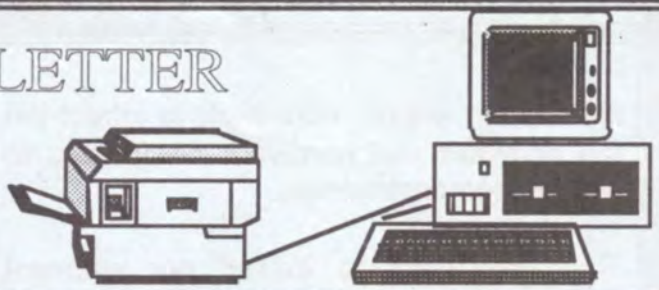
BITS OF BLUE NEWSLETTER

IBM PC USER GROUP

EDITOR: ANN SANBORN

VOLUME II, ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY , 1988



MEETING

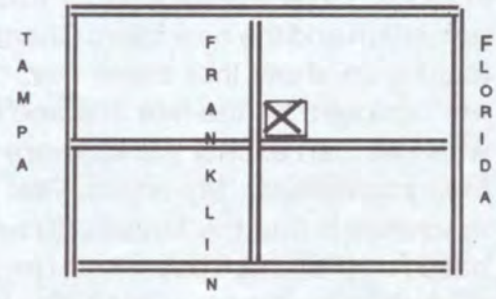
DATE: February 10 th

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: NCNB, 20 th Floor
600 N. Florida Ave.

TOPIC: Borland Rep.,Sandra Soloman demos Quattro & Paradox

DIRECTIONS



Parking available in the building for a charge

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President's Podium

It is wonderful to see the good turnouts that we have been having lately at our meetings. I know that we can increase our attendance if we let our friends know about our group, the good information and the fellowship that is available here. Remember, the more people that we have attend on a regular basis, the greater the expertise that we have available to our group. Addi-

NOTICE

COME ONE, COME ALL

THIS MONTH'S MEETING IS AN OPEN INVITATION TO EVERYONE WHO RECIEVED A NEWSLETTER OR INVITED BY A MEMBER. WE HOPE YOU WILL FIND THERE ARE MANY ADVANTAGES IN A USER GROUP & THINK ABOUT JOINING.

DOS LESSONS

Will be presented at the February meeting by Russ Merritt.

MEMBERSHIP

We are on our annual membership drive. This month's newletter will be distributed to over 600 names with an application as the last page. Join in and bring a friend to this month's meeting!

tionally, we are far more likely to attract the top software and hardware companies to give us demonstrations.

We want to extend our warmest thanks to Kathy Johnson and IBM for their excellent demonstration of the PS/2 Model 50 and a general discussion of the thrust of the whole new IBM Personal Computer Operations. The improvements in the video resolution and the new Micro Channel Architecture do show that these new machines are designed for the late 80s and early 90s when we can expect the software to match their capabilities. My only caveat on these machines is that the Models 50 and 60 are based on the 80286 chip which I regard as no more than a souped-up 8088 chip in capability. Personally, I would not plan on any purchases of these AT type machines if I needed true multi-tasking capability and could afford one of the new 80386 machines that are now rapidly entering the market.

Next meeting we will see a demonstration of the Quattro Spreadsheet and Paradox Database by a Borland Representative. We will have an overhead projector to make this demonstration visible to all.

We look forward to seeing you there. Bring a friend and have a good time!

Steve Speairs, President



PC VIRUS

All of us have been following the spreading news of the computer virus with a great deal of apprehension and interest. The destruction that one of these bugs could cause makes our hearts skip a beat and sweat pop out on our palms. I have already had one of my superiors inquire about the safety of our operations and programs and what damage the virus could cause. While IBM and others are looking for ways to kill this dastardly bug, I would like to repeat suggestions on how to detect the bug's effects and some safety measures.

First, make a backup copy of your hard disk. If you are still using floppies exclusively, backup all of your major programs and their data files. Put these backups into a safe place and keep them there. If you are not currently infected by the virus or if you are hit by the virus later on, you may be able to reload from this backup only after checking it and cleaning it with a virus killer program that I am sure we will have by D Day, May 13th.

Secondly, you should monitor the sizes of your programs that will never change (.EXE or .COM) and if they do change then you can feel pretty certain that they have been infected.

Third, you can periodically check your RAM Memory usage through such programs as the WordPerfect Library where you should look for an unnamed program that should not be there.

Finally, you can wait for Friday, May 13th, 1988, when the current virus is scheduled to destroy your data. Don't say that you have not been warned!

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Chairman, Bob Fultz, informed the group that Borland would be giving a demonstration at the Februrary meeting. He also passed out literature concerning ***Awsome IO,*** which he saw at the most recent Comdex show. It reformats and improves performance of a hard disk up to 30% by keeping all files contiguous and lists for $595.

It was annouced that we would be doing a mass mailing for the February issue of the newsletter in hopes of recruiting new members. We will be using a print shop to reproduce the newsletters.

Our Librarian, Russ Merritt, spoke of the continuing review of program disks in Sun City, informed new members of availability of the library disk, and stated that the PC Sig Bulletin Board is still not operational.

Kathy Johnson, Systems Engineer for IBM, gave a presentation on the new line of IBM PC 2's and their operating system, OS/2. She confirmed that the operating system is still incomplete, addressable memory above DOS 640k would be available, multitasking uses Micro Channel Architecture, and VGA graphics. Also, she discussed the new graphic user interface for windowing, Presentation Manager, although it too is still incomplete. Ms. Johnson completed the presentation by demonstrating the ease of disassembly of the PC for replacement parts.

During the question and answer session the new *COMPUTER VIRUS* was explained by Steve, and more specifically the *ISRAELI VIRUS*. For more information, refer to the article on page 2, PC VIRUS.

BORLAND SHIPS SIDEKICK PLUS

Borland International has just begun shipping a new version of its popular desktop utility bundle, this one called SideKick Plus. The product that initiated the desktop utility category and started the rush to RAM-resident programming, SideKick has been among the ten best-selling programs for almost three years and boasts more than 1.5 million users. As its name suggests, SideKick Plus offers more notepads, more phone books, and more calculator types than its predecessor.

The $150 program is also equipped with a form generator, a file manager for naming and moving files, a data communications script writer, and an outliner. SideKick Plus is compatible with the LIM 4.0 Expanded Memory Specification, so that all but 64K of its 384K worth of modules can sit in high memory, solving the increasingly common RAMcram problem. SideKick Plus users can redefine its hot keys to reduce conflicts with the other terminate-and-stay-resident programs.

The current SideKick will remain on sale for $85. An OS/2 version of SideKick Plus is planned.

[PC World, Feb. '88, Top of the News, Mike Hogan]

The VAR Corner

The OS/2

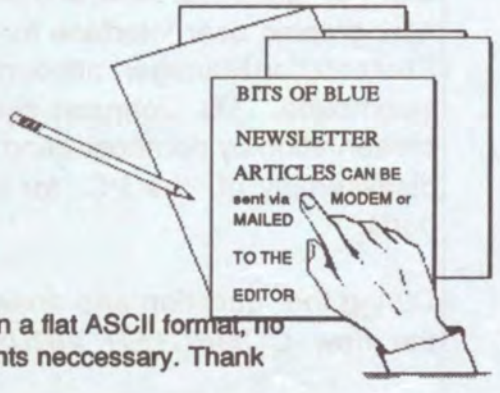
SOLUTION

Author: Bob Fultz

OS/2 is here and I wish to address the effect, at least how I see it, that it will have on our use of microcomputers. First, let us understand that OS/2 is not for everyone. The operating system alone demands a large investment in either new hardware or an expansion of that which we already have. An Intel 80286 or 80386 based PC with a 60 meg hard disk (or bigger) and 2 meg RAM minimum is a must. The operating system alone will take over 1 meg, not including any application which you intend to run. So we have an investment of $1000 to $2000 in memory and storage alone for the AT or PS/2 model 50/60 owner, and $8000 to $10000 for the rest of us. *Just to run OS/2 and our existing DOS applications!*

Similarly, we will need new versions of existing software and/or new products which will take advantage of the capabilities of OS/2. Our current DOS applications, while able to work under OS/2, will still limited to the 640K barrier as always. While OS/2 is not multiuser, multitasking will still be available. Early users claim it is very slow when using disk intensive programs. Also, some early reports show that it is difficult to switch between protected-mode and real-mode operations (by some reports you have to re-boot the system). OS/2 may not be as transportable as DOS has been, allowing different versions of OS/2 to run on other vendors machines. Because of these problems it appears that OS/2 will not overtake DOS until sometime in mid 1989. By then we will be looking forward to OS/2 for the 80386 family of Intel processors.

After all the technical jargon and difficulties are cleared out of the way, I feel that it will be the users who will decide whether OS/2 will take over in 1989. DOS will not die quietly, it still has a long life ahead. EMS will take care of that. There are a large number of the users out there who will never need what OS/2 has to offer and whom will never spend the required monies to upgrade hardware. Yes, OS/2 will open up a new era of microcomputing, but it's impact is up the road a long ways yet.



Send them in a flat ASCII format, no tabs or indents neccessary. Thank you!

Q & A

Got a question? Bring your questions to the meeting or mail them to the editor. We'll put it in the newletter along with the answer so that everyone can benefit.

Articles are a great contribution but, for those of you who can't donate that much time, try a Q & A!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Newsletter	Ann Sanborn 224-4114
Meetings	Bob Fultz 873-5167
At-Large	Steve Scott 870-3807
Education	Vacant

NEEDS TO KNOWS

- Bits of Blue Bulletin Board phone number is 873-1639
- Group Discounts can be obtain by displaying your Bits of Blue Membership card issued when you pay your annual dues. The following are a few locations:

  The Operating Systems
  550 Reo Street, Suite 300
  Tampa, FL

  Sunrise Computer Supplies
  1224 S. Dale Mabry
  Tampa, FL

  TRY-IT Software
  1908 E. Fletcher Ave., Suite D
  Tampa, FL

- USF Bulletin Board, PC Sig is $35. For more information contact Russ Merritt, Librarian.
- Meetings will be held the second Wednesday of each month, barring holidays, at 6 PM.

Comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor at:



Ann Sanborn
GTE Florida
PO Box 110, MC 874
Tampa, FL 33601

BITS OF BLUE | TAMPA PC USER GROUP

APPLICATION

NEW/CHANGES/RENEWAL

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check appropriate box: ☐ New ☐ Change ☐ Renewal

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other_____

Last Name:_____ First Name:_____

Address line 1: _____
Address line 2: _____
City:_____ State:_____ Zip: _____

Home Phone:_____ Work Phone: _____

Company Name: _____

Address line 1: _____
Address line 2: _____
City:_____ State:_____ Zip: _____

Do you have access to a computer?_____What type?_____

What do you presently use your computer for?_____

What major software do you use?_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. expanded memory, printers, etc.)_____

CHANGES

Mail to:

Heidi Martinez, Membership
16106 Dawnview Dr.
Tampa, Fl 33624

NEW OR RENEWAL

Mail with $15.00 to:

Bill Fuller, Treasurer
5611 Fulmar Drive
Tampa, FL 33625

Membership card and Bulletin Board information will be mailed to you or given at the next meeting.

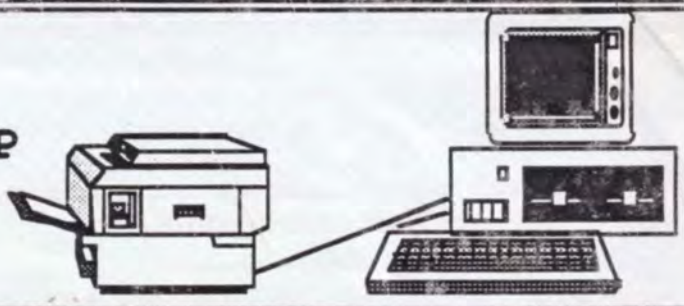
Would you be willing to participate in any committee activities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER GROUP

EDITOR: ANN SANBORN

VOLUME I, ISSUE 10 OCTOBER, 1988



MEETING

DATE: October 12th

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Tampa Main (East/West Hall)
610 Morgan (Please sign in)

TOPIC: Ashton Tate's Byline by Phyllis Wessler

Parking in the street surrounding the building

DIRECTIONS



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NOTICE

ANNOUNCEMENT

Don't forget **ELECTIONS** are this month! Please try and attend to select the representative of your choice on the Board of Directors for 1989!

Coming Events

DataPerfect/PlanPerfect - Wordperfect Training, where to get it - Hillsbourough CIty School Board

President's Podium

Well, we done did good at the show and all over! As you all know, the Executive Board, had some legitimate concerns about the booth staffing, but thanks to a dedicated effort by our members, we had the booth staffed for the entire show! I want to extend the official thanks of the club to these people; Pete Matassa, Norman Jones, Ken Vitoff, Robin Pokoj, Heidi Martinez, Walter Welch, Robin Green, Ann Sanborn, Steve Scott, Victor Marrerro and Bill Fuller. If there is anybody that I missed in this list, please let me know and I will give you the credit and gold star that all of you above so richly deserve.

In terms of the response, Heidi is starting to send out the follow-ups to the over 100 responses that we got. Considering that

Continued on page 2

MEMBERSHIP CORNER
by Heidi Martinez

Welcome Wagon!

Please join me in welcoming the following new members to the User Group:

BILL GANDY
COSTANTINE ANGELAKIS
BEAU DUTY
MIKE STILLINGS
JAY REESE
RALPH WHITLEY SR.
GEORGE COX

Change in Dues Policy

At its last meeting, the Board of Directors voted to increase club dues to $20 per calendar year effective January 1st, 1989. This increase is necessary in order to cover the costs of new equipment, operating our Bulletin Board, printing newsletters, postage, etc.

Also, let me take this opportunity to remind everyone of the change in dues policy approved by the Board at its July meeting, which aligned membership dues/renewals on a calendar year basis. Current members will receive an invoice for membership renewals in the mail in late December unless 1989 dues have been prepaid. If you have any questions, please call Heidi Martinez at 962-6700.

CLUB DUES POLICY

RENEWALS:
$20 per calendar year Due January 1st

NEW MEMBERS:
$20 Joining first year before March 31st
$15 Joining first year before June 30th
$10 Joining first year before September 30th
$ 5 Joining first year before December 31st

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(813) 289-9778 or FAX 289-9824

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PRESIDENTS PODIUM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

our booth was on the 2nd level and beyond the first stairs down to the exhibitor floor, I think that we did very well indeed. To those of you who are receiving your first newsletter through your new membership or our trial subscription program, we bid you welcome and invite your participatic in our meetings. We do have one problem that we caused ourselves by duplicating the September newsletter for handout. We did not get to update the change in the annual member dues from $15. to $20. for the coming year. Consequently, some of these were changed by hand while others went unchanged. Since the offer was supposed to be $25. for membership to the end of 1989, we are contacting all of those who have paid the $15. dues and offering them a $7.50 credit towards their 1989 Dues. We hope that they will understand the mixup and not feel that they are being unfairly treated.

I want to urge all members to make a special effort to come to the meeting on Wednesday, 10/12/88, because that is when we will hold our election for the next year's club officers. We would like to have as many voting as possible. All paid members are eligible to have their nam placed in nomination from the floor for any offic

PRESIDENTS PODIUM CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

LIBRARY TIMES

By: Russ Merrit

Apologies to Steve Spears and Bill Fuller - the programs you gave me did'nt get added. for the membership, next month look for the program Steve demo'd a couple of months ago and for a bunch of good utilites from Bill Fuller.

The reason for the delay was that I got a little too busy downloading PC-Sig progams from Computer Dimension's bulletin board (and a 2 week vacation). Here are the new additions:

DISK127.ARC	C03	PC-MUSICIAN
DISK279.ARC	C04	PIANOMAN VER 3.0
DISK595.ARC	F12	BASIC GAMES & PROGRAMMING
DISK 256.ARC	F13	DOS & PROGRAMMING UTILITES
DISK105.ARC	F14	PC-PROFESSOR (BASIC INSTRUCITON)
DISK019.ARC	F15	ARCHIE (BASIC INSTRUCTION)
DISK615.ARC	G14	ORACLE, TAROT & ICHING (FORTUNE TELLING)
DISK218.ARC	K15	ADDRESS MANAGER
DISK387.ARC	K16	KEEP IN TOUCH (DESKTOP MANAGER)
DISK405.ARC	K17	PC DESK TEAM (DESKTOP MANAGER)
DISK608.ARC	N13	AUTOMENU
DISK642.ARC	N13	MENUMASTER
DISK118.ARC	N16	QYS DOS (MENU, MESSAGES, CALENDAR)
DISK268.ARC	N16	QYS DOS (DOCUMENTATION)
DISK686.ARC	N18	HELP DOS
DISK052.ARC	N20	DOS UTILITIES #1
DISK254.ARC	N20	DOS HELP (NOT THE SAME AS N18)
DISK284.ARC	P16	PC-SIG SAMPLER #8
DISK543.ARC	P17	UTILITES ET CETERA
DISK319.ARC	P18	DOS UTILITIES #18
DISK111.ARC	P19	FILE UTILITES #1
DISK 252.ARC	P20	LISTMATE/LOAD-US BY SWFTE
DISK113.ARC	P21	SCREEN,KEYBOARD, FILE COMPARISON

Later, I expect to list tha actual files that each of these ARC'd disks contains in the Library Disk. Such list were not done at this time because of time contraints. Hopefully, the general description will suffice for now.



Russ

PRESIDENTS PODIUM CONTINUEDFROM PAGE 2

and to participate in the election.

As I close this final President's Podium for my term in office, I want to thank all of those people, both on the board and elsewhere, who have contributed so much effort to making my job easier. It has been a very trying job at times but when I think of how we have gone from an almost totally moribund group to the currently active and thriving club now, I am thankful that I am leaving this position on a high note. May the new president take us even higher!

Again, thanks and I will be seeing you at the meetings ... Steve Speairs



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MEETING TID BITS

* Russ Merritt provided information about a Label Maker program. He asked for a volunteer to "fix" the BASIC program in order to honor printer control codes.

*Sandra Solomon from Borland was our guest speaker. She demonstrated SPRINT, their newest word processing program.

The suggested retail price for SPRINT is $199.95. The package boasts importaion of Postscript graphics, shortcut keys for ease of operation and provides the facility for Multiple documents being open simultaneously. Every three seconds SPRINT automatically saves the current documents loaded into memory, or more often if you customize it to do so. It provides multiple interfaces so the user has the feel of using a wordprocessor they already know as well as a recovery feature.
]

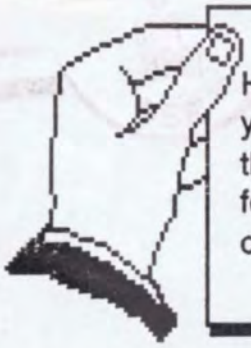
John Pugh was the winner of a complimentary copy of SPRINT!

* Mace and Byline from Ashton Tate will be October's adjenda. WordPerfect and Flowcharting will demonstrated in November.

* Presence at the Business Expo helped to increase our membership significantly!

* A raffle drawing was suggested for each meeting whereas each member paid $1 to puchase a chance to win half the pool and the other half would help supplement the club.

* There is a SMART and a NOVELL users group forming in the Tampa area.



Have a computer item you need to sell? Let the editor know. Drop a few lines of detail with cost and phone number!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Steve Spears 875-1095
Vice President & Membership	Heidi Martinez 962-6700
Treasurer	Bill Fuller 832-0789
Secretary	Ray Thigpen 254-6152
Librarian	Russ Merritt 634-6930
Newsletter	Ann Sanborn 224-4114
Meetings	Bob Fultz 873-5167
At-Large	Steve Scott 870-3807
Education	Victor Marrero 223-7474

NEEDS TO KNOWS

- Bits of Blue Bulletin Board phone number is **239-3704 (NOTE NEW NUMBER)**
- Group Discounts can be obtained by displaying your Bits of Blue Membership card issued when you pay your annual dues. The following are a few locations:

  The Operating Systems
  550 Reo Street, Suite 300
  Tampa, FL

  Sunrise Computer Supplies
  1224 S. Dale Mabry
  Tampa, FL

  TRY-IT Software
  1908 E. Fletcher Ave., Suite D
  Tampa, FL

- Meetings will be held the second Wednesday of each month, barring holidays, at 6 PM.

Comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor at:



Ann Sanborn
GTE Florida
PO Box 110, MC 874
Tampa, FL 33601

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

EDITOR: ROBIN L POKOJ

VOLUMN II, ISSUE 02 February, 1989

MEETING



DATE: February 8, 1989
(Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Downtown Tampa
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 Morgan
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER: **Vickey Kelly**
Blumberg
Communications

TOPIC: Portable PC
Presentation Equipment

Vickey will be demonstrating Portable PC Presentation Equipment by Sharp, Infocus, and Kodak. This equipment projects PC screen images and sometimes comes with memory that will allow play back capability.

Parking in the street surrounding the building

DIRECTIONS

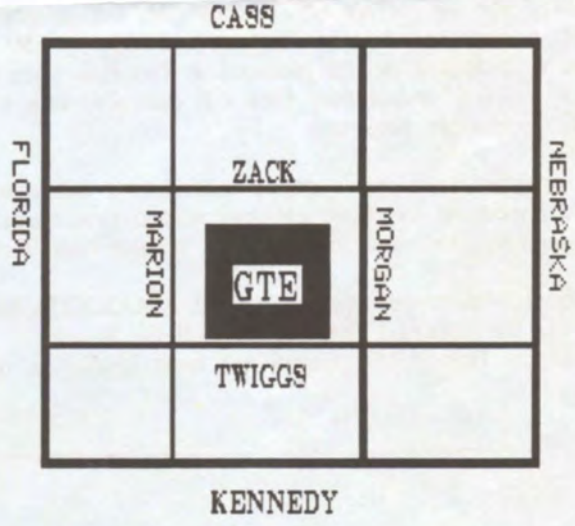


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SOFTWAREREVIEW

By Edward P Buzza

AUTOMAXX ver 3.0 - A combined file manager and menu system.

The file manager is capable of displaying directories and files; renaming them; making and removing directories; editing file attributes; single or mass delete, copy, or move; whereis and search features; customized printer setup; file wipe; and unerase file and unremove directory abilities.

Through the use of an ASCII data file, the program builds a customized menu system that supports 50 menu screens, including nested menus. It can link with any editor to view and/or edit files. It can also link to an ARC compatible program.

The program provides a popup calendar, a calculator, timed execution of menu options, screen save with clock, keyboard macros, and an extensive on-line help facility.

TTThere a shareware version called AMAXX216.ARC that can be obtained from some Bulletin Board Services. This .ARC version has been placed in the library. The registered version (3.0) also has a few "goodies": 1) an extended directory that allows you to add comments to your files, 2) a text view utility which supports all text modes of EGA and VGA adapters, 3) a disk recovery program that will unformat a hard drive, 4) a password feature, 5) a program to customize the colors of AUTOMAXX, and 6) popup menus rather than the LOTUS like command menus of the shareware version.

Vendor: William P. Smith, President
The Computer Enhancement Group
11711 Whittier Road
Mitchellville, MD 20716
(301) 464-8895

Requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/2 or compatibles
256 KB RAM
DOS 2.0 or higher
Mono, Herc, CGA, EGA, PGA, or VGA adapter

Registration: $45.00



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NOTICE



Any PAID UP club member can request any *.com file they have read about in the Utilities section of *PC Magazine* and the the club will make it available.

This MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT has been made possible by Vern Semrad who is a member of *PC MAGNET*.

Thanks Vern!

AUTOEXECuting Along

by Steven Speairs

In the last article, January 1989, we showed a straightforward 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' File that performed a few basic tasks like verifying/setting the system clock and then went on to use that information to set the DOS prompt and then it quit. All told, this is a simple an example of an 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' file as you are likely to find.

For some people this is quite sufficient as they have created this 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' file for themselves and they have a relatively straightforward use for their computer system. For others, however, the additional power available through the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' file is too tempting not to use. Additionally, several software packages also make modifications to the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' file in order to improve that package's usability/performance.

In this months article we shall take the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' file to another level where it performs friendlier actions that go a step further in preparing the computer for use. These actions range from making use of programs that give information about the system's current status to a quickie menu system that can be used to give an idea of what the system has for the user to work with.

Starting with the simple 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' from last month, we first add a call for the 'CHKDSK.COM' program with the '/F' parameter. This will give us 3 pieces of information that can be quite vital for us to know. First it will detect and allow us to fix any incidence of shared clusters. This is a case where 2 or more files share use of the same space on the Hard Disk. To find out what it means, you should check your DOS Manual about this. It is sufficient here to say that this is important and it is here that you start a fix for this problem by answering 'Y'es to the response question if this condition is detected. Once this damage has or has not been detected, then the 'CHKDSK.COM' program will list the TOTAL, USED and AVAILABLE space of the default Hard Disk. Finally, it will list the current Standard RAM (640K Max) and what is still available after DOS has been loaded. If there were any other TSR programs in the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' file ahead of this command, then the RAM available (FREE) would be reduced by their RAM requirements.

Next command is 'MIRROR.COM' which is one of many found in the various Hard Disk utility programs like PCTOOLS, NORTON or MACE. This command makes a back-up copy of the Hard Disk's File Allocation Tables (FAT) to the end area of the Hard Disk. Doing this allows you to use the counterpart of the copy program to restore the FAT if anything, such as a rogue program or power surge causes damage to the original. Without the FAT, the Hard Disk cannot find its data and you are parted from all of the work that you have done to that point.

Finally, you clear the screen and then call in a text file that has the menu of your favorite programs. This text file is simply typed to the screen so that it is the last thing shown before the DOS prompt. The listing of the programs can be done with a letter or number preceeding each selection and instructions can be included to say that each program can be called by

January's 'AUTOEXEC.BAT';

```
ECHO OFF
VERIFY ON
CLS
DATE
TIME
PROMPT Time=$t Date:$d $v$_$p$g
```



February's 'AUTOEXEC.BAT';

```
ECHO OFF
VERIFY ON
CLS
DATE
TIME
PROMPT Time=$t Date:$d $v$_$p$g
CHKDSK /F
MIRROR
CLS
TYPE MENU.TXT'
```

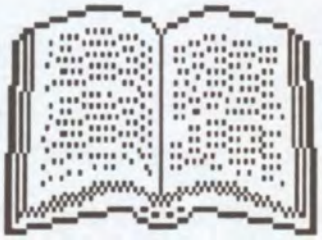
MENU.TXT;

```
' L : Lotus 1-2-3 Spreadsheet  '
' D : dBASE III+ Database      '
' W : WordPerfect 5.0          '
```


Continued Page 5

What shall I read now!

by Steven Spears



We, who have been in the PC Field for any length of time tend to forget how confusing and overwhelming it can be for the novice. Even the most intelligent and alert of them can get quickly overloaded when they first try to find information on computers.

The real novice is generally exposed by going to a computer store to try to find the knowledge that he needs there. I will thank those of you who are now grinning to wipe that smile off your faces. Remember, you too were once a novice! It makes sense to expect this but it is like going to a car dealer to learn about the Belchfire 5000! You generally wind up with a salesperson who is more anxious to see the credit rating on your card than he/she is to demonstrate how little they know about what is being sold. Also, to be honest, the store cannot survive on teaching computers to the novice because all too often that person will take the good salesperson's advice about what to buy and go down the street to buy it at the place which does not pay the teacher's expensive salary!

The richer novice hires a consultant to buy him the computer that he needs. This works so long as he/she has the money to pay for the consultant's research and the consultant really understands what the client wants! The gap here can be horrendous indeed!

So the really smart PC novice goes into the news stand/bookstore and buys an unprejudiced magazine that says precisely what is needed to do what! The only problem here is that the computer magazine rack is now the same size as the automobile magazines and even more confusing! Some of the real old timers in this area can remember when Byte was about all there was available and was found only in the computer stores. It was the size of your average Newsweek and that was mostly how-to articles and advertisements for wire-wrapping kits. Now Byte, which is one of the oldest of the magazines, is in every magazine rack, is seldom less than 350 pages, and is a shrimp to some of its younger competitors.

So, as a service to man (& woman) kind, I thought that I would give a brief reader's guide to the magazine rack. I don't pretend to be unbiased or to have included all of the magazines available for the PC world in here. The majority of these magazines concern MS-DOS machines although many do make references to the Mac and its kin. I have tried to be accurate in my impressions and to give the reader an idea of what each magazine is about.

I have divided the Computer magazine field into 6 categories ranging from the General Computer News Weeklies to the dedicated Application magazines like Lotus. Between these two extremes are magazines that are genuinely oriented towards the novice and those that are aimed squarely at the expert who is going for the optimal system. Some magazines try, with varying degrees of success, to cover both the novice and expert ranks but no one is recommending that a novice spend his hard-earned dollar on one of the expert-type publications!

Continued Page 7

AUTOEXEC Cont.

each program can be called by hitting the corresponding number or letter. For example, one line can say 'L : Lotus 1- 2-3 Spreadsheet. '. To make this work, you can then code corresponding batch files that have the actual instructions to change directories and activate the desired programs. It is important in this kind of use that each of these batch files also contain the instructions to return to the root directory and then to re-display the menu text again. Using the menu line for the Lotus 1-2-3 as shown above, you would create a separate batch file with the name 'L.BAT' that would have in it the following commands; 'CD\LOTUS', '123', 'CD\' and 'TYPE MENU.TXT'.

This is not the only way, nor is it the most efficient way to have a menu-driven system for your computer. It is, however, a simple one and one that can easilybe experimented with by you at your leisure. §



IN THE BEGINNING

Sydney PC UG



I In the beginning, there was vacuum. Then the earth was created. After a while, the vacuum tube was invented and so were better radios. And it was good. Then great war and pestilence fell upon the earth. And in the wake of the destructions came a new idol unto mankind which was built of thousands upon thousands of vacuum tubes. And they called it the computer. And it was good, too.

II But the idol grew prolific and waxed greater in its demands for space and power. So the transistor was invented. For a while, everything was OK.

III Then came the cold war. Next, Sputnik was launched into orbit. There were missiles in Cuba. So John F. Kennedy said let there be an American moon mission. And there was money for the new technology.

IV And the idolaters called upon their wire-wrap gods to provide the answers needed. But the idols demanded more in return. So integrated circuits were created. And this was wonderful.

V Before long, Neil Armstrong took a small step on the moon. Then Intel designed the 4004 microprocessor chip to control a calculator. This was very good indeed.

VI But this small idol foreshadowed things to come. Though its demands for memory were small, the 4004 was fruitful and multiplied. The 4004 begat the 8008 which begat the 8080 which begat the 8086 which begat the 80186 which begat the 80286, and so on...

VII And each had siblings and cousins and some competitors, too. And their numbers grew great within the land. For each gave its worshippers better, faster answers, but in return required more memory.

VIII And memory chips grew abundant amidst the gods. But they were quick to obsolesce and their value steadily declined. And so their numbers grew even greater. Memory chips were the ambrosia of the gods and they drank deeply.

IX But the multiplicity of idols caused dissent among the faithful. For those who followed the 8080 were memory-frugal and called 8086 programmers memory hogs. For while the former groped to save half a dozen bytes, the latter sought ways to splurge half a dozen kilobytes.

X But soon enough they learned the error of their ways. For their high gods proved finite and memory limitations caught up with them. But the wisdom of their frugal brethren had gone unheeded.

XI And they were sore afraid. For their applications grew too big and end users wanted more per-dollar performance from their software without another change of hardware...

READ CONTINUED

In the News category there are two principal players; InfoWorld and PC Week, but you can only find InfoWorld at the newsstand. This is because while InfoWorld aims itself at the general populace and user, PC Week sells itself to its advertisers by limiting its free subscriptions to people already actively involved in the MicroComputer arena. Consequently, while both cover the breaking news very similarly, InfoWorld does reviews of hardware and software while PC Week works on the corporate world's interests of what is being done by whom and why.

In the Genuine Novice Category there are 3 Magazines of note; PC Resource, Personal Computing and Computer Shopper. PC Resource is, in my mind the best magazine to recommend to a novice interested in an MS-DOS PC. It has the reviews and tests that are clear, concise and easy to get into. Personal Computing, is one of the older magazines that tries to cover the waterfront but has little depth to its coverage. I have not found it to be that useful. Computer Shopper is the GIANT of this genre. It is an enormous tabloid magazine that is chock full of everything including the kitchen sink! The reviews are of wildly varying quality and are so spread out in this unique format that reading this is either a love or hate relationship!

In the intermediate level there are the 2 best known of the MS-DOS dedicated magazines; PC Magazine & PC World. They even had an evil twin birth where, when one was bought without the editorial staffs knowledge, the majority of them went out the door to start the other one. My choice here is for PC Magazine which seems to have a more active role in pushing for PC Standards and has some of the best columnists in the business! PC World has the better artwork and is written to a more novice user understanding. They both are heavyweights in the test and review business.

In the Expert category of magazines there is PC Tech Journal which takes off from where its older brother, PC Magazine, stops in its reviews. This is the magazine to use to soup-up your PC into a '386 configuration. It concentrates mainly on the hardware side of the coin. Its software counterpart is Dr. Dobbs Journal (formerly Dr. Dobbs Journal of Computer Orthodontia and Computer Calisthenics)! This is the one for refining your 'C' program into the smallest memory module with all of the bells and whistles!

In a more general view, there is Byte, the grand old man and authoritative voice of the Micro World, and PC Computing, which as one of the newest kids on the block, is an interesting blend of Computer exotica and overview of computer impact on the world. Both are well written but Byte is definitely more technical while PC Computing is more eclectic.

Finally there is the class of magazines that are application-specific and as such cover there dedicated areas in much more depth than the other magazines. Magazines such as Lotus, published by Lotus and devoted to its products will show you Lotus' secrets to get the best out of 1-2-3 and Symphony. Likewise, Ashton-Tate's Tech Journal will give you all it can about dBASE, now devoting most of its space to dBASE IV bug reports! However, don't expect a hard-hitting review of the differences between Excell, Quattro and 1- 2-3 in Lotus! A different approach is that of the magazine DataBased Advisor which reviews and assists its readers in using the multitude of different database products such as dBASE, R-Base, Paradox and their auxiliary tools.

The reason that there are so many magazines is that there is so much information out there to be told. The computer field is still very much in its infancy and this is characteristic of that age. At some point we may have computers so powerful as to be able to do anything we desire and help its user without any other source of help. Until we get to this point, we will need these magazines and other helping references to get the most out of our dollars and computers. I hope that this brief review of some of the magazines out there gives you an idea of where to look for that needed help. §

THE ENFORCER

Gathering articles from members for the newsletter is becoming extremely difficult. Steve Spears has come to the rescue and volunteered to become "THE ENFORCER"! Steve will take over the job of A-SAD (Article - Solicitor, Asker, Demander). So PLEASE, when Steve comes around asking for input dig deep into your creative hearts and help us get some "MEAT & POTATOS" (to coin a phrase from our President) into BITS OF BLUE.

JANUARY MEETING MINUTES

Harvey Bruneau encouraged users to submit articles for our club Newsletter so we can get "more meat and potatoes" into the publication.

"Beware of Dbase IVs network problems" warned Harvey. Vern Semrad President of the Dbase Users Group, said the new release has some very good features but there are many bugs.

Linda Confer of Software Publishing Corporation was our guest speaker. Linda gave us an overview of the PFS product line:

PFS:First Choice - Integrated file management, communications, spreadsheet and graphics package.

PFS:First Publisher - Entry level desktop publishing package.

PFS:FIRST GRAPH - Entry level graphics presentation package.

PFS:PROFESSIONAL WRITER - Word Processor

PROFESSIONAL FILE - Flat file management program

PROFESSIONAL Plan - Spreadsheet analysis program

HARVARD GRAPHICS - H end Graphics presentation package

HARVARD PROJECT MANAGER - Scheduling Project Management package

OFFICE WRITER - Word processing package originally written for the WANG.

Linda then demonstrated First Graphics. First Graphics is a presentation package for producing data and text charts. The package is targeting for the occasional users who wants good quality output at a low price, First Graphics retails for $149.00. §

LIBRARY NOTES
By RUSS MERRITT

For those who didn't get the disk assignments at the January meeting, they are as follows:

PC DRAFT I.....B04
FLOWCHARTING.....B05
CHURCH DATA SYSTEM.....D12
TURBO C TUTORIAL.....E01
A86 ASSEMBLER.....F16
TEXT EDITOR.....H06
BUSINESS THINGS.....K18
FILE UTILITIES.....N21
SCREEN MGMT UTILITIES.....N22
LOTS OF UTILITIES.....N23

The current issue of the Library Disk is January, 1989. To get an update, bring a formatted disk for exchange, (a copy of the last library disk, for example) or $1.00.

AND THE WINNER IS...

As we generally do, we had some very good prizes given away at the January meeting. The software donated by some members who are retailers and by guests making presentations represents some real dollar values our members and guests have taken home just for attending our meetings and participating in our "door prize raffle".

HIGHLIGHTER PEN
won by Ann Sanborn

PFS:First Graph donated by SPC Software
won by George Cox

Coffee Mug donated by SPC Software
won by Linda Dunkerly

Computer-Size Screwdriver
won by Bob Whatley

$28.00 50/50 Raffle Prize
won by Robin Pokoj

DONT FORGET TO PURCHASE "RAFFLE TICKETS" FOR PRIZES $1.00 AT THE DOOR

THIRTEEN WAYS TO DO IT AND ONE WAY TO DO IT AGAIN

By Walter D'Ull, NY PCUG

Attorney do it according to law.

Opera singers do it on a high note.

Librarians do it by the book.

Lotus users do it in a cell.

Witches do it under a spell.

Typists do it manually and electrically.

Nurses do it with tender loving care.

WORDPERFECT devotees do it functionally.

MS WORD users do it on command.

Q & A users do it with and Intelligent Assistant.

Database reporters line them up in rows.

Modem users only remotely do it, if at all.

NORTON users restore it, so that it can be done again.

VIRUS ANTIDOTE NOTE

By Russ Merritt

Maybe for beginners or others who forgot...The recommendation in the December newsletter to use the Assign Command to avoid Virus and Trojan Horse attacks appears sound. However, be aware that the Assign Command is external and when you Assign C to A, Drive C is no longer available since all requests directed to Drive C are automatically routed to A. Solution:- reboot or put a DOS disk in A and type ASSIGN to get everything back to normal.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

By Vern Semrad

NEW MEMBERS:

John Buickerood
Randy & Thea Reynolds
Linda Confer

Linda Confer is a marketing representative for Software Publishing Corporation, the publisher of several of the top selling software programs in the Microcomputer market today. We are especially pleased when people like Linda see fit to join our group. We see that as a vote of confidence by software companies in our organization. We continue to see large numbers of computer-persons in attendance at our meetings. That is very gratifying to me as a member since 1985. I have been through the ups & downs of the club, and, I see nothing but good things ahead.

We are growing, and we are getting better at doing the things micro users in the Tampa Bay area look for in a USER group. I base that on two observations. I see experienced users that I have not seen for awhile coming back to meetings. I see and talk to people who are just starting to use a microcomputer and are coming to the meetings to learn. That's why I joined the group a few years ago. That's what a USER group is all about - all levels of experience and expertise getting together to share knowledge, questions, and answers. Our president, Harvey, has a wealth of experience of computers in several different computer environments. But, we are a MICROcomputer group. My opinion is that even Harvey learns something about MICROs at our meetings. That tells me we are doing something right.

Thanks for coming.

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- Over 200 On-Line Files

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  Tampa, Florida
- Sunrise Computer Supplies
  1224 S. Dale Mabry
  Tampa, Florida
- TRY_IT Software
  1908 E. Fletcher Ave., Suite D
  Tampa, Florida
- Micro-Wise, Inc.
  9310 N. 16th St.
  Tampa, Florida

√ Access to club program library

ASCII text files containing Comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 5¼ diskette (360kb or 1.2Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next months newsletter.



Robin L Pokoj
Editor - Bits of Blue
PO Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492



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This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statics.

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_____

What major software do you use?_____

_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. expanded memory, printers etc.)

_____

_____

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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

EDITOR: ROBIN L POKOJ

VOLUMN II, ISSUE 03 March, 1989



MEETING



DATE: March 8, 1989

(Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Downtown Tampa
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 Morgan
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER: **Brian Herzig**
Hewlett-Packard

TOPIC: Supersport Laptop
Computer &
Other HP Products

Parking in the street surrounding the building
NOTE: Marion street is CLOSED due to construction

DIRECTIONS

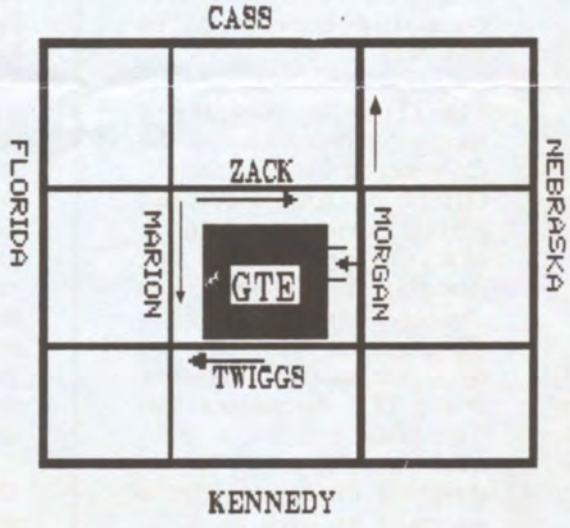


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PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

Harvey Bruneau





Just as memory chip prices are beginning to come down from the last International Trade Commission (ITC) decision, a new Anti-Dumping movement is underway.

The (ITC) is studying a recent determination by the Commerce Department's Office of Anti-Dumping which states that Sony, Maxell and Fuji are dumping 3.5" diskettes on the U.S. market. This investigation was launched by a petition from Verbatim. If the ITC determines that dumping has hurt U.S. manufacturers, prices for the dumped diskettes would increase as high as 51%. Presently, half of the 3.5" diskettes sold in this country are imported. The commission will make its determination in late March.

What amazes me is that when the products in question are sold to only a few consumers, in relation to the total consumer population, its called dumping. But when the masses are involved its OK to sell it at a cheaper price than anywhere on this world.

I refer to the oil industry in specific. The middle east has been selling us oil at a lower price than we can produce it ourselves. This in fact has resulted in the states of Texas, Louisiana and other oil producing states to cap their oil wells resulting in massive cutbacks in American jobs. Is this not dumping. While it would be political suicide for the government to suggest raising oil prices to reflect the world market, they do not seem bothered in raising prices of products whose consumers are few in numbers.

Of course I don't want to pay $2-3.00 a gallon for gas, but when 3.5" diskettes are the standard next year, I will not want to pay 50% more than today's going price.

Why are they picking on the computer industry when the American home electronic, automobile, steel and oil have been OK to dump on in the past?

I can't wait until the day that IBM complains to the ITC that foreign clones are being dumped resulting in unfair competition. §



Investigators from the department of Anit-dumbing search high & low for evidence of disk dumping.

R.L.Poko

HELP!

by Harvey Bruneau



We have need for a few devoted members to step forward and volunteer some time and effort as board members. Board members serve a one year term and are elected by the general membership.

Our immediate need is for a **Librarian** to maintain our Public Domain software library which is brought to the meetings for members to copy. Russ Merritt has been doing a good job in the past but feels a better job could be done by someone who could devote more time.

Additionally, the positions of **Secretary** and **Education** are open. The secretary is responsible for taking minutes (notes) of each meeting. The notes are printed in the following months news letter. Presently this position is being done by a volunteer on a meeting by meeting basis. The education person is responsible for organizing and providing educational presentations for the general membership. These presentations can be lessons in DOS or anything pertaining to microcomputers and do not have to be done on a regular basis.

In conclusion, if you can help us with one of these positions it would be greatly appreciated. You can either call and tell me which position you would like to be nominated for or during our meeting, at nomination time, stand up and be heard. We will have a special election for these positions and the terms will be pro-rated to coincide with terms of the existing board members. §

FastTrax ver 3.9

A disk optimizer and file de-fragmenter

Edward P Buzza



This program optimizes hard disk and floppy disk performance by consolidating pieces of files and directories. It not only places files in contiguous disk clusters, it assigns most files to the least number of disk cylinders resulting in increased track-to-track efficiency.

In contrast to other disk optimizers/de-fraggers, this program allows you to assign frequently used directories, programs and/or data to the "fast tracks" nearest the FAT. Directories and files are grouped by priority: top, high, normal, and low. Also, the amount of "free space" can be divided and placed between the priority groups, or wherever you want it.

While the program only optimizes disks, it does so far better than NORTON or PC-TOOLS. Using the "safe" (and slowest) option, it took only eleven minutes on an AT (10Mz, 64ms access hard drive) to optimize and de-frag 600 files in 28 directories (almost 12 million bytes). It has received highly favorable comments from leading trade magazines (See PC Magazine - Oct 11, 1988).

Author: Mark Elfield

Vendor: Bridgeway Publishing Corp
2165 East Francisco Blvd., Suite A1
San Rafael, CA 94901

Requirements: IBM PS/2, PC/XT/AT and compatibles
PC-DOS or MS-DOS ver 2.0 or higher
256 KB for hard disks up to 32 MB
384 KB for hard disks over 32 MB
Not copy protected

Price: ($34 w/shipping - TELEMART, Ariz)

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GRiDLock

By Steve Scott



A friend of mine, who I hadn't seen in years, stopped by my office at the dealership the other day. He works for General Motors so we began talking about some of the changes which have taken place since I left the company. More and more, he said, he was becoming detached, dependent on voice mail, E-mail, and other non-traditional types of communications which isolated him from contact with his own species. Wasn't it nice, he went on, that we had a few moments to talk about the good old days.

He explained that he had just been through two weeks of training in the mental tundra of Lansing, Michigan, and would be proud to show me the object of his intense study. So much for the good old days! He took me out to his company car, popped the trunk, and showed me an array of electronic gadgets the likes of which I had never seen, except for one piece: a GRiDCase 1530 PC, which he unceremoniously flopped onto the pavement. (Laptop 80386, 12.5 mhz, 40 mb, gas plasma display, battery operated)

Now this guy is no dummy, but I knew he couldn't tell DOS from a dump truck. So what was it all for, I coyly asked, hoping above all hopes that Steve Spears didn't already have the beta version. Sorry, Steve, this is some radical high tech GM proprietary stuff.

Cars are built with on-board computers to monitor and control about 40 engine functions thousands of times per second. These on-board computers can develop bugs which cause serious engine problems. Sometimes the technicians (they should no longer be called mechanics) who work on these computers need a helping hand. My GM buddy is their guru and showed me the latest in electronic diagnosis. What I am about to describe is a service done by many dealerships using more conventional means.

The GRiD is taken to a sick car and fitted to the diagnostic port of the on-board computer. Several other wires are hooked to ports on the engine itself. While the car is being driven, the cellular modem dials a GM access number which, via satellite link, puts the technician on line with an IBM main frame in Lansing, Michigan. The main frame listens to the engine, diagnoses any problems, reprograms the EPROMs of the car's on-board computer if necessary, and spools the results of the session down to the hard disk of the GRiD for later review. The screen notifies the technician of needed repairs and adjustments, like replacement of the spark plugs, which cannot be done by satellite link (yet). The whole operation, start to finish, takes about ten minutes.

After the demonstration, I asked my buddy to bring the GRiD to my office. I hit ^C, exposing him to DOS for the first time, and gave him a copy of PC-WRITE. "Y-Y-You mean," he stammered in utter amazement, "I can actually type my reports on this thing?" §

RBBS Bytes

By Kevan Sheridan

Baud Rate 300/1200
Number 239-3704

One of the benefits of being a member of the IBM PC Users Group is the Bits of Blue electronic Bulletin Board, and every member should learn how to take advantage of this valuable asset and its offerings. Unfortunately, many members do not understand what a RBBS is or how to fuliy use it. This month I want to introduce the BBS to you and encourage the membership to use and enjoy the Board.

Our Remote Bulletin Board System (RBBS) consists of a XT compatible with a 20M hard drive and a 300/1200 Baud modem. It is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It contains a variety of free public domain programs which include games, DOS tools, tele-communication packages, and much more. The board also has a computerized bulletin board, an electronic mail system, a files system,and much, much more. And all of this is just a modem call away.

When you call the Board use your name to tell the system who you are. If you have not called the Board before it will ask you if you wish to register as a newuser. When you answer YES the system will then ask you about your 'setup'. For a simple first time use answer No or None to most of these questions. Later, when you learn what they mean you can change them with the utilities. From there remember to read the prompts. If you have trouble enter a question mark for further help. Once you have called the system once you can then 'TURBO LOGON' by this you just enter you FULL name AND Password when asked for your FIRSTNAME. If you have done it right you will see dots as you type your password. §

COMPUTER GLOSSARY

by Charles Bassline, Datamation

ADA - Something you need only know the name of to be an expert in computing. Useful in sentences like We had better develop an ADA awareness.

BUG - An elusive creature living in a program that makes it incorrent. The activity of debugging or removing bugs from a program ends when people get tired of doing it, not when the bugs are removed.

CACHE - A very expensive part of the memory system of a computer that no one is supposed to know is there. DESIGN What you regret not doing later on.

DOCUMENTATION - Instructions translated from Swedish by Japanese for English- speaking persons.

ECONOMIES OF SCALE - The notion that bigger is better. In particular, that if you want a certain amount of computer power, it is much cheaper to buy one biggie than a bunch of smallies. Accepted as an article of faith by people who love big machines and all that complexity. Rejected as an article of faith by those who love small machines and all those limitations.

HARDWARE - The parts of a computer system that can be kicked.

INFORMATION CENTER - A room staffed by professional computer people job it is to tell you why you cannot have the information you require.

MACHINE INDEPENDENT PROGRAM - A program that will not run on any machine.

MEETING - An assembly of computer experts coming together to decide what person or department not represented in the room must solve a problem.

MINICOMPUTER - A computer that can be afforded on the budget of a middle-level manager.

OFFICE AUTOMATION - The use of computers to improve efficiency in the office by removing anyone you would want to talk to over coffee.

ON LINE - The idea that a human being should always be accessible to a computer.

PERFORMANCE - A statement of the speed at which a computer system works; or rather, might work under certain circumstances, or was rumored to be working over in Jersey about a month ago.

PRIORITY - A statement of the importance of a user or a program. Often expressed as a relative priority, indicating that the user doesn't care when the work is completed so long as he is treated less badly than someone else.

QUALITY CONTROL - Assuring that the quality of a product does not get out of hand and add to the cost of its manufacture or design.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS - Mathematical techniques for trying to understand why things are getting worse.

STRATEGY - A long-range plan whose merit cannot be evaluated until sometime after those creating it have left the organization.

SYSTEMS PROGRAMMER - A person in sandals who has been in the elevator with a senior vice-president and is ultimately responsible for a phone call you will be receiving from your boss.

FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

Vickey Kelly from Blumberg Communication demonstrated two computer overhead presentation systems and a desktop slidemaker.

Ultimate Presentation System - In Focus Systems Inc - This high end PC viewer system comes equiped with 1 Megabyte of onboard memory for storage of presentation graphics, high resolution display - 640 x 480 pixels, infrared remote control, battery memory backup, and a special effects generator. The unit retails for $2795 and can be purchased or rented from Blumberg Communications.

QA-50 - Sharp - This LCD brings overhead projection into the computer age as an education and presentation tool. It uses sophisticated shading controls to project computer created information from almost any IBM PS/2, IBM PC/XT/AT, or compatible in images of high depth and clarity. Retail $1395.

MONTAGE FR1 Film Recorder - Presentaion Technologies - This desktop slidemaker will typically generate presentation slides in 3-4 minutes with up to 16.7 million colors, on requlars 35mm slide or print film, or instant slide film. Retail $5995. §

LIBRARY NOTES

by Russ Merritt



At the February meeting the following new disks were made available:

B06	**GRAPHICS**	Two programs - PCPG, a drawing program and the other a collection of drawings using typewriter letters and symbols.
E02	**PC TEACHER**	A good program that graphically represents the path command.
E03	**MATH/TYPING**	EQUATOR, a teacher program for various equations, Jr. High/High School level. UTMP is a math drill program. PC-TOUCH is the typing tutorial.
E04	**EDUCATION**	IQBUILD - Easy to difficult problems; History Education, high school level; MATH TUTOR, for grades 1-6; MUSIC & EDUCATION: a mixed bag (Grade School/Jr. High School)
G14	**FOLLIES**	Games
K19	**BOOKKEEPING**	Simplified Business Bookkeeping
K20	**CAL - FIN**	One group of programs provides a scheduling calendar and a labeling program; the other, TIME & MONEY, is for financial record keeping.
K21	**CPA - LEDGER**	DOUBLE ENTRY BOOKKEEPING. NOTE - The documentation disk was marked as no longer available by PC-SIG.
P22	**AUTOMAXX**	A combined file manager and menu system. See the write-up in February BITS OF BLUE.

Added to our list of Demo Disks is VP-GRAPHICS and dBASE IV. §

F.Y.I.

by Harvey Bruneau

» A new TSR software product called BATTERY WATCH ($39.95) by Traveling Software, will allow you to check the battery life, in hours and minutes, of your portable computer as you use it.

» Service Merchandise has been added to IBM's pilot program to resell IBM hardware (Model 25).

» dBASE IV Anomalies -
I have uploaded a current listing of known bugs and remedies for dBASE IV. This list is directly from Ashton-Tate and only represents anomalies which they are willing to acknowledge at this time. Check the board for update.

» PC Magazine's (vol 8 # 4) ZCOPY. I had the opportunity to use this program for an actual real life use. While initially I had trouble determining which Com ports I was on and the jargon used in the documentation, I did get it to work. If you have a need to move/copy data from PC to PC having different or like diskette formats, this is a handy product. You will need one null modem and two copies of this software. Look for this program on our BBS. My thanks to Vern Semrad for providing the software to me in an hour of need and to Bob Flanders (program creator) for returning my call.

» WordPerfect 5.0. Earlier versions of WordPerfect (WP) are incompatible with Sidekick. When the memory-hungry WP overwrites the portion of RAM that Sidekick uses, The keyboard will lock up. To correct problem, activate WP with wp/nc/wk instead of usual wp. You will be able to use WP but sidekick will be disabled.

DID YOU KNOW...

ENERGY COST - A Personal Computer cost approximately 5¢ per 10 hours of use.

- Tampa Electric
Open Lines
Issue 58, 1989

LAWS OF COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

1. Any given program, when running, is obsolete.

2. Any given program costs more and takes longer.

3. If a program is useful, it will have to be changed.

4. Any given program will expand to fill all available memory.

5. If a program is useless, it will be documented.

6. The value of a program is proportional to the weight of its output.

7. Program complexity grows until it exceeds the capabilities of the programmer.

8. Make it possible for programmers to write programs in English and you will find programmers cannot write in English.

- LAN MAGAZINE

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE COMPUTER IS TURNED ON AND WHY DO I GET THAT BEEP !

by Steve Spears

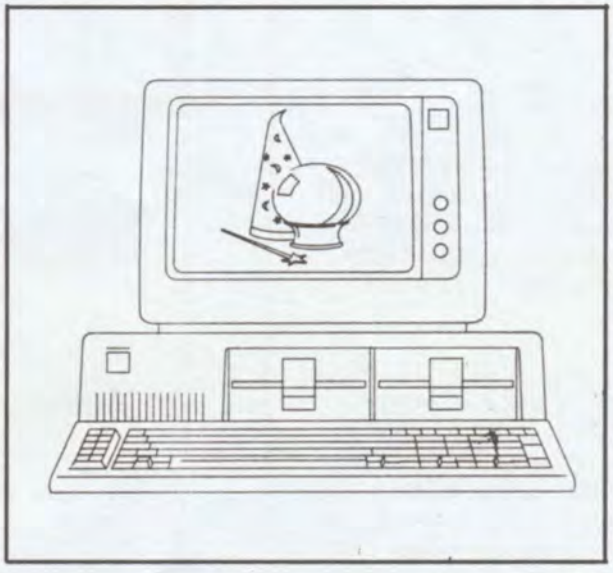
The computer is, by itself, a completely useless consumer of electricity that functions as a feeble heater and a poor night light. You cannot even pickup any channels on that dumb TV that you paid so many bucks for. Of course, most of us would never dream of buying any computer that was so limited, but this is the condition that every new computer is in before the software is installed.

Before the computer can do anything, it must be instructed in the actions that it can perform, from how to read the keyboard keys to how to display to the monitor. This is done by various programs that are loaded into the computer from various sources so that it can become the powerful tool that we now know it is. The only thing that the computer chip knows to do at the start is to look at a specific location for instructions. This first step in a computer startup is called the IPL or Initial Program Load and is completely automatic.

The actions that are performed next come from a particular piece of computer hardware called the ROM chip and is known by the computer jargon as 'Firmware', which identifies a chip with a permanent program load. This is a memory chip that has been loaded at the factory with a series of programs that tell the computer where to look for more information and what to do with it. It also provides the most basic routines for the computer to use in the processing of the data that goes through it. The average layman might well think of this piece of equipment as a combination roadmap and basicphrase book. There have been well known incidences when a computer has gone through several generations of ROMs as the manufacturer has improved the performance of the computer and its equipment. Any really basic change in the computer's motherboard will require a change of this chip.

With the information that is read from the 'Firmware', the computer will then perform the required tests of it's environment and tools that are required by the instructions read from the 'Firmware'. This is called the 'POST' which stands for Power On Self Test. In this operation, the computer will check its allocation of memory, the disk drives, the cards that have been installed and the video circuits. The more memory and devices that the computer has, the longer the 'POST' takes to perform. Different computers handle the 'POST' different ways.

The original PC had a very primitive 'POST' that actually went out to look for anything it could find in the way of memory (512/640K Maximum) or other devices. The AT type machines contain a configuration file in a battery backed- up file that was read at the start. This told the computer to check the



normal operations but also to check for additional Expanded /Extended RAM and the installed Hard Disk etc. The newer computers, such as the PS/2 IBM line go even further by making this file the master list of devices and alerting the user to the presence of a new device or the absence/failure of a previously installed ,device at this time. As a rule, those devices that are connected to the ports, Serial and Parallel, are not included in the 'POST' because they can be of such a varied nature that there is no way that the computer's 'POST' can keep track of what a normal response should be.

A failure of the 'POST' generally produces the dreaded 2 beep warning signal instead of the much more desireable single beep of 'POST' success. The actions that follow depend upon how serious the failure of the 'POST' is. There are cases where the actual 'Firmware' ROM chip or the CPU itself has gone bad, (lightning strike!), and all you get is the power light on the computer and all it does is just sit there. This is a case of Brain Death and, unless you are a computer Technician, you best be prepared to shell out some money or else use your computer as a boat anchor. Less serious failures of the 'POST' produce error messages followed by the 'Hit [F1] to continue ... '. This means that the machine is still functional but you had best check out the problem before going much further. While the 'POST error messages are cryptic at times, they can generally lead you or the technician in the right direction for repair.

This use of the 'POST' operation also defines the difference between the 'Cold' and 'Warm Boot'. The 'Cold Boot' is the same as turning your computer on using the 'BRS' (Big Red Switch) and will always cause the machine to do the 'POST'. The 'Warm Boot' simply recycles the machine and avoids the time consuming 'POST'. This is what you get when you press the [Ctrl] + [Alt] + [Del] keys together. Incidentally, for those who do not know, there are simple programs available in our library that perform these actions without having to actually flip the 'BRS' or hitting the [Ctrl] + [Alt] + [Del] keys. They can be very handy at times for those who need them.

Now you know what the computer is doing in that period of time between the moment you turn it on and the moment you see it start to read the DOS disk and start to perform the actions required by the 'CONFIG.SYS' and then the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' files. May you never get that totally blank look from the screen and may your double beeps be few and far between! §

DIRECTORY DISCOURSE

by Vern Semrad

A friend of mine recently destroyed a large dBASE application on his hard disk because he (for some strange reason) entered DEL . (DEL <space> dot). If he had been in the root directory of the drive, nothing would have happened. Since he was in a sub-directory, what he typed was exactly the same as typing DEL *.*. When you do a DIR of a sub-directory, the first line has a period, and the second line has two periods. The period refers to the current sub- directory, and the two periods refer to the directory (or sub-directory) one up from the current sub-directory.

When you are in a sub-directory, you can always move up one directory in the tree by entering CD.. unless you are already in the root directory.

Along with the above, you can get a list of all of the sub-directories in any directory or sub-directory by simply entering DIR *. (DIR Star Dot). If you have the habit of naming files without an extension, you will also get those, since you are asking for a DIR of all files without a name extension. Sub-directory names don't have extensions, so that's what you get. I know we all give filename extensions to files we create, don't we?

Did you also know that if you are moving from the root directory down the tree to a sub-directory or from a sub-directory down one level to a sub-sub-directory, you don't need to type the backslash. From the root directory, you can move to DIRECT1 by simply entering CD DIRECT1. From sub-directory DIRECT1, you can move to sub-sub-directory DIRECT2 by entering CD DIRECT2.

If you wish to move HORIZONTALLY in your tree structure, you then must include the backslash. Example: To move from sub-directory LEVEL1_A to sub-directory LEVEL1_B, you must enter CD\LEVEL1_B or CD \LEVEL1_B. Yes, directory and sub- directory names can have dashes and underscores.

Everything I said so far applies ONLY to DOS 3.X

Have you ever been copying a large number of small files from a hard disk to a floppy and got the message "UNABLE TO CREATE FILE FILENAME"? The reason for this is that a floppy has a limit of holding 112 files. The message was generated when DOS tried to copy the 113th file. The way around this is to create a sub-directory (call it anything you like) on the floppy, then copy the files to this sub-directory. The 112-file limit on a floppy only applies the root directory of the floppy. The same holds true of the 512-file limit on a hard disk. There is no limit to the number of files that can be in a sub- directory except for disk space.

Have you ever tried to remove a sub-directory (RMDIR or RD DIRECT1) and gotten the message "DIRECTORY NOT EMPTY"? You go to that sub-directory, do a DIR, and only see the the . and the .. on the first two lines. The reason is that there is a hidden file in that sub-directory. If you have software such as PCTOOLS, you can see all the files in a sub-directory, including the hidden ones. If you don't have the software, do a CHKDSK from DOS. If CHKDSK reports more than two hidden files (the ones required by DOS), chanceees are you have a hidden file somewhere that you didn't know about. How did it get there? Sometimes, software gets a little goofy and creates a hidden file. Back in the days when a lot of software was copy-protected, part of the copy-protection scheme was to create a hidden file that had to be present for the software to run. You can change the hidden file attribute with the DOS ATTRIB command, but you have to know the name of the file. Again, lacking the software to do this, you can find out the name of the file by doing a CHKDSK/V. This will take a while, and you willl have to read fast while the filenames scroll by, but you can stop the scrolling with CTRL S. Look for a filename that you don't recognize.

If you would like more information like this, let one of the board members know at the next meeting. §

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- Over 200 On-Line Files

√ Full support from the IBM PC Users Group.

√ Discounts at the following Bay Area Businesses:
- The Operating System 550 Reo Street, Suite 300 Tampa, Florida
- Sunrise Computer Supplies 1224 S. Dale Mabry Tampa, Florida
- TRY_IT Software 1908 E. Fletcher Ave., Suite D Tampa, Florida
- Micro-Wise, Inc. 9310 N. 16th St. Tampa, Florida

√ Access to club program library

ASCII text files containing Comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 5¼ diskette (360kb or 1.2Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next months newsletter.



Robin L Pokoj
Editor - Bits of Blue
PO Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492



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Do you have access to a computer?_____ What type?_____

What do you presently use your computer for?_____

_____

_____

What major software do you use?_____

_____

_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. expanded memory, printers etc.)

_____

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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

EDITOR: ROBIN L POKOJ

VOLUMN II, ISSUE 04 April, 1989



MEETING



DATE: April 12, 1989

(Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Downtown Tampa
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 Morgan
(Please sign in)

SPEAKERS: **Vern Semrad**
TIPCUG Membership
Chairman

Steve Spears
TIPCUG Member

TOPICS: **Telecommunications**

Demonstration of
FLOW DRAW II

Parking in the street surrounding the building

DIRECTIONS

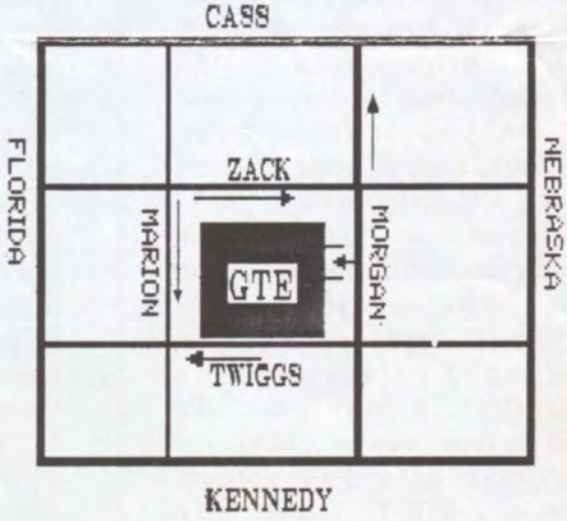


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PRESIDENT'S PODIUM



Harvey Bruneau



I don't suffer from Wade Boggs disease. Neither do I have the alleged gambling problems as they say Pete Rose may have. But I do suffer from Harvey Bruneau disease (PC-Technologic). That's the disease where every time you read or hear about a new state-of-the-art PC product which interest you, you want it or more information about it. Whether its a new 50mhz coprocessor from Yarc Systems Corp. (really), a Multisync 3D monitor from NEC or Publisher's Paintbrush from Z-SOFT, I want it. I have talked with others who suffer the same faith as I. Is there a rehab center out there for people like me. My wife usually brings me down to reality when I mention things like scanners and VGA equipment/software purchases, but that only last until I pick up another computer magazine with new product announcements. I presently read or review 10-15 PC magazines/journals a month, each having some kind of new product review.

I am fortunate that upon occasion I do get to review products. When I can't, the second best thing is that I can generally find someone at our user group who has tested or used the products which I haven't, saving me money and considerable time.

I can relate to the robot, NUMBER 5, in the movie 'SHORT CIRCUIT'. Although designed as a robot for military use, through some accident he acquired the basic mental characteristic of a human. From then on, he wanted INPUT, knowledge of the daily events of human life, which he got from contact with people, television and books in order to understand and emulate them."

While I don't want to be a computer, I do want to understand them and use tools which make my life easier and more productive.

If you dont have this disease send money or new products to those who do. If you do, you have my understanding, I know what its like to want to test these products without there being 48 hours in a day or a LOTTO winning in the bank. §

WAR ON DOS

by Lee Jones, Brevard PC UG

As a special witness to the President's War on DOS Committee, Bill the Cat reveals his sordid past: At first, I did it just on weekends, with my friends, you know? We never wanted to hurt anyone. The girls loved it. We'd all sit around the computer and do a little DOS. It was just a kick. At least that's what we thought. Then it got worse. First I heard about pipes - what a trip! Then I came across multiple level directories. You'd think that just a little would be enough, but soon they were six and seven deep and my hard disk was almost unreadable. Yeah, just a few more and then I'll stop, I said to myself. And then - dare I say it? Batch files! This horrible aberration starts innocently but soon you have problems entering any command because you have no idea where it will take you - but I know - yes, to - nested batch files! Arrrrgh! Oh, sure, I tried different shells to get off the DOS habit, but the Esc key was too handy and I was too weak. As soon as I was left alone, I could be found doing ATTRIB, REN and even an occasional DEL. I'm so ashamed; my children found me one night actually FORMATing. It got so I'd have to do some DOS during the weekday nights - all night. After a while I

Cont. Page 6

THOUGHTS ON ILLITERACY

by Richard T. Rogers, Tucson UG

You know you're computer-illiterate when:

1) You think an Apple is the fruit that first caused discord in the Garden of Eden.

2) You call the drug abuse center when your kid tells you he has a blown memory.

3) You think a nanosecond is the length of time Grandma promises to stay with you next summer.

4) You think a head crash is the result of sniffing too much Duco cement.

5) You think serial communications have something to do with Snap, Crackle and Pop and parallel communications means you and someone else see eye to eye.

6) You think BASIC is simple as Pascal died during the French Revolution.

7) You think a boot is useful only when dealing with manure or bad weather.

BARGAINS



10 Mg HARD DRIVE with controller card if interested call Russ Merritt HOME 634-6930 WORK 882-1993

NEW MEMBERS



Jeff Apple
Cindy Edwards
Ronalda Futtrell
Jim Harrington
Ben Hooks
George Jones
Bert Karpinski
James Markley
Jay Swearingen
Susan JJ. Thompson
Maria Twardowski
Thomas Westmoreland

The following is a spelling correction to last months new member listing:

Linda Dunkerley



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TELECOMMUNICATIONS FRENZY



By Vern Semrad

At the next meeting we will be talking about Telecommunications. Simply stated, that is one computer talking to another computer. Telecommunications can involve a PC talking to another PC, a PC talking to to a MiniComputer, or a PC talking to a Mainframe. The receiving computer can be in the same building with the sender, or the receiver can be in another city. The proximity of the receiver to the sender determines the hardware and software required to effect the communication. Our discussion will involve one PC talking to another computer in another city, or at least, in another location where direct cabling would not be feasible. In the meeting, we will make a PC in the meeting room talk to other computers in remote locations. Obviously, this will require the use of phone lines and modems. For those new users, a modem (acronym for Modulator-Demodulator) simply converts one type of signal to another for transmision. Then, the modem on the other end converts the signal back to the original type of signal for the computer on the other end to read. We can get into more detail if anyone desires, but the details are actually kinda boring if you are not an electronics student. I am not, so I don't really care what goes on so long as my machine can talk to the other machine. I do know what is happening, because I read a lot, but, knowing what is happening at the electronic level is neither necessary nor interesting to the average user. We will call our own IBMPC User Group RBBS (Remote Bulletin Board System). It is called the Bits O' Blue, and it is operated by Kevan Sheridan. He is called the SYSOP (System Operator). I have asked Kevan to help with this part of the demonstration. We will call one of my computers at home to demonstrate the capabilities of PROCOM'M PLUS. There are at least ten dozen Communications programs on the market. Many commercial programs have Communications software built into the rest of the program. Examples are WordStar 2000 Plus, MicroSoft WORKS, pfs:First Choice, and ENABLE. I own a couple of these, and, I can tell you, none of them compares to PROCOMM PLUS. The third service we will call is PCMAGNET. If you are a subscriber to PC Magazine, you know about the utilities section in the last part of the magazine. If you don't subscribe to this magazine, and you are serious about micro-computing, shame on you. Steve Speairs gave an excellent summary of all the PC publications a couple of newsletters ago. If you are going to subscribe to ONLY one magazine about computing, it should be PC Magazine. If you have just won the FL lottery, subscribe to everything you have the time to read. NOTE: "Time to Read" is the key. PCMAGNET is operated through

PRINTING WITH NETWARE 2.1+

In Novells NetWare 2.0a, SPOOL began to spool a job to disk and ENDSPOOL ended the spool and sent it off to the printer. In NetWare 2.10 and higher, the easy-to-understand commands have been replaced with the more esoteric CAPTURE and ENDCAP, respectively. Some existing menus and some applications will no longer function until you upgrade to new version of the software. To avoid this, go into PUBLIC directory and copy ENDCAP.COM to ENDSPOOL.COM. Then copy CAPTURE.COM to SPOOL.COM. Then upgrade to the latest version of the application software when it comes out.

-The Network Reporter

Cont Page 9

MARCH MINUTES

By Russ Merritt

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

o Businessland has asked for a better deal from Compaq to handle their products.

o Aston-Tate has announced a delay in the release of their dBase IV compiler.

o Dell Computers has announced a drop in their prices.

o Club has Board position of Member-at-Large open.

PRESENTATION: HEWLITT-PACKARD

Their review of the market place and HP's position in it has led to this late entry in the PC market. At the low end is a Lap-Top which is a cooperative venture with Zenith - it's their machine with HP enhancements.

On the high end, they are offering their versions of the 286 and 386 machines competing directly with Compaq.

In the discussion that followed, they offered to return to present more in depth their high end personal computers and their laser jet printers and desk jet printers.

MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New members are to receive a library disk. If you haven't received one, see the Librarian. As the library disk is updated, members may get a new one by exchanging a formatted disk or paying $1.00.

Vern Semrad preview his presentation for next month and reminded members of his offer to download PC Magazine Utilities from the magazine's bulletin board. He requested members to leave requests on the Club Bulletin Board.

A new club member donated books and a Turbo C package.

NEW MEETING PLANS:

April - Vern Semrad
Modem Communication
FAT (File Allocation Table)
DOS Directories

Future -
Borland Paradox, 3.0
Bob Fulz - Viewlink & Spinrite
Ashton-Tate - Framework III
AST - Computers

Future Computing



Steve Speairs



The Personal Computer (PC) has come such a long way since it earliest inception about 12 years ago that it is difficult to stand aside from all that history to try to take a look at what is coming down the pike. Yet, if you do take the time to make the effort, you quickly realize that we are basically wasting computer resources because the PC is still such a new tool. The wonders that we can achieve with a really usable PC will be nothing short of amazing, even to those of us who are working with these machines today.

A common truism in our industry, that is used to emphasize how far the PC has come from its first renditioning, says that if the car industry had progressed as far as the computer industry, then Rolls-Royces would have the horse-power of an aircraft carrier, get a 1000 miles to a gallon of gas, cost $0.75 each and be the size of a roller-skate. The ridiculousness of the image just goes to reinforce the progress that has been made so far. However, as the wise old philosopher once said, you ain't seen nuttin yet!

At the present time we are using our computers for information processing only. While this covers a wide area of word processing, information storage and retrieval and other similar chores, it is still a small portion of our average daily activities. The primary fault in our use of computers is that they are still so isolated. While we speak of the networked computer, this only means that the computer is capable of exchanging information with other similar computers. What is yet to come, but come it will, is the capability of tieing the computer into most of our daily activities.

Just recently, a conference of major appliance manufacturers agreed on a standard communication bus that would allow a PC to monitor and control the use of these various devices. Currently, this ability can be minimally performed by using a PC to turn power on and off on appliances by hooking an auxiliary power controller like the BSR X-10 to the computer and then having the computer control power switching modules that are mounted between the socket and the appliance power plug. What this new standard will do is to allow the computer in each appliance to tell the master computer, your PC, its status, problems and operation at all times. Thus if your Air Conditioner's Fan was jammed, you would be able to get a warning message and a complete diagnostic of the problem.

Progress in the

Cont. Page 6

FUTURE Cont.

software field of expert systems and Artificial Intelligence (AI) will allow your PC the ability to function as an active partner in your efforts to control your environment. Instead of you having to do the scut work of trying to track down all of the details of a given problem, the PC will work within the parameters that you have set to do the leg work that you need to have done.

A sample of the kind of work that we might expect and the level of cooperation that is possible AND probable, would be as follows;

It is April 6th, 1999, (10 years from now), and you, J.Doe, are an average citizen, going about your daily life. You are scheduled to fly to Buffalo, NY on a business trip at 10AM on Trump Airways. You have already made the plane reservations from your office computer, but these have automatically been copied to your home computer as standard operating procedure. You have a standard 6AM wake-up call and you know that it will take about an hour to get to the airport. While you are asleep, your computer is taking care of your phone messages, none of which have a priority code high enough to require you being awakened early. It has checked the weather report and adjusted the house air Conditioning for the forecast high humidity and rain. While monitoring the news, it finds that there has been a terrorist threat made by the Frank Lorrenzo Fellowship Society that has forced the FAA to up the pre-flight screening to 2 Hours. Additionally, the North-East Corridor Coalition has instituted a road block on Eisenhower to protest the new Rapid Transit Plan injunction brought by the Insect Society to protect an endangered insect nest. The total transit time has now made the flight impossible to make even though it is now only 5AM. Before waking you, your PC contacts your office computer and the transit database. There are no other logical flights to Buffalo before an expected snow storm that will cut off travel by early afternoon. Instead of the travel, the computer neetwork contacts all participants with the pre- arranged plan 'B' of a tele-conference replacement. Since the local travel is still embargoed by the road blockage, the PC allows you to sleep an hour late while also pre-processing the office work for your later use. It also schedules a service call by the plumber to fix the hot-water heater which has signaled that it's heating coil is about to fail. When you awake, you



get all of the changes, your current phone and mail messages and have your coffee ready for you after you get out of the shower.

This all sounds like Science Fiction, but there is nothing here that is impossible for the computer to accomplish right now. Where the progress is required is in the communications interface with the outside world and in the software that can make the decisions and follow-ups that would be needed upon receipt of information changes. The outlook for these is quite favorable, as we are seeing the moves for more universal communication interfaces and ever more powerful hardware and software.

However, the standard caveats do apply here in that there will be problems and that this is no utopia. Just imagine what would happen in this scenario if your computer went down, OR, worse, if the Cyber Terrorist Front for the Liberation of Human Slaves let loose a really effective virus that shuts down all of the computers and ALL the connected devices. Then you could find your home sweet home a very dismal and uncomfortable place indeed. Just remember - Caveat Emptor! We get what we want but what we want is generally more than we get! §

WAR ON DOS Cont.

couldn't even wake up in the morning, when I got any sleep at all, without having that craving to go do DOS. Then it started affecting my job. I would have to do it during my break. Maybe a MODE command or two. I eventually started doing DOS just to get through the day. Of course, it screwed up my mind so much that I couldn't even function as a normal cat. DOS got me. I'm lucky today. I've overcome my DOS problem. It wasn't easy. If you're smart, just don't start. Remember, if a weirdo in a blue suit offers you some DOS, just say no. MS DOS - Just say no! A special message brought to you by the President's War on DOS Committee. §

ELECTRICITY: ONE MAN'S OBSERVATIONS

by John Buxton, Fargo Moorhead OK UG

I was never taught about electricity at school, nor was it the topic of dinner conversations for my parents. But what with reading, and having to change light bulbs or tune a transistor radio, I have picked up a fairly sound working knowledge of electrical matters. It's not comprehensive. I still don't fully understand why you can't boil an egg on an electric guitar or run a BASIC program on a washing machine.

Most electricity is manufactured in power stations where it is fed into wires which are then wound around large drums. Some electricity doesn't need to go along wires (that used in lightning, for example). This kind of electricity is not generated, but just hangs around in the air, loose. Electricity makes a low humming noise, which may be trained (pitched) at different levels for use in doorbells, phones and electric organs.

Electricity must be earthed, that is,to say it has to be connected to the ground before it can function (except in the case of airplanes, which have special arrangements). Although electricity is said not to leak out of an empty power point, that power is still live. The proof is if you happen to shove your finger in the opening. If it is not leaking, then what is it doing to your finger?

Electricity has but two ingredients: negative and positive. One ingredient travels along a wire covered in red plastic (lately changed to brown which won't show the dirt as much); the other moves along a wire covered in black plastic, lately changed to blue in the interests of racism. These two wires meet together in a plug, where ingredients are mixed to form what we call electricity.

Electricity is stored in batteries. Big batteries do not necessarily hold more electricity than small ones. In big batteries, electricity is just shoved in very loosely, whereas in small batteries (for transistor radios), it must be packed flat. A switch controls a small clamp or vise, which grips the wires very hard so that the electricity cannot get through. When the switch is flicked on, the wire is relaxed and the electricity travels to the light bulb, where a piece of wire, called the element, is left bare. Here for the first time we can actually see the electricity in the form of a spark. This spark is enlarged many times by the curved bulb (which in fact is made from magnifying glass).

It is time to discuss the fuse wire. I'm amazed that a technology that can produced colored electricity for use in traffic lights and harness negative electricity for use in refrigeration should still be manufacturing a fuse wire that is too thin. Using chicken wire, I now have a fuse box which for six months has been as impregnable as the Bank of Argentina. (Even if my spin dryer bursts into flames because too much electric power is fed into it.) I know my knowledge is imperfect. I haven't yet explored the subject of neon signs (how do they make the electricity move about?) or pop-up toasters (how does the electricity know when the bread is brown?)

Logic will eventually answer all of those questions, but that will have to wait. The light on my desk has just gone out. §

CHANGES IN *YOUR* BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LIBRARIAN - Russ Merritt resigned and new member Tom Westmoreland has accepted this position.

SECRETARY - Ray Thigpen resigned and Russ Merritt has accepted this postion.

MEMBER AT LARGE - Heidi Martinez resigned and this position is still open.

LOOK WAY AHEAD FOR OS/2



International Data Corporation, a market research firm in the Framingham, Massachusetts, has published a report on the OS/2 operating system offered by both Microsoft and IBM. "Despite the press coverage that OS/2 has received, its sales have not rocketed," claims Nancy Mc Sharry, senior analyst of IDC's PC software services. "There are few applications currently available that will run under it, and there are several other barriers to market entry which will inhibit its growth for the next five years." Here are some highlights of IDC's report:

o Worldwide OS/2 shipments are predicted to grow from 334,200 in 1988 to 7.5 million by 1992.

o Market penetration will be 25 percent by 1992. As older 8088/6 machines are retired and newer 80286 and 80386 machines are installed in their places, OS/2 will begin to emerge as the primary operating system. However, OS/2's minimum requirement of and Intel 80286 processor and 1.5M for memory currently rules out the bulk of the installed base of the personal computer market- place, inhibiting its emergence as a standard in the short term.

o OS/2 will be offered in two different versions from Microsoft alone and in four versions from Microsoft and IBM. It will standardize around one of the Presentations Manager versions because of its graphical interface capabilities.

o IBM's sales of OS/2 dominated in 1988 and will prevail through 1989, but Microsoft's sales will rule by 1992, as compatible sales surpass true Blue sales.

o 80386-based processors will provide the heaviest sales for OS/2 until 1991, when 80486 processors will take over. Developers are finding that the system runs too slowly on 80286 processors to be of practical use to the end user.

o Presentation Manager sales will eclipse the command-based version's sales. PM sales will account for almost 90 percent of OS/2 shipments by 1992.

The report, entitled OS/2 (#3566) includes five-year market forecasts of various segment of the system.

INFORMATION CENTER
MARCH 1989 VOL. V NO. 3

HOW TO MANAGE EFFECTIVELY IN A "NERVOUS" ENVIRONMENT

Managing effectively is difficult enough when a company is doing well, but it gets a lot tougher when business is off or when the company is in the midst of downsizing. The trap: letting your concern for employees who are understandably nervous about their future interfere with your ability to lead. Here are four suggestions on how to avoid this trap and how to motivate employees when they need it most.

o **COMMUNICATE OPENLY.** Avoid tendency in tough times to withhold information, even if the information is unpleasant. The rationale: the less you communicate, the more you fuel the rumor mill, which usually paints a picture even bleaker than what is actually the case.

o **CREATE ADDED JOB SATISFACTION WITH MORE RESPONSIBILITY.** Instead of playing the roles of "cheerleader" or "psychiatrist," neither of which will work very well anyway, give employees an opportunity to prove their mettle by increasing their responsibility (assuming, of course, the employees are capable of shouldering the responsibility).

o **STAY VISIBLE.** One of the most reassuring sights for employees nervous about their company's future is to see

Cont. Page 9

And the Winner is...

TURBO C - won by George Cox

50/50 DRAWING $23.00 - won by Olin Beers (a second time winner).

Telecommunications Cont.

CompuServe. What they don't tell you when you subscribe to PCMAGNET is that, through PCMAGNET, you have access to anything on CompuServe. If you are a long-time reader of PC Magazine, you know that PCMAGNET is the successor to the old "Readers Information Service". The major difference is that under the old system, the phone call was a long-distance call. Plus, you could never get on. By hooking up with CompuServe, the call goes through TeleNet, and the call is a local Tampa call. Most major On-Line services are connected to either TeleNet or TymNet. It seems that most use TeleNet. If you wish more information on TeleNet, see me at the meeting. TeleNet (without any On-Line services) has its own phone number with a little message service. You can talk to them either voice or modem. I will upload an index of all files available for downloading from PCMAGNET to the Club bulletin board. If you are a regular reader of PC Magazine, you know they generally publish three different languages of their software. You will find an .ASM file, a .BAS file, and a .COM file. The XXXXXXXXX.COM file is ready to run. The XXXXXXXX.BAS must be run through BASICA or GWBASIC. That will create the .COM file. If you want the .ASM file, you must be an Assembler programmer. Then, you know you must assemble the program, link it, and, probably run EXE2BIN from DOS to create the .COM program. For most of us, giving us the .ASM and .BAS files probably seems useless. They have a good reason for doing this.

If you are a programmer, you want this code so you can make your own personal enhancements. In my opinion, this is a great service provided to us by the magazine. They have recently added .DOC files for several of their programs. This saves us the hassle of thumbing back through old copies of the magazine to find out how to use a particular program we like. The final word is this. COME TO THE MEETING. I promise, it will be very interesting for everyone. Also, I will be doing all the demo on a very slick little computer setup for Telecommunications. See you then. VERN §

Cont. Manage

their managers carrying on their normal tasks. The message: don't allow the situation to force you into a shell. Make yourself available and be prepared for constant questions about what's going on in the company.

o **STAY IN CONTROL.** As Alec Guiness proved in the famous movie Bridge Over the River Kwai (although he may have taken the principle too far), people worried about their situation tend to thrive on firm leadership. So, while you might be tempted to slack off out of sympathy, your interests and your employees' interests will be better served by maintaining high performance standards, regardless of the situation.

- ROBERT HALF DATA PROCESSING

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Robin L Pokoj
Editor - Bits of Blue
PO Box 3492
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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

EDITOR: ROBIN L POKOJ

VOLUMN II, ISSUE 05 May, 1989



MEETING



DATE: May 10, 1989

(Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Downtown Tampa
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 Morgan
(Please sign in)

SPEAKERS: **Steve Speairs**
Flow Draw II -
Flow chart program

ViewLink -
Disk information
management program

Parking in the street surrounding the building

DIRECTIONS

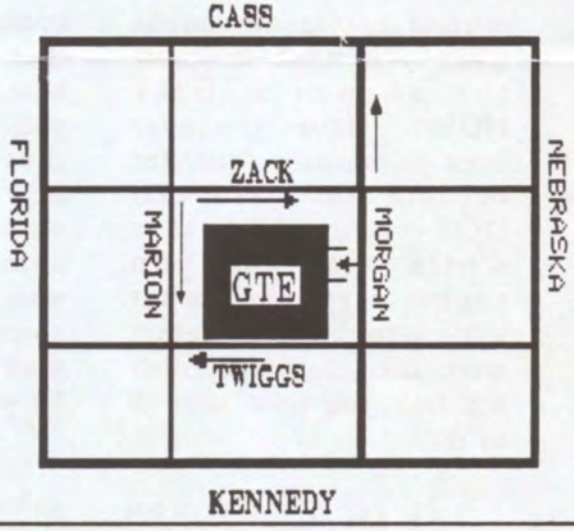


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HINTING FOR FUN & PROFIT



By Steve Spears



Have you ever had the desire to throw the DOS Manual that comes with your computer into the fire because it is so difficult to use in the normal emergency mode when you need to know the answer RIGHT NOW! Have you ever been particularly frustrated because you used that DOS command just a while back but you cannot remember what variations or parameters were used to accomplish the task you now want it to do.

It is a common problem and one that cannot really be solved in the DOS Manual format because that is intended as a reference book and what you really want is to repeat the command that was used before. The DOS Manual is written to give all of the parameters (switches) for every use of each command. This makes it quite frustrating because you basically have to relearn the command each time you use it and go through all the pain of the same or similar mistakes to get it right.

Of course, this is not only DOS but also applies to use of anything else you use your computer for, from word processing to spreadsheets to accounting. In all of these there are always commands and operations that you use once in a blue moon that you know you have done before but just cannot remember how you did it. What you really want is someone to lean over your shoulder to give you some quick hints from your previous efforts and let you get on your way.

There are some software packages now on the market that will do this in some form or another for one or more applications. However, in this article we will be discussing how to create your own 'HINT' file. This is something that you create on your own to store your own experience for the next time that you need it. All it requires from you is some preplanning, good work habits and a couple of common software tools.

The most important of these software tools is some form of a memory resident (TSR) notepad program. Anybody who

Continued Page 4

WORST TREND

From Time Wars, by Jeremy Rifkin



Many people have so accommodated themselves to the new sped-up time frame of the computer that they have become impatient with the slower durations they must contend with in the everyday clock culture. In clinical case studies, psychologists have observed that computer compulsives are much more intolerant of behavior that is ambiguous, digressive or tangential. In their interaction with spouses, family and acquaintances, they are often terse, preferring simple yes-no responses. They are impatient with individuals who are reflective or meditative. Computer compulsives demand brevity and view...interacting with others only as a means of collecting and exchanging useful information. Above all, they put a high premium on efficient communication. Says psychologist Craig Brod: They prefer to communicate with people who are 'system literate' so as to transfer information quickly. People who talk too slowly or in general terms are avoided or ignored. Could be the end of the cocktail party as we know it. §

JUNK CALLS

by Mark Justice Hinton,
BCS PC SIG

You are at the dinner table (or perhaps taking a shower) when the phone rings. You answer and an obviously recorded voice says, Hello, this is Hal the Computer, and I'd like to send you some information about aluminum siding. Please wait for the tone and then tell me your name and address. If you are like most people, you probably went all the way through this first experience, maybe giving a false name or address for future contact. You'll probably just hang up the next time you get such a call, marking it as simply another annoyance to put up with. You get calls all the time from this or that organization, and it is easier to hang up on a machine than on a person. Unfortunately, this may be the shape of things to come. At least one company is attempting to assemble a nationwide network of affiliated computer operators to distribute telephone advertising (telemarketing). Its sales pitch to manufacturers and politicians includes the cost effectiveness of computer-originated calling, as well as the to survey responses to that calling. Their expressed goal is to be able to reach one million homes a day by the 1988 election. Because of the relatively low cost of this kind of marketing, it doesn't take a very high response rate to justify this method. Computer calling is fundamentally different from other marketing tactics. You decide when to watch TV or listen to the radio, and when to deal with your junk mail. The phone, however, forces you to accommodate it; it can ring at any time, and could be about something vitally important. Unlisted numbers have been protection from unwanted human callers, but won't be against computers generating phone numbers. You could put another machine between you and the outside world, but to be forced into such a defensive posture with what may well be your lifeline to the outside world strikes me as outrageous.

As computer hardware costs decline and demand for such services rise, nothing will prevent dozens of companies and entrepreneurs from

Continued Page 6

PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBER



Brooke Bryington

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knows me, knows that I swear by Borland's Sidekick & Sidekick Plus. While these can be RAM Memory hogs, they are so useful to me that I would be hard put to do without them. For you, any small and quickly accessible text editor would probably do but I would caution against using a full word processor because you want something that is really quick and saves easily. Also you want another software tool that is even free and found in our Public Domain Library. It is the PC Magazine utility program called 'DOSKEY.COM'. What it does is to maintain a list of the last 15 DOS commands executed so that you can quickly rotate through the stack of these last commands, using the keyboard arrow/cursor control keys, to read or re-run them. While this is quite handy at all times, it is extremely valuable for what we are about to do here.

Let us take as an example the desire to read, sort and store in a file, a directory listing by date. While there are many DOS Shell programs that do this, what we are doing is something that you would use just often enough in standard DOS to make it nice to have a 'HINT' file to help you remember how to do it. Of course, you have to start this by looking in the DOS reference manual for how to perform this task. What you find is that you use the 'DIR' command with the 'SORT' filter command and a 'PIPE' to the file you want to save the listing in.

After playing with these commands for a time you finally get the command at the DOS prompt to do what you want and it will look like this;

DIR|SORT/+23>DIR_SORT.TXT

The file name that appears after the '>' will be whatever you want it to be and you may have had '/+22' to accomplish the same results. (Please note that this sort routine really only works for months! You can very easily find two or more different years being sorted together because they have the same month in common.) Once you have this command doing what you want, you can recall it from the last, most successful iteration, by hitting the up- arrow cursor key once to get that last command.

Now add this command to your 'HINT' file by using your notepad and entering it as it appears on the DOS command line. If you are using Sidekick Plus you can use the import function of [Ctrl][Del] and [Ctrl][Ins] to bring this line into the notepad. Once in the notepad, you can add whatever comments that you desire that will help you in future instances of using this command, such as using '/+9' to sort by extension etc. In the future, you can locate these examples in your 'HINT' file by browsing it, or if you have the capability like Sidekick Plus, using the SEARCH ability to find keywords like DIR or SORT!

A further elaboration of this whole idea is to make separate 'HINT' files for each major application you might have like 'HINT_DOS' and 'HINT_123' etc. That way you will not have to browse through Lotus 1-2-3 functions while trying to find a DOS 'HINT'.

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And the Winner is...

50/50 DRAWING - won by William Roberts

APRIL MINUTES

By Russ Merritt

Prior to the main presentation, Bill Fuller asked if there was interest in presentations from the book, DOS Power Tools, a compilation of material from PC Magazine. There was a definite request for such information. Bill said he would review a chapter at the next meeting and at subsequent meetings as long as interest continues.

The main presentation was by Vern Semrad. He brought his computers and demonstrated ZCOPY.COM, a program from PC Magazine to permit file transfer between PC's via Null Modem.

He also demonstrated PC communication technique by telephoning via modem to his own system at home and then to PC MagNet, PC Magazines bulletin board. The communication program in use was PROCOM. The advanced version of this program is not shareware and must be purchased. Shareware versions of PROCOM are available on Bulletin Boards. §

README

Allan S. Greenberg, UCLA PC UG

How many times have you rushed back to your computer with the hottest piece of software ever, and ever so anxious to load it into your souped-up 386 machine, you rip off the shrink wrapping, fraying the edges of the manual in the process, and pop the first diskette in the floppy drive. Just as you are about to execute the automatic installation procedure, a small piece of paper flutters out of the diskette jacket with the words printed on it, CAUTION - see README.DOC on this floppy. A little worried that maybe this auto-installation procedure may end up erasing your hard disk or taking a couple of megabytes of RAM out of service, you decide to take a look-see. You enter the command: TYPE README.DOC. What happens? It turns out the file is about 32Kb long and everything goes scrolling by. Well, you've been here before, so, you're clever by now. You load it into your word processor. But when it comes up you see you left the margins and tabs set for Aunt Tillie's funeral notices. The README.DOC doesn't look so good with spaces reserved to print flower designs. A simple batch file to cure these problems is READ.BAT. It just has one short line: MORE << %1. All it does is take a file with the name passed in %1 and stuff it into the DOS MORE command, This latter command is a combination of TYPE plus CTRL+NUM-LOCK. That is, it pauses after filling the screen with text. You almost don't need a batch file since it is so short, but I found myself using it so often, and continually tripping over the << sign, that I put it in a batch file. You use it as: READ README.DOC. While most of us have listing utilities of one kind or another, I still find myself using this little batch file. One reason is that I'm lazy. To use a list function from a utility typically requires more keystrokes to start it up, and more later to exit. The READ batch file terminates at the end of the file, but if you want to get out sooner, use CTRL-BREAK. Most list utilities also limit you to the size of the file they will accept, while there is no limit with READ.BAT. Of course simplicity has a price: you can't scroll backwards, and you can only advance a full page at a time. I have explicitly included the full path for the subdirectory where the more command resides on my hard disk, but if you have the path in your environment, you can leave it out. Not happy with wasting a whole cluster worth of space (2048 bytes) on my hard disk for a file that is only about 15 bytes long, I have embellished it. I added the option that if you type "D" (D is for directory) as in "READ D", you will get an alphabetized listing of your default directory. If you type "READ D C:\DOS", then you will get an alphabetized listing of the DOS directory on the C: drive. Obviously, if you have a file named D (no extension) you won't be able to read it. Rename it. I have one additional trick. If you want, you can put comments or remarks in the batch file without using the REM prefix. The way to do this is to skip over them with the command "GOTO" and a label indicating where you want to go. This works because the batch files are executed by COMMAND.COM in an interpretive mode. If it doesn't execute a line in the batch file, it doesn't know from nothing that it isn't correct. In the following listing, I have used line numbers enclosed in parentheses get around the column formatting of the newsletter, which is not compatible with ASCII file formatting. Do not put these line numbers in the batch file, unless you like error messages.

```
(0)  echo off
(1)  rem the name of this batch file is read.bat.
(2)  goto start
(3)  use lines for making any *&%$#@
(4)  or anything else you may want
(5)  :start
(6)  if %1null==null goto message
(7)  if %1==d goto directory
(8)  if %1==d goto directory
(9)  c:\dos\more  %1
(10) goto end
(11) :directory
(12) dir %2 | c:\dos\sort | c:\dos\more
(13) goto end
(14) :message
(15) echo.
(16) echo the read.bat takes one or two parameters:
(17) echo 1st can be the path\filename or a d to indicate a directory listing.
(18) echo 2nd can be null, in which case the default directory is sorted and listed.
(19) echo2nd can be the drive:\path for a sorted directory listing.
(20) :end
```

Junk Continued

entering the market. Unlike the mail, these junk calls will come anytime day or night. If you take the phone off the hook or don't answer, the computers will just call again until they get through. The convenient phone will quickly become a burdensome vehicle for marketing that interferes with your interests and privacy.

How can we stop this? First, don't hang up. When you get one of these calls, wait until you have an opportunity to respond, then tell the machine your name and that you support legislation to ban the use of such solicitation methods. Next, contact the company or political party whose product is being sold this way and tell them you refuse to buy their product until they stop using such methods. Finally, write (or call) every possible politico (city, state and federal) and tell them you resent this invasion of your home and want it prevented.

As members of a PC users group, we have a special responsibility in this matter. If we take a stand on this issue, no one can accuse us of being Luddites, opposing any technological progress. We also have access to sellers of these technologies, and they may listen to us. Those less informed, like many of our political representatives, will have to respect our informed dissent. Think about this the next time the phone rings. §

CHECKS-3.ARC

By Olin Beers



This is a checking program I wrote in dBASE III+ to keep track of my Check Book. It is a EXE file as I have run it through CLIPPER. I kept adding new modules to it as I run across things that needed to be done. I started writing it in 1985 and it has evolved to its present form.

MAIN MENU

1- It has an unlimited number of checking accounts ability. By that I mean you may have as many checking accounts as you want.

2- You can enter checks, deposits and bank charges.

3- You can enter canceled checks, deposits or bank charges.

4- You may delete check entries or deposit entries if you have made a bad mistake.

5- You may edit any check.

6- You can check for duplicated checks, deposits, or bank charges.

7- You may Display checks that are canceled, all checks, all un-canceled checks, or checks that are for tax purposes.

MAINTENANCE MENU

8- You can re-index the database

9- You can create a new Bank Database (New checking account).

10- You can Change Bank Database File (change to a different checking account)

11- You can move canceled Deposits, Bank Charges, and Checks to a storage file. EXAMPLE : May-89.DBF for May 1989 storage.

12- You can delete all data from a dBASE III+ Database on any drive. This is handy if you want to empty a Checking Account (or any other dBASE III+ database).

All inputs have a stored memory variable that will give you a chance to just hit <ENTER> if that is what you want to do. The main Checking Database is CHECKS.DBF on Drive C:. You are shown a listing of the available Checking Accounts Names to choose from either from the main menu or from the "Change Bank Database File" found in the maintenance menu.

I am releasing it as Shareware, as I want to share it with others. I want to keep the Copyrightand hopefully get a small remuneration of $15.00 from anyone that sees a use for my program.

There is a CHECKS.DOC, in ASCII form, that can be printed on you printer that describes the program and shows the menu's etc. §

PC Communications
By Don Patszch

Part of the jungle of communications confusion is the large number of different protocols available to use. I have been using modems now for over 3 years and have downloaded over 7000 files. I always use the 'XMODEM' protocol because; 1. It Works, 2.) It's Free and 3.) It does multiple File downloads with a single command. I have used this program for years with no errors. I even have my modem operations timed so that it can download at night and thus I can have the files when I get up in the morning. Since this works so well, I see no reason to use the 'YMODEM' or 'ZMODEM' protocols. Since it seems that there are new versions of 'ZMODEM' appearing on the bulletin boards every week, I figure that they really must be some reason for all the work being done to it!

If you download a lot, you will like to see the sorted list of all the files you have. I really like the program 'QSORTL' because it can sort your entries by Directory, first letter or whatever you want. One source for a lot of downloading is the COMPUSERVE Commercial Database. If you do use this on a regular basis and are always downloading the same things, then you should know about 'TAPCIS'. This program will perform an automated COMPUSERVE access that gets you in and out with a minimum of time and charges. It is well described in the April issue of the Boston Computer Society Newsletter.

At some point, you will also like to transfer files between computers without using modems or floppy disks. This is because modems are too slow and floppy disks don't have the capacity. What I use is a program called 'DESKLINK' ($95.00) from Traveling Software Co. This program provides you with 2 serial port connectors that you place on your two machines. You then hook the machines together with an ordinary telephone cord. The provided software then enables one machine to control the other and while doing this also temporarially redesignates the computer's drive letters so that there is no conflict between the machines. Esentially, you now have a mini-LAN that does not conflict with any other LAN you may be currently hooked to. All transfers are now simple copies from one disk drive to another. You can also have a printer hooked up to either machine for hardcopy. §

PC Bulletin Board Hints
By Don Patszch





Perhaps some of you are not familiar with the bulletin boards and would like an explanation of the log-on procedures. When you get access to a bulletin board, the first thing you get is the name request, "FIRST NAME?". At this time you can either follow along the prompts and enter only what is requested OR you can enter all that is needed at that prompt.

For most bulletin boards, the common log-on procedure is to give the following prompts;

FIRST NAME? Harry
LAST NAME? Smith
PASSWORD? XYZR
{Usually most BSBBs will echo dots or blanks when entering the Password!}

You can use the all-in-one method as mentioned above by entering the following string at the "FIRST NAME?" Prompt; "Harry;Smith;XYZR". This gives the bulletin board all it needs for the log-on. Use of the semi-colon ';' delimiter is not necessary in most circumstances but it is a practice I always use. Your password should be of 4 or more characters in order to make it more difficult for anyone else to guess yours. Some people find it easier to use their telephone numbers backwards for this purpose. If you know what application that you are going to want to use, you can add that command to this string after the password. Use of this string sign-on is especially easy for use in a script or macro sign-ons.

PS: An interesting feature of the USRobotics modems is that they support the use of letters in the dialing mode. This means that you can code the number (813) 113-4256 as (813) 11DIALM and it works just as well. This may or may-not be workable on other modems. §

OS/2 Thoughts
By Don Patszch

I currently have an IBM Model 70, (80386 - 20 MHz), that I bought with the thought of being able to run 'Multi-tasking' operations on it. This is the running of multiple programs with the ability to switch or 'stoplight' between the programs at will or to even have them all running simultaneously in the computer. For me, as a HAM Radio Operator, it helps me to think of IBM's MicroChannel as a 'Packet' data operation. As in Packet Radio, on the MicroChannel Architecture, you send information in blocks which gets more done at any given time.

Anyway, I bought the new DOS 4 to use on this machine while I learned about IBM's new OS/2 Operating System. There has been a general progression in DOS from DOS 1.0 to the new OS/2 v.1.1, with each one being easier (Ed.: NOT Easy!) to use. In DOS 4, there is a view of how the Presentation Manager (PM) that is found in the PM versions of OS/2 work. For those who want to learn more about OS/2 and its workings, I can recommend the articles by Charles Petzold, who has been devoting his writing to OS/2 exclusively over the past year. [Ed. HOT NEWS: IBM is about to offer significant discounts on the purchase RAM for OS/2 Standard & Extended Editions as well as discounts for OS/2 Application Packages.] I would not buy OS/2 until I had an actual use for it, but now that I do, the time is here.

I will say this for those of you who claim that IBM is too high priced, all you have to do is to shop around a little. I have called the local ComputerLand in Brandon and gotten a discounted price over the phone and have seen many advertisers in the Sunday paper offering IBM equipment at discounts, especially Sears. There are many ways of buying IBM at discount if you just go and look for them. §

USER GROUP NOTES
Don Patszch

The USF IBM Users Group is changing its meeting times FROM 5PM - 7PM TO 7PM till ? (Everybody gone). This is to make it easier for people to attend our meetings. Have you ever wondered why the Pinellas Users Group has 2000+ members while the Tampa Users Group has so many fewer? There is only one group for all of Pinellas, while in Hillsborough there is USF, Tampa and Brandon! There are advantages to smaller meetings than Pinellas' 400+ average, but they also get people like Pete Peterson (Word Perfect) and Bill Machrone (PC Magazine).

The Boston Computer Society, which is the largest group in the nation, was able to get $20,000.00 worth of USRobotics 9600 Baud Modems donated to it. This is just one example of the ability of the larger user groups to attract substantial doantions and presentations. The newsletters also benefit by having a larger group of writers to contribute. Would any of you like to read the newsletters of the Houston Users Group? You may be surprised at what their people write!

Maybe we don't want this kind of group, but it seems to me we might at least approach the other Hillsborough Users groups to see about taking advantage of numbers in getting things like the other user groups have done! §

SLICE

By Don Patszch

There is an interesting program available off of the free BSBBs that is called 'SLICE.COM'. It comes from the PC Magazine issue Vol.8 No.9 and is available from the Sunshine BSBB or through Vern Semrad of our own user group.

What this program does is to automatically prompt you to insert another disk when you are writing a file to a disk that does not have sufficient space to hold it. This program will allow you to split the file being written over two separate volumes and allow you to be able to use it later. §

ON-LINE MANUALS

By Peter Chow, UCLA PC UG

The idea of computer on-line manuals has been around since time immortal (at least since time computer) and various implementations have been attempted. Since the introduction of the concept of HyperText by Nelson, on-line manuals seem to have taken on a newer look and higher level of utilization. The concept of HyperText centers on current state of computing – an interactive approach. Information (text, graphics or sound) is presented on the computer and a certain portion of that information is 'sensitive' and more related information can be obtained by selecting that portion. Multi-tier material can be created and the reader can complete the reading and obtain the information desired at various levels. A simple example of this could be: information of computer history in an overview form, with 'sensitive' spots on major computer development areas where more detailed information can be obtained. In each detail information layer, the

Continued Next Page

On-Line Continued

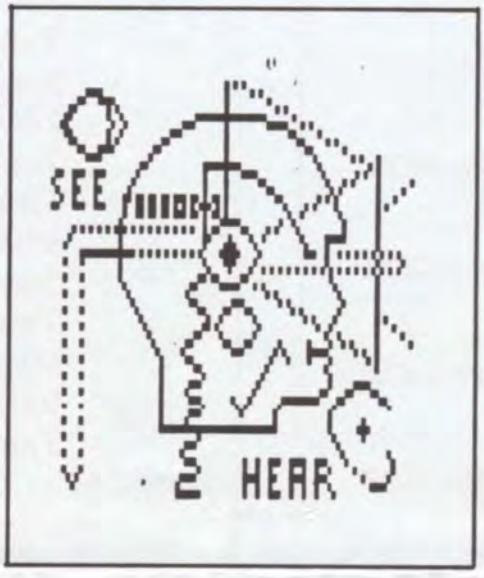
designer and engineer and major technological breakthrough are made 'sensitive' and even more detailed information can be captured. A reader can just read the overview of the computer development history or s/he can be more thorough and get a comprehensive view of the whole historical process. Another fine example could be the anatomy of human whereby at the top level, you would have a picture of a man and make each organ and place of interest 'sensitive.' With each successive stratum, more detail isrevealed before the reader's eyes until eventually, the genetic and bio-chemical level is reached. There are several products like this on the market right now that bring the power of hypertext to the consumer. Apple's HyperCard is an excellent example of hypertext technology. However, it is only available for an Apple MacIntosh with at least half a megabyte of memory. In the future, I will try to search out and report on programs that are more closely related to the HyperCard product for the PC. This article will be limited only to two commercial products that I've come across that have the basics of hypertext with immediately usable information.

The products are both 'engines' with available 'databases' of information categories and they are all text-oriented. They are both modeled after the reference manual of old. The first one is Peter Norton's Guides and the other one is Flambeaux' Help! product line. Although both are in this same category, they are not competing products, per se. Of the two, Flambeaux' product is both more flexible and has more usable features.

Norton's Guides is a memory resident product and by the time you read this article, they will have a version for the OS/2 environment. As a memory resident product for the DOS world, this program takes up about 67Kb of memory. When you press Shift-F1 (configurable of course), a half screen window pops up and you are ready to 'read' your

For $100.00, you get one language database (this product has only programming languages from Norton Computing and they are C, Pascal, BASIC and ASM with OS/2 API functions available later) and the reader program with additional databases at $50.00 each. Although the package isn't copy protected, you are not allowed to distribute any part of the files and there are no separate purchases for the reader alone. Included on the reader program disk are utilities to make your own databases. The manual describes the process quite well, but it is a very tedious process with embedded commands in ASCII text and a two-step compiling procedure (compile and link). I still don't understand the reason for the link part of this process.

This product is geared toward languages or function listings because you can only make databases that resemble quick reference guides. At the top, you get a table of contents screen with individual entries as 'sensitive' areas. When you are 'in' the second level of detailed information you see 'See Also' list at the top with a description, or help for the function as the remainder of the textual information. In essence, this is a two-tiered system. Although the



information presented is very helpful (much like the original manual by either MicroSoft or Borland), it is very 'dry' and technical in nature. One can sit and read this information only when confronted by an absolutely dire question. To help this fact, Guides can 'read' the current word your cursor is on and position you to that particular 'page' in the database if a match is found. This product is truly an on-line manual in the sense that it only can present to you in a quick reference style format.

Flambeaux' help product line consists of DOSHelp! and TechHelp! It can operate as either a DOS program (perfect for DESQView), as a memory resident program or in a special 'pass through' mode that loads itself and the text editor (or any other application) so that it is memory resident and unloads itself when you quit out of the application. It, too, consists of a reader program and one of many (in this case two) databases. This product in many ways is the same as Norton's with the following exceptions: it is not 'dry' reading; it is not in quick reference style but in 'chapter' format; it more closely resembles HyperText; it takes up less memory (57K) and it costs less. However, unlike Norton's Guides, this product does have problems working on an AST machine with an EGA card (works fine on my no name clone EGA system at home!). In actual practice, this product is more 'usable' than Norton's because of the presentation style. It also contains one feature that lacking in Norton's – printing of the information you are currently reading. In all, I much prefer this product to Norton's if it were not for the availability of the databases. There are some experimental hypertext databases on my BBS now ready for you to download that are written for Norton's Guides. I would expect some for the other product soon. However, in order to really capture this niche, the product should be flexible enough that one can add more 'chapters' to the database as easily as one might in a word processor. The author of the Flambeaux products has indicated his intention in this regard, but the projected date of release is still unknown.

DOSHelp!, TechHelp! and DevKit are published by Flambeaux Software, 1147 East Broadway Street Suite 56, Glendale, CA 91205. They are listed for $34.95, $89.95 and $35.00 respectively.

Norton's Guides is published by Peter Norton Computing, 2210 Wilshire Blvd, Santa Monica, CA 90403-5784. The Guides program itself is listed for $50.00 and each language (Assembler, Pascal, C, and BASIC) software manual lists for $50.00 as well. The OS/2-API manual, not yet released, retails for $100.00. §

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ASCII text files containing Comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 5¼ diskette (360kb or 1.2Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next months newsletter.



Robin L Pokoj
Editor - Bits of Blue
PO Box 3492
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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

EDITOR: ROBIN L POKOJ

VOLUMN II, ISSUE 06 June, 1989



MEETING



DATE: June 14, 1989

(Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Downtown Tampa
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 Morgan
(Please sign in)

SPEAKERS: **Steve Speairs**
Flow Draw II -
Flow chart program

ViewLink -
Disk information
management program

Parking in the street surrounding the building

DIRECTIONS

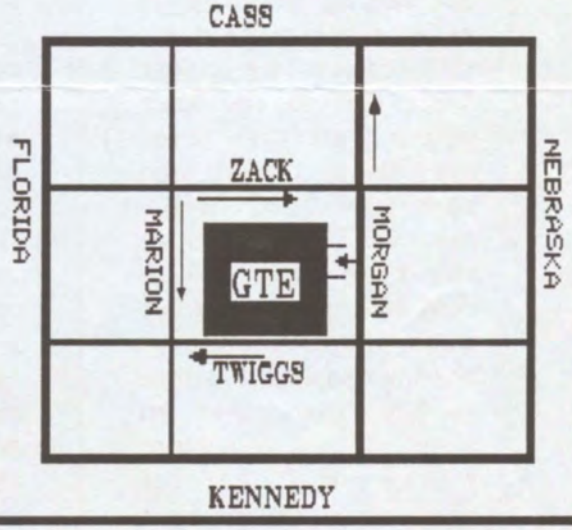


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The Craziest Machine

By Steve Speairs

We have all had cases, I'm sure, where we have a situation that has caused us to doubt our sanity and the status of the world-at-large. Now, I am not talking about your minor glitches or programming bugs here, this is the area where you turn your eyes up to heaven and say, like Job, 'Why me, God?'. This is the kind of problem that has you chewing your finger-nails and then examining them to see how close to your elbow you have gotten. It is instructive to the user community, I think, to show a problem like this and the steps taken to solve the problem. While it is unlikely that this exact same problem would happen to you, but you never know!

The day started off normally for me, in my position as a PC & LAN (Local Area Network) operator for my company. I had a routine call to reload the network software on a machine that had had its controller card and other pieces of hardware replaced. The situation seemed normal enough at the time and I had done similar jobs many times before. I went to the user in question and checked the Hard Disk of this IBM PC-XT286 and was pleased to see that the software was already on the disk and that all that was needed was to change the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' file to call it up for use.

The current 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' that was already there was a simple operation that mainly loaded Sidekick (SK) and then quit. The service technician was still there, packing his tools, and I verified with him that there was an Intel Above Board in the machine and that he had put the machine through all of the standard memory tests on that board. The current 'CONFIG.SYS' had both the Intel Memory Driver and the 3COM LAN System Drivers so there was nothing in this file that needed changing.

Exuding confidence, I sat at the keyboard and made the required changes to the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' so that it would now load the necessary programs for accessing the 3COM LAN. Since 'SK' was already there from the current 'AUTOEXEC.BAT', I used it to make the changes and then warm-booted, [Ctrl][Alt][Del], the system to get access to LAN. I was mildly surprised when, as I watched the machine start, I saw the familiar 'SK' load box come up. I said to the technician that I really must be losing it because I could swear that I had removed the 'SK' load command. However, this wouldn't be the first time that I had made such a mistake and I know that it wouldn't be the last either. So, I made the changes again, only this time paying a little more attention to what I was doing. I checked my corrections and once again rebooted the computer.

This time, I knew I had made the required change so I was really taken aback when the rather unwelcome 'SK' load box reappeared. After

Continued Page 3

some few minutes taken to make sure that I was changing the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' in the Root Directory, I also double checked to see if there were any special or unique commands that may be causing this odd behavior. Not seeing anything that looked suspicious, I tried the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' change again, did a 'DIR' to make sure that the change was saved onto the Root Directory and then rebooted again. By now I just grunted when the 'SK' showed up and proceeded to look at the contents of the Root Directory. The blasted thing showed no signs of my file change or indeed anything that had the current date. I double checked the time and date to be sure that they were correct and sure enough they were.

By now, of course, things were really getting serious. It was time to start exercising all of my legendary skill to find what was causing this very annoying behavior. After all, I did have my reputation on the line. Knowing how some really sneaky people can cause weird behavior in PCs, I decided to short-circuit the normal loading process by deleting the 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' file entirely. Surely, this would keep any chained program call that might be several levels down from making a monkey out of me! Rebooted and you can guess the results! OK, I now decided to remove both the current 'AUTOEXEC.BAT' and its predecessor 'AUTOEXEC.BAK', just to be sure! Same results! Now I tried the same thing only I tried a power-off just in case there was a sneaky RAM- Resident program that was laughing at me. You know what happened.



Just to make very sure about the possibility that 'SK' or some other RAM- Resident software was doing this to me, I killed off all that I could of these programs and drivers that were loaded and then used a RAM monitor program called 'PMAP.EXE' to review the PC's RAM contents. There was nothing there so I tried the reboot once again with exactly the same results! OK, maybe the 'CONFIG.SYS' had a well disguised problem in it, so I deleted both it and its 'CONFIG.BAK' file. No change in the results.

OK, no more Mr. Nice Guy, it was time to roll out the heavy artillery. After making a copy of the Root Directory in a new sub-directory, I deleted all of the files except for 'COMMAND.COM' on the Root. Same results. Now I deleted everything off of the Root, including the hidden files! Same thing happens. No matter what I do, the computer wakes up like there had been no changes! This was getting to be serious

Continued Page 4

Craziest Continued

weird! I now load up my PCTOOLS to really check out what is beyond the surface level of the Disk's logical structure. My mind was starting to speculate about viruses and other assorted horror stories while my confidence was sinking faster than the Stock Market in October, 1987.

The one thing that was now starting to ring a bell was the presence of a file, 'BACKUP.M_U', that I recognized from previous usage as the FAT copy made by the Paul Mace Utilities for the use in data recovery and other similar operations. The thought now was that there may be some switch set somewhere to cause this copy of the FAT file to be used instead of the real one. If this was so, then no changes to hard disk contents could be recognized because until this file was updated, it would just overwrite whatever else was done. This happens because when you delete a file, DOS does not actually erase the physical location of the file. Instead it simply marks the file's address in the FAT as vacant by putting a blank in the first byte of the file name field.

(PS. This is how the un-delete operation programs are able to work. They merely look

Continued Page 8

PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Larry Anders
G. B. Slone
Nancy Baron
Judy K. Childs

MAY MINUTES

By Russ Merritt

The planned presentation by Steve Spears was delayed for another session due to lack of the overhead projector. A general discussion about various aspects of computers was led by Harvey Bruno.

The beginning DOS session by Bill Fuller did take place, using an easel and paper pad to describe the events to be expected when copying files. Another beginners session will be given next month.

Bill Fuller also announced an apparent bug in WordPerfect 5.0. If a space is included in the naming of a file, the document will be saved but cannot be retrieved or renamed using WordPerfect. The solution is to use a file manager program or DOS to rename the file. If DOS is used, the question mark needs to be inserted in place of the space. EXAMPLE: if the file name is MY FILE.DOC the DOS rename command will be REN MY?FILE.DOC MY_FILE.DOC, and now the file can be retrieved in WordPerfect. This was confirmed by your Secretary. When I called WordPerfect, they said this was corrected in the version issued as of April 12, 1989. §

SERIAL COMMUNICATIONS

By Vern Semrad

I promised you all at the last meeting that I would expand a little on a question that came up at the April meeting when I was demonstrating serial communications. Here goes.

We will first discuss bits & bytes, then talk a little about modems. We'll wind it up on a discussion of telecommunication protocols

Bits & Bytes. When we type an "A" on the keyboard, the computer has absolutely no idea what that means. Computer processors only understand 0's and 1's. That was a zero, not the letter O. We could carry that a little further to mean "ON's" and "OFF's", but we don't need to get that deep here. Remember when I said the difference between parallel and serial communications was that in parallel communications, all eight bits of a byte are transmitted at the same time. In serial communications, a byte is sent down the wire one bit at a time.

What do we mean by that. Let's explore the BIT. I think we all know it takes eight bits to make a byte. A BIT is a BInary digiT. What is binary? The binary numbering system is a system that evaluates ALL numbers to the BASE 2 instead a BASE 10 as in our decimal numbering system. We won't dwell on that.

I said a computer doesn't know what the letter A is. How do we send the word "The" to a processor or over a modem. Some brilliant soul devised a system called ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) to which we can convert every symbol we can possibly type on the keyboard. Obviously we need a symbol for all the letters of the alphabet, both upper and lower case. We need a symbol for the numbers 0 through 9, and some other characters such as hyphens, periods, commas, and the like. We can get by with about 128 such conversions.

Lets take our word "The". If you've ever looked at an ASCII chart (that's one of the features in Sidekick), you saw that the letter "T" is ASCII 84, the letter "h" is ASCII 104, and e is ASCII 101. That's still not good for computers and modems. Remember, I said computers understand 1's and 0's. That ASCII 84, 104, and 101 have to be further converted to BITS (BInary digiTs). The 84 converts to BINARY 1010100, 104 to 1101000, and 101 to 1100101. NOW, we have something computers and modems can understand. And, we can send the word "The" through the modem.

We are now at our next problem. Computers talk in this digital language, but telephones do not. Telephones talk in an ANALOG system. Now the modem comes to the rescue. The modem (acronym for MODulator-DEModulator) at the sending computer converts the computer's digital signal to an analog signal so the telephone line can understand it. The modem at the receiving computer converts the analog signal back to a digital signal so the receiving computer can understand it.

Isn't this all wonderful. All this is going on, and we think we just said the word "The". But, there's more

In ASYNCHRONOUS communications (as opposed to SYNCHRONOUS), these two talking computers have to establish some ground rules for their conversation. In synchronous communications, the gap or space between bytes going down is uniform. It's like threading buttons on a string. Each button is uniformly spaced on the string. Not so in asynchronous communications. Since the spaces are not uniform, we have to set up some controls called start bits, data bits, stop bits, and parity bits.

Parity can be Odd, Even, or None. If our data bit

Continued Page 6

Serial Continued

length is 8, we don't need a parity check. If our data bit length is 7, we must have either odd or even parity. When you set COMX: parameters to 12,N,8,1, you are telling the COM port that you will be transmitting at 1200 baud (approximately 1200 bits per second), using NO parity check, sending 8 data bits, and 1 stop bit. Here's the reason for the stop bit. Remember what we said about asynchronous communications. The spaces between data bit chunks are not uniform. The stop bit tells the communication that this is the end of this byte or chunk or bunch, and the next thing you see coming down the wire will be the next chunk or bunch.

How about the start, stop, and parity bits? The start bit is always a 1, and the stop is always a 0. With the parity bit, the sum of our 1's and 0's and the chosen parity (odd or even) determine what the parity bit will be.

Remember the "T" was 1010100. The sum of the numbers is three - odd. If our selected parity is E - Even, the parity bit must be a 1 to make the sum even. If the sum of the 1's and 0's had been even and our selected parity was even, the parity bit would have had to been 0 to keep the sum even.

Why go through all this malarkey. Because in serial communications, when the sending computer sends something down the line and the receiving computer's instructions for verifying integrity of the transmission indicate the transmission was corrupted, the receiver says, "Send it again. I don't think I heard what you said". WOW! This is a lot of work to tell the other computer that I typed a "T".

You will see that an RBBS never asks for Even or Odd parity if the data bit length is 8. The odd or even parity is only required when the data bit length is 7. In other words, you might see "12,E,7,1", but, you will never see "12,E,8,1". If the data bit length is 8, the parity will be "N" for None.

Now, to the original question. What about protocols? I felt the preceding discussion was necessary to really get a feel for what we were talking about. So far, we have talked about sending one word, or more specifically, one letter. If we didn't have something more sophisticated than what we have talked about so far, the two talking computers would spend all their time verifying transmissions instead of transmitting information.

ENTER THE WORLD OF PROTOCOLS!

Protocols are nothing more than methods of sending some data down the line in what some people call packets that are larger than one byte. You can call them packets or chunks or bunches or anything you like, but the technology is the same.

We'll start with XMODEM. XMODEM was developed by a fellow named Ward Christensen. This guy must be some kind of computer genius. He has written all kinds of software, and lots of it is around on bulletin boards.

When you select XMODEM as your protocol, here's what happens. Data is sent down the line in 128-byte chunks (or packets or bunches). When the chunk is received, the receiver goes through its error-checking procedure and sends one of two signals back to the sender. It

Continued Page 7

And the Winner is...

Disk Cleaning Kits - Donated by Sunrise Computer Supplies -
Won by Ronalda Futtrel
Sarnac

Modem Surge Protector - Donated by Sunrise Computer Supplies -
Won by Ben Perez

50/50 DRAWING -
won by Roger Water

Harvey Bruno brought in a bunch of dBase IV TKO Sweepstakes disks from Ashton Tate. For the many winners, they have until May 31st to send in their entry.

Note to the Winners: I apologize if your name is not correctly displayed. When we requested that you put your name on the winning ticket no one said PRINT. When the next winners turn in their tickets, have mercy on your secretary - PRINT YOUR NAMES!

goes through its error-checking procedure and sends one of two signals back to the sender. It either sends an ACK (acknowledged) or an NAK (NOT acknowledged). If the sender receives an NAK, it sends it again. If you ever use this protocol and you want to get an idea of how fast the two computers are doing their thing, watch the screen in PROCOMM and use your stopwatch to time the number of seconds for each 128-byte chunk to be sent and received. With a 1200 baud modem, I think you will find it takes about one second for each chunk to be sent, received, and verified. One reason so many people and bulletin boards use this protocol is that it is VERY reliable. Don related in the last newsletter that this was the only protocol needed. This is true to a point. This is true if you are satisfied with the slowest of all protocols in transferring data.

I think the next most popular protocol is YMODEM. YMODEM is very similar to XMODEM except that it send data in 1024-byte chunks. That's why you will sometimes see it referred to as XMODEM-1K. I'm not really certain that YMODEM is the same as XMODEM-1K. I have experienced some serious problems trying to interchange the two. Maybe somebody in the group can help me with this one.

I do know that if YMODEM is an available protocol on your RBBS or on-line service and you select it as your download or upload protocol in your commuications software, you probably won't have any problems. If you try to mix XMODEM-1k and YMODEM, I won't guarantee the results.

A word about YMODEM. If you time transmission of chunks as you did with XMODEM, you will find that it takes about eight seconds per packet. Then, why would XMODEM be slower than YMODEM? Because XMODEM is making eight times as many error checks and verifications as YMODEM.

We'll touch on one more protocol - KERMIT. KERMIT was developed at Columbia University. It was actually developed as a protocol between different operating environments, such as mainframes and PC's, since it supports transmitting data between 7-bit and 8-bit systems. Transmission of data using KERMIT is faster because it is a full-duplex system. That means verification of receipt of data can be sent from the receiver to the sender while data is traveling from the sender to the receiver. That is unlike XMODEM or YMODEM which are half-duplex systems. That means the sender sends data to the receiver, then must wait for the verification to come back before it can send the next chunk.

One last topic and we'll wrap this up. Error-checking. In the world of PC's, there are essentially two, CRC and checksum.

First, Checksum. We'll use XMODEM for the example. The sending computer first sends a SOH (Start Of Header) control character. It then sends a binary packet number. Next comes 128 bytes of data, and last comes the error detection byte or bytes. If you add the "ones's" in this packet, that becomes the Checksum sent from the sender to the receiver. If the receiver's Checksum is the same as the senders, the receiver sends an ACK, and it is OK for the sender to send the next packet or chunk.

In CRC error-checking, as the packet is being sent, the sender runs the entire chunk through some kind of algorithm or equation and comes up with an answer to the equation. The receiver runs the packet through the same equation, and, if it comes up the same answer, it sends the ACK that it is OK to send the next packet. I don't know what that equation or algorithm is, but, I guess I don't need to know since it works.

I know this has been kinda long, but, you asked me a question, and I answered it.

HAPPY COMPUTING

PIPING AND I/O REDIRECTION

By Peter Chow, UCLA PC UG

Since version 2.0 DOS supports I/O redirection. To put it simply, processed information from one program can be used as the input of another program. A popular example of how piping and I/O redirection works is:

DIR | SORT | FIND /V "i" PRN

The above sorts the current directory listing and prints out onto the printer.

for FAT locations with this blank byte and prompt you to provide the real first character. Since the file still exists, unless it has been overwritten by a subsequent operation, that is all that is needed to recover from a deletion.)

The problem here was that I had no idea of who had done this or when because this file had no time or date stamp associated with it! So I decided to get the Mace Manual and see if there was a software switch that had been set to do this crazy thing. The simple answer, found after much reading was that there was no mention of any such capability. So, now for some Long Distance calling for help from Mace's Tech Support Line in Oregon. IF there was a bug OR if there was a hardware DIP switch that was responsible for this, then they could have very likely encountered it in the past. Also, the fact that this machine had just been serviced, could have led to a switch be moved accidentally. Additionally, the fact that this was a true-Blue IBM, not some unknown clone, gave confidence that if this was a bug in the hardware/software combination, it should be known of.

The call to Mace, produced a very skilled and helpful Tech Support person named Mike Lee. Together, we spent an hour and a half in trying different combinations of changes and usages to see if there was any way that the MACE Utilites could create or resolve this current situation. Unfortunately, the answer was no and no and we ended up with him promising to try to duplicate the problem in Mace's Labs and they would get back to me the next week (This was a Friday Afternoon).

Oops, now I really am starting to see things ... After being burned a couple of times, I was always checking, with a 'DIR' command, the results of any action that I performed. Without exception, this showed the results expected, ie. date and time match to the changes made. Now, though, I had loaded some working software tools onto the hard disk to help in the examination and suddenly they have disappeared from the hard disk. The MACE files from the telephone call to the support line have gone along with the PCTOOLS that I tried using. Even the sub-directory has

Continued Page 9

disappeared with no trace.

Repeating these steps with great care, I see that the files show the message of having been copied to the hard disk and that they are visible when I do a 'DIR' command on their location. I can call them up one time for use of the various executable files but they proceed to disappear upon the use of the second DOS command and the prompt shows control being returned to the Root Directory. The weirdness has gone from not having the changes when rebooting to now not having them after just a few DOS Commands.

The day was almost over and the user needed to have her machine, so, with great reluctance, I agreed to reformat the hard disk so that we could reload the pertinent software for use on Monday Morning. I was reluctant because not knowing what could cause such a problem machine, made me feel like I was destroying something that could hit with even worse consequences later on. However, I was saved from my concern, when I discovered that the machine would not even allow the use of the 'FORMAT' command on the hard disk. It just did not recognize the 'C:' Drive, even though I could easily read it in just the next command.

At this point, you have all of the clues to the solution to this total craziness. If you are in Sherlock Holmes' class, you could say 'Its Elementary, my dear Steve' and would have saved me much toil and headache as I went dashing off after the various Red Herrings that are involved here. However, you weren't here and I was so I proceeded on my way to my considerable frustration.

Now, I am going to be very mean here and not reveal the solution to this mystery except at the next meeting of the PCUG on Wednesday June 14 at 6 PM. It will be interesting to see who has what solutions and who the various Sherlocks are amongst us. If you have a solution to this problem, put it on a piece of paper and give it to me at the beginning of the meeting. I will judge the answers on the best diagnostic solution and there will ba a prize awarded to the one I think best. Remember, that old Holmes' Axiom '... when you have eliminated the impossible, only the answer remains'!

P.S. > This is not the result of a Virus or Trojan Horse. All other possibilities remain, both hardware and/or software!

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TRUE BUT UNNOTICED FACT #3

If builders built buildings the way programmers wrote programs, the first woodpecker that came along would destroy civiliztion.

- LAN MAGAZINE

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Robin L Pokoj
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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

EDITOR: ROBIN L POKOJ

VOLUMN II, ISSUE 09 September, 1989



MEETING



DATE: September 13, 1989

(Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Downtown Tampa
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 Morgan
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER: Egghead Software

TOPIC: Demons of the Latest & Greatest in Hardware & Software

Parking in the street surrounding the building

ELECTIONS:

This month we will be nominating candidates for 1990 Officer Positions. Start thinking about a position on the BOARD OF DIRECTORS that's right for YOU!

DIRECTIONS

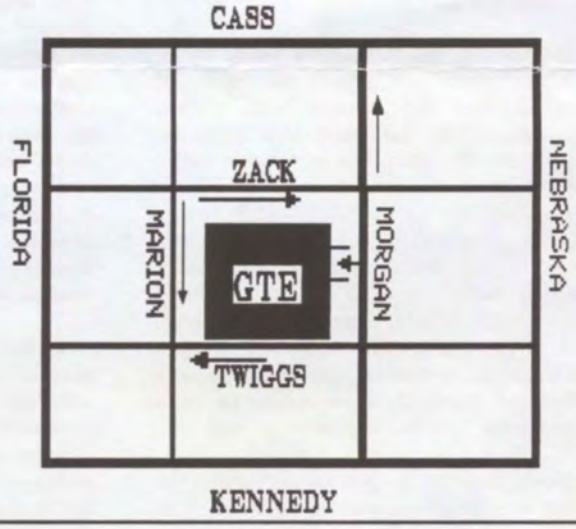


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A Plethora of Confusion!

By Steve Spears



Have you noticed lately what an endless bounty of hardware and software is being made available to us and what it is doing to our poor brains and wallets? Those of us who are old timers or who have access to some of the old magazines are the ones who are most sharply aware of this change because we can see it in black and white. However, all of us are reaping the advantages AND disadvantages that this abundance is bringing us. We are rapidly learning that there is no such thing as a completely free lunch and that everything is relative in the business place.

In just the recent past, 5 years or so ago, you could say with some degree of confidence that there was some combination of hardware and software that was the best for a given task. That combination and task could be specified as a TANDY 100 for a reporter or a COMPAQ Model II for a traveling consultant with Lotus, dBASE and CrossTalk loaded on its 10 Meg Hard Disk. While there may have been valid points made for any given package or combination, there was a sense of general agreement as to a given what the leading package was.

Now, just try to get an agreement on what the best system is and all you will get instead is a good argument. About the only area in the entire Personal Computer field where there is any agreement at all is where there are still patent and copyright restraints active. The most visible example of this is the Macintosh which is from a sole supplier, Apple, and thus has an almost single standard in terms of hardware and Operating System. This monopoly occurs only because Apple was willing to discard compatibility with its other (Apple II) line and strike out in a totally new direction.

In our MS-DOS world, we now have multiple standards in almost every area of hardware and Operating System that has inevitably led confusion and multiple choices. In the recent past where we might have chosen VisiCalc, dBASE II and WordStar as our software to work on a CP/M PC that had 64K of RAM available, we now have to determine whether we want to be working on an 8086/8, 80286, 80386 or a 8086/8 with an accelerator card, and whether we are using DOS 3.x, 4.x, OS/2, Windows or some other Operating System variant or assistant etc... In terms of the software, we have long since left the time when there was a single operational or market leader package as in the times of WordStar, Lotus or dBASE II. Now each and every category has 2 or more names that spring to mind and are equally well regarded.

Thus, we are now reaping the whirlwind of the marketplace that our Capitalistic Marketplace tends to encourage. Our day's of certainty have passed and we must make buying decisions based on factors other than pure leadership or capability. If you already own and like a given software package, you will tend to continue to buy its upgrade instead of looking at its competitors. The problem here is that the others may have features that you need and are not getting from your current choice. So the question becomes whether you sacrifice your expertise in your current package for the features in the new one and the time needed to learn it.

This is one of the reasons that market-share is so important to the software manufacturers. With sufficient market-share, a company can have the current new sales support the upgrade process and then be able to create better, more feature-laden upgrades. They can then keep their upgrade costs down to the point where they can pre-empt the competition and thus keep the majority of their customers. It is for the market-share that such companies as Borland have sent out many free copies of Quattro in order to prime the pump. While such giants as Lotus and Ashton-Tate do seem to have high upgrade costs, you cannot be certain of what it means. Their is a corporate mentality that thinks that high upgrade costs help support high retail prices and that if you have a really significant upgrade, people will be willing to pay that price. Ashton- Tate has found the fallacy to that in the very sluggish sales of dBASE IV and Lotus may have taken a page from their book in its purported actions of late in the 1-2-3 v.2.2 & v.3.0 Upgrades. According to the InfoWorld Industry Gossip Column, 'NOTES FROM THE FIELD' (08/28/89 Vol.11#39), Lotus is allowing subscribers of its' LOTUS Magazine and others to purchase any number of upgrade packages for the $150 apiece instead of the shrink-wrapped package cost of $495.00 (before 12/31/89) $595.00 (1990).

Will this keep up? I don't think so and here are a couple of reasons why I hold this opinion. To continue this increase in available hardware and software requires the continual entry into the marketplace of a lot of new players. This is because there is a continuous dropout rate of companies merging and failing. However, we are getting far beyond the day of the small programmer or hardware shop that could take a flyer on the market for profit shares and work out of a converted garage. There will ALWAYS be some of these and some will make it into the big time, but over- all they will be a smaller and smaller portion of the market. Programming and Hardware facilities both have costs going through the roof and so there is less time and Capital available for a new venture to experiment and get something right the first time. If you don't have it right that first time then the odds are that you won't get a second chance because of the high level of competition.

In essence, I think that we will see a similar scenario to what happened to the automobile industry over the past century. Just as they started off with a multitude of types, Electric, Gas and Steam, and then standardized on gasoline power, so we will probably standardize on an Operating System and CPU engine over the next decade or so. The suppliers will shrink in numbers just as we saw the demise of the Stanley Steamer, the Hudson, the Tucker and the Kaiser brands of automobiles. In terms of software, the shrinkage will take much longer and still have heavy competition well into the next century.

In short, the multitude of decisions needed to be made in the computer purchase and upgrades are here to stay for a long time to come. While it provokes problems for those of us who venture out to offer our opinions and ideas, it is still far preferable to a shortage situation where there is no decision required because all that you can buy is what the single seller has determined you need. I may be caught out by a friend or client who has found a better bargain or a more capable package, but at least it is available. Have fun choosing and remember that it is more important that what you buy works well for you than that you have the newest and most expensive one on the block! §

FAT's, DIR's, Etc.
Some talk about Disks, be they Fixed or Floppy
By Vern Semrad

As you know by now, I try to make my contributions to this Newsletter informative. Many of you already know about the things I will be discussing. But, I'll bet very few have actually seen this information on your screen.

For this discussion, I will be using a floppy disk, but, everything I will talk about also applies to a hard disk. Also, ALL the screen pictures used here have been edited to conserve space. But, the screen pictures were ACTUAL screen pictures before editing.

Knowing where to find and edit data on a disk along with some pretty slick software I have make it possible for me to UN-zap a ZAPPED dBASE file.

First, the organization of a disk. The first thing on any disk is the Master Boot Record (MBR). Here you will find information such as the operating system used to format the disk (DOS 3.3, 3.2, etc.). If your HARD disk is partitioned, i.e., 40 MB Physical disk divided into C: and D:, that information is also stored here. The following is picture of the MBR.

```
  Drive:A  Sector:0      Cluster:BOOT   Dir:ROOT.DIR       File:--------.---
         0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  A  B  C  D  E  F    0123456789ABCDEF
000000:  EB 34 90 49 42 4D 20 20 33 2E 32 00 02 02 01 00    .4.IBM  3.2.....
000010:  02 70 00 D0 02 FD 02 00 09 00 02 00 00 00 00 00    .p..............
000020:  00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 0F    ................
```

Notice in the ASCII portion (right side), this disk is formatted under PCDOS 3.2.

Following the MBR are the TWO copies of the File Allocation Table (FAT). Note I said the TWO copies of the FAT. DOS always keeps two copies of the File Allocation Table on a disk. If the first FAT gets damaged, it can be restored from the second. If both are damaged, you are in trouble.

The FAT is like a book index. It is where DOS stores information about where a file is stored on a disk. Data contained in a file can be stored anywhere on a disk, depending on the empty space on a disk. The information about what clusters and sectors contain any file's data are contained in the FAT. REMEMBER: FAT #1 and FAT #2 should be identical.

Next on any disk comes the Disk DIRECTORY. This simply tells us what is stored on that disk. It doesn't tell us anything about where anything is, only what's on the disk.

After this basic information comes the actual data. This can be your application files (.EXE, .COM, .OVL, .DTA, .DBF) or anything else. This is just the DATA on the disk. Let's look at the layout of a typical disk.

```
 Disk information for media in drive A:

Total available sectors on media.....720
Sectors per cluster allocation unit.....2
Sectors per File Allocation Table(F.A.T.).....2
Number of sectors in ROOT directory.....7
F.A.T. #1 starts on sector.....1
F.A.T. #2 starts on sector.....3
ROOT directory starts on sector.....5
DATA for this media starts on sector.....12
The media is.....2  sided
The media is.....not  8 sectored
The media is.....removable
```

As you can see, we are working on a floppy disk (5¼ 360K). It says 720 sectors are available. That makes sense since 40 Tracks X 9 Sectors/Track X 2 sides = 720. It also says that FAT #1 starts in sector 1, FAT #2 starts in sector 3, the DIRECTORY starts in sector 5, and the DATA recording begins in sector 12. Now, we will start peeking into those sectors.

Continued Page 5

PRESIDENT'S PODIUM
Harvey Bruneau

EARLY RELEASE. WHO WINS.

Ever wonder why some companies seem to announce product shipping date before its completed. Generally its to stay ahead or even with their competition. Whether it's hardware or software these vendors are hoping that their announcement will make you reconsider or postpone a decision to leave their product or purchase another vendors similar product. This is called the freeze factor. They are betting that you will purchase their product sight unseen. Ever buy a house that way. Did you pick your spouse or significant other with a blindfold on. I didn't think so.

Software vendors are notorious for asking you to send in your upgrade money or purchase their current product now in order that you may be among the first to receive the new product when it ships. JUST SAY NO. Ask a dBASE IV purchaser if he got his moneys worth either by upgrading or 1st time purchase.

Many of the big boys COMPAQ, IBM, WORDPERFECT, MICROSOFT, LOTUS, BORLAND, ASHTON-TATE, FOX, 3Com and NOVELL to mention a few play the game. Unfortunately bigger does not mean better. For instance ASHTON-TATE decided to ship a bug infested incomplete dBASE IV 1.0 after missing more than one delivery date. This early product release has allowed ASHTON-TATE competitors to be winners at the expense of users. Of course now that word-of-mouth has gotten around ASHTON-TATE is in deep trouble. A $19 million loss and over 200 employees terminated with no better outlook on the horizon.

WORDPERFECT has been dominant in wordprocessing for some time. MICROSOFT, in order to keep up, released its answer, WORD 5.0, in hope of surpassing WORDPERFECT. While WORD has some nice new features, the product has glitches. It has problems converting documents from the previous release of WORD. There are other problems related to hardware which have also surfaced. Once again the winner is the competition and the loser is the user. These bugs aren't as serious as ASHTON-TATE's but the product shouldn't have been released until corrected.

LOTUS did the right thing. Although around two years late and a loss in market share Lotus 3.0 has hit the streets with favorable reviews. The jury is still out, but so far it looks like a good clean product. Users and LOTUS win.

There are many more stories like the ones above. The point is that the user generally gets the short end of the stick on early released products. The Japanese are getting more involved in software and hardware development. If our current vendors don't get their act together they could go the way of the American automobile industry by the year 2000. §

Q & A
By: Russ Merritt

Spreadsheet

Q: For SMART users - The AVERAGE command has a pitfall. If your figures include a single cell as the last item in a range, the calculation will not be correct even if there is no data in that cell.
A: The solution seems to be to have the last referenced area to include two cells. If either or neither are blank, the average calculation will be successful. SMART has been contacted. The respondent did not know if this apparent bug had been corrected by the recent update.

Word Processing

Q: For WORD PERFECT 5.0 users - Following the disclosure by Bill Fuller in a recent meeting that Word Perfect permitted file save with a space, but would not allow file retrieve.

A: I discussed this with another Word Perfect user. Here it was disclosed that naming a file CON would destroy the document. Both items were called in to WORD PERFECT. The space problem was solved by the April update disk. Now, whenever the space bar is hit in naming a file, that file will be saved, immediately! Some solution.

When the representative tried the CON, he got a illegal name message. He was on a LAN system. He then tried it on a PC and it blew the file away. Further experimenting showed that all DOS reserved names reacted the same way. For WORD PERFECT users, the following DOS reserved names will cause irresovlable problems: CON, AUX, COM, LPT, PRN, NUL. I have personally tested only the word CON. I leave it to others to do their own experimenting. §

FAT'S, DIR'S, ETC. Continued

Next comes the Disk DIRECTORY. This is simply a Table of Contents of the disk. It looks like this.

```
  Drive:A  Sector:5      Cluster:RtDir  Dir:ROOT.DIR       File:--------.---
          0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  A  B  C  D  E  F    0123456789ABCDEF
000000:  46 52 45 45 20 20 20 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    FREE    DOC ....
000020:  53 4C 49 43 45 20 20 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    SLICE   DOC ....
000040:  52 45 50 45 41 54 53 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    REPEATS DOC ....
000060:  4D 4F 56 45 20 20 20 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    MOVE    DOC ....
```

Notice again on the ASCII side there are four files on this disk, FREE.DOC, SLICE.DOC, REPEATS.DOC, AND MOVE.DOC.

We know that when we delete a file, DOS strips away the first letter of the filename. Part of undeleting that file involves restoring the first letter. Let's see what happens when we delete all four files by typing DEL A:*.*. Here's what the disk directory looks like now.

```
  Drive:A  Sector:5      Cluster:RtDir  Dir:ROOT.DIR       File:--------.---
          0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  A  B  C  D  E  F    0123456789ABCDEF
000000:  E5 52 45 45 20 20 20 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    .REE    DOC ....
000010:  00 00 00 00 00 00 6C 7A A9 0A 02 00 80 00 00 00    ......lz........
000020:  E5 4C 49 43 45 20 20 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    .LICE   DOC ....
```

Notice the missing first letters from FREE.DOC and SLICE.DOC. Using a sector editor, I will now go into the directory and restore that first letter on one of the files. The directory looks this now.

```
  Drive:A  Sector:5      Cluster:RtDir  Dir:ROOT.DIR       File:--------.---
          0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  A  B  C  D  E  F    0123456789ABCDEF
000000:  46 52 45 45 20 20 20 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    FREE    DOC ....
000020:  E5 4C 49 43 45 20 20 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    .LICE   DOC ....
000040:  E5 45 50 45 41 54 53 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    .EPEATS DOC ....
000060:  E5 4F 56 45 20 20 20 20 44 4F 43 20 00 00 00 00    .OVE    DOC ....
```

See the first letter back in place in FREE.DOC. You have just seen half of what happens when you use UNdelete software like Norton Utilities to restore a file you accidentally erased. All that remains is rebuilding the FAT so DOS will know where all the parts of that file are.

We can do more of this in the future if you like. I will wrap this up with a helpful hint to any of you who have to import raw ASCII data into your favorite database program. I have to do this a lot with data from mini-computers and mainframes. We know the data most often comes to us in SDF format, i.e., fixed- length records and fixed-length fields. The data looks like this.

```
0014354 0687  303   00100000000002800000420000013000RLANDO J  CAPAZ  01  0817
0014580 3956  101   00800002500004400000660000013000LEON G MARUT JR   01  0817
0013718 4209  302   00100000000002800000420000000750CHARLES A MILLER  01  0817
```

Before we can import this into something like dBASE, we have to determine the position in the record of the beginning and end of each field. I used to load this file into a word processor and using the cursor position indicator, mark the start and end of each file. You can do this by making yourself a text header that simply is a numbering system to tell you where each character is in the record. It looks like this. The pointer is ASCII 206.

```
         1111111111222222222233333333334444444444555555555566666666667777777
12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567
ÚÚÚ
```

A VIRUS AMONG US?
By Russ Merritt

Not too long ago I downloaded WPM5.ZIP from our Bits of Blue and found a Word Perfect pull down menu system. Unfortunately, there was no way to test it without loading it in my Word Perfect directory and linking it to PATH.

First, the EXE program was check for any ASCII characters that might indicate a potential problem. With that bare assurance, the program was installed. It worked as advertised.

On Sunday, August 20th, (about 2 weeks after installing the menu program) suddenly the CSL (clear screen) Command would not work. Command.Com was recopied and everything was fine. About 3 hours later the same problem occurred and was solved in the same way. It was now afternoon thunderstorm time and the PC was unplugged. On Wednesday evening, August 23rd, the PC would not boot. I rebooted with a floppy, copied Command.Com from the DOS directory to the Root, and rebooted successfully. WPM.EXE was then deleted from Word Perfect. Work continued successfully.

On Thursday evening, August 21st, the PC booted successfully. On Saturday, August 26th, the WP.MNU was deleted. However, when working in Word Perfect the SHELL (Cntl/F1) would not work, saying Command.Com could not be found. The final file, a macro created by WPM.EXE (ALTZ.WPM) was deleted. As of this time everything seems o.k.

I have written to the name given in the DOC file. He was asked if any other problems such as occurred here had been reported or was it possible that someone had tampered with the program. Any response from this inquiry will be shared with the membership as soon as it is received. If there is no response, you will also be advised.

Unfortunately, the corrupted Command.Com files were not kept and so there is no easy way to analyze what may have occurred. Members should use care with this menu program until more is known. If others have had any experience with WPM.EXE, WP.MNU, good, bad or indifferent, please share it with the membership. It may be that this is a simple incompatibility problem with my PC. §

TEN TIPS FOR PERFECT COPIED IMPRESSIONS

1. Keep the glass on your copier well maintained. Clean it often with a soft rag and a window cleaner. Be careful not to scratch the glass with rings or other sharp objects.
2. Prepare your original on a clean white sheet of bond paper.
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4. Whenever possible use an original document, not a copy of the document, as an original.
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6. Use "Just for Copies" on any copies that you are using as an original.
7. Use glue instead of tape to make an addition to an original. Tape has a tendency to distort copies and may give you a shadow.
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LOTUS MACROS
By JOY JAMESON

ONE OF THE MOST USEFUL LOTUS MACROS I KNOW IS:

\E {?}{DOWN}/XG\E~

PLACE THE CURSOR ON THE \E AND HIT /RNLR TO NAME THE MACRO. TYPE ALT E TO START THE MACRO SEQUENCE.

THIS IS FOR ENTRY AND ALLOWS YOU TO USE THE KEYPAD. TURN NUMLOCKS ON. FOR OLDER MACHINES YOU CAN USE THE SHIFT KEYS TO WORK THE ARROW KEYS TO MOVE AROUND. WHEN YOU ENTER, THE CURSOR MOVES DOWN ONE ROW. TO ENTER ACROSS TYPE THE WORD RIGHT IN PLACE OF DOWN. TO TYPE DECIMALS (MONEY) AUTOMATICALLY USE.

\E {?}{EDIT}{LEFT}{LEFT}.{DOWN}/XG\E~

THESE WORK IN OLDER AND 2.0/ 2.1 VERSIONS. TO STOP ENTRY YOU HIT CONTROL BREAK. THIS WILL GIVE YOU AN ERROR MESSAGE IN 2.1 SO HIT ESCAPE AND YOUR BACK IN NORMAL READY MODE. §

Welcome Our New Members:

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JOY JAMESON

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MERRILL FRIEND

EARL MARTIN

And the Winners is...



Roger Waters
DOS Instruction (presented by Microsoft)

Gary Evans
DAC Graphics (presented by Egghead)
NOTE: Gary redonated it to the club for another drawing.

Steve Spears
50/50 Raffle



FRIENDS WITH A NEW HARD DISK

By Ed Buzza

A friend, relative, or a client has just installed a hard drive on their computer (or just got a new computer with a hard drive) and has come to you for help.

"What do I put on this thing?", "How do I use it?", "What kind of directories should I set up?", and "What stuff do I put where?" are just some of the panicky and urgent questions that they expect you, the GURU of the PC Kingdom, to answer. If you've gone through this more than once, you swear you're going to get organized the next time and do this thing right. Perhaps the following will help. At least it's a way I've found to be helpful.

First and foremost, insist that the client (that's fancier than saying "user") READ THE MANUAL. The DOS manual, that is. The client should be familiar/comfortable with the Command Line. Then walk and talk the client through the process of setting up subdirectories, the logic of directory tree structures, and point out the limitation of the number of entries in the root directory as being the reason for needing subdirectories.

There are always exceptions, but tell the client to keep as few files as possible in the root directory. The bare minimum of files should be: COMMAND.COM, CONFIG.SYS, and AUTOEXEC.BAT. The rest of the root directory should then contain the client's directories.

The following might be a minimum structure:

- \DOS

Include most of the DOS files. It is suggested that you do NOT include ASSIGN, FDISK, JOIN, RECOVER, SUBST, XASSIGN. Tell the client that these are powerful (dangerous) commands that can be added after the client is an expert. Also there is no real reason to include all of the KBD drivers nor some of the other commands, like SHARE, that could lead the new client into trouble. It's a good idea to rename FORMAT.COM to FORMAT!.COM and provide a FORMAT.BAT program that will ONLY format the A: or B: drive.

- \NAME-OS

This is the directory where all the "goodies" are placed. Many people will set it up as \BIN or \DOS\BIN to hold those little programs that make up for what DOS doesn't supply such as LIST and PKUNZIP, etc.. Using the client's name or initials will stick in his/her mind as to where all the goodies are.

- \WP

Typically, all the Word Processor directories or programs would be grouped together. Consider using the name of the program as the directory name, e.g. If your Word Processor's main program is E88.COM , then it would be copied to the \WP\E88 directory. By doing this, the client has a ready reminder that the directory name is also the program name that would be entered on the Command Line.

- \UT

This is a good place to hold all the Utility type software. Whether it be NORTON, PCTOOLS, PKware, or Batch files that you set up for the client.

- \GAMES

Say what you will, the client will have a game or two on the hard drive; if not now, later. So why not provide for it at the very beginning?

- \DRAW or \GRAF

Seems as if everybody has one or more paint programs to satisfy that artistic urge in all of us. Again, use the program/directory name convention when setting up directories under this category.

- \WORK or \JUNK

It's a good idea to set up a directory in which nothing is ever placed. Tell the client to use it as the current or default directory at all times. Then, if the client messes up a COPY command for instance, it will go into \WORK and the client will know about the error and - best of all - just where the miscreant file went since there should not be anything in this directory.

CONFIG.SYS: For the neophyte, it should provide at least for loading ANSI.SYS, setting FILES and BUFFERS to 20, and turning BREAK on. Other device drivers need to be added to accommodate a mouse or a memory board.

AUTOEXEC.BAT: Here is where you prove your worth as an expert. You can define "hot keys" to call up a menu, redefine Function keys as keyboard macros, show DATE and TIME at initial startup, run CHKDSK, etc.. As a minimum, it should set the PATH, DATE and QUIT.BAT: A batch job of this kind should be part of any sign-off procedure used by the client. It should remind the client to backup critical files, run CHKDSK, and then PARK the hard drive.

COMPLIMENTARY FILES: Keep the faith and do not give the client any pirate copies of commercial software. DO give the client some of the many shareware programs that are commonly used (and explain that shareware means that you DO register the program). A few suggestions:

PKZ101.EXE - Unpacks to create PKUNZIP & PKZIP & manual; Use to unpack .ZIP files.
PKX35A35.EXE - Unpacks to create PKXARC & PKARC & manual; Use to unpack.ARC files.
LIST62A.ARC - LIST.COM & manual; browse files & more.
AMAXX261.ARC - File manager & menu system with manual. **TEACHER.ARC** - Explains PATH vs path commands.

You may also wish to give the client copies of the PC Magazine Utilities, Volume I and II.

BASIC SOFTWARE PACKAGES: Nine times out of ten, the client will ask "What's a good package for ... ?" Now comes the hard part. Do you recommend commercial or shareware packages? It depends on the client's intended use of the equipment and the client's financial status. For the neophyte, I recommend PC-TOOLS, First Choice and First Publisher.

THE TRAVEL KIT: One thing more. If the client agrees with your suggestions regarding the setup of the hard disk, you should make the job as easy as possible. Create a Startup Disk that contains a Batch program to create these suggested directories and that will copy the various files (including the shareware files) to the client's hard drive. Oh sure, you could play mumbly-peg on the keyboard and impress the client with your wizardry as you MD and CD and COPY and whoops! your way through; but be a professional (you are the guru), set it up ahead of time. After all, this is what it's all about. Get organized. Do it right the first time and the second time will be a snap. §

AUGUST MINUTES

By Russ Merritt

A few people arrived only slightly drenched, but in spite of the weather and summer, we had a good turn out.

Lightning again occupied the early announcements. One member reported losing two mondems and two television sets since the last meeting. It seemed the telephone line and the cable may have been the culprits.

It was reported that IBM had announced that it will discontinue the PS/2, Model 60.

The major presentation was by Microsoft - the program, WORD 5.0, a powerful and greatly enhanced word processing program. There was a free exchange of information in the question and answer session that followed the presentation.

The Microsoft representative gave the club a copy of their free EXCEL test program, a full working program, but with the spreadsheet size restricted. It is a high density 5.25 disk and requires EGA to run. For those who would like their own copy, call Microsoft at 1(800)541-1261. Ask for the working model of EXCEL. Please be sure to specify disk size.

Harvey Bruneau announced that he had two 10 mg hard drives for sale at $100.00 each. Bob Fulz offered Serial Port or Bus Mouse at $65 with PC Paint and Menus. A high resolution mouse is available for $85. §

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE: DOLPHIN SAILING SIMULATOR Program -Requires IBM compatible and CGA or CGA monochrome adapter. Bought new for $49.00. First twenty bucks takes it. Call Tom Schroeppel at 839-0724

FOR SALE - 2 10MB HARD DISK CABLES & CONTROLLER $100 each call Harvey Bruneau 932-6745

Wanted - I am looking for a **commercial scheduling program** (note: not project management). It must accept constraints on employee assignment as to hours, breaks, etc. Part time and full time employees must be allowed. It must accept assignment needs on at least 1/2 hour segments, preferably in 15 minute intervals. Call Russ Merritt at 882-1993 or see him at the monthly meeting if you know of any such program.

Salesperson wanted - must have strong accounting knowledge and good sales skills. Commission only but with a high percentage of net profit. Leads furnished. Call the Operating System at 287-5515, ask for Bob Fultz.

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Microsoft Word 4.0	$90.00	Picture Perfect	$95.00
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ASCII text files containing Comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 5¼ diskette (360kb or 1.2Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next months newsletter.



Robin L Pokoj
Editor - Bits of Blue
PO Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492



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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

EDITOR: ROBIN L POKOJ

VOLUMN II, ISSUE 10 October, 1989



MEETING



DATE: October 11, 1989

(Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Downtown Tampa
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 Morgan
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER: Susan Besselman
Lotus Development Corp.

TOPIC: Lotus 1-2-3 Version 3

Parking in the street surrounding the building

ELECTIONS:

This month we will be holding elections for 1990 Officer Positions.

DIRECTIONS

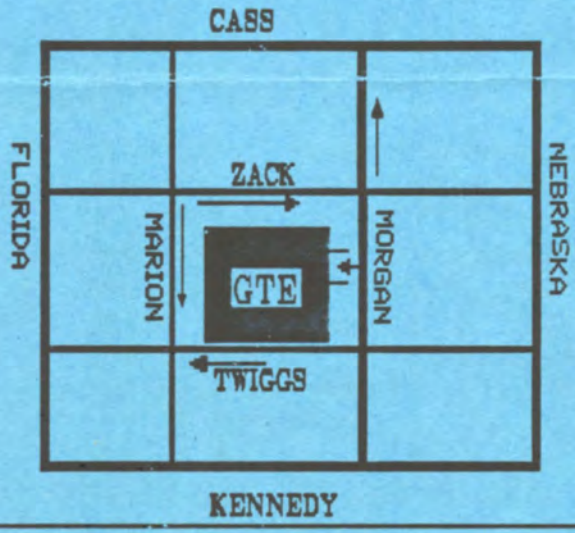


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DOS Tips ...
...ANSI.SYS COMMANDS
By Edward Buzza

ANSI.SYS is a console driver that controls the actions of the keyboard and the screen -- e.g. the console. ANSI.SYS can be used to set video mode and attributes, redefine keys and set up keyboard macros, and control the cursor and screen erasures.

All ANSI commands have the same format: ESC code (ASCII 027), left bracket "[", one or more parameters (sometimes, none), and an ending function code. If there are two or more parameters, they are separated by semicolons. Normally, there are no spaces in an ANSI command. For example, "ESC[1;32;40m" is an ANSI command where ESC (ASCII 027 code) and the left bracket character form the ANSI escape sequence to set a bright(1) green foreground(32) on a black background(40) as the video attributes(m).

The problem in using ANSI commands is that pesky ESC character. As soon as you hit the ESC key to begin an ANSI command, DOS interprets the ESC key depression as a signal to cancel the current command. So, how do you enter an ANSI command? Within the PROMPT command, the $e sequence of characters is interpreted by the PROMPT command as the ESC character (ASCII 027)! So by using the PROMPT command, ANSI commands can be entered fairly easily.

There are other ways to enter ANSI commands than through the PROMPT command. PC Magazine produced ESC.COM and ONCL.COM to provide an escape sequence that are easier and more practical to use, especially in Batch files.

Using EDLIN, the sequence "Ctrl-V[" creates the ESC character. Note that the left bracket is part of EDLIN's requirement to form the ESC character and that another left bracket must by entered for the ANSI command. Thus using EDLIN to send the ANSI command to set the video attribute to yellow on black, the line would be: ECHO Ctrl-V[[1;33;40m where Ctrl-V[is the EDLIN convention for entering the ESC character; the second [is part of the ANSI escape sequence; 1 sets the video attribute to High Intensity (bright/bold); 33 signifies a bright brown foreground (yellow); 40 signifies a black background; and m is the ANSI function code for setting screen attributes.

Granted, ANSI.SYS is limited in what can be done. There are other programs available such as NANSI.SYS, ZANSI.SYS, and FANSI-CONSOLE that can be found in shareware catalogs and on BBSs that are a big improvement over ANSI.SYS. Then too, there are the commercial packages such as PROKEY and others that make ANSI seem like a tricycle entered in a race with motorcycles. But, it's free, it's handy right there on your DOS disk, it can put some pizazz in your batch files, and in a small way, let you do things the way you want them done. §

The ANSI.SYS video attributes are as follows:

Attributes	F'ground	Color	B'ground
0 = All off	30	black	40
1 = High intensity	31	red	41
2 = Normal intensity	32	green	42
4 = Underline	33	brown	43
5 = Blink	34	blue	44
7 = Reverse video	35	magenta	45
8 = Invisible	36	cyan	46
9 =	37	white	47

CUSTOM CONFIG.SYS

By Edward Buzza

During the "booting" or loading process that occurs after you turn on the computer, the first thing the computer does is read the disk boot sector and then load the DOS hidden system files. Then a system initialization routine searches the Root directory of the drive from which it was booted for a CONFIG.SYS file. CONFIG.SYS is just an ASCII file that further defines the computer's configuration. If CONFIG.SYS exists, its instructions are carried out. Whether or not there is a CONFIG.SYS file, DOS then loads the command processor (COMMAND.COM), loads and executes AUTOEXEC.BAT (if it exists) and waits for your commands.

But there will be times when you want the computer configured differently. Some people keep two or three different versions of CONFIG.SYS and of AUTOEXEC.BAT on the boot disk and will copy the one they want as the active file and then do a reboot. For example: CONFIG.NON - No RAM drive in expanded memory; CONFIG.512 - 512K RAM drive in expanded memory; CONFIG.SYS - a copy of .NON or .512 above

You can reduce the clutter in the root directory by booting from a floppy containing a customized CONFIG.SYS file. Just create a few Boot disks with the appropriate CONFIG.SYS (and/or AUTOEXEC.BAT) files on them. This technique is really handy in loading TSRs (Terminate & Stay Resident programs - like "Sidekick") or device drivers only as needed. Mark the disks as to what they are and boot with them on startup or when rebooting.

Hint: If ANSI.SYS is loaded, change the PROMPT command to reflect the current CONFIG.SYS. The prompt could be in reverse video or show an identifying string. e.g. PROMPT $e[7m$pge[m - Drive & dir in reverse video; PROMPT Rpg - R then drive & dir, normal video.

Just remember where you have the PROMPT command - CONFIG.SYS or in AUTOEXEC.BAT. §

CUSTOMIZED PROMPT

By Edward Buzza

The PROMPT command is a fun thing to work with. All of us are familiar with the standard "PROMPT" command (A> or C>) and a lot of us are familiar with "PROMPT pg" which will show the current drive and directory and the > symbol. But there is a whole lot more that can be done with the PROMPT command if you have ANSI.SYS loaded in your machine. To do this, add the following line to your CONFIG.SYS file: DEVICE=ANSI.SYS If it's in the DOS directory on the hard drive, then the line should be: DEVICE=C:\DOS\ANSI.SYS

You can put any string of characters you want in the PROMPT command. For instance, entering "prompt Yes, Master?" (don't enter the quote marks), will show just the phrase "Yes, Master?". If you were to enter "prompt pg Yes, Master" you would see the current drive and directory as well as the message at the prompt line. Try it, it works. Just be sure that you NEVER use the < or the > or the | symbols. Never! DOS always looks for these symbols for redirection of data or piping through filter programs.

If you have a color adaptor board, you can customize the color of your DOS screen. Entering "prompt $e[1;32;40m$p$g" (again, don't enter the quote marks) will show the prompt in bright (1) green (32) color against a black (40) background as the new video mode (m). Now do a CLS and see the new video mode. To get back to normal, just enter "prompt e[mpg". §



What is YOUR Most Valuable PC Tool?

By Steve Spears

For those of you who have already written for this newsletter, (Thanks!), I probably do not need to tell you that the most difficult portion of the task is getting the durn thing started! This month, I have started about 4 different articles and found each of them unsatisfactory for this month's newsletter. The reasoning varies, but essentially I just didn't feel comfortable with the direction that the article was leading. If you have never written, (Why Not!), then you may not realize that the words take a life of their own and lead you to areas that you had no intention of exploring at the current moment.

Anyhow, while stewing over this writer's block and feeling harried by Robin's deadline, I was running through the ideas that I had already written down and suddenly realized that I was looking at the answer on my screen. Everybody has tricks of the trade and tools that he uses consistently and by dint of that constant use has become expert at. So this article will be about my favorite PC tool, ie one that I have found to be the best or most usable, BY ME, in its catagory. In essence, this will be a long-term use report, just like those done by the car magazines on test vehicles that they have used for a year or more.

The standout program in my bag of tricks is one that I have already demonstrated to the user group, Borland's Sidekick Plus! I have been using it for well over a year now and have found it to be very usable in areas, somewhat usable in others and a dud in a couple of others. Along the way, I will present a couple of other programs that fill in for those bad areas and I will talk about how I would like Borland to improve this beast when and if it does!

I use SK+ constantly and consistently in both my working machine at GTE where it imposes a considerable RAM cram on the 3COM network and also on my home machine where the combination of a 386, 2 Meg RAM and an 18ms Hard Disk make it a real pussycat. On the machine at work, where 3COM leaves only about 420K, loading SK+ uses 72K to leave a mere 346K of RAM to work in. While this is NOT a desirable state of affairs, I can and have been living with it because I have gotten such good use out of SK+ in performing my job. On the home machine the 72K of RAM that SK+ uses is hardly noticable and I can easily run other programs in the 480K of RAM that is left in the Conventional 640K RAM standard.

SK+ consists of 7 operations; File Manager, Notepad, Outlook (Out-liner), Time Planner, Phonebook (Communications), Calculator and ASCII Table. In addition, there is a scratchpad area that serves as a transfer spot for copying/moving data between applications and SK+. As I said before, not all of SK+ is equal in usability, although I am sure that a lot depends upon the needs and desires of the user. In my normal day of work, I am mostly called upon to make notes, write reports, to attend meetings and to send status messages. Consequently, I have become very dependent on SK+'s Notepad, Outliner, Phonebook and Time Planner functions. Other people, using SK+ for different activities, could easily have different impressions and ratings for SK+'s operations.

Taking in order SK+'s menu of operations, the File Manager operation is SK+'s ability to perform file manipulations. Certain of its functions can be VERY Handy, such as being able to format from this TSR without losing the data or program currently active. I know several times where that has saved a hapless Lotus user from a fate worse than death! Overall, however this section suffers from a poor user interface and single file orientation that complicates multiple file manipulation. I would give this section a grade of B. When I need to really work with files, I pop-up PCTools' PCShell which I regard as the new top dog in this area.

The Notepad and Outlook (Out-Line) sections are where this program really starts to shine. Each of these has the ability to have 9 windows active at any given time (along with a window for each of the other five operations as well)! These 2 operations work on the old Word Star command structure which has become the equivalent of the 'lingua franca' for the computer world, ie. so many people know it as a second language/key stroke operation. In each you can import and export text and transfer smaller portions between by using the scratchpad. I have used these operations to prepare status reports from already prepared boilerplate, to write dBASE-type programs and most of my initial word-processing. Where necessary, I will then take these straight ASCII test files and import them into Word Perfect for spell-checking and to accommodate sizes larger than SK+'s 90K file limit. While I

Continued Page 5

Tools Continued

would dearly love to have a spell-checker in SK+ and a macro control language for the entire SK+ program, I willingly give this area an A.

The Phonebook is supposed to give you full background communications with script/command language control. Since one of my machines does not have any modem and on the other I have the superior ProComm Plus software, I use this section mainly as an individual database containing information on the various people I know and work with on a consistent basis. For this function I give the Phonebook a B.

The Timeplanner is a real dreamboat. It has the ability to show a day planner/appointment book, a calendar matrix and a schedule planner showing blocked times. I use this operation to schedule appointments with an alarm, keep track of my spending and exercise and to maintain my working logbook. The ability to copy appointments and to schedule repeats on a daily, weekly, monthly (by date or by day of week), and annually make this almost perfect. I do want a to-do scheduler added and a better set of activity markers for the display, but overall this gets an A!

The Calculator section is a disappointment. I have found its interface to be clumsy and non-intuitive. While it boasts of its ability to operate as 4 different types of calculators, Business, Scientific, Programmer and Formula, the display stays the same and can be very confusing. After several attempts, I have either used my own trusty Hewlett-Packard calculator, or I have gone to use the WordPerfect Library's Calculator or PCTools' version. Consequently I grade this one as a C.

What can one say about the ASCII Table. You either use it and know what it does or you don't and don't care. All that I can tell you is that it is the easiest way I know of to put the 'special' characters on the display and onto a written document that I know of. All you have to do is to pick and choose what you want and it will be dropped where you want it in your ASCII Text file. If something does what you want it to do and does it with no fuss or bother, how else is there to grade it but with an A?

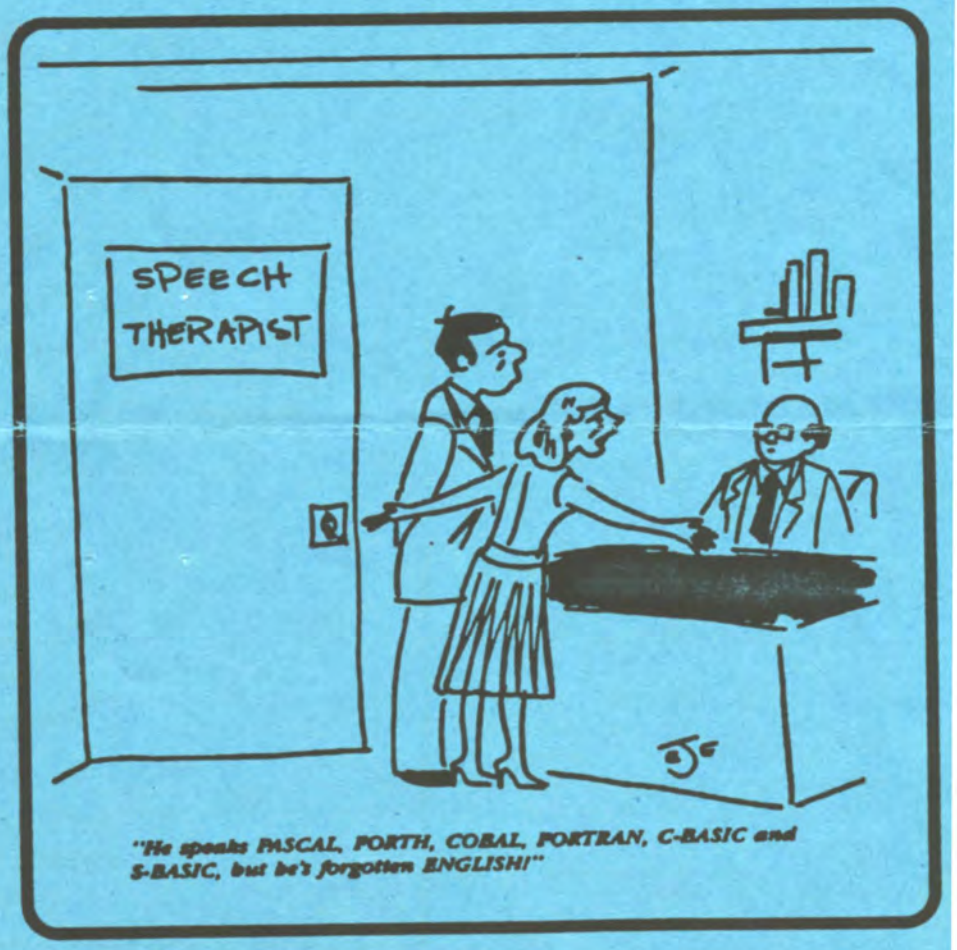
OK, now you have it, this is my favorite PC Tool, warts and all! If you disagree with my choices or comments, I invite you to write your own article about your favorite! I am sure that the newsletter editor will be happy to make the space available! §

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the User Groups oldest new member:

Eduardo Ramos

Eduardo has been a memeber since January 1989 but due to an oversite he's never made the "New Members Column". Eduardo now has the dubious honor of being our "Oldest New Member".



"He speaks PASCAL, FORTH, COBAL, FORTRAN, C-BASIC and S-BASIC, but he's forgotten ENGLISH!"

SEPTEMBER MINUTES

By Russ Merritt

Egghead Software couldn't make it and has been rescheduled for November. Lotus is scheduled for October.

Harvey lead a discussion of current events in our PC world.

(For those who heard my dissertation on the secretarial duties, this translates into "Harvey talked.")

ANNOUNCEMENT: A new PC store has opened in Tampa:

COMPUADD
1707 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33612
(813)971-904

Several of our members have had very good experiences with their mail order operation. Copies of their catalog were distributed. It was noted that the in house prices were the same as in the catalog.

NOMINATION OF BOARD MEMBERS - Our annual ritual to fill membership in our Board has begun. please don't wait to be nominated. VOLUNTEER! (BAD WORD)

This club - ANY club - depends upon (1) membership attendance and (2) volunteer leadership to prosper and grow. Most of us make it through phase (1) and a few make that extra commitment to phase (2). This year we need a few more 2's.

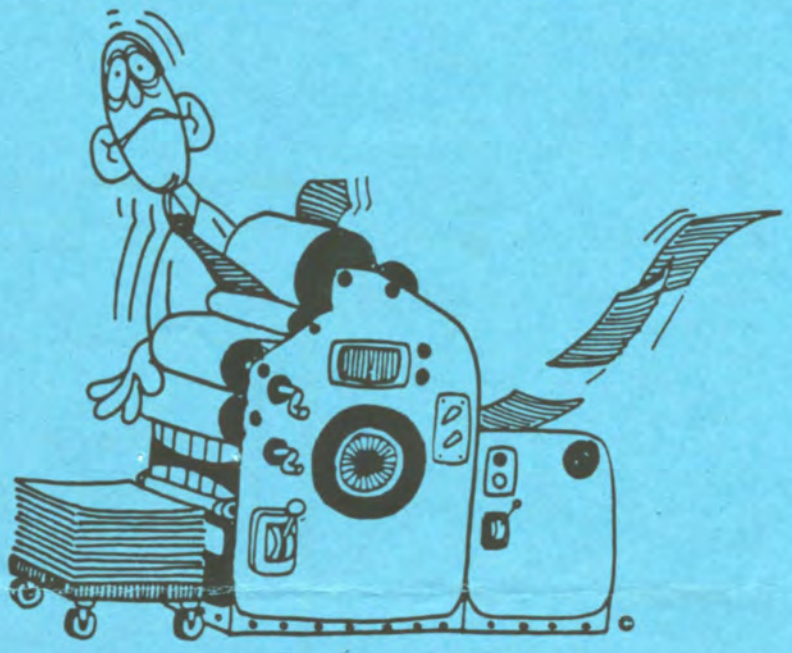
Your immediate past librarian and current secretary will not be present at club meetings next year. The current Librarian has been on travel status on every meeting night except one since he volunteered and he may not be available next year. Our current newsletter editor has been put on travel status and is no longer available.

As to experience - I undertook the library responsibility with slightly more than one year's experience on a PC. I saw the library as an opportunity to learn, and it was. If you know something about Desk Top publishing and want to get some hands on experience, then the Newsletter Editor's job is for your. If you are currently strapped for time, then the Secretary or Member-at-Large may fit your bill.

Talk to any of the officers about the time commitment that my be required of any office. It may surprise you to find how little you have to give to take the second step in this club's success.

The following is the status of nominations as of the September meeting:

President - Harvey Bruneau
Vice-President - Steve Spears
Secretary - OPEN
Treasurer - Bill Fuller
Program Chairman - Bob Fulz
Librarian - OPEN
Newsletter Editor - OPEN
Education - Ed Buzza
Membership - Vern Semrad
BBS Sysop - Kevan Sheridan
Member-at-Large - OPEN



PERFECT IMPRESSIONS

100 S. ASHLEY DRIVE, SUITE 210
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33602
223-9616



VIRTUAL DISK

By Edward Buzza



You have two floppy disk drives and no hard disk and you're tired of swapping the DOS disk in and out every time you turn around. If you have DOS Ver 3.x, there is a solution. The problem is the way DOS handles COMMAND.COM. The COMMAND.COM file is the heart and soul of DOS. Within COMMAND.COM are the 'internal' DOS commands: DIR, TYPE, VOL, RD, PROMPT, RENAME, COPY, CD, RMDIR, PATH, REN, DATE, CHDIR, BREAK, EXIT, ERASE, TIME, MD, VERIFY, CTTY, DEL, VER, MKDIR, SET, CLS.

The following are also 'internal' DOS commands within COMMAND.COM that are used in BATCH files: NOT, REM, PAUSE, ECHO, ON, GOTO, SHIFT, IF, FOR, OFF, ERRORLEVEL

But DOS does not keep the entire COMMAND.COM in RAM all the time. When DOS runs an application program, only part of COMMAND.COM stays in RAM; the rest, called the "transient portion", is freed for use by anyone. Of course, when the application program ends and DOS takes over again, it needs the whole COMMAND.COM program so it reloads it from the boot disk -- if it's still in the drive. Since it's not, you have to swap disks. And this gets boring in a hurry.

One solution is to set up a virtual disk on your machine. This is nothing more than setting aside a part of RAM to be used as though it were a hard disk. But, you don't know how or are afraid to try. Don't be. It's fairly simple.

Put your DOS disk in drive A and format a system disk in drive B. Now copy the following files from the DOS disk in drive A to the drive B disk: ANSI.SYS, DISKCOPY.COM, EDLIN.COM, FIND.EXE, FORMAT.COM, MORE.COM, SORT.EXE, and VDISK.SYS. And let's call the disk in the B drive the "RAM Boot Disk." The addition of these files will let you do quite a bit without the DOS disk in the A drive.

Next, using your favorite

Continued Page 8

And the Winner is...



The winners of last months drawing are:

Martin Miller - 1st Prize
Ronalda Futtrell - 2nd Prize
Linda Dunkerley - 50/50 Raffle



ASCII word processor or EDLIN, create a CONFIG.SYS file on the RAM Boot Disk with at least the following lines:

```
DEVICE=VDISK.SYS 70
DEVICE=ANSI.SYS
FILES=20
BUFFERS=20
```

The number 70 on the first line tells DOS to set aside 70K for the virtual (RAM) disk. Using DOS 3.2 file sizes, this is enough to hold the files we're going to put there. If you have a different version of DOS, you may have to adjust this figure. But remember that whatever amount of RAM you set aside for a Virtual Disk will reduce the amount of memory left for application programs.

On the RAM Boot Disk, create an AUTOEXEC.BAT file with at least the following lines:

```
C:
CD \
COPY A:*.COM
COPY A:*.EXE
SET COMSPEC=C:\COMMAND.COM
PATH=C:\;A:\
PROMPT V$P$G
```

This Batch file will copy COMMAND.COM, and the other needed files, to the RAM drive (C:) and tell DOS to look for COMMAND.COM on the C drive. That is accomplished by the SET command. When the RAM drive is created, DOS will assign the next drive letter to that drive. Since you have two floppy drives (A: and B:), DOS will use C: to mean the RAM drive.

Also the PATH command tells DOS to look in the root directories of both the A and the C drive for any commands entered by you at the DOS command line. The PROMPT command will cause the letter V (as a reminder that you have a Virtual Disk) and the drive and directory to be shown at the prompt line. e.g. VC:\> or VA:\>

That's it. Now use the RAM Boot Disk in drive A: in place of the DOS disk when you turn on your PC or do a reboot and you're in business. Of course, if you use any other 'external' DOS command, you'll have to insert the DOS disk as before. A word of caution: if you turn off the PC or do a Ctrl-Alt-Del, the contents of RAM, AND THE VIRTUAL DISK, are gone. So be sure that the RAM Boot Disk is in drive A when you start or reboot the computer.

Note: If you do have a hard drive, it will be assigned as C: whether or not you have two floppy drives! So if you have a hard drive, DOS will use D: to mean the RAM disk. One last note: if you don't need FIND.EXE, the shareware LIST.COM would be an ideal replacement or you can bump up the size of the VDISK.SYS parameter to accomodate it. §



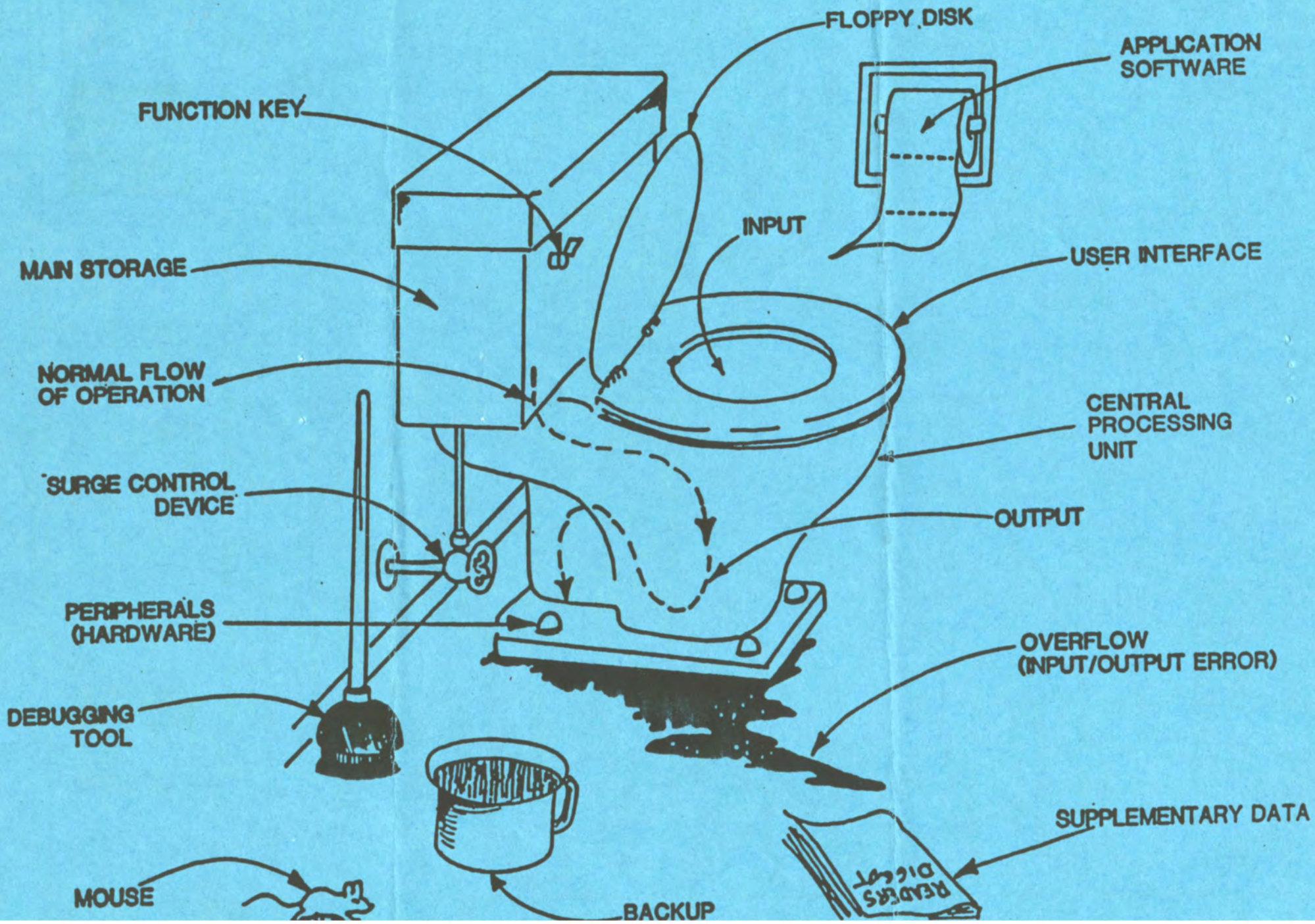
LOTUS QUESTION

? By Russ Merritt ?

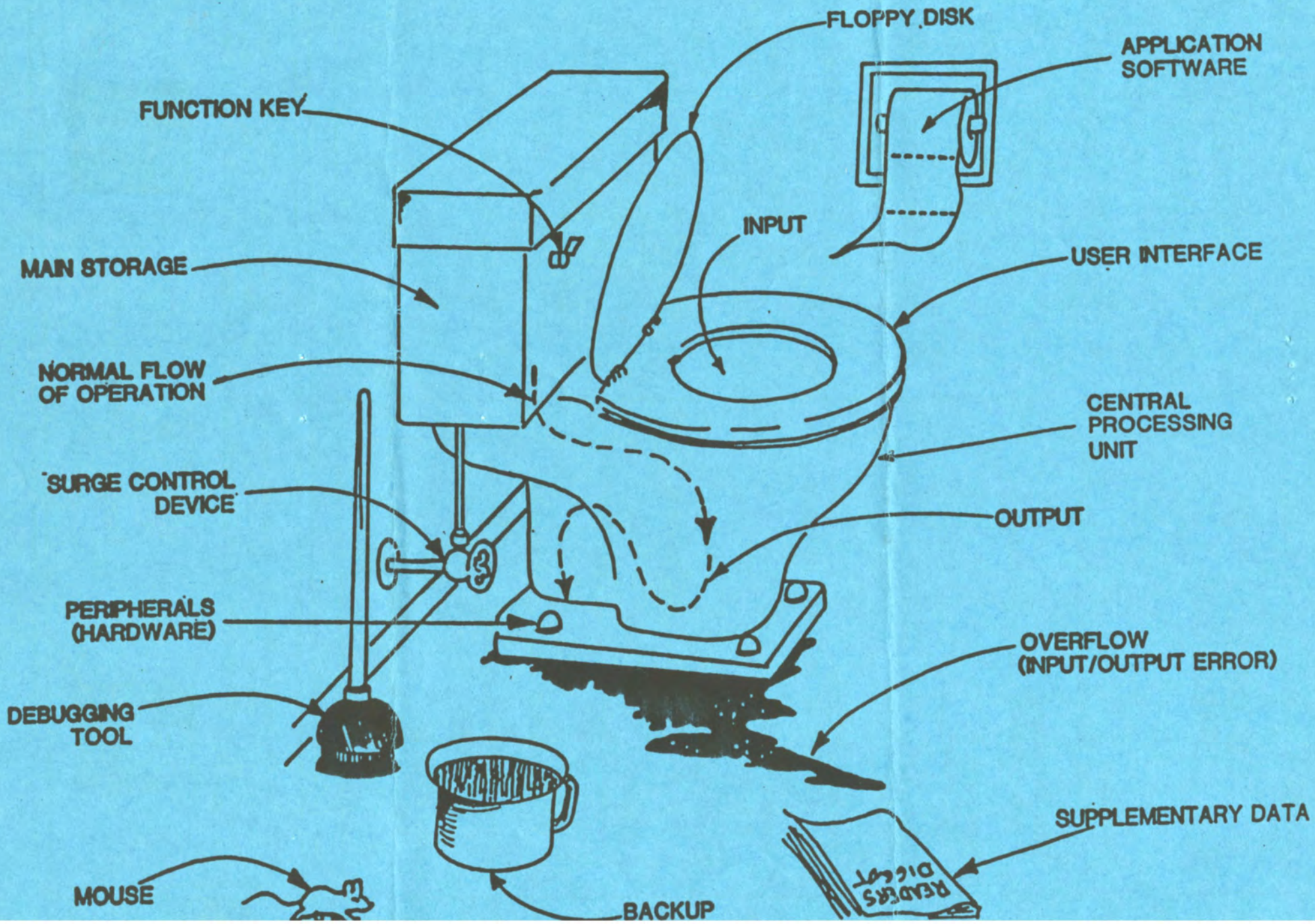
I am currently comparing year to date fiscal data for 10 different items monthly. The data is selected by formula to appear in a report. The current year formula works fine since it always is from the same cell, the current year to date total. However, last year's data requires the formulas in the report be changed monthly to correctly select the comparative month to date total. How can I find a formula for last year's figures that will not require a change in the monthly report?

? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

Understanding the Technology



Understanding the Technology



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√ Bits of Blue Bulletin Board 239-3704:
- Access 24 hrs/day 7 days/wk
- Full E-mail Capabilities
- Over 200 On-Line Files

√ Full support from the IBM PC Users Group.

√ Discounts at the following Bay Area Businesses:
- The Operating System 550 Reo Street, Suite 300 Tampa, Florida
- Sunrise Computer Supplies 1224 S. Dale Mabry Tampa, Florida
- TRY_IT Software 1908 E. Fletcher Ave., Suite D Tampa, Florida

√ Access to club program library

ASCII text files containing Comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 5¼ diskette (360kb or 1.2Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next months newsletter.



Robin L Pokoj
Editor - Bits of Blue
PO Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492



TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

APPLICATION

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statics.

Please check one: ☐ NEW ☐ Change ☐ Renewal

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other_____

Last Name:_____ First Name:_____

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Company Name:_____ Work Phone:_____
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How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group?_____

Do you have access to a computer?_____ What type?_____

What do you presently use your computer for?_____
_____
_____

What major software do you use?_____
_____
_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. expanded memory, printers etc.)
_____
_____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Checks payable to **Tampa IBM PC Users Group** mail to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

EDITOR: ROBIN L POKOJ

VOLUMN II, ISSUE 12 December, 1989



MEETING



DATE: December 13, 1989

(Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Downtown Tampa
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 Morgan
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER: Software Etc...
Caleb Rodriguez

TOPIC: Printshop/First Publisher/Quicken/Jet Fighter

Parking in the street surrounding the building

ELECTIONS:

This month we will be holding elections for 1990 Officer Positions.

DIRECTIONS

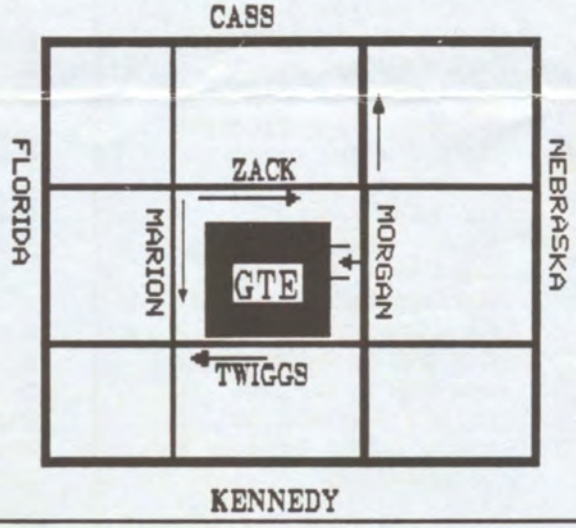


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Backing It Up
By Steven E. Spears

In light of the recent scare with the 'Columbus Day' / 'Friday the 13th' Virus and the potential danger that we all face from Hard Disks wearing out, I have an obvious question for my readers here, 'When was the last time that you FULLY backed up your Hard Disk'? If the answer was within the past year, you are among the minority of PC users. If it was within the past month, you are within the very small number of smart PC Users. Of course, if I asked when was the last time you backed up your Hard Disk prior to that, then that answer might put you back in the great majority who have no regular backup provision for their machines.

When asking why they have no regular scheme for backup, the most logical answer is that the process is too time-consuming and laborious with the standard equipment that is easily available at hand. Also, Hard Disks have become increasingly reliable with longer times between failures. With the advent of such programs as Steve Gibson's SPINRITE that helps to refurbish Hard Disks by restoring the magnetic track that gradually dissipates over time, many of us have not experienced a total Hard Disk Failure. However, so long as we use mechanically based devices such as Hard Disks, they will eventually fail, and the longer that we use them, then the more data will be lost and the more disastrous the failure will be!

A worthwhile habit to insure the longest possible life for your Hard Disk is to leave the PC Box on, even when you are not using it (Except for Thunderstorm season). If you can avoid frequent on-off cycles, the hardware will last much longer since the great killer of Hard Disks is bearing wear and read/write head crashes, both of which most frequently occur when the disk starts and stops spinning.

When Hard Disks were a mere(?) 10 Meg in size, it was relatively easy to backup the data onto floppy disks in the course of an hour of swapping and labeling the disks produced from the DOS BACKUP Operation. If you were real lucky, you might find some use for them later when you discovered that the RESTORE part was generally less than usable. This entire area became a lucrative field for 3rd party software such as FASTBACK and BACKIT who made the backup and restore much easier and even (gasp) user-friendly. However, the problem remained that the operation itself was time consuming and irritating to perform.

The availability of High-Density disks that could hold 4 times the data of the old DS-DD disk format helped this situation so long as the software could recognize the new format and so long as the Hard Disk was still of a manageable size. However, many of us have gotten used to using 32 Meg Hard Disks and even to having multiple Hard Disks Volumes as well. With the more data to back up, that means more disks to dedicate to that task and the longer one needs to sit and feed the monster.

OK, now we are at a point where we recognize the need for auxiliary equipment to perform the required backup. There are four ways to perform backups that are currently available. First is to backup to a different Hard Disk. This gives you an advantage of having ready access to your backup and the ability to continue normal operations even when your 1st Hard Disks goes bye-bye. The disadvantage is that unless this second Hard Disk is in a separate enclosure, it is sharing the same conditions that effect the first Hard Disk. Thus an electrical surge or an earthquake type jar would probably render both Disks useless at the same time.
(40 Meg Internal without Controller = $359 / $8.98 per Meg.)

The second way is to use an auxiliary Hard Disk type of mechanism like the Bernoulli Box. This is a high-Capacity Storage device that is usable as a Disk Device while also being removable for storage and security. It works for its purpose but has limited storage capacity (10 to 44 Meg) and requires the use of a manufacturer-specified storage medium (44 Meg Cartridge $84). It is also

Continued Page 8

Software Review CO.COM
By Edward Buzza

This program, written by Michael Mefford, is available on the PC MAGAZINE Utility Disk. It copies, moves, and deletes files individually or in tagged groups from directory listings that can be sorted by name, extension, size, or date. The directory that it displays also shows ALL the file attributes (hidden, system, archive, and read-only).

The "tagging" facility makes it very convenient to split or move files to another disk or disks as well as to another directory or directories. Arrow keys are used to navigate through the directory and the plus (+) key is used to tag files. The tagged files are indicated with a plus sign (+) and after being copied or moved, the indication is changed to an asterisk (*). The move function first copies the file and, if the copy is successful, then the original file is deleted. Function keys are used to initiate the various actions and 'deletes' must be verified. I think this program is one of the safest ways to delete files.

There are other programs that will do what CO.COM does (and a lot more, like PC TOOLS, NORTON, MAGELLAN, etc.), but CO.COM is used at the DOS command line; you don't have to crank up a big program just to move or delete a few files. §

---

*O*utput *N*umbers on the *C*ommand *L*ine
By Edward Buzza

ONCL.COM

ONCL.COM is an acronym for "Output Numbers on the Command Line." and was written by Philip Erdelsky. It is available on the PC Magazine Utility Disk. The program sends control codes, indeed any data, to the printer, screen, or to a file. Just type ONCL followed by the decimal values for the desired characters. The program will send the characters to the standard output device (the screen) from which they can be redirected to a file, an output device (e.g. a printer), or to another program.

Printer Example: ESC M is the control code for Elite pitch on an Epson compatible printer. The decimal values for these codes are: ESC=27, M=77; so the command "ONCL 27 77 > PRN" will set the printer to Elite pitch (don't enter the quote marks). Entering the command "ONCL 27 12 > PRN" will cause a form feed. No more turning the printer off-line, form feed, and then forgetting to turn the printer back on!

File Example: Entering the command "ONCL 13 > A:CR.DAT" will create the file CR.DAT on the A: drive and the only thing in that file will be a carriage return character because the decimal value 13 IS a carriage return.

Screen Example: To generate an ANSI escape sequence, with ANSI.SYS loaded, consider the following ONCL and ANSI lines:

```
    ONCL 27 91 51 55 59 52 52 109
'ONCL command
        ESC [ 3 7 ; 4 4 m        'ANSI escape sequence
```

Either command will set the screen to blue text on a white background - but we all know the problem



of trying to enter the ESC character on the DOS command line! To actually set the screen you need to do a CLS; or enter "ONCL 27 91 74" which is the decimal value of "ESC [J" - the ANSI equivalent of CLS.

MORE ABOUT HARD DISKS

By Vern Semrad

For the members who were at the November meeting, this will be a repeat, since I had written this for the November newsletter. I will add a couple things at the end to REFRESH the article. Which leads me into the main topic of the article.

A few meetings ago, Steve Spears demonstrated a program called SPINRITE from Gibson Research. This is a dynamite program and should be considered by EVERYone who has a hard disk. (And who doesn't nowadays?)

One of the features Steve touched on rather lightly was the the REFRESH option. Essentially, Steve said that unused portions of a hard disk tend to lose their capability to read and write data. This was news to me. I had never heard that before.

I recently had an opportunity to witness the validity of that statement firsthand.

I bought a hard disk that had been discarded due to what was perceived to be a disk failure. So, I knew going in that the disk had numerous bad sectors. Before I bought it, I had run MACE UTILITIES Remedy function and determined that the disk was virtually unusable. I offered the previous user a garage sale price for the disk, and he took it. Since I knew the disk was ridden with defects, I let it sit on the shelf for several months.

I finally decided to try it in one of my computers, since I was constantly running out of space on the one drive I had.

I installed it and began running the MACE Remedy function on the drive. I have both MACE 4.2 and MACE 5.0 (MACE GOLD), so, I kept alternating between the two versions. One checks the disk sector by sector, and the other checks the disk file by file. After about a month of doing this, MACE had declared that this disk was truly unusable. It had locked out so many clusters (Head & Cylinder) that nothing (I have other disk diagnostic software) would even work on the drive anymore.

At this point I was ready to give up and throw the drive in the trash. Then I remembered about the Refresh function of SPINRITE. The previous user had never used more that about one-third of the space on the drive. The drive was about two and one-half years old when I bought it. This means that 2/3 of the clusters and sectors had never been used, that is, they had never been written to or read from. Since I don't own SPINRITE (yet), the only way I had to write something to EVERY sector on the disk was to low-level FORMAT the disk. For those of you who are just beginning to use a hard disk, BEWARE!!!, there is NO recovery from a low-level format. I repeat, there is NO RECOVERY from a low-level format.

Since I had nothing to lose, I spent the better part of a weekend performing low-level formats of this disk. I low-level formatted this disk about 20 times using both low-level formatting software and the DOS built-in low- level formatting feature called "g=C800:5".

The end result was a fully functional hard disk (at least temporarily). The first few times I ran MACE on this disk, I got absolutely NO errors, meaning NO bad clusters or sectors. I then started using the drive as if it were a perfectly good drive, but knowing that it was once was unusable. I only put data on this drive that I can AFFORD to lose (RBBS download files that I am going to put somewhere else anyway).

As I continue to use this drive, I occasionally lose data, but, since I know when I write something to this disk, it must NOT be something crucial to my operations, I only write data to this drive that either is NOT crucial or can be recovered from some source such as a floppy.

Now, back to the point of this article. Steve said all areas of a hard drive need to be used. I now believe this, (not that I didn't believe Steve) because I have seen the actual results of not using areas of a hard disk. The Refresh function of SPINRITE simply writes something to every sector of the disk and then probably discards it, but the entire disk has been used. The moral of the story is, "Use it or Lose it".

CAUTION ! ! ! ! ! !

Remember what I said about low-level formatting. There is NO RECOVERY from a low-level format. ! ! ! !

SoftLogic Solutions (who publishes Disk Optimizer) has just announced a new release of Disk Optimizer that has a refresh function built in. If Disk Optimizer is your Un-fragmenting software, you can upgrade for $7.00 and get a REFRESHER. I have it on order. If it works, I will report it at the meeting. §

VIRUS

BY RUSS MERRITT

The problem of virus detection was discussed at our October meeting. IBM has a shareware program for $35 that they have made available to their customers. It checks all files for known signatures of existing viruses. The normal conditions of sale also include not allowing the program to appear on bulletin boards, a caution that this program can also become infected if not kept in a write protect mode. The ban against Bulletin Boards is also to try and prevent someone from adding their virus to this program. As of this time the program rights cannot be bought by a PC Club. §

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the following new members to our user Group:

Michael Daniel
James Eckart
Bert Grow
Beryl Puckett
Mike Riggs

FORMATX.BAT & XFORMAT.BAT

By Russ Merritt

THIS BATCH FILE WAS WRITTEN TO FORMAT MULTIPLE FLOPPIES USING DRIVES A AND B ALTERNATELY WITHOUT KEYBOARD INPUT. THE RETURN.BAT FILE CALLED IN FORMATX.BAT CONTAINS A CARRIAGE RETURN (013) ON ONE LINE AND "N" AND ANOTHER CARRIAGE RETURN ON THE SECOND LINE. THIS MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF DOS 3.3 WHICH ASKS YOU TO ENTER WHEN THE DISK IS IN THE DRIVE AND ASKS FOR (Y) OR (N) AT THE END OF THE FORMAT COMMAND.

CONTROL-BREAK WILL STOP PROGRAM, BUT IF YOU DO THIS WHILE A DISK IS BEING FORMATTED, THE DISK WILL NOT BE USABLE. BETTER TO OPEN THE DRIVE DOOR WHEN THE FORMAT IS FINISHED FOR THE LAST DRIVE, THEN DO CONTROL-BREAK WHILE THE PROGRAM IS HUNTING BETWEEN DRIVES A AND B.

THE FORMAT WILL START IMMEDIATELY SO HAVE A DISK ALREADY IN A: BEFORE INITIATING THIS BATCH JOB. IF YOU WANT SOME TIME TO INSERT DISKS, PUT A PAUSE COMMAND BEFORE EACH FORMAT COMMAND. YOU COULD ALSO PUT IN AN ECHO LINE TO TELL YOU WHICH DRIVE SHOULD RECEIVE THE FLOPPY.

NOTE: IF YOU USE THE TYPE COMMAND ON RETURN.BAT ALL YOU WILL SEE IS THE "N".

XFORMAT.BAT IS ALSO INCLUDED FOR THOSE DOS VERSIONS WHICH ONLY REQUIRE "STRIKE ANY KEY" AND BY CALLING ITSELF, THE REQUIREMENTS TO CONTINUE FORMATTING ON THE NEXT DRIVE ARE MET.

FORMATX.BAT READS AS FOLLOWS:

```
LOOP
FORMAT A:<RETURN.BAT
FORMAT B:<RETURN.BAT
GOTO LOOP
```

(see 1st paragraph for contents of RETURN.BAT)

XFORMAT.BAT READS AS FOLLOWS:

```
LOOP
FORMAT A:<XFORMAT.BAT
FORMAT B:<XFORMAT.BAT
GOTO LOOP
```

EXCEPT FOR THE TEXT PRINTOUT OF THE TWO BATCH FILES, THIS IS THE DOCUMENTATION INCLUDED IN FORMATX.ZIP RECENTLY UPLOADED TO BITS OF BLUE. §

NOVEMBER MINUTES

By Russ Merritt

Harvey presented news on the more recent events in our PC environment.

The major presentation was by EGGHEAD SOFTWARE. They demonstrated a number of games currently being offered. Among those shown was SimCity, Flight Simulator, Leisure Suit Larry IV, a new NBA Basketball offering -- there were more. Hope you were there to enjoy them. Also demonstrated by EGGHEAD Software was the new "SCANMAN PLUS" hand held scanner. The Scanman did an excellent job of scanning in images. Software provided with Scanman Plus allows you to edit and modify images you've scaned in. Scanman Plus runs for approx $200 - $250. Some GREAT ideas for Christmas.

As announced at the last meeting, Russ offered for .sale 5 1/4 diskette boxes (will hold 3) for $1. These had been donated by Bill Fuller. These will be offered at each meeting until they are gone (current inventory - 35).

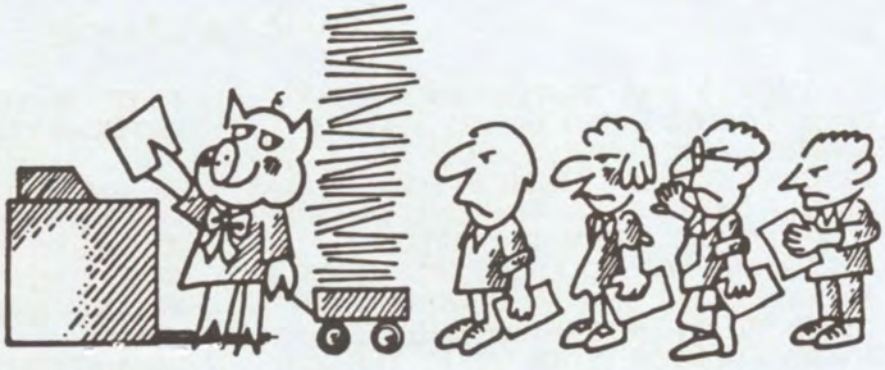
No new nominations were made from the floor for board members. Elections are scheduled for the December Meeting. Also dues for the 1990 calendar year are payable now. §

REMINDERS

* This month we WILL be holding elections for 1990 Officer Positions.

* It's that time of year again...time to break-out the old check book and write that $20.00 check to the TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP for your annual dues. Please send your check with the application at the back of the newsletter (be sure to check renewal on the application).

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NEW vs. OLD:

By Vern Semrad

The first three program I learned were WordStar 3.3, dBASE II, and Lotus, Rel 1A. I now OWN (at list price and we all know nobody pays list price), about $12,000 worth of software. BUT, I keep ALL previous versions of all the software I own. Here's why.

My first real computer was a 2-floppy drive system with 512K RAM, a portable. I could carry WordStar 3.3 on one floppy, Lotus on one floppy, and dBASE Ii on one flopppy. That meant I could run the application from A: and use B: as my data disk. I now own (to name a few) WordStar 2000 Plus Rel 3.0, (20 diskettes), dBASE IV, Developer's Edition (20 diskettes and no snickers, please), PARADOX 3.0, (15 diskettes), WordPerfect 5.0 (12 diskettes), and many others.

The point is this. I own the latest version of PCTOOLS, MACE, and others. I still carry PCTOOLS ver 4.X in my case of utility programs. Granted, I can't do everything with the old version that I can do with the latest version, but, the old version still does a lot of things I need to do. AND, I can carry the old version around on a 360K floppy, because it takes up only 126K of space on a disk.

In my opinion, the two most powerful Word PUBLISHING (processor) programs are WordPerfect 5.0 and WordStar 2000 Plus. I do ALL of my writing of Batch files, some dBASE programming, and miscellany with a little text editor from PC Magazine called TED. TED stands for Tiny EDitor. TED takes up only 3K wherever it resides.

Back to my original point. Newer and Bigger doesn't always mean better for YOU. Don't discard something because a newer version has come out. Get the new version, because upgrades USUALLY don't cost much, but, keep the old version. §



"I know he's a retriever, but this is ridiculous."

DELMONTE IN MEDICAL TRIBUNE



"Computer still in the shop, Jenkins?"

TED TROGDON, BINGER COMMUNICATIONS, INC.



And the Winner is...

The winners of last months drawing are:

1st Prize from EGGHEAD SOFTWARE Primetime Project Management Software - Robin Pokoj
2nd Prize from Compuadd PC Fullback a backup program - Roger Waters
50/50 Raffle - Joy Jameson
Eatable Goodies - Russ Merritt



Backing it up Cont

one of the most expensive of the backup options. (44 Meg Internal System $1,088 \ $24.73 per Meg.)

The third way of storage/backup is the streaming tape approach. This is very popular right now since you can install the drive unit in the standard half-height drive-bay of a PC and thus not need a separate enclosure or added desk space. The capacity of such a tape system ranges from 20 to 80 Meg per Tape and performs the backup quickly (18 minutes for 40 Meg). However, because it is a tape, it cannot be used for real-time access operations like the first two selections. It is really reserved just for the backup process. (40 Meg Internal $379 / $9.48 per Meg.)

An interesting variation on the Streaming Tape operation is to use a Video Tape Recorder (VTR) to make your data backup. There is one specific brand that I know of that comes from Alpha Micro under the name of VideoTrax which works with IBM Compatible machines. It is noticeably slower than the streaming tape backups, requiring 72 minutes for a 40 Meg backup, but since it does it on a standard VHS or Beta Video Tape, the cost of the system is much reduced. The auxiliary board for the computer costs $300 and can either use a standard home VTR ($200) or a special one from Alpha Micro that has the capability of slaving the VTR to the computer for complete remote control ($600). The maximum capacity of a single standard T-120 VHS Tape is about 200 Meg operating in the Extended Play Mode of the VTR. The single absolute requirement of the VTR is that it have Video In and Video Out RCA Plugs for the board to transmit & receive the data. (200 Meg External $500 / $2.50 per Meg.)

The forth, and most advanced, of the backup options is the WORM Optical backup system. This consists of an Optical Disk with Write Once and Read Mostly (W.O.R.M.) mechanism. What this does is to enable the user to keep all the incremental changes stored as he/she goes along. Since the Optical Disk (similar to a Compact Disk) has so much capacity (up to several Gigabytes), it has the room to have multiple versions of complete files stored permanently on it. These disks also have the advantage of being easily filed and securely locked away like the Bernoulli Disks. The data stored on these disks is far easier to access than tape storage and is far more durable than magnetic disk storage. Their costs are still being set but will probably run in the neighborhood of $1,400 for a 600 Meg WORM, which is the cheapest cost per Meg of storage. Its access speed is between that of floppy and Hard Disks, so it is much faster than the streaming tape backup. (600 Meg $1,399 / $2.33 per Meg.)

Incidentally, the long-term storage system of Steve Job's NeXT Computer is the Multiple Write version of this Optical Disk. It has the technology to erase previously written information on the Optical Disk so that it has all the ability of the magnetic Hard Disk but can store more at only slightly slower speeds. §

MORE ON UTILITIES

By Vern Semrad

This will be primarily for new Microcomputer users. I have a plethora of utility programs without which I feel I cannot function. Most of them are public domain or shareware. I have a disk with about 20 of them that I carry around whenever I am working with a client's computer that has none. I have just discovered two that have been around for some time, but I had never used them. They are both FREE Public Domain programs from PC Magazine. They are DR.COM and RN.COM. As with everything from PC Magazine, they are both small and do a lot.

RN is a utility that will let you create directories, delete directories, REName directories, and some other things. From RN, you can call up DR. DR lets you do some really neat things within a directory. One of the best is the capability to 1.) Sort the files within a directory on any of the four sort fields in a DIR listing, 2.) DELete a file, or 3.) REName a file. The slickest feature of DR is that if you have MANY .TXT or .DOC files in a directory, you can select any ASCII text file and actually read that file on screen. I started using this program in a subdirectory that contained about 100 .DOC files. With a text file browser such as BROWSE or PAGE, I had to exit the file browser after each file and re-enter the next file. With DR, you sort your directory on the extension, go to the first file with a .DOC extension, press the [CR], and, Boom, you read the file. Press the [ESC] key to leave that file, down arrow to the next file, press the [CR] key, and you're browsing the next .DOC file.

Slick stuff, AND, it's FREE.§

Backing It Up on Video
By Steven E. Spears

In line with my article on types of backup available on and for Personal Computers, my mention of the Video Tape Recorder (VTR) Option is the one that I personally use and have found quite useful. I chose it because I liked several aspects of its operation, such as dual use of this now common house hold item and the fact that the recording medium, VHS Tapes, are so cheap. I did have a potentially advantageous situation in that I had an old VHS that I thought that I could recycle for dedicated use in this operation

The use of Video Tape Recorders (VTR) to backup computer data is a variation of the streaming tape operation that uses an auxiliary board in the computer, a wire link to the VTR and a standard VTR which can be either a VHS or Beta format so long as the machine has Video-In and Video-out ports. These are the connections that you usually would use to plug a video camera into and are required because the operation has to by-pass the usual built-in TV Tuner. The only provider of this operation that I know of is ALPHA MICRO out of California but I do understand that there are some others that are also offering this type of backup. ALPHA MICRO also offers a more powerful VTR operation with a VHS Machine equipped with a computer control port that allows for complete program control of the backup operation. The auxiliary board costs about $300. and the specialized VHS machine costs about $600.00. The VHS machine can be used for normal TV operation as well when it is not being used for computer backup.

The backup operation using this setup is not quite as fast as the more common streaming tape setups and is certainly not as compact or as convenient, but it does have the attraction of being cheaper and making dual use of what is now a common household item. The capacity of a single Video Tape is measured by the amount of time that it plays since the backup operation works at an absolute speed of about 1.8 minutes to backup 1 Meg of data at a 4 times copy level (See Below). Therefore, you can use a VHS T120 on SP (Standard Play) to backup about 60 Meg of data with a 4X redundancy of the data. If you have a larger disk, you can switch to a slower playing speed and thus increase the recording time and capacity correspondingly. The maximum recording for a VHS machine would be using a T160 Tape at the extended play (EP) setting which gives the capacity of about 260 Meg of data. This gives a cost factor of about $1.92/Meg based on using the $300 board attached to a $200 VHS Machine. The cost of the VHS tapes is so low today that it is almost negligible and the fact that you can use the VTR for other operations is correspondingly a freebie.

Operation of this system is relatively easy and uses a reasonably user- friendly interface program. Starting it up you have a choice of making a backup, restoring from a backup and verifying the integrity of an already created backup tape. Also on the main menu are a couple of the remote control options for the computer controlled VTR as mentioned above. When you choose to make a backup, you are prompted for the choice of making a file-by-file or a disk image backup. If the choice is for file-by-file then you can backup up multiple logical disks and or different directories or combinations of these options. If the choice is for disk image, then you are limited to choosing either the entire disk or some directory(s) of that single logical disk. The disk image is also limited to the 32 Meg limit of DOS 3.X. In the file-by- file, you can also work in the incremental mode to backup only the changes from a prior backup operation by using the archive status attribute indicator for each file.

Once all of the specifications have been entered, the program prompts you to perform all of the VTR routines of loading the tape, rewinding it and setting it on recording. Once you have performed all of these tasks, the program will then start sending the data and indicate progress with a fuel gauge type of display. I have had no problems with leaving this running overnight to backup my 4 logical Hard-disks. The restoral and verification both operate in much the same fashion and the system does keep a log of the backups on both the Videotrax Subdirectory and makes a backup log that is stored on each tape. One further intelligent measure used to make the backup process as successful as possible is the ability to make multiple redundant copies of the data to avoid dropout losses from older magnetic tape. The program defaults automatically to a 4X redundancy which makes 4 simultaneous copies of each byte of information, but that level can be varied from 1X (no redundancy) to 16X. Of course this changes both the amount and time for the backup, but if you are working with absolutely vital data, then this can be very reassuring!

Overall impressions of this system are good to very good. I did have a real problem with the stated specifications versus the real world in that I bought the system on the basis of the claim that it would work with any VTR. When the old VHS that I had intended to use as a dedicated backup machine was declared to be absolutely unrepairable by the shop, I went and bought a good quality VHS machine at my employee store only to find that it did not have a Video-In port and so was useless. Anybody want a good bargain for an Xmas gift? Once I surmounted this obstacle, I have found this reasonable and quite useful. The backup is easy and you can store the tapes almost anywhere and there is a real sense of satisfaction in knowing that you really do have a good backup! If you want more information, I am available for consultations and demonstrations. §

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Robin L Pokoj
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TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

Volume # III ISSUE 01 **Date** MARCH 1, 1990

Kicker

MEETING

(Held 2nd Wednesday of every month.)

Date: March 14, 1990

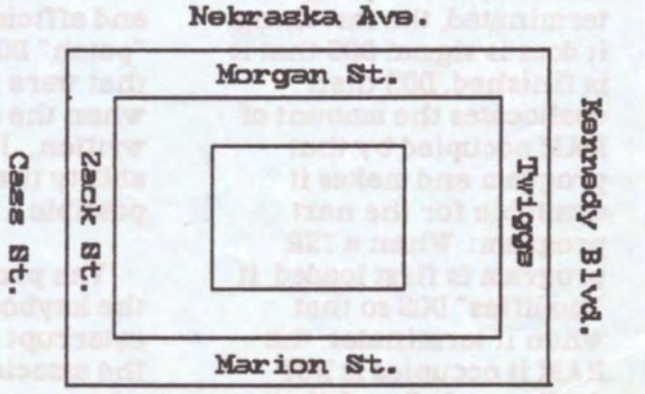
Time: 6:00 PM 'til

Place: DOWNTOWN TAMPA
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 MORGAN ST.
(Please sign in)

Program: Steve Spears - expertise on: PC Tools 5

* * * Refreshment Break * * *

Vern Semrad - speaks on: 2nd Topic



DIRECTIONS

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INTERRUPTS ...and TSRs

by Ed Buzza

TSR is an acronym for: Terminate Stay Resident. When a normal program is terminated, the last thing it does is signal DOS that it is finished. DOS then deallocates the amount of RAM occupied by that program and makes it available for the next program. When a TSR program is first loaded, it "modifies" DOS so that when it terminates, the RAM it occupies is NOT deallocated. So, while it has terminated, it is still resident within RAM. It kind of "goes to sleep" until its "hotkey" is struck.

To understand how TSRs work, an understanding of "interrupts" is necessary. When DOS is loaded, it sets up an "interrupt table" at the very beginning of memory. It contains a four byte address for each of the 256 interrupts. Each interrupt, hardware or software, is assigned a number from 0 to 255. The first address points to the routine that handles interrupt 1, the second address for interrupt 2, and so on. The Interrupt Table is also called a "vector table" because the interrupt address points to the routine that will actually handle the interrupt, hence "vector" or direction.

All programs have access to the Interrupt Table because it is an easy and efficient way to "patch" DOS to do things that were never thought of when the original DOS was written. It is this patching ability that makes TSRs possible.

The processor chip in the keyboard sends an interrupt signal as well as the associated data codes whenever a key is pressed and released. DOS transfers/jumps to the routine located at the interrupt table address assigned to the keyboard interrupt. Normally, this is the DOS routine that puts the data on the standard output device, the console or monitor screen, then analyzes the data to see if further processing is necessary.

Since the interrupt table is "patchable", application programs and TSRs substitute an address of their own in place of the DOS address that was there. This is why words such as 'DIR' and 'COPY' are just words to the word processor application and are in no way related to what these words mean to DOS when entered at the DOS command line. In short, the application program has "taken over" the keyboard.

To explain more fully, the following assumptions are made:

1) INT-9 is the keyboard interrupt number (9).

2) TAB-9 is the ninth entry in the interrupt table.

2) TAB-9 is set to 5000 by DOS at start-up.

3) 5000 is the address of the DOS keyboard routine. As long as only DOS is running, every keystroke generates an INT-9 and DOS goes to TAB-9 in the table, finds the address (5000) and jumps to that address (which contains the DOS keyboard routine).

Let's look at what happens when a TSR is loaded, either from the command line or from AUTOEXEC.BAT at boot-up, into RAM starting at memory address 6000. One thing it will do is take the address that is at TAB-9 and store it within itself (let's say at 6100). Then it will put it's own address (6000) in TAB-9. Now when a key is struck and an INT-9 is generated, DOS will jump to the address at TAB-9. As it always does. But this time, instead of 5000 (the address of DOSs own keyboard routine) being the address in the ninth entry, the

address of 6000 is encountered --put there by the TSR! Now we have:

1) INT-9 the keyboard interrupt number (9).

2) TAB-9 the ninth entry in the interrupt table.

3) TAB-9 set to 6000 by the TSR -- Note the new address.

4) 5000 the address of the DOS keyboard routine.

5) 6000 the starting address of the TSR.

6) 6100 the address of the original TAB-9 entry (5000).

The TSR will then look at the keyboard data to see if it is the "TSR Hotkey". If it IS, the TSR then takes over and starts executing. If it is NOT the "TSR Hotkey", the TSR will use the address that it took from TAB-9 and jump to that address — (5000, DOS routine). Note that TAB-9 is STILL set to 6000 to handle any future "hotkeys".

Now when the word processor application is loaded at the command line, assume that it will go into RAM at 7000. Like the TSR, it too will take the address at TAB-9 and store it within itself (let's say 7100). If the TSR hadn't been loaded, TAB-9 would show 5000 (DOS keyboard routine). But since the TSR is already loaded, TAB-9 shows 6000. The word processor will also take over the keyboard and put it's own address (7000) in TAB-9. Here we have:

1) INT-9 the keyboard interrupt number (9).

2) TAB-9 the ninth entry in the interrupt table.

3) TAB-9 set to 7000 by the word processor -- Note new address.

4) 5000 the address of the DOS keyboard routine.

5) 6000 the starting address of the TSR.

6) 6100 the address of the original TAB-9 (5000) entry.

7) 7000 the address of the word processor program.

8) 7100 the address of the TAB-9 entry (6000) set by the TSR.

Here is where it gets tricky. When a key is struck and an INT-9 is generated, control is transferred to the address in TAB-9 which is now 7000, the word processor. If the data is not recognized by the word processor, (i.e. Alt-W) the word processor ignores it and will jump to the TAB-9 address it stored at 7100 to get more data. Since this is 6000, the TSR jumps in to look at the data. If it's the TSR HotKey, it takes over; if not, the TSR jumps to the TAB-9 address it stored (5000) and DOS takes over.

That's it. Admittedly, this dissertation is not technically correct. Nothing was said about interrupt requests, interrupt returns, TSRs that use an entirely different technique, scan codes, the keyboard buffer, etc.. But if you have some glimmer of what interrupts are and how TSRs work, then this article has served its purpose. ?

And the Winner is...

50/50 Raffle - **Steve Speairs**

DAFFYNITIONS -- Ed Buzza

Assumed Decimal Point - Located two positions to the right of a programmer's current salary in estimating his/her own worth.

Bit - The increment by which programmers slowly go mad.

Byte - What mad programmers do.

Chaining - A method of attaching programmers to desks to speed up output.

Checkpoint - When your check book balance says "No more computer stuff."

Core Storage - A receptacle for the center section of apples.

Counter - A device over which martinis are served.

Disassembler - An unattended five year old child.

Error - What someone else has made when he disagrees with your computer output or personal opinion.

External Storage - A wastebasket.

Fixed Word Length - Four-letter words used by PC owners in a high state of confusion.

Floating Control - A characteristic exhibited when you have to go to the restroom but cannot leave the computer.

Floating Point - The absolute limit before floating control is lost.

Flow Chart - A graphic representation of the fastest route to the restroom.

Input - Food, whiskey, beer, aspirin, etc..

Internal Storage - A receptacle for food, whiskey, beer, aspirin, etc.

Macro - The last half of an expression of surprise: "Holy Macro".

Memory Dump - Amnesia

Programmer - A red-eyed individual who converses with inanimate objects.

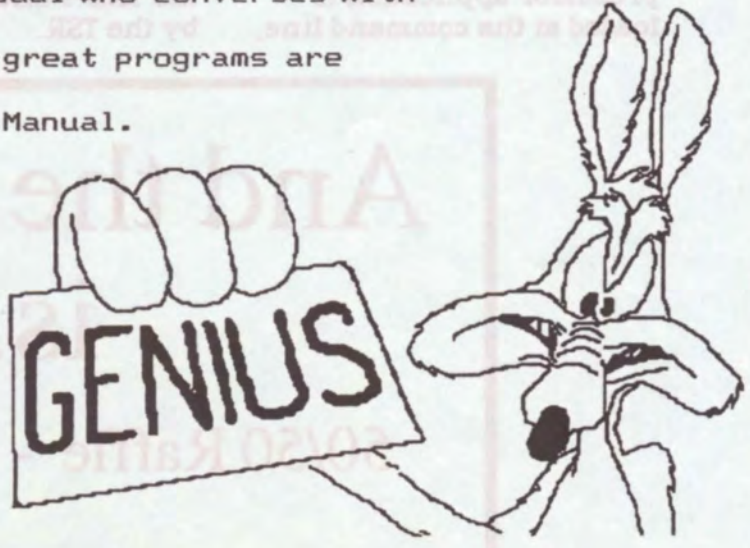
RAM - The sign under which all great programs are born.

ROM - An acronym for: Read Our Manual.

WORM - Attitude assumed by husband asking wife to buy new computer.

XYZ - The three axes of a 3D CAD screen that will turn you into a Xenophobic, Yaupping, Zendik.

1.0 - A program version that you never buy!



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Barbara Peck
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VOLUME # III ISSUE 02 APRIL 1990

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(Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

DATE: April 11, 1990
TIME: 6:00 P.M. 'til

PLACE: DOWNTOWN TAMPA
GTE Main Building
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610 MORGAN ST.

PROGRAM: MONEY!

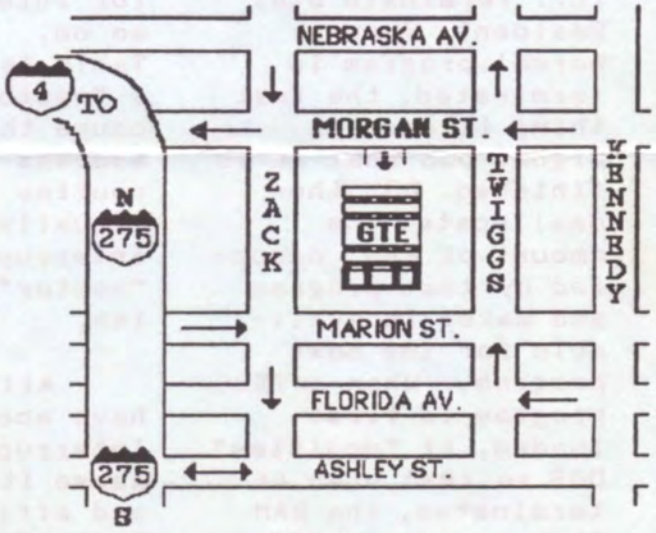
$ STEVE SPEAIRS $
Introduces:
"MANAGING YOUR MONEY"

$ Refreshment Break $

KEVAN SHERIDAN
Challenges with:

$ "QUICKEN" $

DIRECTIONS



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NEWSLETTER CHANGES

Thank you all for being patient with the "Bits of Blue". It is now on the roll and will be regular again. The PFS: First Publisher was donated to the Tampa IBM PC Users Group and is the DTP program that we are using. We welcome all members to write and send articles of interest for our newsletter Bits of Blue. This is a first for me so please share any questions, tips, or helpful information you may have. Contact: BARBARA PECK at 885-9935 or address inquiries to:

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INTERRUPTS ...and TSRs

by Ed Bugza

TSR is an acronym for: Terminate Stay Resident. When a normal program is terminated, the last thing it does is signal DOS that it is finished. DOS then deallocates the amount of RAM occupied by that program and makes it available for the next program. When a TSR program is first loaded, it "modifies" DOS so that when it terminates, the RAM it occupies is NOT deallocated. So,while it has terminated, it is still resident within RAM. It kind of "goes to sleep" until its "hotkey" is struck.

To understand how TSRs work, an understanding of "interrupts" is necessary. When DOS is loaded, it sets up an "interrupt table" at the very beginning of memory. It contains a four byte address for each of the 256 interrupts. Each interrupt, hardware or software, is assigned a number from 0 to 255. The first address points to the routine that handles interrupt 1, the second address for interrupt 2, and so on. The Interrupt Table is also called a "vector table" because the interrupt address points to the routine that will actually handle the interrupt, hence "vector" or direction.

All programs have access to the Interrupt Table because it is an easy and efficient way to "patch" DOS to do things that were never thought of when the original DOS was written. It is this patching ability that makes TSRs possible.

The processor chip in the keyboard sends an interrupt signal as well as the associated data codes whenever a key is pressed and released. DOS transfers/jumps to the routine located at the interrupt table address assigned to the keyboard interrupt. Normally, this is the DOS routine that puts the data on the standard output device, the console or monitor screen, then analyzes the data to see if further processing is necessary.

Since the interrupt table is "patchable", application programs and TSRs substitute an address of their own in place of the DOS address that was there. This is why words such as 'DIR' and 'COPY' are just words to the word processor application and are in no way related to what these words mean to DOS when entered at the DOS command line. In short, the application program has "taken over" the keyboard.

To explain more fully, the following assumptions are made:

1) INT-9 is the keyboard interrupt number (9).

2) TAB-9 is the ninth entry in the interrupt table.

2) TAB-9 is set to 5000 by DOS at start-up.

3) 5000 is the address of the DOS keyboard routine. As long as only DOS is running, every keystroke generates an INT-9 and DOS goes to TAB-9 in the table, finds the address

Continued Page 3

(5000) and jumps to that address (which contains the DOS keyboard routine).

Let's look at what happens when a TSR is loaded, either from the command line or from AUTOEXEC.BAT at boot-up, into RAM starting at memory address 6000. One thing it will do is take the address that is at TAB-9 and store it within itself (let's say at 6100). Then it will put it's own address (6000) in TAB-9. Now when a key is struck and an INT-9 is generated, DOS will jump to the address at TAB-9. As it always does. But this time, instead of 5000 (the address of DOSs own keyboard routine) being the address in the ninth entry, the address of 6000 is encountered --put there by the TSR! Now we have:

1) INT-9 the keyboard interrupt number (9).
2) TAB-9 the ninth entry in the interrupt table.
3) TAB-9 set to 6000 by the TSR -- Note the new address.
4) 5000 the address of the DOS keyboard routine.
5) 6000 the starting address of the TSR.
6) 6100 the address of the original TAB-9 entry (5000) .

The TSR will then look at the keyboard data to see if it is the "TSR Hotkey". If it IS, the TSR then takes over and starts executing. If it is NOT the "TSR Hotkey", the TSR will use the address that it took from TAB-9 and jump to that address -- (5000, DOS routine). Note that TAB-9 is STILL set to 6000 to handle any future "hotkeys".

Now when the word processor application is loaded at the command line, assume that it will go into RAM at 7000. Like the TSR, it too will take the address at TAB-9 and store it within itself (let's say 7100). If the TSR hadn't been loaded, TAB-9 would show 5000 (DOS keyboard routine). But since the TSR is already loaded, TAB-9 shows 6000. The word processor will also take over the keyboard and put it's own address (7000) in TAB-9. Here we have:

1) INT-9 the keyboard interrupt number (9).
2) TAB-9 the ninth entry in the interrupt table.
3) TAB-9 set to 7000 by the word processor -- Note new address.
4) 5000 the address of the DOS keyboard routine.
5) 6000 the starting address of the TSR.
6) 6100 the address of the original TAB-9 (5000) entry.
7) 7000 the address of the word processor program.
8) 7100 the address of the TAB-9 entry (6000) set by the TSR.

Here is where it gets tricky. When a key is struck and an INT-9 is generated, control is transferred to the address in TAB-9 which is now 7000, the word processor. If the data is not recognized by the word processor, (i.e. Alt-W) the word processor ignores it and will jump to the TAB-9 address it stored at 7100 to get more data. Since this is 6000, the TSR jumps in to look at the data. If it's the TSR HotKey, it takes over; if not, the TSR jumps to the TAB-9 address it stored (5000) and DOS takes over.

That's it. Admittedly, this dissertation is not technically correct. Nothing was said about interrupt requests, interrupt returns, TSRs that use an entirely different technique, scan codes, the

Continued Page 4

INTERRUPTS Continued

from pg.3

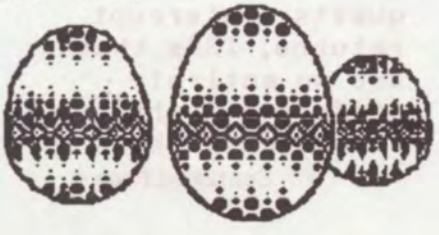
keyboard buffer, etc. But if you have some glimmer of what interrupts are and how TSRs work, then this article has served its purpose.?



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

We presently have openings for the two officers; Secretary and Librarian. The duties of each are:
Secretary - take minutes at the meetings and send in ASCII file to the BBS and or the Editor of the Club.
Librarian - bring our diskette library collection to meetings and record changes.

If you would like to fill either of these offices contact: HARVEY BRUNEAU at 932-6745 or any of the Board Members listed in this news- letter. You may also leave a message on the BBS. Small Pay - Excellent benefits! Happy Easter To All.



MARCH MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President HARVEY BRUNEAU and STEVE SPEAIRS alarmed us with a demonstration of his DeskTop 5!

DeskTop 5 includes a variety of useful operations:
- note pad
- outliner
-appointment scheduler
- Macro editor
- telecommunications
- calculator
- alarm/snooze

STEVE mentioned that he prefers the Desk-Top 5 Appt. Scheduler over SideKick's as DT's calender has more selections: everyday, weekdays only or week-ends only. Most do not give the weekend only option. It also has a JOB JAR. (Don't let the wife find this!)

The calculator is like the HP12c - Reverse Polish Notation. You may actually need to buy the Hewlett Packard Calculator book to become expert with all of the functions if you are not familiar with this type of mathematical operation. It is complete.

Then there's the handy ALARM/SNOOZE. This was different for most but the Members volunteered (jokingly) that "if you sleep near the computer" or "With a computer" the alarm would be handy. (A meeting you should not have missed, very entertaining but also informative.)
We enjoyed Random Access Refreshments during our break and then continued to learn a bit about PC Tools.

PC Tools comes with a Caching System Utility, Compression to back up disk & Security feature file encryption - DES Data Encryption System.

BRIEF and DBRIEF it was remarked are "about the best editor for program- mers to use" with "QEDIT as a close 2nd".

DON PATSZCH offered to give HARVEY a name and Phone number through which the Tampa IBM PC Users Group can receive a free WordPerfect 5.0. (useful for Bits of Blue -We ALL want that number!)

Of Quattro vs.ExCell, Quattro can link more spreadsheets.

We are still trying to upgrade the BBS with another HD. Be patient -we are working on it.

No raffle this meeting -no losers ... WE ALL WON! Board meeting followed.

DAFFYNITIONS

Assumed Decimal Point - Located two positions to the right of a programmer's current salary in estimating his/her own worth.

Bit - The increment by which programmers slowly go mad.

Byte - What mad programmers do.

Chaining - A method of attaching programmers to desks to speed up output.

Checkpoint - When your check book balance says "No more computer stuff."

Core Storage - A receptacle for the center section of apples.

Counter - A device over which martinis are served.

Disassembler - An unattended five year old child.

Error - What someone else has made when he disagrees with your computer output or personal opinion.

External Storage - A wastebasket.

Fixed Word Length - Four-letter words used by PC owners in a high state of confusion.

Floating Control - A characteristic exhibited when you have to go to the restroom but cannot leave the computer.

Floating Point - The absolute limit before floating control is lost.

Flow Chart - A graphic representation of the fastest route to the restroom.

Input - Food, whiskey, beer, aspirin, etc..

Internal Storage - A receptacle for food, whiskey, beer, aspirin, etc.

Macro - The last half of an expression of surprise: "Holy Macro".

Memory Dump - Amnesia

Programmer - A red-eyed individual who converses with inanimate objects.

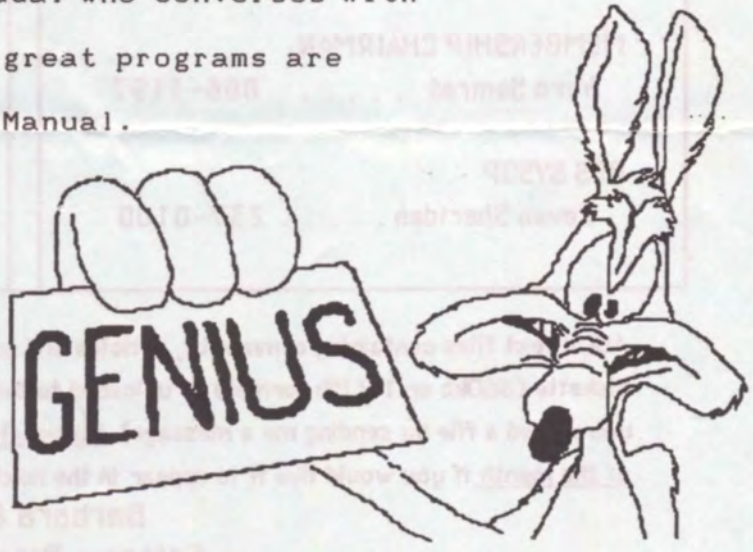
RAM - The sign under which all great programs are born.

ROM - An acronym for: Read Our Manual.

WORM - Attitude assumed by husband asking wife to buy new computer.

XYZ - The three axes of a 3D CAD screen that will turn you into a Xenophobic, Yaupping, Zendik.

1.0 - A program version that you never buy!



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ASCII text files containing comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 5 1/4 diskette (360kb or 1.2 Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next month's newsletter.

Barbara Peck
Editor - Bits of Blue
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP
APPLICATION

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ☐ *NEW* ☐ *CHANGE* ☐ *RENEWAL*

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____
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City _____ State _____ Zip _____
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Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

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What do you presently use your computer for? _____
_____
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What major software do you use? _____
_____
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What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. expanded memory, printers, etc.)
_____

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P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

VOLUME # III ISSUE 03 MAY 1990

MEETING

(Held 2nd Wednesday of every month)

DATE: May 9, 1990
TIME: 6:00 P.M. 'til

PLACE: DOWNTOWN TAMPA
GTE Main Building
(East/West Hall)
610 MORGAN ST.

PROGRAM: DESKTOP PUBLISHING

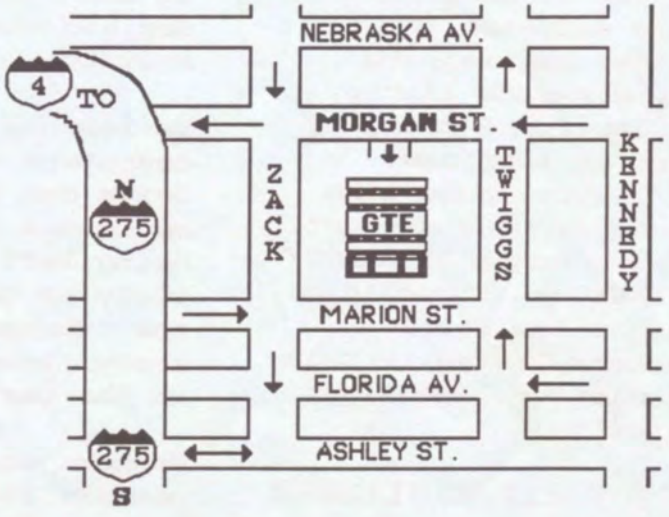
LINDA CONFER of SPC
Presents -
PFS: First Publisher 3.0

Refreshment Break

Brief Preview & OFFER
by:
PRODIGY Representative

$ "RAFFLE" $

DIRECTIONS



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NEW MEETING PLACE - SOON

From: HARVEY BRUNEAU

To: ALL MEMBERS

Re: NEW MEETING PLACE

Effective June 13th our meetings will be held at IBM on Buffalo across from Tampa Bay mall. They will furnish us with the meeting space and hardware as needed. This is a great opportunity for us. Lets start getting the word out. Should anyone of you have suggestions, complaints or questions leave a message or call me. Harvey P. Bruneau 932-6745 or 962-2554

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

We still have openings for the two Board Members; Secretary and Librarian.

The Secretary takes minutes at the meeting and sends them to the Editor via the BBS.

The Librarian has access to many valuable software programs; maintaining our diskette library collection & bringing them to meetings.

If you would like to offer your support, please contact: HARVEY BRUNEAU at 932-6745 or any of the Board Members listed in this newsletter. Excellent benefits!

PFS: FIRST PUBLISHER

..the critically acclaimed personal desktop publishing program. FIRST PUBLISHER transforms ordinary word processed documents into outstanding publications. With FIRST PUBLISHER, it's easy to prepare newsletters, flyers, reports, announcements, and much more.

PRODIGY IS: a low cost information Bulletin Board, like Home Shopping. Easy to use menu driven; provides "information at your fingertips" i.e. stock quotes, catalog shopping, weather reports, long distance w/o fee communication, etc. No hidden or added fees, flat $9.95/mo.

APRIL MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President HARVEY BRUNEAU. There was some difficulty with the portable PC used for our meeting demonstrations but as STEVE SPEAIRS smacked a mosquito the PC was up and running and we decided that was the only bug.

We learned that today computers with a Hard Drive can be turned on as needed instead of being left on indefinitely as there is not the "thermal-dynamic shock" like there was in the past.

Members discussed the possibility of cars being sold equipped with devices similiar to those of law enforcement officials, i.e. location maps. The numerous diskette count in some packages was discussed. When you "install" them some actually "unzip" or "unarc" themselves.

STEVE reminded the club that THE BOOKMAN has a catalog listing on the BBS and as a paid member we get a good discount. If we buy through our Club we get an additional discount. Let any of the Board Members know if you would like to participate in this offer.

KEVAN SHERIDAN gave a well rehearsed demonstration of QUICKEN by INTUIT. Owning his third version of Quicken it is obvious that Kevan likes this product and was just the person to show it off.

QUICKEN is #1 Best-selling, award-winning financial software. Kevan remarked that the only time he ever read any of the book was "how to install", from then on the menus and message lines are so clear that you may only need your book on rare occasions.

Quicken 3.0 includes:
- Check Writing/Bill Paying
- Budgeting
- Bookkeeping
- Tax Recordkeeping
- Financial Reporting

It is excellent for managing cash flow and would be perfect to use for personal or small business financial management.

We recessed for refreshments returning for the brief business portion of the meeting. There were many goodies raffled and many winners. A Board meeting followed with most of the Board members present.

Keep your Membership ACTIVE by sending Your Dues.

THE APRIL WINNERS ARE:

ROGER WATERS	-	Ashton Tate Sun-Visor
STEVE SPEAIRS	-	Ashton Tate Sun-Visor
ED BUZZA	-	Ashton Tate Frisbee
BARBARA PECK	-	Centech diskettes from SUNRISE
BARBARA PECK	-	Ashton Tate STEP IV WARD Software
PETE MONROE	-	1 Fresh bottle of Coca-Cola
WALTER WELCH	-	"Winsome" Miniature Rose Bush
WALTER NAGY	-	$9.50 "CASH - Split"

**** DUES NOTICE ****

To All our Loyal Members:

If you have not paid your 1990 dues, you may do so by mailing your check to the Club PO Box or by bringing it to a meeting. We do not send past due notices. We depend on our members to pay voluntarily. If your payment was not made by January 31st then it is **"PAST DUE"**.

We are back in business with the newsletter. Our new editor, Barbara Peck, is doing a fabulous job. We are going to have some very good presentations this year. When we don't have a presentation by someone from outside the club, our meetings are still very informative. Mingling with the members is always helpful, you always learn something. Thank-you for your participation and your dues payment.

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Barbara Peck
Editor - Bits of Blue
P.O. Box 3492

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Please check one: ☐ *NEW* ☐ *CHANGE* ☐ *RENEWAL*

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? _____
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Do you have access to a computer? _____ What type? _____

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What major software do you use? _____
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TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

VOLUME # III ISSUE 04 JUNE 1990

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: June 13, 1990
TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE:

IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
Lake Pointe One Building
3109 West Buffalo Ave.
ROOM 450
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER:

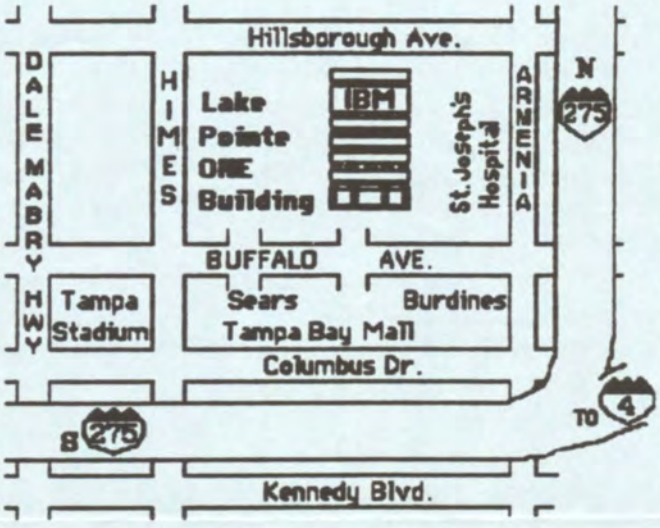
MICROSOFT CORP.

Representative KIRK COVERT
Presents
WINDOWS

Refreshment Break

STEVE SPEAIRS
Presents
CONTROL ROOM

DIRECTIONS



*** IMPORTANT NOTICE! ***

WE'VE MOVED !!!

Beginning June 13, 1990 our meetings will be held at: the IBM Customer Center on Buffalo across from the Tampa Bay Mall. IBM will furnish us with the meeting space and hardware as needed. This is a great opportunity for us. See page 12 for a close-up & complete directions.

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WINDOWS -

MICROSOFT CORP.

...soon to release a new version of WINDOWS. In some 1990 PC Magazines the Microsoft Mouse ad mentions Windows Version 3.0 and MS-Paintbrush. However, in the MS-WINDOW ads I've seen "Microsoft Windows/286" and "Microsoft Windows/386". According to the March 27, 1990 issue, Microsoft recently released WORD FOR WINDOWS. So place your bets on which Window KIRK will show - we can't lose with any of these!

THANKS to SPC

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group Board and members extend a sincere thank-you to Software Publishing Corp. for all of the software donated and for LINDA CONFER. A big thanks to LINDA for the super demonstration and upgrade of PFS:1st Publisher 3.0. We appreciate your support and generosity.

MAY MINUTES

HARVEY called the meeting to order and introduced our Guest speakers.

A PRODIGY representative explained the telecommunication services and gave FREE Prodigy software to all. One advantage with Prodigy (compared to similiar services) is the flat rate of $9.95 per month(no hidden charges).

LINDA CONFER from SOFTWARE PUBLISHING CORP. presented a 1st rate demonstration of the new release PFS:FIRST PUBLISHER Version 3.0. Some of the new features that LINDA emphasized were:

- Circle Drawing
- Graphic/text overlay

F2 - Layout Options, adjust & gallery
F4 - Set Up Fonts
F7 - Set Line Width
-High Resolution Art

SOFTWARE PUBLISHING Corporation donated PFS: FIRST PUBLISHER Version 3.0 to the Club, (The upgrade is already being put to use and is definitely appreciated.)

We recessed for refreshments returning later for a brief bit of business.

MICROSOFT will be at our June 13 meeting. Effective June 13th our meetings will be held at:

IBM Customer Center
Lake Pointe One Bldg
3109 West Buffalo Av
Room 450

SPC again showed their interest and support by donating three more PFS Software Programs. Most stayed hoping to win however, only 3 lucky people cashed in on 3.5" & 5.25" disk Version 2.1 of: PFS: FIRST GRAPHICS, PFS: FIRST PUBLISHER or PFS:PROFESSIONAL WRITE.

CONTROL ROOM

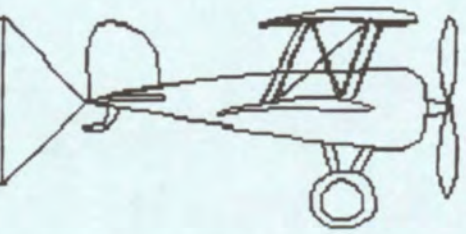
...by ASHTON-TATE:

is a potpourri of PC Utilities which includes disk recovery and disk cache, virus detection, keyboard macros, and programs that analyze the hardware components in your PC. It retails for $129.

Keep your Membership ACTIVE by sending Your Dues.

DOS TIPS

Ed Buzza



Sorting Directory Entries

When a program name or command is entered at the DOS prompt, DOS checks COMMAND.COM to see if the command is one of the internal programs within COMMAND.COM. If it is not, DOS then looks through the current directory for the program. If not found, DOS will then look through each of the directories listed in the PATH for the requested program. If DOS finds the program, it is loaded and executed. If not found, then DOS flashes it's infamous message "bad command or file name."

DOS could find the program quicker if the appropriate .EXE or .COM file is at the very front of the directory.

DOS could find the program quicker if . . .

But you say that you don't have control over where the various files are installed or that it's too much of a hassle to copy the files one at a time just to get them in the proper order. Well, help is available but let's look at another item.

. . . help is available . . .

When a DIR command is issued, DOS shows the files in the same order as they are listed in the directory table. And the files are entered in the directory table as they are created. So the first one created will show in the first entry of the table. Sort of a FIFO (first in, first out) order system. The subdirectory names are also listed in the directory table, again in the same order as files are (even though they're not files, DOS treats them as if they were for directory purposes). Wouldn't it be nice to have all the subdirectory names listed first, then the files?

The answer to both of these problems/peeves is found in PCTOOLS(tm) and in Norton's Advanced Utilities(tm). Go to

continued

DOS TIPS
- Sorting Directory Entries

continued

the Special menu in PCTOOLS(tm), select Directory Sort, and make your choices. After sorting, you will be prompted by a dialogue menu that allows you to view the new order and also to Update the directory table on the disk. With Norton, use the Directory Sort utility but show only the drive (a: or c:, etc.). A menu will then pop up allowing you to make your selection. One BIG difference: within the menu you can Move the various entries around to suit yourself.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

JUNE 13 - Microsoft
JULY 11 - Ashton-Tate
AUGUST 8 - WordPerfect

P. O. BOX SNAFU

TIBMPCUGPOBI

Well, we goofed again. For those of you who didn't know, I am the official TIBMPCUGPOBI (Tampa IBMPC User Group PO Box Investigator). I took over this duty from Robin Pokoj about a month and a half ago.

What I didn't know was that just before I took over, our box rent expired, and the Post Office closed our box. Fortunately, several kind souls called me at home to tell me that they had mail sent to the box returned to them.

The box rent has been paid, the PO Box is once again open, and you can send your dues payments to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

Sorry for the inconvenience.

Vern Semrad

AND THE WINNER IS . . .

HARVEY BRUNEAU - DINERO!! (50/50 Drawing)
DON PATZSCH - Coca-Cola (re-loaded by STEVE SPEAIRS)
Everybody - PRODIGY Software donated by PRODIGY
MERRILL FRIEND - PFS: First Graphics Software 2.1
donated by SOFTWARE PUBLISHING CORP.
NORBERT LUKE - PFS: First Publisher Software 2.1
donated by SOFTWARE PUBLISHING CORP.
JAY REESE - PFS: Professional Write Software 2.1
donated by SOFTWARE PUBLISHING CORP.

Thanks to all the winners for printing their names on the winning tickets.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Apparently, several of our loyal members forgot to turn over the pages of their calendars last January. This is a friendly reminder that the year is now 1990. Please send in your membership dues and keep your membership in good standing.

Our group is getting more organized each month, and the benefits of membership continue to increase. Harvey's agreement with IBM to hold our meetings at their Tampa facility will be a definite boon to our existence. We won't have to worry about presentation facilities as we have in the past. Harvey has some outstanding Programs lined up for the coming meetings. One of the best presentations will be at the June meeting when MICROSOFT comes to town to show WINDOWS 3.0. ASHTON-TATE is scheduled for July and WORDPERFECT will be back in August to show DrawPerfect, another one of their excellent products. If past presentations by their representatives are an indication, these will be meetings you won't want to miss.

Barbara Peck is developing the Newsletter into a quality publication that will get better and better as time goes on. ONLY paid members will receive the newsletter on a continual basis.

Finally, I want to say a few words about a membership benefit that is worth the cost of membership all by itself. That is the Bulletin Board.

Kevan Sheridan has taken a foundering system that has been around for several years, bordering on extinction numerous times, and developed it into one of the premier RBBS's in the Tampa area. It seems every time I log onto the board, Kevan has added another feature. The new RBBS software he is using is as good as any I've seen, and I call a lot of boards. Thanks to many contributors, we are getting more and more outstanding ShareWare and Public Domain software on the board.

The E-Mail feature of the board is also outstanding. This is one feature that, sadly to say, is greatly under used. With more participation from members, this board could develop into the primary electronic message center for the Tampa Bay area.

When you stop and think about all the features and benefits of membership, twenty dollars per year is really a bargain. Won't you help us in our efforts to build our group? Please send in your dues today.

Thanks..... Vern Semrad

The Tampa IBM PC User Group!

WHAT EXACTLY DOES MY TWENTY DOLLARS GET ME?

o 24 Hours a day/ 7 Days a week

Prompt Service from our BBS.. We do not operate from someones Home, where the System goes down when someone decides to do some work. We are always up and running.. (Barring Natural Disasters and/or Acts of God)!

o Full E-Mail Capabilities

You can send mail to anyone that is a Registered user of the BITS OF BLUE BBS (Official Bulletin Board System of the Tampa IBM PC Users Group). You have the capabilities of sending Private mail as well as public messages.

o Over 200 On-Line Files

Sure, Other boards may have more files than us. But does more mean better? We offer the most current updates of Public Domain Software. We also have a club library of more than 3000 Files.

o Full support from the Tampa IBM PC User Group

The Tampa IBM PC User Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User. From the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Any questions that you may have will be competently answered by someone in the club.

o Access to club meetings

Each month the group meets on the second Wednesday to discuss the latest developments in the PC world. There are usually one or more major demonstrations held at each meeting. We have many vendors come to our meetings with a demo of their latest and greatest. Companies such as Ashton-Tate, Lotus, Microsoft, and others have all sent representatives to our meetings. Some of them even bring door prizes!

o Access to club library

The club maintains a library of more than 3000 files on diskettes. This library is brought to each meeting and members are encouraged to copy files or whole diskettes from this library. A computer or two is also provided to make the copies possible during the entire evening; before, during, or after the meeting.

o Newsletter

The club produces a monthly newsletter that contains many interesting articles as well as the latest news available to us from the PC world.

o Discounts at local Bay Area Businesses

There are several businesses that offer discounts to members of the Tampa IBM PC User Group, most of whom are Members themselves!

continued

CLASSIFIED

Opportunities for members to serve on Board of Directors. Secretary and Librarian NEEDED.No experience necessary. The Secretary takes minutes at the meeting and sends them to the editor. Having a Secretary would probably speed things up with publication of the newsletter. This would be an excellent way for someone new to become more acquainted with our group. If interested in either Secretary or Librarian call HARVEY at 932-6745

PURPOSE

The Tampa IBM PC User Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Any questions that you may have will be competently answered by someone in the club.

. . . to encourage, enlighten, and inform

Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible. We invite all interested individuals to join us. Our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

WHAT EXACTLY...? continued

BITS OF BLUE - BBS NEWS

While Bits of Blue is the Board for the Tampa IBM PC Users Group, there are some specific levels in the access structure. The access levels, requirements and time limits available are:

Level	Mins Per Call	Mins Daily	REQUIREMENT
5	15	30	Guest Caller
7	45	70	Unverified Member of the PC User Group
8	120	120	Member of the IBM PC User Group
9	120	120	Board Member of the IBM PC User Group

➡ We now give time credits for uploads on a TWO minute for ONE minute basis!!!! (available to current members only) ⬅

➡ Guest Callers may also download:
PKZ102.EXE - Zip Utility from the Personal download section
MSTRLIST.ZIP - Master File List of all files on this board
PCUGSUBJ.ZIP - Latest list of LIBRARY files for the group

BITS OF BLUE - NEWSLETTER

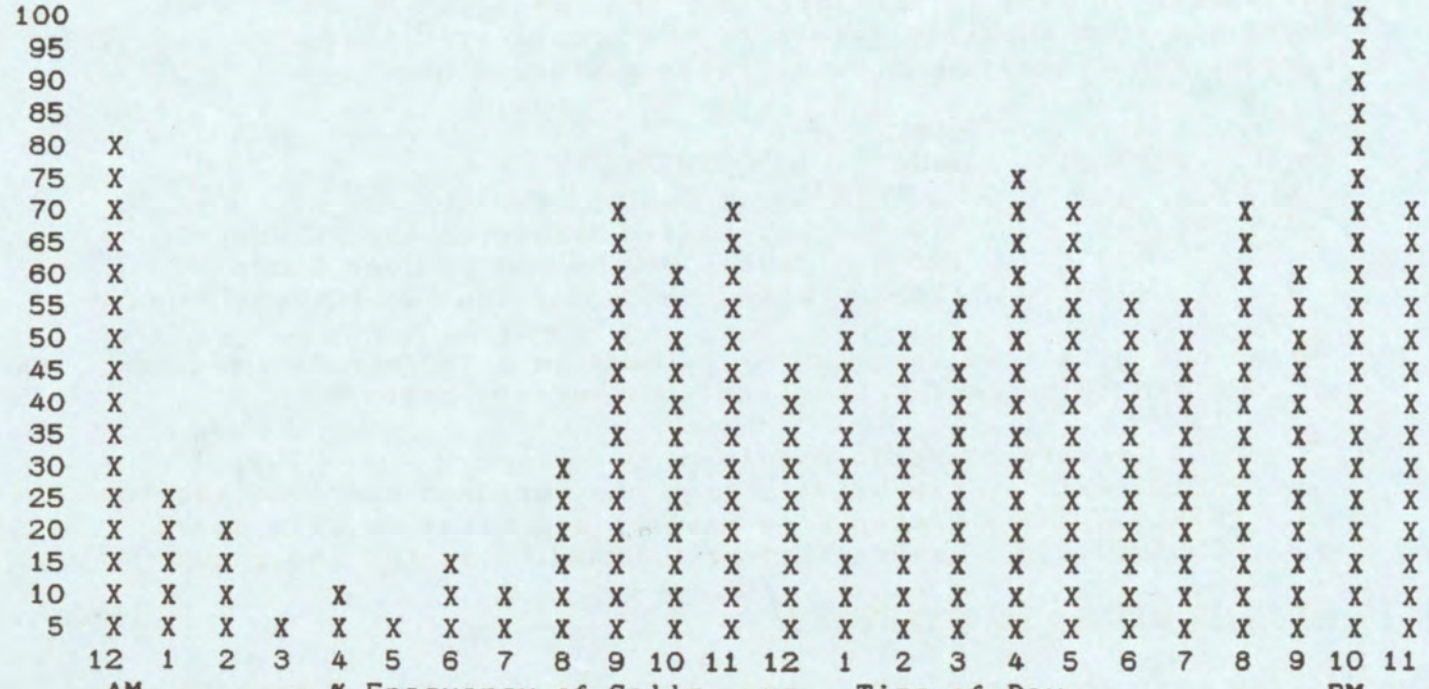
If you Join the Tampa IBM PC User Group Club, you will Receive your monthly issue of Bits of Blue (Newsletter) and Full access to the Board. The Tampa IBM PC UG Meets on the 2nd Wednesday every month at 6:00 pm. Dues are $20 A year. To join our club come to a meeting and sign up or mail the attached application with a check for $20 to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group. P.O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492

Welcome to Bits of Blue

Time Utilization Statistics

Time Period	05-08-1990 - 05-22-1990
Number of Days	14
Total Calls for Period	231
Average Calls per Day	16.5
Total Time Used	45 Hrs, 55 Min, 8 Secs
Average Time Used Daily	2 Hrs, 59 Min, 48 Secs
Utilization vs Total Time	13 %
Busiest Time	10 PM with 19 calls

The following Graph shows Busiest Time as 100%



The information above may be viewed by selecting Bulletin 10 - USAGE STATISTICS on the Board.

BUGS OR BUNNY?

If you logged onto the BBS back in April you may have noticed that we were experiencing technical difficulty.

It all began around Easter... sending the Sysop to investigate. While he suspected it to be just a Bug he Continued to Track the cause (Learning the true meaning of Spring Break).

BBS is up and running strong

It wasn't long before Kevan discovered that a little chocolate bunny had gotten a hold of the Mother Board and made a real mess of things - fried Chips everywhere!"Please Don't Kill me!" a voice cried out as he Located the bunny. (BUGS, of course). He explained that a Call from Kermit brought him here. Kermit was spreading the word at lightening speed that he had Data about "20 eggs one could Pick up for Free, not to worry about Cash".Their Chat came to an End when Bugs Reported that he "didn't know Zip about any Mother being bored!" (Well, nobody talks about Kevan's Mom!) He Booted Bugs out exclaiming "Go! and leave the Megs." Ready to Exit Bugs remarked "Save the Routine, Doc, and YOU keep them eggs, they're all scrambled!"

Bewildered, Kevan rubbed his eyes, when suddenly he Recalled. He was at the controls one day talking to himself about "Cache being a problem, adding 20 Megs, and someone having a New Mother Board!"

UPTOWN / BBS - UPGRADE

Yes - The BBS is up and running strong with many additions and great changes. Our Sysop KEVAN SHERIDAN has spent more hours than most people spend on a regular job working on the conversions. All of his time and everyone's patience (his included) have paid off in a big way. He made some nice improvements.

The board has had a new 20 meg hard drive and disk cache installed. Other new features include new transfer protocols (Kermit, True Ymodem, ZMODEM, and PUMA), increased upload credit, and some interesting System Statistics (some of which KEVAN has turned into Bulletins - see page 8).

The Bulletin Board is based on an IBM PC XT and Runs Version 17.3 RBBS-PC. The Software for it is currently available for downloading. This system adjusts to the parameters of the caller. If you have any problem leave a message for the Sysop using the C)omments when the system asks for a function.

...see it for yourself.

Make an effort to check out the board soon if you haven't. It looks tremendous. Don't take my word for it - call and see it for yourself. KEVAN is there for good news too. Leave him a message letting him know what you think of it. Your FEEDBACK is very helpful and rewarding. Watch for an article in coming months as KEVAN outlines some details of the conversion.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BBS SYSOP
Kevan Sheridan . . 237-0100

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VOICE: 237-4997

Access 24 hrs/ day
7 days/week
Full E-mail Capabilities
Over 200 On-Line Files

FULL SUPPORT from the IBM PC Users Group

DISCOUNTS at the following Bay Area Businesses

The Operating System
550 Reo St., Suite 300
Tampa, FL

SUNRISE Computer Supplies
1224 S. Dale Mabry
Tampa, FL

ACCESS to the CLUB'S PROGRAM LIBRARY

ASCII text files containing comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 51/4 diskette (360 kb or 1.2 Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next month's newsletter.




Barbara Peck
Editor - Bits of Blue
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492




TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP
APPLICATION

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ☐ NEW ☐ CHANGE ☐ RENEWAL

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? _____
_____

Do you have access to a computer? _____ What type? _____

What do you presently use your computer for? _____
_____
_____

What major software do you use? _____
_____
_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. memory, printers, etc.)
_____

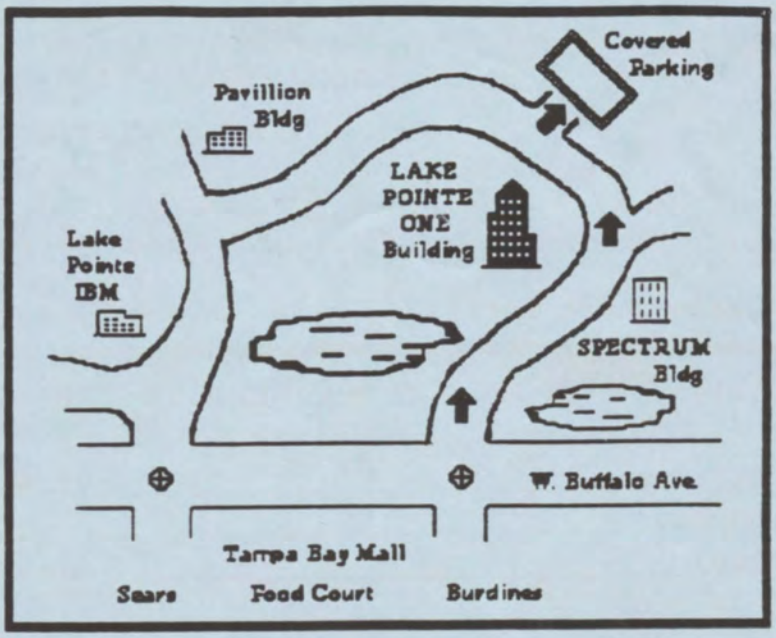
Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Checks payable to *Tampa IBM PC Users Group*

Mail to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

The IBM Customer Center is in the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING. This is the big glass building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance to use is on Buffalo at the traffic light in front of Burdines. Follow the street to the right. Approaching SPECTRUM you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left. Continue to go past the Spectrum Parking to LAKE POINTE ONE'S covered parking on the right. Come on in and join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. Please remember to Sign in.



The LAKE POINTE ONE Building is shown above as the black building. The eight story glass building is easy to spot. It is the largest building in the Tampa Bay Park.

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

JUNE 13 - Microsoft
JULY 11 - Ashton-Tate
AUGUST 8 - WordPerfect

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

NO. 3.05 **JULY 1990**

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: July 11, 1990
TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE:

IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
Lake Pointe One Building
3109 West Buffalo Ave.
ROOM 450
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER:

ASHTON-TATE

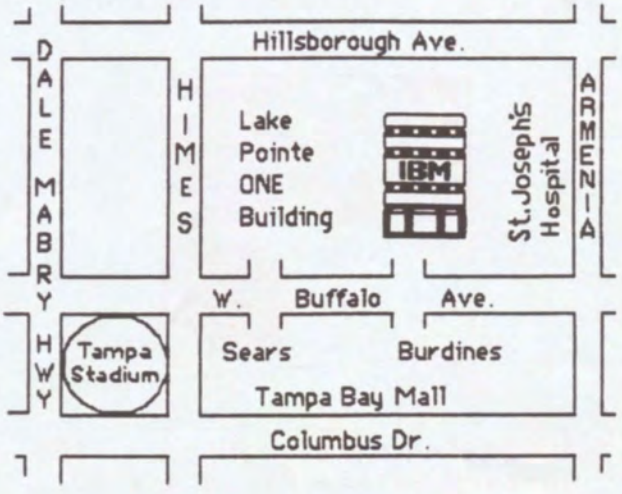
Area Representative
KEVIN NOLLAN Presents

APPLAUSE II

Refreshment Break

Membership Questions
DOOR PRIZE Drawing

DIRECTIONS



JULY - DOOR PRIZES !!!

(donor - Ashton-Tate)

- **APPLAUSE II**
- **CONTROL ROOM**

NEW MEETING LOCATION

We have moved! IBM is most generous in supplying us with convenient parking, meeting, & equipment facilities where we are now holding our meetings. SEE the address & location above! Come join us.



PLEASE WELCOME -

NEW MEMBERS

DANIEL BARRETT
FRANK CIMINO
PETER CRANE
CALVIN JOHNSON
CHRIS LLENES
JEFFREY MAY
MICHAEL STAUBES
RUSS STEPP
DAVID WILLIAMS

APPLAUSE II -
by ASHTON-TATE

Applause II is a business presentation package. It includes applications for charting, drawing, and electronic slide shows. Using Ashton Tate's Applause II you can Build charts, add artwork, and then output to screen, slides, printer, overheads and more.



Suggested retail price - $495.
Current retail Price - $299.
It could be yours for just $1 - as ASHTON TATE has donated APPLAUSE II and CONTROL ROOM for our JULY door prizes.

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INTRODUCING
LARRY ANDERS - LIBRARIAN

The Club is proud to announce that our new Librarian, LARRY ANDERS is our No.1 Uploader on the BITS OF BLUE BBS. This means that LARRY has donated more shareware (programs permitted to be freely copied) to our BBS than any other member. As a member, you too can have these programs in your personal collection. LARRY will bring the Club Diskette Library to the meetings where you may copy the those programs you want. Please bring your own formatted diskettes. He will also maintain the list of our collection and keep us notified of changes. Welcome to the Board, LARRY.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

When you need to inform the Board of Directors of address changes, please address your message to the Membership Chairman, VERN SEMRAD. Addressing it to the BBS SysOP slows down processing of your membership (as he has to forward it to the Chairman, also). Our Membership Chairman maintains all address information, prints newsletter labels, and (along with the Treasurer) maintains data on who is a paid member & who is not. You will save some time when you forward membership messages, questions, or payments to: VERN SEMRAD at 886-1197 or Address inquiries to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Chairman
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

BITS OF BLUE - SAMPLE ISSUES

The Club is designing a 1 pg Newsletter with 1/2 pg Membership Application on the 2nd side, reserving regular Newsletters for Members. This is our FREE copy; & possibly for future BBS callers.

THANK-YOU MICROSOFT & KIRK

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group Board and members extend a sincere thank-you to MicroSoft Corp. and KIRK COVERT for his fine demonstration of newly released WINDOWS 3.0. Learning about "WINDOWS" was a pleasure.

JUNE 13, 1990 MINUTES - 1st Meeting at IBM Location

HARVEY called the meeting to order. STEVE SPEAIRS introduced the Board members and commended KEVAN SHERIDAN, our BBS SysOp, on a job well done. (KEVAN upgraded our Club Bulletin Board & added several new features.) Thanks to VERN SEMRAD, our Membership Chairman, the TIBMPCUG was listed in the Data Bus, and in the Agenda and High Tech sections of The Tampa Tribune. HARVEY turned the meeting over to Guest speaker KIRK COVERT from MICROSOFT.

Once again KIRK made another great MICROSOFT presentation showing us a video of newly released WINDOWS 3.0. It was done in a clever and humorous "Wheel of Fortune" theme where we met WENDY(representing MS-WINDOWS), her opponent BACK-SLASH,& the hostess GLADUS QUO. After the video he took us on a complete tour of WINDOWS 3.0 using an IBM 386 SX computer, furnished by IBM. KIRK began by explaining WINDOWS three modes. He also pointed out that it is very network aware and has a new Solitare Game (Addictive). The suggested retail is $149 - Current retail price $99. KIRK invited questions and did a tremendous job of answering them before we recesseed for refreshments. [Recap of WINDOWS 3.0 in a later issue.]

STEVE SPEAIRS, our own technical wizard, showed & explained Ashton-Tate's CONTROL ROOM, a built-in consultant (UTIL) that analyzes system capabilities.

The business portion was short, but informative. HARVEY showed us a COMPAQ LTE 286 LapTop,also called a "NOTEBOOK" computer due to its size.(COMPAQ LTE 286 courtesy of KEVAN SHERIDAN and his employer.)

An ASHTON-TATE representative is presenting APPLAUSE II at our July 11 meeting. (See front or back page for New Meeting address and location.)After the 50/50 cash drawing HARVEY thanked CHRIS, our IBM Host.

GREEN Turns GREENER!!

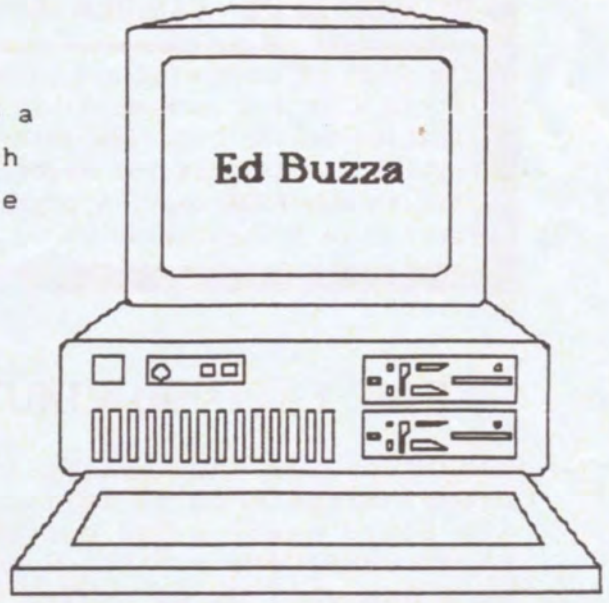
THE WINNER IS . . .



ROBERT GREEN wins 50/50 Cash Drawing

MEMBERS - To Claim Prizes: Please PRINT your name and prize on the winning ticket.

BATCH STUFF



Have you ever wished that you could make a decision from the keyboard while in a batch job? Have you wanted to be able to have the batch job do different things by entering one or more keystrokes? You can, you know. There is a small program, GETKEY.COM, that is available on many BBSs and from shareware sources that will do the job for you. What GETKEY.COM does is act like a PAUSE command, without a message, waiting for a keystroke. When any key is pressed, GETKEY then sets ERRORLEVEL to the ASCII value of the keystroke.

ERRORLEVEL is an area of memory where DOS, or some applications, store an error code upon the completion of certain tasks. Normally ERRORLEVEL will show a value of 0-4 (e.g. 0=normal, 1=user terminated, 2=prog error, etc.). Since GETKEY.COM sets ERRORLEVEL to the ASCII value of the keystroke, it can be tested by the IF command. The IF command provides for branching; so, by testing ERRORLEVEL, the batch program can jump/branch to another part of the batch program.

For instance: We put a couple of messages on the screen asking the user to select option one by pressing F1 and to select option two by pressing F2 (we only put two options on the screen). Now the ASCII value of the function keys ranges from 59 (F1) to 68 (F10). Now, if GETKEY.COM is executed, it waits for a keystroke, and if F1 was pressed ERRORLEVEL is set to 59; and if F2 was pressed ERRORLEVEL is set to 60. If any other key is pressed, ERRORLEVEL will be set to the value of that key. We'll use this in a moment.

Remember that the "IF ERRORLEVEL" test is true if the value being tested is the same OR HIGHER than the value found in ERRORLEVEL. By testing for a value higher than what we are looking for, we catch any erroneous keystrokes. Then by "stepping down" we can test for all the good values. And finally, after exhausting the good values, catch the rest of the erroneous keystrokes.

(continued on page 5)

(BATCH . . . *continued from page 4*)

To illustrate this whole thing, let's look at a sample batch program (the semicolon and following text are only for illustration).

```
ECHO OFF
CLS                                     ;Get a clean screen
ECHO    Press F1 for a DIR of A:        ;Screen message to...
ECHO    Press F2 for a DIR of B:        ;...show options
GETKEY                                  ;Wait for keystroke
IF ERRORLEVEL 61 GOTO ERROR             ;Test for high error
IF ERRORLEVEL 60 GOTO B                 ;Test for F2
IF ERRORLEVEL 59 GOTO A                 ;Test for F1
:ERROR                                  ;Label, and low error
ECHO      You MUST press F1 or F2       ;Tell the dummy
GOTO END                                ;Quit batch
:A                                      ;Label, F1 option
DIR A:                                  ;Do F1 option
GOTO END                                ;F1 option finished
:B                                      ;Label, F2 option
DIR B:                                  ;Do F2 option
:END
```

Note that the :END label is required for the error test and for the completion of the F1 option. No "GOTO" is needed after the test for low value because the prior ERRORLEVEL tests will not be true. According to this batch program, only the F1 (59) and F2 (60) keystrokes are valid; everything else is an error. o

Now, you can get fancy and put up a text-graphic or even a graphic screen to show the various options that you want the user to have - just like a menu system. To handle this sort of thing, you need to hide the cursor and prevent the cursor from advancing beyond the 25th line. But, that's another article.

If you are really interested in setting up your own menu system or learning about batch jobs, get the book "Supercharging MS-DOS"(tm) by Van Wolverton published by Microsoft(tm) Press. There are two versions, one with a disk containing all the routines in the book, and the other without the disk.

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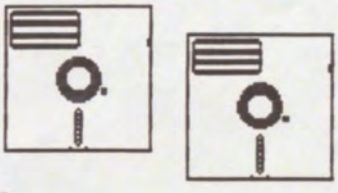
DISCOUNTS at the following Bay Area Businesses

The Operating System
550 Reo St., Suite 300
Tampa, FL

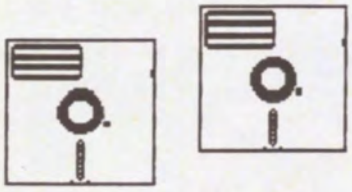
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Barbara Peck
Editor - Bits of Blue
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

PURPOSE : The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ☐ NEW ☐ CHANGE ☐ RENEWAL

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? _____
_____

Do you have access to a computer? _____ What type? _____

What do you presently use your computer for? _____
_____
_____

What major software do you use? _____
_____
_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. memory, printers, etc.)
_____

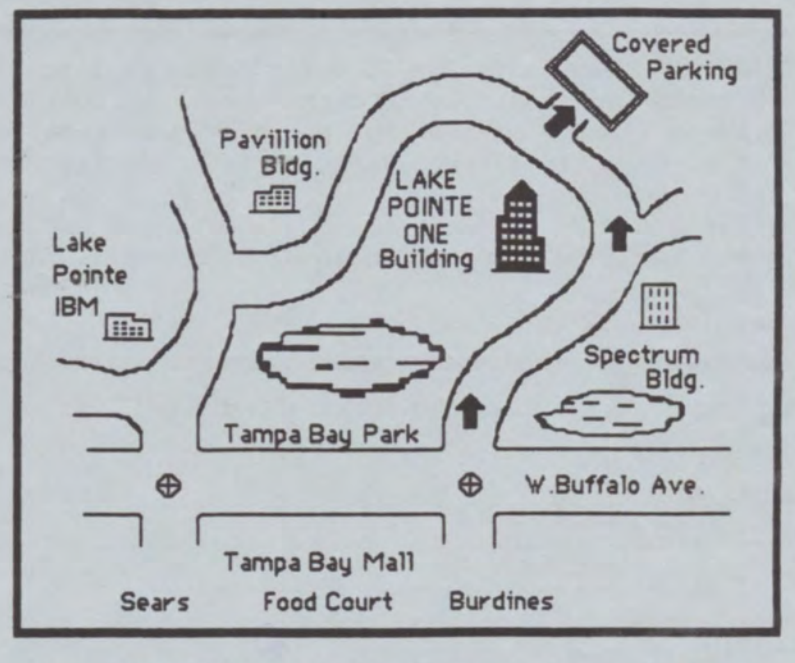
Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Checks payable to *Tampa IBM PC Users Group*

Mail to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING. This is the big glass building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of the Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Buffalo at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Buffalo you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left. Go past Spectrum Parking to LAKE POINTE ONE'S covered parking on the right. Come join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. Please Sign in.



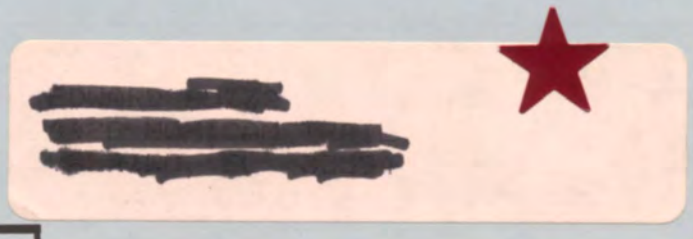
The LAKE POINTE ONE Building is shown above as the black building. The eight story glass building is easy to spot. It is the largest building in the Tampa Bay Park.

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492









UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

JULY 11 - Ashton-Tate
AUGUST 8 - WordPerfect



Bits of Blue

TAMPA IBM-PC USERS GROUP

NO. 3.08 AUGUST 1990

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: August 8, 1990
TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE:

IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
Lake Pointe One Building
3109 West Buffalo Ave.
ROOM 450
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER:

WORDPERFECT

Representative
KENNETH MASON Presents

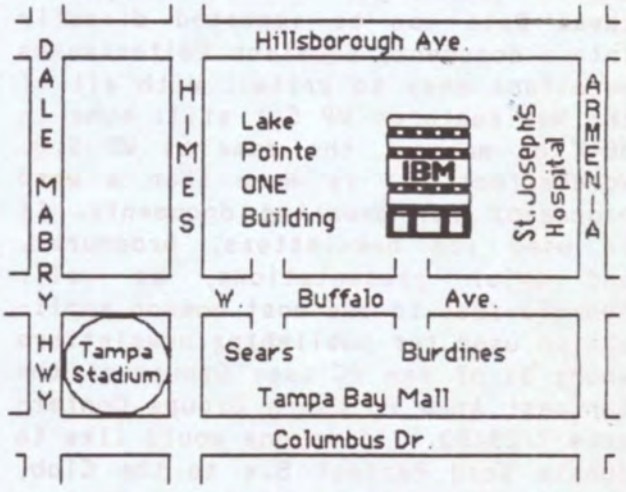
WORDPERFECT 5.1

Refreshment Break

DRAWPERFECT

Demonstration
DOOR PRIZE Drawing

DIRECTIONS



NEW MEMBER wins DOORPRIZE!

Michael Staubes JOINS & WINS DBase IV by Ashton-Tate with the correct $1 ticket. Way to go MICHAEL!

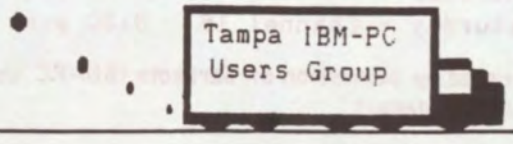
AUGUST - DOOR PRIZES !!

WordPerfect Director Chair, Software, and More

Members ONLY - so join NOW!!!

**** REMINDER! NEW LOCATION ****

We have moved! IBM is most generous in supplying us with convenient parking, meeting, & equipment facilities where we are now holding our meetings. CHECK the address and location above! Come join us.



WELCOME - NEW MEMBERS

DAVID BEACH
DAVID KINTZ
STEVEN MORRIS
EDWARD PURCELL
STEVE SANDERS
STEVE SEITER
BETTY SHAW
CHERYL WATSON
MICHAEL ZICHECK

WORDPERFECT 5.1

by WORDPERFECT

WordPerfect is one of the most popular word processors today. WordPerfect 5.1 is now "Easier to use" and has More than 30 New Features. Some new and/or improved features are: Tables, Merge (Magnified & simplified), Mailing Labels (creating is a breeze), Spreadsheet Data can be imported directly into a document, Equation Editor(makes equations easy to write). With all of the New features WP 5.1 still runs in 384K of memory, the same as WP 5.0. WordPerfect 5.1 is more than a word processor for creating documents. It is used for newsletters, brochures, and major presentations, as well. (WordPerfect is the most common application used for publishing newsletters among 11 of the PC User Groups at the SunCoast Area PC Users Groups Conference 7/28/90.) If anyone would like to donate Word Perfect 5.x to the Club, please, Contact our Editor, Barbara Peck at 885-9935. We would love to try WordPerfect 5.1 for OUR newsletters. - This MUST be an UN-REGISTERED version.

DRAWPERFECT

by WORDPERFECT

With DrawPerfect you can have your own art department right at your fingertips ... or at your mouse's! You can create drawings, charts, and graphs & with little effort bring them into your WordPerfect document or output to screen, printer, overhead transparencies, slides, and more. Current Retail Price - $349.



COMPUTER CHRONICLES SOFTWARE TOP 10

1. Microsoft Windows v3.0
2. PC Tools Deluxe v6.0
3. Quarterdeck's Expanded Memory Manager 386
4. WordPerfect v5.1
5. Info Select
6. PC Globe
7. PC USA
8. Quicken
9. Lotus 1-2-3 v2.2
10. Procomm Plus v1.1

(Provided by PC Connections)

Computer Chronicles is an excellent TV newsmagazine on current interests in computer hardware and software.

Sunday - Channel 3 11:00 p.m.
Thursday - Channel 16 10:00 p.m.
Saturday - Channel 16 3:30 p.m.

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Batch Commands



by Ed Buzza

As mentioned in a prior article, this is the "other story" about the GETKEY.COM program (and a few others). It is very easy to expand the power of batch jobs through the use of a few utility programs. With a handful of programs, you can create custom menus for yourself or others, get runtime decisions from the keyboard, hide or show the cursor,or put the cursor wherever you want. These programs are: ANSWER.COM, ASK.COM, GETKEY.COM, IDECURS.COM, LOCATE.COM and SHOWCURS.COM.

When DOS puts something on the screen, it's as though DOS "painted" the screen with the data. It stays there! This feature enables us to put a menu on the screen and, by using LOCATE.COM, we can then ECHO instructions in the same spot on the screen. By keeping the cursor away from line 24, the screen does NOT scroll. Just remember, if you overwrite a message, the new message must be as long as the original. Otherwise, what's left of the original message will still be there.In effect, ECHO is "painting" new data on top of the old data.

These programs, plus ASC.COM, CHECK.COM, ESC.COM, and ONCL.COM, and this article are available in the file BOB-BAT.ZIP on the Bits of Blue BBS or in the club library. Documentation for all programs is included.

Now let's put some of this to use. Create the following batch program (do NOT type the semicolon nor the data after it, it's only for your information) and name it BOBTEST.BAT:

```
ECHO OFF
CLS
HIDECURS                          ; Make cursor invisible
LOCATE 10,20                      ; Position ghostly cursor
ECHO This is a Bits of Blue test. ; Put up a message
LOCATE 12,30                      ; Set new position
ECHO Press any key to continue.   ; Put up a message
REPLY                             ; Wait for keystroke
LOCATE 10,43                      ; Behind "...Blue"
ECHO revelation.                  ; Overwrite "test."
LOCATE 12,55                      ; On top of period
ECHO , please.                    ; Note spacing
REPLY                             ; Let user see results
SHOWCURS                          ; Make cursor visible
ECHO End of BOBTEST.BAT
```

Now don't just read this thing - create the batch file and run it. Just be sure that the batch file and the commands it uses are in the same drive and directory; or that the drive and directory are in your PATH statement. Of course, you can put these routines in whatever directory holds all your other utility programs (and that the PATH statement reflects that drive and directory).

The other commands (ASC, CHECK, ESC, ONCL) were included as part of this package to add a little more power to your batch files. ASC.COM can be popped up when you forget just what the ALT number is for that particular drawing character

continued pg.7

July 11, 1990 - Minutes - 2nd Meeting at IBM

Our president called the meeting to order and promptly turned it over to Kevin Nollan. Kevin is the local representative for Ashton-Tate. He did and excellent job describing the features of Applause II. This is Ashton-Tate's business graphic and presentation program. It allows you to produce printer output, overhead transparencies, 35mm slides, and, of course, a PC slide show. As demonstrated, the program seems to be very easy to use (move the mouse, click; move the mouse, click; and you're done). Applause II has a wealth of features: custom color palettes, full function drawing board, chart & word templates, Bitstream fonts, pull down menus, 3D charts, library of 400 images, and import/export filters for the major database, spreadsheet, and graphic files as well as ASCII.

Literature and demo diskettes were made available to the members. Kevin apologized that he wasn't able to bring along a copy of Applause II and of ControlRoom to be donated as door prizes. He promised that they would be there at our next meeting. He did more than redeem himself however by donating a copy of dBASE IV.

After the Ashton-Tate presentation Harvey did his usual superb job of informing us of the new products, trends, and in general, what's going on in the world of personal computers. Some of the items he mentioned were:

1) New UPS devices-- one that fits into a slot in the PC & another that is built into the power supply unit.
2) Hewlett Packard's announcement of LaserJet IIID(prints on both sides)suggested price of $3595.
3) Pizazz (a screen capture program) is highly regarded.
4) Bug in Windows3 that can wipe out all data on the hard drive. The combination of using Smart Drive with some 3rd party partitioning software (On Track, Golden Bow) seems to be the culprit.
5) If you get an "Incompatible" message when loading SmartDrive, pay heed. If you go ahead with the loading, you're in deep trouble .
6) A 3 1/2 floppy disk will soon be available that will hold 20 meg of data. This new disk drive is very expensive.
7) If you get the Excel upgrade you get the new Windows 3 for free.

The president also reminded all of us that only club members (paid up club members) are eligible for door prizes.

At the next meeting, WordPerfect will demonstrate their Draw Perfect program.

Just a Reminder....

(Secretary's note: If you haven't yet paid your dues, do it now.)

the WINNER is. . .

MICHAEL STAUBES
- DBase IV (donated by Ashton-Tate)

ED BUZZA
50/50 Cash Drawing

Members ONLY. To Claim Prizes-Please PRINT your name and prize on the winning ticket.

B.B.S..... Bargain Basement Software or Bulletin Board System

by Larry Anders

While flying the friendly skies recently and not having my portable PC with me to bide my time, or not having any documentation on a new program I was trying to learn, I decided to read the airline magazine in the seat pocket in front of me. To my pleasant surprise there was an article on my favorite subject; Bulletin Boards! The article was written by Belinda Bailey, a free lance writer and computer consultant from Greensboro, NC. The following is a summary of her article, but bear with me - I am not a free lance writer ..... just a part-time computer consultant.

"How you can get sophisticated, commercial-quality software packages at rock bottom prices, plus free home trial!?" Just as enterprising entrepreneurs have flooded the market with faster, less expensive, feature-packed clones of the IBM PC, the software world is rushing to do the same thing. One of IBM's major hardware competitors, Apple Computer Inc, was begun by two boys in a garage. Many of the new software programs being developed have just as humble of a beginning, and just as promising a future. The next Lotus 1-2-3 or WordPerfect may be as close as your local BBS in the form of "shareware". After obtaining a copy of a particular package you can test-drive it on your own computer. If you decide you like the software you may purchase it, usually at a fraction of the cost of its commercial counterparts. Although the cost may be rock bottom, many of these programs are commercial-quality packages.



All you need to dial into a BBS is a PC, a terminal emulation package, a modem and a phone line. "Where do you get the phone numbers of the various BBS you ask?" Just call our very own Tampa IBM PC Users Group's BBS "Bits of Blue." On "Bits of Blue" is a list of all our local BBSs in the Tampa Bay area updated monthly. "This is probably very expensive you say!" Not so! There are just as many FREE Boards as there are SUBSCRIPTION Boards. But even if the Board charges a fee, one good program will pay for itself over and over again. With your membership to our user's group, "Bits of Blue" is free.

Once the terminal emulation package and modem are set up properly, which is usually automatic, all you have to do is have your computer dial the BBS. Once you are connected, type your first and last name when requested. Then, answer all the questions you are asked by typing your answer on the keyboard. The first time you connect to a BBS you are usually asked some routine questions such as what password you would like to use, whether you have a color monitor or not and what download protocol you will be using. Some BBSs ask more questions than others. Once you have answered the questions just make the selections from the menu options presented. If there is an online tutorial or information, and this is all new to you, you may want to read it first. Some BBSs allow first timers to download files immediately while others verify the information about the user first. *continued pg.* 6

continued from pg 5

BBS - BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM

In either case, once you have reached the file area you may list the files to see if there are any that interest you. Note the names of any you would like to try. Then to copy (download) a file from the BBS to your PC select the download file option and specify the file you wish to download. After a few seconds or a few minutes you will be finished. Once the file is on your own PC, or a diskette in your own PC, disconnect systematically from the BBS and you are almost ready to test-drive the software.

Since most BBSs archive files in special compressed formats to save space, be sure to download the unarchiver as well as any file. You only need to do this the first time and most BBSs use the same format.

When the software is on your computer you are free to try the program. The program may do more or less than its commercial counterparts. If the software does all it claims and meets your needs, you may keep it and use it by simply registering with the developer. You are on the honor system during the home trial. Developers fully expect you to register and pay for the privilege of using their software. In return, you will receive full legal use of the product. By registering, you may receive a bound manual, product support and updates when available. In some cases the shareware version posted on a BBS may only be 90% functional and upon registering you will be mailed a fully functional product, but this is not usually the case.

While commercial companies charge prices in the $250 to $500 range for their packages in order to offset their losses due to software piracy or illegal copying, shareware vendors encourage free distribution at a price range of $25 to $100 for a quality product.

The types of shareware available covers almost every software category known: spreadsheets, communication, database, graphics and many, many more. There are communication packages, spell checkers, compilers, word processors, terminal emulators and of course, games and entertainment. There are even unique applications, such as a Bible search program that finds any word or phrase in the King James Version of the Bible in two seconds or a program to help you install your satellite dish properly. What variety! and only a phone call away.

There is always a concern that a "virus" may be embedded in one of the programs. Most BBS operators or "Sysops" test for viruses in all software before making it available to the public; but you may want to check with the sysop first before you download from a new BBS. You can always download your own virus protection program if it makes you feel safer.

BBSs not only provide files to download but most also provide public electronic mail (E-mail) which acts as sort of an electronic corkboard that users can post messages on items for sale, job listings, notes of general interest, or most importantly, ask for and receive help! The BBS gives you access to a whole network of other users who have been through the same problems as you.

One side benefit of a BBS is the entertainment value. After scanning the BBS for the latest shareware bargains, settle in for a few games. Some are one-person games that you can download and play on your own PC; others are on-line, interactive games that you play while dialed into the BBS. Either way it's lots of fun and a great way to relax. But be careful: Both the games and the bargains are ADDICTING.

Note: As a reminder....we have our own BBS, operated by Kevan Sheridan, which is fast becoming one of the best in the Tampa Bay area. You can help make it better! Join today! - **L.A.**

SUNCOAST Area PC Users Groups Hold Joint CONFERENCE

The SunCoast PC Users Groups met Saturday July 28 in Sarasota to discuss common goals and plans. While the joint Conference was scheduled for 3 hours the interest was so intense that most stayed for the duration of 5 1/2 hours. Board members were present from 11 Florida groups, representing over 3000 PC Users. Attending from Tampa were: Barbara Peck, Kevan Sheridan, and Steve Spears. Many of the topics discussed can benefit our own group. The board will be meeting to discuss ideas from the Conference in hopes of offering even more benefits to our members. Below are some of the topics covered:

NEWSLETTERS
- ADVERTISING in Newsletters
- DATA BUS - FREE Issues
- WHO Will Supply Articles

MEMBERSHIP
- Brochures
- SIG's - Special Interest Groups

LIBRARIES
PROGRAMS (speakers)
HARDWARE/SOFTWARE
BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEMS
ASSOC. OF PC USERS GROUPS

IBM SUPPORT
- Bulletin Board
- PS/2 Support Magazine

FUTURE CONFERENCES
- Group discussions - 1st half
- Combined Overview - 2nd half
- DataBase of Attendees
- Newsletter Exchange
- Manatee: Oct. 20 or 27, 1-7pm

If you would like to add suggestions or have topics that you would like our group to support, please bring them to our attention by calling Harvey Bruneau at 932-6745 and/or put a C)omment or M)essage on the BBS at 239-3704.

COMPUTER SHOWS



September 7-9: Pinellas Square Mall
Business,Computer & Electronics Show
September 28-30: Orlando Expo Centre
Great Southern Electronics & Computer Expo
October 17,18: Tampa's Curtis Hixon Hall
Computer & Business Equipment ExpoTech

continued from pg.3

BATCH COMMANDS

that you want to use. CHECK.COM will help you to check a variety of machine characteristics and data that you can use to customize a batch file for a particular task. ESC.COM is an easy way to enter the ESCape character for ANSI sequences that set the colors of your screen or redefine keys. ONCL.COM has functions similar to ESC.COM.

Many computer people say "One day I'm going to learn how to write a batch job." So why not start today with the above exercise? Batch jobs are very easy to write and can save a lot of repetitive work. -E.B.

THANKS - ASHTON-TATE & KEVIN

Sincerest gratitude to Ashton-Tate and KEVIN NOLLAN from the Tampa IBMPC Users Group. We enjoyed KEVIN's fine showing of APPLAUSE II at our July meeting and appreciate Ashton-Tate's gracious donation of DBaseIV.

BITS OF BLUE - Samples & Flyers

The Club now distributes a FREE 1 pg FLYER with 1/2 pg Membership Application on the 2nd side. SAMPLE issues of the monthly newsletter are available by request.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT
Harvey Bruneau . . 932-6745

VICE PRESIDENT
Steve Speairs . . . 875-1095

TREASURER
Bill Fuller 832-0125

PROGRAM CHAIRMAN
Bob Fultz 287-5515

MEMBER AT LARGE
Roger Waters . . . 224-6079

SECRETARY
OPEN

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Barbara Peck . . . 885-9935

LIBRARIAN
Larry Anders . . . 989-9119

EDUCATION
Ed Buzza 685-5898

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN
Vern Semrad 886-1197

BBS SYSOP
Kevan Sheridan . . 237-0100

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

BITS OF BLUE BULLETIN BOARD
** DATA: 239-3704 **
VOICE: 237-4997

Access 24 hrs/ day
7 days/week
Full E-mail Capabilities
Numerous On-Line Files

FULL SUPPORT from the IBM PC Users Group

DISCOUNTS at the following Bay Area Businesses

The Operating System
550 Reo St., Suite 300
Tampa, FL

SUNRISE Computer Supplies
1224 S. Dale Mabry
Tampa, FL

ACCESS to the CLUB'S PROGRAM LIBRARY

ASCII text files containing comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 51/4 diskette (360 kb or 1.2 Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next month's newsletter.




Barbara Peck
Editor - Bits of Blue
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492




TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

PURPOSE : The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ☐ NEW ☐ CHANGE ☐ RENEWAL

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Company Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone _____

How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? _____

_____

Do you have access to a computer? _____ What type? _____

What do you presently use your computer for? _____

_____

_____

What major software do you use? _____

_____

_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. memory, printers, etc.)

_____

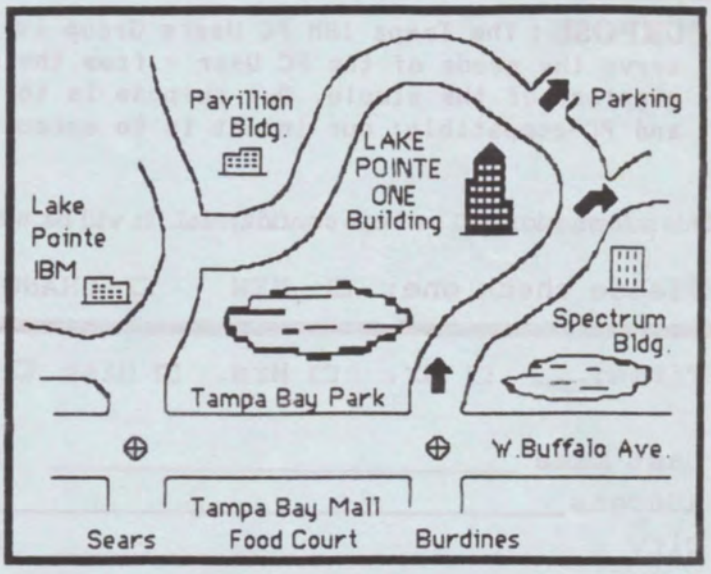
Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Checks payable to *Tampa IBM PC Users Group*

Mail to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building. This is the tall glass building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Buffalo at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Buffalo you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor & Please Sign in.



The LAKE POINTE ONE Building is shown here as the black building. Being the largest building in the Tampa Bay Park makes it easy to find.

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492





UPCOMING SPEAKERS

August 8:
WORD PERFECT 5.1
DRAW PERFECT

September 12: BORLAND shows PARADOX
PRODIGY

Oct 10:
DIGITAL RESEARCH with DR DOS 5.0

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

NO. 3.09 SEPTEMBER 1990

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 12, 1990**
TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE:

IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
Lake Pointe One Building
3109 West Buffalo Ave.
ROOM 450
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER:

BORLAND

Representative
DAVID PRINTZ Presents

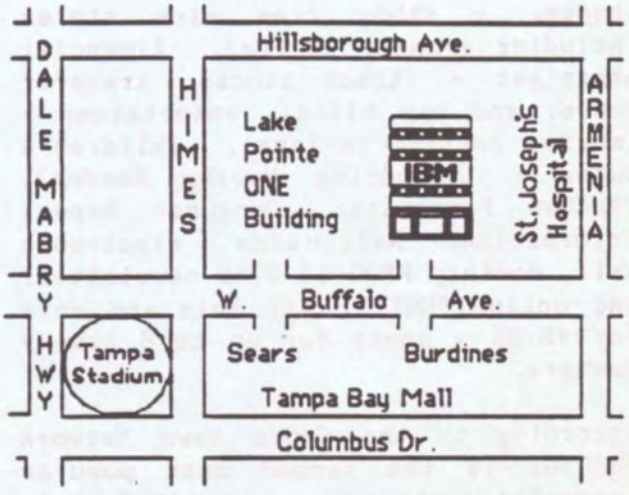
PARADOX

Refreshment Break

PRODIGY

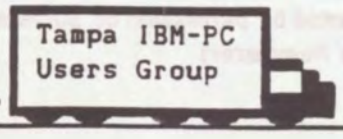
On-Line Demonstration
DOOR PRIZE Drawing

DIRECTIONS



* * * NOMINATIONS * * *

Officer Elections are coming up soon. Now is a great time to try an office out. Secretary and Program Chairman are both OPEN and Volunteers would be accepted. Please, consider who you would like to nominate in the coming months.



NEW MEMBERS win AGAIN!

Michael Zicheck wins an August Door Prize along with our 2 time winner Michael Staubes. Welcome to the WINNER's cirle.

SEPTEMBER - DOOR PRIZES

PARADOX Members ONLY - so join NOW!!!

FOR ALL - **PRODIGY StartUp Kit** New UpGraded Version

WELCOME. NEW MEMBERS



ROGER BONNETT
THOMAS CROCKETT
LARRY DUPREE
BETTY GOODMAN
HAROLD GOODMAN
BILL GUERRA
MIKE SWEILEM

PRODIGY

A partnership of IBM and SEARS

PRODIGY - the easy to use interactive personal service, which makes your personal computer a personal resource for information, shopping, and entertainment. PRODIGY offers several personal services. Among them are: travel guide - (book your own trips), shopper - (shop from many stores including grocery stores), financial assistant - (track stocks, transfer funds, and pay bills), entertainer - (movie rental reviews), children's tutor - (featuring *Weelky Reader*), Weather Forecaster, Consumer Report information, Nationwide electronic mail, Monthly PRODIGY STAR newsletter, and online "HELP". All this and more for $9.95 a month for up to 6 family members.

According to the *Cable News Network* PRODIGY is the second most popular interactive personal service and it is the fastest growing online service in the country.

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PARADOX

by BORLAND

Paradox is a popular database management software package produced by Borland International, Inc. With PARADOX you won't spend a lot of time programming before you can start your work - PARADOX does the work for you. PARADOX includes everything from database basics to PAL programming - including complex queries and reports, forms and multi-table applications. (PAL is PARADOX's high level programming language - for the in depth users.) This database is more than just a fact finder with its multi-user capability and presentaton graphics.

COMPUTER CHRONICLES SOFTWARE TOP 10

1. Microsoft Windows 3.0
2. PC Tools Deluxe 6.0
3. Quarterdeck's Expanded Memory Manager 386
4. WordPerfect 5.1
5. Quicken
6. Procomm Plus
7. Grammatik IV
8. Info Select 1.11
9. Word for Windows
10. PC Excel 2.1c

(Provided by PC Connections)

Computer Chronicles is an excellent TV newsmagazine on current interests in computer hardware and software.

Sunday - Channel 3 11:00 p.m.
Thursday - Channel 16 10:00 p.m.
Saturday - Channel 16 3:30 p.m.

(Reprinted by permission of Sarasota IBM-PC User's Group Newsletter)

THE HELP SCREEN

– A NEW COLUMN FOR NEW COMPUTER USERS

by Edward J. Kant, P.E., Naples, Fl.

This is the first in what I hope will be a continuing series of HELP columns on the most common DOS commands, device drivers, and other useful tidbits. I realize that many of you are fairly experienced DOSers; however, from talking to people at work, at the Tampa IBMPCUG meetings and from my experience as an adult education teacher at Collier County Vo-Tech, I believe there are quite a few of you who would welcome down-to-earth and (relatively) jargon-free communication. I am open to suggestion and encouragement. If, however, this column may be perceived as superfluous, I won't be mortally offended.

Let's start off with three of what I think are among the most used commands in the DOS "vocabulary": **MKDIR (MD)** -- **MaKe DIRectory**; **CHDIR (CD)** -- **CHange DIRectory**; and **RMDIR (RD)** -- **ReMove DIRectory**.

Unless an application has an installation program on the distribution disks, you must usually make up a new directory in which to put the program and overlay files for the application. Many times you might also want to make a subdirectory to hold the data files. I strongly recommend that you arrange your hard disk to keep your data, correspondence and other *CHANGEABLE* files in separate subdirectories from your program files. We will discuss the wisdom of this approach in a later column when we review *BACKUP and RESTORE*.

In general, I will try to use the following discussion structure:

COMMAND NAME	**Internal/external**	**First DOS Version**
⬆	⬆	⬆
Name as used or abbreviated.	Internal to COMMAND.COM or an external program.	1st DOS version where this command appeared.

PURPOSE ⬅ what the command is used for.

SYNTAX ⬅ command with parameters, switches, options, delimiters or other modifiers.

OPTIONS, SWITCHES, DELIMITERS ⬅ what they mean.

DISCUSSION ⬅ a short discussion of where you might use this command along with any cautions, hints, tips, or other potentially useful information.

EXAMPLES ⬅ an example (or several examples) of common usage of the command along with specific hints for that particular combination of switches, etc.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, I can be reached on Bits of Blue under EDWARD KANT, on Compuserve at 71020,2722, on GEnie at E.KANT, or on DELPHI at EDKANT. *continued page 5*

Minutes from the August 8, 1990
TAMPA IBM - P.C. Users Group Meeting

by R. & B. Waters

The meeting was brought to order by Harvey Bruneau. H. Bruneau introduced John Johannesmeyer from the WordPerfect Corporation to lecture on WordPerfect 5.1 and DrawPerfect.

John discussed and showed the many features of WordPerfect 5.1 first. Version 5.1's claim to fame is that it is much easier to use. Now included are pull down menus and mouse support. In addition, this newer version has the ability to create tables anywhere in your documents. WordPerfect 5.1 still uses the same amount of memory that 5.0 does, 384 K.

DrawPerfect allows you to create, design, and edit graphics that may be imported into your WordPerfect documents. (Graphics created with DrawPerfect can be used in other applications, not just WordPerfect) Like other drawing packages, DrawPerfect has the basic drawing and editing commands, but included with DrawPerfect is much more. You may view samples of different types of fonts before you choose them. DrawPerfect uses vector graphics to give you more clarity when zooming in on graphics. One neat feature is the ability to create graphic/slide show presentations. These presentations can be output to the screen, the printer, a file or be made into overhead transparencies and 35 mm slides. Included is a run-time version of the slide show application so you may create a slide show, put it on disk and give it to a friend to see or to distribute. This person does not need to have DrawPerfect in order to view it. There are no licensing or royalty fees.

WordPerfect has also come out with two other "Perfect" applications. LetterPerfect is a stripped down version of WordPerfect. (It's ideal use would be for laptop computers that do not have enough memory, graphic support, etc. to support WordPerfect.) LetterPerfect will import a WordPerfect document with commands that it does not support, and leave them there, while you do the basic editing. When you save it, you can transfer it to WordPerfect and the commands LetterPerfect didn't support would still be there, along with your changes.

Rhymer is another application from WordPerfect. Rhymer will rhyme any word or phrase you tell it to and will allow you to specify which part of the word or phrase to rhyme.

Throughout the presentation, John gave away calculators and hats for those members who actively participated. This was one of our best presentations and the group thanks John for speaking.

H. Bruneau announced that BORLAND will be speaking on PARADOX at the September meeting and PRODIGY will do an online demo. At the October meeting, Digital Research will speak on Dr. Dos 5.0 and Delrina will show PerFORM.

H. Bruneau announced that Ashton-Tate has released dBASE IV 1.1.

the WINNER is . . .

RUSS STEPP - Director's Chair
donated by WordPerfect Corp.

BERYL PUCKETT - SeaGate Disc Drive Guide

ED BUZZA - 50/50 Cash Split - $32

MICHAEL ZICHECK -mystery prize

MICHAEL STAUBES -mystery prize

Please, print PRIZE & Name on winning ticket so we can share this information with ALL members

MAKE DIRECTORY

MKDIR (MD) internal DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **MKDIR** command creates a subdirectory on the specified or default disk drive. Its abbreviation is **MD.**

Syntax: **MKDIR [d:][path]directoryname**

Where: **d:** is the drive for which the current directory will be changed and **path** is the path from the current directory or from the root. All directory names on the path must be separated by a backslash (\). If no path is specified the default (current) path will be displayed.

If the command is entered without a disk drive identifier, the default (current) drive is used. Beginning the path with a backslash (\) tells DOS to create the path starting at the root directory.The absence of a leading slash indicates that you want to create the directory starting at the current directory. Only one directory level may be created by each command, that is, you cannot create two directories at once. Only the root directory has a limit to the number of entries it can have (512 entries -- more than enough for most people). Each subdirectory may contain many subdirectories of its own. The only limitation is that the length of any path from root directory to the desired subdirectory must be less than 64 characters including embedded backslashes.

Examples: **MKDIR B:\DIR1**
Create subdirectory DIR1 on drive B: from the root directory.

MKDIR DIRX
Create subdirectory DIRX on the default (current) disk drive in the current directory.

MKDIR A:\DIR1\DIR2
Create subdirectory DIR2 on drive A: in the directory DIR1 (DIR1 must exist before this command can be executed).

CHANGE DIRECTORY

CHDIR (CD) internal DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **CHDIR** command changes the current directory of the specified or default disk drive. The abbreviation for **CHDIR** is **CD.**

Syntax: **CHDIR [d:][path]**
If no path is specified the default (current) path will be displayed.

Example: **CHDIR** or **CD**
Displays the current directory.

If a disk drive is specified and no path is given, the default path for that drive will be displayed. *continued page 6*

CHANGE DIRECTORY - (CD) *continued from pg. 5*

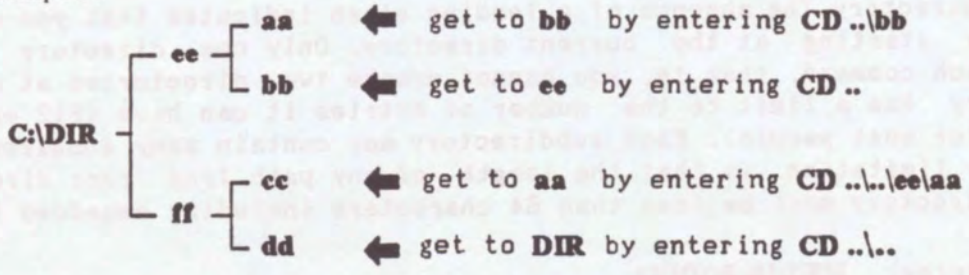
Example: **CHDIR A:**
Displays the current directory of drive A:.

Typically no drive is specified because you usually want to change the current directory of the current drive.

Example: **CHDIR \directory\subdirectory**
Changes the current directory to the specified (sub)directory.

A **shortcut** for accessing subdirectories:
If you are a not in the root directory and want to specify another directory higher in the tree or at the same level, the DOS "shorthand" characters ".." will provide a shortcut. Using .. will "move" you to the parent directory of the current directory. If you are in the root directory and try to use CD .. nothing will happen. Directory names and .. must be seperated by a backslash character (\).

Example:



REMOVE DIRECTORY

RMDIR (RD) internal DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **RMDIR** command removes an empty subdirectory from a disk. Its abbreviation is **RD.**

Syntax: **RMDIR [d:][path]directoryname**

The subdirectory must be empty, except for the "." and ".." entries, before the remove operation will be accepted. If the disk drive is not supplied, the default (current) drive is assumed. The path will start at the root if preceeded with a backslash (\), or it will start at the current directory by omitting the backslash. The last directory name in the path is the one removed. Only one directory level may be removed per command. The root directory and the current directory cannot be removed.

Examples: **RMDIR DIR1\DIR2**
Remove the subdirectory DIR2 from directory DIR1 of the current disk drive.

RMDIR DIR0
Remove the subdirectory DIR0 from the current directory.
RMDIR B:\DIR1\DIR2
Remove the subdirectory DIR2 from directory DIR1 on the disk in drive B:.



Mouse Trap

. . . Ed Buzza

Your computer now has a new super duper high resolution VGA card and an upgrade for your favorite program, or a new package, has just arrived. Naturally, you hurriedly install the new software. Gotta try our all the new frills and features: VGA graphics, mouse support, drag down menus, and pop-up help screens, -- in short, a plethora of "good stuff".

You fire up the software, wiggle the mouse -- and nothing happens! No mouse indicator on the screen. No keyboard indicator either. You go to the manual, reread the Install procedure and do it all over again. With a bit of trepidation, you call up the program and, lo and behold, still no mouse! Now what? has to be defective software, right? Right! Hang the phone bill, got to call Tech Support. If you've ever called any vendor's Tech Support for help, you know what a frustrating hassle that can be. Some companies are very good (there are a few), some are lousy (there are a few), and the rest are so-so. Also, they ask some far out questions: what BIOS version and whose is it; what's in CONFIG.SYS; what drivers and what IRQs are being used; type of PC and what's in it; and on and on and on.

STOP. The most common cause is outdated software for the mouse. But, you say, it works fine with all my other software. Sure, but check the date of your mouse software. Most likely, the mouse driver will handle EGA and lower video modes but not VGA mode. More and more of the new software, including upgrades, will check your video board, find that it's VGA, and will set itself up in VGA mode. Fine. Nice feature. Program doesn't ask a whole bunch of questions about your machine; at last, an intelligent and user friendly program. Except that your mouse driver can't handle VGA mode.

Are you dead in the water? Have to rush out and get an upgrade for the mouse software? Maybe. Most video boards come packaged with some software, like menus and utilities. Check your video programs, and the manual, to see if you can't "lock" or set the video board into a certain mode. If so, crank up that video program and set/lock the video adaptor board into EGA mode. Now, start up the new, fancy frills package and you may be pleasantly surprized to find that your mouse is active. It works. There's the mouse indicator. When the new program checked your PC, it could not determine that your "EGA" board is really a VGA board!

Of course, you should check with your mouse vendor from time to time to see if there are any software upgrades for your mouse. I'm sure you've all seen the admonition in the user manuals about using the latest version of mouse drivers. Pay attention, it may save you a bit of grief later on when you upgrade parts of your PC or your other software packages. I will be replacing version 5.01 of my mouse driver with version 6.3 as soon as the vendor processes my recent order. Maybe now I can run version 3 of First Publisher in VGA mode.

TIBMPCUG BoardMeets

The TAMPA IBM-PC Users Group Board met at the home of HARVEY BRUNEAU on August 20 with seven of the nine board members present. Goals and plans were discussed for our own group as well as reviewing the events of the SUNCOAST AREA PC Users Group joint Conference.

One of the main issues discussed was that of membership renewal period, regarding the collection of dues. In the next newsletter the results of this topic will be printed. The board decided to participate in a National Support Group as well as the Suncoast Area PC Users Group.

If you have any topics that you would like our group to support, please bring them to our attention by calling Harvey Bruneau at 932-6745 and/or put a C)omment or M)essage on the BBS at 239-3704.



REFLECTIONS

One of the most difficult things to give away is kindness - it is usually returned. *Cart R. Flint*

OOPS!

EDITOR ERROR - The speaker for the August meeting was JOHN JOHANNESMAYER not Kenneth Mason as stated in the August newsletter.

THANKS WORDPERFECT and JOHN

The Tampa IBMPC Users Group extends Warmest thanks to JOHN JOHANNESMEYER and WordPerfect Corp. JOHN captivated the group from the moment he was introduced until he left the meeting on his "Perfect" journey. JOHN explained that his objective for the evening was for us to "have a good time and learn something new". The tasks were met easily as he mesmerized the group with his humor and detailed knowledge of his products. The club thanks you for an enjoyable and informative demonstration of WordPerfect and DrawPerfect; the donated Director's Chair and the many participation rewards. They will continue to remind us of an excellent speaker and a superb product from a first-rate Corporation.

BITS OF BLUE Newsletter Available on Area BBS's

The August newsletter was distributed to 32 Electronic Bulletin Board Systems this past month by new Member BETTY GOODMAN, Co-Sysop of Compu-Tech BBS. Some of the boards offer online viewing of the newsletter as well as having it available for download. For those without graphics capabilities a printer version is online for download on the Gallifrey BBS at 885-6043.

On the Bits of Blue BBS there are both June and August copies in the Personal Download Section. They are respectively: BOB-0690.ZIP and BOB-0890.ZIP

Many thanks to the various Sysops who have shown their interest, support, and assistance of this media.

Tampa IBM PC Users Group Meeting
and
WordPerfect Review

by Betty Goodman

The IBM PC Users Group met on Wednesday August 8 at the IBM Customer Center. There were 62 people in attendance. Before going into the excellent presentation, I must mention that the above group is a PC user support group which recognizes the advantages of running a BBS as part of that support, namely Bits of Blue. It in turn provides continued support for club members as well as inform non-club members that there is a PC support group available.

I must confess that I left the meeting feeling quite sad. I had previously spent considerable time deciding which wordprocessing package I preferred and eventually adopted Wordstar and deleted WordPerfect. The reason for the sadness now is as follows: WordPerfect 5.1 as presented to the group by sales rep John Johannesmeyer is so obviously superior that I must now delete Wordstar and readopt THE wordprocessing program, namely WordPerfect. The reasons are many. This wordprocessing program is immensely versatile and now it also has mouse capability. The commands have grown vague in my mind, however with the use of the mouse, one does not have to rely on one's memory at all. My husband being a research Math Professor will DEMAND this program, because it is capable of producing the most *perfect* Math symbols, such as Summation, Integral, and square root signs. Its equations look just right and the subscripts and superscripts are excellent. It can also serve similar to a hand held calculator. WordPerfect's many aspects cannot possibly be enumerated here, for they are so varied and so many. One can combine text and graphics by toggling between WordPerfect and DrawPerfect, which is another excellent program by WordPerfect. I was particularly interested to learn about DrawPerfect due to my interest in graphics. The most impressive graphs and pictures are created by DrawPerfect. These pictures and graphs are saved in vector graphics. As a humorous side remark, there now is a RhymePerfect for those of us whose creativity is in poetry or lyrics!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Harvey Bruneau . . 932-6745

VICE PRESIDENT
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TREASURER
Bill Fuller 832-0125

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Vern Semrad 888-8073

BBS SYSOP
Kevan Sheridan . . 237-0100

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

BITS OF BLUE BULLETIN BOARD
** DATA: 239-3704 **
VOICE: 237-4997

Access 24 hrs/ day
7 days/week
Full E-mail Capabilities
Numerous On-Line Files

FULL SUPPORT from the IBM PC Users Group

DISCOUNTS at the following Bay Area Businesses

The Operating System
550 Reo St., Suite 300
Tampa, FL

SUNRISE Computer Supplies
1224 S. Dale Mabry
Tampa, FL

ACCESS to the CLUB'S PROGRAM LIBRARY

ASCII text files containing comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 51/4 diskette (360 kb or 1.2 Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next month's newsletter.




Barbara Peck
Editor - Bits of Blue
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492




TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

PURPOSE : The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ☐ NEW ☐ CHANGE ☐ RENEWAL

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Company Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone _____

How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? _____

_____

Do you have access to a computer? _____ What type? _____

What do you presently use your computer for? _____

_____

_____

What major software do you use? _____

_____

_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. memory, printers, etc.)

_____

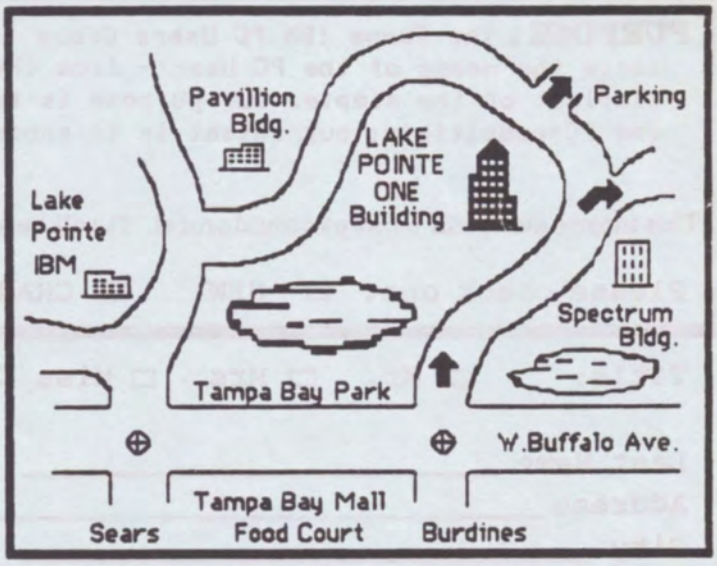
Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Checks payable to *Tampa IBM PC Users Group*

Mail to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building. This is the tall glass building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Buffalo at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Buffalo you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor & Please Sign in.



The LAKE POINTE ONE Building is shown here as the black building. Being the largest building in the Tampa Bay Park makes it easy to find.

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

September 12:

BORLAND shows PARADOX
also
PRODIGY on-line Demo

October 10:

DIGITAL RESEARCH
with DR DOS 5.0
DELRINA - PerFORM



BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

VOL. 3 NO. 10 OCTOBER 1990

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: **OCTOBER 10, 1990**
TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE:
IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
Lake Pointe One Building
3109 West Buffalo Ave.
ROOM 450
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER:

DIGITAL RESEARCH

Presents

DR DOS 5.0

Refreshment Break

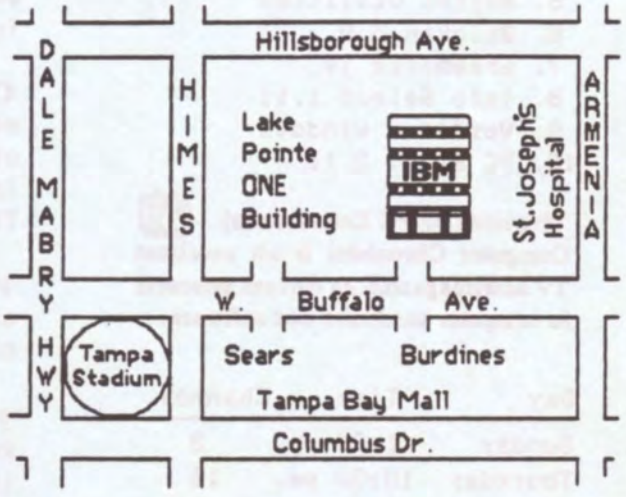
DELRINA

Shows

PerFORM

DOOR PRIZE Drawing

DIRECTIONS



* * * NOMINATIONS * * *

Nominations for Officers begin at the October meeting and continue in November. Officers elected at the December meeting are:

President Vice President
Secretary Education Chairman
Treasurer Member at Large
Librarian

Tampa IBM-PC Users Group

FREE Data Bus at Meeting

Guests & members at meetings will receive FREE Data Bus magazines. First come basis.

October - DOOR PRIZES

DR DOS 5.0, Software & more

Members ONLY - so join before the drawing

Animated Musical BBS Screen
Area's 1st. For new message:
Call Compu-tech at 685-0137

the WINNER IS . . .

RUSS STEPP - Paradox 3.5
donoated by Borland Int'l.

ROBERT GREEN - Cash Drawing

COMPUTER CHRONICLES SOFTWARE TOP 10

1. PC Tools Deluxe 6.0
2. Microsoft Windows 3.0
3. Quarterdeck's Expanded Memory Manager 386
4. WordPerfect 5.1
5. Norton Utilities
6. Quicken 3.0
7. Grammatik IV
8. Info Select 1.11
9. Word for Windows
10. PC Excel 2.1c

(Provided by PC Connections)

Computer Chronicles is an excellent TV newsmagazine on current interests in computer hardware and software.

Day	Time	Channel
Sunday	11:00 pm.	3
Thursday	10:00 pm.	16
Saturday	3:30 pm.	16

WHERE IS . . . . ?

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DOOR PRIZES 1
The Winner Is 1
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Software Top 10 2
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Membership Benefits 11
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TIBMPCUG PURPOSE 11
UPCOMING Speakers 12

DR DOS 5.0

by DIGITAL RESEARCH (DRI)

DR DOS, is an operating system for computers. Created by Digital Research, Inc.; it is RAM and ROM executable. Their ad states that this makes DR DOS "the operating system of choice by OEMs and VARs worldwide for hand-held computers, diskless workstations, embedded systems, laptops, and powerful desk-top machines."

Computer Shopper says: "It has all the equivalent features of PC/MS-DOS 3.3 and most of those of version 4.0, plus... partitions larger than 32 Mb, on-line help, a larger TPA, and other neat features."

PC Week states: "...DR DOS is faster and cheaper and offers more features than its big-name counterparts."

PC Magazine remarks: that "With DR DOS in ROM,...No disc drives have to be accessed, so the battery suffers less of a drain. [It] also frees memory for use by applications."

PerFORM Designer & Filler

by DELRINA

PerFORM, a Form creation and filler software package produced by Delrina Technology, Inc. makes most paper forms obsolete. It enables you to design, warehouse, and fill custom forms on your IBM PC or compatible. PerFORM Designer & Filler are graphic-based. You see on the screen exactly what your form will be when you print it. It has mouse-driven tools that no other form software has. PerFORM does the work for you; it will import from dBase and ASCII files.

Publish! rated it ♦♦♦♦! and wrote, "Surpasses both MAC programs and the other PC programs." Stewart Alsop, PC Letter, said, "out performs them all."

Electronic News

The October newsletter has been distributed to 32 Electronic BBSs this month by BETTY GOODMAN, Co-Sysop of Compu-Tech BBS. Some of the boards offer online viewing of the newsletter as well as offering it for download.

On the Bits of Blue BBS there are copies of June, August, September and October in the Personal Download Section. Monthly the filename changes to correspond with the month and year. Filename format

is: BOB-mmyy.ZIP
Ex.: BOB-1090.ZIP

Thank you to the many Sysops who have shown interest, support, and assistance of this media.

Board Meeting

The TAMPA IBM-PC Users Group Board met at the home of HARVEY BRUNEAU on September 26 with seven of the nine board members present.Officers reported on their progress toward carrying out previously discussed plans for our group.

A main issue covered was membership renewal period -regarding the collection of dues. The results of this topic are printed in this newsletter. (this page.)

Also, covered were diskettes for new members. See next month's newsletter for a brief list of their contents.

Present any topics that you would like our group to support, to our attention by calling Harvey Bruneau: 932-6745 and/or leave a M)essage on the BBS at 239-3704.

THANKS PARADOX & PRODIGY Speakers

The Tampa IBMPC Users Group extend a great big thank-you to DAVID PRINTZ and Borland International Inc. DAVID gave a very interesting demonstration of Borland's popular data base management program, PARADOX 3.5. DAVID emphasized and impressed the group with the simplicity of using PARADOX that is not usually found with this type of application. For more on this product see the TIBMPCUG Meeting Review by BETTY GOODMAN in this issue. We are also most grateful for the donation of a PARADOX software package.

A sincere thank-you also to KATHRYN LEVANDOWSKI of Prodigy. KATHRYN gave an enjoyable and informative demonstration of Prodigy on-line, explaining the various features offered. Mail-in Upgrade cards and literature were available to all.

REFLECTIONS

Good Judgement comes from experience.
Experience comes from Bad Judgement.

Author Unknown

Change in Membership Regulations

MEETINGS

After attending any three (3) meetings during a calendar year, a guest shall be required to join for further admission during that calendar year.

BBS LOGON-ONS

Further, guest log-ons to the Bits of Blue BBS shall be limited to three (3) sessions during a calendar year.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Effective January 1,1991, membership renewal dues will be based on the *anniversary date* of application. Date of application will be the date the membership application and annual dues are tendered to the Membership Director.For mail-in membership applications accompanied with a check for annual dues, the *postal cancellation date* stamp shall be the application date.

This change will have no effect on current members whose annual dues must be received on or before January 1st of each year.

In the event renewal dues are remitted within six (6) months after the anniversary date, the ex-member's date of renewal shall be retroactive to the original established, date of application.



Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Meeting Review

by Betty Goodman "bpg"

The Wednesday September 12 meeting of the IBM-PC Users Group was held as usual at 6 P.M. in the architectually beautiful Lake Pointe One Building. The first speaker was Borland's representative David Printz who presented Paradox 3.5. This program provides all the database power one could possibly require. Yet it eliminates the complexity that usually presents itself in database management. Paradox combines superior performance and intuitive operation. I, personally, was impressed with Paradox's graphics capability. With a simple keystroke, tables can be turned into graphics that allow for ease of analyzing relationships in data.

After the intermission and refreshments, a charming demonstration of Prodigy-on-line had the audience captivated.

What is needed to run Prodigy Services:
IBM/Compatibles require 512K, Dos 2.0 or higher, VGA/EGA/CGA, 1200/2400 Baud modem.

Key points of interest:

Value:	750 features, low flat monthly fee, local phone access.
Easy to use:	You need not be a computer wiz to use Prodigy.
Personal:	Using your own personal ID# and password, you can create a personal Path to suit your interests.

Prodigy provides a world of information and services:

Travel:	Book your own airline flights, hotels, car rentals, etc.
Communication:	Exchange messages with members in distant cities.
Play:	Games, fun contests, and exciting quizzes for kids of all ages.
Shop:	Shop for great values on thousands of items.
Finance:	Buy and sell stocks, get quotes, do your banking.
Learn:	Encyclopedia and educational games.
News:	Check the latest updated news.
Weather:	Current local and foreign forecasts.
Sports:	The latest stats and standings.

For information: 1-800-284-5933

There are door prizes and refreshments.

COMPUTER SHOW: Tampa EXPO-TECH
October 17 & 18: Tampa's Curtis Hixon Computer & business Equipment Expo Tech

CONVERGENCE

by Don Patzsch of Brandon, FL

You might ask, "What is going on in today's software industry. Hardware seems to be going much faster than software.

Perhaps one way to look at it is to recall that years ago there were many separate computer manufacturers working completely independently of one another. Now the hardware people have combined many groups of computer functions into ever more complete, individual, "million transistor" chips.

When you view the overall picture, it becomes obvious that the whole hardware industry is "converging". There are fewer companies each year producing comparatively larger chip modules.

Similarly, there are fewer companies each year producing operating systems like UNIX, TRON, OS/2, Windows, and DOS.

Each year fewer and larger CPU chips become available. Motorola with its 68000 series; and Intel with its 80x86 series; are combining the math chip, the CPU chip, and the Cache chip into one mammoth smaller device. The purpose is to provide ever faster computer systems. As competitors come into the market, they are all providing chips that do the same things, and as they are all putting more into smaller chips, parallel CPU chips provide parallel processing and share the total amount of work done, multiplying that effort. The overall picture in the hardware systems then converges. Where there was a mainframe, a supercomputer,a minicomputer, a workstation, and a personal computer, now the whole industry, worldwide, is converging to where we can see in the future, a single computer combining the features of all those listed. Bearing that in mind, IBM has announced its intention to produce programs that will run on UNIX, OS/2, and AIX. The long term, then will see all the operating systems converge into one program that will function with all computers.

The software industry must follow the hardware people, and it is interesting to take a particular program to see how this is working out. We cannot use too many examples in only one article. P.C.Tools, version 6; and Magellan, version 2 form such an example. PCTools started as a utility to make some computer operations easier to do, and easier to understand. Lotus 123 started by making a spreadsheet, but now PCTools and Lotus both give us a "find" and a "view" program. Bring up PCTools on one computer and Lotus Magellan on another. Try to "find" and "view" with each program and you will see that Magellan is infinitely faster and more complete.

The software industry consists mostly of a word processor, a data base, and a spreadsheet. These people were all little independent groups a few years ago, but now, in 1990, they are all producing programs for use with ALL the operating systems. Projecting forward just a little shows that when all these people produce for each operating system, the programmers will get together and iron out all the little problems in the operating systems, UNIX, OS/2, and TRON.

It won't be long before the screen that Lotus used, with the line across the top having all the major commands in view at one time will be the common graphic interface of all software. It wont be long before the tricks Lotus used to produce Magellan will work their way into all software.

(Continued on Page 6 - Convergence)

CONVERGENCE - (Continued from page 5)

Sit back and look into the future. Right now, you only see computers, programs, and systems of United States origin, When the "Third World" gets into computing they will want not only the best features of present day hardware and software, but they will look to other countries and programs as well. Looking into the future, it is not hard to see desks with just one computer on all of them. Terabytes of memory, terabytes of optical read-write storage, parallel processors, screens that are flat, and with the DOUWT operating system. Douwt combines DOS, OS/2, UNIX, Windows, and TRON, but now they have melted into one program.

In 1990 we have not arrived just yet, but what have YOU done to help YOUR User Group push this work faster? It requires the Users to give the programmers the ideas for their work. Why not get involved in any way you can? **- D.P.**



PATH

THE HELP SCREEN

Edward J. Kant, P.E. Naples, Fl



PROMPT

This month's discussion will center on the DOS environment. The environment is a special place in memory (**RAM**) where DOS stores a few special variables and user-defined variables that may be accessed by your applications on an as-needed basis.

In a very broad general sense, the term *environment* refers to a variety of background factors that affect the operation of DOS commands and applications. Among the factors that may comprise the environment at any given time are: the system date; the system time; the current directory; the DOS file search path; the country settings; etc.

The DOS environment also may be thought of in a narrower sense, one more closely related to our everyday usage, as an area in memory set aside for the storage of certain variables that will be used by application programs. Normally, at least the current prompt, the current search path and the filespec of the command processor are stored there. We will discuss the **PATH** command along with **PROMPT** and a few others in a moment.

The **PATH** command is another way to use the environment to customize a variable. DOS recognizes the **PATH** command as an instruction string giving the location of *executable* file search specifications.

The **PROMPT** command allows you to change the DOS prompt to almost any configuration you like. You don't have to settle for the plain vanilla "**C>**" or even the more common "**C:\>**". You may use the **PROMPT** command to set an environment variable that will say (and look) just about any way you wish.

Let's take a closer look at these *environment* variables along with a few examples.

(Continued on page 7- PATH)

PATH

internal DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **PATH** command instructs DOS to search the specified directories for *executable* commands or batch files not found in the current directory.

Syntax: **PATH [d:][pathname][;[d:][pathname]...]**
or **PATH;**
where: **d:** is the drive and **pathname** is the full path specification to the desired directory.

Comments: The **PATH** command lets you tell DOS which directories to search for executable files after it searches your current directory. Remember, *executable* commands are files with the extensions **.COM, .EXE** or **.BAT** The default (boot up) value is no path.

You instruct DOS to search several directories by separating the pathname specifications with semi-colons (;). Using the **PATH** command with no arguments displays the current path.

The search order is implied by the order in which the individual pathnames are listed. The full pathname starting at the root directory must be given. When searching for an executable file, DOS does not change the current directory or disk.

Examples: **PATH C:\;D:\;C;\DOS;C:\DOS\UTIL;D:\WIN**
This path will, after checking the current directory, first look in the root directory on the C: drive, then the root directory of the D: drive, then the C:\DOS directory, then the C:\DOS\UTIL directory and, finally, the D:\WIN directory. If the executable command file desired is not in any of these directories, then DOS will give you the "File not found" error message.

PATH
This command will display the current path.

PATH;
This command will reset the path to the default, or "empty" status.

Notes:

1. The maximum length of the **PATH** is 127 characters including the word "PATH" itself, the space following it and any separating semicolons.

2. The **PATH** remains in effect until reset or until changed. A reboot is not necessary to change the search path.

3. A **PATH** command with invalid parameters or characters will not be detected by DOS until it is asked to do a search. At that time an error message will be generated.

(Continued on page 8 - PROMPT)

PROMPT

internal DOS 2.0, 2.1

Purpose: The **PROMPT** command lets you specify what the DOS prompt should look like and allows you to tailor it to your own liking -- within limits!

Syntax: **PROMPT [text]**
or **PROMPT [$character]**
or **PROMPT [$character.....] [text]** (any combination)
where: **text** is any ASCII text string (words) or character combination and **$character** is any of the DOS meta-characters given in the table below:

Meta-character	Prompt string	Meta-character	Prompt string
$q	=	$t	The current time
$$	$	$d	The current date
$g	>	$p	Current directory
$l	<	$v	The DOS version
$b	|	$n	The default drive
$h	Backspace	$e	ASCII ESCape character
$_	Enter-Linefeed		

Comments: This command lets you change the system prompt at will. If you do not specify a prompt, usually in the **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file, DOS will display a default prompt giving the current drive and a "greater than" symbol(>).

Examples: **PROMPT pg**
This sets the prompt to the current drive and directory followed by a "greater than" symbol (>).

PROMPT TIME = $t $_DATE = d_$p:
This command will give you a three line prompt as follows:

```
TIME = (current time)
DATE = (current date)
C:\:   (assumes you're logged on the root directory of the C: drive)
```

(Note especially the embedded spaces. They will show up in the prompt just as they were written.)

PROMPT $e[7m$n$p:$e[m
Try this on your own machine if you have the **ANSI.SYS** device driver loaded in your **CONFIG.SYS** file. This command sets your prompt to display in inverse video mode and then returns the display to normal mode

PROMPT
This command will reset the prompt to the system default (current drive followed by >).

PROMPT Your wish is my command:
This command will display the text string as written.

Note: In a future column we will discuss the ANSI.SYS device driver and ANSI escape sequences. It is a fascinating subject and with a little imagination, you can do all sorts of wild things, especially in batch files.

DAVIDSON CORP. Demonstrates

SOFTWARE ETC. - University Mall Announces Guest Vendor:

DAVIDSON Corp.(Educational Software) Demonstration of:

Word Attack Plus
Math Blaster Plus
S.A.T. Personal Trainer

October 13 - Saturday
4 - 6:00 p.m.
SOFTWARE Etc. - University Mall

FREE Software GIVEAWAY, Prizes!

SUNCOAST PC UG CONFERENCE

October 20 - Saturday
1 - 7:00 p.m.
Mrs. Appleton's Banquet Room
4848 - 14th Street West, Bradenton
Lunch: $4.50
Reservations: Harvey 932-6745

JERRY SCHNEIDER, Secretary of the National Assoc. of PC Users Groups, will be speaking. Jerry is a prime mover in the APCUG and involved in all their activities. Jerry is also on the User Group Advisory Board of PC World Magazine.

EXPOTECH

The Ultimate Business & Computer Show

October 17 (Wed.) 10:00 am - 8:00 pm
October 18 (Thur.) 10:00 am - 7:00 pm
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FREE ADMISSION, Seminars, Demos, Much more!

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Try before you buy Software Packages: We will have a representative who will Demonstrate ANYTHING in the store by request. BE HERE!

FREE DOOR PRIZES!

Tampa Area Boards and Tampa Board News

If you have a modem you have a vehicle to a whole new world. Just like a car can take you places you have never been, so can your modem. From a store where you can purchase items to far away galaxies. Your modem can take you there! With one phone call you can travel there without leaving the comfort of your own home. The only information you need are the BBS tele phone numbers to dial. This is where a local source has helped us. Dennis Rodriguez of Aerotech has been putting together lists of local area bulletins boards since the mid 80's. The list includes valuable pieces of information for your use. It includes: Maximum baud rate, when the BBS was started, how much disk space (for files),and a brief statement about the features of the BBS. This list is FREE and can be found on most any local BBS. It is available on BITS of BLUE as both a bulletin (#4) and a file (TAB10.90).

Dennis also compiles a newsletter of information about Tampa Area Bulletin Boards(also, found on most BBSs as: TBN10.90).Each month files are updated and the filenames are changed to correspond with the month and year. Look for: TABmm.yy (Tampa Board List) and TBNmm.yy (Tampa Board News)

If you have a BBS you would like listed, or if you would like more information, call Dennis Rodriguez of Aerotech at: 654-3000 Happy BBS'ing!

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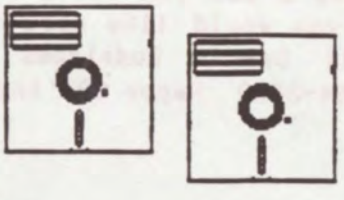
DISCOUNTS at the following Bay Area Businesses

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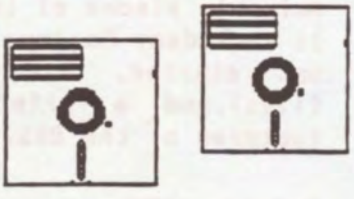
SUNRISE Computer Supplies
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ACCESS to the CLUB'S PROGRAM LIBRARY

ASCII text files containing comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 51/4 diskette (360 kb or 1.2 Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next month's newsletter.



Barbara Peck
Editor - Bits of Blue
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

PURPOSE: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ☐ NEW ☐ CHANGE ☐ RENEWAL

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Company Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone _____

How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? _____

_____

Do you have access to a computer? _____ What type? _____

What do you presently use your computer for? _____

_____

_____

What major software do you use? _____

_____

_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. memory, printers, etc.)

_____

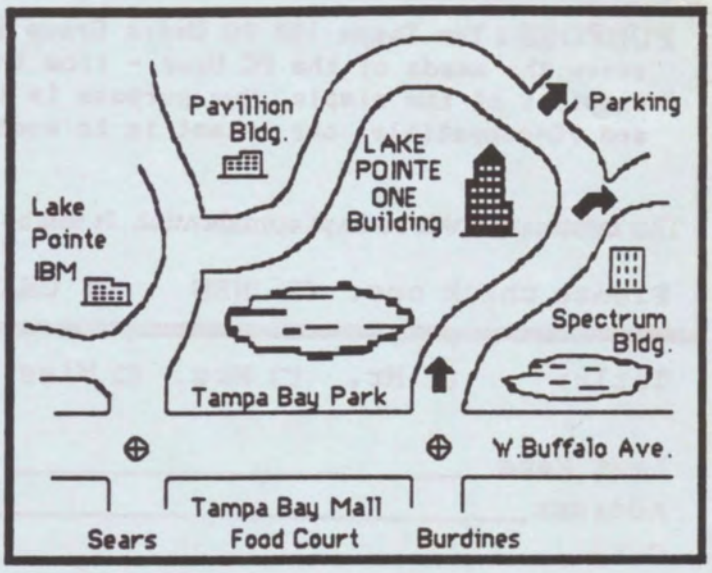
Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Checks payable to *Tampa IBM PC Users Group*

Mail to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building. This is the tall glass building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Buffalo at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Buffalo you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor & Please Sign in.



The LAKE POINTE ONE Building is shown here as the black building. Being the largest building in the Tampa Bay Park makes it easy to find.

Upcoming Speakers

October 10:
DIGITAL RESEARCH with DR DOS 5.0
DELRINA - PerFORM

November 14:
XTREE PRO GOLD
Review

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492



BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

VOL. 3 NO.11 NOVEMBER 1990

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: **NOVEMBER 14, 1990**
TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE:

IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
Lake Pointe One Building
3109 West Buffalo Ave.
ROOM 450
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER:

XTreePro Gold

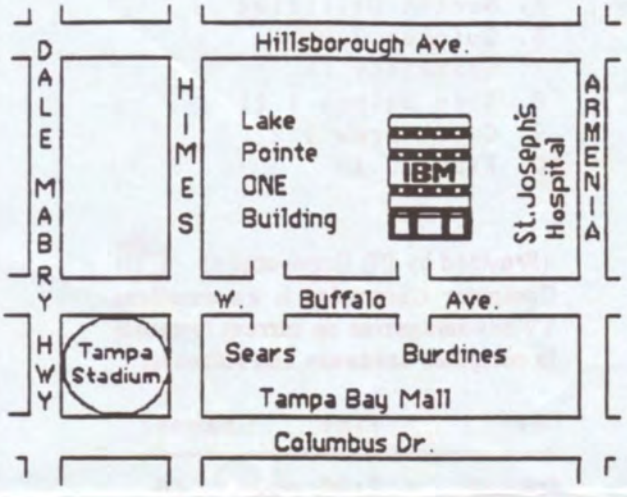
presented by

EDWARD KANT

Refreshment Break

NOMINATIONS
Harvey's Latest Info
DOOR PRIZE Drawing

DIRECTIONS



FREE DataBus at Meeting

Guests & members at meetings will receive FREE Data Bus magazines. First come basis.

November - DOOR PRIZES

Mystery Prizes

Members ONLY - so join before the drawing

* * * NOMINATIONS * * *

Officer Elections will be held at the December meeting. Nominations will continue until then.

Please, consider who you would like to nominate in the coming months.

If you wish to be nominated tell a member at a meeting prior to the elections. (more on pg. 7)

LIBRLIST.ZIP - Latest list of Tampa IBMPCUG file library. Includes TOP 30 downloaded files from Bits of Blue BBS and a search file utility.

MSTRLIST.ZIP - List of all available files on Bits of Blue BBS.

COMPUTER CHRONICLES SOFTWARE TOP 10

1. PC Tools Deluxe 6.0
2. Microsoft Windows 3.0
3. Quarterdeck's Expanded Memory Manager 386
4. WordPerfect 5.1
5. Norton Utilities
6. Quicken 3.0
7. Grammatik IV
8. Info Select 1.11
9. Corel Draw 1.2
10. Excel 2.1d

(Provided by PC Connections)



Computer Chronicles is an excellent TV newsmagazine on current interests in computer hardware and software.

Day	Time	Channel
Sunday	2:00 pm.	16

WHERE IS . . . . ?

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LIBRLIST.ZIP 1
MSTRLIST 1
Software Top 10 2
XTreePro Gold 2
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XTreePro Gold

"The world leader in disk management"

by Executive Systems, Inc.

XTreePro Gold is a hard disk file manager for personal computers. Created by the XTree Company, a division of Executive Systems, Inc.; it is a very popular file managing utility. It was the "Editor's Choice" of PC Magazine - June 12, 1990. Once you organize your hard disk with XTreePro Gold you can forget about difficult DOS commands. You can perform functions like tag, copy, and move files in a snap! With XTreePro Gold you can locate files by content, too. Using the Text Editor, you can edit files within XTreePro Gold. It is simple to use - open any file and its application with a single keystroke or a click of the mouse. There is a demo version of XTreePro Gold 1.3 on Bits of Blue BBS - to download refer to filename: XTGDEMO.ZIP

Farewell to Someone Else

Reprinted from the Alaska Computer Society PC News

Our club was saddened this week to learn of the death of Someone Else.

Someone Else was one of our most devoted members, and his passing creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. He was with us for a long time and did more than his share of work.

Whenever there was a job to be done, a meeting to attend, an article to write, or the need to fill in for the SIG leader, one name was always mentioned: "Let Someone Else do it!" It was common knowledge that he was one of the most ardent supporters of our club.

Someone Else was a wonderful person - sometimes appearing to be superhuman, but a person can only do so much. If the truth were known, everyone expected too much from Someone Else. Now that Someone Else is gone, I wonder what we are going to do.

When you are asked to help out, please remember we can't depend on Someone Else anymore.



TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

REPORT ON THE OCTOBER MEETING

by Betty Goodman ("bpg")

The Wednesday October 10 meeting of the IBM PC Users Group was held as usual at 6 P.M. in the architectually beautiful Lake Pointe One Building. There were 72 people present and the group appears to be growing by leaps and bounds. Its success is due to many factors, such as growing interest in computers in general and PC's in particular. Harvey Bruneau (president) presides the meeting in such a relaxed, informative, and humorous fashion that it merits applause and mention.

The announcement was that Digital Research would present Dr Dos 5.0 and that Delrina would show Perform. However both demos were cancelled at the last moment and quick improvisation created the following demos:

ED BUZZA demonstrated COREL DRAW by Corel Systems. This is an impressive illustration program. It features many fonts, free hand drawing, and text can be wrapped around curves. The format appears to be somewhat like PCPAINT, however this program appears to be far more powerful. The user gets a video tutorial along with the software, which ought to be extremely helpful. The program is definitely "user friendly" and should rank tops as an illustration tool.

After the intermission and refreshments STEVE SPEAIRS (vice-president) presented PCTOOLS 6. Now here is a program no computer-ite can do without. It is exactly what it's name indicates: THE tools for the PC! It is a large and powerful program and it's impossible to describe all its functions. It is mouse driven which makes it terribly handy. Talk about "user friendly"... it practically runs itself. There are "drop down" windows. The File window lets you highlight and choose everything you want to do with a file (but were not afraid to ask): copy, move, delete, edit, quick file review, etc., etc.,etc. The same is true for the Disk window. One of the handiest windows is named Special. It is! You can highlight and view a disk map, a file map, AND directory sort. With a click of the mouse button ... all your files are alphabetized. PCTOOLS also has the compress and diskfix features so important to "the health" of your computer.

***** ANNOUNCEMENTS *****

The IBM PC Users Group meets the second Wednesday of every month. Next meeting:

When: November 14, 1990
Time: 6:00 P.M.
Demo: XTreePRO Gold by ED KANT

The purpose of the PC User Group meetings is to inform all computer enthusiasts. The intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform. The topics generally have something of interest for everyone. There are door prizes and refreshments.

NAMES in the NEWS: Ed Buzza AND Steve Spears

We are very fortunate and grateful to have two such gifted and dedicated members as ED BUZZA and STEVE SPEAIRS. At the October meeting ED BUZZA demonstrated Corel Draw for the group and STEVE SPEAIRS demonstrated PC Tools 6. We compliment and thank them both for selecting fine products to show and most of all for taking their efforts to share their knowledge of these products with us.



SET

THE HELP SCREEN

Edward J. Kant, P.E. Naples, Fl



COMSPEC

This month's discussion will continue the topic we started last month -- the DOS environment. Last month we looked at the PATH and PROMPT commands. This month we will discuss the other two important environment variables: **SET** and **COMSPEC**.

In a very broad general sense, the term *environment* refers to a variety of background factors that affect the operation of DOS commands and applications. Among the factors that may comprise the environment at any given time are: the system date; the system time; the current directory; DOS file search path; the country settings; etc.

The DOS environment also may be thought of in a narrower sense, one more closely related to our everyday usage, as an area in memory set aside for the storage of certain variables that will be used by application programs. Normally, at least the current prompt, the current search path and the filespec of the command processor are stored there. Other variables that are used by your application programs also may be stored there with the use of the **SET** command. We will discuss the **SET** command along with **COMSPEC** and a few others in a moment.

The **SET** command lets you view the current contents of the environment and also lets you store new variables, change existing ones and delete no longer needed ones to save space. **SET** allows you to add any parameter to the environment, even if DOS doesn't recognize it. This is how you can establish values for parameters used by application programs.

The **COMSPEC** variable tells DOS where to find the command processor. This is a standard environment variable and is the only one that is absolutely necessary. Without it, DOS will not be able to find and reload the transient portion of **COMMAND.COM** if an application program has taken over that portion of memory.

Let's take a closer look at these *environment* variables along with a few examples. (Continued on page 5 - SET)

Manatee Hosts SunCoast Conference

October 20th, President HARVEY BRUNEAU and SysOp KEVAN SHERIDAN represented our group at the Suncoast Area Conference in Bradenton. The meeting was hosted by the Manatee PC Users Group.

The guest speakers JERRY SCHNEIDER and GENE BARLOW were introduced.

Jerry is the Secretary of the national Association of PC Users Groups and a prime mover. He is involved in all their activities and is also on the User Group Advisory Board of PC World Magazine.

Gene is IBM's corporate coordinator of IBM PC User Groups and manager of the IBM Personal Systems Technical Journal.

After the introductions and guest speakers the group broke for lunch returning to break into smaller function groups, e.g. program planning, newsletters, membership, etc.

After an hour or so the groups reassembled for a closing general meeting where plans for the next conference were discussed.

SET

internal DOS 2.0

Purpose: Sets one string of characters in the environment equal to another for later use in application programs.

Syntax: **SET [name=[string]]**
or **SET name=**
where: **name** is an environment variable name and **string** is a string of characters which is the value of name.

Comments: When DOS recognizes a **SET** command, it inserts the given name and its equivalent into a part of memory reserved for the environment. If the name already exists in the environment, it is replaced with the new setting.

If you specify just the name, **SET** removes any previous setting of that name from the environment. If you use the SET command without any arguments, DOS displays the current environment variables and their settings.

SET can also be a valuable addition to batch processing. You may use SET to define replaceable parameters by name instead of number. When doing so, you must enclose the variable name in **%** symbols in the batch file (see the examples which follow). This way you can change parameter names without editing each batch file if you use the same parameter in several batch files.

This last characteristic of **SET** is especially helpful in the **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file. You can set up your parameters and strings right when you boot up. You must exercise a little caution, however, because the size of the environment is finite and you may get an "Out of environment space" error message. If so, the environment must be enlarged with the **COMSPEC** variable (more on that later).

Examples: **SET FILE=taxes.86**
If you have a line in a batch file that reads "type %file%", the %file% parameter will be replaced with the filename "taxes.86".

SET INCLUDE=c:\inc
This command sets the string "include" to the value "c:\inc" until such time as you change it.

SET
The SET command by itself will display the current contents of the environment.

SET VAR=
This command will reset the variable "VAR" to a null value (or you may think of it as "zero") and release the space that VAR took up in the environment for another variable.

Note: **PATH, PROMPT** and **COMSPEC** do not need to be initialized with the **SET** command (in fact, in DOS 4.xx, you may NOT use SET to do so). They may be, and usually are, specified merely by starting the command line with the variable name; for instance:

PATH=C:\;C;\dos

(Continued on page 6 - COMSPEC)

COMSPEC internal DOS variable

Purpose: **COMSPEC** is a standard DOS environment variable that tells DOS where to find the command processor. For most of us, the command processor is **COMMAND.COM**.

Syntax: **COMSPEC=d:pathname\command_processor_name**
where: **d:** is the disk drive, **pathname** is the full path specification to the command processor and **command_processor_name** is the filename of the command processor.

Comments: The default value for **COMSPEC** is the drive and pathname of the command processor used to boot up.

COMMAND.COM itself has two "parts". One of these "parts" can be transient if an application program needs the memory to run. Normally **COMMAND.COM** loads the permanent "part" of itself in low memory and the transient "part" in high memory. It is this high memory "part" that can be overwritten by an application program. When you exit that application program and return to the operating system, perhaps to call up another application program, DOS needs to know where the original copy of **COMMAND.COM** is so that it can "reload" and be ready for your next command. As you can probably tell by now, without the **COMSPEC** variable in the environment, DOS will be unable to find its way to **COMMAND.COM** and will give you the dreaded error message:

Bad or missing command interpreter

Examples: **COMSPEC=C:\DOS\COMMAND.COM**
This setting tells DOS to look for a command processor named **COMMAND.COM** in the DOS subdirectory on drive C:.

Note: If you try to cram too many environment variables into the environment, or if your **PATH** and **PROMPT** commands are very long, you may get an "Out of environment space" error message. IF that should happen, and it probably will if you try to get fancy with your **PROMPT**, then you need to add a line to your **CONFIG.SYS** file as follows:

SHELL=C:\DOS\COMMAND.COM **/E:256** <

or more!

This line tells DOS that before it loads anything into memory, it must reserve more space than the default 160 bytes. The example above has reset it to 256 bytes. You could reset it to a maximum of 32768 bytes if you wished. As a practical matter, I would recommend a realistic upper limit of 1024 bytes. This should be more than enough for the average user. DOS recognizes the environment size in 16 byte "paragraphs". In versions of DOS prior to 3.2, the setting must be in 16-byte "paragraphs". From version 3.2+, the setting is in the actual number of bytes desired.Setting the number of bytes in the **SHELL** command in **CONFIG.SYS** to a number that is not a multiple of 16 will merely cause DOS to round it off to the next highest "paragraph".

I hope the foregoing discussion has stimulated your thinking. If you have any questions or comments, I can be reached on the Bits of Blue BBS or on Compuserve (71020,2722), GEnie (E.KANT), Delphi (EDKANT) or at P.O. Box 8326, Naples, Fl 33941. Thanks to **Ed Buzza** for his "proofing" of this column and thanks to you all out there for listening.

Nominations Continue

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group election for officers will be held at the December meeting, and nominations will continue in November. Several offices will be open for electios, including:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Education
- Member at Large
- Membership Chairman

Appointed offices are:

- BBS SysOp
- Librarian
- Newsletter Editor
- Program Chairman.

Individuals interested in becoming considered for an office (elected or appointed) should contact a member at or the November meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the meeting. Only members in good standing are eligible for office or to vote in the general elections.

Appointed positions will be filled by the elected as of January 1, 1991. All elected and appointed positions are for terms of one year, running January 1 to December 31.

Present nominations are:
President- Harvey Bruneau
Vice Pres- Steve Spears
Secretary- Edward Buzza
Education - Edward Kant

Expotech

On October 17th and 18th Tampa's Curtis Hixon Hall was the location of a recent Computer Show. This is a good place to visit to keep up with some of the new developments. Of course, because of the November Comdex in Las Vegas many of the newest products had not been unveiled, yet. This show featured many return vendors and a few new ones. There were also products that would not be seen in most computer shops. Many of the businesses offer show specials and lower prices for this event. If you are in the market for any computer products, this is an easy way to shop and make price comparisions under one roof. The next Expotech in our area is scheduled for March 18, 1991 at the St.Pete Bayfront Center.

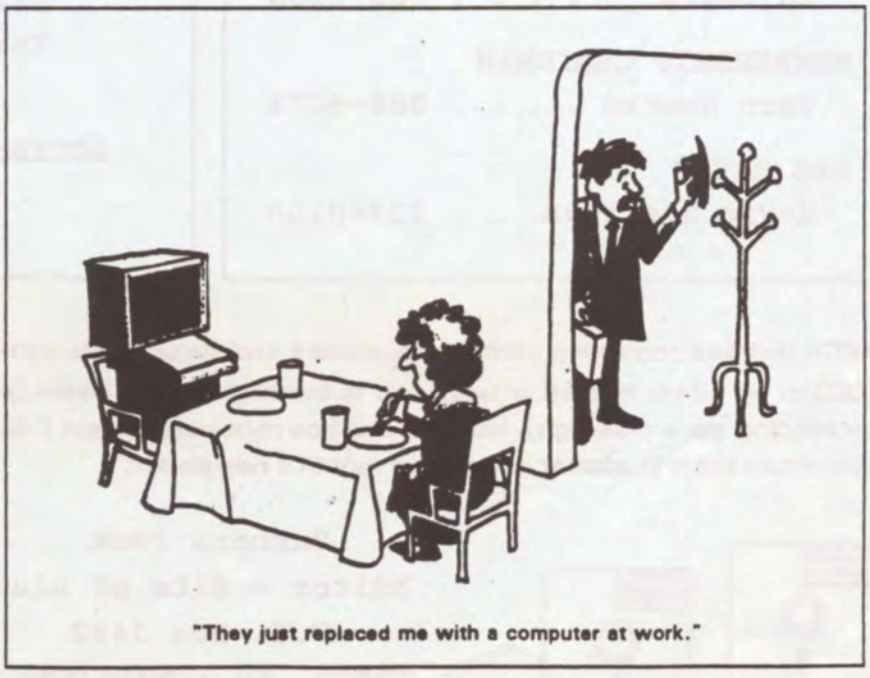
Association of PC User Groups

Portions reprinted from Sarasota IBM PCUG NLetter

APCUG has no individual members as the members are PC User Groups. More user groups are joining every month. There are now more than 130 member user groups representing more than 200,000 computer users.

These user groups are in 38 different states, 3 provinces in Canada and 8 user groups in 6 other countries; the Soviet Union, Australia, New Zealand, England, Japan, & the Sultanate of Oman.

By far the greatest representation is from the state of California with 30 user groups. Florida has 12 user groups and New York has 9 user groups in the APCUG.



"They just replaced me with a computer at work."

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Tampa, FL

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ASCII text files containing comments, articles and suggestions can be sent to the editor on 51/4 diskette (360 kb or 1.2 Mb format) or uploaded to the club Bulletin Board (please let me know if you upload a file by sending me a message). Material must be received at least 7 days prior to the end of the month if you would like it to appear in the next month's newsletter.




Barbara Peck
Editor - Bits of Blue
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492




TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

PURPOSE: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ☐ NEW ☐ CHANGE ☐ RENEWAL

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Company Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone _____

How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? _____

_____

Do you have access to a computer? _____ What type? _____

What do you presently use your computer for? _____

_____

_____

What major software do you use? _____

_____

_____

What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. memory, printers, etc.)

_____

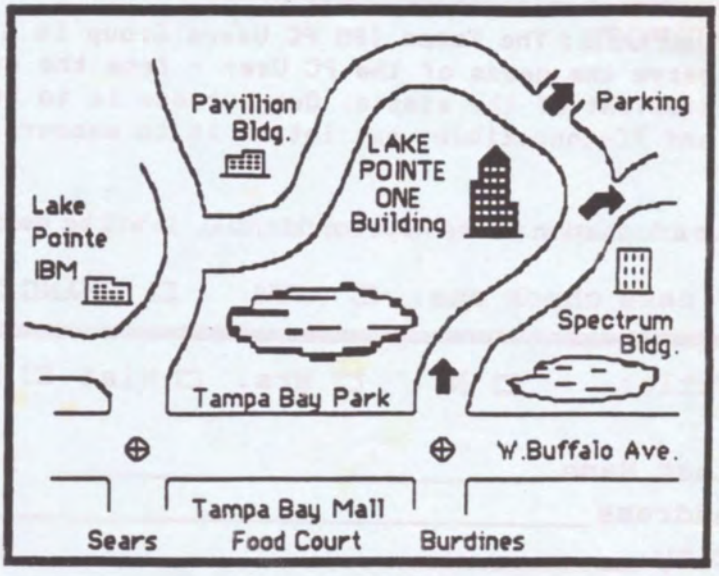
Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Checks payable to *Tampa IBM PC Users Group*

Mail to:

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building. This is the tall glass building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Buffalo at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Buffalo you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor & Please Sign in.



The LAKE POINTE ONE Building is shown here as the black building. Being the largest building in the Tampa Bay Park makes it easy to find.

Upcoming Speaker

November 14:
XTREE PRO GOLD
Review

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492





BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

VOL. 3 NO.12 DECEMBER 1990

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: **DECEMBER 14, 1990**
TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE:

IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
Lake Pointe One Building
3109 West Buffalo Ave.
ROOM 450
(Please sign in)

SPEAKER:

Wealth Builder

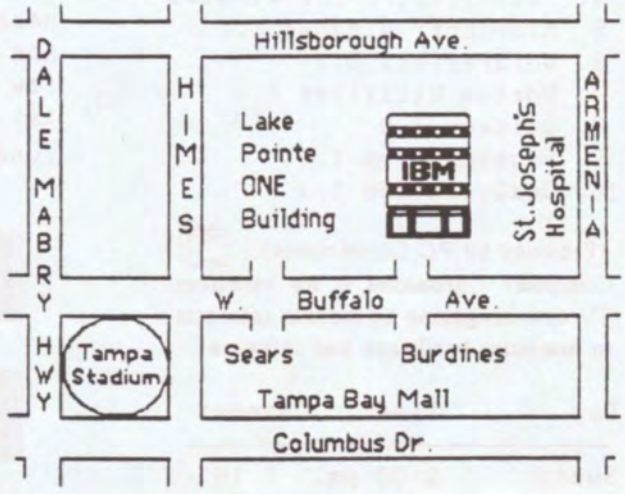
presented by

STEVE SPEAIRS

Refreshment Break

ELECTIONS
Harvey's Latest Info
DOOR PRIZE Drawing

DIRECTIONS



FREE DataBus at Meeting

Guests & members at meetings will receive FREE Data Bus magazines. First come basis.

Peace



* * * NEXT MONTH * * *

Elections will be held at the December meeting. Watch for new changes as our 1991 Officers take command.

Happy New Year

December - DOOR PRIZES

Q&A 3.0
donated by - Gary Kueppers Sr.
Members ONLY - so join before the drawing
Winners: print name & prize on ticket

COMPUTER CHRONICLES SOFTWARE TOP 10

1. Adobe Type Manager for Windows
2. Quarterdeck's Expanded Memory Manager 386
3. PC Tools Deluxe 6.0
4. Facelift 1.0 for Windows
5. Microsoft Windows 3.0
6. WordPerfect 5.1
7. Norton Utilities 5.0
8. Quicken 3.0
9. Procomm Plus 1.1
10. DesQview 386 1.1

(Provided by PC Connections)

Computer Chronicles is an excellent TV newsmagazine on current interests in computer hardware and software.

Day	Time	Channel
Sunday	2:00 pm.	16
Sunday	11:00 pm.	3

WHERE IS . . . . ?

FREE Data Bus 1
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Board Listing 8
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BBS Information 8
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WealthBuilder

by Money Magazine & Reality Technologies, Inc.

WealthBuilder is a financial goal visualizer using Stock Market & goal setting operations. WealthBuilder by Money Magazine is the only program where you can learn and understand everything about investing to increase your wealth. WealthBuilder uses a term called "asset allocation"-but that is all you'll need to know. After importing your Quicken and Stock data, the program will ask you a few questions, map you to an optimal financial strategy and pinpoint investments (mutual funds, stocks and bonds) for you to buy.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS





TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP

REPORT ON THE NOVEMBER MEETING

by Betty Goodman ("bpg")

Approximately 70 people attended the Wednesday November 14th meeting of the Tampa IBM PC Users Group, which took place in IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building. The group continues to grow in interest and popularity due to many factors among which are the professional manner in which the meetings are held and the demos which always appear to be of interest to all computer-ites.

Edward Kant presented XTREEPRO GOLD by Executive Systems, Inc., a program which manages the information on one's hard disk. The program was created by the XTree Company, a division of Executive Systems, Inc. Considering the fact that I still use XTREE version 2.0, the version I have dubbed "The Lean and Mean XTREE", I discovered that the new version XTREEPRO GOLD is certainly a most powerful program. It is a very comprehensive hard disk management program for one's PC. All of the information stored on one's hard disk can be seen and organized in a flash. Complicated DOS commands can be circumvented by single keystroke commands. As a matter of fact, a click of the mouse will enable the user to get to files faster, easier, and safer.

GATHER is a powerful new feature. It enables the user to copy or move a block of text from one file to another or to the printer. In the Application Menu one can go into such programs as Wordperfect simply by pointing to them with the mouse. Another new feature is the prune and graft, which enables one to move (or graft) an entire branch of a directory tree (including all subdirectories) to a different location on the directory tree.

A most amazing aspect is that XTREEPRO GOLD can be collapsed to a mere 7K of memory, thus not wasting any RAM when not in use. It is not possible to describe all the many aspects of this powerful program. A demo version of XTREEPRO GOLD 1.3 is available for downloading on Bits of Blue BBS. The filename is XTGDEMO.ZIP.

The usual break followed this demonstration, a time for all to exchange ideas and meet fellow computer-ites. Refreshments were served and then onward to the second half of the meeting.

Nominations were on the agenda. Officer elections will be held at the December meeting and nominations will continue until that time. Several offices will be open for elections. Roger Waters was nominated for Member-at-Large, Harvey Bruneau for President, Steve Spears for Vice President, Edward Kant for Education.

Ed Buzza gave a demonstration on The Best of Tech. Help by Computer Shopper magazine. It offers technical information for PC's. I regret to have missed this part of the meeting as it promised to be of great interest to all of us in computer-land.

***** Announcements *****

BBS NEWS

Comtel 120 -
is back on line effective 11-10-90

Hours of operation:
6 PM - 6 AM weekdays
24 hours/day weekends

Stack Shack -
has a new phone number: 988-4143



COPY

THE HELP SCREEN

Edward J. Kant, P.E. Naples, Fl



XCOPY

This month we will discuss one of the most important and versatile of DOS' commands - **COPY**. We will also touch on a close cousin of the **COPY** command - **XCOPY**.

COPY can be used not only to duplicate files, but to rename, create, combine, print and move files to different directories or drives. The "move" is not really a copy property, but can be simulated in conjunction with the delete or erase commands (**DEL** and **ERASE**). Let's look at **COPY** in the format we have used for prior Help Screen columns:

COPY Internal DOS 1.0

Purpose: The **COPY** command is used to copy files or copy information from a file or device to another file or device.

Syntax: **COPY** [d:][path]filename[.ext] [d:][path]
Copy file with the same name.

Syntax: **COPY** [d:][path]filename[.ext] [d:][path]filename[.ext]
Copy file with the different names.

Syntax: **COPY** [d:][path]filename[.ext] + [d:][path]filename[.ext]...
[d:][path]filename[.ext]
Copy and combine files.

Options:

/A - Indicates this is an ASCII file.
/B - Indicates this is a binary file.
/V - Verify after copy. The **/V** option instructs DOS to verify that the data written to a file is accurate. This provides the same check as the **VERIFY ON** command, but is only effective for the duration of this **COPY** command.

Either option (**/A** or **/B**) takes effect on the file it is placed after and applies to all subsequent files on the command line until the opposite option is encountered. An option placed on a source filename instructs **COPY** how to interpret the file. The **/A** option placed on the destination file causes a Control-Z to be added to the end of the file, a **/B** option does not. The **/A** option is the default for all files unless specified otherwise. Wildcard characters (***** & **?** may be used in both the source & destination filenames.

COPY can be used to make a copy of a file using the source file name for the file copied. The command format shown below may be used to copy a file from another drive and/or directory to the current directory.

Example: **COPY** A:file1
This command copies the file **file1** from the default directory on drive A: to the current directory. *continued next page*

The next command format may be used to copy from the default disk drive to another disk, or between two different directories on the same disk. The destination filename could have been specified in the last parameter, but is assumed the same if not provided.

Example: **COPY** B:*.* \
This command copies all the files in the current directory on drive B: to the root directory of the current disk drive.

This next command can be used to make a copy of a file using a different file name for the file copied. The source and destination files may be in the same directory, or be in different directories or be in different directories of different drives.

Examples: **COPY** file1 file2
This command copies the file **file1** from the current directory to the file **file2** in the current directory.

COPY B:*.HLP *.DOC
This command copies all the files with a .HLP extension from the current directory on drive B: to the current directory on the current drive with the same filename but with a .DOC extension.

You may also copy to or from one of the known devices in the system. When copying to or from a device you must end the input with a Control-Z character to signify the end-of-file condition. This is a dandy way to create Batch Files!

Examples: **COPY CON** file1
Place all input from the keyboard into the file **file1** until the Control-Z character is encountered.

COPY file1 **PRN**
Copy the contents of **file1** to the printer connected to **LPT1:**

The next command is where one or more files are copied to one destination file, creating a larger file as a result. This is on example of the **COPY** command where the source and destination files may actually be the same file (with some limitations).

Examples: **COPY** file1+file2 file3
Copy the contents of **file1** and **file2** to **file3.**

COPY *.HLP+*.DOC info
Copy all files with file extensions .HLP & .DOC to the file named INFO.

COPY *.HLP+*.DOC *.TXT
Copy each file with a matching name and extension into a file with a .TXT extension. The files file1.HLP & file1.DOC would be combined into a file named file1.TXT.

COPY file1+,,
Change the date & time on **file1** to the current date & time. Commas indicate the end of the source file names. *continued next page*

Help Screen *continued*

Wildcards do not work. Files that are combined are usually text (or ASCII) files. This type of file is copied until an end-of-file marker (Control-Z) is found, rather than using the file size from the directory. When copying binary files such as .EXE and .COM files, the file must be copied until the full file is copied, regardless of how many Control-Z codes are detected. You must therefore provide a **/B** switch to **COPY**.

Examples:

COPY file1.BIN/B+file2.BIN/B file2.COM

The second /B is unnecessary because of the first /B.

COPY file1.TXT/A+file2.OBJ/B+file3.TXT/A file4.COM

Because of the /A for the text file file1.TXT a /B had to specified to correctly copy file2.OBJ. The second /A option was also required for file3.TXT to cancel the effect of the preceding /B. In this example file1.TXT, file2.OBJ and file3.TXT are combined to make file4.COM.

!WARNING!:

All **COPY** commands write OVER (on top of) the destination file. If a file already exists with the same destination path and filename, its contents are destroyed by the **COPY** operation without warning!

As I mentioned at the beginning of this column, **COPY** has a close "cousin" -- the **XCOPY** command. I call it a cousin because it is in the same family as **COPY**, but it behaves quite differently. When **COPY** performs its job, it acts on one file at a time. **XCOPY**, however, reads as many files into memory as possible before carrying out its job. In some ways this allows it to act much faster and to perform some interesting permutations on the files assigned to it to operate on. Let's look at **XCOPY** briefly. A detailed treatment would take more space than we have -- besides, it is always more fun to experiment when you are learning something new. **JUST BE CERTAIN THAT YOU HAVE BACKUP COPIES OF ALL THE FILES YOU ARE EXPERIMENTING WITH!!**

XCOPY external/transient DOS 3.2

Purpose: Copies files and optionally subdirectories of files to the specified drive.

Syntax: **XCOPY** source [dest][/A][/D:date][/E][/M][/P][/S][/V][/W]

Where:

source - is the name of the file(s) to be copied optionally preceded by a drive and/or path. Wildcards are permitted. A drive, path and/or filename must be specified.

dest - is the destination location, optionally preceded by a drive and/or path. Wildcards are permitted.

/A - copy only files with the archive bit set.

Help Screen *continued*

/D:date - copy only the files modified on or after the specified date.

/E - copies empty subdirectories, must be used with /S.

/M - copies only files with the archive bit set and clears the archive bit after a successful copy.

/P - prompts the user before copying each file.

/S - copies all non empty subdirectories and their associated files.

/V - performs read after write verification.

/W - waits for diskette change before copying.

Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah and Season's Greetings. I hope the foregoing discussion has stimulated your thinking. If you have any suggestions, questions or comments, I can be reached on the Bits of Blue BBS or on Compuserve (71020,2722), GEnie (E.KANT), Delphi (EDKANT) or at P.O. Box 8326, Naples, Fl 33941. - **E.K.**



**** MEETINGS ****

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets the second Wednesday of every month.

Next meeting:

When: January 9, 1991
Time: 6:00 P.M.
Demo: *to be announced*

The purpose of the PC User Group meetings is to inform all computer enthusiasts. The intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform. The topics generally have something of interest for everyone. There are door prizes and refreshments.

The Keyboard Prayer

Contributed by George Ciesek
Big Blue & Cousins Newsletter

Our program who art in memory,
Hello be thy name..

Thy operating system come,
Thy commands be done,
At the printer as it is on screen.

Give us this day our daily date,
And forgive us our I/O errors
As we forgive those whose
Logic circuits are faulty.

Lead us not into frustration,
And deliver us from surges.

For thine is the algorythm,
The application, and the solution,
Looping forever and ever.

Return

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Steve Speairs . . . 875-1095

TREASURER
Bill Fuller 832-0125

PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

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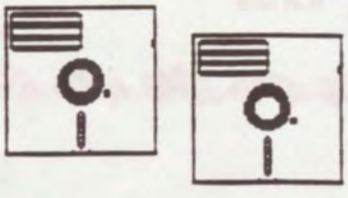
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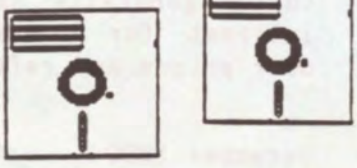
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Editor - Bits of Blue
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Please check one: ☐ NEW ☐ CHANGE ☐ RENEWAL

Title: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr. & Mrs. ☐ Other

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Company Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone _____

How did you hear about the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? _____

_____

Do you have access to a computer? _____ What type? _____

What do you presently use your computer for? _____

_____

_____

What major software do you use? _____

_____

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What peripherals are you familiar with? (i.e. memory, printers, etc.)

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Mail to:

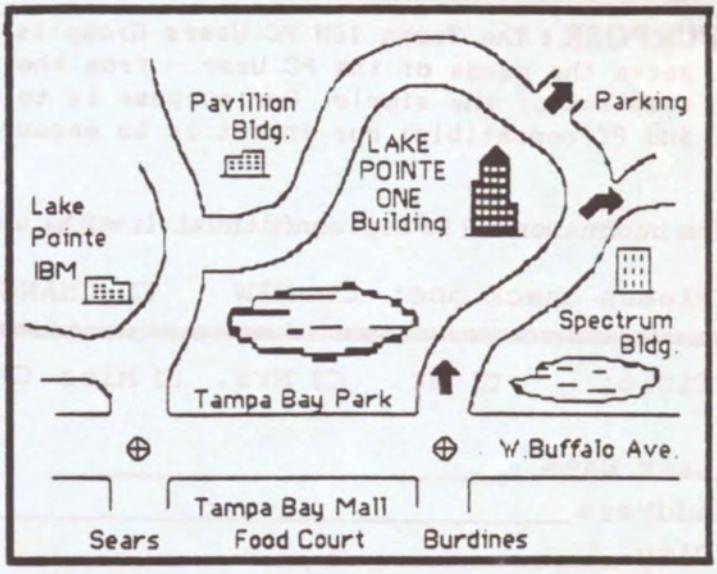
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Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
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Upcoming Speakers

January 9:
To be announced



The LAKE POINTE ONE Building is shown here as the black building. Being the largest building in the Tampa Bay Park makes it easy to find.

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492



Best Wishes
for a
Merry Christmas



BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 1 JANUARY, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: JANUARY 9, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 West Buffalo Ave.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

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The best entrance is on Buffalo at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Buffalo you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor and Please Sign in.

PRESENTATION:

OS/2
IBM PS/2 Mod 95
IBM XGA
(all presented by IBM)

Refreshment Break

Open Discussion

Door Prize Raffle

☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

$ $ MEMBERSHIP DUES $ $

Annual Fee: $20.00
Make checks payable to:
Tampa IBM PC User's Group

Mail to: **Tampa IBM PC User's Group**
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Fl 33601-3492

REMEMBER CURRENT MEMBERSHIP FEES ENTITLE YOU TO THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

Access to Bulletin Board,
Club Software Library,
Newsletter,
Store Discounts,
Raffle Eligibility

(ANY MEMBER WHO JOINED PRIOR TO OCTOBER, 1990, PLEASE NOTE YOUR FEES ARE DUE THIS MONTH.)

UPCOMMING SPEAKERS:

2/13/91 - LOTUS 1 2 3 - 3.1

3/13/91 - SOFTWARE PUBLISHING CORP.
Harvard Graphics

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:



Well here it is January. 1990 was a good year, all my family and friends are enjoying good health. I was looking forward to getting some software for Christmas but I received a soft kitten (BEAU) instead. Santa must have misunderstood me, I guess. With four paws, BEAU can type on this keyboard but has not yet learn to spell.

Last year marked the beginning of a new era for our group, after two months of talks with IBM, they agreed to let us use their office space, hardware and personnel, allowing us to have better presentations. Members came forth and volunteered to help despite no pay and at times, no recognition for the work they do. The bulletin board got a much needed upgrade through donations and wheeling-dealing. Our diskette library was cleaned up and made manageable. An introductory set of diskettes was created to welcome and inform new members of the group's benefits. All of these have contributed positively towards our group and the increase in membership and attendance shows it. **To IBM and all of you volunteers a great big THANK YOU.**

1991 brings a challenge for me and the rest of the board members as we still have some organization to do in order to provide better and new services for the group and community. The re-electing or re-volunteering of the majority of the board members is by far a positive step in ensuring that the group moves forward with previously established ideas and goals. This year's board of directors represents individuals with talents and dedication. Frankly, I like them because they are down to earth people.

In closing, I hope the powers that be, have the wisdom to prevent war and create prosperity among all the people of our earth.

BLESSED ARE THE PEACE MAKERS FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH!

Harvey

* * 1991 ELECTED OFF.

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	932
VICE PRES.:	Steve Speairs	875-1
TREASURER:	Bill Fuller	832-012
MEMBER AT LARGE:		
	Roger Waters	224-6079
SECRETARY:	Ed Buzza	685-5898

APPOINTED
(*Volunteers*)

EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP:	Bill Fuller	832-0125

INVISIBLE 5.0 GRAPHICS

Some users of Wp 5.1 have experienced problems with the WPG graphics that came with WP 5.0. The figures come up blank when printed or viewed with 5.1.

The problem is that 5.1 handles colors differently than 5.0 did. Essentially, the graphics are translated to white lines on a white background. Kinda like a polar bear in a blizzard!

To change the graphic so you can see it, follow these steps:

1) Press [Graphics/Alt-f9], [1-Figure], and [1-Create].

2) Press [1-Filename] and enter the name of the WPG graphic.

3) Press [9-Edit] and [4-Invert]. The graphic should appear.

4) If you want to same the graphic in its new form, press [Save/F10] and give it a name. (or press [Enter] to keep the old one.)

5) Press [Exit/F7] once to get back to the "Figure; Edit" menu, or twice to get back to WordPerfect's main editing screen.

In some instances merely going to the "Figure: Edit", [9-Edit] screen and having 5.1 same the graphic [Save/f10] is enough. The original release of MGI's Picture Pack also exhibits this behavior (white on white).

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 12/12/90 MEETING --

President Harvey Bruneau talked about:

IBM's announcement of their new XGA video standard. It's a step above super-VGA.

A new modem from Practical Peripherals. List price is $159 and only weights 3 ounces. Ideal for laptop computers.

Windows-3: there are about 3,500 bad upgrades in the hands of users. They are the 3.0A versions. Ask for version 3.0B although it is not out yet as of this date.

MS-DOS Version 5.0: Now in the hands of 5,000 beta testers. Scheduled for release by summer of 1991. It is said to incorporate a some of Central Point PCTOOLS utilities. It boasts a better editor (similar to the one in QuickBASIC). It also will have QuickBASIC. And it is said to use less memory than 4.x. It is due to be released in the first quarter of 1991.

Advanced Micro Devices was awarded monetary damages and rights to the 386 processor in an arbitration proceeding. Intel is challenging that award. In fact, Intel wants to prevent AMD from even using the term "386."

ELECTION RESULTS -

By acclamation, the following officers were elected:

President	Harvey Bruneau
Vice President	Steve Speairs
Treasurer	Bill Fuller
Member at Large	Roger Waters
Secretary	Ed Buzza
Education	Ed Kant

The other posts (Editor, Librarian, Membership, BBS Sysop) are filled by board appointment and will be announced later.

PRESENTATION -

Steve Speairs demonstrated Wealth Builder. This program from Reality Technologies, is sponsored by Money Magazine. It is part of the "Better Living Software Pack" and retails for $129 but can be obtained for less. The Pack also includes: Personal Lawyer, Grammitik 3, Form Maker, Floor Plan Layout, in addition to Wealth Builder.

In running Wealth Builder, Steve explained that it is a financial goal setting program and a method of achieving progress. By defining assets and liabilities and what your goals are, the program will help you achieve these goals. You can plan your investment strategy as being conservative or aggressive (low risk - low return, high risk - high return). It also takes inflation into account in its computations.

A nice thing about the program was the attention paid to incidental features. The program uses very clever graphics in it's approach. When planning education goals, the screen is a blackboard! And when working with assets and liabilities, the screen is a spiral notepad.

As always, Steve did an excellent job. Thanks, Steve.

PRIZE WINNERS -

50/50 - Bob Justice;
Q & A - Carl McFarland;
Antique Disk Drive - Bill Graham;
Surprise - N. Luke.

NEW MEMBERS -

Don L. Haas, Charles J. Garcia, Jia C. Huang, Carl D. McFarland

OTHER TOPICS -

Special Interest Groups -
Dependent upon the interest of the members, SIGs may be set up for DOS, Word Processing, Data Base, etc..

Questionnaire -
We will be canvassing the membership regarding their interests.

Newsletter Articles -
If you know of a good or bad piece of software or hardware, DO write it up for the Bits of Blue Newsletter. Sure would be nice to know that a certain product is a lemon just before you go out and buy it! Also, material for the newsletter doesn't have to be journalism or fancy writing, just your experience in your words is enough.

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OPERATION DESERT SHIELD BBS LINK



Jean Prophet of the Prophets BBS in Arcadia, Fl (813) 675-8812 has a one way direct BBS link to Saudi Arabia.

The hook-up goes from Arcadia to Ft. Myers, to New York and finally to an American BBS Sysop six miles from the American command post in Saudi Arabia. The Sysops are working on a two way link so servicemen can send messages home as well.

To contact a serviceman in Saudi Arabia you will need their name, rank and soc. sec. number. Your message should be directed to: Operation Desert Shield and include the organization/unit of deployment as well as the aforementioned personal data.

This would be a unique way to send a message to a loved one serving 'Over There'.

Thanks to Charlotte County PC Users' Group for this information contained in their December, 1990 newsletter.

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

I was nominated, elected, appointed, volunteered and told by the President to put together a newsletter. Also I was instructed to **get it out before the next meeting**. Well if the U.S. Postal Service works as diligently as I did on this, you may get it before 1/9/91.

This is fun and I have enjoyed putting it together. They will get better. All of your comments, assistance and contributed articles will be greatly appreciated. This is **YOUR NEWSLETTER** so help me make it **the best it can be**. I have advised my supervisor that I will need more memory in my laser printer, if he expects a timely product. He said he would load it to the max, so here is hoping next month's letter will reach you well before the February meeting.

Marylee Bruneau

PRODUCT REVIEW

Product: Xircom pocket lan adapter.
Purpose: Connecting PCs which have no slots available for NICs
Cost: $400-675 dependent on adapter type you need
By: Harvey Bruneau

Our problem was simple. The support staff was constantly on the road with their laptops. These portables have no standard internal expansion slots to accommodate network interface cards (NIC this is just a board which permits communication with your network) or any other cards for that matter. This meant that when our support people came back from a road trip and they wanted to exchange files from their machine to our NOVELL network or vice versa they couldn't without access to another computer and that involved playing the diskette shuffle with someone else desktop which contained a 3.5" floppy.

So I ordered and received a new network adapter for use with our laptop computers. Xircom's pocket adapter is a small (5 oz, 5") external device that uses the parallel port of a PC to provide Ethernet, Token Ring, or ARCNET link with NOVELL, 3COM and many other network operating system. After reading the small manual (20 minutes), I installed the particular software drivers (2 files) needed to access our network and DOS. Well of course, it didn't work because I installed the software for the wrong version of DOS (my fault). I reinstalled and it worked fine. Overall, it took me 5 minutes to install, including the mistake, that's 1/4 the time it took me to read the manual. I give this adapter **"Two Snaps Up"** and I see in the January 15th issue of PC magazine that it received the **1990 TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE AWARD.**

Company: Xircom Inc.
22231 Mulholland Hwy., #114
Woodlan Hills, CA 91364
(818) 884-8755

THREE DOs AND A DON'T

by Dean Ewalt

Three DOS commands you can do from any DOS prompt (that's the thing that looks something like C:>\) are **SET, PATH** and **TREE | MORE.** Don't type **PROMPT.**

One of the questions someone wanted to know, was: "The book keeps referring to the DOS prompt, and I want to know if I got one with my computer, or is that extra?" Answer: one is included with every computer, but it changes, depending on which directory is the current directory.

Some DOS commands will display the current values when you type the command. Some will wipe out the current setting. This article is about some of each.

When your computer starts up, it automatically runs (or should run [call me if it doesn't]) a file called AUTOEXEC.BAT. That file should ask you for the time and date if you don't have a "clock" in your computer. If it asks you for the time and date and the values shown are always correct, you should remove the words DATE and TIME from your AUTOEXEC.BAT file.

Some of the **safe** commands are BUFFERS, DATE, FILES, SET, TIME, PATH, VER, and VOL.

BUFFERS and FILES show you how many DOS buffers and files were permanently allocated by your CONFIG.SYS when the computer started. Values too small cause problems, and too large values reduce the amount of memory available.

When you type TIME and DATE, the current setting will be shown. If you like the values you see, just press the ENTER key. Do it again to see that I speak truth.

SET shows you all the values that were saved in the Environment space by your AUTOEXEC.BAT file when the computer last started up (see June's article for more info) .

PATH shows you the value of the current PATH parameter. Unless you have an unusual program, it should be the same value as the one which AUTOEXEC.BAT furnished at startup time. Every time you type a command at the DOS prompt, DOS searches all the directories listed by PATH to try to find that program or command. If you type **asdfg** at the DOS prompt, DOS will search all of those directories trying to find an .EXE, .COM, or .BAT file with the name asdfg. DOS uses the PATH values to search for Programs, but not for searching for Data files.

VER will show you what version of DOS you are running.

VOL will show you the Volume Label of the current drive. It will also accept parameters, so you can get the Label name of a diskette by typing **VOL A:.** If the diskette has no Volume Label, you can give it one with the command **LABEL A: NOLABEL.** I label my re-formatted diskettes with the names 360K or 1200K.

TREE | MORE will show you which subdirectories are in each of your directories, one screen at a time (press space bar to continue). General rule: anytime a DOS command causes a list of items to scroll off the screen, run it a second time, followed by **| MORE.**

To kill any DOS command putting data to the screen (like TREE | MORE), or to kill a batch file, hold down the CTRL key and press the key labelled BREAK on the side of the key, typically the SCROLL LOCK key (depends on keyboard model).

DON'Ts

Do NOT type PROMPT. That will wipe out the current value of your prompt and it will become **C:** instead of **C:directory>** and you won't know what directory you are in. If yours always shows C:, call me for a computer tuneup. I charge reduced rates to Club members (and no travel charge, even to Englewood).

If you have any questions, call me. I may use your question as the basis for next month's article (no names mentioned).

Dean Ewalt
1605 Main St #810
Sarasota FL 34236
(813) 364-8900

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

What kind of PC do you use? _____

What do you presently use your PC for? _____

What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

THE THIEVIN'
(with deep apologies to E.A. Poe)

Oncet upon a midnight dreary,
I looked for games, something cheery.

Then it happened, what I'd feared,
Fer nabbin' programs, I get seared.

We think it won't, but it could happen,
There could come a tap, tap, tappin',

There could come a policeman rappin',
Rappin' at your castle door.

You will beg and plead "no malice",
"Just tryin' it out; 2 years allowed us."

Just to take a quick perusal,
Friends, they offer, so why refusal?

Time goes on, and it's so handy,
Not to pay, just use it. Dandy.

Honest, Judge, my motive's clear,
I was gonna buy. Soon. (next year!).

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Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492







BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 2 FEBRUARY, 1991

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: February 13, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

EasyCAD2, FastCAD3D & FastCAD
Presented by DATAflex Systems, Inc.
(LOTUS 1 2 3- 3.1 re-scheduled)

Refreshment Break

Live demonstration on
using the Bulletin Board & PKzip

Open Discussion

Door Prize Raffle

HAPPY BIRTHDAY GEORGE!



NOTICE

MEMBERS WHO JOINED PRIOR TO OCTOBER, 1990, PLEASE NOTE YOUR FEES ARE OVERDUE THIS MONTH.

UPCOMMING SPEAKERS:

3/13/91 - Object Vision
(A form based application development tool) To be presented by:
Bordland International, Inc.

4/13/91 - Lotus 123 V3.1 presented by LOTUS Corp.

5/10/91 - Harvard Geographics 1.0 presented by Software Publishing Corp.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Well it looks like the editor and I will complete and survive the creation of our 2nd newsletter. We thought we knew *Wordperfect* prior to doing the newsletter. **WRONG!!** Each issue of **BOB** has been a learning experience for both of us and I am sure it has not ended. There is a major difference between creating individual letters and creating a newsletter. Presently it takes about 24 hours x 2 to create a Newsletter although if you ask Marylee (editor) she will tell you it could be done faster if I didn't help. **My hat off to those volunteers who create newsletters especially last years editor** Barbara Peck.

Last month I mentioned that **BEAU** (our new kitten) was trying to help input articles by running across the keyboard. **BEAU** has a new name now since we determined that she couldn't distinguish the difference between **BEAU** and **NO.** Its now **TATER** because she likes to play with a potato sack. This is her 3rd name since moving in with us. She has been watching a lot of TV and has undergone some personalty changes because of it. A couple of new cat names have been heard throughout the house from time to time. **Saddam** is one because she is a terror or **SCUD** because she acts misguided a lot.

Harvey P. Bruneau

Editorial Comment:

First I's like to say thanks to all who contributed articles, as you can see our little "BOB" is growing. Additional thanks to **Micro-Wise, Inc.** for the use of the hardware, software and paper used to create the newsletter.

Secondly, the President and I want all to know that any articles, comments, or implications concerning Desert Storm are our personal opinions and we do not imply these ideas as representative of the entire group. Although, we have mixed feelings about the war, **WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS**.

I am sure all those servicemen/women would rather be here enjoying all the comforts we take for granted every day. But, it's out of their control and ours -- we feel we must support them. Those of you who agree, do what you can, prayers, letters and above all take pride in these brave people.



MLB

* * 1991 OFFICERS * *

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	932-6745
VICE PRES.:	Steve Spears	875-1095
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MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	224-6079
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EDUCATION:	Edward Kant APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)	
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LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP:	Bill Fuller	832-0125

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

ALBER, ERWIN
ALLEN, KIM D.V.
CACI, WILLIAM
CONDON, TIMOTHY
DAVISON, BOB & NANCY
DeARMOND, CHESTER "ROY"
FAUNTLEROY, ROBERT
FEIGENSPAN, ALAN
HANNON, JERRY
KELLUM, ALEXANDER
KEYSER, LEONARD
MILLER, SANDY
PEARSON, ROGER
POPE, RICHARD L.
RAPOPORT, CALVIN D.
REYNOLDS, HARLAN
SANDERS, WILLIAM
SKINNER, JOHN A.
VETZEL, DEBBIE
VETZEL, ROBIN



WE LOVE OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP MINUTES OF 1/9/91 MEETING --

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

a) Membership is now on an anniversary basis (based on the date that you joined) rather than on the old calendar year basis.

b) Our Bits of Blue newsletter is now being prepared using WordPerfect as the publishing program. The Editor would appreciate any and all public domain graphics. Also needed are articles from the members for the newsletter.

c) In response to a comment that some other clubs get more favored treatment from various vendors, it's because those clubs have more members that we do. Vendors are always looking for the greatest audience to spread the word about their products.

d) A presentation of Lotus 1-2-3 Ver 3.1 is scheduled for next month. In March, a representative from the Software Publishing Corp will present Harvard Graphics. Later in the year, Aston-Tate will discuss the merits of dBase IV.

e) Owners of Magellan (Lotus) are eligible to receive, for free, seven new file viewers. You will now be able to view Quattro, Wordperfect, Word for Windows, etc. documents while in Magellan.

f) MS-DOS 5.0, now in beta testing, is scheduled for release the first half of this year. It is said to have QuickBASIC, handle upper memory usage, and have some elements of PC-TOOLS.

g) Logitech has announced a new mouse. For left-handed people! Comments from the members revealed that the IBM mouse has a button to do the same thing; and that some software packages provide a left-handed facility.

h) We have a lot of good material on the Bulletin Board. Log on and check it out. We now have 120meg of disk space.

i) If you have any ideas for education classes or presentations, please get in touch with me (Harvey) or Ed Kant. We might consider a short session of about 15 minutes before the meeting starts. We have to talk to IBM about getting additional meeting space if there is enough interest in having classes on specific subjects. We do have some volunteers.

IBM PRESENTATION

Chris Mayer, our IBM compatriot, gave an excellent demonstration of OS-2 Ver 1.2 running on a 486-95 with an XGA monitor. The XGA video was awesome. Great color and the resolution was remarkable.

Chris had 8 to 9 windows open and zipped from one to the other with effortless ease. The power of the PC and of OS was very obvious in that a program in one window would continue to run while you were working on another program in another window.

Many of the terms unique to OS were defined, including "threads." In effect, programs are "threaded" when they run in the same application window. As an example, he used an animation program that had two eyeballs follow the cursor motion of the mouse; each eyeball was independently following the mouse cursor.

Also the term "concurrent processing" was clarified. A single processor machine, by definition, can only process one job at a time. What OS does, is prioritize the various jobs and gives control to each of them according to their priority. When a program is suspended, a "picture" of the machine (register contents, current memory address, flag settings, etc.) is stored with that program. Later, when the program is activated, the "picture" is used to restore the machine to be exactly as it was when it was suspended.

Because of time constraints, the Communication and Data Base Managers could not be demonstrated. Chris Mayer did an excellent job of presenting IBM's newest products. He knew the equipment, he knew the operating system, and he knew how to communicate. He deserves a "Well done" from all of us.

COMPUTER COMPASS MAGAZINE

Bradley Friedman distributed copies (gratis) of his new magazine. It is a directory of computer and business professionals in the Tampa Bay area. He is looking for feedback from computer users and would appreciate any information you can offer.

SECRETARY'S COMMENTS

If any of you are interested in the "mouse watcher" program, check out EYECON30.ZIP on our Bits of Blue BBS.

OPERATION DESERT STORM "Letters from Home"



GE Information Services is pleased to provide "Letters from Home" - a program to allow families and friends of loved ones serving with the U.S. Armed Forces in the Persian Gulf region to send FREE electronic mail messages via the GEnie Online Information Service.

Letters from Home, offered in cooperation with the U.S. Armed Forces, the Saudi American General Electric Company, GE Rents and Pitney Bowes Inc., allows individuals in the United States with access to a personal computer and modem to send personal messages to loved ones serving in the Persian Gulf region.

Letters will be sent electronically via GE Information Services' worldwide teleprocessing network to GE's local telecommunications facility in Saudi Arabia. The letters will be received and printed on computers and printers supplied by GE Rents. The mail will then be folded, inserted and sealed in envelopes using state-of-the-art equipment provided by Pitney Bowes. The letters will then be given to the U.S. Armed Forces for delivery to the designated serviceperson.

The GEnie service, one of the leading online information services, is available throughout the U.S., Canada, Japan, Germany, Austria and Switzerland via a local phone call. For further information about the GEnie service, please call GEnie Client Services at 1-800-638-9636.

OR, if you desire the full text of the above article you may download GENIE.TXT from the IBMPCUG BBS.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Product: LANtastic
Purpose: Local Area Network
Cost: $495. - 2 node Arcnet Starter Kit
$725. - 2 node Ethernet Starter Kit

By: Marylee Bruneau

Our problem was simple. My boss constantly wanted diskette copies of draft documents from my computer to review and edit on his computer. He looked into installing a Novell Network but found the cost prohibitive and a bit of an overkill for our needs. But our present method was inefficient and he was determined and tired of playing the diskette shuffle.

He ordered and had installed LANtastic NOS (***Network Operating System***) so he could utilize the documents on my computer and have access to the laser printer on my desk.

It features low memory requirement (13KB at the PC and 40KB on server) at an economical price, and has many of the great advantages of a local area network.

The Electronic Mail and LANtastic Chat, for on-screen, station-to-station communications will prove to be beneficial in an office environment where exchanging notes and memos is a way of life.

The January issue of **LAN magazine** in its Products of the Year article states "...no one in the entry-level network arena has a better product than LANtastic, Artisoft's speedy, low-cost, peer-to-peer network operating system."

Company: Artisoft
575 East River Rd.
Tucson, Arizona 85704
(602)293-6363

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

To Sam Donaldson's statement to General Schwarzkopf on Prime Time Live Thursday evening: "You know General,.... you win this war you will be considered a hero." The General's reply: "No! Not me I won't be a hero, the **Troops** are the heroes."

TAMPA AREA BOARDS

by Dennis Rodriguez
Copyright (C) 1983-1991
Aerotech Corporation
Feb/91 Revision
- 24hr operations unless noted
VOICE: 813-654-3000
Desktop Publishers since 1983

COMPUTER BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEMS

Here's a list of over 80 local Computer Bulletin Boards. They provide us with entertainment, information and personal contact with others. Listings are sorted by computer type and max baud rate. Descriptive information includes:

"Up" date : the year the system was placed "online".

Software Capacity in MegaBytes (MB).

Hours of Operation if less than 24hrs.

Extended Access indicated by * in phone number.

"Tampa Area Boards" is distributed electronically and in printed form.

Production and distribution is funded by the system operators whose listings appear in blocked form. If you find TAB useful, your "Thank You" message to these SysOps will be appreciated.

A M I G A Max Baud 2400:

Cyberspace..91-SLine-130MB-Files-Games-Graphics 932-3146
Glass House..90-SLine-5p/9a-Files-Games-Amiga/IBM . . .986-7025
Lazarus.....91-55MB-Files-Games-Messages 933-3729
Simply Amazing..90-SLine-Computer Store-Files-Gams . .977-3940

A M I G A Max Baud 14400:

Benden Weyr.....90-CNet-Files-Games-Messages 653-0046
Vertigo.....90-AExp-Min:9600-Files-Games-Msgs 831-8466

A P P L E Max Baud 2400:

Final Frontier..91-GBBS-81MB-Files-Games-Messages . .877-3457
Generic.....90-GBBS 832-3875
Sanitarium..89-GBBS-81MB-APPLE/CBM/IBM Support. 971-9597

A P P L E Max Baud 9600:

MacLand.89-SSight-60MB-Tampa's ONLY MAC BBS. . .986-7622

A P P L E Max Baud 14400:

Pro-Truckstop...89-PLine-65MB-IIGS/Mac Support. 885-1552

A T A R I Max Baud 1200:

Flea Infested....90-EXP-Files-Messages-Sysop sup. 989*8564

C O M M O D O R E Max Baud 1200:

Wild Nights....90-Files-Games-Messages. 855-6594

C O M M O D O R E Max Baud 2400:

Alligator..86-CNet-20MB 300+ Games-Utils-Debate.. . . .886-5286
Black Cat.....89-CNET-Games-Messages-Warez. 985-6214
Emerald City..89-Image-20MB-C64-Games-RPG's-Mgs.. .621-2024
Guardian Angel..90-CNet-40MB-DS2 V2.0-Online Games.840-0064
Ground Zero....90-CBase-Files-Games-Messages... 935-1980
Naughty Nautical.86-AA-C128-20MB-Over 500 Warez-Games
. . . . . 253*8353
Telefieds.....90-CNet-C128-News-Sports-Cur Events.. 949-3949

I B M / C o m p a t i b l e Max Baud 1200:

After Hours...89-RBBS-6p/8a-Friendly-Selected Text.. . . .884-3080
DataPlex.....89-QBBS-PyroIII-King-TW-VariTale 985-9274
MegaNet.....88-68MB-Fam. Ent Ntwk-14 lines! 855*0433

I B M / C o m p a t i b l e Max Baud 2400:

Alternative.....89-SLite-104MB-Messages-Files. 881*1774
Alternative.....89-SLite-Programming-Spcl Int Groups . . 882*0651
Bekon Hill.....90-SFIRE-Files-Games-Messages. 989-1629
Bird Lake.....90-DCI-Programming-Messages-Files. 265-3256
Bits of Blue.....86-RBBS-Tampa PC Users Group. 239*3704
BSBB.....83-RYBBS-42MB-FL's OLDEST-MOD 1 885-6187
C.....90-SFIRE-Chip Krenn-Files-Games-Msgs 677-4894
CAD Connection...86-RBBS-AutoCAD Support-Files-Msgs . ..
. . . . . 973*3346
Cairo.....90-SLite-40MB-Online Extracts-Files. 887-5862
Challenger.....88-WCAT-160MB-Ads-Files-Messages . . . 837*8546
Compu-Tech.....89-WCAT-120MB-Business-Investments. 685*0175
Compu-Tech.....89-WCAT-120MB-Tampa Area Sysop . 685*0137
Cookie Jar.....90-SF-Home of Glob War-Files-Mess. . . .238-3120
Elseworld.....86-WCAT-95MB-Online Intl Shpg Mall.. . 932*6480
Excalibur.....90-SFIRE-Camelot-Files-Msgs 988-2603
Fletchers Lounge.91-Olecom-Backstreet Bar-Files-Msgs. .971-0057
Forest Path.....89-WWIV-40MB-Numerology/Tarot. 628-4045
Gallifrey.....89-WCAT-143MB-Files-Games-Messages.. 885*6043
GIF Junction.....89-DCI-235MB-GIF Graphics Librarys.. .960-1300
Godfather.....88-PCB-1.5GB-MNP-1700 GIFs-RelayNET 282*0023
Heart Attack.....90-SFIRE-160MB-Games-Astronomy-Adult
. . . . . 961*0124
Inner Dwellings..90-WWIV-40MB-Files-Games-Messages. 645-2032
Jefferson Electr.89-RBBS-850MB-9500 Files-80 Games. 237*8184
Kinetic Circus...90-WWIV-Files-Games-Messages.. 977-1185
Ko Ro Ba.....87-WWIV-Visit the "City"-Games-Files . .237-0152
Listening Post...88-OLECOM-30MB-Games-"Basement Club"
. 872-7112
Macross.....90-WWIV-9p/4p-Files-Games-Messages.. . . .645-0204
Micro-Line.....91-WWIV-Files-Games-Messages. 971-3048
MicroTools.....89-PCB-410MB-Online Games-GIF Grfx . 654-3128
MicroTools.....89-PCB-410MB-Online Games-GIF Grfx.. 654-4128
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Mustang GT Power.90-WWIV-Files-Games-Messages. . .961-6889
Mystery Tour.....91-FNET-Files-Games-Messages 961-9552
Nite Owls....1-WWIV-"Open Minded Adult". 685-4802
Online Services..89-WCAT-90MB-Desktop Pub-Tec Svcs..933*7037
PC Academy.....90-WCAT-Fun-Files-Games-Support . . .621-2815
PC-Help!.....89-WCAT-338MB-MNP-Personal PC Help.949*4993
Prgrmr's Chateau. 90-WWIV-30MB-Adult/Gay-Files-Msgs.972-5251
Rabbit Express...90-TAG-Files-Games-Messages.. 935-2483
Ranch.....85-DLX-XXX Rated-Files-Messages.. .... 837*5977
Ranch.....85-DLX-XXX Rated-Files-Messages 837*0186
Ranch.....85-DLX-XXX Rated-WorldNet. 837*0928
Redbeard's Hole..91-WWIV-Files-Games-Messages 653-1761
Rouges n Rascals.90-WWIV-Files-Games-Messages 920-6974
Savage Curtain...90-WWIV-60MB-Files-Games-Messages .684-6005
Shamrock.....85-OLECOM-30MB-ProOlecom Spt-SIG's.980-2981
Shocker.....90-WWIV-Files-Games-Messages 654-7764
Silver Bullet....90-SB-"Tampa Bay Clipper Dev Group". . 684*4200
Software Heaven..90-OLECOM-335MB-Grtr Tpa Bay Com Cl
..... 653-0431
Stacks Shack.....90-WCAT-Darkenwald Keep-Games-Msgs.988-4134
Sting.....90-DCI-Law Enforcement-Files-Msgs. 265-1608
Suffragette City.89-RBBS-85MB-News Wx Sports Mkts. 968-7843
Terror in Aisles.90-WWIV-Files-Games-Messages 989-2563
Tiny Toons Adven.81-WWIB-Files-Games-Messages. ... 989-1629
V.....90-WWIV-85MB-Files-Online Games-Msgs . 840-9238
World of Tiers...90-SFIRE-MNP5-64MB-Files-Games-Msgs
..... 933*5008

IBM/Compatible Max Baud 9600:

Alternative.....89-SLite-XXX Adult + Gay Conferences . 882-8826
DataCopy.....87-WCAT-MNP-Multinode-Ads-Business 832*4133
DataCopy.....87-WCAT-MNP-Multinode-Ads-Business 837*1852
Rapid Trans Auth.88-RBBS-333MB-Files-Games-Messages
..... 973*2780
Sunshine .....84-RBBS-1.2GB-Limited Free Access 887-3984
Sunshine .....84-RBBS-1.2GB-MNP-6300 Programs .. 885-4659
Sunshine .....84-RBBS-1.2GB-8 Computer Network ... 886*3159
Sunshine .....84-RBBS-1.2GB-8 Computer Network ... 887*3757
TABB.....86-OPUS-80MB-Silver Express-Messages . 961-6242
Tampa Bay Prog...90-QBBS-Programmers' Support 973-7207
Tampa Info Board.88-QBBS-100MB-PCP-Online Games 963*1900
Woody.....91-WWIV-Files-Games-Messages 972-2166

IBM/Compatible Max Baud 14400:

Mr. Bill's Place.90-MNP-Files-Games-Messages 855-5163
Southern Systems.83-QBBS-MNP-IBM/CBM files-NetMail
.....977*7065

IBM/Compatible Max Baud 19200:

AlleyKat's Alley.89-WWIVNET-330MB-Tech Lang Support
..... 239-1339
Bandit.....90-PCB-120MB-MNP-Files-Games-Msgs .. 931-4584
Bart's Comp. Rm..90-WCAT-150MB-Files-Messages-Doors
..... 237-6615
Data Exchange....86-PCB-300MB-Sports-Files-Messages . 264*0073
Data Exchange....86-PCB-300MB-Sports-Files-Messages . 968*3213
Jayhawk.....90-WCAT-1.6GB-MNP-Files-Games-Msgs. 855*7375
PC-Help!....89-WCAT-338MB-MNP-Personal PC Help.. 949*3392
PC-Help!....89-WCAT-338MB-MNP-Personal PC Help. . 949*6588

IBM/Compatible Max Baud 38400:

Arabian Nights...90-PCB-PCPursuit-Files-Games-Msgs.. . 885-3496
Entropy.....88-RAccess-130MB-Politics-Philosophy .. 264*6344
Godfather.....88-PCB-1.5GB-PCP-1700 GIFs-RelayNET.289*3314
Longbow.....90-DCI-130MB-21 Second Delay 961-3653
Nordevald SW.....88-DCI-MNP-Homeboard-Variety 961-0788
Pro Data Exch....88-MNP-660MB-Business-PCRelayNet. 920*8820
Tower Club.....84-PCB-MNP-Intl. Conf- Min:1200 baud 971*2934

TANDY Max Baud 1200:

CoCo Chips.....89-RIBBS-Comp Club-Files-Info-Msgs.. 840-0115

SPELLCHECKERS

At the last meeting, one of the questions was, "What is wrong when I cannot use my spellchecker?"

Perhaps the best way to decide where the trouble lays is to put a DOS disk in drive A and bring the computer up with no special startup sequence.

Then try the spellchecker once more. If it works now, one of the commands you have in your autoexec.bat file may be the source of the trouble. If it still does not work, then it would be a good idea to put each of your original wordperfect disks in drive A and chkdsk them. Use chkdsk *.* on each of the disks.

Using a DOS startup disk is a good generic way to look for trouble. Running chkdsk *.* on all new program disks may help you in many situations.

Specifically with wordperfect, you might check to see if your CONFIG.SYS has files=20 statement. Also to be sure your expanded memory is not the trouble you may start wordperfect with the /ne option to prevent it from using expanded memory. Another check you can easily run is to go to DOS, then type wpinfo. This will list all the characteristics of your particular computer so if you want to know what type of CPU you have, 8088, 80286, 80386, etc, this will print it out for you. It will also give many other characteristics so you can tell the Wordperfect people just what you are using in your computer.



Service with a Smile:

REBOOT -

To repeatedly kick a faulty computer until it starts working.

CORE -

Remains of an Apple when all the bytes are gone.

THE HELP SCREEN

Edward J. Kant, P.E., Naples, FL

Well, here I am again! What with the holidays and all, I sort of lost track of time and didn't get a column in last month. To make up for that lapse, I would like to take this month and next month to discuss several of the so-called "small" DOS commands. These are **BREAK, CLS, DATE, LABEL, REName, SYS, TIME, TYPE, VER, VERIFY** and **VOL.**

For the purpose of our discussion, I am grouping these commands as follows:

BREAK Toggles the DOS keyboard interrupt on or off.
VERIFY Toggles the DOS file verify feature on or off.

DATE Allows checking or changing the system internal date.
TIME Allows checking or changing the system internal clock time.

LABEL Allows the user to "name" a disk.
VOL Allows the user to view the disk label.

REN Allows the user to rename files.
SYS Used exclusively for copying the system files to a disk during the format process.
CLS Allows the user to "erase" the monitor.
VER Shows the DOS version on the machine.
TYPE Allows the user to display *TEXT* files.

This month we will review the first three groups and next month we will finish them.

BREAK internal DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **BREAK** command is provided so that you can instruct DOS to check for an abort operation, either <Control-C> or <Control-Break>, whenever the running program uses a DOS function.

Syntax: **BREAK [ON | OFF]**

Where: **ON** is specified to activate **BREAK.**
OFF is specified to deactivate **BREAK.**
No parameter displays **BREAK's** current status.

As a rule, DOS checks the keyboard for a <Control-C> or a <Control-Break> key only when performing one of the following operations: Reading the keyboard, writing to the display, inputing or outputing to a serial port or outputing to a printer port.

Since some programs do not perform any of these operations, aborting these programs is not possible. However, DOS can be 'told' to check for the <Control-C> or <Control-Break> keys each time any DOS operation is performed. This option is controlled with the **BREAK** command.

Examples: **BREAK** Display **BREAK's** current setting.

BREAK ON Enable detection of a <Control-C> or <Control-Break> whenever a DOS function is invoked.

BREAK OFF Disable detection of <Control-C> or <Control-Break> whenever a DOS function is invoked, but aborting will still be possible during character I/O.

VERIFY internal DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **VERIFY** command is provided so that you can instruct DOS to verify that all disk writes have been performed successfully.

Syntax: **VERIFY [ON | OFF]**

The verify state remains unchanged until another **VERIFY** command is entered or the system is restarted. The normal (default) verify state is **OFF.** If the command is entered without parameters, DOS displays the current verify state and leaves it unchanged.

Verification may be enabled on a command by command basis; for example, by using **COPY** with the **/V** option.

Setting the verify state to **ON** causes all subsequent disk write operations to take longer than normal. This may not be too noticeable if you have a fixed disk but may appear to slow down a one or two floppy system.

(Continued on next page)

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DATE	internal	DOS 1.0
TIME	internal	DOS 1.0

Purpose: The **DATE** command allows you to get, set or change the system date. The **TIME** command allows you to get, set or change the system time.

Syntax: **DATE** [mo-dd-yy] or **DATE** [mm/dd/yy]
TIME [hh:mm:ss.ff]

Where: For the **DATE** --
mo = Month from 1 to 12.
dd = Day from 1 to 31.
yy = Year from 80 to 99 or 1980 to 2099 (a leading 19 is assumed on a two digit entry).

For the **TIME** --
hh = Hour from 0 to 23.
mm = Minute from 0 to 59.
ss = Second from 0 to 59.
ff = fractions of a second from 00 to 99.

The system normally prompts you for the date and time when the system is started unless it finds an **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file. If you use an AT, your system date and time is maintained by a battery backed-up clock. If you use an XT or PC-class machine, add-on boards are available to automatically set the system date and time from a battery backed-up clock. This is done by adding the appropriate command for the board to your **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file. If your machine is not an AT class machine and you have no add-on board, you will need to manually set the date and time each time you boot your system. You should add the **DATE** and **TIME** commands to your **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file. Once the system is started the date and time do not need to be set again.

Entering either command without parameters displays the current setting and prompts for a new date or time. If the <Enter> key is pressed without supplying a new date or time, the date and time remain unchanged. You may supply the date or time on the command line when the command is entered or you can supply a new date or time when the prompt appears.

AT and higher class machines using DOS 3.0 or later can use the **DATE** and **TIME** commands to set their CMOS clocks. There is no longer a need for the setup diskette to do this.

NOTE: When using the **TIME** command, any unentered fields will be set to zero. The colon (:) must be used as a delimiter between fields.

LABEL external/transient MS-DOS 3.1 PC-DOS 3.0

Purpose: Change or delete the electronic label (name) of disk.

Syntax: **LABEL**[d:]

Previous to the existence of this command, the electronic label of a disk could only be entered when the disk was formatted and if the /V option was specified. The label is a 1 to 11 character name that takes up one entry in the root directory, but no disk space.

The following characters may NOT be used in a label:

* ? / \ | . , ; : + = < > [ ]

also spaces and tabs are not allowed.

VOL	internal	DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **VOL** command displays the volume label of the specified or current disk logical.

Syntax: **VOL** [d:]

If the disk drive is not specified, the current drive is assumed. The disk volume (name) can also be specified when a disk is formatted using the **FORMAT** command with a /V option. Alternatively, the **LABEL** command may be used.

Next month we will conclude the discussion of "small" DOS commands. As usual, if you have any questions, comments, complaints or other, please drop me a message on Bits of Blue, Compuserve (71020,2722), GEnie (E.KANT) or Delphi (EDKANT).

☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about IBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

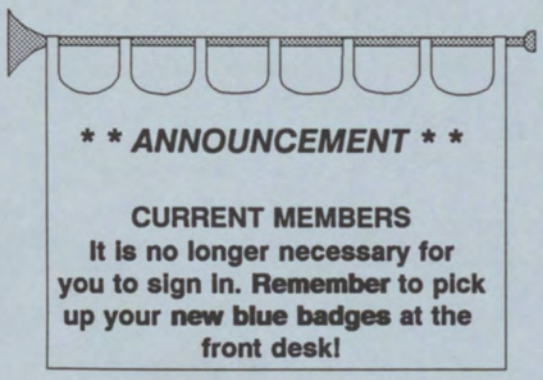
DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ]
DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00

Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



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FUTURE ARTICLES:
"The Help Screen" (continued) by E.J. Kant
"Desktop Publishing...for beginners" by Ed Buzza

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



01-92
EDWARD BUZZA
4426 MOHICAN TRAIL
VALRICO, FL 33594

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 3 MARCH, 1991

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: March 13, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

3/13/91 - Object Vision
(A form based application development tool) To be presented by:
Borland International, Inc.

Refreshment Break

Open Discussion

Door Prize Raffle
SideKick (donated by
Borland International, Inc.





OUR HEROES!!

LET'S GIVE THE TROOPS A HAND.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

4/13/91 - LOTUS 123 V3.1
presented by LOTUS CORP.

5/10/91 - Harvard Geographics 1.0
presented by Software Publishing Corp.

HAPPY SAINT PADDY'S DAY!



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

In the last 6 weeks I have attended 4 PC seminars covering Network Operating systems, Client Server Technology, SQL, Database Techniques, Windows, Downsizing and a bunch of other topics which are in the PC lime light these days. The cost ranged from free to $500 and the duration from 1/2 day to 2 days. While I learned something at each I must say that all were not as informative as I had hoped. Maybe I am expecting too much and some people will say **"You get what you pay for"**. I don't think so. Even if the seminar is free it will cost someone something. Each hour of a seminar represents an hour of lost time at the office. When someone has a seminar and states that experts in the field will be teaching or presenting, I expect to increase my knowledge or at least get some brain cells to think of possibilities within a product that I had not thought of. A couple of times I wondered what field the expert was from, left field, right field or a corn field. There are times when I have learned more from attendees than the experts.

Hopefully, if the seminar has a good expert it will be worth your time in the long run. But remember that shelling out dollars for a seminar may not be the investment you or your company planned for and is not a guarantee that you will walk away with more than you already knew. When all else fails **make the time** to teach yourself or get involved with others who have the same goals. Education in the PC world is a never ending process as long as **you** have the desire to learn.

Harvey P. Bruneau

Editorial Comment:

For those of you who contributed articles - fine job, keep them coming! Please, those of you who think you'd like to submit an article but aren't sure, or do not have access to send articles via the bulletin board - drop it in the mail in any form, (handwritten, typed, diskette) to: MICRO-WISE, Inc., P.O. Box 291097, Tampa, FL 33687 ATTN: Editor TIBMPCUG

It will be my intention to try to have something in the paper to interest all - the amateur to the expert. In fact I'll be putting things in here that I haven't the faintest idea what its about, but I know there are those of you who will soak it up like a sponge. For the less computer literate and those eager to learn (as myself) there will be very informative and enlightening articles.

On February 24, I requested a complimentary copy of WP5.1 from WordPerfect Corp. to be used by the club in publishing the newsletter. Good News! Only twelve days later it was delivered. Beginning with next month all future editions of our newsletter will be created with this donated copy of WP5.1. Thanks WordPerfect!

Again - members, Thank You for your input to our publication, any comments or suggestions are likewise appreciated.

MLB

* * 1991 OFFICERS * *

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	932-6745
VICE PRES.:	Steve Speairs	875-1095
TREASURER:	Bill Fuller	832-0125
MEMBER AT LARGE:		
	Roger Waters	224-6079
SECRETARY:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDUCATION:	Edward Kant	

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP:	Bill Fuller	832-0125



OUR NEW MEMBERS!

BODE, SHARON
DEFFNER, GEORGE
HARTE, MARY
KIMBALL, MARK
KYLE, FREDERICK
MOSKOWITZ, ARTHUR
PALMER, GARY
PURCELL, EDWARD
WANNER, GEORGE
WOLFE, DIANA

Results of January Raffle AND THE WINNERS ARE!

WordStar . . . . . Ed Buzza
50/50 cash drawing . . . . . Robert Green

A BELATED NOTE OF THANKS TO **SUNRISE COMPUTERS** for these wonderful prizes donated for our January meeting:

Speed Screws and Mouse Holder . . . . . Kevan Sheridan
Curtis Clip . . . . . N. Luke
Caretaker . . . . . R. Davis

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP MINUTES OF 2/13/91 MEETING --

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

1) Borland is scheduled for March. The new Sidekick program will be presented as well as Object Vision - application programming based on forms.
2) Lotus (new 1-2-3) has been rescheduled for April.
3) Software Publishing (Harvard GeoGraphics) is scheduled for May.
4) We have new name tags. Blue tags indicate a paid-up member; white tags mean your membership dues are late. Note that the icon screen shows your membership due date.
5) Regular members no longer need to sign in.
6) Our new editor, Marylee Bruneau, was present.
7) Our BBS telephone number is 239-3704.
8) PKZIP and PKUNZIP can be used for other than BBS purposes. It's a handy tool to free up space on the hard drive by condensing seldom used files.
9) Thanks to Vern Semrad for reminding us that a complete list of Prodigy Jump Words is now on our BBS.
10) Visited the SoftWarehouse in Atlanta. It's the hardware and software equivalent of Home Depot. They also had Dell computers for sale. It was rumored that they were to open a store where Egghead used to be (Hillsborough and Dale Mabry area) but no date yet for a Tampa opening. The closest ones are in Atlanta and in Miami.
11) Since there was no "vendor door prize," the 50-50 drawing was canceled for this meeting.
12) According to a Hewlett-Packard survey, their PCs had the lowest failure rate - 4 per cent. IBM was second with 9% and Compaq was the lowest at 17%.
13) A 286 "notebook" PC was shown to illustrate just how small they are. Since so many OEMs (original equipment manufacturer), are making them, parts are hard to find.
14) A review of 7 tax programs was cited. Chip Soft ($75), Turbo Tax, and Tax Cut ($89) were rated among the best. When buying any of these packages, be sure you get the '91 version.
15) Does anyone want to donate a scanner to the club for use by the editor?

CAD PRESENTATION

John Fought, from DATAflex Systems, Tampa, spoke about the merits of EasyCAD2, FastCAD, and FastCAD3D - all Fifth Generation products. The program shown was FastCAD. EasyCAD is almost the same thing as FastCAD. FastCAD is the equivalent of AutoCAD level 9 and features full file exchange to and from AutoCAD. The main difference is that FastCAD provides an icon menu bar on the right side of the screen while EasyCAD relies on pull down menus. It is very easy to upgrade from EasyCAD to FastCAD.

Anyone with some drafting experience can learn EasyCAD in less than thirty hours. It requires 512k RAM and while it can run from two floppy disks, a hard drive is recommended. A math co-processor is not necessary (but is necessary for FastCAD). Some of the main features are:

- It can output to the top name word processors (WordPerfect, WordStar, etc.).
- Up to eight windows can be opened. This lets you keep zoom views of various parts of the main drawing for ready reference.
- It displays drawing status (size, elements, etc.) at all times.
- Can shell out to DOS.
- Calculates distances and areas. If a drawing element is stretched, dimensions are automatically readjusted.
- Allows up to 255 layers or overlay of the drawing and can hide layers.
- Allows tiling. e.g. If plotting a 20x30 inch drawing plan and plotter can only handle 11x17, program will break drawing into 4 parts that when printed can be pasted to form large drawing plan.
- Color bar on the left side of screen and function icons on the right side of the screen allow for quick selection of these elements.

All in all, the presentation was very well received. Thanks, John.

SECRETARY'S COMMENT

One of the most impressive things about this CAD package was the speed of redrawing the screen. No sooner than the zoom command was clicked, ZAP, there was the enlarged view. The multiple view feature is a nice touch also. It's nice to have the main drawing on the screen while working on an enlarged view of a part of the main drawing.

THE BULLETIN BOARD AND PKWARE

Our Sysop Kevan Sheridan shed some light on the dark goings on behind the Bits of Blue Bulletin Board. It was fascinating to hear Kevan explain some of the background activity related to a BBS. Such things as Sysop screens, local log-ons, modem protocols, etc., were logically handled and clearly explained. Great job, Kevan, thanks.

(Minutes...Continued on next page)

(Minutes...Continued from previous page)

In setting up a BBS, there are over 320 parameters that must be set up the Sysop. Further, some of them have additional parameters that must be set. Use of the Utility feature was demonstrated as was the "New Member" initial sign-on. The various protocols (x-modem, y-modem, z-modem, etc.) were discussed and analyzed; as were their merits and caveats.

We were reminded that Q-Modem is a telecom package, not a protocol. A run-through of Q-Modem's menu system showed some of that program's features.

Although batch uploads are not available, batch downloads are! To do this, at the prompt, type <D> <FILEA.ZIP> <FILEB.ZIP> <ENTER>. This will download the two files requested. Just be sure that a delimiter (a space or a comma) separates the filenames. Remember also that x-modem can't handle batch downloads.

How to send, receive, and read messages was explained as well as the one-line and the ANSI editors. To upload a prepared message, use your favorite ASCII editor to create a file with lines no more than 78 characters wide. Then at the BBS prompt (no ANSI editor), upload the prepared text file.

Kevan also demonstrated two of Philip Katz's software offerings: PKZIP and PKUNZIP. Almost all the files on our BBS are .ZIP formatted (we do have some text and .GIF files too). These programs are available in our library and on our BBS.

Kevan gave an excellent presentation. Again, thank you!

Club Members BBS:

The Tampa IBM PC User Group operates a full service 130 Mb, single-line 24-hour electronic BBS for Up- or Down-Loading. As a member you are invited to use the Board within the established BBS rules.

Phone: 239-3704

The first time you log-on to the BBS, you must establish your Password. You will then have limited access until access has been verified by the Sysop.

For assistance from SYSOP, Call Kevan Sheridan 237-0100

How to buy a personal laser printer

Five factors to consider before upscaling your output.

MILLIONS OF BUSINESS PEOPLE HAVE concluded that dot-matrix printers just don't do their prose justice. In 1990 alone, says market analyst Angele Boyd of International Data Corp., some 1.9 million laser printers were shipped to dealers; by 1994 annual sales will have doubled. "The laser printer has had a major impact on the quality of business documents." she adds.

Laser printers have won out as the quality standard for business communications thanks in part to a nonstop drop in cost over the past seven years. When Hewlett-Packard unveiled its first laser printer in 1984, it was priced at $3,495. Today HP's least expensive laser, the LaserJet IIP, lists at $1,495. The machines, which use a laser to create an image on a drum for transfer to paper, offer a huge variety of print-shop-caliber typefaces in a wide range of sizes. They also mix graphics and text easily.



The newest category of lasers is the so-called personal printer, a term describing a smaller, cheaper and sometimes slower machine. List prices for personal printers range for $650 to over $3,000. Before you buy, here are the features you should consider:

■ **NUMBER OF BUILT-IN FONTS.** If you've got sophisticated desktop publishing or presentations in mind, you'll need a lot of resident (built-in) fonts. Otherwise, you'll lose time downloading additional fonts from software.

■ **PAPER TRAY.** The standard 50-sheet paper tray may frustrate you if you print huge reports. See if the printer has a second tray slot or ask your dealer if volume-feeding accessories (including a multiple-envelope feeder) are available.

■ **CARTRIDGE LIFE.** Most printers give you about 3,500 copies from a single toner cartridge (which can cost as much as $125). Make sure that cartridge replacement or refill is simple and clean.

■ **PRINT CAPABILITIES.** Can you print double-sided or sideways? What about addressing envelopes, the traditional failing of laser printers?

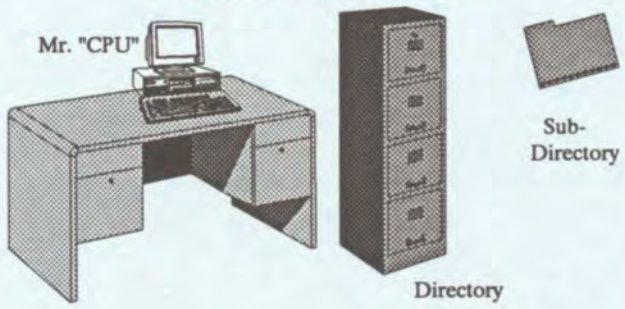
■ **PAGES PER MINUTE.** Four pages per minute tends to bog down productivity. Eight to 10 ppm is probably worth the extra cost.

(Reprinted from Working Woman, March 1991.)

The Computer Simplified

"An Original Story for the First-Time PC User"

by Michael Dodge - UCLA, PCUG, &
Los Angeles Computer Society



Inside your computer there lives a little man whose name is CPU (Central Processing Unit). Inside his house there is a light, a fan, a desk, a file cabinet, and at least one mail box.

You can communicate with CPU through a language called DOS (Disk Operating System). Like any other language (German or French or English), DOS has its own vocabulary and rules. You communicate with CPU by typing DOS commands on the keyboard and he repeats everything on the monitor screen.

The size of CPU's desk is equal to the amount of RAM (Ramdom Access Memory) your computer has. The bigger his desk, the more room CPU has to lay out papers and the more things he is able to work on at one time. So the size of his desk (or the amount of memory in the computer) is very important. If your computer has 640,000 (655,360 actual) bytes of memory (640 kilobytes or 640K), CPU's desk will be bigger than if you had only 128K of memory. A computer with one million bytes of memory (one megabyte or 1Mb) means that the CPU has a very large desk to work with.

All of the messages CPU handles are organized into units called files. There are basically two kinds of files: those that contain numbers or English-language information, called data files, and those that contain instructions to CPU written in programming language, called executable files, or programs. Generally speaking, the executable files enable CPU to write and manipulate the information contained in the data files.

CPU stores both kinds of files in a file cabinet called the hard disk drive. The bigger the storage capacity of the hard disk drive, the more file cabinet drawers CPU has to store things. A hard drive with twenty megabytes of storage gives CPU only twenty file drawers, whereas a hundred megabyte hard drive gives him one hundred drawers for storage. Through DOS commands typed in at the keyboard, you can tell CPU to take files out and what to do with them, as well as to put files away and where to put them. Just as real file cabinet drawers are organized and divided by folders, the hard disk is divided into directories (drawers) and subdirectories (folders).

CPU sits inside his house and waits for you to give him the commands. When you tell him to take out a program to work with, he finds it in one of the file cabinets, takes it out, puts it on his desk (loads it into RAM) and waits for your next command. When you start a new date file, you must give it a name so that CPU can find it the next time you want it. When you are finished working with a program and you tell CPU to put away all the data files the program has been using, he stores them back in the file cabinet. If, for some reason, you haven't told him to put away all the data files and you turn off the computer power switch, you have also turned off CPU's fan and light. CPU says, "It's too dark in here; I have no windows, so I will just sit and wait." Everything you were working on is still sitting on CPU's desk.

Then, when you turn the switch back on, the light comes on, and you can hear the fan come on, but the fan blows everything off CPU's desk. It is now just a pile of trash and CPU throws it away. This is why it is important to tell CPU to put away (save) all your data files whey you are finished with them; if you don;'t you won't have them anymore. CPU's mailbox (floppy drive), which can be different sizes (5.25" and 3.5"), allows you to give CPU new programs or information to work with, or to transfer information from CPU to someone else's CPU. Before you can tell CPU to write information on a floppy disk, it must be formatted.

When you tell CPU to format a disk, he prepares it to accept information by dividing it up into pie-shaped wedges, called sectors (usually eight or nine) and circular tracks, like groves on a record.)a high-density 5.25" disk has 96 tracks, while a low density disk has 48 tracks). CPU stores information in those tracks and sectors. The first sector on the first track is reserved for directory where CPU writes down the name of every file that is stored on the disk and its location(s) on which sectors and tracks it can be found). When you ask CPU to get something from that disk, he runs to the directory, reads it and knows just where to go to get the file. After your work is safely put away -- and you turn off the power switch -- CPU rests until you need his help once again.

(Reprinted by permission from Pinellas IBM-PCUG Bits & Bytes)

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In case you're asked, "What's a:

Modem?: Southern for "more of them."
GUI?: Theater floor.
Baud?: Lady of the evening.
Hot Link?: Onion covered sausage in a bun.
Terminal?: Said of a computer that is about to die.



Book Review: Word Perfect - Desktop Publishing In Style by Daniel Will-Harris.

Publisher: Peachpit Press, 1085 Keith Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708, Retails for $23.95)

If you have a laser printer and use WordPerfect 5.x, get a copy of *Word Perfect - Desktop Publishing In Style* If you're at all interested in desktop publishing, or would just like to know more about WordPerfect, this book is definitely a "must have."

Some may find fault with the author's touches of humor but I liked them. It helps to break up some of the heavy stuff that's in the book. For instance, in the third chapter, *Follow My Example*, he writes: "One iron-clad guarantee: experimenting with these examples won't be as bad as having a root canal or passing a kidney stone". Then he tells you how to desktop publish a document, keystroke by keystroke.

In the *Macros/Soft Keyboard* chapter, he refers to one of the shortcuts as a "minor miracle." He's right! The shortcut, ALT-E (edit a code), lets you edit almost any WordPerfect code. Turn on Reveal Codes, place the cursor on the code, press ALT-E, and the macro figures out what menu you need for editing. After you're finished editing, the old code is removed by the macro. What a time saver! Best of all, the author tells how to create it as a stand alone macro.

In addition to a glossary and a list of recommended publications, he writes about several related software programs and hardware items. From the style of writing, it's obvious that these are user evaluations and not the parroting of advertisements. All in all, this book should be in the library of every WordPerfect user. (Contributed by: Ed Buzza)

Book Review: Waite Group's MasterC by Mitchell Waite, Stephen Prata & Rex Wollard

Publisher: Waite Group Press, 1990 - 231 pages
(4) 5.25" DS-DD Diskettes, MSRP $45.00

Hardware Requirements: PC Compatible, MS-DOS, 3.x+, 5.25" Drive, 384K RAM, HD w/ 2.2 Meg, Available, Mono/Color Monitor & Board

This book is a PC-Based, self-pacing instruction course for the learning of generic C. It covers all of the C fundamentals up to the new ANSI C standards and also covers some of the minor differences between UNIX and MS-DOS C implementations. The course is divided into 15 chapters and is estimated to require about 31 hours to complete all of the lessons.

The course uses the familiar example-question-answer format to teach the C fundamentals. The answer criteria appears to be based on some form of 'Natural Language' interface that picks out the salient points of the students response to compare against the proper answer.

The user interface is very well done and consequently very easy to use and navigate. The system starts out with the master menu and follows that with each chapter's submenu. Depending upon each chapter's scope there may or may not be sub-sub-menus.

The current position in the course is shown by the top status line showing student name, chapter and position in chapter. At the bottom of the screen are located the various navigation options available at the current position in the program. These may vary because at the question screens there is no choice but to answer the question!

The program also serves well as a refresher course or reference work on C. Each chapter has a review exam for its topic and the student can thus check his/her knowledge without going through the learning work if it is thought unnecessary. This would be a way to determine those areas of C learning that need to be refreshed. In terms of being a reference work, the Glossary navigation key allows one to highlight a particular topic in question and then can take the user to that portion of the course that deal with that topic. I found this book/course easy to use and an excellent course on the C Language. I would be somewhat hesitant to give this course to a complete computer novice because I think that one should have some experience in programming before moving into C, if only because of the inherent danger in C capabilities! I was disturbed by the number of errors that I found in the course of this course, ranging from spelling to incorrect answers and examples. However I have a low version number of the software, 1.12, and I presume that, with the errata list I am sending and the ones that have probably been sent by others, these authors will waste no time in correcting the software. The overall quality of this product makes the foregoing almost a certainty!

I love recommending quality products and this is definitely one of them. I would love to see these people issue a more advanced course as well and maybe one on C++ would not be out of question! One can only hope, but considering the number of other efforts that this firm have in the C area, I think that it is a worthwhile hope.

(Editor's Comment: Contributor not identified)

THE HELP SCREEN

Edward J. Kant, P.E., Naples, FL

Last month we had a look at several of DOS's "small" commands. This month we will look at some others. To refresh your memory, the commands were:

BREAK, VERIFY, DATE, TIME, LABEL, VOL,

RENname, SYS, CLS, VER, TYPE

The first six in the top row were discussed last month. This month we will review the last five.

CLS internal
DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **CLS** command clears the display screen and returns with the cursor in the top left corner of the screen (the home position). When using a color system, the foreground and background colors remain unchanged if they were set using one of the DOS functions, otherwise the colors are set to white (actually light grey) characters on a black background.

Syntax: **CLS**

Note: For proper operation of CLS it may be necessary to load the **ANSI.SYS** device driver. This is done with a statement in your **CONFIG.SYS** file such as:

DEVICE=C:\DOS\ANSI.SYS

provided that the file **ANSI.SYS** is in your DOS subdirectory.

REN (RENname)
internal DOS 1.0

Purpose: The **REN** command renames a file from one name to another. It is an abbreviation of the command **RENAME.**

Syntax: **REN** [d:][path]oldfilename[.ext] newfilename[.ext]
NOTE THE SPACE BETWEEN FILE NAMES

Only the first filename may have its disk drive and path specified. The second filename will use the same drive and path as is specified for the first (not the default drive and path). This means the **REN** command may only be used to rename files within the same subdirectory. Wildcards * and ? may be used in the filename and extension. DOS will not let you rename a file to a filename that already exists.

Examples: **REN** oldfile newfile
Rename the file oldfile to newfile in the current directory.

REN \WP*.DOC *.TXT
Rename all the files with extensions .DOC in the directory WP on the current disk to files with the extension .TXT.

Bug note for those of you who might still be using DOS Version 2.10 **REN** command:

If you try to rename a subdirectory rather than a file, the first file in the subdirectory is renamed to the file specified, and the directory you were trying to rename is not renamed. This action is performed whether or not the appropriate error message is generated.

SYS external/transient DOS 1.0

Purpose: The **SYS** command is used to transfer a copy of the DOS operating system files from the default drive to the specified disk drive.

Syntax: **SYS** d:

This command transfers the two hidden system files, **MSDOS.SYS** and **IO.SYS** or **IBMBIO.COM** and **IBMDOS.SYS** to the specified target disk.

The target drive must be completely empty or be formatted using the **/S** or **/B** options of the **FORMAT** command. DOS requires its startup files to be the first two directory entries in the root directory of the disk, and the file **IBMBIO.COM** must be contiguous, that is, unfragmented in noncontiguous clusters on the first track or cylinder of the disk.

TYPE internal DOS 1.0

Purpose: The **TYPE** command displays the contents of the specified file on the screen.
(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

Syntax: **TYPE** [d:][path]filename

If the drive or path are not specified, the default is assumed. The filename may NOT contain wildcards. The file is displayed as is except that Tab characters are expanded.

Examples: **TYPE** B:filename
Display the contents of the file "filename" on the diskette in drive B:.

TYPE file **>** **PRN**
Type the file named file from the current directory on the system printer.

TYPE file **|** **MORE**
Display the contents of the file "file" one screenful at a time.

VER internal DOS 2.0

Purpose: The **VER** command displays the version number of DOS your system is using.

Syntax: **VER**

This command can be an important assist if you are having trouble getting a program to run; especially if you install a program on a machine that you may not be used to using -- A LEGAL COPY. The program may run very well on one machine but not on another. This can sometimes be traced to the simple fact that older versions of DOS may not permit the program to run properly.

You may also find that a DOS command given on one machine works differently when given on another machine. Checking the version number with **VER** may be a "quick fix" for the proper syntax.

Well, that's it for another month. As always you may contact me with comments, questions, suggestions, complaints, etc. on Bits of Blue, Compuserve (71020,2722), GEnie (E.KANT), or DELPHI (EDKANT).

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TO COPY HIGH DENSITY FLOPPIES IN ONE PASS

Joe Crochet

```
echo off
echo Place SOURCE disk in Drive A:
pause
cls
c:
cd\
md copydisk
cd\copydisk
xcopy a:*.*
echo Place DESTINATION disk in Drive A:
pause
xcopy *.* A:
for %%A in (*1*) do del %%A > nul
cd \
rd copydisk
go
```

WORDPERFECT SHORTCUT

Customizing Footnote and Endnote Text

WordPerfect forces you to format footnote text one footnote at a time. Create the macros below to automate this time-consuming job:

1. To start recording, press **<Ctrl>-<F10>** on a blank *WordPerfect* screen.
2. Press **<Alt>-f** or **<Alt>-e** for footnotes or endnotes, then type **Footnote** or **Endnote**; press **<Enter>**.
3. Press **Ctrl>-<F7>**, **f** or **e**, then **c**.
4. Press **<Ctrl>-<F8>**, then choose base font, size, and appearance for all footnote text.
5. Press **<Ctrl>-<F10><F7>** to end recording.

Now, to insert a preformatted note, press **<Alt>-f** or **<Alt>-e**, type your text, and press **<F7>**.

(Reprinted from PCWorld 2/91)

* * * For Your Info * * *

We all know the acronym **WYSIWYG**. (What You See Is What You Get.)

Here's a new one for you - **WYSBYGI**. (What You See Before You Get It.) A capability of the future WordPerfect for Windows (to be released this year), which lets you preview all aspects of the font--including font type, size and appearance--before you change it in your document.

COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN AND SIMULATION FOR THE STUDENT ELECTRICAL ENGINEER AND ELECTRONICS HOBBYIST

Jeffrey May

Are you interested in learning how to use your computer to design and test electronic circuits and/or digital logic circuits? You say you are, but you can't afford the hundreds of dollars some commercial software packages cost. Then do I have the solution for you.

The answer is right here in our own backyard. The Department of Electrical Engineering at USF requires that its students learn several CAD programs. These programs can be purchased at the USF Textbook Center.

The programs are "Student Versions" of popular CAD programs used by engineers at universities and corporations throughout the U.S. These programs differ from the commercial product in that they are usually a "limited" version of the program; this means that the number of components, connections, type of analysis, etc. allowed by the program is not the same as in the commercial package.They range in cost from $30 to $50. Most are packaged with manual and disks together. The manuals assume that you already understand the theory and applications of the circuit you are trying to simulate.

The programs you will find at the USF Textbook Center that you may want to purchase are:

PROGRAM: SPICE - A Guide to Circuit Simulation & Analysis Using PSpice

USE: Used to simulate analog electronic circuits. Will perform DC SWEEP, SMALL-SIGNAL ANALYSIS, TRANSFER FUNCTION ANALYSIS, FREQUENCY RESPONSE, FEEDBACK CONTROL ANALYSIS, NOISE ANALYSIS , and TRANSIENT RESPONSE ANALYSIS.

PROS: Defacto standard in analog circuit simulation. User can define "macro" circuits. Will display results graphically on computer screen using a post processing program which is included or user can output to dot matrix printer. Post processor supports VGA.

CONS: User must write a "netlist" for the circuit using a separate ASCII editor, which is not provided. Comes with a limited number of transistor models in its library.

FORMAT: Only the manual is available from the textbook center, the manual does contain a card allowing you to obtain the software directly from the publisher. Software runs on IBM XT, AT, PS/2, and compatibles with MS-DOS 3.0 or higher and 512K RAM for two disk drive system or 640K for hard drive system.

PROGRAM: MICRO-CAP II

USE: Used to design and simulate analog electronic circuits. Will perform TRANSIENT, DC, AC, and FOURIER ANALYSIS.

PROS: Has a graphical user interface that allows the user to draw the schematic of the circuit on the computer screen. The program then compiles a "netlist" based upon what was drawn. Displays results of simulation on computer screen without changing to another program. Will print out schematic in two different sizes.

CONS: Does not support EGA or VGA.

FORMAT: Manual and program disks come bundled together. Manual includes a set of tutorials to follow which allow the user to become familiar with all the programs features. Will run on IBM XT, AT, PS/2, and compatibles with MS-DOS 3.0 or higher and 512K of RAM for two disk drive system, or 640K for hard drive system.

PROGRAM: MICRO-LOGIC II

USE: Used to design and simulate digital logical circuits.

PROS: Has same type of user interface as Micro-Cap II. Comes with a fairly large library of basic logic components. Allows user to build "macro" circuits. Simulation results can be outputed to screen or Epson compatible printer. Can print out schematic of circuit.

CONS: Does not support EGA or VGA graphics.

FORMAT: Manual and program disks come bundled together. Manual includes a set of tutorials. Will run on IBM XT, AT, PS/2, or compatibles with MS-DOS 3.0 or higher and 512K RAM for two disk drive system, or 640K for hard drive system. A Microsoft or compatible mouse is recommended, although the system will run without it.

If you decided to purchase any of the above software from the USF Textbook Center there are a few rules to follow:

1. You must pay in cash or by VISA or Master Card unless you are a currently enrolled student.

2. Please purchase the software after the first month of classes if possible, this will ensure the availability of the software and manuals for the students who will need it for classes that semester.

I hope that this article has given you some idea of the CAD software available to the Electrical Engineering students and electronics hobbyist. If you have any questions about any of the programs mentioned leave a message on the BBS and I will try to answer them or find out the answer for you.

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about IBMPCUG? _____

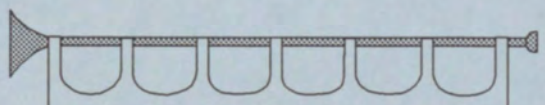
What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ]
DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



*** * ANNOUNCEMENT * ***

CURRENT MEMBERS
It is no longer necessary for you to sign in. Remember to pick up your new blue badges at the front desk!

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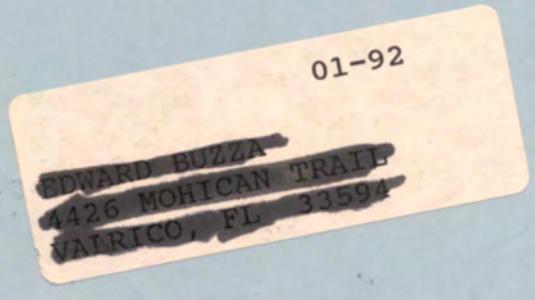
FUTURE ARTICLES:

"Desktop Publishing...for beginners" by Ed Buzza

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492







BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 4 APRIL, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: April 10, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

4/10/91 - LOTUS 123 V 3.1
To be presented by:
LOTUS Corp.

Refreshment Break

Open Discussion

Door Prize Raffle
LOTUS MAGELLAN
(donated by LOTUS Corp.)

UPCOMING SPEAKER

5/15/91 - Harvard Geographics 1.0
presented by Software

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FUTURE ARTICLES:
(to be continued)
"Desktop Publishing...for beginners" by Ed Buzza

This newsletter is published utilizing a complimentary issue of WordPerfect 5.1, generously contributed to our TIBMPCUG by **WordPerfect Corp.**

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:



A first for our group. Beginning this month we will have a separate DOS session. This session will consist of 3 meetings spanning a minimum of 3 months. Classes will begin promptly at 5:45 PM in room 469 across from the main meeting room and end at 6:30 PM at which time you will rejoin the main meeting. This class is provided as a no-cost benefit for **members only** and is presently limited to the members who pre-registered at the last meeting. If enough members sign-up, this session will be offered again in July or August. To sign-up contact me or Ed Buzza. If enough interest is generated and we can keep our dedicated volunteer we will offer additional and higher level sessions. This session will be conducted by Ed Buzza. Ed has a unique way of deciphering high level computer stuff into information which we can all comprehend and digest. He, like the rest of us, does not get any reward for volunteering his time or efforts. An honest positive comment to a volunteer will go a long way to reassure that person that he/she is on the right track and that their efforts are appreciated. Even negative comments presented in a tactful method may turn in to something positive for that individual and the group. **Additional thanks to IBM for providing a classroom and equipment.**

SWAP MEET -

All of us have useful computer paraphernalia sitting around that we don't want to throw away and don't use. You surely have heard that one mans junk is another man's treasure. My wife will be the 1st to tell you that I have accumulated objects that I consider useful, one-of-a-kind things over the years and she would be happy to see as someone else's treasure. If you have items to sell trade or give away and you would like to partake in a computer swap meet, notify a board member of your interest. If enough people want to have it we will pursue this idea. As of now no official date, time or place has been set.

BBS ACESS

We have reduced BBS access to past due members. If you have noticed that you can no longer download files, you should contact Bill Fuller to renew your membership.

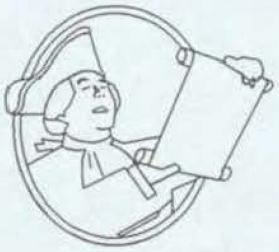
Harvey P. Bruneau

** 1991 OFFICERS **

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VICE PRES.:	Steve Speairs	875-1095
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SECRETARY:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDUCATION:	Edward Kant	

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP:	Bill Fuller	832-0125



ANNOUNCING

OUR NEW MEMBERS!

BRANDENBURG, ROBERT
GRACE, PHILLIP
HARVARD, WILLIAM
LAW, DALE
MERRITT, BILLY
RIDGWAY, DON
SHAW, BETTY
RINK, DON (renewal - welcome back)

Welcome to our group, we are delighted to have each and everyone of you as a "TIBMPCUG" member!

Results of March Raffle
AND THE WINNERS ARE!

Sidekick . . . . . Ed.Buzza.and Dave Kintz
Box of diskettes . . . . . Philip Grace
Solar calculator . . Jerry Hannon.and Ron Scarcelli
Cash 50-50 . . . . . Gary Palmer

Our thanks to Borland for donating the two copies of Sidekick and Solar calculators and our thanks to Sunrise Computer Supplies for the box of diskettes.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP MINUTES OF 3/13/91 MEETING --

There were about 65 members and guests in attendance. The President opened the meeting with the following items of interest:

- WordPerfect has more 800 help numbers than any other vendor. Perhaps that is one reason why they're tops in their field. One member said that WordPerfect has 560 people, full time, answering their technical support telephones.
- If any member did not get a newsletter, check with Harvey.
- Remember to turn in your name badge at the end of the meeting. Those things cost money, so don't take it home and lose it,
- We have received some complaints about "no credit" on articles submitted to the Bits of Blue Newsletter. Please - embed your name in the article; either as a byline or at the end.
- Dun and Bradstreet Software is hiring. They are looking for about eleven people: Technical Writer; Programmers with Clipper, dBase FoxPro experience; and sales people familiar with their products.
- We've gotten use to the word "downsizing" but now we have a new word: "rightsizing." Seems "downsizing" has bad connotations.
- We will start a class covering the fundamentals of DOS. It will consist of three sessions. Each of the 45 minute sessions will be held at 5:45 p.m. on the regular meeting night. Only members may attend (no guests, please).
- TEAC is now shipping 4meg floppy drives; they're in the $60-$70 price range. IBM is announcing PS 2's with 2.8meg floppy drives. There is also trade talk about a 20meg floppy whose price tag is around $250-$300 per copy. Remember, these are "list" prices.
- Seagate has announced a new hard drive with 2G byte capacity. That's 2 giga-bytes, or two million bytes of disk space.
- Microsoft is offering a new trackball device that clamps to the side of your keyboard.
- AMD won their court battle with INTEL regarding use of "386" in defining their computer chip. Microsoft, Apple and Hewlett-Packard are also involved in a court suit regarding the "look and feel" of Windows.
- For all intents and purposes, the future of PCs belongs to OS. While Windows is very popular, it is based on DOS with all of the limitations inherent in DOS.
- Quicken is a great program for home budgeting. It's easy to use and will handle your home accounting. (NOTE: Harvey said he can only speak of software from his own experience. He said that while there are other programs like Quicken, he hasn't used them and can only speak of those programs that he uses.)
- In responding to a question from the floor regarding tax preparation software, attention was drawn to the list of programs mentioned in last month's meeting (Turbo Tax, Tax Cut, etc.,). One of the members stated that AMTAX, a shareware program available on the BBS, is one of the best tax programs around.

BORLAND PRESENTATION - OBJECT VISION

David Printz and Shep Bostin introduced Object Vision. This is Borland's first product for Windows. This program was built for Windows from the ground up; it is not based on DOS. It is an end user application development tool. The next Windows product will be C++,
Borland's version of the popular programming language.

Object Vision creates data links to a variety of databases. It can also create its own database in dBase or Paradox format. There is no need to leave the program to create a database. It is a machine level, structured, object oriented, visual style of programming. The power user can create meta-applications. The small business owner can run a paper-less office. The large corporate or government entities can use this program as part of the corporate data system.

A form is the basic interface. Based on the data in the form, a decision tree (much like a logic chart) is created. Since this is a visual style of programming, taking advantage of the graphical user interface, there are no program language statements. At any point, a decision node can be inserted with branching to other nodes. For instance, assume the form contains data about branch offices, amount of gross sales, and population density. You can then select the branch offices (decision node based on location) to study; classify the amount of gross sales as to high, medium, low (decision node based on less-than, greater-than values); according to population density (another decision node); and determine relative ratings of the branch offices.

What kind of equipment is needed to run Object Vision? As stated earlier, the program runs under Windows. Object Vision needs Windows3 on a 286 PC with 2megs of memory. But the reality of Windows pretty near dictates a 386 with 4meg of memory. (Minutes...Continued on next page)

(Minutes...Continued from previous page)

The list price of this program is $495 but it will be available for a limited time at an introductory price of $99.95. A run-time version of Object Vision ($495) is needed to run created applications at an off-site location. The run-time version also needs Windows. The price for the run-time version is a one-time price and it can be copied as often as needed.

Shep Bostin did an excellent job of demonstrating Object Vision.

TRAINING SESSIONS

The first Training Session will be held on April 10, in Room 469. Attendance is limited to regular (paid-up) members. The items to be discussed include hard disk organization and directory structures. The session will start at 5:45 p.m. and will last about 40-45 minutes. You will miss the President's opening remarks but they will be in the next newsletter.

Club Members BBS:

The Tampa IBM PC User Group operates a full service 130 Mb, single-line 24-hour electronic BBS for file transfers and E-mail. As a member you are invited to use the Board within the established BBS rules.

Phone: 239-3704

The first time you log-on to the BBS, you must establish your Password and set-up. You will then have limited access until access has been verified by the Sysop.

For assistance from SYSOP, Call Kevan Sheridan 237-0100

ON BEING A GUEST
By Donald W. Patzsch

The Tampa IBM PC USERS GROUP is, as I understand it, a GUEST in the building.

Imagine that you came to work in the morning and something was not working. Would you want to know who was in the building last night?

How about if there were a lot of paper cups and napkins laying around?

If we are GUESTS, it seems logical that we would take special care to keep the room clean and not to tamper with any of the equipment. All of us appreciate the very nice place where we can hold the monthly meetings. I hope we are INVITED back each year, this seems to me to be a very very nice place.

Editorial Comment

I had the distinct pleasure of accompanying our illustrious president to the Florida Suncoast Regional PCUG Conference on Saturday 4/6/91. We almost missed it. I was involved in assembling this newsletter for delivery to the printer, and HPB came to me at 11:00 a.m. and asked: "Would you like to attend the conference in Bradenton with me? If so, we'll leave in 30 minutes." The meeting was extremely informative. For openers, an enthusiastic commentary on the upcoming Comdex-Spring, Atlanta seemed to peak the attendees interest. Next, Discussion Groups were set up for the following groups: Newsletters (This was worth the trip alone); Meetings and Meeting Programs; Special Interest Groups and Managing Groups and Personnel Relations.

Contributed articles were "few and far between" this month. I can only assume the lack of articles was due to a more pressing deadline for everyone - "April 15th". However, we do owe our thanks to Ed Buzza for the beginning of his Desktop Publishing mini book and will be looking forward to the future articles spanning multiple issues of "BOB" in the months ahead.

MLB

TEMPLATES

Save your document to be used as a template for future editions of your Little Newsletter. But before you do, you need to create/place the masthead as well as any desired headers and footers. The masthead would include the name of your publication, volume and number if used, date of issue, and perhaps your logo. In essence, place all the boiler plate (the material that will be the same in each issue) in the document, then save it.

If your DTP program provides styles, or style sheets, or master pages, these ARE your templates. By all means incorporate them into your work. They will save you considerable time and effort in your later projects. Some DTP programs allow style notes to be shown in imported text files.

PageMaker can be set up to read <subhead> in your document as being a subhead containing a specific font (typeface, style, and point size). First Publisher can handle font information furnished by Professional Write or First Choice. In WordPerfect, non-printing comments can be used to hold instructions. The use of styles for headlines in WordPerfect provides great flexibility in editing the final product.

Consider putting notes and instructions in your template that will be helpful when preparing the final document. These can then be removed prior to bringing in the text and graphics that will be your final product. Such aids can be particularly helpful when working with seldom used templates.

After saving, make the template file a read-only file. This way you're assured that you will not write over your template or master file.

Retrieve the template and immediately save it with a new filename. Choose a filename that will identify your project and help you remember its contents — now and six months from now. e.g. NEWS9101.DOC, YARDSALE.DOC, DTP-BOOK.PUB, etc..

To put it all together, prepare your text with your favorite word processor and decide on the graphics you're going to use. Now start up your DTP program. Retrieve the new file, place the graphics, turn on picture wrap, place the text, print it, show it around, and accept the applause. And if no one cheers, and you've gotten this far, — hey, give yourself a hand!



DESKTOP PUBLISHING

. . . *for beginners*

Vol 1 Num 1 April, 1991

Writer
Ed Buzza

Publisher
TAMPA IBM PC
USERS GROUP
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL
336061-3492

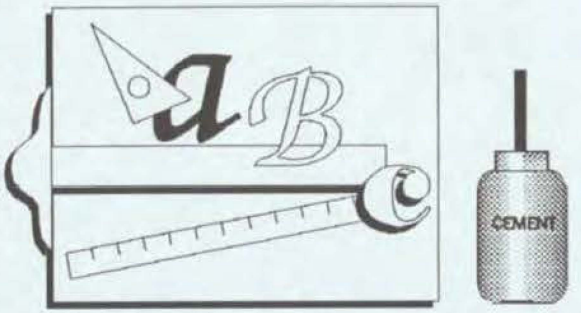
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Desktop Publishing
Some DTP programs
Fonts vs typefaces

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first in a series of articles dedicated to Desktop Publishing. They will be printed in the same format as you see here. That is, two-up page format. Because many will want to know how this is done, the instructions are in this issue.

PROLOGUE

First, these articles are *not* meant as a criticism of anyone who edits or prepares a newsletter. Heaven knows, the job of being a newsletter editor is a thankless one at best. Those who actually volunteer to take on such a task, and for *no* pay or benefit of any kind and under severe schedules, deserve not only our thanks, but our respect and whole hearted support.

Second, the purpose of these articles is to act as a guide to those who wish to use desktop publishing and are hesitant to do so. It is also a contribution to the club for the benefits that I have received. Benefits from the vendor representatives whom the club provided and benefits from the various members. Vendors can only give you the promise, members give you the facts.

Last, information in these articles is published on an "as is" basis, without warranty of any kind. Neither the writer nor the publisher shall have any liability, loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused by this material.

THE LITTLE NEWSLETTER - How it was done

The outside, first and last, pages were printed on a laser printer using WordPerfect 5.1. The inside pages, 2 & 3, were printed on a 24 pin dot matrix printer using First Publisher 3.0.

Before we go on, we need to define some terms. A page is treated as a "logical" page because they're two of them on the "physical" page. So when you see the word "page", we're talking about the logical page. The actual sheet of paper will be referred to as the physical page. After the two physical pages were printed, these two master pages were then printed back-to-back on a copy machine.

Keys to be pressed will be shown within angle brackets. When you see <F7> it means press the F7 function key. Data to be typed will be shown within curly brackets. When you see {Two-Up}<enter> it means type "Two-Up" then press the enter key. O.K.? ok.

USING WordPerfect 5.1

The Labels feature was used to create a "two-up" page. Use a Landscape paper format and define that paper as having two full page labels. WordPerfect (WP) treats each label as a logical page. So, if you define headers and footers, each page (label) will have one. Ergo, the physical page (one piece of paper) will have two headers and two footers.

Start WP and be sure you select the correct printer, have a blank screen, and are at the top of the document. Now let's define the "Two-Up" paper size.

<Shift-F8> format <2> page <7> size <2> add
<9> other {Two-Up} <enter>
<1> size <2> landscape <3> font <2> land
<4> prompt <Y> yes
<5> location <M> manual <8> labels <Y> yes
<1> size {4.5} width <enter> {8} height <enter>
<2> number {2} cols <enter> {1} rows <enter>
<3> corner {.3} top <enter> {.5} left <enter>
<4> distance {1} col <enter> {0} row <enter>
<5> margin {0} <enter> {0} <enter> {0} <enter>
{.2} <enter>
<F7> <F7> <F7> {1} select <enter> <F7>

Just remember, WP page 1 is really your last page, page 4. WP page2 is your page 1; and WP pages 3 & 4 are your pages 2 & 3. It may help if you just type your page numbers on the first line, press <Ctrl-enter> to force a page break; and do the same for each of the pages.You can place headers, footers, page numbers, etc. in your mini newsletter, but you may want to suppress them for your first page (WP pg 2).

USING First Publisher 3.0

This is a "slippery" program. It is more difficult to control text flow than in some other DTP programs. You have to be rather exact in page layout and design. Also, since this program depends on menu selection, we need to show them between square brackets. So, when you see [define page], it means "Arrow down to Define Page" and <enter> or click with the mouse. O.K.? ok.

Enter First Publisher, be sure you have the right printer and a blank screen. <F2>, [define page], and set all margins to <.5> inches. Set paper size to US Letter <F3> Landscape <F7>, and accept <F1>.

<F2> [chose layout] and <PgDn> to [layout 10], an odd looking 4 column layout. <F2> and select column 1. <F3> and set width to <4.5> and height to <.6>, <F1> to accept. Select column 2, <F3> and set width to <4.5> and height to <.6>, <F1>. Select column 3, <F3> and set width to <4.5> and height to <6.9>, <F1>. Select column 4, <F3> and set width to <4.5> and height to <6.9>, <F1>. It may not be quite right; you may have to select a column and move it to its proper spot. Now you have a choice, <F2> to add this layout to your gallery, or <F1> to go to the main screen.

<Alt-A> <Alt-L> and look at the layout. Columns 1 and 2 (headers) should have three lines. Remember, these columns were set to .6" high. With 72pts per inch, these columns will hold one 36pt line or three 12pt lines. Try it. Position the cursor on column 1, left margin. Select a 24pt font and type the first heading line. Select a 12pt font and type the second heading line. To see the effect, <Alt-A>.

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about IBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ]
DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



*** * *ANNOUNCEMENT* * ***

CURRENT MEMBERS
It is no longer necessary for you to sign in. Remember to pick up your new blue badges at the front desk!

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492





01-92

[redacted]

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 5 MAY, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: May 8, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

5/8/91 - **Managing Your Money V.7**
Steve Spears
Refreshment Break
Open Discussion - **Microsoft Ballpoint Mouse**
For Viewing - New **IBM Notebook 40SX**
Door Prize Raffle

* * DOS CLASS * *

REMINDER: **DOS** Part II (Ed Buzza, Instructor) will begin promptly at 5:45 PM in room 469 across from the main meeting room and end at 6:30 PM at which time you will rejoin the main meeting. This class is provided as a no-cost benefit for **members only** and is limited to the members who pre-registered.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

6/12/91 - Harvard GeoGraphics 1.0 & Professional Write Plus
presented by Software Publishing Corp.
(Rescheduled from 5/8/91)

7/10/91 - Ashton-Tate

8/14/91 - Intel

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Initial reports from the **1st DOS Class** have been very positive. All who attended gained knowledge and a better general understanding of DOS and PCs. If you missed registering for this 3 part series, you should register at the meeting or leave your name on the BBS attention **DOS Education.** While students are permitted to bring apples for the teacher, I'm sure Ed would rather hear a **THANK YOU** or **GOOD JOB.** Its a credit to our own Ed Buzza (Secretary) that there is a class. Additionally, as you read this newsletter you may notice that Ed contributes greatly to it. The editor and I have thought of renaming the newsletter from **Bits of Blue** to **Bits of Buzza.** OK maybe not.

In an effort to be less dependent on articles from a few members who contribute regularly and to broaden the scope of topics, we have joined the **Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG).** The APCUG is an organization dedicated to fostering communications among and between personal computer user groups and establishing relationships between those user groups and software publishers and hardware manufacturers. As such, it operates as an information network between user group organizations. Our association with this group will result in an overall benefit to our group, not just the newsletter.

It seems like everything looks rosy, but I do have some bad news. Edward Kant has resigned as Education Director for personal reasons. Edward lived in Naples and joined our board of directors this year. We wish to best for Edward and hope that we can fulfill the ideas he brought for PC education. ■■■

Harvey P. Bruneau

* * 1991 OFFICERS * *

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	932-6745
VICE PRES.:	Steve Spears	875-1095
TREASURER:	Bill Fuller	832-0125
MEMBER AT LARGE:		
	Roger Waters	224-6079
SECRETARY:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDUCATION:	Open	

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP:	Bill Fuller	832-0125

LET'S TAKE THE TIME TO WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS!



BARTLETT, JOHN
BELL, JAMES
BENEDICT, BEN G.
FALTER, RICHARD
HALL, EARL
JACKSON, DAN
KAUCHICK, JAMES
MONROE, PARKER
THOMPSON, ROBERT
WHITLEY, SR., RALPH CHARLES
WILLIAMSON, DEBORAH
ROSE, BOB L. (Renewal)





Welcome to our group, we are delighted to have each and everyone of you as a "TIBMPCUG" member!

Results of April Raffle
AND THE WINNERS ARE!

Lotus Magellan ..... Jim Clark
Cash 50-50 ..... James King

Our thanks to Lotus Corp. for donating the copy of Magellan

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP MINUTES OF 4/10/91 MEETING --

There were about 70 members and guest in attendance. The president opened the meeting with the following items of interest:

- **50 MHz 486**-based PCs would be available by Comdex/Fall (MAY).
- IBM had on display their new portable PS/2 Laptop 40 SX for the members to test out.
- Many notebooks seem to be heavier than vendors announce. Compaq LTE 386/20, AST Premium Exec 386 SX/20, Altima NSX, Zeos Notebook 386, ALR Venture 16-386SX and TI Travelmate 3000 were a few mentioned.
- Logitech has announced that it to will have its own version of a ballpoint mouse (**Trackman Portable Mouse**) with a $169 list price available in July.

LOTUS 1-2-3 PRESENTATION

Bonnie Jacoboni from the Lotus corp. demonstrated the newest version, 3.1, of Lotus 1-2-3. Version 3.1 stresses a graphic approach to the use of spreadsheets. Lotus has a variety of 1-2-3 packages for different platforms (PC, Mac, mini and main frames). Regardless of platform, files and macros as well as the user interface will be compatible. The Lotus spreadsheet will look and operate pretty much the same no matter where it's run.

The new version has mouse support but the mouse is not mandatory. You can use the mouse or the familiar keyboard to navigate through 1-2-3. It also has 3-D capability in that multiple spreadsheets can be on the screen at the same time. The number of spreadsheets that can be shown is dependent upon the amount of RAM that is available to the program. While Version 2 can run on any PC, Version 3.1 is best used on a 286, or higher, with at least 1.5 to 2 meg of memory.

Although no 3-D graphics are available, there is considerable improvement in the graph modules. It can handle the drawing primitives (line, ellipsis, rectangle, polygon) and color lines and fills easily and quickly. A preview mode shows the page as it will look when printed. Also, at last, 1-2-3 has a built-in ability to print in landscape mode. Called "compression," the spreadsheet can be made to fit the page (within reason).

Thank you Ms. Jacoboni for a well delivered presentation. Also, thanks to the Lotus corporation for donating a copy of Magellan to our group.

SATELLITE TRACKING

One of our members, Robert Osband, showed TRAKSTAT; a program that displays the orbit tracks of various satellites. Bob explained that NASA tracks over 10,000 objects in space. Of course, some of that is debris - including a wrench, a camera, and one white glove!

He is a ham operator and talked about the 21 amateur radio satellites in orbit. He pointed out that five of the recent shuttle crew are also ham operators. With the appropriate data files, one can use the program to determine the proper adjustment of the antenna to communicate with one of these satellites. By tuning in to 145.550 MHz, you can listen to the MIR satellite.

Bob also commented on the speed of the PC that IBM allows us to use for presentations as compared to his computer. Graphics that were drawn in a few seconds took many minutes on his computer. Thank you Robert Osband for showing us still another use for PC computers - and doing a great job of explaining satellite radio. Thanks again. ■■■

A LOGICAL QUESTION
by Ed Buzza

Using computer hardware and software often requires more than ordinary skills and aptitudes. Often, your ability to analyze problems is dependent upon your logical ability. To test your logical and analytical skills, the following puzzle is offered:

Adam's wife gave him an XT for his birthday. Burt used his tax refund to buy a 486 PC. The single man who lives in the green house has an 80meg hard drive on his PC. As part of the divorce settlement, Dave kept his yellow house. The widower does not have a 40meg hard drive. The hard drive on the 286 is smaller that the one on the 386. The single man wants to upgrade the 80 meg hard drive on his 486. The man in the white house has no hard drive. The widower has a hard drive twice as large as the man with the 486. The man in the blue house has a faster PC than does the man in the yellow house. What kind of PC does Carl have?

(See Logical Solution. Page 4)

PCGEOS Ensemble
by Don Patzsch

Recently I had an opportunity to talk to the person who wrote PCGEOS. It is a GUI similar to Windows 3.0. The difference is that PCGEOS can run on any 512K IBM or Compatible. It does some amazing things. As an example of the power it has, IBM uses a runtime version in its PS 1 series.

PCGEOS uses the Motif interface from the OSF Group. The interface was designed by OSF for systems running UNIX. In fact, it is claimed that this was the program to be called "PM Lite".

The opening screen is unique. There is one window called "APPLIANCE LEVEL" which can be activated if you are a computer novice, like me. The other window is called "Professional Level" and it will bring up the program in a completely different form. One that contains very complex screens and all the bells and whistles.

At the Professional level, every part of the program appears, multitasking and windows type programs will run under this section.

Now, what is PCGEOS all about. I saw the whole thing displayed. It boggles the mind. For many years I have wanted to know why my old genuine IBM PC, 1982 vintage, and my 1984 Epson FX100 would not really do what I wanted. Do you remember the old BANNERS? They looked like a print made with children's blocks as the method of making the letters, now he has made use of the latest ANTI ALIASING Techniques, pioneered by EDSUN. You can produce letters of almost any type, and almost any size. My long wait is over, now I can produce a good news letter with a program that will not cost me anything. But I am getting ahead of my story.

PCGEOS is a group of several programs, GEOWRITE, GEODRAW, GEOMANAGER, GEODEX, GEOCOMM, BANNER, and a game called SOLITAIRE.

PCGEOS is compatible with over 300 Dot Matrix, INK JET, and Laser printers. The printing I saw which was done on a 9 pin Epson was to me the most spectacular demo I had ever seen. I asked what you would see on a PC Screen if you wanted to print something like that. Most interesting.

The PCGEOS COMM program supports 19200 baud rate, full or half echo, TTY, VT52, VT100, WYSE 50, ANSI, IBM 3101, and TV 1950. This looks to me like a useful comm program.

In order to keep this article short, I plan to stop here, and leave the multi-threading and multitasking description for an article for next month, if there is any interest.

Did you notice that IBM displayed its multimegabyte 3.5 inch floptical disk drive at the Comdex? The new equipment promises to be real interesting. ■■■

Editorial Comment: This article was submitted by Don for the April newsletter, and it was overlooked for that issue. Sorry Don, but here it is and keep them coming, Very Informative!

President's Comment: GeoWorks has given us an evaluation copy of GeoWorks Ensemble. Look for a product demonstration by one of our members in near future. Additionally coupons were sent to us for distribution to our members entitling the purchase of Ensemble for $50.00. Unfortunately, the coupons were sent 10 days prior to expiration. I will see if GeoWorks will extend April 30th deadline.

A LOGICAL SOLUTION
(Continued from Page 3)

Surely, you've seen this type of puzzle before. They're designed to wake up the old brain cells. Sometimes called "story puzzles" or "logic problems," they can be fun to solve. One way to solve them is to construct a "truth table." Note that there are four main objects (Adam, Burt, Carl, Dave) in the puzzle with a group of attributes. These attributes can be grouped as: marital status (single, married, divorced, widowed), color of house, etc..

As with all such puzzles, each of the attributes is an exclusive feature of the object. That is, if one object has one of the attributes, then none of the other objects has that attribute. By the same token, if one of the objects has one of the attributes, then that object does not have any of the other attributes. With these facts, you can now prepare a truth table. Using the puzzle in this issue, here is what part of the table would look like.

	ADAM	BURT	CARL	DAVE
Marital Status				
Single	N			
Married	Y	N	N	N
Divorced	N			
Widowed	N			

Since the puzzle said "Adam's wife ...," obviously Adam is married. Since Adam is married, then Burt, Carl, and Dave are NOT married. Conversely, Adam is NOT single, divorced, or widowed. Beginning to make sense? Good. Now finish the puzzle.
(SEE NEXT ISSUE)



There are thousands of fonts available for use. These are the fonts that you use in your personal computer programs. There are three types: 1) native (built-in) to your printer, 2) bit-mapped soft fonts, and 3) scalable (or outline) fonts. Each font is also concerned with character sets.

Character set means the number of characters supplied for a particular font, or more commonly, a font family. Sets vary in size from 94 (standard keyboard) to as many as 224 (ANSI) characters, or more.

The native fonts are the ones that are built into your printer. They're always there and ready to be used. Laser printers usually have a fixed 10 point, 12 pitch, typeface and an 8 point, 16 pitch, printer font. Some have a version of Times Roman and Helvetica built-in. A few may have as many as 35 fonts built into the printer. Dot matrix printers often have one or more 10 pitch typefaces (pica) and at least one with 12 pitch (elite).

Bit-mapped soft fonts, are as the name suggests, made up of individual bits that form a character based on a grid of 300x300 bits per inch. These fonts are software fonts, not hardware. As such, they must be downloaded from disk or RAM to the printer's memory. They can be bought as individual fonts or as font sets. Bit-mapped soft fonts can take up quite a bit of space on your disk. Soft fonts are almost always used only with laser or ink jet printers. There are some dot matrix printers that can download a soft font but that procedure is rare.

Scalable fonts come in two varieties: built-in and generated. Some laser printers have scalable, resident fonts stored within printer memory or in a cartridge inserted in the printer. By using resident fonts, printing is faster because there are no fonts to download.

A scalable font contains an outline of the character to be printed rather than a bit map image of the character. The size of the font can be scaled to any size within the limits of the printer or of the software application. Typically, point sizes range from 1 point to 999 points. A scalable font may need 50-60k of disk space or printer RAM; but that's all that's needed for all the point sizes you use. You do not need a separate font file for each point size in your document.

A font cartridge has built-in memory that contains either a family of scalable outline fonts or a family of bit mapped fonts. Bit mapped cartridges are limited to a set of point sizes; the scalable font cartridges offer almost unlimited point sizes. Either type of cartridge, because of its built-in RAM, reduces the need for printer memory or disk space. No need to download these fonts. ■

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

. . . for beginners

Vol 1 Num 2 May, 1991

Author
Ed Buzza

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In This Issue:
What it is
What it's for
Popular Programs
Fonts vs Typefaces

Next Issue:
Text preparation
Fillers
Time outs
Graphics

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DESKTOP PUBLISHING - What it is

A DeskTop Publishing (DTP) program is not a word processor nor is it a graphics program. While it may have word processing qualities, they are usually limited. It may have some graphic features that permit you to draw lines, boxes, and circles, but that's about it. What it is, is a page layout program.

A DTP program permits you to arrange your text and graphics quickly, easily, and accurately. By having text and graphics in digital form, the DTP is far faster in allowing you to rearrange placement of these items than the old style method of creating a publication. The old way requires hours and hours to correct typos, change type faces and styles, relocate graphics and articles. Not to mention the heavy use of scissors, razor knives, and the glue pot.

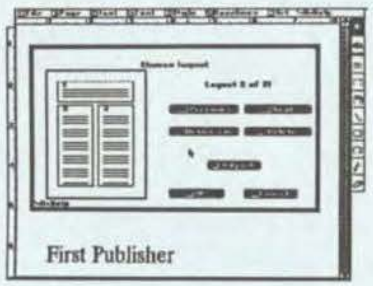
A DTP program is concerned with the "look" of a page. Text and graphics are treated as blocks or frames to be placed on the page in such fashion as to catch and hold the reader's attention. They layout of

these blocks involves design. If it is pleasing, arresting, interesting, - then it's good design. If it is dull, boring, ugly, - then it's bad design. A good test of a DTP program is the ease and speed that it provides you in altering styles, size, and placement of these blocks so as to effect good design. ■

DESKTOP PUBLISHING - What it's for

The purpose of a publication is to communicate; and by communicating, to inform, persaude, or entertain. Don't let the format, fonts, and graphics get in the way of your communication. If the graphics overpower the page, different typefaces are used for each paragraph, and the format is wildly psychedelic — you don't have a publication, you have a mess!

One of the common applications for DTP programs is a newsletter. Others are: advertisements and flyers, books and manuals, pamphlets and brochures, catalogs, directories, price lists, menus, forms, and even correspondence. Correspondence? Correspondence! ■



First Publisher

SOME POPULAR DTP PROGRAMS

PageMaker (Aldus) and Ventura Publisher (Xerox) are recognized as the "top of the heap" when discussing DTP programs. PageMaker runs under Windows while Ventura uses the GEM environment. Both are very powerful and quite expensive.

First Publisher (Software Publishing), Express Publisher (Power Up Software), GEM Desktop Publisher (Digital Research), Finesse (Logitech), Avagio (Unison World) and Publish-It (Timeworks) are considered to be in the medium price category. Although not as powerful as PageMaker or Ventura, these are pretty good programs.

There are a variety of other (usually inexpensive) programs that claim to be DTP programs. They are quite limited in what they can do. Font selection is limited to a handful of proprietary typefaces and generally they use generic output device drivers (one size fits all).

Some word processors have so many features, they blur the line between word processing and desktop publishing. Consider such programs as WordPerfect (Wordperfect), Word for Windows (Microsoft), AMI Professional (Samna), WordStar (WordStar Int'l) and others. These will likely be more than adequate for occasional club or company newsletters. ■

FONTS vs TYPEFACES

Many people confuse fonts with typefaces. A font is one typeface of one size, one style and of one width. Therefore a line set in Times Roman (typeface), 12 point (size), normal (style), and medium (width) is one font. If another line is set the same way but uses italics (style), that is another font. And if still another line is set the same way but is 14 point (size), that's another font. So if a vendor says it is supplying 4 fonts, it could mean that you're getting normal, bold, italic, and bold italic of ONE face in ONE size! Be sure you're talking the same language when you're shopping for fonts.

There are hundreds of typefaces and you are probably familiar with some of them. Surely you have heard of Times Roman and Helvetica. Typefaces can be thought of as one of three different types: serif (with the fillets and curlicues), sans serif (sans means without), and exotic (anything other than the Times Roman or Helvetica kind). To avoid copyright infringement, many font vendors invent their own names for the various typefaces. Surprisingly, only the name of a typeface can be copyrighted, not the appearance or shape of the typeface. But don't worry, they tell you that it is their version of whatever copyrighted font they're selling.

Style generally describes the appearance of the font. Bold, italic, bold italic, and normal are all styles. Width refers to the stroke thickness of the typeface and varies from light, through medium (or normal), dark (or black), and extra black. Note, it is quite common to treat the width and style as a single element simply called style.

While most DTP fonts are proportional, there are also mono-spaced fonts. With proportional fonts, the amount of space any character occupies depends on the width of the character. e.g., the letter "i" takes up less space than the letter "W" would need. Mono-spaced fonts, also called fixed fonts, have the same amount of space for each and every character. Fixed fonts are further classified by pitch. Pitch refers to the number of characters per inch (cpi). Typewriter users commonly refer to Elite type (a 10pt font at 12 pitch) and Pica type (a 12pt font at 10 pitch).

By now you're saying you've learned more about fonts than you've ever wanted to know. But if you're serious about DTP, you will have to cope with fonts. ■

Each of the following lines is ONE font:

12pt Serif - normal
12pt Serif - bold
12pt Serif - italic
12pt Serif - bold/italic
12pt Sans Serif - normal
12pt Sans Serif - bold
12pt Sans Serif - italic
12pt Sans Serif - bold/italic

Hard Disk Trouble?
by Don Patzsch

Hardly anyone should BACK UP a hard disk. Not too many should run an OPTIMIZER program.

Who said that? Well, look around you. Many people have been complaining that they have to replace their hard disks lately so I thought I would say what I think.

When I started working with a Bulletin Board, I noticed that my disk drives were clicking on and off all the time. It finally dawned on me that I was actually testing the drives each day. So I bought the necessary memory and since that time I download to one ramdisk and unzip to another ram disk and I have never had a disk drive failure.

Now I have an ESDI 120 megabyte drive and I notice that when I optimize the disk the head is moving at lightning speed and so fast I can not follow it. Imagine what that does to the drive. Also when you BACK UP a hard drive it may take a long time and of
course the drive is working at breakneck speed, throwing that head around. So Why BACK UP?

If you think a little, you can set up
E:\WP51\LETTERS
then the only thing to back up is the LETTERS. Why back up the main file? You already have that. Suppose you have WINDOWS 3.0. Why back that up? You only need WIN.INI or any of the other files you modify. That backup will save you about 3 megabytes and lots of work for your hard disk. The same is true of most of the other work that the average person does. I use both EXCEL and QUATTRO. I back up only the files I work on. The same is true for PARADOX and C. Why back up all those main programs?

Find out how to set up a program with XCOPY. XCOPY will copy only those files that have been changed since the last backup. Imagine the time and work that your hard disk does not have to do
if you back up that way! Another thing. Sometimes it pays to back up to a ramdisk and then from there go to whatever you want to use for permanent storage.

If I had a small business, I would not buy a computer with a Hard Disk. I would buy a computer with two identical hard disks. Use one disk for your "backup" and make it identical to the other. Then if you come to work and the system does not respond, you can use a disk to bring it up in A: and then replace the bad disk without any fuss at all. This is not necessary for the average user.

Since I do not know which programs you use, I will tell you a little about Wordperfect. If you start the program with wp/r then part of the program goes into memory. Now that is going to make the program operate faster, but it is also going to use your hard disk less often. It is up to you to use your head and find ways and means to actually use your hard disk less often. That will extend its life and make you much happier.

One last note:
The new computers are coming out with space on the motherboard for up to 100 megs. Guess why this is. You will soon load most of your stuff into memory before you start using it. That will make the hard disk last longer, and give you much greater speed of operation. So all you have to do to make your disk last longer is to figure out how to make use of it in a more sensible way. ■■■

Club Members BBS:

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Phone: 239-3704

The first time you log-on to the BBS, you must establish your Password and set-up. You will then have limited access until access has been verified by the Sysop.

For assistance from SYSOP,
Call Kevan Sheridan 237-0100

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- BITS OF BLUE BULLETIN BOARD
  ** Data: 239-3704 **
  Voice: 237-4997
- Access 24 hrs/day 7 days/week
  Full E-mail capabilities
  Numerous On-Line Files
- FULL SUPPORT from the
  IBM PC Users Group
- DISCOUNTS at
  SUNRISE COMPUTER SUPPLIES
  1224 S. Dale Mabry
  Tampa, Florida
- ACCESS to the CLUB'S
  PROGRAM LIBRARY

91

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

TAMPA, FL 336
PM
6 MAY
1991



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[redacted]

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 6 JUNE, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: June 12, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

6/12/91 - **OPEN**
Harvard GeoGraphics 1.0 &
Professional Write Plus
(Canceled for this meeting and will be rescheduled)

Refreshment Break
Open Discussion -
Door Prize Raffle

* * DOS CLASS * *

REMINDER: DOS Part III (Ed Buzza, Instructor) will begin promptly at 5:45 PM in room 469 across from the main meeting room and end at 6:30 PM at which time you will rejoin the main meeting. This class is provided as a no-cost benefit for **members only** and is limited to the members who pre-registered.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

7/10/91 - Ashton-Tate

8/14/91 - Intel

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See President's Column for Review on -

COMDEX

SPRING '91 ATLANTA, GA.

*** * 1991 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	932-6745
VICE PRES.:	Steve Speairs	875-1095
TREASURER:	Bill Fuller	832-0125
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	224-6079
SECRETARY:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDUCATION:	Open	

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP:	Bill Fuller	832-0125

Results of May Raffle

THE WINNERS ARE:

Back Up	Phillip Grace
Sidekick Plus	Jim Clark
50-50	A. Moskowitz

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

HENLEY, Roy
WILLIAMSON, Alan
WYATT, Andrew
BEACH, David

It's great to have you as new "TIBMPCUG" members!

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about IBM-PC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at the address below or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 5/8/91 MEETING --

Harvey Bruneau was the sole speaker for the entire meeting. Software Publishing had to cancel its scheduled presentation on GeoGraphics. It is believed that the local representative had to attend a seminar about the new product that SPC is about to announce. Steve Speairs was to give a presentation but had to cancel at the last minute. Seems that Steve's company had a system crash on their mid-west server. What with air freighting new material and having to go to work at 4 in the morning, Steve has an interesting (?) career.

Harvey spoke about some recent product announcements. Some of the items were:

- Version 5 of DOS is scheduled for release in June. The upgrade price is $100.
- WordPerfect for Windows is due to be released in July. It will be called Version 6. The product was demonstrated at Harvey's office and Harvey said that it looks great. He also reported that anyone buying WordPerfect between 4/1/91 and until 30 days after the product release is announced, registered users can get an updated license from WordPerfect. It will cost $15 to get the update disk, $29 for the manual, and $19 for the work book -plus $5 for shipping and handling.
- MicroSoft's Trackball was shown. It attaches to the side of the keyboard. The trackball is package with its own case and several varieties of clamps to fit the side edge of keyboards. If you want to attach the trackball to a regular desktop PC, you need an extension cable since the supplied cable is rather short. The coiled cable is of an adequate length for laptops or portables. Logitech offers a similar device.
- Hewlett-Packard has lowered its price for the Desk Jet printer. They have announced the Laser Jet IIIP with a price of $1595; same 4 ppm as the IIP but with the new engine of the III model (resolution enhancement). For $1895, you can get the laser jet fax which routes fax material to the laser printer.
- Hewlett-Packard now offers a palm-top computer with Lotus built into it. The keyboard is very small and would be awkward for touch typists. But if you're only entering numbers into Lotus, it's adequate.

(Minutes continued on next page)

(Minutes continued...from previous page)

- Okidata has a new 24 pin printer being offered for $349.
- Tandy (Radio Shack) is allowing up to $500 for your old PC toward the purchase of certain new PCs that Tandy offers.
- Version 7 of PCTOOLS is now available. List price is $179; upgrade price will be $49 until July 1st. Until August 1st, anyone with a competing product will be able to get the new version for $59. It is said to have a Windows-like appearance. It will offer back-up through Windows, launch Window program applications, and protection or detection of over 600 computer viruses.
- Prodigy has been accused of accessing data on user machines. The Los Angeles District Attorney is checking this allegation. One of the members spoke about seeing some of his records in one of Prodigy's .DAT file.
- Virus problem. America On-Line distribution disks may be corrupted. One member reported that the virus seems to affect floppy disk behavior. He said that he couldn't copy files to a floppy disk. And that the middle half of his directory listing was gone. He reported the problem to America On-Line and they said they were not aware of it. He called 3 weeks later to check and again they said that they were not aware of the problem!
- Permission had been obtained extend the 4/30 deadline on the Geoworks coupons for another 10 days. These coupons enable a buyer to get the Geoworks Ensemble for $50, a tremendous saving compared to the list price. The street price is between 130-150 dollars.
- Comments on the working demo of Ami-Pro was solicited. A member reported that he was quite impressed with the features of this high-end word processor. It's easier to work with than the DOS version of WordPerfect. It can substitute as a desktop publishing program. He remarked that although there were virtually no instructions supplied, that it was quite intuitive - very user-friendly. He also said that, as with most Window applications, there is no UNinstall procedure. The working copy WILL comb the physical hard drive to find Windows. When it finds it, it installs itself into Windows. To uninstall it, you have to modify the various .INI files then remove the pertinent files.

LAP LINK Presentation:

Harvey demonstrated Version 3 of Lap Link; a software package that enables two PCs to be connected for file management. Both serial and parallel connector cables are supplied with the package. The software splits the screen and shows both the local and the remote machine. He noted that the ports on both machines must agree. And that parallel hookups were preferred for their speed as compared to serial transfers.

This program enables you to copy files to/from one PC to another when incompatible floppy drives are installed on the PCs. Harvey showed just how easy it was to copy and delete files on either the local or the remote machine. You do have to be careful and keep track of which part of the screen represents the local or the remote PC. He said that it took about 35-45 minutes to copy over 100 meg of data between 2 machines.

SECRETARY'S COMMENT:

Our president deserves a round of applause and our thanks for the great job he did at our last meeting. It was unfortunate that the scheduled speakers had to cancel. But as they say in the vernacular, "Stuff happens." So, Harvey had to carry the whole meeting by himself. He's always ready to fill-in if one of the scheduled speakers has to cancel; but to carry both ends speaks well of his willingness to help our users group. Thanks Harvey, for a job well done under trying circumstances. ■■■

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

We did it! The editor (Marylee) and I went to ***Hot-Lanta*** for **COMDEX/SPRING'91 & WINDOWS WORLD'91.** It was the 1st time either of us attended a national computer show. If general Schwarzkopf had been with us I am sure he would have called it the **mother of all computer shows.** The minimum entry fee was $75 a person for the entire week (exhibits only). For an additional $200 you could attend any of the 170 conferences/sessions during the week. We were fortunate that WordPerfect provided us with 2 free $75 passes. The **Association of Personal Computer User Groups, Inc.** (APCUG) also provided some. The evening of our arrival we attended a meeting with other user group representatives and a variety of software publishers and hardware manufacturers from around the country. The interactive discussion consisted of a user group/vendor liaison roundtable. Vendor Reps included **Borland International, Corel Systems Corp., IBM Corp., Logitech, Inc., Lotus Development Corp., Microsoft Corp., Pat Meier Assoc., PC World, Software Publishing Corp., and WordPerfect Corp.** Additional vendors, including some of the above, sponsored user group activities which took place during the week. These vendors included **Traveling Software, Asymetrix Corp. and Adobe Systems.** Our thanks to all these vendors for their involvement with user groups. All of these events in conjunction with Comdex made for a long, long day.

Our 1st day on the floor (Comdex) was monday morning. We rode an escalator down to the East Hall of the Georgia World Congress Center. As we rode down we could see the a lot of booths and the back of the hall but we could not see either end. This whole show was suppose to have around 900 exhibitors and 170 conferences, but it sure looked like 9,000. Mind you that at this point I didn't even realize that there was also a West Hall (Windows World) of the same magnitude that I couldn't see. Since the show, a lot of people have told me that its small compared to Comdex in Vegas. We were there till closing time and still had not covered the **floor** in its entirety.

Our 2nd day began by returning to Comdex and trying to rush through the exhibits we had not seen. Then it was off to Windows World. This was another hall of the same size connected by a corridor to the east hall. This was where all the **GEE WHIZ** stuff was. Multimedia (the combination of text, moving pictures and sound (voice, stereo/mono)) was the big thing. This technology is neat and not all that expensive, but I am not sure where it fits in for the masses other than education and presentations. I saw for the 1st time voice recognition software/hardware from IBM (**Voice Type**). It does work, although you must change your speech to a slower pace and it requires DOS 5.0. As I write this now I don't recall seeing DOS 5.0 anywhere during the show. Microsoft ,the largest exhibitor (2 acres MOL and 30-40 employees) had multiple booths within their area including two open theaters each seating approximately 50 people. I was impressed with their pen based system. It looked like an Etch-A-Sketch with a pen. This product is a computer without a keyboard consisting of only a screen, disk storage and operating system. It allows data entry via the user's handwriting (print). This product will be a hot product in the corporate world and will get us closer to a paperless society. WordPerfect and IBM seem to be a close second. Other interesting products included **INFRALINK.** This product allows you to use your printer without having to use printer cables. It communicates between printer and PC through infra-red. Boy, I could have used this past week when I installed 4 new PC printer cables each 40' or longer. A Far East conglomerate will surely buy this German company or snatch their technology.

After attending Comdex we came up with a few tips for potential attendees:

1. Pre-register. Avoid the last minute rush.
2. Design a who/what to see list. Its easy to miss the exhibits you want to see when there is so much to look at.
3. If possible get a hotel as close to convention. This eliminates driving in rush hour traffic, paying for parking if you can find any and getting lost due to one way streets. It takes less time to walk to a close hotel than to exit the parking lot with 5,000 other people.
4. Wear tennis shoes. Our dogs were killing us by lunch time of the 1st day.
5. Don't rush, take breaks.
6. Dress appropriately and comfortably. I wore a suit both days and it was comfortable except toward the end of the day carrying 10 lbs of paper materials. If you want exhibitors to take you seriously, dress seriously. A lot of exhibitors are there to make deals with dealers, resellers and distributors. If you look like your there to kick tires they may not talk to you or spend quality time with you. Comdex is a business event not a family show. As a matter of fact no one under 18 is admitted.
7. Take a carrying bag that is comfortable to carry with 1+ lbs of miscellaneous stuff that you will collect during each day. We saw people pulling luggage cart with boxes full of paper.
8. If your a non-smoker, be prepared for a lot of smoke. As big as the show was the smoke was bothersome. Atlanta in general seems to be the same.

I was disappointed that some vendors didn't have their own exhibits, Aston-Tate, Novell and 3Comm to mention a few. I would have liked to attend some of the 170 conferences available. We should have spent an extra day and taken our time, but it was our vacation and we were off to the mountains for 1 day before coming home. Well for rookies we did OK and with the help of APCUG (sysops) and the vendors supporting user groups we had a good time. ■■■

Harvey Bruneau

SOME THOUGHTS ON TECHNOLOGY

BY PHILIPPE KAHN

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As the information explosion progresses and computer technologies become more complex, User Groups will play an increasingly important role in communicating the benefits on these technologies. User Groups will also help bring about new technologies.

Leading edge software technology is the result of constant change and interaction -- interactive communication between the user and software developers. The more flexible and supportive the line of communication, the more we all benefit from the fruition of this technology. End users who are knowledgeable and vocal will serve to increase the overall standards in an industry that can only stand to gain from an informed and supportive user community.

Objects for the People.
At Borland, and at other leading software companies, object-oriented technology is the new cornerstone of software product development. Using object-oriented programming techniques, software developers can be even more effective in implementing ideas and suggestions made by end users.

Unlike traditional programming techniques, object-oriented programming permits the characterization of functions, data or instructions as "objects" which facilitates the design and implementation of software.

There are three aspects to Borland's object-oriented approach: object-oriented methodologies, object-oriented tools for programmers, and object-oriented user interfaces for end users.

Object-Oriented Methodologies.
Borland uses standard object-oriented programming techniques. These include the use of class libraries, which are clusters of objects and embedded objects, which combine instructions and data to be acted upon. The use of object-oriented programming techniques results in software that is reusable, reliable, extendable and more easily and efficiently developed.

Object-oriented methodologies have enabled Borland to create, maintain and evolve its core technologies. These core technologies, which can be characterized as standard reusable software components, are essentially a collection of objects that allow the company to employ common approaches to similar problems.

For example, one problem we heard of from User Groups and others was the need to upgrade hardware in order to run new, more functional versions of software. Subsequently, we developed VROOMM (Virtual Runtime Object-Oriented Memory Manager), a core technology which enables greater functionality to be added to products without the corresponding increase in memory requirements.

Objects for Programmers.
Object-oriented development tools are used by Borland programmers and sold by the company to outside developers. As one of the first software developers to provide object-oriented tools for Windows, we have the opportunity to create even more usable software for end users worldwide.

Objects for End Users.
I believe the benefits of object-oriented architecture should be available to end users as well as programmers, and Borland's unique background of developing applications products and programming tools can help us do just that. Using object-oriented architectures, users can manipulate components, or groups of objects, and create completely customized applications rather than having to rely solely upon already developed standalone applications such as databases and spreadsheets. Borland's ObjectVision is one of the first object-oriented end user programming tools for the Windows environment.

Objects also allow a consistent way for the user to interact with applications. For example, Borland has developed an object-oriented user conceptual model that is powerful yet intuitive. This reduces the number of steps and knowledge required of an end user, which in turn, makes applications products more intuitive and usable. This approach is becoming increasingly important as applications become more complex.

Software for the Future.
Software is designed to accommodate the acquisition, manipulation and delivery of information. The challenge is to improve this process. This is done through the design of better user interfaces, more usable product features and optimization of hardware.

We are all familiar with the level of frustration experienced when using a product that we don't understand, that is not intuitive or clearly documented. When we attempt to use a product to perform a task for which it was not intended, the level of frustration increases.

(Some Thoughts..Continued on next page)

(Some Thoughts..continued from previous page)

User groups evolved out of users' needs to resolve these frustrations, and to provide additional knowledge and support to keep pace with emerging technologies. This need continues today as products become even more complex and as operating environments change.

User groups have developed a voice in the marketplace and their suggestions are being implemented. Through education they assist users in making informed decisions about the technology they purchase and contribute to the industry by transitioning users to new software platforms.

Software developers, manufacturers, user groups and all others involved in furthering technology are responsible for making the industry as effective as possible. If we each do our part, the industry will prosper, we will all be on the leading edge of technology, and we all will reap its rewards.

Philippe Kahn is chairman, president and chief executive officer of Borland International. (TIBMPCUG Editor note: ...and a MAJOR contributor to the APCUG BBS, in hardware, software, and support.)

■■■

FILE COMPRESSION TERMS

FILE = The SINGLE name that identifies information on a disk drive. This information is either a program, text information, or supplemental data for a program.

FILE EXTRACTION = The process of recreating files that have been previously compressed.

FILE COMPRESSION = The process of reducing a file's size. This is sometimes referred to as data compressing.

LZH or ZIP FILE = The file that holds file information that has been reduced in size for better storage. It is sometimes called a compressed file or a library file. A ZIP file can be made up of one or more files compressed and stored together under one file name.

SELF EXTRACTING = A file with an EXE file extension that, when executed, creates files that were stored within. The contents is usually an executable program and it's documentation. This type of file is usually a ZIP file bundled with a program to automatically extract the original files.

Hard Drive Confusion?

Reprinted from 04/91 South Mountain UG The Journal

If you are confused about the different Hard Drives on the market, perhaps this article from JDR Microdevices will help:

HARD DISK SPECIFICATIONS AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

ESDI (Enhanced Small Device Interface) refers to an interface standard designed for ultra-high speed data transfer. ESDI hard disk subsystems are designed with high-performance, high-reliability needs in mind. The encryption method used by most ESDI systems is NRZ (Non-Return to Zero) which eliminates the need for clock pulses, yielding up to 18.5 kilobytes per track and optimum read/write speeds.

MFM (Modified Frequency Modulation) is the most widely used method of encrypting data on the magnetic surface of a hard disk. The data is combined with clock pulses which insure the reliable reading of stored information. MFM hard disk systems can typically store about 8.5 kilobytes per track.

RLL (Run Length Limited) is another widely used technique for data encryption. Data is compressed by substituting repetitive strings of 1s and 0s with shorter identifiers. The resulting compression will yield about 13 kilobytes of data per track or an increase of up to 53%.

SCSI (Small Computer Systems Interface) is a standard interface bus designed to connect system components and peripherals. SCSI is attaining wide spread use in hard drive and network applications. SCSI hard drive systems tend towards high performance and capacity, but use standard data encryption techniques such as MFM or RLL.

IDE (Integrated Device Electronics) is a recent addition to the list of standard hard drive interfaces. Similar to SCSI, an IDE interface card in your system provides the proper bus and interface signals; the hard disk controller is actually part of the drive electronics attached to the hard disk. Again, several different methods of data encryption can be used with the IDE interface.

■■■

COMPUTER PREJUDICE

by Glen Stocking

Education is the natural enemy of prejudice. Everyone is aware of racial and religious prejudice, and since the industrial revolution, the world has known technology prejudice. Today, in a time of satellite communications, fax machines and photo copiers, computer prejudice has arrived. From Webster's New World Dictionary, "Prejudice implies a preconceived and unreasonable judgment or opinion, usually an unfavorable one marked by suspicion, fear, intolerance, or hatred." Computer prejudice inhibits creativity, promotes resource waste, limits productivity, and widens the gap students must jump to reach employment.

People are suspicious of computer users. Perhaps they think computer users are in league with the devil. Surly the demons lurking within a CPU are more terrifying and gruesome than any who issued from Pandora's box. The unmistakable odor of tar and sulfur wafts menacingly from the floppy drive doors, no moral person would toil for such a master.

Computer users do not claim sainthood, but in league with the devil? Computers can be addicting task masters, but most users can control the big red switch. Computer users are not slaves to electronic demons, that odor of tar and sulfur is probably just a ham and swiss on rye warming on the power supply.

Fear of the unknown compels people to be computer prejudice. The electronic wizardry of computers is beyond comprehension to most people. Computer programs are written with strange hieroglyphics that defy translation. Computers have a history of doing things that humans can not explain and often seem powerless to change.

The unknown is nothing to fear, it is a mystery to unravel. How much of the modern world does anyone fully understand? The internal combustion engine is a mystery to most people, but they drive cars everyday. A television set, a toaster and a toilet are found in most American homes, but how many know how they work? Computer users do not always know a lot about computers, but they can still develop a lot of skill with applications.

Programs are written with highly structured logic, and computers do exactly as the program instructs. Flaws in logic have led to bewildering errors, but humans created those flaws, and humans can correct them.

People are frustrated by computers, because a computer will unerringly do exactly as it is told to do. Inexperienced users often overlook their own errors, and are unable to control the computer. The disheartened user begins to feel dominated by the machine. To control their fear of losing control, people often become intolerant of the machine. Unable to master the computer the hapless user avoids the machine, declares it evil, and refuses to associate with those who employ the machine successfully.

Fear leads to anger, anger unresolved, becomes hatred. Throughout history people have feared races and religions different from their own. The hatred that resulted has destroyed uncounted lives. The evolution of humankind has been delayed unknown centuries by misunderstanding and distrust. Today, human enrichment is still impeded by people who refuse to grasp new technology and utilize its power to expand their horizons.

A young man gave up his city life and retreated to the north woods. One night he sharpened his ax and explained to a visitor that the ax had been good enough for the old timers, who respected the woods, and it was good enough for him. The young man's aged uncle spat into the fire when he declared, "Son, the old timers used axes 'cause that's what they had. Grandpa told me if he'd had a chain saw, he'd a used it!" Traditional methods are priceless as heritage, but they are not the best means of production. The right tool for the job saves effort, saves time, and produces better results.

Computer spreadsheet have liberated accountants and bookkeepers from the pure torture of updating reports. Architects and engineers can experiment painlessly using automated design programs. Word processors have opened the untapped universe of ideas formerly locked up in the minds of people with no other way to express themselves. No longer shackled by restrictions of form and mechanics, people can concentrate on content, knowing the machine will help organize the flow into a presentable paper.

To left handed writers, word processors are a godsend. Left handers usually learned and practiced writing on right handed desk that offered no support for the working hand. Pushing a pen across paper from left to right forces the left hand to plow through wet ink and blocks from view the words the writer has just written. These obstacles contribute to interruptions in the writers train of thought, making writing a difficult and painful chore.

With a little practice, the writer's fingers can fly across a keyboard recording thoughts as fast as they occur, before they can be lost to distractions or modified by reflection. The ease of electronic editing encourages writers to fine tune their presentation, rather than accepting second rate work to avoid painful revisions. Word processors create aesthetic results without wasting resources. Brainstorming, outlining, and rough composition is done without a single sheet of paper being consumed. Pens and pencils lie in desk drawers unused. Text can be manipulated on the page

(Computer Prejudice..continued on next page)

(Computer Prejudice...continued from previous page.)

to create traditional or dramatic reports. Only when the writer/editor is satisfied with the composition is the work submitted to the printer. Personal computer printers create pages unparalleled in excellence. The ideas and skills of the writer are laid bare for all to see. With the proper hardware and software, electronic creations can be transmitted and read without paper, reducing response time and increasing productivity.

Productivity is the key to successful business, so computers are proliferating in the work place. Students should be encouraged to become comfortable with computers. Teachers must create opportunities for students to practice computer skills, giving the students confidence with the tools they will be using after graduation. Many adult students finished their formal education before computers were common in the classroom. These people are trying to catch up and hang on. Educators must support these motivated students, not hinder them with insistence on traditional methods. In the near future, college campuses will be completely linked by computer. Students will create reports and upload them into the school's system. The teacher will be able to access the system from their office or home to read the reports. The student will then access the system to retrieve the graded report, complete with comments. For the traditionalist, the system can supply a hard copy.

Prejudice is an ugly emotion. Suspicion, fear and intolerance are characteristics of humankind's troubled past. Education is helping to eliminate religious and racial prejudice. Education must take the lead in promoting creativity, saving resources, increasing productivity and giving students skills needed in the job market, by eradicating computer prejudice.

THIS ONE WAS WRITTEN BECAUSE I WAS MAD, BUT I AM FEELING MUCH BETTER NOW!

NOTES: GLENN STOCKING (407) 276-0867

A LOGICAL ANSWER

by Ed Buzza

As promised in the last issue, here is the complete truth table. Now when you see one of these puzzles in a magazine or elsewhere, grab a pencil and some paper, scratch a few lines for your table, and then amaze your friends and family and confound your boss and other enemies.

	Adam	Burt	Carl	Dave
Marital Status				
Single	N	Y	N	N
Married	Y	N	N	N
Divorced	N	N	N	Y
Widowed	N	N	Y	N
House				
Blue	N	N	Y	N
Green	N	Y	N	N
White	Y	N	N	N
Yellow	N	N	N	Y
PC				
XT	Y	N	N	N
286	N	N	N	Y
386	N	N	Y	N
486	N	Y	N	N
Hard Drive				
None	Y	N	N	N
40 meg	N	N	N	Y
80 meg	N	Y	N	N
160 meg	N	N	Y	N



Remember with programs that compress EXE files.

1. Always run the program against a COPY of the program. Never compress the original
2. Test the program immediately for every possible function. There are certain programs that will no longer work after being compressed. Also, if you are running under Windows, DESQview, or similar environment, the program might not act the same as if it were run from the DOS prompt.

paint/draw programs that can edit a scanned image. As always, beware of using copyrighted material.

Most paint/draw programs provide sample "clip art" images. Although covered by copyright, they can be used for personal or non-commercial purposes. The problem with clip art is size (it may not fit) and graphic file format.

Graphics are either in vector or raster format. Raster or bit-mapped graphics are built on a pixel by pixel basis. Vector graphics are built on an arithmetic formula. For instance, a line in a raster file is composed of a series of sequential pixels whose color is different than the background color. A line in a vector graphic is described by a formula (starting point, length, width, and ending point).

That is why a raster graphic is not easy to stretch or shrink. When a raster line is changed, pixels must be added or deleted from the line, usually resulting in jagged lines. When a vector line is changed, only the data in the formula is changed. Hence, vector graphics will retain their crisp resolution regardless of the changes made to the graphic. All CAD (Computer Assisted Design) programs use vector files (or it really isn't a CAD program).

Clip art or graphic files can be raster or vector files and are known by their file extensions. The following are the more common raster formats: .PCX, .PCC, .TIF, .IMG, .MSP, and .PIC (but not all .PIC files are .PIC files!).

Some of the common vector formats are: .CGM, .DXF, .DWG, .CDR, .EPS, and .WPG (but .WPG files can hold both raster and vector files). Almost all DTP programs will accept .PCX files.

If your DTP program provides for hiding graphics, do so; turn the feature on. Get into the habit of using place holders for graphics and then place the graphics as the final step of preparing the master document. It will speed up draft printing and screen redraws. ■



I'd rather be playing golf!

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

. . . *for beginners*

Vol 1 Num 3 June, 1991

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Ed Buzza

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336061-3492

In This Issue:

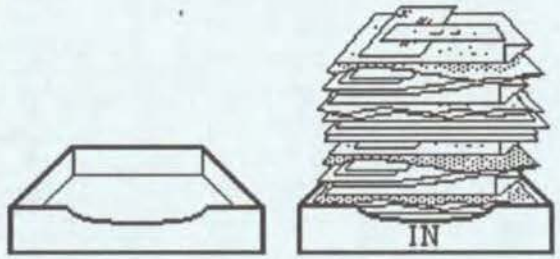
Text Preparation
Fillers
Time Outs
Fonts vs Typefaces

Next Issue:

Font Generators
Measurements
Kerning
Organizing

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TEXT PREPARATION

Use your favorite word processor and save the output as ASCII, unless your DTP can import your word processor formatted files. If the DTP can accept your formatted text files, you can do a lot of DTP formatting ahead of time. Do include fonts, headlines, headers, footers, etc.. In fact, if you have one of the high-end word processors, you can use it as your DTP program.

Whatever you do, USE THE TAB KEY to indent paragraphs, DO NOT use spaces. When using proportional fonts, spaces won't always line up. This will present a ragged look to your final product.

Also, learn to single space between sentences. Yes, your typing teacher always taught you to place two spaces after a period ending a sentence. Just try to avoid that when preparing material for DTP purposes. Those extra spaces take up a lot of room in a published document.

Do not use hyphenation or full justification (both margins flush). If your word processor has this feature, turn it off. When you bring text into the DTP program, then hyphenate or justify to suit the needs of your software and of your document.

Naturally, you will spell-check your text in your word processor or in a stand alone spell checker. It's a good idea to run it through a grammar checker if you have one. Otherwise, proof read your mock-up or, a better idea, have someone else proof it for you.

Keep your text at the eight grade level if you are writing any instructional material. The genius reader will understand and know what you want and will get the job done. Those with below average reading skills will follow your instructions to the letter; if your instructions are correct, the job will get done. Your biggest problem will be those people between the just cited extremes. They read, decide you don't know what you're talking about, or they "help" you get the job done. All you can do is to be as precise as possible. Break the job down into individual steps and describe what is to be done, and why, at each step in order to do the job. Adopt the cook book recipe method - a classic form of instruction.

Some restrictions do not apply when writing technical material. Of necessity, your work will be full of jargon and esoteric language. Also, your spell and grammar checkers may not be of much help. Do consider setting up a personal dictionary if your word processor's spell check provides for one. Here is one place where shop language and legalese may be necessary for you to communicate effectively. ■

FILLERS

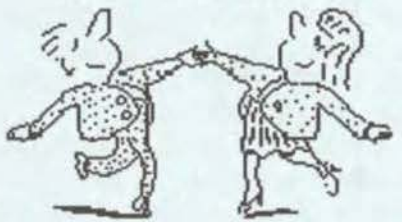
Not every article ends at the end of a column or page. Sometimes you can adjust the leading. But be careful that the lines don't become so far apart as to make reading difficult. There is no law that says all columns must be even with the bottom of a page. If you're writing a book, then that's different.

So there will be a need to "fill out" a column; hence the word "fillers." You've all seen them in magazines and newspapers. Little snippets of trivia stuck here and there to even out the columns. Where do you get these fillers? Get a book of quotations, an almanac, a calendar of noted events, anecdotes, etc.. Do give credit for the source of any material, especially copyrighted material.

One pull quote every two or three pages is about the right ratio

"Pull quotes" or "read outs" can also be used as fillers. Pick up some important point being made in your text; show it in a different typeface, style, or size; then place it either in the column, between columns, or stretch it to span columns. All are effective. If your DTP program has the ability, shade the background of the pull quote. Just don't overdo it. One pull quote every two or three pages is about the right ratio. ■

"We've got Windows!"



TIME-OUTS

Every now and then, the reader needs a "time out." A chance to catch one's breath so to speak. These time-outs are nothing more than a convenient break while reading lengthy material. They can be cartoons, illustrations, graphics, one-liners, pull quotes, hints/tips, late news, remarks from the president or other officer, etc..

They are especially useful in newsletters and brochures. Use with caution in books or in instructional manuals. Never use them in instructional pamphlets. Much like fillers, time-outs can serve to stretch out the body of text to even up columns and pages. Time-outs should always be shown with a border unless it is a drawing or picture. ■

Excited wife called her husband at work. "I won the lottery, pack your clothes!" "Great!" he replied, "Summer or winter clothes?" She said, "All of them, I want you out of the house by six!"

GRAPHICS

There is NO need to have every graphic prepared and/or placed with the computer. You can, literally, cut and paste graphics into your prepared document. Now you know why they invented rubber cement. It is far easier to do your sketching with pencil and paper than it is with a paint or drawing program. All DTP programs provide for creating a "place holder" for a graphic to be pasted in manually. Use the appropriate DTP tool to draw an empty box whose dimensions are the size of the graphic that is to be included. To eliminate the shadow that sometimes occurs when copying a master page that has pasted graphics, paste in the graphic, then use a pen or pencil to draw a border around the graphic right where the shadow would occur. This way, you are not only hiding a flaw, you are enhancing the graphic with its own border.

Paint and draw programs do have their uses but there are other resources that can be used. Books and collections of non-copyrighted material containing virtually any graphic to suit your needs are available. Use them. Dover Publications has a variety of clip art books that fit this need. Such resources are especially valuable to anyone with a scanner. After you scan the graphic, then use one of the

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____ City
_____ State _____ Zip _____ Home
Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about IBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ]
DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00

Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

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  ** Data: 239-3704 **
  Voice: 237-4997
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01-92

[redacted]

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 7 July, 1991

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: July 10, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

7/10/91- **IBM** OS/2 2.0 (Presented by **IBM**)

Refreshment Break

IBM DOS 5.0 (Presented by **IBM**)

Open Discussion

Door Prize Raffle - **Lotus - Freelance Plus**
(Donated by Jim Clark)

UPCOMING SPEAKER

8/14/91 - Intel

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE LOOK FOR REVIEW ON:

Scanman 256 with Ansel Software

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Desktop Publishing *for beginners* . . . (See next issue)
MS-DOS 5.0 New & Revised Commands . . . . (insert)
TIPCUG Application 7

*** * 1991 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	932-6745
VICE PRES.:	Steve Speairs	875-1095
TREASURER:	Bill Fuller	832-0125
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	224-6079
SECRETARY:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDUCATION:	Open	

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP:	Bill Fuller	832-0125

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Kenneth Nott
Mike Hernandez
Don Sebrell
Gordon E. Hallgren

It's great to have you as new "TIBMPCUG" members!

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about IBM-PC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at the address below or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 6/12/91 MEETING --

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Harvey Bruneau informed the members of the latest developments in PC software and hardware. Some of the items he mentioned are:

- IBM will give a presentation next month of OS Version 2 and of IBM DOS Version 5.
- Caution - You can't install Version 5 of IBM's DOS into a PC that now has MS-DOS (Version 4 or earlier).
- Ashton Tate was scheduled to give a presentation at our July meeting but it has been canceled.
- The merits and handling characteristics of trackball and mouse devices were discussed.
- Intel has announced a delay until the 4th quarter of the availability of their 50 mhz 486 chip.
- Dell Computers has cut prices on some of their equipment. A 386SX with 1 meg RAM, a floppy drive, 40 meg IDE hard drive, 16 bit super VGA board, and a VGA monitor for less than $2,000.00.
- Western Digital is now shipping 2.5 inch hard drives. These are primarily intended for OEM sources of portable and notebook computers.
- GeoWorks and Quarterdeck are merging. Could present a bit of competition to Microsoft Windows.
- One of our members recommended the program LIST.SHO that can be found on the Sunshine BBS. It's a demonstration of how to use the LIST program (ver 7.5). He said it runs about 15 minutes and is a very good demonstration.
- A member remarked that the Window Resource Kit from Microsoft was a very good offer (total cost about $20). It contains an icon draw program, screen blankers, system information module, and the Productivity Package.

ATLANTA COMDEX

Harvey spoke at some length about the Comdex event that he and his wife attended.

- He was very impressed with the size of the exhibit space, the number of sessions, and the number of attendees (over 60,000). He said that it's impossible to attend all of the sessions because there are so many of them. He recommends comfortable shoes (you'll do a lot of walking) and being organized. Decide what you want to see and hear before you get there.

(Minutes continued on next page)

(Minutes continued...from previous page)

- While the exhibit hall was huge, there was another building across the street hosting the Windows exhibition that was just as big. Harvey said that some of the exhibits took up as much space as his whole house!
- IBM showed their voice recognition computer. You have to talk slow but it does have a vocabulary of about 7,000 words.

OPEN DISCUSSION
Harvey demonstrated the use of some of his favorite utilities. As a LAN manager, he carries these as part of his "toolkit."

SWEEP: Can be used to perform a DOS operation across directories.
e.g., SWEEP DEL *.BAK

WHEREIS: Searches across all directories for the named file and shows the full path of each file found.

FFM: A utility that shows two directories side by side. Sometimes called 2DIR on some BBSs.

TXT2COM: Converts a text file to a .COM file. Useful in batch jobs.

PKLITE: Compresses .EXE files - usually about 50% reduction.

LIST: Latest version is 7.5I. It's more than a text viewer utility.

He also demonstrated a data base utility that can look at records, sort them, and display selected fields.

A member of the group also showed his "toolkit" of favorite utilities. While most members were familiar with some of them, his demonstration of LIST showed how versatile this program can be. ■■■

MINI BOOK REVIEW: *by Tom Schroeppel*

"Lingo", by Jim Menick, is a new book about an artificial intelligence program that grows from an Apple IIG to eventually take over the United States. It's humorous, mostly believable, and highly entertaining, especially for anyone interested in computers. The book is available at local branches of the Tampa Public Library; if it's not in you can put dibs on the next available copy anywhere in town through the library's new system-wide reserve policy. ■■■

PROGRAMMER'S PUZZLE
By: Tom Cone, Jr.

Assume the existence of a hotel that has 500 rooms.

Assume further that 500 guests show up one day to inspect the rooms one after the other, according to the following sequence:

The first guest visits all the rooms and opens all the doors.

The second guest visits every other room and closes each door.

(at this point half of the doors are open and half are closed...)

The third guest visits every third room. If the door is open he closes it. If it was closed, he opens it.

The fourth guest visits every fourth room. If a door is open when it is visited it gets closed. If a door is closed when it is visited it gets opened.

This sequence continues, until the 500th guest visits the 500th room. If that door is open it gets closed. If it is closed it gets opened.

After the 500th guest visited the last room, how many doors remain open, and how many remain closed? ■■■
(Answer next month)

Club Members BBS:

The Tampa IBM PC User Group operates a full service 130 Mb, single-line 24-hour electronic BBS for file transfers and E-mail. As a member you are invited to use the Board within the established BBS rules.

Phone: 239-3704

The first time you log-on to the BBS, you must establish your Password and set-up. You will then have limited access until access has been verified by the Sysop.

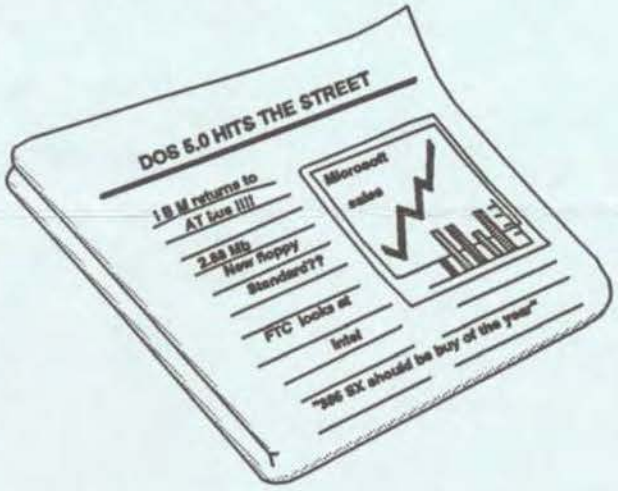
For assistance from SYSOP,
Call Kevan Sheridan 237-0100

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Well events during the closing of the 1st half of the 1991 sure were dramatic.

1. **DOS 5.0 upgrade hits the street.**
IBM and MS DOS 5.0 is available at your local vendor. Street price was around $39 (list $99.95) at Workplace and Egghead. This price is effective for a limited time. For an additional $9 (List $14.95), you could buy **UPGRADING TO MS-DOS 5** by QUE Corp. You may not need this book but I have always found this publisher to present information with more detail than other publishers including the original vendor manuals. Microsoft had over 7,000 beta sites for this product so it should not have any major flaws as it predecessor had. However, there are minor bugs beginning to emerge, some of which are not Microsoft fault. Any information on **5.0** bugs would be appreciated.

I have replaced my MS DOS 3.1 with the 5.0 version on the 286 PC. The 8088 will keep DOS 3.1. The installation required about 4 hours. Mainly due to backing up 2 partitioned 40Mb drives, removing the partitions, reformatting the drives and copying the software back to the drives. My paths and batch files also had to modified to reflect the elimination of the E: and F: drives. Users with partitioned drives have the option to keep them that way. I chose not to. I have not used any of the new features yet. Presently we are sticking to the old fashion DOS prompt. There is nothing worse than getting caught up in new technology and not being able to produce a newsletter. After the newsletter and 384k more of memory chips we will challenge the new features.



If you are one of the 50 million+ users of DOS 4.0x or prior, you may want to consider the upgrade. Please be aware that this **DOS 5.0** release is of a greater benefit to owners of 286 PCs and above.

Note - Our own Frederick Kyle has written an in depth article on **DOS 5.0** for this months newsletter.

2. **IBM unveils 3 new AT-BUS 20MHz 386SX based PS/2s.**
It looks like ***If you can't beat them, join them*** and add a little spice. I could not believe my eyes when I read that IBM had 4 new PS/2s (mdls 57SX, 40SX, 35SX & 35LS), the latter 3 of which are **based on the old AT bus.** If you have an MCA bus machine don't panic, **YET.** IBM has supposedly done this to regain market share from the clone makers. Time will tell if this is true and it works. To add a little fuel to the fire these machines have an option which even I like. A 2.88Mb floppy. The non-AT class machine (57SX) comes standard with this drive. It should not be to long before other vendors follow suit.

3. **Intel being reviewed by the FTC.**
The Federal Trade Commission has included Intel in its review of mircocomputer companies allegedly performing unfair business practices. Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. **(AMD)** along with other companies have accused Intel of hitting below the belt. Intel now joins Microsoft under the governments magnifying glass.

Prices have begun to significantly drop on math co-processors. Look for the 286, 386 and 486 processors to also drop. These drops will further reduce the cost of PCs. The 386SX should be a great buy during the next 6 months.

If you are looking to buy a PC this year I would start looking at the 386SX or higher product line. This processor should have a technology life of 2-3 years. In the past I was recommending a 286 12MHz but advancements in software and price reductions of hardware during the last year have made the 386SX machines the best buy. Be aware that not all PCs are the same. There are some rotten apples out there. Talk to your fellow computer users before you sign.

There is no reason why you should pay more than $2000 for a good clone desktop 386SX 20MHz with the following: MS DOS 5.0/Windows 3.0/4Mb RAM/80Mb 17ms drive/VGA Color monitor/Mouse/1.2 & 1.44 Floppies/32k cache RAM.

The rest of the year should prove to be even more exciting. Look for 486 50MHz PCs to be available from multiple vendors, OS/2 2.0 to give Microsoft a headache, mergers and acquisitions from strange bedfellows to fight the dominating role of Microsoft. Additionally, the release of even greater products for the Microsoft Windows arena including; Wordperfect 6.0, Harvard Graphics and a couple of dBASE languages (finally).■■■

Harvey Bruneau

Software Review: "The Creator" (v.6.0)

By: Tom Cone

"The Creator" is a program that writes BASIC programs to perform database management functions and generate reports. It is what is known as a "program generator". The output is a program written in BASIC. You need MicroSoft QuickBasic (version 4.5 or higher) or Microsoft BASIC 6.0 (or higher) to compile or run the programs that are produced by "The Creator".

In my judgment, his program is not for beginners. It is quite flexible, and has surprising depth. I judge it to be of great use to intermediate or advanced programmers, particularly those familiar with QuickBasic, already. According to the author, an intermediate level BASIC programmer should be capable of creating data entry and update programs, together with simple report programs within an hour or two of installing "The Creator". My own experience indicates that generating the programs that actually manage the database (by adding, editing or deleting records) is relatively straight forward and simple. On the other hand, generating the programs which produce printed reports is considerably more complex and time consuming.

The database programs that are generated by "The Creator" use "fixed length" records in their data files. The data file is composed of "records", which, in turn, are composed of "fields" representing discrete chunks of related information. For example, you could very easily generate a name and address database, which stores each person's name, address, phone number and zip code in a single record; utilizing individual fields to hold the name, the address, the city, the state, the zip code, and the phone number.

Such a database is often referred to as a "flat file" database, since all of the data relevant to the particular application is contained in a single file.

In addition to supporting a flat file system, "The Creator" permits individual fields in a record to be "linked" to related files, thereby giving the resulting application a "relational capability". For example, if you wanted to record the names of family members for each person in your name and address file, you could link the name of each person in your database to a separate file which contains only the names of that person's family members. This saves a lot of disk storage space, since it is not necessary to enter each family member in the main name and address file, nor is it necessary to add separate fields to the name and address record to record family member names, along with the primary name. Since unused fields in fixed length records consume just as much disk space as fields that are completely filled in, a linking system such as this saves a lot of data storage area on disk. With such a system, as you read through the main database file, you can also read any related dependent records in the linked file.

Key fields within the database are also supported. Indexes based upon them are kept current automatically as records are added, edited or deleted. Searches utilizing the key fields are virtually instantaneous.

Password protection is supported.

Specific edit constraints can be imposed on any field in a record. For example, using simple codes you can force all user input for particular fields into uppercase letters; or lowercase letters; or limit to Y/N or T/F. You can designate specific fields to be "mandatory", i.e. fields that must be filled in before a record can be added to the file; and you can limit user input to numeric data, only. Other edit restrictions are also possible, though I won't take the trouble to list them all here.

Calculated fields are supported within the program. This makes it possible to make the contents of one field equal the sum or difference of other fields, so that the calculated field will automatically be filled in as records are added to the file. "The Creator" enables you to design your own formula for the calculated field. You are not limited to sums or differences.

Extended edits are supported for individual fields within each record. This makes it possible to validate user supplied information against another disk file, for example. This helps assure better integrity within the resulting database, since keyboard errors can be trapped & corrected as the data is being entered.

The resulting program code is easy to operate by the end-user. The routines for viewing, adding, editing and deleting records are simple and flexible. You can write your own "help" file, that becomes available to the user simply by pressing the F1 key. The database can be viewed "in order" based on any selected key, or any selected group of key fields. "Browsing" through the file, one record at a time, is a snap. Searching for individual records, (or groups of records) is easy, yet powerful. Searches based on values in multiple "keys" is supported, for example.

It's been my experience that most people find that however nice it may be to have quick access "on screen" to your data, simply viewing the data on disk is not enough for most applications. Instead, people need an easy way to be able to generate written reports summarizing all or parts of the information contained in the data file. "The Creator" package includes a related program called "The Reporter". This program generates BASIC report programs that you custom design for yourself using a pre-defined set of command words or phrases.

(Continued on next page.)

(Creator..continued from previous page.)

These commands function essentially as "macro's" that enable "The Reporter" to translate your report design into the actual BASIC code, itself.

The process requires you to create a text file defining the heading, the body, and the footing for your desired report. In the body of the report, you can include specifications for subtotals or totals on any numeric field. You may insert selection or exclusion criteria within the body of the report in order to limit the printed report to particular groups of records.

A powerful sorting utility is also included within the package. This is useful because it permits data in your reports to be sorted in virtually any order that you may desire.

"The Reporter" is not limited to simple columnar table-like reports. You can design multi-line reports easily, as well. This makes it a snap to generate mailing labels, for example.

As mentioned at the top, I found the report capabilities to be more difficult to grasp and understand than was true for the generation of the database management program, itself. In several instances I have had to "hand-craft" refinements in the BASIC code to achieve the desired reports.

The process for developing stand-alone EXE files works as follows:

A. For the Data Entry Programs:

STEP 1 - Define a data dictionary for your database. In this step, you select names for each field within the record, decide what length each field should occupy within the record, and assign any edit restrictions desired.

STEP 2 - Draw the data input/edit screen. This is done by simply drawing your desired screen with any text editor. The screen may be revised or redrawn at any time, without having to generate new code or re-compile it. (A very nice touch!)

STEP 3 - Run "The Creator" to create a BASIC program file.

STEP 4 - Compile the BASIC file to an OBJ file using QuickBasic.

STEP 5 - Link the OBJ file with QuickBasic libraries and a special Creator library to create the desired EXE file. The resulting EXE file can be distributed and run by end-users without QuickBasic or "The Creator".

B. For the Report programs:

STEP 1 - Define the format of the desired report using special command words and phrases. This is done with any simple text editor. (Incidentally, a text editor is included within "The Creator" for convenience.)

STEP 2 - Run "The Reporter" to create a BASIC program file that will generate the hardcopy report you desire.

STEP 3 - Compile the BASIC file to an OBJ file under QuickBasic.

STEP 4 - Link the OBJ file with QuickBasic libraries and a special "Creator" library to create the desired EXE file.

If all of this sounds complicated, relax. The program includes a utility which enables you to perform these steps in series, by simply selecting menu items off a list. If you prefer, you can step outside of the menu system and perform any "step" manually.

PROGRAM REVIEWED:

"The Creator" (version 6.0)
By: T.N.T. Software, Inc.
34069 Hainesville Rd.
Round Lake, Illinois 60073
(312) 223-8595
Price: $99.00

MINI BOOK REVIEW:
By: Hugh Bayless (Monterey Bay User Group)

"WordPerfect Power Pack"

QUE Books, the computer book division of Macmillan, has just published WordPerfect Power Pack, by Ralph Blodgett, a magazine editor and author of 15 books. He is also one of seven sysops on the WordPerfect Support Group forum on CompuServe who answer questions about WordPerfect from users around the world.

The book is a compendium of office-writing techniques with WordPerfect -- general correspondence, printing envelopes and labels, creating reports, specialized documents, and legal documents. It also briefly covers desktop publishing.

WordPerfect Power Pack includes a self-installing 360K disk packed with samples, macros, styles, templates, forms, letters, merge files, and supporting documents described in the book.

For any business office that is using WordPerfect, this should be the handbook for every clerk and secretary to have within easy reach. It is the most comprehensive book on WordPerfect office writing techniques I have yet seen. $39.95 at your favorite bookstore with disk.

MS-DOS 5.0: NEW & REVISED COMMANDS, DEVICE DRIVERS AND SWITCHES

by Frederick D. Kyle

Microsoft's DOS version 5.0 contains a number of new programs and device drivers, as well as several new "switches" for commands, device drivers and programs from prior versions. This document is designed primarily for those DOS 3.3 users who decided not to upgrade to version 4.01, but who may be interested in the version 5.0 upgrade; it briefly summarizes the changes in relation to versions 3.3 (which is used as the "base") and 4.01. It does not cover any "installation" programs (other than EXPAND.EXE)[1] or the various "compatibility" programs and drivers[2] which come with DOS 5.0; also excluded are the "batch" commands, which have not changed between these three versions (other than their inclusion in 5.0's HELP system). The following symbols are used in the tables below:

*	means:	"the switches for this command or device have not changed from the prior version"
◂▸	means:	"the range of values for some switches has changed in this version"
N/A	means:	"this command or device was not included in this version"
NEW	means:	"this command or device was added in this version"
NEW SWITCH	means:	"one or more switches, parameters or sub-commands has been added or deleted in this version"
REMOVED	means:	"this command no longer is part of DOS"
REPLACED	means:	"this program was replaced by a substantially different program with a different name"

For purposes of comparison, the command or device name appearing in the left-most column is the name used in the earliest of the three versions in which the command or device appeared.

Configuration Commands

These commands are used in the CONFIG.SYS file; they execute when the computer boots.

	ver. 3.3	ver. 4.01	ver. 5.0	Comment
BREAK		*	*	
BUFFERS		NEW SWITCH: adds "m" and /x	**NEW SWITCH**: drops /x	▸"m" should not be used with SMARTDRV
COUNTRY		◂▸ [adds 4 countries]	◂▸ [drops support for some countries, adds others]	
DEVICE		*	*	

---

1 These are SETUP.EXE, HDBKUP.EXE, DELOLDOS.EXE, UNINSTAL.EXE and HDRSTORE.EXE.

2 MS-DOS 5.0 includes a variety of device drivers and programs for compatibility purposes. These include DMDRVR.BIN and XBIOS.OVL (for drives partitioned with OnTrack's Disk Manager), SSTOR.SYS (for drives partitioned with SpeedStor), MSHERC.COM (Hercules graphics driver), CV.COM (to load certain versions of CODEVIEW), WINA20.386 (for WINDOWS), and a number of network drivers (NET5.COM, IPX.OBJ and TBMI2.COM for NOVELL networks; NET.EXE, NETBEUI.DOS, NETWKSTA.EXE, REDIR.EXE, and SETNAME.EXE for other network systems).

DEVICEHIGH	N/A	N/A	**NEW**: uses size=??	▸loads device drivers into UMB area; for 80286 [some] and up with extended memory
DOS	N/A	N/A	**NEW**: uses [high | low], [umb | noumb]	▸loads DOS into HMA, enables DEVICEHIGH; for 80286 and up with extended memory
DRIVPARM		NEW SWITCH: adds /i	*	
		◂▸ [drops "f:3", "f:4" (for 8" FD)]	◂▸ [adds "f:9" for 2.88 MB floppies]	
FBCS		*	**NEW SWITCH**: drops "y" parameter	
FILES		*	*	
INSTALL	N/A	NEW	*	▸used for FASTOPEN, KEYB, NSLFUNC, SHARE
LASTDRIVE		*	*	
REM	N/A	NEW	*	▸used to add comments to CONFIG.SYS
SHELL		*	*	
STACKS		*	*	
SWITCHES	N/A	N/A	**NEW**: uses /k /w	▸make an enhanced KB act like standard KB with /k

Device Drivers

These programs enable the operating system to interact with certain types of hardware "devices" (including memory and mouse devices). All are loaded in the CONFIG.SYS file; EMM386 and SETVER can be executed at the command line after booting, but only if previously loaded.

	ver. 3.3	ver. 4.01	ver. 5.0	Comment
ANSI.SYS		NEW SWITCH: adds /k, /l, /x	**NEW SWITCH**: drops /l, adds /s	▸use /k when "switches=/k" is used
		◂▸ [revises graphics set]	◂▸ [revises graphics set]	
DISPLAY.SYS		*	◂▸ [adds Slavic support + default "sub-font" values]	
DRIVER.SYS		NEW SWITCH: drops /n	*	
		◂▸ [drops "f:3 to f:6" (8" FD; HD, tape)]	◂▸ [adds "f:9" and "s:36" for 2.88 MB floppies]	
EGA.SYS	N/A	N/A	**NEW**	▸to swap tasks in DOSSHELL with EGA monitor
EMM386.SYS	N/A	NEW: uses [size] x:??-?? M?	**REPLACED**: now EMM386.EXE	▸expanded & HMA memory manager (for 80386 up)
			NEW SWITCH: adds 11 new switches plus 3 alternates	
HIMEM.SYS	N/A	NEW: uses /HMAMIN= /NUMHANDLES=		**NEW SWITCH**: adds 5 new switches ▸extended memory manager; for 80286 and up with extended memory
PRINTER.SYS		*	◂▸ [adds Slavic support]	
RAMDRIVE.SYS		*	*	
SETVER.EXE	N/A	N/A	**NEW**	▸loads "DOS version table" into memory
SMARTDRV.SYS	N/A	NEW: uses [size] /a	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /p, "MinCacheSize"	▸loads into expanded memory with /a
XMA2EMS.SYS	N/A	NEW	**REMOVED**	

Internal Commands

The "internal" commands are built into the COMMAND.COM command interpreter.

	ver. 3.3	ver. 4.01	ver. 5.0	Comment
BREAK		*	*	
CHCP		*	◂▸ [adds Slavic support]	
CHDIR [CD]		*	*	
CLS		*	*	▸clears 43/50 lines if MODE CON was set
COPY		*	*	
CTTY		*	*	

DATE		*	◂▸ [max. year = 2099]	
DEL [ERASE]		NEW SWITCH: adds /p	*	▸DOS asks before deleting with /p
DIR		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /a:??, /o:?, /s, /b, /l	▸select attribute types, sort order; include subdirs; can save options using SET DIRCMD=??
EXIT		*	*	
LOADHIGH [LH]	N/A	N/A	**NEW**	▸loads programs into UMB area; for 80286 [some] and up with extended memory
MKDIR [MD]		*	*	
PATH		*	*	
PROMPT		*	*	
RENAME [REN]		*	*	
RMDIR [RD]		*	*	
SET		*	*	
TIME		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds [a | p]	▸can use 12-hour clock to set time
TRUENAME	N/A	NEW	*	▸remains an undocumented command!
TYPE		*	*	
VER		*	*	
VERIFY		*	*	
VOL		*	*	

External Commands (Programs)

The "external" commands are not part of the COMMAND.COM command interpreter; rather, they are separate programs (files).

	ver. 3.3	ver. 4.01	ver. 5.0	Comment
APPEND.EXE		NEW SWITCH: adds /x:?? /path:??	*	
ASSIGN.COM		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /status	
ATTRIB.EXE		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds +/-h, +/-s	▸change hidden, system attributes
BACKUP.EXE		NEW SWITCH: /f:?? replaces /f	◂▸ [adds "f:2880" for 2.88 MB floppies]	
CHKDSK.EXE		*	*	
COMMAND.COM		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /msg	
COMP.EXE		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /a, /c, /d, /l, /n=??	▸case insensitive comparisons with /c
DEBUG.EXE		NEW SWITCH: adds P, XA, XD, XM, XS	**NEW SWITCH**: adds internal ? sub-command	▸access "help" from within DEBUG with ?
DISKCOMP.COM		*	*	
DISKCOPY.COM		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /v	
DOSKEY.COM	N/A	N/A	**NEW**: uses /bufsize=? /history /[insert | overstrike] /macros /reinstall	▸command-line history; macro capability; new ALT-F7, F8, F9, ALT-F10 functions
EDIT.COM	N/A	N/A	**NEW**: uses /b /g /h /nohi	▸needs QBASIC.EXE to run
EDLIN.EXE		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /b	▸edit in binary mode with /b
EXE2BIN.EXE		*	*	
EXPAND.EXE	N/A	N/A	**NEW**	▸decompresses original DOS program files
FASTOPEN.EXE		NEW SWITCH: adds "m", /x	**NEW SWITCH**: drops "m"	▸loads cache into expanded memory with /x
FC.EXE		*	*	
FDISK.EXE	[max. size=32MB]	[max. partition size=2GB]	*	
FILESYS.EXE	N/A	NEW	**REMOVED**	
FIND.EXE		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /i	▸case insensitive searches with /i

FORMAT.COM		NEW SWITCH: /f:??	◂▸ [adds "f:2880" for 2.88 MB floppies] **NEW SWITCH**: adds /q /u	▸specify diskette size with /f:?? ▸unconditional (old style) format with /u; zero out FAT and root directory only with /q; default "format" is modified form of /q
GRAFTABL.COM		NEW SWITCH: adds ?	**NEW SWITCH**: drops ? ◂▸ [add Slavic support]	▸regular "help" switch for all commands is /?
GRAPHICS.COM		NEW SWITCH: drops /p=, adds /pb ◂▸ [drops one printer, adds one]	* ◂▸ [adds 10 printer types]	
GWBASIC.EXE		*	**REPLACED**: now QBASIC.EXE	▸full-screen editor
HELP.EXE	N/A	N/A	**NEW**	▸access via "HELP [cmd]" or "[cmd] /?"; covers all internal, external & batch commands
IFSFUNC.EXE	N/A	NEW	**REMOVED**	
JOIN.EXE		◂▸ [disables 3 more commands]	◂▸ [disables 2 more commands for JOINed drives]	▸disabled commands: ASSIGN, BACKUP, CHKDSK, DISKCOMP, DISKCOPY, FDISK, FORMAT, LABEL, MIRROR, RECOVER, RESTORE, SYS
KEYB.COM		NEW SWITCH: adds /ID:? ◂▸ [adds Fr-Canadian support]	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /e ◂▸ [adds 5 language types]	
LABEL.EXE		*	*	
LINK.EXE		*	**REMOVED**	
LOADFIX.COM	N/A	N/A	**NEW**	▸loads a program above 64KB; documented briefly in "GETTING STARTED"
MEM.EXE	N/A	NEW: uses /debug /program	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /classify	▸lists programs, devices and total memory
MIRROR.COM	N/A	N/A	**NEW**: uses /1 /partn /t /u	▸saves data for use by UNDELETE and UNFORMAT [licensed from Central Point Software]
MODE.COM				
[ALL]	N/A	NEW SWITCH: adds /status	*	
CON		NEW SWITCH: adds cols=?, lines=?	*	▸supports 25, 43 & 50 lines per screen
LPT?		NEW SWITCH: retry=? replaces "p"	◂▸ [adds "retry=p"]	
COM?		NEW SWITCH: retry=? replaces "p"	◂▸ [adds "retry=p"]	
KEYB	N/A	NEW: uses rate=? delay=?	*	▸adjusts "typematic" rate
CODEPAGE		*	◂▸ [adds Slavic support]	
MORE.COM		*	*	
NLSFUNC.EXE		*	*	
PRINT.EXE		*	*	
RECOVER.EXE		*	*	
REPLACE.EXE		NEW SWITCH: adds /u	*	▸replace only older files with /u
RESTORE.EXE		*	**NEW SWITCH**: adds /d	▸display files, w/o restoring, with /d
SELECT.EXE		*	**REMOVED**	
SHARE.EXE		*	*	▸no longer auto-loads with large drives
SHELLB.COM	N/A	NEW	**REPLACED**: now DOSSHELL.COM and DOSSHELL.EXE	▸swaps between applications via DOSSWAP.EXE
SORT.EXE		*	*	
SUBST.EXE		◂▸ [disables 3 more commands]	◂▸ [disables 2 more commands for SUBSTituted drives]	▸disabled commands: ASSIGN, BACKUP, CHKDSK, DISKCOMP, DISKCOPY, FDISK, FORMAT, LABEL, MIRROR, RECOVER, RESTORE, SYS
SYS.COM		*	*	
TREE.COM		NEW SWITCH: add /a	*	▸display links in text mode with /a
UNDELETE.EXE	N/A	N/A	**NEW**: uses /[dos | dt] /[list | all]	▸restores files deleted with DEL or ERASE [licensed from Central Point Software]
UNFORMAT.COM	N/A	N/A	**NEW**: uses /j /l /p /partn /test /u	▸[licensed from Central Point Software]

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____ City
_____ State _____ Zip _____ Home
Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about TIBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ]
DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- BITS OF BLUE BULLETIN BOARD
  ** Data: 239-3704 **
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  1224 S. Dale Mabry
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- ACCESS to the CLUB'S
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Tampa IBM PC Users Group
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[redacted]

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 8 August, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: August 14, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

8/14/91- **INTEL** (Presentation of **INTEL** products including 486 technology)

Refreshment Break
Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

* * * *Tuesday, Aug. 13, 1991* * * *

7:00 - 9:00+ Presentation by Bill Gates for a special engagement at Ruth Eckerd Hall. (Invitations are being extended to the Greater Tampa Bay area. Doors open at 6:00 p.m.)

UPCOMING SPEAKER

9/11/91

MICROSOFT
DOS 5.0

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RAY HENSLEY
BERNARD J. HYMES
BOB LAMB
TIM Mc CLAIN
JOE BILL THOMAS
SUSAN VALEK

It's great to have you as new "TIBMPCUG" members!

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Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 7/10/91 MEETING --

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

■ Version 5 of MicroSoft DOS was a lively topic. At least half of the members in attendance have the new version. Do read the various text files in the new version, especially the notes on applications. For a short while, Egghead and WorkPlace are offering this new version at a big discount. IMPORTANT - Do create a Boot Disk first.

■ IBM and Apple are now working together; seems to be Them vs Microsoft and Intel. Apple will provide the software applications; IBM will provide the operating system; and Motorola will provide the computer chips.

■ "Vaporware" and hardware "pronouncements" tend to drive everybody crazy. No sooner is one upgrade announced to be released at a future date, than the one beyond that is also announced. Case in point: the 486 50mhz chip and the 586 chip announced at almost the same time. The corporate world cannot, and will not, wait; it will go with what's available when needed.

■ You can buy the OS/2 version 1.3 for less than a hundred dollars if you already own IBM DOS. You then get version 2 for free when it's available. Else, you can buy version 2 for an estimated $150 when it comes out.

■ Computerland (national) withdrew some local area franchise licences. Comment from the floor was that the local owner shut down the ones that he owned because he's in some financial bind - his bank withdrew his loans.

■ It's official - Borland has purchased Ashton-Tate. IBM seems to look with favor upon Borland. Should be an interesting summer.

■ IBM and Sieman (Germany) have joined in building 16 megabyte memory chips. Seems to be an effort to reduce dependency upon Japanese suppliers.

■ IBM BBS - access now available to members of user groups. It'll cost you a long distance call to log on to this BBS based in Atlanta. The data phone line is: 404-835-6600. Public domain files are on line as well as information about IBM hardware and software.

OS/2 VERSION 2

Our IBM host and guardian, Chris Mayer, demonstrated a beta version of IBM's latest OS/2 2.0 offering. OS/2 can run Windows and DOS applications in a multi-tasking environment. While Chris had a few OS applications on the test computer, he had a lot of DOS applications - and ran

(Minutes continued on next page)

(Minutes continued from previous page)

them like a charm! It was really something to see. Bouncing back and forth between DOS applications without losing a beat.

OS/2 can give almost 620k RAM to each DOS application. You can run Windows in each "virtual" machine and you can have as many virtual machines as you want.

To demonstrate the versatility of OS/2, Prodigy (an on-line service) was started, then WordPerfect and Lotus 1-2-3 were fired-up. While using Prodigy, WordPerfect and Lotus were still running in the background (a little slower, but running). Chris then brought up another DOS program (Meta Stock Professional) and flipped back and forth from the stock report section of Prodigy to the Meta Stock program. As if that weren't impressive enough, he also brought in Flight Simulator and an OS/2 word processor (DeScribe)!

Chris then showed how easy it was to "cut" an object from the Flight Simulator graphic screen (part of a building) and paste it into DeScribe. He said that this procedure works both ways OS/2 to DOS and DOS to OS/2. Flipping back to Prodigy, the news item aboutBorland acquiring Ashton-Tate was brought to the screen. He then brought up Windows 3 to show how easily OS can run many diverse applications. (NOTE: It was difficult to count all the different jobs that Chris was running but I counted ten (10) applications that were open at one time.) The great thing about OS/2 is that it sets up a virtual machine for each application. Now when an application crashes, only that particular virtual machine crashes, the rest of the system is still running. Contrast this multi-tasking methodology with that of Windows: when one Window job crashes, everything must be rebooted.

OS/2 version 2 will include Windows 3 and it emulates DOS 4.0. It will be offered in two versions. The Standard Edition will take up 15meg of space on the hard drive and is intended for single users. The Extended Edition needs 25meg of hard drive real estate and is intended for LAN setups and large relational data base managers. It is believed that the new version will be announced before the fall COMDEX, probably by October. OS/2 is a whole new ball game.

» It makes full use of the 32 bit features of the 386 and higher PCs.
» Has enhanced functions for DOS
» I/O bus makes no difference
» Processor path must be 32 bits
» Uses flat 512 megabyte address space

Memory is divided into 4k pages that can be flipped in and out of the hard drive. It can handle a virtual memory size of 512 megabytes by using a hard drive to simulate actual memory. The flat addressing scheme equates the memory address to the actual address on the hard drive via 4k pages. And while it is stated that up to 16 windowed full screens are available for DOS applications, as many as over 200 have been run.

Once again, Chris has come through with flying colors. He was asked to give this presentation on rather short notice. Plus, he was running a beta version of the new software and had not seen the manual for the new version. Can you imagaine the kind of show he could put on after reading the manual and working with the release version? Thank you Chris for a great job and an excellent preview of OS/2 and the future of personal computers.

THE WINNERS
Lotus FreeLance - Bob Lamb
50-50 - Edward Purcell

■■■

MOUSEMAN

Hardware Review by Hugh Bayless (Monterey Bay User Group)

Logitech has done it again! Their Series 9 Mouse was one of the best, but the new high-resolution, three-button MouseMan is even better -- in many ways.

Not only does it give you 400-dots-per-inch resolution, its ergonomic design fits the hand like no other mouse on the market. MouseMan is about 30 percent larger than the Microsoft Mouse and is shaped in right- and left-hand versions. I thought the earlier version was a satisfactory fit in my hand, but this new mouse feels as though it was custom made just for me.

MouseMan is compatible with Microsoft's Mouse and Windows 3.0. It works with IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/2 and compatibles. It comes with its own software, including Control Panel and GoMenu. It will do everything you would expect a mouse to do.

Most of all, however, MouseMan will reduce hand fatigue for those who use a mouse a lot. PC/COMPUTING magazine tested MouseMan against the Microsoft Mouse and Logitech's earlier Series 9 mouse and reported that MouseMan won hands-down over the competition for lasting comfort and ease of use for extended periods.

The version we tested was connected to our computer with a cord, but MouseMan is also available in a radio-controlled cordless mouse that has the same ergonomic design. It costs more, but if the connecting cord gets in your way, don't hesitate to select it.

If you are a regular mouse-user, you couldn't make a better choice than any of Logitech's new ergonomic MouseMan models.

■■■

Scanner is bundled with Ansel Software

Scanman & Ansel

Logitech Model 256 Gray Scale Scanner and Image Editing for Windows

by Mike Janda, Madison PCUG,

One thing that caught my eye at Comdex last Fall was a new scanner from Logitech. Shortly after I got back from the show, Rod McKenzie came by with a Scanman 256 for evaluation. It would only cost me a review in "Bits & PC's," so I decided to take him up on it.

Hardware

Inside the box are (1) the scanner with a six-foot cord, (2) a half-size card that goes into a 16-bit slot [an 8-bit slot works too], (3) three diskettes and (4) two manuals; a "Scanman User's Manual" and an "Ansel Image Editing Software Manual."

The scanner itself looks a lot like the other scanners Logitech sells (see Figure 1, which was blatantly scanned from the manual!). It has three switches and dials that control the "look" of the scanned image. The Image Mode switch has four settings: 256, 64, 16 and B/W. The 256, 64 or 16 determines how many shades of gray to incorporate into the final image. B/W is for "line art."

The Resolution switch has four options: 1, 2, 3 and 4 for 100, 200, 300 and 400 dots per inch (dpi). 300/400 dpi are good for line art, while 100/200 dpi are good for gray-scale images. A 4" x 4" 400 dpi 256 gray-shade image can be over 1 megabyte in size!

Finally, the Contrast dial controls how much of the original is "picked up." I spent a lot of time rolling that dial to come up with the best images. My only major gripe with the product is the lack of any markings on the dial (except for a notch marking the center position). It was very difficult to be changing types of originals and not having a convenient way to remember what setting was best for a given type of original — let's see here, 1/8 turn right for "PC Magazine" scans, 1/4 turn left for the family photos....

The scanner indicator light tells you if you're scanning at a speed that maintains all the details. It stays green when you're scanning at a good speed and flashes red when you go too fast. If you get too many red flashes, the software will inform you that the image may have lost some resolution.

The scan button tells the software to start collecting data. Press it and everything the scanner rolls over gets put into the image.

Installation

Installing the card is easy, just pop it into an empty slot. There are eight dip-switches on the card (accessible from outside the computer!) that come preset with the factory default address. If you have some other hardware devices that might use the same port address that the Scanman uses, you can select another address.

Installing the scanner is even easier; just plug it into the hole on the card! The plug is a little like a keyboard plug, but a different size — so you can't confuse them. There is even an arrow that points to the "topside" of the card, but the manual doesn't mention that.

Once the hardware is in place, you can install the software. It comes on 5¼" 360K diskettes but if you have a PS/2, or absolutely have to have 3½" diskettes, you can send in the card on the manual's back page for two 720K diskettes at no charge.(Continued on next page)

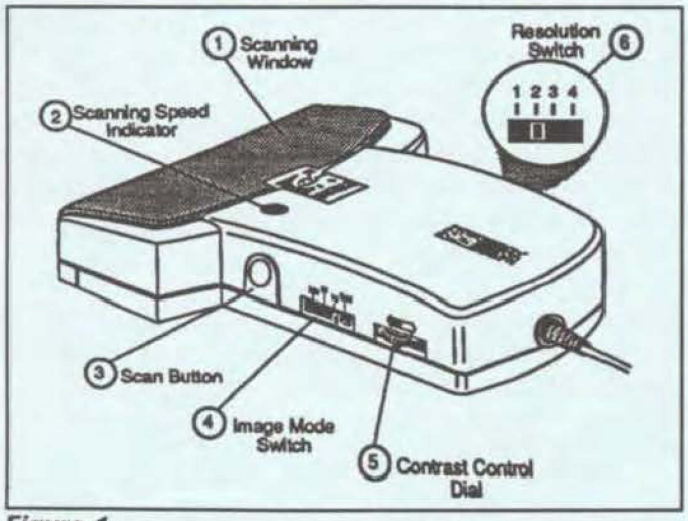


Figure 1

First, install the "ScanMate" software. Pop the diskette in drive A:, change to drive A: and type SCANINST. The menu-driven program will walk you through the installation with the usual configuration questions. It puts 275K of files on the hard disk and offers to change your CONFIG.SYS to put the scanner device driver in. If you say NO to the change, it tells you what line you should add. I like that! Since I have such a "hard disk space problem" these days, I was able to move the 10K driver file to my "SYSSTUFF" directory, add the appropriate line to CONFIG.SYS and delete the rest of the files. The scanner .SYS file LOADHIs with QEMM just fine. Now reboot the computer to "activate" the scanner.

Another file included is a SCAN.EXE that allows you to do scans from the DOS prompt. It is rather limited in what it can do. You have to specify all the parameters on the command line — there are no menus or options in the program. Parameters include the file name and extension (.PCX, .IMG or .TIF — default) and the width and length of the scanning area (4.1" x 20" is the default). You can see what you scanned on the screen, but you can't do any editing. All you can do is save the file or rescan the image.

Ansel

In order to install and use Ansel, you have to have Windows running. It proceeds to copy 700K of files to your hard disk. I quickly deleted the two "example" files for a total cost of 500K. Not bad for software these days.

The Ansel Image Editing program looks like any other Windows program — ah, the power of a common user interface (CUI!). The menu bar choices are File, Edit, View, Tools, Image, Transform, Scan and Help. I'll be working backwards on this list as I go through the features. The Help file is 110K and covers everything in the manual, and more!

Scan has only three options: Setup, Scan and Rescan. Setup opens another window that allows you to set the scan width, calibrate the scanner using a Kodak Gray calibration sheet provided, and to decide whether you want the image displayed on the screen as you scan. Scan does just what it says; it activates the scanner and generates the image. Rescan will allow you to immediately redo the scan if it looks bad or you went too fast.

Transform allows you to flip the image (or any part of it) horizontally or vertically, rotate 90 degrees to the left or right and change the "scale" of any selected area. The last option is Deskew, which is used to straighten out the image. Often, when scanning, you don't get the scanner perfectly vertical. Just select Deskew, draw a line that should be perfectly horizontal or vertical and presto, the entire image is adjusted. I seem to use that option a lot!

Image lets you change the look of the image or any part of it. You can lighten or darken the image by 20 gray shades. You can "smooth" the image by averaging neighboring pixels, "sharpen" it by increasing the difference between gray levels of neighboring pixels, or "equalize" it by making the lightest pixels white, the darkest pixels black and evenly distribute the remaining pixels in between. The "threshold" option converts the image to black and white while "negative" inverts white and black.

Tools offers the options for when you are doing some fine tune editing of the image. You can select the shape and size of the editing tool, called a brush (round, square or short lines), whether you want to lighten, darken or replace the area where you use the brush and the style of any lines you want to draw.

View allows you to set the size of the image on the screen. You can have it "fit in the window," actual size, or zoom in or out (50%, 100%, 200%, 400% and 800% of actual size). You can also decide whether to display or hide a tool box, palette, brightness and contrast controls, and a ruler — more on these later.

Edit has the Undo (and a Redo if you Undo!), and the

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usual Cut, Copy, Paste, Clear and Crop. There is a Stitch to allow you to "glue" two images together to make a larger image — useful if the item you are scanning is more that 4" wide — just scan it in two parts and stitch them together. You can also save and restore the "setup," which allows control over how images are stored and pasted. You can even paste and stitch directly from a scan, without having to go through a file or the clipboard.

File has the usual New, Open, Close, Save and Save As, the Print and Printer Setup options, Preferences (inches, cm., picas, etc., and whether you want color or black and white — B/W is recommended by me!). File formats supported are TIFF, TIFF CCITT, TIFF Uncompressed, PCX, EPS (for saving only — it can't read postscript files!) and BMP (for Windows wallpaper!). The data type can be 256 Gray Shades, 16 Gray Shades, Dither, Error diffusion and Line art.

Perhaps now is the time to discuss some of the data types. 256 and 64 Gray Scales are stored as 8-bits/pixel, 16 Gray Scales is stored as 4-bits/pixel and Line art is 1-bit/pixel. Combined with the resolution (100 to 400 dots (pixels)/inch) this determines the file size. The Gray scale files will not print on an HP-LaserJet — you need a postscript or Linotronic printer. You have to select Dither (digital halftoning by varying patterns of black and white dots to simulate gray) or Error diffusion (digital halftoning by distributing or scattering dots to simulate gray). I haven't seen any major difference between these two on the LaserJet.

The last items of interest are the "tools" — not to be confused with the Tools menu item listed above. The three windows that can be shown or hidden are the Toolbox, Brightness & Contrast and the Gray Palette.

The Toolbox has a "rectangle" for selecting any part of the image for action, a freehand "drawing" selector (provides the same function as the rectangle, except that it can be any shape), a "line-drawing" option (click on point A, drag the cursor to point B and release), a "pencil" (to draw lines free-hand), an "eraser" (to "erase" what is under it), a "brush" (that will lighten, darken or replace what is under it), a "magnifying glass" (zoom in on the image where it is clicked), and a "hand" (used to move the image around on the screen).

The Brightness & Contrast window allows you to lighten or darken the image, or area selected, by up to 20%.

The Gray Palette window is interesting. It offers a range of gray shades that can be used to touch-up images. Just click on the shade you want and the brush will be that shade. Even better is if you click in a little window inside the Palette window, you can then go to any place in the image and click again. The brush will then be that color. Nice for getting the gray shade just right when touching-up an image.

That covers just about all the options in Ansel. This is not a program for creating images, but can be used to modify any file, either scanned, or created in another manner. I found it to be extremely easy to use, and rather bug free.

The Scanman 256 is available from: Logitech Inc. 6505 Kaiser Drive Fremont, CA 94555 Phone: (415) 795-8500

List Price is $499.

■■■

MINI BOOK REVIEW:

By: Hugh Bayless (Monterey Bay User Group)

"Desktop Publishing With WordPerfect"

If you want to go into serious desktop publishing, you really need a program like Ventura or Pagemaker, but if you already have WordPerfect 5.1, you'll be amazed how much desktop publishing you can do with it.

Ventana Press has just released the second edition of Roger C. Parker's book, Desktop Publishing With WordPerfect. It will be invaluable for any owner of WordPerfect who aspires to do even limited desktop publishing. What this book tells you is pretty much already in the WordPerfect manual, but it is certainly not there in the easy-to-read and easy-to-find form of this book.

The author is owner and president of an advertising and marketing consulting firm in New Hampshire and has written several other books on desktop publishing. He knows his subject and how to convey it to the reader. The result is a very informative and readable book.

If you have been wondering just how much desktop publishing you really can do with WordPerfect, here's the way to find out -- read Roger C. Parker's book. It's $21.95 from your favorite bookstore or from the publisher.

■■■

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Help! We need someone to be the group's secretary through the end of the year. Presently Ed Buzza is performing this function in addition to a myriad of other things (DOS classes, Monthly newsletter articles, presentations and general involvement in each meeting). Ed will move into the open education position where members can get a greater benefit from his wisdom and educational abilities. If interested, please notify me at 932-6745 or leave a message on the BBS.

Due to newsletter budget constrains we were not able to include Frederick D. Kyle's list of documented problems & solutions for MS DOS 5.0 in the newsletter. This 5 page document will be available at the meeting upon request for members.

Last month I said there would be some mergers and acquisitions happening during the second half of the year. At that time I didn't know it would happen within a month. A brief recap: IBM and Apple get together to hammer out agreements to allow each other to share their technologies. Then we have Borland slapping down $440 million for Ashton-Tate. **NOTE.**(This acquisition is not a done deal. A shareholder suit has been filed against both companies alleging that the terms of the merger are inadequate). I think the shareholders should take the money and run. There seems to be some investors that say Borland paid too much. The latest is the $80 million acquisition of **Digital Research Inc.** (owners of DR DOS 5.0 & CPM) by **Novell.** Novell wants to create a network version of **DOS.** MS DOS 5.0 was supposed to be more friendly with the Novell network operating system. It wasn't and now Novell has decided to take on Microsoft and provide users with integrated software that combines DR DOS 6.0 with client network software. At this rate there will only be 3-4 major players by the mid-nineties.

Unfortunately all these changes will make PC life tougher for us. At some point next year we could have four operating systems **DOS 5.0, DR DOS 6.0, OS/2 2.0** and the **PINK OS** from the IBM & Apple, to choose from. ■■■

Harvey Bruneau

PROGRAMMER'S PUZZLE ANSWER

By: Tom Cone, Jr.

The solution to the July '91 puzzle is:

22 doors will be open;
478 doors will be closed.

Here's the list of open doors:

1,4,9,16,25,36,49,64,81,100,121,144,
169,196,225,256,289,324,361,400,441,484

****

Here's the source code for my solution:

```
        'Puzzle1.bas ---> solution (QuickBASIC 4.5)
        '   by T.Cone,Jr.   7/16/91
DEFINT A-Z
DIM room(500) AS INTEGER
        'Establish 500 element array.
        'By default QuickBasic fills array w/zero's.
        'I choose to let Zero = a closed door.
        '          and  One  = an open one.
opendoors = 0
        'initialize variable to hold count of open
        '   doors.
FOR guest = 1 TO 500
        'use for/next loop for each guest

FOR door = guest TO 500 STEP guest
        'use for/next loop to visit
        'each door.  Begin w/door that
        'has same number as guest. Then
        'use STEP to skip doors that
        'are not visited.
IF room(door) = 0 THEN
room(door) = 1    'door was closed, so open it.
opendoors = opendoors + 1
        'accumulate count of open doors.
ELSE
room(door) = 0    'door was open, so close it.
opendoors = opendoors - 1
        'reduce count of open doors
END IF
NEXT door
NEXT guest
closeddoors = 500 - opendoors
        'figure closed door count
        'Now display the solution on screen
CLS
LOCATE 1, 1
PRINT "Open:", "Total Open:" + STR$(opendoors),
"Closed: " + STR$(closeddoors)
FOR door = 1 TO 500
IF room(door) = 1 THEN
PRINT door
END IF
NEXT door
SLEEP 10
CLS             END
```

SCANNING PROGRAMS AND TIPS

by: David Pond, Phoenix PCUG

If you are heavily into desktop publishing you most likely have a scanner or you might be thinking about buying one. I use my scanner almost everyday and it has proven to be a wise investment. The scanner I use is a Hewlett Packard ScanJet Plus, this is a very versatile flatbed greyscale scanner.

I use a variety of programs to work with the scanner, depending on the type of original artwork and the type of graphic file that I need to end up with. The main program that I use to scan graphics is HP's **Scanning Gallery Plus**. This program allows you to scan both line art (black and white images consisting of lines) and greyscale images (for photographs). Scanning Gallery Plus lets you save the images that you have scanned in a variety of graphic formats. I generally use .PCX for line art and .TIF for greyscale images. Scanning Gallery Plus has a module that will let you edit the image that you have scanned before you save it to a file.

PC Paintbrush is another program that I use to edit .PCX files. For greyscale image editing, a program like **Picture Publisher, Photo Styler** or **Publisher's Paintbrush** will allow you to do electronic photo retouching. You can achieve interesting effects or simple clean up a greyscale image.

Scanners always produce bitmapped, or pixel images. Many programs work well with these types of images, but there are times that you want to have a **vector** image. A vector image can be changed in size without any loss in picture quality. A vector image is stored as a series mathematical formulas describing the lines that make up the image. A bitmapped image is stored as a series of dots. When you change the size of a bitmapped image, you usually see the results of **aliasing**. This is the unwanted stair step effect that appears on diagonal lines.

CorelTrace is one of the best bitmapped to vector image conversion programs on the market. While it will not produce a perfect vector image of a bitmapped picture, it can save a lot of time. CorelTrace saves files in a .EPS (Encapsulated PostScript) format. CorelTrace is part of the package that you get when you buy CorelDraw.

CorelDraw is a very powerful yet easy to use drawing program. You can create pictures from scratch, or import other vector images, including .EPS files created by CorelTrace. CorelDraw will also allow you to import bitmapped images, but you can only resize these images. Still, it is sometimes very useful to combine a vector and a bitmapped image to create a picture.

OCR (Optical Character Recognition) is yet a third way to use your scanner. Rather than retyping text for a project you are working on, you can scan in the pages with an OCR program, and have that program convert the images into regular text files. The program that I use is **Read Right**. While none of the OCR programs are 100% accurate, they can be real time savers.

Tips for Scanning

The biggest problem that happen when scanning an image is **skew**. Skew occurs when straight lines in the original image show up in crooked in the scanned image. This is one of the times that you can notice aliasing. To fix this problem take the artwork line it up with a T-Square and trim the top of the page parallel with the straight lines in the original image. This will allow you to line up the top of the page with the top margin of the scanner and avoid the problem of skew.

Line art is the easiest type of image to work with. Always scan objects such as line art at the same resolution (dots per inch) as your printer; this gives the clearest reproduction.It is good to know what size a pixel image will be used at. If the original image is small and needs to be enlarged, you can use the settings in your scanning software to achieve this. If you try to enlarge the image after it has been scanned you will notice the aliasing effect, described above.

The best rule of thumb is to have a clear, moderately sized original image. You can usually reduce the size of the image, when working in another program, with out much loss of picture quality. The light and contrast settings in your scanning software can be used to enhance or remove any thin lines in the original graphic image.

Converting a bitmapped image to a vector image with a program like CorelTrace, will allow you to resize your picture without loss of quality. This extra step takes extra time and the vector image may have to be cleaned up in a program like CorelDraw. This conversion works best on small to medium sized line art that is not too complex.

If the scanned image has a lot of fine detail, is a greyscale image or is quite large, you are usually better off leaving the image as a bitmap.

Greyscale scanning is time consuming. I haven't really found any way around this. The larger the image, the longer time it takes to scan it, the longer time it takes to print it, and the larger the saved file size is on your hard disk.

(Continued on next page)

one above the other. The "X" design (one in the center and in each corner) is effective with small graphics. The "diagonal" design (one in the upper corner, one in the opposite lower corner - optional, center) is also good. Remember: pull quotes and text boxes are considered to be graphics!

Consider overlapping pictures or letting part of the graphic project beyond the normal frame. Such techniques add visual interest and draw the reader's eye back for a second look. Use the overlap method to cover the parts of the underlying graphic that are not needed or are not wanted. Letting part of the graphic project beyond the frame helps to ease the rather stilted look of having all graphics within bordered frames. ■

LAYOUT AND DESIGN - Advertisements

When working on informational pamphlets, simplicity is the rule. A sans serif typeface for headings and a serif face for text is sufficient. Keep the reading level down at the 8th grade to ensure compliance with the instructions. Line art graphics are preferred rather than photographs (photos can present a problem when copying).

Your client will pretty much dictate what is needed for a flyer, brochure, or informational pamphlet. Most times, you will be given a copy of what has been used in the past. Ask the advertiser for camera ready copy (black and white) to be placed in your newsletter. Consider using business cards as the copy.

When working with advertisements, you are much freer to use a variety of typefaces. Placement of text and graphics is limited only by your imagination and the purpose of the document. Since the document is intended to grab and hold the reader's interest, you have a pretty good excuse to use some of those exotic fonts in your skitty eight million font collection.

Advertisements, more that any other publication, need white space. Any ad that is filled with wall-to-wall text looks too "busy"; it will not be read; and it will be thrown away. The idea is to grab the reader's attention and lead the eye to the message. Ads exemplify the adage, "the medium is the message."

Avoid having all design elements (text blocks, graphics) of the same size. Resize the text blocks, crop the graphics, or add white space to create contrast and eye appeal. If you have to use two elements of the same size, avoid putting them side by side or one atop the other.

Adopt the "kis-kis" philosophy (Keep It Short, Keep It Simple). One effective design is to put equal sized graphics at opposite corners with the ad copy in the middle. The eye, and the mind, is captured by the first graphic and, in going to the other, is interrupted by the copy. Ergo, the eye pauses and reads the copy. Then, invariably, the eye looks at the ad again, as a whole, and the mind is more apt to remember the message. Again, look at what others have done; then adopt what is good into your sense of style and design. ■

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

. . . for beginners

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LAYOUT AND DESIGN - General

It is as difficult to define "good design" as it is to define a "good cup of coffee." What is pleasing to some is hideous to others. Take some time and look at your newspaper or your favorite magazine. Examine the "freebie" flyers and brochures that many copy centers use to advertise their businesses. Note how they position pictures (graphics) in relation to columns, text, and page position. See if you can spot the kind of typeface used and their different styles. See how they use style to emphasize headlines and subheadlines. Look for pull quotes and fillers. Notice the manner in which they are used and where they are placed.

There are a few general rules pertinent to good style. Do limit the number of typefaces (typefaces, not fonts) in the document. Use size and style for emphasis and to create contrast. Just because you have skitty eight million fonts doesn't mean you have to use all of them every time you create a document. In fact, you'll find that most of your work will be done with just two typefaces: serif (Times Roman) and sans serif (Helvetica). Or some version of these two commonly used typefaces.

If the final output is to an impact printer, there are other things to keep in mind. Use the native font of the printer; it will deliver the best that it can do. Avoid using large fonts because some DTP and font

generator programs will create them as a bit-mapped graphic to be printed. Printing graphics does slow down print speed. If your DTP program can use the highest resolution of your printer and your printer can handle 300 dpi (dots per inch), then you can expect good results. But if your DTP program outputs graphics at less than 200 dpi, expect to see jagged output.

Whatever fonts are used, they should be in harmony with each other and with the publication. You wouldn't use a script font for instructional material nor would you use 36 point Cooper Black for body text (if you do, send me a copy). Again, look at other publications and note what seems "right" to you. Be careful though, if you think it's all wrong, it may be that your sense of good design needs polishing. ■

LAYOUT AND DESIGN - Newsletters

The banner or masthead of a newsletter is the first thing to be created. It should serve to identify the newsletter and its contents. Whatever you decide upon, be sure that it is the same in every issue (except for issue number and date - if used). This is to ensure reader recognition and identification. They see the banner and know immediately that it's your newsletter and have a fair idea of the articles within.

Some refer to the banner as the masthead. Really, the masthead shows the names of the people responsible for the publication. Look at the editorial page of your newspaper or of your favorite magazine. You'll find the names of editors, writers, publisher name and address, and data about submissions and subscriptions — this is the masthead.

Don't worry about the need for a large font file just to print the 48 or 72 point name of your newsletter. Some font generators can create a customized font holding only the actual letters used rather than an entire set. But there's a better way. *Use one of the fonts in your paint or draw program to create the name,* even some of the headlines, and save it as a graphic in a format and resolution that your DTP can handle. STOP. Read that again. It can save a lot of sweat, blood, and tears.

Go see that friend of yours with the laser printer and the super-duper programs. Ask your friend to create a front page for you. Take this "friendly user" page to your local copy center (*not* the OFFICE!) and run off a bunch of copies. Voila! Your own custom stationery.

To stress certain words within body text, use italics or underline. Underlines are used if no italic style is available. Italics are generally used for continuation notices, enclosed in parentheses, and should be two points smaller that the body text point size. Don't put too many "continued" articles on a page. While they can't always be avoided, a little planning will ease this problem.

Italics are an effective style for headlines whose point size should be 4 to 6 points larger than that used for

body text. Quite often Helvetica italic will be used, in varying sizes, for all headlines and normal Times Roman will be used for body text. Also use the bold style for stress within body text. Bold style in the same point size as body text can be used as paragraph headings.

If you want an article to end at the bottom of a column or page, consider adjusting the leading (space between lines) or the kerning (space between characters), if your DTP has these features. If not, add or delete some words or lines or use fillers to "even out" the material. Sometimes, adding one point of leading is sufficient. Another solution is to use a larger point size for the body text or for the headlines. If only one line is needed, place or draw a line to signify both the end of the article and as a filler.

Do use some type of small graphic to end the article or story. It can be the small block in the extended ASCII character set (ALT-254), a miniature logo, or other small graphic. This technique is especially effective when the article ends at the bottom of a page. Many people find it disconcerting to reach the end of an article without realizing it. How often have you reached the bottom of a page, turned to the next page to find an advertisement, gone to the next page, and only then to find that you had reached the end way back there?

Avoid having side by side columnar headlines. It is far better to have the article or story placed in two columns with the headline spanning both columns. Then place the next article or story beneath the first.

The first page of a newsletter should have a table of contents or index, especially if it contains more than five or six pages. The index is best placed in a separate column or in a box. For a club paper, an agenda and a meeting notice (date, place and time - perhaps a map) is a necessity. Without this, club members will fail to attend and the club will fade away. 'Course this is one way of getting out of editing a newsletter.

Whether you use full justification (body text lines are flush at the left and right margins) for your print lines is a matter of personal preference. Full justification is almost mandatory for books. Ragged right (only left margin is flush) is commonly used in correspondence, many newsletters, and instructional material. Ragged left (only right margin is flush) is rarely used; some people set up chapter and title pages in this fashion. ■

LAYOUT AND DESIGN - Graphics

For beginners, there is one rule — don't go hog wild. Use graphics where needed to illustrate a point in the article or document. Of course, casual newsletters are granted more leeway than would be given to other documents.

Graphics should be placed so that the page has a "balanced" look. If more than one graphic is placed on a page, they should be of the same size — especially if they are placed

(Continued from previous page)
Programs such as Ventura Publisher allow you to modify the image before you print it out. You can adjust the number of lines per inch, the screen angle and the dot pattern.

When scanning photographs the controls that your scanning program gives you become very important. You may need to adjust the resolution, the contrast, the brightness, the picture size or shades of grey that you are working with. Some scanners have a fixed number of grey shades while other scanners are adjustable. Common grey scales range from 32 to 256 shades of grey.

When scanning a greyscale image the resolution that you scan at will make a dramatic difference on the size of the file you end up saving. Scanning an image at 300 dpi (dots per inch) or higher may result in a dark image. In greyscale more isn't always better. A good rule of thumb is to scan a greyscale image at 150 dpi and use a higher number of grey shades to get more detail in your final image. The best advice that I can offer about greyscale scanning is to experiment with different settings and keep a record of your results.

OCR scanning is relatively easy. Try to avoid light type and hard to read characters, such as those printed on some dot matrix printers. Scanning typewritten pages works out fairly well.

There is more to scanning than you might think. It takes a combination of programs to fully utilize a scanner. The best advice that I can give you is to practice and become familiar with what the different programs can do for you!

David Pond is a graphic artist and owner of Edge Graphic Arts in Scottsdale, Arizona. He can be reached at (602) 948-4734.

■■■

Club Members BBS:

The Tampa IBM PC User Group operates a full service 130 Mb, single-line 24-hour electronic BBS for file transfers and E-mail. As a member you are invited to use the Board within the established BBS rules.

Phone: 239-3704

The first time you log-on to the BBS, you must establish your Password and set-up. You will then have limited access until access has been verified by the Sysop.

For assistance from SYSOP,
Call Kevan Sheridan 237-0100

STATE OF THE SOVIET SOFTWARE MARKET

by: Esther Schindler

One of the user group officers in attendance at the recent Borland User Group Retreat [See Beating a Retreat, page 4, Ed.] was Andrey Zotov. Andrey is president of BORUGA, the Borland User Group Association, in Moscow. He gave a fascinating presentation describing the state of the computer industry in the USSR. I want to share some of his remarks with you.

PCS IN THE USSR

There are only one or two million PCs in the entire Soviet Union. Less than one percent of these are Macintosh. Most of those computers are XT or 286 class machines, the kind of machines we in the US consider out-of-date. Those Soviet PCs, however, are far from idle. The average PC is shared by six to eight professional software specialists, (what the Soviets call programmers).

As you might have heard, there is an incredible problem with software piracy in the USSR. They have been brought up to believe in the idea that everything is shared, so the concept of intellectual property is very foreign. In fact, only now is legislation beginning to appear that would make the copying of software an illegal act.

There are only two or three US companies trying to make a significant dent in the USSR market, of which Borland is naturally one. (I'm sure we'd never have heard this talk otherwise.) Nonetheless actual software sales are only in the thousands, not the tens of thousands. Part of this has to do with software pricing.

DISKETTE FOR DINNER?

At first glance, the price of software in the US and in the USSR seems to be roughly equivalent. The problem is that the formal (exchange rate) of thirty rubles to the US dollar is not accurate; it's more like ten to the dollar.

Their whole economy is very different from ours. For instance, the average monthly salary is 400 rubles; for a software professional, the average salary is 1000 rubles. The cost of a single software package is perhaps 800 rubles, clearly unaffordable for most.

The comparison that I found most striking is this one: you can get a good dinner in Moscow for 30 rubles. But a single 3<$E1/2> inch diskette (not a box of ten) costs 30 rubles.

■■■

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

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- ACCESS to the CLUB'S
  PROGRAM LIBRARY

BUG REPORT

by: Harvey Bruneau

PC Tools 7.0

1. Looses and corrupts data *running the compress program.*
2. Cannot run in graphics mode *using some vendors VGA adapters.*
3. Rejects floppies *during backup.*
4. Freezes PC *running backup on hardisk or running undelete program.*

Look for maintenance release in September.

Norton Utilities 6.0

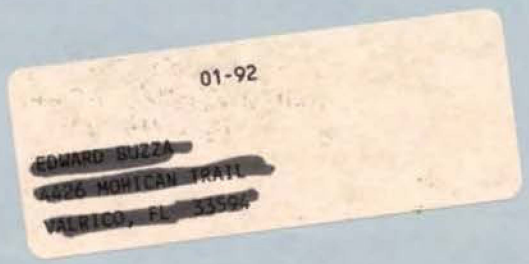
1. Freezes PC; FAT and boot sectors destroyed *using Norton speed disk with DOS 5.0 Fastopen.*
2. Freezes PC; corrupts Windows files *running Norton Cache with Desqview, QEMM or Windows.*
3. Operation aborted, system reboots *when copying files to or from 360k floppies when Norton Cache installed.*

Look for maintenance release 6.01 in next few weeks.





Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 9 September, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: September 11, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

9/11/91- Harvard Graphics 3.0 (DOS)
Harvard Graphics for Windows (Beta)
presented by Software Publishing Corp.

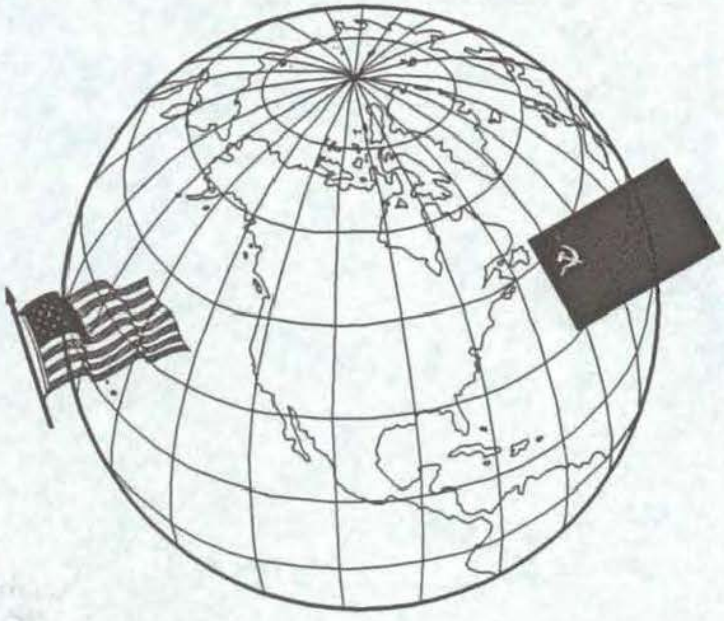
Refreshment Break

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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WINDS OF CHANGE....



LET FREEDOM RING!

*** * 1991 OFFICERS * ***

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

Included in this issue is Vol. 1 Num. 4 and 6 of Ed Buzza's Desktop Publishing Articles. We (editor & staff) did not include Ed's insert in the July newsletter, and in August we really goofed by inserting Num. 5. So now you have his complete booklet and I know you all join me in extending gratitude to Ed for sharing his expertise in the desktop publishing field with us. Thanks Ed, this Bud's for you, OOPS I mean this BOB's for you..!!! GREAT JOB!

■■■

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about IBM-PC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at the address below or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 8/14/91 MEETING --

Harvey called the meeting to order at 6 o'clock and discussed the following:

» There were about 2,000 people at the special Pinellas User Group meeting at Eckerd Hall to hear Bill Gates, CEO of MicroSoft. He stated that software should be easier to use; that users shouldn't have to worry about CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. He also demonstrated Visual Basic and believe it or not, Windows crashed while he was running the demo.

» Northgate shipped some computers with AMD chips instead of Intel chips. It is now making replacements to those customers who complain of the switch. Bad thing was that Northgate didn't say anything about using AMD chips.

» Bug report - Norton will ship version 6.01 to all registered users to correct version 6.0 that had some bugs in it. PC Tools will send a fix to all those who call! Seems to be a lot of confusion here; one report says PC Tools will ship free and Norton won't and vice versa.

» Apologies for omitting the July insert of "Desktop Publishing". It will be issued with the next Bits of Blue newsletter.

» Harvey brought in a new gadget. A 9600 fax, 2400 modem that was about the size of an audio cassette. A graphic illustration of how small computer components are getting to be.

» In spite of DOS 5.0 and Windows 3, one member had just installed DR-DOS and GeoWorks Ensemble — then went to the Bill Gates show!

» There are questions about the OS/2 release date. IBM says "end of the year"; the media says "early next year"; and Gates says "ahh."

» Novell bought Digital Research (DR DOS). MicroSoft flopped on their version of networking. IBM will market Novell. By the end of '92, this should all be very confusing.

» The phonetic pronunciation of PKUNZIP is not PUNKZIP.

» We need a volunteer for the Secretary position.

INTEL Presentation

We were treated to an excellent presentation by three representatives of the Intel Corporation. Their company's goal is to bring to the end user the best of Intel technology.

The MCP (math co-processor) runs with any CPU chip, Intel or any other. The further development of the MCP is that there will be only one 287 and one 387 regardless of the speed of the 286/386 CPU.

(Minutes continued on next page)

(Minutes continued)

The Above Board memory card is compatible with the IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/2 and compatible computers. It's compatible with any memory standard and carries a five year guarantee.

A snap-in 386 is available for IBM and certain specific computers. Just take out the 286 and snap in a 386 CPU. It is not for all computers because of differences in mother board design. The retail price is under $500.

Their 9600EX modem was first shipped in September, 1990. They expect that 45% of all modems will be 9600 by the end of 1992. The board has no jumpers or switches to worry about; its all handled through software. A custom copy of CrossTalk software is furnished with the board. It retails for under $800.00 for the PC.

The SatisFAXtion board retails for $499 and is the "easiest way to send a fax." It has Windows support, can use EMS storage, and is furnished with an Epson FX85 print driver. It has ports for a FAX, a modem and a scanner (Logitech). It is set up to use the LPT3 port, not a COM port.

Code Builder was also discussed. This is a C language compiler for 386/486 programs. One box - 32 bit compiler, MicroSoft compatible library, 32 bit debugger, royalty free, and 32 bit DOS extenders.

They also talked about Intel's "second wave" products. Harking to the customers complaint that there is too much change, too many choices, Intel is designing CPUs that will be good through 2001. Their drive is to have a processor that will handle one instruction per clock tick. The new CPUs will be modular with upgrade sockets - just pop out the old and drop in a new chip. A future chip, Micro 2000, will have 100 million transistors, be a one inch cube, speed of 250 Mhz, run 2 billion instructions/second, and have four CPUs running at once.

Overall, this was one of the most interesting presentations we've had. Thanks to Intel for making these very knowledgeable people available to us. They did an excellent job in describing their company's products and future developments. Also thanks to Intel for their generous donation of an Above Board Plus card.■■■

THE WINNERS ARE:

QUE Book 'MS-DOS Quick Reference' - Bill Fuller
QUE Book 'Upgrading to MS-DOS 5.0' - Don Patzsch
Refreshment package - Russ Stepp
TGE Conference Call - Steve Speairs, Gary Kueppers, Harvey Bruneau, Jeff May
Intel Above Board Plus - Bill Fuller
50/50 - Jim Clark

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

For those of you who missed the last meeting, you missed an education and a lot of prizes. Intel sent in 3 of their best people to educate us with their presentations and information on some of their products. I didn't even know Intel was in the software business (***Intel 386/486 C Code Builder Kit***). I still can't believe I didn't win that memory board (Above Board Plus. $399 retail.) they donated.

I saw Bill Gates for the 1st time on August 13th. I admit I was not a fan, but the man did seem very humble and down to earth during his presentation. It was hard to believe that the 4 billion dollar man was in the Tampa Bay area for a presentation sponsored by a user group (Pinellas IBM PC Users' Group), much less the same room as me, at no cost. Here was a young man who has the power to control my PC career. Sure I had to listen to all that sales hype about Microsoft, but it wasn't that bad. After a while I felt that if he could take the time from his schedule to talk to 2,000+ users, I could at least give him some of my unbiased personal time. He said all the things people wanted to hear but in reality said nothing that I haven't heard the average user say. **"PCs should be easier to use"** was a mild understatement. His goals and objectives were simple while in fact arduous in accomplishing. In all, Bill Gates earned a little more of my respect that evening.

Ok have it your way. I just read that IBM will make their own 20 MHz 386SX chip for the PS/2 by year end. It is based on the Intel chip and will add to the players already in the game. Let me see that's Intel, AMD and IBM that will now build 386 chips. Of course the IBM chip will be better than the original but yet different. Last month, I wrote that in 1992 the process for picking an operating system would be tougher for PC users. It now seems that with the 386 being the de facto standard through the mid nineties there will be an additional choice (386-chip maker) to be made by users. Personally, I still prefer mine from Chips A'hoy with milk.

Its been a while since Ed Buzza completed the DOS classes. We are now ready to start again. But we need to hear it from you. If you would like to enroll in this 3 part session, please notify us on the BBS or during the September meeting.

Another fine vendor (MacMillan Computer Publishing) has offered their product to our members at a 20% discount. These include QUE, SAMS, New Riders Publishing, and Hayden Books. This vendor produces, in my opinion, the best computer reference books available. ■■■

Harvey Bruneau

LIVING IN THE COMPUTER AGE

By: Tom Petrocelli, Buffalo IBM Users Group, APCUG

Eating Disks, Crunching Numbers and other Culinary Delights.

I've always been amazed by the connections that have been made between computers and food. It seems that those responsible for coining new phrases for the computer world have some sort of electronic oral fixation or food fetish. Food-oriented words have always seemed to find their way into the computer lexicon. Let's examine a few of these.

One of the earliest examples of culinary computerese is the phrase number crunching. We all know what is meant by this, of course. To do calculations. What has that to do with crunching. When my computer needs to do some vast mathematical process, I don't hear any loud chewing noises! I don't hear anything at all. It's not like crumbs come out of the disk drive. It would scare the heck out of me if it did.

Crunching is also a bit of a misnomer anyway. It implies taking something large and whole, and reducing it to smaller components (and swallowing), but a lot of what we call number crunching is just the opposite! We do calculations to make many smaller numbers into much larger ones. This isn't anything like crunching. Perhaps my angst over this comes from the suggestion inherent in the word crunching that my data is the electronic equivalent of potato chips. Maybe I'm being self-centered, but my precious information seems a bit more important to me then that.

Another favorite of mine is eating disks. Now I will agree that floppy disk drives have been known to go awry and cause severe damage to floppy disks, even to the point of physical damage, but eating them? If I though for one moment that my floppy drive had the capacity to eat anything, I'd keep my fingers very far away. What do you say to a drive that is in the process of consuming a disk, please don't eat with your door open? And this brings up another important question. Do you clean your drive with dental floss, or is brushing enough? A drive might fold, spindle or even mutilate a floppy, but eat it, never!

My personal favorite is being told that an application consumes RAM. Does it eat male sheep? Or even worse, is it right now munching away at the memory chips in my computer, until they are all gone. What then? Will the computer let out a satisfied belch and then demand more RAM? I don't know, but a word like consume denotes using something up for good and then leaving little droppings to clean up later. And if that's not a little scary, I don't know what is.

The most famous food words associated with computers are, of course, byte (pronounced bite, like we wouldn't figure it out!), and it's cousins bit and nibble. In this case this is an interesting analogy. Small pieces of data being byte-sized (I can hear the groans out there for that one). I think that the first person to use these terms must have been up just a little too late, and had just a few cups of coffee too much. They were getting punchy and thought that this would sound hysterical. They were wrong.

Now, I will admit that in many cases the words and phrases applied to computers are just adaptations of common phrases like it cooks (which is something I'd like to see. Imagine if you could cook with these things. Some hackers would NEVER leave their computers), but for others there is no excuse. By far the worst offenders are those derived from acronyms. Like gooey (spelled GUI). How appealing is it to know that your computer now has a gooey interface. What are you supposed to do with it, eat it or just get it all over your fingers and shirt. It makes it sound like interfaces like Windows are made of caramel or toffee (which some people, who hate Windows, might say is true).

I don't know why there is this fascination with food-oriented terminology in computers. Perhaps it's because people who had traumatic experiences with food go into the computer field (I call this the Freudian View), or maybe food is on their minds because they don't get to eat enough being stuck in front of their systems all day . Whatever the reason, just remember that anything that consumes RAM voraciously, crunches on numbers, and eats disks should be kept away from the children. Especially if you haven't fed the darn thing in awhile. And getting a leash for it might not be a bad idea either. Think about it next time you slip in a floppy and hear that drive start whirring. ■■■

Next Time : MS-DOS - The operating system from Hell!!

If it weren't

for the last minute

nothing

would get done!

ADDRESS BOOK PLUS 3.0

Software Review By: Earl Selby

All we were looking for was a nice little program that addressed envelopes and printed a return address. Address Book Plus 3.0 met that need--and then some.

Address Book Plus, from Power Up of San Mateo, is an unpretentious data base for filing names, addresses, phone numbers and even birthdays. You can also attach an automatically time-stamped note to each name.

Installation is no more trouble than creating an AB3 sub-directory and then copying the program disk's files to it. As early as page 8, the manual suggests you "jump in and start working with it".

You begin with a name screen for listing the data, including up to four 'phone numbers. Each entry in the file is automatically updated to note the last time you edited it. Power Up says you can have 1,800 names in each file, with the number of files limited only by computer capacity.

Typically, you can print the data in a pocket-sized directory; the appropriate paper and spiral wire binder come with AB3. Some people like these directories; we once had one with another program but with the constant changes it was rarely up to date. Adding changes by hand made it look like a thousand chickens had been scratching in it. We finally threw the thing out.

AB3's database can be a dialer. The program, however, is not memory resident so if the urge to call somebody comes when you're working on another program, it's quicker to let your fingers make the call. On the other hand, AB3 doesn't forget a number.

About the envelopes: AB3 does a very competent job; it will output to something like 200 laser, inkjet and dot matrix printers. AB3 also does labels and Rolodex cards. It is functional on any IBM or compatible, with 512K of RAM required.

Within its boundaries, AB3 has one big trump: It works, and without fuss. ■■■

KEY PUBLISHER

Product Review By: Ed Buzza

KEY PUBLISHER is a desktop publishing program from SoftKey Software Products, Inc.. The package operates under a run time version of GEM (Graphic Environment Manager - an operating system interface from Digital Research). It needs a PC with 512k RAM or more, two floppy drives or a hard drive, graphic card (640k RAM if Herc, EGA or VGA), a mouse (recommended but not needed), Laser or Epson (9 or 24 pin) compatible printer. It is not copy protected.

Imports GEM, PCX, IMG or Lotus PIC graphics; and output from WordPerfect, MS Word, WordStar, and others as well as ASCII. Provides drawing primitives (line, rectangle, ovals, etc.), built-in word processor with search and replace, master pages (style sheets), paragraph styles, headers and footers, Ventura-like frames to hold text or graphics, and a host of common desktop publishing features. As an introduction to desktop publishing, it is an excellent program.

Key for key, it is said to be identical to version 1.2 of *Publish It* which has a street price of about $140. But you can buy *KEY PUBLISHER* for $9.90 plus $4.50 (shipping and handling). That's right, DTP software for less than sixteen dollars, delivered! This has to qualify as the Best Value award of the year. To get your copy, call DAK Industries at 1-800-325-0800 and ask for item 5919 (have your VISA, MC or AE credit card handy). Their mailing address is: DAK Industries Inc., 8200 Remmet Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91304-4182.

If you're hesitant about dealing with a mail order firm, don't be with this one. Why? About six weeks after the package was delivered, I got another package from DAK. I hadn't ordered anything, hadn't called tech support, -- nothing. Inside this second package was a letter that apologized for the wrong and some missing material in the initial shipment! The new shipment had an updated manual, users guide, design template disks and manual, and a quick reference card. That a vendor would go to all this trouble for a ten dollar package is almost unbelievable. For my money, DAK is a class act. ■■■

PROGRAMMER'S PUZZLE

By: Tom Cone

A million people live on an island in the South Pacific. The king of the island decides to distribute his wealth to all his subjects. While this sounds incredibly foolish, the king made it interesting by giving $1 to the first person. The next 2 people each got $2. The next 3 people each got $3, and so on. How much did the millionth person receive? How much money was given away, altogether?

(Answer next month)

Training Wheels for Windows
- THE MICROSOFT PRODUCTIVITY PACK -
By: Bruce Mayer BUFFALO BIBMUG

For those who are bewildered or intimidated by the sweeping changes forced by their new Windows applications, Microsoft offers Productivity Pack for Windows, a happy combination of classroom and toolbox for the GUI novice. Once installed (oddly enough, outside Windows), the program leads its user through a series of interactive tutorials which explore the basic maneuvers available within Program Manager and File Manager, and how they can be used to organize, well, files and programs. There is no documentation to not read; the program installs itself from the DOS prompt, leaving behind two new Program Groups: Productivity Pack and Troubleshooter Tools.

Within Productivity Pack are Learning Windows (the tutorials), Quick Troubleshooter and Working Smarter; the latter two are expanded help files. But, the heart of the set is contained in Learning Windows. Five familiar characters from history or literature (A. Einstein, R. Hood, S. Holmes, an unnamed Wizard and Cleopatra) demonstrate the skills needed to navigate Windows, using simple stories to make their point: Einstein teaches Win- dows Essentials, while Hood helps with Managing Your Files. Frankly, this stuff gets a bit long after a while, and the snail- like pace that my 12 mHz 286 painted the graphics didn't help. As always, however, the careful student is rewarded: all lessons allow hands-on practice (and are very forgiving of errors), the lessons can be stopped at any time, and, once learned, the logic of the system should begin to shine through.

The remainder of the program is contained in the help files mentioned before, and the second Program Group, Troubleshooter Tools. Although this group is meant to be used with the help files, it may very well remain on the student's hard drive long after the tutorials are discarded. It contains File Manager, PIF Editor, Control Panel, and four sessions of the Windows Notebook editor, one each for AUTOEXEC.BAT, CONFIG.SYS, SYSTEM.INI and WIN.INI. Thus, with the ability to easily edit the critical configuration files, and the troubleshooting tips and hints in the help files, such problems as slow- running DOS programs or recalcitrant printers can be tackled and solved. Of course, the computer can be rendered unbootable, too, by careless editing of .INI files and the like - perhaps a sixth character, a demon who stalks those who don't back up essential files before experimenting, should be introduced in the tutorials.

There are a few small complaints - the tutorial program takes over the computer, allowing nothing else to run (although the help files can be kept on line), and the whole Pack occupies a rather hefty 2,139,975 bytes on the hard drive, but it is far and away the easiest way to learn Windows. It will be especially attractive to those who are starting with Windows on their first computer, since it is both friendly and easy. Once the tutorials are out-grown, the help and troubleshooting sections will still remain useful as additions to the system bring their inevitable problems. Recommended strongly for the Windows neophyte or intermediate user; experts will probably stick to their own tried-and-true methodology (fumbling around).

Productivity Pack for Windows carries a list price of $59.95, but is available at competitive pricing at a variety of retail outlets. ■■■ [Reprinted from Buffalo BIBMUG Newsletter - May 1991 via APCUG.]

ARC & ZIPPING HELP
By: Penni Dahl (APCUG BBS)

Those of you who are new to telecommunicating probably have downloaded a program that required either unarchiving or unzipping. Both methods are used to make the files smaller to decrease downloading time, and contain more than one file.
You can easily recognize an archived file by its extension. A zipped file will have an extension of "zip" and an archived file will have an "arc" extension.
Two utilities are required to unarchive or unzip a file: PKXARC for archives and PKUNZIP for zipped files. Both utilities are available on the Carencro bulletin board. They are made executable by typing the file name -- they "explode" themselves. It is preferable to have these utilities in either your path statement directory or in the directory or disk you will be using to unarchive them. (To determine the path on your hard drive, type "path" at the DOS prompt. If no path statement is present, you will see "path = ". To set a path statement, edit your autoexec.bat file to include one by typing a statement: "path=(name of directory).)

Once you have installed the utilities and the file to be exploded, type PKXARC (name of file, such as MYFILE.ARC) and enter for archived files or PKUNZIP (name of file, such as MYFILE.ZIP) and enter for zipped files.

The files will then be exploded for regular DOS use. Files with an extension of EXT or COM can be used by typing their name (i.e. a file named MYFILE.EXT would be accessed by typing MYFILE enter). Files with a BAS extension require Basic. Other files likely to be found in an archive files are variation of the read.me theme, such as readme., readme.txt, etc. These files can be printed or looked at on screen via the type command or a shareware utility such as browse. The readme type files usually give you an overview of the program you have downloaded and "quick start" tips. The last type of file with have a TXT or DOC extension and are usually contain more extensive documentation on your program. ■■■

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____ City
_____ State _____ Zip _____ Home
Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about IBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ]
DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- BITS OF BLUE BULLETIN BOARD
  ** Data: 239-3704 **
  Voice: 237-4997
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- DISCOUNTS at
  SUNRISE COMPUTER SUPPLIES
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  Tampa, Florida
- ACCESS to the CLUB'S
  PROGRAM LIBRARY

Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492





01-92

[redacted]

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 10 October, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: October 9, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

10/9/91- *IBM MultiMedia*
Presented by **IBM**

Refreshment Break
Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

(NOTE: DOS CLASS - by Ed Buzza
begins at 5:45 in Room 436)

EXPOTECH

October 10, 11, and 12, 1991

EXPOTECH **is a computer/business equipment and business services tradeshow comming to our area: at the New Tampa Convention Center across from Harbour Island in downtown Tampa.**

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Upcomming Speaker:

December 11, 1991

COREL DRAW



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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

Members - I urge you to contribute ANYTHING, in the way of material for the newsletter - articles, product reviews, suggestions for a better publication. Believe me you won't offend the staff. We would be so delighted to receive your input. Don't you feel this is YOUR paper? WELL, how about it, let us hear from you. If you do not have access to a modem, simply mail any of your articles or disk to me at: 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637.

■■■

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about IBM-PC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at the address below or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 9/11/91 MEETING --

... INTEL is having trouble with their 486-50 chip and has stopped making them. The problem crops up when used with AUTOCAD. Dell and IBM are still shipping PCs with their version of the chip. INTEL is also being sued by AMD about the use of the name "386" for their chip.

... Bits of Blue delivery date has been decided by majority vote. The Editor will make every effort to have the newsletters in the hands of the members about 7-10 days before the meeting date. The question was raised because some members are not attending and it was thought that later delivery would serve as a reminder to attend the meeting.

... Marylee Bruneau, Bits of Blue Editor, was roundly applauded by the members in recognition of her outstanding efforts in preparing the newsletter.

... Training sessions on DOS Fundamentals (same as last time) will be given again. The three session course is scheduled to begin with the October meeting. Course time will be from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m.. Watch the BBS and the newsletter for confirmation of this course. You do not need prior registration to attend. The first session will cover PKWARE (PKZIP and PKUNZIP) and a DOS tutorial program.

... Secretary duties will be shared by Charles Howe, Jim Clark, and Ed Buzza.

... DOS 5.0 problems and solutions has been documented by Fred Kyle in a WordPerfect formatted file available on the BBS. Since this is a five page document, it was not placed in the newsletter because it would raise the price of postage. Some copies are available at the meeting for those who are interested.

... DOS 5.0 seems to be the predominant operating system for the majority of group members. AND they're pleased with it! Perhaps the most significant feature is the improved shell, provision for using a mouse, the DOSKEY utility, and the undelete and other file utilities licensed from Central Point Software (PC TOOLS). It also allows task swapping but that is a s-l-o-w procedure.

... PACE has a pretty good buy for a fax (4800 baud), modem (2400 baud) circuit board - just $99.00.

... DR DOS 6.0 will be available soon and will feature disk compression. This feature could double disk capacity.

... Harvey (The President) expressed regrets that he couldn/t bring us the latest news about PC technology. He has been quite busy and just couldn't find the time to cull these most interesting tidbits from the various trade publications.

(Minutes continued on next page)

(Minutes continued)

SOFTWARE PUBLISHING CORPORATION PRESENTATION

Linda Confer demonstrated the DOS version (3.0) and the alpha copy of the Windows version of Harvard Graphics. This is not to be confused with the 2.3 ver for DOS which is still being marketed as a separate package. Since the 3.0 ver requires a 286 PC, or higher, it is not considered to be an upgrade to the 2.3 version.

76 Registered users of ver 2.3 can get ver 3.0 for $125.00. If you have ver 3.0, you will be able to get the Windows version for $50.00 when it is released sometime between this winter.

The new package includes a completely rewritten draw module (old Draw Partner accessory); it provides for macros and the ability to add eight additional programs to be launched from the main menu. The Chart Gallery brings up chart templates (pie, bar, 3-D, line, etc.) that make building a presentation fast and easy. You can create your own templates and add them to the Gallery.

The Intelligent Charting concept allows for adjusting the font size to make the text fit the chart. It uses Bitstream scaleable fonts for this purpose. It can also be used to prepare speaker notes.

Up to 210 boxes can be shown in organization charts. Also, it is very easy to select/create a subordinate from the master chart. Of course, such attributes as foreground and background colors and graphics are easily handled. Further, these attributes can be carried across chart lines.

The new draw module is quite impressive. Especially the Status Box which shows the element currently being used. There are over 500 symbols (coins, arrows, currency symbols, trees, etc.) that can be animated or used as fade symbols. There are 32 palettes, each with 64 colors, besides the customization that lets you select your own colors.

In the area of animation, one image can be evolved into another; arrows can fly to a target graphic; bar graphs can use a plant symbol that grows to represent the bar value - all this in addition to various wipes and dissolves.

One nice feature is the use of "hidden" buttons that can be mouse selected to jump to another chart rather than follow the scheduled order of presentation. The Presentation module includes 17 different backgrounds (clouds, trees, planets, etc.) or you can create your own.

Linda also demonstrated the alpha version of Harvard Graphics for Windows. That the program is pretty solid was proved by the fact that it ran without ever "locking up." The DLL (dynamic link library) feature was well shown with an EXCEL spreadsheet serving as the base for one of the presentation charts.

GeoGraphics is a mapping program. Showing such items as counties, zip codes are done with ease. The Pentagon used this package for some of its TV presentations of the Desert Storm operation.

Software Publishing Corporation has been long known for its very "user friendly" PFS series of programs for the home and small business user. Recently, the company decided to get more involved with the corporate environment and sold the PFS series to Spinnaker Software.

THANKS:

Special thanks to the Software Publishing Corporation for their generous donation to the group of copies of Professional File, Professional Write, and Harvard Graphics. And a very special "Thank You" to Linda Confer for her excellent presentation.

THE WINNERS:

Harvard Graphics - Ron Mirth
Professional File - Ben Benedict
Professional Write - Ed Buzza
50-50 - Dee Gabbard

■■■

BORLAND, ASHTON-TATE FILE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MERGER

(BPS) -- Borland International Inc. and Ashton-Tate Corp. reported that, in connection with Borland's pending acquisition of Ashton-Tate, they have filed additional information with the Department of Justice under the Hart-Scott- Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976.

Borland and Ashton-Tate believe that the information substantially complies with the Department of Justice's request for additional information.

Borland and Ashton-Tate intend to consummate the acquisition as promptly as practicable after the requisite stockholder approvals have been obtained and all other conditions to the acquisition have been satisfied or waived. Meetings of the stockholders of Borland and Ashton-Tate have been scheduled for Sept. 24.

As previously announced, Borland and Ashton-Tate have entered into a merger agreement providing that Borland will acquire Ashton-Tate and Ashton-Tate shareholders will receive, for each of their Ashton-Tate shares, Borland shares with a market value of $17.50, but no more than 0.398 nor less than 0.346 Borland shares per Ashton-Tate share.

■■■

If you are not the lead dog

The view never changes!

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Heeeeeeeeeeeesss Back.

After a small break, our own Ed Buzza is back to teach you DOS. This 3 month session will begin at 5:45 PM in room 436 across from main meeting room. If your looking to understand the basics of DOS this is a must class for you. The instructor is a genuine educator.

Well IBM has finally accepted that downsizing is the future. This historical moment was brought on in September when IBM announced over 100 hardware and software products to help its customers create distributed computer systems (big words for Local Area Network). I am sure that the acceptance by IBM of the rightsizing facts has put lumps in the throats of many an MIS professional. I personally experienced the feeling in the mid 80s as a DP manager. My thoughts from a decade ago **'MARCH or DIE'** are probably the same as those of IBMs today. Most of you know that I was born in France where that saying is an old French Foreign Legion saying which basically means **march forward or be left behind to die.** It was easy for me then to see the potential of the PC and the future of computing. It was difficult to accept that I would have to reeducate myself to understand this new technology. It took a long time, $3,000.+ investment in a new IBM PC with 2 floppies and the **Tampa IBM PC User Group,** but I did come to terms with this future technology. Mind you I have never mastered the PC because its environment is constantly changing. To master the PC you must not look into the future, and close your mind to consistent change. Unfortunately these thoughts will not allow you to go forward in life, but will freeze you in time like a dinosaur. I don't believe it makes a difference whether you are a DP professional or end user, you will need to keep up with some change or get left behind. Even kids these days want more than a PC XT with CGA, a 10Mb harddisk and flight simulator.

Like IBM, I too have decided to prepare for rightsizing. This weekend I began to recycle those old mainframe and mini software manuals that I have accumulated since 1974 when I began my DP career. I often thought that I might need them again if I had to go back to those environments. Luckily I didn't have to. I didn't realize how much of that stuff I worked with and have since forgotten. You know there were some weird names back then too like VOLLIE, VOICE, THE LIBRARIAN, EASYTRIEVE and VSE POWER to mention a few. Those manuals were ugly compared to the PC manuals of today. All of this makes me wonder where we will be in another 18 years. Will we be throwing away all the information from the past 18 years. Will Windows, DOS, OS/2, the 486 processor, hardisks and VGA be relegated to a faint memory. Probably.

Harvey Bruneau

LIVING IN THE COMPUTER AGE
By: Tom Petrocelli, Buffalo IBM Users Group, APCUG

MS-DOS : The Operating System from HELL!

Who among us remembers the first time we saw a computer novice type the word FORMAT without any parameters? Back in the old days (that's before DOS 3.0) it usually meant that you could either start shrieking wildly and running toward the person who was typing that fateful command, or you could just hang your head and resign yourself to the inevitable destruction about to take place. Anyone who has ever been in this situation knows that the first approach was futile. The ENTER key was always hit before you could do anything about it, so you usually went looking for the backup disks immediately. Of course THERE WEREN'T ANY. No one made backups of anything. "It's such a pain", people would whine. This, inevitably, led to much wailing and gnashing of teeth. And why is this? What has brought us all to such a calamity time after time? Why, MS-DOS, the operating system from Hell of course!

DOS was designed as the operating system for the original IBM-PC. Since PC stands for Personal Computer, so one might assume that the OS was designed to be used by people, normal people. But, to quote James Brown "HA!". From the beginning DOS has had more landmines, blind alleys and traps then you could imagine. While things are improving, it is still pretty deadly. Most of the revisions to DOS have centered on new features and more power, but very little has been done about making it safe. DOS 5.0 is promised to fix some of this, but I'm not holding my breath. Windows is supposed to insulate us from disaster, by placing a wall in front of DOS, but it has only replaced one set of pitfalls with another. If it weren't for special programs like the Norton Utilities, the suicide rate amongst corporate PC support people would probably be double what it is.

Some DOS commands are written in such a way that they can only be described as "loaded". I don't mean loaded with features, but loaded like a gun. They either lack basic protection from common, understandable mistakes, or contain options that can cause disaster. The worst are, of course, FORMAT and FDISK. As we all know, FORMAT prepares a disk so that it works properly with the DOS file system (such as it is). This is very useful, but as the above example illustrates, dangerous as a hungry tiger. In one fell swoop, you can destroy EVERYTHING. Now I will admit that in later versions of DOS certain protections are built in, like asking you if you really want to do this to yourself when you are about to format your hard disk, but it's still way too easy to hit the wrong key and KABOOM! It's all gone.

(Living ...continued on next page)

(Living ....continued)

FORMAT is sort of the nuclear missile of the DOS world. Push one wrong button and it's all over.

FISK is not much better. It partitions and prepares your disk for FORMAT. Using this unwisely has about the same effect as FORMAT. These are dangerous to have around. Why Microsoft didn't just make two versions of FORMAT, one of which would only do floppies, is beyond me. They could have left FORMAT (hard disk) and FISK on the master disks and made the world safe for end-users. But Nooooo! They had to make it nice and easy for you to rain total destruction down upon your system. Nice guys.

This lack of controls shows up again and again. For example, DEL or ERASE. At the very least it could prompt you for individual deletes when using wildcards. Microsoft waited until version 4.0 (that's 10 years folks!) to put in an option to do so, but it's not the default. The default should be to prompt you, and the option should be to override that. And then to have no way to recover an accidently deleted file is just plain rude. There shouldn't be a reason for the Norton Utilities Undelete

program. DOS should already have it. The COPY command is no better. Would it have hurt the designers of DOS to check the target path to see if the file is already there and then prompt you as to whether to overwrite it or not? And what excuse do these guys have for not putting them in by now. What?? They didn't know? Get real!

DOS is chock full of missing features. A decent backup/restore program would have been nice. This seems like a very basic function for an operating system. There is not another OS in the world of any consequence that doesn't include something to help backup data. The BACKUP and RESTORE commands are woefully inadequate. The descriptions of these commands read like VCR instructions and the logic needed to operate them is as cryptic as Egyptian hieroglyphics. There are better shareware backup and restores programs then these. And BACKUP and RESTORE were an afterthought. The original DOS 1.0 didn't even come with them. Talk about being asleep at the wheel. If backing up and restoring were made painless, more people would bother to backup their data, which would please PC support types to no end, not to mention those whose hard disk has gone west on them.

There are so many holes in DOS that you can fall into that there simply isn't enough room to list them all. The ones I've talked about are only the tip of the iceberg. Commands like CHKDSK can be made to mess up directories. Improper use of pipe and redirection characters (| > <) can mess up files or hang your system. Anyone who has piped a file to a nonexistent device (like an LPT3 for example), or redirected output to an already existing file can attest to the amount of damage one is capable of with these little buggers. All of these are nothing in comparison with what an application can do.

If a decent programmers' toolkit and system interface was available to DOS programmers, many nasty bits of programming would never have occurred. Giving programmers, even responsible ones, the kind of low-level access to the hardware that DOS allows is dangerous. I'm sure that everyone has a "the darn program messed up my disk" story. That's not surprising considering the amount of access, hence the amount of damage, that a programmer has to the guts of DOS. When Bill Gates and company wrote DOS, you'd think that they assumed that no one but themselves would ever want to write any programs for it. What they created was a hackers delight. A system with so many back doors, that it practically says "go ahead, take your best shot".

DOS is not the worst operating system ever designed. It gets us where we want to go, so to speak, and is not particularly complicated. It has a flexibility that allows for quite a bit of ... shall we say creative ... programming. Still the landmines could be more noticeable and the pits a tad less deep. That may be the reason for Windows(not that it works that way), to help protect us from DOS. Sort of like a software version of the Patriot missile. We can only hope that in the future we can finally be safe in our own home computers. In the meantime DOS gives guys like Peter Norton something to do for a living.

■■■

COMPUADD COMPLETES 100TH RETAIL STORE

(BPS) -- The CompuAdd Corp. has opened a new store in Corpus Christi, TX -- its 100th computer retail store.

CompuAdd, which designs, manufactures, markets and supports a broad line of personal computers, launched an aggressive retail expansion in June, opening stores in small, medium and large markets at the rate of two per week. Plans call for CompuAdd to have a total of about 120 stores by year end and about 200 by the end of 1992.

CompuAdd selects markets for its retail stores based on a variety of marketing research data, including the installed base of PCs and the number of the company's mail order customers.

The company sells and supports more than 2,000 PC-related products, ranging from peripheral equipment such as printers and monitors to hundreds of software titles and supplies.

■■■

Product Review -

PROCOMM PLUS 2.0
By: Jim McCollum

Are you one of the many folks out there who own a MODEM but have never used it? Why not? You undoubtedly have applications that have a telecommunications feature-- PC Tools, high-end word processors, integrated applications and the like. At last count, I have at least 8 such applications with this feature, none of which I use. The reason usually is that it is too much trouble to figure out how to use this feature and, when you do, you find that it does little more than connect you to the other computer, leaving you to figure out what to do next on your own.

Fortunately, there are several top-notch dedicated communications programs available on the market today that make using your modem an enjoyable and exciting adventure! The "Cadillac" of these, in my opinion, is ProComm Plus 2.0, by DataStorm Technologies, Inc. For a general purpose communications program that will literally make your modem sit up and beg, this product is hard to beat!

This program runs on any IBM PC or compatible with at least 192K of available RAM, running MS-DOS or PC-DOS version 2.0 or better. Virtually any modem-- Hayes compatible or not-- and any monitor capable of displaying graphics will do. Indeed, you do not even require a hard drive, since the basic program is small enough to run from a floppy disk! In other words, this program is available to virtually anyone with an IBM compatible computer! How many of the new entries coming onto the software market today can make that claim?

Needless to say, the first thing one is concerned with upon opening the shrink wrap, is how to get this new toy installed, up and running. This is accomplished by PCINSTAL, which will, to a large extent, automatically determine the correct settings required to install or upgrade PC Plus on your system. If you are merely upgrading from an earlier version of PC Plus, all the customizations of the earlier version, including even your color scheme, become part of your new system. Although the installation procedure will modify your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files for you, it, at least, gives you the option to say, "NO," should this not be to your liking. It lets you know what it wants to do to these files and why. Since, however, there are a number of ways to skin the proverbial cat, it is important that you have the option to do it your way rather than theirs. Too many software publishers forget this!

For you who have version 1.1B or earlier, there are some nifty new features that have been added:

* There is full 132 column support with larger screen displays for EGA/VGA systems.
* The script language, discussed in more detail later in this article, has nearly 100 new commands. Additionally, the first time any script file is run, it is compiled for faster execution, greater security and smaller size.
* It supports Microsoft-compatible mice, newer protocols like ZModem (15 all totaled) and 33 terminal emulations.
* The new File Name Clipboard allows you to "cut" file names from a BBS listing which may be of interest and then "paste" the same in the downloading routine. This eliminates the hassle of copying down all of the interesting files that are listed on a BBS on scratch paper for a later keyboard entry to download.

Basically, ProComm is set up to allow easy, uncomplicated and intuitive access to another computer from yours. A typical session starts, after ProComm is called up, by typing an ALT-D. This brings up the directory of all the entries you have made of the computers (usually computer bulletin boards or BBSs) that you normally call. The menu prompts you to select, modify or create an entry. Once your selection has been made and the ENTER key struck, ProComm takes over, dialing the phone number of the computer you wish to reach and signaling you when the connection is established. At this point, the program on the remote computer, particularly if it is a BBS, pretty much takes over-- but not entirely. For instance, you are typically asked for your name and password, calling for further entry by you. If you have taken advantage of ProComm's script language, all of this will be done for you automatically!

Two of the nifty new additions to PC Plus are its pull-down window menus and its mouse support. You can literally run the whole session on a BBS with the mouse and the pull-down menus, address the menus from the keyboard or disregard the menus altogether and utilize the old familiar keyboard commands - all with equal ease!

The more exotic features of PC Plus do not have to be addressed by you before you can start calling BBSs. They can be learned at your leisure, one by one, as you need or desire them. Should you be into programming, ProComm includes an entire manual dedicated to its Aspect script language, which shares many features with the popular C programming language. However, you do NOT have to be a programmer to take advantage of script file automation. For instance, you can ask ProComm to "listen in" on your logon activities as you call up your favorite BBS. With some editing and a little common sense, you will find that an Aspect file has been created for you which can now be compiled automatically by ProComm into an efficient script file logon procedure, relieving you of typing your name, password and other routine and sometime tedious entries required by the host system you have called. This is particularly useful when the system you are logging onto is relatively inefficient and puts you through gauntlet of keystroke entries just to get to where you want to go.

(PROCOMM PLUS continued on next page)

(PROCOMM PLUS continued...)

PC Plus passes the "don't bother me with the manual" test with flying colors, while providing you with manuals that are nonetheless useful and easy to use. It even has online help with manual references-- a nice added feature. Technical support is available by telephone or on CompuServe. Since the program is so easy to use and the manual so readable, I doubt very much that you will have much reason to avail yourself of this support, however.

Although the manual is extremely easy to read and understand, it really is not needed until you are ready to try the more sophisticated and exotic features of PC Plus. For those of you who have always wondered what the differences are between protocols like XModem, Kermit, YModem, Modem7, C-Link, ZModem, etc. or even what one is, the manual goes into great detail explaining these. If you do get into trouble, the appendix contains numerous "Common Questions" that should be able to troubleshoot your problem. For those or you of a more technical bent, the manual is replete with such information. In my opinion, this is one of the best written user manuals I have seen that is supplied with an application.

PC Plus does have some weak points. Among them are the fact that it still does not allow you to set a default upload directory. Further, I find that the script files written for logging onto a BBS tend to be unreliable; that is, sometimes, for no apparent reason, they do not work or will go just so far into the logon routine and stop. The same script file will often work on one computer, but not on another.

My general impression of ProComm Plus 2.0, is that it is a very powerful, extremely easy to use telecommunications program. If this is not enough to convince you to run out and buy the program, a fully functional shareware version, albeit with fewer features, is available on many bulletin boards to give you an opportunity to try out the basic program before buying its commercial big brother! If you like the shareware version, you will love ProComm Plus 2.0!

List Price - $119 --- Street Price - $59-$89

DataStorm Technologies, Inc., P.O. Box 1471, Columbia, Missouri 65205, Telephone: (314) 443-3282

■■■

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE #2

By: T. Cone, Jr.

```
'Key to this solution:
'  Each person's gift matches that person's "group number".
'     Number of people in each group matches "group number",too.

'First calculate total gifts and number of people in "complete" groups
   groupnumber& = 0      'suffix "&" denotes long integer variable
   totalpersons& = 0
   totalgifts& = 0

   DO
    IF totalpersons& + groupnumber& >= 1000000 THEN
      EXIT DO  'exit loop just before last group receives gifts.
    ELSE
     'otherwise, compute gifts to all groups before the last one.
     groupnumber& = groupnumber& + 1
     totalpersons& = totalpersons& + groupnumber&
     totalgifts& = totalgifts& + (groupnumber&) ^ 2
    END IF
   LOOP      'DO/LOOP continues til exit condition is true.
'determine number of people and gift total to the last group
     lastgroupsize& = 1000000 - totalpersons&

     finalgift& = groupnumber& + 1  'this is size of gift going
                                    'to the millionth person.
'determine combined total gifts
     totalgifts& = totalgifts& + (lastgroupsize& * finalgift&)

'display solution
   CLS
   PRINT "Total persons: ";
   PRINT USING "###,###,###"; totalpersons& + lastgroupsize&
   PRINT "The millionth person received ";
   PRINT USING "$###,###"; finalgift&
   PRINT "The total distributed was ";
   PRINT USING "$###,###,###"; totalgifts&
     END
```

Here's Puzzle #3

By Tom Cone

Assume that a mosquito can circle a building in exactly 4 minutes, while a fly takes 6 minutes to make the same trip. Nevertheless, the fly and mosquito decide one day to race each other around the building. They start from the same position, and at the same time.

Can you write a program to determine how long (in seconds) it will take the mosquito to catch up to the fly ? i.e. how long before the fly is "lapped" ? Here's the catch: you may not use simultaneous algebraic equations, nor may you use math functions other than addition or multiplication. You may use any relational operator you wish (i.e. "=", ">", "<", etc.). Good luck.

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____ City
_____ State _____ Zip _____ Home
Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about IBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

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DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

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01-92

[redacted]

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 11 November, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: November 13, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

11/13/91- KEY PUBLISHER
(Desk Top Publishing)
Presented by Ed Buzza

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

Refreshment Break
Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

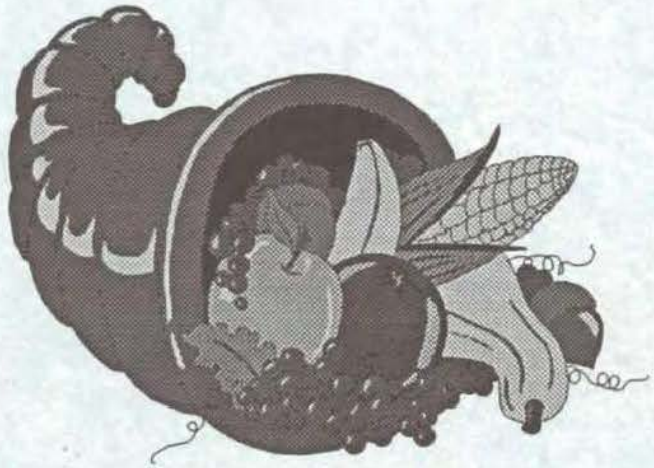
NOTE: DOS CLASS - by Ed Buzza

begins at 5:45 in Room 436

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Happy Thanksgiving!



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PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 932-6745
VICE PRES.: Steve Speairs 875-1095
TREASURER: Bill Fuller 832-0125
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
SECRETARY: Jim Clark
Charles Howe
Ed Buzza 685-5898
EDUCATION: Ed Buzza 685-5898

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 932-6745
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
BBS SYSOP: Kevan Sheridan 237-0100
MEMBERSHIP: Bill Fuller 832-0125

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

dBASE IV (Ashton Tate) . . . . . .Roger Wehling
Control Room (Ashton Tate) . . . . . Larry Anders
WinConnect (Traveling S'ware) . . . . . Marty Miller
President's Cup . . . . . Charles Howe
50-50 . . . . . Parker Monroe

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 10/9/91 MEETING --

IBM MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION

George Johnson from the Orlando office of IBM gave a stunning presentation of IBM's multimedia software and hardware. With video, sound, computer graphics and special effects, we were treated to a brilliant display of multimedia communication. The supporting products include microchannel PS/2, M-Motion, Audio Visual Connection, Action Media, touch screen display window, and the Audio Visual Connection software system.

The AVC (Audio Visual Connection) authoring and presentation system provides for the incorporation and control of text, graphics, animation, live or prerecorded video/audio and special effects (screen wipes, fades, and dissolves). While the AVC requires a Micro Channel computer for creating a presentation, the actual presentation may be run on any DOS computer. Although it can be run a slower PC, a 386 or better is recommended.

Central to the AVC authoring process are the M-Audio Capture and Playback Adaptor and M-Video Capture Adapter boards. The AVC system also supports the M-Motion Video Adapter board. These boards convert the various analog signals to digital signals that are stored as digital data files. Once they are stored as data files, they can be edited using commonly known techniques. e.g. Rotate, resize, cut-and-paste, graphic and text overlays, etc..

The M-Motion Video Adapter and its control program can display live motion video, still video, and VGA graphics at the same time. Up to three video input devices (VCR, camera, CD, cable signal, laser disk, etc.) can be accommodated. Up to four audio inputs and two outputs are all selectable via software control.

As a tool for education, training, sales, promotions, IBM has a rich supply of hardware and software to get the job done. Multi Media would seem to serve a vital need in many communication areas.

Mr. George Johnson was very impressive in his delivery and in answering questions that were raised during his session. Thank you Mr. Johnson for an excellent presentation and for being so forbearing with our questions.

■■■

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Well we are bearing down on the end of yet another year. As usual this means elections at our December meeting, so lets get those nominations in for the 1992 officers. Many of you (83 to be exact) will need to renew your membership for another year. Your renewal date is printed on your mailing label. If it has 01-92, your membership will expire at the end of December 1991. Additionally, your label will have ***last one*** printed on it. Please do not wait until the last minute to renew your membership. Memberships have a one year duration from the time you join.

Now is the time to start looking for that computer related Christmas gift before its to late. An added holiday bonus for us this year will be the addition of **COMP USA**, the Home Depot of computer stuff, to Tampa. This store is being constructed at the corner of Hillsborough & Dale Mabry in the strip mall where Fridays is located. I have been watching the store being prepared and I think it will be open this year in time for the holiday spree. **If you have exact information about the opening of this store please notify me.**

I would like to share a couple of events, thoughts and comments that have cropped up since our last meeting.

● **If we can get a new generation of processors every year, why can't someone build a PC that is smart enough to changes its own clock for daylight saving time?**

● **Its with regret and joy that I welcome the changes Compaq Corporation is implementing.**
This month Compaq dropped from the ranks of PC innovator to join those of the PC followers. After posting a $70 million loss Compaq fired the old captain and put in place a new one. While other companies in the past have experienced greater losses, they either modified their course slightly or stayed true to the original course, but they kept the same captain. My joy comes from the fact that Compaq will now drop prices to compete with the clones. This in turn will make clone makers like Northgate, Gateway, Dell and others drop their pricing. As we (Marylee and I) are in the market for a new PC this year, the price drop looks better every day. The price reduction will allow us to purchase the PC we want instead of the PC we can afford. That will amount to a 486 33mhz for around $2500. My regret is that we will lose a company that has established itself as an innovator and has helped push IBM along with its own innovations. Time will tell if Compaq chose the right course, *to sell PCs based on price not technology*. Hopefully IBM will continue to be an innovator despite its own problems of being competitive in the PC world. If IBM bows out I am sure the Orient will step in to fill the void.

Harvey Bruneau

The Small, the Quick, the Deft, and the Clever Shall Inherit the Personal Computer Industry

by Steve Gibson

APCUG Industry Commentary Subscription Series Column #8:

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My God! Borland is purchasing Ashton-Tate, Novell is buying Digital Research, and old stoic and stodgy big blue IBM is talking seriously about co-developing major new personal computer technologies in conjunction with Apple Computer's crazies from Cupertino. What's going on? What's happening to our once-quaint little personal computer industry? Are things REALLY changing as much as they appear, or is all this just a coincidental timing of seemingly unrelated events?

Not so very long ago this was a peaceful little industry which rewarded hard work and dedication with fame, financing and Ferarri's. Today we seem to be witnessing many signs that our simple work-ethic based business is being reshaped by giant lumbering corporations who care far less about US than they do about their own short-term shareholder reports. Venture Capital financiers now expect to see an established track record before they'll belly up to risk their past windfall winnings. So can the small guy with that "next" great idea still compete, or has the playing field become the exclusive territory of the mega-monolithic multinational monsters? Has all the fun and frolic left the PC business forever, or are there still some gleaming opportunities? Although we're not at the helm of Borland, Novell, IBM, or Apple, let's see if we can't look more closely behind the scenes at what's been happening.

Borland has purchased Ashton-Tate. So what. Ashton-Tate, once the king of the PC databases, has fallen so far from its high and mighty leadership throne that inertia alone has been responsible for its continuing survival during the past several years. Compared to any of the hot alternatives such as Paradox or FoxPro, "real" Ashton-Tate dBase is slow, crippled, incapable, and inadequate. Are YOU still using it? Nope. Ashton-Tate is hardly a company brimming over with hot new technology. In fact they're not brimming over with anything except stale and befuddled management. When too much money is made too quickly and too easily, as certainly happened during Ashton-Tate's phenomenal early start-up years, a company never has the need to develop the means to survive when technology inevitably catches up and glides smoothly past. Ashton-Tate was simply in the right place at the right time and never had anything more than a bit of early luck to offer the world.

(The Small ..... continued on next page.)

(The Small ..... continued.)

So what does Borland see in Ashton-Tate? Well, Borland is presently quite fat and happy over its many recent well-deserved successes with Paradox (which it acquired from Ansa) and its Turbo languages. But Borland is probably quite worried over the many recent rumors it's been hearing. If you've been keeping your ear tuned to the pulse of the industry you might have heard that the powerful BASIC-like macro language underneath Microsoft's Word For Windows actually CAME from the database group within Microsoft. Database group? Yes.

The database group!
So my personal guess is that Borland's crafty old Philippe Kahn has caught wind of the power of Microsoft's forthcoming Windows database product and wants to shore-up his own corporate database market share before Microsoft releases its long-rumored (and long awaited) database product. Given Microsoft's well- deserved recent grand slam successes with Windows, Word for Windows, Excel, and Visual Basic, I can certainly understand Philippe's concern. However, $440 million is a hefty price to pay for "insurance," when you're buying a technologically bankrupt dried out husk of a former company. But hey, since he's got the money from Turbo language and Paradox sales, what's a few hundred million dollars or so exchanged to purchase a former industry adversary?

Then we have networking giant Novell, which is currently in the process of acquiring Digital Research, the original authors of CP/M. You may remember that Digital Research is the company that once told IBM that they had no interest in providing an operating system for IBM's new personal computer, and the people who told the founders of Ventura Software that there was no future in desktop publishing. Well, as a consequence of such sound business decisions, DRI has recently been looking (desperately) for a big suitor to help it get seriously re-launched in the world.

Well, along came Novell, freshly disappointed after getting all tangled up with it's pre-nuptial agreement with Lotus and then unable to complete its marriage vows. At this point, Novell knew that it HAD to buy SOMETHING in order to broaden its offerings and leverage itself into becoming more of a major player ... and stumbled upon DRI. Now, rather than having to continually shoe-horn its aging network interface solutions on top of a never-quite-cooperating foreign operating system (MS-DOS), this purchase of Digital Research would allow Novell to control and evolve its own DOS-compatible operating system. So after its brief and abortive pre-martial spat with Lotus, Novell went looking for a smaller partner that it could absorb and dominate completely. Judging from DRI's DR DOS 5.0 operating system, Novell's purchase of Digital Research will probably lead to a provocative alternative to DOS (even for many non-network users) ... as well as to additional confusion in the already-confused DOS marketplace.

This bring us to perhaps the least likely pair of all: IBM and Apple! These two turkeys have now "teamed up" to co-develop new operating systems and hardware platforms. At this early stage of their relationship it's not yet clear whether the best comparison could be made to Laurel and Hardy, Jekyll and Hyde, Lucy and Ricky, or Fred and Ethel, only time reveals such deep truths (stay tuned), but one thing's certain: We're in for some major league fun times as we watch the kids who order out for pizza trying to express themselves to the blue suits who make reservations!

What's this IBM/Apple deal all about? It boils down quickly to a clear-cut attempt to create an alternative to the current low-cost defacto standard Intel-based clone PCs which are cheerfully running Microsoft DOS and Microsoft Windows. IBM is understandably more than a trifle miffed that it lost "its" entire PC business (and most of its profitability) to every other lower-priced clone maker in the world, while Apple is upset that people who don't work in Cupertino were able to figure out how to develop effective multitasking windowing user interfaces. Since suing everyone in sight didn't help Apple, perhaps teaming up with a past arch enemy will do the trick. Oh yeah, sure thing.

Independent of the outcome of all these lumbering movements, there can be little doubt that giant forces are now being brought to bear upon the personal computer industry ... and we've all been left smack dab in the middle of it. While we've been cheerfully upgrading our machines from 360k floppies to 80 megabyte hard disks and from 640K, 4.77 Megahertz, 8088's to 4 megabyte, 25 Mhz, 80386's, the industry has been evolving into big bucks, big business, and no nonsense. No one would argue that at least part of what we're seeing is the result of the gradual and eventual maturation of the industry. So as the stakes rise, companies like Borland purchase huge chunks of "what-if" insurance, while Novell purchases "us-too" insurance, and IBM and Apple team up in a vain and desperate attempt to rewrite the rules of the entire game after it's almost been won by the other team.

In my view, what's REALLY happening is that the large companies which have been willfully, deliberately, and gleefully extorting profits from the industry during its early, juicy, pubescent period are now finding themselves in trouble. You can almost hear these greedy giants saying: "Gee, what do you know, it's not so easy anymore to make money from all those poor suckers!" Hmmmmm... "In fact, most of the poor suckers seem to have already figured out how to do what they wanted to ... which is what WE had hoped to charge them many more thousands of dollars to do." Hmmmmm... "We'd better go out and buy some other company that's doing better than us!"

(The Small ..... continued on next page.)

(The Small ..... continued.)

To these lumbering giants I say: "Good riddance." The small, the quick, the deft and the clever shall inherit the PERSONAL computer industry from those who would try to turn it into a massive corporate resource. Just say no thanks.

Steve Gibson is president and founder of Gibson Research Corporation and a popular columnist and contributing editor for InfoWorld magazine. In his TechTalk column in InfoWorld, Steve addresses a wide variety of technical issues, from his infamous ideal computer -- "Steve's Dream Machine" -- to discussions of the latest and greatest in hardware and software technology. Steve is the author of SpinRite, a hard disk low-level reformatting utility and FlickerFree, a TSR which increases screen display speed and eliminates the annoying flicker present in IBM's original CGA displays.

■■■

WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS
By: Read Gilgen, Madison PC Users Group

This column is dedicated to the proposition that not all WordPerfect enthusiasts are created equal. These "tips" and "tricks" come from a variety of sources, including WordPerfect Corporation, other users, and even the WordPerfect reference manual (imagine that!) Each month we will share a few ideas that just might make life easier for you. Who knows, you might even be able to impress your co-workers with your WPSF (WordPerfect savoir faire).

Editing (Part I)

Number 1: Finding your place.

Have you ever been editing, and instead of hitting the Del key, you miss and hit PgDn? Now where was I? You laboriously cursor back through your document trying to locate your lost place. Even worse, you're working on a 35 page document, somewhere in the middle, and you hit Home twice before pressing the down cursor key. Yikes, where was I!

A feature that few know about, but which has been in WP since version 4.2, is the ability to return to your most recent cursor position. This saves my skin at least daily. First you need to know what key combination is GoTo: Ctrl-Home usually gives the prompt "Go to" and waits for you to enter a number (which page you want to go to) or a letter (go to the next occurrence of that letter.

Now the fun (and useful) part. Pressing GoTo *twice* (Ctrl-Home, Ctrl-Home) permits you to return to the most recent cursor position. For example, if you are in the middle of a paragraph and accidentally press PgDn, losing your place on the screen, pressing Ctrl-Home, Ctrl-Home returns you exactly where you were. Be careful not to move the cursor before using the double GoTo or your place will have been "lost" and you'll have find your place the old fashioned way.

Number 2: Measurements

One of the more powerful features of WordPerfect, since version 5.0, is its ability to use precise measurements for tabs, margins, advance codes, and more. Going to Setup (Shift-F1), Environment, Units of Measurment, you find that you can tell WordPerfect to measure things in:

" = inches
i = inches
c = centimeters
p = points
w = 1200ths of an inch
u = WordPerfect 4.2 Units (Lines/Columns)

The default, of course, is inches, which for most of us is a pretty easy method of measuring (e.g. 1" margins, 1/2" tabs, etc) However, most of us are pretty bad at math, never having learned how to convert fractions to decimals (Mrs. Magruder said I'd have to know these some day!) Turning 1/2" into .5" is no big deal, but 3/16"? Just try finding a ruler with inches divided into decimal portions!

Now, in version 5.1, all you have to do is measure with your ruler, find the fraction (e.g. 3/16"), and then when asked for the measurement simply enter 3/16. WordPerfect will do the rest, converting that to 0.188". Likewise, if you know your measurement in points (72 points equals one inch) just enter the points followed by a "p" and WordPerfect makes the conversion (e.g. 12p is converted to 0.168").

Number 3: Deleting words

Here's one you probably know already (yeah, you knew but just forgot): You can delete a word at a time by positioning the cursor anywhere on the word and pressing Ctrl-Backspace. This also deletes the space and any punctuation up to the beginning of the next word. This is a quick way to get rid of a phrase or even more without blocking first and then deleting.

More on editing next month...

■■■

Editorial Comment:

This is the first in a series of six articles titled **WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS** *By: Read Gilgen, Madison PC Users Group*. These articles are available to our group by the Association of PC User Group bulletin board service. I hope you will find them informative and helpful.

Product Review:

RightWriter and Grammatik for Windows

By: Dana Trout, GDTPUG

Que's RightWriter ver 4.0

Whenever I get new software, I do five things: I write-protect the master disks, make copies of the disks, write-protect the copies, scan the manual, and read any read-me files. I was surprised the read-me file tells the user the install program is licensed from Knowledge Dynamics Corporation and may only be used for installing RightWriter. There is nothing wrong with this, but it sure looks odd to find this license in a file where you expect to find the latest information about the program instead of printed on the license agreement.

My second surprise came when I tried to install RightWriter. It turns out that after RightWriter asks for your name it modifies the install disk. It failed in my case, because I had write-protected the disk. Neither this nor the read-me file license are significant problems, but made me wonder if I would like the program. As it turned out, my concern was unjustified.

During installation RightWriter asks you to select which word processor you are going to use. I bounce around so much<197>ASCII from the Norton Editor, WordPerfect 5.1, Word 5.5, WinWord, Windows Write, etc., that being faced with choosing just one is dismaying. It turns out this limitation is much more apparent than real: RightWriter lets you switch word processors at any time, and also does a creditable job of automatically determining what word processor was used to create the file, even if you don't know.

One thing I appreciate about RightWriter is their 30-day guarantee. If you are not satisfied you can send it back for full refund. I have not tried out their guarantee because I find the product well worth keeping. But the money-back guarantee is appreciated: it's nice to know that Que has enough faith in their product that I don't have to chance getting stuck with another piece of shelfware. I tested RightWriter on the Figure Exercises article that appeared in the June issue of GolPub. I really like the fact that RightWriter is not confused by the Ventura Publisher paragraph tags and character attribute overrides that appear in the file. I have always been frustrated when I tried to use MS Word's spell-checker on VP text files because it trips up on the tags and attribute overrides. It is instructive to look at RightWriter's comments, and it made several suggestions that were appropriate. However, the vast majority are inappropriate, and would greatly weaken the article (or make it unintelligible) if they were followed blindly.

The summary information indicated the article required an 11th grade education for the reader, the writing was as weak as it could get (0 on a scale of 0 to 1), neither excessively terse nor wordy, and finally RightWriter judged the article to be unduly negative and filled with jargon. The jargon complaint is expected, since the article is a tutorial. I didn't think it was very negative, though.

The first time I let RightWriter scan the article I used the default settings of general Public and General Business writing style.

The second scan, with the settings set to College Education and Technical Report or Article showed the same level of reader education needed, but the strength index was much better: 0.27. The other readings were unchanged. The reason the strength index improved is that RightWriter looks at how many comments it makes and reduces the strength index as the number of comments increases. By selecting college-level readers, RightWriter found fewer sentences that were too complex for the intended reader. I shouldn't gloat though, because a reading of 0.27 is still far below the recommended strength level of 0.8!

One of RightWriter's features is that you can request a list of all the words used in the file, and how many times each word was used. This is an excellent poor-man's way of generating a list of words to be considered for an index: rarely-used words typically are the ones that the reader would like to find again. Common words tend to be well-known. Of course, this is only a generality, and each word should be looked at to determine the appropriateness of including it in the index. (Amusing note: one of the most common words in technical papers is <MI>fig<D>. After a moment you realize that it isn't the fruit that is so popular, but the abbreviation for <MI>figure.<D>

Grammatik for Windows

This product is designed to work with Windows 3.0, and so is convenient to use with WinWord and other Windows-based editors. Of course, it will check files created by non-Windows editors as well.

The installation is pretty straight-forward (for instance, it doesn't write on the master disk). Unfortunately, the installation program does not automatically add the Grammatik icons to your desktop. However, the manual gives clear instructions so you can add the icons manually. It takes only a few minutes to do, but it seems to be an unfortunate oversight.

Many of the features are similar to what is found in RightWriter<197>a large number of editors and word

(RightWriter.... continued on next page

Product Review:

RightWriter and Grammatik for Windows

By: Dana Trout, GDTPUG

Que's RightWriter ver 4.0

Whenever I get new software, I do five things: I write-protect the master disks, make copies of the disks, write-protect the copies, scan the manual, and read any read-me files. I was surprised the read-me file tells the user the install program is licensed from Knowledge Dynamics Corporation and may only be used for installing RightWriter. There is nothing wrong with this, but it sure looks odd to find this license in a file where you expect to find the latest information about the program instead of printed on the license agreement.

My second surprise came when I tried to install RightWriter. It turns out that after RightWriter asks for your name it modifies the install disk. It failed in my case, because I had write-protected the disk. Neither this nor the read-me file license are significant problems, but made me wonder if I would like the program. As it turned out, my concern was unjustified.

During installation RightWriter asks you to select which word processor you are going to use. I bounce around so much<197>ASCII from the Norton Editor, WordPerfect 5.1, Word 5.5, WinWord, Windows Write, etc., that being faced with choosing just one is dismaying. It turns out this limitation is much more apparent than real: RightWriter lets you switch word processors at any time, and also does a creditable job of automatically determining what word processor was used to create the file, even if you don't know.

One thing I appreciate about RightWriter is their 30-day guarantee. If you are not satisfied you can send it back for full refund. I have not tried out their guarantee because I find the product well worth keeping. But the money-back guarantee is appreciated: it's nice to know that Que has enough faith in their product that I don't have to chance getting stuck with another piece of shelfware. I tested RightWriter on the Figure Exercises article that appeared in the June issue of GolPub. I really like the fact that RightWriter is not confused by the Ventura Publisher paragraph tags and character attribute overrides that appear in the file. I have always been frustrated when I tried to use MS Word's spell-checker on VP text files because it trips up on the tags and attribute overrides. It is instructive to look at RightWriter's comments, and it made several suggestions that were appropriate. However, the vast majority are inappropriate, and would greatly weaken the article (or make it unintelligible) if they were followed blindly.

The summary information indicated the article required an 11th grade education for the reader, the writing was as weak as it could get (0 on a scale of 0 to 1), neither excessively terse nor wordy, and finally RightWriter judged the article to be unduly negative and filled with jargon. The jargon complaint is expected, since the article is a tutorial. I didn't think it was very negative, though.

The first time I let RightWriter scan the article I used the default settings of general Public and General Business writing style.

The second scan, with the settings set to College Education and Technical Report or Article showed the same level of reader education needed, but the strength index was much better: 0.27. The other readings were unchanged. The reason the strength index improved is that RightWriter looks at how many comments it makes and reduces the strength index as the number of comments increases. By selecting college-level readers, RightWriter found fewer sentences that were too complex for the intended reader. I shouldn't gloat though, because a reading of 0.27 is still far below the recommended strength level of 0.8!

One of RightWriter's features is that you can request a list of all the words used in the file, and how many times each word was used. This is an excellent poor-man's way of generating a list of words to be considered for an index: rarely-used words typically are the ones that the reader would like to find again. Common words tend to be well-known. Of course, this is only a generality, and each word should be looked at to determine the appropriateness of including it in the index. (Amusing note: one of the most common words in technical papers is <MI>fig<D>. After a moment you realize that it isn't the fruit that is so popular, but the abbreviation for <MI>figure.<D>

Grammatik for Windows

This product is designed to work with Windows 3.0, and so is convenient to use with WinWord and other Windows-based editors. Of course, it will check files created by non-Windows editors as well.

The installation is pretty straight-forward (for instance, it doesn't write on the master disk). Unfortunately, the installation program does not automatically add the Grammatik icons to your desktop. However, the manual gives clear instructions so you can add the icons manually. It takes only a few minutes to do, but it seems to be an unfortunate oversight.

Many of the features are similar to what is found in RightWriter<197>a large number of editors and word

(RightWriter.... continued on next page

(RightWriter.....continued.)

processors are supported, summary information about reading difficulty, etc., is available, and so on. One of the distinctions is Grammatik allows you to work on the file in an interactive mode, looking at each problem area in turn and editing it on the fly. This can be useful, especially if you want to accept the suggested change: all you have to do is click on the ACCEPT button. If you want to make more far-reaching changes, the interactive mode is inadequate because it gives you access to only a few lines of text.

Grammatik's interactive mode can be quite entertaining as well as educational. However, sometimes Grammatik's comments are far better at creating FUD (fear, uncertainty, doubt) than helping you write better. For instance, when Grammatik came to the phrase <MI>whether it be a drawing,...<D>, it complained that I was using the incorrect verb form. Grammatik's dialog box said "The word 'it' and the infinitive form 'be' may be used incorrectly together. You may need a form of 'be' that agrees with 'it'.

I wanted something more concrete than the <169>mays<170>, so I clicked on the ? button for more detailed information. This time I got the following message:
RULE: Use the correct form of a verb.

EXPLANATION: The preposition "of" cannot substitute for the helping verb "have," even though they may sound similar when you speak. Another common example of a misused verb form is adding "ize" to a noun to make it a verb (e.g., prioritize). This should be avoided.

EXAMPLE:<R>
INSTEAD OF: He couldn't of done it.<R>
USE: He couldn't have done it.

I agree I should use the correct verb form, but I don't see how the explanation and example even address the phrase <MI>it be,<D> or what is wrong with it.

Another distinction is that Grammatik, when told to create a list of used words with the least-used words first, makes the list in a nice printer-ready tabular format. Looks pretty, but I find it harder to scan for candidates to be included in an index than RightWriter's list. The reason I like RightWriter's list better is because the words are listed vertically, like a phone book or dictionary. Grammatik's reads left to right, which I cannot scan as quickly or accurately.

Grammatik is not as benign as RightWriter about VP coding that appears in a file. For instance, I have a tag named 2 COL SUBHEAD, and Grammatik saw the COL and suggested that I not abbreviate COLUMN. Grammatik also converted the <<MI>> coding (VP's text attribute override to specify Medium Italic) to a high-order ASCII character. All of this, even though I had clicked the box specifying that the file has VP coding. RightWriter seemed to have less trouble with VP coding, although it would look at a phrase like <169>bar <<MI>>none<<D>>.<170> and complain that there is a space before punctuation. What happened, of course, is that RightWriter ignored anything it did not understand, so the <169><<MI>>none<<D>><170> is dropped out, leaving RightWriter looking at <169>bar .<170> Grammatik also has this problem, so there is no advantage there.

Which is Best?

So which is best? Beats me<197>I use both. If I am already in Windows I often use Grammatik because it has a nice interactive mode and lets me stay in Windows. On the other hand, if I am in DOS, or want a word frequency list, I use RightWriter. I added a an icon to my Windows desktop for RightWriter so I can access it from Windows whenever I want to. The primary operational difference between the two products is Grammatik can be run in an interactive mode which allows you to deal with each problem area of the text as it is found, as well as a batch mode that marks all the problem areas so you can resolve them later while working with your favorite editor or word processor. RightWriter has only a batch mode, but with an interesting fillip<197>you can set it up as a TSR and run it from inside your word processor. If you are using a DOS-based word processor, (as contrasted to Windows-based), this is a wonderful feature.

■■■

Product Review:

Outside In

By: Olaf Meding, Madison PC User's Group
Reprinted from 09/91 BITS & PC's, Madison PC User's Group

How often when using your favorite word processor to create a report due in an hour do you wish you could import information from other documents stored on your disk without re-typing a single word?

OUTSIDE IN lets you do just that and more. You can exchange information between virtually any word processor, database and spreadsheet. Let's say you want to impress your boss by combining the project results she has stored in E-mail logs, dBASE IV, Lotus 1-2-3, Microsoft Word files, etc. Just use your favorite word processor, such as WordPerfect, version 5.1, and begin writing. When you need to import information, pop up Outside In by pressing Ctrl-I, select the file and the text you want to import, and voila, no need to re-type anything.

(Outside....continued on next page.)

(Outside....continued.)

Besides copying information between applications, Outside In is also a very useful file browser. When using Outside In there is no need to fire up Paradox, Excel or Framework and wait until the program is loaded just because you merely want to read a certain file.

Also, very useful is the search feature. If you don't remember the file name (I never do, anyway) Outside In can search a single file or a whole directory for key words to help you find the information you want to look at or copy.

It is recommended that once you have Outside In installed on your hard drive that you quickly go through the tutorial as described in the manual. The tutorial is very easy to follow and sample screens are displayed in the user's guide. The tutorial guides you easily through 5 application examples of importing data: a word processor file or a spreadsheet into a WordPerfect table, a comma delimited format, a WordPerfect mail merge, and how to copy non-contiguous data. After completing the tutorial, which takes about 25 minutes, I felt very comfortable using Outside In without ever needing to refer back to the user's guide.

Also, very impressive is the available on-lint HELP. Displayed st the bottom of the screen are the function key assignments. By holding down the control key, the HELP is toggled to display the control key assignments. The F1 key puts you into the online HELP menu. As I mentioned earlier, there is very little need to dig out the user's guide, except to go through the tutorial.

Here is how it works. Outside In is a so called TSR program. This group of programs get their name from using a feature of the DOS operating system called TSR, Terminate and Stay Resident. As the name implies, these programs stay in memory after the user exits.

One of the very first TSR programs was SideKick by Borland. Actually, Outside In has many similarities to SideKick. After popping up Outside3 In and marking the text to be copied, Outside In imports this information by faking the key strokes necessary to type the marked text into your word processor. SideKick uses this same method, but what makes Outside In shine is that it knows how to display any file and how to import into any application, while SideKick is limited to ASCII (straight text) files only.

By the way, if your word processor is not listed among the over 60 predefined applications, you can define your own or change pre-existing ones. For example, you can change the key stroke Outside In should fake if it encounters the tab key.

I tested Outside In, version 2.0, for few weeks and did not find any major bugs. I even imported the entire PCUGDATE.DIR file (an ASCII text file 530K bytes long) into a WordPerfect document. It took a little while, but it worked flawlessly!

Outside In only uses a little less than 9K of RAM (memory). This makes it possible to have Outside In always loaded without losing precious RAM, which is desperately needed by many programs, such as FoxBase. Outside In can be very easily un-installed by hitting Ctrl-F10, provided no other TSR was loaded after Outside In was. There is no need to reboot, as there is with many other TSRs, and Outside In also will work on a network.

I run Desqview (a multi-tasking program, somewhat like Windows) on my AST-286. I recommend writing a small batch file, so that Outside In gets loaded before your word processor or database, etc. If you use Outside In as a file browser, a window with only 112K of memory is enough to run it. Outside In uses BIOS calls to write to the screen. This is necessary in order for Desqview to multi-task Outside In. After installation, the size of the Outside In directory is 746K. This includes all the sample files to run the tutorial.

Is Outside In just another occasional helpful utility? Nein! How much can you type in 30 minutes? This is the amount of time it takes to install Outside In and to go through the tutorial. Just tell your boss or spouse how productive you could be. The price of Outside In will pay for itself within days. Outside In is a "must have" program. Once you complete the tutorial you will be as hooked as I am on this helpful utility. I recommend Outside In to everyone who uses a word processor, database, spreadsheet or any combination of the three.

Outside In ver. 2.0, was concocted by:
Systems Compatibility Corporation
401 N. Wabash, Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 329-0700 - Sales
Springdale, Arkansas)

COMPUTER TRIVIA:
COMPAQ Computer Corporation. A Houston company that manufacturers high-performance IBM PC-compatible desktop and portable computers.
The first maker of IBM Personal Computer clones, COMPAQ's first computers were portable versions of the popular PC. The company sold over $100 million worth of computers in its first year in business (1983) setting a U.S. record.
COMPAQ was the first manufacturer to develop and market a desktop computer based on the Intel 80386 micro-processor.

■■■

```
'SOLUTION TO PUZZLE 3
'By: T. Cone, Jr.
'11/3/91
'
'ANSWER:  It takes 720 seconds for the
'         mosquito to catch the fly.
'         -  Mosquito circles 3 times.
'         -  Fly circles only 2 times.
'
'SOLUTION:
'measure position using 360 degree imaginary circle.
' - mosquito moves 1.5 degrees every second.
' - fly moves 1.0 degrees every second.
' - reset position after each bug finishes a circle.
' - track lapsed time, til both fly & mosquito are in
'       the same position on the circle.
' - advance fly & mosquito to their positions after 1 sec
'       of flight, to start the solution cranking.
CLS
MosquitoPosition = 1.5
FlyPosition = 1
MosquitoFlightTime = 1
FlyFlightTime = 1
MosquitoLaps = 0
FlyLaps = 0
TotalTime = 1

DO
  MosquitoPosition = 1.5 * MosquitoFlightTime
  IF MosquitoPosition = 360 THEN
    MosquitoFlightTime = 0
    MosquitoPosition = 0
    MosquitoLaps = MosquitoLaps + 1
  END IF

  FlyPosition = FlyFlightTime
  IF FlyPosition = 360 THEN
    FlyFlightTime = 0
    FlyPosition = 0
    FlyLaps = FlyLaps + 1
  END IF

  IF MosquitoPosition = FlyPosition THEN
    EXIT DO
  ELSE
    TotalTime = TotalTime + 1
    MosquitoFlightTime = MosquitoFlightTime + 1
    FlyFlightTime = FlyFlightTime + 1
  END IF
LOOP
' PRINT MosquitoPosition, FlyPosition, TotalTime
PRINT
PRINT "Total lapsed time: " + STR$(TotalTime) + "
seconds."
PRINT "Mosquito lapped bldg " + STR$(MosquitoLaps) +
" times."
PRINT "Fly lapped bldg " + STR$(FlyLaps) + " times."
END
```

Here's Puzzle #4:

An exercise involving strings of characters, and integers:

What value of "N" permits the following 6 digit number to be evenly divided by 99 ?

5N4,0NN

Good luck !

Association of PC User Group's Ten Biggest Lies in Computing:

by: Steve Bass

10. Your update is in the mail.
9. Tech support will get back to you.
8. Sure it'll work with your hardware.
7. No, we won't be serving fried mushrooms at Comdex.
6. It crashed your stystem? That's surprising-it's never happened to anyone else before.
5. Sure it'll work with your software.
4. Ashton-Tate? No, we'd never consider buying them.
3. Spencer the Cat party? Never heard of it.
2. No, the product works fine. This is only a maintenance release.
1. This will only take a minute.



Welcome New Members:

Donald Houston
Nal Legg
Jorge(George) Perez
Wayne Peterson
Guy Shipman
Robert M.D. Ward
Ronald Mirth
Kennteh Carter
Karen Schilit
Charlie Corces
Barbara J. Stifes
David Rogoff
John Webber

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- BITS OF BLUE BULLETIN BOARD
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  Voice: 237-4997
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  Full E-mail capabilities
  Numerous On-Line Files
- FULL SUPPORT from the
  IBM PC Users Group
- DISCOUNTS at
  SUNRISE COMPUTER SUPPLIES
  1224 S. Dale Mabry
  Tampa, Florida
- ACCESS to the CLUB'S
  PROGRAM LIBRARY



Tampa IBM PC Users Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

01-92

BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 4 NO. 12., 1991 December, 1991

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: December 11, 1991
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

12/11/91 **MICROSOFT** Visual Basic,
MS Works, **MS** Money & **MS** Publisher

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Refreshment Break
Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

NOTE: DOS CLASS -
by Ed Buzza
begins at 5:45 in Room 436

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Upcoming Presentations:

January - **WordPerfect for Windows**
February - **CorelDraw**



*** * 1991 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	932-6745
VICE PRES.:	Steve Speairs	875-1095
TREASURER:	Bill Fuller	832-0125
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
SECRETARY:	Jim Clark	
	Charles Howe	
	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDUCATION:	Ed Buzza	685-5898

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP:	Bill Fuller	832-0125

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

Geoworks Ensemble - Ed Buzza
MS WinConnect for Windows - Jay Swearingen
Que Computer Users Dictionary - Joe Crochet
50-50 ($25) - Jim Purcell.

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about IBM-PC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 11/13/91 MEETING --

(I did not join the meeting until the DOS class ended at 6:30 PM; what happened at the meeting prior to that time is unknown.)

In his typically thorough fashion, our President brought to the meeting much information relating to developments in the PC world that he had com across since the last meeting. Among those items were:

* A brief discussion of EXPOTECH recently conducted at the new convention center in Tampa. One could see some of the latest developments in PC hardware there, as well as find some very good buys. Harvey cautioned, however, that some of the vendors at such as EXPOTECH may not be from the local area and you might be hard pressed to get follow-on support in such instances.

* A new book store, "Book Shop", had opened across form University Square Mall. It is apparently a warehouse kind of store with a very good selection in the computer field, as well as discount pricing. Harvey reported that there appeared to be no organization in shelving the books and he therefore had some difficulty in locating selections. A good place to buy from a price standpoint.

* Harvey reported that the long awaited Comp USA computer store should be opened before the end of the year. It is being set up on Hillsborough between Himes and Dale Mabry. Visitors to there other store locations in Miami and Atlanta, among others, have made glowing remarks about these stores - especially low pricing. It will be a welcome addition to our sources. A word of caution: This is strictly a discount operation in a warehouse environment where you pretty much have to know what you want when you go in. It has rock bottom prices and service in commensurate.

* A new upgrade to Laplink is now available.

* The Far Side has come out with a personal information manager (PIM) program. One "advantage?" of this program over other PIMs is that it adds Far Side humor. On the other hand, some report utility shortcomings in this program compared to other PIMs. Look it over to be sure it does what you want before you put your money on the line.

* Harvey reported that Intel and IBM have joined together in a collaborative effort in computer chip development. Some discussion followed as to why, with a wide range of whys expressed. We will just have to wait and see. One thing for sure, though, is that both firms believe it in their best interest.

(Minutes continued on next page)

Minutes continued...)
HELP NEEDED:

Our club has grown to about 160 members now. Though this is some short of the 200 goal Harvey had set for 1991, we have grown a great deal. The workload had also grown a great deal and more member support and help is needed. The elected officers cannot continue to carry the entire load by themselves. Some very good improvements have been made to date in serving the needs of our members and we want to continue to improve and expand. Here are some of the things YOU can do to help:

* Make yourself available to serve as an officer with the club - and it is not to late to do so for the coming year; elections are at the December meeting. If you can't do that, make yourself available to assist.

* Provide articles for the Newsletter. If you come across information of general interest to the membership, submit it for the newsletter. Write a review of one of the programs you have and submit it. If you hear of or have developed some useful utility or technique which has been beneficial to you, submit an input to the newsletter. You know, our newsletter is a bit like a computer - no input, no output. Please help.

* We would like to expand areas of instruction to include word processing, data base, spreadsheet, communications, DTP, etc. BUT, we need people willing to conduct classes on these subjects. To date we have held two classes on DOS (the second in progress now), both of which have been conducted by Ed Buzza, our workhorse who also provides newsletter articles, program review presentations at our meetings, etc., etc.; he is doing far more than his share now. Come on people, share your expertise with your fellow club members. Contact Ed Buzza or Harvey Bruneau.

* We would like to get involved, as a club, in community service - give something back to the community. We need your thoughts on how we might do that.

NOMINATIONS: The President opened the floor to nominations for the elected positions in the club to serve during 1992. The following nominations were made:

President	Harvey Bruneau
Vice President	Steve Speairs
Treasurer	Bill Fuller
Education	Ed Buzza
Member At Large	Roger Waters
Secretary	
(Co-secretary	Jim Clark
(Co-secretary)	Charles Howe

Elections will be held at the December meeting. Nominations will be open until the time of the elections. Come on now, be prepared to make your nominations at the December meeting, or better still, volunteer yourself for one of these positions.

COMING PRESENTATIONS: The President reported that the following lineup had been completed for guest presentations:

DECEMBER - Microsoft Visual Basic, MS Works, MS Money, MS Publisher.

JANUARY - Word Perfect for Windows

FEBRUARY - Corel Draw

PROGRAM REVIEW: Following a break, our own Ed Buzza gave a review of Soft Key's Key Publisher. This is a DTP program which is identical to Timeworks' Publish It 1.2. DAK (a California based electronics mail order firm with which most of us are familiar) made a deal with Timeworks for a license to sell Publish It 1.2 under a different name and with different documentation; Timeworks had developed version 2.0, which is now on the market.

Key Publisher (KP) is a very flexible low-end DTP program. It has a lot to offer, especially for the price, and makes an excellent entry level DTP program. I say entry level recognizing that this program could well serve all of your DTP needs. On the other hand, the low end programs cannot compare in power and flexibility with the high end DTP programs like Pagemaker.

KP is not word a processor, but it has a word processor capability so that text can be entered from the keyboard into the program without difficulty. You are our of luck on spell check and thesaurus, though. Similarly, KP is not a graphics draw program, but it does have a limited draw capability. Among the features of Key Publisher are:

* Imports ASCII text files as well as files in the format of several of the major word processing programs.
* Imports graphics in several formats, including TIFF, PCX, GEM, IMG and EPS.
* Ability to create and retain "style" (master) sheets which saves much time on repeat publications.
* All low end DTPs are memory hogs in that they handle both graphics and text as bit maps. But, KP makes better use of conventional memory than some other low enders. The program does not use extended memory.
* The program will handle about 30 pages at one time, but I think you would run out of memory before that time is you use many graphics.
* The program is slow on the slower computers if you edit text or alter pages toward the beginning of a multiple page

(Minutes Continued on next page)

(Minutes Continued...)

document because of the redraw time. However, redraw time can be reduced by hiding all graphics.

* Hands pages from 3.75 X 6.5" to 8.5 X 14", with several sizes in between, landscape or portrait.

* Flexible column guides, with up to six columns allowed.

* Has six fonts, two of which can be sized in increments form 7 to 60 points; the other four offer only two sizes 15 (or 16) or 30 points. All of the standard styles are available, but only light is available in text effects.

* Graphics and text frames can be moved anywhere on a page, but cannot be rotated, flipped or distorted in any way.

* The "Help" available in the program is fairly good, but it is not location sensitive; that is, when you ask for help you are offered a help index form which you choose area of help you want. And, you cannot obtain help when you are in a dialog box.

And, so on. Ed gave an excellent presentation of Key Publisher, but space here precludes giving further detail. Tough limited compared to the high enders, it is a nice program and fairly easy to learn. He clearly showed that you get a lot of bang for the buck with this package which can be had from DAK for a mere $9.90, plus $4.50 S&H. If you are interested, here's the contact:

DAK Industries
8200 Remmet Ave
Canoga park, CA 91304-4182

1-800-325-0800 with credit card number.

Order item 5919S for 5 1/4" floppy, 5920S for 3 1/2" floppy.

■■■

For Sale:

Used, excellent condition, Apple II C computer with extra disk drive and printer. $400.00/OBO

CALL: 876-8320 Barbara, 9am-5pm or
933-6162, after 6pm

REMINDER:

* * * MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS * * *

If your renewal date on your mailing label reads 01-92, it is time to renew your membership. Complete the application on page 11 and mail it along with your check for $20 to the address indicated on the application.

HARD DRIVE CLUSTERS

By: Ed Buzza

The smallest area of disk that DOS can handle is a sector - 512 bytes. But DOS doesn't allocate disk space based on sectors, it allocates clusters. Clusters consist of several sectors depending upon the DOS version being used and the size of the hard drive. The smallest cluster on a hard drive is four sectors or 2048 bytes. When you write a 1k file, DOS uses 2k of space on the hard drive for that file. If your file size is 2050 bytes, DOS needs two clusters or 4096 bytes for that file.

Until version 4, 32 meg was the most that DOS could handle. But you could set up the physical hard drive as two or more logical hard drives. This way, DOS could handle a physical hard drive of 40 meg if it was partitioned as two logical drives each having 20 meg of space. DOS treated the logical drives as though each was a separate hard drive.

With version 4 and 5, the 32 meg barrier does not exist. Instead, a new problem arises - cluster size. Because of the way DOS sets up the File Allocation Table and its addressing scheme, cluster size varies as shown below:

DRIVE SIZE	CLUSTER SIZE
All versions	
16 meg or less	4k
Through ver 3.3	
16+ to 32 meg	2k
Ver 4 and 5	
16+ to 128 meg	2k
128+ to 256 meg	4k
256+ to 512 meg	8k
512+ to 1024 meg	16k

If your 40 meg hard drive is partitioned as 30 and 10 meg drives, that 10 meg drive has a lot of wasted space in its files. The same is true if your 200 meg hard drive is set up as a single drive. Sure, DOS ver 4 and 5 can handle it but each cluster is now given 4k of valuable real estate on the hard drive.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

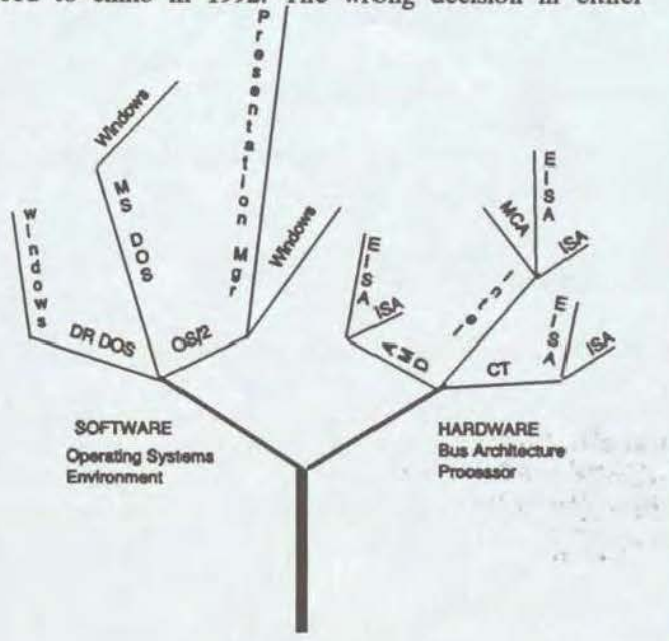
It has been one year and this is my twelfth publication of Bits of Blue. My thanks to all of you who contributed articles throughout the year. We've grown from 7 to 10 pages as the year progressed. I also thank you for your compliments and encouragement, it all makes it worth while. Keep up the good work and as always I do appreciate the feedback - be it praise or constructive criticism. You are a great group and I hope the information contained in BOB is in the most part helpful and informative to you. It's been a fun year, I can only hope it will get even better, if I should be appointed, elected, selected to be your editor for another year. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Marylee Bruneau

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Well another year is coming to a close. Voting for our 1992 officers will take place after the main presentation by **Microsoft** . Please be sure to make your nominations prior to that time. Present nominations are listed in the **Secretary's Report** column.

It certainly was an exciting year in the PC world. Next year may not see as many lawsuits, mergers or innovations since many companies have been swallowed up by bigger ones or just plain went out of business. However, endusers will have some serious decisions to make about hardware and software selections in the coming year. Hardware decisions will be mainly based on the processor manufacturer (**Intel, AMD, CT, or Whirlpool**) and the bus architecture (**ISA, EISA, Microchannel** or **Greyhound**). The ever growing list of non-standard standards is the main reason for falling hardware prices which should continue to drop through the 1st quarter of 1992. In the software arena, the decision will be among operating systems and environment. Please remember that Windows 3.0, **the present environment leader**, is just a shell which executes other programs. Windows 3.0 does require an operating system (DOS 3.1 or higher) before it can be used. The major battle of the year should be between IBM (**OS/2 2.0**) and Microsoft (**Windows 3.0**). IBM has a real challenge ahead of itself to overcome the head start which Microsoft has. It will take some fancy marketing by IBM for **OS/2** to establish even a foothold in the PC arena. Additionally, **DR DOS 6.0** (Digital Research, owned by Novell) could add to the fight against Microsoft dominance. Below is the tree we will need to climb in 1992. The wrong decision in either hardware or software could put you on the wrong branch. Hopefully as a group we can help each other determine which branch is best suited per individual. Unfortunately, I believe that one branch will not be the answer for everyone. Each member may have different requirements of a PC and only a specific branch may provide the desired results. However, the common denominator between all of us is that we do use a PC.



1992 Decision Tree. HPB

Last meeting I mentioned that I had ordered, from Gateway 2000 (mail order), a 486 33Mhz PC on the 11th of November. This was the 1st time I had used a mail order company. The PC cost $2645 + $95 for shipping for a total of $2740. The price included a tower case, 4Mb RAM, 1.2MB & 1.44MB Floppies, 16bit VGA board with 1MB, 14" color crystal scan monitor, 120Mb HD, Microsoft mouse, MS DOS 5.0 and Microsoft Windows 3.0. *This 486 machine is still cheaper than my original IBM PC that I purchased in 1984.* The day after placing the order I faxed a confirmation letter to my Gateway salesman. The letter confirmed the product I ordered along with detail about possible refund, price guaranty, service and support as it was presented to me. I don't mind telling you that was a lot of money and at 1st I was concerned. However, after reading reviews of Gateway products, seeing the Dun & Bradstreet rating of Gateway 2000, and hearing favorable comments from existing Gateway users within our user group, most of my concerns went away. Gateway promised that my PC would arrive in three weeks, which placed delivery around the 1st week of December. In actuality the PC was delivered in 11 days. The PC booted the 1st time and brought me into Microsoft Windows. Of course Gateway loaded DOS 5.0 and Windows 3.0 before shipping. So far this has been a pleasant experience. The main reason for getting the PC was to get into the Windows environment and yet still have the option of installing OS/2 2.0 when it arrives. After copying all my data from my old PC, I loaded three new Windows product which I have never used. These included Corel Draw, Perform Pro and Wordperfect. It wasn't long before that 120MB drive was full. I decided to install Stacker V2.0 compression software to increase the drive capacity. In all, my disk space doubled to 240MB for a cost of only $89 additional dollars. The only other problem I can see is that running Windows programs on a 14" screen is hard on the eyes. This is mainly due to the fact that data is displayed smaller than on a text based system.

My comments are not meant as an endorsement for Gateway 2000 products or that you should buy a 486 PC. You should determine your needs, budget and vendor comfort factor before you purchase.



From Marylee and I, we wish you and yours the best for the holidays and the coming new year.

Harvey Bruneau

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WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS
By: Read Gilgen, Madison PC Users Group

Editing (Part II)

Number 4: Easy blocking.

Anyone who does more than casual editing knows about the Block key (Alt-F4, or F12 if you have the enhance keyboard). You position your cursor at the beginning of a block of text, turn on Block, and move your cursor to the end of the block. You can then perform a myriad of miracles to the highlighted text, including: bolding, underlining, deleting, moving, copying, spell checking, printing, saving, protecting, upper or lower casing, searching, and more.

However, unless you have a speedy computer (and not all of us do), then moving the cursor character by character or line by line can be rather tedious. Here's how to make this task easier:

After turning on Block, you can press the Spacebar to highlight (block) the next word (the cursor actually moves to the next space it finds); or press the period to define highlight an entire sentence (cursor moves to the next period), or ENTER to highlight to the end of the paragraph (cursor moves to the next Hard Return).

Now blocking and moving paragraphs becomes quite simple, especially in conjunction with the next trick.

Number 5: Shortcut moving and copying.

You all probably learned how to move (cut and paste) by blocking, then pressing Ctrl-F4, **Block**, **Move**, repositioning the cursor, and the pressing Ctrl-F4, **Retrieve**, **Block**.

OK, so you're new to WordPerfect and never knew we used to have to use the above sequence to cut and paste. You probably noticed the prompt "Move cursor; press **Enter** to retrieve." at the bottom, so you just moved to where you wanted to paste and hit Enter.

Well now you can eliminate a couple more of the steps. If you have an enhanced interface keyboard (most AT-style or newer keyboards work; you don't need the new IBM enhanced keyboard), you can press Ctrl-INS to copy a highlighted block (this replaces Ctrl-F4, **Block**, **Copy**) or Ctrl-DEL to move a highlighted block (this replaces Ctrl-F4, **Block**, **Move**).

Note: Don't try to get fancy. You do *not* have to select the ENHANCED keyboard layout to use these shortcut keys.

Unless... if this does *not* work, you probably have an older computer. You'll probably use this to convince the boss to buy you a new one! But there actually *is* a way around this, if you want to learn about macros and keyboard layouts: you can assign the old-fashioned steps to Ctrl-Ins and Ctrl-Del. Then you *do* have to select that keyboard definition in order to use this shortcut.

Number 6: Cursoring by Paragraphs

While we're on the subject of enhanced keyboards (the AT-type, not the IBM monstrosities). You can now also move your cursor up or down a paragraph at a time by simply pressing Ctrl and hitting the up cursor or down cursor keys. Again, if this doesn't work on your computer (some portables can't do this), then add that to your list of reasons why you have to sell one of the kids in order to get your new computer.

More on editing next month...

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Editorial Comment:

This is the second in a series of six articles titled **WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS** *By: Read Gilgen, Madison PC Users Group*. These articles are available to our group by the Association of PC User Group bulletin board service. I hope you will find them informative and helpful.

HUMOR.TXT
Larry Anders

Beginner: A person who believes more than one-sixteenth of a computer salesperson's spiel.

Advanced User: A person who has managed to remove a computer from its packing materials.

Power User: A person who has mastered the brightness and contrast controls on any computer's monitor.

Sales Associate: A former cheese-monger who has recently traded mascarpone for MS-DOS

Sales Manager: Last week's new sales associate.

Consultant: A former sales associate who has mastered at least one tenth of the D-BASE 3 Plus Manual.

Systems Integrator: A former consultant who understands the term "AUTOEXEC.BAT".

Warranty: Disclaimer.

(Look for more Humor.txt next month)

Product Reviews:

The Game Room

By: Tom Petrocelli, Buffalo IBM Users Group, APCUG

The Holiday Shopping Awards for 1991.

What does the serious gamer want this coming holiday season? That's a very good question. With so many great games out on the market, a lot depends on how much money you have to spend. In general game prices fall into three categories, cheap, normal and only for those who can afford to appear on Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous. The first two price ranges are in a sense, somewhat arbitrary. Something is cheap is you can afford it without thinking about it. To a five year old with a 50 cents a week allowance, a candy bar is an expensive item. In the case of computer games, it's probably safe to say that if the game is under $20, it can be considered inexpensive. The normal range runs up to about $55. After that it's pricey and should be something special. So what looks like a good buy in each of these?

The envelope please . . .

In the cheap category, the winner is Monty Python's Flying Circus - The Gamefor $14.95. This is one of the most original, thoroughly hilarious, totally fun games ever created. As for play, it's not all that exciting, being in many ways just another arcade game, but who cares! It's chock full of references to the TV program and it hardly matters that you've seen this type of game before. It's like playing in a Terry Gilliam cartoon (for those of you who are not familiar with him, he was a member of the famous comedy troupe and the group's cartoonist). It is surreal, strange, weird and FUN, FUN, FUN! The problem with it is that if you are not a fan of the original TV program a lot of the game won't make sense to you, or seem particularly amusing. If you hated the program, you'll HATE the game. But if you loved it, like so many did, then run . . . don't silly walk . . . right out and get this game.

A partial lineup of what's in store for you is: falling dead parrots, cheese shop humor, Mr. DP Gumby, The Spanish Inquisition (I bet you didn't expect that), hedgehogs, half-a-bee's, exploding kittens, spam spam spam spam eggs sausage spam spam baked beans spam spam spam and spam, an argument, how to identify trees from a long distance and other overt acts of insanity. A must for the Monty Python fans in the family.

In the category of normal priced games, the winner, hands down is Harpoon. Previously reviewed in these pages, Harpoon falls toward the top of the price list for this category, is a over a year old, and is still one of the best games around. With its many add-ons and expansion sets, the true simulation wargamer will go ga-ga over this. The detail is outstanding, the play exciting and the action realistic. Look for a Middle East/Persian Gulf battleset this holiday season. At the time of the release of the last battleset they promised that it was forthcoming. Finally, in the so-expensive-I-need-to-mortgage-the-house category is (ta-da) Mother Goose by Sierra On-Line. First a confession. I've never actually played this one. All indications are that it is a truly fabulous game, with wonderful graphics, realistic sound (in fact there are no printed messages, the program just talks to you), and an imaginative theme. Based on the nursery rhymes, this is the type of software that kids can play and adults can enjoy. It lists for $59.95. But wait! That's not so much. No it isn't, unless you take into account the fact that it only comes on a CD-ROM. If you've got the player, then it's with in the normal range, but since most of us don't yet, the additional $400 to $500 for the CD- ROM player sure makes this an expensive toy. Mother Goose as well as the CD-ROM version of Kings Quest represent the future in games software. Programs so huge that they need to be run from a CD-ROM (which also makes them hard to copy) employing multimedia techniques to bring to the computer user something beyond the limits of a normal gaming experience.

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Product Review:

Norton Utilities 6.0

By: Tom Petrocelli, Buffalo IBM Users Group, APCUG

Usually when a software company upgrades a product these days, mostly what is added to the original software is just "bells and whistles." They usually leave the real changes to a new product that they can then charge much more money for. This is a strategy driven by market forces and not new technology. Thus when one sees a rapid series of upgrades in a product or product line, one assumes that there is probably nothing spectacular, and that they should consider waiting for a few revisions to go by before getting the latest and greatest. This is certainly not the case with the newest Norton offering from Symantec, the Norton Utilities 6.0.

When you first install the new NU 6.0, it is not all that impressive. The installation program does give you more control over what you wish to install and what you don't. The new interface is graphical (and Windows compliant) which is nice, but nothing to get excited about. In fact the first impression is reminiscent of the line from The History of the World Part I where Dom Deluise, as a Roman emperor looks over an alabaster bathtub and says <169>Nice. Nice. Not thrilling, but nice. This is very deceptive. What is really new about NU 6.0 is horsepower.

(Norton....continued on next page)

(Norton ...continued)

What is most amazing about the new Norton Utilities is how fast it is. It feels as if all the utilities now run at warp speed. The most noticeable effect is in the Speed Disk disk optimizer program. This is not surprising, considering that this program is the most susceptible to changes in performance speed. Other utilities like the Disk Editor usually run at a human's pace, but the Speed Disk is on its own. How fast is it? Previously, it took almost 30 minutes to do a full optimization on a 40 megabyte drive that was about 60% full. It now takes around a minute and a half. That's around 20 times faster. This of course means that you are more apt to optimize your disk, thereby gaining increased operating performance on a regular basis.

The other programs that comprise the Norton Utilities have also been given performance increases as well. Disk Doctor, Safe Format, and the Disk Tools all work at a faster rate then they did before. The differences are not as large as they are for Speed Disk, but are noticeable. The one exception to this is the Norton Change Directory. While they have added many new functions to it, such as the ability to prune and graft whole branches on your disk tree, it seems to be much slower. The trade off is well worth it, when you consider that it is not really so much a disk changing utility as a disk tree maintenance one.

The new Norton Utilities is in many ways smaller, using much less system resources as did its predecessor. Most of the programs are in a compressed format, in much the same way as a PKLITE compressed program is, although not in PKLITE format, and hence take up less disk space. Even with all the new utilities added in this release, the amount of hard disk space is the same as release 5.0. You have the option of expanding the programs to full size, but why would you want to? There is no noticeable delay when loading programs on a 286 machine, and on a 386 or better machine it would be downright silly to expand the programs out.

The memory usage of the Norton Utilities is also less than previous releases. This is true in an absolute sense (programs simply occupy less memory then they used to) and many portions of the utilities can be loaded into upper memory blocks or extended memory if a system is capable of it. This of course means it takes advantage of all the new features of DOS 5.0, as well as memory managers like QEMM-386 to make its use of conventional memory as small as possible. For those who don't have a 386, or DOS 5.0, there is no need to fret. The overhead on conventional memory is less anyway, but the Norton Utilities will do certain neat tricks to reduce its use of memory. For example the NDOS shell (a COMMAND.COM replacement) will swap out over 80K of itself to disk if the proper extended memory manager, or upper memory blocks manager, is not available.

Probably the best part of the new utilities is the NDOS shell. This is a COMMAND.COM replacement that can be used as your primary shell, that is loaded using the SHELL= command in a CONFIG.SYS file, or as a secondary command processor from the command line. Its use of conventional memory is actually <B>less than COMMAND-.COM yet it has many more functions. The NDOS command processor enhances almost every DOS command and adds a whole bunch of new ones. The great thing about NDOS is that it makes many of those utilities that you have clogging your disk, or loaded as TSRs, obsolete. For example, the command line is fully editable and maintains a history that allows you to recall any command that you've typed in from the command line. This eliminates the need for TSR utilities like CED which do the same thing, but require the use of conventional memory. Commands like FREE (which tells you how much disk space you have, have used, and have left) and MEMORY (which tells you similar information about memory) both take the place of many shareware utilities. POPD and PUSHD, do the same thing as the shareware utilities POPDIR and PUSHDIR, except that they require no TSR program and allow you to view and clear the directory stack. New batch file commands and enhancements, a file browser and a change directory AND drive command (CDD) are just some of the enhancements made to the DOS command line with NDOS. In addition, many DOS commands that are usually utility programs on disk like ATTRIB, are now internal commands. This makes them faster and eliminates the need to have these programs on your disk.

By now it may have occurred to some people that the new DOS 5.0 provides many of these same functions, such as enhanced commands, a command line editor and a command history. This is all true, but NDOS does it better. For example, in order to have those command line editing and history features in DOS 5.0, you must load a TSR program. This eats up RAM. Everyone seems to forget that as Extended RAM and High Memory finally become useful, they will experience the same RAM cram problems that you have in conventional memory (up to 640K). If it can be packed into a smaller case, then in the end it's better. Besides NDOS gives you these features without going to DOS 5.0 at all! If you haven't gotten around to upgrading your version of DOS, NDOS will provide you with many of the same, if not more, functions.

Another nice feature of this release is not what's new, but what's old. Many people were annoyed that most of the command line-oriented commands like LP (line printer) and TS (Time Stamp) were eliminated with the Norton Utilities 5.0 release. While they did become available later, you had to send for them separately. There really was no reason to

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(Norton ...continued)

eliminate them in the first place, and Symantec must have realized that, because they are back and in some cases improved for 6.0. Directory Sort, for example, is now revamped to give you a graphical interface if you choose not to use the command line options. The FILE FIND and FILE LOCATE programs are similar, but if you wish a non-graphical interface, you now have a choice.

In fact, many of the programs have enhanced command line parameters. This makes them much more useful in batch files, or to those people who need or prefer to use a command line interface instead of a graphical one. It is in this that Symantec most clearly recognizes that not everyone wants a graphical interface, or that such an interface is not always the most expedient method to work with.

While it's easy to get caught up in all the new features, and the better use of memory and disk space, one tends to forget to appreciate the little things that make any software package a useful thing. At the top of the list is documentation which can often decide whether someone really gets any use out of a piece of software or not. In this case, the documentation is clear, concise, and well organized. In addition to the User's Guide and Disk Explorer booklets that came with previous versions (the latter of which belongs on everyone's desk), there is the NDOS manual and an expanded Command Line User's Guide. The former tells you everything you want to know about NDOS and in many ways is a better DOS manual then the one that probably came with your computer. It's a great desk reference. The latter lists all the utilities that can be run from the command line, including explanations of what they do and all of their parameters. Also included in this are condensed versions of all the NDOS commands.

Another oft overlooked feature is good context sensitive help. Norton Utilities 6.0 allows you to get help while in any of the Utilities, as well as the NORTON program (used to launch programs if you don't wish to do so from a command line) and in NDOS. The NDOS one is the best, allowing you to type NHELP or HELP from the command line, or just hit the F1 key. Also if you have a command at the command line and hit F1, help on that specific command will pop up. Help is available from yet another source as well. Each command and Norton Utility program will type out a help information when given a /? parameter. This, incidentally is the same parameter used for getting help from DOS 5.0 commands. It's hard to get lost in the Norton Utilities.

While there have been vast improvements to the Norton Utilities, there are still a few, somewhat annoying traits that haven't been dealt with. For example, SYSINFO hasn't changed much and still gives benchmarks in Norton Units (whatever they are) which doesn't help when trying to make comparisons. While one can debate the various benchmarks that are currently in use like Whetstones or MIPS, these at least are standards and can be used for comparative information. Erase Protect (which used to be called File Protect) still creates a trash directory which uses up disk space and Norton Change Directory continues to have a problem with path names starting at the root directory. In most cases if you wish to go immediately to a directory, you need only provide part of the name to NCC. For example if you want to go to \COMM\DOWNLOAD, you only need to type NCC DOWN and it will immediately find the nearest directory that contains the letters DOWN. Now, say you wanted to go to \LOTUS, and typed NCC \LOT or even NCC \LOTUS, you wouldn't end up in \LOTUS like you might expect, but in the root directory instead. In fact whenever you start a path name with a \, you end up in the root directory. This is an annoyance that should be fixed.

The latest version of the Norton Utilities is fast, easy to use and powerful. It does precisely what it means to do, give you the tools to manage, maintain and fix disks and disk problems. Symantec has clearly listened to its customers and has added the kind of functions and features they want. While not quite perfect, the <MI>Norton Utilities 6.0 goes a long way towards putting the power needed to handle disk management into the hands of everyone who needs it. This is a sure bet.

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Book Review:
By: Hugh Bayless, Monterey Bay User Group

THE PC USER'S GUIDE
Nick Anis & Craig Menefee

This is another of the DVORAK Osborne/McGraw-Hill books that was not written by John Dvorak, but that is certainly nothing against it. Written for the novice PC user who wants to become more expert in using his/her computer, this book achieves its goal admirably. My only regret about The PC User's Guide is that it wasn't available when I was going through the often painful process of learning this material on my own.

From Chapter 1, where you will learn about what computers do, through chapters on DOS shells and utility programs, to troubleshooting your computer when you encounter a problem, this book covers the field. There is a good chapter on advanced DOS and batch file techniques, and there is even a chapter on how to get started in BASIC.

If you only want to know how to run the applications you use, you won't need this book. On the other hand, if you want to learn how your computer works and how to get the most out of it, this would be an invaluable addition to your bookshelf. 725 pages for $29.95 at your favorite computer bookstore.

CIVILIANS

By: Ed Buzza

The Armed Forces tend to regard themselves as members of a unique community. And they often call the rest of the world "civilians". So it is with some computer people. They speak an alien language and know about strange things like PCs, GUIs, RAM and so on. Those who are not computer literate are, in their eyes, civilians. Hence it is not unusual that a PC user and a civilian will, at times, fail to communicate. I imagine some conversations might be like:

Q. Which PC Tools are you using?
A. Just a pair of long nose pliers and a small screw driver.
Q. Do you use Norton Utilities?
A. Nah, we're hooked into TECO.
Q. How many drives d'ya have?
A. Two - a hook and a slice.
Q. Why are you xeroxing that disk?
A. 'Cause the boss said, Do a disk copy'.
Q. Why do you want to take the disk out of its jacket?
A. You said to erase it and it's hard to do in that little window.
Q. Where did the map maker keep all his disk files?
A. In the route directory.
Q. How many meg for this program?
A. One if by LAN, two if by C.
Q. Is this a Basic program?
A. Oh no, it's *real* complicated.
Q. Why did you kick the computer?
A. You said 'Boot it'.
Q. Have you ever ZIPped any files?
A. No, but I've zapped a few.
Q. Why did you choose FoxPro?
A. I'm not going to dBASE *my* files.
Q. Why do you want to put the computer in reverse?
A. How else do you back it up?
Q. What database did you install for that pair of doctors in the new clinic?
A. What else - PARADOX.

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MURPHY'S PROGRAMMERS LAWS

On BBS by: Larry Anders

Brook's Law - Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later.

Dijkstra's Law of Programming Inertia - If you don't know what your program is supposed to do, you'd better not start writing it.

First Maxim of Computers - To err is human, but to really screw things up requires a computer.

Gallois's Revelation - If you put tomfoolery into a computer, nothing comes back out but tomfoolery. But this tomfoolery, having passed through a very expensive machine, is somehow ennobled, and no one dares to criticize it.

Corollary - An expert is a person who avoids the small errors while sweeping on to the Grand Fallacy.

Product Review:
By: Thomas H. Cramer

Chuck Yeagers: Air Combat ** 1/2 Local Price $41.99

Chuck Yeagers AC is a far better than his AFT series. The thing that really drew my attention was that you could fly historical missions (from WWII, Korea, And Vietnam). Also the graphics are about 80% better, the player interface has a "more natural" feel, the game allows more "options" than his AFT series also, and lastly it offers a way to CREATE your missions, and you can fly anything from a P-51 (they are in all of his games) to a MIG-21 and about 10 other machines in between. To give you an idea how easy this game is to use, without any documentation I had it setup in 5 Min., and I was a "PRO" within an hour. In summary I think this flight simulator is one of the best ever produced.

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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 5 NO. 1., 1992 January, 1992

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: January 8, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

1/8/92 **WordPerfect for Windows**
By - WordPerfect Corp.

Refreshment Break
Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

NOTE: DOS CLASS -
by Ed Buzza
begins at 5:45 in Room 436

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Upcoming Presentations:

February - **CorelDraw**

Welcome!



**** 1992 OFFICERS ****

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TREASURER: Bill Fuller 832-0125
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LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
BBS SYSOP: Kevan Sheridan 237-0100
MEMBERSHIP: Bill Fuller 832-0125

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

Weltris - Kevin Sheridan
WinConnect - Donna Stanton
Microsoft Money - Tom Cone
50/50 Raffle $29 - Ruth Radlein

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 12/11/91 MEETING --

There was the customary announcement of upgrades. Windows 3.2 is in early beta testing. It is not a 100% certainty that the Bordland - Ashton-Tate merger will be permitted by the FTC.

Kirk Covert of Microsoft demoed three recent Microsoft releases destined for home and small business use.

Microsoft Money - Write checks, track expenses, create budgets, organize your assets and plan your financial future ($48). **(This product won by Tom Cone)**

Microsoft Publisher - Inexpensive desktop publishing with features found in higher priced packages. Use to designed flyers and newsletters $138.

Microsoft Works - A combination of important business tools including word processing, spreadsheet analysis, database management, charting and drawing. $138.

Although Visual Basic was on the agenda, it was postponed due to Kirk's time constraints. The majority of the attending membership really wanted to see this product and asked Kirk to come back at a later time for a demo.

Elections; the entire slate was voted in without balloting for individual office. Ed Buzza left the position of Secretary to fill the position of Education. Jim Clark and Charles Howe will share the position of secretary.

The president (Harvey) announced that he was working cooperatively with a New York publishing company, which contacted him, to get exceptional subscription rates for computer magazine subscriptions. Harvey has concerns and apprehensions about telling members to send money to a company he is not familiar with. He is researching the company to make sure its legit. Following is a sample of 1 year rates for some of the magazines available.

Byte	9.00
PC computing	9.00
PC Magazine	17.00
PC Novice	8.00
PC World	10.00

There was a short discussion of ink jet printers. It was noted that it is possible to buy a HP color ink jet printer for something in the $700's and a B&W printer for something like $400. These printers produce the same quality of a 300 DPI laser printer at half the speed. Some members mentioned that the cost per page was greater than a matrix.

There was a short Q&A session. The perennial questions, How much memory do you need to run Windows? was brought up. Answer: as a practical matter, 4mb but the more the better. What size monitor do you need for working with text (word processing) under Windows? Answer: at least 16".

The importance of renewing membership subscriptions was emphasized. If your subscription runs out, as printed on the mailing date, you will not receive a copy of the newsletter in the mail. The labels on the newsletter contain a date representing the date your membership is no longer valid. You should renew prior to that month.

■■■

GOLUB'S LAWS OF COMPUTERDOM
(Larry Anders)

1. Fuzzy project objectives are used to avoid the embarrassment of estimating the corresponding costs.

2. A carelessly planned project takes three times longer to complete than expected; if carefully planned, it will take only twice as long.

3. The effort required to correct course increases geometrically with time.

4. Project teams detest weekly progress reporting because it so vividly manifests their lack of progress.

■■■

Best wishes in the New Year.

PRODUCT REVIEWS:

PARADOX SE *By: Jeff Hansman (Copyright(c) 1992 by the Monterey Bay Users Group-PC.)*

As a long time fan and user of Borland's outstanding database management system (DBMS) Paradox, I thought that a scaled-down version of the program sounded like a great idea. After all, the full-blown version of Paradox 3.5 packs a lot of power, probably more than the average use really needs. Consequently, when I installed Paradox SE on my computer, I expected to find an old friend with a few bells and whistles removed. As it turns out, I was only half right.

My first surprise came when I opened the box and found not the excellent documentation normally provided by Borland, but a book by Sybex, a publisher of fine computer related material. What surprised me more than the inclusion of a Sybex book was its title, "The ABCs of Paradox." Not Paradox 3.5, the current version, but Paradox, as in "not the current version." This raised my antennae high enough to take a look at the files I had installed, and lo and behold what did I find? Nothing less (or more) than the files for Paradox 3.0! "Ah ha" I cried, congratulating myself on what I imagined to be a nifty bit of detective work. I began to mumble insults directed at Borland under my breath, sure I had uncovered some sinister plot to deceive an unsuspecting public while reaping vast fortunes. Finally, I paused, sat back and took stock of what Borland has really done.

What the buyer of Paradox SE (for Special Edition) gets is not a mini Paradox 3.5, but a version of the previous edition (3.0) without network support, the Personal Programmer (an application generator) or the Data Entry Toolkit (a development aid for fancy data entry routines). Is this bad? Some kind of ripoff? Hardly. The truth is, most end users who require a relational system would probably not need or use these excluded tools. I actually like the idea of having the "essential" Paradox without being charged for all the other modules. With Paradox SE, you can still manipulate your data as you would with version 3.5, query by example (the strong suit of Paradox), create forms and reports, and even write and execute PAL code. You just have to do it with version 3.0, which is still a nimble product. The difference between the two versions lies mainly in the latter's ability to use memory more efficiently, and this usually comes into play with large databases.

So, does it make sense to buy this version of Paradox? I think so, unless your needs take you into the realm of sophisticated application development or running on a network. What I do wish is that Borland had been a little more up front by letting prospective buyers know exactly what they're getting. As it is, the unsuspecting have every reason to believe the box contains "Paradox 3.5 Jr." Yet, even though this is not the case, what the buyer does get is well worth the street price ($75-$80) and will probably be all the DBMS they will ever need. Borland International can be reached at (408) 438-5300. ■■■

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Well another year (1992) to make our group bigger and better. It seems like I said this the last 3 or 4 years. As usual, I am not sure if your vote for me is one of **'hey Harvey your doing a good job as president and we want you to continue'** or **'well he is the only nomination so we better vote for him'.** As for the other officers, I am personally really happy to see them come back for another year. These people: Ed Buzza, Larry Anders, Kevan Sheridan, Roger Waters, Marylee Bruneau, Bill Fuller and Steve Spears are the glue and nucleus of our group. Without their behind the scene help I could not do my job and the group would flounder. Of course we welcome the new kids, Jim Clark and Charles Howe for 92. Additionally, a big thank you to IBM and Chris Mayer for the help and resources they have provided. IBM has taken some of the worries and problems we have experienced in the past away. In all, you are provided with the best available resources for a volunteer non-profit group. If you think they are doing a good job, please take a minute out of your time to tell them so. A sincere recognition from a fellow PC user can keep us going for a while. At times we are frustrated by the lack of any feedback from members, whether it be positive or negative. While not our intention, we were the best kept secret in Tampa. We have begun with a more aggressive exposure campaign to make our group known. In 1991, we finally created a handout/brochure to explain our group and its benefit. These can be found in retail stores like Sunrise Computer Supplies, Software Etc., The Computer Factory and CompuAdd. Its only a start, and we will add more, but we still need your help. Last meeting several of you wanted those flyers to pass out, look for them at the January meeting. My membership goal for this year is pretty high but yet attainable.

1. Membership by 12/31/92 to 300.
2. Create Special Interest Groups (SIG) for:
   a. Wordprocessing b. Database
   c. Spreadsheet d. Windows
3. 9600 baud BBS

The first two goals will be easily accomplished with your help. Take and distribute flyers to interested friends or companies. Let a board member know of stores willing to distribute our flyers. If you feel others could benefit from your knowledge, volunteer to lead a SIG group. I have mentioned some SIG groups above, but our group is not limited to only those. SIGs do not need to meet on a regular basis, but they should have an accountable leader.

As our membership increases so will our rewards. The more members the more experience we bring into our fold to share. The more local authors of articles we can add to our newsletter and the more volunteers we can get to enhance our group beyond what we know have. There is a lot that we can do to help ourselves, but it will require the general help of you our members. Do not put the entire future of our group growth in the board members hands. **Help us get bigger and better.**

1992 should be the year of a major battle. IBM vs Microsoft. Should IBM and Microsoft ship their new products, Windows 3.1 and OS/2 2.0 in the 1st quarter it will be something to see. If you got the horsepower (386+), the product works as advertised and the price is under $99, OS/2 0 will be a great operating system. Microsoft will need to add more than fixes to its Window product to keep IBM at bay. Even if IBM gave away OS/2 in 92 it surely won't unseat Windows. However in 93 the tide could turn. Remember Window requires and operating system (DOS, OS/2 ...) to run.

Harvey P. Bruneau

■■■

IBM TRIPLES SPEED OF TRANSISTOR FOR LOW-POWER COMPUTERS

(BPS) -- IBM researchers said they have more than tripled the speed of a kind of transistor that could power high-performance, low-power computers.

The new transistor operates at a maximum frequency of 20 billion cycles each second.

The scientists described their new transistor -- which makes use of a novel design and a promising new material -- at the International Electron Devices Meeting (IEDM) in Washington, D.C.

The transistor is known as a "lateral bipolar" transistor because it conducts charge horizontally and uses both positively and negatively charged particles to carry electrical current.

The scientists said the transistor's speed improvement stems from its particularly innovative lateral design, which decreases capacitance and resistance, electrical forces that slow current. The transistor's low-power requirements are enhanced by its fabrication from a promising material known as silicon-on-insulator, rather than from pure silicon.

Because the experimental transistor runs at high speed while consuming a relatively low amount of power, it could be applied in the future to computers that are both very fast and compact. And because the new transistor is compatible with transistors widely used today, it could be integrated easily into computer chips that maintain both power and speed advantages.

The development of the fast new transistor brings the speed of power-saving lateral transistors close to the speedier but power-consuming vertical transistors. Because the low-power lateral transistors generate less heat, the chip designers can pack more of them on a single chip, bringing the speed of larger computers to smaller machines.

■■■

QUATTRO PRO SPECIAL EDITION

By: Lee Keely

Quattro Pro Special Edition (QPROSE) is smaller, quicker and cheaper than Quattro Pro Version 3.01 (QPRO3). It may be all you need to do your spreadsheet work. In general, QPROSE is a reissued package of version 2.0, but there are some differences.

I directly compared all features of the two programs by displaying both on the screen at the same time using DesqView. I also used large macros developed in QPRO3 to test QPROSE. My goal was to compare QPROSE with QPRO3 to determine the advantages and disadvantages of each.

First let's look at the advantages of QPROSE.

With each program in character based mode, QPROSE loads into your computer in less than half the time of QPRO3. Macros are completed faster in QPROSE. QPRO3 WYSIWYG takes about 3 times as long to load as QPROSE. Also, with my large macros, QPRO3 in WYSIWYG required about 2 to 3 times as long as QPROSE to execute. QPROSE occupies about 3.0MB of hard disk space while QPRO3 occupies 3.8MB.

QPROSE retains all of the multi-page consolidation technology, spreadsheet publishing, built-in draw package, and Lotus 1-2-3 compatibility (although not the 1-2-3 menus). Its electronic slide show feature and automatic font-building add graphic presentation capabilities yet to be found in any other PC spreadsheet.

QPROSE comes with a totally revised instruction manual which is simpler and friendlier, than QPRO3 manuals. I believe this manual would be easier for someone new to spreadsheets and classroom students. It is not as complete as the QPRO3 manuals and not as convenient a reference manual.

Now, let's look at what you are missing in QPROSE that might be required in your work. Comparing the pull down menus reveals the following:

/File Utilities DOS: QPROSE exits to DOS and requires "EXIT" back into QPROSE while QPRO3 retains control and a mere Escape key returns to the Quattro Worksheet.

/Edit are all the same

/Style: you can reset block (column) width but not block (column) height. Fewer Fonts are available, but there are many.

/Graph: all first level are the same

/Graph Overall: does not have "drop Shadow"

/Graph Name Display: there is no Auto Save Feature. Graph buttons to switch graphs still work, but the auto save feature is missing)

/Graph Name Slide provides slide show capability but no sound or transition effects.

/Print: No multiple Copies
No Print to Fit

/Options Hardware: shows Memory/EMS for start, but not remaining available or the ability to reserve EMS. Also there is no Mouse button assignment feature in this menu.

/Options Display: No WYSIWYG or scaling. Many of the same display options are available, but whichever you select is not shown on the menu.

/Options Startup MenuTree: only Q1 and Quattro options (no Lotus 1-2-3)
In summary, QPROSE does not include the alternate menus for 1-2-3 and is not networkable. QPROSE does not include WYSIWYG display; graphics printing support of Print-to-Fit, Percent Scaling, Banner output, HPLaserJet III's scaleable fonts; nor sound effects or transitions for slide shows. Documentation is a single manual (compared to the full product's 3 manual set), designed more for beginning users.

However, QPROSE is less expensive, smaller and faster than QPRO3. QPROSE should be the choice for slower and older computers. If the added features in QPRO3 are not required for your work, the faster QPROSE should be selected.

I believe that Borland will have a winner QPROSE. When I compare QPRO3 enhanced features with my requirements, I find that the only feature I would miss in switching from QPRO3 back to QPROSE would be the "Print to Fit".

If you are not a QPRO user, or you are involved in teaching spreadsheets, QPROSE may be ideal for you. At a list price on only $69.95 compared to the QPRO3 List price of $495 or a shift from a competitive spreadsheet of $129.95, QPROSE is a great deal. Be aware, that Borland is still offering QPRO3 at $99.95 under certain conditions. Call 1-800-331-0877 for ordering information.

■■■

MAXIMIZER LITE

Contact Management and Book Making

By: Rod McKenzie, Contributing Editor, Madison PC User's Group (Copyright 1992 by Madison PC User's Group, published in the January 1992 Bits & PC's, a publication of the Madison PC User's Group.)

Maximizer Lite, from Richmond Technologies, is a contact management program that can be operated on a PC without a hard drive. All it requires, in its most spartan form, is one 720K diskette drive. It is the lean, entry-level version of their pace-setting contact management product for single users and networks, called The Maximizer.

Contact management is an emerging application that has gained wide acceptance and can be useful to sales personnel, service-oriented organizations, and volunteer groups. It could prove its worth almost anywhere people need to be able to add current data to previous information, or maintain addresses and phone numbers about individuals or businesses. Users who take a laptop or notebook PC on the road could use it very effectively to schedule and plan an appointment schedule, make lists for follow up, and generally stay on top of the paperwork.

Contact management software is essentially a customized database application that requires consistent input to keep it up to date. It's not really for everybody. Most of the features in contact management software, such as Maximizer Lite, assume that the computer will be your constant companion, or at least at an accessible place where you will frequently touch base. It can give the user a "hot list" of things to do, show a day-at-a-glance calendar of upcoming events, dial the phone, and much more. It works this way only so long as the input is current and complete.

As a database, Maximizer Lite requires input of information about the people, companies or activities to be included. This usually starts with information such as names, addresses, zip codes, phone numbers, position descriptions, and other pertinent details. Maximizer Lite also allows notes and a chronological record of contacts to be entered. Each time a new contact is made, it too is added to the history. Future dates for follow up, or other commitments, can then be added to the calendar. Selective printouts can focus the user's attention, helping decide what to do next.

Relating Information

The strength of a database is in its ability to relate information about the entries, the people, within the database. This can often be as simple as ranking in ascending or descending order, or by grouping together entries with matching fields.

Maximizer Lite makes the task easy, offering predefined lists of column headings and the option to customize headings, if desired. Maximizer Lite makes it possible to generate form letters, a feature some may object to on principle alone, but a useful feature, nonetheless. As a mail merge file, it can be saved in several formats so that it can be used in MS-Word,

WordPerfect, WordStar, or other word processors accepting ASCII character-delimited text files. As an alternate approach, a letter may be imported into Maximizer Lite if it is in an ASCII text file. Automatic dialing is supported by the program. If a modem is attached, the user needs to make sure that Maximizer knows where to find it by having the communications settings. That's found in the Utilities menu under User Defaults.

In the Advanced Options, Maximizer Lite gives the user the opportunity to rename the fields in the database. This would be appropriate for using Maximizer Lite to organize the members of a church, Scout troop, fraternal organization, or even members of a band, barbershop chorus, EMS, or military reserve unit. Fields could be renamed for Rank, Specialty, Patrol, Section, Instrument, or duty assignments.

Making Book

Included with Maximizer Lite is a copy of "Books, Cards, and Labels," a program for printing from the database file. Books, Cards, and Labels is a product of Useful Software, of Calabasas, California, which is also available as an independent program for printing from database or text files. It give users the option to print large and small format pocket address books, calendar pages, Rolodex cards, envelopes, and mailing labels. These formats are supported on dot matrix and laser printers.

The book pages can be printed in several sizes for DayTimer, Filo-Fax, Running Mate, Little Black Book, and Franklin Time Management binders. The sizes range from a 3"x5" format up to a full 8.5"x11" page. Books, Cards, and Labels supports HP LaserJet fonts, cartridges, and Bitstream downloadable soft fonts. Records may be selected from the database so that customized pages of addresses or a day's activities can be created. Perforated pages with pre-punched holes are available from Useful Software to make it easy to add the output of Books, Cards, and Labels to existing ring binders.

Richmond Technologies recently announced a price reduction for Maximizer Lite. It is now priced at $79.95, and is a product of:

Richmond Technologies & Software, Inc. 6400 Roberts Street, Suite 420 Burnaby, BC V5G 4C9 Canada (604) 299-2121 (604) 299-6743 (FAX)

■■■

'PUZZLE #4 SOLUTION

By: T.Cone,Jr.

```
'
'Answer: N = 9
'Proof : 5N4,0NN becomes 594,099
'       594,099 / 99 = 6001
'Solution is found by plugging all possible integer values
' into the string, converting the string to numeric value,
' and testing to see if that value can be divided by 99
' without leaving a remainder

Begin$ = "5N40NN"
FOR N = 1 TO 9
  answer$ = MID$(Begin$, 1, 1) + LTRIM$(STR$(N)) +;
            MID$(Begin$, 3, 2) + LTRIM$(STR$(N)) +;
            LTRIM$(STR$(N))

  'the MID$ function cuts substrings out of Begin$
  'the STR$ function converts numeric values to character
  '  strings.
  'the LTRIM$ function removes leading blanks

  'now test Answer$ to see if current value of N works:

  IF VAL(answer$) / 99 = INT(VAL(answer$) / 99) THEN
     'the VAL function converts a string of characters
     '   into numeric values.
     'the INT function returns the largest integer
     '   that is less than or equal to the actual numeric
     '   value.  If there is no remainder we have our
     '   answer.
     CLS
     PRINT : PRINT
     PRINT "The answer is : " + LTRIM$(STR$(N))
     PRINT "The number is : " + MID$(answer$,1,3) + ","
+;
           MID$(answer$, 4, 3)
  ELSE
     'there is a remainder, so test next integer
  END IF
NEXT N
END
```

■■■

Puzzle #5

By: T.Cone,Jr.

The children in a family returned home on Halloween night, after their "trick or treat" expedition in the neighborhood.

Before going to bed, they put all their jelly beans in a common pile for division into equal shares the next morning.

During the night one child gets up, separates the pile into equal stacks (one for each child), with one left over (that is immediately eaten!). The child removes one of the stacks and hides it. All remaining stacks are pushed back together into a new common pile. This child is followed in turn by all the other children, one at a time. Each child does exactly the same thing. (If these kids sound hyper, just remember they ate a lot of sugar before retiring for the night!).

Next morning the remaining jelly beans are divided equally with one remaining jelly bean going to the family dog.

If there are 5 children in the family, what's the least number of jelly beans they could have begun with ? How many jelly beans are distributed to each child in the morning ?

■■■

WIN/TV ADD-IN CARD LETS TV VIDEO DISPLAY IN WINDOWS 3.0 ENVIRONMENT

(BPS) -- Hauppauge Computer Works, Inc. has introduced a PC add-in card that lets standard (TV) video appear inside a movable, resizable VGA display window in the Windows 3.0 graphical environment.

Menus in that window let users adjust color saturation, hue, RGB balance, brightness and contrast; frame-grab; and select among three NTSC or PAL video sources (camera, VCR, videodisc, etc.).

Win/TV is available for $495. Win/TV provides a pass-through connection between a computer's VGA card and monitor, and inserts the video picture there. This eliminates the problem of computer system bus and memory speeds being too slow to display full-motion images in real time. The card communicates with its companion software to determine the size and position of the on-screen window, and whether the image that will occupy it should be the full-screen video or a zoom-in image of a selected area.

The frame grabber can work as a simple "freeze frame" utility or store frames in Windows Paintbrush (.BMP), IBM Motion and Targa formats.

"We foresee a lot of applications for this in security, quality control and law enforcement," said Ken Plotkin, Hauppauge vice president of Marketing. "Stockbrokers can watch CNN while they work and anticipate how news will effect the markets. Insurance offices can watch adjuster-shot tapes of incident sites while working on claims records. And I'm sure more than a few users will be watching ball games or favorite tapes."

For applications involving as many as six video inputs, two Win/TV cards can coexist on a system. Minimum requirements include Windows 3.0, a VGA adapter and monitor, and an available ISA 16-bit slot. Contact: Hauppauge Computer Works, Inc., 91 Cabot Court, Hauppauge, NY 11788; 516/434-1600.

■■■

WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS
By: Read Gilgen, Madison PC Users Group

Editing (Part III)
Number 7: Interrupting Move/Copy

As we mentioned last time, WP's new "paste" procedure (Move cursor; press Enter to retrieve.) is fast and easy. But sometimes you simply aren't ready yet to paste your text, but you can't edit (e.g. add a hard return) without dropping your text wherever you happen to be.

If you want to remove the message, "Move cursor; press **Enter** to retrieve," (i.e. suspend the move/copy process) press Cancel (F1). The text can later be retrieved by pressing Move (Ctrl-F4) and choosing **Retrieve**, then **Block**.

Number 8: A Paste Shortcut

Whenever you move or copy a block of text, it is saved in a "buffer" of your computer's memory for later retrieval. If you move or copy something else, or exit WordPerfect, that text is lost. But until you do so, the text is there even after you "paste" it.

If you think of the "buffer" as being a file that has no name, you can quickly and easily retrieve the text by pressing Retrieve (Shift-F10) and then without giving a name, simply press **Enter**. This works in place of Ctrl-F4, **Retrieve**, **Block**, and can be used over and over again to replicate a block of text in several locations.

Number 9: Changing the Size of Reveal Codes

Some of you out there are real "Reveal Codes" fanatics. In fact, you even do all of your editing while in reveal codes. I guess there's something reassuring about seeing everything, although the cluttered screen drives me nuts (OK, so I'm already there!)

A nice compromise would be to be able to have a nice large editing area, and a smaller reveal codes area. With version 5.1 you can do just that.

If you want to change the size of Reveal Codes for a single editing session, press Reveal Codes (ALT-F3), then Screen (Ctrl-F3), Window, and then enter the number of lines to be reserved for normal text. The Reveal Codes section of the screen will take up the remaining space. Instead of entering a number, moving the up or down cursors will expand or shrink the windows to your taste. Then just press Enter when you are satisfied. If you shrink the reveal codes window to just one line, you will see only *one* character or code (the one your cursor is on).

To change the size of Reveal Codes permanently, press Setup (Shift-F1), choose **Display**, **Edit-Screen Options**, then **Reveal Codes Window Size**. If you enter **1** for one line, only the *current* code or character will appear in the Reveal Codes screen.

Number 10: Last Editing Tip (hooray...)

If you have an EGA or VGA monitor, a Hercules card, or other selected graphics card, you may be able to change the number of lines and characters that can be displayed on the screen at one time. To do so, press Setup (Shift-F1), choose **Display**, then **Text Screen Type**. Be sure to select the type of display adapter you actually have (you can't get a silk purse from a sow's ear, or VGA resolution from an EGA adapter). Then from the options, select a different setting for number of lines and horizontal characters.

If you get completely messed up, you can always select "Auto-select" to get back to what WordPerfect sees in your computer.
How about we change the subject next month and talk about fonts and characters?

■■■

Editorial Comment:
This is the third in a series of six articles titled **WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS** *By: Read Gilgen, Madison PC Users Group*. These articles are available to our group by the Association of PC User Group bulletin board service.

LAWS OF COMPUTER PROGRAMMING *(Larry Anders)*

1. Any given program, when running, is obsolete.

2. Any given program costs more and takes longer.

3. If a program is useful, it will have to be changed.

4. If a program is useless, it will have to be documented.

5. Any given program will expand to fill all available memory.

6. The value of a program is proportional to the weight of its output.

7. Program complexity grows until it exceeds the capability of the programmer who must maintain it.

8. Make it possible for programmers to write programs in English, and you will discover that programmers cannot write in English.

9. Software is hard. Hardware is soft. It is economically more feasible to build a computer than to program it.

10. An operating system is a feeble attempt to include what was overlooked in the design of a programming language.

■■■

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
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Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about IBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ]
DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
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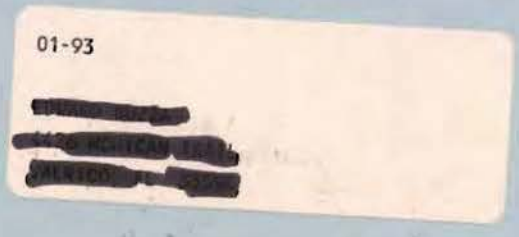
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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 5 NO. 2., 1992 February, 1992

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: February 12, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

2/12/92 CorelDRAW
By - Corel Systems Corporation
Lesley C. Dort

Refreshment Break

Amtax
By - Don Patzsch

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

WordPerfect Classes:

Instructor - Ed Buzza
Four part series begins in March (Dos version)

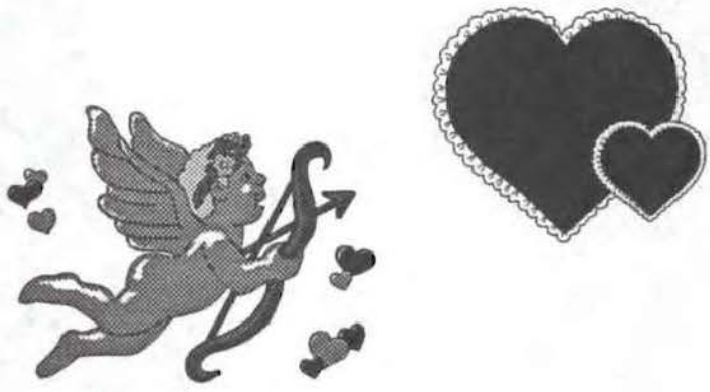
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Upcoming Presentations:

March - WordPerfect for Windows



Happy Valentines Day!

*** * 1992 OFFICERS * ***

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(Co-Secretary) Charles Howe
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APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
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Winconnect	Eduardo Ramos
50/50 ($26)	Don Patzsch

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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"Member, Association of PC User Groups" (APCUG).

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 1/8/92 MEETING --

The President, Harvey Bruneau, opened the meeting at approximately 6 PM. He introduced the officers elected at the December meeting who will serve ;thru 1992. They are:

President	Harvey Bruneau
Vice President	Steve Speairs
Treasurer	Bill Fuller
Education Director	Ed Buzza
Member At Large	Roger Waters
Co-Secretaries	Jim Clark & Charles Howe

CLUB NEWS:

* Harvey announced that the Word Perfect folks could not make this meeting and they have been rescheduled for March. Meanwhile, our own illustrious Education Director, Ed Buzza, would fill in with a presentation on Professional Write for DOS.

* The President emphasized one of the most important functions of our club - computer education for our members and the need to get going on SIGs. The pressing need here is for knowledgeable volunteers to make themselves available to lead SIGs covering the more significant software on which they are proficient. COME ON, MEMBERS! There is a lot of talent in this club. Share your knowledge with others! VOLUNTEER TO LEAD A SIG! And, give a presentation on the software to the club! (Note: A presentation to the club would be an excellent introduction to your SIG.)

* In pursuit of the goal of achieving 300 members, Harvey informed us that he was placing our flyers at strategic retail outlets that would allow same. And in response to queries last month, flyers were available for members to spread around as well.

* In response to a question about tax software for 1991, the membership was informed that the shareware program AMTAX91 was now on our BBS. One member also advised of a freeware spreadsheet template that was available on other BBSs and should be on ours in the near future. If interested, keep your eye out for 91fm1040. Reportedly, this freebee will work on most major spreadsheets (I know it will work on Lotus and Quatro Pro; apparently others as well).

INDUSTRY NEWS:

* The President reported that one rater of computer suppliers has rated Gateway as #1 overall. Others in our group commented on Gateway - all of which was very

(Minutes continued on next page.)

(Minutes continued...)
favorable. This is not by way of a commercial, rather it is one of the functions of this club - to make all members aware of suppliers who have good products and services at reasonable prices.

* It was reported that the Comp USA store at Himes and Hillsborough was to make a soft opening on 11 January, with a Grand Opening to be sometime later.

* A few problems have been reported with Microsoft Word 2.0 for Windows - mostly with the spell checker, grammar checker and MACRO functions. There was a brief discussion of some of the problems, but I was unable to catch the comments. Be Aware!

* Windows 3.1 reportedly is due out in April. If interested, start looking about that time. As an aside, one member reported a RUMOR, I emphasize RUMOR, that Windows 3.1 had deliberately been designed to not work with DRDOS. DRDOS users might want to investigate before buying. And we all should be concerned IF this rumor is true and reconsider Microsoft as a whole and the implications such an action would have for the industry. Let's hope it is false!

* Harvey reported that the early copies of OS/2 Ver 2.0 are out to selected users. But, all of its features have not been Beta tested, though IBM indicates that Ver 2.0 has been tested in-house. General release to the public is now scheduled for the end of March. We'll see then whether or not that will lead to the software battle of the century.

* Intel is reportedly out of the 386 microchip business since there is too much competition and too little money in it, and is now pushing 486 and higher chips. Many expect a rather large decline in prices to take place over the next year.

* Following a break, Harvey shared a few comments on language translators. He related that he had received French Assistant from Santa Claus and he was pleasantly surprised and reported that it was pretty good for a $49 program. Though it will not make coherent translations for every bit of our personal English, it does a fairly good job on proper English. Check it out (also available in Spanish, German & Italian) if you need a translator.

PROGRAM REVIEW: Professional Write for DOS

In typical fashion, Ed Buzza gave an excellent comprehensive presentation on PFS: Professional Write, now owned and published by Spinnaker Software Corp.

Ed reported that PW is installed simply by copying the program files to the desired directory - no "install" program is involved. The program requires 512K of RAM an 8088 or higher. It works best with a hard drive, but will work with two floppies - though you may do a bit of swapping and it will be quite a bit slower when disk access is involved.

Among the features of PW are:

* Has built in grammar and spell checkers.

* Has a built in address book feature which accepts ASCII delimited files from databases. This allows, of course, merging form or standard letters with a mailing list.

* Setup for the program is very easy and it has excellent printer support, including an extensive list of supported printers and an unlisted printer option, and a control code option for lasers.

* Keyboard MACROs.

* Very good on-line help.

* In contrast to some word processors, PW has toggle choice of insert/overwrite.

* Shows the percentage of memory used of that available for documents. Capacity of the program varies with memory available, but it has relatively good capacity - with only 512K conventional RAM the program will hold about 70 pages; with upper memory, about 85 pages.

* Excellent controls, including blocking (including rectangular/column), line/box drawing, maneuvering on the page and throughout the document, print and save in pieces, are but a few.

* It is mouse supported, and includes a calculator.

This is a pretty good program, but you should note that this is strictly a word processor; today we see many "word processors" which are closer to DTPs than WPs. This is not one of those. It does support multi-column formats , however. But, it does not support graphics - except for charts produced in PFS programs - such as First Choice and PFS Window Works.

One other note about this program - there is little similar between it and Professional Write for Windows. The latter is a much more powerful program and includes many DTP features, including graphics handling. When asked about relative value, Ed indicated that in today's environment that the $149 price for PW for DOS was a little high and that for a few more bucks you could get a more powerful program (e.g., WP 5.1).

Having given you this brief summary of the extensive review that Ed gave us, all that is left is to say, "Thanks, Ed, for your typical super presentation. We all appreciate the presentation and all of the effort you put into it."

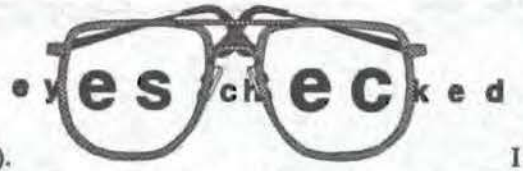
Copyright Laws: After the presentation a discussion of copyright laws developed. It was noted that some businesses and private individuals are rather loose with regard to the proprietary rights of others - passing around copyrighted software. We might all do well to review refresh ourselves and reread the license agreement for copyrighted software we hold. The very beginning of one PFS program I hold, for example, says "This Software is licensed, not sold to you by Spinnaker..... owner of the product.... for use only under the terms of this License..." We all should know and adhere to the copyright laws.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:



Could it be! Since I have started to use Windows (December) I have mentioned on several occasions that word processing (I use WordPerfect for Windows) was a little hard to read on my 14" NEC Multisync 3D screen. I then went on to say that I would recommend a 16" monitor for those who do a lot of word processing or text work within the Windows environment. Of course if you use a point size larger than 12 its not as much a problem. However, our newsletter is 10 point and believe me it's not easy to spot blanks between words much less punctuation. Well last meeting a fellow member came to me during the break and suggested another possible solution. He had stated that he had a similar problem and that he had solved it with this change. Now I am not sure if he was playing on the fact that I had just turned 40 or what, but he suggested that I might want to think about getting my eyes checked. At first I was flabbergasted, then I realized that what he said made sense and it could also be cheaper than buying a $1000. monitor. **Sometimes we need someone to help us focus on the problems which we overlook.** I had only looked at the quick but expensive resolution not the possible problem



(MAYBE). I am not sure if my vision is bad and I have not yet made an eye appointment, but its now a constant thought in my head every time I use Windows software.

This months meeting should be interesting for every one. **Corel Draw,** the #1 Windows PC graphics package, will be demoed by Corel Systems Corp. Additionally, our own Donald Patzch will show you how to use **Amtax** for preparing your 91 taxes.

Finally, COMPUSA (3617 West Hillsborough, ph (813) 877-5560) has opened up. As mentioned last meeting this super store of computer stuff is here in our own back yard. Although their soft open was a day late it was worth the wait. Some of your fellow members have already made purchases there or at least went in for a look and see. I talked to the general manager to see if we could leave our brochures somewhere in their store where customers could see them and pick them up, but was told that company policy did not permit them to do this. This is the same policy that Egghead has. At times it irritates me that these companies will not work with **Non-profit groups** for the educational benefit of the community. Overall prices seem good, but like a flea market you better be an informed shopper before you lay down that charge card or cold cash. They have hardware and software for IBM compatibles and Apple. Additionally, for a small fee they have classes. Their policy on software is different than some stores so before you rip off that cellophane make sure it the right product for you.

I have just returned from a personal trip to France. Once again I am amazed at the technology implemented by the government and used by the public. At first I was not too amused that the phone booths on the street would not take cold cash. I was lost and could not call relatives (**help I've fallen and I can't get up** feeling) for direction. Paris is not fun when your lost, its 20 degrees and your used to Florida climate. I imagine the same applies for New York. It turns out that the old outside phone booths in France were vandalized so much that they were replaced with ones that only use a type of card similar to a credit card. These cards contain a computer chip which contains a beginning monetary value of say $20. It can be purchased at any of the tobacco stores (stamps too) for a nominal value. As you insert this card in the phone it displays the balance remaining on the card. As you use it to make phone calls the phone system automatically deducts the amount from the card. When you have exhausted the amount on the card you just purchase another one. These phones only take this card they do not use credit cards (yet). Pay phones can still be found inside stores. Plans are on the board for implementing this feature into parking meters and garages. How often have you put 1 hours worth of money into a meter only to use it for 15 minutes. Well this card would only deduct the amount of time you actually used not the time you thought you needed. Another neat piece of technology is a chip which is stuck to your car windshield. This chip is used to charge your bank account as you drive through an interstate toll booth. This eliminates the need for cash and allows you to go through the toll at a faster pace 15-20 MPH. Unlike the phone booths, the toll accepts cash and a french credit card (**CART BLUE**).

WordPerfect has a new magazine for WordPerfect for Windows. They now have magazine for their DOS (*WordPerfect the Magazine*) and Windows (*WordPerfect for Windows Magazine*) word processors. Either of these magazines can be purchased at a special user group rate. WordPerfect will reduce the subscription cost by $8 from the regular cost of $24. To be eligible for this discount, please write to: **Wordperfect Publishing Corporation**
ATTENTION: Circulation
270 West Center Street
Orem, UT 84057

or call Subscriber Services at
(801) 228-9656 or (801) 228-9626

Harvey P. Bruneau

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From Presentation Graphics to Desktop Information Systems: The Challenge of Adding Real Value to Software

By: *Fred Gibbons*

APCUG Industry Commentary Subscription Series, Column #10
(NorthWest Arkansas Microcomputer User Group, Springdale, Arkansas)
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It's interesting to look back through the years at how personal computer users' expectations have changed. Like all products of its time, Software Publishing Corporation's first product, pfs:File, was completely primitive in comparison to later filing products. However, users were able to overlook things like clumsy commands and poor documentation because despite the problems, these products allowed users to do things never before possible. Products like pfs:File brought real value to users by letting them use the computer to replace manual systems such as rolodexes and paper-based files.

Since those early days, users have continued to look for value in the products they buy. It has been the job of software companies to understand exactly what constitutes real value for the end user. It's a challenging job because the definition of value continues to evolve and change as users' needs and expectations become more sophisticated. This is where we at Software Publishing see user groups as playing a critical role. With ongoing support and feedback from the user group community, we're able to better understand the true computing needs of the end user.

Let's take a brief look at how the user group community has influenced the PC industry in the past. In the mid-1980s we learned from end users that what they truly valued was power. The failure of the PCjr drove this point home to all of us in the industry. Personal computer hardware and software companies responded with products that provided depth of functionality and performance to meet the user's need for power. For example, at Software Publishing, this move toward power was the catalyst for developing Harvard Graphics. Our objective was, and continues to be, to provide users with the best presentation software tool and enhance that product over time with additional capabilities that extend the value of the product.

In the 1990s, users still want software that gives real value. They want the best package for the job and they want to know that software vendors will support and continue to enhance their products. Users have invested a tremendous amount of time and money in data collection, yet they know there must be ways to make the data more usable. Value today lies in helping users go beyond the individual software package, and make the most of their overall investment. We need to provide simple tools that allow users to leverage their existing data and applications rather than expecting them to start fresh with each advance of technology.

The personal computer has become an increasingly important strategic tools for all of us. To make the most of this tool, users will need to be able to access and combine data from a wide range of data sources; view and present information in graphic, tabular, multimedia and other visual formats; dynamically analyze trends and exceptions; and route, broadcast, and deliver that information effectively.

For example, an advertising agency executive preparing a client presentation might want to take data from an outside source, such as Nielsen, and combine it with client sales data and other strategic data sources to perform various analyses and projections. In order to sell his or her client on a new advertising program, the advertising executive might develop a graphic presentation that includes multimedia clips of competitors' ads and rough ideas for the new campaign. Used this way, the computer can be an invaluable tool for collecting, analyzing and presenting information.

At Software Publishing, we've identified an emerging personal computer software category called Desktop Information Systems (DIS). DIS will combine all of these capabilities and provide the user with a means to interact directly with a wealth of information sources. By giving the user access to this information, we provide the means to make better business decisions, something of true value in today's environment.

Because of the emphasis on combining data from many sources, DIS might be easily confused with Executive Information Systems (EIS). However, the key difference between the two is that DIS focuses on end users, giving them direct access to staged data and allowing them to manipulate that data according to their own needs. In contrast, the typical EIS is a large-scale system, developed by a corporate MIS group and intended to allow executives to view specific information. An EIS has well-defined parameters and does not allow the user to move freely outside those parameters. While EIS has its place, we are hearing that most

users are eager to move toward computing environments that give them more responsibility and flexibility in accessing and presenting data.

To illustrate what will be possible with DIS, we've developed a concept we call the on-line briefing book. These briefing books could cover a wide range of topics, from financial figures to competitive tracking. As an example of how the briefing book concept might be applied, say a sales manager receives a monthly briefing book that includes revenue by region. He notices that the figures for the western region are much higher than the previous month, and is curious about the reason for the improvement. By clicking on an icon, the manager has access to a voice-annotated document from the western region account representative describing the results of a recent sales promotion. This would be a vast improvement over the hardcopy reports that have been so prevalent in business. As networked environments proliferate, applications like the on-line briefing book will become commonplace.

Users are telling us that the time is right for DIS for two reasons. One, we have an increasing number of data sources that users rely on and want to continue to leverage. At the same time, the use of visual information -- graphics, animation, audio and video, etc. -- is on the rise. DIS is the logical extension of both of these trends and combines the two into a powerful resource for the user.

But even if the time is right, no individual vendor alone can make Desktop Information Systems a reality. It will depend on establishing partnerships with vendors and customers, and on developing standards that allow products to work together. And the technology will only work if it is firmly grounded in a clear understanding of what the user wants and needs. This requires an ongoing dialogue between vendors and the user community.

At Software Publishing, we believe that the user group community will play a critical role in the future success of DIS. In order to maintain ongoing dialogue with user groups, we've initiated a number of programs where we share plans for products and solicit user input and feedback. User group members also give us insight into their individual computing needs. We believe this dialogue is critical to our mutual success.

Years of experience in the computer business have taught me that, for the most part, users respond to evolution, not revolution. It's time for personal computer hardware and software vendors to work together to build upon the strong foundation we've established, and to bring real value to the end user -- value on the user's terms, not only our own.

Fred Gibbons is president and CEO of Software Publishing Corporation (SPC). As co-founder of SPC in 1980, Gibbons quickly established the company as a provider of powerful yet easy-to-use products with its pfs: series products for the emerging IBM PC market. Widely acknowledged for his industry expertise, he developed the company into a market leader with multiple product lines sold around the world. Today, SPC develops and markets a wide-range of decision-critical software for accessing and presenting information, including the market-leading Professional and Harvard series, the recently introduced InfoAlliance products, and Superbase, a leading Windows database product.

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WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS

By: Read Gilgen, Madison PC Users Group

Editing (Part IV)

This column is dedicated to the proposition that not all WordPerfect enthusiasts are created equal. These "tips" and "tricks" come from a variety of sources, including WordPerfect Corporation, other users, and even the WordPerfect reference manual (imagine that!) Each month we will share a few ideas that just might make life easier for you. Who knows, you might even be able to impress your co-workers with your WPSF (WordPerfect savoir faire).

FONTS & CHARACTERS I

Number 11: Fancy fonts even on your dot matrix printer

Most of us, even those with laser printers, often wish we could afford special fonts, or even that special printer that would let us make large (i.e. headline sized) fonts. If we could do that and have them look nice also, that we be heavenly. Guess what? You can! Even on your dot matrix printer.

First, we need to talk a bit about fonts. A "font" is another term for a "type face" or "type style", but it also refers to the size and other characteristics. For example, a fairly standard printer font is "Courier", a fixed pitch font (meaning a fixed number of characters per inch, usually twelve) that looks a lot like a regular pica typewriter. But the bold variation of Courier is another font, as are the italics and bold italics versions.

The fancier fonts we associate with laser printers include proportionally space fonts, meaning that "fatter" letters such as "a" or "x" get more space on the line than do the "skinny" ones like "i" or "l". These fonts have a more typeset look, and usually are measured in "points", usually referring to the height of the characters. Seventy-two points equals one inch, and a proportional font that would be roughly equivalent in size to the courier type style would be twelve points.

(WP tips...continued on next page.)

(WP tips..continued.)

Two of the more common fancy fonts are the "Times Roman" or "serif"-type fonts (the letters have little appendages at the ends of the lines), and the "Helvetica" or "sans-serif"-type fonts that have straight, unadorned lines.

Now, if you are lucky, you already have a set of basic fonts that you can load into your printer. If you're real lucky, you have a printer that lets you choose any size you want from among the available type styles. For the rest of us, we're now going to find out how to live like the other half!

Have you ever wondered what earthly good WP5.1's Equation Editor could ever be? Well believe it or not you can use the equation editor to create headline-type titles with Courier, Times Roman, or Helvetica style fonts.

- First, select the font (Ctrl-F8, Base Font) closest to the *type* style you want (Courier, Times Roman, or Helvetica). Prestige elite is closest to Times Roman, for example.
- Second, select the Equation Options (Alt-F9, Equation, Options, **Enter**).
- Third, create an equation box (Alt-F9, Equation, Create, Edit). Create the headline you want and press F9 to view the results. Words you type in will appear in italics. For non-italic words, place the word "func" before each word. Use the tilde (~) to provide spacing). For example:

The~ Better~ Letter (italics)
func The~ func Better~ func Letter (normal)

- Fourth, while still in the Equation editor, go to Setup (Shift-F1), select Graphical Font Size, Set Point Size, and enter the size you wish (72 points equals one inch in height).
- Fifth, exit the Equation Editor. The resulting Equation Box can be moved, sized, etc., just like any other graphics box.
- Finally, remember to set graphics quality to "High" when printing (Shift-F7, Graphics, High) so the font will look as crisp as possible.

Here's what the result can look like:

The Better Letter

Remember if you changed your font to something other than the text of your document you will have to change back to your original font right after the Equation Box.

Next time we'll talk more about creating and using special characters and symbols.

Editorial Comment:

This is the fourth in a series of six articles titled **WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS** *By: Read Gilgen, Madison PC Users Group*. These articles are available to our group by the Association of PC User Group bulletin board service.

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'Puzzle #5 - Solution

By: Tom Cone

```
'Answer: the puzzle has more than one solution.  Here is
'       the answer for the smallest possible pile of
'       jelly beans:
'             each child gets 1023 jelly beans at the end;
'             the minimum number of jelly beans in the
'             original pile is 15,621.

'Solution is based on working backwards.
'       After the last child removed part of the
'       original pile, the number left equals
'       5 * LastShare + 1, where LastShare is
'       the final number going to each child, and
'       the 1 is the jelly bean going to the dog.
'
'       The last pile represents the sum of 4
'       equal portions, since the 5th portion
'       is removed by the last child, before
'       pushing the beans together again.

DEFINT A-Z
CLS
LastShare = 1     'start with 1, and then increment
                  'and test for solution

OuterLoop:        'increment bean count, til you hit
                  'first number that works

SinglePile = LastShare
N = 0             'counter to increment for each child
InnerLoop:        'loop for each child
IF ((5 * SinglePile) + 1) / 4 = INT(((5 * SinglePile) + 1) / 4)
THEN
  N = N + 1
  SinglePile = ((5 * SinglePile) + 1) / 4
  IF N = 5 THEN
    GOTO solution
  ELSE
    GOTO InnerLoop
  END IF
ELSE
  LastShare = LastShare + 1
  GOTO OuterLoop
END IF

solution:
CLS
PRINT "The least number of jelly beans is : " + STR$((5 *
SinglePile + 1))
PRINT
PRINT "At the end, each child gets: " + STR$(LastShare)
END
```

Puzzle #6

- Adapted from puzzle originally published in "Creative Computing" Vol.1, #5 (May-June, 1975)

Mr. Jones went to the bank to cash his paycheck. The teller made a mistake and gave him dollars for cents, and cents for dollars. Mr. Jones didn't notice anything wrong and decided to go shopping. He bought a candy bar for 35 cents and then noticed the bank teller's error.

If he had no other money when he cashed his check, and he had exactly twice as much money as the check after buying the candy bar, what was the exact amount of his paycheck ? (You may assume it was less than $100).

■■■

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

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DONALD RORAPAUGH
BRYAN SAVA
RANDY SMITH
FLOYD THROWER
LUIS VELEZ

The One (and only) i486

By: Peter Norris, DDS
Reprinted from 01/92 HAL-PC Journal of the Houston Area League of PC Users (Available on the APCUG BBS in NWA-MCUG 01/92 Newsletter Article (NorthWest Arkansas Microcomputer User Group, Springdale, Arkansas)

This article will eliminate any confusion you may have about the many forms of Intel's popular i486 chips. It is really very easy to understand, since I have strong reason to suspect that Intel is producing only one form of the 486 chip; the one which we know as the 33 MHz 486DX. It is packaged many different ways, in order to competitively fill niches created by 386 variants.

Begin by considering that, although supplies of the 486 chips are short, Intel claims to be producing 5 or 6 variants already. That's like Rolls Royce offering 20 different models! Not impossible, just not believable. If we examine these chips closely, however, they all look suspiciously alike.

We can start by looking at the simple case of the 487SX chip. It is no secret that this unique coprocessor contains a 486DX. It probably was supposed to be a secret, however. Getting people to buy two expensive 486 chips for one "inexpensive" 486SX computer is the real secret. After plugging in the 487SX, you must leave the original 486SX in place. Apparently it does nothing but waste power, yet the 487SX won't run unless it stays.

Since I'm on the subject, let's examine the lowly 486SX. The single available model of 486SX is rated at 20 MHz, yet it runs so well at 25 MHz that fully half the manufacturers just go ahead and clock their motherboards at that speed. What's more, 486SX chips tested at 33 MHz run just fine, according to Axik president Roger Liao, a motherboard manufacturer quoted in Computer Shopper.

The 486SX is in a different package from the 486DX, however. Is it to save money with cheaper PC packaging? No, it is because a pin-compatible socket would probably reveal that the floating-point coprocessor (FPU) works, if Intel hooked up the pins. Does anyone really think that Intel would create an entire second assembly line to make a slower 486 with a blank space where the FPU goes? Has anyone looked at that spot on a 486SX? Take my word for it, it doesn't say "RENT THIS SPACE."

I know that a lot of people have speculated that Intel is marketing 486DX's that failed the FPU testing, but that doesn't wash. Chip defects occur all over the chip, so the number of 486 chips faulted only in the FPU would be too small and unpredictable to ship. That number would also diminish as quality control tightened up; not a good marketing goal. Instead, 486 chip yield is probably a lot better than we are led to believe. Intel also states that they are not selling defective 486DX's as 486SX's. Could it be because they are selling working DX's as SX's?

Now we come to the 486DX in its 25 and 33 MHz flavors. Soon there will be a 50 MHz model as well. You will note that Intel is using an old car manufacturer's trick here: In the first model year, introduce your sports car with a four- cylinder engine. This will rope in the suckers who just have to have the newest model. Next, introduce a six-cylinder option for the smarter buyers who are waiting for a better value. By the time you finally drop in the V-8, you will get the enthusiasts plus your own early birds, who are selling their 4-bangers to get the real sports car. They never learn!

Now consider that Intel doesn't have to add cylinders here. The silicon on the 50 MHz is the same as on the 25 MHz. It HAS to be, to run the same way. Intel will warn you that running chips faster than their rated speed will cause increased heat. They are correct about the heat. Running a 25 MHz 486 chip at 33 MHz makes it run hot; exactly as hot as a 33 MHz 486 chip running at 33 MHz! Did you think Intel used a shinier silicon, or some different, "cooler" circuits? They would like you to think so. Intel also warns that chip life will be shortened at high speeds. That may be, but when was the last time you wore out the CPU in your system?

MYSTERIOUS INTEL Although Intel wants it to seem mysterious and difficult to fabricate "faster" chips, they cannot be made much different and still run like a 486. Most of the research seems to involve making heat retaining ceramic packaging for the slower speed chips, so that they will heat up and fail at higher, hotter speeds!

We know that the third-party ICECAP chip refrigerator will allow CPUs to run much faster than rated speed, so why don't 486 chips have at least a heat-sink on the package? Because the packaging is all they can use to really control heat, and keeping heat is what makes chips fail. One version of the slow 486SX is even in a meltable plastic package. It will not surprise me if the 50 MHz chip does have a heatsink, but they are probably saving that for the 75 MHz and 100 MHz versions of the same chip.

Let me now address Intel's upcoming "double clutch" models, which ostensibly will run internally at twice the motherboard speed, giving 66

MHz and 100 MHz chips (sort of). I have only heard of these creatures from Intel PR flacks. No human has seen one, and I predict that we may never see one. If we do, it might finally represent a new and truly different variant of the chip with multiple personalities, the i486.

(The One cont.. next page.)

(The One cont..)
If you can't believe Intel would pull something like this, just remember the Intel announcement in Infoworld a few months ago, that the upcoming i586 would be sold only as one version, with all extra features crippled. As each customer decided to "add" a feature like caching, he/she would send money straight to Intel, who would then supply a password to "unlock" the feature. This idea was so universally condemned by manufacturers that Intel immediately claimed it was a rumor.

Intel has a vision of the hardware biz that reminds me of Microsoft's vision of the software biz (and the KGB's vision of Russia). If they thought it would stop AMD's 40 MHz 386, they would probably sell their 50 MHz 486 packaged as a 50 MHz 386!
Think about it!

■■■

APCUG -- Perhaps you noticed on the second page of Bits of Blue, in very small type, "Member, Association of PC User Groups." The Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) is a collection of 200+ user groups in the U.S. and ten foreign countries, representing a total of over 250,000 members.

Our user group pays $25 a year to belong to this fine association and we receive many times this in return. This association's purpose is not to provide services directly to individual user group members, but to support the officers and leaders of the user group.

The support comes in many forms. The Association has a BBS called GLOBALNET located in Scotts Valley, CA, with nodes in five foreign countries including the Soviet Union. Through this medium, officers can exchange ideas with free access through Tymenet.

At Spring and Fall Comdex, a summit meeting is held of user group officers. Here again, ideas are exchanged through seminars, roundtable discussions, and vendor presentations.

The Association maintains excellent contact with the major vendors, who pay for much of the Association's expenses.

The major benefits to the Tampa IBM PC Users Group? The ability to develop closer ties with the user group coordinators of the major vendors; the ability to participate in group purchases; and the privilege of learning from other user groups the things that they have found that make their user group better for their members.

TOOLBOOK 1.5

By: Karen Ohland

With the arrival of Windows, customers rejoiced. Programmers broke down and cried. From the early days of a simple "Hello World", Windows introduced the era of hundreds of lines just to start and close the window and print out a line. Suddenly programming became more work than fun. Toolmakers have rushed to fill the gap, bringing object-oriented and graphical based tools to the desktop. Many of these tools are aimed at the sophisticated developer working on several man-year projects (and with budgets to match), others at the end-user with no programming experience. Asymetrix has positioned Toolbook solidly in the middle: simple enough that the end user can use, yet with enough power to satisfy the knowledgeable programmer. Toolbook is supplied with a series of templates and several complete applications as a starting point. Although each application on its own would not justify the price and could be duplicated through shareware and freeware options, each application can be used a starting point for prototyping a new project.

Installing Toolbook preceded quite smoothly. After ensuring that enough space was available and checking of the options that I wished installed, I was prompted for each diskette and a graphical representation of the progress was shown. Quickly deciding to ignore the manuals, I jumped into the Tutorial. Unlike some other products on the market, the Tutorial is very detailed and provides a lot of in-depth information. After the Tutorial, more advanced lessons are available to learn more of the programming techniques required for complete applications. I spent several afternoons working through the lessons and practicing these new (to me) techniques; others may require more or less time depending on their requirements and previous levels of experience with programming, objects and the Windows environment.

After the Tutorial, I decided to go through the manuals. With both a Programmer's Manual and a Reference Manual, there are over 1,000 pages of tightly packed information. Even the quick reference is larger than some manuals I've seen. With a basic grasp of what I wanted to do, I pulled up one of the templates supplied for an invoice form and tried to set up a simple book. With only a single reference to locking the columns, I never did determine exactly how one should set up a spreadsheet type of entry form, where the user could quickly enter the information required to process a simple invoice, containing Quantity, Description and Amount fields. Every time a [RETURN] key was pressed, a new line in the current column was created. Using the [TAB] key jumped to the last position of the next column, not the same line as the current column. Searching through both manuals yielded no further insight and not on application supplied (only the one template) had this type of data entry; maybe the two are related. I believe this can be made to work, but it will require more effort than most Toolbook users may want to expend.

Backing off from the first project, I brought up a sample application. This went very smoothly. I copied fields similar to those I wanted to the new locations and renamed them and expanded or contracted them and changed from single line to multi-line as required. Within and hour I had a complete application finished. Picking a simpler project and one more people seem to want, I then pulled up a new template and designed a Recipe tracking book. The results are shown in the accompanying picture. Within an easy afternoon I had the basic shell completed, accompanied by clip-art from the collection supplied with Toolbook. Since searching is built in to the system and the template supplied the required buttons to move back and forth within the database, my prototype was complete. Further work might be required to incorporate
(ToolBook 1.5 cont....next page.)

(ToolBook cont...)

more sophisticated features, such as automatic keyword creation, but for many this would be optional. The best part is that this simple book can be used as a new template to generate more sophisticated applications, such as text databases and abstract tracking databases.

Although I did try out the sample applications that used DLL support, I didn't try to create any new ones on my own. The manual details the steps involved in adding support for any third-party DLL for which one has the documentation. This facility should enable the programmer to handle any project required. Building stand-alone projects requires a developer's kit, available separately from Asymetrix; this kit allows unlimited distribution of a run-time system and allows the Author level (used only during development) to be removed from the distributed code. Without the developer's kit, the Author level can still be passworded to prevent changes by end-users; this method is being used by many shareware programmers for distributing their applications.

Whether you are just beginning or a sophisticated programmer, Toolbook should provide the tools you need to get the job done. Toolbook 1.5 is available from many mail order sources and directly from Asymetrix Corporation, 110 - 110th Avenue NE Suite 717, Bellevue, Washington 98004. D From The PC Register, ETPCUG.

■■■

F.Y.I.

Artificial Intelligence: The amazing, human-like ability of a computer program to understand that the letter y means "yes" and the letter n means "no."

Electronic Mail: A communications system with built-in delays and errors designed to emulate those of the United States Postal Service.

C-py Pr-t-ct--n: An obscenity unfit to print and fast disappearing from common parlance.

Turbo Card: A device that increases an older-model computer's speed almost enough to compensate for the time wasted in getting it to work.

Laser Printer: A xerographic copying machine with additional malfunctioning parts.

Workstation: A computer or terminal slavishly linked to a mainframe that does not offer game programs.

RISC: The gamble that a computer directly compatible with nothing else on the planet may actually have decent software written for it someday.

AUTOEXEC.BAT: A sturdy aluminum or wooden shaft used to coax AT hard disks into performing properly.

Plotter: A terroristic hypodermic device used to inject graphic representations of boring data into boring meetings.

Clone: One of the many advanced-technology computers IBM is beginning to wish it had built.

CD-ROM: An optical device with storage sufficient to hold billions of predictions claiming it will revolutionize the information industry.

Nine Ways To Kill Any Organization

Reprinted from the Consultants Forum on CompuServe, via The 08/91 Virginia PC Newsletter, Richmond PCUG

1. Don't participate beyond paying your dues (let "them" handle things), then complain that members have no voice in the management of the organization.
2. Decline all committee appointments and offices (because you're too busy and your time is too important), then offer vociferous advice on how they should do things.
3. If appointed to a committee, don't work (it's a courtesy appointment) and then complain that the organization has stagnated.
4. If you attend meetings, don't initiate new ideas ... and then play "devil's advocate" to those ideas submitted by others.
5. Don't rush to pay your dues (they're too high anyway), then complain about the lack of quality or sparce number of services offered.
6. Don't encourage others to become members (that's selling!), then complain that the membership is not growing.
7. Don't read the newsletter or other communications (they're not important), then complain that you're not kept informed.
8. Don't volunteer your talents (that's ego fulfillment), then complain that you 're never asked, never appreciated, and never recognized as the "expert" you obviously are.
9. Have faith in no one and nothing; don't take any chances on untried procedures (after all, you're not a gambler). Let someone else put their reputation on the line and take the risks, then be sure to enjoy the benefits that result from another's leap of faith. AND IF BY CHANCE the group grows in spite of your contributions, grasp every opportunity to tell the youngsters how tough it was; how hard you worked "in the old days" to bring the group to its present level of success.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

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Tampa IBM PC Users Group
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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 5 NO. 3., 1992 March, 1992

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: March 11, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

3/11/92 WordPerfect for Windows
By - WordPerfect Corporation
John Johannesmeyer

Refreshment Break

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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Special Training Session

Starting in March, a four part seminar on WordPerfect® 5.1 for DOS will be held on our regular meeting date. Each forth-five minute session, for members only, will begin at 5:45 p.m. in the IBM classroom. You may want to bring note material with you. Please be prompt.

This seminar is provided free of charge as one of the benefits of membership in

The Tampa IBM PC User Group

** 1992 OFFICERS **

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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"Member, Association of PC User Groups" (APCUG).

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Friends of the Users Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

IBM

Sunrise Computer Supplies

PC Warehouse

Software Etc.

CompuAdd

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 2/12/92 MEETING --

Once upon a time there was a ....

No, that's not right. Let's see. Oh, yes! The meeting began approximately on time, but something seemed different and it took a while for me to figure out what. But, then my 486/50 mind figured it our after just a few NS's - Harvey, our President, was not there. Instead, our distinguished Director of Education, Ed Buzza, was filling in for our eminent Vice President, Steve Speairs, who was to fill in for Harvey who was out in Arizona on what Ed reported as a "well deserved vacation".

In any case, Ed opened the meeting and carried the first few minutes. Steve then took over and conducted the remainder of the meeting. Here is a summary of what transpired (please remember that I do not hear well - I may not have heard it all):

CLUB NEWS:

* Ed reminded everyone that the January newsletter has some good info in it on how to use the equation editor to make large print.

* Ed noted that WP 5.1 is scheduled in to make a presentation on WP 5.1 for Windows at our meeting in March. he also pointed out that the current issue of PC Magazine has a review on the most popular mid- to upper-end word processors. In that review PC Mag rated Word For Windows and Ami Pro above WP 5.1. Those contemplating an upper-end WP might want to read that article first.

INDUSTRY NEWS:

* Steve reported from one source that Intel wants to create a new bus standard which is completely open. Intel feels that the current standards are not adequate for the 486/50 Mhz chip.

* Apparently there are several chip producers that are developing a 'doubling chip' to double the internal speed of the 486 chip. Since this would only directly affect internal speed, it is anticipated that the doubling chip would result in about a 50% increase in throughput speed.

* In the chip area, Northgate has combined their chip development with development of mechanism for the boards which would permit very easy installation and removal of the chips. From a user standpoint, this sounds very good - but I suspect that if it works out that it might have a substantial impact on the cost of the boards on which that technology is included.

* Steve cited several examples to illustrate the declining prices in the computer field, noting that it is a user's market and will likely continue to be for the foreseeable future.

* Steve noted that the Gateway 486/33 had been selected as the Best Hardware of the year and DOS 5.0 as the Best Software of the Year - for 1991, of course.

PROGRAM REVIEW:

CorelDRAW

Steve introduced Leslie C. Dort of Corel Systems Corp who would give us a demo of CorelDRAW. Leslie began by noting that she had provided a number of different informational/promotional materials for those interested, including quite a few demo disks. Leslie emphasized that while there are a few special versions of CorelDRAW (OS/2 PM, UNIX OSF?Motif, and UNIX OPEN LOOK), the program most of us we are likely to be interested in and the one she would demonstrate requires Microsoft Windows. She then proceeded to outline the current and near-term future of CorelDRAW. The last major release was version 2.0. A maintenance release (2.01) was also out and all owners of 2.0 should have received the 2.01 release free of charge. Version 3.0 was in the works and should be released before the end of 1992. Corel would be marketing a 'Blockbuster Bundle' which would include:

- CorelDRAW & and CD ROM
- An internal CD ROM driver
- An interface kit (with an 8 bit SCSI)

Leslie made a point of informing us that the SCSI in the Corel package would be the first true interface, and it would be capable of supporting 7 external devices. When the bundle would be available was not clear.

The bundle would include 10,000 pieces of clip art, 200 fonts, Art Show 91, and would be usable in 5 languages. The bundle list price will be $1295 for new CorelDRAW purchasers and $595 for upgrades. An external CD ROM driver could be had - and that is recommended to save a slot - for an additional $100. A 16 bit SCSI can also be had for an additional $100. The SCSI will also be available as a separate item for $195 for the 8 bit version, and $300 for the 16 bit variety. But Leslie pointed out that CorelDRAW is not really in the business of make nor marketing hardware - they are and intend to continue as a software company.

In getting to the demo, Leslie noted that CorelDRA rated in its niche and that it is excellent for presen graphics, supporting word processors with graphics and specia effects, and for DTP. She reported amazement at the variety of uses that have been found for the program, including engraving.

Leslie is very knowledgeable on CorelDRAW and proceeded to give a very comprehensive and very quick demo of a very powerful program (the 2.01 maintenance version). I could not even hope to put into text what I saw her demonstrate of the program. In short, I can't imagine anything that one might want to do with text or graphics that CorelDRAW can't do - and she made it look very easy. It gives super control of text (with a supply of 150 fonts in the normal package as a foundation, or you can import with ASCII or from most major word processors), and almost unlimited control of graphics - and the capability to make text graphics which then gives phenomenal control of text. Mirror, skew, size, curve, swirl, extrude, bend, fan, rotate at any angle, stretch, etc., etc., etc, is a short list of the many special effects things you can do - and any combination thereof.

It supports (imports and/or exports) EPS, Windows Metafiles, BMP, CGM, GEM, DXF, WPG, TIFF, PCX, PIC, PIF, Video Show, SCODL, HPGL, and the .Ai format for Adobe Illustrator file formats. Included with the standard package are 3300 symbols and 700 pieces of high-quality art. Of course, with CorelDRAW you can make your own symbols and graphics. It includes three standalone utilities:

- CorelTRACE, which convert bitmaps to vector.
- Mosiac, which is a visual file manager as well as a powerful batch printing, importing and exporting utility.
- WFNBOSS, which is a font import/export utility that convert fonts from major vendors to CorelDRAW .WFN format.

If you get the impression that I was impressed with the program, you're right - it is the best drawing/graphics/special effects program I have seen, bar none.

After the presentation Leslie passed out quite a few prizes as part of a question and answer period. Included were several mouse pads and a SCSI manual. All of the winners of these prizes did not provide their names to me, so I know only a few, who are:

Ruth Radlein	SCSI Manual
Brad Krantz	Mouse Pad
Floyd Thrower	Mouse Pad
Bert Karpinski	Mouse Pad

CorelDRAW requires a 286 or better machine, hard drive with at least 8-10 meg for the program, an EGA or better

display, any printer supported by Windows, and Microsoft Windows. I suspect, however, that the program might be a little slow on the 286.

To Lesley (and Corel Systems Corp) we give you a very BIG "Thank You" for a superb demonstration of a super program - and for all of the goodies you provided. We are indebted.

AM-TAX91

Following Leslie's demo of CorelDRAW, our own Don Patzsch gave a review of the Shareware program AM-TAX91. This program is available on our own and the Sunshine BBS as AM-TAX91A.zip.

It is quite a nice little program, is relatively easy to use and is fairly well documented. It will work on just about any IBM compatible computer that has 320K of usable RAM, any monitor, and just about any IBM or Epson (or compatible) printer. It will work with floppies, but a hard drive is best.

The version downloaded from the board supports the 1040 and Schedules A, B, C, D, D1, E1, E2, F, R and SE, as well as W-2s. The program completes prints all of the forms in a form acceptable to the IRS, except for the 1040 form - the data for which has to be copied to the IRS form. Registration cost $20 for which you get printed documentation and additional capability, including printing of the 1040 in a form acceptable to the IRS.

There are also more capable versions available to deal with more complicated returns - each with a modestly higher registration fee. However, for those whose tax return needs do not extend much beyond the forms supported by the basic program, this seems to be an excellent and relatively inexpensive way to go. (Of course, the freebee 92FM1040.ZIP, for use with Lotus 123 or Quatro Pro, is also available.)

Thanks, Don, for an excellent presentation and introducing us to this program.

AND THE WINNER IS:

After the presentations, Steve began the drawings, using our lovely guest presenter, Leslie, to good advantage. She drew the following lucky names:

Kevan Sheridan	CorelDRAW
William Fuller	IFX Business Expense Report Pgm
Al Anderson	50/50 ($62)

CONGRATULATIONS! We are happy for you - and a bit jealous, as well.■■■



EZCos mos 3.0

Software Review

By: Hugh Bayless, MontereyBay Usr Group

That slick and beautiful program, EZCosmos, has now been updated and improved in the latest version 3.0. When I reviewed version 1.0 a year ago, I was impressed. This new version is much, much better, and I'm even more impressed.

EZCosmos lets you view the sky of earth from any point on the globe at any time and date you choose, from 4000 BC to 9999 AD. Want to see what the sky looked like for Columbus, as he landed on Watling Island on October 12, 1492? As long as you can figure out the latitude and longitude of the spot you want to view from, it's easy. Just set the location and the date and time and the sky appears on your screen.

While the manual is rather brief, it gives you all you need to get started, and after that everything is at your fingertips within EZCosmos itself. Version 1.0 depended on cursor keys to control it, but V 3.0 supports a mouse, which makes moving around the sky much easier and faster. It is very easy to imagine yourself in the Starship Enterprise as you zoom around this star-filled cosmos. I was captivated.

While EZCosmos will run on any computer with a hard disk and 512K of memory, it works best on a VGA system. As a bonus, there are some beautiful photographs of planets, galaxies, nebulae, and star clusters, that can only be viewed with a VGA system. To get the best view of these pictures, look at them in a darkened room from about five or six feet away from the monitor. Up close, the pictures are a bit grainy. From a distance, they are spectacular.

EXCosmos is a beautiful program for anyone interested in the heavens. For more info, call Future Trends, Inc, at (800)869-3279.

UPDATE ANYONE???

VERSION 1.0: Buggier than Maine in June; eats data.

VERSION 1.1: Eats data only occasionally, upgrade free to avoid litigation by disgruntled users of version 1.0.

VERSION 2.0: The version originally planned as the first release (except for a couple of data-eating bugs that just won't seem to go away), no free upgrades or the company would go bankrupt.

VERSION 3.0: The revision in the works when the company goes bankrupt.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:



It was with regret that Marylee and I missed the February meeting. It was a record breaking attendance (100+). We use Corel Draw and really wanted to see the presentation by Lesley Dort of Corel Systems Corporation. It was the 1st meeting in a long time that I missed. However, I must say the 10 day business/vacation trip to Tuscon, Arizona was fantastic. I along with 250 other select Dun & Bradstreet Software (DBS) employees (plus spouses) were sent to Tuscon for a business symposium and awards ceremonies as a reward for our achievments in leadership and dedication to the company. Its not often that I blow my own horn -- but after three years at DBS, the company and my bosses expressed their appreciation by sending me and Marylee to Tuscon. **THANKS DBS.** Our adventures included hot air ballooning, horseback and mountain bike riding, snow skiing and many other fun things. I would recommend you visit Tuscon if just for the scenic beauty of the land surrounding it. We had 10 days without seeing or talking PCs until our plane ride home. These two businessmen (a 20 year old PC guru and 45 year old business exec) were sitting across the aisle from me and began talking about Novell networks. I wanted to jump into this conversation like jumping into a pool after mowing a lawn for 10 days in July. But I just sat back and listen. The kid knew his stuff and was sharing it with the older executive who was also impressed. Then it got worse. This kid pulls out a Leading Edge portable with a monster trackball and begins demonstrating windows. After 10 days without, I was beginning to experience the PC DTs. This kid was pumped up and smart. Once again the executive was impressed. Finally it was the big exec's turn. He reach up and brought down his own Laptop, a new IBM. The kid was impressed. The exec demoed a package but the kid was more impressed with the literature. I was really in trouble now, 2 laptops across the aisle and I couldn't touch either one. I felt a sharp pain in my side, it was Marylee elbowing me and telling me to wipe the drool of my face and fasten my seatbelt for our arrival home. As we landed I looked over to my left and these guys were still pounding away on the IBM. I guess the stewardess thought he was flying the plane from his seat because they didn't make him put the laptop under the seat or fold his tray up. It makes me feel good to see young people using and understanding the PC technology of today. We need more of them.

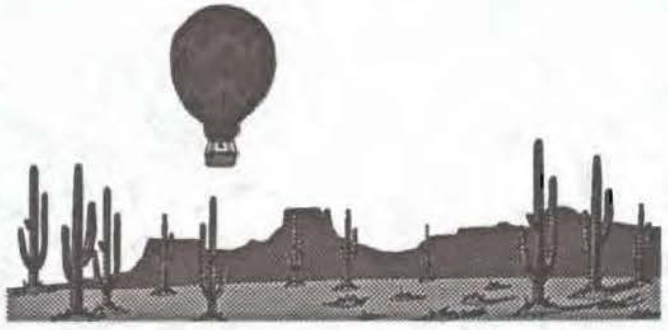
The dreaded Michelangelo virus has come and gone. To date I don't personally know of anyone getting hit by it. Of course you must keep in mind that corporations which were attacked would try to keep it quiet. Others may have disinfected the virus before March 6th. I am not sure how this got so blown out of proportion. I suspect the news media was involved and frankly they gave bulletins boards and IBM PCs a bad rap. Even if unintentional, their broadcast seem more gossip and opinions by PC illiterates than hard facts. Viruses are here to stay and the media crying **WOLF, WOLF, WOLF** did not help. Hackers like terrorist, live for media attention and they got a gold plate full this time. Free advertising and sales occurred for antivirus software companies but I am not sure at whose cost. It is becoming a hallway conjecture that a company could create, spread and later sell the antivirus for huge profits. Practice safe computing check your PC for viruses. Shareware and public domain products are available at little or no cost.

Great news! One of our members has come forth to volunteer his time to our group. Tom Cone, the contributor of the many puzzles in our newsletter, will perform the task of welcoming visitors and helping new members into our group. I have been told on several occasion that we do not do a proper job of making visitors welcomed or informing new members of the goings on and who's who within our group. Tom will also be reviewing popular shareware products as they come along and either write basic reviews for the newsletter or demoing them at meetings. He has also expressed interest in having classes in basic BASIC and PASCAL. The when and where of these classes have yet to be determined. Please join me in welcoming Tom to the board.

We still need more dedicated volunteers. Contact me if you are interested and can help our group (932-6745).

Our second bit of good news is that we have been in contact with Telmar Associates. This company can provide our members with computer publications at a reduced price (see table 1 on the following page). I am pursuing another company which also has good pricing.

Harvey Bruneau



Special Group Rates for Magazine Subscriptions:

Publication	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Amiga World	15.95	25.40	34.80
Byte	15.00	28.00	40.00
Compute	9.95	17.25	
Computer Craft	15.70	28.00	38.10
Computer Shopper	16.97	-----	-------
Home Office Computing	9.95	17.85	-------
Mac User	12.20	23.75	31.25
Mac World	13.70	21.35	29.90
PC Magazine	21.60	36.85	49.60
PC Computing	12.00	20.00	29.65
PC World	15.90	23.90	33.65
PC Source	11.50	-----	-----
Personal Publishing	14.25	22.90	-----
Publish	15.95	28.85	39.90
Windows	14.80	21.40	29.20

- ✓ Only magazines listed are available from Telmar unless otherwise authorized.
- ✓ Correct full payment must accompany all orders - payable to Telemar.
- ✓ ALL ORDERS must include your user group newsletter mailing label to indicate current membership status.
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  Mephis, Tennessee 38117
  (901) 682-1709

American Heritage On-Line-- Dictionary Enough?



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Definitions Plus! from WordScience Corp. is an electronic version of the American Heritage Dictionary. Definitions Plus! effortlessly brings over 115,000 words, word forms and phrases to the fingertips of the online user. All functions are accessed quickly using 3 primary hotkeys and drop-down menus. Word displays contain the traditional dictionary elements including usage examples, parts of speech, synonyms, etc.

How it works: Definitions Plus! can be run as TSR (Terminate and Stay Ready) program, or from a command line.

If you are in the Definitions Plus! directory, or the directory is in your path statement, you can request information about a word from the DOS command line without loading the program into memory. To access a definition, just type "DEF" {word to be defined} <enter>.

As a TSR program, Definitions Plus! may be run in any one of 3 memory-resident modes:

1) if you can spare 98K of memory, Definitions Plus! will load fully into memory and run with maximum speed;

2) as a TSR occupying 4K memory while swapping the rest of the program to the hard disk to be called back to memory when needed. This may be handy when you have larger application programs occupying your RAM memory;

3) as 4K TSR swapping the remaining program element to expanded memory. All of these options may be selected by simple slash commands. The manual instructs you to un-install any memory-resident programs loaded after Definitions Plus! was loaded. If you don't, your keyboard may lock and you will have to re-boot your computer. Definitions Plus! did also interfere occasionally with loading my DOS shell (Elftree). I had to load Elftree twice a couple of times to get it to load.

Once Definitions Plus! is loaded, you have several options. You may simply place your cursor upon a word or phrase to be defined and press Alt-D or Alt-W respectively to call forth a definition. Fast and simple. (The definition will appear in an "information" window away from your cursor and present text.)

Now curiosity might have you wondering how you indicate a phrase in the midst of copious text. You use "phrase capture". Place your cursor at the first word of the phrase and hit the hotkey. A small window will appear with only the word at the cursor in it. You then simply press "+" or "-" to add words to finish the phrase, or subtract words if you get

carried away and go beyond the length of the desired phrase. After capturing the phrase just <enter> and {Wa- la!} a window appears.

This function will only retrieve phrases that appear as main entries in the dictionary, such as "a la carte," "sweat shirt", etc. The phrase size is limited to 8-10 words but you won't need any more than that- I found that many of the phrases I searched for were not available. I guess I'll have to wait for the new unabridged version and buy a new hard disk!

Your second option in memory-resident mode is to call forth the Main Menu (another simple hotkey). The main menu consists of 5 drop-down menus. {"Help", "Setups", "Look Up", "Uninstall", and "Quit".}

HELP- when activated a very simple window drops down with a list of all the hotkey options of the menu. The help menu is short and sweet, but I guess there is not much to be said.
SETUPS- allows you to change the configuration of hotkeys (in case they conflict with other application program commands), change colors of menu and windows (limited options), and word processors may be chosen (out of a list of about 15 popular) to enhance Definitions Plus! functioning within your word processor. I chose "other" and Definitions Plus! worked fine with Visual Display Editor (VDE).
LOOK UP - provides hotkey options to look up a word at the cursor, a phrase at the cursor (using phrase capture) or an option to manually enter a word or phrase.
UNINSTALL - allows you to disable hotkeys, or to remove Definitions Plus! from its residence in memory. The manual instructs you to only uninstall Definitions Plus! from memory at a command line or after shelling to DOS from an application program.
QUIT- I'll let you guess this one. This function does not remove Definitions Plus! as a TSR.

Definitions Plus! even allows you to gain further clarification of a definition, by defining the words within the information window. Just move the cursor to the word and <enter>. A new window with info on that word will appear, if Definitions Plus! has it. You may continue this process indefinitely. By pressing <Esc> Definitions Plus! will work its way back through the path of the last four definitions you have chosen.

If Definitions Plus! does not find the exact entry that you have requested, a "Suggestions Window" will appear with a list of words similar to your entry. Simply highlight any entry in the list that satisfies your search. In some cases, the words you chose may not have any similar words and the Suggestion Window will say "none". Oh well, there is always that archaic option of dusting off the old family dictionary!
INSTALLATION- Simple. Just type "install" and the rest is menu driven with clear instructions. (There is no obligatory changes made to autoexec.bat.)

The software comes with a clearly written 50-page manual that explains installation options, operation procedures (including operations in conjunction with 14 popular word processors), and a brief Trouble-Shooting guide.

I found the program easily workable. I used it within my word processor (VDE 1.6) and within the ONLINE Bible. I have not yet had much serious use for it but can see its usefulness for students, writers, or anyone else who cares to quickly access a brief online definition.

Strengths for this program includes ease of use, and speed. Weaknesses might include the abridged size of the dictionary (although small size can be a virtue), the brevity of some definitions, and the potential TSR interference with other programs. But overall, I liked Definitions Plus! once I got used to its idiosyncrasies revolving around un-installation. This program provides quite powerful, easy, online-dictionary access.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS- IBM compatible; DOS 2.0 or higher; 100 K of available RAM, although only 4 K is used; and a hard disk with 2.5 MB of available storage. Definitions Plus! is available through some local software dealers for about $80.

GLOSSARY:

Hotkey- functions that can be elicited by pressing a single keyboard key.

TSR (Terminate and Stay Ready) program: A program that will run simultaneously with other programs, such as application programs, in the higher portions of your computer's memory. (Sometimes TSRs will interfere with each other or application programs, especially graphics programs.) Slash commands- usually single letter commands enters after an executable program that modifies the working of that program. For example, "DEF /s" will load Definitions Plus! to work as a 4K TSR. "/s" is the slash command.

Swapping- when elements of a program are stored outside of RAM memory (in expanded memory or the hard disk, for example) These program elements are "swapped" when needed by other program elements in RAM.

■■■

Humor.txt

TIBMPCUG BBS

Hard Disk: A device that allows users to delete vast quantities of data with simple mnemonic commands.
Mouse: A peripheral originally christened "vermiform appendix" because of its functional resemblance, renamed for its appropriateness as a cat toy.
Printer: An electromechanical paper-shredding device.
Modem: A peripheral used in the unsuccessful attempt to get two computers to communicate with each other.
Network: An electronic means of allowing more than one person at a time to corrupt, trash, or otherwise cause permanent damage to useful information.
Documentation: A perplexing linen-bound accessory resorted to only in situations of dire need when friends and dealers are unavailable, usually employed solely as a decorative bookend.

WORDPERFECT TIPS AND TRICKS

By: Read Gilgen
Madison PC Users Group

This column is dedicated to the proposition that not all WordPerfect enthusiasts are created equal. These "tips" and "tricks" come from a variety of sources, including WordPerfect Corporation, other users, and even the WordPerfect reference manual (imagine that!) Each month we will share a few ideas that just might make life easier for you. Who knows, you might even be able to impress your co-workers with your WPSF (WordPerfect savoir faire).

THIS MONTH'S FREEBIE

Here's a little extra "freebie": the next time you're working with WordPerfect, notice the number next to "Pos" on the status line. It will reflect the character attributes at your *exact* cursor location. This makes it easier to edit without having Reveal Codes on.

For example, if your cursor is to the right of a [BOLD] code, the number will be bolded, but if it is outside the pair of [BOLD][bold] codes, the number will be normal. The same goes for underlining and other attributes.

[BOLD]cursor[bold] will show: **Pos 4.5"**
cursor[BOLD][bold] will show: **Pos 4.5"**

FONTS & CHARACTERS II

Number 12: Bullet Characters

Bullets rather than dashes add pizazz to lists in your documents. For example:

-- dashed items
-- plain looking text

Becomes:

- bullet items
- classier looking text

While there are complicated ways of getting bullets in WordPerfect, the simple way is simply to hold down the Alt key, and press the "7" key *on the numeric key pad* (not on the numbers across the top of the keyboard). When you release the Alt key you get a nice little bullet. If you the press F4 (Indent), your "item" will be nicely set-off paragraph of text:

- Bullets are easy to create, by pressing Alt and "7" on the numeric keypad

Number 13: Special icons (and other characters)

If you've ever browsed through the appendices of the WordPerfect Reference manual undoubtedly you've seen the list of foreign, scientific, and other special characters. Perhaps you didn't know that WordPerfect 5.1 can print any of these characters, even if your printer doesn't normally include them in its character sets. (Sorry, but daisy wheel printers can't do this.)

So the trick is to get the characters into your document, and then WordPerfect will do the rest.

The method is called "Compose", and no, it isn't what you take after a particularly frustrating session at the keyboard.

First, you identify the character you want to use, for example, the hand pointing to the right, which is character number 21 in character set number 5.

Next you position your cursor where you want the character and press Ctrl-2 (*not* F-2). Nothing happens. Type "5" (nothing happens), type a comma (nothing happens), type "21" (nothing happens), and then press Enter. A small square filled box appears on the screen. This is WordPerfect's way of telling you a special character will be printed in that location, but that it can't display the character on the screen because your IBM (or compatible) doesn't have that character in its video character display set.

Press Reveal Codes (Alt-F3) and move your cursor to the character. The little box expands to reveal: [■:5,21], meaning the box represent the hand pointing right that you so desperately want.

If you now go to Print (Shift-F7), View, you will see the tiny hand pointing in the right direction. Since it is so small, you might want to block the character, press Ctrl-F8, Size, Extra Large, and then Print View again to see the better looking hand:

☞ Now doesn't this look even better than the crummy little bullets we learned about in tip number 12?

Next time we'll talk about some shortcut methods for Compose.■■■

User Groups: "Information at Your Fingertips"

By: Bill Gates

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In ten years, the personal computer has evolved very rapidly -- from an interesting technical niche to the center of personal productivity in many businesses. In the next ten years, it will evolve into an information appliance that spans the office, the traveling worker, and the home. All applications will be inherently "groupware" with the work of many individuals becoming tightly integrated; at the same time individuals will have the flexibility to travel and work off-line and plug in as necessary. Applications themselves will have many interchangeable parts. The computer workday will focus not on the applications being loaded but on the documents themselves that users want to create.

We at Microsoft call this vision of the future "Information at Your Fingertips." It's the idea that people will be able to treat all data, whether local or remote, whether text or graphics or sound or video, as just data; or perhaps more appropriately, as information -- data that can be usefully manipulated, evaluated, analyzed, organized, and ultimately, made sense of and acted upon. This vision also assumes that applications become more content-oriented.

Today's applications are mostly tools -- word processors let you create documents, spreadsheets let you calculate figures, but you have to supply the words and figures yourself. "Content" applications will be rich in data of many types, focusing on education, training, entertainment -- certainly there will be a cross-over between the PC and current game software, only with much greater sophistication.

Two interesting things will happen: The PC will become the central window through which employees will access worldwide corporate data, and the PC will also become more personal. More corporate and more personal at the same time? Yes. Ease of use and intuitive behavior are a necessity for any product going into the home; they are also a necessity to create order out of the huge mass of corporate data confronting people at work.

How do we get there from here?

First, microprocessor technology must continue to advance, as it has, at a fairly constant rate. (Over the last decade, a doubling of power every two years or so has been realized.) There is every reason to believe this will continue. For example, in 1986, the 16 Mhz 80386 was state-of-the-art. After two years, the speed was up to 33 Mhz. In 1989, the 80486 was introduced, with more processing power and a clock speed of 25 Mhz -- and 50 Mhz versions were introduced in 1991. By the end of 1992, the new Intel chip and MIPS R4000 chip will more than double processing power and speed again. PC systems will have gone from less than 1 MIPS (Millions-of-Instructions-Per-Second) of computing power a few years ago, to more than 50 MIPS on the desktop.

Similar advances are occurring in related areas of technology. Within a few years, desktop screens will handle 2048X2048 resolution; notepad-sized machines will be at 1280x1024; and wallet -sized PCs will have displays comparable to the 640x480 standard of today. Soon there will be low-cost, small for-factor 400 MB hard drives, Cheap, removable optical storage devices will provide even grater storage. Wireless networks will provide 10 megabits per second of data transmission, and fiber networks will handle 100 megabits per second. All this means that more information, and more kinds of information, can be utilized via PC technology. The data will encompass such things as: Music and sound effects, speech, 3-D graphics, photo-realistic images, motion video and animation. And PCs will have the capability to respond to input via scanners/OCRs, voice, gestures with figures and pens, and even natural language through any of these media. Microsoft is investing heavily in research into all of these areas.

Our systems strategy is to put in place, via *Windows*, a scaleable architecture that allows applications, hence users, to take advantage of all this data. We want to evolve the user interface of *Windows* to take advantage of new approaches to input and output, to allow better application integration and usability, while at the same time providing more and more power under the hood. Advanced systems services will be available through *Windows* NT and new versions of *Windows* on MS-DOS. We've enumerated our goals for the last year: More object orientation such as drag-and-drop capabilities and application integration with OLE; and better security and messaging services, sophisticated directory services, and so on under NT.

Windows is being systematically evolved to work on systems ranging from low-powered, portable, penbased systems to high-performance servers. This means users will have a standard platform supporting a large number of applications, and developers can get the most return on their investment in new products.

"Information At Your Fingertips" is a vision Microsoft has been articulating, but it is not a vision that Microsoft can implement by itself. The same community of users and developers that grew up around MS-DOS is now creating a critical mass for *Windows*. Users are seeing more and more products become available under *Windows*, and software developers are seeing more and more customers for *Windows* products, so they are encouraged to build more, thus attracting more users. This self-sustaining market cycle that began with MS-DOS is now encompassing *Windows*. And it encompasses, too, all the hardware developers and software developers and user communities of the PC world.

User groups will have an enormous role to play as the industry makes the transition to all these new capabilities, just as user groups did in the original move from pen and paper to PCs. The impact can be even greater, since the user community is highly organized today, rather than starting from scratch as it did in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Microsoft has worked with a variety of user groups almost

from the start. The early ones intended to be highly technical. Today, user group members span that gamut from C++ guru to novice office worker. User groups have provided both formal and informal feedback on many Microsoft products, both systems and applications. Several SIGs have participated *en bloc* in our beta programs (One of the favorites was a program in which we paid user group members cash for every new bug they found. It proved a strong incentive for hackers to pound on our product.)

When I and other Microsoft executives speak at user groups, we get direct feedback--direct, and often quite vocal feedback!--on products and programs. Because of their nature, whether they are technical or not, user group participants tend to be on the leading edge--they might say, bleeding edge--of the user community, and they are not hesitant to speak out. We often make announcements at user groups as a way of honoring, if you will, the user group role as the voice of the user. Information that comes back to us from user groups is fed to our people in product development. We have placed a lot of emphasis on usability at Microsoft in the last year, as one example, and a lot of input has come from user communities and user focus groups.

More important than helping vendors design better products, though, user groups will remain a primary source of information and knowledge for the user community. As the desktop and home uses of computers rapidly expand in the next decade, the simplification of the user interface will be partly neutralized by the expansion of the market to include individuals with less and less computer savvy than PC users of today. Through meetings, SIGs, newsletters, electronic bulletin boards--and no doubt through innovative uses of some of the advanced technology mentioned here--user groups will continue to be a place where individuals can help one another, and teach one another, about exciting new "stuff".

No matter how good the products or technologies, change is always more difficult than stasis; no matter how much support a vendor provides, there are always questions that only other users with similar experiences can easily answer. There will remain in the PC industry for decades a need to pass on certain "folklore" and commonlaw" about technical matters that cannot be transmitted any better way than person-to-person. It is "Information at Your Fingertips" in the most personal sense, and user groups are the best forum in which it can occur.

William H. (Bill) Gates, III is chairman and chief executive officer of Microsoft Corporation.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Chuck Bowersox	Rick Smith
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John Hunt	Rebecca Gareza
Michaline Ostrowski	Florio Giolli
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'Puzzle #6 Solution

```
' By: T. Cone 2/21/92
'
'Paycheck was for $21.43.  $43.21 was received.
'  $.35 was spent, leaving $42.86 on hand when
'  mistake was discovered.

DEFINT A-Z
 'trick is to state the known information
 '  in algebraic form, then test all possible
 '  values to see what solves the equation.
 'we know: paycheck = (100 * Dollars) + Cents
 'we know: cashreceived  = (100 * Cents) + Dollars
 'we know: cashreceived - 35 = 2 * paycheck
 'so: cashreceived = 2 * paycheck + 35
 'so: 100 * Cents + Dollars = (2 * paycheck) + 35
 'so: 100 * Cents + Dollars = 2((100 * Dollars)  + Cents) +
35
 'so: 100 * Cents + Dollars = (200 * Dollars) + (2 * Cents)
+ 35
 'so: 98 * Cents - 35 = 199 * Dollars
 'solution:  look for a value that satisfies this
 '          equation, by trial and error.  Start
 '          with one cent, work up to $100 or
 '          til answer is found
 CLS
 Paycheck = 1   'Paycheck expressed in cents
 DO WHILE Paycheck < 10000
   'Loop to test values from 1 to 10000
   Cents = Paycheck MOD 100
   Dollars = INT(Paycheck / 100)
   IF (98 * Cents) - 35 = 199 * Dollars THEN
     ' Puzzle solved, paycheck is correct
     '   so print solution
     LOCATE 6, 5
     PRINT "The paycheck was $";
     PRINT STR$(INT(Paycheck / 100));
     PRINT "." + LTRIM$(STR$(Paycheck MOD 100))
     END
   ELSE
     ' Paycheck will not solve equation
     LOCATE 4, 5
     PRINT "It was not ";
     PRINT LTRIM$(STR$(Paycheck)); " cents."
     Paycheck = Paycheck + 1
   END IF
 LOOP
```

Puzzle 7

- adapted from Creative Computing Magazine, 1975

How many oranges are in the grocery, when 1/4th of them, 1/5th of them, and 1/6th of them add up to 148 ? (This time, no multiplication is allowed!)

■■■

Win3, DOS Apps, and PIFs

By: Pete Moore

February 1992 LILYPAD - Copyright 1992 all rights reserved, FROG Computer Society, Rochester, NY -

This month let's talk about using Windows with DOS programs, since almost none of us can afford to scrap all our DOS programs and buy nifty new Windows replacements and upgrades. And frankly, even if we could, most of us have certain programs that we're just plain used to, or that do a certain job for us in a way that we aren't ready to discard yet.

At this point, I want to remind you of something I said last month: if what you really want to do is multitask DOS programs, there are better ways to do it. I've been experimenting with Quarterdeck's DESQview 386, and it can multitask DOS programs six ways from Sunday, with speed, precision, and nary a crash. And there are task-switchers (multitasker-wannabees like Back&Forth) galore on BBSs all over the place. In fact, if you bought the DOS 5.0 upgrade from Microsoft, you've got a task-switcher right there in DOSSHELL. (Leave me a note on the Frogpond if you'd like to know more.)

There are lots of ways to run DOS programs from inside Windows. The most obvious, though probably not the best, is to start up File Manager, use the mouse to select the drive and directory of your DOS program, and double-click on the filename. This will start it up in full-screen mode. In many or most cases, this method works with no troubles beyond the fact that File Manager itself is ugly, slow, and non-intuitive. Of course, if your chosen program is a big graphics application, especially one that needs expanded memory, it may not start up at all this way, or it may send your Windows session down in flames. (Can you say "Unrecoverable Application Error")?

You can also run a DOS program by clicking on [File] [Run] and then typing in the appropriate drive:\directory\filename, and pressing [Enter] or clicking on [OK].

But probably the best way to do it is by using a PIF (Program Information File) to start the program. PIFs tell Windows if the DOS program has any special needs for system resources, Open]such as whether it needs to use a COM port. If Windows automatically installed any DOS applications for you when you installed Windows, it may have created PIFs for some of them. Also, lots of DOS programs come with a pre-written PIF included in the package. (In fact, any time Windows runs a DOS program without a specific PIF, if uses its own generic PIF, _DEFAULT.PIF).

If you want to create or change a PIF, (for instance you want to make a program run in a window instead of full-screen), start up the PIF Editor in your Accessories Group. To change a PIF, click on [File] [Open] and then double-click on the PIF you want to change. To create a new PIF, just fill in the information in the dialog box, then click on [File] [Save As] and give it a name.

Besides the obvious things like the program's name and location, the two things you're most likely to want to change are whether the program runs Full Screen or Windowed, and whether its execution is Background or Exclusive.

If you choose Full Screen, your DOS application will look as if you had started it from the C: prompt, and you will be able to use a mouse in it if you usually did. If you choose Windowed, you lose your mouse, which now belongs to Windows. Also, the display will slow and jerky on most machines, because Windows must continually translate the text-mode display to its appropriately scaled graphical look-alike.

If you choose Background, your DOS program will keep executing after you switch to another program, so you could download files with ProComm in the background while you write a letter with Windows Write in the foreground. This works whether your DOS program is in its own window, or temporarily invisible in Full Screen mode. If you choose Exclusive, your program will stop executing when you switch out of its (Full Screen or Windowed) window.

As for the Advanced options available when you start PIF Editor in 386 Enhanced mode, the only thing most of us need to know is that our applications will run faster if we turn OFF all the Monitor Ports choices, except for comm programs. ■■■



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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 5 NO. 5 May, 1992

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: May 13, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

5/13/92 NORTON DESKTOP FOR WINDOWS
and
NORTON AntiVirus
By Symantec

Refreshment Break

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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FUTURE PRESENTATIONS

6/10/92

MICROSOFT WINDOWS 3.1
and
VISUAL BASIC
By Microsoft

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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"Member, Association of PC User Groups" (APCUG).

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect 5.1 donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

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Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 1/8/92 MEETING --

!! Harvey's opening remarks centered almost entirely on the just released Version 3.1 of Microsoft Windows. Several computer stores in the area were offering the upgrade and the complete package at bargain prices. Sad to say, but these low prices were for a limited time only. Installing the upgrade takes about 20 minutes on a 386. It takes only about 6 minutes to install as a new package.

!! Big feature is that it's fast. It loads faster, prints faster and the file manager is even faster. Another big feature is True Type, the on-the-fly font generator built into Win31. True Type does work with WordPerfect for Windows which could not access the Win fonts in the prior version.

!! There are two installation modes: express (which loads everything and needs about 11 meg on the hard drive) and custom which lets you choose the modules that you want installed. There was no problem in installing the new version over the old version. It is not a good idea to install the new version as a second copy in another directory; there may be conflicts in references to the old files. Still no relief for UNinstalling Window applications.

!! There is now a "Start Up" Group (old Load and Run options) that makes it easier to set up your Window sessions. Also, you can use Control-drag to drag a *copy* of the icon to a new location. The Control Panel now provides for adjusting Window boxes *and* font sizes. You can shrink a DOS window to about a fourth of it's full screen size and still read the text.

!! The latest version of OS/2 id due by the end of this month. To install the whole kit and caboodle will take about 30 meg of space on the hard drive.

!! On behalf of the User Group, thanks to ROBCO of Lutz for this evening's presentations. Should any of you be interested in their services, (813) 949-7686 is their office phone and (813) 949-7784 is their fax number.

LANtastic Presentation

David Gallagher of ROBCO, Lutz, described the benefits of LANtastic; rated as the number one peer-to-peer network package. This program makes the productive power of a full-featured LAN (Local Area Network) available at an economic price to, typically, small business users. It allows for

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

resource sharing (printers, disk storage, FAX, modems, CD-ROMs, etc.) without the need for a dedicated server machine. Any work station can act as the server.

Security levels, audit trails, and passwords are easily established or changed. Various services or accesses are easily enabled or disabled for any station. In fact, log in can be restricted to a particular period of time and/or a particular day.

Also, in a small network, ROBCO can set up the system so that a LAN manager is really not needed. Of course, as the number of work stations increases, so does the need for a LAN manager. One of the latest features is that of voice support. Hardware requirements are rather modes: 13k per station and 40k per file server. It can use the common network adapters such as Ethernet, ARCnet, Token Ring and LANtastic.

Right Hand Man II Presentation

Gerry Roberts, also of ROBCO, demonstrated Right Hand Man which is available from the Futurus corporation. This is the new, commercial version of the old shareware program. Many new features have been added to make this product a very desirable addition to a LAN system.

It is a TSR (Temporary, Stay Resident) program that occupies only 4-6k of memory. In of itself, it is a revolutionary network E-Mail, scheduling, fax and phone message center. One nice feature is the Scan module which will determine the first available time slot for a meeting of selected individuals. The scheduler module can keep track of individuals as well as teams or work groups. The data file, dBase compatible, is like a free form Rolodex file; making it easy to set up records in the various files.

Right Hand Man Remote provides the ability to dial in from one PC to another. Usually, one station of the LAN would be set up to wait for remote call-ins. Then uploads/downloads of E-Mail and phone messages can be sent/received in full duplex mode.

The cost is under $500 for a five user setup.

■■■

Humor.Txt

TIMBPCUG BBS

Multitasking: A clever method of simultaneously slowing down the multitude of computer programs that insist on running too fast.

Encryption: A powerful algorithmic encoding technique employed in the creation of computer manuals.

Desktop Publishing: A system of software and hardware enabling users to create documents with a cornucopia of typefaces and graphics and the intellectual content of a Formica slab; often used in conjunction with encryption.

High Resolution: Having nothing to do with graphics on an IBM-compatible microcomputers.

QEDIT - a brief overview

By: Tom Cone

QEDIT is a shareware text editor from SemWare. It is small, fast, and powerful.

What is a text editor ?

Text editors are specialized word processing programs that are designed to work only with ASCII text. These are text files composed entirely of characters, numbers, and punction marks that are represented using ASCII codes. Since the capability of reading and writing ASCII codes is so widespread, these text files are almost universally "accessible" by other word processing programs, text editors, and programming languages.

How is it different from a word processor ?

Features necessary to create a finished document suitable for publication are omitted intentionally. For example, in QEDIT, the following word processing features are not supported:

spellchecking/thesaurus
justification of lines (although line centering is supported)
proportional printing
multiple fonts
multiple printers
multiple columns
document outlining
document conversion

Well, why would you want to use QEDIT ?

QEDIT was designed for fast operation, ease of use, and compact program size. Even though it has too many features to list in this article, it uses less than 60K of disk space. (Compare that to your favorite word processor and I guarantee you'll be surprised !)

Because it's small, it is well suited to portable computers. Also, it's small enough to store on the same floppy disk that you keep your text files on. This makes it possible to take your files and the program with you to another computer very easily.

I have been particularly impressed with its speed. It seems especially fast loading and saving files on disk. Its search/replace functions work like lightning.

Editing commands and cursor control keys seem to emulate the Wordstar command set by default. These can be changed to suit your own tastes if you wish.

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QEDIT is customizable. It can be set up the way you like. You have control over the meaning of all special keys on the keyboard, colors, screen appearance and many other options.

QEDIT will handle files as large as your computer's memory will allow. All text files are created and edited in memory. The program does not swap portions to disk, as other portions are created.

QEDIT allows multi-file editing, and will let you split the screen into separate "windows". You can put one file in each "window" and cut & paste between files. While only 8 "windows" are supported, your ability to load multiple files is limited only by your computer's available memory.

QEDIT supports limited line and box drawing capabilities. It also has a powerful set of "macro" commands that seem to allow you to "automate" repetitive tasks. (I haven't used the macro functions, yet.)

QEDIT supports automatic "word-wrap" at the end of lines, if you wish. It will also "re-format" paragraphs of text for you. This makes it suitable for everyday use as a "quick and dirty" word processor.

Last, but not least, QEDIT comes with very complete documentation of program operation and customization. The evaluation copy does not, unfortunately, contain an index. But, I can see why. The documentation file, alone, is over 250,000 bytes long.

What is "shareware" ?

QEDIT is distributed as "shareware". This means that the publisher authorizes you to try the program for free, for up to 30 days, to see if you find it suitable and worth purchasing. If you want to keep using it (legitimately) you are required to register with the publisher, by paying a fee. The single user license costs $54.95. This will get you the latest version, (and inexpensive upgrades later on), a spiral-bound indexed manual, and free technical support. SemWare has its own BBS, and participates in a user-support Forum on CompuServe.

An evaluation copy of the program (with documentation) is available on-line on the Bits O Blue Bulletin Board. Download the file called "QEDIT215.ZIP".
For more details contact the publisher:

SemWare
4343 Shallowford Road
Suite C3A
Marietta, GA 30062-5022
Voice: 404-641-9002
BBS: 404-641-8968

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

This month I had writers block. While the editor (Marylee) had the newsletter finished a week early, I couldn't get my thoughts collected enough to write more than a paragraph. I had nothing. **Then** my NEC monitor lens arrived. If you have attended the last meetings or have read some of the previous newsletters you know my beef. I don't want to drag this story on but suffice it to say that I am disappointed with their product the NEC 4FG and now their optional NEC monitor lens. I can't see where the lens has reduced the glare. Because of the glare, I would not buy this monitor again or any of the NEC FG series Multisync monitors. This is only my opinion.

Hey Harvey enough with NEC already!

OK lets move on to Windows 3.1. Last month we discussed this product with a general feeling that all in all this is a really good upgrade, especially if you get for $32. I still believe that, and I am now leaning more towards Windows products than DOS even though some glitches still appear from time to time. Most big software companies are spending more of their money and time on developing Windows products than DOS ones. However DOS software is still outselling Windows software. Lets face it software companies just like any company is in business to make money and the money to be made is in the hot Windows platform for now and the immediate future. Don't be swayed from your software or environment just because you hear a lot of people talking Windows. Only you can determine if you need Windows. No matter what anyone tells you there is a learning curve required for Windows just like any other product including each Windows product. Additionally, efficient Windows processing requires a healthy hardware appetite. There are other software alternatives like Geoworks, Desqview and even OS/2 2.0 ($149 at CompUSA) to mention a few. If you want to get radical buy an Apple.

All this stuff can be confusing and costly. I would urge you to ask a lot of questions before you begin investing your time and money. Meetings are a place to talk to vendors and your fellow members. We have a lot of members with diversified knowledge among our ranks that may be able to help you **if only you ask.** The BBS is another source where you can post questions.

While we are on the subject of BBS. The officers of our group, through the efforts of our SYSOP Kevan Sheridan, has decided to add Fidonet Echomail as another membership benefit. At a minimal monthly expense to the group, Fidonet will allow you to post questions through the BBS for specific ECHOES (topics) like Windows, Novell, shareware, viruses, DOS, OS/2 ,to mention a few. Your messages will be viewed nationally by fellow PC users through a network of BBSs. These are just some of the basics of FIDONET. Kevan is in the process of organizing a presentation for the near future. Access to Fidonet is presently available on our BBS as a test basis. We have not determined which echoes, from the several hundred available, we will be choose.

In closing I would like to share a realization I had recently. I for one get caught up in technology at times. I am always thinking of the potential and possibilities of combining or mixing software and hardware to produce results. The results may be a computer generated letter, memo, database, graphics or whatever. With all the geewhiz stuff available we can computer generate anything. *However, certain things are sometimes easier, faster or better received when done the old fashion way.* What I mean is that sometimes it may be better to hand write that letter or memo, physically talk to someone face to face or even draw a picture when needed. Lets not always replace our ***personal*** capabilities with those of in-***personal*** computers.

Harvey Bruneau

■■■

Save Yer Fanny Disk

by Mike Springer
Ocipug

A bootable floppy disk is a MUST for each and every computer so the user can recover in case of computer and/or hard disk failure or accidental reformatting! This SYFD is customized for each particular computer because NO two supposedly identical computers are truly identical. The "emergency" disk must be kept up-to-date, especially if any changes are made in your hardware or software!

The SYFD must be of the size and type to be bootable in A: drive, the first drive that the computer's internal system looks at for boot data when first turned on. It must contain:

System files, e.g. MSDOS.SYS, IO.SYS, and COMMAND.COM, that are identical to those on the specific computer in use. These files should be copied to the SYFD when the specific computer is running properly. It is too late when the computer crashes.

A copy of the computer's CONFIG.SYS file that has been edited to reference pertinent drives and directories. For example, DEVICE=lines should reference A: drive rather than C: drive, inasmuch as you will be using the SYFD because you cannot access C: drive.

(Continued on page 11)

Desktop Publishing Under Windows Focus on Pagemaker 4.0

Review by: Meg Hamel, Madison PC User's Group

If you need to design a flyer, publish a newsletter, or even write a simple business letter, you now have more software choices than ever. The Windows operating environment has had a profound effect on computer publishing -- word processing and DTP programs are growing closer, sharing more features, and accomplishing many of the same tasks.

In a past issue of "Bits & PC's," Rod McKenzie reviewed Ami Pro 2.0, one of my favorite programs. Like the other word processing programs available for Windows, it is loaded with layout features, graphics import capabilities, drawing and charting tools, and other enhancements that allow you to design fairly complex documents with a minimum effort. This is a far cry from the older, text-only word processors, where just setting three columns on a page was a major achievement.

Just as word processors are moving into the realm of DTP, companies that produce publishing software are adding more features to compete with the word processors. I expect this is motivated by the bottom line as much as anything -- usually the price difference between these two types of programs is significant, with DTP being the higher priced product.

For example, Ventura Publisher, a program that has been around for years on the PC, will soon be releasing version 4.0 of their product for Windows. Only now will it include a spell checker and a search-and-replace function -- features that are included in the most basic word processors.

No doubt the marketing experts at Ventura Software, Inc., realized that many people could buy a word processor to accomplish their tasks, and save money.

Ventura's main competitor is still Pagemaker, now also in version 4.0. I've
seen lots of page space dedicated to resolving the question: "Which package should I buy, Pagemaker or Ventura?" To be honest, there are very few things that one package can do that the other one can't. I expect the differences between them will lessen when Ventura 4.0 is released.

Pagemaker is a terrific program. It is versatile, filled with features, and can be used to produce the simplest flyer or the most complex multi-page document. Like other DTP programs, its main purpose is to bring together text and graphics on a page. This is accomplished by importing files and establishing areas on the page where each element is supposed to go. Using a mouse, you can move or resize these areas (frames) while everything is displayed on the screen. Aldus has bundled Adobe Type Manager with Pagemaker to help display typefaces accurately, too.

One of Pagemaker's best improvements is the Story Editor. This is a separate window that pops up over your working document window. It displays your document in a text-only format so that it is easy to read and easy to edit. Certain features become available when working in this Story Editor, such as the spell checker and the search-and-replace commands. You can search-and-replace text and text formats, so you can change all instances of one font to another, or replace one style of paragraph with another.

You can cut and paste between different Story windows. For many people it is easier to make editing changes while in Story mode, especially because it has a word processing feel. Non-printing characters are displayed as symbols, so you can still keep track of tabs, carriage returns, index entries, etc. Style tags are also displayed.

If you are importing a document rather than creating the text from scratch, Pagemaker supports a wide variety of word processing formats. During the installation process you can selectively choose which text filters will be available. Pagemaker loads these filters when you start the program, and each one takes memory space -- so choose only those you'll think you need. You can always go back and add others or remove ones you never use.

Pagemaker has also boosted its graphics support in this version by including 24-bit TIFF and EPS images among the formats it can import. You can place graphics in a frame anywhere on the page or use their new inline graphics feature. This allows you to link a frame holding a graphic with a particular chunk of text -- the frame will stay with the text no matter where on the page it falls.

A particularly powerful Windows feature has been implemented in this version, too. You can "link" together the text and graphics files that compose your document so Pagemaker knows when one has been changed.

For example, you have created a sales chart using Harvard Graphics for Windows and included it in a Pagemaker document. If you change the information in the original chart, Pagemaker can determine that the file is newer than the one you had originally imported, and will ask you if you want to use the newer chart, or you can set it to do this automatically. This is helpful if your documents are accessed by several people -- you can keep track of when each file was placed in your publication and when it was last modified.

Pagemaker has lots of typographic controls available to manipulate your text, including 90-degree increment text rotation. You can stretch or expand text characters in a range of 5 to 250 percent of the original letters to make wide, fat characters or tall, skinny ones. There are also controls for

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kerning and tracking -- adjusting the space in between letters. Type sizes range from 4 to 650 points in increments of 1/10 of

a point. If "point" measurement isn't a familiar term to you, just be assured that you can adjust the size of your letters in very tiny amounts.

In the past, Pagemaker has always been known as the "one-page layout" program. Earlier versions didn't have features built in to simply manage multi-page documents. Version 4.0 has table of contents and index generators, automatic page numbering, and can handle up to 999 pages per document.

One new feature that I am not impressed with is the Table Editor. This is a separate program with its own icon in Windows. You can import Lotus and Excel information into the Table Editor (or just type in your own data). So far so good. The "bug" comes when applying a text attribute, such as superscript, to part of a cell in a table. The whole cell gets superscripted. If you are building only very basic tables of information then this may not be a problem. But if you want to italicize part of a cell, or change one character to a different font, you'll have to apply that change to all the data in that cell.

With a package as complex as this one, I have to resist the temptation to list every feature. That would fill the entire newsletter! If you are in the market for a page-layout program, remember that you now have lots of options, so you are sure to find software that will do the job. The first step is to try to identify what features you know you have to have, such as support for a particular word processing program, or the ability to create complex tables. If you have a low budget, look at any of the new Windows word processors. If you can spare the cash, and want to find a program rich in typographic and layout options, look at Pagemaker 4.0 or the upcoming Ventura 4.0 (we will review it when it is available). Both of these programs, when coupled with a font scaling program like Adobe Type Manager, will allow you to create the church newsletter, company report, or promotional brochure of your dreams.

If you choose Pagemaker, you've made a great selection. To help you get started, look for the PC edition of the "Pagemaker 4: Visual Quickstart Guide" book. Published by Peachpit Press, this Pagemaker tutorial is unique in that it uses screen shots and figure captions to describe how to use Pagemaker's features. No tedious text to wade through -- the Visual Quickstart Guide deals specifically with menus, dialog boxes, and screen shots. It is easy to follow, well-written, and handy to use as a reference after you've mastered the basics. Need to place and resize a graphic? Just follow the steps on page 78. Can't remember how to do a search-and-replace? Look on page 49.

I think this line of books are great for both beginners and people used to computers. Beginners can follow along with the pictures -- experts can flip right to the section they need. Be sure to look at these Visual Quickstart Guides when you next need a boost learning a software program.

Pagemaker 4.0 is available from:
Aldus Corporation
411 First Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98104-2871
(206) 622-5500

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Computer Compulsion

By: Alguien Desconcertado

Why do we spend so much valuable time constantly upgrading to the new versions of software--thereby reducing considerably our time to get some actual work done?

Especially when the old version worked perfectly well for the things we normally do?

We rediscover, after going through the pain of yet another learning cycle--we've merely learned new features which we will promptly forget, because we have no occasion to use them.

Why do we keep doing it?

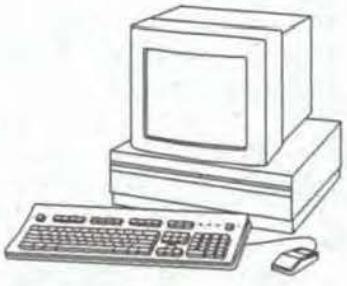
Is it the challenge to stay abreast of new technology, keep up with the cognoscenti, be able to talk the new language about the exciting new features?

Is it a kind of time-killer enjoyment, with no real utility, like figuring out certain very sophisticated crossword puzzles?

Do we do it to impress our associates? Or to prove ourselves, somehow?

Or do we just get fascinated with software, and have a compulsion to make it tick?





BOOK REVIEW -

Q&A in 10 Minutes Flat!



Book review by: Gary W. Wodka, Madison PC User's Group

Be an expert operator in Q&A in only 10 minutes! Guaranteed! Have I got a deal for you! ...well, not exactly, but pretty darn close!

Symantec Corporation's Q&A, a database and word processor built for business, is a powerful business tool. It can also be quite overwhelming to learn. But take it a chunk at a time, and it's a piece of cake. That's the premise behind a new book published by SAMS Publishing. 10 Minute Guide to Q&A will actually take you substantially more than 10 minutes to complete (more like 4 hours), but it won't seem bad at all. And when you've completed the tutorial, you'll have had the cook's tour of one of the most powerful business tools around for DOS.

10 Minute Guide to Q&A offers a new approach to learning. You'll experience Q&A's integrated program in short, bite-sized lessons. Through short, goal-oriented lessons, you will be able to get up to speed quickly, doing the things you need to have done, without spending hours learning all the esoteric capabilities of the program (and there are a bunch of them!).

The entire book is only 150 pages from cover to cover, but those 150 pages are jam-packed with illustrations, short-cuts, tips and hints to get you up and running in a hurry. It is designed for the beginning Q&A user. Nothing in this book is difficult, and although most users will want to start at the beginning and progress through the lessons sequentially, the lessons can be completed in any order. Each lesson is designed to take 10 minutes or less (hence the title!), and each lesson takes just one aspect of the program and introduces the user to it.

The 23 lessons are each titled with the end goal in mind. For example, if you need to create a form, you can skip right to lesson 3 (Creating a Simple Form), where in 9 pages you'll have the basics of form creation. If you need a set of mailing labels, lesson 22 (Printing Mailing Labels) can show you how to design the proper template, and lesson 23 (Merging Data With Text) will teach you how to use the mail-merge features built into the Q&A program. Get the picture?

And even though the book is basically pretty easy to follow, there are still places in the Q&A program that can cause confusion and problems. These places are highlighted in the book with a "Panic Button" icon which states the common problem and its solution.

Every chapter is arranged in the same basic format: The first thing after the title is the goal of the chapter. After running through the exercises, you should have the basic knowledge necessary to complete the initial goal. Let's take a look at one of the chapters to see what we're talking about.

Lesson 3 is titled: "Creating a Simple Form." The goal of this chapter is then stated: "In this lesson you'll learn to create a simple form that you can use to build a database." The various chapters within each lesson each have their own headings, from Planning Your Form, through The Form Design Screen, Designing the Form, Specifying Information Types for Fields, all the way to Global Formatting Options.

Every screen is illustrated every step of the way, and trouble spots are highlighted with the "Panic Button" mentioned above. Following the "Global Formatting Options" chapter, the intended result of the lesson is restated: "In this lesson, you've learned the basic steps required to design a database form. Changing a design is covered in Lesson 9. In the next lesson, you'll enter information in a database."

It's the old teacher's rule: Tell 'em what you're gonna teach 'em; then teach 'em; then tell 'em what you taught 'em. And it still works! I found the book to be easy to follow. And though it is truly only a beginner's guide to Q&A, it doesn't purport to be anything else. It does what it says it will do. In a series of 10 minute lessons you'll have the basics of what can be a complicated program. It's not THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO Q&A (that's a different SAMS publication titled Q&A In Business), but it's a great place to start your exploration of Q&A.

10 Minute Guide to Q&A has a retail price of $9.95 and is available at several area bookstores. It is a product of: SAMS McMillan Computer Publishing 11711 North College Carmel, IN 46032

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Humor2.txt

TIBMPCUG BBS

Sattlinger's Law:

It works better if you plug it in.

Segal's Law:

A man with one watch knows what time it is. A man with two watches is never sure.

Shaw's Principle:

Build a system that even a fool can use and only a fool will want to use it.

PRODUCT REVIEW -

ACCPAC Simply Accounting for Windows

By: David Jensen, Madison PC User's Group

What happens if you have a small business and haven't got your books in order? One common response is to hire an accountant to set up a system and tell you how to work it. No doubt the accountant knows what has to be done. Maybe your accountant will help you customize the accounts the way you need them customized. Will a general ledger be enough, or will you need to set up subsidiary ledgers? The accountant will help you.

Maybe you need to get better information about your projects. Are you really making money on your bids? Accountants can help with cost accounting, too. Maybe you want all of that, but have more time than money. Skip the accountant. Try ACCPAC Simply Accounting.

Any company that needs to process payroll, account for sales and receipts, receivables and payables, assets and depreciation, profits, track customers and suppliers, and know what's going on in the company, needs an accounting system. This program is not for a multimillion dollar enterprise. It's not for companies that need tight controls, such as purchase orders and verification, or any company that needs a professional accountant to set up the system -- they probably have a customized accounting system in place already. Most of the companies that could benefit from ACCPAC Simply Accounting are still running manual systems.

It is not a hard process to set up a robust, informative accounting system, but it does take time. Plan on spending a full day setting up your system. If your needs are complicated, plan on spending more time. Don't be put off by that investment in time, though. The time will be well spent. The first step is to know where you are.

If you already have a well designed accounting package, manual or electronic, your books are current, and you have just closed the books on a year, setting up this system is a breeze. You just have to learn how to use ACCPAC Simply Accounting and copy the account names and their current values into the package and you're off. Simply Accounting will allow you to directly convert files from ACCPAC Simply Accounting for DOS.

If you don't have a good accounting system, and I would guess that the majority of buyers of this package don't, you have to define accounts. Defining accounts and the system that you need for your business may seem like tedious work, and it can be, but you will gain benefits in the long run. CA seems to understand its market well here. Along with the well organized User's Guide, they have provided an Accounting Manual. While I wouldn't try sitting for the CPA exam after reading through it, the manual offers a clear description of a balance sheet and changes in equity. It tells you how to record transactions and how these change a balance sheet. It describes how to make adjustments to previous entries, how to close the books and why you might want a subsidiary ledger. If you didn't know, it explains the differences between a journal and a ledger and how they depend on each other.

The Accounting Manual also describes four special types of accounting that can be difficult to set up: accounting for payables and receivables, payroll accounting, inventory accounting, and cost accounting. After all, if you can't do the last one, you won't be doing the rest of them for long.

By now, the rookie accountant has shot a good part of the morning figuring out what accounting is, her head swimming in unfamiliar detail. The computer hasn't been turned on yet, and the User's Guide is about five times as thick as the Accounting Manual. Don't despair, just start out at the beginning of the User's Manual.

Like all Windows software that I have seen, installation is straightforward. Start your windows session and run the setup program from the floppies. It installs quickly, offers demonstration data and won't let you enter the simplest transaction for your own accounts. It doesn't know what accounts you have. That's why you had to define your accounts. Accounting packages don't have a bunch of predefined accounts that you have to shoehorn your data into. They don't know the value of the accounts at the beginning of your use of them. All of that data has to be populated into the system.

If you are unsure how ACCPAC Simply Accounting works, there is a quick tutorial at the beginning of the book. If you need a more extensive understanding of how an accounting system works and how ACCPAC Simply Accounting works in particular, there are 27 exercises in an appendix that takes you through the entire program. Once you feel comfortable with the program, it is time to create your own company file. You may copy from a template or start from scratch, depending on your accounting needs. Next comes the most important, if possibly tedious part of the program, setting up the system for operation. Each step is covered in clear detail, both in the manual and on line. Now that you've actually defined the accounts and relationships, you have an accounting system.

Once you have an accounting system, the rest is bookkeeping. The better the system you set up, the more informative it can be to you. The bookkeeping is necessary to allow you to get the information needed to understand the business better, pay

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your staff well, keep the government happy and prosper. Entering transactions is simple. Since this is double entry accounting, each transaction requires two entries, one to a debit, one to a credit. Each entry must be to an account with the associated account number. If you forgot the account number, that's no problem. You can query a list of accounts available for that entry and select the one that you consider appropriate.

The accounting system will allow you to create a couple of dozen reports that are able to provide you with the information you need to understand your business results, track them and tell the government what it insists on knowing about them. The reports cover all areas of cost, government and financial accounting.

I found that the entire program was easy to use, follows the Windows standard interface, and offers excellent on line help. Simply Accounting is simple accounting. It is not a top of the line, highly customizable accounting system. CA will gladly sell you a high level accounting program on the operating system of your choice, but if you need a basic Windows accounting package that provides a good level of reporting for a reasonable price (advertised for less than $140), ACCPAC Simply Accounting will fill the bill.

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Picture Wizard

Review by: Gary W. Wodka, Madison PC User's Group

"Wow, Dad, this is great!" My 10 year old daughter gives Picture Wizard an enthusiastic "Thumbs Up!" Computer Support Corporation has come up with a unique approach to marketing its Arts & Letters graphics editing program: They have released 4 versions of A&L aimed at 4 different markets. No matter which version you have, you can upgrade to the next higher version or skip all the way to the $495 (retail) full blown Arts & Letters program simply by paying the difference in the prices of the programs.

The first (lowest level) of the programs is called Picture Wizard: Arts and Letters For Kids of All Ages. And while this program is obviously aimed at the kids in your family, you, too, can have a ball with the program. My daughter had been used to using the old standby: Microsoft PaintBrush. We got the first version some 5 years ago, and she literally grew up drawing pictures with the program. She then progressed to Print Shop, then The New Print Shop. She's 10 now, and much more discriminating than she used to be. She began to complain about the "jaggies." Enter Picture Wizard.

Designed to work within Windows 3.0, Picture Wizard was a breeze to install. It is not, however, a lightweight when it comes to hard disk space. With the clip art libraries installed, it ate up almost 6.5 Mb. That's a bunch, when talking about "entry level" programs. Once I got the program installed, I called my daughter over. She'd never been inside Windows, but was anxious to try out this new program, based on the "All About...." instruction manual with its clip art and profuse illustrations. This was the impetus she needed to WANT to learn about Windows. After walking her through the basics of what Windows does and how to get into it, she was ready to explore on her own.

She took the softcover manual (roughly 80 pages, all totalled) and set to work discovering what Picture Windows is all about. And it is about plenty! Using a standard Windows interface, the File, Edit, Draw, Arrange, View and Help categories on the menu bar each provide the standard Windows drop-down choices. There is a tool bar along the left hand side of the screen which gives access to 90% of all the actions the average user will be likely to need. From the tool bar you can access the clip-art libraries, symbol libraries, text and rotation tools, magnifying glass and duplication (copy) tool. You can select type style, color, fill style and line style from the same tool bar. The only drawing tools are a line tool and a curve tool.

If you are used to other drawing programs, you'll immediately notice the absence of circle and box tools. If you need to draw circles, boxes, or any one of several hundred other shapes (including just about every variety of snowflake you've ever seen) you can import the shape from the symbol library. After importing the basic shape you can bend, move, flip, stretch, shade, size, color, rotate or perform any combination of the above on the basic shape. And a combination of shapes and clip-art can be "layered" to create a virtually limitless number of graphics.

A 1000-symbol library and a 1000-image clip-art library provide a vast assortment of ready-made artwork with which to start your experimentation. And we're not talking your basic .PCX graphics here. We're talking high-quality vector-based graphics with none of the "jaggies" you've come to know and expect when working with bit-mapped images. This is high-quality stuff, Maynard!

Adding text to any page is simply a matter of choosing the type style from those included with the program (it uses its own, rather than those installed in Windows), type size,

(Continued on next page)

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alignment you want (in order to choose an alignment, there must be more than one line of text typed), and typing your text. Text is typed into an "Enter/Edit Words" window. When you've typed in the text you want, the "add" button is clicked on, and the text appears on the page. It can then be moved, rotated, italicized, etc., just like any symbol described above.

If you've ever worked with the "old-fashioned" draw programs, you know how frustrating it can be to draw a curved line using the freehand drawing tool. It's almost like trying to draw a circle with the old Etch-A-Sketch! Picture Wizard has a curve tool that, when chosen, will take the quasi-curve you actually drew and smooth it out automatically to follow the curved path you drew. For kids, this tool is the berries!

While drawing and adding text to pages is neat, Picture Wizard has a lot more to offer. If your kids are in school, this program can help them improve their grades (That's something I've been trying to do for years!) by helping them make their reports sing! Picture Wizard has charting tools that can turn numbers into pictures and graphs. Bar charts, line charts and pie charts are easy to create, and the tutorial was basic enough for my 10 year old daughter Leigh to understand. Adding graphics to charts makes them come alive.

But that's not all! Greeting cards (with templates), banners, mazes and other fun projects are contained in a "Projects and Activities" section of Picture Wizard. We're not talking the typical greeting cards you're used to creating with Print Shop, either! Again, these are vector-based graphics and scalable fonts. When printed on fancy paper stock, they rival what you might find in many card stores. You've already sent 6 cards to everybody you've ever known? How about designing some Christmas ornaments or coloring pages? If that doesn't trip your trigger, how about calendars or door signs? You know what I'm talking about... those goofy signs that hotels use to hang on the doorknob to let someone know you're busy inside? Templates are included for these and other fun activities.

Oh, I forgot to mention one thing. When you're ready to print your artwork or activities, you'd better have a good book handy. This program prints S-L-O-W!!! And I'm not talking slowER than many programs. I'm talking slowEST!! I'm running Picture Wizard on a 386SX-16 with 4 Mb RAM. My printer is an HP IIP with 4.5 Mb of on-board memory. IT DOESN'T MATTER! When my daughter first began experimenting with the program, she thought the computer was broken. So did I. Now that we know how slow it is, we plan ahead. She's up to page 763 in War and Peace!

Picture Wizard is a great activity program. But even more impressive to me than its graphics and drawing capabilities is the fact that it actually interested my kids enough to want to learn about Windows. They actually read the manual for Picture Wizard cover to cover! I don't think I've ever read a manual cover to cover! Now my daughter is helping ME with the program. And we've got doorknob hangers on all our doors throughout the house!

Picture Wizard retails for $49.95. It is a product of:
Computer Support Corporation
15926 Midway Road
Dallas, TX 75244
(214) 661-8960
(214) 661-5429 (fax)

■■■

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(Continued from page 5)

An AUTOEXEC.BAT file that has been edited to assure that pertinent directories and files required for start-up are accessible, as with the edited version of CONFIG.SYS. Edit or delete all non-mandatory lines, such as those that deal with applications, the PROMPT and the PATH.

Selected DOS files, such as CHKDSK, FDISK, FORMAT, DISKCOPY and others that you deem essential in case the files are not accessible from the hard drive.

Selected device drivers essential for start-up.

CMOS data that describes the hardware in your computer's system.

The CMOS set-up data may be displayed on many current AT-type and advanced computers by pressing CTRL-ALT-ESC or CTRL-ALT-S. Other computers can use a utility (e.g. Norton's) or DEBUG to display CMOS data.

Most recent versions of virus detection and correction files should be available for use.

The SYFD should be verified by using it to boot. It should be saved, write protected, and stored in a safe place--with hope that you never have to use it.

■■■

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01-93

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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 5 NO. 4 April, 1992

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: April 8, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

4/8/92 Artisoft's **LANtastic**
(Best selling peer to peer, affordable Network)

Refreshment Break

Futurus's **RIGHT HAND MAN**
(Personal Communication Package)

Both Demonstrations By:
Gerry Roberts - Roboco Computer Services

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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5/13/92

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and
NORTON AntiVirus
By Symantec

6/10/92

MICROSOFT WINDOWS 3.1
and
VISUAL BASIC
By Microsoft

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:



Ok lets all get strapped in. The roller coaster is a fixing to start. Just as I was preparing for the OS/2 vs Windows 3.1 battle someone pulled the rug out from under me. First I am told, and later read that the parent company I work for, Dun & Bradstreet, is considering buying Lotus Corporation. Ok that's pretty major stuff by itself but it didn't stop there. Next I read where Novell is looking to merge or buy Software Publishing Corporation (SPC) ,the makers of Harvard Graphics. Now fact or fiction I am still trying to figure out both of these deals. Finally, the knockout punch, Microsoft buying Fox Software for 175 million. This deal seams to be fact and will probably be a done deal within the next couple of months. If you are an xBASE user, the last deal will be very important to you. Microsoft after many years of trying to create their own database product has opted to buy a very good and established product. My understanding is that Microsoft will not stop working on their own product yet. Microsoft is now aiming squarely at Borland International's dBASE. Foxpro by itself is a very good and extremely fast database language. If Microsoft does the right things to Foxpro to evolve it into the Windows environment it will be a powerhouse. The race to the Windows database arena and market share between Borland and Microsoft should benefit all xBASE users. These two giants will not be the first to market a Windows database product. Companies like Software Publishing Corporation (Superbase 4), Computer Associates (dBFast) to mention a few, are already there. It will take a couple of new releases to see if Microsoft can convert Foxpro from a prince to a king, or court jester. Borland has a fight on its hands, first to regain the trust of previous dBASE users which still have a bad taste from the original release of dBASE IV and now the entry of Microsoft into the jousting contest.

On April 6th Mr. Bill (Gates) will once again do his magic. He will introduce the long awaited release of Windows 3.1 at Comdex Windows World. His presentation will be shown via satellite around the country. If all goes well I will see it at the Hyatt in Tampa. Anyway if you have Windows already, start saving that upgrade money (around $49.00). This product will be shown by Microsoft at our June meeting.

OS/2 2.0 has been released to BIG corporate land via BBS and other electronic means. To date I have only heard from beta sites. The product has not been seen on any shelves. I

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read that IBM is thinking about $49.00 for the product. At this time I am not sure if that is for an upgrade or anyone who has DOS or what. If you plan on getting and installing the full works of OS/2 2.0 make sure you've got 30Mb of disk available, at least a 386 20Mhz with 4Mb of RAM as a minimum.

If you have been waiting for a notebook with great color, I saw one. CompUSA recently had an open house for corporate types to meet vendors and kick the tires of their products. Vendors included Symantec (the Norton people), Dell Computer, NEC, WordPerfect and others. NEC had on display their new NEC Ultralite SL/25C. Its one of the few color notebooks which uses an active matrix thin film transistor display. That's a mouthful. Basically it means that each screen pixel is controlled by its own transistor. This produces a sharper focus and brighter colors than passive matrix screens. The list price of the notebook is under $6000. If you are interested in buying one good luck. CompUSA does not have any in stock.

Sometime back I shared my opinion about the use of 14" monitors with Window wordprocessing software. I stated that the text was to small to read. Well I have an update on this continuing saga. I recently upgraded my discontinued 14" NEC 3D monitor to a 15" NEC 4FG monitor. At first I was very pleased. This monitor has a new color system which you can set, reduced ELF, VLF and magnetic field (Marylee says all that stuff is good for me). However, NEC decided to discontinue applying the anti-glare coating found on its previous monitors. To date this has produced the 1st computer related problem to my body since starting in this field in 1974. I now have a good case of eye strain which I attribute to the complete reflection of myself (scary) and everything behind me outside the building. I talked to the NEC rep at CompUSA about the problem and asked why they had decided to remove the anti-glare coating. In a nutshell he stated that the market had asked for that feature or lack thereof and that my problem may be an individual one (ouch). While talking to him I noticed that the 4FG monitor he was demoing had a NEC anti-glare screen attached. Of course its no longer called that, its now called a NEC MultiSync monitor lens and retails for $79-$199 depending on which of their monitors you have. As I stood there still smarting from the NEC reps comment that it may be an individual problem, two individuals came up pointing to the NEC 4FG monitor. A young man in his twenties and an older man in his late forties. The young man said "see that's what I need to prevent my eyestrain", well I can tell you my poor eyes lit up when I heard that. I talked to them and explained that I now suffered from the same problem and that I felt that NEC was nickel and diming us by making us buy their product (monitor lens) to prevent this. I confronted the NEC rep who overheard this conversation "Must be another case of an individual problem!" I said. **NOT!** I have ordered the NEC monitor lens to see if the eyestrain goes away or if I should bring back the 14" NEC 3D. Presently, I am highly disappointed with the new NEC monitors. Of course this is my story and 1st hand opinion. I couldn't help notice that other opinions are different, PC Magazine (January 14th issue) selected the NEC FG series as one of the Best of 1991 products, PC WORLD (December 1991 issue) rated the 4FG as a BEST BUY for a Windows monitor, PC/Computing (December 1991 issue) selected the NEC 5FG as one of their 1991 MVP and lastly in the April 14th issue of PC Magazine, John C. Dvorak makes the comment about the NEC 4FG that "I can't recommend this monitor enough" in his Inside Track column. Maybe its just me and one other end-user but this has the smell of the initial dBASE IV 1.0 recommendations and great initial reviews by the press several years back. I wonder where the human factor of an end user comes to play in all these press opinions.

Look for the continuing monitor saga in the future.

Harvey Bruneau

Humor.txt

TIBMPCUG BBS

Service: Cursory examination, followed by the utterance of the phrase, "It can't be ours" and either of the words "hardware" or "software."

Support: The mailing of advertising literature to customers who have returned a registration card.

Alpha Test Version: Too buggy to be released to the paying public.

Beta Test Version: Still too buggy to be released.

Release Version: Alternate pronunciation of "beta test version."

Enhanced: Less awful in some ways than the previous model, and less likely to work as expected.

Convertible: Transformable from a second-rate computer to a first-rate doorstop or paperweight. (Lexicoginal note: replaces the term "junior.")

Upgraded: Didn't work the first time.

Upgraded and Improved: Didn't work the second time.

Copy Protection: (1) A clever method of preventing incompetent pirates from stealing software and legitimate customers from using it; (2) a means of distinguishing honest users from thieves by preventing larceny by the former but not by the latter.

Warranty: An unconditional guarantee that the program purchased is actually included on the disk in the box.

BOOK REPORTS:



Troubleshooting Your PC

Book review By: Mike Janda, Madison PC User's Group

So what do you do when your computer stops working? Call someone in the user group, take it back to the store where you bought it (a little difficult if it's a mail-order clone), or throw it away and buy a new one?

A good place to start is with M&T Books' Troubleshooting Your PC. Written by Jim Aspinwall, Rory Burke, and Mike Todd, this 500-page "manual" provides solutions for over 136 common PC problems. Everything from no lights, fan noise or beeps (solution: check the power source) to recovering deleted files (with Norton).

Individual chapters cover PC internals, configuration, memory, math coprocessor, user interface (includes Windows and DESQview), monitors, printers, pointers (mouse, etc.), disk drives, serial communications, and my favorite, "really weird things."

Each topic is introduced with a non-overly-technical description of how it works, and is followed by a number of common problems that can be encountered. It lists different "symptoms" that may be present, discusses what may cause them, and most importantly, tells you what can be done to correct the problem.
There are also chapters on user maintenance, getting the most from technical support, and using diagnostic and utility software. User maintenance is more than just cleaning the PC (which needn't be done often). Their check-list matches mine rather closely.

Keep a bootable disk handy so you can start the computer without the hard drive (useful for hard disk failures and virus infections); make regular backups (oh sure!); keep good records of the system (like what is connected to each port, the interrupts and ports the hardware uses, the contents of the CMOS, etc.); and use care when installing new software (copy the AUTOEXEC and CONFIG files to another location before beginning installation). Do this and you can easily eliminate 90 percent of the common PC problems.

The appendix is very extensive. Included are detailed memory and port maps, IRQ assignments, keyboard codes, complete ASCII character chart, list of video modes and color codes, hard drive tables for common BIOS, error codes, cabling diagrams, and a list of user groups worldwide (the MPCUG is in it!).

There is also a glossary of computer buzz-words and a bibliography of books to "learn more about your PC." A companion diskette can be purchased for $15 and has a several popular shareware programs, all of which can also be downloaded from the MPCUG BBS.

The subtitle for the book is: "The complete, hands-on guide to upgrading and maintaining your PC." If you read through this book, you will have a good understanding of how a PC works, and more importantly, why it sometimes doesn't. It can also help you make the "right" decisions when it comes time to buy replacement parts (an upgrade!).

Troubleshooting Your PC, by Jim Aspinwall, Rory Burke, and Mike Todd, is priced at $26.95 and is available at bookstores everywhere.

M&T Books
411 Borel Avenue, Suite 100
San Mateo, CA 94402-3522
(415) 358-9500
(415) 358-8728 (fax)

■■■

Upgrading PCs

By: Bud and Alex Aaron

Book Review By: Hugh Bayless, Monterey Bay User Group

If you're like me, you have often thought about upgrading your present PC in one way or another. If you have a 286, you wonder about upgrading to a 386SX or full 386. Even if you already own a 386/33, you wonder about upgrading to a 486. And, of course, there are always things to add to the existing computer, such as more RAM, larger capacity disk drives, and peripherals like scanners and tape drives. If you have, here's the book for both of us.

If you ever wished your PC was faster, more powerful, or had greater capabilities, this book from Osborne/McGraw-Hill tells you how you can achieve it for yourself. Aside from upgrading, this is a clear and lucid explanation of how the parts of a computer fits together and do their work. Before you start on any upgrade, invest $19.95 in Upgrading PCs and save yourself a lot of time, trouble and money.

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Effect of Airport Security on Diskettes and Disk Failure on Foreign Computers

By: Carl Tenning and Donald Mendroke

The following discussion took place on the TOGGLE BBS in February 1992:

From: Carl Tenning
To: ALL USERS
About: Effect of Airport Security on Diskettes

Taking Diskettes Through Airport Security

I have been warned by computer users who say that the airport security machines will erase or otherwise damage diskettes. Some say it is the carry-on x-ray screening that will destroy a diskette and others say it is the walk-through metal detector. One time I carried a 3.5 inch diskette through the walk-through, but it was not harmed. Recently, I had occasion to carry a 3.5 inch, 720K diskette to London, England. This time I carried the diskette in my carry-on case which, of course, had to be put through the X-ray screening. The diskette contained an EXE file of an airplane simulator which I wanted to demonstrate to the Civil Aeronautical Authorities. Since this was a government facility the diskette had to be screened for viruses before being allowed onto their computers. It passed the virus check okay, but they said the diskette was empty. Upon doing a DIR on their DOS machine, it said "File not found". At first I suspected the airport security screening. However, if the X-ray screening was the cause of the problem, how could the diskette be read at all (wouldn't it become unformatted)? Apparently their DOS machine at least recognized the diskette, but couldn't find any files. Needless to say, I wasn't able to demonstrate the simulation program.

Later, I wondered if the virus screening had inadvertently erased the file. I wasn't able to find out until I got back home. I carried the diskette back home the same way, in my carry-on case. Since I combined the business trip with a week's vacation, this involved a total of four airport check-ins and the resultant X-ray security screenings. When I checked the diskette on my own machine after returning home, the EXE file was still there and the diskette worked perfectly! I can't explain why the English DOS machine (it was an Apricot) couldn't or wouldn't recognize my file. Is it possible that they have some sort of virus protection that doesn't recognize foreign EXE or COM files? Next time I'll try giving it with a different extension. Since, in this case, the EXE file was the only file on the diskette, I don't know if it would have recognized non-EXE or non-COM files. Or could they be operating a version of DOS that is incompatible with the one I use (DOS 5.0)? I have formatted any number of diskettes that have been successfully read on other machines. I'd appreciate any ideas.

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From: Donald Mendroke
To: Carl Tenning
About: Effect of Airport Security on Diskettes

Well, I can't comment meaningfully on the British Apricot computer's DOS, but I can say, absolutely, that airport X-rays will have no effect on your diskette's stored information.

However, the walk-through metal detector can erase or scramble your data! The metal detector produces a magnetic field, much like a bulk tape eraser, and should be considered extremely hazardous to your diskettes health!

In fact, the X-ray machine is heavily shielded, and emits only X-rays (which are really a form of light). Your diskettes and laptop computer will actually be much safer if they're run through the protective shielding of the X-ray machine.

It is one of the most popular myths that airport X-ray machines will wreak havoc on your data, or even on a laptop's EPROM. Nothing could be further from the truth. EPROMs are erased by direct exposure to intense light in the ultraviolet spectrum. An EPROM requires exposure to a 12,000 uw/cm2 ultraviolet light at a wavelength of 2,537 Angstroms for at least 15 minutes at a distance of 1 inch.

An airport security X-ray machine is 1,000-10,000 wavelengths off, and is nowhere near the strength, duration, or distance required for erasure.

Ironically, those very same circuit boards are X-rayed by the manufacturer during inspection for quality control!

There are still people who get nervous when taking their laptop computers (with hard drive and diskettes) through the airport's X-ray machine, yet think nothing of carrying them through the metal detector, which would actually make a very nice degaussing coil.

One computer expert ran an interesting test. He put his primary boot disk through the X-ray machines in various airports for over two years, averaging two to three passed a week. After putting his equipment and disks through the X-ray machines over 100 times, he found that the same disk still boots any system, and he has never reformatted it. He also owns several portables with hard disks, and has one that has been through X-Ray machines every week for more than two years. He reports that he actually prefers to pass the equipment through the X-Ray machine because it offers the best protection from the magnetic fields produced by the metal detector.

Do your data a favor, let the airport X-Ray it to their heart's content.

From: Carl Tenning
To: Donald Mendroke
About: Effect of Airport Security on Diskettes

I concluded the same on the x-ray, i. e., that it did not damage my diskette, but neither did the walk through sensor affect another diskette. But I suppose some may be stronger than others and maybe be set at different intensities at different times (notice how sometimes they always seem to beep people and at other times hardly ever?). I agree that its probably better to be safe and don't carry diskettes or portables through the walk-through detectors. Go through the x-ray instead.

From: Donald Mendroke
To: Carl Tenning
About: Effect of Airport Security on Diskettes

Yes, your data can probably survive several walks through the metal detector. Although the diskette still functions, it may possibly have sustained some magnetic "damage" on the way through. Let me give a more clear example.

We've all heard about the dangers of putting our diskettes near a video monitor, especially a color monitor. But, we are rarely told the reason why. When a color monitor is turned on, there is a strong demagnetizing effect that occurs around the edges of the CRT. Diskettes should be kept at least one foot away from the monitor during this power cycle. The reason is that this de-magnetizing field will attempt to "wash away" the data on the diskettes too. What we are seldom told is that this effect on our data is cumulative and permanent.

Since many people don't immediately notice this effect, they tend to think that the warnings were overly cautious. What we may not realize is that our data's weakened magnetic domains will fail sooner rather than later because of this "abuse". I would guess that the airport's metal detector's effect would be similar, in the sense that the effect on data would be permanent and cumulative.

My recommendation would be to immediately copy any important disks that you suspect have been "abused" by magnetic fields, then re-format them and re-copy the original data back onto them. I have only recently been made aware of a color CRT's gradual and cumulative de-magnetizing effects, and now take special precautions to make sure my disks are out of its range during power on/off cycles

I've always considered myself to be careful with my diskettes, yet I'm finding new ways to be even more careful, because I didn't realize that my data could be slowly corrupted over a period of time. Like most users, I figured "as long as the data is still there, it's 100% good", not realizing that one day it may go "poof" with no apparent direct cause.

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I have a feeling that the airport's metal detector may also have a similar magnetic weakening effect, that slowly, over a period of time, will cause the signal on the diskette to be partially erased (weakened). It would be interesting to test this by having someone stand for a period of time in a metal detector, rather than just walking through. I wonder how long it would take for a diskette to be erased that way?

Editor's comments: My AT clone is a desktop model with the color monitor placed on top of the computer case. I often leave diskettes lying on top of my PC case, about two and a half inches below my color monitor. According to Donald Mendroke's advice, that is a bad practice. Of course, my "A" drive is just below that, about 3 inches below the monitor, so is poorly placed also, unless the disk drive casing shields the disks from damage due to the color monitor. My machine is about five years old and I have experienced no problems of that type with my diskettes yet.

My guess as to why the English machine couldn't find Carl's program is that for some reason the English machine's set up (BIOS-ROM) couldn't find the File Allocation Table (FAT) which the DIR command reads, and not finding it, listed no files on the disk. Another suggestion from the February meeting: You may have formatted your double density diskette on a high density drive laying down narrower tracks that the English machine could not read...but read on.

Postscript:
From: Carl Tenning
To: ALL USERS
About: Corrupted Diskette, Airport Security?

The problem I had of not being able to read my 3.5 inch 720K diskette on another computer may have been caused by a corrupted directory structure. The diskette appeared normal to my PC clone using DOS 5.0, but gave a "File not found" error when I tried to use the diskette on the other computer. The other computer was an Apricot running DOS, but I don't know what version of DOS. I decided to use PC Tools DISKFIX to examine the offending diskette. It reported that something was corrupted in the directory structure and went on to fix it. [The message was something like: "May not work with all versions of DOS"] I guess I'll never know whether the airport security screening caused the error or not. Now, before I take another diskette on a trip I will first use DISKFIX to make sure that it contains no directory or boot track errors. One note of interest is that that particular diskette was not formatted on my computer, but on an old Compaq computer that had an early 3.5 disk drive, so maybe that was the culprit.

SOFTWARE REVIEWS:

Harvard Draw for Windows

Review By: Bob Norton, Madison PC User's Group

Software Publishing Corporation has recently released its drawing program for Windows, Harvard Draw. A drawing program is different from a painting program, although both kinds of programs work with images. Whereas a paint program treats colors as paint that is applied onto a canvas, a draw program treats pictures as if they were made of many colored paper cut-outs. This way of working lets you go back into a picture, and change things that you don't like, while leaving the parts you do like alone.

The thing which impressed me right away with Harvard Draw was the speed, especially in handling very large drawings. For example, a picture of the starship Enterprise, stored in a 269K bytes file, took only 15 seconds to draw on a 486. There must be thousands of little shapes in that drawing! Speed in a draw program is very important, as you will want the picture to redraw itself every time you make a change. Waiting around for slow drawing to complete could quickly get irritating.

Of course, you can use the outline mode for an image, which is even faster. But I preferred to use the preview mode, so that I could see the full color of the finished images as I was working on them. Using a computer is more satisfying when you can see exactly how your work is progressing as you do it. This way, you can avoid the big mistakes, and having to erase and redo a lot of work unnecessarily.

On the other hand, installing Harvard draw was not so fast. I chose the full install, and even with a fast computer, it took about a half hour to decompress and load all the files and clip art. I estimate that there were a little under 30 MB of files expanded onto my disk during installation, so you better have some space free to load this package. A collection of 47 Bitstream fonts is also added to your disk as you load Harvard Draw. These fonts are the ones available to you to add as text in your drawings, and not the normal Windows fonts. The fonts chosen for you seem to be a good selection for normal use, but I was disappointed that I could not easily find out how to add more.

I tried Harvard draw in both normal VGA mode, and also in a 32K color mode. In both cases, Harvard Draw was reliable, and did not crash, even with my attempts to do things in what were undoubtedly unexpected ways. I did notice that the icon for Harvard Draw blanched out in 32K color mode, as did several other programs' icons. I would chalk this up to being a fluke in the operation of Windows 3.0 and not a problem with Harvard Graphics.

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The clip art package is large, and the symbols are many and well done. I like the little thumbnail sketch that you get as you select each one before you load it. This allowed me to quickly look through hundreds of images to get the one I was seeking. With all these sources of clip art and symbols available, even I can put together an drawing with some meaning. Drop in a few images, size them, add some text and a background if you like. The tutorial that comes in the Learning Guide walks you through eleven lessons to show you how to do all these things and more.

Harvard Draw will let you work on more than one picture at a time, through the use of the Window menu choice. This is a little awkward, as you cannot make a new second window through the file/new menu command. The ability to work on two drawings at once is especially nice if you are lifting, er ah, recycling, part of previously done pictures. Because Harvard Draw can import images from eleven different vector formats, and has a good autotracing ability, you can use parts of pictures from a wide range of other sources not included in the package.

The color selection bar at the top is a very nice feature. It holds 150 colors at a time, and you can pick a group of colors from a set of twelve predefined palettes. If none of these palettes suits your need, you can define your own as well. You can choose your color model too when you define your own colors. Also found on the color bar are a few textures and color fill effects. For example, in the earth palette there was a fish texture and several tree textures, as well as some earth tone graded fills. This grouping of colors and textures is very convenient.

For beginners like me, there is a built in dynamic help bar at the bottom of the edit area. This is called the information bar, and it tells you in a single line the function of each control as you put the cursor over it. If you get so experienced enough that you no longer need this kind of crutch, you can turn it off and reclaim some additional drawing area. The same idea applies to the coordinate bar, which is just above the color bar. If you do not want that information, you can turn it off and boost your drawing area also.

The tools form a third strip along the left edge of the drawing area. Many of the tools can be customized, and this can be done by just double-clicking on the tool. The tool strip does not automatically change size, so that if you run Harvard Draw at less than full-screen, you may lose access to some tools. Of course there are also scroll bars as needed in both dimensions, which will let you work with drawings bigger than the viewable area.

There are so many features that I have not begun to list them all. This is a very powerful program, and you should allow some time to learn the features that you will want to use. From my comparisons with other draw packages on the market, I would say that Harvard Draw as powerful or more powerful than any other Windows drawing program, and it does it at a lower price than the other comparable programs. Some of the features that are most important are:

- Capacity for 99 layers of drawing.
- Three varieties of zoom.
- Easily changed Bezier curves.
- On-line glossary and context sensitive help.
- 18 types of tools.
- Multiple levels of undo and redo.
- Handles drawings too big to fit in memory.
- Autotrace of color or black and white bitmaps.
- Many special effects.

Harvard Draw for Windows also has the ability to work with images from the popular Harvard Graphics program, which is DOS based. It can import CH3 and SY3 files, among the many other formats.

Harvard Draw seems to be a very good value to me, considering the price and the performance. I believe that a competitive upgrade price is available, which would allow you to upgrade from a DOS or Windows drawing program you already own to Harvard Draw.

The list price for Harvard Draw is $595 and is available from:
Software Publishing Corp.
3165 Kifer Road
Santa Clara, CA 95051
(408) 986-8000

■■■

SuperPrint
Souped-Up Windows Printing

Review By: Meg Hamel, Madison PC User's Group

It's a printer driver! No, it's a print spooler! No, it's an on-the-fly font scaler! SuperPrint is indeed all three things -- a super-duper Windows printing package that improves your printing options through three separate utilities.

There are several programs that have broken down barriers when it comes to printing within Windows. SuperPrint's printer drivers, spooler, and type scaler work together to speed up your printing and increase your flexibility.

For starters, Zenographics includes printer drivers for several kinds of non-Postscript printers. These "SuperDrivers" appear in the Control Panel/Printer menu just like any other installed printer. Version 2.0 of Super-Print includes drivers for HP
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LaserJets and compatibles, HP Deskjets, HP Paintjets, Canon LBP laser printers, and most 9- and 24-pin dot-matrix printers. Also included are metafile drivers for output on remote devices such as a service bureau's film recorder, and a bitmap driver that creates a Targa, TIFF, or BMP bitmap file from the document pages.

These drivers offer you more choices than standard Windows drivers. These choices include generating pages in reverse order (last page first) and "draft" printing that utilizes some printers' lower resolution to produce faster output (such as printing at 150 dpi on an HP laser). You are also given three multitasking options that control the rate at which the SuperDriver allows other Windows programs to function and how often it checks the status of Abort, Pause, or Stop buttons. You can experiment with this setting to fit your particular use requirements.

SuperDrivers also improve the look of graphics printing by offering several dithering patterns and gray levels to print color or gray-scale graphics on black-and-white printers. I thought it did a good job, especially on dot-matrix printers, which could only print smudgy images before. SuperQueue is a print spooler that replaces Windows' Print Manager.

SuperQueue is more efficient, and allows you to return to your work faster. You can also use the metafile driver described above to save your printing projects as files to be printed later. SuperQueue has a job list to which you can add these file names and run a big batch file. I found this useful when doing merge printing letters -- I just queued up the saved files before I went home for the night.

If you have SuperQueue running and minimized to an icon, it will automatically print in the background. I found that using SuperQueue with Ami Pro returned control of the cursor back to me faster than regular Windows printing.

The third utility in this package is SuperText, a font scaler similar to Adobe Type Manager. It uses scalable outlines to display screen fonts accurately, and also prints crisp type on non-Postscript printers.

One of my favorite things about working in the Windows environment is that everyone can get great-looking type, no matter what the printer. Using a font scaler, such as ATM or SuperText, allows you to have scalable fonts and WYSIWYG screen representation of those fonts. SuperText has several advantages over ATM, especially because it supports several font formats. Whereas ATM only accepts Type 1 PostScript fonts, SuperText lets you install Type 1, Intellifont, Nimbus Q, Bitstream Fontware, Bitstream Facelift (Speedo), or HP softfonts (.SFP, not scalable).

Support of all these fonts gives you maximum flexibility. I have Speedo fonts from one software package, a few Intellifonts from another, and dozens of Type 1 fonts. I can install and use all of them on any document, on any printer. The SuperPrint package itself comes supplied with many typefaces (Times, Sans, Sans Narrow, Courier, Symbol, Dingbats, Avant Garde, Century Schoolbook, Palatino, Bookman, Zapf Chancery, and Bitstream Charter). This is enough to snazz up any document!

Another neat feature of SuperText is that you can change the name of any font that is installed. Why is this useful? Many typefaces are identical but are given different names. For example, the Palatino fonts included with this program are actually called Palermo, for copyright reasons. I can easily change this back to the more recognizable name. Or perhaps I've installed ITC Garamond, and want to dump the ITC part, so that I can find it in the alphabetical order I expect. This feature also lets you confirm that four weights of a font (regular, italic, bold, and bold italic) are accessible under one font menu name, instead of being all listed separately.

All in all, I found SuperPrint to be useful and speedy. If you do a lot of Windows printing and you don't have convenient coffee breaks for when your job is running, try SuperPrint. It can be found for about $129 from mail order sources -- for a set of enhanced printer drivers, a print spooler, a type scaler that supports lots of file formats, PLUS several typefaces to get you started... it's a SuperDeal!

Zenographics
4 Executive Circle, Suite 200
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 851-6352
(714) 851-1314 (fax)

■■■

Taking a Trip, But Not a Fall
Keep That Notebook Running With Traveling Software

Review By: Rod McKenzie, Contributing Editor, Madison PC User's Group

Traveling Software has carefully focussed their attention on the needs of users who take their computing power away from the home -- those of us who hit the road and leave behind the office based "main machine." Laptop and notebook users are very likely using one of Traveling Software's (TSI) products already. Many OEMs advise their customers to never leave home without it.
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This review covers three recent upgrades that TSI has delivered. One is the PC-to-laptop link for transferring data, one is for the laptop or notebook itself, and the last one ties in the PC to a pocket organizer, Casio's B.O.S.S.

LapLink Pro

The flagship of the TSI fleet is LapLink Pro. It gives the user the means, by serial or parallel cable connection, to exchange files from one computer to another. If the "other" machine is farther away, connect with a modem and make the transfer to and from the remote location. The data transfer capability is enhanced over prior versions of LapLink by the introduction of new "core code" technology -- which TSI terms a "Universal Communications Object," and the development team code-named it "Blackbird." The approach makes the transfers occur independent of the hardware being used.

LapLink Pro is not a Windows 3.0 application. It's solid DOS, but it is Windows aware and comes with .PIF and .ICO files. It will reside very happily on your Windows Desktop and look like it belongs there.

Once the connection is made between the two machines, whether it's by modem or a cable across the table, the transfers can begin. The user has the choice of file-by-file transfers, updating just selected files, or a two way transfer where the files with the latest date and time stamps are copied over the older versions of the files regardless of which drive has the latest file. TSI has improved the transfer rates by compressing the files before the transfer begins.

Once Laplink is installed on both machines, the local drive and directory information will be displayed on the left side of the screen, and information about the remote machine will be displayed on the right side.

The cabling supplied with the program handles both parallel connections, between printer ports (LPT1), or between serial ports (COM1-4). In the case of the serial cable, each end is equipped with a 9-pin and a 25-pin connector. The cables are lighter and longer, now eight feet in length.

Battery Watch Pro

Users will find this second TSI product especially helpful when they're on the go and spending a lot of time on the ni-cad batteries. Notebook PCs powered by these batteries have a limited running time, and it's very easy to work longer than you thought, and find that the machine is ready to pack it in. Battery Watch Pro helps by keeping track of battery use and warns the user when the end is near. It's a good way to avoid nasty surprises.

Like it or not, notebooks and laptops have always been designed with the trade-off between weight and size and hours of battery life. The back-lit screen, the drives, and the CPU itself all draw power, as does an internal modem, if one is in use.

TSI frankly calls Battery Watch Pro a software solution to a hardware problem. BW does this by first learning the expected life of a fully charged battery for the specific model of laptop or notebook where it's installed. It deducts from this inventory of "energy" the amount consumed by each peripheral and the CPU itself, using a mathematical model. When the "balance on hand" is only sufficient to cover another 30 minutes of operation, the first of several alarms goes off. There are 15 and five minute alarms, too, but that might be calling it too close. Remember this is a calculation of the remaining battery life, not a direct measure. Sorry, batteries don't have dipsticks to read.

Battery Watch Pro supports Windows, as well as DOS, and is installed to a RAM disk or to a hard disk. It won't run from a floppy alone. BW supports a wide range of laptops and notebook machines, from Amstrad to ZEOS. Even unlisted brands can benefit from Battery Watch Pro when the user teaches the program what the system has and uses. It's a trial and error process adjusting the rate of drain and the endpoints. A little patience and persistence is needed to get the most from the program.

BW can show the user the remaining time estimate in a small window in the upper right corner of the screen, or in the minimized icon if it's running in Windows. The icon is active, displaying an animated gas gauge, and below it is a digital display of the time remaining.

PC Link Plus

The last program from TSI is PC-Link Plus, a program that makes the connection between the PC and the Casio B.O.S.S. The B.O.S.S. is a pocket organizer that is usually equipped with 64K of memory for storing names, addresses, phone numbers, memos, and other information. It can be very handy. I've used one for over two years and find it's a useful tool, but there are a few problems. One is the small size of the keyboard. It may be fine for the occasional entry of a few lines of data, but not for long lists of names and numbers. It's too easy to hit the wrong key, or not press correctly and leave out a character. Also, there's no direct method of printout.

So that's the problem. Now what's the solution? PC-Link Plus, a program that formats and transfers data between the organizer and the PC. It offers several data input options and printing options to the user. The link is a small plug cord unit which runs between the serial port of the PC and the small phono socket on the side of the B.O.S.S. If anyone's been

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reluctant to use an organizer because they didn't want the tedium of manually keying lots of data, this is the answer.

I've used the original PC Link, between the Radio Shack version of the B.O.S.S. and an old NEC Multispeed laptop -- dual floppies all the way. The new PC-Link Plus is faster and the data entry screens are improved. The program runs faster and there's the option to select and limit the entries to be transferred or printed. Over all, there's a lot of time saved. Earlier versions of PCL would generate duplicate records if a file was loaded a second time after editing the entries. The user would then have to manually delete entries, a tedious process. PCLP avoids this by automatically deleting the duplicates.

The custom printing option allows the user to select isolated records to be grouped together to make special paper based lists. It's almost as easy as laying the organizer on the photocopier!

Another improvement in PCLP is the ability to mark records to be deleted or edited. This is especially handy when making changes to the calendar schedule or the telephone list. The scheduler can copy recurring events -- for example, a user group meeting that happens every second Wednesday of the month. But wait, sometimes it's at 7:00 p.m. and sometimes at 8:00 p.m. No problem! Go in and edit the "odd" meetings that don't fit the general rule.

If this is what Bill Gates, at Microsoft, means by having "Information at Your Fingertips," he's got some allies over at Traveling Software. They're making it possible to share data between these electronic storehouses of information, keeping the hardware from running out of power and letting the users put a little of that data from their PC right into the shirt pocket.

The pricing on these Traveling Software products is:
LapLink Pro - $169.95 (upgrade $59.95)
Battery Watch Pro - $49.95 (upgrade $19.95)
PC Link Plus - $129.95 (for upgrades call TSI)
Traveling Software, Inc.
18702 North Creek Parkway
Bothell, WA 98011
(800) 343-8080 (orders and upgrades)
(206) 483-8088
(206) 487-1284 (fax) ■■■

Editorial Comment:

I am sure all of the members join me in expressing gratitude to Ed Buzza for his Wordperfect classes he so diligently prepared and presented for our members. Thank you Ed, for your consistent support to the group.

Micro-Phone II for Windows V 1.0

A Review By: David Bradshaw, NWA-MCUG - NorthWest Arkansas Microcomputer User Group, Springdale, Arkansas

Introduction -
The setup program provided with Micro-Phone II for Windows made installation easy. Less than one megabyte of hard disk space was required. Evaluation of this program did not require much time. I encountered no functional problems with Micro-Phone for Windows.

My two main expectations for a communication program running under Windows were that it multitask and provide graphical capabilities. At first I was disheartened by the lack of ANSI capabilities. This made communication sessions seem colorless and more difficult to follow. However, the multitasking worked very well and was well supported with script capabilities. I was able to upload, download, and logon in the background while working with other programs. The documentation is very thorough in explaining the capabilities of the program.

Recording Scripts -
I used the script record function which is called "watch me" to automate my logon to various BBS's. This feature allows easy automation of almost any repetitive telecommunication task without having to be knowledgable in a script programming language. It was only necessary to manually go through the logon while the "watch me" feature recorded the script automatically. I assigned these logon scripts to buttons along a button bar at the bottom of the screen. I was then able to log onto any of the BBS's with a single click of my mouse and then switch to a different program till the logon was completed.

Transfer Protocols -
The upload\download protocols available are sparce. The lack of Zmodem transfer protocol is to me a big drawback. Only Xmodem and Ymodem are provided. However, I've read that version 2 corrects this problem by adding Zmodem to the protocols.

Conclusions -
Micro-Phone II provides some excellent script capabilities which support the multi-tasking capabilities of Windows well. Scripts for Compuserve, a mini BBS, and other functions are provided. If your goal is to automate and multi-task then Micro-Phone is a good choice. However, if you want a more graphical interface I suggest you look at Wincomm or Unicom. Micro-Phone is a competent program with all the essentials.

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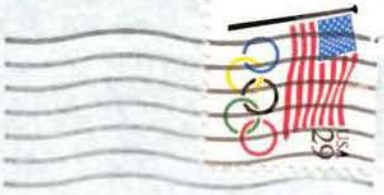
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BITS OF BLUE

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP

VOL. 5 NO. 6 June, 1992

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: June 10, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:
6/10/92 --

MICROSOFT WINDOWS 3.1

and

VISUAL BASIC

By: Microsoft

Refreshment Break

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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7/8/92 --

GeoWorks Pro
By: Tom Cone

Bulletin Board System
By: Kevan Sheridan

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Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 5/13/92 MEETING --

WOWeee!!! Those who did not make this meeting missed another mighty good one. And as much as I hate to say it, I guess I must give credit where credit is due - That we have such good meetings is in very large measure due to the time and effort our illustrious puts into our club. He arranges for our guest speakers, does a good bit of research to bring to us the latest developments in the computer world - much of which I, for example, would not receive otherwise at all, coordinates for our facilities, and so on. Those of us who benefit from our club would do well to give "Old Harv" a "Thanks, Pres. I really appreciate all you do for our club." I do so publicly, here and now!! Thanks, Pres. I really do appreciate all you do for our club. It means a great deal to me.

Speaking of our Pres, everyone was waiting and watching as the hour approached 6 PM, wondering when and if the meeting would begin. The excitement and tension grew as the little hand reached 6 and the big hand reached 12. And then, in comes our Pres in shining armor on his white steed, just in the nick of time - and the meeting commenced only about 5 minutes late. (Harvey and his steed had been held up by a horse jam at the feeding trough. He then proceeded in his inimitable style to lead us through another very good meeting.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Among the several industry news items brought to the meeting were:

-- Harvey reported that a Windows Resource Manual that was out for Windows 3.1 was a very good book and could be had for about $18 - for those who might be interested in Windows at that depth.

-- CorelDraw is expected to come out with version 3 of that program sometime this summer. If you have your eyes out for this one, you might consider waiting a little while.

-- Word Perfect for Windows apparently has had a few problems. Well, there is a fix available now. If you are having a problem with that program that you can't fix, a maintenance upgrade is available from the Word Perfect Corp for about $15 to cover shipping and handling. If you fit this criteria, give them a call. And, it is rumored that Word Perfect Ver. 6.0 will be out in a few months.

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-- Also in the rumor category - Microsoft is now working on DOS 6.0 and that the 6.0 version will include Stacker. (See Commentary below.)

-- Harvey reported that Wired for Sound PRO for Windows was available at Comp USA for about $20. He thought it a pretty neat program, which included over 100 sounds and could be programmed to make just about any sound desired at just about any computer event desired; the sounds are editable and the volume adjustable. The program does not include a drive for Windows, but one is available on the BOB BBS under the name of SPEAKER.EXE (a self extracting program).

And then Harvey introduced our first guest speaker.

PROGRAM REVIEWS

Norton Desktop For Windows

Randy Johnston, the Corporate Account Rep for this area for Symantec Corporation, was on hand to give us a rundown on Norton Desktop for Windows. Before giving us a review of the program, he answered a few of the always asked questions, like: Yes, Norton Desktop Ver 2.0 (the latest) is compatible with Windows 3.1; it uses about 6 meg of hard disk space, including about 3 meg of help files (which could be removed if you do not need them); and the MSRP is $149, but he gave our club quite a few coupons which allow purchase of the program from Symantec for $69 - good until 13 June 1992.

Randy stated that Norton Desktop combined Windows Progman, file Manager, Print Manager and Task Manager onto a desktop, and provided the capability to customize the desktop to just about any configuration one might desire, bringing in just about any of the Windows programs onto the desktop. It expands on Windows 3.1 capabilities with some very helpful enhancements, such as:

-- Setting up individual files on the desktop as a button so that clicking on that file button will load the program that generated the file, with that file loaded into the program. You can also drop the file on a different program (which must be capable of working with the file, of course) and desktop will start that program.

-- Has provisions for up to 14 buttons on a button bar, giving you 14 "button ready" macros to simplify operations. The buttons can be created/changed quickly and easily.

-- Desktop has an excellent file viewer capability (including a wide variety of graphic formats) which has 75 different filters/viewers. It has the capability to view 2 files simultaneously. And, it has a search feature, but does not yet include a cut and paste capability.

-- Desktop has a Launch Manager/List which gives the ability to quickly call on selected (your choice) utilities while continuing to work in an application. One example Randy used was you find yourself in an application with need to save something to floppy, but you don't have a formatted floppy available. What else, click your Launch Manager and select format and Walla! - there is your formatted floppy without leaving your application.

-- Allows the movement of entire tree segments from one drive to another with the simple click, move and drop action with the mouse, a nice feature indeed for those occasions when major restructuring of disks take place.

-- Norton Desktop has many other nice features, including some of the utilities for Norton Utilities, such as: Key Finder, a screen saver with several options, Smart Unerase, a shredder , Disk Doctor (though not as elaborate as in Norton Utilities), Backup (which can restore from DOS), an antivirus capability, Timeline For Windows, and PC Anywhere.

There were too many features for me to keep up with, but the foregoing list gives you a feel that this is a very nice program with many very nice features. And Randy did a super job of giving us an overview of the program and answering questions from the audience.

To Randy Johnston and Symantec - a VERY BIG THANK YOU for a job VERY WELL DONE and for the programs donated.

EASYCAD2

After the break, John Fought of Data Flex gave us a rundown on EASYCAD2. (John is the Florida dealer for EASYCAD/FASTCAD programs.) CAD, I believe, stands for computer aided design/graphics.

EASYCAD is a simplified variation of FASTCAD and is designed for those with design/drawing needs somewhat simpler than design engineers, such as floor plans - though the program is certainly more powerful than that. It lists for $199, but John stated that any of our members could purchase the program from him for $179 (he doesn't have much margin to work with). In contrast, the 2D version of FASTCAD lists for $795, the 3D version for $2995. So, we are talking about some very powerful and rather expensive software. I have little knowledge of CAD software and have no idea of pricing. I am led to believe, however, that these are very competitive prices.

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EASYCAD2 requires 512K of RAM, but 1 meg is desirable. It will work on an XT, but the better the computer, the faster the program. A math coprocessor is not required but the program will use it if available. It is reportedly faster than AUTOCAD, a competitor I believe.

EASYCAD is an impressive program. It draws in real world increments/values, which are settable by the user, and will quickly convert drawings to measurements other than those in which a drawing was made (e.g., SAE, CM, English, pixels, etc.). And, it really does do the conversion quickly. It has a wide open screen with pull down menus. John demonstrated several features of the program and I, for one, thought it a very nice program.

John then went on to give a very brief overview of some of FASTCAD features. If you like EASYCAD, you'll really like FASTCAD. It offers multiple windows (up to five I believe) giving different views of a drawing. And drawing can be done across views allowing for greater speed and accuracy. I am too much of a layman with CAD to do John/'s presentation and the programs justice. They were all impressive programs and I would suggest that if you are into CAD, that you give these programs a look.

To John Fought, a VERY BIG THANK YOU for a very good job.

AND THE WINNER IS

Due to the generosity of Symantec, three programs were available as door prizes, along with the 50/50 cash drawing. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Parker Monroe -- Norton Desktop for Windows
Gary Palmea -- Norton AntiVirus
Emelie Jurado -- Norton GamePack
Ruth a. Radlin -- 50/50 ($46)

COMMENTARY

Well, I don't know quite where to begin. My subject is software in general and Microsoft in particular. In general, there is just too much good software out there and there are those of us who want it all. The problem is that never my wallet nor my hard disk will allow me to have it all - not even very much of it. So you try to pick and choose. I try, but sure as heck as soon as I commit myself I am sure to come across something else that has one or more better features, or the same software company will come out with an upgrade for the very product I bought. More bucks!! We hear and see about the new products of many of the major software companies at our User Group meetings, and many have capabilities that you don't have and could sure put to good use. And you ask some of your fellow users about some of the programs and you are almost certain to come up with conflicting views - WP 5.1 has it all over Word for Windows, and I wouldn't be caught dead with Word on my computer; the next person takes just the opposite view. I do not have unlimited resources as some of my compatriots apparently have and I must try to constrain my outlay for computer goodies (my boss tells me). What do you do? I , and perhaps others, would be interested in how you deal with the constant improvement of software products and the great variety available for any given purpose. How about some input for the newsletter on this subject!!

As to Microsoft in particular. I am getting the impression that they are trying to make it very difficult for many of its software competitors - and me in the process. I had Windows 3.0. I acquired Powerpak for Windows as a font source and printer driver. Then Word for Windows came out. Aha! Powerpak for Windows won't work with Word. So upgrade Powerpak. Then, Powerpak upgrade wasn't even settled in on my hard drive when Windows 3.1 came out. It included True Type. And what do you know - the Powerpak I just loaded won't work with Windows 3.1. Another upgrade. What's more, Bitstream Facelift and Adobe, both of which I had, won't work with Windows 3.1. More upgrades? No, Bitstream wants $40 and Adobe wants $30. I'll settle for Powerpak - while I had to pay $6 for the Word for Windows upgrade, I am paying nothing for the Win 3.1 upgrade. A pat on the back for Atech software. But that is not my point. Doesn't Microsoft talk with anyone else? Are they trying to run a lot of others out of business? Do they have any consideration for the users other than their wallet? One of our guests tonight mentioned it might be time for Microsoft to have a comeuppance. Can IBM do it with OS2/2.0? I don't know, though I have druthers. But I do feel like Microsoft is taking advantage of me. What do you think?

Co-Secretary - Jim Clark

■■■

WINDOWS KEY COMMANDS

By: Jim Karsjens, North Orange County Computer Club

Windows may be graphics and mouse oriented, but to move around between applications, you need to know the following Non-letter and Non-function keycontrol codes:

Alt Tab	Toggles between applications
Alt ESC	Switches to next application
Ctrl ESC	Displays task list
Alt Space	S\Displays application Control Menu
Alt End	Toggles in & out of Windows
Shft f4	Tiles the open Windows
Shft f5	Cascades the open Windows
Ctl f4	Closes active window
Alt f4	Exists Windows



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Thanks Jim. For those of you who read the minutes of the May meeting, please believe me when I tell you that I didn't pay Jim any money to write that about me. However, I appreciate the good words from Jim and others about me and our group. Just remember that our group exist solely on the dedication of a small group of volunteers of which I am only one. A sincere attaboy to a board member is one of the few rewards he or she gets for contributing their time into our group.

If you missed the May meeting, well you lost. We had two vendor sessions. Randy Johnston of Symantec (you know, those people who bought Norton out) did a bang-up job! The total amount of money collected ($98) for the raffle was the largest I can remember. That speaks a lot for the Symantec products that were donated. Unfortunately, my three bucks didn't win that Norton Desktop for Windows or half of the collected money. Well maybe next month. Our second presentation by John Fought of Dataflex (St. Pete) covered three CAD programs. It was slick to look at the model of a house from the outside and then go inside the house to look out. Of course this was the high end 3D product, but it was neat.

That May meeting was mighty long and I will try not to schedule two vendors at the same time in order that we can all get home at a reasonable time.

The June meeting should be a dandy! Kirk Covert of Microsoft will demo Windows 3.1 and Visual Basic. This is a must see presentation if you are new to the Windows environment or Visual Basic programming language. While I am sure Kirk will field questions, please realize that he is here to demo these programs not to replace the Microsoft support department.

As I mentioned at the last meeting, the management of the building (not IBM) has done away with the security guard to the building. This means that if you are late there is a good chance that you may not get in. Be on time.

Over the last three meetings I have noticed more noise than usual during our meetings. This noise is usually from conversations in the audience. While no one has complained I feel that I must speak up before this gets out of hand. I personally find it irritating and embarrassing. Please respect the others around you who are trying to listen to the presentation and to the spokesperson providing us with their personal time. If you must carry on a loud lengthy conversation use the hallway or wait until the break.

Wordprocessing in Windows on a 14" screen, **revisited.**

Also mentioned at the last meeting, Wordperfect has released an update to Wordperfect for Windows. Of the several new features, there is one that alleviates that eye squinting that I have been whining about for the last several months. Its the new ZOOM feature. This feature allows you to zoom the document in and out to your liking. This means that your 10 point text can look bigger by zooming to 150% or the max of 400%. The latter is a bit much but 150% is easy on the eyeballs. Maybe when I get my new bifocals I can go back to the standard 100%.

Since we are on the subject of wordprocessing and Wordperfect, we are planning on offering the famous Ed Buzza Wordperfect classes again. At our last board meeting the general feeling was that these classes should be offered the same night and time of the general meeting. The class would last approximately 1 hour and rejoin the general meeting during its break and after the vendor presentation. If you have questions, concerns or opinions about the class bring them up at the general meeting or leave a message for me or Ed Buzza on the BBS.

Harvey Bruneau

Voodoo DOS

Book Review by: Hugh Bayless
Monterey Bay Users Group - PC

We've heard of Voodoo Economics, but Voodoo DOS? Well, this is the first in a new series of Voodoo books being published by Ventana Press. The idea is that each will offer a bag of "magic tricks" on a particular subject.

Voodoo DOS, by Kay Yarborough Nelson, does just that with MS/PC DOS versions up through 5.0. For example, edit your CONFIG.SYS file to replace your present prompt, which is probably "prompt pg", with "prompt pg $e[7m" and your prompt will appear in reverse video.

Some other tips: XCOPY is faster than COPY. You can use XCOPY to copy files by date. For example, "xcopy *.* a:/d:01-16-92 /s" which will copy all files modified after 1-16-92, including any files in subdirectories.

There is an excellent section of tips and tricks for managing your computer's memory, getting the most out of your drives, using your AUTOEXEC.BAT file, and more. It is the kind of book I wish I had had access to a few years back. Unless you are an expert with DOS and computers, Voodoo DOS can be a goldmine of knowledge.

The book sells for $19.95, but Ventana Press is offering the book to members of established user groups for $12.00, including shipping, until June 15, 1992. Call 919/942-0220 or FAX 919/942-1140, and identify your user group affiliation.

Special Group Rates for Magazine Subscriptions:

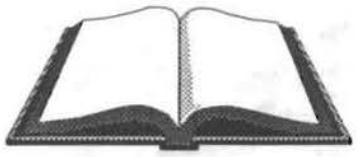
Publication	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Amiga World	15.95	25.40	34.80
Byte	15.00	28.00	40.00
Compute	9.95	17.25	
Computer Craft	15.70	28.00	38.10
Computer Shopper	16.97	-----	-------
Home Office Computing	9.95	17.85	-------
Mac User	12.20	23.75	31.25
Mac World	13.70	21.35	29.90
PC Magazine	21.60	36.85	49.60
PC Computing	12.00	20.00	29.65
PC World	15.90	23.90	33.65
PC Source	11.50	-----	-----
Personal Publishing	14.25	22.90	-----
Publish	15.95	28.85	39.90
Windows	14.80	21.40	29.20

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BOOK REVIEW -

By Hugh Bayless
Monterey Users Group - PC



Guide to Notebook & Laptop Computers
By: Bill Howard

Ziff-Davis, the publisher of PC Magazine, is now in the book publishing business. Their recent book offerings are extensions of material that has appeared in PC Magazine, and are similar to the magazine articles in subject matter and clarity but, of course, cover a subject in much greater depth.

The Guide to Notebook & Laptop Computers, their latest offering, is a good investment for anyone considering the purchase of a laptop computer. It is not a catalog of what's on the market today. Rather, it guides the buyer in making the decision on what to look for and what to buy. It starts with the question of what size and weight you should pick, and goes on to consider performance. This book helps you consider all of the uses to which you might put a laptop computer and guides you in making your choices.

Laptops have the advantage of small size and light weight, but they have their disadvantages too. Before you buy a small computer, there are many questions you need to ask yourself. Is your portable going to be your only computer or your second computer? How much storage do you need? What type of screen do you need? How much can you afford to pay? All these questions and more are considered carefully, leading the reader into making a wise and well-considered decision when the time comes to make the purchase of a portable computer.

This book comes with a disk filled with utilities that can be useful both on a desktop and a laptop computer. The 416-page book, with the disk, sells for $29.95. If you are considering the purchase of a laptop computer, this will be money well spent.

Tampa IBM PC User Group is a proud member of Association of PC User Groups and we appreciate the support it gives to the officers and leaders of our group.

QSORT - an overview

By: Tom Cone

QSORT is a DOS text file sorting utility. This overview is based on Version 4.03 of the program (the same version currently available from the Bits O'Blue Bulletin Board System).

What is a sorting utility ?

A sorting utility is a special software program designed to quickly and easily "sort" text into alphabetic (or reverse alphabetic) order.

Why would I use one ?

It can rearrange text file lists that you are keeping with your word processor. This means you don't have to try to keep the list "in order" by hand. You can simply add new text at the end of your file, and "sort it" later on.

If it supports multiple sort levels, then the program can rearrange your text list in logical groupings that are easier to work with.

Features of this program ?

QSORT is very powerful and flexible.

It handles:

- fixed-length "records" or
- variable-length "records"
- based on single lines of text, or
- using delimiter characters, or
- special multi-line "records".

It can handle up to 30 sort levels, using "keys" that you provide to identify portions of each "record" that you want to sort with.

For example, you can sort multi-line mailing address labels, or lengthy lists arranged with individual "records" on separate lines.

Limitations ?

Requires text file to be in ASCII format. Does not support WordPerfect 5.x files directly, for example.

The "structure" of your text file must be "regular". You must set up the text file using a "pattern" that does not vary from entry to entry. For example, you can't mix fixed-length records with variable-length records in the same file. QSORT

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assumes the internal structure of your entries will be the same from record to record.
This is not unique to QSORT. Other sort programs have the same limitation.

QSORT is driven by a "command line" that you must type in. This is somewhat complex and is harder to use than selecting options from a menu would be. The command line includes the name of the input and output files, all sort keys, and other information the program needs to do its work with your particular file.

Here's an example of a three record list that I want to sort in order based on date, and filename:

```
08/11/87    TURBO-C.ZIP      6
01/10/87    BUSTHINGS.ZIP    5
08/23/85    KERMIT.ZIP       5
```

The command line syntax would be:

```
QSORT infile outfile /7:2/1:2/4:2/14:12
  where "infile" = source file
        "outfile" = output file
        /7:2 = year
        /1:2 = month
        /4:2 = day
        /14:12 = filename
```

That's a lot of work, and there is much room for error. Wouldn't make sense on such a small file. But what if you had a list that had 2 or 3 thousand entries in it ?

QSORT is distributed as shareware. It is available on the Bits O' Blue BBS for evaluation only. If you try it and use it, please register it with the publisher. The fee for non-commercial use is $20 for a single computer. Commercial registration is $35 for the first machine.

QSORT is distributed by:

System Enhancement Associates,
Inc. 21 New Street,
Wayne, NJ 07470.

■■■

F.Y.I.:::

Spreadsheet: A program that gives the user quick and easy access to a wide variety of highly detailed reports based on highly inaccurate assumptions.

Business Graphics: Popular with managers who understand neither decimals, fractions, percentages, Roman numerals, but have more than a passing acquaintance with pies and bars.

Se Habla Español:
Learn to Speak Spanish

Review by: Gary W. Wodka, Madison PC User's Group

So, you've never been to Mexico. You've got no desire to go to Spain. South America is beyond the budget. But you just love the way those Spanish words flow off some peoples' tongues. What's a fella to do?

HyperGlot Software Company has the answer: CD-ROM based "Learn To Speak Spanish." This $99 multimedia program can actually teach an old guy like me new tricks. And they do it just like Herr Poljak taught me German in High School: read it in English, see it in the native language, hear it in the native language, practice it in the native language, write it, say it again, repeat it, test it. The method worked then (some 25-30 years ago) and it works today.

The program itself comes on two CDs. The first is the lessons, tutorial and text that will eventually be copied to your hard disk. The second is filled with "natives" speaking the language. This program requires at least a basic MPC-standard setup. That means a minimum of a 286-based machine, 2 MB RAM, 16 MHz or better CPU speed, Microsoft Windows 3.0 or 3.1, a sound board (many are supported), and Microsoft's Multimedia Extensions. If you have Windows 3.1, the Multimedia Extensions are included in Windows. If you're still using 3.0, you'll need to go out and buy the extensions.

Installation is simply a matter of installing the "shell" through Windows, where a separate program group is created which contains an Overview, Lessons, Toolbook, Listen, Review and Explore buttons. The program contains a series of 30 "chapters," broken up into a total of some 85 lessons. The total text of the program would eat up even the most generous hard disk, so the documentation recommends loading only a few lessons at a time, then as you progress, replace the old lessons with the new.

The documentation included with the program is sparse, but sufficient to get you started. The program on disk is fairly intuitive and I really didn't have to resort to the manual after installation. I did have one question I couldn't find the answer to. I called the company, was greeted immediately (in English), and got my question answered fast and right the first time. It was quite a novel experience! Their phone support would have to get an A+!

How does this program teach Spanish? Very well, would have to be my answer. When I learned my first "second language" so many years ago, it was a matter of learning a few words of vocabulary, then integrating them into sentences, learning grammar on the side. HyperGlot has taken a somewhat different approach: Contextual Teaching. What that means is that you learn to speak Spanish in situations you're likely to find yourself if you ever do decide to go to Mexico, Spain or South America.

Each lesson starts with a screen describing a certain situation. For example, you are in an airport and need to get some coney changed from real money into pesos. The text is available both in English and in Spanish. When you are ready to learn how to say what's on the screen, the CD-voice disk has natives speaking the text lines for you. If you're not sure what the guy said, you can replay individual sentences by clicking on them with the mouse. This enables you to practice, practice, practice until you get it right and are comfortable with the way its supposed to sound.

Oh, you think you've got that lesson learned, huh? Well, let's find out. After you're comfortable with any lesson, there's a test. The same text you just learned is typed to the screen with several key words missing. You are to type in the missing elements. Even better, if your sound board is equipped with a microphone, you can record your Spanish and compare it to the real thing, listening to your pronunciation and then the natives. All in all, a great way to learn what you need to know to get by in a foreign country.

Ok, you've passed the above test and are feeling pretty cocky. Well it's not over yet. There's another part to the examination. The computer will ask several questions in Spanish, and you are to answer by typing in the correct answers. This is where the rubber hits the road. Simply memorizing and repeating things may teach rote. This exercise tests your comprehension. And the sentences are graded on their completeness (complete sentences) and their grammar. This is even tougher than Herr Poljak!

Within each lesson are the "underlying rules and things you need to know" about grammar, parts of speech, definitions etc. No Spanish teacher would be worth her salt without the opportunity rap a few students across the knuckles for misspelled words, improperly placed articles, and verbs which don't agree with their subjects. Even in this area, HyperGlot comes through. But take heart, the chastisement is gentle.

As a bonus, you can take your tutor with you when you travel. Well, almost. You can take the second CD and listen to it on any CD player. This gives another opportunity to "get it right."

HyperGlot may have a winner with this CD. I like the approach to teaching: situational. I like the opportunity to hear the language spoken the way it's supposed to be spoken. I like the opportunity to review a lesson as often as I want to. I like the chance to stick out my tongue at the teacher without getting my knuckles rapped.

Learn To Speak Spanish is a product of:
HyperGlot Software Company
P.O. Box 10746
Knoxville, TN 37939-0746
(615) 558-8270
(615) 588-6569 (fax)

Software Review

By: Jeff Hansman
Monterey Bay Users Group - PC

hDC Power Launcher

Power Launcher for hDC Corp. is one in a seemingly vast array of Windows utilities recently flooding the market. With the rising popularity of Windows 3.0, it seems everybody and their brother is marketing the indispensable Windows utility. Many of these programs have an initial "gee whiz" appeal, but the prudent software buyer must be careful when choosing such programs. In choosing, users can select from software that falls roughly into two categories: programs that serve as useful adjuncts to Windows, or utilities that are redundant, superfluous or just plain unnecessary.

Power Launcher is a complex program that seems to qualify for both categories, providing both tools that are genuinely functional and attempting to add a layer of usefulness already available within Windows. Essentially, Power Launcher gives the user access to "enhanced commands," roughly the Windows equivalent of such DOS command line add-ons as PCED, 4DOS and the like. When used to its full extent, Power Launcher gives users an astonishing amount of control over how they start their applications. Billed as a tool for "power users," Power Launcher offers several utilities that take Windows users well beyond the simple double-click that starts their favorite program. Command line parameters, filenames and switches can all be passed to an application at startup.

The program is easy to install, and by itself requires far less RAM (75K) than its closest rival, Norton Desktop for Windows (275K).

Power Launcher conveniently replaces the control menu in all open windows with a little red box reading "hDC," so it can be readily accessed by a mouse click or pressing Alt-Spacebar. When installed, the program makes available enhanced commands in any one of six ways: a run box, mouse macros, keyboard macros, a toolbox, menus, and a scheduler. You can preset the size of any launched window, as well as its on-screen position.

Power Launcher gives users an astonishing amount of control over how they start their applications.

One particularly nice feature is the ability to prompt for filenames or a text string. With its caption and icon control, Power Launcher lets you control how DOS applications will appear on the desktop. In addition to all these launching options, the program has a "big desktop" capability that provides as many as 8 by 8 screens in real size. You can launch your applications anywhere on this grid, and switch between them with a keypress. This "virtual desktop" can go a long way in reducing screen clutter when you have several maximized applications open.

With the program come three separate MicroApps: Power Keyboard, a keyboard remapping utility; Power Mouse, which gives your two or three button mouse much more usefulness to its right and/or middle button; and Power Toolbox, a customizable toolbar creator that "floats" about the screen, ready to execute macros or enhanced commands.

All in all, Power Launcher is an impressive suite of tools for Windows users. What I found myself resisting was the learning curve these powerful utilities present. Personally, I have opted for the simpler approach that the Windows Recorder provides. I launch my spreadsheet with a Ctrl-E, or my word processor with a Ctrl-W. While these macros do not begin to give me the minute control Power Launcher can, they still do the job and are quickly learned and setup.

If you feel Microsoft has left out a degree of control you wish you had in Windows, or just like tinkering with feature-rich utilities, Power Launcher is for you. Be prepared, however, to spend some time learning the intricacies of the many options available to you.

Power Launcher retails for $99.00, and hDC Computer Corp. can be reached at (800) 321-4606

Software Review

By: Hugh Bayless
Monterey Bay Users Group - PC

Hijaak 2.02

It takes a bit of learning, but once you climb that hurdle, it's a fantastic program. Hijaak 2.02 does two things: it is a screen-capture utility, and it is a graphics conversion utility, and does both of them extremely well.

When you first load Hijaak, you will need to configure it to your computer. After that, it will remember the settings and always be ready for you. To capture a screen, you only have to go to the Hijaak directory and type LOADRPM, which loads the Resident Process Manager. Then go to the screen you want to capture, press the "hot key" combination. You then have a choice. You can use Hijaak's "Quick Capture" feature and capture the file in .IGF format. Or, you can capture the file in just about any graphics format you choose, from .TIF and .PIX to .WPG, but that takes a little longer.

If you captured the screen in .IGF format, you can use the Convert feature of Hijaak and convert the .IGF file to any format you want. If you are a WordPerfect user, you can convert the file to .WPG and include it in your WordPerfect document. If you use any of the graphics applications that prefer .TIF files, you can convert to that. The list of available conversions is much too long to list here. And, of course, you can convert the other way as well, from .TIF to .WPG, or .PIC to .PCX. You name it and you get it. If you screen-capture text, you can convert the text to ASCII. You can even capture screens from inside Windows 3.0.

Hijaak 2.02 is great, but it is not perfect. There are flaws, but they are flaws you can work around. Hijaak 2.02 works perfectly with IBM or Hercules monochrome systems, but it only works with a limited number of VGA cards. Be sure you have a correct one, or you will have problems. Also,

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you cannot use Hijaak 2.02 with certain memory managers like EMM386.SYS. That problem is easy to overcome by doing a "clean boot" without loading any TSRs when you plan to use Hijaak. Finally, while the documentation is complete, it is sometimes hard to follow. However, if you have problems, they have an 800 number for tech support and their support staff are very helpful. All things considered, it is the best screen capture and graphics conversion utility around, and I couldn't get along without it. Retail price is $199, and the street price is about $140. For further information, call Inset Systems at 1-800-828-8088.

LetrTuck and Type Control

Two Windows Type Utilities

Review by: Meg Hamel, Madison PC User's Group

A wonderful thing about the Windows environment is how useful it can be for working with typefaces. With the addition of Adobe Type Manager (ATM) or similar product (or with TrueType in the 3.1 update to Windows), typefaces are rendered cleanly and accurately on the screen. Several utilities have been written to allow the aspiring desktop publisher to manipulate typeface outlines to suit the particular job at hand.

I looked at two such programs recently: LetrTuck and Type Control. LetrTuck is a fast and easy kerning manager. Type Control lets you create and apply special effects to type, then save it as a graphics file. Both require Windows with ATM installed.

Some of you might be thinking you spotted a typo in the previous paragraph -- no, "kerning" is the word that described adjusting the amount of space between individual letters when they are printed. For example, picture the capital letters "A" and "V" printed side by side. When they aren't kerned, there is too much space between their angled sides. Kerning reduces that space and makes the word look better.

Using any Type 1 font installed in Windows, you can adjust the amount of space between any two characters. A large representation of the character pair appears in a dialog box on the screen -- you use the mouse to pull one character closer to or away from the other. LetrTuck displays the pair in a few different sizes so you can see what the pair will look like as you kern the characters. The measurements are saved in the .PFM file, and you can also save the measurements as a file that can be loaded in with a different typeface.

Okay, I realize that most people won't need to run to the phone and order LetrTuck. LetrTuck is an example of a program that is written to serve a very specific niche in the market. Graphic designers and desktop publishers will find this product useful. I find it perfect for adjusting the many public domain typefaces I pick up off the bulletin boards. I also create my own typefaces using Publisher's Typefoundry (by Z-Soft) and use LetrTuck to fine-tune the kerning on those typefaces for a professional look. There are actually two separate programs that come in the package: a regular version for editing normal Windows-installed fonts, and a version that works with Ventura Publisher's width files.

I'm pleased by a product that is easy to use and does what it says -- thumbs up for LetrTuck.

The other product I tried was a real let-down. Type Control is a utility that creates .EPS files out of your typefaces which you can import into word processing and DTP packages. You can combine different typefaces, different sizes, etc. in the image. You can also wrap text in a circle or in a spiral. It was these features that drew me to the product.

I also use CorelDraw, and it is natural to compare the features of Type Control with the type effects possible using Corel. As I stated, Type Control lets you place letters in various typestyles and sizes and save the whole thing as an .EPS file. I'm not entirely sure why the product has been released, since it doesn't do anything that a drawing program can't do, and it's not fast or convenient enough to replace a drawing program.

I found it slow and cumbersome. The documentation recommends a math coprocessor for best performance -- this is a utility for creating fancy type, not a CADD program! The basic type effects don't work all that smoothly. You type in your words, then you can change the characteristics of individual letters, such as condensing or slanting the letter. Most of these basic changes can be accomplished by any decent Windows word processor or DTP program, and you can certainly do this using CorelDraw's Node Tool.

It has a feature that wraps text in a circle or in a spiral. But you can't use an ellipse, or an irregular shape, so that rules out many design options. You tell Type Control what the radius of your circle is, and it wraps the text automatically. I prefer Corel's technique of letting you adjust the letters to fit even after they've been wrapped for the best possible look. And I like using ellipses and other shapes, which rules Type Control out.

There is a rather unique feature that lets you fit a line of text to a given length. This can be used to create headlines that exactly fit the width of the columns. You type in the words, set the size of the line to be whatever measurement you need, then press a function key. It adjusts the size and width of the letters to fit the line.

You can print out a sample of your design, but it can only be exported as an .EPS file. I don't use a Postscript printer, so
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to use any of my design I had to first import them into Corel, then export them as a .PCX file to use with Ventura. If you are looking for a program to create special type effects, I can't recommend Type Control. A much better choice would be a product like TypeAlign (by Adobe) or a full-blown drawing package like Corel. There just aren't enough interesting options available in Type Control, and the program itself is awkward to use.

LetrTuck is a product of:
Edco Services, Inc.
12410 North Dale Mabry Highway
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Font Manager

By: Steven Friedman
Sacramento PC Users Group
Reprinted from April 1992 Issue of Sacra Blue

Ever since Adobe released ATM for the Macintosh and Windows, Type 1 fonts have been proliferating on BBSs, Shareware bins, and packages bundled with programs. If you own programs such as CorelDraw, More Fonts, or SoftType, you can create an endless number of ATM Type 1 fonts,

Therein lies the problem. Before long, you have a hard disk full of fonts, and a real memory hog, Each time you load a font, it steals from your system performance, In addition, Windows limits the number of fonts that can be accessed on any given port to about 120-150.

You could have ATM remove an unneeded font from your system, but you would have to reinstate it whenever you wanted it, Moreover, ATM's Control Panel permits you to specify only one source for your fonts, There is no way to off-load some fonts to a floppy diskette and keep others on your hard disk - that is, until Font Manager came along.

Font Manager is the remarkable work of Dennis Harrington. It provides a way to designate groups of fonts, called font packs, and load them selectively as needed, It automatically updates your ATM.INI and WIN.INI files to reflect the font pack you've selected, If you store ATM fonts in multiple directories, it will search all specified directories to update the master font list.

Creating a Master Font List -

Installing Font Manager is easy. You are asked which drives on your hard disk to search for Type 1 soft fonts. It then updates a master list, which remembers the name of the font and where it resides.

If it encounters font names or PFB files without a corresponding PFM file installed, it lists them and forces them to Printer Resident status for you. It does not load them, however, because doing so would cause the annoying "ATM and Postscript Fonts do not match" message.

It also tests for duplicate .PFM files, which often cause problems because ATM encounters identical font files listed as separate softfonts. If it encounters a duplicate, it simply stops the installation process and prints a list of the offending font files, which can then be removed from your directory.

If you've added new fonts since the last time you used Font Manager, you should use the update feature. Font Manager then rescans your designated directory to update the master list. If you use a PostScript printer or download fonts before starting Windows, FM needs to know which fonts are resident, and it indicates this on the Master Font List.

Creating a Fontpak -

A Font Pack is a package of fonts that you designate by name. For example, I have a standard font pack that contains all the fonts I use on an everyday basis. I also have a decorative font pack that contains some more exotic fonts, which I may use on a brochure, and a font pack that contains a selection of symbol and dingbat fonts.

To create a font pack, you simply double-click the font name from the master list. Font Manager then adds that font to that font pack.

To use the font pack, choose "Change Installed Fonts" from the main menu and select one or more font packs to install. Font Manager updates WIN.INI and ATM.INI with the new information. After changing fonts, Windows needs to be restarted, so you must first close any open windows. Font Manager warns you before doing this, and gives you a chance to back out of the operation.

Font Manager provides safety features to prevent you from forgetting resident printer fonts or fonts needed by certain programs (such as Freelance for Windows). You can exclude these fonts from changes to the .INI files.

The current version, Font Manager 2.0, is available on CompuServe, in Library 6 of the DTP forum and in the Windows forum.

Here's the best news: This program is free. It is written entirely in Visual Basic and requires you to have the runtime library VBRUN100.DLL installed in your Windows or System directory.

■■■

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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 5 NO. 6 July, 1992

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: July 8, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

7/8/92 –

GeoWorks Pro
By: Tom Cone
and
Bulletin Board System
& FIDO System
By: Kevan Sheridan

Refreshment Break

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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FUTURE PRESENTATION:
OS/2 2.0

Presented by IBM

August 12, 1992

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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 6/10/92 –

Well, we had another good meeting. But, I'm sure I will hear many sighs of relieve when I tell you that you won't have to read here about the meeting as much as you normally would. You see, the day after the meeting the index finger of my left hand and a radial saw had an encounter – and my finger lost. No sympathy, please; there has been no great loss – a few hundred $s in emergency room charges, a great deal of inconvenience, and a relatively short report of the last meeting. Don't worry, though, I will be back in usual, verbose form for the next report.

Another difference in this report is that it is not an accurate account of what transpired at the meeting – the program presentations were made at the very beginning of the meeting, followed by news and discussion, instead of the usual opposite sequence. This report is in the normal sequencing.

CLUB NEWS:

Harvey mentioned recent developments with several popular programs:

- Procom for Windows is now shipping – and it is getting high marks from industry media.
- Word Perfect for Windows maintenance upgrade is available. Call their 800 number if you are eligible. Cost is S & H, not more than $15, and if you complain of a specific major bug giving you a problem with your current version, you may not have to pay the S & H.
- Harvard Graphics for Windows maintenance upgrade is now available for $15. While I didn't hear specific mention, presumably you can call the HG people for the upgrade.

There was general discussion of upgrading the Bits of Blue BBS with a faster modem. Harvey pointed out that the biggest problem is $$$! We would gladly upgrade to 9600 baud – if someone would donate the modem or the money for same. This is the same problem with other desirable BBS upgrades – like storage space; it is very limited, and we wouldn't have as much as we have were it not for the generosity of our VP, Steve Spears, who donated two 65 MB drives (for which our gratitude has never been publicly expressed – "Steve, we really appreciate your gift of the hard drives. It has helped make Bits of Blue more usable for us all, and we appreciate it very much. Thank you!"). If the club is to buy another modem, it is Harvey's view that we should get the 14,400 baud modem. Whichever, the club needs more funds to make such expenditures. Possible sources include: Donations, obtaining more members, selling advertizing for the newsletter. What are your thoughts?

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A member suggested that we may save money by eliminating our club financed refreshments for break time at the meetings. A vote was taken and the overwhelming majority were in favor of doing away with the refreshments. And so it is! Do not plan on a snack at the next meeting – it won't be there. (See Commentary below.)

Harvey announced that planning was underway for another Word Perfect for DOS class to be given by our Education Director, Ed Buzza. In response to a question raised by our Pres about class frequency and timing, the consensus seemed to be to have the classes every Wednesday evening, except our regular meeting night, from 6-7 PM. Chris, our IBM baby-sitter, indicated that would be OK from IBM's standpoint. Planning for the class will likely be completed at the next board meeting (6/24). More info will follow – watch the BBS.

Harvey announced that the following presentations will be made at the next meeting:

- GeoWorks Pro, to be reviewed by our own Tom Cone. Some say that this program is better than Windows. It is a GUI. I have GeoWorks and it is a nice program. BUT, it is similar to Windows in that it runs only programs tailored for it – and there aren't many of those I am aware of – or shell to DOS where multitasking is not available. One big advantage is that it will work on just about any computer – from an XT up. I am looking forward with great anticipation to Tom's review of the Pro version.
- Our SYSOPs, Kevan Sheridan, is going to update us on using our BBS and the new features/capabilities that have been added recently. I need this very much – I hear comments at the meetings about BBS features about which I know nothing. I look forward to Kevan presentation as well. I think our next meeting may well turn out to be one of the best yet. I would suggest that you not miss this one.

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

Windows 3.1

Kirk Covert, Regional Sales Rep for Microsoft, was on hand to give a quick review of Windows 3.1. Kirk's review assumed knowledge of Windows 3.0 and he touched on only some of the changes that were made in 3.1. Kirk noted that there are over 1500 changes in 3.1, and he would touch on only a few of them.

Probably the most significant change is that 3.1 is a lot faster (3 - 4 times faster) in all operations than 3.0, including printing. That is a very welcome improvement to all Windows users. Other significant improvements include:

- Object Linking & Embedding (OLE)
- Alt+Tab program selection
- Scalable outline TrueType fonts (including 13 fonts) and driver that gives WYSIWYG on the screen and high quality print. (Kirk states that TTF saves disk space. Maybe so when compared to fonts for laser printers, or bitmapped fonts, but I do not find that is necessarily true when compared to Adobe Type I or Atech's Fastfonts).
- Has come a long way toward eliminating the infamous UAE'S OF 3.0. You still have unrecoverable application errors, but there is usually some explanation and you no longer have to restart Windows – you are presented with choices: Returning to the application, closing the offending application, or restarting Windows. This gives you the opportunity to perhaps be able to save data in the offending application, and usually avoids the need to close down other applications.
- File Manager has been greatly enhanced and now includes drag & drop capability to copy, move, delete, and print files, and activity programs loaded with any file generated by that application.
- Includes a good tutorial
- Includes quite a few more Icons, as well as a better and easier to use Icon viewer

Kirk noted that a Technical Resource Kit, which includes some neat programs – such as Smartdrive Monitor, System Monitor and a Graphics Viewer (all popular formats) – was available from Microsoft for $20, including S & H. They looked like nice-to-have programs. If interested, call 1-800-426-9400.

Kirk also mentioned that the 32 bit Win NT was on the way without any clue as to timing.

Microsoft Visual Basic:

Kirk continued with his presentation with a brief review of Visual Basic. I am not into programming in any form, so much of what was presented and discussed was beyond me. Here are some impressions I was left with: It is a Windows program and anything written with Visual Basic is compatible with Windows. The program was developed with the user in mind – that is, it is user oriented; Kirk indicated that it was easier than "C." The program includes an Icon maker/editor. Kirk indicated that some knowledge of Basic programming is needed, but not nearly as much as before Visual Basic.

To Kirk and Microsoft, a BIG THANKS for a job well done and for the donation go a copy of Visual Basic.

OVERDUE THANKS:

We have several "unsung heroes" among us that work behind the scenes for our benefit. I think it more than appropriate that at least once in a while we acknowledge their contributions for our benefit and give them a bit of thanks. One was appropriately mentioned by one of our members at the meeting:

- Marylee Bruneau, our Newsletter Editor, who has not only given a lot of time and effort to putting out an informative and interesting newsletter, but she has done an outstanding job in doing so. As our member said at the meeting, she produces a very professional product. And, she continues to make it even better. Marylee, THANK YOU. We really appreciate your efforts and a SUPER job!!

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■ The other is Chris, our IBM baby-sitter. Chris gives us a lot of time and effort, and most of us aren't aware of any of it. We just take his effort and product for granted – we come to the meeting in some very nice facilities, computers , projectors and whatever else all set up for use, and things just sort of click along smoothly. Well, it is not all by accident – Chris makes a very big contribution to make it happen that way. We owe IBM a very big thanks you for use of their facilities, and a similar very big thank you to Chris for all he does in the background to make our meetings so enjoyable and productive. THANK YOU CHRIS and IBM!! We really appreciate all you do for our benefit.

AND THE WINNER IS:

Four software prizes were given away to lucky members with raffle tickets. Microsoft donated Visual Basic. The other three programs were games, the donor of which I am not aware. And there was a nice 50-50 prize. THE LUCKY WINNERS ARE:

Microsoft Visual Basic ..... Ran Weinberg
Miniature Golf ..... John Walden
Hill Street Blues ..... Chuck Bowasox
Tie Break ..... Barry Yocum
50-50 ($51) ..... Richard Pope

COMMENTARY:

Those members present at this meeting voted to eliminate the club-financed refreshments that have been provided during break time. I usually enjoy a cookie or two, and the lines are always long with people waiting their turn at the goodies. Yet, when it came time to vote whether or not to keep the goodies, the vote was overwhelmingly NO! Why?

I voted against the refreshments. My reasons were many fold:

■ We make a big mess, with goodies often scattered all over the floors. Someone has to clean that up – guess who, the club volunteers and our host, IBM.

■ Secondly, the money the club spends on the refreshments could be used to help finance some much needed equipment.

■ Then, too, we have been consuming 30 minutes or more in break time, principally because it takes a long time for everyone to get through the line. I would rather see that time used for productive purposes (the business at hand, that is) and the meeting be a little shorter in duration. I wouldn't want any less coverage at the meetings, but I would like to see them a little shorter. And, I think we need a rest room and stretch break, but it needn't be as long as the break we have been having. I know there are some who come directly from work and except for the snacks at the meeting, get nothing to eat until they get home. I hope they can find another source for a tide-me-over. I think the pluses of eliminating the refreshments at the meetings overwhelming the minuses. What do you think?

FIDO Terminology

ADDRESS Each system that is connected to the FIDO system has a node address. An address is based on a geographical area broken down by a ZONE, REGION, NETWORK, NODE, and POINT. Zone 1 is North America. Region 18 the southeast (not used normally), Tampa is network 377, and Bits of Blue BBS is node 32. A point would be a system that depends on 1:377/32.0 for all of its mail. There are currently no points for Bits of Blue.

ECHOMAIL is usually carried in "conferences" that pertain to specific topics like OS/2, Windows, Alternative Lifestyles, etc. Echomail is sent to every system carrying the conference so there is no need to know any network addresses. Bits of Blue carries 11 echomail areas and may be "Joined" from the main menu.

FREQ This is short for the term "File Request." This is a feature used by mailer programs to quickly request files from other listed nodes. Bits of Blue is currently able to request files from other systems and handle file requests also. However, there is no feature to allow BBS callers access to this feature directly.

FRONT END/MAILER This is a type of program that answers the modem call and decides if it is another mailer calling or a BBS caller. If the call is from a mailer the systems will transfer mail. If the system answers a call and it decides a mailer is not calling then control is passed on to the BBS. You may speed this process up by pressing the <ESCAPE> key twice when you see the mailer message.

MODERATOR One requirement of FIDO is that each echomail area has a moderator that controls what happens in the conference. This person maintains a list of requirements and rules for access to the area. The rules are usually posted at least once a month in each area. Please read the rules of an area before leaving any messages.

NETMAIL is usually person to person direct mail that may be "routed" through other systems. To send NETMAIL you must know the name and network address of the intended receiver. Netmail is currently not available to Bits of Blue callers as this involves long distance calls (usually).

Editorial Comment: The upcoming presentation by our SYSOP, Kevan Sheridan will include specific information on utilizing the features implemented on our BBS (FIDO System). Additionally, there will not be a **President's Column** for this issue of ***Bits of Blue*** due to Harvey's career obligations this month.

Information and Society

By: Levon Amdilyan

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This modern age has often been called the information technology age. In the last few years, information has become a major commodity – having significant value in our society. As a result, it's easy to see that the larger the information sector of a state, the richer it is and vice versa. In most of the advanced countries, up to 70 percent of their economy is now information-related. The people who comprise this industry produce information, knowledge, the technology to process it, and provide information services.

All information results from contact, interaction and cohesion between people. The more interactions and the more flexible and complex they are, the better the ability of society to adjust to changes, to evolve and to move faster toward progress.

The former USSR was an excellent example of a society with a minimum level of information flexibility. Its pyramidal (or centralized) type of economic structure left very little room for deviation from content of information. And, all of its information was derived from the upper levels in the hierarchy (the State). All links between the givers of the information and its receivers were mainly vertical. The horizontal ties or free flow of information between the elements of the pyramid were minimal.

As a result, the Soviet society has always shown very poor results in achieving a functional economy, extending its societal reforms or efforts to its people, and the ability to adjust to external changes.

In his theory of non-equilibrium thermodynamics, Ilya Prygogine, the Belgium Nobel Prize winner, proved that these types of systems cannot exist very long. The entropy in them increases and they disintegrate step by step.

It's a very simple rule: Any revolution (or counter-revolution) starts with an attempt to control the sources of information, particularly the mass media such as press, television and radio. In my country – the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States, this has always been the case. And, it was particularly true during the recent attempted E-mail technology was also extremely important for international communication. coup in August 1991, when the putschists acted according to this classical model.

> ☎ "E-mail technology was also extremely important for international communication."

As their first official acts, the coup leaders took immediate control of the State-controlled television and radio stations and press to broadcast and publish announcements of the "orderly transition in government" due to the "illness and incapacitation" of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Unfortunately for these putschists – and fortunately for the people of the then-Soviet republics – the traditional Soviet power structure represented by these communist hard-liners had already lost its rigid control over the flow of information. This was due largely to the rise of personal computing and microprocessor-controlled electronics equipment in the Soviet Union. With the introduction of personal computers, fax machines and telephones in the Soviet Union in recent years, a new communications network was created. This became abundantly clear in the first hours of the coup. Despite the coup leaders' attempts to shut off all access to information, the Soviet people were immediately informed about the true state of affairs through this extensive computer network of people to people communications.

And that was the magic of the situation. While the coup leaders were seizing control of the traditional methods of communication, they had been oblivious to the real revolution that had been undertaken by the Soviet people during the past few years – the creation of alternative sources of information brought about by microprocessor and information technology. The old pyramid structure of vertical information flow – one which could easily be controlled by the State – was no more and had been replaced by horizontal ties which went from individual to individual. Instead of a one to many relationship (where the State was the one and the people the many), communications had evolved into a many to many relationship (people to people)!

Because of their ignorance of modern information technologies, the putschists never perceived the multiple alternative possibilities for people who had already sensed the freedom to exchange (send and receive) information. The role that telecommunications and personal computers played in that attempted August coup has been related many times, particularly by Western and American journalists. With computerized electronic mail (e-mail) and facsimile (fax) machines, the complete text of all of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's decrees in opposition to the coup were transmitted through telephone lines to all parts of the Soviet Union. Similarly, hundreds of independent pro-democracy computer users transmitted a continuous stream of information on anti-coup activities from city to city and Republic to Republic

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Thousands of users of Relcom (an Internet network in the USSR) actually became an alternative system of mass media.

E-mail technology was also extremely important for international communication. Thanks to our many friends in the West, information about coup events and anti- coup activities were reported by Western journalists to their home countries and relayed via a variety of e-mail networks to computer users throughout the Soviet Union. And we, in turn, provided live reports from the streets and villages on the latest news about the current situation that were similarly relayed back to the West and throughout our country. MCI Mail, CompuServe, AppleLink, the APCUG GLOBALNET BBS and the San Francisco-Moscow Teleport were just some of the many vital communications links that were so very helpful in those chaotic days.

In addition to their widespread use in telecommunications,personalcomputers were also the primary means by which anti-coup materials (including official Russian government decrees) were published. With a clone IBM-compatible personal computer, aides to Russian President Yeltsin published their official decrees in opposition to the coup as well as hourly reports detailing the peoples' efforts to resist the coup and bring democracy to the Soviet Union. (For the technophiles, the decrees were created in Microsoft Windows Write and published using Aldus' PageMaker desktop publishing software.)

As of the beginning of 1992, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) had been dismantled and replaced with a Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.) comprising eleven of the former Soviet republics. We have dismantled (or destroyed) the centralized pyramid and are trying to replace it with a market- driven economy. But, just as we have destroyed one system and have not yet built its replacement, the result is a bitter, but natural, further aggravation of an already difficult situation. This is a small price to pay for our move to a more efficient and truly democratic society.

Information technologies continue to play a very positive and important role in this very difficult transition period. The hardware and software market is the most stable and fastest growing sector of our economy. Telecommunications also continues to play a very important role in information exchange between the former Soviet Republics. (As some of them are now introducing changes to their postal and/or money systems, the e-mail or fax communication has become the single, most reliable communication channel between, for example, the Baltic republics and Moscow.)

At the International Computer Club, we firmly believe that the information exchange will continue to play a vital role in building the information technology market in Russia and other independent states in:

- Educating decision-makers, developers and end-users;
- Preparing the market for new technologies; and
- Providing feed-back from users to improve their access to – and use of – the technology. We are proud to be engaged in this information exchange between the East and the West. We do it through our annual International Computer Forums and Exhibitions, publishing activities, and through the establishment and support of user groups. Hopefully soon, many more of our users will be able to join the worldwide GLOBALNET family and participate in the free exchange of information and ideas between freedom-loving people.

Who could have predicted the dramatic changes that the information technology age would bring to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union? After all, I, my parents and their parents' parents grew up in a totalitarian communist state with little hope for a different future. And yet, today, because of a mechanical device called the personal computer – and the spirit of the Russian people – my children and my children's children will be able to live out their lives in a democratic society, full of hopes, dreams and opportunities. This information technology age is, indeed, a truly exciting time in which to live!

Levon Amdilyan is founding Director-General of the International Computer Club (ICC) in Moscow, Russia. The ICC has been influential in providing computer information and access to the Soviet people. Through its educational activities and International Computer Forum (ICF) conference and exposition, the ICC has brought Western computer technology to the Soviet citizenry and enabled Soviet programmers to interact with their counterparts in the West.

■■■

"How to Back Up your PC"

Obtain a copy for $9.00 (Special Rate for User Group Members). This is a very helpful book with "How 2's" for the following:

- Use of DOS commands to Backup and Restore your hard disk.
- Use of 4 most popular back up utilities.
- Use of tape back-ups.
- Network back-ups.
- Designing fast and dependable backups.

If you are interested, see the book on display at the next meeting and pick up an order form.

SOFTWARE REVIEWS:

Microsoft Visual BASIC

Review by Michael L. Wolk
Reprinted from Blue Notes, San Francisco PCUG

Visual BASIC is a program with which you can create graphical applications without having to use programming language to write code. You can establish links and exchange data with other applications, and even import custom routines written in other languages.

When I saw the simplified demonstration of the program at the SFPCUG general meeting, several months ago, it looked like great fun and easy as pie, but I did not yet have Windows 3.0, so that was that. Since then, this novice but steady PC user has also become a novice Windows 3.0 user. So, when I saw the Visual BASIC package available for a review, I jumped at the chance. I thought it would be a cinch, and I'd have the review ready in two months, for sure. Not exactly so. At first, I was terribly discouraged. I was sure I had bitten off much more than I could chew. But, after a while, I realized that a novice can learn this program. It's just a matter of putting in some time and effort. I'm still learning, but I'm more optimistic. However, although you may not need to know a programming language to learn Visual BASIC, it is clear to me that an understanding of programming makes learning and using the program a lot easier.

With Visual BASIC, you can produce all kinds of graphical (Windows-type) applications, which are easy and fun for a user to run, such as custom Windows applications to store and recall information, user-friendly "front-ends" for other applications (e.g., forms for entering information to a database), password-protected security systems, etc.

You should start with a blank window, or form, to which you add controls, which can receive user input or display output. These include labels, text, dialogs, check boxes, command buttons, etc. You can use the color palette to give fore- and background colors to the form, controls, or groups of controls and add icons from Visual BASIC or import graphics from other applications. You can also design drop-down menus, which allow you to group your commands. Next, you set properties of the controls and initial values, such as captions, size, position, name, etc.

All applications created by Visual BASIC are "event driven", that is, they respond to a specific event, such as the click of a button by the user, DDE (dynamic data exchange), or having reached a specific time. To make the application respond in a particular way to a particular event, you attach code, called an event procedure, to your forms and controls. This code includes the object name (the name of the control), the event name (e.g., click, list, etc.), and one or more statements about the procedure. The language in which one writes the code is easy to use and contains many features from Microsoft QuickBASIC and the Microsoft Professional BASIC Compiler, such as If...Then...Else blocks, loops, numerous math and string functions, and eight data types. You can review your code quickly with automatic syntax-checking, debugging tools, and immediate windows, which let you try out a line of code or check a variable before you change a procedure.

This program is lots of fun, an interesting way for a novice to get some concept of programming, and a great way to produce good-looking graphical applications. Visual BASIC is a product of Microsoft Corporation, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052-6399.

Editorial Comment: Due to the fact that the Microsoft Visual Basic presentation at our June meeting was shorter than anticipated, we are including the above review in hopes it will provide you with additional information.

PrintCache V 3.0

A Review by Bill Shook, NWA-MCUG
NWA-MCUG 06/92 NewsLetter Article
Rt 4 Box 376 Springdale, AR 72762-9307

"The Lightning Fast Print Buffer"

That's the way LaserTools refers to their latest version of PrintCache–and it's no wonder. It's the fastest print cache I've used. The keyboard is returned almost instantaneously, depending on what is printing. As an example, I print the newsletter by printing to a postscript file and then actually printing to the laser using GoScript, a postscript emulator. The print file normally runs from 150K to 200K and the keyboard is returned in less than a minute, once GoScript converts the file. For those of you that remember my review on LaserTools Fonts On The Fly in the April newsletter, I mentioned printing the newsletter directly from WordPerfect, which I did with that issue (the majority of it). That is the fastest method of printing–Fonts On The Fly with PrintCache. But since Fonts On The Fly won't handle reverse print (white on black) nor curved text, I need GoScript. Hope no one is confused.

Speed quotes on PrintCache V 3.0 from the "Professionals" go like this:

1) "You should supplement or replace the Windows Print Manager with LaserTools Corp.'s $149 PrintCache, which is really the best print spooler on the market." –Edward Mendelson, PC Magazine

2) "All in all, PrintCache is one of the most satisfactory programs I've ever used... For me PrintCache falls into that category of programs I can't imagine doing without."–Jim Seymour, PC Productivity Bible

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)
3) "Dump your old spooler. PrintCache does the job right." --Mike Falkner, PC Computing

Literature with PrintCache quotes the following:
1) "Time a 386/33 MHz PC is tied up to print 500 labels from Paradox 3.5 to a Panasonic KXP-1124 dot matrix printer: 18 seconds with PrintCache; 11 minutes 10 seconds without PrintCache."

2) "Time a 386/33 MHz PC is tied up to print a 7 page mixed graphics and text job from Excel to a PostScript printer in Windows 3.0: 8 seconds with PrintCache; 1 minute 15 seconds with Print Manager.

I first starting using PrintCache with version 2.0 several years ago. What attracted me to it then was its "Optimization" feature, which eliminates sending the "white space" to a laser printer, allowing printing a full page of graphics with only 512K printer memory (99% of the time). (That's when an extra meg of printer memory costs $320. I've since added that extra meg and don't need the optimization feature, but I still use PrintCache).

Installation is as easy as it gets--type INSTALL at the A: (or B:) prompt and answer a few questions on where to put the program, where to put the buffer, and what size buffer you want, plus a few others like which port (LPT?), etc. As you can gather from the above, the buffer can be in RAM, extended or expanded memory, RAM disk, or hard disk. Size is unlimited depending on available space of where you put it and your needs (size of files). Memory required for the program can be as little as 6K and up to 17K, depending on whether or not you want the pop up menu or the optimization feature (you can have either, both, or neither). The pop up menu allows the toggling of the optimization feature, shows the settings selected such as buffer size and location, as well as the percent of buffer being used at any point in time. It is popped up with a hot key (Alt-Z by default, but is changeable).

Also, when configured for disk buffering, PrintCache transfers blocks of data to and from the disk. Block size can be changed to increase buffering performance; the larger the size, the better the performance.

As noted above, it is RAM resident, operates transparently, supports all printers and plotters, and works with DOS or Windows 3.0 or 3.1.

Last but not least, it comes with a well-done comprehensive users guide of 134 pages and promotional literature saying "The Iron Horse Steams On!" and a picture of a locomotive bearing down on a PC user tied to the track with the caption "Hideous Deadlines Bearing Down On You?", and, Oh Yes, it is complete with a train whistle that actually sounds like a locomotive whistle. I'll bring it to the meeting and let you decide (bring cotton for your ears).

Requires IBM PC, AT, PS/2 (or compatibles) with DOS 2.1 or higher.

Now, listen to this: It lists for $149, but members can pick up coupons at the meeting for HALF OFF! That's $75! (for User Group members only). At this price, you can't afford to be without it.

■■■

The Writer's Toolkit

A Review by: Stephen P. Byers,
NWA-MCUG 06/92 NewsLetter Article
Rt 4 Box 376 Springdale, AR 72762-9307 NWA-MCUG

This program is a summary of a variety of reference books dealing with the English language. If one does not own reference books, or does not have access to them, or does not like to use them then this program is a good alternative.

I tested the GRAMMAR section on several of my letters and articles. It acted as a good proof reader leaving me the choice of accepting the suggested changes or not. It found my spelling errors, allowing me the option of leaving them as written or letting the program correct them. If I used a word non existent in the program vocabulary, it simply identified it. I think this portion of the program is useful to all writers except possibly the accomplished grammarian.

The uses of the remainder of the program features are questionable in my mind. In my opinion the serious author would prefer reference books. Either the business letter/report writer or the casual letter writer would not be inclined to use the features at all. They include a word dictionary, a dictionary of common knowledge, a thesaurus, dictionary of quotations, and an abbreviation program. After all, how often in your day to day activities do you actually use reference books of this nature? My word program includes a thesaurus and a spelling dictionary – that's all I need.

When I say the program features are questionable, I do not mean to say they are not good; I am merely saying that I do not believe that one would use them enough to justify the cost. The programmer is to be commended for getting so much into the program.

Systems Compatibility Corporation, 401 N. Wabash Suite 600, Chicago, IL, (312) 329-0700

■■■

Stockwatch 6.0

Software Review by Jerry Abbanat
Monterey Bay Users Group - PC

Stockwatch 6.0 is a powerful program that can download great amounts of stock market data from Prodigy. Version 6.0 is the latest example written by Robert Huff (Prodigy #KWPK85A).

There are many sources of stock market data available to download into personal computers. A few examples are CompuServe, DialData, and Dow-Jones. Most of these services have a quite high downloading fee in addition to monthly maintenance charges. Prodigy has no downloading fees and requires only the normal monthly charge and, of course, is available to most of us via local phone numbers. The trick here is to get the information downloaded from Prodigy into a file format that can be used by the various computer stock market programs (Chartpro, Quicken, MYM, Metastock) or into a spreadsheet (Lotus or QuattroPro). Stockwatch will automatically download data requested directly into most common charting programs. It will also create comma-delimited Lotus compatible files for importing into spreadsheets.

The manual provided (via diskette), takes you through installation with minimal problems. It is VERY important to follow the directions exactly as presented. Leaving out a number or a space will leave you wondering "why isn't this working." If you do have problems that cannot be solved by digging into the manual, Mr. Huff provides support right through Prodigy's Money Talk bulletin board under "Other Investments."

Once installed, the power of Stockwatch is apparent. One can download hundreds of pieces of information about the general stock and commodity markets as well as unlimited numbers of stock quotes including opening, high, low, close and volume. A fine feature allows you to create a directory of your portfolio and have prices updated with every download. By creating a downloader diskette and using an external timer, your computer can be turned on at a certain time, call Prodigy, download your stock information, update your charting program, create your spreadsheet .PRN files, and turn your computer off. For those of us who leave our computer on all the time, there is a little program included called "Offat" which reboots at a certain time selected, and executes the downloader diskette. This is a slick way of arriving home from work and have a lot of market information ready for your viewing.

With a little imagination, the possibilities are endless. For instance, I have a great shareware program called Playback 1.9 installed on my hard drive. Playback is a keystroke recorder which also includes an automatic timer feature. Instead of using a re-boot diskette, I have Playback execute a command each week-day at 4:30 P.M. which goes into Stockwatch, calls Prodigy, downloads my quotes and market information, updates my Chartpro program, leaves Stockwatch, goes into Quattro Pro, executes a macro which creates a line of daily data I use, takes that data line and puts it into my final spreadsheet and updates my daily graphs. When I get home from work, my computer is in my Quattro spreadsheet ready to view my graphs which are up to date through the market close.

Stockwatch requires another Prodigy utility called ProUtil 5.0 to operate properly. ProUtil loads before Prodigy and can operate entirely on its own. This program allows the creation of macros which can be used in Prodigy to quickly JUMP to areas you desire. It also allows downloading of information to files as well as to printers and does some other interesting things within Prodigy. The cost of Stockwatch is around $50 and ProUtil sells for about $20. These two programs are well worth the costs for those interested in accurate market data.

One disadvantage, perhaps, is that Prodigy does not provide any historical market data. You can only get the information for the current day. There are many sources of historic data that one can use if required and pay for that information when needed. There are also a couple of BBS's which provide historic data. I will be glad to provide that information to anyone on a one-to-one basis by E-mail to me on Prodigy #KGPC10A.

■■■

WordPerfect Class

The four session WP class by Ed Buzza will be repeated starting in September. The classes will be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. Those who plan to attend, please be prompt.

The 1st (Sept) will be an intro to WordPerfect and the use of the Alt-E (Edit a code) macro. The 2nd (Oct) will cover writing, blocking and editing text. The 3rd (Nov) will discuss the table feature. And the last (Dec), will address graphics.

Quicken for Windows

Software Review by Bill Hyler, MBUG

Quicken for Windows is a similar but not exact version of their current popular DOS version 5.0, reviewed on the previous page. I have used every version from Quicken II and have found them all easy and interesting programs able to maintain a running checkbook balance. You can have as many different 'checkbooks' as you want, and, of course, they don't really have to be checkbooks, just different accounts. In turn, you are able to print a number of different reports for home, business or income tax reporting.

The Windows version closely follows the DOS version in general form, keystrokes and the way files are stored and accessed. In Windows you can size the screen as needed, whereas, with the DOS version you use the total screen. There is a familiar icon bar that allows quick access to most common functions.

If you always write your own checks, then Quicken can simply act as a check register. Or you can print checks with a dot matrix or laser printers. In the Windows version, every check you write can be memorized and a similar check never needs to be completely re-written again. All you need do is type in the first part of a memorized transaction, press <Enter> and Quicken searches for the previous transaction, and brings it to the screen for you. Just adjust the date or what ever part of the transaction is different and print it out, since you can recall all transactions and repeat them over and over. This is great for utility bills, rent or mortgage payments or other re-occurring transactions. Intuit can supply you with a number of different priced-right pre-printed checks suitable to use with their programs.

Quicken may be used with Check-Free, an electronic check-writing service. This allows you to send your transaction via a modem to Check-Free's payment center. Check-Free then makes the payment, debits your checking account and provides a monthly statement. Saves stamps, envelopes, but there are fees.

This version uses a mouse which allows you to scan quickly for completed transactions back to the beginning of the file if necessary. The mouse can be used to select from a list of memorized transactions, categories or payees. With categories (Quicken provides a starter set or you can choose your own) you have great command of later on finding out where the money went. Among your category list might be your paycheck, interest income, Social Security check or any other income. Expense categories might include: rent, medical, mortgage, utilities, and the like. Using categories already set up in the program helps to reduce the amount of typing needed with every transaction.

The Intuit system for clearing and balancing the check register is quite straight forward and easy to use. Also, Intuit provides an excellent reference book, and there are a number of after market books available to assist the beginner to get started. However, any person with just the bare minimum of Windows experience should be able to load and have the program up and running in perhaps, say a half hour to an hour.

The few drawbacks might be the inability to change the screen fonts. The size of the default font allows you to see lots of entries, but you may have to squint to read your entries.

The Windows update from DOS 4.0 is not quite the same as the DOS 5.0 version. And once you have upgraded from say, 4.0, you cannot go back. Had I know this ahead of time, I might have put my Windows version in a separate file and not into 4.0.

For those who enjoy using Windows and have the DOS version I highly recommend the Windows version. If you have the 5.0 version, it and the windows version are compatible. Switch back and forth as you wish.

Perhaps the best part of this program is the price. It lists for $49.00 but the usual street price gets down to $25 or $30. Quicken is a product of Intuit, P.O. Box 3014, Menlo Park, CA 94026.

REMark

By: Scott Wallace
Oklahoma City IBM PC Users Group
March 1992 "Monitor",

"Get a life...and a computer".

Your XT is no longer a computer. It's time to redefine the word "computer," and under the new guidelines you don't own one. If you have a Commodore or anything made by Atari, you don't own a computer. Macintosh SEs and IIs are computers, but not the Mac Plus. The Radio Shack Color Computer is not, nor is the original Compaq Portable. The Timex Sinclair certainly is not a computer.

This may seem harsh; after all, your dealer sold you a box labeled "computer." Perhaps at the time it was a computer. The word computer has been overbilled and overused. It has outlived its ability to be definitive of machines that process information in the way that persons need it processed by something called a computer.

A great amount of the hardware billed today as "computers" barely offer more features or software capability than a Nintendo set. Many companies are able to offer outrageous deals to unknowing customers by bundling these crippled machines with shareware software and calling it "a complete computer solution." It's time to stop this charade by educating first-time users in the difference between computers and monoputers.

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Monoputers are machines that are capable of only one task at a time without serious degradation of user function. Many would say that it's possible to use DesqView or Windows on an XT and get more than one task processing, but few people would do it all day every day and enjoy it. A monoputer is a slave machine dedicated to doing one thing at a time. That one thing can change according to the user's needs, but a monoputer does only one thing at a time.

This is not to say that monoputers don't have real use. Dedicated word processors are monoputers; so are some of the more advanced typewriters. If you need a communications gateway or a print server for a network, monoputers are perfect. They can easily be dedicated to any single task that requires processing without interruption. If all you want to do is word processing, buy a monoputer; just keep in mind that you'll have to buy another machine when your needs change.
Rules of thumb: Nothing with an 8088, 8086 or 68000 processor is a computer. Anything that comes bundled with CP/M is not a computer. If it can't run Windows v3.1, OS/2 v2.0, Unix, Netware or Multifinder on it, it's probably a monoputer.

Here then is the new processing capabilities hierarchy, from least to most: pen and paper, abacus, slide rule, hand-held calculator, hand-held electronic scheduler, Nintendo-type system, monoputer, microcomputer, workstation, minicomputer, mainframe and super computer.

If you've just realized you own a monoputer and you're happy with it, continue to be happy. Don't be resentful when new software for computers won't run on your monoputer. Just as you wouldn't expect to run WordPerfect on your Nintendo, you shouldn't expect that WordPerfect for Windows will run on your monoputer.

As a monoputer owner, you are part of a growing class. Because this redefinition of the word computer is now tied to user functionality based on software processing capabilities, machines that are computers today could someday become monoputers. This should cause 80286-based computers to become monoputers within the next three years.

There are products designed just to operate on monoputers. Borland's Quattro spreadsheet package is made to run on 8088-based monoputers. Lotus also has a version of their spreadsheet product just for 640k or less monoputers. A great deal of the shareware software available is designed for monoputers with the intent of making them easier and more interesting to use.

It's not often that a word's usage becomes so mangled that it requires redefinition. This is an industry of change. Every so often reevaluation is necessary to insure that the needs and expectations of the user are being meet. The consumer must not be led into the purchase of a computer when a monoputer will suffice, and no user should be stuck with a limited-capability monoputer if their needs clearly require a computer. By taking the time to explain the difference to your customers and your associates you'll spare them both headaches and money.

Mr. Wallace is a Programmer Analyst for McDonnell Douglas and likes to coin words in his spare time.

F.Y.I.

Database Manager: A program that allows the user to manipulate data in every conceivable way except the absolutely essential one he or she conceives of the day after entering 20 megabytes of raw information.

Project Manager: Software for generating fantasy scenarios of amazing optimism; proven in computer firms, where it is extremely successful at scheduling advertising campaigns for unavailable products.

NEW NEWSLETTER BANNER:

For those of you interested in Corel Draw, the front page header was created as follows:

Picture: Harvey and I drove to many different vantage points in Tampa to take a picture of our beautiful city's skyline. This picture was taken from the parking lot of Tampa General Hospital. It was taken with black and white film and scanned with a Logitech ScanMan scanner and Ansel Image Editing software program. The graphic image was imported as a bitmap file into Corel Draw along with the APCUG Logo (downloaded from the APCUG BBS).

Fonts: *Bits of Blue* is Corel Draw True Type Font Southern Italic 79 point size, effects extruded, depth 5, light on top of text, shaded from light to dark gray. *Tampa IBM PC User's Group* is True Type Font France point size 18.9, *A monthly Publication of the* is Southern italic point size 11.

If you have any questions or comments concerning the new banner do not hesitate to let me know. Your editor.

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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 5 NO. 7 August , 1992

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: August 12, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:
8/12/92 --

OS/2 2.0

By: IBM

Refreshment Break

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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WordPerfect Class

The four session **WordPerfect** class by Ed Buzza will be repeated starting in September. The classes will be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. Those who plan to attend, please be prompt.

9/9/92 Intro to **WordPerfect**, use of the Alt-E (Edit a code) macro.
10/14/92 Write, block & edit text.
11/11/92 Table feature.
12/9/92 Graphics.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge, with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 932-6745, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 7/8/92 --

This meeting proved that we can improvise when we do not have a scheduled vendor presentation. We did it all in-house this time, and it was a very good, interesting and worthwhile meeting -- in very large measure due to the effort and talents of Tom Cone, who gave an excellent rundown on GeoWorks Pro, and our SYSOP, Kevan Sheridan, who gave a rundown on the FIDO Net of which our Bits of Blue BBS is now a part. And, there was a large number of members and guests on hand to take advantage of the opportunity. If you weren't there, you missed another good one. If you are not a 'regular' at the meetings, a bit of advice -- you really should be, because every meeting is interesting and packed with useful info.

CLUB NEWS:
Harvey opened the meeting noting the "new look" of the newsletter and soliciting views on same. The response was an approving round of applause. Good work Mary Lee (and helper Harvey).

- Harvey also noted that newsletter volume was at a breakpoint -- 200 copies for mail distribution. That is the breakpoint for non-profit mail status (which takes time to arrange) and that the logistics of handling the increasing volume is becoming something of a burden for he and the editor to handle by themselves -- in addition to their other club obligations. Be prepared for some changes in the not-too-distant future, and to make yourself available to help if you can.

- Harvey pointed out that non-current addresses cost the club $$, and deny the affected party the newsletter. Please keep your address on record with the club current. When your address changes, send a change of address to the address shown on the front of this newsletter -- PLEASE!

Our Prez summarized a decision taken at the last meeting to end club-financed refreshments at our regular meetings to make funds available for club needs. Later in the meeting we returned to this subject with a different twist. The funds for the refreshments came from 50% of the proceeds of the sale of 'raffle' tickets at our meetings. The other 50% of the proceeds have been given away as one of the raffle prizes. The idea of also retaining this 50% to finance club needs (e.g., a new modem, etc.) was offered as a proposal. Discussion and a vote on this were deferred due to the late hour, but will likely be presented again at the next meeting.

Harvey announced that our Education Director, Ed Buzza, would begin a 4-class series on Word Perfect 5.1 for DOS at 5:45 PM -- 45 minutes before our regular meeting on Sept. 9. The 2nd and subsequent classes will be held at the same time on our regular meeting nights for Oct., Nov. & Dec.

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Each class will be 45 minutes long and will dismiss at 6:30 to rejoin the regular meeting in time for any program reviews that may be scheduled.

- Four 45 minute classes is not, of course, enough time to cover a sophisticated program like Word Perfect in great depth. But, I caution you to not let this be a deterrence to your taking advantage of this opportunity. ED IS GOOD and will cover a lot of ground in a short time -- plus, it will be a good opportunity to ask questions.

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS:

GeoWorks Pro

Our own Tom Cone is an attorney and uses GeoWorks Pro as his 'desktop' and he finds it meets his needs very well. Tom decided a rundown of the program at one of our meetings might prove beneficial to others. This meeting was the time -- and he gave an excellent rundown of the program, including the following:

- It has an environment much like MS Windows, with many of the same kinds of features as Windows. (I believe it is easier to use than Windows.)

- One big advantage is that the program will work on an XT. It requires a minimum of 512K RAM (likes 640K), DOS 2.1 or higher, and needs about 7 MB of hard disk space. It will work with just about any monitor, including monochrome and CGA (which gives B&W picture).

- Another good benefit is that some users report laser quality print from a 9-pin dot matrix printer. (I have a 24-pin DM and I do get very good quality out of GeoWorks 1.2, but it is no better that I get from Windows 3.1, Adobe, Powerpak, or Bitstream Facelift, all of which are very good quality.)

- The program provides three levels of use: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced:

- The BEGINNER level is limited to the desktop features: An excellent planner/scheduler, address book, calculator, note pad/text editor, and a solitaire game and a banner maker.

- The INTERMEDIATE level provides the forgoing, plus GeoWrite word processor, GeoDraw drawing program, a scrapbook, and immediate access to DOS at all times. Applications are available thru icons for all documents stored on disk. This level of GeoWorks Pro is locked into a document sub directory of Geos where documents are stored. Each document is represented by an icon on the screen. Double clicking any document icon will load the application that generated the document, with that document loaded into the application. This level makes available a 'waste basket' into which you can move files, individual and up to and including entire directories -- a convenient feature of file maintenance. Another nice feature is capability to store additional info about your individual files, including up to 200+ characters of notes (similar to high end word processors). It also provides the capability to group/ungroup files/objects for manipulation, a formatting capability, and file management.

- The ADVANCED level provides all of the above. However, instead of being locked into a document directory, a desktop is used, with all applications represented by icons. The desktop is called Geo Manager and is similar in nature to Windows managers. Applications, other than those mentioned above, which appear on the desktop include: Gao Com; a nice, flexible communications program; and a realities kind of address book with links to Gao Com and the Planner.

- GeoWorks Pro can be bundled with Quattro Pro SE, a scaled down, but still powerful version of Quattro Pro. Quattro Pro SE is not a GeoWorks application, but GeoWorks Pro has been designed to allow importing from Quattro Pro SE spreadsheets whatever info you may require.

- GeoWrite is somewhat more powerful the WinWrite in that GeoWrite allows use of columns -- up to 4. GeoWrite accepts files only in ASCII or GeoWrite. GeoWrite will import a wide variety of graphics, but it does not wrap text around graphics -- you can have no text that is not a part of the graphic on the same lines as the graphic.

- Other nice features of GeoWorks Pro include: A special viewer that allows looking at prospective cut/paste imports into GeoWorks applications; GeoWorks Pro allows shutting down with applications running and files loaded into those applications; it will be returned to that same configuration at next start-up. Another nice feature is the cost; some at the meeting reported purchasing the program for as little as $59. That is cheap. Thanks, Tom, for a super presentation. I have GeoWorks 1.2 and like the program very well, and GeoWorks Pro is a good improvement over that. The biggest problem I have is that, like Windows, it does not have powerful enough built-in programs -- word processors, DTPs, etc. - to meet my needs. Unlike Windows, however, there are no major applications on the market written for GeoWorks Pro. Hence, you are limited to the internal features of GeoWorks Pro and shelling out to DOS to use other applications.

FIDO Net

Kevan Sheridan, our Bits of Blue BBS SYSOP, gave an excellent rundown of the FIDO Net system that our BBS recently joined. A layman's definition of FIDO Net is 'a worldwide message network' that allows the exchange of message between any subscribing BBS anywhere in the world. At present, there are some 17,000 nodes on the FIDO Net. It is a real bargain for us -- costing only $3.50 per month for the 10 ECHOs we have subscribed for:

Desqview	Shareware
Novell	QModem
Windows	ZModem
Virus	OS/2
WordPerfect	Disney

Each ECHO on our BBS is limited to the 500 most recent messages. Thus, there are some 5,000 FIDO Net messages on our BBS at all times. That is a LOT of reading. Hence, you are asked to select only those conferences (ECHOs) you are most interested in and download for subsequent leisure reading, rather than tie

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up the BBS reading the messages. It should be noted that the Net is designed for the exchange of messages between BBSs and not messages among members of the same BBS; Bits of Blue members sending messages to other BOB members should use the main conference message feature.

For turbo log-on to the BBS, type: (*first name*) (space) (*last name*) (space) (*password*) (space) (/). That will get you to the main menu where you then select Join Conferences. You may then select any conference you desire, with the FIDO Net conferences listed as Public Conferences. M gets you to the QWK mail door. The first time, you must select the compression system you will use (e.g., ZIP) and the conferences you are interested in downloading; these can be changed later if desired. The BBS will keep track of the conferences you select and the messages you down load so that the next time you download, only those messages added since your last download of that conference will be downloaded.

You may read the messages on the BBS, but that is not practical and really limits the utility of the BBS for all members. You are asked to download those FIDO Net conferences you are interested in -- it takes a lot less time to download than to read, and you can then read at your leisure. But, you will need an off-line mail reader. The BBS has at least two available: OLX-TD.EXE for use with DOS, and WINQ200.ZIP for use with Windows. (I believe both have essentially the same features, but I will mention only OLX which Kevan described.)

When you first crank up OLX (Off-Line Express), you must configure the program to your computer, identifying such as your upload directory, down load directory, etc. It is suggested that you set the FIDO Tagline to 'Yes'. OLX will then allow you to read all messages or selectively read, to print all or selectively print, and/or to save all or individual messages. It is reported to be a nice and easy to use program and should meet all your needs in dealing with FIDO Net downloads.

Kevan, you did a super job. I haven't used this new feature yet, but I believe I can do so with confidence after having benefit of you review of the system. Thanks much, from all of us.

AND THE WINNER IS:
The following had the good fortune of winning some very nice prizes:

GeoWorks Pro	Emelie Jurado
Diskette Manager	Calvin Johnson
Box 3½" diskettes	Ruth Redlein
How To Backup Your PC	Bill White & Roger Waters

COMMENTARY:

I recently ordered OS2/2.0 from a Massachusetts mail order firm, Corporate Software. I received the program after some justifiable delay, due mostly to the need to send in proof of ownership for upgrade price purposes. I had anxiously awaited marketing of OS2/2.0 after having seen a couple of demos of the program and reading several articles describing the program.

After receiving the program, I used a good bit a scarce 'spare time' to read the documentation. I was interested in all of the documentation, especially loading and start-up, with a particular interest in compatibility. I learned much, including that compatibility info was contained in files on the disks -- not much help until I loaded the program. I learned, among other things, that the program included Windows 3.0 and not 3.1. Since 3.1 is a great improvement over 3.0, I wanted to know if OS2 was compatible with Win 3.1. I also had some other technical questions.

So, I called Tech Support at IBM. I learned that OS2 was not compatible with Win 3.1. During the course of the conversation, I mentioned disk compression programs. At that point I was also informed that OS2 was not compatible with any disk compression programs on the market (Stacker, SuperStor, DoubleDisk), and would not recognize the compressed disks. These factors made OS2/2.0 unsuitable for me.

At that point, I looked at the return documentation from Corporate Software. Among other things, it said it would accept return of only unopened or damaged products. That left me out. I should have read the company's documentation before I opened, you say! It wouldn't have made any difference. I had no reason to believe that I would not want the software -- I had no indication on the surface that the program was not compatible with my setup (to the contrary, compatibility data is imbedded in the program), or contained features I would not want (e.g., Windows 3.0).

So, what are the options: (1) Send in to the producer of any software you have an interest in your complete setup to ascertain compatibility; (2) Buy the software and be stuck with any that you cannot use; (3) Don't buy software from a source that will not permit legitimate returns, including incompatible software. The latter is now my practice, along with complaints to the companies involved in this exercise. I would suggest that all software purchasers give similar thought regarding their purchases. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Friends of the Users Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

IBM

Sunrise Computer Supplies

PC Warehouse

Software Etc.

CompuAdd

Computer Corner

Software City

Custom Computer

Computer Group Discounts

20- 40 %+ Osborne/McGraw-Hill is offering a discount on computer topic books shown in catalogs available for your review at our August meeting. If 10 or more of you desire to order books from this catalog, you will realize a savings of 40%.

President's Column :

Ok I am back. In case you didn't notice, there was no president column in last months newsletter. Once a year we at the Tampa Dun & Bradstreet Software office put on a conference for our customers. For a handful of our staff, including myself, this is the equivalent of setting up and preparing for Comdex, but on a smaller scale. For a good 6-8 weeks our focus consist of only one thing 'THE CONFERENCE'. This was my 3rd year participating and once again I found myself spending a lot of hours including weekends preparing. Well the conference is over and I have almost recovered. For the last two weeks the last thing I wanted to see was my home PC. However I now find myself typing this column, I guess I have survived another year.

Now that I am back to earth lets talk about our group. First I want to thank Tom and Kevan for two excellent presentations. Their presentations on GeoWorks Pro and FIDO Net were extremely informative. No matter how much you know a product, when you prepare to educate others you find yourself learning new things about that product. Not only did Tom and Kevan educate us, but I believe they also added knowledge to their existing expertise in each product. I also was extremely pleased to see the large attendance. This was very reassuring considering we had no big name vendor presenting.

A topic that the board has been discussing is how to get you, the member, to participate in product reviews. We are now receiving DOS and Windows products from vendors for our review. The products are ours to keep. However, each vendor ask that we publish a review or show the product at one of our general meetings. The vendors only ask for a fair and impartial review. With this in mind we will be taking names of those of you interested in either presenting a product at a general meeting or writing a review for the newsletter. You will pick the product you wish to review from a prepared list of available products. Reviewers will be selected by the board based on a criteria which has yet to be determined. Once selected you will be loaned the product without the registration and allowed at least 60 days or a number of days selected by the board to review the product to prepare your review. Upon completion of your review you will be given the registration of the product you review and the product will be yours. If you have not properly reviewed the product within the predetermined time you will be asked to give the complete product back to the group. The exact procedures to implement a review process have not yet been finalized by the board but we are very close.

It is our goal to find individuals who can provide an unbiased review of products in a timely manner which will benefit our general membership. Should you have any questions or suggestions on this process please notify me or any board member.

This newsletter contains another 1st for old ***BOB***. You will find that it contains the 1st business add ever. While it is not our intent to turn this newsletter into *Computer Shopper* the realities are that the newsletter represents the largest monthly expense to our group at approximately 90¢ an issue (200 copies) and monies collected that can offset this cost are welcomed. We need a little more organization and about 40 new members to go to bulk mailing on a regular monthly basis. This would drop our unit price some. An additional avenue is to take advantage of postal rates provided to qualified non profit groups. Presently we do not completely qualify. However, before year end we should be able to meet the U.S. Postal Service requirements for this discount. Marylee has completed, subject to approval by the board, an advertising rate brochure which will be sent out to local and national vendors. Anyone wishing a copy of this brochure should contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau, at (813) 932-6745 or the BBS.

As you have noticed, the newsletter has a new look. This is the second issue produced using WordPerfect for Windows, Corel Draw 3.0 and Windows 3.1. It wasn't all fun initially but the end results were worth it. Marylee plans on entering our newsletter in the BIX newsletter contest in the *UP to 12 pages* class. Winners receive a plaque and a postscript cartridge from Pacific Data. I personally would be happy with the pride of winning out over 270 other newsletter from around the world including 42 states and nine countries combining for a total of over 300,000 members. User groups from around the world associated with the Association of Personal User Groups (APCUG) enter this yearly contest. Categories include:

Best Graphic Design
Best Feature Articles
Best Coverage of Group Activities
Best Columnist
Best Publication

We would like our newsletter to represent our group. This is sometimes difficult when we have to incorporate so many articles from other groups. We are making progress and the quantity and quality of articles reflect our growth and contributions from our members. We still have some distance to cover. Read the article by Ed Buzza **Writing Product Reviews** in this issue and challenge yourself to write at least one review this year on a new product you have acquired. It can be any product including shareware or public domain. We all need to hear and read the information or opinion you have about a product. The newsletter will win based on the efforts of the group. **GOOD LUCK BOB.**

In closing please remember that our own Ed Buzza will once again be teaching his WordPerfect class starting in September.

Harvey Bruneau

CorelDraw Version 3.0

A review by: Ian Simpson, Milwaukee PCUG

CorelDRAW, one of the most powerful graphics programs available for Windows on the PC, has just gotten a major upgrade. Version 3.0 is truly a complete graphics package. In addition to the Draw program many of us are familiar with, several new programs have been added to create a suite of tools in one application package.

New in Version Three are Corel PHOTO-PAINT, Corel SHOW, and Corel CHART. The two other units included are the familiar Corel TRACE and Corel MOSAIC.

Starting with CorelDRAW itself we now find several major improvements. Most important is the ability to now edit in preview mode. This way you can see fills and line characteristics as well as stacking order on the screen as you work with the individual elements. Two other major improvements are the introduction of layers for complex or multi-purpose drawings, and the use of True Type fonts rather than the proprietary *.WFN fonts of yore.

Layering now gives us several default layers, including a standard drawing layer and a "guides" layer, which will not print but will help with laying out elements of a drawing. Layers can be added as needed. A special menu box called a "roll-up window" is used by six major functions. One of these windows controls the layers. Each layer can be renamed and moved to a different location in the overall order of the drawing. Each layer can also be hidden, given a default color or characteristic as desired.

CorelDRAW will still utilize WFN fonts if you wish, just point it in the correct direction of all those customized or converted fonts. The program still uses the WFN format for the symbols libraries also. Adobe Type 1 style fonts are also available. Rather than the WFN Boss utility used in previous versions, CorelDRAW now directly converts to Type 1 or True Type fonts from the Export command in the File menu, meaning your can use Corel to convert from one to the other. (I haven't done this yet, but it looks like this process is done one character at a time, so this could be time consuming. A special offer for Font Monger is included with the package, which will do this conversion and more.)

Other welcome changes include much easier techniques for fitting text to a path, creating 3-D objects and changing their positioning and apparent lighting source. The blend function has also been improved with editable blend-along-a-path, rainbow fills and other gee-whiz options.

Corel CHART will take data entered directly or imported from most spreadsheets and create a seemingly endless variety of charts and graphic effects. The functionality is similar to DRAW, so users will be quickly up to speed.

Corel PHOTO-PAINT will be instantly familiar to anyone used to Z-Soft's Publisher's Paintbrush or Photo Finish, as PHOTO-PAINT is a licensed version of this with some Corel touches added. So far all that I have found to be different or missing is the option to scan directly from the program. With this package you will still need a separate scanning program.

Corel SHOW is a presentation package that can tie it all together for business or educational display. Making full use of OLE, SHOW will use DRAW, PHOTO-PAINT, and CHART files, all placed on a common background slide, if you wish. SHOW can also control the time each slide is on the screen, the transition effect and can even include *.FLI animated sequences from Autodesk Animator.

Corel MOSAIC is a graphic library utility which can show and print thumbnails of many different types of graphic files, and Corel TRACE will convert bit-mapped images in the vector drawn images, either singly or in batches.

The whole package comes with some nifty extras, including all six programs, 256 typefaces and 12,000 pieces of clip art on a CD-ROM disk. If you install from the floppies, the number of clip art samples, SHOW, CHART and PHOTO-PAINT samples are cut back and the typefaces are down to a mere(!) 153. Also included is a 400 page catalog of type styles, clip art and sample files, a multi-purpose ruler/template, a coupon book for related products, a wall chart of type styles, a one hour introductory videotape and an 800 page manual.

The User's Guide is perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the entire package. The MOSAIC module isn't even covered. Instead you are referred to on-line help. Subjects covered, are generally informative, but the proofing of the book itself is quite poor. Only a quarter-way into the book several errors are found only by the contradictions involved or from prior knowledge of the program. A major saving grace however, is that now all of these units have on-line help, which seems to be very well done. (Continued on next page)

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If you choose to install all units and all the samples available from the floppies, be prepared to give up 29 megabytes of hard disk space. On a dollar per megabyte basis, this has to be the bargain of the year! With a $595 list price, a street price in the mid $400s and the usual upgrade offers, this package really is a bargain and I recommend it highly.

■■■

WRITING PRODUCT REVIEWS - Ed Buzza

Some people claim that they can't write. They don't mean that they're illiterate or not physically capable of writing; they're saying that they don't know how to put their thoughts down on paper. They say that they don't know the format or style to use. Or they fear possible embarrassment or being made fun of for using poor grammar or for not using high-falutin' words.

To all this, I say *censored*!! If you can talk, if you can think, if you can type -- you can write! Blessed be the person who writes at the eight grade school level. The intelligent will recognize the intent and applaud the effort. The less literate will at least understand what has been written. Those who would look down their noses and adopt a patronizing air are to be pitied, not scorned.

For example, someone might say 'An expository evaluation of the intrinsic merit of this laudatory mechanism refutes beneficial acquisition.' I'd rather see that someone say 'It ain't worth didley.' Anyone can use "big" words; all you need is a dictionary. What is needed are words that give information, that convey thoughts, and are readily understood by almost all people. There will always be exceptions but there's nothing you can do about that.

So, for those of you who would like to write a review of a product, but "don't know how to write," the following outline is meant to help you, to guide you in writing an article for the newsletter. Don't need to be fancy, just the facts as you know them and as you say them!

Title and author:
PRODUCT REVIEW (use this as your title or headline). by (enter your name).

Product name (start of first paragraph):
Enter name of product. Is it a high, medium, low level type? What kind of product is it (type of software or hardware: word processor, paint program, modem, scanner, etc)?

Description or purpose (2nd paragraph):
Describe what it does. Abstract from package hype but your definition is preferred. Briefly describe it's features or modules.

Installation and use (3rd paragraph):
How easy is it to install? Custom install or must install everything? Do you need to delete old version? Tell of any problems when you installed.

If upgrade, is it faster, better, how? Is new version more complex? Do you need or like the new features? Describe the documentation - complete, good, lousy, good/poor examples, good/poor graphics.

What do you like about it? What do you dislike? How does it compare to other similar products that you own or have used?

Requirements:
How much RAM, conventional, expanded, or extended? How much space on Hard Drive - minimum and maximum? Any special needs like SVGA, mouse, modem, CD-ROM, sound board, adaptor boards.

Can it be used on 8088, 80286, 80326+? What version of DOS does it need? Is it Windows only and which version? Where there any surprises that the product package did not mention?

Product data: Product name and version
Manufacturer's name
List price
Street price and source

Using the above guidelines, try to keep the article at about 500 - 700 words or about one page. It's really not that difficult at all. And if you need help, write a rough draft and ask the Editor or me to review it for you. We'll be glad to help. ■■■

Welcome New Members:

David M. Beach
Norman L. Bunting
Dan Crall
Randy Houldsworth
Bernard J. Hymes
Erick LaMartin
Russel W. Lines
Jerry Osterweil
Anne H. Ross
Forrest S. Wilcox

We are ☺ you joined our group!

"Forty is fun because life has just begun. Age is mind over matter--as long as you don't mind, it don't matter."

Muhammad Ali,
prior to his last fight.

Adobe Illustrator 4.0

By: Ash Nallawalla, APCUG

I last reviewed Adobe Illustrator version 1.0 some years ago and lost contact with the program until I joined the tail end of the beta program for version 4.0 (AI4). I am no artist but I have had to help illustrate Unisys manuals with another package for three years. Several PC Update (Melbourne PCUG) covers and articles have featured some of my work. I used modified clip art and scanned images in such work, so my report will not have an artist's viewpoint. I have taken the approach of a technical writer with no art department support, who needs to rely on clip art to get the job done easily. This explanation is relevant.

AI4 is a professional design tool for artists, desktop publishers and technical illustrators. You can edit color and black-and-white images with it, be they geometric shapes or freehand work. AI4 is a "draw" tool, not a "paint" tool-you can modify its output at any stage, such as resizing or reshaping a line or circle.

You cannot do this easily with a paint package such as PC Paintbrush. Note, however, that AI uses the term "paint" to mean assigning colors to its art objects.

Requirements:
The days of the 80286 and lesser CPUs are over, at least in business situations where you need to use Windows. Consider the following minimum requirements:

- 80386- or 80486-based computer
- 4 MB RAM
- Hard drive with 12 MB free and one high-density floppy
- DOS 3.1, Windows 3.0 or later
- VGA, Super VGA, 16- or 24-bit display supported by
- PostScript or other printer supported by Windows

Main Features:
The full list of features would take several pages, so I will list the new or significant features:

- Drawing Tools. A wide range of tools enable you to draw lines, precision curves, rectangles; blend and transform objects, and the like.
- Text Tools. You can import text from a file; key it from within AI4; manipulate text to any shape or wrap it along any path.
- Editing in Preview Mode. Until recently, many such programs made you edit in wireframe mode and you could not edit in preview mode. AI4 now enables you to edit in either mode.
- Graphing Capability. If the simple bar graphs and pie charts in your spreadsheet program look boring, you can jazz them up in AI4.
- Enhanced Color Support. AI4 supports 16- and 24-bit color and popular color interchange formats such as PANTONE, FOCOLTONE, TOYO and TRUMATCH.
- Context-Sensitive Help. Pressing F1 gives you context-sensitive help at any time. This supplements a fully-indexed, comprehensive online help. With my background of having used CorelDRAW!, Harvard Draw and Arts & Letters, I found I didn't need to refer to the manuals except for detailed information.
- Optimized for 386. I have a "slow" 80386/33 system, with just a 256 kB VGA card; yet I found AI4 fast to use. That is because the code has been optimized for the i386 processor.
- Documentation. I consider the AI manuals to be one of the best in the industry-not only are they easy to use but they employ good design principles. The Beyond the Basics booklet is a prime example of that.
- Macintosh Compatibility. AI has been available on the Macintosh for more time than it has on the PC platform. AI4 files may be shared with the Mac and NeXT.

Packaging:
AI4 comes with the following extras, in addition to the software:

- Tutorial guide and sample files
- User Guide
- Color Guide
- Beyond the Basics guide
- Adobe Separator
- Adobe Type Manager (ATM) 17 families (40 fonts) of Adobe Type 1 typefaces
- Adobe TypeAlign
- Clip Art and Symbols
- Quick-Reference cards
- Free technical support and free upgrades for 90 days

In Use:
Installing the software was painless. The User Guide made it easy to understand concepts that I knew by other names. For example, I thought one couldn't import EPS, PCX, BMP etc but I found the command was called Place Art. The Import command is reserved for line art, I see.

The set of tools is comprehensive enough for my purposes as I tend to work with simple objects such as text, boxes, arrows and the like. The 17 new faces didn't matter much to me as I had most of them under other names in other packages. I like to modify clip art so that it no longer looks like something the readers will have seen elsewhere. Sure enough, it was quite easy to do so, again a matter of learning new terms. The amount of supplied clip art is a pittance, compared to, say, CorelDRAW! but then AI has never been aimed at the person who relies heavily on it. What I do like is the small selection of borders, which come in handy for designing certificates.

Adobe Type Manager 2.02:
If you have certain Windows applications then you might have multiple copies of this font generation and display utility. The main difference is in the fonts that come with each bundle. For instance, the stand-alone ATM gives you fonts that you already have on a PostScript printer anyway, but the one supplied, say, with Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows provides several display ones. Similarly, the 17 new faces

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include Symbol, Helvetica, Courier, and Times; but they also include Carta, Berthold City, Copperplate Gothic, Adobe Garamond, Gill Sans, Goudy Text, Madrone, Poplar, Berthold Script, Stencil, Tekton, Willow, and Adobe Wood Type Ornaments 2. AI4 requires that ATM is installed before you can install the former.

Adobe TypeAlign:
Adobe TypeAlign is a free-standing utility that enables you to place text from Adobe or other Type 1 fonts along any path. You can make special effects such as twist, rotate, reverse and color text. The results can be exported to AI or other programs.

Adobe Separator 2.1:
The manual for this program is called Color Guide-it had me worried briefly-RTFM has a lot going for it! This program is strictly for those who need to work in color; it provides separations in CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) or in custom colors, which includes the PANTONE Matching System (PMS). The manual (like the rest) doesn't assume prior knowledge, so you can learn as you go.

Conclusion:
The Macintosh compatibility aspect certainly makes AI4 a prime contender in a PC-Mac or PC-NeXT environment. I like its speed, even on a 386. I would have preferred TypeAlign and Separator to be part of the main AI package, even if they were made OLE clients, although I imagine that Windows 3.0 compatibility was a design objective. As I have used another leading package for some years and support it at work, I didn't see enough in AI4 to make me switch completely. Nonetheless, I would gladly use it to do the kind of business illustrations that I do, and not miss the extra features of my present package. Its small size in terms of disk usage also is a consideration for many who don't have a spare 30 MB. I certainly recommend AI4.
Adobe Streamline 3.0

Adobe Streamline 3.0 (SL3) is a superb tracing tool. It is sold separately, although it was supplied free with Adobe Illustrator version 4.0 (AI4) for a limited time. With SL3 you can take a gray-scale, color, or black-and-white bitmapped image, such as a scanned logo, and create an AI-compatible drawing in color or black-and-white. Not only does this give you a sharper image but the size of the file is smaller. Although AI4 contains an Autotrace tool, it is only suited to very simple images.

Requirements:
- 80286 or better CPU
- 2 MB RAM (4 MB for color work)
- Hard drive with 3 MB free and one high-density floppy drive
- DOS 3.1, Windows 3.0 or later
- VGA, Super VGA, 16- or 24-bit display supported by Windows
- Images to be traced must be PCX, PNT, or TIFF; 8-bit gray-scale, not halftones; up to 24-bit color

In Use:
What impressed me was the availability in the program to choose between three tracing options:

- Outline. Where an image has lines of varying thicknesses, this is the best option.
- Centerline. Where the image has lines of equal thickness, or you want to achieve that effect, this is the correct choice.
- Line Recognition. An image comprising straight lines, such as a form, is best traced with this option.

Most tracing programs previously omitted the Line Recognition option. If you have scanned an image with a straight line you will know how difficult it is to get the line straight. This option overcomes that problem. Furthermore, in SL3 you can combine two options: an image containing both curves and lines needs both Line Recognition and Outline (or Centerline) options.

Modifying the Image:
If you need to trace an image that has white lines or curves on a black background, then you can reverse the image before tracing it. You don't have to trace an entire image if you only want a part of it-there are tools like the "Magic Wand," which enables you to choose an area based on the color similarity of adjacent pixels. The "Lasso" tool enables you to specify the area to be scanned. The "Swatch" tool enables you to apply a chosen color to another part of the image-either touch up a damaged area or change the color of that area.

Converting the Image:
Having chosen the conversion options and the area to be traced, you choose the "Convert" option and sit back. There are numerous fine-tuning options available to get the optimum result, and you will not be displeased with the results. For example, you can "posterize" a gray-scale image into a striking trace using just a few colors. The resulting AI-format image can be further touched up within SL3 or sent to AI4 for complex manipulation. You can also export the image into other formats such as DRW, DXF, CGM, PLT and WMF.

Conclusion:
I heartily recommend Adobe Streamline 3.0 even if you don't plan to use AI4. Its speed and flexibility make it easy to use by anyone who can use a scanner. It is an excellent tracing tool.

Availability:
AI4 and SL3 were kindly supplied by Adobe Systems Inc, PO Box 7900, Mountain View, CA 94039-4400. The list prices are as follows: AI4: $695; SL3: $195 and upgrades: $49.
About the Author

Ash Nallawalla is a product manager (until recently an editor) at Unisys Corporation and is a member of the Society for Technical Communication. He is the Reviews Editor of PC Update, Melbourne PC User Group and is Vice-Chairman, Board of User Group Advisors, APCUG. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 539, Werribee VIC 3030, Australia. Fax 011 61 3 742-4566.

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USA bring home the Olympic Gold!



WordPerfect via ViaGrafix Video

Review by: Phil Saunders, Madison PC User's Group

With the hoards of computer users emerging, and no one having time to read those pesky manuals, videotape is emerging as a viable teaching method for computer applications. Especially those busy yups on a tight schedule appreciate its flexibility.

ViaGrafix of Pryor, Oklahoma (yes, the Pryor, Oklahoma) offers up a huge range of today's most popular applications, including a hefty nine volumes on WordPerfect. Windows, DOS, PC's, PC Tools, and Norton Utilities are covered in General. Word Processing also includes WP for Windows, Word for Windows, Word, Professional Write, RightWriter, Grammatik, and Correct Grammer. I can't believe they forgot WordStar..

Other categories covered rather thoroughly are Desktop Publishing and Graphics, Spreadsheet, CAD, Programming, Accounting, and Database. All are representative of the leading commercial packages and feature a variety of approaches to the more popular applications, such as WP. I started with four of the WordPerfect volumes available: Learning WP, Journey Through WP - Introduction, Journey Through WP - Advanced, and WP 5.1 Secrets/Timesavers. WP 5.1 for Desktop Publishing, WP 5.1 and your Laser Printer, WP 5.1 for the Office, Customizing WP 5.1 and Quick Start to WP for Windows are the other titles. Because of their length and depth, I am going to cover two this month, and two next.

Learning WP is the logical first lesson, and assumes little or no computer skills. I was annoyed by the two minutes of dance/elevator music backing an extended ViaGrafix plug at the beginning of the tape -- if you can see it, they have the cash, right? Given the basic nature of the instruction, I also thought it potentially confusing to have a generic overview of lessons featuring Windows and Lotus screens in this lesson. We then meet our scrubbed hosts, Kirk Gordney and Katherine Sparks, who are bland but effective.

We have a generic hello, followed by a review of the actual program disks included with the program, and a brief explanation of what each is. Next is a terse tutorial on disks, and we begin to load the program for the first time. * First plug: Customizing WP.

The lesson is geared toward hard disk users and ignores those using two floppies, as well it should. The loading wisely sticks to the standard full installation, pausing to explain what each of the steps is, explaining what is happening on the screen, and reminding us to be patient as we wait for the files to be unpacked and loaded. * Second plug: WP for DTP.

Included in this presentation is the caution to back up the original disks and store both sets safely. Although they mention adding WP to the path, they neglect to cover not having the capability to open enough files in the CONFIG.SYS causing loading problems. They then cover loading the printer drivers and registering your copy for reference when calling WP Technical Support. They don't mention that number, or where to find it.

Now we begin. They would have you change to the WP51 directory installed by the program to initiate loading, despite its being in the path. I would like that explained here, as well as establishing a file directory rather than having one's program files mucked up with ordinary text files.

"Clean screen" and the Doc 1 Pg 1 Ln 1" Pos 1" indicators are mentioned, although Doc 1 is not explained. They note the change to "POS" when Caps Lock is engaged, and explain the toggle. It goes on in this vein, giving thorough, meticulous explanations of all the basic keys and functions. It pauses for a Review, one of the many included, to remind us that word processing is not like using a typewriter.

In our first section, we only covered the basic keys, and F10 in combination with Shift (Retrieve). We now move on the Function Keys with printing being the first exercise. This is where the enclosed floppies, in both sizes, come into play. After printing, we save the file under another filename and move on to listing files. "When pressing F5, the path c:\WP51*.* should appear in the lower left-hand corner." True, but what if it doesn't? As attentive to detail as they were earlier, a little more explanation here might help. Our review this time covers Print, Save, Name, List, and Retrieve.

Next comes The Look. Block move, block copy, and block delete are covered, although block append is ignored. Restore and undelete are mentioned, teaching even me that deletions three back are saved -- I had thought two. Underline and bold are mentioned, but it shows Page Centering and neglects to mention it won't show visually without engaging the preview screen; another anomaly in a generally informative introduction. We review without mentioning the preview screen. If that isn't an integral part of "The Look," what is?

Now we do some of the basic formatting, including Line Spacing, Margins T B L R, and a tour of the Format Menu, without explanation. * Third plug: Journey AND Customize.

Our next venture is into Spell, Thesaurus, Search, and Replace. It's good that they point out spell checking will not catch correctly spelled words out of context, e.g., form and from. When explaining search and replace, they give the tip that it can be used to cut typing time by replacing a word after the fact, such as replacing the initials MG after typing the document with Madison PC Users Group. This is a great tip, but isn't it early for someone who just loaded the program forty minutes ago?

When telling viewers how to access the Help menu we are carefully cautioned; "Of course, the help key is no substitute for watching the ViaGrafix tapes!" Thank you for that pearl. Help coverage is good, showing the templates, index listing, and hot keying. The tape wraps up with practice and "polishing" the document using the skills covered; they ask you to underline and italicize one phrase -- real polish! We then get the credits and are

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done after sixty-nine minutes. I would deduct five for introduction and credits, but it's still a packed hour plus.

I whined about this and that, but this is a good intro to someone starting out. My wife, who has used WP like a typewriter for over a year, thought it was wonderful. She was eager to share her use of new skills learned from the tape after one viewing. Interestingly, I couldn't impart the same knowledge over a much longer time -- something about consider the source....

Our second tape was Journey through WordPerfect Introduction. I would have expected this to pick up where the other left off, especially after their insistence on rewinding segments for comprehension. I would then infer that this tape is meant as a stand-alone for those just starting WP, but not those uninitiated to the PC.

Again the tape starts with the three minute introduction. This tape starts awkwardly, with an assumption that you need help starting the program, then directing you to the arrow keys without saying what they are. Then the pulldown menus are displayed, but not explained or utilized. We then hit F7 for a clear screen, saying "no" twice without explaining that the first is for saving, the second exiting. We then have a brief tour of the 101 keyboard, ignoring the 85. They also mention arrow keys being in the number keypad without saying why. Finally, in the demonstration of using floppy drive files, they show a 3.5" drive without mentioning a 5.25" -- this could be confusing to the true novitiate. Having kvetched this much, please be assured it is much better from here out.

We start with a basic tour of the keyboard and computer. Review mentions the toggle, F1-undelete, spell check and thesaurus. Now it starts to pick up with the demonstration of reveal codes and how to work within that screen. We are walked through entering text in code, adding code to existing text, and a plug for Advanced.

The printing session in this module is more intensive, introducing the view document screen, and explaining sizing the screen. I feel they should mention using page up/down for viewing larger documents here. We then go to the actual printer control menu with a selective tour. If they are not going to cover specific menu items, they might mention why, or use this opportunity for one of their plugs. We are shown how to select a printer, but not how to print selected pages, or draft mode. We do learn how to print directly from the file listings.

These tapes are informative, thorough, always available, and received far better by the less curmudgeonly. I would recommend the vendor for their other series based on my exposure to their WordPerfect efforts. These tapes are $49.95 each and are available by calling 1-800-ViaGraf. The people I talked to were knowledgeable and responsive.
ViaGrafix 31 S. Adair Pryor, OK 74361 (800) 842-4723

Byte Magazine Subscription Discount:
McGraw-Hill has supplied our group with Special Discount Rates for New and Renewal subscriptions for this magazine. The regular rate is $29.95 yearly, the special rate to User Group Members is $19.95. See Marylee or Harvey at the August meeting for a prepaid order form if you wish to take advantage of this substantial savings.

CorelDRAW rebates are available for our members. A $50.00 on first time purchase or a $20.00 rebate on upgrade. Contact Marylee or Harvey to receive your rebate seal.

PrintCache half-off Coupons: Last month we had a review in the Bits of Blue on this RAM-resident utility that allows you to buffer any print job to the buffer type of your choice. Any members interested in this software coupon see Marylee or Harvey. (list $149.00 with coupon $75.00).



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Announcement from ARTISOFT:

Artisoft has notified all Users Groups in the US of their free summer and fall seminars. We are passing the information on to you that they will be visiting Tampa on October 29-30.

Artisoft Business Development Group representatives will present "Networking Made Simple" to explain the benefits of networking, especially with the LANtastic Network Operating System, the peer-to-peer world leader.

For more sophisticated LAN devotees, the presenters will demonstrate and explore Artisoft's revolutionary products for multimedia and voice. They will introduce the new LANtastic for Macintosh network utility and tell you all about the Central Station connectivity processor, the ultimate network connection for notebooks, printers and modems.

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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 5 NO. 9 September , 1992

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: September 9, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:

8/12/92 –

WordPerfect Presentations 2.0

By: WordPerfect Corp.

Charting, drawing, painting and presentation tools--even sound capabilities!

Break

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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WordPerfect Class

The four session **WordPerfect** class by Ed Buzza will be repeated starting in September. The classes will be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. Those who plan to attend, please be prompt.

9/9/92 Intro to **WordPerfect**, use of the Alt-E (Edit a code) macro.
10/14/92 Write, block & edit text.
11/11/92 Table feature.
12/9/92 Graphics.

• • 1992 OFFICERS • •

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 932-6745, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 8/12/92 --

The focus of this meeting was on IBM's OS/2 Version 2.0 and there was a good turnout to learn what they could about the program. While a few other subjects were discussed, the presentation of OS/2 and the before & after discussion of same occupied about 90% of the evening. Things moved a bit fast for this hard-of-hearing reporter, so I am sure that I will only scratch the surface of what transpired -- another reason you should all turnout for these always interesting and worthwhile meetings.

CLUB NEWS

Harvey reminded all present of the Word Perfect 5.1 for DOS classes that are to start next month and continue fo the subsequent three months. They will convene on our regular meeting nights at 5:45. They will be conducted by our own inimitable Ed Buzza. An excellent opportunity for those interested. Please be on time -- Ed has a lot of ground to cover in a short time.

Our Prez informed us that our Board is considering trying to start a SIG for communications -- using a modem and a BBS. A good bit of interest was evident from those present and Don Patzsch, who has been CO-SYSOP and technical answer man for the large Sunshine BBS for a number of years, agreed to lead the SIG. It appears another very worthwhile and productive project is about to get underway. Watch for more info on this.

The president of the Tampa Bay OS/2 User Group was present and invited all interested in OS/2 to join their group which meets from 3-5 PM on the 4th Monday of the month. The next meeting is August 24. The meetings are held at the same place as ours -- room 450 of the Lake Pointe One building (IBM facilities). The group focuses exclusively on OS/2 with a view toward exploring and learning about the many features of OS/2, and to solve user problems with same. For more information, call the group coordinator, Joe Poston, at (813)343-3488. If you are an OS/2 fan, give it a shot.

Steven Woas, the author of a new book Learning DOS: A Beginners Guide, was on hand. He noted that his new book is a basic treatment of DOS designed specifically for new computer users and is written in easy-to-understand language. It retails for $14.95, but he is making it available to all of our members at 40% off -- or $9.

George Pollak of Computers and More was also on hand. George announced that he would make available an internal 14.4 modem w/FAX capability to all members for $229. And, if 10 or

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more of the modems were purchased by club members, he would donate one to the club for its use. If you are interested, George can be reached at 254-2810 or 251-6833.

INDUSTRY NEWS - Harvey covered quite a few notes of interest from industry news, with several additional contributions from those present. I was able to take sporadic notes on, some, including the following items:

Microsoft is getting into the sound card business and reportedly will have one on the market by the end of the year. The reported reason is that it will be a means for Microsoft to help push Windows. If that is true, we could expect very competitive pricing on their card. Those considering buying a sound card might want to wait awhile.

QMS (I believe I heard) is coming out with a 32 page/minute -- I repeat, 32 page/minute --laser printer. Hey, that is fast! I think I also heard a price of something like $2995 for the machine.

Several of the chip/computer manufacturers are coming out with a 68 MHz line of chips/computers. And, I guess we are still scratching the surface, with much more powerful and faster chips/machines on the horizon.

An upgrade for Harvard graphics was report in the BOB newsletter just a couple of months ago. Well, still another upgrade for Harvard Graphics is out. Wow! (Such rapid changes are not restricted to Harvard Graphics, however.)

PROGRAM PRESENTATION:

We were fortunate to have Chris Mayers, our IBM representative, on hand to give us a presentation on IBM's OS/2 Ver. 2.0. I am not about to try to cover all that Chris showed us and the many features he pointed out about the program -- it is much too powerful and feature-loaded to do that. Some compare OS/2 with Microsoft Windows -- and to the extent that they both use windows and have graphic interface, and allow multitasking, and have a few other similarities, a comparison can be made. But in reality, comparing OS/2 and Windows is an apple/orange comparison. First off, OS/2 is an operating system, just as DOS and UNIX are operating systems. Windows is not -- it is based on and must have the operating system DOS, and it is subject to the limitations of DOS. Among the many features and capabilities of the OS/2 (Ver. 2.0) program are:

OS/2 includes and will run DOS and Windows and any applications made for them, as well as its own operating system and applications.

OS/2 supports true 32-bit processing, multi-threading and will allow up to 240 (yes, two-hundred, forty) virtual DOS windows. That is to say, up to 240 different programs could be ran at the same time -- with any mix of DOS, Windows and OS/2 programs.

It would seem that OS/2 gives almost total control of all facets of the environment and desktop, including detailed control of settings for each program and the memory allocated for its use.

It includes a mini-database program and a mini-spreadsheet program which can handle small needs, but neither compares to dB IV or Quatro Pro. It also includes an editor, but does not include a word processor.

The installation program allows considerable latitude in which portions of the program you may load -- or not load. Hence, features loaded and HD space requirements can pretty much be tailored to meet your needs.

OS/2 may be shut down with programs operating and it will load to that same configuration when next started.

At installation you can configure your computer as exclusively using the OS/2 operating system; as dual boot where the computer will boot using the same operating system used when last shut down, but will allow you to select the alternative system (OS/2 or DOS) and then reboot; or to make the choice of operating system during start-up each time you start the computer. When in the DOS mode, only DOS supported operations are available to you. When in OS/, all DOS/Windows/OS/2 operations are available. I believe the main reason the DOS-only option is included is because there are a very few programs that will operate only in a pure DOS environment.

One would think that the documentation for such a powerful program would be quite extensive -- and it is. Except, it is not in written form. The written documentation is rather limited, covering primarily installation and information affecting that activity. Program documentation is loaded onto the computer is available on line -- and it is very comprehensive and accessible -- with excellent cross-referencing. The index, for example, allows a search feature for any subject and will report all locations where info on that subject can be found -- and you can switch immediately to any one of the them.

On-line help is super and includes a glossary, a command reference and a tutorial.

Chris covered many other aspects and capabilities of the program, in spite of a glitch which interrupted things, but I did not get notes on them all. It is a super-powerful program and worth consideration by all, including Windows users. It is not all peaches and cream at this point however. There are a few bugs still, one of which showed up tonight, but IBM is working hard and fast to solve them all. And OS/2 Ver. 2.0 includes Windows 3.0, not 3.1, and OS/2 does not recognize disk space controlled by compression programs like Stacker and Super Stor. But most of these drawbacks will be corrected with an upgrade expected before the end of the year, that rumor has it will be free to Ver. 2.0 owners.

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We understand that the producers of Stacker and Super Stor (and presumable the others) will soon have products on the market that will work with OS/2. It is also rumored that Stacker may be included with the OS/2 upgrade -- but I emphasize that that is RUMOR.

Chris reported that requirements to run OS/2 Ver. 2.0 are: 386SX or better; 4 meg of RAM minimum (will operate, but not well), 6 meg gives much improved performance, and 8 meg better still; and a 60 meg hard disk. Loading the complete package takes about 30 meg of HD space. Minimum load takes about 15 meg of space, while a standard loading would take something on the order of 20 meg. Printer driver support is very comprehensive, with 5 HD floppies full of printer drivers supporting just about any printer that is IBM compatible. Video driver support is not as good and OS/2 has drivers only up to standard VGA (8514 mode), and it appears that IBM is going to rely on the many manufacturers of video cards to develop their own drivers.

OS/2 is available at just about any software outlet, or can be purchased from IBM direct (1-800-3IBMOS2). The $49 Windows-upgrade introductory price ended July 31. The Windows-upgrade price is now $79, but one of those present at the meeting stated that a $16 rebate is available (but how and where you can get the rebate, I do not know).

Chris (and IBM), a BIG THANK YOU for the program you donated and for a job very well done, in spite of the computer glitch. You have a very powerful and useful program.

AND THE WINNER IS:
The following members were lucky enough to have a winning ticket at the drawing and won some very nice prizes, with one member winning two prizes:

PCRX (Virus Pgm)	George Pollak
Learning DOS (Book)	D. A. Clary
Turbo C++	Kevan Sheridan
OS/2 Ver. 2.0	D. A. Clary
50/50 ($37)	Charles Howe

(You know, there is something suspicious here. I bought the winning tickets at the meeting, but I didn't win anything. It has been that way for some time. I think I will ask or a congressional investigation. You people had best be a little nicer to me!)

☹☹☹

Private Help for Windows or ...
Cheating at Mine Sweeper

By: Ed Buzza

The August issue (V11 N14) of PC magazine discussed some of the secrets in Windows 3.1. But there's another that they didn't mention. I found it in the Windows Conference on our BBS. It tells you how to cheat in Minesweeper.

"Fire up Windows and be sure that you have a dark Desktop. Run MineSweeper and be sure the upper left hand corner of the screen is clear - no menus, windows, etc.. Place mouse cursor in MineSweeper's playing area and type XYZZY. Hold down Shift key while moving cursor around the board area. A single white pixel will show in the upper left corner when the cursor is over a 'safe' square. The pixel dot will not show when the cursor is over a square containing a mine."

Most of us won't remember the procedure the next time we play the game. And who keeps a copy of Bits of Blue at all times beside the computer? So, let's make our own Help file.

In any Windows application, click [Help], click [Contents] or any other menu item, click [Edit] in Help screen, click [Annotate]. Now enter your *own* help file - your snippet of information. Then click [Save]. Windows will save your annotation *and* will put a paper clip icon on the Help screen - look under the [Contents] field. Click the [paper clip] and -voila- your own private help notes.

■■■

Virus Alert

From the Central Iowa Computer User (Des Moines) and the GTBBS, via Quad-Cities Computer Society

Here are a few viruses that have been recently described. Some may already be extinct, and others will be soon, we hope!

George Bush virus - Doesn't do anything, but you can't get rid of it until November.

Ted Kennedy virus - Crashes your computer but denies it ever happened.

Warren Commission virus - Won't allow you to open your files for 75 years.

Jerry Brown virus - Blanks your screen and begins flashing an 800 number.

David Duke virus - Makes your screen go completely white.

Congress virus - Overdraws your disk space.

Paul Tsongas virus - Pops up on December 25 and says "I'm not Santa Claus."

Pat Buchanan virus - Shifts all output to the extreme right of the screen.

Dan Quayle virus - Forces your computer to play "PGA TOUR" from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., six days a week.

Bill Clinton virus - This virus mutates from region to region. We're not sure what it does.

H. Ross Perot virus - Same as the Jerry Brown virus, only nicer fonts and it appears to have a lot more money put into its development.

Richard Nixon virus - a/k/a the "Tricky Dick virus," you can wipe it out, but it always makes a comeback.

■■■

THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE -- MODEMS AND YOU

By: Deb Suran
reprinted from Shades of Blue, the newsletter of the Downeast Computer Society, Deer Isle, Maine

For years, Esther Schindler (a founder of the Downeast Computer Society) has been telling me I should have a modem, and for years my response has been that if I got a modem my phone bill would go through the roof. A couple of months ago, Esther gave me a modem. We were both right.

A modem is a device that allows you to communicate, via the telephone line, with other people who also have modems (and computers). It's a simple concept with complex and far-reaching implications. Have you seen the movie "Cry Freedom?" A significant portion of that movie (based on a true story) was devoted to Donald Woods' flight from South Africa, smuggling the manuscript of his book about Steve Biko out of the country with him. The manuscript filled a satchel. The whole book probably would have fit on one or two high-density floppy disks. At 9600 "baud" (a relatively fast modem information transfer rate), he could have sent his entire manuscript out of the country, via telephone, in an hour or two. Or smuggled it out on his person, on one or two 3.5" floppies, and then sent it by modem to the rest of the world by simply posting the file on a computer bulletin board. Think of the impact of the fax machine on the pro-democracy movement in China, or of the computer and Aldus Pagemaker in getting out the news about the coup attempt in the former USSR, or the dissemination of the videotape of the Rodney King beating, and you will begin to see just how powerful this communication medium could be.

The implications are personal as well as political. A number of romances have blossomed on-line, and there are many couples who have met this way and have gone on to get married. When you communicate by modem you don't get any visual clues about the person you're communicating with. Are they young or old? Fat or skinny? Differently abled? Male or female (some names are less revealing of this fact than others)? People of color? Unless they tell you, you won't know. When you do find out that the person you've become friendly with on-line is not who/what you expected, it certainly forces you to examine your stereotypes -- you know, the ones you thought you didn't have. Modems are a great equalizer, as, by their very nature, they level the playing field. You may be deaf, or in a wheelchair, but you're just as able as anyone else on-line.

When the modem arrived I joined CompuServe, one of the biggest BBSs in the world. A BBS is a computer bulletin board system. You have to pick up a lot of acronyms when you get into modems -- I'll introduce you to some of the most essential in the course of this article. CompuServe is divided into Forums, each Forum devoted to one subject. Each Forum is subdivided into Sections that deal more specifically with different aspects of the Forum topic. There are thousands of Forums, from Astronomy to Zenographics. Some are basically "clubs" where people with a common interest get together to discuss that interest. Other Forums are run by hardware and software vendors, and provide an opportunity for users of these products to get help in using them, provide the vendors with important feedback on their products, and give users and "sysops" (system operators, the people who run the forums) a chance to work together to improve the vendor's product and the user's productivity. BTW (by the way), most Forums have a Section devoted simply to chatting.

I joined several Forums right away, including MIDI/Music, Crafts, Broadcast Professionals, Science Fiction, and TAPCIS. It was easy to do and I felt very welcome on all of them. Each Forum has its own distinct personality and some are more fun than others. Both Forum members and sysops are very welcoming to "newbies" and willing to give lots of advice to help new members become more proficient at navigating through CompuServe, and taking advantage of what it has to offer. With one exception, my participation on the Forums is purely recreational. The exception is Crafts Forum.

I build hammered dulcimers for a living. The Woodworking Section on the Crafts Forum is very active and full of knowledgeable people who are more than willing to share their ideas and expertise. Living here on Deer Isle as I do I'm isolated from the rest of the instrument building world. Generally I only meet people who share my interest at folk festivals. On Crafts Forum, even though I'm the only full-time instrument builder I've picked up tips and suggestions and help that I couldn't find in a year's worth of festivals. Forum members are helping me locate and purchase hard-to-find woods (even going to lumber yards and picking it out for me), suggesting new finishing techniques and substances, and even writing programs to help me use my database more effectively. I am able to reciprocate by providing information about musical instruments and music, sending people recordings, and posting information about folk festivals that have a crafts component where the other members of the Forum might be able to sell what they make. In addition, I have been asked to head up a special Section on building musical instruments for the month of September.

Sounds inviting, eh? So, what do you need to get on-line? Well, first you need a modem.

Product Review -- Hayes V-Series ULTRA Smartmodem 9600 ($669 mail order) Hayes Microcomputer is THE standard in communications hardware. Just as all PCs must be "100% IBM compatible," so must all modems be "100% Hayes compatible." The documentation that comes with the Hayes modem does a good job of explaining how a modem works. Briefly, telephone lines transmit information by using audio tones. This method of information transfer is called "analog." Computers work with information in a digital format. Modems convert information from digital to analog and back, MOdulate and DEModulate, hence the name modem.

The Hayes ULTRA is a 9600 baud modem. "Baud" refers to the data transfer rate, and

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9600 is relatively fast. There are many modems on the market that send data at 2400 baud. Buying a 2400 baud modem is something like buying a PC XT. You can probably get a good price on one, but not only is it already obsolete, it won't save you any money in the long run. That's because you pay for connect time to many BBSs, and data transfer at 2400 baud takes almost four times as long as data transfer at 9600 baud. Figure in your phone bill (especially here on Deer Isle where *no* call is a local call) and that adds up quickly. You need to be careful when shopping for a fax/modem combination too, because many products advertised as "9600 baud fax/modem" are a 9600 baud fax and a 2400 baud modem.

Well, what can you say about hardware that works? Not much. The first modem developed a problem that acted like a loose connection. I'm inclined to suspect the fluctuations in household current that we experience so frequently on Deer Isle as the culprit here. Hayes replaced the modem promptly. The only thing I had to compare the Hayes to was the modem Esther sent me (which I only had for a couple of weeks before the Hayes arrived). Let me tell you that, compared to 2400 baud, this modem is FAST! It's also the Hayes top-of-the-line product -- kind of makes me wish I'd been using an inferior modem for a few years so I could *really* appreciate it. Instead, I now take excellence for granted. The accompanying documentation is thorough and well- written, and a copy of Smartcom EZ communications software is enclosed as well so all you need is a cable to connect the modem to your computer and you're ready to go. The Hayes ULTRA Smartmodem, in conjunction with their software, is capable of making a connection with a BBS without your having to know things like parity, stop bits, and all the other stuff that a neophyte like me had no idea about. That's what makes it a "smartmodem," I guess. For sure it's smarter than I am.

If you want to join the CompuServe Information Service (CIS) there are several programs available specifically for navigating through CIS, including TAPCIS.

Product Review -- TAPCIS
(shareware, $79)

TAPCIS was the first communications software I tried -- Esther sent me a copy with the modem. TAPCIS was written by Howard Benner and is now in version 5.4. Howard died of skin cancer two years ago but other people are continuing to upgrade the program. The money earned by the TAPCIS Forum on CompuServe is being donated to a memorial fund in Howard's name that supports research into skin cancer. To date about $32,000 has been donated.

To understand how TAPCIS works you need to know how CompuServe stores messages. When you post a message on a Forum you give it a title. CompuServe lists the titles of the messages and you can scroll through the titles and decide which messages you want to read. Say I want to tell everyone on the Crafts Forum about a folk festival in Boston. I would give the message a title like "Boston Folk Festival." Then, people in the Boston area or those interested in folk music are likely to check out the message. Now, you are paying by the minute for connect time to CIS, plus your phone bill if you don't live in an area with a local CIS phone number. What TAPCIS does is automate the process to bring your connect time down. You can tell TAPCIS to go to the Forums you frequent and pick up all the message "headers" (as the message titles are called) from those Forum Sections you are interested in. So I set up TAPCIS to go to the Crafts Forum and pick up the message headers from the Woodworking Section because I'm not interested in the other Sections. TAPCIS does so, and then hangs up the phone. This process takes only a couple of minutes -- much faster than if I was collecting them "by hand." Then, I read through the headers off-line (no connect charge), mark those headers I'm interested in, and call back. TAPCIS quickly collects the messages I want to read and saves them to my hard disk, then hangs up again, and I can read them at my leisure. Responding to the messages is also automated, so I can write my replies off-line and upload them later. While you end up calling CIS two or three times every "session," each call lasts only a minute or two. Just imagine how long you'd spend if you had to read 20 messages on-line, and wanted to write replies to five of them. You can see how much money TAPCIS would save you. Of course, this is false economy because what TAPCIS *really* allows you to do is spend much more time on CIS because eacheh session costs less than it would otherwise.

I have at this point tried six communications programs. Granted that TAPCIS was written specifically for CompuServe so there's a lot it doesn't have to do; I still found it to be the easiest and most intuitive program of the six by far, with excellent documentation. There is a TAPCIS Forum on CompuServe (of course) and anything I wasn't able to figure out in the beginning was quickly dealt with by leaving a message on the Forum, which was answered within hours by a sysop. A terrific program, IMHO (in my humble opinion).

CompuServe isn't the only BBS where I'm spending time. The Association of PC Users Groups (APCUG) maintains a BBS called GlobalNet in a closet at Borland. The Downeast Computer Society is a member of the APCUG and as such all DCS officers are entitled to free connect time on GlobalNet. We can contact hardware and software manufacturers through the BBS and get them to send representatives to do meetings for us, leave messages for other user groups and their officers, and participate in the weekly conferences. As program chair of the Downeast Computer Society, I can join in the weekly Program Chair's Conference and share information about meetings we've had with other program chairs all over the country, and get similar information from them. We tell each other who does a good job and who doesn't, swap contact names and phone numbers, and send each other our newsletters. In order to get through to GlobalNet I had to learn to use another communications program.

Product Review -- Smartcom III
($199 list) I was both pleased and relieved to read an introduction to an article about communications software in PC Magazine this week that complained about how difficult such programs are to use. I was

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really starting to feel like an idiot. Before I got Smartcom III I didn't get anywhere with any of the shareware programs I tried: Procomm, Telix, and Unicom. Well, maybe I shouldn't count Unicom. It's a Windows program, so of course all it did was crash. Some hand-holding definitely would have been most helpful as I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. Part of the problem is a lack of standardization among modems, but part of it is also my inexperience and my disinclination to read manuals. Communications software is, for the most part, anti-intuitive. Smartcom III is a Hayes product designed for use with Hayes and Hayes-compatible modems. There is a reduced command set option for non-Hayes modems that do not completely or correctly implement the Hayes Standard AT Command Set. The program interface allows the use of both keyboard and mouse. TTY and ANSI terminal emulation are supported, as are several different X-, Y- , and ZMODEM standards. The program also provides a scripting language called SCOPE, but I never got that far. The screen set- up is a layered group of menus -- click on your choice and move to the next menu layer. It's pretty inefficient.

I suppose I'd have to characterize this program as the best of a bad lot. Since I didn't know anything when I started, the array of choices for setting up each option was overwhelming. In addition I found I had to set too many of these options too often. For instance, the default for disk capture is "off." But, I want disk capture "on" every time I call GlobalNet because I only call in for the Program Chair's Conference, and I want to be able to browse through the conference later to write down any names and phone numbers. The program automatically returns disk capture to "off," so I have to remember to turn disk capture "on" every time I call into GlobalNet, and that's very annoying. Setting up for a new connection is the same -- I have to start from their defaults, not mine. That means I have to do things like set COM2 (the default is COM1) every time I enter a number in the phone book. And the phone book is set up in two sections for some unfathomable reason, which means you have to select each activity twice, under two different menus.

Considering how many defaults need to be set/reset, this whole process becomes very annoying and time-consuming. If I'd had a lot of BBSs to enter instead of just three or four it would get very old very fast. Having said that, let me repeat that for all its faults, Smartcom III is the best of the general communications programs I tried. It was the only one with which I actually got far enough to make a call and get through to a BBS. The documentation doesn't help a beginner like me all that much, and the one problem that really stopped me wasn't one I could solve by using their manual. Without getting technical, there were two linefeed settings that could be set at either "yes" or "no." The documentation says to try setting one to "yes," and if that doesn't work to set the other to "yes," but doesn't tell you that the problem can be corrected only if the first is set back to "no." Two "yes" settings and you're dead in the water. It took a call to tech support to get that straightened out. Tech support was very knowledgeable and my question was answered promptly. Hayes offers free unlimited tech support during business hours on weekdays, and a 24-hour BBS. Connecting with their BBS is the first lesson in the manual, and their BBS information is set up for you when you install the program.

Let me wrap this up by saying that everyone should have a modem, and every modem neophyte would benefit from a bit of hand-holding. If you have a modem-literate friend, invite him/her over for dinner and ask for some help getting started. There's something for everyone on a BBS somewhere, whether you're looking for recreation or want to enhance your productivity. No matter what you're interested in, a modem will expand your universe, introduce you to new friends, and challenge you intellectually. Oh and BTW, thanks for the modem, Esther!

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Software Reviews:

WordPerfect Works

Review by: Olaf Meding, Madison PC User's Group

WordPerfect Works is a new product by WordPerfect Corporation. It is a combination of six single programs and a few supporting utilities. The six programs are a shell (see below), LetterPerfect, a spreadsheet, a graphics editor, a database, and a communications program.

WordPerfect Works is designed for busy people. For example, managers who frequently need to create documents consisting of both text and graphics, or laptop users who will appreciate the compact hard disk requirements and the communications program. WordPerfect Works' list price of $159 makes it a bargain for everyone who does not need, or want, all the bells and whistles of more sophisticated software packages, such as WordPerfect, DrawPerfect, and Lotus' 1-2-3 spreadsheet.

The installation of WordPerfect Works is easy. You just insert the disks and answer a few very basic questions. Once installed, the command "WW" will start the WordPerfect Works shell.

All five applications programs can be run outside the shell (standalone) except for the communications program. A mouse is supported in all applications, including the shell.

A shell is a piece of software which provides a set of menus. From this menu the user can select and launch an application. The shell offers a number of convenient features. The user can customize the shell by adding more programs to be launched by a single keystroke. The shell macro capability executes a pre-recorded sequence of keystrokes. Macros are nice because a single keystroke executes any large number of keystrokes. This saves time and keystroke sequences do not have be memorized.

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Another powerful feature of the shell is the clipboard. The clipboard makes it possible to copy information between the various programs within the shell.

The most powerful feature of the shell is the task swapper. Please read the sidebar, "Task Swapper versus Multitasking," for an explanation of how a task swapper works. The shell (task swapper) allows you move freely between all programs. For example, you don't have to Save and Exit out of LetterPerfect and launch the spreadsheet to look up some information, and then exit the spreadsheet and restart LetterPerfect.

LetterPerfect is a scaled-down version of the WordPerfect word processor. The reviewed version is compatible with WordPerfect versions 5.0 and 5.1. A utility program included with WordPerfect Works can convert a number of popular text file formats so that LetterPerfect can read them. Since I use WordPerfect regularly, I decided to write this review using LetterPerfect to see if I would miss any of the Wordperfect features, and I did not.

The WordPerfect Works spreadsheet lets you create worksheets on anything from household budgets to scientific data crunching. It has more than 100 built-in functions to calculate statistics. The spreadsheet data files can also be saved in LetterPerfect, DOS text, or Lotus 1-2-3 formats. In addition, you can graph your worksheets and then use those graphs on their own or inside LetterPerfect documents.

The graphics editor is a powerful tool designed to enhance or create your own graphic images. It is easy to include graphic images in LetterPerfect documents. The graphics editor also lets you enhance the graphs created by the spreadsheet or the 30 images supplied with WordPerfect Works.

Furthermore, you can use a utility called Grab, which lets you capture graphic screens created by any other program. It saves these images to a disk file. Another utility lets you convert many commonly used graphics file formats to the WordPerfect WPG format. The Graphics Convert utility supports DXF, PCX, TIFF, CGM, HPGL, and PIC, to name a few.

The WordPerfect database helps you to organize large amounts of data. The shell includes three sample databases, an address book, note cards, and an inventory. These three database applications are good examples of what a database can do and how it is set up.

Last but not least, WordPerfect Works includes a communications program. Right after I installed WordPerfect Works, I logged into the Madison PC User's Group Bulletin Board System using this communications program. My objective was to download a file without reading any documentation. And, voila, no problem! I was even more surprised to see that the communications program included the Zmodem protocol. I then studied the documentation and found that the communications program was actually written by a company called MagicSoft and is based on their MTEZ software. The communications program includes many of the features found in standalone communications programs, such as terminal emulations, 10 different protocols, dialing directory, screen capture, etc. A large number of modems are also supported.

I tested WordPerfect Works running under DOS version 5.0 using my Diversified Systems 486/25 MHz PC without encountering any problem. Everything also worked fine under Quarterdeck's multitasking environment, DESQview.

I really liked WordPerfect Works. It lets you create flashy documents easily, includes great on-line help, and has the look and feel of other WordPerfect products. And it contains all of the features WordPerfect Corp. is so famous for, such as extensive printer support, great customer service support, excellent documentation, and best of all Works works.

WordPerfect Works requires at least 4 MB of hard disk space and 400K of memory. Its list price is $159. For more information, contact:

WorkPerfect Corporation
1555 N. Technology Way
Orem, Utah 84057
(800) 321-3512

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Multitasking versus Task Swapping

A task swapper does what the name implies. It swaps tasks in and out of memory. A task (program) may be swapped out to either the hard disk (slow) or to storage memory (almost instantaneous). A program is suspended (stopped) for the duration of being swapped out.

After the current program is swapped out the task swapper loads into memory another program for execution. If there is enough storage memory (usually memory above 1 MB), swapping programs is almost instantaneous, allowing the user to quickly switch between applications. Task swappers make a lot of sense for applications such as word processors because the word processor is idle in the background anyway.

The key difference between a task swapper and a multitasking program is that a multitasker enables a program to keep running in the background. Multitasker programs are essential for running a communications program while transferring files in the background.

Examples of task swappers are presented by the WordPerfect Works shell, the DOS version 5.0 shell, Software Carousel, and a shareware product called Back & Forth. Examples of multitasking programs include Microsoft Windows, OS/2, and DESQview.

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Editorial Comment:
There will not be a President's Column this month, due to more pressing career obligations. Harvey will be hard at work this Labor Day week-end. He will also, not have the opportunity to engage in his most recent learned recreational activity -- Windsurfing!



dBASE IV Release 1.5

Review by: David Jensen, Madison PC User's Group

If dBASE IV hadn't had problems since Ashton-Tate started working on it, Borland wouldn't have been able to buy Ashton-Tate for the price they did. Ashton-Tate would still be at the top of the heap without any fear of anyone else. Unfortunately, while companies like FoxBase were able to produce new programs that used the dBASE language with execution that was faster and extensions that made it easier to run, Ashton-Tate's answer was to sue, not to improve.

When dBASE IV release 1.0 came out late, it was big, slow, and buggy. Release 1.1 was a major improvement, but by then the damage had been done. Most customers would rather not have to try a new product, no matter how similar it might be to the one they are using, but if the original product's upgrade is bad enough, people will bail out. People did. Now, here is the challenge: Can Borland keep dBASE from going the way of WordStar, a product now more important for its history than its current value?

As a release upgrade from 1.1, dBASE IV 1.5 offers a number of nice features that many developers would find valuable. dBASE IV Release 1.5 is Borland's first shot at saving dBASE. They did a pretty good job. Borland added a number of language extensions, added a group of low-level file I/O functions, improved execution, added mouse support, added features and improved configurability to the control center and additional file format import/export support.

I assume that no one still uses release 1.0. Considering the problems people had with it, Ashton-Tate must have made sure that everyone was upgraded to release 1.1.

For dBASE users of older releases of the product, especially dBASE III+, it's probably time to change your dBASE. For those who don't want to use the dot prompt, the control center isan excellent environment for developing applications. Along with the control center, there is an integrated application generator that creates dBASE code. There is solid multi-user network support, transactions with rollbacks, SQL (Structured Query Language) support, multi-table QBE (query by example), conditional indexes and more. Well, that's fine, but I'm sure that Borland has made their best effort to sell current owners of older releases of dBASE on the merits of dBASE IV release 1.5. What can new users or users of competitive products expect from dBASE IV?

First, they can expect to use a product that is highly compatible with the most common database language in PCs: the dBase or xBase language. New users will appreciate this since they will be able to find more books, more power users, and more advice columns that have been written about this language than any other. With a product as complicated as a database management system, it is very helpful to have as many experienced people around as possible. Along with the language, new extensions have been added that provide further power to users who will be working in the dBASE IV environment only. Compiler switches are now available to allow compiled code to reflect the different environments that the application may be run in.

Second, they can expect to use the product the way they want. The program runs in three modes: command line (the dot prompt), SQL (a different command line mode that is compatible with IBM's mainframe DBMS, DB2, among others), and control center. The command line mode can be interactive or can be used to run programs that have been written using any ASCII editor (one is included in the package). The SQL mode is similar to the dot prompt, but it interprets the commands differently to use the pseudo-standard SQL. Some dBase commands cannot be used in SQL mode, either because they conflict with SQL, or because there is an SQL statement that will do the job.

The control center mode offers a fully interactive development system. The user can use the control center to do something, such as create a file, add records, change records, ask a question about the information in the files or other ad hoc use, or the user can develop an entire application by creating all of the files, all of the data forms, all of the reports and the menus required for an integrated application. Each part of the application is created modularly, so each part can be used for other applications. As these modules are added, even ad hoc users may find that they have developed an application before they knew they were doing so.

The control center mode is the mode that most new users are likely to want to start in. The control center has excellent help facilities, good menus, and, with the help of the application generator, allows users to take advantage of the power of the language. On the other hand, I would guess that most experienced programmers would rather use the dot prompt to get a program written. They just don't need the hand-holding that is provided by the control center. I would consider this combination of excellent support for new users along with freedom for the experienced developer to be a necessary capability for this kind of a development environment.

Third, they can expect to be frustrated by the lack of a proper compiler. Whether the programs have been developed from the command line or the control center, these programs can be compiled to an intermediate object code that runs substantially faster than the uncompiled code can be interpreted. Borland cheerfully offers to sell a runtime compiler to those who want to run their applications on machines that don't have dBASE IV on them. This is nonsense. For the same price or less, you can buy a professional-level language compiler or DBMS that compiles to source code and has no runtime license or limitations. Since this product is aimed at both major applications developers and the more casual users of databases, the value of the product to applications developers is limited substantially by the lack of this capability.

Users will find that the product is easy to install, offers a lot of configuration

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possibilities, allows multiple users to select configurations, provides excellent security options and has the network and network administrator in mind. The manuals are clear and easy to use. Not only do they cover the actual operation of the program, but they also describe some effective basics of using a relational database manager.

dBASE IV is a relational database management system. It understands that relations can be defined among fields of different files, so the files can be smaller, and redundant data need not be keep in each record. This is particularly valuable for those who have to keep the same piece of information for a variety of reasons. If that piece of information can be kept once and pointed to, there will be better data integrity (the piece of information is correct [or incorrect] everywhere) than if that information is actually kept in a number of places, as a flat file system requires. It is much easier to forget to change information in one place, if it is kept in many places.

While users can use dBASE IV or any other relational database manager as a flat-file system, and that is a good way to use it at the beginning to learn the product, if they continue to do so, they have bought a Ferrari for a school zone. dBASE IV works well as a relational database manager.

While there is PostScript and other laser printer support, there is really only support for monospace fonts, so the value of this printer support is minimal. Considering that it was easy for a copywriter to identify parts of the report development as WYSIWYG (on a character mode screen) -- what you see is Courier and what you get is Courier. As Henry Ford might have said, "Any font you want, as long as it's Courier."

The last time I used dBASE, it was dBASE III+ and I'm quite happily impressed with the improvements that I've seen in the product between then and now. I was especially impressed by the changes that were available in the control center, changes that made it easy for casual users to use dBASE at its best. While I can say that dBASE IV release 1.5 is a major improvement from dBASE III+, I can't say that it has managed to continue to outpace the competition. FoxPro, in particular, has been doing its best to be the best xBase DBMS. With the added resources of Microsoft behind it, FoxPro will continue to give dBASE IV a run for its money. Still, this release shows that Borland didn't just buy Ashton-Tate for its mailing list.

dBASE IV Release 1.5
Ashton-Tate, a Borland Company
1800 Green Hills Road
P.O. Box 660001
Scotts Valley, CA 95067-0001
(408) 438-5300

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FINALLY PROCOMM PLUS FOR WINDOWS

Madison PC User's Group

Procomm Plus,the most popular communications software,was designed to take advantage of the capabilities of Windows better than any other communications package. Here's the program with all the features. When you use it,you'll be amazed at how much it can do.

Procomm Plus for Window's ease of use does not decrease it's flexibility. Procomm Plus provides a complete popup dialing directory, you can convert your DOS Procomm directories and adjust file protocol to terminal-key mapping. Plus,dialing directory setting may be customized for each entry. Once you've highlighted several directory entries,just click on dial, and Procomm Plus will dial each number in order. Another convenient feature for those using large dialing directories is the Find command,which can locate a specific text string in any field of any entry.

The terminal window has ample amount of options,more than 20 different emulations are supported. Procomm Plus for Windows can run full-screen mainframe applications by using your PC as a remote terminal. Supports some of the well-known Video display terminals: Ansi BBS, IBM PC, Data general, ADDS, AT&T, DEC, Televideo and WYSE to name a few. Along the top of the terminal window you will find several controls called the ACTION BAR. These ACTION BAR are call the control center. It offers the most commonly-used functions from the menu as icons,these icons operate identically to the menu, but are far more convenient to used. You can get on-line quickly by using the ACTION BAR'S Rapid Dial feature.

Procomm Plus for Window's basic protocol options rise above those of any other communications package. The protocol setup allows you to select from one of eleven file transfer protocols,including Zmodem (my favorite),CompuServe B+(designed for fast,capable and automatic file transfers with the CompuServe information service),and Kermit(useful for file transfers to and from mainframe and minicomputers. Procomm Plus for Windows also includes standard Kermit. For compuServe member, Procomm Plus can show graphics such as CompuServe weather maps as you download them. Procomm Plus operates at baud rates from 300 to 115,200. Line settings include space,even,odd,mark or no parity and 7 or 8 data bits. Well,what more can you asked for in a communication package?

Last but not least,some of the most impressive features are the script capabilities. Full support for Dynamic data exchange (DDE) is available through the script language.

System Requirements:

I. IBM AT,PS/2 or compatible capable of running Microsoft Windows 3.0 or higher in standard or enhanced mode. II. A hard disk
III. EGA, VGA OR higher resolution video graphics card
IV. Mouse recommended.

Procomm Plus for Windows
Datastorm Technologies
3212 lemone Blvd
Columbia, Mo 65205
(314)443-3282

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

TOM BINGHAM
MARC DIPIERO
ROGER EGGLESTON
EDRIS M. FABER
THOMAS M. HOFFER
JERRY E. KING
HELLEN L. MARLOWE
FRAN MOOREHEAD
JOE POSTON
JOSEPH TINGLEY
RAY HENSLEY
DAVID BEACH
BERNARD J. HYMES

GRADE GUIDE
Version 4.0

By: Jon Kane, program author and Madison PC User's Group member

GRADE GUIDE version 4.0 is a shareware gradebook program designed to give teachers an easy way to enter, print, and analyze students' grades. The program will store students' names, IDs, section numbers, grades, and text information. It has a wide variety of convenient report formats, including grade reports, statistical analyses, class lists of grades and averages, and form letters. It has a DEFAULT menu allowing you to tailor the program to your needs. Although most users can use GRADE GUIDE without any assistance, the program comes with an extensive 100 pages of easy-to-follow documentation and an on-line help facility.

Although you could use a traditional paper gradebook or even a spreadsheet program to store your students' grades, GRADE GUIDE has many features to make your work easier. Users describe the benefits of being able to hand students lists of their grades and averages periodically, to demonstrate to students how their grades would change if incomplete work were handed in, to post class lists of grades and averages, and, of course, to calculate final grades with a minimum of effort.

Strengths of the program include: a quick-access menu system; ability to easily edit previously entered data; separation of grades into categories such as Exam, Quiz, Homework, and Attendance; recording NONE grades for work that is not yet complete; supplying statistical reports and graphs of the students' performance; writing letters that include information about students and grades; and selecting students who match a given set of criteria.

I released the previous version, GRADE GUIDE version 3.00, in 1988. Now I have implemented four years worth of new ideas, and the program has been greatly improved. In this latest version, I increased the program's
flexibility, reduced the number of keystrokes necessary to operate it, added mouse control, eliminated needless restrictions, and made the program more useful to elementary school teachers.

One new feature lets you select students based on any criteria. For example, you can select all students receiving a low grade on a test or having a low average on their homework grades. All reporting and grade entry features can be restricted to the selected students so that those students can receive special attention. GRADE GUIDE now lets you separate grades into grading periods (up to 10). For example, if you teach a class that runs for six marking periods, grades for each of the periods can be viewed separately. At the end of one marking period, you would tell the program to begin a new marking period. As a result, all of the previously entered grades would be hidden. You can choose to view grades from any of the marking periods or set a switch and view all the grades from all the grade periods together.

The DEFAULT menu, which has always allowed you to tailor the program to your own needs, has been expanded. Many input quantities, from the maximum values of test grades to the location of students' name fields on text files, can be specified. You can also select your own screen colors. Different DEFAULT menu settings can be saved to disk so that settings can be changed from class to class.

A major change in GRADE GUIDE is an improved menu system. Most menus contain switches which allow you to tailor operations to your needs. Once set, those switches are saved and need not be reset. The menus have been standardized so that the Enter key begins processing and the Esc key terminates it. It is easier to enter and view information since the user can now use the cursor and editing keys to go forward and backward through the data rather than just proceed in one direction as before.

GRADE GUIDE version 3.00 provided three grading formats. Version 4.0 has eight, including letter grades, number grades (with zero, one, or two decimal place numbers), and word grades. With word grades, the user can enter a list of up to 10 six-character words which can be assigned as grades. For example, if you wish to store attendance records, the word list could be Absent, Tardy, and Present. The old limit of 10 grade categories in any class has been expanded to 30. Now even elementary school teachers who traditionally need many categories (Reading Quiz, Reading Test, Math Homework, Spelling Test, and so forth) can keep all of their grading information in one class file. Now you can enter up to 6000 grades for each student, a limit well beyond the needs of most teachers.

NONE grades, which are used to signify work that is not yet complete, now come in five kinds. You get to choose how those NONE grades are displayed and whether each should be evaluated as a zero grade, be ignored, or be left optional.

GRADE GUIDE version 3.00 was able to generate a new grade based on an

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MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- BITS OF BLUE BULLETIN BOARD
  ** Data: 239-3704 **
  Voice: 237-4997
- Access 24 hrs/day 7 days/week
  Full E-mail capabilities
  Numerous On-Line Files
  Access to FIDO NET
- FULL SUPPORT from the
  IBM PC Users Group
- DISCOUNTS at
  SUNRISE COMPUTER SUPPLIES
  3328 Henderson Blvd.
  Tampa, Florida
- ACCESS to the CLUB'S
  PROGRAM LIBRARY

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averaging of all the old grades. This feature has been expanded so that you can generate a new grade by combining any collection of the old grades or averages. The feature will also allow you to choose the largest or smallest of a list of grades.

Other new features include: a form letter editor; saving report formats; copying and archiving class files; displaying letter grade equivalents for number grades or averages; placing comments on printed output; password protection; and ease of switching output from the screen to the printer or a file.

The release date for GRADE GUIDE version 4.0 is August 1992. A licensed copy sells for $40. Site licenses and volume discounts are also available. GRADE GUIDE version 4.00 can be ordered by writing to:

GRADE GUIDE
c/o Jon Kane
281 Regent St.
Madison, WI 53705-5218

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Tampa IBM PC Users Group
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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 5 NO. 10 October , 1992

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: October 14, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

PRESENTATION:
10/14/92

Bulletin Board System
"How to Use and Enjoy the BBS"
Demo By: Don Patzch and TIMPCUG Officers

also: PKZip
Demo By: Harvey Bruneau

Break

Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle

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WordPerfect Class

The the **WordPerfect** classes by Ed Buzza are to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. please be prompt. Those who missed the September class may wish to "catch up" and attend the next three sessions:

10/14/92 Write, block & edit text.
11/11/92 Table feature.
12/9/92 Graphics.

*** * 1992 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 932-6745
VICE PRES.: Steve Speairs 875-1095
TREASURER:Bill Fuller 832-0799
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
SECRETARY:
(Co-Secretary) Jim Clark
(Co-Secretary) Charles Howe
EDUCATION DIRECTOR: Ed Buzza 685-5898

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

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LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 223-3888

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about IBM-PC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 932-6745, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 9/9/92 --

As I sat waiting for the "starting gavel', I noted the gathering of the clan in the very nice facilities IBM makes available to our group and thought how fortunate we are. In addition to these super facilities, we always have a professional presentation of current software by industry reps and/or one of our own, we have a willing source of help with any computer problems we might have, we have access to some excellent training and education in SIGs, we can keep up to date on the most important industry developments, etc., etc., and we get to meet and mingle with some very nice people. And there are always several valuable raffle prizes given away to some lucky members. We always have a nice turnout for our meetings, yet there are many who are members of our group that never attend the meetings. I wonder if they know what they are missing.

☞ CLUB NEWS:

Our Prez informed us of the current SIG on Word Perfect 5.1 for DOS which was holding one of its classes at the time, and announced that the SIG on Modems & Using the BBS would be held next month -- time and date to be announced. All interested in this group were asked to put their name and phone number on a list -- these folks would be contacted by Don Patzsch with the time and place for the SIG. Don Patzsch, a Co-SYSOP for the large Sunshine BBS and an expert in this area, will head up this SIG. Judging from the line of folks waiting to put their name on the list, it is going to be a nice group.

Kevan Sheridan, our BOB SYSOP announced that he had ordered our new 14,400 baud modem for the BBS. A 6-8 week deliver is involved, so Kevan is looking toward a Nov/Dec operational date. Club objectives down stream are to add another phone line to the BBS, upgrade the computer to 386 level, and add storage capacity. We have come a long way, baby, with Kevan's able efforts -- and we are going a lot further in the future.

☞ INDUSTRY NEWS:

Harvey informed us of a number of developments in the industry, on only a few of which I was able to get notes.

IBM will be coming out with their new gaggle of PCs next month, including a couple with ISA. A significant part of the announcement is that they will be marketed through national retail outlets, such as Work Place.

New/relocated computer stores:

- CompuAdd has relocated from its former Fowler location to one on west Hillsborough, west of Dale Mabry, in the same complex as the Sports Authority. (Continued on next page)

(Continued on next page)

▸ A new computer superstore, Computer City, will be going in on Dale Mabry between Kennedy and Cypress.

It appears that at least one company is coming out with a laptop computer that will have a bubble jet printer as an integral part. Harvey observed that that could be a problem -- if you have to have the printer repaired, you would also lose use of the computer. Looks that could be handy for the traveler, though.

Software Upgrades:

▸ MS Money 2.0 will be out next month.

▸ A new upgrade for Quicken for DOS is on the way. A free upgrade for the Windows version is also out, but you have to ask for it -- so, if you own Quicken for Windows, best get on the phone and make a call to the Quicken folks.

▸ FoxPro for DOS and a Windows BETA version should be released in October.

▸ The second interim release (2.0b) for MS Word for Windows will be coming out soon.

Still in the software area, the Aldus Corp is perhaps the first major software producer to announce that it will not develop a 32-bit version of Pagemaker for IBM's OS2/2.0.

It has been reported that the new Xtree for Windows has some problems. I did not catch all the info, but did hear mention of SuperStor. Check it out before you buy.

Harvey noted that in one of the publications he reviews it had been reported that Windows software now outsells software for DOS. (Think about that just a little bit.)

Speaking of Windows, Harvey observed what could be a very risky situation. In the interest of conserving $$$$ in a multi-computer situation to network and install Windows on the central computer. That's fine, BUT -- what if the central computer goes down? If you are using Windows programs, what do you do???

☛ PROGRAM PRESENTATION

We were again blessed with the expertise and talents of John Johanasmeyer of Word Perfect Corporation, this time to give us a rundown on WP's Presentation program, version 2.0. This was the second Beta version for DOS. A Windows version will be forthcoming later. Its direct competitors are other upper end graphics and presentation programs -- CorelDraw, Applause, Harvard Graphics, to name a few. WP believes that their Presentation package is superior to those of all of their competitors.

It appears to be a super program, but I am not into that kind of software and am not in a position to judge one way or another. I do know that I would like to have some of the capabilites I observed. It seemed capable of doing just about anything I could think that anyone would want to do in the way of preparing a computer presentation -- and do it easily and well. Some of the features I noted are:

Willl produce and handle (import and export) both bitmapped and vector based graphics, and the listing of supported graphics formats is extensive.

Includes a bitmap editor that allows editing of bitmapped graphics in fine detail.

Allows manipulating both text and graphics in just about any manner one could imagine.

Includes a WP 5.1 spell checker.

Includes a "John Madden" draw capability -- you know, redraw the play on a rerun of the play

Supports .WAV and .MID, and includes hundreds of .MID files and the capability to create .WAV. While it will use the computer sound system, a sound card is certainly desirable to take advantage of this feature.

Automated or manual presentation of slides shows, and one can quickly and easily reorganize a presentation.

The output of the program can be transported to and used from another computer via floppy. The other computer need not have Presentation loaded, for the runtime program Presentation will load onto the floppy along with the output will allow presentation with the other computer. Interestingly, the file size for per slide seems very small indeed, and the runtime package is only about 75K. So, a single 1.4 Mb floppy would hold a very large presentation. Runtime does not give the capability to modify the presentation, however, so the presentation you take in this mannher is the only presentation you can give.

Includes over 1000 pieces of clip art.

I don't recall any mention of supported text formats, but I did note that Presentation 2.0 would accept directly text input from any version on WP 5.1.

I don't recall any mention of equipment requirements beyond needing about 15 Mb of hard disk space. Just as with any graphics package, the faster your computer the better off you are. While Presentation may run on a 286, I would guess that you would want a 386 or better, or you may be twiddling your thumbs a good bit. I believe John was using a 386/40 laptop on which the program ran very well. The retail price is set at $495, and no clues were available about expected street price.

John did a great job of presenting what appears a super program, and I haven't done justice to either. Many thanks, John (and Word Perfect) for an entertaining and informative presentation (and all the goodies, of course) -- another Word Perfect job VERY WELL DONE!!

☛ AND THE WINNERS ARE:

With the generosity of WP Corp and GeoWorks, there were quite a few raffle prizes this meeting, and the lucky winners are:

WP Cap . . . . . William Coleman
" . . . . . Martin Miller
" . . . . . Kevan Sheridan
" . . . . . Roger Waters
WP Shirt . . . . . Larry Anders
" . . . . . Susan Atwood
Box 3.5" disks . . . . . Larry Anders
WP Graphics Lib . Roger Eggleston
GeoWorksPro . . . . . Cheryl Pett
Money Matters . . . . . Larry Anders
50/50 ($36) . . . . . Chuck Hines

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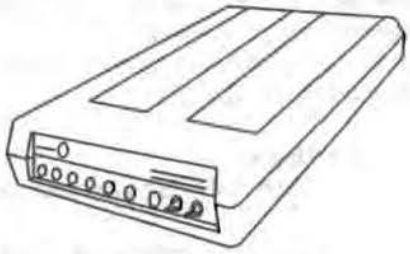
PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Politics are in the air. The other day in Tampa I was talking to president Bush, no it wasn't a 900 number, it was real. A couple of days later, I almost got run over in Hartford Connecticut by Senator Gore's motorcade. I chased it down to the Sheraton to see if I could get a glimpse of the man. I only saw the Governor of Connecticut waiting for Senator Gore to begin his speech. Ok by now I have either got your interest or your going back to the 1st page to make sure you are reading the Bits of Blue newsletter. You are probably wondering, what political party is Harvey for and why is he pushing politics when he should be pushing PC information.

Well let me clear the air. This is not a political paper or endorsement for any party or platform. However, President Bush really impressed me that week. You see his staff invited Marylee and I to a VIP get together where it was reported that Mayor Sandy Freedman would make an appearance. She wasn't there, some last minute problems I guess. However, Marylee and I were introduced to President Bush. Oh I forgot to mention that the President I am referring to is President Alan Bush of Computer City, the new computer super store in town. Anyway, Mr Bush and I talked about his new store and the user group. I wanted to know if Computer City supported user groups. He gave me a resounding yes and mentioned a couple of groups around the country that they supported. Oh course this was the answer I wanted. Other companies in the bay area will not even let us place our flyers in their stores because, ***"its corporate policy"***. With the turbulence and decreasing profit margins in the PC industry one would think that these companies would embrace and support non-profit organizations such as user groups to help them through these economic times. Small and large companies such as IBM, Sunrise Computer Supplies and Hardware, Wordperfect. Software Publishing, Symantec, Corel Systems, Polaris Software, Power Up Software, LaserTools, Softac, Custom Computing and many others see the wisdom in supporting our group by donating their products, time and/or resources to us in return for goodwill, exposure and marketing at a cost effective price. These companies and others look at us as an extension of their marketing and research departments, not as a bunch of hackers in a back room copying as much software as we can for illegal distribution.

Please join me in welcoming Computer City to Tampa and as an addition to the **Friends of the Users Group**. Their store is located on Dale Mabry just South of the interstate. If you have not been to this new store you may be missing out. The staff is large and friendly and there is a huge inventory of software and hardware for PC compatibles and Macs. It was good to see a lot of members during my five (to date) visits. One member suggested I get a life after seeing me two days in a row at this store and one day at Expotech. It is not that I have to get a fix of PC paraphernalia to keep me going, it's that I have a mission to place and distribute those 1000 green flyers at these places and to promote our group to as many people as I can to build up our membership. The grand opening of Computer City was a major opportunity for our group. Also Sunrise Computer Supplies and Hardware distributed flyers at ExpoTech for us. Thanks Gene for your help and contributions to the group. Additionally, I want to thank my wife Marylee, your editor, for her support and understanding of my mission and the ever ongoing process of keeping up with PC technology which keeps me up late at night and at work more hours than I should be.

While on the topic of politics, elections for our group are around the corner (December to be exact). **It is now time for you to start thinking about nominations for the 1993 officers. Elected positions include President, Vice President, Treasurer, Member at Large and Secretary.** The rest of the board consist of volunteers. ***We never have enough volunteers.*** Additionally, we need Special Interest Group leaders (SIG). This does not mean you have to know everything about a product, but that you are willing to be responsible to run the meeting in an orderly fashion. You can let others share their knowledge and talk. I would like to see a Windows and DOS SIG. Marylee pointed out to me that one of the bay area user groups was forming a Woflenstein SIG. I may have to join that group to figure out where all the big guns are to shoot that big guy on the last floor. I have been there twice and I can't bump him off.



Coming Soon to BBS
14.4k baud

Four of our board members (Kevan, Bill, Marylee and I) attended the Florida Suncoast Regional PC User Group Conference in Brandenton on October 3rd. In attendance were 65-75 board members or representatives mainly from groups around central Florida representing 5000+ members. Representatives came from as far as Jackonsville and the space coast. This group is focused on the sharing of information among user group officers and board members to run an effective user group. It is always informative to hear how other user groups are run. You also realize that most groups do not have enough volunteers and rely on a handful of core volunteers to keep the group interesting and active. At the conference, groups are formed to discuss operations and techniques for newsletter, BBS, arketing, SIG participation,Membership building, Vendor presentations and many other topics.

Harvey Bruneau

Welcoming the Era of the PC as a "Commodity"

APCUG Industry Commentary Subscription Series Article #18

By: Rick Inatome

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As another round of personal computer price wars rocks the industry, it seems as though computer buyers are no longer shopping for brand names or a particular manufacturer. Analysts have observed that computer buyers aren't looking for an IBM or a Compaq they're looking for a 486 PC-compatible with four megabytes of RAM (random access memory) and an 80 meg hard drive or maybe for a 386 AT with SVGA. And, regardless of brand name, they're shopping for the lowest price system that meets their specifications.

How Fast Food Gained More Brand Equity Than the PC

This is the beginning of a new chapter in the development of the PC industry, as it matures and adapts a new outlook. Some analysts proclaim that the PC has become a "mere commodity," a "negative development" for the industry. They believe that, as a commodity, the PC's only value is its price. Therefore, major growth will come only for those that offer cut-rate and discount prices.

In some cases, the analysts look like they're right. Let's face it, McDonald's has more brand equity in its french fries than IBM has in its PCs. How does someone who repackages a potato gain more brand equity than a major PC manufacturer? By building a strong customer focus and defining its products in terms of customer needs. McDonald's knew it was dealing in commodities when it started. So it focused on things that would make the customer turn to McDonald's over others: fast, dependable service and a consistent, high-quality product delivered at every location, every time. How many reseller chains can make the same claim?

"The computer industry has been so wrapped up in its own technological advances it has forgotten the importance of its real focus: productivity."

Growth Potential for the PC as a Commodity

The first step in regaining brand equity for the PC, is to welcome the era of the PC as a commodity. While some may see this as a negative turning point for the PC, it really is a positive stimulus because it forces the PC industry to turn away from its inward focus to take a look at the real world and its customers. By admitting that the PC can no longer be marketed as new, unique or novel, we will learn what other industries have known for many years. It's a commodity. And as manufacturers and resellers of commodities, we can no longer dictate what technologies our customers may or may not want. It's time the industry listened to customers.

Once our industry focuses more truly on the customer -- just as premier brand names like Crest and McDonald's have focused on their customers -- we will be better equipped to differentiate value-added formulas for this new commodity era. Also, when I talk about adding value to the PC commodity, I'm not talking about the "value-added" catch phrase the industry has been using for years. We've had "value-added" resellers and "value-added" this and that for years. But we've never really added the value that creates an unique and consistent image to the customers we serve.

We've spent a great deal of time introducing PCs and software as "tools" for incremental productivity improvements -- but we've never delivered the full-scale productivity improvements that we promised. Today, the United States has more than 70 million computers in use, yet we have only managed to upgrade productivity in tiny steps of 10 or maybe 20 percent at a time. Since 1970, computer use and power has increased a thousandfold, but we certainly haven't seen similar returns in productivity. Why? Perhaps the industry has not taken the time to evaluate the real needs of its customers.

The computer industry has been so wrapped up in its own technological advances it has forgotten the importance of its real focus: productivity. It has conspired to tell customers what they want instead of taking the time to find out what they need. The industry has spent a lot of time developing all kinds of "value-added" features that it has told customers they need, slight augmentations in spreadsheet and word processing programs, larger hard drives and increased RAM capabilities. With these "tools" the industry has managed to help its customers gradually make incremental gains in productivity. The problem is the gains have been just incremental -- not incredible.

What the industry hasn't done, however, is focus its products and systems on what the customer really needs: to redefine work flow and business processes for major gains in competitiveness. Instead of automating the same old tasks and processes, the industry needs to re-think the processes in place and enable new ones with technology. By re-engineering work flow patterns and processes, the computer industry can develop added efficiencies and productivity increases for its customers that could never be imagined using simple task automation. Instead of seeing the 10 to 20 percent gains that task automation offers, industry customers could see gains of 50 percent, 100 percent or more through re-engineering their work flow patterns. They'll gain more than a productivity increase -- they'll gain competitiveness.

This is where the computer industry can build its brand equity. Like McDonald's, we need to look closely at our customers and find

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out how to repackage our products to meet their needs better than anyone else. Like the raw potatoes that McDonald's uses for french fries, our PCs must be repackaged and redefined in terms of customer benefit consistently delivered every time. In the computer industry, that mean rethinking our work processes in terms of competitiveness. And it means positioning the PC as more than "task automator," but instead as the means by which a company can rethink its operations for competitiveness in an increasingly competitive world market.

What this Means to the Computer Reseller

The dedicated traditional computer reseller will play a major role in the process. As a direct link to the PC customer, the dedicated reseller is particularly equipped to focus on business operations and provide the customer with an incredible return on investment: worldwide competitiveness. This challenge is one that extends to the computer manufacturer, the reseller and the customer.

By working together, specialty resellers and their customers can analyze needs and define new processes. By focusing on the customer's entire business operation -- instead of just a few tasks to be automated ---the reseller/customer partnership can deliver what the computer industry has long promised but failed to deliver: total solutions for productivity, efficiency and competitiveness. This kind of customerpartnership will enable reseller to do more than come up with a few quick fixes; it will enable them to develop solutions that take into account the entire work flow process and how it can be modified for even greater efficiency.

That's how resellers can build more equity for the computer industry. It's the kind of value that can't be obtained without dedicated support and partnership with the customer. It's the difference that will distinguish the computer industry and re-establish our lost brand equity; it's the difference that will add value to the PC commodity; and its the difference that will keep the computer industry healthy and strong for years to come.

Rick Inatome is chairman of InaCom Corporation, which markets personal computers and related support to customers in 50 states through ValCom and Inacomp Computer Centers. In 1991, Mr. Inatome masterminded the merger between his company, Inacomp Computer Centers, and ValCom, Inc. to create InaCom, now one of the largest computer resellers in the industry. The InaCom channel also includes system integrators, value-added resellers and other specialized providers of computer systems and support. He had previously grown Computer Mart, Inc., which he founded in 1976, from a small storefront operation to a multi-million dollar corporation. Mr. Inatome has been named one of the "Most Influential Executives" in the microcomputer industry by Computer Reseller News every year since 1983.

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Product Review :

ASCII PRINT PRO v1.05

By: Larry Anders

ACSII PRINT PRO is a companion program to your HP Laserjet compatible laser printer that allows you to use the technical features of your printer with all standard ASCII text files.

The program supports 4 different sized paper trays while letting you select 432 different CUSTOM paper or BOOKLET sizes. The program contains 30 DUTCH and SWISS fonts. With **APP** you can print 1UP, 2UP, 4UP, 6UP, and BOOKLETS in portrait or landscape mode. Larger page sizes can utilize your printer's built-in fonts. APP allows up to 20 different predefined program setups.

With **APP** you can print BOOKLETS from 4.25" x 5.25" to 8.5" x 11", Portrait and landscape, print or re-print any single sheet from an ASCII text file, print or re-print any single sheet from a BOOKLET, print a BOOKLET cover only or print a BOOKLET without a cover...allowing you to design your own cover.

With **APP** you can have programmable HEADER lines which can appear on your first page or every page and print back sides of pages with normal or reverse collation.

This program is EXCELLENT for printing all those document files that come with SHAREWARE programs and allows you to save large amounts of paper while doing so. A file that would normally take 50 pages to print can be printed using only 5 sheets of paper. The OUTSTANDING feature of this program is being able to print BOOKLETS using both sides of the paper and will page numbering each for you.

Installation is simple; just copy all the files into their own sub-directory or run the program from a floppy. There is a complete GUI (Graphic User Interface) menu system that is very easy to understand. The SHAREWARE version is completely operational with only a small delay upon quiting, asking you to register the program.

APP requires a 100% IBM compatible computer, (8088, 80286 80386+?), DOS 3.3 or higher, 160k of free memory, EGA or VGA graphics adapter, and beginner's or better knowledge of your laser printer. The printer must be HP compatible (NOT POSTSCRIPT) but HP PCL LEVEL IV compatible. Keyboard is optional but a MOUSE is preferred.

There is minimal documentation included with both the SHAREWARE version and REGISTERED version, but the friendly graphic menu shell is more than adequate to have the novice computer user up and running in only minutes.

ASCII PRINT PRO(APP105.ZIP)
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BBS: (801)265-2496 (2400)
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117-4969
Orders: (801) 265-2497 (8-3 MST)

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Product Review:

On the Road with Windows The AST Premium EXEC 386SX

Review by Rod McKenzie, Contributing Editor, Madison PC User's Group

Looking at a notebook computer? Do you think that there are times that your desk ought to have wheels on it? Or even wings? Dreaming about unfettered computing can be a lot of fun. Shopping for it can be a frustrating experience. The AST Premium Exec 386/25 Color deserves a close look. Well made and loaded with features, it means having Windows with you on the road with few, if any, concessions.

Prices for notebooks have always been priced at a premium when compared to desk-bound machines with essentially the same features. Since the prices of PCs generally have dropped significantly, this might be a good time to look again at the equipment you thought was too expensive just six months or a year ago. With the most recent price cuts, it now might be a lot more affordable. Fortunately, the computing power that a given dollar will buy today is more than ever before. Windows programs place more of a demand on the hardware, so the new entry level is probably higher than where users started when they bought that first desktop machine.

When I started using Windows I stopped using my old laptop. It just didn't have the horsepower that Windows needed. All that has changed since I had the chance to try out a notebook-sized PC, the AST Premium Exec 386SX/25 Color. The Exec is a well-crafted piece of equipment that meets the challenges that Windows and portable computing puts on the hardware. It's not an entry-level notebook, and equipped with an internal fax/modem, a price was paid for convenience. I think it's worth it for several reasons. The most obvious is the fact that my computer investment can now keep up with me. When I move around, it can follow me, and when I want to get to work on a project, the machine I have along is every bit as capable as the machine I left at home on the desk.

Looking back, it's clear why the old iron wasn't equal to the task of running Windows. It was based on an 8086 chip, 640K of RAM, and dual floppies. There was no way to expand RAM and the cost of a hard drive conversion was over $1000. It ran at a respectable 9 MHz, but even loading large DOS programs crawled. This old horse was not going to run Windows, not even on a dare! Having run Windows on a notebook, I'm not looking back. The Exec has a 386SX chip, 4 MB of RAM, and an 80 MB hard disk that's further enhanced with a copy of Stacker which effectively makes it a 150 MB drive.

Windows 3.1 loaded very easily onto the notebook and the hard drive wasn't even breathing hard when I started to load the applications. Since I'd be plugging into a printer only once in a while, I loaded only one printer driver. I moved into the Control Panel, clicked on the 386 Enhanced icon, and made a permanent swap file. Windows thought that 11.7 MB was a good number, and who was I to argue? This was actually going smoother than when I loaded Windows 3.1 over 3.0 on my desktop machine.

For the applications, I decided to start with the Lotus SmartSuite for Windows. First I loaded Ami Pro, my favorite Windows word processor. Installation went by the book. It included Adobe Type Manager, so I knew that I would be able to add some favorite PostScript fonts that weren't included with any of the basic programs. Still no problems. The next program to load was 1-2-3 for Windows. It loaded without a hitch; I upgraded with the version 1.1 diskette that was included, and then added the SmartPack disk I picked up at Lotus World. I was interested in the SmartFill feature that figures out sequences for numbers, months, days of the week, and that sort of stuff.

The next application to be loaded was Freelance Graphics for Windows. This is a presentation graphics package that really brings out the best in a color notebook. Freelance gives the user a head start on generating a good-looking presentation, by providing SmartMasters. These are predesigned style sheets that match good contrasting colors, suitable typefaces, and pleasing layout on the screen. Getting a screen show ready for presentation is almost painless. Previewing is fun, watching the special effects like fades, wipes, louvers, and merging lines of text and data on the screen. This really shows off the bright readable LCD panel of the Premium Exec. Several people can stand around the machine and comfortably look at a clear screen image.

Although I wouldn't be tied into a printer most of the time I am on the road, I know I'll still want to generate some output, so I added WinFAX Pro, from Delrina. It's been the most reliable fax software I've used. Sit down with the notebook plugged into a phone line and you're ready to deliver fax messages, complete with TrueType or ATM fonts, imported graphics, headers, footers, and an optional cover page. Users can easily create a custom graphic cover page using their Windows word processor or a paint program, and then send the file to WinFAX for printing. Instead of sending it to a phone number, the output is saved to file. Now the saved file can be used as the cover page graphics file. There's even auto-dialing to groups, as well as to individuals. Delrina has recently added DOSFax to their line. Users who need to fax from a non-Windows application can have the same convenient performance. If your DOS application can print to an Epson printer or to an HP LJ-II, DOSFax will grab the output and send it out as a fax.

Data communications was the next thing to consider, and the choice was obvious. Datastorm Technologies started delivering ProComm Plus for Windows late this spring, and I needed a place to try it out. It's the successor to WinComm, a favorite of mine since the days of Windows 3.0. The timing was perfect and the hard disk wasn't even close to full. Now I hit some rough sledding. ProComm couldn't find the modem. Finally, I had to do the one thing that I had avoided. I had to read the manual! It turns out that in order to conserve power, the default status is for the

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modem to be disabled. It gets awakened by a .COM program called ASTMODEM. The user enters ASTMODEM ON, or puts that line into a batch file, and then loads the communications program. The other choice is to turn it on in the configuration setup program. I turned it on and left it on. I just have to be aware that it's going to put a little more demand on the battery.

Once the modem was turned on, ProComm Plus installed with no problems and I was dialing into the BBS and getting a busy signal. Situation normal... Actually, I was pleased to see that the modem sensed the busy signal and started the redial delay. My only complaint with ProComm Plus is that they have chosen a fairly small font for their screen and put it into a window that is a good deal smaller than the display. On a notebook PC, type easily gets too small to read comfortably. It's just plain too hard on the eyes. Skip the big frame and make the font bigger.

The Exec doesn't come with a pointing device, so I looked around for something I thought would be convenient. I tend to cut the time too close sometimes, so when I'm packing up to go it looks a little like a bookie's joint being raided. I chose a Microsoft Ballpoint, which clamps to the side of the keyboard and is not a problem to pack when it was time to hit the road. The software includes a program to set the sensitivity, the speed, and the button functions. I ran for a few minutes and realized that the cursor could very easily hide from me. Windows has a cure for that. I turned on the "mouse tracks" feature, so it's easier to follow and to find. I can't close the cover all the way with the Ballpoint clamped on the keyboard, but I can pick up the unit in one piece. A mouse would be a lot more awkward to set up shop and move around, so I prefer the Ballpoint.

The hard disk wasn't full yet, but just to keep the swap file from feeling cramped, I added Stacker 2.0. This is the software only version of the product. Considering the fact that Stacker moves just about all the data on a hard disk into one huge compressed file, I was prepared for an extended session waiting for the STAC_VOL to be created and for all the files to be transferred. It really wasn't that bad. The installation program takes the user through the process smoothly. In this case there were some fragmented files, so it bailed out the first time and told me to run the DOS program CHKDSK and clear up the fragments before Stacker wrote over them. The installation program also saw that there was a permanent Windows swap file and left enough uncompressed disk space so that I could recreate it after Stacker was installed. The next time Windows loaded, it announced, with a warning box, that the swap file was not found and I should recreate it.

While Stacker was doing its installation, I read up on how it works. It uses a compression algorithm to pack the data closer together on the disk, and it creates and then refers to tokens, sort of like code patterns, to save space. This is a loss-less compression method, so file integrity is supposed to be very secure. There's a hardware board for desktop machines that can run even faster than the software-only version. Anyone running Windows and a few applications begins to feel the empty disk space practically evaporate as the software loads. Stacker makes the drive hold a lot more. Loading Windows and its applications from the "Stacked" drive is actually a little faster than the original un-Stacked drive. Not a lot, but it was never very slow in the first place.

Using the keyboard was a little frustrating at first. The keyboard layout is compact. That's a good news, bad news story. For general typing of text, I actually made fewer errors with the Exec than I do with my desktop machine's 101 key standard keyboard. The feel of the keys is definite and they release quickly. The right side shift key is too small for my liking. I will often overshoot it and hit the cursor-up arrow key. When this happens I have to really hunt around for the cursor, and it can be a disaster when you are typing in "typeover" mode. Besides using the cursor keys, I often navigate with the Home, End, Insert, and Delete keys. They're together on a 101 key keyboard, but on the Exec, the Home and End keys are on the top row, and the Insert and Delete are on the bottom row. The spacing of the keys is good for my medium-sized hands. I didn't find that my fingers were in the way of each other while typing.

Battery power will run the Exec for about three hours. That's pretty good for a notebook. Remember that they're trying to keep it small and light. Batteries are usually taken for granted and, unfortunately, some designers treat them like ballast. Many times the three hours is not long enough for my working habits. Given the interruptions that occur, I need to stop and shut off the machine or plug into the AC, right from the start. The hard drive will power down and save power, but the screen still draws its share. The screen saver is handy, but I haven't really noticed a lot more battery time as a result of using it.

What did I want in a notebook that I didn't get with the Exec? First there's the keyboard layout I mentioned earlier. Then there's the small carrying case. I'd like it to have more room for the power supply and space for the Ballpoint or a mouse -- a notch molded into the side of the case that would attach the Ballpoint directly, so the clamping bracket could be left at home. I consider that the Ballpoint is a regular accessory. Why not make the physical attachment point also provide the electrical connection to the serial port? It would eliminate the dangling cord and extra hassle of plugging in the cord every time the machine is unpacked. For a scanner, I'd like to have at least one slot for a half-height card. WAIT! Yes, I know that it wouldn't be a notebook size for long if I add too many more options.

It would be nice to be able to recharge the battery while the notebook and the power supply are still in the carrying case. A little extra space in the case, and another zipper at the back would give the user access to the AC cord.

In the case of the Premium Exec, the fax/modem is a Megahertz unit with 2400 bps data rate, and Class II, 9600 bps Group III fax send and receive capability. WinFAX Pro, as well as DOSFax, will work on the AST Exec equipped with the Megahertz unit or on an external fax/modem connected to the COMPORT, provided it's using the Sierra SendFax chipset or other Class I/II hardware.

What does the Premium Exec 386/25 Color cost? As tested with 4 MB of RAM, 80 MB hard drive, and color screen, it lists

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for $3595. The optional Class II Send/Receive modem adds another $499, putting the total price at $4200. The Ballpoint and the applications software would push it to just about $5000. Give up some of the features or options and the price comes down. Another ploy is to wait for a little of the dust to settle in the most recent PC price wars.

Any user who must take a PC on the road and wants to have almost all of the comforts of home should give the Premium Exec PC a very close look. AST paid a lot of attention to details and has designed a very durable, portable machine. It's easy to set up and quickly becomes comfortable to use. I found that I often used it at home, getting it out of its carrying case, in preference to my desktop machine.

The AST Premium Exec 386SX/25 Color is a product of:
AST Research
P.O. Box 19658
Irvine, CA 92713-9658
(800) 876-4AST (714) 727-8585 (fax)

▪▪▪

Book review:

101 Windows Tips & Tricks

By: Rod McKenzie, Contributing Editor, Madison PC User's Group

101 Windows Tips & Tricks takes a little less structured approach. There are chapter headings like Blast Off, Prints Charming, and Fun and Functional. The authors have put most of their energies into showing the user how to cut through the unnecessary extras. They show how to run a streamlined Windows that will have no opening MS flag-waving logo (start Windows with win :, that is win (space) (colon). They remind users that dispensing with wallpaper will free up system resources. OK, so if you have limited RAM, and who doesn't, skip the wallpaper.

In the section on printing, the authors devote a fair portion of the space to PostScript printers, which are still, unfortunately, a tiny minority of the printers attached to PCs running Windows. There's even a tip for those fortunate few who have a Linotronics at their disposal. Not a single word for the huddled masses that use a dot-matrix printers with their systems. There are good suggestions for improving the speed of printing by downloading the fonts that you plan to use before sending any print jobs to a laser printer. Not a word though about TrueType fonts or downloading Intellifonts to the HP-LaserJet III.

The book highlights many topics in the Custom Made Windows chapter. Unfortunately they hit some of them so lightly that it does the user little good. Some are product recommendations, without any critical review. Is this a tip or just a cheap trick? In the chapter on Optimizing Your System, for example, the user will find the table of shortcut key combinations is buried on page 121. It belongs much earlier in the book. They got off to a good start with the Blast Off, which gives the user a pretty good grounding in the File Manager. The information about faxing documents from Windows is only a half page of text that tries to cover scanning and OCR, and finally tells the user that the best buy in fax-modems is Intel's $399 SatisFAXtion board. Well, that's excellent hardware, but not everybody's best buy. There are too many factors to dispose of the topic so quickly.

Another example where 101 Tips takes a rather breezy approach is the one about setting up a permanent swap file. The authors tell the user where to find the 386 Enhanced icon in the Control Panel, but they merely say to use the recommended settings or to "enter your own specifications." Users need to know more about the factors concerning swap file size. The authors only offer the comment that swap files will take away disk space from applications. True enough, but they fail to mention that the size of the swap file affects how well Windows will execute programs, and especially how well it will multitask. The authors could enlighten users to the trade-off that they need to make if they would acknowledge that the hard disk is a shared resource.

Having made numerous recommendations for third-party products, commercial and shareware, the authors fail to give any addresses or phone numbers interested readers can contact about these good ideas. Too bad, because most users buy these books precisely because they don't have a Rolodex full of contact names and numbers.

101 Windows Tips and Tricks is priced at 12.95, and is published by:

Peachpit Press
2414 Sixth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
(800) 283-9444
(510) 548-4393
(510) 548-5991 (fax)

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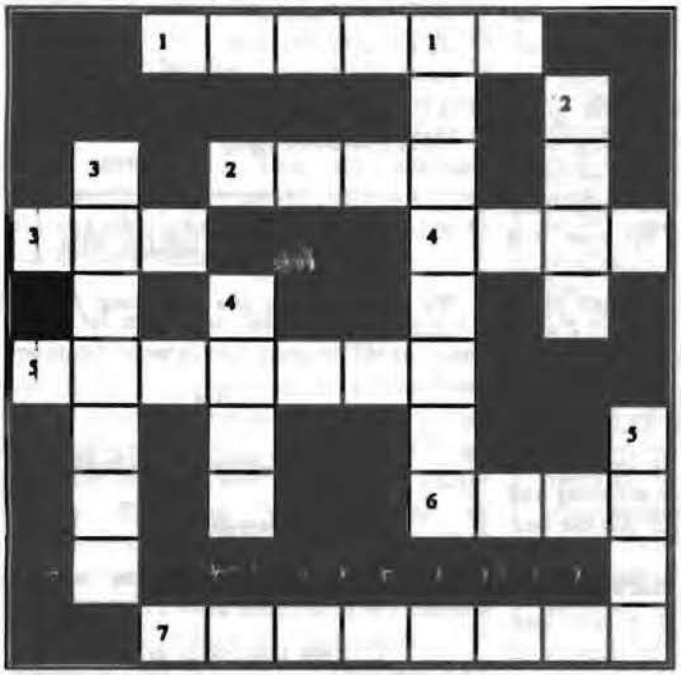
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Do you do Windows?..



Across:

1. A graphics file format in which images are represented as a series of dots called pixels.
2. Press and hold down the left mouse button while moving the mouse.
3. Located on the main input device of a PC.
4. A list of commands that can be applied to the active window or application.
5. Arrangement of windows that overlap each other on the desktop.
6. Arrangement of all open windows that do not overlap on the desktop.
7. Features of a software application.

Down:

1. A variable, constant, or expression required by a command or function.
2. To start an application, or to create a new document window.
3. A setting, value or automatic response.
4. A minaturized graphic representation of an application or window.
5. To increase or decrease space between characters.

(Look for the answers in next months Bits of Blue)

Book review :

Winning

By: Bob Norton,
Madison PC User's Group, P.O. Box 2598, Madison, WI 53701.

John Hedtke subtitles his book "The Awesome & Amazing Book of Windows Games Tips, Traps, and Sneaky Tricks." I would probably call this book gnarly rather than awesome, but the author's point is well taken, as his book is all about Microsoft's games for Windows. As all Windows users know, Microsoft included a couple of gamelets along with Windows. What may be news to you is that it has also sold several collections of games that they call Entertainment Packs. All totaled, twenty six different games are explained in detail in this book.

The book leads off with an explanation of the basics. How to move a mouse, what is a pointer, how to install the games. This section is very elementary, and unless you are totally new to Windows, you can safely skip this section. Luckily, the remaining sections have a lot more of interest.

Naturally, the first section, Part 1, deals with the games delivered with Windows 3. Solitaire has been described as the most thoroughly tested Windows program in existence. Reversi is a popular board game, played on an eight by eight grid. Reversi and Solitaire are both explained in detail, strategy is discussed, and even sneaky tricks are revealed. (Did you know there is a way to deal a single card from the deck when dealing by threes? Uh huh, I thought not!)

Part 2 tackles the Volume One Entertainment Pack, which has eight separate games included in it. Tetris is very well known from the many DOS versions, and it is only a little different here under Windows. Taipei, very similar to the program Shanghai, is another very addictive mouse-skill builder. One game, IdleWild, is even a screen saver, but I'm not sure how to get a high score with this one, even after reading the chapter from beginning to end. If the original solitaire game wasn't to your liking, two additional solitaire games, Golf and Cruel, are in this pack.

Minesweeper challenges you to walk your way around in a minefield with a non-directional metal detector. Minesweeper is perhaps my favorite of this pack of games, as it is a blend of logic and speed, with just a dash of luck. The pack also includes a peg-jumping puzzle, and a version of three dimensional Tic-Tac-Toe. Each game is covered completely, and the sneaky tricks are very sneaky, I assure you. Obviously, some of the programmers of

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these games buried a few goodies to stun their friends with, and now you can be in on the secrets, too.

Parts 3 and 4 explore Volume Two and Volume Three Entertainment Packs, respectively. I do not have these Entertainment Packs, so I was not able to test the information out for hours and hours like I did with Part 2. All the games are covered in the same way, with a lot of attention to detail on how to play, strategy, tips, and sneaky stuff. Part 3 covers FreeCell, Jigsawed, PipeDream, Rattler Race, Rodent's Revenge, Stones, Tut's Tomb, and a second version of IdleWild. Part 4 covers Fuji Golf, a third version of IdleWild, Klotski, Life Genesis, Ski Free, TetraVex, TriPeaks, and WordZap. Now don't let me hear anybody complain that there's nothing to do, OK?

This book really covers the subject, from how to work the mouse to arcane cheat features. If you are a Windows game maven, you ought to give this book a look.

Winning, by John Hedtke, is from:
Peachpit Press
2414 Sixth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
(800) 283-9444
(510) 548-4393
(510) 548-5991 (fax)

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Book review: The Essential Guide to MS-DOS 5 Programming

By: Mike Janda, Madison PC User's Group

At a recent Programming Languages SIG meeting I was showing some arcane system functions available toprogrammers. The demo included what to load into the registers, what interrupts to issue, and what to expectupon return. The examples were written in assembler and, of course, someone asked how to access thosefunctions using C. I gave a very brief reply that "there are int86 and intdos functions available; see your manual." A better answer would have been to "get a copy of Peter G. Aitken's new book, The Essential Guide to MS-DOS 5 Programming."

Published by Microsoft Press (yes, THE DOS people), its 400 pages provide everything you need to know to make system calls directly from your C and Basic programs. There are numerous examples in both languages and a companion disk can be purchased ($19.95+tax, shipping, etc.) so you don't have to key them in yourself. And you get a copyright release so you can use the example code in your own programs.

The book is listed as an intermediate-level tutorial, and I won't disagree with that assessment. The first two chapters cover the basics of DOS, BIOS, CPU registers, memory addressing, etc. It should only be considered as a review and you'll probably need a more detailed reference if you're just getting started in low-level programming.

The next two chapters examine the functions used to issue interrupts in Basic and C, respectively. Never figured out how to use INTERRUPTX or int86x? You'll find a detailed explanation here, along with the data structures required and a step-by-step look at the operation of the functions. Sure beats what they put in the manuals.

This is followed by individual chapters that examine many of the function calls available. Each chapter is devoted to a particular function type.

There is a chapter on the BIOS and DOS keyboard functions, and more importantly, getting keyboard status information. This allows you to get input directly from the user. Most compilers offer pretty good input support, but this could come in handy for making sure you're not getting "redirected input."

The chapter on mouse programming takes up a large chunk of the book. Since most languages offer very little support for mouse functions, you can use this to add mouse support to your programs. The examples examine both graphics and text mode mouse programming.

The chapter on screen displays covers the basic BIOS and DOS services, including ANSI support. There is also n example program that determines what type of display adapter is installed.

Three chapters on disk services examine the basics, files and records, and disk management and directories. Both the FCB (File Control Blocks) and "Handle" functions are examined in detail.

The chapter on serial and parallel port access covers the I/O functions available, which are rather limited. A chapter on memory management includes the DOS allocate, release and resize low memory functions and a section on using expanded memory. There is less than one page about extended memory use. The final chapter looks at the miscellaneous services -- date, time, error handling and equipment installed.

Each chapter closes with a detailed listing of all the services covered, including what to put in each CPU register, what is returned, and important notes and limitations (if any).

The only thing missing? The detailed listing for the "get DOS version" function. This is the function used to show how INTERRUPTX and intdos work.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in learning more about low-level system programming.

The Essential Guide to MS-DOS 5 Programming, by Peter G. Aitken, ISBN 1-55615-471-2, $24.95.

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(800) MS-PRESS

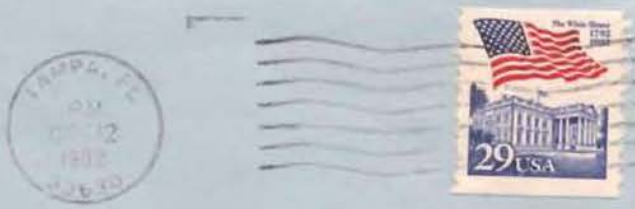
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"You can give a man a fish and he'll be filled for a day. You can teach a man to fish and he'll be filled for life."



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BITS of BLUE

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MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: November 11, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

NOVEMBER AGENDA:
11/11/92

6:00 PM - opening remarks

6:30 PM - Microsoft
Multimedia
Cinemania
Word/Bookshelf for Windows
Beethoven

7:30 PM - Break

7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Nominations

Door Prize Raffle
SUPERBASE 4
Miscellaneous Items

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WordPerfect Class #3

The **WordPerfect** class #3 by Ed Buzza is to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. please be prompt. The last two classes of his four-part series will cover the following:

11/11/92 Table feature.
12/9/92 Graphics.

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 932-6745, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Without getting into politics too much, you may have noticed that the country has a new president elect. I don't know about you but I am glad that the air waves have returned to normal. All those commercials, debates and mud slinging attacks on each other started really getting old after a while. Hey by the way, nominations are being accepted for the 1993 officers and I guarantee the campaign will be fast and clean. I forgot to open the floor for nominations at last months meeting. You can make nominations for the following positions, President, Vice-President, Treasurer Member at Large and Treasurer through the mail, BBS or at the next two meetings. These nominations, as well as the elections are important to the future of our group. Elections will be held during the December meeting and should last a whole 15-20 minutes.

Once again our members did a complete night of talking, presenting and two way communicating. Don Patchz's presentation on modems covered the technical and rudimentary ins and outs of modems. Thanks Don. The second part of the presentation, done by Kevan and myself, covered the use of our Bulletin Board System (BBS), **online and live.** I actually had fun talking and explaining the BBS while Kevan navigated around the BBS through the keyboard, and also explained the BBS. I also learned, as I believe you did, how to use features of the BBS of which I was not aware. The open forum between you, the audience, and Kevan and myself was great.

Of course our own Director of Education, Ed Buzza, conducted the second class, of a four part series, on WordPerfect for DOS. The November class will cover one of my favorite WordPerfect features, Tables. The crossword puzzle in last months newsletter was built with this feature.

One of our members has volunteered to head a Windows Special Interest Group (SIG). The time, location and hardware/software resources have yet to be determined. If you would like to join this group please leave me a message at (813) 932-6745 or on the BBS. SIG groups are for members only and are free. If you would like to run your own SIG please let me know.

Please notice that board members, Tom Cone and Larry Anders, are setting examples by writing articles for the newsletter. We need additional articles contributed by the other 200+ members. They can be about new products you have acquired, tips & techniques or whatever information you feel is informative to the group.

Due to a timing conflict, Software Publishing will not be presenting at our November meeting. I am in the process of rescheduling the presentation of SuperBase 4 (Windows database). However, we will be **giving away a complete copy of SuperBase 4** at the meeting to one of you lucky members.

Fortunately, Microsoft has accepted my invitation on short notice to present some of their current and brand new Multimedia products. These product will include Cinemania, Word/Bookshelf for Windows, Beethoven and discussion of multimedia extension and

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support under Windows. A new Windows extension, Video for Windows, that lets Windows users play video on a PC without additional hardware may also be presented.

We are still waiting on that new 14.4k modem from US Robotics that we purchased a while back. Indications are that it will be installed this year.

Friday the 13th is closing in on us. More than half a dozen viruses are suppose to expose themselves (eek) on Friday. You can protect yourself by downloading McAfee's antivirus from our BBS and running it on your system or buying a commercial product and installing it. Also remember that anti-virus software does not look inside compressed files such as ZIP files. It is possible to scan the EXE and COM files on your hard disk without finding a single virus. However a virus may be attached inside a compressed file and when uncompressed it becomes active. **Make Backups of your most important data.**



Harvey Bruneau

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MS PowerPoint 3.0

By: Mark Bradish
(Reprinted from Bits 'N Bytes, the newsletter of the Pentagon PC User Group, Nov 92)

For those of you who have ever had to create briefing charts and slides, the PC has made life a lot easier. Without telling my age, I can remember back in the "good old days" of having to create briefings and charts using a Leroy Lettering Device and plenty of chart pak tape. Not only were the results frequently unsuitable, there were always the times when the information being presented had to be changed at the last minute, necessitating a complete redo of the job. I ended up spending more time worrying whether the presentation was "pretty" rather than what the contents of the presentation were.

The arrival of the PC has changed all of this. With desktop publishing, powerful word processing software and more importantly, the recently introduced specialized presentation programs, practically anyone can produce a professional looking briefing in a very short time. Of course, while a presentation program can make your charts pleasing to the eye, the content still has to have substance. Presentation software allows you to focus on the content of your presentation rather than the ascetics.

PowerPoint Ver 3.0 is Microsoft's latest version in this specialized presentation program field. Powerpoint has to be used in conjunction with Windows 3.1 which means that the WYSIWYG and the Windows interface is one of its strong points. You also get the benefits of "OLE and DDE" that allows object linking with other Windows based programs. In addition you get an 22 TrueType adjustable fonts. With the advent of TrueType fonts I imagine the folks at Adobe and Bitstream are looking over their shoulder wondering what Microsoft is going to do next. I predict that in the not to distant future, as additional True Type fonts are added, the need for font cartridges, type managers will be reduced.

Installation was, as with all windows products, simple and fairly straightforward. Simply put the disk in and run the setup program through the Windows Program Manager. After a few minutes, another of Bob Jaynes "gorilla" programs was installed. Using the full installation process, Powerpoint will add a little more than 10 MB's to your already overburdened hard drive. However, using the custom installation option, this can be cut down to 6 or 7 MB's depending on the options you need.

PowerPoint comes with clip art and predetermined templates for just about any type of presentation. The clip art library, while not as extensive as I would have liked, still had quite a few useful graphics. When installing, I copied the clip art from my previous version of PowerPoint, so I doubled the amount of clip art I have available. Graphics can also be imported from other applications using the Windows Clipboard or directly using ADI, BMP, CGM, DXE, DRW, EPS, HPGL, Lotus PIC, Mac Pict, PCX, TIFF 5.0, WMF, or WPG, which covers just about every graphics format available

According to Microsoft, one of the benefits of PowerPoint is that it is easy to use and the average person can create an acceptable presentation in a short period of time. PowerPoint has several "views" from which you can work. One view is the slide view in which you work directly on the slide itself. In this mode you can actually see how your presentation will look. Another way to work on a chart is through the "outline view" that allows you to see your entire presentation in outline form. This view (which is faster) allows you to concentrate on your content rather than graphics and is a major additional feature not found in previous versions. You can switch between views, that is, you can work chart 1 in the slide view and then switch to outline view for the next chart. PowerPoint utilizes the ever present Microsoft "Toolbar" to make it easy to change fonts, cut & paste etc. Also there's a built in graphing fool which can be used to produce simple charts without going into a spreadsheet program. Additionally, if you have charts produced by Excel or Lotus 1,2,3, these can be imported directly into the presentation and linked dynamically so if any changes which are made to the original chart are undated in the PowerPoint chart.

After a basic presentation has been made, then comes the fun part. If you want to dress up your presentation, Microsoft has included over 150 templates you can add to your presentation. By selecting and adding a template, your presentation can instantly take on a professional appearance complete with colors, graphics, etc. If you don't like a particular way a presentation looks, then simply change to another template. A slide sorter is also part of the program. It allows you to view miniatures of your slides and the order of the slides can be rearranged by clicking and dragging.

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Output is available through 35mm slides, laser printer, overheads and electronic slide show. One of the things I really like about the program was the ability to print speakers notes on a slide. Besides printing the slide, it will also print a "notes slide" which has a small version of the slide as well as explanatory notes on the slide. This can be used as briefer notes or as supplemental data not included on the basic slide.

A couple of new features allow you to build slides; that is, apply animated bullet effects, and dim previous points to focus your audience's attention. Also new in this version is the ability to apply transitional effects like fade outs between slides. Another innovation is a "viewer" which Microsoft has included which allows you to copy your presentation and show it on another computer even if the other computer doesn't have PowerPoint installed! Great! You can walk in your boss's office or who ever you want to show the presentation and show it on their computer. You need to make sure, however, the boss has Windows 3.1 installed on his machine or the viewer won't work. Now, tell me those folks in Redmon, Washington aren't thinking ahead.

One of the things I gauge software by is how good the documentation is. Microsoft has not been, by any means, my favorite software publisher because in the past, you needed to have the IQ of a rocket scientist to read and understand their documentation. That's why my book shelf at home is loaded with "Que" books, which explain in simple language what the user guide should have said. Well, Microsoft must have heard my plea, because their documentation is quite good. The user manual has a 13 part tutorial that, if you spend an hour or two completing, will give you the ability to create a professional looking presentation.

What is fun with the program is experimenting with different templates and color schemes to change the look of your presentation.

Now, that I have extolled the virtues of PowerPoint and Microsoft, there are several things you need to consider for the program. While the book says that the program needs a PC using a 286 or higher with 2MB of memory, I am here to tell you that I had a 386/33 with 4MB and there were times when it ran S-L-O-W. I have since added 4MB and things really speeded up.

I also recommend that you get the biggest, fastest HD you can afford. When you're running Windows, there is a tremendous amount of disk activity taking place. Of course, this is the penalty you have to pay when working with Windows programs.

In summary; PowerPoint is a powerhouse of a presentation program, which is easy to use and allows the average user the ability to produce outstanding presentations in a short time. The downside is that you have to have the proper system in order to run Windows based programs.

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Product Review:

LASER PRINTER ENVELOPE v1.05



By: Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa IBMPC Users Group

Last Month I reviewed ASCII PRINT PRO v1.05 from ETS Inc. Well, when I registered APP105, ETS Inc. was kind enough to send me a copy of LPE v1.05 to try out. It seems to me that they have another winner.

LASER PRINTER ENVELOPE is also a companion program to your laser printer that allows you to print envelopes on your laser printer.

LPE105 comes with two different fonts but ETS Inc. has there own Free Public Access BBS where you can download a public domain (no-charge) file that contains 28 Landscape fonts that can be used with their programs.

LPE will print return addresses of your choice (up to 6 lines) and will fetch destination addresses (also up to 6 lines) from a data base provided with the program

LPE also gives you a choice to automatically print both FIM mail codes (the large one at the top) and POSTNET mail codes (the small one at the bottom), making for a real official-looking letter.

Probably the most unique thing about LPE is that it comes ready to print all the standard size envelopes but it also lets you specify most any other size envelope through one of its menu options.

Installation is simple; just copy all the files into their own sub-directory or run the program from a floppy. There is a complete GUI (Graphic User Interface) menu system that is very easy to understand. The SHAREWARE version is completely operational with only a small delay upon quitting, asking you to register the program for only $9.95.

LPE requires a 100% IBM compatible computer, (8088-386+?), DOS 3.3 or higher, 160k of free memory, EGA or VGA graphics adaptor, and beginner's or better knowledge of your HP compatible printer (not POSTSCRIPT) but HP PCL LEVEL IV with 40k printer memory available (for downloading a 19k font). Keyboard is optional but a MOUSE is preferred.

There is minimal documentation included but the user friendly graphic menu is more than adequate to have the novice computer user up and running in only minutes.

LASER PRINTER ENVELOPE
FAX:(801)265-8921
(LPE105.ZIP)
BBS:(801)265-0919(14400)
E. T. S. Inc.
BBS:(801)265-2496(2400)
1115 E. Brigadoon Crt.
Orders:(801)265-2497(8-3 MST)
Salt Lake City, UT 84117-4969

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Editorial Comment: I did not receive a transcription of the October meeting minutes to insert in this newsletter. Our Secretary, Jim Clark was unable to attend that meeting. WE (B.O.B staff) **need a volunteer** to take the minutes at the 11/11/92 meeting, as Jim will again be unable to attend. We wish you well Jim, hurry back, we miss your excellent reporting.

Software Review:
FastLynx 2.0 vs LapLink Pro

By: Dana Trout, GDTPUG

I have been using Traveling Software's LapLink Pro consistently for six months now, and have always loved it. But one thing that has bothered me is its sheer size: it requires 437,760 bytes of free RAM to run and over 300 Kbytes of disk space. So when I was offered the opportunity to look at Rupp's FastLynx 2.0 I jumped at the chance to see what LapLink's competition is doing.

The first thing I noticed is that FastLynx includes both the parallel and serial cables, drivers for Windows 3.0 and 3.1 which allow the DOS version to be operated from Windows, and drivers for disk and printer sharing. To equal these features with Traveling Software's product line, you would have to combine LapLink Pro and portions of DeskLink and WinConnect (although in LapLink's case, you would have the extra functionality of LE, the LapLink Editor from LLPro, the Talk Box from DeskLink which allows you to send messages between computers, and several other functions).

The second thing I noticed is that FastLynx requires only 250 Kbytes of RAM, a little over half of LLPro's 437,760. This was looking decidedly promising.

Upon opening the package I found that the disks (both 360K 5.25 " and 720K 3.5") had been slipped into the manual, and the whole works spilled out onto the floor. Oops. (LLpro's box has a nicely formed pocket which holds the disks safely until you explicitly remove them.) And the FastLynx disks are not write-protected (I think master disks should always be write-protected by the manufacturer). Yeah, I know, the manual tells you to write-protect the disks. But some of my clients are either too lazy to do so, or too computer illiterate to realize that a 3.5" disk is write-protected by uncovering the hole, while the 5.25" is write-protected by covering the notch. The manual is mercifully brief (but cogent), has a table of contents but no index. You can see by the seriousness of these faults how hard I had to look to find something to complain about.

I installed FastLynx on an aging 286 with no problems at all. I hooked up the serial cable from the 286 to my Poqet and uploaded a copy to it by following the on-screen instructions. The same basic approach is used by both FastLynx and LLPro you type in the following two DOS commands on the receiving machine:

```
MODE COM1:2400,n,8,1,p
CTTY COM1
```

FastLynx displayed on both machines the file being transferred, how much had been transferred, and how much was left to do. The process was fast and painless. I did have a momentary panic, though, when the transfer was complete. Both machines said the transfer completed without error, but the sending machine complained that there was nothing connected to it and I should check the cable or the remote machine. The answer, of course, was that the files had been transferred, but I still needed to actually run the program on the remote machine. This is one place where I think LLPro is nicer, because it automatically starts up the program on the remote machine when the transfer is complete. One other hiccough occurred when I repeated the process for both FastLynx and LLPro: I accidently logged onto a full drive before starting the upload. The result in each case was an error message stating the upload was unsuccessful, but with no indication of why. I consider this to be a failure in both programs. One small advantage to FastLynx is that when it experiences a failure it gives an error number (undocumented, of course) and displays the phone number of their tech support hotline. I like this, because of course you are out somewhere without your manual. Rupp (FastLynx) has learned from FedEx and Iomega (Bernoulli Box) to plaster the phone number everywhere, so the user does not have to look for it. However, unlike FedEx and Iomega, the Rupp number is not toll-free.

The upload consists of three files: FX.EXE, which is the program itself, FX.HLP, the help file, and GUIDE.FX, which is the whole manual. FX.EXE is 111,218 bytes, FX.HLP is 20,086 bytes, and GUIDE.FX is 53,694 bytes. I immediately deleted GUIDE.FX on the Poqet, and have a file transfer program that takes up less than 132 Kbytes disk space, significantly less than LLPro's 222,370 for the program and 96,470 for the help file. FastLynx has three modes of operation: the familiar split-screen, where the files of the local machine are listed on the left and the files of the remote are listed on the right; Form Mode, which lets you build scripts or macros which can be used directly from FastLynx or incorporated into batch files; and Command Mode, which lets you execute DOS commands and batch files from FastLynx. One feature I especially like about FastLynx is the split-screen mode can be set to look at two drives or directories on the local machine, so you can use it in place of a shell like Xtree. The split-screen mode is quite powerful, with the capability to sort by name, date, size, or extension in ascending or descending order, as well as copy or delete files and directories. You can also use it to create directories or view text files. This means one less program to learn and fill up disk space.

There are some operational differences between FastLynx and LLPro. In LLPro, you select individual files by pressing the space bar, while in FastLynx you use the F5 key. Personally, I like the space bar better because it is so much easier to get to, especially if you are used to function keys in one location and working on a machine with them in another. So far, the space bar has stayed pretty much in one spot in all the keyboard variations.

FastLynx allows you to send only newer versions of files to the target (remote) computer, which precludes the possibility of replacing an updated file with a previous version. This is not quite the same as LLPro's synchronize function, which replaces older files on both machines with the most recent ones. Another nicety of LLPro is that it compares the date and time of the two machines, and if they differ by more than five minutes, pops up a little box telling you about it, and lets you set both machines to the local date and time, remote date and time, or leave both alone.

One feature LLPro has is that it will upload through a modem to a remote machine. I must confess this is a feature I have never had to use.

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The serial cables that come with FastLynx and LLPro are the same length (8' between DB-25 connectors, 10' between DB-9 connectors) and both have both 9 and 25-pin D connectors on each end. However, the one that comes with LLPro is smaller in diameter, more flexible, and lighter (8.5 oz vs FastLynx 10 oz), important considerations for people who have carry all this junque with them. LLPro's cable is also better made, with the jackscrews easily retractable so when you plug it in the screws do not get in the way. I was able to clean out the excess plastic that was interfering with the jackscrews on the FastLynx cable, but that took some time and it still isn't

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Software Review:
MATH BLAST PLUS

By: Margaret Thompson
(Reprinted from Bits 'N Bytes, the newsletter of the Pentagon PC User Group, Oct 92)

I know that I am not the only club member with school aged children in my life, so I thought I'd write about a software package for children... Math Blaster Plus. The program is a successful cross between an arcade type game and a learning tool. It has a combination of graphics and sound that will hold the interest of even the most fidgety child while they learn essential math facts and problem solving skills in spite of themselves! "Blasternaut" and his friend "Spot," a robot, travel through space making the universe a better and cleaner place (making any place cleaner is a radical educational idea for children to learn as well!) Via problem solving, the child helps these two build a rocket ship that can travel the galaxies seeking out "trash aliens" who dump litter everywhere but in the trashcan (this is a concept most children already understand). Blasternaut and Spot continue their journey to a space recycling center where trashcanned numbers are recycled using math concepts. Lastly, with the child's assistance, Blasternaut defends his space station from the villainous "trash aliens".

The child works at his/her own pace and can work on addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, and percents at all levels of elementary school. The work is fun and totally non-stressful for "math shy" children. There are 750 math facts grouped into 30 levels of difficulty. The child is encouraged to develop problem solving strategies, to make decisions, and to see the relationship between decision and outcome while helping Blasternaut and Spot. The program can keep track of the child's progress, and records can be saved and printed out for future use. A certificate can be printed out as an award when the child masters their math facts.

To keep things challenging, the program can be customized for more specific math needs. The "Editor" allows you to enter your own math problems, and if you choose, you can enter the child's name in word problems to make things more interesting for them. The "Test Maker" allows you to crate and print your own tests to determine either a starting level, or to determine whether the facts have really been mastered. Two metro area supermarket promotions of free computers and software for schools for cash register tapes allowed my children's elementary school to get this software. The children liked using it so much, that we bought a copy at our local computer store for about $30.00. The software comes in either MS-DOS or Macintosh versions and was created by Davidson & Associates, Inc., Torrence, California. They list two "800" telephone numbers: (800) 545-7677, Sales, and (800) 556-6141, Customer Service.

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Shareware Review:
JOT-IT6

Reviewed by: Tom Cone
Tampa IBM PC Users Group

JOT-IT6 is a memory resident DOS scratchpad for notes and text. It works quickly and simply, and is easy to install. I've tested it on '386 and '286 systems, with VGA and CGA graphics adapters, and with MS-DOS 5.0 and DR-DOS 6.0. It works fine in each of these environments.

As is true for other DOS TSR programs, once you have "loaded" JOT-IT6, it is "activated" by pressing a "hot-key". This will automatically suspend whatever program you may have been running at the time, and will then display a completely blank screen for your notes or text. When you exit JOT-IT6, your previous program is restored right where you left off.

"Loading" JOT-IT6 is easy. You simply type the program's name at the command line. This can be done by hand, but it's probably better to add a line to your AUTOEXEC.BAT file, so that the program is loaded automatically whenever you startup your system.

JOT-IT6 will use about 15,840 bytes of main memory in its default configuration. This includes room for 5 sheets of text, each of which is 54 lines long. If you don't want this much space for notes, you can easily alter the startup configuration. It will use only 7,840 bytes of main memory if you set it up to use only 1 sheet for text.

The editor is simple and straightforward. You move around the page with the cursor keys, and PgUp and PgDn move you from sheet to sheet. Automatic word-wrap for new text is a nice feature. You can delete lines or sheets with a single key stroke, otherwise you use the DELETE key or the BACKSPACE key to remove unwanted text.

Text that you write in the scratchpad is stored in main memory and will be lost when you turn off the computer. The program allows you to save your scratchpad to disk, and the scratchpad will be retrieved automatically the next time you "load" the program. Your text will be saved in ASCII format, and can be "read" by other word processors and programs. You can also print the scratchpad whenever you want.

In addition to adjusting the number of sheets available in the scratchpad, JOT-IT6 allows you to set or change the "hot-key" you want to use, and you can also specify the particular filename you wish to use for storing the scratchpad on disk.

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In order to keep the size of the program small certain compromises were made. The editor lacks sophisticated cursor movement controls, so you can't jump from word to word, or from screen to screen easily. Margins, page lengths, and line-spacing cannot be adjusted. JOT-IT6 is not a "clip board". You can't "cut" text out of one application, and then "paste" it into other applications. There is no on-line help, and error-handling is minimal. You can't print individual sheets , instead, the entire scratchpad is printed at once. Nevertheless, I found these to be reasonable design choices. I much prefer keeping the program small. It's a scratchpad after all, not a word processor!

If you are working in DOS, and would like to have an on-line scratchpad, that's always a keystroke away, give JOT-IT6 a look. It's available for evaluation on our club's bulletin board. Download a file called "JOT-IT6.ZIP". If you use the program, remember to register it with the publisher. The registration fee is $10.00.

For more information on JOT-IT6, contact its publisher:

Circle Software Company
P.O. Box 7954
Clearwater, FL 34618-7954

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Hardware Review:
Bernoulli Transportable 90

By: Alfred Chan, DDS
Greater South Bay UG, November 1992
(By way of editor of Blinkin Cursor, Milwaukee IBM PC Users Group, November, 1992)

If you are thinking of buying another hard disk for lack of hard disk memory space, consider a Bernoulli Transportable 90 from IOMega. After having watched IOMega's Linda Darlon demonstrate to the GS-BUG members the pros and cons of the removable portable hard disk, I thought I would buy one. And here is what I found.

Upon purchasing you have to decide how you will connect your Bernoulli to your computer. I learned there were two ways to connect the Transportable 90:

1) With a SCSI (pronounced Scuzzi) card in the expansion slot and,
2) with an adaptor to your parallel port.

If you purchase the sample kit for $820, you get either the SCSI or the adaptor for the parallel port. The price is now cheaper. I saw it advertised for $595. I got the SCSI and bought the parallel adaptor for about $150. If you have more than one computer it would be wise to have the parallel adaptor. You have to format your bernoulli diskette before use, easier than formatting DOS floppies.

I enjoy using the Bernoulli for many reasons. I like the idea that I can remove 90 megs whenever it is full and replace it with another empty 90 megs. The disks can be purchased for $145 each. Also, if you use Stacker for Bernoulli v. 2.02 on the disk, you will then have 180 megs on each disk or double the 90 megs. Stacker compresses all the files on the drive and decompresses them on the fly. Stacker is transparent, you don't even know it is there. What's nice about using Stacker here, is that the disk carries its own second partition as one drive. Usually in using stacker, two partitions or drives are made. With so much storage, you can easily carry around all your programs on two 180 meg diskettes.

I like to use Stacker for my Bernoulli diskettes and leave my 120 megs of conventional hard disk alone because I dislike making too many drives. Stacker makes two drives for every one on the conventional hard disk and I have an 80 and 40 meg on C: and D: drives. Stacker on the Bernoulli, can also be used on a computer that does not have the Stacker driver in the CONFIG.SYS. When you call upon your Bernoulli that has a Stacker diskette, you just type "Stacker" and the drive ("stacker e:"). The diskette will then perform as a regular Bernoulli hard disk. Thus you don't have to make all of your Bernoulli's a Stacker drive.

The Bernoulli does not get involved with your CD ROM drive. It just moves the CD ROM drive to the next letter. If your Bernoulli is after your hard drive C:, it will be D: and your CD ROM will be E:. If you have stacker on your Bernoulli then there will not be an E: drive and your CD ROM will be your F: drive.

Installing new programs can be fun with the Bernoulli. You can either place the old program on the Bernoulli as a backup in case you have problems with the new program. You can then replace the old one in a matter of minutes. No hassle with lots of copying backup floppy disks. Also, you can try out or run your new programs on your Bernoulli and leave it there. You can accumulate programs that you do not use frequently but would like instant access to.

With the new Oaddos utility programs, you can put the Bernoulli to sleep and activate it only when you call on it. That saves wear and tear on the drive.

I would strongly recommend the purchase of the Bernoulli Transportable 90 if you have storage limitations.

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Book Review:
The Gray Book

By: Michael Véronneau
Vancouver PCUG, July 1992
(By way of the editor of Blinkin Cursor, Milwaukee IBM PC Users Group, November, 1992)

It was Henry Ford, I believe, who once said about his care, the model "T", that you could have it in any colour you wanted -- as long as the colour you wanted was black. For the majority of personal computer users, this statement could well apply to our printout. We may create our masterpieces (documents, charts, graphs and images) and glory in the fine colours that our monitors produce, but when it comes time to put it on paper, the majority of us look at black ink on white paper. The authors of "The Gray Book: Designing in Black and White on Your Computer would not have you despair though: they have some useful suggestions.

Black ink does not have to be boring. Just flipping through the book gives a good indication of the visual impact that black and white (and shades of gray) can achieve.
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Even the book cover provides its own advertising. A tasteful collection of muted shades of gray with strongly contrasting black and white text for the book title and subtitle (with just a spot of colour for the publisher: Ventana Press) makes a very pleasant and eye-catching design.

The book is organized into six chapters. Chapters one (Contrast) and two (Put it in Black and White) introduce the use of contrast (e.g. size, weight, shape, texture) and reverses (e.g. white text on a black background). One of the first things you notice as you start reading this book is the extensive use of examples. In fact the explanation of a particular design concept usually takes up a quarter of the page and is accompanied by a multitude of examples (that can stretch over the next few pages) to reinforce the concept being presented. Are the explanations too short? Not really. They are easy to read and make their point clearly. The following excerpt about value contrast is a good example:

"The most common sort of contrast is simply that of light and dark. When you expand your range of value, or tonal, contrast by introducing actual shades of gray into an otherwise black-and-white document, you get the benefit of yet more "colour." However, it's technically possible to create a "gray" page without using any gray at all. The type ... creates a gray shade against the white paper, which becomes more obvious if you squint at the page. By selectively changing the face, the style (bold, italic and so on), line spacing, the case (all caps, uppercase and lowercase, small caps) or word and letter spacing, you can create a layout that is easier to read than its text-intensive counterpart."

The two and one-half pages of examples that accompany this explanation amply illustrate how you can use these ideas in your own documents -- whether you are using a word processor or a desktop publishing program.

Chapters three (Playing with Gray), four (Light and Shading), and five (Scans and Beyond) concentrate on using solid grays, graduated grays, 3-D designs, lighting effects and gray-level scans to improve your own designs. Three chapters continue to provide useful tips and techniques and multiple examples to visually make their points. Of particular interest to me was chapter five which provides useful advice and information for integrating scanned photographs or images into a document.

Chapter six, called "The Gray Gallery" is a collection of images, text designs, logos and other illustrations that can serve as a source of ideas for your projects. Short descriptions accompany each example in this chapter pointing out highlights and explaining the technique used to produce the example.

Although I have had the book for several months, I did not actually put it to use until recently. When I first received the book (purchased through the Small Computer Book Club) I browsed through the six chapters (208 pages) and admired the design techniques, hints and examples. Then it was shelved along with my other desktop publishing books and might well have languished there except for a problem that I encountered at work. A guide that I was working on lacked visual appeal. I had the words and even some images that I wanted, but it just didn't catch the eye or invite the reader "read on." To make a long story short, "The Gray Book" provided some much needed inspiration. Since then, I have gone through the book a few more times and feel that I will be better prepared for my next publishing project.

I believe that "The Gray Book" is a worthwhile reference and idea book for anyone who wants to improve the visual impact of their documents (or images) while working with black, white and shades of gray. Each chapter focus' on a interesting topic and provides enough detail to fully explain the concepts without undue use of technical terms. Technical terms are defined the first time they are used in the text, which is useful, however, the book could be improved by including a glossary of technical terms as an appendix for those times that you encounter a term and cannot remember the definition or location in the text where the term was used first.

Overall, because of its sparing but effective use of words, and its lavish use of illustrations, this book is highly recommended.

Note: My apologies to any die-hard Canadian "english" spellers out there. Although I would have preferred to use "grey" in the article, I choose to use the american spelling "gray" for consistency with the book title. Only in Canada you say, pity!

The Gray Book: Designing in Black & White on Your Computer. Michael Gosney. Ventana Press, Inc. 1990. ISBN 0-940087-50-2208 pages w/index.

The Small Computer Book Club. Newbridge Book Clubs, 3000 Cindel Drive, Delran, NJ 08075-9908.

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Software Review:
Links 386 Pro

By: Peter Swanson
The Buffalo PCUG, October 1992
(By way of the editor of Blinkin Cursor, Milwaukee IBM PC Users Group, November, 1992)

If you've played Links, the golf game from Access Software, you'll know how good Links 386 Pro is when I say it's like the difference between Start Trek on a CP/M machine and Leisure Suit Larry on a 386. The only problem is that you may have to add so much to your system that playing the simulation may cost as much as playing a round at Pebble Beach, green fees and all.

Yes, unfortunately, you must have a 386SX (at least), along with 2mb of RAM, a super-VGA card and corresponding monitor to get the benefit of this singular advance in sports games. You want more? You supply more: like a 386-33 and 8mb.

Fortunately, however, it's worth it, and will be even more so in the middle of February when you've gone three months without putting palm to putter! Simply put, this is the closest thing to real golf I've seen on a computer, so much so that it makes me wonder what magic programmers are going to have to conjure when CD-ROM-based interactive games take the stage: this is a tough act to follow!

However, now is now, and Links 386 Pro is here and I've got a review to write. The original Links was an outstanding job,

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incorporating graphics capabilities and sound (if you dare use that term in the same sentence as "PC") that were head and shoulders above most anything else I had seen or heard. Today, Links 386 Pro is almost as far ahead of the original Links as that program was ahead of its time.

Safe bet: the first thing you'll appreciate about Links 386 Pro is the graphics. Sure, the title screen is great, either a shot of the third hole at Hawaii's Mauna Kea or the fifth at the lighthouse in Point Pierce. But they don't stop here. The course literally builds up as you watch: in the distance a waterline; then in front of that a line of moored yachts; next the golf condos, and finally the trees that are designed to keep your busted window bill at a minimum. Then the details on the course start to appear: clumps of bushes, rough, fairway, and greens, here a golf cart, there a ball-washer, a cart path, a sand trap. And finally there you are in the blue shirt you decided you want to wear from a selection of eight different colors. Her choice? Sure! Women both play golf and enjoy PC games, you know. You can play Links 386 Pro against yourself in a twosome or foursome, playing for all players, or you can get a bunch of golfing buddies together and have a knockout tournament of your own.

Ready to tee off? Select your club from the full complement of 13 clubs in your bag, deciding whether you want to take the one the automatic caddy feature recommends or not. You address the ball, step back for a practice swing to check for the feel of things, and swing away! What's neat now? You can even see the folds of your trousers move as you come back to swing!

Here's where the game get frighteningly realistic. You know that nice little "plink" that tells you you've put the sweet spot on your driver onto the sweet spot on the ball? It was there, that, and a whole lot of even more advanced sounds come out of the PC's two-inch no-fi speaker when you're playing Links 386 Pro.

And when you watch the ball arch up into a cloud-strewn blue sky (you can also follow its shadow on the course below) and it lands right close to the pin you get a nice little round of applause and a "Great shot" accolade from your partner. (Eat your heart out, Tom Watson!) Now carefully sink your nine-foot putt, hear that delicious echoing sound as the ball rolls around the hole, and once again enjoy that heart-warming applause from a gathered crowd. And that's only for starters: think what it'll be like when you install a Sound Blaster card or any of the other Links 386 Pro courses.

Fundamentally, the courses look real because they are real. Access Software's staffer go out and photograph and videotape and measure all the details of every course they offer. Every tree shows up where it really is (at least until an ice storm). Every water hole (where you can see your last ball splashdown if you don't time your swing properly) is right there. The half-mil condos that frame so many great courses nowadays are there -- right behind the correct bushes. It's absolutely uncanny if you've ever been on one of the courses they offer.

Another reason Links 386 Pro will keep you engaged is the fact that there are so many courses to play! The shrink-wrapped package includes Harbour Town, and Arizona's Troon North (which features cactus and sand between the fairways), Torrey Pines (San Diego), Bountiful (Links 386 Pro's home course in Utah), Firestone (Akron), North Carolina's Pinehurst, Dorado Beach (Puerto Rico) and Texas' Barton Creek. If you have the original Links courses, you can convert them to 386 Pro format with an included utility, or you can wait until Access redeems its promise to reissue all the original courses in high-resolution versions. When Access will make it possible to play Pebble Beach or Augusta National, they don't say, but if it can be done, expect it. Any course should be proud to be included in a game this good.

One last thing: if you want to play a really competitive game you will soon be able to get on the Computer Sports Network and play against other Links golfers across the country with your modem -- more on that another time.

Access Software
4910 West Amelia Earhart Drive
Bountiful, Utah 84116

■■■

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

IBM

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CompuAdd

Welcome New Members!

Daniel Crocker
George J. Earle
Jerry Inman
Keith Kanarek
Pete Lansbery
Thomas O. Hahon
Bob Morris
Merle D. Nicholson
Wayne Peterson
Ken Sawyer
David Snyder
Edward Spano
Juan R. Torres
Dan Whitman
Ronald Mirth
John Weber

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1993:

Its that time again. Time for you to nominate member individuals for the positions of: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Member at Large and Secretary. For your convenience you may clip the following form and drop it in the election box at the next two meetings or mail to our PO Box.

Elections will be held during our December 9th meeting.

My Nominees are:

President:

.....

Vice President

.....

Treasurer:

.....

Secretary:

.....

Member at Large:

.....

Hardware Review:

The Toshiba T4400SX Notebook Computer

By: Fred Kolbrener
(Reprinted from Bits 'N Bytes, the newsletter of the Pentagon PC User Group, Nov 92)

Recently, I had the opportunity to use a new Toshiba T4400SX computer for a couple of weeks. This notebook computer weighs less han 7.5 pounds, but rivals the performance of much larger desktop systems. Powered by an Intel 486SX computer chip running at 25 MHz, this is a really fast machine which runs at 34 times the speed f an XT computer according to Norton's System Index program. The access time for the 80 Megabyte hard disk is not as fast as some of the desktop machines, but much faster than operations with only floppy disks. In order to save the battery, the computer shuts down the hard disk when it is not used for a period of time as well as the screen if you don't touch a key for over 2 minutes. These are handy features for extending the battery life.

I had no trouble with the keyboard after getting used to the key locations, but then again my hands are not too large. One of the most disconcerting things about notebooks and laptops in general, is that each manufacturer's keyboard is a little different and definitely different from the desktop 101 key keyboards. This translates to a real hunt and find situation when you start out on one of these machines, but I picked it up fast and did not have too much trouble. An annoyance is that the numeric keypad is under the regular keyboard and is accessed with a numeric shift key (NUMLOCK). When using it, you do not have access to the letters without freeing the numeric lock. This is a problem common to almost ALL notebook computers. Function keys were easy to access and quick to learn.

The screen on the machine I tested was really crisp and featured 16 gray scales. Several other designs are available to include a new color display. The Toshiba demo that came on the machine was a roller coaster that carried the features along and it appeared to have real depth. I also had the opportunity to use this machine with a Super VGA monitor. With the monitor plugged in, the notebook recognized it and blanked its own screen using the VGA monitor with no intervention needed on my part. The image was everything you'd want for operation in the office environment.

The life on the battery is rated at 3 to 3.5 hours. I really did not get a chance to fully test it out, but the there is an on board warning system you can enable to warn you of the battery status. It is easily accessed by a combination of keys and when the battery is really low, it will sound an alarm if you want. Battery life will of course, depend on the use to which the machine is put. The more you access the disk, the more drain on the battery. Also, it will depend on whether you charge it fully and properly. A convenient feature of this machine is that you can set it up to maintain the data stored in the memory. If you do, it appears to jump to life when it's turned on, but the price you pay is a slow drain on the battery . Toshiba makes an optional docking station for office use. It allows you to slip the computer into a slot and use it with a full size monitor and a power supply in the docking station. The connector for this station is in the rear of the machine and makes all of the connections.

All in all, this was a powerful computer for its size and weight. I'm not sure I want to carry it around all day, but it certainly beats trying to take a desktop computer with you.

■■■

Isn't it strange how invaluable you are when you ask for a day off, and how unimportant you are when you ask for a raise?

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____

Company Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Work Phone _____

How did you hear about IBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ]
DTP [ ] Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____
_____
_____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____
_____
_____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00

Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

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  3328 Henderson Blvd.
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How did you do?

		B	I	T	M	A	P		
						R		O	
	D		D	R	A	G		P	
K	E	Y				U		E	
	F		I			M	E	N	U
C	A	S	C	A	D	E			
	U		O			N			K
	L		N			T	I	L	E
	T								R
		F	U	N	C	T	I	O	N

(Answers to Puzzle in 10/92 Bits of Blue)



Tampa IBM PC User's Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492





A Monthly Publication of the
Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 5 NO. 12 December, 1992

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: December 11, 1992
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

DECEMBER AGENDA:

12/9/92

6:00 PM - opening remarks

6:30 PM - Demo by
Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
of: Microsoft's
Windows for WorkGroups

7:30 PM - Break

7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Elections 1993 Officers

Door Prize Raffle -
Windows for WorkGroups &
Miscellaneous Items

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Merry Christmas



& Happy New Year!

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 932-6745, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 11/11/92 --

As the witching hour approached, I noted a nice group had arrived to attend the BOB meeting, and the room was a beehive of activity -- numerous small groups talking and picking each others brain, and Don Patzsch conducting his second of seven classes on modems with quite a few folks participating in the class. Off in another room, Ed was conducting the third in a series of four classes on WP 5.1 for DOS. I miss the BOB meetings only when I have no other choice, for even the time before the meeting starts is productive and interesting. This night was no exception.

And then, our illustrious President called the meeting to order.

CLUB NEWS:

* WP 5.1 Class - The fourth and final class in this series will be held same time (5:30 PM), same place (IBM Bldg) on 9 December, just before the regular BOB meeting.

* Don's second modem class was held in the regular BOB meeting room this time because of a conflict with the ongoing WP 5.1 class, and the modem class had to be cut short when the BOB meeting began. The third class will be delayed until January, and that and subsequent classes will have use of a private room and benefit of the planned 45 minute duration. Don has laid out instructions for a total of seven classes. He is providing in-depth instruction, complete with handouts for both present and future reference.

* Harvey announced that a member had volunteered to lead a SIG on Windows. A show-of-hands survey of those present indicated ample interest in the SIG. The problem now is arranging facilities. Harvey indicated that he would try to arrange same, hopefully in time for a January start for the SIG. More info will be forthcoming.

* Harvey cautioned that a virus reportedly in circulation is triggered to strike on Friday the 13th.

* Windows users are well aware that programs installed in Windows make changes during installation in various Windows files/directories. At one time or another, these hackers are faced with the problem of deleting one of these programs. Unless you have retained a copy of all the .INI files and a pre-installation directory listing, there is no way to know just what changes were made with the installation of that program. On the BOB BBS is a program known as In Control that an the answer to that problem. In Control will record in an .WRI (Windows Write) file all changes made by installation of individual programs in Windows.

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When one decides to delete a program installed in Windows, you need only view the .WRI file to determine what changes need to made to completely eliminate the program from all Windows files/directories. The only gimmick is that you have to have used In Control when you installed the program in Windows -- that is to say, In Control is not retroactive.

* Presentation planned for the DECEMBER MEETING is MS WORK GROUP For WINDOWS. This is networking program which ties individual PCs together without the need of servers, LANs, etc.,but it is compatible with these as well. Looks like a nice program that will likely be hot in the work/business world.

INDUSTRY NEWS

* Harvey reported that a PC Magazine book, DOS 5.0 Memory Management, was very interesting and worthwhile for anyone interested in getting more memory out of his computer. In includes some ten utilities on disk which help identify available memory and obtain use of same.

* A parallel to the foregoing, DOS 6.0 is expected to be released in the 1st quarter of 1993. Reportedly, it will include Stacker and better memory management. Whether it will be as much of an improvement over 5.0 as 5.0 was over its predecessors remains to be seen.

* MS database program for Windows, called Access, is now being released. It is reportedly a very nice program. It will have an introductory price through 31 January of an amazing $99; amazing because this is a high- end program that will list for $695 after Jan 31. (Looks like MS wants to get lots of copies in use.) I have seen some of the advertizing literature on the program and it truly looks like a 'goodie'! Kirk Covert says that MS Foxpro has been the fastest (and best) on the market to date, and that Access is even better.

* We previously reported that MS has said that it is getting into hardware only as needed to push its software products. That was said at the time they came out with a sound card to push and take advantage of the new MIDI capabilities of Windows 3.1. Now, MS is coming out with a card for use with HP printers to speed up printing. One could say that this is an effort to offset the notoriously slow printing cycle in Windows. Come on, now!

* MS Windows NT Beta version is now available from MS for $59. We are told that you need 12 MB of memory and a CD ROM to make use of the program. Anyone interested should call MS.

* Western Digital has come out with a chip that will check your computer for viruses. Interesting, but not enough info is yet available. Like, how do you update the chip for new viruses?

* The last issue of PC Computing should be of interest to Windows users -- it contains 172 pages of goodies about getting the most from Windows. If you are a Windows user, you might want to check it out.

PROGRAM PRESENTATION - MICROSOFT MULTIMEDIA

On hand to give us a brief rundown on some Microsoft Multimedia goodies was the inimitable Kirk Covert, Regional Sales Rep for Microsoft, a welcome and well-known personality at BOB. Kirk reported that MS had many things going in the multimedia area and that he would touch on only a few. He noted that multimedia is very useful in the worlds of education, business and entertainment - personal and otherwise. Multimedia requires a sound card and a CD ROM. Among the things MS is producing are:

First, MS is coming out with a new sound card. It is a 16 bit, 5 channel card -- it will handle 5 channels of sound simultaneously. It would be Bus compliant, but not MPC compliant -- but could be made so as an option. He wasn't sure about the price, but thought it would be on the order of $295 list.

As a corollary, Kirk pointed out that sound on computers involves huge files. Computer speed is important, of course, to hand the large files. Also very important is the capability of the CD ROMs -- not matter how fast your computer is, if your CD ROM is slow, multimedia will be slow. He suggested checking thruput and transfer rates, and insure that it meets MPC specs.

BEETHOVEN: This was the first MS multimedia disk reviewed. It contains Beethoven's complete 9th Symphony and, among other things, in depth info on the life and times of Beethoven and the 9th Symphony. It allows random access via menu to any part of the music. It sounded great using, according to Kirk, run-of-the-mill speakers. If a price was mentioned, I did not hear it.

CINEMANIA: This disk contains data on some 19,000 movie titles and 3,000 people, including actors, directors, etc. It has considerable detail on the movies, the stories, the studios,and people involved, including their voices. It, too, is easy to use and provides quick, easy access to any of the data it contains. In answer to a question of keeping current in the field, Kirk reported that updates would be available from time to time. List price is $79.95.

BOOK SHELF/BOOKSHELF FOR WORD: This disk comes as a stand alone, and bundled with Word for Windows, which provides for direct access from the Word program or the desktop. Bookshelf includes seven or eight books; I didn't get all the titles. It does include quotations, including voices; a thesaurus; a dictionary; a 16- book encyclopedia (going to 26 books with the next release) with oral instructions; a world atlas, complete with flags and national anthems; and a world almanac. It seemed to be a very, very nice package. Kirk reported list price as $295

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for Book Shelf, and $595 when bundled with Word for Windows. All the packages were very impressive and Kirk did -- as usual -- a super job of presenting them to us. Many thanks, Kirk and Microsoft, for some really nice programs and a job very well done.

AND THE WINNERS ARE:

With the generosity of several, including Sunrise ComputerSupplies & Parts , a member or two and the creators of SuperBase 4, there were a number of nice raffle prizes this meeting, and the lucky winners are:

Superbase 4	Dave Williams
Computer Games:	
Days of Thunder	Martin Miller
Weltris	Wilfred LaForese
Clue	Wayne Laurentes
Tetris	Jim Clark
Computer book	E. Kaestner
Cmptr Magazines	Dave Williams
Disk Clng Kit	Herb Atwood
	Joe Esposito
Mouse Pad/Hldr	Joe Esposito
50/50 ($45)	Bill White

Congratulations You Lucky People!

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Its here! If you have accessed the BBS lately and you have a high speed modem you may have noticed a faster speed. Yes that's right our new 14.4 bps Courier modem has finally arrived and been installed by Kevan.

Another year is closing and as I look over our accomplishments of 1992 I feel pretty good. We had a group of volunteers dedicated to the group and working together. As always we need more volunteers to help in certain areas. Our newsletter, WordPerfect and DOS classes are better than a year ago. We now have new member diskettes to help new members get started with their PC and our group, a flyer describing our group and an online information system (FIDO Net) which provides you with more information than you ever dreamed about. We have raffled off more computer related items than ever before. The raffles are only possible by the donations of companies and individuals who support us. Our dues have not increased for over five years. I am glad to say that the board has elected not to raise them for 1993. We will however be adding a family membership for those of you who wish to provide our services to your family.

However looking at the 1992 goals I wrote in my presidents column of the January Newsletter I can't help but feel we could have done better. After 11 months only one of the three goals was achieved, the modem. I set a goal of 300 members by 1992 year end and we are 80+ short. I believe this is attributable to a lack of an official marketing and public relations person working to promote our group in the Tampa Bay Area. In addition we need to work harder at getting existing members to renew their membership. Additionally, I wanted to establish Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in Word Processing, Database, Spreadsheets and Windows. We just recently have had a couple of members come forward to head some of these groups, the logistics of where, when and software\hardware have not yet been finalized but should be in place in 1993.

As you may know Marylee and I went to Comdex in Las Vegas along with approximately 130,000 other folks. Of the 130k were 300+ representing over 100 user groups world wide. Members from as far away as Moscow, Russia and Melbourne, Australia were in attendance.

Without making it sound like an Oscar acceptance speech I want to thank some organizations for making this exciting trip possible. Of course my company, Dun & Bradstreet Software, for sending me to keep abreast and informed of current and new technology. The Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) for organizing all the breakfast, luncheon, receptions and availability of hotel accommodations for the 300+ members of APCUG in attendance. These scheduled events were financed by major companies in the PC industry who support user groups including **Adobe Systems Inc., Addus Corp., Borland International, Corel Corp, IBM Corp, Intuit Inc., Intel Corp., Logitech Inc., Microsoft Corp., PC World, Software Publishing Corp., Stac Electronics, Symantec Corp., Word Perfect Corp.** just to mention a few. These activities were attended and chaired by some of the key movers and shakers in the PC business. Bill Gates once again impressed me as a no-nonsense man with a mission. Unlike many which hold his title, he is in touch with what is going on in his company and the industry he dominates. I also admire him for his association with the APCUG. During our evening reception he announced that he would take any and all questions from the 100+ user groups officers in attendance. At the end of the reception Bill Gates was raffled off to a user group for a 1993 appearance. The lucky winner was a Florida group. No it was not ours but that of the Central Florida Computer Society. Philippe Kahn also spoke to our group and showed that he had a sense of humor and was a down to earth type of guy.

Special thanks to the **Interface Group** for providing Marylee and I press badges/passes. The credentials proved to be extremely useful for providing us access to public relation personnel, one-on-one presentations and many other amenities which we would not have gotten as a regular visitor to Comdex.

As for Comdex, it was great but short, if you call 4 1/2 days short. I could have used two more days to walk the seven COMDEX sites with over 2,000 exhibiting companies. Four things stood out over the rest Windows software from everybody, the new pentium processor (586) from Intel, the term *objects* used by many companies to refer to parts of their software although it had nothing to do with Object Oriented Programming and Multimedia.

In closing the 92 year I want to wish all of you the best for the holidays and a Joyous New Year.

Harvey Bruneau



■■■

Happy Holidays

Created by
Ed Buzza

Used WordPerfect 5.1 (DOS),
MoreFont font generator,
Printed on HP LaserJet III.

As the Holidays come rolling round,
We give thanks for the love we've found,
For all our friends and families too,
We wish these gifts are given you.

Happiness and Good Health,
A Long Life and Much Wealth,
A Warm House and Good Cheer,
Friends and Family always near.

MAKE YOUR OWN GREETING CARDS

by Ed Buzza

As you can see from the other side, you can make your own greeting cards, invitations, notes, etc.. While the sample was printed on an HP LaserJet III, you can use any printer. The instructions given here are for the DOS ver of WordPerfect 5.1.

Dot Matrix Printer:

At a blank screen, set L/R Margins to 0.0", 0.5" and the T/B Margins to 6.0", 0.5". Set the Graphic User Box Option to set all border spacing to zero. Create 4 User Boxes; each is Page Anchored, Size = 3.5" W x 4.5" H; Wrap = No.

Place a Hard Page return between Box 3 and 4. Your Doc should look like the figures below:

Pg 1 User Box 1 Back of Card Vert = 6.0" Horz = Mar, L	Pg 1 User Box 2 Front of Card Vert = 6.0" Horz = Mar, R

[HPg]

Pg 2 User Box 3 Inside Left pg Vert = 6.0" Horz = Mar, L	Pg 2 User Box 4 Inside Right pg Vert = 6.0" Horz = Mar, R

Note that when you Set Position for the Horz placement, you use the Margin setting of Right or Left, do NOT use an offset measured in inches. Check View Doc and if satisfied, save Doc as MT-CARD.DMP (or whatever); go to DOS and make it "Rd only".

Enter text/graphics in User Boxes. Position paper so top edge is at print head. Print Page 1 (back and front of card). Remove paper from printer, rotate paper 180 degrees (all printing is on same side of paper) and place back in printer. Print Page 2 (inside pages of card). Fold into obvious quarters. Voila, your own creation.

It will look weird in View Doc, but it should print okay (less'n your printer is a whole lot different from my 24 pin printer).

HP LaserJet III

Since the HP3 can rotate text, the card is printed in one pass.

At a blank screen, set all margins to 0.5". Set the Graphic User Box Option to set all border spacing to zero. Create 4 User Boxes; each as Page Anchored, Size = 3.5" W x 4.5" H; Wrap = No.

Edit User Box 1 (Front of cd) and Set Position at Vert 6", Horz 4.5". Edit Box 2 (inside left) and Set Position at V .5" H 4.75". Set Position of Box 3 (inside right) at V .5" H .5". Box 4 (back cover) V 6" H .5". (Save as rd-only template.) Dump text/graphic into boxes. Be sure to *rotate* boxes 2 & 3. Chk View Doc. Print.

WordPerfect assigns Box numbers sequentially. Since it is more logical to start with the Front of the card, then proceed to the inside pages and end up at the Back of the card, the Boxes are positioned as shown below:

User Box 3 Inside Right pg Vert = 0.5" Horz = 0.5"	User Box 2 Inside Left pg Vert = 0.5" Horz = 4.75"
User Box 4 Back Cover Vert = 6.0" Horz = 0.5"	User Box 1 Front Cover Vert = 6.0" Horz = 4.75

Try it. Amaze and astound your friends and family.

■ ■ ■

Game Review



A-Train

Review by: Dave Batz,
Madison PC User's Group

My heart is warm with the friends I make,
And better friends I'll not be knowing;
Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take,
No matter where it is going.
-Edna St. Vincent Millay

WARNING: The Software Surgeon General has determined that giving A-Train to a railroad hobbyist can cause serious damage to his or her marriage, employment, and social life.

A-Train is the ultimate PC game for wanna-be railroad engineers.

The Package

The package includes both 3.5" (three 720K disks) and 5.25" (six 360K disks), as well as a 133-page manual. In addition to the standard program reference material that one would hope to find in a manual, the documentation also includes facts, fables, and famous quotes about trains and train history in the U.S. To use A-Train, you need an IBM compatible PC with a hard disk, DOS 3.1 or better, and an EGA or VGA display. The PC should have 640K memory, and should run at 10 MHz (PC-AT Class) or better.

Installation of A-Train is fast and easy (the way it should be). Program files will consume a little over half a megabyte of hard disk space, and each game that is saved requires 62K.

The Interface

The program documentation recommends the use of a mouse, although it is not absolutely necessary. I used the game with and without a mouse, and I found that as the game went on and the simulation became more complex, using cursor keys instead of the mouse was painfully slow. Almost all menu selections, laying track, building apartments, buying trains, etc., can be accomplished by pointing and clicking with the mouse. A-Train supports the use of AdLib, Sound Blaster, SoundMaster, Roland MT-32, and Tandy sound boards. For those of us without such sophisticated equipment, the internal PC speaker can also be used. The sound support is fine, but I wouldn't go out and buy a sound board just for this game.

The Game

If you want to be able to plop down in front of your computer for 10 minutes and blast away space invaders, race a car, or shoot a quick round of golf before dinner, A-Train is not the game for you. A-Train is a simulation game consisting of three interdependent aspects:

* designing and managing a rail system to transport passengers and freight;
* building one or more cities (apartments, factories, leased buildings, etc.) and their transportation infrastructure;
* playing a high stakes financial game by being involved in the stock market, and buying and selling real estate.

Managing each of these aspects (simultaneously) is the triple challenge of A-Train. A successful A-Train game is the result of careful planning and thought.

I recommend that new users read through the entire manual (yes, I know, ALL 133 pages) before beginning play. The complexities of the game make it virtually impossible to just sit down and play it without knowing what is going on. After reading the manual, it would be a good idea to go through the tutorial that is included in the manual.

The game has nine different scenarios included, and the rest is up to you, the owner of the railroad company. The object of the game is to build cities, run efficient rail lines, and make money doing it. The game is over and you lose if you run out of money, can't pay your taxes, or can't repay your loans to the bank. The game is also over and you win when you earn $50 million and receive a key to the city. I have lost more games (many) than I have won (none).

It took me a while to figure out some of the intricacies of laying track, train scheduling, and switch changing. I did not find much on-line help, so I spent some time in the manual and much time experimenting. I found myself playing A-Train for hours at a stretch, always wanting to make a little change here or there and see how that would affect my railroad's cash flow, the city's population, or the number of passengers on a particular train. I think that is one if the goals of the game -- to promote constructive thought and wise urban development.

The Bottom Line

A-Train is a game, but A-Train requires a substantial amount of mental effort, and quite a bit of time. If the concerns of worrying about the gains and losses of a fictional stock market and urban development are not for you, maybe you should consider getting Tetris instead. But, if you want a challenge that will take more than a day (or even a week) to master, A-Train may be for you. I think A-Train is best suited for the railroad enthusiast whose dreams are filled with thoughts of Casey Jones and good ol' Engine No. 9.

Price and Support

The retail price of A-Train is $69. Egghead or WaldenSoft will sell it for around $49. The lowest price I found was in the high-volume mail-order house channel, where A-Train is priced at $37. Maxis offers free technical support via a toll call to California, and America On-Line (Maxis), CompuServe (71435,276), GEnie (Maxis), and AppleLink (D4459).

Maxis
2 Theater Square, Suite 230
Orinda, CA 94563-3346
(510) 254-9700
(510) 253-3736 (fax)

■■■

Software Review

PC COOKBOOK



While there are several "recipe" database programs already on the market, PC COOKBOOK, a relatively new kid on the block, just might be The Best Recipe Program in the World!

It's definitely a GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA! - Hint, hint dad!

PC COOKBOOK is extremely easy to use - virtually every feature is accessible from the opening screen. But don't be misled by this - PC COOKBOOK has many POWERFUL features, such as:

It comes with an assortment of 250 recipes already loaded. Plus, you can easily enter your own - up to a total of ONE BILLION recipes (limited only by disk space). You can also edit any portion of or remove any recipe you want quickly and easily.

There's also a very complete reference section, just one keystroke away, that instantly provides you such things as an oven temperature chart, a comprehensive table of common food equivalents, an equivalent measurements table, detailed nutritional values plus vitamin and mineral contents for over 300 common ingredients, a handy substitutions table, a procedural hints and tips database with numerous entries, a yields of fruits chart, and a glossary of cooking and food terminology with over 200 entries. This information alone could fill a book costing as much as this program - and it's all right at your fingertips in PC COOKBOOK.

It's exciting to use - with popup shadowed dialogue boxes, exploding and imploding boxes, hot keys, and sound effects.

A slick "tagging" and un-tagging feature lets you "mark" and un-mark as many recipes as you want by simply highlighting the recipe name and pressing the space bar.

When you're ready to go grocery shopping, PC COOKBOOK will print a detailed Shopping List with every ingredient from every "tagged" recipe - complete with the name of the recipe each ingredient is needed for.

The printing capabilities of PC COOKBOOK are superb - you can either print one recipe or all of them at once, either on paper or on 3" x 5" index cards. You can also print either one reference topic or all of them at once.

There is a convenient feature for backing up your data files to floppy disk that automatically compresses (squeezes) your data to make it fit on as few floppy disks as possible - in most cases, just one floppy disk is all that's needed.

If you ever need to restore your data from floppy disks, there's a built-in feature for that too. This will automatically "un-squeeze" your floppy disk data and put it back into PC COOKBOOK in just a few seconds. Another feature lets you automatically "refresh" (compress, re-index, etc.) all your PC COOKBOOK data files at any time with just one keystroke.

There is also a feature for importing (adding) new recipes from purchased recipes on disks which will add over 100 new recipes per minute to PC COOKBOOK.

Two other powerful features will either list recipes which contain ingredients you specify (as in what you might have in your refrigerator) or, for people on restricted diets, you can list recipes which DON'T contain certain ingredients you specify.

Finding any particular recipe or reference topic is a breeze - you can alphabetize recipes by recipe name or by category with just one keystroke. There's also a "Speed Search" lookup feature that, if you already know the name of the recipe you want, will find it in less than 2 seconds.

You can duplicate any recipe with just one keystroke - no retyping is ever needed. For example, you might want one copy of a recipe for making 4 servings and another copy for making 6 servings, or whatever. Rather than entering the same recipe again with different ingredient quantities (that's how other recipe programs work) and different cooking times, you just press the F8 key and a duplicate copy is instantly created for you. Then, you can simply edit the copy and make just the changes you want. You can do this over and over - making as many variations on a single recipe as you want.

PC COOKBOOK requires an IBM PC or 100% compatible with a hard disk, and an Epson-compatible (most printers are) printer.

PC COOKBOOK sells for $34.95 and comes complete with a simple Install program, an easy to understand User's Guide, and the program itself on both 3.5" and 5.25" size disks.

Additional sets of recipes are available for $20 per 100 by category (Chinese, Italian, Seafood, Desserts, etc.)

Contact :
Brookfield Software Co.
6 South McLean Boulevard #209
Memphis, TN 38104

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Product Review:

FotoMan from Logitech

Digital Photography, Direct to the PC, but With Limited Resolution

Review by Rod McKenzie, Contributing Editor, Madison PC User's Group



FotoMan is one of the first digital cameras for the PC, capturing photographic images and bringing them in through the serial port. Logitech is breaking new ground with this product and they've done all that they can to support it with excellent image editing software, FotoTouch. If there's any disappointment, it's in the limited resolution that the digital camera can deliver. It all depends on your own expectations as to what a picture needs to be.

For nearly a century, since the Eastman Kodak Company made taking pictures an easy and even a stylish pastime with "you push the button and we do the

rest," we've taken photography for granted. Every innovation in optics and photosensitive materials resulted in sharper images, truer colors, and higher speeds for taking pictures in available light. Electronic imaging has taken the form of video cameras recording onto magnetic tapes, laser disks, and even high resolution satellite pictures being beamed back from space transmitted on radio frequencies. The FotoMan joins this parade of photographic inventions that can record a landscape in panorama or the first hesitant steps of an infant.

The FotoMan digital camera comes equipped with a fixed focus 8.5 mm lens, equivalent to a "normal" 55 mm lens on a 35 mm camera, and an internal electronic flash. There's also a neutral density filter for use in bright, i.e. outdoor, conditions. It's compact, weighing about 10 oz., and easily fits into a jacket pocket or handbag. The nickel-cadmium batteries will hold images in memory for a few days. Logitech recommends that users get the camera back onto charge and download their pictures often. This is not the camera to take to Outward Bound. They suggest a charger cord for the cigarette lighter socket of a car if the time away from "home base" is unpredictably long.

The camera communicates with the computer by way of a base unit that receives electrical power from a small transformer power supply and feeds the digital data through a cable connected to one of the computer's COMPORTs. The data transfer rate can be set up to send pictures as fast as possible, as high as 115K baud. The user may have to edit a line in the WIN.INI file to prevent a loss of data because the transfer rate is too high for the serial port hardware.

The FotoMan software can be installed independently or it can be made to operate as a part of FotoTouch, a Windows application for image editing and printing. In keeping with Logitech's commitment to an industry standard for imaging devices, FotoMan is a TWAIN source. This means that, provided there's the necessary compatibility, the camera could output to other software that meets the TWAIN standard. Several new fax programs include TWAIN sources as an input. One of these, Delrina's WinFAX Pro version 3, has an announced shipping date.

The image the camera generates when the shutter clicks is 376x240 pixels in 256 shades of gray. The resolution is effectively 75 dpi if the picture is enlarged to 5"x3.5". There's a capacity for 32 pictures, so users copying a whole roll of pictures will need to have several megabytes of hard disk space, even if the pictures are saved in a compressed file format such as TIFF. While they're still in the camera, the images are stored in DRAM until they're cleared or the power is lost. Keep those batteries charged! When viewing and saving images, the FotoMan software displays the battery's charge status with a small battery icon at the bottom of the screen.

I was generally pleased with the image quality when I could reshoot a picture, but frustrated with the poor results I got when I took FotoMan on the road. If the conditions aren't pretty well controlled, the picture quality will suffer. Cropping and enlarging really exaggerate the limitation of the image resolution. The user needs to move in close and keep the lighting conditions even. Dark backgrounds look pretty muddy and the patterns that are used with the printer to simulate a grey scale can distract from the foreground image.

Our family albums include tin types taken before the civil war and sepia toned prints from the late 1880s and 1890s. There are pictures there from early Kodak box cameras, folding cameras and 1950s Brownies. The pictures that are memorable are the sharp ones. The ones of people show best what's important about a picture. Their eyes are sharp, as are the lines of the nose and mouth, the brow, the cheek, and the chin. The same lines that we see in our children's faces. I'm not ready to put digital photos into the album yet. Those images still look rough. They need more resolution. It might take a larger, high-resolution photo-sensitive array and more memory. Add it as an accessory back to an existing 35 mm camera. Use the good optics, get more control over the image field, and immediately save the images to a WORM drive or a high-capacity magnetic cartridge.

Being used to the horizontal profile of a 35 mm camera, it felt very awkward at first to hold the FotoMan with it's vertical format. After a several shooting sessions, it became more familiar. I realize how unconscious and automatic handling a familiar camera had become. Holding the FotoMan is like picking up a Princess telephone by the mouthpiece and pointing the earpiece at the subject to be photographed. The view finder is above the lens and to the left. The electronic flash, good to about eight feet, is above and to the right. The shutter release is below the lens on the front of the camera, in the middle. It's intended to be pressed by the forefinger of either hand. Holding the camera steady and level is no problem, most of the weight seems to be towards the base of the body where the hands hold it.

The nickel-cadmium batteries are permanently installed in the FotoMan. Unfortunately this means that if they fail to operate correctly, the unit is useless until the camera can be returned to Logitech for them to replace the batteries. In the long run, keeping the batteries removable makes the camera more acceptable in markets where ni-cad batteries have been targeted as environmental problems. The EEC countries have already enacted legislation that requires ni-cads to be removable from portable equipment and consumer products.

Logitech has given users an affordable new "imaging" accessory to directly delivery photographs to the PC. It's just about as instant as it can get, short of a video camera linked to a multimedia application. FotoMan is a logical extension of the scanner product line for which Logitech is known. It's a leap in image acquisition technology. The camera's "film" is a photosensitive array that yields its information for storage in the DRAM memory and then can be re-exposed again and again. This system of imaging delivers the photograph without consuming any chemicals, film, or special photosensitive paper. Nor does it require any darkroom to process the pictures. These images will have as much archival permanence as their magnetic or optical storage medium will allow. Printed out on paper, the images will last as long as a laser or inkjet printout.

FotoMan is priced at $799 and is a product of: Logitech 6505 Kaiser Drive Fremont, CA 94555 (501) 795-8500 (501) 792-8901 (fax) (800) 245-0000 (faxback)

■■■

Software Review:

Button Cube for WordPerfect for Windows

Review by :Gary W. Wodka, Madison PC User's Group

In the beginning, Microsoft created Windows 3.0. On the second day, Microsoft created Word for Windows. On the third day, Microsoft added the Button Bar. By the sixth day, WordPerfect looked at what was happening in the GUI world of Windows and deposited WordPerfect for Windows (WP-Win) on the earth, and it was good.

But there's always someone out there trying to build a better mouse trap, and Software Workshop may have accomplished that task with Button Cube for WordPerfect for Windows. WP-Win is a "nice" program. It has all the features of the DOS version, with the added "niceness" of GUI and button bars. But there are some strict limitations as to what can go on the button bar and how many buttons may be on the screen at one time (and where on the screen those buttons will appear). Not with Button Cube (BC).

This little utility is so simple that the entire manual (which includes full installation instructions, a complete reference section, a zillion illustrations and lots of white space) takes up only 50 pages. And they had to stretch to get that many pages. BC installs itself in your WordPerfect for Windows directory. The sample cube files are installed in the WP-Win macro directory. The Install program sniffs out where those directories are, without any help from the user! And if you ever need to uninstall Button Cube (though I can't imagine why you'd want to!), Software Workshop has included an Uninstall program that removes all the Button Cube program files from your hard disk, deletes Button Cube statements from all WPWIN.INI files, and deletes all Button Cube .CBE files. You end up with a "clean" hard disk, without all the hassle! Once installed, BC automatically loads when you start WP-Win. WP-Win may take an extra 2-3 seconds to boot up, but the wait will be well worth the extra time. (What could you do in 2-3 seconds anyway?)

Once started, WP-Win will have an additional feature: a cube with functions attached. A cube can consist of one to four sides, and each side can have up to 32 function buttons. Thus, you can have up to 128 functions available at the touch of an icon. And you can choose from over 500 total WordPerfect for Windows functions, many of which are not available from the standard WP-Win pull-down menus! No longer will you have to memorize commands or use drop-down menus. Just about any command you can think of can be added to the cube.

You won't need to use the clunky WP-Win button bar. The BC can be moved anywhere on the screen. It is a floating toolbox. It can take the shape of a cube or a strip, and you have total control over its configuration. If you need the full screen for some reason, the cube can be minimized. Using the cube is so intuitive that the hardest part of BC is determining what features you want access to.

Well, that's not entirely true. The hardest part is figuring out what all those icons mean. But Software Workshop makes that easier, too. Anytime the mouse passes over an icon, the function of that icon is displayed at the bottom of the screen. It's really hard to make a mistake with BC!

Configuring the Button Cube is a breeze. It's simply a matter of telling the program how many rows, columns and sides you want, then clicking on the functions you want, arranging them in the spaces you want, and saving the button.

Searching through all the options available is easy because all buttons are arranged according to related functions. There are Text options, Layout/Font options (and you can have separate buttons representing specific fonts for easy formatting), Graphics options (which can include any graphics-related function), System options (print, spell, ruler, file functions, help, etc.), Special Characters options (such as the copyright or trademark symbol, or any special character in any WP-Win or TrueType font family), and Macros options (to which you can assign your own macros).

Total flexibility and total control explain in a nutshell what you'll get with Button Cube. If you've got a question or problem, you can get it handled by fax, on CompuServe, or by phone call directly to the company. There is no charge for the help, other than the long-distance call.

I tried to find something wrong with this program, but couldn't. Its ease of installation, ease of use, and ease of understanding stand out in the industry. I hope we'll see more of this type of program in the future!

Button Cube for WordPerfect for Windows retails for $89.95 and is a product of: Software Workshop, Inc. 170 S. Mountain Way Dr., Suite 114 Orem, UT 84058 (801) 224-6865 (801) 224-8121 (fax)

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FROM THE 11/92 ISSUE OF HOME OFFICE COMPUTING MAGAZINE:

Rupp Technology Corp. invites all "unregistered" owners of the subject programs to register them -- no questions asked! You will be eligible for a special upgrade offer to the recent version (2.0) for $40 for the s'ware and $20.00 for the new parallel cable. Call (800) 852-7877.

Welcome New Members!

ERIC DUNDORE
JOSEPH ESPOSITO
WILLIAM R. GLENNIE
JIA A. HUAG
NED LANGER
JERRY MACIASZEK
ALFORD POOLE
JOHN H. WITMER

Software Review:

WELCOME TO THE TAX SEASON

By Ray Miller

No! I'm not jumping the gun. In their wisdom ??? our representatives in Washington DC passed the Tax Extension Act of 1991. This foolishness is just beginning to take effect. The contents of this little tome are now being enforced by the IRS, changing some of the rules for filing estimated tax payments. Now many of us are confronted with calculating income on a quarterly basis in order to conform with the new estimated tax payment rules. Isn't that just great?

Also the reason I'm promoting this program in November is that the tax planning features, of the following program, may allow you to make some financial decisions before the year's end, and possibly assuage the tax bite.

It is predicted that 2 million more taxpayers will join the ranks of those having to comply with the new estimated tax payment rules. So, it may behoove you to check into the possibility -- YOU MAY BE ONE OF THEM. To make this compliance somewhat less onerous, our tax preparation friends at ChipSoft, Inc. have produced a new program "TurboTax Personal Tax Planner." It won't find the money for you; but it will make the calculating of these estimated payments easier and provide a five year (1991 through 1995) planning schedule to help keep you out of the IRS' scrutiny.

How Does It Work?

PTP (Personal Tax Planner) computes your modified adjusted gross income to determine if you are affected by the new rules. If you qualify, it provides an adjusted estimated tax payment rate and schedule using either regular or annualized calculations of your tax liability. Then it will print a schedule of payments and the minimum quarterly estimated tax vouchers for you to send with your payments. If your income varies, PTP allows amended estimates by quarter. Neat!

Features

This is a powerful tax forecasting and analysis program that will evaluate the tax and income effect of many situations, from retirement to liquidation of a 401K plan. You can calculate up to five different scenarios for each of five years to determined what is best for your financial health. Information generated by PTP can be integrated with TurboTax for Windows (a new offering this year) and MacIntax Personal, 1040 programs.

If you feel the need to change your W4 (Employee Withholding) or W5 (Earned Credit Advance Payment) forms that you provide your employer; PTP will print these for you. This will allow more accurate planning of withholding amounts. Better to have the money in your savings account earning interest (such as it is, now!) than have it in Uncle Sugar's hands.

As with all ChipSoft programs, the user is presented with various abilities that mitigates use and makes the task of giving away money less distressing. You can "Consult" for context sensitive help -- written in plain language. There are verbatim IRS instructions provided; but you have to be a masochist to want to use these.

Cross-Reference Help shows where a given number flows from during a calculation. You can override any PTP calculated figure; but, be careful here. The IRS doesn't like it when their slave labor makes mistakes. Help for Forms and Menus explains the workings of these features. It describes the uses and benefits of the menus and the purpose of any form, schedule, and worksheet it uses.

You can copy information from one alternative to any of the other four to produce "What If" scenarios. Each alternative provides a new five year plan. This allows comparison of the same line item in all five alternatives that are supplied.

Usage

You start out like all of the TurboTax programs with a Personal Information Worksheet. You can supply the29 required data or import it from last years TurboTax 1040 return. These facts include name, social security number, address, etc., and all the forms of income you've had for 1991, and 1992 to date.

One little attribute of this program indicates ChipSoft's attention to detail. You are asked your birth date -- the program calculates your age and files it away. If you reach age 65 during the five year window supported by this program, it will automatically add one more exemption, for your age, to the calculations. I Like That!

You have worksheets for: Wages & Salaries, Capital Gains, Itemized Deductions, Business Income/Loss, IRA contributions, and Self Employed income/loss. If you have rental property a worksheet is provided for this also.

After you have completed entering the required data you can run up to five alternatives with assumptions of how your income may rise or fall, and in what areas these changes will occur. The "Main Summary Worksheet" will compile these options to assist you in planning your financial future.

As I said, you may not need this; but who knows what little traps our tax mongers have laid in wait for us? $50.00 may be all that is needed to keep from being slapped with a hefty fine for non-compliance.

All this is supplied for $49.95 from: ChipSoft, Inc. -- Order Dept. -- 6330 Nancy Ridge Dr. -- Suite 103 -- San Diego, CA 92121 -- ph.619/453-8722.

System Requirements:
For the Mac version -- Macintosh Plus or higher with one floppy and one hard drive, one meg RAM and System 6.0 or above. DOS and Windows version -- IBM or compatible with DOS 3.0 or higher, 640K RAM one floppy and a hard disk. Windows users need version 3.0 or higher and 2megs. RAM. (Ha! go for 4megs. and version 3.1 ■■■

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- BITS OF BLUE BULLETIN BOARD operating @ 14,400 baud modem.
  Data: 239-3704
  Voice: 237-4997
- Access 24 hrs/day 7 days/week
  Full E-mail capabilities
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- FULL SUPPORT from the IBM PC Users Group
- DISCOUNTS at:
  SUNRISE COMPUTER SUPPLIES
  3328 Henderson Blvd.
  Tampa, Florida
- ACCESS to the CLUB'S PROGRAM LIBRARY

WordPerfect Class

The WordPerfect class #4 by Ed Buzza is to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. please be prompt. The last class of Ed's four-part series will cover Graphics.

Nominations have been received for the following positions:

President:	Harvey Bruneau
Vice President:	Tom Cone
Treasurer:	Bill Fuller
Mbr. at Large:	Roger Waters
Secretary:	Jim Clark

Tampa IBM PC User's Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492



01-94



A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 6 NO. 1 January, 1993

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: January 13, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

JANUARY AGENDA:
1/13/93

6:00 PM - opening remarks

6:30 PM - Demo by
Kathryn Nakib
of: PRODIGY
Interactive Personal Service

7:30 PM - Break

7:45 PM - Open Discussion

Door Prize Raffle -
PRODIGY (1 MONTH)
& Miscellaneous Items

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Future Presentations:

February -CorelDraw
March -Lotus

Tim Allen says: **"MORE POWER!"**
Tampa IBMPCUG Board says:
"MORE MEMBERS!":
Hey Members, for every guest you bring to a meeting that pays for a membership, each of you get a free raffle ticket for that meeting's raffle. Just take the guest up to the registration table during the break, introduce them as a guest wishing to join and **Voila!**
Renew your own membership and receive a free raffle ticket.

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 932-6745
VICE PRES.: Tom Cone 875-1095
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MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
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(Co-Secretary) Jim Clark

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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 223-3888

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about IBM-PC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 932-6745, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Intel SatisFAXtion/400

Combining Group III Fax and 14,400 bps Data Modem

Review by: Rod McKenzie, Contributing Editor, Madison PC User's Group

Intel has expanded their line of fax/modems by combining the best features of the original SatisFAXtion board with the high performance data transfer of a top-rated high-speed modem, their Model 14.4EX. It has error correction and data compression built into the hardware. The earlier version of SatisFAXtion included an error-correcting 2400 bps modem. While it gave respectable transfer rates, the new SatisFAXtion/400 leaves it in the dust. Speed isn't the only advantage users will notice. Intel uses sophisticated setup software that makes adding their fax/modem to a PC system as trouble-free as any hardware change can be. If the budget prevents choosing this top-of-the-line model, Intel offers two other fax/modems that may be the right choice. Software is provided for data communications and fax transmissions using DOS as well as Windows. The enhanced Windows software, FAXability Plus/OCR, gives the user a powerful utility to convert image files into text files, including virtually all of the popular word processor formats for DOS and Windows. Any user who's looking for terrific transfer rates and really convenient faxing should consider the Intel SatisFAXtion/400.

The 400 is the top-of-the-line fax/modem from Intel. The high marks it receives for performance are due, in large part to the error-correcting, high-speed modem and the 80186 coprocessor that handles the background fax reception so effectively. The SatisFAXtion/200 includes this powerful fax support, but offers a 2400 bps modem instead. V.42bis data compression increases the effective transfer rate to 9600 bps, so it's still a pretty hot package. The SatisFAXtion/100 is a much more basic unit. While it will send faxes at 9600 bps, it will receive at 4800. The data modem is not error correcting and there is no data compression, so 2400 bps is exactly what you get. All three of these models are CAS devices and support the FAXability software. In addition, the Model 100 is compatible with the Class I protocol, which means that it is compatible with even more third-party software for faxing.

The heart of the 400 is a data modem that is the equivalent of the Intel 14.4EX. It can soar to throughput speeds as great as 57,600 bps, giving transfer rates of 2200+ bytes/sec. Sometimes this can be too much of a good thing. At one point I was able to virtually reset the system. I learned that interrupt traffic can be the makings of a system crash. This modem has speed that just won't stop. The user may have to pull in the reins a little to keep things stable. To avoid problems, it was necessary to limit the speed of the unit to 19,200. During an upload that was cruising along at more than 2200 bps, the 386SX computer I was using abruptly went back to the BIOS power on self test (POST) and started checking RAM -- bang, right out of Windows, right out

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of DOS, right off the cliff! Others had warned me to be careful at the high transfer rates, but I had no idea that it would blow the doors off.

This was a little unnerving, but adjusting the software settings in Procomm Plus for Windows took care of it. Files have grown steadily larger on the BBS's file system and downloading takes so long at 2400 baud that I had just about given up on browsing and trying out new programs, but not anymore. At 14,400, and effectively running at even higher speeds, downloading is no longer frustrating. The stable rates are typically in the range of 1170-1550 bps.

The SatisFAXtion/400 is a CAS/DCA compliant fax/modem. There is a growing list of third-party software that works with the SatisFAXtion, including WinFAX from Delrina, and FAXit for Windows. Initially, I ran the original SatisFAXtion Board using WinFAX and didn't miss a beat when I made the conversion to the 400. Intel has made the upgrade as effortless as possible.

Intel makes sure that some very good software is supplied with the modem. Besides the utility disks for setup, the user gets DCA's CrossTalk Communicator for DOS data communications. To run the fax features from DOS, Intel provides a program called FAX, and a capture style program called FAXPOP. It's a memory resident program that will intercept the output that a DOS application sends to a printer port. It redirects it to the fax/modem and gives the user the opportunity to identify the receiver, dial the number, and add a cover sheet to the transmission. The user enables FAXPOP with the use of a hotkey combination. It moves into action when the document is printed to the LPT port. Instead of reaching the printer, FAXPOP creates an image file and starts the process of identifying the sender, receiver, the number to call, and any other files to be included in the fax.

Their Windows fax software is called FAXability for Windows. It operates the board as a printer driver. This program comes in several versions, starting with a simple, send-only version, included free with the card. Then there's a full-featured send/receive version, and finally a send/receive/OCR program. Each of these latter programs is sold separately.

FAXability, promises WYPIWYF (what you print is what you fax). The basic software acts as a printer driver so the user is free to select the fax/modem after the Windows document is completed, the spreadsheet is recalculated, or the graphics are finished. Now that the fax is sent, if a hard copy is needed for your own records, go to the File menu, select Printer Setup, and change the selected printer. Print out the paper version and save the file. Fax phone numbers can be stored in a phone book and even groups of numbers can be called in sequence for a sort of broadcast mode of transmission.

FAXability Plus and Plus/OCR are offered by Intel for more advanced use of the SatisFAXtion board. There's receive capability in the Plus version using a TSR program that exploits the coprocessor found on the 400. At the top level, there's even OCR for interpreting the image that you've received. A fax can be saved as an image or converted by OCR into a text file. Image files can be retransmitted as part of another fax. The text file can also be incorporated into other word processors.

OCR, or Optical Character Recognition, identifies the characters that appear in the image and create an ASCII or word processing file for the user to edit. While it's far from perfect, it's a lot better than retyping everything in the image file. Beside the ASCII format, FAXability will generate the text in virtually any word processing document format. In that case, it tries to identify the type size, and italic or bold typeface features. In several test transmissions, I found that the error rate was fairly high when it tried to read fancy typefaces. FAXability Plus/OCR gave some pretty hilarious spellings for words, especially when the original was in a closely spaced, serif typeface like Times Roman Condensed. It got a little better when the sending fax machine was set for fine resolution.

The best OCR performance, whole sentences without any errors, came when a document was all one point size, using the Lucida FAX or Courier typefaces. Ironically, in all documents tested, the numbers came out correctly recognized, no matter what size or typeface of the original. "5" and "S" were never confused, nor were the numeral one and the lower case "L" mixed up either. Pretty clever, this software.

The following formats are supported by FAXability Plus/OCR. Image files: CAS PCX (ZSoft Image - single page), CAS DCX (ZSoft Image - multi-page), TIFF (no compression), and TIFF (Group III compression). Text files: Ami Pro (.SAM), ASCII, ASCII (database), ASCII (decolumnized), Display Write, EBCDIC, Enable, Excel (.XLS), Framework III, IBM Writing Assistant, Interleaf, Lotus 1-2-3 (.WK1), Lotus Manuscript, MS Word, MS Word/Windows RTF, MS Write, MultiMate, Office Writer, PageMaker/MS Word, PCA, PeachText, PFS: First Choice, PFS: Write, PFS: Write Professional, Q&A Write, Quattro, SAMNA Word IV, Ventura/MS Word, VolksWriter, WordPerfect (4.1, 4.2, 5.0, 5.1), WordStar, and XyWrite.

Needless to say, most word processor users will be able to find a format that will work. They should plan on editing the converted file, and plan for some chuckles along the way. As in the case of the original SatisFAXtion board, the Model 400 has a scanner port for the Intel/Logitech 256 gray scale scanner. It's a high-resolution, hand-held device that can read up to 400 dpi and 256 shades of gray in a scanned image. Images from the scanner, like those from the fax, can be OCR'd. It needs its own base address and interrupt assigned, which the Setup program does very well. It also requires a TSR to be added to the CONFIG.SYS file. It's a device driver provided by Intel, very similar to the Logitech driver but different enough that only the Intel version of it works. The Model 256 scanner is a hand-held, half-page scanner. That may be a limitation to some extent, but software such as Logitech's FotoTouch, with AutoStitch, can join together several strips of an image taken in succession. That will

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make a respectable page for the program to handle.

Documentation for the SatisFAXtion/400 and related software is excellent. There is a separate manual for the 14.4 high-speed data modem and a handy reference card that lists the extended AT command set the modem supports. The fax features, including the setup utilities, are covered in another manual, which also includes the FAXPOP program, the general FAX software, the TSRs, and the CAS manager programs.

Editor's Note: The original SatisFAXtion Board was reviewed by the author in the October 1991 issue of Bits & PC's.

The Intel SatisFAXtion/400 is priced at $499 and is a product of:

Intel Corporation
PCEO Division
5200 N.E. Elam Young Parkway
Hillsboro, OR 97124-6497
(800) 538-3373 (product information)
(800) 458-6231 (fax)
(800) 525-3019 (faxback)

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PhotoFinish

By ZSoft Image Editing in Windows

Review by Meg Hamel, Madison PC User's Group

ZSoft, maker of PC Paintbrush, has introduced a new image-editing program for the Windows environment. While not meant to replace the poplar PC Paintbrush program, PhotoFinish provides users with a low-priced tool for scanning and editing picture files. Although I'm not an expert at handling color images (I'm still not sure what gamma correction means!), I use two similar products on a regular basis: ZSoft's original PC Paintbrush IV+ for DOS, and U-Lead's PhotoStyler (now supported and sold by Aldus).

PhotoFinish fills a niche somewhere between Windows Paint and a higher priced program like PC Paintbrush for Windows. It is equipped with basic drawing tools, plus filters and effects for fine-tuning your pictures. A scanning module supports a number of different scanners. What it lacks are what might be considered "professional" features, such as performing color separations.

I installed PhotoFinish without much fuss. If you have a scanner, there is a separate installation guide that helps you choose the necessary settings for your scanner driver. I had to make a change to my CONFIG.SYS file so that PhotoFinish could recognize my scanner. I'm lucky enough to have a Microtek 600Z color scanner in my office, so that's what I used. This scanner is capable of 600 dpi, but PhotoFinish could only provide settings for 300 dpi and below.

When scanning, you can do a Preview scan that will give you a very low resolution version of your picture. Using this model, you can select just the area you wish to scan, by means of either an adjustable marquee frame over the Preview, or by numerical input boxes that let you specify exact coordinates. Depending on your scanner, you can scan in B&W line art, B&W halftone, gray scale, or 24-bit color. I wish there was a setting for 256-color scanning, since that is the color format most commonly used for computer images. You can convert 24-bit images to 256 color, but that requires an extra step.

Once you have your image, either scanned or imported, you have a number of different editing options available to you. PhotoFinish has a number of filters that can be applied to all or part of the image, such as sharpen, blend, brightness, contrast, etc. Some of these filters are also available as tools in the tool bar. For example, selecting the Tint tool lets you apply a colored tint to certain areas of your image, instead of the whole picture.

There are also regular drawing tools that create rectangles, ellipses, or text on your image. One thing to remember is that this paint program is not the same as a drawing program. The difference is that once you have created a circle on screen, you cannot adjust the size and shape by moving that object's handles, which is possible with a drawing program. A paint program lays down colored pixels in the shape or pattern dictated by the tool. The shape becomes part of the image and cannot be edited separately. This is standard with any paint program.

Text can be any Windows-installed typeface, including TrueType, ATM, or Facelift. As with rectangles and ellipses, PhotoFinish creates a colored representation of the type on your picture -- once in place it cannot be edited as text anymore.

There are other tools that provide special drawing effects. The Paint Roller tool fills an enclosed area with a solid color, a gradient fill, or with a repeating tile pattern that you choose. The Airbrush tool works like a soft paintbrush. You can control the amount of "paint flow," transparency, and other options to create your own custom airbrush.

One limitation is that many of these tools do not work on 256-color pictures. I don't know why this problem exists, since so many people have not yet purchased hi-color or 24-bit monitors, and would, therefore, still be limited to 256 colors. You must convert your image to 24-bit color (or to gray scale if you are working on a B&W picture) before you can use some of these tools. However, this problem also exists in PhotoStyler, so perhaps it is a limitation in Windows.

In a recent issue of PC Magazine (Sept. 29, 1992), PhotoFinish was an Editor's Choice in a roundup of image-editing programs. Part of the reason was the low price. Dollar for dollar, PhotoFinish includes many of the features and toolsthat the higher priced programs have. PC Magazine even rated it higher that ZSoft's more expensive PC Paintbrush. If you want a program to provide a good range of image-editing controls, and you don't need any of the high-end color publishing features, try PhotoFinish.

PhotoFinish list price is $199 and is a product of:

ZSoft Corporation
450 Franklin Road, Suite 100
Marietta, GA 30067
(404) 428-0008
(404) 427-1150 (fax)

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Publisher's Paintbrush 2.02

By ZSoft

Review by: Rodney Schreiner, Madison PC User's Group

Publisher's Paintbrush is the nominal flagship of ZSoft Corporation's fleet of paint programs. Other members of the fleet include PC Paintbrush for DOS and PhotoFinish for Windows. Publisher's Paintbrush was originally a DOS-based program, but with the appearance of version 2.0 in 1991, it made the move to Windows. The current version 2.02 is a minor revision that appeared in April 1992 to fix bugs and add a few minor features.

ZSoft is among the originators of paint programs for MS-DOS computers, and they are the source of the paint programs that have accompanied several versions of Microsoft Windows. For these reasons, the file format created by ZSoft for bit-mapped images, namely PCX format, is a universal standard, accepted by virtually all paint and draw programs for the PC.

A paint program works with images composed of dots. Each dot (picture element or pixel) is independent of the other dots in the image. Although a human viewer may be able to recognize figures, such as squares, circles, and lines, in the image, a paint program cannot. A paint program deals with the image only as a collection of independent pixels. Although most paint programs can create figures, such as squares or lines, once these figures have been created in the image, they lose their identity. The squares, circles, and lines produced by a paint program cannot be modified as squares, circles, or lines. They cannot be moved or resized, except by modifying the individual pixels that compose them. The inability of paint programs to modify figures in an image distinguishes them from drawing programs, which deal with images as a collection of figures. The squares, circles, and lines created with a drawing program retain their identities, and the drawing program can move or resize them.

Images created by a drawing program are more easily modified than those created by a paint program. This situation suggests that a paint program is less functional than a drawing program. Such would be the case if the only source of computer images were paint or draw programs. However, many images used with computers originate outside the computer. Many images start as photographs that can be scanned, or as video that can be captured from a camera or VCR. The cameras that create photographic or video images are, in a way, like paint programs. They do not recognize individual objects, but create images as a collection of colored dots. Therefore, when the images created by cameras are translated into computer form, the images are in the format of paint program images. Paint programs are able to modify the images obtained from cameras, and in this area lies their greatest utility.

Publisher's Paintbrush can acquire images from scanners or from video grabbers. For scanners, Publisher's Paintbrush comes with a calibration card. It contains an array of squares of various shades of gray. The scanner is calibrated by scanning this card and selecting Calibrate from one of the program menus. The program automatically adjusts the scanned image to agree with the known shades on the card. This adjustment is then performed on all subsequent images from the scanner. A printer can also be calibrated by printing the scanned image and running the printout through the scanner. By this process, a reasonably good printed copy of a scanned image is assured.

I tried both a hand scanner (Logitech ScanMan 256) and a flatbed scanner (Hewlett-Packard ScanJet IIC) with Publisher's Paintbrush. A good image from the hand scanner was quite difficult to obtain; most images contained spurious lines or gaps, or were badly skewed. (By comparison, the software that comes with the hand scanner gives excellent results with little effort. To use Publisher's Paintbrush to edit an image obtained from a hand scanner, I recommend using the software that accompanies the hand scanner to obtain the image, saving the image in PCX format, and loading the saved image into Publisher's Paintbrush.) However, Publisher's Paintbrush worked flawlessly with the flatbed scanner, giving 24-bit color, 256 gray, and black and white images. The image can be prescanned to obtain a rough image, and the desired area can be framed on the prescanned image. Publisher's Paintbrush supports most popular flatbed and hand scanners, and some video grabbers. However, the complete list of supported hardware is not listed on the box, in the manual, or in a text file on the program disks. The complete list appears only during the installation of the program. Make sure the dealer guarantees that this program works with your hardware before buying it.

Publisher's Paintbrush has a wide assortment of tools with which an image can be altered. These include display tools that affect how the image is displayed on the screen, selection tools that allow sections of the image to be isolated from the rest of the image, drawing tools for adding, changing, or removing portions of the image, special effects tools to add patterns to the image, and retouching tools that change the brightness, contrast, and sharpness of the image. The display tools allow Publisher's Paintbrush to show several copies of an image simultaneously. Each copy can be displayed at a different magnification. The Zoom tool magnifies or reduces a displayed image, the Hand tool moves the portion of the image displayed, and the Locator tool forces all displayed copies of an image to show the same portion of the image.

Among the drawing tools are those for creating figures such as rectangles, ellipses, and lines. Also included are tools for simple modifications, such as a paintbrush that applies a selected color to a small area, an eraser that removes all color from a small area, and a color eraser that in a small area changes pixels of one color to another color. For these tools, the size and shape of the affected area can be selected. However, the program does not indicate on the screen the size or shape of the area to be affected before the tool is used. This is a very serious problem, which makes using these tools quite difficult. The only way to determine what will be drawn or erased is to actually draw or erase. Fortunately, Publisher's Paintbrush has an undo tool, which reverses the last change to the image. However, trying and undoing until

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the desired result is obtained is most inefficient. The text tool adds letters and digits to the image. Publisher's Paintbrush comes with several bitmapped and outline fonts that can be used to add text to an image. However, the program does not take advantage of the TrueType fonts that Windows 3.1 supports. An eyedropper tool allows a particular color to be selected from the image, so that color can be applied or modified with the other drawing tools.

The retouching tools distinguish Publisher's Paintbrush from low-end paint programs. The contrast tool increases contrast by fading pale colors and darkening deeper colors. The brightness tool increases the brightness of all colors. The tint tool mixes a selected color with the colors in the image, rather like covering the image with a tinted glass. The blend tool averages the colors in a selected area, while the smudge tool randomly moves the pixels around in a selected area. All of these tools can be applied to the whole image, to a selected rectangle, or freehand, by selecting the shape and size of the tool and moving it over the image. These freehand tools, like the drawing tools, do not indicate on the screen the area of the image to be affected, making them difficult to use.

A variety of other effects can be applied to the entire image or rectangular portions of the image. Spots of various sizes can be removed, detail can be enhanced, or a mosaic effect can be applied. The image can be rotated, but only in multiples of 90 degrees. A color image can be separated into its three color components: red, green, and blue.

The manual is in five sections: Introduction (16 pages), Getting Started (60 pages), Tutorials (54 pages), Menus (88 pages), and Reference (40 pages). Introduction deals with installation, system requirements, memory usage, scanner and printer calibration, and file types. Getting Started describes each of the tools, with step-by-step instructions in their use. Tutorials covers the basics of creating a new image with the drawing tools, and retouching and enhancing supplied images. The Menus section is the reference section, describing the functions of the menu selections. The Reference section is actually a description of miscellaneous features and auxiliary files that accompany Publisher's Paintbrush, such as fonts and scanner drivers. The manual is clear and written to be understood by a novice to image editing. Technical terms are used sparingly and are defined when they are used. This manual would not serve as a text for someone interested in learning the jargon of image processing, for terms such as hue, saturation, and chroma are avoided.

If Publisher's Paintbrush were the only high-end paint program available, it could be recommended, for it is capable of both simple and complex image editing. However, by comparison to other paint programs, it leaves much to be desired. ZSoft's own PhotoFinish has much more usable tools (they do indicate the area they will affect) and only slightly fewer capabilities for a much lower price. Micrographix Picture Publisher has superior capabilities and more functional tools (although they are implemented differently) for a similar price. Publisher's Paintbrush is old and has been improved upon in other programs. For these reasons, I'd recommend looking elsewhere for a paint program.

Publisher's Paintbrush is a product of;
ZSoft Corporation
450 Franklin St., Suite 100
Marietta, Georgia 30067
(404) 428-0008
(404) 427-1150 (fax)

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DosFax PRO

Review by Sandy Dickson, Madison PC User's Group

Do you like software that lets you rip off the shrink wrap, do a mindless install, and klutz around intuitively to get some reasonable results before getting to the "read the manual" stage? Me, too! While DosFax PRO by Delrina isn't quite that easy, it does deliver what it promises ... a convenient way to fax documents from within DOS applications and receive faxes on your computer without interrupting your work. Quite an improvement over the cumbersome fax software usually packaged with fax/modems!

Installation and Setup

The installation process was automatic until it reached the Fax/Modem Setup stage. At that point, the choices became myriad and the manual became necessary. With all the parameters that required setting, I assumed (incorrectly, as such things go) that DosFax was creating a custom initialization string to reflect the modem setup choices. Wrong. You're on your own with your particular modem. This got to be a bit troublesome as my fax/modem is a Zoom 14.4 (V.32bis) and, according to Delrina's technical support, the newfound popularity of fast modems was unanticipated at the time of DosFax PRO's initial release (5/92).

DosFax uses whatever extended (XMS) or expanded (EMS) memory it can find for swapping and optimizing its performance, though either option can be disabled. Hotkeys for invoking capture and fax capabilities while in a DOS application can be customized to avoid possible conflicts with other hotkeys or macros. Screen status messages can display call progress when you are sending or receiving a fax while working in DOS or in any DOS application.

The heart of DosFax's convenience is that its document capture works like a printer driver and can emulate either a HP LaserJet IIP or Epson FX85 printer. DosFax uses these emulations to print the document to a buffer (when the "capture" hotkey is invoked) where it is held until another hotkey combination converts it to a fax image file for sending. Normal printing, to the physically attached printing device, is blocked during that time.

Two TSRs are required for DosFax operation. FAXCOM is the communication TSR that operates the faxing and conversion (from document to fax image file) process, phone book(s) and modem. FAXCAP captures documents (via hotkeys) for faxing from within DOS applications. The combination occupies a total of 70K and can be loaded into high memory with

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DOS 5.0 While the manual had the instructions backwards, accompanying Release Notes noted that the sequence in which the TSRs are loaded into memory (and unloaded) is crucial.

Although DosFax willingly alters your AUTOEXEC.BAT and PATH statement for autoload at boot, I chose "not" in favor of batch files to load/unload the two required TSRs when desired. This seemed necessary since I use other communication TSRs and DosFax's Release Notes warn against such co-residency. It's also a good idea to unload the DosFax TSRs before using your regular communications program. I didn't and was shocked when my 14.4 modem was slowed to 500-600 cps for a large file transfer on a MPCUG BBS call.

Sending

sing pop-up menus and graphic dialog boxes, DosFax provides two methods of sending a fax: from any DOS application and from the DosFax PRO Administrator. Sending from the Administrator is best suited for brief fax messages "on the fly." You can type or insert a short text (ASCII) block into a predefined cover page and, optionally, attach other previously saved fax files. For more extensive efforts, generate a fax of the document in your current DOS application such as word processing, desktop publishing, forms, spreadsheet or database. A cover page and previously saved fax files can also be added ... and see it all via the Image Viewer before sending!

Through the Administrator, DosFax can also schedule delayed fax transmissions for any time/date specified and keep a comprehensive log (view on screen or print) of the details of all faxes sent or received. Each phone book can handle more fax numbers than people I know with faxes (up to 1,000), and are easy to set up. Broadcast groups can be defined for sending the same fax to a number of different people.

Once setup was complete <whew>, I happily began faxing from WordPerfect 5.1 to the fax machine on my second phone line. (This is the fun part.) Prepare a document, invoke the hotkey combination for "capturing" the document (Ctrl-Shift-C), and use WordPerfect's normal keystrokes to "print" the page to the defined HP LaserJet IIP. Once "capture printed" in this manner, invoke another hotkey combo (Ctrl-Shift-F) to activate the fax dialog box for converting to a fax image file and fax transmission.

A pop-up window lets you choose a destination from your defined phone book list (or manually enter one), schedule the time for sending the fax (immediately or any date/time you choose), choose high or low fax printing resolution, attach other files (provided you've had the forethought to save them as fax image files via the "capture print" and conversion process), and even type a cover page on the fly. You can fax many different documents from several DOS applications and combine them all into one fax transmission. Press the "send" button and it's on its way! Meanwhile, you can watch its progress via messages that appear in the upper right corner of your regular application screen -- and continue to work on another document.

This worked so slick that I nearly ran out of fax paper before I remembered to try it from other programs. The DosFax box touts its ability to fax directly from any DOS application, including WordPerfect, Lotus 1-2-3, Microsoft Word, Q&A, ad inf. It didn't say a word about two of my favorites (outside of WordPerfect, that is), PFS Professional Write and Professional File. Since the capture process is essentially a bogus printer, the DosFax manual (by now well-thumbed) suggests assigning the "capture printer" to a different parallel port than the one you use for actual printing. Thus, by selecting LPT2 as the Print Capture port, you need only switch printer ports within your application to change between actual printing and capturing for fax. Seemed logical (and worked dandy in WordPerfect), but didn't work with the PFS programs. They recognized that LPT2 didn't REALLY exist and refused to print to it.

Delrina tech support disagreed with the manual's setup suggestion and said that it seemed to work better to specify the "capture printer" on LPT1 since the process of "capturing" blocked actual printing to the physical printer while invoked. Tech support was right. (I knew there was some benefit to not reading manuals!) Once this problem was solved, faxing even worked from PrintShop (albeit slowly) and my accounting program.

The most fun I had with DosFax was with the customizable cover page feature. The top four inches of a fax transmittal constitute a blank canvas for clip art, logo or wit created in any DOS application and converted to a fax image file. DosFax allows you to choose from your logo file each time you use a cover page. Depending upon how you define your default cover page, DosFax will also automatically nab recipient name and sender name from entries in other dialog boxes, and time/date from your computer settings, and insert them in the appropriate places on the printed cover page.

The only annoying idiosyncracy I found in DosFax was its reporting of a transmission error as the final status of each fax sent. It always sent all the pages -- and they were all received properly -- but DosFax insisted on reporting "Transmission Error 48" in the report log and in the Display Call Progress box. When I finally got through to Delrina's technical support, they were most accommodating, but couldn't explain it. It seems my ubiquitous "error 48" wasn't on their list of possible error codes. I tried all their suggestions for modem tweaking to no avail. I also downloaded (and ran) a maintenance upgrade patch file (8/92 release) meant to accommodate the new 14.4 modems from their tech support BBS in Toronto. Still no change. At this writing, "Transmission Error 48" is still the logged status of all faxes I send with DosFax, but it neither affects nor reflects the actual success of the transmission. It's just annoying and may be specific to my Zoom 14.4 modem.

Receiving

Receipt of incoming faxes requires a send/receive fax/modem and a few more choices. In the default automatic reception mode, DosFax can receive faxes completely in the background (you must periodically check its Administrator for newly received faxes), notify you when a fax is received, or print incoming faxes immediately upon receipt. Enabling the Display Call Progress option (initial setup) shows fax receive messages in the corner of the screen in DOS applications without interrupting your work.(Continued on next page)

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After receipt, faxes can be viewed (zoom in and out), rotated (if sent upside down), saved to PCX or TIFF image file formats for further modification in other applications, or converted to a transmit file to send them again. Received fax images can also be converted into editable text by using any optical character recognition (OCR) software for DOS (this capability already incorporated into the soon-to-be-released upgrade to WinFax PRO). While the printer output of incoming faxes didn't seem as crisp as on a dedicated fax, it was readable and quite acceptable.

Compatibility

As a DOS user who'd still rather fight than switch (entirely to Windows, that is), I found DosFax addicting and fun to use once configured correctly. Windows users would likely prefer its older sister, WinFax PRO. The two programs look and work very much alike and can share the same logs, phone books and fax image files on systems where both programs exist. It is NOT recommended you use DosFax PRO for sending or receiving faxes in the DOS window in Windows.

DosFax PRO supports most popular Class 1, Class 2, and Sendfax (for sending faxes only) modems/boards and can receive faxes from any Group 3 fax machine or fax board. It requires 640K memory, at least 2.5 MB of hard disk space, MS-DOS 3.I or higher, and is Microsoft mouse compatible. Supported graphics include Hercules, CGA text mode, EGA, VGA, and higher.

DosFax PRO list price is $79 (street price is about $50) and is from:

Delrina Technology, Inc.
6830 Via Del Oro, Suite 240
San Jose, CA 95119-1353
(408) 363-2345
(716) 855-3676
(416) 441-0333 (fax)

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Windows

Pete Moore, LILYPAD

WINDOWS' "AUTOEXEC" FILE

This month and next, I'm going to go through WIN.INI from top to bottom, and tell you lots of the things that are specified there, and what changes you can make in many of them. I won't have room for all that information in a single column, so if this information doesn't interest you, next month's column will bore you, too. Be warned.

While SYSTEM.INI serves as a sort of Windows CONFIG.SYS file, specifying the names (and if necessary the locations) of every driver that Windows needs on startup, WIN.INI acts rather like an AUTOEXEC.BAT file, doing the Windows equivalent of a lot of DOS "SET VariableName=Value" statements. In your AUTOEXEC.BAT file, those "SET" statements put information into the DOS environment, where any program can look it up as needed. For instance, Procomm Plus likes to set a PCPLUS environment variable to tell Procomm where its files are, ie "SET PCPLUS=C:\PCPLUS".

Well, in WIN.INI there are sections that make similar, but much more detailed, information available to all your Windows apps. Windows sets up about 18 sections of its own information, and on top of that, many annoyingly pushy Windows apps insert their own new sections, rather than politely writing their own INI files. The sections created by Windows are as follows: [colors],[compatibility],[desktop],[devices], [embedding],[extensions], [fonts], [fontSubstitutes], [intl], [mci extensions] [network],[ports],[printerPorts],[programs], [sounds],[TrueType], [Windows], and [Windows Help]. I'm not going to try to explain every one in detail, because I expect you know or can figure out what most of them are for, but for any that seem particularly obtuse, I'll give a thumbnail sketch. And now without further ado, let's look at an alphabetized list of the first nine sections that Windows itself writes; [colors] through intl].

[colors]

This section is ordinarily written and modified through the Control Panel, and there's not much likelihood that you would want to modify it manually. It contains a list of Windows' screen display components, followed by numerical parameters giving each component's Red, Green, and Blue values, on a scale from 0 to 255. Entries look like this: "COMPONENT=R G B".

[compatibility]

This section deals with "patching" minor incompatibilities between Windows 3.0 and 3.1. Each line is merely the name of an application, followed by a hexadecimal value, like "CHARISMA=0X2000". Whether you have the particular application on your system or not, Microsoft warns that you shouldn't manually alter any entries in this section.

[desktop]

Again, many entries in this section are commonly altered through the Control Panel, though some entries are only entered and changed manually. Here are the entries in alphabetical order:

"GridGranularity=#"

This one is set through the Control Panel. In this entry, "#" is a number from zero to 49, with a default of zero. Granularity, as I mentioned in my October '92 column, gives your desktop a kind of "snap-to-grid" option, letting you specify how coarse or fine you want the invisible grid to be. Each number above zero increases the coarseness by eight pixels.

"IconSpacing=#"

Control Panel again . . . In my September '92 column, I told you about the five icon-oriented entries possible. This one sets the horizontal spacing, and has a default of 77.

"IconTitleFaceName=font name"

(Continued on next page)

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This one has a default of MS Sans Serif, and can only be changed manually.

"IconTitleSize=#"

Another manual entry, and sets the point size for icon titles. The default is eight points.

"IconTitleWrap=#"

This is accessed through the Control Panel, and can only take two values -- zero, or its default of one, which wraps long titles to as many as three lines.

"IconVerticalSpacing=#"

Manual again, this setting is the one Windows uses whenever you use the Arrange Icons command. Its default depends on the IconTitleSize setting and the display driver.

"Pattern=b1 b2 b3 b4 b5 b6 b7 b8"

This is a Control Panel job, and fills your screen with any 8 x 8-pixel bitmap. Its default is None, and if you want, you can click on "Edit Pattern" and create one of your own.

"TileWallpaper=#"

Control Panel again, this takes a one or zero, default zero.

"Wallpaper=BMP-filename"

The default for this Control Panel selection is None, but you can set it to any image that's in Paintbrush's .BMP format. If the image isn't in your Windows directory, just type in its entire pathname.

"WallpaperOriginX=#"
"WallpaperOriginY=#"

These are manual entries, which default to zero. If you change the values, your wallpaper's top left corner will be moved that number of pixels to the right or down.

[devices]

This is another section that was included just to maintain compatibility with pre-3.1 Windows, in this case 2.x. Again, alter or delete anything here at your peril, because pre-3.1 applications might look for information here. The format here is "DEVICE=driver,port [port, port...]"

[embedding]

This section duplicates information found in the REG.DAT registration database, defining classes of objects that can be embedded in OLE client programs. Again, it's here for apps that don't assume you're using Windows 3.1, so don't alter anything here. The entries look like this: "ExcelWorksheet=Microsoft Excel Worksheet, Microsoft Excel Worksheet, C:\EXCEL".

[extensions]

You can modify these by using the File Associate command in File Manager, or you can edit them manually. These entries tell Windows what application to launch when you double-click on a data file. The syntax is "EXT=PROGNAME.EXE ^.EXT", as in "ini=notepad.exe ^.ini". This section can have a bazillion entries, and lots of installation programs modify it, so why should you be any different? Personally, I always make sure that any program specified that's not in my Windows directory has the full pathname included, like "txt=C:\WIN31\NDW\deskedit.exe ^.txt". This means thatWindows won't have to search my PATH looking for DeskEdit.

One note here -- this information is PARTIALLY duplicated in REG.DAT, and if the entry in REG.DAT differs from this one, REG.DAT's data gets used. Therefore, it's safest, or least frustrating, to actually use the File Associate command, which updates both entries for you.

[fonts]

This section contains the names of all of the screen fonts that were either included with Windows, or were installed via the Control Panel's Fonts selection.

[fontSubstitutes]

This section can only be updated manually, and it contains a list of the fonts you want Windows to use when a program calls for the old Helv, Tms Rmn, Times, or Helvetica. The default substitutions use, in order, MS Sans Serif, MS Serif, Times New Roman, and Arial. MS Serif and MS Sans Serif are bit-mapped fonts, while the others are TrueType fonts.

[intl]

This is a biggie, with lots of possible entries, so I'm going to skim over it. Even I'm not fascinated in the minutiae of ALL this stuff. The basic purpose of this entire section, accessed through the Control Panel, is to tell Windows your personal preferences for how numbers, dates, and times should be displayed. In the interest of brevity, I'll just list the entries alphabetically, with their default values. When I list values like "0 | 1", that means "either zero or one." Here goes:

"iCountry=#" (default = 1, for USA). "iCurrDigits=#" (default = 2, for Currency decimal places). "iCurrency=#" (default = 0, for Currency symbol position -- 0 = before the value). "iDate=0 |1 | 2" (default depends on the sCountry setting). "iDigits=#" (default = 2, number of decimal places). "iLZero=0 | 1" (default = 0, 1 = display leading zeros). "iMeasure=0 | 1" (default = 1, 0 = metric, 1 = English). "iNegCurr=#" (default = 0 to display negative values in parentheses). "iTime=0 | 1" (default = 0 for 12-hour clock). "iTLZero=0 | 1" (default = 0, 1 = displayleading zero in time values). "s1159=string" (default = "AM", characters to display for a.m. times). "s2359=string" (default = "PM", characters to display for p.m. times). "sCountry=string" (default = "United States"). "sCurrency=string" (default = "$"). "sDecimal=string" (default = ".", specifies decimal separator). "sLanguage=string" (default = "enu" for U.S. English). "sLis=string" (default = "," for punctuation to separate items in a list). "sLongDate=format" (default = "dddd, MMMM dd, yyyy" for long date format). "sShortDate=format" (default = "M/d/yy"

(Continued on next page)

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for short date format). "sThousand=string" (default = "," for thousands separator). "sTime=string" (default = ":" for time separator).

Well, that takes us halfway through the 18 sections in a default WIN.INI file, and tells us more than we want to know about what it's all there for. Pay particular attention to the items where I specifically warned against tampering. As I said, most of the "no-tamper" sections were included just to make pre-Windows 3.1 programs work acceptably with the latest andgreatest version of the GUI we all love to hate. So be careful, boys and girls. It's a jungle in there. See you next month . . .

- Pete

New Membership Category.

A family can now join our group for just $30.00. Family memberships receive the same privileges as single membership(Exceptions: One election vote per family and one newsletter mailed to head of household) Of course a single membership is still available for $20.00.

Tampa IBM PC User's Group
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492

MODEM CLASS:

The Modem class by Ed Patzsch is to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. (Room behind and left of the reception area) Please be Prompt!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

JOHN H. BOUSHELL
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JEAN-LUC BURLE
JOHN CHAVEZ
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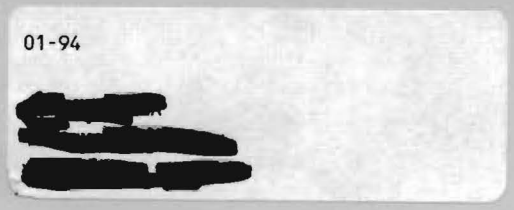
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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 6 NO. 2 February, 1993

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: February 10, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

FEBRUARY AGENDA:

2/10/93

6:00 PM - opening remarks

6:30 PM - Demo by Corel Corp. of:

CorelDRAW

Illustrating, Charting, Photo & Bitmap Editing and Presentations.

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
CorelDRAW
& Miscellaneous Items

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Future Presentation:

Lotus SmartSuite

By: Elena Fernandez of Lotus
March 10, 1993

MODEM CLASS:

The Modem class by Don Patzsch is to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. (Room behind and left of the reception area) Please be Prompt!

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	932-6745
VICE PRES.:	Tom Cone	223-3888
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MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
SECRETARY:	Jim Clark	986-3888

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EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:	Tom Cone	223-3888

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about IBM-PC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	$288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 932-6745, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Minutes of meeting - 01/13/93

By: Ed Buzza

Instead of Jim Clark's scintillating coverage of what transpired at our UserGroup meeting, I did the best I could to record the proceedings. There were many topics of discussion and my 2k scratch pad memory barely coped with what went on. In another room, Don Patzsch conveyed some of his vast knowledge of modems to a group of interested, and appreciative, club members -- more classes to follow. Our indefatigable President called the meeting to order and spoke on a variety of subjects.

CLUB NEWS

- Membership annual dues. $20 for a single membership; $30 for a family membership.

- New membership benefit. A free raffle ticket will be given for each new membership or renewal taken at the regular meeting. For family membership, only the primary member (head of household) will receive a free raffle ticket.

- New computer. Through the very generous kindness of one of our members, who remains anonymous, the BBS now has a brand new 486-33DX Gateway computer. Also, our BBS is now equipped with a 14.4k bps modem. We are in the process of acquiring Desqview so that the Sysop can do some multi-tasking instead of having to wait in line to do some work on the system.

- Guests. Please tell your guests to PRINT their name and address when they "sign in" at the door. We send a sample newsletter to all guests but we do need a legible name and address for mailing.

- Christmas presents. Santa was good to our President this year. He got a Pro Audio Spectrum 16 sound board, with speakers. Prices for the sound board at various dealers in town vary quite a bit. Highest was $239 and lowest (WorkPlace) was $197.

  Harvey also shared with us his opinions and comments on The Video Blaster board which he is testing for his employer. The Video Blaster board not only shows TV on the computer monitor, it can also capture video images and save them to disk. But video capture takes up a LOT of space on the hard drive. Ten seconds of 8 bit color needs over 9 meg - and that is without sound!

  The video board is about $400 locally but only around $320 mail order. Our Prez had a bit of trouble with these boards. What he thought was hardware or software failure was really due to one speaker being bad and one of the video jacks not working.(Continued on next page)

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- Business news. Everex has filed for Chapter 11. In contrast, IBM is doing good with Value Point and with PS/1 computers. IBM now offers a 3 year warranty.

- Software news. EXCEL Ver 4 is really nice, Harvey was impressed with the new features. PageMaker Ver 5 is now available. Approach is a very good data base, user friendly, and easy to learn.

- Stacker. Version 3 is now shipping. Harvey had no problem with installing or using this package but others have reported trouble. The new version lets you stack across floppies. Best of all, Stacker is on the floppy so you can run it from there on a PC that doesn't have Stacker.

- PKWare. The new version of PKWare is now on the BBS. It does a better job on compression. One 400k file was compressed an additional 60k. There have been problems reported using this version with OS/2, Desqview, and with QuarterDeck - from losing UMBs to system being rebooted. Also, Norton AV needs an update (it gives a false virus reading).

- Membership benefits.
  1) A monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of the month. The meeting place is the IBM Customer Center, Lake Pointe One Bldg., 3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd., Room 450.
  2) 24 hour, 7 day access to Bits of Blue Bulletin Board.
  3) Monthly Bits of Blue Newsletter
  4) Hardware/software demonstrations or presentations by vendors of major corporations of by User Group members.
  5) Donated software/hardware and 50/50 pool given away based on raffle drawing at the meeting.
  6) Library of shareware and vendor demonstration programs for copying.
  7) Various educational classes. e.g. Modems, BBS, WordPerfect, DOS, etc..
  8) Discounts at Sunrise Computer Supplies.

- Games. "Wolfenstein" is now passe. "Catacomb Abyss" is the latest thing. Also, "Heaven and Earth" is supposed to be THE game. As one member said, "It'll take you a year!"

PRODIGY

Kathryn Nakib, a Senior Marketing Representative from Prodigy Services Co., demonstrated some of the new features of Prodigy (R).

It is the largest on-line service of its kind with over two million members. Prodigy can be described as sort of like cable TV for personal computers. Over 850 services are available for the base subscription of $14.95 on a monthly basis. A yearly subscription averages out to about $12.95 per month. Subscription covers up to 6 members in a household.

There are a variety of Custom Choices that are available but at additional cost. However, you are told in advance that a particular service is an additional cost item before you enter that service.

9600 baud is available ($2/month) in a number of cities and is being expanded to other cities almost daily. The high light screen has been redesigned and can be customized. Auto log-on is available and you can change your password. A version for Windows is due later this year.

BillPay USA is an added fee Custom Choice that lets you pay your bills through your checking account. The fee is $9.95/mo for up to 30 transactions. Another Custom Choice is the Strategic Investor that shows information about stocks and mutual funds. Data such as quarterly and annual income, dividends, quick and current ratios, balance sheet, performance, etc.. is shown and can be downloaded to your printer or popular spreadsheet, database or word processing programs. Information on stocks incurs about a 15 minute delay.

There is no shareware download except through the ZIFFnet service. For an added fee of $7.50/hour, and a 4 cent/minute surcharge for 9600 baud, you can access PC Magazine, Computer Shopper and PC Computing.

The basic service has a lot of topics for almost every taste. The over 400 bulletin boards cover such topics as art, computers, education, food and wine, games, religion, seniors, sports, and travel. EAASY SABRE helps you find information about airline flights, schedules, amenities, and you can book a flight and even rent a car and make hotel reservations from your personal computer.

Electronic mail is available and is limited to 30 messages. After that, a fee of 25 cents is charged for each message. E-Mail is held for you for up to two weeks. At this time, all messaging is done on-line; there is no facility to write, spell check and compose your messages off-line.

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:
PRODIGY (R) Start Up Kits

.. Jean-Luc Burle	.. Nick Klak
.. Jim Clark	.. Bill LaForest
..William Coleman	.. M. N. Martenz
.. T. Cone	.. Merle Nicholson
.. Ray Cooper	.. Cheryl Petty
.. Joe Crochet	.. George Pollak
.. G. Ennis	.. Kevan Sheridan
.. J. Esposito	.. Robert Stribling
.. William Fuller	.. Floyd Thrower
.. R. Hollander	.. John Waldon
.. Charles Howe	.. Roger Waters

QUICKEN .. J. Esposito
50-50 ($28).. ? Ticket not marked.

COMING EVENTS

February: CorelDRAW
March : Lotus (Smart Suite)
Don Patzsch (AM-TAX)

■ ■ ■

There are three kinds of people:
Those that make things happen,
Those that watch things happen
and those that sit
and wonder what happened!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

HENRY L. BLOHM
MICHAEL R. BUCEY
JEFF EDWARDS
JAMES HARRING
JEFF HERMAN
JOSEPH G. KING
NICHOLAS KLAK
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Friends of the User Group:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

IBM
Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
Computer City
PC Warehouse
Custom Computer Wholesale
Software Etc.
CompuAdd

Whoever said, "Money can't buy happiness", didn't know where to shop!

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

A couple of members mentioned that they missed my Presidents Column in last month's newsletter. Thank you for noticing and stating so. Simply put, I was recouping from 1992 and the holidays which always includes **Food, Family and Fun.** These are my favorite 'F' words. Of course there is one that I don't like, **'Financial debt'** which is incurred during the holidays, then comes to visit me a couple of months later. Marylee always says it's better to give than to receive so I always make sure that I give myself something during the holidays. I am sure that's what CompUSA also thinks when they **give** me a bill for stuff I purchased for the holidays on my charge card. I certainly hope that the Holidays and Santa were good to each of you and your families.

At our December meeting I announced that one of our members had donated a computer to our group. The computer was a Gateway 486. This system has replaced our old 286 BBS PC which required TLC on a regular basis from Kevan to maintain its daily operation. Additionally, the 286 did not have expansion capability for future growth of the BBS without a premium investment. The board felt that it was not in the groups best interest to invest money into the 286. We had decided that the minimum system we needed was a 386/mhz with 4Mb of RAM and 120HD. All we needed was a generous donation from a vendor or more money in our bank account to acquire this PC. Neither occured or would occur in a timely matter. However, out of the blue a PC showed up donated by an anonymous member. To date I am not sure who donated this system. Could it be Mr. or Mrs. Claus or even one of Santas helpers? I don't now but the donation has revived my belief in Santa. I think he or she has retired in Tampa from the North Pole and is a member of group. Anyway, whoever you are, on behalf of our group I wanted to say -

THANK YOU !

The elections are over. **Hooray!** Now we have a new president and an old president. The country elected Mr. Cinton as our new president and the user group elected me as the old president. This will be my 5th year as president. **Trivia Question:** who has been on the board longer than me? I never thought in 1988 when I was first elected that I would do it beyond one year. Well every year it gets better. I certainly would not have done it if we didn't have a staff of dedicated volunteers. Look at the names under the officers section, seek these people out during a meeting or get on the BBS and tell them THANKS. They are the ones making this all possible. We have a new Vice-President this year. Tom Cone has been in charge of membership relations in the past. He will continue in that capacity in addition to his new position. Additionally, members are slowly coming forward and volunteering their services. We are extremely fortunate to have a good group of volunteers. Please join me in welcoming back Tom, Bill, Roger, Jim, Ed, Marylee, Larry, Kevan for 1993. Oh course we welcome and need more volunteers.

My goals for this year: 300+ membership, bulk mailing, formal Special Interest Groups (SIGs) including Windows, OS/2, DOS, word processing & spreadsheets. Other SIGs will be started as we get volunteers to run them. Additionally, we will implement a process for members to acquire free software based on a written review of the product. Vendors are willing to give us full working evaluation copies of software to our group based on a written review. The board will implement procedures for this process soon. Presently our inventory of reviewable software includes:

- Lotus Organizer for Windows - Personal Information Manager by Lotus Development Corp.
- FASTLYNX - File Transfer System by Rupp Technology Corp.
- Adobe Type Set - Software Fonts by Adobe Systems Inc.
- Star Trek the Screen Saver for Windows by Berkeley Systems
- Express Publisher for Windows - Desktop Publishing w/ Text Appeal - Logo builder by Power Up Software Corp.
- KUI - Keyboard User Interface for Windows by Softac Corp.

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If you are interested in reviewing products please contact me in order that I may add you to our list. Reviewers will need to meet the qualifications specified in the procedures written by the board before any software is handed out for review.

Last year I stated that in 1992 there would be a battle between IBM and Microsoft and their respective 32 bit operating systems. Windows NT and OS/2 were going to duke it out. It never happened because NT didn't ship. Now rumors are that Microsoft will ship a subset of NT just to get it to market in order to prevent IBM from slowly building an OS/2 following. While these two giants have been battling with their marketing machines, Novell purchased the rights to UNIX. It will be interesting to see if this group turns into the *Three Amigos, Three Stooges, Three Little Pigs or just Three's a Crowd*. Meanwhile the classic old DOS is fixing to be upgraded. If this OS is as good as DOS 5.0 was, bring it on Microsoft! As Ray Charles would say, *YOU GOT THE RIGHT ONE BAAAABY. UNH UH*. DOS still works for the masses and Mr. Bill (Gates) knows there is still money in it.

Harvey P. Bruneau

What's new :

Andrew J. Gnoza, III

IDG Books has just published the **"PC World Excel 4 for Windows Handbook"** by John Walkenbach and David Maguiness. This 1456 page bible to Excel 4.0 is a complete reference and tutorial to Excel 4.0, with hundreds of tips, tricks, shortcuts, and real world applications. It is an ideal resource for beginners to experts who need to learn the basics and move on to more advanced commands, features and functions of this powerful spreadsheet program. Included in the book is a 32 page Quick Reference booklet which provides users with a handy access to the most common Excel functions. The book is now available in book stores and retails for $29.95

■ ■ ■

WordPerfect News...

Ed Buzza, Tampa IBM PCUG

WordPerfect PresentationsThe winter issue of WordPerfect Report© has some interesting news. WP Presentations (was DrawPerfect) began shipping Nov. '92. For the first 90 days, they will give away a Sound Blaster board with the retail package. Use it to play the 100 MIDI files included with Presentation. The free sound board is *not* good with any upgrades. If you bought DrawPerfect between 6/23/92 and 30 days after release of Presentations, you can get Presentations free. If prior to 6/23/92, $99 is upgrade price.

WordPerfect for Windows Ver 5.2

The new version is shipping this quarter and orders are being accepted now. $39.95 (not including shipping, tax, etc.) to upgrade from Ver 5.1, FREE if you purchased full retail package between 10/1/92 and 30 days after WP5.2 ships.

- **Grammatik 5** is included and available from a pull-down menu.
- **Adobe Type Manager** with some fonts created just for WP.
- **New Macros** like the Pleading and Replace macros.
- **New Button Bars** that can be edited or create your own.
- **QuickFinder** offers fast indexing and text retrieval.
- **Mail-enabled** offers improved e-mail capability.
- **OLE** support is now provided.
- **QuickMenu** lets you get to edit options w/o using menus.
- Other enhancements are in installation and in using Windows print drivers - no more "Updating Printer Info" messages!

WordPerfect (DOS)

There is no *official* word on the next upgrade to WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS. Lots of rumors though that version 6.0 will be out around the middle of 1993. However, this is only speculation and you should not base your plans to acquire WordPerfect on rumor.

■ ■ ■

Software Review: Publish It! for Windows, Version 3.0

Review By: Jim Clark, Tampa IBM PCUG

What It Is: Publish It!, as the name implies, is a desktop publishing program by Timeworks, Inc. It has been a competitor in the low end of the DTP software market for quite some time now with its DOS versions. The Windows version is very similar to the DOS versions I have used, but it is more powerful because of the Windows environment and because of new capabilities that have been added -- like Power Text. Those who have used the DOS versions should have no trouble transitioning to the Windows version. For all others, there will be a bit of learning for you to do; I have not seen two DTPs that are all that similar in mechanics of operation.

The book says that you can run through the exercises provided and produce a document in an hour, but it takes just a little longer to become proficient -- like several self-generated documents. :

Features: Publish It! for Windows is more than an entry level program as some might think from its street price. Actually, it is a rather powerful program with many nice features. It has almost unlimited layout options and has the capability to handle up to 999 pages in one document. Some of the features included are:

A word processor with a 96,000-word spell checker;

Power Text which provides the capability to fill text and/or backgrounds with different patterns; mirror, shadow and rotate text; curve text in a limited number of given circular shapes -- similar to Word Art in MS Word for Windows; and skew (slant) text. Text created in Power Text is the only text that can be rotated in the program. Note, however, that Power Text works only with Adobe fonts. If you do not load Adobe and Adobe fonts, you lose Power Text and the ability to create

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special text effects from within Publish It!. You still have the Windows clipboard, however, to import from other programs.

An increasingly popular tool bar with several of the most frequently used commands represented. The tools on the tool bar change with changes in working mode (frame, text, paragraph, & graphics). The tool bar is otherwise fixed and cannot be changed by the user.

A master page option that can speed page layout throughout a document, and paragraph styles which makes text formatting/reformatting much easier and quicker.

Automatic text runaround of any text or graphic frame, and each instance can be tailored to the shape of the text or graphic contained in the frame if you desire, though the mechanics of doing so are a bit more cumbersome than I would like; and automatic bulleting.

Key Pad which provides ready access to the non-keyboard characters in fonts with complete character sets. Key Pad is available to other Windows programs through an icon installed in Program Manager at the time of program installation.

A selectable and adjustable automatic save feature, or a warning to save if desired -- though the warning beep can be a bit trying at times.

A built-in drawing capability for boxes (with or without rounded corners), circles and ovals, lines, polygons & freehand. You can fill and tint all of it, but there is no paint capability.

Capability to edit scanned images and some of the bitmap graphic formats.

Imports text from MS Works, MS Word (Windows & DOS), WP 4 & 5, Word Star, Windows Write, and RTF, DCA/RTF, and ASCII formats; and imports the following graphic formats: .SLD, .IMG, .LBM, .EPS, .GEM, .CGM, .PIC, .PCX, .TIF, .BMP, & .WMF. Of course, anything that can be copied to the clipboard can be pasted into Publish It!

Other Goodies included with the program are:

150 graphics, mostly .TIF & a few .CGM, separated into 8 different categories; and 100, yes 100, layout templates covering just about any kind of document you might want to create -- ads, invitations, reports, newsletters, and so on -- if any will suit your specific needs.

Adobe Type Manager for Windows (V. 2.02) with 25 fonts. So, if you don't have but always wanted Adobe, here is a chance to get it. Those with Adobe already might find a font or two they don't already have.

Purchase of Publish It! for Windows also entitles the purchaser to acquire (from Timeworks) SoftKey's Key Draw Plus for Windows program (version unknown) for $9.95 S&H. Key Draw, a free-form illustrator, is reputed to have rather powerful text and graphics manipulation capabilities -- skew, stretch, blend shapes, rotate, mirror, shade, fill, etc. It adds an additional 36 scalable fonts and 500 'professional drawings' to the package. I suspect that Timeworks includes it with Publish It! not only as an incentive to buy Publish It!, but to help make up for some of the more sophisticated text and graphics manipulation capabilities not built into Publish It! If Key Draw is as reputed, then the Publish It!/Key Draw combination is indeed quite a powerful package.

Documentation for the program is adequate and straight forward, and includes what is becoming the standard -- a quick start document (or in this case, "Getting Started") and a user reference document. The Getting Started section includes installation, and several exercises to familiarize you with the program and its capabilities. But there is no software tutorial. The Reference Guide gives more definitive information. On-line help is comprehensive, but is not context sensitive; one has to select the help needed from an index.

Requirements for the program are: A 286 machine or better; 2 MB RAM; a hard drive and at least one floppy with a minimum capacity of 720K (comes with 5.25" & 3.5" diskettes); DOS 3.1 or later; Windows 3.0 or later operating in standard or enhanced mode (the program will not even install in real mode); just about any video, including mono, except CGA; and a mouse. The manual says a minimum of 3.5 MB is need for the program and 2 MB for Adobe. I loaded everything and used over 7 MB of space in the process. But that includes about 2.2 MB for clipart and 1.8 MB for layout templates, both of which the average person could pare down considerably.

Installation is simple and clear cut. The program is installed through ProgMan, of course. You make choices about what portions to install and where to place those portions selected, and then you just sit back, watch and swap disks (seven 5¼" floppies, or five 3½", including Adobe). I have a 386DX/25 w/8 MB RAM, 5¼" HD floppies, 28ms RLL hard drives, and SuperStor disk compression. Loading the entire package took me about 30 minutes -- quite a long time. Improvements in your setup over mine should reduce installation time very substantially.

My View: While the distinction between high and low end DTPs is not nearly as sharp as it used to be, an old hat at DTP would not consider this a high-end DTP program. Yet, Publish It! for Windows is a powerful and very functional DTP, especially when combined with Key Draw. It has many nice and useful features. One I particularly like is the ability to import text and graphics into the program at the beginning of a project and have them ready for subsequent instant placement into the document at a later time of choice with a simple click of a button; I have seen no other DTP with that feature. Another is a two-page view with edit capability. Still another is the option to control which sides of a frame will print.

There are also a number on improvements I would like to see: An on-line comprehensive tutorial to make learning the program easier and quicker; more powerful character/line/paragraph spacing capabilities, especially character spacing which is now limited to kerning between two characters at a time; modify the need to create a frame for each and every text/graphic/drawing/line item to be placed into a document because this is time consuming and clutters the screen with boxes; ability to rotate text and flip graphics within the program itself; expand the tool box and make it editable; expand the capability of Power text to include

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mixing text and graphics (imported and created), provide greater flexibility in manipulating text (on curve, slant, rotate, skew, stretch, distort etc.), and allow use of other than Adobe fonts -- at least TTFs.

With a street price of about $73 for Publish It! for Windows and $9.95 S & H for Key Draw for Windows, I think the package is a pretty good buy. If Key Draw is as reputed, the package should satisfy some fairly sophisticated DTP needs -- especially if you have trouble with the BIG BUCKS required to buy one of the high-end DTP programs. It is certainly worth looking at.

Timeworks, Inc., 625 Academy Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062 (708) 559-1300
FAX: (708) 559-1399
To order: (800) 323-7744

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ENVELOPE MACRO

WordPerfect 5.1 (DOS)
By: Ed Buzza

WordPerfect supplies a macro that will automatically print an address on an envelope for you. It's the Ctrl-E macro on the MACRO Keyboard. But since few of us use that keyboard, there is another way to use that macro — *move it*. You can have it as a stand-alone macro or remap your keyboard so that you can call up the macro with an ALT or CTRL letter combination.

How to move the macro: Keys to press are shown between < > brackets.

1) **<Shift-F1>**, **<5>** Keyboard, (**<DnAr>** to MACROS), **<7>** Edit, (**<DnAr>** to Ctrl-E), **<6>** Save, (at prompt, enter **<ENV>**), **<F7>**, (highlight your keyboard), **<1>** Select, **<F7>** Exit.
2) This will create a file named ENV.WPM and will be located where your other macros are stored. You don't *have* to call it ENV, name it what you will.

The way it works:

1) With your document (with an address) on the main screen, call up the envelope macro **<Alt-F10>**, **<ENV>**.
2) If the address is not already blocked, it asks that you do so. (It places [Math On][Math Off] codes as a marker.)
3) It selects a "macro env - Wide" paper form. If it does not exist, the macro creates it (it can be edited).
4) It positions the cursor at the top of the document and creates a new page. This new page is the "envelope." The blocked text (the address) is moved to this new page.
5) If the printer is ready, the envelope is printed. If not, WordPerfect will stack the printer job and prompt you to print the envelope.

Remap your keyboard

1) To play it safe, we'll set up a Test Keyboard file. **<Shift-F1>**, **<5>** Keyboard, (highlight your keyboard), **<5>** Copy, (at prompt, enter **<TEST>**), **<F7>**.
2) Stop. You have just copied your keyboard file to another keyboard file called TEST.WPK. We will experiment with the TEST.WPK, not your keyboard file. You can delete the TEST.WPK anytime that you want to. Now let's modify the TEST keyboard.
3) **<Shift-F1>**,**<5>** Keyboard,(highlight TEST keyboard), **<7>** Edit, **<7>** Retrieve, (at Key prompt, enter **<Alt-N>**), (at Macro prompt, enter **<ENV>**), **<F7>**, **<1>** Select, **<F7>**.
4) You have just copied the stand-alone macro ENV.WPM file to your TEST.WPK keyboard file. This means that you can delete the ENV.WPM file; select the TEST keyboard and use the Alt-N keystrokes to print an envelope.
5) You can remap any other macro file (those with an extension of .WPM) to your new TEST keyboard. Just follow the instructions in step 3) above (remember to use different Alt-letter keystrokes). And if you like the new keyboard, rename it or copy it to a new keyboard filename! Then use it as YOUR keyboard.

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Book Review: Memory Management for All of Us

Book review by: Mike Janda, Madison PC User's Group

Recently, there were several message threads on the BBS concerning PC memorymanagement, and it even came up at the New Users SIG meeting. Only a fewyears ago, the important thing was to have 640K of RAM and most discussions centered on squeezing every possible byte from the operating system and TSRs. Today, many users are getting systems with 2, 4, or more MB of RAM. Now the questions center on how to make the best use of that RAM.

Memory Management for All of Us, by John M. Goodman, answers just about everyquestion that can be asked. The only caveat is that the book is over 1,100 pages! Like I said, memory management isn't what it used to be. However, the book is written in a clear and concise manner, is well organized, and makes for some fascinating reading. It's geared toward users with systems running DOS 5.0 and Windows 3.1. OS/2 is NOT covered since OS/2 has its own way to manage memory.

In this short review, I cannot even touch on the major topics covered in the book. What I can do is recommend it for anyone interested in making better use of their computer memory. It can also be extremely useful to someone who is considering an upgrade, whether it be adding to an existing system or purchasing a more powerful one. Now you can really know what you are buying (imagine asking the salesperson if the memory cache is fully-associative, set-associative, or direct mapping, and knowing what it means!).

Dr. Goodman classifies PCs into six "classes" (8088/86, 8086/88 with EMS memory board, 286, 286 with EMS

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memory board, 386SX, and 386DX/486). As each topic is discussed throughout the book, the options are spelled out for each class of PC.

The book is recommended by the publisher for "intermediate" users, although beginners can use it to learn more about their computers, and experts will find it a useful reference text. The index is over 40 pages and is very complete. I spent a lot of time using it to track down quite a few topics. It is $30 well spent and can easily pay for itself if you make a buying decision based on what you learned. I give this book two thumbs up!

Memory Management for All of US By: John M. Goodman, PhD. ISBN 0-672-27366-7,lists for $29.95, and is available at bookstores everywhere. It is published by: Sams Prentice Hall Computer Publishing ,11711 N. College Ave. Carmel, IN 46032 (800) 428-5331 (800) 448-3804 (fax)

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What if PCs Were Sold Like Corn Flakes?

By: Brian D. Galloway, Contributing Editor, Columbus Computer Society, December 1992

I think most PC-related advertisements are dull and uninspired. The vendors dutifully inform us that their products are better and cheaper than the competition (lately, its has been mostly the latter). Next comes the inevitable shower of carefully crafted specifications and statistics. Maybe there are a few pictures of attractive people using the product, but otherwise it's pretty bland. If you doubt this assertion, I invite you to open any PC magazine and discover the disappointing truth for yourself.

The wildly inventive creativity that has characterized other branches of American advertising has yet to make significant inroads in the computer business. Why is this? Is it because PC buyers are perceived to be fundamentally different from people who purchase other products? Unlikely. We PC users also buy and use lots of other products. I strongly suspect our tastes in products (and advertising) aren't particularly unusual.

Could the difference have something to do with the PC as a product? This makes a little more sense, but it fails to explain why some other highly technical products (like performance automobiles, for example) have great ads. Maybe vendors think the PC is a business tool and want to market it in a very serious manner. Whatever the reason, I thinks it's time for the industry to lighten up. We can have a little fun and still get the job done.

To see what's possible, we need only look at how other products have been successfully marketed. I would think durability would be an important attribute to demonstrate for any portable product. Why not hire one of John Cameron Swazey's descendants to drag the Frobnitz SLG notebook PC behind a speedboat for a couple of nautical miles? Better yet, we could loan it to the gorilla which Samsonite hired to test the strength of its luggage. This would certainly eliminate any questions about the product's construction.

If consumers can be convinced that things like cars, beer, toothpaste, and shampoo are sexy, why not computers? Picture this scene: A man and a woman are sitting together on an airline flight. They obviously didn't know each other before they boarded the plane. They make small talk for a few moments. The woman asks the man about his current project. He pulls a HyperSloB notebook from beneath the seat. The woman displays a broad smile as she removes an identical machine from her briefcase and comments "Well, you certainly know quality." Fade to the pair walking together in a distant airport parking lot ... If this approach won't sell, I hear the Swedish Bikini Team is available.

Even if you can't entice customers to buy a product, sometimes they can be frightened into doing so. An example is the old ad for Wisk detergent which implied that if one didn't religiously buy and use the product, they would suffer endless ridicule due to a horrible affliction know as "Ring Around the Collar." A worse fate can hardly be imagined. This principle can be applied to the PC market. Consider presentation graphics software. The sketch goes something like this: A junior staffer is charged with making a big presentation before the board of directors. He does his best, but without SuperBuffoonGraff 3.6 for Windows, his overheads look like they were prepared by Mrs. Johnson's morning kindergarten class armed with fat purple crayons. The board laughs, hoots, and howls without mercy. The portly chairman has to be helped back to his office after completely loosing all control. The scene closes with our here back at his desk, slowly placing items into a cardboard box and muttering "I shoulda used SuperBaffoonGraff 3.6 for Windows ... " Now that's effective. If these tried and true advertising techniques fail, there is always sheer idiocy. This is the school of thought which brought us the Tidy Bowl man in a boat floating in the toilet tank of some poor unsuspecting housewife (I always wanted the people in the ads to flush). Nothing, however, can match the insanity of the Ajax knight featured in mid-60s television commercials. Here's a guy wearing shining armor from head to toe, carrying a jousting lance, riding a white horse down a suburban street, and screaming "Stronger than dirt." They have a place for people like that.

An anti-virus software package could be sold this way. Picture a small collection of plumber types (assorted shapes and sizes) standing together and singing:

"Computer Rooter, you're at risk,
Keep that virus off your disk."

The opportunities are endless. My guess is once one vendor successfully breaks out of the established pattern, many other will follow. It can't happen soon enough for me.

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If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.
Mark Twain

PrimeType

From LaserTools

Using PostScript Typefaces With DOS WordPerfect

Review by: Rod McKenzie, Contributing Editor, Madison PC User's Group

Maybe this is the case with you. You'd like better looking typefaces than theones in your printer, but you're not ready to work in Windows and a new laser printer is out of the question. You don't need to envy the Windows word processors any more. Any PostScript Type 1 typeface can be used with WordPerfect for DOS simply by adding PrimeType from LaserTools. You don't need a PostScript printer. In fact, it doesn't require that you use a laser printer at all.

It really is a simple task to load PrimeType and get it running with WordPerfect. The setup program moves the user through a very straightforward process of installation, starting with selection of the directories where PrimeType will reside and where it can find the font files that it will need. The PostScript Type 1 files are scaleable so it doesn't use a lot of hard disk space to hold a large selection of typefaces.

Besides WordPerfect 5.0/5.1 for DOS, PrimeType works with LetterPerfect 1.0, PlanPerfect 5.0/5.1, WordPerfect Works 1.0, and WordPerfect for Windows 5.1. To support the Windows version, PrimeType includes a copy of Adobe Type Manager. There are 13 fonts supplied with the software to get the user started. Many sources exist for PostScript fonts: Adobe, Image Club, The Monotype Library, other third-party vendors, the user group BBS, shareware authors, and even freeware.

PrimeType's installation program, PTINSTAL will add several printer driver files for WordPerfect. It's necessary to have selected one of these special printer drivers first, before trying to include the fonts into a document. There are printer drivers for dot matrix, inkjet, and laser printers. In the case of laser printers, the program will ask the user to identify how much memory the printer has installed. During the setup of the printer driver, the user will have to identify the drive and directory where the PostScript files will be found. After selecting a printer, select the Edit option, and then press C for cartridges and fonts.

Using WordPerfect with PrimeType is a simple matter. Start the program by typing PTWP. This will start PrimeType and WordPerfect at the same time. To get at the fonts and choose one of these special typefaces that's going to catch lots of attention, press Ctrl-F8 for Fonts, and F for Base Font. A list of the fonts that have been loaded in PrimeType should appear. Highlight one from this list and then enter a point size to get started.

LaserTools has made it as easy as possible for the WordPerfect user to enjoy the direct access to fonts that the GUI word processors have at hand. They've included a keyboard definition file called Quick Keys, which gives the control key combinations that really speed up the management of typeface appearance. The keyboard definition is selected in the Shift-F1 Setup screen, under the Keyboard Layout choice. Here are some of the key combinations: ctrl-b (bold), ctrl-c (center), ctrl-f (base font), ctrl-i (italics), ctrl-u (underline), ctrl-[(open double quote), ctrl-] (close double quote), ctrl-r (round bullet), ctrl-m (special characters menu). Wait a minute! All this action with the Control key? Did somebody from WordStar just sneak in the side door?

Users who find that changing from their DOS-based version of WordPerfect is just too much trouble, but still want the graphical typefaces that PostScript can offer, should take a serious look at PrimeType from LaserTools.

PrimeType is priced at $99 and is from:

LaserTools
1250 45th Street, Suite 100
Emeryville, CA 94608
(510) 420-8777 (800) 767-8004
(510) 420-1150 (fax)

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If I were two faced would I be wearing this one?

Abraham Lincoln

Felix - The Better Mouse

Tested by Don Hage

Manufacturer: Altra 520 West Cedar St., Rawlins, WY 82301 800-726-6153 Size: height .875", length and width 5.75" weight 9 ounces, cable length 6.83 feet. Connector: 25 pin Serial, 9 volt external power supply. Software Included: Self installation/Test program, 100% Microsoft Mouse Compatible, Windows 3.xx drivers, ADI Autodesk drivers. System Requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/2 or compatible.

"Build a better mouse trap, and the world will beat a path to your door." If this is true, then Interstate 80 and US 287 will be busy going to Altra in Rawlins, Wyoming. Felix is a unique type of mouse which remains in the same position on your desk. It was considered "Best of Show" in the fall Rocky Mountain Computer Conference. Because of its fixed electronic design, it is the mouse used by astronauts in spacecraft under zero gravity.

Felix is a 1.5 inch square mouse in an electronically "caged" 5.75 inch platform. It is controlled by finger motion similar to that of holding a pencil, holding the handle between the thumb and the middle finger. Total coverage of the screen can be made by slightly over a one inch movement. Your forearm can therefore rest comfortably on your desk, while your fingers control the movement. I use Felix set relatively far back and use my old mouse pad as a rest for my forearm.

While the motion of Felix is just over 1 square inch, it can handle screens from 9 inches up to screens as large as 40 inches in each axis. At startup, you touch the top, left side, bottom, and right side (or any sequence that touches all edges of Felix) which then corresponds to the four edges of the screen. The mouse is dynamically controlled. A fast motion provides quick movement around the screen. A slow movement allows finer control. Some suggest using the index, middle and ring fingers for slow accurate movement. You have to get used to these

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movements. Going from a mouse to Felix has been compared to going from a pick-up to a high performance race car. T here are two mouse buttons on the top of the handle. The longer button corresponds to MicroSoft's left button (the one used most) while the smaller button insert corresponds to the right button. I like Felix's action in "double clicking" the mouse in GEM's vector Artline drawing program for drawing curves than the common ball mouse. It seemed that I always jerked my arm while double clicking with a regular mouse so that instead of framing the drawn curve, it drew another unwanted line. While this still occurs with Felix, it occurs with less frequency. Altra's manual and its 7/15/92 README release notes had instructions for keyboard emulation using the left or right alt keys on the newer style keyboards. However, they wouldn't work for me. I dialed Altra's 800 technical help number and found they had abandoned this feature because "there wasn't too much demand for it." Personally, I think abandonment of this feature was unfortunate because it could have eliminated the movement problem I have with Artline. (Of course, programmers could have used the little used the little used right button instead of a double clicking operation.)

Other programs which could use a mouse worked well with the two-button Felix with the exception of MicroSoft's "FLIGHT SIMULATOR" which acts erratically. Altra's technical assistance indicated that they probably would have to make a separate driver for "FLIGHT SIMULATOR." They have a special mouse driver for Windows which worked fine in all my programs including Micrografx's Windows Draw. Felix also has a separate driver "FLXADI.EXE" for AutoCad.

Settings for Felix can be adjusted by ASCII editing of their MOUSE.INI file for permanent changes or through DOS command options. There is a four level sensitivity option from 1 to 100: FELIX /S# (sets both horizontal and vertical sensitivity, /H sets horizontal sensitivity, /V sets vertical sensitivity or /D sets sensitivity of the double speed threshold. These work with relative or "mickey-based" applications such as Word Perfect's version 5.1. They do not affect pixel-based mouse operations where Felix works in the absolute mode.It also has 3 acceleration profiles plus an unaccelerated profile, an option which enables or disables a locked cursor for applications which change the mouse cursor, a cursor delay option for slow LCD displays in Laptops, and options which can change pointer size and colors.

The serial Felix was easy to install once I found a nine pin to 25 pin serial adaptor which would work. The first was just an adapter plug, which worked but did not allow the plugging in of a parallel outlet to one of my printers. I searched over Boulder for a short 3-6" adapter cord, but had to settle for a light 6 foot adapter cord. Retailers should stock short cords if they sell Felix. While Altra has an attractive Felix Users Manual, it is outdated (1991) and practically useless. Neither the manual nor the 7/15/92 README release indicated what the two buttons represented. You had to find out through their FTEST.EXE program included on disk.

In conclusion, I like Felix very much with a four star rating. I would recommend it to anyone. Its dynamic response to finger motion provides a fast or slow pointer control. For those who make considerable use of the mouse, its quick response allows you to get more work done while resting your arm. Its ergonomic design can help reduce Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. It takes little space and its fixed base not only allows you to keep your eye on the screen but probably is more durable because it does not pick up the dust and particles which a mouse with a ball can gather.

Rocky Mountain Area Distributors: Digitech brokers, 555 Hwy 287, Unit C; Park Plaza Center, Broomfield, CO 80020 (303) 465-1314 Suggested Retail Price: $118.00; street price $99.00 - $89.00

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Only those who attempt the absurd, can achieve the impossible!

MOORE WINDOWS!

By: Pete Moore, FROG
Computer Society, Rochester, NY -

This bulletin just handed me, ladies and gentlemen . . . According to highly placed sources in Silicon Valley, all of the personal computer hardware and software presently in use throughout America is obsolete and useless. Users are urged to donate all such items to the non-profit institutions of their choice, and to immediately purchase replacement systems and complete software suites, which will enable them to function minimally until such time as adequate equipment and programs become available.

The suggested minimum hardware configuration is as follows: a full-size, eight-bay tower case; 300W power supply; 486DX2-66MHz local-bus EISA motherboard with 64MB of 60ns DRAM; 20" or larger non-interlaced color monitor, capable of 1280 by 1024 pixels; a local-bus SVGA GUI accelerator video card with 4MB of linear-addressed VRAM; a 1.2GB 10ns SCSI-2 hard disk, with a local-bus controller and 16MB of on-board cache memory; a dual-speed CD ROM drive; a stereo sound card capable of 16-bit, 44.1K/sec sampling, with a MIDI interface; a gigabyte tape drive for backups; and a 132-key keyboard with built-in calculator and trackball.

While an operating system capable of fully utilizing these machines' capabilities is not yet available, Microsoft Corp. promises that it will be shipping Windows NT "Real Soon Now," with many multi-threaded 32-bit applications slated to ship "Real Soon After That." Until such time as these are available, users are urged to purchase MS-DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, and every other program that Microsoft sells. Users are assured that while these applications may contain some minor, unavoidable limitations, the forthcoming 32-bit versions will solve all of these problems, and will be available for truly nominal upgrade costs, estimated to be no higher than $199 per product. Please stay tuned to this station for further bulletins.(Continued on next page)

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Okay, I didn't really get that bulletin handed to me. I sort of figured it out for myself, by reading between the lines of the product reviews, announcements, and ads currently inundating every PC-oriented magazine I see.

For instance, Intel's "not-a-586" P5 processor (also to be released Real Soon Now) has a 64-bit internal bus. Ouch, babe! Apparently this latest wonder is going to be what you might actually call a "686SX," to tide us over until "true" 64-bit processors become available. Forget your 486s, and don't even admit you still own a 386. 286? 8088? Aren't they some kind of fossils or something? Didn't they use vacuum tubes for memory?

I'm going to admit something to you. I write about the latest and greatest software, specializing in Windows, yet I actually do most of my word processing on an 8MHz XT with a 20MB hard disk. I use the Norton Editor most of the time.

All right, I admit that I own and regularly use a 286 and a 386, and I really DO like Windows, but my point is that for most of the stuff I REALLY do, an XT is (gag!) adequate. There, I've said it!

Ever feel like a second-class citizen of PC Land? Or maybe third- or fourth-class? Frustrating as it may be, my company forces almost all of its office-type employees to scrape by with XTs, most with true-blue IBM monochrome or CGA displays. Their major foray into high-tech, besides a 386SX to run AutoCAD, is to upgrade their software to the latest versions of the applicable DOS programs -- Word Perfect 5.1, Quattro Pro 4.0, DOS 5.0 . . . You get the picture. And I'm sure they're only doing that because they're afraid some disgruntled employee might blow them in for using unlicensed copies of some five-year-old programs.

There's a lot of pressure now on the people who must make the hard decisions about buying PCs and software for themselves and their companies. I can't remember a time when there has been more emphasis on PC performance, or when more companies were marketing their products as the best stopgap until the Real Thing gets here.

Now I know that's not actually what the ads say, but how many ads have YOU read that contain the words "upward-compatible"? Intel has based an entire (reasonably successful) ad campaign on the Overdrive Socket in 486 motherboards, focussing attention on the motherboard's ability to accept anything from a 487SX to a 486DX2 to a "not-a-586!" P5. When Windows 3.1 came out, and increasingly since, we've been hearing how great Windows NT is going to be. It reminds me of all the products that have come out over the years touting themselves as "New and Improved," prompting some of us to ask, "What were we using before? Old and Crummy?"

I spend a lot of time (okay, a ridiculous amount of time) looking for new ways to tweak my hardware and software for greater speed and ease of use. (Or is that "ease-of-use"? It's one of those phrases that's on its way to becoming a single, hyphenated word, through sheer overuse.)

I do that for two reasons. First because I, like most of us, can't afford the hardware I'd REALLY like; and second, just because it entertains me. Some people spend hours playing PC games, or even subscribe to the Sierra Online Network, so they can play King's Quest and Blackjack with people in other cities, while never leaving their living rooms. But for me, the whole durn thing is the neatest playground ever devised by the mind of man.

Before Windows 3.0 came along, when Windows was just a cute but AMAZINGLY slow DOS menu program, I got my jollies optimizing memory usage with QEMM, and playing with disk caches and RAM disks, using DOS software exclusively. But since Windows 3.x, the sheer number of ways I can tweak and tweeze has risen exponentially! Now, besides caches and RAM disks, there are fonts, wallpaper, ProgMan and FileMan replacements and enhancers, Windows programming tools, and three bazillion other things to twiddle with. I'm in my glory.

Now as a (sort of unintentional) side-effect of this obsession, I have accidentally learned some genuinely useful things about memory and disk optimization, setup and "EezOfUse" tricks, and a couple hundred other miscellaneous factoids. I've been able to give helpful advice to people about this stuff, and some of the people are technically very competent themselves. They simply haven't got the time (or obsessiveness) to plow into this stuff to the degree that I do.

And that brings me (by an exceedingly circuitous route) to my main point. Namely, that while it is more true now than ever before in the history of the world, that the tools you buy today will be semi-obsolete in six (okay, three) months, you can still get years of good use out of them. Just because you can't spring for enough silicon to run Windows NT doesn't mean that you can't do the things you ACTUALLY NEED to do on a 386SX (or even *urk!* an XT) running Windows 3.1, or GeoWorks, or DESQview, or the DOS 5 Shell task-switcher, or (dare we say it?) the C:\> prompt.

What, you may be wondering, is all this drivel doing in a Windows column? Well, I just realized ("Earth to Pete . . .") that like most or all of the people who spend lots of time reading, thinking, and writing about Windows (or PCs in general), I more or less by definition spend my time scrutinizing individual trees, while remaining blissfully ignorant that such a thing as a "forest" might exist.

In other words, it's too easy to get caught up in the latest and greatest vaporware, never stopping to consider that to most computer users, the point of the whole thing is to get some work done. Most of you really care about getting that report written, or those numbers crunched, and don't give two hoots about whether your Windows setup is optimal -- you just don't want to see "General Protection Fault" pop up over that spreadsheet at ten minutes to five.

And I say, more power to ya. You want your stuff to work, and I want it to work better. And when you see that GPF pop up, you give me a call. Meanwhile, I'll just keep on diving into the latest Windows issues month after month, and you just keep on actually getting your work done on whatever hardware and software you REALLY use, and Intel and Microsoft will keep on trying to convince us that everything we own is Old and

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Crummy. But we'll get our work done anyway... Or you will. Me, I'm gonna go crash my hard disk again, and reinstall forty-'leven pieces of Windows software. Then there's this great new Windows shell I wanna try . . . Pete

■■■

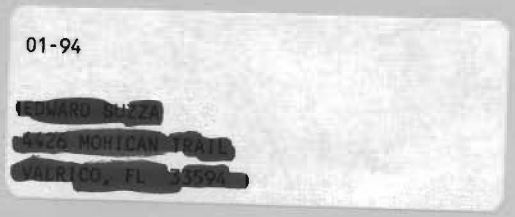
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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 6 NO. 3 **March, 1993**

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: March 10, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

MARCH AGENDA:
3/10/93

6:00 PM - opening remarks

6:30 PM - Demo by Lotus Corp. of:

IMPROV for Windows
The first dynamic spreadsheet for Windows

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
Lotus Ami Pro *for Windows*
Lotus 1-2-3 *for Windows*
Freelance Graphics *for Windows*
Lotus Organizer *for Windows*
& Miscellaneous Items

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MODEM CLASS:

The Modem class by Don Patzsch is to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. (Room behind and left of the reception area) Please be Prompt!

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

MINUTES OF 2/10/93 MEETING
By: Jim Clark

WOWeee!!! If you were not at this meeting, you missed a REALLY GOOD ONE!!. Corel Corporation was good enough to send a lovely and efficient rep to give us a presentation on CorelDraw. And we had a big turnout, with many guests. Don Patzsch and Kevan Sheridan were conducting their very popular modem class in another room, while our user group meeting room began to fill. By the time our meeting started shortly after 6 PM, the room was just about full. The folks attending the modem class found few seats left when their class let out at 6:30, and some had to stand or sit on the floor. But, it was well worth the inconvenience.

CorelDraw is a large and powerful program, and it takes considerable time to just touch on its capabilities. Our illustrious Prez wisely chose to keep other normal meeting activities to a minimum to allow as much time as possible for the presentation.

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS

□ Word Perfect 5.2 is on the market; one member reported that at the $34 upgrade price it is an excellent bargain, especially since it includes Adobe Type Manager 2.5. WP 6.0 is expected to be available this Summer.

□ Pagemaker 5.0 will be on the street soon and the reviews of the program have been very good.

□ MS DOS 6.0 should be out in a couple of months. It will include a compression program that some believe is very similar to Stacker, the creators of which are suing Microsoft.

□ Gateway continues to be a leader in computer sales, but many report their sales are growing faster than their capability to provide technical support. Some report that it is very hard just to get through to them, and with their taped leave-a-message answering facility, it is harder to be able to talk with anyone. But, it is also reported that when you finally get to talk to a human, you are given excellent service. Gateway says it is working on the problem and is adding many new support lines and some 75 additional tech support personnel. Look for tech support at Gateway to improve.

□ Harvey reported that a premier issue of PC Novice magazine is available at many of the computer stores -- like Comp USA, Work Place, Office Depot, Computer City -- that contains a lot of basic PC info. It is free at Comp USA (and probably at all the locations) and is a worthwhile pickup.

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□ The vendor presentation scheduled for March is Lotus SmartSuites.

PRESENTATION -- CorelDraw

Corel Corporation was kind enough to send a knowledgeable and professional representative -- Denise Zutrauen -- to give a presentation of CorelDraw 3.0 to our User Group. And the turnout for the presentation -- like the program -- was quite good.

CorelDraw 3.0 is a Windows program. I have never used CorelDraw nor any other similar graphics package, so I have no basis for comparison. As CorelDraw users already know -- it is a very powerful program and it seemed to me that it can do just about anything that one might want to do in the way of creating graphics and presentation . I can't imagine anything one might want to do with text, for example, that this program will not do -- bearing in mind, of course, that CorelDraw is a graphics package, not a word processor (though it does include spellcheck, hyphenation, columns, a thesaurus, and other word processing features). As Denise noted, she could spend days covering all the features of the program; I do not propose to even cover the highlights of this very powerful program in the limited space of this newsletter.

Denise stated that CorelDraw consisted of 12 applications, and it does. From a user standpoint , however, I would say it has four major applications -- Draw, Chart, Photo-Paint and Show for illustration, charting, bitmap editing, and presentations -- with the other 8 applications supporting these majors. The other 8 include: CorelTrace, which allows bitmap graphics (photos, etc) to be converted to vector graphics; CorelMosiac, a visual file manager which gives the capability to preview application files, view Kodak Photo CDs, print catalogs of artwork and Draw files; Capture, which allows the capture of anything created in CorelDraw and export as a .WMF; and Show Run-time, which gives the capability to run presentations on computers that do not have CorelDraw installed.

Version 3.0 uses TrueType fonts, but will support the proprietary fonts used in the previous CorelDraw versions. It imports text from all the major word processors, and PCX, TIF, BMP, AI (EPS), GEM, PIC, HPGL, CGM, PIF (GDF), PICT, WMF, GIF and TGA graphic formats. It will export in these same formats as well as EPS, SCODL, WPG, and TTF. It will export in color and greyscale, with user definable resolution, and it has a 24-bit color capabilityy. CorelDraw includes over 150 hinted True Type fonts, over 4500 clipart images and symbols, and a host of templates, bitmaps and special effects. A bonus CD that comes with the package includes 250+ True Type fonts and 12000 clipart images and symbols, along with more templates, animation flics and CorelPaint samples. It is also network ready.

The program appears to be well connected with consistent and intuitive interfaces, and appears to be relatively easy to learn. It uses roll-up menus throughout, and reportedly includes excellent context senitive on-line help. And, it supports OLE, DDE and MDI.

The program requires Windows, of course, and it will reportedly run on a 286, but I suspect it would be quite slow. A minimum of 4 MB of RAM is required, but here again, the more the better. A minimum loading of the program would take up 12 MB of hard disk space, while an installation with all the bells and whistle would consume 30 MBs. If you load it on a machine using Windows 3.0, then you must have Adobe TM 2.0, which is not included with the CorelDraw package. A mouse or tablet is required, as is VGA or better video.

One in the audience asked about any problems of compatibility betweeen CorelDraw and compression programs such as Stacker. Denise responded that they had received some calls reporting varying problems, but there had been nothing consistent in the problems, not out of line with problems reported with other interfaces. Others in the audience reported no problems in using CorelDraw with Stacker.

Denise stated that Corel was expanding its technical support and training in several ways, including providing more fax and mail support, and training on CorelDraw at outlets throughout the country, as is now provided at Comp USA in Tampa.

The CorelDraw graphics package lists for $595, but is available at local outlets for $395. I do not take those numbers lightly, but there sure is a lot of capability in the package.

Denise and Corel, a great big THANK YOU for a super presentation of a super powerful program, and for Corel goodies you left with us. We are more enlightened on and impressed by your program -- CorelDraw 3.0.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Corel Corporation, Powerup Software, and Sunrise Computer, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Ron Mipth	Copy holder/Disk cleaner
Ana Elliot	Corel ArtShow 3
Joe Esposito	Corel ArtShow 3
D. Gaigano	Express Publisher
John Witmer	Corel SCSI Software
Philip Tyrgansk	CorelDraw 3.0
Mel Flynn	50/50 ($93)

the meeting adjourned at about 8:40 PM

•••

"Forgive your enemies,
but never forget their names."

John F. Kennedy

President's Column:



A great big thanks to Corel Corporation for sending Denise Zutrauen to show us why their software, Corel Draw, is number one. As the 110+ in attendance saw Corel Draw has a lot of power and is now bundled with paint and chart software. See the Secretary report for additional info. Our appreciation also goes to Corel for providing the many raffle products. If you didn't win anything at the last meeting, come this month for even a bigger software raffle. We will raffle at least five Lotus software products including Ami Pro. While our last meeting was exceptional, it was unfortunate that events in the Tampa Bay Area against tourist did not give Denise a true feeling of our southern hospitality.

Those of you in attendance may have noticed that there was only standing room at the last meeting. It is becoming more obvious that our growth is beginning to tax the facilities which IBM generously (FREE) provides our group. The Board is in the process of looking for an alternate facility to run our general meeting and classes. We are looking for a site within the same area which will allow seating for 300. Additionally, the location must have additional breakout rooms where we can hold our educational classes. Other issues include hardware, such as computers and projection equipment which we need for presentations. The proper hardware would cost our group around $5000 if we were to buy it. However, some facilities, such as high schools and HCC, have computer labs which may be able to provide us with this equipment. We have talked to Jesuit High School and are presently talking to HCC. It will be difficult to find a gracious host, like IBM, that will provide the space and equipment free of charge. Nonetheless, the board will take the challenge to move forward and find the best facilities we can at a minimal cost to the group. If you know of a place that may fulfill some of the above needs, please contact me or one of the board members. The same applies if you or your company has equipment the group could use for meetings.

Since the holidays I have traveled a couple of times out of state on business. Generally the flights can be unproductive time. However, I look forward to those trips and that time because its the only time I can read a good computer book or couple of magazines cover to cover. Stuck in a terminal between flights, no problem, pull out a memory management book, a highlighter and get a better understanding of how to tweak those memory chips. A memory chip is a terrible thing to waste, especially if you are running Windows. Take a computer book with you next time you take a flight. The FAA is taking a second look at computer use on airplanes. We might be relegated to reading about computers instead of using them during a flight. Personally I would like to see the FAA spending more time on correcting the "fast food drive-thru" audio system installed in every plane instead of worrying about real high tech stuff like Game Boys and computers.

In closing I would like to make everyone aware that some hardware vendors (video card manufacturers) have been put on notice for creating video device drivers which are designed to enhance their benchmark performance under Winbench and Wintach test. These video drivers contain code that specifically recognizes that it is being benchmarked. This results in above normal performance ratings. Steve Gibson, developer of SpinRite and president of Gibson Research, has put these vendors on notice. While no specific companies have been mentioned, Steve will name those vendors which choose to continue this process on beyond May 1st. It is hard enough to pick good products from top manufacturers without them skewing benchmarks to fool us. Shame on them for using these tactics and HOORAY for watchdogs like Steve.

Harvey Bruneau

Font Software Review:

The Flintstones Font Pack
A TrueType Font for Windows 3.1
By Bitstream Li'l Bits

By: Billy Birdwell, Pentagon PC User Group

Being a journalist by training and an ameteur typographer by avocation, I jumped at the chance to review The Flintstones Font Pack. (Besides, I considered it a good trade from Enable that I originally won as a PPCUG door prize recently.) I had just loaded Windows 3.1 and I was eager to try TrueType fonts.

As I expected loading the program is a snap in Windows. Put the disk in a drive and double click on "Control Panel" then double click "Fonts" and "Add." Follow the window dialog box and within moments you have five new fonts added to those resident in Windows 3.1.

My 12-year-old daughter can do this! (She's a real Windows fan.) In fact she was the first to try out the new fonts with a quick letter to her friend in Colorado. By using the resident Windows Write she composed a letter in minutes and added highlights from the Flintstones typeface.

Granted, I wouldn't compose a letter to the chief of staff using the decorative typefaces such as Flintstones, Bedrock or Impress, but they are nice to have for the occasional family newsletter. They are useful for cute invitations and other light-hearted writing. Be aware that the Flintstones characters are copyrighted so legally you're only allowed to use them for personal, non-commercial use or for writing glowing reviews of their product.

As with all TrueType fonts, all five typefaces in the pack are fully scalable and appear on my screen just as they print, even on my little dot-matrix printer. This is a real delight for this Pulitzer-prize-winner-wannabe.

I just wish I had installed all this before our Christmas family newsletter. Hmmm, maybe an Easter newsletter is in order....•••

COMDEX/Spring - WINDOWS WORLD TO HOST 1,000 Exhibitors, 75,000+ ATTENDEES

IBM's Cannavino - Microsoft's Gates to Keynote

NEEDHAM, Mass, Feb. 23, The 13th Annual COMDEX/Spring and 3rd annual WINDOWS WORLD, produced concurrently in Atlanta, May 24-27, are poised as strong launching pads for major product introductions from key industry vendors.

"A dynamic new industry is emerging which focuses on individual technologies such as network computing, imaging and multimedia," said Sheldon G. Adelson, CEO of The Interface Group. "These two shows may prove to be the most significant showcases of technology in 1993.

One of the highlights in Atlanta will be Microsoft Corporation's rollout of Windows NT, the company's long awaited 32-bit operating systems with strong network computing capabilities. Bill Gates, CEO of Micorsoft Corporation will keynote WINDOWS WORLD, Monday, May 24 at 9 a.m. On Tuesday, May 25, Robert Palmer, CEO of Digital Equipment Corp. will deliver the CEO Perspective at 9 a.m.

COMDEX/Spring will be keynoted by James Cannavino, senior vice president and general manager, IBM Personal Systems on Monday, May 24 at 1 p.m. The CEO Perspective will feature Jim Manzi, CEO, Lotus Development Corp. on Tuesday 25 at 1 p.m. Adelson predicted that attendance would exceed last year's record of more than 75,000 attendees, including some 5,000 delegates from 70 countries.

The exhibit floors will once again feature more than 1,000 exhibitors including hundreds of companies that will participate in Showcases, which are dedicated areas on the exhibit floor highlighting today's hottest technologies. Both events offer comprehensive educational programs that directly support the Showcases.

COMDEX/Spring features Showcases for: Network Computing, Multimedia, Mobile Computing, UNIX/Open Systems, Office Systems and OEM Sources. WINDOWS WORLD Showcases include: NetworkComputing, Multimedia and Mobile Computing. COMDEX/Spring's conference offers 70 sessions and is divided into six programs that will focus on network computing, office technology, open systems, imaging, UNIX, OEM components and international markets. A major presentation on the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is also scheduled.

The WINDOWS WORLD conference features 50 seminars and is divided into three programs: Corporate Computing, Windows Developers Program and the Windows Channel. Seminars will address technology management, network computing, multimedia, software developers strategies and Windows technical support. In addition, Microsoft will offer to all attendees, free Windows NT Workshops on Wednesday, May 26.

COMDEX/Spring has once again been certified by the U.S. Department of Commerce for participation in its Foreign Buyer Program. Officials will be available on-site in the International Business Center to facilitate contacts between U.S. companies and overseas delegates.

Editorial Comment: Any member desiring additional information regarding COMDEX/Spring '93 may contact Marylee or harvey at 985-3338. We have a few pre-registration forms, which contain program fees and rates on various accommodations in Atlanta.

■■■

Software review:

R&R Report Writer for xBase ver 5.0

By: Lee Keely, MBUG

Do you want to want to produce slick, professional reports from your database or spreadsheet files? Have you been frustrated by the limitations or difficulty of making your reports look exactly as you wish when using the report writers included in your basic database or spreadsheet packages? Is your business using programs which store your data in different formats such as dBase, Paradox,WQ1, etc., and you want to bring these data all together in one report? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, you need to look into a report writer.

More than a dozen companies have created specialized report writers to enable you to produce high quality reports from multiple database formats without programming. So, there must be a need for this by many people.

One of the leaders in this field is Concentric Data Systems R&R Report Writer. I reviewed version 4.0 of R&R for dBase in the June 1992 issue of this newsletter. Please refer to that review for additional ideas on why you should use this program.

Version 5.0 includes some very useful enhancements. There are the normal additions of new printer drivers, improved memory management and improved installation procedures, but there are also new features which increase the utility of the program. The following features are listed in order of value to me as a user.

Stand-Alone Locking Changes. In previous versions, stand-alone users whose systems failed or who turned off their computers while running R&R had to unlock their serial numbers using RRUSERS. With version 5.0, users will no longer be "locked out" if their systems fail when R&R is running.

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Export to Database and Worksheet Files. In my programs using 4.0, I frequently need to write a report to ASCII then import the ASCII format into a dBase file. Now R&R can write directly to a .DBF file and bypass the ASCII step. This is a helpful improvement, but you can only write or overwrite a .DBF file and cannot append from R&R. Also, although you can write to .WK1 and WQ1 files, you cannot import or develop reports from the spreadsheet files. I'm confident that this will come in future versions.

Runtime - RI_Query and RI_Preview. Runtime remains a unique strength of R&R. It will run previously designed R&R reports from the DOS prompt, a DOS batch file, or from within database programs. Previously, runtime would immediately run the report without the ability to change the query or preview it to verify everything looked good. Now you can set up Runtime to allow you to edit the Query and/or display the preview screen before printing the report.

Added Functions. R&R has many functions available above and beyond those available in dBase. Version 5.0 has added 12 more new functions, including 4 lookup functions which can be used to manipulate the database to broaden the information in the report.

Data Dictionary. You can now build a data dictionary which contains descriptive information about the database fields used in reports. When the user highlights a field, information will pop-up describing the contents of the field.

Mouse. The mouse capability has been added with version 5.0. You can use it to point to fields, scroll reports and perform other R&R operations. This first mouse implementation is a step in the right direction, but will certainly be improved over time. For example, each field must be clicked on individually to mark for a move, delete, etc. Ideally and consistent with most mousable programs, you should be able to hold down a mouse button and mark several fields by dragging the mouse.

Overall, Concentric has produced excellent enhancements to an already valuable product. Anyone wanting to generate reports better and easier than can be done from his xBase programs should seriously look into this program.

R&R is produced by Concentric Data Systems, Inc. 110 Turnpike Road, Westborough, MA 01581. Telephone (508)366-1122 or (800)325-9031.

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Product Review:

Chinon FZ-358, 3.5 4MB Floppy Disk Drive

Pentagon PC User Group

Hardware: 3.5 floppy disk drive
Controller card
Drive interface cable
Software: None required

Test Platform Hardware: 486/33MHZ, 8MB RAM, 2 IDE hard disks, 5.25 HD floppy, 3.5 HD floppy, SVGA monitor, SCSI CD-ROM, Lantastic network,
Software: OS/2 2.0, Windows 3.0/3.1, DOS 5.0

The floppy drive came with documentation, but the controller card documentation was not passed along with the card. There are 16 DIP switches on the controller card 12 of which were set through trial and error, the other 4 were left to their default settings. These 12 DIP switches are used for setting the type and number of floppy drives attached to the controller, 3 switches per drive for 4 possible drives.

The physical installation of the drive went smooth. A mounting kit was required to install the drive in a 5.25" half hight drive bay (I had the kit on hand). I added the drive to the system as a third floppy drive. I had to edit my AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS to reflect the first hard drive as D.

When the computer boots, the controller card BIOS displays the type of floppy drives that the DIP switches are currently set for. I did not have to change the CMOS setup, the controller card overrides those settings for the floppy drives.

Once the controller card was properly configured, I booted the OS/2 operating system to check its compatibility. Once in the work place shell, I clicked on the drive icon and selected format. 2.88 was now added to the scroll box as the default density. I formatted several disks, at all three densities (DD, HD, ED), and did various read/write operations all without error. I performed the same operations in DOS and Windows 3.1 and the drive performed flawlessly. Windows 3.0 has no problem reading and writing to a 2.88 floppy, but it can't format it.

Although the drive works well, the ED floppy disks are still to expensive to make them economical. You might be better off investing in a 21MB floptical drive instead. The floptical disks are cheaper per megabyte ($19 per 21MB disk, 90¢ per meg) and are sold individualy. I have only seen the EDs sold in boxes of ten for $80 ($8 per 2.88MB disk, $2.77 per meg).

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Software Review:

Norton Commander for OS/2

By: Bob Shanteau, MBUG

When I was exclusively a DOS user, I used Norton Commander often. NC's main feature is that it can show directories in two panels. Copying and moving files between panels is easy. I also found NC's menu useful, as well as the ability to associate a program name with a filenaeme extension.

I now have OS/2 installed as the operating system on my computer, so when Frank Murphy told me about Symantec's announcement at COMDEX that Norton Commander for OS/2 was being released, I was anxious to try it. As I was arranging for a representative from Symantec to demonstrate NC for OS/2 at the March MBUG meeting, I managed to talk my way into a demonstration copy of it for this review.

NC for OS/2 was easy to install. It installed into a folder of its own containing Norton Commander, The Norton User Menu, and the Readme file. I created a shadow of NC on my desktop for regular use. I fired it up and saw the familiar two screens with most of the same menu items above and below. The OS/2 version has more menu items than the DOS version, including sort by name and sort by extension, font and refresh.

NC supports some of the Presentation Manager functions. (PM is OS/2's GUI.) It supports drag and drop of files and directories between panels as well as between the desktop and the panels. It handles both the FAT and HPFS file systems.

In other ways NC for OS/2 does not act like a program written for Presentation Manager. Programs that are designed for the OS/2 PM are supposed to be able to use any of the ATM fonts that have been added to the system. Unfortunately, NC for OS/2 does not support this feature. Similarly, NC for OS/2 does not support changing the colors of the panels with the color palette within OS/2. This wouldn't be a major problem except that the window is bright yellow, and the box indicating the current item is a dotted dark yellow line that is difficult to see. I find it impossible to change these colors.

The most common procedure in NC involves moving or copying files between panels. If you're using a mouse, you'll probably prefer using the OS/2 method of marking files over NC's default way, which is more suited to keyboard use.

Under a multitasking system such as OS/2, it is possible to create or delete files or directories in another window. For some reason, NC requires you to refresh the appropriate panel before it shows you the changes. Of course, this can get you in a lot of trouble when the listing in the panel does not match the directory structure on the disk. Why Symantec programmed NC this way is a mystery to me; OS/2's desktop always keeps the contents of every folder up to date, regardless of what program alters them. That is one of the nice features of a multitasking operating system; several processes can run simultaneously while interacting with each other.

An attractive feature of NC for DOS is that it shows a command line near the bottom of the screen, and has some nifty ways of entering filenames on the command line by selecting the name in the panel and typing a couple of keystrokes. It saves a lot of typing and lessens the chance for mistyping commands. NC for OS/2 lacks this feature. Instead, it has options to run OS/2 or DOS windows, but there is no way to recall the filename that was selected before opening the window. A shame.

Both the DOS and OS/2 versions of NC have a "find file" option. I found an anomaly as I was testing it, though. On successive searches through my hard disk for a nonexisting filename, NC's file finder took increasingly longer to finish. I've seen OS/2 bog down before as I switch between programs, but this is the first time I've seen it happen with a single program. Most likely this is a problem with OS/2 rather than NC.

The individual user will see no use for the menu program in NC for OS/2. The OS/2 desktop works just fine. The Symantec literature says that a network administrator can protect a user's menu against modification by the user.

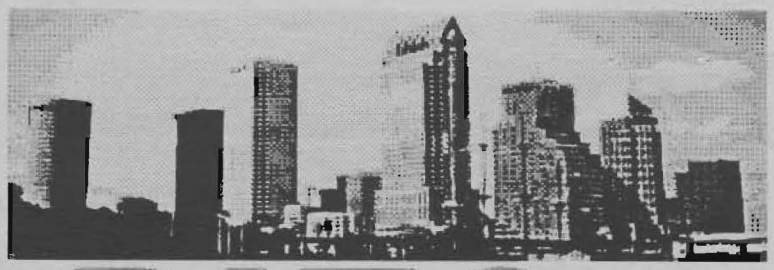
All in all, NC for OS/2 appears not to be ready for prime time. There are many other little features that are not quite right, such as a poor viewer, inability to drag from the find file window to the desktop, lack of executable extensions, and the limited ability of the command processors. Still, I find myself using it often, since it is a more convenient file manager than the native OS/2.

The Norton Commander for OS/2 is available from Symantec Corporation, 10201 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014-2132, or phone (800) 441-7234. MSRP is $149. Symantec offers a 60-day money back guarantee. If you are dissatisfied with NC for OS/2, you may return it to your dealer within 60 days for a full refund. It occupies about ½Meg of hard disk space.

■■■

"The man who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them."

Mark Twain



A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

VOL. 6 NO. 4 April, 1993

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: April 14, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

APRIL AGENDA:
4/14/93

6:00 PM - opening remarks

6:30 PM -
Demo by: SOFTWARE PUBLISHING CORPORATION of:

SUPERBASE

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -

& Miscellaneous Items

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MODEM CLASS:

The Modem class by Don Patzsch is to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. (Room behind and left of the reception area) Please be Prompt!

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	985-3338
VICE PRES & TREASURER	Tom Cone	223-3888
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
SECRETARY:	Jim Clark	986-3888

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with WordPerfect for Windows donated by WordPerfect Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 3/10/93 MEETING

By: Jim Clark

I must say at the outset that our Prez, Harvey Bruneau, is doing a great job. I thought it was another great meeting!!

That the meetings are always enjoyable and productive is in large measure due to the efforts of our Prez. It seems that Harvey always has arranged a super presentation either by a major vendor, and/or by one of our own, on a new program and/or one of current interest to our group. And he brings many items of interest from the industry to us each month. Behind the scenes as well, he pushes to make our group ever better. He receives support from a small, but great group of people who serve in some official capacity in our group: Marylee Bruneau, our editor, who puts together a super newsletter; Tom Cone, our VP, who most know as a pleasant and helpful greeter at our regular meetings, but who also helps in so many behind-the-scene ways; Kevan Sheridan, our SYSOPs, which is a time consuming and challenging task, has done a great job maintaining, improving and expanding our BBS; Bill (William) Fuller, our treasurer, who has done a super job taking care of the group's finances and books, and is so helpful in many other ways. Good luck Bill you will be missed; Roger Waters, our Member At Large, who does what needs to be done; Ed Buzza, Education Director, who helps us all learn more in classes he conducts or arranges, and on a person-to-person basis any time, any where; Larry Anders, our librarian, who not only does a great job of maintaining our software files, but he contributes to our group in so many creative and helpful, but unsung ways.

It is due to the efforts of these folks that our group continues to produce a useful and enjoyable product, and continues to grow. It takes a lot of time and effort on their part -- and I, for one, REALLY APPRECIATE IT. Don Patzsch, an active member, is currently doing a bang-up job with a comprehensive modem/BBS class that he has been conducting. (I have wanted to take advantage of that class, but other responsibilities have taken priority so far.) Arranging and conducting this class has taken a good bit of Don's time and effort -- the classes just don't happen automatically. A GREAT BIG THANKS to all of you!!

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS

In the rather limited time available for general discussion -- the meeting had started a little late and time was needed for the rather large program that was to be reviewed -- a number of items of interest were bought up, including:

- There was a discussion about discounts provided to members by CompUSA. See the President's column for additional information.

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• Harvey reported that his organization (a Dun & Bradstreet company that provides Human Resource and Financial applications to corporate clients) is now using Microsoft's WorkGroup for Windows and it is proving very helpful for them. It is an addition to their network system and is used primarily for internal communications and exchange of data. If you have a multiple-computer office, you may want to investigate the program and what it might do for you.

• There was considerable discussion of Stacker 3.0, started by one who reported a number of difficulties, including compatibility and other computer problems. However, there were no other problems reported from the many other Stacker users among those present. Harvey reported problems with decompressing a drive, a new feature with Stacker 3.0. I run SuperStorPro, which also includes the decompress feature, rather than Stacker.. I note in my manuals that the decompression works only with drives compressed by the program, inferring that drives compressed with earlier versions cannot be decompressed with SuperStorPro -- but I haven't tried it. That may be the case with Stacker 3.0 as well. A question was raised about the impact of compression on speed. The answer was that there appeared to be no discernible degradation for normal operations; while decompression does take time, that time is offset by the smaller size of files that have to be read and written. One reported the only noticeable degradation was in the time required to load programs -- it takes considerably longer to load the larger, complicated programs, such as R-Base. There seemed to be consensus among those who spoke that they were reasonably happy with their drive compression program.

PRESENTATION -- Improv For Windows

Lotus Corporation was good enough to send to us a knowledgeable representative, John O'loughlin, to give us a preview of Lotus's new program , Improv For Windows. I must tell you at the outset that I am not an expert on spreadsheets; my experience is limited to use of a 6 x 6 matrix a couple of times.

They term Improv their new 'Dynamic Spreadsheet for Windows' with 'Functionality Beyond Traditional Spreadsheets.' Though John really tried to explain to me what they meant by dynamic, I can't describe to you what they mean by dynamic. My copy of Webster dictionary says dynamic is, "..full of force and energy; active; potent." I would have to agree with that definition as a description of Improv. It is a very powerful program that appears to be quite user friendly (that is probably what they mean with 'intuitive'). John whipped up new spreadsheets in just a few moments; manipulated with ease the data in just about every way one could imagine, including responses to questions from the floor, 'can you do thus and so?'; and created almost instantaneous charts. Among the many features of the program that give it "Functionality Beyond Traditional Spreadsheets" are:

• Dynamic viewing that lets you rearrange and edit data instantly with drag and drop; a hide, show, collapse and expand capability; and switch from flat to 3-D multi-page mode.

• User defined English language formulas which are stored separate from the data and can be applied to many cells at once -- being much like styles in a word processor, it makes for much easier creation and editing. And the formulas are very easy to create -- a few selections using the mouse and Walla, there it is.

• Multi-dimensional Spreadsheet modeling with the capability to analyze up to 12 categories of data, each of which can have up to 63,999 items, and allows linking and saving up to 100 worksheets in a single file.

• Innovative user interface with a floating panel that lets you instantly view and set colors, fills, line and text styles; edit and drag & drop any object on screen; right button Quick Menus; smart fill of familiar worksheet categories (years, months, dates, etc.); SmartIcons for common Improv commands; status bar that provides quick access to fonts, formats, styles and other basic attributes.

• Flexible formatting/printing/reporting; includes Adobe Type Manager, with 13 scalable fonts, and uses TrueType fonts as well; print preview to verify page layout and appearance; complete page setup formatting, including headers and footers; portrait, landscape, fit-to-page and scalable printing options.

• Develop applications with state-of-the-art tools including LotusScript scripting language; record and playback scripts which can be edited and attached to icons or presentation objects; Application Programming Interface (API) toolkit; and Lotus Dialog editor to create custom user interfaces to Script programs.

• Supports DDE and OLE client and server for smooth integration with other Windows applications, and it reads/writes WK1, WK3, XLS(4.0) data, formulas, numeric formats and styles.

• Professional creation of graphics quickly and easily, selecting a range of data, pick a graph type from over 20 major chart and graph types, including 3-D bar and pie charts, rotate 3-Ds for the best angle, create and print multi-page presentations, hot link multiple charts and worksheet tables, and annotate presentations with text, images, other drawings and OLE objects.

• It is reported (and appears to be) relatively easy to learn. In addition to context-sensitive menus and Quick Menus, and the simplicity and ease of creating and editing/manipulating spreadsheets, it also has context-sensitive help and an "Exploring Improv" quick-start guide.

Hardware/software requirements for the program are: 386SX/20-class or higher computer (with 33 Mhz desired), Windowscompatible displays (VGA resolution desired) and printers, 4 MB RAM minimum (with 6 desired), Windows-supported mouse, Windows 3.1 or later, and 10 MB of hard disk space. (Continued on next page)

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What does this wonderful package cost? List is $495, but there is a special introductory price of $99 that will be good until May 31. As a limited special, John is making available to members present at the presentation a copy of Improv for $49 using a limited number of controlled coupons he is providing our Prez (members present had to sign-up for this offer); the coupons will be available at the next meeting.. Those members not present at the meeting should watch the BBS, or check with an officer at the next meeting to ascertain if the $49 offer has been extended to all members desiring a copy.

To Lotus Corp and John O'Loughlin, thanks for a wonderful presentation of a great program, and for your generosity with the programs and the special pricing for Improv. It looks like to us that you have another winner.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Lotus Corporation and Sunrise Computer, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

William Coleman	Disk cleaner & Mouse Pad
M.M. Marteny	Lotus Organizer (2)
David Geiger	Lotus Organizer
Ed Buzza	Lotus Organizer
Luis Vergara	Lotus 1-2-3
Kevan Sheridan	Lotus 1-2-3
Kit Kelley	Lotus Freelance Plus
John Waldon	Lotus Ami Pro
Ed Buzza	50/50 ($85)

the meeting adjourned at about 8:40 PM

According to the German magazine Der Spiegel:

From 10/92 Calgary PC User Society Cowboy Blue

A software company sends demo-disks to computer fanatics. The unsuspecting recipient runs the disk on his or her computer. While the disk is running the demonstration of the software, it is programmed to search the computer for pirated software. As soon as it suspects anything, the program offers a printed dialogue or manual. To order, one is asked to print out a coupon which needs to be sent off. Unfortunately, what arrives in return is not a printed manual but the police. The manufacturer hopes to prevent piracy. [Translated by Helga Beam]

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



I have good news and bad news representing events that will have an effect our group.

☹

The bad news is that we are losing our treasurer, William (Bill) Fuller. Circumstances within Bill's company necessitate his relocating to Jacksonville Florida. Bill has been on our board of directors for over 5 years and has managed several different positions during his tenure. He has volunteered his time and has been on our board longer than anyone in the history of our group. Please join me in wishing Bill the best. His dedication and contribution to the group will be missed.

☺ Now for some good news. Tom Cone, our Vice President, has volunteered to take on the additional role as interim Treasurer until a permanent solution can be implemented.

Our thanks to John O'Loughlin of Lotus Development Corporation for demonstrating *Improv for Windows*. John proved that the big buzzword du jour, *re-engineering*, does not apply to Improv. Improv in no way looks like the old *Lotus 123 of yesteryear. "This is not your fathers Oldsmobile"*.It is a completely new and bold approach to spreadsheet software within the Windows arena. Hats off to Lotus for going beyond the norm and adding power, functionality, fun, beauty and English commands to number crunching. I heard several positive remarks during the presentation from members. Some even said they did not want to wait for their coupons to purchase Improv. Of course if you were not there, your loss. Not only did you miss a great presentation but you missed out on over a $1000 worth of giveaways donated by Lotus, IBM and Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts. Additionally, all members in attendance became eligible to buy Improv for $49.

On a side note but related to Lotus, I wrote my article this month using Ami Pro for Windows 3.0. This is not meant as an in depth review of Ami Pro but my initial first impressions. This product was donated to the editor (Marylee) by Lotus, for consideration as a possible replacement of WordPerfect for producing our newsletter. Ami Pro has one of the best quick on line tutorials that I have ever seen. While it is not meant as a replacement for the manual it does provide you with a good understanding of the power and flexibility of Ami Pro. This product like Improv uses features which I have not seen in other Windows products. Specifically pull up menus. Yes that's right Ami Pro and Improv have the standard pull down menus form the top of the screen in addition to pull up menus from the bottom. While it will be some

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time before determining whether pull up menus become a Windows standard, it surely will be a Lotus one. We were hopping to produce the April newsletter in Ami Pro but we encountered problems when trying to import last months newsletter as a starting point. As of this writing we have not determined the cause of the problem and have decided to use WordPerfect for Windows 5.2 for this issue. We will resume the test in hope that we can produce the next newsletter in Ami Pro.

😐 At the last meeting some members mentioned that they had been given discounts on items at CompUSA. These statements caught me off guard. When CompUSA first moved into town I talked to them about involvement with our user group. At that time I got a warm reception but no cigar, not even permission to place our flyers in their store. On the other hand, when Computer City came to town and were more than willing to accommodate our group. Subsequently and since the Corel general meeting, these issues have changed. We can now place our brochures in the store. Insofar as the discount, I talked to my corporate sales representative, Ryan Andrew to verify the details. It was expressed to me that there was not an official commitment between CompUSA and our group. However, CompUSA may entertain the idea of coming out to our group and making an official presentation and offer. In the meantime and unofficially you can try to use your membership card to get a discount. Keep in mind that all items may not be discounted and that you must go to corporate pickup with your item(s) to get your price and then go to the regular register to pay for them. I must say that I did try this and it worked. I received a $4 discount off of *Comanche Maximum Overkill.* This is a great game although my patience was tested with tech support and the cumbersome setup procedures initially. While I am not a game freak this game has replaced Wolfenstein on my PC. This is a great tension reliever. Thanks to our SYSOP for recommending it to me.

This months issue includes free tickets for EXPOTECH BUSINESS EXPO at the Bayfront Center in St. Pete to be held May 12 & 13 from 12PM to 7PM. Tickets will be included in the newsletter later this year for the Tampa show.

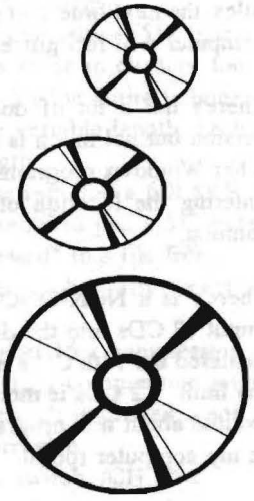
In closing please join me in welcoming Software Trader of Florida to the Tampa Bay area. They produce a publication, *Software Trader*, to promote information exchange among those of us that use microcomputers. Copies of the first edition were delivered and available at our last meeting.

Harvey Bruneau

Product Review:

CD Tray for Windows

By: Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa IBM PC Users Gruop



CD Tray is a Compact Disk Audio Player and Audio Compact Disk Database program for Windows. CD Tray combines the look and feel of a real CD Player with an easy, but powerful means of storing and categorizing disks into a Compact Disk Library. This just may be the best Shareware or Commercial Audio Compact Disk player for Windows on the market.

CD Tray provides these outstanding features for a low Shareware price:

---

* Compact Disk Artist/Title recognition after input into the CD Library.
* Stores Song Titles and Compact Disk time information.
* Track Programming.
* Shuffle Play
* Save a favorite track program for each disk in your CD Library.
* Fast Forward / Rewind / Cueing.
* Segment Play to play a fixed length passage while recording.
* Track Repeat.
* Disk Repeat.
* CD Library capacity of over 2 billion Compact Disks with multiple sort keys.
* CD Library filtering by categories of music in the CD Library.
* Store dollar value and purchase information for each Compact Disk in your CD Library.
* Disk Library summary and statistics.
* Disk Libray exporting capability.
* Ability to run other user-defined Windows programs from CD Tray.
* Custom 3-D look which mimicks a real CD player.
* Animated graphics diversion windows for greater music enjoyment.
* Real-time digital readouts of track number, track length, number of tracks, duration, time remaining, etc.
* All the controls of a real CD player (Play, Stop, Pause, Skip etc.)
* Complete Windows Help file.
* The author's firm commitment to future improvements and added features as well as free customer support for registered users.

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If you currently have a sound card and CD-ROM drive you need nothing further to enjoy listening to your favorite music CDs while working in Windows. And what's really neat, after you enter the information about the disk once, such as artist, CD title and song titles, the next time you put that same CD into the ROM drive your computer will recognize it and list all the info automatically.

There's not a lot of documentation included in the unregistered version but not much is really needed. Installation is as with most other Windows programs through the FILES - NEW command and entering the location of the .EXE file. After that you're up and running.

There's is a NON-DOCUMENTED catch though. You can only imput 12 CDs into the database in the unregistered version. When I entered the 13th CD a message popped up and told me that 12 was the limit. 12 CDs is more than enough to get your attention. I was excited about this program and I already have an audio CD player in my computer room!

The registration fee is $29.00, plus $3 for shipping and handling.

Please be advised that credit cards cannot be accepted.

Checks/cash/money orders ONLY, please!

With registration you will receive:
- The fully functional version of the LATEST CD Tray program and help files on your choice of disk format (5.25 or 3.5 disks).
- Unlimited Technical Support.
- Free or minimal cost upgrades for major program revisions.

You may register CD Tray in the following way:

By mail with check, cash or money order to:

JenJen Software
7 Kettering Lane
Hampton, Va 23666

■■■

Software Review : TrueEffects for Windows

By: Bing Perry, MBUG

TrueEffects for Windows provides a simple way to spruce up your documents by creating special font effects using your existing TrueType fonts. The utility lets you insert a fill pattern for each font, choose from several outlines and shadows effects including 3D, and provides a choice of backgrounds if desired. TrueEffects supports all printers except Postscript printers.

You'll need about 500K of free disk space and a 286 or better computer running Windows 3.1 to install TrueEffects for Windows. Installation is a breeze and, when finished, you can immediately begin creating a series of fonts with only your imagination as a limitation. To create a special effect font, merely highlight the font and indicate what fill pattern, outline, shadow, and background effect you wish from a series of effects provided. As you make your selection, you can immediately view how the effect will appear.

The fonts you create and install in Windows can then be used just like a normal TrueType font in any application running under Windows 3.1 The effects you see in the title were done using Pagemaker 4.0. If you are running short of disk space, the special effects font can just as easily be removed and recreated when and if you need it again. This is a neat program, and I highly recommend it.

Suggested retail price for TrueEffects for Windows is $59.95. It is produced by:
MicroLogic Software
1351 Ocean Ave.
Emeryville, CA 94608-1128
telephone: (510) 652-5464, FAX (510) 652-5040.

■■■

Book Review: Business Software Companion

By: Hugh Bayless

Tom Badgett and Corey Sandler have collaborated on this Wiley book for the non-technical person who has to use a variety of business software. Instead of going into depth on a single program, the authors have provided a reference guide to Ami Pro, dBase, DOS, Excel, FoxPro, Lotus 1-2-3, Microsoft Word, Aldus PageMaker, Paradox, ProComm Plus, Quattro Pro, Smartcom, Windows, and WordPerfect.

It gives task-oriented guidance for someone who has to use one of these applications for everyday tasks. An interesting and probably very useful concept. Instead of searching an entire manual to learn how to write and print a letter in WordPerfect, look in this book and learn how in a few simple pages. It lacks depth, but that will be a plus for the many people whose needs are limited.

$22.95 from John Wiley & Sons, Inc. at 1-800-CALL-WILEY, or at your favorite computer book store.

■■■

The Truth About DOS 6.0 Compression Ratios

Can You Trust DIR/C?

by Doug Lowe

As its name implies, DoubleSpace can effectively double the capacity of your disk drive by compressing your files. For DOS 6.0, Microsoft added the /C switch to the DIR command to report the compression ratio for files stored on compressed drives. But the first time you use the DIR command's new /C switch, you'll probably be surprised to see that it reports 16:1 compression ratios for many files. After seeing so many files compressed 16:1, you might wonder why Microsoft didn't call DoubleSpace HextupleSpace instead.

Are these 16:1 compression ratios exaggerated, or does DoubleSpace really squeeze these files down to one-sixteenth of the space required by the uncompressed files?

A simple experiment will shed a little light on this question. If you've installed DoubleSpace, create a one byte file named ONE-BYTE.TXT on a compressed volume. To do that, enter this command:

COPY CON ONEBYTE.TXT

Then, press the space bar once to ad a space to the file and press Ctrl-Z to signal the end of the file. If you then type DIR ONE-BYTE.TXT, you'll see that the file contains just one byte.

It's impossible to compress one byte of data, right? Wrong. Type DIR ONEBYTE.TXT /C and you'll see that DoubleSpace says it compressed this file 16:1. What gives?

When you use the DIR/C command, your first assumption will naturally be that the reported compression ratio represents the degree to which DoubleSpace was able to compress each file's date. But the compression ratio displayed by DIR/C isn't based on the degree to which the file's data can be compressed. Instead, it reflects the amount of total disk space saved by compressing the file and storing it on a DoubleSpace volume rather than on an uncompressed volume.

The extraordinary compression ratios reported for some files are not due to compression at all, but rather to the fact that DoubleSpace uses a more efficient method to allocate space to files. Simply put, DoubleSpace volumes are not tied to the notion of "clusters," or "allocation units," the way uncompressed DOS volumes are.

When DOS stores a file on an uncompressed volume, it allocates disk space to the file in increments of whole clusters. The size of each cluster depends on the size of the disk drive. For most disk drives, the cluster size is 2KB or 4KB. For large disk drives (up to 512MB), the cluster size is 8KB. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that you have a 512MB disk with 8KB clusters. The smallest file you can create on this drive will use 8KB of disk space, even if the file contains only one byte of data. That's because DOS allocates space to your files one cluster at a time.

DoubleSpace uses a different allocation strategy. DoubleSpace allocates space to your files one sector (512 bytes) at a time. Actually, DoubleSpace allocates space in clusters, too. But instead of using the same cluster size for the entire volume, the clusters on a DoubleSpace volume are variable-length. Each cluster can be from 1 to 16 sectors in length.

The same one-byte file that would have required a full 8KB cluster on an uncompressed volume now requires just a 512-byte cluster. As a result, DoubleSpace "compressed" this file from 8KB to 512 bytes--that's 16:1--even though it obviously wasn't able to compress the data at all.

If you'll look closer at the files that report 16:1 compression, you'll see that they're all small files. The 16:1 compression ratio reported for these files is due to DoubleSpace's improved space allocation rather than to actual data compression.

The DIR command has a lesser-known switch, /CH, that reports the compression ratio based on the cluster size of the host volume rather than the cluster size of the DoubleSpace volume. If the host volume has a smaller cluster size, the /CH switch will report smaller compression ratios for small files. For example, if the host volume has a cluster size of 4KB, small files will show an 8:1 compression ratio instead of 16:1.

Does DIR/CH report a more accurate and fair compression ratio than DIR /C? That depends on your point of view. The ratio reported by DIR /CH lets you see how much space you're saving by using DoubleSpace. For example, your 1-byte file would have required one 4KB cluster on a 200MB uncompressed drive. When you DoubleSpace that drive, it requires only 512 bytes. So the compression ratio of 8:1 is fair. On the other hand, since DoubleSpace lets you store 400MB or more of data on a 200MB drive, it's not unreasonable to base the compression ration on 8KB clusters, since 8KB clusters would be required to support a 400MB uncompressed drive.

The point is that neither DIR/C or DIR/CH report the compression ratio the way you would expect. Unfortunately, there is currently no way to find out the actual degree of compression achieved on your date. We can only hope that Central Point, Symantec, and others are working overtime on it!

Doug Lowe is the author of numerous computer books, including The Only DOS Book You'll Ever Need (Second Edition), published by Mike Murach & Associates, Inc. (1-800-221-5528)

Editorial Comment: ***The Only DOS Book You'll Ever Need*** lists at $27.50, but our members are eligible for a 40% discount, and may buy this book for $16.50... a generous saving on a great book! Call 1-800-221-5528

Shareware, Public Domain, & Freeware Software

By: Bill Quinn, Pinellas IBM PCUG - Bits & Bytes
Clearwater, FL

Freely distributed software has been available since the first days of the personal computer. In the last five years this concept has evolved into an alternate to commercial software. My definitions of the software distribution market may help the novice computer users to have an understanding of the terms that are in use today.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Public domain software has been released completely to the public, and the author retains no legal rights to it. The programmer may not want to market the program, or he may feel that the effort was not sufficient to justify any price. Whatever the reason; however, the key is that the author has given up all rights, and anyone may use the software and may pass it on to others. The way to tell if you have public domain software is to look for a copyright notice. If there is no such notice, you have public domain software.

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Shareware authors, unlike public domain authors, hold copyrights on their programs. The Shareware programmer's software is protected by U. S. and international copyright laws, as is commercial software. Shareware, however, unlike its commercial counterpart, may be copied freely and passed on to others. Like commercial software Shareware is a "FOR-SALE" product.

Shareware authors request that people who try their software and decide to use it send a registration fee to the author. This registration fee is the equivalent to purchasing the software. For this registration fee authors may offer a wide variety of services - including printed manuals, disks, advance versions, and telephone support. Some companies also offer free updates.
The most important benefit of registration is that you receive a legal license to continue using the software. I should like to think that Shareware is a method of distribution of commercial software. In short - try it; and if you continue to use it, send the requested fee to the program's author.

FREEWARE

Freeware holds a place between public domain software and Shareware. The author has retained the rights by exercising the copyright law, but he does not require any fee for continued use of the software. Some authors may request a small contribution if you use the program, but these contributions are not required. With Freeware you may find restrictions on the distribution of the program. While some authors will not allow you to charge for their program when it is distributed, other authors will place a dollar limit for copying and distributing their programs.

STANDARDS Are there any standards? For public domain and Freeware, not really. Many Shareware authors, on the other hand, have become part of the Association of Shareware Professionals, ASP, which is dedicated to the establishment of recognized standards for Shareware programs and for their companies. Not all authors belong to ASP; but as more authors join, Shareware standards have become more universally followed.

DISTRIBUTION METHODS There are four common methods of obtaining freely distributed software: from a friend, from a user group, from a disk vendor, and from a bulletin board.

Friends. The rules associated with freely distributed software generally allow users to make copies for others. If you have a friend with this type of software, you may make a copy the software. Because it is easy to copy software, please make certain that the program you are copying belongs to one of the freely distributed software classes, and that it is not commercial software. It is illegal to copy commercial software. One of the benefits of freely distributed software is that you can try it before buying it to decide if the program meets your needs. With commercial software you have to buy it before trying it. This means your decision must be based on what others have said about the program rather than on your own experiences with it.

Users Groups This is one of the most popular ways of getting freely distributed software, because a wide variety of programs can be obtained, and in some cases you can associate with other members who are able to teach you how to use them. If the user group charges a fee for disk copying, you must remember that the fee is a copying fee. It is not part of the author's registration fee. Our complete disk copying library is on the club's Bulletin Board Service (BBS).

Disk Vendor . A disk vendor operates a business of copying disks for a specified charge per disk. Almost all disk vendors issue some type of disk catalog from which you select those program disk which you want to buy. Remember that the fees you pay to the disk vendor are fees for the copying and for the mailing of the disks you have ordered. Here again, the author of the program does not receive the money you paid to the disk vendor. There is one disk vendor who has made arrangements with several Shareware authors to accept registration fees for the author's program. The name of this disk vendor is:

The Public (Software) Library PO Box 35705 Houston, TX 77235-5705 Orders: (800) 242-4775 (On a personal note, I have found the PSL to be the best disk vendor in the country.)

Bulletin Board Ssystem (BBS) . BBSs require the user to have a device known as a modem. A modem allows one computer to talk to another computer over standard phone lines. There are literally

(Continued on next page.)

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thousands of BBS's around the world where you can download freely distributed programs. Our club has a 4 node (4 telephone lines) BBS which contains over 6,000 files. Our club's BBS is rather small compared to other BBS's in the country. Please remember that it is illegal to download any commercial software from a BBS.

As an alternate to a local BBS, there are a number of Information On-line Services. These are a form of national bulletin board where users are able to access services like those found on local boards. Many of these On-line Services offer hundreds of thousands of freely distributed software programs.

In summary, the world of freely-distributed software can be anything you want it to be. If you want to get a modem and plunge into the many bulletin board systems around the country, that is certainly one option. If, on the other hand, you want to sit back, browse through a nicely printed catalog and pick and choose, that option is also available. The very best part of these options is that all of this software is on a Try-Before-You-Buy basis, totally unlike any software you might obtain through a store or from mail order. One last item: there are computer viruses everywhere. In most cases every effort is made so that software is provided from the source virus free. Our BBS checks all files placed on the BBS for viruses before they can be downloaded to you. That is not always the case when you are provided a copy from an unknown or unintending source. So, please practice safe computer procedures when you are introducing new disks to your computer. Be Prepared. Enjoy!

■■■

Book Reviews:

Microsoft Access Inside & Out and Paradox For Windows Made Easy

By: Ed West, MBUG

Well, have you joined in with the hype over which database program for the windows environment is the best? The heavy hitters, Microsoft and Borland Intl. would certainly like you to. With the recent releases of Microsoft Access at approx. $99, and Paradox for Windows at approx. $139, these vendors have thrown the carrot out for you to nibble. Of course that's just good business, if you bite, you're probably locked into the long haul for the numerous updates sure to follow, making them more money. Isn't that what they are there for?

Just for the sake of argument, I'll throw in my two bits and vote for Paradox because I personally found it easier to use, more friendly... to say. However, on the other hand, Access has more options in designing the final report printout, and don't forget the macros, can't live without them. On second thought, maybe I should withdraw my two bits and invite you to find out for yourself which is best for your particular needs, if you've a mind to.

There are two new books out on the market, both published by Osborne-Mc Graw Hill, separately dealing with these new database programs. The first one, Microsoft Access Inside & Out, written by Mary Campbell, sells for $27.95, with 707 pages, and the second one, Paradox For Windows Made Easy, written by Edward Jones, sells for $19.95, with 430 pages.

Now what do you get with these books? Both have the customary table of contents, and index, and both have sections on using their respective product in a network environment. However that's about as far as the similarities go, they both have strong points and weak points, here goes--

I found the Paradox book easy to read and follow. The book is designed for you to read and work through while at the computer. The author starts the book out by discussing databases, what they are and what their designs should be, then goes into actual data entry. Here's where you begin to follow along with the book, actually making the data entries, and subsequently manipulating this data through various exercises as you continue. The strong point of the book is the printing format, with black for general text, and a light blue for paragraph and topic headings, tips, and embedded text with special meaning.

There are lots of graphic screen displays to explain processes, once again using a two-tone blue with black color scheme to depict the screens. You say, "What's type color and format got to do with it?" Take a look for yourself, it is surprising how much easier it is to read this type of book, compared to the normal black on white format of most publications.

The book is intended for the beginner and intermediate user, and does its intended job well. You will be taught how to enter and edit data, perform queries, create and use custom forms for both screen display and report printouts, as well as how to import/export data from/to various other programs. However, you will not find any documentation on Objectpal, the full-featured, visual programming language that you can use to automate your work within Paradox. The author also includes a 30 page appendix, "A Guide To Windows." I would have preferred that this section have been deleted, and Objectpal information put in its place. I recommend the book for beginners, but not as a reference book on Paradox. Take a look for yourself at your local book store, this may be just the book you're looking for if you are new to Paradox for Windows.

Microsoft Access Inside & Out is written in the traditional black on white format, making the sparse number of screen depiction's difficult to read (or maybe it's just my failing eye sight). The first

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approx. 50 pages of the book deal with databases, and all of the considerations you should make when designing one. The author does a really good job in this discussion, you might say it's a mini tutorial on database construction. The book itself is designed more in the format of a traditional school text book, but is very thorough in its discussion of all aspects of Access. Sections cover data entry/editing, importing/exporting data, queries, customized forms for screen and printed reports, using expressions, and using multiple tables in reports and forms. In addition to a section on networking, the author extensively covers the use of macros, creating sophisticated queries using multiple tables, report generation using FormWizard and ReportWizard, and how to use Access Basic, the programming language for applications development in Access. Any level of user will find useful information in this publication. If you want a general reference book for Access, take a look at this one.

■■■

HARVARD GRAPHICS DESIGN COMPANION - WINDOWS EDITION

Reviewed by: Shirley Neese,
BUG BYTES, Bisbee User's Group, Bisbee, AZ

Design skills are essential to achieve real communication with an audience, point out authors Margaret Rabb and Chris Potter. Their book Harvard Graphics Design Companion Windows Edition teaches users the power of dynamic design.

Using Harvard Graphics' sophisticated graphic features, the authors demonstrate how to produce professional quality graphics through real world applications and step- by-step procedures. The book's easy narrative style coupled with dozens of color and black-and-white illustrations offers tips, examples and advise for Harvard Graphics users at all levels.

The first section of the book, "Design Consultant," examines creating dynamic presentations by probing the essentials of typography, graphic elements, organization and design.

The authors help the user to devise both organizational and visual styles. The "Questions of Style" aid in the decision of which important presentation attributes are to be interpreted visually. Once this is determined, then the "behind the scenes" work can begin. Production tips and examples of visual style alignment, layout, color palettes and background treatments, as well as a whole chapter devoted to the descriptions of and recommendations for using different typefaces, are very useful.

The chapter "Anatomy of a Presentation Graphic" details the basic graphic types and their usage based on the most important point to be conveyed: the comparison, the trend, the variation, the motive. Other chapters lead the user through the procedures for designing and creating text frames, tables, two- and three-dimensional charts and graphs while introducing Harvard Graphics' new production environment.

For example, users accustom the Harvard Graphics 3.0 AutoBuild feature do not have that option in the Windows version. However, by using the Slide Sorter and Outliner features, this "build text sequence" technique can be accomplished painlessly.

Section Two, "Presentation Graphics," illustrates the design fundamentals in action, design do's and don'ts and frame makeovers. "Great Presentations" offers six different presentations complete with illustrations■ScreenShow, overheads to go, slide show, HyperShow, video projector and overhead presentations. These are drawn from fictional, though plausible, scenarios. Each has accompanying production or presentation tips.

Once a presentation is put together, it is vitally important to proof it all together for any problems of inconsistency or visual difficulties. These are easy to overlook when concentrating on each individual frame. The chapter on "Design Do's and Don'ts" has an excellent detailed checklist and a few words of warning that will save the user both time and frustration.

The most engaging element of this book are the frame makeovers. Many Harvard Graphics users are familiar with the Chart Gallery a collection of specially designed sample charts that can be edited to create new charts. This feature can be a "life-saver" when pressed for time and/or a lack of creative "juices." But you can pick out a standard Harvard Graphics frame from a mile away. However, these standard formats can be transformed with some tweaking and a little imagination to improve the appearance and effectiveness of frames. The makeovers section has step-by-step modifications and before-and-after design examples.

The book is rounded out with a glossary, reading list and comprehensive index.

Harvard Graphics Design Companion Windows Edition is well written, nicely organized and complimented with many illustrations, examples and practical applications. Every Harvard Graphics user is in the communication business. Harvard Graphics Design Companion gives the user the needed tools to express information clearly, concisely and persuasively while offering inspiration.

The thought occurred while reviewing this book that some of these great designs should be put on diskette for the user. Sure enough, on the last page there is an order form for the Harvard Graphics Design Companion Windows Edition Diskette. Included on the disk are charts from the book's "Great Presentations" and "Frame Makeovers" chapters, templates for a variety of chart formats, sample grids, and examples of charts using specifically developed color palettes. The disk is available from Ventana Press for $39.95 plus $3.60 UPS shipping.

Harvard Graphics Design Companion Windows Edition is available at $23.95 plus $4.50 shipping from:

Ventana Press
P.O. Box 2468
Chapel Hill, NC 27515
919/942-0220; FAX 800/877-7955

Shirley Neese teaches Harvard Graphics, among other things at Cochise College in Sierra Vista, AZ.

Installing Windows 3.1

By Hugh Bayless, MBUG

The installation of Windows 3.1 is about as easy as any software you can find. However, there are some potential problems you should be aware of, in order to avoid them. The first concern is any memory-resident (TSR programs) that may be loaded at the time o installation. Some of those TSRs that may interfere with the installation of Windows are actually contained in DOS and installed by your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files. Among these are APPEND, FASTOPEN, GRAPHICS, JOIN, and PRINT. That's why it is safest to "clean boot" your system before installing Windows.

If you want to read the lengthy list TSRs and drivers that can cause problems in the installation or running of Windows, look at the file SETUP.INF. You will only find it on your Windows installation disk because it is not copied into your \WINDOWS directory during installation on your hard disk. SETUP.INF is a long file, written in ASCII, so you will have to search for the section you want, which has the heading:

Known TSRs and drivers which may result in a hang or crash during execution of Setup or Windows. To "clean boot" your system, make up a disk that fits in your A: drive by formatting it with the /S switch, which installs the system files on it, then copy your COMMAND.COM file to the disk. Put this disk in your A: drive and reboot (restart) your computer. In this way, there will not be any TSRs to interfere with the installation of Windows.

Among the TSRs that can cause problems, even after installation, are:

DESKTOP.EXE - Part of PC Tools Deluxe
PYRO.EXE - PYRO! Screen Saver
SK2.EXE - SideKick version 2.0
VACCINE.EXE - Vaccine Antivirus Program

Software that is written for Windows us usually free of conflicts, but many older DOS programs can cause problems. The good news is that during installation, Windows checks your AUTOEXEC.BAT file and removes TSRs that it knows will cause trouble. Nevertheless, it is a wise precaution to clean boot before installing Windows.

■■■



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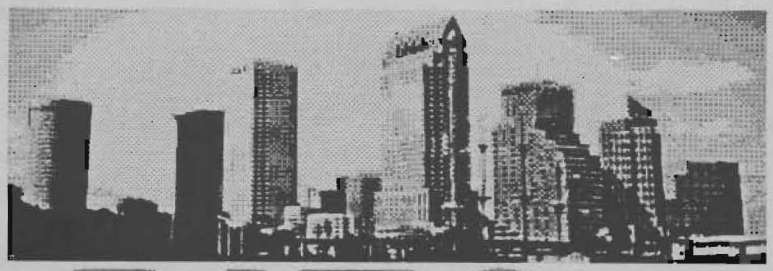
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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

Vol. 6 No. 5 May, 1993

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: May 12, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

MAY AGENDA:

5/12/93

6:00 PM - opening remarks
6:30 PM -
Demo AND Roundtable Discussion
of :

DOS 6.0

Lead by: Harvey Bruneau & Larry Anders

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
DOS 6.0 upgrade,
Microsoft **Access**
and Miscellaneous items

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert noncommercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with Ami Pro for Windows donated by Lotus Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 4/14/93 MEETING

By: Jim Clark

The meeting began just a few moments late (at 6:10, to be precise), but it was another good meeting, with quite a nice group in attendance. In addition to a vendor review of an impressive software program, there were some very interesting discussions on items of interest to a great many of us. Once again, our meeting was guided by the astute leadership of our illustrious Prez, Harvey Bruneau.

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS

Quite a few items of interest were discussed during the meeting, including:

That Comp USA is unofficially allowing discounts for members of our group on many items purchased at Comp USA was confirmed by our Prez. A discount is not given on all items, especially low cost items (e.g., DOS 6 Upgrade, floppy disks). However, the savings can be rather substantial on other items; one member received a 20% on a $50 hardware item, for example. On more expensive items, members have reported $40 or more savings. To receive the corporate discount, take your purchases to the Corporate Desk and show your User Group membership card.

There was considerable discussion of DOS 6.0, with varying opinions from our membership. Harvey introduced the subject, reporting general satisfaction with all DOS 6.0 features used thus far by him at Dun & Bradstreet, including MemMaker, AntiVirus, and optional boot. He had not yet used DoubleSpace.

* Most indicated that DOS 6.0 was easy to load and they had no troubles in doing so. A couple of others reported some problem in loading and setting it up. All felt that documentation left something to be desired, with the manual provided containing little to no technical info.

* Most comments about MemMaker were along the lines that it was not quite as good as the stand-alone memory managers at ferreting out more memory, but that it was a good alternative for those who do not need the last byte of memory and who do not want to pay the price of the stand-alone products. And, it certainly simplified the task of making upper memory available and loading TSRs in same.

* The DoubleSpace feature generated the most divergent opinions. Several reported problems, including some boot prolems which appeared after installing DoubleSpace. One with a CD-ROM, loading the driver in upper memory, reported booting problems following installation of DoubleSpace. Some reported the compression ratio not as

(Continued on next page.)

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good as with Stacker. Others reported does not allow compressed drives to be decompressed -- as the stand-alone products do.

* Few commented on the AntiVirus reported that the built-in antivirus was making his job somewhat easier, and liked the feature thus far.

* All those who had used the Optional Boot feature seemed to like it quite well. Some of those who had experienced boot problems reported that the AllBoot switch solved their boot problem. The ability to select a clean boot from the hard drive was viewed as a very welcome improvement by all who had experienced booting problems -- negating the need to boot from floppy.

A review of DOS 6.0, and all of its features, sometime in the not-to-distant future would be welcome by all DOS 6.0 users, followed by a seminar to discuss problems experienced and solutions found.

PRESENTATION -- SuperBase

Software Publishing Corporation was good enough to send to us a knowledgeable representative, Paul Tondera, Corporate Account Manager, to give us a preview of their program, SuperBase, Version 2.0 -- a fully relational database program for Windows. Paul noted that SuperBase is not something new on the market or in Windows, but that it has been around managing data *in Windows* for over eight years. Hence, it is not something new with a lot of bugs, as is the case with the new programs now on the market; it has evolved as a well founded, sound and very powerful database program. I am not knowledgeable on databases and have no basis for comparison, but I can say that SuperBase certainly appeared to me to be very powerful, functional and easy to use.

Among the many features Paul reported and/or demonstrated are: A forms generating capability; Quick Reporting feature which produces reports in detail; easy setup and modification of all reports, and forms; drag and drop editing; provides for query by example; allows up to 999 indexes per file; provides full multi-media support; imports and integrates sound and video files into SuperBase; uses built-in procedural language; provides automatic recording of macros and can use basic macros and those created in "C"; imports from all the major dB programs as well as ASCII, and exports in most of the same formats; the forms creator uses predefined fields which simplifies forms creation; includes the capability for merging of mail and label files, and SB allows merging of 2 databases. SuperBase is also network ready.

In some respects, SuperBase 2.0 is the least demanding for hardware capabilities of any of the major DB programs. It will load into and work in a 286 machine, for example. A VGA monitor is required, as is 1 MB of RAM, though 2 MBs of RAM is recommended. And, 7 MB of hard disk space is required.

SuperBase 2.0 carries a list price of $795, but has a street price in the range of $500-550. If you already own a previous version of SuperBase, the upgrade price is $149. Those using other DB programs can purchase a SuperBase competitive upgrade for $199.

Many thanks to Software Publishing Corporation and Paul Tondera for an excellent presentation of a great BB program, and for your very generous software contributions.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Software Publishing Corporation and Sunrise Computer, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. In addition, Sunrise Computer donated quite a number of computer items that were distributed to those who could use them, including printer ribbons, covers, and static guards; these items are not reflected here. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Larry Anders	Disk cleaner & Mouse Pad
Herbert Atwood	Mouse Pad
Jim Clark	Mouse Pad
Gene Wade	T Shirt
Bill White	Computer Lock
Parker Monroe	Fanny Pak
Kevan Sheridan	Harvard Graphics for Windows
Luis Vergara	Harvard Graphics 3.0
Tom Cone	SuperBase 2.0
Gene Wade	50/50 ($50)

the meeting adjourned at about 9:00 PM

♦♦♦♦♦

PRIVATE MESSAGES

From: SYSOP
To: ALL
Just a note about private messages....

There is no such thing on a BBS. Remember that anyone who has sysop access can reach each and every message on the system. No limits. What this means is that when you send a private message to another person, that person AND the SysOp can read it. More importantly, ONLY the sender, receiver and the SysOp can read the message. If the message is to the SysOp then only two people can read it.

I get a LOT of GOOD questions in private mail that I feel would be better off as public mail. Remember, there are other people out there that may just have the same question as you do! Don't be afraid to leave your mail/questions as public. If nothing else other people will see what is going on and may learn something!

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Most of you BBS users probably noticed Kevan's comment above on the board, however for those of you that didn't catch it, we felt it was worth noting here.)

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PRESIDENT' COLUMN



Some of my opening remarks last month covered MS DOS 6.0. Additionally, some of the pioneer members, those who take a chance on new technology before the majority do, voiced their experiences with parts of DOS 6.0. I like those meetings where the membership participates and shares their knowledge with the rest of us. With that in mind, the May meeting will be presented by board members. The first presentation, **DOS 6.0,** will be by Larry Anders and I. While we do not attest to being experts in the new product, we will show some of its the new features. This will be an open forum type presentation where everyone can contribute during the presentation. Secondly, Ed Buzza will demonstrate some of the shareware software which is included on new member diskettes or can be downloaded from the BBS. Lastly, and if time permits Kevan Sheridan will review the new Qmodem communication software. This meeting will surely cover something of interest for everyone. The raffle will include a copy of Mircosoft Access and a DOS 6.0 upgrade.

My thanks to Software Publishing Corp. and Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts for their generous contributions to our April raffle.

This month Hot-Lanta will host yet another Comdex. Once again I will be stalking the halls of this show in the search of NT with hundreds if not thousands of other tech weenies and propellers heads. Of course the majority of attendees are normal computer users. The basic goal is simply to seek what current technology and information is available today to facilitate our needs and of those we represent. This to me is gold dust. Its valuable but has only a short life span before its gone. But like a prospector you have to pan the river often to find those rare nuggets of technology on which to base the future. To find those rare items is the ultimate goal, but you must be wary of fools gold for it is also abundant.

Back in the mid eighties I thought I bought into NT (New Technology) that would last a lifetime. I was wrong. My IBM PC/XT was outdated in less than two years and now sits in a closet holding up the outside wall of our house. I keep telling Marylee that it will come back in style, like my bell bottom pants and wide neck ties which are also in a closet. In the late eighties I once again bought into NT. That Samsung 286 lasted only a couple of years before being passed on to my step-son. He uses it for writing his college papers and keeping track of his finances. In January of 92 we bought our third PC. This monster 486/33 was surely going to meet our needs well into the future I thought. Of course that was until I installed 6 Compaq 486/66Mhz systems at work.

Okay so by now you get the message and no we are not buying a 66Mhz or a Pentium PC. I misunderstood the NT acronym back in the eighties. It didn't and doesn't mean New Technology. It stands for *Never-ending Technology*. Of course I was also a bit off on the statement *The only constant is change*. I thought that came from a new parent changing diapers until I switch my career from mainframes to PCs. Anyway, for those of you waiting to buy that first or final state-of-the-art PC that will take you into the year 2000, good luck. By then the Pentium will be long retired and getting nominated into the PC Hall of Fame. The current model will not even resemble a PC. I am not sure what we will do with our extinct diskettes and modems. They will be radical and in time be replaced by NT. Ah Comdex show me the nuggets.

Harvey Bruneau

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Making Mouse Double Clicking Easier

On APCUG BBS by Saginaw Valley Computer Association

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There are two parameters that are in effect that control how the mouse double click feature works. One is the double click speed that is under the mouse dialogue box in the control panel. The second parameter has to do with the number of pixels the mouse can move while a double click action is going on. All of us believe that when we double click the mouse, that we are not moving the mouse at all. However, the reality is, we are moving the mouse just a little bit. If this little bit is greater than the distance that is defined as the limit of the double click distance, then Windows is understanding your double click to be two single clicks at two different locations. In order to make double clicking easier, it is often best to increase the double click height and double click width specifications in the WIN.INI file. The way to do this is to edit your WIN.INI file utilizing either notepad or the system editor. Under the line that says "DoubleClickSpeed=999", where 999 is some number, insert the following two lines:

DoubleClickHeight = 8
DoubleClickWidth = 8

Save this update, then exit Windows, and restart Windows. At this point, your double clicking should be easier than it was in the past. If you are still having difficulties, you can change the 8 to a higher number (multiples of 4), like 12 or 16.

Also remember, that the double click speed needs to e set in such a way that when you double click, the test box converts from regular video to reverse video, and from reverse video to regular video for each time you double click. Moving the double-click speed slower makes this easier. Moving it faster requires that you double click faster.

If you specify your double click height, your double click width, and your double click speed, you should be able to get a combination that makes your mouse double clicking comfortable.

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Walter Mitty's Excellent Plane Rides

Review by: Stephen Talmadge
Flight Assignment: ATP Version 3

Flight Assignment: ATP is not a game; it is simulation software. For those of you who know Microsoft's Flight Simulator (which was itself originally developed by subLogic), Flight Assignment: ATP provides visual and instrument commercial airliner operations training in a simulated environment which conforms to FAA approved procedures, adaptive software simulator interaction; and flight assignments which can be flown in a structured, semistructured or freestyle mode, depending upon the desires of the simulator pilot.

The initials ATP stand for Airline Transport Pilot, the FAA designation for licensed drivers of heavy, multiengine aircraft. In Flight Assignment: ATP there is a structured training program consisting of 96 preplanned flights or 'trips' which become gradually more challenging as the simulator pilot moves more deeply into the program.

And, as if all that wasn't enough, Flight Assignment: ATP runs just fine on a 'fairly zippy' ATclass system. I reviewed the product on a 286 clone that benchmarks at about 17 MHz running DOS 5.0 in 4 Mb of 80 ns memory and a moderate speed IDE hard drive. Sometimes the frame rate appeared a touch slow particularly on short final approach with low ceilings and some stinky crosswinds; but nonetheless that class of system will handle Flight Assignment: ATP adequately.

[SubLogic says the software will run on an XTclass machine; and I have no doubt that it will. But running Flight Assignment: ATP on any processor rated below 15 Mhz may frustrate and perhaps annoy the user; and I also recommend a [preferably VGA] color monitor which is not "necessary" but nice to have when trying to keep track of all of the stuff that comes at you on the screen.

Move up to at least a 386/33 with 2+ Mb of fairly fast memory and things will always appear smooth on the monitor. If you want to hear interactive voice communications with the FAA folks, add a SoundBlaster or AdLib board. Otherwise, the audio support is limited to surprisingly realistic flight sounds played through your PC's speaker and the FAA communications are displayed in text for you at the top of the monitor.]

You can run Flight Assignment: ATP using just the computer's keyboard; but the software also supports [and I highly recommend] use of a pointing device [a trackball will probably work better than a mouse] and joystick. If you really want to get into this simulator, you can add a device called Flight Controls I which plugs into a game adapter and includes an actual control yoke, flap switch, throttle and gear switch. Add a set of optional rudder pedals and, except for the physical sensations that you can only experience in flight, it truly is just like being there.

Flight trips made 'on the record' are rated for safety, airmanship and overall skill; and individual trip ratings are accumulated in a logbook which is maintained for each ATP rating candidate by the simulation program. The preplanned trips may also be made in Single Flight Mode ('off the record') so that one may practice the flight before the electronic 'FAA inspector' sits along side. In addition, the simulator pilot can design and fly a trip between any two airports included in the Flight Assignment: ATP world; and the software will interact properly from start to finish just as though the trip was one of those in the structured training program.



Aircraft provided by Flight Assignment: ATP are the Boeing 737250, Airbus A320150, the Boeing 767250, the Boeing 747350 and [for all you barnstormers] the Shorts 360. In what I construed as an oddly jingoist move, only the Boeing aircraft are included in the structured training program; and flight characteristics of the A320 and the Shorts 360 are left to the student to discover outside the formal training program. I found the A320 a dream to fly and the Shorts 360 can deliver some truly spectacular [albeit noisy] short field takeoff and landing performance. Cockpit design and sound effects are varied with each aircraft; and closely resemble their truelife counterparts.

Instrument support includes the standard commercial airliner panel Airspeed Indicator, Attitude Direction Indicator, Automatic Direction Finder, Artificial Horizon, Pressure Altimeter, Radio Altimeter, Heading Indicator, Vertical Speed Indicator, Horizontal Situation Indicator, Radio Magnetic Indicator, Transponder, two Communications and two VOR/ILS Navigation Radios [with Distance Measuring Equipment]; as well an XBand color radar screen and assorted indicators, gauges, dials and lights. Automatic Terminal Information Service, enroute Flight Service Station briefings and twoway radio communications are also provided.

There is an autopilot which can be engaged to hold altitude and heading; and also coupled to track radio navigation aids such as Visual Omnirange Receivers and [very helpful during a final instrument approach] the localizer beam of an Instrument Landing System. [You're on your own riding the glide slope...] All aircraft other than the 737 provide an Inertial Reference System which you can use to define up to four geographic waypoints that can be flown to in the sequence of your choice.

The software includes a demo ride; and a broad range of Boeing 737 lessons each of which focuses on development of one flight skill set. The demo ride has imbedded, intentional mistakes allowing the novice simulator pilot to sit back and watch what happens when the errors made during the demonstration are and are not corrected. Deploy the flaps at too great a speed and your flight score gets 'derated'; let the nose get too high or don't maintain your climb during departure, same story. Get going too low and too slow on final and you will not only get derated; but you will spend what may seem like therestofyour naturallife pouring on lots and lots of power to get proper control of the airplane back. Continue an approach after you are instructed to

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go around even when everything looks absolutely super to you and you will pay the price in rating point deductions.

Included with the wellwritten and very complete manual are instrument approach plates and airport diagrams [by JeppesonSanderson, Inc.] for 26 primary airports within the continental United States; and two high altitude enroute charts providing detailed information regarding the FAA's Victor airway system. The structured instruction program is based upon flights between the primary airports using the Victor airways and these published instrument approaches.

There is also a listing of over 330 additional airports each complete with geographic coordinates everyone of which has at least one runway long enough to accommodate the Shorts 360. If you like, you can plan and execute your own flight plans between any of these airports using the Inertial Reference System entering the various airport coordinates as waypoints.

Now, every once in a while, things get strange. Sometimes [but rarely] during a structured flight assignment, when everything seems normal and all appears to be going according to plan, you will start to get messages from the FAA telling you to hold a heading that will take you off the airway which your flight plan calls for you to follow.

After that kind of occurrence, two things generally happen: either the simulation starts nagging at you about being off the airway and simultaneously tells you to hold the heading which will keep you off the airway; or it just kind of lets you fly off into never neverland and burn up all of your remaining fuel while ignoring any of your requests for guidance or assistance.

In both situations, asking for radar vectors or a new clearance doesn't seem to help even though the simulator does have full capability to issue a new clearance and/or provide vectors to get you back on track. [As Paul Newman once said in Cool Hand Luke, what we have here is a failure to communicate.] In my experience if you fly the same flight assignment again this 'strange' situation will normally not repeat itself.

For instance, during one apparently normal trip from St. Pete to Atlanta, the simulator turned me around at the Tallahassee VOR and headed me back toward St. Pete with no explanation whatsoever. After flying 150 miles back in the 'wrong direction' with no response from the FAA to my continued requests for a updated clearance and/or radar vectors, I terminated the flight. When I reran the trip again, everything went normally from start to finish. All things considered it is probably best to remember that this is a highly complex, interactive software package; and an occurrence like this should be viewed as a minor software bug and not the manner in which the FAA normally operates. [At least we can all hope that is an accurate assessment.....]

If you like flying or want to fly like Walter Mitty, Flight Assignment: ATP is a real kick in the pants. If you want to get an accurate appreciation for the demanding world of the person who is driving your next commercial airline flight, get yourself a copy of Flight Assignment: ATP. This is a very exciting simulator package that will challenge and entertain you for a long, long time. I really like it! Can you tell? (SubLOGIC, 501 Kenyon Road, Champaign, Illinois)
Recent Street Price: $49.99 @ Egghead Software
Special thanks to Norm Olsen, Vice President of Marketing at subLogic. Norm was kind enough to replace our nonfunctioning Beta evaluation copy of Flight Assignment: ATP with a brand new set of program disks and full set of documentation. Thanks, Norm, you've made one old hanger dog real happy.

References: **IFR Communications Manual,** Bryan Harston, Macmillan, NYC, 1990
Instrument Flying, Richard L. Taylor, Macmillan, NYC, 1989
Instrument Rating Manual, JeppesonSanderson, Englewood, Co., 1990
Mastering Instrument Flying, Henry Sollman and Sherwood Harris, Tab Practical Flying Series, Tab Books Inc., Blue Ridge Summit, Pa., 1989

Author Information: Stephen Talmadge is a licensed pilot with over 200 hours of flight time in single engine aircraft. He has had extensive commercial flight training, has shot more than a few instrument approaches, and done lots of cross country flying in 'real' airplanes. Steve has also used and loved Microsoft's Flight Simulator for many years and, more recently, the addon product called Aircraft and Scenery Designer; having used them as placebos to salve his aerial soul when actual pilot time became too expensive for him to continue.

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Mouse Maintenance

By: Robert Morris, Pentagon PC User Group

Do you feel like beating your mouse against the desk instead of moving it gracefully along its own personalized pad? When your mouse starts skipping, operating erratically, or not at all, it's time to take action. The first step to restore some semblance of normalcy is to clean the mouse as outlined below.

You can clean the ball and the rollers the ball contacts inside the well in which the ball resides with some denatured alcohol and cotton swabs. Be advised this may not help, as dirt on the ball is only part of the problem. The rest of the problem is inside the mouse, behind the covers that warn you will void your warranty if you mess with it. If your mouse is out of warranty, or you're in a pinch (. . .ever try to use Windows without a mouse?) and have to get back to work, then use this procedure to restore your mouse.

CAUTION: DENATURED ALCOHOL IS EXTREMELY FLAMMABLE AND HIGHLY POISONOUS. DO NOT USE NEAR FIRE, FLAME, OR WHILE SMOKING. USE ALL PRECAUTIONS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS. STORE UNUSED PORTION

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IN ITS ORIGINAL TIGHTLY-CAPPED CONTAINER AWAY FROM PETS AND CHILDREN (U.S. AIR FORCE).

First step - find some denatured alcohol, some clean cotton swabs, and a clean, dry lint-free rag. Then, after disconnecting the mouse from the computer, roll the little fella over so you can inspect his belly. You will probably find a circular locking plate holding the ball in place. This plate can usually be removed by either sliding it toward one end, or rotating it either left or right until the lock is opened. When this retaining plate is loose, cup your hand over the plate, roll your hand and the mouse over, and the plate and ball will drop into your palm. Use the alcohol and swabs to thoroughly clean the ball of dirt, grease and whatever else (coffee, soda, mayonnaise and mustard) that your mouse has ingested. Use some alcohol on a swab to clean the little plastic rollers inside the ball well. Be gentle here. If you use too much pressure, you won't need the rest of these cleaning procedures, just the recommendation for a new mouse. Be sure to rotate the rollers to clean its entire contact surface.

After you have cleaned the ball and the rollers, you need to use the lint-free rag to wipe the residue of the alcohol from all surfaces. This is the part where most people will try to cut corners. It is not the hardest part of the procedure, but very a necessary one.

After you have finished buffing the residue off the ball and the rollers, drop the ball back into its well and replace the retaining plate. Reconnect the plug to the computer, and test your work. You should notice a considerable improvement in the operation.

Part of the problem with mice is an inherent design deficiency. The ball rolls on a dirty desk or mouse pad, picking up dust and dirt mixed with skin oils, smokers residue (of course, not in the Pentagon), coffee, tea, and whatever else you have consumed at your desk. As the ball rolls, it can throw these minute particles past the rollers that contact the ball, up inside the body of the mouse. Here it can stick to the thin Mylar disks that have concentric copper rings plated onto them. These copper rings contact minute spring fingers. When dust and dirt lodge between the tiny fingers and the concentric rings, your mouse won't work. No cause for alarm. If you are even minimally mechanically inclined, you can successfully perform open mouse surgery.

WARNING: If your mouse is still under warranty, you will probably void that warranty by peeling or removing the label.

As before, remove the mouse from the computer, and the ball from the mouse. Now inspect the belly to find the small screws or plastic locking clips that hold the top of your mouse (the part with the buttons) to the bottom of the mouse. If you don't find them exposed, you may have to remove a label. If you still have it, check the documentation which came with your mouse to see if any cleaning or disassembly instructions were included.

OK - now that you are inside the mouse - You should find two thin circular disks mounted on shafts connected to the rollers that protrude into the ball well. On one side of each disk are plated copper rings that contact up to four tiny springs. DonÆt try to move the springs or bend them to increase pressure. As a matter of safety, try not to touch them, either.

Changing the pressure of one spring affects the pressure of the others. If all springs don't contact the rings with the same pressure, your mouse will probably not work correctly again!

Tilt your mouse so that you can put a drop of alcohol on one of the disks, then spin the disk by turning the roller in the ball well. This will distribute the alcohol under the spring contacts. Roll the rollers in both directions to clear any dust or particles of dirt that may be trapped under the springs. Now, while the alcohol is still wet , very gently clean the alcohol from the disk with a cotton swab. Do not use much pressure that will cause the disk to flex. After you have removed the alcohol, use a clean (emphasize clean) dry swab to remove as much of the alcohol residue from the disk as possible, spinning the roller to reach all of the areas covered with copper. Again, use a very light touch, and avoid touching the springs!

When the first disk is clean, repeat all steps for the other disk. Don't forget the precautions!

After you have finished cleaning, inspect the disks thoroughly, checking for a warped disk, bent springs, bits of lint from the cotton swab, etc. When you're satisfied that all is well, reassemble the mouse, reversing whatever steps were required to open the little rascal.

You're almost finished - but not quite. Before you go slamming your newly cleaned mouse down for a test run, take a close look at the mouse pad. Would you let your kids play on a carpet that dirty? I think not! Take that scuzzy thing to the sink and wash it thoroughly with a mild detergent and warm water, be certain to rinse it thoroughly (soap left in the pad will attract moisture which will trap dust and dirt that your mouse can pick up). After it's dry, you're ready to check your refurbished mouse. Good luck.

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FOR SALE:

Bordland Turbo Pascal 6.0 and **Microsoft BASIC 7.1** for DOS systems; these include all original disks and manuals. Asking $50 each, plus shipping costs. Will separate. Tom Cone, 223-3888 or leave message on Bits of Blue BBS.

Software Review :

THE KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE SERIES

By Sue Taskey, Sarasota IBM-PC User's Group, Inc.

As a mother of three school-age children and computer lab instructor for more than 1000 children, I am constantly searching for exciting software programs. I recently found some of the most interesting and innovative learning programs that I have come across in a long time. Most of you software buffs are familiar with Lotus Magellan. Mainly responsible for this masterpiece is a gentleman by the name of Dan Gross...programmer extraordinaire. Mr. Gross has embarked on a new tack for his talents in the way of adventuresome learning programs which appeal to children from 6 to 60. They are designed to make learning fun and exciting, and are collectively and appropriately called the Knowledge Adventure Series.

Children of all ages like to be in control, even at the computer keyboard. With these new software by Knowledge Adventure, they are. These are all large programs which require from 5-8Mb of space, sound, and VGA graphics.

Science Adventure is the first of three I previewed. It is a highly informative program in which the user is responsible for his own destiny. They choose the era to explore from the timeline on the main menu. This main screen has a series of buttons representing different science categories, from life science to the history of computers. Clicking on the "Books" button the user can research a variety of subjects. There is no way to look up information on topics other than what is listed. The quiz was my specific area of interest. I need the variety of questions but would have liked the capability to type in answers or have more than one player, similar to a jeopardy game format.

After numerous hours of exploring Science Adventure I moved on to what soon became my favorite...Dinosaur Adventure. Those big, loud prehistoric beasts are so real looking, the children become captivated. The sounds coming through my Tandy Sensation are so realistic, you can easily imagine what it was like to have lived during the dinosaur age. I found Dinosaur Adventure very appropriate for use with children from second grade up. The main menu is different from the other two members of the Adventure Series. It has five different games. One of these is a naming game. Given the name, you must match it to the dinosaur. Another naming game shows you the dinosaur and you must match it to the name. With both games, if you select the wrong answer, the program suggests the correct one.

Another favorite with first and second graders was the Storybook. You read a story aloud and the screen pages change so the children can read along. The most unique game is an animated filmstrip where you can watch the lifestyles of five different dinosaurs in their natural habitat, eating, fighting, and making noise. The adventure game is like the Science Adventure where the user can explore a variety of facts about dinosaurs.

The third program by the same publisher is titled, Space Adventure. The installation is the same on all three, very easy. Movement is accomplished via the mouse, and exit is evident on the main screen of each. Space Adventure explores space from the Solar System to NASA and the Moon. Space Adventure was more popular among the older children.

When I asked a group of fourth graders what they thought about these programs their comments just summed it all up...

- "Wow, there's just so much to do!"
- "It's so awesome, are you sure it's not a CD-ROM program."
- " Listen to those dinosaurs, I bet that's what they really sounded like."

Children need to be always learning, but it's wonderful and painless when they don't know they are. The graphics and sound on all of these programs make them well worth the bargain $30-$50 range they are in.

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Software Review :

Approach 2.0

By : Pete Sloan, Sarasota IBM-PC User's Group

Would you like a database that is simple for the novice to set up and use, yet is powerful enough to access data from up to 10 different databases simultaneously, in different formats, even over a network? Would you like to be able to use all your True Type and Type 1 fonts, and colors in your reports? How about being able to store not only words, but pictures, sounds, video, charts, whole documents and spreadsheets? Yes, you can do all this and much more with Approach 2.0.

Ever since first hearing about databases that would let me store information not only in words but also pictures, I've been wanting to try a Windows database. Like many of you, I don't have enough time to learn yet another programming language. So when the opportunity came to try Approach, an "easy-to-use database with absolutely no programming necessary" I jumped. My immediate goal was to take an existing collection from the spreadsheet I was storing it on and move it into Approach. Then, add pictures of each item. As I called up a particular item, I would not only have information such as price, quantity, name, but also a picture of it.

First, some information on the program. Required is a 286 or better, Windows 3.0 or higher and at last 2 megabytes of ram. I would recommend a 386 and 4 megabytes of ram for acceptable speed especially if using graphics. Installation is very straightforward and I was happy to find it just takes up a bit over 2.5Mb of disk space. The documentation consists of a tutorial and a reference manual. I'd recommend that you spend the time to do the tutorial, this program has many features that you'll miss if you don't. The tutorial takes you through some sample databases and shows you how to start, modify, and add

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to a database. I tried customer service several times and they were very helpful, and knowledgeable. Best of all, there was no long wait, on hold, like I've had with some support.

After going through the tutorial I was eager to start building my own database. Approach walks you through the process, first you name the field, then, by clicking on the choices, define each field. There are ten different field types to choose from. One, the picture plus field, allows you to store graphics, sounds, whole documents or spreadsheets. There are also many conditions that you can apply to a field by just clicking on a selection in a dialog box. As Approach can use several different file formats such as dBASE, Paradox, FoxPro, and Oracle, some differences in field rules do appear, but the "context sensitive help" makes it easy. Once you have defined the fields, Approach puts you right into design mode. Here you can move, color, or box the fields. You can also change the type to any True Type or Type 1 typeface. By simply selecting from the menu or icon bar, graphics, boxes and buttons can be added to dress up your form. You can also add titles and descriptive text. The look or form of the display is stored in a format they call a view and does not affect your data. Many different views can be created to access the same data. Once you have the design the way you want it you just click on the view icon to move from design and begin entering your data.

In my case, I have my business logo appearing at the top of each form, and a block for a picture of each item in the upper right corner. I scanned a picture of each item, cleaned it up in Corel Photo Paint then, using the clipboard, placed a graphic into each record. As Approach supports OLE, you can just double click on the graphic and your paint program will launch, you can make any necessary changes and then return to Approach. Any time you can switch back to design and modify your form without losing or changing any of your data.

Reports are easy to construct. From the design menu you just place the fields across the form as you want them. Using the style menu you can modify the look of the report. Totals, footers etc. can be added without programming by selecting from menus.

Approach also supports mailing labels, with different Avery formats preprogrammed. Form letters are also easy to do.

This program can be used as a front end or access to already existing database files. It can combine information from different file structures onto the same form, and allow you to view and add to it. As it is network compatible, it would make a great information system for executives that need access to repetitive data. You could set up the views for them and add buttons that, when clicked, would cause a macro to update the information. All this without knowing any programming. Approach also comes with some prepared templates that are easily customized. They include budgeting, contact management, inventory management, invoicing payroll and many more.

This program that lists for $399.00 and is available on the street for $249.00. It can be ordered by any user group member for $99.00 by calling (800) APPROACH. Approach is a relational database that is easy enough for the novice yet powerful enough for the computer expert. It allows you to have power without programming.

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Labels in WordPerfect

By: Collette McManus
Hard-Copy: The Journal of the Chicago Computer Society

The first thing you should know is that WordPerfect Corporation ships a lot of great macros and other goodies with WordPerfect. One of those great macros is the LABELS.WPM macro. This macro is used to set up label paper size definitions for use with Avery Labels and other labels. It also has other uses which I'll explain later.

To use the macro press ALT-F10, type LABELS and press ENTER. This invokes the LABELS macro. A box listing all the Avery labels pops up on the screen. Scroll down until the label type you want is highlighted and press ENTER. You will see a "Please Wait" prompt and then a "Building List" prompt. Next, you will be asked for the label form's location "Continuous, Bin or Manual". Follow the prompts for "Bin #" or "Prompt for Manual Feed Y/N" if you chose either of those options. Again you will see the "Building List" prompt and then another prompt that asks "Insert Label Definition in Document Initial Codes? Y/N." If you are setting up this paper size/type to use with the current document, press Y for yes. If you are setting up this paper size/type for later use, press N for no. Whether you answer Yes or No to that prompt, WP will place the paper size in Shift-F8, Paper Size/Type for future use.

Remember, you only need to run the macro once to set up any specific label definition. Then, every time you want to use one of your labels paper size/types that you have set up, you will need to pick it from Shift-F8, Paper Size/Type. This set up procedure also automatically sets up inside and outside margins for your labels. These margins can be changed, but you probably will not find that necessary. You may see a message that says the "Label's margins were increased due to the printer's minimum margins." Don't worry about the message, some printers have minimum margins for their "no print" zones.

Ok, you have a labels paper size/type set up, now let's use it. If you are not at a blank document screen (you can use the following steps on an existing document), go to the top of the document before all codes by pressing Home, Home, Home and the Up arrow. Press Shift-F8, Paper Size/Type for a list of all your paper size/types. Home, Home, Up to the top of the list (some of your list may scroll off the top of the screen). You should see your labels paper sizes that have been previously set up using the LABELS macro. On the left side of each entry, you will see the size of each label and its Avery number (found on the label's package in big numbers). On the right side of each entry, you will see some numbers. These numbers give you the sheet's dimensions in labels. (Continued on next page)

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This dimension such as 2x5 or 3x10 is the number of columns (first number) by the number of rows (second number) on each sheet of labels. Highlight the entry for the labels you wish to use and press ENTER, then press F7 to get back to your document. If you look in reveal codes, you will see the code for the labels you have chosen. This should be the first code in the document to work properly.

Working with labels can be a little intimidating for a new user. If you have your brain working in the right direction, it's really very easy! Think of the labels as a sheet (not page) of many pages (labels) on that sheet. If you think in the "sheet of many pages" terms, it will make working with and printing labels easy, and it is. You have your paper size/type code in your document and your are thinking "sheet of many pages," so now let's enter some information for our labels. Since, WordPerfect has already set up the margins for you, all you need to do is to start typing. Type the address for your first label. Instead of putting a Hard Return code at the end of the last line, put a Hard Page (Ctrl-Enter). Sheet of many pages! Your status line now says Page 2. Type your second address for the second label and Hard Page at the end of the last line. Sheet of many pages! Keep going. Each label is its own "page." Now if you don't trust me, you can view your document to check it out (Shift-F7,View document). I suggest that you wait until you have typed quite a few labels to get the full effect. Pretty amazing, huh? Give me those old WordPerfect Corporation "Oooh!"s and "Ahhh!"s.

Ok, now you're finished and are ready to print your labels. Remember, "sheet of many pages"? To print properly, either print the full document (Shift-F7, Full) or print multiple pages. To print multiple pages, press Shift-F7, Multiple pages, and enter the "page" numbers of the labels you want to print 10-12 will print labels 10, 11, and 12. Be aware that printing these labels will the Multiple pages option will print at the top of the sheet, not necessarily in label positions 10, 11 and 12 on the sheet of labels.

Any document that is a list of clients can easily be changed into a name-per-page document by using WordPerfect's Search and Replace feature. If the document was set up with a double hard return between entries, search for the two Hard Returns and replace them with a Hard Page. You can use any name-per-page document to print different types of labels (yes, even envelopes) by simply picking the desired paper size/type. Changing the paper size/type code changes the structure of the printout. I use a labels document as a primary merge file to merge with the WPSIG membership list. This creates the address labels for the postcards for the meeting notices. If I were to delete the labels paper size/type and insert an envelope paper size/type, I would have an envelope document. When using a merge format, you could use the same secondary file to merge with an envelope primary file. This multiple use idea maximizes your WordPerfect power. The same WPSIG secondary file used to create the postcard labels is also used to create the sign-in sheets. I have a primary file set up for the sign-in sheets.

You're all straight with creating and printing labels, right? And, it's so easy that you're bored! Ok, let's get creative! You can use labels to create your own labels paper size/types to suit your needs. The brochure I created for the South Suburban WPSIG used a Tri-Fold Brochure*Portrait paper size/type that I created. At the SIG meetings I gave a handout with instructions on how to create a Tri-Fold Brochure*Landscape paper size/type. I have also created paper size/types for Business Cards and a Greeting Card (just like PrintShop's greeting cards). This greeting card is set up as a sheet of 4 labels (2 x 2). When printed, you fold the paper in half horizontally and then in half again vertically.

To create a Greeting Card paper size/type, start by pressing Shift-F8, Paper Size/Type, Add (Create), Other. Now, type the name you want to appear in the Paper Size/type list "GREETING CARD" will do just fine. The screen that appears now is used to define your greeting card format. Paper Size is 8.5 x 11, and that's correct. You could change this to 11 x 8.5 or whatever you want. Type is the name you give to this paper size/type definition. Prompt to Load (yes or no) is asking you for information on whether you want the printer to stop and ask you to load the paper. Location tells the printer where to find the paper (bin number, continuous or manual). Double Sided Printing is self explanatory. Binding Edge is used only when binding your document. You probably don't need to worry about Text Adjustment, but Labels is important. Labels (yes or no) needs to be set to yes for your greeting card. When you answer yes, you are given another screen that contains labels parameters for this labels paper size/type definition. Labels Size asks for the widt hand height of the labels. For your greeting card type (portrait) the width should be 4.25 and the height should be 5.5. Number of Labels should be 2 columns and 2 rows. For Top Left Corner, top is 0", and left is also 0". Distance Between Labels is 0" for columns and 0" for rows. The Label Margins would be the top/bottom and left/right margins for each label. Set all margins equally to .25", .3" or .5". Press F7 to accept all settings and exit creating the paper size/type.

To use your newly created greeting card paper size, pick it. Create a graphic on page 1 (see the WordPerfect Manual for specifics). Set the graphic to be a page graphic that is full page and horizontally position it fully between the margins. Edit this graphic and rotate it 180 degrees. Hard Page twice to page 4 and enter your inside message. If you Center Page and Center Justification, your inside message will be dead centered on the inside. These are basic instructions that I hope will get you started in using labels in creative ways.

Remember that any Paper Size/Types that you create, are created for the current printer. If you take the document to another printer without the document's Paper Size/Type existing for that printer, it will print weird. Be sure to create the Paper Size/Type for all your printers (at home and at work if you intend to share documents).

So be creative and make your computing easier. Let WordPerfect help you make your computer a slave to you, not the other way around.

Author Information: Collette McManus is well known to ChicagoComputer Society members as our tireless WordPerfect SIG Coordinator.

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Competitive Upgrades

By: Harold A. Driscoll,
Hard-Copy: The Journal of the Chicago Computer Society

Buying computer software is quite easy. Once you figure out what you want, you just go out and buy it, right? Makes sense, but first let's take a look at excerpts from an advertisement I received in the mail today.

WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows Upgrade Kit$35.95
WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows Competitive Update$99.00
WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows Live Tradeup$79.95
WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows Full Version$289.95

Since this product has a suggested retail price of $495, this is quite a range of prices.

Reading the fine print, we see that the "Upgrade Kit" is limited to registered users of WordPerfect 5.1 for Windows, and the "Live Tradeup" to registered users of any previous version of WordPerfect for DOS. That gives us a choice between $99 and $289.95. So the question is, what is a "Competitive Upgrade?"

When software companies want to increase market share, many of them offer "Competitive Upgrades." These "Updates" are actually full versions of the product, usually without a fancy package wrapper. They are offered to users of similar products, typically at a third or less of the price of the full product.

Okay, but how do you qualify for one of these deals? You need to have a competitor's product., and provide acceptable proof. Each offer has its own list of products; such as our example, which will accept "any DOS or Windows word processor with a suggested retail price of $395 or more." Some offers are quite specific, with a list of qualifying products; others accept any product of a general category.

What kind of proof is acceptable? Again, this depends on the offer. Most common is the title page from the user's manual. Some offers require the original page, others will accept a fax or photocopy. Sometimes the master disk, or one of the distribution disks is needed. Occasionally a simple statement that you own such a product will suffice. Read the fine print on the offer.

If you already have a competitive product, then you are all set. If you don't, look again at the products you have on your shelf. Maybe you got a program bundled with your computer which qualifies. Don't worry about an ancient version, either, unless the offer insists on the current one. Although a few offers are particular, many are quite loose about what qualifies. You might also find something at a garage or rummage sale which qualifies.

What are other ways to save money buying software? Make sure that you send in your registration cards. Some companies, such as Borland, frequently offer their customers the competitive upgrade price, even those who own entirely different products. Another approach sometimes works when a company has both a special individual editions and a more expensive professional edition. Sometimes you can buy an update to the professional edition, and save money on the total cost.

You might also call the company, many have toll-free 800 numbers, and ask for a demo disk of the product. Frequently they will include some kind of special offer. Also watch for new product releases; sometimes the introductory price is much lower for the first few months. Also watch for bundle deals, sometimes you can save big bucks even if you don't want the other product.

The software companies play these games for their benefit; you might as well make the most of them for yours. I'm told that when Microsoft announced their new Microsoft C/C++ 7.0 product at a software developer's conference, Borland had a trick up their sleeve. Borland brought a truckload of an obsolete version of their compiler, and gave them out to participants; suddenly everyone could buy the Microsoft product at the lower price.

Oh, yes, lest I forget; when you do decide to update, check out the price from local software stores. Sometimes their price is ten or twenty dollars less then directly from the vendor, plus you save shipping costs.

Author Information: Harold A. Driscoll is Technical Editor and a regular contributor to Hard-Copy, the Journal of the Chicago Computer Society, as well as Secretary of CCS.

♦♦♦♦♦

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Wayne Beurnier
Mike Diaz
R.A. Friedel, Sr.
Frank Gallio
Bob Johnson
Don Keeney
Juan Silva
William T. Slagle

Friends of the User Group:

: We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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Modem Class :

There will **not** be a Modem Class this month. Look for notice in the June Bits of Blue for when Don Patzsch's Modem Classes will resume.

Our group is very fortunate to have a volunteer, such as Don, who is so willing and eager to share his knowledge of the modem and related communication software. We all extend our appreciation to you Don, **thanks for a great job!**

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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

Vol. 6 No. 6 June, 1993

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: June 9, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

JUNE AGENDA:

6/9/93

6:00 PM - opening remarks
6:30 PM -

Harvard Graphics 3.0

The market-leading presentation graphics program.

Demo by Linda Confer of
Software Publishing Corp.

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
IBM OS/2 ver 2.0
Borland Quatro Pro
and Miscellaneous items

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Modem Class:
The Modem Class by Don Patzsch is to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. (Room behind and left of the reception area) Please be Prompt!

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert noncommercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with Ami Pro for Windows donated by Lotus Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 5/12/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

The meeting began just a few moments late at 6:20, the delay due to "mechanical problems" (had some difficulty getting the NT [new technology] to work). But, it was yet another good meeting, with quite a nice group in attendance. This meeting was particularly interesting because the subject was current and interesting to just about everybody who uses an IBM compatible computer -- the new operating system, DOS 6.0 -- and because it was an "open forum" type of a session, lead by our astute Prez, Harvey Bruneau. Harvey was to be ably assisted by our talented librarian, Larry Anders, but work demands arose which prevented Larry from making the meeting. Like the legendary knight in shining armor, atop a large white steed, Harv carried the evening by himself.

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS: Since NT had delayed start of the meeting, and there is a lot in DOS 6.0 to discuss, industry and club news were omitted.

PRESENTATION -- MS-DOS 6.0

No formal presentation was prepared nor intended since this was to be a forum, or seminar type of treatment of DOS 6.0. Harvey guided the discussion by introducing the major changes in MS-DOS 6.0 compared to DOS 5.0, and giving a brief review of each: Double Space, Anti-virus, MemMaker and the changes to the MEM command, Backup, Defrag, InterLink and selective boot. Installation was also discussed, as were some upgrades of 5.0 features, such as UNDELETE, and some new commands, such as DELDIR, MOVE, and NUMLOCK.

Documentation: The documentation in the manual with the upgrade version is a little sparse and is not nearly as complete as the DOS 5.0 manual; it focuses principally on the changes that have been made from the 5.0 version. (Apparently no one was aware of the documentation that comes with the full version of DOS 6.0, for no one spoke on that subject.). For upgrading to DOS 6.0, then, one should hang onto the manual that came with DOS 5.0.

On-line help is quite extensive, however, and one need only type the command at the DOS prompt followed by /? and a help screen appears revealing the hows and whats of the command. Alternatively, type help at the DOS prompt and a screen showing all DOS commands appear, double click on any you're interested in and, walla, the info appears.

Installation: There were a number present who reported varying levels of difficulty, some requiring some changes to their boot files before satisfactory installation and operation could be achieved. However, I personally had no difficulties installing DOS 6.0 and it seemed that most present who were using DOS 6.0 had no difficulty. Installation instructions seemed adequate for the most part. Rumor had

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it that one must have DOS 5.0 installed to be able to install the DOS 6.0 upgrade. However, the instructions indicate that one must have only a previous version of DOS to install the upgrade to DOS 6.0. That is logical since a disk partitioned and formatted by an IBM-compatible DOS is required in the first instance. But one need not have a complete installation of any previous version of DOS to install DOS 6.0 -- it is enough to have a DOS partitioned and formatted disk. The earliest reported version of DOS to which the DOS 6.0 upgrade has been applied by those present was DOS 3.0.

Double Space: For most, Double Space was fairly easy to install -- and it works as advertised. It appears that it is not as efficient at compression, nor does it have some of the features of the better stand-alone products (i.e., Stacker), but it does do a fairly good job, simply. One big advantage is that it loads before anything else and no statements in CONFIG.SYS is required, and except for those needing and uncompressed area for Windows swap, all files (including boot files, such as HIMEM, tec.) may be compressed. The degree of compression using any existing compression program varies with the type of files being compressed -- ZIP files almost none, spreadsheets a lot. So, the terminology of doubling disk space that they all use must be taken with a grain of salt. Articles have reported an average disk compression using Double Space at between 1.6-1.8 to I.

I do not use DSpace, but I tried it on a new disk I was installing. It compressed at about the same degree as SuperStor PRO. Most articles I have read give Stacker a little better compression ratio. I didn't stick with DSpace because it creates another uncompressed drive with a minimum size of 200K for every compressed drive (or partition) compressed. I run one uncompressed and three compressed partitions. DSpace therefore created an additional 3 drives - one for each compressed partition - giving me 7 drives to deal with in all matters relating to drives. Another feature I did not like is that DSpace does not make provisions for decompression, as do both SS Pro and Stacker -- though some report that decompression is so difficult at this point that it is not really a valuable feature. Access to DSpace once installed is limited to DOS; an interface with Windows is not yet a part of the program.

There have been quite a few reports in the news since DOS 6.0 release, indicating a lot of difficulties have been encountered with DOS 6.0, including DSpace. A couple of folks at the meeting also reported difficulty with DSpace -- trouble resulting in loss of data. Microsoft says that there are 3 million copies of DOS 6 out now and they have received only about 1% of that many calls, and a lot less than that which involved anything significant. Still, there have been some serious problems; problems which will no doubt be corrected in the not-too-distant future.

Anti-virus: This is a welcome addition to DOS, especially for those who haven't purchased anti-virus protection. It can be installed in both DOS and Windows. It includes detection and correction of 800 viruses, and includes 2 upgrade coupons for $9.95 each. What will happen after that is not known now, but some form of upgrade will likely be continued -- as they all do. This feature can be installed as a TSR, but to install all of its protections (features) takes about 46K of memory (23K of conventional and 23K of upper), a fairly high price. Two cautions were noted: Don't have the anti-virus program TSR when installing new programs on your computer; and be very careful about using the auto correction of detected viruses feature because some false alarms occur with some types of files in some circumstances, and you could lose files.

MemMaker: Another welcome new feature for DOS, especially for those who don't already use another stand-alone memory management program, like QEMM. This feature is also easy to use. It can be installed at the time of installing DOS 6.0, or at a later time. Though not as efficient at rooting out all of the unused memory and managing memory as the top stand-alone memory management programs, it does a fairly respectable job finding and using unused memory, and auto loading into upper memory. And, it is very easy to use. If you don't already own a memory management program, or don't want to invest the bucks in one, this is certainly a good alternative.

Backup: Previous versions of DOS have included a backup capability. The major difference here is that this is a full blown menued program, and it allows for compression of the backup files. It also provides for a range of backup -- from complete, down to a single file, all of which can be selected by the user. This, too, can be installed for DOS, or Windows, or both. It is a good improvement, but here too, it is not as comprehensive nor as efficient as the top stand-alone programs on the market. Again, for those who don't now own a backup program, it is a very welcome addition.

An article in a local industry paper stated that this feature would only backup to floppy drives. That is difficult to believe. The manual is silent about to the types of devices one can backup to, but a member present noted that the only device he has been unable to use is a tape drive.

Defrag: A fairly fast and easy to use addition to DOS. Some reported it not as fast as the better disk/file maintenance programs. Defrag doesn't have all of the capabilities of Norton Disk Doctor or PC Tools, of course, but I have found it as good at defragging for my simple purposes as the other programs I have used, including earlier versions of NDD. Defrag is available only at the DOS prompt, and shouldn't be ran at the DOS prompt through Windows.

InterLink: InterLink does the same thing LapLink does -- connect 2 computers together and allow the interchange of files/info between the two. It does not include cables, as LapLink does, and some report it is more cumbersome to use. Nevertheless, for those without LapLink or similar program, it provides an otherwise missing capability. This feature is available form the DOS prompt.

Selective Boot: A very welcome feature by all DOS users who boot from hard drives. This feature is too sophisticated to go into here in detail. Suffice here to say that it allows for a clean boot from the hard drive in event of some

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configuration problem which prevents a normal boot -- in effect eliminating the requirement of the past to boot from a floppy in similar circumstances. (This does not mean you shouldn't keep a bootable floppy, though.) This feature also allows one to boot in any configuration desired by selecting desired options during the boot process. It doesn't happen automatically, however; these capabilities must be setup, except for the clean boot which requires only pressing F5 at the appropriate time.

New/Modified Commands:

Undelete: An undelete capability was available with DOS 5. DOS 6 has expanded a great deal on that capability and developed a menued program which can be installed in DOS, Windows, or both at installation time . It provides for three levels of undelete: Sentry, Tracker & Standard. Sentry & Tracker levels use disk space to store the files or information about the files which will not be overwritten and thereby removed from recovery, as with the previous undelete command and with the DOS 6 Standard level of undelete. The old undelete command is still available at the DOS prompt as well.

Move: Another welcome, but dangerous, addition to DOS. The MOVE command allows for moving individual files and up to and including complete directories -- replacing the old individual files copy/delete method. It is very easy to use. That combined with the magnitude of action that can be involved makes it a command that should be employed with great care

NumLock: Another very welcome addition, especially for those of us with an older machine which does not have provisions in CMOS for configuring NumLock. NumLock can be turned on or off at the DOS prompt, or as a command in CONFIG.SYS.

SmartDrive: I believe this program has been "upgraded", but it functions remain essentially the same as with DOS 5. One word of caution came up at the meeting: If using the Double Buffer feature of Smart Drive, be sure to allow sufficient time when shutting down for the data in the buffers to be written to disk; some have lost data when they haven't allowed sufficient time for the write before turning their machine off. How much is sufficient, I don't know, but I would allow several seconds as a minimum.

Delete Directory: Also a long-wanted capability, DELDIR allows for deleting directories without first having to empty the directory of all files and subs. It., too, is a dangerous command and should be used very cautiously.

In summary, DOS 6.0 provides some very nice additions to DOS 5.0, but some believe that it should have been given a 5.* designation rather than a full number change which signifies a fundamental change, as opposed to added bells & whistles. It has a lot of new and welcome additions, however, especially for those who don't now have similar capabilities in utilities from other vendors. It is a large capability for not too many bucks, especially the upgrade version. Some problems have cropped up with some of the new features; apparently, the more sophisticated the configuration and/or operation, the more likely one is to encounter any problems. I, for one, however, running a home computer 386/25, with multiple hard drives, modem, scanner, 3 printers, Windows 3.1, and a host of Windows and DOS software of all varieties, have had no (zero, that is) problems with DOS 6.0. And, I am confident that Microsoft is working very hard and fast to come up with answers to all problems encountered so far.

THANKS MUCH, HARVEY, for an excellent job of guiding us through as much of DOS 6 as time would allow. It was a productive session!!

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Microsoft (who donated a copy of Access) and your User Group (who donated a copy of DOS 6.0), along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Kit Kelley	MS Access
Donald Houston	DOS 6.0
Mike Diaz	Mouse Pad
Kevan Sheridan	50/50 ($52)

the meeting adjourned at about 8:45 PM

♦♦♦♦♦

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Preston Goossen
Stephen Layton
Joe Zamrin

We are glad you joined our group!

Editorial Comment:

There is not a **President's Column** in this issue, as Harvey is still "catching-up" after COMDEX. However next month, look for his full report on his trip to Atlanta for Spring COMDEX. Some of you may have noticed Don Patzsch's report on the BBS of his excursion to view the latest in computer technology. Thanks for sharing your experiences with us Don.

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Software Review

Software Review:

True Type for Word Perfect

Version 2.1, by Laser Tools

Review By: Jim Clark
Tampa IBM PC User's Group

What It Is: True Type for Word Perfect (by Laser Tools) is a font pack, of course -- but it is a good bit more than that: It also includes a special effects capability; it works in both DOS and Windows; and it works with a variety of Word Perfect Corporation programs -- Word Perfect (WP) for DOS versions 5.0 & 5.1, WP for Windows versions 5.1 & 5.2, Letter Perfect 1.0 or later, Word Perfect Works 1.0, and Plan Perfect 5.0 & 5.1. The true type fonts may be loaded into and used by Windows 3.1 (or later), but one of the foregoing WP programs must be loaded to use the special effect and other capabilities of this Laser Tools program.

Features: True Type for Word Perfect includes::
101 true type fonts , including several 'standard' serifs and san serifs, and a host of fonts from four other font groups -- Kid Bag, Lazy Dog Foundry, Image Club, and Attitude, Inc. Fonts included are KidType, Big Black, Berliner, Mississippi, Archetectura, Banco, BeeBopp, Bodoni Poster, Castle, Comic Book II, Fractur, Jazz Poster, Mistral, New York Engraved, Rock-A-Billy, Salto, Bones, Chill, Eggroll, Elf, Horror, Vanilla Shadow, and Zap, to name a few. Perhaps you can tell be these names the wide variety available in this package. You choose the fonts you want to load;

For use in the WP programs, 12 special effects, including outline, shadow, gray shading, and 9 fill patterns, all of which can be applied singly or in combinations to any of the 101 fonts;

Printer drivers which must be used to take advantage of the special effects and other features of the program. Many report that these drivers are superior to the Windows drivers;

A Windows interface and network compatibility;

Support for most of the popular dot matrix, inkjet and laser printers.

Installation is simple and clear cut. Documentation covers very well installation in the variety of circumstances in which the program can be used: DOS-only, Windows-only, DOS and Windows, fonts only, network, etc. And, installation is fairly simple, quick and clear cut. The documentation as well as on-line help will provide answers to most problems one is likely to encounter. You begin by call up in DOS the installation program -- TTINSTAL -- then follow the prompts. You will have an opportunity to tell TTINSTAL which (or all) of the fonts you want to load.
After installation a batch file is used to start the WP program and TT for WP at the same time. You may also start both using the TTWP command at the DOS prompt without using a batch file. The WP programs may also by used without TT for WP, if desired. Windows will be set up similarly to start the WP program with TT for WP.

Requirements: Laser Tools says that the program will work with a PC (or better), but I have difficulty imagining anyone using the program with less than an AT because of speed.

DOS version 3.1 or above.

One of the WP programs listed above to use all of the programs capabilities, or Windows 3.1 (or above) to use only the true type fonts.

At least 3 MB of hard disk space for the program and a base set of 14 Monotype typefaces. With all of the 101 typefaces that come with the package loaded, about 7 MB of space is needed. an additional 1.5 MB of free space is needed to process dot matrix or inkjet print jobs -- if you use printers from either of those groups.

640K of conventional memory, with at least 560K available. TT for WP likes and uses EMS memory for smoother and faster operation

Costs; The program lists for $79.95, but Laser Tools had a $24.95 special for user groups going until mid-May. I have not seen the program in any of the software retail outlets yet, so it is apparently not widely available and I have no idea of 'street' price. But, the special price for user group members could be extended -- if you are interested, call Laser Tools; it might be worthwhile.

My View: This is a very nice package, especially for DOS WP users -- it provides a large and excellent collection of true type fonts, with a special effects capability. In that context, it seems to me that the program is worth its likely street price. I would have trouble using the program in DOS, however, because I have become accustomed to WYSIWYG -- which this does not give you. For Windows users, there is a lot of competition out there, especially in the special effects area. This is worth a look-see, however, and it does have very nice fonts. If you are a font nut, the fonts alone are worth the 'special price for user groups' -- if it still available. LASER TOOLS Corporation, 1250 45th Street, Suite 100, Emeryville, CA 94608, 1-(510)-420-8777 (Sales) , 1-(510)-420-1319 (Tech Suprt)

♦♦♦♦♦

The Association of PC User Groups

By: John Hoover
SCPCUG Representative to APCUG

Most all members of the Space Coast PC Users Group (SCPCUG) know that our organization is charter member of the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) -- we say so each month on the front page, in the upper left portion of the newsletter banner. But how many know any of the specifics f the APCUG? What principles does the APCUG operate under? What about APCUG's mission? How many user groups are members? How many actual users do they represent? And, most importantly for each individual member of the SCPCUG, what benefits do I personally glean by my membership in the APCUG?

The Association of PC User Groups was, according to my records, officially formed using the APCUG title in May of 1988. It was in February 1989, during the formation period of APCUG, that the Space Coast PC Users Group became a charter member of the Association. Presently the APCUG membership includes 327 user groups from 45 states in the United States and eight other countries: Australia, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, the Saltanate of Oman, New Zealand and Russia. These 327 user groups represent over 300,000 individual users.

APCUG Principles

The following principles are used as a guide in the operations of the APCUG. These principles have evolved from APCUG's inception and were recently adopted by APCUG's Board of Directors as basic principles. These principles were taken from ***Reports***, a report for PC User Group Officers from the Association of PC User Groups, January 1993, Volume 4, Issue 1.

APCUG is a service organization, not a government.

User groups choose to take advantage of our services or not as they choose; we do not tell our member groups (the "customers" of APCUG) what to do. Although our mission is to support all user groups and our membership is open to all, our primary focus and responsibility must be to first serve those groups who have chosen to become members of APCUG.

APCUG serves the user group community; user groups are not servants of APCUG.

As an organization, APCUG is not as important as the user groups is serves. ***The individual user group is the purpose for which APCUG was founded.*** As such, it must remain our number one priority. APCUG officers, directors and volunteers in their official APCUG roles, do not themselves represent user groups. The promotion of APCUG or APCUG individuals should never overshadow the individual user groups and the user group community at large.

APCUG is an association of user groups; it is NOT a user group.

We serve our member groups as groups, working through the designated representatives and other officer of our member groups. We do not have individuals as members, and our activities are designed to help member groups help their users, not to help users directly. APCUG does not contact individual members of its member groups nor provide services for such individuals.

APCUG does not intervene in the internal affairs of its member groups or other.

Other than a determination whether a user group meets the organizational criteria to be a regular or associate member, we do not "police" or comment on the activities of member groups or others. Our programs may contain advice on what has worked and failed in various situations, but whether a group chooses to follow such advice or not is entirely up to it. APCUG communications with members user groups flow through the member group's designated representative and its other officers.

APCUG facilitates direct communication between member groups and computer vendors.

APCUG sponsors events and provides information on member groups, but does not insist on staying in the loop between user groups and in the loop between user groups and vendors. Once the contact is made, APCUG steps back and encourages both sides to continue the dialogue without APCUG involvement APCUG officials individually and APCUG programs collectively, may contain advice about successes and failures in previous contacts between user groups and vendors, but APCUG does not insist that such advice be followed.

APCUG is open to all user groups, regardless of platform or operating system.

The "personal computer" in APCUG does not mean IBM-compatible. APCUG is open to all non-profit, independent user groups whose focus is the individual computer user of a desktop, laptop, handheld or other such personal microcomputer-based machine. It is important that all APCUG programs and activities keep the multi-platform and multi-operating system needs of its member user groups in mind.

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Diversity has been and will continue to be -- the strength of the user group movement and APCUG must provide an environment where such diversity can continue to thrive.

APCUG does not discriminate among its member groups.

Each APCUG-member user group is an equal partner in the association. Except for purposes of membership determination (regular or associate), APCUG does not otherwise categorize or evaluate user groups by size, membership or activities. In no case does APCUG "filter" contacts between vendors and user groups. APCUG provides user group information to all vendors that ask and provides opportunities to sponsor events to all vendors that express interest. Except in very special circumstances, APCUG provides such information as a complete set and invites all groups to APCUG-sponsored events (some limited-size events may be allocated on an earliest-to-reply basis).

APCUG maintains its independence from the computer industry vendors that help sponsor its activities.

To the greatest extent feasible, APCUG tries to be even-handed in working with all computer industry vendors that want to work with computer user groups. Even-handed includes avoiding the endorsement of products and placing APCUG concentration on the user group programs of such vendors, rather than their products. Even-handed also includes being balanced between the vendors that have been very supportive for a long time and those that might want to start or expand user group programs.

APCUG attempts to minimize the cost of participation in APCUG activities and events by its member user groups.

Because most of our members user groups are non-profit, all-volunteer organizations, it is important that APCUG not over-burden its member user groups through continued assessment of fees. (The current annual fee is $25.) Wherever possible, any costs and expenses associated with APCUG events and activities should be offset through the contributions of sponsoring vendors and others. By keeping fees reasonable and affordable, we will be able to guarantee a more widespread representation and participation by APCUG-member user groups.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of APCUG is to:

* encourage, promote and enable communication and the exchange of information among personal computer user groups;

* assist user groups in the fulfillment of their educational and charitable missions and other activities that support those missions;

* promote the awareness of the value of user groups to the community and the computer industry, and

* facilitate communication among user groups, the community and the computer industry.

How Do Members Benefit ?

The SCPCUG member benefits in many ways from our organization participating as a member of the APCUG. Many of the featured speakers for our monthly meetings, as well as the door prizes and programs for review, have been a direct result of our affiliation with the APCUG. Most of the discounts that our group receives on software comes from vendors with whom we have made contact through the APCUG.

Last year the APCUG did a user group demographic study, which was sponsored by Lotus Development Corporation, Intel Corporation and IBM Corporation, and additional support from Borland International Corporation and the Association of Shareware Professionals. This study reinforced what many have been saying all along; that user group members have a significant impact on the computer industry.

Typical PC User

A summary of the results of the demographic study produced some interesting results about the typical personal computer user. Some facts and figures regarding the characteristic of the average user are:

* He/she is 48.3 years old.
* Earns $63,181 in household income.
* 12.9% are female
* 87.1% are male
* 69.4% have a college degree
* 81.7% are employed/self-employed
* 14.5% are retired
* 78.1% are employed in a non-computer related industry
* 21.9% work in a computer industry
* 28.3% are either the Chairman, President or Owner of the business in which they work.
* 33.7% are employed as part of the professional staff
* Spends 26.2 hours on the PC each week
* Owns 2.0 computers
* Paid $4,789 for the home computer system
* Works on a $6,834 computer system at place of work.

The typical configuration of the PC used:

* 80386
* 1 to 4 megabytes of RAM
* 40+ megabyte hard drive
* VGA monitor
* 2400 baud modem
* DOS without Windows (surprise?)

Software competence (top five):

* Wordprocessing 96.2% knowledgeable or better.
* Utility programs 88.8% knowledgeable or better

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* Spreadsheet programs 84.8% knowledgeable or better.
* Database programs 80.0% knowledgeable or better
* Communication programs 83.5% knowledgeable or better.

Three most cited useful sources of information:
Computer magazine articles and reviews
Friends and colleagues
User Groups

Shareware programs currently using: 3.8
Shareware programs registered 2.5
Attended last general user group meeting 34.3%
Aspect of user group liked most: Monthly Newsletter

♦♦♦♦♦

:-) Smileys, They're Here To Stay

Reprinted from the April 1993 issue of KIPCUG, the newsletter of the Kentucky-Indiana PC Users Group, Louisville, KY. Reprinted with permission from the World Monitor.

Most everyone who has logged onto TFD, CompuServe, or Internet have seen some SMILEYs, those little sideways faces that add flavor or take any sting out of remarks on occasion. These have got so much notice that The World Monitor, a monthly world news magazine, recently published a list of SMILEYs which *may* come from a Purdue network. If you recognize old friends, SMILE, If they're new, ENJOY them.

:-)	The generic Smiley, follows a joke or sarcasm.
;-)	Winky smiley; (don't hit me for what I said).
:-(	Writer unhappy about something.
:-	User made a devilish remark.
:-0	Wow!
|:-D	Ho, Ho, Ho.
:-O	Uh oh (dismay).
:-P	Nyah, Nyah.
:-[	Real downer statement.
:-D	Said with a smile.
:-Y	Said aside.
:-/	Skeptical.
B:-)	Sunglasses on head.
:-{}	User wears lipstick.
{:-)	User wears toupee.
}:-(	Toupee in updraft.
:-#	Users wears braces (suspenders?)
:-C	Writer really unhappy.
:-&	User tongue -tied.
:-X	User's lips are sealed. (Program chairman under NDA)
|-I	User is asleep.
[:-$	Using Virtual Reality.
-}	Too long looking at the tube.
:-***	Drooling over new software.

Make up your own SMILEYs as you go: X:-|) for instance, or [8=I/O



The following is a list of software available to interested members for review:

Fastlynx
KUI (Keyboard user interface for Windows)
Links-386 (golf game)
Amazon (game)
Express Publisher w/Text Appeal
Borland - ObjectVision 2.0
Borland - Quatro Pro for Windows

Please contact Harvey or Marylee @ 985-3338 to obtain this software and sign the review agreement.

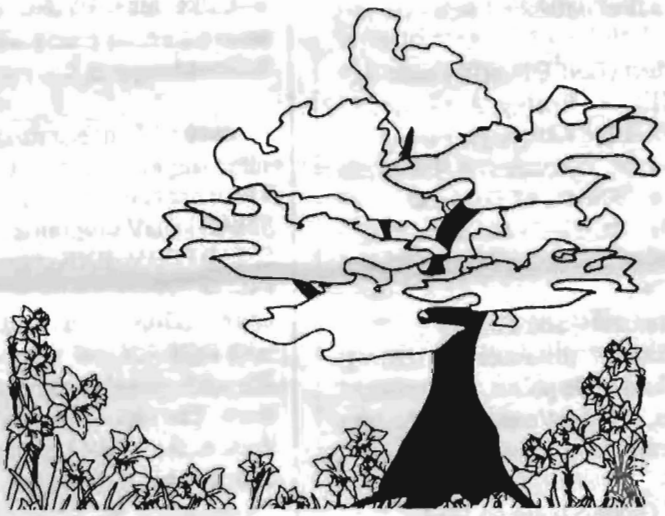
Software Review

AUTODESK HOME SERIES LANDSCAPE

By Ken Lille, Sarasota IBMPC User's Group, Inc.,

Landscape is a slick drawing/CAD (computer assisted design) program that will work on IBM PC's or compatible clones. The install directions were clear; the installation easy.

The program rates an A plus for the finished detailed Landscape drawings. They are beautiful. I planned landscaping for our new 12' X 34' privacy courtyard. The drawing of the plants, trees, and shrubs surrounding and within these garden walls, the 6' high wrought iron gate, the windows and French doors looking into the courtyard all were neat and accurate in both placement and scale. I was able to test several designs with different planting area layouts and various sized plants and trees within each design. I spent much time reviewing the formal and contemporary designs. Each plan could be viewed from the top down, a "bird's eye" view or in a vertical "front view" which showed the height of the plants in relation to the wall, French doors and courtyard gate. The program illustrated where my existing sprinkler system missed watering two large spaces within the courtyard where there would be plantings. Two new sprinkler heads will be provided in the appropriate areas as a result of this planning.



The general guidance on planning a yard was useful. After reviewing the principles to follow for a good Landscape, such as: balance, proportion, order, variety, unity and seclusion, I concluded that good Landscape design is an art form that relies heavily on personal preference. The program didn't tell me which design was best but it allowed me to play with a variety of options, before I made a decision. I liked that.

The final drawing can be in any scale. However, the program suggested the most common, 1/4th inch or 1/8th inch scale used by the professional designers. The program also included advice on various play areas with graphic symbols from kid's swing set to an adult's tennis court. The feature, "shopper" provided a quick summary of the plants and trees in the plan and a summary of the estimated costs which I added for each plant. This was an eye opener. It caused me to revise the drawing with fewer shrubs and larger plants which gave the desired effect but left a few coins in my pocket. I appreciated this feature even though I had to repeat the drawing process.

The symbols are wonderfulùcrisp, clear and understandable. Doors and windows, trees and shrubs, fences and walls, stepping stones, measurements and ground surfaces all enhanced the drawings. I wonder why the authors elected to use only word choices as, deciduous a, b and c or evergreen a, b, and c on the pull down menus and in their handy quick reference card. These word choices alone did not provide as much useful information as their symbols. A choice with word and symbol would have saved a lot of flipping though the book and would have made the program more intuitive.

Landscape rates a C minus for the torturous process one most endure to get to these wonderful drawings. I found myself reading the first 85 pages of the manual, an unheard of prerequisite for a guy on the fast track with drawing programs and clip art and accustomed to working GUI icons to the max. Sure the software has pull down menus, neat options and very nice graphics but the jargon often got in the way. I had to refer to the book's definitions, examples and drawings repeatedly in order to understand how to use these features. For example, terms like "snap" and "dimension" have precise meanings and special instructions to get the desired effects. Some features such as " trim/extend" often produced the opposite effect until they were repeated frequently. Other features appeared to be interchangeable as "swap" and "flip 180" but in reality each has a specific function. When I was learning the program I mistakenly used these features interchangeably. Sometimes I did get the desired effect which then left me confused about the proper use of the feature. The authors cautioned the reader that Landscape will require practice, practice, practice. They are very correct and very understated in their advice. If you want excellent results and are willing to put in the time to learn this program, Landscape is for you. If you lack patience this program is not for you.

Was the time and effort worth the result? Yes. My wife and I look forward to enjoyable hours of relaxation in our contemporary design courtyard for many years. Would I use the program again? Yes, because I already went up this learning curve and I really like the final results.

The program consisted of 149 files and used 1,461,631 bytes of memory in my computer. Landscape is unusual for a new software program because it can operate on PC systems ranging from old and minimal to new and powerful. It requires an IBM PC, XT, AT, PS1, PS/2 or 100% compatible. 640 K RAM with 3.0 DOS or higher, one hard drive a graphics card (Hercules color, monochrome, MCGA, CGA, EGA, or VGA one floppy drive, a printer (Epson dot matrix or 100 % compatible or HP LaserJet or 100% compatible) and a mouse. The street price is about $49.00.

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Software Review

PC GLOBE 5.0

By Stacy Gau

PC Globe is exactly what it says it is, a globe or atlas for your PC. It includes a variety of different maps and graphs. One is regional maps. This includes North and South America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Another is country maps. PC Globe includes 208 countries including the newly emerged nations of Eastern Europe; point-and-shoot capability that allows you to call up specific facts about different countries just by moving the crosshairs on the map; the ability to compare statistics of world groups or to rank countries in comparison charts in ascending, descending or alphabetical order; Finally group maps, which includes ALADI (Latin American Integrated Association), CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), UN (United Nations), and many more.

PC Globe has many different kinds of database categories such as:
Population, Gross National Product (GNP), Health Statistics, Imports/Exports, Government, History, Energy, Agricultural Production, Climate, Age Distribution, Language, Ethnic Groups, Religions, City Information, Resources, Agriculture, Industries, Culture & Tourism, Education, Mining and Quarrying, and Manufacturing Goods. That's not all! It has other information on countries which includes Country Flags, National Anthems, Telephone, Telex, and HAM radio codes, Travel, Visa, and Health Requirements, and Tourist Attractions. PC Globe 5.0 also features distances and bearings between major cities or latitude/longitude points, automatic currency conversions, time zones, standard/metric toggle, data export, screen saving in PCX format, and printer output.

The system requirements for PC Globe 5.0 are an IBM PC/XT/AT/PS2 compatibles, a minimum of 640Kb RAM, a floppy or hard drive, and DOS 2.0+. It supports Hercules monochrome, CGA, EGA, VGA, and Tandy 16-color MCGA displays. Other optional hardware it supports are Kodak, Toshiba, IBM, HP Printers, Epson, Citizen, and many others.

The installation process was very simple and didn't take but five minutes. PC Globe 5.0 comes in two 720 megabyte 3 1/2" disks and in four 360 megabyte 5 1/4" disks. I think that this is an excellent program for children in school. I found PC GLOBE 5.0's street price of about $40.00 and I think it is truly worth it.

[REVIEW EDITOR'S NOTE: How better to review a program aimed at students of all ages than to let our 14 year old reviewer, Stacy Gau, get a crack at it. As usual, he did the job well. If Stacy says it's good for school kids...you can bet your bippy, it's good for school kids!].

•••••

Are You using Smartdrv?

By Ed Hughes, SCPCUG Newsletter

Most Windows users are. I am. When I installed Managing your Money, I found the following paragraph in the README.DOC file on the installation diskette.

"Attention Disk Cache Users! Be Cautious of Delayed Write Caching.

Delayed write caching can cause you to lose data! We recommend that you configure your disk cache to cache only the disk reads and not the disk writes. Microsoft Windows v. 3.1 has a new version of the SmartDrive disk cache that now caches disk writes. To disable SmartDrive's write caching, add a space and a C (or whatever disk for which you want to disable write-back caching) to the end of the SMARTDRV.EXE statement in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. The statement with these changes would look like this C:\WINDOWS\SMARTDRV.EXE C. If you need assistance with configuring your disk cache please call their technical support."

Beware

There are two SMARTDRV programs. SMARTDRV. EXE comes with Windows. SMARTDRV. SYS comes with DOS 4.X and %.0 They are probably not the same. The descriptions of them in the books I have indicate that they are not the same.

How do you like them apples? I lost one month's worth of data input to my financial database earlier this year.

SMARTDRV. SYS goes in your CONFIG.SYS file and it appears that it does what it does and you have limited control over that, I do not know whether it has the problem with the delayed writing of cached data.

SMARTDRV. EXE goes in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file, as indicated above. The WINDOWS 3.1 User's Guide describes it on Pages 538 through 541. I had not read those pages before today! Well, why should I? Yeah! Right!

At the bottom of page 540 is the following paragraph:

Caution Check that SMARTDrive has completed all write-caching before you turn off your computer. (There is no way to chick this! Ed) To make sure this has happened, type smartdrv/c at the MS-DOS prompt. After all disk activity has stopped, you can safely turn off your computer.

How do you like them apples? I lost one month's worth of date input to my financial database earlier this year. I have never had

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that happen before. I have great faith in the computers and their software, so I naturally assumed that I had done something wrong--forgotten to save the file--when I quit the program that day. I have used this program for nine years and never lost data before! I also lost an entire chapter of the DOS for New Users book. I blamed Legacy! My wife has made similar complaints--lost two pages of a document, several entries in her genealogical program--which, of course, I pooh poohed!
Solutions

I can see two ways to solve this problem. Both are described above. Both may not work for you. Here are some things to think about.

The Managing Your Money fix is to change the line in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file so your computer does not cache the data it is told to write. That should work okay, but with an overall penalty in operating efficiency. Normally, the cache program saves the date you want written to the hard disk (it does not cache the data to the diskettes, ever) until it senses that there is not a high demand on the hard disk and then it writes the data. I'd opt for a little inefficiency rather than lost data any day!

If you want to trust your memory, you can use the Windows approach and type the command at the DOS prompt just before you turn your computer off. I don't rust myself to do that. However, if you call your application programs with batch files you could use the Windows approach and put that command in the batch file so the buffer is flushed just after you exit the application program. Simply put the command on the lien after the one that calls your application program. DOS for New Users students who use the GO.BAT file should put it on the line after the ":end" label.

I call Windows from a batch file, so both solutions will work for me. If you call Windows by simply typing "WIN" at the DOS prompt, you will need to use the Managing Your Money fix, or work out another way.

That should be worth an article in the newsletter!

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BRING A FRIEND:

Next meeting, bring a friend. Let them see first-hand what you already know: That the Tampa IBM PC User's Group is the best computer resource they'll ever find for 5 ¢ a day!

CorelDRAW! DooDad Uncovered

By: Richard L. Whitney



I'm not sure if I'm the first to find this DooDad or not and I'm going to be embarrassed if I'm not, but here it is.

Start up CorelDRAW! 3.0 in the usual manner, open the Help dialogue box and then click on About CorelDRAW! Now, press the SHIFT and CTRL keys simultaneously while you doubleclick on the Corel Balloon icon in the upper left corner of the dialogue box. The box will immediately expand and empty its contents except for the Corel Balloon which now sits at the bottom of the box.

Now comes the cute part! The balloon will just sit there until you click the left button on your mouse causing the hot air balloon's propane jets to "fire". The balloon will slowly begin to rise with a banner in tow listing the names of the individuals on the CorelDRAW! 3.0 development team. (If you don't keep the mouse button depressed, or press it periodically, the balloon begins to descend toward the bottom of the dialogue box.)

I'm sure the other icon in the About dialogue box also has some secret but I haven't figured it out.

Author Information: Dick Whitney is the Senior Editor of HardCopy, the Journal of the Chicago Computer Society. He found this little gem while exploring the copy of CorelDRAW! 3.0 donated to HardCopy by Corel Corporation.

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When you're old, and tired and suspicious
And plagued with doubt, you'll still
hear the world calling you.

You'll wish with all your heart you'd
taken the time to listen to it,
And you'll be filled with regret
or maybe not!

Unknown

Don't miss the meeting June 9.
SPC Software Publishing will demonstrate:

Harvard Graphics
for Windows

- ❑ Dynamic data connectivity
- ❑ Superior enhancement tools
- ❑ Extensive charting selection
- ❑ Sophisticated drawing/editing tools
- ❑ Dramatic colors and fills
- ❑ Easy text management
- ❑ Multimedia sound & video

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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

Vol. 6 No. 7 July, 1993

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: July 14, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

JULY AGENDA:

7/14/93

6:00 PM - opening remarks
6:30 PM -

JetForm

Form software for DOS & Windows

Demo by Randy Hippe of
JetForm Corp.

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
Borland -ObjectVision 2.0
and Miscellaneous items

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Modem Class:
The Modem Class by Don Patzsch is to be held on the regular meeting night. The class will run from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. (Room behind and left of the reception area) Please be Prompt!

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	985-3338
VICE PRES & TREASURER:	Tom Cone	223-3888
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
SECRETARY:	Jim Clark	986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDUCATION DIRECTOR:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	932-6745
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:	Tom Cone	223-3888

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa IBM PC Users' Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered nonprofit corporation, to provide educational information about IBMPC and compatible personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

Permission to reproduce portions which are not specifically copyrighted is given to other computer users' groups for nonprofit use. Reprints must be unaltered; proper credit given to the author and publication; and a copy of the publication must be sent to the attention of the Bits of Blue Editor at the club address. All other reproduction is prohibited without the specific written permission of the original author.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert noncommercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is produced with Ami Pro for Windows and CorelDraw for Windows, utilizing CorelDraw's extensive CD Rom clipart library.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 6/9/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

The meeting began just about on time, with our eminent Vice Prez, Tom Cone, our distinguished Prez, Harvey Bruneau, was unable to attend do to business commitments. Tom introduced the User Group to the visitors present and laid out the general flow of the meeting for the evening a demonstration of Harvard Graphics, followed by a short break, a question and answer session, closing with a raffle of some very nice software.

PRESENTATION HARVARD GRAPHICS FOR WINDOWS:

SPC Software Publishing Company was kind enough to make one of their finest employees, Linda Confer, available for demonstration of Harvard Graphics for Windows. Linda noted that Harvard Graphics was the pioneer of business presentation software back in 1986, and in their judgment, is still the best and most complete on the market. Linda's demonstration of the program clearly showed that is a very powerful program. The features and capabilities of the program are far too extensive to cover in this brief space, but includes the following:

❑ An extensive chart gallery of preformatted title, bullet, table and organization charts, and an almost limitless number of data charts which include the capability for data analysis and keyword formulas in spreadsheet data form.

❑ Intuitive presentation creation, with WYSIWYG Slide Editor and a textbased Outliner which allow very easy organization of presentations and draganddrop changes to slides.

❑ A host of styles for a professional look, and the capability to create your own styles, all of which can be applied with ease.

❑ Harvard Graphics' Multimedia HyperShow, combined with a Launch Application feature, allows creation of interactive presentations with sound, music and animation, with the ability to immediately move to backup charts or other DOS or Windows supporting programs when questions arise. DDE support permits keeping the charts in presentations up to date with last minute changes.

❑ Sophisticated, but easy to use, drawing tools and capability, along with unlimited control of color; numerous color palettes are supplied, along with the capability to modify them and/or create as many color palettes as desired.

❑ Support for major network software, including 3Com+ Share, Novell, IBM PC LAN, Banyan Vines, MS & IBM OS/2 LAN Manager/Server.

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❑ Supports all output devices supported by Windows 3.0 and above.

❑ Supports Bitstream Speedo font technology (several fonts of which are included), Bitstream Facelift, and Adobe Type Manager.

❑ Imports directly WK1, WK2, WK3, XCS, PCX, TIFF, BMP, CGM, DRW, WMF, PCC, WPG, PICT, and PICT2 file formats, and exports in PCX, TIFF, BMP, WMF, CGM, EPS, WPG, PICT, AND PICT2. the program also reads Harvard Graphics 2.3 and 3.0 files, and writes in HG 3.0.

Extensive, context sensitive online help, which makes answers available wherever you are in the program. In the help context, purchase of any version of Harvard Graphics (including current owners) brings with it a unique service from SPC the Advisor, which will help you put together your presentations if you so desire. Especially for those new to the game, this could be a very valuable service.

Hardware requirements are a 386based computer with 4 MB RAM and 18 MB of hard disk space (with all options installed). A VGA monitor and a mouse or tablet. I am not knowledgeable on presentation software and have never used HG for Windows. I have used HG 3.0 (DOS), however, a few times. I have noted that when making a sophisticated drawing in HG 3.0, the program is very slow on a 386SX/25 with 4 MB RAM. The problem seemed to be in redrawing on the screen. For simple drawings, no problems, but if you intend to use HG 3.0 (DOS) for complex drawings, I suggest that you do so with a 486level machine. Harvard Graphics for Windows may be a good bit faster in similar circumstances, but I would want to know one way or the other if I was using a 386.

The retail price of HG for Windows was not mentioned, but I note the street price is on the order of $370. Shopping around may save you some $$$.

To SPC and Linda, we thank you very much for an excellent demonstration. Harvard Graphics for Windows is a very powerful and impressive package. And the demo disks of Harvard Graphics you gave to all our members present desiring a copy is much appreciated and will give our people a chance to look the programs over on their own machines. And, finally, thank you very much for the copies of Harvard Graphics 3.0 and Harvard Graphics for Windows you donated to our User Group.

AND THE WINNER IS:

Thanks to the generosity of Software Publishing Company (who donated two copies of Harvard Graphics), Borland International (who donated QuatroPro for Windows) and IBM (who donated a copy of OS2), along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

W. F. Martin	Harvard Graphics 3.0
Will Goble	Harvard Graphics/Windows
Jeanluc Burle	QuatroPro/Windows
Phillip Ficarrotta	OS/2
Renate Marsh	50/50 ($43)

The meeting adjourned at about 7:35 PM

♦♦♦♦♦

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

David Fisher
Gary Robinson
Rene J. Salcedo
Mark Whitaker

We are happy you joined our group!

FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following local firms for their support:

IBM
Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
PC Warehouse
Custom Computer Wholesale
Computer City
Software Review

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group:

Access Software
Borland
Corel Systems
GeoWorks
Intuit, Inc.
Lotus Corp.
MicroSoft
Software Publishing Corp.
Symantec
Traveling Software
WordPerfect Corp.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

I was unable to attend our last meeting due to business commitments. I want to thank our VP, Tom Cone, for stepping up to fill the void. Since I did not write a president column last month and I missed the meeting, I will write a larger than normal column this month. I bet you thought I would spare you. Wrong!



DOS 6.0 DoubleSpace:

20 minutes! For those of you at the DOS 6.0 meeting, 20 minutes represents the time it took DOS 6.0 double space to compress my 486/25mhz PC's 209Mb hard drive with about 40 Mb of data on it. If you remember I closed the DOS 6.0 presentation by starting DoubleSpace on the PC. During the process I rebooted and restarted the process several times to experience that ***what if feeling*** . Its the same feeling I have about winning the state lottery. I do not recommend rebooting your PC during the DoubleSpace process unless you feel lucky! During the process we saw different estimates of time displayed by DOS 6.0 as it tried to calculated the total amount of time it would take to complete the compression process. The time varied between one and two hours. Since our meeting ran late we decided that we would not sit around past 10 PM to see it finish. At that point I powered down the system with DoubleSpace running. Once I got home I turned the PC back on and started the process again. When I checked the PC a half-hour later during a TV commercial break the job had completed. AMAZING! On the screen was a message displaying the process was complete and the time it took. At this point I was baffled, why did it display to us one to two hours and run in 20 minutes at my house. Well there are several reason I imagine but the one I like is AI (Artificial Intelligence). In retrospect DoubleSpace knew the exact time it would finish. It based this time not on the file types and megabytes to compress but the fact that the membership were ready to go home. It knew it would not complete during our regular meeting and it knew the time it took for me to drive home and restart the procedure. In reality AI knew it would take between one and two hours to complete. OK so maybe I'm stretching it a bit with the AI stuff. It did complete in 20 minutes. However, the process to remove DoubleSpace was even a bigger challenge. It took the better part of half a Saturday to remove DoubleSpace without losing any data. Prior to starting the rebuild process I could've sworn I heard Clint's (Dirty Harry) voice "*You feel lucky punk?*" in our house. While I use DOS 6.0 and it is a good product, I personally do not recommend the use of DoubleSpace at this time. Microsoft reports DOS 6.0 sales in excess of 4 million copies. Microsoft says 2 percent of DOS 6.0 customer support callers believed they had experienced a loss of data. However, support technicians were able to help most customers reconstruct or salvage their data. The results were that only .5 percent of customers lost data. That may seem like Microsoft did a good job, but .5 percent represents 20,000 customers with some kind of data loss. Those numbers sure bring back the sound of Clint's voice.

Prior to starting the rebuild process, I could've sworn I heard Clint's (Dirty Harry) voice:
"You feel lucky punk?"

COMDEX:

Comdex really consist of two parts. One is Comdex "*The Worlds #1 Computer and Communications Marketplace for Resellers and Corporate Decision Makers*" and Windows World "*The Official Conference and Exposition for Windows Computing*". Several vendors and products drew the attention of large crowds. WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS appeared to garner the biggest crowds in each of its theater type presentation. Microsoft also had big crowds attend its continuous hands on session of Visual Basic 3.0. This product will be the hot product for the masses. It's ease of use, power and great flexibility will allow non-programmers to create almost anything. Windows NT with third party products running on it were displayed in one of the Microsoft areas while IBM had a similar area for its OS/2 2.1 offering. Microsoft seemed to garner more interest. Intel also drew a big crowd with their Pentium show.

One last thing I noticed was the broad availability of green PCs and periperhals. No these are not items which are available to those suffering from the incredible Hulk syndrome. This is a futuristic move for saving our planet and ourselves by changing certain facets of PCs and peripherals. They include power management, comsumables and personal health.

The typical 8 hour use of a PC consumes $35 dollars a year while the 24 hour use of the same PC cost $105. The average PC consumes 162 watts while the IBM green PC will consume 36 watts. If current trends continue, the EPA estimates that PCs will represent 10 percent of the energy used. The EPA estimates that a monitor is only looked at 20 percent of its power on time. Even screen savers are accused of using 20 percent more power than a blank screen. The future PC and peripheral will monitor themselves and reduce their power appetites when not in use.

We waste more paper than ever before.. Businesses consume 775 billion pages of paper a year. How many of us; copy a fax when we first receive it. copy or print to single sided paper when we can print it double sided, print that document several times before we get that just right printout. The technology to view Faxes from your PC is here as is the capability to print double sided copies. Many software packages include a preview mode or WYSIWYG to show you what a page of printed text will look like before you print it. Email software systems are abundant to reduce the paper flow which chokes many companies. Many vendors at Comdex promoted their products as Green enabled.

Our health is another issue. Ergonomics and electromagnetic emission are important issues today. We are spending more of our time with our computers than ever before. At one point PCs were used for business at work. As prices drop PCs are invading our homes as education, game and auxiliary work machines. Mice, more so than keyboards, are evolving as ergonomic or as I

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would say hand friendly. The Swedish National Board for Measurement and Testing has provided a standard (MPR II) for monitors producing electromagnetic emission. Several vendors had monitors that would go in sleep mode when not in use. and most said they adhered to the MPR II standard.

The EPA has created a program which will discourage waste. President Clinton has mandated that in the near future vendors wishing to sell PCs to the government will have to meet guidelines stated by the EPA stated In the near future. Once in place PCs purchased by the Federal government will need to meet the guidelines of this program

I saw one thing that I never in my wildest dreams expected to see. The weirdness kicked in as I realized that an IBMer in a polo shirt was demonstrating to me IBM DOS 6.0 (not available yet) on a **CompuAdd** and **Gateway** PC. Way to go IBM. Speaking of Gateway, their systems were prevalent throughout Comdex and used by most of the big companies for demonstration purposes.

In all the Green idea is a good one. Time will tell if its a fad or the norm. I hope the EPA can do a better with their new program than they have with safety and mileage estimates for cars.



Of course I saw the product we have all been waiting for. Soft Karaoke for Windows. You know there is an Elvis, Elton, Tina or James Brown in you wanting to come out and sing. Maybe you just want to be a DJ. Well for $49.95 you can turn your PC into a Karaoke machine. I know that's what I want to do with my $4000 PC (NOT). If you are tired of cool screen savers to entertain you and your friends, you can call 1-800-363-TUNE to purchase it. I believe I also saw it or a similar product recently at COMP USA. This is got to be better than Mr. Microphone.

COMPUSA:

In the on again off again issue of discounts provided to our general membership by COMPUSA, please note that our group no longer recieves a discount. I had a lengthy meeting with the Corporate Sales Manager responsible for providing this benefit to other groups. Without going into much detail suffice it to say that COMPUSA has determined that discounts provided to user groups has not proved to be a profitable or positive venture.

New Space:

As discussed last month and prior months, we are still in the process of looking for a bigger space to have our meetings. Some locations have been mentioned and researched without any selection. While downtown has not been eliminated, parking and security issues have raised concerns of relocating general meetings there. Any suggestions are welcomed for a facility that would hold several hundred people. If anyone has the facilities to run Special Interest Groups please notify a board member or contact me. The board will continue to research these issues.

Harvey P. Bruneau

Hardware Review:
A Bernoulli Experience

By :Alford Poole, Tampa IBM PC User's Group

20MB of our 30MB hard drive were occupied when we started considering Windows and Windows programs. We needed a new hard drive, but how big? An Iomega drive with removable disks seemed ideal because additional disks could be purchased cheaper than adding another hard drive. I also liked the removable 90MB disk because serious software could be put on one disk and games and noncritical software could be put on another. Hard Drives International had the best price and a good reputation so we called in an order.

The drive came with installation hardware, SCSI card, cables, manuals, OAD (Open Architecture Drivers), Stacker 2.0 and two 90MB disks. After plugging it in to make sure it worked a backup of the hard drive was made using the OAD utility software.

An XT case housed our computer and with two floppies and a full height hard drive there was no room for another drive. I Stacked the hard drive and carried on until we could buy a tower case. Caution: if you have a drive bay that does not need rails be careful when sliding the Iomega drive into position, the foil on the sides of the drive is fragile.

In the mean time new software had been added to the hard drive and many files updated, so another Disk Copy was attempted. At 93% complete the transfer stopped. Hum, so another attempt was made, this time using Append. Same result - stopped at 93%. The OAD, Direct Access, and some root directory files were not copied. No problem, after copying the missing files to the Iomega disk I thought it was ready to boot up. I wanted to boot from the Bernoulli and use the 30MB hard drive as an overflow drive to hold downloaded files. The CMOS was changed so the Iomega would be the C: drive (I wasn't sure how to describe the Iomega in terms of cylinders, sectors and such so I left it blank) and the hard drive would be the D:. Did not work.

A call to Iomega revealed that the BIOS on the SCSI card will boot the 90 Pro if no other drives are attached or the 90 Pro can be the D: drive. Or when DOS 6.0 comes out it might fix it so a removable medium drive could be the C: drive and other drives could still function or if the hard drive was also a SCSI then the Bernoulli could be designated as the C drive. Or if you have an Amiga . . .

With the hard drive disconnected another attempt was made to boot from the Bernoulli. "Insert DOS disk in drive A:". Another call to Iomega - I needed to format the disk to get the system files in place. Ok, the quickie format only takes about 8 seconds while the regular takes about 12 minutes. This time I tried it out before doing another Disk Copy. It worked! Computers are so wonderful!

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Features of the Bernoulli:

Data security - disks can be removed and put in safe location and if the drive malfunctions the data is not lost.

Using Stacker the 90MB disks become 180MB and being removeable makes the drive expandable as the need arrives.

Disk is locked in place when power is switched off, but can be removed manually. The disk can also be locked in place using the OAD software. This is necessary for a Windows temporary swap file.

Write protect on the disks is similar to a 3.5" floppy but the disk does not slide all the way in the drive - about an inch sticks out of the front of the drive.

The drive goes to "sleep" after a time of inactivity (about 20 minutes). No head parking worries due to disk falling away from head on power down.

Disk #2 has about 50MB of shareware, games and demos, quite a variety - with a menu.

Iomega Tech people are helpful and easy to reach with an 800 number.

How much do they cost? The HDI price is $499 for all the items listed above. Computer City has an Iomega external 90 PC Powered drive with different software for the same price. 90MB disks are also available there for $159.

Trade up is also available through Iomega. To trade in my 90 for an internal 150MB drive it would cost $499. Previous upgrades, such as 44MB to 90MB, could only read the smaller sized disks so data could be transferred while the 150MB drive will read and write to 90MB disks and 150MB disks. Nice improvement.

So, if you chose the Bernoulli experience be sure to format that disk and include the system files if you think you might want to boot from it.

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Software Review:
Star Trek Beams Into Your PC

By: Merle Nicholson, TIBMPCUG

In the past, screen savers consisted of random patterns moving about the screen to prevent image burn-in. They serve their purpose, but average screen savers do not entertain. While Windows is not being used, we should at least keep it busy and attractive.

The **Star Trek Screen Saver** accomplishes the main purpose of standard screen savers, and more. Unlike others, the **Star Trek Screen Saver** is so amusing, that it compels people to activate it, sit back, and enjoy a hunk of the **Star Trek** experience (Computrekker).

When the After Dark control panel is activated, it presents you with a lengthy list of different procedures to save your screen from certain peril. This list includes Tribbles, the Tholian Web, the Final Exam, different technical files, and even Mr. Spock can mess with your desktop. Some of these advanced savers allow you to leave your desktop showing accompanied by the saver. For example, if "Spock" is selected, the saver can be ordered not to clear the screen to black. This results in Mr. Spock beaming around your desktop inspecting, disintegrating with a phaser, and saying the usual things like "Fascinating" or "Most illogical".

Another feature that distinguishes the **Star Trek Screen Saver** from others, is the use of sound. Many quotes, computer beeps, mood music, apply great effect to the saver. Unfortunately, its lack of .WAV files prevent having any more fun with the multitude of sound.

For any **Star Trek** trivia buffs, the "Final Exam" may be selected. The "Final Exam" is a multiple choice test that examines your knowledge of all seventy-nine episodes. Sound may be added to dramatize any correct or incorrect answers.

If a favorite saver cannot be determined, the Multimodule and Randomizer can solve the problem. The Multimodule can be customized to show many different savers simultaneously in their own space on the screen. If the Multimodule causes the screen to look too busy, then the Randomizer is the solution. The Randomizer allows the user to select a few or all of the savers to be shown in order or shuffled for a specified amount of time each. These two features are pretty nifty, but use an enormous amount of memory.

If your computer has a dearth of memory due to Windows' massive appetite, there are a few basic savers that do not need much to run. Also, the **Star Trek Screen Saver** features the Wall Zapper. The Wall Zapper allows any image shown by the saver at any given moment to be created and saved into a .BMP wall paper file.

As far as requirements are concerned, the screen saver is not very flexible. It requires Windows 3.0 or higher, 2 MB memory (although 4+ is suggested for the Multimodule and Randomizer), and VGA or better. It supports all After Dark displays and the Sound Blaster. Additional **Star Trek** .WAV files can be purchased and added. Your monitor will live long and prosper with the **Star Trek Screen Saver!**

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The Promise of the 90s

By: James A. Cannavino

Operating a business in the global 90s is far more complex than it was in the 70s, for most industries. Certainly this is true for the computer industry, which has grown more than 10 times since 1970 and where participation has increased more than 20 times. Back then a handful of companies delivered all parts of a system, including the service. Today, our industry has de-integrated into many specialized niches with providers who offer just microprocessors, just application software or just services.

Over this same period of time, technology has been improving at an annual rate of some 25 percent. Microprocessors are now as fast as the most powerful mainframes of the 70s and getting faster every 12 to 18 months. Tiny diskettes store as much information as these room-sized computer and character-based screens have been replaced by colorful 3-D graphics. Yet these leaps in technology have not increased worker productivity in a corresponding way.

The reality is that computers are still not that easy to use and building new, exciting software applications is an often laborious, time-consuming process.

Things are changing though. In large part because customers are demanding more from our industry. They no longer have the time or the resources to gather multiple pieces, from multiple vendors and put them together. They not only expect technology to increase productivity, but they want it in a way that will help them manage their businesses better. Companies today are more concerned with honing a competitive edge, and that often requires the application of new technologies.

In this decade, the challenge for our industry is to help businesses make substantive leaps in productivity. There are three key technologies that will pave the way; microprocessors, reusable code and communications.

Today's more powerful microprocessors are creating the ability to make much richer user interfaces, like handwriting and voice recognition on the desktop.

Reusable programming -- also known as Object Technology -- will break the logjam of application software. The ability to reuse blocks of code to piece together entirely new applications will improve programmer productivity two orders of magnitude.

Also, the ability to communicate ubiquitously will explode and give workers a seamless connection between anyone, at any point in an enterprise, anywhere in the world. As communication technology improves and computer technology becomes more portable, computer systems and networks will fade into the background, allowing businesses to concentrate on turning a profit rather than maintaining administrative systems.

Together, the microprocessor, the ability to replace major segments of software and low-cost, high-bandwidth communications will lead to a new order.

The best part of this new order is that the mechanics like microprocessors, application programming and communications will be invisible to the worker thanks in large part to multimedia. Today you need to learn to type on a keyboard to run most business applications. With multimedia there will be no reason not to talk to your computer! And no reason why it shouldn't talk back! In the near future, workers will be able to see full motion images, send video clips instead of e-mail messages and videoconference, in full-motion and full-color, right from their desk.

In addition, applications will no longer be stand-alone, text-based business tools. Multimedia applications that take advantage of advances in bandwidth will change the way individuals work. Entire industries will have the power to transform the way they do business.

For example, IBM's recently introduced Fireworks Partners is founded on the concept of helping companies transform their approach to business. Fireworks Partners is a separate unit of Personal Systems that will draw upon the resources of the IBM Company to promote the development of advanced multimedia applications and services through partnerships with others within and outside our industry.

One of its first ventures is with a real estate company in Boston called Homeview. With a multimedia approach to selling houses, Homeview allows people to tour through a set of digitized pictures of homes in the broker's office instead of driving around the community. Customers won't have to leave until they preview a house that meets enough of their requirements to make it worth the trip.

Homeview's next step is to offer geographic information systems (GIS) to allow potential buyers to put an overlay on a house they are interested in to get information about the neighborhood, its topology, its school systems, its taxing rates, demographics, whatever. Soon, with more advanced multimedia technology, customers will be able to view the inside, and so, with virtual reality, if they want to see what the sun looks like in the living room in the summer at four in the afternoon, they can.

This is just one of the many examples of how emerging technologies will enhance the business process instead of just keeping track of it. In the past, our expectations for technology to dramatically change the way we do business may have been a little lofty, but the technology is catching up and it is about to deliver more than we could have imagined.

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James A. Cannavino is IBM Senior Vice President and General Manager Personal Systems. He has held numerous management and executive positions within IBM Corporation. Currently Mr. Cannavino oversees four PS business units: Personal Software Products, which is responsible for development and brand marketing of operating systems and LAN software; Advanced Workstations and Systems, which develops RS/6000 and AIX; IBM Personal Computer Company, a separate operating unit of Personal Systems' line of business responsible for development, manufacturing, distribution and brand marketing of IBM PC's worldwide; and Entry Systems Technology, which creates new subsystems and technology for personal computers and workstations.

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Hardware Review:
FAN CARD II

By: Robert Morris, Bits 'N Bytes,
Pentagon PC User Group.

PC users can measure their enemies in degrees. Degrees Fahrenheit, that is. Today's line of PCs, stuffed to the gills with heat generating CPU chips, cards, extra hard drives and other components can often be classified as small space heaters with video screens. As technology continues to pack more components into smaller and tighter configurations, temperatures can soar. Installing additional cards impedes air movement from the fan in your power supply, compounding the problem. Besides destroying your chips, heat can cause your mother board to delaminate. If that happens, you have no choice but to replace it, at considerable cost.

There are several things you can do to relieve heat stress associated with today's technology. All are simple to accomplish and free, except investment of your time.

Minimize heat buildup by not stacking magazines, books or papers on top of the PC. Paper is an excellent insulator, and will act like a blanket, holding in power and performance robbing heat.

Position your PC with a minimum of two inches of clearance on all sides and on top. Placing your monitor on top of the PC is OK, but alongside it is better.

Once a year, open the case, and using a soft brush, carefully loosen dust accumulated on the surface of cards and the mother board. Take care to ensure you donÆt damage any components.

After you have loosened the dirt and dust, blow or vacuum it away (Blowing is much more efficient than vacuuming). You can purchase a can of dry compressed air for a few dollars at computer and camera stores. Look everything over carefully while the cover is off. The heating and cooling cycles your computer experiences through normal on/off cycles cause different materials to expand and contract at different rates. This allows chips and cables to loosen over time. Press gently on all cards, chips in sockets, and cable connectors to seat them fully. Look carefully at the mother board, especially on the back side of the area where your CPU resides. Discoloration suggests a need for extra cooling. Should you see small white dots, (called measling) this is an area damaged by excessive heat with possible delamination. If you are not already having problems, you definitely will - SOON!. This is most prevalent on lower quality mother boards. These boards are made with thinner, often inferior materials, in an environment where quality control is less important than number of boards produced.

If you have a 486-50MHz machine, it is imperative that you have additional cooling, as it generates a tremendous amount of heat. A 50MHz CPU can destroy itself through its own operating temperatures.

The above steps will greatly reduce the chances of heat related failures. For added insurance, purchase and install a FanCard I or FanCard II. Available with one or two fans mounted on a half-length or full-length board, it slips easily into any available 8, 16, or 32 bit slot. My FanCard II board was just a tad long for my slot, (or my slot was just a tad too short for the FanCard), requiring me to file the end of the board to allow a proper fit. This was frustrating, but within my means to modify. Place the FanCard in a slot as close to the CPU chip as possible. The FanCard is thin, and fits nicely between other installed cards.

After I installed the FanCard II, I fired up my computer without the cover. The fans were almost totally silent! There was an impressive, reassuring breeze circulating throughout the chassis. After I reinstalled the computers' cover, I could not hear the fans at all. Now, when I place my hand on top of the computer case, I feel no heat at all. It must be working!

Benefits of installing a FanCard are:

- Cools the entire chassis, including hard drives, boards, and even the power supply, not just the CPU chip. Cooling air circulates throughout the computer. T.S. MICROTECH claims a 65 degree decrease in operating temperature.
- Does not block any slots, other than the one in which it is installed. CPU mounted fans and heat sinks block up to three slots due to their height, and only cool the CPU chip.
- Quiet operation. "Silence is golden." When concentrating on a task, eliminating background noises is important. FanCard does not add any noise.
- FanCard I ($79.95) has one fan, mounted on a half-length card, FanCard II ($99.95) has two fans on a full length card.
- FanCard draws only 2.4 watts per fan from the slot in which it is installed, and does not require an adapter from the power supply.
- FanCards were tested in over 500 PCs during Operation Desert Storm. The Saudi Desert qualifies as a hostile environment for PCs. However, T. S. MICROTECH fails to mention in their ad if any (or how many) PCs with FanCards installed failed, or a comparison of failure rates with PCs in which no auxiliary cooling devices were installed. This is the type of advertising that we all can do without - fantastic claims, no proof! Give us facts- if your product is worthy, as I think FanCard is, we'll buy it. T.S. MICROTECH, 20818 Higgins Ct., Torrance, CA, 90501 (800) 959-9419

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TEN RULES FOR HIGH SPEED MODEMS

By: Bruce Carson, Tulsa Computer Society

1. 14,400 bps modems must connect to computer at 19,200 bps or faster.
2. 16450 UART chips on your IO card can only handle 19,200 bps modem communications.
3. 16550 UART chips can handle up to 57,600 bps depending on computer and modem.
4. Two active devices cannot share the same interrupt request (IRQ). Com 1 and com 3 are both on IRQ 4; com 2 and com 4 are both on IRQ 3.
5. Serial ports must be configured consecutively, com 1, com 2, com 3, NOT com 1, com 2, com 4.
6. You must not have two of any com. port, such as two serial 1 ports or two serial 2 ports.
7. When in your communications program in terminal mode, you must be able to type "AT" and get a response "OK" from your modem - every time! This should occur even without a telephone line connected to your modem.
8. Modems are like computers in some respects. When they are turned off they lose the active configuration, and when turned back on they must restore an operating configuration into active ram. ATZ as an initialization string will restore whatever you have saved in NVRAM.
9. File transfer problems are often caused by a software or setup problem. If your modem dials and connects but will not transfer files, check your communications program setup.
10. If you are running a Windows communications program, it is important to have your ports set at the proper speed in that program AND in the Windows control panel under ports.

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MODEM PROTOCOL SUMMARY

By: Bruce Carson , Tulsa Computer Society

There are four classes of protocols associated with modems:

1. MODULATION PROTOCOLS.

Computers store and process data as ones and zeros (bits), while telephones can only handle information as sounds. A modem converts (modulates) the computer data in to sounds and transmits them over a telephone line to a remote modem. The remote modem then converts (demodulates) the signal back to ones and zeros for the remote computer to process. The word modem comes from MOdulator/DEModulator. There are several protocols that are used in the modulation process. V.21 and Bell 103 for 300 bps, V.22 and Bell 212A for 1200 bps, V.22bis for 2400 bps, V.32 for 9600 bps, and V.32bis for 14,400 bps.

2. ERROR CONTROL PROTOCOLS.

The error control process can be accomplished by software or by hardware. The newer high speed modems come with built in hardware error control, so that when connected to another similar modem errors are detected and corrected by the two modems without involving the computers. There are two error control protocols in common use today. They are V.42/LAPM and MNP.

3. DATA COMPRESSION PROTOCOLS.

Data can be sent faster if it is smaller, so a high percentage of the data transmitted today is compressed. Most Bulletin Board Systems (BBS's) have their files stored in a compressed (usually ZIPped) condition. but other systems may wish to transfer files as is without compressing them. In this case, modern modems can compress the data on the fly and uncompress at the receiving end. There are two hardware data compression protocols in common use today. They are MNP-5 and V.42 bis. MNP-5 will try to compress a file that is already compressed, so will slow down the file transfer, while V.42 bis is smart enough to not attempt compression on a ZIP file.

4. FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOLS.

To a modem data is data. It doesn't know or care whether the data is from the keyboard as you type, or streaming from the hard drive. It also does not know what a file is, it is all just data. For that reason file transfer protocols are necessary. Xmodem is probably the most widely known and also is the slowest. Ymodem is a little faster, and Zmodem is the fastest of the error correcting file transfer protocols. Ymodem-G and I-modem are very fast but only work with error correcting modems and do no error correction. Using Zmodem with an error correcting modem results in a little redundancy since hardware and software are both doing error correction, but the loss in efficiency is only about three to five per cent, and Zmodem's crash recovery capability may be worth that small penalty. If a long file transfer in Zmodem is interrupted, it can be resumed from the break point without starting over at the beginning.

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Customizing Toolbars in Microsoft Excel

Toolbars were first created in Microsoft Excel to provide easy access to common spreadsheet commands and functions. The seven toolbars built into Microsoft Excel were developed through extensive customer research that identified common tasks in basic spreadsheet activity areas, such as charting, writing macros, and drawing. Microsoft Excel toolbars are extremely flexible and can be easily customized--you can even build your own toolbars by using the standard tools in Microsoft Excel or tools you have created yourself.

Creating a toolbar:

1. Point the mouse cursor at the standard toolbar and click the right mouse button to access the short-cut menu. Then select Customize.
2. In the Customize dialog box, select the file category, and then drag the tool that has the floppy disk on it onto your worksheet. You can add additional tools to your new toolbar, or move tools between toolbars, simply by dragging them while the Customize dialog box is displayed.

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Creating a custom tool:

1. From the Toolbar Customize dialog box, select the Custom category and drag a custom tool onto your worksheet.
2. Microsoft Excel prompts you to enter a macro. Or, if you want, you can have Excel record a macro for you: select the Record button and click OK.
3. Step through a common task that you perform in Microsoft Excel. For example, select the Format menu, then Font, and then Arialr, regular, 12 point. Then select the Halt Macro tool (on the macro toolbar). You've just created your own custom tool. You can use this tool to format cell ranges in the Arial font, 12 point.

Custom tool faces:

You can create custom tool faces in any draw program. After creating a tool face, copy it to the Windows Clipboard, and then paste it onto a tool while the Customize dialog box is displayed. Positioning toolbars You can position a toolbar at any place on the worksheet, or even anchor it at the top, bottom, or sides of the sheet. To do this, simply point the mouse cursor at the toolbar, holding down the left mouse button to drag the toolbar.

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Concise Guide to MS-DOS® Batch Files

Bestselling Guide to Creating and Using Timesaving Batch Files Now Covers MS-DOS Through Version 6

A handy new guide from Microsoft Press takes the mystery out of the batch file language and shows MS-DOS version 6 users how to make batch files more interactive.

The CONCISE GUIDE TO MS-DOS BATCH FILES by Kris Jamsa shows readers how to create, save, and run batch files. Batch files save time, reduce keystrokes and errors, simplify the execution of difficult commands, and can be used again and again. No additional software is needed and no programming experience is necessary. This book and a computer running the MS-DOS operating system is all that's needed.

Readers already familiar with batch files will want to turn to this convenient guide to help them enhance their batch files with more advanced commands as well as those commands introduced by MS-DOS 6. They'll learn how to:

Use the new CHOICE command to make batch files interactive
Create icons that will run batch files from within the Microsoft® Windows® operating system
Use ANSI.SYS to make screen displays more colorful
Use the DEBUG command to create simple programs that enhance batch-file capabilities

In addition, CONCISE GUIDE TO MS-DOS BATCH FILES shows readers how to create macro definitions using the DOSKEY command. For users of MS-DOS 5 (or later), an understanding of the DOSKEY command will make them immediately more productive. An annotated table of contents and a comprehensive index help readers quickly locate information on any topic in the book.

Kris Jamsa is the author of more than 40 computer books covering a wide range of topics. His other titles from Microsoft Press include *Concise Guide to Microsoft Windows 3.1* and *Concise Guide to Windows for Workgroups.*

Microsoft Press is the book division of Microsoft Corporation and the leading publisher of quality computer books about Microsoft products. More than 10 million users at all skill levels rely on a complete line of Microsoft Press® books to make learning and using software easier. Titles ranging from streamlined tutorials for first-time computer users to technical references for professional programmers are distributed to book and software retailers worldwide. Consumers in the United States can also order directly from the publisher at 1-800-MSPRESS.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers. The company offers a wide range of products and services for business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing every day.

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Concise Guide to MS-DOS" Batch Files by Kris Jamsa 224 pages, $12.95, ISBN: 1-55615-549-2, Pub. Date: June 8, 1993

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We have software for review!

The following is a list of software available to interested members for review:

Fastlynx
KUI (Keyboard user interface for Windows)
Links-386 (golf game)
Fidelity On-Line Xpress (Direct line to Wall Street)
GeoWorks - Ensemble 2.0 (Includes: GeoWrite, DeoDraw, GeoCalc & GeoFile)
PrintCache (Doubles Windows & Dos print speed)
Adobe Type Set (30 scalable typefaces)

On the following page is a copy of TIBMPCUG's Agreement for Software Reviews. Contact Harvey Bruneau @ 985-3338 to obtain the software, sign the review Agreement and receive a Reviewer's Guide for writing your review article for the Bits of Blue.



A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa IBM PC User's Group

BITS of BLUE

Vol. 6 No. 8 August, 1993

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: August 11, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

AUGUST AGENDA:

8/11/93

6:00 PM - opening remarks
6:30 PM -

WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS

Demo by **WordPerfect Corp.**

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
ACCESS -Microsoft
(Relational Database Management System for Windows)
and Miscellaneous items

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User Group Name Change!

At the August meeting there will be a vote on a name change for our group. Our President will explain the necessity for this name change and every member will be entitled to vote on the suggested name. If you miss the August meeting look for a full report and explanation in the September Newsletter.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

September --- WINDOWS NT (Tentative)

October --- CorelDraw 4

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	985-3338
VICE PRES & TREASURER:	Tom Cone	223-3888
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.1, on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TIBMPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter was created with Ami Pro for Windows donated by Lotus Corp. to TIBMPCUG for use by the editor.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 7/14/93 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS
By: Jim Clark

He's Back!! Yes, our illustrious Prez, Harvey Bruneau, is back and chaired our meeting. While Harvey seemed glad to be back in the saddle again, the timing of our meeting was again not the most opportune for him and Marylee it was their 10th wedding anniversary. Notwithstanding, they shared some of their precious time with us on this special day for them. And after presenting Marylee with a dozen lovely roses, Harvey proceeded with our meeting, announcing that he had every intention of having a short meeting and then taking his lovely spouse to a special place in celebration of the special occasion. (Check the time of adjournment to see how successful Harvey was at meeting his timing objective.) Harvey then launched into the meeting in our regular format.

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS

A member of our group had told Harvey in the past they would be willing to lead a special interest group (SIG) on OS2. Several at the meeting indicated they would like to participate in an OS2 special interest group. Harvey announced that he would try to arrange a SIG to begin at 5:30 on our regular meeting night in September. Further details will be provided at our next meeting and in the next newsletter.

Software presentation objectives for the next few months are:

August	Word Perfect 6.0 (DOS)
September	Windows NT (If released by that time)
October	CorelDraw 4.0
Not-too-distant future	IBM's OS2, Ver. 2.1

Harvey had read several reports of problems being encountered with CorelDraw 4.0. An interim maintenance release should be available in a couple of weeks. To obtain one, call CorelDraw at 1-800-836-3729.

Harvey related briefly some of his experiences at Comdex in Atlanta. He noted that the Comdex in Atlanta is considerably smaller than the Las Vegas Comdex, but that it is still a very worthwhile gathering to attend and one will see at both more computer related hardware and software innovations than can be seen at any other location in the world. Harvey recommend attending either if you can, giving priority to the large Comdex at Las Vegas if a choice is available.

Microsoft has announced their intention to make MS Visual Basic the macro language of MS Word, MS Access, and Excel; one could expect that it will end up as the macro language in all of MS software products.

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MS Access 1.1 maintenance upgrade is out. It can be purchased from MS directly for $19.95, or call MS for a coupon which will allow purchase from local retailers for $14.95.

It was reported that anyone interested in Superbase, a high-end database program reviewed just a couple of months ago in this newsletter, could be obtained from Software Publishing Corp. for $99 IF you mention one of its competitors.

Harvey informed all that a program he recently acquired, called Romaterial I believe, is a neat fun kind of utility ROM. It includes about 500 icons, and a calculator with voice answers in any one of 5 different voices. Plus several other features, all for a street price of $17.

PRESENTATION JetForm 3.1

The JetForm Corporation was kind enough to make their Regional Sales Manager, Randy Hippe, available for a presentation on their software program, JetForm 3.1 for Windows. Randy related a shaggy dog story of how the twain shall never meet the result being that the material he had expected to have for all present about their program was not available; it was floating around the UPS system and/or several hotels. In introducing the program, Randy noted that they have versions for DOS, Windows, Macintosh, and were working on OS2.

This program is much different than I had expected. I have used a 'forms' program with which one could create a variety of custom forms. Well, JetForm does that, from the simplest to the most complex, quickly and easily. But it does so much more, and it is this part where the program really shines, and which makes this program so much different than the 'forms' program I had used.

JetForm is a very powerful forms program. It really comes in two packages JetForm Filler, which is principally a filler program, and JetForm Design, which includes JetForm Filler and Design as well. JetForm is clearly designed to meet the needs of businesses/organizations that deal with many different people and/or things. Randy showed and informed us about so much I could not keep up with my notes, but I was impressed that it could create just about any form one would need (invoice, order, etc.) and then fill them in with speed and intelligence. Some of the many features include:

* Import directly from just about any major software; you need only tell the program once where to get the desired data. And, it can import data from several sources for the same form. JetForm also includes a database capability of its own.

* The version demonstrated had an excellent graphical interface, complete with button bar and a huge number of icons (macros) with which to customize to suit individual needs

* Easily built in intelligence in the forms to perform whatever calculations may be needed automatically.

* Built in automatic address book.

* Allows creation of forms in JetForm from scanned images which can be quickly converted to JetForm forms, complete with intelligence, etc.

* Capability to transmit output via paper or electronic means, such as E-Mail another step toward a "paperless" world.

The requirements for JetForm are minimal. The DOS version requires only that you have 640K of RAM, for example. There appear to be no requirements peculiar to JetForm. If you use the Windows version, if you have the capability to run Windows, you have the capability to run JetForm. Unfortunately, Randy didn't mention how much disk space was required for the program, and since no literature was available at the meeting, that kind of information is not available to us at this time.

JetForm Filler lists for $129, and JetForm Design lists for $495; street prices (usually special order) run about $93 and $328, respectively. Why buy the filler without the design capability?, one might ask. Several reason are possible: You have need for several filler programs, but need only one design package, is one. Another is, JetForm offers form design services as well as on-site consultation services, and training if needed.

Randy covered many aspects of the program beyond this brief accounting. I can't cover them all here. It is clearly a very powerful and useful program for those needing that kind of capability. And, for those that do, it would appear that JetForm is a program worthy of further investigation.

A BIG thanks to JetForm and Randy Hippe for a fine presentation on an excellent program, and for the copy donated for our use.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of JetForm Corporation , Lotus Corporation, Borland and Sunrise Computer (who donated several maintenance items) along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Roger Waters	JetForm Design 3.1
W.F. LaMartin	Lotus Organizer
Russ Stepp	Object Vision 2.0
Preston Goossen	OS2 Book
Russ Stepp	Sunrise Mx Package
Preston Goossen	50/50 ($48)

The meeting adjourned at close to 9 PM; good work, Harvey.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Diana L. Sillence
Mark Staley

Editorial Comment:

There is not a **President's Column** in this issue, as Harvey is still recovering after a working conference in Sanibel. However next month, look for his usual column and I'm sure he'll share some of his experiences with you.

This will also be a somewhat abbreviated and definitely late newsletter this month as I (the editor) went with Harvey on his trip to Sanibel. I did not take my computer and printer with me to work on the newsletter. I guess I should be severely scolded as there was an abundance of computers at the resort where we stayed, somehow I never got around to the Bits of Blue. I hope you'll forgive me this time. Maybe we need a relief editor?

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Software Review

SOFTWARE REVIEW: ENSEMBLE 2.0

By: Jerry Osterweil, TIBMPCUG

ENSEMBLE 2.0 is what the manufacturers call a "monster upgrade" to GeoWorks and its first upgrade Ensemble I.0. It can also be utilized as the total package for new users. It contains all the user friendly categories of software that regular users of GeoWorks have been using so comfortably. (Familiarity with the earlier versions makes it much easier to use Ensemble 2.0.) In addition it now has a full functioning spread sheet and data base called respectively GeoCalc and GeoFile plus a more sophisticated calculator as well as a host of additional features and refinements, that are so extensive that only some of them can be documented below.

Installation:
There are three options for installations. You can install and keep the early version, you can upgrade to completely replace the earlier version or you can execute a new installation on a new computer. I chose to install and keep my old version as a backup until I was fully comfortable with the new version. (This has been helpful when I want to do something fast and I was still not familiar enough with all the new features of the new program.) This installation option required that I do some "house-sweeping" since it utilizes 20 Mb of free hard drive space. (Incidentally, there is a warning in the trouble shooting guide that disk compression software can interfere with the installation process.)

I was able to install this directly from GeoWorks using the A drive icon to enter the first disk. There are seven disks for installing this. All went smoothly except one point after the disks were installed when my mouse pointer on the screen was stuck and I had to go back and reconfirm its configuration. Incidentally, it is no surprise to old hands but might be to new hands, that you have to be prepared in the later stages of the installation process to specify the configuration of your printer, your mouse and your ports in order for the installation to be completed. So have these on hand before you begin. After installation Loader.Exe is needed to access Ensemble 2.0 from Dos 5.

Functions:
Functions that previously required dropdown menus can now also be accessed by the many additional icons that have been added to this version. For example, you can access the type size and style now from the icons. There are many more drawing tools now available and they can also be accessed directly from the icons Additional desk top publishing capabilities are included since you can now specify a number of columns and you can make sophisticated use of box arrangements, drawing tools and text to modify page makeup. Bit modification of drawings are also now available. Of course with the new version you can easily copy and paste spreadsheets and data base information right into the text.

This version has also added a thesaurus to the earlier versions. It also has a more automatic option on the spell checker than before. It gives you three types of controls for many functions key combinations, the menu, and the icons. It also gives you a variety of additional ways of identifying text for manipulation and for moving around from one part of the protocol to another. It also enables you to import and export different file formats from other programs.

A very interesting feature on the version is the use of templates that can preserve styles for future use. They gives you some examples of this such as a two column newsletter with a banner, headlines and sub headings as well as a an invoice statement. You can also create and preserve your own templates.

In recognition of the many added features in this version GeoWorks has divided its presentation in the manuals and its recommended use of the computer to up to four levels of difficult so that new users can more gradually accommodate themselves to the increasing complexity of operating this program.

Possible Problems:
I had two sets of problems with this version. The first is that it takes time to get used to the many new icons in this version. Some of them are the familiar ones from earlier version but all of them now have been made much smaller in order to

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accommodate the larger array of icons that are included. This makes them much harder to read. The writing on the help displays are also much smaller and harder to read (except that some help screens can be enlarged.)

Another problem is that it appeared that Ensemble 2.0 operated much more slowly than the earlier versions. I thought perhaps this was because I now had only 15,409,152 bits available on the hard drive of my 286 computer after this installation. It is possible that when I remove some more programs from the had disk and relinquish the original GeoWorks which I retained that this problem may improve.

Documentation and Product Support:
Two users guides are supplied, a Book 1 and Book 2. They also have a new trouble shooters guide that can spot and correct difficulties in installation and operations

They have a 24 hour automated support system for fax, voice and BBS that has a 520 area code. It also has a technical support system that operates with on $1 a minute 900 area code from 9:00 to 3:00 PST Monday to Friday.

The GeoWorks warranty provides that if you are not fully satisfied with the software for any reason within 30 days from the date of purchase you may return the complete product for a full product refund. (less shipping and handling).

Overall Evaluation:
Despite some of the 'growing pains" created by the miniaturized icons, increased capabilities and inevitable complications, I think is a very powerful addition to the GeoWorks armamentarium. I am intrigued to get past the initial phase and have a chance to utilize fully the intriguing new capabilities it provides.

GeoWorks Ensemble 2.0 $199.99 (Suggested retail price)
2150 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley, CA 94704 (415) 6440883

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Internet

By: Jim Thomas, TIBMPCUG

Internet is a world-wide cyberspace community that is made up of many diverse networks. I think the best approach to explain Internet is to talk about its origin.

In the early 70's packet switching technology, along with TCP/IP (transmission control protocol and internet protocol), allowed different packet switching networks to communicate with each other without the host computers having to know anything about each other. The Department of Defense declared TCP/IP as the standard for military use. In the early 80's the National Science Foundation introduced the NSFNET to Internet and it became a major backbone of Internet. Internet was then made up of different networks such as NASA, ARPA, NSF, DISA, and DOE. Today Internet connects over 9,000 sub-networks and ten million users and it's growing bigger. Eventually different networks from all over the world hookup together, because if you hook into just one of these networks, you have access to all of them. And in their turn, they all have access to you.

Due to this growth and expansion, your pathways to people change quite often. I regularly send e-mail to my cousin in Australia. For years my messages would be sent from host computer to host computer (Florida to California) to end up in Berkeley, then transmitted to a satellite to Sidney, from where it would wander across Australia and end up in Orange with my cousin. I am based at USF and one day my message started going to NASA, then to a satellite to Australia. Now my message reaches my cousin's mailbox in about 30 seconds instead of six minutes. How did my cousin and I get access to Internet? We began communicating as students, and we now both work in the education field, so our access has always been through our respective universities. The two mailboxes I use are jpthomas@cfrvm and jpthomas@cfrvm.usf.edu. By using these "addresses" anyone in the world with e-mail capabilities can get in touch with me. Fidonet has hooks into Internet and you can send e-mail to someone if you know their address.

When Internet was being formed, the operating system of choice was Unix. There are four basic functions in the Internet Unix environment that open up the Internet world to computer users. They are FTP (file transfer protocol), MAIL, TELNET, and USENET NEWS. USENET is a group of conferences made up of messages that you access and post by the use of UUCP--a UNIX utility program. There are now programs for every type of computer that will give you access to USENET if you have access to Internet. TELNET is a program that allows you to logon to another host and read text files, do directory searches, and play games but generally you can not download files. MAIL is a UNIX program that creates domain names and controls the host computers tracking of all the people, places, and messages. FTP stands for file transfer protocol, but it is really a program that allows you to logon to a host computer anywhere in the world (as long as it is connected to Internet) and download files of interest.

In 1991 the High Performance Computing Act was introduced by then Senator Al Gore. This Act has committed the Federal Government to spend three billion dollars over the next five years to transform Internet into the National Research and Education Network (NREN). So far AT&T has been granted 12 million to maintain a directory of NREN, build a database server and provide training services to other networks.
CERFNet (General Atomic Project) will establish a reference center called INTERNIC, which will provide online, print, and CD-ROM training and documentation. At present Internet-based businesses include software development, search and retrieval systems, publishing ventures, document delivery, and electronic bulletin boards such as Bix, America On-Line, Delphi, and Compuserve.

I'm afraid I got a little long winded, but it is a complex subject. If there is an interest I will expound some more on the subject.

♦♦♦♦♦

Writing Solid Code
by Steve Maguire
288 pages, $24.95
ISBN: 1-55615-551-4
Pub. Date: May 31, 1993

Writing Solid Code

Microsoft's Techniques for Developing Bug-Free Programs

If the developers give responsibility for finding bugs to the testers,the users of the product will find 40 percent of the bugs.

From the Foreword by David M. Moore
Director of Development, Microsoft Corporation

In WRITING SOLID CODE from Microsoft Press, author Steve Maguire shows programmers how to take back the responsibility for writing bug-free source code. Maguire doesn't expect programmers to write flawless code every time they sit in front of the keyboard. But he does believe that programmers who follow the guidelines in WRITING SOLID CODE can make progress toward keeping bugs out of the master sources-before their code goes to Testing.

As a top Microsoft developer and source code troubleshooter for Microsoft, Maguire knows what he is talking about. He has seen firsthand that with the growing complexity of software and the associated climb in bug rates programmers must produce bug-free code much earlier in the development cycle if products are to ship on time-or at all. He is convinced that the key to writing bug-free code is to become more aware of how bugs come about.

The guidelines in WRITING SOLID CODE are the result of programmers regularly asking themselves

> How could I have *automatically* detected this bug?
> How could I have *prevented* this bug?

Maguire focuses on little-known, hard-won techniques for writing code, techniques that don't turn up in textbooks or in programming courses. And he draws candidly on his experiences at Microsoft for cases in point-both good and bad. The result is practical, lively instruction in how to achieve "a nearly shippable product every day."

Entertaining, anecdotal chapters describe

- Increasing the number of bugs that can be detected automatically
- Using debugging assertion statements and debug-only backup algorithms
- Using subsystem integrity checks
- Stepping through code with an appropriate focus
- Writing easily validated functions that minimize the amount of error handling code that must be written
- Exchanging risky practices for comparably efficient but safer alternatives
- Avoiding the seemingly innocuous, most treacherous coding practices
- Developing the essential attitudes and habits

Each chapter contains points for quick review and exercises that push the programmer beyond the chapter. Appendixes contain checklists for a variety of coding situations, a useful linked-list version of memory logging routines discussed in the book, and full answers to the questions posed at the ends of the chapters. An annotated table of contents and a comprehensive index help readers quickly locate information on any topic in the book.

Steve Maguire has been programming professionally for 17 years. He worked on Microsoft Excel for the Macintosh and led the development of Microsoft's Intel® processor-hosted MC680x0 cross-development system for the Macintosh. He was the driving force behind Microsoft's switch to a cross-platform shared code strategy in its applications development and is perhaps best known in the company for his efforts to increase the utility and quality of shared code libraries. WRITING SOLID CODE is the first of several books he is writing to give programmers practical guidelines for developing professional, high-quality software.

Microsoft Press is the book division of Microsoft Corporation and the leading publisher of quality computer books about programming and Microsoft development tools. More than 10 million users at all skill levels rely on a complete line of Microsoft Press® books to make developing, learning, and using software easier. Titles ranging from streamlined tutorials for first-time computer users to technical references and advanced development books for professional programmers are distributed to book and software retailers worldwide. Consumers in the United States can also order directly from the publisher at 1-800-MSPRESS.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers. The company offers a wide range of products and services for business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing every day.

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TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP APPLICATION

Purpose: The Tampa IBM PC Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to serve the needs of the PC User - from the most technical of the techies to the simplest of the simple. Our purpose is to benefit ALL computer users, not only IBM and PC-compatible; our intent is to encourage, enlighten, and inform.

(This information will be kept confidential. It will be used only for keeping accurate membership statistics.)

Please check one: ( ) NEW ( ) CHANGE ( ) RENEWAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____

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State _____ Zip _____ Home Phone _____

Company Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Work Phone _____

How did you hear about TIBMPCUG? _____

What do you presently use your PC for ?**(Check all that apply)**

DOS [ ] Spreadsheet [ ] Wordprocessing [ ] Database [ ] Communications [ ] DTP [ ]
Utilities [ ] Money/Investment [ ] General [ ] Other _____
What major software do you use? _____

What would you like to benefit from/contribute to the Group? _____

Annual Membership Fee: $20.00 individual/ $30.00 family - Make Check payable to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group

Mail to: Tampa IBM PC Users Group
Membership Application
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

Review Software Available:

SuperStor PRO (Advanced Compression Software from Addstor)
Fastlynx
Laplink V
KUI(Keyboard user interface for Windows)
Lotus Organizer (PIM for Windows)
GoldMine (Advanced Contact Management Software)
Fidelity In-Line Xpress (Direct line to Wall Street)
PrintCache (Doubles Windows & DOS print speed)
Adobe TypeSet (30 scalable typefaces)
Kitchen/Bath (Autodesk - home design software)
ECCO (Professional Information Management System)
QuickBooks (DOS -Small Business Bookkeeping)
AddImpact (Windows -add voice, animated graphics & sound)
Multimedia - Make Your Point
ObjectVision (Windows ver. 2.0 -Borland) (the easiest way to create applications for windows and OS/2)
EZ Shopper Plus (Recipe Mgr. Menu Planning)
Watchman (Windows easy-to-use, advanced file protection app.)
International KeyBoard Kit (Windows)(Multi-language writing aide)

Members wishing to review any of the above software to write a review article for the newsletter please contact Marylee or Harvey at 985-3338 or 988-0232.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

BITS of BLUE

Vol. 6 No. 9 September, 1993

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: September 8, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

SEPTEMBER 8TH AGENDA:

6:00 PM - opening remarks
6:30 PM -

Windows NT

Microsoft's "New Technology" for Windows
-- a heavy duty, 32 bit operating system,
Demo by: John Jenner,
Sr. Systems Engineer, Microsoft Corp.

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -

Windows NT
and Miscellaneous items

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Name Change!

At the August meeting, our President explained the necessity for a name change and the members were given the opportunity to vote on the suggested name. If you missed the August meeting look for a full report and explanation in this issue, in the Secretary's Report on page 2 or the President's Column on page 5.
IT'S OFFICIAL! We are now:

"Tampa PC Users Group"

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	985-3338
VICE PRES & TREASURER:	Tom Cone	224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
SECRETARY:	Jim Clark	986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDUCATION DIRECTOR:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	985-3338
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:	Tom Cone	224-9052

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Ami Pro for Windows from Lotus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel systems.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 8/11/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

Another BIGGIE!! Yes, if you weren't at this meeting, you missed another biggie. We had a presentation on one version of probably the most widely used word processor -- Word Perfect 6.0 (DOS) -- made by the inimitable John Johannesmeyer who has a special knack of getting across a lot of info in a very enjoyable way. And, we had a vote on our Articles of Incorporation (AOI) to change the name of our group. Although we had a good crowd, it was not the wall-to-wall crowd I had expected for this event. It was a productive and enjoyable evening.

CLUB NEWS

* Name Change: Harvey explained the several reasons the Board of Directors (BOD) felt that a change in our name was necessary: 1) Our name is so similar to other groups in our area that we are often mistaken for them; 2) Our present name incorrectly implies that only persons using true IBM PCs are eligible, whereas in reality we are open to users of any PC (as well as those that don't use computers at all, but have an interest in them); 3)Because of the similarity of names, some distributions from the computer industry intended for our group is often sent to one of the other groups; 4) We are applying for non-profit status with the IRS and it is important that our name reflect our true situation -- membership in our group is not limited to a select group of people, but is open to all.

The BOD had agreed upon and proposed to the membership that our name be changed to "Tampa PC Users Group". There were other ideas proposed from the floor during discussion, but in the end it was agreed that this name would probably meet our needs the best; it reflects our openness, and at the same time would also help keep our established identity in the industry. A motion to change our name to "Tampa PC Users Group" was made and seconded. A vote was held and the motion carried without opposition.

* Financial Reports: A motion was made to incorporate into our newsletter a financial report to let members know what our financial status is. The motion did not specify a time table for such reports. It was noted that financial reports are available for review by any and all of our members at all of our meetings, and that for such reports to be included in the newsletter frequently would consume valuable space and create additional work on the volunteers serving the organization. Considerable discussion ensued as to the need for such reports and if needed, the frequency of them. An amended motion was proposed to publish a financial statement, consisting of an Income Statement and a Balance Sheet, during the first quarter of the calendar year with an as of date of the last day of the previous year. The motion was seconded, and carried without opposition.

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INDUSTRY NEWS

* CorelDraw Update: A number of bugs have shown up in the recently released CorelDraw 4.0. To rectify most of these problems, CorelDraw has developed and is distributing a free update. If you are an owner of CorelDraw and have registered, you should receive your update automatically. If you have not registered, you will have to call CorelDraw at 1-800-836-DRAW to get your update.

* Word Perfect for OS/2: Word Perfect Corp says they are now shipping this version of WP.

* Stacker/Novell Agreement: An agreement has been reached that will incorporate Stacker software in future releases of Novell and DR-DOS. Inasmuch as Stacker seems to be the most popular disk compression software, this agreement will no doubt expand Stacker's share of the disk-compression market and should enhance the value of Novell and DR-DOS programs.

PRESENTATION -- Word Perfect 6.0 (DOS)

John Johannesmeyer, area manager for Word Perfect Corporation, was on hand to give an overview presentation of WP 6.0 (DOS). It is a very powerful program and no one could review all of its features in the limited time available, but John did cover a bunch of them -- and I shall be even more brief here.

To start with, WP 6.0 is very similar in many ways with WP 5.1 -- that is, is does all of the things 5.1 does (plus a bunch) and those things can be accomplished in pretty much the same way as 5.1 if one so desires Some of the key combinations are different, but if one uses phonetics they are very much the same. WP 6.0 can be operated in a variety of ways, from a clean screen that would remind you of all of the earlier versions of WP, through pull down menus on the screen, to a Windows like operation, complete with user-definable tool bars. One does not have some of the capabilities with 6.0 (DOS) that are available in Windows, such as DDE, but it appears to offer all other benefits of a Windows-like graphical interface. Like Windows, WP 6.0 makes use of all extended and expanded memory installed on the computer and otherwise available for use.

Among the major capabilities offered in WP 6.0 ia a very capable spreadsheet built right in. This spreadsheet provides over 100 functions, including all of the ones used most often by most spreadsheet users. And the spreadsheet is indeed very nice. Also included is an efficient send-fax capability so that one can send faxes from within WP 6.0 (the host computer must, of course, otherwise have a fax capability). And, the desktop publishing capability of WP 6.0's recent predecessors is still available -- but it has been enhanced and made more powerful than ever. Among the many other features of WP 6.0 are:

MS Access 1.1 maintenance upgrade is out. It can be purchased from MS directly for $19.95, or call MS for a coupon which will allow purchase from local retailers for $14.95.

* WP 6.0 can be operated in text or graphics modes; text mode takes less memory and looks much like WP 5.1 on the screen; and graphics mode which takes more memory and runs more slowly, but gives full benefit of the graphical interface (i.e., WYSIWYG).

* Up to nine documents can be opened and working at one time. This makes transfering information between several documents (up to nine) very easy.

* Word processing has been enhanced with features such as Grammatik V grammar checker now built in, and drag and drop editing of text. And, 6.0 will import from all of the popular major word processors.

* Provides a conversion macro to convert on the fly documents from previous versions of WP.

* Macros from WP 5.1 are convertable and creation of macros is easier.

* A comprehensive and detailed table creation and control capability - a very powerful and versatile feature. One can create and modify a table structure in just about any way I can imagine with just clicks of a button, and embed formulas as desired.

* Good control of graphics compared to other word processors, including scaling and drag-and-drop moving. It also allows the choice of block wrap of text around graphics, or contour wrap with a click of a mouse button. The program will import some 15 different graphics formats, including all of the most popular.

* Another feature that is particularly 'nice' is the Watermark. One may import a graphic in any of the 15 formats supported and make it a "watermark" -- a graphic that is printed lightly to become a background to any printed document.

* Enhanced, powerful desk top capabilities, including easily set up and controlled column layouts, with any combination of single and multiples allowed on the same page. Automatic text flow between columns and balanced columns are available.

* Some of the other features are: Extensive documentation and context-sensitive on line help; drag-and-drop text editing; spell checker; thumbnail preview of up to 32 pages at one time; document length limited only by space; envelope printing, with bar-code capability; hypertext (electronic referencing for documentation); supports full color printing; embed sound in any place desired in a document, with the sound becoming a part of the document file (assumes a sound capability built into the computer); uses Adobe and Bitstream Speedo fonts, with third party software providing True type capability as well; and many, many more.

Requirements: John says that WP 6.0 (DOS) will run in text mode on a 286 machine. A 386 with 2 MB of RAM will allow operation in text or graphics modes; more RAM will give faster operation. (A 486SX25 laptop was used for the demo and it

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worked very well.) The program needs about 420K of free RAM, after all TSRs are loaded. A minimum load of the program of the program uses about 7 MB of hard disk space -- loading all features takes about 14 MB.

Costs: List price of the program is $495. Upgrade from WP 5.1 lists at $129.95, but has a street price of around $89. A competitive upgrade is available for a little more, but one must be upgrading from a competitive program with a list price of at least $395.

Word Perfect Corp is implementing a program called Easy Move. This program will allow a purchaser of WP 6.0 (DOS) to obtain the software for the Windows version for $29.95, or $59.95 for the program with complete documentation. This "Easy Move" applies to lateral versions and/or earlier versions, but not to later versions; that is, a 6.0 licensee could Easy Move on any 6.0 versions (Windows, DOS or OS/2), or any 5.X versions, but could not do the same on 6.1 or later. John emphasized that one is not purchasing additional license, but is only expanding an existing license. Hence, if one owned a license for one program and Easy Moved on another, and subsequently gave or sold one version, that person will have sold or given away his license for both versions.

Word Perfect Corporation and John Johannesmeyer, many thanks for an excellent presentation of your very powerful new version of Word Perfect for DOS. It is truly an impressive and powerful program, and John, your presentation was both informative and entertaining, as usual.. MANY THANKS!

AND THE WINNER IS
Thanks to the generosity of Microsoft Corporation (who donated a copy of Microsoft Access), our own Sunshine Computer (who donated several peripheral items), and Word Perfect Corporation (who donated several WP T-shirts), along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Jerry Inman	WP T-shirt
Ed Buzza	WP T-shirt
George Pollak	WP T-shirt
Melvin Flynn	WP T-shirt
Kevan Sheridan	3.5" disk case & 25 diskettes
Frank Gallio	FD cleaning kits
Phillip P. Ficarrotta	Mouse Pad
R. A. Friedel	Microsoft Access
Don Keeney	50/50 ($54)

The meeting adjourned at about 9:10 PM

♦♦♦♦♦

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Maurice Goldsmith
Gary Peterson
John H. Whitcomb

FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
CompUSA
PC Warehouse
Custom Computer Wholesale
Software Review

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group:

Access Software
Borland
Corel Systems
GeoWorks
Intuit, Inc.
Lotus Corp.
MicroSoft
Software Publishing Corp.
Symantec
Traveling Software
WordPerfect Corp.

Review Software Available:

Members wishing to review any of the following software to write a review article for the newsletter please contact Marylee or Harvey at 985-3338 or 988-0232.

Fastlynx
Laplink V
KUI(Keyboard user interface for Windows)
GoldMine (Advanced Contact Management Software)
Fidelity In-Line Xpress (Direct line to Wall Street)
Adobe TypeSet (30 scalable typefaces)
Kitchen/Bath (Autodesk - home design software)
ECCO (Professional Information Management System)
QuickBooks (DOS -Small Business Bookkeeping)
AddImpact (Windows -add voice, animated graphics & sound)
Multimedia - Make Your Point
ObjectVision (Windows ver. 2.0 -Borland) (the easiest way to create applications for windows and OS/2)
EZ Shopper Plus (Recipe Mgr. Menu Planning)
Watchman (Windows easy-to-use, advanced file protection app.)
International KeyBoard Kit (Windows) (Multi-language writing aide)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Its official! At our last meeting the majority of members in attendance voted to accept the new name proposed by the board. Since that time the state of Florida has approved and registered our new name. We are now officially known as the ***Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.*** The name was changed for several reasons:

1. Distinguish ourselves from IBM's own Tampa user group.
2. Prevent the confusion of potential members that we are an IBM PC only group. This also will help us in attaining a 503(c)(3) (Non-Profit) status with the government.
3. Use a legal corporate name. Our old name was *Tampa IBM Users Group, Inc.* but somewhere in the eighties the name was modified unofficially and PC was inserted.

One other change that was voted on and will be implemented is the printing of the groups financial information. This will be printed in the newsletter once every year within the first quarter.

As you are aware we have been looking for a larger space to hold our meetings for quite some time. In past meetings and newsletters I have asked for your help in locating or suggesting a new meeting place. However a site was never proposed that met our requirements. Recently Marylee, our editor, assumed the responsibility of contacting over 40 locations and has found two possible sites. These sites were discussed at our August board meeting and one has been designated as the most promising. Before the board commits to this site we would like to hear your thoughts and other specific recommendations you may have. Our goal is to move our meetings by the beginning of 1994. The location is the Ybor HCC campus. The facilities would provide seats for 195. Our cost would be minimal. The down side is that we would need to furnish our own computer and projection equipment for each meeting. From reviewing the other sites with Marylee it seems that we will need to furnish this equipment no matter where we go. This is a second issue that we will review in the months to come but for now the new meeting space has priority.

During the last several years board members of local PC user groups have been attending the *Suncoast Regional PC User Group* meetings to share ideas on running user groups. Originally these meetings were focused at local groups. However over the years board members from Jacksonville, Lake Wales and other Florida groups have participated in the Suncoast Regional PCUG meetings. With that in mind several influential board members of some of these user groups suggested that the meetings be opened to all PC user groups. This would include any hardware platform ie; IBM & compatibles, Apple, Commodore TI, ... whatever. No matter what platform or operating system a user group is based on they share the same issues. Issues such as membership, newsletter, vendor presentations, advertising, Special Interest Groups and volunteers to run the group are but a few concerns to running a successful group. It has been decided that an organization would be created for Florida PC user groups. This group is officially known as the *Florida Association of Computer User Groups*. By now you are wondering why am I taking white space to inform you of all of this information. To date 20 user groups have joined. I, along with six others representing various Florida groups, have been elected to the Board of Directors of this group. This association should provide a benefit to all member groups including ours. If you know of PC user groups who wish to join the FACUG please have them contact me.

Harvey Bruneau

Product Review:

Lotus® 1-2-3 Release 4 SPREADSHEET FOR WINDOWS

By: Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC User's Group

Background:
First, let me tell you that I have been an avid Lotus® 1-2-3 (DOS platform) user for several years. I ***am not*** a user of any other spreadsheet program, such as Quatro Pro® or Excel®, so this review will not compare one spreadsheet against another. I tried the initial Microsoft® Windows version of Lotus 1-2-3 release 1.1 but could not get excited about learning a new procedure to do something that was already second nature to me. I found myself continually reverting back to the DOS version, especially once Lotus developed WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get)for the DOS release 2.3 of Lotus 1-2-3. When Lotus 1-2-3 release 2.4 for DOS was introduced, I tried it, liked it and finally gave up on Lotus 1-2-3 release 1.1 for Windows.

I had read a couple of reviews on Lotus 1-2-3 release 4 (**1-2-3r4** from now on) for Windows, which both were positive, but I wasn't willing to invest another $100(or so) in upgrade costs for something I probably would not use anyway. But, recently I purchased a new 486/66 and have become a much more frequent user of Windows and other Window based programs. So, when I was offered an opportunity to evaluate Lotus' latest release for Windows, without spending my money first, I accepted, and I'm glad I did!

System Requirements: (on a stand-alone PC or on a network)

* An 80286, 80386, or 80486-based PC certified for use with Microsoft Windows 3.0 of later.
* A color or grayscale EGA, VGA or IBM® 8514 monitor.
* A mouse (although they say it is not required, to get the full potential of all the new features it is strongly recommended).
* Microsoft Windows 3.0 or later.
* DOS 3.30 or later.
* 4 megabytes(MB) of random access memory (RAM); use on an 80286-based PC may require more RAM. A 2MB or more swap file is recommended in 386 enhanced mode.
* A max of 13MB of available disk space on a stand-alone PC; 7.5MB or more on a laptop; 16MB on a network server; and 150 kilobytes (K) on a network node. The Guided Tour requires Windows 3.1 and 3.3MB of additional disk space.

(Continued on page 6)

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(I installed the program on my 386/25 notebook with 4MB of RAM and 120MB hard drive. Installation went as expected.)

Upon opening the package there were several coupons included for various products such as:

* Adobe Type Manager® (ATM).
* A free upgrade from Lotus that will allow programs such as AMI Pro®, Freelance® or Improv® for Windows (all Lotus products) the ability to access and use the new .WK4 file format created by Lotus 1-2-3r4.
* A list of various reference materials such as texts, books or videos.
* A free issue of ***1-2-3 for Windows Report.***
* A free introductory membership to Compuserve®.
* Info of ordering a program called DataLens®, a program that will allow 1-2-3r4 to access data, no matter what the platform, program or operating system.
* A risk-free trial issue of PCWorld Magazine, Lotus edition.

Installation:

As with most Window-based programs the installation was straight forward from the Program Manager by choosing File Run then type *A:install* in the Command Line text box, choose OK, after the next introductory screen choose OK again and then choose the installation you want: Default Install, Customized Install or Install for Laptops. There is more than ample instructions during the installation process for it to be error free, even to the PC novice. Although all the fonts that you already have installed in Windows are available in 123r4 the installation procedure also gives you a choice to install Adobe Type Manager (ATM), which will install a selection of Type 1 fonts and the ATM Control Program.

NOTE: I would suggest if you are a first time user of Lotus 1-2-3 that you use the Default Install option and install everything, including the Animated Guided Tour. You can always go back and remove the extra files later when you are more familar with Lotus. I had limited space on my laptop and chose a different route. I did install the Evaluation Guide Sample Files that gave me hands-on activities to introduce me to the new features and new ways to access the old features of Lotus 1-2-3.

New Features:

* Choose from a much more streamlined, logical menu structure and well-organized dialog boxes.

* New tool bars offer many shortcuts with intuitive SmartIcons and a dynamic status bar at the bottom of the worksheet that is actually a mini-menu system that allows you to change several features of the current selection, such as font or numeric format. There are several tool bars available but not all are visible at the same time, which sometimes caused me to have to look for my option. I'm sure with a little experience this won't be much of a problem. (The *"classic"* 1-2-3 slash-key menus are still available, but I only used it once to see if it still worked!)
* There is now a pop-up quick menu with the most frequently used commands for the current selection.

* Enter and edit text directly in a cell by just a simple double click of the mouse.

* Copy and move data by dragging it with the mouse. After highlighting a cell or a range of cells, when the cursor is moved to the border of the highlighted area the pointer changes to a small hand. When the left mouse button is depressed the hand closes as if it has grasped your current selection and opens to release your selection when the mouse button is released. Cute, and effective! The pointer also changes shape to let you know if a click will select a cell, graph, line, etc. You can now select an entire column or row by clicking on its respective column letter or row number. You can also select discontiguous ranges by using combinations of mouse and keyboard keys. Both right and left buttons of the mouse have been standardized in 123r4.

* Open and work on several worksheets **(3D)** at once and navigate through these worksheets by the use of named tabs, similar to file folders, which are visible at the top of the worksheet. Capability to still read and write previous Lotus 1-2-3 file formats ie., .WK1 and .WK3 are included in 123r4.

* Create multiple versions of data ranges that can vary independently, combine or share data concurrently with other ranges.

* Share data with Object Linking and Embedding (OLE), Dynamic Data Exchange (DLL), and electronic mail (E-mail).

* Style your data with many more fonts, 256 colors and 64 fill patterns. Align all cell entries, not just labels, wrap text with a cell, and a ***first*** for spreadsheets, you can ***rotate*** entries within the cells.

* Create and edit charts overlaid directly on your worksheet.

* Although this new release can run all the old *macros* there are over 250 new macro commands added. Macros are no longer key-stroke oriented. Instead, new commands such as {MENU-CREATE} to modify the menu bar, are recorded in a special Transcript window, where they can be tested, edited and then pasted into the worksheet.

* Jump to any named range using the new *Navigator.*

* *Date Query Assistant* will build database queries graphically, eliminating criteria ranges.

* 120 @functions have been added, bringing the total to over 200, all accessible from the new *@Function pull-down.*

* *Version Manager* allows the sharing of *what-if* scenarios across a network, providing an audit trail by stamping each new version with the author's network, E-mail, date and time of entry.

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Summary:

I think Lotus has become a full-fledged contender in the Windows spreadsheet market with the release of 123r4. It is no longer a DOS spreadsheet made-over to run under Windows. Now with an improved interface, Version Manager, database query tools, 3-D worksheets, enhanced charting, quick menus, and SmartIcons this program has been designed for both the experienced spreadsheet user as well as the everyday user of Windows wondering what they could do with a spreadsheet program. Invest in **Lotus 1-2-3 Release 4** and I think you'll be pleasantly surprised. I was!

Pricing:

Suggested Retail Price $495, Upgrade $129
(Look around....you can beat these prices!)

♦♦♦♦♦

Business Insight: Like Having an MBA on a Disk

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Business Insight offers the counsel of business experts to help you run your business or start an enterprise. It first interviews you about your company, then searches its reservoir of business management knowledge and strategy to analyze your firm and suggest improvements.

Business Insight's designers, both with management backgrounds, constructed the program's knowledge base using the work of 35 business experts, including Harvard economics professor Michael Porter.

An outline format makes this Windows program easy to use and understand. You start by answering questions about strategic business areas such as personnel, product benefits, buyer objectives, and the competition. You don't need to have a degree to answer the questions-terms are defined, and most questions are either multiple choice or scaled. Some require financial data, such as projected startup expenses, and you can use Business Insight's integrated spreadsheet, or import data in WKS format.

Once you're done, the program generates several reports. Business Insight acts as a critical outside adviser in its ôscore cardö report, which rates your enterprise's chances for success in key areas such as product positioning, competition, and profit potential. It gives an assertion rating from 1 to 100 for each area. The program lists the factors that contribute to each rating, so you can review its logic. Business Insight then offers recommendations for improvement and points out inconsistencies in your strategy.

A top ten list shows the ten strongest and ten weakest aspects of your business strategy. Again, each rating is explained. Another helpful feature shows the pros and cons of whatif scenarios, such as ôWhat if I enter the market early?ö A written critique of your strategy combines this information and can frame a formal business plan.

Business Insight can not only help you start a business but develop new strategies as your product and market change.

Laurianne McLaughlin

Business Insight {windows}This Windows program uses a knowledge base of business rules and theory to analyze ventures and offer suggestions.
Business Resource Software Inc. 800/4231228, 512/2517541
List price: $495
Reader service no. 658

♦♦♦♦♦

That's a nice macro you wrote, Too bad Lotus now owns it.

By Ed Foster

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Like many of you, I've always disliked the "look-and-feel" copyright infringement lawsuits that have plagued the software industry. But whether company X gets a legal judgment against company Y doesn't affect me directly, so I've never gotten overly excited about these cases.

I'm getting overly excited now. Downright angry, in fact.

What set me off is the recent ruling in the Lotus-Borland lawsuit that found Quattro Pro's macro key reader a violation of Lotus' intellectual property rights because it allows Quattro Pro to execute 1-2-3 macros. That ruling finally brought home to me the underlying nature of these lawsuits. The party whose intellectual property rights are being violated here is not a software vendor at all, but the user -- you and me.

Think about it. You, as a user of 1-2-3, may have developed a number of macros over the years for your organization that are part of the way you do business. They're your macros, your intellectual property, not Lotus'.

The Lotus position (if you'll pardon the expression) is that if you decide another spreadsheet program offers you something that 1-2-3 doesn't, you shouldn't be able to run those macros on it. You must rewrite them to run on the new program.

At least in this case, Borland advocates a legal environment that allows programs to have features compatible with de facto standards. Users can still have a choice of products down the road without abandoning their own intellectual investment in the programs they've been using.

It's pretty clear that Borland's model is the better one for users. And it's also easy to dismiss the argument that the vendor's incentive to innovate is stifled in a system that allows compatibility with existing market standards. In the real world, it works the other way around. A vendor is rarely going to have a standard worth cloning without having already made a killing, as Lotus did with 1-2-3. And a vendor focused on defending its intellectual property rights is likely to fall behind in bringing new innovations, as Lotus also did with 1-2-3.

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Keep in mind these look-and-feel lawsuits aren't over the fundamental technologies and performance capabilities that made a product like 1-2-3 successful. They are about aspects of the program that became important only because the product did become a standard and people like you and me invested our time in learning how to use them.

It's relatively easy to see how look-and-feel lawsuits violate your intellectual property rights in a case like this, where a language you use for development is involved. I think, however, your rights are also under attack in the lawsuits involving other program elements, such as command interfaces. Lotus has already gotten rulings against Borland, and Paperback Software before that, over the use of its 1-2-3 slash command interface, forcing Borland to pull that capability from Quattro Pro. (I'm not sure why Lotus hasn't taken on Microsoft's Excel, but I suspect it's fundamentally the syndrome of a bully not wanting to mess with a bigger bully.)

Yet a user's ability to work more quickly with the familiar slash commands is due again to your efforts, not Lotus'. Nothing was terribly innovative about the slash command interface over many other programs that existed when 1-2-3's was introduced; WordStar had already proven the basic concept. What made 1-2-3's command interface worth cloning was the skill 1-2-3 users had developed with it over the years. Shouldn't that be considered the user's intellectual property, too?

So what do we do about it? It's clear that the patent and copyright laws are a complete anachronism for this industry. Waiting for inspired legislation to clear up the mess is a pipe dream. And, judging by this latest ruling, hoping for precedent-setting wisdom in the interpretation of the laws is probably just as futile.

The only time you get to be judge and jury of these vendors is when you buy products, so it might be wise to take a company's track record on these issues into account at that time. It's probably not relevant now to worry about Lotus' behavior when buying your next spreadsheet, as they've already lost a lot of their leadership position there. But what about Notes? How much of your company's energies should be put into a development environment whose publisher, on precedent at least, will try to keep it closed? It would be an interesting question to put to your Lotus sales representative.

Ed Foster is editor of InfoWorld. He gets electronic mail at MCI account 584-3453. Command:

♦♦♦♦♦

The Peter Norton PC Programmer's Bible
by Peter Norton, Peter Aitken, and Richard Wilton
632 pages, $29.95
ISBN: 1-55615-555-7
Pub. Date: June 1, 1993

The Peter Norton PC Programmer's Bible

The Ultimate Reference to the IBM" PC and Compatible Hardware and Systems Software

A Peter Norton book without his picture on the cover! At first glance that's what THE PETER NORTON PC PROGRAMMER'S BIBLE from Microsoft Press seems to be missing. However a closer examination of the revised bestselling computer book classic does indeed reveal a likeness of the software industry legend without shirtsleeves rolled up and arms folded!

Peter Norton's trademark pose was first seen on THE PETER NORTON PROGRAMMER'S GUIDE TO THE IBM PC in 1984. It quickly became the symbol for a youthful industry. Computers were about to change the world, and The Norton Guide became the primary reference for thousands of pioneering enthusiasts, students, and programmers. It was the first readable introduction to the technical underpinnings of the PC and was hailed as a valuable reference for anyone curious about how the PC works. More than a half million copies were sold through the first two editions.

Today the completely updated edition of this landmark book is back, better than ever. It provides fresh information for a whole new generation of computer enthusiasts eager to master the concepts of PC programming. And as was true of previous editions, it's not only for programmers. Anyone who is involved in or needs to understand the inner workings of the Intel® microprocessor-based family of microcomputers will be able to use this book as a handy guide. Readers get detailed reference information as well as an overview of the philosophies, ideas, and techniques behind developing modern, high-performance PC software. One look inside explains why many of today's most prominent computer industry figures credit this book for sparking their interest in the computer age. Complete coverage includes:

HardwareReaders get a detailed description of the anatomy and function of each hardware component as well as information on the architecture, design philosophy, and interoperability of microprocessors and bus technologies, including the Intel Pentium® microprocessor and ISA, EISA, and Micro Channel bus technology.

Operating Systems The authors take the readers from the fundamentals to the important details about the latest and most widely used operating systems, including information on BIOS and MS-DOS® services, user interfaces, message-driven architecture, and more. MS-DOS 6, Microsoft® Windows® 3.1, Windows NT,® and OS/2® operating systems are covered.

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Program Development Proven programming methods and techniques from seasoned experts are combined with an overview of four major programming languages and other powerful programming tools.

Reference Includes a BIOS function summary, an MS-DOS function summary, and information on hexadecimal arithmetic and ASCII characters. An annotated table of contents and a comprehensive index help readers quickly locate information on any topic in the book.

Peter Norton started his computer software career with an "undelete" program that would recover computer files that had been inadvertently erased. That became the core for the Norton Utilities,® the flagship product of Peter Norton Computing, now a part of Symantec Corporation. His books have been read by millions of computer users and programmers.

Co-author Peter Aitken has written extensively about computer hardware and software, with more than 60 articles and 14 books to his credit, including *The Essential Guide to MS-DOS 5 Programming* and the *Microsoft Guide to Visual Basic® for MS-DOS*, from Microsoft Press, and the bestseller *Teach Yourself C in 21 Days*.

Co-author Richard Wilton has written about IBM® PC and PS/2® programming for several different magazines and is the author of *Programmer's Guide to PC and PS/2 Video Systems* and *Microsoft Windows 3 Developer's Workshop*, from Microsoft Press.

THE PETER NORTON PC PROGRAMMER'S BIBLE is the first book in the Microsoft Press Programming Classics series. Programming Classics are thoroughly updated editions of milestone books that have had a significant impact on the art and science of software development. Each book in this series continues to be as relevant today as the day it was first published. Look for the Programming Classic emblem.

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Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers. The company offers a wide range of products and services for business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing every day.

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A Convenient Way to Switch Between Video Resolutions

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For most users, Windows is full of hassles. Here are two of them: Although your video card may support several resolutions (640 by 480, 800 by 600, 1024 by 768, and so on), you can't conveniently switch between them. And when you load Windows, it doesn't bring you back to where you were when you exited. Programs by Binar Graphics, AnyView and Fantastic Recall attempt to solve these problems.

AnyView checks out your hardware at installation, then lets you change your video driver-and with it your resolution-on the fly. If you've been working at 1024 by 768, and you decide you'd prefer to work in 800 by 600, just click the appropriate icon and there you are, without exiting Windows or closing any applications.

What happens if you pick a resolution that doesn't really work with your hardware, and you're left with a blank or unreadable screen? You hot-key back to the previous resolution.

Also, the program rewrites SYSTEM.INI when you change the resolution, so you can always edit it back in DOS.

You can also associate resolutions with applications. You can, for instance, assign 1024 by 768 to Quattro Pro, where you need to see a large worksheet, and 640 by 480 to Ami Pro, where you want large letters. As you move from one app to another, your resolution changes.

AnyView sports a few other useful features. You can turn the screen into a scrollable window on a giant virtual desktop. And if you ever thought that those rulers in design-oriented programs looked wrong, AnyView lets you set the number of pixels that equate an inch. You can define this setting-while holding a physical ruler up to your screen-for each resolution your system supports.

If you like to start work each morning where you left off the night before, Fantastic Recall is worth considering. When you exit Windows through Fantastic Recall, it copies memory to a disk file; when you run the command-line program in DOS, it restores from the file to memory, returning you to Windows with your apps running and your data files up, exactly as you left off. That's a lot more energy efficient than keeping your system on all night. The program also has an autosave feature to copy memory to disk.

Lincoln Spector

AnyView {windows} Change resolutions without exiting Windows. Binar Graphics 415/491-1164, 415/491-1565
List price: $99, introductory price $69.95
Reader service no. 655

Fantastic Recall {windows}Start Windows-and your Windows applications-where you left off. Binar Graphics 800/228-0666, 415/491-4182
List price: $79.95, introductory price $49.95
Reader service no. 656

GAME REVIEW:
AMAZON
Guardians of Eden
By: David Burch, TPCUG



If detailed adventure games intrigue you, then you will probably enjoy Access's Amazon. If you don't like detail and having to keep track of a story line then you may find Amazon too complex to be considered enjoyable. Amazon is a long adventure game in which the choices you make determine your fate.

Before the details about the game, I will give you the technical information. The manual suggests as minimum hardware a 285/12mhz CPU, this would be almost impossible; I used a 486/33Mhz and found some of the scenes relatively slow. Amazon is an enormous game, mostly because of its graphics. It has many sections with video like animated graphics. With setup it has 7 disks and requires 9.3MB. The installation is pretty simple and has really interesting trivia about the Amazon region. There was only one area that I ran into trouble, setting up the sound driver. This procedure was really confusing and I never quite figured it out. Except for this, the installation went quite smoothly, but be prepared to eat up all that hard disk space.

The game is written in a story fashion; there are fourteen chapters. The player is allowed to make choices, and as these choices are made correctly then the player can move on to other choices. The story is based on a character named Jason whose older brother has disappeared in the Amazon forests. The object is to find his brother and solve the mystery of his disappearance.

There are a variety of different screens that the player will encounter. Some of the screens are first person scenes in which the player sees through Jason's eyes. There is a portion of the screen that is divided into command icons. These icons allow Jason to pick up things (i.e. keys, weapons, etc.) , look at things, move things and a few other important tasks. These icons are used throughout the game. There are also third person scenes in which the player can see Jason. The command icons are used the same way in these scenes. The third main type of action screen is the Automatic Sequence in which the player sits back and watches. These are especially important for obtaining background information about the story line. There is also an inventory screen that can be chosen from the command line that shows all the objects Jason has acquired.

At the first I found the game quite difficult to play, until I started using the on-line help. There is a help icon that can be chosen in most of the scenes. This icon gives hints for most of the objects and scenes. This actually makes the game quite easy.

There are a few things to remember if Amazon sounds interesting to you and you decide to get it: Save your game often and make sure you've gotten all the objects you need for further chapters or you'll be stuck up the river without a paddle, literally!

SRP. $69.95
ACCESS Software Inc.
4910 Amelia Earhart Dr.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116
1-800-800-4880

♦♦♦♦♦

SOFTWARE REVIEW:
BRAVO
By: Andrew J. Gnoza, III

Alpha Software is out to make a big dent in the presentation graphics software market with its new program called BRAVO.

With a projected street price well under $100. Bravo comes with all the bells and whistles the high priced big boys have and is very easy to use. Bravo is state of the art presentation graphics running with Windows. Bravo is a step ahead of the others in the race because of the new graphics technology that allows you to easily produce more dramatic results.

In addition to new technology Bravo has the normal capabilities including; an outliner, style sheets, drawing tools, speaker notes, OLE and DDE support, multimedia support, a runtime module for distributing slide shows. Bravo also has capabilities usually associated with illustration programs such as: Bezier curve editing, scaleable type from Bitstream, type manipulation, shape and color blends, rotate and skew, and variable zoom.

Finally new features due to the new technology include: intelligent clip art, business graphs with intelligently scaled pictures to represent data, and graphical control of other Windows applications. Extensive context-sensitive help makes it easy for casual users to produce quick word charts and graphs and provides a smooth transition to the more advanced features required by experienced users.

Alpha Software has been a leader in the database market with its Alpha 4 product will soon be known for its Windows graphic presentation product

Bravo. Alpha Software
168 Middlesex Turnpike
Burlington, MA 01803.
Telephone (617) 229-2924.

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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

BITS of BLUE

Vol. 6 No. 10 October, 1993

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: October 13, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

OCTOBER 13TH AGENDA:

6:00 PM - opening remarks
6:30 PM -

OS/2 2.1

IBM's all-in-one operating system supporting DOS, Windows™ and OS/2 software running side-by-side.

Demo by: Dennis Harrison,
of IBM, Corp.

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
OS/2 2.1
and Miscellaneous items

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UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

November 11 -

OFF-LINE XPRESS 2.1 TEST DRIVE 2 -
Offline reader & messager from MUSTANG SOFTWARE, INC.
Demo of this shareware by: Kevan Sheridan
(this will also include some basics on BBS & modems)

December 8 -

askSam for Windows - free form database, makes managing information as easy as using a wordprocessor. *(see askSam for DOS review in this issue)*
Demo by: Phil Schnyder, President of askSam Systems

January 12 -

Simply Money - personal accounting software
"I prefer this over Quicken" remark overheard by one of our members.
Demo by: Marty Steiner, Product Consultant
of Computer Associates

February 9 -

Wordperfect 6.0 for Windows
Demo by: John Johannesmeyer of WP

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

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VICE PRES & TREASURER:	Tom Cone	224-9052
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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Ami Pro for Windows from Lotus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel systems.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 9/8/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

Must be because the new school year has started the number attending this meeting was down a good bit from our normal group, in spite of the fact that we were having a Microsoft presentation on their Windows NT program. Those that were there learned about a great program.

CLUB NEWS

➔ New Meeting Location: This was the most important item discussed in club news area. Recognizing that we have overflow crowds on occasion and that the space crunch is inhibiting growth of the group, the Board of Directors (BOD) has been discussing and investigating potential new locations for our meetings for several months. During the last few weeks Marylee Bruneau, our newsletter editor, has aggressively searched for a new location. Having investigated a very long list of potential locations, Marylee was successful in identifying two that had reasonable prospects adequate space, a willing host, and a price we could afford. The best of the two is the Ybor City campus of HCC. Our Prez, Harvey Bruneau, brought these circumstances to the floor and solicited reaction from the members present. Several commented, all favorable, with at least two who had attended that campus noting that it is an excellent location with outstanding security. With that, Harvey indicated that the site would be visited and the specifics of the facility would be explored in greater detail. If suitable, his objective date for moving is in time for the February meeting. More at the October general meeting.

INDUSTRY NEWS

➔ MS DOS Upgrade: MS has version 6.2 of DOS in the works, to be released in the not-too-distant future. It will no doubt minimize some of the problems that have been reported with Double Space, as well as provide improvements in other areas.

➔ New SmartDrive: Quite a few folks have reported loss of data on shut down when using SMARTDRV in read/write mode. That is reportedly because SMARTDRV may not write to disk for several seconds and those shutting down quickly do so some times before SMARTDRV has written to disk. An update of SMARTDRV.EXE is now available on CServ as well as other locations. This version corrects the delayed write problem at shutdown.

➔ Windows Replacement: Industry news has it that MS now has in Beta testing (or Alpha, depending on which report you read) a program that will be a replacement for Windows. Called Chicago, this program will be much more powerful than Windows and will replace DOS, Windows and Windows for Workgroups.

➔ Computer Training: Working with computers in the business world and a wide variety of software, Harvey

(Continued on next page.)

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reported on his experience with one source of computer training his firm uses Executrain. Without going into much detail which might be construed as a "plug" for Executrain, Harvey reported that the folks there are well qualified, do a great job of instructing, and provide follow-on support. If you need training on any of the many major software programs Executrain provides instruction on, that firm is certainly worthy of your consideration.

PRESENTATION MS Windows NT 3.1

We were fortunate to have John Jenner, Senior Systems Engineer (Florida) for Microsoft Corporation, join us and give a presentation of Windows NT. He gave a very enlightening presentation. Especially in the early portion of the review of Windows NT, I felt a bit like a fish out of water because I had absolutely no knowledge of networking and client server systems. By the time John had finished, he had convinced me that it was a super program for network/client server systems.

There are two versions of the package Windows NT and Windows NT Advanced Server. The basic differences between the two center on the size of operations each will support. NT, for example will support two processors , while NT Advanced will support four processors and is an unlimited server. It will also support Mac systems. Both versions are very powerful and loaded with features, only a few of which I made decipherable notes on:

➔ Compatible with x86based, RISCbased and SMP systems and expanding.

➔ Compatible with a host of networking options: IBM LAN Server, MS LAN Manager, MS Workgroup for Windows, and TCP/IP networks; and with Banyan Vines, DEC Pathworks, IBM SNA networks and Novell NetWare with some additional software.

➔ Compatible with a number of "operating systems": MS DOS, Windows, 32bit Windows, POSIX and OS/2.

➔ Consistent with appearance and functioning of Windows and Windows for Workgroups, and John says that users of these programs are already 80% of the way toward using Windows NT. However, NT has included a feature not now in the other Windows programs, but which we have found so useful in others a tool bar which provides direct click access to a host of commands.

➔ A true preemptive multitasking environment

➔ Provides an 'application interface' and 'provider interface' which, among other things, permits otherwise incompatible components to communicate, and it isolates each application so that trouble with one has no direct effect on the others.

➔ Recognizes and works with FAT, OS/2 and NTFX formatting/filing systems.

➔ Provides a spectrum of 'personal' and 'common' security options that are easy to set up, with centralized control of user profiles and actions, which are applied at user logon.

➔ Supports up to 2 gigabytes of virtual memory, provides power failure protection with uninterruptible power support, and includes builtin backup.

Requirements to use Windows NT on an x86based system are: At least a 386 computer; will operate with 8 MB RAM, but at least 12 MB RAM is recommended; one HD floppy disk drive; at least 40 MB hard disk space for minimum loading and 80 MB of space for full loading, plus paging space of at least 2 MB, with recommended paging space twice the installed RAM; and VGA, Super VGA or other graphics adapter compatible with Windows NT. A RISCbased system needs more RAM and hard disk space, plus a CDROM drive.

Costs: Windows NT lists for $495, with a $295 upgrade price tag.. Windows NT Advanced lists for $1995. No street pricing was available to this writer.

Many thanks to Microsoft Corporation and John for a great presentation and giving us a looksee at what appears to be a super client server capability, and for the programs you donated to our group. It is all very much appreciated.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Microsoft Corporation (who donated a copy of Microsoft Windows NT and a copy of Windows for Workgroups), our illustrious Prez who secured some other goodies for us during his travels, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

M. Kapalas	MS Windows NT
Martin Miller	MS Windows for Workgroups
Steve Hess	Windows NT book
???	Windows NT book
Phillip Ficarrotta	Shirt
M. Kapalas	Cap (times 2)
Jay Reese	50/50 ($58)

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 PM

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FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

- **CompUSA** ♦ **IBM** ♦ **PC Warehouse**
- **Software Review** ♦ **Custom Computer Wholesale**
- **Staples** ♦ **Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts**

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group:

- **Access Software**
- **Borland**
- **Corel Systems**
- **GeoWorks**
- **WordPerfect**
- **Microsoft**
- **Lotus Corp.**
- **Symantec**
- **Traveling Software**
- **Software Publishing Corp.**

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

By: Harvey Bruneau

OUTSTANDING! On September 28th, IBM had their OS/2 exhibition at the Tampa Convention Center. Brad Brown of IBM made an offer to our group that I could not refuse. Free space for us to promote our group during the show. I must say IBM provided with us with 1st class treatment. My thanks to Brad and IBM for their hospitality and generosity. Of course there was a couple of key issues that needed attention. No one to staff the table, no literature to hand out and no sign or banner. Fortunately, and once again, the officers of our group stood up to the challenge. A major thank you to Marylee, our editor, who created a sign, advertising rate brochures, new user group brochures, a Harvard Graphics presentation and attended the table the entire day. My thanks also go to Jim Clark (Secretary), Tom Cone (VP) for donating their time to manning the table during the course of the day. Without the commitment from these volunteers we wouldn't have been able to promote our group at this event. A sincere thank you to each of them. I wish I could give each one a Pentium PC for their unselfish contribution.

IT MAKES ME PROUD! Another round of applause should go the authors of this months newsletter articles. Take a look at the names above the articles in this newsletter. Yes that's right, they are our own members, except for the PC World 11/93 articles on page 13. In fact we had so many articles written for this months newsletter that we could not put them all in. They will be placed in following newsletters. It's great not to be dependent entirely on outside authors. Any member that would like to write articles for the newsletter please contact Marylee at 985-3338. These articles can be from your own personal experience with hardware\software\books or from a product that we have available for review. See page five for a list of current review items. Remember if you check out an item from the list and you write a review on time, the product is yours FREE. You must contact Marylee, meet the minimum product requirement and sign a form to get the item for review.

HELLO CAN YOU HELP ME PLEASE! Read the PC trade journals lately? "*toll-free technical assistance is for the most part being replaced with calls charged on a toll, per-minute, per-incident, or per-year basis*" PCWEEK September 27, 1993 issue. Microsoft, Borland and Lotus are but three vendors that have decided to implement new "fee" support programs. Look for more companies to follow as the price of software drops. Of course vendors will still provide you access to their Compuserve forums, bulettin board and fax-back services as before, but a request for a support technician, that's another matter. Time to setup Quicken with another expense item. The cost of developing and supporting software can no longer be covered by the sales of the product. We all like a low price of $50 to $99 for software. Vendors however can't make money at those prices. That is why they are implementing these new policies. While I understand the WHY, as a private end-user I can't afford to pay for support calls on a regular basis. Can you? I don't want to pay for a vendor's mistake. Sure there are times when I am stumped by a product. However, if vendors had better and more real world tutorials, better online help, better manuals and clean debugged products maybe we would not need to call for support as much. If vendors put more effort into their products and lengthen the product development cycle it surely could reduce the need for support. I realize this is not what they teach in marketing 101 but vendors must be prepared to pay the price if they ship a product with deficiencies. Initial release of products like MS DOS 6.0, Corel 3.0, Corel 4.0 and Packrat 5.0 are examples of products that were not ready for prime time but shipped anyway. Interim releases to all these products are either being created or have shipped to correct ideocencracies. But hey the marketing people are happy. The product shipped on time or beat the competitions product to the street, but at what cost to product and vendor loyalty by the end user. Sure its more difficult to test a product today than yesteryear but that should not be an excuse and we should not be asked to pay for finding the undocumented features of a product. Even WordPerfect has had some problems but they provide unusually good free phone support and free interim upgrades. Presently, they are going to stick with that kind of support policy. I CAN DEAL WITH THAT.

Wow, I must of struck a nerve during the writing of the above paragraph. Lets see why did I begin this issue? Oh yes, to announce that we have started our own **Members Help-Line.** This issue was brought up at the last board meeting and several officers volunteered to help with products and areas they were farmiliar with. No volunteer claims to be an expert! Any member wishing to share their PC knowledge, even products already being supported, with other members should contact the editor in order that we can post it in the newsletter and the BBS. This is a good way of providing basic support to each other. Of course we also have messaging and FIDO Net on the BBS where you can ask questions related to specific items.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! We will be moving in February to a larger facility located on the HCC Ybor campus. The facility will seat well over 200 members and guest. However, we need to provide our own video and computer equipment. We presently have neither and not enough money to purchase either. Several money making ventures have been discussed during our board meetings including a garage sale, raising membership fees and the sale of coupon books. At this time we have no plans to raise the membership dues. However, we will be bringing coupons books for sale at the next meeting for you to purchase. See the last page for information about these coupon books. Also, we would like to hear some suggestions you may have on how we can raise the money or get the equipment needed. If you know where we can borrow, rent or inherit a good color VGA projection panel, 486 computer or how we can raise the money please contact any of the officers.

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Transparent means it's there
but you can't see it.
Virtual means you can see it
but it's not there.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Joe & Theresa Bryant
Jeffrey Kalat
Mario Kephalas
John Lavana
John Martina

We are very happy to have you as members!

Review Software Available:

Members wishing to review any of the following software to write a review article for the newsletter please contact Marylee or Harvey at 985-3338 or 988-0232.

Freelance Graphics (Presentation Graphics for Windows by Lotus Corp.
Fastlynx (File transfer system)
Laplink V (File transfer system)
KUI(Keyboard user interface for Windows)
GoldMine (Advanced Contact Management Software)
Fidelity In-Line Xpress (Direct line to Wall Street)
ECCO (Professional Information Management System)
QuickBooks (DOS -Small Business Bookkeeping)
AddImpact (Windows -add voice, animated graphics & sound)
Multimedia Make Your Point (Creates Multimedia Presentations for Windows)
EZ Shopper Plus (Recipe Mgr. Menu Planning)
Watchman (Windows easy-to-use, advanced file protection app.)
COMMWORKS for Windows (includes LapLink V + tools to: send & receive FAX, access online services, share remote files & printers & notify of incoming files.)
Home (Home design made easy by Autodeck)
Landscape (Landscape design by Autodeck)
Deck (Deck design by Autodeck)
Innisbrook Course (Add on to Links, Links 386 Pro or Microsoft Golf)

The following members are writing review articles:

Name:	Software	Date received:
Edith Ness	Express Publisher for Windows	6/11/93
Matt Nicholson	Links 386PRO	7/21/93
Renate Marsh	Int'l Keyboard Kit	9/8/93
Renate Marsh	Adobe Typeset	9/8/93
Steve Hess	Lotus Organizer	9/8/93

BRING A FRIEND!

Next meeting bring a friend. Let them see first-hand what you already know. That the Tampa PC Users Group is the best computer resource they'll ever find for 5¢ a day.

Software Review:
Print Cache Version 3.1

Review By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

What It Is: As you might expect from its name, Print Cache, by Laser Tools, is a print spooler for both DOS and Windows. But. it is also a good deal more than a print spooler. Laser Tools advertises that it speeds up the actual printing, that it replaces Print Manager in Windows, and provides drag and drop printing in Windows. And it does all that, and then some.

Other Features: Its features include:

* Works with ANY printer and any IBM-compatible computer.
* Provides real time printing status data on screen, including progress expressed as kilo-bytes of the print job remaining.
* Provides voice error messages in Windows 3.I, a selectable feature which can be turned off as well.
* Gives control of the printer during a print job in Windows, and selectably offers the same control in DOS at the cost of about 12K additional RAM. This allows you to suspend, resume or cancel the printing job, eject a page, or turn HP LaserJet optimization on/off.
* Supports the advanced features of the HP LaserJet 4.
* Provides an optimization feature to speed up graphics printing on HP Laserjet printers, and solves the Error 20 problem caused by graphics that are too large to fit in the printers memory.
* Supports multiple printer ports (LPT 1 & 2, and your COM ports) and multiple printing jobs on each, and more than one printer can be connected to each port. But, each port used requires a loading of Print Cache. In other words, if you wish to run printers from LPT 1 & 2, Print cache must be loaded into memory twice, one for each port.
* Supports loading high - as many copies as you wish to load and have memory for, each of which can be loaded into memory automatically by the AUTOEXEC.BAT, or at the DOS prompt; it can be loaded high only at boot, of course.
* A range of selectable buffer options, both size and location. EMS, XMS, RAM disk, conventional memory, or your hard drive may be chosen. RAM is the fastest, of course, but few of us have memory we would want to allocate as a buffer. The hard drive is the best option for most; assuming a reasonably fast hard drive, the cost in performance is fairly small.
* Provides its own interrupt drivers, and alternate drivers in the event that standard interrupts for your printer ports are not available.

What Print Cache Won't Do: Print Cache will do a lot of things for you, some of which I relate below, but there are a number of things it can't do. First, Print Cache will speed up the printing job by accepting the printing instructions of your software as fast as that software can output the data, and it will

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feed the printing instructions to the printer as fast as it can take instructions. And Print Cache reportedly y employs very efficient routines which also helps. But, Print Cache cannot make your application faster, nor can it make the mechanical operation of your printer or its manipulation of data any faster. Those things are fixed -- if your application is slow and/or if your printer is slow, they will continue to be slow even with Print Cache, just not quite as slow overall with Print cache in between.

What Print Cache Does For Me: I have a 386DX/40 w/128K external cache, 8 MB RAM, Hercules monographics adapter with mono monitor, and 2 IDE hard drives. I use a Panasonic KX-P 1124 dot matrix printer and a Okidata OL 400 LED printer. I ran several comparisons, with emphasis on my slower printing desk top publishing programs. In these tests I noted some, but relatively a small improvement in the overall speed of printing using Print Cache in DOS. But that is not as important to me as how soon the computer is available for other things. Here, Print Cache did very well.



Using Express Publisher (notoriously slow in outputting printing) in DOS, Print Ccache turned the computer back to me for other use as soon as Express Publisher finished outputting the print job -- fully 70% sooner than normal (normal being normal for my printer). Dot matrix printers are usually the slowest printers at letter quality speeds, and Print Cache pays off biggest with these printers. But the time savings with laser printers is also significant -- and worth while. And the payoff in time savings is also bigger in DOS than in Windows; without Print Cache or other spooler DOS ties up the computer until the print job is nearly complete, while Windows' Print Manager is a spooler of sorts that accepts the print job and then turns a portion of the computer back to you. With simpler printing jobs from a word processor, Print cache releases the computer back to you in just a few seconds, while it takes over and handles the printing job in the background.

Print Cache is also a very useful tool in Windows. Again using Express Publisher (for Windows this time), printing a complex one page documents without Print Manager or Print Cache is essentially the same as in DOS -- the computer is tied up until the last of the printing instructions have been sent to the printer's buffer. The time until releasing the computer back to me was about the same when using Print Manager or Print Cache. I noted two significant differences, however: When Print cache released the computer, the computer was as responsive to my commands as if nothing else was happening, while Print Manager tied up so much of the computer time that all other operations are slowed substantially. And, Print Cache finished the printing job 25% sooner than Print Manager. In contrast to the instructions in the Print Cache manual to turn Print Manager off, I found using Print Manager and Print Cache together to be even better -- the computer was released to me in about 35% less time, and the print job was finished in 5-10% less time than using Print Cache alone.

I have found the capability to operate more than one printer at a time useful as well. On one occasion, I began a printing job from a Windows program, then logged onto Prodigy and downloaded a printing task to another printer, and then went to another area of Prodigy and did my thing while both printers executed their assigned printing job -- and I still saw no degradation in the computer nor the printing operations.

My experience with Print Cache has not been without problems; not serious problems, but problems nonetheless. Laser Tools Tech Support has been good helping solve them. One problem is a hardware jumper problem I have to correct. The other problem centers around Print Cache advanced settings to reduce the RAM it uses from almost 24K to 9K, which is in the ball park of advertised.

Installation: Installation of Print Cache is easy and quick, taking me only a few moments. And there is little to do beyond selecting the storage directory for program files (which must be in the path statement) and the Print Cache settings you desire. Print cache will install itself in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file for loading, but you will likely have to relocate the statement so that it is the last TSR loaded; this is a must to able to unload Print cache without modifying the AUTOEXEC.BAT file and rebooting. More than one copy of Print Cache can be loaded automatically via the AUTOEXEC.BAT file if you use plan to use more than one printer port. Besides being automatic, the advantage of loading in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file is that all copies loaded can be loaded high.

Documentation: The owners manual is comprehensive and clear regarding loading and use of Print Cache, though in some minor instances it is not consistent (i.e., memory used by Print Cache). The program includes pretty good on-line help as well. Laser Tools also provides toll-free technical support.

Requirements for Print Cache are minimal: Any IBM-compatible PC, DOS 2.1 or above, 7-20 MB of DOS memory (according to the manual, but see Two Unresolved Problems above), and 640K of free disk space (program files occupy 750K in my installation). Though not specified as a requiement, it seem to me that satisfactory performance would demand additional hard disk space for use as a buffer -- somewhere between 32K and infinity; the manual recommends at least 32K for less than 10 pages of plain DOS text, to at least

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1 MB for Windows or DTP printing, to 1-2 MB for graphics, and up to 4 MB for large/complicated print jobs. I chose 4 MB because I have ample disk space and I have some rather large DTP printing jobs.

Cost: I do not know the list price of Print Cache, and the street price varies considerably. I have seen street prices ranging from $29.99 to over $45. So shop a bit for the best price.

My View: There may be other programs that do as good a job as Print Cache, but I am not aware of them. I do know, however, that I like Print Cache and what it does for me, and I think it worth the $30 street price. For additional information, contact:

Laser Tools, 1250 45th Street, Suite 100, Emeryville, CA 94608, 1-800-767-8004

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Software Review:

Quattro Pro For Windows

By: Donald W. Patzsch, TAMPA PC Users Group

Startup: Installing the program is simplicity in itself, just put the first disk into the A: drive and let the program do its thing. Once you bring up the program it is very easy to use. I imported some spreadsheets and edited them before I read any of the manuals. Normally, I read the manuals of any new program three times. The first to get an idea of what it contains and where. The second time through, I get the idea of what they are talking about, and I make notes of where everything is. By the third reading, I am familiar with what they are trying to tell you.

Features: Borland is using the ObjectOriented approach. Once you have made up a program module, there is no need to always go back and start over, you can just use the modules in various ways. Most other companies are beginning to recognize the importance of this process, and they are using it in their programs just as Borland does.

When Quattro Pro for Windows comes up, you see what looks like a standard spreadsheet grid. However, on closer inspection you notice a series of tabs along the bottom. These are a real advantage. You can click on a tab and bring out another spreadsheet, then tile the windows and see how you want to exchange data between them. There is a speed bar that allows fast moves between sheets. You can easily link or consolidate the sheets, or simply view them.

If you want the name of each spreadsheet at the bottom tabs, it is easy to set this up. Just click the right button on the A tab and write in the name of that spreadsheet. You can do this with all of the tabs, so you can easily switch between your spreadsheets.

Borland deserves kudos for its ability to support the file formats of all its competitors.

Borland includes a library function, which allows you to make worksheet macros available to all the files in memory. Also at the back of the notebook, on a special graphs page, QPW stores icons for all the graphs you create, also any custom dialog boxes and/or slideshows.

Borland includes a neat function. Click your right mouse button on any option or text or data within the program and you get some fantastic options.

Quattro Pro provides a data access feature called Database Desktop. DD is really a front end to the Paradox engine, which ships with Quattro Pro. So all the data access, client server, and data integrity features of Paradox come with it.

Slide Shows: One of the extra's this program contains is the slide show. By clicking on the Speedtab, you go to the last page which is the GRAPHS page. From this point you can set up a slide show with text, pictures, graphs, or whatever. This process is very easy and straightforward. I made up three simple presentations in a few minutes, and tried the click of the left mouse button to move forward and the right button to return to the last slide. The slide shows can have special effects like wipes to simulate turning a page, or dissolves (fade in / fade out).

Conclusion: Years ago, I bought Quattro Pro for DOS. I have used it regularly since, but at that time, I could not have imagined the ease of use, and the many features that this program, QPW has. QPW works very well under OS/2 version 2.1, and that is where I will be using it from now on.

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Software Review:

Adobe Type Set - Value Pack

Review by: Alford Poole, TAMPA PC Users Group

When you switch to different software it takes time to discover all the features of the new package. I'm thankful for this opportunity to work with, and thus learn more about, the Adobe Type Manager (ATM), which came with WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, and hope that this review might help others too.

What are scalable fonts all about? Instead of each letter that you type being the same uniform size throughout your document you can vary the size of the type of a whole paragraph, a word or even each letter of a word. You can start as small as 6 points and go as large as 72 points, depending on the font and application.

Font sizes from 6 points to

72 points

Some true type font packages are, well, plain compared to the Adobe Type Set package. Others may list more fonts but some may be the same font with different attributes such as bold, italic or bold italic. I like the variety of the Adobe Value Pack - each font is unique. You get 17 decorative headlines, 5 texts, 5 scripts and 3 ornaments & symbols and the front cover of the box opens to reveal examples of the different type faces.

A Quick Installation Card included with the package gives instructions for installing the whole package or just the fonts.

OS/2 1.3 or greater also comes with ATM. If you don't already have ATM installed then install it through Windows using either the Files - Run - a:\install or the Windows File Manager to locate the INSTALL.EXE program on the floppy. You must exit to DOS (but not by using the DOS Prompt button) and restart Windows to use the ATM program. Also, when new fonts are added, Windows must be restarted to use the new fonts. ATM will take advantage of pre-built (soft) fonts or resident fonts (cartridge fonts or fonts built into the printer) if they are available if you select the "Use Pre-built or Resident Bitmap

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Fonts" checkbox in the ATM Control Panel. This will reduce the amount of printer memory used and may improve performance.

My first problem came in trying to get the fonts to show up in WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows. They were accessible in Windows Write but would not show up in the fonts menu of WordPerfect. Documentation for the ATM said to reselect the printer. What it should say is "select Windows Printer Driver instead of the WordPerfect Printer Driver in the Select Printer menu if the Adobe fonts don't show up." Further digging in the WP Reference tome mentioned that WP Printer Drivers would work with ATM if you have MoreFonts or Prime Type. Isn't that nice?

The Readme file lists several programs that will not work with ATM such as CorelDraw 2.0 and earlier and Harvard Draw 1.0. Others are listed as having limitations, mainly using the type as graphics. There is no mention that ATM supports font embedding.

ATM loads all the fonts you have installed when you start Windows, so if you want to get to Windows faster, unload some less used fonts.

For the print test I used 48 Point type so irregularity or "jaggyness" would be more noticeable. AG Old Style and Blackoak, from Adobe, and Arial Italic and MurryHill fonts that came with WordPerfect, were used with a NEC P2200 24 pin dot matrix printer. Results were interesting. With ATM all printed fonts looked nice. Without ATM AG Old Style turned to regular Arial and Blackoak turned to a less bold type. MurryHill literally turned into Greek using Greek symbols for most of the letters. Italic Arial and Courier remained unchanged. "Jaggyness" of the letters was not much different with or without ATM. Hard copy looked much better than what you see displayed on the screen. Turning ATM on and off takes some time as the printer info is updated each time. Without ATM the Adobe fonts disappear from the font menu.

How do you get the nifty fonts into your document? Unless you want your text to look like a roller coaster ride, changing the type is quite easy. Using the Character button in Windows Write, you can change fonts and size of the letters. Using Reduce Font and Enlarge Font the type can be changed to the next size down or up quickly. In WordPerfect, using the ruler from the View selection, makes changing fonts and sizes fairly quick also.

If you do any kind of newsletter, Christmas letter, or write letters to your member of Congress, these fonts could put more zip in your message. Unleash that creative genius - get scalable!

Contents:
* Adobe Type Manager software v 2.02
* 30 typefaces
* Quick Install card and User Guide booklet
* Discount coupon and catalog for more type

Requirements:
* Windows 3.x or OS/2 1.3 or greater
* 286,386 or 486
* 1 MB RAM (2 recommended) for Windows
* 4 MB RAM (6 recommended) for OS/2
* Hard disk and one HD floppy drive (uses about 1 MB of disk space)

Printers supported:
* PostScript and HP LaserJet Printers
* Dot matrix and inkjet printers
* All other output devices supported by Windows and OS/2

Compatibility:
* Nearly all Windows 3.x and OS/2 1.3 or greater applications
* DOS applications: MS Word 5.0 or greater, Ventura Publisher 2.0

or greater, WordPerfect 5.0 or greater(DOS installation utilities available through enclosed fulfilment card)

Adobe Type Set Value Pack is available at Egghead Software for $39 (before CUE). You can contact Adobe Systems Inc. at 1585 Charleston Road, P. O. Box 7900, Mountain View, CA 94039-7900 1-800-83-FONTS (833-6687)

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Software Review:
askSam for DOS

By: Tom Cone, VP & Treas., Tampa PC Users Group

Overview: This is a review of the latest DOS version of ***askSam*** (vers. 5.11). ***askSam*** is a freeform database that is designed to let you organize large amounts of data and text. It handles both structured data and unstructured "freeform" text. In this context, "structured data" means data organized in records that contain fixed fields, such as is commonly found in dBase, Paradox, Alpha4, PC-File, or Q&A.)

askSam does not use field types, such as numeric, floating-point, and text. Instead, ***askSam*** permits any type of data in any field. ***askSam*** automatically senses the data type and handles the data appropriately. With ***askSam***, there are no mandatory fields. You can create records and documents containing any kind of information, and then retrieve them using special formatting commands to create meaningful structures as desired.

Its designers seem to intend that ***askSam*** be "easy to use", and yet offer the unique capability of handling structured and unstructured information within the same data file. This permits ***askSam*** to be used as an information manager so that you could use it in the office to record unstructured notes, phone numbers, addresses, and any other thoughts or "brainstorms" that may come to mind randomly throughout the course of the day. ***askSam*** permits this information to be easily retrieved, sorted and printed later on. You need not be aware of the traditional complexities in database programming. ***askSam*** may also be used on larger projects to record research notes, journal abstracts, magazine articles, transcriptions of meetings, random notes from telephone conversations and any other stray thoughts or creative ideas. These could all be maintained in a single "project" data file and then sorted and retrieved in manageable fashion later on.

I see applications in my law firm where ***askSam*** could be used to collect documents or deposition transcripts in a single case. I could then search through them quickly and

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easily to spot inconsistencies, or to arrange narrative descriptions chronologically. Sometimes it would be useful to simply and easily look at what different witnesses would have to say about the same topic. These would be difficult tasks with conventional word processors or database programs. However, since ***askSam*** can deal with unstructured text it should be able to do it with little difficulty. Similar applications might make sense for journalists, students, and investigators.

Requirements: ***askSam*** will run on an IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/2 or compatible with at least 384k of system memory. It will work with either diskette or hard disk systems and with monochrome, CGA, EGA or VGA monitors. ***askSam*** can be supplied on either 5 1/4 or 3.5 inch diskettes. It requires PC-DOS or MS/DOS 2.0 or higher.

These requirements make ***askSam*** a series contender for laptop or portable computer systems. Do I see a laptop in my future? ... in the courtroom? Could be!

Installation: I tested ***askSam*** on a Gateway/2000 desktop system (386SX running at 20 mhz under MS-DOS 5.0) and had no difficulty installing the software on my hard disk. The install routine permits the user to designate alternate drive and directory destinations, but will install the system in an ***askSam*** subdirectory on the "C" drive by default. The installation routines do not automatically reconfigure your config.sys or autoexec.bat files.

Documentation and Support: The program arrives with a "getting started" tutorial that walks you through many of the primary, commonly used, functions. It also includes two larger books. The first is a "User's Guide" describing key ***askSam*** concepts and functions. It is intended to be used as a general reference and is designed to be read by topic. For example, Chapter 4 deals with data entry, Chapter 5 importing and exporting data, and Chapter 6, retrieving data. Each chapter in the User's Guide contains a section of "troubleshooting tips" that illustrate solutions to frequently asked questions about the product.

The second book is a comprehensive reference guide, arranging all ***askSam*** commands, functions, operators and other features in alphabetic order for convenient reference.

Equally as important, the program incorporates a very fast and comprehensive "context-sensitive" help system that is always available by simply pressing function key "F1". I found this feature of the package particularly useful.

Technical support is available directly from the publisher for the cost of a long distance call to Perry, Florida. In addition, an electronic bulletin board service is available in Perry, providing 24 hour access to the tech support department.

Does *askSam* Achieve Its Stated Purpose? For the most part ***askSam*** does an excellent job of accomplishing its goal.

Most of my personal experience with database management programs are with programs like PC-File, Alpha4, dBaseIII+, and so forth. Except for those notorious "memo" fields, these programs use a fixed length format for each record in a datafile. The record is the basic building block for storing data. Within each fixed length record you create "subsets" called "fields". These programs require the user to predict the type and length of the data intended to be stored in each field within each record. This takes considerable planning and foresight, often requiring the "user" to adapt to the program, instead of the other way around. If you use fields that are too long for most of your data, you wind up wasting space on your hard disk. On the other hand, if your data is too long to fit within the field width you have allocated, the excess portion is simply lost when it is truncated to fit within its predesigned field.

In sharp contrast, I found the data input and data import features of ***askSam*** to be extremely easy to use. It was a pleasure not to have to worry about field structures!

For ***askSam***, records are also a basic building block within a data file. However, ***askSam*** does not require you to pre-design a fixed structure within each record. Records can hold any type of data, in any order, so long as the overall length of a record doesn't exceed 20 lines (80 characters wide) in length.

askSam stores your data using a proprietary file format. You retrieve the data by typing "queries". The ***askSam*** search engine then uses your query to retrieve data corresponding to your search request and displays it on screen. This retrieval system works extraordinarily fast. I was impressed with overall speed of operation throughout.

Information retrieved from an ***askSam*** file can be sent to the printer instead of the screen, and can be stored on disk in a separate file, if you wish.

The retrieval commands are especially flexible and powerful. You can retrieve information based on a combination of a word or a symbol appearing in a record or document. You can use wildcards to locate parts of a word or symbol. The program supports boolean logic and you can locate data using proximity searches if you wish.

I found it is not necessary to spend a lot of time framing precise queries. Instead, the program operates so quickly it is very easy to start with a general query and then refine it until the desired information is retrieved, alone.

Major Features: The program is completely menu driven. Selections are made by moving the highlight bar (using the arrow keys) or by pressing the key that corresponds to the first letter of the menu item, itself. I found this method of "navigating" to be very fast and easy to use. However, the program presents so many options that initially I was a bit bewildered by all the choices. After using the program for awhile I realized that the vast majority of these "optional settings" would be useful infrequently. The default settings did a good job for me during my testing.

The search and retrieval system is based on the user typing in a query using wildcards and boolean operators.

Retrieval Examples:

Query: sail*

Retrieves all records that contain words beginning with the letters "sail", i.e. sails, sailing, and sailboat.(Continued on next page.)

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Query: ad {AND} Boston {OR} Miami

Retrieves all records that contain "ad" and "Boston"... or that contain the word "Miami". (***askSam*** processes queries from left to right...)

Query: FL {NOT} Tampa

Retrieves all records that contain the word "FL" except for those that also contain the word "Tampa".

Query: Robinson {SHOW :S Witmer}

Retrieves all records in which "Robinson" and "Witmer" are in the same sentence in the same record.

Query: blue {NOT} green

Retrieves all records that contain "blue", unless a record also includes the word "green".

I found the retrieval system very easy to operate, and very fast.

askSam also includes a comprehensive set of "formatting commands" that enable you to control the format of the records retrieved by your query. These were more complicated and presented a greater difficulty for me. I especially had trouble formatting output for the printer.

askSam requires that query and formatting commands be combined together. The displayed results are then automatically formatted to match the formatting commands incorporated within the search request.

askSam limits the query and format command line to a string of 80 characters. If a longer search or format command is required, ***askSam*** supports "batching" the commands collectively. These batch commands are stored in a "program record" that can be retrieved and executed independently later on. This process is similar to building a DOS batch file or utilizing the macro programming language in WordPerfect or Lotus 1-2-3. If you are comfortable with this level of programming, you should have little difficulty in adapting to the ***askSam*** approach.

Programming Examples:

```
:client
{SORT :L NAME[}
NAME[ {COLUMN 40} PH#[
```

Results in a two column table displayed on screen. The contents of the "NAME[" field will appear in the first column, sorted on the "last" word in the field. The contents of the "PH#[" field appear, beginning at column 40.

Note: NAME[and PH#[are examples of "explicit" fields, supported by ***askSam***. These are actually stored in the individual records along with the data, and are useful in providing "structure" to unstructured text, if you need to. A typical record might be:

```
DATE[          ]
NAME[                    ]
ADD1[                    ]
ADD2[                    ]
CITY[                    ]  STATE[      ]
ZIP[           ]
PH#[                   ]
```

These explicit field names can be added to a record at any time, and do not have to be "declared" in advance.

```
:total1
{SORT :L AGENT[}
{BREAK :20 AGENT[ JUSTIFY 30 TOTAL :C $}
```

Results in a list of agents sorted alphabetically by last name. Will contain subtotals for each agent, based on the "implied" field "$" appearing in each record. The subtotals will be right justified in column 30, and the :C modifier means that the results will include commas where appropriate. A grand total will appear at the bottom of the report.

Note: an implied field is one word. The first character or characters of a word appearing in a record can be treated as the "name" of a field. The last part of the same word is treated as the "value" of the field. i.e. "$350.75" can be broken down into two components. The "$" can be the field's "name", and "350.75" the field's "value". This is a very powerful and flexible capability.

In these examples, ":client" and ":total1" are each the names of separate programs. These would be stored as separate records inside the data file itself and "run" from ***askSam***'s main menu, or via "Hypertext" mode.

askSam also incorporates a "Hypertext" capability. In "Hypertext mode" you can move the cursor over a word that may have been retrieved in an initial search but maybe isn't part of your original query. Then, when you press the ENTER key ***askSam*** will find every other occurrence of that word either in the active file, or at your option, in all files in the ***askSam*** directory. In addition, "Hypertext mode" permits the creation of "point and shoot" menus that you might design for easy navigation or to produce regularly recurring reports. What I found to be unique is that this "Hypertext" capability does not require specification of explicit "Hypertext" links between the data in your file. ***askSam*** automatically creates intrinsic links between all text in the file.

Limitations: ***askSam*** can import and export only ASCII or ***askSam*** files. If you need to import data from another file format, you might contact the publisher. It offers an "insert" utility that would convert dBase, comma delimited, and fixed file formats into forms suitable for importing into ***askSam***.

The DOS version of ***askSam*** does not directly support the use of a mouse. This was not as large problem as I anticipated since the menu driven system works very quickly

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and easily. If you feel you need to use the mouse, a separate utility program must be obtained from MicroSoft Corporation and then executed prior to loading ***askSam***.

The program does not support relational data base structures. It basically functions utilizing a flat file paradigm; however, retrieval commands are available which permit you to query other ***askSam*** files from within the current file, thereby imitating to a certain degree the classic relational capabilities of products like dBase and Paradox. The absence of a true relational capability means that there is a tendency to repeat data within multiple records of an individual file. This repetitious storage of the same data would be regarded by some as inefficient use of hard disk storage space. My experience thus far indicates that this repetition in the data does not degrade performance to an appreciable degree. Furthermore, ***askSam*** files seem to be somewhat smaller than their ASCII equivalents already.

The DOS version can be run as a non-Windows program within a window provided you are running Windows in 386 enhanced mode. In this configuration, your computer must be an 80386-based system with at least 2 megabytes of RAM. If you are running Windows in real or standard mode, you can only run ***askSam*** in a full screen display. You are not able to run it in a window. Systems that are not based on an Intel 80386 can only run Windows 3.0 and 3.1 in real or standard modes.

askSam systems published its first Windows version of the product in May of 1993. ***askSam*** for Windows 1.0 carries a suggested retail price of $395. Since I am not running Windows, I have not had an opportunity to test the Windows version of ***askSam***. The publisher indicates that the Windows version will run on Windows 3.1 and requires 2 megabytes of disk space and 4 megabytes of RAM.

Options: The publisher offers a developer edition as well as a network edition of the program. The version I evaluated was the single user version.

Summary: I found ***askSam*** to be very fast, and easy to use, especially for data input and import functions. The retrieval system is extraordinarily fast, flexible and powerful. In contrast, I had some difficulty "catching on" to the formatting commands controlling the appearance of my printed output. I am inclined to believe that this may be more a matter of a "sore nose" bumping in to the "learning curve" than anything else.

If you have need to deal with "structured" data and freeform text, you should check ***askSam*** out, especially if you are willing to invest the time required to learn the retrieval and formatting commands.

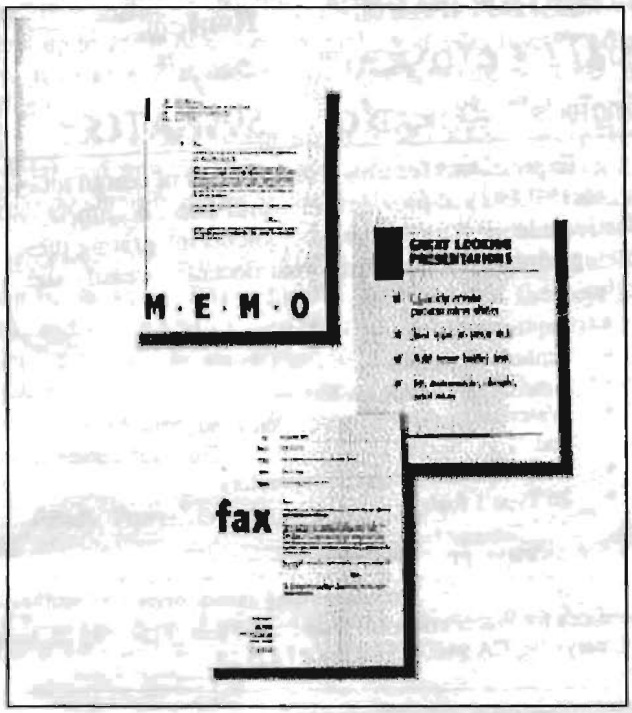
askSam is published by: Seaside Software, Inc., Post Office Box 1428, Perry, Florida 32347 Sales: 1-800-800-1997
Tech Support: 904-584-6590, BBS: 904-584-5413
The suggested retail price is $395 for the single user version.

♦♦♦♦♦

Product Review: Express Docs for WordPerfect® 6.0

By: Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

ExpressDocs is an automated document design and production tool for WordPerfect novices and experts alike that makes the time-consuming production of daily business documents much easier, faster and more professional. You get 44 prefabricated document designs including:



- Memos and Faxes
- Letters and Reports
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- Invitations and Awards
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and more, that are stored in ready-to-use templates.

During installation ExpressDocs asks you for your personal information such as name, address, phone number, company name, etc. Then to activate ExpressDocs, just pick "New " in the WordPerfect File Menu and select the pre-designed document and fill in the blanks as you're prompted. ExpressDocs automatically produces a complete document with all your particulars included automatically. All you have to do is add the words!

OR, ExpressDocs is also a powerful office automation aid that lets you turn any WordPerfect file into a design template. You can automate all your office document production

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based on templates you create yourself. ExpressDocs can be used in a corporate or large office environment with ExpressDocs' full support for all major networks.



ExpressDocs features a complete set of design tools and shortcuts that lets you provide and WordPerfect document with a professional look. You'll have no problems integrating these following advanced features into your documents easily and quickly:

- Pop-up prompts
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- A selection of page borders
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TRY IT - YOU'LL LIKE IT..... LA

ExpressDocs for WordPerfect 6.0 from LaserTools, 1250 45th St, Suite 100, Emeryville, CA 94608, List Price $39.95

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Obstacles are the things you see when you take your eyes off the goals!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Marylee Bruneau	988-9232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows

NEW PRODUCTS -

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NEC and IBM Roll Out Budget 486 Desktops

The same money that bought a no-name 486 clone last year now buys a feature-rich system from top-tier vendors such as NEC and IBM. NEC has added local bus video, power management, and Pentium OverDrive sockets to its Ready and PowerMate PCs, with prices starting at around $1000. IBM has added low-priced models—albeit with graphics and upgrade compromises—to its ValuePoint line, with prices starting at $1090.

NEC Adds Features

While NEC's Ready line targets small business and home-office users, its pricier PowerMate family is geared toward corporate buyers. The two lines use identical components and offer one year of on-site service, but the PowerMates come with a two-year parts and service warranty. To make Ready systems easy to get started, NEC includes a setup video and a preloaded software suite with PFS:WindowWorks 2.0, Delrina WinFax Lite, and one-month trial memberships to CompuServe and America Online.

NEC's revamped Ready and PowerMate systems offer performance enhancements also found in the company's high-end Image line, including local bus video and NEC's OptiBus I/O technology, which speeds up hard drive access time. An improved graphics subsystem supports 256 colors at 1024 by 768 resolution, or 16 million colors at 640 by 480 resolution.

Speed demons will appreciate the 238-pin ZIF socket for Intel's Pentium OverDrive chip, scheduled for release next year. Each system comes with 4MB of RAM (expandable to 36MB), a socket for an optional 256K secondary cache, three open ISA slots, and one open drive bay, accessible from the unit's front. NEC's new systems meet EPA Energy Star Level 1 guidelines, which means PC and monitor power down to under 30 watts each after a user-defined time period.

With a 25-MHz 486SX, 4MB RAM, and a 170MB hard drive, the Ready 425es costs $999. (Add $355 for a 14-inch SVGA monitor with .28mm dot pitch.) The Ready 433es and 466es include an internal 2400/ 9600 data/fax-modem and Ready Remote—support software that allows NEC technicians to dial into your PC to solve problems. With a 210MB hard drive but no monitor, the Ready 433es (486SX-33) costs $1299; the Ready 466es (486DX2-66) with a 250MB hard drive is $1899.

The $1049 PowerMate 425es (486SX-25) and $1425 PowerMate 433es (486DX-33) come with a 170MB hard drive. The PowerMate 466es (486DX2-66) with a 170MB hard drive costs $1845. The monitor is extra.

IBM's New ValuePoints

While NEC brings high performance features to its entry level lines, IBM takes a different approach: adding new machines to the low end of its ValuePoint line. These PCs—the ValuePoint Si series—cut $70 to $120 off standard ValuePoint series prices by reducing graphics power and upgradability.

While the ValuePoint Si systems feature VESA local bus on the motherboard, they don't include an available VL-bus slot. The Si's use inferior graphics accelerators and come with 512K DRAM, upgradable to only 1MB (rather than the 2MB of earlier ValuePoints). 1MB limits you to a maximum of 256 colors at 1024 by 768 resolution; with 2MB you get 64,000 colors.

Other compromises abound. The ValuePoint 425SX/Si does not offer an optional secondary cache or a Pentium OverDrive socket. And while the ValuePoint 433DX/Si does accept up to 256K of secondary cache and a Pentium OverDrive chip, it lacks a ZIF socket, making upgrading the CPU more difficult.

All the Si's accept up to 64MB RAM, (using 16MB SIMMs) and provide three open ISA slots and one open drive bay, as do small-footprint ValuePoints. The 425SX/Si includes a 25-MHz 486SX processor, 4MB RAM, a 120MB hard drive, and an IBM basic keyboard for $1090. The basic keyboard uses the same frame as an IBM enhanced keyboard, but the keys don't click, and felt mushy. If you do a lot of typing, the IBM basic keyboard may not be worth the $40 savings.

These prices don't include monitors, so add an extra $379 for a 14-inch SVGA monitor with .28mm dot pitch.

—Laurianne McLaughlin

NEC Ready, PowerMate; IBM ValuePoint Si

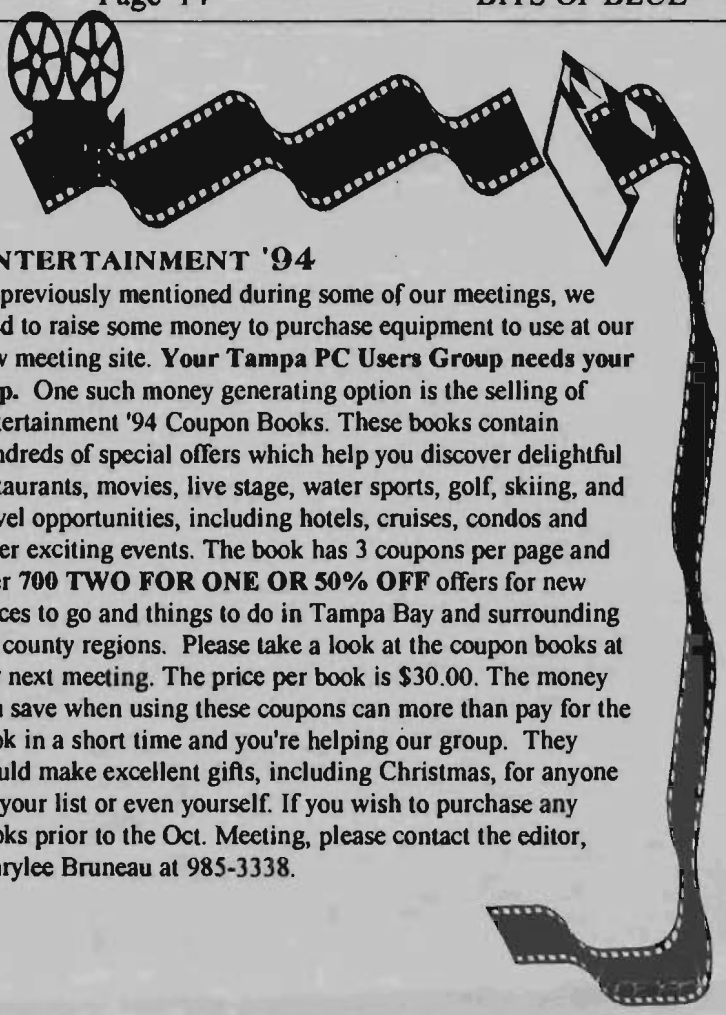
NEC adds features to its low-end PCs; IBM cuts prices and features. List prices (without monitors): approximately $1000 to $2000
NEC Technologies 800/632-4636, 508/264-8000
Reader service no. 645 IBM PC Company 800/426-2968

Rich and Retired 1.1

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Retirement: We all yearn for it, but we don't always devote the time—and money—to make our golden years relatively worry-free. Now you can quit procrastinating and start planning. Rich and Retired is a DOS and Windows retirement planning package that targets the graying Baby Boom generation. Rich and Retired helps you create a personalized retirement strategy based on your lifestyle and financial situation. You specify such variables as desired age of retirement, life expectancy, rates of inflation, and expected income sources. You can design budgets for specific financial objectives, such as paying for a child's college education. Using what-if calculations, you can test the viability of financial scenarios. Rich and Retired imports budget and asset data from Quicken and Managing Your Money. The DOS and Windows versions each sell for $59.95.

DataTech Software, 800/556-7526, 717/ 652-4344, 717/652-3222.



ENTERTAINMENT '94

As previously mentioned during some of our meetings, we need to raise some money to purchase equipment to use at our new meeting site. **Your Tampa PC Users Group needs your help.** One such money generating option is the selling of Entertainment '94 Coupon Books. These books contain hundreds of special offers which help you discover delightful restaurants, movies, live stage, water sports, golf, skiing, and travel opportunities, including hotels, cruises, condos and other exciting events. The book has 3 coupons per page and over **700 TWO FOR ONE OR 50% OFF** offers for new places to go and things to do in Tampa Bay and surrounding six county regions. Please take a look at the coupon books at our next meeting. The price per book is $30.00. The money you save when using these coupons can more than pay for the book in a short time and you're helping our group. They would make excellent gifts, including Christmas, for anyone on your list or even yourself. If you wish to purchase any books prior to the Oct. Meeting, please contact the editor, Marylee Bruneau at 985-3338.

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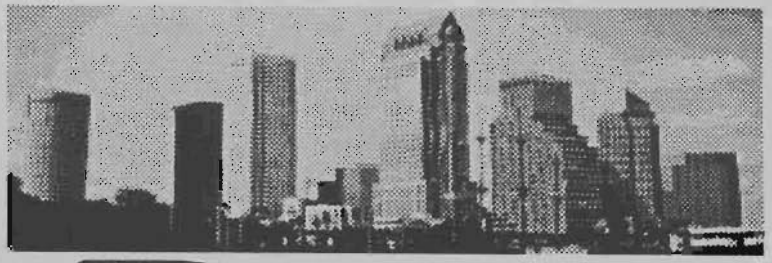
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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Bits of Blue

Vol. 6 No. 11 November, 1993

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: November 10, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

NOVEMBER 10TH AGENDA:

6:00 PM - opening remarks
6:30 PM -

OFF-line Xpress 2.1

MUSTANG SOFTWARE, INC.'s Offline reader & messager
Demo of this shareware by: Kevan Sheridan
(this will also include some basics on BBS & modems)

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
CommWorks for Windows
and Miscellaneous items

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UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

December 8 -
askSam for Windows - free form database, makes managing information as easy as using a wordprocessor. Demo by: Phil Schnyder, President of askSam Systems

January 12 -
Simply Money - personal accounting software
Demo by: Marty Steiner, Product Consultant of Computer Associates

February 9 -
Wordperfect 6.0 - for Windows
Demo by: John Johannesmeyer of WP

March 9 -
CorelDraw 4.0
Demo by: Corel Systems Corp.



Happy Thanksgiving!

*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Ami Pro for Windows from Lotus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel systems.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 10/13/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

HE DID IT AGAIN ! I'm not sure how he does it, but our Prez arranged another biggie -- and that's what we had, ANOTHER BIGGIE! It was a great meeting, with the focal point being an IBM presentation on OS/2, Ver. 2.1, and we had a good crowd to enjoy and benefit from the evening.

Having assumed the duties of manning the door, I missed the first 20 minutes of the meeting, and therefore missed a good bit of club and industry news Harvey discussed -- but I didn't miss it all.

CLUB NEWS

➪ Software Reviews: Harvey informed all that the newsletter listed vendor products (mostly software at present) our group had received for review. All members are eligible to participate. The individual benefits because he not only learns new products, but acquires ownership by completing a good review. The group benefits by becoming informed on the latest software. Harvey noted that timely submission of a review on what has now become a perishable product is essential, and those members wanting to participate in the review program must be willing to provide a comprehensive and honest review of the product not later than the agreed time. All members are invited and encouraged to participate. Those desiring to do so should contact Marylee Bruneau, Newsletter Editor.

➪ Education & Information - Principal User Group Purpose: Yes, that is the primary purpose and function of our user group -- informing and educating all of our members on all aspects of using a PC and related soft/hardware, and of new developments in the industry. We accomplish that purpose in a number of ways --through the newsletter, exchanging information at our meetings, vendor and in-house presentations, SIGs, etc. We are adding a new way to this list, and would like to add another:

• Help Line: the last newsletter began implementation of our newest effort -- a "help line". The help-line is a listing of members willing to help other members who might need help with specific software or hardware products. The persons listed need only have a working knowledge of the products and need not be "experts" on the products they are willing to support. All members are encouraged to participate -- since we all need help from time to time, the more we have to help through the help line, the better off we will all be. Those willing to join in should post a note to Marylee Bruneau on the BBS, by telephone, at a meeting, or by mail at the address on the newsletter.

• Tips & Techniques: Harvey suggested we start a section in our newsletter devoted to this subject -- a place where members could share with others in our group hints and tips they have uncovered that they have found helpful in using a particular piece of soft/hardware. We have seen these helpful bits of info in other newsletters and computer related publications. With inputs from all of our members, a tips & techniques section in our newslettershould

(Continued on next page.)

prove very helpful for all of us. Submit your inputs to Marylee Bruneau (or any group officer) via the BBS, or as above.

➪ Fund Raising Ideas: While firm decisions have not yet been made, your Board of Directors have been working toward finding a new meeting location to better accommodate our growing membership. Any relocation will likely require our group to own or rent most, if not all of the computer equipment now being graciously provided by IBM for our use at our general meetings. Yes, we are talking $$$$$ -- and quite a few, at that. We need your ideas and suggestions on ways to raise the funds we will need -- and we need to raise those funds rather quickly inasmuch as we will probably relocate early next year. PULEEEZZEE give your ideas and suggestions to any of the officers listed on page 2 of the newsletter, or message one of them on the BBS.

➪ Up Coming Presentations: Harvey has lined up some more big guns in coming months, including some of our own: Off-line Express and BBS operations in Nov, Computer Associates in Dec, Word Perfect on WP 6.0 in Feb, and CorelDraw in Mar are among them. They are all good -- and beneficial. Don't miss a single one if you can help it; I have found them all interesting and rewarding.

PRESENTATION -- IBM's OS/2, Ver. 2.1

We were fortunate to have Dennis Harison, an expert with IBM on OS2, join us and give a presentation of IBM's OS/2, Ver. 2.1. He gave an excellent presentation on their newest version of their software package, Version 2.1. It is large and very powerful package. An overview of such a program is the most that we could expect in the time available, and Dennis did that superbly well. Just listing the features would take pages, but here are a few of them:

➪ Breaks the DOS 640K barrier. DOS has been the most widely used platform for PC for many years now, and we have been confronted with that conventional memory barrier all that time. OS2 eliminates that barrier and makes all of available RAM and most of the available hard disk space available for use as RAM.

➪ Provides true 32-bit capability, and the list of software being written to take advantage of that capability is growing.

➪ Full preemptive multitasking/multi-threading, with full speed for each. Memory is allocated to programs on the basis of need, up to the limit of RAM and disk space. If one has enough RAM and disk space, OS/2 will support up to 240 DOS sessions, with each allocated a full measure of memory and operating at the same time.

➪ Will operate DOS, Windows 3.1 and OS/2 programs simultaneously in any mix, with the capability to copy information between them all, and provides DDE between Windows and OS/2 applications.

➪ Uses IBM's System Object Model and is truly object oriented.

➪ Fully supports DOS and Windows 3.1 applications and eliminates the need for DOS and Windows, though those systems may be retained if desired.

➪ Can eliminate the current problem of often having to shut down Windows and all Windows applications because of a GPF in one. In fact, IBM recommends that a Windows window be opened for each Windows application you start so that any GPF will cause a problem for only the application in which the GPF occurs.

➪ Uses the High Performance File System which is faster than the FAT system and provides other benefits, such as a maximum of 250 character file name. One problem here at present is that if one uses more than the traditional 8.3 character file name, DOS based systems will not recognize the file.

➪ Includes REXX programming language and the capability to write and modify applications.

➪ Provides full multimedia support, and provides software-only sound and video. It uses three threads to synchronize sound and video. Dennis demonstrated some of the capabilities of OS/2, overall and multimedia in particular, when he operated two multimedia windows simultaneously while running several other applications at the same time, all of which operated at full speed. And, OS/2 includes the tools needed to write Ultimedia applications.

➪ Supports and uses True Type and Adobe Type I fonts.

That scratches the surface of its many features. Well, what does it take to use all that power? Start with a 386, preferably with a 40 MHz board, though a slower board may be used. OS/2 will operate with 4 MB of RAM, but 8 MB or more is recommended. Hard disk space between 15 and 30 MB, depending on the features you load. It provides support for just about any popular monitor or printer.

And what does It cost? OS/2 lists for $149, with a $99 tag for a DOS/Widows upgrade -- and that includes just about everyone. You can find street prices several dollars less. For the kind of power you get, that is a pretty darned good buy.

One member raised a question of how to determine compatibility with OS/2. Dennis gave a number of sources and way to determine that, including the IBM forum on Compu-Serv, the IBM BBS, and contacting IBM directly. A side bit of info, recognizing that many people are now using disk compression programs: The only compression program that I have heard of so far that supports OS/2 is Stacker. There may be others, but I know of some that do not. Check it out.

To IBM, MANY THANKS for lending us Dennis and for the programs you donated -- you have been very good to use right along. And, Dennis you gave a superb overview of a super program and we are in your debt. THANKS MUCH!

AND THE WINNER IS:

Thanks to the generosity of IBM (who donated 5 copies of OS/2, Ver. 2.1), our illustrious Prez who secured some other goodies for us during his travels, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are include:

D.A. Clary	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
C. Kincaid	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
Wil Goble	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
Jim King	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
Steven Atran	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
M.N. Martinez	Fastlynks 2 software
Gary Peterson	Mentor Notes
Tom Hoffe	$81

In addition, 5 folks won T-shirts, 3 folks won computer City mouse pads, and 10 folks won a book on OS/2. Add all of that up and you come up with some 26 door prizes. WOW !

The meeting adjourned at about 9:20 PM. ◆◆◆◆

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

By: Harvey Bruneau



Yes it's that time again! Time for nomination of your 1994 officers. The positions include President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. Just as important are the volunteer positions. These are volunteers approved or appointed by the elected officers. They include Member at Large, Editor, SYSOP, Membership Director, Education Director and Librarian. Of course we need additional volunteers to help out in the areas of public relations, marketing, corporate accounting, SIG (Special Interest Group) leaders and the members help line. If you know of someone that would make a good elected officer, nominate them either through the mail, BBS or at the November or December meetings. You can even nominate yourself for any of the four positions. If you want to help out as a volunteer in any area please notify an officer.

My thanks to Dennis Harrison and Brad Brown of IBM for a great presentation. Dennis showed enthusiasm and a strong dedication to the OS/2 product. His product knowledge and the capability to demonstrate it was exceptional.

If you want to learn more about the use of the BBS, the off-line mail reader from Mustang Software and modem basics, come to the November meeting. Our SYSOP, Kevan Sheridan, will demonstrate all of these features in an open forum environment.

WordPerfect has joined the ranks of companies implementing a fee for support policy. Although this applies to corporations, free support will still be available to individuals.

Several good ideas were presented to me for collecting funds to purchase equipment needed for presentations. Currently we are selling coupon books (entertainment '94) to generate some funds. You do not have to wait until '94 to use them, you can start using them immediately and the are good until Dec. '94. The coupon books allow you to save up to 50% at restaurants, hotels, special events and more. This includes discounts for car rental, airline tickets, movie tickets, golfing, bowling, dry cleaning and enough other items to fill several pages of this newsletter. With the coupons you can more than recoup your $30 investment in a very short time. You can make good use of these books during the holidays with your family and friends. Frankly if you're not interested in saving money these coupon books may not be for you. However, you can buy the books for gifts to others. If you would like to buy some of these books, bring your checks or cash to the next meeting. You can also call Marylee at 985-3338 to order books. Part of the proceeds of these books are going back into our group. If the coupon books are not for you, then how about bringing some of your friends to our meeting and getting them signed up as members.

A big thanks to those of you who volunteered your time to help fellow members through the membership help line.

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FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

- **Computer City** ◆ **CompUSA** ◆ **IBM**
- **PC Warehouse** ◆ **Software Review** ◆ **Staples**
- **Custom Computer Wholesale** ◆ **ExecuTrain**
- **Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts**

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group:

- **Access Software**
- **Borland**
- **Corel Systems**
- **GeoWorks**
- **WordPerfect**
- **Microsoft**
- **Lotus Corp.**
- **Symantec**
- **Traveling Software**
- **Software Publishing Corp.**

Software Review:

SuperStor PRO Version 1.01

Review By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

What It Is: SuperStor PRO (SStorPro used hereafter) is, as the name implies, a disk compression program by AddStor Inc. It has been a competitor in that software niche for some time, competing with other well known disk compression utilities, such as Stacker, Double Disk and now DOS 6.0. SStorPro is the Windows version of the utility and has been around about a year now. SuperStor (SStor) is the DOS version, which has been around for several years. Functionally, there is little difference between the DOS and Windows versions except for the interface features of the Windows version. Hence, if you are familiar with the DOS version, you will have no difficulty using the Windows version; you will have to adjust a bit, though, in a couple of areas discussed later in this review where WYSI not WYG.

Compression Ratios & Speed: All of the compression programs talk in general terms about doubling capacity, but compression ratios really depend on the kinds of files being compressed. Data base files can be compressed by a factor of as much as 8, while ZIP files can't be compressed further, with .EXE, .TXT and all of the other types of files falling somewhere in between these two extremes of compressibility. I have 3 compressed logical drives, with actual compression ratios of: 1.51, 1.71 and 2.11 only one drive achieving the touted double capacity. My ratios result from a lot of ZIP files on the lowestratio drive, a lot of compressed .TIF files on the middleratio, and mostly programs with a lot of True Type fonts

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on the best drive. I store very little of my program output files on hard drives; thus, my compression ratios are fairly low on average. If you store text files, database files and other output files on your hard disk, you are sure to have higher compression ratios than I.

I have not used other compression programs, so I do not have a good basis for comparison. However, I was changing hard drives about the time DOS 6.0 was first released. In the process of changing over, I took the opportunity to load DOS 6.0 and try its Double Space utility on one drive. I then reformatted and reloaded that drive (because Double Space does not provide for uncompressing) and installed SStorPro. The compression ratios on that drive were almost identical. Most articles I have read of tests of SStorPro and other compression utilities show a somewhat better compression ratio for SStorPro's most popular competitors. SStorPro is also shown as slower than the best at initial disk compression. On the other hand, some of these test also compared speed of normal computer operations, and SStorPro showed a somewhat faster speed in normal operations than the others. One must make a choice, then, which is most important in circumstances one is likely to encounter now and in the future. If you are running a 486/66, relative times and speeds of the compression programs pale in significance, but if you are running a 286/10 they become much more noticeable and loom larger in importance.

Many reports I have read by the "experts" indicate that disk compression programs can actually improve the speed of computer operation. The rationale here is that the slowest operation on the computer is reading/writing to disk. The compression programs reduce the size of the files and while compression/decompression of files takes time, that time can be more than offset by the reduced size of the read/write. As a practical matter, I have not noted a degradation nor improvement in speed of operation resulting from using SStorPro. I have ran it on a 386DX/25 without motherboard cache, and with a 386DX/40 with 128K cache. Where I do notice an impact on speed is in loading programs to the hard drives here the loading time is increased significantly. But then, one does not load programs all the time. Reports do indicate that the slower the computer, the more one is likely to see some degradation of operations as a result of disk compression.

Features:

In addition to the features mentioned elsewhere in this review, SStorPro offers:

Transparent operations once installed and will not affect the way you use your computer.

A recompression utility that will improve compression after initial installation by about 10%., and sometimes up to 25% depending on the types of files involved

Support for Windows swap file without necessity to create a separate uncompressed drive.

Loading about 80% or more of its driver in upper memory, leaving only about a 10K or less footprint in conventional memory.

It does not create a separate disk identifier especially for a SStor PRO disk. Some compression programs assign a drive letter for the DOS drive and one for the SStor PRO drive created on the DOS drive. For example, I run 3 compressed logical compressed drives and 1 uncompressed drive. One compression program created a total of 7 drives that I had to deal with, 3 of which were unusable DOS drives, while with SStor PRO I have only the 4 drives I actually use.

Universal Data Exchange (UDE) support for removable storage media (floppies, Flopticals, Syquest and Bernoulli) that can be read and written to in computers that do not use SStorPro.

Utilities available in both DOS and Windows, though the Windows utilities are limited to information, and preparing and mounting disks; disks maintenance can only be accomplished from the DOS utilities.

Utilities to shrink and expand compressed disks, but expand is functional only on compressed disks that have previously been shrunk. That also means that a compressed disk cannot be expanded beyond its original compressed size.

Selectable compression ratios that are used only for estimating remaining usable disk space. This is often a confusing area. The program compresses in the same manner all the time regardless of the compression ratio you select, but uses a standard compression ratio (2:1) for estimating remaining usable disk space unless you tell it at the time of compressing any given disk to use a higher ratio (up to 8:1). The average user will want to use the standard 2:1.

An "uninstall" utility. When invoked, it defrags the disk in question, shrinks the compressed area to a minimum, copies files from the compressed area to the uncompressed area, shrinks, and so on. However, one must have a large amount of unused space on the disk to begin with or there will not be enough space to decompress the entire compressed disk, the amount of space depending directly on the actual compression ratio of the disk. The manual advises to backup your files prior to using this utility.

As a bonus, Optibase's JPEG & MPEG Image Compression program is included as a separate program. This Windows program allows compressing 824 bit color and greyscale images by up to 95%

Things It Won't Do:

One should be aware that there are limitations with the program and things it will not do. Among them are:

Disks compressed by other compression utilities cannot be converted to SuperStor disks.

As noted above, SStorPro uses a standard or userselected ratio for estimating remaining usable disk space instead of projecting on the basis of the actual ratio of the existing compressed area. In my case, this means that the remaining space figures shown by the program are high. The only way I can get a realistic estimate is to apply the compression ratio of existing compressed files on any given drive to the actual unused physical space on that drive. The unused space figures you see at the DOS prompt (i.e., with DIR or CHKDSK commands) are even more distorted. The unused physical area of one of my logical drives is 24.5 MB, for example. Using the existing compression ratio for the files on that disk, that unused space would hold 41.6 MB. SStor Pro, however, shows 49 MB available, while DOS shows a whopping 62.7 MB of space available. (Continued on next page.)

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SStor Pro is not compatible with some software, partially or totally. Among those are nonMS/PC versions of DOS, which require some special treatment when using SStor PRO. More significant is that it is incompatible with OS/2. And, still more important, the manual says that SStor PRO is incompatible with a number of utilities in Norton Utilities (including Speedisk and NDD, both of which I have used on SStor drives without difficulty) and PC Tools Deluxe. You should check the incompatibilities (several pages in the manual) and/or with AddStor to see if they would have any affect on your computer.

Installation:

Installation seemed fairly easy, though the documentation was confusing at first. While SStorPro is labeled as a Windows Program, the program is actually installed from the DOS prompt and the manual states in one place that it may be used on a DOSonly computer. I installed it when Windows was not loaded on my computer and it worked just fine in DOS. In fact, most of the major utilities must be used from the DOS prompt. It would seem, then, that SStorPro is the DOS program with Windows interface supplements.

It comes on one 3.5" DD or one 5.25" HD floppy. During the installation process, you will be given the opportunity to compress any or all of , but compression may take place later if desired. Installation of the program is fast, but compressing the disks could take some time, depending on the volume of files to be compressed and the speed of the computer and hard drives. The program automatically defrags the files when converting and compressing a DOS drive to a SStor drive; this accounts for some of the time required for initial compression. The installation program automatically makes entries in the CONFIG.SYS file to load SStor Pro at boot, but you will have to install whatever switches you desire yourself.

Documentation: There is adequate documentation, but I did not find it easy to read and comprehend at first. In fact, it has much about switches and keyboard/AUTOEXEC.BAT commands that one is not likely to use in normal use. However, if there is anything about your computer that may require some adjustment to SStor Pro, or if you do not want one or more of the default features of the program, you will have to wade into the documentation about switches. I do not compress floppies, for example; this requires two /NOAUTO statements on the SStor driver line of the CONFIG.SYS. If these circumstances do not apply to you, then you can do just fine reading only that pertaining to installation (which is automated) and what the commands in the dropdown menus do. Help is also available online in the DOS utilities and the Windows utility.

Requirements for the program are: Any IBM PC or compatible with at least 640K of conventional memory, with 512K available after DOS is loaded. (This doesn't seem very realistic. SStorPro uses about 50K of memory for itself which would reduce the available conventional memory in a computer that cannot use upper memory to an unacceptably low level.) MS/PC DOS 3.2 or later, or DR DOS 5.0 or later. At least one floppy, and a hard disk with at least 2 MB of space available. The manual mentions nothing about monitor. I still use a Hercules monographics card for my amber monitor. Works fine, except I do not see the entire screen when using the Windows utilities; inconvenient, but not unworkable.

Cost: The list price of SStorPro is $149.95. As with most software, the street price is considerably lower. I have seen it advertised in flyers and catalogs for as low as $49.95. So shop around for the best price.

My View: I would like to see some of the shortcomings mentioned above corrected, of course. But overall, the program has done the job for me. I have contacted AddStor technical support a few times and have had reasonably good support from them. At its relatively low street price, SStor Pro is a pretty good buy and certainly worth consideration if you are looking for a disk compression program.

♦♦♦♦

Software Review:

STACKER 3.1 FOR WINDOWS & MS-DOS 6.0

By: Floyd Thrower, Tampa PC User's Group

REQUIREMENTS:

Stacker 3.1 for Windows & DOS is specifically designed to work with MS-DOS 6. MS-DOS must be running on your system to use this version of Stacker.

640 KB RAM for installation.

For resident Stacker Device driver after installation:

44 KB RAM without EMS.

26 KB RAM with EMS.

At least 2.9 MB on hard disk to load SETUP.

EXCELLENT COMPRESSION PROGRAM

Stacker safely doubles your disk capacity. The compression is now being embraced by the operating system manufacturers and it is easier than ever to compress files on your system. With Stacker 3.1, you get all of the superior benefits of Stacker, plus complete integration with the operating system. *If you have DoubleSpace drives, Stacker automatically converts for you.*

INSTALLATION:

The installation of Stacker 3.1 can be installed from DOS or from Windows. The installation from Windows was straight forward. Documentation was very clear on both the source diskette envelope and in the Stacker 3.1 Supplement for MS-DOS 6 manual. The User Guide that is in the package is the same as for Stacker 3.0.

I had used Stacker 2.0 prior to installing MS-DOS 6.0. I backed up my hard disk on tape, reformatted the hard disk, and installed MS-DOS 6.0 complete with DoubleSpace and MemMaker. 25% of the free space on my hard disk was no longer available.

My system is a 486-DX, 8 meg RAM, 110 meg hard drive, 2 HD floppy drives, and 1 CD-ROM drive. Display is VGA.

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BEFORE Stacker 3.1 installation,
Specifications were:

Bytes-total disk	211,525,632
Bytes-3 hidden files	90,112
Bytes-143 Dir.	1,187,840
Bytes-4,607 user file	186,818,560
Bytes-available disk	23,429,120
Bytes-ea. alloc. unit	3,192
Total alloc. units	31,004
Available alloc.units	3,043

AFTER Stacker 3.1 installation,
Specifications were:

Bytes-total disk	207,773,696
Bytes-4 hidden files	147,456
Bytes-144 Dir.	1 ,196,032
Bytes-4,665 user file	189,865,984
Bytes-available disk	16,564,224
Bytes-ea. alloc. unit	3,192
Total alloc. units	31,004
Available alloc.units	7,663

After Stacker 3.1 completes DoubleSpace conversion, Recompression by using "Restack" allows the best and safest data compression possible.

While it is not necessary to Restack, extra safety and typically an increase in compression of 10% or more is possible.
AFTER "Restack",
Specifications were:

Bytes-total disk	225,771,520
Bytes-4 hidden files	147,456
Bytes-144 directories	1,196,032
Bytes-4667 user files	189,882,360
Bytes-available disk	34,545,664
Bytes-ea. alloc. unit	8,198
Total alloc. units	31,004
Available alloc.units	7,661

The increase on my system was 17,981,440 bytes available.

WHAT IS NEW IN STACKER 3.1?
FULLY INTEGRATES INTO THE OPERATING SYSTEM.

When you start computer, Stacker loads first as an integral part of the operating system.

Prior to MS-DOS 6, system would read hidden operating system files and then look for and process its configuration files, CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT. Stacker's setup modified these files so the computer could access the compressed data on the hard disk. For safety reasons, these files were stored in two places -- on the uncompressed boot drive and on the compressed Stacker drive.

Now, with Stacker's complete integration into the operating system, when you start your computer, DOS looks for a Stacker-aware file called DBLSPACE.BIN. This file looks in root directory of the startup drive for a hidden configuration file called STACKER.INI. Once this file is detected, the system loads and puts Stacker in place. This happens before DOS reads CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. There is no need to keep duplicate copies of these files.

AUTOMATICALLY CONVERTS DoubleSpace DRIVES & CHECKS FOR SAFETY.

Stacker automatically converts any existing, mounted DoubleSpace drives to Stacker drives during Setup. During conversion, Stacker can run a base level safety check of any existing data. And, you can Restack to add full Stacker safety to all data.

Any new data automatically gets the full safety advantage of Stacker.

USES STANDARD DOS COMMANDS.

On Stacker drives, you can use common MS-DOS commands to receive compression information, i.e.: DIR, CHKDSK, DEFRAG.

PROVIDES A NEW, MENU-DRIVEN STACKER OPTIMIZER.

The new Stacker OPTIMIZER provides menu-driven choices for selecting the drive, optimizing type, and sort order.

It defragments and organizes the Stacker drive for optimal performance.

ADDS STACKER INFORMATION TO WINDOWS FILE MANAGER.

Setup adds the Stacker menu to the File Manager.
A pull-down menu enables a selection of:

FILE INFO - to view compression information.
DISK INFO - to display the kilobytes used and free for the entire disk.

PRODUCT SUPPORT

CompuServe to exchange ideas & information with other users. Bulletin Board for product information and answers to frequently asked questions. STACFAX for up-to-date "tech-notes" on various subjects. Phone calls are toll calls to Technical Support 8-5 PST.

PRICING:

Upgrade is about $20.00/ New User street price, $89.00
Stacker 3.1 is a product of: STAC ELECTRONICS, 5993 AVENIDA ENCINAS, CARLSBAD, CA 92008

♦♦♦♦

REMINDER:
ENTERTAINMENT '94 BOOKS WILL BE SOLD AT THE NEXT MEETING. THEY ARE $30 AND MAKE EXCELLENT GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS OR ANYTIME. HELP SUPPORT YOUR GROUP, BUY ONE OR MORE AND SAVE, SAVE, SAVE, WHEN YOU DINE OUT, FAST FOOD, MOVIES, BOWLING, GOLF, CLEANERS, CAR WASH, ETC.....!

GAME REVIEW:

LINKS 386 PRO - VIRTUAL GOLF



By: Matt Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group

LINKS 386 PRO is as almost as realistic as playing the game. The only difference between the two is that with LINKS 386 PRO, you can't smell the grass, and you can't play "polo golf" with your buddies on the carts. On the other hand, you don't have to wait your turn to play on the hole, and you don't have to get up at six-thirty Sunday morning to beat the other hundred people waiting to play. Oh, yeah, you also have to mix your own drinks, when playing LINKS 386 PRO.

What does make this game worth buying is that you area puppet master, controlling some miserable sot while you're in your air-conditioned office, sipping on an iced tea. Links 386 pro boasts SVGA graphics with full animation of all shots made. You can rotate your puppet 360 degrees, and the program will calculate all the scenery, according to your position, and how far to the left or right of the flag you're facing. To further increase the visual stimulus, LINKS 386 PRO features custom display configuration. This allows you to choose what views you want to be displayed i.e.: Lie view, Green view, Map, and the Score Card can be displayed at once, as well as a few other views, but no more than four at a time. Also, there are forward and reverse replay cameras, and spectacularly luck shots can be recorded, saved and replayed for your personal pleasure.

LINKS 386 PRO supports Sound Biaster, Sound Biaster Pro, and Ad Lib, with a full complement of sound effects, nature sounds, and in-flight and postshot commentaries.

In addition, the Harbour Town golf course is packaged along with LINKS 386 PRO, which is, on a difficulty scale of one to ten, it's about an eight. Many other popular championship golf courses are available from fourteen to eighteen dollars, depending on where you go. The Innesbrook course in Tarpon Springs, Florida was put on the shelves around the end of September. If you already have the old version of LINKS, don't throw the old courses out because a conversion utility is also in the LINKS 386 PRO package. Most of the courses were designed for the original LINKS, but are compatible with LINKS 386 PRO and even MICROSOFT GOLF. All courses can be accessed one hole at a time, to be used for practice. Previously recorded players, which are included with each new LINKS 386 PRO course (but not on the original courses) or recordings of your games, can be used as additional players at any time.

The equipment LINKS 386 PRO requires is a 386/16mhz CPU or higher, 2 MB RAM, 18 MB hard disk space, about 5 MB for each additional course, mouse, SVGA graphics card (VESA compatible) capable of at least 640x400 in 256 colors. A 386/33 or higher, 8 MB of RAM, and 1024x768 resolution is definitely recommended.

LINKS 386 PRO is the best golf simulation on the market and is a definite must-buy, even for the people who still prefer to sweat it out on a real course.

Access Software Incorporated, 4910 Amelia Earhart Drive, SLC, UT 84116, 1-800-800-4880. ◆◆◆◆

Software Reveiw:

Lotus Organizer 1.0



By: Steve Hess, Tampa PC Users Group

Intro and Disclaimer

This is a review of the kinds of computer based "personal information managers" (PIM) I have available, and how they may be used to operate on the computer desktop, or in the Filofax © or Dayrunner © portable book format. I should point out, for a long time I avoided simple computerized checkbook record keeping, as it seemed to me that the most appropriate technology to balance a checking account is a pencil and the record book supplied. As the computer personal finance systems became able to handle more accounts, track investments, and export data to tax software, the benefits became worth the extra work. This is the yardstick I would like to use with the PIMs' reviewed here. Are the benefits worth the extra hassle? What information would you need to choose a PIM? And would you buy a used car from this Author?

Purposes of PIMs

The usual purpose is to keep some kind of personal records, and access them at work, to do your job. From this basic idea, come the major divisions in PIM types.

Single Use Applications -

For example, telephone dialers abound. I have used the Metz Phone © shareware appiication, for its simple interface and rugged modem acquisition. This program allows storage of some address information, keeps track of the last time and date you called each number, and allows notes on each phone number listed. Its drawbacks include crude control of printout, and no export of the notes, although it will put out the names and numbers into a Sidekick file. Also, no import functions. Merging with another file simply doubles duplicate entries. This is a problem if you intend to merge an "Office" and "Laptop" phone list. Most single use applications are awkward if you ever build them up, then try to export the data to another program format.

Integrated Function Applications -

The Granddaddy of this category for DOS is Borlands Sidekick©, which combines the Address book with Calendar functions. It also includes a memo writer, that uses the computer as a typewriter, does simple mail merge, and a phone list that will dial a number from a listing. Its advantages include a calendar merge feature that allows multiple files to be kept, and merged without doubling up entries. It's disadvantages are mostly because its a DOS app, and the popup feature won't work in Windows©. The version I have, 2.0, is networkable.

Database Applications -

Many people found that there were functions that were needed in their personal PIM, that were not supplied by the vendor. Users had fields labeled "something" and had to remember that field is for "something Else". Frustration led to

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people designing their own database structures, using flat files like Q and A©, or relational databases like Microsoft Access©[1]. Their success is related to the skills of the users.

Special Purpose Applications -

Some applications have great use for particular professions. Sales staff can readily use a "contact manager" to help coordinate a telephone presence, like the "tickler" system of personal reminders. Names are kept with phone numbers, subjects last discussed, appointments, and even the names of customers' children can be recorded, for that impersonally personal touch. Most integrated applications can track this kind of information, to some degree.

I will explain the Lotus Organizer© in detail. It installed fine, using about 1.5 MB of disk space, and some of that I cut down to about 1 MB for a laptop application, by removing the tutorial. I even cut the help files, (*.HLP) as I really need the space. The interface on screen is similar to a Dayrunner© book, with some Icons, Smart or not. There is the advantage of having multiple sections, if for example, you need two calendars. There is an Address book, that contains phone number records, and a phone log that can be used to note phone calls incoming or outgoing. The only thing I thought was odd, was the dialing is done by drag and drop, or cutting and pasting the phone number into the dialing dialog box. Other applications work by simply pressing a button marked "Dial". The planner section won't win raves if you use something like TimeLine©, but is adequate if you want to schedule vacations or trips in a graphic calendar "Year at a Glance". There is an anniversary section, that rolls over from year to year, but they ought to include an alarm function, for guys like me that cannot remember my wife's birthday. The ToDo section is linked with the calendar so that items roll from day to day until they get marked as complete.

Printing is in the typical calendar layouts for Dayrunner, Filofax, etc, which is awkward on tractor feed paper. (The paper size does not match) I bought a paper punch, that (sort of) lines up with the six clip notebook. It will punch the calendar pages, and phone number lists I print out. I hate the scissors work involved, so perhaps the answer is to buy a Dayrunner© in a three hole size.

I am not a typical PIM user, as I do not sit at a desk and work with a computer on all the time. Alarm functions, and appointments are of little use to me, as most of my work is done from a laptop, only on when I am actually doing something on it. The Lotus Organizer© contains a neat appointment control, that has a gauge on it that meters the time assigned, as you drag it longer. I can see the ease of use if you have to enter daily appointments. The reason I need to have a PIM is that I bill hourly for my contracting work, and buy parts and equipment from a large list of obscure suppliers I have gathered over the years. For this reason, the features I concentrated on involve importing and exporting the address and calendar information.

In this case, I was pleasantly surprised at the sophistication of the database management of the Lotus Organizer©. There is a utility that compacts the database, by removing deleted links and records, included with it. Import and export are in a Comma-Seperated-Value format, with a field linker that can re-assign the field orders, and not worry about empty fields.

I was using the Windows applet Calendar, for saving my billable time, and the Metz Phones© application for saving my phone number info. Other stuff was saved in a Works for Windows© flat file database, with more stuff in a Microsoft Access© database. I simplified this kind of thing, by combining the information into a single Organizer, and an Access database for more complete info, exportable into the Organizer.

To convert the Calendar applet files into something usable was a trick I would not like to play very often. You need to set the applet printing to a file with the connect feature in the printer control panel, and then take the print output file into a series of passes of "search and replace" to produce a comma-seperated-value (CSV) file. A CSV file has the fields separated by a comma, and the records separated by a carriage return. I did about 300 date records in a couple of hours, and imported that into an Access table, then appended the Metz Phones and the Works for Windows data into the same table, deleted as needed, and exported as a CSV file. The Lotus Organizer was able to use it's import feature to place the Date in the Date field, Name in the Name field, etc. As I enter new information, I will export the file from the Organizer the same way, and pick it up in the Access application that is my invoicing system. I wish there was a way to export only the records between a couple of dates, but it is quite simple to delete the unwanted records from a temporary table, before merging into the main Access table.

Conclusion: A PIM is only good if it can save time, save typing multiple entries, or enable lookup of information better than a paper record system. I had built several small uses, and wanted to integrate them into a space and cost efficient filing system, which the Organizer seems to fulfil. I would recommend sticking with smaller, easier to use specialized applications, until the stuff you need to save or the types of information grows to the point of "jumping past" the simple integrated applications. At that point, save yourself the trouble to learn and buy the software you will outgrow, and cannot re-configure. You could then get something with some real database power, as a master filing system, and something with an importable, easy to use front end like the Lotus Organizer©.

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Lotus Organizer© from:

Lotus Development Corp.
55 Cambridge Parkway
Cambridge, MA 02113 (617)693-1606

(See Products Comparison Table on next page.)

[1] Yes, I realize pure relational database users will not consider Access© truly relational. I am just not very pure.

Application	Features	Ease of Use	Import/Export	Change of Structure	Equipment Needed
AnyTime© from Individual Software	Calendar, Appointments, Planner, print to portable planner books. Good print quality	Fair, but not for use with some laptops. Color scheme not suitable for VGA mono LCD displays, company disinterested in assisting. Offered me my money back.	None	None	DOS- 640 K (Uses a lot, so not too many drivers allowed.) Says Windows Freindly, but UAE'd mine.
Sidekick© Ver 2.0 from Borland	Calendar, Appointments, Planner, Print to portable planner books, Phone lists, Memo writer, Mail Merge.	Good, unexciting stable performer.	None	None	DOS - 640K (Has a pop-up resident module, but won't pop up safely over everything)
Microsoft Access©	Anything you can build, and excellent methods to import info from another app. Access 3.1 comes with a sample PIM from a vendor, that has many features.	Requires actually building the app. I use a "calendar to invoice" application, where I track billable time, then print a report that is in the typical invoice form. I had been using the Windows Calendar on the Laptop, to record the data, and then reenter on the desktop unit.	All the usual forms of file and table import, CSV, Fixed length, DBIII, DBIV, SQL, BTRIVE, Foxpro, Lotus, etc.	All kinds of changes can be added if you need to later.	Windows 3.X in enhanced mode, and at least 14 MB disk space recommended. Any Windows printer and monitor, Mouse
Metz © Phones	Phone list, notes and phone log features.	Works well, and has agressive modem control. Easy use.	Exports Sidekick© format.	None	Windows 3.X in either standard or enhanced mode.
Lotus © Organizer	Phone/Address book,w/log. ToDo list, Anniversary and Calendar with alarms, notepad.	Many features, needs time to learn to operate, but not nearly as much as Access©, where you are building the applications.	Imports and exports CSV, with a field assignment that is flexible.	Some, you can add multiples of it's internal use types.	Windows 3.X in enhanced mode, 1.4 MB. Windows monitor, printer and mouse.

The Norton Commander 4.0: A Great Toolbox

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If you wish you had all your utility programs for file and directory management, file compression and decompression, graphics viewing, and even text editing in one spot, version 4.0 of The Norton Commander may be what you're looking for. This release includes a raft of new and enhanced capabilities that simplify many tasks.

You have plenty of low-level power, control for advanced activities, and a friendlier DOS interface. The list of new features for version 4.0 is long. Copy, move, or delete entire directories in one swoop, including any subdirectories with files. Transfer files and/or directories from one system (with The Norton Commander installed) to another (that doesn't have to have The Norton Commander) by using the machines' serial or parallel ports. Search for specified text in Find File and get system and memory information with a point and click.

You also can use Norton Mail for MCI Mail sessions. Set up your account number, telephone and modem parameters, and address book. Prepare messages, log onto MCI Mail, and Norton Mail sends your messages and receives any mail waiting for you. I found the View function especially handy for looking at image files. No more fiddling with PC Paintbrush to view PCX and BMP files. Use the Tree function to select the directory and file, and click View.

Version 4.0 of The Norton Commander lists for $99. The main thing to remember is that you're not buying a single extraordinary feature. The considerable advantage of The Norton Commander is the sum of its parts: You get easy access to a broad selection of well-integrated tools and utilities.

—Gene Smarte

Norton Commander 4.0 - Be more efficient in your DOS environment with this feature-rich DOS shell and utility program.
Symantec 800/441-7234, 408/252-3570, 408/255-3344 (fax) List price: $99

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Joyce Allen
Jacqueline R. Carter
Matthew Nicholson
Ben L. Perez
Ellen Rogers

We are very happy to have you as members!

Advertisements in the *Bits of Blue* are another source of revenue for our group. If you work for a company that could possibly benefit from an ad placed in the newsletter, please bring the rates (inside cover) to the attention of your marketing manager. Remember the Bits of Blue advertising reaches 250+ users with purchasing power.

When you ask for advice, people know nothing, but when you try to tell them something, they know it all!

BETA TESTERS NEEDED...

...for a to-be-marketed Windows 3.1 product. This product is a generic knowledge evaluation ("quizzing") mechanism, which can be run either from a configuration program, or remotely from a CBT program using DDE.

I NEED PEOPLE WHO KICK DOGS AND MAKE BABIES CRY! If this thing can be broken, I want to find out about it yesterday.

SPECIFICALLY: You will be testing components of Version 2 of the Marc Staley Software Lab Quiz Engine. Components ready for immediate testing are: the quiz configuration program; the quiz engine; the tutorial.

Persons helping me will receive (free) the final product; the Quiz Developer's Kit; and "special interest" quizzes if you want them: USAF: PFE-92. Boaters, skippers; several (call).

Min machine 386DX-25 w/4MB, VGA, 2MB HD space, Contact Marc Staley, (813) 634-4675

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Marylee Bruneau	988-9232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money



A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

BITS of BLUE

Vol. 6 No. 12 December, 1993

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: December 8, 1993
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450
DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

DECEMBER 8TH AGENDA:

6:00 PM - opening remarks
6:30 PM -
askSam for Windows
-free form database, makes managing information as easy as using a wordprocessor.

Demo by: Phil Schnyder, President of askSam Systems

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
askSam for DOS & |Windows
and Miscellaneous items

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UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

January 12 -
Simply Money - personal accounting software
Demo by: Marty Steiner, Product Consultant of Computer Associates

February 9 -
Wordperfect 6.0 - for Windows
Demo by: John Johannesmeyer of WP

March 9 -
CorelDraw 4.0
Demo by: Corel Systems Corp.



*** * 1993 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES &
TREASURER: Tom Cone 224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
SECRETARY: Jim Clark 986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDUCATION DIRECTOR: Ed Buzza 685-5898
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
BBS SYSOP: Kevan Sheridan 237-0100
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 224-9052

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Ami Pro for Windows from Lotus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel systems.



Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 11/10/93 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS
By: Jim Clark

'Twas an interesting and informative evening. It was unfortunate that the turnout for the meeting was relatively small. It may be because no vendor presentations were to be given. If that is the reason, those that have that as a criteria are, in my judgment missing the boat. Oh, I most often enjoy and benefit from vendor presentations and look forward to them, but I learn a lot more every day useful information, on average, from presentations from members of our own group. Their presentations are more from a user's standpoint and cover subjects I have a direct and continuing interest in. Often, as was the case at this meeting, there is more time for exchanges of problems/solutions, techniques, tips, etc., among our own group. That is the real reason I joined the group. Plus, we had some important user group business needing attention.

CLUB NEWS

⇨ Nominations: Our illustrious Prez stressed the need for members to help the user group by volunteering to undertake and expand the activities of the group to the benefit of us all, either as elected or appointed officers, as SIG organizers, to help develop and implement ideas to raise funds for our impending move, or in many other ways help make this an ever improving user group. He noted that most of the Board of Directors had served for a number of years. Our Articles of Incorporation and present By Laws provide for four officers elected by the membership President, Vice president, Treasurer, and Secretary with all other officers appointed by the elected officers presently Director of Education, Editor, Librarian, SYSOP, and Membership Director from volunteers for those positions. Tom Cone carries a very heavy load for our group and now occupies three positions Vice President, Treasurer and Membership Director because no others would volunteer to fill them. He would like to trim his load by at least one position VP, noting that the present situation limits the breadth of the BOD by two views. Our group can be no better than what we as members put into it. You know, GIGO. Sooooo, PULLLEEEEZZZZ make yourself available for any of these positions and in any other ways that could be useful to the group.

The following nominations were submitted:

President	Harvey Bruneau (incumbent)
Vice President	Michaline Ostrowski
	Don Patzsch
	Al Poole
Treasurer	Tom Cone (incumbent)
Secretary	Jim Clark (incumbent)

The December meeting is a VERY IMPORTANT MEETING Election of officers. Nominations will be open until the election begins. Nominations may be submitted by the BBS, by mail to one of the present officers, or in person at the next meeting. If you are interested in serving in one of the elected positions, YOU MAY NOMINATE YOURSELF and you are encouraged to do so. If you will help in any other way, please contact one of the officers. (Continued on next page.)

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➪ 50/50: As a followon to a discussion of ways to generate funds to help finance our impeding relocation, one member suggested the organization keep all the proceeds of the door prize raffle, instead of using half as a raffle item. This idea seemed to have broad support, and a motion was offered and seconded to do just that, effective with the next general meeting (December). Some supported the proposal to eliminate 50/50, but felt that since an unusually small representation was present that it would be best to publicize the idea on the BBS and in the newsletter, and take a vote at and early in the December general meeting before any raffle tickets are sold. An amended motion to that effect was offered and seconded. So it will be.

INDUSTRY NEWS

There wasn't a great deal of time for this segment, but a few items were discussed:

➪ DOS 6.2 is being marketed throughout the computer world. List is $9.95, but it is streeting for as low as $8.32. MS has pointed out this is a stepup, not an upgrade in the traditional sense. Most of the initial shipments are already gone, with many stores awaiting the next shipment. It is also available for download from CompuServ for free, except for CompuServ charges which are reportedly in the $8 range. It was reported that one of the conditions of downloading from CompuServ is that the download cannot be shared with anyone else; I am not sure why such a restriction since MSDOS 6.2 is protected by copyright laws, except that this forces DOS 6.0 users to pay something between $810 to obtain the upgrade to either CompuServ or a retailer, unless you buy from MS direct. It should be noted that MSDOS 6.0 must be loaded on the computer to install 6.2.

MSDOS 6.2 contains a number of nice refinements as well as improvements in some of the major programs, such as MemMaker and DoubleSpace. 6.2 adds onepass disk copy (long available in other software, but not DOS), and commas in memory and disk space readings. When the membership was asked for any difficulties encountered with 6.2, only one reported a problem he could no longer load one of his older programs, even after making an appropriate entry in the SETVER program. It would appear, then, that MSDOS 6.2 is a go and is worth the $810.

ê Fast Modems: Harvey noted that the price of 14.4 bps modems had tumbled and are now widely available in the $150 range, and have been seen as low as $130. This is probably associated with the marketing by some manufacturers of 28.8 bps modems. Only 2 or 3 are presently marketing the 28.8s. Give due consideration before jumping in, however, because a standard has not yet been developed and agreed to for the 28.8, and you could end up with a proprietary modem that will not be compatible with the standard. And, of course, you will not find many (if any) places that will support the 28.8 for some time in the future. I have trouble finding many functionally higher than 9600 baud.

➪ WP 6.0 DOS/WIN: In response to some bugs reported to WP about these programs, WP will be coming out with an interim maintenance release in the first quarter of '94 for both programs. If you are a user, keep an eye out for it.

PRESENTATION Offline Express

Thanks to the beneficence of Kevan Sheridan, our SYSOPs, we enjoyed an excellent overview of Offline Express, an offline mail reader for DOS. Yet, it is much more than that. Though Kevan hasn't said so (in my presence, anyhow), I believe his reasons for volunteering to give the presentation is that this program will allow the user to get more benefit from the BBS and our connection to FIDO NET, while at the same time tying up the BBS less time and thereby making the BBS more available for others.

I am one of those that have not yet tried the benefits of the TQM mail door, so all of Offline Express was new to me. And I am duly impressed. As I understand Offline Express, it provides for automatic logon; bundling and downloading of messages you have set it to download; bundle, compress and upload any mail you have to upload and to the appropriate echo, all automatically. My impression is that it is similar in concept to the similar aids used with CompuServ. It will also decompress the mail you have downloaded and display same for you to read offline. Among its many features are:

➪ Works with all popular communications programs

➪ A 112K spell checker which will check automatically message text created in Offline Express.

➪ Multi conference capability; downloading/uploading exchange with multiple ECHOs in a single session automatically.

➪ Provides a "skip list" capability to avoid downloading from selected people and/or messages with a specified content.

➪ Provides an address book for correspondence.

➪ Supports cut and paste.

➪ Supports a mouse, MCI and CompuServ.

Kevan says that it is a real time saver for the user and for the BBS. A "test drive" version is available on our Bits of Blue BBS as OLXTD.EXE. It is a selfextracting file of about 228K. Simply download the file, place it in a directory of your choosing, and type OLXTD, hit Enter, and walla Offline Express Test Drive is loaded for you to try out. I understand that it is fully functional, but does not include a couple of the niceties. The first time you crank it up, you should look at the settings in the program just to make sure they are right for your particular machine and situation, but the program itself has been pretty accurate on its own.

Requirements are very minimal, and will work with just about any IBM compatible from an XT up. I do not have price information, but I believe it can be purchased direct following a test drive, with all necessary info contained in the OLXTD file. It is presently available bundled with at least one com program, QModem for $79 for both programs.

Kevan, MANY THANKS for a superb overview of what appears to be a very useful program we are in your debt. We also appreciate your arranging to receive any and all members who wish to avail themselves of the opportunity to visit the BBS and get any help from you we might need in using our BBS. I for one plan to take advantage of the offer. (For those who didn't, by the time you read this it will be too late for this go around.)

MANY THANKS!!!

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AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the efforts of our illustrious Prez who secured some goodies for our group, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Merle Nicholson	MS Arcade
W. T. Slagle	CommWorks
Steven Atran	50/50 ($33)

The meeting adjourned at about 9:05 PM.

♦♦♦♦

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:



We made it. Marylee and I survived yet another week of COMDEX/Fall, the largest and best known computer show in the country. This show had more than 2000 exhibitors from around the world showing their products to over 170,000 attendees. It can be overwhelming if you try to visit the six main sites. But hey, its a passion and my job, damn the feet full speed ahead.

Imagine a computer show spread out over the Tampa Convention Center, the Thunder Dome, Curtis Hixon Hall, the Performing Arts Center, the Sun Dome and the Bayfront Center but contained within a two mile circle and you begin to get the picture. All of these Tampa Bay sites still could not contain all the vendors of COMDEX/Fall. In addition to that imagine walking in to a computer show with 2000+ exhibits maned by the employees representing each specific product where you can ask questions or view live demos.

COMDEX/Fall is also the place and time of the annual user group summit meeting put on by the Association of Personal Computer User Groups. This meeting is the world's largest gathering of user group leaders and officers. The summit provides officers with an opportunity to share ideas to effectively run, maintain, promote and enhance a user group. This year over 300 officers attended. Additionally, the officers attend a meeting to recognize user groups that have developed and implemented community service programs within four specific categories; *Education and Training in America's Schools*, *Education and Training for the Economically Disadvantaged*, *Medicine and Health* and *Social and Civic Welfare and Improvement*. This award program is known as the Computer Industry REACH (Recognizing Exceptional Achievement in Community Help) Awards and is sponsored and funded by some well known companies including Ziff-Davis Publishing, Microsoft and Apple. This year five groups were recognized for their achievements. From helping the visually impaired and disadvantaged inner city residents to developing and supporting a 200-node wide area network for the U.S. Olympic Festival '93, all groups showcased what can be done with an idea, volunteers and the willingness to share their time and knowledge. These groups were each awarded $15,000 to apply to their specific projects. Three of these groups are no larger than ours which shows that a group does not have to be a large group to provide a worthwhile community project.

The summit is also a chance for user group officers to meet and listen to national vendors and see their products on a more personal note. This year over 45 vendors, from the big vendors like Microsoft, IBM, Lotus, Hayes, Adobe and Borland to the smaller ones like Cambell Services, askSam Systems, GST Software and Mustang Software, sponsored roundtables, breakfast meetings, luncheons and receptions to promote their products, share their vision and answer questions. The Microsoft reception is always my favorite. It's not just because of the great food that Microsoft provides us with, it's the visit and presentation by Bill Gates himself. No transparencies or slick computer multimedia presentation, no suit or tie, just plain old english from a podium. Bill shares his thoughts and vision of the computer industry, Microsoft and this year NAFTA. He then opens the floor to questions from the audience. Bill is at ease as usual around 300+ user group officers which at times can be a bit testy. During his one hour visit he was enlightening and humorous. Of course his competitors may tell you otherwise.

Following are my thoughts, opinions which I compiled from COMDEX/Fall.

MOST PREVALENT

This year CD ROM disk were everywhere. This inexpensive medium will be a standard for distribution of PC related items by the end of 1994. This not only means distribution of software like MS Office, Novell 4.0 and Corel, but consumer products like educational software, magazines and technical CDs full of information and references. Imagine over 600Mb of data on a CD, no diskette shuffle when installing a large program. Several vendors were showing off a new way distributing software through a try before you buy approach. Even Gateway is selling this idea. You buy a CD from a vendor with over 40 leading applications on it for you to try. If you like one or more products you call the vendor and give them a credit card number and voila they send you the manuals and give you the key to unlock the program(s). Ziff-Davis issued their first copy of PC magazine on CD at COMDEX. It's different reading a magazine from your monitor than from your favorite lounge chair. However, I can imagine one day when the computer can read the article off the CD to me via a sound card and some software while sitting once again in my favorite chair.

The down side of this technology is the selection process of buying a CD ROM drive. There are too many choices and variations. Each drive has a specific function. Before you buy determine your needs. Do you want to just be able to install software from CD, do you want to use it for occasional access to graphic libraries or reference materials or do you want to use for interactive entertainment, education and yes even medical diagnoses. At a minimum and if you can afford it, look for drives that have: access time of 300ms or less, dual speed with a

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transfer rate of 150Kbps to 300Kbps or higher, SCSI interface, support the High Sierra and ISO-9660 standards and are MPC compliant. Remember that a lot of CD drives may not come with the required interface card. Ask before you buy. If you already have a standard SCSI card or sound card with a SCSI connector in your system you may be able to attach your new CD drive to it.

The ever-growing abundance of CD titles will make CD ROM drives a necessity not just a specialty item. Just as the 3.5" diskette drive evolved, CD ROM will evolve and become a standard in PCs replacing the 5.25" diskette drive.

VERY PREVALENT

PCMCIA those credit card size computer cards that go inside notebooks and sub-notebooks are increasing their versatility. In addition to memory, FAX/modems and network PCMCIA cards which have been around awhile, there are now: SCSI, sound, and 100+ Mb hard drive PCMCIA cards. Eventually desktop computers will be fitted with PCMCIA slots to accept all these cards. Imagine adding or replacing these cards on your desktop without the hassle of pulling off the cover or messing around with jumpers. I did see one company, DATA I/O 1-800-332-8246, that was selling interfaces designed to use existing PCMCIA cards on your desktop. One version allowed connection through the parallel port while a second version installed in an empty drive bay. I found this product to be WAY COOL! One concern I have about these small PCMCIA cards is that they will be vulnerable to damage and theft.

NEW STANDARD

Look for Intel Corp.'s Peripheral Component Interconnect (PCI) Local Bus to become the high performance desktop Bus standard of the future, however long that is. With a following of at least 150 industry leading companies the non-proprietary PCI Local Bus will supersede and replace the VESA Local Bus currently being used in many PCs today. I am sure you are thinking "great now you got ISA, EISA, MCA, VESA and now PCI when will it end".

NOT TOMORROW

After seeing and talking to vendors about Windows NT, V.34 (V.Fast) and the PowerPC it became evident that none of the products are ready for prime time, YET.

Windows NT is available today as a network operating system, but as a desktop operating system it needs work. Many vendors within the Microsoft floor space were showing their products running under NT. However, quite a few were showing non-shipping products. It made me wonder how much of those products demos were done with smoke and mirrors. It should take Microsoft about a release and a half to get the product usable as a desktop OS. Of course the Chicago release of Windows will be out before then and many individuals may be satisfied with it instead. I must admit that some 3rd party vendors were extremely ecstatic about Windows NT, even to the point of showing me NT instead of their products. I believe that this kind of dedication is a positive sign for NT.

IBM and Apple displayed their PowerPCs at COMDEX. Neither of which is available today or tomorrow. Look for these PCs to be available in quantity during the final part of 94. These new PCs will give Intel a run for their money if they can get the product to market. The benefits of the PowerPC is that it will run just about any operating system including DOS Windows, NT, OS/2, Solaris, Workplace OS and IBM new AIX version 4.x. Of course at this time that's what the marketing people are telling us.

V.WHAT?

Hayes, Microcomm and Practical Peripherals all demonstrated very fast modems. All of course were non-standard. The new high speed non-standards demonstrated were: V.32 *terbo* at 19.2Kbps and V.Fast class (V.FC) at 28.8Kbps. The standard that you and I want is V.34 (V.Fast) and is stated to be approved by the newly named ITU-T (formerly CCITT) in late 1994. Can I put some more acronyms in this article? In order to use any of these high speed protocols (V.32 *terbo* and V.Fast class (V.FC)) you must have the same vendors modem on the other end. Unless you have immediate needs for this high speed and you are sure that the modem you connect to is similar, you should wait until the standard is approved. Hayes stated that you could buy there V.FC modem today and pay for the upgrade to V.34 when it becomes a standard.

AND MORE

Microsoft has at least three new products that provide more functionality than their predecessors. The new mouse driver for the MS Mouse, Windows for Workgroups 3.11 and version 2.0 software of the MS Windows Sound System are worth upgrading to.

Adobe has a real HOT PROSPECT with Acrobat. This family of software will allow you to send fully formatted documents as a file - containing distinctive typefaces, color, graphics and photographs - created on your computer to other computers, regardless of the hardware platform, operating system or application software used to create the originals. Receivers will in turn be able to print, view annotate and store the document on their own system. I hope to be able to use this software to produce a complete file copy of the newsletter for distribution through the BBS.

Compaq will be bundling a slick replacement product, Tabworks, for the existing Windows program manager with their PCs. Tabworks uses a familiar look and feel. If you can imagine a three ring binder with tabs you will understand this simple idea. This interface provides a very clean looking desktop thereby reducing that group icon clutter. Simply place your groups on the tab sheets and your desktop screen looks like your junior high notebook. While Compaq did not write this product they will have sole distribution rights for one year before other vendors offer it.

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The above only represents some of my thoughts and opinions which I wanted to share with you. If time permits I will share additional items at the December meeting.

At this time Marylee and I wish to thank the APCUG, all the sponsoring vendors and Dun & Bradstreet Software for a successful COMDEX.

STILL MORE... NON-COMDEX COMMENTS:

Please come to the December meeting to vote for YOUR CHOICE. Your vote will determine the officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) for 1994 and whether to keep the 50/50 door prize. Read the secretary's report for a current list of nominations and details about the 50/50 door prize. Your vote is important. If you have any additional nominations there is still time to make them at the meeting prior to the vote.

Many of you will notice a renewal slip in the current newsletter. Please take the time to fill it out to renew your membership. The $20 investment is the best PC investment for the money. Of course you will also be helping our group. As you should be aware by now we will be changing our meeting site in February. Our new home will be the Ybor room of the HCC campus. By the time of the December meeting, I will have signed a contract for the use of the Ybor room through the end of 1994. It will be the first time in the past five years that our group will be charged for meeting space. The board of directors and I felt that in order for the user group to grow and flourish we needed to move to a larger facilities. HCC was one of the few sites that satisfied our needs.

Unfortunately, we do not have a computer or projection equipment to put on a presentation. HCC currently does not have the equipment we need either. I have contacted some of the local vendors for a donation or to see if we can barter for a PC. On the positive side no vendor said NO, but more importantly none said yes. I will continue to pursue this with the vendors. Specifically, we need at least a 486/mhz DX with 120 Mb hard drive, 4Mb RAM and VGA monitor. The current cost for the PC is around $1500. If you can help us to acquire a PC or even the parts to build our own please contact me.The big ticket item is of course a video projection panel like the Proxima ColorWorks or the InFocus PanelBook 450. These are the inexpensive models and are priced around $3500. If you have added the amounts of the equipment, we are looking at around $5000. Once again if you have an idea on how we can borrow, rent or acquire these items give me a call. I can be very humble.

Harvey Bruneau

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SOFTWARE REVIEW:

Home Release 2
Review By: Jim Clark
Tampa PC Users Group

What It Is: Home is a home design CAD program for DOS from Autodesk. It is part of Autodesk's Home Series, which also includes: Kitchen, Bathroom, Deck, and Landscape. Home has been developed for people considering building a home or adding to their existing home. It provides the capability to explore ideas in the computer and help make layout and a host of other decisions that go into home design plans. The final product can then be printed and "will be accurate enough to give to an architect or contractor." Price wise, it is a low-end program, but it has a good bit of power for the money and it provides the capability to develop floor plans for any size home you might wish to draw or design. I can imagine some other simple objects that could be drawn using this program, but it is designed specifically for home plans and really would not be very satisfactory for any other use.

Features: Home has the capability to draw floor plans of any size, though much of the work in creating very large plans will have to be accomplished with only the current portion on the screen -- meaning a bit of zooming in and out. It can create very precise plans, allowing precise placement of all walls and objects; the precision of the plan will, of course, depend on the preciseness of the input. Walls and lines can be drawn accurately at any angle, with 45 and 90 degree increments as menued choices. Wall thickness and height are also controllable, but the program includes no provisions for different wall heights in the same plan -- as exists in many homes with cathedral ceilings. Elevation drawings can also be created. The user can select either metric or imperial measurements.

The program includes a basic but limited selection of floor plan and elevation view symbols for swinging, pocket and sliding doors, 36" high sliding windows, side and arch lites, and garage doors -- all in standard sizes. No symbols are provided for windows taller than 36" nor for styles other than sliding, and only floor plan symbols are available for bi-fold doors. Basic electrical symbols are provided, including even a smoke detector, but strangely omitting ceiling light fixtures and "J" boxes. Standard size symbols are included for major appliances and kitchen bathroom fixtures, major items of furniture, and even a few disabled symbols. Fills are also provided for fireplace, door, exterior wall, floor (interior and exterior) and roof finishes. Fills cannot be created, but a drawing capability is available to draw items desired and not included with the program. The only problem here is that such items will not show up in 3D views/printouts nor in the list of materials, but they will appear in 2D views/printouts.

Yes, the program does include a capability to create and printout a list of materials -- the list being a list of items used from the symbols libraries (outlets, sinks, doors, windows, etc.), with quantity, but not including any construction materials or drawn

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items. Home has a limited text capability (with a choice of two fonts) that can be used to add items to the list and/or to place labels and any other desired information on the plan. Text size is also selectable, but size is expressed in inches (scaled to the plan dimensions) instead of points or CPI. Point-to-point dimensions, though, are a menu item and can be inserted accurately and easily by selecting from the dimensions menu and pointing and clicking the mouse a couple of times.

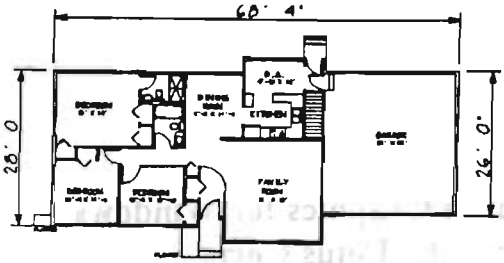
Home includes "3D Plan" as a stand-alone portion of the program that can be ran by itself, or activated from within the basic program. It will take any 2D plan created in Home and display it on screen where it can be viewed in three perspectives: Floor plan, which is the same as in 2D; overview, where you get a 3D view as if you are elevated to 12-15' above floor level and at a distance you select from the structure -- giving an overall 3D perspective of the proposed structure; and an eye-level perspective. Floor plan is used as a launching point for the other two perspectives and is used for selecting the point from which you want to view the structure and the angle from that point that you want to see. Once the view is selected and shown on screen, one can navigate or "walk" around and through the drawing, getting appropriate 3D displays on the screen. Moves are made in 1 or 5' increments, and angles in 5 or 15 degree increments, with each change causing the program to recalculate and display the results to the screen. Calculating, recalculating and display of each on the screen takes a lot of time -- or a fast machine. A "walk" through the house using my computer would take a couple of hours. Alternatively, one could switch back and forth between overhead and eye-level views, changing the location and angle of view each time, and view all of the important areas in much less time. All of the views available in 3D Plan can be printed, as can the 2D plan at any stage of development.

The 3D Plan also provides the capability to change colors on individual items on the screen, thereby allowing one to test color schemes for all portions of the plan. While it is not likely that the precise colors viewed in the plan will be found on or for all of the actual items, I would think this could be a very helpful feature in making color decisions.

Symbols and drawings can be changed easily -- moved or deleted and reinserted elsewhere if desired. Walls can be changed as well, but doing so is a good bit more complicated. The program includes an "oops" feature which all users will use -- and find handy. Oops will remove up to the last 25 steps taken, with a "redo" capability if you err with oops. But, if you "oops'd" the last 10 steps, for example, after correcting the error you will have to recreate the last nine oops items if they are to remain in the plan.

Home supports most printers, using drivers for selected standards and their compatibles. It will print plans at any scale or size you choose that your printer is capable of printing. Home uses a .GCD format as its standard for files saved, but provides the option of also saving plans in Drawing Exchange Format (.DXF) used by many other CAD programs (and word processors and DTPs), or the .DWG format used by AutoCAD. These option formats allow taking plans created in Home to some commersial printers where they can be produced in standard building plan size. The following drawing is a sample of a Home output:





Installation: The program comes on three 3.5" HD floppies. Installation is easy and quick, taking only a few moments and requires only that you select drive and directory. Usually no AUTOEXEC.BAT/CONFIG.SYS changes are required.

Documentation: The owners manual is fairly comprehensive and provides step-by-step instructions and tutorials. There are a few instances, however, where the manual has not kept pace with the program (or visa versa). The tutorial for one portion of the program, for example, focuses on a specific floor plan which is **not** included on the program disks. The program includes on-line help as well as well, but is limited to brief descriptions of menu items. Autodesk provides free technical support, but only on toll lines; initial contact is through an 800 number, but a tape quickly refers technical support calls to their toll numbers.

Requirements for Home according to the manual are: An IBM PC or better with 640K RAM; one floppy disk drive; a hard drive with 3 Mb of free space; DOS 3.0 or later; a video graphics card with at least 640 X 200 resolution; a mouse. However, it recommends a 286 or better with 2 Mb EMS, a VGA card and a math coprocessor. I would say that the recommended is the absolute minimum, and one should be prepared for some rather slow performance in 3D or with large floor plans. I have a 386DX/40 with 128K external cache and 8 Mb of RAM, but without coprocessor, and I found many times that a coprocessor and/or a faster machine would save a good bit of time. And instead of using 3 Mb of hard disk space, the program occupies 5.5 Mb on my HD.

Cost: Home may not be immediately available in all software stores and may have to be ordered in. It lists for $59.95, with a street price at Egghead of $41.99.

My View: Notwithstanding the tutorials, I had some difficulty getting the hang of the drawing mechanics of the program. After some practice, however, I got the hang of it and began to

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create a good bit faster. I used the "oops" feature quite a few times in the process. I am not sure that one could create with the program all of the plans required for building permits in our county. However, had I this program several years back when we were designing our home, I believe it would have been of considerable help in making our decisions and would likely have resulted in finding before-hand at least a few of the changes we would now make. For additional information, contact:

Autodesk Retail Products:
11911 North Creek Parkway South
Bothell, Washington 98011
1-800-228-3601

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SOFTWARE REVIEW:

Freelance Graphics for Windows Release 2 by Lotus Corp.

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group



It's hard to tell what lurks beneath the shrink wrap in some software packages. "The fastest, easiest way to a great presentation," is this true or just hype? The Freelance Graphics for Windows box lists three steps: 1 - Select a look, 2 - Choose a page layout, and 3 - Fill in the blanks. Can the business person, trying to come up with a snappy presentation to bolster sagging sales or a student needing multimedia for a class project, find this software of value? To find out, let me take you on a tour through the contents of the box.

First we find several well-written manuals and booklets using images of the monitor screens frequently and easy to understand text. At the end of each chapter of the User's Manual are good tips on using the chapter material and where to look for additional information. Another booklet has color and black and white pictures of all 65 SmartMasters and black and white pictures of all the symbols. Thus, you can make some option decisions before you turn the computer on.

On the disks we find the SmartMasters, each with 11 page layouts for title, bulleted lists, charts, tables, and organization charts. All are optimized for color or black and white output and just need the blanks filled. An Outliner is linked to the SmartMasters so edits in one show up in both. A Page Sorter makes it easy to view small images of your presentation and rearrange them. There are 108 defined charts and data can be imported from 1-2-3, Excel, Symphony, dBase and SYLK files. More than 20 file formats are supported including ASCII, CGM, WMF, and PCX, TIFF and BMP graphics. Also, DDE and OLE, so only about 10 letters in the alphabet are not supported. There are drawing tools for creating graphics and WYSIWYG word processing and a spelling checker.

Installation was a breeze, after I replaced my floppy drive that decided not to read cylinder 79 anymore. The default, full package option, fills over 19 MB of disk space. Add a little more if you install the Adobe Type Manager with 13 Type 1 fonts.

A three minute Quickstart leads into a half hour interactive animated demo where you watch the computer create a title page and bulleted list and then you try it. Creating a chart, using the outliner, creating a table, and managing your presentation is covered in the same manner. Though the tutor session shows you which buttons to push, there are still some unexplained icons, but help is close through the "?" button at the top of nearly every screen.

The test presentation was a media service demo. Choosing the SmartMaster set was the first hard decision. Several looked good. I selected a boxed menu set and then the fun began - literally. Typing in the titles and bulleted lines was really easy and everything lined up automatically. I toyed with changing the color scheme, but the default seemed to look the best, they really did do a good job coordinating the color palettes. An imported graphic from Imageline Business Clip Art was added to the title page with a few clicks of the mouse and typing *.* for Files to change the extension. A WordPerfect graphic also imported without a hitch. The Outliner looks like a legal pad and worked great for quickly setting up new pages. The only snag came while rearranging text in a double bulleted page. I figured out what to do without going to the manual.

My 13 year old son also created a slide show. He made his a lot more spectacular with each page loaded with graphics and a different technique for each slide change. The sad part was that he made his without ever cracking the wonderful manual and in less than half an hour. We have different philosophies concerning learning to use new software. His is "just push that button and see what happens" while mine is "maybe we should check the manual before we push that button." My son learns quickly, is fearless and confident and hey, I'm over 40!

A slide show that works by itself, without Freelance or Windows, only took a few clicks of the mouse. In the stand alone version some fancy replacement effects, multimedia objects and Screen Show buttons become unusable. The presentation still looks great and you don't have to lug your PC anywhere to show it.

Another neat feature is the ability to create buttons out of just about anything on each screen. I created one out of a block of text and when clicked it jumped the show to a previously specified page. Another application could be opened and used in this way.

Smarticons, Freelance's shortcut buttons, are easy to customize through drag and drop. The default set has 1-2-3, Ami Pro, and Notes buttons and if you don't have those programs they can be deleted and a new set of icons created. To start the new set, click the icon button at the bottom of the screen.

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You can make slides, overheads, prints, flipcharts, posters, and banners of your presentation using a modem and the Autographix software. The nearest Autographix office is in Orlando and they promise overnight service if they receive your info before noon. Costs are $12 per slide, $8 per transparency, $6 per print, and duplicates are a few dollars cheaper. Two day deliveries are also cheaper.

You can create speaker notes to remind you of what to say during the presentation. You can also make audience handouts with up to four presentation screens on one page.

There are two mildly exciting movies, one of a revolving globe and one of a "laser," but the neat thing is that you can import other movies and use them as objects. Several WAV files are included too.

Lotus has an introductory toll-free hotline (good for 90 days), 60 day money back satisfaction guarantee, 90 day warranty, and a Lotus Customer Assurance Plan. They want their customers to be happy campers. I used the hotline to find out why I got error messages from time to time. The response time was about average, maybe a five minute wait, but the service technician was very helpful. We narrowed it down to either memory problems due to too many drivers (Stacker, Bernoulli, Direct Access, mouse, CDROM, etc.) or possibly an outdated driver. Booting with fewer drivers seems to have helped.

To answer the original question of hype or not, it depends. It depends on how involved a presentation you want and your level of experience. After the tutorial, creating a good looking generic presentation can be done quickly, but who wants to be plain? A creative presentation takes time and patience to learn the special features of this package (and there are plenty). This software is a powerful tool that delivers and would help both the business person and student create great presentations.

Minimum hardware requirements:
* 286 PC.
* EGA graphics card.
* DOS 3.1, Windows 3.0.
* 9MB available on hard disk.
* 3MB of RAM.
* A mouse is required.
* Freelance is network ready.

Those wishing to take the self guided tour of Freelance Graphics for Windows and already having Freelance, Harvard Graphics, Powerpoint, WordPerfect Presentations or other presentation product for Windows, DOS or OS/2 can buy the upgrade package for $98.98. Otherwise, it is $349.99.

For more information contact: Lotus Development Corp., 55 Cambridge Parkway, Cambridge, MA 02142 (800)343-5414

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Game Review:

LINKS386PRO: INNISBROOK

By: Matt Nicholson, TPCUG

The latest course for Links386 Pro, Innisbrook-Copperhead, is most noted for its spectacular scenery. Although it is located in Tarpon Springs, it is more like playing in South Carolina, with one difference. I was playing on the Pro difficulty level one time, and I hooked it viciously into the trees. My lie was technically on pine needles, but it was actually on an alligator. Judging by his lack of movement, I took him as scenery and played through while a bird watched in mid-flight, also motionless.

Despite the lack of nature animation, the course is very pleasing to the eye. As far as difficulty is concerned, I'd give it a six on a scale of ten. I scored a nine under par on the second time I played, while my opponent, a recrorded player that came with the course, scored a pitiful eight over par. There are, of course, other recorded players who, unlike pathetic Veronica, could kick my butt. Nine under is good, but megatons of luck were pushed in my direction. On normal days, I'd be lucky to get two under. For a more challenging course, I suggest Firestone, Harbour Town (comes with Links386 Pro), or Mauna Kea.

As a follow-up on my previous article, here's a few things that I've discovered. When you install Links386 Pro, make sure you install the correct video driver for your card. If you cant quite remember what brand of video card you have, check the _____. It would be a good idea to make a boot disk, to give it enough memory to run, and to automatically install the proper video driver. My computer locked up every time I tried to play Links386 Pro, until I made the boot disk. I suggest acquiring as many courses as possible because they each have a new version of links386.exe, mine was upgraded from 1.07 (from Mauna Kea) to 1.10 because of Innisbrook. I saw no change, but in the long run, I felt safer.

To summarize, it was nice playing on a course close to home, and the scenery is great, but overall it was too simple. For more information contact: Access Software Incorporated 4910 West Amelia Earhart Dr. SLC, UT 84116 1-800-800-4880; 1-801-359-2900; 1-801-596-9128 FAX

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Walter Aye
Rex Bennett
Donnie Dunkin
Michael Hodges
Eddie Rodriguez
Mary Wittkamp

We are very happy to have you as members!

User's Corner

LIST.COM Utility Program

Do you keep your utility programs in a directory that is in your PATH statement? If not, create one; then put all those small utility programs that you use in that directory. For starters, put PKZIP.EXE, PKUNZIP.EXE, LIST.COM and FV.COM in that directory. FV.COM is one of the programs bundled with LIST.COM.

Many of you have used the LIST program written by Vernon D. Buerg. The latest version, LIST90.EXE, is on our BBS. While many use it only as a text file reader, it is loaded with worthwhile features.

One use is as a file manager. You can move up and down the directory trees and change to another disk drive. It's very easy to rename, copy, delete, and otherwise rearrange your files. Sure, it's not as fancy as the "drag and drop" modules of other file managers; but if you're browsing disk files from the DOS command line, this is a handy feature.

Another is to look inside .ZIP files! If your unpack program (ARC, ARJ, DWC, LBR, LZH, PAK, ZIP, ZOO) and Buerg's FV.COM are available[1] to LIST, highlight the .ZIP file and press V to view the contents of that packed file. And if you want to look at one of the files inside that .ZIP file, press Alt-I, position the flashing cursor on the particular file, and press the Enter key. Just be sure that the disk with the .ZIP file has enough room to unpack that file.

It also has a block capture feature. Often when browsing a file, it has a snippet of data here and some lines there that you want to capture and either print or save to file. With LIST (and the text on the screen), scroll the text until the start of the block is at the top of the screen and press Alt-M. Scroll the text until the end of the block is at the bottom of the screen and press Alt-B to mark the block. Press Alt-D to save to file or press Alt-P to print the marked block. Press Alt-U if you made a mistake and need to start over or just to clear the block.

But if you want only a few lines and the above method blocks too much text, there is an alternative. Scroll the text until the start is at the top of the screen and press Alt-M as before. Now scroll the text again, up or down, until the end of the block is at the top of the screen and press Alt-M again. Now press AltD or Alt-P.

1. The programs are in a directory shown in the PATH statement.

by Ed Buzza

Contributions, please

Each month, we'd like to publish in this column those tips, techniques, tricks that you have found useful. Whether software or hardware, it makes no difference. Don't worry about words, punctuation, spelling or writing style. Just get the material to Ed Buzza somehow; a message on the BBS, a note at the meeting or in the mail, - whatever. Ed said he's willing to edit whatever he receives. And you will be given credit for the material.

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LOCAL BATTERY SAVIORS

By: Tom Schroeppel

We portable computer owners live and die by our batteries. Recently my Toshiba notebook's internal backup battery, which powers the AutoResume feature and HardRam disk, bit the dust and took me with it.

I logged onto the CompuServe Toshiba forum looking for help. While waiting for an answer, I pulled from my files a flyer I had picked up somewhere for a Tampa battery supplier, Micro Precision.

I called Micro Precision and spoke with Dave Lund, who was very helpful. He invited me to bring my Toshiba into his office for resuscitation.

Within minutes of my arrival at Micro Precision, Dave and his partner, Wade Smith, had custom-built a replacement battery for me. As a bonus, it even had a little more power than the Toshiba original!

When your computer batteries die, I'd recommend calling these guys first.

The cost was very reasonable. How reasonable I discovered when I got home and logged back onto the CompuServe Toshiba forum. A Toshiba parts distributor had left me a message, offering to sell me a Toshiba-brand replacement backup battery for approximately three times what I had just paid Micro Precision--plus overnight shipping!

Micro Precision is a supplier of batteries and battery packs to original equipment manufacturers, so they know their business. They can even rebuild your dead battery packs with new cells, at a fraction of the cost of a new pack.

When your computer batteries die, I'd recommend calling these guys first.

They're located at 13440 Wright Circle, Tampa, Florida 33626, in the Tri-County Business Park near Tampa Bay Downs Race Tract. Their local number is 854-2861. They also have a toll-free number: 1-800-544-8421.

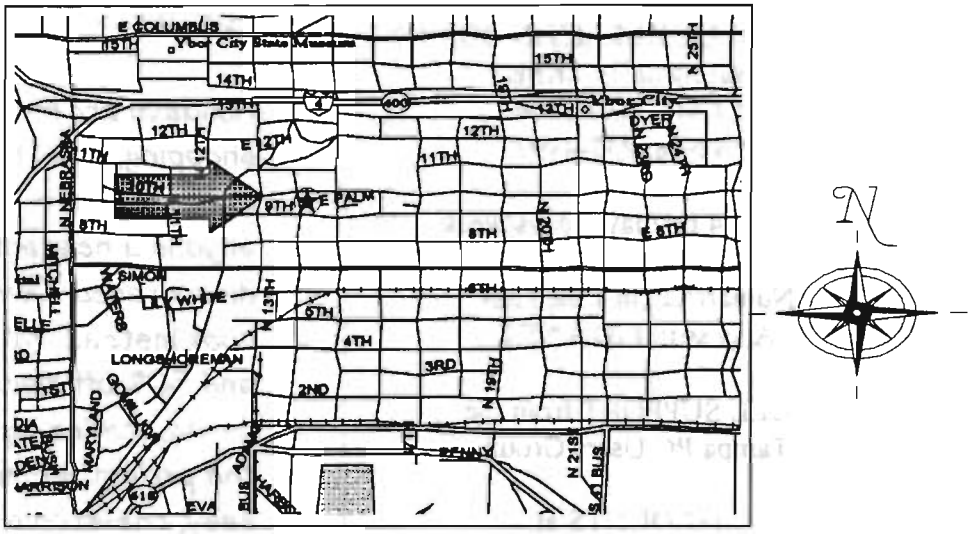
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HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!



We're moving!

February 9, 1994



Directions to our new meeting site: Take Interstate 4 to 21st Street exit, South to Palm Avenue, West to 15th Street to Hillsborough Community College -Ybor Room, 2001 14th Street, Tampa, Florida 33605

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Marylee Bruneau	988-9232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

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** Data: 239-3704
**Voice: 237-4997

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Tampa PC Users Group

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Tampa, Florida

ACCESS to the GROUP'S
PROGRAM LIBRARY

ITS LIKE GIVING OVER 1000 GIFT CERTIFICATES FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

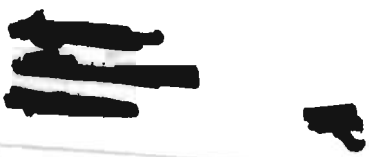
Holidays are merry and bright. Holiday shopping, now that's another story. Pushy, long lines, indecision. It's enough to give anyone a headache. This year don't get discouraged. Give the Entertainment '94 book instead. With over 1,000 two-for-one and 50% off discounts for the very best in dining, movies, sports, hotels and more, it's the perfect gift for everyone. Which means easy, one-stop shopping for you. Entertainment '94 -the one-size-fits-all holiday gift.

Only $30.00 - you may purchase them at the monthly meeting or call 985-3338.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 3492
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A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Bits of Blue

Vol. 7 No. 1 January, 1994

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: January 12, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: IBM CUSTOMER CENTER
LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING
3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd.
Room 450

DIRECTIONS:

The Tampa IBM PC Users Group meets in the IBM's LAKE POINTE ONE Building across from Tampa Bay Mall one block east of Tampa Stadium.

The best entrance is on Martin Luther King Blvd. at the traffic light in front of Burdines. As you turn North off Martin Luther King Blvd. you will see the LAKE POINTE ONE BUILDING on the left & parking on the right. Join us in ROOM 450 - 4th floor. **Guest please sign in.**

January 12th Agenda -

Simply Money - personal accounting software

Demo by: Marty Steiner, Product Consultant of Computer Associates



7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Raffle -
Simply Money -
and Miscellaneous items

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UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

February 9 -
Wordperfect 6.0 - for Windows
Demo by: John Johannesmeyer of WP

March 9 -
CorelDraw 4.0
Demo by: Corel Systems Corp.

We're Moving! -
Effective - February 9th Meeting
Look for the map inside this issue for directions to our new meeting site.
We are excited about this move and look forward to seeing you all there!



*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	985-3338
VICE PRES :	Al Poole	
TREASURER:	Tom Cone	224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
SECRETARY:	Jim Clark	986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDUCATION DIRECTOR:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	985-3338
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:	Tom Cone	224-9052

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Ami Pro for Windows from Lotus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel systems.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 12/8/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

The meeting began a few minutes late at 6:10, led by our illustrious Prez, Harvey Bruneau, with a modest representation of members present and a several visitors. Important user group business was scheduled for the evening, along with a presentation of an intriguing software program.

USER GROUP NEWS

⇨ Elections: The floor was opened to any additional nominations for the five elected positions on the Tampa PC Users Group Board of Directors. None were offered, the nominations were closed, and preparations for the election began. A motion was made, seconded and approved by the majority present that those persons nominated for positions for which there was no opposition be elected in block to fill those positions. There were three nominees for the position of Vice President: Michaline Ostrowski, Don Patzsch, and Al Poole. Two votes were taken, with the first narrowing the field to two nominees since the first vote did not produce a clear winner. Those elected to serve through December 1994 are as follows:

President	Harvey Bruneau*
Vice President	Al Poole
Treasurer	Tom Cone *
Secretary	Jim Clark *
Member at Large	Roger Waters*

* = Sole nominees

⇨ 50/50: A decision was taken by the membership during the November meeting to take a vote at this meeting on a motion to eliminate the split of money collected for the door prize drawings, with the user group instead retaining all of the funds to help offset our need for funds to finance our relocation and other needs. A vote was taken on the motion and it carried by a large majority: At this meeting and all future meetings, all funds collected for the door prize drawings will be retained by the user group.

⇨ New Meeting Location: Harvey announced that beginning with the February 1994 meeting our meetings would be held at the Ybor City campus of the HCC. A map was included in the last newsletter. While equipment arrangements had not yet been completed for that site, the facilities are excellent and the normal meeting agenda would obtain, including a vendor presentation:

⇨ Software Reviews: Harvey announced that he and Marylee had obtained a number of software programs at Comdex for review by our group. A listing of the programs available will be posted on the BBS and in the next newsletter. Please contact Marylee Bruneau about any of the programs you would like to review.

⇨ Adobe Acrobat Explained: Harvey informed the membership of a BOD decision to acquire a license for Adobe Acrobat readers for all group members. Abobe Acrobat allows

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converting the output of most major programs into a common format, retaining all formatting characteristics of the original document, allowing all computers with a reader to display and printout, if desired, any document as it was originally created, whether or not the viewing computer has any of the software tools of the creating computer. Not only will this be a considerable convenience to our members and group administration, but it is expected to lead to considerable savings in distribution of the newsletter.

⇨ Meet Your BBS: A number of our group took advantage of an offer by our SYSOPs, Kevan Sheridan, to meet the Bits Of Blue BBS at the site of the BBS computer. Kevan explained a bit about the BBS and answered all questions with demonstrations where appropriate. It was a very interesting and informative session for all participants. Kevan received enough feedback from those participants to know the evening was worthwhile, and accordingly has scheduled another Meet Your BBS Nite third Wednesday in January. It may well become a regularly scheduled event. Come to the meetings and/or watch the BBS for more current info of this.

⇨ Caution In Buying CDs: Low cost CD's are flooding the market, many of which are not worth their few $$ price. Harvey advises that you look before you leap when purchasing CDs; even a cheap CD is a waste if it is not useful.

INDUSTRY NEWS

⇨ Word 6.0 Bugs: A number of bugs have shown up in the recently released Word for Windows 6.0. Microsoft has announced there will be a release in February to correct these problems.

⇨ 28.8 Modems: Harvey informed that these modems which use parallel ports are now available from at least two vendors. Cost is in the range of what the 14.4 used to cost.

⇨ Sound Technology: Summarizing his readings from articles on the subject, Harvey reported that sound technology was now on the fast track and we could expect in the nottoodistant future that a vocal interface between user and computer would be a lot more practical.

PRESENTATION askSam for Windows, Ver. 1.0

Philip Schnyder, President of askSam Systems, favored us with his presentation of their software program, askSam for Windows. We have been hearing a good bit about that program for a while now and I, at least, have really not known what the program is about only glowing words that it is a great program. BUT WHAT IS IT?? Philip was here to answer that question. A very simplified answer is it is a very powerful, super flexible, very userfriendly information management/database program. I now understand why it was so much of a mystery for me, because even after having seen a demo of the program I am having considerable difficulty coming up with description for you. What I can tell you for sure is that it is a great program.

Designed with a view of doctors, lawyers and others who deal with random information which they need to retain and be able to quickly recall when needed, askSam is a free form information management system. While it can be used pretty much as a conventional dbase to retain and recall structured data, its greatest value lies in its ability to store and recall information in unstructured form; that is, input information of just about any size and shape randomly into the same data base and then be able to quickly recall that information in usable form, using a single or many criteria, and in a wide variety of formats and views. How fast can it retrieve? Philip says they have tested: With a 486/33 using DOS 5 and Windows 3.1, it took 15 seconds to search a 5.2 Mb data base. (I am not sure that this is useful information since timing is affected by so many variables, including criteria, format, available memory, etc.) In any case, the demo I saw was fast.

I was too intrigued with the program to get many notes. I did note the following: The limit on the number of criteria one can use in searches is unknown at present, but is well in excess of that one is likely to ever need; each record can be up to 300 pages (yes, three hundred pages) long; supports OLE of text and graphics; supports direct imports of ASCII, RTF, Word Perfect and dBase/FoxPro formats; exports in ASCII, RTF and CDV. Features not yet a part of the program, but which are in the works include a spell checker and the ability to conduct multiple data base searches. Philip recommends a 386 machine with 4 Mb of RAM to run the program, though it will function with lesser capability. The program requires 2 Mb of hard disk space. askSam lists for $395, with a street price somewhat less than that. Those present at the meeting were given the opportunity to purchase the DOS or Windows version at a great savings for $125. Phil explained that the DOS and Windows versions are essentially the same, the differences in summary being that the Windows version is some easier to use, while the DOS version has a few more options. Phil, we THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your visit, for a great presentation of a super program, and for the copies of askSam you donated for our door prizes. You have a real winner in askSam. We look forward to your next visit in our new quarters.

AND THE WINNER IS:

Thanks to the generosity of askSam Systems, who donated 2 copies of askSam, and to Brainchild Computer, who donated a copy of MS Word Assistant, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Tom Church	Cup
R. W. Davis	MS Word Assistant
Bill White	askSam (DOS)
Tom Schroeppel	askSam (Windows)

The meeting adjourned at about 9:00 PM.

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Check Your Address Label!

The newsletter mailing label shows the date your membership renewal is due. This is your only notice of an expiring membership along with the colorful renewal applications tucked inside your last newsletter. Don't let a simple oversight result in your name being removed from the mailing list. Keep your membership current, renew today by mailing a check to the attention of the treasurer or bring it with you to the meeting this month.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:



Here we are in 1994. Elections are over, holidays are over, presents are gone and now the bills and the tax forms are coming. That is why I scheduled Computer Associates to show us two of their products, Simply Tax & Simply Money, at the January meeting. These products will help keep track of your financials and help you prepare your taxes. Door prizes will include these products.

This will also be our last regular meeting at IBM. IBM has been a gracious host to us for several years. However, our need for a larger space to accommodate our growth has required our move. Effective February our meetings will be held at the Ybor room of the HCC Ybor campus. The meeting will still be held on the second Wednesday of each month beginning at 6:00PM. Look for a map in this newsletter to provide you with directions.

At the December meeting all incumbent officers were re-elected un opposed. Welcome back Harvey Bruneau, Roger Waters, Tom Cone and Jim Clark!

As you may be aware, Tom Cone, was holding three positions, Vice-president, interim Treasurer and Membership Director. This was in part due to the loss of William Fuller, our 1993 Treasurer. Bill's relocation to Jacksonville necessitated an immediate replacement for which Tom volunteered to assume the job for the remainder of the 1993 year. For 1994 Tom indicated he would accept the nomination for Treasurer and volunteered to again to be Membership Director. This left the Vice-president position open. Fortunately, and for the first time that I can remember, there were three nominations for Vice-president. Alford "Al" Poole was elected as Vice-president. Please join me in welcoming Al into his additional and new role with our group. Al and his son Matthew have been contributing enlightening newsletter columns for us. Al has also been learning and helping Kevan with the BBS.

All volunteers have also decided to stay on. While Ed Buzza will no longer be teaching classes he will still be Education Director. I believe the time has come to put more than just reviews in the newsletter. With that in mind I have asked Ed, and he has accepted, to be the editor of a tips and techniques column for our newsletter. This column will be based on contributed articles from everyone, not just Ed.

Marylee Bruneau will continue as our editor. Thanks to Marylee for creating a newsletter every month on her own and implementing bulk mail in 1993.

Larry Anders will continue to roam bulletin boards and other information highways to provide us with great and current software and information for the diskette library and BBS. If you are looking for a specific type of software product and we don't have it on the BBS, leave him a message on the BBS. If anyone can find software it's our Librarian Larry.

Kevan Sheridan will still devote his energy as SYSOP to providing us with the best BBS he can. If you have any questions about anything related to the BBS, modems or communications leave a BBS message for Kevan.

Tom Cone will continue as Director of Membership in addition to being the Treasurer. Tom has also been involved as the welcome committee at meetings to make guest feel welcome and help new members into our group. We are in the process of looking for an official volunteer greeter that can work with Tom. Questions about our group or membership should be directed to Tom.

I believe that 1994 should be the most exciting and challenging year ever for us. Our group and HCC will mutually benefit from each other. We will have a larger pool of knowledge to gather and share information from. This will include students and faculty of HCC and ourselves. This year should be the year that we finally get our Special Interest Groups (SIG) going. Based on conversation I have had with HCC faculty, we may be able to hold some SIG meetings or classes at the Ybor and Dale Mabry campuses at no additional momentary cost. Of course SIG's and classes will only be available if we have volunteers to run them. Contact me or Ed Buzza if you would like to teach a class or run a SIG group. We need to begin the process of organizing these events now.

Last year the board of directors voted to create a family membership. This year the board has created a third membership category. The new category, effectively immediately, will be for current HCC staff and students at a cost of $15.00.

Harvey Bruneau

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SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

WordPerfect Presentations
Dos Collection DOS Hard Disk Backup Utility
Screenscapes Windows Wallpaper
Managing Your Money
Tax Cut
XDrive Deluxe (Doubles your diskspace)
ECCO Info Management systems (Super PIM)
FidelityOnLineExpress (Direct Line to Wall Street)
Seize the Day (Personal Organizer)
Screen Saver (Disney Collection)
WinWay Resume
Watchman for Windows (Advance file protection management)
Deck (AutodeskHome design)
KUI Keyboard Interface for Windows
EZ Shopper Plus (Recipe & Menu Planner

(Contact Marylee or Harvey @ 985-3338 if you are interested in doing a review article for the newsletter on any of the above software.)

SOFTWARE REVIEW:

Add Impact! By Gold Disk

Review by: Matthew and Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group



Imagine you've just completed the perfect presentation with your favorite Windows program. You review it one more time, slide by slide and then wish some key points could be emphasized just a bit more. Now, imagine soaring rockets, zooming titles, music, narration, and all manner of spif and pop added to those key points. That is what AddImpact! is all about. AddImpact! works with Freelance, WordPerfect, CorelDraw, Excel and other applications that support OLE (Object Linking and Embedding) to add emphasis and make the presentation more exciting.

Installation: Weird things happened during installation. A little window appears with a registration reminder which can be maximized. There isn't any more text to read, so maximize only if you don't want to watch the little gauges move as the files are expanded and installed. The installation process takes total control of the cpu so it is hard to get back to see how the installation is progressing. Mouse clicks and key punches become useless. When the screen saver kicks in, the stars don't move. We need more power, Scotty!

Our mouse is an old Mouse Systems Optical (no moving parts) with a 1987 driver. I suspected it was not 100% Windows compatible and was to blame for the lack of control, but a new Microsoft mouse gave the same results. Standard installation requires approximately 9MB of hard disk space.

The first thing you notice after clicking the AddImpact! icon is sand flowing in the hourglass. When all the sand drops down the hourglass flips to start the sand flowing again. Clever.

Major Features:

* Popup tool bar. Start AddImpact! from within an OLE client, AddImpact! adds itself to the menus for easy access.
* 125 animated clips. Brief messages for business or fun such as fireworks, balloons, airplanes, or ringing phones with someone saying something cute.
* 75 sounds and music clips. The WAV files are very short while the MIDI files are musical and much longer.
* PC Speaker Driver for sound with or without sound card. Yes, it will work without a sound card, but compare swimming in a pool to splashing around in the puddle left by your car's AC. It's worth a few bucks to swim in the pool. Even a cheaper 8 bit audio card that comes with speakers will work.
* Recording software. For narration, this feature is cost sensitive too. The better quality sound cards and microphones will give the best results.
* Animated text tool. Text can do just about anything, from rotating to changing size.
* Pathbased animation. Actors can move to any position, even off the screen, with a click and swoop of the mouse. They are layered so they can pass on top of or below other actors. Animation Works Interactive Movies (.AWM) and Screen Craze Movies (.SCM) can also be opened or read.
* Embedded features for distribution without AddImpact!.

Documentation: The manual not only explains how to use AddImpact! through tutorials, it also explains features available in other software packages that are seldom used due to LMF (Large Manual Fright). You too, can become a qualified Linker and Embedder by following the instructions.

Support: There are tech support phone and fax numbers, but they are not toll free.

Test Results: The first time Matthew used AddImpact! he made a short movie of smaller fish swimming rapidly across the screen and being eaten by other, larger fish. It took him about 20 minutes to get used to making animation clips, after that it was "fun and easy."

The test for OLE was to embed and link movies into a WordPerfect document. The manual explained the procedures and the test went according to plan. Trying to get a movie to play within a designated window was not as successful. At first I thought the window was too small. Enlarging it helped, but the actor still played half in and half out of the window.

A recorded message was imbedded into a Windows Write document. The icon, a movie projector, was easy to change using the Windows moreicons library. This, and changing the movie label, is useful to distinguish the movies from each other.

Matthew embedded his fish movie into a Freelance presentation. The results were good, the movie played automatically, but the presentation stalled right after the movie completed. Clicking the mouse resumed the presentation. There was a whole lot of hard disk activity before and after the movie (probably due to the sounds). There was less disk activity when the soundless Freelance animated movie played.

Documents and presentations can be distributed with a playback system. The receiver of the document must activate AddImpact! by double clicking on the AddImpact! icon first. After adding the playback server the movies and playback icon could be moved horizontally, but not vertically. Without the playback server the movies can be moved in any direction.

Limitations: The PC speaker driver can play basic WAV files (simple sounds) without a sound board, but music or speech is very distorted. Even worse, sound stops the action and makes

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the motion jerky. We're not talking Hollywood here. Adding a sound board to the system dynamically improved the quality of the audio output and the action was nonstop while sounds played.

To preview sounds, they must be Selected, Played and then Removed. A single preview button would be preferred when testingseveral sounds. A preview button for the movies would also be an improvement.

In a Windows Write narration test, double clicking the movie icon brought up the Open Wave File window. Choosing anything except the preprogrammed file caused the window to disappear and then reappear. The narration played fine, but then the icon was left selected.

You can create your own text actors using a variety of fonts, colors and sizes, but actors cannot be modified after conversion to a bitmap (to size the actor). Neither the manual nor the menus hint that editing or creating a graphic actor is possible with AddImpact!.

Evaluation: The movies themselves are interesting enough to use as is to enhance and add excitement to documents and presentations. The emphasis improves rememberability of key ideas. Having that rocket go off at the right time could keep the audience awake and paying attention. Although there were a few quirks in the tests, AddImpact! can enhance products like Freelance Graphics. The assortment of ready to use clips are quick to employ. Just plug 'em in, double click, and watch your audience perk up.

Minimum Requirements: Windows 3.1, 10mhz 286, 2MB RAM, 4MB free hard disk space, VGA(16 or 256 color), mouse.

Recommend Configuration: Windows 3.1, 386SX, 4MB RAM, 10MB free hard disk space. Also supports SVGA or higher(up to 256 colors). An MPC compatible sound card with Windows drivers and microphone are needed for recording narration.

Cost: $79 at local computer stores.
Publisher info: Gold Disk Inc., PO Box 1540, Buffalo, NY, 14205, 18004653375

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SOFTWARE REVIEW:
Adobe Type Set - Value Pack

Review by Alford Poole TPCUG

When you switch to different software it takes time to discover all the features of the new package. I'm thankful for this opportunity to work with, and thus learn more about, the Adobe Type Manager (ATM), which came with WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, and hope that this review might help others too.

What are scalable fonts all about? Instead of each letter that you type being the same uniform size throughout your document you can vary the size of the type of a whole paragraph, a word or even each letter of a word. You can start as small as 6 points and go as large as 72 points, depending on the font and application.



Some true type font packages are, well, plain compared to the Adobe Type Set package. Others may list more fonts but some may be the same font with different attributes such as bold, italic or bold italic. I like the variety of the Adobe Value Pack - each font is unique. You get 17 decorative headlines, 5 texts, 5 scripts and 3 ornaments & symbols and the front cover of the box opens to reveal examples of the different type faces.

A Quick Installation Card included with the package gives instructions for installing the whole package or just the fonts.

OS/2 1.3 or greater also comes with ATM. If you don't already have ATM installed then install it through Windows using either the Files - Run - a:\install or the Windows File Manager to locate the INSTALL.EXE program on the floppy. You must exit to DOS (but not by using the DOS Prompt button) and restart Windows to use the ATM program. Also, when new fonts are added, Windows must be restarted to use the new fonts. ATM will take advantage of pre-built (soft) fonts or resident fonts (cartridge fonts or fonts built into the printer) if they are available if you select the "Use Pre-built or Resident Bitmap Fonts" checkbox in the ATM Control Panel. This will reduce the amount of printer memory used and may improve performance.

My first problem came in trying to get the fonts to show up in WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows. They were accessible in Windows Write but would not show up in the fonts menu of WordPerfect. Documentation for the ATM said to reselect the printer. What it should say is "select Windows Printer Driver instead of the WordPerfect Printer Driver in the Select Printer menu if the Adobe fonts don't show up. "Further digging in the WP Reference tome mentioned that WP Printer Drivers would work with ATM if you have MoreFonts or Prime Type. Isn't that nice?

The Readme file lists several programs that will not work with ATM such as CorelDraw 2.0 and earlier and Harvard Draw 1.0.
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Others are listed as having limitations, mainly using the type as graphics. There is no mention that ATM supports font embedding.

ATM loads all the fonts you have installed when you start Windows, so if you want to get to Windows faster, unload some less used fonts.

For the print test I used 48 Point type so irregularity or "jaggyness" would be more noticeable. AG Old Style and Blackoak, from Adobe, and Arial Italic and MurryHill fonts that came with WordPerfect, were used with a NEC P2200 24 pin dot matrix printer. Results were interesting. With ATM all printed fonts looked nice. Without ATM AG Old Style turned to regular Arial and Blackoak turned to a less bold type. MurryHill literally turned into Greek using Greek symbols for most of the letters. Italic Arial and Courier remained unchanged. "Jaggyness" of the letters was not much different with or without ATM. Hard copy looked much better than what you see displayed on the screen. Turning ATM on and off takes some time as the printer info is updated each time. Without ATM the Adobe fonts disappear from the font menu.

How do you get the nifty fonts into your document? Unless you want your text to look like a roller coaster ride, changing the type is quite easy. Using the Character button in Windows Write, you can change fonts and size of the letters. Using Reduce Font and Enlarge Font the type can be changed to the next size down or up quickly. In WordPerfect, using the ruler from the View selection, makes changing fonts and sizes fairly quick also.

If you do any kind of newsletter, Christmas letter, or write letters to your member of Congress, these fonts could put more zip in your message. Unleash that creative genius - get scalable!

Contents:
* Adobe Type Manager software v 2.02
* 30 typefaces
* Quick Install card and User Guide booklet
* Discount coupon and catalog for more type

Requirements:
* Windows 3.x or OS/2 1.3 or greater
* 286, 386 or 486
* 1 MB RAM (2 recommended) for Windows
* 4 MB RAM (6 recommended) for OS/2
* Hard disk and one HD floppy drive (uses about 1 MB of disk space) Printers supported:
* PostScript and HP LaserJet Printers
* Dot matrix and inkjet printers
* All other output devices supported by Windows and OS/2

Compatibility:
* Nearly all Windows 3.x and OS/2 1.3 or greater applications
* DOS applications: MS Word 5.0 or greater, Ventura Publisher 2.0 or greater, WordPerfect 5.0 or greater(DOS installation utilities available through enclosed fulfilment card)

Adobe Type Set Value Pack is available at Egghead Software for $39 (before CUE).

You can contact Adobe Systems Inc. at 1585 Charleston Road, P. O. Box 7900, Mountain View, CA 94039-7900 1-800-83-FONTS (833-6687)

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Welcome New Members!

Dr. Larry Brooks
Tom Church
S. Glenn Fetty
Linda LaForest
Elaine Marmel
Bob Sanders
Joseph Tingley
Sandy Windham-Harring

Volunteer Highlight:

There is one among us that has been contributing a good bit of time and talent for the betterment of our user group. We would like to recognize this individual and let you know what he is doing for all of us. We hope we will have enough active members and volunteer help from our membership to incorporate this kind of recognition in every newsletter.

In recent months this person has devoted quite a number of hours learning the BBS from Kevan Sheridan, our BBS SYSOP, and then helping Kevan maintain the BBS. Kevan reports this person as quite helpful to both he and the BBS. In addition, this volunteer has written a number of articles for our Bits of Blue newsletter, helping inform his fellow hackers and at the same time enhancing the value of our newsletter. Who is this person? All of our members that don't already know him will come to recognize his name, for the membership recently voted him to the office in our User Group of Vice President. He is: **Al Poole**

Many thanks for all your help, Al. This group can only be as good and useful as the membership is willing to put into it; we are all very familiar with the GIGO saying, "Garbage In, Garbage Out." It is clear that you recognize that GIGO applies to our group, with a little different expression NINO, "Nothing In, Nothing Out." We look forward to benefiting from your contribution as a member of the BOD this coming year which we are confident will help make our organization ever better. Thanks again!

User's Corner

...Ed Buzza

TAPE DRIVE. For sure, tape drives are in! With street prices ranging from $160180 for Colorado Memory's 250meg Jumbo, it warrants serious consideration by anyone with a 200meg (or larger) hard drive.

It is a lot faster than backing up to floppy disks and one cartridge takes up a lot less space than a stack of floppies. On a Gateway p60, it took 11 minutes to backup almost 90meg of data on the hard drive. Restoring that data took about 18 minutes.

But, you say, $180 for the drive and $25 for the tape is expen sive! Not if you do a cost/benefit analysis. Let's assume that you use the three level backup system (set A is the oldest, set B is next, and set C is the latest and you rotate the disk sets).

For $255 (180 for the drive and 75 for the 3 tapes), you have a system that will backup 250meg of your programs and files; and that's 3 deep! Buying 750meg of floppies is a lot more expensive. Using 1.4meg floppies at an average cost of eighty cents, you'd spend about $430; and an awful lot of time shuffling those disks in and out of the PC. Besides, what else are you going to do with that money you got for Christmas?

Or you can spring for the Colorado "Trakker", the portable tape unit. It's street price is around $370. Pretty steep but it IS portable and it plugs into your parallel port! No cards, no drive bay, no dip switches, nothing. And you don't lose the printer, it plugs into the back of the tape drive. A great idea for an office environment or even a bunch of friends chipping in and sharing the tape drive.

WORDPERFECT 6.0 FOR DOS. Call up your last macro by pressing <AltF10>, <DnAr>. The last four macros will be displayed in a dialog box. Highlight the one you want and press <Enter>.

PKWARE. These programs are the most commonly used programs to compress/decompress files. But the command line interface is something else. Fortunately, there are font ends, or shells, that make life a lot easier. For Windows, one of the best is WINZIP and for DOS there is SHEZ. Look for them on your favorite BBS or in your user group library.

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Windows Tip from Capital PCUG

To use your mouse to copy from an MS-DOS based application running in a window, from the application's Control Menu select the Edit, Mark dommand. With Windows 3.1 you can then use the mouse to highlight the area of text you want to copy. Return to the Control menu, then select Edit, Copy to copy the highlighted area of text to the Clipboard. The data can then be pasted into an application for either MS-DOS or Windows.

To run a tutorial that teaches the basics of using a Mouse and Windows, choose the Windows Tutorial command from the Help menu in the Program Manager.

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Handy Windows Screen Blankers

Extracted from Windows Sources Mag, which had been submitted by Richard Shoemaker, of NPCUG.

You can make Windows' screen savers blank the screen on demand: Look for the screen savers with an SCR file extension in your Windows directory and copy, don't just rename, each SCR file to an EXE file (for example, copy SSFLYWIN.SCR to SSFLYWIN.EXE). In Program Manager, select "FileNew" and click "Program Item", then "OK". Type the description and the screen saver's EXE file name in the Description and Command Line text boxes. Add "/S to the command line and click "OK". when you want the screen blanked, doubleclick the new icon.

(The above tip, was discovered and submitted by Jim Clark, TPCUG to share with our members.)

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LINGO

compiled by Brian Hodes
The Calgary Personal Computer User Society

When someone talks about a "computer language", we usually think of programming languages like BASIC, 'C', Assembler and so on. If you merely want to *use* a computer, you don't need to learn anything about these languages at all.

No matter how far removed you want to remain from the inner workings of the machine, there is one language you do have to learn: lingo.

Let's take a look at some of the terms which make up computer lingo.

ASCII: (American Standard Code for Information Interchange). a 7-bit code capable of representing alphanumeric characters and control codes in a form acceptable to machines.

BOOT: To start up a computer system, usually by switching on the power. Some computers must be booted with a floppy disk in the drive (a boot disk) which contains the disk operating system (DOS).

DISK STORAGE: A type of mass memory which stores data on a magnetically sensitive disk.

RECURSIVE SUBROUTINE: A subroutine that invokes another subroutine, which in turn, invokes the original subroutine again.

REGISTER: A unit of memory that is contained within the processor circuitry itself, as opposed to main memory or mass storage.

RELOCATABLE CODE: Code that can occupy any position in main memory.

RUN TIME: The time at which the program is executed. Also, the amount of time required to execute the program.

SECOND SOURCE: A manufacturer who produces a product that is interchangeable with the product of another manufacturer.

SEED: An argument that is used as the initial value for a pseudo-random number generator.

SIMULATION: A computer program that mathematically models a process.

SINGLE STEPPING: Having the computer execute a program slowly so that the user can watch each step and its effects.

SOFTWARE LICENSE: A contract signed by the purchaser of a software product in which he is usually made to agree not to make copies of the software for resale.

SOURCE CODE: Code that is to be processed by a systems program such as a compiler or an assembler.

STATEMENT: A single computer instruction within a computer program.

STRING: A variable that contains alphanumeric text.

SUBROUTINE: A program segment that may be invoked by another section of the program. A subroutine call differs from a simple jump instruction in that after completion of the subroutine, execution of the program will return to the program section that invoked it.

SYSTEMS PROGRAM: A program that does not perform actual problem solving but rather is used to control system operations or act as a programming aid.

TRAP: A hardware- or software-implemented function that signals the processor whenever a specified condition occurs.

UTILITY: A frequently-used program or subroutine. Utility routines are most often associated with systems programs rather than applications programs.

VIRTUAL DEVICE: An imaginary device that the processor assumes to be present, e.g., a ramdisk.

WORKSPACE: A loosely defined term that usually refers to the amount of memory available for programs and data.

♦♦♦♦

OS/2 Tip

Eric Larsen, Kentucky-Indiana PCUG

OS/2 2.1 Installation with SVGS Cards

If you have a SVGA card and display, you may have noticed that your video cums up in VGA resolution after you install OS/2.2.1. The SVGA utility usually supplied with a SVGA card cannot be loaded during OS/2's initial installation. To access the SVGA modes, perform the following steps:

1. Boot your machine after installing OS/2 2.1 to the Os/2 System folder.
2. Select System Setup, the Selective Install.
3. Choose to install SVGA support. During that prorcedure, you will be prompted for your SVGA utility diskette.

Once this installation is complete, you can select from the SVGA video modes supported by your card.

♦♦♦♦

BOOK REVIEW: OS/2 For Dummies

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

You've probably seen the For Dummies books, bright yellow and black covers. Well, the author of Windows For Dummies, and coauthor of PCs For Dummies, Andy Rathbone has also written OS/2 For Dummies. I wasn't quite sure reading one of these books in public was a good idea, image you know. I'm not a computer wizard, but I thought Dummies were real potato heads who needed their hand held while being taught how to use the DIR command step by step. What a surprise! "Is OS/2 as Cool as They Say on TV?" is the title for the first chapter. He presents the basics in a simple and fun style making it easy to get acquainted with a complicated piece of software.

Overview: OS/2 For Dummies is a reference book for OS/2 2.0 and 2.1 users and want to be users. It will help you install OS/2, if you haven't already done so, or make it run better if you have.

Major Features: Inside the front cover is a cheat sheet with helpful hints like: Cutting and Pasting Stuff, Fixing Mistakes, Helpful Shortcut Keys, and Fiddling Around with Objects. There are road signs as icons to point out special sections such as Windows Stuff, DOS Stuff, Things to Remember and Technical Stuff. Gray boxes mark Technical Stuff for easy avoidance. There are lots of tips on how to improve OS/2. Like changing Windows icons to OS/2 icons (a ten step process) and silencing the Shredder.

Documentation: The book is well organized and includes Contents at a Glance and a Table of Contents with each chapter broken down into many subheadings. There is also a plain English glossary, an appendix Fiddling with FDISK, and an index. At the back of the book are several blank pages to list Files I Should Never Delete, Computer Gurus, their phone numbers and Favorite Snack Bribe, and Stupid computer Mistakes I've made (And Should Never Make Again!). No more cryptic notes in the margins.

Limitations: This book won't tell you if your hardware will work with OS/2 it has a stock answer for when it doesn't call the manufacturer and bug them to send you an OS/2 driver.

Evaluation: OS/2 For Dummies is great for beginners or intermediates who would like help with OS/2. The use of humor goes a long way in making the learning process more enjoyable. Example: "Computer nerds relax by fiddling with their computers, whether that involves rearranging the computer's power cables to flow in a straight line or changing OS/2's desktop from its traditional dull gray to the livelier color of a Hostess Fruit Pie filling." This book fills a gap between the F1 key and advanced manuals and will help you feel comfortable working with OS/2.

Cost and availability: $19.95 and you can subtract 25-30% at most large computer stores. Publisher info: IDG Books Worldwide, Inc., 155 Bovet Road, Suite 310, San Mateo, CA 94402 18007622974 ♦♦♦♦

Book Review:
"GATES: HOW MICROSOFT'S MOGUL REINVENTED AN INDUSTRY AND MADE HIMSELF THE RICHEST MAN IN AMERICA"

A Book Review by: Marc Valley,
Pikes Peak Computer Applications Society, Inc.

The American Dream To be a millionaire or how about a Billionaire? Forbes magazine announced that Bill Gates, at the age of 37, was the richest man in Americahis personal wealth $7 Billion. William Henry Gates was born on October 28, 1955 in Seattle Washington. He is the only son, second child, of William Henry Jr. and Mary (Maxwell) Gates.

I read this book with enthusiasm and impatience. It isn't a book that you read through in a couple of nights. You are given so many facts and events that you must take your time reading it. Sometimes I'd go to the index and reference an item and go back to read it. By the way the index is awesome. I normally could read this sized book in 34 nights, not so with this one. It took about eight nights of reading to finish it.

> "It was developed through more than 20 hours of interviews with Bill Gates, reviewing personal files and access to Microsoft employees."

Stephen Manes and Paul Andrews did a superb job of writing. Some of the more interesting parts of the book tell of Microsoft's dealings with "Big Blue" (IBM) and Apple. The ups and downs are all in here. From the development of DOS, Windows, Presentation Manager, OS/2 and everything in between. The book is described in the final chapter "Full Disclosure" as being "an independent enterprise". It was developed through more than 20 hours of interviews with Bill Gates, reviewing personal files and access to Microsoft employees. The authors also point out that the information in the book was fully researched by their staff, not Microsoft's. What the authors tried, and did, was present a complete history of Bill Gates and Microsoft as accurately as they could being on the outside. You will not read that Bill Gates was an angel nor will you read that he was a cutthroat business man, you will read the facts. A man does not get to be as rich as Bill by allowing himself to be run over.

Whatever you get out of this book, I believe that it will be fantastic. This book is so full of facts and opinions and because everything was so fully researched, I decided that it is the best biography I have read to date. I do not hesitate to recommend it for your reading pleasure. " Gates: How Microsoft's Mogul Reinvented an Industry and Made Himself the Richest Man in America", by Stephen Manes and Paul Andrews, $25.00, Doubleday, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10103. ISBN: 0385420757.

Software Review:
UFO

Review by Gary W. Wodka, Madison PC User's Group



They're baaaaaack! In fact, they're all over everywhere! There's no escaping the UFOs!!! Well, actually, the historical records of the UFOs are back. In fact, a new CDROM multimedia program from Software Marketing Corporation titled, "UFO: The Planet's Most Complete Guide To Close Encounters," gives you just about all the information there is about the collected "XFiles" of UFO sightings, contacts, abductions and encounters in one place. Included are 1228 of these events, dating back to biblical times, through the first part of 1993.

This program comes in two forms: CDROM (reviewed here) and 3.5" diskette. I can't imagine the diskette is anywhere as complete as the CD, since the CD includes over 175 MB of information, photos, video and sound. Installation from the CD copies a few files to your hard disk, but the majority of the program runs from the CD. UFO installs a runtime version of Microsoft's Video for Windows so you'll be able to view the movie clips.

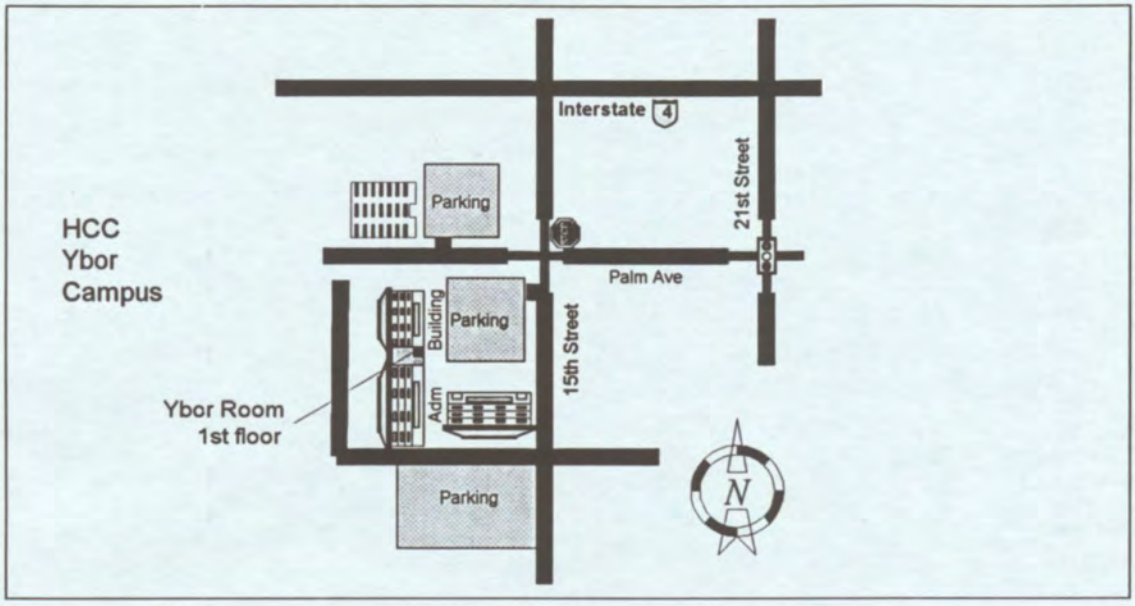
When started, you'll be faced with a screen composed of four sections, with a centerscreen overlay. This overlay is where you tell the program what to look for. You have a choice of sightings, abductions, photographic evidence, videos, mutilations, multiple witnesses, and whether death or injury was involved. You can select the range of years you'd like to search. Once these parameters are selected, the search is on.

The four windows are the Locator Map, with dots over the globe where sightings and encounters have taken place. Behind this is the list of events, chronologically. The second window is a description of the event, with the date, place, time, number of UFOs, and number of witnesses. Also here are radio buttons if there is photographic evidence and textual evidence. Clicking on either of these buttons brings up the photos, video and other text. The lower left window is for the image of the UFO if one is available. And finally, on the lower right is the Event Discussion of the selected event.

That's about all there is, but the fun's not over yet. Since this is a Windows program, you have access to all of this information and can use it in other programs through use of the Clipboard. Text, photographic images and map images can be copied to the Clipboard and imported into other documents.

There's a "Search" function in UFO that allows you to search by date, location name, and locator map. You're able to see at a glance just how many sightings there have been in your area. From what I can determine, there have been sightings EVERYWHERE in profusion. As I searched through the chronological calendar, I discovered that 1897 was a good year for extraterrestrials. Then things slow down until World War II. Beginning in 1942, and again in 1944, there were many sightings in Germany and Japan, especially.

(Continued on Page 12)



Directions to our new meeting site: Take Interstate 4 to 21st/22nd Street (Ybor City) Exit, South to Palm Avenue, West to 15th Street to **Hillsborough Community College -Ybor Room** (Corner of Palm & 15th Street)

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-9232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money

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FULL SUPPORT from the
Tampa PC Users Group

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SUNRISE COMPUTER SUPPLIES
3328 Henderson Blvd.
Tampa, Florida

ACCESS to the GROUP'S
PROGRAM LIBRARY

(UFO--Continued from page 10)

In both of these areas, it seems that many photographs were taken (according to the textual descriptions), but none are included in the photographic evidence. They must have been destroyed in the war, huh? Where videos are available, they are pretty neat! I'd suggest at least a doublespeed CD player to view them without jerks.

Is there anything besides curiosity involved here? Hard to say. I know that I did learn a few things. I won't spoil your fun, but watch out for the caustic angel hair and those men in black!! It could be hazardous to your health.

UFO retails for $59.95 and is a product of:
Software Marketing Corporation
9830 South 51st St.
Phoenix, AZ 85044
(602) 8933377

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492

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Editorial Comment:

The review article titled "Adobe Type Set - Value Pack" by Al Poole appeared in the October '93 newsletter. The duplication of this article in this January newsletter is an editorial error discovered after printing. The following article was the intended software review for this issue of Bits of Blue. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause our readers.

Software Review:

Adobe Wild Type

Review by: Alford Poole, TPCUG

Wild characters: dudes making totally rad letters with skate boards, cute critter letters, and spooky quake letters are just a few of the typefaces included with the new Adobe Wild Type.

Adobe Wild Type consists of fourteen fonts. Five tame fonts complement Critter, Cutout (paper cutouts of people), Studz (letters with rivets), Rad (guys and skateboards), Mythos (mythical type), Toolbox (this is my favorite), Quake, Giddyup (rope letters), and Giddyup Thangs (western graphics).

Installation: Adobe Type Manager (ATM), version 2.51, comes with the fonts and is easy to install. Remember, the more fonts you add the longer Windows will take to load. Either limit the fonts you load to the ones you need or remove older, less used fonts.

Features: Font size adjustable from 6 to 48 pts in WordPerfect, 8 to 72 in Windows Write. ATM supports the Windows Printing System.

Documentation: Font examples are on the back of the box. Charts for character access for Windows applications and ASCII character codes are now included in the rewritten user manual. An index might have been more useful.



Support: Adobe has 24hour automated technical support and a fax request line, ATM and type support, and a PC support line (all you pay for is the phone charge). They even offer to help with third party software problems.

Test Results: Only Rad needed to have the font cache in ATM increased to 160K to be seen or printed in WordPerfect 5.2. All the rest did fine with 96K. Using smaller type sizes, detail was lost and they were harder to read on the screen than in print. With larger sizes detail and readability improve. Type smoothness was excellent. Some fonts have only capitals and no special number characters: Critter, Mythos, and Toolbox. Quake and Giddyup plus the tame fonts can do small letters and numbers that look like the capitals.

Options: Adobe will send low density 3.5 or HD 5.25 disks at no additional cost. For 15 dollars and tax they will send Font Foundry for users of DOS applications like WordPerfect 5.0 and 5.1, Microsoft Word 5.0 or greater, Ventura Publisher, or WordStar Professional and users of HP Laser Jet series II or III or other PCL4compatible printers.

Evaluation: Adobe has crafted a fine package of typefaces. The tamer typefaces are modified versions of older typefaces, and work well with the wild ones. These fonts may not be for everyday use, but they can add excitement to memos, letters, presentations, or anything else to attract attention. With ATM making changes in fonts is easy and using the fonts themselves is just as easy as any of the other Windows fonts. Recommended for those who could use a walk on the wild side, but don't want extra hassles. Get radical!

System requirements: 286 or better, Windows 3.0 or greater, or OS/2 1.3 or greater, 3.5inch HD floppy drive, hard disk, 1MB RAM(2MB recommended).

Cost and availability:
SRP $60
Publisher info:
Adobe Systems Inc.,
1585 Charleston Road,
P.O. Box 7900,
Mountain View, CA 94039
18008336687



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Bits of Blue

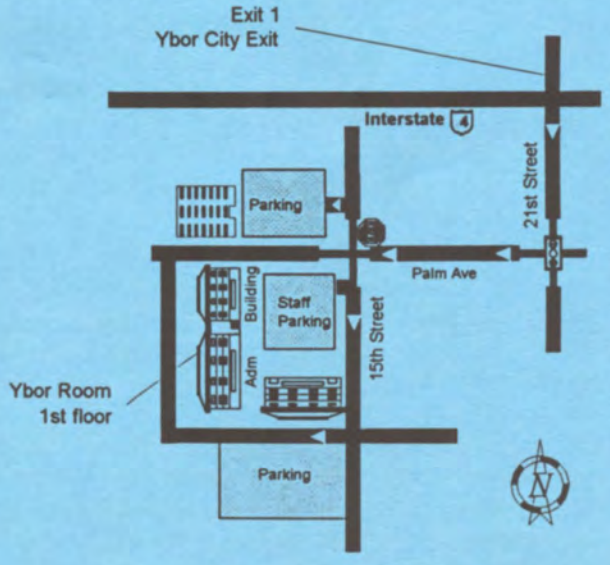
Vol. 7 No. 2 February, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: February 9th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room

DIRECTIONS:

Take Interstate 4 to 21st/22nd Street (Ybor City) Exit 1, South to Palm Avenue, West to 15th Street to Hillsborough Community College. **Guest please sign in.**



Come to the February 9th meeting and check out our new facilities!

FEBRUARY 9TH AGENDA:

Demo of **DESKVIEW** -
a DOS based Multi-tasking operating environment

By: Tom Cone, of Tampa PC Users Group

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Drawing -
OS/2
CA's Simply Money
and Miscellaneous items

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

March 9 -
CorelDraw 4.0
Demo by: Corel Systems Corp.

April 13 - (re-scheduled from Feb. 9)
Wordperfect 6.0 - for Windows
Demo by: John Johannesmeyer of WP

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

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VICE PRES :	Al Poole	876-9445
TREASURER:	Tom Cone	224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
SECRETARY:	Jim Clark	986-3888

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EDUCATION DIRECTOR:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	985-3338
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
BBS SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan	237-0100
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:	Tom Cone	224-9052

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Ami Pro for Windows from Lotus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 1/12/94 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

The meeting, our last general meeting in the IBM Lake Pointe facilities, began on time at 6 PM, with our President, Harvey Bruneau, presiding. There were fewer members present than normal, probably because most had not yet received the newsletter which serves as a reminder, and perhaps because this was the last meeting at the lovely Lake Pointe building. A simultaneous meeting of the OS/2 Users' group undoubtedly also drew some of our members. Unfortunate for them because they missed some very good info and an excellent presentation.

USER GROUP NEWS

➳ New Meeting Location In February: Harvey reminded all that this was the last meeting in the Lake Pointe building and that the February meeting would be held at regular time at the Ybor City campus of Hillsborough Community College. A map is included on the back page of the current newsletter, and will be in the next newsletter as well. Harvey also reported that while he does not yet have a computer for the group in his possession, he does have a promise of a donor computer. Arrangements have also been made to borrow from his employer Dun & Bradstreet a projector on a very temporary basis; that is, we cannot make such an imposition for very long and we must obtain our own projector in the notverydistant future.

➳ NonProfit Status: Harvey reported that the Post Office has approved our application for nonprofit status. That means our newsletter mailing cost will drop again by about 30-40%. (There is no connection between this and our application to the IRS for nonprofit status which is still pending.)

➳ Student Memberships: Harvey informed the membership of a BOD decision to create a new membership category Students & Staff (of the HCC only). Annual membership fee is $15. The good rapport established already in our relationship with the HCC has led to them making available space for use by our SIGs.

➳ Meet Your BBS: All were advised that Kevan, our SYSOPs, was holding another Meet Your BBS Nite on the third Wednesday of this month. If good participation continues at this excellent learning opportunity, it may well become a regularly scheduled event.

➳ Word Perfect Presentation Rescheduled: Word Perfect has rescheduled their planned presentation at our February meeting to the April meeting. Harvey is working with Microsoft to come in for a presentation at the February meeting. CorelDraw is still scheduled for the March meeting.

INDUSTRY NEWS

➳ 100 MHz 486's: Word in the industry is that these machines will be available this year. They will be only slightly slower than present Pentiums and will cost considerably less like in the $2500 range.

(Continued on next Page)

(Continued from previous page)

➳ MS Excel: For those looking for the 5.0 version of Excel, Microsoft has announced that it will ship next month.

➳ Windows For WorkGroups: Version 3.11 of this program will be widely available soon. Be aware that while OS/2 is compatible with Windows for WorkGroups 3.1, it is not compatible with Windows For WorkGroups 3.11.

PRESENTATION

CA Simply Money & Simply Tax

Computer Associates (CA) graciously made available for our benefit one of their Product Consultants, Marty Steiner, to give us a rundown on two of their products Simply Money and Simply Tax. Since very few of those present knew much about CA, Marty gave us a little info about the company. It was surprising for most of us to learn that CA is the second largest software company in the business and has been around from the start. In fact, many years ago they produced the second spreadsheet program to be marketed Super Calc. They have been big in the mainframe area all this time, and are now working to improve their recognition in the PC world; hence, the Simply Money and Simply Tax programs they have been making available for only a S & H charge. CA has software covering just about the full spectrum of computer applications word processing, data base, spreadsheet, etc. some 13 major applications in all. Marty then gave a brief review of Simply Money and Simply Tax:

Simply Money is a program for recording and monitoring personal and business finances. It is a great deal more than a check writing program, and has features which tie together all sorts of accounts and investments into a comprehensive package. In addition to writing checks and maintaining checking accounts, Simply Money handles credit card accounts, cash and savings accounts, credit lines and loan accounts, mortgages, asset and liability accounts, budgeting, and a wide variety of investment accounts, including stocks and mutual and taxfree funds which can be tracked and updated via modem. Business applications include accrual and cash basis accounting, payroll accounting and business reports. All of the accounts in a financial data base can be linked together so that a single transaction affecting more than one account will be reflected in all accounts involved. Reports and graphs can be created quickly and easily for any of the accounts simply by clicking and dragging. In fact, except for the entry of data via the keyboard, all operations in Simply Money can be handled simply and easily with 'clicks' and 'drags'.

As a user of Simply Money I can tell you that it is simple, flexible and easy to use, though I will admit that I have not even scratched the surface of its capabilities. Requirements to load and use Simply Money are: A 286 or better machine, with at least 2 Mb of Ram (4 recommended), mouse, 5 Mb of hard disk space, DOS 3.1 or later, and Windows 3.1 or later. At the present time, it is available only as a Windows program.

Simply Tax is a comprehensive personal and small business tax preparation program. It, too, appears to be very customizable, comprehensive and easy to use. It allows entry of data for the tax returns via interview, questions and answer, or direct entry, all of which appear easy, direct and straight forward. Included are some 90 forms, schedules and worksheets it is very comprehensive. Its many features include: Use of data from Simply Money, Quicken, Lotus, Dollars & Sense and Managing Money, and uses Tax Exchange Format (.TXF) which allows import of data from other accounting programs; automatic overflow statements to accommodate more entries than IRS forms provide; a quick tour to familiarize the user with the program; a tax forecasting capability; data validation; tax preparation checklist; cross reference help; comprehensive contextsensitive online help; depreciation history and reference tables; automatic links to appropriate form & line; depreciation history and reference tables; averages of itemized deductions with an audit alert to notify of entries which exceed substantially the averages; tax tips to help identify ways of reducing tax liabilities; and a 'what if' capability, to name just a few.

Simply Tax will print out all of the return forms ready to file we are told that when printed on a good laser printer the forms will appear identical to the IRS forms. Alternatively, it has the capability and includes instructions to file the tax return electronically.

Simply Tax is available for Windows or DOS. Requirements for the Windows version of Simply Tax are: A 386 or better machine with 2 Mb of RAM (4 Mb recommended), 5.5 Mb of hard disk space, Windows 3.1. A mouse is recommended. Requirements for the DOS version are: Any IBMcompatible PC with 640 K of RAM (500K available), 3.5 Mb of hard disk space, and DOS 3.0 or later. Mouse is optional. Just about any Epson/IBM/HPcompatible printer can be used with either version.

Simply money can be obtained by calling 1800FREEMONEY. Cost is $6.95 to cover S & H. Simply Tax can be obtained by calling 18007FREE TAX. Cost is $9.95, again for S & H. If ordering both programs, call the Simply Tax number.

Marty and Computer Associates, we THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your visit, for familiarizing us with your company, for a great presentation of two of your programs, and for the copies of Simply Money you donated. You have a couple of great looking programs in Simply Money and Simply Tax. We hope you will favor us with presentations in the future on upgrades to these programs, as well as introduce us to your other programs.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Computer Associates, who donated several copies of Simply Money, and collections obtained by Harvey and Marylee at Comdex, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Larry T. Brooks	Simply Money
Cheryl Petty	Simply Money
Doug Rapphun	Simply Money
Dan Whitman	Simply Money
M. N. Martenez	Carrying case
W. L. LaMartin	2 cups

In addition, 2 people won monitor borders and at least 9 people won psychedelic sunglasses.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:30 PM.

♦♦♦♦

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Reminder: Our new meeting place is at the YBOR room of the HCC YBOR campus.

A map is included on first page of this newsletter to provide you with directions. I look forward to seeing each one of you there.

By now all the software and hardware that you received for the holidays should be installed. I hope that each of you had success in the installation procedures and are happy with your new products. However, I am sure that some of you experienced difficulty with some products. Whether good or bad we would like to publish your thoughts and experiences in our newsletter. Send your comments to the editor or to Ed Buzza via the bulletin board or mail and we will see that they get published. Let your experiences help others.

This weekend three separate conversations with different people brought to light how unfriendly computers are to beginner and novice users. Hey even experienced users have problems from time to time. It doesn't seem to matter if a person is a DOS or Windows user, neither environment is as easy and intuitive as it should be or claims to be. Sure computers become easier to use over time, but that's only after the computers and software *have trained us* in their use. Its true, we are trained by the software and hardware to do something correctly. I can remember when I had a real tough time understanding directories and sub-directories, the path statement and the use of a modem. It should have been easier for me back then with only one real DOS and one processor (8088). Has computing gotten easier since those days in the eighties? Not really. If you think it has, take a novice computer user to CompUSA or Computer City today and ask them to pick a Sound Blaster sound card and a CD ROM drive. Sound Blaster has four different sound cards and there are at least four times that in CD drives. The choice of operating systems and computers available are also overwhelming.

OK so we got Windows. Vendors have added a graphical look to DOS programs. Windows applications are suppose to be easier to use because they have a common look and feel. It's true that as you use more Windows applications there is a certain common menu look and basic command structure that is always present. It also true that Windows can be fun and more productive when it's configured correctly. Of course, the fun and that common look and feel doesn't help you the first time you use Windows. And the percent of commands and menus which are common are subject to debate. If you get a chance look at Ami Pro from Lotus and Microsoft Word. Both are designated as word processors. What percent is common? The same can be said about Quatro Pro and Excel. It should be easier.

Communication among each other is difficult when we don't know that the C> prompt and DOS prompt are similar. Just determining which connection is for a mouse, serial or parallel device or even a modem jack can be difficult for the 1st time users.

I hear more and more people say that they don't understand computers because they are computer illiterate. That just isn't true. We, the human race, taught computers what they know, not the other way around. People are not computer illiterate, in fact I believe that computers are human illiterate.

My reason for going into all this detail is that many of you have experienced some of the above. Your experiences, shared with others, can help make these human illiterate computers easier to learn and use. That's the basic foundation of a user group. Monthly vendor presentations are fine, but we need to share our own knowledge amongst ourselves and the community. We need to implement Special Interest Groups and classes to help educate each other. We need more volunteers to add their names to the membership help line.

We need your help in other areas. We would like to organize a computer swap meet. How about a membership drive to boost our finances? Do you know of companies or individuals that would advertise in our newsletter? If you have some ideas on any topic leave me or any board member a message on the BBS or call us.

Harvey Bruneau

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UMAX OFFERS HANDBOOK TO FLATBED SCANNER USERS:

Features Practical Tips for
Desktop Publishing and OCR Applications

UMAX Technologies, Inc. (UTI), announces that it is offering a free handbook to new or future users of flatbed scanners. The handbook shows how to achieve maximum results in two of the most widelyused scanner applications: desktop publishing (DTP) and optical character recognition (OCR). Called "The Practical Guide to Scanning," the handbook explains the importance of DTP and OCR as viable productivity tools and provides stepbystep "howto" tips for both applications. Additionally, the 30page handbook explains the basics of document publishing. It shows how to combine text and graphics for persuasive, professionallooking output. Included are guidelines to help scanner buyers choose hardware and software products suited to their application requirements.

"We commissioned 'The Practical Guide to Scanning' because we believe in giving the scanner practitioner useful information and real solutions," said Andy Chang, Director of Product Marketing at UMAX. He added, "In addition to providing excellent scanning hardware, we like to see both new and experienced scanner users get the most out of their equipment."

For a free copy of "The Practical Guide to Scanning," requesters may either call or write to UMAX Technologies, Inc., 3353 Gateway Blvd., Fremont, CA 94538, Reference: Scanner Handbook. To order by telephone, call 18005620311 or (510) 6518883.

UMAX Technologies, Inc. (UTI) markets a broad range of high quality image and OCR scanners for the desktop publishing and office automation markets. Its parent company, UMAX Data Systems (UDS), located in Taiwan, develops and manufactures scanners and related products. Founded in 1987, UMAX offers its products through dealers, OEMs, and VARs.

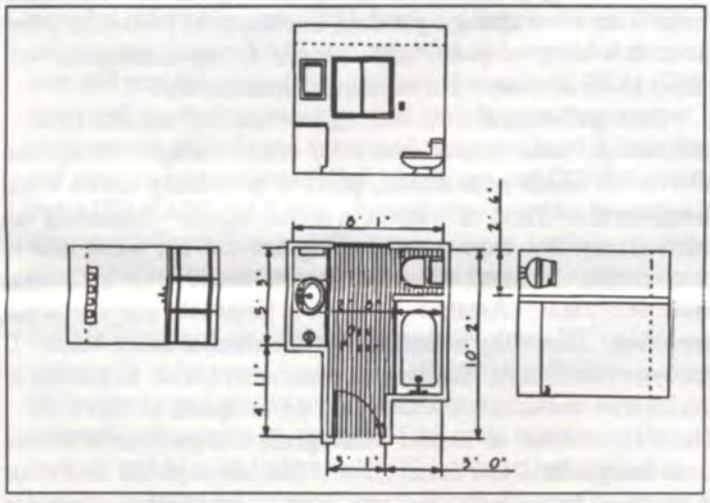
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Software Review:
Kitchen & Bath for DOS
THE HOME SERIES

Accurate Kitchen & Bathroom Design Made Easy

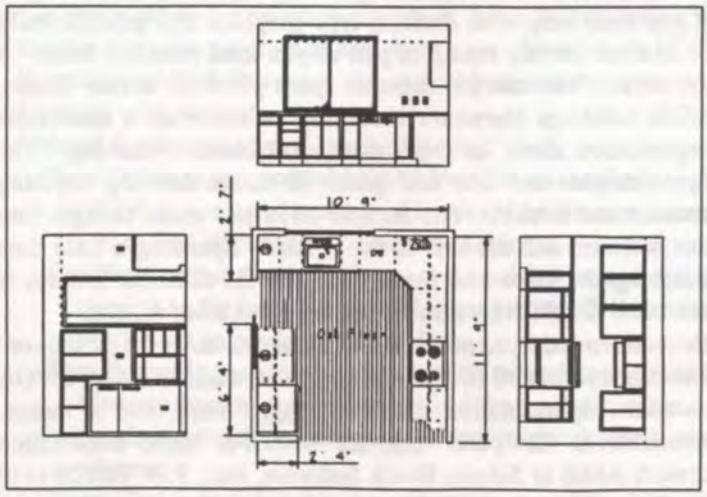
By Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group

Kitchen & Bath by Autodesk is one of the software programs of their Home Design Series. And of course, all Home Series products work together (other Home Series: Home, Deck, Landscape). Do you feel like remodeling your kitchen or bathroom? Better yet, do you want to design your own new kitchen or bathroom? Then this Kitchen & Bath program is for you. I always considered it a complicated process to draw and design floor plans to suit my needs and budget, not to mention that my hand drawings are not the greatest. Using the Kitchen & Bath program with its many pre-drawn symbols makes it easy to create any floor plan. Even if you are new to computers, you will be able to create professional looking drawings.



Bathroom Design

The tutorial in the manual gives step by step help and instruction to create a design for a kitchen and a bathroom right from the start. All the commands are menu driven, a click with the mouse gets you from one menu to the next. A multiple of color coded symbol menus reduces your free style drawing to a minimum. Place symbols of doors, windows, fixtures, appliances, and furniture anywhere in your floor plan.



Kitchen Design

What I liked the most since Kitchen & Bath was doing all the drawing and designing for me, I could create several different floor plans and compare them with each other. You also have a choice to generate a "shopping list" for each plan. The program will list all the doors, windows, type of appliances, fixtures, etc. that has been used for a particular plan.

Of course, as with most tasks or jobs, planning and preparing your design is very important. The manual tries to help you analyzing the needs you have for your planning and creating a floor plan. It also gives instructions how to take and enter actual measurements to obtain accuracy. In the manual or in the program you have a choice of following the Imperial system of measurements (inches) or the metric system.

Besides the manual, you have an "On Line Help" system with detailed instructions as you create a floor plan. Once you have created a floor plan you can make it come alive with different color schemes; and you can load your drawing into the 3DPlan program which will give you a totally new and realistic perspective of your drawing.

During the whole process of creating my own floor plan, I rarely used the keyboard. Almost every command and action is done with clicking or pointing with the mouse. I would not want to use this program without a mouse. Other requirements: DOS version 3.0 or later; a video graphics display adapter and monitor, operating in minimum 640 x 200 mode; an IBM XT, AT or 100 % compatible computer; 640KB of RAM; 3MB of free hard drive; preferable 2MB expanded memory and a math coprocessor.

List price for each Home Series: $59.95 Company: Autodesk, Inc., 11911 North Creek Parkway South Bothell, WA 98011 Tel.: 1 800 228-3601

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IMPORTANT DATES!

Mark your calendar - March 25, 26 & 27! These are the dates for a mini-Comdex style computer show that is being planned for Orlando through the auspices of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG). Tampa PC Users Group, Inc. is a member of the association.

Plans call for approximately 300 vendors to have booths in the Orange County Convention Center over that March weekend. Headquarters for the user group round tables and discussion groups will be next door at the Clarion Hotel.

More details will follow next month.

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Software Review: IntelliDraw 1.0 for Windows

By Aldus

Review by: Alford Poole,

Tampa PC Users Group

"Now what would happen if . . . " "Whoa, that looks weird!" "Neat!" "Wish I had this last year for math class." These are comments made by my son as he took IntelliDraw for a spin. This is drawing with a difference. Have you ever thought the computer and software should be doing more of the work when doing graphics? If so, then check out IntelliDraw, an interesting collection of tools for creating graphics, designing room layouts, and creating organizational charts.

IntelliDraw takes up 3.5 MB, add a little more for product filters (1.5 MB to choose from), and 6.2 MB of clip art. The filters are to help IntelliDraw and other graphic programs work together. The package includes Adobe Type Manager (version 2.0) and a font disk.

Watch the training video first. It is over an hour long and gives a good overview of the major features. You also get a good feeling about the programs capabilities. A second viewing might help cut down the learning time. There are two manuals, a User Manual contains exercises similar to those presented on the video, the other is a reference manual. The User Manual assumes intelligence of the user - as you go along it doesn't repeat all the steps previously covered. The package also includes a handy quick reference card to explain the different toolbars and buttons.

Phone support is available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time). The call is not toll free, but they are prompt. It took less than five minutes to get answers for two questions made at 7:30pm (our time). Each time IntelliDraw launched, a window would pop up saying, "File Error, Cannot find PSCRIPT.DRV." Clicking the Close button made the window go away and the program continued to set itself up. After reinstalling IntelliDraw and searching the whole hard drive, PSCRIPT.DRV could not be found. The tech rep explained that this was a postscript printer driver (I knew that) and could be loaded through Windows Control Panel. The window did go away (I knew it would). Question two was why the dialogue boxes took 30 seconds or more to disappear, even when clicking Cancel. Answer: POINTER.EXE was loaded in WIN.INI and was causing a conflict. Putting a semicolon in front of the offending line in the WIN.INI fixed that problem too. The call was worth it. Fax is also available.

IntelliDraw is a feature-packed program. Using the User Manual as a guide takes you through the basics, shows you which buttons to push to get the right results. What I liked best was aligning each component of a drawing. There are guidelines that appear when an object lines up with part of another object. My computer and flower vase drawing might not have been as pretty as theirs, but it was fun to do. Duplicating objects and then having them all line up with equal spacing with just a click of a key is a thrill. Ok, my thrill threshold is a little low, but drawing was never this easy before. The results were better than I expected.

An Info window explains any object or button that the mouse arrow pauses over. A click of the mouse can move, reduce to a title bar, or eliminate from the screen the tool bars (palates). Grouping and ungrouping objects is no problem. There are shortcut keys or menu choices for just about every action.

"Sticky" connectors, used between objects, are stretchable while maintaining their connections. IntelliDraw can automatically adjust charts, like family history, scheduling, organizational, or whatever. For example, if you wanted to resize all the boxes, just change one and then all the rest are altered also.

I could not locate SLDTEMPL.IDT mentioned in the User Manual, so I attempted a slide show from scratch. It was tedious, but not really a bad experience. You have total control over each aspect of the slides because there is lots of versatility. One neat thing to use while doing space plans are dimension lines. They show changing measurements, so as you create plans for a new shed or patio, any changes to the dimensions will reflect in the measurement numbers, automatically!

An experiment at map making (without any research) was interesting. Line shapes drawn for roads reshaped easily, but after a few roads were drawn, parts of previously drawn roads disappeared. Time to view the video again. Importing an interstate symbol from another program did not work due to incompatible formats. The experiment ended with a General Protection Fault. Another test with a large text file ended the same way. Importing a smaller text file worked much better. If you type your text in another program, don't bother formating it. IntelliDraw works better when there are no spaces to deal with. There is no filter to import Micrografx Designer or Windows Draw images in .DRW format, but if files are exported as .PIC or .EPS then IntelliDraw can use them. IntelliDraw does not currently support the Kanji alphabet. Well, be assured, I was crushed too. Also, the screen savers that worked in other Windows programs don't with IntelliDraw. This could be why the GPF popped up in the above experiments - memory conflicts with the screen saver.

IntelliDraw is diverse and goes way beyond basic drawing. If you need help with drafting-type graphics this product could be like the calvary riding in just as you load your last bullet - a job saver. You can put together space plans for dream houses, office buildings (furniture included), or make up a modifiable organization chart, or experiment with creative drawing. The Symmetrigon tool is a real gem. It makes drawing anything symmetrical EASY. The authors have put much thought into this software and the user is the winner. Spending a little time watching the video and learning to use the different features is essential. IntelliDraw also comes in a Macintosh version.

Recommended System Requirements: Windows 3.1, a 386- or 486-based MS-DOS compatible computer, 4MB of RAM, a VGA or other highresolution graphics adapter card, and a mouse. Available at Computer City for $99. For more information contact Aldus at Silicon Beach Software, Inc., P.O. Box 261430 San Diego, CA 92196 (619) 695-6956

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Software Review:

Check3It Pro Version 1.06

Review By: Jim Clark
Tampa PC Users Group

What It Is: Check It Pro is a DOS-based collection of computer information, testing and diagnostic tools which can be used individually or as a comprehensive package. It is broken down into two volumes: Sysinfo, and Advanced Diagnostic Software. Created by TouchStone Software Corporation, the two volumes can be purchased separately or as a single unit.

Volume I, the Sysinfo volume, makes available information about the hardware, configuration and settings of your computer, and measures performance of the hardware. It provides information in greater detail than all of the computer informational software I have used that has been incorporated into multi-purpose software. It is menu controlled in a way that all of its capabilities are quickly and easily accessible. Sysinfo provides information on: CPU; hard and floppy drives; BIOS; conventional, upper/UMB and extended and expanded memory; com and parallel ports; DIP switches (if installed); TSRs; IRQ usage (where devices are connected and on); interrupt vector assignments; I/O address map; device drivers; hard drive tables; and viewing and editing of CMOS settings and CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. Sysinfo also provides Windows summary information, and allows viewing and editing of .INI files. The performance feature provides for measuring performance of the CPU, hard and floppy drives and video against a range of measurement standards, from XT to 486.

Volume II, Advanced Diagnostic Software, is a flexible package of diagnostic and testing tools which can be used as a comprehensive package, or each of the tools making up the package can be used individually. This allows installation on hard andportions of the program on floppy disks. The entire program can be loaded on a 2.88 Mb floppy, but is too large for lesser capacities. Selected portions of the program can be loaded onto 1.44 and 1.2 floppies, and the installation program makes provisions for that. This does not mean that the license allows unrestricted use. To the contrary, the license restricts use by one user at a time; the licensee can have portions of the program on floppies to allow use on other computers, but only one person may be using the program at any given time. Workbench licensing and Pack-Pricing is also available to accommodate locations with multiple users.

Volume II provides several levels of testing:

- Burn-in test to run non-interactive tests for an indefinite period or a selected number of times to burn in equipment and to find intermittent or elusive problems.
- Certification test that adds floppy and hard drives, and monitor to the burn-in test, and is used to certify that a machine is in good working order.
- Test Everything guides the user through tests of everything: Memory (system & video), hard and floppy disks, system board, serial and parallel ports, video, mouse, joystick, and printers;
- Quick Test, which has no user interaction, tests all components internal to the computer;
- Tests of individually selected component/s. For all tests, including those listed above, the user has the option of specifying the number of times the test is to be run.

All of the foregoing is controlled through a clear and easy to use menu. And context-sensitive help is available at all times. When Vol. II components are loaded on floppies, however, control is limited to the command-line. In this case, one enters a command to active specific .EXE files, from CKALL, which tests the components in the Quick Test, to the individual component test programs, such as CKLPT. Each of these command-line entries require input to control at least two switches. No, it is not all that difficult since entering only the filename as a command brings up a help screen which tells all that is needed to properly execute the program to meet your needs.

The results of all the foregoing tests can be directed to the screen, printer or to disks as reports or journal files which can be viewed and/or printed later.

Other Features: Volume II also includes other useful tools:

- A hard drive low level formatter which includes all the tools needed to low level format or refresh most hard drives, including IDE and SCSI. This feature is clearly should be used ONLY by someone that knows what they are doing.
- A virus scan program that detect the presence (but not repair or remove)most viruses, including polymorphic viruses. Update to the virus program are available from TouchStone for a nominal charge when updating is needed.
- A program to create a rescue disk, or what many of us would consider a boot disk, with some nice additions: System files, of course, plus AUTO & CONFIG files renamed, important programs, and selected useful Vol. II files, plus a text file to tell how to use the rescue disk.

Installation: Installation of Check It Pro on a hard disk is easy and quick, taking me only a few moments. And there is little to do beyond selecting the storage directory for program. Installation on floppies is a bit different; Individual applettes can be loaded as desired until you run out of space, but a problem is encountered when loading packages. I had some trial and error learning to do before I found out just what packages could be loaded onto floppy from a space standpoint; Vol. I can be loaded on a HD floppy, and the CKALL package of Vol. II an be loaded on a 1.44 floppy, but the system package (menu controlled) can be loaded only on 2.88 or larger disk.

Documentation: The owners manual is comprehensive and clear regarding loading and use of Check It Pro, with separate manuals for each of the volumes. Good context-sensitive, on-line help is provided in the full program, and adequate help is provided for command line use.

Requirements for Check It Pro are quite low: IBM compatible XT or better machine, DOS 3.1 or later, and any IBM-compatible monitor. No specs are given for RAM. Vol. I requires 720K of hard disk space or a floppy with 720K or more space. Vol. II requires 3.5 Mb of hard disk space, and up to three 720K or two 1.2/1.44K floppies if you want to load segments of the program to floppies. (Continued on next page.)

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Cost: The list price of the Check It Pro, Vol. I & II package, is $149.95. As you would expect, the street price varies considerably. I have seen a street price of $89. However, shopping around a bit could well result in a better price.

My View: Check It Pro is a very nice computer info and diagnostics package and I have found it useful. One limitation I noted is that testing of com and parallel ports is limited using only the software. For complete testing of these ports, loopback plugs are needed. While these are available from TouchStone and some retail sources, one does not become aware of this limitation until reading the documentation. Though it is a very good program, as just a computer user I am not sure I would buy it at $89+loopback plugs price, if I were not having computer troubles I was having trouble solving; tech types and technicians, on the other hand, would find a great deal more use for the program.

The program is available at most good software stores, or it can be purchased from:
TouchStone Software Corporation
2130 Main Street, Suite 250
Huntington Beach, CA 92648
1-800-932-5566

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Nick Babanats
David Burch
Doug Rappuhn
Stephen Smith
Charles F. Touchton

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

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SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

DQ-DOS Collection - DOS Hard Disk Backup Utility -
Comprehensive set of disk maintenance and management software product.
Vendor - Gazelle Systems, Inc.
Screenscapes - Transform your monitor with spectacular wall papers. - Vendor: Kiwi Software
Managing Your Money (DOS)- Complete Financial Software Program - Vendor: Meca Software
Tax Cut - Andrew Tobias' Tax Program for Windows - Meca Software
XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
ECCO Professional Information Management Systems - Arabasque Software, Inc.
FidelityOnLineExpress - Direct Line to Wall Street - Meca Software
Seize the Day - Illustrated Personal Organizer for Windows - Seize the Day, Inc.
Disney Collection Screen Saver - Berkeley Systems
WinWay Resume 2.0 for Windows - WinWay Corp.
WinWay Job Interview for Windows - Interview with confidence & win the Job. - WinWay Corp.
Watchman for Windows -Advance file protection management- Distant Markets
Quicken for Windows ver. 3.0 - Financial Organizer - Intuit
Quicken For DOS ver 7.0 - Financial Organizer - Intuit
Quicken For Windows Companion - Manages home inventory, estimates taxes, updates stock prices - Intuit
Spanish Scholar for Windows Ver. 2.0 - Two way Translator & Thesaurus
Pebble Beach Golf Links (Game - Course for Use with Links, Links 386 Pro or Microsoft Golf) - Access Software
EZ Shopper Plus - Ultimate home productivity program, shopping, coupons, recipes and menu planner.
Future Trends Software

(Contact Marylee or Harvey @ 985-3338 if you are interested in doing a review article for the newsletter on any of the above software.)

User's Corner

Printer Controls. Everyone's got a printer, right? Right. But how many make use of the printer's features at the DOS command line? You display a directory and redirect it to the printer with a command like: DIR > PRN and the printout isn't *really* what you would like it to be; the list of files is all scrunched up against the left margin and it prints right over the page perforation. And you wanted to hole-punch it and file it in a three ring binder.

Well, take a look at the ONCL (Output Numbers on the Command Line) utility that is included with the New Member Disk(s). And dust off the manual that came with your printer. For now, let's just deal with that old reliable - a dot matrix printer.

The problem with sending commands to the printer is that so many of them start with the Escape character (ASCII 027). You can't just enter it at the keyboard because DOS interprets that as a Cancel operation. That is why you need ONCL.COM. It lets you embed the Escape character in the printer command string that you send to the printer.

The samples shown below are commands for the NEC P2200, but they are the same for the Panasonic 1124 (check your manual, they're likely the same for yours). The command ONCL 27,108,10 > PRN will set the left margin to 10. The command ONCL 27,78,12 > PRN will set the perforation skip to 12 lines; in effect, a top and bottom margin of one inch.

In fact, you can create your own print menu by writing a BATch file using this little utility. Or, if you use the EDIT program in DOS Ver 5 or 6, you don't need ONCL; just use the ECHO command instead. In EDIT, enter Ctrl-P, Esc to generate the Escape character for the print string. Just be sure that the string is redirected to the printer.

WordPerfect 5.1 or 6 for DOS. Sometimes you've filled the screen and you wish you could move everything up a bit so there'd be some blank space at the bottom–to improve readability. Just hold down the Alt key and tap F3 twice. This turns the Reveal Codes window on, then off. The size that you've set for the RC window will govern the amount of blank space. On an extended keyboard, tap F11 twice to get the same effect.

Professional Write. IMHO (that's Modem Rider lingo for "In My Humble Opinion"), this program has the best address merge capability of any of the well known word processors. The Address Book module is really a small data base program. Only, it's predefined as an address book. But hey, that's what you want in a word processor. Right? Right!

The address record format is pretty much the standard stuff: title, first and last name, position, company, street address, city, state, etc.. It also provides two comment lines. And this is what adds to the value. Let me explain.

You can search an address file for any item in the address record or for *any part* of an item! At a blank address form, position the cursor on the field/item you want to search for, and enter the data. You search for partial data by entering a "wild card" (two periods) before and after the data. For instance: entering ..Mo.. in the street field will cause the search to look for every street address that has mo in that field. Like: [Mo]ney Rd, Ala[mo]sa Ave, or Ada[mo] Drive.

By placing key words in the comment fields, you can select addresses for a newsletter, greeting cards, or–whatever! Although an address file is limited to 2,000 records; you can have more than one address file.

...Ed Buzza

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Software Review:

FullShot 2.0
Image Capture Program for Windows
(Reviewed by PC News Syndicate).

FullShot is an image capture program which allows users an easy way to take snapshots of Windows screens which may be used in manuals, training handouts, presentations, marketing materials or for any other purpose. The tools built into FullShot provide a flexible way to select and capture anything on a Windows screen from the complete image, to a single menu, a command button or even the cursor. It automates the procedures of freezing images in precisely the desired form so users can focus on the program.

FullShot is simple to use. Images may be captured using hot keys, Hotbuttons, or HotIcons. Captured images are saved in sequentially numbered files. And, many of the options may be customized to suit the users preferences.

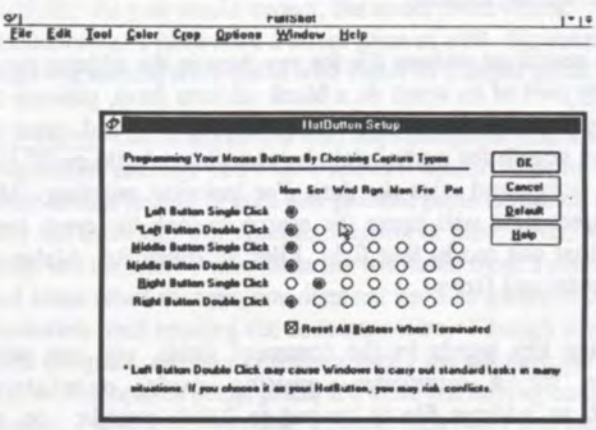
Altogether, windows may be captured in any of 16 different ways. The mouse may be used to define the desired area. The desired screen objects (title bar, menu bar, single menu, or cascading menus with or without backgrounds) may be defined automatically. Captured images may be sent to the Windows clipboard, the FullShot window, a printer or any combination.

Additional builtin flexibility lets the user capture images in B/W, 16 color, 256 color, 32K HiColor, 64K HiColor and 16.8M True Color. Color images may be transformed to B/W or gray scale to suit the capabilities of the printer being used.

Preferences for size and orientation allow the user to use Zoom in and Zoom out commands. Images may be scaled to any size

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by percentage or by pixel and may further be rotated any of 4 ways or flipped horizontally or vertically. Artistic enhancements allow the user to specify single or multiple frames including their size or color to be applied around captured images.

FullShot imports from all and exports to most of the formats listed below:

BMPWindows bitmap
CLPWindows Clipboard
CURWindows Cursor
DIBDeviceindependent bitmap
GIFGraphics interchange format
ICOWindows icon
RLERunlength encoded device independent bitmap
PCXPaintbrush
TIFFTag Image File Format
WPGWordPerfect Graphics format

Finally, FS allows the user to capture a full or partial screen from any graphics system which supports Windows and prints on any printer that has a Windows driver using any of nine different page alignments.

FullShot requires Windows 3.0 or higher, a Windows compatible mouse and a 3.5 or 5.25 disk drive. It retails for $99.95 from Inbit, Box 391674, Mountain View, CA 94039. Phone (415)9671788, FAX (415)9678614. (Reviewed by PC News Syndicate).

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FOR SALE - Unopened copy of WordPerfect 5.2 for OS/2 for the price of $100.00 - leave a message for Merle Nicholson on the BBS if you are interested.

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV

A MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER: Here are the reports showing our User Group's financial condition at the end of 1993. As requested by the membership last Fall, they are being published here in the first quarter of '94. If you have comments or suggestions about the reports let me know. I monitor the BBS frequently, so a message there would be convenient for me. If you wish to discuss them at a meeting, try to find a time when I'm not busy with other members or visitors. I welcome your comments.

For you non-accountants (like me!), the Balance Sheet shows our financial condition at a specific point in time.i.e. at the close of business 12/31/93. In contrast, the Income Statement covers all income and expense activity for the entire calendar year. Each item on it represents the total for that category of income or expense for the entire year. Our books are kept on a cash basis. No effort is made to prorate memberships which began before 1/1/93 or which extend beyond 12/31/93.

Tom Cone, Treasurer 01/29/94

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP, INC

INCOME STATEMENT

January 01 through December 31, 1993

INCOME	
Income	
Advertising	$116.00
Coupon Books - Net	102.00
Dues - 92 Renewa	20.00
Dues - 93 New	1928.00
Dues - 93 Renewa	2755.00
Door Prize Drawings	690.00
Total Income	5611.00
TOTAL INCOME	$5611.00
EXPENSE	
Expense	
Bank Charges	$22.25
BBS Echos	18.25
BBS Phone Line	606.10
BBS Software	251.31
Fees - Legal/Professional	150.00
Fla. Dept. of State	235.00
Food & Drink	28.96
Insurance - Liability	256.00
Memberships for UserGroup	25.00
Miscellaneous	119.52
PO Box Rental	35.00
Postage	728.07
Publications - Flyers	177.33
Publications - Newsletter	2558.03
Rental - Meeting Room	336.00
Total Expense	5546.82
TOTAL EXPENSE	$5546.82
NET INCOME (LOSS)	$64.18

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP, INC

BALANCE SHEET

As of December 31, 1993

ASSETS	
Checking	
Checking - Barnett Bank	$2453.71
Total Checking	2453.71
Other assets	
BBS Equip & Software	3294.00
Bulk Mail - Deposit	50.00
Office Equip & Software	966.00
Total Other assets	4310.00
TOTAL ASSETS	$6763.71
LIABILITIES	
Other liabilities	
Buzza - LDP Escrow	$0.82
Coupon Books - Payable	72.00
Total Other liabilities	72.82
TOTAL LIABILITIES	$72.82
EQUITY	
Net Worth	$6690.89
TOTAL EQUITIES	$6690.89
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	$6763.71

Note:
BBS & Office Equipment/Software is recorded at cost for items purchased by User Group. If received by donation, items are recorded at estimated fair market value at time of donation.

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Member

A Monthly Publication of the

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Bits of Blue

Vol 7, No. 3 March, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: March 9th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE - Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room

DIRECTIONS:
Take Interstate 4 to 21st/22nd Street (Ybor City) Exit 1, South to Palm Avenue, West to 15th Street to Hillsborough Community College. **Guest please sign in.**

SEE LAST PAGE FOR A MAP TO OUR NEW MEETING SITE

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MARCH 9TH AGENDA:

6:30 PM - **Demo of:**



and Corel Ventura

Break



7:45 PM - Open Discussion

Door Prize Drawing -

CorelDRAW!
Corel SCSI
Corel ArtShow 4
Corel Photo Pack
and Miscellaneous items

UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

April 13 - Adobe Systems Inc.

May 11 - Microsoft Office

June 8 - Visio by Shapeware

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT:	Harvey Bruneau	985-3338
VICE PRES :	Al Poole	876-9445
TREASURER:	Tom Cone	224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE:	Roger Waters	276-1019
SECRETARY:	Jim Clark	986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDUCATION DIRECTOR:	Ed Buzza	685-5898
EDITOR:	Marylee Bruneau	985-3338
LIBRARIAN:	Larry Anders	989-9119
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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:	Tom Cone	224-9052

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as Microsoft Word, WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Microsoft Publisher.

Association of Shareware Professionals Member

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 2/9/94 MEETING

and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

This was our first meeting in our new quarters at the Ybor City campus of the HCC. And the facilities are excellent. We have a large circular coliseum-type of room which can be divided fairly easily into two rooms using a built-in partition. The half we used for this meeting will comfortably accommodate over 100 people, with at least 85 seated at tables facing the 'well' in the center of the room; in excess of that number would be seated in comfortable folding chairs. The other half of the room is setup to accommodate almost 200 people, all of which would occupy comfortable folding chairs. All in all, I think the facilities are excellent for our purposes. HCC made available an overhead projector for our use, but a computer and color panel were and are our responsibility; all three are needed for presentations. Our group has not yet been able to acquire either of the missing pieces of hardware, but Harvey saved our bacon this time by borrowing a color panel from his workplace and making a laptop computer available for the meeting. This is not an arrangement that is available for very long and our group simply must come up with our own equipment.

I found the campus very easy to find and to get to. Parking is ample, but is located in three different lots. None of us being very familiar with the layout, some had difficulty locating parking. As we use these new facilities and become more familiar with them, I am confident that we will like our new location as much as or more than the super IBM facilities we had been using. Come on out and see for yourself -- you will enjoy yourself, and you are sure to learn something new.

WordPerfect Corporation, which had been scheduled for a presentation at this meeting, has been rescheduled tolater in the year. Tom Cone, our Treasurer, graciously filled in the opening that was left by WP with a rundown on a program he uses daily in his law office -- Desqview -- and he did a great job, with good interchange with other members. Presentations by one of our own are particularly enjoyable for me because I think we get more of a user prospective, and there is usually much more interchange between presenter and audience. In addition, there was considerable time available after the presentation for free-wheeling interchange between those present on any random computer problem/subject suitable for group discussion -- and that is what happened. In my opinion, that is what this group is all about -- the exchange of knowledge among ourselves, ***supplemented*** with knowledge from vendors and other sources.

(Continued on next page.)

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USER GROUP NEWS

Ybor Campus Parking: There is a fairly large lot for open parking across the street (Palm Ave) on the north side of the complex, with some of the spots reserved for staff; there is another fairly large lot for open parking on across the street on the south side of the complex; and there is a staff parking lot in the northeast quarter of the complex. Harvey will confirm what parking is available for our use; look for more info on this subject elsewhere in this newsletter.

Non-Profit Status: The Post Office computer has carried our group in non-profit status for the last two months, saving us about 50% ($17) off our bulk mailing rate. However, we had not received official notification of award of that status. You guessed it -- earlier this month the PO informed us that we owed them some $$ for the last 2 month's mailings and that they would not award non-profit status until the IRS also approved same for us. So, we are back to bulk mail rates (which is not all that bad - about $37/mo, versus about $20/mo) until the IRS grants non-profit status.

PRESENTATION -- Scheduled:

WordPerfect has rescheduled their planned presentation until later this year, plans for the near future are as follows:

CorelDraw — March

Adobe Systems — April

Microsoft — May

Visio by Shapeware — June

INDUSTRY NEWS

Word Perfect Rumor: - WordPerfect Corporation is undergoing a reduction in force at the present time, as many corporations have and will continue to do to stay competitive. A rumor has been circulating, probably associated with the RIF, that WP has produced its last upgrades of both the DOS and Windows versions of its WP word processors. WP Corp has denied that and other articles report that new upgrades will be out for both versions of WP in the next few months. A major change that has occurred, however, is that free tech support has be reduce to 180 days free tech support, beginning with the first call for help. Various 'for fee' tech support options will be available after that.

MS Access: For those looking for the next upgrade to MS Access, Microsoft has announced that it will be available in April.

Windows For WorkGroups: Version 3.11 of this program is on the market now. Be aware that while OS/2 is compatible with Windows for WorkGroups 3.1, it is not compatible with Windows For WorkGroups 3.11. Also be prepared for MS plans to drop their Windows program as a separate entity and to make Windows for WorkGroups its sole windows package. As a Windows user, that causes me no great concern, EXCEPT -- what does that do to my cost? And, surely provisions will be made to avoid loading unwanted portions of the package to minimize use of disk space, but will they? No answers to these and other related questions, yet!

PRESENTATION -- Desqview

Tom Cone uses this program daily in his office. He chose that program as an alternative to Windows, or other multitasking options. Tom reported that he was looking for a program to speed up his computer work by allowing multitasking to avoid the lost time that otherwise occurs when switching from program to program. Many of us would immediately think of Windows or OS/2. But Tom didn't want the speed cost of these programs. So, he looked around and settled on Desqview, which, by the way, is what your BBS uses operating in a window of Desqview -- that allows the BBS to function normally while our SYSOPs accesses and performs software maintenance on the computer.

Tom very ably demonstrated the features of the program, including creating, using, sizing and switching between windows, all of which is accomplished easily with mouse clicks or short-cut keys. The number of windows that can be opened was not known, but Tom had 5 or 6 open and working at one time, which would be more than adequate for most users. When using a 386 or better machine, all open windows are active and can be working in the background; the more memory the more windows can be open, active and working. For 386 or better machines, Desqview comes bundled with Quarterdeck's QEMM program. A memory manager, QEMM makes the most of the memory available on the machine, and Desqview does an excellent job of allocating that memory to use it to best advantage for the programs the user starts. Yes, you can tweak memory use for particular programs to insure that a minimum amount is available. In fact, the user can do considerable tweaking to customize Desqview to suit particular druthers. Desqview also includes a program called Manifest, which provides detail to the screen (or printer) about your computer and its setup; it is much like similar computer information programs in Norton Utilities and Windows, among others.

Desqview will even run Windows in one of its own windows (if for some reason one would want to), but only in standard mode. You can also open Desqview windows back to DOS while applications are running in other windows. In some respects, Desqview is similar to Windows (but with DOS speed). Tom reports that programs do crash on occasion in Desqview. As in Windows 3.1, sometimes one can just shut down and restart the offending program. Other times, it may be necessary to restart Desqview. And, some occasions may require rebooting the computer -- just as in Windows.

Desqview will run on a 286 machine and one can have several windows open, the number depending on available memory, but one cannot multitask on a 286; only the active window can be working. With 386SX or better machines, the number of

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

windows open and working is tied directly to memory requirements of the programs loaded and the total memory available on the machine. Desqview uses expanded memory (EMS), but simulates EMS from from extended memory (XMS) on those machines which don't have EMS. Tom reports that he sees no signs of any degradation in speed from using EMS and its' paging -- it is fast!! Desqview also uses virtual memory (swapping to disk) when RAM has been exhausted, but there is a speed penalty when that occurs -- as is the case in Windows.

Tom did not have current pricing info, but when he bought his Desqview/QEMM package about a year ago, the street price was about $140. Tom made it a point to make us aware that in his view Desqview is not truly a Windows competitor, for it doesn't have the graphical interface powers of Windows. But, for those who want to multitask with the speed of DOS -- which Windows doesn't have -- Desqview is certainly a super alternative. Tom, thank you for a great presentation. It was both informative and enjoyable.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of IBM, who donated a copy of OS/2 for Windows, Computer Associates, who donated a copy of Simply Money, Brainchild Computer, who donated a copy of MS Windows Entertainment Pak, and collections obtained by Harvey and Marylee at Comdex, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

M. N. Marteny—T-shirt, Mouse Pad & MS Entertainment Pak
D. A. Clary— Adobe Type Manager
G. Jurado— Adobe Type Manager
Renate Marsh— Simply Money
Bill LaForest— OS/2 for Windows

The meeting adjourned at about 9:00 PM.

" WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET, WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE."
—Winston Churchill

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Olympics are **finally** over. Congratulations to all the athletes and the Norwegian people. Rumor has it that each skating judge will be replaced by a PowerPC from IBM and Apple in the next Winter Olympics. This should provide a un-bias method of rating skaters. Of course those skaters wearing Intel clothing will receive a 1/10 point deduction.

Our first meeting at our new HCC home was a success. It was a learning experience for all of us just to determine how to setup the room for a presentation. Fortunately, we had no vendor waiting on us to get setup. As you are aware we still do not have any equipment (overhead panel and computer) of our own. The process is going to take more time than I initially planned. Thanks to all of you in attendance for your patience during that initial setup time. My thanks to Tom Cone, our treasurer, for filling in for WordPerfect. Tom did a fine job at presenting a DOS multitasking alternative to Windows and OS/2.

The upcoming presentation, by Anthonio Sanchez of Corel, will be attended by one of our largest crowds to-date. Corel has invited all it's registered users, through a mail-out, to our meeting. With this in mind you may want to get to the meeting early to get a good seat. In addition to presenting CorelDRAW 4.0 Anthonio will demonstrate Ventura Publisher which Corel recently acquired from Xerox.

Non-Profit Status

The Post Office which assigned our group a non-profit status several months ago has notified us that we are no longer considered a non-profit group in their eyes. This in turn means that our cost of mailing the newsletters has almost doubled. Apparently a computer error within the Post Office temporarily assigned us non-profit status. Just kidding. We will get our non-profit status as soon as the IRS has determined that we our eligible. Eligibility is based on information contained on the IRS forms Marylee filed with them. If all goes well we should be approved as a (501)c3 non-profit group in the second quarter.

Florida Educational Technology Conference

During the 1st week of February I had the opportunity to attend the 14th Florida Educational Technology Conference at the Tampa Convention Center. This conference is for the educators of Florida and is not open to the public. I was very fortunate to obtain a pass at the last minute. The conference provides the educational professionals with an opportunity to see what hardware and software is available to them and their schools in order that they can better communicate and help students acquire the knowledge that they need.

It was amazing. I never realized how many educational products were available. Not just games mind you but actual products to help teachers and students alike, from preschool to college. It also was the first time I ever noticed a close balance between Apple and PC products at a computer show. Normally, PC compatibles dominate a show when both platforms are present. Of course Microsoft was there with products for both platforms. What was unusual was the presence of Compaq Computer Corp. Why you ask? Well Compaq does not even attend Comdex, the biggest computer show in the country. But there they were with a massive booth and a line of 60+ educators around their booth. As I got closer I realized they were not looking at the Compaq hardware which sat on their individual pedestals, but in fact were all in line to put for a free stuffed animal wearing a compaq shirt. That's your basic marketing 101 at work. It brought back memories of Comdex where people will stand in line for 45 minutes to get a chance to win something free. But hey, educators are humans and they deserve freebies too.

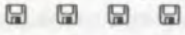
While there were a lot of fine products one specifically caught my eye. It was a communication tool displayed and sold by Audio Visual Innovations of

(Continued on page 5)

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Tampa. This tool was a 4' by 3' touch sensitive writing board called the **SMART 2000**. This definitely superseded the electronic white board I saw at Comdex in 93. If you can imagine a large (3x4) color screen attached to your PC that you control by touch, you may begin to get the idea. Just think of running Windows in front of a crowd by touching the menu options instead of using a mouse. I always lose the mouse pointer when a presenter zooms across the screen to show me some slick feature. But with the **SMART 2000** you always see what menus and commands the presenter is selecting because he has to touch them. If you are in a paint program just draw a figure by hand. Well by now you should of gotten the idea. If you didn't I guess you had to be there. In all the show was great. I just wish two things. One is that the show was accessible to the public and two that all schools could afford to purchase and use the wonderful products they needed to help communicate and educate. These products could certainly help our kids get prepared to survive the complex future that awaits them.

Harvey Bruneau



WHO SAYS TALK IS CHEAP?

Like the eight-track tape, the Veg-o-Matic, and air-for-nothing at gas stations, free technical support for software is becoming an endangered species. Software companies have been hit by thinner profit margins due to spiraling-downward retail prices and are not charging for support that had been free. Here are some typical costs for tech support:

Borland - Free 800 number installation and configuration, then $2 per minute on 800 number.

Lotus - Free for first 90 days on 800 number, then $2 per minute on 900 number, $129 annual flat-fee support.

Microsoft - Free for first 90 days on 800 number, then $2 a minute on 900 number; $129 annual flat-fee support.

Software Publishing Corp. - Free for first 90 days on 800 number, then $2 a minute on 900 number; $79-$99 annual flat-fee support. *(Reprint from Ridge Runner, publication of Ridge Area Computer Users Group - Lake Wales, Florida)*

On-line help vs. manuals - A personal point of view alternate title: Listen up Ed, there is another perspective

By: Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group

This is about a lament we heard; that companies are cheapening their products by providing on-line documentation because it's less costly. I don't agree. I think on-line *should* be more expensive than paper. One thing I'm sure we will agree on, without question, is that excellent on-line docs are better than ill-prepared paper books. But there is more to it than that.

I have one product Rumba (Wall Data - $498 street, $795SRP) that has no paper docs at all; and the company is proud of the fact. It has only mediocre on-line docs, and frankly I resent it.

Personal Communications/3270 3.0 (IBM) has abysmal on-line help and five pounds of truly worthless books. The on-line is a description of the menu commands; ridiculous. There's no way to find out how to do something by subject. Good thing it's a good, intuitive product. If you get this at your workplace - head for the nearest paper recycle bin and forget F1.

Let's look at Visual Basic for Windows. I paid $150 for it (It's $339 now). It has very good paper docs, and truly outstanding on-line. Which do I use? Paper gets maybe 2%, and on-line gets 98%. Why? The on-line is indexed to the hilt. There is nothing you can't find quickly. You can set bookmarks to jump back to and you can step forward and backwards anyplace you've been; there's definitions of terms in pop-ups in surprising neat places. You can highlight or double-click on a programming command, press F1 and the full reference for that command starts. There are pop-ups for related topics everywhere that you click on and get the full text of the related subject; click on "back" and you go back to where you were. If I lost the reference books, I wouldn't really care. There *is* a paper Programmers Guide (not a reference) that is intended to be read; any beginner would need it; it belongs on paper. One real advantage to the on-line; you can cut and paste programming code from the help to the programming windows. Last time I tried that with the books, it didn't work and I had to scrape the glue off the screen afterwards.

The same for WordPerfect 5.2. I've *never* looked at the paper docs since I went to Windows; not once, and I would rate the on-line help quality only average. Word processors need reference material you can look up. Let's save the paper.

I can't see myself reading a novel or Bits-of-Blue for that matter, on-line until the PC, CPU and a 300dpi screen, is small enough to put in my lap or hold above my head laying on the couch. I read fast and I want to see two whole pages of text in front of me and it can't weigh more than a pound or two.

If I want to *look something up* while I'm at the computer, nothing can beat on-line if it's well done. If I need to *read something*, the book is best. I'm willing to bet that creating *good* Windows help is ten times the investment in creative manpower; which is why you see bad stuff out there. But IT CAN BE DONE.

To summarize: 1) What counts most is quality. 2) Both methods have their own unique uses. 3) If they need to cut costs and eliminating books will do that, then they should re-invest some of that money in providing quality indexed on-line help. Thanks.. Merle

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Terry M. Blackwell
Jason De Sava
Lenore De Sava
Bryan De Sava
James Hutton

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

☺☺☺☺☺

SOFTWARE REVIEW: HSC Digital MORPH

By Gary W. Wodka,
Madison PC User's Group

Terminator 2 made me sit up and go "Wow!" The shaving commercial where the faces change but the lather remains the same was even more amazing to me. "How do they do that?" I asked myself. Now I know!

The process of changing one image into another is known as "tweening" or "morphing." If you have enough computer resources, you too can morph! But it's not for the entry-level system. In order to look professional, you must have equipment like a professional. The program I'm talking about is HSC Software's new Digital MORPH (DM). This program allows you to do the great things we've come to expect from state-of-the-art movies and TV.

Installation

Installation wasn't too hard. The hardest part was making sure the system could handle it. Minimum installation requires Windows 3.1 (NOT 3.0!) running in enhanced mode, 8 MB RAM (16 MB is recommended), a mouse, and a math coprocessor. I tried running the program on two different systems. My home system has 8 MB RAM and is a 33 MHz 486DX system. My office system is a 66 MHz 486DX system with 16 MB RAM. I prefer to run DM on my office setup! It was almost twice as fast and gave smoother performance of the finished product. I could, however, live with the home version.

As you install, several files are loaded that you probably already have from your Windows installation, including Packaging, Animation, Sound and Video files. As the files are loaded, you are asked if you want to replace those already there. Before you answer, the DM install program gives you the dates of the existing files and the new files. You are given the opportunity to update or not, depending on the dates of the existing files. DM installs in just under 5 MB and creates its own program group under Windows. In addition, the SYSTEM.INI and WIN.INI files are modified, and a DIGIMORPH.INI file is created.

Morphing

Once installed, you're ready to try your hand at "Speilburging" (I coined it, and I like it!). The first thing you'll want to try is a basic morph. The 120-page User's Guide gives you everything you'll need to do everything you've ever wanted to do in a morph setting. But the first few pages (Quick Start Guide) will have you morphing in less than 10 minutes.

To create a simple morph between two graphics files, simply choose New Morph from the file menu. You'll be asked if you want to morph between two images. I chose "Yes." Using the two sample images, "Boy" and "Girl," you'll have both a source image and a destination image. You'll then choose how your final image will look: 100 percent girl, 100 percent boy, or somewhere in between. Since I was interested in seeing a true morph, I chose 100 percent girl.

In order to perform a morph, the computer must know which points on the master and destination photo to use. So you'll outline key parts of the images. In the two images I used, the eyes didn't line up, nor did the noses or mouths. First I outlined the face of the source image (boy), the eyes, the nose and the mouth. Then, by simply clicking on the girl's image, the lines I drew on the boy were transferred to the girl. By dragging the lines to form the proper shapes around the face, eyes, nose and mouth, I was able to create a perfect morph.

After drawing the lines, select Do Morph and the rest will be history. Actually, not yet. You first have to tell the program how many interim frames to create. There are 15 frames per second.

I experimented with a half second, one second, and two seconds (30 frames). The two-second morph gave the best results. There was a gradual transformation from the boy to the girl that had the guys at the office "ooohing" and "aaahing."

Warping

In addition to morphing, DM provides the ability to do warping. This is a technique used to reshape portions of an image. For example, I could take my boss's picture and make the nose grow! Or the ears! Of course, I wouldn't show him the results, but the rest of the office got a charge out of it!

Warping is accomplished by moving points on a grid system. When selecting Warp from the menu, a grid is placed over your photo or graphic. You can change the size of the grid to small, medium or large. To warp, just drag intersecting points on the grid. It will take a little practice to get this technique down, but the results will be worth the effort. There is an option on the menu to provide for Curve Fitting. This option will take longer to process, but the results will look better. The intervening frames will curve, rather than being short, choppy straight lines.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Image Enhancement

DM provides a series of brushes for modifying the color and texture of an image. There are seven brush types, and each does something different. By using the brushes, you can recolor an image or any part thereof. With the Airbrush you can remove wrinkles from your wife's photo (she'll really appreciate that!). You can smooth parts of an image with the Blend brush. The Color brush merely paints in a chosen color (it is the simplest of the brushes to use). The Pull brush copies the area underneath it and deposits it where the brush is moved to. The Tint brush can give your photos a translucent sheen, and there is an Undo brush to make up for your mistakes (and believe me, when practicing, you'll make plenty!).

Full Motion Animation

In addition to the static morphs described above, DM allows you to create full motion animations. I must warn you, however, that these are not for the faint of heart or wimpy of machine! To work with full-motion animation, you'll have to unpack an animation file into a series of individual images or frames, and warp or morph each frame individually, then pack them back into the animation files. This takes forever! If you have the patience, the result is outstanding!

File Size

Once you've created your morphs, warps, etc., you'll have to save them. I hope you have some extra hard disk space! A two-second video, even using the compressions provided in DM, was just over 500K. If you had to create a series of animations, you'd need an extra hard drive to store them.

The Best and the Worst

If I had to choose the best feature of Digital MORPH, it would be that the program is so easy to use. I was able to morph and warp within 10-20 minutes of unpacking the program. And the results were quite remarkable.

If I had to choose the worst feature of Digital MORPH, it would be that it took a long time to work on a slower machine. On my 33 MHz machine, each frame in the animation sequence took approximately 20 seconds to create. In a two-second video, that means 30 times 20 seconds, or nearly 10 minutes. That process was cut down to six seconds/frame on the 66 MHz machine. I guess it's time to upgrade again!

Digital MORPH is a product of:
HSC Software 1661 Lincoln Blvd, Suite 101 Santa Monica, CA 90404
(310) 392-8441 (310) 392-6015 (fax)



SOFTWARE REVIEW: You Need Business Cards Fast

By: Deborah M. Johnson,
Pentagon PC User Group

Whether yours is a fledgling new business or a Fortune 500 company, you probably at some time have wished you could print your own business cards. Maybe your title changes from day to day, or maybe you are hiring new employees faster than you can get business card requests to an outside printer. Whether you need customized messages for the many different hats you wear, or just a few cards for a new employee, WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS has the solution for you!

Print your Own!

First, buy Avery Laser Business Cards, form #5371. They are currently available in bright white card stock (though colors are promised), 10 cards to a sheet, 25 sheets to a package. Then, start WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS. From a blank screen, choose your form: Click on Layout, choose Page, select S Labels. Press the down-arrow key to highlight "Avery 5371 Business Card" and select 3 Edit. On the Edit Label screen, choose 8 Label Margins and type in 0.2 (for a 2/10" margin all around) and press Enter at each of the four margin prompts. Click on "OK" on the Page Format screen. With "Avery 5371 Business Card" still highlighted on the Labels screen, press 1 Select. Then, click on "OK" at the Page Format screen. Your form is now set up.

Now you need to type in your information. The following format will give your business cards a very professional look. First, press Shift/F6 to center your company's name. To choose a very large font for your company's name, click on Font, choose Font, then select 1 Font CG Times, 2 Size 10pt, and 4 Relative size 5 Very Large. Click on "OK." Type in your companyÆs name, right-arrow once to pass the [Very Large Off] code, and press Enter. Press Enter once more to add space. Then Shift/F6 again to center your employee's name. To choose a large font for the name, click on Font, choose Font, then select 4 Relative size 4 Large. Click on "OK." Type in the name, right-arrow once to pass the Large Off code, and press Enter. To center the job title, press Shift/F6, type in the job title, and press Enter. Press Enter twice more to add space. At the left margin, type in the business phone number, press Alt/F6 to flush right, type in the company address, and press Enter. At the left margin again, type in the home phone number, press Alt/F6 to flush right, type in the company city, state, and zip, and press Enter. Add extra hard returns where necessary in order to fill the "page" completely and space out your information so it is readable.

Copy this first business card using your favorite method until there are 10 altogether. One way is to do this is to delete and restore your first "page" 10 times. Just press Home Home Up-arrow, Ctrl/PgDn, Yes, Esc, Restore. Then Esc and Restore 9 more times. Shift/F7 and press 7 Print preview to spot check the layout on the page before printing.

For a more customized look, you could also add a graphics box (for your company logo), a line, or a border. How ever you design your business cards, try WordPerfect 6.0 and the Avery business card form. Create custom business cards for all your company's needs!

Deborah M Johnson is a WordPerfect Certified Resource and manages her own computer consulting/training business. She is a contributing editor for National Computer Tectonics and the PC Register.

SOFTWARE REVIEW: Multimedia Make Your Point

By: Alford Poole,
Tampa PC Users Group

The title of this Asymetrix software explains it all. If you need to make a point with a presentation, Multimedia Make Your Point (MMYP) version 1.0, could be just what you need.

The box makes this claim "The easiest way to create multimedia presentations for Windows 3.1 . . . It's as simple as point, click, and present." Catchy words, but there are a few things to consider. Like: how simple of a presentation do you want? Do you have lots of long lines of text? Do you want nifty transition effects between slides? The answers to these questions could decide whether this program is right for you.



MMYP takes about 5 MB of disk space if you load all the options. Besides the MMYP files there are Autodesk Animation samples and sample MIDI, WAV, and Metafiles (over 60 in all).

Major features include professionally designed presentation templates, tool bar, menu bar, and a status bar. You can import graphics from any Windows metafile, bitmap, computer graphics metafile, MicroGrafx Draw file, or TIFF file. Some animation files are quite good. I especially liked the revolving earth flick.

The 54 page instruction booklet, the size of a CD jewel case, seems a little brief. But, it does have an index.

There is also on-line help. Asymetrix gives a 90-day money back guarantee and free tech support, you just pay for the phone call.

A neat demo file comes with MMYP and shows how a multimedia presentation can look and sound. To select a template there is a nice preview feature that shows a small version of the template . The background colors and bullets are easily changed and the changes are reflected in the small version. When it looks right save it and then start making the presentation. The 30 templates provided are well done, but it is nice to be able to change them
so easily. In one slide that had a line of text that wrapped to the next line, the lower portions of the letters on the second line were cut off. Reducing the font size did not help. Also, any text that won't fit in the test block doesn't show up in the presentation.

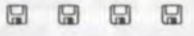
There are three transition effects. Choosing one applies it to all screen changes in the presentation. I would recommend "None." The effects are really S-L-O-W (this is on a 486-33mhz machine). The dissolve is more like putting layers of film over the screen and then removing them to reveal the next picture. Not impressive. These need some more work.

Is it as easy as point, click, and present? Yes. MMYP may not have as many bells and whistles as other products, but the ones it has are useful and could have heavy use on a day to day basis. This would work better for traveling demos than in house presentations. Due to the line length and number limitation (six lines max), using the included templates could be challenging if you needed to list more topics.

Would I recommend this product? If you use very few words in your presentation, want basic features and want to include multimedia, maybe. But, for $69.95 plus $6 for shipping, you can have Lotus Freelance Graphics 2.0 from Surplus Software (1-800- 753-7877). It has some super transition effects (and they are fast), use of text is much more versatile and it has quite a selection of additional features. So take your pick, the VW or the Caddy. They'll both get you where you want to go, only in this instance the sale price is about the same.

System Requirements: 386 20-MHz or higher, Windows 3.1, VGA card, mouse, DOS 3.1 or higher, at least 3 MB RAM (4 MB recommended), floppy drive, and 3-5 MB free hard disk space.

MMYP is available for $75 at Computer City. Asymetrix Sales: 800-448-6543, FAX: 206-637-1504 Address: 110-110th Ave, N.E., Suite 700, Bellevue, WA 98004



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- **Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts**
- **Brainchild (Software Distributors)**

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- **Access Software**
- **Adobe Systems Inc.**
- **Borland**
- **Corel Systems**
- **GeoWorks**
- **Lotus Corp.**
- **Microsoft**
- **Symantec**
- **Traveling Software**
- **Software Publishing**
- **Wordperfect**

Software Review

DECK for DOS THE HOME SERIES

Accurate Deck Design made easy by Autodesk

By : Ronald A. Hargreaves,
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

If you are the type of person who likes to plan, design, and possibly build or contract to build home improvement projects such as a deck or dock, then this is the program for you. If not, don't read any further.

Whether you're expanding an existing deck or starting a complex, multilevel deck from scratch, Deck software lets you transform your ideas into detailed working plans right on your PC. This program should be call DECK/DOCK because it can just as easily be used to design a self-contained dock attached to land or floating. I used this program to design a deck and dock in conjunction with a new home that my wife and I are going to build on a lake in Pennsylvania.
The Users Manual (254 pages) is quite comprehensive. It is well designed and user friendly. It is worth your time to peruse it before attempting to use the program. Even though you can jump right into using the program by taking advantage of the menu-driven options, unless you are familiar with CAD type design concepts, (which I was not)
much time can be saved by reading the manual first. The chapter on advanced techniques provides you with the methods you need to design decks around trees and spas, create multilevel elevation views, draw railings on elevation-view stairs, use angles other than 90 degrees, and create custom symbols. There is also a very good "On Line Help" capability built into the program.

FEATURES:

* **Built-in 3D viewer** lets you "walk through" your design, using up to 64 colors, before the construction process begins. This is fun aspect of using this program. By pushing a few buttons, you get a 3D perspective of your design from your choice of view, i.e. eye-level (moving left or right around any side) or top down.

* With **accuracy to 1/16"** you can create precise working plans without any hand drawing.

* **Symbols**, color-coded for easy identification, add details like grills, furniture and potted plants.

* With the **Undo/Redo feature** you can easily rework the last 25 steps of your design.

* **Variety of textures and surfaces**, like wood, earth, concrete, grass and brick, add realistic detail.

* **Automatic "Shopping List"** feature lets you print the list to take with you when buying materials or asking a contractor to bid on the job based on your design and material needs.

* Easy to learn and use **step-by-step instructions** get you up and running in less than 30 minutes, although like any program, the more you use it, the more proficient you get.

CAPABILITIES:
Export 2D files to AutoSketch(R) and other CAD programs via DXF(TM) format. Load drawings in Generic CADD(R) 5.0 or higher. Save files to AutoCAD(R).DWG format. Load 3D drawings into Generic 3D Drafting(R) Release 2 and Autodesk 3D Concepts for Windows.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/1, PS/2 or 100 percent compatible; 640K RAM with DOS 3.0 or higher; hard drive; floppy disk; two or three-button mouse; graphics card (Hercules monochrome or color, MCGA, CGA, EGA or VGA; color display requires minimum EGA). Recommended: Math coprocessor; extended memory (XMS). Printer Support: Supports 9-pin, 24-pin printers, HP LaserJet or 100 percent compatible, a nd HP DeskJet 500/550c.

Many of you may have read the software review by Renate Marsh that appeared in the February, 1994 issue of "BITS OF BLUE". Renate reviewed a sister program of THE HOME SERIES by Autodesk called Kitchen & Bath for DOS. Many of the same comments that were made pertaining to that program can be applied to DECK, i.e. "planning and preparing your design is very important" and "Once you have created a floor plan you can make it come alive with different color schemes; and you can load your drawing into the 3DPlan program which will give you a totally new and realistic perspective of your drawing." All Home Series products work together. These include "Home","Kitchen & Bath", "Landscape" and "Deck".

List price for each Home Series: $59.95
Company: Autodesk, Inc., 11911 North Creek Parkway South, Bothell, WA 98011
Tel.: 1-800-228-3601



Software Review

Print Cache Revisited

Version 3.1

By: Jim Clark,
Tampa PC Users Group

The October 1993 *Bits Of Blue* newsletter contained a review I had written on Print Cache, Ver. 3.1, by Laser Tools. I gave the program rather high marks in that review, and described what a fine job I thought it did. I also mentioned that I had a couple of problems I was working to resolve with Laser Tools technical support.

The Problems: Well, those were just the beginning of the problems I have had with the program. That is not to say that you would have the same problems (or any at all, for that matter) on your computer. The problems I have are when using Windows programs, with one exception. Among the problems are:

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

* Print Cache will not recognize a driver for LPT2 and insists on using a substitute driver which slows down printing in Windows. I have made certain my controller is set properly and several different computer information and diagnostic programs all show no conflicts for LPT2. This is the non-Windows problem -- this is a setup problem and occurs when setting the parameters for Print Cache operations.
* When reprinting a document (a new printing of the same document, as opposed to copy 2 of a single print instruction) Print Cache sometimes does not intercept and pass on the printing instructions to the printer. Repeated attempts to print the document result in the same outcome. In those circumstances, you have to go to DOS and disengage Print Cache, and change to the Print Manager print spooler to complete your printing job, or restart Windows.
* At other times under like circumstances, and sometimes on second print jobs, Print Cache will print random scattered gibberish in the document, forcing a reprinting after disengaging Print Cache and changing to Print Manager, or restarting Windows.
* At still other times under similar circumstances Print Cache will print only a line or two and cause a form feed, print another couple of lines and form feed, and so on. One must then employ the same procedure outlined above to extricate.

I have found that clearing the Print Cache buffer each time before printing minimizes the occurrence of these problems, but is not a 100% solution. And it is only a preventive precaution; if one of these printing problems does occur, clearing the buffer will not help -- only disengaging Print Cache or restarting Windows works for me.

The problems are likely peculiar to my configuration. I have tried many different configurations, including eliminating TSRs without success. I have ran diagnostics, examined INIs, etc. etc., and have not found a solution. That brings me to the most important part of this update.

Lack of Technical Support: I was in contact with Laser Tools technical support while I was writing the original review. I talked with them 3 or 4 times. They seemed not too interested on the phone in the details of the problem or the configuration of my computer, and were quick to suggest trying this or that. I began to feel after the 3rd call that the only way I would be able to get Laser Tools tech support to really look at my problems was to send them considerable detail about the problems, including samples, and complete details about my computer and its configuration -- which I did. I received no response from technical support. I then wrote management about my problems and sought help finding solutions. Again, no response. So, I am still on my own.

My View: Except for the LPT2 setup problem, I have not had problems with Print Cache in DOS and when using DOS programs, and it saves a lot of time. Print Cache is a very worth while program WHEN IT WORKS properly. My experience in Windows, however, has been just the opposite -- and I use Windows most of the time. And when it doesn't work properly, it is more hindrance than help and will slow you down considerably. Whether you will have any trouble with the program will likely depend on your particular computer and setup. Based on my experience, you may not get significant support from the Print Cache technical support folks. If you purchase the program, you might want to insure that the seller will allow you to return the program for a complete refund if you have any troubles you can't live with.

WHEN IN CHARGE,
PONDER.
WHEN IN TROUBLE,
DELEGATE.
WHEN IN DOUBT,
MUMBLE.



Volunteers Needed!

Our Board is seeking several volunteers who would commit themselves to help organize a committee for planning, developing and the ultimate presentation of a financially successful **Consignment Table** for our membership. The general idea for this consignment table would be as follows:

Members would bring computer items, which they no longer use or need, to the meeting (to be determined). You can likely sell it to another TPCUG member.

The volunteer members on the committee would help in making the sale. There would be a form for each item received, indicating the price and description of the item, and a receipt for the item would be given. At the end of the meeting the money would be counted, and the seller will receive 90% of the money received for their item.

Everyone benefits! The seller would benefit by unloading unused items, a buyer would be able to shop for those bargains, and as members of TPCUG, you would be assisting in raising much needed revenues, as the group would receive 10% for the treasury.

TPCUG would assume no obligation whatsoever with respect to any consigned material. Material left unclaimed, or unsold material that is donated will be disposed of for the benefit of TPCUG.

Dedicated individuals, interested in volunteering for this project, please contact Marylee or Harvey Bruneau (985-3338) for additional information and for a list of others coming forth to assist you on a committee for this exciting, profitable event.



USER'S CORNER

Horror Story. This unidentified gentleman had a 486 and was pleased that it's performance was better than his old 286 computer. One day he was messing around and noticed a button marked "turbo" and pressed it wondering what would happen. Well, that PC took off like rain in a hurricane. Now he is really pleased!

... Anonymous

Horror Story II. Another unidentified gentleman had a bunch of files on his PC at home. He'd used PKZIP before but had never looked at the full help screen that it provides. This time he did and noted that it would do just what he wanted. So he ZIPped the directory, all the subdirectories (even empty ones), and all the files; set the flag to Move and Erase old files; and all this with just one command. And he was proud!

Then he proceeded to unzip some files. Big problem - no unzip program. It was inside the ZIP file, had been erased, and he had no other copy at home. Nowhere. Oh sure, he had the original copy at the office, but,...

... Anonymous II

WordPerfect for DOS Ver 6. Use the Look option (3) in File Manager to view .WPG files. You can also view .PCX, CGM, etc., files. It's quick and shows the full graphic. No more having to import the file and using the View module as you did in version 5.1. And in V6, you can Retrieve a graphic without first creating a graphic box. Use the same Look option to play MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) or .WAV waveform) files if you have a sound board in your computer. Be sure that WP is configured for the sound board.

With version 6.0a of WP, I had problems with the sound module. The MIDI files played okay but the "progress bar" didn't work. When the waveform files played, the progress bar worked but you couldn't play the file again; you had to reload the sound player module (just Look at a text file then Look at another wave file).

Tribune Trouble. For many moons I have been sending a request that a notice of our meeting be published. If everything goes right, it appears in the Monday edition, in the Agenda column of the Business section. Well..., the person whom I had been contacting has moved on to a better job within Mother Trib. And somewhere between my mail box and theirs, it seems that the February notice got lost. *Sorry, folks; stuff happens.*

Windows 3.1:

- Title Bar. Once in a while, you will move a window beyond the top of the screen and then can't grab it. Just press <Alt>-<space><m> and then the DnAr key until the title bar moves down to where you can retrieve it.
- Video Drivers. You changed to another video driver, restarted Windows, and now you've got garbage or a blank screen. Bummer. Because now you can't change back to the old (and good) driver from inside Windows! But there is an easy way to fix this. At the DOS command line, log onto the Windows directory and type: SETUP /L. This will bring up the DOS version of Window's setup program and let's you reinstall your old driver.
- New Settings. You can click the "Save Settings on Exit" so that the current settings will be in effect the next time you fire up. Problem is that you forget to turn off the Save Settings when you exit and you've messed up your setup. Next time, click the Save option, then hold down the Shift key while you click Exit. Windows does it's thing about saving the new setup but does not exit! Now click off the Save option and you'll be all set the next time you run Windows.

—- Ed Buzza

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123,

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

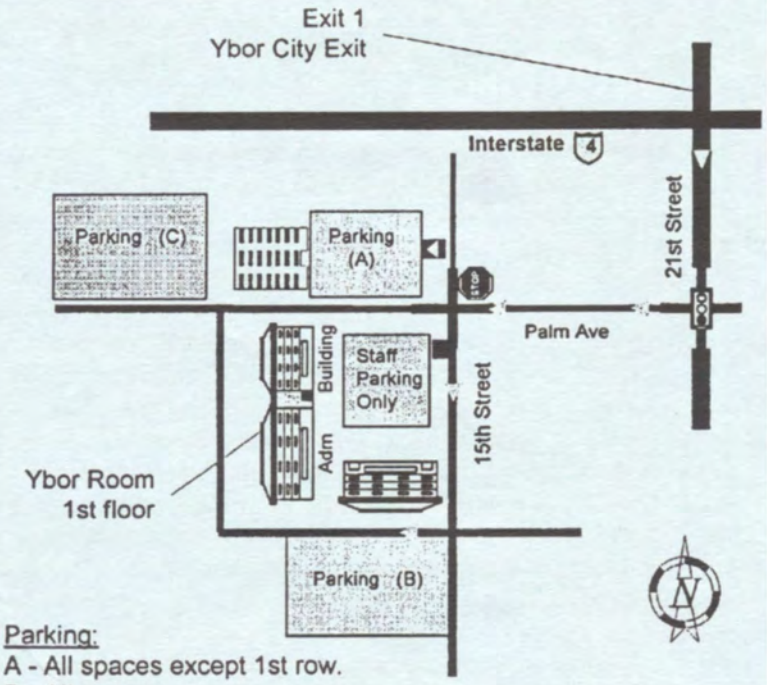
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Tampa, Florida

ACCESS to the GROUP'S
PROGRAM LIBRARY



Parking:
A - All spaces except 1st row.
B - All spaces
C - All spaces

DIRECTIONS:
Take Interstate 4 to 21st/22nd Street (Ybor City) Exit 1, South to Palm Avenue, West to 15th Street to Hillsborough Community College, **GUEST PLEASE SIGN IN.**

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492

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A Monthly Publication of the
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Bits of Blue

Vol 7, No. 4 April, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: April 13th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room

DIRECTIONS:

Take Interstate 4 to 21st/22nd Street (Ybor City) Exit 1, South to Palm Avenue, West to 15th Street to Hillsborough Community College. **Guest please sign in.**

See last page for a map to our new meeting site.

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April 13th AGENDA:



Demo of
Photoshop
by Adobe Systems, Inc.
-

The world's leading photo design and production tool.

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Drawing -
Adobe Wild Type
Adobe Type Library
and Miscellaneous items

UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

May 11 - Microsoft Office
June 8 - Visio by Shapeware

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES : Al Poole 876-9445
TREASURER: Tom Cone 224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
SECRETARY: Jim Clark 986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDUCATION DIRECTOR: Ed Buzza 685-5898
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
BBS SYSOP: Kevan Sheridan 237-0100
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 224-9052

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Ami Pro for Windows from Lotus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals Member

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 3/9/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS
By: Jim Clark

This was our second meeting in our new quarters at the Ybor City campus of the HCC. Things went more smoothly this time and it was a very good meeting. Actually, it was an excellent meeting, with a "Biggie" vendor presentation -- CorelDRAW 4.0. Our facilities are quite flexible now and we have the space to setup for different size crowds. Hence, CorelDRAW was not a 'standing room only' session as they had been in our IBM facilities. For those who haven't been out to the Ybor City site, you should certainly do so. The location is easy to find and very accessible from the interstate.

Your Board of Directors has not yet found a solution to our pressing need for a 486 computer and a color panel for our meetings, but we have managed very well so far -- borrowing at the first meeting here, and Corel have their own equipment, as do most of the larger vendors. But we can't rely on that -- Anyone have a spare 486/33 and/or color panel they don't need and can donate to the group??

USER GROUP NEWS

Special Interest Groups (SIGs): John Lucas is organizing an OS/2 SIG. It should get started in the very near future. Meetings will be held at the IBM building from which we just moved. Look for more info on the BBS and newsletters.

Phillip Ficarota has volunteered to organize a CorelDRAW SIG if there is sufficient interest. Decisions about time and place have not yet been made. If you are interested in participating in this SIG, please get word to one of the User Group officers or Phil -- via the BBS or any other way, but the sooner the better.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Microsoft/Stacker Conflict: - The courts have rendered a decision in the disagreement between these software leaders. Stacker has been awarded some $120 or so million from MS, while MS has been awarded about $12 million as result of their countersuit. And, MS is refrained from using the technology that the suit was all about. Hence, MS will soon be coming out with MS-DOS 6.21 which will have a version of DoubleSpace that is minus the 'borrowed' technology, and presumably it is now illegal to use the DoubleSpace version in MS-DOS 6.2.

Stacker/MS Windows for WorkGroups Incompatibility: Stacker 4.0 is not compatible with the recently released MS Windows for WorkGroups 3.11. Stacker is working on a fix which you might expect in the not-too-distant future. Meanwhile, be aware.

DX4s Coming Soon: Word is that the new 486DX4s (75 and 100 MHz 486s) will be coming out in the near future. as we have previously reported, they are only minimally slower than the pentiums and are a good bit cheaper in price. If nothing else, they will likely produce continuing downward pressure on prices. Then, too, how fast is fast?

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Superbase Becoming History: Software, Inc., has announced that they are dropping their Superbase database program from their product line. I personally hate to see that happen because Superbase is a super database program; the competition and pricing are apparently overpowering it.

Dell Show Big $$ Loss: Dell Computer's recent financial statement shows a loss of $40 million on sales of $2.9 billion. We report this not to imply that Dell is in financial trouble. Rather, we can all expect some changes to be made at Dell, for they won't long stand for those kinds of losses. Pricing action is forcing all to cut their costs and/or improve productivity and efficiency.

PRESENTATION -- CorelDRAW 4.0 The Corel Corporation was good enough to allow their Product Specialist, Antonio Sanchez, to visit with us and give a presentation of their newest release of CorelDRAW, Ver. 4.0. As has been reported before in this space, CorelDRAW is a very powerful program and one could not hope to demonstrate more than a small portion of its capabilities in the time available at our meetings. So, Antonio elected to highlight the differences between versions 3.0 and 4.0 -- and those that we saw are significant. Actually there have been many changes. Here are just a few:

Powerline: A capability has been added to take any line(s) you might want to draw and convert that line(s) into a wide variety (like hundreds) of designs, including ribbon, trumpet, wedge, teardrop and woodcut shapes.

➔ Creative Bitmap Editing: Allows creating startling combinations of graphic images with special effects and animation.

➔ Scanning Support: Advanced direct scanning has been added, including a powerful OCR.

➔ New Fills & Graphics: With added fills, CorelDRAW now includes over 1.2 million. The clipart library has also been increased from 14,000 to 18,000.

➔ Welding of text and graphics is now provided and eliminates a problem that existed with earlier versions when text and graphics overlaid.

➔ Animation capability has been greatly enhanced and can produce really impressive results.

➔ Blending capability has also been enhanced and gives the power to blend literally any object to any other with user-defined sequencing.

➔ Powerful animation of graphics in MOVE has been further enhanced, and includes 125 CorelMOVE animation's and 420 cartoons.

➔ The word processor has also been enhanced.

➔ Now supports 99 levels of undo.

➔ News to me is that CorelDRAW has a comprehensive DTP capability. Imagine creating a flyer, newsletter or other similar publication with the graphic and text manipulation capabilities of CorelDRAW. WOW!!

CorelDRAW 4.0 comes on 11 - 3.5 " HD floppies and a CD. The program itself takes 37 MB of hard disk space when fully loaded, but the user has the option of selecting out any portions of the program not needed. The CD contains the 18,000 graphics and 750 fonts included with CorelDRAW 4.0. One needs an IBM-compatible 386 or better machine for the program, Windows 3.1, 4 MB Ram (8 recommended), a mouse or tablet, and a VIA or better resolution monitor. Cost is $595 MSRP ($249 upgrade) and about $399 street. Companion to CorelDRAW are several Photo CD Collections, each containing 100 beautiful pictures with a common theme, which list for $49.95 Each.

Antonio reports that CorelDRAW 5.0 is to be released on 20 May, which will provide further improvement in an already very, very powerful program. We can all recall Ventura Publisher. Well, Corel now owns that program and a greatly enhanced and improved version of that program will be bundled with CorelDRAW 5.0. Seems like a great combination to me.

Antonio and Corel, THANKS MUCH for a super presentation of your very impressive program, CorelDRAW; it is truly an amazing program. Antonio did a bang-up job of showing many of its new features.

AND THE WINNER IS Thanks to the generosity of Corel Corporation, who donated all of the door prizes, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

M. N. Marteny	Photo CD
M.J. Ciccavello	Photo CD
Larry Anders	Photo CD
Steven Atran	Photo CD
T. Goff	Photo CD
Jeff Jenkins	Corel SCSI
Bill LaForest	CorelDRAW 4.0

In addition, five members were lucky winners of a Corel Mouse Pad.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:35 PM.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Maria Jo Ciccarello
Ben Corvette
Tom Goff
Sherry Jackson
Jeff Jenkins
Ray Mickiewicz
Tom Reilly
Michael Smith
Dave Wyler

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

☺☺☺☺☺

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Let me begin by apologizing for the late arrival of the newsletter. As parents, Marylee and I got caught up in the marriage process of her son, my step-son, David. For those of you who only have one child I am sure that you understand the once in a lifetime experience of this event and ceremony and where the priorities are when it relates to family. Over 100 relatives and friends from around the country came to partake in the joyous occasion at Lowry Park Zoo. Let me add that while we did not get the newsletter out on time I did get David signed up as a member.

With that said I would like to inform everyone that we will be starting an OS/2 and Corel SIG (special interest group) very shortly. The OS/2 SIG will be chaired by John K. Lucas. John is a current member of both our group and the IBM OS/2 group. He is a Sr. Systems Programmer for H. Lee Moffit Cancer Center & Research Institute and has wanted to be part of an OS/2 SIG group for a long time. Initials plans indicate that the monthly meeting will take place on Tuesday evenings of the fourth week at our old meeting place, IBM. If you are interested please contact John at home (voice) 948-7621 or FAX 949-4749.

The Corel SIG group will be chaired by Philip Ficarrotta, also a current member of our group and Corel user. The audience for this group will be for beginning to intermediate Corel users. Initial plans indicate that the meetings will take place at the Dale Mabry HCC campus. At this time a date has not been selected. If you are interested in participating with this SIG please contact Phillip at 879-2780.

In this newsletter you will find a survey. The board has elected to create the survey in order that we can measure the needs of the group and determine the hardware and software representation that make it up. As of the April general meeting the survey will be given to new and renewal members.

Even after my comments of being careful and limiting movement during the general meeting when the lights are out, I saw members tripping on the steps. I found it odd that more people tripped when the lights were on than off. For your safety please be careful when walking around the Ybor room.

We need a logo for our group. With all the talent in our group we should be able to come up with a logo that represents us. Get those art programs loaded and start the left part of your brain. Submit the art, in any IBM PC compatible format (TIF, PCX , CDR ....) to the Editor, Marylee Bruneau through the bbs or mail. The address can be found on the inside cover of the newsletter. Logos submitted must be unique and not violate any copyright laws. The selected logo will be the sole property of the Tampa PC Users Group. Logos submitted will not be returned. A T-shirt, hat and Tote bag goes to the artist of the selected logo.

Last months newsletter was done in MS Publisher and required an effort to get it out the door. Marylee started this months newsletter with MS Publisher only to go back to AmiPro from Lotus Corp. While some members within our group like MS publisher, Marylee and I feel that we must leave it behind for a better tool. The lack of a good layering technique, negative results with OLE, General Protection Faults and a slow screen refresh has left us wanting for something else. MS Publisher with all its Wizards is good if you publish the Microsoft way, but if you are from the Burger King generation where you get it your way, then you may want to look at some other product. Pagemaker is starting to sound good. Of course it cost somewhat more than the $84 of MS publisher.

In the March newsletter, I mentioned having a swap meet of some type to unload all that old computer stuff that is sitting around our homes and offices going to waste. To my dismay and that of the board I did not even get one nibble of interest. Is a Flea Market or Garage Sale more enticing?

We need new members. Surely most of you know someone that has a computer but is not a member of our group. Bring them to a meeting and let them experience what a user group is about. We can help them and they can help us.

Harvey Bruneau

Misplaced Humor: Signs of Our Times

Here are some signs and notices written in English that were discovered throughout the world. You have to give the writers an "E" for Effort.

In a Tokyo Hotel: Is forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person to do such thing please not to read notice.

In a Bucharest hotel lobby: The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.

In a Liepzig elevator: Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up.

In a Belgrade hotel elevator: To move the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving is then going alphabetically by national order.

In a Paris Hotel elevator: Please leave your values at the front desk.

In a hotel in Athens: Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 a.m. daily.

In a Yugoslavian hotel: The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid.

In a Japanese hotel: You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.

In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery: You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried daily except Thursday.

In an Austrian hotel catering to skiers: Not to perambulate the corridors in the hours of repose in the boots of ascension.

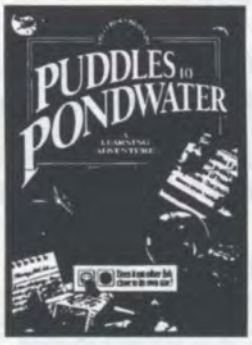
Partial reprint,, thanks to the 12/93 KCA Computer Group Newsletter. Look for more in next months B.O.B.

Software Review:

Puddles to Pondwater

from Niad Corp.

By: David Burch, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



The set up for Puddles to Pondwater is very simple. I followed the instructions and didn't run into any problems. The program requires at least a 286 system with 4.0 MB hard disk space, 640 K RAM and a mouse. Puddles to Pondwater runs in DOS.

Puddles to Pondwater is an excellent environmental education game. It includes detailed descriptions and information of over 100 animals from six continents. It allows the user to learn about several common pollutants and their effects on the environment. The information is authentic, detailed, and interesting.

Starting as a Junior field biologist you attempt to work your way up the ranks to the Worldwide Chief of Operations. Advancing is no easy task. Working from a base station known as the Bio-Ark you have a number of tools on hand. There is an Aquarium/Terrarium complex that stores the animals you correctly identify. There is also a classification center and a classification key. The combined use of these tools makes identification of the animals found on various continents possible. By searching the water and land and identifying animals, you increase your chances of being invited to another continent in order to solve their pollution problems. Being invited to other continents gives you access to their animals to increase the collection in your Aquarium/Terrarium complex. Every so often you are asked to take a test to advance in rank. If you answer five of the ten questions properly you will be advanced to the next rank. Solving these problems teaches the user about some common pollutant problems our world faces every day.

This game format allows an excellent learning experience for all. Although the box is not marked I would suggest the minimum age be 8 years. The major problem I ran into was in the identification of the animals. Sometimes the animal information was inadequate for identifying the animal. The problem came with questions concerning animal coloration. The only references for coloration questions were in the graphic image of the animal in question. A few times these graphics were not adequate to answer. For example a question might be asked about the color of the animals belly when the belly was not clearly visible. A few times I was only able to identify the animal by guessing. Besides this minor problem which only occurred in a few occasions, the classification key method allows the user to learn a commonly used biological method for identifying animals.

Puddles to Pondwater has some excellent credentials. Written by educators specifically for school age children, a previous version of PTP is used in over 4000 schools according to the literature. PTP offers an excellent background for basic biological and ecological principles. As humans and animals on this planet we are dependent on our environment to survive. Our present situation places our planet's environment dependent on our near future actions. This makes environmental education very important especially that of children.

Manufacturer's suggested list price $59.95 USD
Contact: Lucrezia Motta
Thetis Marketing Group, Inc.
7321 Victoria Park Avenue, Ste, 304
Markham, Ontario
Canada L3R 2Z8
(905) 470-0868 FAX: (905) 513-8179

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

Screenscapes - Transform your monitor with spectacular wall papers. - Vendor: Kiwi Software
Managing Your Money (DOS)- Complete Financial Software Program - Vendor: Meca Software
XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
FidelityOnLineExpress - Direct Line to Wall Street - Meca Software
WinWay Job Interview for Windows - Interview with confidence & win the Job. - WinWay Corp.
Watchman for Windows -Advance file protection management- Distant Markets
Quicken for Windows ver. 3.0 - Financial Organizer - Intuit
Quicken For DOS ver 7.0 - Financial Organizer - Intuit
Quicken For Windows Companion - Manages home inventory, estimates taxes, updates stock prices - Intuit
Pebble Beach Golf Links (Game - Course for Use with Links, Links 386 Pro or Microsoft Golf) - Access Software
EZ Shopper Plus - Ultimate home productivity program, shopping, coupons, recipes and menu planner.
Future Trends Software

(Contact Marylee or Harvey @ 985-3338 if you are interested in doing a review article for the newsletter on any of the above software.)

Software Review:

ANDREW Tobias' TAX CUT for windows.....headstart edition

By: Nicholas Klak
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Andrew Tobias and financial software seem to go together. This package from MCAA software is a continuation of several years of programs in the tax software business. If you have looked at some of the reviews in computer magazines this year, you will find this package highly rated. That makes this review harder to do.

I found the program overpriced, and cumbersome to use. Part of the problem was in the "head start edition." A headstart edition is one that is available about the first of the year. All the tax preparing software companies put one out. These packages are not written with some of the last minute changes which congress usually enacts. They do not print out usable forms for submission to the I.R.S.. The final edition is available later at a reduced price, providing you have saved the appropriate coupon or sent in your registration card. Sad to say I have been sloppy in doing that sort of thing with my software. The price of this package is about $39.95 at Super City and Comp. USA. The smaller the store the higher these packages sell for. This is a competitive price with its rival program, Turbo Tax. I was disappointed to read that the final edition could be had for an additional $29.95. What a rip-off. Why buy a headstart edition? My advice is to wait for the final edition of any tax package. Don't waste your time on outdated and non printable forms.

Tax Cut took seven megs of memory to install. The procedure was typical of a windows installation and executed flawlessly. The program supports the importation of TXF. files . This is an agreed upon file format by most of the software makers of financial software. Data can be entered from Quicken, Microsoft Money, CA-Simply Money and many others. This is an asset that is now shared by almost all of the financial programs on the market. Tobias's program uses a "navigator" to guide you around the various parts of the program. I found it to be too simple in its approach. If you have ever filled out some tax form you expect items to be in a logical order. All tax forms begin the same way. You expect that certain items will follow others. All 1040 type forms ask for name, address, and city. No big deal. This navigator made a five minute job of inputting you address. Wages from a W2 are the first money figures on all tax forms. This is followed by the interest income from banks. I had to look for an input area to put in bank interest income. I found it under investments. When one wishes to input information, an on screen help area is displayed. That is helpful, however the layout of the help is confusing. The middle of the screen has some dialog which asks a question. "Do you wish one dollar to go to the presidential campaign fund?" Some help for the question would be across the top of the screen and some more help was on the bottom. I found that to be disconcerting. I was always looking at all the page to see if I left anything out. I knew what I wanted to do and wanted to just move on. By the way the amount is Three dollars in the final edition.

Andrew Tobias" Tax Cut would not be my first choice for a tax program. Well then what would one do? Price is always a consideration. Especially when you may not be set on a specific program or are experimenting with your computer as a useful tool.

I recently purchased Parson's Tax Edge at Super City for $14.95, in its final edition. It also uses the "navigator" as its guiding you through its package. While not reviewed here I feel compelled to pass on an alternative. Parsons tax program was much more to my liking. If you still need a tax package, Parsons Tax Edge for windows is recommended.

Editorial Comment:
We apologize for not including this article in last month's newsletter, as it may have been of some help to those members filing last minute returns and trying to decide on a tax software package

Software Review:

Spanish Scholar for Windows
The two way translator & thesaurus for Windows Version 2.0

By: Beatriz and Mark Saunders,
Tampa PC Users Group Inc.

This program is advertised as a two-way English to Spanish translator, with dictionary and thesaurus.

Requirements:

Spanish scholar is a Windows 3.1 application and the minimum requirements for installation are an 80386SX PC or better, MS DOS 3.1 or higher , a VGA video adapter and monitor, and 2Mb of RAM memory. My installation used 5.9 Mb of hard drive space. The program comes on three high density (3.5") diskettes. The package contained a coupon to exchange the 3.5" diskettes for the 5.25" size.

Installation:

The installation uses the standard Windows 3.1 method with a few differences. The program asks the user if they want the installation prompts and instructions in English or Spanish. If the spanish interface is chosen for the install then Spanish becomes the default interface language for the program's operation. The install program uses a version of the Install Shield windows installation software that has attractive progress graphs and indicators.

I installed the software on a 386DX33 machine with 8 MB Ram and a super VGA card (the target machine for this review) and a Compaq 486 DX266 Eisa with Compaq Qvision Super VGA and experienced no installation or operational errors during the testing. At one point I did get a number of General Protection Faults while simultaneously running

(Continued on Page 7)

(Continued from Page 6)
Microsoft Excel for Windows 4.0. Leaving windows and re-starting seemed to fix the problem.

Spanish Scholar provides interfaces (macros) for the popular packages of WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, Lotus Ami Pro, and Microsoft Excel. With the Microsoft products when the macro is executed a Spanish Scholar menu option is placed in the menu bar. For Word Perfect the option is placed under the Macro Menu. I was not able to test using Ami Pro.This capability provides an easy way to start Spanish Scholar from inside the host word processor.

On-Line Help:
The Windows on-line help provided with the software is available in either English or Spanish. Included in this help are fairly complete rules for conjugating verbs, genderizing phrases, and setting the formality of written text. It was quite interesting to review a topic in English and then switch the help to Spanish and try to follow it.

Operation:
The program provides a clean half-screen interface with menus for File, Edit, Words and Help. The Words menu has a translate option that opens a second screen with a split text entry window. Below the menu is a button bar with choices for English or Spanish interface, translation direction, printer setup and word search.

In its default mode the program is setup to translate individual words. A text box is provided where the English or Spanish word can be entered and then by pressing a button the translated word and its part of speech is displayed. If the word can have multiple meanings then all of the meanings that can be found are displayed. The display of multiple meanings is a menu option.

Once a word has been translated a menu option is available to "Conjugate Verbs" which upon selection provides a screen showing samples of the word in phrases depending on the present or past indicative, and the singular or plural usage. This is very handy for academic study or for a person actively trying to learn the new language.

A second mode is document translation. For this a second screen opens with a vertically split text editing window. The Spanish Scholar manual claims this window can have up to twenty different buffers open at the same time. The size of these buffers will be small if you chose to do this because from my experience if the buffer is more than 4 to 5 KB the editing window will not accept any more text. What is useful here is the interface that is provided to popular word processors where paragraph or portions of the word processor document are copied into the Spanish Scholar window, translated, and the copied back to the original document. For this reason the buffer size limitation is not a problem provided the user has another Windows word processor installed.

The editing window allows entry of basically unformatted text and which all appear to be bold. When the user is ready to translate the text in the window they only have to select the buttons for the direction of the translation, and the options to translate the entire document at once or word by word. There is a button on the button bar to start the translation.

If the user selects word by word the translator will perform this by displaying the original text highlighted in the upper text window and the translated text in the bottom window. If a word to be translated has multiple or ambiguous meanings then the first screen with the word search will be displayed and the user can select the meaning they want. This is assisted by the on-line help which contains a detailed grammar reference and a verb conjugation screen which provides example usages.

If a translation is set up and the user opts to have the Spanish Scholar translate the entire document the end result can be pretty poor. In this mode if a word is found that multiple meanings the user is not prompted and the first meaning found is replaced into the translated text. Also the translator portion of the software will not touch words it cannot find and there is no ability to add words to the dictionaries. Because of the these problems the translation suffers and ends being a mix of Spanish and English words that do not make a great deal of sense. For business use or communicating with persons whom the writer is not well acquainted I would avoid using this mode.

I tested the document translation with a number of different styles documents ranging from personal letters to technical articles (one of which was a Windows Readme file) to news text copied from Prodigy. What I was looking for was a certain target style of document that the program could translate and I found that personal letters probably translated the best although some of them ended up sounding pretty funny. What was also curious was to translate a file into Spanish and the re-translate the translation back into English. The result would end up pretty different from the original

Personal View:
Spanish scholar's utility is in it's powerful on-line help and ability to provide translations of individual words or short phrases. For a student of Spanish or a Spanish speaking person learning English I feel it could be a helpful tool. But For heavy duty document translation it falls pretty flat unless the user selects the single word translation mode. Even in this mode the context of phrases can be lost and the resulting translation inaccurate unless the user has a fair knowledge of both languages. A feature missing in Spanish Scholar for language students is that competing translation/teaching programs are using multimedia to actually pronounce the word or phrase with a native speaker's tone and inflection. This can be an invaluable aid but probably would require the Spanish Scholar to be delivered on many diskettes or on CD, something not currently available. Overall I feel that Spanish Scholar is a useful program.
Road Scholar Software 1-800--243-7623-ext 720

The Tampa PC Users Group Library of Files

The file library for the Tampa PC Users Group is a selection of files, hand picked and tested by the club librarian. Our library prides itself on **QUALITY - NOT QUANTITY!** The library is stored on 3.5 , high density diskettes, and is usually available at every general users group

1. You must bring your own formatted diskette.

2. If you bring your own PC to the meeting you may copy files to your hearts content, under the supervision of the librarian.

3. If the librarians own PC is used, the librarian will make the copies for you. Please be reasonable and limit the number of files to be copied. Remember... the librarian is a member too and is interested in the presentation for the evening.

4. There is always a list of the files in the library provided in booklet form at the meetings for you to look at and choose from. This list is also available in ASCII text format for you to copy onto your own diskette, to take home. This same text file is updated regularly and uploaded to the clubs Bits of Blue BBS for downloading.



5. If you have been unable to attend a general meeting and need a file, just leave a message on the BBS for Larry Anders and the file will be uploaded as soon as possible.

NOTE: If there is a special file you are looking for or are interested in, ask the librarian. The Tampa PC Users Group is a member of the Association of Shareware Pro-fessionals and receives a CDROM each month full of the latest Shareware releases.

THE FILE LIBRARY IS A PRIVILEGE FOR CLUB MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING. PLEASE DONT ABUSE THIS PRIVILEGE!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

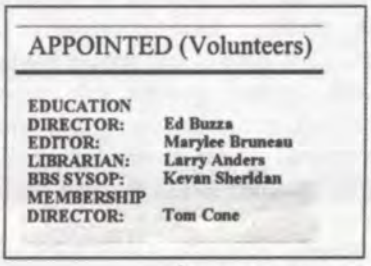
Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV

Software Review
WordPerfect Presentations, Version 2.0

By: Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.







This is a very comprehensive presentations graphics program that will give your slide shows the professional layout and look you always wanted. I am working with this program for the last 2 months and I am still at awe to see it work. I have to emphasize "to see it work" because I don't feel that I do much work at all to create a slide show with

WordPerfect Presentations.

This program comes with a great collection of Slide Show Masters (I counted them: 65!), and each Master contains a sub-group of master templates. The templates of the Masters show a similar background, but are set up individually for different types of information. There are bullet charts, organizational charts, Title page, Text page, Data Chart, and quite a few more to be able to put together one of the best slide shows possible. You use only one or two Masters in one show to give your presentation consistency, but the sub-templates can be used in any variety or repeatedly within that one show.

Every template saves me the trouble to create my own background, title, sub-title, charts, or data. Once I have planned my slide show, all that needs to be done to choose my templates and enter my text and data. WordPerfect Presentation has already done my formatting and setups. Now if I feel very adventurous and creative, I can start a slide show from scratch. The programs features and tools are right at my fingertips and so plentiful that my imagination can have a field day. Help is everywhere. Besides Help-on-Line and the Help menu, there is a Tutorial and a Quick Tutor (for people in a hurry)which can teach you in 30 seconds to 3 minutes how to complete a task. There is Context- sensitive help, which means you can get help at the very moment you are using a specific feature.

My most favored features are the Button Bars. They can be visible set up on screen in different positions to be used. Buttons are like macros (automation of an action or feature) only much easier since you do not need to remember a macro name or letter. Though, you definitely need to use a mouse to activate or create your button bars. Once you have set up your buttons all you have to do is click on them to get any kind of features or action - truly with just a click on your mouse. I created a special button bar just for my slide show function and I believe within 20 minutes I can have a very professional, presentable slide show. I created a slide show for this review out of the Tutorial manual which gives you step by step instructions on how to set up a slide show. Then I converted each slide into a WordPerfect graphic, entered my WordPerfect word processor and started to write this review and included all 7 slides of my show for you to see. Converting, importing, and exporting is a simple matter of choosing what kind of file and for what application you want to use your slides or pictures. Not to forget: since I was able to have my slides in thumbnail format all at once on the screen, I could move them around at will; slide no. 3 became no. 5. Two slides I created just for fun, I could delete again and add another one on to it. The flexibility and ease of this program has not stopped yet to amaze me. It is actually fun to create a slide show - wish I could do this as a job assignment all the time.

WordPerfect Presentations comes with a Shared Application program. This can save you quite some space on the hard drive, but you have many features of WordPerfect programs available in all programs. Since this WordPerfect Presentation is for Windows, the shared application include File Manager, QuickFinder, Speller, Thesaurus, Graphic Conversion, Language Module, Hyphen Utility, Macro Facility, Macro Command Inserter, and Printer Programs. You also can order additional WPCorp products for Windows to include in your Shared Application. Files that take up a lot of space and memory are only installed once to be used by all.

WordPerfect Presentation also comes with its own drawing program for you to create your own slides. To enhance your slides even more, you are able to include sound clips, but your sound hardware must be installed and set up correctly in Windows. Also, you can create speaker notes which will then accompany each slide in your show, and they also can be printed and used as cue cards. The possibilities are endless.

System requirements: A 386 or higher CPU; 2MB memory (4MB recommended); a hard disk with at least 17M of free disk space; a graphic adapter and monitor supporting EGA, VGA or higher graphic cards; DOS 3.1 or higher; Windows 3.1 or higher, a mouse. You have a choice of custom installation eliminate some files to gain space or place your graphic files on floppy disks. Though, the operation of the program will be much slower if you have to get files from the floppy disk.

To emphasize again, WordPerfect Presentations will do most of the work for you when you create a slide show presentation, but it also gives you the opportunity (with a lot of help from the program) to create your own slides, using the drawing program to import images like your logo. It is a very powerful program, especially since it will share major files with other WPCorp. products and therefore saves space and is speedy.

Wordperfect Corp., 1555 N. Technology Way, Orem, Utah 84057 (801) 228-5004 Suggested Retail Price $395.00

FIDONET

By: Kief S. Morris East Tennessee, PCUG - PC Register

If you've called very many BBS's, you've probably run across those boards that demand that you press the escape key before the BBS presents you with a prompt for your name. You may have noticed that these boards have message areas that get hundreds of messages a day, most of whom aren't even posted by people who call that board. How the heck do they do that? What all does this Fidonet thing offer to BBS's and their users?

Fidonet is the hobby BBS's answer to Internet. Over 20,000 sysops worldwide have joined into the network to become part of this international community. For users of a Fidonet BBS, the network offers communication with other users around the country and worldwide, allowing them to get the latest word on new products, and help in using them. Increasingly, Fidonet boards are using the system to offer their callers more and more benefits, including getting the latest shareware files through automatic distribution, and even Usenet Newsgroups and Internet E-Mail.

The Origins of FIDONET

Fidonet's humble beginnings came with Tom Jennings, the San Francisco author of the Fido BBS software. Wanting to exchange messages with a friend helping test the program in Baltimore,

Tom built in a feature that would let them automatically send messages back and forth. Thus, netmail was born.

How Does The Dang Thing Work?

The key to a Fidonet BBS is it's "Front-End Mailer", or Mailer. This program runs when there is no activity on the BBS. When a call comes in, the mailer determines if it is another mailer or a human caller - if it's a human caller, who announces his nature by pounding on the escape key, the mailer turns over the reigns to the BBS program.

If it's another BBS's mailer, the two exchange identification, and then exchange any mail or files they have intended for the other BBS. The mailer is also set up with a schedule for when to call out to deliver mail, or to "poll" another board to see if there is mail waiting.

What Kind Of Stuff Do They Transfer?

The basic element of Fido communication is Netmail, a person to person message used extensively by sysops. It's a more or less private E-Mail message. Netmail was the sole reason for Fidonet in the beginning, but what really opened the net up was Echomail - away for different BBS's to share public message areas.

When a user calls a local BBS and enters a message in a Fidonet conference, the message is exported from the BBS message base and packaged up for delivery to other BBS's. The program that does this is an "Echomail Processor". The next time the board's mailer connects to the mailer of the BBS with which it trades mail, the message will be passed on. The next BBS enters the message into its own message base, for its users to see, and also passes it on down the road to other boards.

Through this method, messages you post in the Fidonet "Windows" confer ence on one board are seen within days on every other Fidonet board that echoes that particular conference. Likewise, you see messages posted on other boards and can reply to them.

Currently there are 480 different message area topics on the oMcial Fidonet distribution system (the "Backbone"), ranging from "Abled", the disabled users' information exchange, to "Zymurgy", for discussion of beer home brewing.

How Do They Organize Ouer 20,000 BBS's?

Not easily! The largest organization level is the "Zone", which generally comprises a continent. These are:

ZONE	AREA
1	North America
2	Europe
3	Pacific (Australia, etc)
4	South America
5	Africa
6	Asia

Below this level are Regions, which are comprised of nations or portions of a large nation. Tennessee is a part of Region 18, which includes the Southeast US and the Carribean. Nets are local organizations of Fidonet BBS's. Their geographical size depends on the concentration of BBS's in an area. In Tennessee we have 8 Nets:

NET	NET NAME
116	Middle Tennessee
123	Mid-South Net
362	Chatta-Net
3615	Tennessee Valley Net
3621	Clarksville
3627	Cumberland Area
3642	Upper East Tennessee
3643	Rural SE Tennessee

Each BBS in Fidonet is referred to as a "Node" (although a BBS with more than one line my have more than one node),

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)
and has a node number. The Zone, Net, and Node numbers arestrung together to form a Fidonet Address. For example, a BBS in North America (Zone 1), in the Tennessee Valley Net (Net 3615), with the number 210 assigned to it within the net, would be "1:3615/210".

At the Net, Region, and Zone levels there are Coordinators responsible for their group. The Net Coordinator (NC) helps new nodes join Fidonet by issuing them a Fidonet address, and putting an entry for them into the local Net's part of the Nodelist. The Nodelist is a weekly directory of all Fidonet BBS's, used by mailers and other software to get the phone number and other info for other members of the network.

The Nodelist, although not structured for humans to read easily, is credited as the largest and most accurate BBS list in existence. This is because it is administered at each level of the or ganization. The Net Coordinators make sure each node in their net is active, and send updated weekly listings for the net to the Region level. The Regional Coordinator (RC) compiles these into the Regional section of the Nodelist and sends that to the Zone Coordinator (ZC). The six Zone lists are compiled by one of the ZC's into the full nodelist, which, as of the most recent list, is 1.7 Megabytes in size.

The Echomail Organization

All of those Coordinator positions were thought up to handle the original, netmail oriented Fidonet. As Echomail became bigger and bigger, a parallel structure came into play to handle it. In each local net there is a NEC (Net Echomail Coordinator), who may be assisted by Hubs. Each node calls a hub to get its echomail. The hub, in turn, calls a Regional Hub, which is administered by the REC, which in turn calls one of three Zone Hubs, also known as "Backbone Hubs". This organization as a whole is referred to as the "Back-bone", and runs all of the Echomail in Zone 1. There is no organized system for sharing echomail with other Zones, but many echoes are carried internationally anyways.

Still Growing!

Fidonet gets bigger every week, and is expanding in new directions. Just as echomail started as a new concept that grew to a major operation - in fact, the lifeblood of the network today - some- thing new has been becoming a larger and larger part of the Fidonet. File Distribution has been around for some time, but this past year has become organized and widespread.

File distribution is patterned after the echomail concept. If different BBS's can share messge areas, with all messages in each area sent to every other board that participates in that area, why not do the same thing with file areas? Unlike echomail areas, most File Distribution Areas (FDA's) can only have files entered from a limited number of locations. At these locations, new files are entered into the file area, and when a BBS set up to receive that area calls the first board, the files are automatically sent over, moved to the second board's download directories, and copied for that board's downlinks. Thus, the latest version of McAlee's Scan, a shareware virus detection program, can be distributed to hundreds of BBS's around the continent within a few days, requiring little or no itervention by the sysops.

This is a great boon to sysops, who can quickly build a large collection of recent, quality shareware. Users benefit as well, being able to find the latest shareware on local boards in a timely manner.

The file distribution system began vith the Shareware Distribution Network (SDN) and Shareware Distribution System (SDS), two closely related Organizations. The SDS and SDN were Generally restrictive about who could and couldn't participate in their distribution, but the software has advanced to the point where any Fidonet sysop an set it up. Thus, the old organizaions are giving way to a new, more reely available group called the Filebone. The Filebone patterns itself in ome ways after the Echomail "Back-one" system, letting any sysop with compatible software link in for easy, fast files

Playing Witb Tbe Big Boys - Internet And Usenet Via Fido

Gateways in many areas allow the Iterchange of Fidonet and Internet Communication. The Internet is a system that connects different nets, mainly large systems at universities, installations, and Corporations, to exchange mail and military and other government installations, and Corporations, to exchange mail and files. Usenet is a collection of message reas called newsgroups, which operate very much like Fidonet echomail, distributed via the Internet and other means.

Connecting to the Internet and Usenet is of growing interest to Fidonet systems. Those BBS's which have this connection can offer their users the Usenet Newsgroups, which are very active and interesting message areas. They can also offer Internet E-Mail, giving them a way to exchange person to person messages with practically anybody who has any interaction with computer networks. An Internet address is the closest thing to a universal E-Mail address there is - they can be used to communicate with individuals at universities, computer companies, newspapers, government, Fidonet, Compuserve, and more. Having this service available on your friendly neighborhood BBS can be very useful, not to mention economical.

Sounds Neat - Wbere Do I Sign Up?

If you have a modem, just call up one of your friendly neighborhood Fidonet boards. If you're a sysop, contact a local Fidonet board to get copies of a mailer and echomail processor for your BBS, and ask the sysop for advice on who to contact to get your Fidonet address. Then you're ready to join the international electronic community!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

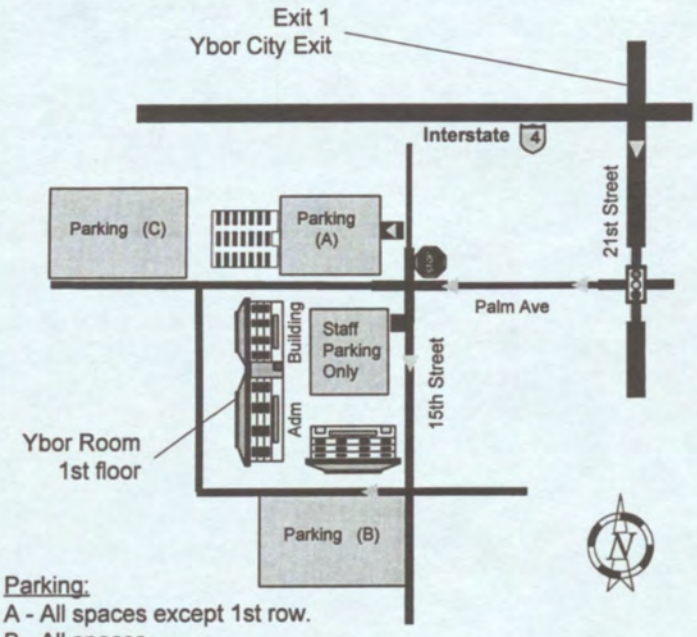
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**Voice: 237-4997

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Parking:
A - All spaces except 1st row.
B - All spaces
C - All spaces

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Member

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Bits of Blue

Vol 7, No. 5 May, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: May 11th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room

DIRECTIONS:

Take Interstate 4 to 21st/22nd Street (Ybor City) Exit 1, South to Palm Avenue, West to 15th Street to Hillsborough Community College. **Guest please sign in.**

See last page for a map to our new meeting site.

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SPECIAL NOTICE: OS/2 SIG The first meeting is scheduled for May 26th at 6:00 p.m. on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall

May 11th AGENDA:

Demo by:

Microsoft Corp.
of Access 2.0



7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Drawing -
Microsoft Access 2.0

UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

June 8 - Lotus Corp.
(tentative)

July 13 - Broderbund
(Games & Educational)

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

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VICE PRES : Al Poole 876-9445
TREASURER: Tom Cone 224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
SECRETARY: Jim Clark 986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDUCATION DIRECTOR: Ed Buzza 685-5898
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 224-9052

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with Ami Pro for Windows from Lotus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 4/13/94 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

A nice turnout for this meeting and everything seemed to go very well. There was a good bit of time for an open forum kind of interchange between members, along with presentations briefly reviewing a couple of very nice Abode programs -- one of which most of you will be using in the not-too-distant future: Adobe Acrobat and the Acrobat Readers.

USER GROUP NEWS

➪ **Membership Survey:** A membership survey form was created by the Board of Directors (BOD) recently for the purpose of gathering the information from the membership needed to help guide our future efforts and the allocation of some rather slim resources. The survey was handed out to those present, and was included in the newsletter for those not present. **All members are asked to complete the survey form as soon as practicable and return it to the BOD, or bring it to the next meeting. Your input is very important and will help your BOD a great deal in making the decisions that must be made in the near future.** The data will be held in strictest confidence and will only be used as statistical data.

➪ Special Interest Groups (SIGs): Preparation for SIGs on OS/2 and CorelDRAW are in their final stages of preparation and all preparations should be complete by the next general meeting. Both will likely be meeting not long after the next general meeting. It is therefore recommended that any members interested in participating in either of these SIGs be sure to attend the next general meeting. It appears that the OS/2 SIG will likely meet in the IBM facility, and the Corel SIG will likely meet at the Dale Mabry campus of the HCC.

INDUSTRY NEWS

➪ Merge Mania: Competition in the software world has led to what seems to be merger mania. In addition to the passing of Word Perfect, recent announcements include Adobe acquiring Aldus, Symantic buying Central Point, and Intuit buying Best Software. Whether the objectives of the companies involved will be achieved is yet to be seen. In the long term, however, this merger mania could have a negative effect on competition, but it would seem the mania has not yet approached that level.

➪ "Simply Tax" Refund For Some: As many know, Computer Associates, a big name in the main frame world for a long time, has been trying to make their name recognized in the PC world by marketing Simply Money and Simply Tax for only S & H charges. Those that acquired Simply Tax before the final version was available had to pay $9.95 for the early bird version, and then another $3.95 to get the final version. After receiving numerous complaints, Computer Associates has agreed to refund the $3.95 charge to those who request same in writing. So, if you want your $3.95 back you will have to contact Computer associates and request it.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 2)

➪ MS Maintenance Upgrades: Maintenance upgrades are now out for MS Word For Windows 6.0 and for MS Windows 3.1. The upgrades change the program designations to 6.0a and 3.11, respectively. No charge is involved and they are available form numerous electronic sources, in including the MS BBS and CompuServe. They are also available on our own Bits of Blue BBS as WORD60A.EXE and WW0981.EXE.

➪ Professional Write Upgrade: Harvey reported that Professional Write 3.0 is available to all present owners of Professional Write, or any competitive DOS word processor, for $65 from Professional Write.

➪ Win Fax PRO Upgrade: Version 4.0 upgrade to that program is available for $49 at 1-800-268-6082.

PRESENTATION -- Adobe

William C. Lindsay, South Eastern Account Manager for Adobe Corporation, generously agreed to give us a brief overview of two of Adobe products: Photoshop 2.5.1 and the Acrobat package. I say 'brief' overview because, although Bill spent a good amount of time accomplishing that end, the scope of the power and features of these programs makes anything short of a several hour review 'brief'. Bill proved to be a very able representative for Adobe and he gave an excellent presentation of both packages. I can't hope to cover, even briefly, all of the features Bill demonstrated, but here are a few:

Photoshop: Adobe says that Photoshop is "The world's leading photo design and production tool." I don't know whether that is accurate or not, but I do know that if there is anything you might want to do with an electronic photograph it would seem that Photoshop will do it very well and very fast. You can create your own, scan images into it, or import from a host of formats. Once in image (negative or positive) is in the program, it can be manipulated in just about any way you can imagine: Change the image to a negative or positive image; change colors (w/16 million available) of any part or all of the image; create duo-, tri- and quadtones; provides for simultaneous viewing of a range of color options applied to the image to aid in making choices; export and import all or any part of an image to other programs and/or as replacement/added components of an image; create any tint/hue changes desired; create and add in graphics created with the versatile and powerful built-in drawing tools; add in any text desired using the large selection of fonts included, or Windows fonts, and manipulate their size, shape, and color to your hearts content; etc., and then print out or export your finished product to any of a wide variety of formats, including that to create an actual film negative.

Photoshop is truly a very powerful program and can handle 40-50 MB images and includes excellent on-line help. It also includes 100 beautiful licensed images, covering a wide variety of subjects. It handles a large selection of file formats (import and export). Windows 3.1 (or later) is required, of course, and it will run on a 386, but a 486 with 8 MB RAM is recommended. The specific amount of disk space the program requires is unknown, but it is in the several MB range. But one needs a good bit of free disk space to accommodate images, especially when handling the 40-50 MB variety.

Photoshop is available for IBM-compatibles and Mac. It lists for $895, but is available for substantially less. One flyer from a retailer was available at the meeting listing an Adobe Photoshop/ Illustrator (also a high end program) package for $679.

Acrobat: Adobe Acrobat is actually a family of related programs, which includes Acrobat Exchange, Acrobat Distiller, Acrobat Reader, and Acrobat Starter Kit. Acrobat Exchange is the starting point. It converts many commonly used document formats into what is called a Portable Document Format (PDF). This common format then can be read by the other components of the Acrobat family. The components are available in DOS/Windows and Mac. Hence, once a file is converted to the common PDF format it can be read by any PC with a Reader, regardless of operating platform or other application software. "Big deal," you say, "I can do just about that much with ASCII format." The BIG difference is that acrobat retains all formatting of the document, including fonts, page layout, graphics, etc., literally all of the features of the original, so that what the reader shows on the screen and prints out to a printer, if desired, is exactly the same as the original document. The host computer need not have the fonts nor graphics used in the original document; Acrobat takes care of that. Acrobat, then, allows the interchange of documents between computers, overcoming the limitations of different hardware, operating systems and application software. Interestingly, in many cases the PDF file is substantially smaller than the application file from which the PDF was created.

Acrobat Exchange allows one to create, view, collate, annotate, manipulate and print PDF documents. Acrobat Reader allows viewing and printing any PDF document, and gives the ability to access any annotations, bookmarks and links that are a part of the PDF file. Acrobat Distiller converts postscript language files into PDF files. Acrobat Starter Kit is a 10-user license package of the Exchange and Distiller components, or everything a workgroup of 10 needs to use Acrobat.

For the DOS/Windows version, a 386 machine with at least 3 MB of hard disk space is needed. The street price for none of the components was available at the meeting. List price is: Exchange - $195; Distiller - $695; Reader - $50; and Starter Kit - $1,395.

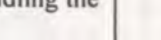
Bill and Adobe, thank you very much for a super presentation. You have a couple of very powerful and useful programs in Photoshop and Reader. We will soon be distributing Readers to our members and then using Acrobat Exchange and the Readers to post our newsletter to our members electronically.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Adobe Corporation, who donated all but one of the door prizes, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Don Simonds	Adobe Wild Type
Joe Crochet	Adobe Wild Type
E. Jurado	Adobe Type On Call
Mark Saunders	Adobe Type On Call
Mark Saunders	Almost Perfect Book

The meeting adjourned at about 8:35 PM.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

My article will be short this month.

Thanks to those of you who have filled in your surveys and returned them to us. In order for us to get a good understanding of the needs of the group we need as many of those surveys returned as possible.

It finally looks like the OS/2 SIG (Special Interest Group) group will be a reality. The first meeting is scheduled for 6 PM on May 26th on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall. IBM will furnish the space, computer and projection equipment. The SIG leader will be our own member, John Lucas. If you have not done so, contact John at (813) 948-7621 if you are interested. My sincere thanks to John for showing the continuous interest in forming and running this SIG over the last six months. Additionally, I want to thank IBM and Brad Brown for allowing us to use their resources, once again, for this SIG group. The space has been reserved for our OS/2 SIG group into the fourth quarter.

The Corel SIG group is still being organized and the forming of a Windows SIG group is in the early stages. Initial plans are to have these SIG groups meet at the HCC Dale Mabry campus.

During our last meeting, the Tampa Bay Computer Society formerly the Pinellas IBM PC User Group, asked, through one of our members, if we could provide access to our BBS for a worthy cause. The worthy cause is the placement of PCs with modems in the Spinal Injury Wards of the St. Pete VA Hospital. At the meeting I stated that I would bring the subject up at the next BOD (Board Of Directors) meeting. It was decided at the BOD meeting that, with only one phone line, our group did not have the resources to provide additional BBS access without impacting the BBS service of the existing membership.

We are currently looking to add a second hard disk to the BBS. If you can help us in obtaining a 400Mb or larger IDE drive call me at 985-3338. Donations or bartering are humbly accepted.

Our BBS may need a new home this year. If you have any suggestion contact me or any board member at the numbers list in this newsletter.

I look forward to seeing each of you at the May meeting.

.....Harvey Bruneau

Murphy's Law

Leakproof seals - will.
Self starters - will not.
Interchangeable parts - won't.
There is always one more bug.

Software Review: Q-DOS Collection

Review By: Jim Clark,
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

What It Is: Q-DOS Collection, by Gazelle Systems, Inc., is as the name implies, a collection of DOS utility-type programs. It includes 7 utilities: Q-DOS 3, a file and directory management utility; Back-It, a file backup utility; OPTune, a hard disk optimizer and defrag utility; PCscan, a virus detection and correction utility; Q-MENU, a DOS menu shell utility; FAST!, a disk caching alternative to SmartDrive, and other competitors; G-Edit, a text editor; and GZFormat, a floppy formatter. I call these utilities because of what they do and how they are used by most of us. Actually, they are independent programs that can be ran independently, with some directly accessible through Q-DOS 3, with the remainder accessible by selecting the executable file, and all of which can be directly accessible thru Q-MENU.

Q-DOS 3: Is a comprehensive file and directory management program that provides the capability to quickly and easily: View the directory structure of any drive, and the all files contained therein; copy or move files and/or directories (and any files/sub-directories therein) from and to any drive on your computer; erase files and/or directories, with a capability for unerase if a mistake is made -- provided it is accomplished before any writing to that disk occurs; prune and graft directories as desired within the current drive; make and rename directories, and rename files; view the contents of files, though only files containing text are intelligible; view and change attributes of any file; execute executable files; scan the current drive to pick up any changes make to files since logging on to the drive; display dual windows to permit comparing directory structures and /or files; find specific files on any drive; access via menu option OPTune, Back-It and QFormat Q-DOS Collection utilities.

Q-DOS 3 has a lot of utility as a file manager. It can be operated effectively from the keyboard, with a mouse, or any combination thereof. It is fast and accomplishes all of the above functions quickly. I am entrenched in using a different file manager, however, and initially navigating my way around Q-DOS 3 has been a bit cumbersome. One feature that I have been accustomed to which is not available in Q-DOS 3 is summary statistics on the drive selected -- like total number of files on the drive, total amount of space used and how much of that is wasted space, and other summary data which I find helpful from time to time. Some of the info -- total, used and free space -- is available, but you must select that as a menu item. The directory tree is blown up a bit too much so that it shows only 4 levels of directories on the screen at one time, including the root, and one cannot get a good perspective of the tree. I find myself scrolling vertically several screens and often horizontally as well to find the directory I have interest in. On the other hand, chasing down a directory in the file section is easy -- if you know where the

(Continued on page 5)

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directory is located in the first place. I expect after more use I will become accustomed to Q-DOS 3 and find it easier to use. It is a very nice file manager, giving the user a lot of power at the controls.

Back-It 4: This is a full-feature backup utility that is also very fast and customizable. It will backup from a single file to as many hard drives as are installed in your computer. Once backed up, subsequent back up can be limited to only those files that have been changed. Backups can be set to occur automatically, with various options available, including three levels of verification, and modification of archiving flag. Three compression levels are also available: None, normal and super. Interestingly, Gazelle says that using super compression on more recent computers (higher MHz 286s and up) can actually be faster than normal compression; it is very fast on my 386DX/40. One can create up to 50 presets (backup plans) that can then be accomplished with a couple of clicks of the mouse.

The directory tree in Back-It looks the same as the tree in Q-DOS 3 -- only a zoomed in perspective is available. Beyond that, selections for backup down to the directory level can be accomplished quickly and relatively easy. Files, however, are not displayed but may be entered from the keyboard into a file selection list, but file selections are limited to 16 for any one backup -- which can be groups of files (e.g., *.DOC), or specific files. I am accustomed to being able to select individual files for backup and have not yet gotten used to not having that feature; but, then, I don't use that feature often. One especially nice feature of Back-It -- that is missing in many of the other backup programs -- is that it supports tape drives, or any kind of DOS drive, for that matter. It will also format floppies automatically. Back-It provides for any level of backup desired, from full to a single file; updates to those backups; multiple volume backups in a single session; and network backups, all of which can be scheduled to occur at any time you select.

The Restore feature is quite fast as well, and has the same kinds of options that are available in most good backup programs: Restore to any location; complete restore, or select as little as a single file; retain or not the directory structure and the file archives backed up; verify the restored files if desired; and can recover most damaged files if there are any in the backup set when restoring

OPTune: OPTune includes a number of features. Its optimization /defrag feature is quite user friendly and customizable. It has four levels of optimization, the highest level of which packs the files in selected sort sequence end to end, while at the other end is a directory only optimization. If you have any doubt about getting into trouble with any particular optimization, it even has a Simulated option that will go through the entire selected optimization/defrag procedure, except actually making any physical changes, and will report any problems encountered. And OPTune is FAST at all levels of optimization/defraging. Gazelle recommends that appropriate commands be placed in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file to optimize/defrag at every startup to keep your drive(s) in top condition and fast working order. Once optimized, daily optimization as Gazelle recommends takes only seconds -- unless major changes have been made on the disk.

OPtune includes a Check Disk feature very similar to DOS, except it is a lot faster, it works with all disks using any version of DOS from 2.0 up, and works on all disks/partitions of any size up to 2 gigabytes. VERIFY/FIX is another feature that will examine in detail the physical condition of your disk, correct and/or move data on bad sectors, and reportedly can identify surface areas that are likely to give problems in the future and mark them as bad sectors. It also includes a TUNE-DISK feature which will correct and strengthen low level format signals on the disk. This features is, of course, usable on only older hard drives (MFM/RLL) and cannot be used on the newer IDE, EDSI and SCSI drives.

The documentation does not address compressed drives. I was concerned about that since most of my hard drive space is compressed, so I called Gazelle Tech Support. They advised that OPtune was not compatible with SuperStor or Stacker, but was compatible with DoubleSpace. Those using other disk compression programs should check with Gazelle for compatibility.

PCscan: This is a virus detection and correction utility that functions from the DOS prompt. It is not a TSR program, but can be ran at any time from the DOS command line. It can also be setup to run at boot to scan any and all of your memory and/or directories/drives. As with any command line command, there are a number of switches available, but never fear -- they are available to your screen by typing PCscan. Here, again, this utility is fast. Another nice aspect is that updates to the known virus pattern bank is available from TRENDs BBS Utility without charge to registered owners; TREND is the creator of PCscan.

FAST!: This is a very good caching program, in my opinion. I have used an older version of Fast! in lieu of SmartDrive for quite some time now. It has always been a good bit faster than the older versions of SmartDrive, but SmartDrive was improved considerable with DOS 6. Fast! has similar read/write options as others do, and it support write buffers. Fast! is a straight-away caching program that uses less memory per unit of cache than does SmartDrive, and is at least as fast. For a 1 MB cache on my computer, for example, Fast! uses 14.5K of upper memory, while SmartDrive uses 27.5K. The manual states that Fast! Is even faster and uses even less memory on 386s and up if the EMS version of it is used (included with package). Fast! supports hard drives only. It is best installed at boot in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file, but may be installed in conventional memory from the DOS prompt. Once installed, all features can be controlled at the DOS prompt or with hot keys.

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Q-MENU 2.0: Q-MENU is described as a hard disk menu system that greatly simplifies execution of difficult or repetitive DOS commands by giving you an easy way to organize them into a structure that you can navigate by pressing a few keys. The completed menu structure allows even a beginning computer user to run applications without having to learn DOS. It does have a lot of capability, as described in the next paragraph, but getting started is not intuitive and takes a bit of effort to learn how to set the menus up.

The menu structure is completely user definable. It will support up to 10 levels of menus, with room for 500 menu items, each of which may have multiple commands. Up to 80 menu items can be available per screen. Q-MENU can be used to activate any DOS command -- start applications, change the environment, execute a batch file, etc. It supports password protection and 50 line text mode, it offers screen saver options, and is network compatible. Once a menu structure has been created, changes to suit personal desires or accommodate changing situations can be accomplished quickly and with relative ease. It is a competent menu program, but don't look for a lot of bells and whistles.

G-Edit: This is quite a powerful text editor that can edit up to 10 files simultaneously with a combined size of up to 16 MB -- YES!, 16 MEG. Files to be edited can be loaded via the command line at the time G-Edit is started, or from within the program. G-Edit will support 10 windows tiled at one time, but that is clearly not practical. The windows can also be stacked and sized as desired, and any of them called to the front for work at any time. The multiple windows are very helpful in allowing viewing and editing of more than one file at a time; for example, changes in the CONFIG and/or AUTOEXEC file often require that changes also be made in the other. And, G-Edit allows moving text between windows via a buffer, and provides markers that are quite helpful in moving around quickly in larger files. It also has find and replace features that aid in navigating within a file and speed up editing.. If you have a VGA or better monitor, you can set the display in G-Edit to show up to 50 lines. G-Edit does not support a mouse , however, and requires some getting used to for those of us that are addicted to a mouse. Notwithstanding, it is a very good editor.

GZFormat: A DOS, Q-DOS 3, or TSR formatting program. If loaded as a TSR, hot keys make it available at any time if you find a need to format a floppy. I have not used it as a TSR, but have used it from Q-DOS 3 and the DOS prompt. It is an adequate formatter that operates with about the same speed as DOS 6.2 format. The real advantage of GZFormat, however, is as a TSR or while in the Q-DOS 3 file management program.

Installation: Q-DOS Collection comes on three 3.5 floppies, and is available on 5.25 floppies. Installation is done from the DOS prompt, but Q-DOS 3 can be loaded during installation to be available through Windows. Installation *can* be accomplished quickly, depending on how fast you are at making decisions; among them are where you want the program loaded, what, if any, of the features you want loaded at boot by the AUTOEXEC file, but many of the decisions relate to configuring the different programs to your particular computer and desires and can delayed until later.

Documentation: The manual in Q-DOS Collection is fairly complete and fairly easy to read. Help is available within each of the programs within the package as well, though it is a little too sketchy in some. For the most part, it is context sensitive and is some cases - like OPtune - is automatically presented on the screen for any menu items selected. But you may have to refer to the manual for help in depth. In one instance (Q-MENU) the manual documentation and on-line help is very sketchy, though the Q-MENU program includes a 19-page README file that can be printed out for more complete documentation. A toll-free 800 number is provided in the manual, but a call to that number gets you a referral to a toll number for tech support; the one call I have made to that number brought a quick, courteous response.

Requirements: While requirements vary for each of the included utilities, are very minimal and any computer having the following capabilities can run them all: Any IBM-compatible PC or better with PC/MS-DOS 3.0 or newer , 384K of RAM, and a hard drive with 3.5 MB of available space.

Cost: The list price for Q-DOS Collection is $179, but Gazelle is selling it for $79. I do not have a local street price because I have been unsuccessful in finding a local software outlet that carries the package. I know of people that have used a version Q-DOS for a number of years now -- and still do, so it has been around for some time. While it is an effective, comprehensive package of utilities, perhaps it is not a shelf item in our area because it does not have a lot of the bells and whistles that seems to dominate in the newer software being produced now.

For additional information, or to place an order, contact:
Gazelle Systems, Inc.
305 North 500 West
Provo, UT 84601
1-800-786-327



Exasperation, Personified
Translation - What Did I Mean to Say?

The exasperated help-line caller said she couldn't get her new Dell computer to turn on. Jay Albinger, a Dell Computer Corp. technician, made sure the computer was plugged in and then asked the woman what happened when she pushed the power button.

I've pushed and pushed this foot pedal and nothing happens, "the woman replied. "Foot pedal?" the technician asked. "Yes," the woman said, "this little white foot pedal with the one switch." The "foot pedal," it turned out, was the computer's mouse, a hand-operated device that helps to control the computer's operations.

(reprinted from Bits & Bytes Magazine, TPCS 4/94)

TeleGrafix Starts Revolution with RIPterm

Review by: Kevan Sheridan and Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Remote Imaging Protocol (RIP) sounds technical, but RIP is a new graphic wave rolling in on telecommuting shores. RIPterm version 1.54.00 for DOS by TeleGrafix Communications, Inc., is a graphical interface for on-line hosts and end users to replace or enhance ANSI.

RIPterm uses RIPscript, a concise, optimized language for instructing a compatible terminal program to display graphics. Instead of using the decimal numbering system, it uses Hexi-Tri-Decimal (HTD), which uses 36 digits (0-9,A-Z). HTD can store a number in fewer digits than decimal, thus increasing transmission efficiency. For example the number 1024 (decimal) is SG (Hexi- Tri-Decimal). 1024 takes 4 bytes to transmit, but SG takes only 2 bytes.

Download RIPterm and try giving it a whirl. We think you'll be pleased with the graphical difference and besides the price is right.

After unzipping RIPTM154.ZIP, available on Bits of Blue BBS (239- 3704), the files need sorting into program, icon, and font directories. The files take less than 1.8 MB of space on the hard drive.

How it works: The files located in the icons directory are called up by the host computer and assigned positions on the end user monitor. This saves time because the files are already on your side of the telephone line, all they need are instructions on how to appear on the screen. The host sends the instructions and then your screen shows the graphics and buttons.

Although RIPterm is not a high cost product, it comes with quite a few features. Text transmitted from the host can be reviewed with Scroll Back. Download protocol can be set to Automatic Z-modem and batch upload/download are possible. Multiple phone directories can contain up to 100 phone numbers in each. There are pull down menus and hot-key support and you can edit or run external applications or shell to DOS from within RIPterm. Your data is secure (nothing can be uploaded without your permission). RIPterm supports extended (XMS) or expanded (EMS) memory, has custom IRQ and base I/O address settings, and editable keystroke macros. RIPterm also comes with a digital manual and context sensitive, keyword driven on-line help. The best feature is the price - RIPterm is FREE!

Test Results As End User: After installing RIPterm and making a few calls I discovered a BBS listing in User Friendly with RIP. Alas, the number was disconnected. Then I tried the BBS at the school where I'm taking a class. As I logged on a nice graphic of Wildcat appeared and then a menu with three-dimensional buttons and graphics came on screen. They are using RIPscript on their Wildcat BBS. I could use my mouse or the hotkey letters to make selections. Neato! There was a picture of a disk for files, an envelope for E-mail, and a flowery graphic for the logoff button. When I scrolled through filenames, they were inside a 3-D frame. There was even a game called RIPuz.

RIPterm is now available as an option on Bits of Blue BBS, thanks to the Cellar Door BBS and many hours of effort reconfiguring our BBS by our Sysop, Kevan Sheridan. When you first log on you'll be asked to choose how you want to view information on the BBS. If you have RIPterm, choose "Graphics." You'll also need to download a new icon file, BOBICONS.ZIP. You can do this, unzip the file into your icons directory and continue your session (the icon file is small and you have 180 seconds to unzip the new icons and return) before the BBS logs you off.

There was only one problem with downloading using Z-modem protocol. If you have a 50K (or any size) packet file named BITSOBLU.QWK and then try to download another one the file transfer starts at 50K and makes a mess. The manual covers this and it only happens using the auto Z-modem download option. Renaming or deleting the packet after viewing is necessary. Also, a few letters got dropped or scrambled while on-line, but was an infrequent occurrence and since changing to a modem with a 16550 UART chip has stopped altogether.

If you don't like RIPterm, but like RIP, QModem Pro and Telix communications programs also support RIPscript.

Test Results As Host BBS: Bits of Blue BBS uses RBBS-PC software which is a user supported package. Cellar Door BBS created modification merges to add RIP Graphics to RBBS-PC. Many file configurations had to be changed to add the ability to use RIP. Menus also had to be reworked to be compatible with our set up of RBBS-PC. Now, there are more options to offer users, but using RIPterm is not a necessity for using the BBS. There are also some areas that don't support RIP. The TQM door for example. Alt-R resets the window and makes the initial menu go away so you can see more than eight lines of text. There is always something to fix or improve . . .

There are many other BBS software products that support RIPscrip Graphics such as PCBoard, Remote Access, Searchlight, TBBS and The Major BBS. As you call different boards you'll find others that will let you use the three-dimensional buttons to make your choices.

TeleGrapfix also makes RIPaint, used by the host to make menus and screens with clickable buttons ($200) and RIPdraw, another graphics maker ($35). Guess which one is easier to use and is more useful?

This is neat stuff. Working with a good terminal program can make calling the local BBS's a lot more fun. Download RIPterm and try giving it a whirl. We think you'll be pleased with the graphical difference and besides the price is right.

Minimum System Requirements: PC, MS-DOS 3.0, 430K RAM, hard disk, EGA video adapter, modem. Mouse (Microsoft compatible) and color monitor strongly recommended.

Freeware on Bits of Blue BBS (239-3704), filename RIPTM154.ZIP.Download it today and check it out.

Publisher info: *TeleGrafix Communications, Inc., 16458 Bolsa Chica, #15, Huntington Beach, CA 92649. (714) 379-2131 (voice), (714) 379-2132 (FAX), and (714) 379-2133 (Arena BBS - 32 lines).*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Everett Bowyer
Ronald S. Crooks
Philip R. Foulis
Jerry L. Inman
Ned Langer
Michael Mosher
Donald Simonds
Logan Van Ost
Joan Van Ost
Robert Van Ost
Bryan Van Ost
William A. Whittaker, III

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

Computer Stress

Submitted by Steve Krivit, The Open Forum, Vol. 2 No. 1, January, 1994.

I get in the elevator and double-press the button for the floor I want.

Not only do I check my e-mail more often than my paper mail, but I remember my network address} faster than my postal one.

I go to balance my checkbook and discover that I'm doing math in octal.

I'm writing a business report, and get to the end of the line in the middle of a sentence, tack on a "/", and continue writing on the next line.

Asked about a bus schedule, I think "Is it 16 or 32 bits?"

After fooling around all day with my stuff, I pick up the phone and start dialing an IP number...

My wife says, "If you don't turn off that contraption and come to bed, then I am going to divorce you! " whereupon I chastise her for omitting the ELSE clause.

I am reading a book and look for the space bar to get to the next page.

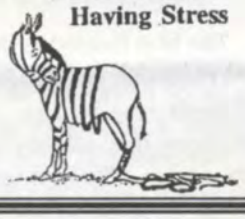
I look for my car keys using: "grep keys/dev/pockets"

I try to sleep, and think..."telnetxxx.dreams.heaven

I count sheep, and go "0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,A,B,C,D...".

I dream in 256 palettes of 256 colors.

I Think I'm Having Stress



MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV

Software Review: SPEED by Knowledge Adventure on CD-ROM

Review by: Matthew and Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

At the heart of Speed is a MacGillivray-Freeman IMAX Movie that starts with a cave man hunting (trying to catch a deer) and being hunted (by a tiger) and goes through the history of our conquest for ever greater speed. It continues to the bicycle, the steam engine, the internal combustion engine, through hotrods, rocket cars, airplanes all the way to the incredible SR 71 and the Apollo space flight. You have control of the movie. You can stop at anytime and even go forward hitting key frames.



The movie lasted quite a long time, considering it is on computer. However, don't go out and buy this program expecting to play a game - there ARE games on it, but they're more to see if you paid attention during the movie.

Matthew had no problem installing the software. It took approximately 8.5 MB of hard disk space for full effects or would use 2.5 MB for minimal installation.

Speed has three simulations; speed of thought, human speed and roller coaster. The roller coaster was really jerky and didn't look too hot with the sound on, but when we disabled the sound, it looked almost like real life. This is unfortunate because the background music and sounds add to the visual effects, The IMAX movie also flowed much better with the sound off. Running programs from CD-ROM isn't quite as wonderful as from your hard disk.

Speed has four extended learning modules that cover windpower, steampower, air speed and feeling speed. These seem aimed at a younger crowd.

Games: 1) Speed Matching: you try to match a given speed with an animal or machine that travels at that speed. 2) Speed Reading: moving down a "Hall of Speed," you read three speed facts and then a question. If you get the question right you go on to the next level, if not you hear a scream and start over. 3) A-Mazing Speed: you navigate through a maze choosing the fastest of two animals or machines. Using a mouse to go through a maze is a little tricky (a joystick might give better movement control).

The manual is clearly written and has an appendix for parents and teachers with tips on how to get more educational value from Speed. There are also a few experiments with speed in the real world.

Speed is a DOS program, please look on the side of the box to see if your sound card is listed. If so, Speed will probably work in Windows too. Speed does not work under Windows with a Reveal sound card. The only other problem we experienced was the video jerkiness.

Why do we upgrade our computers? Usually to buy faster equipment. The science of computer speed needs further development for this program to reach its full, VCR video like, potential (or we need to shake loose massive amounts of cash for upgrades). There are several variables to consider: speed of CPU (ours is a 486DLC 33Mhz), speed of RAM chips (our 5th MB is slower than the 60ns of the first 4 MB, so they all operate at the slower speed), number of SIMM's (the more the better), the sound card (ours is an 8 bit Reveal, surely a Pro Audio Studio would work a little better), the video card (an accelerator with RAM might help too) and the speed of the CD-ROM drive (ours has about 219ms access, no slouch, but could still be part of the problem) and maybe cache memory size could make a difference. The point is: with the jerkiness of the video, it doesn't make me want to see it again.

Speed is innovative and in the forefront of multimedia educational software, but would I recommend buying it? Would students use it a third, fourth, or more times? Well, it would make a good supplement to young children's understanding of speed, but with older people it probably won't be given a second or third viewing. The initial excitement wanes quickly when it isn't Super Mario quality.

Minimum System Requirements: VGA, PC or MS-DOS 3.1, 386 PC, 520Kb RAM, sound card, 2.5Mb hard disk space and a CD-ROM drive. The software will run using the keyboard, but a mouse is recommended.

Cost and availability: $35 at CompUSA.

Publisher info: Knowledge Adventure, Inc., 4502 Dyer Street, La Crescenta, CA 91214, (800) 542-4240 Sales, (818) 542-4205 FAX.

FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Software Review
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Staples
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild (Software Dist.)

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- GeoWorks
- Lotus Corp.
- Microsoft
- Software Publishing
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

USER'S CORNER

DIRNOTES.COM. This utility program from PC Magazine (it's on the New Member Disk) can be a big help in managing files. Entered at the DOS command line, the program creates an ASCII list of the files in the current directory. The neat thing is that it let's you add a descriptive title for each file.

One use is to run DIRNOTES in the Windows and Systems directories. Annotate the file list to show W31 . Then, *after* installing a Window application, run DIRNOTES again. Now annotate the newly listed files with the name of the new application. Helps when you want to uninstall the application.

Another use is to identify all those work and temporary junk files that you create when working on that BIG document. After the document is in it's final form, you know what files to delete.

File Safety. The First Law of Computing: Thou shalt back up thy data files. Let's face it: disks fail; files get corrupted, lost, and erroneously deleted; the FAT and directory tables get bolixed; and power blips can be nasty. There are ways to recover from some of these disasters *sometimes*!

A small change in work habits can pay big dividends. After loading or retrieving a file that you are going to work on, immediately save the file with a new name and index the extension or filename (file.002). As you work on the file, periodically save it (if the application doesn't have an automatic backup) and bump up the extension number (.003, .004, etc.)

If you mess it up, *don't* save it, just reload the last file that was saved. If you did save the messed up file, start over with the last good file.

When it's finally finished, save it twice! Once in it's regular directory and again in another (backup?) directory. Or, better yet, save the second copy to a floppy diskette. Now it's safe to delete the interim files that were created.

Modem Settings. This is specifically about Qmodem V4.5 software and the Gateway Telepath modem. Load Qmodem. The screen will show the statement You are in TERMINAL mode . Turn on capture mode <CtrlHome>; but instead of accepting CAPTURE.CAP as the filename, enter TELEPATH.LOG instead (or filename of your choice).

Press the following keys: <A> <T> <I> <3> <Enter> to see the modem description. I get: Sportster 14,400/Fax V4.1. By pressing <A> <T> <I> <4> <Enter>, the V.32bis settings are shown. Entering a number from 0-7 with the ATI command will show other data. Of course, your data may be different.

Bring up TLELPATH.LOG (or print it) and compare the settings to the information in the modem manual. Amazing what you find in the reference manuals!

If you need the settings for the Telepath modem for Procom for Windows, download the file WMODEMSK.ZIP from our BBS. Also, check out the HSMODEM, QMODEM, and QMODEMU conferences in the TQM Mail Door of our BBS.

Windows - DOS Prompt. When shelling out to the DOS command line, Windows posts a message about typing EXIT and pressing the <Enter> key to return to Windows. As you work in DOS, or enter CLS, those messages scroll right off the top of the screen. It's easy to get so involved with what you're doing that you forget that you've shelled out to DOS from Windows. And even load a second copy of Windows!

In the AUTOEXEC.BAT, add the following line:
SET WINPMT=Enter 'EXIT' to return to Windows$_$P$G
that will cause DOS to show this specialized prompt *only* when it is shelled out to DOS. This SET can be entered at the command line prior to loading Windows instead of modifying AUTOEXEC.BAT. But it's easier, and DOS won't forget, if AUTOEXEC.BAT sets this specialized Windows prompt.

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

Screenscapes - Transform your monitor with spectacular wall papers. - Vendor: Kiwi Software
Managing Your Money (DOS)- Complete Financial Software Program - Vendor: Meca Software
XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
FidelityOnLineExpress - Direct Line to Wall Street - Meca Software
WinWay Job Interview for Windows - Interview with confidence & win the Job. - WinWay Corp.
Watchman for Windows-Advance file protection management- Distant Markets
Quicken For DOS ver 7.0 - Financial Organizer - Intuit
Quicken For Windows Companion - Manages home inventory, estimates taxes, updates stock prices - Intuit
Pebble Beach Golf Links (Game - Course for Use with Links, Links 386 Pro or Microsoft Golf) - Access Software
WinSense - the Windows Optimizer
AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows
Disktop - File Management for Windows
Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
BUG - Knowledge Adventure CD-ROM (Ages 3-8)
SCIENCE-Knowledge Adventure CD-ROM (ages 6-Adult)
EZ Shopper Plus - Ultimate home productivity program, shopping, coupons, recipes and menu planner.
Future Trends Software

(Contact Marylee or Harvey @ 985-3338 if you are interested in doing a review article for the newsletter on any of the above software.)

Book Review:

Almost Perfect

By W. E. Pete Peterson

Review by: Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

When he left in March 1992, the author was the executive vice president of WordPerfect Corporation. For ten years, he was one of the three members of the governing board. In this book he gives some insight of the corporation from it's earliest beginnings.

Satellite Systems Incorporated was born in the summer of 1977. In September 1979 it became Satellite Software International and it's first product was SSI*WP - a word processor that worked only on Data General computers. The author coined the word "WordPerfect" for their product. A word that the corporation adopted in 1986 as it's name, the WordPerfect Corporation.

The book is very well written and the words flow easily from page to page. It chronicles the author's twelve years of experience with the corporation and how a small software company with sales of $400,00 in 1980 had sales of $550 million twelve years later. Interspersed in the narrative are various anecdotes of family life and the fiercely competitive world of software development.

Of note is the interplay of product design, delivery time, competing products, and of manipulating the trade media. Also touched upon are such thorny issues as who controls product design– programmers, management, or marketing. Of particular interest are the marketing ploys and stratagems employed; not just by WordPerfect, but by other software developers as well. The importance of COMDEX and the manner of introducing a product to the public is especially enlightening.

The subtitle of the book "How a Bunch of Regular Guys Built WordPerfect Corporation" pretty well describes it's contents. How three men built a software empire on a shoestring, an idea, and lots of hard work. At times, even family members were pressed into service; duplicating disks at home, inserting replacement pages in manuals, and even cleaning the offices. By trial and error, they taught themselves how to run a software business; a very lucrative business.

While the book is interesting and reads well, one is left with the impression that it is incomplete. It doesn't really get down to the nitty gritty. WordPerfect's delay in moving it's main product to Windows is only briefly, and sketchily, explained. And, with their plans to have WordPerfect standardized across a vast variety of operating systems, there is little in-depth information given to explain their decisions to develop these plans or to cancel them.

Throughout, the author writes of management style and conflict. Not only among the founding fathers but within the management hierarchy. Perhaps his management style can be exemplified by his own words:

"I felt a job was about work, and the personal, political, and social aspects were important only when they were important to the welfare of the company. I certainly was happy if employees enjoyed their work, but I wanted them to understand that their enjoyment and fulfillment were not the ultimate focus of WordPerfect corporation."

Yet these very words are seemingly contradicted by his remarks elsewhere. He believes that anyone should be able to communicate with anyone else "even if that lets a custodian communicate directly with the CEO." He prefers that supervisors be advisors rather than bosses. Advisors were to treat their employees with respect and kindness; who knew how to praise as well as how to reprimand without being overbearing or unfair. A strong advocate of a flat management structure (one advisor for 10-20 people, and as few layers of management as possible), yet he was concerned that all employees be properly trained and treated with respect.

While some of these principles are laudable and should be embraced by workers and management, they see short shrift in today's corporate climate. What with mergers to achieve "economies of scale" that wipe out whole departments and with "downsizing", perhaps one can forgive the employee who does not view the corporation as a benevolent parent. But, sadly, many employees do not work for a corporation, they just work for a paycheck.

The book is published by Prima Publishing, P.O. Box 1260BK, Rocklin, CA 95677; telephone (916) 786-0426. The list price is $18.95. ISBN 1-55958-477-7.

Software Review

International Keyboard Kit

for MS Windows 3.1

Review by: Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Using a wordprocessor on a PC instead of a typewriter or pen is heaven on earth, but now we can top that and take it one more step beyond the wordprocessor capability.

Languages! Many of us know and need to use at least a second language. Wouldn't it be nice if our computer can produce documents in spanish, french, german, or even russian?

Users who work with different languages in the Microsoft Windows environment will welcome the International Keyboard Kit (I.K.K.) Software. This program allows you to have a second language right in your Windows to be used with any Windows wordprocessor at any time. The installation is easy and fast and a permanent visible icon lets you switch from the US language to the second choice language in seconds and back to your original language. You also can display at any time a graphical keyboard layout for the present language in use to see which letters are used with the keys on your keyboard.

I tried out spanish and german and kept the german keyboard layout permanently since I write quite a few letters to Germany. There are only five different settings on my keyboard for the german language, after a couple of days I knew them by heart and could type documents as fast in german as in english. I used three different wordprocessors, WordPerfect for Windows MS Word for Windows MS Write, and typed some correspondence in spanish and german. All the documents had different fonts assigned to them just to see how much variety I can use. The documents looked great in both languages.

The International Keyboard Kit Software lets you choose almost any Western European language. Also, up to 12 languages may be assigned as "Hot" keys for instant switching from one to the next language. For the Eastern European or Russian languages addons of Cyrillic Fonts and Eastern European Fonts are available with the same company and can be ordered additionally.

The cost of International Keyboard Kit is only $30.00 and the addons are also the same price each. I.K.K. is working on add ons for Greek, Hebrew, Music Notes for writing sheet music, and Flow Chart symbols.

A PC and a wordprocessor is really great, and now you can add the best and easiest Multilingual software, International Keyboard Kit, to your system and instantly switch to many different languages which is better than great, it is fantastic!

Requirements: Microsoft Windows 3.1

Company: Distant Markets Export & Import Ltd.
Box 1149, 1943803 Calgary Trail S. Edmonton, Alberta Canada T6J 5M8 Tel.: 1 800 6617383 Fax: 1 800 6619756

Software Review

ECCO™

SuperPIM.



Review by: Bob Sanders,
Tampa, PC Users Group, Inc.

ECCO is not an editor.
ECCO is not an editor.
ECCO is not an editor.

I have to keep reminding myself of that fact as much as I wish it were not true.

ECCO was not intended to be an editor. It is a Personal Information Manager (PIM). As the ECCO short tour puts it, some people live in a spreadsheet, some live in an editor. ECCO promises to make you live in your PIM. I must have been one who lived in an editor.

ECCO is actually ECCO Professional from Arabesque® Software, Inc. in Bellevue, WA. (Arabesque pronounced Air-a-bessk, more of a k sound at the end). Arabesque Software refers to ECCO as the industry's first SuperPIM. Arabesque means Grace, Power, Movement and Motion. Arabesque wants to represent these same qualities to their customers. ECCO, in Latin, means "Behold", in Italian, it's "Here, there and everywhere". ECCO is a name that fits the product.

A Personal Information Manager does just what it says; it manages all of your personal information (that is entered into the database) - phone calls needing to take place, the actual phone numbers/addresses, project planning/scheduling, you name it. The computer can dial the phone for you, it can manage data bases, with its internal clock, it can tell time and announce appointments and so on. You just need something to pull it all together. A PIM is supposed to do just that.

ECCO is a Microsoft Windows program. The better display you have, the better any product (including ECCO) looks. CPU speed same, the faster, the better. I didn't find anything CPU intensive so anything that runs Windows should handle ECCO with ease. The HELP screens are the only parts of the entire system that you may notice slight delays but nothing out of the ordinary. It handles the HELP screens about as fast as any other Windows program.

This review has been edited from its initial writing. To give a product as extensive as ECCO a fair shake, I needed to write about the major features. This turns out to be nearly a small booklet in itself. For a magazine, this is fine but for a newsletter, it can take up a lot of space. To shorten the review, I have attempted to trim information that would seem obvious. Since this is a judgement call, it was difficult to decide what to leave in and what to cut. Rather than type in the sales pitch on the back of the box, I have truly reviewed the product and added my own comments. Hopefully, you can get not only the jest of what ECCO does, but a little bit more as well. Notice the sections are labeled; If you get tired of reading, skip over any sections you wish.

VERSION

ECCO comes in two editions, ECCO Simplicity and ECCO Professional, this review is specifically for the ECCO Professional 2.0 version. It was announced on April 18th and should be released soon (mid May). The 2.0 version adds several new features over the previous versions. I am not familar with the ECCO Simplicity edition or how it is different from the Professional edition. When I refer to ECCO, I am referring to the Professional edition unless stated otherwise.

The product comes with a manual, a small intro, quick guide booklet and, it also has another small booklet, the Advanced Features Tutorial.

SPECIFICALLY

ECCO allows you to arrange your life by supplying you with a calendar, a phone book, and an outliner. The outliner itself allows several ways of looking at the data. A columns view gives additional flexibility. The colums view is actually a mini-spreadsheet. There is also a graphic view of a project. Data is contained in folders just as you might contain data in your desk.

ECCO is not a sit-down-learn-in-one-day program. At first, I was even apprehensive because of all the functionality that is provided. It does not take too long to feel comfortable because the uses are natural.

INSTALLATION

The installation was a breeze. It handled inserting the wrong disk (of four disks) after I got started. It even allowed me to override the default directory to install into. I hate applications that MUST be installed as an entry in the root directory. Most root directories are crowed enough. I install all Windows applications under a WINAPPS directory. I don't want any application installed under the Windows directory either because I want to be able to upgrade Windows at some point and install the new one into a different directory. When I get ready to remove the old Windows directory, I will copy *.INI to my new Windows directory; I don't want to migrate applications or delete around them. These are my two main installation pet-peeves and ECCO worked flawlessly from a directory name of my choosing. It created the directory as it was not there already.

The manual warned that installation *may* have some difficulty if installing from Norton Desktop for Windows or any other shell other than the standard Windows shell. Arabesque had not been able to reproduce some reported problems but since some calls had come in, an appropriate warning was in order. When the manufacturer can't reproduce a problem, it is more likely specific to a particular users situation so I immediately attempted to install under Norton Destop for Windows. Guess what? No problems whatsoever. I also installed under the standard Windows shell with the same successful results. After the installation, I was prompted to run a short tour if I wanted, otherwise, I could run it later. It is very graphic and consists of part of the standard HELP provided for the product. The second installation, I passed on the short tour option.

DISK SPACE AND RAM REQUIREMENTS

With as much functionality as ECCO provides, it is not surprising that it consumes as much as 7Meg of disk space. This is not only the trend but necessary to provide the capabilities that were not available a few years ago. As the cost of disk drives drops, this does not seem to be as much of a factor as it was a few years ago as well. On system memory requirements, it seems to work smoothly with 4 Meg of RAM. 8 Meg of RAM didn't seem to make a lot of difference. This is more due to the fact that there is not a lot of processing going on other than swapping the currently selected view in and out of memory. Some HELP displays were a bit slower on 4 Meg because there is so much help available. ECCO specifies a requirement for only 2 Meg of RAM.

HELP

The HELP text is the most comprehensive help text of any Windows program that I have ever seen. The entire manual is online! Context sensitive HELP is available so no matter where in the program you are, you have direct access to the HELP text about the current ECCO activity. Many words are highlighted to allow for jumps. There are sections of the ECCO help that just say [MORE]. Clicking on these (jump) [MORE] boxes brings on a whole slew of additional information. Initially, I spent more time in the HELP windows than in the application; that is because the online help was there, I did not have to go to the manual to research something. I did read several parts of the manual but the

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jumps available in the online help allow me to get to the specific topic I want faster and without having to pick up the manual. With so much help text, it is difficult to keep track of what you have read and what you have not read because the same jump word or phase may appear in several different places. You can start on a jump word and after a couple jumps get back to a screen that has the original jump word highlighted. You can select that jump word again if you like and go down the same path again or you can chhose to go off in another direction. I have attempted to break programs like this by alternating from one word to the other to see how deep it would recurse upon itself before crashing. They always wear me out and never fail. *This is actually part of Windows and not specific to ECCO. ECCO simply used the help capabilities extensively!* Backing out by clicking on the BACK button takes just as long as it did going in; you see the same two views alternating back and forth just as entered. I would like to see help text that knows what jump words I have read and will change its highlighted color to a different color after it has been displayed. Of course, it would still have to be accessible if I chose to read it. I also want to see an EXIT button, one that would not require me to use two mouse clicks, or to pull down the file menu to exit HELP. Unfortunately, ECCO does not solve this pet-peeve.

Of couse, using the BACK button always backs out to where you started, backtracking each step you took along the way. In fact, most programs grey out the BACK button when you get back to where you first selected HELP. ECCO will take you back to the very start of the entire ECCO HELP. This is generally before the location that you first initiated HELP if you entered HELP through context sensitive help. You may or may not appreciate this feature. This starting HELP window seems to take a tiny bit longer to paint as it is mostly a graphic display. It has all of the HELP topics. When you move the mouse pointer over the different topics, you find that they are actually *jumps*. A video tape is an expensive *(but effective)* teaching add on for a manufacturer to include in a product. ECCO has come as close to a video tape as possible without going into a multimedia presentation. You should appreciate the help available.

The OUTLINE

ECCO gives you several ways to view the world and one of the handiest is through an outline. An outline is an easy way to break down almost anything, a project, a speech, a report, a review, etc.

ECCO is not a full fledged outliner! Outliners are different from editors. The difficulty is in rearranging text. With an editor, rearranging text is not as much of a problem, there are no numbers attached to the beginning of the text. An outliner program has to deal with the leading numbers. Moving text requires renumbering.

In ECCO , the numbers are 1 to n. You may also use Roman numerals, Alpha-Numbering, and of course upper and lower case of these.

Outlines begin with a folder icon. Below it are numbered icons that can be indented to form a true outline. Each icon represents an *item*. Please notice that the word *item* is used specifically in this review as it is the word of choice when referring to data inside ECCO.

An item may be collapsed (hiding what is under it) or expanded. The "item icon" has to be large enough to easily place the cursor over it to collapse or expand entries under that level. The icon does not need to appear on the final printed page; in fact it does not make an ideal bullet as it is wider than it is high. When printing, you may select to print the icon or not. There is no such choice for also not printing the numbers. On the good side, you may choose to print only the selected items or all items; items as shown (some collapsed, some not collapsed) or expand all for printing.

Items can be selected to be mailed as easily as printed. Files may be imported or exported using the File menu.

The outlining editing capability allows you to move *items* about just by clicking on them and while holding the mouse button down, move it around to a different numbering level (up or down) or to a different indentation level (left or right) before releasing the mouse button. The <tab> and Shift <tab> character causes a left to right and right to left movement. Text is automatically renumbered.

A carriage return generates another level at the same level as at currently if below the folder. Entering a carriage return at the folder generates an entry indented under the folder.

All of the standard Windows cut and paste capabilities allow for easy editing of outlines.

All of the folders can be displayed at the right of the screen. Coping data to different folders is as easy as dragging data from the outline item to a folder. Or dragging a folder to an outline adds the contents of that folder to the outline where dropped..

Outline data can also be viewed in columns, or even graphs.

A project management example is included to help in using all of the features of the outliner and the entire program. This example gets down to the specific tasks, the job title of the person doing the task, the name assigned to, completion dates expected, tasks already completed, etc. The examples really showed how to use the product. These examples are stored in *templates.* The templates can be used to start your own projects, and if desired, even the original templates themselves can be modified. Several templates have been added for the 2.0 release. Nice.

There is even a version of ECCO for workgroups that will work on a LAN allowing several members of a project to share data.

A Tickler feature allows you to enter alarms that you can have ECCO remind you of later. Phones calls to make, appointments, etc. This is a very important part of ECCO.

PHONE BOOK

The phone book is pretty standard but this one allows for several phone numbers including a celluar phone number slot.

CALENDAR

The calendar allows easy access to any date for planning, data entry, alarm setting, etc.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

ECCO has a bit of new technology. It is called the SHOOTER. It actually is a Windows enhancement that is active anytime ECCO is active. Anytime ECCO is executing, a small arrow appears at the far left of the title bar, both in ECCO and your current WIndows application. The arrow is inside a square the same size as the Restore/Close Down box and right next to it. Therefore, it doen't take up much space. If you are in a different Windows application, by clicking on the SHOOTER arrow, you get a window that allows you to send *selected* text from your current application to the active ECCO view. It simply bypasses the need to Copy to the Clipboard, select ECCO and then paste. The feature is bidirectional; *selected* text can be sent from ECCO to other open Windows applications as well. If the current ECCO file is not the one you wish to sent the selected text to, the SHOOTER icon allows you to choose first. The text can be send as editable text or as an OLE link or object. You can send Graphics just as easily as text. In fact, if you don't want to send the selection to ECCO at all, you can choose any other open application, even the one you are sending from! If an application is not running, ECCO has a launch (a rocket image) MENU button to start it.

The SHOOTER Window can also allow you to go straight to ECCO if you are in a different application. SHOOTER executes as a separate application so it is also available from the task list.

If you don't want the SHOOTER icon to be next to the Restore/Close Down box, you can *drag* it to any location you like or even hide it.

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MENU BAR

Speaking of dragging, the menu bar at the top is also customizable by dragging. The menu bar has several common functions identified as icons. Not every function possible is displayed on the menu bar. Not only is it less crowded this way, it gives the menu bar a less intimidating appearance when you first start using the product. The function you last performed is displayed at the far right of the menu bar as a menu icon. You can always click on this icon to perform the last function again. This icon is always changing depending on the last function performed. You can drag (right mouse button) this icon onto a blank area of the menu bar in order to prevent it from going away when you select the next function. You can end up with a menu bar just about as crowded as your desk.

You can also hide the entire MENU bar or bring it back with a click of the mouse button.

OLE , DDE and Interfacing to other Products

ECCO is up-to-date; it has OLE and DDE support and can therefore interface to other Windows products very smoothly. Importing data from other applications is supported. A specific interface to several other packages is available from Arabesque at no charge; just tell them which ones you want.

DIFFICULTIES, . . . BUT . . .

I had some editing difficulties (in ECCO 1.0) when I "SHOT" a text outline from MS Write into an ECCO outline view. Blank lines became individual items in ECCO. Version 1.1 or later changes this to allow "SHOOT"ing selected text to a single item. The original selected text contained a <tab> character that now appeared in the ECCO outline. I attempted to FIND and REPLACE "*<tab>" but when I entered <tab> in the FIND data entry field, it causes the cursor to jump to the REPLACE WITH data entry field. This is not ECCO 's fault, this is standard Windows application usage. In any event, I finally had to remove each one by hand. Since ECCO has context sensitive help, I attempted to call up the help on replacements but the help text showed a different FIND and REPLACE example. This might have been due to a result of product evolution, with HELP text not being updated fully or the FIND and REPLACE portion of the program not being updated to what was intended (implied by the HELP example).

Previous PIM Experience

My previous experience with PIMs was somewhat limited but the need was always there. I identified the need back in 1983 when I was having to keep track of all the *initial* phone calls I needed to make, the ones that I needed to call back that had called but missed me, the ones that I needed to call again who weren't expecting a call from me because I didn't get through the first time, the ones that I needed to call again because they didn't call back, and so on. The categories just kept on forming. In addition to keeping track of contacts, I needed to keep track of the project itself, its progress, what needed to be done, etc. I needed a Personal Information Manager.

Sidekick. That will do the job! This was before Microsoft Windows 1.0. Borland's Sidekick was a Terminate-and-Stay-Resident (TSR) program that allowed you to do your regular job and still bring up Sidekick the very moment you needed it with a Hot-Key combination. At the time, it was great; . . . but it still had a long way to go.

I had used outliner programs before. I started with the Brown Bag Software version of PC Outline, a DOS program. The author didn't make any money on it as shareware so he sold the rights (in exchange for royalties) to Brown Bag Software, who in turn went out of business so he still didn't make any money. The start of a great product got stopped before it really got off the ground. The author spoke to the Sacramento PC Users Group a few years back. He explained that the PC Outline, even though dead, had many more users now than when it was being promoted. It is because the need was always there, PC Outline was the only solution at the time. Imagine putting PC Outline and Sidekick into one program. Imagine that the two functions knew about each other.

The author of PC Outline also explained that he was working on a much more comprehensive Windows based program called GrandView, to be sold by Symantec. Before I got a chance to see GrandView, I happened to work for a company that used MORE, a Macintosh program also from Symantec. MORE is a true outlining editor with very sophisticated renumbering, etc. MORE and GrandView originated from different companies and so they are very different even though they provide much of the same functionality. Since Symantec now owns both products, there is no intention of making MORE available on the PC; it would compete with GrandView.

I didn't just live in an editor world but an editor/outliner world when I used MORE. An excellent outliner makes any editing/project planning/scheduling task easier. The outliners lack a phone book and calendar interface. You can have them as separate applications but they don't interface very well. ECCO solves this problem.

With Windows being introduced several years ago, it is surprising that PIMs didn't appear almost immediately. PIMs definitely got a late start. The same need has been there, the solution has not.

When PIMs did start appearing, they had many shortcomings. They just didn't cover the entire picture. I tried several shareware Windows PIMs but still I wasn't satisfied. Most were good products. Good products breed competition, and competition breeds better products. Finally ECCO has arrived.

Fortunately, several individuals who understood the PIM needs formed together to create ECCO. I am sure that ECCO too will evolve and be improved upon by Arabesque Software Inc, its creator or a competitor will surely produce a better mouse trap. At the rate of new improvements to the original ECCO version 1.0, it appears that the Arabesque Software people are serious about leading us into the future of what PIMs will be used for.

PRICING

The 2.0 version is available through several distribution outlets for much less than the retail $395. Upgrades to version 2.0 from version 1.0 or 1.1 is only $49. To find the dealer (actually mail-order) firm nearest you, call 1-800-457-4243. They will tell you most major software dealers carry the product. For example, Micro Warehouse, PC Zone, Egghead, etc. 800-Software sells version 1.1 of ECCO Professional for $284. They also have the Simplicity edition for $58 (Retail $79).

Customer service is available direct from Arabesque in Bellevue, WA from 6AM to 6PM PST at 1-206-885-0559. There is no cost, only that it is on your nickel. On Compuserve, enter "GO ECCO".

CONCLUSION

I spoke to Arabesque Software about my own wishlist for ECCO and found out that other people had wanted the same things and that in fact, the developers had already added these features into the product. Several improvements had been made in the 1.1 and now 2.0 release. For example, the outline numbers now can be in Roman Numerals, etc. They beat me to the punch.

The 2.0 release has added FAX integration into the software (Delrina WinFAX Pro). The enhanced Tools Menu makes launching applications easier - and to live in ECCO!

The 2.0 release has added several features that make ECCO even nicer for workgroups. Users can share phone books, outlines, etc. There is automatic 2-way file synchronization. Group scheduling is available using MAPI, VIM, or MHS mail programs. This can make project planning truly a group effort with less hassle. Look out Lotus Notes! ECCO may suffice in many situations where Lotus Notes would be used but at far greater $ saving.

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I think the product is great! My earlier shortcomings with it are really not justified because they involve making ECCO an editor or a full fledged outliner.

By writing this review as an outline in ECCO, it was easier to see the entire picture by collapsing the text and looking at the headings. Rearranging entire sections was simple. I didn't need to select entire paragraphs, I selected the collapsed outline item and moved it where I wanted it. SHOOTing the finished review to a word processor was simple of course.

Only because I got used to the outliner MORE, did I find any shortcomings in ECCO. ECCO does not allow the same range of editing capabilites in the outline view as an outlining program would. It appears however that these limitations are being removed as ECCO improves on its outlining abilities. Maybe I will continue to live in an editor/outliner world after all.

I have only begun to recognize how many ways I can use ECCO. You should be glad. If I were to write this review six months from now, it would be a book!

Ababesque, ECCO, Borland, Sidekick, PC-Outline, Brown-Bag Software, Symantec, Norton Desktop for Windows, GrandView, Macintosh, MORE, Lotus Notes, Delrina WinFAX Pro, Compuserve, Micro Warehouse, PC Zone, Egghead, 800-Software, MS Write, Microsoft, and Microsoft Windows are recognized as trademarks.

Software Review

The Disney Collection Screen Saver For Windows

By: Renate Marsh, Tampa, PC Users Group, Inc.

The Disney Collection Screen Saver is a multimedia product and protects your monitor from screen burn out in the fun way. It is part of and compatible with all the other screen saver programs from Berkeley Systems. Their most famous one is the After Dark Screen Saver program with the flying toaster. Though, I am totally taken with the Disney Collection and its music and animation.

When I first installed this program, I spent 3 hours just listening to and testing each module. Luckily I was by myself because I was so enchanted with this program, I am sure I had a silly smile on my face and at times laughed out loud.

The Disney Collection Screen Saver has more than 15 different Disney animation to entertain you while your monitor is idle. This program comes with the After Dark Control Panel which gives you the choice to set up each animation to your liking; i.e. the 101 Dalmatian screen saver module gives you a choice of how many dogs on the screen, how often do you want the to bark, do you want your screen cleared first.

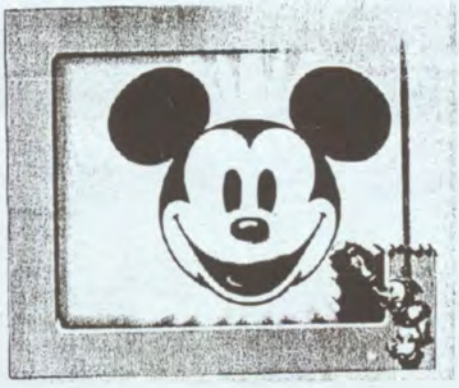
Also, you can use the demo to test each screen saver module, set up your own random file to have a different screen saver every time the program is used.

The Setup Dialog Box gives you a choice of sound, hot keys, password for windows and network, sleep time (after how many minutes of idleness do you want your screen saver to start), and many more commands. One choice that is available I have not used as yet: To have just a plain old blank screen, but it is there to choose.

A 27 page manual has all the information you need to set up this program, to troubleshoot, and maintain. It describes in detail all the option and possibilities you have within this program. It also describes all the files needed and where they are located and what files in your system have been changed when this program was installed. You forgot your password? The manual gives you a solution for that too.

Of course, since animation is included, it takes quite a few your bytes out of your system. The Disney Collection Screen Saver requires 8.5MB to install but needs as a total 10MB of hard disk space to operate under. 386 CPU or higher but uses Windows in Standard or Enhanced mode. Needs MSDOS or PCDOS version 3.3 and up. MSWindows 3.0 and up. 4MB of RAM. VGA color display adapter and monitor. It will not run under EGA or CGA display systems.

The Disney Collection Screen Saver is a multimedia at its best. And let us not forget, it is there to protect your screen from burning (I forgot, because this program is so much fun to check out, watch, and listen too) Berkeley Systems Company information: Order no.: 1 800 3445541 Technical Support: Phone: 510 5405535 FAX: 510 8499426 Mail: Berkeley Systems, Inc. 2095 Rose St. Berkeley CA 94709



MISPLACED HUMOR: (Continued)

Here are some signs and notices written in English that were discovered throughout the world. You have to give the writers an "E" for Effort.

On the menu of a Swiss Restaurant:
Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.

In a Swiss mountain inn:
Special today -- no ice cream.

In a Bangkok temple:
It is forbidden to enter a woman even a foreigner if dressed as a man.

Outside a Hong Kong tailor shop:
Ladies may have a fit upstairs.

In a Baogkok dry cleaner's:
Drop your trousers here for best results.

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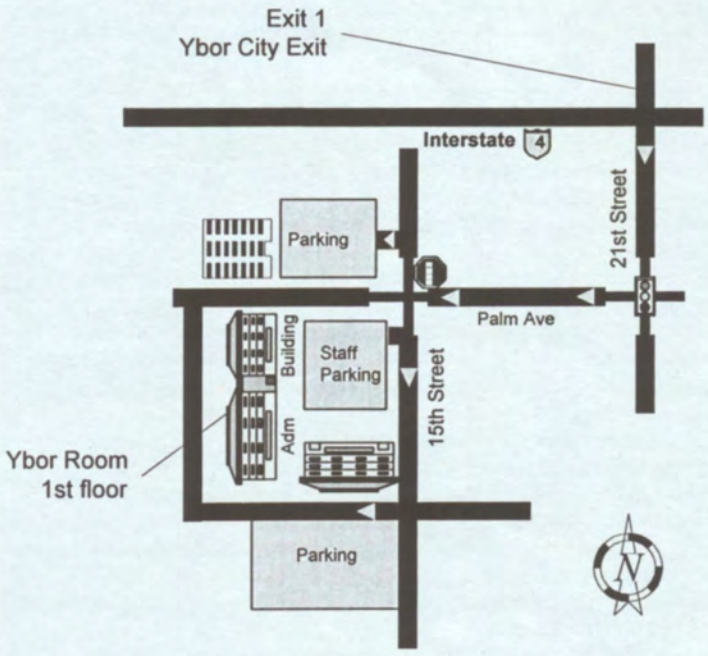
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Member

A Monthly Publication of the
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Bits of Blue

Vol. 7, No. 6 June, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: June 8th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room

DIRECTIONS:
Take Interstate 4 to 21st/22nd Street (Ybor City) Exit 1, South to Palm Avenue, West to 15th Street to Hillsborough Community College.
Guest please sign in.

See last page for a map to meeting site.

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SPECIAL NOTICE: OS/2 SIG is scheduled for Tuesday, June 28th at 6:00 p.m. in room 436 on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall.

June 8th AGENDA:

Lecture on:

INTERNET

by: George Pilat, President of

INTELLIGENCE NETWORK ONLINE, INC.

7:30 PM - Break
7:45 PM - Open Discussion
Door Prize Drawing -
CorelDRAW 4.0
and Miscellaneous items

Up Coming Presentation:

July 13 - **Borderbund**
(Games & Education Software)

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

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VICE PRES : Al Poole 876-9445
TREASURER:Tom Cone 224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
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APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 5/11/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS
By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

A very good turnout for this meeting, which held the promise of a great presentation by one of the largest PC software companies -- Microsoft Access. And the promise turned into reality - a great meeting and a great presentation.

USER GROUP NEWS

➪ Membership Survey: Harvey reiterated the why's and wherefore's of the member survey now underway. Thanks were given to those who had completed and turned in their survey form; those that had not yet done so were implored to please do so as soon as possible. The information will be of considerable benefit to the Board of Directors in guiding the direction of the user group and our BBS, and in making our group of greater benefit for all members..

➪ Hard Drive For BBS: Harvey again noted for the group that the BBS has only one 212 Mb hard drive available to serve all the purposes we want of the BBS. The hard driver is full, and we need to acquire a 500 Mb + hard drive, preferably from donation or barter. Members were asked to look for ways to come by more hard drive space. One of our members offered a 200 Mb to the group, an offer that was quickly accepted. The 'new-to-us' hard drive should be installed in the near future and we will likely see more files available for download in coming weeks. While this is not a long term solution, it will allow us to improve the BBS, and it gives us some breathing space. A BIG THANK YOU from all of us to ELAINE MARMEL for her generosity.

➪ Special Interest Groups (SIGs): The OS/2 SIG is off and running. The first meeting is scheduled for 26 May - the 4th Thursday in May, at 6 PM, in the IBM facilities on the 4th floor of the Lake Pointe One building across ML King Blvd from Burdines in the Tampa Bay Mall. Subsequent meetings will be held in the same location and at the same time, but on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Many thanks to John Lucas for organizing and leading this SIG.

The CorelDRAW SIG is still in the organization stage, with obtaining meeting facilities at the HCC (Dale Mabry campus) the stumbling block. We hope to have good news on this in the near future so we can get this SIG going.

➪ Possible BBS Move: Harvey informed us that the present location of the BBS may not be available to us in the future. Presently located at our SYOPS' place of employment, that business in presently in the throws of reorganization, and tenure of our BBS is a bit uncertain. We need to be prepared to relocate the BBS should that become necessary, perhaps on short notice. All members were asked to keep an eye out for a potential alternate location, at least semi-permanent in duration, for the BBS. Please pass on any suggestions you may have to any of the members on the Board of Directors.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

➪ VA Patients Access To BBS: Harvey reported that the Board of Directors had determined that with only one phone line to our BBS it would be unfair to our members and hinder their access to the BBS. For the present we will be unable to grant access to our BBS to the VA hospital patients as had been requested by the Pinellas User Group.

➪ Review Software Available: Software provided by vendors for our review are published monthly in the newsletter. Since the last newsletter went to print, we have received 4 more software programs for review. All members willing to try the software and write an objective, comprehensive review are invited to contact Marylee (Newsletter Editor) about reviewing any of the the software available. A quality review benefits the entire group and the reviewer becomes the owner of the software reviewed.

➪ Public Relations Volunteer Needed: Membership growth of our user group does not reflect the quality of our group nor the benefits available from membership. What we need is someone that can take the bull by the horns and get information about our group in front of the PC users in the Tampa Bay area -- strategic placement of fliers, contact with area computer retail outlets/shops, etc., and develop other ideas and mechanisms to make the community aware of the Tampa PC Users Group. If you can contribute to this effort, please contact any member of the Board of Directors.

INDUSTRY NEWS

➪ MS Access 2.0: Release of Microsoft Access, the newest database program developed by Microsoft, has been released. Reportedly, sufficient copies are not yet available at all retail outlets to meet current demand, but keep checking if you are interested -- or order direct from Microsoft.

➪ Word Perfect 6.0a: A maintenance upgrade to Word Perfect 6.0, identified as WP 6.0a, is now available from Word Perfect. Distribution is not automatic and you must contact Word Perfect to get your free upgrade.

PRESENTATION -- Microsoft Access 2.0

Skip Purdy, Systems Engineer for Microsoft Corporation, was on hand to give us a rundown on the newest release of Microsoft's database program, Access 2.0. As an Access 1.0 user, I was anxious to see what changes had been made. I wasn't disappointed for there are numerous very good improvements. That is not to say that version 1.0 is deficient -- rather it is to say that Microsoft has taken a very good program and made it a heap better. Emphasis in 2.0 has been placed on making the program substantially more powerful and even more user friendly, so much so that a novice can jump in and do a credible job with it in short order. Many of the routine actions have been automated, and just about everything in the program can be customized to one's circumstances and needs.

Among other things, tool bars have been standardize with the other Microsoft Windows programs; button clues and right mouse-button short command help have been added; wizards have been expanded and made easier, and now include personal and business needs; control of fonts within the program; quick sorting of the data within the database, and drag and drop reorganization of data within a table or other organized manipulations of the basic data base; copies data in RTF format, which means all formatting goes with the copy; seamless integration with Word for Windows; supports OLE and works with any OLE application; reports and other outputs can include graphics of a variety of formats; includes a direct tie-in with a fax and provides for timed dispatch of faxes directly from Access; and many, many more. If you are a data base user, I believe you will want to take a look at Access 2.0 -- it includes a lot of 'easy to use' power.

Machine requirements for use of Access 2.0 are the same as for 1.0, except that 2.0 disk space requirements are more, now requiring about 20 Mb of hard disk space with all options loaded. Cost of an upgrade from an earlier version from Microsoft is $99, or $129 for a competitive upgrade. You can probably find a little better price at some of our retail outlets -- when they have the program in stock.

To Microsoft and Skip Purdy, THANK YOU VERY MUCH for an excellent presentation of a great program. Your overview of Access 2.0 increased geometrically my anticipation of beginning to use the program myself.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Microsoft Corporation, who donated MS Access 2.0, and other vendors, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Tom Goff	MS Access 2.0
Parker Monroe	Links Course Add-on
J. C. Robinson	Cannon Mouse Pad
Jim Clark	Cannon Mouse Pad

The meeting adjourned at about 8:40 PM.

Editorial Comment:

There will be several margin, layout and deisgn errors within this issue of ***Bits of Blue***. Please forgive me, hopefully each issue will improve. So far PageMaker appears to be the best product for getting our newsletter out, now that we are at 16 pages. If you have any questions or comments regarding PageMaker please do not hesitate to contact me. I will be attending a class on PageMaker on the 28 and 29th of June, so look for improvements in the July B.O.B.

Marylee Bruneau

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Internet the Information Super Highway

What the heck is Internet and how can it benefit me or my company? What do I need to use and access it? Will this Information Super Highway be like the Tampa Malfunction Junction? These questions and more will be covered at our next general meeting. Come out and listen to George Pilat, president of Intelligence Network Online Inc., discuss these issues and answer your questions.

501(c)(3)

She did it! A positive attitude and continuous perseverance by our Editor, Marylee Bruneau, finally brought some well deserved sunshine to our group. For over six months Marylee has been dealing with the IRS in establishing our group as a 501(c)(3). It's official and retroactive back to October when we first filed the application. For the immediate future this means that we can reduce our postage rate for the newsletter and permits those who donate items to our group to get a tax write off. For the long term this should provide us with donated computer equipment and miscellaneous items which we can use to promote our growth and implement community projects. This new status applies through December of 1997 at which time the IRS will review to group to see if it still meets the qualification for 501(c)(3) status. Our status can be kept intact by promoting education and special projects within the Tampa Bay community. If you have hardware or unregistered software that you don't use, now may be a good time to donate. Hey don't forget the company you work for may also have things that they would like to donate. Please ask your company. Even products that do not work are acceptable. Please join me in thanking Marylee for a job well done.

More BBS disk space

During my opening remarks at last month general meeting I stated that our group was looking for a hard drive to increase the BBS storage capacity. I mentioned that I was not too humble to beg, barter or whatever to get an additional hard drive. To my surprise and out of the back of the room I heard a voice say,"I got a 200 Mb drive you can have". Pinch me it can't be true I thought. It was as if Ed McMahn had said we won the Publisher Clearing House. A great big thank you to Elaine Marmel and may your hard drives live forever. We provided Elaine with a letter acknowledging her contribution to the group which may be used for tax purposes. Anyone donating equipment to our group will also get an acknowledgment letter.

Bad news turned good

Of course there was some bad news last month. The BBS was out of business for a while. After several days of tinkering and tweaking the BBS still had problems. Al Poole ,our VP, decided enough was enough and performed a magic trick. He pulled cards and chips and placed them back in there proper spots. Ok it was not a rabbit, playing cards or casino chips he pulled but the results were still magical. The BBS worked again. Thanks Al for rolling the sleeves, hey where did that ace come from, and getting us back online. Of course now that the BBS is working again, Al and Kevan are figuring out the procedure for installing that newly donated hard disk.

OS/2 SIG

The first meeting was conducted on the 26th of May. The meeting was the first of many to come. Our SIG leader, John Lucas, has added his name to the list of volunteers in the members help-line. John will provide help on OS/2. Please note that the next OS/2 SIG group meeting will be held on Tuesday June 28th. Contact John or Ed Buzza for additional information.

Here we go again

Over the years our editor has used several software products to create this newsletter. This months newsletter represents the fifth product, Aldus Pagemaker for Windows, to be used since Marylee became editor. As unofficial assistant editor I can tell you that its not immediate fun in the Bruneau household when we switch software or hardware. Some people may think that we are changing too often and that we deserve the abuse we bring on ourselves. However, if you have ever put a 12 page newsletter together on a monthly basis, you no what work is involved. Hey if software can make the job easier then so be it. Additionally, our newsletter is growing to 16 pages which a true desktop publishing package can handle.

General

If you have any tips or techniques that you would like to have published please contact Ed Buzza in order that he can include them in his column.

Harvey Bruneau



Softwart CD-ROM REVIEW -

America Adventure

By: Ed Buzza

America Adventure belongs in the category commonly referred to as edutainment. It educates while it entertains and is one of a series of CD-ROM products offered by the Knowledge Adventure corporation. Like other CDs of this type, it is a book that has been translated into the multi-media computer format. With a few important differences: sound and search capability.

From the main menu, selections include a few games (identify states by their outline, the state capitols, and famous landmarks), a gallery of all the presidents (with each portrait being metamorphosed into the next), an animated population chart of the United States showing growth by state, a series of video animations (movie clips), and the main tour.





The main tour shows a screen with icons across the top for several categories: people, history, natural wonders, native Americans, wars, arts, food, states, and immigration. The screen also shows several inserts: the globe which can be scaled from 100 miles to a view of the galaxy; a text window showing information about the subject, which can be printed; a row of icons for sound, library, print, zoom, retrace, and exit to the main menu; the video or graphic screen; and a scrollable time line.

As you click on a subject, it is shown in the main window with a voice narrating a brief message about the subject. The music is in keeping with the subject as is the text screen. And the global map pinpoints the geographic location. Use the zoom feature to show the main window insert in full screen mode. The shuttle blast off graphic is spectacular.

After you get past the Golly, Gee Whiz phase (although some remnant will remain), this is a very nice educational tool. The user is encouraged to move the cursor to find signposts in the form of pop-up balloons. When clicked, the program jumps to show that subject. As you keep researching deeper and deeper into the program, you might get lost. No problem, at all times you are only a click or two away from the main menu.

Informative, educational, and entertaining, it should appeal to all and especially to children in the first to seventh grade of school. Sound, graphics, and animation are quite well done. Of particular value is the pronunciation of various words and names. Can you pronounce Sacagawea?

Setup was a snap. Just enter the command to install, answer a few questions: type of sound board, Windows install?, and whether to install a minimum (3.25 MB hard drive space), quick (4.5 MB) or fast (7.3 MB) version of the program and the drive and directory for the program. Another 3.3 MB disk space is needed for a demo of the other, similar, products from the vendor.

While a CD-ROM can hold over 600 MB of data, this one has a lot of empty space. It uses about 106 MB for America and 198 MB for the commercials; so almost half of the disk is empty! Another thing, the price is a bit high for this type of software. Suggested retail price is $79.95. Office Depot wants about $60 and CompUSA charges about $35.00 (go figure). Considering the subject matter and other competing products, a price of around $20.00 would be reasonable. And at that price, they'd sell a ton of them.

System requirements are: 386+ under DOS 3.1+; color VGA or SVGA; if using a CD-ROM drive, one that supports ISO 9600; about 11 MB of space on the hard drive if using the disk version, or at least 3.3 MB if using the CD-ROM version; and 520 RAM. A mouse and a sound board, while optional, is recommended.

The product can be ordered from Knowledge Adventure, Inc., 4502 Dyer Street, La Crescenta, CA 91214. (800) 542-4240.



FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Software Review
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Staples
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild (Software Dist.)

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- GeoWorks
- Lotus Corp.
- Microsoft
- Software Publishing
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Gary Ennis
Beth Iandoli
Scott Lawson
Sergio Mendez
Jerry Monarch
Bruce Register
Carol Robinson
John D. Schultz
Dinah Thweatt
Ron Wemhoner

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2

SOFTWARE REVIEW:

Managing your Money

(DOS Version 1.0)

By: Lester D. Heitlinger
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Managing Your Money for DOS may be operated from Windows. Experienced Windows users should not experience any difficulty in operating this program from all versions of Windows. While there is no Windows icon in the program there are several icons available on the Bits of Blue BBS in case you must have one.

Requirements:

System requirements are: An IBM Compatible Computer, a hard disk with at least 4 megabytes (MB) of free space and a minimum of 640K RAM. MYM recommends at least 1MB of XMS or EMS memory, preferably 2MB which MYM will use automatically. If you are using a mouse be certain that you have a DOS mouse driver (even if your mouse works without one in Windows).

Installation:

Installation is from three supplied 3.5" Double Density Disks which are not copy protected.

Operation:

I experienced some difficulty in importing my Quicken data (from Quicken V.6). I tried several different techniques. The program insisted on tendering an incorrect balance. After several attempts I corrected the problem by making manual entries. Anyone starting from scratch should not encounter this problem.

The manual gives complete instructions regarding entering one's current assets. As with any new program it is imperative that one reads (and follows) instructions. This is not an easy program to operate. There is help available in the program but I found the user's guide to be more helpful in solving problems encountered when entering assets.

Some difficulty occurred when initially entering stock prices since market prices are quoted in fractions (ie: 45 7/8ths) and one must convert these fractions to decimals. When updating stock prices the fractions are available to the user.

Once I had all my data entered correctly, things ran smoothly. There is a desk facility included with the program which contains ten features such as Time Summary, Appointments, Phone Calls, Calculator, etc., which can be called up by "quick keys." These features are superfluous. Most computer users already have similar features installed through other programs. Frequently, when changing creens, the program inserts little "cutesy" sayings which I found

Managing Your Money was tested on an IBM compatible 386DX 33mb Compudyne Computer with a VGA monitor. No hardware problems were encountered. Free technical support is available either through Compuserve or directly through a toll call.

Personal Observation:

From a purely personal point of view, Managing Your Money is a useful tool for keeping records of investment portfolios if one has no other system of records. The checkbook program, in my personal opinion, is not equal to that of Quicken. The desk facilities are superfluous.

Managing Your Money is produced by: MECA Software, Inc., P.O. Box 912, Fairfield, CT 06430-0912 and sells for $32.92 at Egghead Software.



SOFTWARE REVIEW:

Seize The Day !

By: Connie Kincaid, Tampa PC User's Group

You know that out of touch feeling you get when working at the computer for hours? I'll bet you do if you have ever spent some in-depth hours without the light of day. It seems as if time stands still. Then suddenly you emerge to realize that time has flown by. If this sounds familiar, you'll appreciate the difference that makes Seize The Day different. This is not just another calendar program. This program looks at your system clock and simulates changes in the time of day with scenes that change as time changes. Seize The Day uses one half of the screen for the calendar portion of the program and another half for a gallery of changing scenes. These animated scenes all have something moving in them such as a babbling brook or falling snow. The scenes can be closed, left open when the calendar is closed or viewed with the calendar. Essentially the gallery operates as a separate window. The scenes change with the time of day and with the time of year. Seize The Day comes with a standard set of scenes from around the country. There are also several add-on packages that provide a wide selection of scenes from around the country, art and inspirational messages from a variety of environments (for a small fee $19.95 - $29.95).



Installation: Installation was fairly simple and lasted approximately 20 minutes. That is probably a maximum time because I like to stop and read everything during installation. Seize

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

The Day is a Windows compatible program. I installed it from File Manager. I did run into an error on disk #2 but nothing seems to be effected. In order to properly run the scenes you need to configure Windows to display 256 colors and at least 512K on the video card. Installation gives you the option to install three segments: the Gallery (5.5 MG), Daybook (1.1MG) and Alarm Sounds (1.3MG). Installing the whole program took just over 8MG of disk space. When installation was complete, I was prompted to call a 1-800 number to register. I called in the evening and was given a reasonably brief number to type in to unlock the program. If I had not wanted to call, I could have chosen to run the program in demo mode which would allow me to see everything but save nothing. Fortunately someone answered the phone, gave me a number and sent me on my merry way in a few minutes.

With my new program unlocked I began to explore the many features of this amazing calendar. I was prompted to open a new daybook (the calendar portion of the program) and realized that I could have more than one calendar or more than one person could have a calendar daybook under this program. I was also given the option to password protect my daybook. (I learned years ago to steer clear of passwords as much as possible so I didn't take advantage of the feature.)

The program offers many features not available in other calendar programs. This is just a brief summary of the features offered.

Program features:

Living World Gallery - Twelve pictures (one for each month) that vary the amount of light , weather and other features as the time of day changes. Each picture is animated so that some aspect of the picture is constantly in motion. For example, in February there is a gentle waterfall. In June there is an evening lightning show. If you want, you can use the Time Travel feature to view other days and times.

Calendar - The calendar can be viewed by the day, week, month or year. This calendar allows the user to enter recurring events easily. Items entered in the calendar portion can be 'dropped and dragged to the To Do List which is also visible with the daily view of the calendar. What a great idea for people who like to plan more than 24 hours into a day. The events in the daily planner can be marked done and tracked in a history file. Also, events may be picked up by the tick mark that precedes the item and dropped for easy rearranging.

Daily Planner - The daily planner allows you to enter events such as meetings, birthdays, etc. that can be marked DONE and added to a history of completed tasks. But, unlike the To Do List, these activities do not automatically roll forward to the next day if they are not marked DONE. I personally like being able to separate the things that I want to roll forward until they are completed (like doing my taxes) from things that I would not roll forward if they don't get done that day (like attending the PC User's Group - there is just no point in attending it on Thursday when the group only meets on Wednesday).

To Do List - The To Do Lists are not linked to the day which means uncompleted tasks are automatically carried forward until marked DONE. Seize The Day also keeps a log of the tasks completed for handy reference later.

Journal - This feature allows the user to keep notes linked to the current date . This comes in handy as a short diary.

Personal and Business Lists - Seize The Day may be one of the first address books to recognize that users need different information for business associates than for personal correspondence. The Personal list has room for 2 name lines and 1 phone entry per record while the Business list has room for 3 name lines and 3 phone entries per record. This layout is very handy for the way personal information usually differs from business addresses. Of course either format could be used as needed to accommodate the information.

Alarms - Bells and whistles can be set to remind you it is time. You may choose from any of 20 .WAV files that come with the program or add your own .WAV file to the list. You may be reminded at the designated time or in advance. Advance warning could be minutes, hours, days or weeks in advance.

Each feature has a button that is displayed in each screen to allow easy toggling from one feature to another. Any of the above may be printed for a traveling 'hard copy'.

Ease of use: This program was very easy to get started with. The screens are more than intuitive. They are labeled simply and nothing is buried several layers deep in menus whose logic is hard to follow. The manual is included in the program and can be dragged as a separate window to another area of the desktop and viewed while using the information contained in Help. (What a great idea!)

System requirements: Windows 3.1, 2MG of RAM, minimum of 3 MG hard disk space (8 MG for all features), VGA display (640 x 480) with 256 colors for Living World, Sound Blaster (or compatible) for full sound effects.

Conclusion: This program seems to take calendars to a new dimension of time and time management. I would strongly recommend it for anyone who has the disk space and enjoys scenery.

Suggested Retail Price: $59.95

Seize the Day, Inc. , P.O. Box 833/ Nizhoni Way, Calistoga, California 94515 Phone (707) 942-9391

SOFTWARE REVIEW:

UNDERSEA ADVENTURE

by **Knowledge Adventure**
Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

"Dive into a fascinating underwater frontier." You can almost see the plaque on the Great White's teeth as it chomps and gnashes at the introduction to Undersea Adventure. This is unique educational software that grabs and keeps your attention as you learn about life in our oceans and seas.



Installation: CD-ROM installation requires from 3.25 to 6 MB hard disk space depending on the operating speed you want. My 13 year old son handled the installation and selected the fastest speed option, using 6 MB of hard drive space. He also install a 3.3 MB demo program to sample other Knowledge Adventure products such as Dinosaur Adventure, Bug Adventure, and Speed.

CD-ROM multimedia full-motion video and stereo sound is usable under DOS or Windows. The digital movies worked surprisingly well. They were the smoothest I've seen, with good detail clarity and nonstop sound. As you get closer to an object in the 3D areas, the detail turns to pixel blocks, but almost everything was recognizable.

Documentation: After my son installed the software, I let him explore it for a day or two and then asked him to give me a tour. Although he didn't use the manual, we covered all the major features of the program. This is a well-crafted piece of software. Ok, I peeked at the manual and it is well written, informative and includes a learning guide in the appendix to help with the learning process.

Support: BBS, FAX and non-toll-free technical support. This is one product that I didn't run into problems serious enough to consider calling for help.

Test Results: The test drive was quite enjoyable. Our system is a 486DLC 33mhz, 5 MB RAM, 8 bit sound card, Toshiba 3401 CD-ROM drive, and 1 MB VGA card set to 256 colors. The system was fast enough to play the flicks from the CD and still have good motion and sound.

Use the cursor, a cute little starfish, to move around the main menu, a wheel house of a boat. Select objects to do things or read the note balloons that pop up while moving the mouse around. For example, to go to the Undersea Movie Theater, click on the box of popcorn sitting next to the wheel. To take the Ocean Tour, click on the compass. This one could help young readers improve their reading skills. Printed words are boxed as they are read so the sounds can be associated with them. Choose the dolphin off the port bow for Who Am I? game. In this one you guess the animal using enlarged body parts as clues. Or choose the lighthouse for Can You Find Me? Here you identify animals in pictures by listening to and seeing the animal name. Click on the deep sea fishing boat and play What Do I Eat? When it wanted Sea Urchin I picked Elephant Seal and it responded "I don't THINK so." Click on the steering wheel for Undersea Reference. There is plenty of information here. We tried the print feature and got a report on oceans, climate and weather for the North Atlantic Ocean. It explained how the ocean helps to determine the temperatures of different areas of land. Neat stuff. The report was from "The Random House Atlas of the Oceans." Clicking on the fish picture takes you to Marine Animal Lab, which gets down to guts and bones of several marine animals, literally.

Limitations: "Sound Device in use." This is what popped up when I tried Undersea Adventure under Windows. The program started to run anyway, minus sound or music. This improved the motion of the video quite a bit (on rerunning it under DOS I noticed more jerkiness in the video), but the sound and music sure makes the program more interesting. Going back to the Readme file helped me find the problem. The printer and sound card were sharing the same IRQ. Change a jumper and off we go. Funny, how it workedjust fine under DOS . . .

Evaluation: Did we learn something and was it an enjoyable experience? Yes and yes. Humor is frequent, keeping things lively. A manatee says, "Hi, I'm a manatee. I used to be a boyatee, but I grew up."

It seems adaptable to a wide range of age groups and aquatic knowledge. A young person could keep coming back to this program to learn more as they grow and mature. The more mature user could get more out of the reference section learning about aquatic life in different regions of the world. Matthew is having fun exploring the program and has already learned a lot. You should hear what he wants to put in the aquarium now!

The full motion videos were a real plus to me. Very impressive. Keep up the good work at Knowledge Adventure. Recommended for anyone who wants to learn about marine life and have fun too.

Now for a pop quiz to see if you were paying attention. Would you expect to see Echinoderms on the menu at Wendy's anytime soon? Ok, that was an easy one. Would Cnidarians go well on a peanut butter sandwich? Right, it depends on their flavor.

Minimum System Requirements: 520 KB RAM, VGA, 386 PC, PC/MS DOS 3.1. Mouse and sound card recommended. **Cost and availability:** $39 at Computer City. Publisher info: Knowledge Adventure, Inc.,4502 Dyer Street, La Crescenta, CA 91214 (818) 542-4200 or (800) 542-4240 for orders.

SOFTWARE REVIEW:

HOME SURVIVAL TOOLKIT

(for Windows)
HOME REPAIRS
The Home & Yard Series
From.....Books That Work

Article by.....Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa P.C. Users Group

Put your ideas to work with the Electronic Book of Home Repair.

A few years ago, before I became totally addicted to personal computing and BBSing, I fancied myself as a pretty handy man to have around the house. Over the years I have collected a good selection hand and power tools to make my home repair activities as easy as possible. But, because of my super-dooper, multi-media PC system I ended up at my work-bench much less than before.....until now! Now there is a way to put my computer to work on home repairs. Now I have a good collection of intelligent tools too.

The Home & Yard Series eliminates the guess work in choosing the right paint, cleaning agent or hardware. You can acquire useful information in a new format that has been designed by professional builders, artists and writers. The Home Survival Toolkit combines sound and animations that you control to show you how-to-do-it.

For example: To see how to connect a wire to an electrical terminal just click the mouse on the play button and watch! To determine how much paint you should buy for two coats in your bedroom just key in the dimensions of the room and....walla! If you own an older home there are special instructions to follow so as to not create more work in damaging the older construction materials.

Some of the areas covered in the chapters are Emergencies, Tools, Plumbing, Electrical, Heating and Cooling, Painting, Outdoors, etc. There is a survival guide section that includes toll free numbers for most major appliance manufacturers, and tips on stain removal, paints and adhesives. There are also cost estimators for paint, attic ventilization and concrete. Definitions are just a click away. Search for specific words and topics. Tips are included from veteran contractors and you are alerted to common dangers and mistakes.

Get help fast to:

- ☐ Stop a water leak
- ☐ Shut off a gas line
- ☐ Fix a dripping faucet
- ☐ Put out fires
- ☐ Wire a new outlet
- ☐ Remove stains
- ☐ Stop a run-on toilet
- ☐ Tape drywall seams
- ☐ Find studs
- ☐ Unclog gutters

Learn how to use, buy and rent:

- ☐ Hand and power saws
- ☐ Cordless drills
- ☐ Combination squares
- ☐ The right hammer
- ☐ Levels
- ☐ Cement mixers
- ☐ Adjustable wrenches
- ☐ Post hole diggers
- ☐ Rototillers
- ☐ Wallpaper steamers
- ☐ Power washers

....and much, much more!

If you are a windows user then you already know how to install the Home Survival Toolkit. Just issue the RUN command from the FILE menu and type A:SETUP (or B:SETUP). Follow the provided dialog box and install automatically or change to your specifications. Installation was straight forward with all the necessary safeguards built-in.

To install and run you will need a 100% IBM compatible PC with 12 megabytes of free disk space, 2 megabytes of RAM, minimum, Windows 3.1, and VGA. (Although there was nothing mentioned in the documentation about needing a mouse, I personally recommend using one.) For top performance a sound card is optional but not required. After installation Home Repairs will appear as a new icon in the Books That Work program group in your Program Manager. Documentation is minimal but enough. You just need to know how to click your mouse button to get started. A non-toll-free technical support number is provided if you should have trouble and a number for Books That Works BBS is also provided.

If you're looking for more shelf space for all those computer magazines then purchase the Home Survival Toolkit and get rid of some of those old Do-It-Yourself home repair books and replace them with a fast and practical electronic reference for your home.

Street price is under $50. For more information contact Books That Work, 285 Hamilton, Suite 260, Palo Alto, CA 9430, or see your local retailer.

Shareware Review:

Starting this month I will try to review a shareware program or two that I find worth the registration fee. Here's number one.

By: Larry Anders, Librarian,Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

File Manager StepUp! Version 2

the File Manager Extender
Copyright (c) 1994, ChaoSoft. ($20)

Since I began using Windows 3.1 I have always felt that the File Manager was missing alot. Not anymore! Last month I found File Manager StepUp version 1, which I felt added enough options to File Manager, that made it well worth the $20 registration fee. Well, when I received the registered version there was a notice that version 2 would be out soon. It's here and it's great!

FM StepUp is a powerful and innovative File Manager extender for Microsoft(R) Windows(tm) 3.1, 3.11, and Windows for Workgroups (tm) 3.11.

FM StepUp makes the File Manager an actually user friendly application. With FM StepUp installed in your system you can perform various file management operations easier and faster.

FM StepUp enhances standard dialog boxes of the File Manager, providing them with additional useful features (history lists, remembering your previous commands; 'verify' check boxes; 'browse' buttons; 'view'/edit' file, and many more).

FM StepUp allows you to combine most frequently used commands of the File Manager into the Quick Menu, so you can access them just pressing the right button of your mouse.

FM StepUp makes your able to easily create, view, edit, or print arbitrary files, not necessarily associated with an application, and you can assign your favorite viewer or editor to do this.

FM StepUp provides you with some unique or hard-to-find commands, allowing you, for example, to figure out the total size of a directory, including all its subdirectories; change date or time of the file; run the default screen saver whenever you want it to; etc.

FM StepUp allows you to add your own commands to the File Manager and easily execute them. You may use this possibility to launch frequently used applications directly from File Manager menu, or to perform preprogrammed operations over files selected in a File Manager's window (like UnZip or UnArj).

If you are a network administrator, FM StepUp can help you to restrict some of the File anager's capabilities (in almost the same way as you do it for the Program Manager), allowing you to prevent your users from performing potentially dangerous or undesirable commands.

FM StepUp is highly customizable. You are in charge of almost every aspect of its functionality - from the size of the history lists to contents of the Quick Menu and Execute Menu.

The way File Manager should have been from the beginning!

Unlike most other Windows applications, FM StepUp is not a stand-alone program: there is no special executable file you would run to start the FM StepUp. To use the FM StepUp software, all you need is to properly install it, and it will run automatically every time you run the File Manager.

THIS IS SHAREWARE: TRY BEFORE YOU BUY !

You may try this program for the evaluation period of up to 14 days. After that time, you are required to purchase the software through registration or else discontinue its use. That I find worth registering. ☐☐☐☐

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

Screenscapes - Transform your monitor with spectacular wall papers. - Vendor: Kiwi Software

XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology

FidelityOnLineExpress - Direct Line to Wall Street - Meca Software

WinWay Job Interview for Windows - Interview with confidence & win the Job. - WinWay Corp.

Watchman for Windows-Advance file protection management- Distant Markets

Quicken For Windows Companion - Manages home inventory, estimates taxes, updates stock prices - Intuit

WinSense - the Windows Optimizer

AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows

Disk Optimizer for Windows - Performs file by file defragmentation on multiple drives ...

Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)

SCIENCE-Knowledge Adventure CD-ROM (ages 6-Adult)

THE DISCOVERERS - Knowledge Adventure CD-ROM (ages 6-adult)

3-D BODY Adventure - Knowledge Adventure CD-ROM (ages 7-12)

PREHISTORIA - Grolier a Multimedia Who's Who of Prehistoric Life - CD-ROM

EZ Shopper Plus - Ultimate home productivity program, shopping, coupons, recipes and menu planner.

lst Press - Desktop publishing software by GST

lst Design - Windows design and illustration software by GST

(Contact Marylee or Harvey @ 985-3338 if you are interested in doing a review article for the newsletter on any of the above software.)

USER'S CORNER

WORD PERFECT - BLOCKING. When blocking text, position the cursor at the beginning of the block. Then when you press any regular key, WordPerfect will extend the block to the first occurence of that key; whether it is an alphabetic, numeric, punctuation, or the Enter key. Press another key, or the same key, and the block will be further extended as above.

About rectangular blocking in WordPerfect:
In WP5.1(DOS): position cursor at top left/right, Alt-F4, move cursor to bottom right/left, Ctrl-F4, 3 Rectangle (select option or press F3).

In WP6.0(DOS): position cursor at top left/right, Alt-F4, move cursor to bottom right/left, Ctrl-F4, tab to Type, <Enter>, 3 Rectangle, <Enter>, choose action.

...Contributed by Larry Anders

DOS - REDIRECTION. When a DIR command is entered, DOS will display the contents of the directory on the CON device — the CONsole or monitor. The directory display can be redirected to the printer or to a file. The redirection is done by using the > symbol.

Entering the following:

DIR C:\DOS > A:\DIR.TXT

will create the DIR.TXT file on the A: drive with the listing of the DOS directory on the C: drive. Substitute PRN for the file specification shown above and the listing will be redirected to the LPT1 printer (if it's on). Warning: if the DIR.TXT file already exists, it *will* be overwritten.

Enter the following:

DIR C:\UT >> A:DIR.TXT

and DOS will redirect the console data and APPEND it to the DIR.TXT file on the A: drive. That is the purpose of the >> symbol on the command line (redirect console data and *add* it to what has already been written). Further, if the file does not exist, DOS will create it. So, if you want to redirect data to a file, adopt the habit of only using the >> symbol. In these examples, DIR.TXT will hold the \DOS directory listing followed by the \UT directory listing.

DOS BATCH FILES. Even with all the features that DOS 6.2 and that Windows 3.1 have, there are still things that only a batch file will do. A batch file is nothing more than a set of DOS commands in a file with .BAT as the filename extension. Enter the name of a BATch file at the command line and DOS will execute each of the commands in that file as though it were a program; as though they were entered one line at a time at the command prompt. The AUTOEXEC.BAT file is a classic example.

TIMEDATE.BAT FILE. If you've read this far, might as well put some of this to good use. Using your favorite ASCII text editor, enter the following commands — *do not enter the line numbers*.

```
1   @ECHO OFF
2   IF "%1!"=="!" GOTO Syntax
3   ECHO | MORE | DATE | FIND "Current" >> %1
4   ECHO | MORE | TIME | FIND "Current" >> %1
5   GOTO End
6   :Syntax
7   ECHO Need a parameter for Date and Time stamp.
8   ECHO PRN = printer; CON = screen; or
9   ECHO D:\DIR\FILENAME = disk file.
10  :End
11  REM Send date and time to file, printer or screen.
12  REM If file, need drive\dir\filename as parm 1.
13  REM If printer, show PRN as parm 1.
14  REM If screen, show CON as parm 1.
```

Save the file as: TIMEDATE.BAT either on a floppy or in your utility directory. TIMEDATE does require a parameter to execute properly. The parameter must be: PRN, CON, or a full file spec.

The use of the @ symbol in line 1 in DOS 4 (or higher) prevents the line from echoing. Line 2 checks for the existence of parm 1 (the first parameter). If parm 1 is missing, then "!" is equal to "!" and the batch file will branch/jump (GOTO) to line 6, labeled :Syntax.

Lines 3 and 4 are a bit tricky. ECHO, DATE and TIME are commands but MORE and FIND are filters. The DATE command shows the FIND to get the "Current ..." which is itself filtered through MORE. And all this is passed to the ECHO command (which provides the <Enter>) that is redirected to parameter 1.

Whew! That was a toughie. I may not have explained this properly and if anyone has a more accurate or clearer explanation, please let me know.

Line 5 tells DOS to go to the line labeled :END (line 10). There is no END command to tell DOS to quit the batch job. The batch job is ended when the command on the last line is executed.

Line 6 is labeled :SYNTAX and was referenced by line 2. Lines 7, 8, and 9 tell the user (the dumb bunny) that a parameter is needed. In other words, where do you want the TIME and DATE to be shown? Line 10 is labeled :END and is used by the GOTO command in line 5. Lines 11-14 are REMarks and are ignored by DOS. After line 14 is executed (ignored in this case), the batch file is ended and DOS returns to the prompt line.

New members may want to review TEACHER.BAS on the New Member Disk(s) for an explanation of how DOS handles BATch files in relation to those with a .COM or .EXE extension. Those who are interested in BATch programming may like the BATPOWR conference on our Bitsoblu BBS. It is an excellent conference and the people who are "regulars" are really knowledgeable. Lots of good advice and many innovative techniques. If you want to learn more about batch programming, jump on this conference.

... Ed Buzza

A Lesson To Be Learned From the Automobile Industry

By: Robert X. Cringely

APCUG Industry Commentary Subscription Series Article #21
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American software companies are merging and buying each other as fast as they can. In the last few weeks, alone, Novell has bought WordPerfect Corporation and the Quattro Pro spreadsheet business from Borland, Adobe Systems has bought Aldus, and Symantec has bought Central Point.

What we are seeing is just the start of a process of maturation that will take several more years to finish. It exactly parallels what happened in the American automobile industry earlier this century.

In 1920 there were about 300 American companies building automobiles. By 1930, this number had dropped to 25. By 1940 there were 10. Today there are three, if you ignore the Hummer. The same thing is happening in the software business, only faster. We took 70 years to accelerate from zero to 100 million cars, but we torqued to 100 million PCs in less than 20 years. So expect the software shakeout to take five years, tops, starting a year ago.

The shakeout in the American automobile business began when Alfred Sloan brought together a dozen car companies under one name — General Motors — creating a company so big, with such economies of scale, that the other car companies had to grow, too, or be unable to compete. In the software business of today, Microsoft is General Motors, with nearly half the industry sales. Novell is Ford. Lotus Development is Chrysler. Everyone else is either a merger candidate, a maker of expensive custom cars, or doomed.

All the smaller companies want to merge with Novell, because Novell is considered the only company that can stand up to Microsoft. Even Lotus wants to merge with Novell, though Lotus CEO Jim Manzi's ego demands that we call it Lotus buying Novell, rather than the other way around.

In this particular round of consolidation (other rounds will follow), all the big players are concentrating on filling out their application suites (packages of several bundled applications like Microsoft Office, Lotus SmartSuite, and Borland Office), because suites are the future of applications. Of course only Microsoft makes big bucks with its suites, at least so far. That's in large part because Redmond's suites are the best integrated, so they sell the best. It's to improve integration, to make the products work better together, that WordPerfect needed to own Quattro Pro. It's to have a suite at all that Novell needed to buy WordPerfect. It's to avoid certain death that WordPerfect needed Novell.

So, if every big company needs a suite, and every suite needs a database, this stage of the consolidation is far from finished. Look for Lotus and Novell to soon start fighting over the bones of Borland. Conventional wisdom says Borland can't survive on its own, and giving Novell one million free copies of Paradox (included in the deal to sell Quattro pro) clinches that. Borland can't expect to make any money selling Paradox if Novell has a million free copies to literally give away, and Borland doesn't have enough money to simply wait until all Novell's Paradox copies are gone.

Lotus wants to weld onto Notes the media server bits of Interbase. Paradox, too, would be a nice higher-end database to go with Approach. Borland's language group could either be merged into Lotus or sold to Computer Associates, the Ferengi of the PC industry.

Novell likes the Borland databases, too, but won't move until after Borland pays damages to Lotus for the 1-2-3 macro infringement case. An American court recently found Borland guilty of violating some Lotus copyrights, but the penalty Borland will have to pay has not yet been set. Novell doesn't want the judge to award Novell money to Lotus, and so will wait until after the judgment is ordered to make an offer for the rest of Borland.

Whichever company gets Borland, the other will turn its attention to either Powersoft or Gupta, two companies that have good technology but probably can't survive as independents in the long run. Lotus likes Powersoft a lot, and might run in that direction anyway.

So here are my predictions for how the American software industry will change over the next few months. This is important information if you own (or are considering) products from any of these companies.

(1) Novell will keep buying pieces of Borland until:

a - all that is left is the Lotus liability

b - the Borland stock price drops to a point it is cheaper to buy the whole company

The Quattro-Pro deal has not been completed yet. Jim Manzi of Lotus and Ray Noorda are talking about a settlement if Borland would cease to exist.

(2) Lotus has offered to buy the Paradox database from Borland and terminate the legal settlement. Borland might go for that.

(3) Borland's new CEO was hired by the major stock holders and has total control of the company. Philippe Kahn, who founded Borland, is only an advisor now. The new CEO has a reputation of selling companies in parts.

(4) Lotus wants Paradox and Borland's Mail API's, but does not care about the language compilers. IBM wants the compilers. Look for one of the big database firms (Sybase or Oracle) to buy Interbase and gut it for its technology. No one seems to want dBase which is ironic, since I've seen dBase for Windows and it could be a **BIG** winner. Buying Borland's dBase business would be a good chance for some Japanese company to get a jump-start in the worldwide applications business. Sprint would be an awesome addition

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

to a mail product, but Lotus and Microsoft haven't figured it out.

(5) Who will buy Quarterdeck? Something happened to them recently (which I can't share) that may put them in the market for a new owner. Microsoft needs their technology. They'd be a good fit to some of Novell's upcoming R&D efforts.

(6) Symantec? Interesting situation. All of their products are very profitable, however, their business is dependent on things Microsoft is doing poorly. I expect them to buy the compiler group from Borland.

(7) Powersoft? The good money is on Lotus buying them, however Computer Associates is interested as well. The **smart** move would be for Powersoft to buy Borland's compiler business.

(8) Microsoft? The U.S. Department of Justice is reconsidering whether to take legal action against Microsoft for trying to run a monopoly and Bill Gates is scared. Microsoft messed up big-time with the Stac Electronics case, where they were shown to have willfully violated Stac patents on data compression technology. I predict DOS will be put into the public domain as a settlement. In true Gates style, it will be brilliantly timed and have no impact on Microsoft. When Windows 4.0 ships, DOS could become useless. Just like donating the Crown Jewels one week before they turn to dust.

(9) Hostile takeovers? You cannot acquire a software company with a hostile take over. All of the value of the company is in the minds of the developers, the only people on the globe who can get a new $100,000 a year job in 30 seconds. Annoy the developers and your company is worthless. Anyway we're about due for some stupidity in the industry. I predict Computer Associates or Symantec will mess up in 1994.

(10) Software Publishing? Almost worthless and directionless. They're looking for a new owner. Symantec almost makes sense.

(11) Micrografx? Another misguided company. They would be a good deal for Lotus or Corel. They'd be most valuable to Microsoft but egos and old grudges between Bill Gates and Micrografx CEO Paul Grayson will prevent that.

Of course this model comparing American software companies to American automobile companies says nothing about Toyota, Nissan, or Honda. That stage won't be reached for another 10 years, but eventually some foreign software companies **will** break into the U.S. market and teach even Microsoft a very expensive lesson.

*Robert X. Cringely is an **InfoWorld** field editor from Palo Alto, California, best known for his "Notes from the Field" gossip column. This column is read by more than 500,000 computer professionals every week. He surfaced in public appearances in 1992 when his book, Accidental Empires, was released. Look for another new book later this year.*

Cringely is a former Stanford professor and foreign correspondent.



Book Reviews:

By: Hugh Bayless, MBUG (APCUG)

New From Jamsa

Kris Jamsa, the best-selling author of computer books, has started his own publishing company, Jamsa Press, and the results are outstanding. Among his best offerings are a new series of beginner-level books with titles that begin with "Rescued by ..."

Rescued by Windows, teaches beginners how to use Windows 3.1 in a series of 5-minute lessons that teach you what you need to know in as painless a way as anything I have found yet. Beautifully illustrated with full-color screen-capture pictures, even the most ignorant neophyte will find the going easy. On the other hand, experienced users will be surprised at how much can be learned as well.

Rescued by Word for Windows, does the same thing for version 6 of Microsoft's best-selling word processor. In a series of 5 to 10-minute lessons, you can learn everything you need in order to use Word for Windows effectively and efficiently.

Rescued by DOS, is the ideal book for the first-time DOS user and is a great help to anyone upgrading to Microsoft DOS 6.2. Like all the other books in this series, it uses full-color illustrations in 5-minute lessons that make it easy to learn and master DOS.

All three of these books are outstanding for their clarity and logical organization. They would be ideal textbooks for a beginner's class or SIG. Each is priced at $19.95, either from your computer bookstore or from Jamsa Press, 2821 High Sail Court, Las Vegas, NV 89117.

Get On-Line

According to the Electronic Mail Association, the use of E-mail is increasing by 50% per year in American Businesses. If you are one of the thousands who are just starting out with E-Mail and are wondering how to use that modem you just acquired, this book by Lamont Wood, a frequent contributor to Byte, Datamation, Omni, and other magazines, may be what you are looking for.

This John Wiley & Sons book is a good basic instructional book for the neophyte, explaining in illustrated detail how to install a modem, how to install and use several of the most popular communications programs, upload and download files, automate your calls, how to access the leading on-line services, how to communicate on the road, and how to protect your files from viruses. The author's advice is sound, "Stop worrying and have fun!" $24.95 at most computer bookstores.

MISPLACED HUMOR: (Continued)

Here are some signs and notices written in English that were discovered throughout the world. You have to give the writers an "E" for Effort.

In a Rhodes tailor shop: Order your summers suit. Because is big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation.

From the Soviet Weekly: There will be a Moscow Exhibition of Arts by 15,000 Soviet Republic painters and sculptors. These were executed over the past two years.

In a Tokyo bar: Special cocktails for the ladies with nuts.

A sign posted in Germany's Black Forest: It is strictly forbidden on our black forest camping site that people of different sex, for instance, men and women, live together in one tent unless they are married with each other for that purpose.

In a Zurich hotel: Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose.

In a Rome laundry: Ladies, leave your clothes here and spend the afternoon having a good time.

In a Czechoslovakian tourist agency: Take one of our horse-driven city tours--we guarantee no miscarriages.

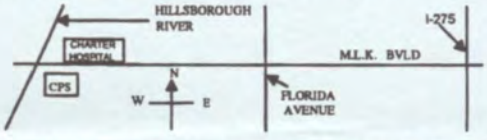
Thanks to the 12/93 KCA Computer Group newsletter as reprinted in the Virginia PC Newsletter of the Richmond PC User's Group. -

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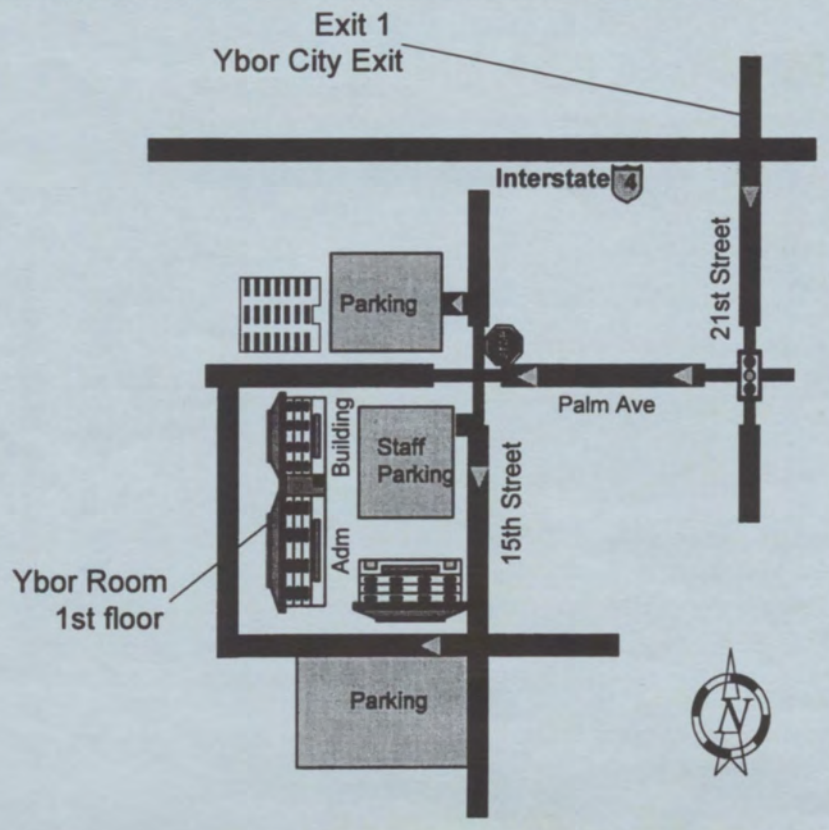
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Member

A Monthly Publication of the
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Bits of Blue

Vol. 7, No. 7 July, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: July 13th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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SPECIAL NOTICE: OS/2 SIG

is scheduled for Tuesday, July 26th at 6:00 p.m. in room 436 on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall.

July 13th AGENDA

Broderbund

Education & Games Software

Tad Brickson from Broderbund will demonstrate:

Living Books
3-D Home Architecture
Print Shop CD
Myst
Kid Pix
Harpoon II



Up Coming Presentations:

August 10 - **Tampa Tribune**
Tampa Bay Online

September 14 - **IBM**
New Personal OS/2

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals Member

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 6/8/94 MEETING

By Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Jim Clark is out there in California enjoying himself and has left the gathering of the minutes of this meeting to a "volunteer" appointed by our eminent President, Harvey Bruneau himself.

USER GROUP NEWS

Non-profit status: After months of hard work by Marylee Bruneau, IRS has granted us 501(c)3 status. Also, she has obtained non-profit mail status for our corporation from the US Post Office. This will help reduce some of our newsletter costs.

PageMaker: This top end desktop publishing program is now being used to prepare the newsletter and appears to be very user friendly.

Print plant: The editor is looking for a new source to print the newsletter. Preferably in the Temple Terrace area. The use of scanned images, while excellent when printed, suffer in image quality (too dark) when processed by local copy centers. If anyone has any suggestions, please contact Marylee or Harvey Bruneau at 985-3388.

BitsoBlu BBS: The BBS had a bit of trouble a few days back. But it's fixed. Thanks in large part to Al Poole. Between he and Kevan, they tore that BBS completely apart, poked and prodded, examined all the boards, etc., etc., and put it back together. Now it works but neither Al nor Kevan know just exactly what caused the initial problem.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Comdex: It was a bigger show than last year. One of our members said there wasn't enough time to see all that was there. The demo on ACCESS suffered from some minor glitches. It was pointed out that ACCESS puts everything into one data base file. It can export pieces of that data base to other data base programs and will import it's own exports and work on them. Thus an ACCESS user and a Paradox user can both work on the same exported file.

OS/2: The personal version is now in beta release. It's available from CI$ and IBM; but it is not to be posted on any other source or BBS. The release is on 21 diskettes and costs about $15 plus S&H. It will run on a system with 4 MB RAM; and the swap file can be turned off. Call (800) 251-2177 for details.

MS-DOS 6.22: The new version of DOS has a new disk compression module and is due out at the end of this month. $50 for 5.0 and earlier users, $10 step-up for version 6.x users. The new version has nothing new for 6.2 users. Users were cautioned not to have Stacker 4 already installed and then install DOS 6.22. You are advised to install DOS 6.22, then install Stacker. Symantec programs, and some others, need a patch

see **Minutes** ....Continued on page 3

Minutes...Continued from page 2

to cope with the new compression module.

PC-Tools: This venerable software developer has been bought by Symantec.

Borland: They lost $70 million last quarter. dBase 4 for Windows now sells for under $100. With such a drop in earnings, the sale of Quattro to Novell along with a million copies of Paradox, the future doesn't look well for Borland .

DELL monitors: Dell has recalled 63,000 monitors because there were 32 reports of them overheating and catching fire. The monitor being recalled is the DL-1460N1, a 14" SVGA, sold during 1992-93. These were sold through Sam's, Cosco, and CompUSA. Dell will arrange for pickup and replacement free of charge. For further information, call (800) 913-3355.

CD-ROM: There is a facility in the USF area that will put your pictures on CDs. In fact, anything you want can be put on CDs; text, instruction manuals, graphics, etc.. Cost depends on a number of factors and there is a marked difference in price if the pictures are negatives or positives.

PRESENTATION — Internet

George Pilat of Intelligence Network Online gave an excellent discourse on Internet; its origins, uses, and the role of his company in using Internet. The fact that Mr. Pilat spoke for ninety minutes extemporaneously and gave a logical step-by-step presentation of a complex process, speaks volumes for the depth of his knowledge about on-line retrieval systems.

Internet:

In the early 70s it was a net work of DOD computers (Advanced Research Projects Agency - ARPANET) to establish a communication network in the event of a nuclear war. During the late 70s, other networks were created initially serving universities and later, commercial organizations. The research portion of ARPANET was replaced by the National Science Foundation (NSFNET). Elsewhere, international networks were being established and they tied in to each other and to United States networks. Today, nternet is the fastest growing network in the world with over 2 million computers and over 20 million users. The primary tools are:

E-Mail: Basically, a message handling service. E-mail is often faster and cheaper than conventional mail

Newsgroups: There are about 7,500 to choose from. While each group is centered on one topic or theme, overall, topics cover everything from A to Z. Many of the people in these groups are subject matter experts. Ask for help and you'll get expert help.

Gopher: A search tool that helps in locating a certain body of information. The material can be read on-line or downloaded to your computer.

Telnet: An Internet facility that allows logging onto another computer; faster than modem dialing.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol): Allows the downloading of files from any other computer on Internet.

IRC (Internet Relay Chat): Interactive discussion groups where several people can talk/listen at the same time. There are over 1,000 channels/groups available. A private TALK mode is available.

The Internet is funded through federal grants. Access to the Internet by the lay public is possible through some BBSes and commercial servers such as IntNet Online, Compuserve, Delphi, etc..

IntNetOnline:

Intelligence Network Online, Inc., offers a variety of services; access to Internet being one of them. These services are offered through a high end UNIX platform with over 20 GB of online storage. At present, all modem lines are 14.4 (and downward) and 28s will soon be installed. The available account styles are:

Shell Dial Up: Normal dial in PC running through their computer. Shell uses command line prompts, no graphic interface. Uses "pine" program to handle E-mail. Cost is $29/month with a one time $29 setup fee. There are no hourly charges, usage time is unlimited. A tutorial diskette is furnished to all new users.

Dial Up PPP: Point to Point Protocol allows you to be registered with your own location. In effect, you have your own Internet set (like a mini server). Can use Mosaic, a public domain graphical interface, to navigate through the system.

Dedicated PPP (SLIP): Serial Link Internet Protocol. Once logged in, you are on 24 hrs/day, the line never goes down. E-mail is instant. Can have friends log in on your computer and they can use your machine to access Internet.

Dedicated Line: Offers 56 kb speed (commercial speed). Commonly used where like 30 people are online. Uses the frame relay service of GTE. This service is being offered within the six county area of Tampa (Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota and Manatee). The frame is for 24 hrs/day and 56 kb servers are installed at each of the nodes. T1: 1.45 MB speed or the equivalent of 24 56kb channesl as an entity.

For further information, call (813) 442-0114.

Thanks to the generosity of our vendor friends, we have the following winners:

Will Goble - Simply Money
Gene Wade - CorelDraw V4

After a few general questions/answers, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Internet

I hope everyone got at least a basic idea about Internet, the global information superhighway, at our last meeting. I hope to schedule a live Internet presentation later this year. As many of you probably noted, a whole new language filled with acronyms and buzzword is used to relate to the navigation and use of the information superhighway. While these terms are new to us they have in fact been around for quite a long time. Of course you all heard the CIA acronym used along with the word LAOS during the presentation. I hope that everyone realized that those are not Internet words. I am not sure how the presentation diverged into a discussion of the covert operations of the 70's. Anyway cybersurfing the highway can be rewarding once you have all the tools and have built up the experience. Only you can determine if this digital highway is for you. It is anticipated that the highway will have over 100 million users worldwide by 1998. Whether you just want to use the most basic piece, email, or have access to detailed information about anything, I would recommend you get your hands on one of the many books available from your local book store. I use The Instant Internet Guide by Brent Heslop & David Angell to clarify the proper netiquette and help me understand the highway.



BBS & CD ROM

Please note that a CD ROM drive has been added to the BBS which will provide access to additional online files available for download. We have a subscription that will provide us with a monthly CD containing files from the Association of Shareware Professionals.

July presentation will be a big bang!

This month's meeting will be presented by Broderbund. This will be the first time that six different products have been demonstrated during a general meeting. There should be a product for everybody. The products include:

Living Books - Interactive "electronic books" for children based on stories and books of proven literary value.

Kid Pix - Creativity tools that can be used to enhance studies across all curriculums.

3-D Home Architecture

Print Shop CD - Desktop publishing for greeting cards, signs, stationery, calendars, banners and more.

Myst - Surrealistic adventure game with 3-D photo-realistic graphics

Harpoon II - Naval game

Of course special user group offers and door prizes of Broderbund products will be made available.

Tampa Tribune moves onto information Superhighway

The Tampa Tribune, in conjunction with Prodigy, is in the process of starting a new service. *Tampa Bay Online*, an interactive local news and information service for personal computer users in the Bay area will begin operation in August. Imagine reading the daily paper online including photos, graphics and other miscellaneous information. Once again Bill Gates's vision, "Information at your fingertips" is taking another step forward. A paperless society is in the future and the Tribune is doing its part to speed up that process before we run out of trees. The presentation to our group of *Tampa Bay Online* by the Tribune has been tentatively scheduled for the August general meeting. I say tentative because this product debut by the Tribune to the general public, is scheduled for the day after our general meeting. If Murhpy's law interferes, during the days prior to the grand opening of this service, it could result in the postponement of the presentation to our group, until a later date.

We need your help

We need you to help our group. Bring a guest and get them to join our group. Pass out our flyers to your business associates or friends. Donate those computers and miscellaneous computer items sitting around your home or business. Our group can get bigger and better, but only if you help us. Remember we are now classified with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible. Check with your tax accountant for proper deduction filing.

Harvey Bruneau

Editorial Comment:

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I used PageMaker to publish the June *Bits of Blue*, which I received 3 days before the newsletter deadline. I struggled thru, with relatively few real problems, but it was evident to me that I needed some expert training in this powerful product. On June 28 and 29th I attended a PageMaker class from 9 to 4 at Learey Technical Center. The class at Learey was extremely beneficial to me, of course the fact that I had a teacher (Jennifer Spooner) with a thorough knowledge of the product, helped me immensely. Jennifer not only did an excellent job in teaching this product, she was very helpful to those in the class that were somewhat new to the whole windows environment. She kept the experienced students challenged and at the same time gave out valuable pointers to the beginners. I immediately came home and began putting the July *B.O.B* together utilizing all that I had learned in my class.

see **Editorial...** Continued on page 5

Editorial....Continued from page 4

For those of you interested in taking some computer classes either for personal or business reasons, Learey Technical Center has a printed brochure of the classes they are currently offering. The classes are very reasonable in price and I wish to share with you, our members, the following information concerning the school:

Learey Technical Center became official July 1, 1993. The Center is named in honor of Fred D. Learey, a former GTE Florida president during the 60s and a prominent business and civic leader for more than three decades. Because he initiated partnerships between business and education, the School Board dedicated the Center in his memory.

The Center provides training for business and industry in 4 areas: Industry Services, Health Industry Services, Public Service and Apprenticeship. The Industry Services Training Program consists of computer, supervision, and employee development training. The Computer Department instructs more than 16 software application in both DOS and Windows versions, including CorelDraw, DOS, Excel, Harvard Graphics, Lotus, Word, WordPerfect and Quicken.

Learey Technical Center sets the standard for employee training and development in the Tampa Bay Area serving business and industry since 1983 in the names of Industry Services Training Programs and Tampa Bay Evening Vocational Schools. Call Mary Ellen Beiletti at 231-1907 for program or class information.

I also owe a word of gratitude to one of our seasoned members, Ed Buzza, for some of his helpful Pagemaker hints and tips. Thanks Ed, I tried to use them all!

Marylee Bruneau

Software Review:
Automap Road Atlas for Windows
Automap Destination Europe

By: Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc

The *Automap Destination Europe* is an add-on to the must-have *Automap Road Atlas*, therefore the comments here treat them as one package.

Installation was a "no-brainer." Start Windows, pop in the first disk and tell Automap what directory you want it in *and* your name and company! This program has one of those irritating features where they insist on writing back to the floppy disk. Rule #1: Always do a diskcopy of the master disks and install from the work/archive copies. This program gets tiffy if the first (install) disk is write protected. Another anomaly is that of the three disks (the Road Atlas set), two are high density and one is double density. And it has no "uninstall" option!



There is a great deal that the user can do to customize the program. Such options as the level of detail in showing names, route numbers, small cities, parks, points of interest, mountains, etc.. City icons and roadways can be customized to show different colors and sizes. Whether all cities and towns are named is up to the user. Caution: showing the names of ALL the towns can be time consuming on a slow PC and without an accelerated adaptor card.

Using the map zoom in/out feature of the program is very intuitive. A tape measure simile to measure straight line distances is a nice touch. Planning or marking a route can be as simple as clicking on the starting and ending points of the trip. Provision is made to avoid user defined routes, use only interstates, calculation of shortest and/or quickest routes, and whether to travel a preferred route. Another attractive feature is that at most city points, you can call for nearby points of interest--and it shows how far away they are. The program can print a report showing the itinerary with directions, mileage, and estimated times. Surprisingly, the calculated mileage is quite accurate. By adjusting certain variables, the calculated times are also very reliable.

On a scale of one to ten, this program is about a six. Writing to the install disk is very annoying and one questions the value of it when it can (and should) be installed from a work copy. Not having an "uninstall" option these days, is almost criminal. The biggest drawback is that there are *no* city maps! Not even a shaded outline to indicate city boundaries. Even when the scale is at maximum zoom (about a 9 mile area will fill the screen), there is no sense of the size of a city. And if all features are turned on (parks, names, route numbers, mountains, etc.), they are written on top of each other. There is no adjustment for these items in relation to map size. While fine at the maximum zoom level, it is very disconcerting at the state or national level. Further, it is only after opening the manual that one is told that many local roads will not be shown; only those that are part of the national road system.

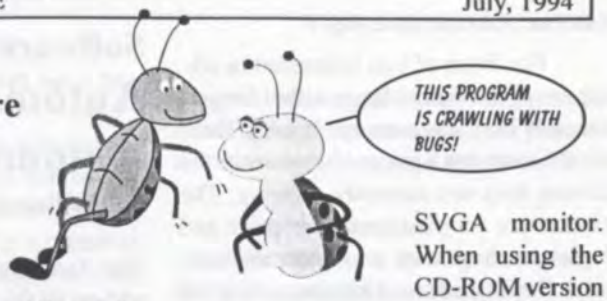
The master program needs about 5.5 MB of space on the hard drive and the add-on needs an additional 3 MB (the box says 1.5 MB, the install sheet says "at least 2 MB", but actual count shows over 2.4 MB--so figure on 3 MB). At least 2 MB of RAM is needed (4 MB is recommended), MS-Windows, ver 3.0, and using a mouse is highly recommended. The vendor is Automap, Inc., 1309 114th Ave. SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98004. The street price is around $60 for the master program and around $40 for the add-on.

Software Review:

Bug Adventure from Knowledge Adventure

CD-ROM MULTIMEDIA

Review By: Renate Marsh



Products that are fun and educational as BUG Adventure is, will give you and your children an interactive way to learn together what our world is all about. The Knowledge Adventure Family Series are created to be enjoyed by everyone within a family, class, or any other type of group of all ages. It says on the box of the program Bug Adventure that it is for the ages 3-8. What an assumption! I had as much fun as any child might have and just taking a walk through the program I learned more about insects and nature than in the last 10 years or since my school days.

Once Bug Adventure is installed and set up properly, one can easily move about the screen and choose any activities from the main menu. The pointer of the mouse is a little lady bug and while moving around the screen it opens up bubble balloons with notes of any of the activity that can be performed.

Bug Adventure has a bug reference index, guessing games, an animated picture storybook, a 3D viewer of the insects, a talking and picturized reference manual, and to top it all off - it also has a "BUG" movie theater. Whatever screen one is on, the bubble balloons give hints and directions and sometimes have a surprise ready for the viewer. The sounds and music of this program are delightful and enhance any action or picture to its' fullest; if you don't have a sound card as yet, Bug Adventure also runs without a sound, but you will be missing a lot. The notes in the balloons send you from one activity or information to the next. There is nothing to study or remember about how this program works. On the DC-ROM version the balloon notes can be read to the viewer. On the disk version the viewer still has to read all the directions and information, but either version gets the viewer from one place to another and back. Many objects on every screen open up a note balloon when the lady bug pointer moves over it to let the viewer know all the different direction to go to from that point on.

With the program comes a special 3D pair of glasses to examine and discover the visual effect of 3D insects, apparently trying to crawl out of the screen and onto the nose of the viewer.

Bug Adventure works either in DOS or Windows. Any big graphical program does better when installed in DOS. Though, this one came with a CD-ROM disk, the program still has to place quite a few files onto the hard drive. The DOS environment is less of a problem and always much faster, unless you have the newest of the new in computer technology.

The User Guide manual is only a 30 page book because the on screen help is fantastic and continuous. The control buttons on the bottom of the screen or the various exit buttons always get the viewer back to the main menu. A big stop sign is the "exit the program sign". Though, one section in the manual is a Learning Guide parents or teachers can use to help the children or students to learn while having fun playing with BUG Adventure. I see this program as an exploration into the BUG world for all the users - big and small. I learned so much just reviewing BUG Adventure for our club. Did you know that a moth might look like a butterfly? I always thought a moth is of grey or brown color. Did you know that there is a type of spiders that go fishing in the water? Well, the Honeycomb Theater in BUG Adventure has a movie that shows all the details about this performance, under water and above.

System requirements to run Bug Adventure: A 386 CPU is required, a 486 & up CPU is recommended. A color VGA or SVGA monitor. When using the CD-ROM version you need a drive that supports ISO 9660. Hard disk space: 9MB, for CD-ROM: 5MB hard drive space. RAM free: 520KB & up. A mouse is optional, but the program runs much smoother with one than using the keyboard alone. A sound device like Sound Blaster or compatible required for CD-ROM version, but optional for the program with disks installation. A printer is also optional but it will give you the opportunity to print all the Bug Adventure text files. Not only that, you can also capture the images and creating bit-mapped files (BMP) by using the <Ctrl-PrtScr> command. Make sure that you turn off any sound and music before you capture images. Once the bit-mapped file is created you can use many different graphic programs to retrieve and print these images.

The most common questions and problems are already answered in the back of the manual. Make sure you read those questions and answers before contacting the company, since many questions are explained and answered in details in that booklet.

The cost: CD-ROM version: $79.95 - disk version: $59.95. Contact Knowledge Adventure at:

4502 Dyer Street
La Crescenta, CA 91214
Order: 800 542-4240
Support: 818 542-4200

The reality of the images and movies of this Bug Adventure program will amaze every viewer. Have fun and at the same time learn about the secret creepy, crawly bug world which is all around us.

Software Review:

CROSSTIES for windows 3.1

by CrossTies Software "The Next Generation Information Manager"

Reviewed by: Nicholas Klak, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

The package this (PIM), personal information management software, came in was sizable and impressive. A slick fold-out carton, with a velcro snap, contained the software. A video tape with about eight minutes of instruction was included. The video tape was interesting but not very important to the understanding of the program. The video consisted of a CNN., Larry King look alike, complete with suspenders and a blue button down shirt, intoning the need for informational management in one package. The low toned voice ends the tape with the statement, "Crossties, the greatest thing since windows".

Crossties loads in through the Windows program manager. No surprises here. It does take longer to load that one might expect since the entire program is only on three high density disks. They can be duplicated so their is no problem about vault storage of the originals. The minimum machine needed is a 386 with four megs of ram. Eleven megs of hard disk space is necessary for the program to run. The program files are greatly compressed on the three original disks. This is version 1.0. That means that it has not been revised. As always we must be aware that new software has the possibility of "bugs". For all that warning, I saw no indication of faulty workmanship.



Crossties has three books that come with it. A quick reference booklet of fourteen pages gives an excellent and clear understanding of the menu and button bars. A second book of about one hundred pages called, "Getting Started", is the life saver for the user. It contains many well illustrated directions and relatively large print. A step by step tutorial is carefully and logically run through. The third book is the users guide. Another well illustrated text with good print. The material is covered in fifteen chapters and six appendix sections.

Upon starting the program you must choose between two data bases. A sample data base which contains the information for the tutorial and the standard data base which is used for entering the real information you wish to organize. I strongly suggest that you go through the tutorial several times. This is not the kind of program which is intuitive. There are logical sequences to steps taken but without several tries at the tutorial, they are not apparent.

The installation process goes through all the directories in your hard drive. These are all listed as programs which can be linked to or from. One of the differences of this program and other PIM's is that not only do you create a large data base of information on people and things within a community of interest, but you can also "link" people and documents within your database.

The tutorial begins with you as an office manager for the Southern Mutual Company of Dallas, TX. You have fifteen people who work for you as insurance agents and financial planners. Your boss is Debora Adams. You must use your database to schedule your day and rearrange appointments. The tutorial is well paced and not so long as to be tedious.

Importation of information from other PIM's is possible. Other PIM data supported are from Packrat, Ecco, Commence and Act. Data from dbase or as text files can also be accepted. I was able to import documents from Word Perfect and Microsoft Word . My favorite word processor, Microsoft Works, was not supported directly but I was able to import the text as an ascii text file. All documents can be linked to any information in the database and to any person. These documents, however, can not be edited. They are frozen in time when imported. Macros are able to be created. That is good news for all of us that like to have them. They can be recalled by a "button" which you add to you menu bar. The bad news on this is that to create the macro, you must write a short program. I have always struggled with the smallest of batch files. If you must have macros, be prepared to write several small lines with cryptic instructions. The manual gives complete instructions. Information can be transferred from one area to another without difficulty. This is accomplished through the editing commands of Cut and Paste. A screen automatically pops up to ask one more time,"Are you she you want to do this?"The flexibility of the appointment calendar was most impressive. Without typing you can change time, duration of meeting and dates. Everything is mouse and keyboard controlled. I preferred to use the mouse prompts but for those who are die-hard keyboarders, they will feel quite at home. The day timer schedule can be printed out in any size or origination including pocket size as small as 1" x 4".

The main activity that the program is designed to do is to manipulate a database which you have created, added to or imported. As mentioned earlier, Crossties imports data from other PIMS. You have your choice of setting up these projects for a group or an individual. I was able to go to several programs and copy items from them. The Crossties diamond symbol inserts itself in the menu bar of the activity and you click on it to link that item to your grouping. The ability to link fax information to various projects is stressed. Faxes may be sent or received and a special fax alert is displayed when you receive one. Email is also covered in detail. Crossties assumes this vehicle of sharing information is of great importance in the business world.

One aspect of the program which is mentioned but not promoted is its ability to facilitate multitasking. I was

see **Crossties**...Continued on page 8

Crossties....Continued from page 7

able to use Print Shop Deluxe for windows within Crossties. I could create and save a picture and then put it in a Crossties individual file. My Print Shop actually printed faster while it was within the Crossties mode than when it was only in Windows. This is the best multitasking program I have used. You can copy or cut what you want, click to another menu, select your destination and the paste it there. Programs may be included or deleted from the Crossties setup after the original installation. Either possibility has no effect on your Windows setup. Windows keeps its programs secure from the effects of this program. I opened up over six different operations at the same time and The program never faltered.

Crossties is a program which needs study and practice. The authors have written a complex and useful product. While it isn't intuitive, it is achievable. You will not run out of learning opportunities with this. The price is right. Computer City has it for $89.00. Other PIM'S are substantially higher. Technical support is available Monday through Friday 9:00A.M. through 5:00PM. C.S.T. A B.B.S. operated by them is also available. Unfortunately, No 800 number is given for either service.

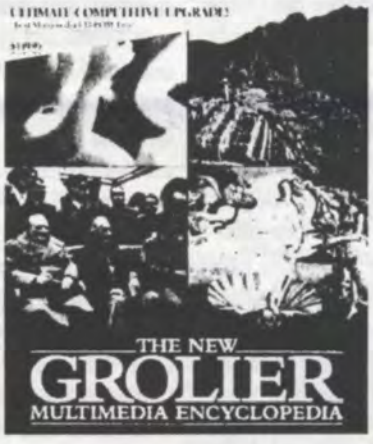
I recommend this product. It has to be learned. Those In the business world will find it less confusing than those who are not. It has great possibilities as a vehicle for multitasking. ❑❑❑❑

SOFTWARE REVIEW:

GROLIER -- MULTIMEDIA ENCYCLOPEDIA

Review by: Larry Anders, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

If you own an IBM-compatible PC, 386sx or better, with Windows 3.1 and don't have a CD-ROM drive - **GET ONE!** - because now you have a reason! **The New GROLIER Multimedia Encyclopedia (NGME) is the reason!**



You can now take an adventure or relive exciting historical events without ever leaving your computer. Just imagine being part of the Apollo 11 crew and watching the Eagle lunar module as it pulls away from Columbia on its way to the first moon landing or learn about human embryo development from a step-by-step animation and narration.

NGME has **MULTIMEDIA MAPS** that lead you on an animated journey through time and make it easy to view individual historical events.

KNOWLEDGE EXPLORER has audio-visual essays that combine photos, music and narration to provide a comprehensive overview of such subjects as the human body, space exploration and the lands and people of Africa, to name a few.

MOVIES are included that feature motion video sequences of such memorable events as Lindberg's first transatlantic flight and Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream"speech.

Some of the narrated animated sequences offer clear explanations of such subjects as aircraft technology, weather and the solar system.

A **TIMELINE** is included that enables you to travel along a continuum of time - from prehistory to the present - stopping along the way to learn more about important periods, dates, topic and events.

There is a **KNOWLEDGE TREE** that makes it easy to narrow broad searches into specific areas of interest.

Included on the CD-ROM are all 21 volumes of the *Academic American Encyclopedia* containing over 33,000 articles on a wide variety of subjects, including Science, World History, Music, Art, thousands of pictures, high-quality sound, full color maps, fully updated encyclopedia text and much, much more. And all this for under $100 street price.

Any of this information that you would like to use can be copied into any Microsoft Windows-compatible word processor, manipulated to your heart's content, and then printed out.

Along with the previously mentioned requirements a VGA color card and monitor is required but SVGA is recommended. A Microsoft Windows-compatible sound card and drivers are required for audio. Hard disk with at least 1.5 MB of free space, 4 MB of RAM and mouse. The CD-ROM must be MPC-compliant (150 KB/sec sustained throughput) for optimal playback of movies and animators. For printing, a Microsoft Windows-compatible printer is required. There is also a network version available.

Installation is straight-forward like any Windows based program by just using the **R**un command for the **F**ile menu.

I own four other CD-ROM based encyclopedia programs and none of them come close to the **NEW GROLIER MULTIMEDIA ENCYCLOPEDIA**. But don't just take my word for it. Ask my daughter in high school, or my other daughter in college, or my wife who is a teacher, or MACWORLD, InfoWorld, Compute, PCWorld and BYTE magazines. They all rate it very high.

So do I! ❑❑❑❑

User's Corner

USER'S TIPS

DOOMSDAY KIT - A Bootable Diskette. Every PC owner should have a "Doomsday Kit." It should have a bootable disk for the A: drive. It's a good idea to put instructions for the use of the disk in a README text file on the disk. And know where to find the neces-sary manuals for the files on that disk. To create a bootable disk, put a blank disk in the A: drive and enter the following: FORMAT A:\ /S /F:nnn where /S tells DOS to put the system files (MSDOS or IBMDOS, IO or IBMBIO) and COMMAND.COM on the diskette. The /F switch tells DOS how to format the disk and "nnn" states the capacity of the disk (360, 720, 1.2, or 1.44).

COMMAND.COM (DOS V6.2) itself holds the "internal" commands:

BREAK CD CHCP CHDIR CLS COPY CTTY DATE DEL DIR ERASE EXIT LH LOADHIGH MD MKDIR PATH PROMPT REM REN RENAME RMDIR SET TIME TRUENAME TYPE VER VERIFY VOL CALL ECHO EXIST FOR GOTO IF PAUSE SHIFT ERRORLEVEL

For a basic kit, copy onto the bootable diskette the follow-ing DOS files: BACKUP, CHKDSK, FDISK, FORMAT, MEM, RESTORE, UNDELETE, UNFORMAT, and XCOPY. Also rec-ommended is LIST.COM, a file viewer and manager utility writ-ten by Vernon D. Buerg.

- ASCII Text Editor. An ASCII editor belongs with these files. Copy the EDIT and QBASIC files if nothing else is available. There are smaller size edit programs that will suffice for creating batch and configuration files. Consider QEDIT, TED, or even EDLIN.

- Backup/Restore. Also copy BACKUP and RESTORE from the DOS directory if these were used to create backups. If a third party backup program is used, a copy of that program should be part of the kit.

- CMOS. Last, a program(s) that will save and restore the CMOS (Complementary Metal-Oxide Semiconductor) settings which hold basic data about the computer. If nothing else, call up the settings on the monitor and write them down. With the Phoenix chip, Ctrl-Alt-Esc will show the settings. Check the instruction manual for your computer. DO NOT make any changes unless you know what you are doing! Read the instructions on the screen or in the manual; just look, record, and exit. PC-Tools (Central Point Software) has utilities that can save and restore CMOS. There are other programs available includ-ing CMOS13.ZIP, a shareware utility on BitsoBlu BBS.

Windows 3.1 - Help. You can create your own help screens. Bring up any application and click on the Help Menu. In the Help window, select the item you want to add notes to, click on Edit, then on Annotate. Enter whatever notes you want to record for that particular Help item, Save, Exit. Windows will place a paper clip icon on that help screen as a reminder that you have your own help notes for that subject. You can also print or save-to-file any of the Help topics. Just click File, Print; or choose Edit, Copy to clipboard, Paste to a document and save the file.

WordPerfect - File Bloat. Have you ever noticed that some of your text files are larger than they should be? That you have about 2k of text but the file size is over 6k? WordPerfect puts a file header or prefix at the front of every file saved in its own format. That prefix contains information about the file, the printer being used, the fonts, etc.. One of the things contribut-ing to file bloat are deleted fonts. Every time you change a font, data is added to the prefix. If you delete a font, the corresponding prefix data is not deleted! And if scalable fonts are being used, about 2-3,000 bytes are added. Of course, you can save your text files in ASCII format if all you want is the raw data. i.e. No formatting codes. There is a better way. At a blank document screen, enter a single space then retrieve the bloated file. The "junk" is stripped from the file because the codes in the new document govern the retrieved information. Now save the file and there should be a reduction in file size. There is one caveat, if you changed fonts without deleting the old font codes, the old codes will be carried to the new prefix. So before retrieving into the "blank, one space" docu-ment, delete any unused font changes in the old file.

BUGGY SOFTWARE. More and more it seems, new versions of software have more bugs than ever before. The old saying "Never buy version 1.0 of *anything*" is truer today than it ever was.

Before installing a new program:

Run CHKDSK to guard against lost clusters or cross linked files.

Run a defragger to clean up the hard drive.

Copy AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS to another directory or to a floppy diskette.

For Window applications:

Use INCTRL (it's on our BBS).

Backup Windows to tape, another directory, or to floppy disks. At least save WIN.INI, PROGMAN.INI, SYSTEM.INI, CONTROL.INI, MAIN.GRP, and STARTUP.GRP in another directory or to a floppy diskette.

Make backup/work copies of the master disks.

Install the new program using the backup disks.

Run the new program to see if it works!

Run CHKDSK to see if anything was messed up during the installation.

Compare/check for any alterations to AUTOEXEC.BAT or CONFIG.SYS, especially the PATH command. Do the same for the Window .INI and .GRP files mentioned above.

Ed Buzza.....

SOFTWARE REVIEW:

Quicken for Windows Version 3

The Personal Financial Manager

Review by.....Don Meng, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Required: 100% compatible (or IBM), 2MB RAM, Windows 3.1 running in Standard or Enhanced mode, at least 5MB space on hard drive, Windows supported monitor and printer. Test installation: 386, 20 mhz, 5MB RAM, Windows 3.1 Enhanced, 100 MB space available. HP 4 laser jet.

When I got the opportunity to review Quicken for Windows several reasons popped up. For years I had not used any of the accounting packages because I kept all my own records on spreadsheets. And I would never use a program to write checks! But I have seen a couple of people who do it, and more, not only just writing checks and balancing their statements, but paying electronically, running three or four check books, reconciling the whole works in minutes, keeping their investments, etc.



In addition, I am involved in SeniorNet, a computer training program for people over 55 years of age, and one of the highest demands was for a course in Home Financial Management using Quicken. So starting this fall we are going to offer a course and it would be good if I knew the program.

And finally, earlier this year, my wife asked me to make a list of where all our accounts are. After showing her how to get into QPRO, I gave up. Quicken is the solution for us!!

Obviously I started from scratch, so it was a simple installation. I had read the start up manual and a great deal of the User's manual. Both easy to read and very clear, including warnings to avoid TSR's when loading. So I had to disable my automatic virus checker and special screen saver. Got everybody out of the house and sat down at 8:15, copied the 2 3.5" disks for backup purposes. (I always use backup disks for installation.) Ready to go at 8:30 and by 9:00 was completely installed and ready to follow the CUSTOM install - Quicken belongs in my Applications directory.

Choosing to load the hardest book first, I loaded my checkbook starting on January 1, 1994. After one month, I began to see why the wife would have a difficult time if I was not here - my handwriting is almost unreadable!

But I made it and by 10:30 I finished up book #1. This is probably the easiest program I have ever loaded. There are so many cues, hints and suggestions you almost can't go wrong. Every once in a while a Qcard would pop up and they are great. Context sensitive help right while you are working. Let's look at only a few of the best parts, loading the check register.

Date: today's date was there. Click the icon and the months calendar show. click left arrow five times and you are in January, click on the 1 and go. If your transaction is on the 4th, press the plus key 3 times and it is there. Press the Tab key to go to Num.

Num: Enter the check number & press the Tab key. (But what if it is a deposit? Anything but a number brings a drop down menu. Since I make quite a few errors I typed ERR. And BEHOLD!!! the next time I had to enter an error, I type an e and the program automatically typed ERR! this trick works for DEP(deposit), TXFR [transfer], etc. It is beautiful.) Tab key again.

Payee: Enter the payee and press Tab. You go to the Payment column. (The next time you pay this payee, you get a suggested name: for instance type A, the program suggests the last payee, such as American Express. Since I also pay Anthem Insurance, that pops up when I enter An.) Press Tab

Payment: Since Anthem Insurance payment is the same every month, the suggested payment was there the second time I paid and all I had to do was press the Tab key to go on. (If this transaction was a deposit or credit error, the cursor went automatically to the Deposit column.)

Deposit: Since my Social Security is the same every month, this box has the suggested deposit. Press Tab.

Payee: {again} There is a memo field for describing the transaction. File it in and Press Tab.

Payee: {again} There is a category field - you MUST make an entry in this field.

[This is the place where you should spend most of your study time before starting. If you have a category of expenses or income which is not standard, you can add them as you load your data. For example, I make so many errors that I set up a category called Adjust-ments. If you plan this carefully your charts and graphs later on will be much clearer.]

After you check all the data in that transaction, click the Record button and you go to the next record. It is as simple as that.

Then I started checking through all the options, writing a check, charts, graphs - every button on the screen. You ought to see how much the "Utility" category takes out of your assets. You get a pie chart in default and if you use the Utility category for

See **Quicken**...Continued on page 11

Quicken ...Continued from page 10

sewer, water, electricity, telephone, the pie chart shows it very clearly. Quicken almost makes spending money fun. I guess it would if I had a large amount of dollars left to put in savings after paying all bills. And when I next reconcile with the bank, I am going to be able to read what I wrote and I'll bet I balance a lot quicker.

Since we run three checking accounts, the next step is to enter them and tie them all together. Then, this is so simple, I am going to enter all the data on my credit cards, categorize all the charges and then combine all expenditures to find out where the money goes, besides out.

For the future, I expect to start using the electronic payment feature, and also budgeting. The budget procedure looks powerful, and since I now control my own escrow accounts for the house, that will be a help. Also I will add investment accounting, a personal balance sheet, and by the end of the year my wife will be able to understand where we are and what to do if I am not here to help her. Quicken to the rescue!!

The Billminder facility will help her more than anything else. You can set the program up to remind you that you have a payment to make today as soon as you turn on your computer, or when you start Windows, etc. And if you have gone on vacation, when you come back it will tell you everything you were supposed to have done, until you acknowledge every transaction reminder.

The capability I will use the least is the Reports section. I ran a few of them, and if I was running a business, I certainly would use them. Loan handling used to be a big one which would have been a boon - you know, helping your kids get a house, major improvements, cars, etc. It is simple to set up and track loans and the reports are very useful.

Quicken for Windows Version 3 is the most user friendly software I have seen or used. If it's friendly features have been there for years I can see where the big software firms are getting some of their ideas.

Installation: Extremely easy, the software was write protected but not copy protected. It alerts you if you do not following instructions, and permits a custom installation. You control the whole thing.[My autoexec.bat file is always Read Only and this did not hurt the installation.]

Documentation: I rate the documentation at 9.5 out of 10, 10 being the best. The 'Getting Started Guide' is easy to read [If a person has installed Windows, this is a simple but clear book, well written. I only had to mark the book in three places: 1. Where they warned you about TSR's and the need to remove them during installation. 2. If you had an earlier version or the DOS version, watch out for the file conversion. & 3. On page 18 where the 'First Time Setup' screen appears with the caption: The only time you'll see this window is the first time you start Quicken. Warnings like that upset me because I don't like to reinstall. But later in the book you find out you can correct for that problem.

If you register, you get FREE, Unlimited Technical support. Since I could not register this edition, and since I had no trouble, I did not test the Tech Support. The pc magazines do that well and Quicken comes out good. The registration card is obnoxiously place in the front of the 'User's Guide.' There is a 4 page section telling you how to avoid calling Intuit, extolling the virtues of all the help available in the program and the manuals. The last page clearly lists all the ways to get them if you do need them.

You get sample checks, envelopes, a catalog of their supplies, a savings certificate for $30 for TurboTax for Windows, and an intro to Checkfree electronic payments.

I plan to use Quicken, with Checkfree, recommend it for anyone for their personal finances and look forward to our classes at SeniorNet.

Intuit, Inc., P.O.Box 3014, Menlo Park CA 94026, 1-800-624-8742

Street price: Under $50

MISPLACED HUMOR:

Here are some signs and notices written in English that were discovered throughout the world. You have to give the writers an "E" for Effort.

Advertisement for donkey ride in Thailand: Ride on your own ass.

In a Copenhagen airline ticket office: We take your bags and send them in all directions.

On the door of a Moscow hotel room: If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it

In a Norwegian cocktail lounge: Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar.

In a Budapest zoo: Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty.

In an Acapulco hotel: The manager has personally passed all the water served here.

In a Tokyo shop: Our nylons cost more than common, but you'll find they are best in the long run.

From a Japanese information booklet about using a hotel air conditioner: Cooles and Heates: If you want just condition of warm in your room, please control yourself.

From a brochure of a car rental firm in Tokyo: When a passenger of foot heave in sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage then tootle him with vigor.

Partial reprint, thanks to the 12/93 KCA Computer Group Newsletter.

FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Software Review
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Staples
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild (Software Dist.)
- Realtron

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- GeoWorks
- Lotus Corp.
- Microsoft
- Software Publishing
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Earl Echon

Sonny Mester

George Walters

John W. Yore

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2

SOFTWARE REVIEW:

QmodemPro for Windows v1.10

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

The unknown is always scary. Faxing was an unknown till I got a fax/modem, but even with the capabilities at my finger tips, I balked at trying something so different. Then I found a local office depot that would receive faxes for five cents, so I could punch out faxes and let someone else stay on-line to catch the replies. The software that came with the modem, QuickLink II FAX, was functional, but limited.

I've become a fan of multitasking (as well as Windows can do it anyway) and had recently tried a Windows terminal program called Excalibur. Excalibur was very impressive, multitasked well when downloading files, but when I tried to call a Bulletin Board System (BBS) that had Fidonet, the program couldn't handle typing ESC twice to start the BBS software. Fidonet is one of my favorite BBS activities, so Excalibur went to the cyber space dungeon. Then along comes QmodemPro for Windows, a white knight, from Mustang Software, makers of QmodemPro for DOS and Wildcat BBS software. QmodemPro for Windows focus is making communication with computers, whether between computers, with BBSs, or sending and receiving FAX, fast, easy and interesting.

Features: Several local BBSs support RIP (Remote Imaging Protocol from TeleGraphix), including our own Bits of Blue. To use RIP with QmodemPro for Windows all it takes is a few clicks of the mouse to select it as an emulation for each RIP supporting BBS or as the default to have it available for all sessions. There is also a generous helping of other terminal emulations available to choose, from ADDS VP60 to Wyse 185.

The package includes both 3.5 and 5.25 high density floppy disks, and installation went well, except the last question asks about using a fax driver as the default printer. The question wasn't mentioned in the documentation, but either way, if your choice is not acceptable the driver is easy to change. Choosing the fax
driver gives you the benefit of being able to send faxes directly from any Windows application. At the end of the installation Last Minute Changes pops up for your perusal.

QmodemPro for Windows has a built in GIF viewer for working with GIF and BMP graphics files and it supports sound cards. This means you can assign WAV sound files to specific events during your QmodemPro session. Six basic WAV files come in the package, or use your own to personalize events. "Reestablish communication," starts my session with QmodemPro and a big bell sounds when a download completes. These two WAV files did not come with the package, but they were easy to add to the events sound list.

*"Especially made for BBS users, **QmodemPro** for Windows can help you get the most out of your modem."*

Another cool feature of QmodemPro for Windows is the ability to review information in the scrollback buffer at the click of the mouse. This is handy if you forget to start a log file and want to see what's happened recently in your session - while on-line or after you hangup.

If you would like to host other callers, QmodemPro for Windows can set up a mini BBS using the Host mode capabilities to handle messages, files and pages.

Documentation: Each manual (there are two: Users Guide and Script Guide) has a colorful graphic design on the cover and the insides are well done too. Easy to read type fonts, lots of illustrations and even a philosophical quote at the beginning of each chapter.

Support: The technical folks at Mustang can be reached in quite a variety of ways: by phone, fax, mail, CompuServe, GEnie, and America Online. A one month free subscription to CompuServe is included with QmodemPro for Windows.

Test Results: Scripts, scripts, scripts. I'd heard of them and even seen them in action, now I have a couple that work too. With a single click the modem will dial Bits of Blue BBS, log on, go to the TQM door, download a packet and log off. And its so fast! The script language SLIQ (Script Language Interface for QmodemPro) is based on BASIC (Quick Basic by Microsoft). It is so comprehensive you could probably write a script to get the kids off to school each morning. There is also a Quicklearn feature for creating scripts without learning the language and a compiler, debugger, and editor. The script for QmodemPro for Windows is a little different from QmodemPro for DOS, so if you are making the switch or are new to scripts, read up on the differences or definitions.

Up/down loading in the background is really handy (right now a 328KB file is uploading while I type this), especially if you connect to a 2400 baud modem and are transferring a large file. The one working in the background now will take about 19 minutes to complete. Meanwhile I can tell you about a few more neat features of QmodemPro for Windows, like collating copies. If you have several different pages to print and need more than one of each page and would like them collated, QmodemPro can do it. Instead of printing the number of copies for each page, you get sets, already collated. Is this great or what? The reference section of the User Manual is loaded with other neat stuff.

See **QModem-Pro...**Continued on page 14

QModem-Pro.. Continued from page 13

The default terminal window is set between an upper screen tool button bar and a lower screen macro button bar with spiffy design strips on each. This all protrudes into the terminal window space and when you call a BBS it displays 25 lines in a smaller than usual space. Squished characters result which are harder to read and tiring after a while. Removing the button bars and increasing the number of lines to be displayed improved the readability greatly.

Options: QmodemPro for Windows does not come with Off Line Express, an off line QWK mail reader, as QmodemPro for DOS does, but is available for $40 from Mustang.

Evaluation: This is an excellent product and I have no reservations about recommending it to anyone who needs a communications package they can grow into. Especially made for BBS users, QmodemPro for Windows can help you get the most out of your modem. Mustang has made their product usable, productive and full of neat features and details. An example of attention to details is found in the status window. While downloading a file the status window shows all the standard information plus it gives the Throughput and Efficiency of the transfer. Keep up the good work at Mustang Software!

System Requirements: 386 or better, 4 MB RAM, VGA or better graphics card and monitor, 5 MB available hard disk space, Microsoft Windows 3.1 or higher, standard or enhanced modes, Windows compatible mouse, COM1-COM4 or Digiboard with comm drivers, any internal or external modem. Network modems: LAN
modems via INT 14, NASI/NCSI using appropriate Windows comm drivers. Class 1 or Class 2 FAX/modem capabilities for handling faxes.

Cost and availability: Suggested retail price $99 through Mustang Software using the phone number below or at Software Etc. Publisher info: Sales (800) 999-9619 Mustang Software, Inc. Office (805) 873-2500 P.O. Box 2264, Bakersfield, CA 93303 BBS (805) 873-2400 FAX (805) 873-2599

SOFTWARE REVIEW:
Disk Optimizer for Windows, Version 2.00

Review By: Renate Marsh

What is a Disk Optimizer? Wy do I need it? How does it work? Where will it do any good?

What is it? Well, as much as you need to tune-up your car, your software and hard drive needs the same kind of care and tune-up. The Windows environment is a great invention but it does need maintenance after you used it (abused it as I do at times) for some times. Disk Optimizer is the cleaning crew that performs tasks when your computer is idle to repair damages to the disks layout. What is so incredible, this Disk Optimizer knows when your keyboard and mouse is idle and it jumps right into action to use this opportunity to do its work to defragment your hard drive in the Windows environment, to sort out the bits and pieces of your files and store them in a continues string, or to explain it better - to optimize your workspace the best way possible. This program is set up automatically in Windows, but if you feel like your DOS environment needs the same care and optimation, then you also have the possibility to go to your DOS prompt (C:>) and run Disk Optimizer for your DOS programs.

Why do I need it? As with your car, the daily wear and tear on your hard drive and Windows can slow down your operation within any of your programs, especially in Windows. Fragmentation of files is one of the greatest problem within your system. DOS and Windows do not care where they scatter your files while saving them. Worse, they take them apart and place part of them in one slot and another part into another slot. Just one file might be scattered around in more than a dozen slots, and it takes time to find all the parts to present them to you as the user in one piece. Your hard drive works overtime to complete this job. Installing Disk Optimizer makes it easier on your hard drive and gives you faster service.

How does it work? Besides many other services, the installed Disk Optimizer defragments your hard drive. It takes all the bits and pieces of one file, places the file in one spot up front of your hard drive, in one piece. The time savings are tremendous, since your system only has to search for one complete file to open it up for you. Your hard drive does not have to work overtime all the time to present any file to you or to run any program as smoothly as possible. The Windows Disk



Optimizer is especially fantastic since it will operate while your machine is idle and will stop its action when you continue to work on something in your programs and continue again where it left off to optimize you system.

Where will it do any good? I installed the Disk Optimizer on my Laptop. My desktop computer has Stacker installed and these two programs are not compatible at this time. The company SoftLogic Solution is working on this problem right now and will sent out an update. Also known conflicts and problems are with Norton Desktop, version 1.00; After Dark Screen Saver, and DOS 6.0. My laptop is running in DOS 6.0 and Windows 3.1 and I had no problems whatsoever. Though, I noticed something quite terrific. My hard disk was performing much faster than before I installed the Disk Optimizer and when I checked the sys-

See **Disk...** Continued on page 15

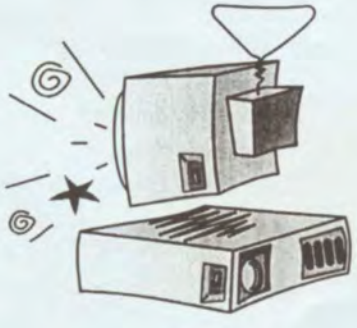
Disk... Continued from page 14

tem my files were in orderly fashion lined up in one piece each up front of my hard drive. What a beautiful sight!

The Help Files and the Manual of the program tell you how to set it up to have it automatically loaded when you turn on your computer. In the Windows environment you can forget about it being there. It will take care of your hard disk fragmentation automatically. In DOS you just need to type the command <OPTIMIZE> at the < C:>DOWIN > directory and a menu driven screen display will let you select the drive to optimize, and also let you choose different kind of actions. It is best to choose: Complete Disk Reorganization for the first time. You do have to make sure that no other programs are running at the same time, like any of your TSR programs or multitasking environments.

My hard drive on my Laptop is happy, cleaned up, and running at top speed. When I run Windows and any Windows program, I don't even need to think about it. Once a month, I will run Disk Optimizer in DOS and that will make me happy too.

System Requirements: Windows 3.1 running in 386 enhanced mode; 0.8MB (800,000 bytes) free space on your hard drive. Company: SoftLogic Solutions, Inc. One Perimeter Road Manchester, NH 03103 To order call: 1 800 272-9900 Technical Support call: 1 603 644-5555 FAX: 1 603 627-9610



CD-ROM REVIEW:
Clip Master Pro

Review by: Ed Buzza



The Key ClipMaster(c) Professional Image Library contains 5,001 images in .TIF (Tagged Image File Format - bit mapped graphics) format on a compact disk. All the images are black and white—no color. On this page are a couple of those images.

The name on the reference manual is shown as ClipMASTERPRO; all scrunched together with no spaces. The street price is around 21-23 dollars but I got my copy at the Office Depot in Brandon for $31.94 (tax included). One of our members got it for $23 at CompUSA.

For the price and the quality of the clipart, this is a *real* bargain. For the PC user who prepares newsletters, flyers, club bulletins, or just wants to dress up personal correspondence, this is almost a "must have."

None of the files are compressed. Installing the utilities is just a matter of creating directories and copying files from the CD-ROM. Utility programs are included for both the DOS and Window environments. Being an old dinoDOSarus, I use the DOS utilities.

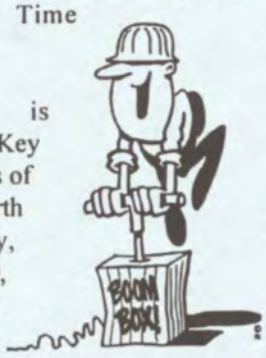
One of the programs lets you create a catalog of graphic files and lets you view that catalog. Within the directories on the CD-ROM are catalogs or "galleries" that show a low resolution thumbnail of the graphics. The same program shows information about the graphic such as pixel size, number of colors, creation date, etc.. The example shown here is 693 x 855 pixels and has a file size of 74,557 bytes. Using a 300 dpi/inch printer, you get a very sharp image if you size the graphic at a width of 2.3" with automatic height adjustment.

There was no problem in importing these graphics into Express Publisher, Word for Windows, WordPerfect 5.1 and 6.0 for DOS, and Publish-It. The clipart is categorized as: alphabets (fancy letters for drop caps); animals (gator included); business (comic and serious); cartoons (with a sweaty penguin); computer (30 pix); exercise (20 of these); fashion (over 350); travel (not bad); food (like that BLT); frames/borders (can be used as mortises); headings (advertisement style); health care (so-so); holidays/special events (over 500 from New Year to Christmas); miscellaneous (it really is); people (babies to grandparents); religion (from the bible to the torah); retail (sales logos and headlines); and sports/recreation (they're all here).

The DOS system requirements are: CD-ROM drive, MS CD-ROM extension version 2.10 or higher; DOS 3.0+, 286+ w/640k RAM, VGA video, 2MB of free memory, a hard drive, and an HP LaserJet compatible printer or an Epson compatible dot matrix printer. The Windows requirements are: Windows 3.1+, 286+, 4MB of free memory. Any Windows supported video adapters, monitors, and printer drivers. Mouse recommended.

There is also a CD-ROM version for the Macintosh (Classic, SE, IIcx w/4MB memory, a hard drive and a laser printer; System 7 and Color Quick Draw required and Quick Time recommended).

The product is marketed by SoftKey Software Products of Florida, 4800 North Federal Highway, 3rd FL, Building D, Boca Raton, FL 33431.



It's a blast man!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

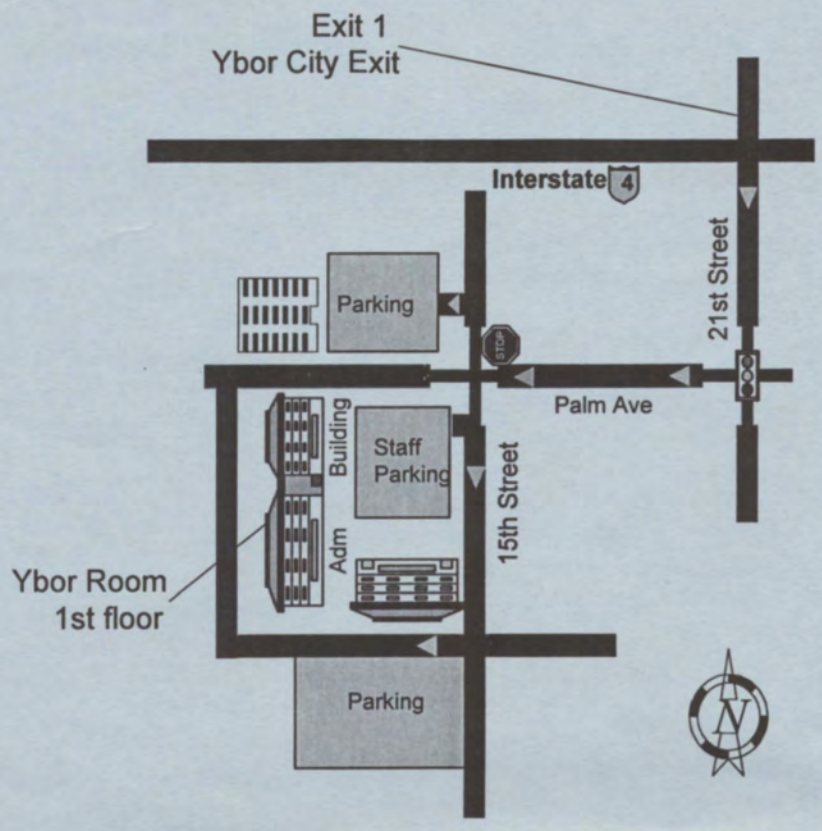
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Member

A Monthly Publication of the
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Bits of Blue

Vol. 7, No. 8 August, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: August 10th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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SPECIAL NOTICE: OS/2 SIG

is scheduled for Tuesday, August 23rd at 6:00 p.m. in room 436 on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall.

AUGUST 10th AGENDA

Tampa Tribune presents Tampa Bay Online

An interactive local news and information service to personal computer users in the Bay area. It will provide the entire local content of The Tampa Tribune daily -- including photos and graphics. Subscribers may obtain unlimited timely information about the Tampa Bay region and its resources.



Up Coming Presentations:

September 14 - **IBM - New Personal OS/2**

October 12 - **Gold Disk**

November 9 - **to be announced**

December 14 - **Broderbund - new products**

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

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VICE PRES : Al Poole 876-9445
TREASURER:Tom Cone 224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
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APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.



Secretary's Report

Minutes of 7/13/94 Meeting
By: Marylee Bruneau, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

The Secretary, Jim Clark, was not present for this meeting and an alternate secretary was not available to take written minutes.

AUGUST 13TH PRESENTATION:

Harvey announced the presentation that is scheduled for the August meeting is **Tampa Bay Online,** a new service being announced the day after our general meeting by the Tampa Tribune, to the Tampa Bay community. This should be an extremely interesting presentation and all are encouraged to attend the August meeting for a Sneak Preview of **Tampa Bay Online** before it is formally introduced to the general public.

PRESENTATION:

The presentation by Broderbund was cancelled at the last minute, and has been re-scheduled for December of this year. All members present were understanding and graciously filled in the meeting time with a very active Question and Answer session. The open discussions were holding the attention of the members. Comments by some of our members at the completion of the meeting indicated that this type of meeting is extremely beneficial for the group.

THE WINNER IS:

Alan Jankowski - Quicken for Windows
The Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Software Review
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Staples
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild (Software Dist.)
- Realtron

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- GeoWorks
- Lotus Corp.
- Microsoft
- Software Publishing
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

Book Review
PC first-Aid Kit

By: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

We expect PC's to live long and prosper, punching out letters, crunching numbers and helping teenagers with their homework. Anxious feelings grip our hearts when "Error: Invalid File Name" or worse "Current Drive Is No Longer Valid" flashes across the screen. Cosmic concern develops when we hit "Print" and it doesn't or we realize the deleted file was a .BAT instead of .BAK. Our choices are limited: the warranty expired yesterday, the toll-free service number has been disconnected, the dealer has moved to Oregon, and the manuals are . . . well, manuals.

Marty Jerome and Wendy Taylor, coauthors of The Streetwise Guide to PCs (Addison-Wesley), are Senior Editors at PC/Computing and have put together a paramedic's bag of tips in PC First-Aid Kit. This book and accompanying 3.5" disk of utilities, gives steps to try to cure your PC's illness yourself. It also covers when to get the patient into capable hands for repairs and when to break out the shovel.

Documentation: Chapters cover problems with the system, drives, printers, keyboard, mice, video, memory, Windows, DOS, and repair shops. If you'd like to learn more about a virus, there's a chapter on them too. Good reference material. The Appendix has information on editing CONFIG.SYS, AUTOEXEC.BAT, WIN.INI, and SYSTEM.INI and DOS commands (those that are helpful and those to avoid).

Software: The included software is an impressive line up of products from XTree, McAffee Associates, Dariana, Ontrack Computer Systems and TouchStone. The installation program dumps all the files for all the utilities into one directory and although this may not be a big deal to seasoned PC users, could be a bottle neck for novices trying to get their system back in order. The moral is: play with the utilities and get a feel for what they can do before trouble strikes. XTree Lite will help with file management, McAfee's VIRUSCAN can help keep out bugs (this one is shareware) and Sleuth can help analyze your system.

Evaluation: This is not a highly technical book, although plenty of details are included to help you understand how your PC works. PC First-Aid Kit is designed to help you analyze your problem, suggest a possible work around or fix and get you back to work as quickly as possible. I would especially recommend that first time PC buyers put PC First-Aid Kit on the shelf next to the computer manuals. PC First-Aid Kit will probably get more use.

Cost: $24.95. **Publisher info**: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, One Jacob Way, Reading, MA 01867

Book Review
WordPerfect 6 Power Tools

by Gordon McComb.

Reviewed by: Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Overall, the book is excellent. It is well written and is easy to read and understand. The material is presented in orderly and logical fashion which is commendable considering the subject matter of the book. While the reader may have a question or two at the beginning, they are answered further along in the reading.

Caution: This book is not for those who are brand new to WordPerfect. If you got your copy of WordPerfect just last week, read the reference manual first. This book does assume that you do have some working knowledge of WordPerfect 6 for DOS. At least, you should be able to create, save and retrieve documents. If you have some knowledge of writing macro instructions or of programming, you should have no trouble.

Writers of "how-to" books and of instruction manuals are mandated to write at the learning level of eighth grade school children. Yet this book maintains a fine balance by presenting twelveth grade material in words an eighth grader can readily understand. The author makes very good use of captured screen graphics and pull-outs which are of a great help to learning what is being taught.

A diskette (3.5" HD format) is furnished with the book. It unpacks into about 4 MB of files containing macros and templates. Many of the macros and templates are set up so that the user can customize them for personal use. While some power users and macro gurus may claim that some of the macros are "fluff" or "fillers" to pad out the collection, it should be understood that not everyone will use every one of the files presented. And they do serve to show how good macros are written to make word processing an easy task.

Chapter 17, Using Merges, is very, very good. It is one of the best parts of the book. It takes the reader by the hand and carefully walks through the process of building the necessary files and accomplishing the merge. Then the whole process is further simplified with the inclusion of various macros and templates that makes child's play of a rather awkward and difficult procedure.

The various parts of a macro instruction such as variables, macro commands, arrays, and logical structure are explained clearly and lucidly. Examples are given that you can key in and try with your data on your computer. Better yet, use the macros that are furnished. And while you're doing that, try out the templates for the calendars and the different types of letters ranging from fax cover sheets to resumes.May 21, 1994

The book suggests that you unpack the disk files into your regular WordPerfect directories on the hard drive. You may want to set up a different structure. Especially if you do not want to devote 4 MB of space for these files. And, more to the point, to make it easier to delete those files you do not want to keep permanently.

Perhaps a \BOOK directory with MACRO and \TMP subdirectories for the macros and templates. Then after reading the book and using the various macros and templates, transfer those you want to keep to your regular directories and delete the \BOOK directory along with the

Continued on page 4 see **WP Power...**

WP Power...Continued from page 3

subdirectories and files.

If you want to learn how to write macros for WordPerfect 6 for DOS, visit your favorite book store and get a copy of this book. It should be a required manual for the WordPerfect resource person on your staff or if you just want to write better and more advanced macros.

The book retails for $40 and is published by Random House, Electronic Publishing, 201 East 50th Street, 3rd Floor, New York NY 10022. ISBN 0-679-75156-4

Shareware Review

C

OM

Larry's MPILE of Files

By: Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

So you're looking for a real neat utility program for WINDOWS, well..... look no further. This month I've found BusinessCards for Windows v2.01.

What is BusinessCards? BusinessCards for Windows is a free form database program, useful for keeping track of any type of textual information. You can use BusinessCards to organize and manage any vital information, such as names, addresses, and phone numbers. Moreover, you may use BusinessCards to store random data, such as video or CD titles, short articles, descriptions of collection items, etc.

With BusinessCards/ you decide how to present and organize information: there are no predefined forms or record layouts. You may enter and store your data the way, that is most useful for you. Using BusinessCards Attachments feature, you also can easily keep track of any number of external files, associated with specific card. For example, you can just clip all your contracts or invoices to card with your clients address.

BusinessCards is easy to use software. It has friendly and convenient notebook-like user interface. I expect you will be amazed by how fast you can learn to use it effectively.

BusinessCards is compact - there are no requirements for megabytes of free disk space or extra memory. So if you are busy business traveler, you will be able to keep both program and data files on diskette and use them at clients site. Since BusinessCards directly reads and writes Windows Cardfile files, there should be minimum problems, converting your existing address or price database.

Specifically, with BusinessCards you can:

- Represent any unstructured textual data in a usual business card form.
- Scan your data quickly using easy to follow book-like interface and work with each card individually by selecting it.
- Access the most often used commands by clicking on appropriate toolbar button.
- View the table of contents for quick and easy navigating through entire BusinessCards file.
- Control the way your information is displayed by taking advantage of the fonts, colors and alignment styles available.
- Find exactly the information you require by using powerful Searching feature.

For experienced Windows users, BusinessCards for Windows also offers advanced features such as:

- Attachment feature, which allows to associate specific business card with any number of external files.
- Launching external applications from inside BusinessCards, passing a file name associated with a business card.
- Transferring data between the BusinessCards format and Windows Cardfile file format.
- Configurable toolbar, which allows you to assign any menu command to any toolbar button.
- User preferences feature, which enables to set up various user options and save them for the next BusinessCards session.

The program author, Michael Dvorkin, is a member of the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP). ASP wants to make sure that the shareware principle works for you.

Shareware is a distribution method, not a type of software. You should find software that suits your needs and pocketbook, whether it's commercial or Shareware. The Shareware system makes fitting your needs easier, because you can try before you buy. Shareware has the ultimate money-back guarantee -- if you do not use the product, you don't pay for it.

Registration is only $19.95. This is alot of program for 20 bucks!

Software Review
Back-It for Windows

by Gazelle

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

"Captain?"
"Yes, computer?"
"It's been a while since the data banks were backed up."
"How long?"
"Since the last Klingon attack."
"Hmm, can the crew still play Asteroids during the backup?"
"Yes, Captain."
"Good, nothing worse than an idle crew. Computer, commence backup of data banks."
"What data banks? . . . Ha, ha, just foolin'. Commencing backup."
"Scotty."
"Aye, Captain."
"Beam the computer to the center of the nearest star?"

Continued on page 5 see **Back-It**..

Back-It ...Continued from page 4

Backups. The most recent pile of floppies is dated 17 Dec 93. Why is that? Aren't backups fun? Don't I follow a strict backup schedule, so I can sleep at night? Right. Life and software get better with time. Gazelle Systems has a product that promises to backup data in the background (while in Windows) and has a scheduler, so we don't have to remember any more. Even with floppies? Let's try it out.

Major Features: Besides doing something productive while the backup is in progress, Back-It for Windows has Backup Preset Icons (more on this below), supports 2.88 floppies and viewing and choosing of individual files for backup. There are three levels of backup compression and support for a long list of tape and network devices (those that support standard DOS commands such as Novell or Netware). Specific kinds of files may be selected (EXE, DOC, WRI etc.), multiple volumes can be backed up within one session and Back-It for Windows is Back-It 4 (Gazelle's DOS backup program) compatible and unformated floppies are used on the fly.

Backup Presets: These are predefined sets of backup instructions and parameters that control the backup process. One for full and one for modified are included as examples. You can make up to 50 different presets and store each as icons and use by double clicking the icon. If you use the scheduler, they can be automatic. Painless backups, I love it!

Documentation: 126 page printed manual with lots of illustrations and both mouse and keyboard instructions.

Support: Gazelle offers a toll free tech support phone number . . . but when you call, you are given another regular long distance type number. Rats! They also have a BBS and can be reached through CompuServe and MCI Mail.

Test Results: Times quoted in the following paragraphs are used only as examples to illustrate comparisons in different methods of backup.

After deleting many files from the C drive, there were still more than I thought would fit on 45 floppies, so I went through the directories and tagged the most important files to backup. A curious thing happened while doing this: when using the up or down arrows to view the directory tree the folder icons would disappear. There would be a gap where the folder icons should be. Clicking where they should be brought them back. Using the elevator bar gave normal scrolling through the directories. Curious.

While the backup was in progress I brought up WordPerfect and there was no noticeable slow down in typing speed. Disk #3 is backing up right now as I type. If you are typing when it finishes a disk the disk drive stops and a message that the disk drive is available appears. While the backup pauses, you can use the drive for other tasks. Back-It for Windows doesn't automatically go back to your previous program. With WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, I had to move the mouse (using the arrows or typing other keys didn't work) to where I left off typing to start again. Ditto for QmodemPro, Back-It did not automatically return control to the foreground application.

Time for one 1.44 floppy: at maximum backup priority the time varied when nothing else was going on - 1:36 to 2:46. While typing in WordPerfect 2:59, while using File Manager: 2:59. This was surprising. I thought using the hard disk would slow the backup down, File Manager was a little slower. With the backup priority set to minimum and nothing else going on the time was 2:07 and went to 4:03 while using QmodemPro. The default for the backup was normal Error Correction, normal Verification, and super Compression. The Back-It icon lets you know how it is progressing, 32%, 55%, etc. 63 MB of files estimated to take 43 disks, but with the maximum compression, only took 33. I like it! On another test on 47 MB of data on a removable drive it speculated 32 disks and took 26.

Tape or removable media drives eliminate the disk swapping and make the backup totally in the background. Another test to backup 14.7 MB of data from a hard drive to an Iomega removable media drive took 3:50 and created a 9.3 MB file. This is definitely the way to go. A tape backup will be slightly different, but once going, will work away while you pursue other tasks. A caution: while doing a second backup to the Iomega I switched to Windows File Manager and checked the Iomega drive. This resulted in a smaller backup file, but the file got an error message when I tried to use it. Moral: don't access the drive being backed up.

Back-It Scheduler: Automatically added to WIN.INI at installation and is loaded when you crank up Windows. Set this baby up for daily, weekly, full, or just the modified files to date and let the computer do the remembering.

Restore: More trouble with the vanishing directory tree as the up and down arrows are used. Picked out one deleted file to restore from backup disk #1. The file was restored, but all the rest of the files on the disk scrolled through the viewing window and then Back-It asked for disk #2. Panic! Did it want to go through all 32 disks although 100% complete was showing on the screen? I expected it to copy the one file and be done, no extra checking needed please! I hit CANCEL and went back and tagged a file on disk #3. Same thing, Back-It requested disk #1, went through all the files, asked for #2, went through all the files, asked for #3, went through the files, restored the tagged file, asked for disk #4 . . . Some time could be saved by popping disk #3 in to start with. The Backup Report lists all the files and which disk they are on. Back-It can't figure out from its report which disk the file is on and ask for that disk. This may be a hard thing to do, but it would sure speed things up, especially if you have to use floppies for backups. The larger your backup files the more this could be a problem. Imagine backing up your 540 MB or 2-gigabyte hard drive and then needing a single file restored!

Restoring a file from the Iomega gave similar results. The files didn't flash by in the little window, but it did go through the backed up files and at :43 restored the file, at 1:52 the restore finished. The tagged file was less than 1 KB. Interesting. Also, the restored files were all from the DOS directory. When they were restored the first went into the correct directory, the second went into

Continued on page 6 See **Back-It**

Back-It ...Continued from page 5

\DOS\DOS and the third went into \DOS\DOS\DOS!

Evaluation: Using the floppy in the background method is disruptive to the train of thought, but with practice, can be mastered. The disruptions are worth while to be able to do something else besides waiting for the next beep to load the next disk. Back-It is easy to set up and use, I can live with the few quirks mentioned above. The only enhancement needed would be support of for OS/2's HPFS. I think Back-It for Windows is going in the right direction with user friendly backup software.

Ok, I've got my data backed up. Will you be able reconstruct your data after the next Klingon attack?

System Requirements: 286 or higher processor, Microsoft Windows 3.0 or later, One MB of free hard disk space for installation. Back-It will only run in either Standard or Enhanced modes.

Cost and availability: $65 from Gazelle. Hard to find in local stores.

Publisher info: Gazelle Systems, Inc., 305 North 500 West, Provo, Utah 840601 800-RUN-FAST or 801-377-1288 FAX: 801-373-6933

Software Review (DON'T WAIT TO CROSS THIS BRIDGE)

Review by: Larry Anders, Librarian Tampa P C Users Group, Inc.

I recently decided to get serious about another area of personal computing - SCANNING. For Christmas this past year I purchased an HP DeskJet color printer as a present our entire family could use. Now that I had the ability to print pretty color pictures and photos of our family it only seemed natural to me to trade my 256-gray scale hand scanner for a flatbed color scanner. So I started reading reviews on flatbed scanners. The HP ScanJet IIcx consistently came out on top in all areas except one...the IIcx did not include OCR (optical character recognition) software. Being I was more interested, at the time, in printing color images, I decided on the IIcx, but soon decided than an OCR program was next on my agenda. I remembered that while I was reading the reviews on scanners I kept noticing an advertisement for an OCR package from Xerox Imaging Systems called TextBridge™ OCR for Windows, version 2. Since Xerox has set the standard for copiers for years, name recognition was an obvious plus. Their advertisements compare TextBridge to the high priced packages, claiming that there is no reason to spend $500 or more for some of the professional OCR software when TextBridge can do the job for under $100. Well, I was game if Xerox was. I asked Xerox to put their product where their mouth was ...and they did! They sent me a copy to review.....So here goes!

TextBridge OCR for Windows is software that can convert scanned image data into text that can be recognized by a number of word processing, spreadsheets, databases and other text formats that run under Microsoft Windows, version 3.1, in enhanced mode only, with at least a 386 or higher processor, at least four megabytes of system memory (eight recommended), and DOS version 5.0 (or higher). Approximately 3.5 megabytes of hard disk space is also required. TextBridge will also run under IBM's OS/2 version 2.

TextBridge will recognize and convert scanned and on-line page images into text files that you can open, edit, reformat, republish or apply in any other way of your choosing.

A number of popular desktop and hand scanners are supported by TextBridge to convert recognized text into many popular text formats. P ractically any scanner that supports ISIS (Image and Scanner Interface Standard) or the TWAIN standard can be used to input hard copy documents into TextBridge, which takes the scanned images, performs OCR, converts the recognized text to the format of your choice and stores it as a file. Also, TextBridge can recognize and convert on-line page images stored in TIFF (Tagged Image File Format). These images typically come from fax modems.

SUPPORTED SCANNERS:

Apple OneScanner
Artec WalkScan
Canon Ix-12
Complete PC scanner
Ficus LEOscan 610
Ficus LEOscan 1210
Envision 6000
Envision 6100
Envision 8100
Epson ES3OOC(GT-4000 outside U.S.)
Epson ES6OOC(GT-6500 outside U.S.)
Epson ES8OOC(GT-8000 outside U.S.)
Fujitsu ScanPartner 10
Fujitsu M3096G
Fujitsu M3097G
HP ScanJet
HP ScanJet Plus
HP IIc
HP IIp
HP IIcx
Logitech ScanMan
Microtek MS-II
Microtek ScanMaker II
Microtek 600Z
Panasonic FX-RS307
Relisys Aries 1201
Tamarack 6000c
UMAX UC-630 scanner with GSII-PC car
XIS Datacopy GSplus
XIS Datacopy 730GS

SUPPORTED TEXT FORMATS

Application	File Extension
Ami Pro 3.0	.sam
Ami Pro 2.0	.sam
ASCII Standard	.txt
ASCII Smart	.txt
ASCII Stripped	.txt
dBaseIV	.dbf
DCA/RFT	.rft
DisplayWrite 5	.rft
FrameMaker	.mif
Interleaf	.wps
Lotus 1-2-3	.wk1
Excel for the Mac	.xls
Excel 3.0	.xls
Excel 4.0	.xls
RTF (Rich Text Format)	.rtf
RTF for the Macintosh	.rtf
Multimate Advantage	.doc
PostScript	.ps
Prof. Write 2.0	.doc
Prof. Write 2.2	.doc
Samna Word IV+	.sam
Windows Write	.wri
Word for Windows 2.0	.rtf
WordPerfect 4.2	.wpf
WordPerfect 5.1	.wpf
WordStar	.doc

TextBridge provides an easy-to-use interface and a powerful set of built-in capabilities. For example, the preview

Continued on page 7 See **Don't Cross**

Don't Cross...Continued from page 6

tool lets you view and zone portions of pages before OCR. The Verifier lets you interact with the OCR software to achieve the highest possible accuracy.

According to Xerox, TextBridge incorporates Xerox Imaging Systems' industry-leading document recognition software, and includes a number of technologies developed by Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), where modern computer interfaces originated. Consequently, TextBridge provides the most accurate OCR and format retention results on the widest range of documents, such as:

_ documents with point sizes ranging from 6-point to 72-point type in practically any typeface (TextBridge can reliaby recognize type smaller than 8-point nly from images scanned at 400 dots per inch resolution).

_ documents printed on typewriters, photo-typesetters, and impact, ink-jet, and laser printers

_ photocopied, degraded, or dirty documents

_ documents with single- or multiple-column layouts

_ documents containing halftones

_ on-line single- or multiple-page TIFF images from fax modems and other sources

_ hard-copy faxes

_ documents composed in English, French, Italian, German, or Spanish (TextBridge versions shipped in international markets can recognize an even greater number of languages).

TextBridge is designed to be easy to learn and use. However, if you need assistance, TextBridge provides a complete hypertext-based on-line Help system. In any of TextBridge's screens, you can select Help and display a Help window about that particular screen.

Installing TextBridge software is a two-phase process. First, you install the software files as you would any software under Windows by choosing Run from the File menu. Second, you run a scanner setup program to link TextBridge to your scanner's system-level or TWAIN source driver. After this you are ready to save hours of typing time.

(You can also use TextBridge without a scanner to recognize TIFF files produced by fax modems. TextBridge treats on-line TIFF image files as one or more scanned page images. TextBridge can process both single- and multiple-page TIFF files).

Unless you have an automatic document feeder you must run your native scan program before scanning each new page so that it can interface with TextBridge. (This is the ONLY negative feature of TextBridge I could find). Then choose scan and away you go. TextBridge allows you to preview the text before the final scan. During this stage you can create one or more zones to define the page area(s) to be processed, allowing you to resize, move, position, overlap or delete these zones. Once you are done previewing the page you are ready for the final scan and the OCR process.

One other option given by TextBridge is to verify and/or correct questionable words. When TextBridge encounters the first questionable word, it opens the Verify window, and displays the questionable word highlighted in a Word edit box and an image of this questionable word is highlighted for context. With the Verifier, you can move through the recognized text and accept or correct TextBridge's recognition decisions. Your input helps TextBridge improve recognition as the job progresses. On a multiple page document you generally only need to verify one or two pages, then end verification.

TextBridge has Auto Page orientation that automatically determines the orientation of a page, rotates it in memory if necessary, then begins the OCR process. TextBridge can also ignore Photos and Halftones and recognize multiple columns on a single page.

My favorite feature is the ability of TextBridge to run from within virtually any other Windows application. By running TextBridge Application Server prior to opening a Windows application such as a word processing or desktop publishing program, TextBridge OCR actually becomes a menu item under the File option. When scanning from within an application the recognized text conforms to that application's format and enters the application at the cursor's location.

TextBridge also has a way of recognizing certain proprietary fax images other than TIFF formats such as PCX, DCX, Corel, etc. TextBridge OCR Printer is designed to appear in Windows applications as just another target printer. By choosing TextBridge OCR Printer in the Print Setup option of File menu this enables you to "print" an image to a recognized and formatted text file, therefore allowing you to be able to recognize virtually any image format.

I was extremely impressed with TextBridge OCR for Windows. My deal with Xerox was that if I thought their advertising was correct, I would purchase their product. Well, I do believe there is truth in advertising, at least in this instance, so I purchased the software.....BUT.... Xerox offered it direct for $99 plus postage. I found it, by shopping around, for $81.95 shipped to my door. They kept their part of the bargain; I kept mine.

Bravo to Xerox Imaging Systems! This (text)Bridge is worth crossing!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Chuck Begian

Karlan Jankowski

Amanda Jankowski

Karen Jankowski

Alan Jankowski

John Telesmanick

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

SOFTWARE REVIEW
3-D BODY CD-ROM

From Knowledge Adventure Series

By: Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

The picture in this review might suggest that we have a Halloween program - but far from it. 3D-BODY is not at all associated with Halloween and not spooky at all, but quite amazing and fascinating. This program takes you on a journey through your body with fantastic detailed pictures, information, movies, great sound and voice. I used the word journey because you actually can take a tour through the heart and many other organs to see their mechanism and how they work.



How Knowledge Adventure put this program together I do not know, but they completed an amazing job producing 3D-BODY. It is sectioned off in four main subjects: Body Reference, Body Recall, Body Adventure Movies, and Emergency.

Body Reference: Here you have a main screen with a full size or torso part of a body which you can rotate with your mouse or the arrow keys on the keyboard. With the CD-ROM version like this one you can also use up and down movements of your mouse or arrow keys to see the body or torso at a certain depths level. Another small image frame is on the other side of the screen showing you detailed parts of the body. You can choose which detailed body part you want to see and get information from by simply clicking on any part of the main body. Every information or help is provided by you clicking on objects or moving your cursor around the screen until a balloon pops up with particulars. You can move from one body part to the next without getting lost. The 3D-BODY logo is always somewhere on the screen and clicking on it gets you back to the main menu. Believe me, this is very good to know. I clicked my mouse and jumped from one subject to the next. All of the sudden I realized that I have no idea how I got there and where I am. Though until now, I do believe, I only saw 1/10th of the whole Body Reference part, there is so much on that subject.

To side-track a little bit. This CD-ROM version of 3D-BODY has great music and all kind of other sounds (of course, you need to have a sound card). Any information on a specific subject or object will be read to you which my eyes appreciate very much. The disk version does not has the "read to you" capabilities and I consider that one of the best features of this program.

Body Recall: Here you can play guessing games (at least I did a lot of guessing). You try to match a body part picture with the description. If you get a match, you then can click on that image to get more information about that part of the body and another click returns you to your game. A total of three levels with six matches each can keep you occupied for quite some time. It is a lot of fun to play this game, so it is hard to let go.

Body Adventure Movies: Have you ever taken a drive through your heart? Here you can travel through several organs to experience the inside of our body system. The main menu in this theater gives you several image choices on the bottom of the screen, click on one of them and away you go. Your choices how to view any of the movies include the 3D feature and a pair (or two) of 3D glasses to use come with the program. You get the full impact of the 3D version if you sit at least a couple of feet away from your screen. This movie section is quite impressive, you want to watch them all.

Emergency: On the main menu you have a door you can go through and above it you see the sign Emergency. Once you wander through that door you are in a hospital type surrounding going crazy to get the hang of moving with your mouse along the hallways of the hospital. It takes some maneuvering until you get used to it. The first time I landed outside of the hospital looking at the city in the background and couldn't find my way back in. My friends, when driving with me in a car, always think my orientation is terrible, but this was pushing it a bit, getting lost in a hospital in a program on screen! Once I got the hang of it somewhat I did find the different types of emergency rooms. With images on the wall a scenario is set up for a type of an emergency. You click on any of those images to play the game and solve the problems of versified emergencies. Each room specialized in one type of organ or object. I have no doctors mind, I wasn't that good at it.

3D-BODY is supposed to be a program for the ages 7 to 12 (it says so on the box). But, as with all the other programs of the series Knowledge Adventure, all ages will enjoy this program and learn a lot while having fun.

With the CD-ROM version you need to use very little of your hard drive (2MB). A VGA monitor is a must though and a sound card brings the program alive with stereo music and sound. The CD-ROM version cost $69.95, disk version $49.95. 3D-BODY can be installed in DOS or Windows. With this program you do take an adventure journey through the anatomy and inner workings of the human body and having fun while doing it.

Knowledge Adventure, Inc.
4502 Dyer Street La Crescenta, CA 91214
Orders: 800 542-4240 Technical Support:
818 249-0212 Fax: 818 542-4205
BBS: 818 248-0166 (N,8,1)

Software Review:
QEdit 3.0 for OS/2

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

My introduction to QEdit came through our Sysop of the Bits of Blue BBS. Maintaining the board takes a lot of time and there are lots of text files that need constant editing. At the beginning of my learning sessions he would whiz through changes and even edit several files at once, flipping back and forth between files to compare differences. When I tried QEdit, it was a pain because the commands were foreign. I didn't like to keep asking Kevan what to use to mark a block or delete a line, so I continued to use MS DOS's Edit to make text changes. As time went by and I continued to watch and learn, it seemed that QEdit had more flexibility and was much faster to use than Edit, if I could only learn what keys

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to push. I downloaded QEdit 3.0C and started playing with it at home. It didn't take long to become converted.

Installation of QEdit for OS/2: QEdit for OS/2 comes with Qedit Advanced (for DOS) and the install program installs both versions (in separate directories). The installation takes less than 700KB. An interesting note here, MS DOS's Edit takes only 413 bytes of disk space while QEdit for OS/2 takes over 68KB and the Advanced edition takes about 54KB (the shareware version takes less than 53KB). The only thing is that DOS's Edit needs Qbasic to be able to run, and it weighs in at 194KB of disk space!

Major Features: The following was taken from the Fidonet Qedit echo (use the TQM door on our Bits of Blue BBS to get to see latest questions and answers on QEdit). George J. De Bruin, SemWare Technical Support, answers to the question, "What will it (QEdit 3.0) do for me that the older version will not do?"

* Contains a fully-integrated SPELL CHECKER that suggests spellings for misspelled words.
* Offers ENHANCED PRINTING OPTIONS including assignment of the print device, adjustable line spacing, line numbering, and more.
* Increases the MAXIMUM LINE LENGTH to 1000 characters, providing additional file editing capabilities.
* Features IMPROVED MACRO CAPABILITIES including an automatic startup macro, increased macro space, multiline macros, and more.
* Provides enhanced ASCII CHART capability, allowing you to directly insert the selected character into the text.
* Allows you to CONFIGURE THE DATE AND TIME FORMATS.
* Includes ADDITIONAL SORT OPTIONS for ascending, descending and case-insensitive sorts.
* Offers IMPROVED TAB HANDLING including variable tabs, smart tabs, and fixed tabs.
* Gives you the ability to display a PICKLIST OF SCRATCH BUFFERS to choose from.
* Allows you the option to show the HEX AND DECIMAL values of the current character on the StatusLine.
* All new 174 page manual, including documentation on QMAC, advanced macro writing tips and more.

To the question, "I am well pleased with the one that I am now using and would like to know the cost of updating to the newer version also, where to write for the update?" Mr. Bruin responded:

QEDIT ADVANCED v3.0
* Upgrade from previous version of any SemWare product - $19.95
* New copy - $59.00

QEDIT FOR OS/2 v3.0 (includes QEdit Advanced v3.0)
* Upgrade from previous version of QEdit for OS/2 - $19.95
* Upgrade from any other SemWare product - $35.00
* New copy - $79.00

QEDIT TSR v3.0 (includes QEdit Advanced v3.0)
* Upgrade from previous version of QEdit TSR - $19.95
* Upgrade from any other SemWare product - $49.95
* New copy - $99.00

SHIPPING
* US/Canada/Mexico - $5.00

Telephone: (USA ORDERS ONLY) (800) 467-3692 (9-5 ET,M-F)
Information, and outside the USA: (404) 641-9002 (9-5 ET,M-F)
FAX: (404) 640-6213
EMAIL:sales@semware.atl.ga.us
CompuServe: 75300,2710
BBS: (404) 641-8968 (type ORDER and follow the prompts) SemWare Corporation, 4343 Shallowford Rd, Suite C3A Marietta, GA 30062-5022

The above was pasted from another text file and edited using QEdit.

Test Drive Results: OS/2 has two built in editors: System Editor, suitable for text-only editing such as .CMD files, CONFIG.SYS or AUTOEXEC.BAT) and an Enhanced File Editor, suitable for files that require formatting and printing. The Enhanced File Editor wraps lines of text and inserts line breaks that can ruin CONFIG.SYS and other system files. With QEdit configured not to wrap long lines of text, it can edit any file and still give you formatting and printing capabilities. On the other hand, both OS/2 editors are mouse friendly. The mouse is still available while using QEdit for OS/2 for doing things on the OS/2 desktop, but not within QEdit itself. The keyboard commands can be faster than the mouse (after you learn a handful).

For example, if you need to move two lines of text to another location, move the cursor to the first line and hit HOME (if the cursor is not at the beginning of the line). ALT-A drops an Anchor to begin the block. Arrow down once, then hit END to go to the end of the line. Type another ALT-A, to end the block, and then move the cursor to where you want to move the two lines. Hit ALT-M, to Move the block, and ALT-U, to Unmark the block, and voila! The move is complete! Much time can be spent fiddling with CONFIG.SYS, AUTOEXEC.BAT or .INI files. This is where QEdit really shines. Moving between files and comparing things that work to things that just caused the computer to go into Limbo Land is a major time saver. I used QEdit exclusively to try to get a CD-ROM to work with OS/2. The OS/2 partition is HPFS (High Performance File System) and so DOS's Edit (on a FAT partition) couldn't get to the OS/2 CONFIG.SYS. When the OS/2 boot failed, I could use the OS/2 floppy startup and then use QEdit for OS/2 to continue the experimentation. Even OS/2's editors need the desktop to function, so QEdit was the best solution. QEdit windows are much quicker to set up for viewing multiple files than OS/2's E.EXE. I am really pleased with QEdit's speedy performance.

Evaluation: Using QEdit Advanced on the BBS is the only way to go. It's speed, flexibility and configurability save us lots of time. Sure, if all you need is something to look at yourCONFIG.SYS or AUTOEXEC.BAT once or twice a year when you add or delete software, then DOS's Edit will do fine. But, if Edit doesn't wave the flag for you, download QEDIT3C.ZIP (DOS version) and try it out. Be careful though, it could lead to a long and satisfying relationship. QEdit is so good I'm using it right now to type this review, it's so much faster than

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QEdit.. Continued from page 9
cranking up windowsand WordPerfect or another major word processing software. Qedit also works better on a small screen (like this 13" VGA). It doesn't do fonts or check grammar, but is a meat and hold the potatoes program. Once you know the commands and set up a few macros it will surprise you how much more you can to do in less time.

This may sound like an advertisement, but SemWare has taken the seemingly simple task of editing text files and produced a much more powerful tool than the editors that come with the operating systems software.

System Requirements:128 KB of RAM, OS/2 v2.0 or greater, one floppy drive, Color or monochrome monitor with 80-colomn display, 70 KB disk space (or 200 KB if the spell-checker dictionary is loaded).

Software Review:

DiskTop for Windows Version 1.0

CE Software, Inc.
Review by: James R. Hutton, Tampa PC User Group, Inc.

DiskTop for Windows simplifies working with files. In a Files window you see all files and sub-directories in a directory, view different directories, volumes or open more Files windows for more views. Anything in a Files window can be moved, copied, deleted or renamed.

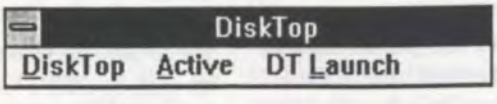
The software comes on one double density diskette. Before you install you must be running on an IBM PC or compatible with DOS 3.3 or greater. Running Windows 3.0 or greater with at least 640K of memory. The program only takes up 200K of hard drive space that is a little less than WINFILE (Windows File Manager) but with a lot more features.

Some of the features are the powerful way in which you can quickly and easily find files, programs, anything on your computer. Multiple search attributes lets you find items without having to remember their name, size, type or dates they were modified or created. View drives or directories of all items at once. DiskTop Sort feature lets you view files by name, size, date, type or kind. Move files quicker than copying and deleting. DT Launch sets up menu items that launch programs or files anytime, anywhere. DiskTop Extras allows access to most DiskTop features within the Open or Save dialog boxes.

The DiskTop window looks like all Windows programs. The program window has a title bar, and you can move the window anywhere on the screen by clicking on the title bar with the mouse and dragging. The menus are the central point for controlling DiskTop for Windows.

The DiskTop menu gives you many options to manage your files and your computer. Move, copy, delete, even find files and directories using DiskTop's advanced file's management features. If you are a long-time DOS user, you will be surprised by how easy DiskTop makes it to find files on your disk. It searches every directory on your hard disk as well as any mounted floppies and network disks with a single find request. More importantly, DiskTop makes it possible for you to work with the files as a group after you have found them. Using DiskTop's preference options you can even customize DiskTop to reflect your own personal requirements.

The Active menu allows you to either minimize or restore all the open applications as well as individually activate any applications already on the desktop. Use the Active menu to keep your desktop in order.



DiskTop is more that just a program to copy and moves files. You can add programs to DiskTop's Launch menu. Then whenever you want to open a program, you merely select its name from the menu. No more looking through the different groups in the Program Manager. DiskTop lets you attach documents to a program so that you can open the document, and its associated application, simply by selecting the document from the Launch menu. You also can create launch groups of applications that are launched at the same time when you select the name of the launch group from the menu. You can even make timed launch groups that automatically open at a predetermined time.

I recommend this program. It has a lot of great features with ease of use. It replaces the Windows file manager with not adding to the overhead.

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

Screenscapes - Transform your monitor with spectacular wall papers. - Vendor: Kiwi Software
Managing Your Money (DOS)- Complete Financial Software Program - Vendor: Meca Software
XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
FidelityOnLineExpress - Direct Line to Wall Street - Meca Software
WinWay Job Interview for Windows - Interview with confidence & win the Job. - WinWay Corp.
Watchman for Windows -Advance file protection management- Distant Markets
Pebble Beach Golf Links (Game - Course for Use with Links 386 Pro or Microsoft Golf)
WinSense - the Windows Optimizer
AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows
Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
Little Monstor at School - Interactive, Animated Stories for Children
Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing
The Discoverers - Knowledge Adventure CD-ROM works with DOS or Windows
Magic Theatre - Easy way for kids to create, narrate, and animate their own computer movies ages 6&up.

(Contact Marylee or Harvey @ 985-3338 if you are interested in doing a review article for the newsletter on any of the above software.)

ADOPT the Bits of Blue BBS !

The TPCUG Board. of Directors has announced a fund raising drive to benefit our Bulletin Board System. Here are the highlights:

WHY: Our Bulletin Board System (BBS) is one of the most popular and beneficial services our group provides to the membership. The recently completed membership survey indicated that the number one priority for the BBS is improving accessibility by adding a second phone line. A second phone line also means a second high speed modem. Running a close second is support for adding greater on-line file storage capabilities. Our BBS is running on a Gateway 486 that was anonomously donated to us. On-line hard disk storage is limited. In addition, the BBS monitor failed and had to be repaired. done. We have also recently added a CD-ROM drive, so that an entire library of shareware material is available. Both of these were funded from our Group's Treasury without any increase in dues.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Our budget does not have the funds required for a larger drive, a second modem, nor the costs of a second phone line, so we are asking for your help. This is a good opportunity to assist yourself and our group as a whole. We hope you will take advantage of it! If you approve and appreciate the BBS, don't applaud...send help in the form of a check! Thanks!

PURPOSE: To raise money specially earmarked for the BBS. Funds are needed to expand on-line hard disk storage, to purchase a second high speed modem, and to cover setup and 1st year operating costs for a second phone line.

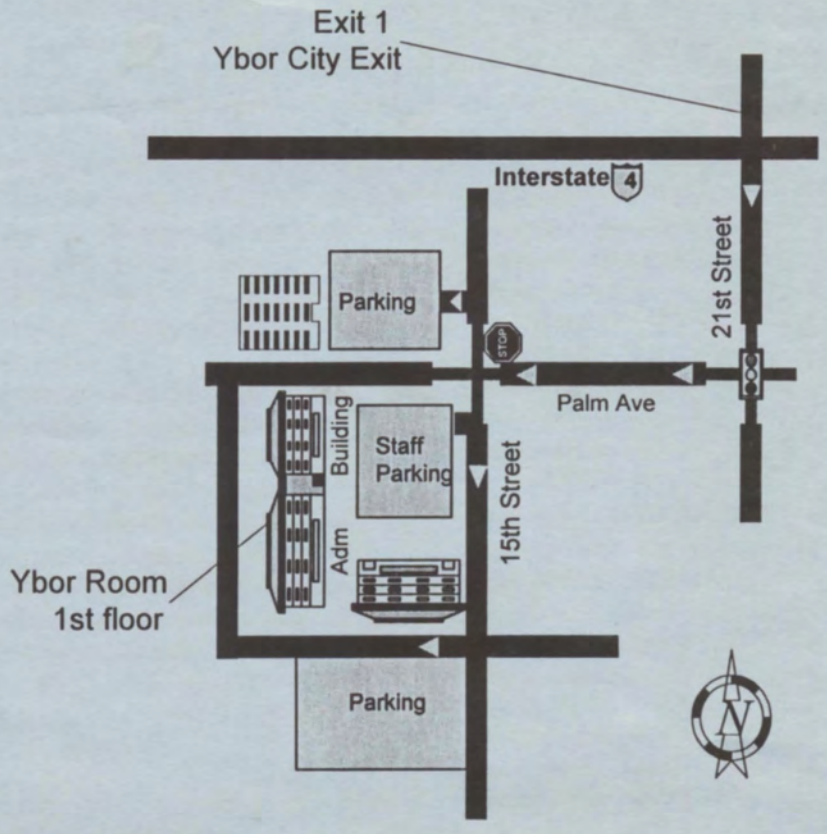
GOAL: Raise $1,500 by the close of the September membership meeting (9/14/94).

WHEN: Bring your checkbook to the August or September membership meetings, or send your check to Tampa PC Users Group, P.O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL Remember, the TPCUG is now a 501(c)3 Charitable Organization, so your contributions may be tax deductible.

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows, AmiPro for Windows
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2



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Member

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Bits of Blue

Vol. 7, No. 9 September, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: September 14th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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SPECIAL NOTICE: OS/2 SIG

is scheduled for Tuesday, September 27th at 6:00 p.m. in room 436 on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall.

September 14th AGENDA

Presentation by:

Target Software Group, Inc.

Product to be demonstrated:

CA$HGRAF OFFICE *PLUS*
"The World's Most Powerful
Single-Solution Office Software"



Up Coming Presentations:

October 12 - **Gold Disk**

November 9 - **IBM OS/2 Personal**

December 14 - **Broderbund - new products**

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

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VICE PRES : Al Poole 876-9445
TREASURER:Tom Cone 224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
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APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.



Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 8/10/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS
By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Another very good meeting, but the very wet weather played havoc with attendance — which was down to less than half the norm. Too bad, too, because Prodigy gave a good thumbnail of their service and the Tampa Tribune gave a rundown on the new Tampa Bay Online service they were to kickoff the next day.

USER GROUP NEWS

✔ ADOPTBBS: Harvey elaborated on a brief article in the August Bits Of Blue newsletter about the kickoff of our Adopt The BBS fund raising drive. In essence, our BBS has limited capacity which needs to be expanded and improved. A recent membership survey outlined member priorities for the BBS — more files and add a second phone line, which also entails another high-speed modem. A number of actions have been taken to cut costs and generate more revenues. These have all been helpful, but as yet have done little more than offset increasing cost, such as the rental fees we now have to pay for our general meetings. Our treasury simply doesn't have the funds to accomplish the needed improvements to the BBS. Hence, the Board of Directors elected to raise the needed funds from membership donations. Adopt The BBS is to run through the close of the September meeting. If you want the BBS to be improved and are willing to help with that effort, please send in your check to the TPCUG marked for ADOPTBBS, or bring it to the September meeting. Jopin those of us who want our group to continue to get better.

INDUSTRY NEWS

✔ IBM Dropping Amber Line: IBM has announced that it is stopping production of its Amber line laptop computers. Full support for these computers will continue, however.

✔ ACCESS 2.0 Problem: Industry news reports that Access 2.0 is giving some users problems with losing data. Those affected are users operating Windows for WorkGroups 3.1 and using SCSI drivers, and then only when accessing the SCSI heavily. While the info is not clear, it would appear that the problem exists only when the SCSI is on a personal machine as opposed to in a network situation. Work is in progress to solve the problem.

✔ Intel Dropping Some Modem Lines: Intel is apparently contracting its modem production and has announced it is dropping some of its less profitable modem lines; it would appear competition and continuing cost cutting pressures have prompted the move. I do not have details to publish here, so if you are thinking about an Intel modem, you might want to check to see if the one in which you have an interest is one of the lines being discontinued.

✔ Windows 4.0: Word in the industry is that Microsoft will

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be delaying release of Chicago/Windows 4.0 until the 2nd quarter of 1995. Meanwhile, IBM's work on its OS/2 Personal is nearing completion — IBM will review this new competitor before our group at our September meeting.

PRESENTATION — Prodigy & Tampa Bay Online

Prodigy: Peter Drummond, Retail Sales & Marketing for Prodigy, was on hand to give a brief rundown of Prodigy for those not already subscribing to that online service. He outlined how Prodigy had now grown to become the largest online service in the country with the most subscribers. Among the many statistics provided, there are bulletin boards for just about every area of interest you might think of and, collectively, they handle some 100,000 notes each day. Pete's principal purpose was to introduce Prodigy as a means to get to the new service that is coming online on Prodigy — Tampa Bay Online (TBOL). As a Prodigy user, however, I can tell you that there is a wealth of information available to subscribers in just about any area of interest. It has a Windows-like environment (graphical interface) in both its DOS and Windows versions of the software and in spite of the breadth of areas covered by the service — from news & weather; to business & financial news and investing online;, to banking online; airline info & online reservation/ticketing;, to many, many bulletin boards; to games; and on and on — navigation within Prodigy is fairly easy.

In contrast to the other online services, Prodigy offers multiple levels of subscription. However, over 90% percent of the subscribers chose the Value membership. This $14.95/month subscription gives access to over 90% of Prodigy features without further access or time charges. Less costly subscriptions are available, down to as little as $2/month. This allows subscribers to purchase the service most suitable for their needs. They also offer a free trial membership that allows one to try out the service without cost. You might want to take advantage of that offer.

Tampa Bay Online (TBOL): The bulk of our presentation time was devoted to hearing about this new service for the Tampa Bay Area. Nanette Holland, TBOL News Editor, and Allan Gengler, TBOL Bulletin Board & Information Editor, were on hand to introduce this new service to our members. And they did an excellent job of doing just that. It appears to be an outstanding service. It will provide online all of the goodies contained in the Tribune, except for the national/world news that the Prodigy service already covers, plus other items of interest to Floridians that are not included in the Tribune. Among the latter are computer news and information, including product reviews by our own members; community profiles; beach guides; weather updated periodically, including current radar views; hurricane information and historical data; lottery info; articles prepared for but not published in the Tribune; info on public parks in Florida; and on and on. Another very big plus for TBOL is that it, too, has bulletin boards for notes and messages on just about any subject between TBOL and subscribers, and between subscribers.

Also with a graphical interface, TBOL 's opening screen offers 4 or 5 'highlight' items, plus access buttons for each of the following categories: News/Opinion; Sports; Business; Bay life; Entertainment; The Florida Key; Bay Talk; and Classified. Yes, all the want ads are available on line. Clicking on each of the categories leads you to a similar screen for the contents of that category. Much like the Tribune, it includes itemss of interest to all Floridians, and local news for counties from Citrus County to the north, to DeSoto/Highland Counties to the south, and Polk County to the east. Moreover, a good bit of the info available (such as lottery numbers, or recipes from previous weeks, to name but a couple) is archived so that several days or weeks of back info is available,. Most of what you see can be downloaded to printer and/or file.

I tried the service just before beginning this report and I like what I see. It is, in fact, as easy to navigate within as it appeared to be during the presentation. It is very easy to use, easier in my opinion than finding things in the Tribune itself. Moreover, the news in TBOL is available the evening before the Tribune hits the street. And it is less expensive than the newspaper, costing only $4.95 per month, the charge being billed on your Prodigy statement. I don't mean to suggest that TBOL is a replacement for your Tribune subscription. Rather, I am trying to give you a feel for the high quality and timeliness of service that I saw. TBOL is free for the first weekend for anyone interested in trying it out. That, of course, will have long since passed by the time you read this, but I would expect that TBOL will offer some additional free weekends to acquaint those who missed the first offer. Keep your eyes open. But you don't have to wait — they have made it easy and for those enrolling now, the first month is free. Even if that is no longer available when you finally decide you would like to try TBOL, $4.95 is not an exorbitant cost to not wait for the 'trial' periods or free months; just tinkering with TBOL for a month is worth the $4.95.

Many thanks to Peter Drummond of Prodigy, and Nanette Holland and Allan Gengler of the Tribune for an excellent presentation of your services. You have been most helpful and we look forward to the continued progress of your respective services.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Asymetrix and Computer Associates, there were a couple of very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Rob Davis ----- Simply Money
Herb Atwood -- Multimedia Make Your Point

The meeting adjourned at about 8 PM.

TTTT

Write! ✍

Tampa PC Users Group needs writers! Share what you've learned with your fellow members.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It is with deep regret that I announce the resignation of Ed Buzza as our Director of Education. Ed has been extremely instrumental in the life of the group through his dedication and generosity. Through his knowledge and patience he taught us, through his wisdom he guided us and through his writings he enlighten us. The TPCUG owes Ed a great deal of gratitude, more than we can ever repay.

Ed will continue to volunteer on the Members Help-Line. Thank you Ed.

Tampa Bay Online

We are on TBO (Tampa Bay Online) via Prodigy. TBO, from the Tampa Tribune, is providing the TPCUG with resources to place information about our group on their service. Currently three software reviews written by our members and general information about the TPCUG is online. The TPCUG has agreed to provide TBO with four reviews a month. Any TPCUG article printed in the Bits of Blue newsletter can be a candidate for TBO providing its not the current newsletter issue. Articles to be placed on TBO are selected by the President and Editor of the TPCUG. For those of you wishing to leave me mail on Prodigy my ID is DYHJ67A.

Over the last five years I have asked for help from our members. The plea was mostly for volunteers or member involvement to help the TPCUG. Since I was elected in the eighties, I see that the volunteers and elected officials have accomplished a lot.

However, I am still troubled by what I see and don't see.

I see that it is the same handful of members which are striving to better the TPCUG. These people are like you, they have jobs and families. They aren't computer geeks or nerds. Why do they contribute and others don't. Is it the big bucks that the TPCUG pays them, is it the fame and glory, is it those home made cookies that we have at our house for some of the board meetings. Ok sure Marylee's cookies are "to die for" but I don't think that's the reason. No one gets a paycheck either. In fact most of them pay for things for the user group and never asked to get reimbursed. It must be the fame, glory, bennies and perks. Yeah that's it we all get a new generation computer from CompUSA every year, Computer City provides us with all the free software we need, Bill Gates flies us all to Washington for our input into new technologies, we get twelve extra days of paid vacation from our jobs to promote the user group and our significant others, friends and family just think we're normal for spending more time with a computer than them.

I believe its because they want to contribute to others in whatever form they can. They believe in the user group concept and the benefits that can be provided to its members and community. Volunteering is not for everybody. But I do think that each member has a responsibility to put something back into the TPCUG other than the yearly dues. I hope that each one of you have gotten a benefit from our group and it was more than a free software product. If you have not I am sorry we just don't have the volunteers

What I don't see is growth in membership. Last year my goal was to have a membership of three hundred. It didn't happen. I have the same goal this year and we currently need around 100 new members more to attain that goal. If you want to know how you can contribute please read the following sections.

New Membership Category

In our continued efforts to expand our group the board of directors has approved a new membership category effective immediately. We now have a corporate membership category. This category is provided for the businesses who wish to participate in our group and provide our services to it's employees. For $50, a business can sign-up three employees with full membership privileges. To join our group as a corporate member the business must submit, on company letterhead, the intentions of joining our group along with the three full names of the employees (we need addresses), the enrollment form and of course $50. Additional employees of that business can join for $15 each. All employees will get full membership privileges. The renewal date for a corporate membership is based on the initial enrollment of the business. This means that all employees renew on the same date no matter when they enrolled.

FAX numbers

We are in the process of building a database of local FAX numbers. The purpose of this database is twofold. One is to notify members and non-members, individuals or businesses, of our monthly meetings and it's agenda. Two as a cost effective marketing strategy of promoting the TPCUG to the Tampa Bay community.

I believe that this process will provide a positive impact on the growth of our group. We need your help to collect these local FAX numbers in order that we can build this database. Look at the business cards that you have accumulated over the years, go through the phone book, get them from your friends that work for other businesses. Once you have FAX number(s)that you wish to add to the database please provide them in writing or ASCII format including name (individual or business), phone number and routing information if necessary, to Marylee Bruneau through the BBS (phone number), mail (Marylee Bruneau Attn: FAX List, 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Fl 33637 or call 985-3338. This data will be compiled into an xBASE file which will be used with WinFax Pro. Faxing will occur on a week night the week before the meeting.

Magazine Subscriptions

Please note that we have included a list of 30+ computer magazines in this newsletter which you can subscribe to or renew your existing subscriptions. Used the attached order form to order. By using the order form the user group gets credit and a little bit of money for each subscription. The prices are right for you while providing revenue to the group. Additionally, there is a list of approximately 500 titles contained in the file 94_GUIDE.ZIP on the BBS which you can download. These titles cover every type of magazine found in a doctors reception room plus more and you even get current issues. Its not to early to place that Christmas order for someone

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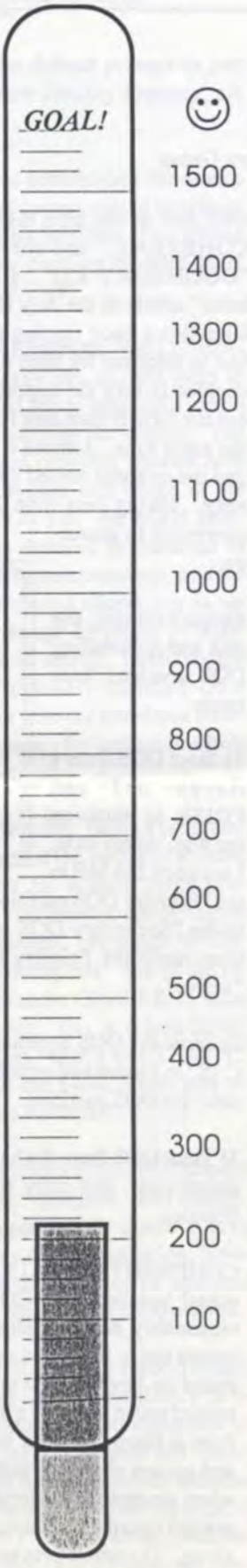
President's....*Continued from page 4*

special or even yourself. Whether it's about fashion, science, money management or hobbies there is a magazine for everyone. Several of the board members have already tried this service and are very satisfied. If you need additional information please contact our VP, Al Poole.

Adopt the BBS

At last months meeting I kicked off the "Adopt the BBS Campaign". This campaign has been set forth to get the funds and equipment to add a second phone line to the BBS. This is a result of the surveys which you, our members, filled out. **The highest request included a second line and more files.** Since the surveys, we have added more files by attaching a CD ROM drive which we purchased and an additional 120Mb hard drive which was donated to the BBS. However, the TPCUG does not have current funds to establish a second line. We have established a limit of $1500 which will cover the cost of installing a second phone line, one years operation and a high speed modem and 500Mb hard disk. How can we overcome this issue? Through tax deductible contributions from you or even non-members of money and/or hardware. We need a 14.4 modem or higher and large 500Mb hard disk. Currently we have over $200. We will be maintaining a progress indicator (a Dollar $$$ Thermometer in the newsletter) on the BBS.

If you read all that, thanks for your time. I hope you found an area that you can help us in. If you haven't don't worry their are still plenty of opportunities: you can just bring a guest, buy extra door prize tickets, volunteer to run a swap meet, volunteer to do a presentation, write your own articles for the newsletter covering your tips, techniques, or experiences, donate computer equipment, upload new files to the BBS, volunteer for the membership help line. Still nothing, call me with your ideas.



SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

Screenscapes - Transform your monitor with spectacular wall papers. - Vendor: Kiwi Software

Managing Your Money (DOS)- Complete Financial Software Program - Vendor: Meca Software

XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology

FidelityOnLineExpress - Direct Line to Wall Street - Meca Software

WinWay Job Interview for Windows - Interview with confidence & win the Job. - WinWay Corp.

Watchman for Windows -Advance file protection management- Distant Markets

Pebble Beach Golf Links (Game - Course for Use with Links 386 Pro or Microsoft Golf)

WinSense - the Windows Optimizer

AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows

Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)

Little Monstor at School - Interactive, Animated Stories for Children

Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing

Magic Theatre - Easy way for kids to create, narrate, and animate their own computer movies ages 6&up.

(Contact Marylee or Harvey @ 985-3338 if you are interested in doing a review article for the newsletter on any of the above software.)

SPECIAL OFFER!

Free software....**Micrografx** is offering copies of their **ABC SnapGrafx** (regularly $299!) business users drawing package free through September 30th. There is an $8.95 shipping charge. Call **1-800-653-3510** to order. **SnapGrafx** includes frequently used templates for organizational charts, flow charts and other diagrams, making it more "user friendly" for the casual user. Requires Windows 3.1 Check supplier for further system requirements.

Software Review:
COHERENT

Reviewed by: Jeff Edwards, Tampa PC Users Group

COHERENT is a Unix clone for 386/486 Personal Computers. I had seen it in the trade magazines for years, but when the advertisement arrived in my office just at the end of long stint working on an obsolete computer and operating system, both the timing and message on the envelope were perfect: "COHERENT - now you can be a Unix expert for just $149.90". After confirming that COHERENT can co-exist with DOS (I had no intention of giving up PowerC, Qedit, and Procomm+) and that it would run on my minimal Dell 386SX (it needs 2 MB RAM, 20 MB hard disc space, and one 1.2 or 1.44 MB floppy) I placed my order.

I've barely skimmed the surface after working with it for only a few weeks, but it is already apparent that COHERENT will not only be a nice vehicle for learning the basics of Unix, but that it provides several unexpected bonuses as well. Just in case anyone else out there might be as interested as I was, this review gives my initial impressions in time to take advantage of the special pricing that the company says will expire on September 16, 1994.

THE PACKAGE. The package arrived four days after my order, and my first impression was that it was just a bit mind boggling. It included 5 floppies containing the basic operating system and utilities; 3 floppies containing COHERENT's X-Windows clone; one floppy of games for X-Windows; a 1200 page COHERENT manual; a 200 page X-Windows manual; a 64 page COHERENT installation procedure; and a 15 page X-Windows installation procedure. The manuals all appeared to be very well done, and the installation guides appeared to be clear and concise.

PREPARATION FOR INSTALLATION. The first step in installing COHERENT is actually to re-install DOS with part of the hard disk reserved for COHERENT, and for that task the "DOOMSDAY KIT - a bootable diskette" article in the July issue of Bits of Blue was a good starting point. Since I had to reformat the hard disc anyway, I decided to take the opportunity to swap out my 50 MB hard disk for larger one at the same time. I chose a 410 MB unit, and the swapout turned out to quick and easy, taking less than 2 hours from power-off to power-on.

Re-partitioning the disk and re-installing DOS involved three steps:

1) Boot DOS from a floppy and run FDISK to partition the disc. In my case, I assigned 256 MB to the "Primary DOS partition" and the rest to the "Secondary DOS partition", and then made the Primary DOS partition "active".

2) Issue the DOS command "FORMAT C: /S" to format and write the system files onto the DOS partition.

3) Boot DOS from the hard disk, create directories, and copy files back from floppies.

COHERENT INSTALLATION. The actual installation of COHERENT was reasonably fast and simple, and that turned out to be a good thing, because I ended up having to do the installation a total of seven times! To install, you boot from a floppy (it must be the A: drive) and answer questions and insert floppies when prompted, preferably reading the printed installation instructions as you go along. The whole process takes about 1-1/2 hours of you choose all the optional checking and un-compressing.

TECH SUPPORT. When I booted the new system from the hard disc for the first time, it hung up with cryptic hexadecimal code in the upper right hand corner of the screen instead of displaying the COHERENT sign-on prompt. Shortly thereafter, I learned that although COHERENT tech support is "free", it is not the easiest thing to come by, and once you get it, it may not be the most useful thing in the world.

I called COHERENT's Chicago area tech support number and was immediately put on hold listening to a Mark Williams Company commercial. This wasn't so bad the first couple of times through, but by the time a real person came on the line a half hour later, my attitude had take a definite turn for the worse.

> *....COHERENT will not only be a nice vehicle for learning the basics of Unix, but that it provides several unexpected bonuses as well.*

The tech support person I talked to didn't know what to make of the error code that appeared when I tried to boot, and after asking me several questions, decided that the problem probably had to do with my using a monochrome VGA monitor but choosing a VGA driver during the installation. I tried to tell him that the computer didn't even know that the monitor was monochrome, but he had no better ideas, so we spent another 15 minutes of long distance time trying various "patches" before he gave up and said he'd just have to mail me a set of floppies with a different video driver.

PERSISTENCE PAYS. Not one to give up easily, I set about re-doing the installation, each time trying a different combination of optional selections (floating point support; additional users; passwords; VGA/mono; daylight savings time conversion; etc). I hit pay dirt on the fifth attempt: the COHERENT sign-on prompt appeared after booting, and from there on everything went accord-

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ing to the book.

I'm still not sure what the problem was with my initial installation, but I think it had to do with selecting the optional "virtual consoles" feature and not having enough memory in my system to support it. Although the documentation says nothing about memory requirements over the minimum 2 MB if you're not installing X-Windows, I found that the system kernel couldn't even be linked on my system if I included the optional "streams" support during installation.

INSTALLATION POSTSCRIPT. A set of two floppy disks arrived in the mail about a week after my conversation with tech support, and I decided to give them a try even though by that time I had the system up and running for almost a week. To make a long story short, the new disks didn't change the original situation a bit, so I ended up with a system built from the new disks, but with the same combination of options that had finally been successful with the old disks.

BOOTING COHERENT. To boot COHERENT instead of DOS, you simply hit the "1" key (for partition number one) while the ROM boot program is trying to access the floppy drives. If you don't hit the "1", DOS boots automatically just as it did before COHERENT was installed. Starting COHERENT is not nearly as fast as starting DOS, however; on my system with 150 MB assigned to the COHERENT partition, COHERENT takes about 1-1/2 minutes to check its file system each time you boot up.

STANDARD SETUP. In order to give COHERENT a little more familiar look and feel, at least while I was beginning to learn the system, I ended up making a series of "standard changes" immediately after installation:

1) I selected the Korn shell instead of the Bourne shell as default. This allowed me to make the next two changes:

2) I select "EMACS style" instead of "vi style" command line recall. This makes command line recall similar to DOS's Doskey feature.

3) I change the default prompt to just display the current working directory, ala DOS.

4) I change the permissions for device "/dev/at0a" to allow any user to read from the DOS hard disk partition. This allows quick and easy copying of files from DOS to COHERENT!

HELP/MAN/APROPOS. The COHERENT system provides on-line help in three levels, and this is especially useful if you're just learning the system. The HELP command provides concise help on command syntax and usage in the style of MS-DOS 5.0; the MAN command provides detailed explanation of commands and system concepts; and the APROPOS command allows you to access MAN write-ups on topics of interest via a keyword search. I believe that these are all relatively standard Unix commands, but with my non-Unix background, this is easily the best on-line help system I've ever used.

THE 'C' COMPILER. Being a programmer, I decided that the best way to learn Unix would be by writing some programs, and so I set about to convert some of my DOS/PowerC programs to COHERENT. In doing this, one of the really nice things about COHERENT soon became apparent: this is a true 32-bit operating system, with a true 32-bit 'C' compiler, and the 640K limitations of DOS simply do not exist!

My initial impression of the 'C' compiler is that it is fast, complete, and reasonably well supported. It doesn't have much in the way of documentation, however; the manual refers you to standard textbooks for basic 'C' documentation.

THE ASSEMBLER. My second happy discovery was that COHERENT provides a full featured 32-bit assembler to go along with the 'C' compiler and linker. I got interested in the assembler because the first program I converted from DOS to COHERENT was a cross-platform CRC checker that I use for program configuration control, and it ran more than 3 times slower in the 32-bit 'C' version that in the original 16-bit PowerC/PowerC assembler DOS version.

The COHERENT assembler was my first foray into 32-bit protected mode programming for the PC, something I had been wanting to do for a long time anyhow. It didn't take long to learn the basics, however, and my CRC little subroutine (which includes some "line" counting logic) was debugged and incorporated into the final program within a few hours of starting the project. The final execution speed was not quite as good as the 16-bit DOS version; I suspect that this was because my PC is only a 386SX with no cache, and that the 32-bit version would run considerably faster on a PC with a real 32-bit architecture.

THE DEBUGGER. The COHERENT system does have a debugger, but by today's standards it is a throwback to the dark ages. Suffice it to say that if I have anything really complicated to prototype, I'll surely go back to DOS and rely on the $19.95 PowerC Trace, which is about a million times easier to use.

TEXT EDITOR. A decent text editor is essential if you're going to do any serious software development, and COHERENT provides at least two: elvis, a "vi" clone, and "me" (microEMACS), a scaled down clone of EMACS. I chose to learn "me", firstly because it has some "C" debugging capabilities built in, and secondly because it seemed to be much more like the DOS editors I normally use.

MicroEMACS is a perfectly usable full screen editor, but it's not nearly as nice as DOS offering such as Qedit. For example, it took me a full day to develop a small set of 'bullet proof' basic keyboard macros (such as single-key duplicate line and delete line), whereas the same task took closer to 15 minutes for Qedit. A lot of the problem was that the "me" documentation was incomplete and in some instances just plain wrong.

OTHER FEATURES. The COHERENT package has hundreds of basic features

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that I just haven't had time to try, not the least of which are multitasking and "native mode" access to a huge number of Unix-based networks and public domain databases. Also, if you're interested in such things, Mark Williams Company claims that COHERENT will run the Unix versions of WordPerfect, Lotus 1-2-3, and several other "standard" programs right out of the box.

SUMMARY. If you prefer Windows to DOS and you spend most of your time running your favorite half dozen application programs, you'll probably have very little interest in COHERENT. If you're a working programmer with an interest in learning Unix, however, you might give COHERENT some serious thought. This package came with a sixty-day money-back guarantee, and at the time of this writing, I've used it less than three weeks. All the trials and tribulations not withstanding, I think the best way to summarize my impressions is this: COHERENT with X-Windows for $149.90 is a bargain to compare with PowerC for $19.95, and I wouldn't even consider asking for my money back.

Mark Williams Company, 1-800-636-6700 ☆☆☆☆

Software Review:

Seaworthy Two WWII Simulators on one CD-ROM

Review by: Alford and Matthew (PT Boat) Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

The Seaworthy CD-ROM contains two World War II simulators, PT Boat and Sub Battle.

Installation is easy from the CD-ROM and takes less than 2 MB's of hard disk space for both games. These "classic" DOS (or OS/2) games run from the hard drive.



PT Boat

General Quarters! Man your battle stations! Do you ever wish you could go back in time to World War II and take command of a Patrol Torpedo Boat? That YOU could be the person giving the orders to fire torpedoes, or launch rockets at the enemy? Now you can, with PT Boat, a fast-paced action game taking place in the Philippines during early World War II.

You really have to pay attention and be on guard while you're playing PT Boat, because you never know whether you will be ambushed by a squadron of Zeros, attacked by a cruiser, or (my dumbest mistake) run aground and get stuck! (Oops!)

The game is sufficiently documented to help you learn the controls. It took me about 45 minutes to have the controls, indicators, etc. memorized.

Limitations: When saving a game, it prompts you to enter the name of the file you want to save (default is SAVEGAME.PTB). If you enter a different name, it will work, but when you go to restore the game, you have to retype the filename (don't forget what it's called - there is no list of available files).

Evaluation: Overall, it is a VERY good simulator, well worth buying. It keeps your attention, is realistic, and very addictive, I keep playing it even after having won several missions. On a scale of 1-10, I rate it about 9.6.

Sub Battle

The documentation contains a Quick Reference Card and instruction booklet with a historical perspective of both the American submarines and German U-boats.

Sub Battle starts you off 28,000 ft from the nearest target. Traveling at 21 knots, it takes a while to get within firing range. The convoy is also traveling away from you, this is good because it takes a while to figure out which keys to push to make things happen. When within 10,000 ft I fired a torpedo at the escort ship, it had detected me and was heading down my throat! The screen started flashing red, sounds of explosions blared from the speakers, while various damage reports scrolled on and off the screen. Where did the airplanes come from? While bombs and bullets hammered me, the escort sank, and I soon followed.

The instructions suggest sneaking around in front of the convoy and then waiting until they are in range to sink the armed ships. Use the deck guns for the unarmed ships and antiaircraft guns for the airplanes. Ah, that sounds like a plan!

Limitations: Sub Battle uses the keyboard exclusively. Joysticks are supposed to work, but our Gravis Game Pad caused the view dial to spin wildly and didn't control anything. Sub Battle and PT Boat will work in OS/2, but not in Windows (not enough memory!).

Evaluation: After getting used to working in real time for maneuvers (no instant gratification here), my enthusiasm has grown. This is like the real thing. When the action does start, it is fast and furious. There is also time compression for bold souls with nimble fingers. I think playing these games enhance our knowledge of battles fought during WWII. While not as graphically advanced as "Rebel Assault" or some of the latest games, PT Boat and Sub Battle are none the less quite entertaining and certainly more educational. Full speed ahead for Seaworthy!

Minimum System Requirements: 286 CPU, DOS 3.3, EGA graphics, 550KB free RAM, CD-ROM drive, 2MB free hard disk space.

By Digital Illusions, Cost and availability: $29.99 for SeaWorthy CD-ROM, or $19.99 for PT Boat and $24.99 for Sub Battle from Alliance Interactive Software, 1859 N. Pine Island Rd. #103 Plantation, Florida, 33322 Phone (305) 423-4289, FAX (305) 424-9054, CompuServe 73744,521. SPECIAL OFFER FOR USER GROUP MEMBERS ONLY: PT Boat Simulator $9.99, Sub Battle Simulator $9.00, Seaworthy $15.00 call 1-305-423-4289 to order, offer expires 9/15/94. ☆☆☆☆

Software Review:
Prehistoria

A Multimedia of Who's Who of Prehistoric Life

Review by: David Burch, Tampa PC Users Group



It's a CD-ROM that gives you the power to search through 500 million years of earth's history. Prehistoria is an excellent resource for all ages interested in how life on our planet developed. It includes over 500 prehistoric animals, many full color renderings of these animals, narrated animations and video clips.

To run Prehistoria you need at least a 386 20MHz or faster, 4M free hard disk space, 4M RAM, and a CD-ROM drive. The easy to use setup software installs an icon for Prehistoria in Windows. My system is 486 66MHz with 8M RAM. Response was quick although some of the videos were still a little slow.

Prehistoria provides the user with, exact time period, locations of fossils found, size, text and even an audio pronunciation of the animal's name, on all of the animals represented. Searching through the many animals and information is made rather simple with a variety of different navigational tools. The Gallery is a graphic searching feature that groups animals by similar features. By starting your choice with one of the major animal groups (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, etc.) you enter a graphical index of the animals Prehistoria covers. Choices are made by selecting groups of animals. You work your way down the classification chart by pointing and clicking on the picture of the animal or group of animals that most interests you. Time Tracker allows you to choose from 11 geological eras. During each era chosen a dynamic map shows the position of Earth's continents. By then choosing the major animal groups, Prehistoria searches for the animals found in those groups within that particular era. The animals on this list and their information can then be viewed. The Creature Show takes you on a slide presentation of the animal's life-like illustrations, where you can stop at any time and check an animal's stats. By using the Classifications search Prehistoria allows you to advance through the scientific hierarchy of prehistoric creatures.

The most interesting feature of Prehistoria is the Grolier Museum. This feature contains over 40 full video clips. Clips include talks with several famous paleontologists and geologists. While animations cover current theories of the development of prehistoric Earth, dinosaur extinction and the lives of dinosaurs. Also included within the museum are a bibliography and a museum listing allowing the user further reference to this exciting field. I had an excellent time searching through the prehistoric time tables and would definitely recommend this CD to anyone interested in natural history.

Grolier Electronic Publishing, Inc. 1-800-285-4534 SRP $69.95.

David Burch received a BS degree in Zoology from USF in December, 1993 and has been employed by Busch Gardens for the past 6 years in the Conservation Education Dept. He is currently working in the Graphics Arts Department for the Busch Gardens Zoo Department and is working on undergraduate courses for a second degree in Geology.



USER'S CORNER

WORDPERFECT 6.0 FOR DOS. When you select the Look feature while in File Manager and you see the Doc Summary, just press 3 (Look) again and you will see the document itself. Also use the Look feature to view graphics; no more having to create a graphic box and retrieving a graphic file just to see what it looks like as in version 5.1. And use the Look feature to play sound clips (assuming that you're set up for sound in WP. If you'd like a calendar macro that you can personalize with your own reminder notes (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.), down-load EB-CAL from the bulletin board. Version 6.0b is now shipping. Cost is $17. Corrects some bugs. Now provides for a ruler.

LIST.COM Many people use this versatile utility but how many have really used some of it's little known features? If you have many directories on a hard drive or a lot of files in a directory, using the TREE or MEM command results in a scroll so fast that all you see is the last screenful of data. Recently, there was a post in the BATPOWR conference that mentioned the use of the /S switch. This switch tells LIST to use a piped file as input. By piping the output of these commands through LIST, you can use the scrolling feature of LIST to review the data. Plus, you can use the utility's ability to capture part (or all) of the data and write it to a new file or to the print-er. The command is as follows: MEM /C | LIST /S The next time that you are at the computer, try it.

WINDOWS 3.1 HELP The Help screens are very useful, especially the ability to jump to other topics. You've seen them, the topics in that icky green color that's so hard to read. Well, you can change that color! First, backup the WIN.INI file. Copy it to a "SAVE" directo-ry or to SAVEWIN.INI or to a floppy diskette. Fire up Windows, click on Main, SysEdit, WIN.INI. To expand the window, any window for that matter, double click on the Title bar. Scroll down to [Windows Help] and add the following line: JumpColor=0 0 128 to select deep blue, instead of that wimpy green. Save the file and exit SysEdit. Exit to Program Manager. Click Options, set Save Settings to On, and click File. Now_hold down the Shift key and then click on Exit Windows (or hold down the Shift and Alt keys and press F4). Windows will now be updated and you didn't have to exit and reboot Windows! Turn off the Save Settings if you want Windows to come up the same way every time. To see other colors and their RGB values, click on Colors, then on Palette. Setting two of the values to zero and the other to 255 will give you a solid

See User's ...*Continued on page 10*

User's...*Continued from page 9*

primary color. The double click on the Title bar is easier than trying to click on that small arrow to change window size. Depending on your Windows setup, you may need to double click the Title bar twice to get a full screen window.
WINDOWS 3.1 SOLITAIRE Instead of dragging aces up to the foundation row, just double click on the ace and it will jump up there whether the ace is one of the cards in the tableaux or in the talon. Same for the deuces, treys, etc., that are built onto the foundation.

Software Review:

Perfected! Version 3.0 for WordPerfect 6.0 DOS The Office Expert Series

Review by Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group



No more paper files!

Are you using WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS at your place of business? Then this program Perfected! is almost a "must have" to automate all your many office tasks. Perfected! is like an "Add On" program to WordPerfect (WP from now on). It utilizes many of the advanced features of WP to simplify most of the daily and repetitive office tasks. What is so amazing that my WP looks at times like a database program when used in combination with Perfected!. That's because this program with the help of WP advanced merge commands does perform many functions of a database within the frame of the WP program.

What setups do we need in an office environment? How about an Address Book? Perfected! has a template or setup of a customer/client address database, ready set up to be filled in with data. You only need this one Address Book for all your addresses, just assign a different category code for different groups. Once you have recorded a name and address (and of course saved your file), then this information stays in the Address Book within your Perfected! office program setup and all or part of it can be plugged from the database to be used on labels, envelopes, in memos, letters, or on/in many other templates supplied by Perfected!.

For mass mailing this Address Book is perfect since it also has several choices of commands, like to sort by zip code, before using it for mass mailing. One or more addresses can be plugged into the daily tasks of an office: writing letters, letterhead settings, fax cover sheet, view telephone numbers. Perfected! is there with its setups to get you going. All templates are WP files and can be treated that way when you save, retrieve, or merge.

You can also create and edit a variety of nametags for the Avery nametag products, or create an attendance list to print out along with your nametags. Perfected supplies your office with forms to use for telephone messages, telephone logs, notes, and other types of routing slips. Perfected! includes an invoice and purchasing order setup within WP with automatically updating invoice and order numbers. It will keep a running log of both of them for you to keep track of your accounts. Both forms can also be printed with your letterhead and if multiple copies are required, purchase colored paper and print multiple copies, since printing is so speedy and it will save you so much on costs of supplies.

Need to keep track of you petty cash? Perfected! produces petty cash vouchers, keeps a log of disbursement amount, and calculates balance. Templates for different headers, footers, financial reporting, administration forms, time scheduling forms are also included in this program. You even can use your own file system management which will keep a log for all your files, lets you print file labels and hanging folder tags with your laser printer.

What I liked best of all is a setup of a merge file with different types of paragraphs which I can plug into any form letter I need to send out. This is like a library of paragraphs I can set up which are then available any time I need them. Any form, template, or database can be edited. Sections can be deleted or added on.

Perfected! has it all for your office needs and if you are already a WP 6.0 for DOS user, it uses the same environment and including the program will be easy. The manual gives a step by step description for each tasks or keys to use. The automation in your business should be snap when you use this fantastic program Perfected! with WP 6.0 for DOS.

System Requirements: Besides WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS this program needs 4MB of your hard drive and a laser printer. I don't have an order telephone #, but the address is:
Niad Corporation
85 River Rock Drive, Suite 200
Buffalo, NY 14207
Tech. Support #: (905) 470-0868

Bring a friend or two to our general meeting!

There are many people out there who would greatly benefit from joining our group. And, there are many people who would be able to assist others in our group with their knowledge and expertise. When you bring a guest or meet a potential new member at our meetings, please make them feel welcome and encourage them to join our group. If every one of our members would aggressively recruit just one new member - Imagine what that would mean to our group!

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Software Review:
PUBLISH-IT! Ver 4 for Windows

This is a medium level desktop publishing (DTP) program. Although not at the same level as PageMaker or Quark Express, this is a very powerful package in it's own right.

Installation is very simple. Open Windows, run INSTALL, tell it the drive and directory and feed in the three 1.4 MB diskettes. Take a bit of time to go through the Quick-start Mini-manual. Within a couple of hours, even without any DTP experience, almost anyone can produce an attractive flyer or simple newsletter.

Publish-It! is an excellent introduction to DTP. The manual is very, very good. Lots of illustrations of menus and screen layouts. The left side of the pages in the manual is used to show tips, keyboard shortcuts, icon buttons, menus and sample text. The program is rich in features and is very easy to use. For example, the spelling and hyphenation files are in ASCII format. And they can be edited with any ASCII editor!

The program has a set of templates that you can use or you can make your own. Everything in the document is contained in frames: text, graphics, and special effects. The master page concept is supported very well. Common items as logos, headers and footers, page structure, and styles can easily be made part of the master page. Use of a master page ensures consistency of work product throughout the document and every time it's used.

Rulers and guidelines are there to create and position frames. A floating menu shows the stories, graphics, and other objects (OLE-object linking and embedding is supported) that are part of the current document. Click on a frame to make it active, click on the story in the menu box, and the text flows into the frame. A dotted line at the bottom of the frame means there is more to the story. Draw another frame, either on the same page or on another page, click on the story title and the rest of the story flows into this second frame. This automatic frame linkage works in sequential page fashion_you can't go from page 1 to page 3 then backwards to page 2.

While single letters and words can be formatted, the basic construct is the paragraph. Since a hard return defines a para-graph, a single line, like a headline, becomes a paragraph. And that is the key to the versatility of this program. Styles are applied to paragraphs, even single line paragraphs. Styles define the typeface, point size, attributes like italic or bold, para-graph spacing, tab settings, indents (including hanging indents), line justification, letter spacing, etc.. All these can be placed in a named style.

The style name "Body text" would define the format of all paragraphs considered as regular text. All text is body text until the paragraph is tagged with another style. Headline style may have it's own, different format; at least the point size should be larger than that for body text. The bullet style obtains it's bullet character from any symbol font available in Windows such as Wingbats.

There can be more than one "Body text" style; just create the new style, or copy and modify an existing one, and give it a unique name. The same is true for headlines, subheads, bulleted text, etc.. Headers and footers are treated separately from paragraph styles. Automatic page numbering (including "page x of n pages") is available. Different headers and footers can be set up for left and right pages. And three separate parts of the header can be right, center, and left justified_no more guessing or measuring to get it just right.

The Power Text module manipulates text. Put it in an up or down arc, circle, or even a spiral. Various colors, gray shades and patterns are on tap for the fill and line styles. Power text can be rotated to any degree, skewed, reversed, mirrored, squashed, stretched and shadowed.

The Key Pad is a TSR module that operates like the Character Key module in Windows_only this one is better. The symbols and letters are larger; they are very easy to read. Key Pad can be used with other Window applications.

Publish-It! can import text in a variety of formats: ASCII, RTF (rich text format), MS-Works, Windows Write, Word for Windows and DOS, WordPerfect 4 and 5, and WordStar. Graphic formats that can be imported include: CGM, EPS, GEM, GIF, PIC, PCX, TIF, BMF and WMF. The user is cautioned that the newest versions of some word processors should save files in an older version format. i.e. Documents in WordPerfect V6 should be saved in version 5 or RTF format.

Overall, this is an excellent product. It is superior to First Publisher and Express Publisher both in terms of features and ease of use. There are over 70 templates (from business cards to newsletters), clipart, and 16 fonts included in the package.

Requires MS-Windows 3.1, DOS 3.1+, EGA or better, minimum of 2 MB RAM but 4 MB is strongly recommended, at least 4 MB of space on the hard disk, a mouse, a floppy drive, and any printer that can handle graphics. The vendor is Timeworks, Inc., 625 Academy Drive, Northbrook IL 60062. The price: $60.00, Office Depot, Brandon FL.

Tip on Fonts

Ed Buzza, TPCUG

FONTS. We've all seen the ads "50 fonts included, FREE" or "120 fonts for only $39.95." Be careful; you may be reading something that they're not saying. Correctly, a font is a typeface of a certain style in a specific point size. Times and Helvetica are the names of two different typefaces. Normal (or Roman), bold, italic, condensed, black are styles of a particular typeface. Point size is measured in 1/72nd of an inch. A 72 point font is one inch high measuring from the baseline to the height of the tallest ascender (d,b, as opposed to g,p). So, Times Roman 12 pt is one font while Times Roman 14 pt is a different font. With scalable fonts (True Type in Windows), the choice of point size is no longer as important as it once was. Still, the typeface and style govern a font. A set of scalable Times and Helvetica in normal, bold, italic, and bold italic is eight fonts; yet many will say it's only two! They may be justified in their thinking because many word processors and desktop publishing programs will create a bold or italic font using the normal font for the basic outline. Before you spend your money, check and be sure that what you're buying is really what you expect it to be.

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We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
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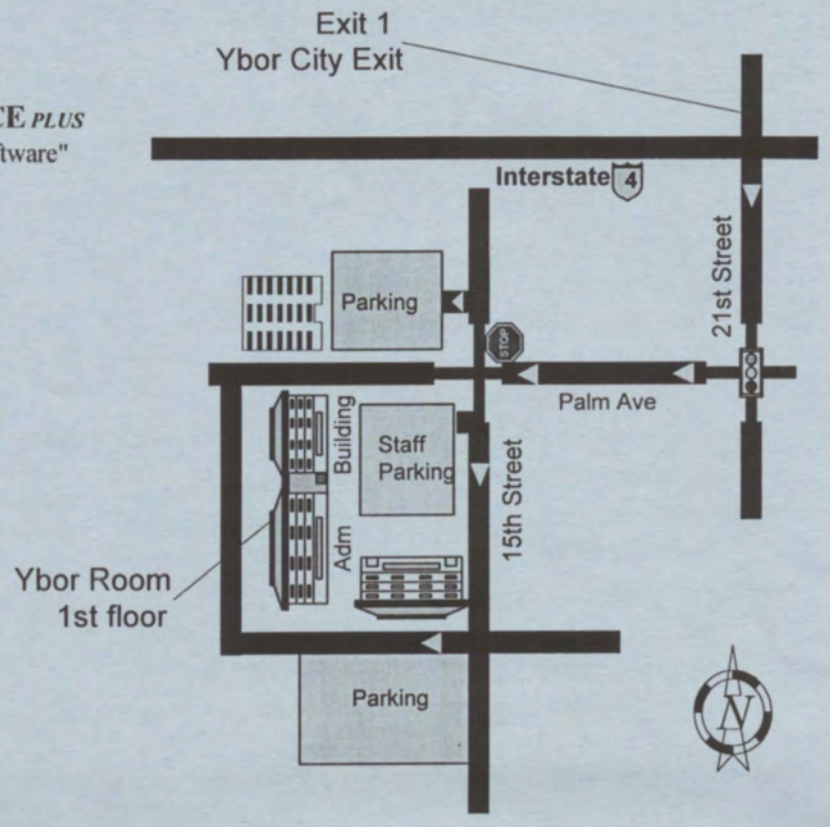
The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect, CorelDraw Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3

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Member

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Bits of Blue

Vol. 7, No. 10 October, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: October 12th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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SPECIAL NOTICE: OS/2 SIG

is scheduled for Tuesday, October 25th at 6:00 p.m. in room 436 on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall.

October 12th AGENDA

Presentation by:

Brainchild

Computer Distributions

Jason Kimenker will discuss the basics of buying a PC. He will bring miscellaneous add-on hardware and software products to review and consider for your existing PC system.

UP COMING PRESENTATIONS:

November 9 - **IBM OS/2 Personal**

December 14 - **Broderbund - new products**

BARGAIN TABLE

We will have a Bargain Table at this months meeting. Come early to shop. And ...Remember your PC related discards are another's treasures, bring your PC items you no longer need or use and donate them to the group. **All proceeds will benefit TPCUG.** All sales final.

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.



Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 9/14/94 MEETING
and Personal Comments by
Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

This was another great meeting, but the rain was once again not a friend to our meeting. However, the rain did not interfere with the very good meeting that took place, including a fine presentation on a very new and powerful program — Ca$hGraf Business Office.

USER GROUP NEWS

- ADOPTBBS: Harvey gave a brief summary as to what the Adopt The BBS fund raiser is all about and why, and then pointed out that the newsletter includes a how-goes-it thermometer to reflect our progress toward achieving the funding needed to improve the BBS — add a second phone line, another modem to support that line, and add a 500+ MB hard drive to provide more file storage capacity. He reported that as of newsletter publication time only $200 in contributions had been received. He emphasized how important the additional funding is to the BBS and urged all members using the BBS to lend their support to this fund raiser.
- MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS VIA FAX: Harvey announced that the Board of Directors (BOD) had decided to send notices of our general meetings via fax to area business and educational institutions as a means of making those organizations aware of us and what we do. These one page notification flyers would be sent to a selected group of organizations for the next meeting. Any organization that desires the notifications should inform the user group at the address shown on the back page of this newsletter, along with organizational info (name, address, fax number, etc.), or notify any member of our BOD. On the other hand, anyone who receives the flyer via fax that does not wish to receive future notifications should also let their wishes be known in the same manner.
- CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP: The BOD has created a new membership category, Corporate Membership. Annual membership fee is $50, with membership commencing when the application for membership is approved and continuing for one year thereafter. This includes membership for three (3) corporate personnel, each of which would have full membership rights. The corporation may sponsor membership for additional corporate personnel if desired for an annual membership fee of $15 per person; however, the expiration of these memberships will be concurrent with the expiration of the sponsoring corporate membership. Each of these additional personnel will also have full membership rights. The initial application should be sent to the user group under corporate letterhead, and include the names of all corporate personnel for which membership is requested. Requests to add additional personnel may be submitted at any time thereafter; this request, also under corporate letterhead, must include the names of the

See **Minutes** *Continued on page 3*

Minutes.. *Continued from page 2*

additional persons for whom membership is requested.

➧ TBOL PARTICIPATION: Tampa Bay On-Line is in full swing on Prodigy. Harvey explained how our user group is participating — providing reviews and articles for posting on TBOL. All articles provided by us to TBOL will have first been published in our own Bits Of Blue newsletter. Several, usually about four, will be posted on TBOL every month; articles are be retained on TBOL until they become outdated. Nothing will posted on TBOL by this user group until after it has been made available to our own membership.

➧ INDUSTRY NEWS: A number of news tidbits from the industry were tossed out from the podium and from the membership as well. Probably the item of greatest interest is that Microsoft has selected a name for Chicago/Windows 4.0 — the name announced is 'Windows 95,' after the year in which it is expected to be released. Yes, the industry now expects 'Windows 95' to be released in the 1st or 2nd quarter of 1995. (Will it have to be renamed Windows 96??)

➧ PRESENTATION — Ca$hGraf Business Plus

Our own St. Petersburg-based Target Software Group, Inc., favored us with a visit by four of their staff. Richard Muscarella, Sales Manager, gave us a rundown on the company and the development of Ca$hGraf Business Plus — a comprehensive, interactive financial management program designed for small businesses. Rich explained how the company and this program evolved. Ca$hGraf was in development about 5 years and was first released only last May at Comdex. It has won numerous awards since release from a variety of industry reviewers and critics. The name of the software evolved from Ca$hGraf, to Ca$hGraf Office Plus, then to Ca$hGraf Business Plus because of a need for a name which more accurately reflects the breadth and comprehensiveness of the program. Rich described it as the only fully integrated, single solution financial management software available, and the only piece of software a small business would need. Moreover, Rich explained that great emphasis was given during development to ease of use and true user friendliness, the result being that anyone would be an effective user in a very short time. That lead in raised our level of expectations and set the stage for the presentation of Ca$hGraf Business Plus.

Chris Payne II, Regional Representative for Target Software, followed Rich with a review of Ca$hGraf. The introduction given by Rich soon became evident in the review. A very comprehensive program, Ca$hGraf includes: A financial awareness and goal tracking system, with loan and savings scheduler; full business accounting, including budgeting and projections; supports both cash and accrual accounting simultaneously; handles 3 types of invoices; does credit memos and billing statements; provides a general ledger; does full perpetual inventory with location and multi-location and price levels by item; handles check writing and deposit tracking with up to 99 accounts; provides a preset and user definable database; complete instant text and graphical reporting on all data in the program; provides contact management in client database with 'Phone Script", and autodial throughout; includes word processing, complete with spell check and thesaurus, and mail merge from databases and financials; prepares purchase orders; prints to preprinted forms or will accept and fill in scanned forms; supports bar codes; does time and billing accounting; supports tab tables; provides a day planner and appointment scheduler for an unlimited number, to name just a few. And all of these features are fully integrated and interactive so that data in any portion of the program is instantly usable in all other areas of the program. Boy, that is a mouth full!!

The size of the files that Ca$hGraf will support are limited only by the limitations of the host computer and disk drive space. Ca$hGraf is not yet network compatible, but a network version is currently in development. Meanwhile, an easy to use full security capability already exists within the program that provides the capability to limit individual user access to specific areas of the program. True context sensitive help is available at every location within the program. Moreover, a single comprehensive manual provides ready information about the program in the unusual event that you cannot find your answer with from on-line help. And if that still isn't enough, free technical support is provide by Target Software via toll free telephone. To speed up the learning curve, Target includes a 1½ hour video tape with every copy of the program; this video gives the guidance needed to use the program effectively quickly.

Ca$hGraf Business Plus requires a 386 or better computer, with at least 4 Mb of RAM (preferably 8 Mb), Windows 3.1, and a total of 11 Mb of hard disk space for program files. The program lists for $299, but is available at an introductory price of $199 for a limited, but unspecified time. For those in need of that kind of program and but did not attend this meeting, you blew it because Target made the program available to those present for an even better price — better luck next time.

To Target Software, Rich and Chris, and all who helped with the presentation, THANK YOU very much for an excellent presentation about Target and Ca$hGraf. We appreciate your making our membership aware of both Target and Ca$hGraf.

➧ AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Target Software Group and Brainchild Computer Distributions, there were a couple of very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Dave Clary	MosesAll!!
Tom Cone	Ca$hGraf Business Plus

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 PM.

TIP

To make MS-Word6.0 or 6.0a run a little faster,: edit the WINWORD6.INI file in the Windows directory, and put the following lines in the [Microsoft Word] section:

BitMapMemory=1024
CacheSize=256

President's Column

PRESENTATION -
This months presenter, Gold Disk, has been rescheduled to early 1995. Unfortunately, the representative from Gold Disk had to reschedule at the last minute due to a change in his business schedule.

Fortunately, I was able to schedule one of our local vendors for a presentation. Jason Kimenker of Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc. happily accepted my last minute invitation to present at our meeting. Brainchild has two PC retail stores at which you can purchase a full variety of PC hardware and software. Of course Brainchild goes further than your average PC retail store since they take national, corporate, state and federal orders. One of the stores is located in Tampa at 1910 W. Busch Blvd., and one in St. Pete. Jason, from the Tampa store, will bring miscellaneous hardware and software items to show. Additionally, he will discuss the basics of what to look for when buying a current PC. Jason will also review what add-on products for your PC you should be considering to purchase. These may be hot items to get for the upcoming holidays. This will be the first time that we actually have a variation of hardware to show. This meeting will be a great opportunity to ask detailed questions about hardware and software.

BARGAIN TABLE -
Hey want to help yourself and the Tampa PC User Group? Well at this month's meeting we will have a bargain table chock full of miscellaneous PC items for sale. The table will be located on the South side of the Ybor room. The items have been acquired through donations from vendors and fellow members. Pass by this table and see if you can find your bargain. If you have an item sitting at home or work that is of no value to you, bring it to the meeting and donate it. We can put it on the bargain table at a future meeting.

NEW MEMBERSHIP RATES -
For over five years our membership rates have stayed the same. However, the cost of operating the TPCUG has grown and the membership count has not increased enough to offset that cost. Paying for meeting space and insurance are just some of the new expenses we incurred this year. Of course additional moneys have been spent over the years to run and maintain the BBS, produce brochures and newsletters just to mention a few items. Having said all that, the Board of Directors has decided to raise the dues effective January 1995. You can avoid paying that higher rate by renewing your membership early. If you wish you can renew for more than one year. Look at your mailing label attached to your newsletter. If it has 95 on it then you are a prime candidate for early payment. Just renew your membership at the meeting or by mail, using the current rates, by the end of November 1994. Mail renewal must be postmarked before the 1st of December 1994. We will add to your renewal date based on the number of years you renewed. For those of you that have a December 94 renewal year on your label and wish to avoid the rate increase, we must receive your renewal payment before year end 1994. All rates will be raised $5.00 except for the corporate rate which will be raised $10.00.

ELECTIONS -
Once again elections for the board of directors are around the corner. At the December meeting you will vote for the 1995 board of directors. It is time to think about the nominations for office.

Harvey P. Bruneau

Our Apology to Brainchild Computer Distributions

We erred in our August and September newsletters by identifying this fine firm as 'Brainchild (Software Dist.)". Their Correct name is Brainchild Computer Distributions, of course. They have been a friend of this user group and its members for some time, providing software donations and quality computer products. (full line hardware and software) and services at a very competitive prices.

Brainchild Computers Distributions, you would think that the least we could do is get your name correct. We do apologize! and a big **THANK YOU for being our friend.**



It is SLOOOWLY rising....
CAN YOU HELP?

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
WinSense - the Windows Optimizer
AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows
Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
Little Monstor at School - Interactive, Animated Stories for Children
Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing
Magic Theatre - Easy way for kids to create, narrate, and animate their own computer movies ages 6&up.
CA$HGRAF Office Plus - The World's Most Powerful Single-Solution Office Software!
PC Tools for Windows Ver 2.0 -Control and expand the power of Windows.

(Contact Marylee or Harvey @ 985-3338 if you are interested in doing a review article for the newsletter on any of the above software.)

Software Review:
Quicken Companion for Windows Version 2

Home Inventory, Stock Quotes & Tax Estimator add-ons to Quicken 3/Windows



-Required: 100% compatible (or IBM), 2MB RAM, Windows 3.1 running in Standard or Enhanced mode, at least 5MB space on hard drive, Windows supported monitor and printer.
-OPTIONAL(but highly recommended): Quicken for Windows, Version 3.
-Test installation: Pentium 90, 16MB RAM, Windows for Work Group 3.11 Enhanced, 1 GB space available. HP 4 laser jet.

QUICKEN HOME INVENTORY

Quicken Companion for Windows is another highly friendly and valuable piece of software from Intuit. Before doing anything I read the manual and again found it to be clear and easy to read. Also learned about the advisability to use it in conjunction with Quicken for Windows.

First I wanted to take a look at the program in a stand alone mode. Since the test bed was brand new and did not have Quicken loaded, this was ideal. And I had a good comparison to go with because I already have a complete inventory in QPRO for DOS.

Anytime a company says you can inventory your home in one hour, you have to be skeptical. Not believing them, I followed their recommendation and two hours later I was done with the first step. What they actually recommend is remembering everything you can in each room, then printing a copy and go to that room to fill in what you missed. And is it surprising how much you forget you have!

A big reason for a home inventory is insurance, and since we live in the hurricane belt, with a few tornadoes thrown in for good measure, this program will be very valuable. And then you also have fire and burglary. So when you are done, make sure you have a safe place off premises to keep a copy of the records.

In the opening screen, choose a location by clicking the arrow by 'View by Location' and you get about twenty suggestions. Start with the room you are sitting in and just plug away. Click in the 'Item Category' box, click on the down arrow on the right side and you will get a drop down menu of 25 or so suggested categories - furnishings, electronics, decorations, etc. Choose one and list all the things you can see in your room. Click in the 'Item Description' box, click on the detail button on the right, and another pop down menu gives you many items. Or you can just type your item in, which is what I did later on because it was so much faster.(Like 'Table, dining, walnut')

Being well versed in Windows, I then pressed the Tab Key twice to go to the 'Replacement Cost' field. Here, Intuit shows how friendly they are with users, because in a preferences box we'll talk about later, you can choose to move between fields by pressing the Enter Key! (I avoid the Enter Key like the plague - get into more trouble with Enter than any other key except Del.) Type in your estimate of the replacement cost, especially if your insurance policy has that provision.

> For instance, to replace our solid walnut dining room table today probably would cost $1,500 or $2,000. We can seat ten comfortably. When we bought it 37 years ago, the whole dining room set cost $295, yet our table is in like-new condition. We have pictures of it so we can discuss the replacement cost with the adjustor if we have a catastrophe.

When you next press the Tab Key to go to the 'Resale Value' field, a dollar figure is already suggested. You can override it, but in the preferences box you can set the percentage rate for each item.

Then press the Tab Key again and you are ready for the next item. It is a simple as falling off a log.

So after doing all the rooms I could think of I thought about the details. We have lots of boxes, probably sixty or seventy with things we use occasionally. They are in the attic, on a storage shelf, in the garage, in closets, etc. What do you do with them? Since I have them all in QPRO, I decided to leave them there temporarily, but listed QPRO as a source and entered the value carried in that file. But I added new boxes because I was cleaning up, and very easily added 'Box994A' and listed its contents. Then 'Box994B' and listed its contents, etc. Since some of those contents are current software programs, I went to the item and was able to add the serial number, the number of disks in the set, etc. You can completely describe each individual item to your hearts content.

And now, preferences, which makes the program so personalized for you. Click in the 'Preferences' box and you get a dialog box with many choices.

Suggested Item List Preferences

-Use suggested values for new items? (Default is on)

-Automatically set Resale Value: (Default is on)

- % of replacement cost (Default is 50%)

So in the above you have control and can make changes.

Inventory List Preferences

-There are several items in here for warnings and I suggest they all be left turned on (the default)

-Show cents in currency fields (Default is off)

General Preferences

-Treat the Enter Key as a tab. (Default is On) If you are not used to Windows programs, I suggest you leave this one on.

-Remind to backup on exit. (Default is On)

Since I am a backup freak I recommend you leave this on and have a floppy disk available at all sessions to put the backup data on a removable source.

-Default Insurance Policy (Default is Homeowner)

If you are doing cars, or boats, or business computers you can change to that policy for each session.

See **Quicken** *Continued on page 6*

Quicken... *Continued from page 5*

There are many additional assets, such as numerous reports, lists, inventory valuations, and even the ability to update the inventory directly from Quicken. Say you bought a new projection television. When you enter the purchase data, you can tell Quicken to update Home Inventory. How simple can it get?

Recommendations:

A superb program! After I did this as a stand alone package, I loaded Quicken 3 for Windows into the Pentium, told Companion to update Q/W 3, which then was automatically opened, checked the Home Inventory Menu and there it was. Beautiful.

Have Quicken loaded before you start, then follow the manual and YOU will have your first cut at your home inventory within an hour, just like they say.

QUICKEN QUOTES

Added requirement: Modem.

-Quicken for Windows, Version 3 installed.

-An online service: You can use Quicken Quotes Hotline or CompuServe basic services account if you a user.

Since the test bed is not equipped with a modem yet, the package will be valuated at a later date. A couple of points, though, for your thinking purposes.

The Quicken Quotes Hotline is a 900 phone number with a cost of about $1.00 per minute. If you are a CompuServe customer, there is no added charge, because the Quotes Hotline actually uses CompuServe to get the quotes.

If you update your portfolio on a weekly basis from the Hotline, the program is so well designed your cost will probably be very reasonable, since the quotes will be retrieved very fast.

A very valuable part of the package is: before accessing Quicken Quotes Hotline, you get a dialog box telling you the costs! You must click okay before you incur any costs. If you are confident you are correct, you have the option of turning the warning dialog box off for future use. Might be wise to leave it show every time, especially if you have expert grandchildren who know how to use your programs.

QUICKEN TAX ESTIMATOR

Version 2

Options: Recommend you use this after you have installed Quicken Version 3 for Windows. It does not work with earlier versions of Quicken, nor with the Version 1 Tax Estimator.

Bad news from 1993 for me, my estimated taxes cost me a bundle, plus a penalty for the first time. So I explored this one first, just to see how things are going. They are not going as well as I would like, because I **am** under withholding.

Good news for 1994, though, thanks to the Tax Estimator, I now have time to adjust the withholding so at least I don't get a penalty.

One of the reasons for all this uncertainty is the impact of three things: Social Security earnings, earnings from businesses, and wages. I forgot that last year up to 50% of Social Security earnings were taxable, and this year that goes to 85%. And I did not think I was earning enough to worry about that, but I was wrong. It touches very deeply low in the middle class.

But the 1994 tax structure in effect today is going to wallop me and it will you if you have anything other than wages earned with withholding helping you. And you can get the answers you need by using the tax estimator!!

You can even use the what-if strategy available. Plug in an annuity coming due and decide what impact it will have on 1994 taxes whether you cash it in, in 1994 or 1995. The same for capital gains. They are called scenarios in the program.

Although you can fill in all the boxes without Quicken installed, which I did, you can import data you need for a calculation and you should have it available.

Choose the filing status that applies to you - single, married - joint, etc. Choose one of four options: 1993 old, 1993 new, 1994 old, or 1994 new.

Quicken warns you that it is you (and your accountant or attorney) who is responsible for using the correct rates. And you can click on the rates button and modify the rates if changes take place before you file. Of course, this is just an estimator - you can't file tax returns from this package.

You enter the wages and salaries for both you and your spouse, if applicable, directly into the box. They should be easy to forecast.

For the other entries, you click on the title box and it gives you another dialog box. For instance, Interest & dividend income, you enter the estimated taxable amounts, then click OK and they are carried to the totals sheet. The same for Business income, capital gains, etc. The catch all is Other Income. This is where you list Social Security (the taxable portion, if you can figure it out. Very complicated!), pensions, etc.

As you add all this data, the estimated tax is automatically calculated. Tells you your marginal and average rate and has a table for estimated payments made and balance due. Comes January 15th 1995, I am not going to be happy, but I am not going to get back into a penalty state.

If you have Quicken installed as recommended, and if your data is all entered in detail, all that data can be imported directly into the tax estimator and it goes into the correct account after you review it for accuracy.

Another big plus for Intuit! This package is a boon to anyone with income from more than one source, or has special tax treatment - in other words can not use the 1040 easy form.

Quicken Companion for Windows Version 2 - Price: $25.00 at CompUSA.

Intuit, P.O. Box 3014, Menlo Park, CA 94026 (415) 322-0573 Support (415) 858-6051 ❓❓❓❓

User's Corner:

SMARTDRV CACHE. At the end of your PC day, enter the following command at the DOS prompt: SMARTDRV /S to see the number of hits and misses. Divide the number of hits by the number of misses. If the number is 6 or higher, it's doing a good job; if the number is usually 5 or lower, consider increasing the minimum cache size.

To cache the CD-ROM drive, be sure that MSCDEX is loaded before SMARTDRV. To see if the CD-ROM is being cached, check it's drive letter under the information shown by the SMARTDRV command.

.....Ed Buzza, TPCUG

Software Review:
Science Adventure

by Knowledge Adventure

Review by: Jo Ciccarello,
Tampa PC Users Group

Knowledge Adventure's " Science Adventure" does indeed meet up to it's credo: Learning through Discovery". Unfortunately, the user has to discover some basic operations by discovery instead of through clear documentation. The program itself is chock full of seemingly endless scientific and historic information. It is a maze of curious and wonderful facts and science. To the younger user, (my child is five which is 1 year younger than the recommended age) the program loses its charm after several minutes. It is too confusing, too hard to figure out on its own. The manual, even with an adult's aid, is short on functional usefulness and long on cute verbiage. The adult user can get around this, but I'm afraid the younger ones are going to find it too hard to mess with and lose interest.

Perhaps part of the problem is my configuration or my sound card. The manual does list what sound drivers will cause what problems. Unfortunately, my card fell into one of the categories listed. Consequently, when there is spoken word and video playing, my card will not handle both at once. I usually get video first, then the audio.

Let me tell you what the program requires and what I used it with. This may guide you to determining whether you are able to try the program. The box lists the age range as 6 years to adult. It works with DOS or windows, the version I worked with is the CD-ROM version. There is some loading/installing of software from the CD and you do have to keep the CD in the reader as you use the program. It REQUIRES: a MPC CD-ROM drive, 9 MB hard disk space, 540 Kb RAM available, color VGA or SVGA, PC/MS-DOS 3.1 or higher, 386 PC or higher. It RECOMMENDS: a mouse, a sound card and a 486 PC. It lists that it supports PC Speaker, Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, DSP Solutions, Logitech, Pro Audio, Disney, Microsoft, ATI, Covox, Artisoft, Aria*, Gravis* and other compatible sound sources. (* When set in Sound Blaster emulation mode)

My system is a hodge podge of various brand peripherals. My PC is a 486sx Packard Bell Executive model. It has a split hard drive with a total of 230 megs memory and 8 megs of RAM. I use DOS version 6.2 and windows 3.1. My CD-ROM is a NEC CDR-25 Express model. The manual instructs you to be sure that your CD-ROM supports ISO 9660 but I could find nothing in my literature from NEC whether mine supports it. I took my chances. I'm not even sure what that is. I took a look in a Computer Shopper article and still found it unclear but they made it sound as if any CD-Reader made recently is compatible. The sound card I have is a Cardinal Sound Studio. Its emulation is the AdLib driver. Hence the problems.

Installation was easy. Instructions were accurate. Being a CD it was naturally write protected. It does allow drive and directory selection. It automatically configures your system and tells you what the old file's name will be called. Documentation for installation was accurate and helpful. Documentation on the program itself was fair as you will hear about.

There are numerous aspects to this program. When you first get on board you come to an opening screen, the audio is a pleasing-to-the-ear melody. In the center there is a small picture of what they term as the lab, where you can go back to start in a different direction or avenue to knowledge seeking. What you find yourself in is a circular room, with many doors/panels/kiosks that you can point yourself in and by using the arrows on your keyboard or your mouse, you can send yourself through to that one's adventurous knowledge laden experience. (One thing that was extremely frustrating to me was that although the manual states on page 7 how to exit from any of the rooms to the lab, it is not until page 21 that it tells you - in a not very highlighted way - how to actually leave the program. AND for those of us who like to try any of the other tried and true usual ways of exiting a programs, let me assure you that it is not any of those! It is Alt-X or Alt-F4. You can exit through a door, it is the one that has a stylized "G" over it. And by the way, to get back to the lab while in the middle of an experience, all you have to do is press ESC twice.)

There are 23 different exercises in science finding that you can experience. Some are games, some are merely demonstrations, some are elaborate yet entertaining slide shows. All are enjoyable. Here are brief descriptions of what you are in for:

1) The Mobius Strip. This demonstration shows what looks like an infinity symbol. You are able to follow the path on this ribbon which proves it only has one side.

2) Living Blackboard. Shows basic demonstrations of pi, x/y graphs but runs short of explaining practical applications of each.

3) Microscope. Has 24 different slides to view as if under a real microscope. Subjects range from AIDS to the Weevil.

4) Threads of Science. 166 different thread subjects from Accidental Discoveries to X-rays. a button can bring you to another type of adventure: the Science Reference. Subjects have a timeline, a category, a globe to reference where you are talking about. It even has an adult and a young adult level of text written for you to choose from. It can also show you several examples of the topic discussed.

5) Prism. Explores light through different shaped prisms and colors.

6) Bogus Scientist Game. A barred Door leads you to the Bogus Scientist Game. You start in a library with busts of different scientist who have facts for you to listen to. Unfortunately, in this game, when the text runs out at the bottom of the text box there is no way to get the rest of the text. Although the audio does give you the complete text. You must go to the convention rooms to actually play

See **Science**..*Continued on page 8*

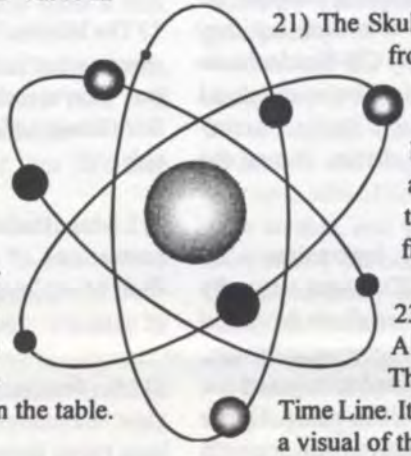
the game where various figures, when you click on them, will tell you a different science fact. If it is not true and you click on the police robot on the wall and catch them in the act, you get points. You later go to another room to cash in your points for another adventure.
J

7) Science Quiz. You can score points with correct answers to various questions asked of you. A multiple choice scenario. Students with correct answers get a cartoon show for their reward.

8) Music. Shows you sound patterns when clicking in different points of the picture that simulate various sounds.

9) Coil Magnet. An interesting aspect of physics, but this kiosk doesn't really explain it fully for my taste.

10) Periodic Table of Elements. Shows each of the elements, gives their pertinent information and arrangement on the table.



11) Globe. Shows by country, subjects of discovery nature are highlighted. You can rotate an image of the globe and click on a selection to hear the featured discovery.

12) The Exit Program door. Has a stylized "G" on it. That's it. You have to guess.

13) The Orbit. Movie shows the moon orbiting the earth while the earth orbits the sun.

14) The Pendulum. Shows the effect of weight, length and gravity on a pendulum. 12 different situations shown in a movie format.

15) A Roller coaster. A movie of a simulated roller coaster ride. Shows speed, weight, and barf quotients.

16) Gears. Shown on a bicycle, the higher the difference in ratio of the gears, the faster the speed although the higher the force needed to achieve that speed.

17) Time Line. Also accessible through Threads of Science, it is information along a timeline.

18) Hyper Gallery. Wall photos allow you to quickly access related information.

19) Pulleys. A cute animated movie about how compound pulleys facilitate lifting.

20) The Heart. Zoom in on the human heart and its various parts.

21) The Skull. Examine the skull from different angles.

22) Stonehenge. A brief information about and examination of Stonehenge from different angles.

23) Science Reference. Also accessible from Threads of Science and Time Line. It allows you audio and a visual of the topic.

24) Science Theatre. As if you are in an actual theatre, the curtains part and you are given the choice of 102 different movies to watch while a description of each is given. (This is where I could not hear the audio while the visual was going on, I usually got audio after visual.)

The program is not bad, it is, as I stated earlier, packed full of information. It just gets frustrating when even the on screen help is not entirely clear. For instance, when in the room for the game, Find the Bogus Scientist, the help lists a robot button to press to get the answer as part of the play of the game, what is not actually written in the manual or expressed audibly is that you have to be in a second room, not in the library where the scientist busts are, to get that button to show up on the screen. Only in experimenting and generally nosing around the program do you eventually come across it.

One thing to it's credit, the manual does list a 24-hour Bulletin Board System phone number for you to gain access to commonly asked technical questions and answers and be able to download new drivers, order new products or even register your products. The cost is only for the call.

All in all, I would recommend this product for its content, but not especially for its clarity of use. A warning, if you're the type of person that requires everything to be spelled out for you, get ready for a major frustration headache. If not, enjoy the adventure of figuring it out!

The program lists for about $49.00 on the street. The version is 2.0 and the address of Knowledge adventure is 4502 Dyer Street, La Crescenta, CA 91214. Phone (818) 542-4200.

Software Review:
Power Pak for Windows

by PC-Kwik
Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

Have you wanted to cache your CD-ROM, your printer, your screen, or your floppy drive to make them operate faster? Or speed up Windows loading? Have you wanted to replace Smartdrive or wished typing while printing in Windows was not such a jerky experience? Struck any nerves yet? Improving PC performance while operating in Windows (and DOS) is what Power Pak for Windows is all about.

Power Pak for Windows installation is a little technical, but help screens are available. Power Pak takes less than 2Mb of hard disk space and installed two programs (13Kb) into conventional memory and one (21Kb) into upper memory. These numbers could vary, depending on your system configuration.

The user manual is surprisingly thorough. I mean how complicated can a cache program be? Microsoft's DOS 6 manual gives Smartdrv less than three pages of

coverage and refers to the HELP screens for further enlightenment. Using HELP SMARTDRV at the DOS prompt within Windows resulted in the system rebooting. Anyway, the help screens contain info on the three Smartdrv parameters and 12 switches. Power Pak for Windows has 15 pages devoted to parameters - in the manual! The only documentation shortage noticed was when WINOPT (Windows Kwikload program) locked up the system (after using WINOPT and attempting to go back to Direct Access, a menu program). The manual does say that WINOPT need only be used once and then afterwards only when Windows programs are added or removed. This info solved the lockup problem.

Super PC-Kwik 6.0 works with DOS 6.2, but will it work with other programs such as Stacker 4 and QEMM 7? The manual says yes.

Support: Read the manual, try PC-Kwik's FaxBack Service, or call Technical Support by phone, CompuServe or the Internet.

Test Results: Our system has all the required system elements plus a CD-ROM and Bernoulli removable media drive. Our PC suits us, but may be a factor in testing a program that needs to work with a variety of software/hardware configurations. The results are only applicable to very similarly configured systems. That said, here are the results: Using the WINOPT, Windows optimizer program, Windows now loads in 13 seconds, three seconds faster than before!

I used Knowledge Adventure's Speed CD movie to test the CD-ROM cache and detected little improvement in performance. The sound was still good, while the video was good when there were small amounts of movement on the screen, if background movement was involved then the video was jerky. Speed is a DOS program and maybe it was made jerky, even with the KwikScreen hardware option there was no improvement in the video. However, there was a noticeable improvement in WordPerfect for Windows 5.2. Moving around in documents has more snap. I like it!

Testing print speed in Windows is an interesting endeavor. Using WordPerfect with or without Power Pak, the printing started almost immediately after the print windows were done. Returning to work on a document was much improved when using Power Pak. There was much less printer hesitation while typing. Power Pak almost makes Windows multitaskable.

A cache for the Bernoulli drive, added manually, took only 224 bytes of RAM. Most of the programs on the Bernoulli are DOS based and seemed to work as fast as programs running off the hard drive. This is good, the Bernoulli has a much slower access time.

During one testing session QModemPro for Windows failed to initialize the modem with Power Pak operational. Although RIPterm (DOS) seemed to work fine, there are many variables that could have caused this one time glitch. Incoming FAX capabilities were being tested (lesson here: only test one product at a time) and it turned out that the phone lines were reversed (Phone to Telco socket and Telco to Phone socket) when the surge protector malfunctioned. Silly computer!

Options: Super PC-Kwik, the main cache program, will also work with DOS. Power Pak also includes a Remove program to remove Power Pak if needed.

Evaluation: More attentive manual reading would have saved the hassles of READ.ME file searching and CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT tinkering. This was the result of using WINOPT, as mentioned previously, before understanding how it works.

Nobody likes to wait while the computer does it's stuff and PC-Kwik's Power Pak for Windows helps speed up the processing. Using a disk cache means the disk drive is physically used less, so your drives live longer. Clicking on the Super PC-Kwik Meter tells you how much less your disks are being used. Checking right now revealed the cache buffer size is 2592K (8 Mb RAM) and there were 4973 logical transfers and 1607 physical transfers for a savings of 3366 transfers. Think of that over the life of your hard drive! Highly recommended!

System Requirements: 386, 486 or Pentium, Windows 3.1, 2Mb hard disk space, 4 Mb RAM recommended, KwikScreen requires a Super VGA monitor capable of running in 256-color mode with a non-accelerated video card.

Cost and availability:$45.95 + $5 S & H through PC Connection.

PC-Kwik Corp., 15100 SW Koll Parkway, Beaverton, OR 97006-6026, (503) 644-5644 FAX (503) 646-8267.

October Special for TPCUG members: Power Pak for Windows or Power Pak for DOS can be purchased for $39.95 plus $6.50 S & H or Super PC-Kwik Disk Cache 6.0 by itself for $19.95 plus S & H by calling PC-Kwik at 1-800-333-7259 and using the order code "5A1" to get the special discount. This offer is good til the end of October.

A helpful WindowsTip From the Monterey Bay PC Users Group:

If you start encountering system errors when installing a new piece of software in Windows it may be due to a peculiarity in your SYSTEM.INI file. Before calling Tech Support, use your SYSEDIT to look at your SYSTEM.INI file.

Double-click on the SYSEDIT icon in Program Manager and then select SYSTEM.INI. Click on Search/Find. In the Find box, enter a [and click on Next. Keep clicking on Search and Next, each time making sure that each line enclosed in [...] has a blank line above it. Whereever a blank line is lacking, enter one and contineu until the end of SYSTEM.INI. If there were any [...] brackets enclosing a word group without a blank line above, that was probably your proble. Save the altered file and exit Windows. When you re-start Windows, you'll probably find that your problem is gone.

Software Review: Integrity Master

by Stiller Research

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

"Oh no, Bob just used my machine! It took me a week to figure out what he did last time!"

"Hey George, I had a disk with Maltese Amoeba over the weekend."
"Great. I recently saw African Queen. That Bogart is a great actor!"

Have you ever wanted to keep track of what files come and go from your system? Or know more about the dreaded "V" word, but didn't know who to ask? Integrity Master (IM) can track your system and give you an update on changes at anytime, give you a list of all the changed files since the last time you made a report and let you know if there are any virus-like changes. IM will check your memory, boot sectors, FAT tables, and all the files on your system.

Installation is easy and IM can be used from a floppy for better security. The interface is user friendly, I didn't need the manual to complete a scan of all the drives.

The 128 page manual, Defeating Viruses and Other Threats to Data Integrity, is divided into two parts. The first deals with using IM and the second, data integrity and viruses. Plenty of information is packed on each page and there's an index for quick reference.

Support: A text file is included with a short questionnaire to help gather information if contact is needed from Stiller Research or Advanced Support Group (faster, but more expensive than Stiller).

Test Results: Keeping track of what files are added to the system rates pretty high for me. If a shareware program doesn't work out, it is great to be able to know exactly which files to delete so there will be enough room for the next batch. The scanning process seems quick, considering virus presence is checked simultaneously.

Limitations: Some anti-virus programs create a database file of all the files in each directory. IM creates a small file in each directory (like MS DOS 6's Anti-Virus CHKLIST.MS). The documentation says these can be hidden, but is not recommended. This is a red flag that you are using an anti-virus or security program, but the files are encrypted so that only IM can figure them out.

Options: Upgrades are available on an annual ($45) or one time ($5) basis. IM also comes with a program called RunMaybe that will execute a program, DOS command, or batch file on specific days. RunMaybe a backup program?

Evaluation: My confidence level is high on this product. I've not had (to this date) any trouble with viruses, but if that day comes, IM is ready to take 'em on. I use IM to keep tabs on the departure and arrival of files regularly. Highly recommended for control of your system and peace of mind from viruses.

System Requirements: DOS 2.0 or later, 256K free memory

The shareware version is I-MSHARE.ZIP and is on many bulletin boards. To register and receive the latest version and the manual, send $35 plus $4.50 S&H to the address below.

Stiller Research, 2625 Ridgeway St., Tallahassee, FL 32310-5169 Sales: (800)788-0787 or (904)574-0920. FAX: (904)574-7884. Stiller Research can also be reached through the Internet, Genie, CompuServe and Prodigy.

Special Offer!

Kurta Corporation for the Kurta PenMouse Tablet along with CorelDRAW 3.0. The number to call is 1-800-562-0010. This offer is available in the US and Canada. Pricing is $234.95 for the CDROM Version and $259.95 for the Diskette/CDROM Version. This offer expires October 31/94. Please quote offer KAA111XX.

The Next Windows

By: Larry Ogintz, Editor, of the PC 101 Monitor, Millburn, NJ

You have to give credit to Microsoft. Despite the fact that Windows 3.1 and MS-DOS operating systems run on an estimated 140 million PCs worldwide, they want to get rid of them. But, they have something new in store for everyone. The newest version of Windows, code-named "Chicago" is on the way. And if it works like it's supposed to, say good-bye to your old operating systems.

Whether you love or hate Microsoft and their products, they spend an enormous sum on usability testing and devote a lot of attention to customer feedback. What they discovered was something that most people already knew. Using a computer was hard. The operating systems were anything but intuitive and easy to use. In fact, according to their own lab tests, it took a novice user over nine minutes to figure out how to start Notepad, a simple Windows application, without any prompting. Not exactly an endorsement for a supposedly "easy to learn and use" graphical interface. Enter Chicago.

Chicago is a complete overhaul of Windows. It will be a completely self-contained operating system, not just a graphical interface for DOS. The best part is, it will run on a 386 computer with as little as 4 megs of RAM! The mission for Chicago developers was to maintain backward compatibility for most of the computers out there. Of course, if you have a Pentium with 32 Megs of RAM, so much the better.

The biggest change will be that you will no longer require MS-DOS. Chicago will in fact produce a better environment for your DOS applications. This will be accomplished through what's called, "Zero Conventional Footprint Components." Some DOS programs do not run under Windows due to the fact that by the time you load DOS-based device drivers (CD-ROMS, SCSI drivers, etc.), TSRs (Terminate and Stay Resident) and maybe some network drivers, you wouldn't have enough conventional memory (the first 640 kilobytes of

See **Chicago.** *Continued on page 11*

Chicago...*Continued from page 10*

memory) to run your program. Chicago will provide 32-bit protected-mode components that will replace many of the 16-bit real-mode components now being used, which will provide the same type of working environment while improving overall system performance. And, it will use NO conventional memory! In some cases, this can free up to 225 K of conventional memory for use! Plus, DOS windows will be able to use mouse support and True-Type fonts.

Perhaps the biggest plus for computer users will be "Plug and Play." Microsoft estimates that over fifty percent of custumer support is related to the installation of new components such as sound boards, video cards, modems, etc. The goal of Plug and Play is: install a new hardware device and it will work. This is a formidable task. Under Chicago, all devices will be configured automatically. You will never (hopefully) have to deal with interrupts, IRQs (interrupt requests), DMA (Direct Memory Access) channels, etc. On boot-up, Chicago will detect and configure your devices. Just imagine the time saved in this one area. This is supposed to work with all currently used hardware and as manufacturers start to make hardware that complies with the Plug and Play standard, it will be even easier.

Of course, speed, robustness and ease of use are some of the other areas addressed by Chicago. Chicago is a 32-bit operating system with some 16-bit com-ponents necessary to run some of today's applications. If you have an application that is written as a 32-bit program, it will run extremely fast and efficient under Chicago. Also, many components such as printing, video functions and other basic computer functions will be written as 32-bit (rather than current 16-bit models) which will speed these tasks tremendously. For example, under Chicago, when you send a document to the printer, you will almost immediately be able to resume any other task while printing.

With its 32-bit engine, Chicago becomes what is called a preemptive multitasking environment. Basically, this will provide protection form errant applications when you have more than one program running. For example, if you had a spreadsheet, word processor and DOS game running at the same time, and one program crashed, the other programs will be protected and all that would be necessary would be a "local reboot". Previously, under Windows, if a Windows program crashed, you sometimes had to reboot your computer because the errant program would not give up resources (those little 64K heaps of memory that constantly plague Windows users). A preemptive multi-tasking environment provides true protected-mode usage. This should almost certainly do away with General Protection Faults, the leading cause of crashes under Windows.

This should almost certainly do away with General Protection Faults, the leading cause of crashes under windows.

Ease of use is addressed by a completely new interface. Gone on start-up will be the ubiquitous Program Manager (although Program Manager and File Manager will be retained for compatibly and for transition purposes), and in its place will be a neat, clean screen with a Taskbar on the bottom with a Start button. As applications are opened, an icon and description are added to the Taskbar to allow for smooth transition from program to program.

Many other changes are logical, For example, a new display icon located in the Control Panel will handle everything related to displays. This includes changing video resolutions, a function previously found illogically under Windows Setup. A new feature, Explorer, will replace File Manager. This has been described by Microsoft as "File Manager on Steroids". Power users will love this. Explorer will be totally customizable with all kinds of searches possible. Use of the right mouse button will bring up context-sensitive menus from almost every area of Chicago. Help screens will have a "?" icon that, when dragged to a certain area of your help screen, will invoke a wizard that will take you step-by-step through your task. Also added: support for long file names. You will be able to use file names of up to 255 characters in length (although the ancient 8.3 naming format can be used for DOS compatibility).

Chicago is still in the beta test stage. Microsoft hopes to release it by the end of 1994. When it arrives, it should change the face of computing just like Windows 3.1 did. In short, if Chicago works like it's supposed to, computers should be easier to use, more powerful and more fun. This will open up computing to even more users while making it easier for novices and beginners. Microsoft ain't dumb!

Author Information:

Larry Ogintz is the Editor of the PC 101 Monitor, the newsletter of PC 101User's Group. He is a Gemologist/Jewelry Appraiser in Millburn, NJ and President of his family's business. He has been using personal computers since 1988 and is a WordPerfect Certifed Resource. Larry works with PC 101 as its Director of Training, training members of the User Group in many applications. (356 Millburn Ave. / Millburn, NJ 07041)

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NOMINATIONS NEEDED

It's that time of year again! Time to nominate your choice for officers of the Tampa PC Users Group. Only this year, more than one officer has expressed their desire to no longer hold office. Some of the officers have held their positions for several years and feel that maybe it is time to inject some new blood into the management of our association. So, as members of our users group it will be up to you to nominate a full slate of officers.

Any full member may nominate any other member for office. Nominations will be taken during our October and November meetings and the slate will be published in the newsletter. The election of officers shall be held during the meeting in December. All full members present at the December meeting will be able to vote.

Below please find a description of the duties for each of the officers.

1. **President**: The president shall foster and promote direction, leadership, education, and organizational goals. The president shall act as the legal head and chief administrative officer; exercise supervision of the corporation and its activities; represent and speak for the organization; preside at meetings of the members; appoint and discharge committees; sign letters or documents necessary to carry out the mission of the organization; and preside as the chair of the Board of Directors.

2. **Vice President**: The vice president shall assume the duties of the president in the event the president is absent or incapacitated or at the request of the president. {and} the vice-president automatically} becomes president {up}on the death, resignation, or permanent incapacity of the president.

3. **Secretary**: The secretary shall serve as the chief recording and correspondence officer and the custodian of the records of the corporation. The secretary shall take such steps as necessary to prepare and certify the correctness of member and Board of Directors meeting minutes; preserve all records, reports, and official documents of the corporation except for those specifically assigned to the custody of others; sign official documents to attest to their authenticity; and carry on the official correspondence of the corporation as directed, except for those matters assigned to other officers.

4. **Treasurer**: The treasurer is responsible for the collection of funds, their safe deposit, and the expenditure of all funds for the organization; and for keeping an accurate record of the collections and expenditures. The treasurer shall submit a report at the Board of Directors meeting and prepare an annual report to the members. The treasurer shall issue payments for bills submitted to the corporation.

5. **Member at large**: The member at large shall serve in the capacity of an ombudsman for the members of the organization; propose a slate of candidates for the offices of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer; and perform such other duties as requested by the president. The member at large shall, to the best of one's ability, be accessible to the members and to bring to the attention of the Board of Directors those matters that the members do not wish, for whatever reason, to bring to the floor of the meeting.

The above elected officers as members of the Board of Directors of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc. shall appoint:

Education Officer
Newsletter Editor
Bulletin Board System Operator
Librarian

as well as other chairpersons and committees needed to fulfill the requirements of our corporate charter.

If you feel that its time for a change then stand up and let it be known at our next meeting. If you feel you or some other member qualify to serve as an officer, then take heart and take interest. This is YOUR association. Maybe its time YOU got involved. Its easy to pay your dues and sit back and let the same few people continue to provide for you. Maybe its time for YOU to get involved.

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We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Thomas Murphy

Barbara Murphy

Dennis Seeton

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect, CorelDraw Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3

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PC GAMES	8	29.95	18.95	n/a	n/a
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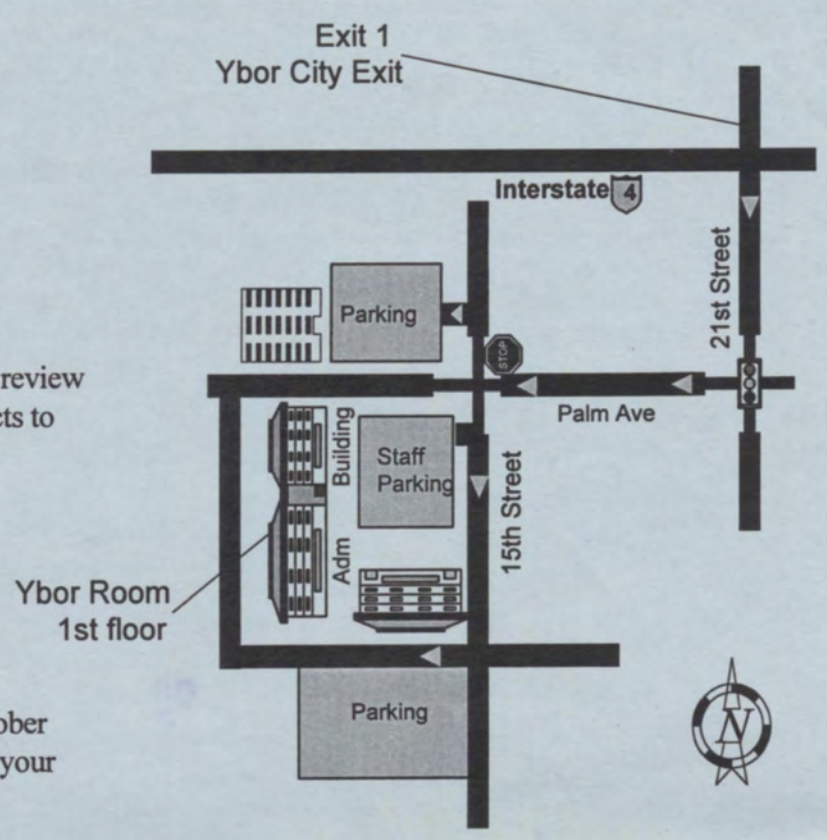
Don't Miss the October 12th meeting!

Presentation by:

Brainchild

Computer Distributions

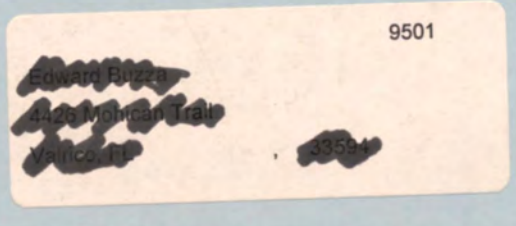
Discussions on the basics of buying a PC, and a review on the add-on hardware and software products to consider for your existing system.



TPCUG will have a **Bargain Table** at the October Meeting. Come early to shop and bring any of your PC donatables. Proceeds to TPCUG.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492

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Member

A Monthly Publication of the
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Bits of Blue

Vol. 7, No. 11 November, 1994

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: November 9th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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SPECIAL NOTICE: OS/2 SIG

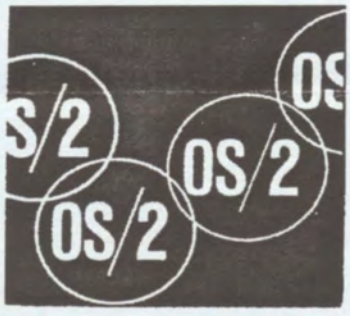
is scheduled for Tuesday, November 22nd at 6:00 p.m. in room 436 on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall.

November 9th AGENDA

Presentation by:

IBM

OS/2 Warp, Version 3



OS/2 Warp won the most important product award of Spring Comdex! *(And that was when it was still in Beta code.)*

UP COMING PRESENTATION:

December 14 - **Broderbund new products**

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES : Al Poole 876-9445
TREASURER:Tom Cone 224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
SECRETARY:Jim Clark 986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 224-9052

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

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	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.



Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 10/12/94 MEETING
and Personal Comments by
Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, wonders of wonders, it wasn't pouring down rain for this meeting. And it was a good session with a very interesting presentation — a look at some of the latest hardware on the market and where it is likely to go from here. Those that didn't make the meeting missed out on a lot of very interesting information and an excellent give and take.

USER GROUP NEWS

➧ MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASING: Harvey gave a brief summary of the decision the Board of Directors has taken in light of increasing user group costs — to increase annual membership dues by $5, except the corporate membership which will increase $10, all effective 1 January, 1995. Membership dues will then look like this: Regular Membership - $25; Family Membership - $35; HCC Student & Faculty - $20; Corporate Membership - $60 (includes 3 corporate personnel), with additional corporate personnel at $20 each.

New members joining between now and 1 January and renewals of memberships expiring before 1 January, 1994, will enjoy the current rate. Memberships expiring in 1995 may be renewed between now and 30 November, 1994, at the current rate. Beginning 1 January, however, all memberships and renewals will be subject to the above listed rates. All memberships renewing early will have one year tacked onto the expiration date of the current membership.

➧ CONSENSUS - EXPOTECH A FLOP: Harvey asked for opinions of the EXPOTECH in Tampa this year. This generated a good bit of discussion, most of which was that of disappointment at the reduction in booths this year and the scarcity of computer vendors of interest to the most of our membership; the bulk of the vendors provided services, some of which had little or no relationship with high technology.

➧ ELECTION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS: Nominations for the five elected TPCUG corporate officer will be open and solicited at the November 10 general meeting. Elections will take place early in the December 14 general meeting. Nominations may be made until just before the election at the December general meeting. The five elected corporate officers are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Member at Large. Newly elected officers will assume their positions effective 1 January 1994.

All members are asked to give the nominations some serious thought and to make their nominations at the November or December general meetings, or mail your recommended nominations to the TPCUG Nominating Committee at the TPCUG corporate address (shown on the last page of this newsletter).

See **Minutes** *Continued on page 3*

Minutes.. *Continued from page 2*

INDUSTRY NEWS: Probably the most important bit of information brought out is that the new OS/2, OS/2 Warp 3.0, has been released and is available for $79, before a $25 rebate. Pretty good price, I would say. One word of caution, however, is that if you are considering getting OS/2, be sure to check the compatibility listing IBM provides for OS/2 to make sure your hardware and software is compatible.

PRESENTATION — A Look At Some Of The Latest In Hardware.

Following notification by Gold Disk that they would be unable to make their scheduled presentation at this meeting, Harvey contacted Jason Kimenker, from our own Tampa/St. Petersburg Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc., to see if they could fill in. Like the proverbial "knight in shining armor", Lee Vaccaro and Jason responded to our short notice request and put together a presentation on some of the latest in computer hardware. What's more, Jason did an admirable job with the presentation. And as it turned out, I think it was one of the most interesting and informative sessions that we have had during the several years I have been a member — and I have missed but a very few of the general meetings.

I won't even attempt to summarize the information Jason passed on, but among the hardware Jason reviewed were: Modems; PCI technology, compared to VESA; CD-ROMs; Soundcards, especially in a current Microsoft Office bundle; AMD chips, compared to Intel; and the DX4/100 chip. Jason did an excellent job of reviewing these new products and was clearly well versed on them. His discussion was not only very informative and interesting, but it generated a lot of give and take with the membership. Some tid-bits that I will pass on are:

28.8 Modem: V.34 standard was approved earlier this year is now being put into 28.8 modems. Though it is currently available only in the Robotics Sportster, all manufacturers should have them out soon.

PCI Technology: If you are considering the purchase of a Pentium, be aware that the 60 MHz chip is giving the most trouble.

CD-ROM: The double speed CD-ROM is probably adequate for most of us, but you should consider the quad speed if you are into multimedia sound/video very much because it will provide near-movie quality. New controller cards are also coming out that will support up to 4 floppy drives, and 4 IDE drives one of which can be used for a CD-ROM. This will not only allow increasing the number of IDE drives one can operate, but can free up an expansion slot by eliminating the need for a separate card for the CD-ROM.

AMD Chips: Have proven at least as good as Intel chips and are considerably cheaper; like AMD has a DX2/80 MHz chip that sells for about the same as Intel 66 MHz chip. Also, a 586 line of chips will be out soon in competition with the Pentium line and is expected to be about $200 cheaper.

DX4/100: If considering purchase of this new technology, be sure the voltage of the chip is compatible with your motherboard; some of the earlier chips are 3.2 volts, while 5.0 volts is most common.

Jason and Lee, thank you - and Brainchild Computer - for a GREAT presentation and the most useful and helpful information you provided, not to mention your generous contributions for our door prizes.. We hope that you will agree to do give us a similar presentation again in the not-too-distant future.

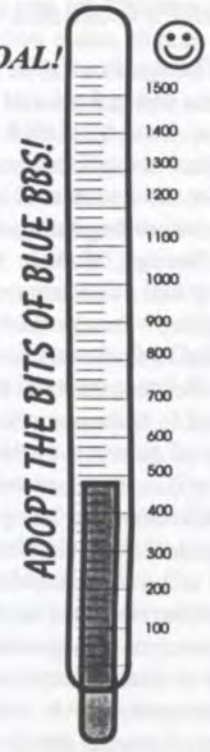
AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Lee Vaccaro and Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc., there were a several very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Joe Crochet	OS/2 2.1
Dave Claire	Printer stand & mouse pad
A.J Mester	Printer stand & 100 diskette box

In addition, J. Whitmer, S. Atron, Van Ost, M. Nicholson, R. Davis and J. Robinson won mouse pads.

The meeting adjourned at about 9 PM.



*Almost 1/3 there....**CAN YOU HELP?***
THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED!

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology

WinSense - the Windows Optimizer

AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows

Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)

Little Monstor at School - Interactive, Animated Stories for Children

Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing

Magic Theatre - Easy way for kids to create, narrate, and animate their own computer movies ages 6&up.

CA$HGRAF Office Plus - The World's Most Powerful Single-Solution Office Software!

MULTIMEDIA MAGIC CD - by Gold Disk - Everything you need to enjoy the magic of multimedia.

SHERLOCK - The ultimate filing and retrieval system for Windows.

LAPLINK for Windows - remote control and file transfer.

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

President's Column

The question goes something like, If a tree fell in the forest but no one was there to hear it , would there be a sound? OK, I can tell that you are wondering if I ate too much Halloween chocolate before beginning this article. Seriously though, if there was a user group but it had no officers would there be a user group? I really don't know and I don't want to find out. DO YOU? As you know elections for the 1995 officers will be held in December. At our October board of directors (BOD) meeting most of the current board members announced that they were not planning on serving again. How can this be you wonder? Well when you consider that most of the BOD has been serving the TPCUG for five years, you may get the picture. It takes some dedication to run the TPCUG. This dedication does, over time, consume some of your energy, personal time and business time. Unfortunately the BOD is not made up of Energizer Bunnies. We don't run on batteries, we do have families, jobs and enjoy life outside of computers when possible. There are less than ten people running the TPCUG. Perhaps if we had more members and help the TPCUG would not be faced with this situation. It is now time for some of you to step forward and either nominate yourself or find someone that will accept a nomination for the position of president, vice-president, treasurer, member at large or secretary. Of course the volunteer positions can be applied for also. Don't wait until its too late before you act.



October Meeting

All I can say is, it what a great meeting. See the Secretary's report for a more detailed recap. My thanks to Jason Kimenker of Brainchild Computer Distributions for his down to earth and candid presentation. This meeting embodied one of the basic concepts of a PC user group. Sharing and learning the PC knowledge. It was evident that we need to schedule more of these types of meetings.

Bargain table

The bargain table proved to be a success. We had well over one hundred computer related items for sale. From books to software and hardware, we had everything. Thanks to those of you who purchased the items and also to those of you which donated items for us to sell. We still have a lot of items left and have collected some additional items since the last meeting. Marylee will be selling these items again at a three family garage sale on November 12th at 3910 Mullein Ave in Tampa from 7AM-4PM. Proceeds from the sale of the items on the TPCUG table will go to the TPCUG. If you have computer related items that you would like to donate to the group for the garage sale, please bring them to the November meeting.

Christmas Items

Yes it is that time again. It seems like it was just yesterday that the programmers at our office were pulling down their Christmas lights from the ceiling sprinkler heads. With that in mind here are some items that you may want to consider for the Holidays.

1. CD ROM - A double speed with 200ms or faster access at under $300 should be the minimum followed by a quad speed under $500. I prefer a SCSI interface since it provides more growth potential. Look for these compatibility items; Multisession support, CD-Audio and Kodak Photo CD.

2. Sound - 16bit stereo or higher, MPC-2 compliant for under $200 and it should be a Sound Blaster model

3. Speakers - your choice. Unless you plan on playing your music CD collection on your computer you don't need high end speakers. If you want to listen to your music collection, play them on a $200 boom box not your $3000 computer.

4. CD ROM software - be careful here. There is a lot of junk CDs available. However, there is enough good software available to break your wallet. Before you buy, make sure your PC meets the recommended hardware and software requirements. A good multimedia software product can look bad on an inadequate PC. I would suggest a minimum of a 486.

Determine the intended audience and purpose for the software. Is it for education or recreation. For adult or kids. Many great educational software products are abandon by kids after a couple of hours because they are not game oriented. Some software may have too much violent content for small children. Look for interactive software that challenges your kids and gets them to use their brain not just a mouse or joystick. I guarantee you that a child will get more from interacting with a computer than watching the Lion King or Ghost Buster for the umpteenth time. It is your choice.

Products like Grolier's encyclopedia or Microsoft Encarta are very good products for the entire family and are available for under $100. If your are looking for clipart (10,000 images) from a major vendor with a minor price tag look at Corel Gallery for under $40. For great animated stories for kids look at the Broderbund Living Books series. Products like Little Monster At School are an excellent choice. If your into shootem-up games I highly recommend Comanche Maximum Overkill or Rebel Assault.

5. If your going to buy a modem stick with a 14.4 Kbps fax/modem as a minimum for under $150. I like the Practical Peripherals models. Keep in mind however that the new standard is v.34 (28.8Kpbs).

6. If a new computer is on your list then it better be no less than a 486/DX266. The preferred system is a 90Mhz Pentium. Either choice should come with VL-Bus or PCI, 8Mb, 300+Mb HD,

See **President's** *....Continued on page 5*

President's....*Continued from page 4*

Double speed CD-ROM, 16Bit sound, 15" monitor, Windows 3.11, DOS 6.22 a bunch of software and a THREE YEAR WARRANTY. Prices should range from under $2000 for 486 to less than $2500 for the Pentium. Of course if you wait till the Christmas of 95, that same Pentium will cost $1,000 less since it will be old technology by then.

Well that should provide you with enough ideas on what to get me for Christmas. Please remember that we need your nominations to begin by the next meeting. Also, don't forget the garage sale.

Harvey P. Bruneau

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

Our apology to **Don Meng**, who wrote the excellent software review article in last months issue titled: **Quicken Companion for Windows Version 2.** We did not include his name as the author of that wonderful article. Don is very proficient with the Quicken products and this is evident by his article. With 35 years experience in data processing, Don now teaches personal computer usage for the home and in School System Industry Services & adult education classes. He helped get SeniorNet, a program for people over 65 years old to learn computers, started at

---

LOTUSPHERE '95

WHAT: The second annual worldwide technical and business conference will showcase 120 "hands-on" in-depth tutorials and case studies of actual business implementations of all of Lotus' products including Notes, cc:Mail and SmartSuite.
WHEN: January 22-26, 1995
WHERE: Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel in Orlando, Florida.
WHO: Thousands of Lotus customers, including IS Managers, LAN Administrators and Business Managers, as well as Lotus Business Partners, including Professional Developers, Service Providers and Lotus Authorized Education Centers (LAECs). Last year's conference drew more than 2,000 Lotus attendees.
For more info call 1-800-OK-LOTUS.

Software Review
Graphics Tools!

Review by: James R. Hutton, Tampa PC User Group

As a PC programmer that likes to dabble with graphics I was very interested in looking at this package. Graphics Tools! lets you create easy-to-use media collections. It also boasts a sophisticated image editor and a screen capture program to help in creating the right look for your application.

To install this program you must have a IBM PCs 386 or higher, with 2MB RAM (4MB for image processing), 5-11MB hard disk space, VGA graphics card and monitor, mouse, Windows 3.1, and DOS 4.01 or higher. I found out that even though that I had a VGA monitor I still to upgrade my driver for the program to load. I did find the monitor driver on the local bulletin board. The install uses a very user friendly install program in which you click on the buttons for the option that you want. The documentation encourages you to make copies of your Graphics Tools! disks and store the originals in a safe place, and use your backups for the installation. The installer provides two options - "Complete Installation" and "Custom Installation." Complete Installation install Graphics Tools and all other files including imported/exported filters, clip art, and digitized images. This installation requires approximately 11 MB of hard disk space. Custom Installation lets you choose which applications and groups of files you want to install. This is for those that have limited hard disk space, or do not plan to use certain features within Graphics Tools!



Once the program was installed you can start using the different programs that come with the package. Media Manager is a catalogers that can be used to organize your images, clip art library, sounds, multimedia presentations, and application linked files. Each item added to a Media Manager collection is represented by a thumbnail bitmap in the Media Manager window. The Capture program allows you to Captures any window, pull-down menu, dialog, area, arbitrary area, or full screen with the push of a button. You can capture and save to a file, send it directly to the printer, or display the captured area in Image Tools or the Image Processor. If Capture is not open, it is launched and the setup dialog is displayed. I found out with most of the add on programs that if they were not loaded that the program would launch it. You can also click on the Capture icon from within the Command Bar to perform the same operation. The Convert feature supports conversion between dozens of different graphics file formats. There are a lot of supported file formats from vector file formats to bitmaps file formats to fax file formats. Batch processing allows you to convert one or more files to multiple formats at the same time. I was very impressed with this feature since I receive graphic in different format and have to convert to PCX or BMP format for the programs that I use. This program also supplies an Image Tools window for basic editing chores such as tracing and viewing images. The Image Processor allows you to perform more advance image processing functions, as well as provide scanner support, special effects, color control and manipulation, and other image manipulation features.
Also included with Graphics Tools! are; 700 clip images, and 150 professionally photographed digitized images. To access the clip art collections of the included CD, you need a CD-ROM drive and appropriate device drivers installed Graphics Tools! has Free and Unlimited service through DeltaPoint Technical Support They can be contacted by phone, fax, or through one of the On-line Service. For the price of this program it's hard to beat the capabilities of this program. Graphics Tools! puts a lot of image-processing and editing power in the hands of the Windows users. And in the burgeoning field of multimedia, program's media manager is just the tool one needs to get the job done.
DeltaPoint Inc., 2 Harris Court Suite B-1, Monterey, CA 93940-List Price $99.00 ❑❑❑❑

Software Review
The Discoverers

By Knowledge Adventure, Inc.
Review by: Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group



By now we know that Knowledge Adventure has programmed many of the best educational programs we have on disks or CD-Rom. My review is about the CD-Rom version. The Discoverers is one of the best programs Knowledge Adventure has put out. Though, I haven't seen all of them. The people at Knowledge Adventure might still surprise me. The program has so many movies about Discoverers around the world that my computer turns into a mini TV, except it is under my control to get more details on any subject. Also, the games with detailed descriptions of the discoverers (after I guessed and picked the right person) are a special treat that TV cannot give me.

We might call Knowledge Adventure programs educational, but to move around in them is pure fun and enjoyment. Did you know that beautiful paintings have been discovered in a cave in Spain? Painted on a rock ceiling by men 10,000 years ago? Did you know that dolphins cam watch television and



understand commands given to them by way of TV? Did you know about the hardship explorers had to go through to reach the Antarctica or to find a passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean? Do you want to be there when Columbus discovers this round world? These questions cover only a small portion of the vast information presented to you by way of movies, games, and detailed instructions.

Thanks to CD-Rom any discover story comes alive on your screen with beautiful clear sound and music, if a sound card is available on your system. A mouse is the best device to move around in The Discoverers. Moving your mouse pointer around the screen has little balloons appear in many places giving you encouragement to click there with your pointer to go on to more detailed information or to see a movie about the subject.

Explorers and discoveries are presented here from around the world, past and present. Subjects are man's greatest achievements in history, science, music, literature, and art. It all comes alive when wandering through The Discoverers program. The wandering around is made easy not only by the tell-tale balloons, but also with function and command buttons, starting right at the main screen all the way within the program. You can go forward, backward, return to the main screen and start again. A manual is hardly needed, except that The Discoverers manual includes a Learning Guide for students or your children. It includes sample projects related to discoveries (making a compass, understanding time, making a kite, and many more). It also includes a Question and Answer section to solve or make you understand the most common problems about the software, sound, installation, or hardware compatibility. One section gets you acquainted with the family of software learning tools from Knowledge Adventure, Inc.

The Discoverers can be installed in DOS or Windows. Though, I would always recommend that any big graphical, movie type program with sound be installed within DOS; but I only have a 486SX computer with 25Mhz. Using Windows you better have lots of memory and more Mhz. A Pentium wouldn't hurt at all. The group of Knowledge Adventure icon will be created in Windows and the manual lets you know about the add-on lines in the command files in Windows. But The Discoverers can be installed in a 386 and up and will run fine, just slower with a slower machine.

Learning and educating can be fun for all children or students, for me and for you as proven again with this program The Discoverers by Knowledge Adventure, Inc.

Knowledge Adventure, Inc.
4502 Dyer Street
La Crescenta, CA 91214
Orders: 800 542-4240
Tech. Support: 818 249-0212
Fax: 818 542-4205
Bulletin Board (N,8,1):818 248-0166
Costs: 3.5" disks $59.95; CD-Rom $79.95

Book Review:

CD-MOM
The Mother of All Windows™ Books

CD Version
by: Woody Leonhard & Barry Simon

Review By: Larry Anders,
Librarian, Tampa P C Users Group

Read any good books lately? If you're a Windows freak like I am, I've got a book you just might be interested in. CD-MOM, The Mother of All Windows™ Books — MOM for short, claims to have the largest, most useful collection of software ever assembled, and this just may be true. The size of MOM will shock you at first. It's actually 2 inches thick. It is in no way a technical reference on the how to's of Windows. Most of that stuff you should know about already, even if only by accident. MOM does take information found in boring technical references and presents it to you in a way you can use and understand without having to be a rocket scientist.

Windows 3.1 running in 386 Enhanced mode with a mouse is highly recommended, but not necessary. Hopefully everyone has upgraded to version 3.1 by now, if for nothing else but stability. If you are still using a 286 then you can only run in Standard mode, but you should really consider a system upgrade. As for the mouse, MOM has a lot to say

See **CD-MOM**...*Continued on page 7*

CD-MOM....*Continued from page 6*

about when to use a mouse and more importantly, when not to. However MOM will not tell you what is Windows 3.1 specific and where Standard and Enhanced modes differ. The authors of MOM figured that if you use Windows enough to even think about buying a book on it, you should have upgraded by now.

For the most part MOM is in plain English. Every now and then the computer-eeze comes out but only when necessary. When this happens the font is different to warn you that a computer thing is coming. All through the book there is a cast of characters utilized to get the authors' messages across. MOM, of course, plays herself with a mixture of emotion, silliness and words of wisdom. IGOR, points out the stuff that could prove detrimental to your health, like gaps in Windows, problems with applications, bugs, etc. Finally is CTO Mao, the Chief Technical Officer who is the tips man. He'll read it to you straight from his little red book.

MOM reads like no other computer book I have ever read. It is definitely not your typical hint or secrets books. This book reads like you're having a conversation with several different people who are computer literate but know how to explain it in a way you can understand and feel comfortable with. For instance, one of MOM's first statements goes like this. "I'm sure that nice Mr. Gates means nobody harm. Just look at him, that boyish face, those glasses slipping down his nose. Cuddly enough to hug and spank, simultaneously. Surely Microsoft can do no wrong, with a fine boy like that at the helm. But I must say this talk of a divorce with IBM has caused me some sleepless nights. Who's going to take care of the kids"? The authors of this book went to great pains to fade into the background and let the characters take over, evolving into a life of their own.

Even if you don't own a CD-ROM, as long as you can beg or borrow the use of one, you'll only need it for a few minutes. CD-MOM has so much on it no serious Windows user should be without it. If you've ever wondered what it's really like using programs like Ami Pro, on your machine, with your work, CD-MOM includes an enormous selection of working models from the major software vendors. Just copy the files on your hard disk, install the model and take the program for a test drive, right there on your own machine. There are dozens of working models, of many top Windows applications, that you can choose from and try out on your own computer. The latest Windows drivers for printers, video cards, sound boards, and much more. A full, commercial copy of WinCIM -for Windows access to CompuServe, plus a free CompuServe sign-up and your first month of basic services free. A hundred shareware and freeware fonts - good ones, not throw-away junk. Video clips. Movie trailers. Thousands of icons. The best electronic newsletters. Concert-quality audio recordings. Fun "system event" sounds. Latest versions of the top 100 Windows shareware and freeware programs, utilities, wallpaper, add-ins, replacements, games, etc., ad nauseam. In case you don't have a CD-ROM and don't have any place to borrow one....fear not! There is a copy of this book with diskettes that is ten bucks cheaper than the CD version, but of course this one doesn't have near the good stuff on the diskettes as on the CD. Although, there is a coupon included in the non-CD version that will allow you to purchase the CD for ten bucks when you finally decide to buy that CD-ROM drive. Truthfully, computing today without a CD-ROM is like having a television without a VCR. Come to think of it, I have two VCRs. Maybe its time to purchase my second CD-ROM drive.

I'm not going to go into all the information that can be found in The Mother of All Windows™ Books. Just suffice it to say that there's a lot of information in 2 inches of book and it's all in plain English. If you want the straight scoop on Windows just let MOM take you where no book has gone before!

CD-MOM The Mother of All Windows™ Books CD Version
by: Woody Leonhard & Barry Simon
Addison-Wesley Publishing Company
(800)822-6339 List Price $49.95

Book Review

The Visual Guide to Microsoft Access

By: Walter R. Bruce, III
Dan Madoni
Rich Wolf

Review by: Carol Robinson, Tampa PC Users Group

One of the best things about this book was the software that came with it. I had already purchased the Access program as I will soon be using it at work, so I was anxious to "get up to speed".

The software that came with the book had two databases, the Contacts database that you actually create, and the Ventana database that has been created already, and is ready for your perusal and use. Installation is simple, and I do not believe that it even took ten minutes to do. I used the defaults that the installation offered, although I was given the option to make different selections.

This book starts out with a "whirlwind tour" of Microsoft Access, which is just enough to give you a taste of the softwares' potential. Chapter 2 explains what a database is, and why it is important to take some time to determine what information you want in your database, who will use your database and will they be comfortable using menu bars, pull-down menus, and pop-up menus, or is the user comfortable with the native Access interface? What security issues must the database address? Will users be allowed to change data or just view it? Do you want to generate forms, reports, or letters from the information in your database? What about adding/updating information in the database?

The book then takes you step-by-step, complete with illustrations, through the creation of tables, queries, forms, reports, OLE, graphs, macros and Access Basic. I'm impressed with the "wizards", "cue cards", and online help that have been built into Access. The Wizards are so simple and easy to use, simply answer the questions and Access creates the form for you. If you decide to change one or any of your answers,

See **The Visual Guide**..*Continued on page 8*

The Visual Guide... *Continued from page 7*

simply click the "<back" button with your mouse to make any necessary changes.

There are two ways to create a table, form, or report. The easiest method is to use the wizards that are built into Access. Simply open the database you desire, select the item you want to create (i.e., table, form, etc.) and then select the "new" or "design" button. At that point you have the option of using a wizard or designing your own table or form from scratch (which is easier to do than I expected). The creation possibilities range from a very simple form to overly elaborate forms. The possibilities are endless, and I had a lot of fun learning how to create forms with the nifty tools that are available in Access.

As I progressed through the Visual Guide, I found some "intelligence" was expected, as I would be instructed to create a simple form or import data from another database without the directions on "how to". I generally attempted these instructions without looking things up, but sometimes my forgetfulness won out. Anyway, locating the information that I needed was not a problem.

Queries - The programming code underlying the queries in Access is a language called Structured Query Language (SQL), which is supported on a wide variety of computer platforms. By using SQL, Access can communicate with other computers and retrieve the information you need. Queries can be used to perform many tasks, from retrieving specific records from a table to manipulating data contained in multiple tables. The ability to quickly create queries to perform these functions is one of the many features that make Access such a revolutionary PC database product. Again, the Visual Guide takes you through the query wizards, and then on to creating queries "from scratch".

OLE - Visual Guide has a good discussion of what OLE is in general terms, what it was in Access version 1.x, and finally, OLE 2.0. I found this interesting as my knowledge of OLE is slim and none. Visual Guide walks you through embedding and linking documents, as well as editing existing OLE objects inside Access. You can also convert an OLE object to a picture.

Graphical Presentations - I had fun with this section as the graph wizard has nine different types of graphs. As you select which graph you want the wizard shows you immediately what it will look like.

Macros - Macros were illustrated in the book, starting with the most simple ones and then leading on to the more complicated ones.

Access Basic - This is where the real programming power lies. Access Basic picks up where macros leave off. Access Basic is an event-driven language, meaning that you first write the programming code, but that all of that code just sits there until you tell it to go (you basically define some routines, and they just sit there until an event, such as clicking a button or opening a form, triggers one of them). Access formats the lines of code that you type as well as checking for proper syntax. There are two benefits to this, the first being that you do not have to wait to run your program to find out that you made mistakes when coding your procedures. The second benefit is that Access does not have to check the entire program for mistakes before you run it. Again, the authors of Visual Basic take you through the very basics before proceeding to more complicated programming.

There is a chapter on the installation of the Access program itself. The recommended requirements are: IBM compatible 486SX (486/66 desired), 16 mb of ram, 19mb of hard drive space for a typical installation, VGA display, Microsoft mouse, MS-DOS 3.1 or higher, Windows 3.1, Windows for Workgroups or Windows NT 3.1 or higher. I'm running the full installation of Access on a Compaq Contura 3/20 386SL, 10mb of ram, 212mb hard drive, MS-DOS 6.2, Windows 3.1 with no problems.

This book is well written to include detailed instructions, explanations, and illustrations. I found it to be an excellent "hands-on" instructor in teaching me Access 2.0. The book is published by Ventana Press, Inc., P.O. Box 2468, Chapel Hill, NC 27515; telephone (919) 942-0220. The list price is $29.95. ISBN 1-56604-070-1.

Book Review
Mosaic Quick Tour For Windows

Reviewby: Hugh Bayless, Montery Bay Users Group

Suddenly, everyone is talking about Internet, and one of the words mentioned most frequently is Mosaic. So what is Mosaic?

Mosaic is the key to open the the world of hypermedia _ the world of the Internet. Mosaic is a Windows program developed by the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at the University of Illinois, and it's FREE. But I am getting ahead of myself.

There are basically three ways to access the Net. Only the first two types of access can utilize Mosaic:

1) Direct or dedicated connections between your computer and the Internet. This type of connection is quite expensive and is usually only used by very large organizations like universities, government agencies, and local service providers.

2) Temporary dial-up, commonly called SLIP/PPP connections, which are routed through a local service provider who has direct or dedicated access. As of the last word I received, there is no local service provider on the Monterey Peninsula, but that will probably change in the near future.

3) Dial-up accounts, in which your computer becomes a terminal on a local host computer that's connected to the Internet. With this type of indirect or "host" connection, all of your interactions with the Internet are through programs that run on the host machine. This is the cheapest type of connection, but also the most limited.

If you are going to access the Internet through one of the service providers like NETCOM, DELPHI, or BIX, you won't be using Mosaic, but you won't be getting full access to the Internet either. If, on the other hand, you are going to use a SLIPP/PPP connection through a local or nearby service provider, you will need Mosaic. Mosaic is free, but you have to

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Mosaic....*Continued from page 8*

download it from NCSA. The book tells how you can do this before you have Mosaic loaded in your computer. And, after you have downloaded Mosaic, the book tells you how to install and use it.

MOSAIC Quick Tour For Windows is written by Gareth Branwyn and published by Ventana Press. If you will be using Mosaic, this book will be the best introduction to it that you could find anywhere, and the $12.00 price makes it one of the best book bargains around. You can order it direct from Ventana by calling 1-800-743-5369 and paying an additional



Book Review

The Secret Guide to Computers

By: Russ Walter
Review by: David P. Henry, Tampa PC Users Group

The Secret Guide to Computers by Russ Walter (who calls himself "Russy-poo") and the elves, mostly female apparently, and published by himself, address: "bedroom at 22 Ashland St., Somerville, MA 02144". Russ earned math and teaching degrees from Dartmouth and Harvard, taught for a while, then became "seduced by a computer to whom he's now happily married". If you're not already convinced this book is a bit out of the ordinary, get this: You can call Russ at his home number 617-666-2666 for free advice on any computer related topic any hour of the day or night - he says. "I'm near the phone 85% of the time...If you get an answering machine, just leave your number and I'll call you back at my expense, even if it's long distance" When I phoned him to try this out, he was on another call, but phoned me back in Tampa within 15 minutes. He gave me the exact information I wanted. I have this image of Russy-poo in bed, attended by his elves and surrounded by his 40 computers, his computer books and papers stacked to the ceiling and talking like a guru to his adoring disciples all around the world. Surely he has a flowing mane and a long white beard?

The Secret Guide is obtainable by direct mail order from the above address and is priced at $15; or $12 a book for at least 2 copies; $9 a book for at least 4 copies; and $6 a book for at least 60 copies. It just shows what can be done if the expensive publishing industry is bypassed. The formula is evidently extremely successful, as the Secret Guide, originally published in 1972, is now in its 19th edition.

The material in this 640 page, large format paperback is based on lecture notes accumulated over the years, and covers a wide variety of topics - like an encyclopedia but without the alphabetic sort as an organizing principle. It covers a wide range of material including hardware and peripherals, DOS and Windows, other (non-IBM) systems, shopping for a computer, many mainstream applications, several computer languages (including his own assembly language called SEXY ASS, because its a Simple, EXcellent, Yummy ASSembler), utilities, repairs and computer careers - all written in a light, humorous and engaging style.

How would you like to write a review of an encyclopedia? Especially one that claims to be "...the world's only complete computer tutorial: it covers everything important about computers!" Well, that's how I felt when preparing to review this highly entertaining book which is primarily aimed at the novice, but which also has much of interest for the expert.

The Table of Contents lists eight major areas: Buyer's Guide, Operating Systems, Word Processing, Databases, Spreadsheets, Wild Applications, Programming and Endnotes. Within each area there is a brief introductory background followed by several pretty well independent chapters. For example, the area on Programming (270 pages) contains chapters on BASIC, DBASE, PASCAL, C, LOGO, FORTRAN, COBOL, Strange Tongues and Assembler. On the other hand Wild Applications with chapters on Graphics, Desktop Publishing, Sound, Multimedia, Communications, Accounting, Personal Programs, Games and Artificial Intelligence is only 68 pages long. Obviously, you do not get so much depth in those areas where Russ has apparently less interest and, presumably, less expertise.

Most chapters about specific software products consist of a tutorial (the ones covered more thoroughly such as DOS, Word Perfect and BASIC are very good) such as you often find in the User's Guide which accompanies the product when you buy a program such as DOS. The product package also includes a Reference Guide; The Secret Guide doesn't. So it clearly doesn't replace printed product manuals, or commercial single-topic books for that matter, especially in the shorter articles (13 pages on DBASE or 5 pages on Ami Pro): the amount and depth of the material on a topic reflect Russ' own interests. But would it be useful to a prospective purchaser? In my opinion, the longer chapters are too detailed to be useful as a buying guide for a purchaser, who would probably prefer the typical review-length article of a couple of pages as found in computer magazines. There are several What to Buy articles comparing some of the main hardware and software products and these are well worth seeking out and reading. They have firm recommendations, list and discount prices, and include dealer's names and phone numbers.

So, if The Secret Guide is not very helpful as reference material, and it is difficult to locate its review material, just what is it most useful for? Its not the kind of book you settle down to read from cover to cover. To test my theory that it is the sort of book you enjoy best by just dipping into different items in a more or less random fashion, I made up a list of topics off the top of my head that I was curious about, and looked them up. They were: Express Publisher / hyphenation rules / RAMAC / Internet / Sys Request key / Toolbook / code page / draw vs. paint / DRAM / postScript / pixel / Amiga / MacIntosh / BIOS / scanner / config.sys / DOS versions / modem / UNIX / baud / virus / backup / pentium / fax. I drew a blank on the first eight topics (I shuffled my random list before typing it) and supposed that they weren't considered important enough to be included. I classified what I found on the others as follows:

Not very useful: BIOS / scanner / baud / virus / pentium

See **The Secret** .....*Continued on page 10*

The Secret... *Continued from page 9*

A useful smattering: DRAM / PostScript / pixel / Amiga / UNIX / fax

Genuinely useful: MacIntosh / config.sys / DOS versions / modem / backup

For example, even an experienced IBM user is likely to find out something new and useful in the article "Boot" under DOS. You might conclude that when any computer question comes up, you should make The Secret Guide your first point of reference; you stand an even chance of finding a useful answer. But if you draw a blank, or find a reference which is "not very useful" you will probably be out of luck, because the book doesn't give many references to other sources, except for the computer languages. Here's where footnote references to items in a bibliography might have been helpful. Despite these reservations, I feel many knowledgeable users will find this book very useful and enjoyable.

Keeping a reference book up to date in the fast moving computer field is a daunting challenge, and it seems that Russ makes a major effort to do so. For example, while comparing the current 19th edition published this summer with its 18th edition predecessor published in the Fall of 1993, I found there were major new articles on DOS 6.2, multimedia computers and Pentium.

The last is in a thoroughly practical and illuminating discussion on chip technology. In introducing a table comparing the characteristics of various chips, Russ has this to say:

You've seen that a Pentium is the fastest Intel chip, the 8088 is the worst, and other chips are intermediate. But how much do those chips differ from each other?

Don't ask that question to a computer salesman! Computer salesmen dispense lots of misinformation about computers, because the salesmen are lying or stupid. Usually the salesmen are lying and stupid! Here's a famous riddle...

What's the difference between a used-car dealer and a computer salesman?

Answer: The used car dealer knows he's lying.

For the novice, Russ writes in a rather simplistic yet comforting way. His somewhat dogmatic style may be ideal for beginners or high school students but might grate on someone more familiar with the topic. There are no half-hearted opinions in this book; Russ tells you exactly what to do. For example, from the article on Notebook computers:

"The first rule about buying a notebook (or laptop) computer is: don't buy one unless you must! Try buying a desktop computer instead!

Though notebook computers are portable and cute, you pay a lot for portable cuteness.

Suppose you want a computer containing a 486SX-33 with 4M RAM, 210M hard drive, 1 floppy drive, color screen, DOS, Windows, and mouse or trackball. To get a desktop computer containing all that, you pay about $1000; to get a notebook computer containing all that, you must pay about $1900 instead...So don't buy a notebook unless you must."

If you are a novice, I feel comfortable in heartily recommending this book to you. Russ has the born teacher's gift of being able to "put it across" very well, and uses the teacher's tricks of repetition, variety and good humour to make the beginner feel at ease.

Novice or expert, you will find the real pleasure of this book will be in browsing a huge range of material, and in enjoying the relaxed, off-beat, whimsical tone of much of the writing.

Special Character tips for Word 6.0 for Windows:

Use Word for windows shortcut keys to insert special characters into your documents.

For a trademark symbol, press **<Ctrl><Alt>-T**.

To insert a registered trademark symbol, press **<Ctrl><Alt>-C** for a copyright symbol.

To use other symbols or characters, select Insert-Symbol, select either the special character or symbol you want, them click **Insert-Close.**

WRITING PRODUCT REVIEWS

By: Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group

Some people claim that they can't write. They don't mean that they're illiterate or not physically capable of writing, they're saying that they don't know how to put their thoughts down on paper. They say that they don't know the format or style to use. Or they fear possible embarrassment or being made fun of for using poor grammar or for not using high-falutin' words.

To all this, I say *censored*! If you can talk, if you can think, if you can type — you can write! Blessed be the person who writes at the eight grade school level,. The intelligent will recognize the intent and applaud the effort. The less literate will at least understand what has been written. Those who would look down their noses and adopt a patronizing air are to be pitied, not scorned.

For example, someone might say 'An expository evaluation of the intrinsic merit of this laudatory mechanism refutes beneficial acquisition.' I'd rather see that someone say "It ain't worth nuthing." Anyone can use "big" words, all you need is a dictionary. What is needed are words that give information, that convey thoughts, and are readily understood by almost all people. There will always be exceptions but there's nothing you can do about that.

So, for those of you who would like to write a review of a product but "don't know how to write," the following outline is meant to help you; to guide you in writing an article for the newsletter. Don't need to be fancy, just the facts as you know them and as you say them.

Title and author:

PRODUCT REVIEW (use this as your title or headline) by (enter your name).

Product name (start of first paragraph):

Enter name of product. Is it a high, medium, low level type?

What kind of product is it (type of software or hardware, word processor, paint program, modem, scanner, etc.)?

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Writing... *Continued from page 10*

Description or purpose (second paragraph):

Describe what it does. Abstract from package hype but your definition is preferred. Briefly describe it's features or modules.

Installation and use (third paragraph):

how easy is it to install? Custom install or must install everything? Do you need to delete old version? Tell of any problems when you installed.

Overall impression (fourth paragraph):

If upgrade, is it faster, better, how? Is new version more complex? Do you need or like the new features? Describe the documentation - complete, good, lousy, good/poor examples, good/poor graphics.

What do you like about it? What do you dislike? How does it compare to other similar products that you own or have used?

Requirements:

How much RAM (conventional, expanded, or extended)? How much space on Hard Drive (minimum and maximum)? Any special needs like SVGA, mouse, modem, CD-ROM, sound board, adaptor boards, etc.?

Can it be used on 8088, 80286, 80396+? What version of DOS does it need? Is it Windows only and which version? Where there any surprises that the package did not mention?

Product data (closing paragraph):

Product name and version; manufacturer's name, list price, street price and source (check any trade magazine or local computer store).

Using the above guidelines, try to keep the article at about 500-700 words or about one page. It's really not that difficult at all. And if you need help, write a rough draft and ask the Editor or me to review it for you. We'll be glad to help.

Reprinted from the August, 1992 issue.

The Tampa PC Users Group Library of Files

The file library for the Tampa PC Users Group is a selection of files, hand picked and tested by the club librarian. Our library prides itself on QUALITY - NOT QUANTITY! The library is stored on 3.5" , high density diskettes, and is usually available at every general users group meeting. Access to the file library is simple if you follow these rules:

1. You must bring your own formatted diskette.

2. If you bring your own PC to the meeting you may copy files to your heart's content, under the supervision of the librarian.

3. If the librarian's own PC is used, the librarian will make the copies for you. Please be reasonable and limit the number of files to be copied. Remember... the librarian is a member too and is interested in the presentation for the evening.

4. There is always a list of the files in the library provided in booklet form at the meetings for you to look at and choose from. This list is also available in ASCII text format for you to copy onto your own diskette, to take home. This same text file is updated regularly and uploaded to the club's Bits of Blue BBS for downloading.

5. If you have been unable to attend a general meeting and need a file, just leave a message on the BBS for "Larry Anders" and the file will be uploaded as soon as possible.

NOTE: If there is a special file you are looking for or are interested in, ask the librarian. The Tampa PC Users Group is a member of the Association of Shareware Professionals and receives a CDROM each month full of the latest Shareware releases.

THE FILE LIBRARY IS A PRIVILEGE FOR CLUB MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING. PLEASE DON'T ABUSE THIS PRIVILEGE!

CRAFTS AND COMPUTERS

While browsing through a magazine (Family Circle Holiday Crafts 1994) at a friend's craft shop I found a "Computer Corner". I like both Crafts and Computers so I continued to read....to sum it up the article was about "on-line services" specifically for both MEN and WOMEN crafters.

America On Line
Crafts and Sewing Forum, 1-800-827-6364. This BBS includes Needlework, Quilting, Holiday Crafts and Woodworking.

Compu-Serve
At 1-800-848-8990. This BBS includes Knitting, Crochet, Minatures, Sewing, Quilting, Spinning, Stitchery and Lacework, Weaving and Woodworking.

Prodigy
At 1-800-PRO-DIGY. Their BBS includes Beadwork, Cross Stitch, Needlework, Ceramics Clay and Fimo and Seasonal Crafts.

(Reprinted from The Microcomputer Users Group, Clearwater, Fl.)

Battling the Upgrade Path

By: Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Some people think a computer should be like your father's Oldsmobile—choose a destination, drive to wherever you're going and get on with your life. Unfortunately, many of us use the computer in a different way — like the '64 Pontiac GTO of our adolescence, we tinker with it. It's almost become an obsession; fine-tuning the computer's operating system, squeezing out every last drop of power and adding special hardware, pushing the performance envelope.

The software industry helps this process along with minor software upgrades—a new version of the product—every six months or so and major changes every twelve to eighteen months. The hardware folks are no bargain either. The current rage? The local bus, a slot on the system board that lets your video card (and, on some systems, the hard disk controller) get direct access to the CPU with, well, what else...added performance. And within a year, they're going to ask you to send your 486 to your brother-in-law and buy a Pentium, the chip that's next in line, awaiting your computing dollar.

Look at the last six months: Stacker moved up to version 3.0, PCKwik upgraded their caching program, Paradox bumped to 4.0, Quicken's up to 6.0, WordPerfect/Windows released a new version and Ventura's latest is 4.1. I've got more but let's move to 1993. Watch for DOS 6.0, a new WordPerfect/DOS, Microsoft's Windows NT, an improved Access, another version of Lotus' 1-2-3 and, well, you get the idea.

And because software companies depend on your need to fiddle, they make it easy to upgrade and switch, further complicating your life. Listen to this: At a recent user group meeting in Long Beach, Lotus offered to let you upgrade your Windows word processor to their $495 list price AmiPro for $80. Did you miss the meeting? No sweat because it's available through mail order for $99. It sounds like a bargain but, with very product, no matter how easy, there's a learning curve and, ultimately, downtime for you.

Want more? Some programs don't work with upgrades from other programs. Windows 3.1 didn't work well with Quarterdeck's QEMM 6.0. Once you ran the new version of Fastback, a program to backup your hard disk to floppies, you could no longer use the old version of the program — it wouldn't read the files. A nuisance if you then decide you don't like the new version.

Remember, no matter how valuable the upgrade, it takes time away from your immediate goal—using the computer for productivity.

Don't get me wrong, there are some programs worth upgrading. Quicken for DOS, an accounting program, for example, offers some new features that make the program more efficient, decreasing the time I need to spend with it. On the other hand, Borland's database program, Paradox 4.0, made significant changes to the programming language, something I never use. They also made minor changes to the interface, enough, though, that I have to spend time fiddling, increasing the time I need to spend with the program.

I've got some guidelines to help you decide whether to take the upgrade path.

- Cop an attitude. Rather than let yourself get dazzled by the advertising copy (or even a personal letter from Philippe Kahn, Borland's president), put yourself into an analytical position that forces the company to prove it's worth upgrading.

- . Think critically. Before you decide to upgrade, minimally read three magazine reviews with a copy of the advertising prospectus in hand. Carefully examine the list of new features and compare them with not only the reviewers' comments but what's not mentioned.

- Try it out. Examine the product at a local software discounter —many stores have a computer and are given an evaluation copy from the company. Bring along a file you're familiar with because spending time with the product is the best way to evaluate its potential for increasing your productivity.

- Ask others. If you're a member of a users group, find time to ask others during the Random Access session or while you're networking before the meeting starts. Many user groups offer a list of volunteers willing to share their skills —and opinions — with others in the group. If you have a modem, post the question on an electronic bulletin board. If you're a subscriber to an on-line service like CompuServe, America On Line or Prodigy, monitor the company's forum or conference. You'll get the chance to see hard core users interact and get a tremendous insight into the product's relative value.

- So the next time you're trying to decide whether, uhm, excuse me, it's Federal Express with the new version of Wordstar. Did you hear about the way it...

Steve Bass is the president of the Pasadena IBM Users Group and a Contributing Editor for PC World.

FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Software Review
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Staples
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Keith Hamilton
Carl Oligny
Margaret Petro
Kathrine Powell
Beth Sawyer
Kevin Sawyer
Ryan Sawyer

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect, CorelDraw Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3

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BONUS #2: If order is $30.00 or more, take a 1 yr. subscriptionto either PC WORLD or US MAGAZINE (up to a $29.90 value alone).

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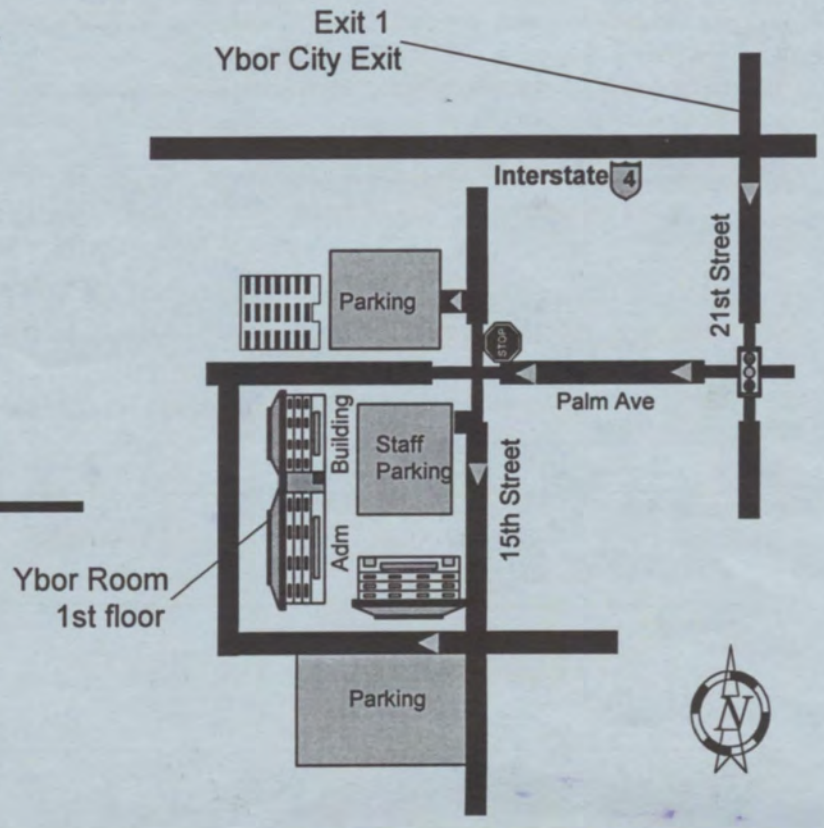
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION ORDER

Don't Miss the November 9th meeting!

Presentation by:
IBM
of OS/2 Warp

- √ Performance Enhancements
- √ Workplace Shell Enhancements
- √ New Tutorial
- √ Easy Installation
- √ PCMCIA Plug and Play

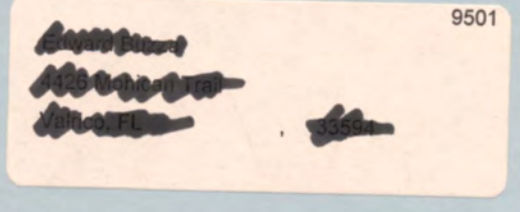


Yard Sale on Sat., Nov. 12

The remaining items from the TPCUG **Bargain Table** (October Meeting) will again be offered for sale at 3910 Mullen Avenue (1/2 blk. behind Christ the King Church) 7am to 4pm. on 11/12. Sale of the items donated to the TPCUG will benefit the group. Marylee will be handling the sale of the TPCUG items at this three family Yard Sale.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Member

A Monthly Publication of the
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Bits of Blue

Vol. 7, No. 12 December, 1994

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: December 14th, 1994
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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SPECIAL NOTICE: OS/2 SIG

is scheduled for Tuesday, December 27th at 6:00 p.m. in room 436 on the fourth floor of the Lakepoint One building across from Tampa Bay Mall.

December 14th AGENDA

Presentation by:

Broderbund

of the following:

Print Shop CD

Where in the World is Carmen San Diego, Jr.

Math Workshop

3D Home Architect

Myst

UP COMING PRESENTATION:

January 11 - Open Q&A Session

February 8 - Gold Disk

March 8 - Caere Corporation

April 12 - Delrina

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES : Al Poole 876-9445
TREASURER:Tom Cone 224-9052
MEMBER AT LARGE: Roger Waters 276-1019
SECRETARY:Jim Clark 986-3888

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 224-9052

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.



Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 11/9/94 MEETING
and Personal Comments by
Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

An important meeting for our group, with nominations for officers, and the weather, though a bit threatening, cooperated. We also had a major and increasingly popular piece of software to be reviewed — OS/2 Ver. 3.0 Warp.

USER GROUP NEWS

➧ SECOND BBS 14.4 MODEM ON HAND: Our group has acquired a second 14.4 modem for use with the BBS. It is an external version and will be placed into use as soon as the ADOPTBBS fund-raiser generates enough funds to pay for installation and first year's use of a second telephone line. Harvey called attention to the how-goes-it chart in the newsletter which shows the generation of funds still far below that needed to upgrade the BBS with more file space and a second telephone line, and he emphasized the importance of supporting the ADOPTBBS fund-raiser if we are to realize these improvements in the BBS.

➧ NOMINATIONS: Harvey reported that several of the present officers who have served for several years have expressed their intent to not serve in the coming term. However, most decided that the loss of so many on the BOD at one time could jeopardize continuity for the group and agreed to serve again, if nominated and elected, but for only one more year. Harvey pointed out that it is essential for creativity as well as the continued life of the group that new blood come aboard the BOD. It was also noted that our members must become more active in helping the group to improve by contributing their time and effort to generate new members and perform services for the group as a whole.

Nominations were made for the elected positions on the BOD as follows:

President:	Harvey Bruneau (incumbent)
Vice President:	None (it was not known if Al Poole would serve again)
Treasurer:	Tom Cone (Incumbent - not present at the time and assumed he would serve)
Secretary:	None
Member At Large:	Roger Waters (incumbent)

No new blood was nominated for any of the positions. Members may submit nominations via mail and/or make nominations at the December meeting up to the time of the election. It is extremely important to the group that additional nominees be obtained and that these positions be filled.

Harvey outlined what should be some of our objectives for the coming year, and will be if he is again elected. These included more SIGs, more member-to-member sessions at our meetings where we could help each other with problem solving, using things we already have, working on computers, using DOS, Windows, the BBS and others, demonstrations on installing and setting up components, etc.; and membership of at least 300. None of these objectives are achievable without more active participation from our membership. One of the easiest ways we could all help is to bring in just one new member. Try it, you might like it!

See **Minutes** *Continued on page 3*

Minutes.. *Continued from page 2*

➪ PRESENTATION — IBM's OS/2 Ver. 3.0 Warp

IBM was good enough to make Carolyn White, one of IBM's Workplace Marketing Specialists, available to give us a rundown on the new version OS/2, called Warp, they just released. And a fine job she did, too. She began by noting some of the reasons 'Why OS/2?' Among them are safer operations because program failures, such as occur in Windows are contained within the offending program and do not force rebooting the computer as is now usually the case in Windows and DOS; OS/2 is an operating system itself and doesn't rely on DOS or any other operating system; it provides better memory management, and is not inhibited with the constraints that have long limited DOS; allows simultaneous operation of DOS, Windows and OS/2 applications and supports interchange of information between all three; and it is an operating system designed to make best use of new hardware technology.

You all are at least a little familiar and know what a large and powerful program it is — well beyond the scope of this little section of the newsletter. I will only point out some of the improvements that have been made compared to previous versions of OS/2. First, IBM says that this program is designed specifically for the home PC user, the student and the business executive, and great emphasis has been placed on making it truly user friendly. Warp combines the advanced OS/2 32-bit operating environment with new features for productivity, reduced memory requirements, and ease of use and productivity enhancements. Among them are:

✔ Redesigned and simplified installation that automatically configures your system; imagine avoiding all those address and configuration conflicts.

✔ Much faster and smoother operation of Windows and Windows programs.

✔ Enhanced print performance and significantly improved monochrome and color bitmap printing due to new 32-bit printer drivers.

✔ New easier to use tutorial that shows best use of OS/2 to fit your style.

✔ Customizable program Launch Pad ready access to your most used applications and features.

✔ Automatic configuration of PCMCIA cards through a "Play at Will" interface which permits putting in another PCMCIA card without having to reboot you r laptop.

✔ Includes a set of popular OS/2 windows audio device drivers.

✔ Improved user interface and graphics.

✔ Now requires only 4 Mb of RAM.

✔ Warp also includes a number of features and utilities in a 'Bonus Pak':

✔ OS/2 CompuServe Access.

✔ Person-to-person for OS/2: Desktop conference software where you can share files or multimedia with another computer.

✔ FaxWorks for OS/2 where you can send, receive and print faxes as ;you desire.

✔ IBM Installation Utility & System Information Tool which allows quick, convenient access to detailed info about your soft/hardware.

✔ Access to Internet which will automatically configure for free hours on IBM's WEB service, and includes several Internet applications including Gopher, Mosiac, NewsReader and E-Mail.

✔ Provides a suite of applications including a word processor, spreadsheet, report writer and database.

✔ An organizer to keep track of addresses, phone numbers, to-do lists, and calendars all in one place.

Requirements for OS/2 Warp are a 386 machine or higher, 4 Mb of RAM (though 8 Mb or more is preferred), DOS 3.1 or higher installed if you plan to run DOS applications, Windows 3.1 or higher installed if you plan to run Windows applications, and 30 Mb of disk space for minimum loading and up to 55 Mb for a complete installation, including all the bells and whistles. Carolyn was using a 385/25 MHz with 8 Mb of RAM for the demonstration and while performance was not really fast, it was acceptable. And what a bargain. IBM reports a street price of under $80; Computer City has OS/2 Warp on 3.5" floppies at this writing for $69.97. Carolyn and IBM, THANK YOU very much for a great introduction to a super program. OS/2 has been and is of great interest to our members and we hope that you will keep us abreast on future developments.

➪ AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Carolyn White and IBM., there were several very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Dan Whitman	OS/2 mouse pad; OS/2 Progammers Guide
Dave Clary	OS/2 cups
Herb Atwood	OS/2 T-shirt
Steven Atran	Disk Optimizer
Roger Waters	Cash Graf Office
Joe Crochet	OS/2 Warp

The meeting adjourned at about 9 PM.

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology

WinSense - the Windows Optimizer

AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows

Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)

Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing

CA$HGRAF Office Plus - The World's Most Powerful Single-Solution Office Software!

MULTIMEDIA MAGIC CD - by Gold Disk - Everything you need to enjoy the magic of multimedia.

SHERLOCK - The ultimate filing and retrieval system for Windows.

PC 911 - Automatic Rescue Utility for your PC

FIRST AID for Windows Users - Fixes problems fast and automatically.

Kinderventures - The Wanderoos Go Exploring (ages 3 to 8) CDRom

PROCOMM PLUS for Windows - Intuitive Data & Fax Communications Software.

RUSA - Interactive Art Tour - St. Petersburg, Russia CDRom.

DO-OVER! - Change the look of Windows with a bonus utility to speed task switching.

GeoPublish - Trial size word processor & disk management suite (Shareware).

TuneLand staring Howie Mandel - Interactive Cartoon CDRom (ages 3 and up)

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

President's Column

Elections

Another year is coming to an end. This means several important things are going to happen this month. Of course there is the notification from the IRS, it's time to Christmas shop, my birthday, New Years Eve and most importantly BOARD MEMBER ELECTIONS. These positions include President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Member at Large. This year we will have ballots that you must fill in during the election process. Just select the candidates you want by selecting their name or you can write in a name. This process is important so please come out and vote. Of course you can nominate yourself or any other member prior to the election.

Second BBS Line

Some of you that have been on the BBS lately may have noticed that we now have a second line (237-4997). While we have not yet reached our goal of $1500, we did get enough donations to implement the second line. These donations came in the form of money (THANKS to all of you who contributed $$) and other contributions. The other contributions came in the donation of a brand new Intel 14.4 modem by an anonymous member and the use of an existing phone line from the good folks at Realtron. While the user group is paying for the monthly access of the second phone line, we did not have to pay an installation charge since it was already in place but not used by Realtron. Of course should Realtron need that line in the future we will need to install our own line. Anyway thank to Realtron and the anonymous member who left the new modem in my office.

At the November board meeting, it was decided that the second line would be setup so that only members could use it. We felt that this was the right choice since you, the members, made the contributions. The original line is of course is available for members and the general public.

The adopt the BBS fund is still open. While the second line is installed, we still need your donations to enhance the BBS. One enhancement that has been brought up during the board meetings is the upgrading of our US Robotics modem to the new 28.8 (V.34) standard. The upgrade cost $99 and could be used by those of you getting those high speed modems for Christmas and to speed up the nightly process of updating the message base from FIDONET. The original goal of $1500 included a big hard drive (500Mb+) for the BBS. The hard drive is another reason that we are keeping the fund open. Of course if someone donates a Western Digital Caviar 540Mb we would all be very appreciative. We will not turn down a bigger drive either. If you can help, call me at 962-2554 or 985-3338, lets talk.

SIG Groups

At the last general meeting one of our members generously offered the use of his office facilities to our group for use of Special Interest Group meetings. This includes computer, projection equipment and space for 20 people. It has been determined that a SIG will be formed and focused on electronic communication. This will cover modems, BBS and Internet. The goal of this SIG is to promote the proper use of electronic communication and prevent you from being roadkill on the information superhighway.

At this time a SIG leader has not been designated nor has a meeting night been determined. We need a SIG leader and an Internet account before we can move forward on this SIG. Interested individual should contact me.

We can have two SIG meetings a month at the facility offered to our group. If you have an idea for the second SIG or you want to run it, please call me.

New Rates

A reminder that membership rates have increased and are now in effect. Each membership rate has increased $5 except for the corporate rate which has been increased by $10.

Happy Holidays

The Board of Directors join Marylee and I in wishing each of you the best for the coming holidays.



THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED.



Old Drivers on New Software

By: Bill Allen, North Orange County Computer Club, California

Many club members may be aware of the following. I was not. For those who, like me, are still learning I submit this anecdote. I recently bought the Microsoft MS Office software, which includes MS Word, Excel, and Power Point. When using MS Word I could not get any of the TrueType fonts to appear, although they were available for Excel. My son-in-law loaded his MS Office package on my computer and was able to use MS Word with all the TrueType fonts I had on my machine.

I called the Microsoft forum on Compuserve for some expert advice. Most of what I got was specifics on how to leave messages on Compuserve, which I apparently did incorrectly. The little I got regarding MS Word and TrueType Fonts was right out of the manual, which I had already read and tried. I signed off after getting no real help. In groping around to solve my problem it occurred to me that the printer driver might be the cause of the problem. I believed it had to be unlikely that a printer driver could prevent MS Word from recognizing Windows TrueType fonts. But that turned out to be the case.

In checking my Windows drivers using my trusty XTreeGold, I determined that the HP-IIP PLUS printer driver loaded by Windows was dated 1988. That's a six year old program. Could that be the problem? It was.

A quick modem call to Microsoft's bulletin board located a 1993 driver. I replaced the old driver with the new one. That solved the problem. Now I had all my TrueType fonts available for MS Word and Excel. It may be that other drivers provided with current copies of Windows, MS Office, etc. will also be old enough to be incompatible with new software, even from the same manufacturer. This could be the result of a possible lack of quality control at Microsoft. So much for Total Quality Management! Hopefully, this story will help another computer neophyte solve a similar problem in the future.

Book Review:

More Windows for Dummies

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

Andy Rathbone's sequel to Windows for Dummies is a snappy delight, full of more handy tips and explanations to help make the most of Windows.

More Windows for Dummies has five parts. Part I deals with everyday stuff: Windows basics, installing new software, graphics and sounds, and the history of Windows development. Part II helps you make Windows do more such as working on a laptop, use the new stuff that comes with DOS 6, use Terminal, and use multimedia. Part III shows examples of other people's desktops, mouse fixups, and more about CONFIG.SYS, AUTOEXEC.BAT, and swap files. Part IV "More Advanced Ugly Tasks Explained Carefully' has chapters on unzipping files, uninstalling old programs, creating PIF files, editing INI files, and dumping unneeded Windows files. Part V wraps up with more tricks, shortcuts, and tips and even tells how to uncover the Hidden Credits in Windows 3.1!

Here are a few tips I found useful:

Make File Manager look the way you want it to: "While holding down Shift, double-click on the box in File Manager's upper-left corner - the box that usually closes File Manager down. Holding down Shift while double-clicking tells File Manager to remember the way it's currently set up. The next time you load File Manager, it will look the same as it does now."

"To complete the trick, make sure there's no check mark next to the Save Settings on Exit option from File Manager's Options menu. That way, File Manager remembers its current layout only when you tell it to." The Shift-double-click trick also works for Program Manager.

Replace highlighted text; "After highlighting some text you'd like to replace, immediately begin typing in replacement text. Your first keystroke will delete the highlighted text, just as if you'd pressed Del."

Put Windows on a diet; "If you want to strip Windows to its bare bones - a shell of a beast with little power - then buy Microsoft's Windows Resource Kit. It describes all the files you can remove to bring Windows down to 2.6 MB almost enough to fit on your digital watch."

There are four pages of file extension descriptions to help ferret out deletable files to free more hard disk space. I love this kind of info!

More Windows for Dummies supplements the Windows manual and answers lots of nagging questions. If only manuals could be written this way...

Cost and availability: $19.95, minus discount, at CompUSA or Computer City.

Publisher info" IDG Books Worldwide, 155 Bovet Road Suite 310, San Mateo, CA 94402-9833 Sales and Info: 1-800-762-2974.

Reminder for Membership Renewals:

$25 (individual)
$35 (family)
$20 (HCC Students & Faculty)
$60 (corporate = 3 employees
+ $15 each add'l employee

To renew your membership make your check payable to:

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and Mail to:

P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492

THOR is in town!

The Tampa-Hillsborough Online Resource is now available to connect you to the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library via your computer.

Requirements:

- Computer with modem (up to 14.4 baud rate)
- Emulation program for VT100 or ADDS Viewpoint (they mean communication software: RIPterm, Qmodem, Telix, etc.)

To use Dial Access:

- Set your modem for 8 bits, parity - none, 1 stop bit and echo off and dial 276-2770 through the modem.
- When conected, press <Return> until you see a logon prompt.
- At the logon prompt, type "thor" (in lower case - they may be using UNIX) then <Return>.
- At the prompt:
  System emulation....:WY50-VP
  Dynix emulation.....:WYSE
  Is this okay? ([Y]/N)
  Answer N (no).
- Enter the number of the emulation you are using. (The most commonly used emulation is Digital VT100, so choice 10 or 12 should work).
- You may choose to test your emulation by answering Y or to bypass the test by entering N. If in doubt, check it out.
- If you typed N, you will be sent to the THOR Greeting screen. Enter <Return> and the THOR search menu appears.
- You may now perform all the same functions you perform at the public access library terminals.
- When you are finished searching, select Logoff on the THOR search menu. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU FORMALLY LOGOFF. (they must be using UNIX)
- In consideration of others who wish to use Dial Access, they ask that you limit your time on line to fifteen minutes per session.

While you are online, check out some of the neat computer books available like: The Internet Unleashed, Cruising Online, Larry Magid's Guide to the New Digital Highways and a couple of my favorites: More DOS for Dummies and More Windows for Dummies. The books can be put on hold and/or sent to the library branch closest to you and you will be notified by mail when the book(s) become available. Happy reading!

Prices Drop for Online Services

Prodigy, in an attempt to keep up with America Online's lower prices, has just changed its pricing structure to capture new subscribers. The new Prodigy pricing will offer minimal users of its services the option of a monthly rate of $9.95 for five yours online, compared with the present flat monthly rate of $14.95 for unlimited use. At the same time, America Online dropped its extra hourly charge from $3.50 to $2.95.

All of the online service providers are trying for a larger share of a growing market. Prodigy says it serves over one million homes, in addition to commercial accounts. America Online, the least expensive provider, claims a total of about a million subscribers. CompuServe, the most expensive of the services, claims over two million subscribers worldwide.

Software Review:

Quotes on Line by askSam

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

Fulton J. Sheen observed: The mind is like a clock that is constantly running down and must be wound up daily with good thoughts. Quotes on Line (QOL), a collection of quotes from Keith D. Mohler, can help wind up our minds.

A database of quotes presents a unique challenge for quick and easy access to lists of related quotes. To make it user friendly and simple seems to have been the goal at askSam. How does it compare with tomes like Bartlett's Familiar Quotations or the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations? QOL is a collection of 12,000 quotes. Bartlett's has almost 20,000 and Oxford has over 17,000. Where QOL shines is in its speed of collecting groups of quotes and not having to retype the quotes selected once found.

The 28 page QOL manual covers the basics: installation, search and output. QOL installs itself onto hard drive with only one query: do you have a color monitor?

Test Results: The main menu consists of Quotes, Help and Exit. Under Quotes are three more choices: Topic Search, Author\Source Search, and Full Text Search. The Full Text Search takes the longest, but is still quick.

Selecting a quotation is a simple two key operation. Selected quotes can be saved through creating or adding to an ASCII text file or output to a printer. Each time you go back to the list of selected quotes you go back to the beginning of the list. Bummer! This is annoying if your list is long and you want to output several selections. I used Windows to cut and paste the quotes to other documents (like this one).

There are a few typos as in St. John Ervine's, "The is no instrument so deceptive as the mind." A spelling checker would not catch that one, but Grammatik did.

QOL also has an undocumented screen blinker that kicks in after a few minutes of inactivity.

Limitations: QOL lists very few sources and no dates. Both Bartlett and Oxford list sources, dates and authors.

No going back! When viewing the quotes or list of authors there is no reverse gear to go back to the previous page or screen. No mouse support either. No way to add new quotes.

Evaluation: Even with the above limitations this program is worth considering. Going through a few pages of mind-expanding thoughts occasionally will do anyone some good. The following (also the other quotes included in this article) are found under the topic of "mind":

William L. Phelps:

"At a certain age some people's minds close up; they live on their intellectual fat."

Toledo Blade:

"A great many open minds should be closed for repairs."

Reading one quotation a day would take over 33 years to exhaust QOL's supply. QOL is great for writing letters, articles or even memos. Add a little culture to the office with a few quotes. "The growth of the human mind is still high adventure, in many ways the highest adventure on earth." Norman Cousins.

System Requirements: IBM PC, AT, PS/2 or compatible with at least 384K RAM. Monochrome, CGA, EGA, or VGA monitor. PC or MS-DOS 2.0 or higher. 4 MB free hard disk space for installation, 2.6Mb after installation.

Cost and availability: QOL: $49 through askSam, Bartlett's Familiar Quotations and Oxford Dictionary of Quotations are available in hardback editions for $40 and $35 at Barnes and Noble book stores.

Publisher info: askSam Systems, P.O. Box 1428, Perry, Florida 32347 (904) 584-6590

Software Review:

CD-ROM Almanac

Review by: Hugh Bayless, MBUG-PC

Parsons Technology has just brought out one of the most truly useful (as opposed to merely entertaining) CD-ROMs that I have yet seen. It is the 1994 Information Please Almanac for Windows. While I have not compared it, item by item, with the printed version of Houghton Mifflin's book version of the Almanac, the CD-ROM version had all of the data that I did look up. That's pretty impressive in itself. But, the CD-ROM version makes possible search features that are not possible in the printed version. You can search for words, topics, or phrases to find precisely what you are looking for. But, if you prefer, you can browse through the Almanac at least as easily as you would with the book version. Topics covered are all of those you would expect to find in any almanac _ census data, crime data, election results, economic data, famous personalities, postal rates, toll-free numbers, and all the rest. What you couldn't do with the book version but is easy with the CD-ROM version is copy text from the almanac to the Windows clipboard and then include it in a document prepared in your Windows word processor. You can also simply print an entry direct from the almanac. This is one CD-ROM that I intend to keep within easy reach all of the time.

The 1994 Information Please Almanac is available in both DOS and Windows versions, on either CD-ROM or disk. The DOS version requires a 286 or higher, 2MB RAM, and 7.25MB hard disk space. The Windows versions on floppy disk require a 286 or higher running Microsoft Windows 3.x, 4MB RAM, and 7.25MB hard disk space. The CD-ROM version requires a CD-ROM drive and only 1MB of hard disk space. All versions are available for $49 each from Parsons Technology, 1-800-223-6925.



Electronic Mail Defined

By: Linda Hargraves, Tulsa Computer Society

I decided to write this article because I frequently get questions from people who don't understand the concept of mail. I thought that if I explained the different types of mail, it might help others to be more interested in writing messages to other people.

Electronic mail or E-mail is a general term used to convey messages sent from one person to another person on a local BBS or a national one such as CompuServe, Prodigy or a mail system used by a company to get messages from one person to another. Just like the U.S. Mail (nowdays referred to as Snail Mail, because electronic mail is much faster) needs to have a person's street or post office box address in order to deliver mail, electronic mail needs both the sender and the receiver's address in order to get the mail delivered.

You may see several different terms used to mean mail. On some systems, it may be called Conferences, Forums, Topics, Message Bases or some such name. There are four basic forms of message systems: local, echo, netmail & Internet mail. The actual name used for mail is not as important as the type of mail. Some bulletin boards are connected together by a network. Each BBS has an address in that network that allows mail to be sent between one BBS and another in the network. Public mail is mail that may be read by anyone on the BBS or in the network. Private mail is normally only read by the person who writes the mail and the person it is addressed to. All sysops have the ability to read all mail but don't normally read everthing.

Local (public or private) - Mail that stays on the system it is written on. Mail is addressed to the sysop or to anyone that calls that particular BBS.

Echo (public) - Mail that is written by one person to another person or to Everyone on the BBS and can be read by every person on any other BBS in the network.

Netmail (private) - Mail that is written by one person to a specific person on another BBS in the network. You must use the person's name plus the address of the other BBS in order for him to receive the mail. Netmail access is not available for general use on some systems.

Internet Mail (private) - Mail that is written by one person to a specific person on any system anywhere in the world that has Internet access. Internet mail may be written to anyone as long as you have their address. It can be sent to any of the major online services or e-mail services like MCI:mail. An example of an Internet address is my own address below:

Linda Hargraves on ACCESS AMERICA (BBS) - lhargraves@accessamer.com

The first part of the address in front of the "@" sign is for the logon name of the user. Sometimes the whole name is used as in "linda.hargraves" with a period between the two names. You cannot have spaces in any part of the address. If you use a middle initial like mine Linda L. Hargraves, you will need to write it like this: linda.l.hargraves or llhargraves because you cannot use 2 periods after the initial like this: linda.l..hargraves.

CompuServe uses a series of numbers separated by commas as the user ID, so you will need to exchange the commas for periods in the user ID. As an example, Don Singleton's address is 76154,26@compuserve.com and the commas would be changed to periods as in: 76154.26@compuserve.com to write to him on Internet.

The second part of the address after the "@" sign is the place the person is located at, called the domain address. It can be a commercial business, a BBS, a government or military agency, a educational institution or a non-profit organization. The address also can show an international organization or different county. The most common domain names are shown below.

Domain	Type
.com	Commercial
.edu	Educational
.gov	Military
.int	Governmental
.net	Internet resource
.org	Non-profit
Domain	Country
.au	Australia
.ca	Canada
.ch	Switzerland
.de	Germany
.dk	Denmark
.es	Spain
.fr	France
.il	Israel
.it	Italy
.jp	Japan
.mx	Mexico
.nz	New Zealand
.pl	Poland
.ru	Russia
.tr	Turkey
.uk	United Kingdom
.us	United States (rare)
.va	Vatican

Commercial Online Services

America Online	@aol.com
Bitnet	@bitnet.com
Bix	@bix.com
CompuServe	@compuserve.com
Delphi	@delphi.com
GEnie	@genie.com
Prodigy	@prodigy.com

Electronic Mail Services

AT&T EasyLink Services	@attmail.com
MCI Mail	@mcimail.com
Sprint Mail	@sprint.sprint.com

Fidonet BBS Internet Addressing

ACCESS AMERICA 1:170/808

The first number indicates the zone, in this case, 1 is United States. The second number indicates the net number, which in the example is Tulsa, OK. The last number indicates the node number for the computer and if there is a point it will follow the number like 808.1 for me if I had a BBS up all the time.

The internet address is a bit different in that the numbers are written backwards.

In the example: 1:170\808 my Fidonet address would be: lhargrave@f808.n170.z1.fidonet.org

Local Internet Providers Black Gold Internet Gateway - colonel.cline@bgbbs.com

Galstar Internet Sales - mlester@galaxy.galstar.com

Although I have given you some of the most widely known addresses, there are a variety of variations depending on the person or department that you want to contact. It is very important to learn the domain name which is on the left side of the @ sign of the address.

OS/2 Tips, Tricks, and Secrets

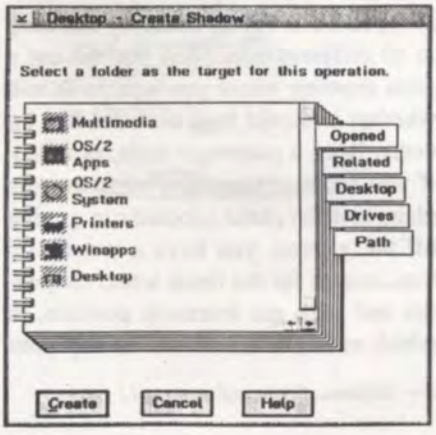
By: Leleith Kilburn,
Tulsa Computer Society



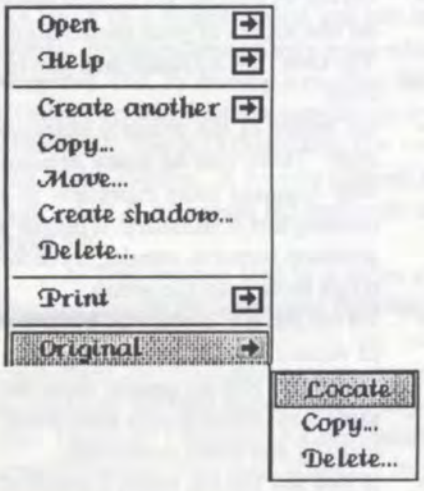
Using Shadows in OS/2

Sometimes it is handy to have copies of an object in several different places. If the object is a file, disk space consumption and file synchronization become an issue. The shadow feature in OS/2 allows you to create copies of an object without those worries. A shadow is an object created from an original object. Any changes made to the original are made to the shadow and any changes made to the shadow are made to the original object.

To create a shadow, click the right mouse button on the original object to display the popup menu (Figure 1). Chose Create Shadow from the list. The dialog box will display the desktop folder and any open folders on the desktop as target locations for the shadow object (Figure 2). If you click on the Related or Desktop tabs, you will get a tree view of possible locations for the shadow object. Choose Path if you want to type in a specific location. Click on a location and the shadow object will now exist in that location.



There is no way to tell a shadow object from the original except for the icon text and the popup menu. The icon text of the shadow object will be a different color from the original. The color will be what you have chosen in the scheme palette. The popup menu of the shadow object will contain an additional item at the bottom called Original (Figure 3). Clicking on this item brings up a



menu with three options that act on the original object. Locate takes you to the original object. Copy allows you to make a copy of the original object. Delete allows you to delete the original object. However, if you delete the original object, you will also delete all of its shadows.

Deleting a shadow does not delete the original. Objects like the system clock and drive objects can not be copied. But you can make shadows of them and put them in as many places as you please. The shadow concept also gives you complete freedom in arranging your folders without having to worry about consuming disk space or synchronizing data files.

Book Review

Planet Internet

Review by Hugh Bayless, MBUG-PC



This book, by Steve Rimmer, is an extremely interesting guide to what's out there on Internet. Rather than just listing all of the possible Internet addresses, it gives a random sampling of what you can find and explains those samples in some detail _from Clinton jokes to ways to destroy the earth.

Ever hear of Devilbunnies? There is a newsgroup with the title "alt.devilbunnies" and if you wonder what it's all about, the author couldn't figure it out after logging onto it several times. Maybe you could do better. Want information on cats, David Letterman, Spam _ that's right, SPAM _ or the weather in China? It's all there, somewhere.

The book is well-written and very informative, but someone got carried away with the artwork and many pages have "watermark" printing overlaid on the text that makes the text sometimes very hard to read. If you are starting to explore Internet, this could be a great help in deciding where and what to explore.

Published by Windcrest/ McGraw-Hill, Planet Internet sells for $24.95.

Prodigy adds two newspapers

Prodigy recently added the Times Mirror Co. newspapers the Los Angeles Times and New York Newsday on the computer network.

The addition of these two publications brings Prodigy to five online newspapers. The others include: the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The Dallas Morning News and **The Tampa Tribune.**

Editorial Comment:

In reference to the President's Column this month (Page 4 SIG Groups) the following article should prove to be beneficial to those of you stepping forward to lead a SIG Group. Remember, TPCUG needs you to volunteer to share your knowledge and expertise with the rest of the group. You will in turn feel a tremendous accomplishment by helping others learn about their PCs. It's not difficult, see the closing comment of the following article reprinted from the Tulsa Computer Society, and come forward to lead a SIG Today for your Tampa group!

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10 Hopefully Helpful Hints On Presenting to a Sig

By: Paula Sanders
Tulsa Computer Society

TCS needs you! With a constantly expanding membership, the formation of new sigs, and the continuation of old ones, the need for new programs keeps escalating.

How often have you listened to a speaker and wanted to share your love of a new program or excitement with a piece of hardware but didn't think you could speak before a group of people? While you can tell all your friends about your "new find," you feel that you couldn't address a group. However, sharing your ideas with a group is much easier than learning a new program. With some hopefully helpful hints, you can become adept at addressing your favorite sig.

Everyone who has attended a sig or the general meeting knows that the audience covers the full range in knowledge from novice to expert for any particular program or type of hardware. This range of knowledge can seem daunting. But, if you will remember that there will always be someone who knows more than you do about the subject, you can use those people to help you in your presentation by asking them to answer questions that you can't. How you plan your talk, will depend on what your goal is. Hopefully, these helpful hints will help you.

- You need to know why you are in front of the group. Are you giving general information about a product, speaking about a small aspect of the product, or instructing others on how to use it?
- Since the members of the TCS Sigs reflect many levels of knowledge, you need to know how to address this problem. Address your talk to the middle range but speak to the novice and expert as well by (a) giving a brief overview of the function of the product to interest the novice in it; and (b) give special advanced tips to the experts even if these are too complicated for the beginner to fully understand.
- Do not let yourself get bogged down on one aspect of your presentation. The time flies by faster than you realize.
- Be aware of the group's attention span. There can be many reasons why attention lacks especially in a meeting that is voluntary. If people's attention seems to wander, try to interact more with the group.
- Do not just talk if possible. Make use of visuals - slides, overhead projections, etc. Not all people learn the same way. Some people learn better visually and some auditorially.
- If you are talking about a piece of hardware and how it works, try to have it available both to demonstrate on and to let people look at after the program.
- Use handouts whenever possible. These are especially useful for technical data and as a summary. Also, they can be used in the "IO Port" to inform others who did not attend the meeting. Remember, especially, if you are using visuals, it is hard to take notes in a dim room while looking at a screen. (How to write handouts will be covered in another column.)
- In your presentation, remember English 101. (a) Say briefly what you are going to say; (b) say it and give examples; (c) then, sum up what you have said. Step (b) should be the bulk of your talk. Leave at least 10 minutes at the end of your talk for questions.
- Let the audience know that you welcome questions; but do not let anyone monopolize the floor nor let yourself get side tracked. Do not be afraid to not know something about a product. Never make up an answer! If possible, have a list of sources for further information available.
- Last but definately not least, prepare your talk beforehand. Make sure, as best you can, that all the visuals work.

And remember! Have fun! Let yourself enjoy what you are doing. Everyone is nervous the first time, the second time....

If Operating Systems Ran Airlines

DOS Airline
Everybody pushes the airplane until it glides, then jump on and let the plane coast until it hits the ground again, then push again.... Repeat until arrive at destination.

DOS with QEMM Airline
The same thing but with more leg room to push.

Macintosh Airline
All the stewards, stewardesses, captains, baggage handlers, and ticket agents look the same, act the same, and talk the same. Everytime you ask questions about details, you are told you don't need to know, don't want to know and everything will be done For you without you having to know, so just shut up.

OS/2 Airline
To board the plane, you have your ticket stamped 10 different times by standing in 10 different line. Then you fill out a form showing where you want to sit and whether it should look and feel like an ocean liner, a passenger train, or a bus. If you succeed in getting on board the plane and the plane succeeds in getting off the ground, you have a wonderful trip...except for the times when the rudder and flaps get frozen in position, in which case you have time to say your

See **Airlines...***Continued on page 11*

Airlines...*Continued from page 10*
prayers and get yourself prepared before the crash.

Windows Airline
The airport terminal is nice and colorful, with friendly stewards and stewardesses, easy access to the plane, an uneventful takeoff...then the plane blows up without any warning whatsoever, your luggage however arrives at your destination.

NT Airline
Everyone marches out on the runway, says the password in unison, and forms the outline of an airplane. Then they all sit down and make a whoosing sound like they're flying.

Unix Airline
Everyone brings one piece of the plane with them when they come to the airport. They all go out on the runway and put the plane together piece by piece, arguing constantly about what kind of plane they're building.

NeXTSTEP Airline
The trip is the reward. All the stewards, stewardesses, captains, baggage handlers look great, stylish and friendly. Airline engineers design in no time the custom plane you need for your trip which is built with spare parts from other airlines planes in their factories. This follows a bold move in which its CEO, considering that in fact the "box" does not generate revenue, decided to close his high-tech plant producing black boxes. Your are still buying tickets despite rumors in the press pronouncing the airline dead for the past 3 years. 🖫



The Value of Owning a Modem

By Greg Eden, Melbourne PC User Group, Inc.

No, this is not another article on the Information Superhighway or the Internet. People often ask me why I own a modem. The question to me is--how can anyone survive without one?

A vital use is to keep up-to-date with software patches and drivers. Do you own Norton Utilities 8?. The magazines would have you believe that you cannot use NUS and Windows for Workgroups 3.11 with 32 bit file access. But if you dial into the Norton BBS you can get a patch to overcome that problem, and it works. I am a hobby programmer and I use Symantec C++ 6.1; did you know there is a 6.11 upgrade? I do, because I have a modem. For programmers there are gigabytes of source code waiting at the end of the phone line. Through the Internet and local BBSs you can have access to Dr. Dobbs and PC Magazine source code. At Microsoft sites there is a staggering amount of information, patches and source code.

I recently started using Maestro 288FM Executive modem. This is a V.Fast 28,800 pbs modem. It is upgradable to V34 when this new 28.8 standard is ratified. Do not buy a 28.8 modem unless you can upgrade it to V34 or you will be left with an orphan. Problems immediately arose when I tried to run it faster than 19,200 bps under Windows. But, by owning a modem, the solutions were out there to be found. I use COMMit communications program (a commercial version of the shareware program Microlink). The READ.ME files that came with the software were helpful, but only part of the solution. It became obvious that what was needed was a 16550AF serial port. AVLB IDE multi I/O card with dual 16550 serial ports can be purchased for about $70.

This solution lead to a series of problems. A quick peruse of the Maestro message area on the Melbourne PC User Group BBs and I find there is a bug in Windows. The line in SYSTEM.INI that reads Com2FIFO=TRUE should read =1--Ok, easily fixed, and the system now smokes along at 28.8, **but** it now intermittently freezes up, and only the reset button frees it. My first thought was that the new I/O card was a dud. However, I discovered a replacement serial .386 driver; it is a bug fix to stop the system hanging when there is already data in the FIFO buffer.

Admittedly these modem-obtained solutions were for a modem problem, but the principle is the same for all computer problems. Message areas and newsgroups provide an invaluable source of information on virtually any topic. Without a modem you are in the dark. Most software companies have a BBS and the phone number is generally in the manual. Borland, Microsoft and Symantec all have BBSs in Sydney and they are chock full of patches, fixes, and updates. Without a modem you would never know solutions to your problems exist.

There is a downside to owning a modem. Time wasting. It can take a lot of time to search through newsgroups and download files. Also the best times to ring are late at night, or early in the morning, when everyone else is asleep.

Now that I have solved my Windows comms problems I am about to switch to OS/2--just as well there is a mountain of information out there at the end of my phone line, as I feel I am going to need it. 🖫

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Software Review:

Communications Suite from Delrina

Review by: Paul Perdue, CSRA Computer Society

This is a communications package that contains three different programs. There is WinFax PRO which is the world's best selling fax software, WinComm PRO which is a new, powerful and easy to use communications interface and Delrina Fax Broadcast Service, which, for a small price can send a single fax to hundreds of people around the world. These applications that will allow you run fax and other communications at the same time without causing port conflicts. First, we will look at what is required to run, and then we will look at what the programs will do.

WinFax PRO requires 640K of conventional memory, at least 2MB of extended memory, 3MB of hard disk space and a floppy drive. You will also need a Windows supported printer, mouse, Windows 3.0 and DOS 3.1. Next, WinComm PRO needs 640K of conventional memory, 4MB of extended memory, any modem and 3MB of hard disk space. You will also need a floppy disk drive, mouse, Windows 3.1 and DOS 5.0. For Delrina Fax Broadcast, you must have Winfax PRO and WinCom Pro installed but not running. You can install them individually or use the master program to perform a minimum, full or custom installation. The selection you make depends on how much hard disk space you have. The users manual also lists the recommended configuration which will enhance the performance.

WinFax PRO is Delrina's full featured fax program that comes with over a hundred witty cover page designs. Furthermore, you can create your own art work with the internal Cover Page Designer or use your own drawing tools to make your company logo or personal cover page. Phone numbers for FAX recipients can stored in the new and improved phone book. It features the ability to store your notes, billing codes, country and local area codes, send single and multiple document faxes. You can send a single document fax from any Windows application or assemble various documents and send them as one fax directly from WinFax PRO. Documents can also be scanned and saved as a fax attachments.

WinFax PRO also allows you to receive faxes in the background while you continue to work in other Windows applications. You can configure the program to receive faxes automatically and notify you when they have arrived. A fax that has been received can be viewed page by page or you can look at an overview of all the pages. There is also four levels of magnification under which, you can flip or rotate fax the pages. The send and receive logs maintain records of all your faxes. Reuse events to resend or forward a received fax. You also can schedule faxes to be sent out automatically during the day or night to take advantage of lower phone rates. It has that make it easy to use. Any application is only a couple of clicks away with drop down menus and colorful icons. If you really get stumped, a two hundred and fifty page manual and a two page Quick Reference card is provided.

WinComm PRO is a communications interface that can communicate with mainframes, remote PCs, e-mail services or bulletin boards. It has drop down menus and a button bar across the top. There are several icons representing many popular communication services including, CompuServe, Genie, Delphi, Dow Jones and MCI Mail. All you need to do is double click on the icon and have your Master Card ready. If you don't feel comfortable with the icons, you can change the layout so the BBS information is in table format. To add entries to the phonebook just click on NEW and enter the information. Click on "open" to open a new session with the icon that is highlighted. Another convenient characteristic is the ability to drag files from the File Manager and drop them into WinComm. Rather than typing long path names, you can drop a file on "send" to upload it to a bulletin board. The program also has a scroll back feature that let's you read previous screens that are held in a buffer. You can use this feature after you have logged off. Just use the scroll bar on the right side of the screen to review your latest session. If you see something you would like to save, just click on capture and the information will be placed in a file or click on print to print as it is captured.

When I first started reviewing this program, I felt more comfortable with PC Plus (my DOS based communications program). However, the more I used this WinCom PRO the more I liked it. It has a bright and colorful screen and all functions are only a couple of clicks of the mouse away. The only draw back that I can find is how small window where your communication session takes place. PC Plus uses a full screen, unfortunately, with WinCom, there is a half screen window. I suppose I'll have to breakdown and buy those glasses to read the small type. The third program is geared toward the business user. Fax Broadcast allows you to setup an account with Delrina. When you have an important fax to send out, you send it to Delrina and they will transmit it to hundreds of people at the same time. This will save you money and the time it takes to send hundreds of faxes.

Delrina Communications Suite Delrina 6830 Via Del Oro Suite 240 San Jose, CA. 95119 Phone (408)363-2345 Price-$129.00 .



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

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Richard Morris

WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR GROUP!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	WordPerfect, CorelDraw Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Emelie Jurado	885-5924	Mon-Sun.	10am-4pm	Managing Your Money
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3

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CAR & DRIVER	12	20.00	8.95	16.90	24.85
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DISCOVER	12	29.95	11.95	22.90	33.85
DR. DOBB'S JOURNAL .	12	29.97	15.95	29.90	44.85
ELLE	12	26.00	13.95	23.90	29.85
ENTREPRENEUR	12	19.97	7.95	17.90	25.85
ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	52	35.88	19.95	n/a	n/a
ESQUIRE	12	15.94	6.95	12.90	18.85
FIELD & STREAM	12	15.94	7.95	14.90	19.85
FORTUNE	27	52.95	22.95	n/a	n/a
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MICROSOFT SYSTEMS JOURNAL	12	50.00	24.95	46.90	n/a
THE NEW YORKER	52	32.00	13.95	21.90	n/a
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OMNI	12	24.00	10.95	17.90	23.85
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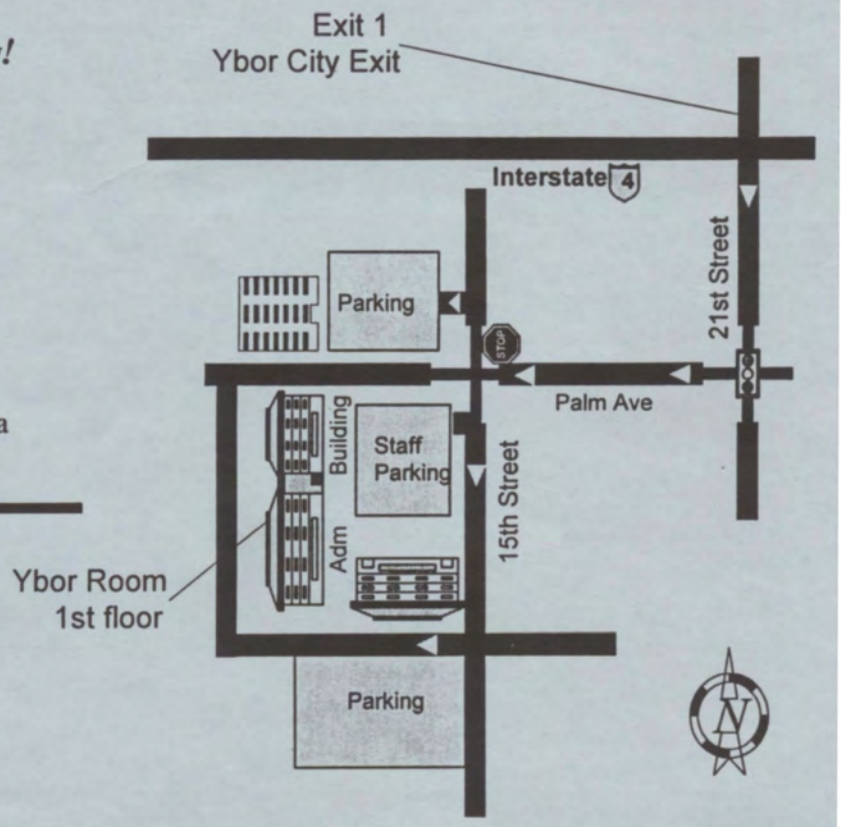
Don't Miss the December 14th meeting!

Presentation by:

Broderbund

√ Games
√ Education Software

You may find exactly what you want to add to your Christma list, or for Santa to deliver to your family!



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Bits of Blue

Member

A Monthly Publication of the
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 1 January, 1995

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: January 11th, 1995
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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January 11 - **AGENDA**

Open Q&A Session

TPCUG Members and Guests will share their knowledge and expertise on various hardware and software applications. Be sure to include this meeting in your schedule of events. Previous meetings of this agenda, with member involvement, proved to be highly informative for the novice and expert computer user.

UP COMING PRESENTATION:

February 8 - Gold Disk

March 8 - Caere Corporation

April 12 - Delrina

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES : William LaMartin 251-3817
TREASURER:Tom Cone 222-8925
MEMBER AT LARGE: Connie Kincaid 962-8799
SECRETARY: Bruce Register 968-8170
APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 222-8925
SIG Leaders: Charles Howe (Internet) 968-2107
John Lucas (OS/2) 949-4300

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
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Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 12/14/94 MEETING
and Personal Comments by
Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

Another important meeting for the TPCUG, with elections taking place for the five elected positions on the Board of Directors. And there was a good turnout for this important event, as well as for a fine presentation by a very popular software vendor Broderbund.

USER GROUP NEWS — A foul-up by the Ybor Campus staff, who had just closed the campus that day for the holiday season and hadn't made arrangements for our use of the facility, caused a delay in the start of our meeting, cutting down the time available for user group and industry news.

➧ **SECOND BBS PHONE LINE IN OPERATION:** Thanks to the donations received so far in the adopt the BBS campaign, the generosity of an anonymous donor of a 14.4 modem, and an offer by REALTRON (the host site of our BBS) who is allowing use of an existing phone line for the BBS, paying only the monthly phone bill, our second line to the BBS has been put into operation and is now available for all MEMBERS. This line, 237-4997, is reserved exclusively for members in good standing. Harvey also called attention to the how-goes-it chart in the newsletter which shows the generation of funds still far below that needed to upgrade the BBS with more file space and other improvements. He emphasized the importance of supporting the ADOPTBBS fund-raiser if we are to realize these improvements in the BBS.

➧ **NEW SIGs BEGINNING:** Harvey announced the offer of one of our members, , to host two SIGs at his business facility near the intersection of Anderson and Waters. Mr. Hodges is also making available for these SIGs his computer equipment Plans are already under way to begin an Internet SIG in February; final plans will be announced at the January general meeting; reservation will also be open at that time. Space will be limited to 20 people for each class.

Harvey also solicited people to lead other SIGs, such as but not limited to Windows, DOS, communications, or any of the many popular software applications, to name but a few. One need not be an expert in the SIG subject, but need only have an interest in it and be able to guide the learning experience for all. If you have an interest or would like to discuss the matter further, please contact Harvey.

➧ **ELECTIONS:** Harvey announced the names of the members nominated for the five elected positions on the Board of Directors and opened the meeting to additional nominations from the floor. Receiving none, Harvey proceeded with the election and issued guidance on completing the ballots which had been provided. The ballots were collected and counted, producing the following elected BOD officers who will take office in January:

President:	Harvey Bruneau (incumbent)
Vice President:	William LaMartin
Treasurer:	Tom Cone (Incumbent)
Secretary:	Bruce Register
Member At Large:	Connie Kincaid

See **Minutes** *Continued on page 3*

Minutes.. *Continued from page 2*

Congratulations to you all. We are confident that you will do an excellent job for the TPCUG.

INDUSTRY NEWS:

INTEL PENTIUM CHIP: The bug in Intel's Pentium chip has received a good bit of publicity lately. Intel says the bug has been fixed and all of their new chips do not have the flaw. They also say there has been a big to-do about nothing, that the probability of anyone having trouble with the chip is negligible, that there is no need to replace them, and they have no plans to do so. They will, however, replace the chips for anyone having trouble. Informally, word is that they will replace the chip for anyone requesting same, but it may take a while since they are well behind the demand for their Pentium chip.

PRESENTATION — BRODERBUND

Tad Brickson, Southeast Sales Representative for Broderbund Software, Inc., was kind enough to make a presentation for us on some of the Broderbund software. Tad noted that Broderbund had some 147 software titles, categorized into three broad categories — productivity, education and entertainment. However, he wisely chose to limit his discussion to an overview of the company and a brief review of 4 or those titles. Sitting here writing about Tad's presentation, one thing seems to dominate my thoughts — consistent with all four programs is that they seem to be very easy to use; a bit like a multiple choice test where all the answers really are good answers and you can't go wrong.

PrintShop 2.0 for Windows: This is probably the best known and most popular Broderbund title and it is a really good one. I have used Print Shop Deluxe for DOS and Windows, both of which are fine programs. But, Print Shop 2.0 makes major improvements, adding labels and business cards to the list of things one can create in the other programs — greeting cards, signs, banners, letterheads and calendars. Even more emphasis has been placed on user friendly — and it is truly easy to use — while adding significantly to the text, graphic and layout template options available, and including the capability for almost unlimited user control of all of these. It would be tough to dream up a creation in any one of the categories of documents that Ver. 20 is designed for that one couldn't produce in minutes, selecting only from included layout options; the toughest part would be you determining what words you wanted to say in the document. Ver. 2 will handle a variety of graphic formats PCD photos, and it provides the capability to print out in any density now available in popular printers or expected to be available in the foreseeable future.

Print Shop 2.0 for Windows is available on floppy disks and CD-ROM. Both have the same program, but the CD-ROM version includes more goodies than the floppy version - 73 versus 30 TrueType fonts, for example, and some 1600 pieces of clipart, and 25 PCD photos. The floppy version has a good supply of clipart, though well short of the CD-ROM, and no PCD photos. The CD-ROM version also includes Print Shop Companion. Originally conceived as a program for youngsters, Print Shop has evolved into a powerful, very flexible program suitable for all ages and purposes, including business.

Math Workshop: An example of the education category, Math Workshop is a program designed for younger kids. It does an excellent job of teaching in an entertaining way. Like Print Shop, this program is very easy to use, yet contains a wide variety of options. The graphics are well done and entertaining, even for adults. It provides a number of different levels of difficulty and several different approaches to the learning of math.

3-D Home Architecture: Another example of a productivity program, 3-D Home Architecture shines above the other programs in its category that I have seen for its power, speed and ease of use. Home Architecture is very easy to use, almost intuitive. It is well laid out, fast and very powerful, allowing switching between 3-D and 2-D views and between 3-D views quickly and easily with a click or two of the mouse button. Imagine a house suspended in air, for example, giving one the ability to view the structure for any angle, including from underneath — that is the kind of capability built into Home Architecture. Unlike other programs I have seen, this program will create a useful list of construction materials. Tad was using a 486/33, with a mathco, for the demo. As fast as the program operated on that machine, I would judge that it would operate fine on a 386/25 or better with mathco, but may be a bit tedious with lesser capabilities. A mathco is not a criteria, but because of the very large amount of complex calculations that take place, it makes a big difference in how fast the program operates.

Myst: Tad informed that this is the best selling entertainment software in the industry today. It is an impressive program, for sure, with stunning graphics. Tad was able to do little more than demo the graphics in the program, however, but reported that it could be addictive in that once you get started it may be difficult to stop. One of our members who had tried the game confirmed that it is very fascinating and hard to quit.

Tad, thanks very much to you and Broderbund for an excellent presentation and the opportunity to view some of your great software programs. We will look forward to seeing your updates to these programs, and perhaps an introduction into some of your other programs.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Brainchild Computer Distributions, who donated Fox Pro 2.6 for Windows, and Broderbund who donated the rest of the door prizes, there were several very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

William LaMartin -	Garden Plant Selector
Kelly Saunders -	CNN Time Capsule
John Whitmer -	New Car Buyers Guide
Merle Nicholson -	Plumbing Essentials
Jenny Lind Olin -	Royal Flush
George Jurado -	FoxPro 2.6 for Windows

The meeting adjourned at about 8:40 PM.

President's Column

I certainly hope that each of you had a great holiday. Although our last meeting started out on a different foot than usual, it turned out great. I want to thank some folks for the successful meeting. One is Tad Brickson of Broderbund Software and of course the HCC security guard who went out of his way to help me find two overhead projectors. But mostly, I want to thank each of you that attended. It was one of the best attended December meetings in several years.

Additional thanks for electing me into my sixth year as president. I believe that I am know eligible for TPCUG retirement benefits.

1994 was a very productive year for our group. We were classified as 501(c)3 non-profit group by the IRS. We finally got bulk mail going and got a bulk mail permit. Our newsletter contained more articles by our own members than ever before. Over 600Mb of additional storage was added to the BBS. Additionally, a second phone line was added. Our first SIG (OS/2) was started. A members help line service was implemented. All of this was accomplished by the hard work and donations of the Board of Directors and members.

With all that accomplished, some may wonder what's left for 1995. Well, while we have not yet had our first board meeting of 1995, I have some goals.

1. The creation of additional SIG groups, Internet and MS Access, are a good start, but we will need more of them. These SIG groups are a must and provide a valuable educational service to members with specific product needs. SIG groups require a place to meet, a PC and a leader in order to function.

2. An active membership of 300 by November. A larger group means a richer pool of knowledge, more volunteers and more benefits to us all. A membership drive can help, but would it not be simpler if each one of you committed to signing up one new membership in 1995. Certainly you know a family, friend or co-worker that would benefit from our group.

3. Involvement in our community. With all the PC k nowledge and expertise that our group has, there must be a project that we can implement and manage to help our community.

4. The creation of an electronic newsletter. This will be done using Adobe Acrobat allowing us to post the newsletter on the BBS or any similar medium. The layout and formatting of the paper newsletter would be maintained allowing anyone to read on-line or print it as it looks when mailed to you.

These are only a few of the goals I have for 1995. There will be more. Each of you can contribute to many of these goals. Ask yourself how you can help. If you draw a blank call me and I'll help you decide. Why not renew your membership for several years instead of one. Donate equipment that we can use either for our group, a community project or sell at our bargain table. We can use a 28.8k modem or a 500Mb HD for the BBS. Old computers can be used for our SIG classes or installed in the community. Bring in that old stuff and help us out. Remember your donations may be tax deductible.

1995 Officers

The December meeting included the elections of the 1995 officers. Please join me in welcoming the new board members, William LaMartin, Bruce Register and Connie Kincaid. Of course I will miss the parting board members, Jim Clark and Al Poole. Read the secretary's, Jim Clark's, last report for the details of the election results. Please take the time to thank Jim for his contributions to the group. While we are losing our vice-president, Al, he will continue on as CO-SYSOP with Kevan Sheridan on the BBS.

A previous board member is rejoining us in a new role. I am pleased to announce that Ed Buzza has accepted the position of Advisor to the Board of Directors. The views and opinions provided by Ed will help the Board of Directors (BOD) to make more informed decisions. Other appointed officers include the return of Marylee Bruneau (Editor), Al Poole (CO-SYSOP), Larry Anders (Librarian), Kevan Sheridan (SYSOP) and Tom Cone (Membership Director). While it looks like we have a full compliment of officers and volunteers we can always use more. For now we need someone to take on the responsibility of membership director which Tom Cone currently occupies. Tom will focus on his Treasurer position once someone assumes the membership position.

SIG Groups

I am very pleased to announce the addition of an Internet SIG group. This group will be limited to 20 members and will be opened to enrollment very soon. Additional information will be posted on our BBS as it becomes available. The formation of a Microsoft Access Group is also in progress and should be ready in February. We also have the opportunity to create another SIG group as soon as we find a topic and SIG leader. But don't forget that we have an OS/2 SIG group run by John Lucas. Those of you getting into OS/2 WARP should attend this SIG. In all, we will have four SIGs by the end of the first quarter.

Harvey Bruneau

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Software Review

Video Director, version 2.0

By Gold Disk Inc.
Review by: Katherine M. Powell, Tampa PC Users Group



"Lights! Camera! ..." well, you know how it goes. And if you shoot any amount of video you also know that you end up with waaaaay more footage than you or anybody else would care to see. That's normal. So, if you want to make more viewable tapes, you need to leave some of those shots of your feet and the ground on the cutting room floor.

Video editing has been around since video recording started, but most of the tools affordable by the casual videographer are hardware components, like edit controllers, mixers and titlers. Even with more software starting to make the scene, most packages are for morphing and special effects and are at least $500.

Video Director is more affordable ($200 or less) and does the job of the hardware components I mentioned. And you cannot buy those components for what this package costs. It basically acts as the controller between the source deck (the deck you're copying from) and your record deck (copying to). There is a special cable, the SmartCable, that comes with the software and connects these decks to the serial port. The software provides a way to document segments or clips of the videos in a database and manipulate the information to create your final masterpiece.

Sounds easy! Well, before you run down to you local software superstore, be aware that there is still a good deal of setup, tweaking and commitment involved. This is not plug and play stuff. First you will need at least a 386 16Mhz PC with a minimum of 2MB RAM, a VGA monitor and running Windows 3.1 or higher. I ran it on a Pentium 90 system with 8MB of RAM and 2MB of Video RAM, so I wasn't testing the lower limit. Then you will need an available serial port. And you will need two (2) VCRs, either decks or camcorders or a combination of the two. Of these, one deck will need to be infrared remote control equipped and there needs to be a set of video and audio cables connecting the two decks. A TV monitor that is connected to the record deck will be needed to view the footage. Finally, one deck will need to be LANC compatible or have some edit controlling jack. This is a biggie. Most Sony products or 8mm camcorders will have this feature, though.

Still ready to run out and buy it?

Installation was easy and without incident. "Good, I'll just slip the tape I want to edit into the Sony camcorder, plug in my cables and set up my record deck. My record deck? It's over by the TV. Hmmm." If you have a camcorder, location is no problem, but unless your computer is within a few feet of the VCR by the TV, you either have to move that deck or have another VCR. You would almost have to be a hobbyist to have that equipment setup. Add one more thing to that list above.

OK, let's get to the software itself. The Windows based screens impressed me right away. I did notice a few places where part of the window didn't always refresh after another window was active over top of it, but in general they were easy to understand and they guided me through the steps I needed to complete the process. There are windows for the source and record decks, for logging clips and for editing and creating a tape. The menu bar at the top has three buttons for steps 1, 2 and 3. Selecting these buttons in order arranges the workspace with the appropriate windows for that step and walks you through the needed information.

To begin editing, get your popcorn out and watch the tape on the source deck. Now, don't get butter on the mouse! You wont have any need to touch the video equipment once you put the tapes in your decks since the SmartCable gives you complete control at the computer. While you're watching, you will be selecting the clips you want to keep and making any notes about them in the clip window. This takes some playing with to fully understand what information will be useful later. Fortunately, the manual that comes with Video Director is pretty easy to understand and helpful.

"I have all the clips selected, so now I'm ready to make the tape, right? ". Hold on. A true masterpiece requires careful editing even after you choose what's hot and what's not. Step 2 provides an Event List window or storyboard. You can include all or some of the clips you've just picked, add effects (add more hardware to that list we started) and rearrange the order. You could add titles or sound or computer graphics at this step with additional hardware. I priced some video capture boards and computer output to video boards that were needed to do any additional effects and found them costing $300 and up. My imagination was reasonably priced at free, so that will do for effects now.

The clips have beginning and ending tape locations logged, so when you choose Step 3 and pick 'GO', it takes all the information you've compiled and begins making an edited tape for you. Really. This part was fun! I sat back and watched the source and record decks go back and forth between play and fast forward, record and pause. And the popcorn went faster now. I had two free hands!

It was a far less than perfect answer to my editing needs, but the price makes up for that quickly. I would like to see more software that followed this example and more video equipment being built ready to interface with computers. "That's a wrap!"

Gold Disk Inc.
P.O. Box 789, Streetsville
Mississauga, Ontario
Canada L5M 2C2
Retail Price: $199.00
Sale Price: $99.00

Software Review

Magic Theatre - Windows/CD-Rom Version

Review by: Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group

Are we and the children ready to create our own movies with our computer? We certainly are and Knowledge Adventure/Instinct Corporation Software is here to help us along. This software is a Magic Theatre once you got your creativity going to develop, narrate, and animate your own computer movie. It is a program for children ages 6 years & up, but what can I tell you - I must belong to the "UP" group since I created all kinds of movies and had as much fun as any child.

By the way, Magic Theatre is the first program that allowed me to hear my own voice come out of my computer. Now I do know I still have a German accent after more than 20 years residing in the good, old USA. Magic Theatre is fascinating. Not only can you record your own voice and music while you create a movie on the screen, but this program has so many props in a special library to be used and interchanged for your movie ideas. Here you have background sceneries, all types of animated characters and music to choose from, drawings, painting tools and sound effects.

The setup to move around in this program does require a mouse. All that is needed to get going is to click on the icons around the outer frame of the screen. Click with the right mouse button on any of the little icons and you will hear a help voice that tells you what this icon has in store for you. You have no problems to create your own movies within a few minutes after you installed Magic Theatre on your computer. It took me a little while to get my music going within this software, but the little manual that comes with this software told me how to go into Windows to set up my MIDI driver and MIDI Mapper to hear music. It also has some great magic tips for movie making. There is quite a difference in drawing a picture and be done with it or creating a continuous moving pictures with sound.

I cannot wait to try this program out with some of the children at church. I can see already how they take over my computer for the day. Children do like to use their artistic skills, voice, and drama to tell their own story and present it to an audience. Magic Theatre allows them and us to do it and the results are very amazing, and the movies are created with such ease within this program.

Every time you start Magic Theatre, it presents different types of mini-movies to show you what this program is capable of. It is a delight to watch every one of them and you are inspired to use your own imagination and drawings to create a movie.

The program Magic Theatre came with a free microphone (a $29.95 value as an introductory offer). It needs Windows 3.1 and up, Sound Blaster or compatible sound card. 4MB memory, 256 SVGA. CD-Rom requires 4M storage, floppy disks require at least 18M of storage space for the big library of props that come with Magic Theatre. Using narration the movie production requires 600K of hard disk space per minute, without narration 5K are needed per scene. Since Magic Theatre is a Windows environment program and needs all the space it can get while running, it is best to close all your other applications. Though, the program makes sure they and the Task Manager are disabled while Magic Theatre is running. This protects any of your other data and makes this program run smoothly.



Book Review

Making Movies With Your PC

Prima Publishing
By Robert Hone and Margy Kuntz
Second Edition, 272 pages, Illustrated, $24.95
Review by: Harry Ludowise, Portland PC Users Group

This book explains how you can edit, and display digital video on your computer, using some additional hardware and software. Because the quality of your finished video depends on the quality of your source material, scripting, lighting, and camera work are discussed as well. The book gives fairly comprehensive instructions for video editing using "Microsoft's Video for Windows" and "Adobe's Premiere," but the hardware and software for these programs is expensive and most likely will cost more than your computer did.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I, "Video-editing Basics," includes the first five chapters and is primarily about the mechanics of editing although some camera work is included.

During editing, the picture will not be the same as the one you are accustomed to seeing on your television set. Video consumes an enormous amount of memory. For example, one second of normal video takes up 9.2MB of memory. In order to make it practical to work with a reasonable length of video on the average computer, three techniques are used. The first, data compression, can reduce the memory needed for a second of video from 9.2MB to 500K. The second technique is to drop frames. Normal video contains 30 frames per second. The software described in this book will typically eliminate 40 to 50 percent of the frames. The third technique is to reduce the information needed to create the picture. This means the picture quality will be reduced to the point that it must be viewed on a small portion of your screen. The authors recommend about 1/16 of full screen or 2.5 by 2 inches.

When the editing is completed, the final step is to save the video to its final form. The picture quality and the missing frames are restored, and the dissolves

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Movies... *Continued from page 6*

and special effects are assembled for the first time. This can be a slow processes, taking several hours for a short video. The finished video may then be viewed on your PC or transferred to ordinary video tape for viewing on a VCR.

Making a satisfactory video involves much more than the mechanics of editing. Therefore, as you might expect, more than half the book covers camera work, lighting, writing scripts, and editing for effect. For example, Chapter 3, "The Picture Tells the Story," explains the various types of camera shots and when to use them to create the desired effect.

In Part II, "Into the Cutting Room," chapters 6 through 10, the authors get into the real work of editing. In this part they explain how to use the camera together with editing to express ideas and tell stories. For example, Chapter 6, The Grammar of Visual Storytelling," the authors show how to analyze a film, and how to create continuity using only a single camera. Two simple projects are discussed in this section, producing a group discussion video and a sales demonstration video. The authors demonstrate how to prepare a simple script, called a paper cut. The paper cut allows you to recognize potentially boring sequences, and other faults early enough in the project to figure out ways to eliminate them. The proper use of music and special effects are also discussed in part II.

Part III "Becoming a Professional," chapters 11 through 14, covers sound effects, lighting, and advanced camera work. The emphasis in this part of the book is on the use of the camera.

The last section, Part IV, is a series of appendixes, which lists recommended books and magazines for additional information. There also is a list of manufacturers of video editing equipment, and a glossary.

I recommend this book to anyone who has a camcorder and who wishes to learn better camera technique. It would also be useful to anyone thinking of editing video or film. Roughly a quarter of the book is devoted to editing with "Adobe Premiere" and "Microsoft Video for Windows" but the editing techniques described would have some value to anyone editing video. Unless you are serious about making video, however, the book is not for you. It does not discusses computers except as useful tools for editing video. Prima Publishing, 1994; PO Box 1260BK, Rocklin, CA 95677-1260.

Software Review

PC911 Version 1.0

Review By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group



What It Is: The name appropriately indicates the function of the program — created by Cybermedia, Inc., it is a rescue program designed to keep track of the critical configuration and boot files of your computer and create and maintain an emergency boot disk that will permit you to boot your computer from a current boot floppy in the event you have difficulty booting from your hard disk, restoring the critical files on your hard disk in the process. It also maintains a log of configuration changes, thereby giving the capability to revert to a previous configuration easily. PC911 can detect many of the cards installed in your computer and report potential conflicts found if more than one peripheral is set to use the same IRQ, DMA, etc., offering alternative settings to avoid the conflict. While PC911 automatically backs up and monitors critical Windows files, and will restore these files when needed, it is a DOS program and operates only in DOS.

PC911 does these things by collecting and storing in files the configuration information about your computer and backing up critical configuration files at the time of installation. It also creates an emergency boot disk containing all the critical files and configuration information to boot your computer in its normal configuration and restore damaged files on the hard disk. It can operated from the DOS prompt, or at the time of boot through an entry in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file; the latter would seem the way to get the most benefit. Since PC911 is not a TSR program — it does its thing and then closes down, having updated, as necessary the critical configuration information/files it monitors — and therefore does not consume memory. The only evidence you see of it working are statements at the end of the boot process showing that it has done its thing, or a screen identifying a change or problem if one is found.

Does it slow booting down? Yes, but only very slightly — about 2 seconds — unless it detects a configuration change and you have selected to have the program report all changes to you and/or the emergency boot disk needs to be updated. It will then call the change to your attention and offer an opportunity to make note of the reason for the change before it records the changes to its backup files. It will also offer to update the emergency boot disk if any changes have been made in the boot files (CONFIG.SYS or AUTOEXEC.BAT).

PC911 can be customized to your particular needs and desires, and provides several useful utilities : Reports IRQ/address uses of existing cards and allows direct entry of the same info for any cards that PC911 cannot detect; can report unused IRQs and DMAs; allows review of prior configuration files and/or restoration of anyone of them as the active file; provides for user selection of any other files for monitoring and automatic backup by PC911; will warn at boot of low memory and/or disk space, if desired, when either is below values selected by the user; includes a system information utility that will provide data about the computer's hardware and operating systems. In addition, PC911 can be used in PCs connected in networks, with the backup data stored on either the server or the PC.

All well and good — it doesn't take any memory, it doesn't significantly slow the boot process, and it does automatically a lot of very nice things for me. What are the drawbacks? No major ones that I can see, unless one expects too much from the program. For example, I

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have an unknown problem in my computer that causes the mouse and/or keyboard to become inoperable at irregular intervals, requiring restarting Windows as a minimum, and sometimes rebooting the computer. I also have problems using the LPT2 port. PC911 has not identified a problem or conflict. That is to imply that PC911 is limited to what it says it is — a boot rescue program and not a PC trouble shooter. Though it keeps track of IRQs, DMAs, etc., and may help identify conflicts for cards you add to your computer, its principal purpose is boot rescue

Installation: Simple, clear cut and quick. PC911 comes on one 3.5" HD floppy. Insert the floppy in the appropriate drive, type "PC911" at the prompt for that drive, and you are off and running. Other than PC911 prompting to accept or change the location to which it will install itself, PC911 does everything automatically.

Documentation: The small owners manual is comprehensive and clear regarding loading and use of Print Cache. The explanation for using all of its features is clear and adequate. There is no on-line help file, but instructions are provided on each screen. Technical support is free, but is available only via regular long-distance lines.

Requirements for PC911 are minimal: Any IBM-compatible PC, MS-DOS 5.0/PC-DOS 6.0/Novell DOS 6 or above, and 800K of uncompressed hard disk space. Yes, it is compatible with major popular disk compression programs, such as Stacker, and will monitor, backup & restore critical INI files for those programs. Program files use about 525K of disk space; the remaining space is needed for backup.

Cost: PC911 is not readily available locally. In fact, you will likely have to order directly from the Cybermedia or special order through one of the local software outlets. Cost via special order is about the same as the MSRP - $59.95.

My View: A useful utility program, especially for those fairly new to computers. At $60, however, it seems a bit expensive in today's software market. Perhaps a better price could be obtained dealing directly with Cybermedia. For additional information, contact:

Cybermedia, Inc.
1800 Century Park East, Suite 1145,
Los Angeles, CA 90067
(310) 843-0800.

Printing Halftones and Gray Fills

By Richard Leonetti,
Portland PC Users Group

Understanding dots-per-inch (dpi), lines-per-inch (lpi) and your printer.

For most graphics work, we do our fills, include our photos and print it on our laser printer without a second thought. Then one day we want to send something "out" to a different printer, maybe because it is in color, or a larger size than our printer handles.

Suddenly, we are confronted with understanding dpi's, lpi's and gradient fills on the "outside" printer, or worse, get back an expensive print done "outside" and it looks different than we expected.

To improve my results I decided to study these variables, and this is what I found.

Historically the printing trade has created half tones and grays photographically by overlaying a dot screen on the image. The grays were broken into uniformly spaced small dots, using larger diameters where the image was darker and smaller ones where the image was lighter. The uniform spacing of the dots was called screen resolution and is measured in "lines per inch."

With desktop publishing, that process has been eliminated with output going directly to a laser printer or imagesetter. Because these printers produce dots of uniform size and spacing, shades of gray (or color) can only be produced by turning on and off some of these much more closely spaced black dots.

Authors of books and software manuals often assume that a square area of printer dots is manipulated to produce the equivalent of the changing size photographic dot, and hence a shade of gray. Often this formula is shown:
(printer resolution [dpi] ÷ screen ruling [lpi])2 + 1 = printed shades of gray
For a 300 dpi laser printer, at the standard 60 lpi, the formula yields 26 shades of gray. The logic is that a 5-by-5 group of printer dots, manipulated in all possible 25 combinations, plus all white, yields 26 combinations or shades. 300 printer dots, divided by groups of 5 is the 60 lpi.

The software print driver is the program that tells each printer where to put the dots. Testing this process, I printed a variety of test grays using a NEC 95, 300 dpi printer. For print drivers, I used a PostScipt and HP III driver supplied with windows 3.1, and a different PostScript driver that came with PageMaker 5.0. Instead of the 25 grays expected both PostScipt drivers gave me 32 shades of gray (plus white) and the HP driver 64 shades of gray (plus white). At "60 lpi" all three drivers used a of 4-by-8 grid of print dots arranged like figure A. To darken the gray, the driver first fills a 4-by-4, offsetting the grid by four on the next line. The horizontal and vertical "dot spacing" is 37.5 per inch, but the dots really are nearer on the diagonal giving 53 lines per inch. So even though the software says I want printing at 60 lpi, I'm actually getting only 53 lpi in return for a boost in the number of gray shades from 25 to 32 plus white.
For this 4 by 8 grid, the math is (300 ÷ 4) ÷ 1.41 = 53 lpi.

The HP driver delivers 64 shades of gray from the same 4 by 8 grid by a small non uniformity. Instead of adding one small printer dot to each larger group of dots for the next darker shade, it achieves an intermediate shade of gray by adding a single dot to every other horizontal row, then balancing it up on the next darker shade.

Carrying this scheme on, you can calculate the PostScript driver, a 300 dpi printer and a 7 by 14 grid will give 30 lpi and 98 grays plus white. And that is what happened when I used 30 lpi.

Although I did not test this, it likely that for a 600 dpi printer, the default 85 lpi setting uses a 5 by 10 grid

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and yields 50 shades with PostScript and 100 shades with the HP scheme, plus white. Try your print driver—printer combination to find out.

It is important to understand the number of grays the printer can produce so you can anticipate the "banding" you will experience in large gradient fills. For example, at 60 lpi with 33 shades available including white, a gradient fill from 60% to 30% will show (.60-.30)x(33) or about 10 bands. Divide the size of the fill by the number of bands, and you will know how large they are. 2 inch fill with 10 bands means they are 0.2 inches each, and you will see them. Generally your eye will see banding larger than 0.1 inches. If you cut the lpi to 30 lpi, the number of grays increases to 99, and the bands on this 2 inch fill shrink to .07 inches and you don't see them. The trade off is no banding but larger, more visible dots.

With halftones (photos) there is a balance to be struck between increasing numbers of grays and larger number of lines they require. The generally accepted "best" balance of these two is shown in the table and samples appear in most books on the subject.

A related topic is just what resolution to scan any halftones to be used in your document. The basic rule is you must scan at a higher resolution than you will print, but anything more than double the print resolution is wasted information, needlessly swelling you scan files. The norm is to scan at 1.5 to 2.0 times the print resolution for half tones. Suggested scan rates are also in the table.

Black and white material with no grays, is best scanned at your highest scan resolution since sharp edges are desired. Anyway, with only black or white to store the scans take only a small amounts of space.

Richard Leonetti is a Portland PC User Group member; contact him at (503) 246-4952 with your comments and feedback. - ed.

Writing Add-Ons

Andrew J. Gnoza, III,
El Paso, Texas (APCUG)

Like money and fonts you can never have enough templates for your word processor or DTP software. Most people either don't want to or don't know how to create templates for reoccurring tasks such as making invoices, FAX coversheets or style sheets for newsletter pages. Here are some of the better packages I have seen that you may want to consider for your writing tasks.

HotDocs V:2.0 turns your Windows word processor into a powerful business document machine. The software automates production of standard business documents like: letters, proposals, contracts, legal documents, RFP's, and others. With Hot Docs you can quickly use any of the templates by inserting names, numbers, dates and you are done. You also have the ability to make templates and add them to the existing lists to choose from at a later time. Normal SOP with a word processor is to cut, paste, rewrite, edit, move, and proof reading a business documents over and over again. With HotDocs templates producing a perfect document is simply a matter of answering a few questions, the answers are placed into the appropriate blanks throughout the document and you print it. Done. HotDocs requires a IBM or compatible 80386 PC or faster CPU, VGA display, M/S Windows V;3.1 and a Windows word processor; WordPerfect 5.2 or 6.0, Microsoft Word 2.0 or 6.0 or AmiPro 3.0. A hard disk with 2 MB of space is also required. For more information contact CAPSOFT Development at (800) 500-DOCS or (801) 763-3900.

Design Portfolio for M/S Word for Windows 2.0/6.0 or WordPerfect for Windows 6.0a/6.1 from Streetwise Software is loaded onto your word processors menus and you are then a mouse click away from professional looking documents. The software is very easy to use and includes over 170 professionally designed pages that include FAX cover sheets, letterheads, memos, certificates, resumes, business forms brochures, calendars and more. An integrated address book lets you point and click to insert names into your design Portfolio documents. As an added bonus design Portfolio ships with 35 True Type fonts (you never can have too many fonts) and over 150 quality clip art images to dress up your documents. The software comes with a guarantee that if you can't create professional documents within five (5) minutes just return the software to Streetwise and you'll get a full refund (60 day time limit from date of purchase). Contact Streetwise Software at (310) 829-7827.

DesignKit for AmiPro V:3.0 from Logic Arts Corp. is a set of over 100 ready to use AmiPro style sheets. With the this add on you select the template you want, add your customized text and print it out. Because this add on is not a separate program, your existing hardware and software setup for AmiPro is all you need to install the templates. Used in conjunction with Adobe Type Manager (ATM) which ships with AmiPro you have all you need to create professionally looking documents. Installation is through the Windows "RUN" command which automatically performs the steps to place the styles into the appropriate sub directories on you hard disk. All you do to use a template is load the style sheet from the pull down menus in the word processor. The kit includes a rubber stamp function to place gray scaled text onto your document such as: CONFIDENTIAL, NEW, URGENT and 22 others as well as some clip art. To contact Logic Arts call them at (804)-266-7996.

Layouts is a set of templates for Aldus PageMaker that were designed by award winning graphic artists to enhance the abilities of your PageMaker software. A total of 219 templates make your first time encounter with PageMaker a breeze and the more you use PageMaker and Layout the more proficient and creative you become. Templates include those to: do brochures with two, three and four panel styles; newsletters for single and multi column layouts; flyers; business cards; letterheads; envelopes; and business reply cards. The templates are customizable so you can adapt the existing ones into forms that meet your specific needs, including changing fonts to

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create an entire new look. The out put is printer/camera ready and meets Printer'sApprentice specifications. For more information contact Postcraft International at (805) 257-1797.

DesignKit for Aldus PageMaker from Logic Arts Corp. is a collection of over 50 ready to use documents that includes: brochures, manuals, calendars, stationary, news releases, certificates, and many other templates. You get all the pieces of the document puzzle wrapped into one software application. Professional help from an award winning designer is included on the pull down menus, saving you the time of not having to go elsewhere to get the assistance you need when you need it. Point and click with the mouse lets you change the format, style, font , layout, etc instantly. DesignKit helps you present information in a way that captures attention and moves your reader to take note of what they are reading. Included is a logo library and some clip art. To contact Logic Arts call them at (804)-266-7996.

SmartPad for Aldus PageMaker embeds powerful toolbars right into the application with over 50 buttons make you more productive using the DTP software. Formatting control, graphics shortcuts, special characters, file operations, toolbox selections, and program launching are all right at your finger tips. You can access file and clipboard commands with a single click on the Main toolbar. With a simple installation routine from Windows, automatic start up feature its very intuitive to learn, no big manuals to read through, from cover to cover the Reference Guide is only 17 pages long. Before you know it you are running and gunning through one of the most complex and productive software packages on the market today, Aldus PageMaker. A demo version is available for $10.00 which can be applied to the retail price of $49.00. For more information call toll free (800)-434-0202.

Let There Be Light!

Submitted by Eldon Graham
with careful coaching by Crystal Graham

How many Windows programmers does it take to change a light bulb?
472. One to write WinGetLightBulbHandle, one to write WinQueryStatusLightBulb, one to write WinGetLightSwitchHandle, etc.

How many managers does it take to change a light bulb?
We've formed a task force to study the problem of why light bulbs burn out, and figure out what, exactly, we as supervisors can do to make the bulbs work smarter, not harder.

How many MIS guys or gals does it take to change a light bulb?
MIS has received your request concerning your hardware problem, and has assigned your request Service Number 39712. Please use this number for any future reference to this light bulb issue. As soon as a technician becomes available, you will be contacted.

How many WordPerfect support technicians does it take to change a light bulb?
We have an exact copy of the light bulb here and it seems to be working fine. Can you tell me what kind of system you have?
OK. Now, exactly how dark is it? OK. There could be four or five things wrong . . . have you tried the light switch?

How many Microsoft technicians does it take to change a light bulb?
Three. Two holding the ladder and one to screw the light bulb into a faucet.

How many Microsoft Vice-Presidents does it take to change a light bulb?
Eight. One to change the bulb, and seven to make sure Microsoft gets $2.00 for every light bulb ever changed anywhere in the world.

How many software testers does it take to change a light bulb?
We just noticed the room was dark. We don't actually fix the problems.

How many software developers does it take to change a light bulb?
The light bulb works fine on the system in my office . . .

How many C++ programmers does it take to change a light bulb?
You're still thinking procedurally. A properly designed light bulb object will inherit a change method from a generic light bulb class, so all you'd have to do is send a light bulb change message.

How long does it take a DEC repairman to change a light bulb?
It depends on how many burned out bulbs he brought with him.

How many Windows users does it take to change a light bulb?
One. But he'll swear up and down that it was just as easy for him as it would have been for a Macintosh user.

How many Apple Newton users does it take to change a light bulb?
Foux! There to eat lemons, axe gravy soup.

How many Microsoft engineers does it take to change a light bulb?
None. Bill Gates just redefined Darkness (TM) as the new industry standard.

Compliments of the Saginaw Valley Computer Association "Blue Chip News" Saginaw, MI (517)792-6874.



Software Review

"STREET ATLAS"

*CD-ROM Review by: Mark Eager, Contributing Editor, Pikes Peak Computer Applications Society, Inc. (P*PCompAS)*

When I'm in a strange town, (stranger then Colorado Springs), I always like to have a map to help me figure out where I am and how to get where I want to be. And, like any man, I don't like to ask for directions — (I am a man of the sixties, not the nineties). With Street Atlas by DoLORME Mapping, I can prepare and print maps for any city or area of the US. and include as much or as little data as I need.

First off, Street Atlas is not a trip planning package, like DoLORME's Map 'N' Go. What it does is provide maps of any area in the US. and allow the user to include or exclude any local feature information needed, such as lakes, mountains, etc.

Besides producing detailed, street-level maps, Street Atlas also provides the tools for a user to quickly locate a street, area, etc., merely by clicking on a button and entering information. A search can be done by place name, phone number or Zip. It can also search with partial information, such as the area code, part of a Zip Code or place name. Each map comes with elevation lines to indicate variations in local topography, places of interest, such as airports, parks and lakes, and can list block numbers for streets in urban areas.

The opening screen of Street Atlas displays a map with a status bar at the bottom indicating a magnification of between 3 and 16 along with distance information—(One inch =X). Help is available by hitting the F1 key. There is a small window showing an overview map of the area surrounding the detailed area on the main map and a floating tool bar of option buttons. The Toolbar can be arranged as buttons along the top edge of the screen and overview map on or off to make more room for map viewing. At any time during map viewing a map legend can be displayed by clicking on the "KEY" button in the Toolbar or by choosing Legend under the View pull-down menu. You can also change the magnification level to show more or less detail.

Locating a particular street is simple. First, you can search a map you are already viewing, as long as you are at magnification level thirteen or higher. If you are not already viewing an area, then you can locate the area you think the street is in by doing a search by Place name, Zip Code, or Phone number. You can use partial spellings, numbers, etc., in this search.

For example, suppose you are looking for a street in the Peyton area. You can do a Place search for Peyton. Street Atlas will give a list of matches and you can select Peyton from that list and then click on LOCATE. This will center the map on the Peyton area. From there you can do a search for a particular street name. Remember, you can do a partial-spell search if you're not sure how to spell the street name.

You can also search via phone number, with either area code only, area code and exchange, or the complete number with area code. If you don't have the phone number, but do know the Zip Code, then do a search from that. Either method will bring up a list of areas that match the search parameters, and you select the one you want and then click on locate to center the map on that area. From there, it's just a short street search to locate the street you are looking for.

Street Atlas allows you to copy any map to the Windows Clipboard for use by another program, such as a word processor. You can also pan in any direction by moving the mouse pointer to that section of the map and clicking with the left button. Clicking with the right button allows you to identify a street that your mouse pointer is on and places a label with the street name next to the street itself. Clearing any labels you have inserted is as easy as clicking on the erase button from the Toolbar or the pull-down menus.

The one area of the program I had a problem with was Printing. Street Atlas allows you to print any map you have in the viewing area under any magnification. The one problem with this, is in Gray Scale rendering. Street Atlas uses Gray Scaling to differentiate between features on the map, such as highways, local streets, and large and small cities. If your printer doesn't handle gray scale well enough, some details on the maps will be unreadable.

I discovered my Panasonic KX-P2123 couldn't handle gray scale well, causing individual streets in major cities to be unreadable due to the shading of the city boundaries. The streets were there but covered by the shade used to show the city area itself. My laser printer, however, worked flawlessly. So, be advised that you should make sure you printer can handle gray scaling properly before you buy Street Atlas. You can call the company at 1-(207)-865-7098 between 08:30 and 17:00 EST for help in confirming your printer's ability. You can also contact the manufacturer of your printer for help in this area.

Street Atlas requires an IBM or 100% compatible system with a 386 or higher processor. A minimum of 2MB - 4MB recommended and 2.5MB of space on the hard disk, Microsoft Windows V3.1, DOS V4.1 or later, VGA MONITOR, a Microsoft compatible mouse and a CD-ROM drive is also necessary.

Installation is a breeze. Open the File Manager, select the install floppy drive, double-click on "Setup.exe," and you are off and running.

Street Atlas installed and ran on my 486DX2-66 with no problems or slow-

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• Banquet Facility
• Complete Event Planning Services

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Street... *Continued from page 11*

downs, except when printing to my postscript laser printer, which I expected anyway, since my laser is old technology and not fast to begin with. Street Atlas is easy to use and great at making up maps before taking any trips. It doesn't do trip planning, and although, it did show quite detailed maps of the rural areas east of Colorado Springs, it didn't have our new airport yet, (or that big mess east of Denver :-)). If you are looking for a decent street atlas, look no further. Street Atlas will do the job just fine. It can be had locally for $75.00, and mail order at $89.00 and up, although you might find someone who has it cheaper.

Update on Sound Cards

By Rob O'Daniel - The DOS Umbrella
Reprinted from the "Blue Chip News" a publication of the Saginaw Valley Computer Association

In the past year, the PC audio industry has surpassed the previous two or three years. Last year, buying a sound card meant choosing between Creative Labs' Sound Blaster Pro (SB Pro), MediaVision's Pro AudioSpectrum-16 (PAS-16), Advanced Gravis' UltraSound, Microsoft's Sound System, Turtle Beach's high-end Multisound, or a small handful of others. But now, the choice is staggering!

This year's offerings include Creative Labs' newest offering, the Sound Blaster 16 ASP (in three different flavors!), MediaVision's revamped Pro Audio Studio-16, and more than a half dozen different cards based upon Sierra Semiconductor's Aria chip set.

Add to this Microsoft's soon-to-be-released Sound System 2 and Roland's highly anticipated RAP-10, and the choice begins to get a bit tough. Complicate matters further by tossing Creative Labs' add-on daughter board called WaveBlaster and Turtle Beach's add-on called Maui, both designed to marry high-end wavetable synthesis with digital audio-capable sound cards, into the mix. What to do? Which one is best? Which should you choose?

Which One Is Best? Which Should You Choose?

Well, the decision making process is one thing that has remained unchanged in the past year. You must have an idea — at least a general concept — of what you'd like to accomplish with your new sound hardware before you go shopping. How do you shop when you may have never owned a sound card before? Well, to evaluate your needs and goals for a sound card, you should ask yourself a few questions:

What do you want to use this card for?

If games are your bag, you will want to stay within the realm of Sound Blaster compatible music cards! If you are a serious game aficionado, you will no doubt want to consider a solution that combines both stereo digital audio for sound effects and high quality MIDI capabilities for stunningly realistic orchestrated game sound tracks. In the past, you could only do both by combining a sound card and a separate MIDI synthesizer card. This year, you have the option of buying a wavetable add-on for your sound card — if you choose the right card. Also investigate Creative Labs' WaveBlaster and Turtle Beach's Maui add-ons first. Also keep a lookout for AVM Technology's soon-to-be-released wavetable product built around a Kurzweil chip set that was recently mentioned in Computer Shopper. Advanced Gravis' economical UltraSound is also worth considering; the UltraSound now has more capable software to support MIDI within many games and is garnering more industry support this year.

If your primary concern is multimedia, Sound Blaster compatibility isn't a big issue. For multimedia, consider a card that has both Sound Blaster compatibility, is capable of handling multiple inputs, and supports stereo .WAV playback at rates up to 44 kHz. MediaVision's Pro AudioSpectrum-16, Logitech's SoundMan 16, and Microsoft's Sound System are worth a look.

For MIDI sequencing, obviously you need not be as concerned with Sound Blaster compatibility. Take a look at wavetable based cards such as MediaVision's new Pro AudioStudio-16XL, Advanced Gravis' UltraSound, one of the Aria-based cards (such as Diamond Computer System's Sonic Sound), Orchid's SoundWave 32, or Turtle Beach's Multisound. These cards, and many others, have MIDI muscle to make your compositions come to life.

On a Budget?

Consider Creative Labs' Sound Blaster Pro Deluxe, Aztech Labs' Sound Galaxy Pro NX16, Logitech's SoundMan 16, or Advanced Gravis' UltraSound. There are many vendors offering feature-packed sound cards in the $110-150 range.

How important is compatibility?

Again, if you are into games or rely more on DOS-based multimedia or education programs, Sound Blaster compatibility is a must. For gammers, the SB Pro Deluxe offers stereo music and sound and won't break your budget. Bear in mind that cards that only say they are Sound Blaster compatible are only offering monaural music and sound, whereas cards that offer SB Pro compatibility will take advantage of DOS-based programs that support stereo music and digital sound.

What about vendor support?

Even more so this year than last, you must consider how viable support will be when purchasing a sound card. Will the vendor be able to offer technical advice or provide you with the latest Windows drivers? The AudioPro Buster-16 sound card may seem like the hottest ticket in town, but if the manufacturer isn't around to provide support, you will probably have a difficult time finding any software that will work with your new card. Read message boards and magazine articles to try to determine what level of support you can expect from the company that is offering this oh-so-hot sound card. Chances are, if you are buying it from an electronics catalog, a department store, or from a computer shop you aren't very familiar with, there could be problems. Best to pay a few dollars more and get a well-known product produced by a reputable company.

How important is a 16-bit sound card?

In the context of computer audio, 16-bit refers to the sample resolution. While 16-bit digitized audio is being touted as a 'must have' by most magazines, how much do you really need it? Consider that uncompressed digitized audio recorded in

See **SoundCard...** *Continued on page 13*

Sound Card...*Continued from page 12*

stereo at 44 kHz and 16-bit requires more than 10.5 megabytes of storage per minute and you'll see that, while the sound might be impeccable, the storage requirements make it unrealistic for most computer owners. (16-bit, 44 kHz, stereo digital audio is commonly referred to as 'CD quality' since those are the sampling settings generally used by the compact disc recording industry.)

But what about CD-ROMs? While it is true that 5 or 10 megs is a drop in the bucket on a 600+ megabyte storage medium, consider this: Why load a huge .WAV file into your memory and play it back, when you could simply play recorded sound information off of the CD-ROM just like your home stereo plays a standard audio CD? This approach frees the system of the tremendous load of having to process a potentially huge digitized sound.

With this in mind, it's unlikely that 16-bit digitized audio will be supported by mainstream software vendors until a compression standard is settled upon. The 16-bit feature of a sound card is probably not reason enough to warrant the additional $50-100 cost. However, this is not to say that a 16-bit sound card won't have some other, more usable, features that would suit your needs. Once you've decided your needs, it's time to start reading reviews, talking to computer hardware dealers, investigating all the nitpicking details, and asking LOTS of questions! Be patient—chances are, you'll only be buying one sound card for the next two or three years, so you certainly aren't going to be happy if you rush out and buy a product that becomes obsolete before it's six months old. Don't try to be the first person on your block to get the newest whiz-bang sound card or you may get stuck with hardware that garners no third party support. While some of the new software innovations, such as surround sound and 3-D audio, certainly sound appealing, don't let that be the sole basis for your hardware decision because there may be no software companies supporting that feature for many months to come. Rob O'Daniel is the PC Music & Sound Forum Leader for America On-Line and can be reached as PC RobO. *Courtesy of North Orange County Computer Club, California.*

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
WinSense - the Windows Optimizer
AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows
Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing
CA$HGRAF Office Plus - The World's Most Powerful Single-Solution Office Software!
MULTIMEDIA MAGIC CD - by Gold Disk - Everything you need to enjoy the magic of multimedia.
SHERLOCK - The ultimate filing and retrieval system for Windows.
FIRST AID for Windows Users - Fixes problems fast and automatically.
Kinderventures - The Wanderoos Go Exploring (ages 3 to 8) CDRom
Jump*Start KINDERGARTEN - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6)
Kid's ENCYCLOPEDIA - The Random House (ages 7-12)
RUSA - Interactive Art Tour - St. Petersburg, Russia CDRom.
DO-OVER! - Change the look of Windows with a bonus utility to speed task switching.
CD ESSENTIALS- The Windows software utility that lets you automatically access, play and manage your CDs from Windows.
SPACE ADVENTURE- Knowledge Adventure up-to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
AVIATION ADVENTURE - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
TuneLand staring Howie Mandel - Interactive Cartoon CDRom (ages 3 and up)
PFS:Works for OS/2 - Graphics, Word Processor, Spreadsheet, Label Maker, Address Book, Communications, Database (Spinnaker)

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

Software Review
"SPINRITE v3.1"

*Review by: Mark Eager, Contributing Editor, Pikes Peak Computer Applications Society, Inc. P*PCompAS*

SpinRite V3.1, by Gibson Research Corporation is a hard disk utility for user maintenance of hard disks. Like MSDOS's Scandisk, it is used to help a user maintain their hard disk with minimal effort. However, it goes way beyond the capabilities of Scandisk and gives the user a host of tools for working with hard disks.

SpinRite V3.1 requires that the system be booted from a clean boot disk, because it uses all the available system resources. Consequently, some TSR's and device drivers could interfere with operations. The manual helps the user determine which ones are necessary and which aren't and how to add them to the boot disk.

The main screen allows the user to start SpinRite with the default settings, go to the Options sub-menu, or exit the program. The Options sub-

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Spinrite...*Continued from page 13*

menu allows the user to change settings, view drive information or run the hard disk benchmark test.

There are five main settings that can be viewed or modified. The first is the level of SpinRite Operations. The other four allow the user to select where the Operations Log File will go, how many Prior Logs are retained, and whether to include Drive Information and Benchmarking Information in the log.

There are seven different levels of operation. Level 1 employs a simple read-only test, similar to ScanDisk's, for checking the disk surface. Level 2 goes deeper and adds data recovery using SpinRite's DynaStat Data Recovery that attempts to recover unreadable data and then rewrites it to its original location or moves it as needed. Level 3 adds to Level 2 by employing a complete read and re-write on every sector of the drive to realign the data on the hard disk. Level 4 adds light testing of the drive for physical defects using a series of special data analysis patterns. Level 5 goes further, adding a moderate defect analysis of the hard drive, which is three times deeper testing then the previous levels. Level 6 is SpinRite's deepest surface testing and data recovery. Level 7 uses the same deep testing employed in Level 6, but goes one step further by testing sectors of the drive that had previously been marked bad. If these areas pass all of SpinRite's rigorous deep level testing, they are returned to full use, but only if all pattern tests are completed successfully.

The hard drive Information Option will display a wealth of information on the drive including cluster use, used cluster space and bad cluster information, just to mention a few. It can also display the model type, drive serial number and firmware revision if that information is available on the drive.

The hard drive Benchmark Tests will show the drive's random sector access in milliseconds and the sector access velocity in megabytes per second. Along with them will be the Burst Transfer rate and the Sustained Transfer rate in bytes per second. With this information, the user can tell just how fast their hard disk really is.

SpinRite V3.1 is extremely flexible, even while running. The program can be interrupted at any time by pressing the ESC key. This allows the user to choose to cancel the operation, suspend the operation, resume a suspended operation, suspend the operation and exit or simply return to the main menu. Not enough, you say! OK, how about this. SpinRite V3.1 uses multitasking to allow the user to display any one of 7 different screens, even while the program is testing the drive.

The Graphic Status Display will bring up a display similar to that of ScanDisk or Norton's Disk Doctor. The Real-Time Activities screen will display the immediate details of what SpinRite is currently doing, along with summaries of the current operation since it started.

The detailed Technical Log, allows the user to peruse a text log of each event that has occurred during testing. The user can scroll back through the most recent 200 lines of this log, without interrupting the testing going on. This means the user can examine the test results in a real-time environment, instead of waiting for the test to complete.

Both the Surface Analysis Monitor and DynaStat Data Recovery Screens, display data of a more technical level. This is useful for the more technical user, but most users won't have much need to view these screens.

SpinRite V3.1 does have a small list of known incompatibilities listed in the manual's appendices. Any user is advised to thoroughly read this section before starting any testing to avoid problems due to any incompatibilities. More important then that, the manual strongly recommends that the software be backed up before testing begins. That's usually a given, when performing hard disk operations of this nature, since only a fool would risk data that is not backed up. Running Chkdsk or ScanDisk is also recommended before starting any testing.

SpinRite V3.1 can be run un-attended from a batch file or by using a set of DOS command line keywords. Because of the introduction of hard disk compression software, SpinRite has been designed to be compatible with the AddStor's "SuperStor, V2.0" or later, Microsoft's "DoubleSpace, V1.0" or later and Stac Electronic's "Stacker, V2.0" or later. If you are using any other compression program you can contact the SpinRite Technical support group at 714-362-8900 for compatibility questions.

SpinRite V3.1 will not work with large capacity drives set up using On Track's software BIOS setup. However, it will work fine with large capacity drives set up using "Drive Pro," from Micro House, which does the same thing -- better I might add, in my opinion -- as On Track.

Since SpinRite V3.1 is intended for the non-technical, the manual is short and sweet. Everything needed to run SpinRite is explained in easy to understand terms. The program also includes a Hypertext system that is filled with interesting and valuable information for both the first time, and the experienced user.

The amount of time SpinRite needs to complete its task depends on the level of testing the user desires. The deeper the testing and recovery, the larger the drive, the longer the test will take. The nice thing is being able to select the level of testing as needed to solve a possible hard disk problem.

SpinRite has always been an excellent hard disk utility and the latest version is no slouch. I highly recommend this program as an addition to anyone's utility library. You won't be disappointed with SpinRite V3.1 and it may even help prevent a major hard disk problem before it gets out-of-hand. As a tech, I use SpinRite V3.1 to troubleshoot problems Scandisk can't handle. I give it a Five-Star rating.

SpinRite V3.1 requires an IBM-compatible PC, XT, AT, PS/1 and PS/2 system equipped with a floppy drive, 350KB of free RAM, Mono, EGA or VGA display (no CGA) and DOS version 2.1 or later. SpinRite owners can upgrade to V3.1 for $29.00. Non-owners can purchase SpinRite for $69.00 plus $4.00 S&H. To order, call 1-800-736-0637, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

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- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

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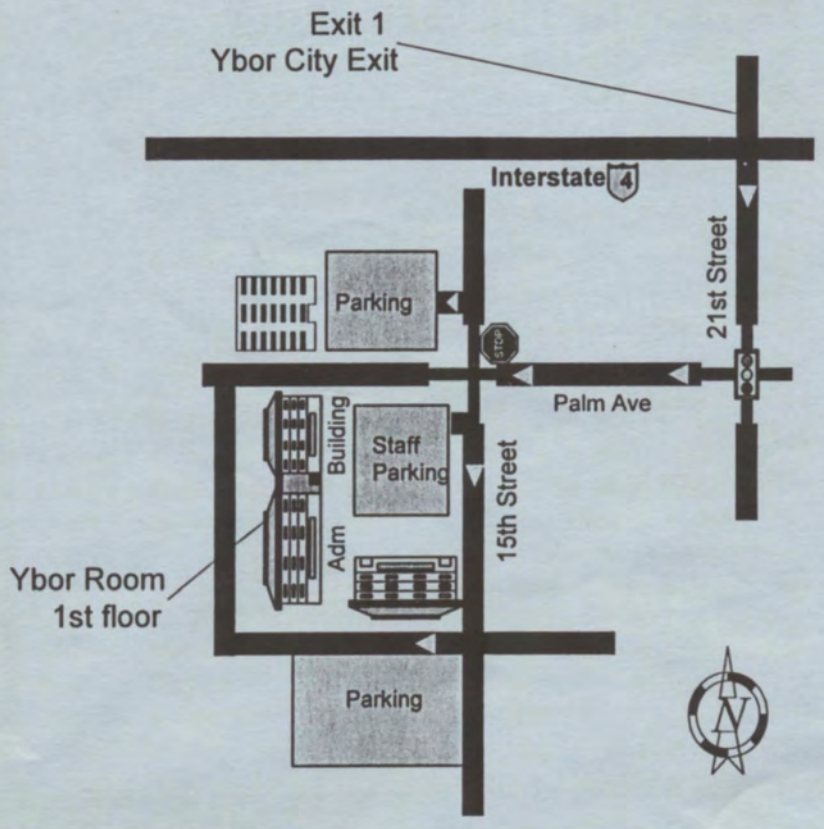
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Kevan Sheridan	237-0100	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems & BBS
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3

JANUARY 11TH AGENDA:

OPEN Q&A SESSION. EVERYONE BENEFITS FROM THIS TYPE OF MEETING FORMAT. COME TO LEARN OR SHARE YOUR COMPUTER KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHERS.



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 2 February, 1995

MEETING
(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: February 8th, 1995
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE:
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus
(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)
Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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February 8 - **AGENDA**

GOLD DISK to demonstrate:

Astound for Windows
- for all your presentation needs

and,

Animations Works Interactive
- award winning animation and interactive Multimedia presentation authoring tool.

UP COMING PRESENTATION:

March 8 - Caere Corporation

April 12 - Delrina

Member

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

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TREASURER:Tom Cone 222-8925
MEMBER AT LARGE: Connie Kincaid 962-8799
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John Lucas (OS/2) 949-4300

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Meeting 1/11/95. Minutes and comments as I understood them. Bruce Register, Sec'y

The meeting was called to order by President Harvey Bruneau. Some 53, MOL, attendees.

Elected Officers are:

President: Harvey Bruneau
Vice President: William LaMartin
Treasurer: Tom Cone
Secretary: Bruce Register
Member-at-Large: Connie Kincaid

Appointed Positions are:

Education Officer
Newsletter Editor
Bulletin Board System Operator
Librarian

President Harvey reported many bits of interesting information. He asked that the members let him know what subject matter that the members would like at the meetings and SIG meetings.

President Harvey reported that SIGs (Special Interest Groups) are scheduled.

Internet SIG...January 24, 1995, 6 PM, Reflectone Corporation, Tampa West Boulevard. The building is located south of Waters near Anderson Road. Security is tight; entrance is through the north entrance for only persons on the advance cleared list. If you signed up before the class max'ed out, your name will be on the security list for entry. Charles Howe is the leader. We thank Mike Hodges and Reflectone Corporation for making this possible.

Microsoft Access. February 16, 1995, 6 PM, 3903 North Dale Mabry Boulevard. Mark Saunders is the SIG leader; Sergio Mendez, Connie Kincaid are among the assistants.

SIG enrollments can be made on the Bulletin Board; however, you should report your name exactly as it appears on the TPCUG membership list. Look at your membership card or the address label on the BITS OF BLUE.

SIG sessions are open to TPCUG members only. Have you renewed yet? President Harvey asked that everyone submit topics that we would like to experience, not only in SIG but also in discussions at regular meetings. He also asked for SIG leader volunteers. Please make a note of your comments and hand them to President Harvey. Written comments are less likely to be forgotten or misunderstood. Lets help our long-serving President by putting them in writing.

President Harvey announced an upcoming SIG on OS/2. Come, listen and watch BITS OF BLUE for details at the appropriate time.

Caere Corporation will present program March 8, 1995.

Delrina will present April 12, 1995.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

(As I understood them, factual or not)

Brainchild offers discounts on products and labor to TPCUG, membership card showing, members. One store is in St. Pete; the other is at 1910 W. Busch Boulevard.

President Harvey stressed the request that each of us bring in one new member in 1995...early in 1995.He also stressed the need for receiving renewal membership dues for 1995. Please encourage your fellow member friends to renew. Do not let member friends fall by the wayside.

The TPCUG Board is considering all aspects, known, or made known, to them regarding a more suitable meeting place. Please jot down your comments "however you feel' regarding a change or not to change. Give your thoughts to President Harvey.

INDUSTRY NEWS:

Windows 95 will not run OS/2.

Lotus is developing an application to run on OS/2 under contract with IBM.

Notebook with Windows 95 must have "plug and play" docking stations with recognizes notebook Windows 95.

Some people, today, are spending more on speakers for computer systems than they spent on their stereo systems. Why not just hook up to the stereo; save money; spend the savings on computer needs.

Gold Disk will make multi-media presentation at TPCUG meeting February 8, 1995. Meeting starts at 6 PM, Auditorium, Administrative Building, HCC, Ybor City. Security guards are positioned in the parking lots.

PRESENTATION:

A speech by Bill Gates at Fall Comdex '94 was presented by Harvey with equipment provided by Will Goble.

President Harvey announced that the manner of this presentation is a FIRST for TPCUG. A machine (computer) with a video card in it that allows one to hook up a VCR to the machine that has a video and sound card. The computer connects to a display panel positioned on the top of an overhead projector. The display is then view on the "movie" screen. The sound card in the machine permitted plugging into the external speakers.

On with Mr. Gates... Microsoft is presenting (The following are excerpts from Mr. Gates speech.)

"Microsoft Tech Net to help software users like replacing intel chips and how to cure Intel Chip problems."

"40 million PCs are out there and will double in the next ten years."

"...on line service will be improved...Windows 95 will assist on line services through innovated ideas."

"Stereo vision (3-D) is being developed to provide ....viewing...(we) will not see this as mainstream for 3 or 4 years"

"Internet can be accessed from computers of all types." "Information Highway with all types of information by anyone will be available to anyone who wants it."

"Video is down the highway (Information Highway) at a future time."

"Fox Pro is to be released in January 1995 at a Fox Pro meeting."

"Microsoft Access is becoming the common tool and...unifies all languages."

"E-Mail is in major use in business. Our E-Mail is our primary application in our company (Microsoft). Our E-Mail includes spreadsheets....(other documents)."

"Beta use (Beta Windows 95) allows you to use all the connectivity to any number of machines without license problems...this is to allow a user to test application and get ready for the release of Windows 95."

"The real question is 'Will the industry run Windows 95 or OS/2' (and) is a dead-end (discussion). OS/2 and Windows 95 are just competition."

"All new machines that you buy after Windows 95 will come with Windows 95 already installed."

"In three or four years, the high end users and low end will operate from one platform instead of two as they come together in the future."

"Bus will become standard...VL....people will likely move to a 64 bit bus level."

After the Bill Gates video presentation, the door prizes were given away.

ALAN JANKOWSKI - UFO for Windows

Gerda Anderson- Optimizer for Windows

the meeting adjourned, approx. 8:50p.m.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Goal

At the last meeting I asked each member to set a simple goal for 1995. Bring in one new membership. That is, within all the remaining months of 1995, commit yourself to getting one new membership signed up. Is that difficult? Is that a lot for me to be asking of each of you.? The answer to both is no. I must say I was extremely surprised when, during the break, a member approached me and said "I didn't realize you were looking for members". I also made another simple request , I would like to see more women among our members. Once again during break a sincere question from one of our lady members, "are you serious about more female members". Certainly" I said "Women have just as much to contribute as anyone else", I don't believe computers have a gender gap. I look at my associates at work as examples. We have a lot of talented ladies that know their stuff. From Administration to Programming, they use and share their knowledge to benefit our business. Sharing is good. For that matter, the same applies to kids and teenagers. They too have something to offer, to both adults and their peers. I think of the Visual Basic programming work of someone like Matt Nicholson and see a high school student that yearns to learn and share with others. Last time we talked his quest was to learn Visual C++. You know he could be the next Bill Gates. My point I guess is that we have a lot of good existing members in our group that want to share what they know. We have a larger group of members that want to learn more than what they already know. And of course there is the biggest group, those that are not members and can contribute knowledge and those that want to learn but don't know where to turn. Your goal is to go out and seek these people and get them signed up.

Discount

Our friends at Brainchild Computer Distributions have generously offered the members of the Tampa PC Users Group a 3% courtesy discount on all advertised items, including sale items. Members can also get a 10% discount on labor rates. To qualify for either discount you must present your valid TPCUG membership card. This offer is good until further notice from Brainchild Computer Distributions. Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc has two stores. One located at 1910 W. Bush Blvd in Tampa and 2887 22nd Avenue N. in St. Pete.

Special Interest Groups

There here. Well it's official, the TPCUG now has three Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The focus of these groups is to provide and share knowledge within a specific topic. S the side bar in this newsletter for time and location of the SIGs. An Internet and a Microsoft Access SIG have been added to the existing OS/2 SIG. Enrollment for each new SIG is now closed. Due to limited seating both SIGs were filled in a hurry. There are still plans underway for two additional SIGs to cover the basics of computer hardware/software and another on modem communication .

Harvey Bruneau - HPB@DBSOFTWARE.COM

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows
Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing
CASHGRAF Office Plus - The World's Most Powerful Single-Solution Office Software!
MULTIMEDIA MAGIC CD - by Gold Disk - Everything you need to enjoy the magic of multimedia.
SHERLOCK - The ultimate filing and retrieval system for Windows.
FIRST AID for Windows Users - Fixes problems fast and automatically.
Jump*Start KINDERGARTEN - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6)
Kid's ENCYCLOPEDIA - The Random House (ages 7-12)
RUSA - Interactive Art Tour - St. Petersburg, Russia CDRom.
DO-OVER! - Change the look of Windows with a bonus utility to speed task switching.
CD ESSENTIALS- The Windows software utility that lets you automatically access, play and manage your CDs from Windows.
SPACE ADVENTURE- Knowledge Adventure up-to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
AVIATION ADVENTURE - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
TuneLand staring Howie Mandel - Interactive Cartoon CDRom (ages 3 and up)
Elastic Realty - DTP and Multimedia, Corporate Communication

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP, INC.
Income and Expenses - Actual
January 1, 1994 through December 31, 1994

INCOME

Income		
Adopt BBS Campaign	$	648.00
Advertising		170.00
Bargain Table		153.50
Coupon Books - Net		132.00
Diskettes - Sold		6.00
Dues - New		1300.00
Dues - Renewal		2680.00
Instructor Disk		0.00
Magazine Promotion		15.74
Raffle - Door Prizes		947.00
Total Income		6052.24
TOTAL INCOME	$	6052.24

EXPENSE

Expense		
Bank Charges	$	18.07
BBS - Miscellaneous		0.00
BBS Echo		20.00
BBS Hardware		0.00
BBS Phone Line		500.57
BBS Repairs		106.00
BBS Software		50.00
Fees - Legal/Professional		0.00
Fla. Dept of State		252.50
Food & Drink		20.57
Insurance - Liability		0.00
Memberships for the User Group		175.00
Miscellaneous		4.50
P.O. Box Rental		35.00
Postage		445.56
Publications - Flyers		150.64
Publications - Newsletter		2670.29
Rental - Meeting Room		280.00
Supplies		0.00
Taxes		0.00
Total Expenses		4728.70
TOTAL EXPENSE	$	4728.70
NET INCOME (LOSS)	$	1323.54

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP, INC.
Balance Sheet - Actual
December 31, 1994

ASSETS

Checking		
Checking - Barnett Bank	$	3366.93
Total Checking		3366.93
Other Assets		
BBS Equip & Software		3542.50
Bulk Mail - Deposit		50.00
Office Equip & Software		1317.00
Total Other Assets		4909.50
TOTAL ASSETS	$	8276.43

LIABILITIES

Other Liabilities		
Buzza - LDP Escrow	$	0.00
Coupon Books - Payable		0.00
Total Other Liabilities		0.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	$	0.00

EQUITY

Net Worth	$	8276.43
TOTAL EQUITIES	$	8276.43
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	$	8276.43

Software Review

LAPLINK FOR WINDOWS

V. 6.0

Review by: Nicholas Klak,

I have computers, lots of computers. Quite often I want to transfer data from one to the other. I find a program on one computer that I want transferred but the disks have long since fallen into that black hole where all missing things end up. Dragging files off a hard drive in sequence can be only sometimes successful and time consuming. What to use? Laplink to the rescue.

Laplink has been around for years. It is made by Traveling Software in Bothell, Washington. This particular edition is version 6.0. for windows. It is packaged in an attractive box about eight by eleven inches and three inches deep. The minimum requirements for operation are DOS 3.3, Windows 3.1 or 3.11, 386 enhanced mode, and four megabytes of memory. It occupies five megabits of space on your hard drive and requires a VGA monitor. Having all of that as a given, you are presented with an attractive package, the cover of which is adorned with statements extolling the virtues of the program. A serial and a parallel cable were include. Already I was impressed, free hardware!

The transfer of date is possible by serial cable, parallel cable, or modem. A new wireless system called AirShare is possible as well as transfer of data using Novell supported networks and Windows for Workgroups IPX network.

Two manuals are supplied. A quick start one of forty four pages and a larger main manual of one hundred and sixty eight pages. Both were well illustrated and the print was easily read. I hate to read manuals so I determined to test this program's "user friendliness" by reading the least possible. I had never used Laplink in any version before. I did resort to a fifteen minute scan of both manuals and several peeks while setting up the program. While not as intuitive as the old Print Shop program, Laplink was not complicated. The program was supplied on two three and a half inch disks and they were not copy protected. I copied the masters and used the copies as working disks.

I used the parallel cable to connect my 486 to my 386 laptop. The program required a minimum of four megabytes of memory in both machines. The two keys to a successful connection are in the address drop down menu and the connection drop down menu. Each computer must have a distinctive address name, such as 486 or 386 or any other name you choose. The program must be installed and active on both computers. The connection is automatic as soon as the addresses are selected. You are presented with a split screen. The host on one side and the remote on the other. Either computer can scroll the drives in either machine and files can be transferred to or from either machine. It is mousified. You can select a directory to transfer and it asks if you wish to create a directory on the other computer. Transmission of data seemed quite fast although I did not time it.

The program ran as advertised. It was not difficult to run and should be easily used by the vast majority of computer users. I liked the flexibility of being able to use it in several different transfer modes. If you want a program that will transfer all kinds of files by several different methods, this is the program.

Traveling Software, 18702 N. Creek PKWY, Bothell, Washington.

Book Review

Starting on the Internet

Reivew by: G. L. Hollander,
North Orange County Computer Club, California

Electronic Highway Books Recent Information Superhighway publicity has peaked public interest in the Internet. Many promotions target personal computer users, the public sector most ready for this future. Internet evolved in the 1970s from the ARPAnet, a network of university and government computers. Just as PC users access their favorite BBS, full Internet users can access libraries and networked computers with priceless databases all over the world. As an important national research resource, the government has underwritten most long-distance connection costs.

Individuals can have two types of Internet access: Interactive and message-based. Interactive access allows full access to files (ftp - file transfer protocol) and connected computing power (telnet prompt) throughout the world. Message access provides messages and newsgroup conferences at a fixed board, maybe your local BBS, which relays them to the Net periodically in batches Messages are either Email (sent to private mailboxes) or newsgroup messages (posted by subject in a BBS conference). Most individuals without school or work access must use an intermediary, usually a commercial Internet provider.

While Internet has served the government and university communities for decades, new users need help. Many books compete for this market, some merely hyping future benefits, describing a specific software system, or explaining the network customs. PC (IBM or MAC) users need to know how to get on the network and how to use it for their interests. This article reviews three recent books with a focus on how well the authors recognize and satisfy the user's needs.

Book Summaries: The Instant Internet guide is a 200-page pocket-size book that promises "a reality check" "so that any-

one can navigate the Internet". The book's first half is devoted to two specific Email and newsgroups readers, Pine and Tin. The second half covers interactive access to text-oriented UNIX systems; including the needed UNIX commands for controlling the remote computer. Despite its 1994 date, this book ignores image- based (GUI) interfaces like MOSAIC, which almost eliminate the need for UNIX code. The appendix lists about 20 service providers and contains a short checklist for selecting one.

The book's strength is its clear writing and its command and keystroke level detail. However, the detail fits only the specific environment. If its coverage matches your environment, it could be a useful introduction and handy reference for the first few weeks on-line.

The Internet Companion Plus is another 200-page pocket-size book that promises to enable "anyone with a PC or MAC and a modem to join the Internet". It reads like a Sunday paper supplement; and leaves the same feeling of satisfaction. It substitutes anecdotal trivia for needed detail. Lack of focus forces a reader to seek better sources for an intelligent Internet decision. The so-called free $40 software is a start-up disk for the WorldLinkþ network provider.

The Whole Internet User's Guide & Catalog contains 540 regular-size pages of well organized and presented information for the Internet user. About 365 pages describe the different Internet uses in user terms, while the rest are appendices with Internet conference descriptions, provider lists, and other useful data. Each chapter takes the reader through one aspect of Internet use with many examples and illustrations. For example, the Pine and Tin readers mentioned above are covered in about 10 pages in the Email and newsgroup chapters.

The book reflects the author's long hand-holding experience with novices at the University of Illinois. Its clear and logical presentation allows a non-technical user to understand some intricacies of the Net. The more technical aspects are touched, but the author references other sources for information beyond the interest of a serious user. The book is comprehensive, yet its 15 chapters can be selected as modules for any reader's specific interest and background. The book is professional and serious, but makes its points with a conversational style and humor. The book is up-to-date, with good coverage of MIME, MOSAIC and the World-Wide Web. At first, computer club members may find the UNIX examples strange, but they will soon recognize their similarity to DOS and BASIC commands.

The reviewer noticed two significant, but correctable, shortcomings. To intelligently select a network provider, readers must search the book for nuggets before working with the 20-page provider list in Appendix A. Secondly, the index is too skimpy for such an extensive reference. The index pointed to only 20 percent of the answers to realistic user questions, although the book contained over 80 percent!

Recommendation:

Everyone serious about using the Internet needs The Whole Internet. For a brief general introduction, the free Beginners Guide to the Internet (BGI13A.ZIP) and The Big Dummy's Guide to the Internet (BDG22TXT.ZIP) on most bulletin boards are better than the other two books. Lastly, who publishes instructions pecifically for access through the common (non-UNIX) BBS systems (PCBoard, Mustang, etc) now carrying the Internet? Brent Heslop & David Angell. The Instant Internet Guide. Reading, MA; Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.; 1994. $14.95.

Tracy LaQuey with Jeanne C. Ryder. The Internet Companion Plus. Reading, MA; Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.; 1993. $19.95.

E Krol. The Whole Internet User's Guide & Catalog. Second Edition. Sebastopol, CA; O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.; 1994. $24.95.

For user group discounts, 10%+, contact publisher at 800/998-9938 or order@ora.com.

Software Review

Bodyworks 3.0

An Adventure in Anatomy

Review by: Doug Cooper, Portland PC Users Group

Bodyworks 3.0 is a CD-ROM multi-media anatomy reference, with color pictures, sound, and text concerning the human body. It is organized with hypertext and you can zoom, in hypertext fashion, in on details of pictures as well. Menus and a toolbar let you look at the various systems. It also has timed quizzes, lessons, animated clips it calls "movies", an index, a glossary, bookmarks, and 3-D views. It allows you to store medical records in a database for up to 50 people besides yourself. You can copy pictures or text to the Windows clipboard.

This program comes on a CD-ROM and requires an IBM PC, with Windows 3.1 and 4 MB RAM, a VGA adapter (Windows 256-color driver recommended), a CD-ROM drive, a Microsoft or compatible mouse, and Sound Blaster or compatible sound card for sound. The program takes about 2 MB of hard disk space for files needed to access the CD-ROM.

Installation:

I installed the game on a Dell 486DX-33 with all the required equipment including a Sound Blaster Pro, and the Windows 256-color driver loaded. I had no major problems using the program once it was installed.

Installation went smoothly after I figured out what was wrong with the instructions. To install it on a hard disk, you go into Windows and run the CD-ROM's SETUP.EXE, but the manual said to install it from DOS by typing "Install" from the CD-ROM drive.

Other than the faulty installation instructions, the manual that came with the product is fairly simple to understand, and not really necessary to read. My kids found it fascinating and my wife wished she had had it when she took Human Anatomy classes. This was a very easy

program to learn to use, and it helps you to pronounce the medical terms, using the sound board to talk. However, the pronounciation part talks in a featureless monotone, and the result actually sounded humorous at times.

Tools:

Some of the "Tools" accessible from the menu bar were disappointing. I thought the 3-D views weren't useful. The 3-D smooth shapes were extremely lacking in detail, and only got more abstract with the angular and wire-frame views. I had difficulty understanding what use any of the 3-D views had, the way they were done.

The best movies, about one-third of the movie selection, had sound. One showed childbirth, with some narration, for example. About another third of the movies were slightly useful, showing some movement but no sound, such as the heart beating. The remaining portion were just silly, such as the one of a skeleton turning around and around on a platform endlessly, or likewise for a set of lungs. In the case of the lungs, they should have been demonstrating breathing and circulation.

The Glossary didn't have a Search feature, so you'd have to scroll through hundreds of selections to find your entry. Since the other "Tools" generally did have the Search feature, I thought this was inconsistent.

The Medical Records feature, accessible from the "File" menu item, seemed nearly useless to me. I couldn't get it to print the one record I put into it. Since I wasn't really interested in this feature, I didn't pursue the issue of printing.

Value:

I didn't call the technical support number. From what's in the manual, they seem dedicated to support, however. There are four pages of Troubleshooting help, on top of the page which covers "For Further Assistance".

Egghead Software carries Bodyworks 3.0 for $39.98. This is probably a reasonable value for an anatomy reference, and much simpler to use than a textbook. The hypertext organization of it makes looking up details of a topic easy.

Publisher: Software Marketing Corp., 9830 S. 51st St., A-131, Phoenix, AZ, 85044. Phone (602) 893-3377, Fax (602) 893-2042. Technical support is available at (602) 893-8481 or the Fax line. -

CLIPindex for CorelDRAW

Andrew Gnoza, III, El Paso, TX, (APCUG)

CorelDraw's vast clipart library contains virtually every piece of clip art you'll ever need. Now with CLIPindex for CorelDRAW you can quickly locate the image, or images that best suit your design needs. The perfect companion to your CorelDRAW Clipart Handbook, CLIPindex also shows you how to locate and load the image you want from the library. The printed index sells for $17.95 from M2 DESIGN. For more information call (201)-726-9388.

Software Review

Rome — Pathway to Power

Review by: Robert Singer,
North Orange County Computer Club,
California (NOCCC)

The ancient Romans were known for their cruelty and greed, and caused much hardship in expanding and maintaining their empire. In Rome — Pathway to Power, you play the part of a down-and-out slave named Hector who wishes for a better life and will do anything to accomplish this objective.

Game Scenario: When you begin this game, you see a screen showing the small Roman town of "Herculvaneum" nestled below an active volcano. As you hear military music and the blare of trumpets, you are told to deliver a scroll to Fellonius the Consul" and thus you begin your military adventure.

This game plays very much like a movie with your first objective to get out of the town of Herculvaneum which is about ready to be destroyed by an active volcano. Afterwards you make your way to Rome where you purchase a slave or two, save the emperor and finally find yourself in command of four divisions of military soldiers in the British Isles.

At each phase of this game — from your trip to Herculvaneum, to your trip to Rome and then to the British Isles — the plot thickens as you wonder what new adventure awaits your character. You also become more involved as you not only need to lead your character, but gain control of four military division that fall under your control.

User Interface:

As in most adventure games, you have the option of moving your character, greeting others, placing items within inventory, and following other characters of interest that are displayed on the screen. To move your character you simply point and click on the screen with your mouse, or access a map of the city and point to the location you wish Hector to move. More complex interactions, such as stealing an item of clothing or removing an item from inventory, require selecting a menu choice from the control box at the side of the screen which activates a popup menu.

As the game progresses you gain access to a military control box which allows you to issue commands to your troops such as advance, halt, attack, retreat, rally, follow and watch.

Installation :

This DOS based game was easy to install on my 486 IBM clone. The manual has sections written in English, Spanish, French and German.

Conclusion:

Those of you who enjoy military adventure games, and enjoy the challenge of a series of puzzles that are scripted out like a movie will enjoy this game. My only complaint with this game are that the user interface could be simplified for easier play and that added music could have made this other-

wise well thought out game that much
better. I would consider this game a pretty good value for the money.

Requirements:

Rome — Pathway to Power was created by Firstlight and published by Maxis. It works with IBM AT and 100% Compatibles, requires a hard disk; VGA & 640k RAM required, DOS 3.1 and above. It supports Sound Blaster, Roland & Ad Lib; Includes 3.5" 720k and 5.25" 1.2 MB disks, 5.25." 360k disks are free upon request To my knowledge, Rome — Pathway to Power, can only be ordered by calling 1-800-MAXIS. The game lists for 19.95 plus 5.00 shipping. After registering the game you will receive a free Rome Hints and Tips booklet; become entitled to 2-years free replacement of defective media, and low-cost updates and upgrades; become entered in a weekly drawing to win Maxis games and accessories and receive a Maxis newsletter filled with hints and tips concerning some of Maxis other products.

Buying a Laser Printer

By Hugh Bayless, MBUG (APCUG)

About a year ago, I bought a Sharp JX-9400 laser printer because Sharp advertisements proclaimed that it had a toner cartridge capacity of 5,000 pages and the lowest cost-per-page of any of the current crop of printers. Its price of $399 was very attractive too. When I asked the salesman the price of a replacement toner cartridge, he said he didn't have a price list handy but it would be about the same as other laser printers, somewhere around $40. So I bought the Sharp laser printer, and everything was fine until the "TONER LOW" message appeared on the display panel after only 2,500 pages, not the 5,000 they promised.

Why did I only get 2,500 pages when Sharp said I should get 5,000? It seems that the toner cartridges Sharp installs in their printers when they are first sold are only half-full. But that was only the beginning. Next, I learned the true cost of a replacement cartridge (toner and developer only) is $200 instead of the $40 I had been told. And if I need a new drum, it's another $200. When I got on the telephone and shopped around, I learned that there are no refilled cartridges available for Sharp laser printers because Sharp makes the toner and will not sell it except in a new cartridge.

On the other hand, if I had bought a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet for about $200 more than I paid for the Sharp, I would have been able to buy replacement toner, developer and drum packages for only $89 and recharged toner/developer cartridges for as little as $30. A Hewlett-Packard laser printer would have cost more to start with, but would have saved me a lot of money in the long run.

The next time, I will remember that old advice from the days of Rome's glory _ caveat emptor _ let the buyer beware.

Essential Guides from Mike Murach

Book Reviews by Hugh Bayless, MBUG (APCUG)

The Essential Guides are designed specifically to help a PC user convert or upgrade to a new software release, and they do it very well. All of the information is not only explained, but it is clearly illustrated with actual screen captures that let you see precisely what you will get when you perform the operation.

Organization of this series of books is excellent, permitting the user to quickly find the desired function explained in a single place _ no more searching through page after page to learn about a single function. Since chapters are organized by function, you only need to read those chapters that cover the functions you want to perform.

The Essential Guide: 1-2-3 for Windows, Release 4, by Ann Prince, is a handbook that no user of the software will want to be without. While no book can entirely eliminate the need for learning the changes that come with an upgrade, this one can reduce the time spent to some 3 to 5 hours. The list price is $20.00

The Essential Guide: WordPerfect 6.0 for Windows, by Joel and Tom Murach, does for WordPerfect what the previous book does for 1-2-3. Illustrations tell you everything you need to know and the learning process is reduced to the absolute minimum. If you are upgrading to version 6.0, you need this book. The list price is 25.00.

As usual, Mike Murach & Associates offers our user group members a substantial discount when ordering direct _ call 1-800-221-5528.

Your price for the Essential Guide: 1-2-3 for Windows is $16.00 and the Essential Guide: WordPerfect 6.0 is $20.00, both with free shipping.

The Pentium Again!

(posted on APCUG Globlenet..
As if flunking the math test were not enough, now we find that Intel's Pentium chip has a problem with future dates. Granted, the problem won't appear until midnight of 12-31-99, when the system clock should roll over to the year 2000. It doesn't. At the stroke of midnight, Pentium machines will flip over to 1-1-1980.
Probably Intel expects all Pentium machines to self-destruct before the end of this century, but considering how many IMB-XT machines are still chugging away in less-demanding jobs, it is a safe bet that some Pentium machines will be around to see the year 2000 arrive _ as 1980

Microsoft Access SIG

We will be having the first Access SIG meeting on Thursday February 16, 1995, at the Dun & Bradstreet Software office, located at 3903 Northdale Blvd., Suite 113E, (look for the burgundy awning for the entrance) Tampa. The door locks at 6:00 pm, however, we will have someone keeping an eye out for late arrivals. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.This first meeting will last approximately one hour. We will take the first few minutes to get acquainted. We can then begin discussing what type of format we would like the SIG meetings to follow.

Sergio Mendez
Mark Saunders - MARKS@DBSOFTWARE.COM
Connie Kincaid

OS/2 SIG

OS/2 SIG, Next meeting: Tuesday Feb. 28, at 6:00 p.m.
Location: IBM Lakepointe One Bldg., Room 436
Topics: Customizing the Launch Pad, Using EPM and REXX to create small utilities Installing WARP
BE SURE TO SIGN IN.

John Lucas
JKLUCAS@MAILSERV.MOFFITT.USF.EDU)

Internet SIG

There were approximately 20 attendees at the first meeting of the Internet SIG. The basics of using a COMM program were covered, with particular emphasis on uploading and downloading files. Signing on was demonstrated, and several topics related to a shell account were discussed.

The next Internet SIG meeting will be Tuesday, February 28, 1995, Time: 6-8pm at Reflectone Corp. Training Center. This meeting will repeat the topic of uploading and downloading. Commands such as: "whois", "ftp", "telnet" and "ping" will be discussed. Seating is limited to 20, so prospective attendees must have pre-registered.

Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

BEGINNERS: Charles Howe is also prepared to conduct very small meetings five or so, where the basics of signing on to the BBS or to an ISP will be demonstrated and attendees can practice. Call Charles for additional info at (813) 968-1207.

Charles Howe -HOWE.COSTECH@INTNET.NET
Michael Hodges

For Additional Info Call 985-3338 or 962-2554 ext 715

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

Welcome New Members!

Chuck Bowersox
Andrew Ciborowski
Stephanie Jones
Jerry Tabak
Joseph Tingley, Jr.

We are happy to have you in our group!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

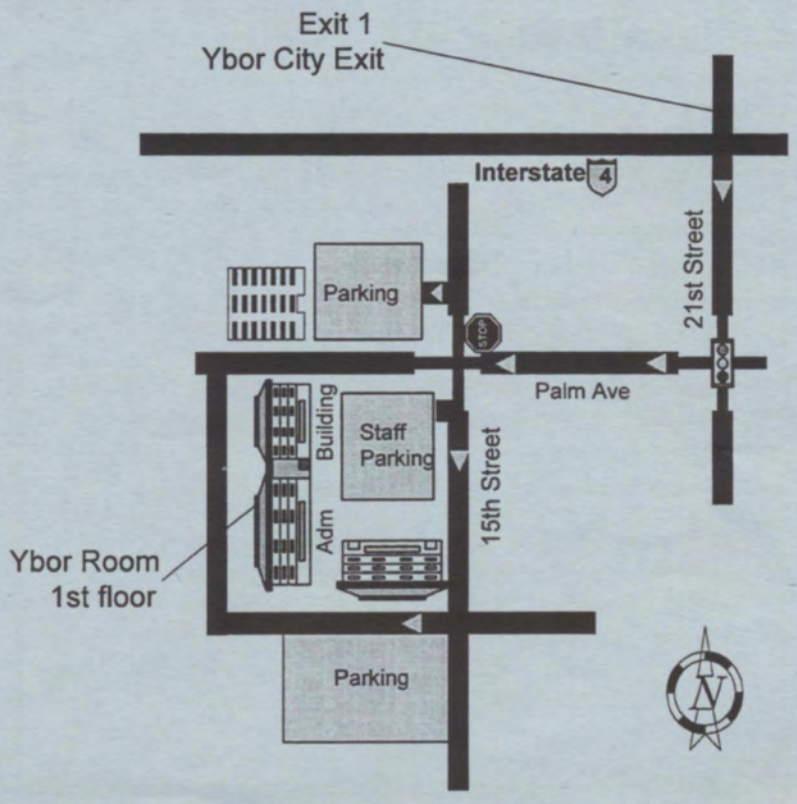
Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3

Feb. 8th Presentation by:

Gold Disk

√ ***Astound*** *- for Presentations*

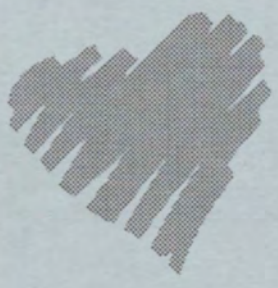
√ ***Animation Works Interactive*** *-*
Multimedia authoring tool...



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BITS OF BLUE

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 3 March, 1995

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: March 8th, 1995

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE:

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Ybor Campus

(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)

Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

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March 8th Presentation by:

caere™

Caere's products include the market-leading **OmniPage** family of optical character recognition (OCR) software that converts printed documents into electronic text, and the **PageKeeper** family of advanced file and retrieval software that allows access and use of information from many sources.

UP COMING PRESENTATION:

April 12 - Delrina

Association of Personal Computer User Groups APCUG

Member

*** * 1994 OFFICERS * ***

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VICE PRES : William LaMartin 251-3817
TREASURER:Tom Cone 222-8925
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SECRETARY: Bruce Register 968-8170

APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)

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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 222-8925
SIG Leaders: Charles Howe (Internet) 968-2107
John Lucas (OS/2) 949-4300

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

SECRETARY'S REPORT

TPCUG MEETING 2/8/95, 6 PM
Ybor Room,
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register

President Harvey Bruneau called the meeting to order. Comments and information was given regarding **SIGs, miscellaneous and vendors.**

SIGS

Microsoft Access - February 16, 1995, 6 PM Promptly.. 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast corner of Mapledale and Northdale. Reservations are closed due to limited seating. Next SIG-Microsoft Access is same place, March 16, 1995, 6 PM (sharp-Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building). Sign up early.

OS/2 - February 28, Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/sign-up.

Internet - February 28, 1995, 6 PM, Promptly,. Contact Charles Howe. As of February 8, 1995, seven seats were available. You can use BBS to sign-up. Promptness is required because of security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of the street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone Building. You must enter north end and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock door and escort us to the meeting room. It reminds me of the Pentagon; you don't stray or wander around.

ANOTHER SIG is under consideration. Let Harvey know your interest. A tax SIG was mentioned as a possibility. It is timely. Harvey wants your opinion. He reads BBS regularly. Send him a message.

MISCELLANEOUS

Harvey reported a monetary gift from GTE to TPCUG. GTE has a program for recognizing their employees who make a contribution of time and effort to community and educational activities. In recognition of Roger Waters many hours of devotion to TPCUG, GTE donated some $430 to TPCUG. Thank you Roger! Thank you GTE!

Harvey reiterated the goal of every member in 1995 is to bring in at least one new member.

VENDORS

"IBM has recalled power adapters for IBM Thinkbook 360 & 375. If you have one, contact IBM for a replacement part.

"HP DeskJet 500, 550 and 560C have glitches in rollers. Call HP for replacement parts.

See **Minutes** ....*Continued on page 3*

Minutes....*Continued from page 2*

"Pentium prices have dropped and are expect to drop some more before the end of March.

"Some surprises have been received by Pentium users who have replaced the old chip with the new chip. Spreadsheets run and calculated under the old chip will carry the same chip errors along with the spreadsheet under the new chip. Solution: when you load the spreadsheet, recalculate the entire spreadsheet under the new chip. Easy solution!

"Many companies are tied so completely to Microsoft that they feel that they cannot change software when errors and software problems occur. Some feel that Microsoft, unintentionally, releases software with problems. When this occurs serious difficulties could occur. Some companies (end users) are so critically dependent upon Microsoft's various packages that they feet it is better to suffer than to try to change it all.

"Hardware vendors and software vendors are planning on the future world of Microsoft Windows 95, whenever it is released. IBM OS/2 Warp is the competition. Some feel that sufficient market acceptance of OS/2 would result in a much more healthy competitive market—one without monopoly.

"Some feel that Microsoft Windows 3.1 will not only lose its state of the art position but will also become extinct to OS/2 and Windows 95-relatively soon after release.

"PS2 mouse ports make your life easier.

"Don't use Windows 3.11 32 bit File Access on Gateway, Compaq or Notebook computers. Problems may occur!

SOFTWARE VENDOR DEMONSTRATION

Mr. Robert Morgan of Gold Disk, presented two software products-ASTOUND AND VIDEO DIRECTOR. His general comments during the demonstration ran along these lines: ASTOUND was developed, originally, on a MAC platform. Since then, they have developed it on Windows platform. Their market demand has been pleasing.

ASTOUND is chasing the PowerPoint (by Microsoft) presentation market. ASTOUND loves multimedia machines. ASTOUND is a presentation package. One can create/use handouts, slides and video clips. A cable connects the computer with video, camcorder and stereo for use in creating presentations. The process was demonstrated to be very fast. We watched a presentation being developed before our eyes!

ASTOUND for Windows allows one to integrate the power of multimedia. Sound, animated texts and graphs, and digital video appeared to be easy to add into presentations. Import of files from other presentation packages and from other sources such as clip art, etc., are an emphasized feature.

"No special training is needed...just a few clicks", according to Mr. Morgan. Any object may be animated; you can add digital video animation, sound and synchronized narration. You can save to disk(s) and send or hand to your clients with a full demonstration of what service or product that you offer. A user can even add interactivity by making any object button to control your presentation. Slides, overhead projections and video tapes are computer based. On screen presentations appear to be most welcomed as tools for instructors and public speakers. The sophisticated production that we have seen on television news, TV advertising, etc., appears to be available now to anyone with inexpensive equipment. The cost of the software is unbelievably low.

ASTOUND has menu bars, pull down and pop up menus. Robert Morgan feels that all the help that you need is on the screen available "for the clicking." ASTOUND can perform 3-D presentations (like you see with CAD). "The time line is the heart of the presentation. Much time is saved compared to other programs." Voice over editing is permitted. Mr. Morgan demonstrated by placing a graphic voice track on the screen. The "uhs" and "ahs" can be erased right on the graphics screen. Animation and graphics are very easy to do. One can put together a demo presentation disk to market your product or service and give out the disks. Minimum Requirement: ASTOUND; 486, 4MB (8 MB is better), 66 MHZ. Cost: ASTOUND: Retail, $399; Computer City $129. Gold Disk SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG $79.00 ASTOUND/Video Director bundle SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG $150.00

VIDEO DIRECTOR software. Plug you computer to camcorder or VCR. Video Director has three modes: Icon, Text and Graphics. A tape library is nice to work with. The video clip that you developed with ASTOUND can be selected to be saved on tape (you have already saved it to disk in the ASTOUND software). "Pull in the clips that you want. Click to make tapes. One can create the video clip, click the camcorder to make a video tape for replay on the VCR and go have a cup of coffee while your take is being recorded. Minimum Requirement: Video Director; 386, 2MB. VIDEO DIRECTOR; Retail, $199; CompUSA, $119, SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG $89.00.

Editorial Commment: See Kathrine Powell's excellent review article on Video Director, Ver. 2.0, in Bits of Blue, Jan., 1995 on Page 5.

Yep! The prices are a correct quote of Special Offer from Gold Disk.

Robert Morgan gave an excellent presentation of these two software programs. Comments were concise, understandable and meaningful. His demonstration was well planned. He is GOOD!

Robert Morgan and GOLD DISK donated the door prizes. We all appreciate this generosity. The following door prize winners appreciate them even more than the rest of us!

See **Minutes ....***Continued on page 4*

Minutes...*Continued from page 3*

Jay Reese	MultiMedia Magic
M. N. Marteny	MultiMedia Magic
John Lucas	ASTOUND
M. N. Marteny	VIDEO DIRECTOR

Harvey thanked all for coming. He reminded all to return here (Ybor Room at HCC YBOR Campus, adjacent to the Administration Building) March 8, 1995, 6 PM. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. Use the BBS.

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

WindowWasher - the Ultimate Optimizer for Windows with Intelligent Data Compression

Dashboard & Sidekick for Windows (Value Pak)- a convenient Push-Button Utility Panel for Windows and a Fast Functional and Friendly Personal Organizer.

OnFile -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks"

Page Magic - 100 pre-designed templates for brochures, flyers, etc.

XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology

AnyView - Screen Commander for Windows

Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)

Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing

CA$HGRAF Office Plus - The World's Most Powerful Single-Solution Office Software!

SHERLOCK - The ultimate filing and retrieval system for Windows.

Jump*Start KINDERGARTEN - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6)

Kid's ENCYCLOPEDIA - The Random House (ages 7-12)

RUSA - Interactive Art Tour - St. Petersburg, Russia CDRom.

DO-OVER! - Change the look of Windows with a bonus utility to speed task switching.

CD ESSENTIALS- The Windows software utility that lets you automatically access, play and manage your CDs from Windows.

SPACE ADVENTURE- Knowledge Adventure up-to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)

AVIATION ADVENTURE - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)

TuneLand staring Howie Mandel - Interactive Cartoon CDRom (ages 3 and up)

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

President's Column

Contributions

Thanks to GTE and Roger Waters for their generous contributions to the Tampa PC Users Group. GTE has an excellent program where they will donate a monetary amount to a non-profit group, 501(c)3, for GTE employees that perform work for that group. The donation is based on amount of the time that the employee volunteered his or her time. Roger, our 1994 Member at Large, helped out by getting the mail from our PO Box, contributing in the board meetings and helping out with many aspect of the regular general meeting. This help included membership enrollment and door prize drawings. In all Roger help whenever we asked. Of course it was really a pleasant surprise when Roger presented me with the news of the GTE program late last year. A couple months after filling out the paper work we received a check from GTE for $430. Our treasurer, Tom Cone, was ecstatic when he was told the good news. Of course he had not yet heard the other foot coming down. This foot represented approximately $700 dollars in bills which included a new six month lease at HCC, one year of insurance for TPCUG and the yearly corporate filing with the Government. Ouch. You can look at the TPCUG's 1994 financial statement in last months newsletter and see that it takes money to run a volunteer group. Thanks again to Roger and GTE. If you want to thank Roger or GTE, order an ISDN line or just add all the frills to your personal phone line.

Membership

Membership is growing. However, it will need to grow at a faster rate to achieve our goal of 300 members by year end. Remember the goal which I have asked each of you to fulfill, "bring one new membership to TPCUG this year". Short of donating your money, this is one of the best ways of keeping the TPCUG vibrant and alive.

Newsletter articles

While we have a good basic pool of writers for our newsletter, we sure could use some more. Please help by providing the editor with some of your experiences, tips or techniques. Additionally, vendors have provided the TPCUG with full working copies of software which is available for review. Find the section in the newsletter that list the products available and contact the editor if you see a product that you would like to write a review about. All articles submitted are eligible to be printed in our newsletter and placed on Tampa Bay Online via Prodigy. This means a circulation of over 6,000 readers and good exposure for us to the community and vendors.

Bargain table

The May meeting will include THE BARGAIN TABLE. Since our last bargain table meeting, donations of unwanted PC items have steadily been coming in. If you have any unwanted PC items that you would like to donate to the TPCUG please contact me at 962-2554 or 985-3338 and I'll arrange to have it

See **President's**...*Continued on page 5*

President's.. *Continued from page 4*
picked up. All proceeds benefit the TPCUG and may be claimed as a tax deduction.

Adobe Acrobat 2.0
It finally arrived. What is Acrobat you asked? Well it is a set of software products that will allow the TPCUG to distribute, and you to read, documents created or received by the TPCUG, in an electronic format without losing the documents original visual richness. This capability to read or print is available to those individuals using DOS, Windows, Mac or Unix. Our initial intention is to make the DOS and Windows Acrobat reader software available for download from our BBS. Once you have the readers, any PDF (Portable Document Format) document can be displayed intact with color and fonts. The same applies to printing. The initial idea is to produce the newsletter in the Acrobat PDF format. Then it can be placed on the BBS, Internet, Prodigy or wherever. Additionally, our flyers and other miscellaneous information can be electronically distributed. Look for the DOS and Windows Acrobat readers on the BBS in March and miscellaneous PDF files.

Look forward to seeing you at the meeting. Bring a guest.

Harvey Bruneau

Surfing the Halls of Congress

Newt Gingrich, new House Speaker and James Billington, Librarian of Congress announced the first of the year the availability of Thomas, a Congressional on-line public-access information system. Users worldwide can surf with Thomas, the halls of Congress, viewing such information as the full text of House bills, the House of Representatives Gopher, the C-SPAN Gopher and the text of the resolution adopting the rules of the 104th Congress. The Thomas Uniform Resource Locator is HTTP://THOMAS.LOC.GOV.

SHOPPING2000 Interactive Catalog

What is *SHOPPING2000*?
SHOPPING2000 is fun and practical. It's the best way to shop at your convenience, with all information you need to buy with confidence.
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MERCHANTS CALL 212-273-5757 for information or participation.
Internet users can find a network version on The World Wide Web at http://Shopping2000.com

Software Review

Little Monster at School

Review By: James Hutton,
Tampa PC Users Group



I usually spend time reading stories to my children, but it was fun to have the computer read them this story. This program gave my children the opportunity not just to read a story but have the story read to them. And with the use of a mouse, touch the different area on the screen an make different things happen. It took me some time to get my computer back after showing my childern this program. The program is so easy to run that my children mastered it after the first time I showed it to them. I was very impressed that the program will also speak in two different languages both English and Spanish, giving them the opportunity to also learn a new language.

Little Monster at School tell the story of Little Monster and follows him from the time he wakes up, having breakfast, going to school, going to the different classes, and going home. This is truly a learning program for kids showing the words as the computer speaks to them. But also giving you the chance to go over the words as many times as you want. It also allowed them play with the different items on the screen to keep them interested and wanting to come back.

Installation was very easy with this being the CD-ROM version. This program will run completely from the CD-ROM leaving the much guarded hard drive space alone for other things. I like this because I am always looking for hard drive space. You must be running Windows 3.1 or higher, with DOS 3.3 or higher, have a 386 or better CPU, 4MB RAM, Super VGA video, Sound Blaster compatible sound card, and a CD-ROM drive. If your video is not set for 256 colors this program will not run.

If you have children between the ages of 4 and 11 this is the program they will thoroughly enjoy. But beware you might have trouble getting your computer back from them.

Mercer Mayer's/Living Books, Windows/CD-Rom, Cost $34.99

Software Review

PAGEKEEPER For Windows
Version 1.1 by Caere

Reviewed by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa P C Users Group, Inc.

If you've been computing for any length of time you probably have quite a collection of various electronic files. Whether you're a dedicated user of just one or two programs or use many different programs that save these electronic files to many different formats there is now a program that will index and organize your existing electronic files so that you can get more out of what you have stored on your PC or network than you ever thought possible. **PAGEKEEPER™**.

PAGEKEEPER from Caere is a revolutionary information management system that lets you collect information from virtually any source, store it on your PC or network hard disk, and access it on demand.

The Smart Way to Store, Manage, and Find Your Information



PAGEKEEPER

PAGEKEEPER has a built-in OCR (optical character recognition) that lets you scan text and images right into your PC (scanner required). When it's time to find a document, **PAGEKEEPER**'s advanced search and retrieval technologies will find what you want, even when you don't know exactly what you're looking for. You can forget about the hassle of searching through piles of printed papers or spending hours rambling through hard drives trying to tie a file name to some specific information you're looking for. With **PAGEKEEPER** you can have a library of information at your fingertips like, magazine articles with charts and graphs, data sheets with illustrations, even letters with signatures, all within reach. And once you've found the document you want you can actually *use* it. You can copy and paste parts of it into your working application. Export it using one of its many text or graphics formats. If you're on a network you can even share it with a friend or colleague using **PAGEKEEPER**'s built-in e-mail.

System requirements are :

- Minimum 386; 486 recommended
- 4MB memory
- Windows™ 3.1
- Scanner optional

PAGEKEEPER utilizes Caere's SuperCompression™ technology that lets you keep both the text *from* your document and the image *of* your original document. Documents with similar content can easily be found using Caere's Document Agent Search™ feature.

The program installs as most all Windows based programs do by selecting *Run....* from the *File....*menu and typing A:(or B)setup. The full installation requires over 10MB of disk space but 3 to 4MB can be recaptured if you erase the tutorial files after you feel comfortable with the operation of the program . **PAGEKEEPER** comes with an excellent tutorial that will quickly get you up to speed on:

- Creating and opening databases
- Working with information folders
- Viewing documents in their original format
- Viewing and modifying the contents of a document
- Performing different types of searches to find information you need
- Importing new documents into a database by either importing an existing file or scanning one directly into your folder
- Adding notes to your documents (which are searchable)
- Sending documents to other users on a network

PAGEKEEPER has a completely customizable Button Bar allowing you to execute the commands you use most frequently with the press of a button. Documents can be viewed in their native format including all original graphics or they can be viewed strictly in text format. The built-in OCR capabilities are some of the best and fastest I've ever seen, including spell-checking the entire document while the text is being recognized. **PAGEKEEPER** has the ability to scan several pages into one document. I installed this package on a 486/66 and the search capabilities were *incredibly* fast. **PAGEKEEPER** will search for all occurances of your search criteria or restrict its search to only the document(s) that contain(s) all the criteria. Whatever notes you may have attached to the document can also be searched for. **PAGEKEEPER** displays anything that is relevant to your search, but to make your task easier it ranks them in order of importance - using colors. Once you have found the documents you need, they can be stored in a separate folder so you don't have to search for them again. These documents can then be cut and pasted into any other Windows application or exported to any of *59* different formats.

If there is a down side to **PAGEKEEPER** its the disk space needed to save both the original scanned image and the text file. Although the files are saved in a compressed format it still requires ample disk space to accomplish this and **PAGEKEEPER** will not allow you to delete the original graphic-based scan. But, if you're a serious PC user, with lots of data to access and manage, a $250 investment for a new half-gigabyte drive is well-worth the advantages and cost of **PAGEKEEPER**. Street price for **PAGEKEEPER** is approximately $399.

Virtually anyone who works with printed words and images will find that **PAGEKEEPER** can help them use information better and faster than ever before.

Caere Corp. , 100 Cooper Court, Los Gatos, CA 95030, 1-800-535-SCAN. ■■■■

Software Review

WinSense Version 2.0

Review By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

What It Is: Created by SoftLogic Solutions, Inc., and now owned by EWARE, WinSense is a program to optimize MS Windows to provide best performance and to improve the user's knowledge and understanding of the Windows program. I emphasize that this is a Windows optimization/information program, not a diagnostic program; WinSense does a lot of nice things to optimize Windows performance, but it does not seek out and identify Windows problems. Specifically, it:

- Automatically looks at your hardware and examines existing Windows settings in light of a user profile that you input at installation, and makes specific recommendations on 43 different Windows option settings to help optimize Windows performance. The program submits these recommendations to the user for approval and/or change as one may desire, and will then automatically make the changes, as approved and/or modified by the user, in the Windows INI files. In addition, the program creates and makes available to the user advisories on a number of Windows option settings, 12 in my case, including advice on swap file size. Any action resulting from the advisories that one chooses to implement will not be done automatically by WinSense, however. Both the list of recommendations and the advisories may be printed out.

- Provides the capability for easy viewing and safe editing of all Windows INI files. One need not be knowledgeable on how the INI files are laid out for WinSense provides a search feature that allows locating the appropriate section of any INI by: Subject (appearance, etc.); the program involved (i.e., Word for Windows); by INI file and section within that file (i.e., Desktop), or by the option keyword name. The default setting and the range of possible settings is shown for each option. When viewing/editing any Windows option setting one has immediate direct access to the Knowledge Base for an explanation of that option. The viewing/editing feature can also be used with any text file (no larger than 65K), including INI files for non-Windows programs. It also provides the capability to view and compare different INI files, or different copies of the same INI file.

- Provides an INI file management system that automatically makes changes to INI files after you have made all changes to any INI file in WinSense, and backs up those Windows INI files and others which you have told the program to back up. WinSense retains in back up files copies of each of the last 9 versions of each Windows INI file; the user can view, compare and/or restore any of them at any time. The program also allows the user to create and name a 'permanent' backup set that the user can restore at any time. While WinSense does back up all changes to Windows INI files that one may make daily or several times a day (i.e., printer selection, desktop colors, and other frequently changed minor adjustments) to its backup files, such minor changes would not be reflected in the 'permanent' backup set; hence, one would have available a base set of files available at all times.

- Provides a large WinSense Knowledge Base to explain and help understand over 350 Windows option settings. It also provides descriptive narrative of the Windows functions and is tied directly and in context to the view/edit feature described earlier. The Knowledge Base is always available, is context sensitive when viewing/editing option settings, and comes complete with direct access cross referencing, a glossary and definitions. Some of the information may be considered rather basic by some 'old hands' at Windows, but newcomers, novices and intermediates like me will find it helpful in having ready access to explanations of Windows options and settings, and an easy way to locate and modify those option settings.

The program allows for a great deal of individual customization and many aspects may be changed at any time, including the user profile. In fact, one should change the user profile when any significant change is made in the hardware or use of the computer. It also provides the capability to create custom menus and even offers an option to reduce some of the detail the program provides by default; that is, 'experts' can make the screens more terse and less cluttered. One can also use WinSense to view, edit and backup non-Windows INI files as well.

One should update the user and system profiles every time there is a major change in hardware or software, or there is a change in the user profile, and then have WinSense look at the Windows settings again in light of those changes. WinSense will than produce a new set of recommendations for Windows option settings. While I am not sure that the options WinSense has given recommendations for on my computer is standard on all computers, it makes recommendations on 43 option settings in my computer and gives advice on 12 more. Those option settings cover a wide range, but leaves potentially some 300 options settings for which it makes no automatic recommendations. However, all may be viewed and edited in WinSense, with the Knowledge Base immediately available to provide an explanation of and information on them all.

Installation: WinSense comes on two 3.5" . HD floppies. The program is installed using normal Windows program installation procedures and installation is simple, clear cut and quick One will be prompted to verify directory location and name for installation and asked to com plete a profile which seeks to identify certain aspects of how the computer is

See **WinSense....** *Continued on page 8*

WinSense....*Continued from page 7*

equipped and will be used (i.e., network, CD-ROM, and primary and secondary uses). During the installation process WinSense automatically takes inventory of the hardware, examines all Windows INI files in the context of a user profile completed earlier in the installation and makes recommendations at that time for all of the settings it reviews.

Documentation: The program is pretty well documented in its 108 page manual. Context sensitive on-line help is available from most areas to give help on using WinSense. In addition, the Knowledge Base provides an explanation of Windows option settings and functions which should prove helpful to all in dealing with Windows, especially those who are not Windows technocrats. The Knowledge Base is available at all times in WinSense. Technical support is free, but is available only via regular long-distance lines.

Requirements for WinSense are minimal: Any IBM-compatible 286 or higher CPU, Windows 3.1 or later version, and a 3.5" floppy drive for installation purposes. While the manual states a requirement for 2.5 Mb of hard disk space, program files take up 2.8 Mb of space on my computer, plus additional space is required for the backup copies of the INI files. WinSense is compatible with major popular disk compression programs, such as Stacker.

Cost: WinSense is not readily available at local software outlets but may be special ordered from Egghead Software, and other major software retailers, or perhaps directly from EWARE (though there is presently no 800 listing for them). Currently, the special order price at Egghead for this version is $49.95.

My View: A useful utility program that will insure that one has backups of current critical Windows INI files, will assist in getting the best performance from Windows, and provides a ready source of information and guidance on Windows functions and option settings. It is not a panacea, nor a trouble shooter, however. It also provides a relatively easy means of getting to the appropriate section of the appropriate INI file for viewing and editing. All of the files that WinSense will view and edit can be viewed and edited by other means, of course. Similarly, all of the information that is available in WinSense is also available from other sources. But WinSense pulls all of this together to a single source and on one screen, and makes the entire process a lot easier, quicker and much less frustrating. I will retain and use WinSense on my computer. It is likely that as the program becomes more widely known it will become more readily available at a more popular price. For additional information, contact:

EWARE, 5241 Lincoln Ave, Suite B5, Cypress, CA 90630, (714) 236-1380

Software Review

First Aid for WindowsVersion 1.2

Review By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

What It Is: The name appropriately indicates the function of the program — created by Cybermedia, Inc., it is a program designed to find problems in the Windows environments and for certain Windows applications, and then helps with the resolution of those problems by recommending solutions and fixing many of the problems, if you so desire. The program consists of 2 main components: First Aid, and the First Aid Monitor.

From the First Aid component, the main operating component, one inputs setup information tells the program what hardware and applications are installed and what checks are to be made. How the Monitor operates is also controlled from this component. Here one can have the program create an inventory of the computer's components, including software applications supported by First Aid; the inventory can then be viewed and/or printed out. First will, on command, perform checks and report problems in 6 areas - Windows environment, Printing, Applications, Multimedia, Performance, and Network.

- In the Windows environment, the program checks the setup of fonts, the display setup, and mouse and keyboard to insure that appropriate drivers are installed and the configuration is reasonable; File Manager for appropriate file associations; Program Manager for appropriate setup of groups and icons, and their relationship with programs they represent; and Application Embedding to determine the existence and validity of OLE and DDE links.

- In the Printing area, First Aid checks to insure that appropriate drivers are installed and that Windows is configured to use installed printers. It does not, however, actually check the printers for operation.

- In the Applications area, First aid includes the capability to check and report setup and internal problems for a number of select popular major applications. It will check and report problems with the setup of all the components of each application that you select. This version of First Aid supports: Lotus 1-2-3, ver. 4.0; Access 1.0 & 1.1; Ami Pro 3.0+; cc:Mail 2.01; CorelDraw 4.0; Excell 4.0 & 5.0; Freelance Graphics 2.0+; Harvard Graphics 2.0; Improv 2.1; MS FoxPro 2.5; Paradox 4.5; Power Point 4.0+; QuatroPro 5.0; Quicken 3.0; MS Word 5.0 & 6.0; Word Perfect 6.0; and MS Publisher 2.0. (The '+' following the version # indicates subsequent decimal upgrades of that version are included.) (I seem to recall that during reading of the manual and exploring First Aid I came across info

See **First Aid....***Continued on page 9*

First Aid... *Continued from page 8*

that indicated support for later versions of these applications could be obtained from Cybermedia, but I could not find no such reference when it came time to write this review.)

- First Aid Multimedia checks include all device drivers, including actual operation of them and the components they drive: Sound, video, attached musical instruments, if any, and CD-ROM. Each of these to be tested must be configured in First Aid, including a musical CD in the CD ROM drive, before First Aid can check them.

- In the Performance area, First Aid can check the SMARTDRV caching utility settings for efficiency (but it does not recognize other caching utilities), virtual memory settings for adequacy for the system, and for the presence of an expanded memory manager. The program can also be set to warn if Windows GDI or User memory falls below a user-selected level.

- The Network feature of the program support only Novell Network and Windows for WorkGroups at the present time; it will operate only partially or not at all on other network systems. For compatible systems it will check and report problems relating to the network drivers, mapped drive changes, network printing capability, and accessibility and availability of the server(s).

Problems identified by First Aid in conducting these checks are reported in a Problem Panel window. The Problem Panel can be divided into 2 windows, with one window showing the basic problems and the other showing more detail of contributing factors; alternatively, one sees only the basic problem window. Here one can select Diagnosis for any given problem reported and get another window which again shows the selected problem, but it also shows solution(s) to the problem. One then has the choice of having First aid automatically fix the problem; the user manually fix the problem by selecting, in turn, one or each of the solutions offered; saving the solution to disk; asking for more detail about any of the solution(s) offered; or dismissing the problem.

The First Aid Monitor is, in effect, a Windows TSR. If configured in First Aid and setup to load when Windows is started, it will monitor operation of all of the features supported by, checked and set up in First Aid and report to the screen when any problems are encountered. It can even be configured to automatically correct problems it supports when those problems occur; however, I suspect that most of us would prefer to review the problem and proposed solutions before action is taken.

Installation: Simple, clear cut, easy and quick. First Aid comes on two 3.5" HD floppies. Follow the normal Windows application installation procedures, answer a couple of questions about owner, SN and location, and very shortly First aid will become a part of your system. It also provides an uninstall capability should one ever want to remove the program.

Documentation: The small owners manual is comprehensive and clear regarding loading and use of First Aid. The explanation for using all of its features is clear and adequate. Context sensitive on-line help is also available; a little basic in some areas, it is still quite useful. Moreover, First Aid Help also includes a HelpDesk option which provides access to a rather extensive Knowledge Base that offers considerable detail on Windows settings and relationships; again, a bit basic in some areas, but very helpful for the less experienced. Technical support is free, but is available only via regular long-distance lines.

Requirements for First Aid are minimal: Any IBM-compatible 386 or better, DOS 5.0 or above, and Microsoft Windows 3.1 or later. Program files use a little less than 3 Mb of hard disk space.

Cost: List price of First Aid is not known by me, but I have seen advertised prices in the $35 range.

My View: While I have a good bit of experience with computers, I am far from an expert in computers and I find First Aid a very useful and helpful program and worth the money; I would think that Windows novices would find it most helpful. I have not encountered any significant problems since installing First Aid, but it has been most helpful in cleaning up a good bit of residue and in correcting several settings in Windows. It is a program I intend to keep on my system.

The one problem I have with First Aid is that the text in the Problems and Solutions windows is tiny and I have difficulty reading it, and there is no way to zoom in to make the text larger. Larger text and/or a capability to enlarge the text would bve very helpful

For additional information, contact:
Cybermedia, Inc., 1800 Century Park East, Suite 1145
Los Angeles, CA 90067, (310) 843-0800

Microsoft has its own **BOB!**

Bob, was once known as Utopia. It is Microsoft's latest product, designed to reach the computer beginner or novice. **Bob** sits on top of Windows and uses an interface similar to the rooms in a home were cartoon characters tell you how to maneuver around in your computer's applications. For an example, click on a piece of paper on a desk and **Bob** launches a scaled-down version of Word for writing.

Bob's street price is around $100. It includes a calendar, an address book, e-mail, a personal finance program, a household manager, a guide to financial information and a geography game.

Six reasons why 1-2-3 for DOS users should upgrade to 1-2-3 or Excel for Windows

by Mike Murach

When I upgraded from 1-2-3 for DOS to 1-2-3 for Windows, Release 4, I did so with no enthusiasm and considerable reluctance. After all, I was a master of 1-2-3 for DOS, and it let me do everything I wanted to do. So why did I need the new program? And how many hours was it going to take with the new program just to get back to where I was with the old program?

If you have the same misgivings about moving to a Windows spreadsheet program, here are six reasons why it's worth taking the time to upgrade. This assumes, however, that you have a 486-based PC or better; otherwise, you probably won't be happy with the speed of your new program. This also assumes that you're going to upgrade to Excel 5.0 or 1-2-3, Release 4 or 5. If you upgrade to one of the earlier releases, the reasons for upgrading aren't going to be as obvious or as compelling.

1. The new interface helps you work faster

Studies show that a graphical user interface like the one for 1-2-3 or Excel for Windows can help you work from 25 to 50 percent faster than you can with a DOS interface. This is true whether you prefer to use the keyboard or the mouse. As you start to work with your new program, you'll discover better ways to move and copy cells; better ways to format or align the data in cells; better ways to change the font or font size; and on and on and on. In fact, improved productivity may be the best, though least obvious, reason for upgrading to a Windows spreadsheet program.

2. You can simplify your work by combining two or more worksheets in a single file

With either Excel or 1-2-3 for Windows, you can keep more than one worksheet in a single file. For instance, you can keep 13 budget worksheets in a single file: one for each month of the year and one that summarizes the data in the 12 other worksheets. This feature lets you organize your data in a way that simplifies your work. In particular, you no longer have to keep related data in separate files, and you no longer have to create huge worksheets that consist of several versions of the same items of data.

3. The formatting, layout, and printing features make you look good effortlessly

With either Excel or 1-2-3 for Windows, it's easy to format a worksheet with special fonts and font sizes, vertical and horizontal lines, and shading or colors. It's also easy to lay out the pages so they print horizontally instead of vertically, and it's easy to size a worksheet so it prints on a single page. You can do all this with just a few clicks of the mouse, and the result is better looking worksheets that are easier to read and understand.

4. The charting feature is a joy to work with

With 1-2-3 and Excel for Windows, it's easy to create, format, and print charts in a wide variety of forms. If you currently use 1-2-3 for DOS to prepare charts, this is reason enough to upgrade. The Windows programs are that much better.

5. The learning curve is more like a molehill than a mountain

When you start Excel or 1-2-3 for Windows the first time, you may want to turn it off and go back to 1-2-3 for DOS. For me, it was that overwhelming. But if you stay with the new program for a few hours, you'll find that it's much easier to use than 1-2-3 for DOS. And when you want to learn a new feature, you'll find that's a lot easier too. Besides that, both Excel and 1-2-3 for Windows make it easy for you to convert your 1-2-3 for DOS spreadsheets to the new format.

6. This may be your last significant conversion

The latest releases of Excel and 1-2-3 for Windows are major improvements over 1-2-3 for DOS. The new programs are so good in fact that it's hard to imagine any significant functional improvements in the next decade. In addition, it certainly appears that the windows interface is here to stay whether it's in the form of Macintosh, OS/2, Windows NT, or Windows 95. As a result, there shouldn't be any significant operational changes in the next releases of the Windows spreadsheet programs.

What this means is that you may never again have to make a significant conversion to another spreadsheet program. Yes, there will be some trivial differences in operation as you move from one program or operating system to another. And, yes, there are bound to be some new features that you'll want to try in future releases of the programs. For the most part, though, the skills that you learn as you upgrade to Excel or 1-2-3 for Windows will be the skills that you use for at least the rest of this decade.

This article was written by Mike Murach of Mike Murach & Associates, Inc. Mike's company has published four books on spreadsheet applications including The Practical Guide to Lotus 1-2-3 for DOS *(releases 2.X and 3.X)*; The Essential Guide to 1-2-3 for Windows, Release 4; *and* The Essential Guide to Excel 5.0 for Windows. *To order, call 1-800-221-5528 and mention this article to get your User Group discount.*

Microsoft Access SIG

The Access SIG meeting will be on March 16, 1995, at the Dun & Bradstreet Software office, located at 3903 Northdale Blvd., Suite 113E, (look for the burgundy awning for the entrance) Tampa. The door locks at 6:00 pm, however, we will have someone keeping an eye out for late arrivals. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

Sergio Mendez
Mark Saunders - MARKS@DBSOFTWARE.COM
Connie Kincaid

OS/2 SIG

OS/2 SIG, Next meeting: Tuesday March 28, 1995 at 5:45 p.m.
Location: IBM Lakepointe One Bldg., Room 436

BE SURE TO SIGN IN.

John Lucas
JKLUCAS@MAILSERV.MOFFITT.USF.EDU)

Internet SIG

The next Internet SIG meeting will be Tuesday, March 28th, 1995, Time: 6-8pm at Reflectone Corp. Training Center. Call Charles for additional info at (813) 968-1207 on what this meeting will cover.

Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

BEGINNERS: Charles Howe is also prepared to conduct very small meetings five or so, where the basics of signing on to the BBS or to an ISP will be demonstrated and attendees can practice. Call Charles for additional info at (813) 968-1207.

Charles Howe -HOWE.COSTECH@INTNET.NET
Michael Hodges

For Additional Info Call 985-3338 or 962-2554 ext 715

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The Practical Guide to Lotus for DOS (2.0-2.4, 3.0-3.4)	25.00	15.00

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- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

Welcome New Member!

George Cox

We are happy to have you in our group!

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	962-8799	Mon-Wed.-Fri.	Before 3pm	WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 123, dBase III Plus or IV
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3

Software Review

PC Tools *for* Windows 2.0

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

All men know the utility of useful things,
but they do not know the utility of futility

(Chuang-tzu 369-286 B.C.)

Pre-crash warnings, performance boosters, productivity enhancers, file management, disk analysis and repair, hard disk backup, and virus protection are the guts of Central Point's PC Tools *for* Windows. To give you an idea of the massive scope of this utility package, there are 14 printed pages of "What's new for v2."



Installing PC Tools *for* Windows is involved. Along the way you rebuild your desktop, create an Emergency Disk, schedule PC Tools *for* Windows programs (Backup, Diskfix, AntiVirus and Optimizer), convert Norton, Fastback, MS-DOS backup files, and go through PC Tools Windows Configuration. The installation takes up to 18 Mb of hard disk space. If you have a memory manager you will probably need to reoptimize. Using the full install, my Windows initial loading time went from 13 seconds to 36 seconds. Time to unload some more fonts! If you use the Quick Launch feature for your applications plan to make a few return phone calls or wash the breakfast dishes during initialization.

The PC Tools *for* Windows Desktop is similar, yet very different to the familiar Windows Desktop. Among the additions are a disk drive button bar, menu button bar and a CrashGuard bar that display resources used and the time and date. This is useful if you are running low on disk space.

Using Central Point Screen Capture was an educational experience. You probably knew that when you cut or copy something from a Windows document it goes to the Windows Clipboard. Screen Capture images can also go to the Clipboard and then be edited with Windows Paintbrush. My experiments with capturing images to file resulted in large bitmap files (400K+). Pasting the Clipboard images to a document uses much less disk space.

Central Point offers several support options: Basic Access - 30 day complimentary phone support then you have the following options: AccessOne - $25 pay per call (toll free), Access Plus - $129 single user annual plan (toll free), there is also a CPS Bulletin Board, TTY/TDD service for the hearing impaired, CP SOLVR Voice Response (Toll Free), FaxBack, CompuServe, or America Online.

Besides the CrashGuard tool bar, System Consultant and File Companions are new for this version of PC Tools.

System Consultant recommended five changes to our system: 1) Turn off INT28 Critical Variable in SYSTEM.INI, 2) Reduce BUFFERS (to 10), 3) Use Print manager, 4) Enable 32 bit disk access and 5) change Swap File from Temporary to Permanent. Changing 1, 2 and 5 was quick and reversible if the results were not good. I left 3 and 4 because I use another print manager and have vague remembrances of not good experiences with the 32 bit disk access engaged.

File Companions are file management tools and are available with a click of the right mouse button or from windows where the little open file drawer icon shows up. These fall in the "nice" category. Nice if you take the time to learn how to use them to copy, delete, move, etc. your files. Once learned they will save a trip to File Manager.

The AntiVirus program scanning must be very thorough, it took a lonn-g-g-g time to do 120MB of files. VWatch (installed at boot up so it works with DOS also) caught a virus on a floppy before it could do any damage. For $49 you can get Central Point's Continuous Anti-Virus Protection Service.

Using the Move feature in File Manager got some interesting results: trying to move C:\MAIN\UTIL*.* to E:\MAIN\UTIL where E:\MAIN\UTIL already exists got the message "E:\MAIN\UTIL\UTIL does not exist, create it?" After several attempts with the same results, I went to DOS and was successful. The manual says the move works for moving files or directories on the same drive. My fault, I wanted to move stuff to another drive!

By the way, the 885 page manual is well written and on-line help and a tutorial are available for those new to the Tools.

Other neat touches: Deleted files and their recoverability status (from Excellent to Destroyed) can be viewed when listing files. Zipped files are treated as directories so individual files are listed. File viewer can be used to see contents of most files.

If you like rearranging your living room or bedroom furniture then this utility package is for you. Your desktop will look different plus you'll have a whole basket of new toys to play with. The File Manager enhancements alone are worth the upgrade price. Recommended for anyone who wants Windows to work better or needs a utility package of good tools to handle system maintenance. A teenager might say, "This is an awesome package!"

Minimum System Requirements: 386 CPU, Microsoft Windows 3.1, 4MB RAM (8MB recommended), up to 18MB free disk space, and Microsoft Windows 3.1 compatible mouse.

If you already have an older version of PC Tools, Norton Desktop or Utilities, Fastback, XTree or HP Dashboard then you can get the PC Tools for DOS (version 9) or Windows version 2.0 Universal Upgrade for $49.99 at CompUSA. If you don't have one of these packages then the price is $99.99.

Central Point 15220 N.W. Greenbrier Parkway, Suite 150 Beaverton, OR 97006-5798 Automated Voice Response 800-976-6703 FaxBack 800-847-8766



Microsoft Access® Solutions Pack

Version 1.0

Microsoft Access Solutions Pack for the Windows™ operating system has four ready-to-run, business applications that you can use with Microsoft Access version 2.0 to track your sales, fixed assets, service requests, and events. Our design goals for this product are threefold:

- To create applications that are fully functional, so you can use them for your own business needs right out of the box.
- To create applications with helpful sample databases and documentation, so you can learn even more about Microsoft Access.
- To create applications with code samples that can help you design your own custom solutions with Microsoft Access. You can also extend the functionality of the packaged applications for your own needs or for others in your organization. Microsoft is partnering with those customers who are interested in supporting and extending these applications.

Sales Manager

Sales Manager is designed to make storing, tracking, and finding information about sales contacts and business opportunities simple. With its help, you can:

- View detailed information about sales contacts and their companies.
- Identify sales opportunities and coordinate campaigns to win them.
- Generate mailing lists targeted to reach contacts in a particular company, department, or city.

Asset Tracker

Asset Tracker helps you keep track of all the tangible, nondisposable items a growing business needs to remain competitive in today's world. With its help, you can:

- View detailed, up-to-the-minute information about your assets.
- Trace an asset, or group of assets, to a specific location, department, or employee.
- Generate reports that list the current status, value, and location of your assets.

Registration Desk

Registration Desk is designed to make event registration speedy and efficient. With its help, you can:

- Create a customized registration process in minutes.
- Sign people in and out quickly and track when each registrant arrives and departs.
- Print identification badges for registrants automatically.

Service Desk

Service Desk will help you manage service requests from receipt to completion. With its help, you can:

- Enter new service requests and assign due dates and staff to work on them.
- Prioritize service requests and manage the queues they are assigned to.
- Communicate with requesters via acknowledgment, late, and completed notices.

Purchase information

Microsoft Access Solutions Pack is scheduled to be available through resellers or direct from Microsoft in the spring of 1994. Suggested retail price is $64.95. Requires Microsoft Access 2.0.

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03/94 Part No. 098-55211

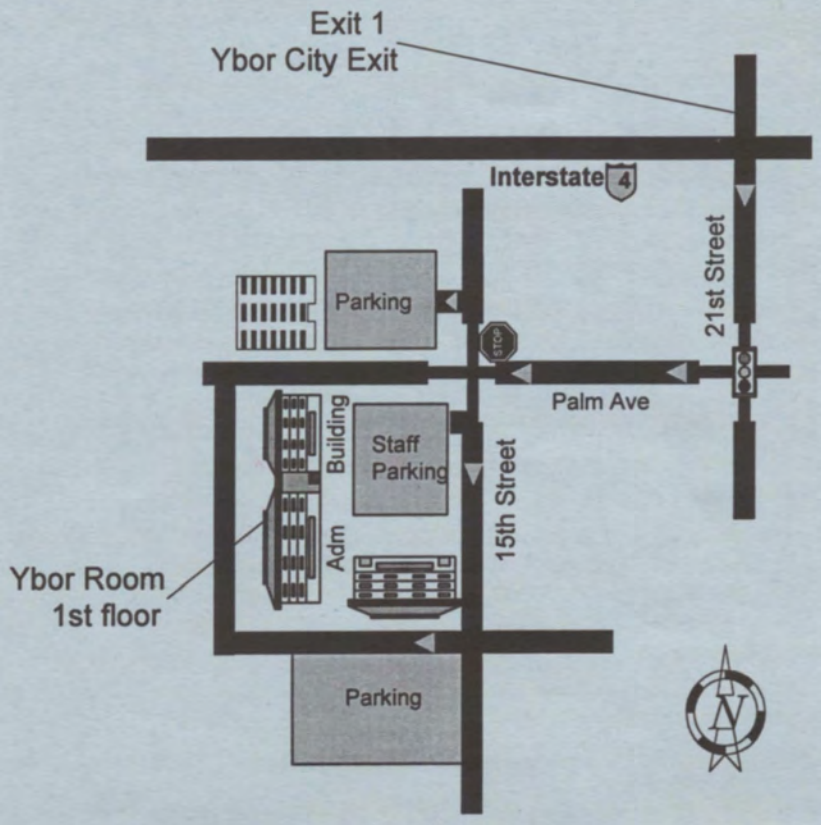
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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 4 April, 1995

MEETING

(2nd Wednesday every month)

DATE: April 12th, 1995

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE:

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Ybor Campus

(Corner of Palm & 15th Street)

Ybor Room (See map on last page.)

Presentation by:

DELRINA

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Member

WHY MICROSOFT WINDOWS 95 MAKES SENSE FOR TODAY'S PC USER

Easiest Windows operating system yet.

Navigate your system quickly with powerful new tools:

❖ *The Start button and taskbar are your primary jump off points* for working with program and documents, and they are always visible, even when applications are open full screen.

❖ *Windows Explorer* unites File Manager, Program Manager, Control Panel, and Print Manager from Windows 3.1 into a more efficient tool for browsing and managing your PC's resources.

❖ *Natural, full-length filenames*. File-names can be up to 255 characters long, making it easy to find what you're looking for.

❖ *Plug and Play frees you* from manually setting up hardware devices. Windows 95 detects and configures Plug and Play, compatible devices automatically.

❖ *Customize and use resources efficiently.* Just click the right mouse button wherever you're working, and a context menu appears in order to help you manipulate objects directly.

❖ *Microsoft Exchange is your one-stop inbox* for viewing and working with such things as: Electronic mail from multiple sources, faxes, documents, and bulletin boards.

❖ *Automatic file synchronization.* Windows 95 Briefcase automatically updates files between two PCs. so you can easily keep files on your portable PC in synch with your desktop PC or the network.

A Faster, more powerful Windows.

❖ *Increase your productivity.* A 32-bit architecture delivers better performance and reliability in areas such as networking, printing, communicating, and multimedia.

See **Why '95.** *continued on page 11*

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

SECRETARY'S REPORT

TPCUG MEETING 3/8/95, 6 PM
Ybor Room, Hillsborough Community College,
Ybor Campus
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register

Harvey our president, called the meeting to order. Comments and information was given regarding SIG, vendors and miscellaneous.

SIG

March 16, 1995, 6 PM Promptly. SIG-Microsoft Access. 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast corner of Mapledale and Northdale Boulevards. Reservations are closed due to limited seating. First signup first served! Next SIG-Microsoft Access is same place, April 20, 1995, 6 PM (sharp-Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building). Sign up early. Use Bulletin Board.

March 28, 1995. OS/2. Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/signup.

March 28, 1995, 6 PM, Promptly, SIG Internet. Contact Charles Howe. Seats are available. You can use BBS to signup. Promptness is required because security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of the street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone Building. You must enter north end and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock door and escort us to the meeting room.

If you would like to have a particular SIG, let President Bruneau know your interest. President Bruneau wants your opinion. He reads BBS regularly. Send him a message.

A two day SIG regarding basics and BBS, etc., is in talking stages. Connie KIncaid is thinking that the interest in overviews of PCs, DOS, Hardware, etc., is strong enough to warrant the effort to bring us this educational and functional SIG. What a treat for us neophytes and for the more advanced. Let Connie and Harvey know of your interest.

Harvey asked for VOLUNTEERS to call non-renewal members to encourage them to continue being a member by paying the low, low dues.

Harvey strengthened the reminder that the goal in 1995 is for every member to bring in at least one new member.

There is a new store in town. CompuAmerica. See the USER FRIENDLY newspaper for more information.

See **Minutes** ....*Continued on page 3*

Minutes....*Continued from page 2*

Harvey presented Adobe Acrobat. He demonstrated how to download ACROREAD file and how to read the BITS OF BLUE newsletter through BBS. He says software download will take about 15 minutes. You can click anything in BITS OF BLUE; you can go right to the article and then you can print it, even in color if you like. You can click on an article and move it around. Harvey has put in tabs for "hot links". If you want to download BITS OF BLUE instead of receiving it in the mail, notify the Editor. You can use TPCUG Bulletin Board (BBS) to access it.

TPCUG paid for ADOBE ACROBAT but you can download ACROREAD without license/registration problems.

Harvey plans to put BITS OF BLUE on PRODIGY and ON LINE AMERICA.

Contributions to Bulletin Board will continue to be accepted.

The Editor of BITS OF BLUE will surely appreciate receiving quality fillers for BITS OF BLUE.

SOFTWARE VENDOR DEMONSTRATION

Mr. Andrew Domnauer, District Sales Manager, CAERE CORPORATION, Atlanta, demonstrated OMNI PAGE AND PAGEKEEPER. CAERE has five OCR products. He stated that OMNI PAGE PROFESSIONAL is a high end product. Wordscan and OMNI PAGE are middle line; others are OMNI PAGE DIRECT and WORD SCAN.

He demonstrated scanning a page with graphics, using different sizes of text and also multiple columns. He emphasized and showed the ease of doing this. He said, "This OCR product holds the format in place" You tell OMNI PAGE the scanner product that you are using and OMNI PAGE recognizes text in 6 to 72 points.

When you bring in text, apply text editor to spell check. OMNI PAGE even reports the "success of the scan accuracy." Graphics sharpens images in an easy format. You can add special effects to your work. The program has the ability to retain or hold the "look and appeal" of the original document. You can save the document in your word processor application such as WordPerfect 6.0. You can fax the image. You can scan and use DEFER OCR to editor at a later time. A feature called 3DOCR helps clarify when the original document is "not to good." PAGEKEEPER , requires 7 MB to install, is a database program with OMNI PAGE built in. You can retrieve information from virtually any source. Special dealer price is available to TPCUG members. We are very grateful to Mr. Domnauer and CAERE CORPORATION for the demonstration and for the software that they contributed for door prizes.

COMMENTS by various members for our benefit and edification:

THE TPCUG BARGAIN TABLE will be presented at the MAY meeting. That particular meeting will be across the street from our regular meeting place in the auditorium due to the need HCC has for our May meeting night. Harvey asked us ALL to look around for LEGAL software, hardware, connections, etc., that you might like to contribute. Please look around now! Everybody gains. TPCUG gains!

TUBOTAX and TAXCUT have been reported to have some problems.

MICROSOFT Resource Guide at a cost of $19 is a good source for help with unique problems.

Winners of the door prizes were:

Merle Nicholson	Pen Set
D. A. Clary	T-Shirt
Larry Anders	T-Shirt
Margaret Petros	WINSENSE
#177 Sec'y got ticket but didn"t get name.	PAGEKEEPER 2.0

Remember our long time friend and contributor to TPCUG Ed Buzza. He has been ill. We have missed Ed's presence.

President Bruneau thanked all for coming. He reminded all to return here (HCC YBOR Campus, ADM Auditorium) April 12, 1995, 6 PM. You will not want to miss DELRINA's presentation. Who knows what great door prizes await TPCUG members. Only members are eligible for opportunities of receiving door prizes. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. Use the BBS.

News Briefs:

Acquisition approved
Stockholders of U.S. Robotics, Inc. approved the Skokie, Ill., modem maker's acquisition of Megahertz Holding Corp. The two companies will now operate under the names U.S. Robotics Access Corp and Megahertz Holding, Inc. and be subsidiaries of U.S. Robotics Corp.

OS/2 Warp to go in 300 Bank of Boston locations.
This will be more than 2,000 PCs and 600 servers. The IBM computers will be powered by Intel 486DX2/66 MHz chips. Multitasking capabilities was a big reason for using OS/2 Warp, plus it supports Bank Pro, a software program Bank of Boston wants to use to improve service.

President's Column

InPut + PutIn = Winner

As always your InPut is welcomed. Whether it's on how we can grow our group, make better use of our general meetings, the BBS, the newsletter, SIGs or whatever you think is needed to nurture our group into a healthy organization, please share your thoughts with a board member. While InPut is a healthy thing for an organization please remember that it is only the first part of the equation. More often than not it requires a second step which I call PutIn. By this I mean that a new idea generally requires individuals to PutIn time to bring ideas or projects into reality or bear fruit. In a volunteer organization there are many excellent ideas that surface as InPut but too few individuals who PutIn the time to accomplish them. When this happens the formula looks more like ***InPut - PutIn = Loser***. Wouldn't it be great if all good ideas turned out to be Winners instead of Losers. Until we have more people who PutIn, the officers will not be able to implement or accommodate all good ideas. However, we can always listen or review opinions and ideas from members and nonmembers alike and hope that someone will volunteer to PutIn. Will you?

Thanks to the volunteers

At last months meeting Marylee, our Editor, requested volunteers from the membership to create a temporary task force. The task for these volunteers was to contact members whose membership had expired in the months of January, February and March and remind them that their membership had expired and get them to either renew or determine why they did not want to rejoin our group. In all the there were 41 members expired of which most were single memberships. We had five volunteers step forward and offer to help. I want to thank each one of you for contributing your time to help the group. The results of the task force were both positive and informative. As a result we will be creating a formal task force whose function is membership retention.

Bargain table

A reminder that the May meeting will include THE BARGAIN TABLE. The bargain table will consist of computer related items. If you have any unwanted PC items that you would like to donate to the TPCUG please contact me at 962-2554 or 985-3338 and I'll arrange to have the items picked up. **All proceeds benefit the TPCUG and may be claimed as a tax deduction.**

Special Interest Groups

A reminder that we currently have three SIGs. They include OS/2, Internet and MS Access. See the SIG section in this newsletter for specific information on each group.

We are currently in the process of rescheduling the Internet group to a different night. This is due to a scheduling conflict with the OS/2 SIG group which meets on the same night. Many members have stated that they would like to attend both SIG meetings. Charles Howe will discuss the change with the Internet group and determine the new meeting day. The change should become effective by the May meeting. Up to date information will be presented at future general meetings and be posted on the BBS and in the newsletter as it becomes available.

A new SIG, **PC Fundamentals**, will be available in June and focus on educating attendees on the basics of PC hardware and software. While this group is in the SIG category it will follow more of a traditional classroom curriculum and thought by our own Connie Kincaid. Due to limited seating and a balanced teacher/student ratio, enrollment will be limited. However, this two month class will be repeated several times during the year.

Harvey P. Bruneau, President

TTTT

GOOD NEWS FOR DOS LOVERS --

IBM forsees a great opportunity awaiting them to develop a DOS up-grade. They will attempt to fill the void left by Microsoft, who has chosen not to continue the development of MS-DOS up-grades.

PC-DOS 7, is now in beta, and is commited to trimming memory needed to run the system, leaving as much as 70 KB of extra memory for other drivers and applications. Lotus Development and Novel will continue to invest in DOS.

So 50 million plus DOS-only users will not be left in the dust.

Book Review

Internet in Plain English

Book Review by Hugh Bayless, MBUG

This is the book that made me realize that there are still many areas in which I am totally ignorant. Internet is one of those areas _ you need to learn a whole new language in order to even know what people are talking and writing about. Bryan Pfaffenberger has done very well in writing a book to help people like me, who only speak English, to learn to speak, think and read Internet.

There are many books that explain how to use Internet, but this is the first one I've seen that explains the language you have to know before you can fully understand what the authors of all those Internet books are talking about when they discuss Gopher, NIS, IAB, Mosaic, interpedia, and PDN.

Internet in Plain English, by Bryan Pfaffenberger, is published by MIS Press and retails for $19.95.

TTTT

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

1) **OS/2 Warp for Windows** - 32 bit operating system
2) **My First Encyclopedia** - Knowledge Adventure (ages 3-6)
3) **Microsoft BOB** - 8 essential hosehold programs, calendar, letter writer, checkbook, and more...
4) **Aldus Persuasion** - Presentation Graphic Software
5) **Microsoft Complete Basketball** - Hoops!
6) **QuickBooks for Windows Ver 3.0**
7) **Quicken for windows Deluxe** (CD Rom or Diskette ver. 4)
8) **Quicken for DOS,** (Ver. 8)
9) **3-D Home Architect** - Broderbund - Home designs and floor planning.
10) **Adobe -Type on Call-** 2 free fonts, call to buy more fast from Adobe
11) **ABC FlowChart** - by Micrografx
12) **Fonts for You** - Fantazia Concepts - 6,000 fonts
13) **WindowWasher** - the Ultimate Optimizer for Windows with Intelligent Data Compression
14) **Dashboard & Sidekick for Windows** (Value Pak)- a convenient Push-Button Utility Panel for Windows and a Fast Functional and Friendly Personal Organizer.
15) **OnFile** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks"
16) **XtraDrive Lite** - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
17) **Your Deck** - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
18) **Space Age** - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing
19) **Jump*Start KINDERGARTEN** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6)
20) **Kid's ENCYCLOPEDIA** - The Random House (ages 7-12)
21) **RUSA** - Interactive Art Tour - St. Petersburg, Russia CDRom.
22) **DO-OVER!** - Change the look of Windows with a bonus utility to speed task switching.
23) **CD ESSENTIALS-** The Windows software utility that lets you automatically access, play and manage your CDs from Windows.
24) **SPACE ADVENTURE-** Knowledge Adventure up-to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
25) **AVIATION ADVENTURE** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
26) **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - Interactive Cartoon CDRom (ages 3 and up)

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

Book Review

Simple Internet

Review by: Dr. Paul Hoffman Jr., Capital PC Users Group

I could not wait to get and read the new book *Simple Internet*. The promotional material sounded great:

Meet Archie Finger, Private Eye, an Internet illiterate hired to solve the mystery of a missing person-on-line.... Travel along the information superhighway with Detective Finger as he uncovers electronic clue after clue, prompting him to learn the most exciting, useful Net tools, programs, fun on-line files, and databases. Etc.. etc.

First let me tell you my Net aware less. I had taken the first two courses That CPCUG gives on the Intemet, "First Steps on the Internet" and "Next Steps." These were great! Besides that, I had purchased and skimmed three or four other books on the Intemet, and had progressed far enough to send and receive e-mail. But FTP, Gophers, WWW, and Veronica were still outside of my abilities at the time I started this book. Wth anticipation, I grabbed my high-lighter pens—can't read anything without a good highlighter—and sat down to learn more about "The Net." All of the other Waite Group's books that I had read were good how-to-do-it books and I was looking forward to learning lots.

But there is too much filler, fluff, and empty space in *Simple Internet*. When finish reading a book, one indication of how good I thought the book was, is the number of marks. Red marks indicate information that I might want to come back to later. More important is the number of green marks. The green marks highlight ideas that I want to try as soon as possible. Sadly there were only 9 green marks.

This is a definite thumbs-down. It was a great idea. But there was so much of an effort to make it different, that it was too different for my tastes. Maybe it would be enjoyed by seventh or eighth grade students.

A much better book is Internet Slick Tricks by Alfred and Emily Glossbrener. It has more pages, much more information, and costs less—$16.00 vs. $16.95 for Archie et al. Another possibilility; is the Video Tutor: Introduction to the net. For $31.95 you can sit in your living room and get an hour and fifty minute tour of the Internet. Obviously you can look it as many times as you need, and rerun those sections that need more attention. I saw the write-up of the video in the Winnipeg PC User Group magazine, Tid Bits N Bytes, and obtained my copy by e-mailing a request to *shareviews @mbnet.mb.ca* . If you not mastered the process of e-mail try (204) 837-2639. Forget Archie Finger, Private Eye, and get Glossbrenners' book or the video, or both.

Simple Internet by Jeffrey Cogswell is Published by Waite Group Press, 200 Tamal, Corte Madera, CA 94925. List price is $16.95.

Software Review

The Face of Life and Smithsonian's America.

Reviews by: William F. LaMartin



Under review here are two CD-ROMs developed by Creative Multimedia, *The Face of Life* and *Smithsonian's America*. I have seen both for sale by mail order, each for $29.95, but at the time of this review I could not locate them locally. I have, however, seen *The Face of Life* for sale at Comp USA in the past.

Both programs list as system requirements a 486SX/25 or above computer running Microsoft Windows 3.1, 4 MB of RAM, 5 MB hard drive space, a double speed CD-ROM drive, 256 color Super VGA monitor, and a SoundBlaster or compatible sound card with Windows Drivers.

The Face of Life installed from the CD-ROM in less than one minute and took up about 3.3 MB on the hard drive. *Smithsonian's America* installed almost instantaneously, and, as best I could tell, only installed one small file. Perhaps that explains why the Smithsonian program didn't run as smoothly as did *The Face of Life*. Despite the recommendation, you can run these programs on a 386/33 with a single speed CD-ROM drive, but for the newsreels in *The Face of Life* I found a double speed drive gave much better results.

The Face of Life is a collection of all the Life Magazine covers for each week from 1936 through 1972 along with a sampling of advertisements, letters to the editor, and photographs appearing in those magazines. In addition to the material from the magazines, they add a listing of major world events, US events, books, movies, songs, fads, and a trivia quiz for each year.

Working from the "Editors Desk", where there is a typewriter(search tool), a sheet of contact prints(photo essays), radio(popular songs), advertisement folder (Ads. of the era), a press camera (access to menu), a copy of *LIFE* (access to newsreel, picture of the week, and events of the week), you choose the issue you want, then begin to relive the past.

Following the advent of the 35 mm camera, *LIFE* brought a new type of journalism to America—Photo Journalism—telling its stories through the camera lens. With this CD you can relive some of that. See a young Marlon Brando on the cover of the April 4, 1960 issue, Khruschev pounding on the table at the United Nations in the March 28, 1960's newsreel, Germany invading Poland in the newsreel footage of November 20, 1939, and General MacArthur on the cover of the December 8, 1941 issue.

I have several old *LIFE* magazines around the house. Upon comparing them to what is on the CD, I was surprised to find a lot of material missing. I guess CD's just don't hold as much as you think when newsreels, photos, and sound are included. For example you only get five or six ads for the entire year on the CD, when there are more than that in any one issue of the real magazine. My July 13, 1959 issue had 16 letters to the editor, the CD for that date had only one. These shortcomings notwithstanding, I enjoyed the CD because I like old photos. In fact my major disappointment was that whenever I transferred any of these images to the Windows clipboard, the colors of the photos either arrived there mixed up, or upon trying to paste them from the clipboard into an application they didn't transfer properly.

The second program *Smithsonian's America*, an exhibition on American History and Culture, is based on the American Festival 94 exhibition mounted in Japan to commemorate the 140th anniversary of the establishment of official relations between Japan and America negotiated by Commodore Perry, which according to the narrator on the CD "Promised a firm, lasting, and sincere friendship between the two countries".

The organization of this CD is based on the following eight categories: American Ideals and Images, The Peopling of America, Entertaining Americans, Politics and Protest, Western Frontiers, Conquering Space and Time, Americans at Home, and Looking American. Further each of these categories is broken down into several subcategories. Then for each subcategory you get a "Picture Show" consisting of a sequence of still photos and drawings accompanied by a narration and background music. For example, under Entertaining Americans, two of the subcategories are Jazz and Motion Pictures, each with its short picture show explaining the topic.

Again, I found the old photos and drawings interesting, but the coverage on any topic is fairly shallow, which would make it more suitable for a young person than for an older adult. As before, I suppose this is because the audio and visual material take up so much disk space there isn't room to go very deeply into any topic. Unfortunately, based on the history I learned in school, there seems to be a bit of political correctness running through some of the narrations—not a lot—just enough to be noticeable (you'll have to buy the CD to check me out on this). And I suppose the reason that World War II is absent from the material is that it represents a short break in the "lasting and sincere friendship between the two countries".

I recommend *The Face of Life* for those over 40 and *Smithsonian's America* for the younger crowd

Software Review

Kinderventures™ "The Wanderoos Go Exploring"

for Windows™ and Macintosh®

Review by: Katherine and Mary Powell
Tampa PC User Group Member and offspring



From the onset this software caught our attention with a stuffed bear right in the box! (Then we opened it and realized it was a type of kangaroo). Mary thought this was great and put the kangaroo (uh, Wanderoo) right next to the monitor when we started the program.

Installation was quick, but we received too many errors when starting up. This seemed to clear after the second install, though.

The opening screen is very nice, but there was no visible navigation aids or menus and we had to stop and read the software guide before continuing. The guide was fairly well written, and we were on our way before long.

The setting of this game is a forest and twin Wanderoos (Wandering Kangaroos) Pocket and Tails are the guides to exploring. What the child is exploring are videos about different topics, memory games, counting games and interactive hunting for Wanderoos.

The game begins at a campsite in the forest from which they may choose to do any number of things. To start the main seeking game, the child goes into a tree house and creates a new Wanderoo and names it. Then they proceed to the fountain where six Wanderoos scatter down six different paths in a game of hide and seek. From here the navigation is pretty good. There are sign posts with the topic that each path explores. For children who cannot read, there is a friendly flower next to each sign that will read it for them when they click on it. This is a must anymore as most children come to expect this kind of help. Exploring topics involves playing videos about them, taking pictures and saving them in an album and playing matching games for extra credit.

The object of the game is to tag all six Wanderoos as you go exploring. When this is accomplished, there are two more levels to explore before the game is over.

If the explorer wishes the return to the opening campsite, they can go into a schoolhouse where they will find a classroom. From here, there are games involving the alphabet, numbers, shapes and colors.

For a five year old, this was an engaging game that was fairly intuitive. The objective seemed to be too lofty, however, and Mary lost some interest in catching the Wanderoos. The main window couldn't be exited from unless the hidden menu was exposed and so Mary called to have me start and stop the program. She can start and end all of her other Windows applications on her own, so I found this to be an item that could use improvement.

Overall, it was a worthwhile learning game and we both recommend you jump on out and explore it!

Optical Data Corporation
30 Technology Drive
Warren, NJ 07059
(908)686-0022
(800)887-0022

Quick Tip

Bob Beck, Quad Cities Computer Society (2/95)

Getting a lot of files spread across your hard disk with the extension. TMP? You can safely get rid of 'em. They are just leftovers from running programs that create files with the extension. TMP while you're running the program, and erases them when you exit the program normally.
So why are they still there? If you're running the program and experience a lockup, or shut off the computer while the program is running, they are left hanging around forever, in limbo, but using up storage space on your hard drive.
You can use your favorite utility to move about the hard disk and delete them, performing yourself your applications' failure to perform its clean-up chores, kind of like cleaning up your kids' rooms. But it you're using DOS 6.2X there's an easier way. Add the following lines to your AUTOEXEC.BAT file:

```
IF NOT EXIST C:\TEMP\~*.TMP GO TO NEXT
ECHO "Y"|DEL C:\TEMP\~*.TMP
:NEXT
C:\DOS\SCANDISK/ALL/CHECKONLY
```

The procedure will slow your bootup process a little, but will perform the chore for you as a tradeoff.
You should be aware that the only drive on which *.TMP files will be deleted in the above scenario is C. If you want to clear other partitions on your hard disk, it will be necessary to add several lines for each such drive, substituting the drive designation in lines one and two with the appropriate drive letter, as

```
IF NOTEXIST C:\TEMP\~*.TMP GO TO
NEXTC
ECHO "Y" | DEL C:\TEMP\~*.TMP
:NEXTC
IF NOT EXIST D:\TEMP\~*.TMP GO TO
NEXTD
ECHO "Y" | DEL D:TEMP\~*.TMP
:NEXT D
C:\DOS\SCANDISK/ALL/CHECKONLY
```

and so on.
You could of course, set this up as a .BAT file and just run it when you want to do some housecleaning.

Microsoft Access SIG

The Access SIG meeting will be on April 20, 1995, at the Dun & Bradstreet Software office, located at 3903 Northdale Blvd., Suite 113E, (look for the burgundy awning for the entrance) Tampa. The door locks at 6:00 pm, however, we will have someone keeping an eye out for late arrivals. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

For more info call Mark Saunders at: 949-6936 or
MARKS@DBSOFTWARE.COM
Sergio Mendez at --799-6589
Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.

OS/2 SIG

OS/2 SIG, Next meeting: will be: April 25, 1995 at 5:45 p.m. Location: IBM Lakepointe One Bldg., Room 436
This meeting will cover reformat without backup and restore "Partition Magic"
BE SURE TO SIGN IN.

John Lucas
JKLUCAS@MAILSERV.MOFFITT.USF.EDU)

Internet SIG

The Internet SIG met on Tues. March 28th. Topics discussed were ping, whois, finger, gopher, archie and veronica. The approach was through Scott Yanoff's Internet services goper server.

The next Internet SIG meeting will be Tuesday, April 25th, 1995, Time: 6-8pm at Reflectone Corp. Training Center. The first half hour will be largely devoted to fostering useful online practices. Then the topics covered at the March meeting will be illustrated once more. Participants are urged to go to the keyboard and demonstrate something they have become knowledgeable about. Call Charles for additional info at (813) 968-1207.

Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

Charles Howe -HOWE.COSTECH@INTNET.NET
Michael Hodges

For Additional Info Call 985-3338 or 962-2554 ext 715



Your ***TPCUG, Bits of Blue*** needs you to share computing experiences, discoveries, succcesses, travails, and opinions. SHARE - It's what computer user groups are about. Thanks this month to B.O.B. writers, Bruce Register for the meeting minutes, Harvey Bruneau for the president's column, and review writers: William F. LaMartin, Katherine Powell (with help from her daughter Mary), Cliff Goble and Scott Lawson.

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- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

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- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office . Suite
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3

Software Review

Under A Killing Moon

Review by: Cliff Goble, Tampa PC Users Group



The great, fairly new game Under a Killing Moon is finally here. To install this game, it requires at least a single speed CD-ROM (150kb/sec), 386/25 or better CPU, SVGA display, 2megs of hard disk space available, 4 megs of RAM, mouse, and sound board. I ran it on a 486DX2/66MHz IBM compatible with 8 megs of RAM, and a 1 meg VLB graphics card. I would highly recommend having at least 8 megs of RAM, a 486 processor, and a double speed CD-ROM. The 8 megs of RAM makes a tremendous difference on the graphics in the movement mode, and the interactive mode. The installation was fairly easy, but I did refer to the instruction manual once. While you are playing the game, you may change the configuration of the view, the sound setup and so on, so when you are all loaded up and something's not working correctly, there is no need to quit the game and go to a different setup menu every time something is wrong.

This four CD adventure contains great cinemas throughout the whole game. It also features James Earl Jones as the "great P.I. in the sky." This game takes you to a new virtual reality setting. You play a man named Tex Murphy, a P.I. who hasn't had very many cases lately, has no money, and really no life. You kind of run into a little luck and start getting a few cases at the beginning but nothing real serious, yet. The game is rather very basic to play but a it gets a bit tricky sometimes. If you are unlucky enough to basically predict the whole game, which it sometimes is, it kind of ruins the challenge. In the parts that aren't predictable you must pay attention to minor details here and there. There are two types of modes, movement mode and interactive mode. The movement mode and interactive mode toggle back and forth by double clicking the right mouse button, pressing the spacebar, and if you have a three key mouse' just by simply pressing the middle button will do it for you (which I never could get to work). You don't move around with the keyboard, instead you use the mouse which can be a pain to get through tight places (a good way to avoid this is not to go too fast unless you are in a hurry.) The up and down arrow keys are used to look up or down for clues (make sure you use them throughout the whole game.) When looking at the normal view in movement or interactive mode, things look 3-D, but when you look up or down, you notice that things, such as plants, are flat and just rotate as you move around. When you are in interactive mode, you have basic actions you can take such as talk, get, turn on or off, open, or move, etc.

After a while you will sort of find this game addicting, if you play it enough. Under A Killing Moon is definitely the game to have. If you like games that will last you more than two days, this is the one for you.

Access Software Incorporated, 4910 W. Amelia Earhart Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116 (801)359-2900 1-800-800-4880 SRP: $49.95



Internet Access Company going Public with Stock

With more people logging onto the Internet every day, a large provider of access to computer network plans to offer investors a chance to buy into its business.

Performance Systems International, Inc. plans a public offering of 3.3 million shares of stock. Performance Systems plans to offer the shares at $7 to $8 each and hopes to raise 22 million.

The company plans to add 100 more hook-ups to the Internet to the 99 already operating in the U.S. They also operate in Tokyo and plan to expand to England.



Software Review

Procomm Plus for Windows Version 2.0

Review by: Scott Lawson, Tampa PC Users Group

I was pleasantly surprised to find that I could get this software up and running without opening the manual. The installation booklet covered a step by step installation. I made a backup of my current communications software Procomm Plus for DOS before the installation, because mistakes sometimes happen.

I always install new software from a disk copy. This protects the originals, as a backup. The set made from a DOS disk copy did not work. A backup made with the Norton disk duplicate worked fine.

The express installation could not auto detect my modem, an Intel Satisfaxtion 400. My modem was on the list of available and supported modems. My first call after installation didn't go through. I did have to go into windows advanced COM port setup to correctly set the COM ports, address and interrupts.

Up and running, I was able to call out to Datastorm Technologies. There are no provisions for reading the dialing directory from Procomm Plus for DOS, so I manually retyped it. File folders organize the numbers in the dialing directory into groups.

File transfers have be simplified, no more page-up or page-downs to send and receive files. Almost every thing needed in available on the tool bar, and accessible by a mouse click. It did take a few days to memorize the new tool icons and locations. There is also the ability to create custom tool bars, if the defaults don't have a needed tool. I'm beginning to really like the graphical interface.

File transfer speed is identical to the DOS version I get about 1620 characters per second on a zipped file. The file transfer status now shows the percent-

See **Procomm Plus...** *...continued on page 11*

Procomm Plus *continued from page 10*

age of completion on the file as well as the batch transfer. A timer also shows the 'actual' time left on file transfers.

I have windows running with standard VGA 640 x 480 (old monitor). I would recommend using Super VGA with this program since the screen fonts can be difficult to read at lower resolutions. The display can use any font available to Windows.

There is extensive documentation provided for both the software and the aspect script language. I can see both of these manuals have grown in thickness from the DOS version. I have not needed to write any new script programs. The only time I have used the aspect language was to customize the Host mode setup.

One of the new features of V2.0 is the ability to send and receive faxes. I was not able to get my computer to answer incoming faxes. I called Datastorm and found that they do not support the fax class of my modem. They support a 400e but not a 400. I was not pleased with that. I have tried to get Intel to fix this problem.

I had been using Procomm and Procomm Plus for DOS for years and I am very happy with their Windows version. It gives me the ability to transfer files to floppy, or run another Windows application (Solitaire) without leaving Host mode. I keep the modem computer in host mode almost 24 hours a day for company file transfers. I will be able to move the company's communication software to the windows platform, one of the last applications still on DOS. Now all I have to do is decide which GUI OS to steer the company toward, OS/2 Warp, Windows 95, or Windows-NT?

Datastorm, 2401 Lemone Blvd., Columbia, MO 65205 (314)443-3282. SRP $69

Why.. '95... Continued from page 1

❖ *Work on several tasks at once* with fast, new 32-bit programs that support preemptive multitasking and multi-threading-threading and run on their own memory space, so errant programs can't affect one another.

❖ *Focus on your documents instead of the programs* that created them. Programs that use OLE, Microsoft's strategic object technology, let you create and edit documents easily, allowing you to work not only within a single document, but within multiple programs.

❖ *Built-in networking.* Windows 95 is network-ready, providing easy 32-bit access to network resources, even simultaneously.

❖ *Connect to servers* running Novell, NetWare, or Microsoft Windows NT Server, the Internet, or other PCs running Windows 95 from a local or remote connection using a phone line.

❖ *Easy networking anywhere.* Dialing in remotely to network services is just like connecting to them from your desktop PC, a couple of mouse clicks and you're ready to run.

❖ *Automatic multimedia upgrade.* Windows 95 can provide full-screen, full-motion video on today's high-end PC with no special hardware assistance.

❖ *Play today's hottest games* on Windows 95, thanks to faster graphics support for Windows- based action games.

Compatibility is built in.

❖ *Works with all current software:* Your existing 16-bit programs and drivers for windows, Windows for Workgroups, and MS-DOS are completely compatible with Windows 95. Programs meet or exceed their current performance on Windows 3.1.

❖ *Runs on today's PC platform.* Use Windows 95 on a PC with as little as 4 MB of memory (8MB recommended and a 386DX processor.

What can Windows 95 Do for Our Organization?

❖ *For organizations*, Windows 95 provides an opportunity to cut overall computing costs while increasing the efficiency of users and those who support them. This helps reduce the support burden of PC' Groups, increase control of the desktop, and improve end-user productivity.

❖ *For users at every level* of experience, Windows 95 ushers in a new generation in computing.

❖ *Smooth migration* to Windows 95. Testing shows users of Windows 3.1 become more productive in just one hour with Windows 95 and end-user transition is eased with reference aids such as a computer-based tutorial and powerful new Help System.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL.

AND

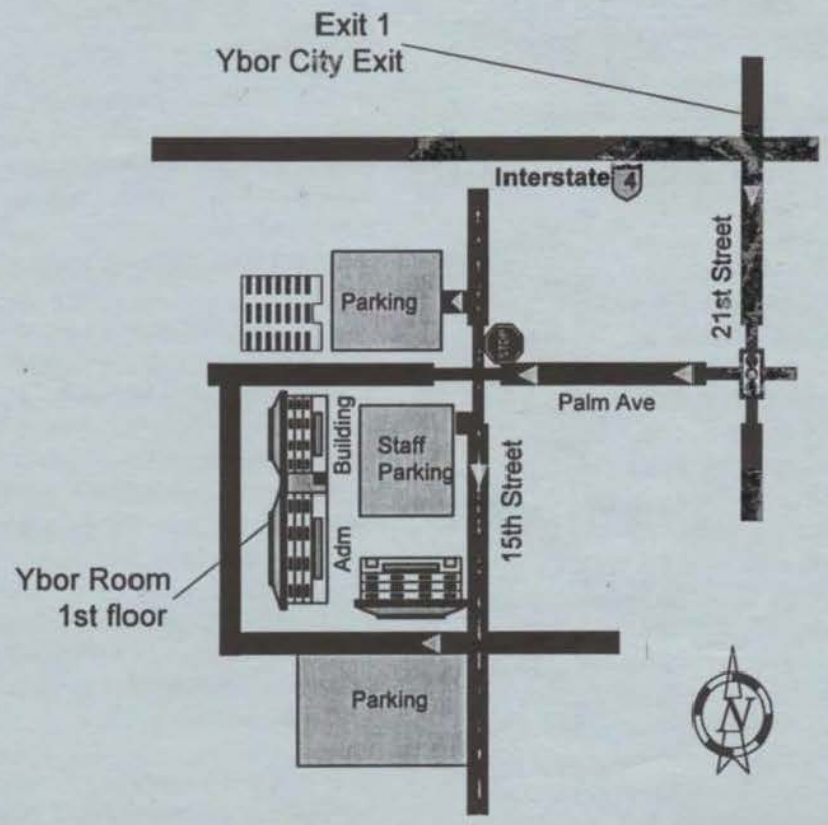
WHEN YOU DO BE SURE TO MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
P.O. BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual
$35 Family
$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

April 12th Presentation by:

DELRINA



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 5 May, 1995

MEETING

DATE: May 10th, 1995

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE:

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

REMINDER

THIS MONTHS MEETING WILL BE IN THE **THEATRE BUILDING** ON THE NORTH SIDE OF PALM AVE., (Directly North of our usual meeting site) Parking is available on the eastern and western sides

(See map on last page.)

AGENDA:
BARGAIN TABLE; DEMO OF BBS; CELLER DOOR; ATTACHING FILES TO MESSAGES

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Member

HOW TO HANDLE DATES AND TIMES

by Connie Kincaid,
Tampa PC User's Group



An employee leaves on October 28th for vacation and returns on November 3rd. How many days was the employee on vacation? A client comes into the office at 11:30 AM and leaves at 12:45 PM. How do you keep track of the fractions of an hour to bill your client by the hour? You worked on an important project from 10:15 PM to 6:25 AM the next day. How do you calculate the amount of time spent on the project?

These questions are relatively simple to answer with fingers (and sometimes toes) when they only plague us once in a while. But if you've ever had to automate keeping track of time in a spreadsheet or database, you have encountered the mysteries of time keeping on computer. (Perhaps someday computers will have fingers and toes and then it will be easy for the computer to figure out these problems. Meanwhile.....)

Let's review the basics. There are 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day and 365 days in a year. You already knew that. The computer doesn't. The computer only knows whole numbers and fractions of whole numbers (expressed as decimals).

The computer also doesn't know about calendars or clocks. "But MY system knows the date and time" you protest. "It marks it on every file every time I save it. I can go to a DOS prompt and type TIME to see the time or DATE to see the date. I tell you, it's in there!" Let's look at how the computer sees times and dates.

See **Dates and Times...** *...continued on page 11*

*** * 1995 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES : William LaMartin 251-3817
TREASURER:Tom Cone 222-8925
MEMBER AT LARGE: Connie Kincaid 962-8799
SECRETARY: Bruce Register 968-8170
APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 222-8925
SIG Leaders: Charles Howe (Internet) 968-2107
John Lucas (OS/2) 949-4300

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII file or in a commonly available word processor format, such as WordPerfect 5.2, or Ami Pro 3.0 on diskette to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or send it by modem to BBS (813)239-3704.

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

SECRETARY'S REPORT

TPCUG MEETING 4/12/95,
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register

President Bruneau called the meeting to order. Comments and information was given regarding SIG, vendors and miscellaneous. Some members have downloaded BITS OF BLUE. You must have Windows and download Adobe Acrobat Reader to download the BITS OF BLUE. The April issue contained 300 KB. First, you download the reader then use it to download the BITS OF BLUE NEWSLETTER.

The MAY MEETING TPCUG will be across the street (north side of street from regular meeting place) in the performing arts building. The bargain table and an excellent program composed of demonstrations, questions, and answers regarding many of your concerns including working through the bulletin board (RBBS) and using the Adobe Acrobat Reader. Bring your individual questions for which YOU need answers. Come prepared to get those answers to the questions that "you never asked but wished that you had asked." Be prepared to sigh, "I did not know that!" One of the joys of TPCUG is that members are always ready and willing to help each other.

THE TPCUG BARGAIN TABLE will be presented at the MAY meeting. That particular meeting will be across the street from our regular meeting place in the auditorium due to the need HCC has for our May meeting night.

Contribute to the BARGAIN table. Harvey asked us ALL to look around for LEGAL software, hardware, connections, etc., that you might like to contribute. Please look around now! Everybody gains. TPCUG gains!

MICROSOFT Resource Guide at a cost of $19 is a good source for help with unique problems.

SIG

May 18, 1995, 6 PM, promptly, is next SIG-Microsoft Access. 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast corner of Mapledale and Northdale Boulevards. One or two may be squeezed in due to limited seating. Be there at door at 6 PM, a few minutes before 6 PM is better. A Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building. Sign up early. Use Bulletin Board. Meeting is the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Instructors and SIG leaders are superb!

April 23, 1995, SIG OS/2. (Always 4th Tuesday of Month) Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/signup.

June 6, 1995, 6 PM, promptly, is next SIG Internet. Contact Charles Howe. Seats are available. You can use BBS to signup. Promptness is required because security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of the

See **Minutes** ....*Continued on page 3*

Minutes....*Continued from page 2*

street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone Building on left. You must enter north end and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock door and escort us to the meeting room. There will be no SIG Internet in May due to scheduling of OS/2 on the same 4th date. The next SIG Internet meeting will be the first Tuesday of the Month.

If you would like to have a particular SIG, let President Bruneau know your interest. President Bruneau wants your opinion. He reads BBS regularly. Send him a message. Many have not tried to use the Bulletin Board. Use it, you can't hurt it.

SIG SOFTWARE & HARDWARE. Connie Kincaid has the two day SIG regarding basics and BBS:

Hardware, June 27, 1995, 6:30 PM.
Software, July 25, 1995 6:30 PM.
Place: Reflectone Building. See SIG Internet above for directions, security, etc.

Harvey asked for VOLUNTEERS to call non-renewal members to encourage them to continue being a member by paying the low, low dues. Various reasons were given to the VOLUNTEERS by non-renewals. From "I forgot" to "I lost my interest" and all kinds of good response in between. Most non-renewals appreciated the call. The responses were helpful.

EACH ONE SIGN ONE. Harvey strengthened the reminder that the goal in 1995 is for every member to bring in at least one new member. Some have already exceeded this goal. Where do you stand! You will be surprised how many people are unaware of how easy it is to get such excellent help. Ask those browsers in the computer store, check out line; even your Pastor will want to know. They will not know if you don't ask. Please do; better, bring them.

Harvey reported that you should that you should download Adobe Acrobat ACROREAD file to download the BITS OF BLUE newsletter through RBBS. ACROREAD download will take about 15 minutes. You can click anything in BITS OF BLUE; you can go right to the article and then you can print it, even in color if you like. You can click on an article and move it around. Harvey has put in tabs for "hot links". If you want to download BITS OF BLUE instead of receiving it in the mail, notify the Editor. You can use TPCUG Bulletin Board (RBBS) to access it.

Financial contributions to Bulletin Board will continue to be accepted, needed, desired and appreciated..

The Editor of BITS OF BLUE will surely appreciate receiving quality fillers for BITS OF BLUE. Some of members have insertions already. Put in your sharing of knowledge, hints, help, etc.

Some members reported receiving BETA WINDOWS 95 ($39). One member reported "running 16 bit and will not change to 32 bit until the final release of WINDOWS 95 come out."

Tampa College, on West Hillsborough, is looking for speakers for their PCUsers groups. They meet on Saturdays. If you feel that you have something to offer and want to be helpful, give them a call.

SOFTWARE VENDOR DEMONSTRATION-Comments and statements are:

Mr. Hartley Macklin, Manager of User Group Relations, Delrina Corporation presented Delrina's several existing and new to be released programs. He made an excellent "discount offering" to TPCUG members. "Delrina is the leader in communication and forms products. Delrina has 650 employees in five countries and will be hiring an additional 150 within the next 60 days. Delrina can send out 10,000 faxes for you anywhere in the country. WinFaxPro can be used to download a fax that is awaiting you in your FaxMailBox. This is a Delrina service.

Delrina has Communications Suite "Strategy" (WinFaxPro and WinComPro) for stand alone applications. They are for mainstream market, i. e., Windows 95 & MacIntosh. Applications for OS/2 will be in the future as OS/2 users increase to 20,000,000. WinComPro is for Bulletin Boards. Delrina "is getting a toe hold on Internet." They have Internet Messenger. WinComPro provides for Internet E Mail. Echo Lake is soon to be released for consumer programs. Scrapbook applications, biography photos, and forms are popular applications. Graphics works well.

Hartley gave a BETA copy of Echo Lake to the TPCUG Editor for review. He donated several software products to the TPCUG door prize program. He said, "If you can print it in Windows, you can fax it with WinFaxPro. There are no exceptions regardless of the application; DOS print will not work; it must be a Windows application that will print in Windows. He demonstrated the ease of use with Microsoft Word whether faxing to one or to several recipients. You can select style and other features. One can "grab, drag and drop" from one phone book to another. In addition, mail can be sent to those in the address book that are selected to receive mail. (FYI-BFT means "binary file transfer). BFT and whole files can be transferred.

WinFaxPro has menu and tool bars. The "item log" manages the folders with choices and icons. Right mouse button capabilities speeds use. WinFaxPro "Viewer" cleans up fax "dirt" from faxes; it will even add your signature. You can doodle on your fax or draw on it, etc. He demonstrated using

See **Minutes** *....Continued on page 4*

OCR. He took Microsoft word, created a fax and turned the fax back to Microsoft Word. You can hook up any twain scanner and back up with WinFaxPro. He says the current WinFaxPro is a tremendous improvement over WinFaxPro 3.0.

Delrina PerForm Designer for Windows was release in December 1994. "It is so easy to use; it is a 'form for idiots' ". It shows you what you see before you get it. It is easy to put in your logo just like you did your signature. The special to TPCUG members present that night only was $39; not the suggested retail price of $129. He presented several other special "one night only" offerings. Several of us took advantage of them.

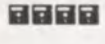
Many COMMENTS by various members for our benefit and edification were shared.

Winners of the door prizes were:

WinSense	Gary Peterson
Bag	Ennis
Corell CD	Ennis
Delrina Com. Suite	Richard Morris
Delrina Com. Suite	Carol Robinson
Delrina Com. Suite	A. Morgan
Delrina PerForm	Bob Davis
Delrina PerForm	Merle Nicholson
T-Shirt	Frank Kinsinger

Thank you Hartley Macklin for the presentations and door prizes.

President Bruneau thanked all for coming. He reminded all to return across the street for meeting on May 10, 1995, 6 PM. You will not want to miss the exciting BARGAIN TABLE and the help round-tables. If you are not looking for help, come on, you will learn something anyway. If you can help others, this is your chance. Who knows what great door prizes await TPCUG members. Only members are eligible for opportunities of receiving door prizes. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. Each one sign one. Enjoy the BBS.



Digital will use Windows 95!

Digital Equipment Corporation has announced they will preload the Microsoft Windows 95 operating system on its Plug and Play desktop and notebook systems, as soon as it is available. Digital has signed a Windows marketing development agreement with Microsoft, that ensures that Digital's customers will be able to take advantage of the new operating system. In addition, Digital is one of five companies chosen by Microsoft to provide telephone support for Windows 95.
(Excerpt from Charlotte Bytes, CCPCUG, article by Wayne D. Waterfield)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

1) **Microsoft BOB** - 8 essential hosehold programs, calendar, letter writer, checkbook, and more...
2) **Aldus Persuasion** - Presentation Graphic Software
3) **Microsoft Complete Basketball** - Hoops!
4) **QuickBooks for Windows Ver 3.0**
5) **Quicken for DOS,** (Ver. 8)
6) **3-D Home Architect** - Broderbund - Home designs and floor planning.
7) **Adobe -Type on Call-** 2 free fonts, call to buy more fast from Adobe
8) **Fonts for You** - Fantazia Concepts - 6,000 fonts
9) **WindowWasher** - the Ultimate Optimizer for Windows with Intelligent Data Compression
10) **Dashboard & Sidekick for Windows** (Value Pak)- a convenient Push-Button Utility Panel for Windows and a Fast Functional and Friendly Personal Organizer.
11) **OnFile** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks"
12) **XtraDrive Lite** - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
13) **Your Deck** - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
14) **Space Age** - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing
15) **Jump*Start KINDERGARTEN** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6)
16) **Kid's ENCYCLOPEDIA** - The Random House (ages 7-12)
17) **RUSA** - Interactive Art Tour - St. Petersburg, Russia CDRom.
18) **DO-OVER!** - Change the look of Windows with a bonus utility to speed task switching.
19) **CD ESSENTIALS-** The Windows software utility that lets you automatically access, play and manage your CDs from Windows.
20) **SPACE ADVENTURE-** Knowledge Adventure up-to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
21) **AVIATION ADVENTURE** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
22) **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - Interactive Cartoon CDRom (ages 3 and up)
23) **PC DOS** 7 - from IBM
24) **Harvard for Windows ChartXL** - Compelling charts from critical data from Software Publishing Co.
25) **Harvard for Windows Montage** - Easy way to organize your graphics from Software Publishing Co.
26) **Spider-Man Cartoon Maker** - ages 5-up
27) **Delrina Communications Suite 2.1** - WinCommPro and WinFax Pro
28) **OnCmd** - xBase for OS/2 - xBase database development environment for Native OS/2

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

May meeting

A reminder that the May meeting will be held across the street (PALM Ave) in the HCC Theatre building. Don't forget to bring your American cash or checkbooks in order that you can purchase items from the bargain table. Guest are invited and can purchase items also. ALL proceeds go to the Tampa PC Users Group.

Thanks

I want to thank those members who brought or invited guest to our last meeting. It really made me feel good that there were so many new faces in attendance. Several of the guest joined our group that night. While the goal I proposed to each of you is to bring in one new membership in 1995, you can of course bring in more. Anyway, a sincere thank you to each of you for your efforts and contribution to the Tampa PC Users Group.

Additional thank goes to the members who have donated items to be sold at the May meeting bargain table. A reminder that items can be donated year around and that donations can qualify as tax deductions on your corporate or personal tax return. Please either bring items to be donated to the meeting or contact Harvey Bruneau at (813) 985-3338 or 962-2554 (ext. 715) to schedule a pick up of the items.

No words can describe my thoughts of the episode that went on during the last meeting. Several members contacted me after the meeting to express their concern of the behavior exhibited by some members during the Delrina presentation and the negative impact it generated about our group to the presenter, guest and members. Frankly, I agree that the conversations and debate going on during the presentation were distracting and reflected negatively upon our entire group. Some guest did not join our group because of this uncalled behavior and some members left because they had enough. I must remind everyone that the presenters are our guest and are here because I have invited them. We do not pay these presenters to present, give us special product pricing or donate their products to our group. In fact it cost these companies a lot of money to send their representatives to us. In this instance Hart came from Canada. This kind of treatment of presenters will only result in vendors refusing to attend our meetings. I do not want negative word of mouth conversations to circulate among potential members or presenters that the Tampa PC Users Group is a disrespectful group due to the actions of a few members. This problem can be solved by stopping the side conversations going on among yourselves and the debates with the presenter of whether product A is better than product B. In the future I will personally stop the presentation and ask the individuals to be quiet or leave the meeting. Those of you that wish to debate between products or whether a glass of water is half full or half empty should form a SIG group. Fortunately, Delrina has asked to come back for another presentation in January.

SIG/Classes

It's official. We now have a **new class, PC Hardware & Software Fundamentals,** and will be taught by Connie Kincaid. This class will last two months (June-July). It will be repeated in October-November for those of you that were not able to join the first class.

The process is underway to create a new **Graphics** Special Interest Group (SIG) which will begin in August. Additional information will be forthcoming as we finalize the details. Stay tune to the newsletter and the BBS for additional information.

See SIG or Secretary articles in this newsletter for further detail information on the SIGs currently available.

Constructive opinions and comments are welcomed and can be addressed to me on the BBS or Internet.

Harvey Bruneau
HPB@DBSoftware.com

Vacation Planning?

Map'n'Go Wins Award!

Map'n'Go, won the prestigious award for "Best New Use of a Computer" in the Software Publishers Association's annual Excellence in Software Awards. Map'n'Go is a sophisticated multimedia travel planning program on CD-ROM, that takes the guesswork out of planning trips in the US, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Street price is $39.00, and through July, a manufacturer's rebate of $10 is available. For information, (800) 452-5931 or contact them on Internet http;// www.delorme.com

(Excerpt from Charlotte Bytes, CCPCUG, article by Wayne D. Waterfield)

Software Review

Quicken 4 for Windows Deluxe CD-ROM



Review by: William F. LaMartin
Tampa P. C. User's Group

I have used *Quicken* from Intuit to record my financial transactions for almost four years. First there was the DOS version; then I switched to the Windows version as soon as it was available. That gave me advantages like having more than one account open on screen at the same time. Of course, there were little improvements I could wish for like a drop down calendar in the date field, a drop-down calculator in the amount filed, or buttons on each account register that carry out frequently used actions like deleting and finding transactions. Now that I have the *Quicken 4 for Windows Deluxe CD-ROM* (I somehow missed versions 2 & 3 for Windows), I have all of that and much more.

The Deluxe CD-ROM edition is really a two part creature, from my point of view. First we have our old familiar *Quicken*—much enhanced as to convenience features—a little enhanced as to what it actually does. The second part consists of the excellent tutorials, well done talking tutorials, the financial planning , stock guide and stock quotes, "Ask the Experts", and the home inventory data base. In fact, if you don't plan on subscribing to their stock quote service via your modem (you can get the same information from the on-line services) or subscribing to the Tradeline® Stock Guide(the historical performance of 6,000 + securities updated each 6 months), I would recommend just purchasing either *Quicken 4 for Windows* or the *Quicken 4 for Windows CD-ROM* (with this you get the on screen user manual and multimedia tutorials—which are pretty good.) and save about $20. The Deluxe CD-ROM version is priced at $59; the basic *Quicken 4 CD-ROM* is $39. Almost any store carrying software will have them.

Quicken 4 for Windows Deluxe CD-ROM installs very easily, but will consume 24 MB of your hard drive for the full installation (and it leaves most of the extras on the CD). They claim you need a 486 computer with 8 MB of RAM, 24 MB free on your hard drive, an MPC2-compliant CD-ROM, and a video board and monitor capable of running 256 color VGA. Scares some of you away already, doesn't it? Since the system I had *Quicken* already loaded on is a 386 with 10 MB and a single speed CD-ROM drive, I decided to first try it out there. Surprise. Everything worked fine—including the multimedia talking tutorials and the multimedia "Ask the Experts" section. Possibly the experts' heads moved a little jerkily as they gave me their "tips" via the single speed CD-ROM, but the movement in the talking tutorials (people jumping around, talking, and pointing at the *Quicken* account register) was perfect.

For those of you new to *Quicken*, it allows you to track your money by setting up accounts, e.g. Checking, Savings, Visa, other debit accounts(like your mortgage balance), other assets (like a bond account). You then create a list of categories, e.g. Medical, Groceries, Dining, and Auto, so that when, say, you enter a check in the checking account you can assign it to one of your categories. If a transaction involves more than one category, you can split the transaction among those categories.

After setting up your accounts and categories and entering data, you can do things like reconcile your check book, pay credit card bills, print out reports(cash flow, itemize by categories, net worth, etc.), and set up a budget. Of course, *Quicken* would like you to integrate all this with paying your taxes by also earmarking certain categories , say, charitable contributions or income, as tax related so that at the end of the tax year you can purchase their add on program *Turbo Tax* and drop your already selected data right into it. During the year you can use (for free) the *Quicken* Tax Planner to estimate those taxes. Additionally you can just throw away that old checkbook, purchase checks suitable for your printer, and print checks directly from the program. After four years, I am finally going to give this a try. The only drawback is that the checks cost more per check ($.10 /check is you buy less than a 1000) than the bank will charge you. But just think of the convenience of not having to fill in those lines by hand.

For the experienced *Quicken* users, you get the old *Quicken* plus the following partial list of new features in the base program.

Financial Calendar Enter scheduled transactions in the calendar; display or print the calendar

Reminder Each time you start *Quicken* you are reminded of scheduled transactions (you select how far in advance to be reminded) and notes for the day. This is different from Billminder that is activated when you turn on you computer.

Forecasting Creates a graph of your future cash flow and account balances based on scheduled transactions and budget amounts.

Option Buttons Edit, Find, Close, and other buttons right on the register and other windows where you need them. No need to go to the menus.

Drop down Calendar & Calculator No need to go to the menu anymore; it's right there in the field.

Account selection bar At the bottom of the register lets you switch accounts easily.

Snapshots Instant overview of your finances.

The extra material on taxes, stocks and mutual funds includes these separate modules

See **QUICKEN...** *Continued on page 7*

Quicken...*continued from page 6*

Quicken Tax Guidebook Advice from tax experts; mainly tips. One tip is titled "Lowering your tax bill by hiring your child." Don't expect too much here.

Quicken Quotes℠ Use your modem to check on stocks and mutual funds. This involves a fee.

Tradeline® Stock Guide Graphically displays historical data on more than 6,000 securities. This involves a fee for an update on the information.

Your Mutual Fund Selector Interactive multimedia guide to aid your selection of mutual funds.

Ask the Experts Interactive video advice from Jane Bryant Quinn and Marshall Loeb.

Finally there is the

Home Inventory A specialized database to record household items and pertinent data. The data can be quite detailed with serial numbers, model numbers, room location, purchase price, etc.

This is a good solid product, and, as noted above, I much appreciate both the new conveniences like the drop-down calculator in the amount field and the added features like the financial calendar, the reminder, and the forecasting. I am less enthused about the tax advice and stock information. That said, I am sure, though, that such advice will be of value to many, and with all the room available on a CD-ROM, the more the merrier (since the data isn't taking up my hard drive space, and I can delete those modules that access this data from my hard drive). Intuit has made a good product better, and you can even register it via a toll-free modem call if you don't want to mail in the registration. The one thing that hasn't changed since my older version, though, is its inability to make me stick to my budget.

Intuit, P.O. Box 3014, Menlo Park, CA 94026 (415) 322-0573, Support (415) 858-6087

Software Review

OnFile 1.0

Review by George Kretschman, CCPCUG

I cannot remember the number of times I have been hardpressed to find a file. The eight character name and three character extension made sense to me at the time I saved it. Then when it was time to retrieve it, there was no indication of the file contents, I had forgotten the directory too. I guess most of us have just learned to accept this as a way of life in our PC oriented world. OnFile promised to change all this.

This article is based on a review copy of OnFile and an evaluator's guide written specifically to assist in reviewing the first release of OnFile. Installation was typical of a Windows program. After the installation,, the evaluators guide led me through a well designed 30 minute hands-on tour of OnFile. This hands-on tour exercised all the capabilities of the program in a clear and concise manner.

OnFile has an Auto Book feature that can automate the process of building a book.

OnFile organizes files in a series of books. Each book contains a table of contents, index, tabbed chapters, and topics. The user can organize his files, creating different books to hold related information. As an example, you could create a book concerning "Writing Projects for 1995." Within this book you could create chapters such as Computer Users Group, Business Correspondence, etc. In the chapter "Computers Users Group" you can place "Topics" (pages). A topic could be the file containing the evaluation report of OnFile. The best part of this is that you can use up to 100 characters to create a topic title and up to 255 characters to write a description of the file. The "Topic" would be associated with a normal DOS eight-character name and three-character extension. It really is not as complicated as it sounds. One trip through the hands-on Tour had me right on track. In addition to organizing files into books, subdivided into chapters with topics, OnFile can also view a file without loading the application that created the file. OnFile supports more than 50 file types. This is the one area where I ran into a problem. I use Express Publisher quite extensively. When I attempted to view an Express Publisher file (EWD), OnFile seemed to load Express Publisher (quite time consuming) in order to display the file. Even though Express Publisher appeared to be loaded, I was unable to exercise any function of that program. The amount of time it took to view the file was about as lengthy as it would have been to close OnFile, call up Express Publisher, and retrieve the file By calling the file up through Express Publisher I have the advantage of being able to modify the file.

OnFile also is capable of displaying a thumbnail image of each file but this appears to be functional only with Microsoft Word files. I do not use Word so I was unable to evaluate this feature. If you had been very careful in using file extensions, OnFile has an Auto Book feature that can automate the process of building a book. I must admit I have been very careless in naming my files. Be cause of this, I was not pleased with the results of using Auto Book. This I feel was my fault and not OnFile's.

OnFile is an easy way for Windows' users to organize and quickly locate their files. It can save time that ' had been spent searching for files and increase user productivity.

Minimum Requirements: 386 or higher, IBM-PC or compatible, Windows 3.1 or higher DOS 5.0 or higher, 4MB hard disk space, 4MB RAM, Mouse, VGA or higher display. Software Publishing Corporation 3165 Kifer Road P.O. Box 54983 Santa Clara, CA 95056-0983

Microsoft Access SIG

Recap of the Access Sig meeting on April 20, 1995 - began with a demonstration of how Aaccess can connect to remote Sybase tables that were physically in Atlanta.

Connie Kincaid showed her application written in Access that will be used to track user group announcements submitted to local newspapers. Clay Borkholm showed a set of tables for using Postal Service zip code information in an Access application. Joe Zamrin showed a system that he uses to track time spent on various projects at his work. We spent a little time just discussing problems that the participants were having.

The next sig meeting will be at 6:00 PM on May 18, 1995 at the D&B offices. at the Dun & Bradstreet Software office, located at 3903 Northdale Blvd., Suite 113E, (look for the burgundy awning for the entrance) Tampa. The door locks at 6:00 pm, however, we will have someone keeping an eye out for late arrivals. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

We are planning to walk through the creation of a simple stand-alone application with a database, a form, a menu, and a report.

For more info call Mark Saunders at: 949-6936 or *MARKS@DBSOFTWARE.COM*

Sergio Mendez at –799-6589 OR Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.

HARDWARE & SOFTWARE SIG

Connie Kincaid will lead the two day SIGs regarding computer basics and BBS,
Hardware: June 27, 1995, 6:30 PM,
Software: July 25, 1995 6:30 PM
Place: Reflectone Building (See Internet SIG for directions

Internet SIG

The next Internet SIG meeting will be Tuesday, June 6th, 1995, Time: 6-8pm at Reflectone Corp. Training Center. This SIG will be the last meeting (for a while) emphasizing working with a shell account, as opposed to SLIP or PPP. A printed summary highlighting what has been covered will be available.

The Internet SIG meetings will be the first Tuesday of the month to avoid conflict with the OS/2 SIG, however there will not be a meeting on Tuesday, July 4. Call Charles for additional info at (813) 968-1207.

Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

Charles Howe -HOWE.COSTECH@INTNET.NET
Michael Hodges

OS/2 SIG

OS/2 SIG, Next meeting: will be: May 23rd, 1995 at 5:45 p.m. Location: IBM Lakepointe One Bldg., Room 436 BE SURE TO SIGN IN. SIG Leader will be John Meroth, for this meeting, he will discuss how to take advantage of OS/2 & mailreaders.

Contact: John Lucas
JKLUCAS@MAILSERV.MOFFITT.USF.EDU)
OR
John Meroth at (813) 831-7878 anytime except 6-8pm.

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

Welcome New Members!

Laszlo B. Apathy
Chappel Engineering
Pauline Garcia
David Garcia
Bob Johnson
David Lomax
Patricia Van Horn
Richard Van Horn

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

Software Review



"Multimedia Magic CD" by GoldDisk

Review by: Nicholas Klak, Tampa P.C. Users Group

Multi Media Magic C.D. is a collection of five programs offered to the public. Each program on the disk is a part of one program. Let me point out that these are working programs and not "cripples." The programs are not complete but they do work. The disk sells for $39.99. at Comp USA. The combined cost of the programs they represent would be about $500.00.

Installation of the CD is from the program manager in Windows. A program group will be set up that contains all the icons, and there are lots of them. Minimum equipment necessary to run the programs consists of any 386 with windows, four megabytes of ram, three megabytes of hard disk space, a CD windows compatible drive, VGA monitor and a Windows compatible sound card. The sound card is only absolutely necessary for one program.

Animation Works: This program lets you experiment with the art of moving objects. You can be a movie creator! The directions are straight forward and with some practice it is possible to see a bird, or other object you select, fly across the screen with their wings flapping. The tutorial is well worth your time and repetition of the tutorial is recommended. Creating a movie is made easier by offering several "paths" for the object to travel. This path is followed by the object at up to forty frames per page. Each object is chosen from a group entitled "actors", hence the directions instruct you in "movie making". Sound can be added to each scene through imported wave or midi files. New actors can be created if you possess the talent and patience.

Halo Desktop Imager: This program was the winner of a P.C. Magazine editors award. It is the best image control program in its field. It allows you to manipulate the tone, brightness and intensity of a picture with handy slide bars. Almost all formats are supported for import. TIFF, GIF, PCX and on and on. They can be printed on any printer windows supports. My favorite option is to take an imported picture file and size it to the page. No hassle. You get a full page print out. Another great feature is the poster option. Any picture can be made into a very large poster. After printing just join the pages together on the back and a beautiful poster has been created. The scan in portion of the program has been left out. The printing feature alone is worth the price of the CD.

AudioDirector: This is a digital sound editing application which allows you to use sounds which have been recorded. Both eight bit and sixteen bit sounds in monophonic and stereophonic form can be imported. With a microphone you can record your own sound and include them in your sound files. The editing process shows a screen with spiked vertical lines above and below a horizontal line. These spikes lines represent sounds. The program allows you to copy the spiked lines repeatedly and by doing so you can create a sound loop. Sounds can also be converted from one format to another, a handy thing for importing sounds to other programs.

AddImpact: This program deals with object linking and embedding, (OEL). Pronounce this "Oh-Lay". The tutorial and booklet information on this was concise and informative. The short of it is that you can add sound and /or graphics to another document. This is not quick or easy. Patience will, however, lead to success. Lots of icons, called actors, were supplied to imbed and animate. The editing was limited because this was not the entire program.

ScreenCraze: This is a collection of programs to spice up your windows screens. You might also say, clutter up your screens. Dozens of screen savers are provided. Both sound and moving graphics are included in many of the screen savers. These can also be added to your After Dark menu or they are accessible through an icon on the bottom of your screen. A familiar menu setup is provided for duration of time until it begins and which ones to select for use. I chose random selection, to test them out. Some are quite clever, such as a telephone which rings and answers itself. Wall paper for windows is also available. It is optional. I was not ready for any more wallpaper but here are some. The use and frequency of ScreenCraze is optional. One very interesting option is the establishment of one or two passwords. Two can be enabled at the same time. A network manager might have access to all the computers with one and a personal password would be available to privatize your computer from your fellow workers.

Multimedia Magic CD at thirty nine dollars is a super buy. Any one of the programs was worth the price.
Gold Disk, 2250 Scott Blvd., Bldg. 14, Santa Clara, California 95054-3107 (408)982-0200

We Cannot hope to build
a better world
without improving the individual
toward this end,
each of us must work
toward his own highest development
accepting...his share
of responsibility
in the general life of humanity.

Marie Curie

Dates & Times.....*continued from page 1*

In most software applications, the computer thinks time started at the turn of the century. For the computer, day 1 was January 1, 1900. Day 2 was January 2, 1900 and so forth. The computer just keeps counting from the turn of the century to the date being considered. It counts actual calendar days which means it doesn't forget February 29th in leap years. It doesn't become baffled by the fact that some months have 30 days and some have 31. Why? Because it doesn't know months and years. It just keeps counting each day as one more day. So May 10th (our next meeting) is day number 34,829. (That's alot of days since the turn of the century.) The software converts that day number into a date format that we people types recognize.

The computer views time as a fraction of an a day. So to the computer 24 hours equals 1, 12 hours equals 0.5, 1 hour equals 0.041667 (1/24 to be exact). Again, the application converts these fractions to a time format that we understand. To the computer, May 10, 1995, 6 PM looks like 34829.75 (since 6 PM is three-fourths of the way through the day).

How can we apply these concepts to automate our time/date tracking problems? Let's go back to our examples.

Example 1: An employee leaves on October 28th for vacation and returns on November 3rd. How many days was the employee on vacation? October 28, 1995 is day 35,000. November 3, 1995 is day
35,006. So, 35,006 - 35,000 is 6. The employee was gone for 6 days. The software handles displaying the days as dates to you and me. But it sees the numbers to do the math.

Example 2: A client comes into the office at 11:30 AM and leaves at 12:45 PM. How do you keep track of the fractions of an hour to bill your client by the hour? To the computer, 11:30 AM looks like 0.4792 and 12:45 PM looks like 0.5313. The difference is 0.0521. So would you charge your client 0.0521 times your hourly rate? Your client would love you but you would go broke. Your client was in your office for 0.0521 of one day not one hour. So you would charge your client 0.0521 * 24 or 1.25 times your hourly rate. (All numbers have been rounded to 4 decimal places but most actually carry more decimal places. I didn't want this to start looking too crazy.)

Example 3: You worked on an important project from 10:15 PM to 6:25 AM the next day. How do you calculate the amount of time spent on the project? This one can get a little bit tricky because you crossed midnight. We need dates as well as times in most applications. So let's say this was right before the above mentioned employee went on vacation. You worked from 10:15 on October 27, 1995 (34999.9271) to 6:25 on October 28, 1995 (35,000.2674). The difference between the start time and the stop time is 0.3403 (of a day) times 24 (hours in a day) equals 8.1672 hours.

If you're like most people, you probably counted this on your fingers and toes alot faster than I explained it. But in most applications today, you don't have to go through all this. I just did it so you can understand what the computer is doing. This will make it alot easier to understand the results you get. For example, as I was typing the above examples, I toggled over to Excel and typed in 10/28/95 (or 06:25, etc.) and then formatted the cell to display either the date/time value or the number value behind the date/time. Excel (and many other spreadsheet and database applications) understand several popular date and time formats and will automatically convert those keystrokes to a date/time value for you. The only tricky part comes in understanding what the result means when you do some math with dates and times. If members are interested, I can give you some more complex examples in future issues. I hope this helps you understand some of the basic things you can do to track and calculate dates and times.

EDITOR POSITION AVAILABLE

The current editor of the Bits of Blue has given notice that she will not be able to continue publishing the newsletter effective January 1, 1996.

The requirements for this position are:

- Commitment of approx 3 or 4 full days work a month (can be evenings and weekends - that's when she usually does it!)
- Knowledge of PageMaker or another suitable desktop publishing application, Corel Draw or similar drawing and graphics program, database management software.
- Willing to learn how to prepare bulk mail and take the sorted newsletters to the airport postoffice each month.
- Computer equipment with enough power to handle the page layout of a 12 to 16 page newsletter with graphics and a modem to access the Bits of Blue Bulletin Board and the APCUG bulletin board for articles.

Please contact the current editor, Marylee Bruneau for further details at 985-3338.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL.

AND

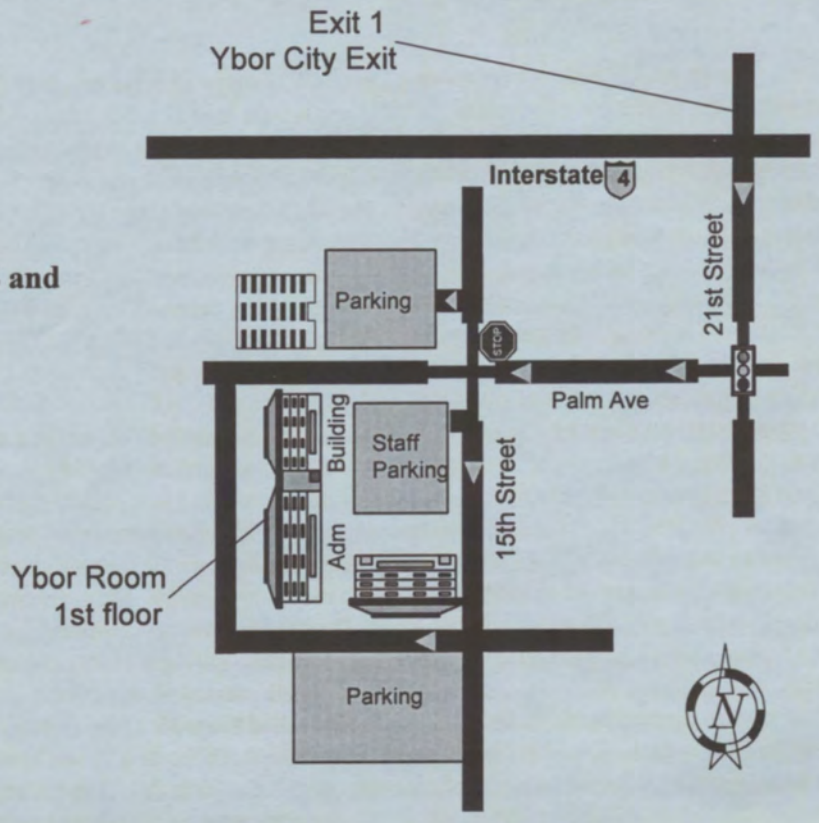
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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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$35 Family
$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

May 10th Agenda:

BARGAIN TABLE;
DEMO OF BBS; CELLER DOOR;
ATTACHING FILES TO MESSAGES and much more...



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REMINDER

THIS MONTHS MEETING WILL BE IN THE
THEATRE BUILDING
ON THE NORTH SIDE OF PALM AVE.,
(Directly North of our usual meeting site)

9601
[redacted]



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 6 June, 1995

MEETING

DATE: June 14th, 1995
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus - Ybor Room
(See map on last page.)

This Months Agenda presentations by:

LANDMARK
RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

WINProbe3 -
"The #1 rated troubleshooter toolbox for windows

and

MagnaRAM for Windows -
"Get up to 2, 3 even 4 times more available Windows Memory"

Next Month's presentation by:
KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE
Entertainment and Educational Software

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Member

Microsoft Word Viewer version 6.0 for Windows



Microsoft has released Microsoft Word Viewer, a small application that enables users who do not own Microsoft Word for Windows, to view and print Word documents exactly as they appear in Word. Word Viewer gives users the flexibility to view page layout, zoom, outline, headers/footers, footnotes, and annotations. Word Viewer allows you to read and print Word documents, but it does not allow you to edit them, although you can copy information from the document and activate OLE objects. Thanks to Word Viewer, people who own any version of Microsoft Word for Windows, or Word for the Macintosh versions 4.0 and later, can now share their documents with users who do not own Microsoft Word. Compressed, Word Viewer fits onto one 3.5" 1.44 MB floppy disk. We encourage users to copy Word Viewer freely and distribute it to friends and co-workers along with documents they have created in Word format.

Use Word Viewer to view Word documents posted on the Internet

This product also allows users who wish to post richly formatted Word documents on the Internet to share such documents with people who might not own Microsoft Word. In order to use this product for viewing Word documents on the Internet, you must configure your Internet browsing tool to recognize Word Viewer as a helper application. Please consult the owner's manual of your browsing software in order to learn how to achieve this. Documents with the suffix ".doc" will be recognized by Word Viewer as Word files.

Microsoft Word Viewer is Freeware!

This product is "freeware". Users are encouraged to copy and distribute Word Viewer to friends and co-workers or post it onto public electronic bulletin boards. This product is available on the Tampa PC Users Group BBS.

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII text file, Microsoft Write or Microsoft Word to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or upload to the BBS.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.



SECRETARY'S REPORT

TPCUG MEETING 5/10/95, 6 PM
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

Many of our members and visitors enjoyed the TPCUG Bargain Table. The efforts of the donors and donees (purchasers) are much appreciated by all the members The President thanked all for contributions of items and contributions from your purchases/double barreled bargains. He stated that we might do the TPCUG BARGAIN TABLE again in December 1995.

After considerable and adequate time, President Bruneau called the meeting to order. Comments and information was given regarding SIG, vendors and miscellaneous. Several comment and questions were raised and answered. Harvey asked for comments from those who have downloaded BITS OF BLUE. (FYI: You must have Windows and download Adobe Acrobat Reader to download the BITS OF BLUE. The April issue contained 300 KB. First, you download the reader then use it to download the BITS OF BLUE Newsletter.)

The JUNE MEETING TPCUG will be back at our regular meeting place, the HCC Auditorium - Ybor Room.

SIGS

MICROSOFT ACCESS: June 15 (3rd Thursday), 1995, 6 PM, promptly, at 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast corner of Mapledale and Northdale Boulevards. One or two may be squeezed in due to limited seating. Be there at door at 6 PM, a few minutes before 6 PM is better. A Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building. Sign up early. Use Bulletin Board. Meeting is the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Instructors and SIG leaders are superb!

OS/2: {Always 4th Tuesday of Month) Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/sign-up. (Read the SIG information page.)

INTERNET: June 6, 1995, 6 PM Contact Charles Howe. Seats are available. You can use BBS to sign-up. Promptness is required because security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of the street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone Building on left. You must enter north end of the building and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock door and escort us to the meeting room. The next, and thereafter, SIG Internet meeting will be the first Tuesday of the Month.

See **Minutes** ....*Continued on page 3*

Minutes....*Continued from page 2*

President Bruneau wants your opinion. If you would like to have a particular SIG, let him know your interest. He reads BBS regularly. Send him a message.

The Bulletin Board is easy to use. You cannot mess it up. Try it whether member or non-member of TPCUG. Many have not tried to use the Bulletin Board. Use It, you can't hurt it. Check out the HUMOR Board, also while you are on.

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE: Connie Kincaid has the two day SIGs regarding basics and BBS:
Hardware, June 27, 1995, 6:30 PM.
Software, July 25, 1995 6:30 PM.
Place: Reflectone Building. See SIG Internet above for directions, security, etc.
Check with Connie for reservations. If it is filled, ask her about a repeat

DESKTOP SIG: is in the planning stage for August.

EACH ONE SIGN ONE goal in 1995. Harvey reminded us that the goal is for every member to bring at least one new member. Just ask those whom you casually meet in places of business. If someone asks you a question while you are browsing the computer store, acquaint them with the benefits of TPCUG. What did your neighbor say when you invited them? You didn't Well bring them next time on June 14, 1955. Bring a "whole"" carload; they will thank you for being a good neighbor.

Use of the Bulletin Board and a demonstration of Adobe Acrobat was presented. A Q & A session was lively and helpful, even for those of us who did not ask questions? We learned also.

Kevin Sheridan, SYSOP, showed a tree of files on the RBBS. He noted the new EXPRESS mail file. Over 144 files related to messages are available. He accessed the RBBS so that we could follow the steps on the overhead screen as he walked through the prompts and responses. Mail door is working perfectly but 255 lines continued to lock up the system. Kevin installed SILVER EXPRESS to solve the problem so that messages of 255 or more can be handled.

Some comments on this and that were given. The RBBS Menu has a different color combination than previously. Al Poole, Asst. SYSOP, has done an excellent job on the system. Kevin walked through BULLETINS Menu. We watched Bulletins retrieval. Files have been categorized matter. PDF extensions are ADOBE ACROBAT files. You can change your color setting by using Utilities Menu on the RBBS (Bulletin Board main menu). Kevin recommended that we use Z-MODEM Protocol for download. Upload will ask you for that information each time. You can use numbers rather than names of "doors"", i. e., TQM door is the 1st. Type in the number of mail conference to turn on that conference. RIPTERM.4 is RIPTERM communication program to download; go to files. RIPTERM is basically a form of graphics and can use a mouse. All uploads on RBBS are scanned for virus before accepting upload. "Express System" explains the RBBS and how it works. When TQM or EXPRESS are packing main, your screen may look as if nothing is happening but the RBBS is packing the mail. Just wait it out. Downloading messages shows a spinning propeller as it packages messages. Message numbers in series should be separated by a comma or a space in between. Sending a message to (ALL) exposes the messages or questions to everyone. The phone numbers to the Bits of Blue BBS are (813) 239-3704 and (813) 237-4997. In uploading, give one filename and short description, then go into upload. Harvey has a directory called UPLOAD. He enters files there for upload. (Me too, I'll bet you do or will).



Harvey demonstrated ADOBE ACR0BAT ACROREADER 2.0. He demonstrated the download of BITS OF BLUE. He installed categories in a new left hand column. He inserted Quick Tabs. Harvey is making BITS OF BLUE available to TAMPA BAY ONLINE. You can click on anything that shows in blue text and then ZOOM ADOBE ACROBAT ACROREADER will download other information, i. e., New York Times when you are in Internet.

Winners of the door prize OS/2 WARP:
Ever hear of "COALS TO NEWCASTLE" John Lucas OS/2 WARP SIG Instructor won the software. Congratulations, John!

President Bruneau reminded all to return across the street to the HCC Administrative Auditorium for meeting on June 14, 1996, 6 PM. Who knows what great door prizes await TPCUG members. Only members are eligible for opportunities of receiving door prizes. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. **Each one sign one**. Enjoy the BBS.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Local Vendor

This months presentation will be by a vendor from our own back yard. Landmark Research International Corporation, located in Clearwater, is well known for it's Windows troubleshooting software, **WinProbe**. However they have many other products including **DataSafe** which allows you to crashproof Windows, **Uninstall-it** , a tool to uninstall Windows apps, and now **MagnaRAM**, the ultimate tool which provides more speed, memory and allows you to run larger programs within Windows. Come to the meeting for this exciting presentation and a chance to go home with some of these fine products.

What a bargain!

I want to thank those of you that contributed to the successful Bargain Table sale during the last meeting. The contributions came in multiple forms. First were those individuals and companies who donated all the items that were available. Then there were the people who I volunteered on the spot to manage the tables. Of course one of the most important were those of you who gave your hard earn cash for items. Finally, to those many volunteers that help load/unload the items from my truck.

Based on the success, we are planning on having the next Bargain Table around year end. Individuals or businesses that have items to donate to the TPCUG should contact me at 962-2254 ext. 715, or any board member to arrange for pick-up. A receipt for IRS will be provided.

Performing Arts building

Many of you expressed your opinions about our temporary meeting site. I am glad to say that all were positive. If enough of you like the HCC Performing Art room, we may look at renting it for 1996 meetings.

Mid Year

Well we are entering the mid-way point of 1995. The outstanding positives are the new SIGs which have been added. Much of that credit goes to those individuals who have volunteered their time, equipment and facilities to promote these groups. The distribution of the newsletter in electronic format via Adobe Acrobat is also a plus. However, there are still some issues that need attention. Many of you have successfully reach your goal of bringing in one at least one new membership for 1995. Some of you have even brought in more than one new member. Despite the efforts our membership is slowly going backwards. This means more work needs to be done. Specifically, we need to make our presence known in Tampa. This can happen via word of mouth, flyers, TPCUG business cards, newspapers and assorted other methods. While some of these items are being done now there is no consistency in the process nor a dedicated individual responsible for this cause. Are you the one that can get this important process organized. If you are call me at 962-2554, ext. 715.

Several of you have suggested the creation of a generic TPCUG business card which would contain pertinent information about TPCUG and could be passed out by everyone. This is great idea which we will implement as soon as possible.

Reminder

A reminder that we are looking for a newsletter editor for 1996. The individual will get Pagemaker 5.0, Corel 5.0 and Adobe Acrobat. These software products are currently in use to generate the newsletter. The individual should have MS Windows, a 486 and a laser printer. The sooner we can find someone the sooner we can begin the transition and training (if needed). Contact Marylee at 985-3338 for additional information.

Harvey Bruneau,
President

News Briefs:

Intel drops prices

The **sub-$2,000, 100-MHz Pentium PC** could become a reality by year's end. In another major pricing action, chip maker Intel Corp. last week dropped prices on its Pentium chips byup to 31%. The biggest reduction was on the midrange 90-MHz chip, which will cost between $377 and $546. Intel also rolled back prices on its recently announced top-of-the-line 120-MHz Pentium chip by 21%. The cuts, which are part of Intel's regular quarterly pricing announcements, are expected to further accelerate the Pentium migration. Some analysts now say that the cutover to the new processor could be completed as early as the third quarter of this year.

Packard Bell at the top

Consumer market leader **Packard Bell Electronics, Inc.** has zoomed to the top of the U.S. market. According to preliminary data from market research firm International Data Corp., Packard Bell shipped an estimated 591,000 units in the first quarter of this year, up 37% from the previous year. Meanwhile, **Compaq Computer Corp.**, which finished last year as the king of the desktop market, was second last quarter with 530,000 units . Finishing third for the quarter was **Apple Computer, Inc.** with 477,000 units. Former market leader **IBM** came in fourth with 410,000 units.

Q: What is a Web Page?

A: It is an electronic billboard running on a machine directly connected to the Internet. Web pages contain information, advertising, and pointers to other pages (known as "links"). Unlike many other Internet services, Web pages can contain graphics and are easy to navigate.

(reprinted from User Group Connection 5/95)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

1) **Microsoft BOB** - 8 essential hosehold programs, calendar, letter writer, checkbook, and more...
2) **Aldus Persuasion** - Presentation Graphic Software
3) **Quicken for DOS,** (Ver. 8)
4) **3-D Home Architect** - Broderbund - Home designs and floor planning.
5) **Adobe -Type on Call-** 2 free fonts, call to buy more fast from Adobe
6) **WindowWasher** - the Ultimate Optimizer for Windows with Intelligent Data Compression
7) **OnFile** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks"
8) **XtraDrive Lite** - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
9) **Your Deck** - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
10) **Space Age** - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing
11) **Jump*Start KINDERGARTEN** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6)
12) **Kid's ENCYCLOPEDIA** - The Random House (ages 7-12)
13) **RUSA** - Interactive Art Tour - St. Petersburg, Russia CDRom.
14) **DO-OVER!** - Change the look of Windows with a bonus utility to speed task switching.
15) **SPACE ADVENTURE**- Knowledge Adventure up-to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
16) **AVIATION ADVENTURE** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
17) **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - Interactive Cartoon CDRom (ages 3 and up)
18) **Harvard for Windows ChartXL** - Compelling charts from critical data from Software Publishing Co.
19) **Harvard for Windows Montage** - Easy way to organize your graphics from Software Publishing Co.
20) **Delrina Communications Suite 2.1** - WinCommPro and WinFax Pro
21) **DataSafe** - Crashproofs Windows
22) **Uninstall-it** - Safely uninstalls any Windows or DOS application
23) **Personal Attorney** - helps you prepare the 16 most needed legal documents.
24) **Small Business Attorney** - includes over 70 contracts and documents for small business.
25) **Managing your Money Plus** - Finance package, check book and more.
26) **Managing your Money Windows** - Finance Package
27) **Managing your Money DOS** - Financial Package

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

Software Review

Fonts For You, 6000 Fonts

by Fantazia Concepts, Inc.

Review By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

What It Is: *Fonts For You* is a collection of 6000 fonts on CD-ROM. It comes complete with a manual includes, but the bulk of which provides samples of all the fonts on the CD-ROM. The sub-title is a bit misleading in that the CD-ROM does not contain 6000 *different* fonts. While it does contain 6000 fonts, in reality it provides only 2500 *different* fonts which are in 3 different formats: All 2500 in each of TrueType and Adobe Type Manager (ATM) Type 1 formats, and 1000 fonts taken from the 2500 that have been created in Geoworks format. I use the term "only" reservedly because 2500 fonts is a lot of fonts.

It should also be noted that the term 'font' is used here in its classic sense. Some of us install only the regular (or basic) font of any given typeface family on our computers and rely on Windows or other sytems/applications to simulate bold, italic and other versions of the font using the regular font as the foundation, rather than take up disk space with those fonts. *Fonts For You* provides at least 2 variations of almost all of its regular fonts, excluding only dingbats and some of the special fonts, and has several variations of most of the regular fonts, including one or more of condensed, extended, italic, lefty (italics to the left), cracked, hollow, mangled, spiked, spotted, striped, and wavey. The fonts in TrueType and Type 1 formats are virtually identical, while the 1000 fonts created in Geoworks format vary slightly due to the limited complexity Geoworks can support in its fonts.

I have been used to common names for basic fonts and its file, with shred-outs of that name for all variations of the basic font; Arial for example, with bold (B), bold italic (BI), italic (I), condensed (C), etc., for the variations. That identification system works fine with a limited number of fonts, although there is often no correlation between the font name and the filename. However, that system becomes a nightmare when you are dealing with 2500 fonts. Consequently, Fantazia Concepts came up with a system that provides ready correlation between font name and filename, and relatively easy management of the fonts. The fonts are segregated into 24 style categories, with some of the categories further subdivided for organizational purposes. The 24 categories are: Dingbats, basic, border, contour, cracked, digital, gothic, handwritten, holey, hollow, jazzy, mangled, outline, Roman, script, shadow, spiked, spotted, striped, unique, wacky, warped, wavey, and 3D. As is evident in this list of categories, this package just about covers the waterfront.

See **Fonts....***Continued on Page 6*

Fonts... *Continued from Page 5*

This organization is reflected both in the names of the fonts and in the filenames. The font name for the Roman font in the samples below is Roman 16 Italic. The filename for the font is R16I, a direct correlation. It takes a bit of adjustment to get used to the name system, but when one learns the system and the categorization it is easy to use and works well. Most of the fonts include an extended character set, but do not including some of the special fonts do not have a complete keyboard set; border fonts, for example, and some of the outline fonts. All of the fonts I have tried seem to be of good quality and print out well. Here is a sampling of some of them at 16 points:

BORDER FONT SAMPLE
CRACKED FONT SAMPLE
Handwritten Font Sample
Holey Font Sample
Hollow Font Sample
Jazzy Font Sample
Mangled Font Sample
OUTLINE FONT SAMPLE
Roman Font Sample
Script Font Sample
Spiked Font Sample
Spotted Font Sample
Striped Font Sample
UNIQUE FONT SAMPLE
Wacky Font Sample
Warped Font Sample
Wavey Font Sample
3D Font Sample
SHADOW FONT SAMPLE

Installation is very simple — no installation is required. A program is included on the CD-ROM for viewing the fonts and copying them to your hard drive (or any other drive desired), but no provisions are made for installing the fonts directly into Windows. At present this *fontmenu* program is a DOS program which may be ran in a DOS or a DOS window in Windows. In fact, one may install and use the fonts in Windows without copying them from the CD-ROM. While this would save a lot of disk space, it doesn't seem practical since that would mean dedicating a CD-ROM drive to supporting fonts in Windows. One may use the program provided to select and copy font files from the CD-ROM to any directory on your hard drive; alternatively, Windows File Manager (or any other file management program or the DOS copy command) can be used to copy the files since viewing and selection of the files may be done using the manual provided. Fonts are installed in Windows through the Fonts icon of Windows Control Panel. A Windows based *fontmenu* program is currently being developed and will be provided to all registered holders of *Fonts For You* when it becomes available.

Documentation: The manual includes several pages describing how to view, select and copy the fonts using the *Fontmenu* program provided on the CD-ROM. It also provides guidance on how to install the Type 1 fonts in Adobe's ATM and TrueType fonts in Windows, all of which is simple and straight forward. No guidance is provided, however, on installing fonts in Geoworks; presumably, Geoworks users are familiar with font installation or already have adequate documentation. Text files on the CD-ROM also describe in a little more detail how to use the *Fonts For You* program. The remainder of the manual, some 291 pages, shows a sample of each of the 2500 fonts. They also describe some of the other offerings of Fantazia Concepts. The most important instructional files have been translated into a number of other languages, including German, Japanese and Italian, and are included on the CD-ROM.

The registration form and a form to register any problems with any of the fonts are also on the CD-ROM as text files. These may be mailed or faxed to Fantazia. Fantazia Concepts report that all of the fonts have been tried and tested in a variety of programs and on different computers. Fantazia will attempt to solve any font problem encountered, recognizing that there is an infinite variety of programs and circumstances in which these fonts might be used.

Requirements: The manual provides no requirements statement. However, an implicit requirement is a machine capable of running Geoworks or Windows. This is only partly correct, however, since there are DOS programs capable of using TrueType fonts, and 3rd party software is available which allows us of the fonts in DOS programs. ATM is also available for use with DOS and DOS programs. Hence, there are no real requirements beyond a computer that is IBM compatible and a CD-ROM drive.

Costs: This font package is not yet available in local software stores. Fantazia Concepts has established a list price of $89.99. For a limited, but unspecified time the font package may be ordered directly from Fantazia Concepts for $49.99.

My View: This is a very nice package of fonts — it includes a large and very good collection of fonts. It provides a wide variety of basic fonts, along with many variations, plus more specialty/display fonts than most home-PC users would ever need. Those in the advertising business, or producers of flyers and other eye-catching publications will find great utility with this font package. As a home-PC user, however, I would like to see more in the way of fill variety suitable for various special occasions, like national and religious holidays, birthdays, weddings, etc.

For more information contact Fantasia Concepts at:
Fantazia Concepts, Inc., 34544 Lakeshore Blvd., Eastlake, OH 44095 Phone: 1-800-951-0877, or 1-216-951-5666
Fax: 1-216-951-9241

Software Review

"PAGE MAGIC"



Review by: Frank Kinsinger, Tampa PC Users Group

Page Magic has been an extremely versatile desktop publisher to work with. It is easy to learn and flexible in its design. I have some experience on both high end window products and low end DOS-BASED products. I found Page Magic to be a nice compromise between the two.

This Windows based program is great for the smaller business or for the casual user. System requirements are within reason for this type of desktop publisher. Page Magic listed requirements are a minimum of 2 megabytes of RAM (4MB Recommended); IBM PC or Compatible 286 or Higher Processor (386 Recommended); Hard Disk Space, 4 Megabytes minimum and 11MB maximum; Microsoft Windows 3.1; Any Monitor supported by Windows (except CGA); Mouse or other pointing device supported by Windows; Any Printer supported by Windows.

Installation is standard, one may proceed without any hitches. The setup program steps you through the installation and informs you of the progress. The "disk sequence checker" ensures that the correct disk is loaded before copying the data to the hard drive. For those who wish to keep DOS directories and subdirectories grouped, it is possible to change the default directory to any directory, or subdirectory, in order to control the system configuration during installation. The Page Magic installation states that the program SHARE.EXE is required to be running while using Page Magic. SHARE.EXE (DOS) is normally associated with network systems but is required for Page Magic. The install program will ask if you wish the install program to add SHARE.EXE to the autoexec.bat or if you wish to add the statement manually.

I loaded the Page Magic software on a 486DX2-50 with 8 megabytes of memory running DOS 6.2. I run Windows 3.11 on a non-network system with an SVGA monitor.

Page Magic has provided several useful features.

Page Magic is fully WYSIWYG. That is, What You See on screen Is What You Get when you print your document.

Page Magic also provides a word-processing feature that allows you to enter, edit and check text for spelling mistakes. You may find meanings for selected words. You may also import text from selected word processors or ASCII text files. Page Magic has formats for Microsoft Works, Word for Windows,WordStar, and others. However, Page Magic supplied the Word Perfect formats for versions 4.0 and 5.0 and none for version for 6.0. When using the word processor feature with Word Perfect 6.0, it becomes necessary to save the text as an earlier version. This causes a chance of losing some of the formatting commands incorporated in the latest versions of Word Perfect. I am not familiar with word processors other than Word Perfect so I cannot judge how the other software is affected by the text features.

In Page Magic documents, you can include pictures and graphics by: (1) drawing them with Page Magic's own drawing tools (2) importing them from any of the art applications supported by Page Magic or (3) object linking and embedding them from other Windows applications. Once a picture is put into a frame, you can add labels, boxes, lines, arrows, and so on.

The Page Magic software came with a full operations manual. A smaller, quick start book is for those who really hate to read the manuals, was also included. The quick start is complete enough to load the software. It explains all the button bar icons, and it allows a new user with some desktop publishing to start building a document. I feel that the manual provided with the software is sufficient to learn and enjoy using the software. I do not feel that this software requires an audio or video tape tutor to learn how to use it.

The manual provides a toll call number for technical support and help. The manual does not address any charges, or lack of charges, for the support assistance. At this writing, I had no need to call for support, so I cannot comment on the quality of the service; installation was easy!

Product retails for $49.99.
For more details contact:
NEBS, 500 Main Street, Groton, MA 01471

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Software Review

PerForm for Windows



Review by William F. LaMartin,
Tampa PC Users Group

Delrina, makers of *WinFax Pro*, produces at least three programs to assist in dealing with forms, both paper and electronic. They are, in descending order of complication, *FormFlow*, *PerForm Pro*, and *PerForm*. *PerForm Pro* is obviously a slightly more powerful version of *PerForm*, but *FormFlow* is in a different league, intended for network situations, where the forms travel around an office electronically. At each stop individuals, depending on their access level, are allowed (or required) to provide input to certain fields of the form. All of this is easily transmitted electronically anywhere in the world. In theory no one need write anything on a piece of real paper. And in theory a form never gets lost on someone's desk.

PerForm, the subject of this review, has a considerably more modest goal: To allow the individual or small business to either create blank forms to be printed out and filled in by hand or to create electronic forms with fields to be filled in on the computer. In the latter instance, the form could still be printed on paper, but additionally, and this would make **Delrina** happy, using *WinFax Pro* it could be faxed from the computer to the intended recipient at a distant location.

In my opinion, it is this ability to fax this electronic form that is the real use of this program. For I could certainly use my word processor to create blank forms to be printed out and filled in by hand. And using PerForm to electronically store the information I type into the form's fields on the computer could just as well be accomplished by my database program. Indeed PerForm operating in the electronically fillable mode is really just a specialized database with each copy of a form you fill being another record of the database.

I also know that I can fax from both my word processor and database, and additionally with a bit of work I could create a database report that could be printed to *WinFax* or some other faxing program and would look a lot like the form I created in *PerForm*. *PerForm*, however, makes all this a good bit easier—and cheaper. I found *PerForm* locally at prices from $69 to $89.

So how do you create a form in *PerForm*? Since it is a well designed Windows program, you simply drag and drop the text, fields, tables, and graphics you choose where ever you want them on the blank form with which you started. And every object on the form is easily modified by choosing the modification you desire from the tool bar. For example, given a fillable field on the form you may specify the font to be used, the size of the field, its margins, whether it is opaque or transparent, type of border, etc. Additionally you may perform calculations in a field; I counted 52 different ones available from the following categories: mathematical, statistical, financial, date/time, database, table, and one logical one, the if....then....else statement.

PerForm comes with about 40 predefined forms; Invoice, Purchase Order, Bill of Lading, etc. You can use these, modify them to suit your needs, or make your own from scratch. I chose to make a purchase order form for my business using their purchase order form as a guide, but making mine from scratch so that I could learn as much about the program as possible. Like any other program, there are methods that after you learn them make things go much faster. For example, if your form will have several fields that are going to be the same size and have the same properties, then after creating one field, simply duplicate it, say, 10 times by entering 10 in the duplicate dialog box.

After getting my Purchase Order form like I wanted it, I decided to tackle the ultimate in forms. The much maligned 1040 Federal Tax Form. I wasn't going to try to recreate it, simply use my flat bed scanner to scan it in actual size and then bring it into PerForm as a graphic object and then create the appropriate fields at the positions where information is to be entered. Well, I couldn't find a blank 1040 around the house, but I did come up with a blank 1120 corporate tax form, did the above on it and was quite pleased with the results. If you are very careful to scan it full size, insert in full size into PerForm, then place the fields carefully on the scanned background 1120 form, you can even print out only the fillable fields without the background scan onto a blank 1120 form that you have put into your printer, and it will look just like you typed everything in on the official form (of course, everything would look correct if you simply printed out the form you created including the scanned image onto a blank sheet of paper, but that is easy).

The next time I place an order to the industrial supply house I sometimes use, instead of calling in my order, I think I will fax it from my computer to them the night before using my newly created Purchase Order. However, I am pretty sure that I will not be faxing in my tax return next year; I will, though, give some thought to filling out the form electronically on the scanned form's image and then printing the data to the official form. Ideally **Delrina** would provide tax forms that could be downloaded free from their BBS to be used with *PerForm*, but I guess that is why other companies produce tax programs.

Unlike a word processor, not everyone with a computer will need a form producing program. So, after getting this far in the review if you haven't yet come up with a concrete application for this program, then it is probably not for you. But if you have, then I am sure *PerForm* will not let you down.

Delrina Corporation, 6320 San Ignacio Avenue, San Jose, California 95119-1209

Software Review

Elastic Reality

Software to transform the world!



Reviewed by: Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

So, you've got a deep passion for special effects. Maybe it goes back to your childhood when you sat in a theater, popcorn forgotten, horrified by a monster climbing out of a flying saucer. Although you cheer and scream with the rest of the crowd, simple awe and terror aren't enough for you. From the start, you've demanded to know, "How do they do that?" For a select few, that curiosity leads to a career in the business. **Many** *Elastic Reality* users create special effects (or *"FX"*) for TV, film, advertising, or commercial design.

You don't need to be a professional, however. With a 386 or better PC, running Microsoft Windows, even the casual hobbyist can create some of the coolest,eye-bulging special effects. Whether you're a weekend dabbler or the industry's senior image wizard, with *Elastic Reality* your world will never look the same.

Elastic Reality is the first 32-bit desktop WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) video transition program and probably the most advanced commercially available warping and morphing effects system in the world. It can also be used to create other types of visually-striking effects such as "break-aways" (where parts of the image detach and move in various directions), caricatures, page peels, twirls, and other types of effects where areas of an image are being stretched, shrunk, or broken apart. With a little practice and *Elastic Reality* you'll be able to create your first morph, warp, or transition within minutes and create morphs that rival the ones you see on TV and film in a matter of hours. In fact, you'll be working with the same software that created a lot of those very same special effects.

What is warping and morphing? Warping and morphing are simple concepts to understand and learn. The process of warping an image involves creating Bezier curve shapes that describe the starting or source shape and the ending or target shape, then linking (joining) them together to form a correspondence. These shapes describe areas or objects in an image. The correspondence between shapes describes the amount and direction that the image will be "pulled" or distorted. Its like your images are rubber sheets, having elasticity. These shapes allow you to push, pull, and restrict the movement of the image. The process of morphing is merging two warped images together. Normally when you bring two images together, you are mixing a percentage of one image with the other image. Morphing adds the step of warping each image so that the merging will make it seem that one image is transforming into another—the outlines in the image are aligned with each other.

There's lots more to *Elastic Reality* th an morphing, though. With *Elastic Reality* you can also make composites which are foreground images that appear in front of unusual backgrounds, such as placing the New York skyline in front of a Rocky Mountains backdrop or superimposing a picture of yourself standing next to President Clinton. You could be the next Forrest Gump! *Elastic Reality* can also help you create several kinds of animated images. For instance, you can provide two pictures that define the start and end of a motion sequence. *Elastic Reality* fills in the intermediate frames for smooth movement.

Computers have drastically altered the work of the FX artist. Effects that used to require lots of physical hardware and labor now occur in silicon chips at the speed of imagination. The advantage of using a computer for visual effects is that you have total control over an image. After all, to the computer, a picture is just a collection of pixels, individual dots or "picture elements" that correspond to data values in the computer's memory. The computer will happily move those pixels around, change their colors, or obliterate them. In the hands of an imaginative FX artist, computer power can make you wonder if you really saw what you think you saw.

The *Elastic Reality* package also includes *TransJammer*. This powerful tool automates much of the work that normally goes into digital video effects. With *TransJammer*, anybody, even beginning image wizards, can instantly create professional quality special effects. Just specify the pictures you want to transform and choose an effect. It's really easy to produce dazzling images and most of your popular file formats are supported such as TIFF - BMP - FLI - JPEG - GIF, etc.

The entire process is really very easy to learn with excellent on-line help throughout the entire program. The software installs as most all Windows based programs do by selecting **R**un.... from the **F**ile....menu and typing A:(or B)setup. The package also comes with two manuals; one Getting Started manual that is more of a hands-on introductory tutorial to the main features of *Elastic Reality* and another manual that breaks down each feature or topic into more detail. Whether you just want to play or make a career out of special effects what you can create with *Elastic Reality* is limited only by your imagination!

Elastic Reality. List price: $495. (I have seen mail order pricing at $369)Requires: 4MB RAM minimum, (8MB recommended), 6MB hard disk space, Microsoft Windows 3.1 or later; math coprocessor recommended. Elastic Reality Inc., Madison, Wisconsin; (608)273-6585.

Special Interest Groups Info

Microsoft Access SIG

The next sig meeting will be at 6:00 PM on June 15, 1995 at the Dun & Bradstreet Software office, located at 3903 Northdale Blvd., Suite 113E, (look for the burgundy awning for the entrance) Tampa. The door locks at 6:00 pm, however, we will have someone keeping an eye out for late arrivals. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

For more info call Mark Saunders at: 949-6936 or
MARKS@DBSOFTWARE.COM
Sergio Mendez at --799-6589 OR
Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Hardware & Software SIG

Connie Kincaid will lead the two day SIGs regarding computer basics and BBS,
Hardware: June 27, 1995, 6:30 PM,
Software: July 25, 1995 6:30 PM
Place: Reflectone Building (See Internet SIG for directions

Internet SIG

The Internet SIG meetings will be the first Tuesday of the month to avoid conflict with the OS/2 SIG, however there will not be a meeting on Tuesday, July 4. Call Charles for additional info at (813) 968-1207.

Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

Charles Howe -HOWE.COSTECH@INTNET.NET
Michael Hodges

OS/2 SIG

OS/2 SIG, Next meeting: will be: Tuesday, June 27th, 1995 at 5:45 p.m. Location: IBM Lakepointe One Bldg., Room 436 BE SURE TO SIGN IN. SIG Leader will be John Meroth, for this meeting, please contact him for further information on what will be covered. .

Contact: John Lucas
JKLUCAS@MAILSERV.MOFFITT.USF.EDU)
OR
John Meroth at (813) 831-7878 anytime except 6-8pm.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL.
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FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

Welcome New Members!

Michael Leiss
David Lomax

& Renewal Members!

Gary Ennis
Stephen Layton
Renate Marsh
Carol Robinson
James Robinson
Rene J. Salcedo
Edgardo Vila
Ronald Weinberg

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

Agenda for June 14 Meeting:

Presentation by

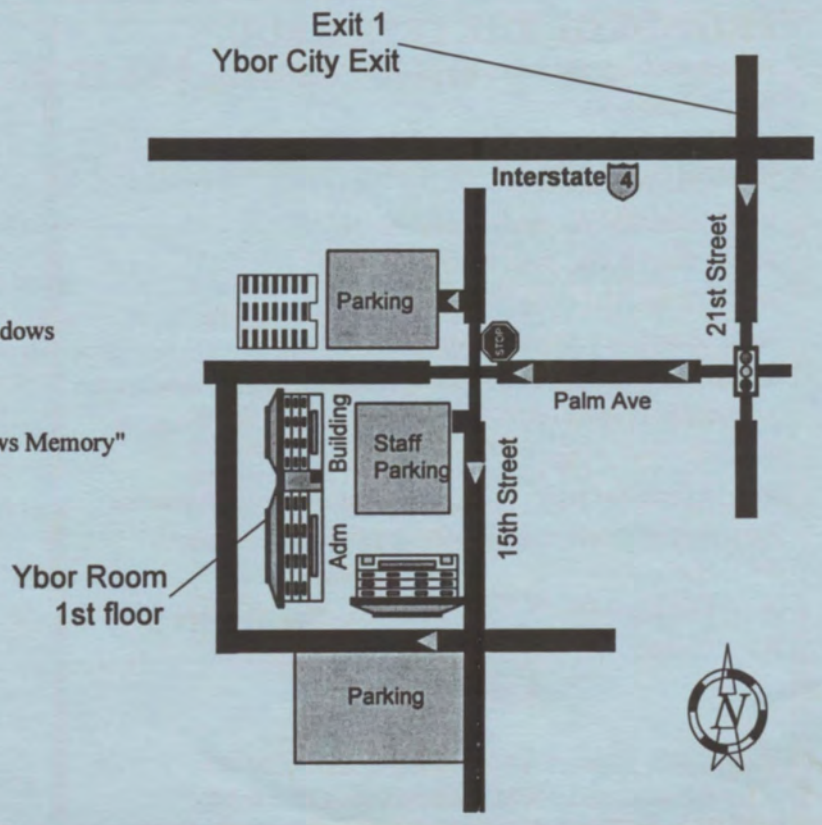
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RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

of the following products:

WINProbe3 -
"The #1 rated troubleshooter toolbox for windows

and

MagnaRAM for Windows -
"Get up to 2, 3 even 4 times more available Windows Memory"



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Edward Buzza
4426 Mohican Trail
Valrico, FL [redacted] 33594

Reminder Bring a Guest!
Your spouse, a neighbor, a friend or relative and sign up a new TPCUG member at the next meeting!



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 7 July, 1995

MEETING

DATE: July 12th, 1995
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus - Ybor Room
(See map on last page.)

Presentation by:

KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE

Education and Entertainment Software

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Member

PRODIGY by CEL connection:

By Steven Hess,
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



If you have wondered how the "information highway" has progressed, you have probably noticed the appearance of "cellular connection" devices, and cellular modems. Unless you have much patience, or a LOT of bucks, save your money for when the systems get more compatible.

My research started with the devices that allow connection to a CEL phone, that provides an RJ11 jack for your usual modem. I balked at paying for a device that would cost $250 and only connect to the CEL phone, so I went with what should be an effective combination. I purchased a Motorola UDS CELLect 14.4, +FAX for connecting to my Motorola MicroTac Flip phone. Since the both products were by Motorola, a company I believe produces world class communications gear, I figured I had the right hardware.

In reading the information, I discovered that the UDS modem had two jacks, one for a standard RJ11 phone line, and a second one for the CEL phone connecting cable supplied. Switching between the jacks is done with a AT command string. The book suggests not leaving the two connected while attempting communications.

My first attempt was to send a fax to a machine in the office. It worked fine, except that the phone HAS to be selected to the ANALOG cellular system. In other words, there is NO advantage to the Cellular One Digital Network, as it won't work. This is explained by the manual, for the modem as well. Setting the phone is easy enough if you have a Digital Network connection, by the setup menu. If you have an analog network phone, you have all you need.

Connecting to information services was more difficult. Using the standard phone line, CompuServe and GEnie were a snap, with no changes needed in the setup. Bits Of Blue was no problem either, with connections at 14.4 Reliable dialed up whenever the line was not busy. Prodigy, however, has some kind of a bug with this modem. I have contacted Motorola UDS Tech support, and even got to a "Level Three" Tech support on Prodigy,

PRODIGY by CEL.....*Continued on page 3*

*** * 1995 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES : William LaMartin 251-3817
TREASURER:Tom Cone 222-8925
MEMBER AT LARGE: Connie Kincaid 962-8799
SECRETARY: Bruce Register 968-8170
APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 222-8925

BBS -- (813)239-3704 Line 1 (813)237-4997 Line 2

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII text file, Microsoft Write or Microsoft Word to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or upload to the BBS.

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.



SECRETARY'S REPORT

TPCUG MEETING 6/14/95, 6 PM HCC Administration Building, Ybor room. Minutes and comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Bruneau (Harvey) called the meeting to order. He announced that the presentation by Landmark Research International Corporation of MagnaRAM and WINProbe had to be rescheduled. However, they did send several door prizes which were given away.

Miscellaneous comments and information were given. The new release of Windows, Win95, appears to be on schedule for it's August 24th release date. Costs are expected to be around $100 to upgrade from OS/2 or Windows. The standard non-upgrade version will cost approximately $200. While Win95 has not yet been released, Microsoft has already announced upgrades, code named Memphis and then Nashville to be released late 95 and 96.

Microsoft is expected to released MS Office95 and MS Office95 Pro shortly after Win95. Win95 will be required to run these new suites.

IBM purchased Lotus and Novell is rumored to be buying Borland.

A suggestion/comment: If considering the purchases of WIN95, one might consider installing from the CD version rather than taking the risk that one or more of the 23+ floppies might have a problem...Murphy's law is still active and well! SIGs. See elsewhere in the BITS OF BLUE.

PRESENTATION: Harvey demonstrated **"Windows 95**, Final Beta Release". A few comments about this and that. These comments do not come close to including all of the information or statements covered by Harvey during his presentation

Harvey used a 486/50Mhz notebook with 16Mb of RAM for his presentation. The program boots up in windows mode, not a DOS prompt. However, Win95 still has a DOS window to run your favorite DOS applications. Windows applications can be found by pressing the START button and then navigating through menus. WIN95 can be setup to install or run from a network server as well as a local PC. Win95 does not require AUTOEXEC.BAT or CONFIG.SYS. However, AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS is supported, if needed, for older applications and backward compatibility. Harvey stated that personal test run by him at his office demonstrated that Win95 (BETA) was faster than Windows for Workgroups 3.11 when running on similar configured Compaq 486/66 PCs.

Minimize, Maximize and Close buttons, are completely different than the current Windows products. Most of the Accessories have a new look in Win95. The familiar File Manager of Windows has been replaced by Win95's "Explorer".

Harvey stated that due to the higher level of graphic detail in Win95 he recommended a 17" monitor. WIN95 has shortcuts which reduce time and strokes. Use of the right mouse button has been implemented throughout Win95. Password security for access to the PC and networks is available in

WIN95. WIN95 includes an enormous amount of drivers for supporting and installing a full set of hardware components.

In WIN95, you install programs in the same manner as you do under Windows. Multitasking was fast and easy. During this presentation Harvey ran as many as twelve windows without locking up the system. The windows included three DOS sessions and Windows versions of Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Visio, Uninstaller 2.0 and many more applications. WIN95 "recycle bin" keeps deleted files until the user selects to empty or restore the files. WIN95 does so much so well. Harvey presented so much more information.

You really needed to be there to enjoy and see the detail of this Win95 presentation.

Screen saver, clocks etc., use up valuable Windows resources. When one deletes Windows icons, it does not delete any installed software or directories. You should use an uninstall to remove software from Windows and your hard drive.

MORE THIS AND THAT. (PCMCIA cards are nowadays known as the PC Cards. Just thought you might like to sound esoteric about computers.)

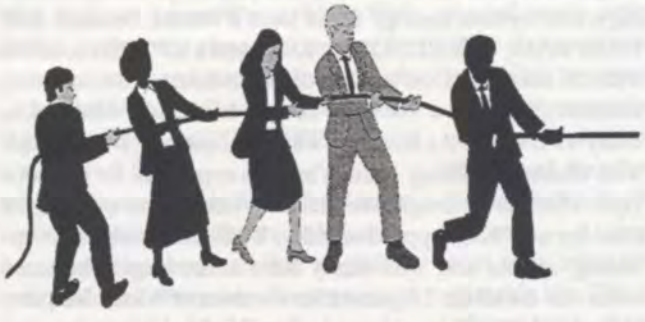
Regarding hardware, Harvey says "Be safe by buying standard products. Special promotional products are sometimes different from standard hardware and could cause some frustrations"..."Cheaper may not always be as good."

Many specific and personal computer problems/questions were answered during the break. If one has a problem, there is SOMEONE present who knows the solution. Just ask! The "helping spirit" is great at TPCUG. Expert assistance is available on the phone also. Just see that page in the BITS OF BLUE Newsletter.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

WINProbe — Richard Nabors
MagnaRAM — Richard Van Horn

Thanks to Landmark Research International Corporation of Clearwater for the prizes. We look forward to their future presentation. Thanks, fellows!



Lets ALL pull together
for
a successful TPCUG

PRODIGY by CEL*.....Continued from page 1*

with no communication possible. What was happening, was the mo would connect, (using Prodigy for Windows), and give me a Communications Error that was different than the usual screens. Nobody could help, so I just tried the Prodigy suggestions of turning off all error correction, and all MNP compression. I then tried turning off something that should make no difference, trellis coding at 9600 baud. For some reason, this allows me to connect as before, and nobody knows why. The trellis coding is used only from the modem connect level, and according to Prodigy Tech support, they would see my ID appear, then drop access. This makes little sense to me, however, adding B3 to the AT command string allows connection.

It is probably not a problem with the particular modem, as I replaced the unit on a return, and the second unit did the exact same thing.

Now that I can connect to Prodigy with the POTS line, I tried to connect with the Cellular. At first, I tried by editing the PRODIGY.INI file, and saving it as an alternate file name. Copying the various setup files saves having to use Prodigy's software to change between setups. I have now saved files for connecting at work, (dial 9), at home, via the CEL phone, and so on. Copying one of the files over the PRODIGY.INI file allows Prodigy to just dial an autologon with the new file.

I read in the book that the factory default Cellular connection uses LAPM or MNP, at 7200 baud. I could not reliably connect Prodigy with it's requirement for no error correction, so I find that the connection speed maximum is 2400 baud. It is slow, but acceptable, but you will have to be careful with the phone. I think if I move too near the antenna, it drops carrier enough to drop the line, and of course, if the plug is wiggled than that will drop as well. I have to set the phone on the desk next to me, the length of its cord, and not move around.

In addition, Prodigy offers a 800 service, that carries a surcharge of .12 cents a minute, but would be the preferred method over a long distance call. Unfortunately, the service is noisier than the straight dial up, (at least on the Cellular One service) and is MUCH more prone to dropping the line.

Conclusion: I have spent $280 for a modem, (usable as a regular fax modem as well), and about $40 in test calls, to find out that the system will connect to Prodigy at a second rate 2400 baud, and is susceptible to other quirky things like where you sit. In the near future, the MOBIDEM system for digital communications will be out, and is designed for this kind of thing, but the cost of the modem is over $1400.00 now. Perhaps I should have waited, but I want my mail on vacation, just like the guy in the AT&T ad on the beach. Maybe with a $5000 EO, but with the more mundane equipment I have it's more like YOU MIGHT, than YOU WILL.

Disclaimer. Any and All opinions stated in the above article, right though they may be, are the Sole Responsibility of the Author, Who is only stating what Actually Happened. The article is provided for your Information Only, in the hope of providing Useful Tips on a friendly basis. Rely on any of the above information at Your Own Risk. Assume all company names, and trademarks are the Property of the Respective Owners.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

June Presentation - I was disappointed when Landmark notified me that they were not going to be able to present at our June meeting. With only a short notice before the meeting, it was not possible to schedule another vendor. Although he never got a chance to do his presentation, I want to thank our own Tom Cone for volunteering to do a presentation. As usual I got carried away with myself and dominated the meeting with my Win95 presentation. I can't stop myself sometimes. I certainly hope that those of you in attendance got as much out of the presentation as I did.

Help Needed - In my column last month I mentioned that we were looking for a replacement newsletter editor. This individual will take over the duties from Marylee for the 1996 year. However, we would like to get someone onboard as soon as possible so that we can begin a smooth transition into the 96 year. To date there has been no response.

We are also looking for early candidates to fulfill officer positions. Look at page 2 for the positions in question While I am not sure which current officers will volunteer again next year or in what capacity, lets not wait until our elections in December to realize that we have no volunteers to run the business of the Tampa PC Users Group in 96. In next months newsletter I'll post job titles and descriptions.

If you are interested in helping and are willing to volunteer your time and effort for a good cause then please call me at 985-3338 or 962-2554 ext. 715.

SIGs - I can't express enough thanks to Reflectone and Michael Hodges for providing the facilities and resources to hold two of our SIG meetings. Similarly, I thank Dun & Bradstreet Software and IBM for providing their facilities and resources to the MS Access and OS/2 SIG groups. Without the contributions of these companies there would be no SIGs.

The 1st meeting of the hardware SIG ,led by Connie Kincaid, was an enormous success. Connie mentioned that those in attendance were grateful yet thirst for more at the end. A reminder that Connie will be presenting her software SIG on July 25th. Both of these SIG meetings will be repeated later this year by Connie. Thanks Connie for a job well done and your unselfish dedication to furthering the education of our fellow PC users.

Items Wanted - A reminder that we are collecting equipment and software for the December bargain table and special community projects yet to be announced. Donations are eligible as a tax donation since we are a designated 501(c)3 non-profit group. If you have any computer related items to donate Please bring them to any of the following; general meeting, SIG meeting or contact Havey Bruneau at 962-2554 ext. 715 for pick-up.

A 28.8 modem for the BBS would also be appreciated. Don't forget that we are still taking donations for the BBS.

Win95 - It wasn't that long ago that my belief was **WHEN95?**. However after conversations with many software vendors and using the Beta version, I do believe Microsoft will ship the long awaited Win95 this August.

I am sure many PC users are wondering if Win95 is going to affect them and if they should bother upgrading to it. The answer for both is a resounding YES. Of course there are those who will say NO. Well those are the individuals that still use old 57 Chevys and VWs to get around and THAT'S OK. However, I think most of us would rather have the new models with AC, stereo, airbags, power steering, and if cruise control and power windows come with it that's even better. Keeping up with PC hardware alone has not been pleasant for most of us. It seems that the state of the art hardware technology we buy gets outdated faster and faster every year. This new release of Windows will not only speed up the outdating of hardware but will now begin to outdate existing software at a fast pace.

Despite all of the hoopla and hype or how many bugs it has when released, Win95 will be next major dominating operating system for the masses. No I don't have stock in Microsoft. My experience and common sense tells me that, for now, Microsoft is the undisputed front runner in the OS and GUI world. In the year 2000 Packard Bell may replace Microsoft, but that's a column for another day.

Some things to consider; Win95 will be preinstalled on most new PCs, at best there will we one last release of MS DOS before Microsoft puts it to rest; software vendors will eventually stop developing 16bit Windows apps and develop 32bit apps for Win95 and Windows NT, the same will be true for drivers, hardware vendors will develop plug and play products. When will all this happen you might ask, I anticipate that this shift will be completed by the end of 1996. Of course by then we will have updated Win95 twice.

How would I prepare and implement Win95 and it's technology if I could? If you are not in a hurry and you don't need the immediate benefits of Win95, wait till the 1st update. It should be out in the Q4 of 95 and include some worthwhile patches to the original release. The minimum computer system should be a 486/66, 16MB RAM, 300MB HD, 14" 28. dot pitch VGA monitor. Of course if you are planning on buying a new system then go for at least a 90Mhz Pentium with 16MB RAM, 1GB HD, 4X CD ROM and a 17" VGA monitor with 28. dot pitch. Don't skimp on the monitor. Also, take into consideration that a 90Mhz Pentium is already outdated in today's PC world. As far as software applications, I would stick with whatever existing 16bit Windows apps I had for at least a year. There are enough benefits in Win95 alone without the need for new 32bit apps. Secondly, Win95 is a brand new operating system and will surely have some bugs. The same holds true for all the 1st generation versions of Win95 3rd party software that will be released after Win95. Unless you feel lucky or have a dedicated IS staff then wait for these new products to be tested and proven by others.

Harvey Bruneau

Book Review

Word For Windows Design Companion

By: Katherine Shelly Pfeiffer

Review by: Herbert Atwood
Tampa PC Users Group

I was initially disappointed in this book in that it is targeted towards a very intensive "desktop publishing" audience rather than a general purpose type book for those of us that are not so involved in desktop publishing.

This book was written as a source of information and ideas for anyone who uses Word for Windows, to include both 2.0 and 6.0. Chapter two contains a brief summary of features and commands in both versions of Word, with Word 2.0 being denoted in parenthesis.

Chapter three is a brief introduction to design. Before starting each new project, consider the following questions: What is the purpose of this document? Who will read your pages? Are your readers busy people who want their information in bytes and blurbs, or are they looking for in-depth analysis? Answering these questions will help you design and structure your document for your "target audience".

The author also has a brief discussion of what she calls the "dynamic duos", namely structure and order, style and tone, harmony and contrast, positive space and negative space (white space), and finally symmetry and asymmetry. These are important because each is dependent on the other. She recommends making a specimen template and then print samples of your typefaces to use as test blocks in designing your layouts (an excellent idea in my opinion, who can remember all the typefaces they may have?).

The author then briefly touches on line space, line lengths and column widths, kerning and letter spacing, and then on to page layout basics. In page layout basics, the author discusses the use of grids as a "page skeleton" in order to help one design and organize the page elements and use of positive and negative spaces.

Here the use of "attention-getters" is also discussed. Changing type, using negative space, changing column structure, i.e., using one large column rather than two smaller ones can be effective. Use of graphic devices such as dingbats (dingbats are typographic ornaments used to signify the end of a text section or to introduce list items). These items quickly draw the reader's eye and add visual excitement to one's document.

Rules and boxes can be used as well. Rules are lines placed under headlines for emphasis and separation. Be careful when using these, however, as they create barriers as well. Boxes should be used with sections of text that can be read both separately and in conjunction with the related text.

Shading can be used as graphic patterns behind, above, or under items to be emphasized. Again, too many elements will create confusion. Illustrations and photographs are excellent attention-getters. Studies have shown that ideas accompanied by illustrations (to include photographs) make a stronger and longer lasting impression.

The rest of this book goes into design, step-by-step, from page setup, to the use of type, and finally production tips to include illustrations. This book is published by Ventana Press, Inc., P.O. Box 2468, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515; telephone (919) 942-0220. The list price is $21.95. ISBN #1-56604-075-2.

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

1) Microsoft BOB - 8 essential household programs, calendar, letter writer, checkbook, and more...
2) Aldus Persuasion - Presentation Graphic Software
3) Adobe -Type on Call- 2 free fonts, call to buy more fast from Adobe
4) WindowWasher - the Ultimate Optimizer for Windows with Intelligent Data Compression
5) OnFile -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks"
6) XtraDrive Lite - (Windows & DOS) Doubles your disk capacity. vendor: Integrated Information Technology
7) Your Deck - Design & Build How-to Software (Sunset)
8) Space Age - Arts & Letters 3 in 1 Software = Multimedia + Clip Art + Drawing
9) Jump*Start KINDERGARTEN - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6)
10) Kid's ENCYCLOPEDIA - The Random House (ages 7-12)
11) RUSA - Interactive Art Tour - St. Petersburg, Russia CDRom.
12) DO-OVER! - Change the look of Windows with a bonus utility to speed task switching.
13) SPACE ADVENTURE- Knowledge Adventure up-to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
14) AVIATION ADVENTURE - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
15) TuneLand staring Howie Mandel - Interactive Cartoon CDRom (ages 3 and up)
16) Harvard for Windows ChartXL - Compelling charts from critical data from Software Publishing Co.
17) Harvard for Windows Montage - Easy way to organize your graphics from Software Publishing Co.
18) DataSafe - Crashproofs Windows
19) Personal Attorney - helps you prepare the 16 most needed legal documents.
20) Small Business Attorney - includes over 70 contracts and documents for small business.
21) Managing your Money Plus - Finance package, check book and more.
22) Managing your Money Windows - Finance Package
23) Managing your Money DOS - Financial Package
24) ECHO Lake Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album

(Call 985-3338 for info on review software)

Software Review

PC DOS 7 by IBM

Review by: Alford Poole, Tampa PC Users Group

I was almost liking Windows after installing PC Tools for Windows. There were no GPF's (General Protection Faults) for quite some time, then while using Central Point Backup for Windows to back up the hard drive and reaching 98% complete - bingo, GPF! The last %@!*#! straw! I also love to strike a blow against the Empire, so when the opportunity came to switch from MS DOS 6.2 to another operating system I gleefully accepted.

IBM's PC DOS version 7's box promises it has full-featured Windows and DOS utilities, new on-line help and reference tools. Stacker 4.0 (Stacker replaces Super Stor in this version), and Central Point Backup for DOS supports high speed diskettes and tape drives and - no more GPF's! Ok, the part about GPF's isn't really on the box.

IBM's PC-DOS 6.3 came with several Central Point (CP) utilities: CP Backup, CP Memory Optimizer and CP Scheduler. Additional tools available for installation with version 7: PenDOS, Phoenix PCMCIA, CP Undelete for Windows, IBM Antivirus for Windows or DOS, REXX (REstructured eXtended eXecutor language - instead of BASIC), CP Backup for Windows or DOS, file update, RAMboost, docking support, Dynaload, E Editor (similar to EDIT, but more like QEdit) and CD-ROM support.

PC DOS 6.3 installed on the Bits of Blue BBS with all its complexities with no problem. I hoped for the same experience on my machine with version 7. The manual gave instructions for installing under different configurations including Boot Manager which we have. The installation took about half and hour and the old DOS files (MS DOS 6.2) were backed up to floppies using the "A" drive (no choice of drives). Any extra DOS files (like List or other utilities you might have added to the DOS directory) remain after the installation. The amount of hard disk space needed to install the programs depends on which ones you want to install. 6MB of free uncompressed hard disk space will get you started with PC DOS and Central Point Backup for DOS if you don't have Windows. You'll need 18.5MB of uncompressed space to install PC DOS plus all PC DOS and Windows optional tools.

After the installation there was no noticeable change in system performance. So what did I expect? DOS is DOS right? Same old DIR, COPY, MOVE, CD, FORMAT, DEL, ETC. There are neat new things too. CPBackup for DOS is a much better program than the old BACKUP and RESTORE routine. The PC DOS Shell is good for file management and has graphic icons, but won't cause GPF's. Just wish it would show more information such as space taken up in directories by files when viewed (yeah, like Windows File Manager). If you need help remembering to make backups or execute other DOS programs at specific times, let Central Point Scheduler between backups just to avoid being reminded so often.

Guess how many 3.5" floppies are in the PC DOS 7 box. 20? 15? No peeking! That's right, five. That's it! Thanks to Stacker's XDF (eXtended Density Format) the 1.44MB diskette capacity is increased to approximately 1.86MB. Wait a minute, those numbers don't add up to a 2:1 ratio, what's the deal? Well, it seems this is something pretty to look at, but not really to use. You can copy the DOS disks using the XDFCOPY command, but you cannot create XDF floppies for your own files. No big deal! Once Stacker is setup 5.25" formatted floppies can be compressed to 2.8MB and 3.5" formatted floppies can be compressed to 3.4MB. Really neat! Now some of those great shareware games will only take up two disks instead of three.

For all you faithful EDLIN users, beware, EDLIN.EXE was deleted from this version of PC DOS 7. The good news is that if you have a licensed copy of Edlin you can copy it to your system. Whew!

Documentation consists of almost 600 pages in the User's Guide, and lots of information on-line through a viewer. The viewer can be started from the DOS command prompt, PC DOS Shell, OS/2 and Windows. Both the manual and on-line help are easy to use and understand. Using the on-line system is required sometimes since the manual refers to the on-line source for further details on some topics and if you want info on PC DOS Command Reference, DOS REXX and DOS error messages there are three on-line books. These are also available in hard copy form for optional purchase.

Over the years I've talked to several IBM tech support people and found them knowledgeable and helpful, even to the point of receiving a follow up call the next day. IBM offers several ways to receive additional help with PC DOS: a toll free number for "getting started" activities with recorded information and information on how to reach a real person (toll call may be required), on-line through CompuServe, by FAX, mail, BBS and extended services are also available.

How does PC DOS 7 improve on DOS 6.x, PC or otherwise? Utilities. More and better utilities. If you want Stacker 4.0 or some spiffy Central Point programs, then buy this bundle and save some cash. Did I really need this upgrade? Is it a blow against the Empire? Perhaps. If you are still running under DOS 3 or 4 do yourself a favor and upgrade. You'll be amazed at the improvements to DOS. If you have DOS versions 5 or 6 and don't have Norton Utilities, PC Tools or some other system management tools, then there are still quite a few new toys to enjoy. There is quite an assortment of goodies in the box, yet if you already have some of the products then the difference after installation won't seem like much. On the other hand if you feel like striking a small blow against the Empire . . .

Sure, I still have Windows 3.1 installed on our system and am even using it to write this review, and sure it is working fine now, but there are times when you just need to get in touch with the inner machine, check things out at the COMMAND prompt. I am comforted knowing that the heart of the system is dominated by Big Blue code instead of Mr. Bill's. Is there really any difference? Mostly in the cyberspace between my ears.

System Requirements: IBM compatible personal computer with a 1.4MB 3.5-inch diskette drive for this package (CD ROM packages also available), DOS (3.3 or higher) installed on the hard disk, 512K system memory and 6MB to 18.5MB of free hard disk space. A mouse or compatible pointing device is also recommended.

PC DOS 7 Upgrade Edition retails for $47.99 at CompUSA in either the 3.5" floppies or CD-ROM formats. By the way, Stacker 4.0 by itself is $89.97 and PC Tools (by Central Point) is $99.99 at the same store.

PC DOS is published by International Business Machines Corporation, Old Orchard Road, Armonk, New York 10504.

WHEN YOU THINK YOU'RE INDISPENSABLE

Sometime when you're feeling important
Sometime when your ego's in bloom
Sometime when you take it for granted
You're the best qualified in the room.

Sometime when you feel your going
Would leave an unfillable hole
Just follow this simple instruction
And see how it humbles your soul.

Take a bucket and fill it with water
put your hand in--up to your wrist
Take it out and the hole that's remaining
is a measure of how you'll be missed.

You can splash all you wish as you enter
You can stir up the water galore
BUT STOP, and you'll find in a minute
That it looks quite the same as before.

There's a moral in this quaint example
Just do the best that you can
Be proud of yourself but remember
There is no indispensable man.

Author Unknown

Software Review

My First Encyclopedia

by Knowledge Adventure

Review by Katherine and Mary Powell Tampa PC User Group Member and offspring

Like most parents, if my young child is going to 'play' on our $3000 computer, we prefer that she a) learn something, b) have fun and c) **not** spill chocolate milk on the keyboard. While this software package could not prevent the unwanted spills, it offered fun while learning and one thing more...return appeal! She wants to 'play' with it all of the time!

As far as system requirements, it is very *now* in that the use of multimedia (sound & video) is extensive and will require a *now* kind of PC, i.e., an IBM 486SX or greater running at 25 Mhz with at least 4 MB of RAM. In addition, the video must be 640X480 by 256 color SVGA and the sound device must be MPC compatible. It must have an MPC compatible CD-ROM, a mouse device, and 8 MB of free disk space as well. And this is the minimum! We installed it on a Pentium 90 with 8 MB of RAM and a double speed CD-ROM, and another Pentium 90 with 16 MB of RAM and a quad speed CD-ROM. The CD-ROM speed definitely made the biggest performance difference.

Be prepared to tweak the sound device or display. I had to change the default video settings on one system before it would even install. On another system, the sound required some equalizing in order to hear the speaking over the background music. While this all sounds painful, I found a friend in the User's Guide. It was informative, well organized and genuinely helpful.

The opening screen provides clear choices that are easy to access with a mouse. Once inside, a large tree is the guide to all sorts of topics ranging from medicine to agriculture or anything you might find in an encyclopedia. It would be difficult to make an error navigating through here since almost anything they do will result in an activity. Mary has become somewhat computer literate at the ripe old age of 5, but it was still easy to see any child would get the idea right away. The tree itself is so full of interesting things that it provokes a child's natural curiosity.

There are a group of older children that appear in windows to verbally guide, instruct and inform the child every step of the way. Clicking on an object will either enter another screen or launch a window that explains what it is. Other screens can be rooms of more objects or a learning game. These are nested all through the program and cover the many different topics. The key is that children can explore at their own pace and about whatever interests them.

There are many different learning games and all sorts of topics to explore it would take a very long time to see it all. I guess that's where the return appeal I mentioned comes in. Mary is still learning new things every time she uses this program...and she thinks she just playing!

Knowledge Adventure, Inc.
4502 Dyer Street
:La Crescenta, CA 91214
(818)542-4200

SYMANTEC AND DELRINA JOIN FORCES TO EXPAND PRESENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS MARKET IN $415 MILLION DEAL

Cupertino, Calif., July 6, 1995 symantec Corporation (NASDAQ;YMC) and Delrina Corporation (NASDAQ:DENAF and TSE:DC) today announced they have signed a definitive agreement to combine in a deal with an estimated value of US$415 million to Delrina shareholders. By joining forces, the two companies will combine their individual resources to take full advantage of the rapidly growing communications market. It is anticipated that the merger will be completed in November, 1995.

Software Review

DASHBOARD & SIDEKICK, a Great Team

Review by Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group

This is a dual package containing SIDEKICK and DASHBOARD. I started off installing SIDEKICK. Not much bad about it... The best feature of SIDEKICK is the Calendar which has the ability to schedule things virtually any way you want to. For example, you can just specify a particular time and date. You can specify a recurring event (like going to a PC meeting) to remind you every 2nd Wednesday, or any particular day of months, or the last day or last Thursday, or the 10th of each month, etc. The program has great flexibility in this area. Go to Yearly calendar, click & drag over multiple days & get a Multi-day event option. You can show things like trip to Colorado, or Vacation days, etc. And, all event entries have an alarm feature that can be turned on with a choice of several different alarm sounds.

SIDEKICK has a card file feature, too. Although it does not have a work and home phone entry, the phone number line is long and has intelligence. If you add for example "wk= 123-4567 Hm= 987-6543" and select the entry to dial the phone, it will show an option to dial the 1st or 2nd phone number. That is, it realizes there were two numbers in the line and sets up an option to dial either #. I expected it to stuff the whole line of numbers and comments into the number to dial area. It did not do this. A major plus for SIDEKICK.

There are three notes areas with boiler plates for business, personal, and SIDEKICK Tips notes areas to create, for example a proposal or thank you note. There is also a nice calculator with an electronic tape showing what has been entered. Also, if you have YOURWAY files you can move them to a SIDEKICK subdirectory.

You can drag and drop things, too. That is, just drag a name from one of your cards to the phone icon and drop it and presto! It dials their phone number. There are other drag and drop features too, like a trash bucket to delete things with. Or drag a card to a boilerplate in the notes and it fills in pertinent information from the card.

SIDEKICK requires about 4 to 5 Mb of hard drive space, (unless on a compressed drive, it may need 10 Mb), a 386 processor or better, Windows 3.1 or later, and a minimum of 4 Mb of RAM. Although you may never need it, SIDEKICK has 2 types of support. Their 900 number costs $2.00 per minute after the first minute. Their 800 number costs $14.00 per call. This seems a bit expensive, but as easy as I found SIDEKICK to use, I may never have to use it.

This product may be better for a laptop so you could carry it around with you and keep notes and reminders of appointments, etc. It's a very useful basic database type program.

After running SIDEKICK for a few weeks, I decided to load up DASHBOARD. I wasn't really excited about trying this program until I loaded it up. It was very easy to install, and the product is just great! It sets up all the groups from windows into folders with tabs. Click on a tab, it displays all the programs in the group vertically down the screen and in alphabetical order, Double click the tab and you get the old Program Manager type group display. I like the vertical list a lot better than the Program Manager type display. Seems easier for me to see what I want to load up. Also, you can click & drag a group tab and move it to a different place, thus you can arrange the order of the group tabs to suit your taste.

Below the tabs is a clock and optional calendar displayed. Double click on the clock and you get the menu to set up alarms. These can be recurring or single events and it even has a "Snooze" button which you can set to repeat every so many minutes like on your alarm clock. Next are some Prog windows, and then a resource window showing how much memory is still available, etc. Next to that is a window showing the current Windows default printer.

There is an option that allows DASHBOARD to replace PROGRAM MANAGER as your windows shell. After using DASHBOARD for about 10 minutes, I saw the benefits of doing this. When that option is selected, DASHBOARD requires you restart Windows and gives you an option to do so. I did, and it came up correctly the first try. It also has an uninstall feature should you decide to not use it.

Both SIDEKICK and DASHBOARD, although not essential things to have, seem to be very worthwhile programs that serve particular purposes. Although there was no price on the package, a check in the Computer Shopper shows the dual package available for under $50, which seems like a reasonable price for this neat pair.



Ziff-Davis Announces Winners of Its 1995 Shareware Awards Competition

CD-Quick Cache,
Greatest Paper Airplanes and
Heretic Programs

Take Top Honors

Editors from Ziff-Davis Interactive, PC Magazine, ComputerLife and Computer Gaming World evaluated more 1,300 programs in 16 categories, selecting one winner in each category based on its innovativeness, quality and value. Each magazine additionally selected one program to receive its Best of Year Overall Award.

The overall winners are:

PC Magazine Best of Year Overall Award: CD-Quick Cache by Circuit Systems — Of this winner in the **DOS**

Shareware Winners... *Continued on Page 9*

Shareware Winners..... *Continued from page 8*

Utilities category, the editors noted, "This great CD-ROM cache delivers great performance and its logic successfully detects and optimizes random reads."

CornputerLife Best of Year Overall Award: Greatest Paper Airplanes by KittyHawk Software — Winner in the **Home & Hobby** category, this cool paper airplane-folding software provides a brief history of flight and a complete library and instructions to create an entire fleet of first-class paper aircraft.

Computer Gaming World Best of Year Overall Award: Heretic by Raven Software/id Software — Winner in the **Action Games** category, Heretic is an outstanding action game sequel that propels users into a fictional universe and delivers impressive special effects. With its win, Heretic marks the second straight year that id Software has captured both action game and game of the year honors.

The other 1995 Shareware Awards Winners are:

Business Computing and Applications Development (selected by PCMagazine)

Business and Finance: Scheduling Employees for Windows by Jan Jansen/ Guia International — An easy-to-use, full-featured program that tracks employees' hourly and daily schedules as well as vacation and travel days.

Communications: SlipKnot by Peter Brooks/MicroMind —This graphical Web browser saves World Wide Web surfers substantial time and money by letting users connect to the Internet via a standard Unix Shell account, eliminating the need for a SLIP or PPP connection.

Major Applications: SmartTracker Inventory by Insight Software Solutions — An innovative program that organizes and catalogs information about personal possessions.

Math & Science: Judy's Tenkey by Dan Stickel — A feature-rich calculator that functions in three modes — pocket calculator, adding machine and RPN scientific — and features a "live" tape display, statistics, trig and financial functions.

Networking: Inner-Net by Jim Runkel — This easy-to-use program enables group desktopbased discussions over office networks with unlimited channels and allows you to page users using pop-up alert boxes.

Programming Tools: CEnvi for Windows by Nombas — An interpreter/compiler that uses C syntax and provides a great environment for C hackers to write batch-like programs.

Utilities-Windows: TextPad by Helios Software Solutions — This souped-up NotePad can edit multiple files of any size and in a variety of ways including font changes, word wraps and many others.

Home Computing and Education (selected by ComputerLife)

Education: Piano Professor for Windows by SofTech Multimedia — This outstanding electronic piano tutor brings out the Beethoven in everyone. The program links visual and audio cues to reinforce key positions relative to a note's tone and position on the scale.

Graphics: Jasc Media Center by JASC, Inc. — An easy-to-use program that organizes all media files into a single organized media center. It creates albums of media files including sound clips, bit maps and animations, which can be sorted, searched, printed, played or viewed on screen.

Multimedia: NoteWorthy Composer by NoteWorthy Art Wave — This sophisticated music composing program enables composer wanna-bes and talented musicians to experiment with notation and instrumentation to produce scores of musical masterpieces.

Personal Productivity: Time and Chaos Professional by iSBiSTER International — A simple and very helpful tool that organizes even the busiest person's life. This comes complete with address book, calendar, to do list, autodialer and appointment scheduler and out-values just about any Personal Information Manager on the market.

Games (selected by computer Gaming World)

Card & Casino: Casino Verite Blackjack by QFIT — A great game that enables players to apply the rules of almost any casino with enough options, card-counting tables and solid tutorial advice to hit the jackpot every time.

Puzzle & Logic: Word Search Construction Kit by Insight Software Solutions — A super program for gamers and teachers alike that delivers built-in hours of play value and enables l! you to modify and develop your own puzzles.

Strategy: World Empire III for Windows by Viable Software Alternatives — An amazing program for wargaming that delivers the addicting strategy of RISK with a geopolitical bent and ruthless characters.

The Ziff-Davis Shareware Awards are co-sponsored by Ziff-Davis, publisher of the leading computer magazines, and Ziff-Davis Interactive, which offers the ZiffNet™ and ZD Net™ online information services about computing on CompuServe, PRODIGY, eWorld, AppleLink, and the Internet's World Wide Web, as well as other electronic information products about computing. The Ziff-Davis Macintosh Shareware Awards, sponsored by MacUser magazine, will be awarded at MACWORLD Expo Boston, August 8-11, 1995.

Available for Downloading from ZiffNet

All the winners and programs nominated for the 1995 Ziff-Davis Shareware Awards are available for downloading from the software libraries on ZiffNet on CompuServe. To access the programs, ZiffNet members should GO PBSAPPS and look in Library 23/ZD Shareware Awards. CompuServe members may join ZiffNet by typing GO ZIFFNET. Users wishing to connect with ZiffNet directly may call 1-800-895-4596 for instructions about how to log on to the service.

■■■■

Special Interest Groups Info

Microsoft Access SIG

The next sig meeting will be at 6:00 PM on Thursday, July 20, 1995 at the Dun & Bradstreet Software office, located at 3903 Northdale Blvd., Suite 113E, (look for the burgundy awning for the entrance) Tampa. The door locks at 6:00 pm, however, we will have someone keeping an eye out for late arrivals. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

For more info call *Sergio Mendez at --799-6589 OR Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.*

Hardware & Software SIG

Connie Kincaid lead the Hardware SIG on June 27th, and reported there was a good turn out and that it was very successful. She will lead the Software SIG on Tuesday, July 25, 1995 at 6:30 PM

Place: Reflectone Building

Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

For More Information contact: Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Internet SIG

There will not be a meeting in July. The next scheduled meeting will be Monday, August 7th. Call Charles for additional info at (813) 968-1207.

Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

Charles Howe -HOWE.COSTECH@INTNET.NET
Michael Hodges

OS/2 SIG

OS/2 SIG, Next meeting: will be: Tuesday, July 25th, 1995 at 5:45 p.m. Location: IBM Lakepointe One Bldg., Room 436 BE SURE TO SIGN IN. SIG Leader will be John Lucas.
REXX Programing will be covered at this meeting.

Contact: John Lucas
JKLUCAS@MAILSERV.MOFFITT.USF.EDU)
OR
John Meroth at (813) 831-7878 anytime except 6-8pm.

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- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

Solutions?

A Software Engineer, a Hardware Engineer and a Departmental Manager were on their way to a meeting in Switzerland. They were driving down a steep mountain road when suddenly the brakes on their car failed. The car careened almost out of control down the road, bouncing off the crash barriers, until it miraculously ground to a halt scraping along the mountainside. The car's occupants, shaken but unhurt, now had a problem: They were stuck halfway down a mountain in a car with no brakes. What were they to do?

"I know," said the Departmental Manager, "Let's have a meeting, propose a Vision, formulate a Mission Statement, define some Goals, and by a process of Continuous Improvement find a solution to the Critical Problems, and we can be on our way."

"No, no," said the Hardware Engineer, "That will take far too long, and besides, that method has never worked before. I've got my Swiss Army Knife with me, and in no time at all I can strip down the car's braking system, isolate the fault, fix it, and we can be on our way."

"Well," said the Software Engineer, "Before we do anything, I think we should push the car back up the road and see if it happens again.

Quad-Cities Computer Society, contributed by Dale Neil

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

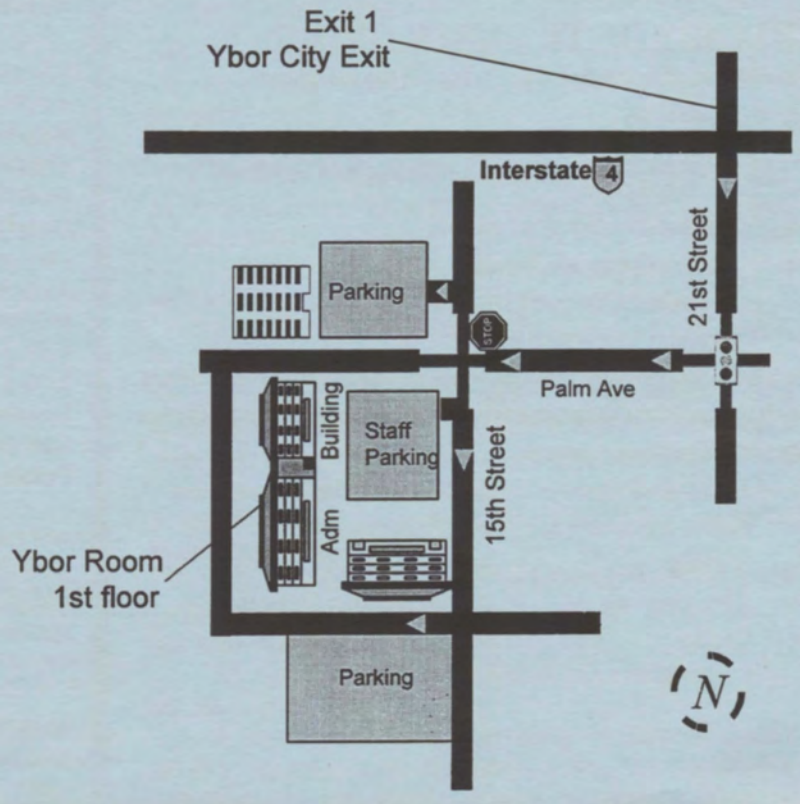
Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

Agenda for July 12 Meeting:

Presentation by

KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE

Education and Entertainment Software



Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 8 August, 1995

MEETING

DATE: August 9th, 1995
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus - Ybor Room
(See map on last page.)

Presentation by:

MYSTERY GUEST

GUARANTEED TO INFORM, EDUCATE & KEEP YOU INTERESTED

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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Member

Open Letter to Mr. Manzi and Mr. Gates

By Philippe Kahn

Two recent editorials by Lotus Development's Jim Manzi and Microsoft's Bill Gates have created quite a controversy. Mr. Manzi says that Mr. Gates competes unfairly, while Mr. Gates takes exception to Mr. Manzi's criticism and invokes free enterprise as the sole source of his success. Having been part of this industry for more than a decade and having helped shape it with new technologies, I feel compelled to respond to both gentlemen. Too much energy is being expended in courts of law, and a bit of creativity can save us from turning the software industry into a legal playground. Our mission is to serve customers and continue to grow the software industry through technical innovation.

Mr. Manzi, innovate, don't litigate.

Let me first address Mr. Manzi's criticism of Mr. Gates. Mr. Manzi, you accuse Mr. Gates of anti-competitive practices. This is very hypocritical. If anyone has used anti-competitive practices in the software industry, it's you, Mr. Manzi.

Let me refresh your memory. Over four years ago, you unfairly attacked Borland by alleging copyright infringement. You knew, like all of us, that "systems" and functionality cannot be copyrighted. Nevertheless, you relentlessly tried to put our company out of business. We had the best technology, but you decided to beat us in court, and not compete in the marketplace. You actually privately told me several times to "get out of the spreadsheet business," and you boasted in the Wall Street Journal that you were going to perform a "cashectomy" on Borland. Your lawyers gave continual interviews to the press and even convinced stock market analysts that Borland would have to pay you as much as $300 million in damages. That amount would clearly have put Borland out of business. Unfairly you destabilized our company: you put doubt in the minds of our customers, you questioned our viability, you manipulated public opinion right up to the day when the Court of Appeals issued its opinion.

The ruling two weeks ago was a landmark for the whole industry and a vindication of Borland — a unanimous decision of the Court of Appeals affirming all of Borland's rights. We never doubted this outcome. How-

See **Open Letter.....***Continued on Page 3*

*** * 1995 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES : William LaMartin 251-3817
TREASURER:Tom Cone 222-8925
MEMBER AT LARGE: Connie Kincaid 962-8799
SECRETARY: Bruce Register 968-8170
APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 222-8925

BBS -- (813)239-3704 Line 1 (813)237-4997 Line 2

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII text file, Microsoft Write or Microsoft Word to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or upload to the BBS.

Permission to reproduce portions which are not specifically copyrighted is given to other computer users' groups for nonprofit use. Reprints must be unaltered; proper credit given to the author and publication; and a copy of the publication must be sent to the attention of the Bits of Blue Editor at the club address. All other reproduction is prohibited without the specific written permission of the original author.

The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

SECRETARY'S REPORT
TPCUG MEETING 7/12/95, 6 PM

Ybor Room Auditorium, HCC Ybor Campus
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Bruneau (Harvey) called the meeting to order.

Miscellaneous Comments and Information were given:

Windows 95 (W95), standard edition, is advertised for $499 or $599
with Access. Release appears to be on schedule for soon release. Watch for
"competitors upgrade" and Microsoft upgrades for less money.

Harvey reminded the group that TPCUG has several software products for review.

NEWSLETTER, BITS OF BLUE. Kinkos, Carrollwood, mixed the pages in assembling the July Issue. The error was not noticed until delivery was received and mailed. Just pull the staples, arrange correctly and re-staple. Sorry!

BITS OF BLUE will be loaded on RBBS real soon. Time just ran out. It could not be uploaded sooner due to other demanding time requirements. Check it out in the next couple of days for downloading.

SIGs. SIG schedules are listed near the back page in the BITS OF BLUE newsletter.

SIG Hardware. There have been many most favorable comments regarding the high quality of the presentation and the material. Thanks, SIG leader Connie Kincaid.

PRESENTATION: Harvey presented Lynda Orban, KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE, makers of educational and entertainment software. Lynda flew in from California to make her most interesting presentation to TPCUG.

KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE provides a large range of software products in CD-ROM or 3.5" diskettes. Lynda reported on several products on which Steven Speilburg participated or is participating on. KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE staff are excited about innovative developments that are creative, adventuresome, etc. All are designed to encourage individual thinking and individual growth within a pleasant and enthusiastic environment. Their products are a real learning experience.

KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE is already preparing products for Windows 95. Release of them will begin soon. Lynda presented parts of several movies in 2-D and 3-D. The movies can be interrupted while an information reference window appears. Most of KNOWLEDGE ADVEN-

See **Minutes**.....*Continued on Page 3*

Minutes.....*Continued from Page 2*

TURE products run on standard machines rather than requiring high end technological machines. One does not have to go out and buy new equipment. Some products run on DOS; others run in Windows.

We were treated to a trip inside a human heart in 3-D. We ventured through 3-D Dinosaur Adventure while wearing 3-D glasses (we kept the glasses after the presentation). We paused and went, at will, to "reference areas" to learn the weight, length and height of each prehistoric animal. After satisfying our quest for information about whatever, we returned to the movie.

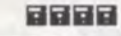
Lynda created a Spiderman movie of her (or our) design before our eyes. Then, she immediately played the movie just created. It was complete with a city, streets, street repair excavation, a thug, police car with siren wailing and, then, eventually Spiderman chasing the thug. After Spiderman, we toured the airplane museum in the Aviation Adventure product.

You can not believe the low price specials offered to TPCUG.
CONGRATULATIONS TO DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

My First Encyclopedia	Patricia Van Horn
Spiderman	Kevan Sheridan
Aviation Adventure	G. Ennis
Real King T-Shirt	Everett Bowyer

Thanks to Lynda Orban and KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE for three software prizes.

The next regular meeting of TPCUG will be Wednesday, August 9, 1995, 6 PM at Ybor Room, Administrative Building, Ybor City HCC.
Come and bring someone, your dentist, neighbor or friend, etc.



Open Letter.....*Continued from Page 1*

ever, we can't erase the irreparable damages that you caused our company, our customers and our shareholders over the last four years. This suit cost Borland and its shareholders millions of dollars, and probably robbed Borland of a bright future.

Even the day after the landmark decision, in statements to the press, your General Counsel, Tom Lemberg, claimed that "The lawsuit has still been a success for Lotus because it's stopped others from making compatible spreadsheets". Is that what you call success? Is that what you call fair competition? And, yesterday you decided to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. May I suggest that you and your customers may be well served by investing less in your legal department and more in your research and development teams.

Mr. Gates, don't "stick it" to the industry.

As you know, Mr. Gates, a lot of issues were raised recently when Judge Sporkin read an internal Microsoft memo where some of your executives expressed an intention to "stick it to Philippe." You can understand that it's a bit worrisome for me to be in the sights of one of the most powerful companies in the world (it's also flattering!).

When I founded Borland over a decade ago, Microsoft was Borland's first competitor. You were already a large company. We were a bootstrapped garage operation. Through great technology, Borland grew to become the leader in developmental tools. A healthy competition developed between your large company and our more modest enterprise. As a consequence, the rate of innovation in the tools market continued to increase. We prevailed in tools, but you took the lead in applications and databases. I have to say that Mr. Manzi's unfair competitive practices certainly helped you—all of our competitors flourished as we weakened under Mr. Manzi's relentless attacks on our reputation. However, unlike Mr. Manzi, who tried to use the legal system to gain a competitive advantage, you, Mr. Gates, competed in the marketplace—and you did a very good job of it. You deserve credit for that. You've actually done such a great job at it that today Microsoft clearly dominates the software industry.

Some say that Microsoft is like a government that has been democratically elected but is now tempted to take advantage of its position of power. Mr. Gates, prove these critics wrong. Use your position of leadership to foster industry practices that will help the software industry grow to its next stage of maturity, assuring our customers that the software industry will remain fair and competitive for decades to come. To your credit it seems that, in today's environment, non-Microsoft products can be successful. For example, Borland's recently released Delphi has established a leadership position in the tools market very rapidly. Sidekick, recently released by Starfish Software, has become the world-leader in personal organizers. Both are succeeding because of their quality and technical merits. Will that become the norm, or will these two recent examples of success be the exception?

Mr. Gates, the ball is in your court. Windows 95 is a great operating system. Borland and Starfish are among the many software companies around the world that are building the great products to reinforce that. You now have an opportunity to prove all of your detractors wrong. Take the high road. You and Microsoft are in a position to help build personal computing into the next century and make it one of the most exciting industrial endeavors ever. As an industry, we can help people around the world become more productive, stay better organized, and communicate better. Your leadership is needed here.

See **Open Letter**.....*Continued on Page 9*

President's Column

I certainly hope that each of you weathered hurricane Erin without any major problems. In the aftermath of this storm it's easy to for many individuals in the Tampa Bay area to say the storm was a wimp. Never the less the center of the storm came less than forty miles from Tampa. It certainly could have been worse. Personally, I thought it was going to be, based on information coming across from the news media. We should all be prepared for these storms and not chance a disaster. Ask the people in the Florida panhandle how they liked Erin. I am sure they have a story that is 180° different than ours.

After the storm, the story The Little Engine that Could came to mind. Two events happened that caused me to think of this. One was the backups I created for our small data center the night before the storm was to hit and the second was Erin itself. My nightly backups are usually performed on a 4Gig Mountain tape drive. Unfortunately, it had failed the week before and I was waiting for a replacement from Mountain. While waiting for the replacement drive I purchased a 4Gig Conner tape drive from Computer City to ensure that I would have daily backups. At this point Erin was not even a tropical storm. After conversations with tech support from Arcada and Conner it was determined that limitations of the Arcada software that was included with the Conner drive was not going to allow me to properly backup my Novell server. By now Erin was a hurricane and bearing down on Florida and still no replacement drive. Well on Tuesday it was finally time to put plan C and D into action. Plan C was the use of Colorado Trakker 250Mb tape drives. Fortunately I had two. It took a lot of tapes and some time to backup four gigabytes but it worked. This was a case of the little tape drives that could.

The second reminder is to look at the damage caused in the Pensacola area. Who thought that Erin, that little bitty storm could do over $200,000,000 worth of damage. I guess it was the little storm that could.

I mentioned in my column last month, we are looking for early candidates to fulfill officer positions of the Tampa PC Users Group for the 1996 year. Elections will be held in December. Lets not wait until the elections to realize that we have no volunteers to run the business of the Tampa PC Users Group in '96. Following is a list of officers needed to run a PC user group and their associated brief job description. I have added some positions which do not currently exist but are important. Additionally, I have placed the names of those individuals currently assuming, in whole or part, the responsibility of each position.

President (Officer) Harvey Bruneau
Duties: Ensure the delivery of the group's mission to its members. Lead meetings and provide overall direction. Serve as overall representative of the user group to the public.

Vice President (Officer) William LaMartin
Duties: Act as president during president's unavailability and chair key committees. Fill other key roles as determined by group needs.

Secretary (Officer) Bruce Register
Duties: Manage correspondence and records. Records minutes from group's general and board meetings.

Treasurer (Officer) Tom Cone
Duties: Oversee financial resources, recording, and reporting.

Director/Chairperson/Committee Head/Task Leader
Tom Cone
Committee/Task: Membership
Duties: Coordinate new member recruitment and existing member retention. Manage database and membership communication.

Committee/Task: Program Director Harvey Bruneau
Duties: Handle planning and direction of speakers, presentations, demos, special events, and other programs. Periodically query members to identify speakers and programs of interest, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction.

Committee/Task: Vendor Relations Harvey Bruneau
Duties: Responsible for communication with vendors (hardware and software; local, regional, and national) regarding working with the group, special events, obtaining review products and door prizes, and other activities.

Committee/Task: Volunteer Coordinator All officers
Duties: Coordinate volunteer recruitment, management, and recognition.

Committee/Task: Equipment Manager Bruce Register, All officers
Duties: Manage inventory, transportation, availability, and storage of equipment owned by group or used by group.

Committee/Task: Marketing/Public Relations
Connie Kincaid, All members
Duties: Direct publicity, including media relations, community relations, and special event promotion.

Committee/Task: Advertising Marylee Bruneau
Duties: Manage advertising sales in user group newsletter and advertising placements for group activities.

Committee/Task: SIG Director William LaMartin
Duties: Assist special interest groups with program development, publicity, membership, meeting arrangements, and other tasks.

Committee/Task: Newsletter/Magazine Editor
Marylee & Harvey Bruneau
Duties: Oversee editorial development and submissions, design, production, and distribution of newsletter. Prepares and sorts mail according to bulk mail postal regulations. Creates electronic version, Adobe Acrobat, of newsletter. Selects and

See **President's**.....*Continued on Page 5*

President's.....*Continued from Page 4*

distributes articles to be published on Tampa Bay Online via Prodigy.

Committee/Task: Bulletin Board Sysop Kevin Sheridan/ Al Poole
Duties: Maintain and operate group bulletin board system.

Committee/Task: Librarian/Resource Center Coordinator Larry Anders
Duties: Coordinate shareware, public domain software, and other resources for group.

Committee/Task: Software Review Editor/Coordinator Harvey & Marylee Bruneau
Duties: Get review software from vendors, coordinate getting software to review writers, and follow up on reviews.

Committee/Task: Legal Counsel Tom Cone
Duties: Advise group on legal issues.

Committee/Task: Finance
Tom Cone/William LaMartin
Duties: Advise and oversee financial management.

Committee/Task: Development/Fund-raising
All officers
Duties: Plan and oversee fund-raising events and activities.

Committee/Task: Community Relations/Outreach
Harvey & Marylee Bruneau
Duties: Manage community services activities and serve as contact person with community at large.

In conclusion, if you are interested in serving your group in any one or more of the above positions, share those thoughts with the officers in person at the monthly meeting on the BBS or by phone. **The future and the success of the Tampa PC User's Group depends volunteers committed to leading the group.**

Trust Measure

Some measure their lives
by days and years,
Others by heartthrobs,
passion and tears.
But the surest measure under the sun
is what in your lifetime
for others you've done.

Ruth Smeltzer

Software Review

OS/2 Warp

Review by: Nicholas Klak, Tampa PC Users Group

International Business Machines, better known as IBM., has continued to try to assert dominance in the personal computer market. OS2, in its several versons, represents an attempt at capturing the operating system market for personal computers. OS2 version 3/warp is the latest attempt.The selling price at most computers stores is about seventy dollars.The Microsoft Corporation with its DOS and Windows versions has dominated the operating system market for most of the 1980's and 1990's. Every computer used must have an operating system. Which one will be your choice?

A review of OS2 could be made without reference to the issue of Windows 95, but that hardly seems realistic. Windows 3.xx and Windows 95 are real and they have the numbers to dominate the market. What then, is the value of OS2. Does the public need one more review of this product?

Unless you have been in a large box for the last two years or are completely unaware of computers, you are aware of the Windows 95 vs OS2 system fight. OS2 is here now. Tons of software has been written for Windows 3.xx and Windows 95. Much less has been written for OS2.Both Windows 95 and OS2 have a 32 bit operating system. Temper that with the reality that you must have 32 bit software to take advantage of this speed. That will not be a cheap switch. What about running our present software? That, I think, is one of the important considerations. What will run on the new systems? I have peeked at the Windows 95 literature. It will run our old software in 16 bit mode, but you must have at least a 386 DX/ 33 machine. What about OS2? What does it offer?

I decided to approach this review from a different position than I had previously seen. That is, the position of the minimum requirements possible as listed by the manufacturer. Windows 95 recommends at least a 486 SX with four megabytes of memory. I have several computers and I decided not to entrust the new operating system to my computer in everyday use. The concept of reviewing OS2 on a minimum machine was, therefor, a convenient scenario. Windows 95 requires a 386 DX be used if it was a fast one. (No 386 SX allowed here.) OS2 requires a 386 SX or DX with four megebytes of ram as its minimum. I decided to use a Packard Bell 386 SX /20 with four megabytes of memory and eighty megabytes of hard drive space freed up. I was determined to find out if OS2 version 3 with warp could operate effectively at this level.

I benchmarked my Packard Bell 386/20 SX, at "16" using Norton Utilities. Not a good start and a portent of things to come. The box containing OS2 Warp is about the size and heft of a desk top dictionary. Not the big one in the library, but the kind you have on your shelf at home. My OS2 package contained twelve disks for the basic installation. This took

See **OS/2 Warp**.....*Continued on Page 6*

OS/2 Warp.....*Continued from Page 5*

over one and a half hours to complete. Also in the package were several printer disks and several video disks. A bonus pack of programs was also included. The" Bonus Pak" included a fax program, Internet connection program, multimedia programs and IBM Works. IBM Works is a sort of expanded Microsoft Works. The advertisement on the box exclaimed that OS2 enhances your existing DOS and windows programs. What a friendly and all inclusive statement!

The installation was smooth and nearly flawless. One disk had to be reset, (started at a different spot) but after one and a half hours the "duel boot" system was installed. This duel boot allows the use of OS2, DOS and Windows programs to be used. Indeed, I ran several DOS programs at the same time. Actually they were taking turns being active which is different from actually working at the same time.

I also installed IBM Works. It has a word processor, database, spreadsheet, charting, forms and several other features.This installation took about fifteen minutes. Ten megabytes of disk space was used to hold the program.

Boot up time for OS2 on my machine was about four minutes. It seemed longer. The time needed to get the "program manager" for Windows up was another two minutes. DOS programs were installed automatically with an icon for each one. I ran my old,"New Print Shop"and tested it for a speed comparison. It took only sixteen second to load. I then loaded a ready made sign, "garage sale". It loaded instantly. Printing it out on my Hewlett Packard 500 ink jet printer, took seven minutes. This same job running under a straight DOS system can be done in about three minutes. Changing printers under OS2 is accomplished by selecting the printer icon on the desktop. Interrupting a printing job to change printers or assignments causes problems. The "spooler" of the printing mode will not allow any new activity until the previous activity is done. It appears that OS2 has all the faults of Windows Print Manager. You must wait for all the printing jobs to be completed before a proper shutdown can occur. There probably is a way around this but I did not find it in the time I reviewed this. The spooler can, and should, be turned off. Running the same Print Shop program, mentioned above, as a DOS program in Windows under OS2, was a nightmare. It took sixty minutes to print most of the garage sale sign. Printing was reduced to three second bursts every five minutes. My screen saver kicked in and I was flying (stumbling) blind. System reset was my only alternative. At that point I terminated the printing attempt.

" IBM Works looked like a nice program", I thought. "Here at last was a 32 bit program written directly for this operating system." My hopes were quickly dashed. It was sluggish to say the least. Any changes were made at a snails pace. It was now evident to me that OS2 would not work under the minimum requirements advertized by IBM. Sorry about that but that is the bold bad truth. I know others who are using OS2 with success but I have concluded that it takes more of a machine than a 386 SX with four megabytes of ram.

Uninstalling OS2 from my system was an undocumented adventure. The manual gives instruction on "selective" uninstall, not a complete uninstall. Nothing within the program allows a complete uninstall. A partial removal of fonts, etc. is allowed but nothing more complete. I guess IBM. never thought anyone would? Fortunately I did have Norton Commander on the hard drive. I went to the DOS programs after boot up to began deletion. There was a full screen edition of my old standby utility, "Norton Commander." Already I felt better. OS2 had not saved a backup of my autoexec.bat and config.sys files. I did, however, have backup files which had been kept by my Norton Utilities program. I renamed both of those files with the proper extender. Manual deletion of the OS2 files was accomplished. A reboot of my machine brought back the Windows 3.1 system I previously had.

Please be advised that my experiences with OS2 ver3.0/warp was on a low powered machine. This, however was supposed to do the job. The end line is that it did not. Most operations were so long in time as to be useless. Will I install it in a faster machine? I doubt it. Perhaps I am too intrenched with Microsoft to switch.

Warp'd Humor

Top 10 Reasons IBM is buying Lotus

10. IBM Finance could not run their Visicalc spreadsheets in OS/2 Warp.
9. IBM wants to show Microsoft that they have better Antitrust lawyers.
8. IBM thought they were buying the auto company.
7. Lotus CEO Jim Manzi mooned Lou Gerstner on the Lotus Home Page.
6. IBM's own email product, ccProfs, never caught on.
5. It was the easiest way for IBM to acquire copies of Windows 95.
4. Bill Gates double-dared Lou Gerstner.
3. Lotus Warp rhymes with basketball guard Otis Thorpe.
2. IBM will rename Lotus' spreadsheet program to 1-2-3.3 billion.
1. The Notes server in Armonk is down.

Reprinted from I/O Port newsletter of Tulsa Computer Society

Software Review

MapLinx for Windows

Review by: William F. LaMartin, Tampa PC Users Group

MapLinx for Windows is a database mapping program that will plot on a United States map the locations of any data you may have containing a zip code field. It is obviously targeted at sales and marketing people. But its street price of $89 - $99 makes it accessible to anyone interested in maps and data.

It imports from most major database applications, like *Access, Approach, dBase, Lotus 1-2-3, Paradox*, or just a plain comma delimited list of fields in a collection of data records. So getting data to plot should be no problem.

It has built in integration with programs like *GoldMine, Maximizer*, and Pro*Phone*. Its use with ProPhone is one of the applications that caught my attention. From *ProPhone*, I simply select those phone numbers of interest (typically gathered by some search), send them to *MapLinx*, and get my graphical representation.

Taking our user group database from several months back, MapLinx produced the plot you see on this page of our members in Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties. I then added the labels indicating the number of members per zip code. The numbers add up to less than our total because all family members are counted as one entry for the plot.

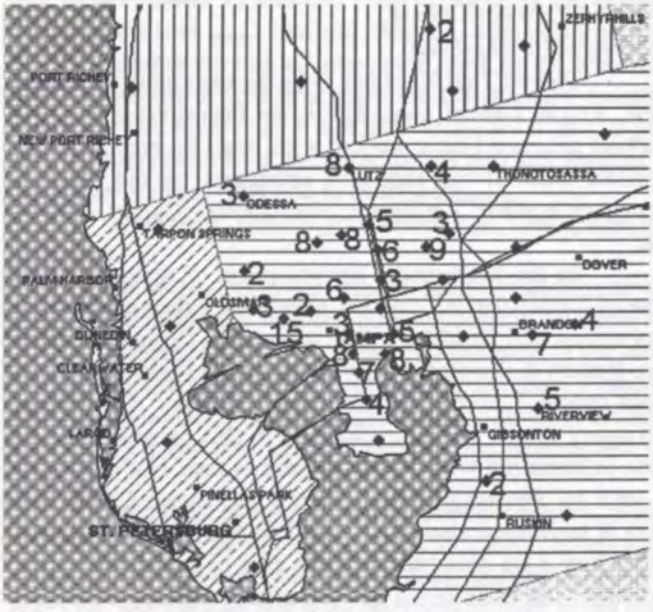
Now what sort of things can be done with this map on screen. First, let me say that it looks much better on the computer screen than in this printout. I can zoom-in and zoom-out with my view. I can select any region with a selection rectangle. Then the map acts like a database and provides me with whatever information is in the database for each of the records associated with those diamonds in the selected area. For our user group that is basically just address, telephone number, and date of membership. I could do the reverse procedure. Search that database from MapLinx for a particular name, then have *MapLinx* label that person's location on the map.

One very useful feature is being able to measure distances on the map. For example, I could choose a potential meeting site, then use that as the center of a circle and determine how many members were in , say, a 5 mile radius, or a ten mile radius. You can, of course, see the usefulness of this in dispatching services. For, given a zip code, *MapLinx* will label it on the map. You can then, using the distance feature, expand the measuring circle from that zip code until you encompass the nearest hospital, service center, post office, or whatever other type of locations you used *MapLinx* to represent on the map.

This program is not like a word processor or a drawing program. There isn't really much to learn. It is easy to use and works well. The smallest boundary lines it draws are county boundaries—which on the US map scale are quite small areas. But if you desire to see the actual zip code boundaries, then for $99 more you can have that too.

MapLinx Co., 5068 W. Plano Pkwy, Plano, TX 75093-5099. Phone: 214 231 1400. Fax: 214-248-2690

List price: $149 Street price $89 - $99



Each diamond represents the center of an area code where at least one **Tampa PC Users Group** family resides. The numbers indicate how many families are in a particular area code. No number equals one family.

QmodemPro offers multithreaded file transfers under Win 95

Mustang Software Inc. will ship a Windows 95 version of QmodemPro on August 24 that uses 32-bit multithreading to enhance file-transfer rates even when minimized on the task bar.

Available until the end of September for $129 retail or $49 as an upgrade, QmodemPro supports Telephony API and Mail API and is an Object Linking and Embedding 2.0 client. The product includes a BASIC-like script language for customizing, macro keys, a host mode, support for 35 terminal emulations, and 11 file-transfer protocols. A graphics viewer for reviewing GIF, BMP and JPEG files is also included.

Mustang Software, in Bakersfield, Calif. is at 800-999-9619.

Software Review

Arts & Letters SpaceAge - CD Rom



Review by: Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group

!Wow! That word has to be the beginning of this review. Arts & Letters SpaceAge is the fastest most versatile drawing program I have worked with, and I do include in my opinion most of the topnotch programs on the market. SpaceAge is a 3 in 1 software: Multimedia - Clipart - Drawing.

In the Multimedia Encyclopedia of SpaceAge you have all the detailed information, slides, and videos about space exploration and its history. The subjects to explore are endless: History & People (you can listen to their famous speeches about space), Launch Vehicles, Space Centers, The Future, and many more. The Encyclopedia in this program has all these information with a click of your mouse. Not only am I amazed by SpaceAge but apparently the Space Center and Nasa is impressed also as indicated on the cover of the programs box. I am delighted with the ease of usage within this program. The main menu has big picture buttons with each topic written right below it. The SpaceAge Theater button gives you a choice of running a slide show or watching a video. Actual photographic pictures of famous space history with narrations will let you re-live exciting explorations in outer space in our country and around the world.

Since SpaceAge is a 3 in 1 Software you receive 2 manuals with the software. One gives you detailed instructions how to use SpaceAge Encyclopedia and Multimedia, the other tells you all about the Drawing program and how to use the clipart, including props and scenery to create presentations. Both manuals have lots of pictures to explain one feature or another. Those manuals are very helpful with all their hints and tricks how to create your own scenery or to move around in this program, but SpaceAge is so easy to maneuver that you will install it and go your own way for quite a while before you remember the manuals. The On-Line Help and On-Line Glossary are so extensive with lessons, samples, and detailed description that you might forget to check out the manuals.

The Arts & Letter Drawing program has a new feature (at least it was new for me) called Flex-Art which make your creations come alive. It is so much fun to use it and to change your object movements. Look at my little astronauts. I duplicated the one standing up and changed the duplication into the one bending down. The possibilities of creations are endless with this feature and it is amazing how the body parts blend together after you changed their positions. Space stations or rockets can be taken apart, objects can be placed into the hands of astronauts - there must be hundreds of variations to use this feature called Flex-Art. Now this is fun! And I have to mention this one important aspect of this program. When I edited and changed objects and parts around, the redraw of the scenery or picture were fast. My frustration with other programs in that field was mounting, but Arts & Letters Drawing program proved it - re-draw while editing can be swift. Hundreds of space and other clip-art let you design your own space station. Included ready made props and scenery let you create instant art in minutes.

Arts & Letters main program with over 10,000 clip-arts is called Arts & Letters Express (which I ordered right away while checking out SpaceAge for this review). If you are interested Arts & Letters also has a WarBirds and Dinosaur program set up in the same fashion as SpaceAge and you can contact Computer Support Corporation to receive a FREE demo CD Rom which will give you a guided tour of each program plus their complete Drawing program to use right away. Just the demo disk is quite impressive and entertaining.

You of course do need a CD Rom, sound card, Windows 3.1 or higher, and a 386 CPU - preferable 486 with this version. There is also a disk version on the market but be prepared to have a lot of free hard drive space. Get the FREE demo CD Rom to check out Arts & Letters products. My review does not give them justice at all because there is so much more to these programs then one short review can tell you. Computer Support Corporation 15926 Midway Road Dallas TX 75244 Tel: 214 661-8960 Fax: 214 661-5429

Arts & Letters Express - Guided Tour



Review by: Renate Marsh, Tampa PC Users Group

Here we have the most impressive CD Rom demo disk I have ever encountered. Even though it includes a complete Drawing program for you to use with many typefaces and over 400 clip-art images, this CD Rom is FREE! Just write, call or fax your desire to have this CD Rom to Computer Support Corporation and they will send you one.

This CD Rom will introduce you to the following programs: Arts & Letters Express, Arts & Letters SpaceAge, Arts & Letters Dinosaurs, Arts & Letters WarBirds and of course the complete program of Arts & Letters Draw which can be activated and used by you right after the installation. The Guided Tour installation of Arts & Letters Express gives you an installation choice of 3 languages: English, German, and Swedish. As a born Berliner, I had to install the German version and it was quite impressive to follow the guided tour in my native language.

I am supposed to write only a short paragraph about this CD Rom and there is no way to give you all the fantastic details in a short little paragraph. Get in contact with Com-

puter Support Corporation and get your own free CD Rom. Arts & Letters Draw is quite powerful with its Drag and Drop feature and with its instant art using ready made scenery and props. The Draw program includes many features you only would normally find in a very expensive Desktop Publishing or Draw program.

Their main purpose with this CD Rom is to draw your attention to their programs, especially Arts & Letters Express which is a very uncomplicated DeskTop Publishing program. Easily a rival of the many desktop software that are out there. It has a complete color and image management which can be combined with various sound effects. The guided tour shows you all its capabilities. What impressed me the most, one can turn a straight standing man into a jogger with selecting parts of the legs and arms and rearranging them into a running position. In the SpaceAge, Dinosaur, and WarBirds guided tour, it demonstrates the same with the rockets, dinosaurs, and airplanes. And of course, I have a full functional Draw program where I did try out some of the creations I have seen on those guided tours. Get your pen, fax, or phone going to order this CD Rom for yourself; tell them you heard about their free CD Rom in our club newsletter. After viewing the CD Rom guided tour, and you order the program Arts & Letters Express which comes with over 10,000 clip-art images (cost $99.00), register right away and you will receive an Arts & Letter Typography CD Rom with over 1000 fonts again for FREE. Arts & Letters software are great and Computer Support Corp. do offer us quite a bargain.

Computer Support Corp. 15926 Midway Rd Dallas TX 75244
Tel.: (214) 661-8960 Fax: (214) 661-5429
System Requirements: 386 SX or better - CD Rom drive at least 4MB Ram (8MB recommended) Windows 3.1 or greater Mouse or other pointing device

Open Letter..... *Continued from Page 3*

The US will continue to dominate the Software Industry — with or without Microsoft.

The US software industry, led by Microsoft, is the clear global leader. As a matter of fact, the top 10 software companies in the world are US companies. Let's take that incredible economic advantage into the next century. Let's make sure that Windows 95 provides a fair opportunity for innovative products such as Delphi and Sidekick. This will help customers, increase the rate of innovation, and, in the long run, profit Microsoft. It will strengthen the US software industry and Microsoft. Most of all it will help build the vision that you among others have been pursuing for the two last decades: a computer on every desk and in every home.

Mr. Manzi, refocus your efforts. Mr. Gates, take the high road.

So, to conclude, Mr. Manzi, please refocus your efforts. You should keep your criticism to yourself; you have no place to complain about Mr. Gates or Microsoft. Your anti-competitive practices are the worst in the industry. I predict that your Notes and Smartsuite customers are going to increasingly worry about your commitment to open systems and innovation.

Mr. Gates, in the name of the software industry, please provide leadership by making Windows 95 a level playing field where all can fairly compete and succeed. We will all get behind you, and we'll all put more creativity to work as we continue developing the best software in the world. Out of courts of law and government intervention!

[Mr. Kahn is Chairman of Borland and CEO of Starfish.]
(Editor Note: Originally published in the Wall Street Journal, this open letter was down loaded from a Compuserve forum where it had been placed for republication.)

"SnagIt" Snags Anything

Tulsa Computer Society (APCUG)

SnagIt is a very handy image capture utility which will capture anything from a total screen image to a single icon. The evaluation copy is fully functional with a help file that is outstanding. In the May issue of "PC Computing", this utility was given a 5 star rating. Although this is a "Windows" program, it is possible to capture full screen DOS images as well. This process is a bit complicated but by following the directions in the help file it is manageable.

This program works somewhat like using the print screen option to send an image to the clipboard, however, the versatility is much more advanced. The output can be sent directly to your printer, the clipboard or a BMP file. The fantastic part is that you are not limited to just full screen capture. Choices vary from the previous to region, entire window, last active window or the window client area. The window client area allows you to "Snag" the window without boarders, title bar or menus. This is just the click of the button when this input method is selected. The title screen is such a capture. Image output can be monocrome, color or dithered greyscale. I found that using monocrome when printing to a black and white printer gave the best results.

Brian Livingston states that **"SnagIt is the utility that "Microsoft"** forgot." If Mr. Livingston (the father of how to use Windows) gives this a resounding thumbs up then who are we to argue. I used "WinZip" to install this program and therefore the two files, exe and hlp, take a mere 196K of hard drive space. There are other associated files that you can install or by keeping the zip file available they can be accessed with "WinZip".

SnagIt is in the software library of AOL as SnagIt22.zip, through the Internet at address ftp://garbo.uwasa.fi/windows/util/snagit16.zip or from the TCS bulletin board as SnagIt22.zip. The registration information is from a region image capture on the program's information screen. The $59 fee to the shareware author seems a little high to me, but if you have more than just occasional need to do screen captures this program is as versitle and easy to use as you will find. Try the evaluation copy and have a snagin good time!

Special Interest Groups Info

Microsoft Access SIG

The next sig meeting for September will be announced in next months Bits of Blue and on the BBS. There will not be an Access SIG in August due to vacations.

For more info call *Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.*

Hardware & Software SIG

Connie Kincaid lead the Hardware SIG on June 27th, and the Software SIG on Tuesday, July 25, 1995. She reported there was a very good turn out and she received many request for repeats of these informative SIGs. Watch the announcements in the Bits of Blue and the BBS for schedules on these proposed future meetings.

For More Information contact: Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Internet SIG

The next scheduled meeting will be Monday, August 7th. It will be conducted jointly by Charles Howe and Dan Guy. Dan will start his freshman year at Wilkes University in September. He will navigate the Web. Call Charles for additional info at (813) 968-1207.

Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.

Charles Howe -HOWE.COSTECH@INTNET.NET

OS/2 SIG

OS/2 SIG, Next meeting: will be: Tuesday, August 8th, 1995 at 5:45 p.m. Location: IBM Lakepointe One Bldg., Room 436 BE SURE TO SIGN IN. SIG Leader will be John Lucas Subjects: Customizing the Desktop and REXX programing.

Contact: John Lucas
JKLUCAS@MAILSERV.MOFFITT.USF.EDU)
OR
John Meroth at (813) 831-7878 anytime except 6-8pm.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL.
MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
P.O. BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- CompUSA
- IBM
- PC Warehouse
- Custom Computer Wholesale
- Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Realtron - Appraisal Magic

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

Welcome New Members:

Doug Atkins
Julian Garcia
Cynthia Gomez
Terry Hubner
Margie Martin
Justin Yore
Adam Yore

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

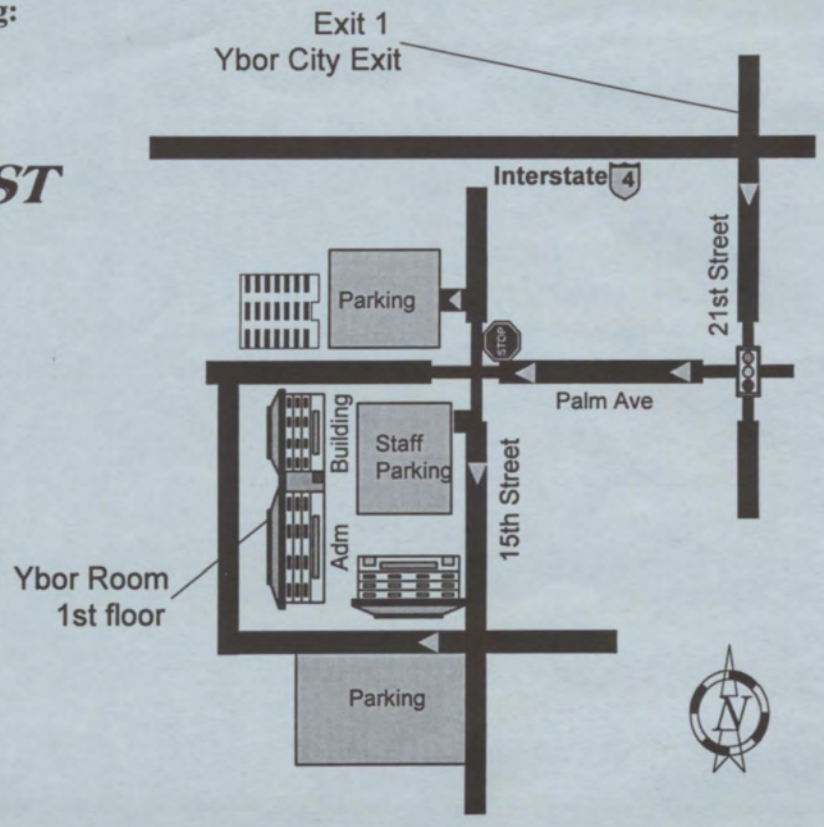
Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

Agenda for August 9th Meeting:

Presentation by

MYSTERY GUEST

GUARANTEED TO INFORM, EDUCATE & KEEP YOU INTERESTED



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8, No. 9 September, 1995

MEETING

DATE: September 13th, 1995
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ybor Campus - Ybor Room
(See map on last page.)

Meeting Agenda

Windows 95 Overview and Q&A Session

Bring your computer questions, bring your tips and tricks. This will be one of those meetings where **everyone will get a chance to talk**, whether you want to ask for a solution to a problem you may be having or to share your knowledge with others in the group.

Come and enjoy the education!

NOTICE:
The Bits of Blue BBS has moved and the new dial in numbers are:

Line 1: (813)-980-1295
Line 2: (813)-980-2725

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Association of Personal Computer User Groups
APCUG
Member

*** * 1995 OFFICERS * ***

PRESIDENT: Harvey Bruneau 985-3338
VICE PRES : William LaMartin 251-3817
TREASURER:Tom Cone 222-8925
MEMBER AT LARGE: Connie Kincaid 661-8185
SECRETARY: Bruce Register 968-8170
APPOINTED (*Volunteers*)
EDITOR: Marylee Bruneau 985-3338
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders 989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone 222-8925

BBS -- (813)980-1295 Line 1 (813)980-2725 Line 2

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII text file, Microsoft Write or Microsoft Word to the editor at 9402 Hidden Ridge Place, Tampa, Florida 33637 or upload to the BBS.

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27.00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, Marylee Bruneau at (813) 985-3338, for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with PageMaker 5.0 from Aldus Corp. and Corel Draw from Corel Systems.

Association of Shareware Professionals
Member

SECRETARY'S REPORT

TPCUG MEETING 8/9/95, 6 PM
HCC Ybor Room Auditorium
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Bruneau (Harvey) called the meeting to order.

Miscellaneous Comments and Information were given:

Harvey Bruneau shared Hurricane Erin preparedness. He stressed the importance of being serious about equipment and data. Losses can occur from wind, storm, rain, or sprinkler systems; or, maybe even static electricity in the building through the metal superstructure or conduits. He emphasized backup systems. UPS and dedicated plugs are just some of the terms that have familiarity.

Planning is required for most ongoing systems before making a cold splash into W95. Some of your previous applications may not run in W95 without adding this or that software that you previously had within your software system. Some may elect to increase hard drive capacity so as to accommodate a dual boot, W95 and Windows 3.11. W95 will only run on Intel or clones. Other platforms gives one an opportunity for other considerations.

Many interesting opinions were expressed regarding many applications.

(Secretary's opinion—Some people seemed to be polarized toward W95 or OS/2 Warp. Sometimes these strong opinions become almost argumentive as emotional preference is aggressively manifested; Our President, Harvey, seems to be exceptional at keeping peace while allowing everyone their say One of the many benefits of TPCUG is the openness of the expressions by the members. We are exposed to other viewpoints. We are then able to have better understanding before making decisions).

Much open and frank dialogue permeated the meeting. Several members stated that they thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the broad participation. Several expressed opinions regarding the future of the computer world. All comments were enlightening and confidence builders.

Someone suggested that TPCUG could set up a 286 in a retirement facility to fulfill the desire to provide community service. Volunteers are needed to do it; suggestions such as this are great and hopeful but "we need doers" according to one opinion. The interface by individual members reflected enthusiasm during the break. One member stated the "refreshing sight to see pairs, threes, etc., groups exchanging information, assistance and fellowship." Sharing info and ideas are just one of the great benefits of TPCUG, Harvey stated.

See **Minutes.....***Continued on Page 3*

Minutes.....*Continued from Page 2*

Harvey reported that GTE has offered to present ISDN at their downtown GTE building. More later as plans develop. Several members responded with delight. Look for messages on the bulletin board.

Some members have avoided using the TPCUG BBS. Do not hesitate to try it. You cannot break it. You cannot hurt it. You will enjoy the experience. If you have stage fright, just call one of those most willing helpers listed in the back of the BITS OF BLUE. Any of them will be glad to talk you through the access. In helping me, they have even "fired up" their own computer while talking to me over the phone. They would ask "Do you see....."? etc. They really like to assist you. Do not hesitate!

Miscellaneous comments were "stay away from 5 volts and 60 Pentium", "Lotus Approach is better than ACCESS", "Be prepared to upgrade; but you may continue with your present system and may not need to go to the latest technology. If you need it; do it. If you do not need it; you might want to consult you pocket book before jumping in." Other comments were also appreciated.

PRESENTATION:
Tom Cone, Treasurer, shared a tool that he finds useful. Creator, V6.0, writes programs. It is a "code generator". It is not particularly sophisticated and is very easy to use. Tom presented highlights of the program rather than giving training detailed. He likes the program and uses it in building report programs. You tell it what kind of information you want to track and the type of screen you want. Creator then builds the program. You add fields as you desire. Creator is a commercial program that sells for $99 MOL (More or Less).

CONGRATULATIONS TO DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

Pagekeeper	Steve Schoeneck
CD Murder Mystery	Wil Goble

The next regular meeting of TPCUG will be Wednesday, September 13, 1995, 6 PM at Ybor Room, Administrative Building, Ybor City HCC. Come and bring someone, your spouse, pharmacist, neighbor or friend, etc.



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Software Review
Quick Books by Intuit

Review by Jamie Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

As an owner of a small home business, I have always dreaded the bookkeeping chores. My normal mode is to collect a pile of receipts, bills, invoices and other scraps of paper into various piles. Once or twice a month, I look them over, pay any that I owe, send out bills to any clients that haven't been billed in a while, and then return them all to the pile again. Maybe I have scribbled "Paid" on some, or "Past Due" on others, but usually I end up spending most of my bookkeeping time trying to figure out what is going on. When it gets too confusing, I stuff it all in the file cabinet and hope that it will clear itself up in time for taxes.

Luckily for me, the folks at Intuit seem to be a sympathetic group. They put together QuickBooks for Windows for all the small businesses and their piles. QuickBooks is an easy to use, small business accounting package that makes it much easier to track everything the small business owner needs to follow, and more. All without requiring you to learn cryptic accounting terms or magical number concepts.

Users of Quicken will find the look and feel of QuickBooks familiar. QuickBooks uses a "paper form" interface wherever it can. Filling out a check or an invoice on the screen is just like filling one out on paper. QuickBooks also uses the QuickFill feature to eliminate duplicate typing, by finding information from elsewhere in the system and placing it where it thinks you need it. If you have already been using Quicken for your small business, QuickBooks will even import your files.

Installation and startup are quite easy with the help of the online QuickTour demo and the Getting Started manual. Between the two of these aids, you will quickly have all the information you need about your company, your clients, and your vendors, entered into the system. After that, you are ready to roll. While you are learning the program, Qcard pop-ups attached to each dialog box will help you along.



QuickBooks running under Windows95. New users are helped along by the Qcard help attached to each dialog box.

See **QuickBooks..***Continued on Page 4*

QuickBooks.....*Continued from Page 3*

QuickBooks handles all of your accounts receivable, accounts payable, inventory, budgets, checking, and many more things that I will never use. It provides you with an easy way to enter new items, and easy to understand reminders when old items need attention. It has a considerable amount of smarts concerning recurring bills and invoices, letting you reuse the information and prompting you when you forget one. It remind you of overdue accounts, both yours and the other guy's, and even helps you cut a check if it is you that needs to pay up. Output is easily customizable, from your invoices and checks to the plethora of reports. QuickBooks prints on most of the standard laser printer and dot matrix checks and invoice forms. They are even nice enough to give you a couple of samples and a catalog so you can order more. You can also view your plummeting sales figures in graphs and charts for the number impaired and even print them out to share with a friend.

Overall, QuickBooks should more than adequately meet the needs of any small to medium sized business. I have used it for several months and have had no problems getting everything out of it that I needed, and then some. My bills are being paid on time and my clients are getting billed twice as often as before. A happy situation for me. I am even looking forward to tax time when I export all of my year's accounts straight into TurboTax and hit the "Where's My Refund?" button. And with the available payroll supplement, QuickPay, I might even hire someone to come clear out all these little piles of paper.

Jamie Clark is a senior technical writer at Dun & Bradstreet Software and owns Mighty Halfred Publishing, a small desktop publishing and computer consulting business. Visit http://www.halfred.com or write jamie@halfred.com.

Software Review

SPIDER-MAN

CARTOON MAKER

Review by Scott and Jimmy Lawson,
Tampa PC Users Group

Knowledge Adventure has a large selection of educational and entertainment software available. Spider-Man Cartoon Maker definitely falls into the entertainment category. The computer skills needed are minimal. The program is easy to use. Most kids will not need the manual.

The program is Windows 3.1+ based on a CD-ROM. The installation gave two options, playing off the CD with a small directory on the Hard Drive, or fully installing onto the Hard Drive. The minimum hardware requirements for software are a PC with Windows 3.1 or higher, MPC compatible sound card and speakers, 4 MB memory (8 MB memory recommended), and a 16 color 640 x 480 monitor (256 color SVGA recommended). If you have a microphone available, kids can store their own voices into the cartoon. I ran the program on a 486-66 MHz with 16 MB memory, 2X CD-ROM, and a SVGA monitor. The program ran from the 2X CD-ROM with no problems.

Simple icons lead the player through the act of creating their own cartoons. A thumb down icon will undo the last command entered. A question mark icon will start audio help, explaining in detail any other selected icon or item. There is a large selection of items to place into the cartoons. These items are separated into libraries. The background library starts the cartoon by selecting the scene. A stamp library is filled with foreground items. There is also an animation library, with Spider-Man and his villains. A moving object library has cars, planes and other vehicles. Finally a trace library, so that the



player can color some items themselves. A snapshot menu of available items in each library makes selecting easy. In addition to placing and moving graphics, audio may also be added. Music and sound effects from a library can be added, as well as your own recorded voice or sounds.

I know that my opinion is not the final word where games are concerned so I will let my son, Jimmy (age 10), finish the review. Spider-Man is his second favorite comic book character, after Venom (one of Spider-Man's Allies and Foes).

I though that Spider-Man Cartoon Maker was a very fun game. I really loved the graphics. They looked just like the comic books. The background scenery was also just like the comic book. One of my favorite things about the program was that unlike other drawing software, the characters moved. The animation made the program really cool. The program also has a trace library to make customized characters. I liked how you can also have the comic strip replay by itself. There were some things that I didn't like. It took too much time to display some graphics. Some of the screens were hard to get out of. There is no icon to erase things that you don't want. You have to start the screen over if you really mess-up. I think it will sell good. I would buy it.

Knowledge Adventure
4502 Dyer Street
La Crescenta, CA 91214
(818) 542-4200

Software Review

3D Home Architect

by Broderbund

Review by Katherine Powell,
Tampa PC Users Group

Having taken mechanical drawing and being a "do-it-yourself" type homeowner, this package appealed to me right away. Designing a dream home or even just making simple changes to my current residence would be fun. 3D Home Architect had the added appeal of providing the interactive 3D views and editing, and I wanted to see my current house from all these different angles and try "what if" scenarios out from the safety of my keyboard and mouse.

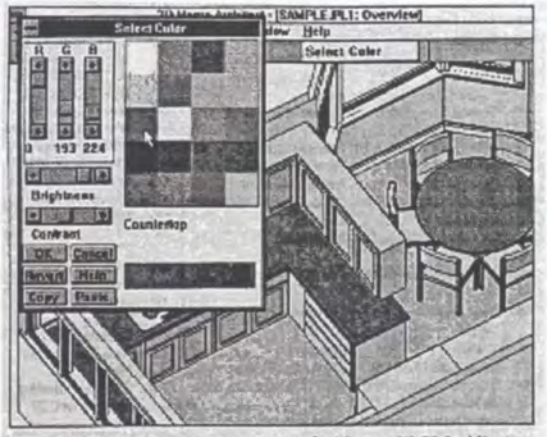
Running under Microsoft Windows 3.1, your minimum system requirements will be an IBM 386 or greater with at least 4 MB of RAM and a VGA display, however a 486 is recommended and a color SVGA display is highly recommended. The manual clearly states that a mouse is essential, "If you haven't got one, you cannot use the program". I installed it on a Pentium 90 with 8 MB of RAM and an SVGA monitor.

Installation was quick and easy. Once loaded, I was able to double click that new icon and start drawing immediately. Or was I? Although the interface was very nicely laid out, my first attempts were somewhat frustrating. OK, they were unidentifiable masses of walls and objects. I figured at this point I should at least *look* at the manual. This is one software package that requires some reading invested. The manual was excellent! It provided a tutorial in the second chapter that was well worth going through.

After the tutorial, I felt like an expert. I began my project by drawing my house. It started out great and I loved how easy it was to get the basic walls and doors up. Once again, I found myself getting frustrated though as I began to do more and more complicated things. It took all day to play with the package and learn the limitations and nuances. Then I was an expert!

There is furniture and fixtures available to help make your plan more realistic. There were limited selections, though, and some of the furniture was not sizable. You can color these items for even more realism and the color selector was quite good. However, the number of colors that you can assign to your furniture, walls, floors, etc., was limited as well and I found this annoying. The package has limited decorating capabilities but, in all fairness, this was not what it was intended to do.

The real strength of this software package came to light as I began to play with the 3D options. You can view your plan from nearly any angle. There are camera objects that put you inside the rooms and from there you can modify colors and some sizes and other specifics. There are elevation views from any side or cross section you choose. Finally, there is an overview of the plan that shows you the 3-dimensional plan from above, below, behind...anywhere you wish!



POINT-AND-CLICK: Mouse your way to a perfect home with 3D Architect.

Other interesting features include the PlanChek™ option that goes through your plan and makes suggestions for changes you may wish to consider. You can generate a materials list of everything you will need based on your plan. This is in a spreadsheet form that includes a column for prices, so you could print out the list and begin checking prices at the hardware store! The SmartParts™ technology makes putting things together faster and stops you from doing things you shouldn't, like putting a door where it can't be properly installed.

There is a companion booklet with sample plans that are also installed as plans for you to view through the software. These are handy to view for ideas, or to see how something complicated was handled.

Although there are limitations, and there was some frustration in learning to use this software, it is a very worthwhile package that I plan to continue to become an expert at.

AOL Users

America Online has a beta version of its World Wide Web access available online now. Located using the KEYWORD: WWW you can download this Version 2.5 free of charge. Remember, you must do it in the window in this area or you will be charged. By the way its only for Windows. It works GREAT!, and is simple to use.

It may also be installed in conjunction with your present **AOL** software. Best of all there is no extra charge for this Internet access. What a great way to experience this new technology.

Special Interest Groups Info

Microsoft Access SIG

The next sig meeting will be Thursday, Sept. 21, 1995, at 6:00pm. **NEW LOCATION!**
Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and 1/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the **Reflectone bldg**. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER..
You must call to register in advance with Connie if you plan to attend this meeting.
For more info call *Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.*

Hardware & Software SIG

Connie Kincaid will lead a Hardware SIG on Tues. Oct. 24th at 6:00 p.m. Location: Reflectone (see above for directions)
The Software SIG is scheduled for Tues. Nov. 28th at 6:00pm. Location Reflectone.
You must call to register in advance with Connie if you plan to attend either or both of these SIG meetings.

For more info call:: *Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.*

Internet SIG

Contact Charles Howe at 968-1207 for information on date, time and agenda for the next Internet SIG meeting.

Charles Howe -HOWE.COSTECH@INTNET.NET

Graphics SIG

Will Goble will lead a Graphics SIG on Monday Sept. 25, 1995 at 6:00pm. Location: Reflectone (See Access SIG info for directions.)
You must call to register in advance with Connie if you plan to attend this meeting.
For more info call *Connie Kincaid--661-8185 - Leave a Message.*

OS/2 SIG

OS/2 SIG, Next meeting: will be: Tuesday, Sept. 12, 1995 at 5:45 p.m. Location: IBM Lakepointe One Bldg., Room 436 BE SURE TO SIGN IN. SIG Leader will be John Lucas

Contact: John Lucas
JKLUCAS@MAILSERV.MOFFITT.USF.EDU)
OR
John Meroth at (813) 831-7878 anytime except 6-8pm.

Genealogy SIG

We are in the process of forming a Geanealogy SIG to be lead by Jenny Lind Olin.
If interested please leave a message for Harvey on the BBS or call 985-3338 and leave a message.

ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network)
Presentation by GTE

DATE: **Tuesday, October 17, 1995**
TIME: **6:00pm**
PLACE: **GTE**

For further information see BBS or call Connie Kincaid at 661-8185

FRIENDS OF THE USER GROUP:

We acknowledge the following firms for their support:

- IBM
- Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
- Reflectone

We also acknowledge the following national software vendors for their excellent demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group.

- Access Software
- Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Borland
- Corel Systems
- Grolier
- Knowledge Advenenture
- Microsoft
- Symantec
- Traveling Software
- Wordperfect

Welcome New Members:

Donald Patzsch

and Renewals:

Erick LaMartin
John Meroth
Gary Peterson
John H. Whitcomb

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

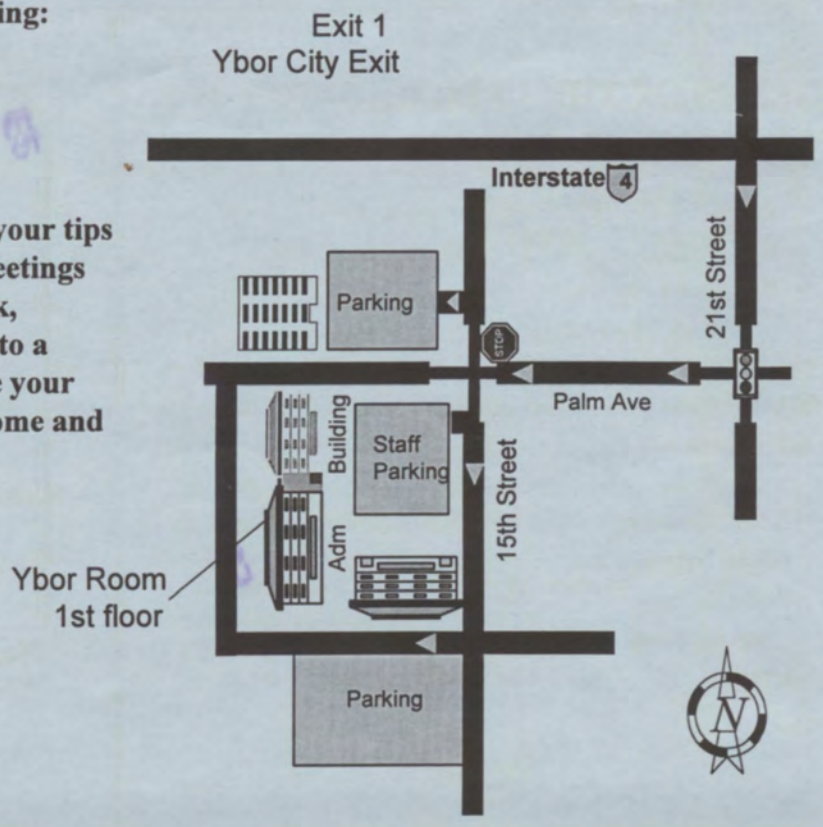
The following phone list is provided for our **Tampa PC Users Group** members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. *(Don't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!)* **TPCUG** is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	Phone No:	Day:	Time:	For help on:
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun.	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	CorelDraw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
John Lucas	948-7621	Mon-Fri.	7:30pm-8:30pm	OS/2
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

Agenda for September 13th Meeting:

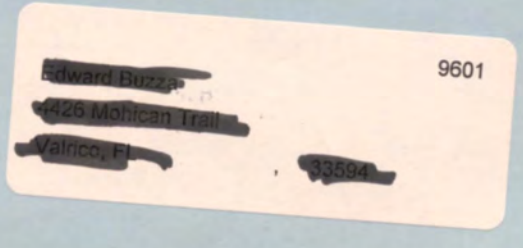
Windows 95 Overview
and
Q & A Session

Bring your computer questions, bring your tips and tricks. This will be one of those meetings where everyone will get a chance to talk, whether you want to ask for a solution to a problem you may be having or to share your knowledge with others in the group. Come and enjoy the education!



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P.O. Box 3492
Tampa, Florida 33601-3492

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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 8 No. 11 December 1995

Meeting

Date: December 13, 1995
Time 6:00 PM
Place: Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Bargain Table
(bring donations & checkbook)

Election of Officers

&

Lotus ScreenCam Presentation:
multimedia screen & sound capture
by
Harvey Bruneau

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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New Editor for Newsletter

By William LaMartin

To help Marylee Bruneau out of the bind she got herself into by taking on one or two jobs too many, I am relieving her of this one a month or two early. Does the new editor normally take over with the January newsletter, where the work is done in December, or the February newsletter, where the work is done in January? Which ever way you answer that question, I am finding that there is a bit of work involved in meeting the standard her issues of *Bits of Blue* set in the past. Luckily I have past issues to study and use their layout as a template for the layout of this issue.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel, so this issue should look a lot like past issues. I will probably make changes as I get into this and learn the ropes of setting up a newsletter. One change already is a slightly expanded map of our meeting site. Ideas from the membership about what would be of interest in our newsletter are welcome. Times change, and what was important to include five years ago may no longer be of interest to the general membership since we now have so many different sources of computer information.

With the short notice in preparing this and the fact that we have no backlog of finished reviews of software by members of our group, I asked two members, LarryAnders and Don Patzsch, to contribute articles for this issue, so that not every review is copied from another APCUG member newsletter. I hope Harvey came back from COMDEX loaded with complementary copies of software for our members to review for the newsletter.

Harvey did bring back a good bit of information from COMDEX. See

see **Newsletter**.....page 7

* * 1995OFFICERS * *

PRESIDENT. HarveyBruneau	988-0232
VICE PRES : William LaMartin	251-3817
TREASURER: Tom Cone	222-8925
MEMBER AT LARGE: ConnieKincaid	962-8799
SECRETARY: BruceRegiste	968-8170
APPOINTED (Volunteers)	
EDITOR: MarleeBruneau	988-0232
LIBRARIAN: LarryAnders	989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR: Tom Cone	222-8925

BBS 813-980-2725 Line 1 813-980-1295 Line 2

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

Permission to reproduce portions which are not specifically copyrighted is given to other computer users' groups for nonprofit use. Reprints must be unaltered; proper credit given to the author and publication; and a copy of the publication must be sent to the attention of the Bits of Blue Editor at the club address. All other reproduction is prohibited without the specific written permission of the original author.

The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	$288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27 00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

This newsletter is created with *Microsoft Word 7* and *Corel Draw 3.0*.



Member

SECRETARY'S REPORT

TPCUG MEETING 11/08/95, 6 PM
Administration Building Auditorium, HCC
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

(Thanks to Jenny Olin for taping the meeting for me in my absence at the meeting)

President HarveyBruneau called the meeting to order. Miscellaneous Comments and Information were given:

Harvey announced that the newsletter has not been published for the two previous months. His wife Marylee, is pursuing a change of professional career and has "been buried in the books" plus their computer at home had to be rebuilt, etc.

William LaMartin will be doing the newsletter in the future.

The TPCUG BBS has two numbers; 980-1295 and 980-2725.

The floor was opened for nomination for 1996 Officers. Voting will be at the December 13th meeting.

President	Connie Kincaid
Vice President	Jenny Olin
Treasurer	Will Goble
Secretary	Bruce Register
Member at Large	Margaret Petro

Some discussion was held about the duties and activities of the Board. For the last few years Harvey and Marylee have hosted the meeting at their home...etc., etc.

PRESENTATION:

Thank you William LaMartin for the presentation of Genealogy Research. William discussed how he uses the computer in genealogical research.

First he accesses the genealogical conferences available on our BBS using communication software such as *WinCommPro* or *ProComm* and downloads the conference messages in compressed QWK packet form from a TQM mail door session on the BBS. He then uses the off line mail reader *OLX for Windows* to read and respond to those messages that interest him. This process is facilitated by using OLX's search feature to search for particular names of interest.

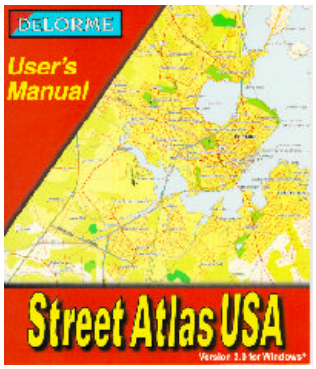
See **Minutes.....**continued on page 4

Software Review

DeLorme's Street Atlas USA® and Phone Search USA™

Review by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

I read an advertisement recently that asked the question, "ever wonder how Santa finds your house?" Well, word is he uses DeLorme's *Street Atlas USA*® 3.0 and *Phone Search USA*™ to find and map the homes for his deliveries and I can well understand that. I have personally been using *Street Atlas USA* since version 1.0 and it just keeps getting better and better. New to this 32-bit version 3.0, that takes full advantage of Windows 95, are a powerful search engine that lets you locate a specific address and ZIP code on the map, and a set of map-customization tools, which allows you to create your own maps that can be annotated and edited as needed. Also with version 3.0 they have added *Phone Search USA* as a companion program. The quality of the printed map on a 300 dpi laser printer rivals any professionally printed maps I have ever seen. When I say this I am not speaking from total inexperience. In college I studied cartography (map making) and wanted to follow that as a career path at one time. I'm glad I didn't now....I could be out of work because of this program.



If you're looking for a real neat gift for that special computer person for Christmas let me tell you a little about some stockingstuffers everyone can enjoy.

First things first, these are the system requirements:

- IBM or 100% IBM-compatible PC with 386SX or higher or 100%-compatible processor running at 33 MHz or faster.
- 4 MB RAM minimum (8 MB recommended).
- 4 MB of hard disk space.
- ISO 9660-compatible CD-ROM drive with 650 BM read capacity and Microsoft® CD-ROM extensions.
- Microsoft® -compatible printer (not plotter) recommended, with 1.5 MB printer memory for 150 or 300 dpi laser printing, 6 MB for 600 dpi.
- Microsoft Windows-compatible mouse.
- Microsoft Windows-compatible VGA card and monitor.
- Microsoft® Windows version 3.1 or later (including Windows® 95 and Windows NT™).
- MS-DOS® version 4.01 or later.

DeLorme's *Street Atlas USA* combines detailed, street-level maps of the United States with tools that rapidly locate and display them. Highways, populated places, rivers, lakes and mountains are labeled. The maps have elevation lines and tints to show you variations in topography. *Street Atlas USA* includes the address ranges of streets and marks airports, parks and other points of interest. The overview map provides a reference to the area surrounding the main map view and a legend to help you interpret map features. *Street Atlas USA* also has tools to customize, preview, layout and print maps directly or copy them to the Windows Clipboard.

In addition to the wealth of map data available, *Street Atlas USA* provides several tools to access the maps. You can locate a map by ZIP Code, by the name of a city or town, or by telephone area code and exchange. You can search for and highlight street addresses on detailed maps using the Find Address tool. You even display the ZIP Codes for any of the maps you are viewing. You can move around the maps or use the In and Out tools to show maps at higher or lower magnitudes. *Street Atlas USA* automatically provides the level of detail appropriate for the geographic area shown on each map.

Street Atlas USA 3.0 has an additional advantage: it works with DeLorme's new *Phone Search USA*. *Phone Search USA* is a digital phone directory containing over 80 million residential and business listings. You can search by name, by phone number or by business type. You can limit your search to a specific city, state, ZIP Code or area code and exchange. You can look up all the restaurants in town, find an old friend or relative, locate a client or E-mail map files to other version 3.0 users. With unlimited exporting, you can use your search results in any word processor, database or spreadsheet program. Best of all you can locate the listings on *Street Atlas USA* maps It's as if the phone book had a map for any listing.

Street Atlas USA comes on one CD-ROM while *Phone Search USA* comes on 3 CD-ROMs. Street price for each program is approximately $80. My upgrade price for each as a registered user was $39. DeLorme offers direct purchasing for $79 each program.

So, if you made your Christmas list and checked it twice consider these programs as gifts for someone whose naughty.... or nice!

(DeLorme, P.O. Box 298-205, Freeport, ME 04032, 1-800-452-5931(205), Fax: 1-800-575-2244, http: //www. delorme.com)



Minutes.....continued from page 2

He then demonstrated the use of the free form database *AskSam* to show how he saves messages of interest so that at any time in the future he may do one of *AskSam's* many different searches to relocate information in these messages. Off the genealogy topic he demonstrated other features of *AskSam*, e.g. its hypertext feature when used as a word processor (think of *AskSam* as a combination word processor and database. Back on to genealogy, he finished with a demonstration of the specialized genealogical database program *Family Tree Maker for Windows*, where one stores all the pertinent information about a family line and is then able to display or print out this information if various forms: family descendant charts in tree form or outline form, ancestor charts, and relationship tables.

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Microsoft BOB** - essential household programs, calendar, letter writer, checkbook, and more...
2. **Aldus Persuasion**- Presentation Graphic Software
3. **Outside IN** for Windows - Instant Access to any file-- View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows -Compelliong charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **Window Washer** - the Ultimate 0ptimizer for Windows with Intelligent Data Compression
6. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
7. **Partition Magic** - IBM Shrink, expand, move, and convert hard disk partitions - for OS/2 & DOS
8. **OnCmd** - On-Line Data xBase database development environment for native OS/2
9. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
10. Jump Start **Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) Windows CD
11. Jump Start **Kindergarten** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6) Win. CD
12. Jump Start **First Grade** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 5-7) Windows CD
13. **Space Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
14. **Aviation Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
15. **X-Men Cartoon Maker**- Knowledge Adventure (ages 5 & up) Windows CD.
16. **Casper Brainy Book**- Knowledge Adventure Interactive Storybook (ages 4-8) Windows CD
17. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
18. **Personal Attorney**- helps you prepare the 16 most needed legal documents.
19. **Managing your Money Plus** - Finance package, check book and more. Windows CD
20. **Managing your Money Windows** - Finance Package
21. **ECHO Lake** - Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
22. **Internet in a Box** - The complete internet solution for Windows.

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)
People with software reviews due--we need them!

Some Interesting World Wide Web Locations



http://nytimesfax.com/times.pdf	NY Times Fax
http://www.afn.org/~ifa/	Independent Florida Alligator
http://www.usf.edu/	The University of South Florida
http://www.pcworld.com/	Welcome to PC World Online
http://www.census.gov/	Census Bureau Home Page
http://www.fsu.edu/	Florida State University
http://www.ustreas.gov/treasury/bureaus/irs/irs.html	The Department of the Treasury: Internal Revenue Service
http://genealogy.org/NGS/	National Genealogical Society - Home Page
http://www.niyp.com/	NYNEX Interactive Yellow Pages - Home Page
http://www.zdnet.com/~pcmag/	PC Magazine on the Web
http://www.microsoft.com	Microsoft
http://www01.ny.us.ibm.net/friends/	Your Friends at IBM
http://www.byte.com/	BYTE Magazine
http://www.PoliticsUSA.com/	Welcome to Politics USA
http://www2.USNews.com/usnews/	Welcome to U.S. News Online
http://www.usatoday.com/	USA TODAY
http://www.pathfinder.com/@@kUDn19GLFwMAQOs@/time/timehomepage.html	TIME World Wide Home Page

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Harvey Bruneau

Change is good. Change is constant. While these statements aren't profound they are the norm in the world of computer technology, especially the PC world. Of course not everyone will agree that Win95 or OS/2 is better than DOS but everyone is entitled to their opinions. At the December meeting you will each have an opportunity to get involved in this change process. I am, of course, referring to the election of new officers for the 1996 year. They include the following positions President Vice President, Treasurer, Member at Large and Secretary. As of this writing the following were nominated President *Connie Kincaid*, VP *Jenny Olin* and *Michael Hodges*, Member at Large *Margaret Petro*, Treasurer *Will Gobble* and Secretary *Bruce Register.* Nominations will stay open until just before the voting process begins at the December meeting. We are very fortunate to have a full slate of nominations for each position. Some positions even have two nominees.

As you may all know by now, I have chosen not to run for president this year. After holding that position for six years I need to step back and let someone else lead the group. This change is good for the group and me. I thank you for allowing me to serve as your president for those many years. I also want to thank all of those volunteer board members that worked with me over the years. Were it not for them I couldn't of lasted more than one year. Additionally, Marylee has handed the position of editor over to William LaMartin in order that she can focus on attaining her A.S. degree in Nursing. This is a tremendous change and opportunity for Marylee. Please join me in wishing her the best in this endeavor. The newsletter you are reading has been designed by William LaMartin.

I wish each of you the best during the upcoming Holidays.

Comdex/Fall '95

Once again I attended Comdex "The Worlds #1 Information Technology Marketplace for Resellers and Corporate Decision Makers". Comdex/Fall is always held in Las Vegas and is their largest show/convention of the year. Armed with my press badge, a good pair of walking shoes and an insatiable appetite for knowledge I set out among the miles of aisles within the more than half a dozen sites. This year Comdex expected over 200,000 attendees. Final estimates were around 250,000. For those of you interested I have placed the keynote speeches by Lou Gerstner, Chairman & CEO of IBM, and Bill Gates, Chairman and CEO of Microsoft on the BBS as an Adobe Acrobat file call KEYNOTE.PDF.

Following are my thoughts and my experiences of Comdex/Fall '95.

Internet

Of course Internet was a hot item. The focus was predominantly on one piece of Internet, the World Wide Web. Everyone was showing their Home pages, Web browsers, HTML (HyperText Markup Language) editors or explaining the benefits of setting up an Internet account through them. However, it became evident over a couple of days that the story was not in the current state of the Web, but in fact the future of the Web. Many vendors demonstrated their new proprietary software that will be incorporated into Web pages. It is was really fascinating to see products like JAVA, HTML 3.0, VRLM and Blackbird incorporated into Web pages. The inclusion of sound, video, 3D virtual reality and other features really add a lot to a Web page. These products will raise the level of interaction with the Web, but at what cost? Currently there is a standard, HTML, which can be viewed by almost any good browser. However, Microsoft, Netscape and others have decided to add their own new extensions to HTML that will require special or proprietary Web browers or filters. I believe that these new non-standards, while beneficial, will create divisions among the Web surfers, much like the separation of DOS, Windows, Mac and OS/2 users of today. Remember change is good. These changes should be noticeable during the 1st half of 1996.

ISDN

ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) looks to be a hot prospect. ISDN is a digital phone line/network that lets you communicate at speed of 128kbps. At about five times the speed of a 28.8 modem it should be the preferred way to connect to the Internet or to telecommute to work. This standard includes support for accessing all network services, allowing voice, data, fax, video and graphics to use the same line, with all the error free performance associated with digital technology. Imagine accessing the net while having the ability receive and make phone calls simultaneously. Of course ISDN is not as cheap as a standard phone line and modem but as the demand for this technology increases the prices will drop.

If you are planning on getting an ISDN look at the BitSURFR Pro ISDN modem from Motorola. It allows you to connect your computer to the ISDN line in addition to providing you with two analog ports for phones, faxes or even an analog modem.

MPEG

MPEG (Motion Pictures Experts Group) is really going to be big in 1996. This data compression technology will allow you to play full-screen, full-motion video on your PC. Combined with other technologies, MPEG will be a boon to multimedia, video-conferencing and the Internet. While this

See **President**.....page 7

Software Review

Adobe Photoshop 3.0

Review by: Dave Garcia
The Mile High Computer Resource Organization
Denver, CO

Graphics Design Software, Adobe Systems Inc.,1585 Charleston Road, P. O. Box 7900, Mountain View, CA 94043, (415) 961-4400 Retail: $549.00 (PC Zone) Upgrades: $145.00-179.00

Overview: Comprehensive software for creating painted images, and editing scanned images.

Pros: Now supports multiple image layers, improved color control, improved interface. Cons: Long learning curve for first time users.

Requirements: 386 or 486 processor, (Pentium recommended), DOS 5.0 or higher, MS Windows 3.1 or higher, (DOS 6.0 recommended), WlN32s, 10 MB RAM (16 MB recommended), 16 MB for Windows NT, (32 MB recommended), 20 MB Hard Disk Space, 256 Color Display Adapter, (24-bit color adapter recommended), Mouse, (Sound Card & C19-ROM recommended) Optional - Scanner

Installation: Photoshop is a 32-bit application and requires the MS WIN32s subsystem. This allows 32-bit applications to run under 16-bit Windows 3.x. The setup program installs WlN32s automatically when you install Photoshop. You can install from diskettes or from the Deluxe CD-ROM, both are included. In addition to the Photoshop application, the CD-ROM contains the User Guide, Plug-in Filters, Stock Photography, Tutorial, Technical Notes, Acrobat Reader, and Tryout versions of other software.

Adobe Photoshop 3.0 offers an improved interface, and provides support for multiple image layers, new color adjustment features, and new filters. All together the changes offer greater control and keep Photoshop ahead of the image-editing pack.

The new Photoshop interface has a toolbox containing 30 different tools (two of them new), three new floating palettes (Layers, Options, and Commands), and six redesigned palettes (Brushes, Channels, Paths and three color palettes.) The toolbox and palettes are floating and can be arranged anywhere on the screen. The palettes are also collapsible to give you more screen viewing room when you're not using them. The new tools are Move, which lets you reposition selections, and the Sponge tool, which lets you control the saturation of colors in an image as you paint.

The Layers Palette allows you to create composite images by combining multiple layers. The implementation of layer support was something that all Photoshop users have been waiting for. If you're not familiar with layers, imagine three separate transparencies, one has a picture of you on it, another one has your mothers picture, and another has fathers picture. Each is a layer. You can edit and reposition each layer separately, try it in combination with the other two layers and continue editing each until you are happy with it, then combine the three layers to create a composite family photograph. You can copy elements from one layer into another simply by dragging and dropping. You can also add special effects to your layers using the Opacity controls and Blending modes. For example a 50% opacity setting would give an element a somewhat transparent effect. Blending modes control the lighting appearance of layers and their elements.

The Options Palette provides a single location for the options for each tool in the toolbox such as Opacity and Blending modes for the Pencil and Paintbrush tools.

The Commands Palette allows you to quickly access frequently used commands and palettes with a single click. You can add your own commands, and you can modify the commands that Photoshop supplies in the command palette. The Brushes palette now gives you the capability to create, edit, delete, and save your own custom brushes To create a brush you define the diameter (size), the hardness, the spacing (distance between brush marks in a stroke), the angle of a non-circular brush, and the roundness, which indicates whether the brush is a circle, an ellipse, or a straight line. As with most of the Photoshop tools practice makes perfect (well, almost perfect).

The Channels Palette. Every Photoshop image contains one or more Channels which represent color element information. For example, an image created in RGB mode has three channels, one each for Red, Green, and Blue information. In Version 3.0 additional channels, called alpha channels, can now be added to an image for storing, editing, and loading temporary masks (selected portions of an image).

The Paths Palette controls all of the Pen tool functions. When you draw with the Pen tool you can save the path that you have drawn as a path name. Then you can reuse it later on, and even fill the path with color. Three color palettes, Picker, Swatches, and Scratch, separates the functions of the former Color palette. The Picker palette displays the color values for the foreground and background colors and allows you to edit these colors using one of five different color models. The color models are (Gray scale RGB, CMYK, HSB, and Lab. The Swatches palette contains just that, swatches of colors. You can select from the swatches to create foreground and background colors You can add or delete colors to the palette, and even create your own customized swatch palettes. The Scratch palette is so called because it is a scratch-pad area that allows you to mix your own colors and then select them for use as foreground or background colors. It's also a good place to experiment when creating your own brushes.

New filters include the Lighting Effects filter, the Dust & Scratches filter, the Mezzotint filter, and the Clouds

filter. The Lighting Effects filter allows you to add up to 16 different light sources, such as a spotlight, to an image. this filter offers a lot of versatility to give an image a special effect, but it takes a lot of experimentation. The Dust & Scratches filter allows you to remove dust ant scratch areas picked up in a scanned image. The Mezzotint filter is another special effect that converts an image to a random pattern of black and white. There are ten different patterns to select from. The Clouds filter gives you just that, a sky Image with clouds.

Photoshop is a very powerful graphic design tool for professionals. The system requirements and the learning curve involved preclude it from use by the occasional user. But if you are a professional graphics artist or designer, or want to be, then AdobePhotoshop V3.0 has everything you need.

President.....continued from page 5

technology is available now as an add-on, look for MPEG to be a standard feature included in new PCs.

Video Conferencing

With the advent of the two previous technologies video conferencing is rising to the top as a viable technology. While the initial users may consist of large corporations it should not be long before you can video conference with your family and friends over the Internet. But if you don't have ISDN or MPEG you can still setup video conferencing on your network. Look atQuickCam for Windows from Connectix. This simple yet powerful product includes a digital video camera, which plugs in to your parallel port, and software for under $150. It also allows you to create snapshots or videos and video conference with any other QuickCam user on your network.

CD Technology

The CD technology that we use today will be history. Multiple vendors are now in the process of setting the next CD standard, Super Density Disc. Today CDs hold 650MB of data, but in the future (1996) a 5.25" CDs will contain anywhere from 4.7 GB to 17GB. The bad news is that you will need to purchase a Super Density CD ROM drive. The good news is that it will be able to read all your old CDs. This technology will allow the distribution of full length movies on CD. You will be able to select up to eight dubbed language tracks and 32 subtitled language tracks. Of course many other applications will benefit from this new mass storage format.

The above comments cover only a few of the many products that caught my attention. Come to the December meeting to hear about other technologies which I think will rise to the top in the future.



Newsletter.....continued from page 1

his President's Column where he shares some of this information with us.

There is a little overlap there with DonPatzsch's ISDN article. I asked Don to write about ISDN since most of you weren't in attendance when GTE gave us a very good presentation on this telecommunications technology. We are very appreciative to GTE for taking the time to do this for our group and for group member and GTE employee Roger Waters for setting it up.

Like Harvey said in his column, theinternet is the big thing now, and I could certainly use one of those fast ISDN lines as I wait for my World Wide Web (WWW) sites to produce their graphics. But at $.02/minute, I will just have to forgo it for now. In a bow to theinternet, though, as space permits I will include some of the WWW addresses that I have visited recently that may be of interest. They are literally thousands of such sites to visit, and, I suppose, the number is growing by the hundreds each day. For example, my neighbor, a Realtor, just got her listings with photos of the houses on the WWW. I'll try to pick sites to list that have some informational value.

This newsletter can be viewed in Adobe Acrobat format by downloading the file PCNL1295 from our BBS. The telephone numbers are listed on page 2. If you don't have the Acrobat reader, you need also to download the file ACROREAD.EXE from the BBS. There is much more than reading our newsletter online for which the Adobe reader can be used. One such is viewing and printing out the IRS forms you download from the Treasury's WWW location listed on page 4 in this newsletter. Another interesting use is viewing the eight page summary of the NY Times in Acrobat format that you can get free at the WWW location listed on page 4.

If you are using software or have read a computer related book you think others might be interested in, discuss it with me. There might be a newsletter review there. I prefer to use our own talent. We can not depend only on software donated by vendors for reviews. There just isn't that much coming in anymore. The software that LarryAnders reviewed was software that he purchased. I welcome others to do the same.

Don't forget the election of officers this coming meeting. And don't forget to thank Harvey andMarylee as they leave office for all their contributions to our group.



Software Review

Lotus SmartSuite for OS/2, Release 1.1

Review by JohnSeckman,
Serra Vista IBM PC User Group

In order to run this package of applications, you must have the IBM OS/2 operating system installed and running. My installation is a dual-boot system, which gives me the choice of booting up in either DOS or OS/2.

Lotus SmartSuite for OS/2 consists of the following applications:

Lotus 1-2-3 Spreadsheet for OS/2, version 2.1 Lotus 1- 2-3 is a powerful spreadsheet far outdistancing the version I first used years ago. New features include the ability to drag and drop objects in the Workplace Shell to open, move, print or discard files; to automatically expand or compress the print range to fit the page; to include powerful 3-D Worksheets; Solver and Backsolver goal-seeking technology; to enable file linking and drawing layers; and to automatically link charts and data between 123 spreadsheets and Freelance Graphics. This marriage of 123 with OS/2 means you can perform multiple tasks at the same time. As Lotus claims, you can print monthly reports while calculating a spreadsheet while downloading an external file via your modem. This version takes approximately 8 MB of hard disk space.

Lotus Freelance Graphics version 2.1 This presentation graphics program is powerful and very easy to use. My first attempt went without a hitch. From handouts to color slides and overheads you just fill in the blanks. You can link live data from your 123 spreadsheets or insert text from Ami Pro. Included are a tutorial that helps getting started; 40 SmartMasters that automatically guide you through the process of creating slides, overheads and handouts; powerful text editing, drawing, charting and presentation tools to automate the process. Included are over 500 symbols and pictures and 13 Adobe Typefaces. As mentioned earlier you can automatically link charts and data between 123 and Freelance Graphics however to do this both must be the same version, i.e. 2.1. This version takes approximately 5 MB of hard disk space.

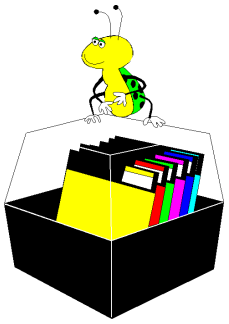
Ami Pro for OS/2 version 3.0 This easy to use word processor works and thinks the same way you do, in words, pictures, symbols and colors creating letters, reports, newsletters, calendars, memos and proposals. Features include editable, customizable icon images; quickly move text, tables and icon images on the screen by simply dragging them to a new location; clip art, symbols, scientific equations, automatic bullets and numbered lists; includes outlining, built-in-tables, grammar checker, spell checker, thesaurus, WYS/WYG display, revision marking and pull down menus. I could not use all the capabilities of Ami Pro as my CPU is limited to 8 MB of memory. This version takes approximately 17 MB of hard disk space.

cc:Mail. This was not tested in that I do not have access to a LAN and I was not subsidized for long distanced telephone expenses. Lotus describes this as the worlds most popular LAN-based mail system. Features advertised are send and receive mail from any SmartSuite application; create new mail messages directly from the desktop by selecting or dragging and dropping attachments onto a MTO for automatic routing to pre-defined recipients; seemlessly communicate with other cc:Mail users in the DOS, Windows, Macintosh and UNIX environments; also communicate with users on other mail systems including PROFs, All-In-One, AT&T, MCI, SMTP and other via optional products. Require approximately 2 MB of hard disk space.

Requirement: Hardware: IBM PC or compatible (386 or higher) including IBM PS/2 and COMPAQ. A mouse (required for SmartIcons). An EGA, VGA, XGA, SVGA, or IBM 8514 or 8515 graphics card. A printer supported by an OS/2 printer driver. Disk: High-density disk drive required. Installation of all products requires a minimum of 23 MB of hard disk space. Additional space is required for optional features. Networks: Designed for use with networks that support OS/2 2.1 or OS/2 for Windows including IBM LAN Server and Novell OS/2 Requester. Memory: 12 MB RAM minimum required.

Summary: This is an excellent set of desktop programs which have been optimized for OS/2. I found the speed of these programs to be impressive. The package comes with a full set of detailed manuals, one for each application. If you are running OS/2, this is a must-have package of applications at a very low price.

Lotus SmartSuite for OS/2, Release 1.1, Lotus Development Corporation, Cambridge, MA. For more information call Lotus at 1-800-343-5414. This package is also available by mail order from MicroWarehouse, 1-800-367-7080.



ISDN : Integrated Services Digital Network.

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Lets start with recognizing the DOS configuration. DOS was originally intended to provide an operating system for one computer and only one person operating that computer.

Unix is a multi-tasking and multi-user, operating system. That means that if you have a computer set up with the UNIX operating system, many people may operate that one computer at the same time, as a network, or with simple terminals.

POTS is plain old telephone system. With your present line, you expect to be able to call one person and talk in voice operation. One telephone number per two wire line.

We plan now to tell you about ISDN. ISDN is a system in which you may do many things at one time with the single ISDN 2 wire connection. More than likely they will use the wires you already have at your home. You may talk with people by voice as you do now, and you may send a fax, and you may have two computers talking to one another, all at the same time on that one ISDN connection.

If you call into a network with your computer on an ISDN connection, you are then part of that network. You may expect to use your computer at its fast receive and transmit, just as though you were in the office and using one of their computers, only now you are at home using your own computer. In the past, you may have been used to using a modem and waiting while it screamed and made other noises and took a relatively long time to connect. With ISDN you are on the network in a few seconds, with no handshake noises and no line noise problems. Because the system does not take its power from the telephone line, you may lose all connection when the power is interrupted

You will have to have a way to connect to the ISDN line, as it is not the same as the plain old telephone service. Some devices are known as TA or Terminal Adapter. The Motorola Bitsurfer Pro is such a device. You may plug in two analog telephones or a fax and a telephone. You may use the telephone and the fax without the extra cost shown as .02 per call and .02 or .01 per minute. Those apply to data only. The extra costs per minute are expected to be eliminated in a month or two from now, in other words just into 1996.

At this time, the costs forinstallling ISDN are as follows. From the time you place your order, to the time you may use the system, is now five working days. The installation and the Motorola Bitsurfer cost about $600, and the members of the Tampa IBM PC User Group were given a discount of 50% at the meeting on October 16. This tells me that all of the ISDN pricing is tentative at this time and will come down as time passes, probably quite rapidly. Competition rears its ugly head in January of 1996.

The monthly costs at this time are: From 10 A.M. to 8 P.M. there is a charge of 2 cents per data call locally, and 2 cents per minute, or about $1.20 per hour for data only, telephone calls and faxes are not affected by this charge. From 8 P.M. to 10 A.M. and on weekends, the data connect charge is 2 cents per call and 1 cent per minute, or about 60 cents per hour. Again these charges are probably going to be removed in a few weeks. The standard monthly charge at this time is $37 per month.

I had planned to provide various bits of information from users of the system locally, some in Brandon where I live and some in Tampa. I wanted to get their reaction after using the system for some time. If there is any interest, I will write a second article on this subject with more detail by far.

Lets go over it again: WHAT IS ISDN? ISDN stands for Integrated Services Digital Network. (Not plain old *analog* telephone service.) The ISDN is capable of carrying voice, data, fax, and X.25 packet data over the same media and through the same kind of connection, hence the name Integrated Services. Digital in ISDN implies that all connections to the ISDN are made through digital devices, such as Terminal Adapters, ISDN telephones, Point-of-Service Terminals, T1 and E1 DSU/CSUs, Group IV fax machines, etc. Analog devices, such as standard telephones. modems. and Group III fax machines are generally connected to the Public Switched Telephone Network and cannot be connected directly to the ISDN.

Two types of ISDN are available. BRI, and Primary Rate Interface ISDN, known as PRI. Both services use bearer channels known as B channels to carry user calls., be they data, voice, fax, or even packets. The B channels operate at a data rate of up to 64K bits per second. (twice as fast as a 28.8 modem) and they can be "bonded" or connected so that you can send and receive data at 128K bits per second. This does not consider compression, which can increase the actual transfer speed. There is also a D channel operating at a rate of 16K bps. It can also handle X.25 packets. It is used for signaling. The two B channels and the one D channel operate over a single pair of wires. The call is paid for by the one who initiates the call, and billing is based on the time connected, not the amount of data transmitted. Basic Rate or BSI is based on two B channels and one D channel. You may use the D channel if there is no signal information needed, to increase the total to 144 plus 16 or 160kbps.

The PRI system is based on 23 B channels, and a single D channel, in this country, but in Europe it is 30 B channels and one D channel. PRI is usually a 4 wire trunk. I won't go into further technical details unless there is a request for

See **ISDN.....**Continued on page 10

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it.) Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month. Next meeting is December 4, 1995 at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone.
Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE. COSTECH@INTNET NET

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. at 7:00 PM at a member's home. However the December meeting will be December 6 at 7:00 PM.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin. at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

Book Review

Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway by Clifford Stoll

Review by Carol Theodore, Los Angeles Computer Society

Has your e-mail been lost? Have you connected to a site only to be inexplicably dropped? Spent hours doing research on-line and then lost it? You are not alone. The hoopla is as never ending as the profusion of Internet providers and web sites. Everyone sings the praises of this exploding technology; those who are not on-line feel that they are missing out. Here is a serious analysis of the Internet by the author of "The Cuckoo's Egg", an Internet user since it was the Arpanet. This is no crackpot naysayer but a concerned participant asking important questions. Does the Internet help us communicate better or just faster? Is e-mail really faster than snailmail? Cliff Stoll thinks that e-mail may impede communication by encouraging us to dash off the message. In writing a letter, one is almost forced to think about what one is saying. In addition, e-mail trans-mission may not be as reliable as we may think. Stoll says that it gets lost more often than mail sent the old-fashioned way: the U.S. Postal Service actually has a better record than e-mail. How about the on-line library? There has been much discussion and much written about books on-line. However, Stoll contends, there has been too little thought addressed to how this should be done. Many libraries, including the Library of Congress, have on-line catalogs, but the books can-not be checked out on-line; they remain where they are. Stoll cites national and international copyright laws as tall barriers. Other questions deal with data storage and retrieval: what methods will be used and how can they be kept current with changes in the technology. Libraries have been sold complex computer systems as a way to save money at the expense of other essential services such as books and librarian support. A good librarian is worth much more than the most extensive on-line catalog. Stoll's conclusion is that the Internet, however useful, has been oversold as a fast link to information and as a better way for people to communicate. The questions posed in this book are valuable. If we are going to benefit from all that the Internet can offer, we must consider what that is and how it can best be utilized

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ISDN.....continued from page 9

that. PRI is about the same speed as a T1 line.

The PPP protocol is a standard data link, it supports multiple network layers including IPX, DECnet, Appletalkl, and OSI. PPP is actually a whole set of specifications to cover the different aspects of Wide Area Network communication. The Internet Engineering Task Force is responsible for the PPP protocol. (standards). These processes were necessitated because not all the RBO's and certainly not the European system were coordinated. Standards had to be set up.

ISDN was started in 1980, and Europe is way ahead of our usage. To keep this brief, I will not go into a discussion of the difference between the ISDN and the Frame Relay systems, ADSL, nor the new Internet telephone service that operates in full duplex. With the new system you may call any individual if you have his address on the net, and you may set up your own scrambling system with the software.

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
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Corel Systems	Traveling Software
Grolier	Word Perfect

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MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you, treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri. 9	am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Marylee Bruneau	988-0232	Mon-Sun.	9am-9pm	Corel Draw, Pagemaker 5.0, MS Word
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

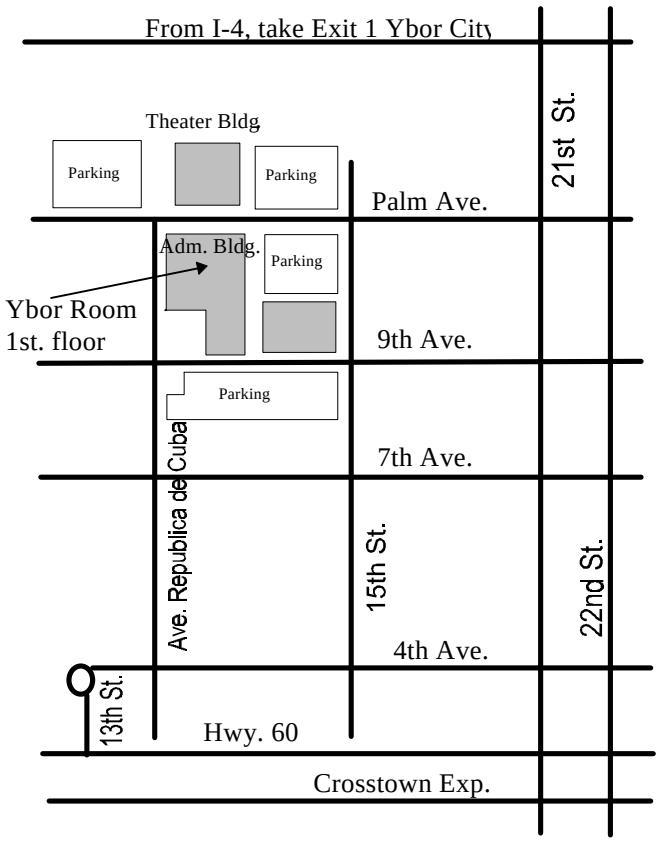
Agenda for December Meeting

Bargain Table
(bring donations & checkbook)

Election of Officers

Lotus ScreenCam Presentation:

multimedia screen & sound capture
by
Harvey Bruneau



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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol 9 No. 1 January 1996

Meeting

Date: **January 10, 1996**
Time **6:00 PM**
Place: **Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus Ybor Room**

Agenda: **Not set at Press Time**

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Thank you Harvey andMarylee

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group,Inc

This past month has given me a taste of what Harvey and his wife Marylee have been doing for our group these past years. I took over the duties of this newsletter,Marylee's old job, starting with the December issue and thought that quite enough. Then Harvey called me two days before the December general meeting saying that he had to go to Atlanta on business and needed me to run the meeting and do a presentation of LotusScreenCam. So I went out to his home that evening to get the things I needed for the presentation, and he filled my car trunk with old software, etc. for the bargain table sale. Apparently part of being president of TPCUG is being part pack horse.

So after spending several hours preparing my presentation, running off 20 new name tags, printing out 50 copies of a special software offer to our group, making up some disks with copies of thScreenCam presentation on the BBS for anyone who might be interested, collecting the software people had requested for review, and gathering extra copies of the newsletter that had taken up so much time a couple of weeks back, I was ready to cart everything to Ybor City for the meeting. I admit that most months my User Group duties will not be this demanding, but I have presented this little compilation to give you an idea of what Harvey andMarylee have been doing for our group in the past. That's why I and , I am sure, all of you say

"Thank you, Harvey andMarylee."

* * 1995 OFFICERS * *

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This newsletter is created with *Microsoft Word 7* and *Corel Photo Paint 5.0.*

Secretary's Report

TPCUG MEETING 12/13/95, 6 PM
Administration Building Auditorium, HCC
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

Vice President William LaMartin called the meeting to order. President Harvey Bruneau was out of town. Miscellaneous Comments and Information were given:

Election
The election was held. The following were elected:

President	Connie Kincaid
Vice President	Mike Hodges
Treasurer	Will Goble
Secretary	Bruce Register
Member at Large	Margaret Petro

Tom Cone moved that the slate be declared by acclamation. The Motion Carried.

Bargain Table
The Bargain Table was successful. Several people found their prizes. The TPCUG benefited with over $200. Appreciation was expressed to all item donors and to all who purchased.

William mentioned Comdex and referred us to Harvey's article in the BITS OF BLUE newsletter. Charles Howe stated that the Internet SIG would be held January 8 instead of January 1. No meeting on New Years Day. Jenny Olin will hold the Genealogy SIG on the third Wednesday of January, January 17.

Someone suggested that an inventory be made of needs, such as panel, good OH projector, etc., and that fund raising projects be performed to provide acquisition of needs.

Tom Cone announced that the financial report will be published to the membership in the first quarter of 1996 as set by precedent.

Presentation
William LaMartin demonstrated Lotus ScreenCam software. This is software which records sound and all screen activity as you work. It can be played back as a training tool or sent to a friend. He put the first part of the demonstration along with the Lotus ScreenCam player on a floppy for those who wanted a copy. This is the same principle as with the on-line version of the newsletter on BBS. Adobe Acrobat is used to make the on-line version of the newsletter. We as members can download the Acrobat Reader file, ACROREAD.EXE, to view the

See **Minutes.....**continued on page 3

Minutes.....continued from page 2
newsletter We install this reader file on our computer. Then we can print the BITS OF BLUE or view it on our screen. We can copy it to a disk and send it to someone who has ACROREAD, the reader. In the same way we can view, using Lotus ScreenCam player, the demonstration William presented about the BBS.

William previously recorded, on Lotus ScreenCam, his access to the BBS using the Windows 3.1 Terminal program--a bare-bones communications program most of us have--and demonstrated it to the TPCUG meeting. Prior to the meeting, he called in to BBS as a visitor named Fred Newuser and moved around. He went through the first time caller questions, stated that he was a new paid up member of the group, requested to have his access level upgraded, read messages, etc. In a second session, after the SYSOP had upgraded his access level, again using the terminal program he signed on as a member by giving his password. He moved around and tutored us more. In a third captured session, he accessed the BBS using WinCom PRO, a full featured communications program. In this session he demonstrated how to sign on, move to the File Menu, search for files, and download a file. In this session, his narration was also captured, making the file much larger.

Lotus ScreenCam provided a "movie" of every stroke, every cursor move and even William's sound monologue while he was recording the presentation. Simply stated, he opened ScreenCam on his computer at home on Monday night. He then had his communications software call the BBS. All of the three times he logged on and logged off the BBS were recorded as it happened. At the meeting, he turned on the computer and let it run by itself as he and we watched a movie of the monitor and every thing that he had done earlier. To conlclude he demonstrated how simple it was to do one of these screen captures.

The shelf price of the program is $99. You might shop for a street price of say maybe $69 or $79. He whetted my cyberspace appetite. I really had a serious conversation with Santa. You may post a message to William for a disk. He copied his presentation on a 3.5 floppy and charged $1 each.

Unfortunately, the overhead projector provided by HCC was considerably less than desired. The laptop and the panel provided excellent quality. The overhead did not. However, William's presentation of the recorded "movie" was great. So good in that the poor OH visual was negated and did not dim anyone's intense interest.

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

PageKeeper	Richard Morris
Type On Call	Will Goble
Your Deck	Michael Leiss
T Shirt	Dave O'Connor

Please mark your calendar for the next TPCUG meeting on January 10, 1996. Bring a friend. Bring a spouse...Bring somebody!

President's Column

by Connie Kincaid, President Tampa PC Users Group

As the new year dawns, it brings many changes to the Tampa PC User's Group. The most obvious are the many new officers elected last month. I am sure that they are listed in other columns so I won't list them here. But I want to assure everyone that we have once again compiled a group of intelligent, big hearted, loving servants who want nothing more than to help the group members grow in skills and confidence. One of the most frustrating things is to want to help and not know what people want or need. So, please talk to the board members and let them know what's on your mind..

I want to take some space and time to thank Harvey and Marylee for all their efforts on behalf of this group. My first computer was an Appld IIe (no hard drive, dual single density floppies, 56K of RAM and Apple Works). It's amazing to me that I was able to do as much as I did with that computer. When I moved to Tampa in 1991, I knew I couldn't hang on to that technology much longer. I tried almost every PC user group in town at that time. I didn't know if I wanted to go to a MAC, Amiga, PC or anything else. I found that they were all growing and changing so rapidly that I couldn't base my decision solely on the capability of a given technology because that was sure to change. With my background in Psychology, I know that people make the products not the other way around. So I went back to the groups one more time and decided to invest my future with the people I found in the Tampa PC User's Group. I found that this was one of the few groups who could attract "geeks", "nerds" and "newbies".. I haven't regretted it one minute. The magic behind having something for everyone lies in the board. But the charisma to present it has been in Harvey and Marylee. Harvey through his work at Dun & Bradstreet comes equipped with enough knowledge to hang in there with the best and enough stage presence to do it with grace and style. Marylee has been the quieter counter balance that also helped prevent "boy's club syndrome". I remember many meetings when she and I were the only two females in a very crowded room. I want to thank Harvey, Marylee and every member of the board for making me feel welcome in those early years when all appearances would have led me to believe I didn't belong

see **President**..... page 10

Software Review

SYNCWARE FILL

Review by William LaMartin,
Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

The *Windows Sources* magazine ad intrigued me. It said "Kiss your Typewriter Goodbye! Say Hello to *SYNCWARE FILL*!" and was accompanied by the eye-catching color photo reproduced below in black and white. This program promised to do easily what I had been spending a fair amount of effort doing: Filling out printed forms on the computer, or, more precisely, filling out scanned in copies of printed forms on the computer using Corel Draw. Not exactly what first comes to mind when you mention Corel Draw.



The process was tedious, and the resulting files (if I wanted to save them) were large. Neither of these objections is the case for *SYNCWARE FILL*. Best of all, you can try out the program until February 1, 1996 for free via download from the World Wide Web at http://www.syncware.com. What you get is a 1.6 MB compressed file that self extracts into a program that is a full featured "lite" version of *SYNCWARE FILL* ver 1.0.

Actually the lite version does everything I desire. Let's suppose I have, say, an IRS form that I wish to fill in on the computer instead using a typewriter or pen, both of which make corrections or changes difficult. I simply start *SYNCWARE FILL*, put the form in my scanner, then tell the program to "acquire" the form. Once the form is scanned into the program, I can place text anywhere on the form I desire, use any size font I choose for the text, draw lines or rectangles on the original form, or erase parts of the original form. And, if as in most forms, I have text that appears in columns or in rows, I can select some of the text I have entered and then right align, left align, top align, or bottom align it with the press of a button.

It is all very easy, and the result printed out 100% accurate as to size on my laser printer. One couldn't ask more of a free program. Unfortunately it is only free until February 1. So how does one go about purchasing this program. I couldn't find it locally, but I called their 800 number, talked with a very helpful and informative fellow named Tony, and have the following purchasing information to relate.

The lite version from the internet only utilizes the quick fill feature of *SYNCWARE FILL*; there is additionally the ability to create templates where one would tab from one fillable form field to the next, the ability to integrate data from other OLE compliant Windows applications, and to perform both data entry and form filling functions with your databases.

Tony said that the price of version 1.0 was $149, but now they were offering it at half price since version 2.0, a 32 bit WIN95 application (which will also run under WIN 3.1), is coming out in several months. Version 2.0 will list for $199, with the upgrade probably being $40 - $50.

SYNCWARE, 3025 S. Parker Road, Suite 109, Aurora, CO 80014
Telephone 303-369-6900 FAX 303-369-6540
Orders 1-800-759-0082
Support Hotline 1-800-308-3690

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Microsoft BOB** - essential household programs, calendar, letter writer, checkbook, and more...
2. **Aldus Persuasion**- Presentation Graphic Software
3. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file-- View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows -Compelliong charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **Window Washer** - the Ultimate Optimizer for Windows with Intelligent Data Compression
6. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
7. **OnCmd** - On-Line Data xBase database development environment for native OS/2
8. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
9. Jump Start **Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) Windows CD
10. Jump Start **Kindergarten** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6) Win. CD
11. Jump Start **First Grade** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 5-7) Windows CD
12. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
13. **Aviation Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
14. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
15. **Managing your Money Plus**- Finance package, check book and more. Windows CD
16. **Managing your Money Windows**- Finance Package
17. **ECHO Lake** - Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
18. **Internet in a Box** - The complete internet solution for Windows.

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



http://lycos-tmp1.psc.edu/lycos-form.html?	Lycos Search Form
http://thunder.met.fsu.edu/~nws/imagery.html	Florida Radar and Satellite Images
http://www.secapl.com/secapl/quoteserver/mw.html	Security APL Market Watch
http://www.secapl.com/cgi-bin/qs	Security APL Quote Server
http://www.farmjournal.com/	Farm Journal Today
http://www.petersons.com/	Peterson's Education Center
http://freenet3.scri.fsu.edu:81/ht-free/stgov.html	State Of Florida Government Agencies
http://ipl.sils.umich.edu/reading/	Internet Public Library Reading Room
http://www.infoworld.com/	InfoWorld
http://genealogy.org/NGS/	National Genealogical Society - Home Page
http://stats.bls.gov/blshome.html	Bureau of Labor Statistics
http://www.infi.net/weather/index.html	The Weather Channel ® Home Page
http://www.sec.gov/	U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission
http://www.ix.netcom.com/bin/findnews	FindNews - FindingNewsgroups
http://gnv.ifas.ufl.edu/	Univ.of Fla - Institute of Food &Ag. Sciences
http://www.us-digital.com:8080/homeweb/	HomeWEB®, Home Search , Real Estate
http://www.sptimes.com/aquarium/	Florida Aquarium
http://nytsyn.com/cgi-bin/times/lead/go	Computer News Daily
http://www.channel1.com/users/winwatch/WindoWatch.html	WindoWatch online magazine

Software Review

PhotoWorks from SeattleFilmWorks

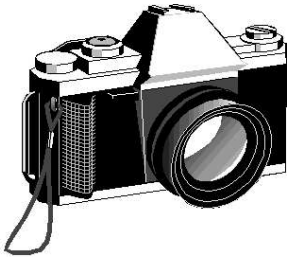
Review by Bruce Register, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

I received what I thought was junk mail from Seattle FilmWorks offering free two rolls of film and a process for putting your photos onto a floppy disk. I have shot thousands of frames with my camera to be used in my work. I returned the card. After I had forgotten about it, two weeks later, a mail package arrived with two rolls of film. I shot 19 images on a roll in my 35 mm camera when I went to a family reunion in October and decided to give the system a try. I mailed them in the postage paid envelope with a check for $15.80 which covers some $3 or $4 S&H. Some week or so later, I received a mail package containing two sets of color prints, a 3.5 floppy with the "album" consisting of the 19 images. Also included were two 3.5 floppies containing software to run the program. The two sets of color prints with developing at my local discount one hour express would cost about the same amount, and there I can get my prints in one hour; however, I get no floppy with the images on them and get noPhotoWorks software. I thought I got a good deal if I had the time to wait a few days. I could have received the graphic images via the Internet immediately after they were developed if I had an address. The prints would then follow by snail mail had I chosen the Internet to get the images quicker. If I had a color printer I might prefer Internet delivery.

Seattle FilmWorks offered a new roll of film with every order at no extra charge, the choice of prints or slides or both from your film, postage paid film mailers first class both ways in snail mail, and "absolutely risk free guarantee." They did all that plus the floppy with my 19 images plus the two 3.5 floppy disks with thePhotoWorks software. With this software I can rotate, crop, cut, change resolution and other things that I do not even know yet. I even sent photos by fax from my computer to two different recipients. On the Internet I could send my Christmas photos anywhere in the world.

To install the software, I opened Windows 3.1 to Program Manager. I inserted disk #1 in the drive and clicked run in the file menu. On the command line I enteredA:\setup and ENTER. My screen displayed a message that all of my available colors were not installed. "Go to windows installation". I ignored this for now and followed screen instructions which were so easy and quick to follow. "Setup complete" I restarted Windows and selected the icon for PhotoWorks. Instructions instructed me to insert the disk with "Pictures on Disk". I was asked to name the "album" of the images on the disk. I named the album "reunion.95" The program copied the images from the floppy to the hard drive. I double clicked on "thumbnail". A strip of the photos came across the screen. At this point, I printed the "thumbnail" strip on my B&W Epson 1500 Action Laser. They printed better than they looked on the screen. I followed instructions and printed a number of images on copy paper. Now, I was ready for the Big Time!

Later when I openedPhotoWorks, I made several mistakes in naming albums. I learned that I needed to learn a language that I do not use in my circles. I pressed PhotoWorks and then Album. The "album" gave me two tutorial albums. Naturally, I did not want to spend time learning...i.e. when all else fails, read the instructions. I never had to read the instructions as it was so easy. I selected "albums" and I got no reunion.95. I backed up and took another approach. I pressed the icon "folder". That gave me the same "Open" window. "Album" or "download" rendered "Reunion. 95." I clicked "Images". My "Album" "Reunion.95" appeared. I clicked on an image 45430_9.SFW (640 x 480 x 24 BPP). This was photo exposure image # 9. I printed the image in B&W. It looked good with great resolution. I printed the other images with no problems. I rotated them easily.



Feeling so good, I decided to experiment and get full advantage of those colors that I had been told were available on my system and I was not using. From "Main" menu I changed to 768 x 1024 monitor resolution. I returned to Program Manager to find the strangest array of colors and patterns like I have never seen before. I could only get out of the locked up situation by Ctrl-Alt-Del. MY WINDOWS SYSTEM DIED COMPLETELY RIGHT THERE. I reentered the system and changed the resolutions back to 600 x 800. That did not cure the problem. I still had a screen with Fourth of July colors. After hours of trying to salvage without reinstalling Windows, I gave up and reinstalled windows.

After getting windows running again and spending hours of time getting my system back where it was, I got bold and decided to fully utilize my "available" colors that PhotoWorks told me that I had. I CRASHED AGAIN. This time and 5 hours later, I had reinstalled Windows and restored all my programs. Many individual applications had to be reinstalled themselves. I lost some enhancements, data, etc. Now I decided to leave the monitor settings alone.

see **Seattle FilmWorks**.....page 7

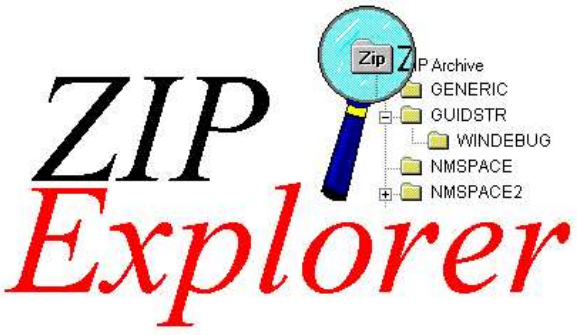
Seattle FilmWorks..... continued from page 6

BUT...after a while with the system working well, I got bolder and decided to move around within the PhotoWorks. I discovered that "Layout" on the menu bar had a selection called "scale" that permitted me to set the resolution to 768 x 1024 in portrait or 1024 x 768 in landscape. SO THAT IS THE WAY THEY MEANT TO DO IT. WHY DID NOT THEY TELL ME!!!!

I like the program and will order the "More Features, More Fun! Upgrade to PhotoWorks Plus for Just $14.95." I am not sure what that will do but I am impressed so favorably with what I have that it has to be good, especially for the money. I am writing SeattleFilmWorks to see if I might upload PhotoWorks on the BBS. SeattleFilmWorks, 1260 16th Avenue W., Seattle, WA 98119 or call (206) 283-9074.

ZipExplorer for Windows 95

Review by Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



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As we bring in the new year with new officers and a new Bits of Blue Editor, as librarian, my New Year's resolution will be to try and provide a review of at least one *SHAREWARE* program each month. My first installation comes under the heading of ***SUPERIOR SHAREWARE.*** This is one of the **FINEST** add-on programs for Windows 95 I have come across yet.

ZIPExplorer is an extension to your Windows Shell which allows you to interact with compressed ZIP archives as if they were normal folders on your hard disk. You can open ZIP archives as you would any normal folder, and inside you will find the files and directories that were added to the archive by whomever originally created it.

ZIPExplorer is all you need to work with existing ZIP files: it contains all of the necessary decompression code, and does not rely on any external programs.

The following is a quick list of 20 of the things you can do with ZIPExplorer, and how to do them.

1. ZIP archives will now appear on your desktop and in folders with a special icon that looks like a normal folder but that has "Zip" emblazoned on it.
2. You can double click these new icons to open the archive as if it were a folder. You can also right-click the icons and select "Explore" to open them in a hierarchical tree-style view. From there, it behaves just like a normal explorer.
3. Once the archive is opened (as in item 2, above) you drag new items from your desktop or any folder into the archive to compress them.
4. You can also drag any item out to your desktop or a folder to extract them.
5. You can create a new ZIP archive anywhere by selecting the New/ZIPExplorer Archive menu from your desktop (or in any folder).
6. You can right-click any item and select "Extract To Path" to extract items to a specific location without having that destination open in the explorer.
7. You can "Copy" items from an open archive and "Paste" them anywhere in the filesystem any number of times (as long as the folder you copied from remains open).
8. You can drag or paste items directly into Exchange messages.
9. You can drop files and folders onto a ZIP archive's icon (just as if it were a normal folder) to compress items into the archive without actually opening it.
10. You can set the passwords for extracting items and for compressing new items with the ZIPExplorer/Set Passwords menu item in any archive folder.
11. You scan select any or all of the items in an archive and select "Scan For Viruses" from any of the selected items to invoke your favorite virus scanner on the files before you extract them.
12. You can delete any set of selected files and folders within an open archive from the context menu of the selected items or by pressing the Delete key.
13. You can set the level of compression for new items that you add by selecting the ZIPExplorer/Options menu in any ZIP folder.
14. You can quickly extract (or "checkout") files from an archive by selecting "Extract to Path" from the archive icon without actually opening the archive.
15. You can drag the archive to the place you wish to extract the files to and then select "Extract Here" from the icon's

see **ZipExplorer**.....page 10

Software Review

Partition Magic, version 1

Review by DonaldPatzch, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

The first thing I did with the Partition Magic program that the Tampa PC UG gave me to review is to read the manual. It says to BACK UP before doing any experimental work.

I use an IOMEGA Bernoulli 150 megabyte disk backup. I am of the opinion that tape drives are too expensive and too cumbersome. The hard disk type of backup provides a disk that you can use instead of the C:> hard drive on your computer. In other words, it backs up the disk in a very short time, and the backup can be used just as the regular disk is used. You can get a directory in a flash, and you can "run" any program from either disk.

Now, I have DOS and Windows 3.1 on the present hard drive, and other programs, so they are also located on the backup disk. I wanted to set up a place for the OS2 Boot Manager, which means moving the whole setup over a little as the Boot Manager has to be in the forefront of the hard drive. It must be a primary partition as well as the DOS-Windows must be in a primary partition. So I set aside 2 megabytes at the start of the disk, by "moving" the existing operating system over toward the back of the disk, by two megabytes. This is one neat feature of Partition Magic.

Now I can break up the rest of the 540 megabyte hard disk into three more primary partitions and as many logical drives as I like. You know, one thing the manual is good for is to act as a textbook on formatting and setting up a hard disk. There is a lot of information in it.

OS2 can be booted even if it is installed in a logical drive. So I will set up a separate primary drive for the LINUX program, and a spare drive or two in case I want to add something later. I am doing all this while the original programs are still on the hard disk and they will not be disturbed, except to move them and maybe shorten the partition in which they are now located. I set up the 2 megabyte space ahead on the C:> drive with no previous experience with Partition Magic, and with little effort. No effect has been noticed on the use of the hard drive C:>, although I went back and tried each program to make sure no change had taken place!

This Partition Magic program can be used in a DOS computer, or as I will be using it, in an OS2 computer. You may set the program up on your hard disk, or use a floppy. When you bring the program up, you see a window in which your partitions are clearly laid out. There is a window for the physical drives on your machine, another window for the Partitions, and in that window is a layout of the various hard disk letters to correspond with those on your disk. Also in that same section is a Volume window. Each separate volume is shown and each has the type (boot manager, extended, FAT, etc. designation). Everything is in different colors so that you can easily see what you are being shown on the chart. There is also an Options window in the above window. That shows you the Check (check disk), Info., Resize, and Convert buttons. You may convert a FAT Boot Drive to an HPFS Boot Drive, if you want to use the long file names, and get the other advantages of the HPFS system in OS2.

The company has now written a new Partition Magic Version 2 for DOS and Windows (both 3.1 & 95). This is available now for $49.95. The new Version 2 for DOS and OS2 sells for $69.95.

The advantages of Version 2 are

- Non destructive clusterresizing. When you resize a FAT partition clusters are automatically resized. This can save a lot of space especially if you are using a gigabyte hard drive or larger.
- Format. You can format a new partition with version 2 from Partition Magic.
- Hide/unhide partitions. Hide any data partition.
- Expand Windows95 root directory.
- Set active partition.

This program will be very useful to me.

PowerQuest Corporation
1083 North State Street
Orem, Utah 84057
Telephone: 801-226 8977 FAX: 801 226 8941
Email miker@powerquest.com
http:/www.powerquest.com

Additionally, in the package I reviewed is an advertisement for the program System Commander. System Commander allows you to make a boot menu of all the operating systems you wish to use. Information on it can be obtained at 1-800-648-8266. The Company is V Communications, Inc., and it is in San Jose. The cost is $99, except if you buy it from Indelible Blue (from IBM), it costs $69.



Software Review

Impos/2 Version 1.2 *

by Jose De Jesus

This review appeared originally in the *OS/2 December 1995 Monthly Newsletter* on the WWW at http://www.austin.ibm.com/pspinfo/os2nl.html

Impos/2 is an image-processing program for OS/2 developed by a German company called Compart Systemhaus GmbH. *Impos/2* is a powerful program that is a major player in the OS/2 graphics market. I'll explain what it can do, but first, let me give you the bottom line: the product costs $99 and offers features and performance found in much more expensive software. You won't be sorry if you buy it now, but you may want to wait for the next version, coming soon.

Impos/2 lets you capture images from the screen, from a scanner, from a video overlay board, or from the OS/2 clipboard. The software supports the major graphics file formats, including OS/2 and Windows Bitmaps, Graphics Interchange Format (GIF), Z-Soft's PCX, Tagged Image File (TIF), IBM IOCA (IMG), JPEG (JFIF), OS/2 Metafile (MET), Kodak Photo CD (PCD), TrueVision Targa (TGA), and PBMPLUS 'anymap' (PNM). It supports major scanners like Hewlett Packard's ScanJet series and Logitech's ScanMan 32 and ScanMan 256.

Impos/2 contains many powerful features that you can use painlessly. For instance, you can easily convert an image to and from black-and-white, 16 or 256 colors, gray scale, or true color. To convert a file from one format to another, all you have to do is save it as the new format. More than anything else, though, *Impos/2* excels in image-editing capabilities. Once you load an image, you can do virtually anything with it, from adjusting its contrast and brightness, to color swapping, edge detection, mosaic and embossing modifications, and noise filters. The graphics tools provided in the package include brushes, air-brushes, erase, smear, color cloning, and line and freehand drawing, among other things. Overall, *Impos/2* features a full set of tools that perform flawlessly, and at an excellent speed.

Impos/2 version 1.2 is a good product, but Compart must continue to enhance it. *Impos/2* is a solid start. It just needs polishing. The makers should keep an eye out for those little details that can make a world of a difference. For example, the program's Undo function is in the window's title bar instead of in the main menu bar or in the toolbar -- no wonder I couldn't find it! And wouldn't it be great if there were multiple levels of Undo?

The User's guide and the online documentation need a little polishing. The text is not exactly terrible, but contains too many grammatical errors and reads like a rough draft. Also, the chapters should have numbers instead of just titles. I heard that much of the text's quality was lost during the German-to-English translation. What a bummer! Software like this deserves a better manual.

Some of the enhancements they made in version 2.0:

- More selection capabilities. You can select portions of graphics using a magic wand, a circle selection tool, a square selection tool or freehand. You can then use all tools and filters on your selections.
- A fully configurable toolbar. Users can choose the icons they want to appear in the toolbar. You can also create your own icons to associate with REXX commands. The entire user interface (not just the toolbar) in version 2.0 is programmable using REXX.
- An enhanced user interface. The new version is more WorkPlace Shell-oriented. Every image you load is its own object, and you can load multiple images in one application frame.
- Improved scaling options. Every image can be displayed and edited in all display ratios (compared with version 1.2 in which they can only be displayed in specific, fixed ratios like 1x2 or 2x4). This gives you almost unlimited scaling abilities.
- Multiple views. You can open multiple views of the same image -- for example, a stamp size view and a full screen view. If you edit the image in the full screen view, your changes are automatically reflected in the stamp size view.

Overall, the developers of *Impos/2* got it right. If version 2.0 includes some of the fine tuning mentioned earlier, and Compart manages to keep the price down, I think we'll be seeing a lot more of *Impos/2* in the years to come.

Impos/2 version 2.0 will be available in North America from Indelible Blue, beginning December 20. Indelible Blue will also provide the first level support for *Impos/2*.

* This article is based on the author's personal review of the product and should not be viewed as an IBM endorsement of such product.

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OS/2

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday (January 18) of the month at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month. However, due to New Years the next meeting is January 8, 1996 at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone.
Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (January 17) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin. at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

President's Column..... continued from page 3

there and presenting so many fascinating programs that intrigued me into wanting to learn more.

I want to extend warm new year's greetings to all the members of the board and members of the group. I am looking forward to a promising new year. It recently occurred to me that somewhere in the past two years personal computing has crossed some important social/cultural boundaries. I want to elaborate here but have decided to include more on that thought in a separate column that William can include when space permits. It would seem that we have just about reached the point where having at least one computer in the home is roughly equivalent to having a car, microwave and color TV. It is rapidly being added to a family's "musthave's" list. I think this makes the Tampa PC Users Group an important resource to our community. I would like to enlist everyone's support in letting people in our community know that we are here to serve them.

ZipExplorer.....continued from page 7

context menu for a little extra convenience.

16. You can view documents and run standalone programs from within an archive simply by double-clicking it as you would if it were in a normal folder. Handy for reading "readme" files before extracting them.
17. You can view an open archive in "Details" mode (from the View/Details menu) to see a great deal of information about each item in the archive.
18. ZIPExplorer archives are fully hierarchical, so you can compress entire subtrees into an archive and navigate them normally. You can also drag entire subtrees out selectively to decompress them.
19. When you are dropping (compressing) items into an archive folder, dropping the items onto a folder icon in the archive compresses the new items into that subdirectory. The same is true for dropping items to any directory in the left hand (tree view) pane when you are in explorer mode.
20. You can right drag into an archive folder (or onto its icon) and select from other options, such as "Update", which will replace only files that are older then the ones you are dropping.

OK, I lied. There are actually 21 things: You can even browse and extract things from ZIP archives inside of other archives.

Registration is $29.95, plus $3 S&H from:
Silicon Prairie Software
Suite N202
4771 148th Ave. NE
Bellevue, WA 98007

Email: plummer@iceonline.com
WWW:
http://www.iceonline.com/home/plummer/zipexplr

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
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And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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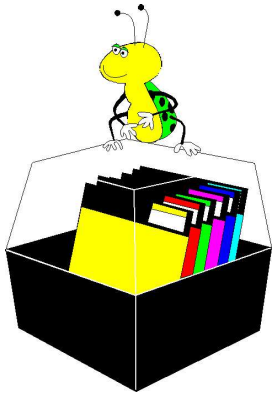
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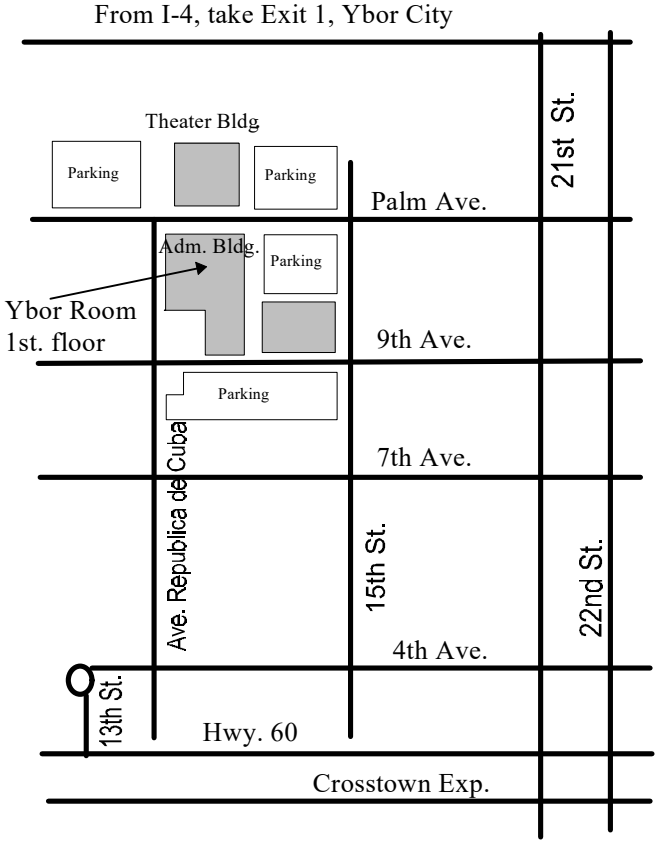
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri. 9	am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)



From I-4, take Exit 1, Ybor City

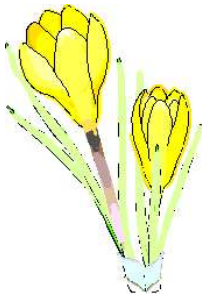


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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No.3 March 1996

Meeting

March 13, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

How to do a Home Page on the Internet
by
Chuck Palm

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Some Notes From FACUG

by Connie Kincaid, President Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

I attended the Florida Association of Computer Users Groups (FACUG) on Feb. 24th and 25th and was amazed at what I found there. FACUG falls under the umbrella of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG). APCUG is the parent organization for all users groups in this country. Each has a web page, forums on the on-line services, newsletters and a board to manage their activities. The primary mission for each is to help local users groups be more effective.

The conference actually began on Friday evening but I was unable to attend that portion. The conference was held at the Clarion next to the conference center in Orlando and approximately 33 PC users groups sent over 100 attendees. The conference also had representatives from IBM, Microsoft, Symantec, Corel, Borland, Parsons, Delrina, Micrografx, Intuit, Adaptec, Adobe Systems, America Online, Global Network Navigator, Microhelp, SSK Technology. Each meal was provided to us by a different sponsor who also demonstrated their latest products. The meals were tasty, informative and a good chance to sit and talk to board members of other groups. I can't begin to describe the charity and willingness to share that was manifested by the entire conference.

Between meals there were 2 one hour round tables on different topics. In upcoming newsletters I would like to take a single topic and

(Continued on page 3)

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TREASURER: Wil Goble (wilgoo@aol.com) 684-8004
MEMBER AT LARGE: Margaret Petro 253-2167
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BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING, 2/14/1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secreary Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vice-president Mike Hodges called the meeting to order. President Connie and family were bedridden with "whatever is going around." Mike expressed all of our sympathies to Connie and Wil with hopes they get well soon.

Mike mentioned the desire to consider a new location for meetings. All members were asked to submit their suggestions. Mike reminded us to look at the SIG Group meeting schedules in the back of the BITS OF BLUE Newsletter.

Regarding entry to Communications SIG, March 4, Reflectone Building, Tom Cone said call him at his office, 949-9698. Mike Hodges said that as long as Reflectone gets the additions to the list before 4 PM of meeting day, entry can be arranged. However, by the time you get a message to Tom and Tom gets a message to Mike, time becomes of essence. Simply plan ahead whenever possible to eliminate miscommunication.

Jim Lindsey, Computer Generated Solutions, made an excellent presentation on "Presentations". He worked through *PowerPoint*. His theme was "How to start up, how to run and how to have fun in building presentations". *PowerPoint* is a presentation package, but it is marked as a "graphics" package. Jim opened *PowerPoint 4.0*, "Presentations that talk to you". He said for us to decide what we want to do. Take inventory of what we have in software programs and databases. Then, determine logical order of arrangement. Numbers can be boring. "You'd rather have depth. You must consider presentations by your competitors...Tables are nice but graphics are generally more interesting...You can build interest into your presentations with graphics." He showed tables with numbers and contrasted them with graphics of the same information.

He presented visual graphics. Then, he introduced sound effects (music) to his presentation that he built. He says, "Do not get carried away by adding to much sound; it's overkill... use sound wisely... the sound should associate with the visual... You can also add moving pictures...clips and cartoons sometimes enhance your presentation... you can add other features, e.g., speaker's outline and notes (such as Jim's handouts)." Jim said that you can also include the same outline notes within your presentation so that the listeners can see the image while reading your outline on the screen and hearing your voice. He said that panels and overhead projectors help

(Continued on page 3)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
with presentations. You may also have your presentation viewed on video monitors well placed.

Jim then demonstrated a presentation that he built for the AMVETS 1996 meeting. He explained what he did as it was being shown on the screen. He used multimedia disks that you can purchase at computer supply stores as a source of graphics, sound an video. These graphics come from CD Media so that you do not have to use HD storage space. You can get media graphics on disks but you use too much hard drive space. He name several CD media products. He says that you can use your own video or imaging equipment and create your own media graphics rather than purchase them.

Jim opened the floor for Q & A. His responses to Q's included comments like "You can use your own sound, bring in sound, fade sounds in and out, sporadically in and our, change directions, etc. Jim used KOSS speakers that are battery amplified with good quality. As a demonstration he turned off the battery supply while the speakers operated from the power supply of the computer through his sound card. "Wave files" bring in sound. You can use your microphone to capture sound in "wave files".

He said that you can get *Microsoft PowerPoint* right now "dirt cheap", probably for a street price of $69. Building your presentation with *PowerPoint* is a 9-step process; he demonstrated (faster than your Secretary could write). Your titles do not change while you do a "build" which affects texts but does not affect titles. Jim's computer had 16 MB ram. He also said that *FreeLance Graphics* and *PowerPoint* are similar. And, *PowerPoint* is not stand alone in the sense that if you want to send someone a presentation and they don't have *PowerPoint*, then you will need also to include the *PowerPoint* viewer.

Jim enlightened us with much more than we are able to relate here.

Due to the illness of Wil, we did not have the coupons for the door prize drawing; we will just have carry over door prizes for our next meeting on March 13. Connie has another great presentation arranged already for that meeting. Please bring a friend! ◆



(FACUG.....Continued from page 1)
discuss it in some detail. This month I will give you some of the highlights and cover the first topic in detail.

- **The health of users groups** - Users groups in general are growing is size, budgets and services. Creativity and community support are key elements.
- **How users groups are like a small business** - The are often incorporated as 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. They pay taxes, expenses, have board of directors with elected officers, they must promote themselves to 'consumers', acquire physical assets and they need to have a strategic plan to operate effectively.
- **How users groups serve the community** - Users groups provide education, social events, a channel for donations from the business community to other areas of the community and sometimes are able to get expensive technology to those who need it but can't afford it.
- **SIGs** - Special Interest Groups provide a focused source of learning for every level of interest. They also provide access to technology to people who might not otherwise have time, money or someone to show them how.
- **Technology** - Users groups are the liaisons from vendors to their market. The meetings provide important forums for vendors to 'teach' their consumers. Computer technology as a business relies more heavily on the education of it's consumers than any other mass industry. Users groups bring that education to the public.
- **Vendor relations** - Users groups and vendor have an interdependent relationship. Vendors rely on users groups to 'spread the word' while users groups rely on vendors to give them something to spread.

I will now look at the first of these items in detail.

The health of users groups - In general, PC users groups are growing by leaps and bounds around Florida. I met people from users groups that were specific to one trailer park in a community. I met people from users groups that regularly had 500+ people attending each meeting. The majority of people that I met fell somewhere between those two extremes. Much of the discussion time was spent on managing growth, promoting growth, helping more people in the community and what services to provide the community. The issues that a particular group will face is very strongly related to size. I sense that groups generally fall into three categories: small, medium and large.

The small groups seemed to be characterized by: serving a geographic region smaller than a county, less than 100 participants at meetings, many members belong to at least one other group, single monthly meetings with few or no SIGs, very few if any vendor demos, no physical assets and rely on the community for free meeting sites and other support.

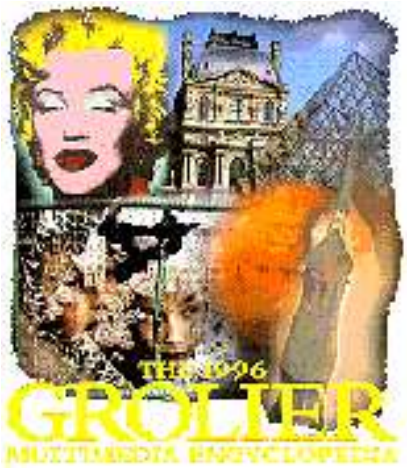
(Continued on page 10)

Software Review

The 1996 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia

Review by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

This month I have an opportunity to do something I've never done before, re-review a program I reviewed it the first time in July of 1994. At that time I reviewed the original issue of The New GROLIER Multimedia Encyclopedia (NGME). It is now just called The 1996 edition of Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia. Back then my comment was "if you own an IBM-compatible PC, 386sx or better, with Windows 3.1 and don't have a CD-ROM drive - **GET ONE! -** because now you have a reason!" Well, today you'll need at least a 486 DX/33 or higher, 4 MB of RAM and 6 MB of hard disk space, a "double-speed" CD-ROM with a 300 KB/sec or higher transfer rate, 8-bit or higher Windows-compatible sound card and a SVGA or higher-resolution display. Also needed is Windows 3.1 or later, MS-DOS 5 or later, and a mouse. Also, new to version 8.02 Grolier now has 12,000 article links to Compuserve Information Services. To use this you will need 8 MB of RAM and 10 MB of hard disk space. If anything they have taken what I thought was the best electronic encyclopedia and made it BETTER!



There are now over 34,000 articles, including 1,200 new and 6,000 revised and updated, that can be browsed, searched, marked, copied, saved or printed. Linked to each article is a gallery of either photos, videos, animations and various other multimedia images such as maps, fact boxes, tables, sounds. There are 150 historical documents, including the Magna Carta, landmark Supreme Court rulings and words from historical figures Plato to Nelson Mandela.

There is an easy to use, all new interface that makes exploring, discovering and learning easier and I guarantee more exciting than you could ever imagine.

Grolier takes the concept of "learning-by-doing" one step further with the use of *Interactivities,* which are dozens of new interactive animations and 3-D models of hands-on demonstrations such as the food chain, finger-spelling exercises and even 3-D renderings of the human brain. There is a total of 15 hours of video, 150 national anthems, 300 classical musical selections, 100 pieces of U.S. historical and world ethnic music, with 125 additional selections.

There is an interactive atlas with 900 maps, all completely interconnected and hyperlinked to articles. There are 77 new *Thematic Maps* to help you understand better with information on world/continent agriculture, climate, vegetation and population density. There are also 166 new *Historical Exploration Maps* and 64 new *City Maps*.

The *Yearbook* is a dramatic recap of events providing a detailed, day-by-day look at the people and events that shaped 1994-95. It includes a media overview of events, a survey of major themes and trends, and a wealth of timely news photos and more.

Timelines helps you explore the relationships between events in world history. This feature divides world history into 10 periods. For each period, there is a graphic

As I mentioned earlier, there are over 12,000 hyperlinks between Grolier and Compuserve, including a connections to special-interest forums, popular publications and databases, chat rooms and more. You get to all of this with a single click.

Any of this information can be copied into any Microsoft Windows-compatible word processor, which can be opened from within Grolier's, quoted and then printed out. As with all copyrighted material, you must give proper credit.

Also included in my copy of Grolier's was a Modern Art CD-ROM from the Maeght Foundation containing the "International EMMA Award Winners of 1995." All of this and a street price of still under $100.

Once again, in my opinion, Grolier is on top of all the rest. This is one software package that the entire family can use to explore, discover and learn in more ways than ever before, and have a whole lot of fun doing it!

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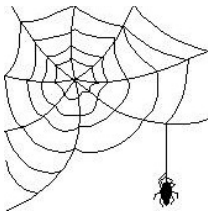
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file--View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
2. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
3. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
4. **OnCmd** - On-Line Data XBase database development environment for native OS/2
5. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Kindergarten** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6) Win. CD
9. **Jump Start First Grade** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 5-7) Windows CD
10. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
11. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
12. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
13. **Managing your Money Plus** - Finance package, check book and more. Windows CD
14. **Managing your Money Windows** - Finance Package
15. **ECHO Lake -** Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
16. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows.
17. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
18. **Science Fiction** - Grolier - Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science Fiction - Windows CD.
19. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



http://www.fl-orchestra.org/music/	Florida Orchestra - Tampa, FL
http://www-wane-leon.scri.fsu.edu/~mikems/	Florida Wildflower Page
http://www.polaroid.com/replica-home/nara/index.html	National Archives Duplication Service
http://ttx.com/bookzone/homepage.html	Book Zone Home Page
http://www.gm.com/index.htm	General Motors
http://pages.prodigy.com/guardian/egypt.htm	Guardian's Egypt
http://www.hpmetro.com/0402/index.htm	Hyde Park Metro - Tampa, FL
http://www.metmuseum.org/	Metropolitan Museum of Art
http://www.tampatrib.com/mosi/	Museum of Science and Industry - Tampa, FL
http://www.prairienet.org/arts/ptg/homepage.html	Piano Page
http://www.primenet.com/~mrdata/midi.htm	The Ultimate TV and Movie MIDI Page
http://www.ed.gov/	U. S. Department of Education
http://bluehen.ags.udel.edu/insects/descriptions/entohome.html	University of Deleware Insect Database
http://tycho.usno.navy.mil/what.html	USNO Master Clock Time
http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/	WebMuseum - Paris (Art)
http://www.cyber24.com/home.html	Welcome to 24 hours in Cyberspace (photography)
http://www.f8.com/FP/Russia/index.html	Welcome to the Russian Chronicle (photography)
http://www.zdnet.com/home/filters/maina.html	ZD Net (Computer News)
http://www.decision96.msn.com/	NBC - MSN Decision 96 ('96 election)
http://www.hpmetro.com/main/altnews.htm	Alternative Newspapers

Software Review

Microsoft Publisher CD Deluxe for Windows 95

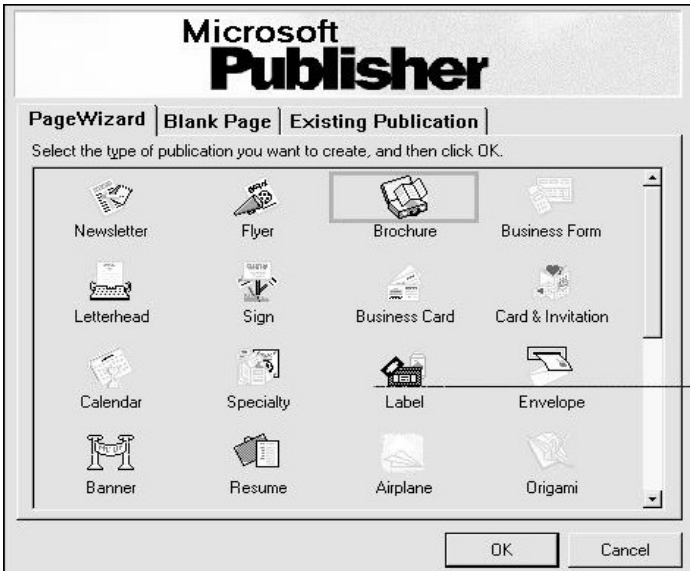
by William LaMartin, Editor Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Consider this an interactive review of *Microsoft Publisher for Windows 95*; for as I write this review I am also using Publisher to put together the March newsletter. When I come across something I want to comment on, I switch from Publisher to *Microsoft Word 7*, where I am writing this, insert the comments into this document then switch back to Publisher. Of course I could easily compose this review in Publisher, since it, as you would expect, also functions as a text editor and spell checker. But being able to create the text and edit it in the more powerful Word 7 is a definite plus--particularly the underlining in red of misspelled words as you type.

I used *Word* to put out the last three newsletters (my first three), and, as with almost everything I have tried to do with it, it did quite well. One problem did occur, though–controlling the flow of articles from one page to, perhaps, several pages later. If I made a change in the first page of an article, then any additional text would flow, not to where it belonged several pages later, but to the next page. Well, even for a program as good as Word, you can't expect it to do everything. That is why there exist publishing programs.

There are probably three levels of publishing programs: low, medium, and high. No surprise there. *Microsoft Publisher* fits in the medium level with a price of $79 that is not much more than some low level programs of more limited scope, e.g. brochure only publishing programs. It is aimed, in Microsoft's words, at "small businesses, home offices, schools, and any organization that wants to self-publish quickly, easily and economically." Sounds like the Tampa PC Users Group doesn't it? If you want to put out a slick, glossy publication with complicated placement and many different layers of complicated color graphics that would have nationwide distribution then Publisher is not for you. You need one of those $500 plus programs. But for the group described above Publisher should do the trick.

The screen-captured window from Publisher in the adjacent column is the opening window for the program and indicates the different types of publications that the program will guide you through the process of creating with its **Page Wizards™**. Anyone who has used any of the newer programs should by now be familiar with wizards which, by asking questions and giving you a series of choices, present you with a template for the particular publication you wish to print—newsletter, brochure, business card, etc.



I didn't choose to use a wizard for our newsletter since I already had the design I had created in *Word* based on the newsletter the previous editor, Marylee Bruneau, had published (using *Page Maker*, one of those high level programs). All I had to do was duplicate it in the new program. Perhaps as time goes by I will incorporate more of the design features discussed in the Publisher manual, but my first goal was to put out this month's newsletter with *Publisher* reproducing the layout of previous newsletters.

A few words about how the program functions, with the newsletter used as the example: First, I created 12 pages with two columns each, with the odd and even pages mirrored (notice how the page number in the header is always on the outside–something I never could accomplish in *Word*). Next, with the text frame tool, I simply draw text frames where I want to place text, e.g. in each of the two columns on each page; with the picture frame tool I draw picture frames where I want to place graphics. I can then insert text in the text frames and graphics in the picture frames. Where appropriate the text frames can then be linked together to make the individual articles flow from column to column and page to page. This is the big advantage a publishing program has over a word processor. For a simple publication that is all you need do.

You can place frames on top of frames, resize frames, move frames from front to back, right align them, top align them, make them transparent, etc. If you understand the use of frames you are a long way to mastering *Microsoft Publisher*. However, as you might expect for the price, Publisher will not do everything. For example, if you have a graphical object you did not create in *Publisher*, say, a picture of a rabbit, *Publisher* will rotate it for you, but it will not flip it horizontally or vertically for you. This would have to be done in a separate graphics program. It does provide you with **Word Art**, which

(Continued on page 9)

Shareware Review of PaintShop Pro v3.11 (16-bit) & v3.12 (32-bit)

By Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC users Group, Inc.

I was wondering what I was going to tell you about this month until I had a conversation with William LaMartin today, so I'll thank him for the idea.

First, I'll explain what we discussed, then I'll talk about *PaintShop Pro* (PSPro). I was telling William about a nifty utility package I had purchased recently from CompUSA to make T-shirt transfers using a color printer. You get ten - 8 ½" x 11" sheets for $17.95. The product is "T-Shirt Transfers TR-101" distributed by the Creative Products Division of Canon and says its for use with the Canon Color Bubble Jet 4000 and 600 series, but I'm here to tell you it works very well with the Hewlett Packard DeskJet line of printers also. I've used it with my HP-550C and my new HP-855C, and the results were *SUPER*. They can be used on any cotton or cotton/poly blend fabric to personalize T-shirts, sweatshirts, aprons, table cloths and napkins, tote bags or anything else your imagination allows!

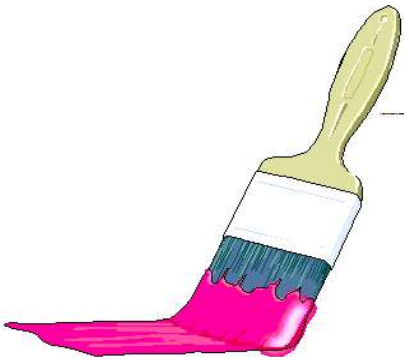
Besides the T-shirt transfer package you'll also need a household iron, pillow case, glass or any smooth, hard, non-porous surface (not wood or metal) and of course a cotton or cotton/poly blend, light colored garment to personalize. If you follow the instructions you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Now, to create these transfers you have to have a graphics program that will create a *mirror* image so that when you iron on the transfer the image comes out normal. That's where PaintShop Pro comes in.

Since I've gotten into PC computing I have always been interested in computer graphics and have spent top dollar for some of the best graphic packages out there like, Adobe PhotoShop and Corel Draw. PSPro, by all means is not better, but in most cases its just as good. And for only $69 that makes it a lot better in my book.

PSPro is a raster format image editing program more commonly known as a "bitmap editor". Raster image formats break a picture into a grid of equally sized pieces, called pixels, and record color information for each pixel. Common examples of raster formats include the Windows ".BMP" format and the CompuServe ".GIF" format.
Unlike most bitmap editors, PSPro isn't confined to a short list of raster file formats. It provides full support for all of the most popular raster formats, full or partial support for many less-popular raster formats, and can read nine meta and vector image formats. It can also convert to any of these formats.

One real neat utility that comes with PSPro is the PSPro Browser. When you start PSPro Browser, it opens the Select Directory Dialog Box, which you use to choose the directory that you want to browse. It then creates thumbnails of all the graphic files in the directory or folder. Just click on the thumbnail you want and PSPro opens automatically with that file loaded.



Another feature PSPro has is a screen capture utility to copy an image from within any other Windows-based program directly into PSPro.

During PSPro's installation, you are given the option of adding Paint Shop Pro to your Program Manager. If you do this, then PSPro's Browser's icon will be in the same group as PaintShop Pro's. To launch PSP Browser, double-click on its icon. The screen capture utility is a menu choice and built into PSPro.

There is a complete set of basic image editing tools to cut, copy, and clear, paste, undo and revert to file, empty clipboard, add a border to an image, cropping or enlarging an image, changing an image's width and height, reversing orientation: flip and mirror, and viewing image information.

There is a complete set of selection tools such as standard cursor, color selector, magnifier, image mover, rectangle selector, oval selector, selection adjuster, cloner, lasso, magic wand, and color tool. Also, there is an ample set of paint tools including, standard brush, clone brush, user-defined brush, push brush, airbrush, fill tool, pen, pencil, marker, crayon, chalk, charcoal, swap brush, undo brush, text tool, line tool, hollow rectangle tool, solid rectangle tool, hollow oval tool, solid oval tool, smooth brush, and sharpen brush. But these are not all.

PSPro also supports TWAIN-compliant image devices, such as scanners. TWAIN is an industry standard that allows applications (like PaintShop Pro) to talk to the software that controls an image device. With my flatbed scanner and PSPro I can take any graphic picture or photo and turn it into personalized apparel within a few minutes

With all these tools you can easily see why I can say, "under most cases this, $69 Shareware program can do just as good a job as the *BIG BOYS* do." PSPro comes in both 16-bit and 32-bit versions for Windows95.

Gosh, I love computing and Shareware. And utility packages like these T-shirt transfers makes computing a whole lot of fun again.

You can order PaintShop Pro from JASC, Inc. by payment with check or credit card (MasterCard and Visa). The numbers for ordering are: 1-800-622-2793 or Voice (612) 930-9171 or FAX (612) 930-9172.

Make checks payable to: JASC, Inc.
Mail to: JASC, Inc.
PO Box 44997

(Continued on page 10)

Product Review:

Technical Connection Personal Software

*by Karla Meyers, from the OS/2 Monthly Newsletter**

IBM Technical Connection Personal Software is a collection of tools that allow users to have quick access to the latest in service and product support information. And what a truly wonderful collection it is.

The software collection consists of seven components including AskPSP, Solutions Database, Technical Bulletins, Corrective Service Diskettes, Reference and Diagnostic Diskettes, Product Information, and Device Drivers.

The Technical Connection is easy to load and even easier to use. To install it, you simply put the CD-ROM into the system, change to the drive letter designation for your CD-ROM and type install. It really couldn't be an simpler. The icons in the package are well labeled and easy to understand.

If you own IBM equipment, the Reference and Diagnostic Diskettes are indispensable options. It could turn out to be very handy the first time you can't find your reference diskette for your PS/2 Model 70. The list of equipment diskettes is extensive enough to include CD-ROMs and page scanners. I was quite impressed.

OS/2

The Product Information section will keep you up to date on the latest IBM products available. It also includes IBM Dealer Support News, Team OS/2 Newsletters, and several other newsletters from different groups at IBM, including this one. Demonstration software programs are also available here from time to time. This area contains such a tremendous amount of information that it alone makes the Technical Connection subscription worth the price.

The Device Driver section is also indispensable for medium and large companies that use a wide variety of equipment. The video driver list contains drivers from ATI, Western Digital and Cirrus Logic. The PCMCIA section contains drivers from several manufacturers including Toshiba and Apex. Similarly, the CD-ROM section presents drivers from Mitsumi, Sony, Phillips, Chinon and others. As a technician, this section really caught my attention because it would save me from having to call a half-dozen different bulletin boards to get the drivers I need. It's a real time saver.

The Technical Bulletins section is divided into PS/2 Assist and OS/2 Assist. The PS/2 area contains the PS/2 Assistant, the Consumer PC Assistant, PS/2 Marketing, and General Information Assistant. The OS/2 Assist area is an exceptionally comprehensive listing that includes the OS/2 platform product strategy, questions and answers on several software products, employee written software (that does a wide variety of things), the Personal Systems support family (PSSF) problem reporting guide and users guide, and last, but not least, the Technical Solutions Library. The Tech Solutions Library contains information on OS/2 Warp, Communications Manager/2, DOS, LAN, and multimedia. All in all, it is a very complete guide that complements the other sections very well and provides yet another source of solutions.

To stay current with the latest fixpacks and service packs, jump into the Corrective Service Diskettes section. The Technical Connection compresses over 350 megabytes of information and fixes into this area. Most of the fixes concern installation and creation instructions. The fixes cover a wide variety of products including Personal Communications AS/400, OS/2 Warp Connect, and Communications Manager/2. This is another incredible grouping of information and tools to make your support technician's life a lot easier and keep your systems running smoothly.

The Solutions Database allows you to find solutions to reported problems. This is the area where you can get confirmation that you are not the only person in the universe with this problem. This database is a collection of APARs (Authorized Program Analysis Report). Each entry contains a brief description of the closed problem, the symptoms, and the resolution. Previously you could only access this information on a BBS, now you can have it at your disposal at any time. This definitely provides a savings in time and money as well as increased efficiency in getting a problem solved without having to call for help.

I have saved my favorite part of the Technical Connection for last. AskPSP is your own personal help desk. It uses an expert system tool, CasePoint, to allow you to ask questions in everyday English to help you find solutions. It contains casebases on a variety of products including Communications Manager/2, OS/2 Warp, OS/2.X, DCE, LAN Systems, OS/2 Warp Connect, and Novell NetWare from IBM. You will also find a readme file and a tutorial to show you how to use AskPSP.

For example, imagine you were using OS/2 Warp Connect and could not get the software to see your 3COM 3C509b network adapter. By describing the problem to AskPSP and answering its questions, in a matter of minutes you would find that the card probably is not configured correctly. It would tell you to check the transceiver type (set to match the cabling that you are using), to disable the plug & play feature, and to set

(Continued on page 9)

(OS/2.....Continued from page 8)
the modem speed in the softset configuration to 9600 baud. It is really a phenomenal tool that many of the support technicians at IBM actually use. I require it in my bag of tools. A lot of hard work has gone into creating the case bases and we are continually updating them. The effort and commitment to quality are evident.

The cost of the Technical Connection is quite reasonable. A single purchase costs $59. An annual subscription is available with the updates coming either monthly or quarterly. The quarterly updates subscription is $119 per year while the monthly updates subscription is $299. As an initial purchase bonus, the Technical Connection includes a copy of the CD-ROM containing over 275 books on a variety of OS/2 products.

Having been a support technician with several hundred systems to maintain, I wish I had had a tool the caliber of the Technical Connection. I have not seen a support tool of this quality from any other hardware or operating system manufacturer. I highly recommend it to both end users and in-house technicians alike. ◆

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OS/2 users, note: The beta version of Lotus Smart Suite for OS/2 is now available

(Publisher.....Continued from page 6)
allows you to make interesting designs with text as I did on this page with our group's name. Additional tools at your disposal allow you to insert tables, draw various shapes, or use the design gallery tool to apply *Publisher's* design templates.

Tampa PC Users Group

One final thing that *Publisher* won't do is allow you to first print the even pages of a document in reverse order, then on the back sides of these pages print the odd numbered pages in regular order resulting in a document printed on both sides of the paper . This is very handy for small runs of , say, a newsletter that you want to print on your own printer. It is not necessary or even desirable if you are going to use an outside printer. However, it is a feature that *Word* introduced to me that most other programs don't offer—including *Publisher*, but, again, Publisher is only a $79 program.

For the beginner, the design wizards will probably be of the most use. I used the business card wizard to set up a card for me. Then having the basic size and design, I made the modifications I wanted and printed them out ten to a page on heavy stock paper with a laser printer. Finally I cut them out with a trimmer and was pleasantly surprised how professional they appeared. Similarly I tried my hand at a three fold brochure, something I had previously accomplished in Word, but found much easier here.

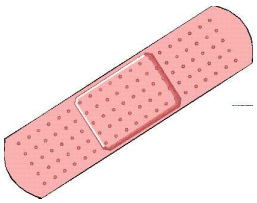
The CD contains over 1,000 pieces of clip art and 60 True-Type® fonts. The program will automatically fix common fit-and-finish problems with letter spacing in the background without your involvement. It will also identify layout errors and offer suggestions for correcting these, and it provides for setting up your document for outside printing if you so desire (more professional--and expensive--than the way our newsletter is done at Kinko's).

To run this program you will need a 386DX or higher running Windows 95, 6MB of memory and a CD-ROM drive. Retail price is $79 with a $49 upgrade from earlier versions (if you bought the earlier version after 7/15/95 the upgrade is free). Also, for those who insist on sticking with Windows 3.1, Version 2.0 will remain available, also for $79. This program is available in most all software outlets. ◆

Follow-up of review on CleanSweep95 in the February 1996 Newsletter

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

If you purchased *Cleansweep95* version 2.0 check your CleanSweep95 folder (usually C:\Program Files\Cleansweep\) for a file named CSINSM32.EXE. If the date is anything other than 1/16/96 you will probably need the 2.02 patch. This patch can be downloaded from Quarter-Deck's home page at: ***http://www.qdeck.com/*** free of charge. From the home page go to the Technical Support area, click on patches and follow the instructions. The file name, if you are using Win95 only, is **CSPAT202.EXE**. It seems that on some occasions Win95 will lock up giving a "CSUSEM32" (or



(Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (March 21) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (March 4) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Tom Cone at 949-9698 or Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (March 20) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin. at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

(CleanSweep Patch.....Continued from page 9)
similar) error code. It happened to me, but not right at first.

Fortunately there are people like William LaMartin in our users group who had forwarded a message to me from the WIN95 conference on our BBS concerning the reported problems back on February 19, but at that time I hadn't experienced any problems. I have a new 133 MHz system that has only Win95 and mostly all 32-bit programs and had **NEVER** had one lockup until this past week. After it happened three or four times I got suspicious and went back and re-read William's message. Thanks William!

This patch updates over fifty files in *CleanSweep95* and makes 14 main changes to the program. I thought CleanSweep was great last month but now its even better!

If you don't have access to the Internet yet (and you really should - but that's for another time) let me know and I'll see that you get the patch somehow. I'm sorry if my review led you to purchase the product and caused any inconvenience, but I still think *Cleansweep95* rates an "A." ◆

(PaintShop Pro.....Continued from page 7)

Eden Prairie, MN 55344 USA
$69 plus $5 S/H ◆

(FACUG.....Continued from page 3)

The medium size groups were the majority and while they seemed to differ in many ways, they also seem to share some fundamental similarities. The groups tended to have about 100 to 500 members, serve a county wide area, own or be in the process of acquiring/establishing some of the following: large meeting site (>100 members at a meeting), resources centers where they held SIGs and/or meetings, more that one general meeting per month, novice SIGs, community service projects where their participation will end when some goal is accomplished (not ongoing or open ended projects), boards with more than 10 regular members, home pages on the Internet, and regular vendor presentations (usually quarterly).

Large groups were characterized by: serving multiple counties, meetings with 300 to thousands of attendees, frequent vendor presentations (not always monthly but at least quarterly), open board of director meetings with over 50 attendees, multiple committees reporting to various board members, a permanent meeting site with full presentation equipment setup or rental agreements for their setup, resource centers that were active 40+ hours per week with SIGs during weekdays, evenings and weekends.

This covers a broad spectrum. Most users groups don't exactly fit the characteristics described above. But, these characteristics seem to me to be the trend in Florida. The other significant trend is that a high portion of the volunteers in users groups are retired. Also, the stronger groups enrich more lives by being a part of service to the community in some volunteer capacity. The volunteers seem to take a great deal of personal interest and pride in their project or part of the group. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software
Adobe Systems, Inc.
Borland
Corel Systems
Grolier
Knowledge Adventure
Microsoft
Symatec
Traveling Software
Xerox

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$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employees

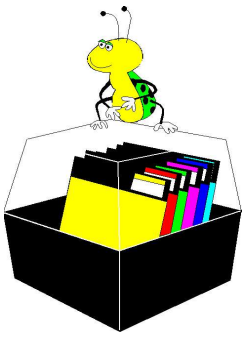
Check the address label for your renewal month

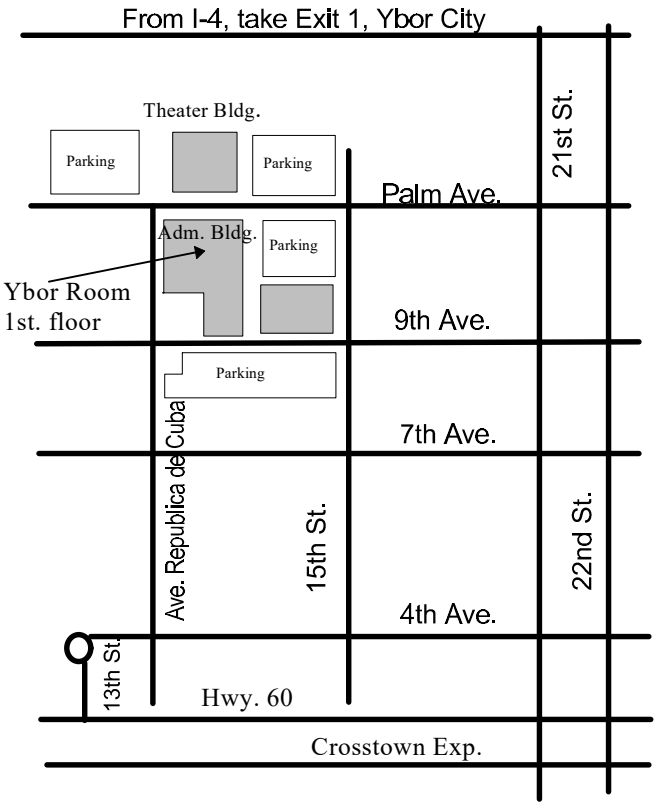
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Winmdows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

To view this newsletter in full color, download PCNL9603.PDF from the BBS and view it with the Adobe Acrobat Reader





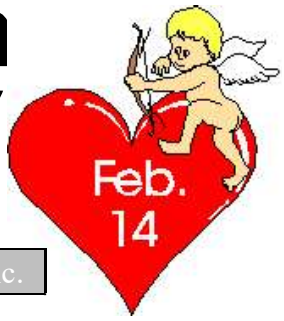
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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No. 2 February 1996

Meeting

Date: **February 14, 1996**
Time **6:00 PM**
Place: **Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus Ybor Room**

Using Graphics, Animation & Multimedia to Enhance Your Presentations
by
Jim Lindsey IBM/CGS

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Computers Across Generations

Some personal thoughts by Connie Kincaid, President Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

There comes a time in any creative endeavor when the art, the artist and the artistic medium come together in a synergistic moment and each is transformed by the other. In that moment, the piece of art is truly born. The rest is a lot of hard work. My sense of all things computer related tells me that we are in one of these moments (which may actually last several months to a few years). I foresee changes that will alter the social and cultural fabric of our world the way traveling through the air and turning a wheel without a horse changed the way we live.

As I look back, computers started out as the tools of scientist and engineers. These were highly specialized pieces of equipment for highly trained people. The machine itself would do only very specific tasks. But soon other people began to see the possibilities, and our entertainment media brought us visions of machines that would conquer the world (back in the 'world dominance' days). As some people may remember, computers were first developed to calculate how to throw something (missile, bullet, etc.) at an enemy in acts of war. Then we figured out how to hurl a space craft at the moon and get back.

But the computer was good for more than just throwing things. If the computer could figure out how to manipulate objects in time and space, then we could put them to use in factories; hence, the development of the early robots or Computer Aided Manufacturing machines (sometimes referred to as CAM). People struggled with social/cultural demons of displaced workers. As people saw robots replacing people, people assumed robots could have some other 'human like' abilities. Robots were depicted to have varying versions of our

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* * 1995 OFFICERS * *

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BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted at the following rates:

	1 month	3 months	6 months
Full Page	$60.00	$162.00	$288.00
Half Page	$40.00	$108.00	$192.00
Quarter Page	$22.00	$60.00	$106.00
Eight Page	$12.00	$33.00	$58.00
Business Card	$10.00	$27 00	$48.00

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

Secretary's Report

SECRETARY'S REPORT
TPCUG MEETING 1/10/1996, 6 PM
Administration Building Auditorium, HCC
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President ConnieKincaid called the meeting to order. Connie introduced the new officers. See minutes December 1995 BOB Newsletter.
Harvey Bruneau was appointed program coordinator.

PRESENTATION:
Connie introduced JasonKimenker of BCD, Brain Child Distribution, Inc., across from University Square Mall on Fowler. Jason came, as in his presentation in December 1994, to give us information about products, technologies, etc. He probably has more information about more hardware than anyone we have had...right from the top of his head. Some of his comments are as follows.

He says....Pentium is a big flash name but your 486 will still do your work..... Pentium Pro makes the Pentium look like it is standing still....discussed the Diamond 3-D sound card. Prices are constantly dropping..Iomega Ditto tape backup uses a thinner tape to store moreinfo. It stores 800mb of compressed information. Sells for about $149....Anytime you read the specs on tape backup, you cannot save the data stated as compressed...the stated (x)Mb means that the amount of information BEFORE compression is (x)Mb. The actual storage as compressed data is less than the stated amount.

He says ....Upgrading a US Robotics modem, can be done with either a chip or with software depending on your model. To use an ISDN line you must buy an ISDN MODEM (ISDN modem is expensive)...US Robotics has a new modem, aSportster 28.8 DSVD, that also permits voice communication, $299. It is an analog connection.....Most modems have data capabilities and fax capabilities but not voice capabilities at the same time....You can purchase a camera to set on top of your monitor that permits video and voice transmission.

He says ....CD ROM technology is changing fast. Prices are dropping. You want to be sure to include MPEG..... Digital video disks (DVD) will be coming on the active scene. The standard is not yet determined by the industry and therefore is slow to come. DVD system will not be compatible with current market technology.....6x speed drive is about $200 now...that is just for the drive and

See **Minutes.....**continued on page 3

Minutes.....continued from page 2

does not include the other features, speakers, mic, etc. that serious game players want.

Jason showed an HP Surestore CD writer. It is a CD ROM recorder for around $1,000 . It is a quad speed reader and double speed writer . Another year will bring much lower prices, more storage and greater speed. Floptical technology is great but is still searching for industry standards...The Logitech TrackMan Marble, a combination, sort of, mouse and track ball was shown. It is ergonomic and more comfortable than a mouse or track ball. You do not move it on a pad....3 fingers and thumb controls...Ergonomically speaking, monitors that are flicker free, 28 dot pitch, 17 inch are much more comfortable...one should seriously consider ergonomics when purchasing anything today.

He says.....regarding memory, a $30 converter will permit you to change a 30 pin memory to a 72 pin memory....Why doesn't the price of memory fall? Silicon is a commodity, and its price is subject to supply and demand like any other commodity.

Jason showed a ViewStation color flatbed scanner @2400 DPI which should sell for $399 including SCSI control card. It is a dual pass. 300 dpi takes about 10 seconds for documents or one minute at 600 dpi for images. The SCSI card can connect to other hardware.

Now you can buy a top of the line 486 motherboard for about $200...when you purchase any technology, ask what is current and what will be the future direction. Technology is moving very fast. Stay with generic standards...stay away from proprietary.

Jason presented a full program, and he stayed until the lights went out because so many people wanted to discuss so much with him. Thank you Jason for another excellent program.

After his presentation, comments were made about various things. Networking was excellent at the break and after the meeting.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

Window Washer	Charles Howe
Internet in Box	Mike Hodges
Managing Your Money	Roger Waters

Please mark your calendar for the next TPCUG meeting on February 14, 1996. Bring your Valentine!

Thoughts.....continued from page 1

five senses (hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch). While much of this technology is more fiction than fact, the arts and entertainment industry had a lot of fun with it. The more positive visionaries brought us visions of unlimited leisure time and leisure pursuits while the computers did everything . The less positive visionaries brought us stories of the haves controlling the havenots with computer technology (Big Brother). And the direct war themes became infiltrated with spies and espionage. Soon, throwing massive quantities of explosives gave way to strategic information and a few good gadgets (always in the hands of a handsome man that beautiful women adored).

Gadgets became 'sexy' in the hands of handsome stars in spy films. With the new microchip technology, the rich had a new toy store of gadgets to play with. This was a lot more fun than displaced workers and enjoyed quick popularity

Back at the workplace, large companies were growing at a pace never seen before. The worker had to be supplemented by machines that could do repetitive tasks so that people could do more work faster. The computer was quickly the answer. Large companies soon started buying mainframes or time on someone else's mainframe (called time sharing). Suddenly time on the computer became a commodity to be bought and sold. The popular culture didn't do much with the timesharing concept except apply it to vacation homes (hence, timeshares), sexual partners (remember 'open marriages' in the late 60's and early 70's? I won't pin that one directly on computers but, the similarities are striking). A lot of social/cultural forces seemed to pull together to move us from a rather defensive, territorial era to one of sharing resources on many levels.

It seems to me that the next era - personal computing was something of a backlash or pulling back to personal boundaries. People went from network computing with shared resources to having their own 'personal' computer that they didn't share with anyone. That didn't last long. Technology has given us the best of both worlds. We can have our own personal computer that is connected to networks at work, at home or the world (literally). While I don't think we have realized unlimited leisure time thanks to computers, we do spend a lot of leisure time using computers to explore the world and meet other people.

The popular culture has moved out of the movie theater to a noticeable degree and into the Internet. People don't want to be passive consumers. People want to be more involved in their own entertainment. The next wave will bring us a melting together of all the various forms of

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Software Review

TextBridge Professional™ 3.0

Review by William LaMartin,
Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Why does anyone want to perform Optical Character Recognition (OCR)? When you scan in a document or receive a fax you do not have a text based document—you have a graphic. The job of OCR is to transform this graphic back into the original text based product. How accurate this transformation is done is the measure of how well your OCR program is working.

This OCR program from Xerox has extremely accurate character recognition and page layout duplication. It is the best OCR program I have used, and if I had had it when I scanned and performed OCR on a 350 page typewriter written manuscript, I could have saved far better than 50% of my time on that project.



There are basically three levels of OCR programs: what usually comes with your faxing software, those programs costing $100 or less, and the top of the line programs like *TextBridge Professional* and *OmniPage Pro*. If you are going to do a lot of scanning and Recognition, get one of the top programs. The time you save will be worth it.

To use *TextBridge*, you simply place your document in the scanner, make the selections you want as regards, preview or automatic selection of text and graphic areas, training level, proofing data if you are using Word or Word Perfect, whether to save data for later OCR, whether to load a user dictionary, then press the Go button. The interface is really quite simple, and the process moves along fairly rapidly.

In performing recognition on newspaper articles, magazine articles or books, the recognition is almost perfect. The recognition is also excellent on laser printed documents and those generated by electric typewriters. The results are not quite as good with the old manual typewriter generated documents. However, with any problem documents, if you are going to be doing several pages, you can use the training feature for the first couple of pages, save the training data, then use that to improve the results in the remaining pages. If your document has a large number of proper names or specialized terms that are not in your usual dictionary, you may additionally create and load your own dictionary.

Besides accurate character recognition, the preservation of the page layout and formatting is sometimes important. I have been amazed how well TextBridge matches the original font type, size and formatting: If the original had an 8 pitch, bold Arial font, then your recognized text probably will too. If the next line contained a 14 pitch font, then you will have that preserved too. However, don't expect miracles; some formatting is just too complicated to be preserved. In fact, for my work, I often prefer that only the font characteristics be preserved and that I redo the layout of the recognized text in my word processor.

There is an additional feature called Instant Access which by running in the background allows you to scan directly from most Windows applications and have the recognized text sent directly to those programs. In addition if you use Microsoft*Word for Windows* or *Word Perfect* you can perform post-recognition proofing and editing within these programs where suspect words are printed in different colors which correspond to their confidence level and, if desired, view the scanned image of the suspect words.

If you are using Windows 3.1, have a scanner, and want to do OCR, then this program should be a top candidate for the job. However, if you run under Win95, you will want to wait for the 95 upgrade due the first quarter of 96. The reason is that the Instant Access OCR and the Embedded Proofing do not function properly in Win95. The Instant Access feature causes problems with 95's Task Bar, it sometimes refuses to be closed, and it performs very slowly when compared to the standard option of simply first running*TextBridge*, saving the recognized text to a file and then importing it into your word processor. The Embedded Proofreader used with Microsoft Word (I don't know about Word Perfect) is really a 22 page Word Basic macro written for an earlier version of Word. Unfortunately it does not run properly with Word95. With several hours of study and changes I was able to get it up and running, and, more hours would be necessary to completely update it. However, I may leave that to the professionals at Xerox and their release of *TextBridge Professional* for Win95.

$259 retail; $149 competitive upgrade from Xerox,
5400 Hillview Ave., Palo Alto CA 94304
Tel: 415-813-6800 FAX: 415-813-6967

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Aldus Persuasion** - Presentation Graphic Software
2. **Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf** - Grolier - Windows CD.
3. **Outside IN** for Windows - Instant Access to any file--View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
6. **OnCmd** - On-Line DataXBase database development environment for native OS/2
7. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
8. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
9. **1996 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia** - Win CD
10. Jump Start **Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) Windows CD
11. Jump Start **Kindergarten** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6) Win. CD
12. Jump Start **First Grade** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 5-7) Windows CD
13. **Space Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
14. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
15. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
16. **Managing your Money Plus** - Finance package, check book and more. Windows CD
17. **Managing your Money Windows** - Finance Package
18. **ECHO Lake** - Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
19. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows.
20. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
21. **Science Fiction** - Grolier - Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science Fiction - Windows CD.
22. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay** - Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



http://www.fedworld.gov/	FedWorld Home Page
http://www.pizzahut.com/	Welcome to Pizza Hut!
http://www2.USNews.com/usnews/	Welcome to U.S.News Online
http://www.townhall.com/townhall/welcome.html.cgi	Town Hall
http://www.glowmag.com/	Glow Magazine
http://www.cnn.com/	CNN Interactive
http://www.cftnet.com/members/gtbpcug/	Greater Tampa Bay PC User Group
http://www.usps.gov/postofc/pstoffc.htm	The United States Postal Service, General Post Office
http://www.bcd.net	BCD - Brain Child Computer Distributors, Tampa
gopher://chronicle.merit.edu/11	Chronicle of Higher Education
http://www.adobe.com/Software/Acrobat/	Free Adobe Acrobat Reader Software
http://www.apcug.org/	Association of Personal Computer User Groups
http://www.cowtown.org/	National Cattlemen's Assoc. COWTOWN AMERICA
http://www.haus.net/	INFOHAUS - Tampa
http://www.intac.com/~jdeck/index4.html	Photo Journalism Exhibition
http://www.intac.com/~jdeck/links/pj.html	Photo Journalism Links
http://www.tampatrib.com/	Tampa Bay Online
http://users.aol.com/chettown/citrus.html	The Ultimate Citrus Page
http://nytsyn.com/med/	Your Health Daily

Software Review

CleanSweep95 : Total cleanup for Windows 3.1, Windows 95 and Windows NT

Review by Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

This month, in addition to a review of shareware, I am reviewing a utility program that everyone can use and it's just as inexpensive as shareware. Windows 95 has already made your computer easier to use. But to get the most out of Windows 95, you need to manage your hard disk space. Today's programs are larger than ever and it is likely that at some point you will run out of disk space and find it necessary to delete unnecessary or infrequently used programs and files.



Windows programs have long had a tendency to scatter their contents across multiple directories, making it difficult to purge your computer of all the program's components. Windows 95 itself takes up even more space. Your PC probably contains many redundant, obsolete, and unused files and programs you no longer use. Now is the time to clean up your hard disk.

CleanSweep is the essential uninstaller program for Windows 95, because there is simply no other way to clean up the remnants of your old Windows desktop and manage your new 32-bit environment properly. *CleanSweep* is more than just an uninstall program. It is a multipurpose utility for minimizing hard disk clutter and reclaiming disk space.

CleanSweep can remove unneeded DOS programs and Windows 16- and 32-bit programs and system components. You can also use it to delete unneeded duplicate files. The resulting increase in available disk space will greatly improve your computer's performance and allow you to install new programs.

The main screen of *CleanSweep* 95 follows the Windows 95 theme in that there are five tabs that contain *wizards* - helper programs that guide you step-by-step through a particular process. These five tabs are as follows:

The Program tab contains five wizards. You can uninstall files, archive files, back up files, move files, or transport files to another computer.

The **Uninstall wizard** deletes programs and all related files in the same folder or program group Uninstall deletes not only the individual components (files) of the program, but also any external references to the file, such as program icons or entries in system configuration files (such as the Registry or SYS.INI). The wizard is smart enough to leave program components that are used by other programs intact.

The **Archive wizard** uninstalls programs but saves copies of the program's files in a compressed format for future retrieval. This gives you the best of both worlds, because you can free needed space on your hard disk and still retrieve the program whenever you want. The Archive wizard creates a backup of a program file and all related files in the same folder or program group. The original files and configuration information are deleted from your hard drive. When you need the program, click its icon, and *CleanSweep* restores it.

The **Backup wizard** creates a single, compressed backup file of a program file and all related files in the same folder or program group for use as a reserve in the event that the files need to be restored. Backing up leaves all of the original files and configuration information in place.

The Move wizard moves a program file and all related files in the same program group or folder to another drive or folder location.

The **Transport wizard** transports a program file and all related files in the same program group or folder to a disk or other storage medium. Use this wizard to transport data to your laptop, home computer, or other computers.

To start any wizard, simply click its icon. In general, the wizards will guide you through the process by asking you a question. When you have answered the question, click Next. When you are done, click Finish.

The Cleanup tab contains the Finders that locate specific types of files: the Duplicate File Finder, the Redundant DLL Finder, the Unused File Type Finder, the Low File Usage Finder, and the Orphan Finder. After you locate unneeded files with a Finder, you can delete, archive, back them up, move, or transport them.

The View tab contains three reports that summarize your *CleanSweep* activities.
The Master Log keeps track of all of the actions performed, so you can always look up any file or activity. It will also tell you where a backup was stored and how many bytes of disk space were freed.

The Savings report details the amount of space freed, the amount of spaced used by backups and the total overall savings. All totals are in kilobytes (KB).
The Folder Usage report details folder use.

The Restore wizard restores a program to its original state.

The Options tab contains the Configure *CleanSweep* icon, which customizes *CleanSweep* to suit your personal preferences.

After you install *CleanSweep 95*, Windows 95 will

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Software Review

Encyclopaedia Britannica CD 2

by Dick Reaser, Los Angeles Computer Society

This new electronic encyclopedia on CD-ROM provides fast, easy access to text and illustrations from the printed Encyclopaedia Britannica (hereinafter referred to as EB) by means of several advanced searching features. EB is arguably the de facto standard of the world. EB implements both natural-language and Boolean searches. It uses hypertext links to move between related entries in different parts of the database. A Nations of the World section provides easy access to basic information on all nations, including maps, flags, and articles. EB provides a random access feature for browsing among both illustrations and articles. EB contains the approximately 44 million words from the printed version plus 1,000+ articles that are not in the printed version. It has 2,000+ graphics and illustrations as well as Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition.

Here's an old wrinkle. There is a hardware security key that goes into your LPT1 port. You can then plug your printer into the back of this key. Historically, such devices often caused problems. So far, so good on my installation. Hardware minima are a multimedia PC with 10-MB of hard-drive space avail-able and a mouse. Software minimum is DOS 5 and Windows 3.1 or Windows for Workgroups 3.11. A 15-Mb swap file is recommended. Everything is installed directly from the CD. You can choose to put some of the CD files on your hard disk for faster operation. I chose not to take up the extra hard disk space and don't feel I suffered in speed. The program uses Win 32s and the Netscape Web Browser to view data and will install them from the CD-ROM if they are not already present. I had some problems with installation on my old system (with a very slow CD-Drive) so I put it on my daughter's 486DX100 with quad-speed CD-ROM drive. It installed and works like a charm there. Guess it's time to catch up with my kids grandkids and the modern computer world!

Conventional Windows startup brings you to the Home Page which is longer than the screen. The side bar arrows show the bottom of the page with significant launch buttons: Nations of the World, Propaedia, Random Article, and Picture Tour. To find out "What is the longest river in the world?", type it that way into the Query Box. EB finds references that contain the key words, sorts them by priority, and shows the first paragraph of each. In this example, it found the longest river of each continent, so you had to do a little more reading to find out the answer you were looking for (Nile River). The hyper-linked text feature makes further reading very simple. The Propaedia section is a tree-like arrangement of the various branches of knowledge covered in EB and their many divisions and subdivisions. The top level subjects are: Matter and Energy, The Earth, Life on Earth, Human Life, Human Society, Art, Technology, Religion, The History of Mankind, and The Branches of Knowledge. Each of these goes down several levels of refinement. You can then hypertext to those portions that interest you. Although I tried out the random graphics and random article features, they didn't hold my interest very long. Guess that the scope of the information is way beyond my field of interest. The On-Line version of EB appears matched to the CD-ROM version with its HTML. I have not used it yet.

EB documentation is a short VHS video for installation and demonstration and a simple 82-page spiral-bound pamphlet covering installation, the meaning of the menus and buttons, and a short tutorial. Technical support is available through a toll-free number. Like most 800 numbers for products with a fresh release, it was busy most of the time. I was able to speak to a person who referred me to another more technical person. I ended up leaving a detailed message with my question and phone number and they promised to call me back. They did call back the same day but I was out. He left a toll number and his extension where I could reach him directly.

This is an excellent research tool and very easy to use. I wish it would incorporate some audio and animation or video features to make it more multimedia. Just reading a monitor screen isn't very efficient. Of course the searches are what really makes it worth while compared to looking in book indices. Should be great for students.

Britannica CD 2.0 Enclyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. Britannica Centre 310 South Michigan Avenue Chicago, IL 60604-9973 (800) 323-1229 Price: $995 (direct sales only)

Who is the man and what is he doing here?

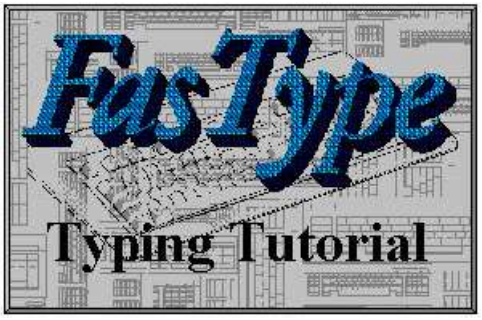


Video capture by Wil Goble

Software Review

FasType: A Typing Tutorial

Review by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



As always, I stay on the lookout for superior shareware, and in my opinion I have found another one. Many of you may have used this product in the past under an old operating system called ***DOS***. Now Trendtech Corporation has stepped up *FasType* to a Windows platform and has done a fine job of the transformation! From what I've seen this the best computer-based typing tutorial marketed as ***Shareware***.

FasType is ideal for use in a private at-home environment or during spare time at the office, as well as an ideal teaching tool in a classroom environment. Feedback is constant; time durations, Words-Per-Minute (WPM), percent of accuracy, typing errors, and other statistics are displayed at the end of each drill or exercise. Additionally, the highest WPM obtained, and a running average WPM is maintained, as well a typing history of your progress.

FasType has the capability to drill you on all shifted special characters and upper-case symbols plus all CAPITAL letters; you must use the CORRECT Shift key to successfully type any of these characters. You will also be drilled on using the ENTER Key which is required in exercises selected during advanced training.

All drills, exercises, and options are selectable using the menu bar. HELP is available from all of FasType's dialog boxes for quick reference while learning how to type. *FasType* is very flexible for the beginning typist. By using various options from the menus, the beginner can select many combinations of drill sequences. You can adjust your drills to boost your typing skills in those areas that you may feel are weak (e.g. Numbers, CAPITALS, special symbols, etc.), and you can improve your speed and accuracy.

Advanced typists can improve their word-processing skills by using the OPEN TYPING feature. OPEN TYPING gives you the opportunity to type any text of your choice in a full-screen window. You can use the cursor keys to navigate about the screen, adding text and over typing. The program won't catch your misspellings, but you'll be penalized if you use the BACKSPACE key. The OPEN TYPING feature has an EDIT option too so you can use it to modify text files. You can also use it to create and save files that you practiced typing.

If you're an intermediate or advanced typist you can use timed exercises to test your speed and accuracy. You can time your exercises in fifteen second increments for up to one hour.

The drill technique used by *FasType* for teaching you how to touch-type using any of these drill selections is RANDOM PROMPTING. That is, *FasType* will randomly select a character from the list displayed in the text window above the screen keyboard display and prompt you to type the key where that character is located by animating the key and using a metronome-like sound to "click" it up and down. After you press the matching key on the keyboard, the key is reset and another character is selected randomly. This goes on until you have successfully typed the number of characters shown under Drill Count in the typing helpers dialog box. The displayed time in the status bar only starts ticking with your first keystroke, and the number of characters you type is also tracked and displayed in the status bar. You can press the escape key at anytime to end your drill early, but it is suggested that you go for the full count. Keystroke errors are indicated by a beeping noise and a large NO symbol shown over the key you incorrectly pressed. The keyboard prompting continues until you type the correct character.

There is a neat option called *CHOOSE YOUR OWN* in the beginner section that is a powerful tool for selective reinforcement of your typing skills. Common selections include all of the keys in one row, or all of the keys in one or more "columns" of keys. For example, you could practice typing numbers on the keypad area by selecting all the numbers on the number row (1 thru 0), then press the NUM LOCK key so it's ON. When you BEGIN TYPING, you can type the numbers you're prompted for by using the keypad area of the keyboard; this will reinforce your "calculator" skills. You can also choose all of the characters for particular fingers.

Suppose you wanted to practice typing all of the characters addressed by your two index fingers; your index fingers type more characters than any other pair; you could CHOOSE the following sequence of letters: - f g r t v b j h m n u y - and optionally, the numbers 5, 6, 7, 8. Then BEGIN TYPING to exercise your two index fingers ONLY. Can you think of other ways to use this option?

For most computer owners, a word processor and/or a good text editor is one of their most treasured programs. It imparts the freedom to originate and generate documents away from the confines of the office. Often though, a severe flaw in this new freedom to create is the inability to type quickly. Typing accuracy is of less significance, since documents can always be cleaned up magnetically before

See FasType.....page 10

Cash Flow Report
1/ 1/95 Through 12/31/95

INFLOWS	
Adopt BBS Campaign	430.00
Advertising	60.00
Bargain Table	765.88
Door Prize	659.00
Dues - New	800.00
Dues - Renewal	1,870.00
TOTAL INFLOWS	4,584.88
OUTFLOWS	
BBS Echos	34.00
BBS Phone Lines	1,095.25
BBS Repairs	354.26
Fla. Dept. of State	61.25
Food & Drink	35.40
Insurance - Liability	305.00
Miscellaneous	0.00
Newsletter	1,979.45
PO Box Rental	40.00
Postage	299.00
Publications	161.81
Rent-Meeting Room	1,008.00
Supplies	60.80
TPCUG Memberships	75.00
Outflows - Other	70.00
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	5,579.22
OVERALL TOTAL	-994.34

Balance Sheet
As of 12/31/95

ASSETS	
Cash and Bank Accounts	
Checking Barnett	2,372.59
Total Cash and Bank Accounts	2,372.59
Assets	
BBS Equip. & Software	3,542.50
Bulk Mail-Dep.	50.00
K. Sheridan	50.45
Office Equipment	1,317.00
Sub Total Assets	4,959.95
TOTAL ASSETS	7,332.54
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
LIABILITIES	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	0.00
EQUITY	7,332.54
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	7,332.54

Book Review
Outrageous PC FX

Review by LloydMizer, NOCCC

"Outrageous PC FX" is not a tutorial. Rather it is an intermediate level guide to graphics on the PC. This book leads you through an exciting series of the most-daunting special F/X tasks step by step so you can combine images, do sophisticated photo retouching or make color separations without first spending time with boring, basic tutorials. The book is not specific to a particular software program.

The book is fascinating. It shows examples of graphics effects and with the programs provided you will be able to do them. With software available today anyone can change pictures to 'prove' anything the graphics artist wants you to believe. After working with this book you will never again accept any picture at face value -- since you will know how to create that effect yourself.

This book emphasizes the PC as a great graphics platform. When you consider the number of PCs owned by individuals and small businesses it is obvious that the future of limited budget graphics is on the PC.

On the enclosed CD there are fully functioning save-disabled versions of AdobePhotoshop, Aldus Photostyler, Pixar Typestry, Elastic Reality, Adobe Illustrator, Premiere Acrobat. There is a Library of full color and gray scale images, and custom filters. There is a collection of shareware image editing programs and utilities.
Ourageous PC FX, Author: David A.Busch, Publisher: MIS PRESS, List $34.95.

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday (February 15) of the month at 6:00 PM at theReflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. DaleMabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach theReflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call ConnieKincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. **There will be no February Meeting**
Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (February 21) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin. at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

Thoughts..... continued from page 3

entertainment and culture into a technology medium that has yet to be realized. It may come on screens that look like a blank living room wall or holograms or who knows. But I personally believe that by the turn of the century, we will not pursue entertainment by going to it. It will come to us. What will the themes be? Throughout all the technological changes the dominant forces remain the same: sex, power, spirituality and exploring the unknown (not in any particular order). Those presenting it to us will still choose from the two dominant themes of theater: comedy and tragedy. My don't we live in interesting times!

CleanSweep.....continued from page 6

automatically display two symbols in the bottom right corner of the desktop. These symbols represent *CleanSweep*'s Usage Monitor and Install Monitor. These monitors run in the background to keep track of edits to existing configuration files, installation information about any new programs you add to your computer, and how often you use files. All this happens behind the scenes.

Included in my copy of*CleanSweep* 95 was a courtesy copy of*CleanSweep* for Windows 3.1 and 3.11. If you haven't installed Windows 95 yet because you don't have enough disk space, before spending $300-$400 on a new hard drive spend $30 on*CleanSweep* 95. If you're only half the file collector as I am I guarantee you'll recover enough disk space to more than pay for this fine utility.

Quarterdeck Corporation, 13160 Mindanao Way. Fl 3,
Marina del Rey, CA 90292-9959
E-mail: support@qdeck.com
info@qdeck.com
WWW: http://www.qdeck.com/
Street price $30

FasType.....continued from page

printing them. However, the lack of skill in putting thoughts down on paper at a reasonable speed is always frustrating.

The following list will give you some idea of the various authoring speeds available with different writing techniques:

Hunt 'n Peck Typing	15-25 WPM
Ordinary Handwriting	20-30 WPM
Touch Typing (average)	40-60 WPM
Very Good Touch Typing	70-90 WPM
High Speed Touch Typing	100+ WPM

I think the advantages of touch typing are obvious. If your heart's desire is to write The Great American Novel, or merely effective business letters, then it is imperative to learn the art of touch typing. For $29 you'll be on your way to a much more enjoyable computing experience.

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USA (201) 694-8622

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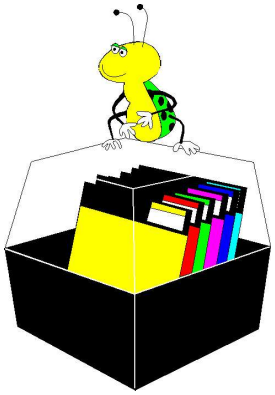
$25 lndividual $35 Family
$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 eachadd'l employees

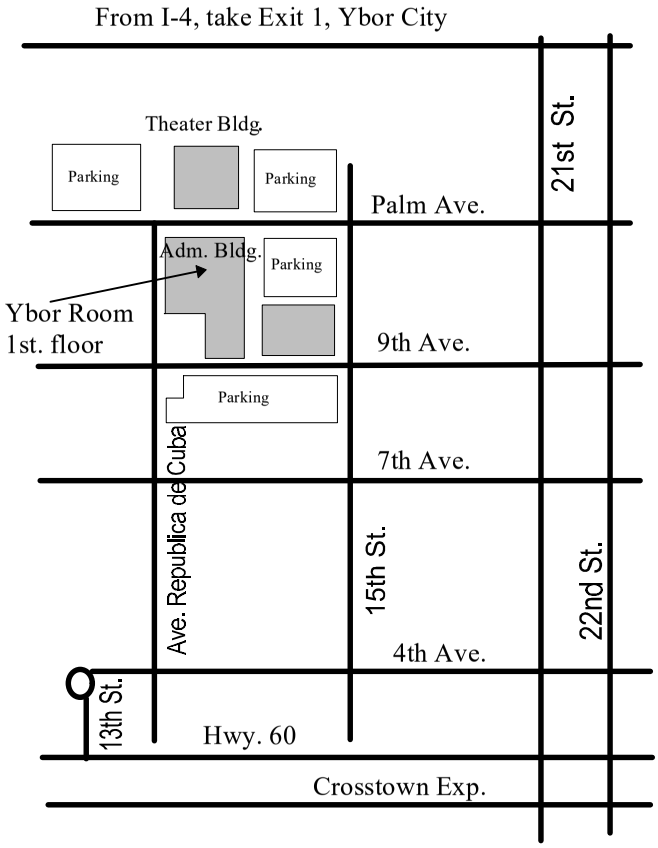
Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose a the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for DOS
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)





Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Bits of Blue



Tax Time

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No.4 April 1996

Meeting

April 10, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Managing your personal affairs with Microsoft Office
by
Connie Kincaid

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Some Notes From FACUG - Part 2

by Connie Kincaid, President Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Last month I reported some of what I learned at the Florida Association of Computer Users Groups (FACUG). I learned more than I could confine to one month's article so this month I would like to pick up where I left off and finish. Last month I discussed how size affects the activities of a group and how groups tend to fall into functional categories because of their size. This month I want to look at 5 other aspects of PC user's groups.

- **How user's groups are like a small business**- They are often incorporated as 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. They pay taxes, expenses, have board of directors with elected officers, they must promote themselves to consumers, acquire physical assets and they need to have a strategic plan to operate effectively.

Small groups tend to not have 501(c)(3) status. I found that most of them were a small group of people who usually met in a clubhouse that was available to one of the members (usually the founder) at their community residence or a place that was available to a member through their workplace. Their meetings were generally less than 25 people and did not involve overhead projection for demos. They did not own any physical assets (BBS computer, projection equipment, etc.). They tended to have an informal structure. Some may have boards and hold elections while others 'just pitch in' to get the various tasks done. They tended to suffer from growing pains (outgrowing their facilities, a sense of chaos at times) and

(Continued on page 3)

* * 1996 OFFICERS * *
PRESIDENT. Connie Kincaid 661-8185
VICE PRES : Mike Hodges (hodges@reflectone.com) 962-2114
TREASURER: Wil Goble (wilgoo@aol.com) 684-8004
MEMBER AT LARGE: Margaret Petro 253-2167
SECRETARY: Bruce Register (sfyvzsfi@scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us) 968-8170
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EDITOR: William LaMartin (lamartin@ix.netcom.com) 251-3817
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Tom Cone (72356.170@compuserve.com) 949-3716

BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING March 13, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Connie Kincaid called the meeting to order. We were blessed with one of our largest number of attendees to come to our most recent meetings.

Connie expressed the desire of the Board to meet the needs of the membership, considering that there are many different levels of needs and interest among the membership. To this end, she passed out a survey and asked each person to state an opinion to help guide the Directors of the TPCUG. Please let Connie know how you feel.

Anyone with a meeting place suggestion is encouraged to let Connie know. Also the BBS badly needs a new hard drive to replace one that sounds as if it is on its last leg.

Connie mentioned the donation of equipment for the TPCUG to use in community support. One computer system has been donated for genealogist to use at the downtown public library. Connie mentioned talking with PAL, Police Athletic League, regarding donating equipment and setup for them to work with youth in trying to redirect youth toward worthwhile activities. (The Secretary is for that since his son was robbed at gunpoint and his wife has been mugged twice. All occurred in most unlikely places.)

Jenny Lind Olin mentioned that Hillsborough Public Library is interested in more hardware. She will get information on this. Charles Howe contacted the VA Hospital for possible uses by the veterans there. Charles was enthused by the positive reception. He will investigate further.

Connie is anticipating more PC equipment being donated to TPCUG for community support projects. It was suggested that members might know of possible donor companies. Do not be afraid to ask the CEO to help provide additional support for the community. We already know it works to ask!

Connie suggested that someone might have memory, 1 MB SIMs, to donate for the use in the donated equipment See Connie Kincaid or Wil Goble.

Connie reported on the meeting of the Florida Association of Computer Users Groups. (FACUG). She spent two days with them.

John Meroth offered a free space for a TPCUG Home Page on his future Internet provider service.

(Continued on page 3)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)

Since the presenter scheduled to give us a demonstration on how to create Internet home Pages canceled, William LaMartin presented a program on the same topic. Using a live connection to the Internet, he used a browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer, to view some varied examples of home pages. He stated that the underlying file for a home page is nothing but a text file written in hypertex markup language (HTML). William said that the standards for HTML are in flux, with anything after version 2.0 not supported by all browsers. He said, "It is not as hard to do a Home Page as you might think. You can build onto what someone else has done (generic, that is...no copyright infringement permitted)." He demonstrated how you can view the underlying HTML file for a home page in "Notepad" and how you use different tags, denoted by"< >"s, to tell the browser how to display the text as regards to location and size. He demonstrated how to insert a graphic into the home page, which are GIF files, not bitmap files.

Since the file that you use to create a document on the Internet is nothing but a text file, you could use a simple text editor like "Notepad" to design a Web Page, but he said that a special purpose program like *HOT DOG* designed specifically for this purpose makes the job a lot easier. *Hot Dog* is available on our BBS as shareware. Home Pages typically provide one links to other sites. He demonstrated.

Finally, he showed us a home page he had created for the Tampa PC Users Group. It was fully functional allowing a user to view information about the group, view the research interest of the Genealogy SIG's membership, send e-mail to officers or Genealogy SIG members, or view recent newsletters in Adobe Acrobat format. However it was really only on his computer hard drive and awaits that Internet slot that John Meroth has promised.

We thank William for a most interesting program.

Regarding entry to any SIG at the Reflectone Building, be sure to get your name on the list. If you miss the sign up let Mike Hodges know. Mike said that as long as Reflectone gets the additions to the list before 4 PM of meeting day, entry can be arranged. Reflectone is a tight security building. Simply plan ahead.

Congratulations to door prize winners. To be eligible to participate in the great door prizes, one must be a dues paying member. We appreciate those donation of products and of cash to help keep TPCUG alive and active. Thanks and congratulations to:

M. N. Marten Cup Insulator

(Continued on page 9)

(FACUG.....Continued from page 1)

struggled with the question “How big do we really want to become." There were two different views on this question. Some like the intimacy and manageability of small groups while others wanted the diversity and opportunities that only happen with larger memberships.

Medium size groups seem to be the most diverse. Therefore, they are the most difficult to describe.. The key difference between a small group and a medium group seems to be the decision (commitment) to grow. While small groups seem to struggle to keep a more ‘manageable’ size to their group, medium size groups seem to feel that growth is important to their core mission and seem committed to grow a management structure that corresponds with the growth of the group. Many of these groups are in the process of acquiring status and assets. Status includes: 501(c)(3) status with the government, status with vendors that attracts ‘premier’ presenters and status in the community so that they are sought out as a resource by the general public. The issues that medium groups seemed to struggle most with are advertising and getting more things together to offer the community.

The large groups are fairly secure in their status by all the above measurements. They have been 501(c)(3) organizations for a few years and have some sense of how to do that. They have a strong community presence and often serve a multiple county area. They have a well defined board of directors and often have committees and subcommittees. They often have acquired many assets and rent some real estate on a full time, exclusive use basis. Often these groups have a store front where they offer classes most days and evenings with special events several times a year. They have strong ongoing relationships with vendors and can draw large vendors on a fairly regular basis. These groups often have clearly defined projects and goals. The large groups that were present at FACUG appeared to be managed by ‘young at heart’ retirees. In fact, there seemed to be something of a correlation between the number of retirees on the board and the size of the group. I suspect that if this is in fact true (so far it’s really just some observation and some speculation on my part), it has something to do with time available to do all the leg work, phone work, committee work, etc. The one concern that seemed to be common to all groups was how to get it all done. Every topic seemed to have some element of recruiting and managing volunteer efforts as part of their discussion.

- **How user's groups serve the community** - Users groups provide education, social events, a channel for donations from the business community to other areas of the community and sometimes are able to get expensive technology to those who need it but can’t afford it.
-

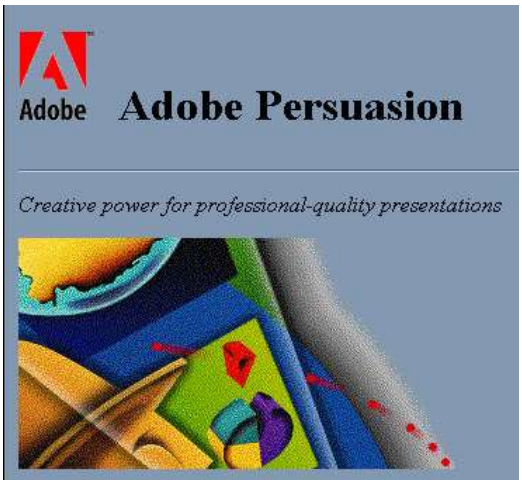
The key component to all groups was clearly a desire to educate the public about computers. It was equally clear that

(Continued on page 9)

Software Review

Aldus Persuasion 3.0

Review by Don Patzsch,
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Aldus Persuasion 3.0 comes from the same folks that provide you with Aldus Pagemaker, the real standard in desktop publishing. However, subsequent to our receiving this software, Aldus became part of Adobe.

When you open the package of presentation software you will find a **User Manual** that gives you a lot of tips regarding the distance from the audience, size of the screen, and the size of the letters you should use to put on a successful presentation; a **Chart Manual**; an **Autotemplate Guide**; A **Compact Player Guide**; a **Quick Install Card**; **Tips for Slide Shows**; and a **Pictorial Catalog of the Graphics** included in the package, so you may choose the graphic you want without bringing it up on the screen.

The **Autotemplate Guide** provides you with many color slide views. You can easily see what effect that color has on the templates you will be using by going through the 75 slides shown in this guide. I often use the color templates that are included with the program and all I do is go in and edit the text they have in the template. This allows a quick and easy way to make up something just before you go to the meeting! If you have time, and want to include animation in any slides, or if you want to include sound and or movies, that takes considerably more time to present a continuous program that makes sense to your audience. (You've seen some that do not make sense, right?)

The **Chart Manual** shows you various charts you might want to produce from a spreadsheet, and how to set them up for easy viewing, with your audience in mind. I have seen many presentations that looked good, but were not easy to read due to the colors used.

Installation is quite easy, there are 12 floppy disks, each 1.44 Mb. I did not copy the original disks because the company sent me a new set of disks which I appreciate because I can store the second copy. All of the programs of this type rework your autoexec.bat file and also your win.ini file. If you are using a different operating system I am sure they will go in and change those as well. This is not a problem, but you can see why I occasionally format my C: drive and remove all the miscellaneous bits of old files from here and there!

The manual is just about the right size. It must be read before using the program, as this is a large program. More than 30MB on the hard drive. You may use sound and motion in your presentations. Motion is smooth and clean, the kite flying demo is neat. It shows you how a kite is flown, and how to maneuver one. The program does this by showing a diagram on the left of the screen that gives you the idea of how to manipulate the kite to get it to go through the various motions you might want to emulate, if you were flying the kite outdoors and wanted to make it go through its paces! There are several of these diagrams and including them is a very clever idea, in my way of thinking. Good tutorial.

In looking over the files that *Persuasion* places on your hard drive, I noticed a log file. Evidently, *Persuasion* puts a log of the original setup of the program on your computer. It shows just how install went along. I made a couple of errors and they show up very nicely. Must be a real help to the trouble shooter when you call in for help. The log file is 38K in size on my machine. A tech rep could also see which you have installed of the total program parts.

Three formats are available for the program, 35mm slides, Overhead Transparencies, and Computer displays. Computer displays are presentations using a computer and a typical LCD screen with an overhead projector. The Player allows you to run the presentation on a computer that does not have *Persuasion 3.0* installed.

Apple Quicktime for Windows is included in the disks that come with the program. You may transfer a presentation from the IBM to the Mac and also from the Mac to the IBM computers. This assumes that you have *Presentation 3.0* on both machines.

Suggested Retail Price $395 (U.S.).

For More Information in the USA and Canada, call Adobe at 1-800-628-2320. Or visit Adobe on the World Wide Web at http://www.adobe.com . ◆



Don Patzsch with his IBM jacket

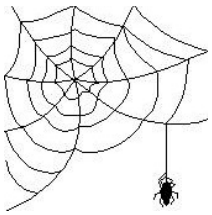
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Works 4.0 for Windows 95 with Bookshelf '95**- Integrated software package & Reference - Microsoft - Windows 95 CD
2. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file--View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
3. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
4. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
5. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Kindergarten** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6) Win. CD
9. **Jump Start First Grade** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 5-7) Windows CD
10. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
11. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
12. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
13. **Managing your Money Plus** - Finance package, check book and more. Windows CD
14. **Managing your Money Windows** - Finance Package
15. **ECHO Lake -** Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
16. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows.
17. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
18. **Science Fiction** - Grolier - Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science Fiction - Windows CD.
19. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



http://www.bloomberg.com	Bloomberg Financial News
http://loft-gw.zone.org/jason/DJ.html	Dow Jones Index Graphs
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/login.html	Electronic Telegraph (London paper)
http://www.bannerblue.com/	Family Tree Maker Online
http://fcn.state.fl.us/dor/revenue.html	Florida Department of Revenue
http://www.gate.net/%7Erglazier/	Florida Lawyer
http://www.metmuseum.org/	Metropolitan Museum of Art
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http://www.historychannel.com/	History Channel
http://www.ionet.net/~jellenc/potpourr.html	Ellen's Place - Potpourri
http://www.dep.state.fl.us/geo/	Florida Geological Survey
http://www.cincyzoo.org/	Cincinnati Zoo
http://www.desoto-trail.leon.k12.fl.us/hhs/hhs.html	Hillsborough High School

Software Review

CASPER'S BRAINY BOOK

Reviewed by Scott Lawson,
Tampa PC Users Group

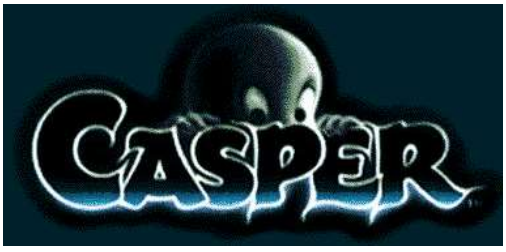
This is an educational program from Knowledge Adventures. It comes on a CD-ROM. The game runs from the CD-ROM, only a scratch directory is set-up on the local hard drive. The minimum hardware requirements are Windows 3.1, a MPC sound card and speakers, 4 MB of memory (8 MB recommended), and a 256 color monitor.

I ran the program on two different computers. A Windows 95 486-33 MHz with 8 MB memory and a 2X CD-ROM, and a Windows 95 Pentium-120 MHz with 16 MB memory and a 4X CD-ROM. Audio and animation were a little jumpy on the 486. There was a increase in speed and clarity on the Pentium, sounds and video were excellent.

This program is divided into five areas. The main area is the story, the Casper story is read (in a male or female voice) as text is displayed on the screen. Each screen is full of objects that come to life as they are selected. The player is encouraged to read along with the program. The three ghosts from the movie (Stinky, Stretch and Fatso) each have their own reading games. Each game has three skill levels, aimed at readers of varying abilities. Stinkie's peek-a-boo is a memory matching game. Stretch's shake rattle and roll is a letter placement game. Fatso's creature feature game is a jigsaw puzzle. There is also a printing program so that each screen from the story can be printed for coloring latter.

I have really enjoyed watching my children use this program. They sit and read along with the game. Casper's Brainy Book is an excellent game for young readers.

Knowledge Adventure
4502 Dyer Street
La Crescenta, CA 91214
(818) 542-4200 ◆



Software Review

X-MEN CARTOON MAKER

Reviewed by Scott Lawson,
Tampa PC Users Group



This is another program in Knowledge Adventure's cartoon maker series. It is supplied on a CD-ROM, where most of the graphics are stored. The minimum hardware requirements are Windows 3.1, a MPC sound card and speakers, 4 MB of memory (8 MB recommended), and 256 color monitor. A microphone will allow kids to save their own voices in the cartoons that they make. I ran the program from both 2X and 4X CD-ROM's with no problems.

I ran the program on two different computer systems. A Windows 95 486-33 MHz with 8 MB memory and a 2X CD-ROM, and a Windows 95 Pentium-120 MHz with 16 MB memory and a 4X CD-ROM. There was a increase in speed on the Pentium, but I had no problems with either configuration.

The program begins with a simple layout screen that is bordered with icons to lead the player through the creation of their cartoons. There is a small manual delivered but it isn't necessary, voice help is available through out the cartoon. There is a full supply of painting and drawing tools to create any custom drawings. Audio effects are available for background music Voice and sound effects. Editing tools make returning to a specific scene easy. Animated characters and moving objects add life to the cartoons.

Knowledge Adventure has designed their cartoon maker series of programs so that they can share library objects. A character or background music from Spiderman Cartoon Maker (See Bits of Blue Vol. 8, No. 9) can be used in the X-Men Cartoon Maker. This effectively doubles the amount of items that players can add to their cartoons.

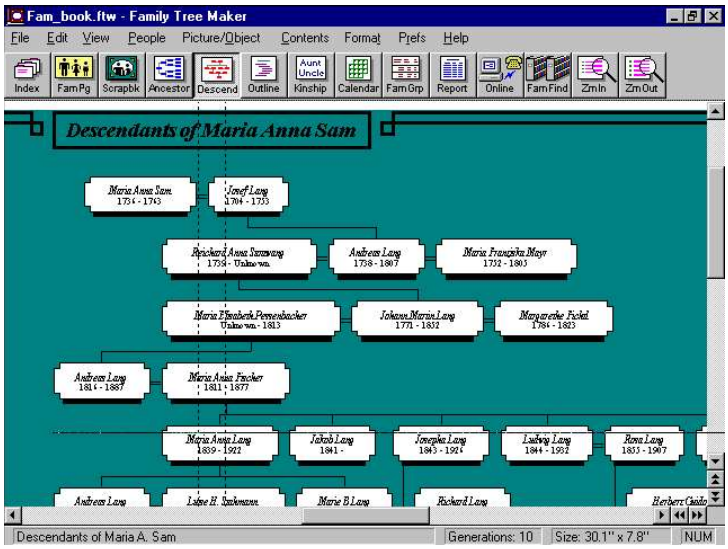
My children and I all enjoyed the program. The only drawbacks I noted are the inability to print out the completed cartoon. I would recommend the program for anyone with children who read comics.

Knowledge Adventure
4502 Dyer Street
La Crescenta, CA 91214
(818) 542-4200 ◆

Software Review

Family Tree Maker

Review by Bruce Register, Secretary
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Family Tree Maker by **Broderbund** is a well recognized genealogical program that has been highly acclaimed by users on different genealogical bulletin boards. In this review, *FTM* refers to the FTM for Windows and Windows 95. I am reviewing the Family Tree Maker, Deluxe CD-ROM Edition, Version 3.0. Other versions are also available on 5.25 and 3.5 floppies or CD-ROM.

Having seen chit chat on the Genealogical Bulletin Boards regarding different software programs, I was of the opinion that *FTM* appeared to get the most favorable comments. My much cheaper program, *Expert Personal Roots* was satisfactory to me at my level of interest and technical accomplishment until I met *FTM*. *ProOne Family Tree* is still in the unopened box in which I purchased it. Installation in Windows 3.1 was a breeze (I could have installed this same software in Windows 95 if I had wanted to). I have a 486 (requirements are for 386 or higher), I needed 9 MB free HD space; 4 MB RAM is minimum; I run with 8 MB. I felt that the only problem would be operator trouble with me as the operator. Generally, I ask more questions than I see answers in most software HELP or manuals. This software is no exception to that rule. I knew I need much preparation.

In preparation, I scanned the manual, including Table of Contents, Index, Common Problems and chapters on Installation and Getting Started. I have found that "problem discussions" are real time savers. My tendency to "do" then hunt ways to "undo" have caused me much anguish over the past years. After 6 hours of familiarity with the manual and other hard copy inserts, installation began. I inserted the CD-ROM in the CD drive and followed instructions. I went into TUTORIAL and looked around. Just moving around the TUTORIAL is a most interesting stand-alone experience. My *Expert Personal Roots* experience helped in this regard. With an abundance of personal confidence, I uploaded data from my brothers *FTM* database from the 3.5 floppy that he sent me. Skipping ahead and with no further reference to the TUTORIAL, I jumped right in.

FTM is a very user friendly program. I felt the ability to cruise, at one's own selected depth, to be a real plus. *FTM* is dual functioning. It is as simple and slow or as advanced and fast as one's level of technical knowledge will permit. One of the advantages is that *Broderbund* offers a tremendous amount of reference information under the Family Archives CDs program. These CDs contain data that has been collected about individuals and family, geographical areas, localities, settlements, etc. The total cost can run over $1,000 for the set. However, there is good likelihood that most of these CD's are already available in a well stocked local library. *Broderbund* also offers an information exchange service for users who contribute and retrieve information submitted by other users called World Family Tree CDs. This should reduce research time. Why reinvent the wheel. Quality of information, however, is no better than what is input.

Entering individual and group data is simple. One just needs to follow the prompts. Reminders and choices under *FTM* are helpful. The manual is more user friendly than most manuals "written by programmers for programmers" rather than for users. The latter thought is a very strong personal opinion developed from years of experience and "millions" of pages read. *FTM* manual writers appear to fall into the same trap; but less than most. A component writer, "or chapter writer", will throw in a term as though it came out of the blue. You will not find the term in the index or in the Contents. After reading and reading of seemingly unrelated material, one may find the term buried. More wasted time on research eventually turns up the term and an understanding. One gets the feeling that manual writers do not always read the other chapters in the manual or they do not speak to other writers. I admit to being a cynic regarding this phenomenon, but I am a user. Real world experience will sometimes do that to one. I want to shout "Thank you for giving us this beautiful program that we would not have except for you but please field test the manuals and HELP screens." I wanted to find out about file extensions so that I could import photos.. It is neither in the index nor in the Contents. Read, read and read! The subject of extensions is buried in "Managing your file" This relates to my own quirk. In *FTM*, the search indices are easy to use by and large.

(Continued on page 9)

Software Review

PMView (from the IBM Monthly Newsletter)

*by Maxine Senn-Yuen**

PMView version 0.92 is a graphics viewer and editing tool for OS/2. This software package offers many useful features for viewing, enhancing, organizing and converting a wide range of graphics formats, including BMP, EPS, GIF, IFF, JPEG, Photo CD, PCX, PIC, PPM, PNG, TIFF and TGA.

PMView has a narrow learning curve, so you can start using the software right away. When you select File Open, *PMView* searches for all the graphic files in your current directory. If the program has already created thumbnails for your graphics, they will be displayed along with the file names in the File Open window. The program can be set to automatically create thumbnails of all the graphics in that directory in the background while you work on your computer. Once the thumbnails are created, you'll have a handy graphical index every time you re-open that directory in the future. The thumbnail facility takes the guesswork out of finding the right image. You can also setup *PMView* to create thumbnails only when a graphic is loaded, saved or converted. This option is best for users with very large graphics collections on CD-ROM.

OS/2

You can perform many operations on your graphics from the File Open dialog box, without ever opening a single image. Right-click on any thumbnail, and you'll see a list of options for that file. You can check the file size, image size and color depth of that graphic here. You can also rename or convert the image into a different format. Right-click in the File Open window (but not on a thumbnail) and you'll get a list of viewing options. Here you can sort your thumbnails by image size, type, file name and file size. You can also randomly scramble your thumbnails if you prefer less, not more, organization. Choose the Sticky Select option if you want to select multiple thumbnails with only your mouse. This feature is great if you want to convert a batch of files into a different format, or if you want to create a slide show.

The Slideshow function is another unique feature in *PMView*. Open multiple thumbnails from the File Open window and the Slideshow will automatically launch. Or you can start the Slideshow by drag-and-dropping graphic files on to the main *PMView* window. The Slideshow is an easy way to create and practice business presentations.

PMView has decent, though not comprehensive, editing tools. The program lets you crop, stretch, rotate or flip any image. When you select a rectangular portion of an image, a handy Track Info box tells you the size and location of the selected area, and lets you type in a new location or size. *PMView*'s handy Screen Capture utility lets you capture any portion of your desktop, including parts of a window that lie outside the visible screen.

PMView offers some important image enhancement features as well. The package includes several filters you can apply to your graphics to create special effects (like an "embossed" effect). You can also create your own user-definable filters. In addition, *PMView* lets you adjust the brightness, contrast and red-green-blue balance of your graphics. You can convert the color depth of any image from color to black-and-white to grayscale. You can correct the Gamma factor, create a negative or "solarize" your graphics. You can even save an image with more colors than your video card or monitor can display. If you make a mistake while editing a graphic, you can simply undo your last change. Although the program has only one level of undo, it has a useful recall function that reloads any of the last eight files viewed.

PMView has some very handy features for creating graphics for the World Wide Web. It allows you to save GIF files in interlaced mode, with transparent backgrounds or a background color you specify. This feature is important if you want to create eye-catching HTML 3.0-compliant Web pages. You can also save your JPEG files as something called progressive JPEG, which lets Web browsers load the images progressively, like interlaced GIF.

Printing is a snap with this software. *PMView* uses your standard OS/2 printer drivers, but allows you to modify your printer setup to print your graphics optimally. For example, you can print your graphic across more than one page to create poster-sized hard copies.

Context-sensitive help is available throughout *PMView*. Hit F1 at any time, and you'll get help for the task you're trying to perform. Although the program doesn't have a tutorial, you can probably learn to use most of its features from its well-organized help contents which describe, menu-by-menu, all of *PMView*'s features. The help index also includes Frequently Asked Question for some functions. In addition, the authors Raja Thiagarajan and Peter Nielsen are very responsive to users' questions or suggestions.

On the whole, *PMView* was easy to use and had a smooth, polished feel. The program was very well-threaded and ran quickly on my 486DX2-66 (although the authors say it has been optimized for Pentium processors). The slideshow and

(Continued on page 9)

(PMView.....Continued from page 8)
thumbnail functions were most impressive. Serious graphics users will also appreciate the customizable filters and other graphic enhancement features. All in all, I think *PMView*'s $40 registration fee is well worth the price for such a fast, complete graphics package.

PMView is now available in both English and French versions. To download a copy, visit http://copper.ucs.indiana.edu/~sthiagar/pmview/pmview.html or htt p://www.wilmington.net/bmtmicro/catalog/pmview.html. The shareware version is a full-featured app with no "disabled" functions, so you can test all the program's features before you register. If you have limited graphics needs, then less expensive shareware programs like PMJpeg will probably serve you adequately. But if you work with graphics all the time or have large, disorganized clipart collections, then I highly recommend *PMView*.

* This article is based on the author's personal review of the product and should not be viewed as an IBM endorsement of such product. ◆

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(Family Tree.....Continued from page 7)
Reports can be tailored to one's own design. Several print formats are available for the most discriminating genealogist. GEDs are exportable and importable. Data backup is continuous and automatic. Information merges directly into your family files. I am excitedly encouraged to become more deeply involved in *FTM.* I recently reviewed *PhotoWorks* from Seattle FilmWorks. For the review, I took my family reunion photos on 35 mm Seattle FilmWorks film and received printed photos as well as graphic files on a 3.5 floppy. *FTM* accepts such graphics as an enhancement to your Family Tree data (once you find "extensions" buried in the manual text).

This program is an excellent piece of software, and it does for you just about anything that you can imagine. Genealogy is a hobby for me; therefore, I am interested in a very user frendly program that requires little training time. I feel that *FTM* is such a program. The software program procedures, etc. appear to be well planned for harmonious continuation in my usage. What a great time for genealogical novices to be alive! *FTM* is available in DOS or Windows and Windows 95 on disks or CDs. The street price for the version reviewed is $59.95 (plus tax) at the largest two local suppliers. I recommend this program to the "novice" and the "veteran". ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 3)

Jenny Olin	T-shirt
M. N. Marten	Cup Insulator
Michael Leiss	Complete Basketball
M. N. Marten	Managing Your Money ◆



(FACUG.....Continued from page 3)
there was no one way to do that. Groups large and small found creative ways to connect with the community. To list some of the activities mentioned: pancake breakfasts, picture scanning concession at the flea market, publicized donations to those in need, lectures and demos at the mall, library, local bookstore, speakers for career day at schools, participation in technology fairs as well as general meetings and SIGs.

• **SIGs** - Special Interest Groups provide a focused source of learning for every level of interest. They also provide access to technology to people who might not otherwise have time, money or someone to show them how.

Medium and large groups almost universally had SIGs as a recognition that they had grown too large to meet the needs of the membership for a more personal experience and as a way to meet diverse information needs. Larger groups offered more SIGs in fairly direct proportion to the group size. Interestingly, there didn't seem to be much consensus about what SIGs a group should have other than a New Member SIG.

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (April 18) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (April 1) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Tom Cone at 949-9698 or Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (April 17) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin. at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

(FACUG.....Continued from page 9)
Beyond having some sort of 'Introduction to Computers' lasting 6 or 12 weeks, the SIGs were as diverse as anything else about the groups. One of the top concerns about SIGs was insurance. SIGs were meeting in schools, peoples homes, churches, libraries and conference rooms at established businesses. Most conference attendees were unclear about their liability in these diverse locations and their insurance needs.

- **Technology** - Users groups are the liaisons from vendors to their market. The meetings provide important forums for vendors to 'teach' their consumers. Computer technology as a business relies more heavily on the education of its consumers than any other mass industry. User's groups bring that education to the public.

The user's groups are the best way to find a room full of intelligent, curious people who *want* to sit still and hear all about a vendor's latest idea. What a deal for the vendors and what a deal for us the consumers. The vendors get to teach us how to use their latest and greatest, and we go out and teach others. It benefits everyone.

- **Vendor relations** - Users groups and vendor have an interdependent relationship. Vendors rely on user's groups to 'spread the word' while user's groups rely on vendors to give them something to spread.

Saturday evening at the conference was an open discussion with a panel of the vendors attending the conference. The vendors were very candid and frank in their comments to the user's groups as well as the groups being very forthright with the panel. I can't find words strong enough to describe the thoroughness of the commitment from the vendors to support user's groups. The best I can do is offer an analogy. Have you ever seen a real, live Christmas tree that wasn't green? I don't mean an artificial one or one that has been spray painted to look like an artificial tree. With a real Christmas tree, you can hang anything on it and still see that it is a green Christmas tree holding it up. With the vendors, you could throw almost anything at them and still see that underneath it all was their commitment to user's groups. That commitment was an integral part of everything they said and did. In return, they wanted from the users groups a couple things: a chance to bring their wares to the public's attention and HONEST, HONEST, HONEST reviews of their products. In Communications studies, it is the textbook classic communication feedback loop. Vendors hire lots of people who are breaking new ground in technology. It may be lots of fun for them, but, if the market doesn't want to go there, it's expensive fun, not a profitable business. Vendors need to show the public (via the user groups) their latest and greatest and need to ask us (the public via the user's groups) 'What do you think?' It's the way they find out whether or not they are on the right track. Please note, a glowing review of a boring or poorly constructed program is just as much a disservice to this process as an unwarranted poor review. It's like telling your children how cute they are when they accidentally do something wrong and then wondering why they keep doing it. (I certainly don't mean to imply that vendors are children - the same principle applies to adults too.) Vendors want and need user's groups to test drive their products and give them feedback about how they are doing. The real goal is to make technology work for people, not people work for technology.

I want to express my most heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to attend this conference. It was certainly valuable to me as your new president. I hope that my review of this conference helps everyone in the group understand our part in the big picture. I know that attending this conference helped me feel connected in ways that were not clear to me before. If

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Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software
Adobe Systems, Inc.
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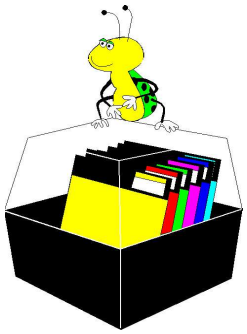
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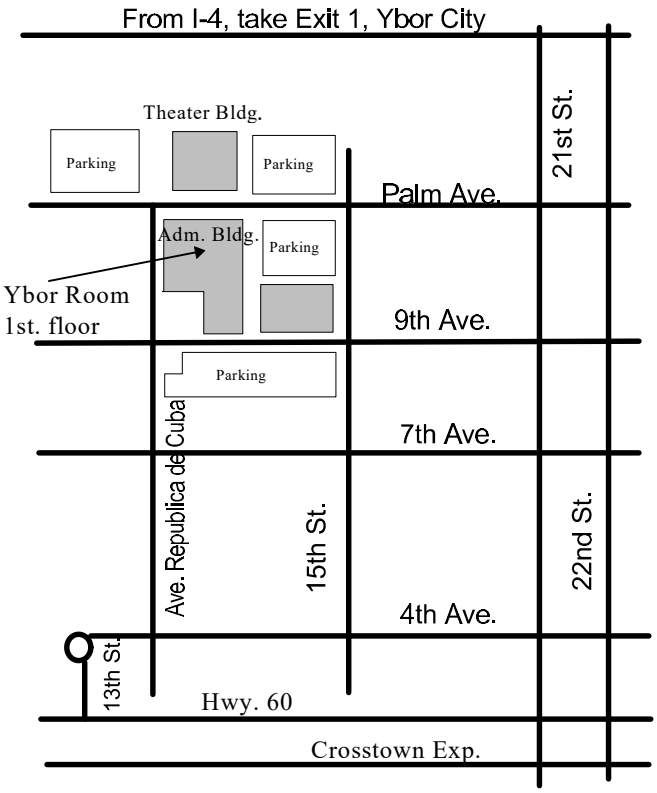
The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Winmdows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

To view this newsletter in full color, download PCNL9604.PDF from the BBS and view it with the Adobe Acrobat Reader

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you have any comments or questions, send me a note on the board or give me a call. ◆





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Bits of Blue



Class of 1996

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No.5 May 1996

Meeting

May 8, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Personal Paper Management for Home & Office
by
Frank Kinsinger

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Computer News & Comments

by William LaMartin, Editor Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

This is the usual location of the President's Column. However, this month Connie said she really didn't have anything to contribute. I too may not have anything to contribute, but since I have all this empty space to fill I must come up with something.

The first thing that comes to mind is that I now have been doing the newsletter for six months. It's interesting, more work than I thought it would be, and I have learned a little. The first thing I learned is that each issue must consist of a multiple of four pages. That is, you can't have a 10 page newsletter; it must be four pages, eight pages, twelve pages, etc. This is mandated by the size of paper used in the process, 11 x 17 printed on both sides with each piece of paper containing four pages. So to fill up this 12 page issue, I need to write this column.

By the way, I always welcome guest columns, in case some of you have an itch to get into print. It can concern anything computer related and not too biased. Most of our articles have been software reviews; however, I think the readers would also like to hear a little more about hardware. And Larry Anders has such an article in this issue. Larry, I need not point out, has been very helpful in providing articles for the newsletter, writing about software he has bought with his own money (we don't have that much non-game Vendor donated software available for review) or writing about his most recent shareware discovery. Another topic in need of more coverage is OS/2. I do what I can by searching the Internet for articles that we can

(Comments.....*Continued on page 3)*

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING April 10, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Connie Kincaid called the meeting to order. Connie introduced each of the TPCUG Officers and Appointees. She asked that if anyone with a meeting place suggestion to let her know.

The first 25 minutes of the meeting was dedicated to informal networking, etc. During this time, a popular activity was William LaMartin's "close up huddle around and hands on" demonstration of and about the Internet's World Wide Web. There from 10 to 15 persons gathered close all during that 25 minute planned activity. William answered questions and assisted with problem queries. This activity appeared to be a hit. It was set up across the room away from the networking conversations. Margaret Petro supplied the 17" monitor for this demonstration. The networking was also planned for people to talk to each other about problems, questions, information exchange, etc. This planned activity appeared to be well received also. Some people just cannot get to meetings at 6PM. These two activities served a good purpose while accommodating those late comers who were interested in the planned presentation of Microsoft Office.

Connie reported on the survey Most people seemed to be interested in hardware, people tracking, communications and “something to do with money”. Perhaps making money with your computer....

Reminders were given for SIGs Communications, Genealogy and Microsoft Access. Connie asked for requests for SIGs of interest. Mike Hodges reminded that those who do not sign up for SIGs at Reflectone must call Mike before 4 PM of the day to get their names on the security list which is posted at the entrance for use by security personnel. Call Mike at 887-1675 to get on list if you have not already signed up. Each meeting list does not carry over to the next. So, sign up each time.

Discovery Day at Eckerd College is a really exciting for people such as TPCUG members and visitors. It is free! All Day Saturday, April 27. Mike Hodges and Margaret Petro have further information.

Comments were provided regarding different Internet providers. Good suggestions and information came from this discussion.

RAM chip prices have been dropping-one source advertised 4

(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
MB chips for $89 or 8 MB chips for $139. (What a steal, Secy).

TPCUG has adopted charities to help with computer equipment that was donated to TPCUG. The three charities are: Police Athletic League; Veterans Hospital; and Tampa Hillsborough Public Library--One computer has already been donated to the library for genealogists in particular.

Connie presented "Managing your personal affairs with Microsoft Office". Most of the presentation involved the database part of Office, Microsoft Access. There are many features in this application. She explained "combo box" for selecting items from a menu. She explained "auto dialer" feature; she inserted certain parties and organizations for dialing. She explained many features, functions, etc., by walking through. She created "household inventory" as a simple example that most of us want and all of us need. She and others shared stories of losses in which inventories with pertinent information would have been helpful. The "table" and "report" forms, etc. for the program were demonstrated, even with type and term of warranties on each item.

Using “Snap To Guides" makes designing of the form easier. She stated that one may store a photo of the household item right on the information table. One may then have an electronic file. Seattle Filmworks, (see previous review in BITS OF BLUE) will provide you film, prints and 3.5 floppy of you photos. Cost is cheap, less than $16 for 20 exposures. Eckerd will put you photos on a 3.5 floppy. They advertise it for "screen savers". (Your secretary gets many rolls of film developed at Eckerd for commercial purposes and inquired after the herein reported meeting as to cost. ...was quoted $30 for 24 exposures....I did not ask if that included film developing and prints)

All created fields are retrievable, changeable, "findable", etc., as long as they are not in the "note section". The note sections provide a place to put all kinds of miscellaneous information about "whatever". Connie demonstrated a search of a number string, e.g., "3213". Every phone number in the file that contained the search number in total or in part was found. The "3213" search produced an auto tag number that contained the string "3213" somewhere in the license number. Every field was searched for that string, except the Note Section" field.

Connie demonstration a creation that she did for the TPCUG presentation. Several questions came from the group as to "how to", "can you", "what if". Connie simply inserted, deleted, changed or whatever to demonstrate answers to all of the questions. She created a table and then imported from EXCEL. One can import from many other applications. She showed "how you can get simple results from a sophisticated template".

The demonstration was well received. Since that meeting, the Secretary has 'bumped" into members, at some other location, who expressed delight in Connie's presentation. It must have been effective because Connie's ACCESS SIG was full a week later.

Congratulation to Door Prize winners:

WordPerfect Infobase	Margaret Petro
Mouse Pad	Genda Anderson
WordPerfect in Job Search	Bruce Register
SuperTax	Gary Peterson
GTE T-shirt	Emily Jurado ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)
legally reprint but would prefer some home grown articles.

Those of you who come to the meetings probably gather that I do a fair amount of Internet browsing based on my demonstration of how to build a home page and the Internet browsing session we did before the beginning of the last meeting (which we will probably continue as long as there is an interest and Margaret Petro is able to lug that 17" monitor to the meetings). And those who crowded around the monitor at that meeting also noted what a difficult time I had connecting to the Internet that last meeting. My provider was simply overloaded and wouldn't let me own.

Only the day before I had heard some industry expert saying that the Internet would have to crash and burn before it got better. And I have seen more than one article titled something like "Gridlock on the Internet". If you go online at the usual busy time between 4:00 PM and 9:00PM you might agree with these pessimists. I personally have seen more than enough of the slow response of Web sites and retrieval of files. I remember, in particular, trying to download a file from Microsoft's WWW software location. It was supposed to take less than twenty minutes. After almost two hours it was only 90% retrieved when I lost my Internet connection. Then realizing that I could also get the file from the Wang Web site, since they developed the program for Microsoft, I tried there and --surprise--got the file in 20 minutes. Moral of the story: Some Web locations are much more crowded than others. In the past few weeks I have gotten much better service from my

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

Software Review

WebCompass by Quarterdeck

Review by William LaMartin, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



If you use the Internet you need a search engine like Lycos, Yahoo, Webcrawler, Infoseek, etc. And if you use the Internet a lot you need WebCompass, a meta-search engine than allows you to combine all these individual search engines along with any other search engines into one combined search . However, WebCompass is much more than a meta search engine, it also creates an index of the topics on which to search and supplies summaries of the individual articles under each topic whenever possible. Once you have configured the program to use whatever search engines you prefer and selected the topics you desire information on, WebCompass will work in the background finding , cataloguing, and describing the World Wide Web (WWW) HTML pages and Usenet Newsgroups messages which contain information pertaining to your topics.

To use WebCompass you, of course, need an Internet connection and a WWW browser. Quarterdeck supplies their version of Mosiac if you don't already have a browser. They also supply a pre-configured version of their Internet WebServer, a program that coordinates all this background activity between the Internet and your computer. WebCompass will run under Win 3.1, Windows 95, or Windows NT.

My installation under Windows 95 went smoothly from the CD-ROM drive. And since I use Microsoft's Internet Explorer as my WWW browser, I didn't install the Quarterdeck Mosaic component of the setup. To run the program, you connect to the Internet via your Internet service provider (NetCom in my case), start the Quarterdeck Internet Server program, Start you WWW browser, then go to the WebCompass home page which has been installed on your hard drive.

What I did first was to do several simple searches to see how WebCompass compared with the individual search engines I was familiar with. Without a doubt if you want to know about oxford University, e.g., it would be faster to simply use a single search engine, say, Lycos, to do the search; however, it is faster than doing each search engine independently (they don't by any means find the same articles so it is best to use more than one) and in the long run more efficient to let WebCompass do this search using Lycos plus all the other search engines that WebCompass contains. Then once you have your results, which are just links to documents on the WWW or Usenet Newsgroups messages, you can designate Oxford University as a topic and add whichever of the articles you want to the topic.

You can set up as many different topics as you wish, additionally WebCompass comes with 40,000 or so topics pre-installed with their descriptions and variations on spelling. However, I haven't found this topic database of any use in my work. But it perhaps has a value in providing related topics to the one you are searching. Once you have some topics on which you want information, you start WebCompass' Search Agent, and it will search in the background while you do anything else you want with your computer, including Internet browsing on your own. When the Agent is finished, you will be provided with a list of WWW locations of documents for each topic, and within each topic the documents have been further broken down into categories (not too accurate of an assignment in some cases) and a summary of the content of each document when that can be retrieved in the time allotted (you can configure the Agent as to how much time to spend on each attempt at retrieving information) This allows you to decide whic if any of these documents you wish to add to the topic.

If you have a search engine you wish to add to those in use by WebCompass it is an easy process; although I had a little trouble adding some extra search engines for Usenet Newsgroups until I noted that the check box saying "don't link to documents at this site" needed to be deselected when adding this type of search engine but not when adding WWW search engines. The Help let me down here. Help, in fact, is a weak point with this program. The manual provided is quite thin and mostly deals with installation of the program. There is "online help"; however, this is a large HTML file that takes an inordinate time to load. So it is probably best to print out this file to have it readily available. The program is not really that complicated, and after a few false starts I figured out the best sequence of steps to define my topics of interest, search for documents, and then edit this information as to what was worth saving. Again after a false start or two I was able to add new search engines to the collectin already in WebComapss, disable some of the search engines WebCompass provided but which I didn't find useful, configure the program as to what search engines I wanted to use, and finally tell the program how long it should try to contact a location before moving on to the next one (anyone who has browsed the WWW much knows that you can't always get a location to answer). Finally you can tell the Search Agent how often you want it to refresh the data in eac topic, say, for example, once a week.

(WebCompass.....Continued on page 10)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

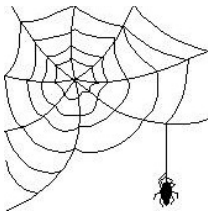
1. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file--View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
2. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
3. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
4. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
5. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
6. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Kindergarten** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 4-6) Win. CD
8. **Jump Start First Grade** - Knowledge Adventure getting a head start on education. (ages 5-7) Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
11. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
12. **Managing your Money Plus** - Finance package, check book and more. Windows CD
13. **Managing your Money Windows** - Finance Package
14. **ECHO Lake -** Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
15. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows.
16. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
17. **Science Fiction** - Grolier - Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science Fiction - Windows CD.
18. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay** - Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
19. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calandar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

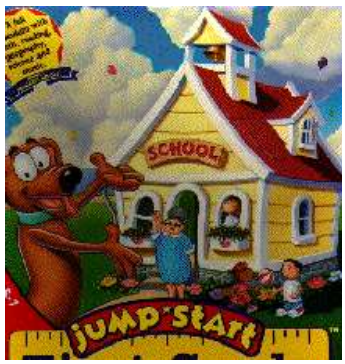
http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~hoemann/cwarhp.html	American Civil War Home Page
http://www.moneypage.com/	The Money Page
http://www.theadvocate.com/	The Baton Rouge, LA Advocate
http://www.boardwatch.com/	Board Watch Magazine
http://www.bugnet.com/~bugnet/	BugNet (software bugs)
http://policy.net/capweb/congress.html	CapWeb - A guide to the U.S. Congress
http://www.cartalk.com/	Car Talk
http://www.zdnet.com/cshopper/	Computer Shopper Magazine
http://legal.firn.edu/agweb.html	Florida Attorney General
http://sln.fi.edu/	Franklin Institute of Science Museum
http://www.polaris.net/%7Elegend/bookmark.htm	Genealogy Bookmard File
http://www.iguide.com/insites/1/2/6/index.htm	iGuide - Magazines on the WWW
http://www.inquiry.com/	Software Developers Information
http://www.movielink.com/	Movie Link
http://arts.endow.gov/	National Endowment for the Arts
http://www.newslink.org/menu.html	NewsLink
http://www.oneworld.org/	One World Online (British Charity)
http://www.petersons.com/	Peterson's Education Center
http://www.edoc.com/jrl-bin/wilma/pri	Print Magazines that maintain Web sites
http://www.deltanet.com/reason/	Reason Magazine
http://www.gateway-va.com/pages/tdmain.htm	Richmond Times-Dispatch
http://www.wp.com/genealogy/	Virginia Genealogy Home Page
http://www.zdnet.com/zdi/software/index.html	ZD Net Software Library - Top Rated Shareware



Software Review

Jump Start First Grade by Knowledge Adventure

Reviewed by Mary and Katherine Powell
Tampa PC Users Group



I thought we had seen some wonderful software for kids...until now. This program has held my daughter's attention longer than any other. It is so versatile and creative that it's hard to imagine that she will ever get tired of it. Oh, by the way... it's also educational!

The program comes with a CD ROM and users guide. System requirements include a 486SX 25mhz PC or higher, double-speed CD ROM, 7.5 MB hard disk space, 4 MB RAM, 640 x 480 x 256 color SVGA graphics, Windows 3.1 or greater, MPC-compatible sound card and, finally, a mouse or other pointing device.

Installation was so easy that Mary, age 6, did it herself. It was your typical windows installation window that prompted you for the directory and program group and then handled the rest.

The program begins in an interactive classroom. Anything the child clicks on reacts by performing or taking them somewhere else. I have seen a few children's packages use this approach and it holds their attention very well. Children naturally want to explore, so a window like this will occupy them for quite some time!

There is a guide, a 'wiener dog', named Frankie. He is with them everywhere they go, describing the game or prompting them for what they need to do next. He acts as more than on-line Help. He actually talks to the child, encourages them, and gives them hints to help decide what they are supposed to do.

Each activity teaches a basic skill, like math or reading. Math games include working a cash register in the lunch room, adding or subtracting marbles on the playground, or following a recipe in the kitchen. There is a good letter recognition game, like in the sandbox where they have to help Frankie find buried letters with the metal detector.

The level of difficulty is guided by the child. There are rooms with progressively harder games and Frankie is always there to assist them. It is designed to help children in kindergarten begin to understand the types of basics they will have in first grade. Now, I know school curriculum is different everywhere, but this software is flexible enough to cover a broad range of abilities. I noticed that there were some games Mary didn't do well in at first, but she tried them again and again until she mastered the skills. Now, she tries harder games building on what she has learned.

We were so impressed with this program that we plan to get her the "Jump Start Second Grade" when she starts first grade next year. Now, all we have to do is decide which college she will attend.

Knowledge Adventure, Inc.
1311 Grand Central Ave.
Glendale, CA 91201
Retail: $34.99 ◆

Software Review

Managing Your Money's Personal Attorney

Review by Robert Davis
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Managing Your Money's Personal Attorney Version 1.0 (MYMPA) is a Windows program. It creates legal forms you can use and update as often as necessary. MYMPA gives rudimentary legal advise. It also warns you to seek legal counsel when needed. Although MYMPA is a Windows program, the forms print out in regular ASCII text format. Basically, the printing goes fast but there are no great graphics.

This program helps you prepare some basic and necessary forms such as a Living Will, Last Will & Testament, General Power of Attorney, Medical or Special Power of Attorney, and Revocation of Power of Attorney. You can create a Promissory Note, Bill of Sale for Motor Vehicle, or a General Bill of Sale. For business, it will create an Employment Agreement, Independent Contractor Agreement, Offer of Employment Letter, Demand Letter for Money Owed, and a Bad Check Notice. Lastly, you can make a Defective Product Complaint Letter and a Request for Credit Report. These forms with their legal advice can help you use and/or print what you need. The legal advice may also aid you in avoiding basic legal problems.

I Installed this on 3 machines. Two are running with Dashboard for Windows, and one is not. All three are 486 processors running Windows version 3.1. One Dashboard machine went OK, but the other lost the MYMPA icon in the MYM

(Attorney.....Continued on page 7)

(Attorney.....Continued from page 6)

group it created. It was a simple fix to just add the item into a group. However, this may be a problem for a novice PC'er. The machine without Dashboard installed without a hitch. It does create a MYM Group if you don't have one, but you can just drag & drop the single icon into another group if you prefer. Then you can just delete the newly created MYM group.

There is a wealth of information in this program. It starts out with a questionnaire that suggests various chapters you should read through in the Advise section. The Advise Section has 12 Chapters on everything from Wills & Trusts to Going to Court, and when you need a Lawyer. And filling out a form is easy since it always tells you what it is looking for in an answer. For example, when filling out the Independent Contractors Agreement, the first Input is the Corporation Name with comments. The comments tell you if it is a fictitious name, enter the real name followed by DBA and the fictitious name. In fact, every input request has a comment that guides you on what to enter.

MYMPA does have some limitations, though. It will not print any blank forms. It does say you can fill out a form, save it, and then edit it with a word processor. This seems a long way to go to get a blank form. Blank forms may be needed if you are not at the computer. I would also like to create different forms to fill out other than what is provided. This may be beyond the scope of the program, though.

MYMPA requires a minimum hardware of a 80386SX or better, a 3.5" Floppy disk, a hard drive with about 2 MB of free space, 4 MB of RAM, and any common printer to print the documents. You must be running Windows 3.1 or higher. The price of MYMPA at CompUSA is $24.95. The value is there if you have a need for these forms and want to do them on your own. ◆



Software Review

Microsoft BOB: A Triumph and a Failure

by Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

Microsoft's BOB, a suite of programs aimed at "home users," is both a triumph and a failure. To be sure, it evoked almost uniform scorn among established computer users when it came out, and today continues to draw these really irascible comments, out of all proportion to its supposed sins.

First of all, what is the thing. It's a "home productivity" program that Microsoft came out with in early 1995. It consists of eight integrated programs that come in a highly stylized front-end, including colorful "rooms" containing various usable objects that can be moved about. You also get your choice of more than ten little cartoon-like "helpers" which range from a small dog, to an animated earth, to a lightning bug, to an obnoxious rat with a basketball, and others, all ranging from "most helpful" to "least helpful," depending on what level of assistance you might want).



The programs in the BOB suite include a calendar, with a to-do list and reminder provisions; an address book; a letter-writer, which is a simple but colorful word processing program optimized for personal correspondence; a checkbook, with provisions for arranging to pay your bills electronically, a la Checkfree; a "household manager" database for keeping track of personal possessions, insurance policies, important papers, medical records, favorite restaurants, travel plans, etc.; an e-mail communications program; a trivia game, GeoSafari; and a front-end to access other Windows-based programs. It requires Windows 3.1 or higher, at least 32 megs of storage, and at least 8 MB of memory, and doesn't really move very fast even with a Pentium 100, since it's a graphics-heavy program. Suggested retail price is $55, which means street prices are probably on the order of $40 or $45.

BOB is the result of a huge research program Microsoft

(BOB.....Continued on page 9)

Software Review

Review of Snappy…Video Snapshot

by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Anyone who has read any of my reviews in the past knows that I am always looking for something that makes computing ***FUN.*** Well, I've done it again! *Snappy…Video Snapshot*, fits the bill. I had been tempted to purchase Snappy for quite some time because of the relatively low price for what it said it did, ($199) but it just seemed too good to be true. Well, I had an opportunity to purchase it *almost new* at a very attractive price from one of our members, so I did. I should have purchased it long ago and been enjoying it all along.

What is *Snappy*? *Snappy* is a 2½" x 5" video digitizer that plugs into your parallel port and becomes a bridge between you and most of your consumer electronics. Snappy grabs from any video source, such as: VCR, camcorder, TV Tuner, cable Box, laserdisc player, satellite tuner, Nintendo, Sega, Atari, PlayStation, 3DO, CDI, Mavica or Xapshot still video camera, security system, video-out from another computer.



No matter what kind of source you feed into *Snappy*, it will squeeze every last bit of resolution out of the original video signal and bring it into your PC as a perfect still. People who are using *Snappy* are either traditional imaging professionals, businesses that want to use video images, and the fastest growing segment of the computer market, home PC users. With *Snappy's* low cost, you now have a way to bring your own faces, photos and families into your PC. And with the low-cost color printers of today, what you do with these photos is only left up to your imagination.

Snappy works with almost any PC program because it saves industry standard image files such as: BMP, PCX, TIFF, and even the compressed JPEG format. *Snappy's* TWAIN interface lets you bring images into most PC graphics programs directly, without saving and reloading. Including: Fauve Matisse (included with *Snappy*), Adobe PhotoShop, Aldus Freehand, Corel Draw, Microsoft Imager, Fractal Design's Painter, Microsoft Publisher, Aldus Pagemaker, Aldus PhotoStyler, Softkey's PhotoFinish, Deneba Canvas, and many more.

What can you use it for you say?: School reports, Real estate databases, Store your photo albums onto your PC, put your face on the Internet, Christmas and birthday cards, instant digital photography with no chemicals, interactive multimedia presentations, business reports, desktop publishing, sports imaging, insurance verification, graphical employee databases, morph your family, friends and coworkers (Gryphon Morph is also included with *Snappy*), photo retouching, ID cards, instant personalized T-shirts and posters, time-lapse digitizing, home security, interior design/set design/landscape design, newsletters, brochures, catalogs, bulletins, medical visualization (plastic surgery), on-screen instant make-overs, scientific and legal imaging, remote visual monitoring via modem, grab texture maps for 3D programs, label VCR tapes with actual video frames, capture backgrounds for paint software, personalized baseball cards, and many more.

It all sounds complicated, but *Snappy* is incredibly easy to use and setup. All users need to know is that they can grab images from video sources that look as good as photographs. At less than $200, *Snappy* provides an inexpensive source of digital images and offers an entry into digital photography for many people who would never have tried it before. And it really isn't difficult to be up and running in 10 minutes. Just plug the battery (included) powered hardware module into your parallel port, connect the video cable (included) to your video source, install the Window's based software and you are ready to be pleasantly surprised. System requirements are minimal such as: 386 or better, Windows 3.1 or better, pointing device, minimum VGA 640 x 480 x 16 colors (16- or 24-bit display card recommended, but not required), 4-Mbyes of RAM, 4-Mbytes of hard disk space, and an unused parallel port. (My parallel port wasn't unused. I just unplug my printer while I'm using *Snappy*). And of course, because *Snappy* takes pictures from video sources and brings them into your PC you must have some kind of video source available - such as a camcorder, VCR, laserdisc player, or TV tuner.

Along with the *Snappy* hardware comes Fauve Matisse SE, a graphics program that will allow you to retouch, add titles, change backgrounds, or otherwise improve your captures. Also included is Gryphon Morph 2.5 that will allow you to Morph, Warp and add all kinds of special effects. Everything you need to get started immediately is right in the box. Even the box is kinda neat.

Snappy appears to me to be the lowest cost color video digitizer that offers high quality video stills while being the easiest hardware add-on for a PC that I have ever seen. This one is a keeper!

Play Incorporated, 2890 Kilgore Road, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6133. Phone 916-851-800, FAX 916-851-0801, http://www.play.com. Retail Cost $199 ◆

(BOB.....Continued from page 7)
mounted into computer-human interfacing. It is intended as a "home productivity" application, and is targeted at the 70 percent or so homes that still didn't contain computers as of early last year (that percentage is doubtless dropping), a huge untapped market. In BOB, Microsoft tries to both serve and entice that market. Looked at that way, the program has somewhat noble intentions: It is intended to make computer use "fun" and "easy" for all those people out there who haven't joined the revolution yet.

On the other hand, BOB immediately earned the scorn and enmity of many established computer users. Many, such as PC Magazine columnist Robin Raskin, thought BOB "too cute" in its cartoonish rooms and animated helpers. Others, such as computer columnist John Dvorak, thought BOB was "the most unique user interface ever introduced to the computing public," but found the interface to be "uninteresting and beside the point"...yet fascinating and useful to his 9-year-old son. Dvorak predicted BOB would be a hit with kids, but "not destined to become a commercial success."

And then there were those many who just plain didn't like BOB, period. Locally, in the Feb. 1996 issue of Computer Connections, one columnist wrote: "Dog product of the year, Microsoft Bob, is approaching his one-year birthday. Fortunately, sales have been poor. Excluding OEM sales, estimates of units sold range less than 300,000...Look for a new version in the fourth quarter of this year with anticipated new junk including telephony features and less cartoon-like personal guides as well as integration of modules from other Microsoft packages. Enough is enough."

Actually, my 10-year-old daughter found it pretty interesting, and my 84-year-old mother is regularly fiddling with it on the Pentium 100 machine I got for her, slowly exploring the program, and liking it. There is definitely a market out there for BOB, albeit perhaps not a giant one. But few of us in the TBCUG would find it compelling. ◆



Two members excited by our monthly meeting

(Comments.....Continued from page 3)
Internet provider, so they have either added capacty or lost customers. And, I think, in general, the suppliers of information will upgrade service to meet demand--if there is a profit in it for them.

Don't let the above comments keep you from trying the WWW if you already haven't. For it is a wonderful resource. For the $20 per month that most providers charge now for unlimited access you get a window on the world from your computer screen. In addition to corresponding with people all over the world with e-mail, I have access to newspapers, magazines and virtual art galleries far removed from Tampa, Florida. Being a rancher, among other things, when I wanted to find in depth information about the recently hot topic of "Mad Cow Disease" in England, I went to the source: English newspapers. And with the help of the Internet search tool WebCompass, described elsewhere in the newsletter, I located a virtual clearing house of information on this bovine disease--in the most unexpected of places--Japan. Want to find out about your ancestors? Just use one of the search engines to locate a site listing both the word genealogy and your family name. With a lot of luck you will make a useful connection. I dd.

Then there are those strange requests you get from friends. One of our members studying to be a nurse called me looking for a cow's heart. I kid you not. The one she was using for dissection had deteriorated so much that it wasn't useable. In fact I actually had access to such an item since a cow had just died on the ranch, and all I would have had to do was go to the ranch and remove the desired item for said cow. But that was a little more than I was up to. So what to do? Why, of course, go on the Internet and search for "cow" and "heart". However, I am sad to say, the world wide intellectual community let me down. I could only find a sequence of photos of the dissection of a pig's heart. But they should look the same, shouldn't they?

The only way to learn about the Internet is to sign on and begin looking. Start with some of the sites that I have been putting in the newsletter for the past six months. Probably some of those sites no longer exist, since like ordinary mailing address, they are only good as long as the people you want to contact still live there.

I am amazed by the growth in home pages on the WWW since I started looking about two years ago. I have seen estimates of 13 million web sites with one million new ones each month. Looks like there are a lot of sites I will never visit.

Is there anything happening in computer news not concerned with the Internet? Well, Compaq is now the leading PC vendor, followed by Packard Bell, then either Apple or Hewlett Packard depending on who does the reporting. Next are IBM, then Gateway. Both HP and Gateway showed very strong

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (May 16) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (May 2) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Tom Cone at 949-9698 or Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (May 15) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin. at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

(WebCompass.....Continued from page 4)
You can try out a stripped down version of this program by downloading the Personal Edition of WebCompass from the Quartedeck Web site at no charge. If I am not mistaken, this version only allows you to use the multiple search engines in real time--not in the background as the Search Agent does in the full fledged program, where it additionally organizes the data found in each topic and summarizes it. In other words, in searching for information on Oxford University, this program would save you from having to select each search engine, Lycos, WebCrawler, Yahoo, etc. individually and then do the Oxford University query for that individual search engine. But you don't get the ability to automatically in the background build up a file of information on Oxford University.

While testing the program I had it go out and search on seven topics: my hometown, a disease a friend has, the university my son will attend (not Oxford), "Mad Cow Disease", a college in England which solicits American students to study overseas but doesn't seem to have much of a track record (not Oxford), and two different family surnames I do genealogical research on. Now each time I connect to the Internet, start up WebCompass and activate the Search Agent feature it will in the background begin to search for information on these topics, adding new documents it comes across and if an appropriate amount of time has elapsed updating the existing documents. What more could you ask for: You have your own low-paid, never complaining research assistant. All you have to do is check on him from time to time and delete any documents he has found which are of no interest to you based on the summaries he has provide for you.

The program sells for $89.99. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 9)
growth in the first quarter. Note, though, sales volume certainly doesn't equal profit.

CompUSA, which operates 98 superstores had earnings up 45%. I can personally understand this since six months ago at Comp USA I bought some toner for one of my printers for $95; a couple of weeks ago at the same store I paid $115 for the same toner. Chip makers, however, are not doing so well since bloated inventories of PC's are forcing PC manufactures to cut back on chip purchases.

Prodigy is cutting its work force by 20%. Prodigy's situation relative to AOL reminds me of Word Perfect's plight compared to Microsoft's Word for Windows. The operative word is Windows. Prodigy was first on the scene, but stuck with their cumbersome DOS style interface with adds taking up the bottom third of the screen. Even running under Windows, Prodigy looked like a DOS program with large text and very little content on each screen the viewer was presented. It is obvious why America on Line swept past them so rapidly. Same thing for Word Perfect. They were first, but waited too long in moving to Windows, and when they did their first attempt was hamstrung by kludging their DOS program into a Windows one instead of being able to start fresh with a Windows program. However, the Internet and all its rapid change threatens AOL and even has Microsoft scrambling to adapt. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software
Adobe Systems, Inc.
Borland
Broderbund
Corel Systems
Grolier
Knowledge Adventure
Microsoft
Quarterdeck
Symatec
Traveling Software
Xerox

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 lndividual $35 Family
$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employees

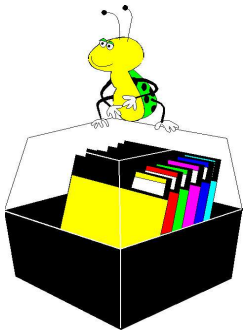
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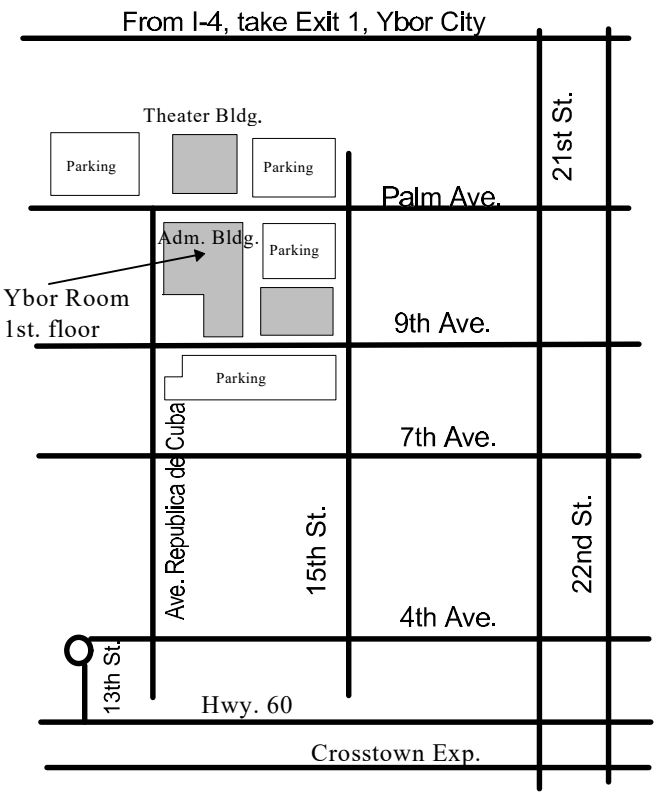
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Winmdows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

To view this newsletter in full color, download PCNL9605.PDF from the BBS and view it with the Adobe Acrobat Reader





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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Florida in the Summer

Vol. 9 No. 6 June 1996

Meeting

June 12, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Personal Secretary: Voice to Text Software by Mel Fox
&
Bargain Table

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My Five Year Old Computer

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Now that we are about to get a new computer in the house, I think it only fitting that I pay my five year old Gateway 386/33C its due. It has been a superb and hard working machine, as I am sure it will continue to be, since the new computer is meant mainly for my son's C++ programming. Many a time the software package said "Minimum requirement: 486/66, 8 MB RAM,.....etc." But in all except one case that I can remember (and I am not even sure a Pentium would have run that ill constructed piece of software well), the Gateway 386 performed quite a respectable job on the software. I get a laugh reading all the computer experts' opinions that to run Win 95 you need a 486 machine with 16 MB RAM, better still a Pentium, since this machine is running '95 very well.

So what is going on here? I think the secret to the machine's success is due to Gateway's using quality components originally and the upgrades I have added. I have always believed that a fast processor with a slow video card or with no cache memory is not much better than a slow processor. And most importantly a lack of memory can cripple the fastest processor. This machine started out with 4 MB RAM and a 120 MB hard drive whose access time I can't remember. The machine now has 13 MB RAM, two very fast hard drives with a total capacity of about 2 GIG, a sound card, 14.4 modem, and a 4X CD drive.

In general things zip along at an acceptable speed. The only programs that I would like more processor speed on are ones involving

(Computer.....*Continued on page 9)*

NEWS FLASH: Soon we will have our WWW home page at http://www.tbos2cla.com

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING May 8, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Connie Kincaid called the meeting to order. Connie introduced each of the TPCUG Officers and Appointees.

The first 20 minutes of the meeting were dedicated to informal networking, etc. As according to our planned new procedure, William LaMartin held a "close up huddle around hands on" demonstration of and about the Internet during the networking session. He moved the computer up front and used the big screen for demonstrations during the 15 minute break before the drawing for door prizes. Everyone could see it from anywhere in the room. The networking had been planned for people to talk to each other about problems, questions, info. exchange, etc. This planned activity appeared to be well received also. Some people just cannot get to meetings for a formal presentation beginning at 6 PM. These two planned activities served a good purpose while accommodating those late comers who were interested in the planned presentation by Frank Kinsinger of DocuMagix's PaperMaster.

Mike Hodges reminded us to be on a sign-up list or to call him before 4 PM of the SIG day to get our names on the security list which is posted at the entrance for use by security personnel. Call Mike at 887-1675 to get on the list *if you have not already signed up*. Each meeting list does not carry over to the next. So.o.o.o, sign up each time.

Tim Bryce, OS/2 Users Group, visited and pitched the IBM and OS/2 Users Group. He gave us promotional glimpses of IBM's new products.

Visitors were given visitor's tags. Thanks to Larry Anders for making them and having them ready. TPCUG members like to recognize and give special, warm greetings to visitors.

Mike Hodges asked that if anyone wanted to help with SIGs to let him know. If anyone wants a new SIG Group on ANY APPLICATION (that means any software program), let Mike know. Mike accomplishes a great and appreciated effort in providing the high tech meeting place for the SIG groups. No SIG request is too elementary to be considered; Connie's "Hardware Basics" and "Software Basics" were both well attended by novices and veterans alike.

Ford Bond announced a program at MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry on East Fowler) that will assist youth from three years old and older this summer with the 15 computers they have. In the fall, they will have 30 computers and want

(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
to assist "youth of all ages" from three to 105 years of age. Some classes are free, some with nominal fees. Ford encourages all to assist in promoting and spreading the word. He also requested that anyone with abilities and interest in volunteer instructing, please contact him. Ford is a "brand new" member of TPCUG. Call Ford at 986-6300 or 986-6309.

Don Patzsch reported on ATT. If you are a user of ATT long distance service, you can get 5 hours free every month on ATT Internet Provider Service. If you use more than 5 hours, you pay an hourly rate but only for the minutes you use. Unlimited access, as with most providers, is $19.95. Non-ATT users must pay $24.95.

Mike Hodges asked for a show of hands of those interested in a Laptop presentation. A majority of those present was interested. Connie stated that it is the intent of TPCUG to cycle hardware presentations during the year. A Laptop presentation will satisfy those objectives.

PRESENTATION

Frank Kinsinger gave a presentation on DucoMagix's PaperMaster, a step in the direction of the paper-less office. PaperMaster "brings everything up like you are looking at a filing cabinet and drawers." In fact, you see cabinets and drawers. You go to a cabinet (one among the several that you can create) and open a drawer. You then go to a folder of particular interest, e.g. Real Estate Offered for Sale, and then to a specific file folder on the sale of a particular property, market area, street or submarket. He faxes or scans articles to his computer. He then uses PaperMaster OCR to clean up the document. This program is especially useful for paper pack rats (such as your TPCUG Secretary). One may clip an article of particular interest, scan or fax it to your computer. "Print" it to "PaperMaster." Move it to a cabinet, then to a drawer, then to a general folder and then into a specific folder. It will stay there forever or until you do house cleaning. You may THEN THROW AWAY THAT CLIPPED ARTICLE. You get rid of that piece of paper. You still have it filed into a folder in your computer instead of in a physical metal file cabinet or in a stack on your desk or stacked on your floor area.

Frank stressed that scanners are an excellent way to get documents into the system. He uses fax since he does not have a scanner at his home. Quality of document (text or graphics) depends upon the source. Frank showed us documents that he faxed for use in this presentation. He demonstrated the "straighten page" capability of PaperMaster. One probably does not have any other software to straighten a document that came out in a slanted (oblique) manner after having been received through scanning or faxing. PaperMaster straightened the page perfectly. After pressing the "straighten page" icon and performing OCR, one may open the document in WordPerfect or other word processor. PaperMaster has built in OCR (Optical Character Recognition) to be used in turning a graphical presentation of the document into a text based version.

Frank had faxed a document with some graphics map on it as well as text. He then brought up the map and added text on top of the map to call attention to certain features on the map or to provide qualifying data sources. Frank uses PaperMaster to store his correspondence regarding prospects or clients in his real estate business with Orange Realty of Tampa. He demonstrated how he stored a letter in WordPerfect into a cabinet, drawer, multiple folder and specific folder. A folder may be a path, directory, file or document.

Frank stated that William LaMartin had uploaded a Demo Version on the BBS. This file allows full use of PaperMaster but limits the volume of bytes and doesn't support scanning. While one may use it to do most everything Frank demonstrated, one will want to purchase the unlimited version after being satisfied that it will do all that is claimed and desired. The test drive Demo Version is free for the downloading.

Everyone praised Frank for a very good presentation. Several people stated that "we would like to see more member presentations by people who use a program. They can tell us what they did and how they did it as well as give their positive and negative comments. "

Congratulation to Door Prize winners:

Borland Quattro Pro	Bruce Register
CD Disk-Power Tools	Bambi Stoll
MS BOB	Michael Leiss
Internet and Job Searching	Gary Ennis
CompuServe CD Disk	Larry Anders
SMC Cap	Wil Goble

Congratulations Bambi on winning on the first night as a new member. New members get a ticket on their first night without having to make a donation. Only regular members who make a DONATION to the TPCUG for equipment acquisition and upkeep are eligible for the door prize drawing. ◆

Software Review

Train Your Bird To Talk!



Review by Larry Anders,
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Last year I visited a pet store to purchase my daughter some rabbit food for her award winning flop-eared rabbit. This particular pet store had just put out on display about 50 cockatiels in a rather large aquarium sitting on the floor. I reached my arm into the aquarium to try and pet one of the birds and they all scattered, except this one little pearly pied (gray-yellow) girl who jumped right on my arm and scampered up to my shoulder. My daughter looked at me and said, "we're gonna take this one home, aren't we Dad?" Well, she was right! It's a year and a half later now, the bird is a permanent fixture, and is just as spoiled as the other three women in my household. Oh yea, I named the bird "PC". Wonder where that came from? Actually it stands for *'personal cockatiel'* and she is my personal bird because she will not have much to do with my wife or two daughters. The only trouble I have with "PC" is communicating with her. Come to think of it, I had the same trouble with my other two daughters!

Well, this time I thought I'd do it right, so…..enter the computer. I guess the trouble I had communicating with my other two daughters is the same I have with "PC", … lack of patience. But we all know the one thing a personal computer can do, and do well, is repetition. If you've ever owned a bird and tried to teach it to talk, the two primary things needed are patience and repetition. Then what better tool than a personal computer for teaching a bird to talk!

I had seen ads for rather expensive machines and other devices in bird magazines that would teach birds to talk, and almost sent for one, until I was wandering around cyberspace one day recently and found a Shareware program that was just what I was looking for….and MUCH cheaper, too…. "TRAIN YOUR BIRD TO TALK!"

The only requirements for this software package are Windows 95, a sound card and speakers and a microphone if you want to use your own voice, although the program comes with eight built-in phrases to get you started. Once the program is loaded, to start playing a particular phrase just click any one of the eight buttons that correspond with the phrase you would like to teach your bird. If you decide to try a different phrase just click on a different phrase button. The speed that the phrase is repeated can be set to repeat from every one to ten seconds. Just click the arrows or the scroll bar itself. And…. there is a *STOP BUTTON* to give you silence, and believe me, sometimes you need that….or your bird will.

When you get tired of the eight built-in phrases, you can record a new phrase over an existing phrase, create a completely new phrase or open a phrase that you may have made in a different program or downloaded from an on-line service or BBS. Of course, all of your phrases can be saved for later use. Any *.WAV* file will work. Just remember to keep it short. After all, this **is** to train your bird. You can set up any or all of your available eight phrases for a 24 hour period and create up to 100 cycles.

That's really all there is to it. The program comes with a pretty thorough on-line Help system that covers everything you need to know and how to do it. If you don't own a bird, ***GET ONE!*** You don't know what you're missing. If you haven't upgraded to Windows 95 yet, ***DO IT!*** This program should be reason enough since it requires Win 95.

Of course, both of my daughters have a personal computer in each of their rooms and I've been thinking about installing this program on their computers just so I don't have to keep saying "CLEAN YOUR ROOM or MAKE YOUR BED" over and over again!

If you're interested in this program you'd better hurry. The price went up 59% since I registered my copy last month but, oh yea, it was only $5 originally. **Isn't Shareware GREAT!**

Retail price $7.95
Mike Holtz, P.O. Box 462516, Escondido, CA 92046-2516
Your choice of registration number delivery. E-mail or U.S. Postal Service
mikeholtz@aol.com
download the file from: http://members.aol.com/mikeholtz/ ◆



Faithful members Ed Snow and Jenny Lind Olin

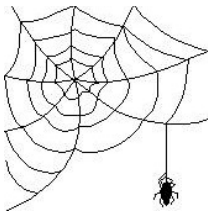
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **First Aid 95 Delux** for Windows 95 & 3.11 - CyberMedia - Windows fixing, crash-proofing- & system restoring survival tool - Windows CD-ROM
2. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
3. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file--View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
6. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
11. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
12. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
13. **ECHO Lake** - Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
14. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows.
15. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
16. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
17. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calandar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

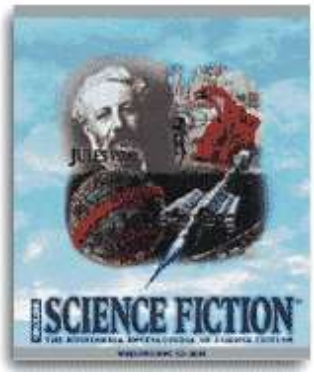


http://www.tecc.co.uk/bmj/	British Medical Journal
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http://techweb.cmp.com/techweb/hpc/current/	Home PC Magazine
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http://www.chicago.tribune.com/news/current/news.htm	Chicago Tribune
http://miso.wwa.com/~jeffster/chitown.htm	Chicago Information
http://www.cyberkids.com/	Cyber Kids Home Page
http://www.turbonet.com/games/default.htm	Games First (Reviews of Games)
http://www.search.com/?msn.srch2	Search.com (combined search engines)
http://www.dos.state.fl.us/fpc/	Florida State Archives Photo Collection
http://www.hotbot.com./	Hotbot (New search engine)
http://www.cs.uchicago.edu/vt/chicagoloop.html	Chicago Virtual Tourist
http://www.quotesmith.com/	Instant Term Life Insurance Quotes
http://www.insure.com/	Insurance News Network
http://www.mapquest.com/	Map Quest Welcome
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http://www.usatoday.com/	USA Today Online
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http://phone.yahoo.com/	Yahoo People Search (phone & Internet)
http://s12.bigyellow.com/home_msn.html	Big Yellow (yellow pages)
http://www.zdnet.com/yahoocomputing/	Yahoo Computing (computer information)

Software Review

Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science Fiction by Grolier

Reviewed by James E. Kalshoven
Tampa PC Users Group



As I installed Grolier's Science Fiction: The Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (G-SF), I thought of all the great SF I'd read beginning in the 7th grade and continuing until my interest and time decreased in graduate school. But G-SF recaptures those halcyon days in its quality and scope. This is obviously a work of love on the part of the authors, but less obviously a work of love on the part of the computer programmers. The CD is an expansion and update through 1995 of the book *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (Little, Brown, 1993), edited by John Clute and Peter Nicholls. The transfer to a hyper linked CD-ROM is outstanding. Like other Grollier products, however, windows do not expand to fill the monitor size. One size fits all, so you get use to the PgUp and PgDn keys. Such things as a small search-result window with no horizontal scroll bar and no keystroke short cut for the copy command are indications of a non-standard Windows interface. One other oddity is the treatment of articles such as 'The' and 'A' as indexable terms in doing a book search. So *A Voyage to Arcturus* is listed under A.

In remembering one of the first SF novels I read, I did a word search of the whole G-SF on Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters*. I was somewhat disappointed that the novel did not merit a brief review on its own but was impressed at all the essays it showed up under. These essays are a trademark of the G-SF. My search turned up essays on topics such as 'Paranoia', 'Parasitism and Symbiosis', 'Invasion', 'Social Darwinism', and so on for a total of twelve. The essays are quite long and detailed with substantial hyper links. But there is no search capability within the essay. Using Heinlein again, I searched for another esoteric work: *Have Space Suit -- Will Travel*. This turned up three essays: One on the author, one on 'Children in SF' and one on 'UFOs'. The book was discussed in the 'Children in SF' in context as one variant on four types which use children. While one might disagree on the selected types, it certainly is thorough and well thought out, stimulating the reader to other works that branch from the one that had been searched.

The essays are grouped under broader themes such as 'About SF', 'Life Forms', 'Science and Technology', and 'Time'. With the hyper links and extensive scholarship, it is an explorers delight. There is extensive reference to television, movies, comic books. Film, video, and audio clips, pictures of SF art and book covers are also fun to look at and listen to and learn from.

The first thing I recommend is for the user to pull down the Help menu and go to 'About This Disc'. This is more than a publisher and version box. It is a narrative discussion on the history and layout of the G-SF, a clear indication of the care put into this extensive content.

This is a delightful and impressive piece of software, a layout with a basically attractive and inviting interface. I recommend this to anyone who enjoys or is even curious about the literature and art of SF.

Grolier Electronic Publishing, Inc.
90 Sherman Turnpike
Danbury, CT 06816
203-797-3530
http://www.grolier.com/interact/index.html ◆



Librarian Larry Anders checking with Treasurer Wil Goble on the availability of User Group funds for the next all-expenses-paid two week trip of TPCUG officers to London, Paris and Rome.

Software Preview

What does "Merlin" Mean?

IBM reveals plans for next version of OS/2

by Tim Bryce,
Tampa Bay OS/2 Users Group

Contrary to popular belief, "Merlin" (project code name for the next release of OS/2) is not a reference to the magician of King Arthur's court. Rather, it refers to a pigeon hawk, a small falcon, a name that is consistent with IBM's latest product naming convention after birds of prey, e.g., IBM's "Eagle" series of file servers.

As a product, Merlin represents some significant enhancements in the operating system that were revealed only recently at the IBM Technical Interchange in Nashville (April 22-26) and the OS/2 TeleSeminar held April 29th.

Knowing that Merlin was in the works, many existing users weren't sure if there would be significant improvements in the product to justify an upgrade, particularly for OS/2 Warp Connect users. Initial reports on Merlin indicated that it would feature an improved Graphical User Interface (GUI) and connectivity for the Internet. This alone would not warrant an upgrade. Fortunately, IBM added several other enhancements that make this release important and justify an upgrade, most notably speech recognition and universal client support for network operating systems. Although the product is only now entering beta-test, reports indicate Merlin will have the following features:

SPEECH NAVIGATION AND VOICE-TYPE DICTATION

OS/2 will be the first operating system with integrated speech navigation and voice dictation. The decision to include this was made in the eleventh hour by PSP management (IBM's Personal Software Products division). As late as March, IBM officials refused to commit to speech support. However, the decision to adopt speech is a significant move, if for no other reason than to generate media attention.

IBM has been working on speech support for some time now. Their VoiceType Dictation software has been on the market for quite awhile and has begun to snowball in terms of popularity. The decision to embed this technology, therefore, comes as no surprise.

The speech support included in Merlin is touted as easy to learn and use, which is very important. The speech navigation portion of the product allows the user to open and close icons as desired (folders, command files, and executable programs). This will be particularly useful for starting an Internet session (more on this later).

Speech support, however, will come at a price. For starters, it will require at least 16mb of RAM (or preferably higher) and a fast processor, either a Pentium or a 486 at 133mhz. Of course, you will also have to have a decent sound card and microphone (is a video camera far behind?). To many users, Merlin will represent a substantial upgrade in hardware. But if you do not require speech support (and a lot of us will not), you should be fine with your existing OS/2 hardware configuration.

Speech navigation and VoiceType dictation will be more beneficial to end users as opposed to application developers or technicians. Let's not forget physicians and attorneys were the prime markets for VoiceType Dictation prior to Merlin. Not surprising, there will be upgrade fees for special dictionaries for these professions. It will be interesting to see what applications are developed that truly capitalize on speech recognition, particularly games (imagine a game of Doom or Heretic with speech support!)

OS/2

Initially, voice support will be available for the U.S. and U.K. English, German, French, Italian and Spanish. Because of the complexities of the Oriental languages (Japanese, Chinese, Korean) requiring the Double Byte Character Set (DBCS), it may be some time before OS/2 supports these other languages.

UNIVERSAL CLIENT

IBM launched OS/2 Warp Server in February as a universal file server for just about any client: OS/2, Windows (3.x and 95), DOS, and various flavors of UNIX. This was a smart move by IBM because it no longer confined them to a single operating environment (OS/2). Now, with Merlin, IBM is going to do the same thing on the client side by allowing OS/2 to integrate with the popular network operating systems: OS/2 Warp Server, Novelle NetWare, Banyan Vines, and Windows NT.

This aspect to OS/2 is perhaps more significant than speech support even though it won't necessarily generate the same amount of press. Basically, IBM is recognizing that companies do not have one homogeneous computing platform any more and will want to integrate everything. By having universal clients and universal servers, IBM will now be able to penetrate more companies and markets. This approach is in sharp

(Merlin.....Continued on page 8)

(Merlin.....Continued from page 7)
contrast to Microsoft who doesn't seem to grasp heterogeneous computing.

USER INTERFACE

Screen images of the proposed Merlin graphical user interface have been circulating on the Internet for some time now. However, IBM was more definitive when they demonstrated Merlin at the Technical Interchange. A lot of the changes can best be described as cosmetic (e.g., setting notebooks will appear horizontally as opposed to vertically, bubble help, and new system fonts). Perhaps the biggest change will be the new WarpCenter, an icon ribbon that was developed based on a popular technique used by Lotus. WarpCenter will replace the LaunchPad, a favorite of OS/2 users since it was released with Warp. Although the initial reaction to the ribbon has been favorable, the Merlin beta-test should tell us if OS/2 users will really accept it.

INTERNET SUPPORT

IBM has been a big supporter of the Internet ever since they introduced their Internet Access Kit (IAK) with OS/2 Warp in 1994. Their IAK has won industry acclaim for its superior features and ease of use. Now it appears they are going to further simplify it by allowing the user to create icons representing favorite Internet sites and accessing the site by speech navigation. This will be different than the QuickList as provided in the IBM WebExplorer. Instead, users will be able to say something like, "Open Yahoo," whereby the web browser and Internet dialer are initiated taking you to the Yahoo web page (http://www.yahoo.com/).

Although the WebExplorer remains the favorite browser among OS/2 users, it is possible that IBM and Netscape are planning to introduce an OS/2 version of the popular Navigator web browser. Although there is no documentation to substantiate this claim, there has been a lot of scuttlebutt on the Internet that such a development is in the works. Further, application forms for independent software vendors to participate in the Merlin beta-test makes mention of a "Netscape Plug In." With the web browser war heating up between Netscape and Microsoft, such a move to OS/2 may very well make sense. What this means to the WebExplorer is anyone's guess. If the OS/2 version of the Navigator comes to fruition, look for IBM to drop the WebExplorer. We'll probably find out with the final release of Merlin.

OTHER ITEMS

There are a host of other enhancements planned:

- Improved installation facilities, including support for plug n' play.
- Developer API extensions to simplify the migration of 32-bit programs to OS/2. It is still uncertain whether Merlin will support Win95 apps. At minimum, the new API set will simplify conversion.
- Support for industry standards such as OpenDoc, OpenGL, and JAVA. IBM scores a coup here by offering the first JAVA enabled operating system. It is rumored that Microsoft will only provide JAVA support for its web browser, not the operating system. In sharp contrast, OS/2 will include run-time code for JAVA applications, a JAVA Developers Kit, and a JAVA enabled web browser.
- Dual SMP (Symmetrical Processing) support - although welcomed, this is a curious feature in that OS/2 Warp Server is still without SMP support (although it is forthcoming shortly) and not many "client" machines come with dual processors.
- A new and improved BonusPak - the first BonusPak basically consisted of IBM Works (word processor, spreadsheet, graphics, and data base suite), the Internet Access Kit, and other communication applications (terminal emulator, fax machine, and CIM for OS/2). It is not clear what the new BonusPak will consist of but look for a few speech enabled apps to be included, such as an Internet telephone.

MARKETING

As always, IBM is gearing up to market Merlin to business (particularly banking, manufacturing, and insurance) and not to the home user. They're primarily targeting professional people who need to be "connected" to their business via computer. More and more, IBM is positioning OS/2 as an "industrial strength" operating system to run a business. From this perspective, the average home user will feel understandably abandoned. This is a shame since OS/2 has a lot to offer the home user in terms of stability and connectivity. IBM still has problems marketing to the general public and feels more confident selling to business instead.

With Merlin, it appears there will no longer be "red box/blue box" versions of the operating system (for customers with DOS and Windows/and for customers without). This will greatly help to eliminate confusion as to which version to purchase.

Pricing will be critical. Currently, the best prices for OS/2 Warp Connect (the immediate predecessor to Merlin) ranges from $124 (red box) to $159 (blue box). Although these prices may indicate what a new OS/2 user can expect to pay, existing customers will balk at such a fee to upgrade. An enticing price is necessary to assure users will want to upgrade.

(Merlin.....Continued on page 9)

(Merlin.....Continued from page 8)
The beta version of Merlin will be distributed on or shortly after May 22nd. Independent software vendors and European users are already signing up to receive the release. Beta test periods normally last 90 days, this means we can expect to see the final release of Merlin (or whatever the final product name is) sometime around September.

IBM is much less confrontational to Microsoft in selling OS/2 than it has been over the last few years. They more or less have capitulated to Bill Gate's marketing magic to capture the hearts and minds of the general public. Instead, IBM is content focusing on the corporate world. OS/2 has obviously evolved into a very rich and technically superior operating platform. Microsoft is years away from the type of features that will be taken for granted by the Merlin user (e.g., speech navigation, connectivity, JAVA support). IBM is simply hoping that the corporate user will become so dependent on OS/2 that they will also want to run it on their home computer. Will Merlin be the death of Windows? Hardly. But it will put Microsoft in a very bad light, particularly to corporate users, a market Microsoft is still struggling to penetrate.

So what does Merlin mean?

It has been two years since IBM issued a major release of OS/2; a short time to some, but an eternity by marketing standards. In order to convey its commitment to the product, IBM needed to issue a substantial release that will broaden its market share and enhance its technical credibility. In addition, IBM is beginning to describe future modifications/improvements to OS/2, far beyond Merlin. This type of talk is particularly encouraging to OS/2 users, both current and potential purchasers, who may be afraid of being abandoned by IBM. So, bottom-line, what does Merlin really mean? That IBM is deeply committed to the operating system and has no intention of backing off from it.

Tim Bryce is with the management consulting firm M. Bryce & Associates, Inc. (MBA) in Palm Harbor, an OS/2 independent software vendor. He is also the Editor of the OS/2 CONNECT freeware newsletter (http://warp.eecs.berkeley.edu/os2/connect/) and founder of the Tampa Bay OS/2 Users' Group (TBOUG). He can be contacted at TimB1557@aol.com. Copyright (c) MBA 1996

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◆

(Computer.....Continued from page 1)
graphics. I certainly would like my *Street Atlas USA* and *Map and Go* maps to print faster—my *HP Laserjet 4 Plus* printer prints fast enough, but the computer takes a long time to compose the map and send it to the printer. And those *Corel Draw* pages take a long time to redraw as they get more and more complicated. Additionally, I think that *WebCompass*, which I reviewed in the May newsletter, would have benefited from a faster computer, but I am not sure, since the Internet itself is so slow. However my other applications—the *Microsoft* ones, *Word, Excel, Access, Publisher,* and *Visual Basic*; and the non-Microsoft applications, *Quicken, Family Tree Maker, Lotus Organizer, WinFax Pro & WinCom Pro, PerForm, OLX for Windows, AskSam, TextBridge Pro*, and many, many more—all move along at an acceptable speed. Now, since I don't play games often I can't judge the 386/33's performance there except to note that it did well with *Myst*. I am sure, however, there are multimedia titles out there that would be too much for it.

Perhaps the machine is not as fast as I think it is, and I have just gotten used to it; sort of like an old, comfortable shoe. However it certainly is more than adequate to put out this newsletter using *Microsoft Word* and *Publisher* for text and layout along with *Hewlett Packard* scanning software and *Corel Graphics 3* and *Corel Photo Paint 5* for graphics. But it will be an interesting comparison to make when the new Gateway P5-166 with 32 MB RAM arrives in a couple of days. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (June 20) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (June 3) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Tom Cone at 949-9698 or Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (June 19) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin. at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

Announcing SoftBrain 95

You've doubled your RAM, you've doubled your speed, you've even doubled your CPU. You're still hungry for more. What to do next?

Double Your Brain!

Since the introduction of the Altair in the mid-1970s, the power of the average personal computer has grown at an exponential rate. Today's notebook computer possesses orders of magnitude more processing power than the Apollo astronauts took with them to the moon. You and I wouldn't think of booting up with less than a PowerPC or Pentium; Neil Armstrong cruised a half-million miles and made One Giant Leap™ with TTL circuitry!

Despite the explosion in processing power and the accompanying plunge in costs for RAM and hard disk storage, many computer users are still disappointed with the performance of their personal computer systems.

"In 1985, when I bought my Mac 512K and an ImageWriter II," says Roy Cardiff, an early Mac adopter, "it took me about a day to write and edit a 10 page memo. Now that I have a Mac 8500 32/1080MB and a color laser printer, it takes me... about a day to type and edit a 10 page memo."

Indeed, our detailed analyses show that over the course of a 24 hour period, 99.94% of all processor cycles are spent waiting for you, the computer user, to do something. In other words, the bottleneck today is not in your computer--it is in your head.

The lesson is plain. If you want to get more out of your computer, you're going to have to improve *your* performance. To help you along, we've developed **SoftBRAIN 95**.

In our beta testing, we have found that **SoftBRAIN 95** significantly increases the rate at which experienced users are able to get work done with their computers:

Good ideas per hour:
w/o SoftBRAIN 95
w/ SoftBRAIN 95



Bad ideas per hour:
w/o SoftBRAIN 95
w/ SoftBRAIN 95



Coherent sentences per hour:
w/o SoftBRAIN 95
w/ SoftBRAIN 95



(Your results may vary. We've noticed that people with a general propensity for bad ideas produce a majority of bad ideas with **SoftBRAIN 95**. We're working on a fix. In the meantime, we do not recommend **SoftBRAIN 95** for idiots, MBAs, or government employees.)

Look for **SoftBRAIN 95** at your local retailer/mail order house. Available soon!

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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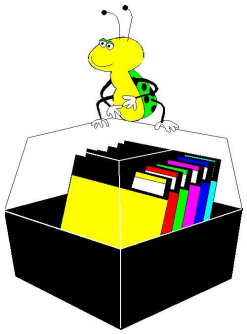
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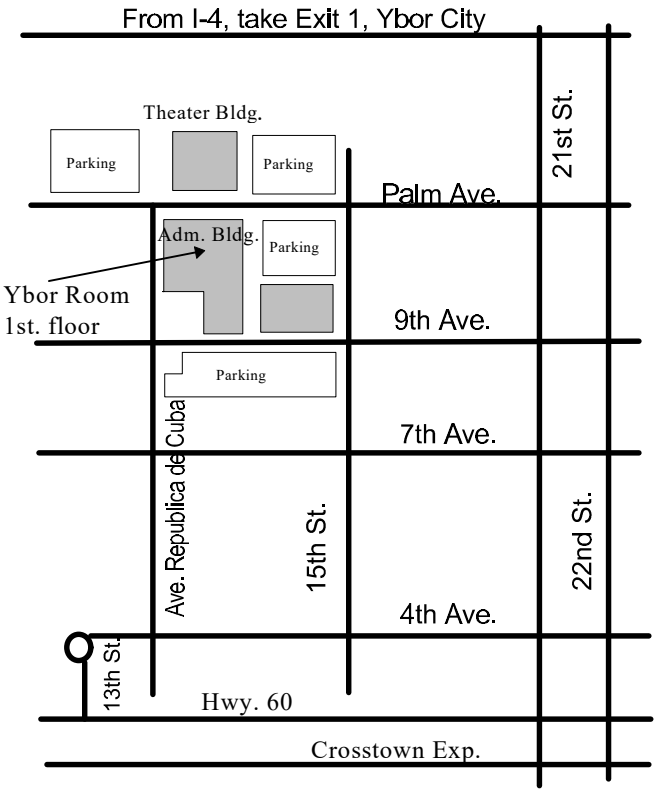
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Winmdows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

To view this newsletter in full color, download PCNL9606.PDF from the BBS and view it with the Adobe Acrobat Reader





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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

July 4, 1996

Vol. 9 No. 7 July 1996

Meeting

July 10, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Hardware Program
&
Laptop Auction

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Transplant Time?

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Last month I wrote about how pleased I was with my five year old Gateway 386 computer. I still am; however, with the arrival of the new Gateway P5-166 I have something much faster with which to compare it. And I must admit, my old computer comes up a bit lacking. But, then, that is as one would expect. The real problem is how well it now compares to the other 386 machine in the house which I have recently turned into a 486/80.

This rebuilt 486/80 with 16 MB RAM tests out at a little over four times as fast on throughput as does my faithful 386/33 with 16 MB. And the upgrade of the 386/33 with 8MB RAM to a 486/80 with 16 MB of RAM costs less than $350. That's correct; less than $350 using an entirely new 16 MB RAM SIMM costing $165. I recall spending almost $140 less than nine months back for four 1 MB SIMMs. Prices have really fallen on RAM, and that is what made all of this possible. Since in the past, the high price of RAM precluded me from making such an upgrade because to move from the 386 motherboard to a 486 motherboard required abandoning my 30 pin SIMM memory and purchasing 72 pin SIMMs.

I decided that this machine needed some help after configuring it for my daughter's use and noting how sluggish it responded. It had been my son's machine before the arrival of the new P-166. No wonder he spent most of his computer time on the 486 laptop. It had never been a very good machine, made by a clone maker and given to us

(Computer.....*Continued on page 3)*

NEWS FLASH: Visit our WWW home page at http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING June 12, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Connie Kincaid called the meeting to order.

Connie announced that the Board of Directors decided to auction two laptops at the July 10 meeting. These are 386's with power pack, etc.

Editor's Note: The two laptops to be auctioned are Compaq 386/20's with 4 MB RAM and 60 MB hard drives capable of running Windows 3.1. They work. Minimum donation to start the autcion will be $100 each.

William LaMartin reported on the TPCUG Home Page that he created and John Meroth donated space for on his internet provider system at no charge to our group. The group gave John and William a round of applause.

Presentation: Mel Fox and Charles Aldridge presented *Personal Secretary: Voice to Text Software* . The program listens to the way an individual person says words. The system then extrapolates sounds and words from one's own individual voice. It forms a marriage with one's voice. The most recent version lets you say some 50 words from which it gets better and better at extrapolating words. The program learns each time it is used. This technology is on the threshold of voice recognition. Mel said, "For instance, in the near future you will be able to walk up to your front door and say something like 'I'm home'. Through voice recognition, your front door will unlock and swing open for you to walk in with both arms loaded and not even have to touch a door knob much less a key. In time, you will be able to call your bank over the phone. The bank's computer will recognize your voice and will extrapolate the words and carry out your commands...all by talking to the bank's computer."

Charles said that "it will take about three hours for the program to learn from you and you to learn how to do the program. The next phase of the setup will take about 20 hours at a minimum to get the program operating for you as you like for it to run. You cannot have a misspelled word in this program because the vocabulary is large and knows how to spell all words." He demonstrated by speaking medical terms. There are legal, standard and other versions of dictionary vocabularies available. One can make corrections by keyboard or by voice.

(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)

A minimum of a 486/100 computer is recommended; however, it will work on less. Twelve MB RAM is a minimum, but if you have 40 MB RAM, the system runs much faster since you can load the entire program into memory.

Charles demonstrated the program. He started it with his voice command only. He said. "WAKE UP." The program opened. He said, "GO TO WORD PERFECT." WordPerfect opened. Charles told us that a training process is required in which you train the program to recognize your pronunciation. He wrote documents without using his hands. If the program does not recognize the word, you must tell it to "CORRECT WORD"; you repeat words that sound like the unrecognized word. The program is, therefore, trained to recognize your inflections and pronunciation.

During the demonstration, Charles wanted to tell the audience something that he was doing. If he spoke to the audience, the program would think that he was talking to it. So, he said, "GO TO SLEEP." He told us his remarks. Then the said, "WAKE UP." The program resumed. He opened a vocabulary window to train the program to HIS voice commands. He went to the vocabulary window. He repeated a word or phrase until the program understood (got trained).

Charles said that you can use the *Sound Blaster* card or use a digitizer card which is quicker and more efficient. The program is available in DOS Vers. 2.01 and MAC Vers. 2.03. Price is about $500 - $2,000. The price is higher when one desires more applications. We thank Mel and Charles for the program.

Bargain Table: We had a bargain table sale. The bargain table was full of more hardware and software goodies than I have ever seen at such a "flea market". Prices were cheap. Many people bought much. The remainder was donated to the Police Athletic League (PAL).

SIGs: Regarding entry to any SIG at the Reflectone Building, be sure to get your name on the list. If you miss the sign up let Mike Hodges know through the BBS. Mike said that as long as Reflectone gets the additions to the list before 4 PM of meeting day, entry can be arranged. Reflectone is a tight security building. Simply plan ahead whenever possible to eliminate miscommunication.

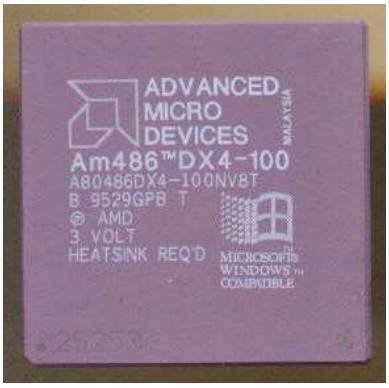
Next Meeting: The next meeting is a hardware meeting. The auction will be accompanied by hardware demonstration as per popular request. Connie asked us all to pass the word to our friends. Come and bring someone! ◆

(Computer.....Continued from page 1)

by a relative. We, of course, were grateful to have it. But to get it to perform anywhere near the level of the Gateway 386 we had to replace most of it's components, and it still had occasional unexplained problems which couldn't be resolved. We basically replaced everything except the motherboard, processor, keyboard, and floppy drives. Not such a free computer, was it? Well, now the motherboard and processor have been replaced, and it zips along like the new machine it is.

When I got the itch to do something about the machine I called member John Meroth, who suggested I talk with member George Pollak, who is in the business of building computers. I did just that, and he suggested a 486 motherboard and an AMD 100 486 processor costing $160. Then an additional $160 would provide 16 MB of Ram for the 486 board, since the RAM on the 386 board was not compatible with the new board. Sounded good to me.

However, almost immediately after I hung up the phone my son came in with the components that the Nicholsons (also members) had removed from a 486 in upgrading their computer to a Pentium. Not only did they have a motherboard and processor, there was an expensive Number 9 video card and a Promise 2300 enhanced IDE I/O card , the latter two items providing an additional boost in performance. And the price was the same as for the new processor and motherboard. Member Wil Goble provided me with a 16 MB SIMM and I was on my way.



Out with the old motherboard and in with the new. It wasn't a perfect fit, being smaller than the original one it turned out that the right side of the board was not easily supported. Not to worry, Will suggested bubble gum between the case and the motherboard. I settled on modeling clay. Pop the cards in and boot the computer. Except that it wouldn't boot. Think, think, think. Solution--slow down the processor just a little. By changing the jumper settings on the motherboard you can change the clock speed of the processor and the multiplication factor. As set when I first tried to boot, the processor was running at a tripled 33 MHz, which would be reported as 100 MHz. I reset the jumpers to double the 33 MHz, and running at 66 MHz the computer booted perfectly to Windows 95. Time to check the throughput with a diagnostic program. It reported that things could be better. I made some changes (as recommended in the manual with the motherboard--you

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

Fun Stuff

by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

I've been personal computing since the early 80's when I purchased my first Commodore 64. From the very beginning my concept of PC'ing has always been synonymous with ***"having fun"***. I switched to the IBM compatible format in the mid 80's when I found out I could have more fun because of the amount of software available for the compatibles. Each successive upgrade since then has been made to increase my enjoyment factor. Most upgrades have been in the hardware area such as: hard drives, sound cards, CD-ROMS, scanners, video capture, color printers, etc. New operating systems and software such as OS/2, Windows and scads of Shareware have made PC'ing much more enjoyable. But now there is a entity that puts all of these things together (and adds a few more things). The **INTERNET.**

In some of my last few articles I've alluded to the Internet as something I'd talk about later, well….its later. In the past few weeks I've found so much fun stuff to do with and on the Internet I thought it was time to pass the information on. This is not a *how-to* or *what-to-do* article, but more of a tiny bit of *what's-out-there* article. I will suggest though if you are new to the Internet or wanting to learn about it start of with a service like CompuServe or America On Line that has Internet access built-in, then switch to a dedicated ISP (Internet service provider) to save money. Most all ISPs now offer unlimited Internet access for a monthly charge of under $20 and most give you your first month *FREE* or discounted.

First of all…what is the Internet? The Internet can be thought of as a worldwide network of networks originally used and paid for by the military, scientific and academic communities. The Internet that has been around for years. It does not originate from any one source and is not owned by anyone. Some people say the Internet has taken on a life of its own - like an alien life form. When the GUI (graphical user interface) was introduced to the Internet, a marriage was made in heaven and its been growing and changing by leaps and bounds on a daily basis ever since. But what is so neat about the Internet is when you connect to it, you become part of it.

What's out there? Well….let me to be the first to admit that I am a *Shareware Hound.* (Shareware is software distributed for trial use, without charge. The author requests payment if the software is found useful). I became the Librarian for the Tampa PC Users Group so I would have an excuse for collecting and examining all this software. And my gosh, there is Shareware galore on the Internet. How do you find it you say? *PC Computing Magazine*, published by Ziff-Davis Publishing, has made it easy for you. In July's issue they have listed and described what they claim to be the 1,001 best Internet downloads of this amazing free stuff (and a lot of this is *FREE-WARE* that never has to be paid for). And what's better than that they have put it all together at one place on the Internet. Go to "http://www.pccomputing.com" and download to you heart's content. *This same issue of PC Computing Magazine also has an excellent manual on Windows 95 included.* Such a deal!

Probably the most used aspect of the Internet is the ability to send E-mail next door or around the planet in just seconds. Now you can do this part of it **TOTALLY FREE.** There is a service called Juno whose motto is *"E-mail Was Meant To Be Free"* that provides you with your own electronic mail address on the Internet. You can use this address to exchange messages with any of the millions of people around the world who communicate with each other by e-mail. Juno also gives you an easy-to-use software package that makes sending and receiving e-mail as simple as using a telephone and an answering machine to pick up your messages. Best of all, Juno is free - there are no membership charges, no monthly charges, no per-message charges, no fees of any other sort. (At most, there may be a cost of a local phone call to connect your computer to Juno's server, as with any other on-line service but there is no charge here in the Tampa Bay area). It's a little like television; Juno carries advertising, so you don't have to pay to use it. When you are reading and writing your mail, you are not connected by telephone to Juno's main computers. When you choose to get or send your mail, your computer will briefly connect by telephone to Juno's central computers. There is currently no file transfer or attachments associated with this service. But what do you want for nothing! If you're interested you can download the software "JUNO.ZIP" from our BBS, *Bits of Blue,* or go to "http://www.signup@juno.com" on the Internet and sign up.

Lastly, for this month's article, if you're using the Internet to communicate with friends and relatives on a regular basis why not *"talk"* to them over the Internet or





leave them a *"voice-mail"* instead of just plain old E-mail. And guess what? This also is FREE, except for your normal ISP charges. (It cannot be used in conjunction with the above mentioned JUNO service). I recently visited *"http://www.netspeak.com"* and downloaded a beta copy of their Internet phone program called *"WebPhone".* WebPhone is a

(Fun Stuff.....Continued on page 9)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

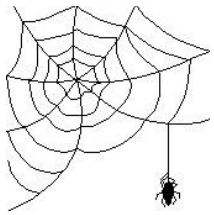
1. **First Aid 95 Deluxe** for Windows 95 & 3.11 - CyberMedia - Windows fixing, crash-proofing- & system restoring survival tool - Windows CD-ROM
2. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
3. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file--View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
6. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure complete world of Flying (8-adult)
11. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
12. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
13. **ECHO Lake** - Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
14. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows.
15. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
16. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
17. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calandar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

http://www.fedex.com/track_it.html	Federal Express Airbill Tracking
http://www.ups.com/tracking/tracking.html	UPS Package Tracking
http://www.agriculture.com/	Agriculture Online
http://www.slate.com/cover/current/cover.asp	Slate (Microsoft Magazine)
http://mundil.cs.mu.oz.au:8004/~dnich/boggle_intro.html	Play Boggle Online
http://www.csmonitor.com/	Christian Science Monitor
http://www.yatcom.com/neworl/vno.html	Virtually New Orleans
http://www.nyip.com/	New York Institute of Photography
http://rs6.loc.gov/amhome.html	American Memory - the Library of Congress
http://www.sundial.net/~djarrett/dj-nr1.htm	Normal Rockwell Collection
http://lonestar.texas.net/~mharden/	Mark Harden's Texas Museum of Art
http://www.findlaw.com/	FindLaw - Internet Legal Resources
http://www.dep.state.fl.us/index.html	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
http://dps1.travelocity.com/gltrmain.ctl?tv_module=TR	Travel Reservations Home Page
http://www.interedu.com/tampacenter/	Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center
http://www.infospaceinc.com/	InfoSpace (Telephone & Internet Directory)
http://www.bigbook.com/	BigBook Directory (Business Yellow Pages with Maps)
http://www.owlnet.rice.edu/~indigo/gsotd/	Geek Site of the Day
http://www.pcworld.com/annex/	Annex (from PC World)
http://www.corbis.com/	Corbis (photography)
http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/	Tampa PC Users Group



Software Review

Jump Start Kindergarten by Knowledge Adventure

Reviewed by Fred Buss
Tampa PC Users Group

I have been looking for a program for my Grandson, something besides Rebel II, Star Wars or Full Throttle. I saw in the "Software Available for Review" section of *Bits of Blue* a program for getting a head start on education called *Jump Start Kindergarten* for ages four to six. My Grandson has just turned six years old and completed kindergarten.

I have Windows 95 so I installed it with my install icon, and everything was going good until I received an error message saying I didn't have enough memory. I used the telephone number in my *Bits of Blue* newsletter and called Merle Nicholson on the Members Help Line, and he walked me through my problem, and the program installed very nicely.

I set my Grandson down with the Kindergarten program and he started to use it with great ease. It is very educational with the child learning to create and form sentences by clicking figures that represent characters, places and actions. It also teaches numbers, the alphabet, time, months and has coloring objects which are interesting. It not only keeps him occupied but teaches at the same time. The five songs on the CD can be used on any CD player.

I'm anxiously awaiting my granddaughter, who is 22 months, to reach the level of maturity to get another form of *Jump Start* for pre-school ages two to five.

Knowledge Adventure, Inc.
1311 Grand Central Avenue
Glendale, CA 91201
818-246-4400
http://www.adventure.com ◆



Software Review

Works for Windows 95 from Microsoft

Review by Gary Peterson
Tampa PC Users Group Inc.

When Works wouldn't install I was prepared for the worst, I'd heard and read several horror stories about calling Microsoft help and waiting on hold for a long time and then getting someone who was no help at all. I was surprised to get right through to a knowledgeable, polite man who helped me edit my sys.ini file and I was off and running.

I was anxious to compare this version versus the version of Works I bought with my first computer 4 years ago.

The difference was night and day. The old version of Works for DOS was a stripped down office suite far too limiting for my needs even then.

Works for Windows 95 is a full featured suite of integrated programs consisting of a word processor, spread sheet, data base, communications and fax and even bookshelf (a very useful reference lookup of encyclopedia, almanac, thesaurus and dictionary).

Works is easier to learn than other office suites because of the countless "Task Wizards". They guide you, step by step through pre made templates for anything imaginable, letters, flyers, brochures, envelopes, labels, inventories, teachers tests, to invoices and loan repayment schedules, just to name a few.

All the programs are OLE (object linked and embedded) so that if you want your spreadsheet or database file updated by a word processor document or the reverse, it's done.

Works for Windows 95 on CD with Bookshelf is a full featured office suite, not a stripped down version, it would satisfy almost any individual or professional organization.

Extremely low street price of $64.75 makes it a bargain.

System requirements; if you can run Windows 95, you'll have no trouble running this fast 32 bit program. ◆

Hardware:

You Only Think It's Safe

by Fredrick Rea O'Keefe,
Tampa PC Users Users Group, Inc.

Aren't you just a bit proud of living in the "Lightning Capitol" of the world? Most of us like to brag about how bad it is wherever we live, recognizing that we are survivors. And if you haven't had a close call yet, don't you enjoy a small thrill when you talk to a Yankee friend about "What a doozy of a storm we just had! The lightning was just terrible."

In fact, if you own valuable electronic equipment (computer, stereo, ham radio, big screen TV, etc.), you are smart enough to protect it with a surge suppressor.
Right? Sorry, but several experts estimate that your surge protector is probably useless and dangerous if it's between six months to two years old. American Power Conversion, a leading manufacturer of *shunt-mode* superiors, noted the "finite life" of this type of device. If it's based on the common "shunt" designs, as reported many times in the technical press, sometimes at only the first good jolt of electricity on your power line -- the "protective" device could overheat, and even explode or catch fire. That's right, they sometimes overheat and start fires. In any case, until they burn out, these devices deteriorate with every surge which comes visiting. There is no warning of deterioration, often none of failure, and no way for you to test the functionality of your surge protector. As far as anyone can tell, they are good, right up to "The End."



If you are so lucky as to be tending a computer system, it's worse for you. The shunt type suppressors are notorious for shunting current directly to the data reference line, to the computer's motherboard and the boards in peripherals and communications equipment - *by design*! This frequently causes those fun "unexplained" lock ups, subtle and ongoing data corruption, or burn outs of your printers, modems and other equipment.

A shunt-mode device shorts surges to ground, theoretically so the surge won't blow up your equipment's power supply. Unfortunately, the robust power supply is the component best able to handle overvoltages. So what gives?

Until ten years ago, shunt-mode engineering seemed a more beneficial solution than big transformers to disarm constant jolts of electricity on the power lines, which easily damaged the then fragile power supplies in electronic equipment. But, in 1988, when power lines were tested, François Martzloff of the National Bureau of Standards (now National Institute of Standards and Technology) discovered the damage these devices *cause*. The evidence has become solid: *shunt-mode suppressors can do more harm than good,* particularly on a computer network (or with any *interconnected* electronics).

"Why," you might ask, "if this is known, do retailers and computer vendors still sell these devices? Is a $6 "suppressor" any good for my $5,000 computer? Why isn't there a 'warning label'? How come manufacturers don't make a better design?"

Ignorance, apathy, profit, competition to build cheap not good. *("Because our competitors do it, and that's what sells. The buyers don't know any better and don't care." said one of a local Clearwater suppressor manufacturer's engineers.)* After all, aren't vendors in business to sell you something? And what do buyers ask for -- "Sell me something that says 'surge protector', but make it low cost and good; I've already spent too much money!"

To some vendors, as far as low cost add-ons to a sale go, if it doesn't work, that's the manufacturer's look out and your problem; The vendor doesn't warrant the product against electrical damage. Neither do most manufacturers of surge suppressors!

Look at warranties, and you will more often than not read such notices as "this device is not warranted against large surges such as lightning." I kid you not, one manufacturer issues an insurance policy stating "Damage to electronic equipment resulting from [surges] on data lines is not covered." (Do you remember that I pointed out that all shunt mode suppressors dump surges onto the data line!?) And, "Damage caused by failure to provide a suitable installation environment for the product (including, but not limited to, a lack of good ground) voids the warranty." In other words, if you use it and it fails, your warranty and included insurance coverage are void.

That's capitalism. Let the buyer beware. And from whom will you buy a new electronic system when yours burns out -- the same dealer who sold you this device? Who makes a profit? And what is the deductible on a homeowner or business insurance policy (if your equipment is covered)? Probably a lot more than protecting your favorite equipment in the first place with a reliable, fail-safe surge suppressor. To the deductible add equipment depreciation, loss of time and data, (or worse, if you are in business). Sadly, consumer apathy is prevalent,

(Surge.....Continued on page 8)

(Surge.....Continued from page 7)
lower price is the number one buying point, definitely *not value* -- even more so than ten years ago, according to trade polls.

There is good news for you and your valuable electronics. J. Rudy Harford, an award winning inventor, electrical engineer and fine fellow, patented a unique new type of device - a *series-mode* surge suppressor. The importance in the term *series-mode* is that there is zero response time; the device is always active, removing every form of over-voltage, excess current, and noise. Other protective (shunt-mode) devices, even when new, take time to react, and always, always let through powerful spikes.

Zero Surge Inc., in Frenchtown, NJ, was incorporated in 1989, based on Harford's invention. The manufacturer is proud that Zero Surge Suppressors® are designed and carefully hand built in America.

To educate consumers, Zero Surge folks have been busy getting the word out. So, one day real soon now, you, too, will come to know and cherish your very own Zero Surge Suppressor®. (But, you might be bored when lightning strikes nearby, and your equipment doesn't burn out anymore. Sorry, being interesting isn't high on Rudy's list of design criteria!)

Ah, you ask, "What about the warranty?" Good question. Yes, Zero Surge Suppressors® each have an honest, ten year warranty which does not exclude even lightning, and provides a valid million dollar repair/replacement insurance policy for your equipment with each surge protector bought. (Just read the fine print on *your* shunt-mode protector's warranty -- it probably says something on the order of, "Void if damaged by use. Void for interconnected equipment. Void if damaged by a large "lightning-like" surge, ...") Is there any exception to Zero's warranty? Yes, that neither the hot nor the neutral may be wrongly wired (to ground!).

From all the press and technical reports I've seen, the Zero Surge Suppressor® units are rated, at a minimum, to effectively handle UL's® highest test pulse of 6,000 volts at 3,000 amps repeatedly, without decreased protection, and without degrading in performance. That's smart engineering, knowing that no overvoltage, excess current or noise can get through a ZSE, not even the very fast spikes to which other units can't react in time, nor the more damaging, long-term, large "swells."

"Why haven't I, a knowledgeable person in electronics, heard of this?" Well, you have now. Who have you been talking with -- probably well-intentioned people who have an interest in selling "peace of mind" to you, but don't yet know about Zero Surge Suppressor®? Perhaps you have relied on folks who have a vested interest in maintaining an old, deficient technology? It takes a long time for good information to travel, even in this time of the "information highway."

Just so you know, when you switch to the new series-mode Zero Surge Suppressor®, you will be in good company. Novell, Inc., FSU, the New York Stock Exchange, NASA, Sony, NYC Board of Education, Prudential, Citicorp, US Navy, Deloitte & Touche, Government of Canada, broadcasters, universities, government agencies and many more confidently rely on Zero Surge Suppressor®.

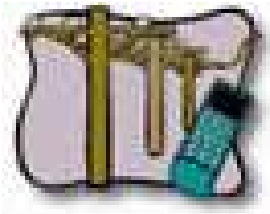
A local source of information and supply is Quality Electric Supply, Inc., in Tampa.

Post Script:
Since this article was written, because of the unacceptable rate of failure of UL 1449 listed shunt-mode suppressors, the federal government has developed a requirement for testing suppressors which is intended to rate suppressors. One rating is Grade A, "recommended for the most severe electrical surge environments." Only Zero Surge suppressors have been able to pass the test, earning the Grade A rating. The test is called *UL Adjunct Endurance and Performance Test.* This is a requirement for government purchase, and it should be yours as well. Any product which cannot perform well enough to achieve a Grad A rating may not offer the quality, effectiveness and durability to protect your investment, here in "Lightning Alley." Please be aware that you have a right to receive a *bona fide* copy of the official UL test report, proving the claims of any suppressor manufacturer. Refusal to provide such should be a clear warning to you.

Fredrick Rea O'Keefe
Member, National Writers Union, Local #AL
CEO, CSR Consultants, Inc.
(power quality assurance consultants)
13014-363 N. Dale Mabry
Tampa, FL 33618-2814

Phone 813-933-1575 ◆

(Fun Stuff.....Continued from page 4)
professional, feature rich voice communication system for the Internet which requires some preparation on your part in order to use it properly and take advantage of all the functions it has to offer. You have to have a sound card and microphone to communicate. It took me about 15 minutes to get up and running. I could have probably been finished faster if I had read the instructions first! The person on the other end to whom you want to talk has to have the software too. But that's no problem, just E-mail them a copy or tell them where they can go to get the software. How does it work? As you speak into the sound card's microphone, WebPhone samples the incoming audio signal, compresses the raw audio signal, encrypts the compressed audio, then transmits it in packets via TCP/IP over your communication link to another WebPhone which receives the packets of compressed audio, pieces them together, decrypts the compressed audio, decompresses the audio, then sends it to the sound card's speaker on that WebPhone's computer for the other party to hear. I know that sounded complicated but *you* don't have to worry about any of that. All I can say is that it works, and if whomever you are trying to contact is not on-line at the time you call, just leave a voice mail message for them which they will receive the next time they check their E-mail. This Beta version is totally unrestricted with unlimited talk time. If you decide to keep it there is a one time charge of approximately $50 per computer for unlimited talk time. Also, almost every major Internet software company has their own version of an Internet phone. Some may have a better deal. This is the only one I have tried and it works great.



Well, that's it for this month. I'll have some follow-up on more FUN stuff in the future. If you have any questions or more fun stuff you've found please send me an E-mail (or voice mail) at "lga696@gnn.com". I'll be waiting to *hear* from you! ◆

(Computer.....Continued from page 3)
would be lost without this paper) in the BIOS settings, and the throughput increased considerably. One more change got things to where they are now. I again moved the jumpers on the motherboard so as to make the processor run at a doubled 40 MHz. Everything was still fine, and we were running at 80 MHz.

The computer was a pleasure to use. All the programs opened fast and ran smoothly. What a difference $335 makes. One problem remained, however. We needed a new CD ROM drive. The old two speed Philips which had worked well under DOS and Windows 3.1 had not made the change to Windows 95 with grace. In fact, it essentially didn't work, and my son had suffered with it for the past several months.. When Win 95 came out, this CD drive like many other one and two speed models was not supported by Windows 95. You had to install the old DOS drivers and suffer the attendant loss in performance. When Philips provided a Windows 95 driver, I downloaded it from their WWW site. Unfortunately as far as I could tell it didn't work properly. The solution was obvious. Go to COMP USA and buy another drive. Again a bargain (although Wil tells me that I paid too much), for $99 I bought a Goldstar 6X CD ROM drive, which upon installation was recognized by Windows 95.

Again I am the beneficiary of a price decline in the computer industry. The first CD ROM I had cost over $400 and was a single speed Philips. The double speed I just mentioned cost around $170. I bought a 4X Mitsumi drive last September for $140, and now the 6X Goldstar goes for $99. I don't have the price of the 8 speed in the new Gateway at hand right now.

So what should I do with my Gateway 386/33? Again, if I upgrade the motherboard and processor to a 486 I will have to dump my 16 MB of 1MB RAM SIMMs (I added 4 MB from the computer I just upgraded). But with RAM prices so low, that will cost only around $160. So just as with the other 386, the whole process should only run $300 - $350. Most likely I will do this, but for now I think it best to digest the cost of the new P5-166 and the 386 to 486 upgrade just mentioned. Or should I just start fresh and build a, say, Pentium 120?

In closing I want to thank the above mentioned members, Wil Goble, John Meroth, Merle Nicholson, and George Pollak for the help and advice in performing this computer surgery. Now that I have done it once, I am an expert. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (July 18) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (July 1) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (July 17) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin. at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

Hardware: GlidePoint

by Charles Howe, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

A cute, useful, somewhat frustrating (you decide) pointing device has emerged: The Alps Electric GlidePoint. It is small -- will be of interest to laptop owners more than anyone else, but functions with a desktop also. It consists of a screen about 1 inch x 2 inches; the housing is a bit larger and not much more than 1/4 inch thick. There are two buttons on the bottom and one on the top. You move the cursor by resting your finger (and nothing else) lightly on the screen. It is very sensitive. Position the cursor where you want and take your finger off the screen. Then press whatever button you want.



Installation: None, but your mileage may vary. I had recently installed OS/2 using a Logitech Trackball. I was assured that it would work with the Logitech driver already installed by a fellow close enough to OS/2 guru status to ally my fears, so I bought one. It worked. There is a DOS/Windows driver, but I haven't gotten to installing it yet.

Do I like it? Not sure. It is very sensitive, perhaps excessively so, but others with better motor control may feel otherwise. Certainly it would be an alternative, perhaps part time, for someone who uses a mouse a great deal and is concerned about repetitive motion injury. $69 mail order from USA flex. Most likely you can also purchase it locally. ◆

Humor:

Microsoft Tech Support Saves the Day

There was a pilot flying a small single engine charter plane, with a couple of very important executives on board. He was coming into Seattle airport through thick fog with less than 10m visibility when his instruments went out. So he began circling around looking for landmark. After an hour or so, he starts running pretty low on fuel and the passengers are getting very nervous. Finally, a small opening in the fog appears and he sees a tall building with one guy working alone on the fifth floor. The pilot banks the plane around, rolls down the window and shouts to the guy "Hey, where am I? To this, the solitary office worker replies "You're in a plane." The pilot rolls up the window, executes a 275 degree turn and proceeds to execute a perfect blind landing on the runway of the airport 5 miles away. Just as the plane stops, so does the engine as the fuel has run out.

The passengers are amazed and one asks how he did it. "Simple" replies the pilot, "I asked the guy in that building a simple question. The answer he gave me was 100 percent correct but absolutely useless, therefore that must be Microsoft's support office and from there the airport is just a while away."

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Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software
Adobe Systems, Inc.
Borland
Broderbund
Corel Systems
Grolier
Knowledge Adventure
Microsoft
Quarterdeck
Symatec
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$25 lndividual $35 Family
$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employees

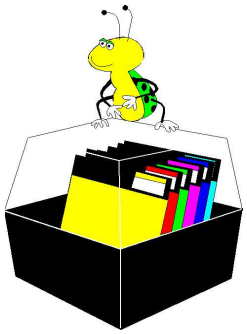
Check the address label for your renewal month

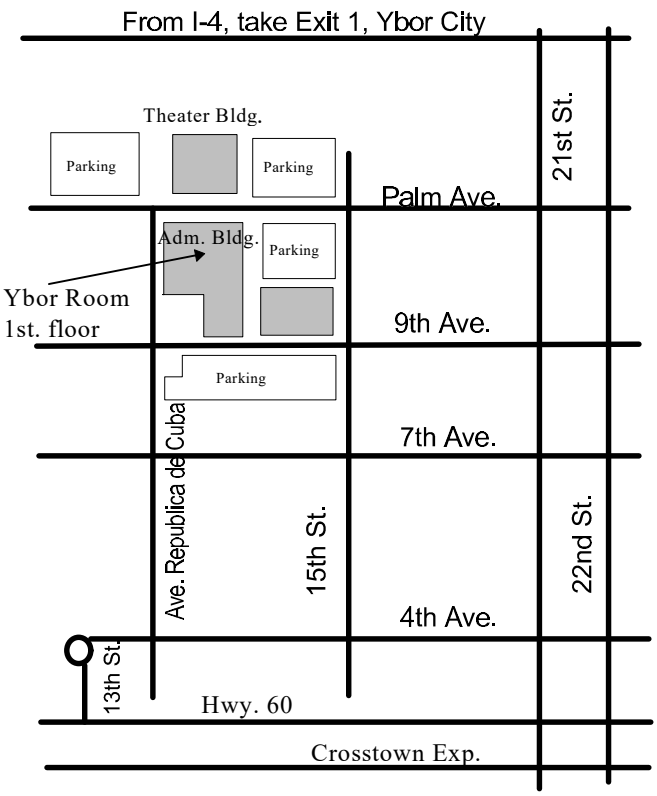
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri.	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun.	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun.	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri.	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)

To view this newsletter in full color, download PCNL9607.PDF from the BBS and view it with the Adobe Acrobat Reader





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Tampa, FL 33601-3492

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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No. 8 August 1996

Meeting

August 14, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Windows NT 4.0
by
Arup Charkravarty

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New Computers, the Internet & our Group

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

New Computers

In the June newsletter I spoke glowingly of my faithful Gateway 386/33 computer that was almost five years old. With the upgrades to memory, hard drives, and video I had made over the years it was still serving me well in all aspects of computing except graphics. My DeLorme *Street Atlas USA* and *Map & Go* maps took a pretty long time to print, as did my work with *Corel Draw.* Then in the July newsletter I described upgrading my daughters no-name 386/33 to a 486DX2 80 with 16 MB of RAM. It is now running approximately four times faster than the old Gateway. And along the way I mentioned the arrival of a new Gateway P5-166 with 32 MB of RAM. Needless to say it is faster than the other two computers.

But how much faster? Based on the results of WinTune (a benchmarking program on our BBS), how about approximately 25 time faster on throughput than the Gateway 386/33 and about 6 times faster than the 486/80. I haven't bothered to actually run comparison tests where I timed sending the same map or drawing to the printer from both the 386/33 and the P5-166, but just based on casual observation, I would say that what was a 10 minute job using the 386/33 is now less than a one minute job with the P5-166. Quite an improvement.

However, for most of what I do the extra speed is not all that impor-

(Comments.....*Continued on page 3)*

September 11 Meeting: ScreenCam - Video Capture - Bring a 3.5 high density disk to have your photo digitized
October 9 Meeting: Micrografx - Great company presenting a graphics software demonstration

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SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING July 10, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

Vice President Mike Hodges called the meeting to order and introduced officers present.

Mike introduced Cathy and Phil Torres who conducted an auction of the two laptops. Melvin Flynn bought one for $145 donation. John Witmer bought the other for $200 donation. The members applauded appreciation to Phil, who is a professional auctioneer, for donating his services for the TPCUG and to Melvin and John.

Frederick "Rick" O'Keefe made a presentation on surge suppressors. His company is CSR Consultants, 13014-363 N. Dale Mabry, Phone 933-1575. These comments are bits and pieces (and my understanding or misunderstanding) of what Rick presented.

He showed us a fire damaged suppressor due to an inadequate system. The average price of a common suppressor is $30 to $50. The better one should run in the neighborhood of $150. He showed us the inside of suppressors. We viewed the "MOV" disks that are in them. The MOVs will burn out and short the surge to the ground, hopefully, without damaging equipment. He said that every time a surge passes through a suppressor, the life of the suppressor is reduced. You cannot know this from the outside appearance. He emphasized the three locations for needed suppressors. 1) From the main panel to the outside. 2) Between the main panel and anything in the building. 3) Middle of the building which generally receives no more than 3000 amps and 6000 volts. You want in a suppressor to be: 1) Durable, 2) Reliable, 3) Safe, 4) Effective. We should never use a suppressor that is not UL "Listed". The old UL-1449 was the top "listed"; now the UL-1449 Adj is the best "listed" that UL has. UL no longer rates; they list. If the device is not UL "listed", do not use it. The UPS is used to tell the rest of the network or system to shut down because there is a problem. He said that a UPS provides no surge protection to your system. The suppressor in the UPS is to protect the UPS so that it can perform its function of shutting down. He says that you need suppressors on "each end" of each piece of equipment. Surges sometimes travel the ground and neutral wires. He reminded us of the need to have telephone lines protected also. Mike Hodges reminded us that Tampa is the lightning capital of the US; lightning in this area is 87 strikes per acre per year. Indonesia is the lightning capital of the world. Other members mentioned the need for lightning arrestors. It was stated that an objective should be to dissipate lightning away from the inside

(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)

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as quickly as possible. We thank Rick for the most interesting and informative presentation. This report only covers a little of what he imparted to us.

Mike introduced Pat Fulton who gave a presentation and discussion regarding laptops. Pat has a company that services and sells laptops. Pat referred to a newspaper clipping regarding an airport scam for stealing laptops. It seems to work like this. When a traveler places a laptop on the inspection conveyer, two people (appearing to not know each other) jump in line ahead of the traveler. One crook goes through the detector quickly and cleanly. The second crook has his pockets loaded with metal objects. The detector sounds off and he starts unloading piece at a time while alarms keep sounding. The first crook is already inside; he simply picks up the laptop as it comes through. Everyone's attention is on the guy with all the metal who creates all the commotion that he can. Meanwhile the first crook quickly gets around a corner and gives the laptop to a third crook who quickly stashes it. No ones knows or sees the third crook. When the traveler becomes alarmed that his laptop is gone, someone might remember seeing the first crook. If they find him, they do not find the laptop. He naturally denies everything and is not caught with the goods. The second and third crooks disappear. Later the third crook returns to take the stash. He may put it inside a suitcase to hide it as he most casually walks out of the terminal with no one the wiser. Mike Hodges stated that the annual loss for this type of scam numbers 208,000.

Back to the laptops, laptops now have CD drives. Pat told us that the average charge time for a battery is from one to two hours and will last about two hours with a color monitor. The best units may last up to seven hours with monochrome. She said that people should buy the laptop for mobility and not for the sole reason of working unconnected to a wall plug. The battery usage time is generally over emphasized. William LaMartin warned us about using a laptop connected to telephone lines other than those of the telephone company. He had a hotel experience in which the hotel had their own phone system. It was not compatible with laptops. He was lucky that his unit was not damaged by the PBX or whatever the system was. Some have not been so lucky. Pat cautioned us about extreme temperatures. She said never leave the unit in a locked car. The heat will damage it. She said when you move around with one in your car, make certain that it is not in direct contact the heat source of direct sunlight. Extreme cold will damage the unit, also. Things happen to laptops; they get stolen, bumped or dropped. She said that one should close a laptop very gently after use. Damage has occurred when someone has closed the laptop quickly while it is hot from usage. A slam close will damage a hot monitor; that is a $500 repair bill. By the way, her company offers 24 hour repair service in most cases. When one buys a laptop one should be

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tant. Writing this in *Microsoft Word* works just fine on the slower computer, as does tracking my expenses in *Quicken*, maintaining the User Group's database of members in *Microsoft Access*, or projecting my business expenses in *Microsoft Excel.* And until I get a faster connection to the Internet than the usual modem connection, the old computer and the new one perform just about the same with that task too. Now, if I had an ISDN connection then perhaps I could tell the difference. Why don't you members of the group take up a special collection so the newsletter editor can pay for an ISDN line and modem to check this out? If the group can send two other officers to Europe (see the photo accompanying the Micrografx article), then certainly this extra expense should be trivial.

There are in actuality a couple of tasks using *Microsoft Word* that I have noticed the faster computer really helps with: Compiling indexes and re-paginating. I have several large documents. One is 350 pages, and the other is over 1 MB of text (I don't remember how many pages it is). Anyway, the 350 page document has an index which is quite extensive, and if changes are made in the document, the index must be re-compiled. This, as with re-pagination, is noticeably slow on the old computer. It is almost done in a flash on the new.



While moving from page to page in *Microsoft Word* is fast enough with the old, doing the same in *Adobe Acrobat* produces a noticeable delay between each page. On the P5-166 the page change is almost instantaneous. So for people with plenty of time and patience, a 386/33 may suffice--especially is there is also a lack of money. If you want to gain speed on the cheap, I think replacing the motherboard and processor and probably memory, to upgrade to 486/100 is the way to go. This computer would be five times as fast as the 386/33, and really is good enough for any application I have tried it on. Recall that in my upgrade to a 486 I couldn't get the chip to run reliably at 100 MHz and had to settle for a 486/80 which is about four times the speed of the 386/33.

I apparently am not the only one who has encountered chips that will not run at their rated speed. I know of an individual who bought a mass-market Pentium 100. It worked OK for awhile, but soon failed. He sent it in for a warranty repair and they supposedly installed a new motherboard and processor. Now he is puzzled why when it boots up it states that it is a Pentium 60 or 75 (I can't remember which). You figure it out,

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IOMEGA's ZIP DRIVE

Review by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group

I've heard questions lately from several of our members asking about the ***"ZIP"*** drives, as far as what they are and how they work. Well, I've been using one since they were introduced and I think it's one of the best $199 investments I've made since I've been personal computing and I'll be glad to pass on the information to all interested.

The Iomega Zip drive is a light weight portable storage device that uses removable 100 megabyte diskette-like cartridges. It plugs directly into your PC's parallel (printer) port, and can be easily moved from one computer to another, even notebooks and laptops. The cartridges are slightly larger than a regular 3.5 inch diskette, but store the equivalent of 70 diskettes. These Zip cartridges are also inexpensive, compared to the data stored. It works out to about 20 cents per megabyte, less if you purchase the diskettes in quantities of 5 or more.

Although these cartridges look like diskettes, they perform more like hard drives in terms of speed and capacity. They **ARE NOT** quite as fast as hard disks (see the specifications below), but they come close enough to be reasonable alternatives. The main strength is they are removable media, which permit virtually unlimited capacity by exchanging cartridges. Unlike tape, Zip cartridges provide random access. Like tape they offer high capacity, portability, and are well suited for backing-up and archiving. The Zip drive can be used an adjunct "hard disk" drive, especially for temporary projects.

The drive is supported by a simple software driver which makes the Zip disk appear as another drive letter to your operating system. I run my software as a permanent TSR so it's available all the time but you don't have to set it up this way. Actually, no permanent software changes need to be made to your system to use the drive, just run the software when access to the drive is needed.

The Zip drive comes with other software utilities such as: 1) Copy Machine that you can copy one removable disk to another using Single Drive Copy or use Two Drive Copy to make a copy from a disk in any drive (except network drives) to a disk in any other drive (except to CD-ROM drives). The advantage of using Copy Machine to duplicate your data is that you have immediate access to the copies. Backup utilities generally compress data and require much more time for the restore processes. Copying a hard disk may require multiple target disks but Copy Machine automatically spans the target disk set, meaning that it keeps track of where one Target finishes and the next starts. 2) The Guest program is a portable driver that let you easily move your Zip drive from one computer to another without having to permanently install the driver. Just install Guest on a floppy disk and take it with you. 3) The Format tool allows you to erase or prepare a disk for new data. A short format is quick, but does not verify the disk surface. A long format (also called a low-level format or format with surface verify) prepares the entire disk and verifies the disk surface at the same time. 4) The Protect tool enables software protection for a Zip cartridge in a selected drive (it is grayed out as unavailable for all other drives and disks). As a replacement for the conventional write-protect tab on removable disks, this tool provides a wider variety of data protection options for Zip drive users. 5) Making a disk non-removable is sometimes required either by software installations to the disk, or by software running from the disk. This tool allows you to make a removable drive look like a hard drive to the system when necessary. 6) Status provides a quick and easy way to view the selected drive's type and current state of function. 7) and Parallel Port Accelerator is just



what it says it is.

What can you do with a Zip drive? How about low cost archiving with easy retrieval, file backup, temporary storage expansion, multimedia projects (which use large amounts of storage), libraries of images or databases which need not tie up regular disk storage, temporary holding areas for scanned or downloaded files, setup an easy filing system with one cartridge per course, research project, etc., easy to produce backup for secure storage of important files (no special backup software or knowledge required, no permanent device needed), portable mass storage for classroom use (easily attached to an existing classroom PC), transportation of an entire filing system between home and campus offices.

Your computer must have an available parallel port (LPT1) for connection, and be a 386 or better processor running either DOS or Windows (3.x or 95). Newer PC's provide high per-

(Zip.....Continued on page 9)

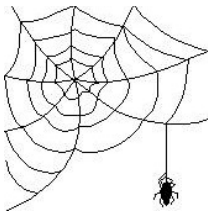
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Microsoft Automap Road Atlas -** Trip planning and mapping made easy - Microsoft Windows 3.1 or higher CD
2. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
3. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file - View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
6. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of Flying (8-adult)
11. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
12. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
13. **ECHO Lake -** Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
14. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
15. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
16. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
17. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calendar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

August 's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Edmund's Automobile Buyer's Guide	http://www.edmunds.com
House Call Network (Medical information)	http://www.housecall.com/
Florida Weather Center - Tampa Bay online	http://www.weathercenter.com/
ClairNet (News)	http://www.clari.net/
Michigan State Univ. Extension Service	http://msue-250.msue.msu.edu/
SoftwarezCom (Shareware)	http://www.softwarez.com/
The Business of Sports	http://www.rothnet.com/sports/index.html
GameSpot (Computer game information)	http://www.gamespot.com/index.html
Castles on the Web	http://fox.nstn.ca/~tmonk/castle/castle.html
Tampa Hillsborough Public Library System	http://scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us/thpl/thpl.htm
U. S. Gazetteer	http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/gazetteer
USGS Geographic Name Server (find places in teh US)	http://www-nmd.usgs.gov/www/gnis/gnisform.html
USGS Water Resources of Tampa Florida	http://www-tampa.er.usgs.gov/
Washington Post	http://www.washingtonpost.com/
Baseball Scores (from Yahoo)	http://sports.yahoo.com/mlb/
Suck (an irreverent look at computer news)	http://www.suck.com/
PC Quote (Stock information)	http://www.pcquote.com/
Strawberry Facts Page (for all you Plant City folks)	http://vanbc.wimsey.com/~jam/StrawberryFacts/facts.html
Virtual Tourist World Map	http://www.vtourist.com/vt/

Software Review

ABC Graphics Suite by Micrografx

Review by WilliamLaMartin, Tampa PC Users Group

I think that I have found a replacement for my aging *Corel Draw* and *Corel Photo Paint*. I have not upgraded to Corel 6.0 since the price is just too steep, and to be honest the previous version has been more than sufficient, doing what I wanted. Having used this package for some time I have managed to figure out how to do most anything I wanted with the it, using Photo Paint most of the time since the majority of my needs involve manipulating graphic images. But after acquiring *Micrografx's ABC Graphics suite,* which includes *Designer 6.0*, *Picture Publisher 6.0*, *ABC Flow Charter 6.0*, and *ABC Media Manager* I think Corel and the other graphic software publishers are in for some intensified competition--especially since this package has a street price of around $300 and a competitive upgrade price of $149.



I have worked for several years with the equivalent of Designer and Picture Publisher. I have no experience with a Flow charting program; however, having learned FORTRAN programming in the 1960's I am quite familiar with flow charts, since then we had to create a flow chart of the program before ever starting on it. It is amazing how I have been able in the intervening 25 years to get any programming done without first starting with a flow chart. Most probably only because what I do now is not all that complicated.

But back to *Micrografx ABC Graphics Suite*. First off, let me advise you of the most remarkable thing. Designer will import any Corel .CDR file through version 5. So all my previous work is right there at my disposal. This is the first program that I have seen that successfully does this--others have claimed to, but failed. For you who are not familiar with what you can do with a program like Designer consider the following simple card I made to go with gift for a neighbor who took care of our bunny while we were in Chicago recently. This is simply a collection of images relating to Chicago I picked from the Internet (another useful feature of the Internet) and inserted in *Micrografx Designer* while adding some text. Of course this is quite simple--no fancy, curved text or layered graphics--just something that I could produce in a few minutes. Unfortunately in the printed version of the newsletter none of the color is visible. For this you must retrieve the Adobe Acrobat version of the newsletter from either our BBS or our WWW Home Page.

The program in the Suite I will be using most frequently is *Picture Publisher* which allows you to retouch and manipulate graphics of all sorts. I have long been an amateur photographer, doing my own black and white darkroom work. And for the past twenty years have been making copies of old photographs of family, places and buildings. Some of those photographs, being damaged, were in need of repair. With a program like Photo Publisher and a scanner you can do that. And with my HP Laserjet 4 plus printing at 600 DPI I get fairly good reproductions. I look forward to the day that I can afford a 1200 DPI printer--and perhaps in the distant future a printer that will give near photographic results.

Picture Publisher allows you to obtain a graphic from either a file or by scanning. You can then manipulate its color, contrast, lightness or darkness. If is a little fuzzy you can "sharpen" it, or if you like such an effect you can make it more fuzzy. I particularly like the methods the program provides for accomplishing

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(ABC.....Continued from page 6)
these changes. For example, to change, say, the contrast and brightness of a photo, I simply use the mouse to move my cursor on a two dimensional grid situated next to the photo on the screen. As I move the cursor, for example, to the right, I can view real time changes in the photo as it becomes lighter. Moving the cursor in the vertical axis changes the contrast.

One of the most useful features of such a program is the ability to remove unwanted background objects from a photo. You do this by working with masks. There are about 5 different mask tools to use depending on which suits your purposes. If you have a uniform background that is a different color from what you want to keep you are in luck for you simply have to use the "magic wand" mask tool to click on the unwanted background and then fill the enclosed area with the color white. however, you will probably rarely encounter this lucky situation except when the software vendor is demonstrating the program for you. Most of my work is a bit more messy, and I am forced to use a more labor intensive masking tool to outline the unwanted background and then dispose of it. Most of the photos of members I have put in the newsletter in the past were cut from their backgrounds using such a method.

Of course, once you have cut out the unwanted background you then can add one you like. Remember our group officers Larry Anders and Wil Goble pictured in a past issue wondering whether there was enough money in the treasury to take a tour of Europe. Well with the help of Picture Publisher look what has happened. You don't need to travel to get those impressive photos of you in exotic places. You just need Picture



publisher, a photo of yourself, and one of the exotic places in question. And the *ABC Graphics Suite* CDs provide plenty of stock photos and clipart (30,000 plus clipart symbols).

I could take up the rest of the space in the newsletter just describing what you can do with Picture Publisher. As I said, it is the component I use most. My favorite editing tool is the cloning tool which allows you, by moving the cursor over an area of the image, to produce an exact copy of that area at a different location on the image that you have selected. Cloning is particularly useful in repairing damaged areas if you have a similar place on the image which is in good condition so that you may clone it. Or you may, as above, clone Kevan Sheridan's head onto Don Patzch's photo.



Now there is still more to *ABC Graphics Suite* than *Designer* and *Picture Publisher.* There are *ABC Flow Chart* (design flow charts and analyze performance), *ABC Media Manager* (organize and manage your graphic images), *Instant 3D* (create 3D images), the 30,000 + clipart library, and the seamless integration with *Microsoft Office Professional '95 Suite.* Obviously enough for another article.

Although I am quite happy with and impressed by this Graphics package, it has one shortcoming—There is only a very slim manual to explain how things are done. The online help is good, but I do miss those fat paper manuals of old. ◆

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certain that the local support is available. Even when purchasing a new unit, you may get home to find that it does not function. Local vendors may not have the capability of simply taking that unit back and giving you another from stock. Pat says you receive a response like, "Here is the manufacturers phone number and here is a packing box that you might have." We thank Pat for a very interesting presentation on laptops.

There was no drawing tonight. Door prizes will be carried over until next meeting. ◆

A Better Mouse Trap?

(don't throw that old mouse away, yet!)

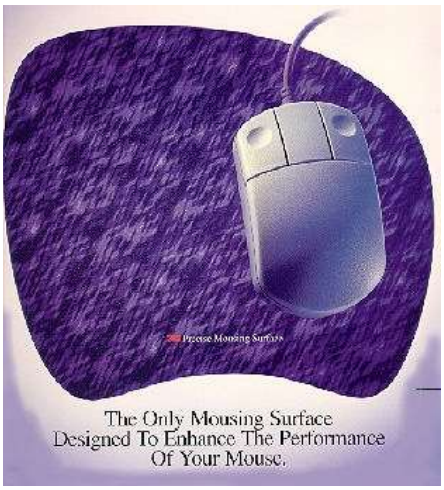
Review by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group

Ever had that favorite mouse that you had to put on the shelf because you just couldn't get used to the pointer jumping all over your page? Well, I have, more than once. When Microsoft first came out with their ergonomic mouse I rushed out and bought one almost immediately. I'm on my third or fourth one now but none felt as solid as the first one. When the mouse first gets dirty its simple to remove the ball and clean everything out with a cotton swab and some alcohol. This works for a couple of times but after a while, especially with a track ball on a notebook, the alcohol and swab method doesn't seem to work anymore. Now Curtis, the makers of Rolodex, have a way to breath new life into those old mice. Their product is called *Clean Mouse.*

For approximately $10 you can get the *Clean Mouse* kit from your favorite computer store or office supply house that has all you need to bring those old mice back to life, assuming you didn't throw them away. The kit includes a couple of scrubbing balls that fit what they call standard mice, a Velcro like scrubbing desk pad, a bottle of cleaning solution and a lint-free cleaning cloth. All you have to do is remove the ball, squirt a few drops of cleaning solution on the scrubbing ball and insert the scrubbing ball into the empty mouse cavity. Pass the mouse over the Velcro scrubbing desk pad several times in light circular motions. Remove the scrubbing ball, blow into the empty cavity and wipe out with the lint-free cloth. I cleaned mine a couple of times because it had been sitting on the shelf for a couple of years. Did it work? I'm using it now as I write this article. I'd say it works pretty darn good!

After you've cleaned that old mouse with *Clean Mouse* from above, and want to keep it working in top notch form, take another trip to your favorite computer store and purchase 3M's *Precise Mousing Surface*. 3M has developed a microstructured, low-profiled work surface that will increase tracking control and aid in pinpoint mousing accuracy.

The first things you notice about the new mouse pad is its shape and how thin it is. The shape is designed to conform to your natural hand movements and it has no foam backing like a regular mouse pad. But if you could put this new pad under a microscope you would see what makes it really different. 3M had patented a network of micro peaks and valleys specifically designed to make your mouse move and perform better. They call it WYPIWYG: Where You Point Is Where You Go and say "this surface is specially engineered to provide the optimal coefficient of friction." I say "it makes the track ball grip just right."



Another benefit of this new shape and microstructural design is that it actually keeps the track ball cleaner. Because of the shape there is minimal hand contact with the pad which means less hand oil gets absorbed into the surface. What debris is left behind is pushed into the channels and not on the ball. Clean the new pad with a little alcohol and a lint-free cloth occasionally and that mouse should perform quite well for some time to come. This is probably the biggest improvement in computer mousing technology since the mouse itself!

Curtis
225 Secaucus Rd.
Secaucus, NJ 07094
$10

3M
Consumer Stationary Div.
PO Box 33594
St. Paul MN 55133-3594
$15◆

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did they install a slower chip than before or simply slow the one he had down.

In closing this section, let me note that there is one thing that you can't do on a 386 machine--no matter how patient you are: Run *Windows NT*. By design NT will only run on 486 machines or higher. At present we have loaded the newest Beta of NT 4.0 onto the new machine. The interface is very much *Windows 95*, but your control over the computing environment is much greater. I have done very little with it at present, but I did note that configuring NetCom as my Internet provider for NT seemed to be a lot less complicated than doing the same on a Win 95 machine. Additionally, all the programs we have so far installed, as well as printers, seem to be running fine under NT. My big hurdle right now is getting the HP Scanjet llcx scanner up and running on NT—not a trivial task I have read.

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(Zip.....Continued from page 4)
formance parallel ports that improve the speed of the Zip drive. The Zip drive includes an additional parallel port which permits you to simultaneously attach a printer or certain other devices that use the parallel port.

Specifications: 7 x 5 x 1.5 inches, weighs 1 pound, 29 millisecond seek time, up to 20 megabyte per minute transfer rate, quiet operation, powered by a supplied AC adapter, Example benchmark - copying a 1.25 megabyte file, conventional diskette drive, 100 seconds, Zip drive, 15 seconds, typical hard disk drive, 5 seconds.

Having one of these Zip drives is like having a hard disk upgrade, mobile storage and a backup drive all in one. And you get the drive, the software and one 100 MB cartridge for under $200.

Iomega Corporation
1821 West Iomega Way
Roy, Utah, USA 84067-9977
SRP $199 ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 8)

Internet

Has the Internet taken over your computing life yet? If you let it , it will. Just like the computer itself would preempt everything else in the pre-Internet days. I know some of you have no interest, but an increasing number of our members seem to be signing on. Possibly starting out with online services like AOL and Prodigy, then moving to stand alone Internet providers after they see their online bill growing with their online time. Nowadays for $19.95 on average you get unlimited time on the Internet.

To me what is happening in computing with the Internet versus computing without the Internet today is similar to computing using Windows four or five years ago compared to computing using only DOS. I distinctly recall when I first joined the Tampa IBM PC Users Group (that was our name then) that most members didn't use the Windows operating system (3.0 at that time), and they didn't really see any need for it. In fact, they were a little hostile to it. Today, although most of our members are operating under Windows--most probably 3.1, since the majority has not yet upgraded to 95 to the best of my knowledge, only a minority is regularly using the World Wide Web (WWW).

But just as people moved from DOS to Windows when they saw the increase in productivity and ease of use it provided, I think they will embrace the WWW when its value to them is demonstrated. And with the addition of more and better Web sites each day with real content (not just a photo of the creator and his views on life), I think that will happen. Today people who before saw no need for computers are buying them so as to get on the Internet. And it is not just to download dirty pictures as our US Congress seems to think. They want to make contact with other people (e-mail and UseNet News groups) and gather information (WWW).

I use the Internet every day, usually sending or receiving about four e-mail messages, checking listings to see what new WWW pages might be out there, making sure our group's WWW home page is functioning OK, perhaps going to a computer vendor's site for upgrade or driver information and software, or reading some of the online news sources that I have bookmarked. For example I may receive a message from one of our members here in Tampa, a friend in Colorado, or a software vendor's user group representative in California. Then I may check the *Tampa Tribune's* site where most of the day's paper is on view, not to mention a current doppler weather radar image. If that is not enough news for me I can go to the *Washington Post's* site. By now I probably should get to doing something else, but perhaps just a quick visit to a new online art museum, history site, or genealogical site will not hurt too much.

So, if you are not connected yet., take my suggestion and give it a try. There is a lot of useful information out there just waiting to be found by you.

Our Group

I have been a member of the Tampa PC Users Group for four-and-one-half years. Initially I didn't expect to receive much of a benefit from joining, since I am a person who likes to solve problems on my own. But a neighbor who was in the group kept badgering me to attend, so I did and after the second meeting, joined. It has been worthwhile. I have been introduced to software that I didn't know I needed until someone demonstrated it at one of the meetings. I have even had solutions to a few of those problems (computer related) that I thought I could always figure out for myself provided by fellow members. But the most significant benefit has come since I started doing the newsletter.

I took over the production of the newsletter from Marylee Bruneau at the end of last year, since she said after doing it for several years she no longer had the time it required—and

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (Aug. 15) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (Aug. 5) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (Aug. 21) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.

Hardware: Logitech Marble

by William LaMartin, Tampa PC Users Group

Last month Charlie Howe described a new pointing device he had purchased, the Alps Electric GlidePoint, an alternative to the ubiquitous mouse. I, too, have decided to try out an alternative to the mouse.



After going through at least one mouse a year on my computer, and changing a little less frequently on the other computers in the house, I came to the conclusion I ought to at least try another design. What was happening was that the mouse would get so that to make a movement, say to the left, you had to give it a jerk instead of a smooth push. Movement in other directions was usually OK. Furthermore, all the cleaning and compressed air blowing provided very little improvement. In the past the solution was a new mouse--and not a cheap one (they were a guaranteed failure)--a Microsoft Mouse. I didn't know about the mouse cleaner described by Larry Anders earlier.

This last time, though, I decided to go with the Logitech Marble which the fellow from BCD computing demonstrated at one of our meetings late in 1995. It is not cheap, costing around $90. This is not a normal trackball. There are no mechanical linkages; the movements of the ball (marble) are tracked by light. So there is less chance of problems as with a mouse or trackball. Additionally it takes up less space than a mouse since the device does not move. Ask me a year from now how well it is working. So far so good. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 9)
someone had better take over or there wouldn't be a newsletter. Since no one else who had the requisite computer hardware volunteered, I said I would give it a try. To do the job correctly, you need a 600 DPI laser printer and a scanner. Additionally the editor needs to have a familiarity with some graphics program and a word processing and/or desktop publishing program. Being familiar with the BBS so as to receive articles posted there by members was also helpful (now e-mail is also satisfying that function). The shoe fit so I decided to wear it. And I have learned a lot. I have honed my graphics skills and my desktop publishing skills—and surprisingly my database skills, since I also keep the list of members and have to perform all sorts of queries and reports to keep up the mailing list and prepare the newsletter for bulk mailing.

Unfortunately I have also honed my stapling and folding skills. Ed Snow helps me prepare the newsletter for mailing, but we could use one more individual who has a very flexible schedule and can come to South Tampa on short notice once a month during a morning. More importantly I need some more content providers. This issue, you will note, consists of mostly Larry Anders and myself doing the writing. I know that you are buying programs and hardware, using them, and forming opinions about them. So, give it a try; tell us about them. That is the purpose of the group: To share ideas and information.

Right now just a few of us are carrying the load. Help us out. I think you will find, as I have with the newsletter, that your contribution will help you as much as it does the group. So, write a newsletter article, do a presentation or suggest a presenter and topic, suggest a SIG topic and lead such a group, attend the monthly meetings.

*(*Comments.....*Continued on page 12)*

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software
Adobe Systems, Inc.
Borland
Broderbund
Corel Systems
Grolier
Knowledge Adventure
Micrografx
Microsoft
Quarterdeck
Symantec
Traveling Software
Xerox

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PO BOX 3492
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Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

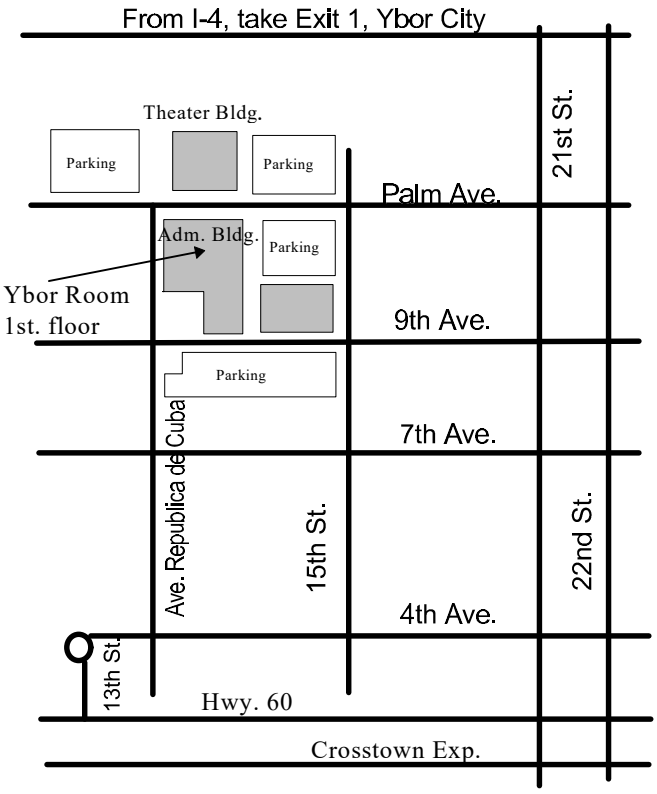
The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

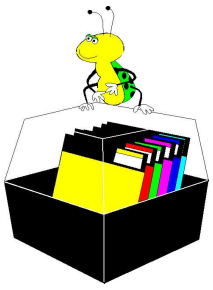
To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9608.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

Comments.....Continued from page 10)

Regarding the meetings, our attendance is off a good bit, and most people attribute that to our moving from the IBM location to the HCC Ybor site along with a drop off in the frequency of big name presenters. The officers, as best we can, are working on solving these two problems. However, this will take time and is sort of a chicken and egg problem: It is hard to get big name vendors with a small attendance, and it is hard to have a large attendance without such a presenter. So help out here—attend the meetings regularly, and the vendors will follow. Let's start now so that by the October meeting when Micrografx comes we will be back on track with a full house. ◆



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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*



Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No. 9 September 1996

Meeting

September 11, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

QuickCam Video Capture by Wil Goble

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Computer Hell……..and more hell

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

……and more hell

Until today, the last day of August I really questioned my ability to put together a newsletter for September and get it in your mail box (local to the Tampa area only—not bulk mail to California) before the September meeting. I, with my family, was in Virginia for eight days getting my son settled in college and doing the tourist thing—which included a lot of walking and standing. The past five days I have been recovering from all that walking, standing, and sitting in a car for 2000 plus miles. Needless to say sciatic nerve problems are not a new thing to many of you. And they are not new to me—only the severity of this case was new. I literally was not able to sit in a chair for more than a couple of minutes at a time, which sort of limits my ability to use a standard computer setup. Well, I finally found an orthopedic surgeon who could see me (no small feat) and am on my way to recovery.

Computer Hell: Windows NT and the NYB Virus

Windows NT. As you may recall, last month I mentioned that we were running Windows NT Server 4.0 beta 2 on the new machine and everything seemed to be going well except for getting the sound card and the scanner installed. I was impressed by some of its features, but felt that it wasn't yet meant for home use and didn't look

(Comments.....*Continued on page 3)*

October 9 Meeting: Micrografx - Great company presenting a graphics software demonstration
November 13 Meeting: Hardware & Software for Christmas Plus Nominations for 1997 Officers

* * 1996 OFFICERS * *
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TREASURER: Wil Goble (wilgoo@aol.com) 684-8004
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LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders (lga696@aol.com) 989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:
Charles Howe(howe.costech@intnet.net) 968-1207

BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

Home Page http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trade marked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING August 14, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary



President Connie Kincaid called the meeting to order and introduced officers present.

Connie announced the upcoming SIG schedule. No Genealogy SIG in August; will resume in September; 1st Wednesday after regular TPCUG meeting. Communication SIG for first Monday in September is canceled due to Labor Day Holiday; it will resume 1st Monday in October. ACCESS SIG will be held August 22 as scheduled: first Thursday after the regular TPCUG meeting. (Watch for other SIG announcements)
Connie announced that nominations for officers for 1997 will be received at the November meeting with election to follow in December. She asked members to be considering nominees for offices. Present officers are listed in the front of BITS OF BLUE newsletter.

Connie announced that Police Athletic League needs some volunteers to assist with salvaging and setting up the equipment that the members of TPCUG donated to them to use in their youth program. They are trying desperately to salvage our youth in a positive way.

October 9, 1996: Regular TPCUG meeting with presentation by Micrografx. At the September 11 meeting Wil Goble will have his magic camera ready to take images of anyone who desires. Just bring a 3.5 floppy so it can be downloaded on your floppy. Take those self images home or work and use them however you desire. Make Christmas cards, newsletters, family communication, etc. from your very own disk. DO NOT FORGET TO BRING DISK.

The November meeting will be the nominations meeting AND a presentation of Christmas Shopping in the computer world for yourself or gifts. We have always enjoyed the presentations of the state of the art in hardware, software and direction trends.

The December meeting will be the BARGAIN TABLE. Hindsight is poor excuse for foresight; many people have said that they needed some of the items that were at our last bargain table. What was left was GIVEN to PAL. In fact, there was so much in hardware, software, etc., that President Connie

(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
announced, "If you have bought something already from the table, you may pick out what you want for just $1." Can you believe software one or two versions old for just $1. Do not miss out...Oh yes, uh, uh, uh, we need your donations of software (unregistered, to be legal), hardware or whatever or we cannot have a bargain table. We upgraded our hard drive with proceeds from the bargain table CONTRIBUTIONS and the door prize CONTRIBUTIONS.

VOLUNTEERS! HELP! Connie asked for volunteers to help do a number of tasks for the good of TPCUG. Many times people want to help and will jump in if asked. What is difficult is that the leaders may not know who is willing or who to ask individually. Thus, Connie asked that all who will, let her or Mike Hodges, or William LaMartin, or other officers, know that you will be available. Ed Snow has contributed immeasurably in helping get the newsletter out each month.



President Connie Kincaid giving the photographer the evil eye

Seniors. Don Patzsch mentioned that USF has programs for senior citizens. "Over 60 get free pass (library card), cost is $50 if not a senior. Also at USF, senior citizens get Tampa Tribune for $60 per year. (Don Patzsch is a compendium of knowledge about many things....Secretary)

MEMORY BEWARE! Memory has gotten down to like $10 per M. A local supplier offered 4M for $29.95 recently. They are reputable. However, a member at the meeting warned us to beware of the memory that you purchase for a bargain and not from a reputable company. It was stated "A local company is selling memory that is not true parity memory but they imply that it is true parity. Get true parity memory."

PRESENTATION: Arup Chakraverty

Arup came prepared to discuss Windows NT 4.0, but we sort of messed him up. We were to have the computer on hand with that program loaded. A glitch occurred in the loading of NT so we had to ask him to change his presentation on site.

(Minutes.....Continued on page 7)

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)
forward to fighting with the scanner or sound card, and mainly didn't look forward to having to pay the price of using NT when the beta expired in six months. I already owned several copies of Windows 95, which I was fairly well satisfied with—especially the hardware plug and play that NT did not support. So since it had been mainly an experiment for my son, and since he had decided to leave me the new computer when he went to college and only take the laptop, it was back to Windows 95. **And there is where the trouble began** (if you don't count configuring the computer for NT, reinstalling the programs I needed to use and bringing my data back when we changed to NT in the first place).

You can't format what you can't find I can't retrace the exact steps that were taken in replacing NT with 95, since I left that to my son. Because the 2.5 GB hard drive was portioned into a 2 GB C drive containing the operating system and a .5 GB D drive where I kept my data, I suspect he simply reformatted the C drive and installed Windows 95 there. After installing 95, we then proceeded to reinstall all the programs I wanted to use. While doing this we noted that something was missing—there was no D drive. DOS showed that there was a drive called D, but could tell us nothing else about it (for example it had no idea of the contents of drive D which contained all my data). OOPS! The D drive was still formatted with the Windows NT file system NTFS. Well, that should be simple to fix, just reformat the drive (destroying my data). However, DOS wouldn't do that. It listed drive D by name, but didn't consider it a drive that it had any control over. We were locked out by the Windows NT file security. OK, all the data was backed up—well at least most of it—so why not just remove that partition using FDISK to regain my .5 GB of disk space. No good. You can't use a DOS FDISK to move NTFS partitions.

Time to call Gateway. The computer and Windows 95 had just come from Gateway, so I thought I had some hold over them. It was 10:00 PM here in Tampa, but they were still at work wherever their technical help lives, and I got quick attention. The tech representative worked very hard on the problem, but every suggestion he had produced nothing. After over an hour he said to let him research the problem some more, and he would have someone else who was better versed in NT problems call us tomorrow. He was a man of his word. They called us the next day—**at 1:00AM**. Well, you can't look a gift horse in the mouth, so we took in the latest cure. It was simply to use Windows NT's FDISK program instead of the DOS version. Unfortunately I couldn't find such a program anywhere on the NT CD-ROM.

Partition Magic to the Rescue. I was beginning to feel a little sick. I could still use the computer, but I had .5 GB of my hard drive that was unrecoverable, and it contained my

(Comments.....Continued on page 8)

FIRST AID 95 DELUXE

Review by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa P C Users Group



I have reviewed many software titles during my tenure as Librarian but I have NEVER experienced a bigger waste of money than First Aid 95 Deluxe. I find it hard to believe that CyberMedia can get away with marketing a product of this caliber. What suprises me are the rave reviews on the inside of the box, especially from Windows Magazine that said "First Aid will kiss your desk-top bruises away."

I tried this software package on two different computers to be fair but had exactly the same results on both. I was having problems with both computers and was hoping that First Aid would help me out. All it did was help me out with a review for this month's newsletter.

What it is supposed to do is fix application configuration and setup problems. Fix multimedia by repairing mismatched drivers and setup problems with the most popular sound cards and CD-ROMS. Correct communication problems with accessing the Internet, other on-line services and networks. Check INI files and Windows 95 Registry for invalid entries and repair them. Intercept crashes and General Protection Faults (GPFs) before your work is lost and let you recover from them (HA!). Recover disk space by removing and archiving unused features of supported applications. Roll-back to previous working versions of programs when something doesn't work right. Creates an emergency disk that restores your PC if your CMOS battery dies. Automatically connects to vendor WEB sites on the Internet to get tips and help and download the latest bug fixes and driver updates (HA! HA!). Keeps itself current by downloading updates and new knowledge modules to support new applications.

It says it will:

- Make your life with PCs easier
- Correct over 10,000 known problems and keep your PC conflict free
- Take the risk out of adding new programs and cards
- Surf the Internet for help, current drivers and the latest remedies
- Be your full-time 24 hour per day technical support expert

It comes with versions for Windows 3.11 and Windows 95 operating on at least a 386 or higher, 4 MB RAM minimum, 10 MB hard drive space and VGA or higher monitor. I installed it on a Pentium 133 and a 486/66 with much higher than minimum requirements and had nothing but trouble. It all started shortly after installation on the 133 when First Aid COULD NOT find the file to launch itself. It diagnosed the problem well and told me it could not run so I set the shortcut up myself. During installation it asked for the serial number and tells you that it can be found on the registration card, but it wasn't. The serial number was on the CD-ROM. When it set itself up for Internet access it defaulted to the dial-up scripting built-in to Windows 95 that I DO NOT use NOR could I change. I contacted CyberMedia via the Internet and explained the situation and I am still waiting for an answer. (That was over 30 days ago and I don't really expect an answer.) So I forgot about Internet access. When I ran the diagnostics for the first time it told me that some of my problems were because certain files were missing out of specific folders (sub-directories). But when I checked out the folders the files First Aid said were missing were all there where they were suppose to be.

With First Aid running in the background, it would occasionally pop-up and say that there was a problem and asked if I would like it to A*utoFix* the problem. I answered *yes* every time and the computer would come back and say "Windows cannot start more than one copy of this program at one time" or the system would just freeze-up. (And its not easy to get Windows 95 to totally lock-up on you.) It not only could not diagnose my problems but when I would try to print explanations after a problem I would have print spool problems and my system would totally lock-up again.

When I finally decided that I had had enough and used the uninstaller program that came with First Aid, First Aid came back and asked me where it was installed. Am I nuts or do you think that's kind of strange too? It asked me where it was installed. At that point I started CleanSweep 95 and uninstalled it with a program that I KNOW works. I then installed First Aid on my 486/66 with basically the same scenario, but it didn't take as long before I invoked CleanSweep 95 and got rid of it.

First Aid 95 Deluxe sells for a street price of $50. Save your

(Aid.....Continued on page 9)

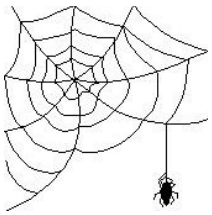
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
2. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file - View, copy, print, search, launch & manage files.
3. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
4. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
5. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
8. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
9. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of Flying (8-adult)
10. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
11. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
12. **ECHO Lake** - Delrina-Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
13. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
14. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
15. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
16. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calendar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

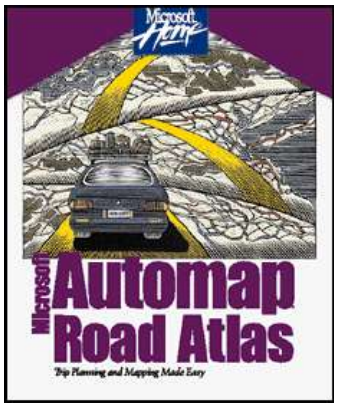
September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Carnival New Orleans (the flavor of Mardi Gras)	http://www.icorp.net/carnival/
Crayola - Crayola	http://www.crayola.com/home.html
European Business News Interactive	http://www.ebn.co.uk/
Florida Department of State	http://199.44.58.12/
L. L. Bean	http://www.llbean.com/
Menu Online	http://www.onlinemenus.com/
MSNBC (Microsoft - NBC)	http://www.msnbc.com/
It's Williamsburg	http://www.wmbg.com/its/index.html
Solar System	http://www.msnbc.com/modules/planets/planets.asp
St. Petersburg Times (improved since last posted)	http://www.times.st-pete.fl.us/news2/Default.html
The Screaming Capitalist	http://www.cadvision.com/screaming/index.html
Vine Computer Industry (InVircible anti-virus)	http://invircible.com/
PartitionMagic (PowerQuest)	http://www.powerquest.com/partitionmagic/
Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center	http://www.mskcc.org/
PCL Map Collection	http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/Map_collection.html
Onion (satirical newspaper)	http://www.theonion.com/.www.html
Texas Farms and Ranches Online (buy yourself one)	http://www.txfarm-ranch.com/default.htm
NASA's ocean monitoring project	http://seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEAWIFS.html
Titanic Page	http://seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/OCEAN_PLANET/HTML/titanic.html

Software Review

Automap Road Atlas
by Microsoft



Review by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

This is the first time I have ever received a program to review, and with it a review that I can rewrite as "my" review.

I think that providing a "review" of a program is a good idea. More people are likely to read and follow the review than are likely to read and follow any manual.

If you would like to have a "fun" program, this may be what you want. It is easy to load into your computer, and it is easy and friendly to set up and to use. I asked the program to show me where I live, and it promptly provided a small map of Brandon, that included the place where I live. It also placed an x in red color right on the block where I live. If you wanted to send this to a friend from out of town, this would make a neat way to give instructions on how to find your home.

To start from a logical beginning, the program comes on a CD Rom. When you load it, it requires 6.2 MB on your hard disk, and it makes a directory called USA.MAP on the drive. That seems like a neat name to me. I have not used a period in a directory name before.

The program starts with an automobile on a road and appropriate music. There are two icons at the bottom of the screen. Choose "Display Automap Road Atlas" and you will be presented with a map of the United States, with many cities and roads. There is a second icon named "Plan a Trip Using Route Wizard". Bringing up Route Wizard gives you a screen with a place to list the city or location you want to visit.

You can view an online demonstration of this program by going to the WWW site http://www.microsoft.com/automap/default.htm

Now you start into the real program. You are first asked, "where are you?". I listed Tampa, FL. Then you are asked "where do you wish to go?". I listed Charleston SC. You are then asked if you want to stop along the way; I listed Savannah GA as a place to stop. Then you are asked for various places of interest you might want to know about along the way, Airports, Land Features, Cities or State information, Parks, etc. This is one neat feature. Next you are asked about how many hours a day you like to drive, example, 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. Now it is up to you to put in some needed information. How much does gasoline cost for your vehicle? What is the capacity of your tank? How fast do you plan to drive? and so on.

You are asked about whether you would like the shortest route, the quickest route, or do you want to select back roads yourself? Another nice feature. Now you click on Finish. You are then presented with three screens in one. You can see each town you will pass through, and you are told which roads to turn onto, and you are given a map of the whole distance. Each item on a separate window so you can page back and forth to see your time of arrival, your total trip time, and all sorts of other details like when you should stop to refuel, etc. This program will give you a great deal of information that you might forget to include in your thinking about when and how to make the drive. It gives you the days needed to make the trip, at the speeds you said you wanted to travel, etc. If you click on any place on the map of your trip, it outlines that description line in red, on the word description of your trip. I happened to click on a place and the red appeared at the time I needed to stop and refuel. Thus before you leave you can guess where you want to buy gasoline. This is one of the nicest and easiest to use programs.



A routing map example from the Road Atlas WWW Demonstration

There is one thing that this program does not cover. We belong to the AAA and have found that in many years the savings we make are more than the cost of the membership. Example, when we rented a car in California last month, the AAA suggested that I use my gold credit card, rather than adding the cost of insurance to the cost of the rented car. I called AT&T and spent some time with the girl who told me that they cover me for fifteen days. We planned on renting the car for fourteen days, so we were covered there. However, some insurance companies do not cover theft in California, so I asked about that. I was assured that I was covered. So that saved us a considerable amount of

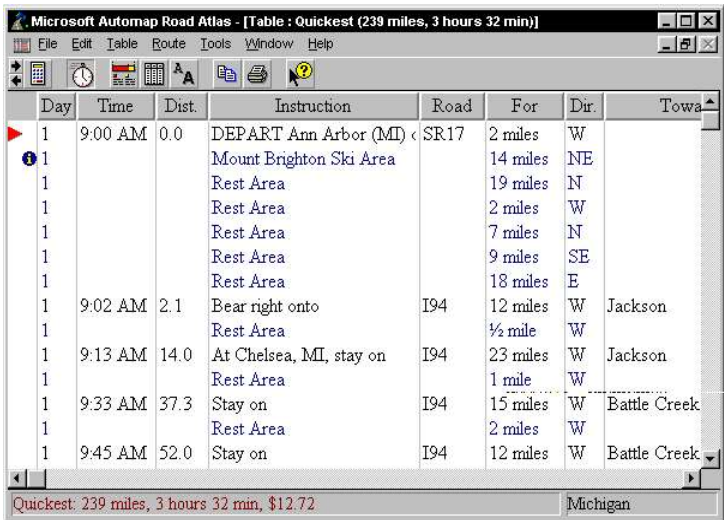
(Atlas.....Continued on page 7)

(Atlas.....Continued from page 6)

money. I had forgotten about the coverage provided by a gold credit card.

We go to the AAA to have them advise about the route we take, if we are going to drive. The reason is that they often have up to the minute information on such things as speed traps, road construction, and unusual things that we might experience along the way. A program like Automap Road Atlas can't include this type of information, obviously.

One last thing. If you have children, and they are small, this might be a terrific way to introduce them to the study of geography. There are the sounds and action of the leadin, and there are the places named and the roads laid out from one location to another. I think this would lead to lots of fun with kids, and I do not wish to minimize the actual value of the program for the program's sake. This is just an added gem.



a routing time table from the Road Atlas WWW demonsotration

The price is about $40, it is from the HOME collection of Microsoft. I am sure you can find it at any of the computer stores that handle software.

Once again, I would like to thank the Tampa Group for giving me the chance to review and, of course, keep a program such as Microsoft's Automap Road Atlas, version 4.00 for windows.

More of you should take William LaMartin up on his offers of software for review!
Note: I did not look at the review that came with the program, probably I should have! ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 3)

He did a beautiful transition as he is very knowledgeable of Win95 and NT. The audience questions demonstrated much interest. He proved worth of the challenge.

NT was primarily designed for business network users and was not designed for home use. Some say that NT does so much more than Win95 but that the expense for the relative difference is not generally feasible to the average user. He explained the differences in the NT 3.51 and the NT 4.0. There seemed to be a consensus of audience participants in the belief that Win95 is an interim system as Mr. Gates moves us to the NT system. Arup expressed a feeling that 16 bit applications will, maybe, become obsolete in a couple of years as 32 bit becomes more acceptable and as the state of the art reaches the average user. You can download a list of bugs and solutions for NT from Microsoft on the net. When you purchase NT server, you must also buy license for each workstation.

Miscellaneous thoughts were expressed: If you leave your machine on to receive faxes, you can turn off the monitor and printer unless your fax goes directly to the printer. When you turn on your system, whatever system you use, turn on the printer before turning on your machine. That way the computer finds your hardware and does what it needs to as it boots. If you run Progman you get 3.1 program manager in Win95. He mentioned something about "regedit" (your secretary—who is writing this— is too computer illiterate to understand this) opening a registry but said be really careful because you can mess up badly if you try to alter the registry. Unfortunately for you, the reader, so much was said so quickly that the secretary could not keep up with the note taking. Comments that your secretary heard after the meeting were of delight. Arup answered simple questions in understandable terms and did likewise for the advance questions. We really have some computer educated members in TPCUG as was indicative of the audience participation. Thanks Arup for the great presentation. Prize winners were:

Francis Cape	Excel 4.0
Jim Archer	Quicken 95
Fred Buss	Kiplingers Cash Money

Congratulations!

BRING YOUR 3.5 FLOPPY FOR YOUR PERSONAL IMAGE (PHOTO)!!! ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 3)
data, which I could recover—but with a lot of time spent on re-transferring it. Most of you probably think that you can remove anything from your hard drive simply by reformatting—well, think again. Another example, I believe, of what you can't remove by a simple reformat is the Dynamic Drive Overlay that the On Track Disk Management System puts on your hard drive when you install one of these large hard drives in an older computer without LBA to trick the BIOS into accepting the hard drive. But here, if I am not mistaken, this can be removed from the hard drive using the DOS FDISK.

What to try next? Being a faithful reader of Bits of Blue I had heard about the program Partition Magic from Power Quest which allows you to move partitions at will without losing data and having to reformat as with FDISK. But would it work with a NTFS partition? To find out I simply went on the WWW, found the Partition Magic site and read their literature. I found that I could move NTFS partitions, but could I delete them? The only way to find out was to get the program and give it a try.

Partition Magic recognized the partition as an NTFS one, it then allowed me to delete it, and to finally create a DOS partition in its place. Unfortunately, I did lose my data on the D drive (I still had the backup) since the partition was deleted. But, at least, I had my .5 GB back as usable disk space. And I again filled it with data.

After reinstalling windows 95 and many of my applications, I still had a few more that were absolutely necessary for my daily computing. One was my Web browser Microsoft Internet Explorer. Since Windows 95 installed Microsoft Internet Explorer 2.0 when it was installed, I already had a browser, but I wanted the latest version, so that meant going to Microsoft on the web and downloading the file misie30b2.exe to get the beta 2 version of Internet Explorer 3.0. I believe I downloaded it from one of the Washington DC locations, and had it install itself over the older version. Either just after the installation or upon rebooting the first time following the installation, I received the message "A program has altered the Master Boot Record" Ouch! That didn't look good, but all I had done was what I just described. Certainly no serious harm could come from a Microsoft installation. And everything did seem to go OK.

Computer Hell returns. A couple days later I couldn't find my CD-ROM, i.e. Drive E had disappeared. When the computer booted, the BIOS found it, but as far as Windows 95 was concerned drive E didn't exist. Again what to do? The general rule is to not panic and to try and think your way out of such situations. I looked in the literature that came with the computer, and it mentioned something about installing drivers for the CD. But I knew that shouldn't be necessary in Win 95 as it had been in Windows 3.1. In fact the CD had been getting along just fine without drivers a few days back. Well, it wouldn't hurt to try, so I installed the DOS drivers for the CD and got my CD-ROM drive listed again. Of course this wasn't ideal since using these drivers degraded the computer's performance (as Win 95's device manager informed me). Oh, well, this really was Gateway's problem. Hadn't I already returned the CD-ROM drive that came with the computer because it had started screeching (I called Gateway at 3:00PM and I had a new CD-ROM drive via Federal Express by 9:30 the next morning)?

Gateway to the rescue. So a second Gateway technical support call got me a fellow who really had a handle on my problem. He had me make a few quick checks regarding settings and memory available for DOS programs, etc. and told me I had a boot sector virus called the NYB virus (for New York Beauty also called the B1 virus). Further he stated that there was only one program that would remove the virus, and it was called InVircible and could be gotten from the home page of Vine Computer industry. Only one program of all the well-know anti-virus programs that would do that job? That is what he said.

Needless to say I beat a quick path to the site http://invircible.com/ and downloaded the InVircible program. This is not a full featured version, but after some time trying to figure out the online instructions I was able to use the program to good effect and plan on buying the full version after contacting the author and getting a few questions answered. The first thing the program told me was that I had a boot sector virus, and then it went on to list the many, many programs on my drive that had been 'piggybacked". The program could now clean up these files, but that would be a waste of time, since, as I understand it, you can completely reformat the drive, and the boot sector virus will still be there since it is in memory while the computer is turned on. The only way out of this is to have InVirsible make a rescue disk—preferably before you have an infection, but I had no choice here—and then boot the computer from this disk and let the program do its work. I did this, and the next time I booted from the hard drive I had my CD-ROM drive listed again. InVirsible had saved the day. Also every time I boot up, I am informed of any changes in binary-executable files since InVirsible was last run. So I also get continuing virus protection.

InVirsible seems to be a very good and unfortunately necessary program. So, go to the InVirsible site and read all the press clippings about the program. The program seems quite impressive—especially when compared with the better known commercial anti-virus programs. It certainly saved the day for me.

Hell is relative My problems, however, were not quite over. I had installed the Microsoft Office Professional Suite, but

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

(Comments.....Continued from page 8)
had not yet run Excel. And the first time I started Excel a very strange thing happened. Excel opened up not the usual single worksheet, it opened up 249 such sheets and refused to allow me to enter the program. By now I was getting to be an old hand at such problems. Compared to what had already happened to me, this was child's play, and I was able to handle it myself.

I went to one of the other computers in the house with the same program on it and opened Excel; everything went OK. What was the difference? I went back to the new computer, un-installed Excel and reinstalled it. The same problem occurred. Did I have another virus? A little more thought led me to look at the Excel startup directory. There were two additional files in that directory on the new computer than in the directory on the old computer. I removed those two extra files, one of which was a macro, and Excel ran just fine. So we have another marco virus similar to the one for Word. Where did it come from? I don't know, and I don't have the energy at this point to try and find out.

For five years since moving from Apple to the IBM format I have been virus free, then in the period of one month I get two separate viruses. Looks like my carefree days are over, and I must now start screening for viruses. Microsoft Is the last place I expected to get a virus, but I am quite sure that is where the boot sector virus originated. Unfortunately I could figure no way to notify them of this through e-mail, and now with the introduction of Internet Explorer 3.0 in final form the offending file is no longer available, so I guess the problem is over. Over, except for anyone who has the virus on their computer still. Where the Excel virus came from, I don't know. Possibly I got it at the same time. It was probably the most benign type of virus that you could get.

I don't need many more months like August 1996. ◆

(Aid.....Continued from page 4)
money!

CyberMedia
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Santa Monica, CA 90405
310.581.4700
http:\\cybermedia.com/ ◆

E-MAIL ADDRESSES WANTED

Members please send your e-mail adress to the editor at lamartin@ix.netcom.com so that it can be added to the group's database

Political Computer Viruses

discovered & submitted by TPCUG member James Kalshoven

PAT BUCHANAN VIRUS:
Your system works fine, but it complains loudly about foreign software.

COLIN POWELL VIRUS:
Makes its presence known, but doesn't do anything. Secretly, you wish it would.

HILLARY CLINTON VIRUS:
Files disappear, only to reappear mysteriously a year later, in another directory.

O.J. SIMPSON VIRUS:
You know it's guilty of trashing your system, but you just can't prove it.

BOB DOLE VIRUS:
Could be virulent, but it's been around too long to be much of a threat.

STEVE FORBES VIRUS:
All files are reported as the same size.

PAUL REVERE VIRUS:
This revolutionary virus does not horse around. It warns you of impending hard disk attack: Once, if by LAN; twice if by C.

POLITICALLY CORRECT VIRUS:
Never identifies itself as a "virus", but instead refers to itself as an "electronic micro-organism."

ROSS PEROT VIRUS:
Activates every component in your system, just before the whole thing quits.

TED TURNER VIRUS:
Colorizes your monochrome monitor.

(Viruses.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (**Sept. 19**) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **No September meeting.** You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. at 7:00 PM at a member's home. **September 18 is next meeting.** *Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

(Viruses.....Continued from page 9)

DAN QUAYLE VIRUS:
Their is sumthing rong with your komputer, but ewe cant figy-our outt watt!

GOVERNMENT ECONOMIST VIRUS:
Nothing works, but all your diagnostic software says everything is fine.

NEW WORLD ORDER VIRUS:
Probably harmless, but it makes a lot of people really mad just thinking about it.

FEDERAL BUREAUCRAT VIRUS:
Divides your hard disk into hundreds of little units, each of which does practically nothing, but all of which claim to be the most important part of your computer.

GALLUP VIRUS:
Sixty percent of the PC's infected will lose 30 percent of their data 14 percent of the time (plus or minus a 3.5 percent margin of error).

TEXAS VIRUS:
Makes sure that it's bigger than any other file.

ADAM AND EVE VIRUS:
Takes a couple bytes out of your Apple.

CONGRESSIONAL VIRUS:
The computer locks up, and the screen splits in half with the same message appearing on each side of the screen. The message says that the blame for the gridlock is caused by the other side.

AIRLINE LUGGAGE VIRUS:
You're in Dallas, but your data is in Singapore.

FREUDIAN VIRUS:
Your computer becomes obsessed with marrying its own motherboard.

PBS VIRUS:
Your programs stop every few minutes to ask for money.

ELVIS VIRUS:
Your computer gets fat, slow, and lazy, then self destructs only to resurface at shopping malls and service stations across rural America.

OLLIE NORTH VIRUS:
Causes your printer to become a paper shredder.

NIKE VIRUS:
Just does it.

SEARS VIRUS:
Your data won't appear unless you buy new cables, power supply, and a set of shocks.

JIMMY HOFFA VIRUS:
Your programs can never be found again.

KEVORKIAN VIRUS:
Helps your computer shut down as an act of mercy.

STAR TREK VIRUS:
Invades your system in places where no virus has gone before.

HEALTH CARE VIRUS:
Tests your system for a day, finds nothing wrong, and sends

(Viruses.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software
Adobe Systems, Inc.
Borland
Broderbund
Corel Systems
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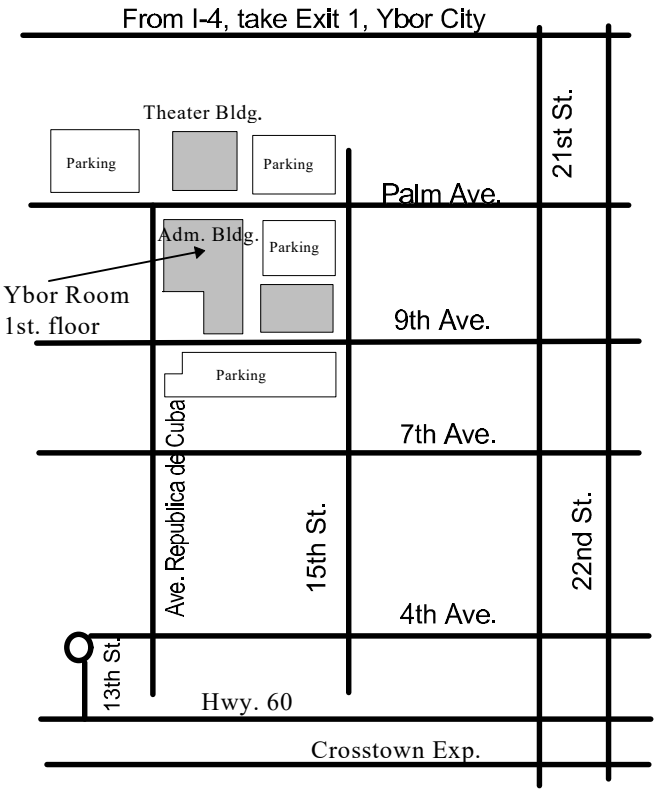
The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

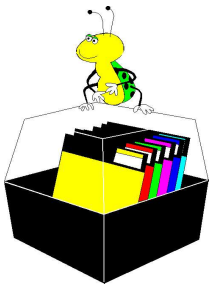
To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9609.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

(Viruses.....Continued from page 10)
you a bill for $4,500.

GEORGE BUSH VIRUS:
It starts by boldly stating, "Read my docs...no new files!" on the screen. It proceeds to fill up all the free space on your hard drive with new files, then blames it on the Congressional virus. ◆



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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No. 10 October 1996

Meeting

October 9, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Micrografx Corporation

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Not Much Writing Needed

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Thanks to the sudden outpouring of material from our members I don't need to add much myself this month to fill out the newsletter. In fact I probably have more material than the remaining space allows. It's nice to have some additional help. Keep it coming!

Micrografx will be doing the presentation this month. This is the first presentation in some time we have had given by a national vendor, so I encourage you to attend. Since I am the one who asked them, show that you would like more such presentations by your attendance, and I will see what can be arranged for the future. I have enjoyed the presentations by local vendors, computer experts, and our own members, but there is always a little something extra that the presence of a name-brand vendor provides.

Check out our World Wide Web home page. The address is http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/. I have made a good number of additions. Now added are maps of the regular meeting site and the Reflectone site, an Announcements page, and all of the newsletter articles and commentary dating back to March in HTML format. This last item means that you do not have to download and read the individual newsletters with the Adobe Acrobat reader to get the material in the separate articles. However, if you want to see the graphics, Secretary's Report, and a few other items you will still need to read the entire newsletter.

In the space that remains, let me describe latest hot software. If you

(Comments.....*Continued on page 12)*

November 13 Meeting: Hardware & Software (Regnis Computers) Plus Nominations for 1997 Officers
December 11 Meeting: Bargain Table & Swap Meet & Election of Officers

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING September 11, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary



President Connie Kincaid called the meeting to order and introduced officers present. She welcomed visitors: Steve Martin, Lucille Piekenbrock, Brian Payne, Ed Bryan, Ken Boyd, Jim Alters, and John Sims.

William LaMartin has most laboriously created the TPCUG Home Page. Thank you William. http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/ Go to your Home Page. You will like it and will also be proud of an organization that is on the cutting edge!

Connie announced the upcoming SIG schedule. See page 10 of this newsletter for details.

Connie announced that nominations for officers for 1997 will be received at the November meeting with election to follow in December. She asked members to be considering nominees for offices. Nominations will be accepted from the floor; be sure that your nominee has agreed to dedicated service. Nominations committee composed of the Board of Directors will present a slate. Present officers are listed in the front of BITS OF BLUE newsletter.

Micrografx (See review by William LaMartin in past issue of newsletter or download from TPCUG Home Page) will present the program on October 9, 1996. The November meeting will be the nominations meeting AND a presentation by REGNIS COMPUTER of Christmas Shopping in the computer world for your own self or gifts. December is SWAP MEET AND BARGAIN TABLE. The December meeting will give YOU THE MEMBER the chance to sell, bargain, negotiate, wheel and deal with your own treasures for a small table donation ($5). PLUS! Those who just want to donate treasures to TPCUG are encouraged to do so also. We need your donations of software (unregistered, to be legal), hardware or whatever for the bargain table.

VOLUNTEERS! HELP! Connie asked for volunteers to help do a number of tasks for the good of TPCUG. Many times people want to help and will jump in if asked. What is difficult is that the leaders may not know who is willing or whom to ask individually. IF YOU WILL HELP IF ASKED, please put your name on a card and give it to one of the officers at

(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
the meeting. Ed Snow, joined last month by Fred Buss, has been helping William LaMartin get the newsletter to you each month...after William has spent hours producing it. Thanks to all of you .

LOOK for "ASK PC WILLY" in this issue of the BITS OF BLUE newsletter. To get your question answered and printed, post your question on the BBS to Wil Goble...the Ask PC Willy address will be set up on the BBS at a future date by the SYSOP.

Wil Goble presented QuickCam Video Capture. Many expressed surprise and joy at seeing this piece of hardware that works so well and so cheaply. About $100. The photo eye sits on your computer or wherever the cord will reach to capture images or series of images. This little camera draws its power from the keyboard connection with the small connection adapter that comes with it. Wil demonstrated that the quality is better if you view or send it ½ or 1/3 screen size. Ford Bond stated that there is a talking and picture version which permits talking and picture transmission and reception. Wil says you can use it on the net. (Your Secretary can't wait to view grandchildren in their own home...cooking, smiling or whatever.) Wil says for about $200 one can get the color QuickCam. One use is to set it up in the shop, leave it on, go home to lunch (or go somewhere with computer access), dial your shop computer from your home and see what is going on! Your computer DOES NOT REQUIRE A VIDEO CAPTURE BOARD to use your QuickCam.

Congratulations to Door Prize Winners:

Bruce Register	WinCom Suite
Roger Waters	Uninstaller
Ken Bryan	Canvass Tote Bag
Scottie Holland	Mouse Pad
Bob Davis	Quick Book Demo Test Drive

We all thank Wil Goble for making our images with QuickCam and putting them on disk for us to use on our personal computer for whatever reason. (Your Secretary's personal problem is that there is so much truth in the captured likeness that now I must acquire a touch up program to get that handsomeness that I thought that I had in real life...Thanks, anyway, Wil. My grandchildren in another city can see me as I really am...grandchildren cannot be fooled) ◆

Free Stuff

Net Findings

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

In my travels recently down the Super - I - Way of the World Wide Web I ran across another FREE utility that I just had to pass along. The Web is a storehouse of just about every kind of information you can think of and growing by leaps and bounds every day. But searching the Web is time-consuming and demands that users be familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the various search engines. Up until recently it was only possible to search one engine at a time. If you did not find what you wanted the first time around, it meant repeating the search with a different engine. “Well..… not anymore”!

Thanks to WebFerret, tedious searches are a thing of the past. WebFerret, produced by Vironix, is a wonderfully time-saving program that queries the five big Web search engines *simultaneously*. This program is a must for Windows 95 users….and its **FREE !** (It’s free because there are small splash advertising screens that pop-up on the search tool during the searches. See below.)

It is simple to install and astoundingly quick to run and perform searches. You type your query into the search box and select whether to match all key words together or independently. Web Ferret then searches the major search engines such as Yahoo, Infoseek, Ananzi, AltaVista and Lycos and quickly returns the results.



The advantage of WebFerret is its efficiency and speed. Accessing search engines itself is a slow process, particularly if the Net is busy. On average you can expect to wait a minute or so before being able to begin searching. Loading WebFerret, however, is extremely quick. From the time WebFerret is loaded it will take seconds to begin searching the Web. WebFerret avoids duplications and shows all the relevant sites collected from searching the five engines. And it's simple. A beginner to searching the vast databases of the Web can be up and running immediately.

For the more advanced user there are menu options. With the copy-and-paste option you can copy the results listing into a

(Ferret.....Continued on page 7)

~~Merlin~~ WARP 4

by Charles Howe, Tampa P C Users Group

On Wed, Sept 25, 1996, a few days before this issue of Bits of Blue goes to press, OS/2 Warp 4 will have been announced officially. The effect on the world of personal computers is apt to be large.

What it is: The latest version of IBM's operating system for x86 class computers.

Equipment requirements: It is worth drawing a distinction between theoretical possibility and practical minimum. Any 486 or Pentium class machine, at least 8 MB of RAM and several tens of MB of free disk space will allow an installation, but more resources than that are required for a useful installation. (Installation on a 386 won't necessarily fail, but IBM has stated publicly that it will not make any effort to fix problems that come with use of the 386. If you want to use Warp 4, upgrade.) There is a caveat: one feature can only be run on a machine with at least 24 MB of RAM and with a CPU with a speed rating of at least 100 MHz.



Bear in mind that hard disk space is now not much more than a dime a megabyte, 16 MB memory SIMMs can be had for about $100 and 4x CD-ROM drives (if you can find them) can be had for well under $100.

Cost: As a practical matter, expect to pay $115 (before taxes, or S&H if you buy by mail order) for an upgrade, $185 new; but it isn't clear to this writer how the new vs. upgrade distinction will be enforced.

Contents of the package: 3 CD-ROMs -- the Warp 4 disk itself, a disk full of drivers and a disk of demos of native applications. Note that this means that you must have a CD-ROM drive. Installation from floppies is no more than a theoretical possibility. Are you really going to get a friend to take the CD-ROM and make the more than 100 floppies it takes to install (up from 27 for Warp 3)? Also in the box: a noise canceling microphone! More on this later. The writer's supposition is that there is virtually no printed documentation.

Features: It is impractical to attempt to enumerate all of them. The writer's understanding of what to expect comes from having scanned several hundred thousand lines of the Fidonet OS/2 echo in the past few months. Here, in no particular order, is what impresses me the most.

Multitasking: With OS/2 it is not just possible but practical to execute more than one program at a time. This is not a new feature. Warp 3 did it very well, 95 nowhere near as well.

A typical reaction is, "Why should I get excited about that? I'll never use it." No! Experience shows users becoming familiar with the concept, then becoming avid multitaskers.

Stability: Highly stable. 95 was a vast improvement over 3.1, etc., but Warp 3 had already left it behind in this regard even though Windows 95 was introduced 10 months after Warp 3. Warp 4 solidifies the standards set by Warp 3 in this regard.

Programs to run under Warp 4: Much better than the endlessly repeated assertion, "But there aren't any programs to run under OS/2." Wrong!

To fully appreciate how good the situation is, understand a long-standing feature of OS/2: It runs almost all Windows programs. An early decision(specifically, when the transition from text based OS/2 - versions 1.x - to GUI- versions 2.0 onwards - was initiated), a design goal was to include the capability of running Windows programs from the desktop. A small cadre of able programmers was assigned to this task. They succeeded brilliantly. Although the phrase is seldom heard any more, an IBM slogan was, "A better windows than Windows, a better DOS than DOS". The idea was to start a Win-OS session and call the Windows program, but ordinarily not to run another Windows program under that Win-OS session. If the Windows program was well written, it would function well. A "Better Windows than Windows" was actually achieved: the dreaded UAE was virtually eliminated. This alone was a strong argument for moving to OS/2 2.x and Warp 3.

Does Warp 4 run ALL Windows programs? No, but the number it doesn't run is small. All a developer has to do is to write to what is called (techno babble alert!) the Win32 1.25s API -- not the Win 1.30 API. (He ought to do a thorough port, but that is a different topic.) When you see a Windows 95 logo on a box, ask questions of the publisher. Ask him if it is compatible with Windows 3.1 or 3.11. If it is (conforms to the 1.25s standard), you are safe. The developer isn't taking advantage of OS/2's strengths, but in all likelihood his program will run -- probably better than it will under Windows. And

(Warp.....Continued on page 8)

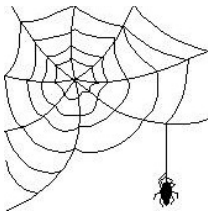
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Microsoft Publisher 97 -** Microsoft - Newest version for Windows 95 on CD.
2. **Monty Pythons's Quest for the Holy Grail**- Tracer - game
3. **Quicken Financial Planer** - Intuit- Creats your financial plan, step by step - Windows 95 or 3.1 CD
4. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
5. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file - View, copy, print, search, launch & manage files.
6. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
7. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
8. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
9. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
10. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
11. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
12. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of Flying (8-adult)
13. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
14. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
15. **ECHO Lake -** Delrina-Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
16. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
17. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
18. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
19. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calendar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Amtrak	http://www.amtrak.com/
Atlantic Monthly	http://www.theatlantic.com/atlantic/
Discover India	http://www.pugmarks.com/d-india/
Doc in a Box (Medicine)	http://www.onlinedoc.com/
Inventor of the Week	http://web.mit.edu/invent/
Kalmbach Publishing (Hoby Magazines)	http://204.95.206.71/kalmbach.html
Hillsborough Counthy Property Appraiser	http://www.propappr.co.hillsborough.fl.us/
Museum of Modern Art	http://www.moma.org/menu.html
Games Mania	http://www.gamesmania.com/cgi-bin/english/default.cgx
NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory	http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/
Ocean Planet home Page	http://seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/ocean_planet.html
Curent Sky Events (Astronomy)	http://www.kalmbach.com/astro/SkyEvents/SkyEvents.html
Computer history (Smithsonian museum)	http://www.si.edu/perspect/comphist/computer.htm
People Magazine Online	http://pathfinder.com/@@9GUEHAQAxx5vsP7y/people/
Pharmaceutical Information Network	http://www.pharminfo.com/
Yahoo Scoreboard (Sports Scores)	http://sports.yahoo.com/
SportsLine USA	http://www.sportsline.com/
Smithsonian Magazine	http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu./
Newbies Net Guide	http://www.newbies-netguide.com/netguide.html
Farm Journal Today	http://www.farmjournal.com/cgi-shl/dbml.exe?template=/farmjournal/index.dbm

Create your own personalized multimedia greeting cards!

.....with More Than Words...™ for Windows®95

Review by Larry Anders Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

Since I began personal computing in the mid '80's, I have always created and sent my Christmas cards by utilizing my PC. I will be the first to admit those first few years were experimental. I remember the first year I just printed labels to go on the envelopes. It sure saved a lot of time. With each passing year, as I added new hardware, the cards got better. Last year was my best yet. The entire card was created (including color photos of the family), printed, and envelopes addressed using my PC. But this year I'm gonna ***blow their socks off*** !

If you're on my mailing list, and I know that you have a PC with Windows 95 or Windows 3.1, with 4Mb RAM and at least 256 color graphics, this year it's ***MULTIMEDIA*** all the way. Krepec MultiMedia Corporation has created a greeting cards program that finally enters the electronic age, **More Than Words…** I can now express my feelings like never before by easily creating my own personalized multimedia greeting cards for all occasions, saving and sending them on diskette, or sending them by e-mail as an attachment.

- More Than Words... is a sophisticated multimedia application which introduces the innovative concept of personalized multimedia greeting cards. The following outlines More Than Words... principal features:
-
- Interactive Multimedia Tutorial · The tutorial will explain step-by-step how to create multimedia greeting cards. Turn your speakers on and enjoy the presentation! (The Tutorial will also show you a few features of the upcoming Version 2.1).
- Catalog of 35 pre-designed cards for all occasions · When you create a card, you start by selecting one for the appropriate occasion from the Catalog. It's like being in a greeting card store!
- Total freedom to customize and personalize the card · The cards in the Catalog are very nice but you, as the card creator, decide how the final result will look and sound. You can change a little or you can change everything. When you access the card editing session, you have at your fingertips an abundance of ready-to-use audio-visual material that you integrate within the card with a simple click of the mouse. More Than Words... comes with the following Catalogs of multimedia material:
- Images · Flowers, sentimental, holiday, celebration, you name it.
- Verses · Dozens of verses for all occasions. You can make the verses truly personal by easily adding the name(s) of the recipient(s) or other personal information (age!) within the verse.
- Music · Various musical themes that suit any occasion.
- Background watermark images
- Sound effects
- Color styles · Variety of colors for the card, background, text (3 colors).
- Intuitive text editor · The simple text editor allows you to personalize any verse, type your own verse if you wish or type a personal text message to the recipient.
- Personal voice message · You can very easily record your personal voice message. It is simply unbelievable the emotional impact it makes on the recipient to hear your familiar voice delivering your personal greeting!
- Personal pictures · You can easily add personal pictures to the cards (of yourself, your family, your new house) or any images which are in digital format.
- Very easy electronic distribution · The "Send" function will automatically package and compress your card together with the auto-playback code into a single .exe file and save it where you want. The extremely small size of the .exe file (given all its multimedia content) makes it perfect for electronic distribution via e-mail, modem-to-modem transfer or on a diskette. For example, with a 28.8 modem it normally takes less than 2 minutes to transmit over the Internet a typical More Than Words... card attached to an e-mail message (better than the postal service!). Your cards will always arrive on time!
- High quality printing · You have the option of printing your personalized card for recipients who do not have a PC. If you have a color printer, you will be surprised how great it looks!
- Electronic User's Guide

System Requirements

You need the following properly installed hardware and software to use **More Than Words...**:

- personal computer with a 486 or higher microprocessor running Windows 95 operating system
- 8 MB RAM
- hard disk with 10MB of free space
- at least 256 color graphics
- 16-bit sound card with speakers

(Greeting Cards .....Continued on page 7)

(Greeting Cards.....Continued from page 6)

- Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device
- microphone (if you wish to record personal voice messages)

You can find out, like I did, how much fun it is to create personalized cards, by down-loading a copy of **More Than Words…** for Windows 95 at ***http://kmmc.harvard.net.*** (5.7MB, expect transfer time of about 30 minutes with a 28.8 modem). Once it's downloaded just double-click on the file to install the program. There is also a copy for Windows 3.1 users to create personalized multimedia greeting cards, **More Than Words... ExpressCards** - Version 1.0 for Windows (1.7MB, expect transfer time of about 10 minutes with a 28.8 modem). Just double-click on the downloaded file to install the program. With the assistance of an audio-visual tutorial, you will be able to immediately create your own multimedia cards and see if you like **More Than Words....** If you do like the program and want to print or send your cards, you can purchase the license for only $29.95. Licensed users will receive for free the upcoming update 2.1. I purchased my copy by calling an '800' number and registered immediately.

At the Internet site there are also fully functioning *generic* card samples that you can you can download and send without having to register. Each card offered for downloading has been created for a particular occasion using **More Than Words....**

This is one innovative program optimized for Windows 95 that is loaded with features which will allow you to:

- save money by not buying traditional greeting cards and paying for postage (and soon the savings will exceed the license fee!)
- create an unlimited number of exciting personalized multimedia cards for all occasions
- send the cards by e-mail all over the world at virtually no cost (you can also send cards on diskette)
- make sure your cards always arrive at the right time (it generally takes less than 2 minutes to send a card by e-mail with a 28.8 modem)
- communicate your greetings to the recipient in a very personal, powerful and entertaining manner
- easily create exciting multimedia greeting cards for all occasions.

More Than Words… is ***GREAT!…*** and just in time for Christmas.

Krepec MultiMedia Corporation, $29.95
http://kmmc.harvard.net ◆

(Ferret.....Continued from page 3)



word processor and distribute the list of sites to colleagues or keep it for further reference. (A requested feature to save to HTML format, partial or full results, is currently being worked on.)

Once the results listing is displayed, point the mouse at any site and WebFerret displays a brief description of the site's contents.

WebFerret forms part of the NetFerret Finder Series which also includes NewsFerret and IRCFerret. NewsFerret allows users to search specific news articles for a topic of interest, without having to access each newsgroup separately. It automatically joins multipart messages together and can retrieve messages without having to start up a separate news client or web browser. Binary attachments that are encoded with uuencoding, binhex and mime can be automatically decoded. NewsFerret can start up the user's registered news client to access a particular newsgroup in the search results. It uses advanced NNTP commands where available for enhanced performance. Looking for friends, new and old ?
IRCFerret will search the IRC Networks around the world to find them. Searches are specified by the keywords you enter, matching them against every IRC users email address, nickname, and description. You can even limit specific channels to search. The IRC networks will be searched simultaneously, without you having to manually connect and search. Searches are done intelligently and efficiently to save you time and bandwidth. The entire NetFerret series can be downloaded **FREE** from http://www.vironix.co.za/NetFerret/. This deal is tuff to beat!

Vironix Software Laboratories

(Warp.....Continued from page 4)
the number of programs that run under 95 and not under 3.1x is actually quite small.

Applications that take full advantage of OS/2: The standard applications are well covered: word processing and spreadsheet. A suite called StarOffice meets with much enthusiasm. A new version of Lotus SmartSuite isn't completely done yet, but will be RSN. It seems probable that Corel, now owners of WordPerfect and Quattro, will restart developing for OS/2. Corel is particularly threatened by a drawing program called Colorworks. DeScribe, a word processor, has been an eye-popping bargain. A company called Poly-Ex is close to announcing a superb tool set for games programmers. (The writer has seen demos of ColorWorks and the Poly-Ex tool set. They are stunning --arguably approaching the status of being killer apps.) There are several suites of utilities. There are several communications programs. There are several mail readers and several IRC (Internet Relay Chat) programs. There is a vast amount of IBM EWS (Employee Written Software), which IBM doesn't officially support but which mostly work and are free. There is much shareware. When a vendor tells you that there is no software for OS/2, take it with a grain of salt. What he really means is that he doesn't sell it, not that it doesn't exist.



Voice Navigation and Dictation: Linguists have been studying speech recognition for decades with IBM scientists always in the hunt. Now Warp 4 incorporates them as installable options. (Don't know if one can be installed and not the other.) The hardware requirements are at least a 100 MHz CPU and at least 24 MB of RAM. These features should be of great interest to any one with a repetitive motion problem. Also (the writer has never seen this pointed out, but it seems obvious), the ability to do voice navigation should be very helpful to some people with disabilities. A noise canceling microphone is supplied to allow the user to do voice navigation and dictation. Beta testers report that navigation is accent independent but dictation requires some training. Voice macros are possible.

Netscape Navigator 2.0 is being ported to OS/2, i.e., is being written so as to take advantage of OS/2's strengths. It will be available for download by the time Warp 4 becomes GA (Generally Available; IBM speak). It will be available on the club board. Navigation by voice will be implemented, but not until about December 1, when Netscape Navigator 4.0 is released. There will be no Netscape Navigator 3.0 for OS/2.

Installation: Several years ago the writer heard David Barnes, IBM's world class showman and principal presenter of OS/2, praise the capability of Microsoft in creating installation routines. High praise, considering that an important component of his job is to show OS/2 running rings around 95 and NT. Now comes Warp 4, including an entire CD-ROM full of device drivers. At a minimum, installation will be better (easier) because of the greater number of drivers for OS/2, plus the fact that they in one place, a CD-ROM. Will the list prove to be exhaustive? Stay tuned.

Workgroup collaboration: The buzzword is OpenDoc. If all members of the workgroup are using programs that are Open Doc enabled, then one person can operate the spreadsheet, another the word processor, a third the paint program, etc. They can do this over a LAN or WAN or even the Internet. They can be using a variety of operating systems. In theory none of them could be Warp 4, but OS/2 is very thoroughly committed to the standard. OLE is subsumed by Open Doc.

Development techniques: They are beyond the scope of these comments (and the writer's comprehension), but some of the buzzwords are Threads, SOM and DSOM. The Colorworks developers, for example, cited OS/2's threading capabilities (strong) as a principle reason for developing for OS/2 and not for Windows NT (weak) and even more so for Windows 95 (worse). SOM stands for System Object Module and DSOM for Distributed same.

File system and virus protection: OS/2 is comfortable with FAT, the old standby, but you also have the option of choosing HPFS at installation time. You can also mix them -- some drives FAT, others HPFS. HPFS's strengths are its resistance to fragmentation, its resistance to viruses and its thriftiness in using space on hard drives (not stuck with each file, no matter how small, occupying one cluster, which can be as large as 32K with today's drives). Simply put, HPFS has no clusters. The smallest storage space is 1 KB: 512 bytes for the file and 512 bytes for the extended attribute and directory entry. Any additional storage for that file is increased in 512 byte increments as needed.

Buying a computer with Warp 4 preloaded: Possible. Hasn't been easy, but the situation has improved recently and is apt to become commonplace. The premier vendor of OS/2 software, Indelible Blue, 1-800-776-8284, is now selling computers with OS/2 preloaded by mail order. A few companies in the Austin, TX, area are also. It seems likely that some vendors will start to highlight their willingness to deal with it. In particular, it is foreseeable that some store owners will spe-

(Warp.....Continued on page 9)

(Warp.....Continued from page 8)
cialize in adding Warp 4 to machines preloaded with Windows 95. ◆

Connect the World with Merlin (Warp 4) : A worldwide, 24 hour on-line party will be held on Saturday, October 26. Tampa Bay can take pride in the fact that the idea and organization is local. There will be demo sites at CompUSA, Egghead, USF, Caylu Enterprises on South Howard and points in 40 countries around the world. Put the date on your calendar. A feature locally will be that there will be an all night session at the CyberCafe alongside CompUSA.

Ask PC Willy

Answers by
Wil Goble

Dear PC-Willy

Q. I'm using DOS 6.2 and when I run some programs I get "Insufficient Memory" and I can't run the program but I have 8 megs of memory. Do I have to buy more memory?

A. You need to manage your lower memory (below 640k) better. With DOS 6.2 you have a program called MEMMAKER that will do this for you. Just type memmaker at a dos prompt and let it setup your config.sys and autoexec.bat files.

Q. Some people I overheard talking about "hotmetal", just what is this?

A. Hotmetal is actually HTML the abbreviation for HyperText Markup Language which is the language used to generate web pages. Mostly it defines the structure of a document not its page layout.

Q. I'm 14 now and I like to play games on my computer, and I'd like to learn how to write game programs. Do you have any suggestions as to what I might get started with?

A. Well, right now games are mostly written in C or C++ language so getting a program or a course on these platforms would be helpful. But more in demand than games right now is Web pages and Java applications for the Internet. Its a lot easier than C language and you can make some good money making web pages for people when you get good at it.

Q The other day I turned on my computer and it did absolutely nothing, so I turned it off and on again and it

(PC Willy.....Continued on page 10)

Book Review

Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML 3.2 in 14 days.

Author: Laura Lemay

Review by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

Whenever we use a device that is expensive to produce, we can look to the Federal Government as the place where the funds came from. So it is in the case of HTML. The Federal Government paid for the Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML), which is an authoring language that lets users publish information in different formats. HTML is derived from that language.

If you want to produce a home page and send it up to the Internet, there are many ways to do it. You can download a home page you like and just change the text in an editor. You can buy any book on HTML and sit down and read, and then make up your home page very easily. Or you can buy a book like this one and take a few weeks to read and learn the material written up here. This book is very easy to read. I have not found many such books. This book is really very complete. It is up to date. And it is thick, 2 and 1/2 inches thick. It has a CD ROM in the back which has all the programs that are described in the book already typed out for you. There is much more.

The book starts out as most books do, with a resume of where we are in the use of the World Wide Web. Then they go right to work.

The first chapter tells you how to create a simple web page. Then they start telling you how to set up to produce multiple web pages. In each succeeding chapter, they give you a little more detail, such as they tell you about editors and how they work. They tell you about using images (pictures or graphics), color, and setting up a background.

Next they go to Multimedia, sound, and animation. They tell you about blinking. Then they go back to tell you how to design an effective web page. Then they go into Tables, Frames, and they tell you how to link pages. All this is given to you in very simple easy to understand English. I have not read a book so easy to follow and to build their examples.

Now we get to the more interesting parts. They tell you how to put your pages up on the web. They tell you how to set up your own server. This book is complete.

We aren't finished. They tell you about CGI. They give you

(HTML.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (**October 17**)) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (**October 7**) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. at 7:00 PM at a member's home. **October 16 is next meeting.** *Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

(HTML .....Continued from page 9)
forms and scripts and describe them carefully; you have no trouble following the author. The next section is devoted to Java. You are given a development tool kit on the CD ROM for the Java program. You are given instruction on Java script, creating and working with those scripts.

In the Java section, they make up a stock ticker type of thing. It starts a sentence on the right side of the screen and the words travel slowly to the left side of the screen. You can simply copy this right out of the book if you want it in your web pages. Just change the text to what you want.

The next section tells you about plug-ins, and embedded objects. All the things are given plenty of explanation. They tell you about Shockwave, and Adobe's acrobat amber. Also RealAudio, and Multimedia plug-ins. They don't forget VRML. There is quite a section on creating Pages with embedded objects, and Plug-ins. Last but not least, they discuss ActiveX and Visual Basic. The last chapters are devoted to telling you about testing, revising and maintaining your web site, also MIME types, etc.

Probably you can tell that I am very pleased with this book. Also I can not go into detail about each and every one of the sections in this book, it would require a book length review! You can buy this book for $59.99 at most of the bookstores. That will sound like a lot of money, until you need to make up a set of web pages, and then it will impress you as being fairly priced, because it is such a simply laid out bunch of instructions, that are easy to follow and understand. And it has a lot of things I could not find elsewhere. After I have finished the course, I will have my notes on what the other students have said, and also their questions and the instructors answers. Then too, I will have my notes on what the instructor gives us. After all that, I expect to set up and place a series of pages on the Internet. Don Patzsch, September 11, 1996 ◆

(PC Willy.....Continued from page 9)
worked fine. It's about 3 years old and I haven't had any problems before. Do you think that I'll have to get it fixed soon?

A. If it ain't broke don't fix it. Sometimes when you turn on a computer it will not get the right signals at the right places at the right time. I've seen the same thing happen before but the computer went right on working fine till the hard drive quit. Computers really have only one moving part (hard drive) so really not much goes wrong with them. But dirt and dust can get into the sockets that plug into the boards and sometimes that will cause intermittent problems and just by taking the cover off the computer, and taking all the boards out and plugging and unplugging the wires will sometimes fix things. (It's those times that you'll wonder what was wrong and how you fixed it.)

Well, that's all the questions I have for now, but if you are stumped and can't figure it out write me on the BBS or e-mail me at wilgoo@juno.com or locally call 813-684-8004.

PC-Willy G'day ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software
Adobe Systems, Inc.
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MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Memory Management, DOS, Windows, Norton Desktop, Visual Basic 3
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9610.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

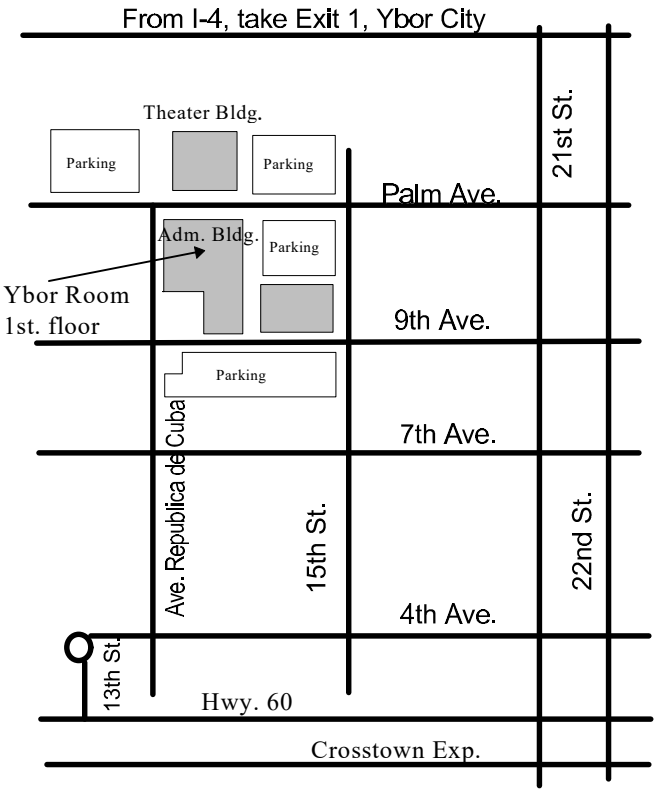
(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

are running Windows 95, are on the Internet, and have a sound card, microphone, and speakers, go to Microsoft's Web site http://www.microsoft.com, and from their free software section get the program NetMeeting. It's free and it's super.

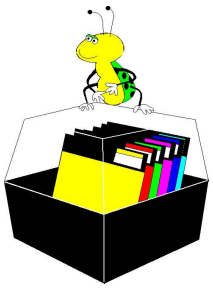
With this program you can carry on live audio conversations anywhere in the world for free with anyone else running the same program. I have spoken with individuals in the Netherlands, England, South Africa, Australia, and Texas who sounded like they were next door; however, I have spoken with people here in Tampa, and the voice quality was not so good.

Additionally, while connected you can share applications. For example, I often start up *Street Atlas USA* and share it with the individual. Within a minute he has a map on his computer of downtown Tampa, and if I give him collaboration rights, he can take control of the map. You could similarly share spread sheets and, I suppose, play a computer chess game. All of this done while you speak in real time.

Get *NetMeeting* and give me a call. ◆



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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No. 11 November 1996

Meeting

November 13, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Regnis Computer Hardware Demonstrations

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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New, Free Internet Software

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

First, I'll note that we had a very good meeting last month with **Micrografx** doing the presentation by demonstrating their graphics software. Bob Woods, the presenter, sent me a note saying that he made a mistake when he said that American Greetings will do a mail merge of addresses on envelopes and names in the cards. In fact, it will only do the mail merge for the envelopes. He asked me to pass the information on to the group, which I have now done.

I am continuing to make changes and additions to our WWW home page **http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/**. Stop in for a visit and see the dancing palm tree and changing moon. These animated graphics, I think, only work with the Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer browsers, though. Also, there you will now find all the Internet links that have been appearing in the Newsletter available on the Links subpage, where a click on them sends you to the site. There is a listing of meeting topics and SIG schedules, along with maps to both the Reflectone and Ybor locations. My goal is to both advertise our group and provide useful information. We are certainly appreciative of member John Meroth for providing us free space on his Internet server.

Now to that new software. Microsoft is certainly giving away some interesting software for the Internet right now. The main program, of course, is their browser, **Internet Explorer** 3.0 for Windows 95. I think a version for Windows 3.1 is in the works. I find the program quite good; however, most of the world is still using Netscape's

(Comments.....*Continued on page 9)*

December 11 Meeting: Bargain Table, Swap Meet, and Election of Officers
Visit us on the Web at http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/ or on the BBS at 813-980-1295

* * 1996 OFFICERS * *

PRESIDENT. Connie Kincaid	661-8185
VICE PRES : Mike Hodges (hodges@reflectone.com)	962-2114
TREASURER: Wil Goble (wilgoo@aol.com)	684-8004
MEMBER AT LARGE: Margaret Petro	253-2167
SECRETARY: Bruce Register (sfyvzsfi@scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us)	968-8170
APPOINTED (Volunteers)	
EDITOR: William LaMartin (lamartin@ix.netcom.com)	251-3817
LIBRARIAN: Larry Anders (lga696@aol.com)	989-9119
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:	
Charles Howe(howe.costech@intnet.net)	968-1207

BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

Home Page http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if it is not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING October 9, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Connie Kincaid called the meeting to order and introduced officers present. She reviewed the SIG schedules with special time changes for this month only. A table was set up with publications donated, free for the taking. This was popular with many members and visitors.

Connie announced the Nominations Committee reported:

President:	Connie Kincaid
Vice Pres:	Mike Hodges
Member at Large:	Margaret Petro
Treasurer:	Wil Goble
Secretary:	No name presented *

Appointed positions

SYSOP:	Kevan Sheridan
Librarian:	Larry Anders
Editor:	William LaMartin

* Present Secretary will serve if no one else comes forward

Nomination will be received from the floor at the November 13th meeting. Elections will be at the December 11, 1996, meeting for the 1997 officers.

The November meeting will be the nominations meeting AND a presentation by REGNIS COMPUTER of Christmas Shopping in the computer world for yourself or gifts. We have always enjoyed the presentations of the state of the art in hardware and software. (This should be an especially informative session as prices and bargains are running rampant, at least it seems so to the Secretary.)

December: SWAP MEET AND BARGAIN TABLE. The December meeting will give YOU THE MEMBER the chance to sell, bargain, negotiate, wheel and deal with your own treasures for a small table donation ($5). PLUS! Those who just want to donate treasures to TPCUG are encouraged to do so, also. We need your donations of software (unregistered, to be legal), hardware or whatever for the bargain table. We upgraded our hard drive with proceeds from the bargain table contributions and the door prize contributions. Two great bargain opportunities PLUS Election of YOUR officers for 1997, PLUS networking with one another. Many people, including your Secretary, have had problem solutions given right there on spot.

(Minutes.....Continued on page 6)

Software Review

Microsoft Publisher 97 CD Deluxe for Windows 95

by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



As everyone is aware who reads this newsletter, it just continues to get better. The main reason is because we have a dedicated editor, William LaMartin who strives for quality over quantity. One of the tools he uses to produce this newsletter is ***Microsoft Publisher for Windows 95***. I am happy to say that I recommended it to him.

When William took over the duties as editor in December of last year he used ***Microsoft Word*** to produce the first three newsletters. ***Word*** performed quite well for him except when controlling the flow of articles from one page to another. During one of our conversations he expressed his frustrations so I suggested he try Publisher. I have been using Publisher since the first version for Windows 3.1 and highly recommended it. Well, in March of this year he gave us an interactive review of Publisher, and a fine review it was, when he published his first newsletter with it. Now, Microsoft has released ***Publisher 97.***

I've read that approximately three million people use Microsoft Publisher to create the materials they need for their businesses, volunteer interests, and personal use. According to user surveys, 97 percent are satisfied with Publisher - so satisfied they regularly recommend it to their friends and associates. We know that's true. Don't we?!

I think the reason for Publisher's popularity is because it is exceptionally easy to use. You can get creative right away - without learning how to use the software first! The program offers so much design help with PageWizard design assistants that guide you step-by-step to help you create all kinds of projects - brochures, newsletters, flyers, Web sites, postcards, business cards, invitations, greeting cards, labels, signs and banners, stationery and envelopes, calendars, business forms, specialty items, just to name a few! You're guaranteed to create the kind of publications that get results.

Publisher 97 includes an expanded and enhanced collection of clip art, fonts, borders, and design elements and templates - enough to make your creative possibilities virtually unlimited.

And now more content is available online too, with the Clip Gallery Live on the World Wide Web. (You'll need your own service provider for this one.) To make your documents distinctive you can use the built-in features like WordArt special text effects, rotate elements, add gradient fills, start articles with Fancy First Letters, and even recolor clip art in any of 16 million colors. Also, if you already know Microsoft Word or another Microsoft Office program, you're on your way to knowing Publisher. Publisher uses the same menu bars, rulers, and shortcuts where appropriate.

Some of the features include:

- Page Wizards help you design newsletters, flyers, brochures, postcards, Web sites, forms, letterheads, signs, business cards, greeting cards, invitations, calendars, menus, posters, bookmarks, envelopes, banners, labels, resumes, paper airplanes, origami, and more with PageWizard design assistants.
- Step-by-step Design helps you create customized, professional-quality publications, and it couldn't be easier - just click the type of document you want to create, and PageWizard design assistants guide you through the design process, step-by-step.
- Design Gallery allows you to choose from hundreds of coordinated design elements - such as mastheads and pull-quotes.
- Borders will let you select from more than 150 Publisher borders, or create your own custom borders from any piece of clip art.
- Design Checker identifies common design problems (such as too many colors or fonts) and recommends solutions.
- Font Preview lets you preview all your fonts just by looking at the pull down menu. Each type style name appears in its corresponding font. See all your fonts before you apply them to text.
- There ís something for every project and occasion with more than 5,000 clip art images, 150 fonts, 150 borders, and 180 digital stock photos included with the CD Deluxe version (500 clipart images and 45 fonts, 150 borders, and 65 photos on disk version).
- For additional content you can visit the Clip Gallery Live at the Microsoft Publisher World Wide Web site at "http://www.microsoft.com/publisher/" and gain access to 1,000 additional clipart images, plus video and sound clips.
- Select from hundreds of included images in the Clip Gallery.
- Browse for ideas in more than 100 new PageWizard style design templates.
- Add pizzazz with WordArt, which uses special effects to make your text more vivid and memorable.

(Publisher.....Continued on page 7)

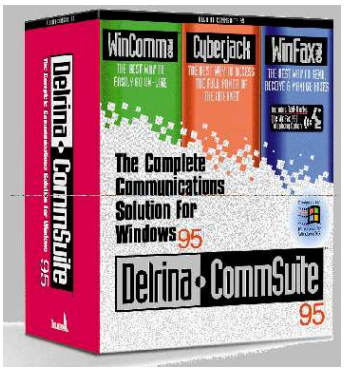
Software Review

Delrina CommSuite 95

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC users Group

This is my second version of CommSuite and my third version of WinfaxPro, its major component. So I have some familiarity with the product. *ComSuite95* is a strictly *Windows95* product, and it contains two more components than did the original CommSuite, which contained only *WinfaxPRO*,the faxing component, and *WinCommPRO* the communications component. The present version has added *TalkWorks* and *CyberJack*. *TalkWorks* (if your modem supports voice) will turn you computer into a messaging center, and *CyberJack* is an Internet Browser which also contains several other Internet utilities such as Gopher, Telnet, and FTP.

So anything you computer may want to do that involves a modem or the Internet, *CommSuite95* can handle—**if you have the correct type of modem.** Most modern modems will have no trouble with the WinComm communications program or the WinFax faxing program. The trouble arises, for example, when you want to combine these two. That is, to have both programs running simultaneously, so that if a fax arrives at your computer, the modem directs it to WinFax, and, if a data transmission arrives, the modem directs it to WinComm. This is called **Call Discrimination.** You can further complicate things by also running TalkWorks and asking the modem to also detect voice calls. My US robotics 28.8 modem was supposed to be capable of doing all this; however, I spent a lot of time in a futile attempt to accomplish it.



I finally went to the Delrina (Symantec) Internet site and searched for tech notes on the problem. The result was the following statement, which I paraphrase: *U.S. Robotics modems do not support call discrimination in Class 1, but they do in Class 2.0. However, WinFax only supports Class 1 and Class 2, not Class 2.0. Class 2 and Class 2.0 are very similar but not the same*. So you see why the average user can sometimes get a little frustrated with computers. Anyway, I am happy to at least have figured out why I can't get call discrimination. In fact, if I have the call discrimination option set, WinFax will not even receive. Happily, though, all of the separate functions work fine independently. And, since I don't really need this option, I am not overly bothered. However, I am sure not everyone will look as benignly on this problem between U.S. Robotics and Symantec.

WinCommPro: I use this program almost every day to connect to our BBS. It has served me well, and I have everything automated using the session scripts. I simply put it in learn mode, log on the the BBS, go through your usual key strokes necessary to download my messages & Fidonet Conferences (I use the TQM Door), then log off. The next time I do this, the script is run automatically when I log on, and that is the last time I have to touch the computer during the online session. I then use an off-line reader (*OLX for Windows* in my case) to read my messages. You can, of course, do much more. One feature I find useful is the Host Mode. Using Host Mode you can turn your computer into a mini BBS, where people using their communications programs can dial your computer to either download or upload files.

WinFaxPRO: This is the most important of the components, and if you have done much faxing using other fax programs you will appreciate the versatility of the program. In fact, some people shy away from it because it contains too many options for their simple once-a-month faxing requirements. If you are only going to do occasional faxing, then the fax program that comes with Windows 95 should be sufficient. But if you require scanner support, the ability to also scan and send multiple pages, the ability to annotate pages before you send them or before you forward them, remote fax retrieval, optical character recognition of received pages, and more, then WinFax is the program for you.

I suppose all faxing programs allow you to be working in a Windows program like your word processor and, when ready to send the current document via fax, to select the particular faxing program as your printer driver and then send the fax. I use this feature with *Microsoft Word* to Fax letters and with another Delrina product, *Perform*, to fax in orders that I have filled in on the computer in *Perform* to an industrial supply house. What WinFax adds is the ability to add fancy cover pages, select the time of day (to save in phone charges) to send the fax, use your scanner as a normal fax machine, and, by beeping your pager, notify you when a fax has arrived at your computer.

The scanning feature is most the important to me. Not everything you want to fax resides in your computer. For example, I have to fax multi-page forms I have filled in regarding our group to various computer vendors. I simply put them in the scanner and WinFax does the rest, be it one page or ten.

TalkWorks: If you want to take revenge on all those companies that have made you navigate your way through all their voice mail boxes and button pushing options, then this is the program for you. With it, you can set up a similar voice mail

(CommSuite95.....Continued on page 8)

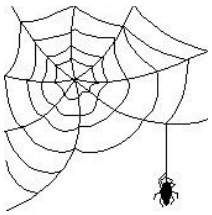
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Tracer -** 7th Level - Launch into cyberspace with a deadly virus on your heels-Windows 95 CD.
2. **Quicken Financial Planner** - Intuit- Creats your financial plan, step by step - Windows 95 or 3.1 CD
3. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
4. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file - View, copy, print, search, launch & manage files.
5. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
6. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
7. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
8. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
9. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
10. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
11. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of Flying (8-adult)
12. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
13. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
14. **ECHO Lake -** Delrina-Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
15. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
16. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full-Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
17. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
18. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calendar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

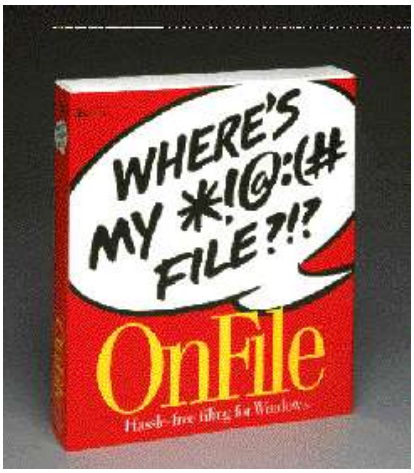


Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Boston Globe	http://www.boston.com/
Capitol Steps (Political satire)	http://www.capsteps.com/
Early American Review (18th Century America)	http://earlyamerica.com/review/
Florida Museum of Natural history	http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/
Intellectual Capital (Politics & Social issues)	http://www.intellectualcapital.com/
New York Daily News Online	http://www.mostnewyork.com/
Library of Virginia Genealogy	http://leo.vsla.edu/archives/genie.html
Live Video Cameras Worldwide I	http://www.rt66.com/~ozone/cam.htm
Live Video Cameras Worldwide II	http://www.rt66.com/~ozone/cam2.htm
Oral Arguments Page of US Supreme Court (Real Audio)	http://oyez.at.nwu.edu/oyez.html
Rose Related Links	http://www.halcyon.com/cirsium/rosegal/links.htm
Shareware.Com	http://www.shareware.com/
Oracle (USF student newspaper)	http://www.oracle.usf.edu/today/default.html
USGenWeb Project (Genealogy)	http://www.usgenweb.com/index.html
US Most Wanted Criminals	http://www.cpcug.org/user/jlacombe/wanted.html
Hard Drive & Controller Information	http://theref.c3d.rl.af.mil/
Timecast - Real Audio Guide	http://www.timecast.com/timecast.html
Tampa Bay Business Journal	http://www.amcity.com/tampabay/
Florida Review Net	http://www.review.net/
Planet Earth World numbers (Time, Zip,....)	http://www.nosc.mil/planet_earth/numbers.html
Classical MIDI music	http://www.cjnetworks.com/~mikep/music/midi/ClassicalHeader.html

ON File from SPC Software

Review by Nicholad Klack,
Tampa PC Users Group

I write for pleasure and publication. The two are not inconsistent with each other, but they do lead to a mixture of files in my word processor. With only eight letters to deal with it is impossible to quickly locate a file written even several months ago. Enter "ON File", a piece of software that purports to organize these same files in any sort of organized collection.



SPC Software Publishing has marketed this, Windows 3.1 and above compatible utility, for everyone who writes on a word processor. The software comes on two 3.5 inch disks and is priced at about the $40.00 level. The book size red box does not advertise that it is Windows 95 compatible, but it is. When I installed it in my "Windows 95" I got a message that, " the operating menu screen did not match the software." I ignored the message and proceeded with the installation. The program continued with a flawless installation. I must point out that the software is version 1.0 and was made over a year ago. I suspect that at least another version is now on the market and my just mentioned installation interruption may indeed not exist anymore. "On File" has a "tool bar" on the top of the layout sheet. Each icon contains several choices within the "button" category. The tasks possible were complete and imaginative. Clip art could be inserted and rotated, and the viewer offered both viewing the article or exporting it to the clipboard. Autobook, is one of the icons. It will quickly step you through the book building process with a selection of your files. Once the book is created you can customize it as necessary.

"On File" purports to read over fifty different file forms, view clip art and organize them in whatever way you choose. My experience confirmed their claim to the extent of the word processors I had. Microsoft Works files did leave a few extra symbols on the top of the print out. I easily cleaned those off. I am used to Microsoft Works not being entirely compatible when imported into other word processors. Indeed of all the popular word processors it is the least exportable. "On File" did not exhibit any problems with Word Perfect and Microsoft Word.

The setup for the program was automatic and straight forward. A tutorial is available from within the program. I suggest that any user take the time to work through the tutorial. In my case I went through the tutorial and found it helpful. The directions for the program consist of five pages on a slick cardboard fold out. I like short instructions and these instructions were indeed economical. I decided to group my writings by categories. I selected, and invented the names of these categories. The opening page becomes the table of contents. An opened notebook is pictured as you begin the program. Vertical tabs are listed on the right side with "your categories" written on each tab. The eight digit limit is not in force within this program. Long titles and long image names are allowed. Keep in mind that you are building a book. Short names can be much more convenient.

"On File" lives up to it's advertised mission. It will organize your various files into several logical "books" The perfect tool for the casual letter writer that wants to keep their correspondence separated or the budding author that has that, soon to be discovered, best seller. ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)

Presentation: **Micrografx Software** by Bob Woods.

He first demonstrated some programs from *ABC Graphics Suite*. This suite has combined several individual programs by Micrografx:. Flowcharter, Picture Publisher, Designer, Media Manager, Instant 3D and Snap Grafx. ABC Graphics Suite has a suggested retail price of $299.95, but the special to TPCUG Members through December 31, 1996 is $129.95.

The first program in the Suite was Micrografx *Picture Publisher*. This program permitted changing objects, foreground and background. He demonstrated a photo of Stonehenge with blue sky and white clouds. He replaced (by masking off) the sky with a sunset. He inserted a picture of a child into the foreground of the Stonehenge image. He used "twirl" to give an interesting illusion to the sun. This state of the art program permits one to do those things that we see produced on TV by hi-tech staff. That technology is now available in your own home or office. He showed how to develop brochures and book jackets using Micrografx *Designer*. Bob copied the created images into a Microsoft Word document with drag and drop. The *ABC Graphics Suite* works seamlessly with Microsoft Office, Bob said. He demonstrated the *ABC FlowChart* portion of the suite. Here he created an organizational chart and showed how to create a genealogical family tree. This software permits high-end flow charting.

(Minutes.....Continued on page 8)





(Publisher.....Continued from page 3)

- Element rotation can rotate anything - including text, pictures, calendars, ads, coupons, or logos - so your document looks exactly the way you want.
- It's easy to add gradient fills, start articles with Fancy First Letters, even recolor clip art in any of up to 16 million colors.
- There's an Outside Printing Assistant that lets you set up your files easily for most professional printers. And Publisher utilizes Windows 95 image color matching to achieve true color fidelity in printed pieces.
- It's easy to edit text in the Word Story Editor. Just write in Microsoft Word, and let Publisher integrate the text into your publication layout.
- With the Mail Merge feature it's fast and easy to merge address information directly onto your publication. Create and store address lists within Publisher. Or, let Publisher access your Microsoft Word or Microsoft Works files, or files in Microsoft Access, FoxPro®, dBASE®, or other databases.
- Publisher makes it just as easy to create an online publication as it is to create a printed one. The same ease of use and design is built in, so you can create and post online publications to the World Wide Web. The new Web Site Wizard offers design assistants to help you quickly and easily create a multi-page Web site that includes navigational links. And you can use over 100 backgrounds, photo images, and Design Gallery elements optimized for viewing on the World Wide Web. Publisher saves Web pages in HTML format, ready for your Internet or online service provider such as America Online® and CompuServe®, etc. And Web Page Preview allows you to preview your Publisher Web sites in Internet Explorer 3.0 or another compatible browser.
- First Time Help Features and concepts are introduced the first time they are accessed, and 17 online demonstrations offer information to make even advanced design options easy to use.
- And strangely enough, this Microsoft program comes with a real life, 300-page printed manual called Microsoft Publisher Companion that's packed with tips and design principles for professional looking publications. Also included in this manual is a Pictures Gallery of all the clip-art images, included on the CD, divided into categories.

To use Microsoft Publisher 97 on CD-ROM, you need:

- Personal computer with a 386DX or higher processor (486DX or higher recommended) running Microsoft Windows 95 operating system or Windows NT® Workstation version 3.51 or later operating system
- MB of memory (RAM); 8 MB recommended on Windows 95; 12 MB recommended on Windows NT Workstation
- Hard disk space - Typical installation: 116 MB Minimum installation: 9.5 MB
- Note: The CD includes 140 MB of clip art *in addition* to the typical installation.
- CD-ROM drive
- VGA or higher resolution monitor
- Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device
- Optional:
  - Modem (9600 baud or faster) required for online features (28,800 baud recommended)
  - Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 or compatible World Wide Web browser required for Microsoft Clip Gallery Live and Web Site Preview
  - World Wide Web access required for Microsoft Clip Gallery Live
  - Microsoft Web Publishing Wizard works on Windows 95 or Windows NT Workstation 4.0 or later

If you haven't used Microsoft Publisher before….now is the time to try it! Right now you can go to the Publisher site on the Web listed below and try a ***FREE*** trial copy of Publisher 97. If you like it, for $69 you can own it. You **CAN'T** go wrong. I **guarantee** you'll like it !

Microsoft Corporation at http://www.microsoft.com/publisher/
◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 6)

*Windows Draw 5.*0 is a new version and a scaled down program compared to *Designer.* Suggested Retail Price $49.95; Special to TPCUG members through December 31, 1996 is $39.95.

Next was *American Greetings*. *American Greetings Create Card Plus* includes 3,000 unique greeting cards that work with color or b/w printers. He demonstrated imports, introduction of graphics, including photos, and other parts of the program interface. This software contains some adult humor that can be "child blocked". You can modify, recreate, rearrange, import, add text or change text, etc. You can change color and typeface to suit. You can address your envelopes and even do mail merge. A self mailer eliminates the need for envelopes. Bonus: A screen saver, *Picture Saver*, is a part of the *American Greetings* program. Suggested Retail Price $29.95; TPCUG special $24.95.

In conclusion he presented *Crayola Art Studio 2.* This program has audio in the multimedia presentation. It is a coloring book for kids 3 years old and up, including great-grandparents. Many rooms are available for entry for different applications. Rooms are full of objects that become animated at the mouse click. One can color with "crayons, water colors or markers." The Suggested Retail Price is $39.95; special TPCUG member price is $29.95.

http://www.micrografx.com is their WWW address.

We thank Bob for an excellent presentation AND for Door Prizes. Please send an email to the above website expressing our appreciation to Bob Woods and to MICROGRAFX, INC. for the presentation and door prizes. Do not miss the opportunity to get these excellent quality products for low prices and even better specials to TPCUG.

Door Prizes:

American Greeting Card Plus	Bob Davis
American Greeting Card Plus	Robert Gerda
American Greeting Card Plus	Connie Kincaid
Windows Draw 5 & Print Studio	Bruce Register

Congratulations winners on winning these CD Disk Software Programs. ◆

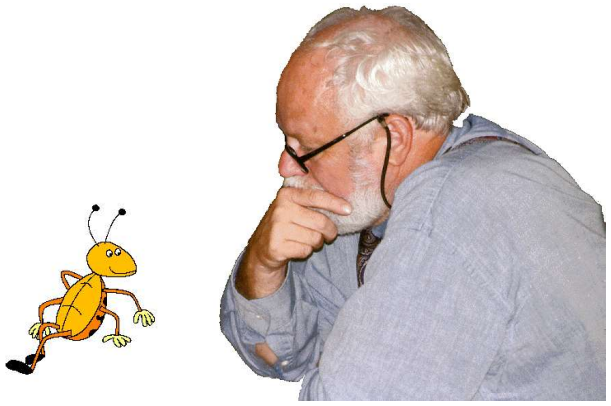
(CommSuite..... from page 4)

and messaging system for your computer. (Of course you will need a sound card and microphone.) And, since you also have WinFax, you can even set up a fax back service. I chose the simple answering machine option for my setup, and it works fine. And you never have to worry about the recorder tape coming to the end; however, you do need to worry here in Tampa that lightening may strike your computer while it is left running during your summer vacation. Losing an answering machine is a good bit cheaper.

CyberJack: This is Symantec's Internet browser, and I view it as a free add-on to the Suite, since anyone running Windows95 can also download for free Microsoft Internet Explorer or NetScape Navigator. CyberJack is a credible browser. Unfortunately for Symantec and everybody else in the browser business, there is really no way they can compete with Netscape and Microsoft, who have better products that they are giving away. One nice feature of Cyberjack is that it collects several Internet utilities and makes them easily accessible. They are FTP, Archie Finger, Gopher, Telnet, Internet Relay Chat, Image Manager, and Zip Manager.

It's a good suite of communications programs that take advantage of Windows 95 multitasking and multithreading properties and sells for around $99 at major computer stores.

Symantec on the WWW is at
http://www.symantec.com/ ◆



Member Ford Bond and friend in deep thought

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)
Navigator. And we can only benefit from the competition between these two giants of the Internet.

The next free program is **Microsoft NetMeeting**, an Internet telephone program. They have just released Version 2.0 Beta, which is about a 2.9 MB download. To me, this is the type of program that changes the computing world. Not only can you make "phone" calls to others using the program anywhere in the world at no charge, you can simultaneously share applications, send and receive files, share a white board (for writing and drawing) and carry on a keyboard chat. Only two individuals can speak to each other, but an unlimited number can take part in the keyboard chat feature. Netscape has a similar program called Cool Talk (no sharing of applications), as does IBM and VocalTec, the tiny Israeli company that started it all. The problem is that none of the above, to the best of my knowledge, can communicate with each other. That is changing, because there are some standards emerging now, and the Microsoft product and one by Intel called Intel Phone supposedly can communicate.

Since NetMeeting is the only one of the above I have used let me describe what you can do in a little more detail. First to use this program you will need to be running Windows 95 (one reason why Microsoft might be giving away the program), have a sound card and microphone and be connected to the Internet—preferably at 28.8 (it will work at 14.4, though). To speak to someone you simply look up their name on the list of who is currently connected to one of the servers provided by Microsoft for this purpose, or you can simply "dial" their Internet address.

I have spoken with individuals all over the world, and the audio quality has varied from bad (someone in Tampa) to excellent. I suppose the quality depends first on the quality of your equipment and second on how busy the Internet is. While talking to an individual, say, in London, he can take any active window on his computer and send it to me so that I can see what he is looking at. He can start up the "white board" and we both can draw on it in real time. Additionally, I can start up my mapping program Street Atlas USA and share it with him. He will then after a short delay see what I am seeing, for example a map of downtown Tampa. This is what is meant by sharing an application. I can go further and allow him collaboration. He then can click on the map and take control of it and run Street Atlas from his computer, although it is still residing on mine. Similarly two individuals can work on a spreadsheet or database simultaneously—all the while carrying on an audio conversation. And if that is not enough, one of you could initiate a file transfer. I suppose the ultimate net meeting would be one with Bill Gates in which he shared his checking program (Microsoft Money?) and gave me collaboration rights.

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Book Review

Mastering Windows 95

Author: Robert Cowart

Review by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

Recently, Microsoft gave us a copy of the Windows95 program. I wanted to buy a book that would give me the information I would need to be able to use the program fully.

One of the things you may do when you get a new program is to go to the library and read several magazines on computers. Byte magazine has Jerry Pournelle. Boardwatch magazine has Jack Rickard. These men are knowledgeable, computer-wise. Read what these men or men like them can tell you about what book they bought and why. You will quickly find out that you can solve any problem in this manner.

On the recommendation of these men, I bought *Mastering Windows 95* by Cowart. This book is divided into sections by a color on the edge of the pages for each section. The first section is "Up and running with Windows 95." A second section is "Exploring Windows 95". Each of these sections is further subdivided into the anatomy of a window, or the organization of your files, etc.

Now why did the book get this recommendation? Let me try to tell you. First, this author is easy to read. When he tells you something, you can understand what he is trying to convey. Many books give you a short sentence that actually says, "Yes, you can do that." Well, what you are looking for is not that, you want to know "how" to do it.

Cowart tells you how and in words that you can understand.

He starts out with a chapter on "About Windows 95". Some other chapters are "The Desktop", "the New file system", "Security", "What programs do not run under Windows 95, so you will want to upgrade them or get rid of them".

He sets up "Tips and Shortcuts" on the two pages just inside the covers, both front and back. These will jog your memory when you get stuck. Want to set the system clock? It is there so you do not have to go to the index and then through several steps to find out what you need to know to set the clock. These Tips and Shortcuts make it easier to use the book.

Now what is inside? That's what we all want to know. Is it easy to find what you want, and is it easy to understand how to follow what he is telling you? Well, lets take the use of the Internet as an example. He tells you how to connect your

(Windows 95.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (**November 21**)) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (**November 4**) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. at 7:00 PM at a member's home. **November 20 is next meeting.** *Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

(Windows 95 .....Continued from page 9)
computer to the Internet. He draws pictures of the computer, the modem, and the telephone line. He shows you pictures of a local area network connection to the Internet. He gives you pages of actual photos of the screens you get when you bring up the Windows 95 program. You can see just what to put in and where to type it into the program. It is with simple straightforward descriptions that he makes it easy to set up your particular computer to "get on the Internet".

Now the same is true for "FONTS". He tells you about fonts, and he puts the "wingdings" and "symbols" and other screens of fonts in the book so you can tell what there is for you to use. He describes how to add fonts and remove them. He tells you that true type fonts take up a fair amount of room on your hard disk, and so you may want to remove some of them, as the fonts in your printer may work faster than those that come with the program. All the descriptions are easy to read and easy to understand. Again, he shows you actual screens of Windows 95 and shows you what to put into them.

Now I could go on indefinitely, describing each section of the book. The author goes through each function of Windows 95: Using your laptop, Microsoft Plus, Painting pictures with Windows Paint; e-mail; Customizing your screen with Control Panel; and all the various features of the program.

Lets go back to the beginning of this review. If you want to know something, go to the library and read what other people have to say about the particular subject. Here we wanted to know what book on Windows 95 we should buy. We got the recommendations of two men. We went to the store and looked at a particular section that would tell us one thing we wanted to know about that particular program. We were satisfied that that explanation was something we could understand and use. So we bought the book.

You can do the same when you want to learn about buying extra memory for your new computer. Go to the library and read about memory in a book on "Repairing your pc". Then get on the Internet and search for computer memory. That will give you the URL of a few memory manufacturers. Leave an e-mail and let them know at that manufacturer that you want "cache" memory and you want to know what it is and how to buy it for your particular computer. They will give you their model numbers and their description of the memory you want to buy. Then when you buy it, it will "fit" and work from the word - go. Don't depend on the guy behind the counter, as he may not have any idea of what "cache" memory your computer needs, nor how much of it you really need. If you are willing to do a little work before you buy something, you can save yourself a lot of grief! ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 9)

Microsoft is also allowing a free download of their Internet authoring program *Front Page* 2.0 beta. This is around a 10 MB download and a good program. Unfortunately this program expires on January 1. What I like about the program is how it makes a map of your WWW site.

Finally, there is this small program called Microsoft Personal Web Server which allows you to turn your computer into an Internet server while you are connected to the Internet.

For these free prgrams go to http://www.microsoft.com/msdownload/downlabc.htm ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
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And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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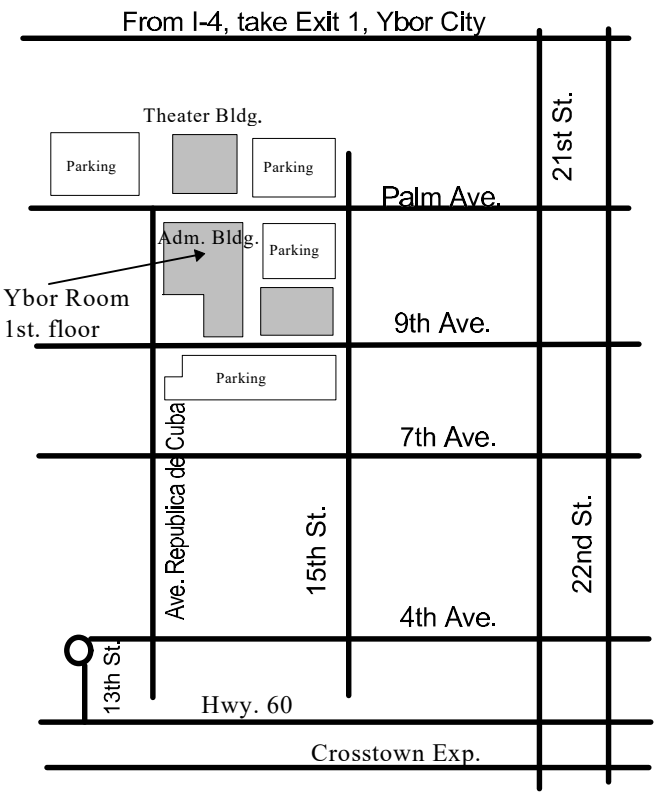
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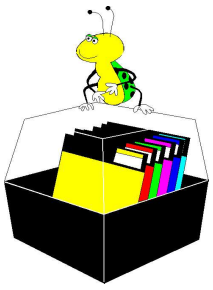
The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9611.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.



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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No. 12 December 1996

Meeting

December 11, 1996
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Bargain Tables & Election of Officers

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POSTNET Barcodes

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Done any bulk mail lately? No? Then you can't imagine what you have been missing. One of the many side benefits of being newsletter editor is the privilege of trying to decipher the many rules of bulk mailing and then deciding which apply to you. Then, once you think you have mastered your little niche of the bulk mail world, the post office changes the rules. That is just what happened to all of us bulk mailers this past July.

Our group being a small nonprofit makes things a little easier —not to mention cheaper—than it is, say, for a Realtor doing his or her mailings. He must now, if he is to receive the lowest possible rate, have his mailing list certified several times each year as to containing only legitimate addresses with nine digit zip codes and carrier route numbers, which people in the business will do for him for a small fee. Or he can buy the appropriate program and the updated CD's each three months and do it himself for about the same cost. Then on his mailings he, of course, must print this information with the addition of a POSTNET barcode. Most likely all of the above will probably apply to our group before long.

So, why my interest in all this and what does it have to do with computers? Well, I am interested because it may soon apply to our group and because someone asked me to help them with just such a problem. Of course, if their super software package, which was supposed to do anything a Realtor could ever imagine needing doing as regards keeping records on and keeping in touch with his clients,

(Barcodes.....Continued on page 8)

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BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

Home Page http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if ithey are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING November 11, 1996

Minutes and Comments by Jenny Lind Olin due to Bruce Register's absence.

President Connie Kincaid called the meeting to order at 6:27 p.m. She extended a welcome to new members and visitors. Current officers and SIG leaders were recognized. She stated that nominations will be taken from the floor for the election of new officers for the coming year. She invited visitors and members to take advantage of the table with the "freebies." A Micrografx brochure about Windows Draw Graphics & Print Studio, version 5 was passed out as promised last month.

Connie made several announcements concerning the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) as there were some changes in the schedule:

The Genealogy Computer SIG meets on the third Wednesday November 20 (this month), but the December meeting will meet on the first Wednesday, December 4 (next month).

The Access SIG meets on the third Thursday, November 21 (this month), but there will be no December meeting because of the anticipated Christmas activity. The Communication SIG had met on the first Monday, November 4, but there will be no meeting in December because of the unavailability of the meeting facility. The next Communication SIG will be January 6, 1997.

Nominations for the 1997 officers were opened from the floor resulting in the following slate. President: Connie Kincaid was nominated by Jim Clark, seconded by Larry Anders and others. Vice President: Michael Hodges was nominated by Margaret Petro, seconded by Richard Naber. Secretary: Merle Nicholson was nominated by William LaMartin, seconded by Larry Anders and Jim Clark. Treasurer: Will Goble was nominated by Charles Howe and seconded by Fred Buss. Member At Large: Bruce Register was nominated by Margaret Petro and seconded by Larry Anders. Nominations from the floor will also be taken before the vote at the December Meeting.

The following appointments were announced and accepted: Kevan Sheridan had agreed to continue as our SYSOP; Larry Anders agreed to continue as the Librarian; William LaMartin agreed to continue as our Editor of the Newsletter "Bits of Blue" and the TPCUG Home Page on the World Wide Web (WWW). Margaret Petro was asked and she accepted the newly defined position as the Educational Chairperson. She will be aiding the present SIGs and creating new Educational programs and new SIGs. Ken Boyd volunteered to help Margaret in her new position.

It was announced that the Swap Meet/Bargain Table would take place at the next regular meeting December 11, 1996. There will be a $5.00 donation per vendor for space at a table. Vendors and members are invited to set up a table to sell their useable computer components. TPCUG will also have a table.

The meeting place "move" from the Ybor Campus of Hillsborough

(Minutes.....Continued on page 6)

Software Review

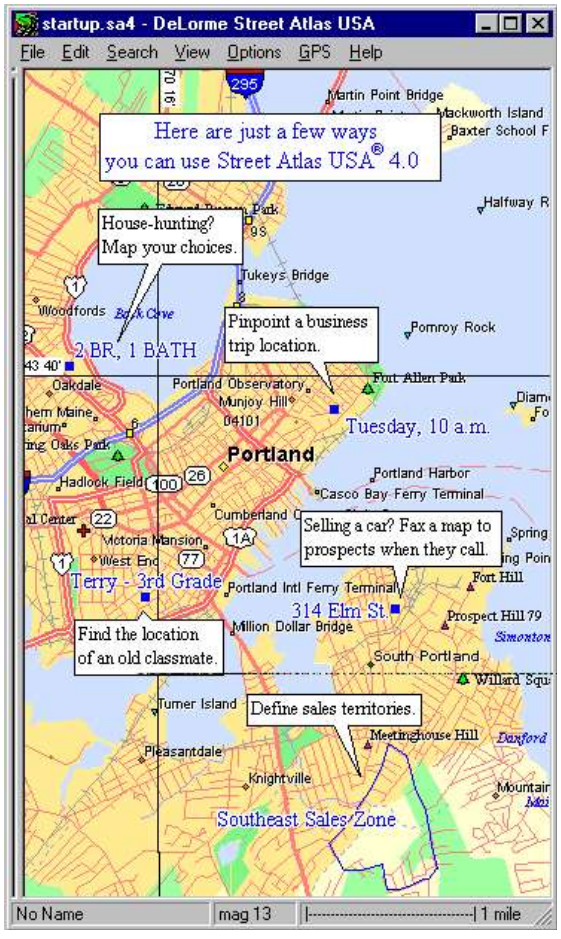
Street Atlas USA Version 4.0

by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

There are only a handful or so of software packages that I have stuck with from the beginning, and Street Atlas USA from DeLorme is one of them. For quite a while now Street Atlas USA has been the best mapping program of its kind, and with version 4.0 it has only gotten better.

New features allow you to:

- Draw lines and shapes
- Measure distances and areas
- Get up-to-date travel information
- Show Zip code boundaries and demographic information
- Copy maps from CD to PC
- Map imported databases and a few other things



You can now add your own lines or various shapes to personalize your maps. Add your own roads, indicate property boundaries, draw a circle to show your house or business in relationship to other homes or businesses or map sales territories.

You can now click on any two points and Street Atlas USA 4 will give you the distance between each point. If you add more points or draw a shape or circle and you will get the area inside that shape. Distances are given in feet, miles or meters and areas are in kilometers, acres and hectares.

Just click on the *UPDATE* button and your Internet service will automatically be started and *"go-online"* to DeLorme's ***FREE*** Internet link for you to get all the latest highway construction information, latest updated weather and other localized current event information such as local festivals, etc., and display them right on your maps. This is really a neat feature!

Street Atlas USA 3.0 was the first mapping program to link to a CD-ROM phone directory, Phone Search USA (also available from DeLorme). With version 4.0 now you can also import names and addresses from your own personal database or contact manager and pinpoint them on street-level maps.

I had always felt that Street Atlas USA was the most detailed mapping software I had used, but now I think it's even better. Now there is also demographic data like population, income, home values, and average age by Zip codes. Also included are area codes and landmarks. You can also denote Zip code and county boundaries.

If there is a particular map or section that you use quite frequently you can copy or download that specific information to your desktop or portable PC for faster access. This could be great for presentations or transferring data to a PC that does not have a CD-ROM.

TAKE NOTE OF THIS…. NEVER GET LOST AGAIN! For $125 you can get Street Atlas USA 4.0 and ***TRIPMATE***, a high-performance, easy-to-use link to the satellite navigation technology of the Global Positioning System. (GPS is a network of 24 orbiting satellites, placed there by the US Department of Defense, that broadcast low-power radio waves.) With a portable PC, Tripmate will locate you on detailed maps anywhere in the United States. An arrow shows your position on the map and moves as you travel using signals that determine your position, altitude, speed and direction of travel. Even though this seems like "Star Wars" technology DeLorme claims it's really easy to use.

Street Atlas USA 4.0 can save a map in its proprietary format that can then be e-mailed to anyone else with Street Atlas 4.0, and viewed and/or printed on the other end. If there is a negative feature with Street Atlas USA 4.0, it's that it cannot be directly saved to any other file or graphic format. The screen can be captured or copied to the clipboard, brought into a graphic type program and then saved in various graphic formats. I would rate this process as only *good*. Whereas printing directly from within Street Atlas USA I would rate as *SUPERIOR*.

(Atlas.....Continued on page 6)

Suncoast Freenet

by Charles Howe,
Tampa PC users Group

A huge resource is available to Tampa Bay area (Hillsborough County, Pinellas County): the Suncoast Freenet. After a few generalities, this article, which is prescriptive in nature, tells you a shortcut technique which will substantially enhance your efficiency in using the Freenet.

Signing up:

If you aren't signed up already, you can do so by dialing 273-3755 (Hillsborough), 298-1653 (Pinellas). Or you can go to a public library and find at least one workstation networked to the server. Follow the directions on the screen in either case.

Accessing after you have signed up:

It is much faster to use a networked computer at a library. The modems you connect to when you dial in from home are 2400 baud only. A third method of access is available if you have a shell account with a commercial ISP: telnet. At the command prompt type

telnet scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us

("scfn" -- Suncoast Freenet. "thpl" -- Tampa-Hillsborough-Pinellas Library.) Then log on in the usual way.

You can telnet to the site and log on as visitor.

Shell account:

The freenet is a UNIX box. You have a disguised shell account. You do not (are not allowed to) type in UNIX commands. You follow the menu. Your menu choices are translated into a series of UNIX commands that accomplish your objective, but you never see them. The all important seeming exception is explained below.

Getting to the Main Menu:

When you log on, a one-screen page shows up. (Nomenclature: A page consists of 1 or more screens -- can be many.) Read it the first time you see it (you will skip by it automatically afterwards), then press the enter key. You are at the second page. Read the first screen, press the space bar (this is UNIX's way of proceeding through text), read the second screen, etc. When you are ready to proceed to the next page -- you will be immediately after you have read it once -- press q (as per the instructions at the bottom of the screen; learn them), then return. The third page shows up. Study it also, but very soon you will find yourself pressing q, return in one motion.

The Main Menu:

The main menu shows up. It is the starting point for whatever you do on the Freenet. When you have settled into a routine of using the Freenet -- know what topics you want to deal with -- you will key in a word (take a shortcut) which will either take you where you want to go or nearly there -- some navigation by menu may be necessary, but not as much and maybe none at all. In this learning phase, we are going through some menus. They will show you how to get at all the shortcut words.

The top line reads

SUNCOAST FREE-NET MAIN MENU (menu = main)

We will refer to it as the Main Menu. From it, choose

1. Suncoast Free-Net (Administration, Help & Index) (admin)

A second menu with the top line

ADMINISTRATION CENTER (menu = admin)

shows up. Choose

14. Suncoast Free-Net INDEX

We have now gotten to the menu that is the centerpiece of this note. We see

SUNCOAST FREE-NET INDEX (menu = index)

1. A - B
2. C - D
3. E - G
4. H - J
5. K - M
6. N - Q
7. R - S
8. T - Z
9. Index to USENET Discussion Groups
10. Another Index to UDGs

(There is also a two-line set of navigation instructions at the bottom. Many screens contain one of two two-line sets of navigation instructions. If you become a serious user of the Freenet, they will become second nature.)

Each of these menu choices gives you one-line descriptions of

(Freenet.....Continued on page 8)

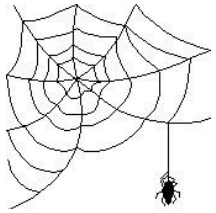
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Flight Simulator for Windows 95** - Microsoft-Fly a plane in Windows 95 - CD & Pentium required.
2. **Goldmine** - GoldMine Software Corp. - Contact management software.
3. **Tracer -** 7th Level - Launch into cyberspace with a deadly virus on your heels-Windows 95 CD.
4. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
5. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
6. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
7. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
8. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
9. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
10. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
11. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of Flying (8-adult)
12. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
13. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
14. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
15. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full-Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
16. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
17. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calendar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Biodiversity & Biological Collections	http://www.keil.ukans.edu/
Business Week	http://www.businessweek.com/
CNET.Com (Internet News and Tips)	http://www.cnet.com/
IRN News (British news in Real Audio)	http://www.sms.co.uk/real.html
NEWS.COM (Computer News)	http://www.news.com/?msn.punch
TUCOWS (Shareware)	http://www.sausage.com/tucows.htm
FindLaw (Law Crawler)	http://www.lawcrawler.com/index.html
Galleria degli Uffizi (Art museum)	http://www.televisual.it/uffizi/index.html
Daily Brief (Collection of Audio News)	http://www.timecast.com/dailybrief1a.htm
Gene Map of the Human Genome	http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/SCIENCE96/
MDR Fernshen (live German TV)	http://193.22.36.165/livekam/lk1.htm
Museums on the WWW	http://www.cs.rdg.ac.uk/vlmp/usa.html
Book Stacks (commercial book sales)	http://www.books.com/scripts/news.exe
National Library of New Zealand	http://www.natlib.govt.nz/
North Carolina Genealogy	http://www.flex.net/u/golden/nc-state/nc-state.htm
Mariner's Museum (Newport News VA)	http://www.mariner.org/
Computer Credible Magazine	http://www.credible.com/compmain.html
Enviromental Horticultural Department (UF)	http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/
GardenNet	http://trine.com/GardenNet/
Intel Secrets	http://anet-dfw.com/cgi-bin/imagemap/x86.org/docs/gifs/HomePage.map

(Atlas.....Continued from page 3)
System Requirements:

- IBM-compatible computer with
- 386SX (33MHz) processor ·8MB RAM ·9MB hard drive space ·CD-ROM drive Super VGA graphics ·256-color monitor mouse ·Microsoft® Windows® 3.1 or later (designed for Windows 95)
- Recommended: 486DX (66MHz) processor or higher color printer
- (for Tripmate you will also need a portable PC, 4 AA batteries, and/or DeLorme's AAA Map 'n Go.)

In my opinion this is the finest software of its kind on the market today. And if you own a color printer, you won't believe the quality of the printed maps. The street price ranges from $40-$50 with an upgrade from version 3.0 directly from DeLorme for $25. I took the upgrade route and got more for my money than most programs I've upgraded lately. This program would make someone a great Christmas gift.



DeLorme
181 US Route 1 South - Freeport, ME 04032
1-800-575-2244 - http:\\www.streetatlasusa.com ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
Community College to the Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI), at 4801 East Fowler, 33617 has been tentatively set for February, 1997.

The membership was invited by Clark Evans to visit MOSI to observe the Ham Radio Station setup. Call 988-0125 to get in free.

Charles Howe informed the group that ISDN is getting close to affordability and is very fast, all digital. He said two companies, Packet Works and Internet Junction (ij.com), resale GTE services for about $37.00 per month. There is no charge for a voice call. GTE charges $.02 per connection plus $.02 per minute after the ISDN line is installed.

Michael Hodges took a survey of on-line users. Eight members use AOL and 2 used MSN, the two services with unlimited access. Two members use Compuserve, none uses Prodigy. Most use other independent Internet providers, and almost everyone in the room had some Internet access. Some people raised their hands more than once, indicating that they use more than one service.

A discussion followed concerning a networking segment of the meeting for employers to meet those looking for computer related work.

A program about "Upgrading your Computer Components" was presented by Steven T. Singer, Chief Executive Officer of Regnis Distributors, Inc. He has a degree in industrial engineering from the University of South Florida. He stated that to purchase computer components from his company, you would have to have a tax number and have a business license in computers or electronics.

He said proprietary computers are hard to upgrade, you could get a fine middle of the road computer built by Gateway, but you are better off building your own computer (or having it built).

When upgrading your computer system the key words are Bigger, Better, Faster. This is accomplished by getting a faster processor. We have moved from the 286 to a 386, then the 486, next the Pentium Others, 586s and 686s are also available. A faster processor requires a new mother board, available now for under $100. Other means of upgrading entail upgrading the software for the BIOS; new chips for speed and more memory; better video cards or more memory for the video card for more colors.

Before upgrading ask: How fast is it? Does It work? How much does it cost? The time to upgrade is now as prices are coming down. The bottom line, though, is the compatibility testing: what will work with what.

Steve gave a presentation that seemed to capture the interest of everyone. He spent much of the talk describing the many different CPUs available, their advantages and disadvantages. He was being questioned during the break and was still giving out information long after the meeting was over and I was leaving the room. I don't know if I left knowing less about more or more about more. This was definitely one of the most interesting presentations, in spite of its mind-boggling aspect.

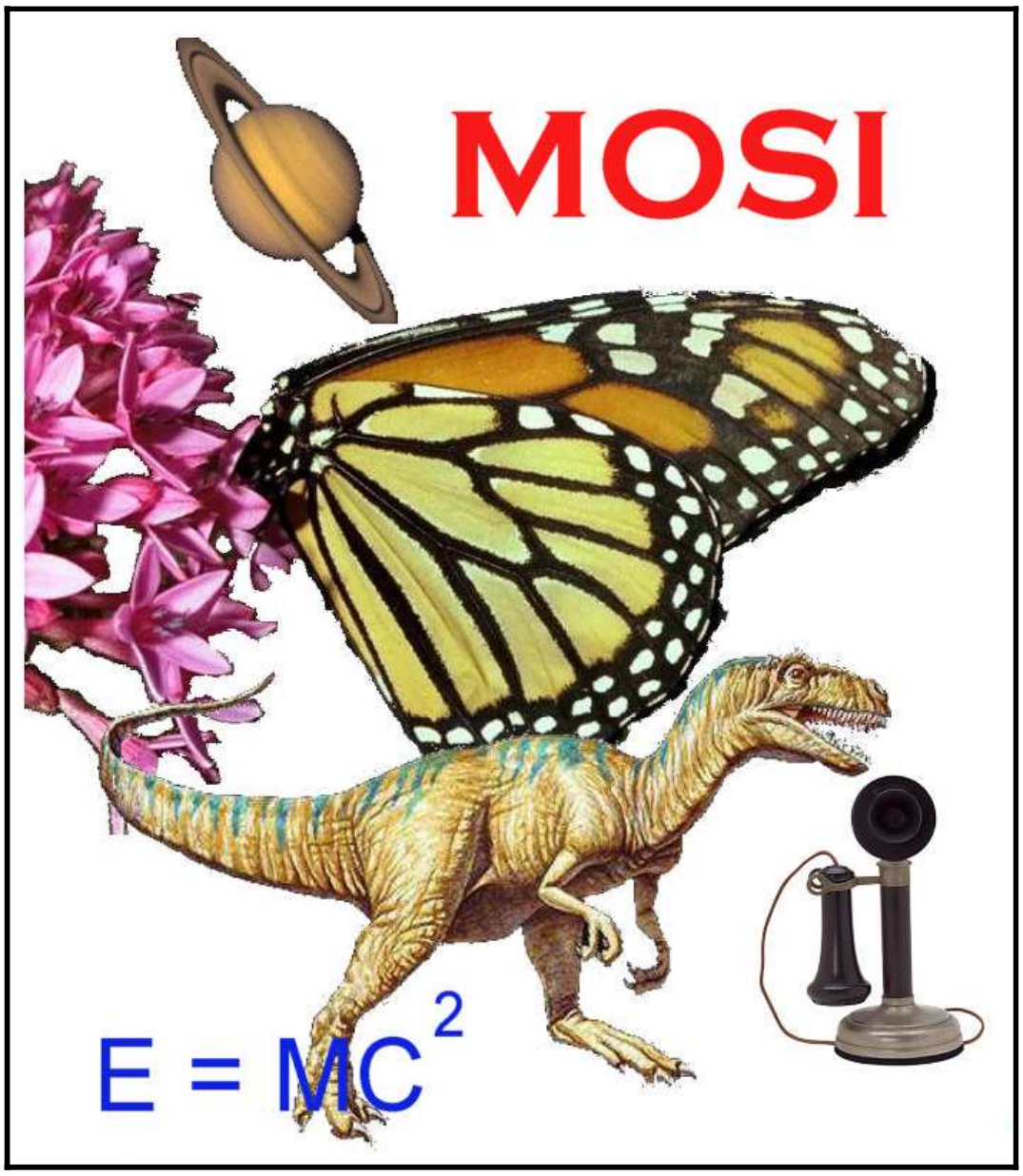
Steven can be contacted by phone: (813) 623-3302, FAX (813) 622-8580 or E-mail
RegnisDist@aol.com. His BBS number is 622-8948.

Door Prizes:

Scenes	Ken Boyd
Avation photography (screen saver)	Michael Leiss
Family Fun Pack for OS2	Merle Nicholson

(Special Note of Thanks from Bruce Register to Jenny for taking the above minutes while I was in San Francisco) ◆

In February, follow the Tampa PC Users Group to



Beginning with the **February** meeting, we are moving the site of our monthly meeting from the Ybor campus of HCC to the Museum of Science and Industry at 4801 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa, FL.

This will be a much better facility for us with computers and projection equipment on site.

The exact location of the meetings and further information will appear in the next newsletter and at our Web site http://www.tbos2cla.com/ on the “Announcements” page.

(Freenet.....Continued from page 4)
a topic -- a newsgroup; files of information about something such as a program or place or event or how to deal with some bureaucracy or ...other freenets to telnet to; discussion groups; gopher sites; ftp sites; and so on.

To make that concrete, suppose you selected 1. It is a page (see the distinction between page and screen above) 645 lines long. Here is a sampling of topics:

A - B	index
A History of MacDill Air Force Base	tbhcmil
Ab-Fab	tvtalk
Abandoned Cars	hcsubaf
About Suncoast Free-Net Mail	mail
About Connecting to LUIS from the Free-Net	usflib
Acronym Dictionary	elecref
Adoption Sources	geneal
Airline 800 Number Directory	direct
Amateur Radio, Homebrew	radiotalk
Aquatic Weeds	hcsubaf2
Area Marinas and Boat Ramps	ramps
Armwood High School Leo Club	leo
AT&T 800 Number Directory	busdirec
Barbershop Quartets	barbershop
Baywatch	tvprog
Bean Recipes	vegfood
Bertrand Russell's Ten Commandments	humart
Bible Gateway (four versions in six languages)	protest
Bird Hospital	pconvis
Borrow Pit Permit	hcsubaf2
Bronson, Missouri	ustrav

(My selection criteria? None.)

If you select 9, you see a listing of discussion groups, about 135 in number. A sampling:

Discussion Groups - Animals	animaltalk
Discussion Groups - Breastfeeding	breastfeed
Discussion Groups - Energy	energy
Discussion Groups - Model Railroading	hobbytalk
Discussion Groups - Soccer	soccer

If you select 10, you see a pageful of explanatory text, then about 700 lines like the following:

alt.alien.visitors	astrotalk	Aliens from ...
alt.autos.camaro.firebird	autotalk	Camaros & Fi...
alt.fan.conan-obrien	tvtalk	Conan O'Brie...
alt.fishing	fishtalk	General (alt...
alt.missing-kids	partalk	Missing Chil...
alt.rock-n-roll.classic	rocktalk	Classic Rock...
alt.sports.baseball.balt-orioles	basetalk	Baltimore Or...
alt.sports.football. pro.tampabay-bucs	foottalk2	Tampa Bay Bu.
alt.support.arthritis	healtalk	Arthritis ...
alt.tv.seinfeld	tvtalk	Seinfeld ...
bit.listserv.mednews	medtalk	Medical News..
comp.internet.library	inettalk	Internet Li ...
k12.lang.esp-eng	k12talk2	Spanish/Eng ...
misc.invest.real-estate	estate	Real Estate ...
rec.autos.tech	autotalk	Technical ...
rec.games.trivia	gametalk	Trivia ...
rec.pets.dogs.activities	dogtalk	Activities/E...
rec.puzzles.crosswords	gametalk	Crosswords ...
rec.video.cable-tv	cabletv	Technical an...
sci.math	scitalk	Mathematics ...
soc.culture.quebec	ethtalk2	Quebec ...

The shortcut is as follows: when you are at the Main Menu, key in the word that points to what you are interested, then do re-turn. Most or all of the navigation is done for you.

Be warned: not every shortcut works as advertised.

Browsing through the lists: download frntshct.zip from the club BBS. Keep in mind that this set of lists is not entirely static. ◆

(Barcodes.....Continued from page 1)
really did what any reasonable person would think that it would do based on the program's description, then there wouldn't have been too much of a problem. And if this individual had owned Microsoft Access and Microsoft Word, which together can certainly handle record keeping, mail merge, label printing, etc. with POSTNET barcodes, then there wouldn't have been much of a problem either. But that was not the case, and buying those programs is a somewhat expensive solution to printing mailing labels with barcodes. So I rebuilt the individual's database, since the supposedly super program would only export the fields necessary for mailing, leaving behind all sorts of other client information. I assume that this was to prevent the customer from ever changing to another program. Then with the rebuilt data, we found an inexpensive program called *My Advanced Mail List* which will do the addresses with barcodes on labels or letters. It will also allow you to edit, import and export all of your data fields. Its only shortcoming was that it didn't do mail merge on text documents. But how much do you want for $40. The super program that wouldn't allow you to export all of your

(Barcodes.....Continued on page 9)

The Computer Chicken

discovered by Merle Nicholson,
Tampa PC Users Group

NT Chicken: Will cross the road in June. No, August. September for sure.

OS/2 Chicken: It crossed the road in style years ago, but it was so quiet that nobody noticed.

Win 95 Chicken: You see different colored feathers while it crosses, but cook it and it still tastes like ... chicken.

Microsoft Chicken (TM): It's already on both sides of the road. And it just bought the road.

OOP Chicken: It doesn't need to cross the road, it just sends a message.

Assembler Chicken: First it builds the road ...

C Chicken: It crosses the road without looking both ways.

C++ Chicken: The chicken wouldn't have to cross the road, you'd simply refer to him on the other side.

VB Chicken: USHighways!TheRoad.cross (aChicken)

Delphi Chicken: The chicken is dragged across the road and dropped on the other side.

Java Chicken: If your road needs to be crossed by a chicken, the server will download one to the other side. (Of course, those are chicklets.)

Web Chicken: Jumps out onto the road, turns right, and just keeps on running.

Gopher Chicken: Tried to run, but got flattened by the Web chicken.

Newton Chicken: Can't cluck, can't fly, and can't lay eggs, but you can carry it across the road in your pocket !

Cray Chicken: Crosses faster than any other chicken, but if you don't dip it in liquid nitrogen first, it arrives on the other side fully cooked.

Quantum Logic Chicken: The chicken is distributed probabilistically on all sides of the road until you observe it on the side of your course.

Lotus Chicken: Don't you *dare* try to cross the road the same way we do!

Mac Chicken: No reasonable chicken owner would want a chicken to cross the road, so there's no way to tell it to.

Al Gore Chicken: Waiting for completion of NCI (National Chicken-crossing Infrastructure) and will cross as soon as it's finished.

COBOL Chicken:

```
0001-CHICKEN-CROSSING.
IF NO-MORE-VEHICLES THEN
PERFORM 0010-CROSS-THE-ROAD
VARYING STEPS FROM 1 BY 1 UNTIL
ON-THE-OTHER-SIDE
ELSE
GO TO 0001-CHICKEN-CROSSING ◆
```

(Barcodes.....Continued from page 8)

data fields cost more than ten times that much.

Now, all of this got me to thinking about how I could print barcodes for mailing without any special program. After a little research on the Internet, I found that to print a POST-NET barcode for an address you first produce a 12 digit number as follows:

Take your nine digit zip, 33606-2904 in my case, and write it as 336062904. Then you add the last two digits of your street address to this. So, since my street address is 821, I now have 33606290421. Finally you need to add what is called the check digit. To get this you add up all the digits in the above number, which comes to 36 in this example. You then select the single digit which when added to this sum would give you a multiple of 10. In my case the check digit is 4, since 36 + 4 = 40. Thus our 12 digit number is 336062904214.

Now, to get a POSTNET barcode out of this all we need is a barcode font. The Internet also provided me with such a font. This particular font requires that you write the zip to be bar-coded as follows s336062904214s. Other barcode fonts want you to use an * instead of the s, others use /'s to enclose the zip. So to get my barcode all I do is write out s336062904214s, select it with the mouse, go to the menu bar of whatever program I am writing this in, select the appropriate barcode font as the font for the highlighted text and you

(Barcodes.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

No meeting in December. This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

No meeting in December. This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. at 7:00 PM at a member's home. **However, December 4 is the next meeting.** *Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

PC Willy

Q. Dear PC Willy

Ya know that I've gotten in the mail about 20 to 30 free startup disks from AOL, Compuserve, and Prodigy and some others and I was wondering if I could reformat these disks and use them for other data. Is that allowed?

signed Howed Theygetmyname

A. Dear Howed Theygetmyname

Well you can do anything you want with those disks that they sent you because they're unsolicited advertising. But be carefully about keeping valuable data on them because they are usually not the top of the line disks. I've thrown away about half of the ones that I've received because of errors and bad sectors. Sometimes it's better to just delete all the files on the disks rather than format them. (Be sure to run scandisk on them with surface scan.)

PC Willy

Q. Dear PC Willy

My laptop computer is only about a year old and the battery doesn't seem to hold a charge as good as it did when it was new,any suggestions?

signed Q.K. Typer

A. Dear Q.K. Typer

A lot of batteries will have a "memory effect". That is, when you recharge the battery without completely discharging the battery it will start charging itself faster and faster but not to full capacity. Many machines will cut off before the battery goes dead so the battery never gets to discharge completely and the "memory effect" slowly keeps the battery from charging to its full capacity. A way to overcome this is to use a separate battery charger that will completely kill a battery before it charges it (there are some new ones that do this automatically). But if you remove the battery and put a light bulb (usually a 12 volt car turn signal bulb will do) with wires to the battery and leave it connected for a couple of hours to completely discharge the battery then charge it overnight and kill it again with the bulb 2 or 3 times, that will remove the memory in the battery and make it bounce back to nearly new again. This only applys to NiCad batteries not to the new NiMh ones.

PC Willy

Send questions and hints or trivia to Wilgoo@aol.com ◆

(Bacodes.....Continued from page 9)
get

ŝ3360629042 1 4ŝ

Theoretically this barcode uniquely identifies my house among all the others in the United States, but somehow I don't

(Barcodes.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
Borland	Quarterdeck
Broderbund	Regnis
Corel Systems	Symantec
Grolier	Traveling Software
Knowledge Adventure	Xerox

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL
MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 lndividual $35 Family
$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

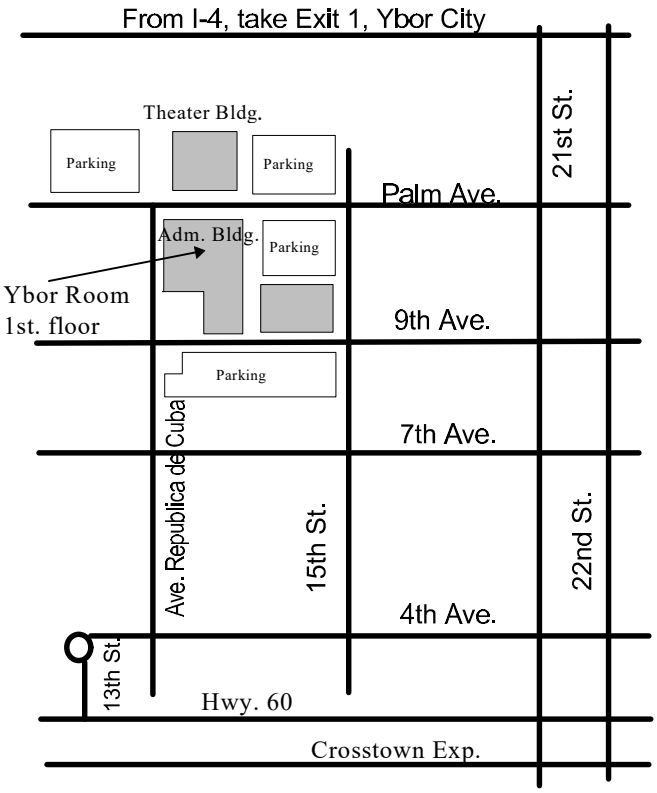
To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9612.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

(Barcodes.....Continued from page 10)

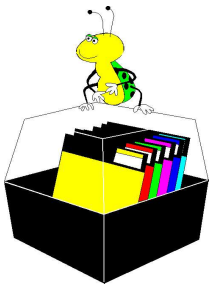
think my mail carrier will deliver a letter to me with that bar-code as the only information on the letter.

However, once you have figured out this much, you just have to write a basic program (Visual Basic in my case) that will take an address with a nine digit zip code and turn it automatically into an address with such a bar code and print it on an envelope or label. Well, when you have gone this far you might as well go all the way. That is, write a Visual Basic program which will open a database containing mailing information, then print out mailing labels for a selected group of entries such that the labels also have POSTNET barcodes as described above.

This is an example of what I enjoy in computing. I used the Internet to find the needed information. Then I used my knowledge of Visual Basic programming to produce a solution to my problem of printing POSTNET barcodes. ◆



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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 1 January 1997

Meeting

January 8, 1997
6:00 PM
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Ybor Room

Turbo Tax Presentation
Election of Officers

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MOSI, Compaq & OmniForm

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

MOSI I am sure most of our members are happy to be moving the meeting site to the Museum of Science and Industry beginning with the February meeting. Unfortunately for me, it will mean a longer drive—at rush hour. For some of you it will be closer than the present location, so that balances out. Driving distance notwithstanding, it has to be a good move for the group. I have watched our membership and attendance at the meetings steadily decline following our move from the IBM building to the present site. It is a simple fact of life that many people over 40 just don't want to be in the Ybor City entertainment district when the sun goes down. I remember one fellow in the computer field whom I invited to our meetings last year. When he found where we met, he said, "There is nothing you could be doing that would make me risk my life by going to Ybor City after dark." We, however, have been coming to Ybor City after dark for almost two years with no ill effects, but such ideas don't die easily. And this perception has been a definite drag on our group. But we have survived and are now ready for a new beginning at MOSI. For this, we are most appreciative of Ford Bond, affiliated with both the Tampa PC Users Group and MOSI, for his assistance in making this move possible.

Compaq I always thought of Compaq as a fairly good company, but some recent events have changed my mind. The first was when a friend wanted to upgrade an older Compaq and found that basically nothing but the hard drive, keyboard and monitor was salvageable due to the proprietary nature of the computer's design. How-

(Comments.....Continued on page 2)

Starting February 12, 1997, we will meet at the Museum of Science & Industry, 4801 E. Fowler Ave.
Visit us on the Web at http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/ or on the BBS at 813-980-1295

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BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

Home Page http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if ithey are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING December 1996

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

DECEMBER MEETING

The December meeting was devoted to the bargain table and swap meet. Several people came away with some real bargains in software and hardware. The networking appeared to be equally rewarding. A lot of questions were answered for all of us.

JANUARY MEETING AT HCC YBOR

The next meeting is January 9, 1997 and is our last at the Ybor location. Since we didn't get around to the formal election of officers for 1997, we will do this at the January meeting.

FEBRUARY MEETING WILL BE AT MOSI

The February meeting will be at MOSI on East Fowler opposite the USF campus. The TPCUG will congregate in the lobby promptly at 6 PM for networking. A 6:30, we will move to the meeting room. The front door will be locked at 6:30 as we move to the meeting room. If anyone is later than 6:30, stand by the front door and get attention of security as they pass to be admitted and led to the meeting room. We certainly do not want anyone to miss the meeting. Sometimes, we just absolutely cannot get there by 6PM or even 6:30...Come on anyway! ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

ever, that doesn't bother me as much as the following problem a member of our group encountered recently.

Apparently now when you buy a Compaq Presario with Windows 95 loaded you do not get a copy of Windows 95 on a CD or as a collection of floppies. You are advised that you have the "right" to make a backup copy of the operating system. To do this you must feed about 29 disks into your computer. When you are finished, you still don't have a real copy of Windows 95, though, since there is one more disk, a startup disk that you have to use before you can use the first disk that you made (in case you need to reinstall the operating system). In fact, this startup disk apparently partitions your C drive into a standard DOS partition and a nonstandard proprietary "Compaq" partition. Now, you are ready to use those 29 or so disks you made

(Comments.....Continued on page 8)

Software Review

InfoPedia 2.0

by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



In the past I've reviewed other multimedia encyclopedias, and I own several, such as Microsoft's Encarta, Compton's Interactive and Grolier's, to name a few. I like them all to some degree. But now there's one that is truly multimedia, down to having your own personal "human librarian" guide to show you what's included and how to use it. There was obviously a version 1.0, which I know nothing about, but I can tell you about version 2.0, which I am going to do now. I am always on the lookout for quality software at a reasonable price and this one scores an "**A**" in both categories.

First, let me tell you about the references Infopedia 2.0 comes with…you get all this:

- The complete 29-volume Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia
  Thousands of articles with hypertext links you can click on to find more information.
- Roget's 21st Century Thesaurus
  More than 450,000 synonyms yield over 1,000,000 word choices.
- Hammond World Atlas
  Explore the world through hundreds of richly detailed full-color maps.
- The 1995 World Almanac & Book of Facts
  The most comprehensive and up-to-date collection of facts anywhere.
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary
  Over 200,000 definitions.
- Webster's New Biographical Dictionary
  Details on the lives of more than 30,000 leaders.
- Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage
  The ultimate source book on English usage.
- The Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Quotations
  Who said what, when? More than 4,000 quotes from the world's personalities.

Infopedia allows you to search all eight references simultaneously with one mouse click. You can also browse through a gallery of videos, photos, and animations and listen to more than 450 sounds -- an interactive experience that will both inform and entertain you.

Although Infopedia 2.0 uses a single window interface to keep things faster and easier to use, it also comes with six different *View* capabilities. The ***Browser*** is an alphabetical list which displays all the topics. You could just scan the list to find what you're interested in, but, if you start typing, the list will automatically adjust to your topic. The ***Browser*** functions differently depending on which of the six Views is currently active.

- **Index View** - general reference mode that shows every entry alphabetically
- **Media View** - shows only entries that include photos, videos, maps, sound clips or animations - filter-out whichever media you are not interested in
- **Search View** - search for entries that include specific words or phrases - utilize AND, OR, or BUT NOT
- **Book View** - look and feel of a real book - displays Table of Contents - access entire contents of book, including preface, index and notes
- **Subject View** - list of entries within a particular area of interest
- **Project View** - organize research into printable, integrated projects - create customized time-line

Other features include the **Zooming Atlas**... that allows you to zoom in to see detailed maps and information on cities all over the world; **Morphing Maps**... where you can discover how great events in history have reshaped our world and see how the earth has changed over time. (These are narrated entries.) The **Instaview Tool Bar**... gives you instant access to Infopedia's wealth of articles, videos, photos, maps, and

(Infopedia.....Continued on page 9)



Software Review

Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail from 7th Level

Review by Jim Weber, Tampa PC Users Group

What would you expect from a game that begins with the disclaimer "No Refunds"? This truly warped humor is your first greeting to the latest game from the Monty Python troupe. Just getting through the opening sequence and actually starting the game will be enough to remind you of why Monty Python had such an avid audience. Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail follows the adventure of King Arthur on his famous quest for the Holy Grail along with all of the usual obscene jokes, sexual innuendo, and references to things only the British would find funny.



The game follows the same story line as the original motion picture, along with the original video clips and dialog from the film. If you saw the movie you have a good idea of what Arthur is expected to do during each scene to progress to the next task on his search for the Holy Grail. Of course if you want to finish the game successfully you have to stick around and search for the various hot spots to find clues and collect items for your quest. (I still don't know why I had to collect a pile of dung.) Some of the hot spots have to be hit more than once to give up all their secrets.

During your search several other small games appear upon completion of a task. "Drop Dead" is a spoof of Tetris played by stacking dead bodies in a pit. The Python comes through when the live ones get thrown in also with their little cries of "I'm not dead." Another game is "Burn the Witch", where witches are burned at the stake in various colors of flame and musical screams. Like the old "Simon Says" game, the object is to repeat the sequence each time as the number of flames increases.

Holy Grail is full of the off color humor that made the original Monty Python series so popular. I personally am a big fan of Monty Python and enjoyed this game. The bizarre and racy British humor associated with the Monty Python series is readily present during game play, so if you wouldn't let your children watch the show, don't get them this game. Also, those of you who don't really get Monty Python probably won't enjoy this game either. Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail falls into a sort of love, hate category of games that make it really difficult for any one to either endorse this game or not. I would have to leave that decision to the individual gamer, but I found the game to be an enjoyable trip through Python Land.

7th Level, Inc.
1110 E. Collins Blvd., #122
Richardson, TX 75081
Main Line: (972) 498-8100
http://www.7thlevel.com/ ◆

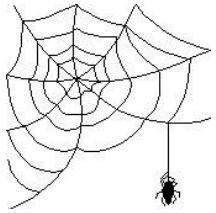
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Quicken Deluxe** - Intuit-Manage your finances in either Windows 95 or Windows 3.1. Both versions included on CD.
2. **Goldmine** - GoldMine Software Corp. - Contact management software.
3. **Tracer -** 7th Level - Launch into cyberspace with a deadly virus on your heels-Windows 95 CD.
4. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
5. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
6. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
7. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
8. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
9. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
10. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
11. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)
12. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
13. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
14. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
15. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full-Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
16. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+) - Windows CD
17. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calendar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Baton Rouge Advocate Online	http://www.theadvocate.com/
Automated Weather Source	http://www.aws.com/
Cajun Clikers Genealogy SIG	http://www.intersurf.com/~cars/
Cato Institute (Public Policy)	http://www.cato.org/home.html
AudioNet (Audio Programs on the Internet)	http://www.audionet.com/
Antoine's Resturant - New Orleans	http://www.yatcom.com/neworl/dining/antoines/netscape/welcome.html
Cavern's Win 95 Page (List of Win 95 Sites)	http://www.iag.net/~mgoetz/win95.html
Cigar Friendly Restaurants	http://www.cigarfriendly.com/cfrest.htm
Delorme's Cyber Atlas (online maps)	http://www.delorme.com/cybermaps/cyberatlas.htm
DineNet (Restaurant Menus online)	http://www.menusonline.com/
Economic Policy Institute	http://epinet.org/
Electronic Zoo (Animal Pictures)	http://netvet.wustl.edu/pix.htm
Four11.COM (Internet White Pages)	http://www.four11.com/
French Quarter Web - New Orleans	http://www.frenchquarter.com/
FTD (Florists)	http://www.novator.com/bigbook/
Italy Online	http://www.initaly.com/
Paris Pages	http://www.paris.org/
My Town (local Information around the USA)	http://206.129.166.117/mytown/mytown2.html
San Francisco Bay Recourses	http://www.slip.net/~scmetro/sfbay.htm
Sunhawk Digital Music Software	http://www.sunhawk.com/hawk/home.html
The Adrenaline Vault Game Site	http://www.avault.com/
The Economist (News, Ideas, Opinions)	http://www.economist.com/
Virtual World Wide Web (3D Virtual Worlds)	http://vwww.com/

Software Review

Quicken Financial Planner from Intuit Version 2 CD-ROM

Review by Rob Davis, Tampa PC Users Group

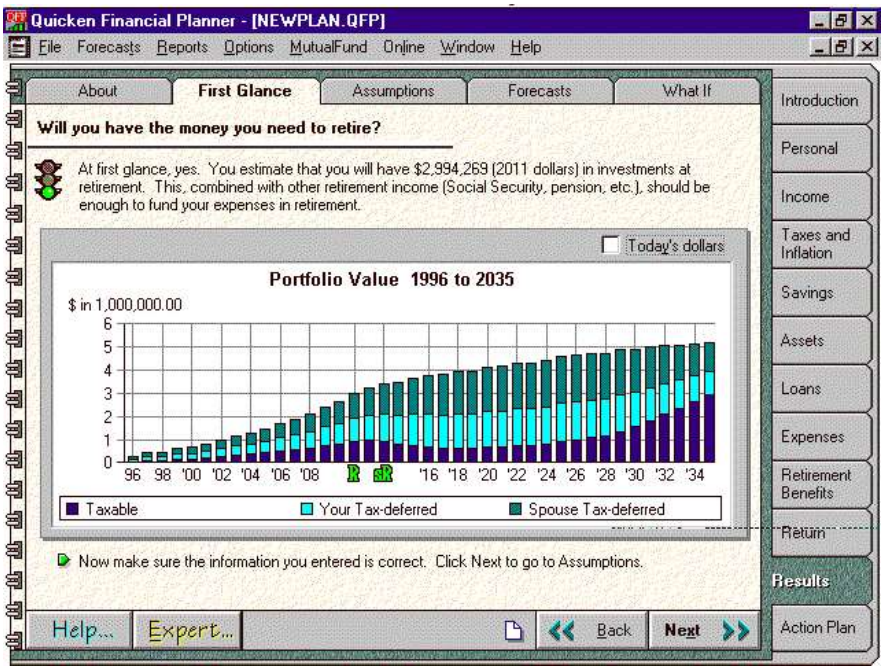
Do you want to retire and have the money to do those things you wanted to do but didn't have time for while you were working? Now that all that Holiday shopping and party fun is over, we may want to look into our financial future. That is what Quicken Financial Planner (QFP) can do for us. It can not give us all the answers for our particular situation, but it can certainly lead us in the right directions for planning our future financial needs.

Although the installation of QFP went without a hitch on my system (running Windows 3.1), this program is not made to run on your old XT! In fact, the system requirements would be considered pretty heavy a few years ago. It requires at least a 486/33, an MPC2 compatible CD-ROM drive with speakers and sound card, running MSCDEX 2.2 or higher, Windows 3.1 or 95, 8 MB RAM or more, a hard drive with at least 16 MB free, a 256 Color VGA Monitor, and about any printer supported by Windows. The video clips and graphics are what you couldn't get with that old XT. I installed this on my 486 DX4-100 with 12 MB RAM, a 2X CD-ROM, and lots of disk space.

Have no fear about reading a thick manual to run this program. There is no thick manual to read. In fact, if I weren't writing this article about QFP, I probably wouldn't need the manual at all. You are guided every step of the way through the initial setup and planning to the view of your future financial state.

It's a simple concept actually. First, you tell the program about your finances by answering simple questions. Next, you can play what if with various entries to see what you may need to change to make your plan work. There is also "expert" financial advice available in the form of video clips and pop up notes to help you make decisions. Then, of course, you can view results on screen or print out summaries, plans and graphs that will detail your path to financial security. The planning can guide you on how much you need to save, what ways you should invest those savings, and how to track your progress.

You can start with the QuickPlan which can be done in a matter of minutes. Later you can go back and add more details to the plan. QFP handles most retirement plans including 401(k), IRA's, 403(b), SEP, Keogh, and tax-deferred annuities. It will also automatically calculate your estimated Social Security Benefits. If set up properly, it can import data from your Quicken account. There is a built in access to the Internet for free access to financial information on the Quicken Financial Network.



QFP is mainly set up for stocks, bonds, annuities, retirement plans, and the like. Although my main investments are in the rental business, I was able to put my rentals and mortgages into my plan. And although this may not be the ultimate in financial planning programs, overall I found it to be very good for planning a financial future and showing the areas that may need improving. ◆

In January, the start of a new Program within the TPCUG

ANNOUNCING THE CAREER CORNER

at the

Tampa PC Users Group monthly meeting

From 6:00 to 6:30 PM we will have a networking half-hour at our monthly meeting devoted to potential employers and employees.

The *Tampa PC Users Group* has been serving the greater Tampa Bay community since 1984. The *Tampa PC User's Group* is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational opportunities to the community in the area of personal computer technology.

We have been frequently contacted by companies looking for talented Information Systems people. In 1997, we are expanding this "informal networking" into something that will provide more opportunities to serve the community.

When: Wednesday, January 8, 6:00 PM.

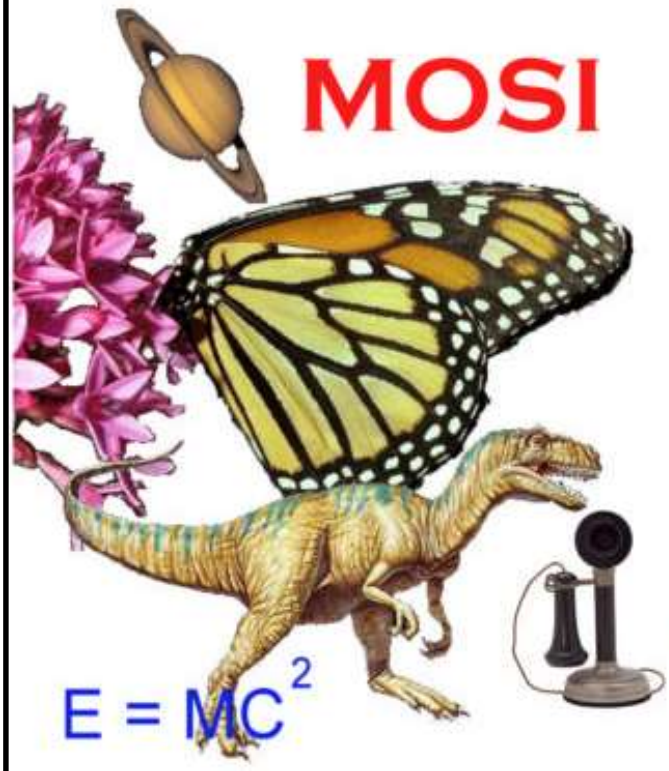
Where: Ybor Room, Administration Building
HCC at Ybor City
Corner of Palm Avenue and 15th

What to do: Come prepared to meet potential employers/employees

For additional information, call Connie Kincaid at 801-3532 (days) or 661-8185 (evenings) *connie@cybercup.com*

or Wil Goble 626-1892 (days) or 684-8004 (evenings) *wilgoo@aol.com*. ◆

In February, follow the Tampa PC Users Group to MOSI



Beginning with the **February** meeting, we are moving the site of our monthly meeting from the Ybor campus of HCC to the Museum of Science and Industry at 4801 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa, FL.

This will be a much better facility for us with computers and projection equipment on site.

We will first gather in the lobby of the main entrance. After the "Career Corner" in the lobby, we will move to the meeting room. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 2)
to reload your nonstandard version of Windows 95—you can only pray that there is not a defective one among them. What is the problem with Compaq simply providing a CD version of Windows 95 with the computer? Other companies do it. Do they have to pay Microsoft more if they provide the CD or is it just another method of making their systems proprietary so as to better control their manufacturing process—good for their cost control, but not good for you if you plan on making any changes.

If you run into a problem getting things back in order, you can call Compaq (the call is free if they determine the problem is their fault) and they will send you a" Compaq Quick Restore" CD with accompanying floppy. I assume the floppy is to boot up, put in the proprietary partition, and install your CD ROM drive software. Each model of Compaq has its own separate Restore CD, and the CD will return your computer's hard drive to the state it was in when you purchased the computer. Same question: Why couldn't this CD be included with the computer when you purchased it?

I discovered all of this when a member called requesting help with reloading Windows 95 on such a system. He had never been given the Restore CD, and the startup disk he had only gave him a message saying it couldn't proceed any further because the hard drive appeared to be compressed, and he would lose any data there (he didn't mind that). He didn't know anything about the drive being compressed, but perhaps someone else with access to the computer had done that in the past; then again the message may have been inaccurate. Anyway the solution was to give him a real Windows 95 Startup disk that I made on my computer (everyone should make one), have him then boot from this disk, then remove the non-DOS partition from his drive with FDISK, then reformat the drive, and finally use his 29 backup Compaq disks to reinstall their version of Windows 95. That got him up and running, and he installed some of his non pre-loaded software. The only problem was that disk 22 would not load entirely, and it apparently was the one with sound card drivers on it. So he had no sound.



Connie checks her notes

Later he got the Quick Restore CD from Compaq and tried to restore the pre-loaded programs. Sadly this didn't work. The program ran for six hours and produced nothing but an inaccurate progress indicator bar, which made it to 7 % complete then began to act strangely by exiting the right side of the screen and reappearing from the left side. So you get the idea, the Quick Restore is not very quick; nor does it always work

After the above, I went to the Usnet News Groups on the Internet to look for other people having such problems. There I found others had had problems with the Quick Restore CD and who were unhappy with the lack of a real copy of Windows 95. I found one more problem. Suppose a program that is pre-installed, like the Compaq Phone Center, needs to be reinstalled. From the articles I read, the only way to accomplish this is to use the Quick Restore CD—and this wipes your hard drive clean (if it works), including anything you may have added beyond the pre-installed software. And it is not hard to corrupt Phone Center, since from the Usenet News Group messages I gather that Compaq warns you this will happen if you install a program while Phone Center is running. Not hard to do, since it is in the start up directory of Windows and, hence, runs automatically.

So buyer beware. Is Compaq turning into another Packard Bell by going after the Wal-Mart/mass market computer business? Or am I off base here? Let me know if you bought a Compaq computer recently and are happy with it. Are others having such problems with Compaq or other companies? I am willing to bet that there are many more companies who don't supply full stand-alone copies of the software they pre-load.

OmniForm I don't like to be negative, and this form generating program from Caere gives me the opportunity to be positive. This isn't intended as a review of the product, just a note. Perhaps a review at a later date. As this program demonstrates, Optical Character Recognition (OCR) has really come a long way.

Take some printed form you use regularly, put it into the scanner, and press GO. Depending on the speed of your computer, in moments you have before you on your screen OmniForm's best guess as to the layout and wording of the form ready to be edited. And this guess is very good. I have done 20 plus forms so far, and consistently get very good results. The original form's text characteristics are well preserved. For example it knows the difference between Courier, Times Roman, Ariel, and the different sizes of these fonts; it catches bold, Italics, and underline. Everywhere there is a blank line for information to be provided on the form, a yellow highlighted underlined space appears on the screen. Check boxes on the form appear as yellow highlighted check boxes on the screen. Finally, the OCR performed on the form's text is very accurate. Simple forms

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

(Infopedia.....Continued from page 3)
sounds -- from anywhere in the program. To find information fast you can use the **Outline feature**… to collapse an article to just the main headings and subheadings. Then, click on a heading and Infopedia expands to the text you want.

If you use Microsoft's Word for Windows, Infopedia 2.0 will link to it. While using the word processor, highlight a word or phrase you wish to look up in Infopedia 2.0. Under Word's "view" menu, choose "Infopedia" and an **Index View** will appear open to the entry closest to the word or phrase highlighted. Also, if you own any of the "Intelli Link" reference series, Infopedia 2.0 will create a link allowing you to access those databases.

As I mentioned previously, Infopedia 2.0 is loaded with **HELP**! There is a fully cross referenced help file with detailed instructions on using all the features, plus tips and suggestions to make your research easier. There is a "Tour Guide" Librarian that will give you a full tour through the interface. Infopedia 2.0 is fully customizable to your preferences. You can save the screen layout and last article upon exit so you can start-up where you left off. You can also display the text in any size font you choose.

Although Infopedia 2.0 is designed for Windows 95 it will run on Windows 3.1x. Under Windows 95 the installation was automatic. I just inserted the CD in the drive and voila. I chose to run it directly from my CD-ROM and saved 8 megabytes of hard drive space.

Minimum System Requirements are:

- CPU: 486 SX, 25 MHz processor or better
- Software: Windows 3.1 or Windows 95
- RAM: 8 MB minimum
- Graphics: SVGA (640x480x256) graphics card
- CD-ROM: Double-speed CD-ROM drive with MSCDEX or better
- Sound: Sound card required
- Mouse: Mouse or other Windows-compatible pointing device required
- Plus: Fully compatible with Windows 95 Autoplay Feature

All of this comes on one CD and lists for $89.95. I received an offer in the mail for all of the above and a free gift of *Explorers of the New World* for an incredible $29.95. It wouldn't hurt to call the 800 number listed below. Whether you have kids in school or college or just want to do something nice for yourself, get Infopedia 2.0. It's an **EXCELLENT** value!

Softkey International
1-800-716-8506
http://www.softkey.com ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 8)
need almost no editing. Complicated forms with small print on legal size paper require more editing—sometimes a lot more, but still much less time than if you tried to create the form from scratch. If you want to create a form from scratch, then the program will do this also.

Once the form is in good shape you can then save it as a template, fill it out on the computer, save the form with the filled in data, fax it, or print it. It is a very useful program for those of us who deal with forms and a step toward the paper-less office.

Oh, I almost forgot, you can designate any of the fillable fields on the form as calculation field and thus do simple mathematics on the form. So in theory you could recreate your 1040 Tax form and have the form calculate your taxes. Whether the IRS will accept this form, I am not sure; although, they will accept the Adobe PDF forms that you can download from their Web site and fill in manually. I believe that a carefully scanned and edited copy with OmniForm should look the same.

Selling for around $200 it is not cheap, but for those who hate filling in the same forms again and again, I think this is the answer. ◆



Tim Condon catches up on the news before the meeting

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (January 16) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (January 6) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month (January 15) at 7:00 PM at a member's home. *Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

PC Willy

SOME RAMBLINGS FROM PC WILLY

Gone are the days of when if you wanted to run a program you just put in a disk and ran the program on that disk. Then came hard drives that would hold many more, different kinds, and bigger programs. Most of these older programs would install in their own directory and would run peacefully by themselves, one at a time. Keeping your hard drive directory fairly well organized was a pretty simple task, every program resided in its own directory and didn't use other directories from the root directory, but made sub-directories under its own.

As I have been a "hardware" type of guy rather than a programmer type, I usually load a directory maintenance type of program rather than just typing DIR to see what's on a hard drive or in a directory. I use a program called Tree View for DOS, and I think it was written in 1989, but it does fine for me. Some people use X-tree or something like it, and my son uses Norton Commander. It's all up to the user as to what you are most comfortable with.

Having worked on many computers (usually to upgrade), I have looked at many hard drives and was amazed to see the things that happen to people who have installed programs that possibly didn't work right the first time or stopped working for some reason or another, and they reinstalled it again, sometimes in the root (only 512 files allowed) and sometimes in a sub-directory of the program that they were trying to run! One lady had 3 copies of Windows on her hard drive and she was wondering why she was running out of disk space!

Well, anyway as I was saying about programs installing in their own directory, most new installation programs will make their own directory and install accordingly. When MS DOS is installed it goes into one directory and puts a couple of files in the root directory. When Windows 3.1 is installed it makes two directories and maybe a file or two in the root. When Win95 is installed it puts all the files and directories under its own directory and a bunch of files in the root (not too bad).

Well, the other day I put on OS2 and instantly lost control. I mean, I used to know all my directory names and what was in them, but when looking at the tree structure I needed a big screen TV to see the whole tree at once!

Well, I guess the programmers know what they are doing (because it does work), but gone are the days that I know what is in each directory and what the program does. I guess that this is USER FRIENDLY in that the whole hard drive is invisible to the average user (sort of like looking under the hood of a new car).

See Ya next month. wilgoo@aol.com ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
Borland	Quarterdeck
Broderbund	Regnis
Corel Systems	Symantec
Grolier	Traveling Software
Knowledge Adventure	Xerox

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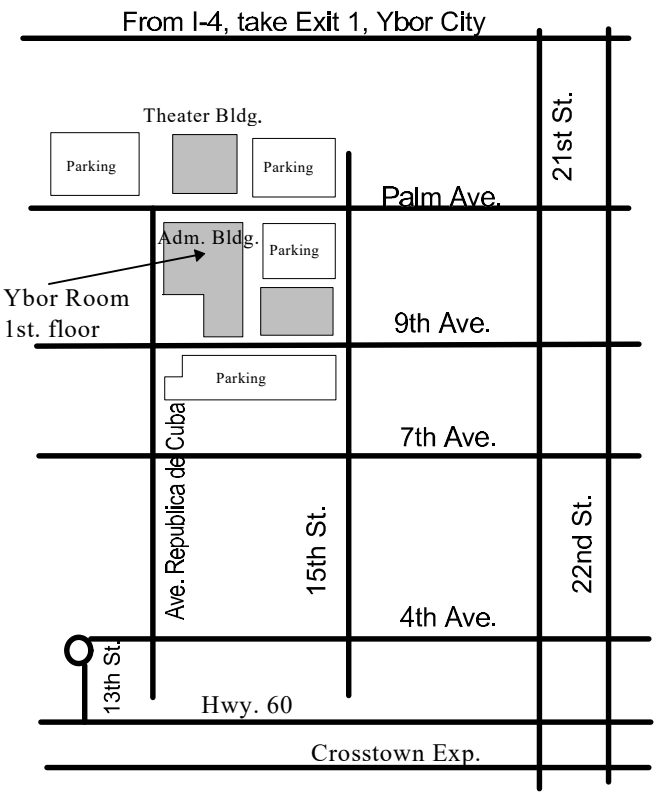
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MEMBERS HELP-LINE

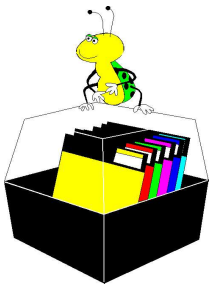
The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9701.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.



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Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 4 April 1997

Meeting

Data Depot presenting PC Diagnostics

April 9, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.
Main Entrance

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Newsletter Thoughts

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, my contributors did it again and filled the newsletter, so I only have this small space on the front page. This is a good sign. As I have said, it is the group's newsletter, so we need a group effort.

Consider the newsletter for a moment. I have been doing it now for 17 months. It is a good bit of work and the group's major expense. The first part of the work is my collecting (and writing when necessary) the articles and setting up the layout in the computer. Then it is to Kinko's for the printing (really copying), then back here where with the help of Ed Snow, Fred Buss, Charles Howe and Emelie Juardo it gets stapled, folded, labeled and prepared for mailing. Finally I take it to the post office.

While waiting for the printing, I usually prepare and post the Adobe Acrobat version to our Internet site and BBS. Thus it is there before I even deliver the printed version to the Post Office. For printing and bulk mail it costs about $.70 per newsletter. To put the same material—in color—on the Internet costs nothing. Think about it. Times change. Will there be a time when the online version of the newsletter is sufficient for our group? ◆

At the May 14 meeting, Corel Corporation will demonstrate Corel Graphics 7 & Word Perfect Suite 7.
June 11 - Pilgram Software presenting Pilgram's ISO9000 software.

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Home Page http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if ithey are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING March 12, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

President Connie Kincaid opened the meeting at MOSI at 6:50PM starting in a very spacious room. This was our second meeting at MOSI. We had three guests.

Connie began by introducing the officers and welcoming the guests, followed by the SIG announcements.

Communications SIG - Meets at Reflectone Monday April 3rd at 6PM.

Geneology SIG - combined with the MOSI geneology group the second Monday.

We discussed the Word Macro virus, experienced by two members. The fix for Word 7 (Windows 95) is posted on the Microsoft Internet web site. Also, the latest security fixes for Internet Explorer are available.

We moved into the adjacent computer lab room for the evening program - a comparison of 1996 Tax software. Ford Bond, assisted by Connie Kincaid demonstrated three tax products; TurboTax 1996 by Intuit, Personal Tax Edge by Parsons Technology, and Tax Cut by H&R Block. There was a great deal of interest in compatibility between the most common personal money management software - Quicken and Microsoft Money.

A short view of Microsoft Money was included in the demo showing us the facilities for entering checks by category. Use Microsoft Money for putting your expenses in order. Personal Tax Edge - the CD-ROM version has extensive videos of a slimy guy coaching you through the entry process, a very slick, high-tech way of making the hard parts at least interesting, if not entertaining. Thanks for a great program, Ford and Connie.

While we were there, Ford started up the Internet browser and connected to the IRS, where you can obtain all the forms you'll ever need.

We broke at about 8:25 and held the drawing for door prizes. Richard Nannis drew Harvard Chart XL, Charles Howe won a copy of Beginning Access 95 and Ed Snow won an Adobe cap. ◆

Software Review

Quicken Deluxe 6 for Windows

by Rob Davis, Tampa PC Users Group

Some people may call Quicken a glorified check book register, and maybe it started out that way. But it has turned into a very powerful tool for your finances. This new version has pushed the limits on what can be done with a simple to use and relatively inexpensive personal financial program.

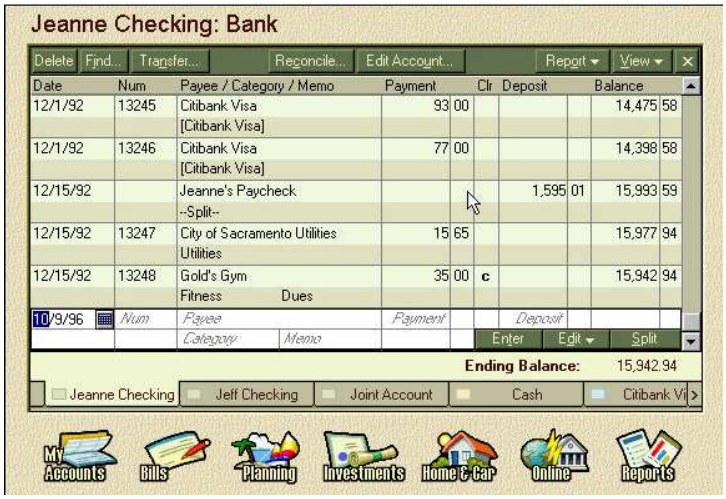
Happily, the installation of Quicken Deluxe 6 from the CD-ROM disk went basically flawlessly. I saw several improvements over the previous versions. The sound and graphics are good, even with my meager 2X CD-ROM. I'm running Windows 3.1, and a 486DX4-100 with 12MB of RAM. The minimum system requirements are a 486, Windows 95 or Windows 3.1, 8MB RAM, 30MB of hard drive space, MPC Compatible 2X CD-ROM, sound board and speakers, 256 color SVGA monitor. They claim you need 6MB more disk space if you load the Netscape software. (My installation only used about 23MB of disk space, that I know of.)

Quicken Deluxe 6 has a new streamlined design making it easier to find and choose what you want to do. Basically, the center is used for the particular thing you are working on. The edges of the screen have icons for all the other things you may want to do. This is my first time using the GUI interface version. It looks like I will be happier with it than with the DOS version.

The help is more helpful, too. There is multimedia video that explains how to get started for the new user. On screen comments guide you on how to fill in any blank, or how to accomplish a task. The 'SHOW ME' button gives animated audio/video explaining how something is done. Another neat feature now is you can do several things like memorize transactions, etc. by clicking the right mouse button, and selecting from a list of options. (This is easier than pressing F4 in my DOS version.)

There is also a 'free' limited access Internet account available. It will let you download stock quotes and reviews. There are tips & tricks and Intuit news and updates available, but you can't browse outside of the Quicken Financial Network. However, for a nominal fee, Quicken can provide a full Internet access account with unlimited browsing and full access to all Quicken Live features.

Quicken Live is a group of features like free price quotes on stocks in your portfolio, a categorized directory of financial sites on the Internet, easy means to download minor upgrades to Quicken, tips on using Quicken, special offers from Intuit, and access to Quicken Financial Network. The Internet can



be a struggle to find what you want, but Quicken claims they can make it easy for you. You can also dial into the Online Banking & Investment center and do online payments. And Quicken can do online accounts with multiple financial institutions as well.

Some other nice features are you can now sort entries (by order) on entry date, amount, or check number (except Investment register). You can also use longer names, account descriptions, etc. There is an improved Billminder, too. It will automatically remind you of bills to pay.

This Deluxe version helps you find hidden or often forgotten tax deductions, too. You just click on the *Planning* icon and then P*ossible Tax Deductions.* I tried this and was led through about 100 possible scenarios. I answered some simple questions. It showed whether I was eligible for some little-thought-of deductions.

One of the other features I liked was the Home Inventory section. You can list everything of worth in your home if you want to. Quicken will assign an estimated value to each item. Of course you can edit the value as you wish. It also has a good list of what to call everything so you can standardize what you name your stuff. For example, you could call your couch a sofa, a couch, a davenport, a hide-a-bed, etc., but in the home inventory list you only find *couch*. By only using names in the standard list, it's easier to group your like things together. (That may be getting a bit too organized!)

For those of you who use *Turbo Tax* for income taxes, this program will output directly into it. For other tax preparation programs, Quicken Deluxe 6 will export your data in TXF format which most of these type programs can use.

The street price of Quicken Deluxe 6 is only about $50. In my opinion you can't get a better personal finance program for the money. ◆

Software Review

Partition Magic 3.0



by Don Patzsch,
Tampa PC Users Group

Let's assume that you are not an expert on hard disks. Then we can begin by making a few statements about hard disks in general. When I bought my first IBM PC back in April of 1982, there was no hard disk that came with the computer. Since that time, IBM has improved the hard disk many fold. Now instead of simply commercial interests using hard disks, we all have them, and fantastic gigabit sizes, too! Now if we say that the hard disk is used to store information, we are at the start of this review. There are two, 2 gigabit hard disks in my computer today. If we say that a hard disk can be divided into compartments or partitions, then we assume that we all know what is meant by that. We want to divide them into partitions because a single partition hard drive may have a minimum storage area of 32K bytes. If we store lots of files on that disk, we will lose 200 megabytes or more in "wasted" space. Many times we end a file with a short word or two, and this would take up a space of 32k bytes on the disk. Titles and other things would also take that much space on the disk, even though they may be only a few bytes long.

So, now we have a newer computer with a large hard disk, or even two large hard disks, and we are ready to begin to use the new computer. We might want to start by partitioning, or dividing each disk into smaller "sections". Assume that we made four 500mb partitions on the disk. The minimum storage space would be 8k bytes. Much better than 32k bytes! And you might do better than that.

Now how and why do we partition? Each hard disk can be divided into four partitions. You may opt for four primary or maybe three primary and one extended partitions.

If you plan to use DOS, you must set aside the first space for DOS, and if you plan to use another operating system, it may or may not "boot" if it is located in a "logical" partition.

By now you could be confused. We have to accept the fact that a primary partition is defined as a partition in which any operating system may be installed and from which it will be able to "boot" up the computer with the operating system of your choice. We have to accept the definition of an extended partition as a way of getting around the four-partition limit. We can easily create three primary partitions with Partition Magic, and also one extended partition. An extended partition can be subdivided into as many "logical" partitions as we want. A "logical" partition is one that is intended to contain data and also certain operating systems loaded into them, that will "boot" from the logical partition. OS2 is such an operating system. So you could have Boot Manager, DOS, Windows95, in the primary partitions, and you could also have OS2 in a logical partition and the Boot Manager will allow you to select DOS, Windows95, or OS2 when you want to boot your computer to start using it.

The manual that comes with Partition Magic Version 3.0 has a very clear and well thought out description of all the terms used in hard disk work, and for that reason the manual is worth the price of the whole package. I suggest that before you start to use the program, you read the manual at least twice. It is well worth the time and effort.

Now, why do we want a program like this? The answer is because there is no other way you can accomplish what this program does. With it you can make space on your hard disk anywhere you like. You can move any program to any partition you like, and not lose any information; the program will run where you moved it the same as where it was before. You can move whole partitions, you can create and delete partitions. If you buy something new, you can create a separate partition for it; say you want to try OS2 or WindowsNT, this is ideal. And with Boot Manager, you can bring up any of the operating systems installed on your computer at startup. At this time, I have WindowsNT Server Version 4 loaded and when I bring up the computer, Boot Manager asks which of the operating systems I have installed I would like to bring up.

Suppose you want to go from Windows 3.1 to Windows95. Just add a partition and put Windows95 there, leave the Windows 3.1 on until you are satisfied that Windows95 is for you. You have great flexibility when you have Partition Magic, Version 3.

You may hide and unhide partitions, convert a FAT file system to an HPFS, format, set a partition active; and remember all these functions are clearly shown on your screen, with each section clearly colored with a distinctive color, and all of them are clearly indicated as to the purpose of each. Each disk is clearly labeled drive C: or whatever drive is shown. There is a drop down menu to change to the other drives if you have more than one installed. If you get the feeling I am very happy with this program and I strongly recommend it, you are correct. The company is coming out with a new Copy program. It really works very well. You can easily and quickly copy a partition from one drive to another, or copy a whole hard disk full of information from one hard disk to another, of the same size or larger size. This might be very useful when you buy a new computer, if they do not supply you with a CD Rom that contains all the operating system, plus all the programs that may be on the computer when you buy it. This is a most unusual copy method. It is fast and easy compared to using a tape backup.

Partition Magic is available at most computer stores, and the

(Magic.....Continued on page 10)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
2. **Tracer -** 7th Level - Launch into cyberspace with a deadly virus on your heels-Windows 95 CD.
3. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations - Windows 3.1 & 95
4. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
5. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
8. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
9. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)
10. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+) - Windows CD

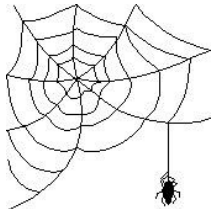
(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!



Detail of live picture via the Internet of the Interactive Model Railroad at http://rr-vs.informatik.uni-ulm.de/rr/. You can actually run the trains located in Germany from your home computer.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Wal-Mart Online	http://www.wal-mart.com/home/home.shtml
NewsLinx (Web News Link)	http://www.newslinx.com/
GENDEX -- WWW Genealogical Index	http://www.gendex.com/gendex/
HIV- AIDS Information (Univ. of CA San Francisco)	http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu/
HTML Reference Links	http://www.gte.net/create.html
Sci-Fi Channel - The Dominion	http://www.scifi.com/
Scrabble Online	http://mundil.cs.mu.oz.au:8004/~dnich/scr_intro.html
WWL 870 AM New Orleans Virtual Studio	http://www.wwl870am.com/index.html
Savings Bond Redemption Calculator	http://www.ny.frb.org/pihome/svg_bnds/sb_val.html
Tampa Florida Official Government Site	http://www.ci.tampa.fl.us/tampa/index.htm
SKY Online (Astronomy)	http://www.skypub.com/
Comic Strip ® (differnet comics online)	http://www.unitedmedia.com/comics/
Salon Magazine (online literary magazine)	http://www.salon1999.com/
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Exploratorium - ExploraNet	http://www.exploratorium.edu/
Reuters Health Information Services	http://www.reutershealth.com/
Internet Movie Database	http://www.imdb.com/
Pathfinder! (Time, Life, Money, sports, weather)	http://pathfinder.com/@@EICNHQYA9prIAaKM/welcome/?navbar
Leon County FL (puts all other counties to shame)	http://www.co.leon.fl.us/
Britannica Online	http://www.eb.com/

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Review

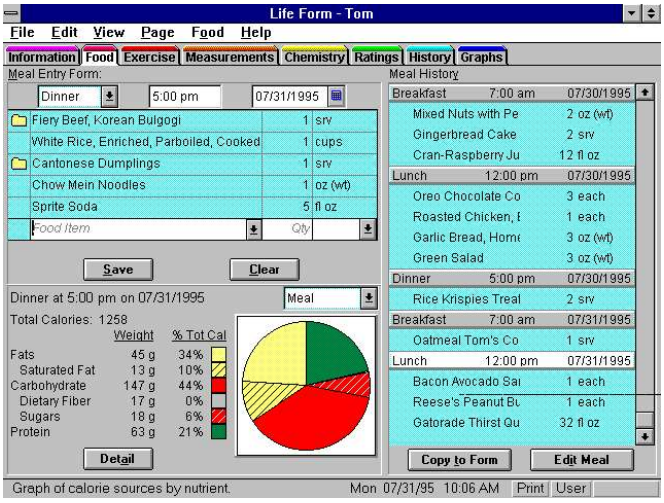
Life Form
Personal Health Management
by Fitnesoft Software

by Mary Sheridan, BBS SYSOP,
Tampa PC Users Group

You can just imagine my excitement! No more walking, no more crunches, no more water aerobics, no more jumping around in a room with 50 other women and I'm the only one facing East. Uh…wait a minute…..

Well, it doesn't do the work for you, but it does an incredible job of charting it. It's main menu is set up like a card file. The program is broken into 9 main categories of data. The categories are information, food, exercise, measurements, chemistry, ratings, history, graphs and reports.

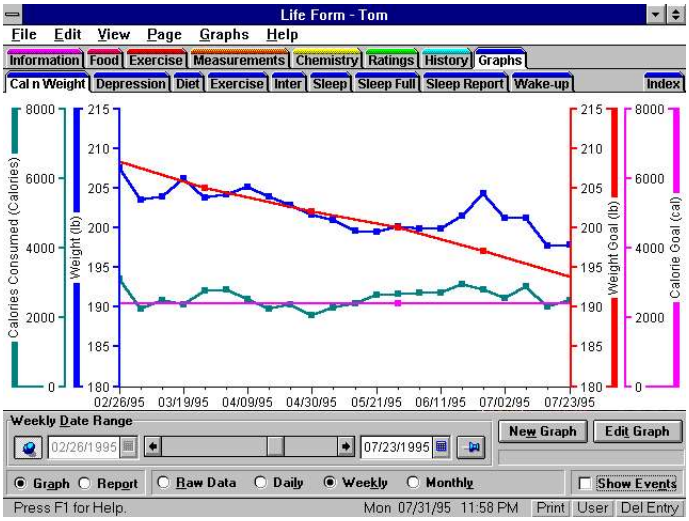
The **Information** area is basic health information about your



doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, health insurers and special medical conditions. After you log your data, you can do reports that would be more than a little helpful next time you are sent to a specialist and you have to fill out a medical form. Everything you would need for the form would be in the report.

The **History** is your health background and any medical conditions that run in your family. This is another good report to take with you to that new doctor.

The **Food** area is outstanding. You can begin to type 'corn' and after 'cor' you get a list of all the corn there is. All you add is the quantity and you get the nutritional data of that



amount of corn. For anyone who's ever had a food journal, this program is the answer.

The **Exercise** section helps you chart your effort and see how your doing in reference to the calories you're consuming. Anyone involved in an exercise program is advised to keep track of their activities. This is the best way I've ever seen of doing that.

The **Measurements** area is more than just your size information. This is where you keep track of your blood pressure and temperature. The measurements are a vital part of a fitness program. They sometimes are the only indication that you are making progress.

The **Chemistry** area stores the results of blood and urine tests.

In **Ratings** you track personal events that cause health problems such as headaches or allergies. By keeping a record of these things, you can sometimes find the cause and make changes that can help you feel better.

The **Graphs** and **Reports** are to let you see how the different types of data compare to the data from the past and the data from other areas.

This program installed into Windows 95 in less than a minute. You can have as many users as you want and you can password protect everyone's data. It has a backup and restore feature to protect your data.

Life Form isn't just for those involved in physical fitness programs, it's for anyone who wants to keep track of their health and their habits. It's a nice piece of software and I would highly recommend it.

If you'd like to order the Life Form CD-ROM for $49.99 call 1-800-607-7637

(Life.....Continued on page 10)

Hardware Review

WebTV

by Charles Howe, Tampa PC Users Group

WebTV -- What is it? How capable is it? Will it do what is claimed for it? Would it fit your circumstances? If so, what brand? Where can it be purchased? Is it a good value?

A small item in the paper several weeks before this was written caught my eye. There would be a demo of WebTV at a Sound Advice over the weekend. (The fact that it was and is on the weekend will be of some importance in the near future.) Curious, I dropped by. It was there, all right, and a Sony guy was there to demo it, but he couldn't do much of anything. Literature hadn't come in as promised.

So I went there the next weekend. Different. A Sony gal this time, but more to the point, she could demo it. There wasn't any traffic, so she could let me play with it. Also (very important) she gave me a thick magazine called "What's on the Web", Sony Special Edition. It is fairly close to 500 pages long, many of them with short write-ups of 5 or so Web sites. It is a superb promotional idea. It highlights the jump capability that the Sony unit has. It is possible to go to thousands of different sites by keying in four digits. But you can go anywhere if you key in the URL just as you can with Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer.

I can't vouch for any other branch, but at that Sound Advice (East Fowler) it is possible to go there at any time the store is open and play with it to your heart's content. I wouldn't have been as comfortable doing that at the Circuit City across the street because of the higher store traffic.

Now on to the specific questions.

WebTV is the generic name for the apparatus that enables you to access the Web using a television as your screen. Sony and Philips market them so far. For $330 you get the basic attachment plus the basic control unit (a clicker, i.e., a remote). For another $70 (Sony) or $80 (Philips) you get a detached keyboard. For all intents an purposes, the keyboard is a necessity. In a few weeks, both manufacturers will offer a printer. No price is given, but an ink jet printer is a reasonable guess. That sounds like another $200 to me. Your television has to have the standard video input jacks. You have to have a telephone jack within reach.

Also, you have to subscribe to the WebTV Internet service at $19.95 a month. The thought occurs to me that it might be possible to use some other ISP, but it would require a very capable hacker. There are a couple of standard problems: You have to have a second line, or face up to the problem that you can't make or receive calls and access the Internet at the same time and you have to have a telephone jack near the TV.

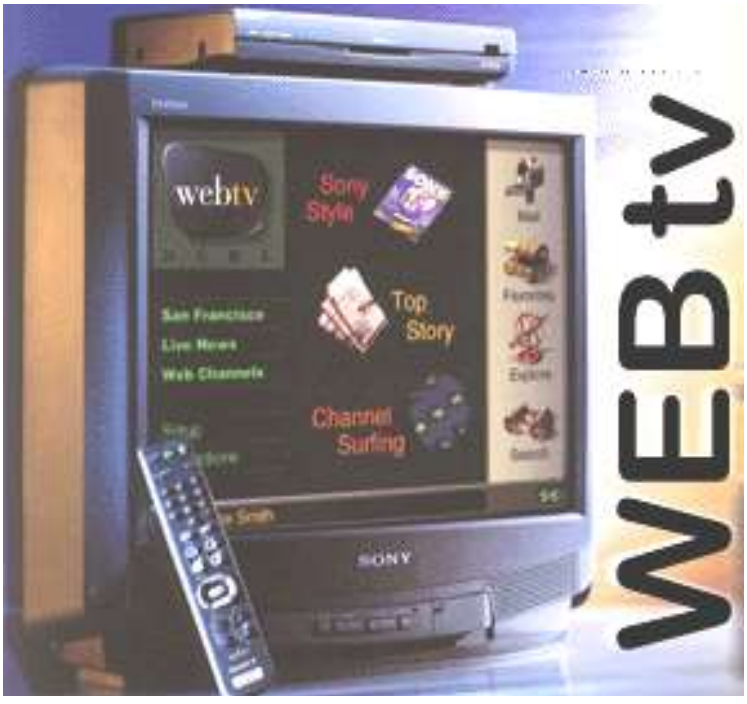
You can send and receive email.

Access is probably as fast as but no faster than any other ISP. The would-be buyer in an outlying or rural area should either assure himself that there will not be any toll charges when he connects or be willing to accept them.

Sound Advice sells Sony but not Philips. Circuit City and Best Buy sell both. Wal-Mart doesn't sell either.

Should you buy? It depends on your circumstances. The point that Sony and Philips are going to try to get across in their advertising is that WebTV takes Web viewing out of your study and by yourself and into the family room with others. There are many ramifications of that notion, the possibility of better parental steering of what sites their children access not least. One other possibility is worth mentioning: its being acquired by older people, people who won't tackle a standard computer. It is so simple to operate that it is reasonable for such people to contemplate doing so. There is one caveat: the keyboard is a bit cramped and there are lots of special keys. This could be a problem for people with impaired vision and/or motor control problems.

I like the product. ◆



Software Review

NavCIS, by Peak To Peak Services & Development, Inc.

by Tom Cone, Tampa PC Users Group

NavCIS helps you "beat the clock" with CompuServe accounts.

NavCIS is an off-line CompuServe navigator which makes working with forums and e-mail efficient, systemized, ... and cheap. It is designed to automate the process of logging on, checking your mailbox, visiting multiple forums (which you designate in advance), collecting message traffic waiting for you there, and collecting message headers in whatever sections of the forum you desire. It then quickly logs you off-line. If you wish, it can build catalogs of the files available for downloading from the targeted forums, and can notify you when new files are added to the on-line library.

I use CompuServe for e-mail and to monitor message traffic in 8 to 10 different forums. Most of these relate to equipment or software which I use in my office. I'm interested in new drivers, software updates, product announcements, and, most of all, the message traffic exchanged by others across the country who use the same stuff I do. Often I learn valuable tips or tricks which help me use my systems more efficiently. On more than one occasion I've posed a question asking for help with some problem or other, only to have knowledgeable volunteers respond overnight with correct solutions or suggestions. It's a great way to obtain inexpensive tech support for the office.

Anyway, here's how I use NavCIS daily. I press a single button and then go pour my coffee. NavCIS automatically logs on, collects all mail and message traffic for me, and collects all new message headers in my target forums. It does this automatically, and quickly. It then disconnects me from the service, so the billing clock stops running. The total time on-line is much less than if I were to sit there and personally navigate among the target forums. I then use NavCIS to view/print/delete my mail. If I want to reply to something, NavCIS helps me prepare the reply while I remain off the clock. I do the same thing with any messages left for me in the forums.

Next, I browse the message headers in each forum. These are little one line descriptions of the subjects of new messages posted with CompuServe since I last visited the forum. If any are of interest I mark it, requesting NavCIS to download the message, and any related or following messages on the same subject. (This is called marking a message thread.) Once I've done this in each forum, all the while remaining completely off the clock, I then press another button and NavCIS goes to work again. First it logs me on, then it sends my e-mail replies, then it visits each forum and downloads the full text of each message (and message thread) I've marked. It then logs me off. Once I'm off the clock again, I read and reply to the messages at my leisure. Incidentally, having the downloaded messages arranged in thread order is a big help, cause it lets you easily follow the on-line "conversation" contained in the series of messages and replies on the same subject.

NavCIS contains other tools which simplify my life with CompuServe. I can use it to transfer specific files between other users, and to and from forums via built-in file upload/download functions. It has many flexible features that make it easy to use, like a built-in spellchecker, and the ability to temporarily deactivate forums, if you don't want them visited the next time NavCIS goes on-line. You can download weather reports and maps. The maps can be viewed "off-line" using the included graphics viewer function. You can also access CompuServe's FileFinder service to search for specific files without first joining each forum in which they might be found.

If you use CompuServe, then this package warrants your consideration. If you use CompuServe a lot, then you deserve a tool like this. NavCIS is available in a Test Edition, which is a full featured, but time-limited version. This let's you try it for 30 days without obligation.

NavCIS runs under Windows 3.x, Windows 95, Windows NT, and also OS/2 (using WinOS2). It requires a 386/20 or faster processor, 4 MB or more of RAM, 6 MB or more of hard disk space, a VGA or higher resolution monitor, and a mouse. Naturally it also requires a modem and a CompuServe Account.

The registered version costs $69 plus shipping.

The Test Edition is available in the "Free Software" section of the PeakToPeak Forum on CompuServe. It's also available on the internet, by visiting the publisher's website, http://www.peaktopeak.com. ◆



Recommended Shareware/Freeware

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

I thought I'd try something new this month. If you're not on the Internet yet, you really should be. If for no other reason than the wealth of *FREE* stuff that's out there just for the taking. This month I am including "links" to locations on the Internet where you can find some neat Shareware and absolutely FREE software. If you like this sort of thing let me know and I'll continue the column on a regular basis. The role of Librarian has changed since I first took this position. No one seems to be interested in a "physical" library anymore, so I'm trying something new. I'll try to pick out something interesting each month if there is interest.

If you're reading this from the printed newsletter, just type in the link address in your *URL* address area. If you have downloaded the *.pdf* file and are using Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the newsletter, just highlight the link address and copy it into your *URL* address area. If you are using Word 97 you can copy the link address from within Acrobat and paste it into Word 97 and the link will become *hot*. (Just click on the link and you'll be taken there automatically.)

Note that the hyphen in each URL is part of the address

http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-25433,00.html **GK Web Promotion Spider**

GK Web Promotion Spider is a URL registration tool that automates the registration process with nearly 150 search engines and other Web resources. In addition to automatically submitting your site to over 150 (and growing daily) major search engines, directories, and Usenet newsgroups, GK Web Promotion Spider will dynamically optimize your site or page, ensuring maximum visibility on the Internet.

Requirements: Windows 95/NT Demo



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-25435,00.html **McAfee VirusScan for Windows 95**

Viruses can be accidentally received through disks, bulletin boards, email, networks, and the Internet. VirusScan offers virus detection, removal, and support services to remedy this problem. The program supports Windows 95 and scans all system areas, including local and network drives, CD-ROMs, floppies, boot sectors, file allocation and partition tables, files, and compressed files. It cleans most virus infections from files, master boot sectors, partition tables, and memory, returning them to their virus-free state. Designed for daily operation, VirusScan works to keep your system immune from viruses.

Requirements: Windows 95 Shareware



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-25368,00.html **HotDog Express**

HotDog Express lets you create and upload a cool-looking Web page in 4 simple steps. Even someone completely new to the Web can use HotDog Express and make a Web page in just 5 minutes.

Requirements: 486, Windows 95, 16MB RAM Shareware



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-25320,00.html **Computer Tutor for Windows 95**

Computer Tutor for Windows 95 is a 150+-page book that teaches beginning and intermediate users about Windows 95. The tutor contains detailed graphics and information on how to work within Windows 95, as well as how to operate many popular Windows 95-compatible software packages. The tutor can help you learn the Windows 95 environment, DOS environment, Microsoft Word 95, Microsoft Works, WinZip, HyperTerminal, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft Fax, System Agent, Microsoft Money, Norton Anti-Virus, Netscape Navigator, Netscape Mail, and Microsoft Publisher. It also tells you how to set up an Internet PPP account and includes a graphical appendix of computer parts.

Requirements: Windows 95, Microsoft Word 95 Free



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-25009,00.html **Top Desk**

Top Desk adds an icon to the system area of the Taskbar, giving you complete access to everything on the desktop: system objects and files, even the Display Properties dialog box.

Requirements: Windows 95/NT Free



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-24948,00.html **Preschool Pack**

The colorful graphics, songs, and speech of Preschool Pack will be sure to capture the attention of your preschooler. Through five entertaining activities, your preschooler will learn about counting, number recognition, the alphabet, colors, matching, classifying, and their name and phone number. All activities may be performed entirely with a mouse.

Requirements: DOS or Windows 3.x/95 Free

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at a member's home. *Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

(Magic .....Continued from page 4)
street price is about $59. Until March 31, there is a $15 rebate. For more information and ideas, go to www.powerquest.com, the home page of Partition Magic. ◆

(Life.....Continued from page 6)

Editor's note: You can get information on LifeForm on the Web at http://www.healthychoice.com/lifeform/html/lifeform.htm, and while you are there you can use the link to a free demonstration version download. It appears that this web site is provided by Healthy Choice Foods. Any further linkage between Fitnesoft and Healthy Choice is unknown. ◆

Create New HD Space On Same HD

By Bruce Register, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group

My Windows 95 program began giving me messages that my hard drive (850 MB Maxtor HD) was running low on space on my C: drive. Upon installation months ago, I partitioned my hard drive as C: 510 MB; D: 242 MB; and E: 98 MB. I used my DISK MANAGEMENT file that came with my Maxtor hard drive to create the three partitions. I am told that Partition Magic does a fantastic operation without changing your existing programs and documents. (See revies on page 4)

I continued to get a message that my C drive was running low on space. I would save files, documents and graphics until the time was available "next week" or so. Not getting around to them created more space demand. The low space message kept coming; I would click "OK". When other messages such as "insufficient memory to complete this operation" started to show, the time for corrective action became immediate. The "low space" message gives a choice of "OK" or "Suggestion". For weeks I would think, "Yea, Yea, I do not have time to read this fine print and when I get around to it..." This time, I clicked "Suggestion" and read the fine print. Several suggested options appeared. One was to run "DriveSpace3". I was told that running DriveSpace3 (it is part of Microsoft Plus! for about $24, which I had on my computer) would create an "H" drive. "H" means Host Drive. The H drive was created with approximately 2 MB of commands that were automatically installed. Now when I start up, the H drive starts quickly and automatically moves the action to C drive. That is what a "Host Drive" does.

What a surprise! My C drive now has 520 MB; My D drive has the same 242 MB and my E drive has the same 98 MB; however, my new H drive now was created and has 500 MB of new space for a total of 1,350 MB of hard drive space on my 850 MB hard drive. I wonder what would happen if I attempted to execute DriveSpace3 on my D and E drives! After I purchase a Zip for backup, I will try that.

I have talked with several people. Their remarks are generally

(Hard Drive.....*Continued on page 12)*

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
Borland	Quarterdeck
Broderbund	Regnis
Corel Systems	Symantec
Grolier	Traveling Software
Knowledge Adventure	Xerox

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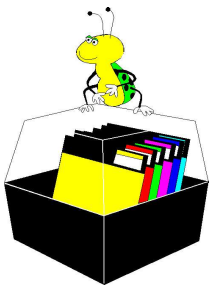
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9704.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492

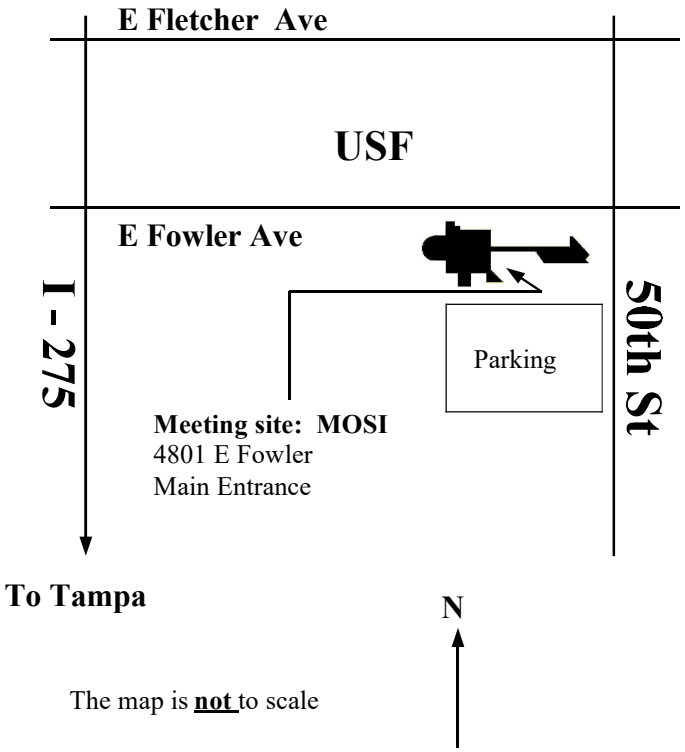


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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Hard Drive.....Continued from page 10)
along the line, "I have not used it, I am not too sure about drive space but I hear that the new DriveSpace3 is pretty good...but, there may be problems...I just do not know until I try it." They are glad to hear about it.

I really do not care what or how DriveSpace3 did what it did. I just know that I have all of this extra hard drive space and I do not have to dump documents and software nor do I have to buy a new hard drive. Someone said that cannot be. I told the story of the client who called his lawyer from jail and told him the circumstances of his incarceration. The lawyer said, "They can't put you in jail for that." The client said, "You don't understand, I AM in jail." Well, I do not understand nor do I wish to argue because I AM WITH 500 BRAND NEW MEGA BYTES OF HARD DRIVE SPACE. After moving many documents and some software to the new H drive, I have bookoodles of space on my C drive. No more messages. Thank you Microsoft Plus! None of my documents or software were affected by the DriveSpace3 execution. ◆





Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 5 May 1997

Meeting

Corel presenting Corel Graphics 7 & Word Perfect Suite 7

May 14, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Newsletter Comments

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Kinko's had no blue paper when it came time to print last month's newsletter, so since we were on a tight schedule, the newsletter went out covered in white—albeit a better grade of white paper than usual (at no extra cost). That inspired long time member Ed Buzza to post the following on the BBS. I can't match that, but my comments will appear on page 7.

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

Bits of Blue No More

By Ed Buzza

Harken whilst the bugles blow tatoo,
Oh claborous, oh frabjous day,
For there's not a bit of blue
In the Bits of Blue today!

With teary eye and palsied hand
Did I hunt that treasured azure band,
Nay, nay, say canst not be true
Nary a bit of blue in Bits of Blue?

For seven years and fourteen moons,
At half past of those yesternoons,
Golden words wrapped in blue I'd seek,
By the postal box I'd read - just a peek

The years are many, the years are long
When first I heard the siren song,
The golden words from the magic quill
Of Robin, Barbara, Marylee and Bill.

Precious words writ and writ for me alone,
More hallowed than if carved in stone,
Each month I'd wait for what was due
In blue wrapped paper, the Bits of Blue.

Gather round whilst heralds sound,
Ka-loo, ka-lay, oh grizzlizound,
With volume ten, number four,
Bits of Blue is blue no more

Tanem, sur tanem

June 11 - Pilgram Software presenting Pilgram's ISO9000 software.
Visit us on the Web at http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/.

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if ithey are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING April 9, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The meeting was convened by Ford Bond in President Connie Kincaid and Vice President Mike Hodge's absence.

Announcements: The Geneology SIG is meeting at MOSI, combining with the MOSI group. It meets the second Monday of the month.

The evening program - PC Diagnostics - was presented by Robert Hurt of Data Depot. "Data Depot was founded in 1990 by Robert and Karen Hurt to develop and manufacture leading edge PC diagnostic test products, particularly hardware." (a quote from their "Press and Catalog Information") They produce four hardware devices MiniPost, PocketPost, PocketPost MCA, and PC PowerCheck., and a variety of software utilities and diagnostic programs.

Richard started by giving us a historical outline of the PC diagnostics industry in Clearwater, the products they made - and make. Then a very interesting dissertation on the anatomy of a PC's BIOS and the boot-up (POST) process. He showed off two products that diagnose problems with POST. These products are designed to accurately diagnose 60% of dead PCs. (Dead PC's happen 5% of the time.)

Other products - PC PowerCheck is a card that measures and displays the quality of the power supply voltages. Robert even drew electrical diagrams of a PC's power supply to illustrate the need for a diagnostic card.

Their main product, PC Clinic Pro, is a collection of utilities for professionals that tests all aspects of a computer. One version even has remote control software for remote diagnostics.

Robert is a very entertaining speaker. He kept our attention a full two hours and we would have enjoyed more if we had the time. He's offered to come back and speak again. It was a thoroughly informative and interesting program.

Robert very generously donated a variety - actually a box full of software and hardware, including a complete PC Clinic for the membership to check out. Many of the items donated went to the door prizes. The winners were - Larry Anders - Carmen Sandiego, Ken Boyd - Lotus, Wil Goble - a CD database and William LaMartin - PocketPost Jr.. ◆

Windows 95 Peer-to-Peer Networking

by Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group

I really haven't any idea of how many of the homes in the US have more than one PC, but I'll bet it would be a surprisingly large number. My own house has one PC per adult - three when our son Matt is home from college summers and Christmas break. To print from my wife Valerie's notebook, we have a cable switch and a cable lying next to the PC desk so she can plug the cable into the printer port, flip the switch and print to the deskjet. Well, that works very well for the light printing she does; exactly one page per workday. For other things— heavier printing, tape backup and file (and product) sharing, you need more. So when Matt's here, the two Pentiums are networked. We're constantly exchanging files — especially program updates from the Internet.

Microsoft has made networking easy for you software-wise. The hardware is a little more complex.

You need a wire connection from PC to PC. Ours are simple internal ethernet cards, plugged into expansion slots in our PC's, and using RJ45 connectors and UTP (Unshielded Twisted Pair) cable between them. RJ45 connectors are just like telephone jacks, but larger, for six wires. You can also use the more fragile ethernet coaxial cable. Some ethernet cards support both coax and UTP. Be sure you read the box the card comes in to make sure what you're getting.

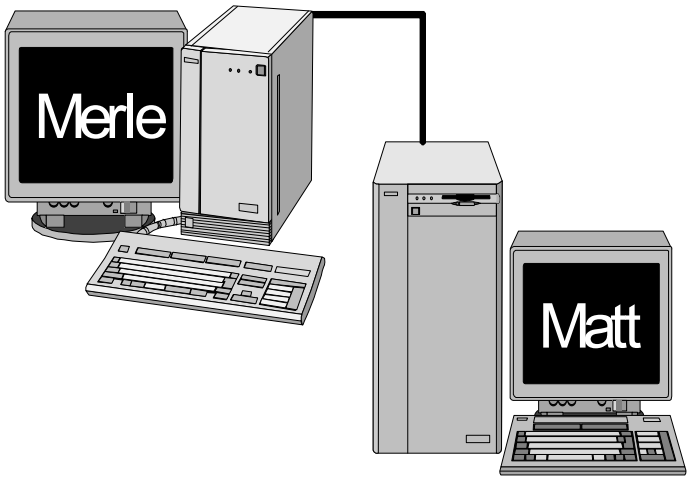
You can get very inexpensive cards as low as $25 up to $100 for an expensive PnP 3-Com card. They're available as ISA or PCI cards; as PCMCIA cards and even as a small device that plugs into your parallel port. For two PC's you need just a $3 crossover cable, about six inches long. For more than two PC's, you need a "hub" instead. A hub is a small box, about the size of a large modem, with six or more ports to plug in all the PC's. Plug and Play (PnP) cards are the most desirable cards if your PC supports it. It simply makes life easier configuring the software and software support for the card.

The cable needed to go the full distance between the PC's is fairly expensive. You can get this cable in various lengths from the superstores in the area that have the connectors already crimped on. You can have cables terminated by several custom cable companies in town, or you can buy a crimping tool yourself. It's $30 or so, if you have a hankering for owning an obscure tool.

Now for software - this is the easiest part of the process. Windows 95 has all you need built right in. Incidentally, Windows 95 is network-able with Windows NT and also with Windows For Workgroups 3.11. Get the hardware installed first. Win 95 has the drivers for most cards built in, but if you've bought something unusual, make sure the Windows 95 drivers are included with the card when you buy. Then add new hardware through the hardware wizard to make sure Win95 recognizes the card. OK - we're ready. In Win95, if you go to Start, Settings, Control Panel, Networks .. there it is … the Printer and file sharing button. Press this and there are just two things to check. "I want to give others access to my files" and "I want to be able to allow others to print to my printers" Check the first for sure, and the second on any PC with a printer. While you're there, select the "identification" tab and give your PC a name and workgroup name. For our simple household, we use the same workgroup for all PC's. This all installs more software from the Win 95 CD-ROM.

OK .. now you have a use for that Network Neighborhood icon on the desktop! Open it up and you should see a computer symbol for each of the computers on your little network by name. Walk to the other PC, open Windows Explorer, right-click on, say, the CD-ROM in the directory tree. You'll see a new item in the selection list now - Sharing. Select that and select Share, and click Read-only, and don't give it a password. Go to your own PC, open Network Neighborhood, open the other PC and you'll see the CD-ROM on the other computer! Can you run Diablo from it? Sure! So share your tape backup - or go buy one - you should have one anyway. Now, you can't share the tape, but you CAN share drives. That is, if the other PC has shared the entire C drive then you can map to that drive from your own PC, and run your tape to back up that mapped network drive!

You - as a user - can choose what to share to the network. If you go to your "My Computer" you can right-click on it, select share and share the whole drive. Or you can choose to share just one or more directories in the drive by sharing from Windows Explorer. You can choose read-only or read-write with separate passwords (or no passwords) as you wish. Have fun! ◆



Software Review

ASAP WordPower

byFrederick O'Keefe,
Tampa PC Users Group

Up Front Summary:
Product - ASAP WordPower™, ver. 1.95
Publisher - Software Publishing Corporation (SPC)
Class - Presentation Software
PC requirements - WIN 3.1/95/NT; 486 recommended, 3.5MB HD space; 1MB free RAM; VGA 16 or 256 colors. Comes on 1 diskette, plus one optional spelling dictionary diskette. Works well on laptops.
Rating (0-10) - 9
Recommendation - Buy it, even if you don't "need" a presentation package!

Microsoft PowerPoint™ (PP) and other powerful presentation packages are as complicated to learn and use as their output is extensive. Most of us in small business or education don't have time to spend becoming knowledgeable enough to fully use those packages. Yet, we want, and sometimes need, an effective sales tool to lift a presentation above the humdrum.

Help is here -- ASAP WordPower™ (WP). From the folks who bring us the potent Harvard Graphics™ program, and now the PagePlus™ desktop publishing powerhouse.

Putting together an attractive, professional presentation in short order is satisfying, and, for a business person, cost effective. The program is so "intelligent" in its doing the grunt work that it is more fun than most computer games! Yes, WP is fun to play with. I spent more time repeatedly redesigning (tinkering) a "show" than it took to lay it all out. It's a great way to learn. Keywords applicable to WP are: easy, quick, extensive preformatted display, intelligent, automatic, artful, pleasing, effective, functional....

Few software programs have performed so well, and right out of the box. The first action to take when you open the box is watching the brief videotape. It shows a bit of what you can do. Then, browse the "Presenting Visually" booklet for good ideas about making interesting presentations. The recommendations are to the point, and right on the mark. If you aren't an artist or designer, WP will do the work for you. Where's the manual to labor over? None is included, and none is needed. The help file is more than enough. You'll rarely need it.

"What is intelligent formatting?" asks the box cover. Answer: Lay out your outline, then let WP format it all for you. Touch it up, and you are done. (It takes some playing to shape everything to one's satisfaction, but playing is just what it is. Non-frustrating, too.) There are 22 layouts (bulleted list, table, organizational chart, etc.), 14 designs (styles, backgrounds), and 18 color schemes. If you don't like outlining, then start with the layouts, and "fill in." The layout of each page can be different, as needed. And with just a click or two of the mouse button.

Some capabilities are: drag and drop objects, with immediate "drag here to..." instructions; import tables and spreadsheet cells; text and associated background resizing to suit you; insert objects (logo, clipart, header/footer... to one or to all pages); a wealth of page-to-page transition effects. WP pages can be imported into other programs, too. There is too much to mention.

"I have PowerPoint. Why use WP?" Because WP is easier and faster for design work. You can swap entire presentations back and forth between PP and WP. And the run-time player lets you safely send out diskettes to prospects and clients with compelling presentations. You will "look great" through your "silent sales person." Heck - e-mail me a copy of your best WP work so I can enjoy it! Use fredrick@tech-center.com to reach me.

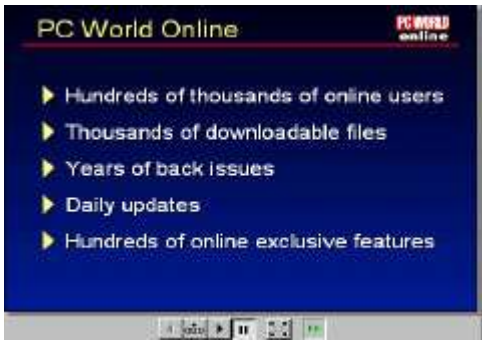
Is WP perfect? Nearly so, for its intended market. But I would have liked the ability to vary the color scheme and design scheme page by page; and I want to see word processor-like text drag and drop in the outline mode. That's my one, big suggestion to Software Publishing Corporation. Otherwise, folks, congratulations on an exceptional job.

SPC also published Active Office™, which is a super add on to MS Office 95/97. When I receive my copy, you'll read about it here.

Go to SPC's home page http://www.spco.com/ for information and an online demonstration.

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To the right is an example of one slide from an Internet Web presentation by PC World created using SPC's ASAP Word power and WebShow.



SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
2. **Tracer -** 7th Level - Launch into cyberspace with a deadly virus on your heels-Windows 95 CD.
3. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations - Windows 3.1 & 95
4. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
5. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
8. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
9. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)
10. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay** - Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+) - Windows CD

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!



Hyde Park Avenue, Tampa FL as pictured on a postcard postmarked in 1906. This postcard is one of approximately 15,000 images available from the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection on the Web at http://www.dos.state.fl.us/fpc/. I chose this particular card since I live only a few block from this location. Note the inscription of "I do not forget you" on the card written 91 years ago.

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
University of Tampa	http://www.utampa.edu/utmain.htm
Hillsborough Community College	http://www.hcc.cc.fl.us/index.stm
Research It - your one stop reference desk	http://www.itools.com/research-it/
Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet	http://www.oz.net/~cyndihow/sites.htm
Maps On Us (A map, route & yellow pages service)	http://www.mapsonus.com/
Ticketmaster Online	http://www.ticketmaster.com/
Florida Report on Physician Discipline & Malpractice	http://www.state.fl.us/fdhc/hpcc/hpolicy/malpractice/medrpt.html
Tropical Hibiscus Home Page	http://www2.trop-hibiscus.com/trop-hibiscus/
NCSA Virus Technical Labs (the computer type)	http://www.ncsa.com/virus/
Central Europe Online	http://www.centraleurope.com/
ArabNet (online resource for the Arab world)	http://www.arab.net/
Butterfly Website	http://www.isit.com/butterfly/indexfr.htm
Open World City Guides	http://www.openworld.co.uk/cityguides/
Vietnam Pictures Archive	http://sunsite.unc.edu/vietnam/vnpic.html
HomeArts (Hearst publications)	http://www.homearts.com/
Microsoft Technical Support - Knowledge Base	http://www.microsoft.com/kb/
Clip Art Connection	http://www.ist.net/clipart/index.html

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site.

Software Review

Editor's Note: *Software sometimes stays a long time waiting for a reviewer here at TPCUG. That was the case with Delrina's Echo Lake. By the time someone decided they would like to do a review, Delrina was absorbed by Symantec and Echo Lake was sold to Creative Wonders and renamed Family Album Creator. Normally I would not print a review of a program that no longer exists; however, Bruce, after looking at the demonstration version of Family Album Creator available on the Internet, has assured me that Family Album Creator is the same as Echo Lake. Therefore, since he thought so much of the program, I am going to break my rule and print the review.*

Echo Lake
(Family Album Creator from Creative Wonders)

Delrina's ECHO LAKE attracted my attention because it was billed as a novice book writer's dream; at least that is how I saw it. This software guides one through the planning and layout process for a novel or "how to" book.

THE PROGRAM is a great program. I did not know that such a program existed so you can imagine my delight. When the program is opened, a room, called the CABIN appears. Visible icons include: picture on wall hiding a security safe, bookshelves for books you are writing, rolling index to create a new book, story plate for creating a new (chapter) story, drop and drag icon, trash can, planning format to lay out your book, and many other clickable icons.

I really got excited over this program. I have published pamphlets and manuals from long ago with the old mimeograph system cranking one page at a time; later, an electric motor was attached. In fact, my first teenage effort to self publish was with hecktograph jelly in the biscuit pan. In those days there were no copy machines. I went through the "tin" plates that we "burned" and later the paper mats. I even owned an expensive off-set printer "burning" my "paper plates" on the





Xerox Copier. Reflection on the "good ole days" surely makes one realize that now is the "best of the ole days". Therefore, I thought that I had died and gone to an authors heaven when I obtained Echo Lake.

Why is (was) it called Echo Lake? Click on the steaming coffee cup with the upward curl of steam to open the cabin window for a ringside seat to view a lake with eagles and other birds flying, squirrels dancing on the window sill, ducks swimming across the lake, even a Nessie swims by, etc. Echo Lake wants the author to view the peaceful tranquillity of nature while contemplating the intellectual, philosophical inner being. The desk with the three drawers has accessories for click linking to functions. An outdoor garment hangs on a coat rack near the door; click on the coat to go outside; that is, exit the program. With all the easy links, one can click new book and begin writing. Later one may "plan" the book after the writing begins. Echo Lake provided the after the fact opportunity to plan the book because they know that one's uncontrollable enthusiasm prohibits planning ahead; we just jump right in. Remember, "If you do not have time to do it right now, when will you have time to do it over!" One may "play" around with Echo Lake while getting the feel.

One may choose even the style of book cover. Graphics, audio and video are said to be easy to add. My system does not permit me this luxury. Graphics can be manipulated, cropped or otherwise creatively adorned. For the autobiographers, this program inserts memory jogging notes to assist the remembering of those "Oh, I forgot all about that" afterthoughts. The "inspirator" is activated by clicking the red button on the light. Did you get the connection? A light bulb flashes an idea in your head; the programmers have a sense of humor. A cross cut of a tree trunk provides the "Tree Ring" (annual rings) at the end of the book. One uses this for an additional review of the book so that reorganization of the stories (chapters) can be accomplished. The "Tree Ring" should be used in planning before commencing writing. Echo Lake has too many features to include in this review. There are restrictions that I do not think I understand like the warning: "an Echo Lake book cannot be used for any commercial purpose." That I do not understand; if I write and print it, I expect to do whatever I want with the printed copy. Another is that "these books" can be distributed to "no more than 10 people". The legal department may have failed to communicate with the manual writers.

Echo Lake is one of the best and most exciting programs that I have. One of the bonus philosophies is that family researchers can get information from otherwise reluctant family members. When uncooperative family members at reunions

(Family.....Continued on page 10)

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)
This is the first time in three months my contributors have left me more than a column of space to make my comments.

Of course, the big news is that Corel Corporation will be demonstrating their software at the May meeting. This is one of the computer world's premier software vendors. They established their reputation in the graphics market with Corel Draw and its associated programs. Now they have done the computer community a favor by buying a much deflated Word Perfect and pumping new life into it; thus, reintroducing competition to the office suite market. There is nothing like competition to benefit the consumer (us).

Frederick O'Keefe's review of ASAP WordPower from SPC in this issue led me to the SPC Web site, where I saw a demonstration of how this presentation program, along with their Web Show program, can be used to create online presentations. We've had presentations to our group where the presenter used a presentation program such as Power Point or Harvard Graphics to give us what is basically a slick slide show. The above mentioned software now allows you to post such presentations on the Web. Then, individuals using Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator can, after a one time download of either an Active X control or a Netscape plugin, view the presentation on their home computer--with sound if the author provided for such using the Real Audio technology.

This technology from SPC along with the Net Meeting idea from Microsoft is moving us closer to the possibility of a virtual meeting, where members could simply sit at their (well-endowed multimedia) computers and take part in the meetings form their homes. The presentation mentioned above is a one way affair. The Net Meeting, however, is interactive, where files, programs, talk, and video can be shared. Unfortunately, Net Meeting at this point only allows these features between two individuals--and has a tendency to crash. If more than two want to meet, the best they can do is a keyboard chat with the group. But, give Microsoft time, and they will probably have all of the above and more for many people in some future version of their browser.

If we had this technology now, and we all had advanced machines, Corel could stay all snug around their furnaces up there in chilly Canada, from where they could send us a virtual presentation. If that were the reality, then, of course, you would no longer be reading this newsletter in hard copy, but would have gone to our Web site and be viewing it on your computer—or, if preferred, in the color copy you just printed.

This leads me to ask, "Why do we have meetings anyway?" Well, we have them, I think, because people with a common interest in computers and a desire to get out of the house once in awhile find them a useful way of gaining information and meeting others of like interests.

In the time before the Web, user groups and their associated BBSs with their computer related conferences were about the only way of getting computer information other than the computer magazines. You would come to the meeting, see a software product demonstrated, ask a member about the problem you were having with your computer, and possibly get an answer.

Now, you can see software demonstrations at COMPUSA or another mega store. And most of all you can go on the Internet and find not only the answer to your computer questions, you can find information about almost anything.

Let me give you several examples. Recently I needed a new battery for one of our IBM ThinkPads. I went to the IBM Web site, found the page for ThinkPad parts, clicked on my model number and was presented with a parts list with prices and a schematic of the insides of the laptop. I called the 800 number listed, gave them the appropriate part number and had the battery two days later.

Just yesterday, I noticed that if I double clicked on a PDF file, nothing would happen. This must have happened because of a recent installation of Acrobat 3.0. Being a knowledgeable Win95 user, I then did what was required to set up Acrobat as the program associated with the PDF extension. Now, a double click on the PDF file got Acrobat up and running, but also produced a system error message—and no file open. I was stumped. So it was off to do a search on the Usnet Newsgroups with DejaNews. Within 10 minutes I had my answer. I needed to put "%1" at the end of the path to the Acrobat executable file when I did the file type association mentioned above. I frequently more easily find the solution to software problems this way than by going to the software vendor's own site.

However, vendor sites are good for one thing: Software updates, patches, and drivers. Do you remember the days when you had to call the vendor and ask them to mail you a floppy with the appropriate driver on it, or, more recently, search for it at your long distance expense on their BBS site. Now, not only can I get the updated software mentioned, I can get entire programs, sometimes limited time trial versions and sometimes complete programs free of both cost and restraints on their use. I must have downloaded at least six such free and very useful programs from Microsoft and various driver updates to my Hewlett Packard printers and scanner.

So, in this day of the Internet, what can a user group do for you? Send me your thoughts. We need to make our group even more relevant. ◆

Software Review

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

I received four CD Roms from IBM that are targeted at computer resellers. Each disk covers a separate topic.

The quality of sound on the IBM disks is excellent. The graphics are FULL SCREEN, and the graphics are top notch.

The first of the four disks is the Marketing Disk. There is over one hour of multimedia information on each of these disks. The disks are intended for resellers to use. There are sections that can be used as is, to set up a computer on the sales floor and place the movie on it to allow continuous running advertisements, describing OS2 WARP Version 4.

This marketing disk is set up with presentations, product literature, and Camera Ready art. The presentations allow the salespeople to put these shows on their computers as demos. The product literature gives the description of OS2 and what hardware you need to run it. A text file tells you how to view and how to copy any section on the disk. Many of the files are .pdf (acrobat) files, full color and excellent graphics.

The second of the four disks is the Interactive Demo of OS2 WARP version 4. This disk contains the demo of the operating system in its entirety. It is very long and it is complete. It shows you how to set up the voice recognition and all the other features of OS2. More on the details later.

The third disk is the World Tour. You are presented with a map, and with various objects on the map, each of which is in a different country. Click on any country and you will be listening to and watching Chip Ramsey, a rock singer. Chip and Roxanne Rolls will give you a story of how OS2 works. A globe rotates in the center of the screen on most of these presentations and is used in a very unique way to add interest to an otherwise very dry story, with much repetition as to how OS2 works and what it will do for you.

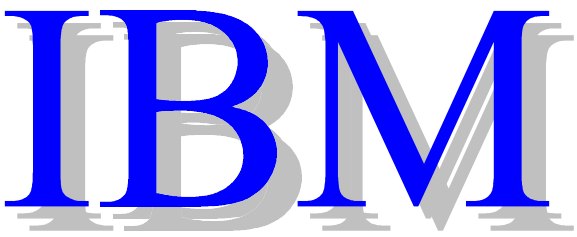
The fourth disk is marked Back Stage Pass. It starts by telling you this disk is for resellers ONLY. Once again you have Chip Ramsey and Roxanne Rolls giving you the story of OS2 WARP version 4.

So, using only the disks to find out— What is this OS2 WARP Version 4?

- Each disk shows you how to use a microphone and not your mouse or keyboard to do whatever you want to do. Dictate a letter, change the URL that you are going to see next, and calling up any program on your computer. The voice system is in six languages. That is, any of six languages can be used and there is no "training" needed to start out and do dictation or any of the other things you can do with just your voice.
- Plug and Play is supported by OS2. IBM began using plug and play in 1986 with the PS2 computers. I have one I bought in 1987, and it works fine.
- Multitasking. OS2 warp supports multitasking and does it differently from that in windows.
- OS2 is the first operating system to support Java, Sun's new object oriented language.
- IBM can use this program to run your computer remotely as a service tool. The technician can check your program and see what you have been doing in order to correct a problem.
- Networking. OS2 supports networking and also infra red so that you can update your notebook without wires.
- Power management, pcmcia support, and a Java development kit , are all included in OS2 WARP version 4.
- Internet support is excellent.
- A bonus pack is included.
- An Internet Browser is included.

All these features are completely described and demonstrated in the four disks. Much repetition is to be expected because this is a series of helpful materials intended for resellers to use to make up short demos. In full screen you watch a person dictate a letter by bringing up the program with speech and then writing the letter with only the microphone and his voice. He also shows you how to change to a different URL or, for that matter, get on the Internet by simply voicing his commands.

I am going to stop here, and I would like to tell you that this is the most unusual review I have ever done. It took an awful lot of time to listen to and watch all these demos and try to make a sensible report from that— there is much repetition. The graphics and the sound are terrific, and anyone who wants to use the disks are welcome to have them for a time. I have a copy of OS2 WARP Version 4, and use it. I did not use that copy as material for this review, as I am writing about the four disks mentioned above, and not the actual use of the operating system in practice. Microsoft gave me a copy of their competing system, and so I can easily compare the networking and security and stability of both systems and also compare them both against Linux or any other operating system. ◆



Recommended Shareware/Freeware

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, I didn't get any complaints from my column last month so I thought I'd try to do it on a regular basis. I visited some of my favorite Shareware hangouts this past month and came up with a few more interesting tidbits that I thought you'd like to know about.

If you're reading this from the printed newsletter, type in the link address in your ***URL*** address area exactly as you see it with NO spaces. If you have downloaded the ***.pdf*** file and are using Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the newsletter just highlight the link address and copy it into your ***URL*** address area. If your are using Word 97 you can copy the link address from within Acrobat and paste it into Word 97 and the link will become ***hot***. (Just click on the link and you'll be taken there automatically.) I double checked all these links, and they worked at the time I check them out. But the Internet is so dynamic, it changes on a daily basis. In case you go to one of these links and you get a message that says it can't find the file or link you can usually find an area at the bottom of the page that will let you search for the file. Just type in the name of the file as listed and you should be transported to the download area for that file. (If you should have any trouble – call me. My number is listed in the front of the newsletter.)



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-24900,00.html

Personal Screensaver

Personal Screensaver is a customizable screen saver that lets you personalize your PC's napping time with your own photos and sounds. Your idling computer will come alive with sights and sounds of your own selection. The endless combinations of images, sounds, titles, and reminders let you create a showcase of your family pictures and memories. The Snap2it feature is a built-in event reminder which will pop-up with images, sounds, and captions on the day of your choice.

Requirements: Windows 3.x or later. Free



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-25861,00.html

WebWhacker

Personalized Internet content delivery is the key feature that distinguishes WebWhacker as an effective offline browsing product. By preselecting the Web sites that you want to monitor, you can set a schedule for Web pages, text, graphics, and HTML links to be delivered to your desktop computer automatically and unattended. The evaluation software expires after adding and/or grabbing 20 URLs to the Whack list. Each URL can be set to "whack" a maximum of two levels of the Web site. All data collected during evaluation can be used with the permanent (purchased) copy of WebWhacker. WebWhacker 3.0's enhanced speed, site storage on removable media, and automatic updating heighten the performance, flexibility, and portability of offline browsing.

Requirements: Windows 95
Shareware – Fully functional demo



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-27022,00.html

Free Agent (32-bit)

Free Agent is a robust newsgroup reader that can be configured in many ways. It provides multipane viewing, and news can be read online or offline. There is flexible article purging, database compacting, carbon copying for email and article posting, editing of all fields, and canceling of posts.

Requirements: Windows 95 Free



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-21550,00.html

VoicePad

Kurzweil's VoicePad can be used to dictate memos, letters, reports and other documents. Users can also format text, navigate through VoicePad menus and dialogs, change its settings, and preview and print documents using intuitive voice commands. VoicePad combines continuous digit recognition with its dictation capabilities so you can always use the keyboard to quickly enter telephone numbers, street addresses, zip codes, dollar amounts, social security numbers, and other numerical data into documents.

Requirements: 5 MB RAM, Windows 3.x/95, microphone, 16-bit sound card, high-quality PC speakers
Shareware – Fully functional demo



http://www6.zdnet.com/cgi-bin/texis/swlib/hotfiles/info.html?fcode=000DWO

Dipstick

(Shareware.....Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

Lotus Notes SIG

This SIG meets every Thursday at Reflectone at 8:30. It is a professional SIG focusing on Lotus Notes certification. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.*

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(Family.....Continued from page 6)
are presented with the Echo Lake Family Album (your book), they do not want to be left out. What a hit this would be at a family reunion! Creative Wonders told me that the subsequent program, called "Family Album Creator", is very, very much better.

The new program is available from Creative Wonders, P. O. Box 51790, Livonia, Michigan 48151. Their support can be reached by email at "cwsupport@cwonders.com. Their website is www.cwonders.com. CompUSA carries the program for $39.95—with a $10 mail-in rebate sticker. I asked for a review copy of their new Family Album Creator to review. I did not get a copy. I have not test driven Family Album Creator, but I did have an opportunity to test drive the "mini-version". . I went to the web site and downloaded the new "mini-version" of Family Album Creator. The "mini-version" permits one to try the program for "5 hours", then, one may decide to purchase it or the program will do something--self destruct, I guess!

At "http://www.cwonders.com" I was afforded the opportunity to view several programs that Creative Wonders sells.. However, my interest was in Family Album Creator. Several components of the program are available for trial. I downloaded the mini-version of Family Album Creator (3.7 MB), Sample Album--Julia's School Days (3.7 MB), Wing10.zip, Help File (288K), Interaction Tour (2.3 MB), and Personal Template (3.12MB). I opened the "new Echo Lake" now called Family Album Creator. Everything that I saw was exactly the same as Echo Lake. Any change from Echo Lake would have to be in the components not available for download.

The Family Album Creator Help File that I downloaded is designed to answer "all" questions about the product. The Help File installs directly into the Mini-Version. The Interactive Tour permits one to "point and click along the way". The voice-over and video helps the learning process. The Christmas Album Template and Birthday Album Template will install into Family Album Creator. The Personal Album Template helps in creating a multimedia album. I have seen enough of the new program, Family Album Creator, that I may acquire the upgrade. I may enjoy it even more than Echo Lake.

Now, I will lean back and click the steaming coffee cup. Maybe something will rub off on me. The philosophical, intellectual contemplation while viewing nature on the lake is worth the cost. Pardon me while I reheat my real cup of coffee in the microwave and click the steaming coffee cup on the screen. I want to watch the birds, squirrels, ducks and Nessie!

◆

Member Ad

Before you buy a 486 computer part, call Merle! I have a small collection of used surplus I/O cards and VL bus video cards and a few odd 486 processors. Not quite free, but I'll install for the labor, or whatever.

Merle Nicholson 879-3602.

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
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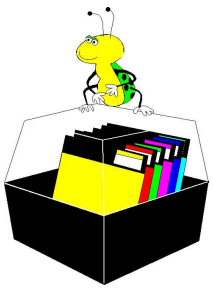
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9705.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

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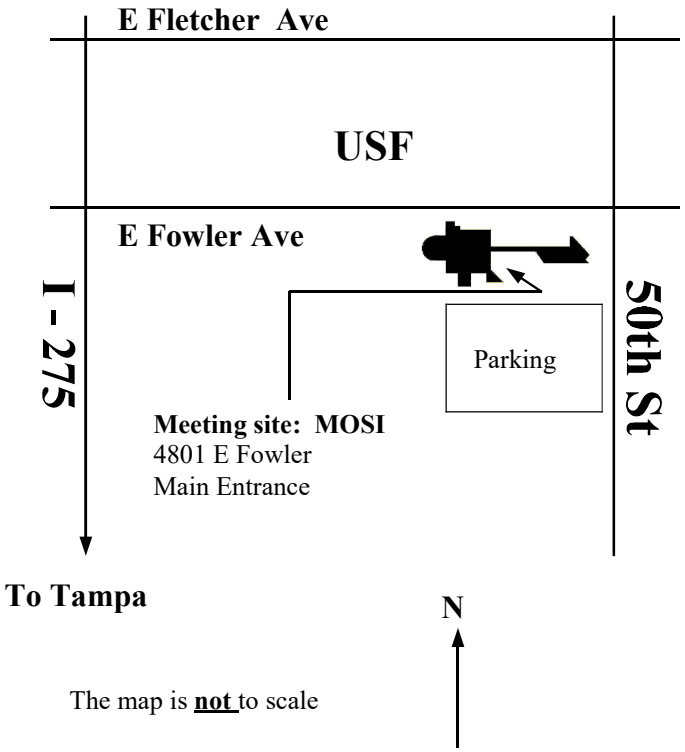
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Shareware.....Continued from page 9)

Dipstick, a free utility, answers the question: "Which site should I download the file from?" When presented with multiple Internet site locations to receive files from, you'll want to use the fastest connection. Drag the URL links onto Dipstick, and the program will test the speed of multiple connections, by pinging them, and show the fastest link. You can adjust the number and size of pings, plus time-out parameters. Dipstick returns the host IP address, minimum average and maximum round-trip time, as well as packet-loss percentage.

Requirements Windows 95 Free. ◆





Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 6 June 1997

Meeting

Pilgrim Software presents ISO 9000 Software

June 11, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.
Main Entrance

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ISO 9000, Hardware Problems & More

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Regarding this month's meeting topic, President Connie Kincaid tells me that the International Standards Organization oversees the international standardization of almost anything from computers to dog food. They have set a series of standards known as the ISO 9000 standards for businesses that want to do business internationally. Any company that wishes to be ISO 9000 certified must submit to rigorous and lengthy examination by ISO 9000 auditors. It is very expensive and exhausting, but once a business obtains ISO 9000 certification they are believed to be a stable, reliable business that anyone anywhere in the world would be comfortable dealing with. It's really about creating some assurance that a company is reputable. The Pilgrim software is designed to aid businesses in documenting everything about themselves that relates to certification.

It's been a bad month for computer hardware and software.

First the hardware. My almost one year old Gateway P5-166 now has a new 12 speed CD drive. It is the fourth drive that has been in the computer. The computer came with an 8X Wearnes. That failed after a couple of months and was replaced by another Wearnes. A few months later it also failed, and it was replaced by an 8X Toshiba, which for some reason I deemed to be of higher quality. It quit working (drive not ready message) a couple of weeks back, and, as in all the previous cases, after a free call to Gateway technical support and just a few minutes wait I had a tech representative who, after putting me through the usual paces of checking various settings and then disconnecting and reconnecting cables, determined that the drive was defective and promised me another one via UPS in a few days. This time it was a Mitsumi 12X, which

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

Visit us on the Web at http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
The July meeting topic is not yet fixed. In August, PowerQuest will present Partition Magic.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING May 14, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Ken Boyd & William LaMartin substituting for Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The meeting started around 6:45 with Connie Kincaid giving a description of our group, since there were more than the usual number visitors present due to the Corel presentation.

Chantal Smith from Corel Corporation then took over and gave a description of Corel and the types of software they develop. She mentioned, in particular, their move to Java with **Corel Office for Java**.

She next listed the major software packages she would touch on: **WordPerfect Suite 7**, **Corel Office 7**, and **Corel Draw 7.** First to be demonstrated was WordPerfect Suite 7, with the comment that version 8 would be on the shelves shortly.

The suite contains WordPerfect, Quattro Pro and Corel Presentations as major components with many auxiliary components like Envoy, Barista and Corel Flow. She highlighted improvements made to WordPerfect such as: 300 levels of undo, text formatting improvements, shortcuts to frequent operations, improvements in working with embedded spreadsheets, and speed formatting . Next shown were several time saving features to the suite's spreadsheet QuattroPro. And to finish out the suite, we saw how to enhance your slide show in Corel Presentations with movement, transitions, bouncing bullets, tables and charts.



Corel Office 7 was not demonstrated, but it was noted that it was basically WordPerfect Suite 7 with added features like Paradox and Sidekick.

The pièce de résistance of the presentation, of course, was Chantal's demonstration of **Corel Draw 7**. She led us through the creation of a brochure where we saw how to fit text to a path, fill text with a graphic, use interactive color fills and blends, place material on different layers, and much more that I can't remember. I do remember that one manipulation was so impressive it brought applause from the audience.

The program comes with powerful utilities like Dream 3D and PhotoPaint . Needless to say, there is a tremendous amount of clip art and graphics included. One impressive fea-

(Minutes.....Continued on page 12)

Software Review

ActiveOffice Can Make Even Me Look Good

by Fredrick Rea O'Keefe, Tampa PC Users Group

Up Front Summary:
Product - ASAP ActiveOffice, ver. 1.0
Publisher - Software Publishing Corporation (SPC)
Class - Graphics Software
PC requirements - MS Office 95 or 97; WIN 95/NT 4.0; 486/50 or Pentium (recommended); 4MB HD space; 8MB RAM (12MB for NT); VGA 256 colors (works on 16 colors). Comes on 1 diskette.
Street price - about $50
Rating (0-10) - 9
Recommendation - Buy; it's a bargain. Makes your tables, worksheets, and data stand out. Maintains the high performance standards of SPC graphics products.

SPC is famous for the highly praised Harvard Graphics family of programs. For us non-power users, SPC has invented their "Intelligent Formatting" software "engine." As reported last month in my review of ASAP WordPower, this engine makes easy the transforming of text, tabular data, spreadsheets, and flow charts from old-fashioned to lively graphics. ActiveOffice is the first in a planned line of "Active" productivity enhancing software. Based on what I've seen so far, Hooray! However, to benefit, you must own Microsoft's Office 95 or 97 applications.

As with ASAP WordPower, ActiveOffice features straightforward point-and-click to convert highlighted data into your choice of graphic design. And then, you can play with the choices, immediately seeing results. As an example, you can select a table in Word, or a set of Excel cells, and create a 3-D, grid delineated table, or a bar or pie chart, or flow chart type layout. Then, you can resize, change colors and other graphical attributes.

That's as easy as it can get. But, that doesn't do justice to the complexity of what ActiveOffice does for you, or the breadth of the choices you can make in customizing your documents. As with ASAP WordPower, you can convert data, or you can create an "ActiveOffice object" from scratch. Rather than spending time considering graphical design, simply type your material, or highlight what already exists, and let ActiveOffice do the grunt work. It takes longer for me (two-finger typist that I am) to type a few phrases than it takes to convert them into an acceptable presentation object.

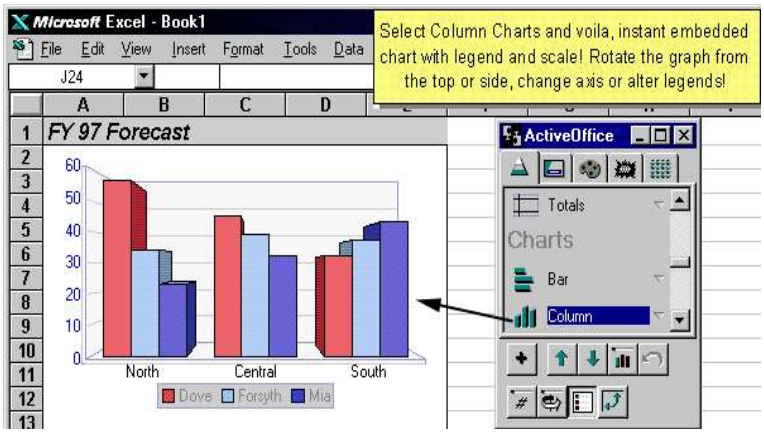
Another way to create an object is to select a layout from the ActiveOffice™ menu, drag it onto your document, spreadsheet, or PowerPoint presentation, and drop it. Fill in the object, and be done.

The right mouse button, clicked on an object, allows for a wide range of formatting manipulation, including sizing - a valuable tool you will use often. Once a custom object has been created, you can save it for repeated use. This is great for those price quotes, or equipment descriptions for your proposals. Yes, the recalled object can be toyed with.

Because ActiveOffice integrates with MS Office, it is available with one click of your favorite rodent. OLE (not "o-lay")is the secret to success here. (You don't really want to know, do you?) And, no, Office's built-in layouts and charting modules don't begin to have the ease, breadth or convenience of those with ActiveOffice.

Well, upgrading our office 486/66 with a 200MHz Pentium motherboard forced me to shelve the Diamond Stealth video card we were using, and revert to the original VGA, 16 bit card from the first 386 machine we owned. It works! Even at this rudimentary level, ActiveOffice jobs look great. But, I see that I will need to get a color laser printer to be satisfied -- should one be available which can meet my standards of both text (must be perfect) and graphics (likewise, in both subtlety of shading and color). LaserMaster® printers are the closest, but my business doesn't require typesetting-quality hardware. The point is that ActiveOffice can easily make your printed presentations (make that "profit generating sales materials") good looking enough to warrant quality printing. Junk that obsolete 300 dpi printer!

(ASAP WordPower™, ActiveOffice™, and Intelligent Formatting™ are trademarks of SPC Software Publishing Corporation®. PowerPoint®, Microsoft® Office®, Windows® are registered trademarks of Microsoft, Inc. SPC is located at 111 N Market St., San Jose CA 95113. Website: www.spco.com. Sales office 800-557-3743. The author of this review is not affiliated with SPC, nor is he available for technical support.) ◆



A Brief Comment on Java

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC users Group

In 1991, the Sun Microsystems Company wrote an operating system for electrical appliances such as TV's, VCR's, microwave ovens, etc. They first called it Oak, and then changed the title to Java.

In 1994 Sun wrote a browser called HotJava. When the Java program was combined with HotJava, the computer programmers around the world began to take notice of Java, and they began to program with it.

Now really, just what is Java. Java is a computer language similar to C, C++, Pascal, and Module-3. The Java language is based on C++, an object oriented language.

The reason that all the programmers are taking a hard look at Java is because you only have to write a program once, and you can run it on any platform. That means that you can write an applet for the World Wide Web, and it will be readable by Netscape or Internet Explorer, because they are both Java compliant. (Applets written in Java are very short and load into the browser fast. It is easy to write very interesting animations in Java.) You can write the second type of program, an "application", and it will run on a MAC, or an IBM compatible, or a UNIX computer, or on Windows95 or Windows NT, OS2, or even a 64 bit Cray Supercomputer, without going back and making changes in the program for each machine.

C programs require that you link and compile them for a specific type of computer. Java programs are Byte Code and you need to have a program on the computer you want to run it on called an Interpreter, or a Run Time environment. New computers will soon arrive Java compliant, which means they will be able to run applications. An application is a regular program such as a word processor or a spreadsheet. Corel is out now, with a suite that is written in Java.

To clarify, there are two main types of Java programs, "applets", which require a browser, and "applications" which require an interpreter at the user's computer. An "application" is a standalone program. This use of an interpreter is called a "Virtual Java Machine" (VJM). You will be seeing VJM in advertisements for new computers.

Now, due to this type of arrangement of the system, security and portability are "built in". If you download a regular program you may download a virus. This does not happen with Java.

Now - what are the **strengths of Java?**

- Java is simple and easy to learn.
- Java is secure.
- Java is portable. It can be run on any computer.
- Java is object oriented. You don't need to write everything twice.
- Java is Robust. The program you write will behave.
- Java is Multithreaded. You can easily create interactive, networked programs.
- Java is Architecture-neutral. You can upgrade your computer and the programs will still run and behave.
- Java is Interpreted and High Performance. Java was designed to perform well on very low-power CPU's.
- Java is distributed. It handles TCP/IP easily.
- Java is dynamic. You can dynamically link code in a safe and expedient manner.
- Java prevents Memory Leaks.
- Java incorporates automatic garbage collection.
- Java applets are smaller and will load faster.

Now - what are the **weaknesses of Java**?

- Java runs slower when more complex programs are built.
- Java is new and so programmers may be confused until they become familiar with the programming.
- Java requires a runtime interpreter on the user's computer.

One more thing. JavaBeans. Microsoft called their OLE, or Object Linking and Embedding, a means of making changes in the spread sheet automatically when you made a change somewhere else. JavaBeans is like that in the sense that it has the ability to make links to components in other models.

Java is a newer language and therefore it will take time to improve it to the point where other languages are now. The universal approval of Java is shown easily.

Just go to Barnes and Noble or another bookstore, and look at the shelves of books devoted to the Java language. Or better yet, talk to some computer programmers or to some employment agencies. Java is really getting everyone's attention. It works fine with NC's, and NC's are now becoming available in quantities, and from many manufacturers. Java does not need an operating system, or does it actually form an operating system? How will this affect our future use of computers? How will it affect various companies? ◆

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
2. **Tracer -** 7th Level - Launch into cyberspace with a deadly virus on your heels - Windows 95 CD.
3. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations - Windows 3.1 & 95
4. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
5. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
8. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
9. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)
10. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay** - Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+) - Windows CD

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!



Internet Picture of the Month

From the Charleston Multimedia Project Internet site listed below, this is one of the many historic homes you can read about and view. This is the William Roper House c.1838 located at 9 East Battery. The site also includes detailed maps of all the historic areas.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Bureau of the Public Debt	http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/
Cars Online	http://www.cars-online.com/index1.html
Charleston Multimedia Project	http://www.ccpl.org/ccl/cmh_title_page.html
Chicago Architectural Project	http://www.architecture.org/
Golf Web	http://www.golfweb.com/
Hillsborough County (new site)	http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/
Kenwood Audio	http://www.kenwoodusa.com/
National Trust for Historic Preservation	http://www.nthp.org/
New York Sidewalk (Microsoft city guide)	http://newyork.sidewalk.com/
TUCOWS (software)	http://www.tucows.com/
Seattle Sidewalk (Microsoft city guide)	http://seattle.sidewalk.com/
Online News Hour from PBS	http://www1.pbs.org/newshour/
Support Page for Microsoft FrontPage	http://www.pmpcs.com/support/frontpage.htm
Using Microsoft Front Page (online book from QUE)	http://www.superlibrary.com/que/et/MSFP97/
Java Tutorial (online notes from college course)	http://math.hws.edu/eck/cs124/notes/index.html
Using Java (online book from QUE)	http://www.superlibrary.com/que/et/se_java2e/

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Review

Microsoft FrontPage 97





by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

FrontPage is made up of two complimentary applications: FrontPage Explorer and FrontPage Editor. FP Editor is used to create the HTML pages that make up your site, and FP Explorer maps the site you have created in either a folder view or a hyperlink view. A screen shot of the hyperlink view of part of the TPCUG Web site is on the next page. The whole site could not be presented in hyperlink view here since there are over 300 links alone in the "Links" folder.

For the uninformed, a Web site on the World Wide Web is simply a collection of files on some computer (called a server) that is connected to the Internet. One of these files is designated as the home page. For example the TPCUG's Internet site is at the Internet address http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/. tbos2cla is the name of the server we are on, and tpcug is the folder there containing our files. Within tpcug is the file welcome.html which is the HTML file you see when you first go to our site. That is the file labeled Tampa PC Users Group, Inc. on hyperlink view on the next page. The page labeled Genealogy SIG is the HTML page your browser goes to when you click on the Genealogy hypertext link on our home page.

FP Editor allows you to type in text, format it just as you would in a word processor to the extent the HTML rules allow, insert graphics (graphical formats other than GIF and JPEG are automatically converted), insert tables, and hypertext links to other files at your site or anywhere on the WWW. This is the standard stuff of an HTML editor; however, FP Editor provides for more. It simplifies the process of creating forms like the questionnaire (called forms test on the hyperlink view) at the TPCUG site and the creation of frames as in the online review page at the TPCUG site where the scrollable list of articles appears on the left part of the screen and the article being read on the right.

So far nothing has been mentioned that a dozen or more other HTML editors couldn't do. In fact I created all of the TPCUG site without an editor. I did it with Microsoft Word. I could have used Note Pad, but I wouldn't have had spell checking. Of course, to do this I was required to be familiar with the HTML codes to enter to accomplish things like the links, tables and inserted graphics. Using FP Editor you are spared the need for knowing HTML, since it is pretty much point and click.

But there is more, and this is where Front Page leaves the other editors behind. Front page is a unified approach to creating, publishing and maintaining a WEB site. First you use the FP Editor to create your home page and all the pages branching off of it; you use FP Explorer to create however many folders you need to contain and organize all of this on your computer. To allow real-time testing, your own Personal Web Server (PWS) software is supplied, so that when you connect to the Internet it is automatically running with an Internet address of whatever your Internet provider has temporarily provided you while you are online. The next time you sign on you will be provided with a slightly different address—however FrontPage always knows the current address of the PWS).

So, you have created your new Microsoft Front Page Web which is now stored in the PWS directory on your computer. You can test it there and fine tune it. In fact you can do more there than at most Internet Service Providers (ISP) because FrontPage will have installed the Microsoft FrontPage Server Extensions at your PWS. These extensions are necessary to utilize the full functionality of FrontPage. With these extensions on the server you can create more powerful WEB sites without bothering your ISP with things like password protection and saving form results. The presence of the extensions also allow you to use the discussion group wizard to create a FrontPage WEB site which is a discussion group. When someone visits this site they will be presented with a list of current topics from which they can read messages and post their own messages. I created such a discussion group on my PWS and while connected to the Internet gave my temporary address to several members of our group. They then went to the site, read the couple of messages I had already posted there and then left messages of their own. It's a really nice feature; however, it did seem to have a flaw in that a reply message did not always appear associated with the message to which it was replying.

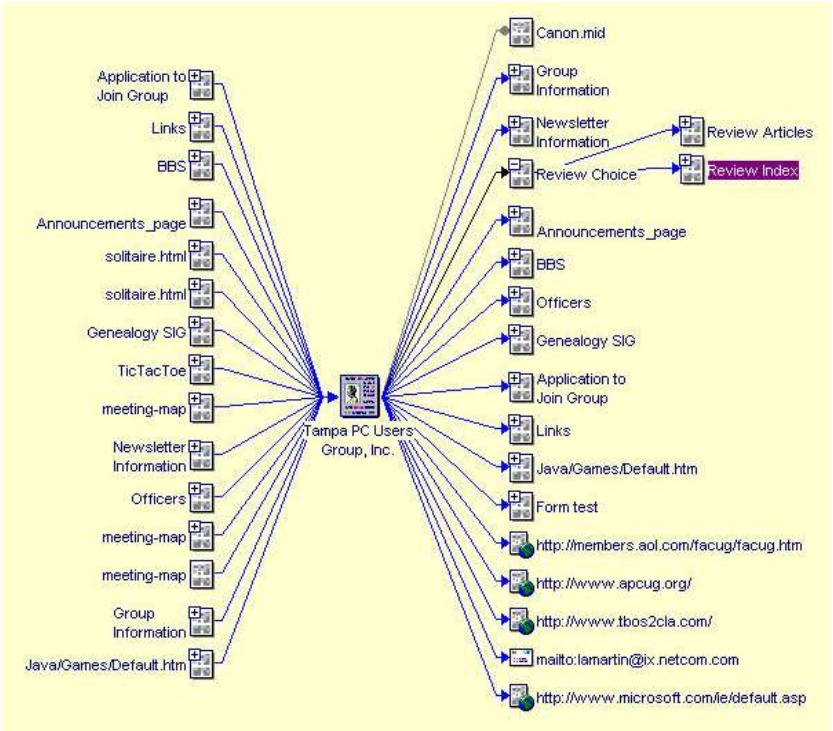
Once you have your FP Web created and tested on your computer with the Personal Web Server, you are ready to put it on the Internet for the world to see. In a perfect world, you would simply choose the option to publish your FrontPage Web, and FrontPage would handle all the details of dialing up your ISP and using File Transferee Protocol (FTP) transmit all of your files to the proper place at the ISP, keeping the structure intact just as it was on the PWS on your computer. As you know the world is not perfect, and most likely your ISP will not be supporting the FrontPage Server Extensions for the free home pages they provide you for your $20 each month. For this you will have to buy one of their upgraded service plans. I know that my provider, NetCom, does not support the extensions with the free home page they provide.

(FrontPage.....Continued on page 7)

(FrontPage.....Continued from page 6)

But all is not lost, if, in trying to send your FrontPage Web to your ISP, FrontPage detects that the server extensions are not supported it invokes its Publishing Wizard to create a Web site for you at your ISP without the extra functionality that you would have if the server extensions were available. So you are back to having the type of Web site that could be created with most other HTML editors—with the added convenience of easier maintenance of the site, because, in the future when you want to update the site with any changes you had made, the publishing Wizard would automatically send only the files that you had made changes to. Unfortunately I (and a lot of others based on UseNet newsgroup messages) could not get the Publishing Wizard to post to my ISP. I also tried posting to our TPCUG site, which also doesn't support the FP Server extensions, but the Publishing Wizard balked at this also.

So, where do we stand? FrontPage is a good program. The Editor makes creating HTML pages almost as easy as using a word processor. The Explorer is very helpful in viewing the structure and maintaining your site. And the Personal Web Server provides you with your own temporary Internet site on your home computer where you can test everything out. And I am sure that now after reading above about the Discussion Group Web, many of you who have personal Web pages that your ISP is giving you for free would like put such a discussion group on some favorite topic of yours on your site. But until more ISPs support the FP Server Extensions, this discussion Web and much of the extra functionality of FrontPage will go wanting.



For me the program is worth having just for the ease of creating your pages with the Editor and then viewing the structure with Explorer, but I will for the time being have to continue relying on standard FTP to upload my files to my site, all the while keeping track of which files I have modified and which folders they go in.

The local price is about $130.◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

so far is functioning flawlessly. My reading on all of this is that CD drive makers--at least the ones that Gateway uses--have not upgraded the quality of their drives to math the increase in speed. The drives are literally rattling themselves to death.

My next hardware failure occurred when I tried to use the HP IIIp laser printer which had been sitting unused for about 9 months. First it produced a foul odor, some sort of rubbery smell and refused to print with an error message concerning missing toner, an open door, or an inoperative fan. Repeatedly trying to get it to work finally produced a scan error message.

Since my son wanted to take it with him for the summer, I broke down and called Hewlett Packard's tech number for old products--$2.50/minute with a $25 maximum. That produced a tech representative who basically had me do the same sort of things I had just done. And much to my surprise, a print test finally worked, followed by the printing of a document sent from the computer. So it was worth the $25. Three days later when it came time to pack up the printer for travel, a final check produced the old error 52 again--failure to scan. This time I checked for local HP service. Calling CompUSA produced the explanation that some printers also functioned as scanners, and this part of the printer wasn't functioning. Let's try someplace else. At least the fellow at Computer City admitted he didn't know exactly what the scan error was, but he was sure they could fix it. The next name on the list from HP was ComuCom Systems here in Tampa. I was transferred to a technician who happened to be in (most of their work is done at client locations). He immediately explained what the scan error meant. It had to do with a scan motor not working, and this could usually be repaired by simply cleaning the corrosion from the terminals of the wires connecting the motor to a circuit board. All I had to do was remove the top of the printer. I did this plus removing about three layers of circuit boards to get at what I think were the correct terminals. No corrosion in sight, but I cleaned them

(Comments.....Continued on page 8)

Lightning, So What!

by Fredrick Rea O'Keefe, Tampa PC Users Group

Working with electronics (35 years+), and being responsible for keeping them working no matter what, has given me an education. Sometimes it has been costly. Working with electrical engineers in power quality, including lightning and surge protection, gives me a daily view of how even large, technical corporations often can't distinguish between what is effective and what is not safe to use.

So, for my associates in the Tampa PC Users Group, here are a few tips. If your plug-in surge suppressor cost you less than $100, and it is more than a year old, it is probably at its life's end. If you bought it "retail," the same. The well known brand name devices offer minimal protection (don't believe the marketing hype on the specification sheet or the packaging) and should be replaced annually (every two years in low risk areas). Central Florida is "Lightning Alley," the area most high risk from lightning. How about an average 82 strokes per acre per year!

If you use such "consumer grade" protectors, unplug your computer equipment, including the phone wires, every time there is a storm. Lightning can easily cause damage to sensitive electronics if it hits two miles away! Unplug everything? Inconvenient? "I've never had a problem"? "It's got a 'lifetime' warranty, doesn't it"? "It has insurance"?

Using an ineffective and potentially unsafe suppressor is a matter of not having accurate information, not a matter of opinion. Even electrical engineers often have no access to accurate information, and are fooled by slick tricks of manufacturers. Ever heard the term "ringer"? Manufacturers often build a powerful suppressor just for public testing purposes, or build "tuned" suppressors for official testing purposes. You couldn't find one of those for sale anywhere. That's why, in our testing, we obtain suppressors off the shelf, or directly from the manufacturer's assembly line. We do the picking.

With proper training, and $100,000 in equipment, you could test suppressors, too. Realistically, you are at the mercy of your vendors, who know every bit as much about reliable, effective and safe surge suppression as you do. They've read the box label!

If you want reliable, effective and safe surge suppression for your home, or business, you will need to contact an industrial supplier or a lightning consultant such as, in Tampa: Bolt Lightning, Inc., Quality Electric Supply, Inc., Borrell Electric Company, or Power Support Engineering, Inc. (for which business I am a consultant). Don't expect proper protection from your electric utility. Expect to pay a minimum (uninstalled) of $700-1,200 for real surge protection, and a reasonable homeowner grade of lightning protection. There is no way around this. And, no, a UPS is not a surge protector, unless it is labeled with "UL 1449-2 listing pending; device submitted for testing on _____ (date)." The old UL-1449 listing is no longer valid. If a suppressor bears a label stating its "UL Grade __, Class __, Mode __," you have a reliable guide to its actual, real world performance. Get nothing less than a Grade A, Class 1, Mode 1 device.

In a nutshell, you have five choices:

1. Trust to luck, and allow your equipment to age rapidly;
2. Use low grade retail suppressors, and enjoy the same as #1, but with a short term better chance of surviving a large surge, once -- throw these suppressors away every year;
3. Use a high end "industrial" or "commercial" type protector supplied by an electric distributor, and improve your chances -- change these every five years, at the most;
4. Unplug everything with every storm;
5. If your equipment is valuable, or "mission critical," particularly if you must keep operating all the time, your only rational choice is to spend the money. You must protect every cable (data, comm, power)connected to your equipment, and the input to your UPS. Use no power cable longer than six feet long; and never use extension cords or power strips (every power cord must be plugged directly into a surge suppressor).

There is obviously far more to the subject than is presented here. I wrote this article so that you will have fewer illusions about what you rely on to protect your investment in computers, large screen TV's, ham radios, or high end stereos.

Fredrick Rea O'Keefe Member, National Writers Union
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(Comments.....Continued from page 7)

anyway, put everything back together with only one left over screw, and expectantly tested the printer. It wasn't fixed. Possibly the motor itself is dead. So next week I'll take it in to CompuCom.

The software problems for the most part all result from installing Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0—the developer's preview. It has some nice features, but my recommendation is to wait for future releases. After installing 4.0 I find that they did not implement the spell checker for email, the same for

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Larry's Links
Recommended Shareware/Freeware

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

If you're reading this from the printed newsletter, type in the link address in the ***URL*** address area of your Internet browser exactly as you see it with NO spaces. If you have downloaded the ***.pdf*** file and are using Adobe Acrobat Reader ver. 3 the links are **hot**. (Just click on the link and you'll be taken there automatically.) I double-checked all these links and they worked at the time. (If you should have any trouble – call me. My number is listed in the front of the newsletter.)

http://www6.zdnet.com/cgi-bin/texis/swlib/hotfiles/info.html?fcode=000B05

Visual Labels (32-bit)

Create your own custom labels and business cards with Visual Labels for Windows. Drag and drop fields to add text, outline shapes, images (.wmf and .bmp formats) and serial numbers to your own custom-size labels, or choose from a database of over 200 Avery label and business card templates. Right-click mouse support gives you fast access to menus to change the properties of selected objects. Nifty features include a choice of label-component colors, and text rotation. Extensive online help further simplifies an already easy-to-use program. A 16-bit version is also available. The evaluation version limits you to 50 startups of the program. This is a minor update with unspecified changes.

Requirements
Windows 95

Purchase Information
Shareware: Free to try, $19.95 if you decide to keep it.



http://www6.zdnet.com/cgi-bin/texis/swlib/hotfiles/info.html?fcode=00061S

HyperTerminal Private Edition

HyperTerminal Private Edition is a more powerful version of the terminal applet built into Win95 and NT 4.0, released freely by the same developer. It not only fixes some problems found in the Win95 release, it also adds more scripts, automatic redial on busy numbers, Zmodem crash recovery for resuming interrupted file transfers, and support for non-English alphanumeric characters. HyperTerminal PE also corrects some problems identified after the Windows 95 code freeze. It transfers files properly through direct cable connections, and enumerates country codes correctly even if more than one TAPI service provider is installed. Its character delay setting now throttles text sending even when pasting from the clipboard. It also fixes problems that occurred with certain printers, and subtle errors in Minitel terminal emulation. HyperTerminal PE allows faster, more reliable connections, along with some very useful features all at the right price -- free. New to version 3.0: A simple answer mode, the ability to remap the backspace and delete keys, enhancements to Telnet and the VT100 emulation, fixes for Shiva and other high speed serial connections, and enhancements to the install program. In addition, the VT100 emulator now supports host-controlled printing (sometimes called pass-through printing) and the user can also define the string that the emulator responds with when queried by a Telnet host.

Requirements
Modem and Windows 95

Purchase Information
Free.



http://www6.zdnet.com/cgi-bin/texis/swlib/hotfiles/info.html?fcode=0003YS

WnBrowse, Nigel Thomas

WnBrowse is a multi-function ASCII and Hex file viewer. Users can view any size file, including files within zip archives, and copy selections to the Clipboard. You can choose fonts and colors, specify your favorite editor, and easily access search and print functions and launch files. WnBrowse quickly browses an entire directory, file by file, at the click of an icon. The program runs as a standalone, or can be run from Explorer-type dialogs using a right mouse-click menu. This update adds support for ZIP files (PKZIP 2.04 required), user-defined editors for Hex and ASCII files, a repetitive 'find' function, and other enhancements and bug fixes.

Requirements
Windows 95

Purchase Information
Shareware: Free to try, $15 if you decide to keep it.
Registration benefits include: available site licensing.



http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-25320,00.html

(Larry's Links.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

Lotus Notes SIG

This SIG meets every Thursday at Reflectone at 8:30 PM. It is a professional SIG focusing on Lotus Notes certification. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.*

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See the Lotus notes SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(Larry's Links.....Continued from page 9)

Computer Tutor for Windows 95

Computer Tutor for Windows 95 is a 150+-page book that teaches beginning and intermediate users about Windows 95. The tutor contains detailed graphics and information on how to work within Windows 95, as well as how to operate many popular Windows 95-compatible software packages. The tutor can help you learn the Windows 95 environment, DOS environment, Microsoft Word 95, Microsoft Works, WinZip, HyperTerminal, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft Fax, System Agent, Microsoft Money, Norton Anti-Virus, Netscape Navigator, Netscape Mail, and Microsoft Publisher. It also tells you how to set up an Internet PPP account and includes a graphical appendix of computer parts.

Requirements:
Windows 95, Microsoft Word 95
FREE

http://www.wired.com/newbot/

NewBot

Do you use the Web to find late-breaking news and information? Are you tired of bouncing from site to site, day after day, never sure whether you've missed something new and important about the topics you follow? Then NewBot can help. Searching for exactly the topics you specify, NewBot finds, filters, and delivers the Web's freshest news and information directly to your desktop. Scanning a wide range of sites throughout the day, NewBot's database of breaking news and Web content is the most up-to-date available anywhere. The ultimate personalized agent, NewBot finds online information that matches your interests as soon as it's published, then promptly alerts you. With NewBot at your service, you'll always know "what's new on the net today?"

Requirements:
Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0 Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0
Easy to install - and **Free!** ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 8)

being able to right click on a file link and download the file to your computer. IE 3.0 did not work properly with Acrobat 3.0 files; version 4.0 basically does not work at all with them. Finally, Java applets that I have been working with and which ran correctly when viewed with Internet Explorer 3.0 as the browser now fail to run when viewed with IE 4.0.

And other odd things that didn't happen before the installation of IE 4.0 seem to be occurring on my computer; things which can only be corrected by a reboot. Betas are bad enough but stay away from developer's previews. Ideally I would only run this beta software along with any programs I am writing on a separate computer. But who wants to drop back to the previous generation computer to do anything. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
Borland	Quarterdeck
Broderbund	Regnis
Corel Systems	Symantec
Grolier	Traveling Software
Knowledge Adventure	Xerox

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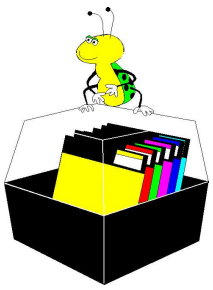
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9706.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492

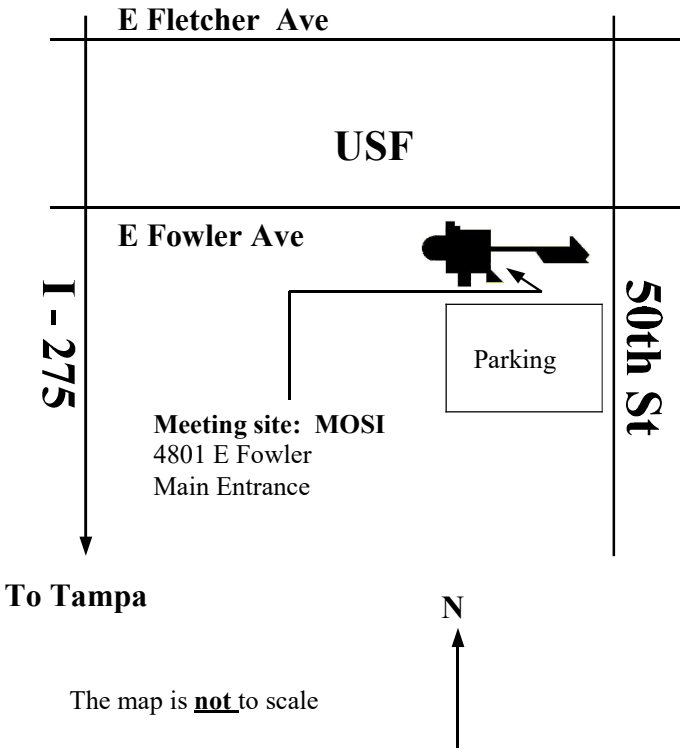


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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
ture that caught my attention was Draw's 400,00 levels of zoom--a page can be as large as 150 ft.

We took a break to give everyone a chance to buy tickets for the drawing for which Corel had donated a copy of Corel Draw 7. A lucky Marcia Brown won the software. But for those who didn't win, Corel also offered very good user group pricing on the software packages, and a number of members took advantage of it. ◆





Bits of Blue



Fruit Fly invades Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 6 July 1997

Meeting

Productivity Point International (PPI) presents

Maximizing your Computer

July 9, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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PPI, Printer Wars and Hardware Support

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

This month PPI is sending two Microsoft certified people to present a checklist for maximizing our computers and telling us how to plan for upgrades. Plan to bring pencil and paper for assigned exercises at the meeting.

Now, to fill in this empty space staring back at me, let me tell you about a very naughty printer. But before starting in on what is bad, I want to emphasize that I have three Hewlett Packard Printers here that have given very good service over the years. The HP IIIp has given reliable service for about five years. Unfortunately letting it sit idle during its sixth year caused a problem—possibly corrosion—that will need the services of the repair shop. But for the first five years there was absolutely no problem. The HP 855C also has performed as advertised for the year or two that I have had it. And the HP 4 Plus is simply superb, churning out its 600 dpi pages at the rate of 12 per minute. Of course it was considerably more expensive than the other two. Then there is the old Okidata Laser that a few years back cost almost as much to repair as it did to purchase—which at the time soured me on Okidata and printer repairs—but it is still working OK.

Now to the HP from Hell. It is the HP 5L, and ,thank God, belongs to someone else. Unfortunately that someone else is also someone for whom I provide computer help. The 5L is an inexpensive 600 dpi, four page per minute laser printer which produces nice looking output. However, it has a driver problem. The default driver is called the Host driver and is one of those drivers which provides a status window telling you all sorts of details about the printing job in progress. It also takes over your computer. One HP tech representative I spoke with described it as aggressive. I would describe it as very aggressive, since it

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

Visit us on the Web at http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
At our August meeting PowerQuest will present Partition Magic.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING June 11, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

We gathered in the computer lab at about 6:35PM, with our President, Connie Kincaid, moderating. We had a short discussion on our SIGs, and a presenter, Raye Jones, talked about a free Internet access service, followed by a brief discussion of a members' CD-ROM. Then an excellent presentation was given by Jim Lindsay from Pilgrim Software concluding at about 8:15 with the monthly door prize drawing.

Raye Jones, with a new service called Savenet offers a free Internet dial-in account. It allows 1 hour per day, including email, to a maximum of 30 hours per month. For $65 per year, their subscribers get 150 hours per month. The cost is borne by advertising subscribers. Ms. Jones gave a very animated, entertaining presentation, given the short time we had to offer. The company is based in Las Vegas. Contact them via modem at (813) 381-4030. To order via voice use (813) 381-6803. Visit their website at http://www.savenet813.com.

Jim Lindsay of Pilgrim Software, a Tampa based software company, gave a very good talk and computer slide presentation on their ISO 9000 software. This software is targeted at the mid-line and major corporations that want to invest in becoming ISO 9000 compliant. To better understand the product, a brief explanation of ISO 9000 is necessary. The International Standards Organization is an organization that is made up of representatives from member countries who work on establishing standards that are compatible with world-wide interests. It's kind of a voluntary rules committee. Now this isn't just the same bunch of people trying to set rules. It's a whole lot of working committees that have expertise in the field being addressed. So … ISO 9000 is a set of rules that says if you want to have your company compete in the world market, and you have processes that run your company or manufacture products or offer services, then you must document those processes in a standardized way. After investing in the time to do all this, then you contract to one of several companies that are authorized to certify you as being ISO 9000 compliant. And you must re-certify periodically.

Pilgrim Software offers a product that is used to document and control processes and stores that information in databases. It helps those that are interested in becoming certified to present the materials needed to the certifying company. So if you have a process in your company, you need to document the process to prove you do it well. There ... that being said, let's move on to the presentation itself. I hope you haven't tuned

(Minutes.....Continued on page 4)

GoldMine: "The Number One Rated Contact Manager"

by Bambi Bond, Tampa PC Users Group

Why you should look at Goldmine. Don't buy or upgrade another information management or communications software miracle until you have looked at Goldmine – it could save you time and money. This is not a premature release or a glimpse into the future – Goldmine is an up-and-running NOW-Time reality. You may already be using a variety of schedulers and databases to manage your time and keep track of your friends, family, and business contacts. Windows has enabled us to keep several of these programs open at a time, and with a few linked fields and clip-boarding, we have generally been able to move information around through our various calendars, PIM's — and database mailing and contact lists. Goldmine demonstrates that list-making and faxing and all that other organization and communications stuff can happen in one fat and happy program that's not terribly complicated nor horribly expensive.

Getting Started. Are we having fun yet? Not yet. The first task was to import ye olde database from Outlook into Goldmine. Goldmine has written documentation – two volumes that are logically organized, clearly written, and well illustrated. The documentation describes the processes, but ferreting out some of the necessary details requires digging. If the user doesn't accomplish the initial step of transferring old data, he will not use the program. I had already rehearsed this scenario a year ago (not a pleasurable memory) by having to bring the names, addresses and phone numbers from Schedule+ into Outlook.

Exporting the Database. My first step was to export from Schedule+ to DBase. Trying to recall the conventions of DBase III reminded me of trying to remember enough high school French to help my daughter with her studies – they didn't have the word for laundromat back in the olden days. So, headings of eight characters or less, no commas inside the fields, use tab-delimiters, you start to get the picture….

Importing the Database into Goldmine. Next is to import the .dbf file into Goldmine. Just correlate the field names, and slide right in? Not quite. Outlook has 2 address fields per record – business, home, and either can be designated as mailing address and the POB never has the same ZIP. I took advantage of the user-defined fields to create the second address fields, and after about the 5th trial import, practically despaired of ever accomplishing the Herculean import task -- please, Bill Gates, give me a stable to hose out next time! -- to include all phone and fax numbers, both home and office. So the database took a detour into a spreadsheet in Access, so that I could see the locations that Goldmine had alerted me of problems by record number. Well, for one, it seemed that the +1 that Schedule had put in front of the long-distance numbers was sending a message to Goldmine that it was importing an Excel file. Ooops! A few manual replacements resolved that tiny SNAFU. Now Goldmine was ready to go to work.

E-mail. Communications functionality is necessary in a contact manager. Goldmine has a wealth of links to ease Internet communications. It can message pagers, schedule faxes, queue and send email. I put the telephone dialer to work right away. It took some more reading to find the active link for e-mail buried in the Profile Folder. Once the protocols for your dial-up network are established, you can schedule your e-mail to be checked periodically. The counter only gives 99 minutes, so if you want to upload and check mail once or twice a day, it appears you will need to do it manually. If your contact has a Web site, you can enter it in the Profile Folder, and access it the same way.

Bells & Whistles. Goldmine is as fully loaded as a Lincoln Continental. It doesn't make coffee or walk the dog, but for the home-based or networked office there's not much else you could ask it to do for helping track your contacts. You can build a history of and plan a future for each contact with Automated Processes. For each phase of the contact development, the person or persons responsible have access to the history.

Scenario for a new contact. For example, say a contact browses to your widget homepage, signs the guest book. You retrieve his/her email response into your database. You have set up an automatic email action thanking them for their filling out your form and letting them know that you have attached an informational file in answer to their request. The response is triggered by a command to wait 2 hours after you have read the email. Follow-up by mail and/or phone is routed to and scheduled for the proper phone and mail people designated in your company. Completion of follow-up calls appears in the contact history showing the tracking of the client contact. And so on through the maze of marketing and sales.

About Goldmine on the WEB. If you jump on your favorite search engine and type in Goldmine, you will first go to a Jewelry sales site – and are almost immediately likely to be invited to look into an MLM company. Goldmine's address for product information is www.goldminesw.com on the Internet. You can download a demo version. Goldmine's email address is ready in your database with your newly installed software, so you can contact directly. From Goldmine's home pages, you can link to other companies' Websites that contain descriptions of Goldmine Software adaptations and Add-ons.

Add-ons, utilities and dynamic linking. Software programs to enhance Goldmine's capabilities, or utilities to dynamically link it to familiar and useful programs abound. Goldmine has a few of its own, like GoldSync, for updating data at multiple sites and for multiple hosts and users at predesignated sites. Since the name lends itself to play on words related to gold or mining, you can readily recognize most add-ons by their names

(Goldmine.....Continued on page 4)

(Goldmine.....Continued from page 3)
– or by a prefix or suffix of GM. I visited most of the third party adaptors who have Web sites but did not write to any email addresses:

- Accounting Links
  - Goldrush 72466.532@compuserve.com
  - ACCGOLD www.axiomsystems.com
  - GoldQuote www.ccc24k.com
  - GoldMASter, GoldWorks www.efsys.com
- Addressing Utilities
  - Dial-a-Zip, DAZzle www.philix.com
  - Address PRO www.smartersoft.com
- Caller ID both Incoming and on-line
  - The Bridge 75112.3322@compuserve.com
  - ACTIVATE, NETACT, PICKUPS http://tel-comp.com
- Data Utilities
  - AIM Toolbar www.aimtools.com
  - GoldTracker www.up2date.com
  - GoldBox & GoldboxLite for Laptops www.gbxutil.com
  - GMCalendar www.resource-dynamics.com/gold-mine.htm
  - Split-Wizard www.tssw.com
  - WhiteGold www.zfirmllc.com
- Email - Office Anywhere for GM www.inasec.ca
- Expense Tracking - TABS for GM www.inimageinc.com
- Faxing Solutions
  - FAXPort www.lansource.com
  - GM-DOCS www.zfirmllc.com
- Help Desk - HELPDESK for GM www.resource-dynamics.com/goldmine.htm
- Mailing/Phone list - PhoneDisc www.phonedisc.com
- Mapping Links
  - BusinessMAP & GIS for GM www.esri.com/busi-nessmap/
  - MapLinx for GM www.maplinx.com
- Notes Integration - Prospero www.oberon.com
- Order Entry
  - QuotePro www.pcstar.com/quotepro/quotepro.htm
  - QuikLinx 102754.601@compuserve.com
  - OAK!Quote for GM www.oakhurst.com
  - QwikQuote www.qwikquote.com
  - SalesOPs for GM 76734.1710@compuserve.com
- PDA Integration - Tele-Support Data-Sync for GM www.tssw.com
- Project Enabling - GoldProject www.salesteam.com
- Scanning Tools - Smart Business Card Reader www.seikosmart.com/sbcr.htm
- Service Tracking - Service 2001 www.microdoctor.com
- Telephony
  - Link & Sales Call for GM www.page-tel.com/
  - PHONETASTIC www.SoftTalk.com
  - BlackGOLDTM www.ctsnet.com/gm.htm

A lot of software for your money. I have spoken with ACT! (List, $199.00) and Telemagic (List, $500, Single user; $1300, Network) users who believe they have built their businesses with their contact manager software. Goldmine appears to have stepped ahead of these two popular programs by encompassing the most frequently needed information and communications functionalities within a single program, particularly in the internet compatibility. Goldmine (List, $295) may be installed as a network version or for a single user, and can be dynamically linked to your other programs.

Minuses. How do you take a plus and turn it into a minus? Say that you have a feature, and then make it invisible, or hard to do or find. According to the manual, the e-mail supports RTF, but when you arrive there, the editing tool bar doesn't give you color and font options. Right-button mouse functions are mixed with <F2>, and they don't seem to work with consistency. The On-line help in MSOffice lets you ask a question that launches a search on keywords. That would be useful in Goldmine, because I still might find the dog-walking function. In the meantime, Goldmine can fax the pizza order while Queenie and I enjoy each other's company. ◆

(Continued from page 2)
out on this because Jim gave a very interesting presentation. I haven't seen so much interest generated in the audience at any other presentation. Jim finally had to stop at 8:15, but there were people there that would have asked questions for another hour.

Pilgrim is an employee owned company in Tampa. They currently have 36 employees; many were just hired this year. They started with just 3 people 3-1/2 years ago. Their profitability in 1996 was 1.5 million dollars and they expect 3.5 million in 1997. This is from a program that costs just $500 per user. Of course, a company will need a lot of licenses, but still …. Also, I believe he said that all the employees are at least bilingual. His own second language is Japanese.

The demonstration was about just one of the six modules - the one on documents and controls. This module has an underlying database that stores documents. The formats of the documents are of your own choosing. The company using this sets up rules controlling the routing, security and approvals and publication of all the documents, and the software not only stores it but also presents the information about the documents in a non-database way. The information presented is about the process. It has reminders and even sends e-mail to people

(Minutes.....Continued on page 12)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more the 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action- Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
2. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Hellicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
3. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
4. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations - Windows 3.1 & 95
5. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
8. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space (8-adult)
9. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)
10. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay** - Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+) - Windows CD

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!





Internet Picture of the Month

From MSNBC's coverage of the return of Hong Kong to China from Britain we have celebrating Hong Kong residents and a sad Prince Charles of Britain. MSNBC is at http://www.msnbc.com/.

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Center for Responsive Politics	http://www.crp.org/index.html-ssi
Dia Center for the Arts - New York	http://www.diacenter.org/
Barnes & Noble	http://www.barnesandnoble.com/
The Internet Chef	http://www.ichef.com/
92.1 FM KRTS Houston, TX Classical Music	http://www.audionet.com/radio/stations/station.asp?station_id=29
WSJT 94.1 FM Smooth Jazz Tampa	http://www.audionet.com/radio/stations/station.asp?station_id=63
WFLA 970 Live Radio	http://207.49.155.80/970wfla/
EXTOXNET - Pesticide information	http://ace.ace.orst.edu/info/extoxnet/
Tampa/Hillsborough Convention & Visitor Assoc.	http://www.thcva.com/index.htm
boldtype - an online literary magazine	http://www.bookwire.com/boldtype/
Medfly information from Fla. Dept of Agriculture	http://www.fl-ag.com/medfly/
Restaurant Scene - an insider's guide to restaurnats	http://www.restaurantscene.com/
Nikon - the most complete collection of information	http://www.zaiko.kyushu-u.ac.jp/~walter/nikon.html
Micrografx	http://www.micrografx.com/
GoldMine Software	http://www.goldminesw.com/
COMPUSA	http://www.compusa.com/prd.i/pgen/CompUSA/0L/compusa_menu.htm

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Review

Micrografx's Graphics Suite 2

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

In the August 1996 newsletter I wrote a laudatory review of Micrografx's ABC Graphics Suite. That review, without the accompanying graphics, is included in the "Online Reviews" section of our Web site. However, since it is more than six months old, the full color PDF version of the newsletter has been removed from the "newsletters" section.

Graphics Suite 2 is the 1997 version of that collection of programs. This suite of programs is designed to run in the 32 bit Windows 95 environment and to mesh with the Microsoft Office interface.

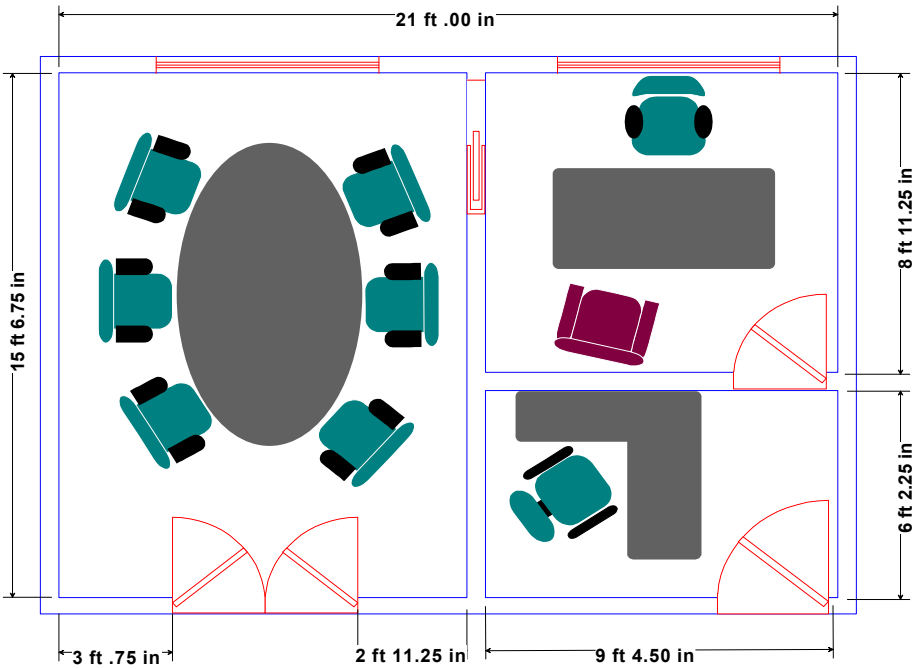
These programs are:

- Designer 7 is a Graphics creation program similar to Corel Draw.
- Flow Charter 7 is obviously a flow chart creator.
- Picture Publisher 7 is an image editing program.
- Simply 3D allows you to create animated 3D objects and 3D text.
- QuickSilver 3 uses Designer to create vector based graphical objects for the Web instead of the usual bitmapped images.
- Media Manager 7 manages your graphical files.

QuickSilver is the only new addition to the Suite, and the one most likely not to be used by the average user. So let's dispose of it first. I have used it to create interactive vector based graphics (which open much faster than their bitmapped counterparts) on Web pages. For example, when you click on a certain part of the graphic, an action is performed, say, the graphic changes colors. The one problem with QuickSilver, and the reason I haven't put such an example on the group's Web site is that the person viewing the Internet site must have downloaded and installed the ActiveX plugin or ActiveX control on his computer for all of this to work. When such facility is built into browses then I think it will be a more attractive tool for the average Internet surfer.

Back to the heart of the Suite. The first improvement I noticed was a fatter paper instruction manual (of course, there is extensive online help) for the programs and more clip art and graphics containing CDs. The manual, by taking you through a couple of projects for each of the programs, introduces you to many of the tools and capabilities of those programs.

Even though I have used **Designer** and Picture Publisher extensively over the past year, there is always more to learn. In my previous review I dwelt on the placement and manipulation of graphics and text on a Designer page, with the emphasis on being both creative and informative. The graphic on this page is an example of using Designer's architectural drawing abilities to create a scale drawing of an office plan. But there is more to the plan than can be shown on the page. Additionally each object in the drawing can be assigned properties, e.g., cost which the program then tracks as you add furniture, windows, etc. Now, if we all had downloaded the QuickSilver plugin from Micrografx for our browsers, then I could put this Designer drawing on our Web site. With a bit of work, I could, then, make it possible for you to change the color of and even the placement of the furniture by certain actions on your end.



One of the small improvements to Designer is much appreciated. When selecting a font for text, in the previous version only the font selected had its name displayed as it would appear. Now, when you display the font list, all the font names on the list are each displayed in the appropriate font. Of course, this would be time consuming on an old, slow computer. But, then, if you are doing much graphical work, you really don't want to be using an old, slow computer anyway. This brings us to the hardware recommendations: 486 DX or higher with 16 MB RAM and 200 MB free hard drive space; Windows 95 or NT.

To fine tune any graphical images you might want to use in

(Micrografx.....Continued on page 7)

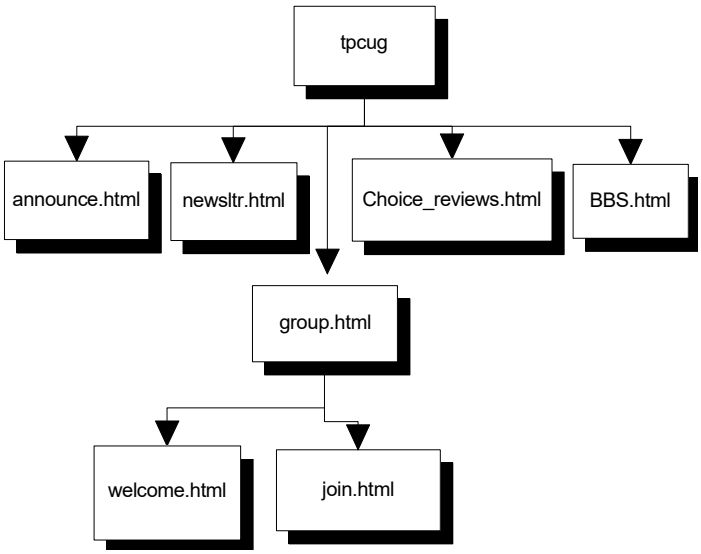
(Micrografx.....Continued from page 6)

your Micrografx Designer project, you would use **Picture Publisher**. As I said in the August 1996 review, I use this program more than any other in the Suite. I use it to enlarge, reduce, or crop images; to change their type, e.g. from .TIF to .GIF; to remove an unwanted background and possibly add a new background; to make a picture brighter or darker; to repair damage or remove an unwanted spot. There is so much that can be done with this program.

As an example of what you can do, I spent 15 to 20 minutes scanning two photos into Picture Publisher and merging them to produce the wild turkey in an orange grove on the University of Tampa campus. The result—indeed all the newsletter—looks much better in color, so if you are reading this in the paper copy of the newsletter, download the Adobe Acrobat version of the newsletter from either our BBS or our Web site and see what I mean.

I really have done no more with **Simply 3D** than to see that it works as advertised. 3D graphics at the present are not of very much interest to me, but I am sure to others this program would be quite useful.

Flowcharter 7 is a major component of the suite. However, I don't understand what it has to do with graphics—except that a flow chart is, I suppose, a graphic. Anyway, I am glad they included it in the package, since it is quite a good program—if you need a flow chart program, and the Suite would probably not have been any cheaper without it. So I view it as a very nice freebie. Also, as I practice with the program, I am discovering I do have uses for it.



One use is in mapping Web sites. Micrografx has included a little WebCharter program that, upon being given a World Wide Web address, will go to the site and produce a listing of the pages there along with the internal and external links. And to provide a graphical representation of all of this, the WebCharter program turns this information over to Flowcharter, and we are presented with a flow chart of the Internet site showing the hierarchy of the pages and links there. The flow chart displayed above is a small portion of the chart created by the program for our TPCUG Web site.



After studying the examples in the manual, I must admit my awareness of the usefulness of flow charts has been greatly enhanced. Some different types of charts supported are:

- Standard flowchart
- Organization/family tree
- Cause-and-Effect chart
- Network chart
- Statistical process control charts
- Living FlowChart

The price of a competitive upgrade is $140. A regular purchase costs $360. For more information visit http://www.micrografx.com/ ◆

Computer Store Shopping Adventures

by Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group

This will be a departure from the usual review or computer techie stuff I do. The reason my subject is computer-related at all is that this adventure occurred in a so-called "computer superstore". I've given it enough time now that I can relate this with some degree of detachment, but look out, I may just get steamed up again. On with the tale.

My company has a corporate account at this store and purchasing is extended to employees, so usually I call our rep at the store, describe what I want, check on availability and price, which is what I did this time. I got a good price (doesn't always happen) on some video memory and ordered it. It wasn't in local stock, so I could check back or just go in in a couple of days, which we did. My experience is that often they don't know an item is in, even when it is, and we live close by, so we go in without calling.

If the item is in, the commercial desk will have it. My son, Matt, and I went there, stood in a short line, identified the item so they could look it up on the computer. He looked it up and said … "Hmmm .. well it's not here, but tell you what .. since it's an "upgrade item" check it out at the upgrade desk, it might have been received there, and we use separate databases and I can't access theirs. Give them this paper so they'll charge the right price." I should have seen it coming but didn't when he took a piece of scrap paper, wrote the stock number on it, the price and scribbled his initials. So off to the upgrade desk. Stood in a short line.

I gave this guy the paper, he looked it up, determined that he had it and while we waited, he rooted through some bins in the cabinet, went thru small packages to read labels and after some time came back with it in his hand. This guy says: "Go to the cashier, pay for it, bring the receipt back and I'll give you the memory". I said - "You've got to be kidding me." He said no - that's the way it must be done. I'm thinking here - why are they more trustworthy that I am? Will I pay for it and really get the memory afterwards? Well, sure I will. He handed the paper back to me. It occurs to Matt … why don't they have a cash register of their own at the upgrade desk? Why not indeed? Now we really have to stand in line! There's one register open and a line - not a big one, but enough of a wait to warrant opening another register - which is what finally happens when we get to our own cashier.

Do you think this tale is nearly over? What can happen now? Well, I handed this scrap of paper to her, she looked at it and walked away toward the upgrade desk without a word to us. By the way, in this store, the entrance is blocked off so the route to the upgrade desk from here is through the outside door and back in the inside door. Jeez. We watched her, somewhat mystified. She located our guy by showing this paper to all three back there, and then had a long conversation. About what, I can't imagine. I thought - say - being a trusted employee, she's there - would she bring the memory back with her and save me the trouble? No … she's in motion back to us, and she has nothing but the paper. Remember now - she's gone some time and has basically abandoned her customers that are standing there behind us, but the new register has opened up.

She comes back and asks us - "Who gave you this paper?" Well …. shoot … I'm thinking … if that was the problem, why didn't she ask me in the first place? So I pointed out the guy at the commercial desk (in the opposite direction from the upgrade desk) and described him so she wouldn't waste any more time. So she abandons us again! And everyone in line behind us! Comes back more quickly now, apparently satisfied, mentions that she didn't recognize the initials on the paper and had to verify that it was "OK".

OK .. are we done? But no. Keys in things, like my phone number. What do they do with my phone number? In case my cash is bad? Settle down now … don't get steamed. It's been a long wait, but it's nearly over with. No … it's not over .. she says in as large a voice as she can muster: "Password !" and waits - not too long because the password person is the lady running the register behind us. Guess what .. this lady abandons her customers to come over, puts a key in the register and keys in some numbers. Now what the hell is this about? Is our cashier not a trusted employee? What is accomplished by this? Does anyone know?

So … We get the receipt and guess what … swing through the store outgoing door, back in the ingoing door … stand in line … Is this stupid or what? Do I ever want to buy anything here again? No. Stood in four damn lines to buy one small item.

So let's see what we can learn by this. Most of us work for companies. Maybe we aren't in retail. I'm not, but in a lot of ways my company is, because our revenue comes from the public. What's the objective? Mostly to process people out the door with a maximum number of purchases. In other words, exchange their money - as much of it as you can, and give good value in return so they'll come back and do it again. Is it to our mutual advantage to make this exchange as pleasant and expeditious as possible? You bet it is. ◆

Larry's Links
Recommended Shareware/Freeware

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

If you're reading this from the printed newsletter, type in the link address in the ***URL*** address area of your Internet browser exactly as you see it with NO spaces. If you have downloaded the ***.pdf*** file and are using Adobe Acrobat Reader ver. 3 the links are **hot**. (Just click on the link and you'll be taken there automatically.) I double-checked all these links and they worked at the time. (If you should have any trouble – call me. My number is listed in the front of the newsletter.)

RealPlayer (Progressive Networks, Inc.)
File Size: 1.1 MB
License: **Free**
RealPlayer allows you to enjoy streaming audio and video on networks and the Internet. It provides enhanced sound quality and newscast-quality video to systems with 28.8 modems or faster. The RealPlayer includes the Buffered Play feature for playing content that is encoded for higher bit rates than your connection provides.
Requirements: Windows 95/NT, 8MB RAM, 14.4 modem or faster
http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-29909,00.html

PhoneFree (Big Bits Software)
File Size: 237 KB
License: **Free**
Call anyone you want with PhoneFree, a browser plug-in for Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer. Compatible with existing phone programs like Netscape's CoolTalk and VocalTec's Internet Phone, PhoneFree offers a simple and fully integrated way to use your browser as a telephone. No one home? PhoneFree even allows you to leave voice mail for anyone who has an email address.
Requirements: Windows 95/NT, sound card, microphone, Netscape Navigator 2.0 or later or Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 or later
http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-29740,00.html

Acid Tetris (Dungeon Dwellers Design)
File Size: 1.2 MB
License: **Free**
Stack up blocks in this remake of the classic Tetris game. Your goal is to line the pieces up horizontally. Get rid of the lines before the blocks pile up to the top of the screen. This game features interesting sound effects and visuals, and Acid smileys are there to keep an eye on you throughout the game, and to comment on your gameplay.
Requirements: DOS 3.1
http://www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-29910,00.html

TopDesk v3.0b (Snadboy)
File Size: 110 KB
License: **Free**
How often have you had one or more applications running that have conspired to completely cover the desktop just when you needed to access something on the desktop, e.g. the Recycle Bin or the Internet icon??? Rather than continue enduring this frustration it's time you downloaded TopDesk. TopDesk adds an icon to the system area of the task bar that gives you complete access to everything on the desktop - system objects and files, including the display properties dialog. And best of all, TopDesk is freeware !!!
Requirements: Windows 95/NT
http://www.snadboy.com/topdesk.shtml ◆

(Continued from page 1)
will not coexist with another printer on the system. It also will not cooperate with a Zip drive or a network setup. So as long as you don't need any of these extras you might be OK. If you do want one of these features you must use the alternate driver for the 5L—the PCL driver. However, all is not perfect there either as a little history will show.

In setting up a new HP 200 mhz mmx Pentium computer with 32 MB RAM and a 4 GB hard drive by installing all the old programs and data from the previous machine, everything went fine until I came to what should have been easy—installing two printers on the system. The Canon bubble jet installed fine. Then I installed the HP 5L, and troubles began. As expected it set itself as the default printer, and indeed that is what I wanted it to be. I did not, however, expect it to change other settings for the Canon printer. For example, it changed the Canon to print not to LPT1 but to file. And after the installation, neither of the printers would print consistently. I tried all sorts of tweaking to the printer settings to no

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

Lotus Notes SIG

This SIG meets every Thursday at Reflectone at 8:30 PM. It is a professional SIG focusing on Lotus Notes certification. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.*

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See the Lotus notes SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(Comments.....Continued from page 9)
avail.

I finally gave up and called HP support—no 800 number, but at least I didn't have to pay the $2.50/minute up to a $25 max. for old equipment support. After much checking and changing, the lady told me that I would do better to change to the PCL driver for the printer. First she had me click on the uninstall program for the Host driver (there is actually a program group for this HP printer driver), and after "uninstalling" it I added, in the usual Windows 95 fashion, a HP 5L PCL printer. She said that this driver should be better behaved. To make things work still better, we set the printer to not spool, to print RAW data, and about everything else she could think of to emasculate the printer. Well, at least both printers seemed to now be working in harmony.

But that didn't last. Next day, the computer's owner called to say that the HP 5L was printing very slowly—40 seconds per page on a multiple copy print. It was supposed to put out a page every 15 seconds. I came over and wasted a lot of time spinning my wheels: turned back on spooling, etc., but nothing worked. In desperation, I reloaded that aggressive Host driver, and we were off and running. My solution to the printer conflict problem was to unplug the Canon when booting the computer if the HP 5L was to be used and vice versa if the Canon was to be used. Not elegant, but it worked. Or at least it seemed to work. Next day, the HP 5L was sending error messages and printing correctly one time then not the next.

This couldn't last, so back to HP support on our dime. I got a different tech representative who seemed more knowledgeable than the other (who had told me she only knew about printers when I asked her about a computer BIOS setting that could affect the computer's parallel port). He was the one who said that the Host driver was aggressive and that the other tech representative possibly hadn't gone far enough in removing all traces of the Host driver. To do that he again had me run the Win 95 uninstall program, then we went to a DOS prompt and ran another uninstall program with two different switches, then we went to both the Windows directory and the Windows/System directory where we did two different wild card deletes in each directory on HP type files. After that he had me reinstall the PCL driver (the newest version I had gotten from the HP Internet site), and, as he promised, everything worked fine: 15 seconds per page printing and peace with the Canon printer.

That was a week ago. Yesterday I had a message on my answering machine that the 5L was back to printing 40 second pages. I called to check and had the individual list all the printer settings. They were the same as we had a week back. I am at a loss.

Do not buy a 5L. If you want to read others' problems with this printer do a usenet newsgroup search using DejaNews on the topic of "5L printer" AND "Problem" or some suitable variation. You will see that my 5L owner is not alone. I also wonder about the new 6L which is a replacement for the 5L.

My solution: Buy a more expensive printer like the HP 5. I still like production quality HP printers, but quite possibly HP has left something important out of the less costly home-use type of laser printer. If you do a lot of printing, your printer is almost as important as your computer.

By the way, I tried using a parallel port card to get an additional parallel port for the second printer, but the HP computer always produced an error message on boot—even though Win 95 seemed to like the card, and I was even able to print to both printers simultaneously. But who wants an error message on every startup, so it was back to the switch box (which is not what is causing all the problems). **Suggestions Welcome**. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
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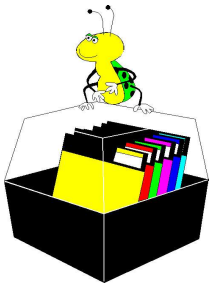
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9707.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
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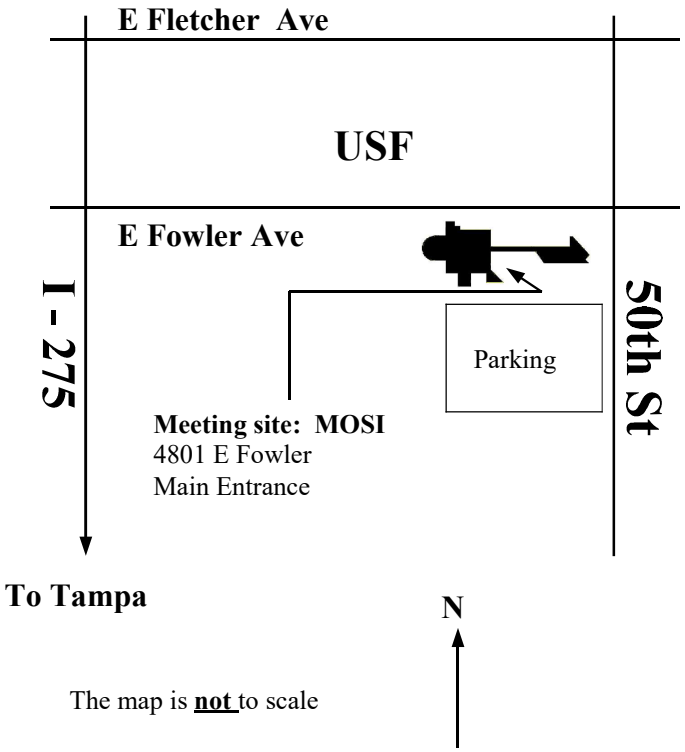
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes.....Continued from page 4)
when they need reminding that they must take action to fulfill the rules you've set up.

Jim did discuss one other module that raised some interest. This part tracks calibration information on measurement equipment. I wasn't able to write down all the functional modules, sorry. It was a very entertaining presentation. Thanks, Jim for a very good program.

We had a whole bunch of miscellaneous things to give away as door prizes this month. Ken Boyd and Sue Puigdomenech both won Internet Connection software. Sheree Weisenberg, a T-shirt and software. Wil Goble - a game called Tracer, and Clark Evans - OS/2 Family Fun Pack. ◆





Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 9 September 1997

Meeting

Internet Advertising Computer
September 10, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

While doing the final proofreading of this newsletter, I was greatly saddened to learn of the death of John Meroth, a member of our group and the provider of our Internet site. John died of a heart attack on August 29.

John's generous contribution of the space on his Internet server for our web site made a valuable contribution to our group's visibility. Since John was the sole person responsible for the maintenance of his Internet service, our group needed to find a new location. Larry Anders has donated space for a temporary site. Other members are looking into other possible hosting sites. The new location is http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ .

Finally, due to the change in our Internet site, some of my comments below may no longer apply.

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Automatically updating Web pages

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

M. Bryce & Associates will demonstrate the **Internet Advertising Computer (IAC)** at the September meeting. As they describe it, the **IAC** is a complete turnkey solution for small and medium sized businesses that wish to promote their products through the World Wide Web. It is primarily aimed at companies who are not Internet savvy yet want to capitalize on this exciting new advertising

(Comments.....Continued on page 4)

The new TPCUG Internet address is http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ . At present this is a temporary address; however, it may become permanent. In any case, there will be a link there to any later location.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING August 13, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

President Connie Kincaid brought the meeting to order, did introductions and announcements; then introduced Dick Kellerman from *PowerQuest*, who gave us an excellent tutorial on hard drive organization and also the use of Partition Magic, their premier product. The meeting concluded with the door prize drawing. If you weren't there; you missed a very valuable, educational meeting!

Connie opened the meeting at 6:30 sharp after a half-hour "networking" period in the computer lab at MOSI. After officer introductions, Connie asked about visitors and discovered we had five this month. Two heard about us through our web site (way to go! webmaster William LaMartin), two from flyers at Barnes and Noble (and a Way to Go! To Bruce Register too!) and one as a guest of a member. (Sorry, I didn't get the member's name, but a GoodOnYa, whoever you are!)

Connie announced a new bulletin board for exchanging information, job posting and items for sale. This new BBS is a … board … where we pin things on, and it will be available every meeting. Thanks to helpful member Ken Boyd and for the direction signs too. Nice job, Ken!

In another announcement we will take comercial advertisements in the monthly newsletter at new inexpensive rates.

Dick Kellerman, of PowerQuest, is a former President of the Tampa Bay Computer Society and now does presentations in Florida. As you will see, he is a wealth of knowledge on this subject and knows his excellent product very well.

I have to say that I'm an owner of Partition Magic version 2, and have used it very successfully several times. I was looking forward to seeing what the latest version 3 does, and deciding if I should upgrade. I should, and I did.

To summarize the usefulness of this product, it is a tool that does a great many things for your hard drive; Reclaim wasted space on the drive through non-destructive partitioning; Includes Boot Manager to run multiple operating systems; and organize or reorganize or move your data. (BUT … if you are comfortable with DOS or Windows Defrag and Scandisk, and don't own a large drive and don't intend to at least for a while … you don't need this product.)

The program's main feature is managing multiple partitions

(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)

WebTurbo

by Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

If you're like me, there's never enough time left in the day to "play" on my computer. I use my computer everyday in my work, but I still get enjoyment playing with it whenever possible. Obviously, one of the most popular things nowadays is the Internet, because of the vast amounts of FREE information there just for the taking. But the problem is that there is too much information and it's really difficult to sort through it all. Well, now there's a FREE utility out there to help you wade through all this information. It's called **WebTurbo,** and it's available for the downloading.

What is it? WebTurbo allows you to query six of the most popular search engines at once using "smart queries" to quickly bring back more relevant results than if you used each search engine directly. WebTurbo identifies results delivered by each search engine and removes duplicates from the list. You can click on an individual search result, enter a URL (Web site address), or select a bookmark, and WebTurbo uses its hypersketch outline technology, and it will rapidly deliver previews of the contents of the selected Web page. These previews are presented in an intuitive outline format and are not just hyperlink lists or the first few characters of the page like most other search utilities I've used, but meaningful summaries of the page.

WebTurbo allows you to quickly preview your findings, letting you see the contents and links of a page in outline format in a fraction of the time it takes to load the entire page. When you find what you want, double-click and the full page appears. It has a side by side preview frame and page view frame that lets you view your search results and previews at the same time you review your Web pages. Double-clicking on an item in the preview frame loads the underlying Web page in the page view frame. The preview frame is always visible as you view selected pages, so you don't lose your search results and previews, or forget which pages you've already seen. You can submit searches on related topics simultaneously. For example, a query about two sub-topics such as "money" and "more money" yields results for both, organized by sub-topic. (Bill Gates' name would probably come up several times in a search like that.) Your search results and previews are organized into topic folders with each folder containing search results and previews on the specific areas of interest to you. You can move between topic folders to quickly compare information between them. You can save the topic folders (with their search results and previews) and retrieve them later for further browsing.

System Requirements: Intel-based PC or 100% compatible, Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0, Netscape Navigator 3.x or higher, or Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.x or higher; Disk Space: 4MB; Memory: 8M of RAM; Screen Resolution: At least 800 x 600 screen resolution recommended.

This software comes with a tutorial to get you up and running real quick. You really can't beat the cost!

http://www.webturbo.com ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)

on your drive. It will divide your drive to reduce your cluster size and thereby return up to 30% of your disk space back to you. It will readjust the partition sizes afterwards if needed, all non-destructively. It now handles Windows NT's NTFS, O/S2's HPFS and also the Windows 95 FAT32 format. It even will convert partitions from one format to another.

Dick described the structure of a hard drive better than anyone I've seen. He had slides that illustrated the terminology and structure; a drive can have up to four primary partitions, and only one can be active at a time, the others are hidden and are used for multiple operating systems. (I didn't know that!) You can then define one extended partition, and then define as many logical partitions inside the extended partition as you have drive letters available. Very simple.

Something else new is the ability to move software applications from one partition to another! That's a real accomplishment, and a very valuable one at that.

Dick demo'd the product on his own hard drive and showed us the good user interface, designed to do all this with an easily understood graphical interface. He then talked briefly about another product: DriveCopy. DriveCopy is used to … guess what … copy hard drives. It does that in a flawless manner so that you can then switch hard drives in your system and make the new one a primary drive, a fairly common need that just wasn't previously possible.

Dick then concluded and offered a special price on both products. He brought a box full of them and did some very brisk sales. Thanks to Dick Kellerman!

After the break, we held the door prize drawing. Bruce Regis-

(Minutes.....Continued on page 12)

Grabber

by Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group



Grab USENET news attachments the easy way.

Along with my review of WebTurbo, on page 3 in this newsletter, this is another review of a software package designed to make your sorting through vast amounts of data on the Internet much easier and faster. Another area of the Internet that is loaded with information is the USENET (the collection of newsgroups). One of the main problems with USENET is the proliferation of "spam". Spam is generally an article that does not belong in that group. It is anything from chain letters, to ads, to pornography and anything else unrelated and unsolicited. Well…. guess what? GRABBER has a way to handle that unwanted spam, but that's later.

What is GRABBER? Grabber is a tool to allow a user to easily collect attachments to USENET news articles without having to use a newsreader. Sounds, pictures, movies can be automatically *decoded* and stored without much effort. I have always had trouble decoding files. I installed this program, read the tutorial and was up and running it in less than five minutes. And, believe me, the USENET has never been one of my specialties.

The first time you run the program it asks you for your mail server name, which you get from your preferences section of your browser, and for your user name and password, if required for your server. Once the setup is complete, it then downloads the newsgroup headers, and, with a dual window setup of Newsgroup and Group, you can choose to download the entire group or just one article at a time. There is a different icon associated with different types of articles, i.e. attachments or text, complete multi-part or incomplete multi part. Just read through the list and click on the ones you want to receive. If it is a rather long list, just let it work in the background while you work away on something else.

As I mentioned previously, the biggest problem with the USENET is the spam. This reduces the enjoyment of USENET if you have to download 100 files to find 5 of what you want. GRABBER tries to address this by attempting to help you avoid the other 95 (and hence save connection time, which will make your fellow user happier if he/she can download his/her articles faster because you're not tying up the bandwidth, and so on).

The simplest way to avoid spam is once you find a piece you're not interested in, do not collect any articles from that person again. Simply clicking on the *Kill Person* button will add the author of the selected article to the exclude list. No articles will be collected from this author again. This is also good if the person posts articles or attachments that are not of interest to you. Sometimes, though, the better spammers post under a different name all the time. But they usually post from the same originating domain. GRABBER collects the origin of the mail (and this can't be faked by the sender) and puts it in the article list. Simply clicking the *Kill Site* button will exclude any articles from the selected articles origin. *But watch out for public ISP's as many people use them and they could also be "killed".*

GRABBER also logs details of each file or article downloaded. The user can then use the *Browse button* to show the Browse window. The browse window can be used to hunt down the senders and origins of already downloaded files or articles. The Kill Person or Kill Site button can then be pressed to avoid more spam from them.

GRABBER isn't free…but almost. This is Shareware at its finest and the registration fee is only $15. I don't think you could find an equal off the shelf for that price. The downloaded copy is complete but limited to 30 uses. And that is more than enough for you to decide that this is an indispensable tool. The primary requirement is access to a newsgroup. This software comes to us all the way from Australia but you'd never know it when you're online. Ain't the Internet GREAT!

For more information on Grabber, go to:
http://www.trontech.com.au/grabber and **enjoy!** ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

medium. The IAC offers a simple and cost-effective approach for advertising to a substantial marketplace. It consists of the computer, software, digital camera and an Internet site.

If the small businessman can use the IAC along with its digital camera and software to update the content and photos on his Web page automatically, why can't the TPCUG do something similar at ours? Are we computer experts, or not? Anyway, here is the plan as I conceived it.

Several members have voiced a desire for a TPCUG discussion group at our Internet site, which would be similar to the Main conference on our BBS where members read and leave messages. To those familiar with the Internet, it sounds a lot like a Usenet newsgroup, doesn't it. But to have a newsgroup someone would have to go through whatever procedure is required to get the OK for such a thing and then set it up. Thus, I don't envision that happening anytime soon. I often wonder, though,

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **American Greetings CreateaCard Gold -** Micrografx - Create greeting cards, certificates, etc. - Win 3.1/95 CD
2. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more than 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action- Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
3. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Helicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
4. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
5. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations - Windows 3.1 & 95
6. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!



Internet picture of the month

This photo is from the London Times Web site at http://www.the-times.co.uk/ . The photo is of the coffin of Diana, Princess of Wales, arriving in England August 31, 1997.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
AutoWeb Interactive	http://www.autoweb.com/
Beyond Computing (Online magazine & resources)	http://www.beyondcomputingmag.com/
Comedy Central Online	http://www.comedycentral.com/
Creative (Home of Sound Blaster)	http://www.creaf.com/zonemenu.html
CyberHomes(Real Estate)	http://www.cyberhomes.com/
Epicurious (Food and Travel)	http://www.epicurious.com/
Get Dressed Interactive (Interesting JAVA App.)	http://www.gap.com/gap/gapstyle/summergirl.html
KGON 92.3 Portland - Classic Rock	http://www.audionet.com/radio/stations/station.asp?station_id=25
Law Net	http://www.law.net/
National Fraud Information Center	http://www.fraud.com/
Net Grocer (Online grocery store)	http://www.netgrocer.com
Photography through a microscope	http://www.pbrc.hawaii.edu/~kunkel/
Restaurant Scene	http://www.restaurantscene.com/
Tom's Hardware Guide	http://www.sysdoc.pair.com/
TV Guide	http://www.tvguide.com/

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Hardware Review

Corex's CardScan 300 Plus

by Eric "The Viking" Hirtriter, Houston Area League of PC Users

Editors Note: The author contacted me after seeing the newsletters at our Internet site and asked if we accepted articles from members of other user groups. I said we did if we had room after using our own member's material. Well, this month we have room and are happy to have a guest writer.



Spend too much time after networking typing information from business cards into your contact manager program (e.g.., Goldmine 3.2)? Want to save a lot of time? I ran across this device with software that can reduce data entry by over half. This should increase a businessperson's, small or large, productivity.

A business card scanner and software combination should be: small, able to scan any business card, run as a Twain-compliant device, use a parallel port for the major compatibility, have a pass-through connector for the printer, and be extremely accurate in scanning in text to reduce manual typing.

The software should be able to do the following: rotate the card automatically to identify text, run an OCR program that will accurately identify the text and fields printed on the card in different fonts, save images to a database, save/export/import/transfer contacts to and from many different Contact Management programs, manually modify the text prior to transfer/export to a Contact Management program, export as comma-delimited ASCII format, zoom in on the business card images to verify text, scan many cards at once before running the OCR, customize database fields for entry, and provide a word/name search throughout the database.

Corex's CardScan 300 Plus: It can do ALL the items above and MORE! I connected the CardScan 300 to the parallel port on the computer and loaded the CardScan software. It was very easy! I then called up Goldmine for Windows 95, a great contact management program which I use, to be in the background. I inserted a business card into the scanner and it automatically started to scan. The image was saved automatically and asked if I wanted to do another before the OCR was run. The OCR feature records the characters in digital form into an electronic simulation of a good old desktop Rolodex, sorting the data by name, title, address, phone and fax numbers, even e-mail address. After checking the text for accuracy, which it was most of the time, I transferred it to Goldmine with only two problems: it didn't put the phone extensions and country addresses, other than the United States addresses, into their respective fields in Goldmine version 3.2. Corex is currently working on a solution. However, I very easily changed them manually and then transferred them. It also has the ability to transfer to over 25 different contact management programs and/or versions.

CardScan 300 Plus' additional features include: its own backup, drag and drop text, supports vCard and Twain standards, dialing capabilities with TAPI, smart zoom, password protection for each contact file and the ability to share contact files over a network, e-mail capabilities, ability to browse Web sites, synchronization of files to the latest update, and the software can be used by other scanners.

The ONLY other area to worry about is the ability to scan very specific types of cards. CardScan only has a problem with text printed on very dark or speckled paper, very small text or light printing, text printed in script or stylized typefaces, text embedded in logos or graphics, text printed diagonally, and text printed both vertically and horizontally on the same card. None of the other products can do this to date. This only affects ~15% or less of all cards.

Special Features:

- CardScan 300 Plus is a 32-bit application designed to run on Windows 95
- It takes advantage of advanced features in Windows 95 such as long file names, tabbed dialog boxes and OLE 2.0.
- CardScan requires a Windows compatible network that supports file and printer sharing,
- CardScan for Windows 3.1 requires a Hayes-compatible modem. CardScan for Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0 requires a Telephony API (TAPI) compatible modem. (Most Hayes-compatible modems are also TAPI-compatible)

System requirements:

- Intel-compatible PC with a 486 or Pentium processor,
- Microsoft Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and Windows NT version 4.0,
- 8 MB of memory, 16 MB is recommended,
- 12 MB of free space on a local hard drive,
- When using Windows 3.1 as your operating system and having exactly 8MB of RAM in your computer, CardScan also requires a permanent swap file of at least 6MB.

(CardScan.....Continued on page 7)

(CardScan.....Continued from page 6)

The CardScan 300 Plus is very accurate! It even associates images of the cards with the computer records, giving you a fallback when the scanning process fails. CardScan 300 Plus is very good but needs a little more work on the card reading capabilities to make it GREAT! I have been told a new release to improve this will be available in August/September 1997!

To purchase this terrific device with software, call Corex at 1-800-942-6739 and mention "HAL50", to receive a HAL-PC discount, and you will only pay $249.00 plus shipping. If you just want the software, the HAL-PC price is $79.00 plus shipping.

Corex Technologies Corp., 130 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139, (617) 492-4200 , http://www.cardscan.com ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 4)

what would happen if a group of individuals, like us, looked over the 15,000 to 20,000 Usenet newsgroups, found one that had little or no activity—I have seen many such—and sort of took it over. That is, the group just started posting their messages to it. I suppose someone somewhere started the thing and might object to all the off-topic messages; however, it appears that there are some newsgroups out there that are basically orphaned and are, thus, candidates for adoption—but not by us, since I hatched a different idea.

My idea is as follows. Most of you have probably seen, if not filled in, the survey I have at our web site. Such a survey form can easily be turned into a message posting device, where the first few input fields are for your name, date, subject, etc., and the last much larger input field is for your message. When you submit your message form, the data is put into a comma delimited text file on the server.

Now, all I need do is write a program that on a regular basis, say, every hour, will do the following:

- Connect to the Internet and, using File Transfer Protocol (FTP), retrieve this data file from our Internet site.
- Add the newest data to the older message data and turn all of the data into an HTML file that, when viewed with a browser, will display all the messages in order with the latest at the top.
- Again using FTP, send this HTML file up to our Internet Site to replace the older one there.

I am sure all you programmers already have the program written in your mind. Well, it has taken me a bit longer. First, I wrote a Visual Basic program to turn the message data into an HTML file. Here is what the data for a typical message looks like:

```
"William","LaMartin","lamartin@ix.netcom.
com","Yes","August 24, 1997","Setup","At
present I am updating this page manually.
I have to FTP to the¶
site, get the message data, then on my
home computer I run a program¶
to turn it into an HTML file, then FTP it
back to the Internet site.¶
¶
I will now try to write a program that
automates that process. Then we¶
can update the site every, say, 30 min-
utes. When I have done that we¶
can "beta" test it all with the other
members."¶
```

The main problem here is dealing with the carriage return symbol ¶, which could either represent the end of one message data packet or just a line break in the message field of a message data packet. But that's what programming is all about, and once that is figured out, the program yields the html code

```
<P>message  <B>9</B>
<P>From <B>William LaMartin</B><br>
At <B>lamartin@ix.netcom.com</B><br>
On <B>August 24, 1997</B><br>
Concerning <B>Setup</B>
<P>At present I am updating this page
manually.  I have to FTP to the<BR>site,
get the message data, then on my home
computer I run a program<BR>to turn it
into an HTML file, then FTP it back to
the Internet site.<BR><BR>I will now try
to write a program that automates that
process. Then we<BR>can update the site
every, say, 30 minutes. When I have done
that we<BR>can "beta" test it all with
the other members.
<P><hr align="left" width="80%">
```

And when your browser displays this, you see:

message **9**

From **William LaMartin**
At **lamartin@ix.netcom.com**
On **August 24, 1997**
Concerning **Setup**

At present I am updating this page manually. I have to FTP to the Site, get the message data, then on my home computer I run a program to turn it into an HTML file, then FTP it back to the Internet site.

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

Your Tax Dollars at Work for You

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

I want to tell you about how your tax dollars are used for extremely worthwhile projects. Often we hear of waste in government spending, but read this and then check it out on the Internet for yourself.

Back about thirty years ago, we were in the cold war period. DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, started paying out grants for research in computer graphics and virtual reality.
DARPA has been awarding these grants for all these years. Why?

- To improve the military. For example improving all the instruments on a fighter plane dashboard.
- In order to accomplish that purpose, many little research grants must go to many companies! Why?



To understand this, I want you to think for a minute. FM radio operates at a frequency of 88 to 108 MHz. Now the CPU chips are operating at 300 MHz. 300 MHz antennas are very short, and so the wiring on a chip could be an antenna and radiate the energy into the air. The zeros and ones would not make it to the other end of the wire! Radiation is always present in small amounts so your computer cabinet is a shield against that, but you hear the radiation when your computer is very near a TV set that is on. So these things must be taken into consideration. This would be just **one of the grants - i.e. study the wiring on a microchip to reduce radiation of radio waves.**

The people who make motherboards use the technique of layers. To make wires go to each and every item on the motherboard without crossing another wire (creating a short circuit) they use four to five layers to make up the board. Now at 300 MHz they have to run the wires in a special way or they find that the wire is an antenna and it radiates the energy into the atmosphere, rather than moving the zero's and one's from the one end to the other of that wire! The people who design motherboards, CPU's and other computer components have to be very well trained, either at a university or on the job. **Another grant - determine the routing for wiring on a four or five layer circuit board to minimize radiation.**

Each of the following processes is improved because of grants for military needs, and of course the private industry people benefit from these military grants by using the processes developed by the military through DARPA.

- As the CPU becomes larger (more millions of transistors), the operating voltage becomes smaller, less than 3 volts now. They must reduce the voltage to keep the power expended down to reasonable values, especially for notebooks that are battery operated. There must be a "limit" somewhere, and by the time we reach that, someone will be making components from glass or some other material. IBM is right now researching the use of a solid cube of material to use it as a hard drive.

- Sometimes we need to stop and elevate our sights. At first we talked of 10 Mb (mega bit) Ethernet (network cards), now with financial help from DARPA we are thinking not of 100 Mb but 1 gigabit per second network cards. Without that infusion of cash, and the suggestion of major improvements, we could be stuck in one place (10 Mb) network cards for a long time.

- When you use telephone wires to interconnect the Internet, you can have electromagnetic interference. Lightning or "transients" can place a magnetic field around the wires and induce foreign voltage or "noise". One way around this is to use glass fibers to transmit the signals. Glass fibers are not affected by magnetic interference.

Now think for a minute. Which country leads in computers? Japan, Europe? No, the U.S. leads, and the reason is that the government starts out a research project, maybe for the military as DARPA does. Private industry picks up the ideas, and private industry adds more billions to the total amount spent on research. That is what has kept our country in the lead.

I will make this brief. In 1995, the Internet (NSFnet) backone was shut down and the Internet given to private operators who interconnected at a series of Network Access Points, "NAP's". That is our present INTERNET. The National Science Foundation then issued another contract to build a Very High Speed Backbone Network, VBNS. The goal is a 2 Gbps network. In other words, a separate NEW very FAST Internet is under construction right now. [WOW, isn't that something?]

Vocal-tec, the Internet telephone program was written in Israel. We don't have a monopoly on software writing, but most countries learned their skills here. Our U.S. companies have very large groups of programmers working all over the world. Scotland has many large groups of programmers working for

(Tax Dollars.....Continued on page 9)

(Tax Dollars.....Continued from page 8)

U.S. companies. So do Israel, Russia, and also India. Still, there is a real shortage of computer programmers. Maybe after the year 2000 problems are solved, things will slow down a little in this category.

Lets end this by saying that the ARPANET and the TCP/IP protocol developed by DARPA in the early 1970's has evolved into what we call the Internet!

What else has DARPA done?

- A disk drive gets a big boost in capacity by read/write arms fitted with microscopic inertial navigation arms that position the heads so accurately data can be packed many times more densely.

- Two million mirrors, each one-fifth the diameter of a human hair, are mounted on a memory chip and act as mobile digital switches. Each controls one pixel for large, high resolution displays. You see this at MOSI each month.

Want to see dozens more examples? Go to http://www.darpa.mil. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)

I will now try to write a program that automates that process. Then we can update the site every, say, 30 minutes. When I have done that we can "beta" test it all with the other members.

So far, so good. Next, to write a visual basic program to connect to the Internet and use FTP to download the message data and then to upload the completed HTML file after it has been generated. This cost me several hundred dollars since I had to upgrade from Visual Basic Professional 4 to Visual Basic Professional 5 to get the FTP programming ability.

As with any new programming tool, I made a few false starts, but I finally got my program up and running. And it was a real pleasure to watch as the program connected to the Internet, then to the tbos2cla.com server where our site is stored, downloaded the message date, created the HTML Message file and uploaded it back to tbos2cla,com. A quick check with my browser at the test page there (I have not provided a link to it yet since it is not yet ready for prime time, as you will momentarily read) revealed that everyting was working fine. And I went to bed happy.

As with all well constructed stories, you know that the next day brought disaster. And it did. The program would not FTP to the tbos2cla.com server and returned the message "HOST NOT FOUND". Some checking with the FTP component of the program revealed that it would not connect to any FTP server requiring a username and password—even though I programmed them according to the Visual Basic specifications—and in the same manner that had worked the night before with ftp.tbos2cla.com. The FTP component, however, worked perfectly with any FTP server that allowed an anonymous longon, like ftp.microsoft.com does, for example.

Believe me, I have pondered this problem a great deal to no avail, except for a lack of sleep and a headache. I am not even sure it is a Visual Basic problem . It may be a Windows 95 problem, since my son installed my program on his laptop running Windows NT Work Station, and it performed flawlesly. Oh, for a Visual Basic SIG with someone who knows the subject better than I. I have checked the Usenet Newsgroups, the Microsoft Knowledge Base and, of course, the Visual Basic help files and come up with nothing.

So, for the time being the TPCUG Discussion Group on the Internet will have to remain on hold. Updating it manually, while it only takes a couple of minutes, would be difficult for me to do at timely, regular intervals.

Now, you might ask why I am going to all this trouble when, as the possessor of Microsoft FrontPage, I have the ability to create such a discussion group using this program. Unfortunately there is one problem with this. To use a FrontPage created discussion group on an Internet server, the server needs to have what are called Microsoft FrontPage Extensions installed—and such extensions don't exist for OS/2 servers—and the tbos2cla.com server where our web site is located is such a server. The extensions, to the best of my knowledge, only exist for Microsoft 95, NT and UNIX servers.

I hope the above was not too specialized for most of you. It will give you some idea of how I spend my spare time. We all need a hobby, and programming is mine. With the Internet being the newest item to come along, it is only natural that we programmers have a turn at seeing what can be done with it. Right now, though, I have had to put all such attempts on hold so as to do a little toward my real occupation and also toward the completing of this newsletter. After I catch up on those two items and do a little work around the house, then I can return to the mystery of the inoperative password and username.

If you have been reading the newsletter regularly you will have noted that over the past year a reliable group of our members have been contributing articles. You could almost say we have a stable of writers. I am very appreciative of that, and I invite any other members out there who have tried a new piece of software or hardware to put your thoughts down in your computer and email them to me. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles, take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Internet E-Mail for the UnConnected!!

by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Do you need Internet e-mail? Do you need more e-mail accounts in your family? Do you want it free of charge? It's here, it's good and it's free. It's called **JUNO**, and it really works well. It has some very minor disadvantages, but they provide good software and good service. I know eight or so people who are using it, including my spouse and oldest son, and I haven't heard one complaint. I've used it some and like it. It's not a substitute for full-blown Internet access, but if you just need Internet e-mail … it's terrific. I've been asked this question … can I send e-mail to someone that's not on JUNO? Yes. It's Internet e-mail just like any other. You send and receive to any e-mail account … anywhere. Here's how it works.

The company provides a very good small e-mail software package free of charge. They provide local access numbers - more than 400 all over the country. All you do is get the software from their Web site on the Internet or from a friend or from JUNO itself . They encourage you to redistribute the software to anyone as long as you give it away in its original form. The current version is 1.38, by the way, so you can check if you're giving away the latest version.

It's paid for by selling advertisements that every user sees whenever he uses the software. In my opinion, the advertisements are relatively unobtrusive. You may get one that you must clear out on startup, but it's just a mouse click and it's gone. Otherwise you see various adverts in the top quarter of the program. That's it .. no hardship.

The software is what's called an "offline mail reader". You click on a send/receive button and it dials the modem, sends all the outgoing mail you've composed, and checks for any incoming mail and then logs off and disconnects the modem. It also downloads all the advertisements it displays. But they're small and it goes quickly.

It manages multiple users. So each member of your family can have his or her own private account. When you start the software you select who you are (in the list of users) and (optionally) provide your password. It manages multiple inboxes and outboxes, one for each account. Also, you sign up online and even find out what your local access number is, identify your modem and a whole bunch of other ways to customize. You can arrange to send software to a friend within the program too by notifying JUNO through e-mail or calling them. They'll send a diskette!

You can send an e-mail message with your friend's name and full postal address (including zip code) to signup@juno.com. You can send as many names and addresses in a message as you like. They'll send you a reply to let you know your message has been received. OR Call 1-800-654-JUNO (1-800-654-5866) and give them your friend's name and full postal address (including zip code). They'd prefer e-mail, since that's the easiest way for them to handle a large volume of requests.

Now, some final observations about the program. It doesn't do file attachments. It doesn't use the Windows 95 modem configuration. It uses its own, just like you used to do with Windows 3.1. It does have what looks like a comprehensive list of modems. It installs for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 from the same executable, so I suspect (I don't really know) that it's a Windows 3.1 application. But it has worked flawlessly for us. Obviously it must share the modem, and a modem does one thing at a time. My wife must check first to make sure the modem isn't connected to our Internet provider before she uses it. And yes, she can use our Internet account for mail, but she likes JUNO. It's HER mail.

(JUNO.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
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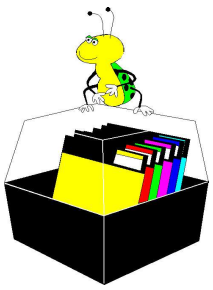
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9709.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

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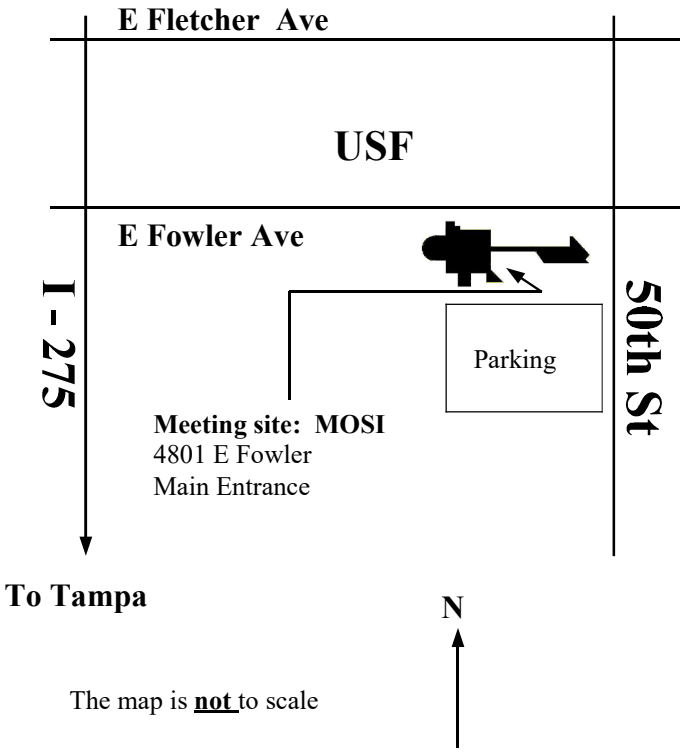
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(JUNO.....Continued from page 10)

Have fun .. get your kids on e-mail with their own private accounts .. get connected .. free. ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 3)

ter won a copy of DriveCopy; Roger Waters, OnFile; Wil Gobel, a much needed mouse pad; and Charles Howe, a book on Word for Windows 95. By the way, doesn't Wil win something every month? ◆





Bits of Blue

August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group

Vol. 10 No. 8 August 1997

Meeting

PowerQuest presents
Partition Magic
August 13, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 preview 2 & Office 97

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Partition Magic Come see a very useful product demonstrated this month. If you ever need to re-partition your hard drive and don't want to delete your data, this is the product for you. It certainly saved me from grief when I failed to remove a NTFS partition from the drive when I uninstalled Windows NT from a computer. There I was with Windows 95 now installed and no way to do anything with a good portion of the hard drive. FDISK was of no use, but Partition Magic did the job. They also have, I believe, a useful hard drive copy program. That should come in handy when you want to replace that 1 GB drive with a new 4 GB drive.

Internet Explorer 4 The more I make changes to my computer setup, the more I see why some people never make changes to their computer setup. I downloaded and installed the newest "preview" (not to be installed by the faint of heart) version of Microsoft's World Wide Web browser, Internet Explorer 4.0 preview 2. It is far more polished than preview 1; however, it is still probably not finished enough for those among us who can't tolerate a few things not working correctly. I will briefly give my impressions of the program and invite you to read the review of Netscape Communicator in this same issue. I can't make a comparison since I have not used the new Netscape program.

If you so choose, it can function as a shell for Windows 95, making changes in the way Windows Explorer functions and the appearance of your desktop. My choice was the standard Win 95 desktop and windows Explorer functioning as originally, except that I did customize one folder as an HTML page just to see what was going on. I wanted to keep the possibilities for problems at a minimum—remembering preview 1. Thus, I did not choose the active desktop,

(Comments.....Continued on page 4)

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING July 9, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Mike Hodges brought the meeting to order, did introductions and SIG group announcements and some informal polls. Mark Cassetta and John Reis from *Productivity Point International* gave a talk on "Maximizing the Use of Your Computer". After the break, we held the door prize drawing and concluded about 8:40.

Mike Hodges, our Vice President filling in for the running-late-Connie-Kincaid did the welcome and introductions and SIG announcements. He then conducted some informal opinion polls to help out the board with information for future direction of the club.

Productivity Point International provides computer training services from five centers in Florida - Orlando and south -on a variety of subjects and products. From their catalog, they do 1 or 2 day sessions in desktop training … publishing, database, spreadsheets and word processing; and also longer - 5 day - Microsoft Technical training; operating systems, networking and application development. They have a very slick, impressive catalog that they handed out to everyone.

Mark Cassetta gave a PowerPoint-guided talk on "Maximizing the Use of Your Computer", discussing:

- PC configuration
- Key Components of a PC
- What you'll need in 3Q 1997 *(in the way of equipment)*
- What you want to do in 3 months, 6 months and 12 months and how to Achieve your Goals *(Get more training, of course!)*
- Put Magic in your Computer
- Questions

Mark, with John Ries helping out in the background, gave an interesting talk on the components and use of a computer, leading up to the training they provide. He unfortunately had to compress the training discussion to be very short. But there was some good interaction from the club members during the course of the presentation., where some of our computer-head members were quick to pick up on any incorrect piece of information regarding a particular processor. The meeting was stimulating. Thanks, Mark and John.

We had an eclectic selection of door prizes this month: Ford and Bambi Bond won CA Tax and CA Simply Money. Kevan Sheridan a CD Homicide game and Clark Evans, a Win Jack game. Roger Waters, Will Gobel and Ken Boyd won cups. ◆

COMDEX '97 in Atlanta

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group



Editor's Note: Don sent this in for the July newsletter, but your editor misplaced it, so here it is one month later than it was meant to appear.

What would you see if you went to the Atlanta COMDEX in June of 1997?

We go to a motel at one of the four ends of the MARTA system. MARTA is a train that takes you from your motel to the COMDEX. It is a very smooth riding train. We think we save money and our sanity by staying out of town and it is great to have MARTA, a cheap way to get downtown in a hurry!

The first thing we noticed at the 1997 Atlanta COMDEX is that there were very few 3.5 inch floppies given out. At previous COMDEX there were many thousands of them given away. Now it is all CD ROM's. Do you want a CD ROM that gives you the ZD tests on your particular computer, comparing the speed of the Computer to a "standard"? Two CD ROM's are given to you at the ZD booth. Ziff Davis publishes PC Magazine and many others. The two disks are Winstone97 and Winbench97 and also 3D Winbench97. On the disks, they have the URL to go to for updates.

Would you like to understand what memory is all about? There are many booths with memory people inside. Want to know what interleaved memory is? Page mode memory? Row and column memory? WRAM? EDO RAM? Any questions can be answered by asking these people or letting them demonstrate their wares. Gold or tin plating, why? Get a few of their pamphlets on what memory is and does. Go to Rambus on the web if you want to see the new 665 MHz memory, You use 60 or 66 MHz in your latest computers.

The magazines So many magazines have booths at COMDEX you can't pick up a free copy of all of them. PCWeek, PC Magazine, and all the Reseller magazines are there. Don't pick up a copy of Computer Shopper early in the morning and carry it all day. Wait till you are ready to leave for the night.

The foreign companies Hong Kong, and most of the Asian companies have representatives in booths. They have literature on their countries and also how to sell to them through various means. They want to sell to you also. You can see motherboards and other boards and hardware that they sell, as well as their pricing schedules. Take home catalogs on anything you think you want next. Let me give you an example. Hitachi has a booth in each of the football field size rooms. One is on hardware; they have a complete line of monitors out for you to look at, and also computers. In the other section, they show their software booth. (Some people do not realize how much software is produced in other countries.) You see it here.

Have you been a beta tester for a few companies? I went to the **PowerQuest** booth and the man I saw recognized my name on my badge. He was the person I talked with via email during the testing of the Drive Copy program. You may be surprised at what they tell you about the company and what they have on tap next. Anyone can be a beta tester, you only need to know your limitations.

At previous COMDEX, they had lots of "girlies" dressed or not dressed, in costumes. There were less girlie shows at this COMDEX, but there were the usual number of people doing "magic tricks" One guy really mystified the audience. He had someone from the audience put on handcuffs and get into a trunk. During the show, he almost instantly was in the trunk and the man from the audience was out of the trunk. Most surprising! And of course, there were prizes given out. But the big one, a large combination surge suppressor and battery backup; you had to come back at 4 P.M. to win that.

Adobe has a booth. They really show you how to handle photos and what their software will do. I won a book at the end of the demo. Others win very expensive software after each demo.

Like to play miniature golf? Putt the ball into the hole and win a very neat folding umbrella or other prize.

Then there is the **Curtis Mathis** booth. I watched and talked with many of the people in this booth. They have a "Web TV" set up; in fact, they have maybe ten of them. Not one of the demonstrators could make it put email on the screen for me! For some reason, their system did not work at the show! You can go to any Curtis Mathis showroom here in Tampa and see it work, though.

Now for the real show. **Corel** has a booth. The screen size is about eight feet high and maybe twelve feet wide. The person who talks has a radio mike, and can move around while she tells you about Corel Draw7, and Corel WordPerfect version 8, and Quattro Pro, and Presentations, and Corel's Webmaster.

(COMDEX.....Continued on page 4)

(COMDEX.....Continued from page 3)
She makes up home pages while you watch, she shows you the latest and the greatest and you see just which keys to push to get that animation or the post card you want in Corel Draw etc. We watched this demo at least three times, because I wanted to learn the latest changes in Home Page construction and also in the WordPerfect manipulations. Mary Farrell sure knows how to key in the stuff to get the best out of Draw and WordPerfect and also the Internet package, Corel Webmaster. The demo was to be in Tampa downtown on June 19, I believe. Corel is always the hit of the COMDEX for me.

Laplink shows you how to use the Laplink program. They gave three 3.5 inch floppies with a complete copy of Laplink for WindowsNT to anyone that asks for one. It times out after a period of time.

IBM and others gave away a notebook computer.

USB, a new bus. It is called the **Universal Serial Bus**. It is on many of the new computers, and instead of having your keyboard and all the things like your external modem, monitor, etc-plugged into separate connectors on the back of your computer, you can daisy chain over a hundred items using this system. I have been watching it develop for about three years. Now it is here. You can get info from the Intel people who are here, or from many other companies who are in this same booth, and they all have literature for you. Perhaps this is the biggest single thing to hit your computer in years. Rambus is next.

I could go on for a long while, but maybe this will give you an inkling of what you can see and do at COMDEX, Atlanta. Next year it will be in Chicago. If there is anything you want to know about computers, this is the place to meet the people who design and build computers, and also the place to see and hear from your software manufacturer. They will tell you what you want to know. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)
which turns your formerly fixed Windows background wallpaper into an HTML page that, in addition to your old folders, can contain Java components, links, ActiveX controls, and other HTML pages.

One of the more ballyhooed features is the use of push technology to move information to you automatically. The idea is that you subscribe to a channel—a Web site that has been especially prepared to push its information at you at the specified times you set— e.g. when the content changes, or every two hours from 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM, or once a day. Microsoft provides a beginning list of such web sites with, I am sure, many more to follow. Three I found useful were the Wall Street Journal (not the full fee based online version), the New York Times, and MSNBC. It took we awhile to get used to my computer all of a sudden dialing out on the modem on its on initiative to look for updated content. You can, of course, subscribe to any Internet site in this way, but as best I can figure with the limited time I have to devote to this right now, you only update the immediate page you go to. With channels, however, the update goes as deep as necessary to get past the "headlines" and retrieve the whole story.

So, if you want a little computing excitement, go to http://www.Microsoft.com, find the free download site and have at it. You will first download a "starter" file of about .5 MB which, when run, will then download the actual 23 MB IE 4.0 preview 2 file. With my 28,800 modem connected at 26,400, I received this file in 4 hours, 20 minutes, and the installation went smoothly. This download includes much more than just the IE 4.0 browser and auxiliary mail and news group reader Outlook Express. Before listing the extras, just note that Outlook express provides the ability to add backgrounds, called stationary, to your email. It also permits embedded graphics and sounds. However, whether or not the recipient will be able to see any of



this will depend on the email program he is using. The newest Netscape seems to handle all such messages except for the embedded sound, which is done with a Microsoft only supported HTML command.

With this full download you will also get NetMeeting, which allows you to hold voice and video conferences, share software applications, chat, and share a whiteboard. You also get the Web page editing program WordPad (a scaled down version of FrontPage), the Web Publishing Wizard, NetShow 2.0 which allows you to stream multimedia across the Internet and intranets without eating up a lot of network bandwidth , Personal Web Server and a few other odds and ends. If you don't want all these extras you can get by with only about a 15 MB download.

Office 97 Wanting to take advantage of a good price on Microsoft Office Professional 97, I bought the CD and am now writing this in Word 97. And that introduced another problem: Microsoft Publisher 95, the version I have, will not use Word 97 as its auxiliary text editor; it wants Word 95 or Word 6. Another example of how a change causes problems. But this gave me the opportunity to experiment.

You may recall that when I started doing the newsletter, I did it

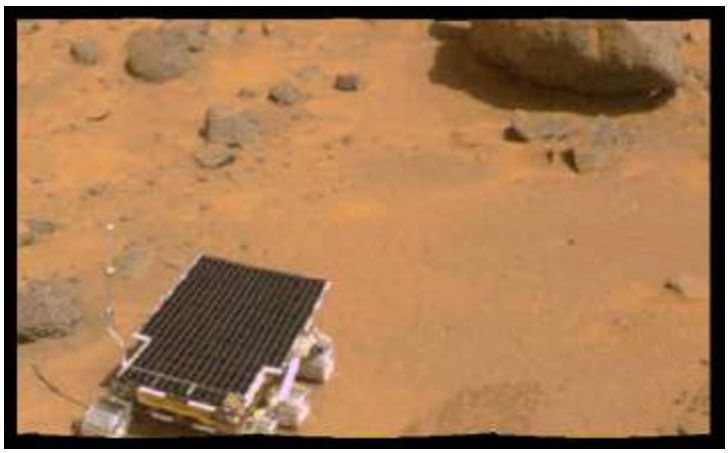
(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more than 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action- Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
2. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Helicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
3. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
4. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations - Windows 3.1 & 95
5. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
8. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space (8-adult)
9. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!



Internet picture of the month

This is a screen capture from the Martian Panorama found at http://www.ambitweb.com/pf/pf.html . The photo was taken at Sagan Memorial Station, Mars, on July 6, 1997.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Astronomy - Mark Elowitz	http://www.seds.org/~rme/mark.html
AudioNet AudioBooks	http://www.audionet.com/books/
Boston. Sidewalk (Microsoft city guide)	http://boston.sidewalk.com/
Florida Professional Malpractice Records	http://www.doi.state.fl.us/liability/
Freeware Publishing Site	http://www.katho.be/freeware/freeware.htm
Gibson Research Corporation (SpinRite)	http://www.grc.com/default.htm
Intellectual Capital	http://www.intellectualcapital.com/
Lowry Park Zoo	http://www.med.usf.edu/NINA/park/index.html
Microsoft CarPoint	http://carpoint.msn.com/Home
Policy.com - Reports on today's leading issues	http://www.policy.com/
South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Resources	http://historic.com/schs/main.html
Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System	http://scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us/thpl/thpl.htm
WFMT 98.7 Chicago - Fine Arts	http://www.audionet.com/radio/stations/station.asp?station_id=139
WHNZ 570 AM Tampa - News & Talk	http://www.audionet.com/radio/stations/station.asp?station_id=64
WRCY 107.7 FM Washington, DC - Country	http://www.audionet.com/radio/stations/station.asp?station_id=59
Windows 95.com (Win 95 software & information)	http://www.windows95.com/
World City Maps	http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/world_cities.html

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Review

Netscape Communicator

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



As in the past, with some of my articles, this is more of a summary of the good stuff than a full-blown review. Quite frankly, if I didn't think this was a good product I wouldn't waste your time or mine discussing it. Any of you that know me, know that I am an avid supporter of Microsoft and Microsoft products, because they have done more to make computing fun and enjoyable for me than anyone else out there…… until now.

Like most of you I wasn't an early user of the Internet. I started after the graphical user interface (GUI) came along. I tried them all in the beginning but settled on Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) primarily because it was feature-rich and designed to run specifically under Windows 95. And FREE! The one thing I never liked about IE was that the e-mail program was not purely integrated. It takes too long to start up and shut down e-mail in IE.

I recently began publishing web sites and learned that there is a difference in how each web browser displays a web page. So to make sure that the best possible displays of my web pages were presented I had to view my sites in the various browsers. During this process I started using the new Netscape Communicator and it has become my browser, or actually suite, of choice because it is a collection of software components for sharing, accessing, and communicating information via Intranets and the Internet.

Communicator Standard Edition now includes components for navigation (Navigator 4), e-mail (Messenger), discussion groups (Collabra), HTML authoring (Page Composer), dynamic information delivery (Netcaster) and real-time collaboration (Conferencing). *Communicator Professional Edition* also includes calendaring and scheduling (Calendar), IBM host communications, and Communicator management. Communicator runs on 16 platforms.

Navigator 4 is the cornerstone of Communicator. It has a new, user interface and new technology that makes browsing dynamic web content easier than ever. Navigator 4 comes pre-installed with the most popular multimedia plug-ins (small programs that add functionality to Navigator). SmartUpdate automatically configures and installs new multimedia plug-ins so they work right away without any user configuration. There are currently 154 plug-ins available. Access to favorite sites and Internet searches are just one-click away. With the initial release of version 4 there were security problems discovered, but Netscape immediately plugged the holes. Now Navigator includes open standards-based security features to protect information such as credit card numbers and personal financial data. Data encryption in Navigator 4 protects information as it is transmitted over the Internet. Navigator's tool bar can be customized to your individual preferences including bookmarks for marking favorite sites. There is a new Search button that links directly to a collection of the Internet's leading search engines.

Messenger is a full-featured application for sending and receiving e-mail over Intranets or the Internet. Messenger includes new message-management features that are powerful enough for corporate power-use but easy enough for individual novice use. Open standards-based features, such as mobile user support and online address searching, allow you to access your email from any location and find people anywhere on the Internet. I have two separate Internet accounts: GTE and AOL. I have no problem checking my GTE e-mail while in AOL and AOL Internet access runs terrific under Navigator. Messenger is fully integrated with Netscape Composer, allowing you to create e-mail messages that look like web pages, complete with graphic images - even Java applets. As with all other Communicator components, Messenger includes encryption to protect private communications. A fully integrated spelling checker helps eliminate spelling errors.

Collabra brings the benefits of newsgroups and online information exchange to workgroups, businesses, and corporations and can also be integrated with Internet newsgroups. It's as easy to use as e-mail. You can perform cross-discussion searches for relevant information. With Collabra's filters you can highlight certain postings and ignore others. You can also post forum messages with graphic images and Java Applets. Documents created in Composer's HTML editing environment can be displayed and viewed in Collabra.

Composer is an easy-to-use tool that makes creating HTML-based documents as easy as writing a memo with a word processor. Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) describes how words and images should be displayed on a web page or in an e-mail message. Like a word processor, Composer uses fonts, styles, paragraphs, and lists, and includes an integrated spelling checker. Composer can also publish, or upload, documents to an Internet document server with a single button click.

Netcaster dynamically (automatically) delivers Intranet and Internet information right to your desktop. With "push" capabilities Netcaster enables you to receive constant information updates in the background while you're working on something else. Customize how and when information is delivered to your desktop. Information is delivered in an of-

(Netscape.....Continued on page 7)

(Netscape.....Continued from page 6)
fline cache for faster display. You can "anchor" any web content to your desktop to create a "webtop" environment. Netcaster's offline download capabilities lets you download content and then view it when you're ready.

Conference is a real-time multimedia communications tool. Unlike email and newsgroup communications, which use "store-and-forward" technology, real-time communications happen simultaneously. A telephone conversation, for example, is a real-time communication, while a voicemail message is store-and-forward. With Conference, one or more users can hold a conference call, share a whiteboard, or conduct a text-based discussion as easily as you can send e-mail or read newsgroup postings. Full-duplex audio conferencing is supported. You can send and receive any kind of data, including files, text, and images, in real time. A shared whiteboard provides a central location for sharing images between users. Chat allows users to exchange text messages. File transfer lets you upload and download documents and applications during a conference. With Conference you can send voicemail messages to standard e-mail addresses in WAV voicemail standard.

Calendar (available in Netscape Communicator Professional Edition) is a heavy-duty calendaring and scheduling tool for the corporate environment. With Calendar, you can schedule meetings and reserve conference rooms or other resources, all in real time. Calendar can support more than 100,000 users and is accessible from any Communicator component menu. Keep calendars and schedules private. Access control allows users to specify user access to their personal calendars.

There are also various other assorted utilities included in the Professional Edition such as the ***IBM Host On-Demand*** component that was co-developed by IBM and Netscape that is a cross-platform, Java-based application that uses the industry-standard 3270 protocol to provide Communicator clients with Intranet or Internet access to IBM hosts. Also available is ***AutoAdmin***, which allows IS managers to centrally manage and update Communicator and manage the installation and configuration of client software.

The rest I won't bore you with at this time. Just let me reassure you that this software package can handle anything you can throw at it, and more than likely, it can handle a few things you haven't thought of yet. Requirements are Windows 95/NT, 16 MB of memory, 16 MB of disk space for base installation or 30 MB for all components. You can download a free, fully featured trial copy of version 4.01a from Netscape at: http://home.netscape.com/download/index.html. The software is free for all students, faculty, and staff at educational institutions, charitable nonprofit organizations, and public libraries. For the rest of us it costs only $59. ***Don't miss out on this one!*** ◆

SpinRite

Disk Diagnostic & Data Recovery – As Good as it Gets

By Fredrick Rea O'Keefe, Tampa PC Users Group

UP FRONT SUMMARY:
Product - SpinRite 4.01
Publisher - Gibson Research Corporation
Website: www.grc.com/default.htm
Class - Utility, Disk Drive Maintenance
PC requirements - 100% IBM Compatible PC (XT & up), 1 diskette drive, any DOS version 2.1+, any DOS formatted (12/16 bit) hard drive. Comes on 1 diskette
Street price - available from publisher for $93, or upgrade price $43 (plus tax in CA, s/h included)
Rating (0-10) - 10
Recommendation - This is "required" for all IBM PC owners.

In the "good old days," when we knew that floppy diskette and hard drive media were going to fail, taking data with them, and that this was a certainty; back when we had to "clean" our diskette drives regularly because the diskette media both rubbed off onto the drive heads and eventually "sandpapered" the heads into uselessness -- there came a rescuer. No, not Peter Norton. I refer to the noted columnist Steve Gibson and his SpinRite program.

Don't know the name? Shame on you! Then you don't know that the disk media scanning programs included with Windows (Scandisk), and programs such as Norton Utilities' surface test are light duty and not sufficient. Such programs will detect only the most gross disk media aberrations, often after the damage has been done to your precious data, or to as yet unused sectors. Or when the disk drive is ready to collapse.

Without discussing esoteric disk drive hardware and media technicalities, let me state that only one program can deep-test every bit on a hard drive or floppy diskette, checking for every possible form of weakness. SpinRite not only finds the already shot areas, but those which have weakened and will soon fail, or even those bits marked bad by other programs -- but which are actually good! On the old-time hard drive types (how soon we forget -- MFM, RLL, ESDI), SpinRite is able to test, restore and deep format an entire drive, while preserving or recovering the data. Head drift and fading away or migration of formatting data (track location, cluster and sector start/end location) and your precious data are no longer problems. On newer, huge capacity IDE and SCSI drives, as well as compressed drives, SpinRite works its magic, eliminating problems in advance, preventing drive media recording fail-

(SpinRite.....Continued on page 8)

(SpinRite.....Continued from page 7)
ures from occurring. Fortunately, newer media and mechanisms are greatly improved, with longer MTBF (mean time between failure), and on floppies, very little rub off or sandpapering of the drive heads.

Why use SpinRite if new drives are so good, when you already have a disk utility? Let me clinch the reasons for you by quoting from the small manual: "SpinRite reads and recovers all or most data from completely unreadable hard or floppy disks; Optimizes and resets improper sector interleaves; Renews critical low-level drive formats; … Verifies drive characteristics and setup parameters …" What that doesn't make clear is that various brands of disk drives use techniques to fool DOS into exceeding its limits on drive capacity. All IBM PC clones use DOS to format the drives. Drive mechanisms and DOS use Error Correction Code (ECC firmware on the drive) to account for what the drive or DOS thinks are errors, validly or not. SpinRite is unique in being able to eliminate results of erratic drive error correction schemes and DOS limitations by addressing the drive media directly at the register level. A drive would have to be far off the wall for it to not be completely accessible to SpinRite. Virtually all hard drive and floppy drive interfaces, data transfer, and operating technologies managed by DOS are automatically and effectively handled. SpinRite is unique. (Remember that your drives are FDisked and formatted by DOS in either a 12 or 16 bit FAT (File Allocation Table), regardless of "Windows" or other operating systems. DOS has an inherent limitation of 4.3 GB for a partition. SpinRite tests drives up to that capacity. The limitation is that of DOS, not SpinRite. No, SpinRite does not analyze the new 32 bit FAT, and won't until Microsoft releases Windows 97, and end-users can "upgrade.")

Another unique, "wow" reason to use SpinRite is that it can correct a damaged or incorrect BIOS drive setup parameter! SpinRite determines exactly what the true drive is, how it operates, and lets you know the most efficient parameters. Nobody but Steve Gibson has thought of such a "needed" program. Part of the accuracy is due to reading the actual drive, not relying on the BIOS report or Windows record. "So what?" Even without having been used on your machine, SpinRite can resurrect your hard drive when the BIOS collapses (such as when your power-loss CMOS batteries fail during a power outage), and you can't find the BIOS/CMOS data disk, or the paper records you always keep up to date and available. So it is that you have another potent tool in your arsenal for defending your vital data against the vagaries of mechanical and electronic "betrayal."

Technical users familiar with SpinRite 3.1 know that there are up to 22 individually-shifted test patterns which scrub (write and read) the daylights out of every widely spaced "data bit cell," guaranteeing that every possible media and head function performance factor is tested. Testing under version 3.1 takes hours, but is extremely effective in locating existing bad "spots," soon-to-become-bad spots, and data weakening or damage (including endangered data existing on those spots). Data is analyzed, restored, and moved to proven-safe locations.

When I used older versions of SpinRite for testing at the deepest level on a 486-66 DX with a 350 MB HD, it took overnight and then some before the drive was completely tested. Unfortunately, I don't have the time or an older computer (anymore) to compare various versions of SpinRite. I can tell you that on the 200 MHz Pentium, with a 2.5 GB HD, it took only three hours and 56 minutes (236 minutes) to complete the test! That's 10.6 MB/minute. I'll explain the speed improvement later. Oh yes -- not a defect was found on my hard drive. Nor could I find a defect on any of the floppies I tested, including some old 720 KB diskettes I hoped would challenge SpinRite. Oh, well. It takes four minutes to test a 720 KB floppy, and six minutes for a 1.44 KB diskette. Not bat at all for a thorough write/read rejuvenation of the media.

The excessive time that hard drive testing takes with older versions of SpinRite is one of two major problems. The other, more troublesome problem existing with version 3.1 is a "ping pong effect," that is, unwanted reaction of the drive mechanism's read/write electronics throughout the data channel when subjected to such massive test data flow. This causes, in some drives, some media regions to be erroneously marked bad, then good, and back and forth on subsequent testing. Data is nonetheless preserved. How could this last problem occur? A seemingly admirable quality of SpinRite 3.1 is an absolute intolerance of variation in data amplitude. But, such a variation is purposely forced by 3.1 from use of the long-period test patterns! Then the drive mechanism reacts. This is not an obvious problem, and came to light only with three years of extensive use of SpinRite by observant users and laboratory testing. Back to the drawing boards!

SpinRite 4 designer Steve Gibson rewrote the machine language program to incorporate available research and new and pending drive technologies. As much as I have been able to enthusiastically recommend that users rely on older versions of SpinRite, I can recommend to you version 4.01 even more. Both problems just mentioned have been eliminated. A new pattern testing approach called "short-period" creates the needed weak amplitude data signal for detecting fading media areas, while not interacting with the drive controller firmware. Bye, bye ping pong effect. But, is 4.01 notably faster? Yes. As much as ten times faster. Because short-period patterns are able to test every other data bit cell simultaneously, two patterns alone suffice where twenty two used to be needed! Now, only one "level" of surface evaluation is required to deep scrub the disk media.

(SpinRite.....Continued on page 9)

(SpinRite.....Continued from page 8)
While users have an option of five test parameters (as opposed to the previous seven), the first three use only DOS' pattern testing, the fourth and fifth use Gibson's test pattern. The reason for a choice is that users need to frequently do a quickie "disk scan" with pre-selected actions in case of problems with data: 1) examine the surface (read); 2) recover weak or damaged data (read and, as needed, move data); 3) refresh the surface (all the previous plus write to and read every sector). These three are better in quality than Windows based disk scanning, in my opinion, because they directly address the drives. For the complete testing, using the short-period patterns, levels four and five do all that level three does, plus: 4) locate surface defects not apparent to DOS or the hard drive's limited Error Correction Code (ECC) of 11 bits (SpinRite can read and correct up to "510 bytes out of 512"), and 5) restore to use perfectly good sectors wrongly marked bad by DOS or the hard drive itself.

All that might seem confusing to some readers, but more technical users should be aware of the improvements.

A couple of other points. "DynaStat Data Recovery" is so effective at reading data from a defective drive, and subjecting the unclear portions of data to statistical analysis that almost all data can be recovered intact. By matching known characteristics of a disk drive with the readable or "not readable" data, comparing the subtle variations in magnetic flux of the "on/off" bits on a track, and being able to determine the true location of a track, SpinRite allows DynaStat to reconstruct almost all the otherwise "lost" data. That's as close to a miracle as one can get. This applies to both hard and floppy drives. Do you have an old floppy with archival data you wish you could use, but can't?

In using every version of SpinRite to test or recover a hard drive, one must always boot from a bare floppy, because SpinRite works directly on the drive without intermediate programs. Other drivers and background software would interfere. New with SpinRite 4.0, to test a floppy, you may run from Windows 95 using the "Exclusive DOS Mode" without requiring a clean boot from a floppy. The SpinRite "pif" program (desktop icon) will close all running programs (except comm programs which you must first manually close) and remove Windows, then move to the exclusive DOS mode, run SpinRite (you must select the floppy drive to test) and, when done, warm boot Windows for you.

As it operates, SpinRite documents all of its work and findings, including an extensive and accurate analysis of your disk drives and partitions and locations of any unresolved data problems for your bit-by-bit correction, tests the RAM and drive hardware every time SpinRite is started, and writes a "fingerprint" with pertinent data of recent tests. This valuable record is also a time-saver whenever you run SpinRite; no need to redo the extensive drive tests.

There is too much more to cover in this article! Be encouraged to visit the website for all the minute details of what SpinRite can do. You will be amazed and delighted with all the benefits of faithfully using SpinRite to protect your data! A completely effective defensive product, like SpinRite or Zero Surge Suppressors, is so "boring" that you might forget how potent and necessary it is. However, if you, too, are a semi-techie, you will appreciate the fully detailed, live-action screen reports SpinRite shows on the screen and records for your next run (or in case of interruption).

The 4.0 manual contains an error on page three. "Data Recovery 'Aggression' Control" is not implemented yet. I found no other documentation error.

That overview of SpinRite should be more than enough to convince anyone that SpinRite 4.01 is more than valuable, it is a necessity. To frost the cake, this summary: SpinRite can prevent data problems due to unreliable media, recover virtually all data from failed media, rejuvenate and maintain your hard and floppy drives. It's fast and easy to use, the help file is extensive and completely detailed with technical explanations anyone can understand. "SpinRite is a complete, ready-to-run, data recovery and disk repair system." There is no other comparable program, not by miles. If you don't buy it, when you have the inevitable problem I will be more than pleased to assist you with a copy of SpinRite, which I will sell to you, and charge you for my time in recovering your data! (Please don't take this seriously -- I'm not available for technical support.)

A bonus demo program included with SpinRite is ChromaZone™, Steve Gibson's "World's only animated, virtual reality, interactive, screen saver construction set." Written in machine language, it is far tinier than After Dark and similar programs, yet includes far more presentations. It can even capture screens. The demo is a neat "ad" for the $19.95 program. Replace the static or dreary screensavers you are using.

As ever, wishing you safe and enjoyable computing,
Rick O'Keefe ◆

SpinRite

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles, take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Book Review:
Internet Service Providers, July/August 1997

Published by: Boardwatch Magazine

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC users Group

This book arrived today, and I am very surprised at the depth of information about the Internet provided here. The introduction is written by Jack Rickard. Jack is one of the most knowledgeable people I know on the subjects of bulletin boards, telephone company information, the Internet, and computers in general.

The introduction tells you a little about what you will see in the book. To start, there is a story on the Architecture of the Internet. This is not a brief section; it goes into great detail as to what it is that makes up the Internet. A "backbone" is thoroughly explained. (A backbone is the wiring that interconnects everyone around the world by wires, wireless, glass fiber, and/or satellite.) You may have wondered how so many people can be on the Internet all around the world, yet your connection to any one computer on the Internet will be private and your download proceeds with no interference. (Ideally.) This section of the book describes how this is accomplished. What Jack did is to have 27 cities set up to call each of many backbones and download programs to determine a means of comparing these backbones as far as how reliable they are and how fast the download took place. This was not done in one location by one computer on one Internet Service Provider.

Now Jack goes to a monumental work. He provides you with the story on MCI, AT&T, Sprint, BBN, UUNET, and so many others you will have to read for a long time. The stories fill you in on the start of the Internet, the companies that provide the circuits your data goes through, and the maps that show you exactly who has long line connections all over the world. In other words, you can better understand what is meant when people tell you your data from your keyboard goes all over the country to get from one place to another. Now Jack lets you in on the tremendous knowledge he has about computers. He begins to tell you how to set up a dialup connection to the Internet using your computer. This is a long description and it is worth reading if you want to know just how these things are accomplished. Next, Jack tells you in great detail how to configure Windows95 on your computer. A complete story on how you can set up Windows95, with all of the pictures showing you the screens you will see on your monitor is included. This part of the book is worth the cost of the whole book, for those who do not really understand how to set Windows95 up.

The last section of the book gives you a list of all the Internet Service Providers, complete with telephone numbers and details of how each provider is connected. This will tell you why some ISP's are not as reliable as others. You can learn a lot simply by reading this book, if you want to know how the Internet works, who provides what connections, and how it all started and has grown. But that is not all. It tells you what is coming up. There is no way I can give you a real description of all this!
The book is called *Internet Service Providers* and sells for $9.95 at Barnes and Noble and many computer book places. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 4)

in Microsoft Word—probably Word 6. But there was always a problem with the flow of text from one part of the document to another place in the document. Word could only easily continue onto the next page. Switching to Microsoft Publisher solved that problem, and, as noted, I could still take advantage of the superior editing power of Word. Well, Word 97 will now allow you to flow text too by the use text boxes—the same method Publisher uses. Unfortunately it does not provide the automatic little message: "Continued on page….." as Publisher does. Anyway, I got bold and decided to do this month's newsletter in Word 97. But I soon encountered an-

(Comments.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

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And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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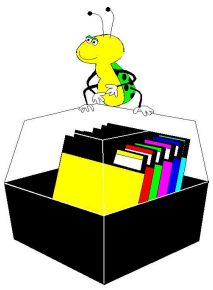
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9708.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
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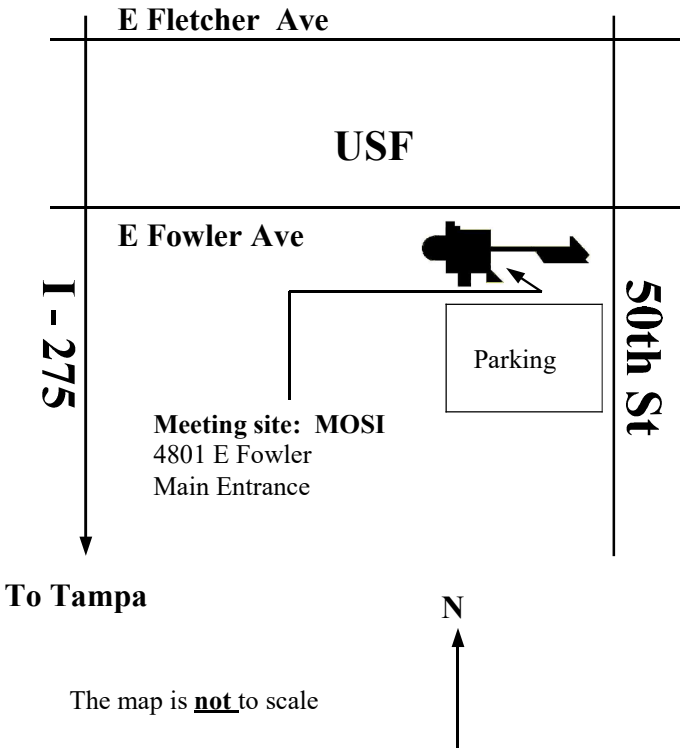


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(Comments.....Continued from page 10)
other obstacle that I could find no way around: Using text boxes I can find no way to flow the text around graphics. If I want the text to flow around graphics it appears that the text can't be in a text box—even if the graphic is in the text box. Perhaps I am missing something, but I don't think so. Well, if Word did everything Publisher did we wouldn't need Publisher, but it came so close—just one little feature short.

I am not going to give up text easily wrapped around graphics, and I can't live without the text flow allowed by the use of text boxes—all things provided by Publisher. I also want the text editing capabilities of Word. So, by buying Word 97, it looks like I have also committed myself to Publisher 97. And , indeed, from this paragraph on I am using Publisher 97 and Word 97 to do the newsletter . I had the newsletter 80% completed in Word 97 when I discovered the graphics problem with text boxes. So now I must take a little time to bring everything back into Publisher 97. Don't get me wrong: Word 97 will wrap text around graphics—just not if the text is in a text box. If any one can make text wrap around a graphic inside a text box I would love to hear about it ◆





Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 10 October 1997

Meeting

BCD Computers Presents
New Hardware

October 8, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science
and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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TPCUG Discussion Group, Video Capture & Speech Recognition

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, I have quite a few things that I can write about this month, which is good, since as I start this I am short an article or two for this month's newsletter. So, the rule is: If you don't want to read my material you should either contribute an article or encourage another member to contribute.

Wil Gobel's video capture presentation at the September meeting got me to thinking about such things. I have never been much interested in moving photography or videos, even though I have done a lot with still photography over the years: taking the photos, processing the film, making the prints myself, and, in recent years, scanning the prints into the computer and manipulating them with the digital software. But there have been times when I would have liked to capture something from the TV or a video.

The Rebirth of an Old Computer An opportunity to do this arose this past week when my wife said that she would like to have a permanent computer set up that she could use for word processing when I am monopolizing the Gateway Pentium and my daughter is using her 486 no-name clone and the 486 laptop was the only thing left over. Well. there was the old Gateway 386, which had been such a faithful workhorse in the past. It was gathering dust in a corner; its monitor had been sent off to college with my son to be used as an auxiliary monitor for his laptop, but there was another usable monitor in the garage. So why not bring it back to life? It had 16 MB of RAM, and almost 2 GB of hard drive space. All that it lacked was speed, but you don't really need that for many PC applications—certainly not for word processing: although, I

(Comments.....Continued on page 4)

November 12: MindSpring, an Internet access provider, will do the presentation.
The new TPCUG Internet address is http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ .

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING September 10, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The scheduled presentation for September had to be canceled, so Wil Goble generously volunteered to fill in with a graphics and video demonstration.

William LaMartin, our newsletter editor and webmaster opened the meeting with an explanation of the new web site generously donated by fellow club member Larry Anders. Also he gave us a description of the two development products available from Microsoft on their web site - MS Voice and MS Dictation - described later in this newsletter.

President Connie Kincaid took over with introductions of the officers. Also, Connie announced that William LaMartin is tentatively giving an Internet demo at the next Comm SIG meeting - the first week of October. **Editor's Note: The Comm SIG will not be held due to the unavailability of the usual site this month.**

Connie welcomed three visitors, one guest of Don Patzsch and two visitors from the MOSI Genealogy group.

Connie outlined the coming meeting programs as:
October - Brainchild BCD Computers - new hardware
November - Mindspring, an Internet provider
December - Tentatively, a presentation of Win 95 tips
January - working on this one
February - Corel

Connie did an informal survey of the people present on Internet providers. One thing was evident - that we universally use the Internet.

William returned to the front and went on-line showing our web site and then showed the new discussion group section on our site. He demonstrated how you add a subject and also how to post a response.

Wil Goble then took over with his own personal computer. He has a video capture board and a camcorder as a video input device. Using a nice collection of graphics editing software, he gave us a very informative view of what can be done with graphic captures. Using the camera, he captured portions of the room and then edited the files using Micrografx's Photo magic. He edited out areas of the room using cloning and then showed us a wide variety of special effects. Finally, he captured a nice photograph of a boat of fish from a member. Then

(Minutes.....Continued on page 12)

Sony's Digital Mavica®
(floppy disk camera)

by Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group



Just in case you don't know, it's possible to have Christmas in September, at least at my house. Only, Santa has a remarkable resemblance to the Sony Corp. this year. I had been saving up my change ever since I saw my first digital camera. I even purchased one a while back in a moment of weakness, but quickly returned it when I saw the poor quality of the picture, both on the PC and in print. I also wasn't real comfortable having to connect the camera to my parallel port so the pictures could be imported into my PC. (My parallel port already has a Zip drive hooked to it.) And the biggest negative thing I find with today's digital camera is the limited number of photos you can take unless you purchase a camera that uses those expensive flash memory cards. Then came along Saint Sony (Nicholas) and released a camera that took care of all of my dislikes at one time.



The new Mavica still camera records images on a standard 3.5" floppy inside the camera so you can utilize your pictures on virtually any PC at any time. Each diskette can hold up to 20 high resolution or up to 40 standard resolution images in 24-bit 640 x 480 (VGA) JPEG format. The Mavica is compatible with Windows 3.1/95/NT or Mac OS 7.5. There are no drivers, new interfaces to learn or cables to hassle with. You can use whatever graphics program you are used to. JPEG is recognized by most modern-day graphic programs like Paint Shop Pro and other software made by Adobe, Micrografx, etc. Or you can use ArcSoft™ PhotoStudio™ software that comes with the Mavica for creative options to manipulate images, add text and change backgrounds. The printed pictures on my HP color printer are excellent.

Mavica comes in two styles; fixed lens (MVC-FD5) and 10x power zoom (MVC-FD7). (*I got the zoom*). There are real camera features like allowing you to shoot an object as little as 1 cm away. It also has auto or manual focus, auto-iris, 1/60 to 1/4000 second shutter speeds, white balance, built-in flash (usually not needed) and a self time (so you can get in the picture too). There are also five auto macro functions such as portrait, landscape, beach/ski, sports and sunset/moon. The camera automatically adjusts itself depending on the setting. The MVC-FD7 also features picture effects, which add digital effects to images automatically. By selecting picture effects, you can enjoy effects such as *monotone, negative, art, pastel and sepia* without having to purchase another paint software.

The camera operates off Sony's lithium-ion rechargeable battery that allows up to 500 continuous shots with a single charge and that also powers a 2.5" color LCD screen for composing, monitoring and playback. This means that you can shoot enough images to fill up to 25 floppy disks (high resolution) with one battery. Mavica incorporates the same technology as the Sony Handycam® camcorders, which allows for low power consumption.

You can view images that have already been taken on a multi-image screen on the LCD panel; this allows for easy search and selection of desired images that can be protected and/or deleted while the diskette is still in the camera. When you get the set of photos you want, just remove the diskette from the camera and insert it into your PC. It really is as easy as that! I can't say enough about this camera. It is ***everything*** I had been waiting for ***and more!*** And my wife loves it too. She teaches commercial floral design and marketing and wanted the ability to take pictures of her students' work and give them instant feedback. Now she has that ability. See!

If you would like the full specifications on both cameras go to http://www.sel.sony.com/SEL/consumer/mavica/ and get all the information needed to make an educated wish list for Christmas. Heck… Halloween and Thanksgiving come before Christmas. Then again, Christmas comes in September too, doesn't it?!

I give Sony's Digital Mavica®

◆



Software Review

Drive Copy from PowerQuest

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

Drive Copy is intended for those people who want to upgrade to a larger hard drive, now that hard drive costs have come down. Another thing, if you buy a computer loaded with Windows95 and other software but no backup disks came with the computer, you can copy your hard drive before you accidentally delete anything or have a crash of some kind. This copy process is fast and easy. Small businesses may want a second copy of their drives to store in another location in case of fire, etc. So when you put in a larger hard drive, just put the old one in a safe place. The advantage to this method is that in case a disk freezes, the old one can be reinstalled in minutes, and the business is back in full operation. Of course this is true for any individual user as well.

I was a beta tester for the Drive Copy program, and I became familiar with the people at PowerQuest. So let me begin this review by saying that you may get on the Internet at any time and go to *http://www.powerquest.com* to get an answer that you can easily understand from their support people. They will answer questions within a day or two via email, give you plain written instructions to solve your problem, and, in the process, tell you a little more about the program. Partition Magic version 3.0 is the program that sold me on the PowerQuest company. It costs about $39. Highly recommended.

Drive Copy will "diskcopy" one hard drive to a hard drive of the same size or larger. If you decide to upgrade to a larger hard disk now that the prices have fallen, you have a choice. You can go the long way, back up the hard disk, partition and format the new hard drive, reinstall the operating system and applications, and finally, restore the data. All this takes time. Lots of time.

There is a second way. You can buy Drive Copy for a little over $20 and then the process is much easier. First, install your old hard disk as the slave. Be sure to set the jumper settings on your old hard drive to "slave". You then install your new disk, equal in size or larger than your original disk, as the Primary or Master disk in a two hard drive computer. Settings on your new hard disk will be described in the instructions.

Now you are ready to go. Insert the 3.5 inch floppy, and type A:\PQDC. Now just wait and watch. It took me only a few minutes to copy a 2.1 gigabyte Maxtor hard disk.

Here are a few ideas and suggestions.

There are several ways to find out how to place each hard disk within your computer.

- Find a friend in the User Group who has done this many times. He will help you.
- Go to the manual that came with your computer, it should show you everything you need to know.
- Go to Barnes and Noble or maybe to the public library. Find a good book on upgrading your computer.

The appendix A in the Drive Copy manual lists the common Maxtor and Western Digital jumper settings. If this is not sufficient, then in the same appendix they list the companies that manufacture hard disks and the URL's and some email addresses, 800 telephone numbers, etc. so that you can easily get the information you may need.

Drive Copy copies all versions of Windows95, WindowsNT, Windows 3.x, DOS, and OS2 including FAT, FAT32, NTFS, and HPFS partition types. It works with EIDE, IDE, SCSI drives. It works with Stacker and/or Drivespace. Linux and Unix will be copied but not expanded or otherwise supported. You will want to have at least 5 megabytes of space within each FAT partition so that Drive Copy can expand the partitions during the copying process.

A computer BIOS made before 1994 is not likely to support the EIDE standard. It cannot handle hard disks larger than 504 MB. New hard drives larger than 504 MB typically include software such as OnTrack disk manager or similar products to let computers see larger hard drives.

Yes, I have copied the hard drive and put the copy in another computer to try it. It works fine, but your software license may be for one copy on one computer. You need to check that; read your software license.

PowerQuest Corporation 1083 North State Street, Orem, Utah 84057, 1-800-379-2566 ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)
do appreciate my 166 MHz machines speed when it comes to repaginating a 350 page Word document with an index.

Video Capture Once I had the 386 set up and running, having removed many of the programs that were still on the drive but either were no longer of interest or could be much better run on the newer machine, I got to thinking again. The computer was in the same room with all our audiovisual items and there was a video capture card upstairs in my son's desk that wasn't being used for anything. Since it had been given to him as part of a programming job, I didn't expect much, but it

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **American Greetings CreateaCard Gold -** Micrografx - Create greeting cards, certificates, etc. - Win 3.1/95 CD
2. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more than 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action - Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
3. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Helicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
4. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
5. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations - Windows 3.1 & 95
6. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - comple world of flying (8-adult)

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!



Internet picture of the month

This photo is from the panoramic photographic collection at the WWW site http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/pnhtml/pnhome.html. It shows Plant Park on the Hillsborough River in Tampa, FL in 1914. It is cropped from a much larger photo which includes the just completed bridge across the river at Kennedy Blvd. It is well worth a visit to this site.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
Bylines (a gallery of fine writing - for a fee)	http://www.bylines.org/
Expedia (Microsoft Travel Site)	http://www.expedia.msn.com
Exposure - A Beginners Guide to Photography	http://www.88.com/exposure/index.htm
Facts about the USA - USIA	http://www.usia.gov/usa/usa.htm
Collection of images from the Sistine Chapel	http://www.christusrex.org/www1/sistine/0-Tour.html
Florida Department of State - Historical Resources	http://www.dos.state.fl.us/dhr/
Food Network's CyberKitchen	http://www.foodtv.com/
HomeSeekers (Real Estate Database)	http://www.homeseekers.com/main.htm
Internet World Online	http://www.iw.com/
Nando Times (newspaper chain)	http://www.nando.net
Northern Light Search Engine	http://www.nlsearch.com/
Panoramic Photographs at the Library of Congress	http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/pnhtml/pnhome.html
Pretty Good Privacy, Inc. Home Page	http://www.pgp.com/
Reader's Digest At Home	http://www.rdathome.com
The Inquisitive Cook	http://www.inquisitivecook.com/
Introduction to the Univ. of VA Special Collections	http://www.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/most/index.html

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Review

Microsoft Dictation & Voice

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

As I mentioned in my Comments article starting on page one, my WWW ramblings led me to a Microsoft speech recognition research site where you may download two programs which do quite good jobs at discrete speech recognition. First, go to http://www.research.microsoft.com/research/srg/srproject.htm and read the overview of speech recognition. Then go to http://www.research.microsoft.com/research/srg/install.htm#MSDict to download **Microsoft Dictation**. Click on the *link "Download Microsoft Dictation Research Demonstration",* and 11 MB later you have got it. To get **Microsoft Voice**, go further down the page and click on the *link "Download Microsoft Speech SDK 3.0 Suite (includes TTS and CNC engines)"*. It is only a little over 11 MB, although it claims to be 13 MB. When you install the SDK, Microsoft Voice will also be installed. I couldn't find a way of getting Microsoft Voice alone.

To run either of these programs, you will need Windows 95 or NT, a Pentium 90 or better, 16 MB of RAM for 95 or 24 MB for NT, 16 bit sound card or better, quality microphone, and speakers. The requirements for the new continuous speech recognition programs, **ViaVoice** from IBM and ***NaturallySpeaking*** from Dragon Systems have more stringent requirements. Note that these Microsoft programs recognize discrete speech (short pause between words), not continuous speech which is certainly better--if it works.

Both Larry Anders and I have had fairly good results using these two programs. A couple of other people who tried them at our suggestion have not fared as well. I think, however, their problems are hardware related. Both individuals had 8 bit sound cards, which doesn't meet the requirements. Additionally, a good microphone is essential.

Microsoft Dictation transforms the words you speak into text in your computer. You may either work with what is called the dictation pad or have Microsoft Dictation place the text directly into any Windows program that allows text input, e.g. your favorite word processor.

When you first start Microsoft Dictation, you will be asked if you wish to train for awhile. There are a number of different training sessions available, each lasting perhaps ten minutes. Of course, the more you train, the better the program will do. As yet, I have done only about four training sessions, and the program is working quite well. In addition to the training, the program learns your voice as you work from the corrections you make as you are dictating. If you make a mistake you can say "cross out" and the program will erase the last word. You then can repeat the word; if the program still gets the word wrong, you may select the correct word from the corrections window which is a list of alternate words to the one the program selected. For example, if the correct word is the third one listed, you would say "choose three". If the correct word is not listed in the correction window, then you can highlight the word with the mouse, the program will then pronounce the word, and you may type in the correct word. Supposedly the program then learns the correct spelling to go with that sound.

What I find hard to do when using this program is to keep talking and not pause so long between each word. The program will actually keep up with you about as fast as you can speak if you can get used to speaking fast with pauses between each word. In fact, sometimes I think it does better when you keep going without looking at what is happening on the screen and not worrying about making corrections as you go. This, of course, works well when you can use your hands to move a mouse to make the corrections later. Obviously this method of correction will not work so well if you can't do that and must rely on voice navigation of the document.

In addition to words, you may insert punctuation by saying the appropriate command. For example to get a semi-colon you just say the command "semi-colon". To get a period, you say "period", etc. A sampling of the list of built in commands, as well as glossary items, is shown below. Additionally, you may create your own glossary items by saying the text and then typing in what you want printed when you say that particular text. For example, you could say "my telephone" and have it type in 813-222-7777, if that was indeed your number.

By the way, the above three paragraphs beginning with "When you first start..." were done solely with Microsoft Dictation. It took 12 minutes. That time included making minor corrections and "think what to say time". I suppose a much better test of speed would be to read in something I had already written out. Then I wouldn't be pausing to think of my next sentence.

Here is a sampling of the built in commands:

- Cross-out - Deletes the last word.
- Capitalize-that - Capitalizes the previous word.
- Capitalize - Capitalizes the next word spoken.
- Go-back-one through Go-back-nine - Moves the cursor back several words.
- Hide-window - Hides the correction window.
- Today's-date - Types in the current date.

Here is a sampling of the built-in glossary entries:

- Bullet-text - Enters a new-line and then a bullet item.
- Indent-paragraph - Enters two new lines and then a tab to

(Speech.....Continued on page 7)

(Speech.....Continued from page 6)

indent the paragraph.

- Indent-text - Enters a tab to indent the text.
- New-paragraph - Enters two new lines.

Using your voice for dictation alone is not enough if you really want to get away from the keyboard. You need to be able to start programs, open and close windows, switch between running programs, open files, bring up WWW sites, and simply move the cursor around the screen. All of this is the function of Microsoft Voice. In theory—and in practice as I found out—with this program you can run your computer with only your voice.

Simply by speaking you can **start programs** [*start running <program name>*]; **move the cursor** on the screen [*move<direction>*]; **select text** [*select line*]; **delete text** [*delete selection*] or even programs (very scary—while in Windows Explorer with the Quicken directory selected you mistakenly say "delete Quicken"—Thank goodness for the recycle bin and the **Undo** command); **switch between running programs** [*switch to <program>*]; **cascade all windows** [*cascade all windows*]; **copy selection** [*copy selection*]; **go to any web site** that is in your Favorites Folder [*go to <name, e.g. Tampa PC Users Group>*]; **bring up any folder** [*bring up <name>*]; have the program **read to you any selected text** [*read selection*]; **tell you the time or date** [*tell me the time (date)*]; and finally **undo** the previous action [*undo*]. There are many more commands, which I will leave for you to find after you download and run the program.

Microsoft Dictation and Microsoft Voice obviously will work together; however, they can't be listening simultaneously. You can start Microsoft Dictation from Voice. However, when you do this Microsoft Voice goes into its "not listening mode", and I haven't as yet figured out how to wake up Microsoft Voice when I am finished with the dictation. I am sure there is a way. ◆



(Comments.....Continued from page 4)

turned out to be a pretty good card—at least as far as I could tell. I installed it, hooked up a long video cable to the back of the TV, and I was in the video capture business. For the details, see my ComputerEyesRT article on page 8. If you want to learn about the latest and best in digital cameras see Larry Anders' article on his new camera on page three.

Speech Recognition I am sure all of us are intrigued to some degree about the prospects of simply telling our computers what to do and having it done. No more typing—a convenience for most of us—a necessity for an unfortunate few. Well, if you were in the group several years back, you possibly saw the demonstration we had on speech recognition software. As I recall, that demonstration was not without problems, which were explained as due to a lack of training time. See, you have to train these programs. Since then I have been following developments in the computer press concerning such programs. Some time back IBM with the release of Warp 4 included a speech recognition component where you could use voice commands to tell the computer what to do. The only demonstration I saw of that was, again, far from impressive.

Since then much work apparently has been done, the computers have gotten faster, and several companies including IBM, Dragon Systems, and Kurzweil have come out with new products priced to move at $50 - $200 (the original products were close to $1,000 several years back). Additionally, some claim to recognize continuous speech as compared to discrete speech (a pause between words). I have read mostly positive reviews of these products, but I have also received first hand reports from people who returned them as not worth the money. Since I haven't personally tried them, I can't comment, except to note that there are a lot of variables in speech recognition. You need a good microphone, the correct type of sound card, and a fairly fast computer with a lot of memory. I have heard of cases with two different people with basically the same computer setup who got widely varying results. The operative phrase here is "basically the same". A poor quality microphone can short-circuit the whole process, for example.

In cruising around the Internet I came across a sort of hidden Microsoft site devoted to research. Some of the titles of papers available there reminded me of the titles of mathematics and physics papers you see in professional journals ("Some initial results on P-normed quadratic bipolar forms" sounds about typical). And this location led me to the Speech Recognition research location. There you can download demonstrations of what Microsoft has been testing in discrete (as opposed to continuous) speech recognition. The two programs I downloaded were Microsoft Dictation and Microsoft Voice. Except to get Microsoft Voice you have to download the entire Speech SDK. Each of these downloads is a little over

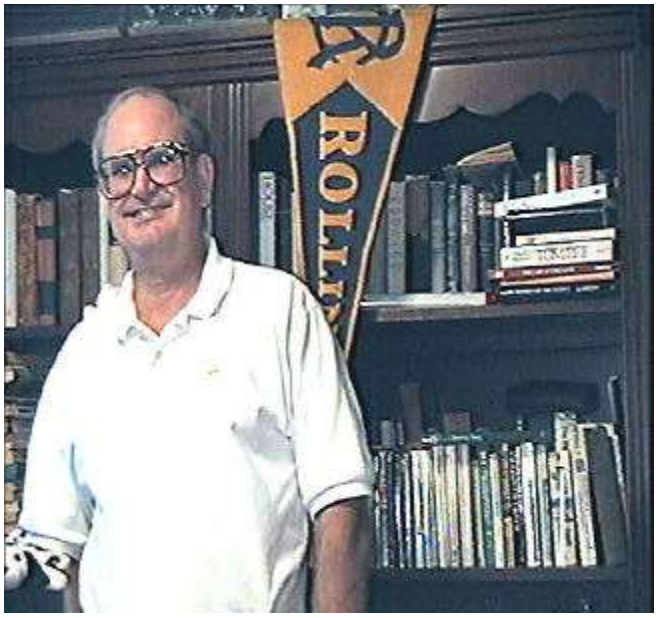
(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

Hardware Review

ComputerEyes/RT Video Capture

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

As I mentioned in my comments that begin on page one, we had an unused computer and video capture card around the house, so I installed the card in the computer, set it up in the room with our TV, and connected the TV and card with a standard video cable. The card is a ComputerEyes/RT card made by Digital Vision, Inc. I suppose the RT stands for real time. It is described as a conflict-free real-time color video frame grabber. The card can grab single frames in a resolution of 512 x 512 in 256 or 24 bit color, or it can capture six frames/sec at a resolution of 320 x 240. This card is probably two to three years old, but is still sold by the company at a list price of $319, along with four other video capture cards, some with more advanced features and some with less. You will pay more for finer resolution and more frames per second in the action capture. The Digital Visons web site is http://www.digvis.com.



Before using the card I went to the Web site and downloaded the latest interface software for Win 3.1/Win95. After installing it I noted that it was probably the same software that has been in use for some time. But I have no complaints since everything worked fine, with the only shortcoming being that you can't use long file names to save your captures since the program is really a Win 3.1 program.

Using the software and making the captures are quite simple. With the software running and the capture card connected to your TV, VCR, or camcorder, you see in a small preview window on your computer whatever is being displayed or produced by these video sources. The preview image was degraded somewhat in quality on my computer screen, but recall that I was doing this with an old 386 and a monitor not in the peak of condition. However, when you actually capture a frame, the results are quite good.

So how does this work? The capture card has enough memory and speed so that it can capture and store a new image 15 times each second. When you do a capture you get whatever image happens to be in that memory at the time of capture, but with 15 captures each second you should get exactly what you want.

The software is about as easy to use as it can get. When you run the program, you are presented with the preview window where you watch a copy of what is showing on your TV, for example. You can use the preview options to modify the color, brightness, contrast, etc. of this preview image. Again, the quality of the preview will depend on your video card (not the video capture card), the monitor, and the color pallet that Windows is using. (That is why it is suggested that you close other programs when doing a capture, since they may affect what color pallet is being used by Windows.) When you see something you would like to capture, you simply click on the capture button, and you have got it. You are then presented with a 512 x 512 captured image on your monitor, which is much larger and of much better quality than was the preview image. If you wish, instead of capturing single frames you can make your own video for Windows by using the capture mode where you capture six frames/sec. to make your own .AVI file. However, since I am basically a still photographer, I didn't use this option. Also, this option would probably work better on a faster computer than the old 386—even though it fit the specifications.

To show you how easy the video capture is, I include a capture of me done by my 12 year old daughter using a camcorder in our home. I apologize for the quality of the subject. Additionally, don't expect the quality of a camcorder capture to match the quality of the results from a good digital camera like Larry Anders describes in his article on page 3. And certainly don't expect it to match the quality of a scanned in photo.

Digital Vision, Inc., 270 Bridge Street, Dedham, MA 02026
(617) 329-5400
Fax (617) 329-6286
http://www.digvis.com ◆

Hardware Review

SuperDisk™ LS-120

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



In today's GUI (*graphical user interface*) computing world the one thing certain is that the files and programs keep getting larger. Fortunately, because of supply and demand, hard drive storage now comes in gigabytes instead of just kilobytes and is a lot less expensive then a couple of years ago. The one thing that hadn't kept up with the times was the floppy disk ….. until now. Now you can exchange your 1.44Mb floppy (or add to your PC) a floppy disk drive that can hold 83 times the amount of a standard 1.44Mb floppy and still use your old 1.44Mb or 720k floppies.

The current "in" tool for mass floppy storage is the **ZIP** drive, which holds 100 megabytes of data. The new **SuperDisk™ LS-120** made by **Imation**, a division of **3M**, as the name indicates holds 120 megabytes. Several manufacturers make the drive in either internal or external models and the new 120Mb floppy works in any of the drives. I purchased an internal version and the transfer rate is about five times faster than a normal floppy. I wasn't sure how it would work so I didn't replace my factory-installed 3.5" disk drive. I just added the new drive to my existing system. And because I don't have a space problem in my PC I'll probably just leave the original floppy installed.

The new SuperDisks look, feel and work just like conventional diskettes, unlike the ZIP diskettes, and, as I said before, the new drives are compatible with your old 3.5" diskettes. ***(NOTE: The new LS-120 floppies ARE NOT compatible with your standard 3.5" drive.)*** The SuperDisk diskette has a read/write latch just like a conventional diskette so it is write-protectable. You can easily protect your work from being overwritten. If you do mobile computing, you will be able to get the benefits of 120 megabytes of removable storage without having to carry an extra drive or giving up your ability to read your old disks. Shortly the new 120Mb drives will be available for notebooks, too.

For your information, the LS-120 technology (LS stands for laser servo) uses a unique manufacturing process to increase the data track density on a 3.5" diskette from 135 tracks per inch (tpi) to 2490 tpi. You can easily see why you can store so much more data on one floppy.

The new LS-120 external super drive requires no internal installation at all (it's as easy to hook up as a printer) and gives you the added benefit of portability between different computers, so you can use it at work and take it home to transport your files and projects without hauling around your entire computer. Most IBM-compatible PC computers can be upgraded with internal LS-120 drives. As I mentioned before there are now a variety of products on the market so you have choices about how to upgrade your machine. I had no problem installing the new internal drive myself but if you are not as confident you can get it installed at a retail store for a modest charge. Current street price for the drive unit ranges from $175 to $200, with as much as a $50 factory rebate available at some local stores. The price on the diskettes range from $15 to $20 depending on the quantity purchased.

It seems that our computer technology is changing at the speed of light (laser light). Finally, the old floppy disk has caught up! ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)

11MB and are, of course, free.

Microsoft Dictation is just what you would think it is. It turns your voice into text in any document that you want it in. The Microsoft Voice program allows you to control your computer with voice commands. Commands like "Start running Word for Windows", "Switch to Micrografx Picture Publisher", "Close window", "Read selected text", "Move up", Press OK". So, theoretically, someone, using these two programs could do pretty much anything on their computer they wanted with only their voice—and a lot of patience. See the article on page 6 about speech recognition for the details.

TPCUG Discussion Group You will recall that in my comments in last month's newsletter I was attempting to write a Visual Basic program that would update Web pages automatically so as to give our group a discussion group at our old Web site. But at press time I was having problems with using FTP to a secure site in Visual Basic. Well, that problem is solved. Microsoft caused the problem when they supplied a service pack that corrected some problems in the original release of Visual Basic 5. Unfortunately, the service pack also introduced the problem I was having with the FTP component of VB. The solution was to load in the old version of the FTP component. With this, everything worked as it should.

However, since we had moved our site there was no need for my kludge of a discussion group. The new location at *http://*

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles, take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Clipbook

by Emelie Jurado, Tampa PC Users Group

I got this informational jewel while reading Frank Ruiz's column in the Business & Finance section of the June 16, 1997 Tampa Tribune.

After you have placed something on your Clipboard, have you ever felt frustrated that you couldn't keep that text, graphic, etc. because the next copy you made to the Clipboard (of course, before turning off your computer) would automatically delete the previous entry?

Well here is some good news. In an obscure region in Windows 95, there lives another program called CLIPBOOK which enables you to save clippings from Clipboard in order to reuse them.

If you're still interested, follow these simple instructions: From the Windows 95 CD-ROM, click on Add/Remove Software. Go into the Windows Setup tab and click Have Disk. Click Browse and click your way to d:\Other\Clipboard. (Note that "d:" is the drive letter for the CD-ROM. If your CD-ROM drive uses another letter, use that one instead.)

Get to the file "clipbook.inf", click OK twice. Now check Clipbook viewer and Install. After Clipbook is installed, you can find the program under the Accessories folder in Windows 95.

Are you still having fun? You might even like to make a shortcut of the program icon using Windows Explorer and placing that shortcut on the Desktop so it will be easier for you to start the program.

There's more! Would you like the program to start up automatically when you turn on your computer? Then drag a copy of the shortcut into the Start Up icon. You'll find the Startup icon under Programs in Windows Explorer. Drag a copy of the shortcut over the StartUp icon and let go of the mouse button. Voila! It will be copied there automatically.

There are many reasons to keep copies of Clipboard clippings. You might want to keep a paragraph in order to repeat it in e-mail replies and it's handy to use Clipbook to cut and paste the paragraph instead of retyping it each time.

You might also like to save clippings from several sources, when visiting some sites on the Internet. The use of Clipbook is endless, not to mention also saving addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.....Enjoy!!! ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 9)

www.canx.com/tpcug/ was on a Unix server that supported Microsoft FrontPage extensions, so I had a discussion group available which FrontPage created for me with basically no effort on my part. The discussion group is up and running, and it is the second option on our home page. I encourage you to use it.

Now that I have dabbled in updating Web pages automatically and video capture, I am getting another idea: The TPCUG LIVE VIDEO CAM. Stay tuned. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
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Grolier	Traveling Software
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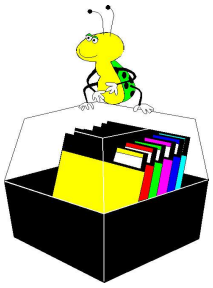
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9710.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

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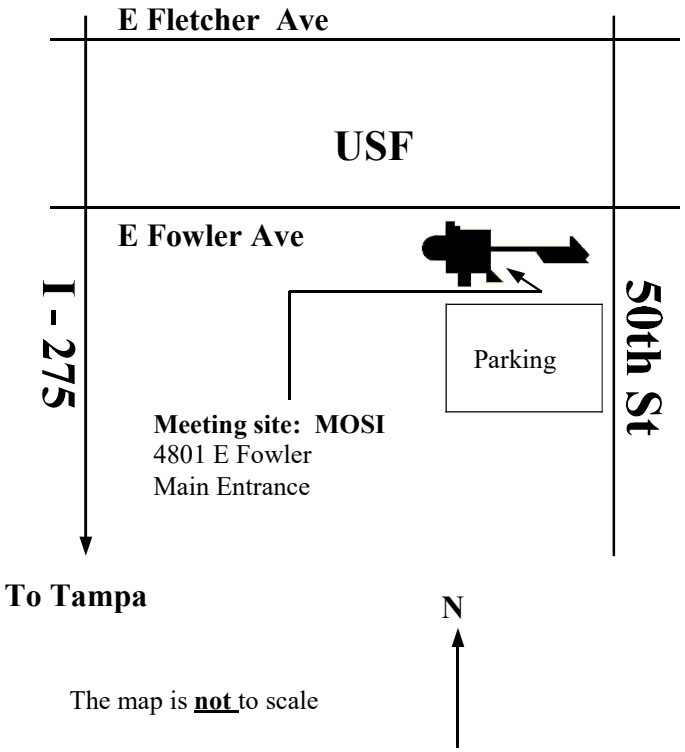
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
he cut out a picture Charles Howe from a capture of the room and put his head and upper body in the bottom of the boat!

Wil also captured a 10-second AVI (a movie) and also played sections from a VCR tape.

After the demo, there was a group discussion on software for sale at BCD at very good prices, Drive Copy, and Partition Magic.

Sorry, I've misplaced my notes on the door prizes. But I'm sure that Wil Goble won all of them. ◆





Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 11 November 1997

Meeting

MindSpring
an Internet Provider

November 12, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science
and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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AOL, NetCom, and WebCams

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

AOL and NetCom If American Online sneezes, the world knows about it the next day. Anytime the slightest thing goes wrong with their service, it is front-page news, and the lawyers begin preparing their class action suits. I don't know if anyone will sue because they were not able to traffic in email from AOL for several hours yesterday, but I do know that their two hour total outage and three to four hour email blackout made the news section of *The Tampa Tribune.*

But for those of us using other Internet providers, nobody cares. My provider NetCom (600,000 subscribers vs. AOL's 9,000,000 subscribers) has been giving me and three other NetCom subscribers whom I know here in Tampa pretty uneven service for the past seven to ten days. And I assume everyone else using the service in the area has been having problems. There was one day that connecting in a useful way was impossible. I say "in a useful way" because with persistence you could connect. My computer would tell me I was connected and at what speed. But I couldn't do anything. No WWW, no email, no FTP, and no newsgroups. How do I know I was really connected to the Internet if I couldn't do any of these things? Well, I could do a Ping or a Trace Route. For example, I could do a Trace Route on microsoft.com and would be told the numerical address of the site and shown how many steps and the time it took to reach microsoft.com.

For those who aren't familiar with this, if you are running under Win 95, while connected to the Internet, go to the DOS prompt, type tracert microsoft.com and press enter, and you will be presented with such information. To see the

(Comments.....Continued on page 8)

December 10: Jason Welz of Time Warner will discuss Cable Modems.
The new TPCUG Internet address is http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ .

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING October 10, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Robert Armstrong from BCD Computers gave a very entertaining and informative talk on the direction of personal computers. BCD also donated very generous items for the door prizes.

Starting a little late - we had more time for conversation and networking this meeting - Connie opened the meeting welcoming two visitors. Ed Buzza, a very long term member was attending also. It was very good to see Ed. The SIG announcements were next, with Ford talking about the genealogy SIG and Charles Howe about the Communications SIG.

Bruce Register - member at large - gave a summary of the nominations for office for next year's positions and encouraged all who have the time or inclination to serve to speak out and nominate themselves.

Robert Armstrong from BCD Computers was introduced. He covered a very wide range of topics on personal computers. I will not attempt to cover all, but just a few highlights are: They are offering a 10% discount on purchases for club members. You'll need your membership card. Don't forget. BCD now has a fully stocked download section on the internet, with an extensive drivers section. Also they have an on-line catalog ordering section on the internet. You place the order; it's faxed to a salesman at BCD for later pickup at the store.

He talked about processors next, covering the AMD 5x86-133, and the AMD K6 - "Fastest windows processor today" - Uncle Tom's Hardware Guide. Pentium II, how it's configured and the need for a special box including 32K cache. 168 DIMM 10ns memory, universal serial bus, DVD CDROM, Windows 98 and Intel TX chipsets were all covered - a lot of ground for an hour.

BCD is located across from University Mall; 1911 East Fowler Avenue in Tampa. (813) 631-0100 and in Clearwater 23486 US HWY 19 North. (813) 712-0515. They are also on the Internet at http://www.bcd.net. Thanks Robert!

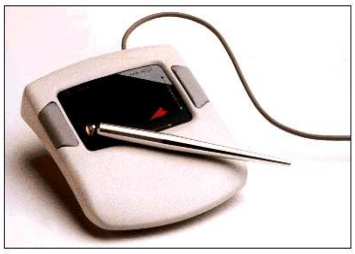
There was a real bounty on door prizes this month including two $50 gift certificates and much more from BCD. And on top of that, the club took in $50 in door prize ticket sales! The winners were:
Mary Sheridan $50 certificate; Roger Waters $50 certificate;

(Minutes.....Continued on page 12)

Hardware Review

POWER CAT Touchpad

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



I recently received some bad news from my neurologist. It seems the tingling that started in both my hands several years ago has grown into a classic case of severe "carpal tunnel syndrome." I am writing this now in hopes that some of you may wake up a little sooner than I did if you hear my story. I always thought it was a circulation problem and that it would go away someday. Well, it will, hopefully, after November 14th when I have orthoscopic surgery to open up the tunnels of crushed nerves in my wrists and one of my fingers. And no, it was not diagnosed as repetitive stress syndrome caused by my computer use. The computer use probably aggravates it but it was not the cause. The culprit is more than likely all the football and rough-house sports I played when I was younger. Just think about it; every time you fall on the ground what do you catch yourself with?…. your wrists.

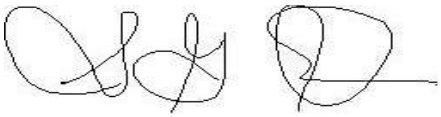
It all started with my hands going to sleep at various times like driving, mowing the yard, eating, writing, etc., etc., etc. Sound familiar? It's amazing how many people I have talked to who have experienced the exact same thing and have done the same thing about it … Nothing! Well, after a battery of sometimes painful tests at my neurologist's office he sent me to an orthopedic surgeon and according to her, I should have done something about it … much sooner! Because of my delay they cannot guarantee full recovery. The only reason I finally went to the doctor was because my hands began to hurt instead of just going to sleep. So, what I'm getting at is, if you are experiencing any of these symptoms ***GO TO THE DOCTOR, NOW!***

When I visited the surgeon, and she learned of my extreme computer use, she advised me to immediately begin using a *touchpad* because it would reduce the stress on the nerves in my right hand (much more than a mouse does), and the right hand is the worst of the two (and the one being operated on first.) She guaranteed that I would not be able to use the mouse for the first few days after surgery. It may take me a while to get to the doctor but I listen once I get there, especially if it's going to affect my computer use. So, I made my appointment for surgery, which will be a follow-up story I'm sure, and began my search for the perfect touchpad. I wouldn't go as far as declaring that I have found the perfect touchpad, but I found a good one. And, so as not to waste a good case of carpal tunnel syndrome, here's my review of ***Cirque's POWER CAT Touchpad.***

I immediately left the doctor's office and headed for the I-way (Internet) and began my search for a touchpad. Why did I decide on the Power Cat? Simple, the Cirque Power Cat was recently awarded *Windows Sources Magazine's* "Stellar Award" for November 1997, and I am an avid reader of *Windows Sources*.

The Power Cat is Cirque's top-of-the-line touchpad. They also make two other, smaller, less expensive touchpads, The *Easy Cat* and The *Smart Cat*, but neither have all the features that the Power Cat has, which are provided by the Cirque driver included and are:

- **Sign** Signature tool and software accept your signature as a graphic for placement into any compatible application. Just double-tap on an icon on the Windows system tray and your screen will display a window resembling the touchpad surface. Use the special "GlidePen" provided to sign your name in real-time and paste it into the document. (It's not quite as easy as it sounds – it took a little practice to duplicate my signature. But the printed quality of the signature was excellent. You can see it below.)



- **Surf** Internet navigation buttons ("back" and "forward") are operable in Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. Glide your finger along the upper edge of the touchpad to activate page back and forward surf. The surfing area is labeled on the touchpad surface. Each 1/8-inch movement will activate a page change.

- **Scroll** Horizontal and vertical scroll commands are operable in most Microsoft Office 97 applications and many non-97 applications such as Corel WordPerfect Suite 8 and Lotus Word Pro 97. Just glide your finger along the right and bottom edges of the touchpad to activate up/down or sideways scrolling. The Scroll areas are labeled on the touchpad surface.

(Power Cat.....Continued on page 10)

FACUG's Sarasota Meeting

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

On October 13, 1997, my wife and I attended the Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG) meeting in Sarasota.

Not long after registration we broke into groups for discussion. I picked the membership group. Here are some of the things I learned.

The women from the Women's PC Users Group told us they charge $2 per year for their SIGS. They charge visitors $1 to come to the regular meetings. For that $1 the visitor gets a red ticket, a copy of the newsletter and entrance to the meeting. The regular members are given a blue ticket. The tickets are for raffles at the end of the meeting. This group has about 250 members, and about 125 to 200 attend each meeting in Venice, depending on the time of the year.

Sarasota has about 1,060 members, and they sell their membership lists for $110.00; they sell four or five lists per year. Sarasota has two or three members sitting at tables each meeting, and as each member comes into the meeting he goes to one of these tables and gives his "number" on his bar code to the database entry person. They then draw their prizes at the end of the meeting with a randomly generated number from those numbers, ensuring that they will only call numbers of those who are there at the meeting. Their SIGS are held at a vocational school, and members pay $7.50 per year for the SIGs. Members donate time to the school.

The Hilton Head UG of S.C. does an interesting thing. They have the members present put their membership cards into a hat for the prize drawing. That is the way they get their cards back, to keep them safe until the next meeting!

Lakeland sets up a table at Computer City to hand out literature about their User Group, and they get many new members that way. They average 60 to 80 per meeting. They also send one of their members to Computer City to buy lots of those items that cost maybe ten or twenty dollars, but they get all their money back by giving them out as prizes (for which people have contributed for tickets) after the meeting!

Jacksonville has about 350 members and 100 to 175 at a meeting. The Pinellas group now has about 1,400 members and about 100 expirations and applications or renewals per month. Manatee County has about 600 members and about 300 at each meeting.

The Women's PCUG had received a $10,000 grant. Joan Dineen, who had applied for the grant happened to be sitting across the table from us at lunch. The grant is for new equipment for the Women's PC Users Group. My guess is that the first item they will buy is a new projector with the Texas Instruments mirror chip. It was two or three years ago that Roger F. Meissner of the Sun City Center group told us how they had applied for and received grants. They have had their $10,000 projector for years now.

In the afternoon, Rick Rogers of COMCAST demonstrated Cable Modems on the large screen. His talk was very interesting because he could bring up the Internet and show us how fast he could get some screens. Of course it can't bring up a server that is down. Cable Modem connections are available in and near Sarasota and the cost is $150 to install and $39.50 per month if you have COMCAST TV cable connections.

After that, we broke into groups, and I attended the Web group. Various people described their experiences making up and maintaining their sites.

Mr VanDerWeele introduced me to Joan Brown, President of the Pinellas Group. I believe he wanted me to repeat the story of Jim Leonard, a retired minister, who started the Pinellas User Group. Jim Leonard belonged to the USF and the Tampa Computer User Groups back around 1982. The Tampa IBM PC User Group met in the downtown Tampa public library when the group started. Jim was standing on the roof of the Library when he told me he was going to start a Computer User Group in Pinellas County where he lived. We were on the roof next to the Planetarium like area, which is where we were meeting at that time. I told Jim I was his FIRST MEMBER. Jim Leonard started the group and I have most of the copies of the newsletters since March, 1984. Apparently Jim wrote the newsletter himself for most of the first issues. The group met at the Fortune Federal Building on East Bay Drive, just a few doors west of U.S. 19, Jim says in the March newsletter.

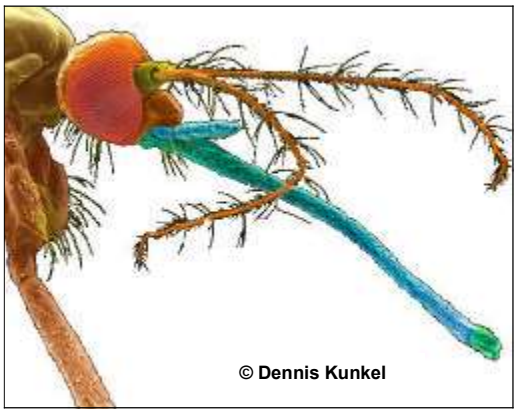
How did the FACUG get started? It was 1990, and Gary Schweinshaupt of Sarasota wrote to several of us and asked if we would like to go to Sarasota for a day and break into groups so that the Presidents and the Newsletter Editors etc. could talk about their problems. My guess is that the response was so high at that time because people wanted to know how other groups were getting good programs for their meetings. On July 28, 1990, 38 people showed up for the day. The meeting was so successful that further meetings were scheduled regularly. I have attended each meeting since that time. Also, Mike Ungerman of Orlando made a similar meeting each year in Orlando a real interesting affair. Due to Mike Ungerman, the meetings evolved into the FACUG. He did a tremendous amount of work to make the meetings interesting and to provide prizes from various vendors at each meeting. He also found ways to get the vendors to defray some of the costs. Slowly, the various groups around the State volunteered to take the fall meeting, but the spring meeting has been held in

(FACUG.....Continued on page 12)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **American Greetings CreateaCard Gold -** Micrografx - Create greeting cards, certificates, etc. - Win 3.1/95 CD
2. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more than 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action - Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
3. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Helicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
4. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
5. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations - Windows 3.1 & 95
6. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)



Female Mosquito

Internet picture of the month

This photo is from Dennis Kunkel's Microscopy WWW location. For many more views like this go to his site at http://www.pbrc.hawaii.edu/~kunkel/ . This copyrighted photo is reproduced with the permission of Dennis Kunkel.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
ABC News	http://www.abcnews.com/
AMERICA VR (virtual reality)	http://www.americavr.com/
DigiBooks (electronically published books for sale)	http://www.best.com/~lidial/digibooks/
InfoClips, Inc. (Video channels)	http://www.infoclips.com/hal.html
Kitchen Link (What's cooking on the Net)	http://www.kitchenlink.com/
L.A. LIVE (online music)	http://www.lalive.com/index2.html
LIVE-ONLINE (online music)	http://www.live-online.com/
Merriam-Webster Dictionary	http://www.m-w.com/
Museum of London	http://www.museum-london.org.uk/MOLsite/home.htm
National Center for Biotechnology Information	http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/
Switchboard (people & business directory)	http://www.switchboard.com/
Living the Civil War in Pennsylvania and Virginia	http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow/vshadow.html
The Wired Eye (WebCams)	http://www.tiac.net/users/wiredeye/wc2.html
WFLA-TV - Barnett Plaza WebCam	http://www.wfla.com/storm/webcam/barnett.htm
World Map of Live WWW Cameras	http://dove.mtx.net.au/~punky/World.html
Worth Online - Financial Intelligence	http://www.worth.com/

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Review

Clip Tracker

byLarry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



Anyone that has used Windows for a while, either 3.1 or 95, is familiar with the clipboard utility included. But, you also learned in a hurry that with the clipboard it's ***FIFO*** "first in – first out." It retains only what you copy until you copy the next clip. Last month Emelie Jurado told us about ClipBook, a utility that Microsoft hid on its Windows95 CD that will save your clippings as you go. But ClipBook is limited to cutting and pasting in an almost ASCII text format. I mean, if you copy text from a formatted document, when it is pasted into a new document all formatting is lost. Granted that's still a lot easier than typing the text all over again. Well, now you can have your cake and eat it, too, and a glass of milk (metamorphically speaking).

Silicon Prairie Software has developed a program, ***ClipTrakker,*** which, like ClipBook, automatically maintains a history of data that has been placed on your clipboard. But that's just about where it ends. *ClipTrakker* remembers as many items as you specify. Every time data is copied to the clipboard, *ClipTrakker* takes a snapshot of it and creates a thumbnail image, storing it on the 'Clipboard History' page. You do not have to save these snapshots, as they are saved as soon as they are created. With this thumbnail, you can easily find the data you need at a later time. You can create new pages at any time to organize snapshots for long-term safekeeping and easy access.

The main window of *ClipTrakker* is hidden so as not to obscure your work, but you can unhide the main window by a hotkey combination or by double-clicking on the *ClipTrakker* tray icon next to the clock.

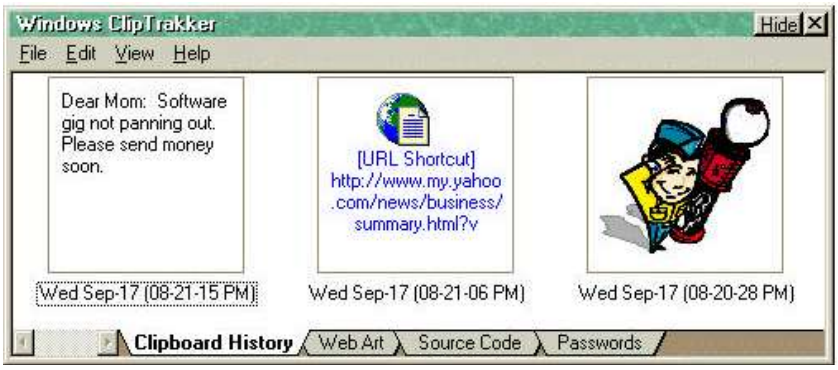


There are also other view and access options left up to the user.

As I mentioned earlier, with *ClipTrakker* installed, all items that you cut or copy are retained and stored as 'Clipboard Snapshots' on the 'Clipboard History' page. To make locating the data you copied yesterday or last week a lot easier, *ClipTrakker* generates a Thumbnail, which is a small bitmap image of what the original data looks like. And one of the neatest and most useful tools is the text editor. When you right-click on a text thumbnail, like the one in the largest graphic reproduced on this page, and choose Edit Text…up pops *ClipTrakker's* text editor for you to add, delete or change the text however you see fit. You can even combine text from different snapshots to make one clip to paste into your document. *ClipTrakker* also retains all special formatting such as, font size, color and style, etc.

You can use *ClipTrakker* to exchange data with other *ClipTrakker* users. For example; by copying a graphic file generated in an application on one computer to the clipboard, and sending the snapshot to another computer via e-mail or a company network, the recipient, who must also use *ClipTrakker*, can paste that graphic file into his document even though he does not have the required application. If the recipient user should install that graphics application at some later date he would then be able to manipulate (edit) the graphic file in its native form, since *ClipTrakker* snapshots preserve the native data structures, even on systems where the application is not available.

As also mentioned earlier, *ClipTrakker* snapshots are organized into *ClipTrakker* Pages. All original clips are deposited into the "Clipboard History" page. Additional pages can be created and deleted by the user and thumbnails can be dragged and dropped between pages to more easily organize your clips. This is a great way to file and collect art and backgrounds borrowed from the Internet. The files can then be exported to a permanent storage location.



I have been using another shareware program with similar abilities to Microsoft's ClipBook for years but *ClipTrakker* is a keeper. Isn't shareware grand! The cost is $25, and you can learn more about it at http://www.ClipTrakker.com/cliptrak.htm . ◆



Give your PC — and yourself — a Christmas Present

by Merle Nicholson, Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group

Here are just a few Christmas ideas and some new things that have caught my own attention recently. Some of these are on my own list to buy.



Sony Mavica digital camera. See Larry Anders' article about this in the last newsletter. What an outstanding idea: putting the files in JPEG format on floppy drives! Now, a serious photographer wouldn't use this because of the low resolution (compared to film), but if you're going to present pictures on a PC or even a TV set, 640x480 is just great. Remember, no film development costs, and you can set up electronic slide shows and albums; shoot a lot and discard what you don't need. Combined with a recordable CD unit for long term storage on CD, what more would you want? (http://www.sel.sony.com/SEL/consumer/mavica/wgreat.html)



Xerox "Document HomeCentre" This is a combination color inkjet printer and scanner. Kind of like those "all-in-one" home office units, except without the FAX, and much cheaper. It is a compact 600x600dpi printer with a detachable 24bit color scanner that sits on top. So it's a scanner, printer and copier in one. It includes OCR software too. Combined with your own modem and FAX software, you've got a complete FAX also. Office Depot is advertising this at $399, $100 off list. (http://www.xerox.com/products/dhc/index.htm)



Imation Portable LS120 disk This is the best competition to the zip drive I've seen. See Larry's other article last month. Office Depot has the parallel interface unit at $200 less a $70 rebate right now, making it slightly less than a Zip drive. Now, while I don't know which way the industry is going, LS120 or Zip drives, it's clear that 3-1/2 floppies are inadequate, and that there's a consumer interest in replacing them, and my own personal observation is that you'll find more internal LS120's than internal Zip drives, largely due to Compaq's offering it standard in some machines and optional in all others. I've seen many other ads for PC's offering one or the other as optional. I do need a portable drive, and I've been waiting, hoping that an LS120 would become available. Here it is. (http://www.imation.com/dsp/ls120/index.html)

Other stuff to improve your life at the PC:

New modem Real bargains can be had on 33.6 and 28.8 baud modems because everyone is pushing 56KB right now. Many services do not support 56KB because the standards have not been established. My own service, GTE is one of those. I don't think I will ever have a 56KB modem, because I'm (optimistically) waiting for cable modem from TimeWarner. If you're still plodding along at 14.4, you deserve a break.

Cable modem Blinding internet speed for only $40 a month! I can't wait. I've talked to one user who lives in Northdale who has this, and there just isn't any downside. Check out www.timewarnercable.com.

More memory Windows 95 needs 16MB to run well, and if you have less than that, there isn't a single upgrade that will do more for you than more memory. Go to 24 or 32MB if you can afford it; you won't be sorry. Prices are back down now to $60 for 16MB, $30 for 8MB. Check out the available SIMM slots in your computer before you haul it off to COMP-USA or BCB though.

Disk drives are at the lowest they've ever been, and there's no end in sight. You can get a 3.2Gig drive on sale for less than $200. If you have a 486, and an I/O card that you can replace, consider replacing it with a newer EIDE card. This will allow you to handle your large drive without a software patch like Disk Manager. Avoid disk managers if you can. Office Depot usually has EIDE cards for the lowest price. And while you're at it check out Wal-Mart for computer parts.

Monitors If you're still using that 14" monitor left over from your old 386, it's time to upgrade to a 15" or 17". You don't have to pay more than $350 (15") and $650 (17") for one, because that's the suggested retail for the Sony monitors, and there are plenty of cheaper ones. You can get Sampos for $249 and $429 at the low price end. The best way to select one is to first go to www.winmag.com and especially to www.pcmag.com and check out their shopping guides, then go to a store and look at them, compare to other brands and pick one that is best suited to you.

Processor upgrades One of the best-kept secrets in the 486 upgrade world is the AMD 5x86-133 processor. This little gem will make your 486 perform on a par with a Pentium 60. It is very compatible with almost all 486 systems when it is supplied with a voltage adapter. It's commonly sold as a "stack" consisting of a voltage adapter, cpu and cooling fan

(Christmas.....Continued on page 8)

(Christmas.....Continued from page 7)
for around $120. There are two things that will prevent you from using it; since it's a 3-unit stack it's tall, so if a drive unit or something is above it in the case, it may not be physically possible. And the motherboard must be set at 33mhz. It already is if you now have a 33 or 66 processor, but if you have a 25 or 50, the motherboard must be settable to 33. I've heard that AMD has discontinued the manufacture of this processor, but I know it's still available from existing stock and that the price is steadily rising.

If you have a "generic" standard 486, the prices on upgrades to pentium class just cannot be lower with the competition from AMD and Cyrix. They're both making very fast processors that fit in standard Pentium sockets and use MMX. The AMD K6 processor uses techniques from Pentium Pro processors that make its performance the very fastest available. Right now the K6-200 is very inexpensive, with the K6-233 almost $200 more due to shortages. Complete rebuild to a K6-200 runs $400 to $800 depending on if you need all new memory or hard drive.

And look at UPS!! Wow .. the prices on Uninterruptable Power Supplies are rock bottom! There's no excuse now. For $120 to $160 (get a 400 or 450VA if you can, but get a 280VA UPS at the minimum), you get superior surge protection, a $25,000 policy against damage, and battery backup to boot. The ones I've seen lately have two banks of outlets, one for battery backup and one for just surge protection. You don't need the monitor on battery backup (unless you have the capacity), but you do need surge protection. And don't forget the telephone line! People lose modems all the time from current coming in on the telephone line. One more thing to mention, the inexpensive surge protection strips. They just don't cut it. You'll spend $50 or more for a decent one.

There are many other things to mention: Color scanners have finally become affordable, Color printers are becoming confusing. (How many models does HP make anyway?). Epson, Cannon and Lexmark are in there trying to beat up HP in the inkjet wars and doing a good job of it. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)
route taken to our web site, type tracert canx.com. You can also Ping a site to test average response time. To check on Microsoft, at the DOS prompt type ping microsoft.com and press enter. The reason I have you do all of this from a DOS prompt instead of simply typing it in the Start|Run text box that Win 95 provides is that if you do this, you will see the same information, but it will disappear as soon as it is finished presenting. With the DOS approach the information stays on the screen.

Getting back to NetCom, different days would produce varying problems. Some days I would need to try back several times over a three hour period before I could connect. The time of day didn't seem to make a difference. At other times, I could connect and browse the WWW, but the email server was not available. Some times I could connect, but again no WWW, no email—nothing. However, on hanging up and reconnecting, everything worked fine. You get the idea.

Calls to NetCom's 800 number always produced a busy signal. The other three NetCom subscribers were having similar problems. But no mention in the press. AOL is down for two hours, and that is news, but NetCom on the blink for over a week (at least for four of us in Tampa) and no mention.

While all these problems were occurring, I received a press release form NetCom concerning their merger with ICG Communications. They assured me that I was a valued customer and that I would "continue to receive the same high quality Internet service that we've always provided, with no change in the way you access or use your current service." I do appreciate the service they have provided me for quite a long time at what is probably a money-losing rate for them of $19.95 each month. But if things don't improve I may be forced to sign on to some other provider and let them lose money on me at $19.95 a month. If you are a heavy Internet user, $19.95 does not cover the provider's cost of providing service to you. They hope to make up the loss from those subscribers who use their service very little.

After writing this, I receivied an answer to one of my email inquires to NetCom. They said that they were aware of a problem with the Tampa POP server and were working on it.

WebCams In last month's newsletter I described how I took an old, unused computer, put a video capture card in it and had some fun bringing TV images and video camcorder images into the computer. And that got me to thinking about these WebCams you see around the Internet.

You know the kind of site I am talking about. The ones offering an image of New York City, Hong Kong, or even Tampa that is updated periodically—as frequently as several times each minute at some sites. And city skylines are not the only subjects that are available. You can also view someone's office, their aquarium, even their refrigerator door (although this site turned out to be a hoax in that it was not really being updated—how would you know, since the door doesn't change). All of this originated with someone's idea several years back to focus a video camera on the coffee pot in some laboratory at Cambridge University in England, to capture the image at

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

(Comments.....Continued from page 8)
regular intervals, and to then make it available on the laboratory's computer network. That way the workers could just sit at their desks and easily check to see when a fresh pot had been made. Oh, the ingenuity of man.

I am really a fan of these WebCams and have included a page of them at our web site. There you are presented with 16 thumbnails of current images from around the world: four from Florida, four from the rest of the USA, and eight from the World. They basically follow the path of the sun (for all of us who believe the earth stands still and the sun moves around it). So, if the WebCams are working, when it is daylight at the Tampa camera, it should be dark at the Japanese one. This, as you may have noted, is not always the case. These cameras are apparently a low priority at many of their locations, and if they malfunction, you may see the same image for several days. If you click on one of the thumbnails, say, the Chicago one, you will be taken to an Internet site displaying a larger version of the image, and in this case, several more images from around downtown Chicago.

If you like what you see at our WebCam page, you can then check out the following listings of WebCams around the world (see other listings under the Internet category on the links page at our web site). **Live Cam Worldwide I** http://www.rt66.com/~ozone/cam.htm, **Live Cam Worldwide II** http://www.rt66.com/~ozone/cam2.htm, and **World Map of live WWW Cameras** http://dove.mtx.net.au/~punky/World.html . You will quickly see that there is a correlation between technological development of a country and the density of WebCams. Germany has a lot of them, but I have yet to find one for India. Pakistan has one, but it is unreliable.

Now, back to my old computer, its video capture card and my camcorder. What more do I need to set up my own web camera? I need an Internet site and some software to capture the image on a regular basis and transfer it to my Internet site. Those at last month's regular meeting saw my first, feeble attempt at such a setup.

Since our meeting would occur at night, I had a problem of a subject for the camera. I thought about the pet rabbit in a cage in the back yard. Although he would provide some action, it was too dark for that; the street out front was dark also with little traffic. I needed something that would change, so I gave up on the camera and let the TV provide the video input. The Visual Basic software I wrote captured an image from the TV once a minute and transferred it over a local network to another computer connected to the Internet. On this computer the image was converted from .BMP to .JPG and saved to a file name used by an image on an HTML page. At the meeting, I accessed this page on the Internet and projected it onto the screen. In this manner those at the meeting were able to "watch" the TV at my home. When I left the house, the TV was tuned to the local PBS station. Apparently that was changed, since what we saw at the meeting, as some of you noted, was not regular PBS fare.

As those in attendance will remember, the quality of the images was quite poor. The main reason for this was my capture of them in 8 bit color. The video projector at the meeting then amplified the problem. Since then I have refined the setup so that the image is now captured in 24 bit color; thus, the image quality is much improved. I also managed to capture it as .JPG, thus, avoiding a conversion so as to be usable on the Internet. (For those of you not familiar with creating WWW pages, you can only use .GIF or .JPG graphic files—no .BMP files allowed.)

So, what keeps me from having my own live WebCam if I have basically solved all the technical problems? It is that pesky Internet connection problem. You see, I don't really have a permanent Internet connection. When I did the demonstration at the meeting I was just using the temporary Internet address my computer has while it is connected to the Internet (it is running Microsoft's Personal Web Server software). As soon as I sign off (or my provider kicks me off) and I sign back on, I will have a different address—and no one would know where to find my WebCam. Additionally, I don't feel right about simply leaving my computer connected to the Internet for hours on end, since I am sure my provider didn't have that in mind when they gave me unlimited access for $19.95/month. And even if they didn't object—which I am sure they do—the connection would get broken due to technical problems at some point, and, when I reconnected, I would have a different Internet address.

There are two solutions to the above problem. First, I can pay a lot of money and get a permanent Internet connection at my home. If you have looked into this, you know how expensive this can be—hundreds of dollars each month. Second, since my Internet provider provides me with a small home page site that has a permanent address on their server, I could use that as follows: Put the captured image there on a page and write a program to automatically update it at regular intervals by uploading the updated image from my home computer to their server using FTP. In fact, I have done this. Unfortunately there is a problem. The image file is about 60KB; thus, 10 uploads of this file would equal 600KB, and my provider only allows 750KB worth of uploads each month after I get the free site up and running. To update the file only once each hour in a 30 day month would require 60 KB x 24 x 30 = 43,200KB of transfers. You have to pay a good bit of money to be allowed a transfer rate that would handle that. As they say, "You get what you pay for." So, right now I am not getting much. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles, take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(Power Cat.....Continued from page 3)

- **Zoom** Magnification feature is operable in most 97 applications. Glide your finger along the left edge of the touchpad to activate zoom in/out. The Zoom area is not labeled on the touchpad surface; feature requires compatible applications.

To click, all you have to do is lightly and quickly tap the surface of the pad once. To double-click, rapidly tap twice. There is a Right Tap Zone in the upper right corner that takes the place of right-clicking in Windows applications. To drag, draw or highlight, double-tap and hold your finger down on the second tap. If you reach the end of the pad while dragging, just lift and reposition your finger when you reach the textured edge of the pad. Sounds, custom speed, sensitivity, and orientation are just a few of the adjustable settings provided by the Cirque driver.

System Requirements

Power Cat works with any standard mouse driver, but to get the extra features mentioned above, you need to install the Cirque driver. Also, to use the touchpad you will need:

IBM PC-compatible desktop, laptop, notebook or subnotebook computer
Available serial or PS/2 port
One of these operating systems:
DOS 3.3 or above; Windows® 3.1 or above; Windows® 95; Windows NT®
To use the advanced software features such as surfing, signing and scrolling, you will need a Windows 95 operating system.

Physical Specifications

5.5 in. long x 4.4 in. wide x 1 in. deep
6-ft. serial cable (6 in. PS/2 adapter included)
Two mechanical buttons; one virtual button

No contact pressure required; sensitivity adjustable with driver

The Power Cat has a very comfortable feel. The touchpad is mounted on a case that slopes gently onto a foam wrist pad, creating a cushioned frame for your hand to rest on. Because of Cirque's GlidePoint technology, the touchpad senses your finger's movements without pressure or direct contact, allowing the touchpad to respond to your lightest of touches. I had tried other touchpads in the past but none came up to the standards of the Power Cat.

If there is a downside to touch pads in general it's that they require a bit of practice and patience. Once I got past that awkward stage, though, the Power Cat offered enough options and comfort, for me anyway, to put my mouse on the shelf. The computer super-stores list the Power Cat for $79. ◆



Merle Nicholson discovered this ad. The ad states that you can store up to 40 photos per disk. Merle wonders, "How many more do you think you could store if you inserted the disk correctly?"

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems
Broderbund
Corel Systems
Grolier
Intuit
Knowledge Adventure
Micrografx
Microsoft
PowerQuest
Regnis
Seventh Level
SoftKey International
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

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TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 lndividual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Check the address label for your renewal month

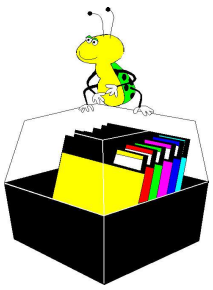
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9711.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

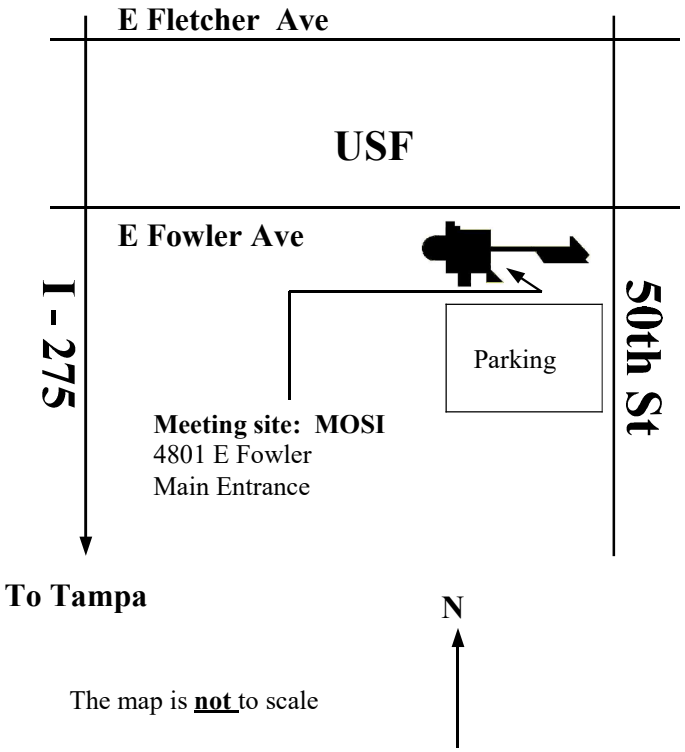


NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TAMPA, FL
PERMIT NO. 1917

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
Wil Gobel and Connie Kincaid both won clocks; Bruce Register a thermos jug; and William LaMartin, Merle Nicholson, Wil Gobel, Vince McCoy, Kevan Sheridan, Roger Waters, Gary Ennis, Connie Kincaid, Bruce Register and Ford Bond all won mugs. ◆

(FACUG.....Continued from page 4)
Orlando. I have kept a copy of most of the announcements and many of the other records of these meetings. The proposed by-laws for the FACUG are dated September 21, 1992. The first Board meeting I attended as a member of the Board was held on October 23, 1993. ◆





Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 12 December 1997

Meeting

Time Warner's Cable Modem Service

December 10, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Chat and Sharing an Internet Connection

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

The TPCUG Chat

The TPCUG Chat page as been up and running at our Web site for a little over a week as I write this. You access it by taking the second link on our home page at http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ . The first evening we used it I phoned around to make sure we had a few participants and they called others. Somewhere between 12 and 16 chatters showed up between 9:00 PM and 10 PM that evening and it was a mad house with messages flying back and forth so fast that it was practically impossible to keep track of what was going on. Additionally, individuals would open a private chat with you, and you then had to try to follow the main chat and simultaneously carry on a conversation in the private one.

In the following days, we would sometimes have two or three, sometimes none, and when I called around again, 12. So the success of the chat seems to depend on guaranteeing that you will have a group gathered at a fixed time. However, I must admit, that as a single individual, you can get a lot more information exchanged if you have fewer people whose messages you must try to follow. We have been saying that if anyone is interested in chatting they should show up at 9:00 PM or a little after to see if anyone else is on.

Perhaps as time passes, we will be able to organize chats at specific times, hosted by specific people and devoted to a narrow range of topics. But right now it is a free for all. Of course, there is nothing to keep any of you from organizing a chat. All you have to do is send email to the potential participants

(Comments.....Continued on page 4)

January 14: Joseph Roediger of Microstar Research will demonstrate Indigo Investment software. Visit the chat page & the discussion group page at our Internet site http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ .

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Home Page http://www.canx.com/tpcug/

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING November 12 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

After a normal start, the meeting this week went a bit awry when it was decided that our presenter wasn't going to appear. Some members stepped in with some last minute improvisations to save the day and concluded with the door prize drawing.

President Connie Kincaid opened the meeting with officer introductions and information on the club for the benefit of our seven visitors.

SIG leader summaries were next, led by Ford Bond explaining the Genealogy SIG, followed by Charles Howe, Communications SIG.

Bruce Register, as member at large, introduced the current nominations for the upcoming elections. Elections are being held at the December meeting. The current nominations are; Merle Nicholson, president; Mike Hodges, vice president; Kevan Sheridan, Secretary; Jenny Lind Olin, treasurer and Bruce Register, member at large. Connie again asked for other nominations or for anyone that may like to volunteer.

Don Patzsch discussed his current plans to hold Internet Web page HTML classes at 6:00 to 6:30 before the meetings. Eight or so people were interested after a request for hands.

It was about here that concern that Mindspring, an Internet provider, was not going to attend. (As it turns out, they were frantically trying to locate us. They were very apologetic about the missed opportunity.)

Mary Sheridan, our program coordinator, mentioned the current negotiations for a voice recognition company to come in with a presentation, possibly in April.

Ford Bond, MOSI coordinator, and Don Patzsch nicely filled the time with a good demonstration of Internet search services and tips on locating what you're looking for.

The evening concluded with the door prize drawing. Ed Buzza won a copy of Live Pix; Vince McCoy, Jump Start Preschool; Roger Waters an OS/2 Watch; Mary Sheridan, a drinking cup and Michaline Ostrawski, Managing Your Money. ◆

Software Review

American Greetings CreataCard PLUS 2

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

MICROGRAFX

As the holiday season fast approaches so does the greeting card season. If you're like me and have a pretty extensive card list, you have to get started early to make sure you get them all sent. For years now, I have created my own cards using various programs. Back in the beginning they were done in black and white on an old dot-matrix printer, then on a black and white laser printer, then a few years ago I began using the HP DeskJet printers. A few years back, when I got my scanner, I started adding family photos. This year I'm using my digital camera to add really fresh photos and maybe several different ones. Each year it becomes more difficult to outdo the year before. And with the cost of postage it becomes a costly venture before it's all over.

During the past year the Internet has doubled in popularity, and most of my friend have an email address. If I could just come up with a way to email my Christmas cards this season .. well… wouldn't you know it… along comes Micrografx with CreataCard Plus 2 and provides a way to do everything I want to do: create quality cards, add my own photos and email my cards to friends with email accounts to save on postage.

Some of the features are:

- Over 7,000 projects and designs
- Over 3,500 unique greeting cards, invitations & announcements with thousands of greeting card verse messages included, ranging from sentimental to short & sweet to humorous
- Create your own personalized gift tags, labels and business cards
- Envelope printing capability including designs to print on your envelopes
- Over 3,500 artistic designs & clip art
- Choose a specially designed Add-A-Photo™ card or add your favorite photo to any card or project.

Now it's easier than ever to directly import and edit your photos from a scanner or digital camera. You can even import your photos using one of many formats such as FlashPix (FPX), BMP, JPG, PCD (Kodak Photo CD), PCX, TGA or WMF.

Creative Workshop™ lets you add your own personal touches.



You can quickly and easily create personalized cards and projects for just about everyone – from adults to kids. With the easy-to-use drawing and editing tools included, they're as much fun to make as they are to receive!

- Choose from 3 great delivery methods
- Print your cards at home and send USPS
- Send your cards electronically via email
- Use Personal Delivery and have American Greetings print your cards for you and deliver them on time, every time
- 50 Greeting card fonts included
- The Forget-Me-Not™ Reminder system features an easy-to-read monthly calendar, an address book to enter names, birthdays and more, as well as a reminder system to help you keep track of personal and special event information for individuals and for the whole family. Each time the computer is turned on, a reminder about important occasions is displayed on a pop-up window. Also, use your address book to print envelopes and labels too.
- There are assorted themed variety packs that can also be purchased directly from Micrografx for under $15 per collection.
- Over 40 screen savers

Also new is ***American Greetings CreataCard Gold™ 2*** (Carlton Cards® Gold™ 2) which includes all the contents and functionality of CreataCard Plus 2, with the addition of:

- Over 1,000 greeting cards, a total of 4,500 cards
- 2,000 additional artistic designs and clip art, a total of 5,500
- 50 NEW fonts, a total of 100
- Additional screen savers, a total of 50
- An assortment of specialty paper samples is also included in the box

I've used many different programs to produce my greeting cards in the past but none have ever lived up to the standard and quality of these American Greeting Cards by Micrografx. CreateaCard Plus 2 lists for under $30 while CreateaCard Gold 2 lists at under $50. This software package needs to be added to your collection! ◆

Product Summary

HP DeskJet 1000C printer

by Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group



If you haven't entered the world of color printing there's never been a better time. If you have and want more options, there's never been a better time either. At current count, Hewlett Packard, the makers of the world's most widely used laser printers, has 20 models of color DeskJet printers available, but that's just today. By tomorrow there could be a couple more. It used to be that only one or two new printers were released each year, but not anymore. I'm on my third HP DeskJet (HPDJ) and the latest is a doozy. Strangely enough, I have paid the exact same amount every time but I keep getting more options with each new printer.

My first HPDJ was a 500 Series, which I purchased about 4 or 5 years ago, is still being used by my daughter and has never been serviced. My second, an 800 Series, is currently being used by my wife and has never been serviced either. There was some kind of paper feed problem when we first got the second one a couple of years ago, but I didn't realize it until HP sent a kit to fix the problem. Recently I purchased a new 1000 Series, and is it ever loaded with features! One thing about the HPDJ printers that eliminates the need for servicing is that when you change the ink cartridges you also change the print heads. All three of my HPDJ printers use two cartridges. One for black and one for color. The cartridges run from $25 to $30 each but they last and last.

With the HPDJ 1000C you can print any size document, from 4 x 6 inch postcards to 11 x 17 inch posters. It even accepts oversized 13 x 19 inch media for full-bleed design documents (no margins). Plus, it handles virtually every media type, from postcards, labels and transparencies to envelopes, banners and specialty papers, even poster board.

Hewlett Packard's RealLife Imaging System ColorSmart delivers super sharp blacks, excellent colors and photo-quality images automatically. And built into the new exclusive printer driver are software features such as HP ZoomSmart, billboard and booklet printing, letting you can create a full range of high-impact business documents with ease. The HP DeskJet 1000C is the flexible, business color printer that does it all at home, too.

Review of Features

- Prints media from 4 x 6 in. to 11 x 17 in. and just about anything in between
- Three easy-to-use media input paths, including a straight-through paper path from the rear for thicker media
- Create brochures, transparencies, oversize documents, banners and labels
- HP's exclusive software provides a range of special 11 x 17 in. printing features
- HP ZoomSmart scaling technology - easily reduce or enlarge your work at the touch of a button
- Billboard printing lets you tile all the way up to 4 x 4-foot posters
- Booklet printing - create professional-looking brochures with the automatic booklet printing function, plus mirrored printing, banner printing, manual duplexing and handouts
- Special CD-ROM and media kits let you create professional-looking documents
- Fast printing - up to 6 pages per minute black, 3.5 pages per minute color
- HP's Resolution Enhancement Technology (REt) for crisp black text at 600 dpi
- Photo-quality color at 600 dpi with Color Resolution Enhancement Technology (C-REt)
- True-to-life images with HP's RealLife Imaging System
- Custom engineered for printing in Microsoft ® Windows ® 3.1x and Windows ® 95
- MS-DOS ® printing through Microsoft Windows

Hewlett Packard says it's good for about 20,000 hours. I say it's better than that. It retails for slightly under $500 at any of your super stores. It's too big for a stocking stuffer but it would fit under the tree nicely, and no one would be disappointed with this gift from Santa. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

telling them when and where to meet. You could have someone meet you for a private chat where only you two would see the messages going back and forth.

Chat is real time. It is not like our Discussion Group. In the Discussion Group the message you post remains after you post it. With the chat, when the last participant signs off everything disappears. So a chat needs live bodies. That is why you need a scheduled time to meet.

Now for a little technical information. Most chat programs require you to have chat software on your computer. This chat requires only that you have a Java enabled browser. It consists of a Java program running on the server where our

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **1998 Grollier Multimedia Encyclopedia** - Windows 3.1/95 2 CD set
2. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more than 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action - Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
3. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Helicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
4. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
5. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
6. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
7. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space (8-adult)
8. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

Internet picture of the month



Spartan Capture

This photo is one frame taken from one of the Flight Day 6 Mission video clips at the NASA site http://www.nasa.gov/. The exact page for this clip is at http://shuttle.nasa.gov/sts-87/video/daily/ .

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
BBC News	http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/
Britannica Online	http://www.eb.com/
CDnow (online music store)	http://www.cdnow.com/
Dave Central (software archive - programming)	http://www.davecentral.com/
Merle Nicholson - Custom Computers	http://home1.gte.net/merlenic/
Project Bartleby Archive (digital library)	http://www.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/
Project Gutenberg (free literature)	http://www.promo.net/pg/
Qbik New Zealand Limited (Wingate maker)	http://nz.com/NZ/commerce/qbik/corporate/qbik.htm
Realtor.Com - National Association of Realtors	http://www.realtor.com/homepage.htm
Southwest Airlines Ticketless Travel	http://www.iflyswa.com/
St. Petersburg Times (Russian paper in English)	http://www.spb.su/times/
StarChefs (recipes, ingredients & utensils)	http://www.starchefs.com/
Tampa Bay OS-2 Users Group (TBOUG)	http://www.os2ss.com/connect/tboug/welcome.htm
THOMAS -- U.S. Congress on the Internet	http://thomas.loc.gov/
Thomas Register of American Manufacturers	http://www4.thomasregister.com/index.html

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Review

Encyclopedia Britannica 1997

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

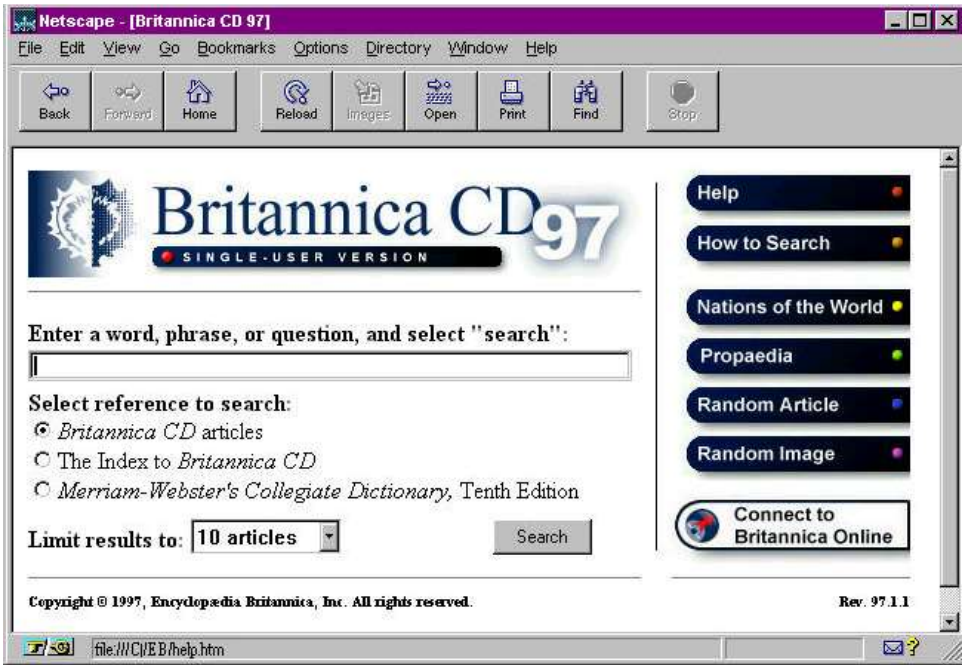
First, I should point out that there are two versions of this encyclopedia available, the version I am going to review and the other called *Encyclopedia Britannica 1998*. The 1997 version is a one CD, text-based program containing the entire text of the 32 volume print set. The Britannica '98 CD is a two CD multimedia edition of the same encyclopedia. So, roughly speaking, with the '97 edition you get all the text of the printed edition plus a limited number of maps and pictures, and with the '98 edition you get this plus all the multimedia bells and whistles of a program like Microsoft's Encarta (but with much more textual content than Encarta).

Second, a little background. Everyone is familiar with the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Quite possibly when you were growing up it was the encyclopedia your parents couldn't afford to buy, and you ended up with *World Book Encyclopedia* or another cheaper publication. Britannica was the standard by which all others were judged—and for scholarly articles and scope all the others fell short. But something happened on the way to the computer revolution: Britannica (and their owners the University of Chicago) got caught napping and sorely misjudged their market. They chose to stick with their paper product while the lesser publications like Grollier, Compton and the new kid on the block, Microsoft with *Encarta,* began selling their $49 -$99 CD based products. Never to worry, they thought, the real scholars and caring parents would continue rely on Britannica with its $1,000 plus product. They were very wrong—and they about went out of business.

Even after they committed to putting out a CD version, they were still out of touch. In 1996 they dropped door to door sales and announced a subscription fee of $150 per year for individual access to Britannica (where you accessed the encyclopedia online) with special site licenses to universities and other institutions for this service and—get this--charged $995 for the CD-ROM version. Also, somewhere along the line, a group of private investors bought the company in the hopes of reviving it.

Well, as an example of what competition will do, a year and a half later you can get the full textual content of Britannica in the '97 CD for $85 and with the additional multimedia additions in the '98 CD for $125. Oh, if you are interested, you can still get the printed version—without the door to door salesman (I think you had to ask them to come to your home; they didn't just show up unannounced like the other encyclopedia companies)—for a mere $1,500.

Now to *Encyclopedia Britannica CD 1997 Edition*. A CD based encyclopedia is simply a collection of articles with hyperlinks linking them and—most importantly—a powerful search feature. If you use the Internet, you will be right at home with the '97 version of Britannica. When you start the program, it first fires up Netscape Navigator (Version 2.0 comes on the CD, but you have the option of using any other version you may have on your computer). And your Britannica home page looks like the graphic on this page.



So, you Netscape Navigator devotees will be right at home. Unfortunately for us Microsoft Internet Explorer users, there seems no way to use that browser in place of the Netscape one. Believe me, I tried, but they have done some things in the Win 95 registry that I cannot get around. They appear to have defined a new protocol called EB—just like the familiar protocols HTTP, FTP, etc—that Internet Explorer doesn't understand. But, if Bill Gates' *Encarta*, with a little help from the other CD encyclopedias, had just about destroyed your product, you probably would fall into the Netscape camp, too.

What sets any version of Britannica apart from its competition is the quality and scope of its articles. Given that you have good content, the next thing you need is a good search feature.

(Britannica.....Continued on page 7)

(Britannica.....Continued from page 6)
The Britannica CD supports natural-language searching as well as Boolean searching. Natural-language searching allows you to enter a question exactly as it comes to mind (e.g., "what is the riddle of the sphinx?"). Boolean searching uses uppercase operators such as AND, OR, NOT, and ADJ to link search terms together (e.g., "relativity AND Einstein").

As to the content of the CD as compared with the print edition, here is a quote from the Britannica CD FAQ:

"The article database of Britannica CD is created from the same knowledge base as the New Encyclopædia Britannica, 15th edition, but differs from the print set in a few significant ways. Title cross-references (such as "Clemens, Samuel Langhorne: see Twain, Mark."), which are useful to the print reader, are unnecessary in an electronic product that is accessed through full-text searching, so they have been eliminated. Because there are different space restrictions for a CD than for a print book, many articles in Britannica CD are longer and more detailed than their print counterparts.

Related entries gathered together under broad titles in the print Macropædia for ease in consultation (such as the print article Beverage Production) have been restructured into smaller articles (such as Beer, Wine, Coffee, Tea, Soft Drinks, and Distilled Spirits) for easier retrievability in Britannica CD. And, of course, Britannica CD contains more than 2,000 new articles not included in print."

So it looks like everything and more is there. Just don't expect any multimedia glitz. No AVI files of frogs being dissected here. For that you will have to buy the Britannica '98 multimedia CD version or one of the competitors.

Additionally, you have *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* at your fingertips. And, for a trial period, you can investigate the additional information in Britannica Online.

For anyone who understands a browser, the program's navigation is trivial, and, as expected, the textual content is superior to that of the competition. This is a college student and adult encyclopedia. However, there is one potential problem with the installation. When you are given the choice of selecting a folder in which to install the program on your hard drive, it is best to choose the default of, I think, C:\EB. For, if you, like many of us Windows 95 users, choose to put it in something like C:\Program Files\EB, you are going to have problems. The program will run, but you will not be able to do a search. The reason for this is that many non-Windows 95 programs have a problem with paths containing spaces like the one above. Thus the program can't find its files. It took me awhile to figure this one out.

I got an offer through the mail from Britannica for Britannica '97 for $99 and Britannica '98 for $150. By the time I got around to phoning them in October, the Britannica '97 was $85 and the Britannica '98 was $125. I feel, though, that they are phasing out the text based '97 version, since when I went to their WWW site at http://www.eb.com/ I only saw mention of the Britannica '98 multimedia version. However, I just checked, and ithe 1997 version is still for sale. So if you would like to get the 1997 version for $85 you may call 1-800-747-8503. Just think, in 1995 they were charging $995 for the 1995 version of this CD.

This is a Windows 3.1 program and will run on a minimal setup, whereas the 1998 multimedia version prefers a Pentium. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 4)
Web site is located and a Java applet that is download to your computer each time you go to the chat page. The applet does all the work on your end. As a point of information, the Java games we have at our Web site (Rubik's Cube, Tic Tac Toe, etc.) are Java applets.

Sharing an Internet Connection

Ever since I networked two of the computers in my home I have been thinking about the possibility of giving one Internet access through the other one. Well, I have finally accomplished that at no cost to me.

First, some networking background. Several months back in this newsletter Merle Nicholson described how to create a peer to peer Windows 95 network with two computers. In a nutshell, you put a network card in each computer running Windows 95, connect them with 10 Base T network cable with a crossover cable joining one end of the network cable to one of the computers so as to "turn what is a send signal on one computer into a receive on the other". Windows networking and the setup details that Merle supplied did the rest. I added an additional twist to my setup. Instead of using a crossover cable, I add a network hub to the system with each computer connected to the hub instead of to each other. With the hub I can add additional computers to the network, as I just did when my son brought his laptop home with him from college. Later, perhaps, I can add my daughter's computer to the network, but network cable is expensive and her computer would require a long run of cable to the upstairs.

My son's short visit prompted me to think again about con-

(Comments.....Continued on page 8)

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)
necting other computers to the Internet through the modem in my main computer. His laptop had a network card for use at the university but no modem, so he couldn't connect to check on his email or browse the Web using his computer from our house. We talked about the problem for awhile. I said that I recalled some Usenet newsgroup message I had read once that dealt with the problem, but I couldn't recall or find the details. He had the idea of using Virtual Private Networking (VPN). VPN is a new feature added to Windows 95 if you download the latest version of Microsoft Dial-Up Networking. i believe that this would have worked if my main computer were running Windows NT, but it operates under 95 which will let a 95 computer only be a VPN client—not a VPN server.

So, another solution was called for. Now, what do I do when I need an answer to a computer question? I go to the DejaNews link in the Internet Search category of the Links page at our Web site. DejaNews searches the Usenet newsgroups for the keywords you enter. I forget what words I entered, but they were something like, "two computers one modem Internet". That produced a list of relevant (and not so relevant) articles. Several of them mentioned a program called WinGate but didn't tell me where to get it.

My next step was to go to the ZDNet Software link under the Computer Software category at our Links page. Once at ZDNet, I entered WinGate in the search, and bingo! I had it. The description was as follows:

> *WinGate is a multiple proxy server for LANs enabling connection to the Internet through a single controlled server. Instead of needing to set many computers up to access the Internet, WinGate can be set up on a single machine and provide a medium for any networked PC not connected directly to the internet to access information including FTP, Telnet and the WEB . Cost effectiveness is evident since only one account to an on-line service is necessary to enable several users at a location to use the connection.*

It was just what I needed, and is free for use with two computers (with the one connected to the Internet acting as a proxy server for the other). Money, however, is required for the key that will allow you to connect more than two. Following a 1.3 MB download, an installation of WinGate on the computer connected to the Internet, an assignment of local IP address for all the computers on the network, and the configuring of the browsers on the computers not connected to the Internet so that they access the Internet and mail servers through the proxy server instead of directly, we were up and running. By the way, you assign the local IP address as follows: 192,168.0.1 is assigned to the proxy server, 192.168.0.2 to the next, 192,168.0.3 to the third and so on. In theory, it appears that you could connect 255 computers this way going up to 192.168.0.255. Of course, you would need one heck of an Internet connection and computer serving as your proxy server if you were to do this.

In our simple case we had three computers connected. Wait a minute, you say. I thought you said you had to pay if you connected more than two computers? That is almost correct, we can connect three computers this way—two computers connected to the proxy serving computer—we just can't access the Internet using more than one of the extra ones at a time. If you try to access Web pages from both of the auxiliary computers at the same time you get a message that there are too many computers connected.

This was just what I needed. While my son was checking his email (using his university mail server and not the one for my account) or downloading a file from the Internet on his laptop, I could be reading the Wall Street Journal online or taking part in the TPCUG Chat I spoke of earlier.

And that brings up the only shortcoming of the program I have found so far. You can not use the TPCUG chat feature from one of the networked computers. I am not sure why. It is not a Java problem, since you can play the Java games at our Internet site with the networked computers. It must have something to do with the way the downloaded chat applet communicates with the Java program running the chat at the TPCUG site. I also suspect, but have not verified, that programs like Microsoft NetMeeting would not work from one of the auxiliary computers. But what does work is great. From the second computer in another part of the house I can now share the Internet connection of the computer I am writing this on for email, Web browsing and FTP.

Of course, the more computers you add and try to access the Internet simultaneously with, the slower things will go. The problem here is not really with the computer that is acting as the proxy server if it has any sort of up to date speed and memory. The problem will be your bandwidth—that is, the speed of your Internet connection. In what we were doing, I noticed no problem in working with my 28,800 connection. However, just think what you could do with that cable modem connection we are all supposed to have in the future. You could have a computer in every room of the house accessing the Internet simultaneously over just one Internet account. Why you would want to do that, I don't know, but you could.

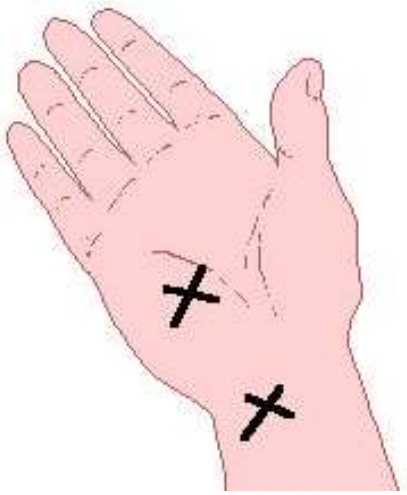
One thing you don't get with all this is more than one email account. You can do email from all the separate computers, but, unless you already have different accounts they are still working under the same account as the proxy server. I am at this time a little vague on this point.

If you would like to download a free one user (two computer)

(Comments.....Continued on page 12)

Surgery Review (Carpal Tunnel Syndrome)

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



Anyone that read my review of Cirque's Power Cat touch pad in last month's newsletter is aware that I had surgery scheduled on my right hand. Because so many people whom I have spoken with about my Carpal Tunnel Syndrome have the same symptoms I have, I thought I might share my experiences, without going through all the gory details. My hope is that they and you, if you have similar symptoms, will get it taken care of a lot sooner than I did.

It all started several years ago when my hands started getting numb doing various tasks such as mowing the yard, driving the car, eating, writing, typing…. I think you get the picture. Both hands started at the same time, which in some way made it more acceptable for me to deal with, so I let it go on for years. It finally became a problem sleeping through the night when my hands began going to sleep all the way up to my elbows. I finally had had enough, so I went to a neurologist who diagnosed me with "*classic carpal tunnel syndrome*." He explained that this is caused when the tunnel in the wrist that wraps the nerves together as they travel from the arm to the hand becomes injured and swells causing the nerves to be pinched, thereby causing the numbness. The neurologist recommended I try the wrist braces for a couple of months but also said they probably would not help because I had waited so long. He was correct. You see, the cure for this, if any, is early detection and complete rest of the stress points in the wrists to allow the swelling to go down. I don't think waiting five years constitutes early detection.

Well, the neurologist recommended an orthopedic surgeon and she recommended the surgery. The only choice was which hand first? We settled on the dominant hand first and I see now why that was probably the best case scenario. After getting through the right hand recovery the left hand should be a snap. For example, just for kicks, try going just 24 hours WITHOUT using your dominant hand for *anything*! Now multiply that by a couple of weeks. There are a couple of personal hygiene maneuvers that are real chores. My wife, Debbie, is a sweet, helpful person who was by my side the whole way. But there are just some things I won't ask her to do. (Enough on that - after all I did say I wouldn't get into the gory stuff.)

The surgery is outpatient surgery and the actual surgery takes about an hour. I walked into the hospital at 12:30 PM and "walked" out at 4:45 PM. No wheel chair required. The rest of the time was pre-op and just waiting to leave.

I was given a choice of two types of anesthesia; either being put under totally or a nerve block in the armpit with twilight sleep during surgery. I went with the nerve block because there was no danger from the anesthetic and no real recovery time and my surgeon also recommended it. There was never really any pain other than a feeling like hitting your "funny-bone" during the nerve block. (I never really understood where that terminology came from. If anything, it isn't funny.) I actually never felt a thing until the next morning when there was some discomfort. As mentioned earlier, the hardest thing was NOT using my hand for the ten days. My hand was placed into a soft cast and left that way for the ten days. When the stitches and cast were removed on the 11th day I found that I had two small incisions approximately where the "X's" are on the graphic above. (I actually had two other incisions but that was because I also had my ring finger and thumb operated on for what is called "trigger-finger", which is carpal tunnel damage on a smaller scale at the joints.) I was then told that everything looked fine, was given some hand exercises to do to avoid physical therapy, and told to come back in thirty days. That's it!

Had it not been for the extra two fingers that were also operated on I would consider myself, now on day fourteen after the surgery, at least 75% recovered and my right hand HAS NOT gone to sleep since the surgery. I am actually looking forward to the surgery on my left hand in a couple of months. It has been overworked the last few days and has been in a lot of pain. Always before I had the other hand to swap off with when the numbness began. I failed to mention above that, with a good case of carpal tunnel syndrome, when the numbness leaves the pain begins. One down, one-to-go.

If you're like so many of the people I have spoken with that have similar symptoms, please have it looked into as soon as possible. It WON'T go away unless you do something about it and the sooner the better. I'll give you my hand on that.

By the way, the Cirque Power Cat touch pad is one fine piece of hardware. It would make an excellent stocking stuffer. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles, take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Software Review

Drive Image

by Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

If you own a computer, and you plan to really use it, you need two utility programs. One is Partition Magic, and the other is Drive Image. With these two programs, you may change your partitions at any time without being concerned about losing data, and you may do fantastic copying from one hard disk to another, or to the same hard disk, or to floppies. This means easy backups with this program. You can produce compressed backups, or exact image backups easily. I do not use tape backups because these programs provide much faster results, and instant replay.

The program Drive Image is one of the most interesting that I know of.

When I decided to test out my copy, I used Partition Magic to make a new logical drive G: from my H: drive and a new logical drive I: from my F: drive. I then filled the G: drive with several programs, and then used the Drive Image program to copy all that to the I: drive.

It takes only a few seconds, and you have copied bit by bit, the G: drive to the I: drive. An exact copy. This means you can copy an operating system and all the various files that make up the system, plus all the data and programs you may have on that disk. These copies are exact, so if you have two computers, you may have exactly the same hard disk programs on each of them.

You could do the same and copy only a partition, copying it to a partition on another disk, or for that matter, to another partition on the same disk. Drive Image is a very flexible program, fun to use because it is user friendly, and fast. Drive Image works with FAT, FAT32, NTFS, and HPFS. If you want to buy a new larger hard disk, Drive Image will transfer from your old hard disk, without losing a single byte. Drive Image copies only used sectors! Drive Image will copy to a floppy drive, a second hard drive, a network drive, and a removable storage drive, such as a ZIP drive, JAZZ drive, or CD ROM. So, if you buy a new computer, get a removable drive, and your backup problems are then fast and simply accomplished.

Drive Mapper is a utility that comes with the program. It allows you to change drive letters on occasion. Magic Mover is another utility that comes with the program. It allows you to move applications from one partition to another. The PowerQuest Company has always answered questions that I send by email in a day or two. They really give you answers you can understand and use.

The manual requires a bit of study, but it contains a wealth of hard disk information.

Note: We no longer need Drive Copy by PowerQuest. It was intended to copy an entire hard disk to another hard disk, the same size or larger. It did not permit copying of partitions. Partition Magic version 3.0 could be used for copying partitions, but Drive Image is a newer program and is preferred for all copying—partitions and entire disks.

I think you can see that I recommend Drive Image and Partition Magic highly. Street price of Drive Magic is about $45. Your PowerQuest presenter will usually give User Groups a nice discount on all PowerQuest programs.

PowerQuest Corporation
1083 North State Street
Orem, Utah 84057
1-800-437-8900
http://www.powerquest.com ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
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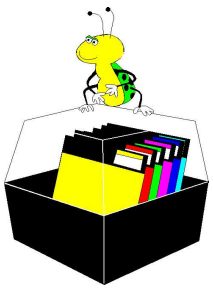
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area of expertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9712.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

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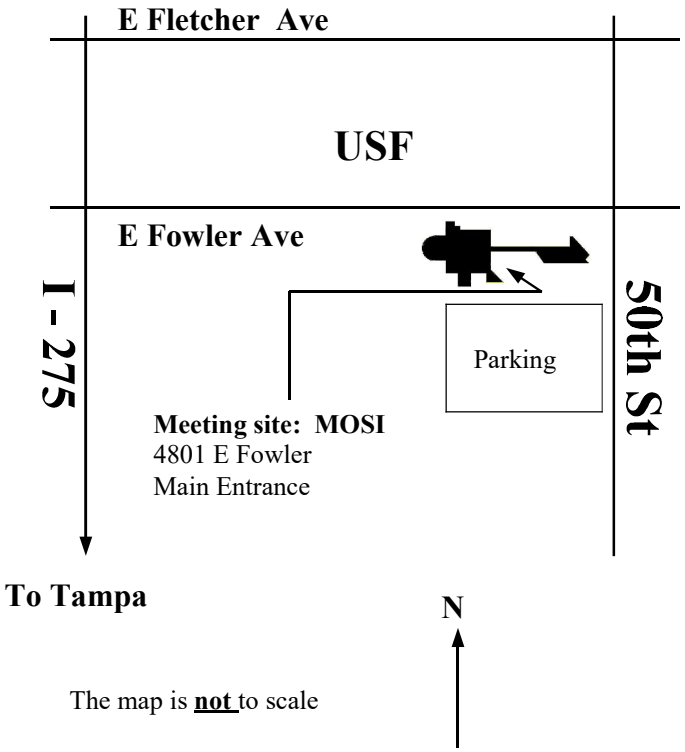
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments.....Continued from page 8)
copy of WinGate or see pricing for multiple users, go to the Internet site http://wingate.net/download.htm . The site for the parent company, Qbik New Zealand Limited, is http://nz.com/NZ/commerce/qbik/corporate/qbik.htm . ◆

NOTICE

If you have an interest in learning how to write a simple home page and how to upload it to a server, come to the meeting room at 6:00 PM. December 10. Don Patzsch will talk about TAGS, and the handout will show you how to write a simple home page, and you will be given a copy of actual HTML code you can change to put in your own name, etc.

This is the time between 6:00 and 6:30 that the early arrivals use to network before the actual meeting starts.





Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 3 March 1997

Meeting

March 12, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave
Main Entrance

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An Abundance of help

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Things must be changing at the TPCUG. When I requested that members—those whom I was able to contact via email—provide some articles for this month's newsletter, since I, as is not unusual, was looking at a lot of blank pages, I got more than I bargained for. Usually such a request would produce perhaps one short article. This request produced more than the newsletter can hold. So next month I will not have to start from zero. Thanks very much to all who volunteered material. In addition to the reviews you will see in this newsletter, both delivered and promised articles also came from Tim Condon, Tom Cone, Don Patzsch, Charles Howe, and Bruce Register. As I said in my request, "It is a group newsletter, so we need a group effort."

The move to MOSI is a chance to revitalize our group. I know this sounds trite, but from my experience the more you put into the group, the more you will get out of it. It can be as little as showing up for the networking session we have at the beginning of each meeting. There you can share computer problems and solutions with other members and visitors.

So what is new? Well, I have a new niece in Maryland, and my brother-in-law had delivered photos to my computer within six hours using one hour photo processing, his color scanner, and the Internet. I suppose that if he had had a digital camera and laptop in the hospital room we could have gotten them almost immediately.

Finally, check out the Street Cam photo on page 5 to see what else the Internet delivered to my computer in February. ◆

Since the bulk mail section of the Post Office misplaced one tray of newsletters, those with zip code prefix 336 received the February newsletter about 10 days late. We are sorry for the inconvenience.

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BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

Home Page http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if ithey are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING February 12, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary

Most members appeared at the usual 6:00PM time, gathered in the large lobby, and then moved to the outside tables until the room was available at 6:30. Ford Bond unlocked an outside "side" door and escorted us to a lab room with about 16 PC's. We brought more chairs in to get the crowd into the room. Ford assured us that there were other, larger rooms available that we could use if needed.

The following SIG information was presented:

Communications The next meeting's topics are going to be Internet Relay Chat, FTP and Newsgroups, UNIX Shell accounts.

Genealogy Jenny announced the next meeting was going to be at Charles Doll's house in conjunction with a local genealogy club. Jenny briefly described the purpose of the group for the newcomers' information. Some discussion followed describing the classes offered at MOSI.

MS Access Connie announced that due to conflicts in schedule she will no longer be able to head up the Access SIG. Connie apologized for the short notice and announced the job was open and needs to be filled for the SIG to continue.

At 7:00 Connie welcomed the new members and described the dues. There were 11 guests in attendance. Ford Bond described the basic rules of the house and the museum and lab facilities.

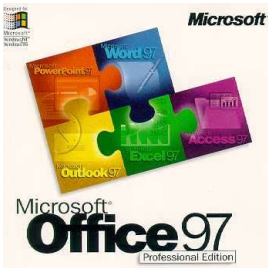
For the monthly presentation, Vice President Mike Hodges brought an abbreviated version of an earlier presentation he did for the Young Astronauts. He began with a description of the technology. Mike brought the presentation on a CD-ROM made at his workplace. It covered a wide variety of subjects; for instance, graphics captures about the workings of inner ears were made from an Internet site and drew from Mike's own knowledge of the effects of motion on astronauts. It concluded with a series of stunning photos taken from space and also artists renditions of the future space station.

After a break, the door prize drawings were made. Ed Bryan won a computer dictionary, and Ken Boyd won the Quicken Financial Planner.

Thanks for a good meeting, Connie .. and especially to Mike for an outstanding presentation. ◆

SOFTWARE SUMMARY

Microsoft Office 97 Professional



by Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group

I'm not calling this a review, although in some ways it is. It's actually more like a summary. I'm also not going to waste my time or yours by trying to compare this to some other integrated package. I'll say it up front and get it over with. This has got to be one of the **BEST** software packages ever written. Although I purchased it as an upgrade to my Office 95 Professional Suite, it is definitely more than the standard upgrade that comes out every year just so the software manufacturer can get a few more bucks out of you. This time Microsoft listened. If you have been looking for a reason to step up to Windows 95, **you have one now!**

What's new?
There is a much tighter integration between all Office applications that creates a more organized and unified workspace:

- Microsoft Outlook - Provides an integrated desktop where you can organize and manage your e-mail, calendar, contacts, tasks, and files (All in one place)
- AutoJournal - Logs Outlook communications and Microsoft Office application activities
- Address book integration - Stores your address book contacts in one location for easy access from any Office application (You'll know where that address or phone number is when you need it)
- Multiple views - Allows you to view information in any Outlook folder by icon, table, card, timeline, or calendar, or to customize your own view
- Complete portable solution - Takes your Outlook information with you by way of paper planner, laptop computer, personal data assistant, or Timex® DataLink watch
- Office Binder - Stores all your files for a project in one place-you can even add common headers and footers so they look and print like one document

You can now get connected with Internet-ready software that enhances and flows through the entire package:

- Adding Hyperlinks - Creates live links to a file or site automatically when you type the URL or UNC address (Instead of just giving someone an address, with this you show them how to get there)
- ActiveWeb - Allows you to author and view documents in their native format on your corporate intranet or the Internet
- Full-text searching - Enables you to find information on your network quickly and easily
- Web toolbar - Brings the navigational and searching tools of the Web to your Office applications
- Save as HTML in Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, and PowerPoint® - Saves your Office documents into HTML format with the click of a button for posting to the Internet or corporate intranets (You have no idea how useful this is. Web page creation just got a lot easier)
- Web templates in Word - Provides custom templates to design great looking Web pages (Like I said, web page creation just got a lot easier)
- Document Versioning in Word - Tracks and stores all previous versions of your document in one file (Never wish again that you would have kept that original)
- Web Queries in Microsoft Excel - Pull real-time information from Web sites directly into your worksheet (Why re-type when it's already in print)
- Publish To The Web in Microsoft Access - Converts your data or reports to HTML so you can create dynamic, interactive database pages and share them across a company intranet or the World Wide Web
- Save to URL in Microsoft Excel - Allows you to save to a Web server by simply specifying the URL address (Automatically update your date on your web page)
- PowerPoint Animation Player for ActiveX™ - Lets you publish presentations to the Internet as a Web page with animation and narration (Web page creation not only got easier but no one will know that a pro didn't do it)

Personalize your desktop and get ready for some intelligent software.

- Office Assistant - Provides interactive advice, help, and tips to help you learn as you work, and it's completely customizable so you can choose the Assistant and the options that best suit the way you work (This is not only informative but darn cute too)
- Grammar Check and Spell It in Word - Proofread your documents for spelling and grammatical errors as you type, and correct errors with one click of the right mouse button (If you send a document out with an error now you'll have to do it on purpose)
- Enhanced AutoCorrect in Word - Corrects common multiple-word typographical and grammatical errors, fixes capitalization mistakes, and creates handy shortcuts for frequently used text and graphics (and it really works)
- Natural language formulas in Microsoft Excel - Allows you to use your own terminology when building formulas (Not a mathematician – no need to be now)

(Office.....Continued on page 4)

(Office.....Continued from page 3)

- Multiple Undo in Microsoft Excel - Allows you to undo multiple commands (I've wanted this for years)
- AutoPreview in Outlook - Lets you view the first three lines of each e-mail message (Make short work of the spam without having to read the entire e-mail)
- IntelliMouse support in Office 97 applications - Takes advantage of the IntelliMouse Wheel for enhanced navigation, close-up viewing, and panning left and right and scrolling (This is sold separately or in a package deal with Office 97 – Sure beats running that slide bar up and down)
- OfficeArt - Gives you drawing tools to easily design sophisticated 3-D effects, shadows, multicolored fills, textures, and Bezier curves (This is one of my favorites – I leave it turned on all the time)
- Images and fonts on CD-ROM - Includes approximately 3,000 clip-art images and 150 fonts (More than you'll ever need)

Word 97 simplifies common word-processing tasks with built-in intelligence by recognizing what you want to do. The new Letter Wizard structures your letter and adds dates and other information, so you can focus on the content instead of correctness. Word 97 suggests layouts and styles and will even insert addresses using your contact information from Microsoft Outlook™ 97 or another compatible application. With Grammar Check and Spell It you can proofread for errors in grammar and spelling as you type, so you can be confident that your writing is correct to the smallest detail. The interactive Office Assistant is always ready with instant answers, tips, and shortcuts while you work. It'll make learning or upgrading to Word 97 easy for novices or the experienced word-processing person. And Word 97 allows you to quickly convert any document into HTML format for the Web! You can even import, edit, and save HTML files directly to Internet servers. Also, Word 97 gives you powerful tools for collaboration, with easy-to-use features that let everyone write, review, and edit documents as a team. And don't forget my favorite. Design impressive graphics with 3-D effects, fills, and animated text using the new OfficeArt drawing tools.

Microsoft Excel 97 is a comprehensive and intuitive spreadsheet program. Whether you're a novice or expert, Excel 97 is more discoverable and usable than any spreadsheet I have ever used, and I have used spreadsheets now for over 12 years. It just makes it easier to turn your numbers into answers. Formula creation has never been easier with the new natural language formulas that let you build equations using your own terminology instead of cell coordinates. And you don't have to worry about being so precise because Formula AutoCorrect will intelligently fix common equation errors on the fly. You can create charts easier than ever with the enhanced ChartWizard. As with Word 97, team members can now collaborate simultaneously on a single shared workbook. And you can easily keep track of when changes were made and by whom. You can also convert your files to HTML format for the Internet with the click of a button—no coding necessary!

Whether you're conducting an informal meeting, presenting to a large audience, or delivering your message over the Internet, with **Microsoft PowerPoint 97** presentation graphics program you will be able to quickly and easily create professional-looking presentations. PowerPoint 97 has new professionally designed templates, a step-by-step wizard to generate content, plus PowerPoint Central's links to additional tips, content, and multimedia effects. You can also use the new Microsoft OfficeArt text and drawing effects to bring your data to life. Plus, you can create dynamic presentations easily with new, improved multimedia features including sounds, movies, and pictures from the Clip Gallery. This seems like an easy way to turn your work into animated advertisements, banners, or presentations for attention-getting World Wide Web pages. Not only can you publish your ideas, but also you can include image maps, links to other Web pages, and even narration in your Web page.

Microsoft Access 97 is relational database management system that easily integrates data from spreadsheets and other databases or turns raw data into answers with tools that help even first-time users get up and running quickly. The Database Wizard automatically builds any one of more than 20 custom databases in minutes to help you get started fast. And the Table Analyzer Wizard intelligently finds the underlying structure in a flat-file list and transforms it into related tables so you can immediately harness the power of a relational database-even if you don't understand relational database systems. With Access 97 it's easy to share up-to-date information with others, regardless of where they are. The Publish To The Web Wizard lets you share dynamic or static database information across the Internet almost instantly. And the Import/Export Wizard walks you step-by-step through the process of converting data to and from a variety of popular data formats. Along with the enhanced 32-bit performance, the Performance Analyzer Wizard automatically recommends the best way to create a well-organized, more responsive database. Whether you are a first-time user or a database expert, Access 97 can manage all your data.

Bookshelf® Basics for Office 97, Professional Edition, on CD-ROM contains the Bookshelf Basics reference library for quick access to the reference tools you need most. Included in Bookshelf Basics are The American Heritage® Dictionary, The Original Roget's Thesaurus, and The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations. All of these are directly accessible with a click of the mouse while you are inside your documents.

Office 97 also now contains **Microsoft Outlook 97**, an easy to use desktop information manager that organizes and manages all your e-mail, calendar, contacts, tasks, and files, all in

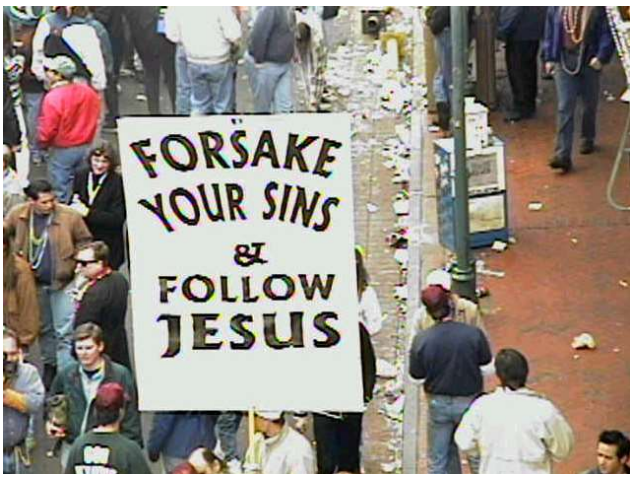
(Office.....Continued on page 10)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
2. **Tracer -** 7th Level - Launch into cyberspace with a deadly virus on your heels-Windows 95 CD.
3. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
6. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)
11. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
12. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+) - Windows CD

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!



Live picture via the Internet of street scene Mardi Gras day in New Orleans. Picture was updated about every 60 seconds.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Rogue Market (Buy and sell celebrities)	http://www.roguemarket.com/
Access Atlanta	http://www.accessatlanta.com/
Ancestor Search	http://www.ancestry.com/
Celebrity Slugfest	http://slugfest.kaizen.net/
Harley-Davidson	http://www.harley-davidson.com/
Hotel, Motel & Bed & Breakfast Directory	http://www.travelnett.com/
This Old House	http://pathfinder.com/@@6NpWGAUAHIv3JU6W/TOH/
Consumer World	http://www.consumerworld.org/
The Interactive Gourmet	http://www.cuisine.com/
World of Tea	http://www.stashtea.com/
Portable Computer Parts & Service	http://www.matrixintl.com/
Desktop Wallpaper Store	http://hkusub.hku.hk:8000/~h9526296/wpstore/wpstore5.html
Aircraft Images source	http://www.cs.ruu.nl/pub/AIRCRAFT-IMAGES/
HTML Authoring & Web Recources	http://www.library.nwu.edu/resources/www/
Better Homes & Gardens Home Improvement	http://www.bhglive.com/homeimp/
Fine Art from Around the World (large collection)	http://www2.iinet.com/art/index.html
New Orleans Net	http://www.neworleans.net/indexmain.html
International Assoc. for Flight Simulation	http://www.microwings.com/
The Ultimate Citrus Page	http://users.aol.com/chettown/citrus.html
Audio on Demand	http://www.wrn.org/audio.html

Software Review

MS Flight Simulator for Windows 95

by Wil Goble, Treasurer, Tampa PC users Group

Well, after having a few problems getting the program installed on my computer (this turned into a trip to the Internet for some Microsoft frequently asked questions and answers) the program installation went along just fine.

Turns out that you must have the 32 bit drivers for the CD-ROM installation to succeed as your computer cannot handle the long file names on the CD, so it just kept getting errors at the same place on the installation. You could click on ignore and the installation would continue but the program would not run.

I have the old version of the Flight Simulator for Windows. It's pretty good for learning to fly a plane and the graphics are just O.K.—not spectacular. Now the new version for Win 95 is a whole different ball game.

My computer is pretty fast and the video card is very fast, so I can turn on maximum resolution for the display and it looks almost picture like, certainly as if you were looking out of a window from a plane flying at over 1,000 feet.

You have a choice of about 5 different airplanes so if you master one of them you can switch to a different one while still maintaining the same position in the sky. Now this can be risky because if you switch to the glider while going too fast (like from the Lear jet) you could get into trouble real fast because gliders were not meant to go 300 mph. But you can't get hurt in this simulation because you can just start over again.

The plane choices are a Cessna 182 RG (looks like a Piper cub to me), a Sopwith Camel WW1 biplane, Lear Jet35A, a Schwietzer and 2 new planes: the Boeing 737-400 and the aerobatic Extra 300S.

Now this program is not a shoot'em up, but a leisure game of flying around and looking at the scenery, or flying to a destination on the map and just seeing if you can do it. Or just learning about how planes fly and learning to fly them.

They have training situations that you can select, or it will ran-





domly pick a course for you to fly to the destination that the program has chosen.

There are more 3D cities on this CD including San Francisco, London, Tokyo, New York City, Paris, Chicago, Seattle and many more. Also included are more than 300 airports and landmarks like the Taj Mahal in India and Big Ben in London.

Built in is a virtual pilot that will instruct and guide you through all of the steps of the flight. The virtual pilot will have you flying within seconds of loading the program. Also, you can set the time of the day and the weather that you'll be flying in. This program has so many things to do in it that you will probably never get to the point of saying that this is the same old thing over and over again. There are just too many variables so that each flight you embark upon will be fun and different. So you've been flying and you just crashed on a landing? Well just play it back on the flight recorder that will run the last 50 seconds or so of your perfect landing to see what went wrong. You also can view the plane that you are flying from: a tower view, a rear view from outside the plane, a side view, or a front view. You can also set the distance that the view is from the plane.

I like the way that the newer programs are being written where you can change so many of the parameters to the program instead of just using what the programmer thinks that you'll like. Very customizable to the way that you want to see or play the game. Microsoft says that this program will run on a 486dx66 with 8 MG RAM, but I sold my dx66 so I can't confirm that. They recommend that you have 16 MG, a Pentium, sound card, double speed CD, a fast video card, a joystick and at least 40 MG free on your hard drive. I think that the program sells for around $50 and I would recommend this to anyone who would like to try their hand at flying without getting air sick. ◆

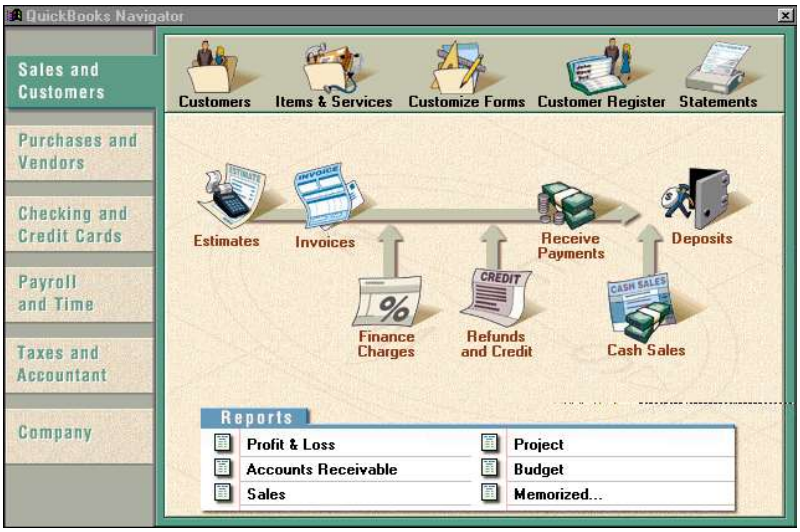
SOFTWARE REVIEW

QuickBooks Pro for 97 (Version 5.0)

by Fredrick Rea O'Keefe, Tampa PC Users Group*

UP FRONT SUMMARY: For the Mom & Pop, small business, or in-home business, probably the best, most comprehensive, easy to use bookkeeping program available. Macintosh, Windows 95 & 3.1, CD-ROM or diskettes.

Intuit's evolving Quicken™ programs have been the continual leader in easy to use, personal and business bookkeeping software. If you can keep a checkbook, you can use QuickBooks Pro (QBP). This will not be a technical review, but is intended to give you a view into the richness of QBP, applicable to almost all small businesses. The best news about QBP, to me, is that I can forget double-entry bookkeeping and difficult accounts setup. Double-entry work is automatically done by the QBP. If you need a more sophisticated package, Peachtree accounting is strongly recommended.



The first premise of QBP is simply entering payments by typing onto the form of a check. My preference, however, is using the check register form for entering transactions. Either way, one of several automated benefits is that QBP monitors your typing, and looks for previously entered types of transactions and account names for laborsaving fill-in-the-blanks. You can choose to include or exclude accounts in this. If you have a salary or regular source of income, or you have routine, periodic payments such as rent, you could automate them. When you complete each transaction, your immediate checking balance is shown, and you are ready for the next transaction. Quick and easy.

Deposits are handled the same way. In both pay or receive functions, you choose the appropriate credit or debit account(s) to apply the cash flow to, without having to know what "credit" or "debit" means in accounting terms! Yes, you may split transactions between accounts, such as splitting a credit card payment between charges for clothes, car, food, entertainment, inventory, and yanked teeth. Taxable and nontaxable categories may be designated, too.

All desired, user selectable shortcuts are included, such as bulk or individual check printing, or designation of a check as having been written manually; maintaining and printing payee addresses (mail merge); keeping the register "in order" by date and transaction number; straightforward register balancing with your bank statement - or electronically, if you "bank by modem." You can designate automatic bank payments (bank generated and mailed checks) which are tracked and recorded, with due notice to you. No more "forgetting" repetitive payments ("What overdue payment? Where did I put the invoice?" "Don't tell me we have to pay that bill now!!!") or manually processing the same monthly bills. Those are some of the basics everyone needs for enhancing profits. A valuable feature for "power users" are the keyboard shortcuts.

But there is much more for businesses of many types, each with an alterable, pre-designated chart of accounts, and a useful bookkeeping reference guide for your chosen form of business (franchise, subcontractor, writer, property management, etc.). The reference, a help file which is printable, is useful as a primer.

More expected benefits for a business are seeing, numerically or in a multitude of charts: where your finances are now; how you have been doing month-to-month in receivables; which collectible invoices are behind; whom you forgot to invoice; what automatic payments, by you, are upcoming; what discount does this customer get.

UNEXPECTED AMENITIES: using account numbers with account names, not instead of names; entering transactions of almost every type on what appears on the screen as simple paper forms pertinent to each transaction (no complex "where do I post this?"); automatic customer sales tax rates, applicable to varying jurisdictions; keeps personal finances off the business reports (note that QBP is a business program, and you would want to use the separate Quicken personal finance program simultaneously); print your bank deposit slips as your bank prefers.

Depending on your business needs, you can easily design and modify invoices and statements for your clients. A logo can be imported, and the typefaces are selectable. Billing and payment details are automatically filled in. Results are professional, making you look as good as you ought. Time saving ease like this is evident throughout QBP.

(Quick.....Continued on page 8)

(Quick.....Continued from page 7)

REPORTS! There are more than 100 graphs and reports immediately available for you. You can see how your sales reps are doing; how your purchases are flowing; what your inventory valuation is; who your best and worst customers are; cash flow forecasting; payroll liability .... Sounds like a real business, doesn't it? These reports are thorough, although you might want more, or different. But there is enough beef here to satisfy the needs of most small businesses.

How would you like to automatically reconcile both your bank balances and credit card transactions at will, simply by dialing up your bank (if offered, or by your transferring your business to an on-line bank. Fees are charged for this.)? You can do it with QBP! This is up-to-the-minute bookkeeping.

Yes, you can easily edit the books if you find data-entry errors, or need to revise debit and credit accounts. A clear audit trail is kept. And, the program can grow with your business.

For many businesses, it still seems too difficult or time consuming to learn how to implement some form of practical time tracking, contact management, or project management. QBP has your solution. By being integrated in one program with your accounting, all the fundamental business functions are made more efficient, far more accurate, more quick to finish and analyze. You get superior control over your business, and that might mean the difference between an unexpected catastrophe, or profitable success.

Is QBP easy to learn and use? No! But, it is easier and more straightforward, while being more comprehensive and approachable than other accounting packages I've looked at. QBP isn't "easy" to learn, any more than is any other complex program, of any type. Knowing this, Intuit provides a tutorial which, step-by-step, covers the basics, along with extensive, context sensitive help, and a well organized, clear, printed manual. You have 30 days free telephone support, so beat QBP to death within that time frame. There is an on-line web site, too, with useful FAQ's. These can be printed, and themselves are a good tutorial. Http://www.intuit.com/quickbooks/ is the URL.

To emphasize a point, when you set up QBP, you choose which modules and accounts to include and exclude. You may always amend your choices as time passes. This is a vital utility. And.,how about tying in the number one selling and rated tax program - TurboTax™, and analyzing upcoming possible tax liabilities, so you can adjust for them? QBP is ready.

QBP on CD-ROM offers more information than the diskette version, including extensive business advice and legal articles. You should find several of the worksheets useful. Installing is so much easier, too.

QBP also offers more "books" to keep than does QuickBooks alone. Comprehensive job estimating, time tracking, and automated job costing are added. Too many business which could benefit from any of these modules just don't realize it, or haven't found it convenient enough to implement. No more. Indeed, QBP version 5.0 includes enough new functions and reports, and simple integration of all the books your business needs to make it worth upgrading.

IN CLOSING, there are far too many rewards in QBP for almost all small businesses, from service, to professional, to manufacturing, to franchise, to subcontracting, restaurant, accountant, repair shop, etc. to not computerize your bookkeeping. Because most accountants use QB, it is another money and time saver for you both to automate the interaction with the special module included in QBP. QBP is highly recommended by the author. So much so that, if you don't have a CD-ROM yet, QBP is a compelling reason to buy one now.

Intuit is located at P.O. Box 7850, Mountain View CA 94039-7850. Online banking and payment may be reached at 888-245-3279. The author of this review is not affiliated with Intuit, nor is he available for technical support or bookkeeping advice.

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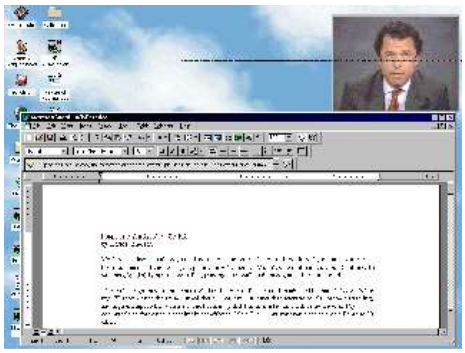
Hardware Review

Hauppauge WinCast/TV dbx PCI

by Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group

Win/TV is a device to allow you to have a TV set on your PC screen. It works well, and once you're past the initial horror of the idea - (you go to your PC to avoid TV don't you?) - it has its uses. Right now I'm watching PBS's News Hour as I write this, proving I can walk and chew gum at the same time!

It's perched right now in the upper right hand corner of the screen. It's adjusted to about 2-1/2 x1-3/4 on my 17" screen, with the sound turned down .. not low, but lower than average so it's not too distracting, and high enough so that when a subject comes up that I'm interested in, I will be aware of it. My computer's performance is absolutely not affected. It's a P166+, but you won't notice it on a Pentium 90 either.



This is a picture of my desktop with the TV sized as I like it. It saves two screen positions. One with a small border as you see it, and one with a tool bar and menu. Both are sizeable and moveable. A right-hand mouse click very quickly switches between the two views. Actually, it has a third mode - TV Mode - that uses up all of your screen with the TV picture set at its maximum size - 640x480. Here's the second mode:

And for the third mode .. my computer locked up. Try again, same thing. Well, I don't use it anyway. But you can see the pitfalls. This is the only bad thing I've experienced. You may consider it serious. I don't, because my document is saved automatically very frequently.



Ok, now I'm revising this three days later, with the problem fixed. I just had to read the read-me file and found two suggestions. The first was a program that changed the registry in a way that affects the way that the VGA drivers work. It eliminates closed captioning in the process, though. The other fix is specifically for my S3 Trio video card, a program that must run from the autoexec.bat. That fixed the lockup problems as it suggested, and I was able to use the "Full TV mode". I'm running my resolution at 1024x768. The largest resolution that the TV will run at is 640x480, so even in full TV mode the picture will not take up all the monitor space. However, if I were to change my resolution to 640x480, I'd have a very expensive TV, and no computer at all.

Win/TV has good controls, 125 channels for cable, and a huge number of formats to suit; a number of countries, Japanese, Canadian and French standards, and a whole lot of formats I don't care to understand. Mine is set to USA-CATV and NTSC(M). Initially, you do a scan so that it can collect a list of channels available. You can edit this list easily. It has volume controls, audio settings, Brightness, Saturation, Contrast and Hue. Audio can be set to Mono, Stereo and SAP. There is a mixer list to tell it which input port on your sound card is used. It has Always-On-Top so that it cannot be covered up. It has a capture button to copy to the clipboard and channel up-down buttons.

Now for the requirements. Forget 486, think Pentium 90 minimum. Here's the list:

1) PC with a PCI bus. That means a Pentium, and obviously an open PCI slot.
2) Windows 95 (also with up-to-date Direct Draw software available free)
3) Sound card (with an open line input jack)
4) CD-ROM (although it says so, you don't really need a CD-ROM)
5) A VGA card meeting specifications - more later.

Here's some info from the box that describes the details well. "WinCast/TV digitizes live video from either the built-in 125 channel cable TV tuner or an external video-input source using high-quality 4:2:2 video sampling. The digitized video is sent over the PCI bus in your PC into the memory of your VGA display adapter. This allows the digitized video to move efficiently, and takes a fraction of the available bandwidth of the PCI bus."

Now, here are more catches - the video card requirements. Not all video cards will work. The box lists five, and advises that you check their internet site for a complete list of certified cards. My own card was on the list - an S3 Trio 64+. It's selling for about $90 in its 2M form. Now there's more … I want my computer resolution at 1280x1024. The TV looks terrible. There are just red outlines. The problem? Well, at 1280x1024 the best my card will do is 256 colors, and it just won't work. Sometimes I set it at 1152x864. Guess what ... 256 colors. So at the moment I have it set to 1024x768 x 65,000 colors. I can live with it for a while, but I'm getting a memory upgrade

(TV.....Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — Canceled (temporarily we hope)

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at a member's home. *Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

(Office .....Continued from page 4)
one place.

Specifications
To use Microsoft Office 97, you need:

- Personal or multimedia computer with a 486 or higher processor
- Microsoft Windows 95 operating system or Microsoft Windows NT® Workstation 3.51 Service Pack 5 or later (will not run on earlier versions)
- For use on Windows 95: 8 MB of memory required to run applications individually (12 MB required to run Microsoft Access); more memory may be required to run additional applications simultaneously
- For use on Windows NT Workstation: 16 MB of memory required to run applications individually; more memory may be required to run additional applications simultaneously
- Office Standard hard-disk space required: 60–167 MB; approximately 102 MB required for typical installation, depending on configuration (use the Office Upgrade Wizard during setup to maximize free disk space)
- Office Professional hard-disk space required: 73–191 MB; approximately 121 MB required for typical installation, depending on configuration (use the Office Upgrade Wizard during setup to maximize free disk space)
- CD-ROM drive (3.5" high-density disks available free of charge through in-box coupon; CD-ROM contains additional items such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, extra clip art, fonts, .avi files, and sounds not available on 3.5" disks)
- VGA or higher-resolution video adapter (Super VGA, 256-color recommended)
- Microsoft Mouse, Microsoft IntelliMouse, or compatible pointing device

Microsoft Office 97 makes it easy to get the results you want. Office 97 is an intelligent, personalized software package that will work the way you do, so you can achieve what you want, quicker and easier than you ever thought you could. If it starts getting tough, Advanced Help will guide you through the most difficult tasks, while state-of-the-art wizards and other features help you get it done the way you want it done. Oh yes, it also comes with a 700-page paper manual that is done quite well. There is also a Standard Edition that comes with Microsoft Word 97, Microsoft Excel 97, Microsoft PowerPoint® 97, and Microsoft Outlook™ 97, omitting Access 97 and Bookshelf Basics 97.

Yes, I like it!

If you'd like to see an on-line multimedia demonstration of all the features mentioned above go to:
http://204.203.124.10/office/autodemo/default.aspon the World Wide Web.

Microsoft Corporation **http://www.microsoft.com**
Pricing varies depending on Edition and/or if upgrading.

(Some of the above information came from various locations on the Web. The comments are my own.) ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
Borland	Quarterdeck
Broderbund	Regnis
Corel Systems	Symantec
Grolier	Traveling Software
Knowledge Adventure	Xerox

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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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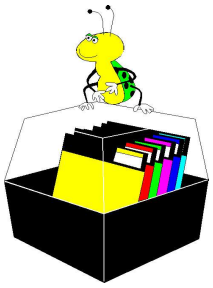
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9703.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

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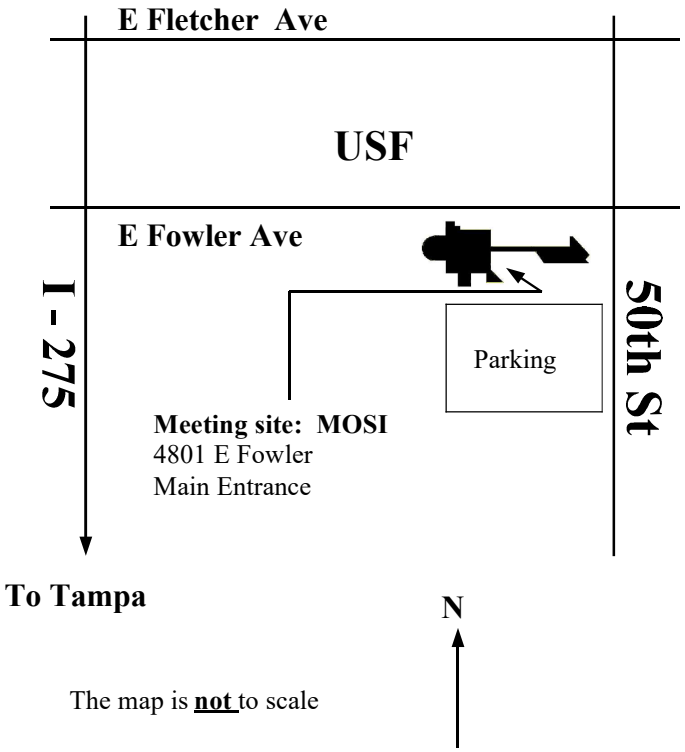
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(TV.....Continued from page 9)
($50) for my card. It's that cheap because it uses slower EDO DRAM. That'll fix it and I can go back to 1280 like I like it.

Well … don't scoff ! That's why I bought a 17" monitor ! If you still have your 17" monitor set to VGA or SuperVGA, you should give the monitor to a needy person (a monitor-deprived person) and go back to a 15" monitor. I'm constantly amazed at the number of people I find who don't know what screen resolution is!!

The Hauppauge internet site is very good, with the latest full versions of their software on line. (Don't download the Beta software .. you'll regret it - I did). *Www.hauppauge.com*

Hauppauge WinCast/TV dbx Model 401. $149 locally. Not bad. ◆





Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 2 February 1997

Meeting

February 12, 1997
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave

New Meeting site

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Some Notes and Observations From FACUG

by Connie Kincaid, President, Tampa PC Users Group

I want to thank our group for sending me to the Florida Association of Computer Users Groups' Winter Conference in Orlando. The conference started on Friday night, January 17th and ran through Sunday afternoon. I am also very, very grateful that Margaret Petro and Mary Sheridan were able to attend with me. As many of you know, the Florida Association of User Groups, Inc. (FACUG) is a private, non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to help local PC users groups such as ours. There are member groups all over the state of Florida. If the vendors are to be believed, we are one of the best organized groups in the country. FACUG sponsors a winter conference and a summer conference. Their conferences are very worthwhile. FACUG is available on the Internet through a link from our home page.

The conference schedule

The conference offered more than any one person could handle - one of the many reasons I was so glad to have Mary and Margaret with me. We drove over Friday afternoon and arrived just in time to check into our hotel room before the 6PM conference registration. After registering, we were treated to an Italian style dinner by Adobe. They supplied not only magnificent food, but also a display of their products and a representative to talk to us. All of the meals were supplied by vendors who fed us something sumptuous. Most

(FACUG.....Continued on page 4)

Starting February 12, 1997, we will meet at the Museum of Science & Industry, 4801 E. Fowler Ave. First, we meet in the lobby for networking at 6:00 and then move to the meeting room at 6:30.

* * 1997 OFFICERS * *
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PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Margaret Petro 253-2167

BBS 813-980-1295 (connects to first free line)

Home Page http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if ithey are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following imitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING January 1997

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

Networking began at 6 PM. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by President Connie Kincaid. She extended a welcome to new members and visitors.

Election The election was held. The following were elected for the 1997 term.

Officers:

President	Connie Kincaid
Vice President	Michael Hodges
Secretary	Merle Nicholson
Treasurer	Wil Goble
Member at Large	Bruce Register

Appointed positions:

Editor	William LaMartin
Librarian	Larry Anders
SYSOPS	Mary Sheridan
Program Chairman	Margaret Petro

SIG Leaders:
Jenny Olin
Charles Howe
Connie Kincaid

Public Relations: Ken Boyd

Ken Boyd volunteered to help Bruce Register in distributing the tri-fold on TPCUG.

Meeting Connie reported that the swap meet donations were just over $100 net to the group to help defray costs of TPCUG.

Connie reported that the February meeting networking is dedicated to employers and prospective employees getting together. She asked that we pass the word to ANYONE (Employers and Employees) who would like to use this time to make connections.

Presentation Since the announced presentation of Turbo Tax fell through, William LaMartin, on short notice, presented a program on Microsoft Visual Basic 4.0. It comes in two versions: the Standard Edition and the Professional Edition. William used the Professional Edition.

Visual Basic is a program that you use to write Windows pro-

(Minutes.....Continued on page 8)

Product Review

Tripmate:
GPS Navagation from Delorme



by William LaMartin, Editor
Tampa PC Users Group

In the December 1996 Newsletter, Larry Anders reviewed *Street Atlas USA Version 4.0* from Delorme. One of the features mentioned for this CD based Windows 95 mapping program was the ability to be used in conjunction with a global positioning device.

With the small yellow GPS receiver pictured above placed on your car's dashboard and connected to the serial port of your laptop computer, and with Street Atlas USA Ver. 4.0 running on that computer, you can see exactly where in the USA you are. And it is accurate. The guaranteed accuracy is 100 meters horizontally and 156 meters vertically. It can also tell you the time to 340 nanoseconds accuracy. All of this 95% of the time. If the Department of Defense would allow it, the accuracy would be considerably better. However, in practice, I have found the errors to usually be considerably less than those above.

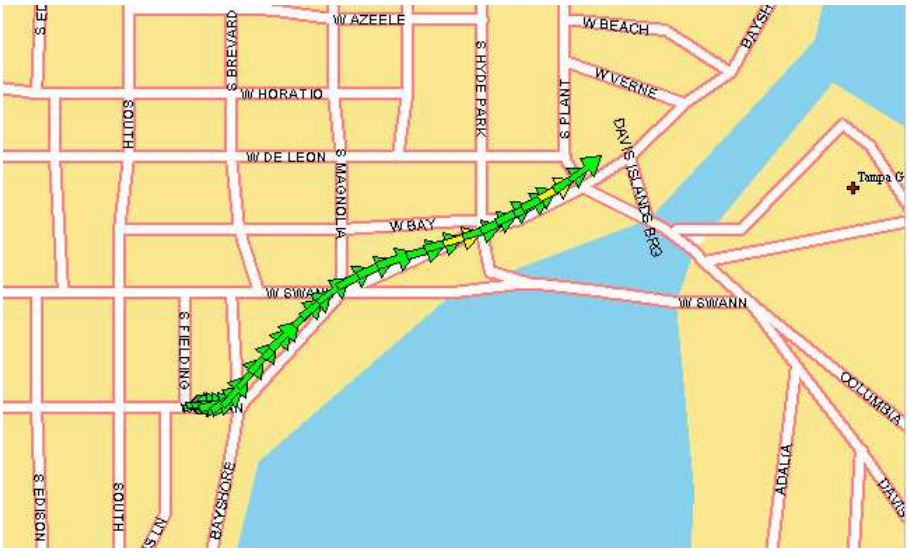
Everyone to whom I have demonstrated the device has been impressed. When we first got the device my son was home with his laptop which has a CD drive. So all we had to do was put the Street Atlas CD in the drive, connect the GPS receiver to the serial port and go for a drive. It takes several minutes for the unit to find enough satellites (it needs at least three) to do its thing. So after as long as three minutes you all of a sudden see the map changing to your location and a round dot at the unit's determination of your present position. We were all amazed as we watched our path on the computer screen as I drove around Hyde Park and then over the bridge to Davis Islands. The data must have been really good this first time, since it usually put us right in the middle of the street on the map. On other trials it has shown me driving a little off Bayshore Blvd. and in the bay or sometimes in people's yards. However, I can recall only once when it located me closer to another street than the one I was actually on.

After my son went back to college I had to figure how to use the unit with my non-CD equipped laptop. Street Atlas, however, provides for that by explaining how to do a remote installation of the program on the laptop and then how to selectively export map data to the laptop. To install the program on the laptop you will need to establish a cable connection between the laptop and another computer which has Street Atlas installed. I used the direct cable connection program available under Windows 95 and a "LapLink" style parallel cable between the two computers' parallel ports. After getting the program installed on the laptop, I then exported map data for only those counties in Florida through which I thought I would be driving. It only took about 6 MB to export data for four counties. Later I got the idea of installing the program and data on an Iomega Zip drive attached to the laptop. When I did that, the entire state of Florida took up 29 MB. So it looks like you could get three states on each Zip disk. However, you may get more if the states take up less room than did Florida.

If you are hard pressed for entertainment you can make a log of your trip and play it back later, either at real-time speed or 10x or 100x speed. I did this on a 140 mile trip I took, and the log was about 500KB in size. See the small map below for the log of a short trip along Bayshore Blvd. near Tampa General Hospital in Tampa.

When you are moving the arrows are spaced in direct relation to your speed. If I had been going 60 mph, the arrows on the map would not have touched . When you stop, you get a round dot, and when the data is poor (if you go under an overpass, or heavy tree coverage) the arrow turns yellow from

(Tripmate.....Continued on page 9)



Log of a short trip along Bayshore Blvd in Tampa

Software Review

Tuneland from 7th Level



Review by Fred Buss, Tampa PC Users Group

Tuneland is designed for children of all ages. Children explore Tuneland and learn basic computer skills. Parents and Grandparents alike laugh at the funny gags and jokes. My Grandson is six years old and enjoys every aspect of the cartoon. Each scene in Tuneland contains a musical cartoon for the child to view. You can choose to watch the cartoon or you can interrupt its play anytime.

Lil' Howie is on hand to help you explore Tuneland and show you how to move around and what to do by clicking on objects. It's funny to watch and hear the sounds of the cartoon characters. You need to click on all of the objects to see and hear what they do and how it affects every scene.

Tuneland is truly an adventure with many things to see and hear, and, if you should get tired of viewing any of the scenes, you can click the hat on the bottom right hand corner of the screen. Come and go through each of the areas, but leave when you tire of the search.

Don't forget to look in the barnyard, farmhouse, barn, grandma's house, train station, valley and enjoy the music from the jukebox.

Tuneland is a remarkable tool for children (ages 3 - 6).

Every scene in Tuneland is an adventure in itself. If you have a favorite song you can journey back to the scene that it is in and play it again and again. As you travel through Tuneland don't forget to look for Lil' Howie and Jack and Jill in each scene. In the barnyard you can see all the exciting places in Tuneland that you can visit. Explore the barnyard before you begin another adventure. You can play hide and seek in the barnyard, don't forget to look high and low. If you would like to hear old MacDonald had a farm again maybe old MacDonald could help. There is also a farmhouse to explore. Songs in the scene are the three blind mice, Polly put the kettle on, I'm a little tea pot, patty cake, hot cross buns, hickory dickory dock, and many more tunes. There's also a pond scene, Grandma's house, mountain scene, train station, and valley scene. Just keep clicking along.

The company's WWW URL is http://www.7thlevel.com ◆

(FACUG.....Continued from page 1)

of them also provided a speaker who shared the latest technology from their company. Saturday we had breakfast with Symantec, lunch with Intuit and Parsons and dinner with Microsoft. Sunday we had breakfast with Broderbund and lunch with Micrografx. I felt like royalty after so much pampering.

Vendors

The vendors sent their best presenters who put on new demos with each meal. The demos were great. The presenters attended the whole weekend conference. It made the whole thing more enjoyable to watch them banter among themselves as rivals showed their wares. All of them were very professional about teasing one another which made it a lot of fun.

Adobe told us about their user group relations program. They have a vendor web site for user groups to contact them. Symantec talked about PCHandyman and their special offer to user groups (I'll have to see what the board wants to do with this one - more later). Parsons (an Intuit company) and Intuit each sent a speaker. So we had the brothers McKatz (not real brothers - more like the 'Blues Brothers') who did a demo on the Atomic Clock. We saw Microsoft's newly released Office '97 Professional. Broderbund showed us the new Print Shop Deluxe III. Finally, Micrografx showed off their Flow Charter (no longer called ABC Flow Charter) and the American Greeting Card program.

The vendors were very informative and entertaining. Many of them have deals available for members of user groups. The vendors were also very generous in donating a stage full (and I do mean 4 cafeteria tables piled high) of software and hardware. These were all made available to user groups for door prizes and reviews and will be available in the coming months. Some of the readers may be wondering why vendors would go to so much trouble. It's simple. All of the major software and hardware vendors realize that user groups are the 'grass root' movement of technology. We are the only viable link to the market place that most vendors have. Unlike any other product, technology vendors have to try and convince people to buy things unlike anything they have ever seen before. Think about it. If you were buying a car, you have probably driven cars for years and perhaps owned other cars before. You have some knowledge of the features and potential capabilities of a car. All a car manufacturer has to do is compare their car to what you already know. The technology vendor has to educate you before he or she can tell you about their product. That's where the user groups come in. We are very important to them. All they ask in return, use their product and spread the word. They don't ask anyone to sing unfounded praises. (I just spent a whole weekend with a bunch of them and they really don't want us to say things that aren't true!!) They want us to tell others about our experience with

(FACUG.....Continued on page 7)

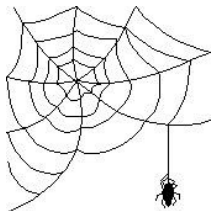
SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Goldmine** - GoldMine Software Corp. - Contact management software.
2. **Tracer -** 7th Level - Launch into cyberspace with a deadly virus on your heels-Windows 95 CD.
3. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **On File** for Windows - Arranges your files into fun-to-use "notebooks "
6. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)
11. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
12. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
13. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full-Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
14. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay**- Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+) - Windows CD
15. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calendar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

People with software reviews due--we need them!

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug/
Asahi - Japanese newspaper in English	http://www.asahi.com/english/english.html
Biographies online	http://www.biography.com/
Burpee (seeds & gardening information)	http://www.burpee.com/BPages/sunflower.html
Children's Internet Sites	http://www.vividus.com/ucis.html
Carnivorous Plant Database	http://www.hpl.hp.com/bot/cp_home
Carnivorous Plant FAQ	http://mips3.as.arizona.edu/~barry/cps/faq/faq2.html
Dallas Morning News	http://www.dallasnews.com/home.html
Delporme (mapping)	http://www.delorme.com/
Garden Escape (comercial site plus information)	http://www.garden.com/
Global Positioning System Overview	http://wwwhost.cc.utexas.edu/ftp/pub/grg/gcraft/notes/gps/gps.html
GuideStar- database of nonprofit orgranizations	http://www.guidestar.org/
Irish Times	http://www.irish-times.ie/cgi-bin/today
London Times	http://www.the-times.co.uk/
New York City Reference	http://www.panix.com/clay/nyc/
Savannah online	http://www.catalog.com/cgibin/var/savannah/welcome.htm
Social Security Administration	http://www.ssa.gov/
The Trip.Com (airline reservations & tracking)	http://www.thetrip.com/
Washington Times	http://www.washtimes.com/
Landscape Photography of Eastern Mountains	http://io.datasys.swri.edu/PATC/photos.html
WWOZ 90.7 FM- New Orleans (live radio)	http://www.audionet.com/radio/jazz/wwoz/
Main Florida State Governmental Directory	http://fcn.state.fl.us/fcn/3/main.phtml
Science Magazine Online	http://www.sciencemag.org/

Maple V

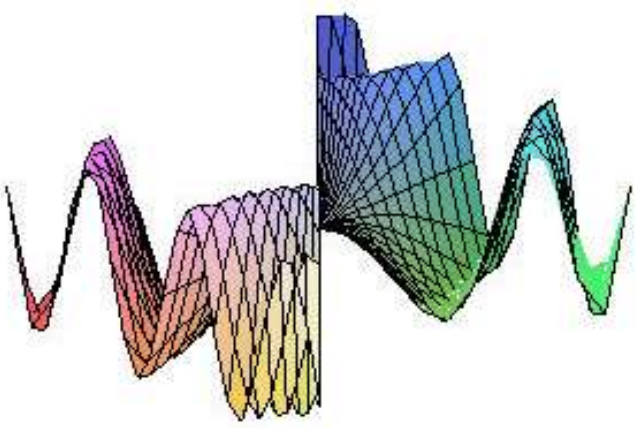
Review by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

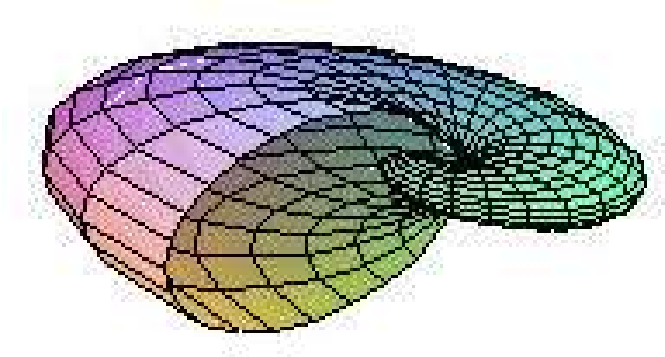
Got a spare $995 plus tax, then I have the program for you. It's *Maple V*, *Release 4* from The Symbolic Computation Group, a research group in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Waterloo in Canada. To quote their own words:

> *Maple V is a powerful mathematical problem-solving and visualization system used world-wide in education, research, and industry. Its principal strength is its symbolic problem solving algorithms. Unlike conventional math software, which can only work with floating-point numbers, Maple V can solve problems involving formal mathematical definitions and return answers as mathematical objects. Derived from over a decade of world-class R&D and customer service, Maple V Release 4 provides all the right tools for users in education, research, and industry.*

Boy, if I had this program thirty years ago Calculus would have been a breeze, not to mention linear algebra and differential equations. Well, students today not only have the good fortune to have such a program available, most, I suspect, have access to included in the price of their tuition. Most Universities give their students access to *Maple V* or its chief competitor, *Mathematica* from Wolfram Research (http://www.wolfram.com), on the university server.

Actually you have had access to this program for several months. You just don't check out those WWW links that I put in the newsletter and on the Links page of our WWW site. There is a link at our Web site listed under Science to the page of a Canadian mathematician, Peter Borwein, and in the left frame of that page there is a link listed as Maple. If you followed that link you would be presented with a simple Maple input form. I now have a more direct link to a Maple input form at
http://www.cecm.sfu.ca/projects/OMP/nmpform.html.





When you go to this site you are presented with an input box like the one on our Computer survey form at our WWW site. If you know what to enter, you will be amazed at the results.

Before I explain how to get to the help menus, allow me the following examples:

Enter *plot3d(sin(x*y),x=-Pi..Pi,y=-x..x);* and you get the 3D plot (in color on the screen) in the previous column. Be patient; it will take a few moments for the graph to get to your computer. You can then save it with a right click —at least that's the way Microsoft Internet Explorer works.

Another nice 3D graph, pictured above, is gotten by entering; *plot3d((1.3)^x * sin(y),x=-1..2*Pi,y=0..Pi,coords=spherical,style=patch);*

All of you old Calculus students, recall finding anti-derivatives, or by another name indefinite integrals. Can you still integrate x*sin(x)? Well, Maple V can. Entering the line *Int(x*sin(x),x); yields sin(x) - x*cos(x).*

Maple V handles all the usual algebraic manipulations like finding roots of polynomials. Enter *roots(x^2-9);* and you get [[-3,1],[3,1]], which is Maple's way of telling you that -3 and 3 are each single roots of the polynomial x^2 -9, which you can easily check by substituting them in for x.

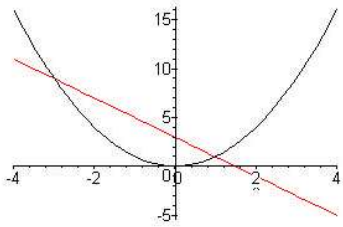
So now that we know that plot does graphs and Int does integrals and roots does roots, how do we find the syntax for these procedures and the many more procedures that we don't even know about yet? We invoke Maple V's help. To get a list of help topics enter *?library[index].* This will produce a long list of procedures. Note: *?index[library]* seems to give the same list. And you sort of can guess what they do by their abbreviations. To get detailed help on a particular one, like Int, for example, we would next enter ?Int.

A note: Each time before entering a new item in the Maple input box, it is best to use your browser's back feature to go to the first instance of the input box and then clear that box, then enter your new request. Also note that all entries other than

(Maple.....Continued on page 7)

(Maple.....Continued from page 6)
for help end in a semicolon. I suggest that you first start by simply copying the examples at the end of each help topic. For example, to try plotting, enter ?plot to get the plotting help, then choose one of the examples at the end of the help message to paste into the input box.

Let's do one more example of a common algebraic problem. First we graph the two equations y = x^2 and y = -2*x+3 using the Maple instruction *plot({x^2,-2*x+3},x=-4..4);* to get:



This simple two dimensional plot is not nearly as exciting as the previous two three dimensional plots, is it? Now, if you recall your basic mathematics, you know that your teacher would want to know at what x (horizontal) coordinates the two graphs intersected. Well, that is simple. Having Maple calculate we get *solve(x^2=-2*x+3,x);* yields x = -3 and x = 1 as the solutions.

Give it a try. My examples have been quite trivial compared to what the program can do, but I think I know my audience. Isn't it remarkable that you can do all of this mathematics via the Internet on a computer in Canada.

In closing I note that USF uses *Maple V*. Check the site *http://curiac.acomp.usf.edu/math/maple/* to see that a student at USF can buy a full version for only $19.95. Doesn't seem fair, does it. Of course, with USF's low tuition of $62.55/semester hour, a three hour course is less than $200. So sign up for your course and save around $800 on the price of the program. However, after reading the newsgroup *sci.math.symbolic (devoted to programs like Maple)*, I think the USF statement that the student version is the full version may not be correct. Anyway, it would still be a super bargain.

You can go to the USF site *http://curiac.acomp.usf.edu/math/maple/learn_maple.html* for help in learning Maple. If you want to use the USF tutorials with the Canadian provided interface above, you should open two separate pages in your web browser where you can bounce back and forth. I challenge USF to provide us a user interface on the Internet as the people in Canada have done.

A good site for information on Maple is at Indiana University *http://www.indiana.edu/~statmath/math/maple/*. To buy the program go to *http://www.maplesoft.com/* ◆

(FACUG.....Continued from page 4)
their technology in our own words. That's all. It broadens the educated consumer base for them and helps them develop stuff we like. It's an important part of the feedback loop to them.

Workshops

The meals and the vendors were wonderful and entertaining but there's more. That's right, much more. When we weren't eating there were no less than 3 simultaneous workshops for attendees. Each workshop was conducted by someone who has been an active leader in one of the member groups and demonstrated success in the area of their workshop. Most workshops used an open discussion format that allowed maximum participation. Margaret, Mary and I tried to 'divide and conquer' by each attending different sessions. Mary attended sessions relating to her position as BBS Sysop, Margaret attended program oriented sessions and I attended business/financial sessions. Each of us came away with the same general feeling that all is for naught if it doesn't serve our members. It may seem difficult to imagine 150 people gathering in Orlando for a weekend, forsaking Mickey to lock themselves into ballrooms to try and figure out what people want from a users group, but that's it in a nutshell. The logic goes something like this: It takes people to make a group. It takes something of value to people to bring them together (a moving target at best). It takes time, effort and, alas, money to put something together of value to people. It takes people to come up with time, effort and money. In short, all is lost without membership that participates in some manner or another.

It's easy to list the tangible benefits the group can offer its members. The newsletter offers information about new technologies that is written by your peers so it is easier to read and relate to individual situations. The BBS offers local E-mail, conferences with other people who share similar interests around the world and files and programs to download (and you don't get nearly as many busy signals as the Internet). The meetings offer a place for people to meet, ask questions, learn and be entertained. The difficulty is listing the intangible benefits. I have met more clean-living, wholesome, happy-to-be-alive people through users groups. I don't have to profess anything. I don't have to know anyone to join. I have met people from every industry and walk of life as their peer. I can be a novice in something one minute asking questions without feeling 'stupid' because the next minute I find I am the one who knows the answer to another question. I laugh and enjoy the company of my fellow man every time. I find a potent source of hope for humankind that I don't find in the media. How can I describe those benefits in a membership brochure? I can't. I don't make them happen for people and I can't promise them to anyone. I can only provide a

(FACUG.....Continued on page 12)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
grams. It is also the basis for the macro languages of other Microsoft applications, e.g., Word and Excel. He demonstrated how you construct a simple Windows program based on a single form (Window) which he populated with text boxes, a picture box, labels, and a command button, all gotten from the Custom Control Tool Box on the left side of his screen. He then showed how you associate basic code with each of these custom controls, for example, what programming code is executed when the command button is clicked. His first example alternated photos of the former and current president of the TPCUG in the picture box when the command button was pressed. He emphasized that Visual Basic is an event oriented programming language (click on a button and something happens).

William showed us some of his programs:

- A BBS access dialing program allowing you to dial into and read messages on our BBS.
- A grocery shopping program in which you select the items from an alphabetical list of several hundred, then select the store in which you wish to shop. The program then puts the items you chose in the order you will find them in that particular store. You, of course, have the ability to edit the store order. That program was very interesting and unique as only William could do it.
- He created a program that opened a Microsoft Access database in order to make changes to the database. He stated that one of the prime uses of Visual Basic 4.0 seems to be aimed at working with databases.
- He created a program in Visual Basic which allowed him to measure fuel in a cylindrical tank which was buried on its side underground. Note that when the tank is on its side, the bottom inch measured on the ruler will contain less volume than another inch nearer to the widest point in the tank. This program used text boxes to input the various radii and lengths, a list box to display the different volumes for different depths, and a command button to start the program running.

After the Visual Basic demonstration, William illustrated the connection of two computers with a LapLink style cable between the two parallel ports. He then used the Direct Cable Connection feature of Windows 95 to transfer files between the two computers. It was pointed out by Don Patzsch that this could also be accomplished in DOS 6.0 using the Interlink and Interserve programs available in DOS 6.0

No door prize drawing was held tonight. The meeting was adjourned. ◆

Format Your 3½ Floppy From 1.45 to 1.9 MB

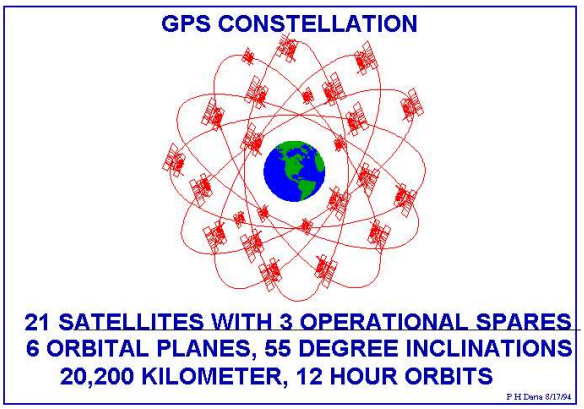
by Bruce Register, Tampa PC Users Group

Occasionally we have need for a disk to be formatted so as to receive a file with more than 1.45 MB. Most know that the Windows 95 3 ½ floppies are recorded on 1.7 MB disks. Some say that Microsoft did this to keep people from sharing their disks with others by letting them copy the original disks. That is another ethics story. I ran into the problem when COMPAQ directed me to their web site to download a file containing a "disk manager" program so that I could restart my 386 computer. My problem was that the COMPAQ file contained 1.512 MB zipped and 1.537 MB unzipped. I could not copy the file from my 486 to a 3 ½ disk that I needed to boot my crashed system.

I stumbled upon a file on our very own Tampa PC Users Group library. The file is named "**2 M.Zip**" I downloaded the file into my 486. I found that it will not run in Windows or Window 95. I "shut down" my W95. The window gave one of several choices before turning off the computer. The correct choice is shut down and restart in DOS...that way Windows 95 is nowhere around on the reboot. When the system rebooted in DOS, I unzipped the 2M.ZIP file.

I created a directory named 2M on my C: drive. I unzipped the 2M.ZIP program to C:\2M. The unzipping created four unzipped files in the "2M" directory. I then changed to the 2M directory containing the four files. After this I typed the command as C:\2M>"2M/?" to get help information and instructions. I printed that file so that I could study the hard copy...I sometimes do not remember what I read and need a reference. I typed "2M/ML" after the prompt C:\2M>. I just followed instructions. Once I formatted my 1.45 MB disk to 1.9 MB with the 2M program, I copied the COMPAQ file from my 486 "download" path to the a: drive. I then put the newly formatted disk with the copied file in my 386, turned on the machine and was up and running.

PS. I got into the dilemma by deciding that I wanted to reformat the "H" drive on my 386. What I did not know is that COMPAQ had set up the 386 to operate with an H drive and a C drive. The H stands for Host. My DOS and Windows 3.1 programs were on my C drive. I did not know that the computer started with the H (Host) drive and swapped to the C drive as needed. When I reformatted the H drive, I wiped out all start up files. ◆



(Tripmate.....Continued from page 3)

green. There is an additional screen you can bring up which will indicate your longitude, latitude, speed, and direction. The speed was always within one mile per hour of what my speedometer indicated. And, as best I could calculate, the data is updated on the computer every five seconds. So at 60 mph the map is always going to be a little behind your actual location.

Since the battery on a laptop is rarely good for more than two hours under such usage, what do you do on longer trips? Merle Nicholson suggested I get an inverter, a device that changes DC current to AC. Then I could simply plug the computer's charger into it. I had never seen a small version of these things, only the larger ones used in travel homes to power TV's, etc. However, CompUSA had just what I need; a fairly small unit putting out 140 watts and capable of 300 watt peaks costing $59. It , thus, has enough additional capacity to run the Zip drive and some other small device.

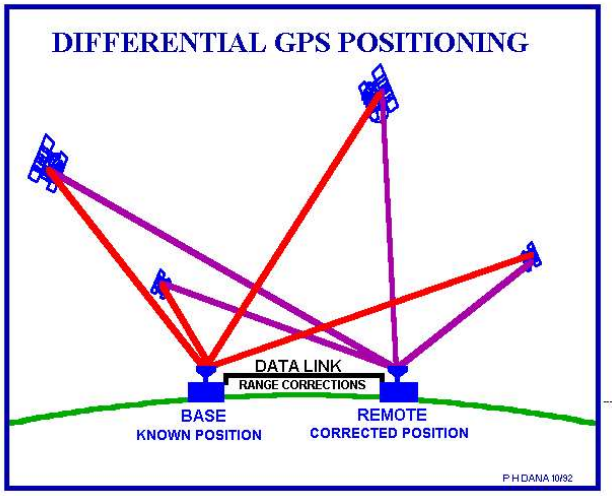
The Tripmate and Street Atlas USA 4.0 may be purchased for $159 from COMPUSA. Or you can buy the Tripmate GPS unit separately from Delorme for $129 if you already have the Street Atlas USA CD. The total package is $149 from Delorme, but I assume shipping would bring the price up close to the local price.

What is GPS? To conclude let's look a minute at how the Tripmate gets its information. The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a constellation of 24 satellites (21 navigational and 3 spares) that orbit the earth in 12 hour orbits. The system is funded and controlled by the US Department of Defense. The Russians have a similar system. The Monitor facility for the satellites is located at Falcon Air Force Base in Colorado. This monitor facility computes orbital data and clock data and sends it to the orbiting satellites. The satellites send a subset of this data to the ground GPS units (like the Tripmate) via radio signals.

In theory, the Tripmate determines its distance from a particular satellite by the time it takes to receive signals from the satellite. Using this distance and the location of the satellite (based on the satellite's identity code), the Tripmate now knows it is located somewhere on a sphere a certain distance from this satellite. With the same information from two more satellites, it then knows exactly where it is by intersecting the three spheres. In practice, however, it takes four or more satellites to do this due to inaccuracies in the data.

As mentioned above, the Department of Defense intentionally degrades the data it provides for civilian use. For military and other authorized users there are receivers which have a guaranteed accuracy of 22 meters horizontal, 27.7 meters vertical, and 100 nanosecond time accuracy. And this can be much improved upon by setting up fixed receivers at known locations (the latitude, longitude and elevation of which have already been precisely calculated) and then comparing the satellite data at these locations with the known data and simultaneously transmitting the correction factors to the nearby receiver in the field so that it can make the corrections to the incoming satellite data. This more accurate method, Differential GPS Positioning, is being employed by the Coast Guard in marine navigation by the installation of both receiving and transmitting stations at fixed latitudes and longitudes. Boats with special GPS units then can make corrections to the data they receive based on the correction factors they are also receiving from these stations.

For a very good and detailed explanation of GPS and the location where I got the two graphics on this page, go to the WWW site *http://wwwhost.cc.utexas.edu/ftp/pub/grg/gcraft/notes/gps/gps.html* maintained by Peter H. Dana of the University of Texas Geography Department. A Usenet newsgroup devoted to GPS is sci.geo.satellite-nav. And you thought geography was a dead subject, dealing only with place names. ◆



Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER.
For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at a member's home. *Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

A Slight Problem in Communication

A member of our group recently sent the following message to a Korean company. The company is to be commended for responding to his request for help, since not all computer companies do. However, the individual responding obviously did not understand the structure of the English language—and probably not even the request.

Now, this is not an attempt to poke fun at the company representative, since not only do I not speak Korean, I don't think I even know a single word in that language, and I feel that all those outside our borders who take time to learn English as an additional language are to be commended. But it has been a slow news month, so I offer you the following:

The Question:

Under some CD-ROM titles, such as Diablo by Blizzard Entertainment, the CD-ROM drive will read sporadically and eventually lock up the game. I still have not figured out what the problem is, the game works fine under Windows 95 but not NT 4. Do you have a driver more recent than the one that's installed with NT 4?

So the person was only asking : ***Do you have a new driver for Windows NT?***

The Response:

Dear sir / ma'am. How are you ?
Thank you for your E-MAIL.

If you have nothing to do with the win'95 then cd-rom drive is not problem. Because It is below the problem.

First : The problem you set would be caused by the interference between device drivers of WIN'95 and DOS.

Second : The most problem of data CD'S of itself. If you are using the abnormal CD ,and then the cd-rom will does not recognized. For Example : scrach on the Cd, unfit of Cd size, finger print by someone and illegal reproduct CD.

Third : Would you try to SMARTDRV.EXE file delete. and your using the data CD, PC configuration send to our E-MAIL get in touch with again and only the speed of audio cd is single speed to spin, video cd is dual speed to turnig. But the data cd is depend on cd-rom speed performance so then if 8X speed of cd-rom and the data access is more than quickly.

The cd-rom of (*company name)* , what happen the error contain of data cd then 8x speed spin to 2x speed down If it not read contain file of cd , CDR101 error messae display Other cd-rom is nothing this like control function. Therefore this case is not problem of the cd-rom running.

best regard ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Access Software	Micrografx
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Microsoft
Borland	Quarterdeck
Broderbund	Regnis
Corel Systems	Symantec
Grolier	Traveling Software
Knowledge Adventure	Xerox

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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 lndividual $35 Family
$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Check the address label for your renewal month

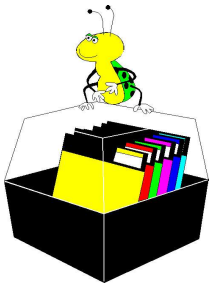
MEMBERS HELP-LINE

The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members' questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

Name:	**Phone No:**	**Day**:	**Time:**	**For help on:**
Ed Buzza	685-5898	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS
Jim Clark	986-3888	Mon-Sun	10am-9pm	Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows
Charles Howe	968-1207	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	Modems, BBS & Internet
Tom Cone	949-3716	Mon-Sun	7pm-9pm	Alpha 4 & Compuserve
Larry Anders	989-9119	Mon-Sun	6pm-9pm	Lotus 123 for Windows
Connie Kincaid	661-8185	Eve.+ Weekends	Leave message	MS Professional Office Suite
Merle Nicholson	879-3602	Mon-Fri	6:00pm-10:00pm	Hardware Memory Management, DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95, Visual Basic, Delphi
John Meroth	831-7878	Mon-Sun	Anytime except 6-8pm	OS/2, Database (general), Clarion, DTP (limited)
William LaMartin	251-3817	Mon-Fri	10am-9pm	Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet

To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9702.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



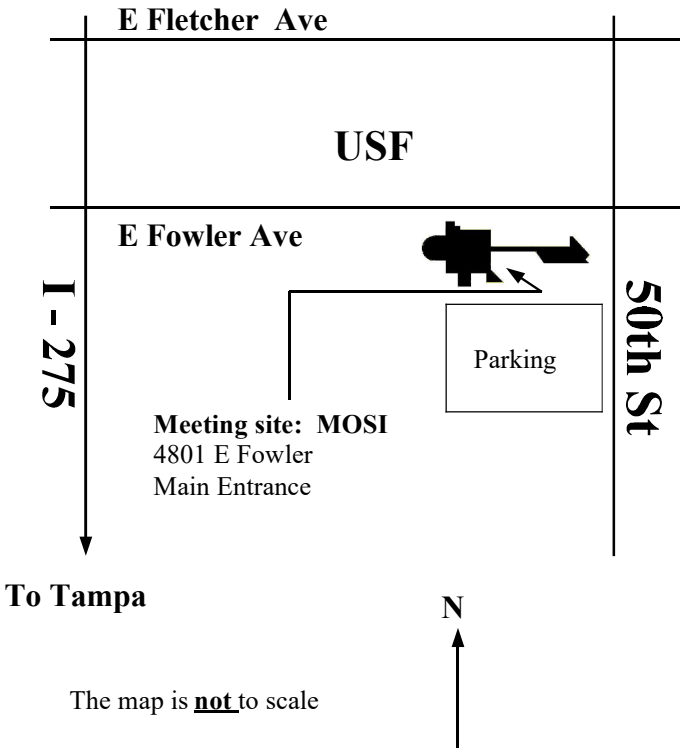
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(FACUG.....Continued from page 7)
place and a program. The members make the magic.

Directions for the future

I want to warn you - 150 very intelligent people just spent a weekend devising ways to coax, persuade, bribe and otherwise convince you to participate in your user group. Every group needs people to answer other people's questions, put brochures out where you work, tell people about us, write articles, or do whatever you can do to help the 70% of the population that is just now waking up to computer technology. Our primary mission is to help people understand and make use of computer technology. We need to reach out to those who want to learn. ◆





Bits of Blue



Happy New Year

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 1 January 1998

Meeting

Microstar Research will demonstrate Investment Software

January 14, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Starting this month, our meeting room at MOSI has changed.

We will follow the computer lab to its new location in the new wing of MOSI. Enter the main lobby, take the stairs to the second floor, then turn left and proceed to the computer lab. Someone should be available to direct you.

President's Message

by Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

We have a new year upon us, a (kind of) new officer lineup, a relocated meeting place and some acknowledgments to make.

First I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Connie Kincaid for serving as President for the past two years. Connie brought friendliness and perceptiveness to the job. She has changed the job description for President of TPCUG for a long time to come. Having served on the board for a year myself, I've observed her dedication and experience on the job, and, believe me, it has been exemplary. On behalf of the members of TPCUG: Thanks, Connie.

Wil Gobel is also leaving us as outgoing treasurer, having held the job for two years. Wil will be missed. Thanks for a job well done, Wil.

Kevan Sheridan and Jenny Lind Olin will be serving as Secretary and Treasurer, replacing myself and Wil in those positions. Kevan and Jenny have been participating on the board as past BBS Sysop and Genealogy SIG leader, respectively,

(President.....Continued on page 3)

February 10: Corel will demonstrate their Internet Web design products & update us on their other titles. Visit the chat page & the discussion group page at our Internet site http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ .

* * OFFICERS * *
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VICE PRES : Mike Hodges (hodges@reflectone.com) 962-2114
TREASURER: Jenny Lind Olin (jlolin@juno.com) 960-5723
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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

Member of
Association of Personal Computer User Groups
APCUG

SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING December 10, 1997

Minutes and Comments by Merle Nicholson, Secretary '97, Tampa PC Users Group

The pre-meeting HTML class started at 6:00, followed by introductions and announcements. TPCUG Officer nominations and elections followed. A very informative talk on the Roadrunner Internet service by Time Warner was next and the meeting was concluded with the doorprize drawing.

A pre-meeting tutorial on HTML was conducted by member Don Patzsch from 6:00 to 6:30. As expected, Don presented a very concise, informative session. A large group of members and guests attended the session. This is to be a monthly feature, and if you're even remotely interested in the subject you can't help but learn something about the Internet and how it works.

Connie opened with SIG Announcements. The Comm SIG was spoken for by Charles Howe and the Geneology SIG by Ford Bond.

Starting in December, the meeting room will be in a different location. It will be in the new wing on the second floor gallery above the main lobby. This should make us easier to find.

Connie briefly mentioned upcoming events such as a possible job fair in the spring in conjunction with MOSI. Also the FACUG is conducting a web page contest and a judge is needed to serve for a limited time to look at the contested web pages. Also intentions are to bring in tax preparation software for demo starting in January for a couple of months.

The officer elections for 1998 came next. The following people were nominated and duly elected to serve in 1998:

- Merle Nicholson, President
- Mike Hodges, Vice President
- Kevan Sheridan, Secretary
- Jenny Lind Olin, Treasurer
- Bruce Register, Member at Large

A very informative talk on the Roadrunner Internet service was next. A representative of Time Warner, Jason Wells, assisted by Ty Abrahams of Groupware International gave an outstanding talk on the cable modem system being installed throughout most of Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties. There was just too much data given during the talk for me to be able to do it justice here.

They are a complete Internet Service Provider (ISP), offering

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

(President.....Continued from page 1)
for some time, so they both bring a lot of experience to the job.

Mike Hodges and Bruce Register are continuing in their positions as Vice President and Member at Large. Mike and Bruce both have the past year's experience on the job, and Bruce has several more years as past Secretary.

Ford Bond, Larry Anders, Charles Howe, Mary Sheridan and William LaMartin have all agreed to continue as: MOSI Liaison, Librarian, Comm SIG Chairman, Programs Coordinator/BBS Sysop and Newsletter/Web Editor, respectively.

So it's a good, experienced group of people, all fun to be with, so I know we're going to enjoy the year at the helm.

If it seems that we're playing musical chairs with the board positions, that would be right. What we're actually doing is reducing our total number of board persons by two with the loss of Connie and Wil. My personal preference would be to bring in at least a couple of new people each year. It was not to be. Bruce did an excellent job pleading for other members to fill positions--with no success. So it's on my personal agenda to take a new approach to solicit help for next year. I'll start right now with this: **The board meeting is open to all members. We meet at Reflectone at 6:00PM on the Thursday prior to the Wednesday meeting.** ***ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME and NEEDED.*** If you think you can serve in some capacity during the following year, come to the meeting and participate, and maybe scope out your next job, or just help out. Contact Mike Hodges first to get on the Reflectone security list.

Finally, just a couple of acknowledgments; ***A very special thanks to Don Patzsch*** for conducting the HTML class and for bringing his special knowledge to each meeting and for his willingness to serve in any way he can.

MOSI, through Ford Bond, has provided the facilities without which we cannot exist. Ford came though for us and continues on our behalf.

And thanks to Mary Sheridan who has brought a renewed enthusiasm to scheduling our monthly programs. The quality of the programs is evident. She volunteered for the job when it was needed and is serving very effectively in the #1 most important job in the club. The OTHER #1 most important job is .the newsletter/web editor. William LaMartin has brought the quality of the newsletter to an all time high. William really cares deeply about the club in general and about the newsletter and web site in particular. They're both "award winners" in my book. And not forgetting Larry Anders, whose humor, interest, experience and especially newsletter articles have been invaluable to us for many years.

Thanks, and I'll see you at the next meeting. Merle ◆

Comments

by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC users Group

Several months back I upgraded to the newest versions of two of the more expensive programs that I use: Visual Basic Professional and Microsoft Office Professional. With some searching I found the new versions at fairly reasonable prices—when compared to the highest asking price out there. More recently I upgraded three programs I have been using for years, programs which, I think, are the best in their respective categories—and which all three taken together don't cost as much to upgrade as one of the first two programs mentioned. They are Delorme's Street Atlas 5.0, Broderbund's Family tree Maker 4.0, and Intuit's Quicken 98. (The latter was actually a Christmas gift from my son.) I have the deluxe version of Quicken, the non-deluxe version of Family Tree Maker, and the only version of Street Atlas.

I have been using these programs for years, starting with the DOS versions of Quicken and Family Tree Maker since in the beginning that was all that existed. I immediately jumped to their Windows versions when they were first offered and have watched them improve with each new version. Occasionally I skip an upgrade for Family Tree Maker and Quicken. For example, my previous Quicken was version 4; the new one is Quicken 98 with versions 5 and 6 for Windows in between. For Street Atlas, though, I have purchased each new version since each one has been such a major step over the previous one. Version 5.0 combines the mapping features of version 4.0 with the trip planning features of Deloreme's *Map and Go* program. So, now, I have two programs for the price of one, and there are plenty of new features to boot.

The one new feature common to all three programs is their integration of the Internet. Each has a menu button to click on to connect to the Internet to access financial data in the case of Quicken, genealogical data for Family Tree Maker, and travel information like new road construction in the case of Street Atlas. As space needs filling in the newsletter I will write about these programs. Luckily I don't need to use all three this issue.

For the past six months I have been struggling with space on my 18 month old computer's 2.5 GB hard drive. I aggressively delete programs and files that I no longer need; I save to ZIP disks those files that I use only rarely. I empty my browser's cache regularly as well as the Windows Temp folder. But none of this seems to stop the steady diminution of free space on my hard drive. When my son loaded Riven with the 150 MB of files that it installs, things really got tight.

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

Software Review

Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



To start out the New Year differently, I thought I would do something new myself…. re-review a product for the third time. I first reviewed the original issue of Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia (***GME***) in 1994, then again in 1996. With each new issue it keeps getting better and bigger. Now, the Deluxe Edition comes with two CDs full of interactive information. Considering each CD can hold up to 680 megabytes of data. You do the math. It's loaded. The 1998 edition works with both Windows 3.1 and 95, but if you're not using Windows 95 yet, quit waiting. You're only depriving yourself of a much more enjoyable time between you and your computer.

When ***GME*** is first installed, Apple's Quick Time movie player is installed and you are given a chance to register on-line. If you register on-line you are then given the opportunity to install 36 new *free* fonts. After that you're ready to start an interactive, learning-by-doing experience you, and/or your children, are sure to enjoy. Grolier has been doing this for over 100 years, and I believe they continue that tradition with ***GME*** 1998.

The initial screen gives you an immediate opportunity to tour what's available in ***GME,*** or you can dive right in and explore yesterday and today on your own with help usually just a click away. The 1998 edition of ***GME*** has:

- Over 35,000 articles, including 1,100 new and 4,200 updated articles.
- Over 15,000 images, including 3,700 new pictures.
- 31 Guided Tours that guide you through specific topics with related sights, sounds and articles.
- 1,200 geopolitical, historical and thematic maps that include multimedia features.
- 400 points of interest.
- Over 15 hours of sound.
- 10 custom interfaces.
- 1996-97 Yearbook, including multimedia video coverage, current events, chronology of events, and photos of the month for '96-97.
- On-line Knowledge Explorer that includes the Grolier Internet Index of related sites, links from ***GME*** articles to two additional Grolier encyclopedias on-line, Encyclopedia Americana and The New Book of Knowledge and monthly updates that mean your articles are never really out-of-date.
- The American Heritage College Dictionary, available by just clicking on a word or just typing in the word for a definition.
- Drill-Down Atlases link map to map allowing you to drill down to smaller and smaller geographical areas, to points of interest photographs and related articles. You can also change from geopolitical to thematic to historical maps of the same area.
- Multiplex Videos create a multimedia learning experience by combining all the videos on a given topic on a single screen.
- Interactive Timelines allow you to explore the relationships between events in world history by knowing what was happening in one part of the world while something else was happening elsewhere.
- Free Activity Book developed with teachers and other education experts provides fun family projects to help you become familiar with the many features of GME.

Whether you just got your first computer this Christmas or you're an old pro at computing, I don't think you can go wrong with Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia for 1998. In either case you'll find ***GME*** easy to install, understand and use. ***GME*** makes learning come to life with exciting and innovative features. The easy-to-use interactive modules let you explore the world in all its geographic, scientific, artistic, and cultural wonder. And under Windows you're always just a click away from your word processor.

List price is under $50 with a $20 mail-in rebate if you are a previous owner of ***GME***, *Microsoft Encarta*, *Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia, IBM World Book* or *Encyclopedia Britannica* and if you purchase by June 30, 1998. You can find out more about ***GME*** at http://www.grolier.com. ◆



SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Mixman Studio** - Mixman Technologies -Mixing studio where you can load up to 16 tracks of digital sound, mix, them and perform them in real time - Win95, Pentium & CD required.
2. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more than 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action - Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
3. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Helicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
4. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
5. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
6. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space (8-adult)
7. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

Internet picture of the month



Sacred Heart Church, Tampa FL

This photo is from the Tour of Tampa Bay collection at the Tampa Bay Online site http://tampabayonline.net/tour/home.htm . This is a collection of interactive, panoramic, 360 degree photos of Tampa area sites. Using your mouse, you can move around a 360 degree tour of the church. This particular photo was taken by Jim Reed.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
Art Masterpiece Collection - Jim's Fine Art Collection	http://www2.iinet.com/art/
Broadcast Network on the Internet	http://www.audionet.com/
Compendium of HTML Elements	http://www.htmlcompendium.org/sitemap.htm
drivesavers.com (hard drive rescue)	http://www.drivesavers.com/home.html
Blues Summit (Internet Only Radio)	http://www.radio.audionet.com/radio/blues/blues_summit/station.html
CompareNet! (comparison shopping)	http://www.compare.net/cgi-bin/webc/comparenet/home.html
Earth TV Galicia Channel page (Spanish TV)	http://dove.mtx.net.au/~punky/TVgalicia.html
Earth TV LCI Channel page (France)	http://dove.mtx.net.au/~punky/TVlci.html
Escher The Ultimate Collection.	http://www.uq.edu.au/~zztmunda/escher.html
Happy Puppy's Front Porch (Game Site)	http://www.happypuppy.com/
Java Chess interface	http://pine.cs.yale.edu:4201/java/chess.html
Legal Information Institute	http://www.law.cornell.edu/
Medical Multimedia Group - Reference Library	http://www.sechrest.com/mmg/reflib.html
MetaCrawler search	http://www.metacrawler.com/
Tour of Tampa Bay (360 degree images of Tampa)	http://tampabayonline.net/tour/home.htm

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Hardware Review

UMAX Astra 1200S Scanner

by Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group



Well, I just had to buy a scanner after many years of price checking. You may have noticed that the prices, while going down steadily, took a nosedive just before Christmas. This one, a 600x1200 dpi model was priced at $249, and the model 610 at 300x600 dpi was priced at $119 and for a day or so, had a rebate bringing it down to $99. But I took at look at the 600x1200 for $250 and didn't give the other a second thought. I should maybe have given it a second thought, but more on this later.

As for the hardware, it's a scanner. What more can I say except that it is SCSI, and it has a lid, being a 8 1/2 x 14 flatbed, and it scans. The proof is in the software!

The attraction that it had over the 610 was the SCSI interface card. I really didn't want to add another parallel cable to an already tight, crowded mess of cables, and was also reluctant because of stories of printing issues and operating with the LS120 or ZIP drive I was planning to put there too. So - unless you already have SCSI installed - you have to open your computer and install the 8-bit card in an ISA slot. Windows 95 does not recognize the card at all. There are no settings on the card or in software. It just does not exist as far as the operating system is concerned, but it works. The techie part of me hates that, but what the hey. The installation instructions are very clear and easy for anyone to follow. That's the hardware part of the review.

When it comes to scanners, software is probably more important than hardware, and this one really is not bad. The biggest complaint that I have is with the documentation. There's nothing I can find that gives a really clear picture of the overall functions of the software and how they fit together. I have it mostly figured out, but not all. There are two good manuals in Acrobat format, one on the main program called Presto PageManager and one on the TWAIN device called VistaScan. PageManager is the central program, and I'll start there after I cover the three utility programs: Copier, AutoScan Setup and Scanner Test.

Copier is just wonderful. You just start Copier, put a document in the scanner, select the number of copies, and hit the start button. It's like a real copier, except slower. In 30 seconds the printer starts, so on my old Deskjet it's a full two minutes from start to finish, but, to be fair, the printer time is ¾ of that and you can be scanning more while the printer prints. Copier's control panel has several controls like reduction from 1% to 200% and other controls making it more versatile than a standard Xerographic copier. Copier is a nice bonus as far as I'm concerned; not having expected it. I find I use it a lot, and my family does too. And don't forget that your FAX, if you have a FAX modem, is a printer device too, making it easy to FAX out anything on paper.

The other two utilities, Autoscan Setup and Scanner are for setup and testing. They do a good job, but you don't use them unless you have trouble with the interface. I did not.

Now to PageManager. It's a kind of a "shell" to use a software term, a kind of a manager for all the scanning you may want to do. You don't have to use it all the time (except for OCR), but it's a neat concept, and after I figured out what it did, I use it all the time except for copying.

First let's review a scanner term - TWAIN. It's a standardized interfacing system that allows many different software applications to access one or more input devices. In our case just one: a scanner. You may have noticed in Paintshop Pro a menu item called "Acquire". All graphics programs will have it. (I was surprised that Microsoft PowerPoint doesn't, that I could find.) The menu item Acquire in such a program will start up the registered TWAIN-compliant device - in our case, a program called VistaScan. With VistaScan, you do the actual scanning, and then when done, VistaScan "hands" the result to the program!

Now back to PageManager. PageManager uses the Acquire in its tool menu to get more scanned documents or pictures and stacks them up as small thumbnail pictures side by side. So you can manage all the scanned images you have from here. Delete them as needed or pass them onto other programs. PageManager has an application toolbar at its bottom to designate all the apps that you may want to pass images onto. The bar is customizable, but the basic list contains e-mail, FAX, Print, PageType, PageImage and Notepad. I removed Notepad and replaced it with Microsoft Word, and then added Paintshop Pro and PhotoDeluxe. So after scanning in the image and after it appears as a thumbnail picture, you simply drag the thumbnail image to the Application button of your choice. Now, associated with each application program is a

(Scanner.....Continued on page 7)

(Scanner.....Continued from page 6)
selection of image type. The image types are Bitmapped (.BMP), PCX (.PCX), TIFF (.TIF) and ASCII Text. In the case of MS Word (and notepad before I deleted it), I selected ASCII text. So guess what happens when you drag an image to Word? It does OCR on the image! (OCR=Optical Character Recognition). Converts it to text. And I must say it's fast and fairly accurate, too. Now that's a subjective opinion, of course. I really didn't do testing of its accuracy. And its having OCR was the reason I put MS Word on the App bar. Notepad doesn't have a spell checker. And all OCR needs a spell checker to find the words it messes up, and this OCR just doesn't have it. I'm sure I'd be happier with one of several good OCR software programs; I've used them and like them, but …. this one comes with the package and I didn't spend the extra $80 or so. I'll stick with this until I have some large difficult OCR'ing to do.

Two other apps are supplied, PageImage for image editing and PageType for forms conversion. I'll have to skip over PageType. The help for it is abysmal, consisting of a definition of each menu item. PageImage's help is the same, but at least I know what an image editor does, and the functions are strikingly similar to Paintshop Pro, the popular shareware program, so I was comfortable with it. But I've decided that PaintShop Pro has more functions, so I've stopped using PageImage, and I'll probably delete it from my system. But in fairness, PageImage isn't bad, and isn't hard to use, and for basic cropping, resizing, color adjustments and such and if the limited output formats (.JPG, .PCD, .PCX, .TGA and .TIF) are adequate (where's .GIF?), then it'll work well.

Neither PaintShop Pro nor PageImage is good for photo editing, and they weren't really designed for it. For detailed photo editing, I used Adobe PhotoDeluxe. I won it as a doorprize long ago and didn't take it out of the box until I got the scanner. I clipped the background out of a photo and then pasted in a graduated blue background for my personal website. Nice.

When "Acquiring" images into any application, the VistaScan software is as easy to use as any I've seen, and it is better than the software that comes with the Hewlett-Packard scanners I am familiar with. It gives a range of adjustments and histograms that would take some study to be able to use them effectively, but that's true of Paintshop Pro, too. Fortunately, you can take the defaults and do very well. Some obvious functions are for contrast and brightness that you may want to use most of the time, and, at the worst, you just keep scanning and adjusting until you get what you want.

Now to the problems and overall observations. I really didn't have any problems except in my own expectations. I discovered that to use what I paid for (not much money at that) I need more … memory, hard drive and printer. On a scanner that I paid extra money for to get 600x1200 dpi, guess what? … I'm scanning at 300 dpi. Why? My 32MB of system memory isn't enough for really high resolutions scans. I can do a standard photo at 1200x1200 and then if I close all other apps down I can edit it. And the hard drive space! It apparently uses a lot of temporary disk space, so I had to uninstall it and reinstall on another drive where I had more room. But the detail! Zoom in! Wow! A lot of detail. It looks like nothing on the photo is lost!

I never thought that I'd see an "out of memory" error on my system, but I had it within 10 minutes of installing the scanner. Am I really disappointed? No. 300dpi is quite enough for most purposes, and I really didn't know that. So, could I have bought the 300x600 and saved $100? Yes, but I wouldn't have gotten the SCSI interface with that model as far as I could tell. I'm still happy with it, and I can always add another 32MB of RAM, can't I? But it'll have to wait for a new photo-quality printer.

UMAX Technologies Inc., 3561 Gateway Blvd. , Fremont CA 94538, (510) 651-4000
http://www.umax.com
About $250 is the street price. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 3)
The solution, of course, was to add a second hard drive, and I finally gave in and bought a 5.1 GB Western Digital drive for $279. And this brought back memories of past hard drives: My first two IBM compatible computers and 120 MB and 75 MB drives. I don't recall the prices of those drives, but I do recall the next hard drive I purchased. It was a 350 MB drive which cost $350--a price which at the time seemed like a real bargain. At that $1/MB price, my new 5.1 GB drive would cost $5,100. What a price reduction we have seen. Similar reductions have occurred in memory. The first memory I ever bought was 64 KB for an Apple IIe in 1983. I think it cost $200 - $250. I believe the first memory I bought for an IBM compatible was over $60/MB, and now you can get 32 MB for around $60.

Now the same dynamic seems to be at work on the complete computer system with the advent of quite loaded computers for under $1,000. But buyer beware! Due to some of them having at most one expansion slot, many of these bargain

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Software Review

Street Atlas USA 5.0 from Delorme

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

As I mentioned in my Comments article earlier, this is a program of which I have purchased every version starting with version 1.0. And every update has been more than worth the fairly modest price of updating. This update combines Delorme's *Map and Go* trip route planning program into the Street Atlas program. So now, in addition to viewing maps from every location in the US, you can also plan a trip to any US location, having the program calculate the shortest, quickest, most scenic, etc. route for you. It will also list the points of interest along the way and print out a AAA-type routing booklet of maps to take on your trip.

If you have a laptop with a CD drive, you won't even need to print out anyting, since you can view the map data on the laptop as you drive. Additionally, if you purchase the Delorme global positioning device called *Tripmate*, which I reviewed in the February 1997 newsletter, you can let the computer guide you on your journey—even letting it tell you where to turn or take a different highway if your laptop has a sound card.

I recently tried out this last feature on a 140 mile trip. The only problem I encountered was the low volume of the laptop's sound. If there was a lot of noise in the car at the time the computer decided to advise you of an upcoming route change you might miss it. In addition to mapping out your trip and guiding you along it with audio instructions, you can also have the program display points of interest and businesses with their phone numbers along your route. I don't know how the particular businesses get into the database, since some obvious candidates were omitted and some obscure ones were included.

If you desire you can have it tell you the entire route. While using the global position, you are presented with a split screen with a list of different roads you will take, how many miles and the estimated time needed in the left frame and the map with your current position in the right frame. It is something that you only want to take quick glances at while you are driving. This was not a problem on this trip since there were two of us in the car, and the passenger could navigate with the computer.

When I first started with Delorme's Map and Go, in making trip plans you were required to start and end trips at major locations. Now you can start and end a trip at any point on the map. There are now a lot more points of interest, public buildings, churches, etc. denoted on the maps than in the past. Of course, you can turn off this feature if it clutters your screen, as I did in the screen capture at the end of the article. As usual, you can find locations based on address, zip code and phone extension as in the past. And, as before, at any point you click you will be given the longitude and latitude.

You can connect to the Internet to download current road work notices. For example, I noted that there was a warning of a slowdown on Hillsborough Avenue in Tampa due to work on the bridge over the Hillsborough River. You can also download Coast Guard information on public marine aids to navigation along the coasts and information regarding the location of nuclear power plants and dams for some reason I cannot fathom. I assume that the available information here will increase with time. For example, all you speeders will probably eventually be able to find the locations of the latest speed traps.

It is a great program that just gets better with every new version. In addition to the major additions, there are the minor ones that improve the appearance of the program on your screen and the way you interact with it.

Some of the new features in Delorme's own words are:

- **Address-to-Address Routing** DeLorme's extraordinary map detail enhanced with address-to-address routing
- **Over 2 Million Points of Interest** Find restaurants, hotels, gas stations and lots of fun things to do along the way
- **GPS Voice Navigation** When using the GPS feature, Street Atlas USA 5.0 talks to you as you travel, telling you how far it is to your next turn, what road you're on and how far it is to the end of your journey
- **PalmPilot PDA Support** Plan a route and send your directions to a 3Comâ PalmPilotä to carry with you
- **Enhanced GPS Features** Automatic panning, automatic logging, automatic tracking, GPS map features, change symbol size, monitor satellites and more
- **Prefer/Avoid Roads** Select or avoid certain roads in your route
- **Edit Roads** Assign characteristics to roads (e.g., one way, no left turn, etc.) that are incorporated into the routing
- **Automatic On-line Updates** With an Internet connection, on-line information for weather, road construction, upcoming events and other points of interest automatically appears on your maps as you pan
- **On-line Gazetteer** Direct Internet access to hundreds of city Web pages for more detailed regional information
- **Attractions Web Sites** Direct Internet access to up-to-date information for points of interest

(Atlas.....Continued on page 10)

Software Review

Quicken Deluxe 98 from Intuit

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group



Quicken is another program that I have been with since almost day 1 in personal computer time. I started with the DOS version, switched to the first Windows version when it came out, and have updated to about every other successive version. You know that the program must have served me well all these years or I wouldn't have stayed with it. I can remember only one time I had some trouble with it. That was when converting data for the DOS to Windows upgrade or from the Windows 1 version to the next Windows version. In the conversion, some of my splits (the different lines you can break a transaction into if you want to specify the separate items, for example, that make up a single deposit) had the correct amounts but incorrect descriptions. Since this concerned only a few entries and they were several years old and the amounts were correct, I didn't worry too much about it. But that was the only time I have had cause to really complain about Quicken.

Of course, Quicken is much more now than a simple checking register. It is a place to track anything financial in your life. Most of what Quicken has added (at least for the deluxe versions) starting with version 4, I believe, are the investment features that I really don't use. I mainly use it to track the disappearance of my money instead of its growth. My accounts and different categories of expenses (and a few categories of income) easily reach 50 in number. Just think, before the personal computer and Quicken none of this would be possible. It is another example of how the personal computer has made us more productive. Now I track 50 different items, where as in the past I only struggled to balance my checkbook and a few savings vehicles with pencil and paper.

Seriously, Quicken has been a bookkeeping life saver for me. A couple of years back I let it take over more of my life when I ordered sheets of checks to feed into my laser printer so that Quicken could not only record my expenses, it could also pay my bills. This way, I save time by letting Quicken print the check and record it in my checking register at the same time.

But, enough of how wonderful Quicken has been in the past. What is new for Quicken 98? Well, as might be expected, there is more of a tilt toward the Internet. You can now get all sorts of investment and other financial information from the Quicken site. If you use any of the online brokers like Charles Schwab & Co.., E*TRADE , Fidelity Investments or Waterhouse Securities, they will let you interface with them directly from the program. And in the works is the ability to download all of your credit card data (recent charges, etc.) directly into your Quicken credit card register for card issuers that team up with Quicken. This is intended to keep you from having to input this data yourself, but, to me, if you don't enter it yourself you have no check on whether the charges when you get them are valid.

Of course, they also are forging alliances with various banks to allow you to do online banking using Quicken and connecting to these banks over the Internet. Local banks that I saw listed were Barnett and Sun. Of course, Barnett is about to be gobbled up by NCNB, so that may no longer be available since NCNB was not on the list.

Banking is definitely moving to the Internet. But the problem, as I see it right now, is that we are getting many different groupings of banks, using different software, so that at this point services like those Quicken is offering will only be of use to a select few of us potiental Quicken and Internet users. If my bank or credit card company is not allied with Quicken, then all bets are off. Additionally, many banks, like Barnett, want to charge you about $10 /month for accessing your account via the Internet. I think it should be free, since such service is keeping me out of their buildings and away from their human tellers. And indeed some banks offer such services free. Huntington Bank, for example, offers free Internet access to your account with them via a secure Internet server if your browser is Java enabled, as Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator are. So Quicken gets cut out of deals like this one, and my bet is that this is the direction banks will go in the future (although they may offer some sort of Quicken compatible download of your transactions).

Other than access to financial information on the Internet and more investment help, what else do you get with this new version? Since I skipped two versions before this upgrade, I cannot say what is completely new, but to me the most noticeable changes involved the "small" things. It is now just a lot easier to move around my different accounts in Quicken. The appearance of the program on the screen is more pleasing, and they seem to get more information and options presented in the same space than in the past.

When I open the program I am presented with a week's worth

(Quicken.....Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
approximately 27MB/sec at the modem for $39.95/month for current cable subscribers after an installation cost of $99.95.

The installation of the necessary infrastructure to offer all of the Time Warner system in the two counties is still ongoing. They look for completion of that by June 15th, 1998. The City of Tampa area will start at the first of the year and be completed to South Tampa in March or April.

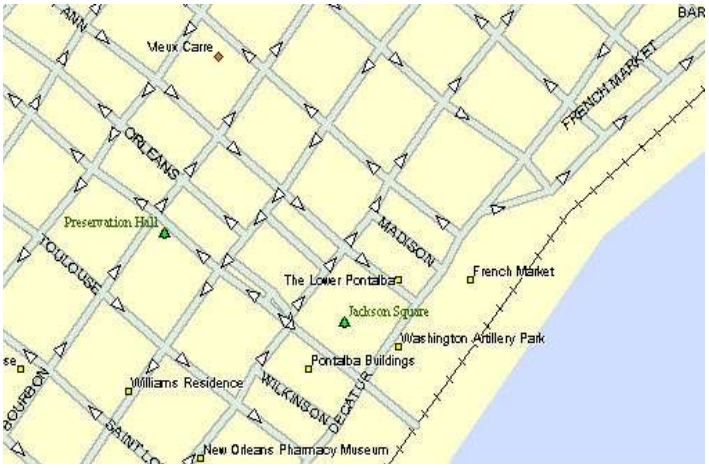
As an ISP, they are offering added services: 5MB for personal web sites, up to 5 e-mail addresses etc. The equipment installed, including an Ethernet card installed in your PC, is owned and maintained by Time Warner. It consists of the Ethernet card, cable modem and cabling, and a new dedicated cable run into your house. There is a discount offered to all TPCUG members reducing the installation cost to $49.95. Contact Jason Wells at jason@timewarnercable.com.

The door prize drawing followed after a short break. Roger Waters won a hat and software. Micrografx Greetingcard Gold was won by John Weber, and Janet Bowersox received a Tee shirt; Vince McCoy won a mouse pad; and Warren Fuss, Larry Anders and Merle Nicholson received Time Warner hats. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)
computers cannot be upgraded. Even laptops are rapidly delining in price. It is amazing what you can now get for less than $2,000 in a name-brand laptop (the only type to have). ◆

(Atlas.....Continued from page 8)
- **Reservations** Make on-line reservations for hotel accommodations, airline tickets, car rentals, etc.
- **Training Card Tutorials** Easy-to-use tutorials coach you step-by-step as you learn about Street Atlas USA 5.0's many features
- **Travel Package** Printing options include Summary, Directions, North Up Map, Detailed Maps and Travel Plan - everything you need to keep you informed as you travel
- **Weather Almanac** Weather statistics for 341 places in the United States
- **Radio Listings** Listings of AM and FM radio stations and their formats throughout the United States
- **Exit Services** Comprehensive listings of available services at US interstate highway exits
- **Avoid Areas** in Routing Avoid specific geographic areas, such as cities with heavy traffic congestion or major road construction

It is a great program even if you don't have a laptop to take it on the road. But it really comes into its own on a color laptop with sound and CD ROM to which you have attached the Delorme Tripmate GPS unit. Pop in the disk and hit the road. You will never get lost again. ◆



Screen shot of Street Atlas showing one way streets in the New Orleans French Quarter

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

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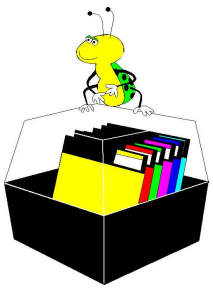
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Connie Kincaid	evenings & week-ends	661-8185	DOS, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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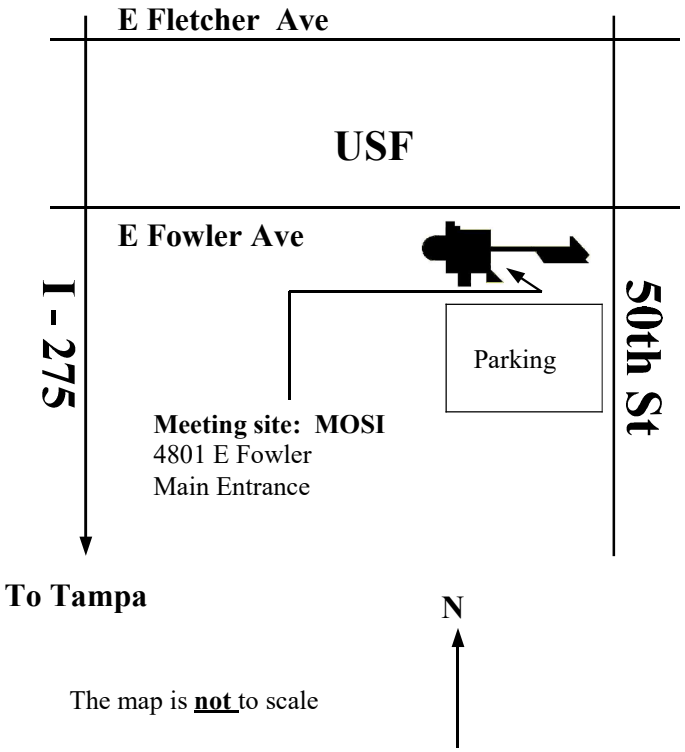


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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Quicken.....Continued from page 9)
of bills to be paid or scheduled deposits to be made. That way I know what lies ahead and hopefully I won't miss any payments this way. On my right I have tabs that list the various account registers that are open, and this allows me to move between them easily—a big improvement over older versions. In brief, it just has a more polished look than past versions—not that there was anything really bad about the previous versions. Of course, there is extensive help, including tutorials. Finally, this version also takes you on the Internet (again) to a Quicken site, which allows you to search for the best car insurance rate or home mortgage deal. It also allows you to do minimal tax planning.

Quicken Deluxe sells for around $59 with a $20 rebate for previous Quicken owners. If you are happy with the basic Quicken package, which omits much of the investment material and tax planning material but really does everything that I want out of the package, you can probably get that for around $20. ◆





Bits of Blue



Spring in Florida

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 3 March 1998

Meeting

Kinematics will do a surge protector presentation
March 11, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

I have very important news to convey to all club members. Due to the low traffic on the BBS, the TPCUG BBS has been closed down by decision of the board of directors. The BBS is a very vital part of our history and was a club mainstay for a good many years. I can recall in years past that, even if you didn't know much about the club itself, if you were interested in computers, you knew that the Bits-of-Blue BBS was top-notch. The quality of the BBS was the result of two club members - Kevan and Mary Sheridan.

There isn't any way that we can repay Mary and Kevan for all the literally thousands of hours they've devoted to running the BBS all these years. It's been a selfless dedication to something they fervently believed in. So the Sheridans are due our most heartfelt thanks. They can certainly rest assured that they have made an impact on the quality of the Tampa Bay area. ◆

The END of the BBS, an end of an ERA?

By Kevan Sheridan, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Quality and Quantity are the things that really change. When I started calling the BBS, I thought it was this huge computer in some big room where the high guru of computers sat in his big chair controlling everything that happened in the world. I know others who have had this same thought. I was literally startled when I saw it for the

(BBS.....Continued on page 4)

April 8: Dick Kellerman will do a presentation of Photo Suite. Visit TPCUG's Virtual Reality World. A link is at the bottom of the page http://www.canx.com/tpcug/communications_sig/communications_sig.htm

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Home Page http://www.canx.com/tpcug/

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING February 11, 1998

Minutes and Comments by Kevan Sheridan, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The pre-meeting Turbo Tax demonstration was canceled. Introductions and announcements began at 6:10 pm. Merle announced the closure of the BBS, and William gave a quick demo of the club web pages. The Corel demonstration began at 6:35 and lasted until 8:00. Following a short break the meeting concluded with the door prize drawing. The amount brought in from ticket sales was $112.00.

The Tampa PC Users Group BBS opened for business during August of 1986, and there have been quite a few changes since then. One of the biggest changes to bulletin board system usage has been the growth of the Internet, and with this growth a big decline in BBS activity has made it impractical to continue. The local fidonet feed for message echoes will stop on Feb 20. The final day of BBS operation is scheduled to be March 1, 1998.

The Corel demonstration was presented by Sussane Gramann, Product Specialist for Corel Corporation, and John Torres, Corel Corp./Mindshare representative for the Tampa bay area. The first program presented by Sussane was WebMaster Suite, a complete solution for web site creation. The suite contains Web.Designer, Web.SiteManager, Web.Photo Paint, Web.Draw, Web.Move, Web.World, Web.Data, O'Reilly's Website v1.1, Netscape Navigator 3.0, 7500 internet ready clipart images, and free 30-day web site hosting service. Minimum system requirements: PC 486 DX/66 or higher, Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51 or higher, 2X CD-ROM drive, 16 MB RAM, VGA monitor, mouse or tablet.

Web Designer can handle up to five pages simultaneously and has 222 templates. Web pages can be setup in just minutes. Web site management allows management of local sites, remote sites, and even sub sites. It automatically updates links, detects and reports broken links and orphan files. Photo Paint 7 technology lets you quickly create or edit wonderful images with quite a few fancy options thrown in. With 3D VRML (Virtual Reality Modeling Language) you can design 3D images and even use animation! Image file formats used include both GIF and J-Peg. If you have stored information to display, tables with up to 100 by 100 elements allow you to publish your database information quickly and easily. Finally, of course, you can use Netscape Navigator to view your pages as they would appear on the web.

Just to show us what could be done with Web.World, Sussane

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

Comments: Corel, Virtual Reality, and Visual Basic

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Before anything else, allow me to invite you to check out the new online version of this newsletter (take the fourth link on our home page). In the past, I had been posting an Adobe Acrobat version of each newsletter at our web site. If you downloaded it and viewed it with the Acrobat reader, you were presented with a true, in color, copy of the newsletter with hot links. However, I got the feeling that not many took the time to do this since it involved the download. So, I decided to try to create an online HTML version--I was already reproducing the main articles in HTML format in the "Online Reviews" section. This just added a bit more work, and it turned out to be easier and consumed less hard disk space than I had originally thought.

Corel's Web.World Virtual Reality Program

As usual, Corel gave us a stellar presentation of outstanding products. They were also generous with the door prizes (see photo at right) and the special user group pricing on their major products. I and each of the individuals on either side of me took advantage of the offer on Corel Draw 8 and the WebMaster Suite. And I noticed many others filling out the order forms that were passed around. In a little over three weeks I had a nice fat box from Corel sitting at my door--much sooner than promised--but too late for a review in the newsletter. However, part of one of the products intrigued me, and I just had to give it a try: Corel Web.World

I first installed Corel Draw 8. That took about 225 MB of that new 5.1 GB second drive I wrote about adding last month. Then WebMaster Suite took around another 100 MB. It's a good thing I got the drive. I remembered enough of an earlier version of Corel Draw to whip out a birthday card for someone in a short time. I haven't used Corel Draw in some time, since I have been using a newer version Micrografx's similar product for the past several years. I plan on using both now so as to compare the two programs.

After installing the WebMaster Suite, I took a quick look at the features of the main program Corel Web.Designer to get the feel of it and then quickly moved on to Corel Web.World, the virtual reality creation program. This program and several of the other lesser programs in the Suite must not be true Windows 95 programs since they don't support long file names. Corel Draw 8 and Web.Designer are Windows 95 programs.

During the Corel presentation, the presenter did not actually build a Virtual Reality (VR) project; she used one that had been created earlier just to show what the results of using the program could be. Actually constructing such a VR world would take too much time for a brief presentation.



Corel is always very generous with door prizes. Here I am wearing mine.

In using the program, you basically choose a level on which you want to work, say, 0 to 3 units. Here you create your rooms and other rectangular objects--a room is just a rectangular object with the inside cut out. You can then apply color to the walls and "hang" objects on the walls. These objects on the walls can then be given properties such that when a visitor to your virtual world double clicks on the object they may see a text message, hear a MIDI music file being played, be sent to another site on the Internet, or transported to another virtual world you have created.

If I have created a room or collection of rooms on level 0 - 3, then I could change to level 3.5 - 6.5 and create a second floor above the one I just created. I haven't found a good way to move from a first floor to the second floor. Right now one just moves up through the air from the first to the second floors. I suppose you could create two different VR worlds with one the first floor of the building and the second world being the second floor. Then a double click on the stairs, for example, could take you from one floor to the next. I have had only one day to work on the program before writing this article, but to see an example of what can be accomplished, go to the site http://www.canx.com/tpcug/communications_sig/virtual/world3/mosi.htm . It is hidden away at our web site in the Announcements section under the Communications/Internet SIG. To view the VR world, your browser will have to have VMRL viewing capability installed. Both Netscape and Microsoft Browsers provide add-ons for this. You mayor may not have this feature installed. If your browser has this ability installed, when you go to the above site you will see my version of the MOSI floor plan. See if you can find the man at the computer in the computer lab upstairs. To get upstairs you just sort of walk through the air at present. Later, I will make this more realistic with you going to the stairs then double clicking or something to be transported to the second level.

Just like there is a Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) for writing the code for a web page, there is a Virtual Reality Markup Language (VRML) for creating VR objects. Both produce text files with associated graphic files for whatever pic-

(Comments.....Continued on page 6)

(BBS.....Continued from page 1)
first time. Just a little thing sitting in the corner with nothing more than a monitor, keyboard, and modem connected. The sysop was no longer bigger than life, not much different from anyone else, and was just interested in computers. The BBS was nothing more than a program and a modem. A web page is nothing more than a text file that is sent over communications lines to your browser.

Today web sites just about replace the BBS. A web site can be located on big computers in big rooms with high gurus running them… AND a web site could work on YOUR computer too. With a BBS you could get the latest printer drivers or text formatting program, and the files could have been released just last week (more often it was a few months ago). Today a trip to the web page of the developer can net a driver that was released just 10 minutes ago. Messaging, a big part of a BBS (where valuable information is passed along), is now replaced by Usenet newsgroups. Games, a big portion of BBS doors, can now be found everywhere. Some support hundreds of people playing at once.

All of the functions of a BBS are replaced. Chat, messaging, games, files, bulletins, e-mail, and even individual color preferences are handled on the "net" (or by your browser). "How do I go to the FILES area of your BBS, I use O-A-5 on my favorite BBS?" is a question I was asked once. The answer was "F" on our system but the question highlights something. Today a "link" is a link. You move the mouse and push a button. Just like the BBS 'How do I' question, though, someone probably told you that a colored underline was a link. Today links work the same from site to site.

Quality. A fidonet message area usually contained some off-topic messages such as which side of the bay was better. Today it is just as common to see messages titled 'Windows Lockups' while the contents are about what color a particular beer label had before it changed.

Quantity. With a BBS there was a sense of community, you knew most of the people visiting. Today the Internet covers the world. It seems a little less intimate but you have access to more information than anyone could handle in a lifetime.



End of an ERA? I don't think so….it just looks a little different. ◆

The History of the Bits of Blue RBBS

By Kevan Sheridan, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Sometime during August of 1986, Rodney Brewer of Excellence Computers and then president of the Tampa IBM PC Users Group Inc. started a club electronic Bulletin Board System (BBS). Back then bulletin boards, just becoming popular, all had names that tried to give an idea of what the system was about. The IBM PC was quite the computer in those days, and the nickname for IBM was "Big Blue". So, the name of the club newsletter, Bits of Blue, was used for the BBS. The purpose was to give members a place to trade valuable information and prospective members a place to find out more about the group. We will not talk about what some callers thought about a name with 'blue' in it.

This original system had some very fancy items for those days. A messaging area allowed questions, answers, and general comments to be posted or read by any caller. Bulletins allowed the System Operator (Sys-Op) to give callers a standard set of information on request. Items such as how to join the group or what the next meeting would be about were placed in bulletins. A Files area, a standard part of most BBSes, kept the latest version of your favorite shareware game. If your communication program included the X-Modem transfer protocol, downloading files took place at the (amazing for the time) speed of 1200 baud (1200 bps or 120 characters per second). Let's not talk about how long it took to download big files, okay?

Games were big then too, so one was installed on the BBS. Games were so popular people wrote them to be played online, using a function called 'DOORS'. This allowed players to compete for the best scores or just offered something to do for awhile. Another function was called PC-Pursuit, which allowed callers to 'connect' to other systems. Word of mouth and an advertisement on other boards was the way callers found out about any BBS. After a short time Rodney brought his brother Daniel in to help him. Daniel eventually took over all operation of the BBS and worked very hard until mid 1988 when Excellence could no longer support the system.

After two years of operation, volunteers to operate the BBS were called for. Three people, perhaps more, spoke up: Vern Semrad a very capable computer expert, Harvey Bruneau of Dun and Bradstreet, and Kevan Sheridan of Realtron. Kevan, being two months on a new job, offered to keep the BBS at his place of work. His company let the system take up desk space and connected it to a 5kv UPS. The public access of an office must have helped as Kevan was picked to be the next BBS Sys-Op.

(History.....Continued on page 7)

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **GoldMine 4.0** - GoldMine Software -Number one rated workgroup contact manager - Win95, 16 MB, 486 & CD required.
2. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more than 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action - Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
3. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Helicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
4. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
5. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
6. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

Internet picture of the month



Bill Gates

This photo from the London Times is of Bill Gates displaying the results of a cream cake assault in Brussels. The London Times site is at http://www.the-times.co.uk/ .

A slightly different photo can be seen in the CNN Interactive archives along with a Quick Time movie of the event at http://cnn.com/TECH/computing/9802/04/belgium.gates.ap/index.html.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
InteliHealth - Johns Hopkins Health Information	http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH
Electronic Newsstand (links to online magazines)	http://www.enews.com/
Fedor's Destination Guides	http://destinations.previewtravel.com/
BRS Web Radio (gateway to online radio)	http://www.web-radio.com/
Comcast Online Schoolyard	http://www.onlineschoolyard.com/default.asp
Biltmore Estate	http://www.biltmore.com/
Real Planet (Real Audio & Real Video Broadcasts)	http://www.realplanet.com/
HomeWeb - Real Estate Listings	http://www.homeweb.com/
HOMES.COM - Real Estate Listings	http://www.homes.com/index.html
Computer Virus Myths home page	http://kumite.com/myths/home.htm
OneLook Dictionaries, The Faster Finder	http://www.onelook.com/
The Elements of Style (English usage text)	http://www.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/strunk/
Windows95 OSR2 FAQ	http://www.compuclinic.com/osr2faq/
Titanic (from Encyclopedia Britannica)	http://titanic.eb.com/

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Windows 9(x)

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

Later this year, as Windows 95 reaches its third birthday, a new release of Windows is to be unveiled. While some are calling it Windows 98, word is that it will be called Windows version 9(something). I have not given this latest version a trial run, even though I have had a couple of offers, because my system is running just fine with 95. But, I have read a lot about it since it has gone into BETA, and as I sit in a hotel room on the other coast of Florida, reading an e-mail from William saying he needs my article for this month's newsletter, I thought I'd pass on some of what I've learned to you.

It apparently will not be as major a design change as from 3.1 to 95, but it's touted to be more than just an upgrade. The bright spot in my mind is that it will actually save disk space. Included in this latest release from Redmond is the new Drive Converter utility that will convert your old Win95's inefficient file allocation table (FAT 16) to the more efficient FAT32 that reclaims wasted disk space. A full installation of Win 9(x) over Win95 takes approximately 70 megabytes but frees up over 150 megabytes after running Drive Converter.. That's quite a diet for your hard drive.

One neat feature is the ability to run two PCI display adapters and two monitors on a single PC. Why would you want to do this? You could run your e-mail program continuously on one monitor and run your desktop normally on another monitor:

Some other new features included are:

- Better plug and play management
- System File Checker and Windows Tune-Up
- Windows Update, a web-based wizard that analyzes your PC and automatically recommends updates to download such as patches and drivers
- Improved disk cache and memory management
- Over 1,200 new drivers including ones for DVD and USB
- Explorer 4, which has already been released, provides a choice for a different desktop view, one based more on the web, called Active Desktop
- Outlook Express, Personal Webserver, Task Scheduler, Net Meeting and a new version of Backup have also been added.

This isn't all of the new features but it's a majority of them. The RAM requirement is between 12 MB to 16 MB. Major performance gains shouldn't be expected but you can expect your system to run better and have better reliability. Although Win95 has been good to me I'm ready for the next step in our evolutionary chain to Windows NT. How about you? ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 3)

tures you want to put on your web page or hang on the walls of your VR world. What follows are the first few lines of the VR file for the MOSI VR project.

```
Separator{
    ShapeHints {shapeType SOLID vertex-
Ordering COUNTERCLOCKWISE}
    SpotLight  {on FALSE}
    PerspectiveCamera{
        orientation 0 1 0 0.00170909
        position 5415 3009 11346
        heightAngle 2.42572
    }
    DEF BackgroundColor Info{
        string" 0.517647 0.768627
0.721569"
    }
    Coordinate3{
        point[
         256 0 6144, 256 0 9984, 256 896
9984, 256 896 6144, 7680 0 6144, 7680 896
```

and much, much more. If I knew what all those numbers meant, I probably would know why my colors aren't reproducing properly.

Visual Basic - ActiveX

I am always on the lookout for interesting things to do with Visual Basic. This last month produced two. Creating an ActiveX component to place on a web page and enumerating all the installed programs on a computer.

In some sense creating an ActiveX component for a web page is similar to creating a VR object to place on a web page. In both cases you use a special program to create the object. For ActiveX, I used Microsoft Visual basic to create a special type Visual Basic program to be uploaded to the web site, which is similar to what I did above with the VR object. Next, just as your browser needed to have the VMRL add-on installed to be able to view the VR world, you will need to download what I would call the Microsoft Visual Basic runtime environment files to your computer to be able to view the ActiveX object on your web page. Once you have these files, you will not have to download them again, but that first time could be time consuming, since the minimal size is around 700 KB. Once you have all the required files, you can do some powerful things with ActiveX. In my simple example, I just had a real time clock running on the page, spaces for the user to fill in information, some of which was numerical, and hen a button to press to do calculations with the numerical information, and spaces to display the various calculations. Then just for a lark, I had the component change colors if you clicked on it.

All this is very cute and indeed useful; however, there is one

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

(Comments.....Continued from page 6)
problem other than the need for the one time download of the run time environment files. It is all the warnings you will get along the way from your browser telling you of the potential dangers of renegade ActiveX components from untrustworthy developers. And I am relegated to the untrustworthy category, since I don't have a "certificate" from what, as best I can tell, is the self appointed issuer of such things. To get such a certificate, one needs to have a "substantial presence and evidence of financial responsibility as evidenced by such things as a Dun & Bradstreet rating." So unless there is a way figured out to make people like me "trustworthy", I don't think there will be much reason for me to put any such components out on the web just yet

Visual Basic - Counting the installed programs

How many programs are installed on your computer? I have 701 on my C drive alone. You say, “No one has that many programs installed." Well, it all depends on what you call a program. Using the definition of a program as being a file with the .EXE extension, I have 701 programs on my C drive. And you probably have at least 200.

Why would anyone want to know such a thing, and, then, how can you enumerate the programs? The last part of the question is what someone asked me. The first answer is that Microsoft has some such program for managing the installed programs on all the computers on a network. And, of course, in Windows 95 you have a list of the programs that you can uninstall, but the non-Windows 95 programs will not be there. For these types of programs, I suppose, you could check every .INI file. And then it came to me that all you needed to do was use the find feature in Windows Explorer with the file name set to *.exe. This would produce a list of executable files. Of course, it is a list with which you can't do much.

My project was to write a Visual Basic project that would also find these files and additionally present you with a list that could be dealt with as any other text file: saved, printed, sorted. With this sort of information, you can compare the state of the installed program base now with the previous month, look for major software titles, and what interests your boss--look for game titles.

To write such a program you need to think of a drive, e.g. C, as a tree trunk with all the folders as branches, the subfolders as branches off the branches, etc., with the programs as the leaves on the branches. You then proceed to search along all the tree's branches. As I said I came up with 701 leaves on my tree. What I am going to do with this information , I don’t know. But it was interesting project, and it helps keep my programming skills alive. ◆

(History.....Continued from page 4)

Unfortunately, the transfer of operations was not a smooth one. The entire list of items actually transferred amounted to two backup tape cartridges. A company whose name cannot be found, offered to donate equipment for the operation to continue. Kevan's first encounter with building PC's began with a trip through a repair shop: "Here is a computer case and keyboard. And we'll use these memory chips. Let's see. Yes here is a mother board…. Whoops, let's use this one instead. A 20 meg hard drive…" The company really should get credit here for donating this equipment because they did make it possible to continue the BBS. They also loaned the use of a backup tape drive.

It was September 1, 1988. With a pile of components and a modem, Kevan proceeded. He affectionately (well MOST of the time) called this the "Frankenstein System" and once built, the restore from backup could begin. The next lesson was: Backups do not always work. Halfway through the first of two tapes a block was apparently unreadable, thus ending the restore. Some 1500 files were never restored. Fortunately the core files needed to run the BBS were recovered. The next month was spent finding out how to make it run. On October 8, the BBS software, RBBS-PC version 15.1A, was upgraded to RBBS-PC version 17-1A providing lots of new features.

The first official (non sysop) call to the "new" BBS was on October 14, 1988. The sysop spent the next few months learning about modems and how to handle them. Fortunately the BBS software included all the BASIC source code which gave him enough information to allow him to write a new set of modem control programs for his other job (the paying one). This was the first time his BBS experience helped his career. Terms like Baud, BPS, Parity, Stop Bits, and Flow-Control now meant something. Constant system trouble also gave him valuable experience with the operating system and hardware connections. "Wait! You mean the location AND order of the memory chips make a difference???"

In May 1989 Edward Buzza wrote "So,… You've Got A Modem" for new callers to the BBS. Distributed on the BBS and mainly on new group member disks, this manual continues to be the ultimate resource for new BBS users. In April of 1990 a second 20 MB disk drive was added and ZMODEM, YMODEM, and PUMA file transfer protocols were added too. Right after that memory parity errors started to happen causing the system to be taken down for repair. With a new motherboard and completely empty disk drives the next lesson was Low Level Disk Formatting. A program called FDISK now became a friend. Previously learned lessons paid off as the backups worked this time. The support of several group members helped greatly during this low period.

(History.....Continued on page 9)

Screen Resolutions

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC users Group

You really don't ever do one thing at a time do you? No, absolutely not, and Windows was designed for doing multiple tasks as well. As Windows was developed over the years, it's gotten better and better at that. My own screen right now has a window on the Internet , sized pretty small in the top left hand corner. It's waiting for someone else to pop up into the TPCUG online Chat window. But I'm really concentrating on what I'm writing right now. I have a clock going at the top of my screen, and I'm kind of tracking the time, hoping to get this article together before bedtime. I have Outlook Express minimized also, because I'm hoping my son will send a note to me by e-mail. I'll hit send/receive a couple of times during the evening, and maybe print out the note for my wife if something interesting comes in. That's it for the moment. Sometimes I have more going on, but this is a night that I have to concentrate on this article.

What the computer is doing (and my brain also) is called "multi-tasking", and for those of us brought up on technologies of the past; Apple and Atari and Commodore and DOS, we're really living luxuriously. So what does this have to do with screen resolution? Screen resolution has to do with how much you can see on the screen at once.

So if your brain is capable of multi-tasking and your computer is also, what about the computer's ability to present that information to you? It's all through the screen (and also sound to a limited degree). So how do you know what you have? Start with the monitor specs. What size is it? Common sizes are 14", 15" and 17". There's a new 19" size becoming popular, and 21" has been around for quite a while if you have lots of money. This is a diagonal measure. My own 17" monitor has an actual diagonal measurement of 15-3/4 inches. Now for the resolution. Right-click on your desktop and select properties, or go to Start, Settings, Control Panel, Display. Select the Settings tab, and on that panel, look at "Desktop Area". At the moment, mine is set to 1024 x 768 the "intended" resolution of a 17" monitor. (We'll debate this in a moment). In one sense, "desktop area" is a good description of resolution.

Slide the pointer back and forth, and you'll see - depending on your monitor specs and your computers' video card - just what your system is capable of. The resolutions that you'll see are:

640 x 480 - called VGA
800 x 600 - called Super VGA, and sometimes SVGA
1024 x 768 called 1024x768 and sometimes XGA.
1152 x 864 is rare, but some video cards support this (mine does)
1280 x 1024
1600 x 1200

The specifications for my monitor says that it's built to a maximum of 1280 x 1024. As a rule, the larger the monitor, the higher the resolution. All monitors that I've heard of will handle from 640x480 up to some maximum, depending on how expensive and how big the monitor is. I have an older 14" monitor in my computer room that handles 1024x768 (and did this terribly, even when it was new). Certainly all newer 14" monitors will do that. 15" monitors will do 1024x768, and sometimes 1280x1024. 17" monitors will all do 1280x1024, and sometimes 1600x1200.

What does this do for us? The higher the resolution, the more "things" we can put on the desktop at once. It's that simple. I very often switch my resolution to 1280x1024, mostly when I'm programming in Visual Basic where I must have six or so windows up at the same time, and still have my e-mail and appointments on-screen and handy. I'll switch it down - usually to 1152x864 when the demands of what I'm doing are lower.

By the way, you'll see both 14" and 15" monitors sell with the same resolution capability, and also many 15 and 17's have the same specifications. What do we gain? Easy - the bigger the screen, the easier it is to see, given the same resolution.

I'm writing this because I've been amazed to see that people do not experiment around with their settings. I've seen dozens of people with expensive 17" monitors with the resolution set at 800x600, a resolution that any 14" monitor will do with ease.

So here's Merle's middle-of-the-road guidelines given ,say, mid-life capable eyes and then (young eyes) in Parenthesis
14" - 640x480 (800x600)
15" - 800x600 (1024x768)
17" - 1024x768 or 1152x864 (1280x1024)
19" - 1280x1024 (1600x1200)

You obviously need to modify this depending on the quality of the monitor; the real need you have to juggle many windows on the screen at once; the age of your eyes and also how well your glasses or contacts - if any - are "tuned" to the distance to the screen.

Because of my age, I went to "computer glasses" many years ago that have the upper part prescribed for a distance of 22 inches from the screen. That allows me to use a very high 1280x1024 with very little fatigue.

Sit down at your computer, don't be afraid to change it to see what the effect is, and work with each one for a few days; you may discover something you like. ◆

(History.....Continued from page 7)
A new 286 computer was purchased from LORAN Computers in November 1990 (we actually traded our old system in!). Steve Speairs donated two 65 MB RLL hard disk drives, as the previous D: drive (containing only files to download) failed.

By 1992 the BBS had many message areas (or topics) that had a lot of activity. Two doors, Silver Express and TQM, were added to allow callers to download, read, and send mail while offline (not connected to the BBS). To make things better, there was a new "network" called FIDOnet. With a dog as the logo and using a system of computers, a new way to transfer messages between people was developed. Each 'node' on the network wasn't always connected to other nodes. Special programs called "mailers" were written to handle the transfer of messages. A program called D'Bridge (version 1.3) was installed in March 1992. For those interested, our node address was 1:377/32. Fidonet allowed the sysop to ask questions in the DesqView "echo" and get helpful answers from a caller to another BBS located in Australia (in just 3 days!).

The BBS joining Fidonet gave all of its callers access to the world. Additionally fido membership gave the sysop access to other local BBS sysops, a wealth of PC knowledge. This also led to the addition of a US Robotics 16,800 baud modem, a big leap in online speed.

The next very big boost for the BBS came from a donation in Dec 1992: A brand new computer! A 486/33, 200 MD Hard Drive, and 8 MEG RAM. With a better computer a second phone line was added with Desq View running two nodes of the BBS software. This sysop lesson was called file sharing along with a BIG boost in the member support lesson.

Things change, and during 1995 the sysop was no longer able to spend the same amount of time on the BBS. System operation was transferred to Mary Sheridan in September when the system was moved to their home (cutting the monthly phone bill in half).

Things changed even more when the Internet took hold. Overall usage went down over the next year or so, and life with a PC changed as well. The local fidonet feed ended on February 20 1998. Mary took these changes (and more) into consideration when she decided to recommend the TPCUG board stop BBS support in March of 1998. With that, the history is over.

On a personal note: When I started, I spent about thirty to forty hours a week on the BBS (down to ten by March 1994). During that time I learned a huge amount about modems, programming, and people. I spent months and even years learning software. I was allowed to install just about any program I wanted to, each one helping in one way or another. I spent countless hours trying to make hardware or software work properly. And after all of this I believe that I had the better part of the deal! I also believe I couldn't have done it without the unending support of many group members. I would like to personally thank these people for their special support (without which nothing could have happened): Harvey Bruneau, Vern Semrad, Ed Buzza, Larry Anders, Bill Fuller, and Connie Kincaid. I would also like to thank my wife Mary for helping me change my life from a keyboard to the real world. By the way, I met her on the BBS! ◆

SHAREWARE

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

For this month's newsletter I thought I'd pass along some Shareware files that can be easily downloaded from the Internet. As I have written about in the past, there are plenty of reputable locations where good software is available, and you don't have to worry about downloading some gosh-awful virus along with the software. That's not to say that you shouldn't always be leery of viruses but I've been downloading Shareware for years and I have ***NEVER*** obtained a virus from a downloaded file. I have also been a registered user of McAfee VirusScan for years and so far it's been well worth the minimal expense.

At this point, before I go any further, I would be remiss not to mention the passing of a very good friend of mine, which was responsible for me joining the Tampa PC Users Group several years ago, our very own *Bits of Blue BBS*. She is gone but not forgotten. Thank you for many, many hours of enjoyment. May it rest in peace! Enough said, now for the good stuff.

Back in the days of Bits of Blue BBS, before the Internet, there was a download protocol called Zmodem that would allow an interrupted download to start back up where it left off without having to start all over again. Now you can expect the same on the Internet with:

GetRight (32-bit), File size: 920 K (Shareware) GetRight gracefully recovers from the many errors that can occur while you're downloading files. No matter how you loose your connection, GetRight can resume downloading a file. It can dial your telephone, download a file, hang up, and even shut down your computer automatically. It can also schedule files for later downloading, support a file mirror list, and switch be-

(Shareware.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
took us through a "walking" tour of a virtual building that had been created by someone at Corel. This building was complete with wall paintings, windows looking out, and it even had a fire "burning" in the fireplace. Oh, and don't forget to include sounds in your pages.

Corel Draw 8 was the next program on the agenda. With over 100 new features in this version of Corel Draw the system requirements may be evident. Minimum requirements: Pentium 90 (133 recommended), Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0, CD-ROM, 32 MB RAM, 80 MB hard disk space, SVGA, and a mouse or tablet.

This version uses a different user interface. The Property Bar is now context-sensitive, and there are now roll-up dialog boxes, and something called Dockers. It also handles multiple objects better than before using, for example, a 'digger' action to quickly move through multiple images or objects. ALT-SHIFT-PAGEUP and a right mouse will let you copy properties. If you want to duplicate images, try smart duplicate and place copies wherever your mouse goes. Most tools are now interactive to let you see changes as you type them in. Distortion, Zipper, Extrude, Drop Shadow, Envelope, and Smart Duplicate are just some of these. The 3D effects also look quite impressive in both results and speed. Throw in light source control, color gradient control, transparency, and import text tools and you can have sentences wrapping around in spirals.

Sussane Gramann can be reached at (613) 728-0826 Ext. 1637 or E-mail: sussaneg@corel.ca
John Torres can be reached at (813) 620-8094 or E-mail: torresjd@aol.com

The door prize followed a short break. Ford Bond won a copy of Web Master Suite. William LaMartin won a sweatshirt. Finally, Connie Kincaid won a copy of Corel Draw 8.

Next Month look for a demonstration of surge protectors. ◆

(Shareware.....Continued from page 9)
tween download sites transparently to ensure that you find the best download site. In addition, GetRight supports clipboard monitoring, which can help you start the download process more easily. Other features include username and password storage, integration with Netscape Navigator, download filtration by file type, and a "speed limit" that limits GetRight's share of your modem's resources. Minimum requirements: Windows 95/NT.

Although I have all of the top rated graphic manipulation programs such as PhotoShop, CorelDraw and Micrografx I still use this program more than the rest. Here's their latest effort at making it better with a little extra added:

Paint Shop Pro (with Animation Shop), File size: 7.3 MB (Shareware) Paint Shop Pro 5.0 (currently in beta 2.1) is the latest version of this popular graphics editor, with powerful new features such as complete layer support, Picture Tube brushes, CMYK separations, and pressure-sensitive tablet support. The program also includes enhancements to Paint Shop Pro's flexible painting and retouching brushes, adjustable cropping and selection tools, and images. If you have an existing installation of Paint Shop Pro (registered or shareware) and would like to keep this preexisting installation intact, simply install the Paint Shop Pro 5.0 beta into a different directory. This program will expire on April 6, 1998, but it's worth the look until then. Minimum requirements: Windows 95/NT.

I've been doing my taxes on the PC for years but have never transmitted them electronically because of the charge. It's starting to sound reasonable with this one:

Federal Tax Wizard (Nelco, Inc.), File size: 1.9 MB (Free) Now you can file your tax return electronically without using a paid preparer or buying tax preparation software. Download Nelco's free Tax Wizard electronic filing software and get the benefits of electronic filing. For $4.95 per return, you can transmit up to three returns using this software. This eliminates all of the delays associated with a mailed tax return and a mailed refund. Just enter your completed tax return information into Tax

(Shareware.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems
Broderbund
Corel Systems
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Micrografx
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SoftKey International
Symantec

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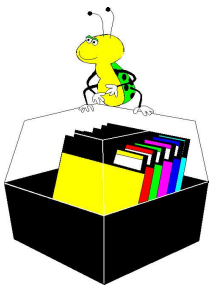
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & week-ends	661-8185	DOS, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



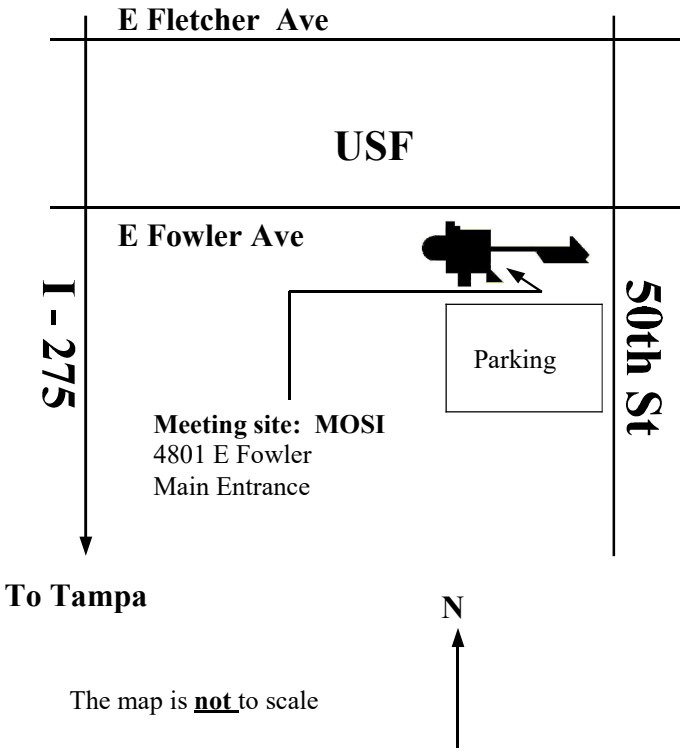
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(Shareware.....Continued from page 10)
Wizard. (Note: Tax Wizard is not tax preparation software.) Then enter your credit card information and transmit your tax return. You can have your refund mailed to you or directly deposited into your bank account. Minimum requirements: Windows 3.x.

I'm sure most of you have heard about the dancing baby.

Boogie Baby Screensaver, (PJ Software), File size: 1.3 MB (Shareware) This screensaver, features the original dancing baby designed by Kinetix. After already making its way to prime time on the television show Ally McBeal, this little bundle of dance moves can also get down on your PC. Amuse yourself and friends as you watch it boogie to a version of the classic Village People hit "YMCA." Minimum requirements: Windows 95/NT.
All of these files can be downloaded from http://download.com. Just go to the site, search for the file name and follow the instructions. Enjoy! ◆





Bits of Blue



Give your valentine a TPCUG membership

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 2 February 1998

Meeting

Corel Corporation will demonstrate their Web Products & Corel Draw

February 11, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Our meeting room at MOSI has changed

We have followed the computer lab to its new location in the new wing of MOSI. Enter the main lobby, take the stairs to the second floor, then turn left and proceed to the computer lab. Someone should be available to direct you.

President's Message

by Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, we moved into the new location at MOSI for the January meeting. For those of you that didn't make it to the meeting, you're in for a nice surprise. The room is much easier to find and just feels more in the "center of things". Just head for the main lobby, past the reception area and up the left stairway. The room is the first one you come to. We owe MOSI a great deal for accommodating us over the past year. And, of course, we also owe Ford Bond our thanks for his personal interest in the group.

When you're there, be sure to pick up the course catalog; there's a stack of them inside the door. And if you can spare some of your time, Ford is always looking for people to teach classes. Several of our members have done this, and there's room for more. Be sure to speak with Ford about this. One thing he has assured us is that you don't have to be an "expert" to teach a class. Many of the classes are entry level and many are for kids.

While I'm at it, I'd like to remind all members that our newsletter - BITS OF

(President.....Continued on page 10)

March 11: Terezka Olsen from Kinematics will talk about surge protectors.
Visit the chat page & the discussion group page at our Internet site http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ .

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or upload to the BBS (News section of FILES).

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or uploaded to the BBS as a message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING January 14, 1998

Minutes and Comments by Kevan Sheridan, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The pre-meeting Tax Cut demonstration began at 6:20 PM, followed by introductions and announcements. After a short talk by Tech Systems, the presentation by MicroStar began. Following a short break the meeting concluded with the door prize drawing. Ticket sales brought in $36.

The first meeting of the year began in a new room located in the new wing of MOSI. Look for directions to the new room on the front page. Appropriately, former president Connie Kincaid gave us a nice showing of Kiplingers' Tax Cut program. This program is packed with features and will run under Windows 3.1, Win95, or MAC. She began with a short video (part of the program included on CD) giving an overview of some of the program's features and functions. Tax Cut supports electronic filing ($15 filing fee not included) and is available locally for around $24.95 and up. Next month look for a demo of Turbo Tax. At the end of the session, Don Patzsch said that those who would like any IRS forms, including publication 17 (a free full book of complete instructions for form 1040xxx) could get them from http://www.irs.ustreas.gov.

President Merle Nicholson began the regular meeting at 6:55 with introductions of the 1998 officers and appointees: Vice President Mike Hodges, Secretary Kevan Sheridan, Treasurer Jenny Lind Olin, Member at Large Bruce Register, Newsletter Editor William LaMartin, Librarian Larry Anders, BBS Sysop/Program Director Mary Sheridan, and MOSI Liaison Ford Bond. Merle also talked about the new meeting schedule: 6 –6:30 class or demo; 6:30 – 7:00 Business; 7:00 – 8:00 (more or less) main demo; followed by a short break and then the meetings will close with the drawings. SIGS (Special Interest Groups) now include: Genealogy SIG meets on the second Monday of the month at MOSI, contact Ford Bond. The Communications SIG meets on the first Monday, contact Charles Howe. Sign up sheets were passed around the room.

At 7:15 Shannon Stumpf, a Technical Recruiter from Tek Systems talked about the job market in the Tampa Bay area. It seems there are many more jobs than people to fill them. Shannon can be reached at (813) 207-2619 or sstumpf@teksystems.com. Bruce Register started a few short discussions after that.

The main presentation of the evening began at 7:25. Joe Roediger, an Account Representative from MicroStar Re-

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

Comments: Hard Drives & Disappearing Hardware

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Hard Drives

Last month I wrote about buying a second hard drive, a 5.1 GB *Western Digital* drive for $279. Recall that I detailed what a bargain such things are now compared to, say, five years ago. But, as is to be expected when buying computer hardware, you can now get the same drive $50 cheaper. For those who haven't installed a drive or who can't recall the exact process, I will describe the installation of the drive.

First, let me say that I am not totally dumb. I bought the drive several days before I completed the January newsletter, and, even though I was sure that the installation would be completed without a problem, I restrained myself and waited until the newsletter was completed until I did the installation. This was not a bad choice, since what I was sure would be a 45 minute operation lasted probably three hours.

Second, some hard drive facts. If you use *Windows 95*--and it is not *Windows 95 OSR2* (OEM Service Release 2)--then you are using the standard FAT file system, as opposed to the FAT 32 file system. If you are using Windows 95 OSR2, you may or may not be using FAT 32 . As I understand it, you can only get Windows 95 OSR2 on new computer systems--you can not go to a store and buy it. Furthermore, even if you purchase a new computer with Windows 95 OSR2 installed, unless it came from Gateway, you probably are not using the FAT 32 file system, since Dell, Compaq, and Micron, as far as I can tell, are not enabling the FAT 32 option--probably since they don't want to deal with the extra customer support it would entail. In fact, if you, on your own, change to the FAT 32 file system, you may lose your free support from these companies.

So, why would one want to have FAT 32? Simply because it overcomes the DOS/Windows limitations of a maximum hard drive size of 2.1 GB, allowing drives of up to 2 terabytes, and it has smaller clusters of size 4 KB on drives smaller than 8 MB. Recall that a few years back we had a maximum hard drive size of around 500 MB since our computers' BIOS wouldn't support anything larger. The hard drive manufacturers came up with software programs, called overlays, to trick the BIOS into using the full capacity of the newer hard drives up to the 2.1 GB limit.

Now, back to my situation. I already had a 2.5 GB drive divided into a 2.1 GB partition and a .4 KGB partition, and there would be nothing to gain by making the new drive my master drive, since under my version of Windows 95 I could have partitions no larger than 2.1 GB. Thus, I would install the new 5.1 GB drive as the slave drive. To do this, you simply set the jumpers on each drive to the positions indicated in the instructions--the old drive is the master and the new drive is the slave.

Next, comes the physical installation of the new drive into the computer. The current drive was mounted vertically, instead of horizontally as in older systems. However, the obvious place to mount the new drive was in one of the horizontal drive bay openings, as I had done with the half dozen or so drives I have installed over the years. That created my first problem. There was no drive bay close enough to the existing hard drive for the cabling to work. Some thought led to the conclusion that I should try to mount the new drive vertically next to the existing drive. It was a tight fit, but it worked. Now my only problem was to install the four screws holding it in place--with only an inch of clearance above and below. This was too little room for a standard screwdriver, but with the aid of a pair of needle nose pliers holding each screw and a small right angle screwdriver doing the turning I finally got it secured. By now I was well past my allotted 45 minutes.

The next step is to turn on your computer and,when it begins to boot, go into the BIOS setup. On these modern computers, all you need do is make sure that for the new hard drive you select auto configuration, and you are on your way. Recall the old days when you had to select the drive type or know the number of cylinders, etc. Once the BIOS is set correctly then you can continue with the boot. Western Digital's instructions now said that I should use their EZ-Drive setup Software to partition and format my new drive. I said, why not. In the past I had always used the DOS program FDISK to partition the new drives and then FORMAT to format the drives. But why not use EZ-Drive and not have to think?

Well, I had to start thinking real fast. The first message I got was that my computer's BIOS didn't support large hard drives and that EZ-Drive would like to install EZ-BIOS to overcome that. That sounded a lot like a disk overlay to me--something I didn't want and didn't need--since at present I already had a drive installed with a 2.1 GB partition--the largest that DOS/Windows allows. Perhaps EZ-BIOS was going to make it possible for me to have a 5.1 GB partition. I don't know and didn't find out.

I could now go back to the tried and true FDISK and FORMAT; however, as many of you did at one of our meetings, I had purchased *PartitionMagic 3.0* from the PowerQuest representative and--probably just like many of you--hadn't yet used it. I had used *PartitionMagic 2.0* to remove a Windows NT NTFS partition from a drive that used to be an NT drive but was now a Win 95 drive—when no other method could be found to remove it. As Don Patzsch keeps saying, *PartitionMagic* is a useful program. I just don't get as much excitement

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

Software Review

Family Tree Maker 4.0



Family Tree Maker ONLINE

by William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

I have been using Family Tree Maker from Banner Blue, which is now a division of Broderbund, since it was a DOS program only. I remember when it could either not export or not import GEDCOMs—a fairly important feature to be omitted. It was simply a special use database for entering genealogical data. It provided for printing some nice descendant and ancestor charts, but that was about it. As I recall, there was no way to enter extended notes and information about an individual--or perhaps you just couldn't paste it into the program--since it was not a Windows program. I recall that I was so frustrated with this shortcoming and their reluctance to produce a Windows version that I set out to write a Windows genealogical program using Visual Basic. I was making good progress along these lines when Banner Blue produced their first Windows version and called it Family Tree Maker for Windows. Since this program did everything I needed, I discontinued work on my program and bought into the Banner Blue scheme of things.

Family tree maker was not and still is not the only genealogical program, but to me they seemed to be proceeding more in the direction I thought such programs should go than was the competition. And as I have watched them add new features with each upgrade I bought over the years, I still feel as though they have the premier genealogical database program. I believe that I have missed only one upgrade.

What is new to me in this version, but possibly not to those who had the immediately preceeding version, is the new report called a genealogy report, the ability to create a book, a Sources database, and a direct link to the Family Tree Internet site. At the right is a listing of Family Tree Maker's features for different versions. As you can see, they are about to come out with a new version, 4.4. It is due in late February. My version 4.0 seems equivalent to the 4.4 Standard Edition III, with the exception that I only have two CDs. They are the Family Finder Index. The Family Finder Index, by the way, can also be found online at the Family Tree Web site, http://www.familytreemaker.com.

As I said earlier, Family Tree Maker is a specialized database for recording your family members, their places and dates of birth, death, marriage, etc. You may include brief additional facts or extensive notes. You may create an additional Source database which will track your sources of information. Additionally, you may include photos or medi-

(Family Tree.....Continued on page 8)

	Basic Edition	Standard Edition III	Deluxe Edition III
Version	3.02	4.4	4.4
Organize names, dates, facts, photos, & more	Yes	Yes	Yes
Print the widest variety of family trees and reports	Yes	Yes	Yes
Create multimedia family albums	Yes	Yes	Yes
FamilyFinder Index of more than 153 million names		Yes	Yes
View and search more than 100 Family Archive CDs	Yes	Yes	Yes
"Sources" database tracks your research with expert efficiency		Yes	Yes
Create professional-quality family books to print on paper or publish on your home page		Yes	Yes
Genealogy reports automatically create narrative family histories		Yes	Yes
Automatic reference numbers -- fast and accurate		Yes	Yes
Book Layout trees show up to 99 generations without splitting boxes		Yes	Yes
Step-by-Step Genealogy "How-To" Guide		Yes	Yes
Share and extend your family tree with Family Tree Maker's vast online community	Yes	Yes	Yes
FREE online classified ads, home pages, and message boards		Yes	Yes
InterneTree--a tree style especially for the World Wide Web		Yes	Yes
Online FamilyFinder Reports find info for you on the Internet		Yes	Yes
Spell Checker for Notes and Books		Yes	Yes
Two Social Security CDs with more than 54 million records		Yes	Yes
Five World Family Tree CDs with thousands of actual family trees			Yes
Media	1 CD-ROM	4 CD-ROMs	9 CD-ROMs

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

1. **Mixman Studio** - Mixman Technologies -Mixing studio where you can load up to 16 tracks of digital sound, mix, them and perform them in real time - Win95, Pentium & CD required.
2. **G-NOME** - 7th Level - Pilot more than 20 different mechanized vehicles in war action - Win95, Pentium 90, 16 MB RAM & 4X CD required (13+)
3. **HELI COPS** - 7th Level - Helicopter war game simulation - Win95, Pentium 100, 8MB RAM, 4X CD
4. **Magic Cap** - General Magic - Organize all your communications: email, fax, etc. - Windows 95 CD
5. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
6. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of flying (8-adult)

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

Internet picture of the month



Monica Lewinsky

This photo from the Pentagon found its way onto many WWW sites shortly after the latest Presidential scandal broke. If you would like to visit the WWW site that first printed the allegations regarding Ms. Lewinsky and the President after *Newsweek* got cold feet, you will find the *Drudge Report* at http://www.drudgereport.com/. It is not a very polished site, but apparently polish was not what was required to break this story. You need to click on "*Drudge Report*" to bring up the report.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
The Associated Press	http://wire.ap.org/
Dancing Baby Info Page	http://baby.nwlink.com/babinfo.htm
The Drudge Report (Internet gossip sheet)	http://www.drudgereport.com/
Family Tree Maker's Genealogy Site Home Page	http://www.familytreemaker.com/
FAWN - Florida Automated Weather Network	http://hammock.ifas.ufl.edu/fawn/
IRS Forms & Publications for downloading	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/plain/forms_pubs/index.html
HTML - List of useful HTML information links	http://www.webreference.com/html/tutorials.html
InCongress - Congressional information from lobbyists	http://www.incongress.com/
invest-o-rama! (Internet directory for investors)	http://www.investorama.com/
Le Jardin Ombragé (North Florida garden & plants)	http://www.nettally.com/skinnerd/ombrage.html
MicroStar Research (last month's speaker)	http://www.microstar-research.com/
NOLA Live - from the New Orleans Times-Picayune	http://www.nolalive.com/
Sears Craftsman Tools	http://shop.sears.com/store/craftsman/main.html
Technical Analysis of Stocks & Commodities Mag.	http://traders.com/
The American Spectator Online	http://www.amspec.org/

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

What Do Librarians Do These Days?

by Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

Initially, when I first became the librarian for the Tampa PC Users Group, my job was easily defined; collect shareware and freeware files and provide access to these files for our members. I used to lug a large container of diskettes to each meeting with a portable computer of some type and allow our members to copy to their hearts' content. When the BBS became popular, my role changed to uploading massive amounts of files to the BBS, so our members would have easy access to the latest programs offered. On occasion, I would be asked to try and locate specific files through my connection of national BBSs. Then came the Internet and everything changed. At least my duties as librarian did.

Now, with the Internet, everyone has access to some of the best software packages offered today. In this article this month I will try and inform you of a few of the places to go to find these jewels of the super I-way. (I can only say that if you still do not have access to the Internet, then what the heck are you waiting for?)

CNET.COM (http://www.cnet.com/) is a free online information service that provides access to two of the largest shareware distributors on the Internet. They are:



SHAREWARE.COM http://www.shareware.com/

and 

DOWNLOAD. COM http://www.download.com/ .

I'm not sure what the difference is between the two but all the files are not duplicated on each service. For instance, the top ten files downloaded on ***SHAREWARE.COM*** are:

winzip95.exe WinZip 6.3 SR-1 for Windows 95/NT addresses an issue in the original release of WinZip 6.3. If you have the original release or a beta release of 6.3, you are encouraged to download SR-1. WinZip is a straightforward zip and unzip.

netlight.zip Speed-up your Internet connection with Net Lightening.

windiag.zip Put your PC to the test with BCM Diagnostics.

wz32v63.exe WinZip v6.3 SR-1 for Windows 95/NT . (If you don't have a previous issue.)

Win95one.exe The Windows 95 Sample Collection One is everything you always wanted for Windows 95. It's a free grab bag of utilities that will aid and enhance your everyday use of the desktop.

v95i312e.zip McAfee VirusScan for Win95 v3.12. (The Best!)

icq98a.exe ICQ 98 is the latest version of the popular, user-friendly Internet program that notifies you in real time when friends or colleagues are online.

psp414.zip Paint Shop Pro Shareware v4.14

xpsw1.zip EXTREME PINBALL features Ultra-Realistic table dimensions, animated arcade style 3D dotmation scoreboard, multi-ball play and a new music and sound system that changes the music with gameplay events.

digib33.exe Tired of those plain old FM/AM Radio Stations? Listen to the dawn of the new age with DigiBand Radio.

Whereas the top 10 ten files downloaded from ***DOWNLOAD.COM*** are:

ICQ (32-bit) Seek out friends and colleagues on the Internet

WinZip (32-bit) Handle ZIP files with ease

PowWow Chat and share files over the Internet

LView Pro View and edit images in a variety of file formats

Netscape Communicator (32-bit complete install) Try the latest shipping release of Netscape's Internet suite

ICQ Update Patch Upgrade to ICQ 98 to seek out friends and colleagues on the Internet

Quake II Play this "compatibility test" release of Quake II

Newnix Shell Get Unix-like control over your DOS or Windows system

DirectX Drivers Install this 32-bit gaming requirement

Applet Button Factory Add Java buttons to your Web pages without Java or HTML programming savvy

The main difference I see is the size of the description of the file.(I shortened them for this publication.) There are hundreds of other files sorted by category and operating system. You

(Librarian.....Continued on page 7)

(Librarian.....Continued from page 6)
even have the ability to search for a file if you don't know it's exact name. These are both very current, up-to-date sites and you don't have to worry about viruses. Best of all…. It's **FREE!**

Shareware Shop http://www.bsoftware.com/share.htm

www.32bit.com http://www.32bit.com/

the best shareware http://www.concentric.net/~rickid/

Children's Software and More! http://www.gamesdomain.com/tigger/sw-kids.html

Download.Net http://www.download.net/download.shtml

FILE MINE http://www.filemine.com/

FILEPILE http://filepile.com/nc/start

JUMBO! http://www.jumbo.com/

WINDEX http://win95.daci.net/

Believe me, this is only a few of them. For a list of some of the best locations on the Internet to find software, go to the father of shareware

Father of Shareware http://www.halcyon.com/knopf/jim.html and click on distributors.

After visiting just a few of these sites you will see why my job as librarian for the TPCUG is really hard to define now. If you've got any suggestions, just get in touch with me. If you have any sources for good software, please let me know too. I'm always interested in good, cheap software. **Happy hunting.** ◆

Note: This article is written in Word97, which allows me to include hyperlinks. When this newsletter is published to our Web site http://canx.com/tpcug/, you can download the .PDF file and read it in color on your own computer, if you have the free Adobe Acrobat reader on your PC. If not, there are instructions on how and where to get it on the Web site where the newsletter articles are listed. You really get the full effect of all the hard work William puts into each newsletter by reading it with Acrobat. While reading it on your own PC, if you click on the hyperlinks while on-line to the Internet, you will be automatically transported to the Web site referenced in the article. It can't get any easier than that. Ain't computing GREAT!

(Comments.....Continued from page 3)
as he does from resizing my partitions every so often when I get bored.

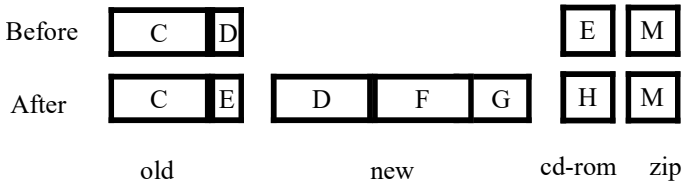
Anyway, I installed the new version of *PartitionMagic*, didn't bother to read the instructions and created three primary FAT partitions. Unfortunately two of them turned out to be Hidden Partitions. What had I done wrong? It had been over a year since I had partitioned a hard drive, and I had forgotten that you are allowed only one active (visible) primary partition--as a reading of the *PartitionMagic* manual would have disclosed. Back to the drawing boards. I removed the two extra primary partitions. That left me with one primary FAT partition of 2.1 MB. I then created an extended partition using all the remaining disk space. Inside that extended partition, I created two logical partitions of sizes 2.1 GB and .9 GB. By the way, *PartitionMagic* automatically formats the partitions when you create them. I was finished

There was, however, one surprise left. I had forgotten how DOS names your hard drives. Before I installed the new drive I had logical drives C & D on the original Drive, and my CD-ROM drive was E and the ZIP drive was M. After installing the additional drive, I had C and E on the original drive and D, F, and G on the new drive; the CD drive was now H, and the Zip was still M. A graphical description of this is at the bottom of the column. Luckily the *PartitionMagic* CD has a program called, I believe, *Drive Mapper* which goes through all your INI files and the Windows 95 registry looking for all instances of old drive letters and makes the appropriate changes. For example, I had it map old drive E to new drive H for my CD. I didn't have it map the old D drive to the new drive E, since, everything there being data, I just moved it to the new drive D. I have had to install only two programs that couldn't adjust to the change. *Drive Mapper* apparently correctly changed the drive information for the rest of my programs.

I recommend *PartitonMagic* as an easy way of accomplishing the above since it provides a graphical interface for the process.

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

Drive configuration before and after adding a new hard drive



(Family Tree.....Continued from page 4)
cal histories of individuals. You may import data from or export data to other genealogical programs as a GEDCOM. And, as with any database, you have your reports.

For an individual, these reports may take the form of:

- Ancestor and Descendant trees in twelve styles, including fan trees, with your choice of contents and size
- Outline Descendant Tree
- Genealogy reports, such as Register, NGS Quarterly, and Ahnentafel, automatically create narrative family histories, complete with names, dates, notes, sources, and more
- Kinship Reports showing how individuals in your file are related
- Family Group Sheets and individual fact sheets
- Book
- Multimedia Scrapbook images

You may also print out a calendar with the important dates for all the individuals in your database noted on the calendar . I didn't find the Book feature of much use, since the items you may add to it were very limited, as best I could tell. I do use the outline Descendant Tree quite often when I want to send someone a brief sketch of a particular line I am interested in to see if they might have information of interest. An abbreviated example of such a report is as follows

Descendants of Thomas Blount, Jr.

1 Thomas Blount, Jr. 1687 - 1729 b: 1687 in Perquimans Precinct, Albermarle Co., N. C. d: 1729
.... +Anne Elizabeth Reading
..... 2 John Blount Abt. 1715 - Abt. 1765 b: Abt. 1715 in Beaufort Precinct, Bath Co., N. C. d: Abt. 1765 in Beaufort Precinct, Bath. Co., N. C.
..... +Martha Lewis
..... 3 Jacob Blount Abt. 1740 - b: Abt. 1740 in Beaufort County, North Carolina
..... +Martha
..... 4 James Blount Abt. 1760 - b: Abt. 1760 in Beaufort County, North Carolina
..... +Martha Radford Spears
..... 5 John Churchill Golding Readding Blount 1791 - 1879 b: March 12, 1791 in Auusta, Georgia d: February 22, 1879 Bartow, Florida
..... +Elizabeth Varn 1796 - 1861 b: April 22, 1796 in Beaufort District, South Carolina d: October 12, 1861 Tampa, Florida

Of course, you may maintain more than one family tree database. You could, for example, have separate ones for your wife's ancestors and your ancestors.

In my opinion, the WWW is revolutionizing how genealogy is done. As individuals research their family history, many are posting that information to the WWW, either to personal Web sites, other genealogical sites, or to the Family Tree Maker site.

As an example of the free online search of the Family Finder Index, here is a small selection of the information returned on my surname, LaMartin.

The Robert Lamartin listed is my father, and the listing comes from the Social Security records of individuals who died between 1936 and 1995. If I either buy this CD from Family Tree Maker (they have loads of genealogically related CDs for sale, having bought the Family Archive CDs several years back and continuing to add to their collection) or go to our local public library and view it, I will find the following information about my father.

Name	Est.Date Location	Archive Type
Lamartin, John	1775-1782 U.S.	Revolutionary War
Lamartin, Kirk David	Private Private	World Family Tree
Lamartin, Lois	Private Private	World Family Tree
Lamartin, Margt	1870 Massachusetts	Census CD 284
Lamartin, Marjorie	1937-1995 U.S.	Social Security
La Martin, Mary	b1810-1819 France	World Family Tree
Lamartin, Mary	1860 MA	Census CD 318
Lamartin, Neil Stuart	Private Private	World Family Tree
Lamartin, Rebecca Ann	Private Private	World Family Tree
Lamartin, Robert	1937-1995 U.S.	Social Security
Lamartin, Shelley Marie	Private Private	World Family Tree
Lamartin, Sofia Elisa	Private Private	World Family Tree
Lamartina, Alice	1937-1995 U.S.	Social Security

- The individual's name and Soundex code
- Dates of birth and death
- Social Security number and state where it was issued
- State of residence at death
- ZIP CODE of last known residence and the primary location it is associated with (77% of the time)
- ZIP CODE of the address where the death benefit payment was sent and the primary location associated with it (15% of the time)

With Family Tree Maker 3.4 or later, for free you can go online and create your own Web page at the Family Tree Maker site. It can include text, up to five reports from your Family Tree Maker file and, with Family Tree Maker 4.0, a box-style InterneTree™ using Java technology. Others will, then, have the ability to search the Family Tree Maker site using the Internet Family Finder for surnames that interest them. If such a surname is on your home page—or any other place on the Internet that has been indexed by the Internet Family Finder— it will be found, and the interested individual may then contact you or anyone else who has placed that information there.

Of course, as with all genealogy, the information you find at such sites may be incorrect and totally misleading. The computer with the Internet gives us a powerful tool in our quest for information about our ancestors. It allows us to easily

(Family Tree.....Continued on page 12)

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)

Lost Hardware

This past month I have turned on my computer and found on three different occasions that

- My microphone produced no sound
- My Zip drive was missing
- My scanner was missing

The first thing one should do on such an occasion is not panic. Stop and think and consider your options. In reading messages in the Usenet Newsgroups, I notice that people quite often reinstall Windows when they have the slightest problem. I don't recommend that—or the more extreme method of re-formatting your hard drive and reinstalling everything—until you have exhausted other less destructive solutions.

Quite often when it is a hardware problem you either have an IRQ or address conflict with another hardware item. Windows 95 makes it fairly easy to check that out, which you do by going to Control Panel | System | Device Manager and looking at the properties of the particular—your sound card, for example. My problems were not conflicts, though.

When I noticed the microphone didn't work, my first thought was a bad connection, then a bad microphone. Checking to see if it was plugged in and then trying a different microphone didn't help. Checking that it was not muted and the volume level was not zero in the multimedia volume control program did not help. Win 95 also said that the sound card was functioning properly—and it was for output—just not microphone input. The solution that worked was to, from the Device Manager, remove all mention of the sound card, reboot and let Windows find the sound card again. It worked.

In the past, occasionally I had noted that my Zip drive would not be listed in My Computer or Windows Explorer. A simple reboot of the computer always brought it back. This time, however, nothing produced any mention of the Zip drive. Again I checked all connections; everything was tight. Using the utility Tweak UI, I checked that I hadn't mistakenly set the Zip Drive not to show. There was no listing of the Zip in Tweak UI; it couldn't find it either. So it really was not there. I got out my Zip installation disk and reinstalled it. It was back, and has functioned perfectly for the past week.

Several days after missing my Zip drive, I tried to scan in a document for OCR using *TextBridge Pro* and the program went into suspension (an hourglass forever). It apparently got confused when trying to find my scanner, since I discovered that, when trying to run my scanning software, I would get the message that I had no scanner installed. I checked the Win 95 Device Manager. It listed my scanner and said that it was functioning properly—apparently Win 95 does not yet know everything. Again, the obvious solution was to remove the device from Win 95 and reinstall.

Before doing this, though, I had an idea. Even though my Zip drive uses a parallel interface, it installs a SCSI controller. Could this controller be conflicting with the SCSI controller for my HP scanner? To check this idea, I removed the Zip drive from the Windows setup, unplugged the Zip drive, and rebooted. Still no scanner. So much for that idea. I then reinstalled my Zip drive, removed the scanner from the Device

(Comments.....Continued on page 12)

Tampa PC Users Group Cash Flow

1/01/1997 - 12/31/1997

INCOME

Membership Income	$1,975.00
Door Prize Donations	$359.50
TOTAL INCOME	**$2,334.50**

EXPENSES

Administration Expenses:	
FACUG Membership Dues	$25.00
Bank Charges	$19.39
Liability Insurance	$91.80
Post Office Box	$40.00
Reservations FACUG Convention	$150.00
Florida Nonprofit Corp. Report	$61.25
Stationary, Office Supplies	$22.95
Total Administration Expenses	**$410.39**
Newsletter Expenses:	
Annual Permit Bulk Mail	$85.00
Postage	$300.00
Printing, Photocopying	$1,172.62
Total Newsletter Expenses	**$1,557.62**
BBS Expenses:	
Telephone Expense	$424.94
Total BBS Expenses	**$424.94**
TOTAL ALL EXPENSES	**$2,392.95**
TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE	**($58.45)**

Jenny Lind Olin, Treasurer

Special Interest Groups

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)

search & Trading, Inc. brought Indigo Investment Software, a very impressive investment trading system. With over four pages of notes, it would be very hard to organize and trim them enough to be able to do the program justice here. Here are just some high points: The program is written for the non-technical person who wishes to maintain his/her own investment portfolio. With a subscription to a daily data service (about $25 per month), the system tracks your stocks and tells you when to place buy or sell orders. It does this by looking at the market activity of your stocks based on the model you select (from the many available). The buy/sell orders are for the daily opening price. Some of the methods/models used include The Prior Year's Best, Growth "Relative Strength", Mutual Fund Timing, and Momentum Swing (MSX).

You determine the investment size and the program uses this information to determine the number of shares to buy or sell. Joe gave us quite a few examples of the program at work. He explained that in a 10 stock portfolio the "program" will "own" no more than about eight stocks normally. If the market should go that way, it will even tell you when to sell all stocks (100% to cash). If you have 150 MB of disk space available, then you have enough disk space to last until the year 2020. It tracks about 850 stocks, and you may add others. For the price of a year's worth of commissions (depending upon your investment/activity) you can own this software package (selling price $2495), with annual updates. The purchase price may even be tax deductible. Joe very generously offered the group a 20% discount ($1995) and even offered a payment plan! ($1000 down plus five months @ $200). Joe Roediger may be reached at (800) 315-5635 or (941) 918-8068.

The door prizes followed a short break. Brian Lance won a Space Adventure Game. Connie Kincaid won Work Safe Office, Clark Evans an Adobe cap. Finally, Ed Snow won a Tek Systems coffee mug.

Next Month, look for Corel. ◆

(President.....Continued from page 1)

BLUE - is written entirely by members of the club. For many years, the previous editors had chosen to reprint articles from other clubs' newsletters when needed to make up a complete publication, but that hasn't happened for some time because our editor has managed to wheedle articles from TPCUG members pretty successfully. But I have to hand it to William, it's a tough job.

We really need more members to write about their experiences and knowledge. Wouldn't it be great if William actually had a backlog of articles waiting to be published. I know that absolutely every member has *something* he can write about. For instance, we have not had a "beginners" level article for … maybe never, I'm not sure. If you'll look at the past year's - or more - articles you'll find that almost all of them have been written by the same six or so people. If every member wrote just one article a year, it'd be a bonanza! Think about it and crank something out. Find a volunteer to edit it if you're not sure of your writing skills. Your club needs your help.

As a reminder, the board meeting is open to all members. We meet at Reflectone at 6:00PM on the Thursday prior to the Wednesday meeting. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME and NEEDED. If you think you can serve in some capacity during the following year, come to the meeting and participate, and maybe scope out your next job, or just help out. Contact Mike Hodges first to get on the security list.

BE SURE TO COME TO THE COREL PRESENTATION !! IT'S ALWAYS THE BEST OF THE YEAR!

Thanks, and I'll see you at the next - Corel - meeting
Merle ◆

Friends of the User Group

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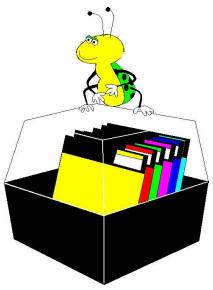
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Connie Kincaid	evenings & week-ends	661-8185	DOS, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



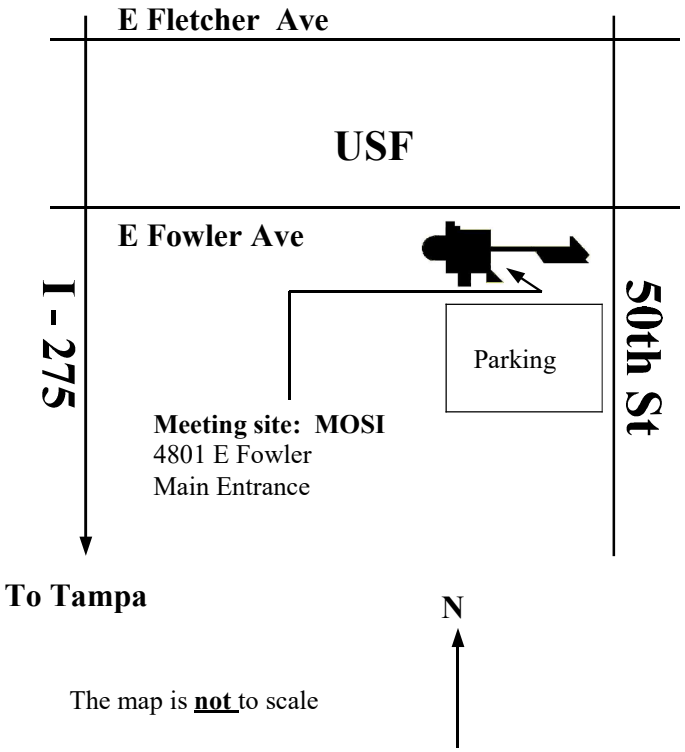
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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Family Tree.....Continued from page 8)
share such information with interested parties. And, unfortunately, it allows us to post to the entire Web connected world incorrect information we have either created ourselves or copied from others. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 9)
Manager, and did a manual reinstall of it using its installation disks (Windows will not automatically find the scanner).

Everything was back to normal. I have no idea why my hardware disappeared. Possibly things like this happen when your computer freezes while doing something crucial. Or maybe it is a right wing conspiracy. ◆



http://www.canx.com/tpcug/



Bits of Blue



April in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 4 April 1998

Meeting

MGI Photo Suite and MGI VideoWave Presentation
April 8, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry

Meeting Preview: At the April meeting you will see two products from MGI Software, MGI PhotoSuite and MGI VideoWave, which give you unlimited options when it comes to your photos and videos. MGI PhotoSuite is a complete PC photography solution. It's allows you to edit and organize your photos while giving you creative freedom. And with MGI VideoWave, you can now capture, edit, and produce your own videos on your PC.

Dick Kellerman will be the guest speaker representing MGI Software. He has worked with user groups for over 14 years. Dick is an informative and entertaining presenter. You will come away from this meeting with a much better understanding of photo editing, cataloging & transforming your photos! Dick promised to bring informative handouts for all, door prizes, and a special user group price for those wishing to purchase any MGI products at the meeting.

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President's Message

By Merle Nicholson

This month, I'd like to mention once again the need for all club members to participate in some way. There are opportunities limited only by imagination. Here aresome ideas: Serve on the board, write newsletter articles, call vendors for donations, telephone past members and re-invite them to meetings. Hand out our club flyers. Do personal invitations to club meetings. Encourage other members to do the same. I'm sure there's more. The board of directors and the people writing articles are very small groups that especially need new blood. Ask any board member how to get started on the activity that appeals to you most, and if you're not satisfied with the answer, persist.

I have written two beginners' articles, last month and this, and I'd like US to continue to do more. It would be just wonderful to have some beginners' articles written by beginners. If you're concerned that you'll miss on something techni-

(President.....Continued on page 2)

May 13: Waldec-IKON Technology Services will present Microsoft and Internet related products.
June 10: IDT/Centaur will discuss the Winchip Processors for your computer.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



(President.....Continued from page 1)

cal, someone can edit it or make suggestions for you. Send articles by e-mail to lamartin@ix.netcom.com or call William or myself. All our telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are elsewhere on the page. Thanks, and I'll see you at the meeting on April 8th.

Minutes of the March 11 Meeting

By Merle Nicholson for Secretary, Kevan Sheridan

The meeting started with a demo on the web site, followed by a talk on surge protectors. The Door prize drawing was held following the break.

The meeting was opened by President Merle Nicholson at about 6:30. After announcements and officer introductions, our Newsletter editor William LaMartin gave a live demo of the virtual reality world that is posted on the TPCUG club web site. William created a model of the lobby portion of MOSI as a demo of Corel Web.World, the virtual reality component of Corel WebMaster.

Melanie Arsenault of Kinematics Corporation gave a good overview of what is necessary to protect your home from power surges. They advise the installation of a general household protector at the breaker panel, heavy-duty surge protectors on all electronic appliances, protectors to suppress surges coming in on the telephone lines and even the cable TV.

Two very important points Melanie stressed were that you can't accomplish anything with a $14 power strip. You have to look at the specifications, and to look at the warranty. If the warranty offers to replace the power strip in case of damage, and not the protected device, you've not accomplished anything.

Kinematics offers a free home survey and estimates. A very complete installation protects everything including pool pumps and garage door operators (an often forgotten item). They're located in Masaryktown. For a free estimate, call 800-393-6966. Thanks to Melanie for an informative talk.

After the break, the door prize drawing was held. Ted Rodenbach won a printer stand, David Clary a printer stand. Frank Reguero won a mouse pad, Merle Nicholson a copy of Helicops, and finally David Clary won a MicroFiche unit that he donated to MOSI. Thanks to Bruce Register for donating the stands and the Fiche unit. ◆

Road Runner Cable Modem - Part 1

by Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

I finally got the telephone call I've been waiting months for from Road Runner saying they're ready in my area. They asked if I'd be willing to serve as a beta tester and could they install next Tuesday? You bet they could. That day was just three days ago as I write this. So my experience is limited, and I'll be following up with more next month as I gain experience. But I've learned a lot of details about what it is–and is not–that I'd like to share.

First a little background in case you've not heard about it at all. The Time Warner Cable Company wants to be your Internet service provider, and they want to bring the connection into your house along with the TV signal at an extraordinary speed far exceeding anything a dial-up modem will do. The cost to the customer is just $40 a month for an existing cable subscriber. The normal installation cost is $100 a month but just $50 for members of our club.

The data signal comes in on your TV cable. The catch is that the strength of the signal must meet some standards that are not necessarily required by your TV sets. Mine did not, and when that's the case they beef up what is necessary to bring it to cable modem standards. So they schedule a TV installer at the same time as the cable modem/software installer. If for instance the signal strength at the pole outside is good, and by the time it reaches your TV set it's not good, they'll run a new cable in. Your TV may not care too much, but the modem will. A friend of mine a mile south of me is getting one too, and they ran a new cable in just for the cable modem because the existing interior cable just was too old. In my case, Time-Warner brought in a new cable for me five years ago to service a bedroom and my computer room. So I had a TV and VCR in one room on a good cable. He did replace the splitter and short jumper cables to the outlets to improve that part, and then replaced a cable that ran around the room. He wasn't happy with my 25 feet store-bought variety. He said his was much better quality. All this is included in the cost.

He wasn't at all happy with the signal strength after he was done, but the problem was on their end at the pole, and they scheduled repair people to come out and do that the same day. That was done, and in the process improved the quality of one TV set that was a bit snowy on some channels.

The cable is plugged into a box that looks like a 1985 model 2400-baud modem. It's big, about 7x3x11 inches. It has a power cube about the size of my regular modem. Fortunately the cube uses a power cord, so it doesn't eat up a power strip. He installs a Network Interface Card (NIC) in the computer - a nice little 3-com 10 PCI Ethernet card. There's a short standard network cable patching between the modem and the PC.

I just found out today from Michael Solomon of TWC that the modem doesn't like being turned off more than two hours, so he asked me to plug it into something always turned on. They're monitoring the data rate and lot of other performance things remotely to make sure my service stays good. They can tell if my modem is misbehaving. It was, so he called me and I reset it for him while he was monitoring.

I already have browser and e-mail software. The only thing to do is install the software support for the NIC, configure that to use TCP/IP and install the Road Runner login software. Then set Internet Explorer and Outlook Express to use the Road Runner proxy servers. All this Ty Abrahams of Groupware International did for me while he was at my house. This part went pretty smoothly considering that I'm running a local-area network in my house and the two NICs–his and mine didn't want to coexist. So I disabled my network and plugged the modem in my own NIC just to make sure everything was working. I've since restored my LAN, and everything is running perfectly.

Fortunately I had already gone to IE4.0, which handles multiple e-mail accounts. So I'm continuing to access my GTE e-mail account through Road Runner. I'll start notifying all my e-mail buds of my new address–merlenic@tampabay.rr.com, for the next month, and I'll be ready to drop the GTE account.

The Road Runner software is just to log onto the system as far as I can tell. It comes on one diskette, and during the installation it connected for the first time and did a very fast download of some software, and Ty very quickly stopped the download as it began downloading Internet Explorer 4.0. All this leaves you with one small login program to run on startup called Login, with a picture of the Warner Brothers' Road Runner on it. When you run the login program, a very simple panel comes up with a place to type the login name and password and press the Login button.

Now the silly stuff. As it logs on, it plays that Road Runner sound thing that cartoon Road Runners make and then runs Internet explorer for you. The sound was funny once or twice, but after that I wanted it to go away. And I just don't want IE to launch. Usually I do e-mail first, but most of the time I just want to connect, and do nothing until I'm ready. Ty said that the login really just wants to run *something* and it doesn't matter what. And it's configurable. The other annoying thing is that it doesn't save the password. It has to be typed in every time. Jeez. I guess in the overall scheme of things, say, compared to weapons inspections in Iraq, it's not important. But Jeez … guys! Obviously I'm not the only person who thinks this way because there's a freeware program called *QuickRR* that fixes all that. The annoying beep-beep gets replaced by a .wav file that plays … silence. And the program that gets run does … nothing. And it remembers my password! And then the login program goes away completely.

(Road Runner.....Continued on page 5)

Software Junkie

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

For all of you who do not know me personally, this article this month is my 'coming out-of-the-closet' article. ***"I am a software junkie."*** There! I've said it. I have been a member of software-aholics anonymous (SAA) for several years, but if anything, I am worse now than ever before. One of the reasons I became the TPCUG Librarian years ago was to help me through the hard times when I just had to have a software program. I figured if I was the person in charge of the library of files, then anytime I needed a fix I could just go to the tray of diskettes and fondle all the software I could get my hands on. But instead of making things better it actually made things worse.

Originally, just having to pay the absurd costs of software off the shelf in that fancy shrink-wrap was deterrent enough, but when you become a junkie you find ways to get your hands on that next fix. I found that one of the easiest ways to get really good commercial software was to start writing software reviews for *Bits of Blue,* our users group newsletter. I'll never forget the rush I got from that first major software package I reviewed, (Lotus for Windows). And the fact that it was free made the high even greater. But there are just so many vendors that are willing to feed my addiction, at least with enough good software so that I wouldn't be looking for more software before the next newsletter was published. After all, I would never consider reviewing someone else's software. I'm not that low!

Then I discovered Shareware. WOW! That's like shopping with a credit card you never have to pay, or at least not as often as with store-bought software. I mean, I could get my fix, decide I didn't like, and not have to pay for it. Although I will admit that quite a few packages have caught my eye and I did the right thing and registered the Shareware. I mean, I'm not a low-life software junkie. Give me some credit! But even the Shareware buzz couldn't always satisfy me. The highest high I can experience is finding good FREEWARE. Think about it! Great software utilities that you can actually use but you don't have to pay for, ever!

Obviously, the hardest thing about Freeware is finding it. Right? Wrong! My friends *at PC World Magazine* have just published their 3rd annual "Best Free Stuff Online" issue for April 1998. The magazine is loaded with great Freeware/ Shareware reviews and worldwide web addresses so you can download these treasures immediately. Along with the software they also give you tips for smart downloading and explain exactly how to "try before you buy" Shareware.



There really is good software out there that you don't have to pay an arm and a leg for, written by people, like you and me, who don't have the major dollars to market their products. The Shareware concept exists to help these people inform the world about their software. Support these people every chance you get so that this form of marketing remains a viable resource for them and us. Enough commentary. . . . back to the FREE stuff.

This year PC World Magazine offers:

- Best Free Windows Utilities
- Best Freeware and Shareware Apps
- Best Free Software Sites
- Best Free Browser Plug-ins
- Best Free Web Services
- Best Places to Find Drivers
- Best Graphics and Sound Tools
- Best Free Financial Information
- Best Free Government Sites (Oxymoron?)
- Best Ways to Personalize Your PC
- Best Free Gaming Sites

An example of some of the Free stuff listed is a program called Screen Loupe, which allows you to get a close-up view of any part of your screen you choose. You can also save that portion of the screen you've magnified to the clipboard to print out later, etc. Speaking about clipboard, there is also a program called Yankee Clipper that adds a very useful feature to Windows that should have been included. It saves up to 50 Clipboard text-only images, like boilerplate text that you continually retype, such as your return address, for later retrieval.

One of the most popular e-mail programs is listed, Eudora Light, that has many of the features of the big boys, such as strong message filtering, a find function, and encryption to keep those messages private. If you're into building web sites, it lists a web site called MetaBuilder that has a whole bunch of free tools and utilities that you can use to 'spiff-up' that new web site of yours.

Another interesting site listed is called "Nonags", which lists an impressive library of Shareware and Freeware software

(Junkie.....Continued on page 9)

(Road Runner.....Continued from page 3)

Now to the last thing. Accounts. They pick one for you. It's made up of your first initial, some of your last name and one number, limited to 8 characters. So mine is … well you don't need to know, because I'm not using it. You **do** need to log on under that "primary" account to go to the customer Account management on their web site. There you can create four more accounts, login and e-mail. Make up your own. This is good. I did have problems getting into the account management– failed, no access rights, so I sent e-mail, and then called next day. But it took until late that night to resolve it. I sent the help desk e-mail describing the problem again and to my surprise, about 11 PM I got mail back with a setting in my browser to try. It worked. The help desk is open from 8AM to midnight. Very good.

Have I mentioned that it's FAST ?? How about a 1.6MB download in about 8 seconds? It's **F.A.S.T**.

More next month. ◆

Internet picture of the month



MIR live broadcast

This is a screen capture of NASA Astronaut Andy Thomas (on Mir) from a live March 23 Webcast interview with Alan Alda (on Earth).

Please excuse the poor quality of the photo, but for those who have viewed them on a regular modem, this quality of Real Video images is nothing new. This one was a little worse than usual. But it is historic, I think.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
HTML Station (HTML programming)	http://www.december.com/html/
Online Book on VRML programming	http://www.wasabisoft.com/Book/menu.htm
Cosmo Software (VRML browser plugin & software)	http://cosmo.sgi.com/
The Ultimate Web Host List!	http://www.webhostlist.com/
Monster Board (Job Search)	http://www.monsterboard.com/mbhome.htm
1-800 Flowers	http://www.1800flowers.com/flowers/welcome.asp
Savings Bond Wizard (calculate returns)	http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/sav/savwizar.htm
New England Historic Genealogical Society	http://www.nehgs.org/
Find Sites on the Web using their Real Names	http://www.realnames.com/Resolver.asp
Visual Basic Resource Center	http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/rasanen/vbnet/vbnWelcome.htm
Imagine Radio (Internet only radio)	http://www.imagineradio.com/
Melbourne PC User Group, Australia's Largest!	http://www.melbpc.org.au/
Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections	http://www.votehillsborough.org/
Forms and Publications of the IRS	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/plain/forms_pubs/index.html
USPS ZIP+4 Code Lookup	http://www.usps.gov/ncsc/lookups/lookup_zip+4.html

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Mixman Studio

By Brian Lance, Tampa PC Users Group

First of all, I would like to mention that if you are looking for a sequencer or MIDI-compatible program, this is not it. What it does is allow *anyone* to create music using a unique interface to mix supplied tracks (.TRK) live and save a mix (.MIX) to a standard wave file (.WAV).

Minimum requirements listed:

Windows 95
Pentium (MMX for optimal performance)
16MB RAM
5MB HD space (100MB preferred)
CD-ROM
16-bit DirectX-compatible soundcard

I would add that you will need DirectX 5 or later, and MMX is required for pitch-shifting.
On the other hand, the quality of output (.WAV) is not related to the performance of your machine. You always get CD-standard output.

Setup was easy. I took the full install, so the total was 103MB with all mixes and tracks. After perusing the manual, I opened the Demo Mix. My first mix took only 10 minutes, and most of that was messing with settings. I mixed once and then recorded it to a .WAV. A 93 second mix resulted in a 16,170KB file. This is not surprising - CD-quality sound is 16-bit PCM stereo at 44,100Mhz; or 172kb/sec. So you could burn this right onto a CD! You can also import .WAV files or record directly into Mixman Studio. By comparison, my .MIX was 40KB, only having the track, timing and other information. The tracks used were 1.61MB.

I used Windows 95's Sound Recorder (SNDREC32) to convert the resultant .WAV. SNDREC32 will convert to different formats and do simple editing. Try this: right-click on a .WAV, select Properties and go to the Preview tab. This is quicker for previewing a large .WAV, versus actually loading it into SNDREC32.

At 22050Mhz, 8bit PCM stereo, 4043KB, there was no appreciable change in music quality (low-end Labtec speakers). At 8000Mhz, 8bit PCM stereo, 1467KB, the quality suffered: Cymbal crashes weren't crisp, bass was dull, and there were small amounts of noise.

Under ADPCM format, music is uneditable (not Mixman's fault!). Changed to ADPCM 22050, 4bit Stereo, eighth the size (2046KB). With my speakers, this was indistinguishable from the original.

There are also much better sound editors on the market, and better converters. One I have used is *GoldWave:* http://www.goldwave.com/

Items that would be nice to add in a later release are:

- Track names by each mixing 'turntable', over the (very nice) graphics.
- The ability to copy settings to a text file, like track modifications.
- Concatenation of two or more mixes.

One small problem I had with displaying dialogs was easily solved by looking online at their Product Q & A. I believe they are going to put tracks online for downloading, but they are not online yet.

Overall, Mixman Studio has a decent interface, and the help manual has a comprehensive tutorial. On-screen help is a nice touch with overlays.

Like the material mentions, you can mix live, create a tape, a CD, add it to a multimedia presentation, wherever you need music.

Online: http://www.mixman.com/

- Technical support through Q&A and Email. Registering gets you a CD of tracks.
- Description: http://www.mixman.com/studio.html .
- Make sure to stop by the links page!
- Demos of the original Mixman (Win 3.11/95) and reviews.

Available soon: Mixman Soundiscs. Files in various styles: Gospel, Funk (George Clinton), Hip-hop, etc. in .TRK, .WAV and stereo audio files.

Ordering: 1-888-4MIXMAN (1-888-464-9626). ◆

How Many EXE Files Do You Have?

By Tom Cone, Tampa PC Users Group

One thing that's kept me interested in personal computing is the seemingly never-ending potential it offers for doing tedious chores quickly and easily. Basically, I guess I'm pretty lazy. If there's something the PC can do faster and more accurately than I can do by hand, I'll spend some time and effort to "make it happen". I also enjoy the challenge of pushing the technology a bit, using the PC to solve problems on my own. This combination of personal "quirks" has led me to learn a little about programming, and to use that knowledge from time to time to solve an occasional "puzzle". Sometimes the investment in the puzzle's "solution" is greater than the value of the solution. In other cases, like the one I'm going to describe in this article, you can sometimes avoid "reinventing the wheel", by relying on advice from folks who share your interests, and are a step or two ahead of you on the PC "learning curve".

Recently I learned that our editor, William LaMartin, was embarked on a programming project using Visual BASIC. He was building a short program that would scan his entire hard drive and give him a count of the number of "EXE" files installed on the drive. This struck me as a problem ideally suited for a computerized solution. I liked the problem because I could understand it. At least I thought I did. What was needed was a way of opening every folder, scanning and counting any EXE files found therein, then closing the folder, and moving on to the next folder. If you repeated the cycle for every folder, you'd have an accurate tally of all EXE files on the drive.

So, I dropped William an email note and asked if he would mind sending me what he had developed so far. He quickly sent me the source code, and looking it over I began to see how he was approaching the problem. Although I don't know Visual BASIC, it began to look like there were several tricky little "details" that had to be solved in order to come up with a correct solution. First, you needed a reliable way of figuring out where all the folders were located on the hard drive. As you know, folders (directories) can hold folders (subdirectories), which can hold folders (sub-subdirectories) which have folders (sub-sub-subdirectories) inside, also. How can you be sure you've scanned each and every folder on the hard drive? I began to see that this "riddle" could be trickier than I had imagined.

Next, you need a way to scan the file directory within each folder, one entry at a time, and test whether an entry meets the search criteria, or not, e.g. look at the first filename, is it an EXE file? If so, count it, if not, skip it and go to the next one, and so one.

This task seemed to be working well for William, but he told me that he wasn't all that happy with how he had figured out how to find all the folders on the hard drive. Using specific Visual BASIC commands he built a list of "level one" folders, each of which would then be opened and scanned. He then opened the level one folders and built a list any sub-folders found therein. These became "level two" folders, which were processed similarly, and so on. He counted seven levels "deep" noting that eight levels of sub-folders provided no additional hits.

I began to think of ways to solve the problem using a different programming language, Visual dBASE and quickly ran into the same difficulty as had William. The program must tell the computer which folders to open and scan, but the number and location of folders is unknown to the programmer when the program begins to run. I began to work on a solution which opened the root directory, built a list of all "primary" folders located there, and then processed them in series. As each primary folder is opened and scanned, a new list of sub-folders located within, if any, is built. These would then be processed one at a time, in series. I wanted to process all the folders in a single "root" stemming from the root directory. When a "stem" in the root directory had been carried to its logical extreme, I would eventually open a folder and find zero folders within it. I would know that all folders in that particular branch of the directory "tree" would have been checked, regardless of how many sub-folder levels might exist. If I repeated the process for all "stems" in the root directory, I would have covered, comprehensively, all folders on the hard drive.

Doing this proved very, very difficult. If a folder could only hold one sub-folder the problem would be soluble, at least by me. However, since multiple subdirectories can exist anywhere along the "stem", I began to flounder. My "directory" tree resembled an ancestral family tree so much that I began to wonder if I hadn't stumbled into a "genealogical" quagmire, and almost called Jenny Lind, our Geneology SIG Leader, to see if she had any suggestions for me!

Instead, I asked myself what William would do? I got on the Internet and asked for help. This was done by posting an email message in a VisualDBASE newsgroup. Within the space of several hours I received a really great suggestion. Why not look "outside the box" and take advantage of services available from the operating system? Huh? Well, it turns out that the lowly DOS "DIR" command, in its Windows 95 incarnation, contains a lot of power that I'd not been using.

We've all gone to the command line, typed "DIR" and pressed the ENTER key to see a list of files in the current directory, right? Some of us know that if you add "/p" after the command, the display will pause instead of scrolling quickly through and off the top of your screen. Remember, also, that you can limit the display to files which match a particular pattern. "DIR *.EXE", for example, will list only files that have the letters "EXE" in their extension.

(Exe.....Continued on page 10)

Florida Association of Computer User Groups Meeting in Orlando

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

At the FACUG meeting in Orlando on March 13, the first vendor was Adobe. They gave each person present a shrink wrapped copy of PageMill version 3.0. The girl who demonstrated PageMill ver 3.0 and PhotoDeluxe really did a beautiful job. She had her talk down perfectly, with no hems or haws and she knew how to use her computer to advantage in showing us these programs. I give her an A+, and the programs are A+ also. Another thing regarding Adobe. They have a Reader on their Internet site which is free. You should look at it. A copy was given to us. (This is not Adobe Acrobat, that's another program.)

Saturday morning JASC software told us about their Paint Shop Pro 5 and other software on their web site. Some of the software is shareware. Paint Shop Pro 5 is their easy-to-use graphics editor. It features complete layer support, picture tube brushes, CMYK separations, and pressure sensitive tablet support. The demo was very good. I ordered a copy for my own personal use. It is about $50. http://www.jasc.com .

Then there were sessions on making money for your group, publicity and public relations, and user group newsletters. Following that, sessions on user group home pages, SIGs, and using volunteers. In each session, you learned from the folks from all the groups. It would be difficult to place all the notes we took in this short review of the meetings.

Saturday noon, Alps Electric presented a talk on their new printer.

Then a session with all the vendors up at the front of the room so we could pester them with silly questions and requests of all kinds. This is where you meet all the vendors and you get to ask them how to get them to come to your meetings and what they want from you.

At 6 P.M., Microsoft representatives gave us a talk on some of their products.

About 9:30 P.M. Micrografx gave us a talk on some of their products. This girl was very good, she kept the demo down to earth. They sell Webtricity, which gives you easy animations and 3D graphics. Great! Also, Windows Draw 6, a general purpose drawing, diagramming, and publishing program. You can output HTML without knowing any code. Micrographx gave us all a CD ROM of Picture Publisher.

Sunday morning, there were group sessions on running a user group, building membership, and obtaining grants.

We attended Joan Dineen's session on how to obtain grants. She does a great job of telling us how their Women's PC User Group received a grant of $10,000 cash for them to buy an InFocus Projector for their group. Several members present told how they obtained grants, some for large sums of money. This is always a very interesting session. I recall about three or four years back, Roger Meissner of the Sun City Center group chaired this group session and told us how they received their grant of $10,000 to buy a projector for their group. They got their money in three batches of $3,333 each year for three years. Sun City Center has probably been the most active in applications and receipt of grant monies. Since Roger Meissner's session, for the last two or three years or so Joan Dineen has chaired this panel discussion. By the way, the Tampa Bay Computer Society has applied for a grant to give their group a projector also.

Following this session, were others: The Internet as a User Group Facility, New Member Orientation, and Meeting Presentations and Programs.

Cybermedia was to present the talk and demo at Sunday's noon session. The presenter was ill and could not make it, so Gene Barlow talked about PowerQuest's programs, Partition Magic, Drive Copy, and the New Drive Image, version 2.0. Gene has been at most of the sessions since it started in maybe 1989. I don't remember when Gary Schweinshaupt started this gathering of the User Groups, but it was about eight years ago. I have attended all the meetings each year except one in the Space Coast group's area a year or two ago.

Also to share the lunch time, we were given a talk on Real Help, and other programs by Quarterdeck. At the end of his talk, we were each given a copy of RealHelp.

After lunch on Sunday the vendors set up displays of their products and we all walked around to see and talk for an hour or two. Corel gave us a CD ROM of CorelDraw 8. It is good for only 30 days but will give us time to look it over. Lotus gave out a copy of SmartSuite 97 on CD ROM. Then, many prizes were given away by calling our ticket numbers out. Everyone got at least one prize, some were very expensive shrink wrapped software. Then back to the car to drive home. ◆

FACUG

Beginners' Column

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

Do you know how to "run" a program? Lets say, for instance, you are on the Internet and download a program, maybe the Adobe Acrobat Reader from the link on the club web site. You're asked to "Open" it or "Save this program to disk". If you (rightly) select "Save to disk", it brings up a Directory box, and you press Open. What do you do with it after you have it? If you can't answer that question, read on. We have the right stuff here for you - I hope.

Let's start with a quick tutorial on file names. A good example of a file will be C:\Downloads\ar32e301.exe. The C: part of the name is the *drive letter*, the \Downloads\ part is the *Path*, the *ar32e301* is the name and *.exe* is called the *extension,* or in Windows terminology, the *file type.* The *extension* is what I really need to tell you about. The file type for the extension part "*.exe"* is *program* or *application*. The terms *program* and *application* are somewhat interchangeable. In a strict sense, a program can be a part of an *application*, because you can apply the term *application* to Microsoft Office, which is a suite of *programs*. But if you use Windows Explorer (you do, don't you?) and show Details (under view, details), look to the right of any file with *.exe* and in the *Type* column, it will say *Application*. While you're in Windows Explorer if you were to double-click (DON'T !) on an application, it will "run" the application. There are several ways to run an application and I'll get to that and what it means, but I'll continue first with Types and how Types relates to the *extension*.

In a broad sense, the file type - the three letters at the end following the dot - determines what the file is used for. We know that if you use Word and save a letter called MyLetter, Word will add the ".doc" extension to the name, and there's a very good reason for this. If you were to double-click on a document file with the name Myletter.doc, what happens? Microsoft Word starts up and loads the file automatically. That's because when you installed Word, the installation program registered the extension .doc in the System Registry as belonging to Word and from that time on, .doc "belongs" to word, just as .wpd belongs to Corel WordPerfect and .txt belongs to Notepad and .bmp belongs to Paint. You can misname a file easily to something that the operating system doesn't have an association for and mess things up. Let's say in Notepad you type some characters and then save-as and type in "Mystuff.bmp" for the name and you **really** enclose the name in quotes. The file gets saved as mystuff.bmp. If you didn't enclose it in quotes, Notepad would have saved it as *mystuff.bmp.txt* ! But you did and now we have a file that is most certainly not a graphic file. If you were to double-click on it, Paint will start and then error out and tell you that it cannot read the file mystuff.bmp. The lesson to be learned here is: **Always make sure that all files are saved with a three letter extension !** It was very common usage back in the DOS days to name a file MYBOSS.MEM (for a memo to my boss) or something like that. In windows you can't do that any longer. Actually you *can* do things like this, but it just complicates your life and doesn't accomplish anything.

What's all this leading to? Well the operating system has reserved many three-letter extensions for specific purposes, and *.exe* is reserved for an *application*. So if you were to double-click on it, or create a shortcut from it and double-click on that (again DON'T), Windows will know what to do with it, just as it does for Word or Paint. And this is a good place to break. We'll continue next month with running files. ◆

(Junkie.....Continued from page 4)

where none of the packages are hindered with reminders to register, disabled features, time bombs that shut down the software after a certain time, or any other tricks that limit the trial software.

I've only touched on a very few of the many, many free things that are referenced in April's issue of PC World. If you don't subscribe, you should. But, have no fear. There is another way to get all this free stuff. Go to ***http://www.pcworld.com*** and follow the links. But please be for-warned or you'll end up like me, hooked! This is an addictive site with addictive software. The kind people of PC World Online will even assist you in becoming a software junkie like me. If you will go to ***http://www.tipworld.com*** and fill out the form, they will send you an e-mail everyday with their choice of Shareware files of the day. How can a junkie ever hope to kick the habit when it's crammed down your throat, or rather your modem, for free?!

If I have opened any of your eyes enough to admit that you too may be a software junkie, maybe we could get together and form a SIG for software-aholics and share our sources. Just a thought! ◆

Special Interest Groups

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

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In the distant past I also remember that many DOS commands permit you to "redirect" output from the display screen to other devices, like the printer, or the hard disk. For instance, the command "DIR > C:\FILELIST.TXT", when executed from the command line, will scan the current directory, and instead of displaying the file list on screen, will "redirect" the file list to a DOS text file called "FILELIST.TXT" which will be written in your root directory on the C: drive. Try it yourself, but be warned, any earlier file by the same name (FILELIST.TXT) will be "overwritten" by the file created in this way by the DIR command.

This much was familiar to me, but its usefulness for the EXE file count problem was not apparent until the additional command line arguments "/S" and "/B" were shown to me.

The Command "DIR /S" will list all files in the current directory, and all files in any subdirectories found within it. If this were executed from the root directory it would display a list of all files on the hard drive, including those in any subdirectories, sub-subdirectories, and so on. The Command "DIR /B" will list data on each file "Briefly", excluding information like date created, date last modified, and so forth. All you get is the filename, including its DOS path.

If you go to the command line in the root directory and type the DOS command DIR C:*.EXE /S/B > C:\EXE.TXT , you create a DOS Text file called "EXE.TXT" in your root directory which contains a list of every single EXE file on your hard drive. Once this file is created, all my program has to do is open the list, count the number of lines, and display the answer

In VisualDBASE I did this by building a program which shuts itself down temporarily, runs the DOS DIR command with the necessary arguments to build a text file containing the EXE filenames, and then opens an array, reads the file list from the disk file one line at a time, each line going into a separate element in the array, and when the end of file is reached, I see how big my array is, and display the result. It would run a bit faster if I didn't build the array, and simply counted lines in the text file, but I wanted a more general solution which permits me to actually display the filenames on screen from within the program. This solves the problem comprehensively, but makes more experienced programmers shudder. My approach is "quick and dirty", lacking the elegance which solving my "folders within folders" dilemma without using the crutch of a temporary disk file would have meant. But it works, works quickly, and is accurate and thorough.

Naturally, I shared "my" approach with William, managing to create the impression, without actually lying about it, that I simply recalled these arcane command line arguments for the DOS DIR command from memory, instead of having them "fed" to me by more experienced programmers on the Internet!

But you've heard enough from me, he'll finish the story for himself.

William LaMartin's additional comments:

Using Tom's approach, here is what my program reduced to:

```
Private Sub Command1_Click()
Dim MyAppID

If Dir("C:\TEMP\EXE-2.TXT") <> "" Then Kill
"C:\TEMP\EXE.TXT"
MyAppID = Shell("C:\command.com /C DIR C:\*.EXE /S/B >
C:\TEMP\EXE.TXT", 1)    ' Run DOS DIR comand
start = Timer
Do While Timer - start < 40  'give time for the DOS program to
run
Loop
Open "C:\TEMP\EXE-2.TXT" For Input As #1
   Do Until EOF(1)
   Line Input #1, A$
   List1.AddItem A$
   Loop
Close
```

(Exe.....Continued on page 12)

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Adobe Systems
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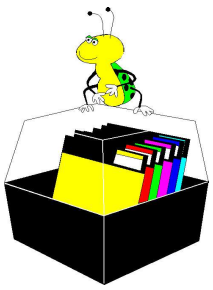
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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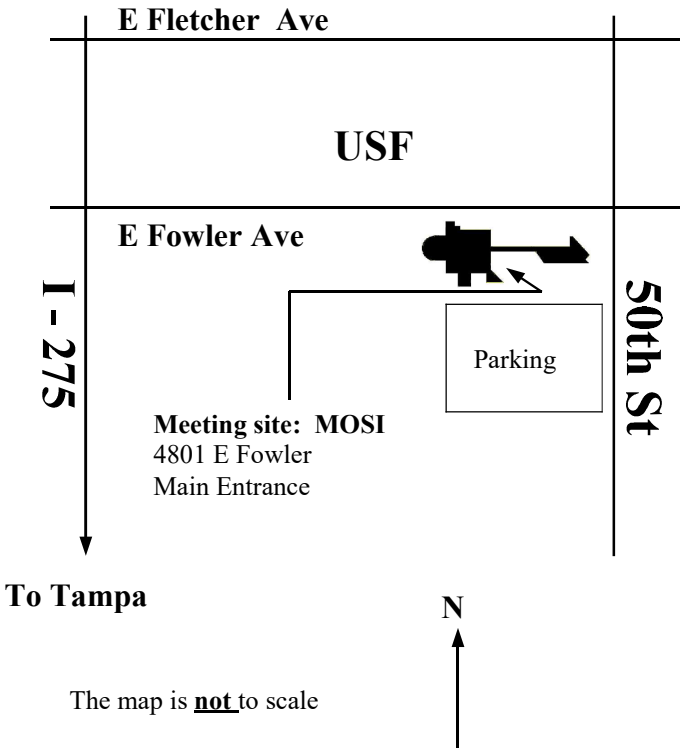
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(Exe.....Continued from page 10)

```
Text1.Text = List1.ListCount
End Sub
```

This is much shorter than my first attempt. There is one fly still left in the ointment, though. Notice the Timer loop that waits 40 seconds. That is to allow time for the DOS program to finish cataloguing all the EXE files before the VB program begins to display them. It would be more elegant to have the main program check to see when the DOS program has finished and then to display all the files that had been found. Unfortunately VB does not have the ability to do this. Thus, we need to step out of the box, as Tom calls it, and appeal to the Win 95 operating system with what are known as Win32API calls. This was beyond my current knowledge, but Tom pointed me to a site on the WWW that had such information. Modifying what I found there to fit my situation, I was able to create a program with code about twice as long as the one above which did the job elegantly with no need for the timer.

This is just one more example of how we members can help each other and the usefulness of the WWW. ◆



http://www.canx.com/tpcug/



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 5 May 1998

Meeting

Microsoft & Internet Related Products

May 13, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the May meeting, Phil Humphrey and David Parsley of Waldec-IKON Technology Services will present Microsoft and Internet related products. In addition we will have several better than usual door prizes—the best being Microsoft Office 97 Professional donated by a member of our group.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

I think it has been a sufficient length of time since I last mentioned the word, so I will say it again—**NetMeeting.** If you don't have it, get it. I am talking about Microsoft NetMeeting, one of the programs in the large Internet Explorer 4.0 package. If you downloaded the small IE package, you didn't get it; however, it is also available as a separate download from Microsoft. The file is 2.09 MB and takes 58 seconds to download.....with a cable modem, according to Merle Nicholson.

For those not familiar with the program, NetMeeting is an Internet conferencing program which allows two people to use audio and video to communicate over an Internet connection. While they converse, they can transfer files, use a white board, display one computer's running program on the other computer's screen—even allowing the other individual to collaborate in using that program. More than two people can simultaneously use NetMeeting, but the audio and video are restricted to only two of the participants. The program is much better behaved now than in its first version, and it works surprisingly well with 28,800 modems. However, when you add video and sharing of programs the audio is sometimes degraded.

What prompts me to mention this is that my son, who is away at college and is about to graduate and take a job, and I recently had a NetMeeting which demon-

(Comments.....Continued on page 2)

June 10: IDT/Centaur will discuss the Winchip Processors for your computer.
July 8: Tim Adams from Gateway 2000 will give a hardware presentation.

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Member of Association of Personal Computer User Groups APCUG

Minutes of the April 8 Meeting

By Kevan Sheridan, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Merle started the meeting at 6:15pm by welcoming everyone and introducing the officers. There were discussions about starting a Windows SIG possibly at HCC. Mary Sheridan passed around a sheet to see how much interest there might be in this. Merle announced the start of a 50/50 drawing at the meetings, separate from the software drawings. As always donations for the tickets are $1.00 each or 6 tickets for $5.00.

One of the members asked about information on electronic filing of taxes and using Tele-File. It was discussed and hopefully cleared up by the other members at the meeting.

Mary Sheridan announced how important it was for everyone to be involved and asked that some try to attend the board meetings.

At 6:30pm Dick Kellerman, a self-proclaimed User Group Evangelist, began his presentation. He was showing two programs by MGI software, Photo Suite and Video Wave. He explained that both programs needed a greater resolution than our projector provided and apologized that they wouldn't appear as good as possible. Photo Suite is a complete photograph manipulation program. It allows for touching up, resizing and photo album creation. You can make slide shows from various media, scanned pictures, captured pictures, digital cameras and photo disks. A free upgrade will be available for those who bought Photo Suite, and the upgraded program will include the ability to morph photos and use on the Internet.

The Video Wave program was for manipulation of videos. He couldn't demonstrate this program since it required a higher resolution than the 640 x 480 our projector produced. He offered a great price for the software purchased at the meeting.

The door prizes were MGI Suite won by Kevan Sheridan, Norton Utilities won by Jim Weber and Magic Cap won by Roger Waters. Roger also won the 50/50 drawing, so it was a good meeting for him. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

strates how useful this program can be. While we spoke into our microphones and listened to our computer's speakers, just like with a regular phone conversation, he shared with me a listing on his computer of apartment rentals in a potential job city while I shared a Street Atlas USA map of that city from my computer with him. I could move around the apartment list on his computer and he could manipulate the map on mine. I was familiar with the city and could orient him by moving my

(Comments.....Continued on page 8)

Windows 95 Enhancements

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

As the June 25th release of Windows 98 draws nearer all of us that use Windows 95 hope that there will be some much needed additions to 98 that should have been included in 95 from the beginning.

I don't know about you but I have my desktop set up with several of the programs that I use continually so that I don't have to click Start, Programs and go looking every time I want to run a program. And I don't let Windows automatically arrange my icons for me. Well, at least I try not to. But every now and then Windows decides to hiccup, and all my icons end up left-justified on the desktop and all scrambled up. Boy, does that just burn me! Why isn't there a button somewhere that you can push when that happens to put it back like it was?

I use Windows Explorer all the time. So much in fact that it starts up automatically when I start up Windows. And I agree that 95's long file name feature has made it much easier to find files that have been saved for a while. But why can't you make notes alongside a file in case there's more info you need to remember than you want to include in a file name?

I get so tired of those clouds flying around when 95 takes forever to load. Why isn't there an easy way to change that opening screen to some cute picture or animation of my choice instead of what Bill Gates wants me to see?

Are you like me and wish there were more choices on the menus of the programs you use? Who decided that those choices were the only ones we wanted?

Have you ever deleted a file in DOS mode that you wish you hadn't and wonder why it couldn't have been sent to the recycle bin like in 95?

Ever load a new program, like a graphics program, that automatically changes an association to a particular type of graphics file that you would rather have loaded automatically by another program but was changed when the new program was loaded? Maybe we would like to have it load with a different program, or better yet load with the program of choice at the time we double click on it.

Have you ever wished the recently used menu was easier to get to and that you didn't have to use RegEdit to make changes to it?

Why doesn't 95 have a built-in utility that lets me swap around keys on my keyboard, especially the ones I keep hitting in error?

Ever had so many programs running that your task bar was so full you couldn't make out which program was which and you decide you need to load one more program from your desktop, but don't feel like minimizing all the programs to get to your desktop?

Better yet, why couldn't there be one button to push to clear off all the garbage from the screen and get to a clean desktop? But, if I wanted to go back to the garbage screen, it would still be available.

All of this seems a little much to ask the Redmond, Washington team to cure in Windows 98, all at one time. And I don't really expect them to cure all the ills. But everything I just wished for is available for Windows 95 right now and they are all FREE. That's right, *PC Magazine Online* has come through again. Last month, when I was doing research for my article, I came across the mother-lode of much needed utilities or fixes for Windows 95. So much so, if the justice department or some of the states keep Mr. Gates from releasing 98 on time I don't really care. . . . for now that is!

Send your browser to http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/pctech/download/win95.html and behold the bevy of free programs available just for the download. And they are all relatively small so the download time is minimal for the benefit you'll receive. Here's what you'll see there:

- ***Explorer Notes*** enhances Windows 95 explorer by letting you associate a note of up to 255 characters with any file or folder.
- ***BigBin*** enhances the Windows 95 Recycle Bin so those files deleted from within DOS boxes are protected along with those deleted through Explorer.
- ***MultiLaunch*** lets you associate more than one application with a file extension and adds a section to the context menu that lists programs that can be used to open that file.
- ***TrayLaunch*** lets you access all the icons on your desktop from the task bar, including system utilities such as My Computer and Recycle Bin that are placed there by Windows. These system utilities are normally accessible only from their desktop icons.
- ***ZDKeyMap*** adds a property page to the Control Panel's Keyboard applet that lets you remap all the standard keys on your keyboard. Thus, you can swap the CapsLock and Left Ctrl keys to avoid pressing CapsLock accidentally, or turn little-used keys on a notebook into other keys that the notebook may be missing.
- With ***LogoMania***, you can replace the standard startup logo with your own animated or static bitmaps.

(Enhancements.....Continued on page 4)

Road Runner Cable Modem - Part 2

by Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

Last month, I related that I was offered the Road Runner cable modem service as a Beta tester. It's been more than a month on the Road Runner service now. I've resolved some problems I had having to do with my own PC setup, and I've had a couple of outages on my service that were resolved quickly. I've been very happy with the service.

I had kind of a complicated setup in my home. I would guess that most people don't have a LAN in their home, but I personally know two other families besides my own who do. I wanted to take advantage of my LAN and route the Internet service to both PC's. I've managed to do that satisfactorily by using two Ethernet cards in my own PC, and installing a nice little $50 software package called Sygate. The software part was easy, and after I figured out that I was out of interrupts in my PC, which prevented the LAN Ethernet card and the Cable modem Ethernet card both from working, I resolved it by pulling my PS/2 mouse and reinstalling it to a serial port. That freed up the interrupt (12) that I needed, and my system was happy again.

That complicated my life some, because I had a docking station for my little electronic Sharp Wizard in that serial port; my modem is in the other, so I had to install an a-b switch so that I could switch between the two. That works well.

I've had a couple of short duration outages on the cable modem during the month; the last one was cleared within about three hours after I called it in. I haven't had any trouble contacting the help desk by phone, and so far they've responded to my e-mail almost immediately in the evenings. Even though it's Beta in my neighborhood (I have to remind myself of that sometimes!) I really haven't had any more problems than with my conventional GTE service. Time will tell, but it's very encouraging.

As for performance, I'd say that my browser is pretty easily double the 28.8 that I was getting. E-mail send and receive is fast, newsgroups are pretty much instantaneous once the headers are loaded. Downloads from FTP sites are just amazing. I get a very consistent 30kb/sec, about 15 times faster than my 28.8. Some people report even faster than that.

One concern I had was accessing my e-mail from my office. They have that covered with a regular e-mail server address that's outside the Road Runner network. That is working very well.

Very highly recommended --Roadrunner Cable ISP service from Time Warner Cable. ◆

(Enhancements.....Continued from page 3)

- ***MenuEdit*** lets you easily edit the commands available on context menus and add new ones.
- ***RUPL2*** allows users to put a Recently Used menu on either the Programs menu or the Start menu. It also eliminates the need to use RegEdit for configuration.
- Organize your Windows 95 desktop and keep it in order with ***WinTidy 95***. Use its predefined icon layouts to create an initial arrangement, then make any fine-tuning changes to the icon positions. The utility will automatically tidy your desktop when it starts up and when the screen resolution changes.
- The ***ZDDesk*** utility creates multiple configurations on your Windows desktop, or virtual desktops (up to 9). This lets you run a greater number of applications without cluttering the task bar. Users can toggle from one virtual desktop to another with a click of the mouse.

I've tried them all, and my favorites are ***WinTidy 95*** and ***ZDDesk***. I would find it hard to live without either one now. So if the justice department wants to play with Bill Gates for a couple of months, let them. I figure these ten new utilities will keep me busy until the Buccaneers start winning again in August. Besides, there are other freebies located at this site, like the ***Top Ten Utilities***, some of which I talked about last month, ***Classic Games*** and ***Internet Utilities***. **WOW! What a find!**

I've said it before. . . . if you're not on the Internet you don't know what you're missing. Find your way to the ***I****-way*. You won't be sorry! You'll only wonder why you took so long to get there in the first place.

There is an interesting tidbit I'd also like to pass on to everyone. There are several free email services out there but to my knowledge none allow you to attach files or pictures… at least until now. ***ZDNet*** (Ziff-Davis Publications) will now give you free email and allow you to send and receive attachments. They also allow you to store up to 4 megabytes on their server so you can save the more important stuff if you want. Follow the super ***I****-way to* http://www.zdnetmail.com and check it out for yourself. ***Happy Computing!*** ◆



Recent Software for Review

Adobe Page Mill 3.0 - Easily create and manage pages for the web - 486 computer, Windows 95 or NT, 16 MB RAM, CD-ROM.

Adobe Premiere 4.2 - Powerful editing program for combining animation, video, audio and graphics to produce digital movies or videotapes - Pentium computer, Windows 95 or NT, 16 MB RAM, CD-ROM

PowerDesk Utilities 98 - The fastest, easiest way to move, copy, zip, convert and view your files - Windows 95 or NT, 8 MB RAM (16 for NT), CD-ROM

Your own software - Most of the reviews in the newsletter are done on software packagers purchased by the reviewer and not supplied by vendors. Join the group of reviewers by reviewing a software package you have purchased.

Internet picture of the month



Thomas Hart Benton's "Sugar Cane"

This is one of approximately 4,000 scanned in images from the works of over 300 artists at Jim's Fine Art Collection site. It is the most impressive collection of images I have found—and he says that he has more than 4000 more to be added as time between working and sleeping allows.

You may visit and enjoy all of this fine art for free at http://www2.iinet.com/art/ .

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
Yahoo! Finance	http://quote.yahoo.com/
All Hotels on the Web ™	http://www.all-hotels.com/home.htm
Inns&Outs - The Bed and Breakfast Source	http://www.innsandouts.com/
Miami MetroGuide	http://miami.metroguide.net/
Chemical Scorecard (locations of dangerous chemicals)	http://www.scorecard.org/
Sm@rt Reseller Online (reseller computer news)	http://www.zdnet.com/sr/
Sutton Designs (surge suppression, etc.)	http://www.suttondesigns.com/
GardenWeb Home Page	http://www.gardenweb.com/
V Communications (System Commander)	http://www.v-com.com/
WQXR 96.3 - Classical Radio in New York City	http://www.classicalinsites.com/wqxr/content.html
How to Build a Network	http://www.linksys.com/support/faqs/howbuild/default.htm
The Ultimate Resource for Graphics Users	http://www.unleash.com/
Internet Weather Report (status of many IPs)	http://www.internetweather.com/
VB Online Magazine and Catalog	http://www.vbonline.com/
Web Site Garage (check out your web site)	http://www.websitegarage.com/
Mountain Zone (Skiing, Climbing, Expeditions,.....)	http://www.mountainzone.com/toc.html

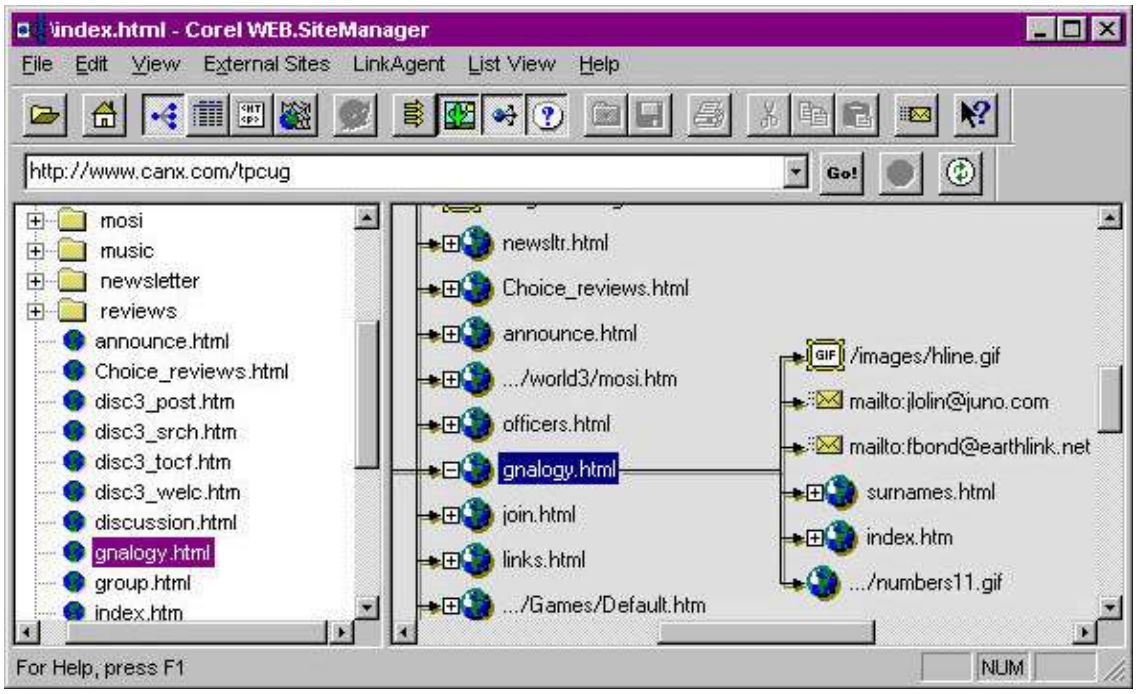
Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Corel's WebMaster Suite

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

According to Corel, "Corel WebMaster Suite offers a complete solution for creating web sites." My assessment of this is that they are close with this statement, but the suite of programs could use some improvements in the area of HTML editing and site management.

Why, for example does the HTML editing component of Web.Designer not have a replace feature? That said, Corel's HTML editor is a bit better than Microsoft FrontPage's HTML editing component of its FrontPage Editor. In this price range, Corel's competition is Microsoft FrontPage. Which program you buy will depend on what graphic programs you already own, where you plan on posting your web site, and how much you want to pay. I will come back to this later, and next month I hope to have a review of FrontPage 98.



There are really three different groups of programs in the suite. The first group, and most important, consists of the WEB.DESIGNER program, which is a "what you see is what you get" type of HTML editing program, and the WEB.SiteManager program, which is sort of like Windows Explorer for web sites. The second group of programs is comprised of the ones that assist you in creating graphics for the web: WEB.PhotoPaint and WEB.DRAW. These are scaled down versions of Corel PhotoPaint and CorelDraw especially adapted for web graphics. WEB.GALLERY organizes these graphics. The third group is what are called accessories--sort of like freebies--things you are glad to have but which are not very important to creating your web site. This group consists of the last three programs in the list below. By the way, these last three programs, along with the two graphics programs, are 16 bit programs; the two main programs are 32 bit. Since they licensed WEB.WORLD, I understand why it is 16 bit, but why WEB.DRAW is 16 bit is beyond me.

In sum, we have included in the Corel's WebMaster Suite:

- WEB.DESIGNER
- WEB.SiteManager
- WEB.PhotoPaint
- WEB.GALLERY
- WEB.DRAW
- WEB.WORLD
- WEB.MOVE
- WEB.DATA

Also included are OReilly's WebSite 1.1 server software (allowing you to run a web site from your computer), Netscape Navigator 3.0 (somewhat outdated), 7500 clipart images (nice collection of Internet ready images instead of Desktop Publishing images), and a free 30-day web site hosting offer (from MicroCrafts web hosting service). The price for all of this is $199.99. To see what Corel has to say or to place an order you may go to http://www.corel.com/corelweb/webmaster/.

You use **WEB.DESIGNER** to create the individual pages for your site. It has all the usual tools for point and click creation of links, tables, and pages with frames, to mention just a few items. To create or polish the graphics you will be inserting in these pages you can use **WEB.DRAW** or **WEB.PhotoPaint**. And, to me, these two programs are the strong selling points of the suite if you don't already have good quality graphics programs. Microsoft FrontPage is equally good at creating web pages with their FrontPage Editor; they have, I think, a slightly better "SiteManager" component in FrontPage Explorer than does Corel, and they include Microsoft Image

(WebMaster.....Continued on page 7)

Treasures on the Web

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

In a recent article I told the world about my addiction to software. Shareware, Freeware, Bloatware, I don't care. Obviously, the less I have to pay for it the better, because the less I pay the more I get. The World Wide Web is a gigantic storage vault of excellent software. And now, my friends at *PC Magazine Online* have gathered a bunch of these treasures together at one site to make it easy for me and all of you who haven't admitted you're just as crazy about good, inexpensive software as I am.

If you will travel to http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/features/utilities98/index.html, you will find a listing of their choice of the top 225 Windows utilities and they have divided them into 13 assorted categories to make it easier for you. These categories are:

- antivirus
- backups
- file viewers
- messaging
- search and navigation
- parental filtering
- uninstallers
- troubleshooting
- other Internet
- security
- other operating systems
- browser acceleration
- miscellaneous

There are reviews, editor's choices and summaries of features to take all the guesswork out of finding just the right tool for the just the right price. For example, under "browser acceleration" you'll find reviews on *Go Ahead Got It!*, *Java Booster*, *NetAccelerator*, *PeakJet*, *Speed Surfer*, *Surf Express*, and *WebEarly*. The editor's choice under this category is *Go Ahead Got It!* because it is the only product that lets you specify which pages to preload, giving you ultimate power over accelerating your surfing experiences. You can also have the program preload frequently visited pages, and it's the only program to notify you when pages have changed. A partial summary of features looks something like this.

	Go Ahead Got It! 3.01 (Editors' Choice)	Java Booster 1.0a	Net-Accelerator 1.1	PeakJet 1.56	Speed Surfer 3.2	Surf Express 1.0	WebEarly 1.70
Price	$19.95 (list)	$29.00 (list)	$30 (street)	$29.95 (list)	$30 (street)	$34.95 (list)	$24.95 (list)
Preloads links to current page	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Preloads frequently viewed pages	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Most of the software reviewed has links to either the parent company's web site, where you can purchase and download immediately, or to PC Magazine's Online Shareware library. There is also a full explanation of the system requirements, so there is no doubt as to whether the software will work on your PC or not. It really couldn't get much easier to purchase software.

Also, at http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/pctech/index-ut.html you can link to PC Magazine's superb ***FREE*** utilities such as *Dupeless,* to get rid of duplicate files on your system, *SiteSnagger,* that lets you download entire websites and read them offline, *Checkers,* where you can play against the computer or a friend and *COA32,* that allows you to move some of those 32-bit Windows programs that are taking up so much space off that crowded C drive onto that new hard drive.

These are just a very few of the many treasures that are located at PC Magazine Online. Next time you're out for a spin on the super I-way stop by and browse for a while. You'll be glad you did! ◆

(WebMaster.....Continued from page 6)

Composer to manipulate graphics for the web. But the inclusion of WEB.PhotoPaint and WEB.DRAW, I think, make up for this difference. I must confess that I really have not looked closely at these two "light" graphics programs since I have CorelDraw and Corel PhotoPaint on my computer.

Thus, if you are not going to be hosting your web site at a provider that supports (and charges for) Microsoft FrontPage Extensions, which allow for increased functionality like the Discussion Group or Site Search at our group's web site, then going with Corel's WebMaster Suite possibly makes sense--except that it goes for $199 versus FrontPage's $149. However, with WebMaster you also get the accessory programs.

The accessory program **WEB.DATA** turns your Database tables into web documents--something that the newer versions of database programs like Microsoft Access 97 also do. But if you don't have one of these newer versions, then this program may be of use to you. The most interesting of the accessory programs to me was **WEB.WORLD**, which is really an earlier version of the Virtual Reality Markup Language (VRML) program, Cosmo HomeSpace Designer. I enjoyed using it to create a virtual reality tour of our Museum of Science and Industry meeting site, which you can view by taking the "TPCUG Virtual Reality" link on our main page. You will have to have a VRML plug-in installed to be able to view this with your browser (something that can be downloaded for free). Sometime, when I have time, I want to redo it to make it more accurate now that I have studied the layout of MOSI.

(WebMaster.....Continued on page 10)

System Commander Deluxe from V Communications

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

System Commander allows you to install and run any combination of PC compatible operating systems, including Windows 95/98, Windows 3.x, Windows NT, DOS, OS/2, and all of the PC compatible Unixes.

When I tried to install the program I got a message that I should unprotect the installation disk to allow writing to it. I didn't want to do that with the original disk, so I sent an email to V communications, and they said to go ahead and do it! Of course, I made a diskcopy of the installation disk and used that. The System Commander boot installation disk will have the backup files written to it as you progress. These may be useful some day, and of course that's why you have to unprotect the installation disk. I was surprised at how easy it is to install this program.

The next thing I encountered was that I was using BOOT MANAGER, a similar program that comes with OS2 and also with Partition Magic version 3.0. Due to that program, the System Commander did not come up. It was as though I had not installed it. I set up Partition Magic and deleted the BOOT MANAGER primary partition on the hard disk. Then I reinstalled System Commander and all worked as shown in the System Commander manual.

I could switch from Windows95 to Windows NT Server Version 4.0 on startup. Those are the only operating systems on this computer, although I use OS2 Version 4.0 and Linux, as well as P.C.DOS 7.0. I will add each as time permits now that I have the System Commander working. These operating systems are installed on my everyday computer.

The manual says that when you install System Commander, a copy of the various Master Boot Records (MBR) are made. One reason for this is that if you want to uninstall the program it will be possible to do it. Another is that if System Commander detects a MBR virus, a copy of the Master Boot Record is installed automatically, to remove the virus.

The Master Boot Record is the first sector of the first physical hard disk. The MBR consists of a master boot program and a partition table that describes the disk partitions. This area holds data about each of the four primary partitions, such as the size and the starting location of each partition, for each hard disk you have in that computer. The master boot program looks at the partition table to see which primary partition is active. It then starts the boot program from the boot sector of the active partition.

A hidden part of the hard disk is the DISK PARTITION TABLE. This specifies how the hard disk is divided. You may divide your hard disk into one to four primary partitions. System Commander provides both automatic and manual partitioning, and you may even resize the partitions without losing the data on the disk using this program. Extended and Logical partitions are the way to divide a Primary partition. OS2 and WindowsNT can be installed in a Logical partition. The WindowsNT boot program must be in the active primary partition on the first physical drive. DOS must be installed in a Primary partition in order to boot from the hard drive.

What can we do now that we have System Commander Deluxe?

- System Commander will boot from up to 16 Logical partitions.
- System Commander will manage up to 32 different operating systems in a single primary DOS partition, including different DOS versions, Windows95/98, WindowsNT, and OS2. No one is expected to have that many operating systems, but it allows us to better understand how these things work when we list the possibilities.
- DOS boot sector virus protection checks every boot and replaces infected boot sector and hidden system files.
- Operating systems that can be booted from the second or any hard drive include OS2, Linux, Solaris, and Coherent.
- You may create, resize, delete, and use advanced tools. Looks a lot like a copy of Partition Magic is included, even to appearance.

I have read the entire System Commander manual and tried each of the processes suggested in the manual. I also reread the Partition Magic manual to be sure there was agreement between the two manuals and a compatibility between the two programs. Note: In the Partition Magic Version 3 manual, on page 165, an option for the System Commander is given. Instructions tell you how to prevent System Commander from opening multiple visible primary partitions.

I even learned more about DOS by reading those manuals! It makes sense to compare all the variables when you set up a new program. Their URL is http://www.v-com.com/ ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 2)

cursor on the map. And all the while we were carrying on our "phone" conversation. It was quite productive. And with Merle's cable modem, I am sure it would have been even more productive. ◆

Beginners' Column

(Running programs - part 2)

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

Well, I'm encouraged. I've received some feedback from last month's article. I want to reply to one question I received and then continue where I left off last month. You may want to read last month's article as a refresher because I'll be assuming you did as I continue.

I received some e-mail from a club member with a very good question. *"... why did you mention in the beginners' article, not to 'double click' on a file in explorer? I do this now and then, ... I thought the worst thing that could happen when you double clicked on a file is that it would launch the host application."* I twice cautioned against double-clicking an *application;* that is a file with a *.exe* extension. This is very good advice. Most often, unless you're very familiar with the application, you are not going to know what the results of double clicking an app is going to be; and that can be dangerous to your PC at worst, or annoying to you at best. Here's why.

Executables (in the form of applications or programs with *.exe, .com* or *.bat* extensions) are delivered to you from external sources like purchased installation packages or Internet downloads. Most often they come to you by CD or by diskette with installation programs. The installation process copies programs and all associated files to the correct locations on your hard drive and then, most importantly, supplies you with a shortcut or start menu item to run the program. It may register an associated *file extension* as I described last month. Like say *.ask* for an AskSam file. So the correct way to run the AskSam application is to click on the start menu item OR double-click on a file with an extension of *.ask.* Double clicking on the asksam.exe (if there is one - it *could* be named something else) is not necessary or recommended. Clicking on the shortcut item will launch AskSam without a data file, and double clicking on an asksam file will launch AskSam and momentarily will load the asksam file into AskSam. Clear? Let's reflect on the *bad* things that can happen.

Let's say you read about a neat utility called *neatstuff* and get it from a download site on the internet. The download process - after asking if you want to open it or save it to disk - lets you specify where it goes, and for some reason defaults to Desktop, and you accept it (ever done this? I have !). So it downloads neatstuff.exe to your desktop and shows a neat icon on the desktop. Do I want to double-click it and run it??? **NO ! oops, too late.** What happened? Well as it turned out neatstuff.exe was a "self extracting zip file", and it contained 1,533 files that it extracted to your desktop! And they're **ALL OVER THE PLACE!** How am I going to clean this up? They're all mixed up with my good, well organized desktop icons. I can't remember all this stuff! What are the good files, and what are the bad? Wished I hadn't done that.

Let's say I had thought ahead and created a directory called "d:\downloads" and am in the habit of placing all downloads to that directory, but I then inadvertently double-click on it, and neatstuff.exe does a quick installation and without warning makes all my graphics files its own. Darn! So instead of ACDSee opening when I double-click on a .GIF, it opens this terrible neatstuff application that looks like it was written by an old geezer that's real proud of his newly-learned Visual Basic skills. What do I do now? Re-install ACDSee, I guess, and hope it all gets straightened out. (I can joke about geezers with impunity, since I'm one.) So to summarize: Use the icon supplied with a program to run it, after installation, or double-click on a file that is registered to an application.

How do we know what files are registered to what application? The best way is to use Windows Explorer features. Unless you've been experimenting, you may not know what Explorer can do for you. Here are some things to try. Follow this through and you'll have the information you'll need to determine what file types are registered.

Open Windows Explorer from the Start Menu. Go to the menu under View, Options. On the panel with the View tab, click "Show all files", then check "Display the full MS-DOS path in the title bar", un-check "Hide MS-DOS file extensions for file types that are registered", and check "Include description bar for right and left panes", click OK. Go back to the menu, click View, then Details. Look at the right pane as you click on directories in the left pane. The right pane should have file headers called Name, Size, Type, Modified. Under Type there's now a description of the type for every file. An exe is "Application", an ico is an "icon", a BMP file (maybe) is a "paint" file.

Some programs will come to you as a single executable that must be double-clicked on. This has become very rare, and is mostly restricted to DOS programs. It's nearly impossible (and probably inefficient) to deliver a Win95/NT application as a single file. If you do have a program like this, drag a shortcut out from the exe and place it in an appropriate place in your Start Menu.

So, let's continue with running applications. As an experiment, do this: Go to Start, Run and type in `Wordpad /p c:\autoexec.bat,` and click Ok. If you're still running Windows 3.1, instead of Wordpad, use Write. So, see what happens. Wordpad launches, loads your autoexec.bat file, then prints it and then closes out. Gone. We'll continue with this next month. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Communications SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(WebMaster.....Continued from page 7)

To see what you can do with **WEB.MOVE** take the "Animated Movie of our last Meeting" link on our main page. It is not a real movie, just a background with three separate animations that appear and disappear on a schedule. Cute--but of what value I am not sure.

Once you have created the pages for your web site, you then upload them to the Internet using either Corel WEB.DESIGNER's *Instant Publishing Wizard* or the standard File Transfer Protocol (FTP). All of this is explained very well in the online help or the printed manual.

After you have published your site, you can then maintain it and view its organization with **WEB.SiteManager**. The graphic accompanying this article is a small portion of the SiteManager's page view of a small portion of our TPCUG web site. You can have SiteManager check the site for broken links, having it list them and the pages on which they reside. This is very useful in keeping a site current, since links to external URLs will be dying on you all the time--hopefully this is not the case for internal links. On our "Editor's choice of useful WWW links" alone there are over 400 external links that should be checked for currency regularly. A feature like this makes the process easy.

Of course, as with all programs now, there is a wizard that will guide you through the process of creating a web site with designs you can use if you are short on imagination at the moment.

I bought the program because Corel gave members of our group good pricing on it, and I hope to use some of the graphics features it has that Microsoft FrontPage doesn't. However, since I have access to a site with Microsoft FrontPage Extensions and since this gives me Discussion Groups, site searches, hit counters, and very easy uploading, I will stay with FrontPage for maintaining the User Group site at http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ . But I sometimes use Corel WEB.DESIGNER to create pages (I prefer its HTML editor to FrontPage Editor's), and I am interested in Corel's new Barista technology which allows you to make web pages employing Java to remove the limitations imposed by HTML while offering rich formatting options, advanced layout control, and improved graphics display.

The idea behind Barista is to create your fancy graphic in WEB.DRAW, "publish" it using Barista (you don't have to know Java, the program does the work), and everyone then enjoys a web page with much richer graphics and layout than is possible with HTML. What you see on your web page is really the results of a Java applet. Sounds good doesn't it?

I just had to try this out, so I cranked up CorelDraw (no need to use WEB.DRAW when you have the real thing), created a simple graphical document, then used the Barista option to create a package of files (mostly Java Class files). To test this, you open the one HTML file that starts everything with your browser. This cranks up a Java applet that after a bit of a wait displays your graphic. Corel warns that this process can be quite slow over the Internet and is more appropriately used on Intranets until Java is tweaked so as to run faster.

Of course, an alternate method of getting a Corel Draw document on the web is to save it as a GIF or JPG graphic which work well on HTML pages. I did this too and then compared the results. The Barista version was much truer to the colors of the original Draw document. However, the Barista version did not print properly from the browser, and the GIF version did. The Barista version also requires about 500 K of additional storage for all the Java class files (this is a one time thing, though, since additional Barista graphics can use the same Java class files).

So I was in a bit of a quandary as to exactly what Barista will do for me. I put a query concerning this on the CorelDraw newsgroup. Here are two answers I got:

- "There is no good reason to use Barista."
- "Security: It's a good way publish something you don't want anybody to print. <g>"

From these two answers and my experience, I gather that perhaps Barista's time has not yet come. But since this is a very, very small part of the WebMaster Suite, don't let it have any

(WebMaster.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

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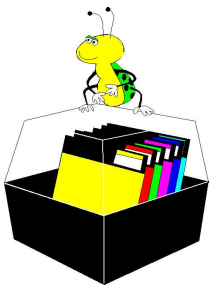
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



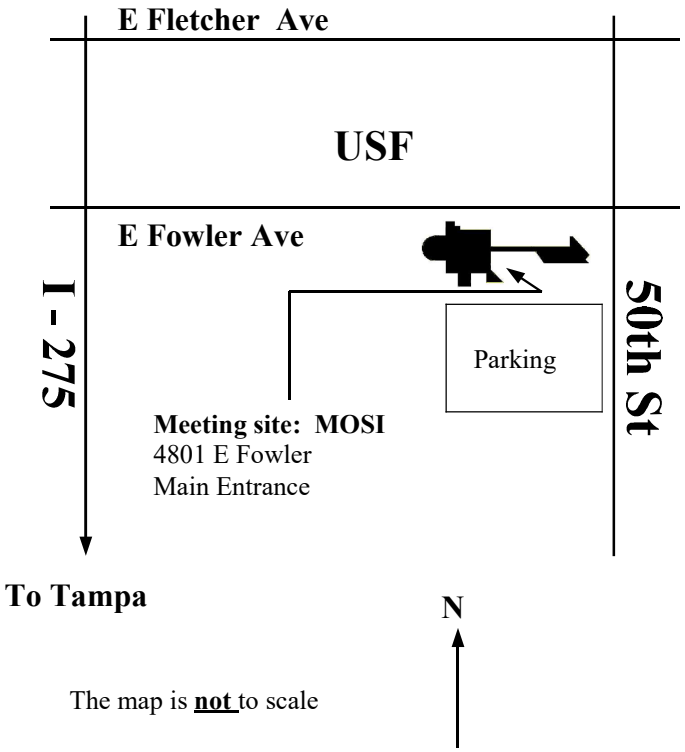
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PERMIT NO. 1917

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(WebMaster.....Continued from page 10)
influence on a decision to buy or not to buy. You should study other reviews (which you can probably easily find on the WWW) of the suite and its competitors, consider the price, then make your decision. You might even decide that you can get along fine with one of the free web page creating (but not site managing) programs.

If you would like to read Usenet newsgroup messages concerning the WebMaster Suite and other Corel products, you may need to get them from the Corel newsgroup server CNEWS.COREL.COM instead of your IP's newsgroup server. That is what I have to do since NetCom does not carry them.

For those who don't follow any newsgroups, but who want to better understand an operating system or program they use a lot, I strongly recommend that you start following a newsgroup covering these topics. It is easy, since most mail readers also function as newsgroup readers. ◆



http://www.canx.com/tpcug/



Bits of Blue

June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 6 June 1998

Meeting

IDT/Centaur presents
Winchip Processors
June 10, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the June meeting, Mike Bruzzone from IDT/Centaur will discuss Winchip Processors for your computer. This is a replacement chip for your Pentium computer. To quote the manufacture, "The WinChip serves up blistering speed, smaller die size, better heat dissipation and 100% Windows compatibility. " They are at http://www.centtech.com/..

President's Comments

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

This month on a general note, I'd like to make an appeal to every member to invite a friend, neighbor or co-worker to our meetings. Our membership is declining. It's slow, but it's happening, and we need suggestions from our membership on how to improve it, but, most of all, we need new faces. Email me at MerleNic@tampabay.rr.com with your suggestions.

Our cash doorprize has been doing well since we started two months ago. The proceeds are small, but needed. Our thanks to Mary Sheridan, who suggested that it be revived and volunteered to collect it at both meetings.

Our longtime hardworking Comm SIG leader Charles Howe has resigned from the Board of Directors. Charles has steadfastly dedicated his time for the SIG for many years. It will be difficult to replace you, Charles. Thanks for these many years of dedicated service, Charles.

On a personal note, I'd like to mention my foray into graphics and photo editing. I bought a scanner just before Christmas and then in January picked up an HP722C deskjet printer. This printer is one of two inkjet printers that use a larger, newer type of ink cartridge. It started with the professional series 820C, replaced by the 890C. The 890C ($400) and 722C ($300) have labels on them

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

July 8: Tim Adams from Gateway 2000 will give a hardware presentation.
August 12: Peter Schenk from Quarterdeck will present their products

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the May 13 Meeting

By Kevan Sheridan, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The members were a little late in showing up, so Merle Nicholson, our president didn't start the meeting until 6:30 p.m. Merle welcomed everyone and introduced the officers. He asked that we limit the use of the computers on the desks while the vendors are giving their presentations. Sign up sheets for the Communications, Genealogy and a possible Windows SIG were circulated. Charles Howe made available copies of a DOS browser for anyone interested in trying it out. There was a discussion about a program called "Opera". It's a small Internet browser that will run on a 386 machine with Windows 3.1. A question was asked about the Internet phone and William LaMartin explained how NetMeeting was working well for him. Our members will soon be able to link from our web site to their own web sites. If you're interested submit the needed information to William LaMartin.

The presenter was Mike Austin with Waldec/IKON Office Solutions. Waldec/IKON is an authorized Microsoft reseller. They provide software and networking installations to businesses. He first gave a nice summary on his growing company and what it does. Mike then gave an interesting presentation on the future direction of Microsoft operating systems. The presentation was originally created to help make business decisions for future purchases of software, but he adapted well to our mixed audience. He presented some slides that listed a matrix that classified types of software and suitable operating systems and the direction that Microsoft is going. He stated again what we've been hearing for some time: Windows NT is targeted to be in everyone's future by the year 2001 when it and Windows 95 will converge. One thing that NT does not do well - and never will - is run just any old DOS software, and a lot of Windows 3.1 software, too. NT version 5 will be bringing us plug and play support so the hardware issues will be improved for us. But the bottom line is, for compatibility, Windows 95/98 is best, and for crash-proof, secure systems NT is the way to go for now.

Mike also gave us a sample of some other business considerations - servers, networking and TCO - Total cost of ownership; thin clients, fat clients and Net PC's. It was interesting to know where the industry is headed. Thanks to Mike for an interesting and informative presentation.

Mike presented Warren Fuss and William LaMartin with very nice laptop bags for answering his questions.

Mary Sheridan won a copy of Office 97 Professional in our software drawing and Ford Bond won Windows 95. Other

(Minutes.....Continued on page 7)

FrontPage 98 from Microsoft

By William LaMartin, Editor
Tampa PC Users Group



FrontPage 98 is a refined and improved version of FrontPage 97. Microsoft has corrected a few minor flaws and added several new features to this version. It is the program I use to maintain our group's web site, and I highly recommend it for a site of our size or larger. However, it may be overkill for the simplest of personal sites consisting of just a few pages. For that you might do just fine with FrontPage Express, which comes free with Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0, or some other such free HTML point and click editor.

Since switching to FrontPage for both creation and maintenance of the site from a simple text editor to create the HTML code and an FTP program to upload the pages to the web server, I could never think of doing it any other way. Moving up to FrontPage 98 has just made the job a little smoother.

FrontPage is made up of two main applications: FrontPage Explorer and FrontPage Editor. FP Editor is used to create the HTML pages that make up your site, and FP Explorer displays the site you have created in either a folder view or a hyperlink view. A screen shot of the hyperlink view of part of the TPCUG Web site is above. The whole site could not be presented in hyperlink view here since there are over 400 links in the "Links" folder alone.

For the uninformed, a web site on the World Wide Web is simply a collection of files on some computer (called a server) that is connected to the Internet. One of these files is designated as the home page. Within TPCUG this is the file index.htm, which is the HTML file you see when you first go to our site. That is the file labeled Tampa PC Users Group, Inc. on the hyperlink view above. The page labeled Genealogy SIG is the HTML page your browser goes to when you click on the Genealogy hypertext link on our home page.

FP Editor allows you to type in text, format it just as you would in a word processor to the extent the HTML rules allow, insert graphics, insert tables and hypertext links to other files at your site or on the WWW. This is the standard stuff of an HTML editor; however, FP Editor provides for more: It simplifies the process of creating forms like questionnaire or feedback forms and the creation of frames as in the HTML version of the newsletter page at the TPCUG site where the scrollable list of articles appears on the left part of the screen and the article being read on the right. And it allows for a what-you-see-is-what-you-get creation of tables. In general, everything is as much WYSIWYG as possible.

Using FP Editor you are spared the need for knowing HTML, since it is pretty much point and click. It does, however, provide for an HTML view of the page. Unfortunately (from my point of view), this HTML view leaves out all the HTML code used to create any of the special features that FrontPage so easily creates—like themes, shared borders and navigation bars. I suppose Microsoft didn't want anyone messing with their creations. Unfortunately I have found it sometimes necessary to crank up the old text editor and make such changes when things get a little out of kilter.

FrontPage is a unified approach to creating, publishing and maintaining a web site. First, you use the FP Editor to create your home page and all the pages branching off of it; you use FP Explorer in either Folder View or Navigation View to create however many folders you need to contain and organize all of this on your computer. To allow real-time testing, your own Personal Web Server (PWS) software is supplied.

Once you have created your new Microsoft Front Page Web, which is now stored in the PWS directory on your computer, you can test it there and fine tune it. In fact, you can do more there than at most Internet Service Providers (ISP) because FrontPage will have installed the Microsoft FrontPage Server Extensions at your PWS. These extensions are necessary to utilize the full functionality of FrontPage. With these extensions also on your ISP's server you can create more powerful web sites without bothering your ISP with things like password protection, text searches on the site, and saving form results. The presence of the extensions also allows you to use the Discussion Group Wizard to create a FrontPage web site which is a discussion group like the one at the TPCUG site. You also get hit counters for free.

After you have your FP web created, you are ready to put it on the Internet for the world to see. In a perfect world, you would simply choose the option to publish your FrontPage web, and FrontPage would handle all the details of dialing up your ISP and transmitting all of your files to the proper place at the ISP, keeping the structure intact just as it was on the PWS on your computer. As you know, the world is not perfect, and most likely your ISP will not be supporting the FrontPage Server Extensions for the free home pages they provide you for your $20 each month. For this you will have to buy one of their upgraded

(FrontPage.....Continued on page 8)

Put the Power in the Palm of Your Hand

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



In my line of work I travel a lot, and I was recently stranded in an airport for several hours because of bad weather. I always save up the latest of my computer magazines to take along and read on my trips. On this occasion I had enough time to read the two magazines twice over. While I was sitting there, I noticed several people working (or playing) with what appeared to be Gameboys (small game machines made by Nintendo). I've never been much into playing games on the computer; I don't seem to have the patience. But on this unusually long day in the airport I think I would have made an exception.

As luck would have it, when I finally got on the plane a young lady sat down beside me with one of these new hand-held things. It turned out to be a Palm III™ (P3) connected organizer, or better yet, a palm-top computer. I had just finished reading (twice) the review on the P3 in one of my magazines and was anxious to check it out. But up until this point I had never been in contact with or even given these things a second glance. I asked the nice lady if she would mind telling me about it and how she used hers. She was very obliging and told me all she knew about it, which wasn't much, because she had just recently purchased hers, too. She did tell me enough to more than whet my appetite and in the process of her demonstration she made one BIG mistake; she let me hold it and that's all it took. I was hooked. That was on a Friday.

All that next weekend I went on the Internet and researched these things. I'm not one to rush right out and buy something like this on the spur of the moment. I usually wait at least 12 hours, <grin>. This time I had to wait a little longer because the P3 had just recently been released and was still a hot ticket item. I called around locally and no one had them. Everyone said they sell out as soon as they come in. Then the nice people at CompUSA told me to check back Tuesday when a shipment was due in. I did. They opened at 10:00 A.M. and I called at 10:01. A shipment of P3's had come in so I had them put my name on one, and I took an early lunch. Needless to say I had an interesting Tuesday afternoon. And yes, it's much more than just a Gameboy clone.

The Palm III™ made by 3Com, which also makes the industry standard U.S. Robotics modem, utilizes an operating system called Palm OS3. And, as you can see by the picture, they do fit in the palm of your hand. This is the third revision of the Palm series by 3Com and apparently the third time is a charm. The 3Com connected organizer family consists of three models: the Palm III™, PalmPilot™ Professional, and the PalmPilot™ Personal Edition. The P3 is their top of the line but each one has their own niche. Although there weren't many sweeping changes from the previous models, the refinements are obviously for the best. Or so say the reviews I've read.

So, what can you do with the P3 other than play games…. a bunch of things. The P3 connected organizer is designed as a companion product (not replacement) to my personal computer and enables a mobile user like myself to manage my schedule, contacts and other critical personal and business information on my desktop and remotely. The P3 automatically synchronizes its information with my PC locally or over a local or wide area network at the touch of a button through the use of a graphical user interface and a desktop docking cradle which facilitates two-way synchronization between the PC and organizer. The docking cradle easily connects to a serial port but nothing else can use that serial port at the same time. (Make sure you have an extra serial port or you might have to add an extra serial card, which is really no big chore and not very expensive.)



The P3, and the rest of the 3Com organizers, are equipped with a complete suite of built-in personal information management (PIM) software. These include a date book, address book, to-do list, and memo pad that are accessible through permanent buttons along the bottom of the case (see below). There are also four permanent buttons on the touch-screen that provide direct access to the applications, the menus in each of the applications (similar to Windows), a calculator and a find feature.

The P3 works simply by touching the stylus pen (included and stored in the back of the case) to the touch screen (which is also a backlit screen) to open the application of your choice and enter your data or information. At the end of the day,

(Palm.....Continued on page 7)

Recent Software for Review

Adobe Page Mill 3.0 - Easily create and manage pages for the web - 486 computer, Windows 95 or NT, 16 MB RAM, CD-ROM.

Adobe Premiere 4.2 - Powerful editing program for combining animation, video, audio and graphics to produce digital movies or videotapes - Pentium computer, Windows 95 or NT, 16 MB RAM, CD-ROM

PowerDesk Utilities 98 - The fastest, easiest way to move, copy, zip, convert and view your files - Windows 95 or NT, 8 MB RAM (16 for NT), CD-ROM

Your own software - Most of the reviews in the newsletter are done on software packagers purchased by the reviewer and not supplied by vendors. Join the group of reviewers by reviewing a software package you have purchased.

Internet picture of the month



Belle Grae Inn, Staunton, Virginia

This is one of many fine Bed and Breakfast Inns for which you can find detailed information on the Internet. Many, in addition to prices and locations, provide dining menus and photos of various rooms. The Belle Grae site is at http://www.valleyva.com/bellegrae/index.html. Visit the site; it may make you want to make a real visit, as your editor's family did.

To search for more B& B's online go to Bed & Breakfast Inns Online at http://www.bbonline.com/. Unfortunately many B&B's either do not have web sites yet, or, if they do, they choose not to list them with a site like this, making it very hard for the Internet traveler to find them.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
Bed & Breakfast Inns ONLINE	http://www.bbonline.com/
The ComputerJobs Store, Inc.	http://www.computerjobs.com/
Quicken.com (Financial news from Quicken)	http://www.quicken.com/
NetBooks.com - Source for Downloadable Books	http://www.netbooks.com/
Borders.com. - books	http://www.borders.com/
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego	http://www.mcasd.org/
Time Capsule by dMarie (see what happened)	http://dmarie.com/asp/history.asp?action=process
Free legal forms	http://www.findlaw.com/16forms/index.html
More free legal forms	http://www.goodmanlaw.com/forms.htm
Weather Channel	http://www.weather.com/twc/homepage.twc
The Digital Art of Larry Carlson	http://www.ziplink.net/~s76/
Reference to China-Chinese Related Web Sites	http://www.aweto.com/china/
THE SYNC - Internet Broadcasting	http://www.thesync.com/
RENT NET - National Apartment Rental Guide	http://www.rent.net/ctg/cgi-bin/RentNet/Home
Microsoft CarPoint	http://carpoint.msn.com/
Frank Sinatra 1915 -1998	http://www.pathfinder.com/people/tribute/sinatra/

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

The Sun Coast Freenet

By Ted Rodenbach, Tampa PC Users Group

The Sun Coast Freenet Do you have an older computer, and still want to be able to send and receive mail at no cost? Do you like to learn fascinating, yet exotic new ways of computing?

Well there is a way that all this can be done. It's called the Sun Coast Freenet. I know many of you have already heard of it, but how many people really know what it's all about?

Sun Coast Freenet, or SCFN for short, is a free service of the Tampa/Hillsborough County library system. Once you register (which by the way, is free to the residents of Hillsborough County), you are able to log on, and, through using 'lynx', a text based browser, you can go to all of the numerous links they have on the system. You are also provided an Email account, and through PINE, the Email program, you can check your mail, manage folders, and go to thousands of varying newsgroups.

The main problem most people will encounter is the non-graphical interface that lynx uses. SCFN uses an operating system called UNIX. I'll get to that later on.

Once logged on, you see a non-flattering splash screen come up. From there, you are prompted to enter your 'logon name' and 'password'. Unless you opt to pay an extra fee, the system will provide you with both a name and a password; these can be very arcane, so please write them down. A typical user name and password for example would be something like tw45wwx.

If all this hasn't scared you away by now, then read on, and I'll explain many of the other features of the system.

UNIX Some of you might be saying "What's this UNIX stuff I keep hearing about?" UNIX is an operating system, just like Windows. Well, not just like Windows, but an operating system nonetheless. It was developed by AT&T in the late 60's and is still in wide use today. Many companies' computer networks run on UNIX, and the telephone networks use routers and computer systems running UNIX. As a matter of fact, 90 percent of all web servers use it.

So, if it's so powerful and widespread, why aren't we all using it? Well, mainly because it's a very difficult and unforgiving operating system to use. But I know people who use it exclusively, and they haven't had to reboot in over a year! It's pretty stable.

With that brief description done with, I'll move on to navigating the system.

Everything you do on SCFN is done with numbered links. You can either enter the link number, or move the highlighted bar under the link and hit enter. The type of link is also included in brackets next to it. This tells you whether it's a GIF, JPEG, or some other type of embedded file. What we're interested in is links. Once you choose the link you want to go to, you'll see a status bar at the bottom of the screen. It's similar to that of Netscape or Microsoft except it's text. Once it's fetched the page, you can browse through it, either by hitting the space bar to move down a page, or using the page down button. One of the things that is confusing is that every time you move down a page, the screen refreshes itself and writes over the current text. You cannot scroll back; you might if you have a terminal that can do so, but I use hyperterm, and when I scroll back, I get garbage. There's a help section with SCFN that helps you configure your terminal. This bring us to the (J)ump command.

You can jump to any part or section of the freenet system, with the exception of when you're in PINE, by using the 'J' command. When you hit this key, a message will appear at the bottom of the screen asking to input a keyword. As mentioned earlier, you can find help on configuring your terminal software by hitting 'J', then entering "commhelp" without the parentheses.

There's also a way to bookmark sites that you visit on freenet. This can be done by pressing "a", then choosing 'link' or 'document'. This will add either a link or document to your bookmark list. You can view your bookmarks whenever you want, by pressing "v" and then choosing the link of your choice.

I realize most of this seems very confusing and esoteric, but as a free alternative to an ISP, this might be your best bet.

There's a ton of other quirks and tricks associated with SCFN, but there are way too many to mention.

You can also visit their site at http://scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us/bbs/welcome.html

This is a close approximation of what the system is really like. You can also view many of the help files mentioned, so you won't be ill prepared when you do sign on.

I hope this article has helped you learn more about the freenet and the many features it has to offer.

LYNX INTERNET COMMAND GUIDE

- **Arrow Keys** - Up and down arrows allow you to move

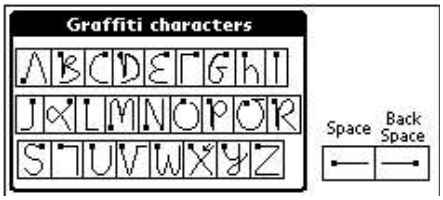
(Freenet.....Continued on page 12)

(Palm.....Continued from page 4)
week, or whenever you choose, it's easy to synchronize, utilizing the Palm™ Desktop organizer software (a companion desktop PIM), HotSync® local or remote synchronization software and the docking cradle.



The trick to the whole thing is entering the data into the P3, which can be done in any one or all of three ways: (1) You can utilize an enhanced version of **Graffiti®** power writing software, which enables the user to enter data at up to 30 words a minute with 100 percent accuracy. All in all, Graffiti® is mostly like printing capital letters with the primary importance on where you start and which direction the stylus moves. It took me about half an hour to get pretty comfortable with the handwriting recognition software.

This is the area that most of the complaints come from with users of the P3. You either love Graffiti® or hate it. I have had absolutely NO trouble with learning to use Graffiti®. Once I learned that there was an area to input letters and another to input numbers, it was a piece of cake. Although it was kind of touch and go to begin with. (Sorry!) <grin> The characters look something like this graphic above.



(2) You can also use the P3's **on-screen keyboard** that looks like this:



Just tap the screen with a stylus like you would a regular keyboard.

(3) You can also key-in information using your **desktop computer's keyboard**, then use the HotSync® technology to synchronize the data with your P3. It's easy. Just drop the P3 into the HotSync cradle attached to your PC and press the HotSync button. You'll never have to worry about retyping anything again. That process looks something like the picture in the next column.

My favorite part is the ability to check my email wherever I am without having to lug my notebook computer everywhere. There is a small modem that plugs into the bottom of the P3 and with the proper after market software you can check your email from any POP3 account. (It doesn't work with AOL yet but that's coming.) The software I purchased allows me to download only the headers first and then pick and choose which mail I want to read. It also has complete email filtering to eliminate most of the junk mail that comes in every day. I can then read my mail online or at my leisure later on. You can also do the same with news groups and web pages in text or graphic-based style, although I recommend the text based style because the size of the screen makes it difficult to read everything properly. I guarantee that the average web designer is not designing for a palm computer.

Oh yes, all this is done with only two megabytes of Flash RAM memory. I currently have exactly 50 assorted applications stored in that two megabytes, along with the built-in applications previously mentioned, and still have over 400k of storage remaining. There is also built in infrared transfer ability. The Palm III™ lists for $399 (not including $129 for the modem) and operates off of two AAA alkaline batteries that apparently keep going… and going… and going! <grin>. I'm still on my original set. You can store some 6000 addresses, 5 years of appointments (approximately 3000), 1500 to do items, 1500 memos, 200 e-mail messages and a bunch of other stuff. Windows 95/NT required.



I'm new to this but it's fun being a 'newbie' again. If any of you out there use the P3 or any of the many other palm-tops, please let me know. Maybe we could form a SIG. Please remember though that this IS NOT a replacement for the desktop, only a companion to use with it. I'm sure I'll be telling you more about the P3 it in the future because there are just loads of software (especially games) out there for this thing and you know how I am about software…. but that's another story. **Way to go 3Com!!!** ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
winners of miscellaneous items were Brian Lance, Vince McCoy and Clark Evans. The 50/50 drawing is proving to be a success. ◆

Put Your Hard Drive On A Diet!

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

Need more hard drive space? Who doesn't! In a recent past article I mentioned that one of the benefits of the soon to be released Windows 98 will be a converter from the inefficient FAT16 to the much enhanced FAT32 (**FAT** is an acronym for **F**ile **A**llocation **T**able). Quite possibly you are like I was until recently. I didn't really know what the heck that meant, except that FAT16 wastes hard drive space. And because the prices of hard drives have dropped so rapidly lately I haven't really cared either.



Well, I read recently that FAT32 could reduce the hard drive access time by as much as 50%, and who doesn't want more speed. So I decided to find out what all this FAT stuff was all about and pass it along. Here it is in a nutshell.

The minimum space needed to store a file in most Windows 95-based PCs is in a 32K cluster (since most users don't bother to create or don't want small partitions on their hard drive). In Windows 98, the minimum space needed to store anything has been reduced to a 4K cluster--even with very large partitions. Based on this reduced cluster size, the average you can expect to gain is as much as 28% more hard drive space.

What all this is leading to is a neat little (40 kb) ***FREE*** FAT32 utility that is available from Microsoft at http://www.microsoft.com/windows/download/fat32.exe that will allow you to check just how much space you could gain by using Windows 98 and converting to the enhanced FAT32 file system.

I recently purchased a new 6.4-gigabyte drive, which brought my total hard drive space to 10.7-gigabytes. After I installed and set up the new drive I had approximately 5 gigabytes of free space left. When I ran the FAT32 utility I found out that I could re-gain another 1 gigabyte of space already utilized.

I don't know what it's going to cost to upgrade to Windows 98 but the extra hard drive space, along with the possibility of decreasing my hard drive access time by up to 50%, is enough for me. Sign me up! ◆

(FrontPage.....Continued from page 3)
service plans. The server at the TPCUG site does support the extensions, and that makes publishing only the updated pages each time as simple as one click of the mouse. Couldn't be easier.

If FrontPage detects that the server extensions are not supported, it invokes its Publishing Wizard to create a web site for you at your ISP without the extra functionality that you would have if the server extensions were available. In this case, you would have no free discussion group or hit counter, for example.

So what is new in FrontPage 98? First, they have made it much easier to edit your site off line. For some reason, many of us had problems in getting FP 97 to function well when not connected to the Internet. That problem is now solved. Also, now when you delete a file on your local site and then publish, FP asks if you want to also delete the file from the remote site. Previously you had to do this manually.

I should comment that once your site is set up, one very valuable tool is the hyperlink check. As I have noted, on our links page alone we have over 400 hyperlinks to other sites. Checking each of these manually would be a big job. With FrontPage, one click starts the process; when it is finished (a fair length of time later), I have a list of sites with potential problems, meaning that they didn't respond in a certain length of time.

As for new features, they have added many more themes, which get you up and running with a stylish site fast. This is something I have found no use for; I like to create my own "theme"--tacky though it may be. You can now make all your pages have shared borders or navigation bars to give a consistent look to your site—something the TPCUG site lacks. So, you see, even though I think a lot of the program I haven't bought into all the new features which mainly affect the appearance of a site. Additionally you can now easily create hover buttons (move your mouse over them and they change appearance). Now, I might add a few of those.

Like any program, the more you work with it the easier it gets. I have been using it for so long that most everything is second nature. I have noted, though, that beginning users often complain (on the Usenet newsgroup *microsoft.public.frontpage.client* that they get a little lost when they venture away from simple page creation in FP Editor to the actual publishing and maintenance of their web.

The local price is about $50 for the upgrade and $140 for full version. ◆

Beginners' Column

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

This month, let's work on shortcuts. In previous months we worked a bit with executables (.exe files). You may want to review the previous two articles to recall file names. Remember that our web site has the last several months' newsletters in HTML format and also Acrobat Reader.

Have you set your Windows Explorer to show all files and their extensions? Remember that **Open** means Double-click and **Select** means one click. **Open** *My Computer.* **Open** *Drive C.* (Launches Windows Explorer). **Select** *View, Options, View.* **Select** *Show all Files*, **De-select** *Hide files of these types*, **Select** *Display the full MS-DOS path in the title bar,* and **De-select** *Hide MS-DOS file extensions.* And last, **Select** *Ok.* Let's close this version of Explorer out and use the one on the Start menu. **Select** *Start*, **Select** *programs*, **Select** *Windows Explorer*.

Now back to Explorer. This Explorer has two panes, left and right, called the *Tree Pane* and the *File Pane*. **Select** *View*, then *Details.* Remember that an executable says *Application* under the heading *Type* in the right-hand pane. In the Tree view (the left pane), find *C*: and then find the folder *Windows*. If you select the folder icon, the icon changes from a closed folder to an open folder. If you select the "+" to the left of it, Explorer expands the directories one level below it. If you select the word *Windows*, the effect is the same as selecting the folder icon. Selecting the folder icon is preferred, because selecting the name is also the way to rename a folder and we certainly don't want to do that!

In the right pane there are some things to observe. The columns are named *Name*, *Size*, *Type*, and *Modified.* If you select any of these column headers, you'll see that they are made to sort by that category. The default is to sort by ascending *Name*. But if you click on *Name* and then again, you see that it's now sorted by descending name. I often use this sorting to help me find items, usually to sort by descending date, so that a file I just changed will be at the top.

For this practice, we want to have some of the desktop visible, so look at the top right corner at the three symbols called *Minimize*, *Full* (or *Restore*) and *Close*. *Full* is a square box with the top edge heavier. *Restore* is a symbol depicting two overlaid boxes. If it's currently *Restore*, then click it to change it to *Full*, then grab a corner and resize the window so that Explorer covers either the top or bottom half of the screen. Don't be confused by their names, because they don't describe the current state of the window. If the center symbol is *Full*, then clicking on it will make the window go to full screen, and the symbol changes to *Restore*, so that you can restore it to a smaller size. Confusing until you practice with it a bit.

We want to find a file Calc.exe for this exercise. An easy way is to sort by ascending name, and since we're looking for an Application, it should be at the top near the folders. So **select** Type once and then scroll down to Applications, and find Calc.exe. Let's make a shortcut for it first, then go on to placing it in the start menu.

Select the file Calc.exe by placing the mouse over the Calc icon and **select** it with the right mouse button, and drag it to an open place on the desktop. When you let go of the mouse button a small pop-up menu comes up with *Move here, Copy here, Make Shortcut(s) here* and *Cancel*. Just before you let go of the mouse, the grayed-out symbol you were dragging changed into a Shortcut symbol. The Shortcut symbol is a box with an up arrow in it bent in the middle to the right. It's small, but this symbol tells you the default action is Make Shortcut(s) here, and indeed if you look at the pop-up menu when you let go, that same selection is bolded, meaning you could have used the left mouse instead and just dropped it and it would have created a shortcut on its own. All of these actions have a default, but the default changes according to what type of file it is and whether you're dropping it onto the same or a different drive. This takes a little practice. Since you use this same technique to copy and move files you'll need to mess with it for a while until you get some idea of what it will do.

Now that we've gotten a shortcut, let's move it to the Start Menu - next month-- since this fills my allotted space. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

"Includes Kodak Image enhancements". These printers render just outstanding color pictures. I've bought photo paper and also a pack of greeting card paper. My photo editing so far has been limited to cropping and red-eye elimination and some brightness/contrast adjustments. I've sent two cards out to relatives, with photos and personal notes using Printmaster. They were just delighted with the cards. The prices on scanners have just hit rock bottom. A hundred dollars gets you a good parallel port model and for $20 or so more you can get one that uses a SCSI interface. Great fun. See you at the next meeting. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Communications/Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Travel, Jobs, and the Internet

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

I have recent, first hand knowledge of how useful the Internet can be. In May, my son was graduated from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. The computer, along with information from the WWW and mapping programs, made our trip there much easier to plan and execute.

To begin with, plane reservations were needed. From the Editor's choice of useful WWW links page at our site, I visited two Travel sites specializing in plane schedules: **The Trip.Com** at http://www.thetrip.com/ and **Southwest Airlines Ticketless Travel** at http://www.iflyswa.com/cgi-bin/buildItinerary2. Both sites allow you to choose departure and arrival cities and days of travel. They then provide you with a list of flights available, their prices, restrictions for discount fares, types of planes, etc. After finding the round trip flights that were best for us, I could have made the reservations online but chose to do that part by phone--just in case the person on the other end knew something that the Internet didn't. We then made rental car reservations by hookup from the airline.

Next thing on the list was somewhere to stay. We combined **AAA** with several sites on the WWW. From the TPCUG Travel section, I used **Hotel, Motel & Bed & Breakfast Directory** at http://www.travelnett.com/. Since we prefer Bed & Breakfast Inns, I also used **Bed & Breakfast Inns Online** at http://www.bbonline.com/, which is in our Newsletter's June Links and soon to be added to the web site.

We fast found that Charlottesville was full to overflowing, being a one business town—the University of Virginia. That led us to Staunton, Va and to the Belle Grae Inn featured in this month's Internet picture of the month.

Once I knew where we would be staying, I could crank up Street Atlas USA 5.0 and have it calculate the best route from Dulles International Airport to the Belle Grae Inn in Staunton and from Staunton to UVa. I printed out the maps and took them with us, including a detailed map of Staunton—something that AAA doesn't carry. To be on the safe side, I also brought the Delorme GPS TripMate unit, the Street Atlas USA CD, and my laptop.

The next thing on my agenda was to get information about graduation at Virginia. For that I went to the UVa site at http://www.virginia.edu/. They had thoughtfully provided a link called **Final Exercises 1998** at http://www.virginia.edu/~major/finals98/ . Here were a schedule of events, maps of where visitors could park, a detailed map of the immediate Lawn area where the graduation exercises would take place showing the seating plan and where the procession would be. Nothing was left to doubt. If you go there now all this information will be gone, replaced by video clips of the final exercises, including speeches by Christopher Reeve and the Governor of Virginia. I have found Virginia to be a very "wired" university. When my son applied, I recall it as one of the few universities that offered an online application form.

After graduation, then what? A job! My son went through the usual job interviews on campus, but the job he finally took was found on the Internet. He went to **Yahoo** at http://www.yahoo.com, searched for "jobs"; something called "**Career Mosaic**" popped up at the top of the screen, he entered more information, and eventually found several companies that specialized in placing programmers. After considering several openings in far-flung places, much to my surprise and pleasure he chose a position in West Palm Beach.

After a job, what's next? A place to live. Back to the Internet. He found the site **Rent Net** at http://www.rentnet.com, called me on the phone from Virginia to set up a NetMeeting, and we viewed apartment complexes in West Palm that were close to his planned work site. All provided detailed specifications, floor plans, photos, and location maps. Some even provided a video tour.

I give the Internet an A+ this past month. ◆

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

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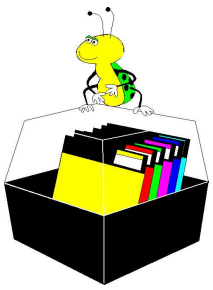
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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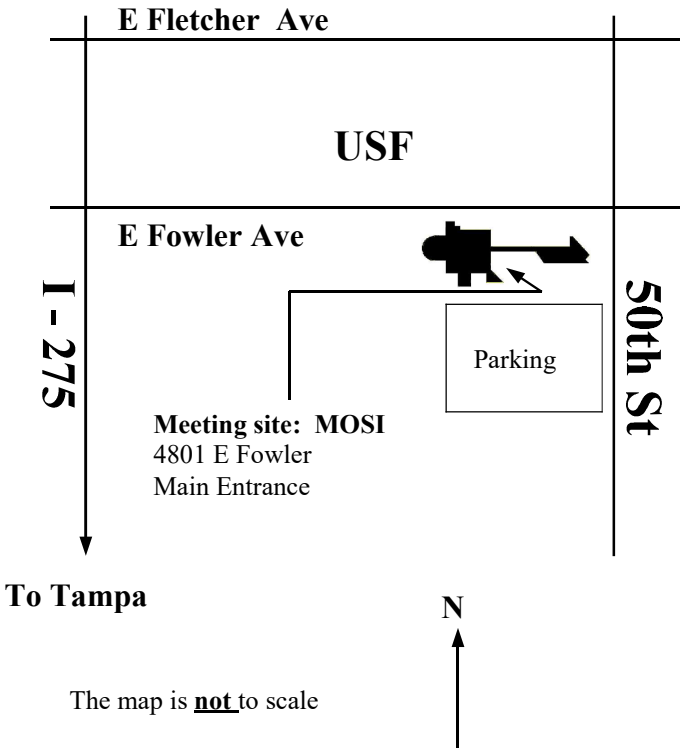
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Freenet.....Continued from page 6)

up and down on a page. The left arrow allows you to return to a previous page. The right arrow (or the [enter] key) allows you to enter a highlighted link.

- **H)elp** - Calls up an extensive online help guide regarding the use of Lynx. Tap the left arrow key to return to previous page.
- **O)ptions** - Presents a menu of variables the user can change. Tap r to return to Lynx.
- **P)rint** - Provides user with various print options.
- **M)ain Menu** - Returns you to the SCFN Main Menu.
- **Q)uit** - Quits the Suncoast Free-Net.
- **J)ump** to menu - Using the **abbreviations** in the top right corner of most screens you visit (menu=shortcuts). For example, tap j, type help and tap [enter]. This calls up SCFN help.
- **[/]** Search - Locate a word/phrase within the current document.
- **[delete]** History List - Shows a list of sites you have visited.

◆



http://www.canx.com/tpcug/



Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 7 July 1998

Meeting

Gateway 2000

July 8, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the July meeting, Gateway 2000 will talk to us about their computers and trends in the hardware and computing industry. Gateway is a major mail order computer retailer. They have recently also started selling from retail stores, one of which is on North Dale Mabry in Tampa.

President's Comments

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Since it's halfway through the calendar year, I'd thought I'd do a quick summary for you of where we are and how we're doing as a club. This is something I don't recall any of my predecessors having done, but it's equally your club as mine.

Financially, we're just holding our own-taking in almost as much as our expenses. We just obtained a new insurance policy to cover liability for damages at a reduced cost thanks to our diligent treasurer, Jenny Lind Olin. Insurance cost is now our highest single item. Printing the newsletter used to be by far the most expensive item, but that has been dramatically reduced through the generosity of a club member. Our newsletter costs have dropped to just the cost of the paper and the post office bulk mail rate. If our newsletter expenses had stayed the same as they were at the beginning of the year, we'd be looking at the financial end to the club by year's end.

Another big change-the quality of our monthly presenters-is due to Mary Sheridan's efforts alone. We have now booked past the first of next year. Just an outstanding achievement. All we had to do was give her a job title. What a woman!

We dismantled our BBS, further reducing our monthly costs. The BBS just

(Comments.....Continued on page 5)

August 12: Peter Schenk from Quarterdeck will present their products
September 9: Vinnie Barber from Alps Printers

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the June 10 Meeting

By Kevan Sheridan, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The pre-meeting Windows SIG was run by Mary Sheridan, Program Chairman. This SIG should be a regular occurrence at the beginning of future meetings beginning at 6:00 PM. After a short discussion, the introductions and announcements began at 6:45 PM. Merle announced there would be two drawings, with hardware being part of one drawing. We are still putting together the Visual Basic SIG so get ready if you are interested. The IDT/Centaur demonstration of WinChip began at 7:00 and lasted until about 8:15. Following a short break the meeting concluded with the door prize drawing. The amount brought in from ticket sales was $53.50.

The WinChip demonstration was presented by Mike Bruzzone of IDT/Centaur. Mike began by passing out several handouts for the group to read. This interesting information was about who Integrated Device Technologies (IDT) and Centaur Technologies are, what chips they produce and why. Mike also announced that he brought four motherboards (with WinChips in them) for the group. For every motherboard that is reviewed in this newsletter the reviewer will receive an upgrade (faster) chip. He also said that if we review the two designated motherboards the group will receive a complete PC.

The major portion of Mike's talk was about the technical side of PC Chip manufacturing. We learned a wealth of information about the side of computers, chips, software, marketing, and manufacturing that we all normally don't even think about. He talked about the advantages the WinChip brings to the market and what target markets the WinChips are aimed at. For example, the low power consumption of these chips makes them attractive to notebook manufacturers.

Two motherboards were used for the drawing, two boards for club use and two motherboards were given to the group for review. If you are interested in reviewing one of these please contact Merle Nicholson, president of the group.

Mike Bruzzone may be reached at (408) 492-8637 or E-mail: campmkting@aol.com

The door prize followed a short break. Mary Sheridan won the 50/50 drawing. Roger Waters and Mary Sheridan both won a motherboard (with WinChip) donated by IDT Centaur.

Next month look for a demonstration by Gateway 2000. ◆

Power Desk Utilities 98

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

For as long as I've been using Windows, way back to Windows 3.0, I have made it my main ambition to find utility programs that Microsoft left out. I'll have to admit that Microsoft has done a heck of a job adding utilities over the years but their File Manager, or Windows Explorer, has always been thin on built-in utilities. And as much as I work with files this has been my area of concentration. Well, not anymore!

MIJENIX™ Corporation has developed PowerDesk® Utilities 98 that took the "work out of working with Windows." (Not my phrase – it came from their website, as does some of the text below.) PowerDesk is actually several programs in one. All of the standard stuff is there like ***move***, ***copy*** and ***format*** but there's a whole lot more too. Here's some of what you get:

- **File management.** ***PowerDesk*** is the heart of PowerDesk Utilities 98. PowerDesk is a supercharged file manager that optionally replaces the Windows Explorer, and is also the "umbrella" program, providing access to most of the various other tools. Each tool can also be accessed independently of PowerDesk. In addition, you can split PowerDesk's window into two panes (rather than opening a second copy of the program, as you have to do with Windows Explorer), which makes drag-and-drop operations between folders or network drives much easier.
- **File Finder.** PowerDesk's ***File Finder*** is a Super Search Engine for your PC that finds files over multiple drives, views the files you've found, and uses more advanced choices to narrow your search.
- **Instant graphic viewing of what's eating up space on your hard drive.** The ***Size Manager*** shows you which files are cluttering up your drive.
- **Open and save files easier than ever before.** Have you ever forgotten the name of a file you were working on? The PowerDesk ***Dialog Helper*** includes two enhancements to the Windows "common" file dialogs (open, save, and save as). ***Fullview*** allows users with larger monitors to resize their dialogs, and the ***Tracker*** "remembers", for each program, which files or locations were recently opened or visited (up to 20 per application).
- **Built-in Zip/Unzip.** With the power of a complete ***Zip File Manager***, PowerDesk's built-in zip utility supports every major compression format, including zip, arj, arc, lzh, z, gz, tar, rar. In addition, support is also included for automatically detecting the need for and spanning of large compressed files over multiple disks, password protection for zip files, multiple compression ratios and more.
- **Convert image files.** PowerDesk has the ability to convert files from over 20 different graphic file formats: *LEAD, JPEG, JTIF, GIF, (Animated/Interlaced* /Normal), *TIFF, BMP, ICON, CURSOR, KODAK, EXIF, PCX, WMF, PSD, PNG, TARGA, EPS, SUN, WPG, PCT, FAX, MAC, MSP, IMG*, and it even supports "batch" conversion, for large-scale multi-format conversions from one graphic format to another.
- **Keep folders in sync and up-to-date.** The ***Synchronizer*** makes quick work of comparing and updating folders. Select two folders, compare the contents, and quickly synchronize their contents with one click. Great for backups! (Far superior to Windows' Briefcase!)
- **Toolbar provides quick access to favorite programs and files.** Create your own Custom ***Toolbar*** for one-click access to your favorite files and applications, as well as functions like Print Screen, restarting your PC, or changing your active printer. Even display multiple clocks for different time zones, or get a quick view of system resources!
- **Fast access to file viewing**. A fully integrated ***File Viewer*** that supports over 80 file formats (too many to list- but believe me I don't think you'll have any problems here viewing anything you have) lets you view your files as you browse your hard drive. You can quickly scan the contents of files without launching a viewer or separate application.
- **Decode those unreadable email attachments.** Nothing is more frustrating than receiving an email attachment that you can't open. PowerDesk Utilities includes a powerful ***Email Attachment Decoder***, so you can right-click on a file to decode MIME/ Base64, BinHex and UUencoded mail attachments (it can create UUencoded files as well).
- **Keep your files private**. Protect your data with PowerDesk Utilities' own encryption, DES encryption, or completely remove all traces of a file through low-level deletion.

…and much, much more.

As I said before, I am always looking for the best utilities to make Windows work better, faster and easier. PowerDesk Utilities 98 is by far the **BEST** set of utilities I have come across for Windows 95. It is absolutely everything that Explorer should have been all along. It's almost like Explorer on steroids. And the best part is it works fine under Windows 98,

(PowerDesk.....Continued on page 12)

TPCG Help Line and Microsoft Access

By William Lamartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

The past few weeks I have received several questions from members regarding their computing and, I think, answered them satisfactorily. Let's see, I recall questions on not being able to reinstall Win 95, a missing CD ROM drive, getting a DOS program to run properly in a DOS window in Win 95, installing Win 95 C over Win 95, and Microsoft Access. I believe that my answers solved all problems except possibly with Win 95 C, which I had never heard of until a few days before at our regular meeting. I think it is basically Win 95 B with USB support plus Internet Explorer 4.0. I couldn't give a definite answer on this, only discuss with the member his various options.

I also know that several other members listed in our Help Line have been receiving calls to answer questions from members. Apparently the Help Line is providing a useful service. This is one of the functions of a user group, and, I think, it not only helps those who ask but also those who answer. That may sound surprising, but I find that in solving other's problems you are forced to better understand and clarify your thinking on the topics in question. The question I received on *Microsoft Access* is a good case in point.

I am a relatively recent convert to databases having gotten by storing most tabular data in Microsoft Excel until several years back when I bought my first copy of Access. Now, I had owned a database program before. It was called *Superbase*, and, if I remember correctly, was the first Windows based database. About six years ago we had a demonstration of it at one of our meetings, the members were offered a good price on it, and I bought it. I used it a bit but never really saw much advantage to using it over a spreadsheet to store my limited amount of tabular data—my fault, not the program's. A few years later, through, I used Superbase (then essentially out of business) to get a competitive upgrade to my first copy of MS Access. Two or three versions later, I have not only quit using Excel to store non-numeric data, I am becoming moderately proficient in Access' finer points.

A Microsoft Access database consists of a collection of tables, queries, forms, reports, and Visual Basic Code Modules. As I use it, my original data is in a table (consisting of rows called records and columns called fields) or, perhaps, in two or more tables; I then generate queries (other tables) by putting conditions on the records in my original data. The reports and forms are used to display answers to various questions I ask regarding the data. The Visual Basic code, if included, is used to accomplish manipulations of the tables that either are not possible with the other tools available in Access or are not easily possible. Additionally, one can write a separate Visual Basic program which will open up an Access database (totally distinct from using VB code from within Access) and perform the desired manipulations.

Here is where the member's Access question prompted me to sharpen my skills in Access: How to solve his problem by not resorting to a separate Visual Basic program that opened the database and did what was desired, since he didn't want to have to deal with a separate program. This forced me to figure out how to put the same code into a VB module within the database, have a form use this code and display the desired results. But, once I had gone this far, why not do away with the code altogether and somehow accomplish the same thing. After several days of off and on again thinking about the problem, I finally produced the solution using one extra query and one report—a far cry from my original solution. I assume that someone who works with Access every day would have immediately adopted this approach.

Now that I have led you this far, you might like to know the original question. A member had a database of recent car sales listing everything (probably from an auction) with fields for the buyer's name, address, ZIP, VIN, year, auto make, model, and much more we won't list. So a typical record might look like John Doe, 4254 Main, Saint Augustine FL, 32084, 4T1BG22K4VU071602, 97, Toyota, Camry ce/le/xle sedan 4dr.

The problem was to group the records based on the first word in the model field (not the whole field) and to count the number in each such group. One such grouping would consist of all sales where the model began with Camry, for example. Sounds easy doesn't it, and I suppose it is for database professionals. But several casual Access users tried it before it got to me with no solution.

My first thought was to write a simple VB program to open the database, find all the different first words in the model field, count the number of records in each such group and display the results. This is indeed a solution as far as I am concerned. However, it requires one to step outside of the Access environment—and was not preferred by the one who presented me with the problem.

The next method was to create a VB module within Access that did basically the same thing. To display the results, I used a form with a list box based on a one column table, where the table's values were the results found in my VB module. To find the solution, all an individual had to do now was click on a button on the form causing the VB code in the module to run, which when finished updated the one column table whose values were then posted to the list box on the form, where a typical line in the list box might read "Toyota

(Help Line.....Continued on page 8)

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

wasn't being used enough to justify the cost. And rightly so. The Internet has just taken over that function completely. If you'll look at our web site, you'll see a very, very good example of what can be done by a club. There isn't praise enough to describe William LaMartin's contribution, doing the newsletter AND the web site. For those of you who lament the passing of the BBS, go to the web site and post something of interest on the discussion group, won't you? We have excellent facilities on the web, with chat and threaded messages and more.

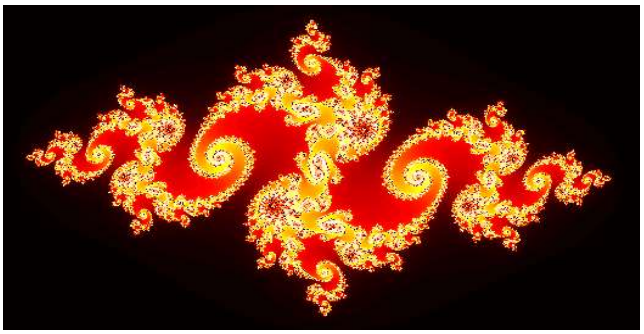
Our membership level is suffering, unfortunately. Please come to the meeting and bring a relative, friend or neighbor. And we need to discover the kind of services that will bring in new members, so please send in your ideas. All the officer email addresses are posted in this newsletter and on the web site. See you at the meeting.

IDT Motherboard Offer

For those of you who couldn't make it to the June meeting,

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Internet picture of the month



A connected Julia set

This is one of many interesting fractal images at Fabio Cesari's Fractal Image Gallery. Fabio says he is a 22 years old student of computer engineering at the University of Bologna, Italy, interested in astronomy, chaotic systems and fractals. The address of his site is http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/2854/ .

One of the great things about the Internet is how it allows people to express themselves in a creative way and to share their interests with others.

There are many other sites featuring fractal images. A good starting point is the Yahoo category http://www.yahoo.com/Arts/Visual_Arts/Computer_Generated/Fractals/ .

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
Palm Beach Interactive - (from the Palm Beach Post)	http://www.gopbi.com/
y'all.com - We cover the South like Kudzu	http://www.yall.com/
New Scientist Planet Science - News, jobs and more	http://www.newscientist.com/home.html
America's Health Network -Medical Information	http://www.ahn.com/
TAMPA BAY WHOLESALE (computer hardware)	http://www.tbwi.com/
IBM Direct (buy online plus parts)	http://www.direct.ibm.com/
eBay - Online auction	http://www.ebay.com/
Tampa Guide -restaurants, events calendar, and more	http://www.tampaguide.com/
ClipArt Collection	http://ftp1.rad.kumc.edu/clipart.htm
Fedstats One Stop Shopping for Federal Statistics	http://www.fedstats.gov/
Savage-Goodner Camp 1513 Sons of Confederate Vets	http://tennessee-scv.org/Camp1513/index.htm
auto.com - Daily news and reviews	http://www.auto.com/
Microsoft Office 97-Visual Basic Programmer's Guide	http://microsoft.com/officedev/articles/Opg/toc/pgtoc.htm
Lotus software	http://www.lotus.com

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

T.H.O.R (FREENET'S COUSIN)

By Ted Rodenbach, Tampa PC Users Group

Last month I told you about the Suncoast freenet (SCFN). This month I'd like to tell you about another service similar to "freenet" called THOR. THOR stands for: Tampa Hillsbough Online Resource. It's similar to "freenet" in that they look about the same. And once you discover many of its wonderful features, you'll see what a powerful resource it is.

There are a couple ways to sign on. If you have already signed on to freenet (you did, right?), the way you log on to THOR is pretty much the same. There are two methods for logging on to THOR: Direct dial and indirect connect.

To log on indirectly, while logged on to "freenet" using the "J" command I told you about last month, type "thpl" Once you're at the desired menu, go ahead and select "Connect" to THOR" or "link 15" at the bottom of the list. This will connect you to the system via TELNET. After the connection has been made, you'll see a screen similar to SCFN. When asked to log on, log on as "thor". You don't need a password.

To direct dial into THOR, using your COMM program, dial 276-2770. The procedure, then, is the same for logging on using this method as going through freenet.

O.K, We're ready to get our feet wet and start exploring. I should mention that THOR uses the same operating system as freenet. So if you haven't read my last article, or are unfamiliar with UNIX, you might find the way THOR and SCFN work a little confusing. So if you are new to this, then go back and read my first article; you'll thank yourself later.

Once logged on, the first thing the system will ask you for is "What terminal type are you using?" I could go into detail on why these systems ask that, but in a nutshell, back in the old days, there were many different terminal types. And UNIX is very picky about what kind of hardware it's using. So, there came about things like VT standards and such.

When asked to select the type of terminal, select "VT100"; this is compatible with 99% of all PC's. Next it will ask you if you want to test your "terminal emulation". You can go ahead and say yes, but most of the time it'll be set up right, so the next time just say no. No pun intended.

Still awake? Hang on, we're almost there. At this point we're one click away from the main menu. Hit "enter".

From here, you'll see the welcome screen; once again, it's not much to look at. After you exit the main screen, you should see a list of different options from which you can select. I've spent time exploring each one and was very impressed with the depth of information I was able to find. There are an on-line dictionary, reading lists, events' calendar, and you can even check out your library record. You can even search for books in the library and reserve them on line! This was one of the most impressive features of the system. I've used it quite a few times, and every time it worked like a charm. What you do is, once you find a book you want to check out, use the menu to select "place a hold" or "PH" from the bottom menu. Then you select the library you want it delivered to, and as soon as it arrives, you get a call to come and pick it up.

If you go to "library catalogue", you can search any of the resources listed below by entering the number you want to use:

1. Library Catalog
2. American Heritage Dictionary
3. Bestsellers & Other Reading Lists
4. Clubs and Organizations
5. Frequently Asked Questions
6. Library Events Calendar
7. Print Saved List
8. TRAILS - Tampa History Index
9. VISTA: Online Indexes & Articles
10. Your Library Record
11. Logoff

Take your time exploring each one; you'll be amazed at what you find. If you want to spend a considerable amount of time using THOR, then use the direct dial method, since, if you connect to THOR through "freenet", you are still constricted to the 60 minute time limit.

VISTA: In my opinion, this is the best part of the entire system. Select number 9 from the list, and this will connect you though telnet to VISTA. I'm not exactly sure what it stands for, but it really doesn't matter. Once you connect, you see some text which tells you that you are connecting, and once again it'll ask you what type of terminal you're using. You can start to see why it does this. You are connected to a computer in Utah that doesn't know anything about you, or your provider's system. It does tend to get a little confusing. But as long you can remember VT-100 is the standard, you will have little trouble. Here is what you'll see.

MAIN MENU

* Indicates FULL TEXT is available.

Available search options:

(THOR.....Continued on page 7)

(THOR.....Continued from page 6)

1. Books In Print (R)
2. Books Out of Print (R)
3. *Business ASAP
4. Company ProFile
5. *Contemporary Authors
6. Encyclopedia of Assoc.
7. *Health ASAP
8. *Magazine ASAP
9. Magazine Index Backfile
10. *Middle Search
11. *SIRS Researcher
12. *World News Digest
13. Quit Searching

Enter your selection(s) and press <Return> :

Let's say, we wanted to search through magazine articles about "horse racing" Enter number 8, and it'll take you to the magazine search page.

Magazine ASAP

Database years: 1992 to present
Available Search Option:

1. QUICK SEARCH-Look for any (-IMIGW)
2. Look for NAME of person (-IMIN)
3. Look for SUBJECT by Keyword (-IMISA)
4. Return to MAIN MENU
5. Quit Searching

Enter your selection(s) and press <Return> :
Commands: B = Back, S = Shortcut off, BB = Bulletin Board, ? = Help

Pick any one of the categories that you feel is best for your search. If you know the name of someone, select 2, and you should see a screen like this:

Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library
Vista

Magazine ASAP Name

******* HELPFUL HINTS *******

Enter a PERSON'S surname you would like to find.
An Alphabetical listing will be displayed
You can enter the entire name or a part of a name, last name first.
Examples: Johnson, Thomas
If you do not find an exact match, search the surrounding entries.
Enter Name List :
Commands: SO = Start Over, B = Back, ? = Help

To show you how powerful it is, I'll do a sample search, and print the results. Let's say, we want to find articles on Stephen Hawking. From the "enter name list" I'll type it in, and here's what it came back with.

Your Search: Hawking, Stephen W.

Database:Magazine Index

TITLE/JOURNAL (truncated)
1. Stephen Hawking's Universe. (television p
The New York Times Oct 13 1997, v147, pB3(N) pE6
2. The Large, the Small, and the Human Mind.
Publishers Weekly March 10 1997, v244, n10, p59
3. The Nature of Space and Time. (book revie
Physics Today July 1996, v49, n7, p60(2)
4. The Nature of Space and Time. (book revie
Science June 7 1996, v272, n5267, p14
5. The Nature of Space and Time. (book revie
Library Journal Feb 15 1996, v121, n3, p172(1
6. The Nature of Space and Time. (book revie
Publishers Weekly Jan 15 1996, v243, n3, p456(1
7. A Brief History of Time. (video recording
Video Review Wntr 1994, v15, n1, p61(1)

***** 13 Items - Page 1 - More on Next Screen *****

Enter an item number for more detail :

Commands: SO = Start Over, B = Back, SL = Sort List, ML = Mark List, PR = PRint, <Return> = Next Screen, VA = View Article, L = Limit Search

When there's a "VA" in the title, it means that you can view the article online. You can also sort the list by author, subject, etc.

There are so many other features, it would take a novel to write about them all. But this is the crux of what you need to know to access the system. Also, when at the "THPL" in freenet, select link 14; this will give you even more information about THOR and its many features.

There probably are those of you who don't see the need for services like this. You figure that most of this stuff is already on the net, and why bother going through the trouble. In my personal experience, 98 percent of all useful information I've obtained Online has come either from local BBS's like our former Bits of Blue and a service such as THOR. I'm not saying that "the net" isn't bountiful with its own resources, but maybe it would be worth your while to pull off of the information superhighway and take a stroll down a country road. BBS's were around long before "the net"—well, at least the net as we know it today. So do yourself a favor and check it out. ◆

The + AND – of Internet Searches

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

All of us who use the Internet to any extent have searched for something at some point on the web. Never before in history has so much, mainly free, information been so easy to access. But, because all this information is out there, finding what you're looking for often requires more than luck (although luck helps, too). The goal of a good search is to cut down the amount of time you spend sifting through all those search results for that proverbial needle in the haystack. The key is to create more accurate search queries using advanced syntax and Boolean logic operators that are available through most commercial search engines. But don't let the term Boolean logic throw you. You actually use it every day in conversation.

Boolean logic lets you set up relationships between concepts based on operators such as **AND**, **NOT**, and **OR**. For example, if you were looking for information on (football) stadiums but not (baseball) stadiums you might think of the logical relationship as being expressed by: find me stadiums with baseball and without football. Boolean logic just takes a simple statement like that and formalizes it a little, so it looks like this: "stadiums AND football AND NOT baseball." This query will find documents on the Net which contain the keywords "stadiums" and "football" but which don't contain the word "baseball." Most all of the Boolean operators also have symbolic equivalents. So the same query above can also be written as: "stadiums +football –baseball."

Some other Boolean operators are:

- "" (quotes) - Specifies that documents must contain the phrase within the quote marks. For example, "Tampa, Florida" will find documents with this exact phrase.
- OR (|) - This operator indicates a search for documents containing any of the terms joined by the operator.
- NOT (!) - This operator excludes documents containing the term that follows the operator. So, "salt AND NOT pepper" or "salt !pepper" will find documents about salt that don't mention pepper.
- NEAR (N) - This operator finds documents in which two words appear within 25 words of each other.
- (), {}, [], <> (parentheses) - This nesting operator can be used to group expressions when building more sophisticated queries. For example, (Marshall +Stephens) AND (appraisals |valuations) is a sample of a nested query.
- + (plus sign) - Placed at the beginning of a word, this operator indicates that the word is required. For example, Florida +beaches will return docs that mention both Florida and beaches.
- - (minus sign) - Placed at the beginning of a word, this operator indicates that the word must be excluded. For example, Florida -beaches will return docs only with Florida.
- *, ? (wildcard) - Wildcards can be used to truncate words so that results contain variations of a word. So, apprais* or apprais? will return results containing such variations as appraiser, appraisers, appraising and so on. These should be used more often.

(NOTE: Search engines may differ slightly on how to use the operators. The above list is typical but if you continually use one particular search engine you should probably become familiar with their requirements.) I use a free search utility called WebFerret (http://www.ferretsoft.com/netferret/webferret.htm), which I have written about in past newsletters, that searches multiple search engines at one time, and the above listed operators work fine.

For a complete list of the Boolean operators, next time you're on the Net go to: http://www.zdnet.com/products/garage/search/search.master/cheatsheet.html, and bookmark this page for future searches. ◆

(Help Line.....Continued from page 4)
Camry has 20 sales."

This, however, was still unsatisfying in some sense. I just knew that a solution existed using basically no VB code. When gotten, the final method of solution consisted of creating a query with an additional field displaying the first word in the model field gotten using as the definition of the new field the expression left$([model],InStr([model],” “) – 1). So you see that we didn't entirely get away from VB. Once I had this query, it was then a matter of creating a report that grouped all the records based on this new field (all the Camrys would be together) and counted the number in each of the groups—something that can be accomplished within a report if the right "buttons" are pushed.

So why have I drug those of you who have made it to this point through all of this? Mainly to show how one member's question lead me on a path of learning. Not only did I solve his problem, better yet I taught myself a bit more about Access which should help me in the future. ◆

Beginners' Column

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

Last month we had embarked on a journey to get an application icon onto the Start menu. We got as far as creating a shortcut on the desktop and hopefully we'll get it to the Start Menu this month. You may want to review last month's article. Our web site has the last several month's newsletters in HTML format and also the Acrobat Reader format. Go to http://www.canx.com/tpcug.

For just a quick review, have you set your Windows Explorer to show all files and their extensions? Remember that **Open** means Double-click and **Select** means one click. **Open** *My Computer.* **Open** *Drive C.* (Launches Windows Explorer). **Select** *View, Options, View.* **Select** *Show all Files*, **De-select** *Hide files of these types*, **Select** *Display the full MS-DOS path in the title bar,* and **De-select** *Hide MS-DOS file extensions ….* And last, **Select** *Ok.* Now look at last month's article and follow the steps to get an application's icon on the desktop.

I'd like to ask you, please; this article should not just be read. Sit at your computer and poke around and follow around with the mouse. All this needs practice to learn well. It isn't cerebral in nature, it takes experience and practice. I remember very well when I got my first computer with a graphical interface, an Atari 1040 ST. The first couple of evenings I was sweating it. I was convinced I'd made a very serious mistake spending a thousand dollars (for something without a hard drive) and I was never going to get the hang of it. After a few days, something just clicked in my brain, and I was having fun again, discovering how the thing worked.

Although you may want all your most useful icons on the desktop, there's a practical limit, when the desktop becomes so cluttered that you can't find what you want. And besides, application windows cover up desktop icons. What about the applications you need while you have other windows covering it up? What if a desktop icon is inadvertently deleted? That's easy to do. If it's on the Start menu, it's never covered up because it pops up over everything, and it's difficult to delete.

Let's look at the Start Menu. By default, when Windows is first installed, reading from the bottom is Sh*utdown, Run, Help, Find, Settings, Documents* and *Programs.* Since the menu is hierarchical in nature, expanding as needed, we'll call this level the *First*, or *Root* level. Some program installations add some items above Programs at the root. Office 95 and 97 do that. Personally, I like to reserve that right for my own stuff. So when Office put that "New Office Document" and "Open Office Document" at the root, I simply moved them to a newly created "MS Office" group myself. While Office is important to me, it's not so important that I want to skip around it all the time.

If you move your cursor to *Programs* and let it expand, this is where another level of items branch out. We'll call this the *second*, or *Programs* level. Most of the items at this level have new branches of their own that contain program items and also more branches. You'll see that for instance if you expand the level *Accessories,* that this level contains single items like *Notepad*, and also contains other levels like *System Tools*. Inside *System Tools*, there's nothing except items. I'm referring to single items as applications or shortcuts that do not have an expansion right arrow to go further. All this may seem obvious to you, I suppose, but my intention is to take the mystery out of all this because we need to relate this cascading *tree* to directories, or folders.

To successfully navigate this whole exercise, you may notice that we're having to learn a lot of background stuff that leads up to where we're going. That's ok. Hopefully we'll have a lot of background that'll be useful for a lot of other things. Like directories, also called folders. We'll call them *folders*. Ok, here we go. **Select** *Start*, **Select** *Settings*, and **Select** *Taskbar*. **Select** the tab *Start Menu Programs*. **Select** the button *Advanced*. Is the Explorer view a double pane, with *All Folders* on the left and *'Contents of C:\WINDOWS\Start Menu* on the right? Also if the details of the files on the right are not showing, ***Select*** *View* from the Explorer menu, then **click** *Details*.

Now, we'll explore just a bit. Size the window so that it's short, but wide, then move it to the top of your screen. Next move your mouse to the Start menu. **Select** *Start*, **Select** *Programs*, **Select** *Accessories*, **Select** *System Tools*. Then move to the explorer window, **click** on the folder icon *Start Menu*, and look at the items on the right. You're positioned at the root if the *Start Menu* folder on the left is *open*. Then **select** the "+" attached to Programs. It'll expand to folders. **Select** the folder icon *Programs*. Look at the right. You're at the *Programs* level.

In addition to Folders on the right you'll also see a couple of items -program icons -like MS-DOS and Windows Explorer. **Right-click** the *Windows Explorer*, and **drag** it to the left pane and **drop** it on the folder *Start Menu*. When the small pop-up menu appears, **Select** *Copy*. Then go back to the bottom of the screen, and look at the result. Above the Programs level, at the root, you'll see a Windows Explorer. What my intentions here are for you to see the relationship between this directory structure and the Start Menu. The *Start Menu* is just a collection of directories underneath a directory called c:\windows\Start Menu. Now let's finalize by selecting the icon for Calc.Exe we left on the desktop with the left mouse, drag it to Programs in the left pane and drop it. Select **Move**

(Beginner.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Communications/Internet SIG will NOTmeet in July.

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

(Beginner.....Continued from page 9)

this time, because we don't need it on the desktop anymore. **Close** out the windows-all of them-and look at the *Start Menu*. You should see two changes. One is a copy of *Windows Explorer* in the root of the menu, and a nice location as far as I'm concerned, and also a Calc item under programs, which I would delete now. Go back through the instructions to open up the directories and delete the Calc shortcut. Just for the fun of it.

There are a couple of other ways to access the *Start Menu* directories, the most notable one being to **Right-Click** on the *Start* button, and select **Open** from that menu. This isn't my favorite way to do menu maintenance, but it will work, and I'd admit it's more of a personal preference.

Now you're in control of your own *Start Men*u. One of the things that will happen is that your second level -Programs level -will get too tall as you've added programs over time. If that's the case, it's time to reorganize. Move all your games folders at the program level to a new folder called Games, for instance. MS Office always moves its program items to the Program level. I prefer to make a folder MS Office and move all Office icons into that folder.

Practice. You're in control of this thing, and the more you do, the easier it gets.

If you're enjoying these articles -or not -and have suggestions for me, be sure to e-mail me. I'm looking for ideas and I do appreciate any feedback. MerleNic@tampabay.rr.com ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 5)

IDT has given us four motherboards for review. We're taking names for the moment for volunteers to take these boards, assemble a complete computer from them and submit an article to the club newsletter. The boards and processors are yours to keep. The two 225's will be upgraded by IDT as new processors are available, and mailed to the current owner

There are two ATX motherboards with 225MHz CPU's and two 200Mhz, one an ATX and one a baby AT.

You'll need to either upgrade an existing computer by replacing the motherboard and other needed items or build a new computer from scratch. It may take as much as an additional $800 to complete the project.

One thing, if you're not aware, even if you have a Pentium now, chances are good that you don't have an ATX case. The ATX motherboard is taller, with the peripheral connectors built onto the motherboard where they're exposed through a large rectangular opening in the back. An ATX case is significantly more expensive than a baby AT.

In exchange for the articles, TPCUG will receive a full, completed computer for club use.

If you are seriously interested, will commit to assembling the computer and writing the article, please e-mail me at MerleNic@tampabay.rr.com or call me at 879-3602. In case of more volunteers than boards, we'll draw by lot. Thanks. Merle. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems
Broderbund
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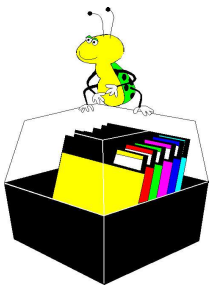
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



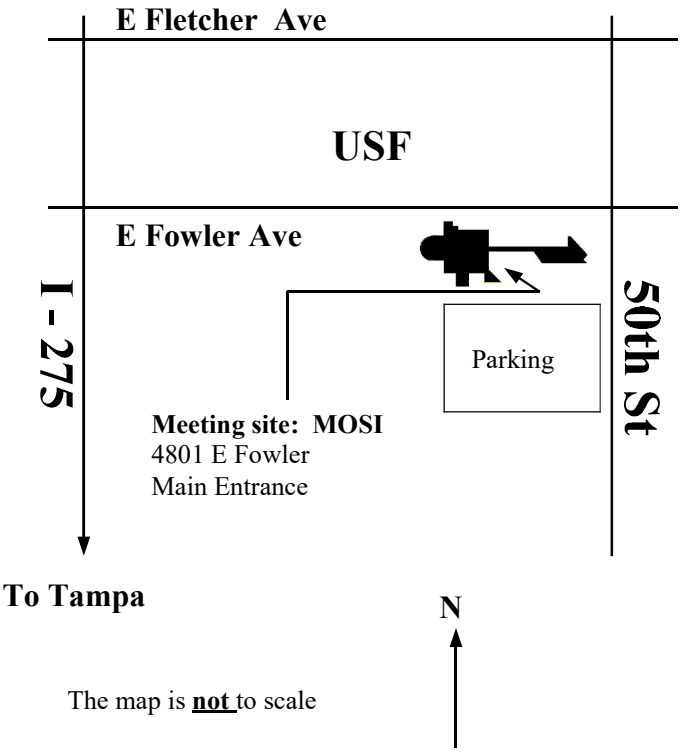
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(PowerDesk.....Continued from page 3)
too. I seldom give a **"SUPER"** recommendation to software (maybe never). If not, this is my first! This is one software program you need to add to your arsenal and absolutely the first one you need to add to Windows 98.

You can download a fully functional version of PowerDesk Utilities 98 for a free 30-day trial period from http://www.mijenix.com/download.htm#PowerDesk. If you like it half as much as I do then order the software for $39.95 plus S+H from Mijenix. If you're using any earlier version the upgrade is only $19.95. Don't pass this one up! ◆





http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ (this address may change later this month)



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 8 August 1998

Meeting

Quarterdeck

August 12, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the August meeting, Quarterdeck will present their software. Also, as in the past few meetings, Mary Sheridan will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Comments

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Good news! We're finally going to start the Visual Basic SIG August 18th. After some foot-dragging on my part, we have a classroom reserved at the Gateway Country Store on North Dale Mabry. This arrangement was made partly through the two Gateway employees Rich Podolsky and Beth Wood who gave us a very fine talk on Gateway last meeting.

One thing that I hadn't realized was the sheer number of Gateway customers in our membership! And those who mentioned it were all very positive about the experience. Nice to know there are good recommendations out there among us.

I would expect when someone in the group buys something, be it a complete PC or a printer or whatever, that he or she would draw on the experience of other club members, and except for short discussions at the meeting, I don't see much of that going on. We have the perfect forum for the exchange of information. All we have to do is use it – the discussion page on our web site. Won't you please go there today and see what's there? It really makes sense, and this is a perfect example of what a club is for – to post a message and title it "What's the best scanner?" and see just how many responses you get. I'll bet you would be surprised how much free information will be posted.

Even if you aren't in the market for anything right now, if you'll just scan the titles every day, you'll be bound eventually to answer someone else's question.

(President.....Continued on page 7)

September 9: Vinnie Barber from Alps Printers
October 14: Colleen Hinsburg from Mindspring, a nationwide Internet provider

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the July 8 Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

We started with the Windows SIG at 6:00PM, led by Mary Sheridan. The purpose of the SIG is to provide a discussion forum for Windows issues and helping each other. The half-hour was easily filled with a lively discussion, mostly concerning Windows 98 and who has done what so far. We were reluctant to stop, but finally had to because the main event got set up and going - Gateway 2000.

Rich Podoisky and Beth Wood from the Gateway 2000 Country Store gave a very nice talk about their company, interesting facts about the company, about the founder and how he started the company. The founder simply started in his house building computers for people in South Dakota and expanded into his father's barn - hence the cow logo and barn theme in their advertising.

Beth and Rich led some lively discussions and gave out many T-shirts, pencils, cups and key chains to people who would speak up with answers. A prize was given to the person with the fastest computer, the slowest and for computer trivia. As the evening progressed it was obvious that there are a lot of Gateway computer owners among our membership. Some time was devoted to discussing various members' purchases. All the comments were very positive.

Beth and Rich talked some about the newest ads that offer a computer for $49 a month. It was understandable because the ads really do not offer much detail. But if I understood it correctly, the deal is simply a direct financed purchase of whatever computer you want with payments up to four years. After two years, Gateway will accept the computer back as a trade, with the trade-in value based on the "computer bluebook" published value.

Rich and Beth gave a lively, entertaining talk and we appreciate them coming out to talk to us. They're welcome back any time. During the break, we discussed arranging to use their training room for our Visual Basic SIG, and they were very enthusiastic about the idea. (See page 10 in this newsletter for information on the SIG)

As you know we have two door prize drawings - one for prizes and one for cash. We had good sales and some fun with it. The details - who won what - will be reported next week. ◆

Yeah Write

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Yeah Write is a word processor. It's an interesting word processor. That much I can say; interesting enough that I've been continuing to use it even though I have alternatives that I'm more familiar with. My own personal choice is MS Word, but I can't honestly say that I've looked at alternatives. And this is certainly ... well ... an interesting alternative. I'll say to you what I've been reminding myself. A word processor shouldn't cost $150 or $89. What about people whose word processing needs are simple? What about people who really can't justify the cost of a full blown word processor? What about simple?

There's always WordPad, isn't there? And Write in Windows 3.1? They're both more than adequate to write your credit card company a note when they've messed up and you want to tell them a thing or two. So why start a company and create a brand new word processor? I'll give it a try first by listing some features.

1. It's $19 or free or $29. Take your choice. (More later on this.)
2. It takes up 2MB on your disk when fully installed. (Do I care about this? No, but YOU might if your hard drive is limited.)
3. They're honest. Read the box. They list all the things it CAN'T do.
4. It's fast. (Does a word processor need to be fast? If you're running Win 95 on a 486, yes.)
5. It does a lot of neat things.

This is a new product. The company is made up of ex-WordPerfect employees in Orem, Utah. On the CD, if you buy the CD, is a 16 bit version for Windows 3.1 and also a 32 bit version for Windows 95, 98 and NT. The minimum requirement is Windows 3.1 with 4MBof RAM and 4MB of hard drive space. I'm not kidding.

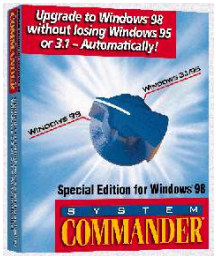
This is my sixth document, including one FAX document. The program loads fast. And it starts where you last left off, even (especially) if you were last editing a document. All documents that you create seem to be contained "in" the word processor. You don't deal with external files, you simply select a tab and add more documents to a list of documents under the tab. The list gives you the date, the title and some of the first line of the text. You double-click on <New> to create a new one or double-click on an existing one. That opens an editing window with the date and title at the top and a text area for typing in the rest of the window. The edit area is sizeable. The tabs at the top classify all the categories of documents you can make. Starting with Address, then Diary, Email, Faxes, General, Journal, Letters, Memos, Notes, Text, To Do, and YW Info. This last is the documentation for Yeah Write, implemented as text. It's easy to use, and not complicated, just as you'd expect. You can add tabs of your own as I did for TPCUG and select the default document type for the documents under that tab. Each tab has a different form or "style" that pre-formats your document. This is very hard to describe. You'll not see a "Made for Windows 95" logo on this box!!



(Yeah.....Continued on page 8)

System Commander:
Special Edition for Windows98

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group



This is a very interesting program. You do not need this program if you have SYSTEM COMMANDER 3.0 or SYSTEM COMMANDER Deluxe.

When you install this program, it makes copies of various components of the Windows95 program, or if you are using Windows 3.x, it will make copies of those program components.

The purpose of this program is to put a boot menu choice on your screen when you start your computer. If you now have Windows95, you will see--OS selection Menu. A: Windows95 B: Windows98

You may then select whichever operating system you wish to boot. That is the purpose of this System Commander Special Edition. Use this program only if you plan to install Windows98 UPGRADE. You do not need to set up a separate partition to install the UPGRADE. Another interesting feature is that the DOS boot sector virus protection checks for viruses on every boot-up. If one is found, the program replaces the infected boot sector and hidden files.

Remember, with this program, you may install the Windows98 UPGRADE without affecting your Windows95 or Windows 3.x system. Quite an unusual idea.

For User Group prices, contact sales@v-com.com. For a description of the program visit http://www.v-com.com/ ◆

PowerBASIC Console Compiler for Windows

By Tom Cone, Tampa PC Users Group

The **PowerBASIC Console Compiler for Windows** creates EXEcutables (.EXE) capable of running in the Win32 environment (Windows 95, 98 and NT). It's published by PowerBASIC,316 Mid Valley Center, Carmel, CA 93923. (http://www.powerbasic.com)

The program features an Integrated Development Environment for writing and debugging your BASIC code. It will feel very familiar to you if you ever worked in QuickBASIC, PowerBASIC for DOS, or (even longer ago) TurboBASIC.

What is a Console?
A console is a text mode interface connected right to the heart of 32-bit Windows. If you double-click on the MS-DOS icon in Windows, the window that opens with the C:\> prompt is your text console. In it you can execute commands such as DIR, CLS, COPY, etc. Additionally, you can run text mode applications such as XCOPY32.EXE and PING.EXE. These programs are actually 32-bit Windows applications which use special calls to the Win32 API in order to display text inside of the console window.

PB/CC eliminates the need for you to learn these special Win32 API calls in order to create console applications. The whole process is handled for you when you use the PRINT, LOCATE, COLOR, CLS, and other statements in the PB/CC language. This frees you to concentrate on the task at hand.

While not every application written for Windows will need to be a console application, the console seems suitable for many types of tasks. I, for example, have long been interested in database programming. Databases do not require sophisticated graphical components. Usually, it's "heads down" full speed keypunching data entry that's more important. Speed and ease of use are valued more highly than pretty screens. In that setting, having to lift your hand off the keyboard to position and click the mouse slows one down.

Every programmer is familiar with the "Hello, World!" program. It simply displays the greeting text to an end user. While not a significant program, it does measure two important things. The amount of source it takes to write a complete application, and the size of the executable generated by the compiler.

In Visual Basic I believe you have to create a form with a static text label and write the code to change the label. You then have to set the text of the label. And finally you have to access several different menu items and property sheets in order to configure VB to compile a true EXE as small as it possibly can. The result? About 1.9 megabytes of executable and runtime DLL files, I've been told from reliable sources..

In PB/CC only three lines of code are necessary,

```
FUNCTION PbMain()
  PRINT "Hello, World!"
END FUNCTION
```

And the PB/CC compiler takes care of the rest automatically.

There are some differences. Unlike most DOS versions of BASIC, PB/CC requires that all executable code be contained inside of a Sub or Function. Only scanned statements (such as meta-statements, constant declarations and procedure declarations) can be placed outside of Subs and Functions.

The following PB/DOS program:

```
PRINT "At the tone the time will be "; TIME$
BEEP
```

Simply needs to be placed inside of a Function called PbMain() in order to execute:

```
FUNCTION PbMain() AS LONG
  PRINT "At the tone the time will be "; TIME$
  BEEP
END FUNCTION
```

When your program is loaded, the function PbMain() is executed automatically by PB/CC. This is where the main code of your application should be placed. The program stops when there are no more statements in PbMain() or an EXIT FUNCTION is encountered.

By default, all variables are local to Subs and Functions. Which means they can not be seen by other Subs or Functions. If you need to share a variable or array throughout your program, you should use the GLOBAL statement to change the scope. This promotes modular programming styles, which can lead to more efficient programming and easier debugging.

Besides the text console interface, the publisher says PB/CC offers BASIC programmers complete access to the complete Win32 API. It supports all true 32 bit DLL's, including the Winsock API for Internet access and ODBC for accessing SQL and other database servers. Win32 console applications also have a 2 gigabyte flat memory address, so trying to fit everything into 640k or 16 megs of EMS memory is no longer required. A string variable can be many megabytes in size and the limitation on arrays is measured in gigabytes instead of 'k' bytes.

(PowerBASIC.....Continued on page 10)

Internet picture of the month



I-95 & Palm Beach Lakes Blvd in West Palm Beach, FL

This is one of an almost infinite number of satellite photos available at http://terraserver.microsoft.com/, the Microsoft TerraServer site mentioned in the Editor's Comments on page 9. The photos come from US and Soviet satellites. You can view the photos at different resolutions, and for the best resolutions you can pay to download better quality images. Essentially all of Florida is covered, a fair amount of the USA and various other locations worldwide. I was interested in the above location since I spent some time there recently.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.canx.com/tpcug/
ABA Network Lawyer Locator	http://www.abanet.org/martindale.html
Ancestry.com - Home of Online Genealogy	http://www.familyhistory.com/
SQL Tutorial	http://w3.one.net/~jhoffman/sqltut.htm
555-1212.com	http://www.555-1212.com/
A few scanning tips	http://www.scantips.com/
TerraServer -World's Largest Online Database	http://terraserver.microsoft.com/
EarthCam - The Ultimate Search Engine for Live Web	http://www.earthcam.com/
ICON CITY	http://www.yoink.com/iconcity/icons.htm
Trend Micro online virus scanning service	http://housecall.antivirus.com/explorer.html
AnyWho Find Telephone Number, Email, Home Page	http://www.anywho.com/
The Java Boutique - Java Applet Resource	http://javaboutique.internet.com/
vTuner (your global antenna to Internet radio)	http://www.vtuner.com/
Joslin Diabetes Center	http://www.joslin.org/
Martindale's Reference Desk Calculators On-Line	http://www-sci.lib.uci.edu/~martindale/RefCalculators.html
Online Mapping - Chicago Map Corp	http://www.mapmania.com/scripts/mania.exe

Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

PhotoSmart Photo Scanner from Hewlett Packard

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group



This last Father's Day brought me something I have wanted for a long time, a scanner for negatives and slides. I have been using an HP ScanJet llcx flat bed scanner for, perhaps, five years to bring photos or printed text into my computer. But this scanner does not have the ability to scan negatives or slides. There was a negative scanning attachment (actually a new top for the scanner as I remember) available when I bought the scanner. The price was over $600. Needless to say, I didn't buy it.

The price of the new PhotoSmart Photo Scanner is $399. In addition to 35mm negatives and slides, it will also scan in a photograph up to 5" x 7" in size. It comes with a SCSI interface card and cable. When I first saw the scanner, my worry was how I was going to install it. If it required an interrupt, then I had problems, since, like many of you, my computer is out of interrupts. But a little thought and $35 led to a very nice solution.

The solution was to connect it to the already existent HP ScanJet llcx in a SCSI daisy chain. Specifically the llcx was already connected to a SCSI interface card in the computer, and the llcx had an additional SCSI connector on its back to connect another SCSI device. However, to accomplish this I had to locate a special SCSI cable that had a DB 25 pin male connector on one end and a Mini 50 pin male High Density connector on the other. HP sold one for $30, but I more conveniently also found one for $35 at a local cable store (Advanced Cable Connection Inc.). After connecting the new scanner to the back of the old one, I just had to set the new scanner's SCSI address to a different number than 2, which was used by my original scanner. Then, shut down Windows 95 and restart. Windows 95 finds the new scanner, and I install the scanner's imaging software.

To use the scanner you first select by pressing a button which media you are going to scan: 35 mm negative, 35 mm slide or photo. Second, you insert the item and the scanner takes it inside, where the software takes over and presents you with a view of the resulting photo on screen. For negatives, it will take in as many as five frames at once and display them on screen in thumbnail size. You then click on the one you want to work with, and, as with a slide scan or a photo scan, that one is enlarged on the screen.

Once on the screen, you can rotate, resize, modify the color, or change the brightness and contrast of the image. Additionally, you have a number of different formats in which to save the image file including tif and jpg. You may also specify the size of the resulting image. An 8 x 10 in the tif format will eat up about 5.5 MB of your hard drive. I mostly save my files as 4 x 6 tif images. If I am going to send the photo to someone in an email message or use it on the web, I will save it instead as a jpg file, reducing the file size considerably (using the standard 10:1 compression, a 4 x 6 photo with a 1.5 MB file turns into a 150 KB file).

Although the PhotoSmart scanner software is fairly adequate for correcting most simple problems like exposure correction and color correction, I prefer to simply scan it and save it. I then open the file in Corel Photo-Paint, where I have a much larger pallet of tools with which to work. If you don't have a graphics program like Corel Photo-Paint or Micorografx Picture Publisher, then HP has also included Microsoft® Picture It!™ photo manipulation software that lets you easily enhance your photos and use them to create photo projects on your PC. I didn't install this software since I already have Corel Photo-Paint..

The scanning resolution for photos is an optical 300 DPI; for 35 mm negatives and slides it is an optical 2400 DPI. Note that you need the higher DPI for 35 mm negatives and slides since you will usually be enlarging them so much more than you would a photo that you scanned.

Regarding quality, a scan of a negative produces a much sharper image than does a scan of a photo made from that negative. I have sent email with jpg images made from some negative scans, and people tell me they can not believe the quality of the images—the best they have ever seen.

(PhotoScanner.....Continued on page 7)



Ed Snow assembling the newsletter Aug. 1996—from a negative scan. Unfortunately newsletter reproduction does not lend itself to quality photos.

Microsoft Windows 98

Is it worth it?

One Guy's Opinion on Windows 98

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

Just in case you don't want to read the entire article let me tell you up front …. Yes, I think it is! Why? …. Let me tell you ….

First of all it's more stable and reliable. With Windows 98 you're much less likely to experience those dreaded lock-ups that everyone experienced with 95. The bugs of 95 (approximately 3,000 of them) have been corrected and Windows has been optimized to run the way you want it to and be much more reliable doing so. If you should have problems you can now access the Support Online Web site for answers and even update your copy of Windows. System maintenance is now much easier with the Disk Cleanup Wizard, which automatically deletes unnecessary files, and the Maintenance Wizard, which walks you through the scheduling of basic disk maintenance. If you're a power user, you'll love the Task Scheduler and System Configuration utility.

It supports all kinds of new hardware like DVD, MMX, and USB. You can now utilize more than one monitor at the same time. FAT32 on my computer recaptured 2.5 gigabytes of hard drive space. That alone made up for the $87 upgrade cost.

It's just plain all around faster. Internet access, hard drive access and memory access have all been tweaked to make Windows as a whole faster. Programs open faster than before. Choosing the desktop option to single-click, where you used to double-click, makes things faster and … easier.

If you're into the Web then you're into Windows 98 already because of the web integration that's built in. Although Netscape works fine under 98, Microsoft Internet Explorer is included and is as good as Netscape if not better. There's an Internet Connection Wizard to make connecting to the web a simple process. Also included is Outlook Express for your email, FrontPage Express to create your own web pages, NetMeeting to collaborate and hold conferences on the Internet, NetShow for streaming media, just to name a few.

The one thing I find humorous is the person who says, "Never buy version one of anything.…let them get the bugs out first". Years ago that may have made some sense but considering some 100 million beta testers have spent years testing 98 I think it's safe to say it's ready for prime time. And installation for me was really a snap. I just followed the instructions and in about 45 minutes I was upgraded.

No, it isn't as dramatic a change as it was from 3.1 to 95 but it's well worth the money and time. Do yourself a big favor and upgrade. For under $90 it well worth it! … and by the time your friends get 98 release 2 you'll already be a power user. ◆

(President.....Continued from page 1)

As my most recent contribution to the discussion page, I just started a discussion on Windows 98 tips that hopefully will grow as the members get going on Win98 upgrades. And look on pages 5 & 9 at the items on TerraServer! This is a database of satellite photos that you can get online. What fun I had using this, just finding my house on a photo taken from space! Thanks to William LaMartin who found this and posted it on the discussion group.

Also while you're at the web site, you'll notice some small changes William has been making to tidy up, including new background music. Read more about this on page 9.

So here's the message from the pres… Use our web site as often as you can and come to the meetings or tell us why not – we want to know. See the e-mail addresses under officers.

Finally, the TPCUG web site may be changing its URL late in the month. If you don't receive a new URL and can't find the site, contact me at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com or William LaMartin at lamartin@ix.netcom.com. Merle ◆

(Photo Scanner.....Continued from page 6)

The only thing missing from this piece of hardware is the ability to scan in negatives larger than 35 mm. I have a lot of large format negatives both from old photos—when all negatives were large—and from my more recent work with a camera using the 6 cm x 7 cm format.

HP has two companion pieces of hardware, a digital camera and a photo printer. Their prices are coincidentally $399 also. I have not worked with either. ◆

Moving Hard Drives

By Forest Wilcox, Tampa PC Users Group

I own two computers, one in New York, my home, and one in Tampa where I spend half of my time. Thus, I am faced with the problem of keeping them in sync with each other. I have struggled with full back ups, backups of files with the archive bit set using Iomega's Ditto tape and Zip disk backup drives. They work fine for most files, but I have found no way to transfer things like Window settings and Desk Top settings between the computers. The way I use my computers, these settings are constantly changing.

After successfully upgrading a hard disk from a one Meg drive to a 4.3 Meg, I was emboldened to carry the new hard disk with me as I traveled back and forth. I was also encouraged by the fact that both computers were of the same make (Acer Pentiums) and vintage, though one is a tower and one is a conventional desktop.

The first transfers weren't without problems, mainly getting the unlike modems to work. I had problems until I discovered Plug N'Play. It really works! All I do now is use Control Panel's Add New Hardware (Start, Settings, Control Panel) after physically installing the drive. I use the default settings, that is, let Windows search for new hardware. Now my Desk Top remains the same wherever I am.

Not willing to quit while I am ahead, I took my hard disk with me on a visit to my daughter in California. I could have made floppy copies of interesting things to exchange and demo, but why not demo the whole hard drive? My daughter's computer is an unknown clone, though a Pentium, and with Windows 95. We had that much in common. This transfer was interesting.

We went through the procedure using Add New Hardware but now Windows requested at various times the original Windows Upgrade CD and other original disks to pick off the necessary drivers and files needed for the strange computer. We had to repeat the process several times until Windows found no new hardware. The other necessary changes required were local telephone numbers for my AT&T Internet, Juno e-mail and Reuters Service accounts, all of which were obtained from 800 number telephone calls. Since this was a very temporary arrangement, we did not make a physical installation. We connected an unused power cable, borrowed the ribbon data cable and let the drive sit outside the chassis. This was an unqualified success.

A precaution, don't try to install the moved drive as a second hard drive; only one operating system per machine is allowed unless you have System Commander or its equivalent.

When I transport my hard drive, I use the anti-static envelope that it came in and then wrap it in bubble wrap. I have carried it in my carry-on luggage as well as put it in my checked suitcase. I am undecided about putting it through the security system, but have done it without a problem so far.

I still make a full backup before I transport the hard drive (using a Zip drive), but I do save the up to two hours required if I were to use the backup to restore onto a second hard drive. ◆

(Yeah.....Continued from page 3)

All this is organized under "Drawers" that you can name. A drawer is analogous to a folder, and indeed if you create a new drawer, it creates a new folder under the YW directory. When you create that folder you get a new set of tabs with blank lists for documents. If you look in the YW program directory, you can identify the drawers, but not the underlying files in them. This is interesting and may be very appealing to some people, because a lot of people have a concept that a document is "in" WordPerfect or Word. I've many, many times seen people who otherwise use computers efficiently use the file manager in WordPerfect 5.1 to move files. They open a file and save it in another location then go back and use WP's file facilities to delete in the old location. Those people will love YW, no doubt about it. Yes, there are a lot of businesses still using WP 5.1 for DOS, even on a Win 95 machine. I've seen them.

Now, the editing area is NOT WYSIWYG. To see the finished product, you press Print, and you get a graphic print preview. In preview, you can change some basic document format, paragraph style, tabs and font. That is, font, singular - because you can have all the fonts you want up to one (1).

It has a very, very fast spell checker. It's like in the olden days (1994) where you had to press the spell button. You can add your own words to the dictionary. By the way, the spell checker flags YW, Orem and WordPlace (but not WordPerfect) as needing correcting. There is a more traditional Windows Help available on a button at the bottom.

And last - file formats. Obviously it has its own internal format. The import and export formats are Yeah Write, WordPerfect 5.1, Text with ANSI, or Text ASCII Only. You can also import/export to an FTP site. The help suggests if you want to export to another word processor, use WP 5.1 format because that's the only one available that will preserve formatting and most word processors will accept that format. Interestingly, the file open and save as dialog boxes are old "short" file name boxes on my 32-bit version. That's an oversight and a serious disappointment to me, because it's very easy for the programmers to do. I wanted to export to the desktop so I could drop it in e-mail, but

(Yeah.....Continued on page 12)

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

As is usual, when there is empty space to fill in the newsletter, you are subjected to hearing about what I have been doing lately with my computer. This month I can write about a slight redesign of the TPCUG web site, writing a Visual Basic Program to teach a bird to speak, some interesting web sites, and, if room permits, some Microsoft Access and bulk mail topics.

Web site redesign For some time, I have felt that our TPCUG site http://www.canx.com/tpcug/ needed a face lift. It was beginning to look a little dowdy, so I selected a new photo of Tampa and modified the top 25% of the page. I also selected new background music for those who said they were getting a bit tired of Pachabel's Canon. And on many of the other pages I put at the top of the page some quick links to other parts of our site. That way one doesn't have to always go back to the main page to find the link to somewhere else at the site. I also made other minor changes throughout the site to make the pages look a little more consistent—nothing like a theme—just trying to make them look like they belonged together.

Unfortunately, when you make changes to a web page, it probably won't look the way you want on all browsers at all font settings and screen resolutions. I have received feedback from members regarding this problem and made changes to the layout to try and make it display better in the situations they described. If there are still problems with the display on your system, let me know. It looks fine on mine.

Visual Basic & Birds Some time back Larry Anders wrote a review of a program designed to teach your bird to speak. Well, we now have a new cockatiel in the house, and that came to my mind. But why should I buy someone else's program (although it was very cheap), when I could write my own in Visual Basic. That is the way that I have learned VB over the years—writing programs to solve problems that I encounter—not by simply studying the VB manual (back when they actually provided you with hard copy manuals).

The result is a fairly polished little program that allows you to record sounds up to 15 seconds in length, save them, and then play them for the bird to listen to a selected number of repetitions. You may record as many sounds as you like and select as many repetitions for play back as you like. I typically select 120 repetitions, since that gives the bird 30 minutes to listen to me saying something like "Hello..... Hello..... Hello..... Hello, Bird".

What I got from this exercise is a better understanding of the Visual Basic Multimedia control, which I had had no interest in using before. What the bird gets out of this, we will have to wait and see. Contact me if you are interested in the program.

TerraServer and HouseCall Online Virus Checking Each month in the newsletter I list the new and interesting sites I have come across since the previous newsletter. This month I have two real good ones: Microsoft TerraServer and HouseCall.

Microsoft TerraServer is at http://terraserver.microsoft.com. This is a site containing what is called the "largest database in the world". It contains satellite photos of many different locations on earth. Not every place is photographed, but all of Florida is. The photo of Tampa was taken in 1995. See if you can find your house. Look at famous locations around the world. Their photo of West Palm Beach is shown on page 5.

Reading ZDNet about the latest virus scare in late July led me to the most interesting site--HouseCall, a site that checks your computer for viruses while you are online. You have to be using either Microsoft IE or Netscape Navigator and not mind either an ActiveX component or a Java applet being downloaded and run on your computer (you have to trust Trend Micro). These programs scan that portion of your computer's hard drive designated by you for viruses, including CIH variants (which the ZDNet article was about). By doing this from the Internet, this removes the worry about whether the user's PC is already infected (some viruses apparently attach themselves to the virus checking program).

The site's URL is http://housecall.antivirus.com. It will take it a few minutes to load since it is setting up the Java applet or ActiveX component. The site has a certificate and is also recommended by ZDNet, so I suppose it is safe. It had better be since I used it with no ill effects so far. In fact, it found that some of my old Word documents were infected with the Word Concept virus. I had such a problem one or two years back. Apparently I didn't get everything cleaned up then (it is not a very bad virus, and , if I am not mistaken, Word 97 actually detects it and removes it--I just hadn't opened these files with this newer version of Word).

After finding a file that is infected, the program with your permission will attempt to remove the virus. If that is not successful, it will give you the opportunity to delete the file then and there. It cleaned up all my Word Concept infected documents.

Microsoft Access and MySoftware's MyMail List I continue to encounter people who need help with fairly large databases they want to extract information from to then use with bulk mail. In a typical procedure, I first import the database into Access, then using queries, retain only the fields needed and do any manipulations required of the data like combining house number, street name and apartment number into one field. One could then use this data for a mailing, but if you want to get the

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com* .

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309* .

Visual Basic

This SIG will hold its first meeting Tuesday, August 18 at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

(PowerBASIC.....Continued from page 4)

Here's a sample, furnished by the publisher, which I've modified to contain explanatory notes and to cause the text mode interface to remain on screen until the user presses a key.

```
==========================================
Hello, World!
Copyright (c) 1998 by PowerBASIC, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
        Modifications by Tom Cone, 6/23/98
==========================================
'$RESOURCE "HELLO.PBR"   'embed icon in executable if desired

FUNCTION PBMAIN() AS LONG   'PbMain is a user-defined function called
                            'by Windows TO begin execution of an
                            'application.
    COLOR 7,1    'set to white on blue
    CLS
    LOCATE 15, 10
    PRINT "Hello, World!" ;
    WAITSTAT     'wait for any key
      'program will end, and console
      'will close.
END FUNCTION
```

The foregoing code compiled to an EXE that was 9,725 bytes in size. That's less than 10k of 32 bit code. The program will run under Windows 95, Windows 98, and Windows NT. It will not run under Windows 3.x When you run the program a text mode window opens on screen. It's resizable and moveable with your mouse. It seems to behave exactly like a DOS mode program, except that it's actually a 32 bit Windows program. If you're curious what it looks like, send me your e-mail address and I'll send it to you.

The program has other features including support for WinCGI applications, but does not support ActiveX controls. However, it does include support for threaded processes, an inline assembler, and other advanced features that I'm not familiar with (yet).

System Requirements

- Personal computer with a 80386 or higher processor
- Windows 95/98 or Windows NT 3.51 or later
- 2 MB of available memory
- One 3.5" high-density disk drive
- A hard disk with 3.0 MB available for installation

PB/CC version 1.0 is priced at $149 plus shipping.

Documentation for this product is provided in electronic form, as it allows the maximum amount of information, without the physical size limits of a book. Optionally, printed documentation can be purchased for $29 plus shipping. ◆

(Comments..... from page 9)

best bulk mail rates, you will need to CASS (a postal term) certify the list. That is where a program like MyMail List comes in. It is a specialized database program for mail management. It also comes with an extra CD (for a fee) that has the most current postal address information. After importing the modified database into MyMail List, you then do an address check using this CD. When you are finished (3.5 hours for 61,000 names), you have a CASS certified list. Now you can select the whole list or any subset of this list using a filter (e.g. voted in last election field is True for a database of voters), and MyMail List will print the mailing labels in the correct order and prepare the necessary forms for bulk mail. It is a bit more complicated than this, but you get the idea. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems
Broderbund
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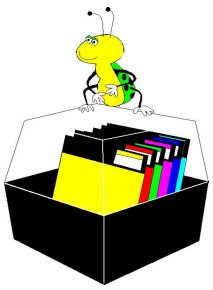
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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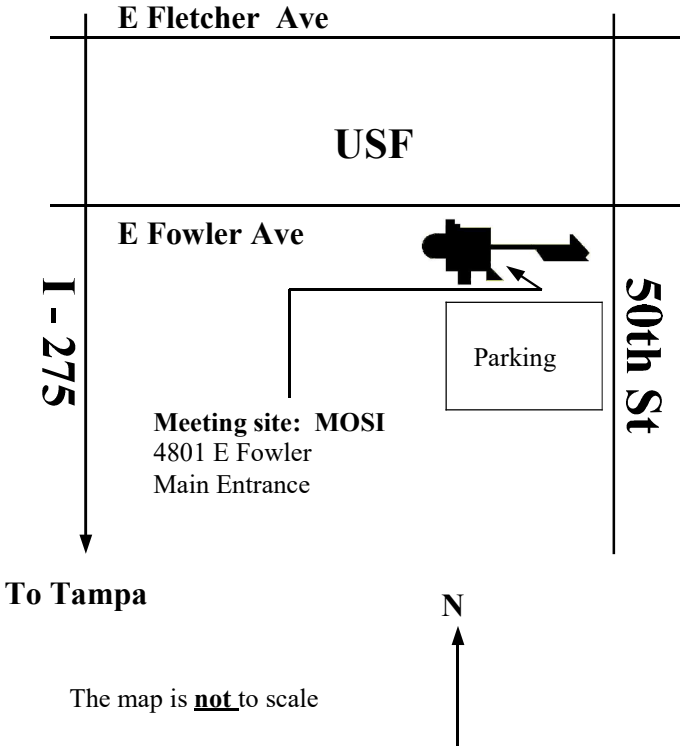
(Yeah.....Continued from page 8)
I had to drill down to the desktop folder with this.

Now ... what it won't do .. taken from the back of the box: Tables, Columns, Multiple fonts, EndNotes, Footnotes, Table of Contents, Index, Headers and Footers. I'd miss Footnotes and, of course, graphics. If graphics were implemented in the same manner as WP 5.1 for DOS, I could use this baby for all my word processing needs.

For what Yeah Write does, it does well. And it does it cheaply. I like it. Thanks to Stacie Bise for sending it.

There's a free version, both 16-bit and 32-bit on their web site http://www.wordplace.com. After downloading, you can keep the free version, or you can use it for 15 days as a trial version of the $19 standard product. After sending the $19, they'll send you an email message with a name and registration number. And if you find it in a store, it's in a nice standard package on CD for $29.

Word Place Inc., Suite 201, 11 East 200 North, Orem Utah 84057
(801) 221-7777 http://www.wordplace.com ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 12 December 1998

Meeting

Jasc Software (Paint Shop Pro)

December 9, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the December meeting, El Shaddai Edwards from Jasc Software will be giving the presentation. He will demonstrate Paint Shop Pro. Come out and see a great graphics program. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting. Possibly she will tell us a little about her trip to COMDEX.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Last reminder, everyone. The election of officers is this December meeting. Please attend the meeting and show your support for your club.

On that note, I'd like to recognize those people on the Board of Directors who contribute so much of their own time to make this club possible. TPCUG is an organization that offers a quality contribution to the membership and to the community. The club obviously doesn't run itself; and it's only through the dedication of the board and the membership that it remains a viable organization.

Mike Hodges, as TPCUG Vice President provides experienced organizational ability to the board. He's willing to step in and keep our meetings on track. He offers experience and insight and creative ideas. Mike is also our host at Reflectone for our board meetings and the Internet SIG, a resource that would be very hard to replace.

Kevan Sheridan, as TPCUG Secretary and very long time member, has donated his time to help track our ongoing projects and discussions. He's always in there at the meetings to help with anything needing doing. He's going off the board as secretary next year, but we fully expect him to carry on as before.

(President.....Continued on page 2)

January 13: Rod Stebbins—How to run a home based business with the help of a computer and the Internet.

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the November 11 Meeting

By James Weber, Tampa PC Users Group

The November meeting started with Mary Sheridan presiding over a Windows SIG. As usual, several topics were discussed. The idea of recycling old motherboards or recovering the gold from computer components was probably the most intense. There appears to be quite a few people in the group who have old equipment that they might be willing to part with.

Robert Armstrong from BCD was the guest speaker. He related very interesting information about Intel's strategic plans for the next few years, including the Xeon and Merced processors, and AMD's new K-7 chips. Mr. Armstrong then made a brief sales pitch for the "Flash Net" Internet service.

After a brief beak, we had the door prize drawing. Bruce Register and Roger waters were among the winners. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

Jenny Lind Olin, TPCUG Treasurer, stepped into the job at the right time last January when we thought we might not survive financially. Jenny leaves no doubt where every penny of our club money is. I can't tell you enough about how difficult club life is when the financials aren't in order. An organized treasury enables the board to make decisions with minimal discussion and maximum dispatch.

Those three and I are the four elected board members. The other board members are volunteers. They're appointed by the board and have full voting rights in board decisions.

Mary Sheridan as TPCUG Programs Chairman made up her own job. She was on the board as BBS Sysop and filled a job that was very badly needed as Programs Chairman, then proceeded to eliminate her old one as Sysop. Mary has done an outstanding job getting quality speakers in and is a very major contributor to our success.

William LaMartin is Newsletter Editor and Web Site Editor in one, and I need not point out the dedication to quality William brings to us. You can see that for yourselves when you get the newsletter and use the web site. One thing he had done when he took over the job was to make the newsletter an "All TPCUG" newsletter. All articles are submitted by members, where previously many articles were reprinted from other clubs' newsletters. What isn't so obvious is that he also prints, folds, staples and mails the newsletters also, with some volunteer help. He dedicated no small amount of time in getting our web site moved to another internet provider and got the club's web name

(President……..Continued on page 6)

ZIFF DAVIS SHAREWARE AWARDS



Summarized by: Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group

Ziff Davis (ZD) publishes several excellent magazines for the personal computer user. I know because I have subscribed to a few of them for years. They also have one of the best web sites on the Internet for computer users at http://www.zdnet.com. Recently ZD held their 5th Annual Shareware Awards and have published their winners at http://www.zdnet.com/swlib/zdawards/zdawards.html#Winners. Not only are just the winners listed here but all the runner-ups for each category are also listed. Below is a summary of the winners of each of the categories selected by *PC Magazine*. All of these files can be downloaded from the above link.

APPLICATIONS: NoteTab Pro, Eric G.V. Fookes NoteTab Pro is a powerful editing tool especially suited for programmers and web developers that can open multiple documents of up to 16MB each in their own tabbed window. NoteTab's Editor's Clipbook tool lets you easily insert any kind of boilerplate text, such as HTML tags, glossaries, etc., into your documents. Many conversion functions are included, such as stripping HTML tags, changing text to HTML, sorting lines, converting between ASCII and ANSI, and changing case. Some features include the ability to open links or view documents in your web browser, search-and-replace text in all open documents or disk files, format outlines to organize notes, and calculate mathematical expressions. The evaluation edition is functional for approximately 30 days. Spell checking and thesaurus functionality are available once you register. Free to try; $19.95 if you decide to keep it.

DESKTOP ACCESSORIES: Judy's TenKey, Judy's Applications Judy's TenKey Calculator is regular calculator, RPN, or ten key adding machine, that uses a tape that can be saved, printed, notated, and even edited. It's very versatile with a good introductory demo of its many capabilities. It supports scientific notation, and can smoothly exchange data with other Windows applications. This versatile calculator can be nearly whatever type of calculator you need it to be at the time. Free to try; $19.95 if you decide to keep it.

BUSINESS: Power Utility Pak 97, JWalk & Associates Power Utility Pak 97 adds 31 general-purpose utilities, 40 custom worksheet functions, and enhanced shortcut menus to Microsoft Excel 97. Run Power97.xla only when you need the features or install it to the Excel add-in list. This shareware version gives you information and help for all of the features, but they are not all functional until you register. System Requirements: Microsoft Excel 97 and Windows 95. Free to try; $39.95 if you decide to keep it.

COMMUNICATIONS: WinProxy (Ositis), Ositis Software WinProxy lets you connect multiple computers on a LAN to the Internet through a single point. It runs on any Windows 95 or NT. The program walks you through setup step by step, providing guidance all the way. All Internet interactions are then seamlessly routed through the WinProxy server. Save money by using a single Internet account, modem, and dialup or leased line on one station for all Internet accesses. Free to try; $299 if you decide to keep it. (This is by far the most expensive shareware program I've seen!)

E-MAIL, NEWSREADERS, CHAT: ICQ (32-bit), Mirabilis Ltd. ICQ means "I-seek-you," And it's free! (And you know how I like free things.) ICQ lets you communicate directly (no IRC) with any other ICQ user on the Internet, either by direct messaging or in a text-based windowed interface for multi-person chat. ICQ has dozens of options such as file transfers and linking to audio/visual chat applications. It's simple, operates seamlessly and is well documented. And it's FREE!

FILE UTILITIES: Turbo Browser 98, Pacific Gold Coast Corp. Turbo Browser 98 is a file-management replacement that mimics the Explorer interface but adds a viewing window. With support for dozens of file formats, it can convert, print, zip and unzip, and even encrypt files. The system is tightly integrated with Explorer's options, plus offers all the conveniences, such as drag and drop, rename, cut, copy, paste, delete and more, and it makes the same right mouse menus available to you. Free to try; $69.95 if you decide to keep it.

GRAPHICS & MULTIMEDIA: Screen Saver Toolkit, Stardust Software The Stardust Screen Saver Toolkit can help you to build a professional-quality Windows 9x/NT screen-saver product without programming knowledge. It uses wizard interfaces to create a slideshow or presentation style screen-saver application. The system supports common image formats and .avi videos and includes an image conversion utility. Free to try; $249 if you decide to keep it. (Another expensive one!)

HTML EDITORS: HomeSite, Allaire Corp. Homesite was originally a highly functional non-WYSIWYG HTML editor. Now it has drag-and-drop WYSIWYG editing and an abundance of other features and functions and well-written help documentation, including sections on HTML tags and web page design. Free to try; $89 if you decide to keep it.

INTERNET UTILITIES: WS_FTP Professional, Ipswitch, Inc. WS_FTP Professional is a 32-bit Windows FTP client that provides two intuitive interfaces for easily transferring files and directory structures between FTP servers and your local computer: classic WS_FTP interface and a new Explorer-style interface similar to My Computer. You can group select multiple files and/or directories and transfer them in a single operation. Features include firewall support, UNIX permission

(Shareware.....Continued on page 4)

(Shareware.....Continued from page 3)
switches, basic transfer logging, and a comprehensive logging option. Many display features can be customized. Also included is WS_FTP Pro Explorer, an extension for Windows Explorer that lets you transfer files via FTP. Full online help is provided. Free to try; $37.50 if you decide to keep it.

PROGRAMMING TOOLS: Setup Specialist 98 TG, Byte Software Setup Specialist offers a user-friendly visual development environment that does not require you to learn any script language; you set all options using a wizard-like graphical interface. Setup Specialist provides a training card feature that guides you through each step of creating your 32 or 16 bit setup program in English or in German. Each program you create features the typical Windows 95/98 Wizard. Setup Specialist supports selective installations, uninstall, creation of program groups, and Registry modifications. It can check for a variety of existing requirements -- including minimum display properties and CPU, Windows platform and version. Because it creates a single .exe file, you can easily distribute your applications through the Web, Internet, or even email. Finally, Setup Specialist supports many other features, such as billboards, checking for an expiration date, and efficient data compression. Free to try; $89 if you decide to keep it.

SYSTEM UTILITIES: Take Command/32, JP Software Take Command/32 brings the power and convenience of the popular 4DOS Command.com replacement to the Windows desktop. If you're a diehard command prompt user, you'll find this utility useful for performing tasks such as managing your hard disk, scripting a series of steps with a batch file or alias, or starting programs. The program's many features make it well worth a look by anyone who frequently uses the DOS command line from within Windows. You can try it out for 21 days before registering. Free to try; $69.95 if you decide to keep it.

WEB DEVELOPMENT: GDIdb, Global Data Industries GDIdb is a tool for anyone who needs to create, manage, and present an ODBC database or spreadsheet on a web site. It works from your local PC, with an intuitive, dockable toolbar environment for generating operational scripts containing all the necessary HTML to transform an existing database into a fully functional "data server." The only requirements are the data source and a dial-up connection to your web site. GDIdb even includes a built-in FTP interface and transfer-progress indicator for automatic publication and management of your new pages. You can evaluate this well-documented trial version for 30 days. A sample MS Access database is included. Free to try; $38 if you decide to keep it.

So if you're into Shareware as I am…. Merry Christmas! …. If you're not into Shareware…. Merry Christmas anyway. ◆

My Favorite Software – Info Select 5

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

It seems that---with William LaMartin asking for articles on a regular basis---we might want to consider sharing "a few of our favorite things"…namely favorite software programs. You know, the one that you use for just about everything, and you can't imagine switching to another program because this one just does perfectly for you what it's supposed to…**so** well? (For instance, I think we can all agree that WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS was the premier word processor in all of history, and it's been downhill ever since then…but that's another story.)

Well, let me be the first to lead off. I've been using computers in my law practice since about 1985, when I finally figured out how to use DOS on the 40-pound Zenith Z-160 "luggable" that I'd bought with the two 360K floppy drives and the tiny orange CRT. Sigh. Those were the days, weren't they? But I digress. Back in the mid-1980's there was a little pop-up TSR ("terminate and stay resident," lest we forget) program that was advertised in all the computer magazines called "Tornado." It wasn't quite totally clear what the program could or would or should be used for, but the marketing campaign said it would be mightily useful…if you could figure out what you were gonna do with it.

At that time Tornado was one of a nascent class of programs that years later would come to be called "PIMs" (personal information managers). Of course, no one called it that then, because no one had ever seen anything quite like it. It was originally trumpeted as a terrific way to keep names, addresses and telephone numbers, as well as "random information" (whatever that meant). Well, as a shiny young lawyer I figured I had more than enough random information to keep track of…so I took a flyer on the program and bought it…I think it was $39.95 or something like that.

Now this brings me to another digression, but one that will lead us back to little Tornado's latter-day incarnation in due time. Have you ever noticed that---in years past, at least---one of the hardest things to figure out about software was…how you were gonna use it? Like, how you were going to actually put it to work so that it fit your circumstances, your work structure, your…your…way-of-doing-things? Even today I find that's still a Major Question. Well, in those nether days of yore, when we were all fiddling around with DOS and DOS programs and TSR's and these newfangled things called "word processors" (remember what a sensation WordPerfect 4.2 caused?), I couldn't exactly figure out how I was going to use Tornado…but I figured that I could at least start by using it for my address/contacts/telephone book. And it served that purpose well, as I remember.

(Info Select.....Continued on page 5)

(Info Select.....Continued from page 4)

Well that, as they say, was then. And this is now. My favorite program, the one that gets cranked up in Windows 95 at the very beginning of the day, and the one that is repeatedly used for all kinds of things, is Info Select 5.0, the latest end product of its distant ancestor, Tornado (when they made the jump from DOS to Windows, I heard, they got into some kind of copyright snafu with some other Tornado-name-user, so they switched the name of the little program to the inelegant but pretty descriptive "Info Select").

Now, before I tell you the myriad ways I use Info Select, I've got to say there's a funny thing about it: Many of the computer world pundits and reviewers don't seem to like it…or understand it. When you sniff out a "comparison" review of PIMs on the Internet, you'll often find the writers scratching their heads over Info Select. The "standard" PIMs like EccoPro and Lotus Organizer and Act! and even Time and Chaos32 and Above & Beyond…well, those they can understand just fine, with all those clear little boxes and fields and fill-in-the-blank thingies. Problem is…Info Select doesn't have just about any of that. It just lets you---no, no, it insists that you---figure it out yourself and then set it up and use it the way you want.

That seems to unnerve a lot of computer users, especially the pundits. I had a friend, Chad, who asked me what PIM I would recommend, back in the late '80's. I was only too glad to tell him about Info Select. Well…he tried it, and he couldn't stand it. Just couldn't get comfortable with it. He…just…couldn't "figure it out," that is. He couldn't figure out how it was that he was going to use it. Strange, I thought. But then he got an early version of Lotus Organizer…and oh well,

Internet picture of the month



Front Dining Room at Antoine's, New Orleans, LA

Antoine's Restaurant in the New Orleans French Quarter is one of the great restaurants of America. Antoine's has been in continuous operation since 1840 under the same family's management. If you can't make it there for a meal just now, you can still pay a virtual visit at http://www.yatcom.com/neworl/dining/antoines/netscape/welcome.html

Chad was in hog-heaven with that little program. Thing was, I couldn't see how Organizer had any versatility or usability at all compared to Info Select….

Well, again, "that was then, this is now." Since the 1980's when a few of those little babies were popping up here and

(Info Select……..Continued on page 6)

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Reiter's Scientific & Professional Books	http://www.reiters.com/
International Lyrics Server - your favorite song lyrics!	http://www.lyrics.ch/
TipWorld -Computer tips, news & gossip	http://www.tipworld.com/javacontent.html
How Stuff Works	http://www.howstuffworks.com/
Tying Knots - animated - Boy Scouts	http://www.bsw.net/~bgibson/knots/
Web PrintSmart	http://www.hp.com/peripherals2/webprintsmart/index.html
Acronym Finder	http://www.mtnds.com/af/fr-bottom.asp
BIOS Setup Information Guide	http://www.sysopt.com/bios.html
Digital Chef	http://www.digitalchef.com/
Digital Recordings from Nature	http://www.naturesongs.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Info Select.....Continued from page 5)
there, modeled for the most part on existing paper organizers… since then a whole galaxy of those little huggers has appeared. Oh, it's just been grand. First of all, the suites all had ta have a PIM as a component, from Microsoft Office's "Outlook," to Corel WordPerfect 8's "CorelCentral," to the aforementioned Lotus "Organizer" (and Organizer 97, and Organizer 97 GS, and Organizer Premium Edition…sheesh), they've all become tails that sometimes wag the dog, an indispensible part of every suite.

And the rest? Oh yeah, "the rest": You get to choose. From EccoPro to Act!5.0 to Day-Timer Organizer Deluxe, to Franklin Quest Ascend, to Janna Contact 95, to Maximizer 97is, to Pack-Rat, to InTouch, to Comm Assistant, to PhoneBook95 Professional Edition, to Virtual Secretary, to Above & Beyond, to Time and Chaos32, to Client Tracks, to Organizer 97, to Quick Organiser, to AMF Daily Planner and PIM, to…to…well shucks, we can go on like this all day, and then all next week naming these little boomers. It's like there are more PIM's out there than cockroaches, and they seem to be multiplying almost as fast! It's like everyone with a keyboard has decided he's gonna bat out the dee-finitive PIM and slap it on the Internet… and it seems they're all just doing just that!

But I digress again. I was talking about my little gem, Info Select. Now, lemme tell ya this about that little enchilada! Oh. Oops…William says wait! William says I can't do unlimited babbling in a single issue of the newsletter. So I'll reluctantly shut up for the time being. Next newsletter, I'll tell you all about my baby, Info Select, and the myriad ways I use it.

In the meantime, I'm sure the rest of you have just as strong feelings about your favorite PIM! How's about we get some kind of Socratic dialog going here? Everybody send William a few nicely-crafted paragraphs about why your PIM is the best in the world, and what specifically you like about it, and how you use it and how it perfectly fits your work-style and needs. You know, all this brings a thought to mind. It's a great thing, the destruction of the commies' Evil Empire. I mean, look at us, we all get to not only pick our own software and tools from a universe of choices, but we also get to argue loudly and long about all of 'em. Without being shot. Of course, to my mind, anyone who doesn't cop to the extraordinary superiority of Info Select…well, they should be shot! But I'll tell ya all about it next month. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 2)
registered.

I should also take a moment to thank all those who contribute articles for the newsletter each month. There is a fairly small

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Memory & Office Problems

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Memory My Gateway P-166 now has 96 MB of memory. However, the process of putting it in was a little convoluted.

I bought two 32 MB SIMM modules for $40 each at CompUSA with a $40 mail in rebate. That seemed like a pretty good price—remember when a 1 MB SIMM was $40? Unfortunately before I went to CompUSA, I opened up the computer to look at the RAM that was already installed--two 16 MB SIMMs. To get a better look, I took one of them out. Then, when I tried to reinstall it, it wouldn't go in. A little investigation revealed that its socket on the motherboard now had a problem. About five of the 72 metal wires that run parallel to each other along the inside of the socket had sprung up from the bottom of the socket. With a fair amount of force you could insert the SIMM, but when the computer was rebooted it let you know that there was a problem by emitting a collection of loud beeps.

Fortunately I could install the memory I had in the two other sockets on the motherboard, and everything was fine. That meant, however, that I couldn't install any new memory in the two sockets that had been in use before the problem. So I called Gateway, and they offered to send me a new motherboard—not bad for what they thought was a one year warranty on a computer that was over two years old. However, when I convinced them that I actually had a three-year on site warranty, they agreed to send the motherboard with new memory, processor, cache, etc. for a technician to install. Everything was to be exactly like the original.

The technician came, did the installation, and everything worked fine except the network card and the scanner SCSI card. They were conflicting with each other, and he couldn't remove the conflict. I couldn't either--even with an uninstall and reinstall of each item in the Winnows Device Manager. Since I had solved such problems in the past, I told him not to worry about it and sent him on his way to his next appointment. About 15 minutes after he left, I had everything working. There was a BIOS setting for plug & play that was set incorrectly. Once I changed that, the cards were assigned different interrupts (something that couldn't be done earlier), and everything was in good order.

Office 97 If it is not a hardware problem, then it is a software problem. I know you think I probably make up these problems just to have something to write about, but that is not the case. I have enough problems occur naturally that there is no need to manufacture them, believe me. Of course, I may have a lower tolerance of things not working correctly than most people do. If something is wrong with my computer setup, I want it fixed. My Microsoft Office 97 saga is as follows:

(Comments…….Continued on page 7)

The Win Chip C-6 Processor

By James Weber, Tampa PC Users Group

At our June 10th group meeting, a representative from IDT/ Centaur, Mike Bruzzone, spoke about the new Win Chip or C-6 processor. Two chips with a board were offered to the group for evaluation, and I was one of the ones to receive a Win Chip Processor for evaluation.

The processor I received was one of the 225Mhz ones with a Tyan motherboard. I purchased all parts for the test system new so as to limit any hardware problems later on down the road. I purchased a Samsung 2.1 gig hard drive, 32meg SDRAM memory, a Trident 4meg AGP video card, U.S. Drives 24X CD-ROM, Ensonic PCI sound card, a Diamond 56K V.90 PCI modem, and a new ATX case. The only things used were my PS2 mouse and keyboard and a Maxtech 15" monitor.

I had no difficulty installing any of the components. I always build a system one piece at a time starting with the motherboard/processor, video card, and memory; I tend to stop after each component and turn on the power. This way if a problem develops I can isolate the newest component to see if it is defective or just causing a conflict with another device. After a bare bones construction of motherboard, Win Chip, memory, hard drive and video card, I did a bare system format of the hard drive. This was just enough to start up the system and check the functionality of the primary components. The bios recognized the Win Chip right off and booted to the hard drive without a hiccup. I next installed the 24X CD and loaded its DOS drivers and copied the setup files from the Windows 95 CD. As a rule I load the necessary files from the Windows 95 CD onto the hard drive and install from there. This allows me to change or add system settings on the fly without the need to swap out CDs. This also allows me to check the function of the CD in DOS mode just to be sure it works.

A new, clean, installation of Windows 95 ran fine on the first attempt, so I began to add the rest of my components. An Ensonic PCI sound card and Diamond PCI 56k modem rounded out my hardware. Again, all the new components installed and worked properly. A brief note about PCI modems. Windows 95 and 98 will install these cards and will not give any indication that there is a problem. A quick check of the System Properties box will not show any conflicting ports or memory addresses. However, the modem will fail to initialize in some cases. If you should ever have this problem, either disable one of the two serial ports from the motherboard in the bios, or go to the Control Panel \ Add Hardware button and add one or two more Comm ports to the system configuration before physically reinstalling the card and drivers. This error doesn't happen often, but it has happened enough for me to be cautious building a system.

I was able to run Windows 95 on the Win Chip without problems. I ran through all the accompanying programs that come with Windows and left it running for a week with various system utilities set to run during the day. I never had a system crash or lock up, and the processor showed no signs of over heating. Next, I loaded up Microsoft Office. Again, everything worked well. Word, Excel, and Power Point all responded without hang-ups. Internet access was not affected by the C-6. I used both AOL and Mindspring for Internet access with both Netscape and Internet Explorer running as browsers at different times. I didn't experience any difference in performance with any combination of these programs. I then loaded up a copy of Quick Books and ran my bank statements from the last year through it. (Had to do it sometime.) I left the machine running the whole time to look for any instability. Even though I still can't balance my checkbook, I didn't experience any problems with any of the programs I installed. The most remarkable thing I can say for the C-6 was that it didn't cause me any trouble up to this point. The whole experience had been remarkably uneventful.

Finally, I came across something the Win Chip couldn't handle: Games! Now, I know some of you don't think the use of games is important to the overall computer industry, but just look at all the money Americans spend on computer gaming every year. And I guarantee that any computer system you could possibly imaging will at some time have games running on it. I have a benchmark demo of Forsaken and Quake II that I used for my test. Forsaken refused to run at all beyond the introduction. Quake II was unstable at a resolution higher than 400 X 300. Even at low resolution, frame rates were never higher than 15 to 25 fps. I installed an Intel 233MMX chip into the motherboard at the end of the test, to see if my problems were video card related, but these games ran appropriately with the Intel chip.

The system I configured for this test was probably left running continuously for three weeks. Other than the few game problems I liked working with the C-6. In an office environment the C-6 would make a legitimate alternative to Intel or AMD for a Windows workstation, but don't expect the C-6 to be an inexpensive replacement for that new P-II Junior wants. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 6)

I noticed in MS Access that I no longer had the office assistant working properly—you know the little thing that bounces around on the page, makes noises and is there to assist you--so I reinstalled Access from the CD. That got back the assistant. I then figured I needed to reinstall the two Office 97 patches SR-1 and SR-2. Neither would install. The Sr-1 log file said that it would not install because it encountered incorrect ver-

(Comments…….Continued on page 10)

Beginners' Column: Files & Folders for the Folder Inhibited

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Because of a completely overwhelming response from my one fan, I'd like to review files and folders this issue. I know it seems pretty fundamental, but have you ever, say, downloaded a file from the Internet and then can't find it? Or has someone sent you an email attachment and, after dragging it to the desktop, have you realized that there are twenty other files on the desktop, and it's gotten overwhelming? Do you know what to do with these files? If you don't, then read on.

We're going to use Windows Explorer for the rest of this article. If you're using something called File Manager, shame on you. If you are using Windows 95, Windows Explorer is fairly good. It has some quirks, but even with quirks it handles long file names. File Manager does not and should not be used.

Now, please don't just sit on the couch and read this article. I'm writing it intending for you to be seated at your PC and actively following my instructions and to repeatedly do these instructions as an exercise until it becomes second nature. This is a foundation to understanding most of what goes on in your PC, so it's important.

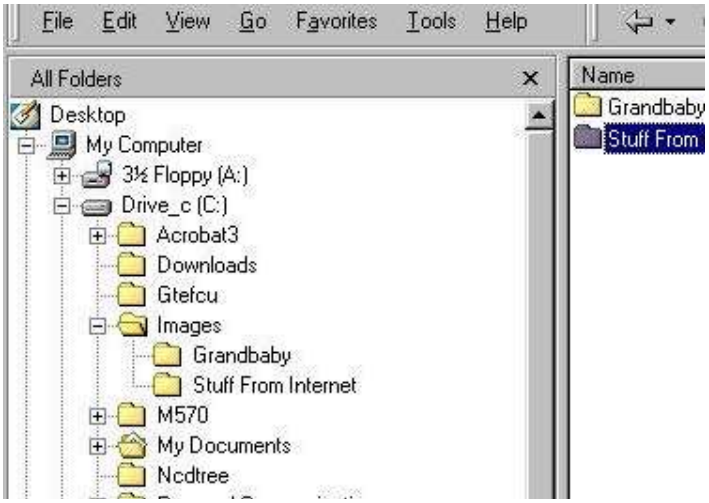
Windows 98 has an improved Explorer and is very configurable. It's main improvement is that once you set the style of how it looks, it stays that way. The Windows 95 version doesn't seem to remember much of anything. But there are a few things we must do here to make Windows 95/98 Explorer more useable. Open Explorer from its icon in the Start menu. This is the view that has a dual pane. The left pane has a directory tree diagram, and the right pane has a folder and file list. Go to the Menu, View, and click on Details. This gives you a pretty easy-to-read picture of the files in any directory. Browse to any directory on the left pane and see what files appear on the right. You'll need to go to View, Options and set Explorer to use the same window for all directories to keep it from launching a new window for each directory. And you'll have to click on View, Details sometimes to keep Explorer (95) behaving. While you're at it, display the toolbar too. The most useful feature on the toolbar is the "up" button.

For those of you with Windows 98, try setting your Explorer as "custom" and "use windows classic desktop" and "open each folder in the same window". I'm wary of imposing my personal preferences on you here. I prefer a traditional view of a hard drive, so I'll ask that for the purposes of this article, try it this way then experiment with the settings later.

So, we'll just assume now that your own files are not organized. When I say "your own files", I mean attachments to e-mail from your Aunt Tilly; interesting pictures or recipes you've captured from web sites; A letter to Uncle Bus that you started in WordPad; a spreadsheet to calculate how much interest you paid on the old clunker .. that sort of thing. What about the digital pictures of the "Worlds Most Perfect Grandbaby" the kids have been sending you? Can you find them? So let's organize your hard drive a bit.

Go to Explorers' Left pane and expand (C:). To do this, click on the + in the box next to the "(C:)" to expand the drive if it's not already expanded. If it's already expanded it has a "-" in the box.

Select the (C:) ("Select" means click once so an object is highlighted), then on the menu, click on File, New, Folder. In the right pane, a "new folder" will appear, and is ready to be renamed from "new folder" to let's say "Images". You'll see that when it's renamed it also will appear in the left pane, alphabetically under (C:). So let's add a subfolder under that one. Select the folder "Images", then on the menu, select File, New, Folder. And rename it "Grandbaby". Add another one under Images called "Stuff from Internet". So here's what it looks like in my Explorer.
Now that you have the idea, create a new one called



"Downloads" under (C:) and also make sure you have a document directory. Since I have Microsoft Office, notice that I have a folder called "My Documents". Other word processors may or may not create a document directory for you. If not, then go ahead and do it now. If you look at my expanded "My Documents" directory in the next picture, you'll see that I've categorized all my "stuff" into separate folders. So when I create a new document I always immediately do a "Save As" and select the correct directory or create a new one on the fly.

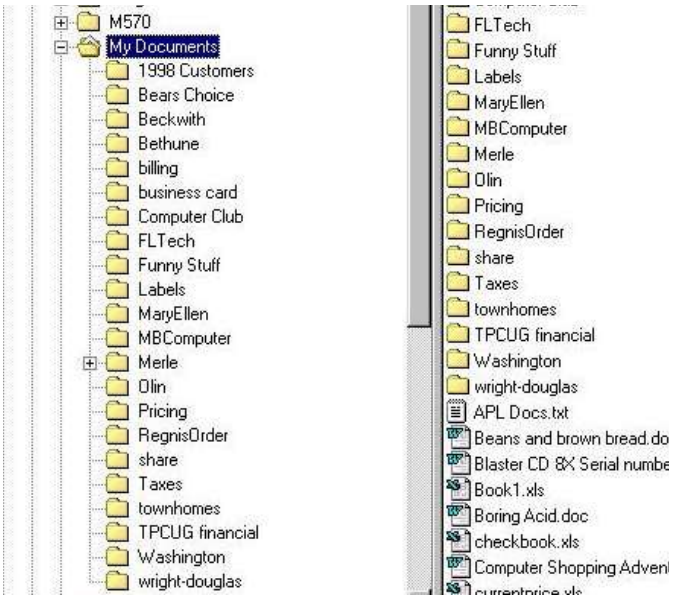
The best reason to organize in this way, besides being "organized", is that you're also making it much easier to back up your important files.

So now, what are we going to do with all that "stuff" you've

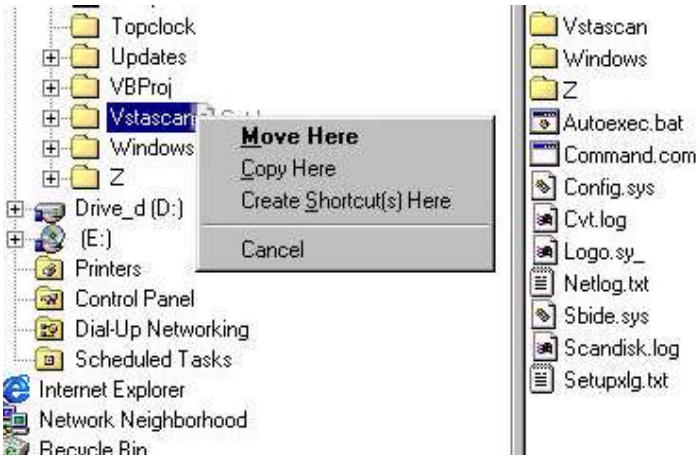
(Beginner.....Continued on page 9)

(Beginner.....Continued from page 8)

been accumulating in the root directory and on your desktop? We're going to move it all and get it organized. You can move all your files, one at a time or as groups. You can open two Windows Explorers if you like, one to move files *from* and one to move files *to*. You can size these so that you can see them both. Locate the files you want and drag each one to the destination folder. Using the right mouse key to click and drag gives you the most flexibility. When you "select" a file (or files) they become highlighted. Select them using the right mouse, drag them to the other window and when you drop the file, you get a small pop-up menu.



The item that is highlighted on the pop-up is the current "default" action. It's best to go ahead and select the action you want. Our objective here is to relocate a file, so **Move Here** is appropriate. So navigate through the hard drive using the left pane of one Windows Explorer and select the files on the right. Find the destination folder in the other Windows Explorer, drag each file to its destination folder with the right mouse and when you drop it, select Move.



You can easily select more than one file at a time and move files as groups. The trick here is to get them all highlighted and then ,when you have them all, right click on the *icon* of one of the files in the group and drag it where it's to go, just like moving one file. When you're ready to drag the group, it's easy to mess it up if you aren't careful to select a file icon from the group. You may need to practice this a bit.

Now to select multiple files, just click on the first file in the group, hold down Ctrl and then left click on another, and each one in turn until you have them all. If you want to select a contiguous group of files you can select the **first** of a list, then hold down Shift, and select the **Last** of the group. All files between those clicks will be selected. If you wanted to then exclude one of them you can de-select using Ctrl + mouse click. You can add or subtract any number of files in this way.

If you have multiple files on your desktop and want to drag them to a folder, you can drag a rectangle over any number of files and all within that rectangle will be selected. You can add or subtract from that group using Ctrl + mouse clicks. When you're ready to drag, remember to grab it by one of the icons in the group, otherwise you lose all the selections you've made.

There are other ways to move or copy files. For instance, if you look at the left pane of Windows Explorer, at the top will be a "Desktop" icon. Select that and on the right you'll see an organized view of all the files on your desktop. You can also right click on any file and get the long file menu – the one ending in properties. In the middle of that menu you'll see *Cut* and *Copy.* If you'll select Copy, and then navigate to another folder, and right click in that folder, you'll see that the menu has changed. It now has *Paste*, *Paste Shortcut* and *Undo Delete.* In this case select *Paste*, and the file you selected earlier will be copied to the new folder. If you had originally selected *Cut* from the menu when you selected the file in its originating location, the file would have been *moved*. That's because the *Cut -then- Paste* operation is the same as *move*, and the *Copy-then-Paste* operation is the same as *Copy*.

You'll need to practice to get this all right. Then as you use the software you have, use them with some discipline. Pay close attention to where the software puts you when you *Save* and *Save As*. It's much easier to maintain an organized system as you go along than to correct one. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

At last month's meeting, we critiqued a participant's web site, offering alternate ways of doing things, and then visited several interesting sites. We also looked at how to set your own walking order for a store for the online grocery list compiler at http://www.lamartin.com. This led to a discussion of cookies.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

Last month we learned the many different ways of manipulating string variables.

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)
sions of certain files. I figured that I needed to download the newest versions of each patch. After downloading SR-1, it seemed to run fine. I then ran the old version of SR-2 (I hadn't downloaded the new 23 MB version of it yet), and it ran, but seemed to run too quickly to have done much.

Next, when I tried to run Microsoft Word, I received the message that it might have problems due to missing or corrupted files and that I should run the Word installation. Everything seemed to run OK, but to be on the safe side I uninstalled Word and reinstalled it from the Office setup. That solved nothing. Additionally, Access had also lost the ability to import .csv or .txt files, and the Access setup would not allow me to reinstall this feature—saying that it was already installed.

I then decided that there might be a problem with versions of files and not that they were missing or corrupted, so I downloaded SR-2 and the version checker utility and ran both of them. Again SR-2 seemed to go mighty fast. However, the version checker said that I had SR-2 installed and everything was OK. Word still gave the error message about corrupted or missing files, and Access still had its problems.

This was another instance, like I had with Visual Basic 5, where an uninstall and reinstall of a program did not put things right. It seemed impossible to completely remove Word or Office. What do you do when a reinstall will not eliminate the missing file or possible corruption message? I think it was simply a version discrepancy among the SR-1 patch, the SR-2 patch and the original word installation. But how do we wipe the slate clean and start fresh--short of wiping the hard drive clean? Only recently have I run into this type of problem: Uninstalling a program and reinstalling will not fix a problem. It seems that things get stuck in the registry, and you can't get rid of them, and RegClean doesn't help.

Eraser97.exe to the rescue! Someone on the Office 97 newsgroup suggested a Microsoft utility called Eraser97 that would remove all traces of said program suite, and it certainly does its job. You wouldn't believe how much a regular uninstall leaves. Eraser97 gets all of that. Unfortunately other programs need some of what it removes.

So far, I have found three programs that had to be reinstalled because of Eraser97: the Active Server Page component for Microsoft Personal Web Server and my two scanners. I also reinstalled WinFax since I at first thought the reason that I couldn't scan and send from that program was the fault of the program, but, as I discovered, I could use scanners in none of my programs. Unfortunately, reinstalling WinFax probably installed a lot of old DLLs.

If you think you need Eraser97, you can get it at ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/softlib/mslfiles/eraser97.exe. Of course, afterwards, you may have to reinstall a few programs in addition to Office 97. ◆

Friends of the User Group

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BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems	Micrografx
Broderbund	Microsoft
Corel Systems	PowerQuest
Grolier	RDI, Inc.
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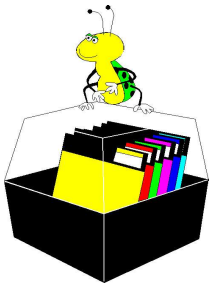
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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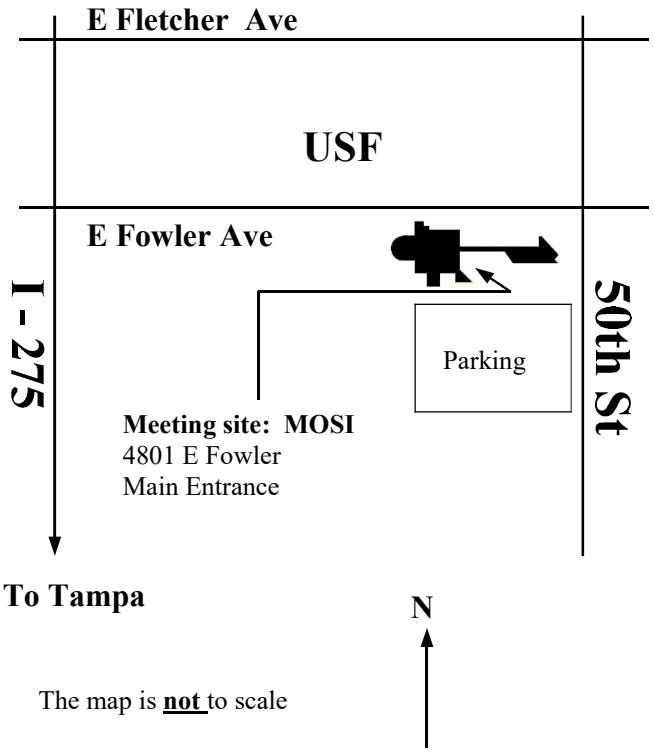
(President.....Continued from page 6)
group of people who selflessly give their time to do this. It's they who are helping maintain the quality of the club for all to enjoy.

Bruce Register, Member at Large, is a long time mainstay of the club. In the board meetings, Bruce's ideas and comments are always thoughtful and creative. You can expect that if there's a small task to be done, Bruce probably has already done it. He's a tireless and outspoken promoter of the club.

Larry Anders is the TPCUG Librarian. This job – and Larry along with it - has transitioned from the BBS to Internet Shareware research, so he's also become an invaluable regular contributor to the newsletter. Larry contributes to the administration of the club in so many ways.

Ford Bond is TPCUG MOSI Liaison. Ford represents us at MOSI, which provides us with our meeting place. Ford contributes at the board meetings and is a valuable supporter for our club. As our "MOSI guy", Ford is present and ready at all our meetings and Genealogy SIG too, making sure everything is set up and in working order.

That's the gang, the Board members who work for you to make this club great! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 10 October 1998

Meeting

Mindspring

October 14, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the October meeting, Colleen Hinsburg from Mindspring, a nationwide Internet provider, will be doing the presentation. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting. Come and bring your questions.

President's Comments

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

One more reminder, my fellow club members – elections! Well it's hardly an "election", because no one is running! We have to have a full slate by the November meeting. Remember that it's YOUR club, and to make sure that it continues, it takes YOUR active participation. I really, honestly believe that absolutely everyone must hold an office at least one time while a member. Please don't think you can't contribute. You can.

At the moment, we are especially in need of a secretary. The secretary simply takes notes during two meetings a month and types them into a file. One gets published in the newsletter, the other (the board meeting) is archived and is also used to track ongoing issues or tasks that carry from one meeting to the next. Each is about one typewritten page. It's an important job, but really is not demanding.

But any office – all offices – are open. Most of the people on the board are serving for their third or fourth year in some capacity, maybe more in a few cases. Every one of us would very gladly give the job to anyone who we feel would do the office credit.

And while I'm at this, I'd need to mention that the board members are a great bunch of people, and I truly enjoy our meetings. In the two years I've been on

(President.....Continued on page 5)

November 11: Robert Armstrong from BCD, a local computer company, will demonstrate hardware
December 9: El Shaddai Edwards from Jasc Software (Paint Shop Pro)

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Minutes of the September 9 Meeting

By Mary Sheridan – for Secretary Kevan Sheridan

Mary Sheridan's Windows SIG got underway right at 6 PM. The SIG strays from time to time with discussions about Comdex and Digital Camera, but for the most part it's about Windows. Any suggestions on topics you'd like covered will be appreciated. You can email Mary at mcpease@aol.com or give her a call at 988-6480.

Merle Nicholson began the club business portion of the meeting at 6:35 PM. He announced the importance of keeping the PCs quiet during the presentation. SIG sign up sheets were distributed. The current SIGs we offer are: Windows SIG at 6pm before the regular meetings, Internet SIG the first Monday of every month at Reflectone, Genealogy SIG, the second Monday of the month at MOSI and the Visual Basic SIG the third Tuesday of the month at Gateway . Check the SIG page of the newsletter for any additional SIG information. Bruce Register announced the nominations for next year's officers will be presented at the October meeting. Be sure to come and nominate yourself or someone you'd like to see as an officer.

At 6:50 PM Steve Singer of RDI Hardware (morevalu@tampabay.rr.com) presented the group with a video camera for a door prize. The camera is used for video conferencing with 30 frames per second in 24 bit color capability. The camera uses a USB port on the computer. Steve says you must load the driver before plugging in the camera. Windows 98 (recommended) and USB make the camera very easy to use. When used with NetMeeting, there isn't any jerky video because of an onboard chip. Video movies can be made into AVI files. The price of the camera is $98 and the name is C-It. Steve gave tips on the industry and how memory manufacturers raise prices by shutting down plants and decreasing supply.

The presentation started at 7:15 PM. Vinny Barber from Alps Printer started by explaining what Alps is and the products they make. It's a 50 year old company that has for 48 years made the components used in almost every device you can think of. They make (of course) printers, but they also produce a mouse, keyboards, and Touch Pro. They are the third largest makers of floppy drives in the world. They make VCR parts, switches, power window switches, Alpine stereos, etc. The printer was the focus of the meeting, and it really is a wonderful machine.

The MD 1000 is a micro dry printer with dry ink. It uses a thermal print heat, so heat is how the ink adheres to the page. The ink is a resin based, plastic pigment based product; it will not fade, and it's waterproof. It uses a Deposition on Silicone (DOS) print head and a ribbon. The printer notifies you when the ribbon is empty. They have a gloss ribbon that prints a photographic quality print on notebook paper. It was really some-

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

Active Server Pages & More

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

LaMartin.Com

Last month I wrote briefly about my new web site at http://www.lamartin.com (http://lamartin.com will work just as well). I noted that I needed a place to try out my ideas separate from our group's site. Over the past two years I have devoted a lot of time to what is now http://www.tpcug.org, building what I think is a pretty good user group site. However, the user group site is hardly the place for me to post genealogical and historical data, photographs of interest to me, and other such things. Hence lamartin.com, which has been up and running for about a month. I have added a lot to it since I first mentioned it in last month's newsletter.

What is there will probably be of little interest to most people. Certainly the few individuals I have heard from who have found information about their ancestors there are interested and in some cases extremely grateful to be given information and photos they didn't know existed. A slightly larger number may find the old photos of the Okeechobee, Florida area interesting. And more probably will consider the Mardi Gras and Louisiana photos worth at least one look. But what could I add that would be of interest to a larger audience?

My first attempt at a general interest item is the online grocery list compiler that allows you to select from a list of about 260 items those you wish to purchase at the grocery store. After making your selection and adding any comments, you can submit your list, which will then be displayed on screen to be printed out and taken to the store. If you happen to live near my part of Tampa, Florida, you will want to take advantage of the additional opportunity to have the list of items selected displayed in walking order of one of four stores I have an order for in that part of town.

In the future, I shall reduce the number of items in the master list. There is really no need for Aluminum Foil and Aluminum Foil (Large), for example, since such differences can be noted in the comment text box next to each item. The big challenge is to come up with some scheme to allow users to do a one-time ordering of the items for the store they shop frequently. It wouldn't be as precise as the ordering I have for the four stores listed, but would rather be based on the order in which such general categories as fresh vegetables/fruit, meat, dairy, etc. appear. Once you had established such an order it could possibly be saved as a "cookie" (greatly feared by Microsoft conspiracy buffs) on your machine so that you wouldn't have to reorder the next time you visit the site. Possibly I will have that ready for next month (I need something to write about).

Active Server Pages (ASP)

So how did I create the online grocery compiler? If you have never done any work with HTML pages – the pages you view when you browse the WWW – then you may not think there is any more to be done than with a normal page– one with some text and a few pictures. And actually you are correct as regards the appearance of the page that displays the 261 grocery items, each with a check box for selection and a text box for comments. That page could all have been done with standard HTML coding. But it would have taken a long time. For each item you would need a line like

```
<input type="checkbox" name="C1"
value="ON>Aluminum Foil<input type="text"
name="T1" size="40">
```

When finished, you would have 261 such lines. No one would want to do this 261 times, each time changing Aluminum Foil to the correct item name, C1 and T1 to different names. That is where ASP enters the picture. ASP allows you to combine Visual Basic Script (similar to Visual Basic) with standard HTML coding to enable the server to dynamically create web pages. The code to create those 261 lines is as follows:

```
<p><% ' Now lets input the data from the
database
do while not rstemp.eof %><input
type="checkbox" name="<%="C"&i+1%>"
value="ON">
<%=rstemp(0)%>   <input
type="text" name="<%="T"&i+1%>"
size="40"><br>
<%rstemp.movenext
i = i+1
loop%></p>
```

I am sure to some, perhaps, most of the readers, the above is gibberish. First, the <% tags are used to indicate VB script. Then, what we are doing is stepping through a database table called rstemp and retrieving the grocery item name part of each record. We then create a check box on the page, insert the item name, and finally create a text box on the page. The loop allows us to do this for each record of the database table (261 times at present).

Before executing the above VB script, though, we had to first open the database table. This was done on the ASP page with code like

```
<%set
conntemp=server.createobject("adodb.conne
ction")
conntemp.open "DSN=lamartincom_data"
set rstemp=conntemp.execute("select *
from grocery")%>
```

(ASP.....Continued on page 4)

(ASP.....Continued from page 3)
This code was run when the page was first loaded, so that a database with my store data is now temporarily called rstemp and is ready for use. rstemp(0) is the first field of whatever record we happen to be on; rstemp(1) is the second field but is not used in the present example. If i = 0 (the first record) then rstemp(0) = "Aluminum Foil".

After being processed by the server, the above mixture of VB script and HTML code produces 261 lines of HTML code producing a check box, item name, and text box for each line. Later, if you change any items in the database, the next time the page is loaded, those changes will appear on the page. This is how the list of items is generated. Note the VB script is being run on the server, not the client's browser. This is termed server side scripting as opposed to client side scripting (run on the client's machine). An example of client side scripting is the Java script that is used on the TPCUG home page to display the scrolling announcement at the bottom of the screen. Another is the Java script on the TPCUG Announcements page that gives a count down to Year 2000 – which I bet you haven't even noticed.

To get a list of his selections, the user checks the items wanted, makes any comments desired in the text boxes, selects to receive either an alphabetical list of selected items or one in walking order of one of four South Tampa stores, then presses the submit button on the page. When the next page appears it again is an ASP page and displays the results by using VB scripts to display only those items selected along with the appropriate query from the database to display them in walking order of the particular store selected. There is no way this page could have been done with standard HTML.

Thus, when your browser tries to access an ASP page, the server steps in, reads the combination of HTML code and VB Script (or Java Script), does any calculations required and returns to the browser a stream of HTML code that is used by the browser to display the page. If you do a view source on the page, you will only see the resulting HTML--not the original combination of VB Script and HTML.

My first use of ASP was to create a user name and password protected collection of pages at another site. You can see how this would work. When you initiate a session at the site, the ASP page induces the server to make a note that you have begun a session and ask for your user name and password. It then "follows" you around making sure that you have permission to visit any other ASP pages that have been tagged as restricted. This allows you to set up password protection on your own without having to give a list of people and passwords to the server administrator.

Now that I had this new tool, I needed to think of ways to use it. One idea that came to mind was an online mortgage payment calculator. Given the principal amount, interest rate, and term, it would first display the fixed monthly payment, then display for each month the portion of the monthly payment going to interest and the portion going to principal, along with the remaining balance. I did it locally on my computer. Then I had to decide if I should put it at my site. Was the world crying out for such a thing? I have seen loan payment calculators all over the Internet but haven't seen one that lists where you stand for each period (month) of the loan. So, you can now find a loan calculator at http://www.lamartin.com.

What's next, an online income tax calculator? It could be done, I am sure, for simple returns. However, the number of options to be considered for more complicated returns is mind boggling.

ASP on your Computer

A web developer should always test out his new creations locally before posting them to the WWW. That introduces the question of how you test out ASP pages on your local setup. First, you need for your computer to act as a server. If you are using Windows 95/98, the easiest way to accomplish this is to download for free from Microsoft their Personal Web Server (PWS). After you install the PWS, you can locally host a web site. In fact, while connected to the Internet, if you give out your temporary Internet address, anyone in the world can connect to your computer and view whatever HTML files you have set up in the PWS's directory. The PWS also has FTP capability, and I have used it to allow others to send files to and receive files from my computer via the Internet. If you have Microsoft FrontPage, it will install PWS as part of the FrontPage installation.

The next thing you will need is an ASP engine. Microsoft also provides this for free. The file is ASP.exe, if I recall correctly. You may download it or, if you have FrontPage 98, copy it from that CD. After you run this file, you should have the ability to host an ASP setup on your local PWS. The final thing you will need is a database like Microsoft Access if you want to use a database file as I did in the grocery list compiler (note the mortgage payment calculator doesn't use a database). To set up the particular database file, you move the file to your local web directory in PWS, then run the 32bit ODBC entry in Control Panel and tell it the name of the data base and where it is located. When you move everything to the Internet, you will have to have your server administration do this last thing for you. And that bring us to:

ASP on the Internet

If you are hosting your site on an NT server running IIs, then you probably have everything already set up for ASP pages. You just need to set the folders containing the ASP pages as executable (that is, scripts can be run). If you want the ability to access a database with the ASP pages, you will have to ask

(ASP.....Continued on page 6)

(President.....Continued from page 1)

the board I don't recall any argument or any bad feelings about anything. Everyone does his job knowing that if he needs help, someone else will pick up the slack and make sure our deadlines are met. We have some fun together; everyone on the board contributes his opinion, and, when votes are taken, it's almost always unanimous.

Talk to any officer about this. Find out what the jobs entail. Come to a board meeting to look it over and see if there's anything of interest for you.

And last, do you know anyone who'd like to come to a meeting to look our club over? You're a member, so you believe the club is worthwhile, and if you know anyone, friend, neighbor, spouse or family, invite them and help the club grow.

I'd like to extend my personal thanks to Steve Singer of RDI @ Tampa Bay Inc. for coming to our meeting and donating a C-it color digital camera for our door prize. Thanks to Steve and also to Quarterdeck's contribution the previous month, we collected the highest amount of money we have seen all year and then some.

Thanks. See you on the 14th. ◆

Internet picture of the month

The content of the following materials are verbatim as forwarded by the Office of the Independent Counsel. The conversion to HTML has altered the pagination and format. The original Table of Contents is not provided.

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Chronology

Table of Names

The Principals
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Opening page of the HTML version of the Independent Counsel's Report

History was made September 11, 1998 when Congress released the Independent Counsel's Report to the world via the Internet. The Congressional servers were jammed at first, but other organizations, like Yahoo, CNN, and most major newspapers, made the report available at their sites, so within a few hours anyone that wanted to view or download it could. The report was 840 KB in size. A 243KB zipped version is available at our site.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
ASP Quick Lessons	http://www.activeserverpages.com/
Independent Counsel Report Prepared in Trellix 2.0	http://www.trellix.com/icreport/
Satellite Tracker	http://liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov/realtime/jtrack/
Visual Basic Scripting Reference	http://www.webf1.com/ScriptDoc/mainindex.htm
Autoconnect - used car shopping site	http://www.autoconnect.com/
SandlotScience.com - Optical Illusions	http://www.sandlotscience.com/index.htm
BUYCOMP.COM - The Internet Computer Superstore	http://www.buycomp.com/bc/default.asp
RegClean 4.1a Description and General Issues	http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q147/7/69.asp
Web Hosting sites for FrontPage checked by Microsoft	http://microsoft.saltmine.com/frontpage/wpp/list/
RETRO Magazine (early 20th century)	http://www.retroactive.com/

Many of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Search Engines

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

A couple of months ago I wrote an article about the proper techniques of smart Internet searches using Boolean search strings. So now that you know **HOW…. WHERE** do you go to search the Internet? There are well over 100 search engines available for your every searching need...you don't need to know all of them, but there are a few important ones you should know and remember. Most function about the same, but to get the best results out of your search you should check each search engine's help section to instruct you on how to make your searches smarter. There are different kinds of search engines, too.

General search engines are ones that use their own internal engine to search for your text string. Some general search engines to remember are:

Alta Vista	Lycos
Excite	Magellan
Filez	Snap!
Hotbot	Webcrawler
Infoseek	Yahoo

Multiple search engines are just what the name implies. They are set up to search several engines simultaneously for your text string. Some multiple search engines to remember are:

All-In-One	Metacrawler
Cyber411	Profusion
Dogpile	USE IT!
Mamma	

For email addresses or phone numbers try these:

555-1212	Four11
BigFoot	WhoWhere

Most of these search engines can be reached by just typing "***http://www.***" in front of the name and adding ".com" after the name. Or just type in the name as a search string at any other engine. If all of these aren't enough for you, then go to http://www.beaucoup for more than 1,000 listings of search engines, directories and indices to help you find just about anything you're looking for.

My favorite way to search the Internet is to use an internal PC based search utility. I use two; one I paid for (***WebSeeker 98*** from Blue Squirrel at http://www.bluesquirrel.com), the other is **FREE** for the download (***WebFerret*** from FerretSoft at http://www.ferretsoft.com). Both programs are accessed the same way, by clicking on **START,** then **FIND**, **WEB PAGES,** and both work approximately the same way by accessing several search engines at the same time.



Webseeker comes with 13 major search engines built in and allows you to add and utilize more than 100+ search engines, eliminates duplicate results and dead links, monitors Web pages for any changes, schedules automatic, unattended searches and automatically updates itself over the Internet. It sells for $49.95, and is well worth the money if you do a lot of Internet searches.



Webferret, which as I mentioned is **FREE**, searches 10 engines automatically but you can't add any more search engines. For quick searches I find myself using ***Webferret*** more than WebSeeker because of its simplicity and speed. Searches can be narrowed by choosing to match any keyword, match all keywords or by submitting the keywords as an exact phrase. Double click on a result or use the right mouse button to open the web pages using your default browser. It is also designed to keep up with the changing nature of the search engines by automatically updating how they are searched. If the engines change, WebFerret changes too, so that searches always work and are accurate. And did I forget to mention that it's **FREE**? … and, you know how much I like **FREE** stuff.

The Internet is by far the best source of information we have ever had available to us but knowing how and where to search can make all the difference in the world. So…. here's to smarter searches! ◆

(ASP.....Continued from page 4)

your server administrator to set it up and possibly pay an extra fee. If you are hosting your site on a UNIX server, it is possible to use ASP pages but not guaranteed. It depends on the software they are using.

Help on ASP – Usenet Newsgroups

If you want to learn how to use ASP, where do you go? I suppose you could buy a book, but that is not my method of late.

(ASP.....Continued on page 8)

Linux and Us

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

You know, you get in some of the strangest discussions when you start talking about using a non-Microsoft operating system like Linux, the "Unix-like" alternative operating system first introduced in 1991 by a Finnish university student named Linux Torvalds. Releasing the operating kernel source code onto the Internet, Torvalds invited programmers from anywhere and everywhere to hack, change, modify, insert, and generally participate in making the nascent operating system better and better and bolder.

Legions of programmers and hackers from all over the world responded, and Linux has become something of a phenomenon. The buzz on Linux in the computer world is currently loud and getting louder. Corel has announced they'll produce a Linux office suite in 1999. Netscape has supported Linux virtually from the beginning (of Netscape) by porting its browsers to the OS. Although the operating system kernel source code is now and must always be "public" (and distributed for free) under its public license, several companies are producing and selling commercial, shrink-wrapped, "value added" versions of Linux, including Red Hat, Caldera, S.u.S.E., Debian, and others. The cost? If you choose to buy a commercial distribution of the OS, about $50. Or you can simply download the latest version of the OS from the Internet for free.

Because of the burgeoning popularity of Linux, new companies seem to be signing on to support it almost weekly. For instance, software giants like database powerhouses Informix and Sybase Software, Inc. have announced their support for Linux in the past year. But what has really gotten computer-tongues wagging is what happened just last month: Two of the biggest names in computing---Intel and Netscape---announced that they were pumping a few hundred million dollars (ahem…pocket change) into the company that distributes probably the most popular Linux shrink-wrapped version, Red Hat Software, Inc.

For Intel---half of the Microsoft/Intel duopoly sitting astride the computer world---and Microsoft arch-enemy Netscape to cooperate in supporting Linux has virtually caused eyeballs to snap throughout the industry. Why? Because although Linux is essentially distributed for free, and therefore no one knows for sure how many users it has, studies amounting to educated guesses put the number now at between 9 million and 14 million users, and growing fast.

In addition, studies have shown that only two operating systems are gaining users over the last couple of years: Windows NT…and Linux (this statistic may not include new users, but only existing computer users who are upgrading). When you consider that Linux didn't even exist nine years ago, and that its distribution and development have been and continue to be "free," it's nothing short of astounding that the OS is even on the radar screen.

Mark Andreeson, executive VP of Netscape, explaining his company's investment in Red Hat at a trade show a couple of weeks ago, said Linux "is free, it's stable, it's fast and scalable, it's Unix, it's the OS of choice on the Internet, and it runs on cheap Intel hardware." It also is capable of doing everything Windows NT is touted as being able to do---the operating system that Microsoft has said we will all be migrating to over the next few years---and more. Studies comparing Windows NT and Linux have even in some cases shown Linux to be superior to NT…something the dedicated Linux following of computer nerds, hackers, programmers and Unix gurus have loudly asserted for several years.

So. I decide to take a flyer on Linux, buy a shrink-wrapped version, visit the local Linux users group, and maybe see if I can make the OS work on a spare Intel 486 machine I have with 16 megs of RAM. And what do people say when I tell them I'm going to try out Linux? "I don't get into any of that radical computer stuff," said one fellow lawyer. "I just stick with Microsoft."

How about a more knowledgeable computer aficionado? Like our own newsletter editor, Fred LaMartin? "Now why would you want to waste time learning a new operating system when Windows works just fine for everything you want to do?" he said. Later he was even more supportive: "I know what Linux is," he said. "It's just the latest fad of the anti-Microsoft people. First it was DOS, and people didn't want to switch to Windows." (Yep, I said, that describes me.) "And then when they were forced to go to a Windows-type OS they went to OS/2," Fred said. (Yep, I said, I tried out OS/2 before being forced to go to Win95.) And now, Fred continued, the anti-Microsoft cranks (yep, that may well describe me too, I thought) are all rallying behind Linux. Doom and gloom, and you're wasting your time, our editor seemed to be telling me.

And yet…and yet…there is the…you might call it "underlying philosophy" of Linux, which has fueled its explosive growth, and undergirds the entire "world domination" movement that the Linux-lovers jokingly say is their ultimate aim. That philosophy, which was impossible before the advent of the Internet, has been called "the bazaar model." And it has been most powerfully explicated in a seminal article written by Eric Raymond in 1997 called "The Cathedral and the Bazaar." Within seven months of the publication of the article, Netscape Communications executives had read it and announced the release of the source code for Netscape Communicator 5.0. And I admit it: The notion of what might be called "spontaneous co-

(Linux.....Continued on page 8)

SIG REPORT

By Merle Nicholson & Jenny Lind Olin
President & Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group

A SIG – (Special Interest Group) is an informal gathering of club members who meet to exchange ideas and knowledge of common interest. TPCUG has four SIGs, Genealogy, Internet, Windows and Visual Basic.

Genealogy SIG – meets on the second Monday of the month in the MOSI lab at 7:00 PM. That's October 12th and November 9th. Contact Jenny Lind Olin. jlolin@aol.com

The Genealogy and Internet SIGs had a joint meeting on the second Monday in September. William LaMartin demonstrated his relatively new web site that included his own family genealogy as well as some very interesting photographs of family members and places of interest such as Okeechobee and New Orleans. The participants turned on their computers and were able to browse his web site, viewing it from that vantage point and from the screen at the front of the room. William's recent encounter with another researcher demonstrates how the genealogy home page is a wonderful way to make contacts and share information with others doing research on the same family. William's experience with designing pages for the Internet and his genealogy provided a well-integrated program for the combined meeting of the two SIGs.

Internet SIG – The first Monday of the month at Reflectone at 6:00PM. That's October 5th and November 2nd. Contact William LaMartin at **lamartin@ix.netcom.com**

Visual BASIC SIG - This SIG will hold its Third meeting Tuesday, October 20th at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. Contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

The second meeting on September 15th was well attended. William LaMartin started reproducing a working program a part at a time by way of demonstrating how a program goes together. There was a lot of discussion during the session about how things were done and about how it can be done differently or better (or worse).

Windows SIG – This is an informal discussion group led by Mary Sheridan during the half hour preceding the monthly meeting: 6:00-6:30PM. There is always a lively discussion on any topic of interest related to Windows. The emphasis is on helping each other by sharing experiences. Come to this SIG armed with all your questions about using Windows or any other software; someone will help, and, if not, you'll have fun anyway. ◆

(Linux .....Continued from page 7)
operative software development" does appeal to me.

Want to read the piece? You can find "The Cathedral and the Bazaar" all over the Internet. Just do a search for the name of the article and lots of locations will pop up. What makes the entire development of Linux so fascinating is how it has (1) seemingly come out of nowhere, and (2) constitutes an almost diametrically opposed philosophy and structure for software development from Microsoft. Where Linux has come about through the apparently spontaneous operation and organization of "the bazaar model," Microsoft is a resolute of "the cathedral" model. Read the paper; it'll all become more clear then.

In the meantime, I wonder if there are any Linux-users in the TPCUG? And I wonder if there might be any interest in forming a Linux SIG? Hello? Hello? Anyone out there? I'm going to be loading my copy of S.u.S.E. Linux onto one of the hard drives in my old 486 machine here before too long. I'll let you all know how it turns out, if there's any interest. And if anyone has particular knowledge about Linux, let me know by email at condon@usa.net. I might want to pester you for help…if all does not go well. ◆

(ASP.....Continued from page 6)
What I did first was search the Microsoft site for articles on ASP and VB Script. I found a few, one particularly good one on setting up an ASP page to access a database. But I needed more information – especially examples. I then turned to the source of much of my computer help, the Usenet Newsgroups that you read using your mail reader (same as the email program). Interest in ASP not being all that great, I was only able to find one newsgroup: microsoft.public.inetserver.iis.activeserverpages. But it was loaded with information. Not only did I learn from reading the questions and answers posted there, but I was also directed to several WWW locations that specialized in ASP. People on the Internet, I have found, are very happy to share their knowledge on different aspects of computing. For now, this particular newsgroup and the WWW locations I have found will be my tutorial on learning ASP.

Since I have found them so useful, I want to fill in the rest of the empty space in this month's newsletter writing about the Usenet newsgroups. Part of an editor's job is filling up all the

(ASP.....Continued on page 9)

Observations, Tips, etc.

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

Most of you who know me or have read some of my articles know that I subscribe to several PC magazines. I travel a lot and save up my magazines to read on the plane. I especially like the special issues that tell you about the 101-Best of whatever's such as the best freeware, websites, buys, etc. Well, this month's PC World Magazine (October) has a bunch of tips and tricks and I thought I'd pass along some, so here's a few.

We've all heard of "***cookies***". If you're new to using the Internet or just want to find out more about the nosy little critters go to Cookie Central (www.cookiecentral.com) for one of the best sources for cookie information on the web. Here you'll find complete info on what they are, how to find and read them on your PC and what to do about them.

If you use Microsoft's wheel-mouse like I do, there is a new IntelliPoint 2.2 driver out at www.microsoft.com/msdownload/intellipoint/intellieng.asp that is supposed to take care of some glitches under Windows 98. I didn't have any trouble with mine but it's **FREE!** (and you know how I like **FREE STUFF!**)

If you have a favorite CD-ROM that's gotten a bad scratch on it, try cleaning it by placing a few drops of water on a lint-free cloth and gently wiping the data side (non-label) of the disc from its center to its edge. After it has dried, place it back in the CD-ROM drive and try again. If that doesn't work, Memorex makes a Scratch Repair Kit for $10 (www.memorex.com) and Esprit makes ***Wipeout*** for $15 that does the same thing (www.cdrepair.com). To protect your CD discs you should always handle them by the edges and store them in their sleeves when not in use.

For some reason many people are leery of giving a credit card number over the Internet to purchase something but think nothing of physically giving the credit card to a waiter or waitress whom they have never seen before. Does this make sense? Estimates are that sales via the Internet will reach $20 billion by the year 2000. Just make sure you're using a secure server and go for it. There are a lot of good buys over the Internet and, if nothing else, you're likely to save on the sales tax. But obviously not all buys are best buys. To find out if you're getting a good deal, comparison-shop at sites such as Excite's Product Finder (www.excite.com). Use this service before you settle on a particular vendor.

If you have scads of folders and sub-folders, as I do, you may have trouble finding particular folders from time to time, as I do. Well, there is a **FREEWARE** utility (and you know I like **FREE STUFF!**) that you can get from www.fileworld.com called ***DirNow*** that appears as a small box in which you type a few characters of the folder you are seeking, press <**Enter**>, and up pops a list of folders matching your entry. ***DirNow*** is fast and small and **FREE!**

For a more complete listing of tips and tricks and a troubleshooting guide for your PC, pick up a copy of PCWorld Magazine. It's worth the cost. ◆

(ASP.....Continued from page 8)

space left over after including all the articles that members' have submitted. Of course, I could move from 10-point type to 12-point and that would do the job nicely, but I prefer to add content and stick with the 10-point type.

To be able to read newsgroups, you first have to set up the your mail reader so that it knows where on your Internet Provider to look for them. I use Microsoft Outlook Express as my mail and news reader. To set up News on it, I click on the "Tools" menu item, then "Accounts", then the "News" tab; next click on "Add". I then need to supply some information about my Internet Provider's (IP) news server. The most important item is the server name, which, since I use NetCom, is "nntp.ix.netcom.com." Your IP will provide you with the appropriate name somewhere at their WWW site.

Once you have set up the News account, you are ready to download a list of all the newsgroups that your IP carries on their server. At present, the number that NetCom carries is well over 20,000. After this information is downloaded, you can then have the program search this list for key words in the name of a newsgroup. Subscribe to such a group and start reading the messages. Post a message of your own if you desire. But be warned that any thing you post will end up being indexed by such search sites as DejaNews (http://www.dejanews.com/) and be available to anyone using DejaNews to do a search. If you do a search using my last name "LaMartin", you will find about 30 "recent" messages and hundreds of "past" messages. All – I hope – dealing with computer questions. I have left my electronic trail. But it is nothing I am ashamed of. There are no newsgroups listed there with names like "*..alt.pervert*" (the kind of Internet items that give politicians and preachers something to be against). What you will see listed for me are names like *microsoft.public.frontpage.client, comp.lang.basic.visual.misc*,

(ASP.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com* .

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309* .

Visual Basic

This SIG will hold its third meeting Tuesday, October 20, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

Norton's Uninstall Deluxe

By Clark J. Evans, Tampa PC Users Group

Dear TPCUG Members,

I am the type of person who believes in making things simple for people to understand.

When I couldn't get a bunch of programs out of my computer by regular means, I asked my friends what to do. The answer I got was, "Don't use anything but Norton's Uninstall Deluxe program." I heard a lot of bad reports on other Uninstall Programs.

I got Norton Uninstall Deluxe, and to make it simple, it worked so well I never read the instruction book, just did what it said on each window that came up.

The questions make it so simple to use. It had a disk clean-up that gets rid of duplicate files,and a program to get rid of those programs you can't get rid of. If you make a mistake and kill a wrong program you can get it back from the recycle bin.

It is so simple for anyone to use. I give Norton's Uninstall Deluxe an A++. It does what it says and more. ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
thing to see this demonstration and to look at the finished product with a photographic loop. It was impressive. The printers are comparable in cost to other brands, and the inks are the same price or cheaper. The MD 1300 is like a dye-sublimation printer. This is the kind of printer used by magazines for the glossy photos. The printer had true photo quality output.

Vinny gave away photo loops and a squirt gun for everybody.

Vinny was one of the funniest and most entertaining presenters we've ever had. You really missed something special if you weren't able to attend.

Charles Howe won the 50/50 drawing. Brian Lance won the video camera. Charles, this was your lucky night: Charles Howe also won a copy of Partition It. Warren Fuss took home a game called Gnome and Brian Lance left with Disk Clone (Charles isn't the only lucky one). ◆

(ASP.....Continued from page 9)
or *comp.periphs.printers*; not very exciting stuff by most standards but great forums for sharing information on narrowly defined topics relating to computers. I probably follow at least 20 such newsgroups off and on but only two or three at any one time, since that is about the limit of what I will be actively interested in at any one time.

So join the Usenet newsgroup crowd. As I said, there are over 20,000 such public forums to share information on almost anything you can think of: health, medicine, religion, philosophy, cars, money, sex, computing, farming, gardening, genealogy, photography, pets, mathematics ..... The list is essentially endless.

I have used the computer related groups to solve many of my

(ASP.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Museum of Science and Industry
BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems	Micrografx
Broderbund	Microsoft
Corel Systems	PowerQuest
Grolier	RDI, Inc.
Intuit	SoftKey International
Knowledge Adventure	Symantec

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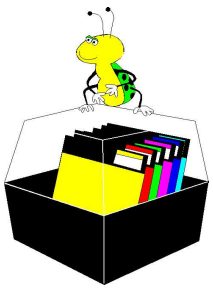
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95	W95
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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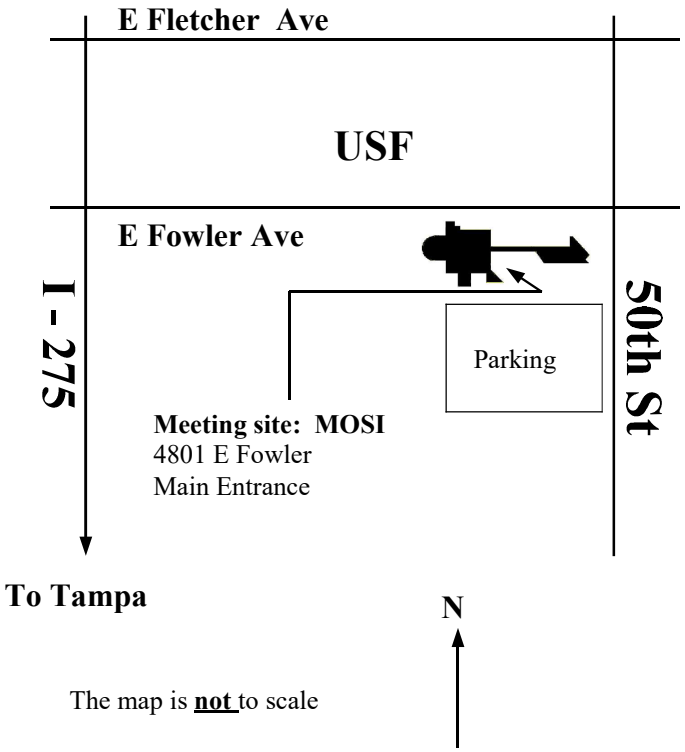


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(ASP.....Continued from page 10)
problems with software (almost every program has its own newsgroup) and a few with hardware. As I have become more expert over the years, I, in turn, have been able to return the favor. It is a good feeling to be able to reply to a query with a solution and to then receive a message that your solution worked.

You can lurk, and no one will ever know you were there. You only end up being listed in newsgroup search engines like DejaNews if you post a message. But I warn you, if you lurk long enough, you are going to see a message to which you just have to respond. Then you will be electronically recorded as perhaps of the opinion that "...all politicians do it, so it is not a sin." in the "alt.politicians.clintonmustgo" newsgroup. Is there such a newsgroup? I don't know, but I do know that one could be created. All you need is a server to host it. But I have filled all the empty space, so you will have to figure out how to do that on your own. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 11 November 1998

Meeting

BCD Computers

November 11, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the November meeting, Robert Armstrong from BCD, a local computer store, will be doing the presentation. He will demonstrate the latest in hardware. Come out and see what to put on your Christmas wish list. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting. Come and bring your questions.

Cheap Computers, Cookies & Internet Banking

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Assembling your own Machine

In this issue of the newsletter Ford Bond and Brian Lantz write about their experiences building a computer from scratch. In Ford's case he put together his machine from mostly spare parts along with the WinChip and motherboard supplied to members of our group by IDT/Centaur. Brian it appears is using mostly new components. His articles (this is the second of three) are more general in that they provide details of things you might encounter in any PC assembly and not just the particular one he is describing. But if assembling your computer yourself is not your thing, read on.

Cheap Computers

Those computer prices just keep going down, and the power of the stuff inside them just keeps going up. Last week my sister ordered a Gateway 350 configured as follows for $1698 plus tax and shipping.

(Comments.....Continued on page 6)

December 9: El Shaddai Edwards from Jasc Software (Paint Shop Pro)
January 13: Rod Stebbins—how to run a home based business with the help of a computer and the Internet.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC users Group

Last reminder, everyone. The election of officers is close at hand. Won't you step up and volunteer for a job? Contact Bruce Register at bregis@gte.net.

Talk to any officer about this. Find out what the jobs entail. Come to a board meeting to look it over and see if there's anything of interest for you.

Do you know anyone who'd like to come to a meeting to look our club over? You're a member, so you believe the club is worthwhile, and if you know anyone, friend, neighbor, spouse or family, invite them and help the club grow.

Our Visual Basic SIG is going just great. The interest in the group is as strong as ever. There is room for a few more, so if you'd like to look it over to see what we're doing, send me an email; I'll send the meeting times and a reminder to you.

You may be thinking of Christmas presents to yourself. I've been using my scanner to reproduce photos quite a lot. We've also been creating our own greeting cards and placing family photos on them. The results are just spectacular. If you're thinking of getting a scanner, you couldn't pick a better time, price-wise. Look for a SCSI or USB model if you can afford the $50 higher cost. Also, as I found out the hard way, it takes a pretty decent PC with plenty of memory. I'm thinking of increasing mine to 128MB, when I can get some loose money. 32MB was inadequate, so I upgraded to 64MB when I built my current PC. When I pull up a large photo scanned at 600x600, my PC does the job, but very, very slowly.

A true photo-quality printer is still a $300 item, although if you are willing to accept somewhat reduced quality, you can save quite a lot. Look at the current PC magazine for a complete review of printers. Hewlett-Packard and Epson are still the front runners in inkjet models. They also give the Alps printer good marks.

Thanks. See you on the 11th. ◆

Member of Association of Personal Computer User Groups APCUG

Minutes of the October Meeting

There were no minutes available at press time for the October meeting. ◆

Building a Computer with the WinChip CPU

By Ford Bond, MOSI Liaison,
Tampa PC Users Group

"Sure I have the parts. I can build a computer with spare parts".

Wishful , but, after all, with 15 years of computers and 10 years of upgrading computers, I have boxes of parts. XT parts, 286 parts, 386's, 486's, 586's, Pentiums, etc. There is one box dedicated to abandoned motherboards, another to hard drives. What do I do with an XT hard drive? Well, so much for organization; the other boxes are a jumble of parts. Tens of thousands of dollars invested in parts that are now rendered obsolete. Passed by with cheaper parts and faster parts and tens of thousands of dollars of newer parts. I cringe when I think how much that obsolete memory cost.

Oh well, now is not the time to bemoan the cost of my addictions, but to create a computer. The problem is the word abandoned. Why did I abandon this part or that? They may be dusty, but they look good. Only a few still smell smoky. After all, I now remember which way the cable goes. Why did I put all the parts, including those which were fried, broken and otherwise inoperable into the same boxes. I could have put notes on them even If I couldn't bear to throw them away. That would be like giving up on children. There must be some future value to these parts. I couldn't throw them away, not yet anyway. No, not I. Nevertheless, such nostalgia is not getting the computer built.

Oh well, time to assemble parts. I have a motherboard and a WinChip. Great start, but it will only fit into the cases I have with a hammer and drill. Off to the store and $90 dollars for a new case. Oops, I think I better look further. After much searching Jim at MB's says "We have one for $39."

Great! Now for memory; after some looking through the boxes I have two matched 8MB SIMMs, two unmatched 8MB SIMMs and two 4MB SIMMs. If I put the unmatched SIMMs away, I have 24MB. Things are going better. There was reason to keep parts. Small ones anyway; maybe the cases are going to have to go. I'll think about that tomorrow.

Video cards. OK, what's that funny slot? Looks like a PCI turned backwards. AG what? Oh! AGP? Now I remember, had one in the Pentium II I built last year. Last year when they were $150. I can hear the sucking sound now. Wonder what they cost now. Oh boy, I can get one for $35 and that includes video out, as well. Now I can bemoan the cost of TruVision and Matrox cards that cost thousands of dollars just to get video out. They now sit lonely and abandoned on shelves in boxes (out of reverence to their cost) because they didn't like the new chipsets. Maybe one of these days I will rebuild a 386 so that they will work again.

Sound card. Shuffle through the boxes again, and here is a sound blaster and another and another. OK which one of them works? Where oh where have the drivers gone? So many thousands of disks; so little time. OK, drivers located and boards working. Why are they all working? Dim memory says that they worked but were a problem to configure. There must have been some reason for abandoning them. Could it be one set of drivers for three boards? Mysteries will never cease. Chalk it up to middle age dyslexia or early signs of senility.

Hard drives. Now which one shall I choose? Here I have a great selection: MFMs, SCSIs, IGIs— no, that's genealogy IDEs? Finally, there are two 1.2 GB IDE that look good. Wonder why they are here? I'll check them out later.

The pile of parts is getting bigger. Is everything here? Time to check it out: case, motherboard, CPU, memory, storage, sound card, and hard drive. Oops, where is the CD, and how can I boot without a floppy drive? Back to the storeroom. Found the 3-1/2 drive and CD but no drivers. Well thank goodness for the Internet. Some time passes, and futile search follows futile search. Why do they make it so hard to find drivers? Is it really a conspiracy to get one to buy new parts rather than find drivers for older CD's? There are drivers for 12X's and up but no drivers for my poor little 8X drive. I guess it will remain lonely and abandoned. Back to the shelf and back to the store where I find that CD's are now only $35 for a 24X. Whoop de do. Why did I spend so much time on the Internet; this is easier than finding a driver.

Back to the pile of parts. Now there are enough parts, and it's time to check out the motherboard and CPU. Experience tells me that rather than put it together and turn on the power, it's time to read the manual. At least when no one is looking I can read the manual. Chip in place. Time to check the jumpers. Where is the magnifying glass? Bus settings OK. CPU multiplier setting's OK; CMOS, OK; CPU voltage OK, SIMMS voltage is set for 5 volts instead of 3.3 volt. Back to the manual. No explanation of SIMMS voltage. OK ,call a teckie. SIMMS voltages usually have a default setting of 3.3 volts. So I change the voltage setting. Now that the board setup is confirmed, it's time to put the parts together and turn it on.

Screen comes on, video card checks out. Memory checks out. Hit the delete button for setup. On to BIOS. Hmm, let's check out the hard drive with IDE detection. Oh well, nothing is there. Try another hard drive and repeat process. Success!! Second hard drive checks out OK. BIOS features OK. Turn off power management (personal thing). Save settings. We're

(WinChip.....Continued on page 5)

MicroLogic's DiskMapper Version 2

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

Here is a real neat program. It comes on a single 3.5 inch disk. It is very simple to install, but it has many advantages. The one I like most is that the screen that resembles Windows Explorer has the size of the folder or the file right after the entry.

For example, C:\folder 900MB. Just below that is Windows 240MB Program Files 175MB and so on; each folder is listed and followed by the number of bytes or MB's it contains. After the folders come the files, again listed by the number of bytes in each entry. See the graphic below to get the view of the screen.

This sounds innocent at first, but think for a minute. If you had a listing of all the folders and files on your C: drive, starting at the top with the largest entry, you could quickly see where you could go to remove some unused or seldom used folders or files and thereby get that space you need for the latest and greatest program you want to add.

Now click on Windows and then FONTS and notice that your fonts are all listed with the largest entry first. You can run down and see all the fonts that your computer is loaded with, and right here you can save a lot of space by removing a few dozen fonts you never use. My FONTS folder has 21.1MB of FONTS and I use maybe four or five. This DiskMapper feature is worth having.

If you want to see the files you have installed but never used, simply click on "Never Used After Creation". The files or folders you have installed but never used are then highlighted. You can get an idea of how they are spread out on the disk representation, and also you can get an idea of how many such entries are on your hard disk.

Put the mouse cursor on any file and get a description of the file, its size, the date you entered it and the quantity at the bottom of the screen. Double click on the file, and it will come up in a viewer, your browser or a text editor, or whatever you have set up.

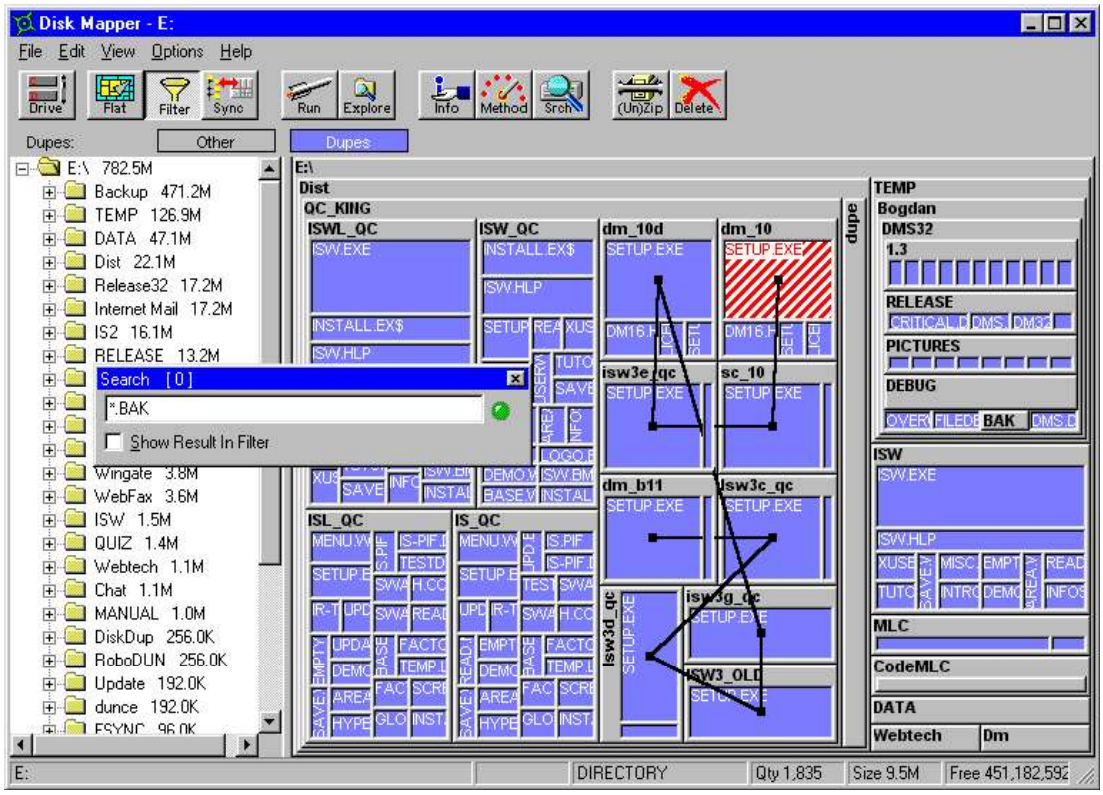
When DiskMapper comes up, the view (like Explorer) that you see is a color coded map. On the left is the familiar folder and file list similar to Explorer, on the right is a map consisting of rectangles; the size of each represents the relative size of the file or folder. You can easily see where the large files that take up the bulk of your disk space are.

If you bring up Windows Explorer, you can right click on any folder and access DiskMapper by clicking on DiskMapper. You can find duplicate files by simply clicking on the Duplicate File button. The duplicate files show up in colors on the graphic side of the DiskMapper screen. Click on one file and a line forms to the duplicate file. You can then easily see where they are located on the hard disk. Look at the black connecting lines on the graphic to see this.

In a similar fashion you can see all the .GIF (or any other extension) files on the graphic representation by clicking on the ext button. This is really a neat representation.

A special feature for users of Office 97 helps you see how much space Office 97 consumes and shows you which files are optional. You'll see how much space Office 97 takes up and see files classified into four types.

DiskMapper by Micro-Logic, $49.95 list price. http://www.miclog.com. Recommended. Street price will be much lower, I believe. ◆



(WinChip.....Continued from page 3)

on our way. Let's see what 95 does. Time to reboot and reboot and reboot. Isn't 95 fun? Finally, 95 is happy with the computer. Nuf work for the day.

Back in the salt mines it's now time to try again. Power on. The screen is black. Where's the video? Last thing I need is a hardware failure? Pull the AGP card and plug in a new video card. Thankfully, a PCI video card was lurking in the stack of spare parts, proud to show that it worked when a new fangled AGP Card didn't. Now the video works. Back to the computer store. Hope it's still under warranty. Looks like it's time to replace the video card. Thankfully, it doesn't work on their computer either and they replace the board. Once again I fulfill my role as quality control for the import market. Back to the motherboard (drawing board or future). Plug in the video card and every thing works including Windows95.

That was too easy. The hard drive already had Windows95 installed and some people had problems loading Windows95. OK, now, let's start over and load Windows95 from the beginning. Let's make sure that we have all the software, drivers and tools. First create a boot disk in Windows Explorer. Next, copy FDISK.exe, Format.com, Edit.com, edit.hlp, mscdex.exe, sys.com, autoexec.bat, and config.sys files to this floppy disk. Edit the autoexec.bat and config.sys files so that the CD ROM Drivers are directed to the A:\ drive. Make sure we have a Windows95 disk, CD ROM Drivers and boot disk. Now we are ready to start. Boot the computer. Now there are two choices: 1. Boot as normal and begin pressing the F8 key until you are given the choice of ways to start the computer, then choose command prompt; or, alternately, 2. Boot from the floppy. From the a:\ prompt, type FDISK. Choose "delete

(WinChip.....Continued on page 6)

Internet picture of the month



Space Shuttle Discovery lifts off successfully

From NASA's Space Shuttle site, http://shuttle.nasa.gov/demos/, where you can track the current shuttle, read about the shuttle, and, as we did, view photos of the current mission.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Newsweek.com	http://www.newsweek.com/
iDOT.com - Buy computers over the web	http://www.idot.com/
WK's Midi Collection - The One Stop Pop Rock MIDI	http://ue3.ee.nus.edu.sg/midi.html
AltaVista Translations - translate any text	http://babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate
Armchair Millionaire Tax Center	http://www.armchairmillionaire.com/tax/
Quicken.com Tax Estimator	http://www.intuit.com/turbotax/taxcenter/estimator/start.htm
ONSALE - online auctions	http://www.onsale.com/
Internet Movie Database - more than 160,000 titles	http://www.imdb.com/
SlashdotNews for Nerds. Stuff that Matters.	http://www.slashdot.org/
Gamelan - The Official Java Directory	http://www.gamelan.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.



Vinnie Barber of ALPS Printers giving the presentation at the September Meeting

(WinChip.....Continued from page 5)

partitions" and wipe out the existing partitions. Reboot the computer with the floppy and type FDISK again; now, go to the command "create a new DOS partition" and create a new dos primary partition. Next, format the hard drive, remembering not to put a system on the hard drive or the OEM Windows95 will not load. Reload the CD ROM drivers. Start Windows95.

After reloading Windows95, everything seems OK. Computer is spunky and has not crashed. Install clean and easy. Only glitch was the SIMMs voltage jumpers and it would have worked either way. Hardest thing was to find parts that worked and the appropriate drivers for them. As a bonus, now the parts are better organized, and best of all the computer works smoothly. Now to load Office 97 and test the program. Oops, Windows Office 97 is an upgrade and will not install. Time to find the Office 95 disks. As usual, Microsoft is providing entertainment and pain in installing programs.

Programs load smoothly. Time to run benchmarks. Then I can test my patience by putting both a network card and a modem in the computer. Finally, I will turn it over to Bambi and James to see if they can confuse it.

That it set up simply is a tribute to the WinChip CPU and the Trinity ATX with AGP motherboard by Tyan. Having worked with Tyan boards in the past, this was not a surprise. It is pleasant that the CPU followed suit. Once the parts were assembled and tested, this combination of chip and motherboard has been the easiest to set up in the last 100 plus computers I have built or supervised building. Also, a tribute to all those spare parts which contributed to the project, well sort of. Spare parts and $100 plus motherboard and CPU isn't bad for a 200 MHz computer. Using current wholesale prices the computer could be built for under $400 plus software. Probably cost more in time to find and check out all the spare parts but it does appeal to my Scottish ancestors, or were they my wife's ancestors. Have to load the genealogy program and check it out. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

Intel 350MHz Pentium® II Processor w/ 512K Cache
64MB 100MHZ SDRAM expandable to 256MB
EV700 (17inch Monitor, 15.9inch viewable area)
Integrated nVidia 8MB AGP Graphics Accelerator
10.0GB Ultra ATA hard drive
DVD II ROM Drive & 3.5" Diskette Drive
Integrated Sound Blaster AudioPCI 64D
Boston Acoustics BA635 Speakers
U.S. Robotics 56K Voice Winmodem
Micro-Tower Case
Multi-function Keyboard & MS IntelliMouse
McAfee Anti-Virus Software
Microsoft Windows 98 & Microsoft Office97 Small Business Edition and Quicken Basic 98
Gateway GoldSM Service for PCs

Actually, she exchanged the 17" monitor for a 15" one due to space limitations on her desktop, and, per my suggestion, upgraded the Winmodem to a standard modem. I think the final price with tax and shipping was a little over $1,800. And if one is willing to forgo some of the above features like the large hard drive, the large monitor, the DVD instead of a CD, 32 MB RAM instead of 64 MB, you can get the price down closer to $1,200 without tax and shipping. Sales tax is one of the drawbacks with Gateway for Florida residents. Local stores mean sales tax on ordered items. Quite possibly if you buy from Dell or Micron you will not have to pay a sales tax.

As we all know from the ads in the newspaper, computers well below $1,000 are out there--and from name brand companies. So why spend $1,800 when $999 will get you a better computer than you could have bought a couple of years back? I suppose the main reason is that one wants the features of the more expensive computer--but not the much more expensive one priced at close to $3,000. And I recommend Gateway

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since they have served me so well in the past. I bought a Gateway 386 in 1991 for $2,490 (no tax back then). I think it had a 125 MB hard drive and 4 MB RAM. The hard drive was eventually upgraded to 1.1 GB, and the memory to 16 MB--at prices of $75/MB to $45/MB. Boy how those memory prices have come down. Of course, the 386 had only a 14" monitor and no modem or sound card--both items purchased within a few months.

Then there was a no name 386 that we had which I upgraded to a 486 80 Mhz. I forget the price of all that. The next Gateway was bought in 1996 for $3,347 including tax and shipping. It was a P-166 with 32 MB RAM and a 2.5 GB hard drive, 17" monitor, 28,800 modem, sound card & 12 speed CD, and Microsoft Office Professional. That is the computer I am using to write this on. I have added a second 5 plus MB hard drive, and I do need to get around to adding another 32 MB of RAM. It is interesting to compare my sister's computer above to this one. Two years and five months get you more computer for just over half the price.

There are, however, still some expensive computers out there if you want to buy on the bleeding edge. To thank our son for getting through college in record time, thus saving us many thousands of dollars in tuition and expenses, as a graduation present last June we gave him the best Gateway had to offer at the time. It was a system with a 450 MHz processor, 19" monitor, 128 MB RAM, 14 GB hard drive, etc. coming in just under $4,000. I would never buy such a system for myself. I believe in dropping back at least one step from the bleeding edge machine, which, then, would probably have been around $2,800. You pay a big premium to have the latest technology.

So, I have purchased three Gateways, and advised others to do the same when asked for a recommendation (which most of the time is not followed since they can not stand to wait the 10 - 14 days from placing the order to receiving the machine. They opt for the instant gratification gotten from going to CompUSA and purchasing a Compaq or HP off the shelf). I have done it because of my belief that Gateway gives good value for the price you pay--if you don't buy on the bleeding edge. Others feel the same about buying a Dell or a Micron.

When it comes to laptops, however, I started with and have remained with IBM. In laptops, I feel that the ability to get parts for or get the machine repaired is more important than the absolute lowest price. And IBM provides that; plus in the current 385 series there is a good cost to value ratio. I bought two ThinkPads (the less expensive versions) for my son while he was in college. And now that he is out earning his own living, he just purchased a new one for himself. Each time he gets a new one, he always passes along the old one to me. The latest one he purchased, a ThinkPad 385XD-LEU**,** features a 233MHz Intel Pentium Processor with MMX , a 12.1" TFT Active Matrix Display, 32MB EDO memory , 3.2GB^2 Hard Drive 24X Max CD-ROM, and a 56K PCMCIA Modem with X-Jack Sound Blaster Pro-Stereo. That has more power than my current P-166 desktop, and it cost about $1,000 less than did the P-166 in 1996. Perhaps he will tire of it soon and pass it on to me.

Grocery Shopping List Update

Last month I wrote about the grocery shopping list compiler I had created at http://www.lamartin.com. Recall that if you didn't shop at one of the four stores in South Tampa for which I had a walking order, your list of selections would have to be printed in alphabetical order. I mentioned that I would work on a method of allowing you to order by food category the store at which you usually shopped.

Well, I have now done that. If you now visit the site, at the bottom of the page where you select the items you wish to purchase, you will see an 18 x 18 matrix of radio buttons which allow you to indicate the order in which the 18 food categories appear in your particular store. For example: Produce, Dairy, Meat, Canned, etc. You only have to make the ordering once, since when you set the radio buttons for your ordering, select the order by food category option, then click the submit button, a cookie will be written to your hard drive storing this information. On a subsequent visit, the cookie will be read and the radio buttons will be set the way you selected them the previous visit.

Cookies

Some people fear cookies, and a lot of fuss is made over them in the media and by certain individuals. It is like they are some sort of invasion of privacy. I don't see it that way at all. They basically store information about the settings you use when you last visited a site, e. g., a user name and password necessary to visit the site, or certain preferences you have about the way the site displays information or what information it displays. This is all to the user's advantage.

Now, of course, if some devious programmer creates a site that asks you for your social security number, your credit card number, etc., and you are foolish enough to enter this information, then cookies don't even need to enter the picture for him to grab this information. I can think of nothing of importance that a cookie can record that you don't explicitly give it by entering information that is requested.

Internet Banking

You simply can't depend on banks to not hit you with a fee if they think they can get away with it. I am sure you have noticed all the ads this year touting **free** Internet banking to ac-

(Comments.....Continued on page 9)

The Do's and Don'ts of PC Assembly Part Two: Installation

By Brian Lance, Tampa PC Users Group

Before we throw it all into a box and hit the switch, let's review Part One of this article, which appeared in the September newsletter:

Bring your tools, hardware, software and miscellaneous items to a handy work surface. Familiarize yourself with the case and layout of the cards. A good example is an Enlight case (on a computer I recently built). The diagram shows arrows parallel to the case, so I pulled on it until I thought I was going to break something (hopefully, not a finger!). There are six little bud-like snap-onto connectors on the inside of the front panel, which was removed easily when I noticed there was a handle of sorts on the underside. Had I looked the case over a little more carefully, I could have avoided that scene. The rest of the case comes apart easily, and without tools. Lesson learned.

Some tips: Remember to always handle processors, memory modules and cards without touching pins or circuit traces. Check your cables and other parts for damage. Write down the model number and common name of your peripherals and cards. This will help when locating new drivers and updates. The FCC ID, which will appear on modems and other devices, may be useful as well.

Check your jumpers again and set according to the configuration you need. Definitely mark the location of ones you may have to change later in your manual. Some on-board devices (video, sound) may appear to disable themselves after installation of a like card, but if there is a conflict or the on-board device appears in Windows, you may need to manually disable it via jumpers.

If you don't have a grounding leash, touch a grounded metal surface on the case before you begin. This should drain any residual static charge. If you're worried about static building up due to carpeting (you should be!), get off the carpet, get a leash and come back here when you're done.

Now, let's start with the on-board components. Locate your memory DIMMs or SIMMs (Dual- and Single Memory Modules) and install them according the directions in the manual. SIMMs have to be installed at a 45° angle and pushed to vertical to install. Note the direction that they will have to angle from. If the chips have to be pushed to the right, start installing the chips from the rightmost slot in that bank. DIMMs install straight down. Open the retaining clips so they are laid back from the slot, align the chip, push down evenly, and the clips will close automatically. Check all memory to ensure proper contact.

I've noticed that certain motherboards advertise a maximum amount of RAM that can be installed. Say 1024MB. When looking in the manual, you might see a warning not to populate the board with both SIMMs and DIMMs, therefore making it impossible to attain the maximum memory. You can ask, “Why would I need a Gigabyte of memory?” You probably don't - yet. Memory will, in all likelihood, get cheaper per unit and the memory needs of applications will grow accordingly. How much memory was in a standard PC five years ago? The point is that if you do happen to need the advertised capacity, ask if can be reached without going against the manufacturer's recommendations. This is also true for bus or clock speeds - you can go past the recommendations, but you may not get support.

If your case has a removeable mounting plate, take it out of the case. Otherwise, your plate is part of the case and cannot be removed, so ignore references to the plate, substituting the case itself. Line up the motherboard with the plate, keeping in mind the card slots face the rear of the case. There should be at least four mounting holes that line up through both motherboard and plate. Note the location of these on the plate and set the motherboard aside. Find your standoffs. These may be little doohickeys with a hexagonal internally threaded head and a screw base or (the cheaper and much less desirable) tiny plastic christmas trees. Screw the standoffs into the plate. If these leave an uneven plane to put the motherboard onto, you may have to make do with one or more of the trees. These go into slots on the plate with a hole at one end and are to be pushed to the other end of the slot until they lock in place. The motherboard will then be secured to the standoffs by machine screws - and insulating rigs, if you have them. The trees will just push up through the motherboard and clip onto the holes.

Installing the CPU is a snap with a ZIF socket, which the Socket 7 CPUs are. Raise the lever on the side of the socket. Line up the corner of the CPU that is not square with pin 1 - this should be indicated on the chip as well as the socket. The CPU should drop right in. Slowly lower the lever (you may hear a squeak). That puppy is seated! The new Intel chips (Pentium II) are Slot 1 and install similar to a memory module.

Before you affix your heat sink (and possible fan), lay it on the CPU to see just how they will bond. This is usually done via a clip of some sort. Determine if you need anything special to help dissipate the heat, such as thermal grease or silicone. If so, apply this in a thin layer to the CPU and heat sink. The CPU and heat sink meet as flat planes, so if too much is applied, it may ooze out. This is not good. Go clean it up and continue. Now mate the heat sink with the CPU.

(PC Assembly.....Continued on page 9)

(PC Assembly.....Continued from page 8)
There's a good chance the first time will be problematic, and you may need an extra hand to help out. On Socket 7 systems, there will be little tabs the heat sink will latch onto.

Next, let's attach any onboard cables, such as IDE, floppy drive, sound, video and USB (Universal Serial Bus). If you have an ATX case with predefined panels (there will be several), choose the one you are going to use and screw this into the case. If it does not have the panels, decide whether to use ports behind the cards - which will block external access to that card - or knock-outs built into the case (recommended). For instance, the TX Pro motherboard in my Enlight with case has built-in sound and video. I used the video through a case knock-out until I bought a card to replace it. So there are now two video ports, but the onboard is disabled. If I had a 'knock-out pop-in', I'd remove the cable and port and plug the hole.

Note how many slots you have open and what type they are. Current systems may have a combination of ISA, PCI and AGP slots. The AGP slot is for an AGP video card only. Check to see if any of the cards have connectors that need cables attached. Sometimes the cables will prevent cards being adjacent to each other, so you will need some idea of what will go where. On a new system, you may have cabling from the modem or CD-ROM (to sound card), from a video card to a 3D accelerator or cards dedicated to I/O, such as a SCSI.

Next, install your storage (floppy drive, hard drive, Zip drive, CD-ROM, DVD, tape drive, etc...). These will all have bays designed for them, in 3.5" or 5.25" form factors, and will be outlined in the documentation for your case. Cases will vary, but most hard drives will be mounted internally, vs. the "external" bays for floppy drives. There should be four screw holes visible through the sides of the bay for each device. The sides of the bay are slotted and sometimes more holes are on the devices; these are to accommodate a wide variety of device/bay combinations. Make sure the external drives are mounted flush with the face of the case, or, for cases where the face covers the floppy (or Zip), just behind the case's face. All storage devices are designed to be mounted horizontally. Most can also be on edge (rolled 90 °) as well. The documentation I have here mentions that a hard drive should not be more than 5° off from horizontal, so don't put a phone book under one corner!

After a final check, put the plate with the motherboard into the case and secure it. Plug in the power connections from the power supply to the various components. If there is a separate plug by itself (not chained to another plug), use it for the CPU's fan. Most components, except for a 3.5" floppy, will use the larger 4-pin connector. The power for the motherboard is two separate plugs for a non-ATX power supply. These are white rectangles with 6 wires each. These snap onto the motherboard with the black wires in the middle. An ATX connector is one plug with two rows of ten.

Next time: Part Three: Everything Else. ◆



President Merle Nicholson at the September meeting

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)
cess your account information and transfer funds between accounts over the Internet. Now if you want to pay your bills via the Internet, then there would be a fee, but no fee for just looking at transactions. I jumped at the chance to Internet enable an account at Huntington and one at Nations. Well, as of December 1, Huntington says they will no longer provide the service free--even though, in my opinion, it saves them money over other ways I can use to get account information. However, they are still pushing it as a free service at their Internet site.

Should I simply move the Huntington Account to Nations to get the free service. I just might; however, I purchased 1000 computer checks from Quicken for this account. They would be no good at Nations, and I have only used a little over 100 of them. Additionally, once Nations sees that Huntington--and many other banks--are charging for Internet access, they will probably keep their Internet access free just long enough to snare people like me, then impose the fee. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

At last month's meeting, we discussed Active Server Pages at William LaMartin's site, lamartin.com.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Last month the interest seemed to return to questions about scanning and scanners. Ford demonstrated scanning a member's large photo of a family reunion. The second part of the demonstration was to cut and enlarge one person's face from the large photo. The discussion resulting from the demonstration was about the different features to look for when selecting a scanner.

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

Last month we learned how to create a VB program to calculate fixed mortgage payments for a loan and display the portion of each month's payment that goes to principal and to interest and the remaining balance.

Fall FACUG Meeting

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

The Fall Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG) meeting was held in West Palm Beach.

One of the things I noticed was that several of the User Groups have been giving real service to their communities. And they have found out that public schools cannot refuse to let them hold their meetings in the schools in Florida. Federal and state buildings are also open according to law. Several of the groups told of their experiences with school people.

We met in the Palm Beach Lakes High School Media Center. The West Palm Beach User Group met with the evening school principal and they talked about how the school could benefit from allowing the user group to meet there. After a while, both the principal and the user group became enthusiastic about the idea. At the present time, the school allows the group to set up auctions to make money for the group. These are held in the school cafeteria to provide enough room for the tables. Other rooms are available for SIGs. All this is free to the WPBUG, and no insurance has been required of the user group. The same is true for other groups in the FACUG.

Several User Groups have now purchased projectors, mostly by getting a grant. Another interesting thing that you notice is that both Mac groups and PC groups are represented in the FACUG meetings.

The Orlando group now has about 850 members and sends out 5,000 newsletters each month. Each group told a little of how their group is set up and what they do.

We broke into small groups and discussed a subject in each of the groups. The Internet is well known now, and so the discussion there became quite technical, each person describing how his group obtained an individual domain address. The fun comes in listening to the different ways in which each group goes about its objective.

We broke for lunch at a unique place. The cost of the meeting is $8 per person and these folks made arrangements with a Chinese buffet, and we carpooled and went to the buffet which was included as part of the $8 entrance fee! Carpooling and all of us having lunch in the same place allowed us to talk about other experiences besides those in the User Group meeting. This was one of the better FACUG Fall meetings as I see it. Of course there are prizes at the conclusion of the day.

Another thing that was brought up at the meeting was how to teach the elderly or "senior citizen". When people call me and say they are disgusted because the grandkids can use the computer but they can't and they don't have the money to take any courses, this is what I do. First, talk to them a little to ensure that they are rational and really want to learn. Then remind them that free training is available at ANY library. Just call and set up an appointment, and a volunteer will sit with

(FACUG.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

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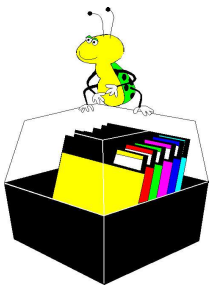
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



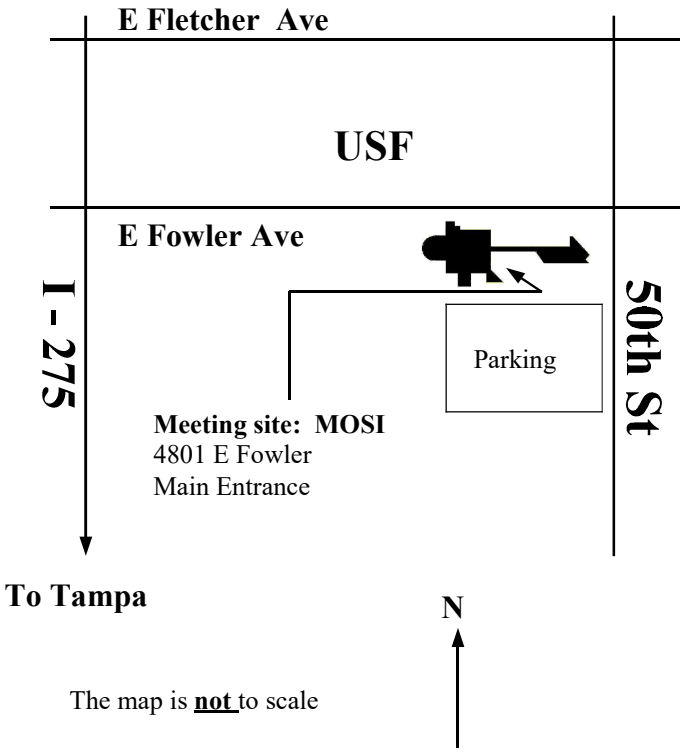
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you and show you email, how to get civic info, and how to use the Internet. In Hillsborough County, the Library has NETSCAPE available and also Time Warner cable connections (free to the library). That is one way to learn at no cost, and you don't need a computer. Just go to each library, a different one each week is what I tell them.

I took several Bits of Blue along to the meeting to hand out. These are placed on a side table along with those from other computer groups. This is an excellent source of information on how the other groups accomplish their objectives. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 12 December 1998

Meeting

Jasc Software (Paint Shop Pro)

December 9, 1998
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the December meeting, El Shaddai Edwards from Jasc Software will be giving the presentation. He will demonstrate Paint Shop Pro. Come out and see a great graphics program. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting. Possibly she will tell us a little about her trip to COMDEX.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Last reminder, everyone. The election of officers is this December meeting. Please attend the meeting and show your support for your club.

On that note, I'd like to recognize those people on the Board of Directors who contribute so much of their own time to make this club possible. TPCUG is an organization that offers a quality contribution to the membership and to the community. The club obviously doesn't run itself; and it's only through the dedication of the board and the membership that it remains a viable organization.

Mike Hodges, as TPCUG Vice President provides experienced organizational ability to the board. He's willing to step in and keep our meetings on track. He offers experience and insight and creative ideas. Mike is also our host at Reflectone for our board meetings and the Internet SIG, a resource that would be very hard to replace.

Kevan Sheridan, as TPCUG Secretary and very long time member, has donated his time to help track our ongoing projects and discussions. He's always in there at the meetings to help with anything needing doing. He's going off the board as secretary next year, but we fully expect him to carry on as before.

(President.....Continued on page 2)

January 13: Rod Stebbins—How to run a home based business with the help of a computer and the Internet.

* * OFFICERS * *

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the November 11 Meeting

By James Weber, Tampa PC Users Group

The November meeting started with Mary Sheridan presiding over a Windows SIG. As usual, several topics were discussed. The idea of recycling old motherboards or recovering the gold from computer components was probably the most intense. There appears to be quite a few people in the group who have old equipment that they might be willing to part with.

Robert Armstrong from BCD was the guest speaker. He related very interesting information about Intel's strategic plans for the next few years, including the Xeon and Merced processors, and AMD's new K-7 chips. Mr. Armstrong then made a brief sales pitch for the "Flash Net" Internet service.

After a brief beak, we had the door prize drawing. Bruce Register and Roger waters were among the winners. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

Jenny Lind Olin, TPCUG Treasurer, stepped into the job at the right time last January when we thought we might not survive financially. Jenny leaves no doubt where every penny of our club money is. I can't tell you enough about how difficult club life is when the financials aren't in order. An organized treasury enables the board to make decisions with minimal discussion and maximum dispatch.

Those three and I are the four elected board members. The other board members are volunteers. They're appointed by the board and have full voting rights in board decisions.

Mary Sheridan as TPCUG Programs Chairman made up her own job. She was on the board as BBS Sysop and filled a job that was very badly needed as Programs Chairman, then proceeded to eliminate her old one as Sysop. Mary has done an outstanding job getting quality speakers in and is a very major contributor to our success.

William LaMartin is Newsletter Editor and Web Site Editor in one, and I need not point out the dedication to quality William brings to us. You can see that for yourselves when you get the newsletter and use the web site. One thing he had done when he took over the job was to make the newsletter an "All TPCUG" newsletter. All articles are submitted by members, where previously many articles were reprinted from other clubs' newsletters. What isn't so obvious is that he also prints, folds, staples and mails the newsletters also, with some volunteer help. He dedicated no small amount of time in getting our web site moved to another internet provider and got the club's web name

(President……..Continued on page 6)

ZIFF DAVIS SHAREWARE AWARDS



Summarized by: Larry Anders, Librarian
Tampa PC Users Group

Ziff Davis (ZD) publishes several excellent magazines for the personal computer user. I know because I have subscribed to a few of them for years. They also have one of the best web sites on the Internet for computer users at http://www.zdnet.com. Recently ZD held their 5th Annual Shareware Awards and have published their winners at http://www.zdnet.com/swlib/zdawards/zdawards.html#Winners. Not only are just the winners listed here but all the runner-ups for each category are also listed. Below is a summary of the winners of each of the categories selected by *PC Magazine*. All of these files can be downloaded from the above link.

APPLICATIONS: NoteTab Pro, Eric G.V. Fookes NoteTab Pro is a powerful editing tool especially suited for programmers and web developers that can open multiple documents of up to 16MB each in their own tabbed window. NoteTab's Editor's Clipbook tool lets you easily insert any kind of boilerplate text, such as HTML tags, glossaries, etc., into your documents. Many conversion functions are included, such as stripping HTML tags, changing text to HTML, sorting lines, converting between ASCII and ANSI, and changing case. Some features include the ability to open links or view documents in your web browser, search-and-replace text in all open documents or disk files, format outlines to organize notes, and calculate mathematical expressions. The evaluation edition is functional for approximately 30 days. Spell checking and thesaurus functionality are available once you register. Free to try; $19.95 if you decide to keep it.

DESKTOP ACCESSORIES: Judy's TenKey, Judy's Applications Judy's TenKey Calculator is regular calculator, RPN, or ten key adding machine, that uses a tape that can be saved, printed, notated, and even edited. It's very versatile with a good introductory demo of its many capabilities. It supports scientific notation, and can smoothly exchange data with other Windows applications. This versatile calculator can be nearly whatever type of calculator you need it to be at the time. Free to try; $19.95 if you decide to keep it.

BUSINESS: Power Utility Pak 97, JWalk & Associates Power Utility Pak 97 adds 31 general-purpose utilities, 40 custom worksheet functions, and enhanced shortcut menus to Microsoft Excel 97. Run Power97.xla only when you need the features or install it to the Excel add-in list. This shareware version gives you information and help for all of the features, but they are not all functional until you register. System Requirements: Microsoft Excel 97 and Windows 95. Free to try; $39.95 if you decide to keep it.

COMMUNICATIONS: WinProxy (Ositis), Ositis Software WinProxy lets you connect multiple computers on a LAN to the Internet through a single point. It runs on any Windows 95 or NT. The program walks you through setup step by step, providing guidance all the way. All Internet interactions are then seamlessly routed through the WinProxy server. Save money by using a single Internet account, modem, and dialup or leased line on one station for all Internet accesses. Free to try; $299 if you decide to keep it. (This is by far the most expensive shareware program I've seen!)

E-MAIL, NEWSREADERS, CHAT: ICQ (32-bit), Mirabilis Ltd. ICQ means "I-seek-you," And it's free! (And you know how I like free things.) ICQ lets you communicate directly (no IRC) with any other ICQ user on the Internet, either by direct messaging or in a text-based windowed interface for multi-person chat. ICQ has dozens of options such as file transfers and linking to audio/visual chat applications. It's simple, operates seamlessly and is well documented. And it's FREE!

FILE UTILITIES: Turbo Browser 98, Pacific Gold Coast Corp. Turbo Browser 98 is a file-management replacement that mimics the Explorer interface but adds a viewing window. With support for dozens of file formats, it can convert, print, zip and unzip, and even encrypt files. The system is tightly integrated with Explorer's options, plus offers all the conveniences, such as drag and drop, rename, cut, copy, paste, delete and more, and it makes the same right mouse menus available to you. Free to try; $69.95 if you decide to keep it.

GRAPHICS & MULTIMEDIA: Screen Saver Toolkit, Stardust Software The Stardust Screen Saver Toolkit can help you to build a professional-quality Windows 9x/NT screen-saver product without programming knowledge. It uses wizard interfaces to create a slideshow or presentation style screen-saver application. The system supports common image formats and .avi videos and includes an image conversion utility. Free to try; $249 if you decide to keep it. (Another expensive one!)

HTML EDITORS: HomeSite, Allaire Corp. Homesite was originally a highly functional non-WYSIWYG HTML editor. Now it has drag-and-drop WYSIWYG editing and an abundance of other features and functions and well-written help documentation, including sections on HTML tags and web page design. Free to try; $89 if you decide to keep it.

INTERNET UTILITIES: WS_FTP Professional, Ipswitch, Inc. WS_FTP Professional is a 32-bit Windows FTP client that provides two intuitive interfaces for easily transferring files and directory structures between FTP servers and your local computer: classic WS_FTP interface and a new Explorer-style interface similar to My Computer. You can group select multiple files and/or directories and transfer them in a single operation. Features include firewall support, UNIX permission

(Shareware.....Continued on page 4)

(Shareware.....Continued from page 3)
switches, basic transfer logging, and a comprehensive logging option. Many display features can be customized. Also included is WS_FTP Pro Explorer, an extension for Windows Explorer that lets you transfer files via FTP. Full online help is provided. Free to try; $37.50 if you decide to keep it.

PROGRAMMING TOOLS: Setup Specialist 98 TG, Byte Software Setup Specialist offers a user-friendly visual development environment that does not require you to learn any script language; you set all options using a wizard-like graphical interface. Setup Specialist provides a training card feature that guides you through each step of creating your 32 or 16 bit setup program in English or in German. Each program you create features the typical Windows 95/98 Wizard. Setup Specialist supports selective installations, uninstall, creation of program groups, and Registry modifications. It can check for a variety of existing requirements -- including minimum display properties and CPU, Windows platform and version. Because it creates a single .exe file, you can easily distribute your applications through the Web, Internet, or even email. Finally, Setup Specialist supports many other features, such as billboards, checking for an expiration date, and efficient data compression. Free to try; $89 if you decide to keep it.

SYSTEM UTILITIES: Take Command/32, JP Software Take Command/32 brings the power and convenience of the popular 4DOS Command.com replacement to the Windows desktop. If you're a diehard command prompt user, you'll find this utility useful for performing tasks such as managing your hard disk, scripting a series of steps with a batch file or alias, or starting programs. The program's many features make it well worth a look by anyone who frequently uses the DOS command line from within Windows. You can try it out for 21 days before registering. Free to try; $69.95 if you decide to keep it.

WEB DEVELOPMENT: GDIdb, Global Data Industries GDIdb is a tool for anyone who needs to create, manage, and present an ODBC database or spreadsheet on a web site. It works from your local PC, with an intuitive, dockable toolbar environment for generating operational scripts containing all the necessary HTML to transform an existing database into a fully functional "data server." The only requirements are the data source and a dial-up connection to your web site. GDIdb even includes a built-in FTP interface and transfer-progress indicator for automatic publication and management of your new pages. You can evaluate this well-documented trial version for 30 days. A sample MS Access database is included. Free to try; $38 if you decide to keep it.

So if you're into Shareware as I am…. Merry Christmas! …. If you're not into Shareware…. Merry Christmas anyway. ◆

My Favorite Software – Info Select 5

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

It seems that---with William LaMartin asking for articles on a regular basis---we might want to consider sharing "a few of our favorite things"…namely favorite software programs. You know, the one that you use for just about everything, and you can't imagine switching to another program because this one just does perfectly for you what it's supposed to…**so** well? (For instance, I think we can all agree that WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS was the premier word processor in all of history, and it's been downhill ever since then…but that's another story.)

Well, let me be the first to lead off. I've been using computers in my law practice since about 1985, when I finally figured out how to use DOS on the 40-pound Zenith Z-160 "luggable" that I'd bought with the two 360K floppy drives and the tiny orange CRT. Sigh. Those were the days, weren't they? But I digress. Back in the mid-1980's there was a little pop-up TSR ("terminate and stay resident," lest we forget) program that was advertised in all the computer magazines called "Tornado." It wasn't quite totally clear what the program could or would or should be used for, but the marketing campaign said it would be mightily useful…if you could figure out what you were gonna do with it.

At that time Tornado was one of a nascent class of programs that years later would come to be called "PIMs" (personal information managers). Of course, no one called it that then, because no one had ever seen anything quite like it. It was originally trumpeted as a terrific way to keep names, addresses and telephone numbers, as well as "random information" (whatever that meant). Well, as a shiny young lawyer I figured I had more than enough random information to keep track of…so I took a flyer on the program and bought it…I think it was $39.95 or something like that.

Now this brings me to another digression, but one that will lead us back to little Tornado's latter-day incarnation in due time. Have you ever noticed that---in years past, at least---one of the hardest things to figure out about software was…how you were gonna use it? Like, how you were going to actually put it to work so that it fit your circumstances, your work structure, your…your…way-of-doing-things? Even today I find that's still a Major Question. Well, in those nether days of yore, when we were all fiddling around with DOS and DOS programs and TSR's and these newfangled things called "word processors" (remember what a sensation WordPerfect 4.2 caused?), I couldn't exactly figure out how I was going to use Tornado…but I figured that I could at least start by using it for my address/contacts/telephone book. And it served that purpose well, as I remember.

(Info Select.....Continued on page 5)

(Info Select.....Continued from page 4)

Well that, as they say, was then. And this is now. My favorite program, the one that gets cranked up in Windows 95 at the very beginning of the day, and the one that is repeatedly used for all kinds of things, is Info Select 5.0, the latest end product of its distant ancestor, Tornado (when they made the jump from DOS to Windows, I heard, they got into some kind of copyright snafu with some other Tornado-name-user, so they switched the name of the little program to the inelegant but pretty descriptive "Info Select").

Now, before I tell you the myriad ways I use Info Select, I've got to say there's a funny thing about it: Many of the computer world pundits and reviewers don't seem to like it…or understand it. When you sniff out a "comparison" review of PIMs on the Internet, you'll often find the writers scratching their heads over Info Select. The "standard" PIMs like EccoPro and Lotus Organizer and Act! and even Time and Chaos32 and Above & Beyond…well, those they can understand just fine, with all those clear little boxes and fields and fill-in-the-blank thingies. Problem is…Info Select doesn't have just about any of that. It just lets you---no, no, it insists that you---figure it out yourself and then set it up and use it the way you want.

That seems to unnerve a lot of computer users, especially the pundits. I had a friend, Chad, who asked me what PIM I would recommend, back in the late '80's. I was only too glad to tell him about Info Select. Well…he tried it, and he couldn't stand it. Just couldn't get comfortable with it. He…just…couldn't "figure it out," that is. He couldn't figure out how it was that he was going to use it. Strange, I thought. But then he got an early version of Lotus Organizer…and oh well,

Internet picture of the month



Front Dining Room at Antoine's, New Orleans, LA

Antoine's Restaurant in the New Orleans French Quarter is one of the great restaurants of America. Antoine's has been in continuous operation since 1840 under the same family's management. If you can't make it there for a meal just now, you can still pay a virtual visit at http://www.yatcom.com/neworl/dining/antoines/netscape/welcome.html

Chad was in hog-heaven with that little program. Thing was, I couldn't see how Organizer had any versatility or usability at all compared to Info Select….

Well, again, "that was then, this is now." Since the 1980's when a few of those little babies were popping up here and

(Info Select……..Continued on page 6)

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Reiter's Scientific & Professional Books	http://www.reiters.com/
International Lyrics Server - your favorite song lyrics!	http://www.lyrics.ch/
TipWorld -Computer tips, news & gossip	http://www.tipworld.com/javacontent.html
How Stuff Works	http://www.howstuffworks.com/
Tying Knots - animated - Boy Scouts	http://www.bsw.net/~bgibson/knots/
Web PrintSmart	http://www.hp.com/peripherals2/webprintsmart/index.html
Acronym Finder	http://www.mtnds.com/af/fr-bottom.asp
BIOS Setup Information Guide	http://www.sysopt.com/bios.html
Digital Chef	http://www.digitalchef.com/
Digital Recordings from Nature	http://www.naturesongs.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Info Select.....Continued from page 5)
there, modeled for the most part on existing paper organizers… since then a whole galaxy of those little huggers has appeared. Oh, it's just been grand. First of all, the suites all had ta have a PIM as a component, from Microsoft Office's "Outlook," to Corel WordPerfect 8's "CorelCentral," to the aforementioned Lotus "Organizer" (and Organizer 97, and Organizer 97 GS, and Organizer Premium Edition…sheesh), they've all become tails that sometimes wag the dog, an indispensible part of every suite.

And the rest? Oh yeah, "the rest": You get to choose. From EccoPro to Act!5.0 to Day-Timer Organizer Deluxe, to Franklin Quest Ascend, to Janna Contact 95, to Maximizer 97is, to Pack-Rat, to InTouch, to Comm Assistant, to PhoneBook95 Professional Edition, to Virtual Secretary, to Above & Beyond, to Time and Chaos32, to Client Tracks, to Organizer 97, to Quick Organiser, to AMF Daily Planner and PIM, to…to…well shucks, we can go on like this all day, and then all next week naming these little boomers. It's like there are more PIM's out there than cockroaches, and they seem to be multiplying almost as fast! It's like everyone with a keyboard has decided he's gonna bat out the dee-finitive PIM and slap it on the Internet… and it seems they're all just doing just that!

But I digress again. I was talking about my little gem, Info Select. Now, lemme tell ya this about that little enchilada! Oh. Oops…William says wait! William says I can't do unlimited babbling in a single issue of the newsletter. So I'll reluctantly shut up for the time being. Next newsletter, I'll tell you all about my baby, Info Select, and the myriad ways I use it.

In the meantime, I'm sure the rest of you have just as strong feelings about your favorite PIM! How's about we get some kind of Socratic dialog going here? Everybody send William a few nicely-crafted paragraphs about why your PIM is the best in the world, and what specifically you like about it, and how you use it and how it perfectly fits your work-style and needs. You know, all this brings a thought to mind. It's a great thing, the destruction of the commies' Evil Empire. I mean, look at us, we all get to not only pick our own software and tools from a universe of choices, but we also get to argue loudly and long about all of 'em. Without being shot. Of course, to my mind, anyone who doesn't cop to the extraordinary superiority of Info Select…well, they should be shot! But I'll tell ya all about it next month. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 2)
registered.

I should also take a moment to thank all those who contribute articles for the newsletter each month. There is a fairly small

(President……..Continued on page 12)

Memory & Office Problems

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Memory My Gateway P-166 now has 96 MB of memory. However, the process of putting it in was a little convoluted.

I bought two 32 MB SIMM modules for $40 each at CompUSA with a $40 mail in rebate. That seemed like a pretty good price—remember when a 1 MB SIMM was $40? Unfortunately before I went to CompUSA, I opened up the computer to look at the RAM that was already installed--two 16 MB SIMMs. To get a better look, I took one of them out. Then, when I tried to reinstall it, it wouldn't go in. A little investigation revealed that its socket on the motherboard now had a problem. About five of the 72 metal wires that run parallel to each other along the inside of the socket had sprung up from the bottom of the socket. With a fair amount of force you could insert the SIMM, but when the computer was rebooted it let you know that there was a problem by emitting a collection of loud beeps.

Fortunately I could install the memory I had in the two other sockets on the motherboard, and everything was fine. That meant, however, that I couldn't install any new memory in the two sockets that had been in use before the problem. So I called Gateway, and they offered to send me a new motherboard—not bad for what they thought was a one year warranty on a computer that was over two years old. However, when I convinced them that I actually had a three-year on site warranty, they agreed to send the motherboard with new memory, processor, cache, etc. for a technician to install. Everything was to be exactly like the original.

The technician came, did the installation, and everything worked fine except the network card and the scanner SCSI card. They were conflicting with each other, and he couldn't remove the conflict. I couldn't either--even with an uninstall and reinstall of each item in the Winnows Device Manager. Since I had solved such problems in the past, I told him not to worry about it and sent him on his way to his next appointment. About 15 minutes after he left, I had everything working. There was a BIOS setting for plug & play that was set incorrectly. Once I changed that, the cards were assigned different interrupts (something that couldn't be done earlier), and everything was in good order.

Office 97 If it is not a hardware problem, then it is a software problem. I know you think I probably make up these problems just to have something to write about, but that is not the case. I have enough problems occur naturally that there is no need to manufacture them, believe me. Of course, I may have a lower tolerance of things not working correctly than most people do. If something is wrong with my computer setup, I want it fixed. My Microsoft Office 97 saga is as follows:

(Comments…….Continued on page 7)

The Win Chip C-6 Processor

By James Weber, Tampa PC Users Group

At our June 10th group meeting, a representative from IDT/ Centaur, Mike Bruzzone, spoke about the new Win Chip or C-6 processor. Two chips with a board were offered to the group for evaluation, and I was one of the ones to receive a Win Chip Processor for evaluation.

The processor I received was one of the 225Mhz ones with a Tyan motherboard. I purchased all parts for the test system new so as to limit any hardware problems later on down the road. I purchased a Samsung 2.1 gig hard drive, 32meg SDRAM memory, a Trident 4meg AGP video card, U.S. Drives 24X CD-ROM, Ensonic PCI sound card, a Diamond 56K V.90 PCI modem, and a new ATX case. The only things used were my PS2 mouse and keyboard and a Maxtech 15" monitor.

I had no difficulty installing any of the components. I always build a system one piece at a time starting with the motherboard/processor, video card, and memory; I tend to stop after each component and turn on the power. This way if a problem develops I can isolate the newest component to see if it is defective or just causing a conflict with another device. After a bare bones construction of motherboard, Win Chip, memory, hard drive and video card, I did a bare system format of the hard drive. This was just enough to start up the system and check the functionality of the primary components. The bios recognized the Win Chip right off and booted to the hard drive without a hiccup. I next installed the 24X CD and loaded its DOS drivers and copied the setup files from the Windows 95 CD. As a rule I load the necessary files from the Windows 95 CD onto the hard drive and install from there. This allows me to change or add system settings on the fly without the need to swap out CDs. This also allows me to check the function of the CD in DOS mode just to be sure it works.

A new, clean, installation of Windows 95 ran fine on the first attempt, so I began to add the rest of my components. An Ensonic PCI sound card and Diamond PCI 56k modem rounded out my hardware. Again, all the new components installed and worked properly. A brief note about PCI modems. Windows 95 and 98 will install these cards and will not give any indication that there is a problem. A quick check of the System Properties box will not show any conflicting ports or memory addresses. However, the modem will fail to initialize in some cases. If you should ever have this problem, either disable one of the two serial ports from the motherboard in the bios, or go to the Control Panel \ Add Hardware button and add one or two more Comm ports to the system configuration before physically reinstalling the card and drivers. This error doesn't happen often, but it has happened enough for me to be cautious building a system.

I was able to run Windows 95 on the Win Chip without problems. I ran through all the accompanying programs that come with Windows and left it running for a week with various system utilities set to run during the day. I never had a system crash or lock up, and the processor showed no signs of over heating. Next, I loaded up Microsoft Office. Again, everything worked well. Word, Excel, and Power Point all responded without hang-ups. Internet access was not affected by the C-6. I used both AOL and Mindspring for Internet access with both Netscape and Internet Explorer running as browsers at different times. I didn't experience any difference in performance with any combination of these programs. I then loaded up a copy of Quick Books and ran my bank statements from the last year through it. (Had to do it sometime.) I left the machine running the whole time to look for any instability. Even though I still can't balance my checkbook, I didn't experience any problems with any of the programs I installed. The most remarkable thing I can say for the C-6 was that it didn't cause me any trouble up to this point. The whole experience had been remarkably uneventful.

Finally, I came across something the Win Chip couldn't handle: Games! Now, I know some of you don't think the use of games is important to the overall computer industry, but just look at all the money Americans spend on computer gaming every year. And I guarantee that any computer system you could possibly imaging will at some time have games running on it. I have a benchmark demo of Forsaken and Quake II that I used for my test. Forsaken refused to run at all beyond the introduction. Quake II was unstable at a resolution higher than 400 X 300. Even at low resolution, frame rates were never higher than 15 to 25 fps. I installed an Intel 233MMX chip into the motherboard at the end of the test, to see if my problems were video card related, but these games ran appropriately with the Intel chip.

The system I configured for this test was probably left running continuously for three weeks. Other than the few game problems I liked working with the C-6. In an office environment the C-6 would make a legitimate alternative to Intel or AMD for a Windows workstation, but don't expect the C-6 to be an inexpensive replacement for that new P-II Junior wants. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 6)

I noticed in MS Access that I no longer had the office assistant working properly—you know the little thing that bounces around on the page, makes noises and is there to assist you--so I reinstalled Access from the CD. That got back the assistant. I then figured I needed to reinstall the two Office 97 patches SR-1 and SR-2. Neither would install. The Sr-1 log file said that it would not install because it encountered incorrect ver-

(Comments…….Continued on page 10)

Beginners' Column: Files & Folders for the Folder Inhibited

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Because of a completely overwhelming response from my one fan, I'd like to review files and folders this issue. I know it seems pretty fundamental, but have you ever, say, downloaded a file from the Internet and then can't find it? Or has someone sent you an email attachment and, after dragging it to the desktop, have you realized that there are twenty other files on the desktop, and it's gotten overwhelming? Do you know what to do with these files? If you don't, then read on.

We're going to use Windows Explorer for the rest of this article. If you're using something called File Manager, shame on you. If you are using Windows 95, Windows Explorer is fairly good. It has some quirks, but even with quirks it handles long file names. File Manager does not and should not be used.

Now, please don't just sit on the couch and read this article. I'm writing it intending for you to be seated at your PC and actively following my instructions and to repeatedly do these instructions as an exercise until it becomes second nature. This is a foundation to understanding most of what goes on in your PC, so it's important.

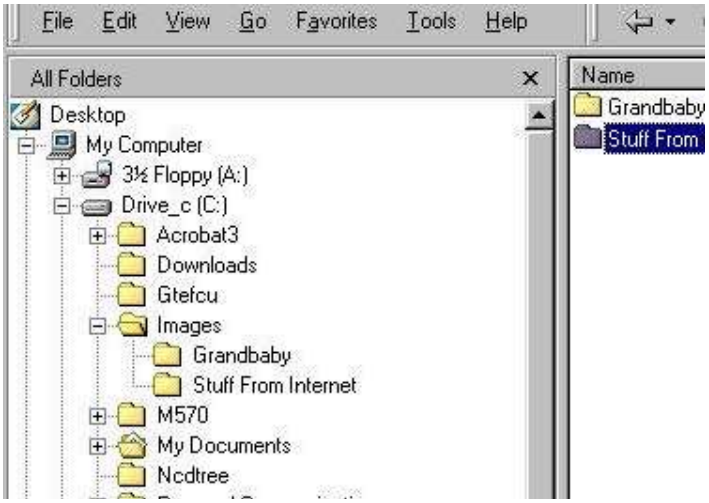
Windows 98 has an improved Explorer and is very configurable. It's main improvement is that once you set the style of how it looks, it stays that way. The Windows 95 version doesn't seem to remember much of anything. But there are a few things we must do here to make Windows 95/98 Explorer more useable. Open Explorer from its icon in the Start menu. This is the view that has a dual pane. The left pane has a directory tree diagram, and the right pane has a folder and file list. Go to the Menu, View, and click on Details. This gives you a pretty easy-to-read picture of the files in any directory. Browse to any directory on the left pane and see what files appear on the right. You'll need to go to View, Options and set Explorer to use the same window for all directories to keep it from launching a new window for each directory. And you'll have to click on View, Details sometimes to keep Explorer (95) behaving. While you're at it, display the toolbar too. The most useful feature on the toolbar is the "up" button.

For those of you with Windows 98, try setting your Explorer as "custom" and "use windows classic desktop" and "open each folder in the same window". I'm wary of imposing my personal preferences on you here. I prefer a traditional view of a hard drive, so I'll ask that for the purposes of this article, try it this way then experiment with the settings later.

So, we'll just assume now that your own files are not organized. When I say "your own files", I mean attachments to e-mail from your Aunt Tilly; interesting pictures or recipes you've captured from web sites; A letter to Uncle Bus that you started in WordPad; a spreadsheet to calculate how much interest you paid on the old clunker .. that sort of thing. What about the digital pictures of the "Worlds Most Perfect Grandbaby" the kids have been sending you? Can you find them? So let's organize your hard drive a bit.

Go to Explorers' Left pane and expand (C:). To do this, click on the + in the box next to the "(C:)" to expand the drive if it's not already expanded. If it's already expanded it has a "-" in the box.

Select the (C:) ("Select" means click once so an object is highlighted), then on the menu, click on File, New, Folder. In the right pane, a "new folder" will appear, and is ready to be renamed from "new folder" to let's say "Images". You'll see that when it's renamed it also will appear in the left pane, alphabetically under (C:). So let's add a subfolder under that one. Select the folder "Images", then on the menu, select File, New, Folder. And rename it "Grandbaby". Add another one under Images called "Stuff from Internet". So here's what it looks like in my Explorer.
Now that you have the idea, create a new one called



"Downloads" under (C:) and also make sure you have a document directory. Since I have Microsoft Office, notice that I have a folder called "My Documents". Other word processors may or may not create a document directory for you. If not, then go ahead and do it now. If you look at my expanded "My Documents" directory in the next picture, you'll see that I've categorized all my "stuff" into separate folders. So when I create a new document I always immediately do a "Save As" and select the correct directory or create a new one on the fly.

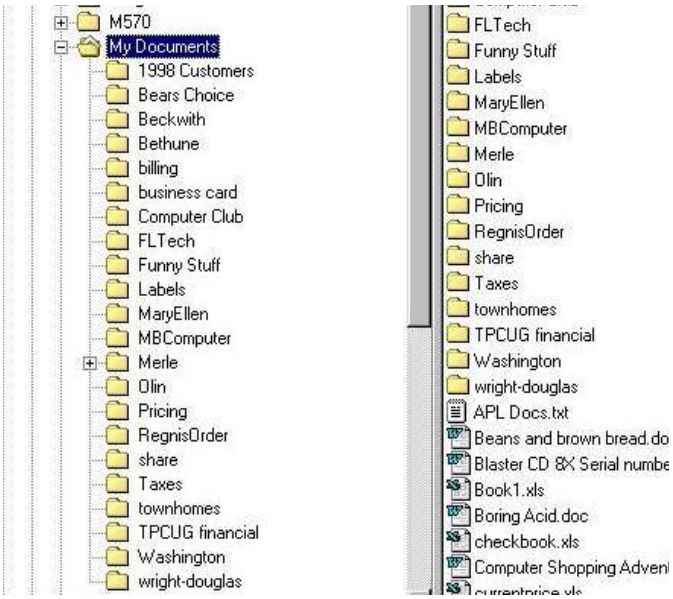
The best reason to organize in this way, besides being "organized", is that you're also making it much easier to back up your important files.

So now, what are we going to do with all that "stuff" you've

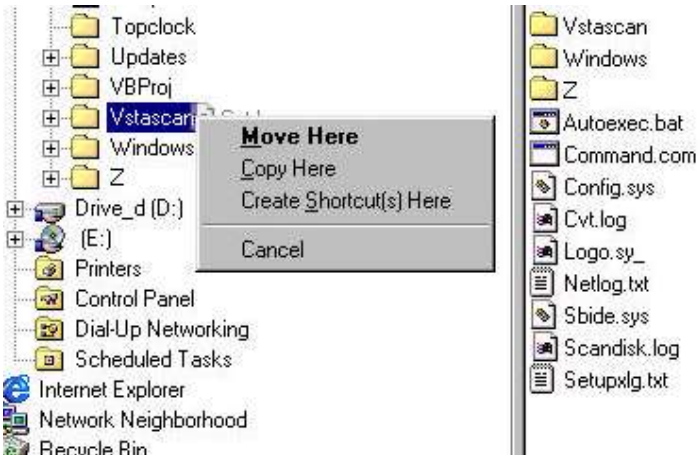
(Beginner.....Continued on page 9)

(Beginner.....Continued from page 8)

been accumulating in the root directory and on your desktop? We're going to move it all and get it organized. You can move all your files, one at a time or as groups. You can open two Windows Explorers if you like, one to move files *from* and one to move files *to*. You can size these so that you can see them both. Locate the files you want and drag each one to the destination folder. Using the right mouse key to click and drag gives you the most flexibility. When you "select" a file (or files) they become highlighted. Select them using the right mouse, drag them to the other window and when you drop the file, you get a small pop-up menu.



The item that is highlighted on the pop-up is the current "default" action. It's best to go ahead and select the action you want. Our objective here is to relocate a file, so **Move Here** is appropriate. So navigate through the hard drive using the left pane of one Windows Explorer and select the files on the right. Find the destination folder in the other Windows Explorer, drag each file to its destination folder with the right mouse and when you drop it, select Move.



You can easily select more than one file at a time and move files as groups. The trick here is to get them all highlighted and then ,when you have them all, right click on the *icon* of one of the files in the group and drag it where it's to go, just like moving one file. When you're ready to drag the group, it's easy to mess it up if you aren't careful to select a file icon from the group. You may need to practice this a bit.

Now to select multiple files, just click on the first file in the group, hold down Ctrl and then left click on another, and each one in turn until you have them all. If you want to select a contiguous group of files you can select the **first** of a list, then hold down Shift, and select the **Last** of the group. All files between those clicks will be selected. If you wanted to then exclude one of them you can de-select using Ctrl + mouse click. You can add or subtract any number of files in this way.

If you have multiple files on your desktop and want to drag them to a folder, you can drag a rectangle over any number of files and all within that rectangle will be selected. You can add or subtract from that group using Ctrl + mouse clicks. When you're ready to drag, remember to grab it by one of the icons in the group, otherwise you lose all the selections you've made.

There are other ways to move or copy files. For instance, if you look at the left pane of Windows Explorer, at the top will be a "Desktop" icon. Select that and on the right you'll see an organized view of all the files on your desktop. You can also right click on any file and get the long file menu – the one ending in properties. In the middle of that menu you'll see *Cut* and *Copy.* If you'll select Copy, and then navigate to another folder, and right click in that folder, you'll see that the menu has changed. It now has *Paste*, *Paste Shortcut* and *Undo Delete.* In this case select *Paste*, and the file you selected earlier will be copied to the new folder. If you had originally selected *Cut* from the menu when you selected the file in its originating location, the file would have been *moved*. That's because the *Cut -then- Paste* operation is the same as *move*, and the *Copy-then-Paste* operation is the same as *Copy*.

You'll need to practice to get this all right. Then as you use the software you have, use them with some discipline. Pay close attention to where the software puts you when you *Save* and *Save As*. It's much easier to maintain an organized system as you go along than to correct one. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

At last month's meeting, we critiqued a participant's web site, offering alternate ways of doing things, and then visited several interesting sites. We also looked at how to set your own walking order for a store for the online grocery list compiler at http://www.lamartin.com. This led to a discussion of cookies.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

Last month we learned the many different ways of manipulating string variables.

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)
sions of certain files. I figured that I needed to download the newest versions of each patch. After downloading SR-1, it seemed to run fine. I then ran the old version of SR-2 (I hadn't downloaded the new 23 MB version of it yet), and it ran, but seemed to run too quickly to have done much.

Next, when I tried to run Microsoft Word, I received the message that it might have problems due to missing or corrupted files and that I should run the Word installation. Everything seemed to run OK, but to be on the safe side I uninstalled Word and reinstalled it from the Office setup. That solved nothing. Additionally, Access had also lost the ability to import .csv or .txt files, and the Access setup would not allow me to reinstall this feature—saying that it was already installed.

I then decided that there might be a problem with versions of files and not that they were missing or corrupted, so I downloaded SR-2 and the version checker utility and ran both of them. Again SR-2 seemed to go mighty fast. However, the version checker said that I had SR-2 installed and everything was OK. Word still gave the error message about corrupted or missing files, and Access still had its problems.

This was another instance, like I had with Visual Basic 5, where an uninstall and reinstall of a program did not put things right. It seemed impossible to completely remove Word or Office. What do you do when a reinstall will not eliminate the missing file or possible corruption message? I think it was simply a version discrepancy among the SR-1 patch, the SR-2 patch and the original word installation. But how do we wipe the slate clean and start fresh--short of wiping the hard drive clean? Only recently have I run into this type of problem: Uninstalling a program and reinstalling will not fix a problem. It seems that things get stuck in the registry, and you can't get rid of them, and RegClean doesn't help.

Eraser97.exe to the rescue! Someone on the Office 97 newsgroup suggested a Microsoft utility called Eraser97 that would remove all traces of said program suite, and it certainly does its job. You wouldn't believe how much a regular uninstall leaves. Eraser97 gets all of that. Unfortunately other programs need some of what it removes.

So far, I have found three programs that had to be reinstalled because of Eraser97: the Active Server Page component for Microsoft Personal Web Server and my two scanners. I also reinstalled WinFax since I at first thought the reason that I couldn't scan and send from that program was the fault of the program, but, as I discovered, I could use scanners in none of my programs. Unfortunately, reinstalling WinFax probably installed a lot of old DLLs.

If you think you need Eraser97, you can get it at ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/softlib/mslfiles/eraser97.exe. Of course, afterwards, you may have to reinstall a few programs in addition to Office 97. ◆

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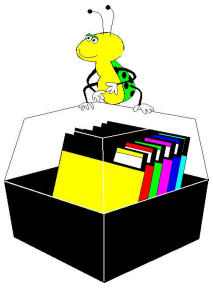
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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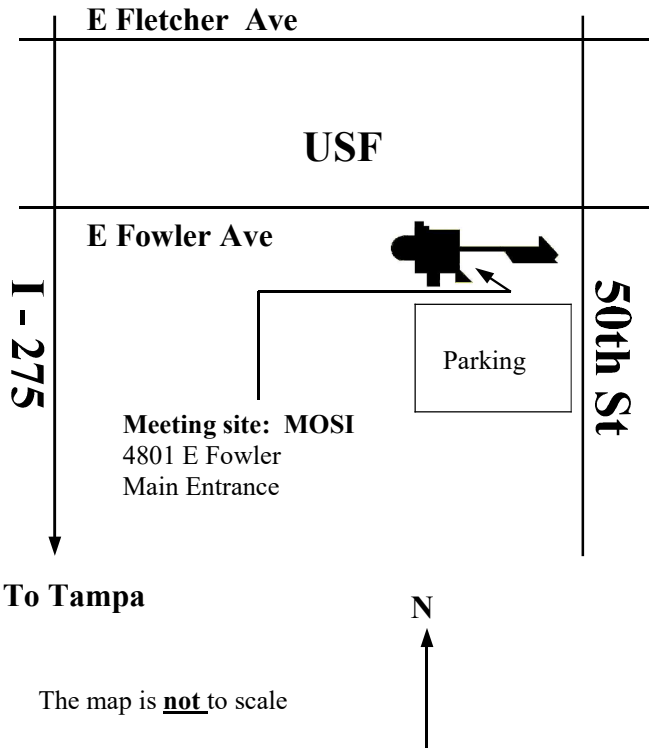
(President.....Continued from page 6)
group of people who selflessly give their time to do this. It's they who are helping maintain the quality of the club for all to enjoy.

Bruce Register, Member at Large, is a long time mainstay of the club. In the board meetings, Bruce's ideas and comments are always thoughtful and creative. You can expect that if there's a small task to be done, Bruce probably has already done it. He's a tireless and outspoken promoter of the club.

Larry Anders is the TPCUG Librarian. This job – and Larry along with it - has transitioned from the BBS to Internet Shareware research, so he's also become an invaluable regular contributor to the newsletter. Larry contributes to the administration of the club in so many ways.

Ford Bond is TPCUG MOSI Liaison. Ford represents us at MOSI, which provides us with our meeting place. Ford contributes at the board meetings and is a valuable supporter for our club. As our "MOSI guy", Ford is present and ready at all our meetings and Genealogy SIG too, making sure everything is set up and in working order.

That's the gang, the Board members who work for you to make this club great! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 1 January 1999

Meeting

Running a Home Based Business with your Computer

January 13, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the January meeting, Capt. Rod Stebbins will tell us how he runs a successful home based publishing/outdoor writing business with the help of his PC. Working with Frank McAllister he has also designed software for Loran-C and GPS positioning. Looks like an interesting presentation. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Welcome to the New Year from your TPCUG Board of Directors.

1998 was most certainly a successful year in terms of our financial status and also the quality of our invited speakers. Having a dedicated Program Chairman has really paid off for the club, and Mary Sheridan most certainly stepped up to the job. The newsletter, Bits-of-Blue, and the quality of the web site has continued to develop due to the unselfish dedication of editor William LaMartin. Our membership is at least steady.

In 1999, my personal agenda is to increase our membership. The BOD discussed this last month. (Actually we don't stop discussing it throughout the year.) We'll be calling on all of you to participate in some way.

The elections went off very smoothly at the December meeting, for those of you who couldn't make it. I won't go over the slate here, having done that last month, but I'd like to welcome James Weber to the board as secretary, and give Kevan Sheridan, the outgoing secretary, a very hearty "Thank You" for his years of dedication. I know Kevan won't be disappearing on us, since he's been a very, very long term member of the group. His most notable job was as the BBS SYSOP. He was "Mr. SYSOP" for many years until his wife Mary

(President.....Continued on page 5)

February 10: Mark Hayley - Travel Software and William LaMartin - Creating Interactive Web Pages
March 10: Jason Velasco-Jewell from Ontrac Data International – Hard Drive Utility Developers

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the December 9 Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group

Mary Sheridan presided over the Windows SIG, which started at 6:00. One member had a problem with his Win 3.1 sound card not working in Win 98. A suggestion from the group was to check the web site of the card's manufacturer for an updated device driver. No one in the group had any specific suggestions for solving this problem. Another member was trying to record sounds over 60 seconds using Windows Sound Recorder. No one present at the group had an answer. We also had an open discussion on LCD monitors.

Mary gave a brief run down of her experience at Comdex, the annual computer industry expo in Nevada. She got to see Bill Gates and listen to him take questions from the crowd. Mary was impressed with the clear and eloquent manner in which Mr. Gates answered questions, even though some of the questions lacked intelligence.

The general meeting started at 6:40. Nominations were read to the group for new officers. Ford Bond passed a motion to have the entire list voted on simultaneously with Bruce Register seconding. A unanimous vote passed the election of officers. The installation of officers will occur at the January meeting.

Sign up sheets were passed out for attendance and SIGs. The idea of a Linux SIG was discussed again as well as a presentation of the operating system.

The guest presentation started at 7:00 with Julie Altstatt of Jasc Software demonstrating Paint Shop Pro 5.0. Paint shop Pro is an image and photo-editing program offering a wide range of functionality. Ms Altstatt demonstrated how to make a Christmas card by importing image files and creating new images. She also showed Paint Shop Pro's photo cropping ability by editing and combining several existing photos and touching up damaged photos. Ms Altstatt quoted a price of $59.99 for group members and a free upgrade off the web site to version 5.01 for registered users.

Ms Altstatt brought two copies of Paint Shop Pro and Quick View Plus, a file translation program, for the drawing. Bruce Register and Jim Weber won copies of Paint Shop Pro and Kevin Sheridan and Jim Weber won copies of Quick View Plus. $64.00 was raised.

The meeting ended at 8:05. ◆

Microsoft Publisher 98

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Well, I now have in hand my third or fourth version of Microsoft Publisher, the program I have been using to publish this newsletter for the past three years. There are more sophisticated publishing programs and much more expensive publishing programs, but for the needs of our newsletter I have found Publisher more than adequate. With each new version, too, new features are added. I suppose the big new feature this time is the ability to publish your document easily to the web. As I recall, the previous version had this ability, but it didn't work very well, so, as far as I was concerned, that feature really wasn't there. As is often the case with Microsoft, they got it correct the second time around.

Publisher 98 comes in two versions: Standard and Deluxe. With the Deluxe version, you get Microsoft PictureIt, a "user-friendly" graphics manipulation program. Since I already have both Corel Photo-Paint and Micrografx Picture Publisher on my computer, I have no need for such a program. But if that is not your situation, for an extra $30 it looks like a good deal.

This will mark at least the second review I have done of Microsoft Publisher, possibly the third, so first allow me to tell you why a publishing program is necessary even if you already have a very good word processor. If you are only going to write letters and simple reports, then a word processor is more than sufficient. But for quality brochures, newsletters, fancy reports, greeting cards or business cards—a publishing program is a must. The reason is placement and text flow. You simply can not get good placement of graphics on a word processor page, and if you have more than one "article" in your document, you will find that in a word processor controlling the text flow from one page to the next is almost impossible without simply daisy-chaining the articles one after another—something you most likely don't want to do. I know, because, three years back, my first three or four newsletters were done in Microsoft Word. With two columns per page and more than one article on some pages, I about went crazy trying to control the text flow within each article when a change was made toward the beginning of the article. Boy was I glad to get my first copy of Microsoft Publisher.

In Publisher, text and graphics are contained in "boxes". If you want two columns of text on a page, you put two text boxes the size of the columns on that page. If you would like to additionally have a picture in the middle of the page, you place a picture box there. The text in the text boxes will then behave nicely and flow around the picture. You are allowed different layers of text and graphics which, depending on one's creative ability, can produce some nice results.

And, of course, there are the **wizards** which, according to Microsoft, "provide step-by-step instructions that guide you through setting up a publication, then allow you to use the power of the wizard to make global changes to your publication at any time." For the novice, the collection of over 1600 **design templates** produced by these wizards should be a great help. You have templates for newsletters, envelopes, letterheads, menus, business cards, logos, reports, brochures, etc.

You have the ability to set up profiles, which include items like name, address, logo, color scheme, and have them applied to new publications. Using this feature, you could easily achieve a consistent look for your company's newsletter, brochures and business cards. Of course, one must be careful here. If you use the Publisher supplied "**design looks**", then your company's look might turn out to resemble very much the look of another that used Publisher. One thing you can say about my publications (our newsletter & web site, for example) is that they don't have a consistent look and certainly don't have a **coordinated color scheme**.

I think the thing I like best about the new version is the automatic spell checking which underlines possible errors in red as you type—just like in Microsoft Word. As before, you also have the ability to edit each article in Word. It now takes one more click of the mouse to get there, though. In fact, several of the features that I used in the previous version that were accessible with a right click to get a menu, then a left click to select an action now require a right click for a menu, then a left click to choose between a selection of secondary menus and a final left click to choose the action. More options mean more time required to choose the one you want. If everything were still plain ASCII text, then we wouldn't have to make any choices—but we would have typewriter output.

Another nice new feature is the **multilevel undo**. Before there was only a one level undo. There is also the fixing of common errors as you type. For example, I just noted that Publisher supplied an uppercase A for the beginning of this paragraph to replace the lowercase a that I had typed. Of course features like this can sometime be a problem. Perhaps the lowercase a was not an error, and I wanted it there. Then it would be a fight with Publisher until I went into options and disabled the auto correct feature. But, for most of us and most of the time, such features are nice.

Besides producing this newsletter in Publisher, I have made brochures, business cards, envelopes, personalized mailing labels with graphics. And since Publisher has a **mail merge** feature, after creating a nice mailing label, you could use the mail merge to access your database of addresses and print out a nice label for everyone for whom you wanted to print a

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card—or you could print the address information directly on each envelope, or, in fact, print any personalized information you might have in a database into any Publisher document.

Now, once you have created your document, for example our monthly newsletter, you can do several things with it. First you can simply print it out on your printer. That is what I do with the newsletter, then I use this master copy to run the Xerox copies you get in the mail. Second, if you have the money, you could save the document in Publisher format or in PostScript format (if you have that driver installed) for a printing service. If you have the Adobe Acrobat printer driver installed, you could print it to an Acrobat file, as I do for a download via the Internet of the newsletter in this format. This is also an easy way to share your document with others who may not have Publisher, since the Acrobat reader is free for the downloading from Adobe. A final possibility is to publish the newsletter to the World Wide Web.

To accomplish this you need to take care with the layout of your document. The main consideration here is to avoid having any of your text boxes or picture boxes overlap (something I never worry about—in fact desire—in the creation of the newsletter for printing). If they overlap, Publisher will treat that section as a graphic when it creates a web document from your Publisher file—something that is not optimal. After Publisher has transformed each page of your publication into a separate HTML page and created graphic files in the GIF format for all the graphics in your publication, it remains for you to then link all the pages together and provide any further hyperlinks you wish in the document. When finished, publisher will invoke the **Web Publishing Wizard** to upload your new web document (actually a collection of HTML and GIF files) to the Internet. If you already have your own method of exporting files to the web, you can simply take the folder that contains all these files and export it to the web yourself in your usual manner, e.g., via FTP.

To see the November newsletter turned into a web document with Publisher 98 go to http://www.tpcug.org/publisher/pub9811/page1.html, hidden away in the study material section for our Internet SIG. It looks a lot like the original or the Adobe Acrobat version, but it has the additional feature that you can navigate through it while viewing it on the web. Even though Publisher 98 can be used to create nice looking web pages or even web documents like the newsletter example, it is not a web site management tool like Microsoft FrontPage.

Regular version around $99 and Deluxe around $129.◆

Urban Legends (on the Internet)

By Cheryl Alexander, Tampa PC Users Group

Rumors flying. Gossip galore. Knowing something that very few others know, even if it isn't true. Human nature has loved these things since the dawn of time and will continue to do so. However, with the Internet and email putting the world at our fingertips, individuals can do it faster and reach more people at the same time than ever before.

Many of these are stories that were passed on by word of mouth. They never happened to someone known to the individual and usually involved a Friend Of A Friend (FOAF). For the really gross stories, camp and slumber parties were the travel method. With the arrival of fax machines, the stories could circulate even faster. The advent of email brought ease of personal communication and, yes, the very same stories! They've been the basis of at least two movies ("Dead Man on Campus" and "Urban Legend"), a line of commercials for K-Mart, and several different TV series episodes.

These, my friend, are known as Urban Legends. Some of them are even true! However, the vast majority are made up or an old story placed in a modern setting. Many of them serve as cautionary tales in these “dangerous” times. We've all heard them or received them as a fax or many-times forwarded email. I remember hearing all the spooky ones at a slumber party and didn't sleep well for a long time!

What kind of stories are Urban Legends (UL)? The Choking Doberman, Alligators in Sewers, Maniac in the Back Seat, Diver Found in Tree are just a very tiny fraction of the stories that are out there. How do you know if you've been told or passed a UL? Quite often, there are few verifiable details, such as names, places, and dates. But that isn't always a guarantee. There actually are several sites that deal with Urban Legends. The one that I read the most is The San Fernando Valley Folklore Society's Urban Legends Reference Pages. Here is a list of some stories that I have been passed and found on the web site Urban Legends Reference Pages (http://snopes.simplenet.com/ or http://www.snopes.com):

- $1,000 email chain letter from 'Bill Gates' (BETA tracking program) http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/billgate.htm
- Monster AOL cookie http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/aol.htm
- aircraft carrier vs. the lighthouse in Canada http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/lighthse.htm
- using 90# for long distance calls from jail http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/jailcall.htm

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took over the job two years ago. He was pressed into service as secretary last year despite his increasingly busier and busier schedule. So, thanks Kevan, and if you'll stick around we promise not to elect you to something else.

Now my monthly nag. Let's all try to bring in new members. Now. This Month. You know someone, friend, relative or co-worker who can derive as much benefit as you do from being a member. I know you do. Pick up some Tri-Folds. (These are handouts with club and membership information on them.) Drag a friend in. I'm doing just this and it's working, and it really isn't much effort.

I'd like to thank JASC, the Paint Shop Pro people for allowing Julie Altstatt to speak to us at the last meeting. We depend on companies like JASC who will devote some resources for User Group support for our monthly programs. And a special thanks for the door prizes too.

Did anyone manage to take advantage of the discount sales going on this season? I went to Best Buy on the 26th and snagged up a 6.4G Hard drive for $99 (well, after I wait 2 months for a $30 rebate). While I was there I found some fantastic prices for scanners. I had bought mine a year ago, and I'm still amazed at how useful it is and how often I do use it. And there were great discounts on CD-ROMs and modems. There's still free installation coupons for new roadrunner subscribers too, good through January 31st. Current cable modem subscribers have these coupons – actually from a web site. Email me, and I'll send it to you with instructions.

Internet picture of the month



1998 stock price chart for Amazon.Com (AMZN)

1998 was the year of the Internet stock, and few did better than the on-line book retailing pioneer Amazon.Com (*http://www.amazon.com).* It experienced a yearly low of 24, a high of 361, and closed at 321. That resulted in a market capitalization of about 16.9 billion dollars. For each quarter 1/1/97 – 9/30/98, Amazon has failed to make a profit.

The chart above was from The Wall Street Journal's Interactive Edition at http://interactive.wsj.com/. You will, however, need to be a subscriber to view the same chart online. But there are many other places on the WWW providing the same information for free, e.g., Bloomberg at http://www.bloomberg.com/.

Happy New Year, to our fellow TPCUG'ers, and we'll see you at the January meeting. Merle ◆

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Cruising With Capt. Rod Stebbins – January presenter	http://home1.gte.net/captrod/
The Political Graveyard	http://www.potifos.com/tpg/
BUY.COM – Internet superstore	http://www.buy.com/
Victoria's Secret – shopping	http://www.victoriassecret.com
IRS Forms for download	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/forms_pubs/
UF Citrus Research & Education Center	http://tangelo.lal.ufl.edu/default.htm
Wotsit's Format – programmer's file & data formats	http://www.wotsit.org/
15 Seconds – ASP programming information	http://www.15seconds.com/
National weather buoy data center	http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/
Steve Hoffmann's Nature and Scenic Photography	http://www.niftywebs.com/photoweb/
Priceline.Com – where you name the price	http://priceline.com

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Make your own removable hard drive for fun and profit and backups.

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

I'd been developing this idea in my head for some time. And it's a pretty simple idea. You have a removable hard drive that you put into the PC, do a full system backup in 20 minutes, pop it out and put the hard drive in a safe place. If you're running a business from it, just take the hard drive home.

The idea got started mostly because of my lack of confidence in tape backups since Windows 95 came out. I think all of my own personal objections to tape backups have been satisfied now with better software except for two – cost and convenience, where a removable HD has the edge.

TAPE

The newest tape software now has you make DOS recovery diskettes that will load your operating system back on a new or reformatted disk and restore your hard drive as it was at the time of your last backup. For many years the procedure was to install Windows first, then your tape recovery program, recover from tape and then start reinstalling all the things that didn't work. The main problem is that you can't update files that are in use, and you have to use Windows to recover. It's time to look at your backup software now to see if it's time to upgrade.

The objections I have to using tape are many. One thing of course is that it takes a long time, so it has to run unattended. Do you look at the log (indeed, does it make a log for you in the first place?) to make sure everything went smoothly? Do you at least get a catalog of the tape each time to make sure the backup has actually been completed? Look at the date and size of the backup to make sure. I have known people who thought they were making backups and they were actually not accomplishing anything. You can set the software so that it doesn't halt on errors (a reasonable thing to do), set it to close when finished and not log the results. What do you have? No backup, probably. It's possible to get good useful backups, but it takes diligence and knowledge; it's not for disinterested employees who want to go home but have to do the weekly backup first.

DISK IMAGES

In the meantime, PowerQuest (DriveImage), Seagate (Ghost) and a couple of other companies came out with disk imaging software. These are really useful, and it's a mystery to me why it took so long to develop the products.

This type of software accomplishes many things, such as duplicating drives. The function that I'm interested in will make a compressed copy of a disk and write it to a file. One thing needs explaining. You have to write this file out to some other disk or partition or network drive, but not to itself, so a one drive system just can't be done. As for a network drive, this software runs in DOS, so you would have to have networking program files for DOS that are small enough to run from a diskette. I'm still looking for Microsoft Networking for DOS.

STARTING OUT

On my personal machine, I have one drive with two partitions. In its previous incarnation it had two drives. When one failed, I removed both, bought a 6.4G and partitioned it in two so it would have the same file arrangement without installing all software, and just built a new computer to use as a server with the one remaining. Also I built my spouse a computer to replace her nice old 484 Toshiba Portege. So I have three computers at home (and two at work) to contend with, and life is getting complicated. For a while I was making a monthly drive image from one to the other partition, and then copying the files to the server drive for safekeeping. I even once copied the two files to tape. It worked, but hard drives are too cheap and life is just too short, and besides, I have two other machines to worry about that were getting occasional tape backups. I'd duplicate document directories from the two personal machines to the server when I thought of it.

ENTER THE REMOVABLE HD

So I looked at an IDE removable drive kit. As you can see from the pictures, it consists of a case that installs in a 5-1/4 bay, the same size as a CD-ROM but an important ¾" longer.



On the outside back of the case is a standard IDE 40 pin connector and a standard power connector, both just like the end of a hard drive. Inside the cartridge is a ribbon cable and a power connector that connects to the HD. The interface connector inside resembles a Centronics printer plug and socket. Notice also the small fan for cooling the hard drive. On the front is a key interlock. This key turns power off to the drive and releases a mechanical lock before allowing you to pull the

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cartridge out. It's a standard PC lock key. I hate these keys and would prefer a conventional lock with a unique key. The kits are $45 to $50 retail. From some ads I've seen it's possible that some brands don't have the fan. I needed three cases and one cartridge. They can be purchased separately on special order, but there wasn't much cost savings, so I bought three complete sets.

In addition to moving a single hard drive from machine to machine, another possibility is to have multiple hard drives for the same machine, so if you're, for instance, trying to learn Linux or NT server and have one machine, this may beat the "dual boot" situation. I suggested this to my oldest son who is learning operating systems, so I'm sending him my two extra cartridges and one complete set.

INSTALLING
Installation is straightforward. Install the case and connect the ribbon cable and power connector. In my case I used a connector from my CD-ROM cable and set the drive jumper to "slave" since all my machines have single hard drives and the CD-ROM is set as Secondary IDE Master. I set all the BIOS to detect a Secondary Slave as AUTO. Each machine hesitates only a moment looking for that drive when it's not installed. In the inside of the cartridge, connect the ribbon, paying attention to the pin numbering to make sure it isn't backwards, plug the power connector to the drive and last, position the drive and put the four mounting screws in. Thankfully I haven't seen a non-standard hard drive in many years where the power connector is on the other side of the IDE connector.

As an aside, I had gotten a good price a month ago on the 6.4G drive I'm using, but I just got a 6.4G Maxtor at Best Buy the day after Christmas for $99 after rebate. This is one reason it's cheaper than tape.

I used Partition Magic to partition the drive in two at about one-third as FAT16 and two thirds FAT32. One of our three



machines is Win 98a, and my spouse doesn't want me messing with it. The other two are Win98 FAT32, which the Win 95 machine won't even recognize. In retrospect I should have used one partition FAT16, but it's not worth changing back now. Eventually we'll have them all Win 98 or Windows 2000.

USING THE DRIVE
Simply shut down Windows, turn the machine off, open the lock on the drive, insert the drive and lock it in the on position. Turn on the computer. If you have a partitioned main drive, as I do on my personal machine, just hold down Ctrl (Win 98) or press F8 at the right time (Win 95 and Win 98) to get the boot menu and select Command Line prompt. Since my main drive is partitioned as C and D, the removable will insert itself between as D, with the old D partition as E, and my CD-ROM as F … so the best thing to do is to just not go into Windows. On my other two machines, it doesn't matter.

Since image programs run in native DOS, Windows must not be running. You can set up what you need three basic ways: On a boot diskette, as an icon on the desktop or Start Menu, or on the removable drive.

As an icon under Windows, no matter where the executable is, the properties for the program must be set to MS-DOS Mode under Properties, Program, Advanced. This causes Windows to exit, and reboot into DOS Mode and start the program automatically. If you go into Command Line Prompt, you can run the program manually from the command line, and if you use a boot diskette, you can call the image program in autoexec. bat. The boot diskette method is pretty clean, and you can have the image program on the diskette or on the removable drive.

So once a week, I go to one machine, restart with the removable in, boot to DOS, run the image software, go away for twenty minutes, shut down, remove the drive and start the machine again. I've backed up all three machines in an hour, easy.

INTERIM BACKUPS
You can't make an image backup every day, I wouldn't think, unless you're running a business and are developing things for clients, something like that where recovery time is critical. I have a reminder to do this weekly, and I have to admit I sometimes skip it. Not often though.

I do daily file copies of the document directories from our personal machines to the server. I'm evaluating a small shareware program called Backer 4.0 from Leanware. It's $35, and it seems to do what I want. It's a little difficult to understand how to set it up at first. To their credit, they have excellent online help and examples. The help recommends that you start

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Info Select 5 – part 2

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

Like I said last month, Info Select is a program that people either love…or hate. And many of the software reviewers---accustomed to those orderly rows of boxes and fill-in-the-blanks of the "normal" Personal Information Manager (PIM)---well, they just, plain, flat, don't **like** this program. Consider David Haskin in the November 1997 *Computer Shopper*, commenting on Info Select 4: "Beyond its unique abilities to manage both free-form and structured information, Info Select's other PIM capabilities are weak….Info Select's to-do list capabilities are even more anemic….Info Select also scores poorly on more advanced contact management capabilities." Or Kathy Yakal in the December 14, 1998 issue of *Shop & Compare:* "Info Select is a terrific idea for an information manager, but its execution doesn't fulfill that promise, and the PIM lacks the polish it should have by now."

On the other hand, *Byte* magazine's famous columnist, Jerry Pournelle, weighed in on Info Select in the November 1996 *Byte*, that the program is great for helping him write his novels, and "it's also great for diaries, keeping track of work in progress, and other stuff. You can learn to use it in about 5 minutes, and I don't see how anyone gets along without it." Ditto for some fans caught raving on the Info Select web page (or I should say, Micro Logic's web page, the company that puts Info Select out). Said one: "I just wanted you all to know that I am completely enamored of Info Select 3. It has quite literally reorganized my entire information life….It's hard now to imagine life without it…a truly astonishing piece of software engineering."

Okay…what's going on here? Well, I can't explain everyone else's rants and raves, both for and against Info Select, but I can tell you that Info Select 5 is the most important single program that I use every day in my law practice (out of, say, a dozen other programs that are used daily or almost daily).

Does Info Select do my calendar and scheduling (super-important for a lawyer)? No, although it does have such capabilities. Does it do my word processing? No, although it has extensive capabilities in that area also, from templates to spell checking to the ability to generate fill-in-the-blank forms. Does it handle my email? No again, although it has extremely extensive capabilities in that area. Does it even do my to-do list (another super-important function for a lawyer)? No yet again; for that I use a little standalone shareware program called To-Do List Pro.

Well, then, why is Info Select so dang-blasted important and useful to me? Well…hmmm…kind of…duh…well, like…I guess, almost **everything.** And therein lies the rub when it comes to this little bombshell. It's **so** flexible, and so good at **so** many things, that every user uses it as an absolutely crucial program for…whatever that user finds it most useful for. Jerry Pournelle uses it for keeping scenes and characters straight in writing novels. He's a writer. I'm a lawyer. I use it for…

- Keeping track of what's going on in individual lawsuits and disputes, which (as you might imagine) have numbered in the thousands over the years. I use the free-form note-taking ability that Info Select gives me to notate everything that happens in every case I have. Then when I need to refer to any particular lawsuit, whether it be with regard to discussions on the telephone, or what the judge did at the last hearing, what position the opposing shyster…uh, **lawyer**, is taking, or what the phone number and/or address of any-of-the-above might be…I just pop it up in Info Select.
- Keeping track of names and addresses and telephone numbers and email addresses and the such (finally, something that **other** PIM's are used for…and I can't imagine that any other PIM could do it better or more effortlessly).
- Keeping a "personal dictionary." Yep, that's what I said. Don't we all run across words that just aren't in our pitiful vocabularies from time to time? When that happens to me, I strike back: I pop that bugger into my Info Select dictionary (i.e. "list of words you don't know"), plug in the definition, and when that word pops up again I just check in my personal dictionary. Strange, admittedly, but there it is.
- Keeping…uh…"miscellaneous or oddball information." Do I remember how to send and pay for a certified letter when I'm asking for a signed receipt back? And what's the procedure and cost difference between certified and registered mail? Who knows? Info Select knows, because I put the instructions for myself in there years ago. Ditto for, oh, billing procedures, contact information, legal clauses in various documents, procedural hurdles in various situations, etc.
- Legal authorities: Admittedly, this could be grouped under "oddball information" above, but it's what I do. Do you want to know what interest rate a circuit court judgment drew in 1954? I've got it. Or how about the authority for slapping an attorneys' fees claim on an opponent when the contract only says **they** can get such rewards? I've got it (it's statutory, for all you lawyers out there). Or what about the various charges involved in issuing and serving a post-judgment continuing writ of garnishment? Who the hell would know? I certainly wouldn't if I didn't have it stashed in an Info Select window.
- Let's see…what else is there. Lots. Closed file lists. Payments by debtors. "Miscellaneous interests." Computer information. Neighborhood civic association newsletter information and volunteers. Professional associations info and happenings. "Projects in process." Client lists, cross-referenced with files and lawsuits. Internet information and locations. Out-of-town lawyer contacts. Plot and character information for writing projects (yep, I dabble in the black

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art of fiction writing). Info about repairs, upkeep, modifications, components, records, etc. on….everything, from the lawn mower to the copy machine to the oven and stove, to the various computers around here.

And plenty more. And I really only scratch the surface of what Info Select can be used for. That's the funny thing about the program: Everyone uses it in a different way, for different purposes, none of which may be the "most popular" uses by others, or even "most recommended" by the manufacturer.

Which brings me to an odd thought: In all this talking about what Info Select 5.0 can be used for, I haven't described how the program actually works. The answer to that is…well…it's a free-form, text-driven, windowing PIM database that has uses, as Micro Logic puts it, "limited only by your imagination" (whereupon they list about 50 examples off the top of their corporate heads). That doesn't adequately describe the software in a supposed software review, I know. So thank goodness for the Internet. To get the real flavor of the program, go to http://www.miclog.com/isover.htm. You'll find full information on Info Select 5.0 there, including screen shots.

In the meantime, that's my most important, beloved, and crucial program, used every day in every way to make my life more organized and easy. What about the rest of you? Having shared with you that part of my daily computing life, I'd be interested in hearing about the "fave programs" of others in TPCUG. Come on, don't be shy. Step right up and talk. The information you impart may---dare I say it?---change the (computing) lives of the rest of us. ◆

(Legends……..Continued from page 4)

- most bizarre suicide http://www.snopes.com/spoons/faxlore/opus.htm
- diver found in tree http://snopes.simplenet.com/horrors/freakish/scuba.htm
- Points Off Licence http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/ticket.htm

It is a nicely organized site. They also have a message board where rumors and facts are tossed around with abandon. Before posting anything that you've heard on the board, search the site. It's probably there, and you will prevent unnecessary threads. However, if you just use this site (or a similar one that has researched the stories) to check the email with a subject line that is just too scary or too good to be true, then you can avoid passing on a story that is totally without basis in fact. ◆

Epson Stylus® Photo 700

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group



As a lot of you probably know, it's hard to buy a computer-type gift for a computer-type person at Christmas time. So my wife gave up on that idea a long time ago… at least picking out the gift on her own. So it's one of my challenges each year to decide what I want Santa to bring me. Of course it would be easy in this day and time to ask for a new computer but I'm still happy with what I have. So more thought was put into solving this dilemma for this year.

I will admit that after seeing the demonstration of the Alps line of printers at one of our recent user group meetings I was tempted to ask for one of them (one of which I hear our newsletter editor **was** fortunate enough to get). Hands down the Alps line has the best output I've seen for photo quality pictures, and if I wanted nothing but a photo printer I would have asked for one of those. But I was interested in finding a good photo quality printer that was also good for printing pages with heavy graphics ***and*** text, such as web pages. I personally think it's unrealistic to use an Alps printer to do this. The speed is too slow (up to 20 minutes to print a full-page photo), and the cost per page is too high (the Alps uses special paper to get the best quality output). Enter the new **Epson Stylus® Photo 700** ink-jet printer. (The one I asked Santa to bring me.)

This new printer not only prints sharp photo quality pictures but it also has crisp looking text that rivals any laser printer that I've ever used, so that makes it perfect for printing other things like greeting cards, calendars, reports and web pages. The Epson 700 prints up to 1440 dpi resolution and uses something called enhanced Super MicroDot™ technology that creates a lot of detail on the image. Its **6-color** print cartridges print photos as smooth as those I've gotten from the photo-lab. Also, Epson's Micro Piezo™ print head creates clean, consistent printing, no matter what type of paper I use. But obviously, the better the paper, the better the output. The monochrome print head has 32 nozzles while the color print head has 160 nozzles (32 x 5). I have found that printing in 1440 dpi the paper tends to ripple on the backside of lighter paper. On a heavier card stock type paper, it prints just fine.

It can print a standard 5" x 9" photo in about 90 seconds and an 8" x 10" photo in about 5 minutes, which is about ¼ of the time of the Alps printers. While it can print 1440 dpi its standard resolution is 720 x 720 dpi and will also print 360

(Epson.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We again critiqued a participant's web site, offering alternate ways of doing things. We also looked back on what we have been doing, trying to get some perspective on not only how but why we build web sites.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309* .

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

The projector was broken last month, so we couldn't run VB on a laptop and project it to the screen. Thus, we went off topic a bit and used the Gateway computers to view and discuss Active Server Pages (which use VB script) on the Internet.

(Epson.....Continued from page 9)

or 180 dpi. The input tray can hold 100 pages or 10 envelopes. By the way, it prints envelopes better than any printer I have ever used. It can print on single sheets from 3" x 5" all the way up to a panoramic of 8.3" x 23.4" and can print on plain bond, photo paper, transparencies, iron-on transfers, and a bunch more.

The EPSON Stylus Photo 700 also came with Digital Photo Lab™ software suite, which is a pretty decent photo project package for editing and organizing photos, sharing photos on the Internet, and creating personalized calendars or panoramic images.

I've owned nothing but HP DeskJets in the past so this Epson is a first for me. But this Epson cost half of what I've paid for every HP I've ever purchased. And that was a pretty good deal for Santa, if you know what I mean. ◆

Getting Rich, Alps Printer, Buy.Com & Extended Length Sound Recording

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Since my contributors came through so splendidly this month, I have very little space to fill. It is a new year, and I am sure all of our computer savvy members made a killing last year by early on buying stock in AOL, Amazon.Com, Yahoo and any of the other computer/Internet items and then sitting back and watching them quadruple every few months. I am jealous of you. I was just too busy editing the newsletter and web site to get around to increasing my wealth.

But I have contributed in my own way to this Internet frenzy by making several online purchases. Most recently I have been keeping the connection to Buy.Com busy with orders for Alps printer cartridges and paper. If I don't stop I will soon have as much money in consumables as in the printer. There is serious money to be saved (as much as 40%) by buying such supplies online, and I have had good service so far through Buy.Com. The MD 1300 printer was bought locally and was my Christmas present. Perhaps I will do a review on it next month. Using the photographic quality paper and cartridges, it produces output that looks essentially like a photograph. Coupled with my HP PhotoSmart slide, negative & photograph scanner, it is producing superb results.

Those who watch the web site or read my email messages will know that I have added a TPCUG events calendar to our site. It is another example of using Active Server Pages. It updates itself each month as to our fixed meetings with no input from me. I also rearranged the order of the links on our main page.

I added a slightly different calendar to the ASP section of my site, http://www.lamartin.com. This one will create a calendar for any month and year you choose. I am also slowly adding more photos to that site. The latest are black and white shots of the New Orleans area, and I hope to soon add some black and white Mardi Gras shots to complement the color ones.

Finally, recall the question at last month's meeting concerning the one minute time limit on the Windows Sound Recorder? Well, that is indeed the limit. But when you know Visual Basic you can create your own programs, and I created an Extended Length Sound Recorder-Player which records for 90 minutes. You can download it from the VB section of http://www.lamartin.com (for free, of course) ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Museum of Science and Industry
BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems	Micrografx
Broderbund	Microsoft
Corel Systems	PowerQuest
Grolier	RDI, Inc.
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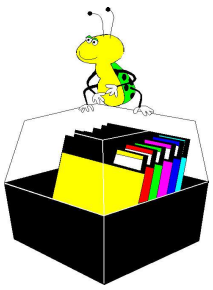
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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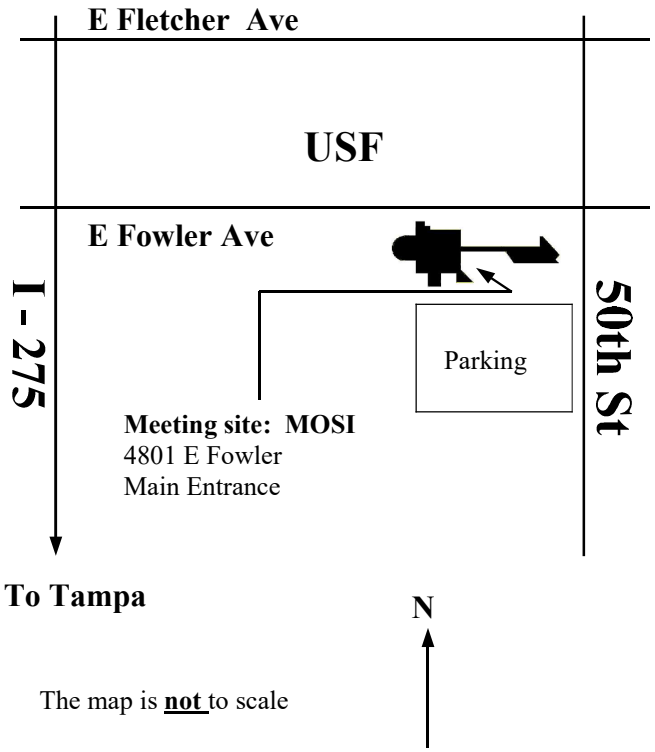
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Backup.....Continued from page 7)
out simple and grow to your needs, and I agree. The way I have it configured, I have two batch jobs, one for each personal machine. I have the folders on the two machines identified that I want backed up as the source and a directory structure on the server set up as the destination. I have it set up to synchronize the destination only to mirror the source. Many, many other options are available. Synchronize to the destination makes the destination reflect the source identically, so that when I delete a source file it deletes the backup too.

The part that I hesitate about is I'm not confident about my ability to identify all that must be backed up daily. Would you remember your Outlook or Netscape Address book?

One thing I know, is that ***when*** I have a full hard drive crash, the worst I can be is a week old, I can recover in not much more time than it takes to go buy a hard drive, and that lets me sleep better.

If you have any questions about this, don't hesitate to email me at MerleNic@TampaBay.rr.com. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



March in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 3 March 1999

Meeting

Ontrac Data International

March 10, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the March meeting Jason Velasco-Jewell from Ontrac Data International will speak about recovery software and the prevention of data loss. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, I have very little to rant and rave about this month. The SIGS, Windows, Internet and Visual Basic, are all going pretty well. Genealogy is being under attended. Please, if you have an interest in this SIG, show your support by attending. I'm very pleased with the other SIGs, and we have some interest in starting a new one for Linux.

What I think a Linux group needs to get off the ground is a volunteer to locate a meeting place and send out email to those people we know have an interest. Call the first meeting an exploratory one and decide on locations and subjects as you go along. It's really not much work; the Visual Basic SIG is a good example; it takes just a few minutes work each month.

On a personal front, I received a notice from American Express this month stating that I would not be held responsible for internet purchases on AMEX that I did not make. That is reassuring. I had given the hazards of online purchasing some thought in the past, and I have to say I'm not comfortable with it. I've only made a couple of purchases, one to Amazon, and two to purchase software licenses. I'm not ready to jump into buying a lot of things like clothes for instance. My oldest son, who lives in a remote area in Colorado buys on line and also from catalogs all the time and just doesn't worry about it. One thing I do tell myself is that I let that same card go out of my sight all the time at restaurants. That isn't to say I don't worry about it.

(President.....Continued on page 7)

April 4: Mark Komula from Network Technologies — Home networking

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the February Meeting

By Bruce Register, substituting for James Weber

The education session was opened by Mary Sheridan with discussion of Windows 95 and Windows 98. Some members asked for help. Other members provided the helpful guidance.

Virus checking became a subject. It was suggested that if a virus check indicates "no virus" then one should check for the date of the virus check program. One may need to have a new virus program update. A great deal of comments were devoted to pluses and minuses regarding virus solutions. Some Microsoft programs have built in virus protection. Comments were made about the invasion of macro viruses into Word. The best protection is to have the best and most recent version of virus checker.

William LaMartin announced that the Discussion Group on our web site was not working at present because of a technical problem with the TPCUG ISP. He assumed the problem would be resolved shortly.

President Merle Nicholson followed Mary's discussion with a brief business meeting and proffered several announcements of interest. He reported on the various SIGs.

Guest speaker, Mark Haley, presented CD products including "Planets and Stars", "America's National Parks and Forests" and "World's Great Cities, Parks and Wildlife". He previewed the CDs on the big screen. He presented videos, stills and maps. He discussed the use of the Internet for making travel and lodgings reservations. Rather then restate the presentation on his CDs, let us note that he found a way to capture many public domain movies and still photos, linked together with maps to which he added a narrative to make CDs. I obtained the CD "Planets and Stars", which contained material seen on commercial and educational TV. He did add a sketch locating some planets in relation to each other. He sold CDs for $10. Last month we had a presentation on how each of us can prepare and produce CDs for the market. This program provided another example of that idea.

Following Mark Haley, William LaMartin presented "How to Make Your Web Pages Do Something by Using Active Server Pages". He presented and commented on ASP pages, web sites that employ them, html , and server side scripting. He demonstrated a site created by Microsoft and his own site, http://lamartin.com, where he showed us how to use an ASP created online grocery list compiler.

Door prizes were won by Rick Mills, Mike Hutchison, Bob LaFavr and Kevan Sheridan. ◆

Complete Hard Disk Backup to CD-R Disks

By John G. Hatsios, Tampa PC Users Group

Merle Nicholson's fine article on backing up a hard disk by using a removable hard disk appeared in January's "Bits of Blue" newsletter. After reading it, I was reminded I must backup my hard disk and better do it sooner than later.

In my case, I wanted to use a CD-R/RW to backup my hard disk on CD-R media. Although many software companies advertise the capability of backing up the hard disk to a CD-R, they hide the fact that they mean "only if all the data can fit in a single CD-R"! One of the reasons I bought the CD-R/RW was for backing up my hard disk, but now it looked as if I had to do a little more investigating. After asking Adaptec, the foremost company with CD-R supporting software, and inquiring on the subject in a couple related forums on the Internet, I was told the software for backing up to multiple CD-R's is not available yet, but it is under development.

The reason I am writing this article is that I did backup my hard disk in multiple CD-R's, and I will take you through it so you can use the information if you need to do something similar. But before I tell you how, let me tell you why.

Yes, I know, why should anyone bother? To buy the hardware, then the software, then to go through the learning process on how to do it and finally backup the hard disk. Bottom line: Spend $200-$300 and 10-20 hours. Then wait for the hard disk to crash, and nothing happens to the hard disk for years. Is it a waste of money and time? I think not.

From my personal experience I have been on both sides of the fence. First, from my first IBM PC to 286, 386, portables, etc. never backed up anything and never had a problem. But with my first Gateway 2000 Pentium I thought it was time to backup. I bought a Colorado 1400 MB tape and I made a point to regularly backup my disk. I never had a problem and consequently never needed to use the backup.

Now I come to my present system, a fast IBM Aptiva with plenty of resources, all kinds of system tools (Config Safe, PC Doctor, Norton Anti-virus, etc.), Windows 98, and an array of fine software. Did I need to backup such a solid system? Why should I, since I never had any problem before. Well, I found out the hard way that I should have backed up my hard disk.

After having my system set up the way I wanted it, which took many, many hours spread over many weeks, it crashed. It really crashed. No Config safe, PC Doctor, Windows 98 Startup Disk, or DOS could revive it.

The first indication was a message during booting up, "Cannot find VMM.VXD". But that was only the tip of the iceberg. The complete registry was all messed up and the Windows \System directory had only a small number of files left; all others were an indistinguishable rubble, a complete mess. There was no hope of restoring my hard disk. I had to start from scratch, formatting, reloading the software and then rebuilding my configuration. Luckily, most of my data were backed up in diskettes.

A couple of weeks later I found an entry in the "known problems" area of the IBM Aptiva Tech Support web page. It said the problem is due to the incompatibility of a particular scanner with the operating system software. I assume they meant the Windows 98 OEM software. I did not ask whose fault it was... I have a scanner but not from the same manufacturer. The fix recommended was to format the hard disk and reload Windows and all the software, literally start from scratch. Little consolation! Also, now there was a downloadable BIOS update to correct the problem. However, the cautious language used in the instructions left the door open for possible future problems. It said, in essence, that even after the BIOS update "if problem is repeated, please repeat procedure", and that left me kind of wary.

FINDING THE RIGHT SOFTWARE

Well, it just happens that I listened to the PowerQuest people saying their "Drive Image" software can backup a hard disk to multiple CD-R's. There were three conditions:

1. There had to be more than one partition, so as to be able to use one for a backup file.
2. The partition with the backup file could not be backed up.
3. The backup file, or image, had to be split into a number of sections, 650 MB maximum each, in order to fit in each CD-R.

My hard disk was a single partition. I could create a partition using Drive Image but because of some additional features I was sold on a second product for this from PowerQuest. Partition Magic creates additional partitions on the fly without destroying the data, as long as there is adequate free space on the disk. More information can be found in their web site http://www.powerquest.com.

It sounded good ,and the price was right, $30 each plus shipping, around $65 total, less than half the regular price. So I ordered the two programs.

In the meantime, while examining other alternatives, Merle informed me through the Internet TPCUG Discussion Group that he knew someone who had backed up his hard disk on CD-R's using PowerQuest software and also using a Seagate backup program. I knew Seagate made the Windows 98 native backup program, but I had already written it off since it was

(Backup.....Continued on page 4)

(Backup.....Continued from page 3)
not supporting CD-R/WR. What about an update?

Yes, I found an update in the Seagate web site, http://www.seagate.com. For $49 for Windows 98 owners, $99 for others, plus shipping, I could get a backup program that would support removable media, including CD-R/WR. It sounded perfect, and, since there were no conditions, I could backup directly on the CR-R and then use my CD-ROM to restore. I ordered it.

All along I've been concerned about restoring. A regular backup program works in the DOS environment. To restore, DOS has to recognize the device containing the backup file(s). The startup, or rescue, diskette contains the DOS program, but it also needed to contain the DOS driver for the device to be used to restore.

The PowerQuest documentation says to backup directly from Windows, using the Windows version of Drive Image and then, for restoring, using the DOS version of the same program. The instructions ask you to contact your device manufacturer for a DOS driver. In my case it was an OEM CD-ROM. However, as you might know, the Windows 98 Startup diskette already has a generic CD-ROM driver and you can choose to have it loaded during boot-up. Seagate did not say much about restoring in their documentation, which is only available in their backup program's "help" file, but I assumed I would find more information as I proceeded, so I chose to try Seagate first, since it seemed to be a straightforward backup program.

TRYING TO BACK UP USING SEAGATE BACKUP

The Seagate upgrade, called Backup Exec, came on a single CD-ROM without any documentation, except basic installation instructions. I felt these instructions were not adequate because they did not say anything on system requirements, what changes will be made in my system, will it update the existing backup program or install an entirely new one. Right from the start I did not get the impression of a good and well-documented program. The Backup Exec was loaded by default to its own directory, different from the original Windows 98 Seagate Backup directory, so it is a complete stand-alone program.

The instructions for backing up to CD-R's contained two steps:

1. Backup to a file on the hard disk.
2. Copy the backup file to CD-R.

Both backup and restore are executed within the Windows environment. That caused two concerns:

1. How Windows 98 will back itself up completely. Or will it?
2. I will need to load Windows 98 before restore.

In my case, Windows 98 OEM is part of a number of compressed files on a single CD along with all the other OEM programs, and they are automatically installed if you install Windows from this CD. So I needed another extra step installing all the original programs and then uninstalling the ones I did not want. This was not a pleasant task to look forward to. A lot of junk is loaded 'free' in today's computers.

OK, I backed up to a file on the hard disk, in the same partition. I formatted three CD-R's to ensure I had enough space for 2.2 GB of uncompressed files. I needed a little over 1.3 GB with compression. Looking at the size of the backup file I could tell it did backup Windows 98; however, during compare it generated an error report of a few Windows files it could not backup. This, however, was no longer important, since reinstalling Windows 98 will be required before restore. I assume they backup Windows 98 to include any updates, upgrades, and customization, but files in use could not be backed up.

The copying to the CD-R started normally. The CD-R/RW was recognized and started burning the backup files to CD-R at the normal 2X speed. But while I was waiting for the 'Insert CD-R number 2' message, I got an unpleasant surprise: "Error-The end of CD-R media has been reached unexpectedly. Copying has been terminated." The first CD-R stopped after copying 637 MB, and there was no recovery path. Seagate Tech Support next morning told me that not all CD-R/RW are supported. I was told the supported list did not include my Acer CRW6206A. I thanked them for the news and asked for an RMA number. The damage was $15 for shipment and registered return and two weeks wasted.

BACKING UP USING POWERQUEST SOFTWARE

The PowerQuest packages came with very good documentation. Both Partition Magic 4.0 and Drive Image 2.0 came each on a single CD-ROM and each with a good printed manual. I also received BootMagic for use with multiple operating systems to enable switching among them. It sells separately for $15-$30, but it is included with Partition Magic in its CD-ROM and a separate smaller printed manual. I had never used any PowerQuest software before, but I had heard good comments about them. I expected everything to go very smoothly, at least this time. However, it did not quite happen that way.

I installed both programs, following the usual installation instructions, and generated a "Rescue Disk", actually a two floppy startup pair for each program. For obvious reasons, this is recommended before attempting to partition a hard disk to

(Backup.....Continued on page 5)

(Backup.....Continued from page 4)

run Scandisk and Defrag. I did both. Also, there was a bold caution note to backup the hard disk before attempting to partition. I had no way of doing that. As a matter of fact this was to be the end result of the process I had just started. A little ironic, but I would not blame them for being extra careful.

Here I had another minor distraction. The documentation said if I had more than one CD-ROM installed, Windows 98 might not automatically assign the proper new drive letters to the CD-ROM(s), so I might not be able to copy to CD-R. I followed the recommended procedure and when I pre-tested, the assignment was incorrect. I disregarded the above and returned to my previous setting. This was probably my error, since I assumed CD included CD-ROM and CD-R/WR.

I started Partition Magic and got the initial screen. But as soon as I tried the first pull down menu everything froze. This was the kind of freeze no Ctrl-Alt-Del or Power-Off buttons could fix. It was a solid hang-up. I had to pull the plug out of the wall. Tried again, after making sure all other programs were turned off. The result was the same. I performed Scandisk and Defrag on the hard disk again and reloaded the program. There was still no solution.

Next morning the PowerQuest Tech Support, after examining the procedure, tried several times without success, then told me to use the "Rescue Diskette(s)" to start and open the pro-

(Backup.....Continued on page 9)

Internet picture of the month



First American Patrol to Enter Town
Troina, Sicily, August 6, 1943

This is one of the photos by Robert Capa on display at the site Masters of Photography. The URL is http://www.masters-of-photography.com/. Other photographers featured include Adams, Cartier-Bresson, Eisenstaedt, Evans, Lang, Steichen, Westen and many more.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
IP Magazine (Internet law & policy)	http://www.ipmag.com/
Price Watch - for comparing prices on computing items	http://www.pricewatch.com/
Nolo (self-help law center)	http://www.nolo.com/
Religious and Sacred Texts	http://webpages.marshall.edu/~wiley6/
Automotive Learning On-line	http://www.innerbody.com/innerauto/Default.htm
Butterfly Web Site	http://butterflywebsite.com/
Floridata (plants & gardening in Florida)	http://www.floridata.com/
Masters of Photography	http://www.masters-of-photography.com/
Mineral Gallery (minerals for viewing & purchase)	http://mineral.galleries.com/
Active Server Corner (Programming ASP)	http://www.kamath.com/
AutoNation USA	http://www.autonationusa.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Backer 4.0 by Leanware

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

Boy, I like shareware. What a concept shareware is. I used Backer for more than a month before I decided that it did everything I needed. So I ordered it online, and they sent me a license a day later by email. Slick.

Backer 4.0 is file backup software, and I needed it to complement my current full backup scheme. If you remember from our January Bits-of-Blue, I set up a method of doing full image backups to a removable hard drive. I have three Pentium-like computers in the house and I'm trying my best to keep backups from ruling my life as much as possible and yet give me the best protection.

So I'm doing full image backups whenever I install something significant on the machines. But as important as it is to have full recovery capability, it doesn't address keeping up with the files we generate daily in between when we make full backups.

Valerie does our Quicken financials and daily logs and accounting for her business. I generate accounting stuff, invoices and expenses for my business, in addition to my occasional programming projects, writing articles and course materials for my teaching. And what about things like internet email addresses, and recent email itself that you accumulate? If I have a full system failure, all my recent stuff will be lost.

So I went looking for shareware backup software. My requirements were simply this: On a daily basis, copy all new files generated on Valerie's and my machines to a backup directory on the server over the network. I'll admit I really did luck out on this one because I didn't have to look at many before I found this on Shareware.com. It's $35,and made by a German company, Leanware. It appears that this is their only product.

Backer 4 is a very slick, kind of complicated program that will synchronize directories between computers, between directories, between a desktop and notebook, over a network, to Zip drives, floppies or whatever. It has a time scheduler to do daily or weekly backups or whatever your needs are.

To understand what the complications are, let me explain directory synchronization. If you have a source directory that you want to duplicate elsewhere (called the destination directory), the rules are pretty easy. If a file has a later date in the source, copy it. If it doesn't exist in the destination, copy it. If it is in the destination and not in the source, delete it from the destination. This is called one-way synchronization. Backer calls it "touch destination only" and needs the "erase destination" option.

Two way synchronization is harder. You'd use this if you had a notebook and a desktop and wanted to make sure certain directories were both the same, regardless of which machine you used. The basic rule is to move a copy of any file that has a later date to the other directory. The difficulty is in handling orphans. Let's say you have one orphan in one of the directories. Is it an orphan because you deleted it from the other? Or is it orphaned because you created it here or copied it to here, and needed to duplicate it to the destination? Don't know, can't tell. For now, what you do is set an "overview" option so that it displays a very attractive, readable panel with a summary of all files it intends to copy or erase and which way it is to be copied so you can change it before it happens.

Leanware intends to improve on this in the next revision by (optionally) keeping a small database on each folder, so it can tell if a file was added (then copy it) or deleted from the other (then delete it).

In Backer, you create a backup file that describes all you want to do on a particular source and destination drive. You set up all the rules, designate what directories you want to synchronize from and to. This becomes a "work file." The directory structure on the destination does not reflect the exact structure as the source. For instance, I created a single directory, "Backups", on my server, and then two more directories under that for Valerie's and my machines. Underneath each of those, the directory structure reflects that of the source. I designate the directories, specify all files and all directories underneath those, select what file types to compare (by age), enforce (copy always regardless of age), erase, and exclude all using standard wildcard conventions.

Then, if you have more than one drive, either source or destination , you set up a "batch" file that will run any number of "work files".

All this is complicated. Leanware recognizes this and provides very exceptional help files. And it comes with a sample "learning" backer file. They specifically warn you to go about the process of setting up slowly. If you start by using advanced options right away, the program will pop up a warning that you may be in over your head, and suggests a sample file to work from. You can make the warning go away easily. I can't say enough about the help files; they're really excellent.

The shareware version is not much different from the licensed version. On the shareware version, it has a startup pop-up screen with an "agree" or "disagree" button to press. This effectively prevents you from scheduling it to run unattended. It alters the position of the buttons on each startup, I suppose, to keep you from starting it with a windows macro.

I registered my copy online from a jump from the Leanware

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website to a secure ordering service in this country. The next day I had an email from Leanware with the name and password. That made the startup panel go away, and now I have it running on my server. Daily, it goes out to the data directories on the other two machines and copies all the latest files. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

Once, an Olive Garden restaurant switched my card with someone else's. I got his and he got mine. The bill amount was very close, and I actually paid his bill, he mine, and a week later when I tried to use it, a cashier at Office Depot wouldn't let me have my card because this card, with someone else's name on it had been reported stolen. Why didn't the guy just phone me, instead of reporting his stolen? AMEX was very nice about it and got a new card to me quickly. The manager at the Olive Garden basically said, "Oh well, these things happen!" when I called him about it. It doesn't happen to me anymore, I'll tell you that.

I just used my card to buy a software license for Backer 4, the software I reviewed elsewhere in this issue. I elected to go through a secure software site, which I'm sure takes a cut off the top of my $35 purchase. I could have just emailed Leanware and given my card number, but that was more than all my conservative bones could take. I'll get used to it. ◆



Editor's Comments: Genealogy & Photography

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Since my contributors came through so well this month, I have very little space to fill. In fact, there is really no room for graphics within the articles. I had decided to do a review of the latest version of Family Tree Maker (FTM) if there was space, but it looks as if that will have to wait until another issue. FTM, like Quicken, is one of those programs that I usually skip versions of between purchases, but this time I had to buy the latest version about nine months after buying the previous version if I wanted to share data files with my sister, who had the latest version. So I might as well write a review.

That brings to mind my latest Visual Basic project: retrieving data from FTM. It works as follows: I export my FTM data to a GEDOM file (a standard genealogical data format for storing such information in text files—but which is hard to decipher if you view it with a text editor). Next, I write a VB program to retrieve the information from the GEDCOM file and store it in several tables in a Microsoft Access database, e. g. there is a table of individuals with fields for information about the individuals, and a table of families, etc.

Why do I want to do this when FTM allows me to display my data in so many ways? My two reasons are: First, I just like to be able to get at my data and not be at the mercy of some program—no matter how well-behaved the program. Second, I would like eventually to do things with the data in the genealogy section at my WWW site, http://lamartin.com, that require having the data in a database I can access using the Active Server Page (ASP) server side scripting I discussed in the February general meeting.

My second recent project was to create a contact sheet for a roll of 35 mm film using my HP PhotoSmart scanner and my ALPS MD 1300 printer. A contact sheet has all the photos on the roll printed at a size so that the entire roll fits on one sheet of paper. I always had the ability to do this—it would just have taken forever since the scanner software would only allow me to work with one frame of the negatives at a time. And with that image from one negative, I would then have to size it appropriately, etc. One such contact sheet, very much reduced, is at the left.

The solution to my problem was a piece of shareware called VueSmart from Hamrik software for the HP PhotoSmart scanner that allows batch scanning. VueSmart scans in all the negatives on a strip up to 8 frames long and creates a separate graphics file for each frame of size and format of your choosing, which are then all opened in your default viewer for that graph-

(Editor.....Continued on page 9)

Installing Linux

By Charles Howe, Tampa PC Users Group

Objective: Install Linux "on my own". I had sort of installed Linux on a plausible machine (plausible from the standpoint of CPU speed, amount of memory, disk space) at a meeting of the Suncoast Linux User Group (charming acronym: SLUG). A couple of helpful people guided me through it, but the process didn't allow me to mull over each step and let me fix what happened in my brain.

Rather than wipe it out, I decided to try putting it on a machine with a 40 MHz 386 motherboard. I brought memory on that machine up to 16 mb and hard disk space to 540 mb. The video card had 1 mb of video RAM, and there was a CD ROM drive and an AHA1520 SCSI card to handle it. I had Red Hat Linux, version 5.1. A mantra of Linux types is that it will install on hardware like this. Ought to work.

Did work.

Did it go to completion first time? Of course not. There was stuff to figure out beforehand. I had tried installing with a 170 MB hard disk, but it ran out of space. That was when I bought a used Connor 540 MB hard disk. I also put in a 120 MB Maxtor hard disk to be used for the Linux Swap partition, but it didn't get recognized when partitioning took place, even though it was recognized by the BIOS at boot up. That has been the only disappointment so far.

The installation process: You have to experience it for yourself, of course. I put the boot diskette in A: and the CD in the CD-ROM drive and turned the power on. The first screen shows up! A morale booster. Then screen after screen. What you do for several screens is obvious and simple minded. Then comes the one entitled "Disk Setup", the choices being Disk Druid and FDISK. A legend tells you that Disk Druid does partitioning and setting up mount points and is usually easier to use than FDISK so I chose it. The next screen to show up, entitled "Current Disk Partitions", and its derivatives are all important.

In the middle of the screen is the legend "Disk Summaries". If you have just one hard disk, just below the first header it reads "hda". (If you have two, the second line would read "hdb"; a single SCSI drive would read hdsa, etc.) The second header is "Geom [C/H/S]". The entry is something like "[866/15/26]", meaning 866 cylinders, 15 heads and 26 sectors. Note that the drive geometry was autodetected! These numbers pertained to the 170 MB hard disk that was abandoned in favor of a 540 MB drive.

The third column header is "Total". Below it is 164 M. The fourth column is "Used". At one point it was 162 M. Then came the column "Free", below which was 2 M. The last column is untitled. Below it was [########], roughly indicating percentage occupied.

The top of the screen has a line of column headers reading "Mount Point", "Device", "Requested", "Actual" and "Type". There are as many lines as there are partitions. Initially the "Mount Point" column is blank. The "Device" column might contain entries like "hda1", "hda5" "hda6", etc. In other words, there may be skips. The "Requested" and "Actual" columns are filled with partition sizes. It isn't clear to me what would have to happen for the two columns not to be identical. The last column must show at least one "Linux native", and there has to be one "Linux swap".

Along the bottom is a line of five push buttons. What they are used for is obvious.

Initially the first partition is highlighted, selected and active and the first disk drive is highlighted and selected. I'm not going to try to describe every keystroke you can take, many of which will lead you to a dead end. Do enter and key in the mount point. I do not yet comprehend what would be a good partitioning scheme, but I took the easy way out and designated one mount point only, the root -- "/". The installation takes care of everything, but if anything goes wrong, everything goes wrong disk-wise. I also made a 32 MB swap partition. I would have used the entire second drive had installation recognized it. A bit of arcana: the largest allowable swap partition is 127 MB, one MB less than 128. (Don't ask.)

I didn't install a modem, a GUI and TCP/IP. Later. I did install X Windows, in which programs can be run from the command prompt. In that manner multitasking can proceed. There are two GUIs, KDE and GNOME. Red Hat didn't include either in version 5.1 and also didn't in version 5.2, which is now out. However, GNOME is almost certain to be included in version 6.0, which is expected to be out by midsummer.

Tip about attending a SLUG meeting: There are two meetings a month. One is on the second Wednesday of the month at Thomas Jefferson High School. In addition to a conflict with our own TPCUG meeting, the meeting room is a long distance away from where you park, so bringing your computer is very inconvenient unless you have a cart to tote everything. The other meeting is on the fourth Saturday of the month (5th Saturday in January) at the Dunedin Public Library, at 9 am. An early start, but otherwise much better. ◆



(Backup…….Continued from page 5)
gram in DOS. That helped a little. We got to three steps before freezing. Then I was told I might not have enough conventional memory. We inserted a line in the Autoexec.bat of the Rescue diskette to load the program "high". By that time I was on the phone for 45 minutes and I told the tech to study the problem and either call me back or e-mail me with any suggestions.

I am sure this experience is not out of the ordinary. As a matter of fact, it happens so often that some of us have developed certain "defensive" or should I say "offensive" mechanisms. One of them is that we call again, hoping to get a different tech who will have a new idea. It worked. The other tech said I had to lock my hard disk, which is supposedly done by the program automatically. After that the program worked, although only in the DOS mode.

I have a 6 GB disk with 2.2 GB used. It is FAT 32. My cluster size is minimal, 4K, so there was no need for multiple small partitions. I decided to leave another 1 GB to the primary C: partition and make a new D: partition 2.8 GB to be used for backups, etc. You see, if I had a backup file of my C: disk in the D: partition when my computer crashed, I could have recovered just from that file alone, easily. So the strategy now was to leave the backup file in D: even after copying it to CD-R's. This will give me additional insurance and facilitates making interim backups, since backing up to HD is very fast. I will need my removable media, CD-R's, only to recover from a major HD damage.

The creation of the extended logical partition now went smoothly, and the graphical representation of the disk partition sizes and status was excellent.

Ready to backup? Well, not quite yet.

The last PowerQuest tech I talked to cautioned me to ensure I have the Version 2.02 update for Drive Image, especially if I am to backup using a CD-R/W. He assumed the version I received a week ago was 2.0 so I had to do a two step update, first to Version 2.01 and then to 2.02. Checking the version in the Windows 98 program showed 2.0 but in DOS showed 2.01. The updates were downloadable from the PowerQuest web site. Each update was compressed and large, a few MB and a few hundred KB, respectively. They were not self-extracting. The instructions called for downloading to a Temp directory, copying to the Drive Image directory, and expanding by using PKZIP or a compatible utility.

Checking the Windows program, it showed version 2.0 while the DOS showed version 2.01. Besides the question of what version I already had, I also found out there were three directories using the words, Drive Image. Anyway, the directory I chose was the one containing the application, exec file. The update 2.0 to 2.01 did not do anything to either Windows or DOS programs. The update from 2.01 to 2.02 changed a couple of important files. It was now obvious I had version 2.01 for both programs. In any case, however, I was interested in the DOS program, since that's the one I would use for both backup and restore.

This is the end of the suspense. The rest worked just fine. I backed up the entire drive C: in a three part split backup file in D: using the high compression setting. Then I copied the backup file from D: to F:, my CD-R/RW drive, one CD-R each file part. The C: to D: backup took, approximately, half an hour and the D: to F: copying another 75 minutes. There were no errors and no more problems.

I do not expect problems with restore. The Windows 98 Startup Disk loads the DOS CD-ROM driver and the Drive Image Rescue Disk contains the DOS version of the program. Although I have not done the restore, I am confident the complete drive C: is restorable. I did check it as much as it is possible with a dry run. ◆

(Editor…….Continued from page 7)
ics format. In my case, for each negative strip of four frames, I have four pictures opened in Corel Photo-Paint each of which I simply copy and paste in a row to another 8.5 x 11 window I have open in Photo-Paint. To do a roll of 24 requires repeating this six times and takes about 16 minutes.

I then also have the 24 individual thumbnail sized graphics files, which I may at a later date use in a database of my photos, and I have the Photo-Paint page containing all 24. I certainly save this page, and I also print it out using the ALPS in photographic quality mode. The results are stunning.

Possibly at some distant time in the future, all my photographic work will be catalogued in a database with digitized thumbnails and accompanying hard copy contact sheets. Then, again, that project may suffer the same fate as the never finished database of books in this house and the cans of paint bought to paint a certain room in the house which is still unpainted. But at least I now know how to make those contact sheets—just like I know how to paint the room. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. Last meeting among other topics we studied such a member site.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

Last month, we reviewed how to open text files, manipulate the textual date and then save the file. We then studied an example of a VB program that creates a calendar for the month and year of our choice. The study material is posted at our web site under the SIG link on the Announcements page.

Book Review: Peter Norton's Complete Guide to Windows 98

By Donald W. Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

The world of computers has changed in the last few years. We used to have lots of programs like Stac and WordPerfect. There were so many of them that we had a hard time keeping up. At that time, I used to buy lots of books.

My new computer has Windows 98 installed ,so it seemed sensible to go to the library and see what books were available. One of these is Peter Norton's Complete Guide to Windows 98. Most books now are very thick, and this one is about an inch and three quarters thick. Much of the "new" books consist of word for word repetition of what is in the on line manuals. None of the manufacturers likes to give you a book of instructions with the program as they used to. No doubt this saves them money.

Now for the book. I was not sure what Microsoft's reference to Active Desktop really meant. Norton points out that you may use the Win 95 static desktop, or you may opt for an Active Desktop by using the "View as Web Page" option. After you set "View as Web Page", go to a blank space on your desktop. Right click, click on Active Desktop. You will see three options, View as Web Page, Customize my Desktop, and Update Now. Click Customize my Desktop, then Web. An Active Desktop allows you to have a stock ticker or some such thing on your desktop. The ticker can update as often as you wish. Or each morning you may have the newspaper of your choice appear when you start up. In other words, your desktop can be an "active" thing with some changing data to aggravate you as you work. (You have to add small programs to access the Internet every few minutes, that's what Active Desktop really means.) In the book, Norton goes into detail,.

The book tells you things like "If you go to File | Open in most applications you get the same dialog box. That dialog box is part of the COMMDLG.DLL located in your SYSTEM directory." All through the book Norton gives you little bits of information like this.

Norton suggests that if you are going to install a new operating system, you might like to make not one but two different startup disks. The first is the regular startup disk that the program tells you to make. The second is a DOS startup disk of Norton's makeup, and it may take three floppies. You might like to look this up on page 124 of the book. These disks will get you up and running if you have any serious kind of a crash.

Norton tells you why, when, and how to install FAT 32 support on hard disks larger than 540 MB, and he teaches you about the possible incompatibilities and pitfalls of FAT 32. He also discusses multimedia capabilities with MMX, DirectX, OpenGL and ActiveMovie. These take up too much space for this review. That's the reason for the thick book!

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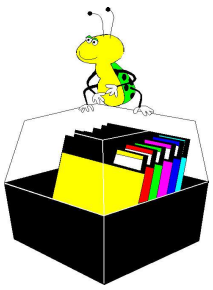
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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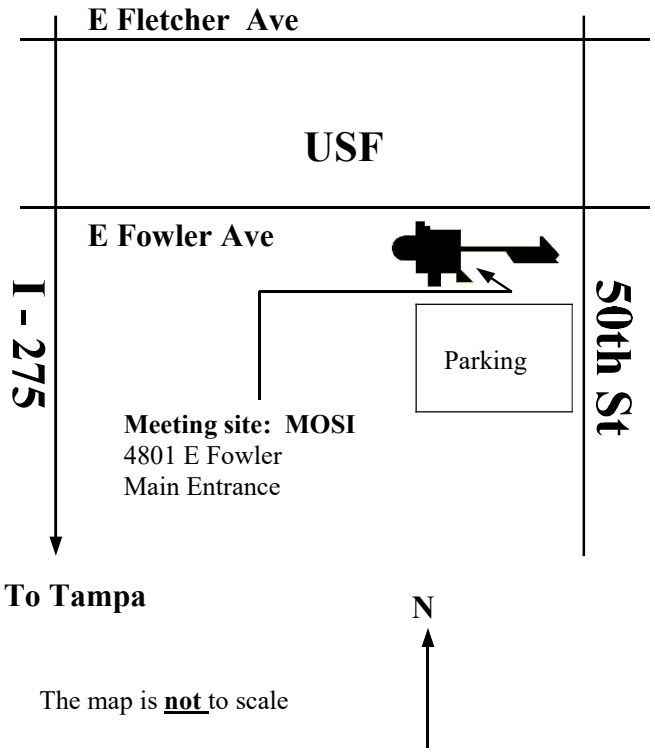
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The section on the new Windows 98 Problem Resolution Utilities includes the System File Checker. The System File Checker allows you to do two things - first to scan your system files for errors, and second to extract files from the installation disk. If Windows acts strange because of a corrupted or missing system file, or because a crucial system file has been replaced with an older version by a bad installation program for another program, you may recover from these problems with System File Checker. Go to Start | Programs Accessories | System Tools | System File Checker. (My computer and some others I work on have a slightly different path, maybe yours does also.) Give this a try and see how easy it is to replace the bad file even if it is buried in a CAB file on your installation disk.

In the past three months, I have read about fifteen books, very thick books on Windows 98. This is the best one for the person who needs a little coaching and a lot of reference material!

This book is in the library if you wish to look it over. In it you can find the answer to most of your questions on Windows 98. There are many tips and tricks scattered throughout the book, and it is easy reading. There are 644 pages, and it is published by Sams. The list price is $29.95. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



February in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 2 February 1999

Meeting

Two Presentations:
Travel Software
Interactive Web Pages

February 10, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry

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Meeting Preview: At the February meeting, Mark Hayley will present Travel Software and other CD programs for the first part of the meeting. In the second half, William LaMartin will discuss creating interactive web pages with Visual Basic scripting and active server pages. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

In this issue, please look at two notable items. One is the announcement of the new officers. The installment of new officers occurred at the January meeting. Part of this is, of course, so that you, the membership, will know who the dedicated workers are. But, since we are also a Florida corporation, it's a good idea to announce the change in a public manner.

The other item to look for is a very brief financial statement. The club passed a resolution many years back to publish this yearly. Please note that our balance has increased considerably. This is due the reduction of printing costs through the generosity of a club member and a small team of volunteers who put this together at the lowest possible cost.

I'd like to make a plug right now for our SIGs. SIG is Special Interest Group. At the moment we have three SIGs: Windows, Internet, Visual Basic and Genealogy. All meet monthly. There is further information in this newsletter and on our web site with a contact name for each. There is some current interest in a Linux SIG. A Linux SIG will get started only when someone will volunteer some time to collect names and find at least an initial meeting place.

A SIG gets started if, One, there are enough people interested to support it, and, Two, if there's a volunteer or two to make the arrangements. There can

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March 10: Jason Velasco-Jewell from Ontrac Data International – Hard Drive Utility Developers
April 4: Mark Komula from Network Technologies — Home networking

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the January Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group

Mary Sheridan started the Window SIG at 6:05 PM. The meeting began with a discussion of Y2K and its possible effects on data access. Many group members are aware that older versions of DOS and Windows, as well as certain motherboards, will not work properly after the year 2000. Everyone present seemed to have some type of solution for their own needs, but not everyone was aware that having a Y2K compliant operating system does not make your data safe. Many programs use two digit time stamps that are unaffected by the O.S. This means your database program could essentially disappear before your eyes. Mary shared a story with us about a power plant that shut down during a Y2K test because a pollution sensor in a smokestack was not compliant. We were assured that TECO is aware of similar problems, and they are addressing them now.

The latest beta version of Microsoft's Office 2000 is out, and there are already problems. Steve Singer passed along his experience with it when his Peach Tree accounting and UPS tracking software quit functioning after installing Office 2000. Apparently the ODBC.DRV file is being rewritten in such a manner that older programs can no longer recognize it. Steve said that uninstalling Office 2000 did not cure the problem. Thanks, Bill!

One of our members was having a problem with his 56K modem. Apparently his phone line will ring back to his house when he disconnects his modem. The problem does not happen all the time, only during certain types of connections.

Merle started the general meeting at 6:30 PM. An attendance sheet was passed out along with sign up sheets for the SIGs. Four people present raised their hands when asked if there was still an interest in starting a Linux SIG, and there are approximately 3 others who were not present who have expressed an interest in the past few months. Jenny pitched the Genealogy SIG.

Cheryl Alexander was introduced to the group as the new Membership Coordinator. Among Cheryl's duties will be making contact with members who have not been attending meetings to see if there is anything we could do to increase participation, as well as contacting old members who have quit the group.

Our guest presenter, Capt. Rob Stebbins, began his presentation at 7:05 PM. Capt. Stebbins created a publishing company

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

PC Haste, not the case, or new displays for old

By Mike Hodges, Vice-President, Tampa PC Users Group

Recall the old adage "Haste make waste". Well, if you are well prepared, you can indeed act quickly. Such was the case for me recently. Having attended the TPCUG monthly meetings for the best part of three years, I believe I have been well prepared to buy a new PC at any time and would feel comfortable that I was getting a good shake for my money. In the rapidly changing PC market, new models are constantly being introduced, and the price ranges appear to change daily. Yesterday's good buy is only a good bargain today at a far lower price. The computer marketplace is forever rapidly changing. However, my frequent attendance at the TPCUG monthly presentations and exposure to the web sites of sense and good value, as recommended to me by the various other members, each with heaps of experimental experience to call on, had set me in good stead to act quickly if called on to do so.

Recently I was put to the test. My son, who has been slaving away at his studies at the University of Florida, called to say that his PC had finally refused to come on, and yes, of course, he had many papers due within the week. Apparently he used good back-up practices, so he did not fear data loss but urgently needed a PC to complete his self-created masterpieces. Let me first describe the PC he had been laboring with up to the point of failure. It was a Pionex ASD machine I had purchased from a now long defunct retail outlet called Computer Warehouse sometime back in 1992. A 486 machine with the then outstanding speed of a 33 MHz processor. The system was initially configured with 4 MB of memory, a 200 MB hard drive, a 2x CD-ROM and a 2400 baud modem. I believe I had upgraded the modem for $40 some years back, but this had been providing at best an intermittent connection. Also, as any aspiring writer knows, an HP 540 inkjet printer was needed, as most college professors prefer to grade hardcopy in the solitary confinement of their bathrooms and the like. Getting the PC to power up had become temperamental at best. This power problem was becoming so prevalent that my troubleshooting by phone had now reverted to a final single advisory. "If it comes up this time, keep it on all the time." Finally the machine became totally dormant, so it appeared that I would have to travel up to Gainesville in person to kick some life into the machine or replace the machine if it would not respond to my coaching anymore. Well, on arrival at my son's apartment in Gainesville on my first available non-work day, which turned out to be within three days of the last time the machine showed signs of life, I found that no end of power cycling and switch and cable shaking would bring the machine back to life. Yes, I do have a Masters in Electrical Engineering pending, and I took along my Simpson meter.

Having been a weekly reader of all the major discount computer store brochures found in the Sunday papers, I considered that for approximately $500 a replacement PC could be acquired. I inquired of my son as to which was the closest computer store to his apartment, as he and I both were in a hurry and found myself at the local Office Depot within a 3-minute drive. I quickly inspected all the many offerings on display and quickly found a Compaq Presario Model 2266 offered for $599. Yes, I did see a machine for $499 on display but decided that the increase in processor speed of the 300 MHz over the 200 MHz model was worth the extra $100. Within ten minutes I was back in my son's apartment and had the new computer replete with a super duper keyboard and mouse connected up in no time with the old display monitor and HP printer. This rapid connectivity was really child's play as all the connectors and cables are conveniently color-coded. This color-coding really helps to ensure that the left and right speakers are correctly located for instance and that the phone lines in and out to the phone are quickly identifiable. The fully connected system was powered on within minutes of my return to the apartment with the new PC, and this included time to unpack in a very confined college town apartment bedroom.

The system booted up and asked lots of questions in what I describe as DOS format via the ancient display monitor, an early nineties model Magnavox. I had acquired the Magnavox Super VGA display second hand some time after the original display had failed and burnt out most of the resistors in the drive circuitry. The Windows 98 screen appeared and then a problem occurred: the screen went blue, and a central static noise pattern stretched horizontally across the middle two inches of the screen. I rebooted once or twice and the same sequence prevailed. I located the convenient installation manual, which up until this moment I had ignored, and quickly found the tech help 800 number. I was connected to a real person after answering all the right questions that the central computer posed to me and was indeed connected within the 3.7 minutes predicted by the central computer. The technical service person from Compaq had not encountered my problem before and suggested that I reload the system from the back up CD provided with the purchased machine. The hard drive of the system software might have been corrupted. This seem plausible to me, so I followed the instructions and reloaded the system from the CD and went and ate lunch as the reload required 75 minutes even with the 24x CD ROM. Back from lunch and even after the reload the blue screen sequence was repeated yet again.

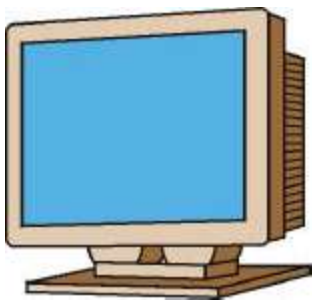
At this point I had a real stroke of luck. Being only a few minutes from the point of purchase, I returned to the store with the intent of swapping out the system for one that would work completely. I found the assistant manager and described the

(PC Haste.....Continued on page 4)

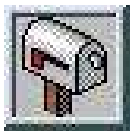
(PC Haste.....Continued from page 3)
problem. Now this is where I really got lucky by encountering a truly savvy individual. He knew exactly the nature of the problem as he had experienced a similar problem with another model some six months earlier. The display was of an old type and some incompatibilities existed between the video driver and the old type display monitor. Sure enough, he was able to get beyond the blue screen impasse and knew how to optimize the display by adjusting the number of colors and other parameters, such as adapter type, to be found under the control panel display settings menu options. Unfortunately, the edge of the Windows motif could not be optimized on my ancient monitor to be a smooth non-jagged edge. I volunteered at this point to buy a new 14" monitor, which the store had on sale for $99. This new display immediately solved the problem, and the system responded automatically by means of the plug and play technology, just as it should.

The moral of this story is that if you are attempting to put new wine in old bottles, then you need luck on your side in the form of more computer system knowledge. I therefore highly recommend that if you plan to buy any computer in Gainesville you stop by at Office Depot and also continue attending our monthly meetings held on the second Wednesday of the month at MOSI to stay informed.

By the way, with the help of some talented technician colleagues from my office, the power supply in the 486 has now been replaced, and that machine with its old display monitor is up and running as slowly as it ever did. This recovery took about a week as the five-year-old power supplies, which can cost $30, are hard to find, but I was yet again lucky and found an old power supply going begging. I had disassembled the 486 and determined with my Simpson meter that the switch assembly was sound and that the power supply was clearly defunct on the night of the Communication SIG presented on the 7th of December by our very own William LaMartin. So I guess the trip to Gainesville took place on 5 December. You can set your calendar on account of the regularity of the TPCUG events. See you at our next regular monthly meeting held on the second Wednesday of the month at MOSI. ◆



Email Netiquette



By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

We may not all surf the Internet, but most us have some form of an email address (or two, or three). The email programs we have available to us today allow for better communication than ever before, but there are a few rules we should follow and a few things we should be aware of.

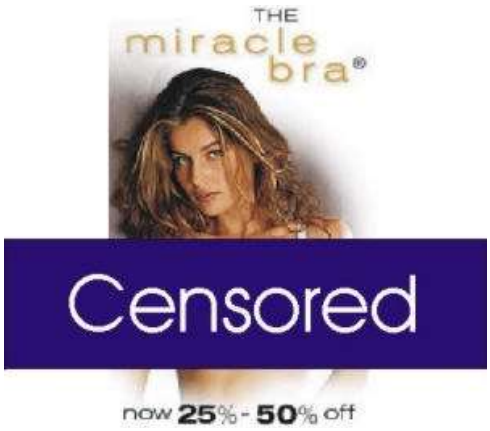
- You should probably consider any message as permanent and that you have very little control over who will see it. The message may lay dormant for quite awhile on someone's computer until someday someone resurrects it. It may not have been anything you would have wanted anyone else to see. Remember this the next time you send an email.
- It's always possible that a message can be misinterpreted, causing the recipient to react negatively. Email doesn't allow for immediate personal feedback. Be succinct and avoid responding while emotional. If you have to be emotional, use some of the "emoticons" listed below.
- To avoid receiving a computer virus, proceed with caution when opening an attachment (a binary or executable file) to the email. If you do not know the sender or were not expecting the attachment, find out who is sending it and what it is first. Remember, though, that most attachments serve a purpose, so don't be overly hasty to delete the message. Likewise, if you're sending an attachment let the recipient know what it is.
- Commonly used acronyms in email messages are: **BTW** – by the way; **F2F**– Face to face; **FWIW** – For what it's worth; **FYA** – for your amusement; **FYI** – for your information; **HHOK** – Ha ha only kidding; **IOW** – in other words; **IMHO** – in my humble opinion; **LOL** – laughing out loud; **TIA** – Thanks in advance; **TNX** – thanks. (Don't overuse these.)
- Commonly used emoticons in email messages are: **:-)** Happy; **:-(** Sad; **:-||** Really Angry; **:-(o)** Yelling; **:-D** Laughter; **;-)** Winking; **:-}** Grinning; **:-o** Shocked or Amazed; **:-&** Tongue-tied; **:-#** My lips are sealed; **;-(** Feel like crying; **:-o** Shocked or amazed; **:-*** Kiss; **X-** Brain dead; **:-P** Sticking tongue out. (Don't overuse these either.)
- Case sensitivity doesn't usually matter in an email address as it does in a URL or Internet address. ie., johndoe @tpcug.org is the same as JohnDoe@TPCUG.org.
- Make sure to always include a subject line. That will make sure the message gets read and if it's forwarded to others they will be able to understand the subject matter. Be creative!

(email.....Continued on page 5)

(email.....Continued from page 4)

- Try to limit your line character length to 65. Some email programs wrap at the wrong place which causes the email to be really hard to read.
- If you quote part of the message in your response edit out unnecessary verbiage and include your reply at the beginning of your message.
- Create a signature file to be added to all outgoing messages. Signature lines are the letterhead (or rather letter-footer) of your email message. Almost every modern email program allows you to create a signature file that typically includes 5-10 lines of contact information about you or your company which is automatically appended to each message you send.
- DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS. This is perceived as shouting.
- Don't send entire web pages. Just the link to the page will do.
- Don't attach files larger than 50k without permission from the recipient.
- Always read over your email before sending it and use a spellchecker when possible.
- And last, but not least, sometimes a telephone call will work much better than email. Know when to post… and when to call! ◆

Internet picture of the month



Victoria's Secret Online Catalog Item

1998 was not only the year when Internet stocks deified gravity, it was the year when online retailing really took hold. One of the last name brand retailers to come online in 1998 was Victoria's Secret. There is no need to go to your local store anymore or thumb through the mail order catalog; just point your mouse toward http://www.victoriassecret.com and click.

As you can see, the TPCUG Censor has been at work.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida History and Genealogy	http://www.rootsweb.com/~flgenweb/index.html
Scams	http://syntac.net/hoax/scams.html
A complete illustrated Guide to PC Hardware	http://www.mkdata.dk/click/start.htm
Cable Modem Software	http://www.cablemodeminfo.com/cablesoftware.html
megaConverter.com	http://www.megaconverter.com/_Conv/cv_home.htm
NIST Web Clock	http://www.bldrdoc.gov/timefreq/javaclck.htm
Online Medical Dictionary	http://www.graylab.ac.uk/omd/index.html
Castles on the Web	http://www.castlesontheweb.com/
National Geographic	http://www.nationalgeographic.com/
Snoopy.com (Charlie Brown)	http://snoopy.com/comics/peanuts/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

ALPS MD 1300 Printer

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group



Several months back ALPS gave our group a presentation at our regular meeting. For most of us it was our first contact with ALPS Micro Dry printers. And for many of us it was lust at first site. I almost bought one on the spot since the presenter handed out a preferential user group pricing sheet, but I restrained myself. Apparently a few members decided to make the plunge after returning home. And, since the presenter recommended searching the WWW for prices even lower than the ALPS user group prices, they did exactly that and were happy with their "Internet shopping experience."

Thanks to my wife, I received my ALPS MD 1300 for Christmas, bought from the local COMP-USA for approximately $400 + Tax. At the time I think the best Internet price was around $360 + shipping. COMP-USA, I believe, now has the 1300 on sale for $339, and on the Internet it appears for $340 at my favorite shopping site http://www.buycom.com/. So it appears that buying locally right now is a good idea. If you want to buy the photographic quality ink cartridges or the photographic quality paper, you will save a lot of money by purchasing them via a company like Buy.Com on the Internet. More on that later. Now to the printer.

From the ALPS site, http://www.alpsusa.com/, one sees that ALPS is currently selling three printers: the MD – 1000, the MD – 1300, and the MD – 5000. The 1000 and the 1300 are the same except that—and this is very important to me—the 1300 allows you to print in dye sublimation mode using the special ALPS' photographic paper and ink cartridges which produce results approaching closer to photo quality than any other printer I have seen. I have given framed 8 x 10 color prints made in dye sublimation mode to relatives, and they cannot tell that it is not a photo. I have shown members of our group 4 x 6 prints made from scanned color slides, and they agree they look like real "photos".

The normal printing process for the 1000, 1300 and the 5000 is Micro Dry—not dye-sublimation. It is a printing technique, invented and developed by ALPS, to produce fade-proof, water-proof and smear-proof images to a wide variety of media (almost any kind of paper) using a thermal process. The 5000 is a new 2400 DPI micro dry printer (the 1000 & 1300 are 600 DPI), costing around $600. For some reason, though, you have to pay an extra $75 to add the dye-sublimation feature to the 5000. I think possibly it also uses different paper for one of its printing modes from that used by the 1300 (so many paper choices can get confusing). But the regular 2400 DPI mode is quite stunning. Check it out at COMP-USA.

Dye-sublimation is a thermal-transfer process. Ink is heated to "sublimation", the chemical term for moving a substance from a solid state to a gaseous state. The image is then transferred onto special paper. Prints made using this process are beautiful, and you will see no individual dots under magnification, but they are not cheap. I paid about $31 + shipping at Buy.Com for the three ink cartridges and one overcoat cartridge necessary to produce these results. A 20 sheet package of the special photographic quality paper runs $13 + shipping. I bought enough of the ALPS consumables so that the shipping allocated to one set of cartridges and the 20 sheets of paper was approximately $6. ALPS claims that with one set of the photographic quality ink cartridges you can do 31 of the 8.5 x 11 pages at 56% coverage, that is 1,623 square inches of coverage. This is equivalent to doing 20 full 8 x 10 prints. How convenient for our calculations. So it appears that with one set of cartridges and one package of paper you get twenty 8 x 10 color photographic quality prints at a cost of $50, or $2.50 per 8 x 10 print. With more expensive consumables, I suppose this figure could go to $3.50 or $4.00.

When I bought my very large supply of ALPS' consumables from Buy.Com (it almost appears as if I have as much money in consumables as in the printer), their prices were 40% below that of ALPS or COMP-USA and about 20% below most other Internet retailers. Additionally, Comp-USA and many of the online retailers didn't offer the entire product line of cartridges and paper. Unfortunately a recent check shows that Buy.Com has increased their prices on these items by about 17%; a photo quality ink cartridge that cost me $6.95 in December now runs $8.13. So, check around before you buy.

In addition to the photographic quality paper and cartridges, I purchased additional regular cartridges and something called photo realistic paper—which produces glossy near photo quality prints using the regular ink cartridges. The photo realistic paper is a good bit cheaper than the photo quality paper, just as the regular cartridges are cheaper than the photo quality ones—and the results are still quite stunning. I use this setup for printing color graphics work I create in Corel Draw. It is a big improvement over what I was getting with my HP 855 C DeskJet. I should note, though, that simply using the regular ink cartridges and regular laser paper produced results only slightly better than my HP 855 C DeskJet.

I only use the new ALPS for color work and direct all text documents to my HP 4 Plus LaserJet , so I am not a normal user. I think most people want to own only one printer. Personally, even though I have nothing but praise for the photographic quality output of the 1300, I cannot recommend it as a

(ALPS……..Continued on page 7)

(ALPS.....Continued from page 6)
printer for very much text output. The black and white text output is excellent; however, it is quite slow—too slow for me but perhaps not for others, since most people are content with the speed of their ink jet printers.

Speaking of speed, in the dye-sublimation mode the printer uses four passes to print the photographic quality output. It takes approximately 6 minutes to print a 4 x 6 print and about 18 minutes to print an 8 x 10. I didn't check on the speed of printing a standard letter, since I doubt I will ever use it for that. For me the ALPS MD – 1300, used in conduction with my HP PhotoSmart negative, slide and photograph scanner, is like having my own photographic darkroom (which I have but never seem to find time to use). The only outside work needed is getting your color film developed. Of course, a digital camera could solve that problem. Except that an affordable digital camera has a long ways to go to equal the quality of my Nikon N70. The ALPS MD – 1300's dye-sublimation prints are very close in quality to the product produced by the one hour photo places that most of us use for our prints.

I should also note that in dye-sublimation mode the 1300 also prints beautiful black and white photos. All the different shades of gray are produced by the same photographic quality cartridges that produce color. It is really an education of color mixing to watch as the printer puts down the three basic colors in three passes and ends up with a beautiful gray scale print.

One warning: do not use the photographic quality ink cartridges with regular paper or the non-glossy side of the photographic quality paper. If you should do this, the ribbons in them will stick to the paper and tear. You will then have a tedious job or repair ahead of you if you want to salvage your cartridges. And at their price, you will want to do this unless they are very near the end. To accomplish this, you will have to carefully pry open each cartridge that has a broken ribbon and use scotch tape to splice the ribbon, just as some of us old timers used to do with home movies. Then you will have to reassemble the cartridges, being careful not to lose them, and replace to their correct positions the several interior springs and spindles. I speak from experience. Probably I should tape a note to the top of the printer saying "**Put glossy side of paper face up**". The regular cartridges do not have this problem.

Unfortunately there is no way to demonstrate the quality of the prints in this newsletter. ◆

TPCUG Officers for 1999

President	Merle Nicholson
Vice President	Michael Hodges
Secretary	James Weber
Treasurer	Jenny Lind Olin
Member at Large	Bruce Register

Appointed

Editor	William LaMartin
Librarian	Larry Anders
Program Coordinator	Mary Sheridan
MOSI Liaison	Ford Bond
Membership Chairman	Cheryl Alexander

Members, please contact any of your leaders with any ideas or suggestions. All the above have made a commitment to serving you, the members in 1999. If you have program suggestions, contact Mary Sheridan; for membership suggestions, contact Cheryl Alexander. Please volunteer wherever you might feel a need. Members are invited to attend the Board Meetings held on the Thursday before the regular Wednesday business meeting. Let us all give Merle Nicholson, our president, our best support. *Bruce Register*

(President.....Continued from page 1)
really be very little work in running a SIG: finding a meeting place (the hardest), notifying and reminding the members, and coordinating a monthly program or agenda. Many SIGs go on very well as simple discussion groups, with a demo rotating among the members to show what each person's involvement in the subject is. Everyone benefits from the exchange of information, advice and viewpoints.

I mentioned that I have two goals this year. We spent last year getting our financial house in order, and I believe that's behind us. We also had a very good year for presentations. This year I'd like to concentrate on building the membership. I plan to do this in two ways – the first is to build partnerships with other organizations, and the second is to enlist the aid of the membership to recruit family, friends and neighbors. If you come to the meetings, you must surely benefit from the experience. Please share that with one or two people during this year, and we'll be on solid footing.

The other goal of mine is to find a replacement TPCUG president by October at the latest. If you're interested, please mention it to me or any of the board members. Come to the monthly board meetings to see how we are organized; make suggestions, whatever you can contribute.

Thanks, and I'll see you at the next meeting. ◆

Over Clocking Processors

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

An interesting thing is going on in the computer gaming world right now with "over clocking" Pentium II Celeron processors. There's quite a lot being circulated about this lately, so I thought I would explain what is going on.

To put it as simply as possible, over clocking is running a computer above its intended speed. Why would you do that? It all boils down to money. Right now the cost of an Intel Pentium Celeron 300a processor is $100, and an Intel Pentium II 450 processor is $550. So instead of buying the expensive version, just buy the Celeron and over clock it to 450. Why isn't everyone doing this? What are the risks? Read on; all is explained here.

Hobbyists have been over clocking computers for a long time now, and I've never really understood what there was to gain. Back when we were all on 486 computers, much was made of the new AMD 486-80 that could sometimes be run at 100. That's a 25% increase in processing power. Why bother? Would you see the difference? My opinion was then that it wasn't worth the work. You had to have a motherboard capable of running it faster in the first place; in other words, make the settings that make it possible. And you had to add a fan inside to keep it cool because it ran hotter. And it didn't always work.

The price to pay – when it didn't work - was instability. Sometimes the processor wouldn't work at all, but many times it would work, but badly. You would have program faults and the deadly Windows "blue screen" errors that forced you to reboot. And sometimes you would get spontaneous reboots. But that's about the extent of the risks, and if you don't like the way it behaves just put it back.

Back to the present, the issues and risks are identical to what they were five years ago. But one thing has changed this time: the gain is greater.

Intel and other chip manufacturers would prefer that their processors not be over clocked. Their main concern is that an unscrupulous manufacturer would buy cheaper processors for their computers and pass them off as more powerful machines— an opportunity to cheat the public. And obviously it would cut into the revenue stream. So with the Pentium II they go to some trouble to make sure they can't be over clocked. And that takes some technical explanation. Stick with me here; I'll try to make it painless.

A processor's power is mainly dependent on two things; the capability of the internal program, and the speed at which it is run. The capability of the "instruction set" – that's the internal program, is slowly evolving with each new processor type. Two things have to be accomplished here. One is that the processor does all the things it used to do so it can run all the older programs, and that any new instructions are useful enough so that there's interest in software development to take advantage of them. MMX is a very good example of this. MMX doesn't hurt anything, and as programs are available to utilize the capability of MMX, some significant performance gains are possible.

I said two things – the other is the speed at which the processor is being run. All other things being equal (the instruction set) the faster a processor is run, the more it can do in a given time (the speed). Why not just build a Pentium II 10,000 then, instead of just messing around with 300's or 450's? The answer is just evolving technology. They're basically making them as fast as the technology allows. And there's been a constant revolution in manufacturing techniques for many years. If they were capable of building a compatible, say, Pentium 600, and they could make it for a price that would make it worth it, it would be done. And they're working on it; you can count on that.

Every once in a while they figure that a major change in chip architecture is needed to take advantage of current technology, so we have a major change like the P II. And the next one is already available - the Xeon, and AMD is coming out with a 500 MHz K7 midyear.

So, back to speed. Motherboards have a clock. They run a speed measured in frequency called Hertz, and since the range we're dealing with is in millions, the term is in Mega-Hertz (MHz). It's simply the number of "ticks" per second, and the processor does a certain number of instructions at every "tick" of the clock. The Motherboard supplies the clock and normally has several settings that can be made so that it will accommodate more than one speed of processor. So a manufacturer will use the same motherboard for a Pentium 233 and a 266 or 300, for instance.

Motherboards have basic "board speeds"; that is the speed that the board ships information around to its several components. The most important function is the speed at which the processor ships data to the memory. Over time, Pentiums used 25 , 60 and 66 MHz bus speeds. Other speeds needed by the other processors have been 75 and 83.3. Now we're using 100 MHz for many computers. And the new K7 will be using a 200 MHz bus. Each of these speed increases required more technology development and expense.

The board must also be capable of handling a given range of processor speeds, and that is set by a "multiplier". The multiplier is a function of the board speed, and to get say a 266, you have to multiply 66.667 times four. And a 400 MHz CPU is run with a multiplier of four also, but uses a 100 MHz bus instead. Boards typically have multipliers of 2x through 5x or more; in half steps; 2.5, 3, 3.5 etc.

(Over clocking.....Continued on page 9)

(Over clocking…….Continued from page 8)
Now back to over clocking and the Celeron. Intel reportedly builds into their processors the capability of detecting both the board speed and the multiplier. But the story goes that someone decided that detecting the board speed of a 300 wasn't necessary. And then it was discovered that the Celeron 300 would actually run at 450 if you reset the board speed from its normal 66 to 100. The multiplier stays the same at 4.5. Successful over clocking at a 50% increase is unheard of. The catch is that the processor voltage must be increased from the normal 2.0 volts to 2.2 or 2.3 volts. And that's the tricky part. And it also increases the risk – of burning out your $100 processor. But an increase from 300 to 450 is very much noticeable, especially if you're running games.

So first you have to buy a board and processor. And you have to get PC-100 memory. Sorry, you can't use your old memory for this. And do your homework and some research on this. There's a lot available at Tom's Hardware page at http://www.tomshardware.com and several other sites. At Tom's, there're good pictures available, and you'll need them, because to set the voltage on most boards, you must actually paint fingernail polish on some of the pins on the processor board.

PC gaming enthusiasts discovered this. There are people out there who routinely experiment with this. But this particular discovery was pretty noteworthy because the 300a is at the bottom end of the processor food chain. So if you would rather put your money into game software and still have the power of a machine that would cost $500 more, it has a lot of appeal.

If you're interested in doing this, you have some research to do, but there's a lot of help out there. People like to write about what they're doing, and the Internet is the perfect place to publish this information. ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

I think I have had enough computer problems this past month to fill the small amount of space available. Luckily all problems have been solved except the most recent: As I write this, the Discussion Group at TPDUG.ORG will not allow posting of messages or replies. In addition, I cannot use Microsoft FrontPage to open the site. So, possibly there is a write permissions problem. You need to write to certain folders on the server when you use FrontPage, and you certainly need to write somewhere if you are going to post a message. And to do this you need the server's permission. But that is just a guess. I assume, though, by the time you get this newsletter everything will be back to normal.

The most interesting problem this month was on a new Gateway Solo laptop—not mine unfortunately. The microphone jack produced no sound; using different microphones did no better. Obviously the microphone was muted in the volume control. Wrong. Obviously something was wrong with the recording settings. Wrong. Obviously all that was needed was to remove all mention of the sound card from the Win 98 Device Manager, reboot and let Windows install all the sound drivers again. Wrong. In fact one of the three sound card components would not install.

Since it was a new machine, the thing to do was call Gateway. The technician I got was the best I have ever worked with. He never missed a beat as he led me toward a solution, and he never broke for a moment to consult a resource (tech talk for asking someone else for help). Of course, he had me do what I had already done with the same result. He then instructed me to insert the recovery disk into the CD drive (not to run the setup program on it, since that would have restored the computer to its status when new—wiping out all the programs we had installed), have Win 98 search a certain folder for the needed driver for this one component, and that is where we stopped. The computer just would not open the folder.

I said I had seen it act like that before and that the drives on this computer seemed slow to react . He said he thought the computer had a corrupted driver for the hard drive, and he had me boot in safe mode, where he had me again remove all mention of the sound card plus some additional Microsoft sound drivers that hadn't shown up in normal mode—and most importantly he had me remove the Intel driver for the hard drive controller. A reboot produced a driver for the hard drive and drivers for two of the three sound components. This time, however, when we had Windows search the recovery CD for the needed driver, there was no problem in getting it.

Miraculously the microphone began to work. Who would have thought that you would need to reinstall the software for your hard drive to get your microphone to work.

My own desktop computer had a problem which I posted to our Discussion Group (when you could still do that). This problem manifested itself by producing an error and closing down Internet Explorer (IE) whenever I would try to type a URL into the URL text box of IE. The same thing would occur when you tried to type anything into the Start | Run text box. I could, however, paste text into the boxes with no problem.

(Comments.....Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We again reviewed what we have done. We also spent a good bit of time studying how the calendars at TPCUG.ORG and LAMARTIN.COM were made.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*
The members of the TPCUG Genealogy SIG have learned a lot in the past year even if they didn't attend all meetings. Several interesting items have been sent to the members with e-mail addresses. A list of epidemics was a unique tool to use while doing genealogy. A list of wars fought on American continents and a list of ailments found in the census reports and their modern disease names were very interesting.

Web sites have been shared this past year. There were URLs for maps of the counties as they changed from census to census, Irish genealogy sites, and an opportunity to visit ancestry.com free for a month.

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

We studied various ways of opening text files for both input and output and how to write data to them and retrieve data from them.

1998 Financial Report

Beginning Balance:	$1,267.14
Ending Balance:	1,978.48
Difference:	$ 711.34
Income:	$ 2,421.50
Expenses:	$ 1,710.16
Difference:	$ 711.34

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
in his own home with a combination of his experience as a seaman and a little bit of programming experience. His annual circulation is around six thousand units. Capt. Stubbins claimed his inspiration came after he bought a boat in 1980 and was not able to catch any fish. After a friend's advice, Capt. Stebbins bought a Loran navigation device and still couldn't catch fish. It was at this point he learned about "secret" spots, or Loran coordinates. Unfortunately, no one ever published a list of coordinates; they were kept secret by the people who discovered them. It was here that Capt. Stebbins decided that there was a market for a published list of GPS and Loran-C coordinates.

The product Capt. Stebbins came up with is a fully searchable and configurable data base of all waterways along America's Atlantic and Pacific coasts as well as the Gulf Coast, the Great Lakes, interior lakes and rivers, and a good portion of the Caribbean. He demonstrated how to find objects of interest, like fishing holes or wrecks, by either searching by site description or entering GPS or Loran-C coordinates. The Captain says that the thousands of coordinates and the database program only take up about 40 MB of disk space. He uses an HP 890c printer to create his own labels and has two computers running a 2X and a 4X CD burner creating the program disk. His presentation ended at 8:15 PM.

We had our drawing after the presentation. Brian Lance won a copy of Clean Sweep and Ed Snow won a book called Windows 98 Annoyances and a 3-D clip art program called Live Art. Kevan Sheridan won a GPS coordinate book. $42.00 was raised from the door prizes.

We ended at 8:30 PM. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Museum of Science and Industry
BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems	Micrografx
Broderbund	Microsoft
Corel Systems	PowerQuest
Grolier	RDI, Inc.
Intuit	SoftKey International
Knowledge Adventure	Symantec

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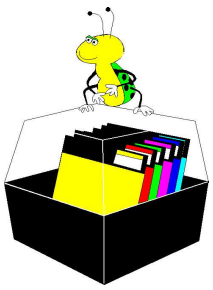
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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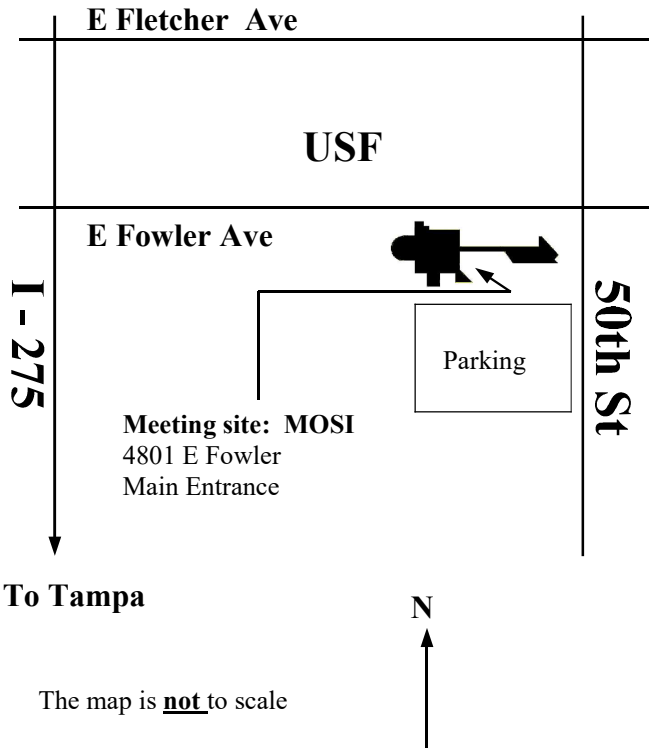
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments.....Continued from page 9)

I thougt about this for 24 hours and could not solve the problem. I searched Microsoft's knowledge Base and the Usenet newsgroups. Suspecting a problem with IE, I reinstalled it. No luck. I then contacted Microsoft and received the answer that my problem was caused by a corrupted history file for IE coupled with the auto complete feature. The solution was to temporarily disable auto complete, delete all entries in the history file and the cache for IE. That solved the problem, and I decided to not enable auto complete again since it was usually more of a nuisance than a help. I now think if I had uninstalled IE before reinstalling it, that probably would also have solved the problem. Isn't computing fun?

A final problem, actually the first problem of the month, was the inability to get help on the common dialog control in Visual Basic 5 after I installed a program. This program apparently installed a newer version of this control. The control worked but required a different help file. I had various complicated schemes for solving the problem but wanted a simpler one. Again, after checking all my usual resources, I contacted Microsoft and they provided a simple solution: unregister the new version of the control, delete it, get the original version off the CD, register the original version. You can't simply replace the new with the old. You must register and unregister using Regsvr32.exe.

Thanks, Microsoft. Thanks, Gateway. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 5 May 1999

Meeting

Road Runner Cable Modems

May 12, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the May meeting Steve Tulloh from Time Warner will discuss their cable modem service. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

It's been an interesting past month for me. I took the month "off" from the TPCUG and went on vacation. My son and his family were visiting, and we did some Disney and some other Florida things. One was a trip to Titusville to see a satellite launch. I had researched at the NASA web site and came up with a good one because it was to go off at near 6 PM, and we'd be watching from the west so the missile would be highlighted by the sun just after liftoff. It was perfect. A couple of days later my wife and I decided to look at the Apollo 13 movie we had on tape. We lived in Cape Canaveral during those days and were pretty involved in it, and I have to say I really choke up when I see that film.

Hold on – I'm getting to the computer part. .. .. .. I was watching the film and was reminded that the trajectory numbers had to be moved from the Command Module's "computer" to the Lunar Module "computer" by hand. I was once again reminded that the whole computing power in the entire array of space equipment wouldn't be greater than a Commodore 128K computer of 1986. Probably not any more than some baby toys of today. And how lucky I am that I'm able to program a computer, and even that I've actually built some number of them. Wow, isn't life great?

I need to remind you again as always … we need to bring in new members. Remember there's a prize for bringing in the most members. So harass your friends and neighbors; make a nuisance of yourselves and drag some new faces in. See you at the next meeting. ◆

June 16: Chuck McPherson from Laser Perfect & a second presentation to be announced
July 15: Mark Komula from Network Technologies speaks on home networking

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the April Meeting

Our secretary was absent from the meeting, and no one realized it, so we have no official record of what transpired. Briefly, though, here is Mary Sheridan's best recollection.

As usual, Mary Sheridan conducted a Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

Tom Walsh from American Power Conversion (APC) spoke to us about surge protectors and Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS). He explained that the danger to electrical components from electrical surges was well known, but that the greatest damage to PC's can be the brown-outs that occur all the time. He also was very generous in providing one of the UPSs for our drawing, which was won by John Whitmer. Tom also offered huge discounts to the user group members. Several pieces of software were also raffled.

To see a compete line of their protective devices, visit them on the web at http://www.apcc.com/. ◆

Editor's Comments – Virus Attack

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

CIH (Chernobyl) Virus Strikes Close to Home On April 26, while returning to Tampa, I called home and was informed of a computer problem at someone's office for whom I provide support. The message was that their computer wouldn't boot. Sounded like a power supply problem at first thought. When I was able to contact the individual, I found out the problem was not electrical. The problem was that on attempting to boot the computer they received the message, "Place bootable media in an appreciate drive". Not a good message, and that immediately brought to mind the warning my wife had shown me in the Tribune a few days back concerning the Chernobyl virus that was scheduled to strike on—April 26.

And it did strike. When I got to the computer, the only drive you could use was the A drive. Trying to access the C drive produced a message like "inappropriate drive parameter". A check of the BIOS showed that there was a Quantum Bigfoot hard drive. So we had a BIOS and a hard drive, but the hard drive was inaccessible. I had brought a DOS bootable floppy with generic CD ROM drivers on it and could access the CD-ROM drive, but no C drive access. I also had FDISK on the

(Virus……Continued on page 7)

Lost & Found

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

TPCUG provided me with a copy of Lost and Found by PowerQuest Corp. Before I begin my review of the program, let me say that I hope you all saw William LaMartin's comments in the April 28 St Pete Times. (About the virus Chernobyl.) Very timely!

When I tried to install the program, I found that you were given a screen that asked if you wanted to register the program. If you said no, the program terminated. I didn't like that, but fortunately the PowerQuest web site has an update which removes that copy protection scheme. I am a fan of PowerQuest; I have been since I got my copy of Partition Magic, version 1.0.

Those of you who believe Microsoft when they say forget about DOS are missing a great deal, as I see it. DOS sets aside your drive letters, and if you have an older machine, it limits you to 2 gig hard drives, maximum. However, DOS is a most valuable program and I use it very often as it is easier than using Windows utilities in so many ways.

By now, you probably have guessed that before running Lost and Found, you must exit Windows and bring your machine up in DOS! It is best to have a second hard drive, or a removable media drive, or one of the newer floppy drives, to recover your files to. Lost and Found tells you the size of the files it is recovering and how long the process will take. The program comes on two 3.5 inch 1.44 floppies.

The Lost and Found manual is very small, but I always read the manual at least twice before I try to run any new program. I think this is a sensible procedure.

To start Lost and Found, insert disk 1 and start the computer. It comes up in Caldera DR-DOS version 7.02.

You are presented with a screen that asks you to select the SOURCE DRIVE. This is the drive you want to recover files from. It may be the floppy drive or any of the hard drives shown. Choose to analyze an entire drive to locate files that are not visible and do not have a drive letter.

I chose the floppy drive as the drive to use as the SOURCE DRIVE so it would be faster. The disk is analyzed and a screen tells you what has been found. Current disk cylinder, the Head number, the Sector number and the Logical Block Address are displayed as the scan progresses. Hit enter and you will see the listing of the files on the disk. In my case, I was using an old disk, and the screen I see fills the monitor. It lists very many files. The undamaged files are at the top, and all sorts of files are listed just below these undamaged files. You may select any file to be recovered by hitting the space bar to mark that file. Then hit escape and you go back to the first screen. The files are color coded so you can tell if they are easily recoverable (light green); possible recovery (yellow); unlikely recoverable (red); and so on.

Continue following the menu on the screen and you will recover the files you "mark". I recovered an old (1996) Lotus Wordpro file that was 1,007,476 bytes in length. This file was marked with a YELLOW color, which means possible to recover. I did not want to test with a file that was marked LIGHT GREEN or easily recoverable. The file was on drive A: the floppy drive, and I recovered it to drive D: my second hard drive.

Enough of recovering. There are utilities on disk two of Lost and Found. Refresh brings back the long file names created under Windows 95, 98, or NT. Restore restores files you recovered using the compressed form.

Now it is not practical to deliberately crash a hard disk just to prove this program works as advertised. So I will list the attributes of the program as listed on their shrink wrapped cover:

Unlike other data repair and recovery software solutions, Lost & Found:

- Does not need to be installed prior to the recovery of lost or corrupted files.
- Does not alter, write to or attempt to repair critical sectors on the damaged disk, increasing the chances of a successful data recovery. Recovers your files even after reformatting, as long as you have not written over them.
- Performs a disk analysis and reports the odds of recovery via color coding. Allows you to save data to a network drive.
- Offers exceptional data error handling, allowing you to recover files from disks that have suffered head crashes or other damage.
- Recovers lost or damaged data even if the critical sectors, such as the boot sector or root directory, are corrupted or missing.
- Recovers data from both FAT16 and FAT32 partitions. Works with all possible IDE, EIDE and SCSI disk drive configurations.

The experience I have had with PowerQuest tells me that the above are reliable statements. I have played with the program and deleted files and recovered them, formatted disks and still recovered files! And so I ask you to accept the above as a review of this program. If anyone has an old hard disk that I can use that has been really crashed but still rotates, I will attempt to recover anything you may want from it.

The cost for Lost and Found is $69.95 list, but probably $30 to User Group members. www.powerquest.com is the URL to the home page. ◆

LapLink Professional

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Until recently, the last time I used LapLink was before Windows 95, whenever that was. I originally purchased LapLink so as to transfer files between two Windows 3.1 computers connected via a serial or parallel cable. With the introduction of win 95 and its Direct Cable Connection feature, I no longer needed LapLink. After I installed network cards in most of my computers, I needed it even less.



But what about LapLink's ability to transfer files between two computers running LapLink and connected by a phone connection anywhere in the world? You can't do that with Win 95's Direct Cable Connection—unless you have a mighty long cable. Well, you can do what most people do now days. You send files back and forth as email attachments.

And there is an even better way to transfer files via the Internet: Microsoft's NetMeeting. And NetMeeting does much more than just allowing you to transfer files. While connected to the Internet and running NetMeeting, you can have an audio conversation, watch each other on video, write on a white board, or have a keyboard chat. Then there is the real neat feature of being able to share an application you are running on your computer with the other individual with whom you are having a NetMeeting. And once you have done this, you may take the further step of allowing them to share control of the program. For example, if I have Windows running, I can give the individual access to it, and he can then move around my computer looking at all my files. Or, if I am running Microsoft Word, I can give him the ability to run Word on my computer, creating documents, typing into them, etc. The only problem with all this is a lack of bandwidth using regular modems.

So why am I writing about LapLink—and why did I pay for a new version of it—if NetMeeting is so wonderful? I purchased a new Windows 95/98 version simply because LapLink is better suited to controlling a remote computer, which is something that is quite important if you are going to help people with their computer problems.

With LapLink running on both computers (the software license allows you to install your copy on up to three computers) and the computers connected basically any way you can think of (cable, LAN, phone, Internet), you can easily transfer files and control the remote computer. This allows the computer technician to take control of his client's machine and do basically anything that the client could do. If the client was unsure of how to install or configure a program, the technician could do it for him. If the client was having a problem with a particular piece of software, the technician could duplicate it and hopefully correct the problem.

For computers that are both connected to the Internet and located more than a local phone call apart, it makes sense to connect via the Internet to use LapLink since the connection will be free. To do this you use the TCP/IP protocol (which can also be used for connections over a LAN). However, I immediately ran into a problem when I first tried to do this after installing LapLink on my desktop and Laptop. I had the TCP/IP protocol enabled in LapLink on my desktop machine, but it could not be enabled in LapLink on the laptop. The Laptop had TCP/IP installed, and it worked fine in connecting the computer to the Internet, but this is not the same as having it enabled in LapLink. Furthermore Help just said to check my network settings (I was first testing using TCP/IP over the LAN before moving on the Internet).

A search of the Microsoft and the LapLink sites produced no solution. So where else do I always turn for answers in such situations? I do a search of the Usenet newsgroups via http://www.dejanews.com. I found my answer in a message in the newsgroup *comp.sys. laptops.* Here is the pertinent part of the message. Who could ask for more?

Apparently, the problem does lie with FrontPage 98. More specifically, it can be traced to the fact that when one installs the Personal Web Server that comes with FrontPage 98, a different version of WINSOCK.DLL is installed. This version of the DLL has a compatibility problem with LapLink and, thus, is the cause for the TCP/IP server not being available.

The resolution to the problem is to restore the original DLL using the System File Checker (SFC) utility to extract and install that DLL from the Win 98 CD. The steps to do that are as follows:

1. Go to START
2. Go to RUN...
3. Type "SFC" then click OK
4. Select "Extract one file from installation disk"
5. Type "WINSOCK.DLL" in the text box and click START
6. At "Restore from: click browse button and browse to the Win 98 directory on the Win 98 CD or the CAB

(LapLink.....Continued on page 5)

(LapLink.....Continued from page 4)

Files directory on your hard drive, then click OK.

You will note that he mentions Win 98. The laptop runs Win 98 and the desktop runs Win 95. I had installed FrontPage 98 on both of them, but the problem didn't occur on the Win 95 machine. With that problem corrected, I had TCP/IP enabled on the laptop and was ready to control or retrieve files from my home computer from anywhere in the world—most probably from somewhere else in Florida.

There is a danger here, though. If you leave LapLink running on your computer and either leave your computer connected to the Internet or set to answer the phone, then anyone running LapLink who knows your computer's IP address or dials your computer's phone line can gain total control of your computer—unless you password protect everything in LapLink (highly recommended).

How much control do you have? Well, right now I am running Microsoft Publisher on the desktop computer via LapLink on the laptop and typing this in from the laptop. But that is not a real test. From the laptop, I just started my scanning software on the desktop and am scanning in a photo and directing it to the laptop. Oops, an error message about not enough memory. Well, we have plenty of memory, so maybe I cannot control the desktop computer via the network connection and at the same time send a file over the network. So

(LapLink.....Continued on page 10)

Internet picture of the month



Giotto: The Dream of Joachim, 1304-06
Fresco. Cappella Scrovegni, Padua, Italy

Luminarium, http://www.luminarium.org/, according to its creator, "is not related to any institution, is sponsored by no one, nor does it generate any profit. This site combines three sites created in 1996 to provide a starting point for students and enthusiasts of English Literature. "

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Luminarium (16th century)	http://www.luminarium.org/lumina.htm
Mcaffee (check out the free online virus scan)	http://www.mcafee.com/
VitalChek (Birth Certificates, etc.)	http://www.vitalcheck.com/
Family Search	http://www.familysearch.org/
Abraham Lincoln's Assassination	http://members.aol.com/RVSNorton/Lincoln.html
Ask Jeeves (ask him anything)	http://www.askjeeves.com/
PCWatch - Daily Technology News Summary	http://www.pcwatch.com/
Radio Station Guide (from MSN)	http://webevents.microsoft.com/radio/radio.asp
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ZipMagic 98

By Robert A. LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group

I had been using the SHAREWARE program ***WinZip*** for a couple of years and I was lucky in the club raffle and won a copy of ***ZipMagic98*** by **Mijenix Corporation** and now have a full registered version of a Zip Utility. So let me tell you what I found out about ***ZipMagic98:*** "***Read the MANUAL***" before you install so that you will be expecting what choices you will need to be make during installation because Zip Magic is made to be running in the background and you need to set up your preferences during installation. They also give good explanations on how the choices affect the initial setup.

After installation you will find along with a new program group on your menu, an icon in the system tray and a new icon in the Control Panel. Both of these icons allow you to change options (your preferences) after installation for how the program is going to run. When working in Windows Explorer you will also be offered a separate Zip Magic menu to work with when you right click an individual file (files) or folder. When looking at the Program Group you can look at Properties, Uninstall the Program or START the ***ZipMagic98*** program itself.

There are two ways to start ZipMagic program. One is called ***Zip Wizard,*** and the second is the ***Zip Tools***. The easiest to use for straight Zip and Unzip process is ***Zip Wizard,*** where you get forms to guide your choices: 1. Extract from an archive, 2. Make a zip archive, 3. Make a self-extracting archive and convert zip to be self-extracting.

On starting the WIZARD these four methods progress from form to form with you having to make minimal selections of the METHOD, other than which FILES to work with and the AREA to save the files to during the process. When files or an area are needed for selection Zip Magic offers a directory tree much like Windows Explore for you to use in the selections. ***Zip Wizard*** is so easy and straightforward that no HELP is offered or needed to do the four methods that it allows you to do.

Zip Tools is completely different and starts with a look very similar to Windows Explorer but with added features useful in file management. Not only can you perform the four methods that the Wizard allows, but you can also perform Find Files, Copy Disk, Format Disk, Create Folders, Delete Files and about anything else you would want to do. There is the option to view individual files with a **FILE VIEWER** that opens most common file types, and they offer to sell you an optional viewer which they say will open any file format for viewing. These features again are easy to use and to understand for anyone familiar with file manipulations and Windows Explorer. HELP is offered here, and it appears to be



extensive from its Table of Contents. ***Zip Tools*** allows you to work on individual files which have been Zipped, and Zip-Magic will make the necessary changes and keep the file in a Zip format. You don't have to go through the process of manually unzipping the file, then making the necessary changes and then re-zipping the file. Both the ***Wizard*** and ***Tools*** perform Disk-Spanning when creating Zip files and moving the files to floppy drives.

Zip Magic has another feature that allow you to easily zip files and attach them to e-mail when using MS EXCHANGE, MS OUTLOOK, or OUTLOOK EXPRESS. It adds an icon button to the toolbar template so you just push one button to attach files. You have control of cache size used and compression speed through the properties, so it has been friendly to use. There is also an " Easy Update " feature in Zip Tools that allows quick and accurate access to Mijenix Corporation.

The only feature that I am still getting used to is that if you load the program at START UP it will be working in the background until you disable it. This causes Zip Magic to operate with your settings at ALL TIMES. As an example, if your settings show ZIP FILES AS FOLDERS: Say you download a Zip file from the Internet and give it a folder to save to on your hard drive, and you go to view it in Windows Explorer. The file will be shown as a FOLDER with all the individual files that were included when it was created as a Zip. If you have used Zip programs, you know that by showing the individual files you pretty much are Unzipping to get the file information and this takes TIME. Sometimes the Zip Magic emblem appears in the upper left of your monitor showing that it is working to correctly show Zip files, but at other times you get no emblem and you start to think that your computer has ***FROZEN.*** This lag in time also occurs when any Zipped file is being used, such as using OUTLOOK EXPRESS, which stores E-MAIL messages as compressed files, or when using Norton Anti-Virus to scan Zip files.

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I am pleased with the program and how easy it is to use and have stopped using Windows Explorer for file management and have been using Zip Tools instead. Zip Tools gives me additional tools that save me time and provide greater flexibility than did Windows Explorer. ◆

(Virus……..Continued from page 2)
floppy, and it indicated a 4.3 GB primary partition on Drive 1 called partition 1. If I recall correctly it indicated 4.3 GB of free disk space—another bad sign. It looked like the virus had done its dirty work and wiped out the File Allocation Table (FAT), the Master Boot Record (MBR), and who knows what else. But we were lucky to have a BIOS. In many of the cases I was subsequently to read about, computers hit by this virus also had their BIOS destroyed.



Luckily for us, only two months back our group had a presentation on data recovery by Ontrac. Additionally they had supplied us with a floppy with their Data Advisor program on it. I inserted the floppy into the A drive and powered up the computer. It booted from the floppy and the program set to work analyzing the hard drive. It said the drive was physically OK, but the Master boot record was invalid, remote data recovery was possible, and all we had to do was let it find the modem and it would communicate with Ontrac. Of course, I knew that there was a $100 minimum charge just to talk to Ontrac regarding this since that had been explained at our meeting. Additional charges would apply depending on how hard the recovery job turned out to be.

All this was moot, however, since the program could not find the computer's modem. It wasn't until later that I figured out why the modem couldn't be found. It was a Win Modem (meant to run in Windows). This is another reason to pay a little more when you buy a new computer and upgrade to a regular modem from the non standard Win modem.

After discussing the options with the client, we decided to create new partitions and reformat the drive, losing all the data in the process. But this wasn't as bad as it sounds, since we had a full system tape backup made January 15. Fortunately there were also paper copies of most of the documents that had been created since then. A full system backup would put the computer back to the exact state it was in on January 15.

To do this, I first had to run FDISK to create new partitions on the drive. Unfortunately I had no idea what version of Windows 95 had been installed before. I didn't even know how many partitions there had originally been. So I created a primary DOS partition of 2.047 GB and an extended partition of the same size in which I created one logical drive. That left a few stray megabytes left over that I didn't worry about. I then ran FORMAT to format the new C & D drives. I should note that there was a recovery CD for this machine but no associated floppy to boot from could be found. I, of course, had my bootable floppy with it's generic CD drivers, so I could actually look at the files on the recovery CD, but I could find none that would start the recovery process. I suppose that must start on the floppy. If I could have used this recovery CD to put the computer back to its original state, then I would have had the hard drive partitioned as original. I would then have restored with my tape backup.

But you work with what you have. After getting the hard drive back into a usable state, I inserted the floppy that was to start the full system restore from the Colorado Backup tape. Everything went smoothly for the first few minutes. Then I got the message that the backup did not have a copy of the Windows Registry and it would be necessary for me to first install Windows before the restore could proceed. This was not the way the program was advertised. The whole idea behind a full system backup was to include the Registry. Discouraged I quit for the evening.

Next morning, I started the full system restore from an older backup tape., and this time everything was OK. Apparently the January 15 "full system back" was not done correctly, and the registry was not included.—a good reason to have more than one such backup. The process continued for about 4 hours and then stopped with 80% of the files restored and a message that the C drive was out of space.

Just what I had feared. The original partition was one 4 + GB drive. But this was just another problem to be overcome. Since the restore first restores the root directory and the Win-

(Virus.....Continued on page 8)

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dows directory, I had Windows up and running on the computer. So I just uninstalled a bunch of programs on the C drive that should have been removed long ago anyway. Then I moved several folders containing a large number of graphics files to the D drive. Before I knew it I had 400 MB of free space on the C drive. Additionally the files that were being restored when the process stopped were in excess of several hundred megabytes, being mapping data, so I didn't include that in the restore when I started back. After probably another hour I had everything restored except the mapping program. I simply reinstalled this program from CD to the D drive.

I was almost finished. The next thing to do was to do a restore of only data files from the more recent backup. After that, I only had to get the modem working, get the network card recognized, and set up RoadRunner again. Setting up the modem was when I realized that the computer had a Win modem. It took a few extra minutes to get the network card installed since it didn't seem to like the information on the first of two installation floppies. I finally read the details on installing the card from its manual and found out that in Win 95 you only use floppy 2.

Setting up RoadRunner was a snap until I tried to log on. It logged on fine and started downloading files to the computer like crazy. Oh, how nice, I thought. It is updating its program files. Then I noticed that it said it was installing Internet Explorer 3.0. Merle Nicholson, whom I had consulted several times during all of this, had warned me about this and said that it was OK to abort the process, since that is what the RR technician had done at his house. And that is exactly what I did, since I didn't want IE 3 to replace IE 4.

As you might guess, this is not the end of the story. Halting the download froze the computer, and it would not unfreeze. Upon rebooting, it came up in safe mode and refused to run in any other mode. A check of the bootlog text file indicated that it wasn't loading many of the font files. What to do? Well, there was a good copy of the Windows installation files in the Windows\Options directory, so I simply reinstalled Windows.

After the installation, a reboot of the computer produced a message that there was a device driver in the Window System.ini file calling for the file Ntkern.vxd, which was either missing or damaged and that I should do something about this. I did. I looked at the system.ini file, and there was no mention of Ntkern.vxd. Anyway, a couple presses of the return key always got you past the message and Windows seemed to run OK. Since the installation of Win 95 included IE 3, I saw no harm in trying to log onto RR again. This time, however, it made no attempt to download IE 3 but instead asked me to supply a path to the browser I wished to use. After doing this, RR was up and running, and I was ready to call it a day. Tomorrow I would install IE 4.0, see if I couldn't remove the cause of the annoying boot-up message, and tie up a few loose ends.

A check of the Usenet newsgroups on http://ww.dejanews.com said that if I wanted to remove the Ntkern.vxd message, I should uninstall USB support and reinstall it. So, next morning I did that first thing, but didn't reinstall USB since the computer had no such ports. Next I installed IE 4, did a few other computer items for the individual unrelated to the virus attack and left for lunch. Before leaving, though, we set Colorado Backup to doing a full system backup of our newly restored hard drive, and the individual was off to the computer store to get a new copy of their antiviral program.

What is to be learned?

- First, you should have a current backup of everything important to you. We actually had a backup of the entire system—but it was several months old.
- You should also know the number and size of your logical hard drives, since the restore needs to be applied to the exact setup from which it came. Note the restore can not partition or format your drives for you. You have to first do that before restoring if the damage has been that severe.
- You should have antiviral software running on your computer.
- This antiviral software should be up to date. My client was running McAfee, but it was over two years old and incapable of catching this particular virus.
- You should not play around on the Internet, downloading executables as files or as attachments and then running them on a computer that is important to you. We are fairly certain that this virus came in from AOL via such an attachment to a message.

End of the story? I don't know. This morning I received a call saying that, first, the computer was now spontaneously rebooting if you let it sit doing nothing for several hours and that it had done this before the installation of the new virus program. My only suggestion here was to disable all energy saving features and screen savers and see if the problem stopped.

The second problem was that the installation of the virus program on a laptop (might as well put a newer version of the antiviral software on that computer too) had killed its ability to connect to AOL. It could connect to NetCom but not AOL. If you uninstalled the program, then you could connect to AOL. A little research revealed that to make the newest version of McAfee work with AOL, you needed to download a patch (10 minutes via RR and over an hour on the laptop's regular modem). Sounds like a new program to me, not just a patch.

(Virus…….Continued on page 10)

Book Review: Microcosm: The Quantum Revolution in Economics and Technology

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

It's safe to say---is it not?---that all of us members of the Tampa PC Users Group are either computer nerds or aspire to computer nerddom? (I know I do.) But in order to arrive at that exalted place, we need a good foundation in the historical evolution of the microelectronics revolution.

Enter George Gilder and his book, "Microcosm: The Quantum Revolution in Economics and Technology." Gilder, a philosopher, writer and economist, penned his book exactly ten years ago. It was then a definitive roadmap for the upcoming economic and technological upheaval that continues to sweep over us all to this day.

The author, in surveying the tidal wave of change to come, waxed lyrical and poetic about a tiny object, the integrated chip, which would soon power all of our machines as well as our economy and our very civilization:

"Every era has its pinnacle," he wrote. "In medieval Europe, it was the Gothic cathedral. In the late twentieth century, it is the very large scale integrated circuit, the Gothic cathedral of modern America. Like a cathedral, it is wrought of common elements---glass, sand, and metal--- transfigured by human genius and art. Viewed through a microscope, the chip unfolds as a panorama of infinitesimal tapestries, as intricate and variegated, efflorescent and symmetrical, radiant and colorful, as all the glass and stone of Notre Dame or Chartres. Passing over for a time the issue of whether it will be comparably given to God, the feat of designing and producing a modern microchip entails craft, devotion, diligence, genius, and vision comparable to any artistic pinnacle of ages past."

In telling the amazing story of "the descent into the microcosm"---the creation of integrated chips in the realm of micron measurements---Gilder recounts the personal histories of a number of individuals central to the surging microelectronics upheaval. Some at that time were famous, some nearly unknown, but all helped to light the fuse of the revolution.

Central to that story are people like Carver Mead, an engineering professor at the California Institute of Technology in the 1950's and '60's; Dick Gossen, a refugee from Texas Instruments who headed up a company named Silicon Design Labs in 1984; Dick Oettel and Vince Corbin, students of Carver Mead who founded Seattle Silicon in 1983; Gordon Campbell, founder of SEEQ, an early maker of EPROM chips; Bob Widlar, an engineer refugee from Fairchild Semiconductor who jumped to National Semiconductor, became a millionaire and disappeared into Mexico where he "was said to enjoy 'the beach, the bimbos, and an occasional exotic smoke'." And plenty of others, each seemingly more eccentric and foresightful than the last.

Gilder's book captures the sense of awe that we all feel from time to time, as we contemplate our increasingly intelligent machines and participate in a drama that surpasses the Industrial Revolution in terms of the changes being wrought upon humanity's stage. The author, however, didn't always write about the microelectronics revolution. He started his career as more of an insightful sociologist, swimming mightily against the dominant trends in the 1970's. "Naked Nomad," "Visible Man," and "Men and Marriage" all pinpointed multiple causes of societal problems long before his views came to be accepted in the debate, if not conventional wisdom.

Then, in 1979 he burst upon the stage with "Wealth and Poverty," another seminal work that combined sociology, economics and politics, and which provided the intellectual blueprint for what came to be known as the Reagan Revolution. That political and economic program in turn set the stage for an economy that would give birth to the personal computer revolution and eventually undermine and destroy the communist empire, with emphasis on low taxes, less regulation, and more entrepreneurship and individual initiative.

Today Gilder has followed up upon his path breaking earlier work in "Microcosm" with further books on microelectronics and the microcosm, including "Life After Television" and the more recent "Telecosm." Both books are accounts of the imminent demise of "bottleneck" entertainment and programming, in favor of virtually total personal choice, made possible and practicable by...you guessed it, the tiny integrated chips that suffuse our lives today.

Whether Gilder's current prognostications will come true or not is still an open question. Yet there is no doubting that he saw and "called" the computer revolution before it was fully upon us. One reader of a recent book about Gilder, writing on the Internet, was moved to say that "I think Gilder will go down in history as one of the great minds of our time."

Want to see where it all started? You may want to try finding "Microcosm" at the library. Or, if you're particularly intent upon earning your wings of nerddom, you may want to go to Amazon, the online bookseller, where you will find that Gilder's "Microcosm" is...out of print! But they say they can find one for you from used booksellers. Why the book was allowed to go out of print, I don't know, because it's a *terrific* read if you have any interest at all in the scientific and technological changes that are reordering all of civilization. ◆

Editor's note: If you go to Amazon, please use the link on the TPCUG home page.

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. Last meeting we considered the problem of downloading viruses & continued with FrontPage. The previous meeting we looked at the winners of the FACUG home page contest and saw how one web host provides statistics of web site activity.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

Last month, we studied Dynamic Data Exchange between a VB program and another Windows Program. A member presented some very old BASIC programs he would like to convert to VB. We will consider them at our next meeting.

(LapLink……..Continued from page 5)

let's just do the scan over the network and save the results to the desktop computer. Then we can do a transfer of the photo file. That worked fine.

Now to see how all this works over the Internet. I have Laplink running on both my laptop and the desktop. I connect each computer to the Internet using two different Internet accounts. On the desktop computer, I run the program WINIPCFG.EXE (it is on all Win 95/98 computers) to find the desktop's temporary IP address. Then on the laptop, I tell it I want to connect over Dial-Up Networking and provide the desktop's IP address. Momentarily I am prompted for my user name and password and am then connected.

If you are going to connect to a remote computer, you can use either the regular modem dial or the dial-up connection to the Internet. They should be about the same speed since they are both going over the phone lines. The Internet connection has the advantage of being free. How fast is such an Internet connection? Certainly much slower than a LAN connection.

I did a test of opening Microsoft Word remotely on the desktop computer via the Internet from the laptop. It took essentially one minute from the time I clicked on start | programs…. on the desktop's screen as viewed on the laptop until I was able to start typing into a new document.

Obviously the value in using LapLink to access another computer remotely is not in creating Word documents on the remote computer. To me it is useful for accessing the files on a remote computer and for being able to take control of the remote computer so as to diagnose problems or, in general, to help when someone is having problems with their machine.

Symantec makes a competing program called PC Anywhere. I think it basically does the same thing. Additionally, in the latest CompUSA Ad., I saw some pretty good pricing on LapLink (especially if you had a recent version from which to upgrade). I, however, don't see too much of a future for these products since right now Microsoft's NetMeeting does essentially the same tasks (just not as smoothly) as long as you connect via the Internet—and it is free. ◆

(Virus……..Continued from page 8)

I do find it odd that a company would create a new antiviral program and have it incompatible with the major ISP. I know AOL does everything in a nonstandard way, but they are the largest Internet provider. Then, again, perhaps McAfee is onto something here. Not letting people connect to AOL will probably greatly reduce the incidence of such virus attacks. Look on it as a feature and not a flaw. Larry Anders has informed me that this problem was caused by AOL making changes after the release of the latest McAfee Virus Scan.

(Virus……..Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Museum of Science and Industry
BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems	Micrografx
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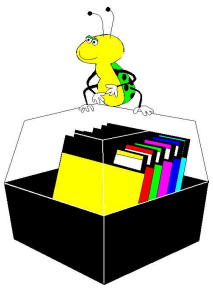
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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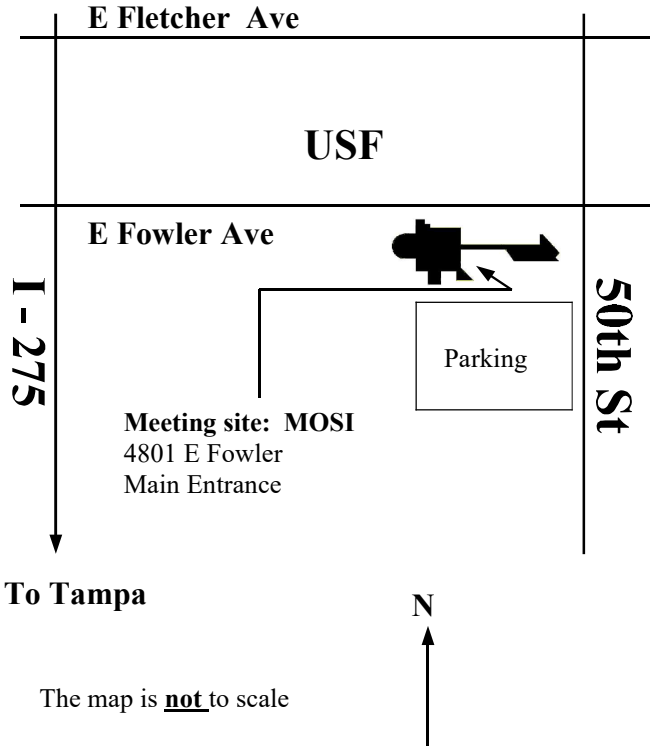
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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Virus……..Continued from page 10)

Just as the newsletter was going to press, I ran across the following news item:

Bangladeshi Student Says He Can Cure Chernobyl Virus
DHAKA — A Bangladeshi student said Sunday he had invented a software program that can quickly revive computers crippled by the "Chernobyl" virus.

I think his claim may be accurate in some cases but certainly not in others. Not all computers are affected the same way. Some, for example, have their BIOS destroyed in addition to losing hard drive data. Some only have the MBR and the FAT destroyed. Others have varying amounts of the hard drive overwritten. I think he would be hard pressed to recover from an overwritten hard drive. However, I certainly wish I had had his software to try out when I visited that infected hard drive one week ago today. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



April in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 4 April 1999

Meeting

APC
Power Supplies

April 14, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the April meeting Kim Slinko from American Power Conversion (APC) will speak about uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) and surge protectors. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Membership drive April 1 through September 30

The TPCUG is having a membership contest, with a dinner for two going to the person who brings in the most new members!

The contest rules are:

1. You have to be a member in good standing at the conclusion of the drive, September 30.
2. You must lay claim to any new people you bring in to our drive chairman, VP Mike Hodges. Mike will track the results and declare the winner at the October meeting. You do not have to be present to win.
3. In case of a tie, the winner will be selected by a drawing.
4. The prize will be a gift certificate, tentatively at Applebee's in an amount that will cover a meal for two.

It would be best if you'd send an email to Mike when – or shortly after - each of your new members join. His email is hodges@reflectone.com. He will acknowledge all emails. In the case that you do not have email (is it possible?) you'll need to write your claim down and make sure some officer gets it, or you can send snail-mail to our mailing address: TPCUG, PO Box 3492, Tampa FL 33601. Be sure to do this by September 30.

(President.....Continued on page 12)

May 12: Steve Tulloh - Road Runner & Cable Modems

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the March Meeting

By Jim Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

The Windows SIG started in the MOSI computer lab at 6:00 PM with Mary Sheridan at the helm. The discussion soon turned toward Linux again with several members expressing an interest in the OS.

The next topic of discussion was Windows networking. With more homes having multiple computers these days, home networking is becoming increasingly popular. William LaMartin was quick to point out that his own home network allows him to use one computer as an internet router, so only one computer has to be configured for calling outside the home and the other computers connect through it. For people with high speed Internet connections, like RoadRunner, you would only have to pay for the single connection. We talked about simple "Direct Cable Connections" between two computers to running wire and installing network cards in your home. New network products now on the market work through the existing phone lines or connect wirelessly, like a cordless phone, and will help make a home network easier to install. The network discussion went from setting up a Windows network to the cost of on site network service. With some places charging over $200.00 per hour to come out to work on a network, some of us considered a career change.

If anyone is interested in starting new SIGs like Access or Linux, or a study group for certification such as A+ or MCSE, please contact any of the board members or bring it up during the meeting.

President Merle Nicholson called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. He started by introducing guests and new members to the group. Merle then passed along a warning to users of RoadRunner that, since the system is basically a large Windows network, if you don't have your security features set properly, outside users can obtain your I. P. address without your knowledge, or access information on your hard drive. This means someone else can pretend to be you on the Internet. Merle announced the dates and times for our SIGs and reminded everyone that they are listed in the newsletter. Mary Sheridan and Bruce Register returned from this years FACUG meeting in Orlando and brought back new users group price lists from Power Quest, Jasc, and Symantec.

Merle then announced the new membership drive. For those who missed it, we will be giving away a meal for two at Applebee's to the member in good standing who brings in the most new members beginning April 1, 1999 to October 1, 1999. In case of a tie, the winner will be determined by a

(Minutes.....Continued on page 4)

Visual Basic Projects

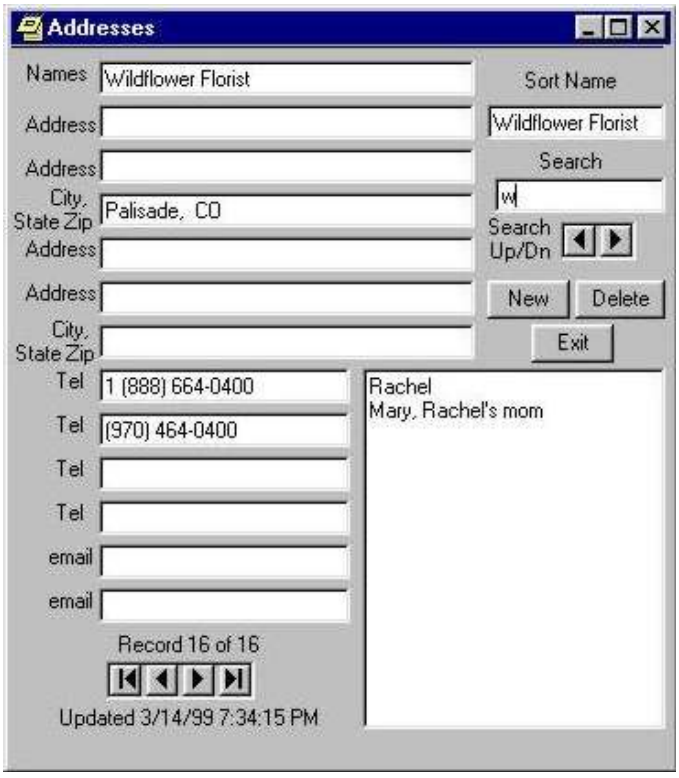
By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

As all our members know, we have a Visual Basic SIG that's doing well. It's well attended and interesting. I'd like to mention something to some of the members of that group and anyone else who is just beginning to have an interest in programming. Here it is, and you can quote me on this. "You have to *do it* to learn anything about it". It isn't like going to a history class where more study improves your performance. It's more like learning to drive. You can study it forever, but as we all know, 99.9% of the skills you learn is doing the driving.

I'd like to present two very recent projects I've done by way of illustrating some of the useful things you can accomplish with programming. One is an Address Book, and the other is a picture re-size calculator. I'm not going to give you any programmer-type language here, just what it does and why I did the projects, so read on.

Address Book

What this world does NOT need is another address book. Definitely. But I have this project as an aid for the VB classes I teach. Also the address books I've looked at don't quite fit what Valerie and I use one for. We have this small brown book by the telephone downstairs that has, yes, names and addresses, but also things like peoples' birthdays, and when their children graduated from school, and things like what kind of illness their mother has. This way Valerie and I can kind of know what each other knows about people we talk to and send cards to. One thing that it doesn't have though that we need is say the phone number to Ho Ho's so we can order carryout, things like that, that would definitely make that little book too complicated.



Also, it's downstairs. My part of the house is in an upstairs "office". Valerie's computer is downstairs, and both are networked to the server, an ideal place to keep a central database. So why not? I revamped the fields some, and added a search field. Note in the picture, the example has "wildflower florist" in it so you can search for either word. Also simply typing in a "w" got to the first record that has a "w" in the first word. The search works just about instantaneously, and the upper right navigation buttons allow you to page through all qualifying entries. In this case all records that start with a "w" in the search field.

I deliberately do not search through Last Name, First Name as you would expect. Instead, you must enter some category words in the search field. In the case of personal friends, perhaps starting with the last name, but if you normally refer to a person as "Dan", that's all you'd put there. Maybe Ho Ho's would be "Ho Chinese food". Notice that there are four telephone entries and two email addresses. Valerie and I have four telephone numbers between us, not counting the modem phone, so for version 2, I'm considering just a free-form box for telephone numbers.

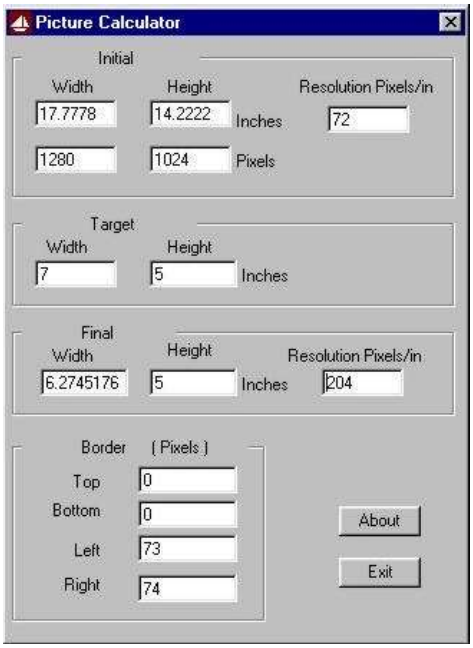
We've just begun putting all the "little book" entries in, and by the time we're done, I may have changed the appearance completely. Also I may give it a way to address envelopes and also some way to go through and check off about thirty entries to do Christmas envelopes. It may just be a Word Basic program instead that accesses the database independently. We'll see. In my household a program is never done.

PixCalc

This is one that I really had fun with. It took about three or four hours to program, and it takes a bit of explaining. When I got Paint Shop Pro 5, I discovered a new (for version 5) feature. It shows any picture with a ruler on it, showing the size of the picture in inches. And I'm REALLY interested in this, because I want to place these pictures on the printed page. I want to print a picture out say as a 5 by 7 or 8 by 10, or I may want to place six small pictures on a single page. If you "scale" a picture you must maintain an "aspect ratio" to keep the picture from being elongated or distorted. So how does a picture that is 5.389 by 2.750 at 72 pixels per inch fit into a 5 by 7, or 7 by 5? Probably not too well unless you do some accurate calculations. I've been doing this with a calculator for a while. And it's just a simple matter of proportions, some straightforward algebra. But it's tedious, and many times you must do it a number of times

(VB.....Continued on page 4)

(VB.....Continued from page 3)



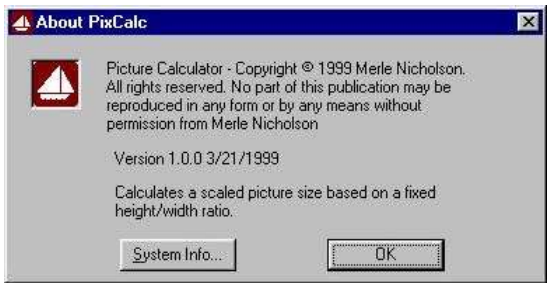
to decide what to do. As you increase the size, one dimension or the other will meet the target dimension, but the other won't if you maintain the original aspect ratio. So you need to know the final dimension, and sometimes you want to know how may pixels to add left and right or top and bottom, so you can sometimes add a border to fill out to the required dimensions.

Some experimentation shows that the initial size in inches is determined by the resolution in pixels, at 72 pixels per inch. Now let's say if it's high resolution you don't just want to scale the picture and maintain 72 pixels per inch. What you really want to do is increase the pixels per inch to reduce the physical size so that either the width or height meet the target printed size.

And this little baby does all that all by typing in the initial size in inches and the pixels in inches. Paint Shop Pro gives you this on the Image, Resize panel. That automatically fills in the Initial Pixels. Sometimes because of round off error, those two pixel numbers may need changing by one or two, and you can do that.

Then you fill in the Target Width and Height and automatically, the new (Final) Pixels/In and the Final Width and Height are calculated. Internally, a judgement must be made about which dimension is reached first. In the example shown, the height target was met, and the width was not. It's short of meeting that target by .73 inches. And if you were to add 73 pixels on the left and 74 pixels on the right, the picture will be exactly 7 by 5. In Paint Shop Pro, you can add borders like this in any color you like. Doing it in white just makes it easier to center the 7 by 5 on the printed page. All you need to do is plug the Final Resolution number in PSP's Image, Resize panel, and it'll print exactly the correct size.

That's it! Except for the About panel, which I'm showing here also. The System Info is interesting, I think. It's the same one that you see on the About panel in MS Word. This About panel was made from a Wizard in Visual Basic, with some modifications. If you're interested in this program, I'll be happy to send it to you by email. The only catch is if you have the Visual Basic 5 product, you don't want this. It's written in VB 6, and the files play havoc with a VB 5 compiler product. As do ALL VB 6 programs. There's no problem otherwise to everyone else. Send me email at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com and indicate if you want the source code also. ◆



(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

drawing.

Jason Velasco of Ontrack software started his presentation at 7:00 PM. Ontrack is a company that specializes in data recovery. They were originally known for their disk manager program, which allowed older computers to recognize and use newer, larger hard drives. Now they perform minor miracles by resurrecting lost data. Mr. Velasco passed along some interesting statistics on data loss, like hardware failure being the most common cause of loss (44%) followed by human error (32%). Virii fell far below at only 7%. Larger hard drives have shown a greater rate of failure than smaller ones, probably because they spin faster and have more closely packed data areas.

Mr. Velasco then described the methods used by Ontrack to recover your lost data. Copies of "Data Advisor" were brought in for the group to take home. This program boots from the floppy only when your hard drive fails and loads directly to system memory. No information is moved to or from the hard drive. Data Advisor begins with a mechanical and electrical test of the drive's hardware before ever checking the data files on the disk. If the drive fails at this point the test stops. The program then tests the integrity of the data on the disk, and it then tests the disk sectors. Again, if any part

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

(Minutes.....Continued from page 4)
of the test fails the whole process ends. Where Data Advisor makes itself truly useful is a modem driver that will run strictly from memory and call Ontrack. The technicians at Ontrack can then attempt to recover lost data remotely over the modem. This process won't work with a Win modem; the drivers are too large for a single floppy. Ontrack also has Class 100 clean rooms where they can open a hard drive to physically repair a damaged disk. Most hard drive manufacturers will continue to honor their warranty after Ontrack has opened the drive. Try that at home. If you choose to send the drive to Ontrack they charge a standard $100.00 fee for just the evaluation.

Data Advisor is available from Ontrack at http//www.ontrack.com for free. There is also a Y2K Bios tester available as freeware. I found this to be a very handy tool.

After a short break we began the drawing for the door prizes. A special congratulations goes out to one of our new members, Mike Torres. Mr. Torres won a copy of Nuts & Bolts, Via Grafix training CD, and an Ontrack T-shirt. Arthur Young, another new member, won a spell-checking program called "Spell Catcher." Ford Bond won a Via Grafix disk and Bob LaFave won "Glider 4.0." ◆

Internet picture of the month



Armour – Stiner Octagon House
1860: Irvington, NJ

This is one of the many things Victorian at the site Victorian Station. You may visit it at http://www.victorianstation.com/. Once there, just click on the Victorian lady to enter the site.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations - just click on the link



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Taxes - Essential Links to Taxes	http://www.el.com/elinks/taxes/
American Power Conversion (this month's presenter)	http://www.apcc.com/
Inner Learning On-line (Human & Auto Anatomy)	http://www.innerbody.com/
gettingstarted.net (Web site tutorial)	http://www.gettingstarted.net/contents.html
Molecular Expressions – Images from the Microscope	http://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/
Victorian Station (everything Victorian)	http://www.victorianstation.com/
Visual Elements (the Chemical Elements)	http://www.chemsoc.org/viselements/
Brandon TownCenter On The Web	http://www.shopbtc.com/
Time Inc. Picture Collection	http://www.thepicturecollection.com/
User Friendly Computer News (Tampa)	http://www.userfriendlyonline.com/
ParenthoodWeb	http://www.parenthoodweb.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Family TreeMaker 5.0/6.0

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

How many versions of Family TreeMaker have I purchased over the years? It is easier to count how many I haven't bought—very few. And since my version 4.0, 4.1 or whatever, was not all that old, I didn't plan on purchasing 5.0 when it came out sometime last year. But my sister, who does the bulk of data gathering in our genealogical searches, had version 5.0, and, as is usual in these matters, version 4.0 can not load version 5.0 files. I don't know what new feature added makes the way the data is stored different in the newer versions, but I do know that it is a good feature for the software marketers. Since I couldn't load version 5.0 files, I had to buy the new version also. And as I write here about version 5.0 being relatively new, guess what our friends at Family TreeMaker have done. They now have produced Version 6.0. I truly believe that within the last 12 months you could have bought the most recent versions available and produced three different versions.

It seems as if every time they think up a new way of displaying your data in a report they feel it incumbent upon themselves to produce a new version—the files of which I assume the older versions will not open. Of course, they only want $20 from me for version 6.0, but this constant updating of the program—now more often than once a year—is getting bothersome. If Microsoft updated their programs as rapidly, you would hear people cry foul.

A little history. I first bought Family TreeMaker as a DOS program made by a company called Banner Blue. Then, along came their first Windows version called Family TreeMaker for Windows. That was a welcome addition. Then came the newer and newer versions, each one adding a feature or two. I think the first version either couldn't import or export to a GEDCOM file, and the notes and the types of reports were limited. But with each new version these deficiencies were removed. In version 5.0, for example, we got the ability to spell check our Notes (actually that was in version 4.4, I think, but I never saw that version). Before I got around this problem by first creating the note in a word processor, spell checking it there then copying it and pasting it into the Family TreeMaker note.

While all these improvements were being made to the program, the company was obviously growing due to the increasing popularity of its product. As a result, BannerBlue became the BannerBlue division of Broderbund, which in turn was gobbled up by the Learning Company. And in the past few months, the Learning Company has become part of the toy maker Mattel. Not a good situation as far as I am concerned, since I see little of value that a toy company can offer a software company. Time will tell.

Obviously this is not your standard product review. But with a bow to such, I will note that any genealogy program is nothing more than a fancy interface to a database where you have the ability to input your data and then view it in a variety of different reports. What Family TreeMaker is doing with each newer version is to give you more latitude in what sort of data you can enter and more variety in the type of reports it will produce. For example with 5.0 you got the ability to view an "hourglass" report, which displays an individual's ancestors and descendants on the same chart. With 6.0 you get the ability to determine the relationship between any two particular individuals. With version 5 and earlier, you could only display all relationships of a particular individual; thus, to get the relationship to another particular individual, you would have to search through this list. Big deal.

With version 6.0, you have the ability to find the Soundex code for anyone in your family tree. They have also enhanced the book feature—the option that weaves the data you select into a "book". Isn't technology great? You can now have the computer write a family book for you, weaving your genealogical data into a sensible narrative by supplying the appropriate connecting words between your basic facts.

I like Family TreeMaker. As a genealogical database, I recommend it, having used it almost from the beginning of its existence, but I am tired of these constant upgrades.

Back around Version 2 or 3, they started offering additional CDs with genealogical information: the social security database, marriages in Georgia 1776 – 1845 (I don't recall if this is an actual title), etc. I think they got started at this by buying a company that had been providing such CDs to libraries. And over the years, Family TreeMaker has added greatly to the list of available CDs they offer. In fact, when you buy Family TreeMaker now you are confronted with several different prices depending on how many extra CDs you would like in the package.

Once the Internet started booming, they jumped on that too with a useful site at http://www.familytreemaker.com. The products they sell make up only a small part of the site, most of which is devoted to articles on genealogy. They also give you the ability to search for information on individual names. If you get a "hit" on a name, you are presented with a list of sources for more information. Quite naturally most of these sources are CDs produced by Family TreeMaker. So if you want to see the information, you know what you need to do. Buy that CD.

They also host individual Family TreeMaker users' genealogical web sites (not mine, though). They are obviously trying to make themselves your one stop for genealogy. ◆

Quicken 99 Deluxe from Intuit

By Jenny Lind Olin, Treasurer,
Tampa PC Users Group

I have used Quicken, well let's just say, since DOS. That is like BC in computer time. I upgraded to the Windows version in due time, and I didn't think Quicken could get much better. It is, and that is an understatement.

Last March, as my luck would have it (a change for the better), I won a copy **of Quicken 98 Deluxe** at the Florida Association of Computer Users Group (FACUG) Convention. That Deluxe version of Quicken was actually more and better than I expected. My new **Quicken 99 Deluxe** just has more features. I thought I had died and gone to heaven.

A very "in" thing in today's world is doing your investing via the Internet. Quicken 99 provides a complete **investment tracking** feature. I plan to use the **One Step Update** to download all of my financial data, as well as stock quotes, right over the Internet and into Quicken. Since I am prone to forget, I need to store my passwords and PIN numbers. **PIN Vault** will hold all of my passwords and PIN numbers using state-of-the-art encryption.

I have thoroughly enjoyed using Quicken 99 Deluxe for my personal accounting and recommend this software package to anybody who is interested in tracking as little as just their checkbook entries or as much as keeping track of every aspect of their financial life as I do. Quicken 99 Deluxe has **60 reports and graphs** available. I like to run reports and file them so I have a record to use for future purposes.

Also as treasurer of this group, I have been using **Quicken 99 Deluxe** to keep track of our finances. I am able to run an **itemized category report** each month and thus give the Board of Directors a report of where we have been, what we have done, and where we are going financially speaking.

As for my own accounting endeavors, I keep track of everything. I remember watching my brother using a little black book where he wrote down everything he spent. He was trying to see where his money was going and how to spend more wisely. It must be in the genes, as I track everything, as I said before. If I write a check to pay for my groceries, it is always for a larger amount than the total amount of the groceries. The excess is tracked in my Cash account. That is where **splitting the amounts to different account categories** comes into play--part goes to groceries and part goes to cash. Now I can see how much I actually spend for groceries. I track my checking account, savings account, credit card accounts, money market account, other intangible accounts as well as my real estate, my car (s), etc. If I own it and it changes in value, I track it.

Quicken 99 makes all those tasks so easy. My eye doctor, Dr. Anderson, recommended Quicken to me. He was telling me how easy it was to **reconcile the bank statement**. In fact he was actually reconciling his bank statement with his Quicken entries as we were talking on the telephone. I am the person who would spend all Saturday afternoon balancing my checkbook to the penny. I still do that, but it takes only seconds now, and I can do something else at the same time. When Quicken tells me that I jive with the beginning and ending balances, then I have the choice to run the **reconciliation report**, or not.

Also I don't keep track of my check writing in the manual check register anymore. I do use checks that make a carbon copy and when I sit down at the computer, I try to record any checks I have written that day. If I have forgotten to enter a transaction, I can edit in the middle of the reconciliation.

Another Quicken 99 feature is their improved **online banking and bill payment**. I do not use this feature, as my financial institution does not offer that. You have the choice of printing your checks or manually writing them. I don't have to use the check writing feature very often, as I have most of my bills paid by electronic transfer, automatically drafting my account. When my bill comes in I immediately enter the transaction in the checking register and date the transaction on the day my bank will be drafted. Now Quicken offers a **Quick Entry 99** icon. I click on the new icon, then I can quickly enter one or more transaction(s). Most of my transactions have been memorized by Quicken so with a speedy edit it is a done deal. I can forget about it. No pile of receipts sitting on top of my computer waiting for me to muster up a block of time to enter them. Later when I do bring up the whole package, I am prompted to add the quick entries at that time. I might just break my habit of procrastinating. Not only will I be more financially sound, I will be a better person.

When I pull up the full Quicken Deluxe 99 package, I see the **Quicken Home Page**, a display of my accounts with the current value for each. The bottom line is I can see my net worth at a glance. I click on my checking account link that takes me to the register to enter new transactions. If the CD is in place there is a **Quicken Audio** that talks to me telling me what I am do at this point. This feature is great for the novice, or if you are lonely, you can listen to a very nice woman's voice.

To help with your taxes, Quicken has provided two features, the **Tax Activity Center** and the **Free TurboTax Online**, both new to Quicken 99 Deluxe. When you categorize your transactions especially if it is tax deductible, Quicken automatically tracks it for your tax purposes, giving you a summary of your current tax status. When you are ready to file your income taxes, run the report for the **Quicken tax data**, then go online and use the free online service or load it into your tax preparing software and most of your entries are automatically done. ◆

A New Sound of Music

By Larry Anders, Librarian., Tampa PC Users Group

No, Julie Andrews hasn't resurrected her roll of the singing nun-wannabe. The Internet has spawned a new breed of music called MP3, which is short for MPEG-1 Layer 3. MPEG (Moving Picture Experts Group) was developed for the compression and storage of video. Layer 3 is that part of the standard that addresses the compression and storage of audio.

Are you totally confused? Don't be. Plain and simple…MP3 compresses audio to a fraction of the size of a standard audio file found on today's music CDs. What does this mean? Audio files have now become easily transferable electronically (over the Internet). The modern music album that is sold today uses up most of the real estate of a 680-megabyte CD. A CD with the same music in MP3 format can be stored on less than 50 megabytes. MP3 typically uses one megabyte for one minute of music.

What's better yet is that anyone can record an MP3 file, which has spawned this revolution of an abundance of music now available for nothing, or next to nothing, on the Internet. Do a search on the Internet for 'MP3' and see what you come up with. It's everywhere.

Is it as good as a store bought CD that you pay $10 - $15 for? Probably not, but close enough for my ears and the price is hard to beat.

Okay… so how do you play and record this music? There's a bunch of shareware and freeware MP3 players and recorders all over the Internet. You can also download these files from your computer to portable players like the 'Diamond Rio', which is slightly larger than a pager and sells for about $100, and take your music with you. My favorite place for anything that deals with MP3 is aptly named MP3.com. Here you can find every popular MP3 player and enough free music to keep you busy for months. But, this is not the only place. Just do your search and see how many you come up with. Even Lycos, one of the Internet's major search engines, now has an MP3 database search ability.

You can also translate your own personal music CDs into MP3 and with the size of the new files play them directly off your own PC, or, like I do, copy them to your notebook and take your music along with you. If you have a CD writer you can convert about 10 CDs to MP3 and copy all of them to one CD. But remember, you are still dealing with copyright laws here. Making personal copies for yourself is one thing, but giving away or selling copies is still **ILLEGAL** no matter what format you use.

One of the reasons there is so much music out there is because it is so easy and inexpensive to make your own MP3 music. That has opened the door for many new musicians that otherwise would have had to wait for their big break to get a record deal, which doesn't come easy. Don't get me wrong… your definition of music and mine are probably different. But there is so much choice that I'm sure that all of our tastes in music can be satisfied. And with the popularity of MP3 growing every day, there are more and more seasoned artists deciding to publish their music in the MP3 format also.

None of this is hard to learn so do yourself a favor and start enjoying some of the benefits of having that Internet account. You won't be sorry! ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Amazon Link If you are going to make a purchase through Amazon.Com, don't forget to go there through the Amazon link on our home page. If you then make a purchase, the TPCUG gets a 5% commission at no extra cost to you.

FACUG Web Site Contest Our humble TPCUG web site placed fourth in the annual Florida Association of Computer User Groups home page contest. In order, the winners were

1 Greater Tampa Bay PC User Group
http://members.cftnet.com/gtbpcug/
2 Sarasota PCUG http://www.spcug.org
3 PCRAMS Computer Club (West Palm)
http://www.pcrams.org
4 Tampa PC Users Group http://www.tpcug.org/

I was quite pleased with my fourth place prize of *Adobe PhotoShop 5.0*. Now I have a new program to learn. It will be interesting to compare it with the CorelDraw Package I have been using. You will probably see a review of it in the future.

Genealogy from last month Last month I mentioned my effort to get my Family TreeMaker (FTM) data into a Microsoft database. I accomplished that and showed the results to the VB SIG, since I had created a VB program to import the data from a FTM GEDCOM into Access. However, most of the work was in creating queries, form and reports in Access to replicate the way FTM allows you to display data. The most difficult part was creating the query and report to display an individual's ancestors or descendants for up to 10 generations. I did the above for two reasons. First, it gave me some VB practice (but taught me nothing new), second, it not only gave me practice with Access, but I actually learned a couple new techniques.

(Comments……Continued on page 9)

Meeting of the FACUG, Orlando

By Donald Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

March 5 through 7, the Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG) met in Orlando at the Adams Mark Hotel.

On Friday night, Adobe sponsored the dinner. They told us a bit about the programs Acrobat 4 and PageMaker Plus version 6.5. After dinner each person present was given a copy of Adobe PhotoDeluxe, Business Edition. Adobe also furnished all the User Groups with discount coupons.

On Saturday morning, Gene Barlow of PowerQuest presented all their programs. He especially told us about the new Lost and Found, a program to recreate files on your hard disk if you have a crash, or if you simply accidentally deleted some files. The disk drive must be rotating, though. The drive may also have been formatted, and recovery is still possible, by you, not a place you send it. PowerQuest sponsored the breakfast, and they provided discount coupons so that we can buy any one of the programs for a cost of $30 plus a small shipping cost.

For the next session, Joan Dineen presented a talk on grants. There was also a second session on grants on Sunday afternoon. Grants are a hot item right now apparently.

When we here in Tampa (not the TPCUG) were given a grant of $140,000, I was authorized to spend most of the money personally. I took bids and carried out the process. All this is in the public records so you may visit the work and then trace it back to the grant application if you like. It is easy to accomplish if you have a definite purpose in mind.

To apply for a grant, first decide what you want to ask for. Don't forget to include extras. The people who approve the grants understand this need (extra cords, tapes, extended warranties, etc.). Second, Look over a few foundations and pick one. Third, Get in your car and drive to the foundation after you make an appointment. Ask to see some successful grants and be sure to ask what they want on their application. Some want a short specific comment here, and maybe something "special" there. The people who pay attention to this detail are the ones who are most likely not to see their application thrown out.

Saturday's lunch was sponsored by Symantec. Everyone, about 150 people, was given an alarm clock. This is one of the most interesting clocks. It has a screen about the size of those on a cell phone. On the top is the year and the month and the date. Just below that is a real calendar that changes with the month. And below that is the time. Across the bottom are the control buttons. One of those buttons will bring up the time remaining until Y2K. It's a countdown also! Many of the Norton programs were shown and a User Group discount form handed out.

In the afternoon, I attended the session on incorporation and obtaining non-profit status for user groups.

The evening dinner was sponsored by Intuit. The two men who put on the presentation are terrific. They not only tell you about the products, but they entertain you as well.

Following the dinner, the home page contest prizes were given. First, GTBPCUG, Brandon's homepage. Written by Charles Vanderford of USF. Second, Sarasota's home page. Great job, Gary. Third, PC Rams home page. Always a real nice home page. Fourth. Tampa PC Users Group, Written by William LaMartin. This page has won honors before.

Sunday morning breakfast was sponsored by JASC, maker of the Paint Shop Pro version 5 software. They provided a user group discount coupon for all. After breakfast there were two more open sessions, and then at noon lunch was sponsored by the Corel Corporation. Their products are well known and used throughout the world.

Following the luncheon, the sponsors set up displays where anyone could visit with any of the individual representatives. This is good way to get answers to your questions on their software. After that, a wrap up and then prizes were drawn for all. The meetings ended at 4 P.M.

Each year there are a Fall meeting and a Spring meeting. The Fall meeting is only one day. These meetings are worth attending. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 8)

That is how I learned Microsoft Access—by creating database applications that solve problems in which I have an interest.

New Laptop I have a new laptop passed on to me by son when he purchased a still newer one. It is a ThinkPad 385XD-LEU with 233 MHz processor, 3.2 hard drive, 32 MB RAM and a 12.1" screen. What surprises me is that it is a little more than 7 months old, was a new model at the time of purchase, but is now no longer made. IBM has a new model in its slot—at a considerably lower price. Laptops are now truly affordable, have large hard drives, fast processors and fairly large screens.

It came with Win 98, and I had a question about something which led me to click on Help. I got a message saying that Win Help had some fatal problem. So the only way to get help was to reinstall Win 98, and that reminded me of one of my main complaints concerning computer makers—many do not provide a true copy of Windows on a CD. They either provide a "recovery" CD and/or have Win 98 installation files in a folder somewhere on your hard drive. With a recovery CD, you can

(Comments…….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. Last meeting we had our first look at Microsoft FrontPage.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309 .*

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com .

Last month, we studied a VB program that imported data for a GEDCOM (genealogical file) and exported it to a Microsoft Access database. This was a little advanced, so this month we will drop back to something more basic.

(Comments……Continued from page 9)

only reinstall Windows 98 by restoring the original preloaded image from the Recovery CD. This will wipe out everything else on your drive and replace it with whatever software originally came with the computer. Not a very good option. With a Gateway laptop I recently worked on, you had a recovery CD, but it also allowed you to browse through its files, and there was a Windows 98 directory for which you could run the Win 98 setup program to reinstall if you wished. Not so with the ThinkPad. None of the files made any sense. There were only 10 of them, and they appeared for the most part to image files, I assume, of various directories that would be placed on your hard drive.

So I ran the Win 98 setup program from the Win 98 folder on the hard drive—an option that would not be available if you somehow had corrupted it. When finished, Win 98 help now functioned. But, as you might guess, that is not the end of the story.

I had the Win 98 laptop and a Win 95 computer connected via a LAN with network cards with no problems. After the reinstall of Win 98 on the laptop, the Win 95 machine didn't show up in the network neighborhood in Windows Explorer of the Win 98 machine. You could, however, find it from "Tools | find computer." But once found, a double click on it produced a message that the win 95 machine was not accessible--not logged on. Additionally the log on screen that had appeared for Windows networking during the boot up of the win 98 machine no longer appeared.

At first I had no problem seeing the Win 98 computer from the Win 95 computer. But then to try and solve my problem, I went into the network properties and, under file and printer sharing for Microsoft networks, enabled browse master on the Win 95 machine since I had read that this might help. All it did was make it so that the Win 98 machine now didn't show up in the network neighborhood of the Win 95 machine. Luckily I could still do a "tools | find" and get the Win 95 machine, where a double click on it produced all the shared folders. Removing the browse master feature did not return things to their previous state either. Seems things can only get worse—not better.

I then removed and reinstalled basically every adapter and protocol I could in Network Neighborhood to no effect. I was sure it was something simple but could not find the answer. I then noted that if I clicked on start, one of the options was to log off. I did that. And guess what, my network log on screen appeared asking me for a username & password. A click on OK got me back to Windows--and now the Win 95 computer showed up on the Win 98 one and vice/versa. Furthermore, if I now clicked Start, I had the option of logging off LaMartin. Apparently the reinstall of Win 98 caused 98 to start up with another user other than me--once I logged off that user, I had all my network functionality back.

Another half-day wasted to discover that a simple click of the mouse produced the desired result. The final problem was how to make it log me on at the beginning? The solution came from where many of my solutions come from—a Usenet Newsgroup. I had posted my problem to the comp.os.ms-windows.networking.win95 newsgroup, and a fellow named Steve Winograd posted the following solution: "The most likely fix is to delete this registry key HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Network\Real Mode Net\AutoLogon. See this Microsoft Knowledge Base article for more information: No Windows or Network Logon Dialog Box at Startup http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q141/8/58.asp." I had searched Microsoft but had found nothing myself. I cannot recommend the Usenet newsgroups enough as sources of solutions.

(Comments.....Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Museum of Science and Industry
BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems	Micrografx
Broderbund	Microsoft
Corel Systems	PowerQuest
Grolier	RDI, Inc.
Intuit	SoftKey International
Knowledge Adventure	Symantec

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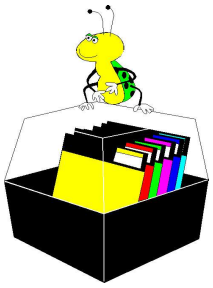
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

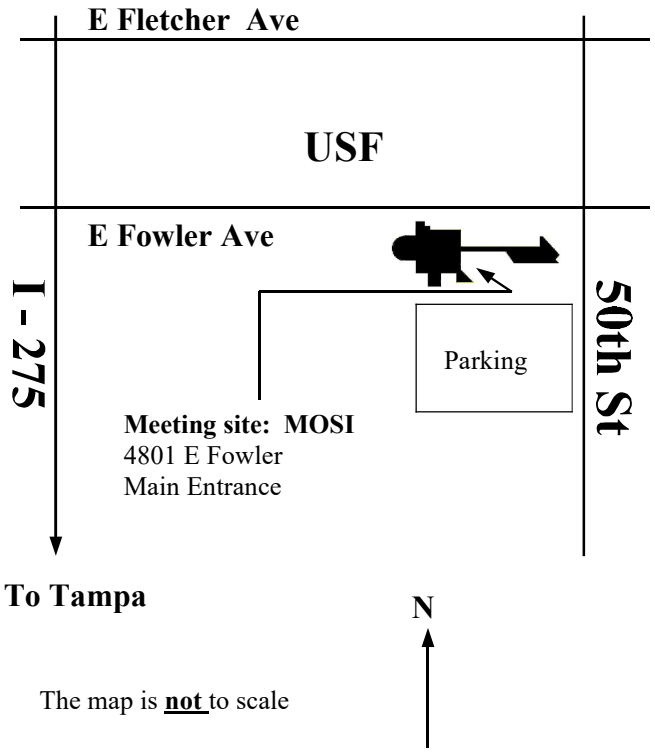


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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(President…….Continued from page 1)

Please take note of the membership contest. And remember the SIGs. We have a lot going for us: an outstanding newsletter and web site, our SIGs are very well attended and the most successful in a great many years, and the fine quality of our meeting presentations is continuing. We have everything going for us except an expanding membership. It's stable, but that's really not enough over the long haul. It doesn't have to grow fast, just expand enough that we can ride through the summer slump. The biggest concern that we have is our continuing ability to attract quality presenters. We're too much on the small side for a lot of vendors, and we need to pick it up a bit. Let's see what we can do over the next six months. ◆



(Comments…….Continued from page 10)

If you noticed that there are few graphics in this issue. The reason is that there was too much text, so I put a few of them in the background. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 11 No. 6 June 1999

Meeting

Laser Perfect Refills & MP3 Music

June 9, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the June meeting Chuck McPherson from Laser Perfect discusses printer cartridge refilling, then Jim Weber demonstrates MP3 music. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

I need to remind you again as always … we need to bring in new members. Remember there's a prize for bringing in the most members. So harass your friends and neighbors; make a nuisance of yourselves and drag some new faces in. See you at the next meeting. ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

My Many Computer Problems: All Solved, I hope

For the past month my computer had seemed to move more slowly than before; most likely because of all the new programs I had recently installed: McAfee Virus Scan, a new version of TextBridge Pro, Via Voice, and Internet Explorer 5.0. I suspected McAfee and IE 5.0 as the main culprits. But the situation was tolerable—just not perfect. Things, however, came to a head

(Problems……Continued on page 4)

July 15: Mark Komula from Network Technologies speaks on home networking

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Jim Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Our May 12 meeting began with Mary Sheridan presiding over the Windows SIG. As our guest speaker was from RoadRunner, alternate ISPs were discussed. A new way of connecting to the Internet with existing copper phone lines at high speeds is called ADSL. Asynchronous Data Service Lines offer the potential to connect to the internet at cable modem speeds, while using existing phone lines. This means you wouldn't need to wait for all those shiny new fiber optic cables to be laid in your neighborhood before you could enjoy super fast access to the web. Recent articles in the business section of the Tampa Tribune stated GTE would be contracting with outside companies to use GTE's lines to offer ADSL service in the Bay area. No price schedules were available at this time. GTE also offers an alternate Internet connection program using existing phone lines. They can offer a guaranteed 1.2 meg upload and download connection for the tidy sum of $600 a month. This may be clearly geared toward a small business, but lower price/connection services are available.

Merle started the meeting at 6:35. He reminded the members about our membership drive, so please try to help your group by finding a new member. Sign up sheets for the meeting and SIGs were passed around.

Our presenters for RoadRunner (http://www.timewarnercable.com) were Steve Tulloh, Jim Canale and Robert Marotta. Steve started out with a brief history of how Motorola got the cable modem industry started and then how RoadRunner is being set up in the Tampa area. For installation, RoadRunner will send a representative to your home to install an Ethernet network card in your computer with the RoadRunner software. The technician who comes out will also give about 15 minutes of training. The equipment has a one-year warranty, and the $99.95 installation fee lets you keep the Ethernet card.

Since the RoadRunner system is a WAN, the shared lines in any given neighborhood will have a degraded contact when more people activate their service. The network runs on a fiber optic backbone with RoadRunner operating three T3 lines at the same time. This allows RoadRunner a 622-megabit connection to the Internet. The fiber optic backbone supplies various ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode) hubs, which in turn supply service to the home. Each hub can service 45,000 homes. RoadRunner claims that a guaranteed upload speed of 768kbs is available because of the Token Ring

(Minutes.....Continued on page 5)

Copernic 99

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

For a few years now I have been singing the praises of free stuff that can be downloaded off the Internet. One of my most used utilities, free or otherwise, that I have downloaded has been WebFerret, a free Internet search utility that automatically searches several search engines each time, one after the other. What could be better? A metasearch utility that searches several search engines *at the same time*, not just one after the other. Enter **Copernic 99**. **Copernic 99** can search up to 30+ search engines at the same time! There's a maximum of 300 search results per engine and a maximum of 1000 results per query.

With **Copernic 99** you don't need to learn which search engine is the correct engine to use, nor do you have to learn the different rules for each search engine. **Copernic 99** does all that for you utilizing the best search engine for that specific search. **Copernic 99** doesn't just find the information you're looking for; it also stores the results on your PC for offline browsing, organizing them by a relevancy score that's easy to understand, and removes duplicates automatically. If you continually search for the same info you won't have to key in the same search over and over again; just click on Update.

Copernic 99 automatically updates its list of search engines and you don't have to constantly check to see if you have the latest version of the software. When a new upgrade is available, an automatic upgrade button will appear on your screen. Just click that button and **Copernic 99** takes care of the rest.

It really is easy to use. Just choose your field of interest (category), i.e., *web, newsgroups, email addresses*, enter your keyword(s) for the search and click the Search button. All engines of a selected category can be contacted simultaneously, up to 32, and the speed is mainly limited by your computer's capabilities and your Internet connection. (On my Time Warner's RoadRunner service it flies!) **Copernic 99** will know which search engines are best suited for your query, such as DejaNews, AltaVista, HotBot, Excite, Lycos, Infoseek, WebCrawler, Yahoo and Magellan. One feature that I really like is that it automatically highlights your keyword(s). It can display your search results in a summary report format in your default browser, remove dead links and download your results to disk for later viewing (up to 32 simultaneous transfers). Another feature is exporting and saving search results in various file formats (HTML, XML, TXT and DBF). You can also share your results with others by e-mail.

Copernic 99 is a fully-functioning metasearch utility which includes the three most used categories mentioned above, which should be more than enough for the beginner to above average Internet user. But, if you want more fields of interest there's the commercial version, **Copernic 99 Plus**, which includes 21 categories, giving you access to some 125 search engines and specific directories. These categories are:

Web	Newsgroups
Email Addresses	Buy Books
Business & Finance	Newswire
Games	Recipes
Health	Sciences
Kids	Software Download
Life	Sport News
Movies	Tech News
Music	Tech Reviews
Newspapers	Top News
	Travel

Minimum requirements are:

486-33 MHz, 8 MB of RAM, 5 MB of disk space

Windows 95/98, Windows NT 4.0 or later

Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 or later, Netscape Navigator 3.0 (32-bit) or later

Copernic 99:

Is Year 2000 compliant

Supports multi-user configurations for individual searches and settings

Has Windows compliant software uninstall procedure

Has accessibility to the program from Windows Start/Find menu (I've placed it on my Quick Launch toolbar so I can get to it more easily.)

Supports the International Windows versions

There are a whole host of customizable configurations and options in either program. While the standard version of **Copernic 99** is **FREE, Copernic 99 Plus** sells for $29.95. Either program can be downloaded from http://www.copernic.com and either program would be an *excellent* addition to your collection of Internet tools. ***Get this one!*** ◆



(Problems.....Continued from page 1)
when **the computer locked up** while transferring scanned and OCRed text from TextBridge Pro to Microsoft Word. The lockup occurred when I tried to cancel a McAfee Virus Scan that started up (on schedule) right in the middle of the TextBridge transfer. Obviously, in retrospect, I shouldn't have done that. When the computer was rebooted and Word started, the response in Word was more than sluggish. If I selected some text and then clicked with the mouse to make it bold, it would be almost 10 seconds before I was able to use the mouse to select more text. This was not tolerable.

My first thought was that the problem might be with the file, since, to create it, I had started TextBridge from a menu button on the Word menu bar and,after scanning in a few pages, had instructed TextBridge to close and put the text into Word. I had used this process several times to place approximately 40 pages of text into Word before the crash. In the past I had noticed a slow response in Word when dealing with large Rich Text Format (RTF) documents opened in Word before they were saved as Word documents. Perhaps this was similar. Unfortunately a check using other documents produced the same very slow response. The proof that something was wrong with Word and not the files was when I opened the same file in Word on my laptop and everything zipped along as it should.

The obvious solution was to reinstall Word. However, a reinstallation did not help, and an uninstall and reinstall did not help. Time now for drastic measures: **Eraser97** (see my comments in the December 1998 newsletter). The uninstall of Office 97 and the use of Eraser97, which removed all trace of Office 97 from the registry, and the reinstallation of Office97 did not help. When I reinstalled Word, I kept getting "**cannot update registry**" warnings. So, I was no better off, and worse, I now had other problems. I knew beforehand that after running Eraser97 I would have to reinstall my two scanners, Personal Web Server and Active Server Pages (ASP), since I had been through something similar before. But this time ASP would not reinstall. It had something to do with the msdasql. dll in the C:\Program Files\Common Files\System\ole db folder. Couldn't load a library or something.

After some thought, I figured this was probably a Windows file and it could most easily be corrected by reloading Windows. I really didn't want to reinstall Win 95, since I had added so many patches over the past 2.5 years that it had been on the computer, and I wasn't sure that any of them would be retained, so I decided to **move up to Win 98 on this machine**.

After the installation of Win 98, Word loaded and ran very much faster than before, my scanners worked, and everything else seemed OK. ASP could now be reinstalled, and it is working fine in spite of a note at the end of the installation that said "Incorrectly Registered, run regsrv32.exe to register". I would have done that, but I have no idea what file to include with the run regsrv32.exe command. Perhaps there is an Installation Log that I can view and see what process gave the error.

As they say, **it is not over until it is over**. There were still several more problems ahead to be discovered as I tried to use other programs or different features in programs which I already thought were OK.

First, when I tried to use my HP PhotoSmart photo scanner, it worked fine—except that the instructions were written out in the symbol font. For Example, **Insert photograph to be scanned** looked like **Ινσερτ πηοτογραπη το βε σχαννεδ**. As usual, a reinstallation did no good. And I could find no solution for this problem for the moment.

Second, when I tried to start Microsoft Publisher 98 to work on this newsletter, I got the message that it couldn't run because of some missing DLL (**Eraser97 strikes again**). This was solved by simply reinstalling Publisher 98—the only instance of a simple reinstallation solving one of my recent problems. Furthermore, this also removed the problem of the scanner software using the symbol font for instructions. Figure that one out.

Third, I noticed that after installing Win 98, when the computer booted I got an error message on my HP 4 Plus printer: "**22 PAR I/O ERROR**". As usual, I turned to **http://search.microsoft.com** and found the following:

CAUSE: This behavior occurs when the Drvwppqt.vxd virtual device driver is loaded or if you are not using an IEEE 1284 printer cable.
RESOLUTION: To prevent this driver from being loaded, follow these steps: ……omitted material…….

1. Click Start, point to Find, and then click Files Or Folders.
2. In the Named box, type "drvwppqt.vxd" (without the quotation marks), and then
click Find Now.
3. Rename all instances of the file by changing the file name extension. You must change the extension to prevent the driver from being loaded.

Three down; more to go.

Next I started Microsoft Access—at least I tried to. Instead I received the message: *"**Microsoft Access can't start because there is no license for it on this machin**e."* (As one of my clients said about a similar message,"*What do you mean no li-*

(Problems.....Continued on page 8)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
system used on the upstream. Download speeds vary greatly by the number of people accessing the network at any given time, but 1.2 meg downloads are possible. The existing pipelines are running at around 15% to 20% capacity. If a pipeline exceeds 70%, RoadRunner increases the number of fiber optics serving that area. Monthly service is $39.95 with standard Time Warner cable service, $49.95 without cable service. Five e-mail addresses are offered per service, with an additional five addresses for $10.00. If you need more than one TCP/IP address, that will also be an additional $10.00.

A Quake II game server is available at this time. A Half-Life server is coming soon.

During the presentation we had several occasions to wander into Question & Answer sessions with group members lending their own experience and expertise to various discussions. The group was very patient and understanding during these exchanges and at some moments appreciated an additional voice to explain a topic another member was having difficulty understanding.

After the presentation we had our door prize drawing. Bob LaFave won a copy of Adobe Pagemill, Arthur Young won a copy of Partition Magic, and Cheryl Alexander won an IBM Sports Bottle. ◆

Internet picture of the month



A portion of the Washington, DC Metro map

If you are planning a trip to the nation's capitol, the metro system is a very convenient means of moving around the city. For an interactive map of the system, go to *http://www.wmata.com/USINGMET/systemmap.HTM*. A click on any station will give station details including nearby points of interest. Similar maps exist for other cities. Another example of useful information to be found on the Internet.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute	http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/nhlbi/nhlbi.htm
Mayo Clinic Health Oasis	http://www.mayohealth.org/
FAST Search All the Web, All the Time	http://www.alltheweb.com/
Lonely Planet on-line (travel)	http://www.lonelyplanet.com/
The Ledger (Lakeland, FL newspaper)	http://www.theledger.com/
WebMD (medical information)	http://www.webmd.com/
Shareware Map - Windows 98-95	http://www.wugnet.com/shareware/95-98map.html
WUGNET (Independent online support for Windows)	http://www.wugnet.com/about/
Nutrient Data Laboratory Food Composition Data	http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/
CSS Journal - Social Studies Web Sites	http://www.webcom.com/journal/sites.html
Food.com (Internet takeout & delivery service)	http://www.food.com/

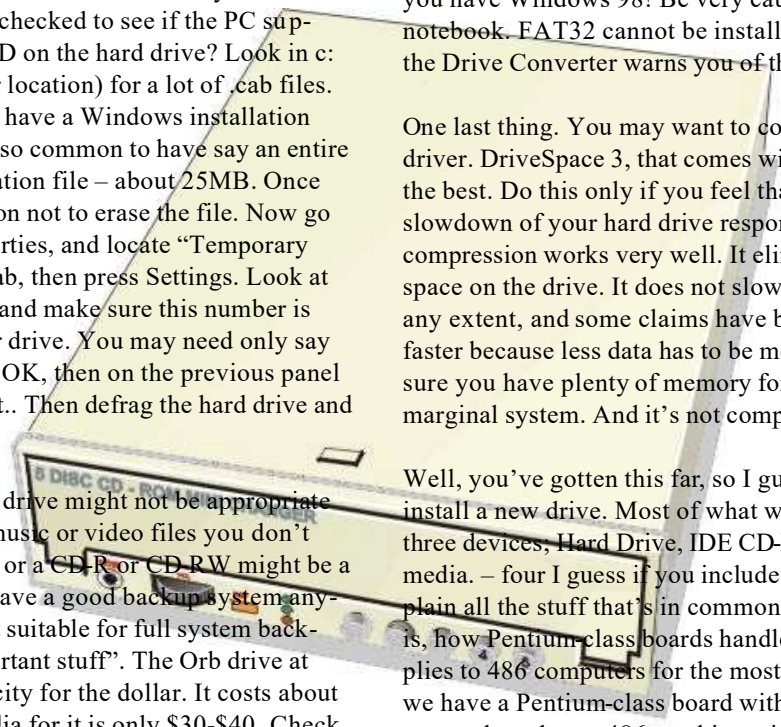
Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

Beginners Column:

How to install a hard drive, a CD-ROM drive, and an IDE removable media drive

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

OK, so you think you need a bigger hard drive. The kids have been installing games again, of course. It certainly isn't your fault. No, the new golf game with 10 bonus courses surely can't be the reason. So first let's just talk you out of this right at the beginning. Have you uninstalled all the old stuff you don't use? Searched the hard drive for all the downloads you've done and need no longer? Have you checked to see if the PC supplier put the entire Windows CD on the hard drive? Look in c:\windows\options (or any other location) for a lot of .cab files. Be careful here, make sure you have a Windows installation CD, then delete the files. It's also common to have say an entire Internet Explorer 4 or 5 installation file – about 25MB. Once you install this, there's no reason not to erase the file. Now go to your Internet Explorer properties, and locate "Temporary Internet files" on the General tab, then press Settings. Look at "Amount of disk space to use" and make sure this number is consistent with the size of your drive. You may need only say 20MB allocated to it. Click on OK, then on the previous panel press "Delete Files", OK to exit.. Then defrag the hard drive and see what remains.



Consider if a removable media drive might not be appropriate here. If you're storing a lot of music or video files you don't need often, an Orb, ZIP, LS120 or a CD-R or CD-RW might be a much better idea if you don't have a good backup system anyway. The ZIP and LS120 aren't suitable for full system backups, but it's good for the "important stuff". The Orb drive at 2.2GB gives you the best capacity for the dollar. It costs about the same as a 250MB ZIP. Media for it is only $30-$40. Check it out at http://www.castlewood.com. There's a good article about removable media drives at http://www.pcworld.com .

Now here's a really, really dumb question … do you have a hard drive in your system you're not using? This is not really far-fetched, and here's why. On many systems (Windows 95A and previous systems) there is a restriction on the size of a disk partition at 2.1GB. So if you bought a system with a 3.5GB hard drive, where did the other 1.4 Gigs go? Obviously, check to see if you have a D drive that's not a CDROM. If that doesn't yield anything, be sure to look at what the BIOS says about the hard drive on bootup and compare it to the capacity that Windows reports. If the BIOS doesn't give the information, take the cover off the system box, dismount the drive and look at the label. Believe it or not, many drives don't have the capacity marked on them unless they were manufactured within the last couple of years. Many web sites have all the documentation you need on this, though. Even for very old drives.

If there is some remainder that isn't partitioned, it won't show up as a drive. And you'll have to use FDISK or Partition Magic to partition the remainder. Be careful now, partitioning a drive isn't for most people. You're putting the entire system at risk and should not do it at all if there isn't a full system backup.

Don't give up... here's more. You may have a reason here to install Windows 98 if you have a drive larger than about 2.1GB. After you upgrade to Windows 98, do a convert to FAT32. The larger the partition you have the more savings there will be. FAT32 reduces the cluster size and can free up a considerable amount of wasted space. And the bonus is that you have Windows 98! Be very cautious if your system is a notebook. FAT32 cannot be installed on some notebooks, and the Drive Converter warns you of that fact.

One last thing. You may want to consider a disk compression driver. DriveSpace 3, that comes with the Win 95 Plus Disk, is the best. Do this only if you feel that you can stand a small slowdown of your hard drive response. Most people can. Disk compression works very well. It eliminates virtually all wasted space on the drive. It does not slow down program loading to any extent, and some claims have been made that it's actually faster because less data has to be moved off the drive. Make sure you have plenty of memory for this. It's definitely not for a marginal system. And it's not compatible with FAT32.

Well, you've gotten this far, so I guess we have to go ahead and install a new drive. Most of what we'll talk about applies to all three devices; Hard Drive, IDE CD-ROM and IDE removable media. – four I guess if you include IDE Tape drives. I'll explain all the stuff that's in common with these devices first: that is, how Pentium-class boards handle IDE devices. This also applies to 486 computers for the most part. We'll assume here that we have a Pentium-class board with the IDE controller on the system board, or a 486 machine with the controller on an add-in card.

Here are some facts about IDE on a Pentium class board. There are two controllers, a primary and a secondary. Each has a connector (a socket) for a 40-pin ribbon cable on the motherboard. They are marked either IDE-0 and IDE-1, or IDE-1 and IDE-2. The first is the primary, the other is the secondary. You can connect two IDE devices on each ribbon cable, for a total of four devices. The two devices on a single cable are the "master" and the "slave". There are jumpers on the drives that must be changed to mark them as master or slave.

To summarize, the four devices are: Primary Master, Primary Slave, Secondary Master and Secondary Slave. If you have four drives in Windows 95/98, they will appear as drive letters in a different order. The more technical bits are at the end of this

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article.

We have to look at your system and make some decisions. First, it's not a good idea to put a CD-ROM on the same controller (same physical cable) as a hard drive. Let's say it should be avoided, but do it only if you have to. The reason is that the system can read and write to drives on separate cables simultaneously, but can read and write only to one device at a time on the same cable. So in situations where you have hard drive and CD-ROM operations at the same time on the same controller there will be a definite performance slowdown. If that operation is just installing software from a CD-ROM or doing a straight copy to disk, there shouldn't be a perceptible difference. On the other hand, where there's a lot of action going on, say in a fast game, it's a no-no. I've seen plenty of business systems where there are just two IDE devices and they're both on the same cable. But that's just sloppy workmanship, or an attempt to save a dollar on the cable, and I correct that whenever I can. It's where you get into three devices that you have to make the decisions. If one of the devices is an IDE tape, I don't see there's a problem because when you do tape stuff, you're probably not interested in background performance anyway.

So, having made the decision on where this second hard drive should connect, ...let's assume it's the primary slave because the CD-ROM is secondary master..., you have to work out the physical problems. You should have a second connector on this cable (see cable notes below) and a place to physically mount it. Usually the rack where the primary drive is mounted is tall enough to accommodate a second drive. Also, is there a power connector available that will reach the location you've selected? If not, you can buy a 'Y' power cable that will extend an existing one to where you want it.

Now it's time to buy a new drive. Surprised? You shouldn't be. You need to work all this stuff out before you buy, right? Now look for a good deal with a rebate. Set a goal for a 6.4G drive for 100 bucks, and see how close you can come to this. If you're reading this well after June 1999, it'll still be a hundred bucks, but it'll be an 8.4 or 10.4 or something else. Be sure that the warranty is for three years, and it's a UDMA. It's also called Ultra-DMA and sometimes UDMA-33. The newest drives are UDMA-66, and you have to have the correct support on the motherboard for this. You'll need the same support for UDMA-33, and if your board doesn't support this, buy it anyway. You'll be upgrading your motherboard soon, won't you?

Most of the drives are packaged in huge boxes, enough for 10 hard drives. These boxes will contain a floppy, some installation instructions and a cable. If you go to a store that builds its own computers, you can get "bulk" drives in just a plastic wrapper, sometimes for less (sometimes not). If it's a "bulk" drive, try to negotiate a cable in the deal if you need one.

When you get home, if you've gotten the boxed type of drive, open it up, find the floppy disk that comes with it, and, if you have a Pentium system, throw the floppy away. Don't even format it, just sail it across the room into the trash. (I'm pretty good at sailing floppies.) If you've got a 486 system and don't have EIDE support, use it with caution. Better still, take the new drive back to the store and buy a new Pentium system; you won't regret it for a moment. Life's too short to use 486's, old cars, old washing machines and not have any fun.

OK, you have the hard drive and you've figured out the physical problems. There are a few other things to figure out. First, is the new hard drive faster than the old? If so, or if you'd simply like to make the new one the primary drive because it's really bigger, we need to manage that; and before you've mounted the drive is the best time to deal with it. There's a separate reference below for this (see "Making the new drive the primary drive" below), and it's especially complicated if your old drive is partitioned.

The next step after getting it physically in and hooked up is to make sure the motherboard recognizes it. So you'll need to go into the BIOS and make a change. You do that by going into BIOS setup during the system POST, sometimes with the Delete key and sometimes with an F key. You'll see the familiar Primary Master, Primary Slave … etc. The position you want will probably have a "disabled" on it. If you have a system not more than a few years old, it should have an Auto setting. Auto is my personal preference, because it requires less fiddling over time. Also sometimes you can just hit Enter and the bios will recognize the drive and make a "User" setting. That's OK, and sometimes doing this will shave a few seconds off the boot up time. Exit and save the settings.

You'll have to partition and format the new hard drive, easily done if you're just adding a second drive. If partitioning and formatting a hard drive is not a familiar process to you, I recommend buying PowerQuest's Partition Magic. It has a very good step-by step instruction manual. PowerQuest offers very attractive prices for user group members.

When all this is done, Windows 95/98 will boot up and all will be well, with lots of space to last you a long time. Check out the position of the CD-ROM, though, and adjust it if necessary. Happy Hard Drive!

CD-ROMs and Removable Media Drives:
CD-ROMS and removable media drives have the same basic issues as any other drive, with the added complexity of driv-

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ers. Remember that IDE CD-ROMS don't need drivers for Windows 95/98. If you inadvertently install from the floppy, you'll need to edit the config.sys and autoexec.bat files and remark out the CD-ROM drivers. It's not really bad to have the DOS drivers around, in case you need to boot into DOS and do a Windows re-install in case of a hard drive catastrophe.

Technical bits:
The primary controller is at port 1F0h, IRQ 14, and the secondary port is 170, IRQ 15. The ports and IRQs don't seem to be negotiable. If, for instance, you had a network card and no secondary IDE device, the system may assign the network card to IRQ 15. But if you then added a secondary IDE device, the system would assign IRQ 15 to it every time, and the network card would be forced to go elsewhere.

Drive order:
Drives letters appear in a peculiar order. An active drive means the active (normally the first) partition. 1) Primary master active drive, 2) secondary master active drive, 3) primary slave active drive, 4) secondary slave active drive, 5) first primary master logical drive, 6) first secondary master logical drive... The problem that this presents is that if you have a partitioned drive c: and d:, and then install a second physical drive, that new drive will be inserted between your old c: and d:. So your old logical partition d: will appear as e:, because the new one will be d:. If the new drive is partitioned also, then the old one will have c: and e: and the new one will have d: and f:. Your CD-ROM will be pushed down the chain as well. This poses a particular problem if you have Windows programs installed to the old d:. They simply won't work. If I were trapped with problems like these, I would be tempted to buy Windows 98, wiping out the partitions and all the software, use FDISK from Windows 98 and repartitioning so that each drive has one partition each. And, of course, reinstalling all the software. A lot of work, I know. A real advantage here though is that you won't be carrying legacy problems with you. I hope you saved your old Windows 95 CD as proof of license to install Windows 98 upgrade.

Cable notes:
The cables will mostly have three connectors on them, but not always. It's very common for a CD-ROM to ship with a cable with two connectors, one for the motherboard socket and one for the CD-ROM, but no other. It can be replaced with the three-connector ribbon without any concern. The two drive connectors are closer to one end, with the longest part from the second connector to the motherboard, although it's not uncommon for the wrong end to be used at the motherboard. In that case, just reverse it. There are various lengths of cables available at computer stores. They are even made in very, very long lengths.

Making the new drive the primary drive:
If you've decided to make the new drive the primary drive, and the old one an auxiliary drive, you can copy the disks binary image from the old to the new, so that the new drive will boot right up with no fiddling with the operating system. I use PowerQuest's DriveImage product. Install DriveImage on the old disk. Be sure to make a boot disk as instructed during the installation. Mount the new disk with the data cable and the power cables after setting the new drive as a slave. You should check the old drive to make sure that a jumper may (or may not) need changing when adding a slave drive. Boot the system with the boot disk you made. Read the instructions carefully, and copy, using the disk-to-disk function. Use the "Resize Partitions" button so that DriveImage makes a new partition using the full capacity of the drive if that's your objective. When you're done, shut the system down, get at the jumpers on the drives and reverse master and slave. It should boot now on the new. You can erase the software on the old, saving data files or documents if you wish.

Master and Slave settings:
Some drives and CD-ROMS have a jumper setting called "cable select". Sometimes it's marked just "cs". We're ignoring this setting, since it's not used. Disks may have three settings; master with one drive; master with two drives, and slave. Other drives have only two: master and slave. CD-ROMS (all that I've seen anyway) have just two. Some are marked "cs", "ma" and "sl". Drives made in recent years have a label with the size of the drive and pictures of the jumper settings. Some have a small paper with the settings on them. If the label isn't complete, I always make my own label with all the specs of the drive and stick it down on the top of the drive: cylinders, heads, sectors and capacity and all the jumper settings. Western digital prints all this stuff on the anti-static bag so you'll be sure to throw it away. ◆

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cense? I paid for it, didn't I?") A reinstallation of Access, as I had begun to realize, didn't solve the problem. Time to turn again to http://search.microsoft.com, type in some key words and see what came up. Here is the solution (the strangest one yet). I am including most of the details to illustrate how careful Microsoft is in guiding you to the solution.

Certain fonts that are installed by Microsoft Publisher can result in the incorrect registration of Microsoft Access 97
……omitted material……..

Follow these steps to correct the registry error:

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1. On the Start menu, point to Find, and then click Files or Folders.
2. In the Name box, type "hatten.ttf" (without the quotation marks).
3. In the Look In box, type "C:\Windows\Fonts" (without the quotation marks) or the path to the Fonts folder on your computer.
4. Click the Find Now button to start the search.
5. Under Name, right-click the hatten.ttf file, and click Rename on the menu that appears.
6. Change the name of the file to "hatten.xxx" (without the quotation marks).
7. Minimize (but do not close) the Find dialog box.
8. On the Start Menu, point to Settings, and click Control Panel.
9. In Control Panel, double-click Add/Remove Programs.
10. In the Add/Remove Program Properties dialog box, select the Install/Uninstall tab and select Microsoft Office 97, Professional Edition from the program list.
11. Click the Add/Remove button to run Office Setup in Maintenance Mode.
12. In the Microsoft Office 97 Setup dialog box, click Reinstall.
13. Once the reinstallation is finished, click the Find dialog box on the Windows taskbar to maximize it.
14. Under Name, right-click the hatten.xxx file, and click Rename on the menu that appears.
15. Change the name of the file to "hatten.ttf" (without the quotation marks).
Microsoft Access should now be properly registered.

Back to Word. Word, as I noted, was really zipping along now; all the sluggishness was gone. Additionally, a lot of the extras that had been added to it by other programs like TextBridge and ViaVoice (buttons on the menu bar that incorporated these programs with Word) had been removed from the Normal.dot, so it loaded much faster. But an unwelcome wrinkle had been added: When you tried to close a document, you were now confronted with an unfamiliar message box, where the choices were Cancel, Yes, and OK. That should have been Yes, No, and Cancel. Back to http://search.microsoft.com, and, with a bit more searching, this time I found the following (again I include most of the details):

SYMPTOMS: When you attempt to close a file, a dialog box appears with three buttons: Cancel, Yes, and OK. When you click them, the buttons perform functions that you do not expect them to ……omitted material……..

RESOLUTION: To resolve this problem, replace the Mso97.dll and Mso7enu.dll files on your computer and run the Office 97 SR-1 Patch Setup again. To do this, follow these steps:
1. Press CTRL+ALT+DELETE to display the Close Program dialog box. Click the OSA item and click End Task.
2. Press CTRL+ALT+DELETE to display the Close Program dialog box. Click the Findfast item and click End Task. Another dialog is displayed. Click End Task. Press CTRL+ALT+DELETE again to display the Close Program dialog box. Ensure that Findfast and OSA do not appear in the list. If they do, click the item and click End Task.
3. Insert the Office 97 compact disc into your CD-ROM drive. NOTE: If you have Microsoft Project 98 installed on your computer, insert the Microsoft Project 98 CD-ROM instead of the Microsoft Office 97 CD-ROM.
4. Using Windows Explorer, open the following folder on the CD-ROM drive: <CD-ROM Drive>:\Office where <CD-ROM Drive> is the drive letter for your CD-ROM drive (usually drive D). For example, if your CD-ROM drive letter is D, open the following folder: D:\Office
5. On the View menu, click Options. Click the View tab. Click to select Show All Files. Click OK.
6. Right-click the Mso97.dll file. On the shortcut menu, click Copy.
7. Using Windows Explorer, open the following folder on your hard disk: Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office
8. On the Edit menu, click Paste.
9. Repeat steps 3 through 7. In step 5, copy the Mso7enu.dll file instead of the Mso97.dll file.
10. In Windows Explorer or File Manager, run the patch by double-clicking the Sr1off97.exe file. This step is not necessary if you copied Mso97.dll and Mso7enu.dll from the Project 98 compact disc.

Well, that was quite a list. If you have made it this far into the article, I applaud your fortitude. I think there is a moral to all of this, and it is that "**all computer software problems are solvable—if you can just locate the source of an answer**." And for Microsoft software, Microsoft probably has the answer at their site. All you have to do is phrase your query correctly.

I strongly recommend that everyone learn how to use the Microsoft search page at http://search.microsoft.com. I find my answers to these technical problems by checking the "Support & the Knowledge Base" radio button when doing the search; you won't find the answers you need by searching the rest of the Micorosoft site. Of course, another good source of solutions is searching the Usenet newsgroups using a tool like DejaNews, now found at http://www.deja.com.

It will apparently never be over. I just tried to access Windows Help and was informed that "**the file hh.exe or one of its components could not be found**." But I have seen that message before on my Win 98 laptop, and I now know that the way to fix the problem is to run the Win 98 System File Checker tool and extract that particular file from the Win 98 CD. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet. Last meeting we began working with Microsoft FrontPage to create a web site in order to learn the features of FrontPage.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309.*

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.

Last month, we reviewed Dynamic Data Exchange between a VB program and another Windows Program. Then we saw the results of porting a very old BASIC program to Visual Basic. We will consider this program again along with graphing in VB at our next meeting.

Computing Tip from Don Patzsch

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

When we get email, quite often there are URL's somewhere in that email. Here is what I do.

First, open Notepad and make up a file called "links". Save it and then put your cursor on the - sign in the upper right corner to minimize it, but keep it easily available. Then when you come across a URL in your email or anywhere else, simply highlight the URL with your mouse and hit EDIT, then COPY. Now restore Notepad by putting your cursor on the Windows task bar and clicking on Notepad.

Next, simply go up to the EDIT – PASTE command and you have the URL and also any explanation that came with it in Notepad. Save it and keep doing this until you have gone through all the email. Now you can leave the stuff in Notepad for a few days or so until you get to it, and meantime you have added several more URL's to that "links" file.

When you go on the Internet, first bring up Notepad and minimize it so it is convenient while you are on the net. Open the Notepad and highlight one URL, hit EDIT – COPY and then go to the browser command line and hit EDIT – PASTE. Now hit ENTER and you will go to the URL, without ever having to type anything. This is a simple procedure once you get used to it. When you have a real long URL, you will appreciate having this way of transferring the URL to your browser, but also you don't have to hunt around for where you left that URL you read about in last week's newspaper! ◆

A Web Site to Reduce Your Electric Bill

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

Suppose you wanted to reduce your electric bill, how could you go about that?

This is a story of what they have been doing in Europe, and now the process has come to the United States. It involves computers. California has deregulated their electrical energy companies. A new company has moved in and is using the Oracle database to plot the use of electricity by their customers on an hour by hour basis so that they know how much power is required each hour. Now through the software and wireless network of CellNet, another California company, the new company, Utility.com, can bid for electrical power from all the generating companies in California, and, I suspect, soon they will get the power they want to sell anywhere by the use of the nationwide grid.

Now, how does this affect you? Well, at the present time, we have to await action by the legislature and then wait for the company to set up its business here. I have asked them to keep me informed of when this may be.

So, right now Tampa Electric probably sells you your electricity. If this company comes in, and if the power is deregulated here, they will connect you at no cost, and you may do one of two things, either buy your power without interrup-

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Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
Reflectone
Marshall & Stevens
BCD

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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Micrografx
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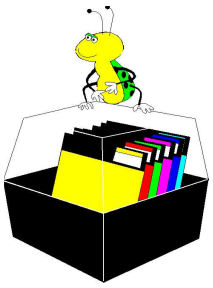
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	5:00pm – 8:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492

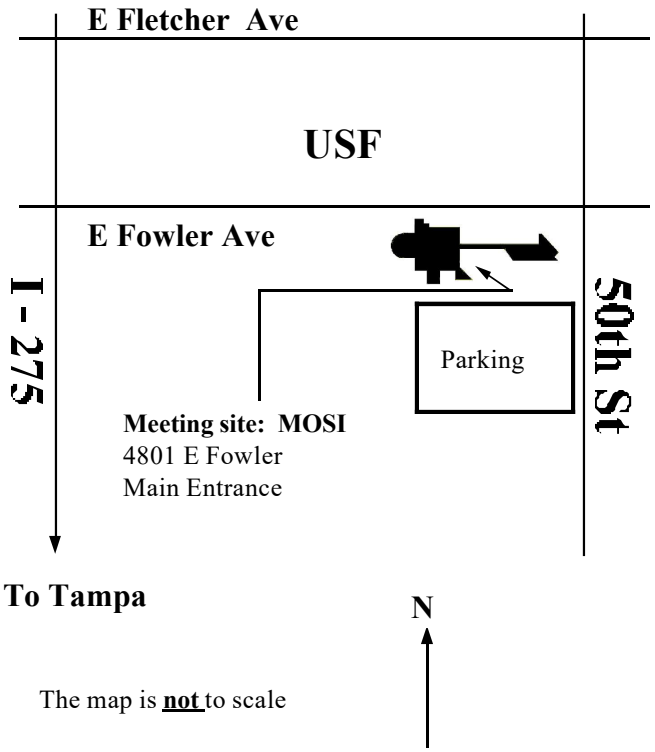


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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

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tion, or you can get a free thermostat, and it will cut off your air conditioning or any large usage equipment you have, and that will allow you even greater savings each month. Right now, CellNet has 2 million remote reading wireless networks connected. They expect 4 million by the end of the year.

Go to http://www.utility.com on the Internet and see for yourself what they have to say. It's worth the time to check it out and see what we could have if the legislature were actively trying to help the folks they represent. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 12 No. 7 July 1999

Meeting

Home Computer Networking

July 14, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the July meeting, Mark Komula from Network Technologies speaks on home networking. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

I'd like to thank a few people who are doing such a great job for us on the Board of Directors. Jenny Lind Olin, Mary Sheridan and William LaMartin. Now everyone on the BOD deserve a round of thanks, but these three are doing more than their share. Jenny is so diligently watching our club treasury that we all can sleep knowing the money is all accounted for. Mary, as programs chairperson, does such an outstanding job of getting guest speakers month after month. The quality of the programs has never been better. And all you have to do is look at our web site to see what a job William LaMartin is doing. The web site is always developing; slowly because a lot of thought must be given before making changes, and the quality of that thought is very evident. And of course our newsletter has been consistently outstanding since he took it over. In addition to building the newsletter, William also has to badger writers every month for material, make up the newsletter, print it (with one volunteer) and then fold and mail it (with a small but loyal group of helpers), also maintain the mailing list, and finally run to the post office to mail it! Did I mention that he also writes a usually large article himself?

Which leads me into one (non) favorite subject: soliciting articles for the newsletter. Now hear me out. If you'll notice there are three or four people who are there month after month. There are three or four that can be counted on to contribute every few months or a couple of times a year. That's basically it. Everyone, and that means **everyone**, is capable of writing an article for the newslet-

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August 11: The meeting topic is yet to be announced — Check the web site later.

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Jim Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Our meeting began as usual with a Windows SIG, which Merle Nicholson started and Mary Sheridan picked up upon her arrival. We discussed one member's problem with a modem not connecting properly. After a brief debate the group decided it was time for our friend to upgrade to a version of Windows a little newer than 3.1.

Disposal of computer parts came up again. As you all know, monitors cannot be thrown out with your regular trash, but were you aware that those old motherboards couldn't go out on a regular pickup either? They contain elements such as lead that qualify as toxic or hazardous material. If you have any of these items you can still take them to the dump yourself. Homeowners will need to bring a copy of your tax receipt for proof of residence, and apartment dwellers can use a phone or electric bill.

Power saver problems were brought up, with several members claiming similar stories. It seems that when the system goes into power saver mode it will occasionally crash instead of warming up. This appears to be common to Win95 and Win98 users. It was suggested that, if you suffer from this problem, you should disable power saver functions in Windows. If the problem continues, then try disabling the BIOS settings.

For those of you who want a web browser with 128 bit encryption, but couldn't find it in Internet Explorer 5.0, Microsoft has the plug-in available on their site.

Merle started our general meeting at 6:45 PM. He reminded the members present of our membership drive, so please try to enlist the aid of your friends into our little family. An announcement was made that if any of you have a personal web site, we would like to link it from our User's Group web site. If you are interested contact our editor, William LaMartin.

Chuck McPhearson of Laser Perfect was our first presenter. His company started in 1988 recycling toner cartridges for copiers. They now remanufacture laser and ink jet cartridges as well. There is less than a 2% failure rate on their product, and if it does fail, Laser Perfect will replace it postage paid both ways. The cost of a remanufactured cartridge can save you up to 50% off retail cost if you send them your old cartridge, but if you don't have the empty available yet you can still purchase a backup at less than the cost of a new one. To order call their number, 1-800-989-2666, and they will send

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Building "Cemeteries of Florida":
http://users.quadra.net/cemetery/

By Cheryl Alexander, Membership Coordinator, Tampa PC Users Group

"I'd like to do something for the Web." Oh, what a can of worms that can be! "Something for the Web" can range from a freebie-walk-you-through-the-template personal page to a huge web site with hundreds (or thousands) of pages. There are many decisions to be made before code is even written:

- What will it be about? - How will you edit it?
- What is your naming convention?
- What do you want it to look like?
- What does it look like on someone else's computer or browser?
- How will I keep up with it all? - How will anyone find it?

I don't have all the answers but maybe I can share my process.

The hardest part of building a web site for me was selecting the subject. That sounds easy until one actually tries to make a decision. For some, it's easy; they pick out their dominant interest. I went through my interests and tried to pick just one. That proved to be too difficult. Meanwhile, I kept poking around the web, looking for what interested me, how they did it, what I liked and what I didn't like on all kinds of web pages and sites. I finally decided that no matter what the subject was, I wanted to add new information to the web, not just another list of links. I had a tentative design that was just horrible. I dumped it and started over. (It was good for practicing how to write code and helped with finding the editing program. So, it wasn't wasted time.)

I decided on "Cemeteries of Florida" by a very strange process. I discovered "Graveyards of Chicago" and many other cemetery photo sites. I looked for similar sites on Florida and found that there was none. My subject is narrow enough to give me a focus but broad enough to give me material for a huge site!

Before I had narrowed my subject, I was already trying to find a program to write this site with. I tried HTML Assistant Pro '97. I can't remember why I didn't like it because it's been so long since I attempted to use it. I tried Corel WEB. SiteBuilder. It tries to do too much for the user without giving any leeway to do anything else. William LaMartin had demonstrated FrontPage Express which is included with Microsoft Internet Explorer. I like that it is WYSIWYG and that I can edit the HTML code easily. I don't use the tool buttons very much because I don't like giving up that much control to the program.

I was ahead of the game on developing a naming convention. Organizing large numbers of documents with graphics was part of my job for a long time. It was very natural to revive the concepts. I knew that I had to number for growth. I could have used what is called the friendly naming system where actual names are used instead of what amounts to a personal code. But there are too many duplications of names of people and cemeteries, so I went with a code: aa000b00.ccc:

1. aa = two letter code that tells me what level I'm dealing with, main page (cf), cemetery (cm) or photo (cp)
2. 000 = a numeric designator, not necessarily in order of use, gives me up to 999 before I have look for two more letters
3. b = usually an f for figure, could have been p for plate, anything that links with the page of the same number
4. 00 = in conjunction with the figure, tells me how many I have, example: f1, f2, f10, f11 etc., gives me up to 99
5. ccc = simply is the extension, jpg, gif, htm

It sounds complicated and not friendly but in the long run makes a lot of sense. My way is good for me but may not be good for someone with a much smaller site. This method is very flexible and allows for expansion.

I looked at a lot of cemetery photo sites before I decided on the layout of my site. I have used "Graveyards of Chicago" as a pattern because it followed the hierarchical set up that I was used to, didn't rely on thumbnails, gave space to add informational text and created a respectful, instead of spooky, atmosphere. Happily, he didn't mind that I copied some of his code, especially since I had asked permission first.

I got some of my page sets from Website-Designs. There are a huge number of sites on the web that will give you all the graphics that you need (background, buttons, bars, animated gifs, icons) to build a site in exchange for a link to their page. I've used Paint Shop Pro 5.01 to modify existing graphics and create my own page sets. One portion of the process is that you have to tinker with the graphics and colors of text, active/visited/link text. Also, I had to take into consideration how a photo would look against its background. I needed something that was neutral but not stark, which would contrast but not conflict with colors in the photo. I make notes of what I name my creations, sizes of buttons, font name and size for title graphics and buttons and color codes.

Testing is dreary, boring and absolutely necessary. Yep, I had experience in this aspect also! I tested all links repeatedly on my machine before I put it on my hosting server. At that point, I drafted about five or six friends to look at my site with their computers and browsers. I asked them to tell me about their computer type, modem speed, monitor resolution, their opinions of the look, the navigation buttons that I had

(Cemeteries.....Continued on page 4)

(Cemeteries.....Continued from page 3)
provided. Try not to take all their advice to heart. If you have thought carefully about your layout from the beginning and have done the best that you know how, it will probably be okay. (For example, one person suggested that I use frames for navigation. I don't know how to use that yet, but maybe in the future, I'll do just that.) However, testing can tell you that some things just will not work and must be re-designed or scrapped.

Maintaining a site starts at the beginning. I have kept a list of all the counties, cemeteries, and photos from the very start. Some of my lists have gotten so large that I have had to split them up! My goal is to include photos from one cemetery per county. At this point I have six counties, 29 cemeteries, and about 750 photos. I use a notebook to keep notes about the elements that I use for each page or set of pages just in case the unspeakable crash happens and I have to reconstruct the whole mess. I may eventually use a maintenance program but, for now, I make upload lists and make notes of changes that I make.

I've just started the process of getting listed with search engines and using meta tags such as “description” and “keywords.” So far, I am listed only on Yahoo!. I have joined five web rings that deal with my subject. I distribute business cards with my site information on it to those who are interested. I exchange links with other sites who have the same subject that I would like to be associated with. I also make notes of link exchange requests and search engine listings. It takes time, but I hope that my site will be noticed and maybe even win awards!

Two books that I have used extensively in this process are:

- *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web* by Louis Rosenfeld & Peter Morville, published by O'Reilly & Associated, Inc.
- *SAMS Teach Yourself Paint Shop Pro 5 in 24 Hours* by T. Michael Clark, published by Sams Publishing.



Any web site worth its HTML code is never really finished. But it will reach a stage where it will become presentable. Improvements and additions can continue as long as there are material and time to work on them. ◆

Recognizing Text and Speech

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Several months back CompUSA ran a special on a bundle of two software items--TextBridge Pro 98 and ViaVoice Office 98. It was $49 after the in-store $50 rebate. But at $100 it would have still been a bargain based on recent prices of both programs. The implied goal here was to set the computer user up so that he would have little typing to do in the future. He could either scan in old paper documents and then have TextBridge Pro turn them into textual documents, all the while preserving the layout and graphics. Or he could simply sit in his chair with his hands folded and dictate into the supplied headset microphone and have ViaVoice turn his speech into a textual document in the computer.



One of these scenarios worked superbly and one didn't. Can you guess which one fell short.? It was the voice recognition. Up front I must admit that the computer I tried ViaVoice on, a Pentium 166 with 96 MB of memory fell one notch short of the required configuration--it needed to additionally be MMX. But I think the problem was more than that. The first time I tried out the program, letting it train itself while reading a short Mark Twain story, things seemed to go OK. During the setup for training, I got where I could speak the continuous speech required in a manner that produced few retires to get the training phrases understood. And after the training was over, the program recognized my speech in a so-so manner. The main problem was that the recognition was quite slow. But I will attribute that to my slow processor.

So I closed out the program and set it aside for a couple of weeks with the thought that when I next tried the program it would undoubtedly do better, since it would have learned my speech patterns better. That was not the case. On the second try, using the same profile I had created before, it recognized almost nothing of what I said. So I decided to train it again. This time I read a passage from *Treasure Island*. And after training, things were better--but not anywhere nearly as good as my first try with the program. In frustration I decided to

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(Recognition……..Continued from page 4)
shelve the program until I had a faster desktop computer. I suppose I could try it on my faster laptop, but I think I will wait until I have one of those 400 Mhz or 500 Mhz machines. That way I will be sure it is the program and not the computer which has shortcomings.

In general, I think the voice recognition programs have a long way to go. I previously tried some Microsoft developmental software for discrete speech recognition and wrote about it in the October 1997 newsletter (see http://www.tpcug.org/reviews/microsoft_dictation.html). I got it to work a bit better than I did IBM's Via Voice. I know others who have tried other programs with poor results. In fact, one of our members has a speech recognition program right now from another of the big name producers of such programs for which he is supposed to write a review. Unfortunately he can not get it to work satisfactorily and has yet not produced a review. So, if there are any members out there who have had success with a speech recognition program, let us hear about it.

Text recognition, on the other hand, has come of age. I am simply amazed at how well TextBridge does on converting the printed page to a computer document. For years I have been using an earlier version of TextBridge Pro and was happy with the results. TextBridge Pro 98, however, leaves

(Recognition……..Continued on page 7)

Internet picture of the month



ARGEMONE MEXICANA
Yellow Prickly-Poppy

For some beautiful photographs of wildflowers from Florida and around the country, go to the site http://www.wfnirvana.com/ .

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Cemeteries of Florida (A member's site)	http://users.quadra.net/cemetery/
Wildflower Nirvana	http://www.wfnirvana.com/
Pineapple Press (Books with a Florida connection)	http://www.pineapplepress.com/
Google search (A different search engine)	http://www.google.com/
BookSpot - Book reviews, book stores, reading lists...	http://www.bookspot.com/
Canalweb.net (French TV online)	http://www.canalweb.net/
Philosophy in Cyberspace	http://www-personal.monash.edu.au/~dey/phil/
Inconstant Moon multimedia tours of the lunar surface	http://www.inconstantmoon.com/
WAMU 88.5 FM – Public Radio - Washington, DC	http://www.wamu.org/
USGS Mapping Information	http://www-nmd.usgs.gov/www/gnis/gnisform.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Summary of Windows 98 SE (Second Edition)

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

There's a little known and little heralded release of Windows 98 out now called **Second Edition** (**W98SE**). In my situation it came out at just the right time. I recently had my first involvement with networking several computers together when we relocated our offices to a new facility. Prior to this we had not been networked, but now we are. And it wasn't very hard to set up our new peer-to-peer network, which I handled myself. After finding out that it wasn't that tough, my *home* network is next on my agenda.

Then along comes **W98SE,** which is an update to Windows 98 (W98) that enhances W98 with the latest Internet, **home-networking** and hardware technologies. And notice I said *home-networking*. And that's just a few of the things included in this upgrade. Here's a full list of the enhanced capabilities related to the Internet and hardware compatibility:

- **Internet Explorer 5**, Microsoft's popular browser software, provides breakthroughs in Web performance, usability and flexibility, including the new Outlook Express 5 integrated email software. There's also a great new feature called Radio Tool Bar that lets you listen to live radio while browsing.
- **Windows NetMeeting® 3**, the latest version of Microsoft's award-winning Windows-based conferencing software, brings Internet conferencing capability to consumers by offering an easier user interface, data conferencing security, enhanced standards support and more.
- **Internet Connection Sharing**, a set of advanced home networking technologies, enables multiple users to share a single connection to the Internet for simultaneous Internet access. (This is the one I'm interested in most!)
- **Windows Media™ Player 6.1**, the latest version of Windows Media Player, enables playback of popular multimedia formats, including streaming media such as Windows Media, MP3 and more.
- **Enhanced IEEE 1394 support** gives support for more devices, such as digital camcorders.
- **Advanced Configuration and Power Interface (ACPI) advancements** deliver hardware optimizations and more granular control over settings on a device-class basis.
- **USB improvements** include the capability to work with devices on a per-device basis rather than a per-port basis.
- **WDM modem support** supports USB modems and enables hardware vendors to write a single WDM modem driver for Windows 98 and Windows 2000 Professional.
- **WebTV® for Windows updates** provides support for a broader array of analog television tuner cards and Advanced Television Enhancement Forum (AVTEF) standards for HTML-based enhanced programming.
- **DirectX® API 6.1** delivers a variety of improvements to Windows multimedia technologies, including better audio and video synchronization.
- **Processor and motherboard optimizations** for the latest hardware technologies, including Intel Pentium III, are featured.
- **Device Bay support** enables a system to ship with Device Bay hardware.
- **Windows 98 Service Pack 1** addresses top issues in existing Windows 98 features, such as Windows 98 Year 2000 updates
- **Multiple monitor support** can be extremely beneficial to users in many areas, including desktop publishing, web site development, video editing and gaming.
- **Intel MMX technology** support provides faster audio and video functionality.

Key performance and reliability features include the following:

- **Setup enhancements** reduce the number of setup steps, allowing for a faster and simplified setup.
- **Applications load faster** by identifying the most frequently used applications and placing the files associated with their startup together on the user's hard drive so they load quickly.
- **Faster shutdown** dramatically reduces the time needed to shut down the computer.
- **More disk space** is available as a result of the ability to store information more efficiently with a new feature called FAT32.
- **Windows Maintenance Wizard** automatically schedules and executes "tune-up" activities to keep users' PCs running in top form.

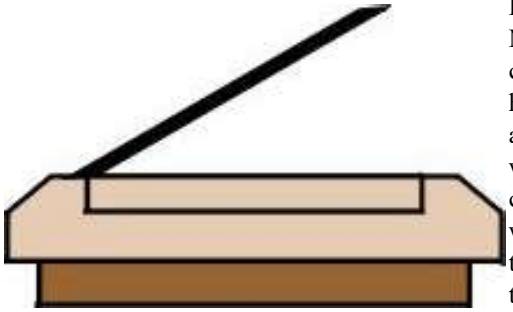
For new users to Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition will replace W98 in retail stores, new machines, etc. Existing W98 users can update their system to the Second Edition technologies via a CD that can be ordered directly from the Microsoft Web site for $19.95 (plus S&H). Also included is a book detailing features and benefits of Internet Connection Sharing.

To me it's a cheap price to upgrade an otherwise pretty stable operating system. And for you people still on Windows 3.1 or 95, who have been waiting for Microsoft to get the bugs out of Windows 98 (…and God only know why!)…, **now is the time for all good computer users to come to the aid of their computers.**

(Note: I know that "bashing Bill Gates" almost seems like the stylish thing to do these days but you won't hear it out of my mouth, or my keyboard. I'm thankful Gates and Microsoft have accomplished what they have because they sure have made computing a lot more enjoyable than it was in the early days (early 80's) of personal computing. Thanks Bill!) ◆

(Recognition……..Continued from page 5)
that program in the dust as to speed and accuracy of the process. As one of my first projects with the new program I converted to a computer document a small book a friend of mine had written 22 years ago and which was now out of print. The average time it took to scan a page (you need a scanner before you can use such a program), perform optical character recognition (OCR) on it, and then present any questionable words to you was less than one minute. Additionally there were usually no more than a couple of questionable words on a page. In fact, the program had usually guessed correctly and I only had to click OK. Then on to the next page.

I used the feature that allows you to open TextBridge directly from Microsoft Word (a similar feature is available for WordPerfect and Microsoft Excel). After I had done about a dozen pages I would then close and it would convert those 12 pages to a Word document.



Then I would open TextBridge again in Word and do another dozen pages. I was afraid of doing too much at one time and possibly losing it due to some computer glitch. If you choose not to work with Word, you can save your scanned text as an RTF file. I do miss one feature of the old TextBridge that allowed you to also save your work to the clipboard (in RTF format I assume).

Once I had the entire book in my computer as a Word document, I could of course print it out as a normal printed document. But this is the age of the Internet, so I saved it in HTML format, brought it into Microsoft FrontPage, scanned in separately (this has nothing to do with TextBridge) most of the photos used in the book and sent to me by the author, brought them into FrontPage, inserted them in the web document, and published everything to my web site, http://www.lamartin.com. To view the results, go there and click on the link *History of Okeechobee County Florida.* By the way, preparing the photos for the web took a lot more time than scanning the text.

Optical Character Recognition, in my opinion, is one of the great success stories of computing. Voice recognition—in time—probably will be a success too.◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)
you a price list with a prepaid return box. Fill out the order form, put your empty in the box and the new cartridge will be back to you within seven working days. If you have a larger item they will send you a postage paid label.

Laser Perfect also assists charitable organizations by purchasing old, empty cartridges at $1.50 each. These organizations in turn get larger sponsors to save empty ink cartridges instead of throwing them away, helping the environment along the way.

Next, Jim Weber gave a brief discussion on MP3 music with a demonstration of Music Match Jukebox. MP3 is a compression scheme that allows a 10:1 compression ratio over standard .WAV and CD music files. This means a minute of CD quality audio now only takes up 1 Meg of disk space. Songs can be transmitted over the Internet without tying up a phone line for hours, and music can be stored and played directly from a hard drive. That means you can now store the long version of "In A Godda Davida" without buying a new hard drive. MP3 works with a combination of removing sounds the human ear can't pick out anyway and mathematical compression algorithms. Since MP3 is a compression scheme, processor power comes into play for decoding during playback. A Pentium 75 is the minimum recommended speed with 16 Meg of memory. In reality a P166 is the least you will want to use on a Windows system if you plan on doing anything else while MP3s are playing. Music Match Jukebox is the first, and therefore favorite, MP3 recorder and decoder I use. It allows a user to create MP3 files from Compact Disks or wave files and convert MP3 files to a wave file. It functions like a Jukebox, which means I can set up a play list of up to 99 songs depending on the type of music I'm in the mood for, and it will proceed to play through my selections. A full description and a demo version is available from http://www.musicmatch.com. It costs $29.95 and comes with a FREE lifetime upgrade. I've upgraded mine twice without any trouble.

In the door prize drawings, Mary Sheridan won a free year of ink cartridge refills, Clark Evans won Nuts & Bolts 98, Roger Waters won ProComm Plus, and Brian Lance won McAfee's Virus Scan. The meeting ended at 8:30 PM. ◆



UPS Surges of the Mind

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

You realize, don't you, that we live in the area (Tampa) with the highest concentration of lightning in the United States? You do have the best protection available don't you? I try to. I have all three of my computers on UPS's and I also have a whole-house surge protector on my outside wall under the meter. Besides buying (I thought) good quality UPSs that also have good surge protection specifications, I have insurance! To me that's the best lightning protection of all; the $25K or so that you get when you buy an APC or Tripplite UPS. I have a positive conviction that if lightning wants to zap your beloved 'puter, it will, period. So I have my machines well backed up to a removable hard drive, and I have insurance. The UPS, as far as I'm concerned, lets my machines survive the one-second blink-outs that frequently happen at my house. And for double insurance, I turn my computers off and unplug the modems.

One thing I hadn't been able to figure out until now is how to disconnect my Roadrunner modem. Actually I can, I just don't want to on the theory that if I mess with that cable too much I'll cause more problems. The cable modem is powered by my UPS and must stay on, 24 hours a day. RR doesn't want you to turn it off. What I want to do is disconnect the modem output to my PC while I'm away. The cable is a standard short network CAT 5 cable with RJ45 connectors on them. They look just like a telephone jack only bigger; they have eight conductors in the cable. I can buy a pin-to-pin adapter that is used to join two network cables and get another short cable so that the adapter is out in plain sight where I can disconnect it easily. I may do that.

I have the same kind of adapters for my telephone lines; they're glued to the underneath side of my computer table at the outer edge, so I can easily tell they're unplugged as I look in the door from 10 feet away.

So back to UPS's. I bought one of those large surge strip/UPS combinations for my wife's PC. This one was made by Tripp. The prices are seriously coming down, and I picked this one up for $75 at CompUSA. It's rated at 280VA. This one was perfect because I could fasten it to the back of her desk which is located next to the living room. We worked hard to hide the wires to her PC to keep it from looking too junky. I even fastened some very small speakers to the back of the desk under the lip of the top so they can't be seen. Hers was the last of the computers to get a UPS, mostly because I started feeling guilty for being so conscientious about my own and neglecting hers. This was after she asked what kind of surge protection was on hers. She assumed I did that when I built the computer for her.

Anyway, after only three months of loyal service, her UPS sacrificed its life, maybe, .. or maybe just committed suicide, I'm not sure. A real outage of six or eight minutes occurred one morning two weeks ago, and she was witness to it, but I had failed to instruct her on how to plug the monitor into the UPS just long enough to shut down Windows. The time on the little batteries was too much, so it died.

Now this really isn't bad on the surface. My own experience is that the worst you can do to an electrical device is to blip it off and back on; characteristic of our one second power blips. So it had been doing a good job up until now. Not having the monitor on the backup is normal; it just shortens the time that the CPU is backed up because of the additional load. Under these circumstances the best thing to do if you're sitting there and it looks like the power will not be coming on soon is to just power the system down after waiting for the hard drive activity to settle out. What you don't want to happen is for the power to blip out while the hard drive is writing to the disk, and that's what the UPS is good for, even a little one.

So she powered everything down and went on to work. I was first to the PC that evening, and saw that there were several lights blinking on the UPS, so I switched it off and back on, and now not only were all the lights blinking, but also it was making a low, short, regular alarm sound. So I disconnected everything from it, unplugged it from the wall, and it was still blinking and beeping. I set it down on the formica counter and then noticed it was warm, and, as the evening went on even warmer, so I had to take it outside so in case it burst into flames it wouldn't burn the house down!

It was dead in the morning, so later I dug the receipt out and called them long distance (no 1-800 number) for an RMA number. The guy was OK with me I guess, after I assured him that the only thing that was plugged into it was the CPU and the answer machine power cube. I gained some respect from him there I think, so he gave me the address to ship it and to put a note "possible internal short" (Hah! Definite Internal Short in my opinion!) on it. I pleaded a bit that I needed him to ship me the replacement **now** because I'm in the lightning capital of the US at the beginning of lightning season and I can't survive two or three weeks without a UPS! No, my guess is that the call center he is in is somewhere in the desert maybe and he's never seen a lightning storm. So it has to go by "trackable" carrier, which for those who know where I live is about a 45 minute trek through town to the guys in the brown trucks.

By the way, why doesn't the postal service know where my stuff is? Now I'm talking like Andy Rooney.

(UPS……..Continued on page 10)

FAT 32 and SexHeaven.com

By William LaMartin, Tampa PC Users Group

Here are a few loose items from my month of computing in June. There were far fewer problems this month than last.

FAT 32

First off, in the last newsletter I noted that I had installed Win 98 on my main desktop after having some problems that necessitated the reinstallation of the operating system. That gave me an excuse to move up to 98 on that machine. This month, since I was running a bit low on space on my C drive, having to religiously delete unneeded files in order to maintain 200 – 300 MB of free space, I decided it was time to convert that drive from FAT 16 to FAT 32, moving from 32 KB clusters (the smallest allowable block of data) to 4 KB clusters. The idea is to recover a lot of wasted space. And it worked. Under FAT 16, I had 232 MB of free space; after the conversion I had 888 MB—quite an improvement.

But the conversion was not without problems. Windows 98 has a FAT 32 conversion program in its System Tools that does the job. As usual with such things you are supposed to stop all running programs before starting. I forgot about the virus scanner, and a few minutes into the process I received the message "There is not enough memory to convert the drive. Edit your ConfigSys and your Autoexec.bat file……". I was being asked to remove any programs that were started in these two files. McAfee virus scan was the only one, and I put a REM in front of the pertinent line to stop it from loading.

Starting the conversion process again, I got the same message. Of course, there was nothing now in those two files to start, but just in case the process got into the Windows' part of the boot, I removed everything that was in the Windows' startup folder and everything set to run in, I think, the Win.ini file. That should have taken care of everything. But it didn't.

The same message appeared, but this time I had paid attention to what was scrolling on the DOS screen as the computer booted. And I saw two file names go by. One was C:\Tools_95 \guest.exe and the other was C:\logitech\mouse\mouse.exe, the first dealing with my Zip drive and the second dealing with my Logitech marble. I could find nowhere that they were loading from, but I knew how to stop them from loading—I simply renamed both of them temporarily. After that the FAT 32 conversion was happy and did its thing, taking about an hour to convert a 2.1 GB C drive. When finished, I changed the two file names back to the correct ones.

SexHeaven.Com

The second thing of note last month was a Visa charge of $59.95 to DMR* info@4hlp.com that I didn't recognize. There was also an 800 telephone number after the name so I called it and was informed of the company name, which I can't remember. I do recall that they said that they were a clearing house for Internet charges made to various online companies. I said I believed they had a charge for me that I hadn't made. No problem, they said, just give us your account number and we will see to whom the charge was made. I did and was informed that on a certain date I had made a charge of $59.95 to SexHeaven.Com. Not I, I said. Oh, she said, it looks here as if the company has already issued a credit (probably exactly when she got my phone call), but you should contact your Visa company just to make sure. I, of course, contacted Visa, and they eventually sent me a print out showing that DMR* info@4hlp.com had issued a credit.

The question is, how did I get charged in the first place. Worst case scenario—my card number, etc. had been stolen from an Internet transaction. That didn't seem likely, since just one incorrect charge had been made. On the other hand, the speed of their "credit issued" announcement implies these "errors" are frequent. Nonetheless, my guess is that a transaction for someone else was simply keyed in wrong and their credit card information was just a digit or two different from mine. So check out those credit card bills. If you enter everything in Quicken or Microsoft Money, you will know what is yours and what isn't.

Computer prices

My most recent purchase brought home how much we in the computer world have benefited from falling prices—should I say plummeting prices. My laptop came with 32 MB of RAM, and I thought that should be enough, but during the previous Internet SIG I had a half dozen applications running—FrontPage, Corel Draw, PhotoPaint, Family TreeMaker, Microsoft Word, and Internet Explorer and then started a conversion of a Word document that was close to .5 MB to an HTML document. Something went wrong and the computer hung. I don't know if memory was the culprit, but a couple of days later I purchased an additional 32 MB. The price was $99. Less than two years ago, the 32 MB I purchased for my previous IBM ThinkPad cost around $350.

Memory, hard drives, monitors; the prices of everything in computing (except Internet stocks) is dropping like a rock. A year or so back, entire systems that would do what most users needed dropped below $1,000, then to $600 more recently—and now to nothing. That's correct—nothing. Well, almost nothing; you have to purchase three years of Internet service for $20 per month. This final offer reminds me of the old Polaroid camera pricing. They sold you the camera very cheaply, then you had to buy the special film at their usual high price. Except, here I am not sure what the equivalent of the film is. Is it the Internet service? Today $20 per month is sort of the going rate for the usual ISP. But what about two years down the

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet. There will be no meeting in July, since it would have been right after July the Fourth.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309.*

Visual Basic SIG

The VB SIG will not meet in July.

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.

Last month, we reviewed the surveying program mentioned last month and then took a quick look at a VB program that queries a web site for information.

(Comments……Continued from page 9)
road? If the rate drops to $10 or nothing (if you are willing to look at an ad on each page), then signing up for three years to get that computer may not seem like such a good deal. Especially if you could then get twice the computer for $200.

Why can't auto parts follow the same price decline curve as computer parts? Every time I spend a small fortune on the simplest auto repair, I think of all the nice computer doodads that I could get for the price of the repair parts. Sometimes it would be an entire system. Perhaps the government should investigate auto parts pricing instead of Microsoft.

Office 2000
Office 2000 is out, but I am not jumping at it. The problem is that I use every one of the programs in the most costly version, Office 2000 Premium: Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Publisher and FrontPage. All are working fine now, so I will wait and collect opinions and comments from the Usenet newsgroups concerning the various components before jumping on the 2000 bandwagon. I am particularly interested in the changes to Access and FrontPage.◆

(UPS……Continued from page 8)

So I'm waiting. I mailed it 10 days ago and I expect it will be another ten days, and in the meantime Valerie has to go back to unplugging her PC – the best surge protection of all, as we well know. ◆

Getting your Freenet email — from anywhere

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

Perhaps you will be in another city some day and want to read your Suncoast Freenet email. If you do not have a computer with you, you may go to the library and read your email there for free. We have done this in Phoenix, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, etc. Most large cities have many computers on the Internet now, and they allow public use, even for nonresidents.

How do you go about it? Ask the librarian if they permit you to read your email on their computers. They may put you at a desk and give you a temporary name and password. You may then bring up Netscape and type in telnet://scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us in the "location" line. This will take you to the Suncoast Freenet. I get half of my email there.

If you want to try this out now, get on the Internet and if you have a copy of telnet either on your machine (Windows 95/98 have it) or the server you work through, just type the above, or whatever URL you want to go to, on the "location" line in Netscape. I do not use Internet Explorer so I can't tell you how that would work, but it would probably be the same.

When I am on my ISP here in Tampa, I bring up Netscape and type in that FREENET URL above and use the telnet program. I can use the email service on the ISP's location also; I just tried that here at home once more to be sure you can do it if the circumstances allow. ◆

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
Reflectone
Marshall & Stevens
BCD

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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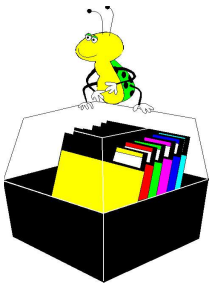
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	5:00pm – 8:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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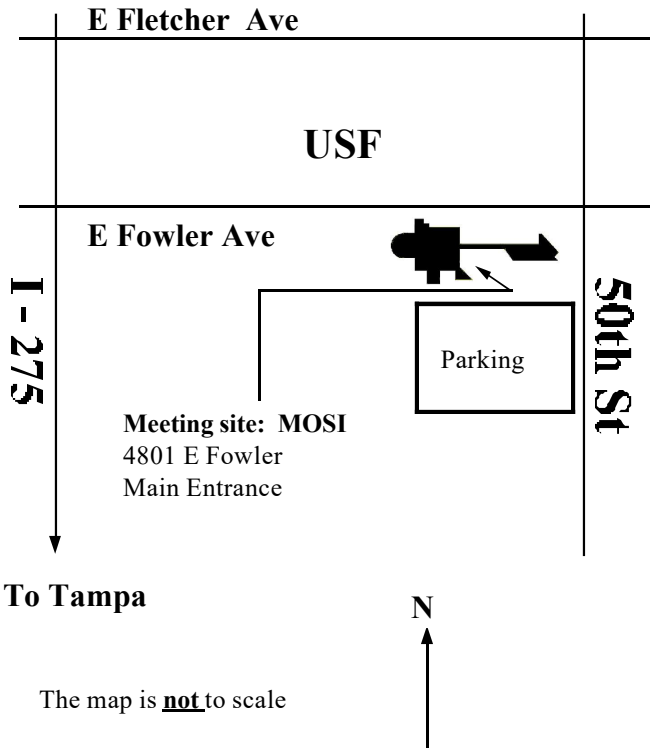
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(President……..Continued from page 1)
ter! It doesn't have to be top quality. It can be on an everyday subject, something that you do or have experienced during your time on computers. We need much, much more material. If twenty five of our most loyal members would write one article a year, we could lighten the burden for a few dedicated members and increase the diversity of subjects.

I'd like to thank our member and secretary Jim Weber for an outstanding talk on MPEG-3 last month. It was just outstanding. I enjoy home-grown presentations as much as the outside speakers.

I need to remind you again as always … we need to bring in new members. Remember there's a prize for bringing in the most members. So harass your friends and neighbors, make a nuisance of yourselves and drag some new faces in.

See you at the next meeting. Merle Nicholson ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 12 No. 8 August 1999

Meeting

Adobe Acrobat & Microsoft Access

August 11, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the August meeting, William LaMartin will demonstrate several programs including the Adobe Acrobat Writer and Microsoft Access. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

This month I'd like to give some well deserved recognition to MOSI for supplying our meeting facilities. We first made contact with the organization through Ford Bond, who is still our MOSI Liaison and a member of our Board of Directors with full voting rights. In addition to coordinating the facilities, he has proved to be a valuable voice in Board discussions. We owe Connie Kincaid, our former TPCUG president, our thanks for the initial arrangements.

I'd also like to thank Jan Luth, Director of Education at MOSI. I've spoken to Jan a few times and I'm delighted to say that we have a commitment from Jan of her continued support at MOSI. We are very lucky to have this support; it would be very difficult to match these facilities. It's not only the right size for us, but also the projector and PC interface are absolutely invaluable.

And again I'd like to mention that Ford has been with us unfailingly. He not only joined the club, but he's been there month after month for us. Thanks, Ford, and thank you, MOSI. ◆

September 8: The meeting topic is yet to be announced — Check the web site later.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Jim Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Merle Nicholson started the Windows SIG at 6:00 PM. One of our members has had a problem with his AMD 233 processor causing blue screen crashes. It turns out the CPU fan was the culprit. AMD has a list of recommended fans to use with its chips listed on their web site. Windows 98 second edition is now available, but some compatibility issues have been seen in newer hardware. If you plan to upgrade, make sure you have the newest drivers available for your computer components.

Merle started the general meeting at 7:00 PM. He announced the upcoming elections in December. Anyone interested in becoming the group's next president please speak up. Merle also reminded the members present about the membership drive currently under way.

David Henry of Senior Net spoke briefly to the group about his organization. They provide computer education for older adults at the USF campuses in Tampa and Lakeland, as well as the Science Center of Pinellas County in St Petersburg. They are currently looking for volunteers to assist in their training programs. They meet for 3 hours in the daytime only, and classes are 4 to 8 weeks in length. If you would be interested in assisting, please call (813) 974-8037 or 974-5263.

Mark Komula of Network Technology Solutions gave a presentation on home networking. He passed out some network cards and explained briefly about how they connect together. An advantage of home networking can be the sharing of peripherals such as printers, external drives, or scanners. Software can be shared over a network as well, saving the cost of buying several different copies of a program that only one person will use at a time. Internet connections can be shared over the network, too, with only one computer needing to be connected to a phone line at a time.

Mr. Komula also discussed ADSL Internet connections. His company provides ADSL connections and service. They offer a guaranteed 256K dedicated connection for $50 a month with an installation cost of $200, which includes a network card and an external modem connection. ADSL works with existing copper phone lines, but the line into your home is split. This means you are not adding the recurring expense of adding a new phone line. Unlike Roadrunner, there is no additional cost to connect to a business account. If interested, their web site is http://www.net-techno.com.

The meeting ended at 7:40 PM. ◆

Mijenix Fix-It Utilities 99

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

An evaluation copy of the program arrived on July 8. I installed the two suites of programs that are included, Fix-It Utilities 99 and Powerdesk Utilities 99. The programs install easily and work well.

When I receive a program, the first thing I do is read the manual, and this manual is over 200 pages, which should tell you there is a lot of valuable material here. These Utility programs will also work with Windows NT; others don't.

Here is a list of the qualities of Fix-It Utilities 99 as shown on the shrink-wrapped cover.

1. Crash protection. Computer programs do crash. Computers also do crash. You can set Crashproof 99 so it is always on. If a crash were to happen with your computer, this can help you save data, even if no one is around to help you. The manual tells you about the program and how to set it "always on".
2. Disk Defragmentation. Defrag Plus defrags your disks. It gives you a neat graphic as it works.
3. #1 Registry cleaning. When you bring this up, there are a number of options. Run fixer and you will see any number of items you may want to remove from the registry. Other registry views are provided for.
4. Virus protection. One free year of updates is included. Good anti-virus protection, but there was not a convenient A/V disable feature that appeared on my computer.
5. Hard Disk Fixer. Checks individual boot records and header data against the master boot record. NTFS, FAT, and FAT32 disk repair. There are too many detailed areas to enter for me to write them all up here.
6. Hardware Diagnostics. System diagnostics are provided in greater detail than any other program I've seen. A year 2000 checker is included to make sure your computer is Y2K compatible.

Installing the program is simplicity itself. Running the program consists of clicking the icon on the desktop. A menu comes up that includes Fix Wizard; Disk and Files, Optimization and Repair; System Registry, Registry Repair and Clean; System Diagnostics, Hardware and System; and lastly, System Protection, World Class Protection. Clicking on each headline takes you to a sub-menu for that category.

Going through these menu items, I found Undelete Plus. The list of files on my hard disk that I could recover with this utility is unbelievable.

A startup disk can be created to allow you to start up if the hard disk crashes. Also, an Emergency Rescue Disk comes with the program. This disk has a Help section that displays a text file to give you hints as to what to do next when something has gone wrong. Disk Snapshot is a program that writes out your FAT table and boot sector and stores it in case your rescue disk needs help in recovering data.

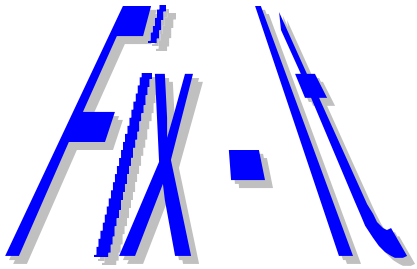
A manual is included in the program to be there if you have a crash; it will assist you in using the rescue disk and the startup disk. It includes much more than just that, but what a nice thing to have if a real crash occurs when no one else is around.

An update program takes you to the Mijenix site and allows you to update your programs components.

I put the program on a computer with a bad internal modem and when I checked COM1 in System Check, a large red X appeared on the modem menu, in contrast to the checks on the other items listed. In the Diagnostics Suite, you can look deeply into the motherboard, memory, or hard drives. It makes it easier to decide if you have a software or a hardware problem.

Before this review gets too long, let me point out that the program PowerDesk is included on the CD ROM. This is a program that offers powerful file viewing, file removal, and also a graphics conversion utility that has provisions for 19 graphic formats. We reviewed the PowerDesk Utilities 98 in the July 1998 issue of Bits of Blue. (Yes, I save all the old copies, from years back.) An email attachment decoding feature is included. With PowerDesk, you can set up two Explorer windows so that it is easy to drag and drop between them.

Fix-It Utilities 99 is a suite of programs. To go into detail on all the various features included would make this review way too long. I recommend this suite over the competition (Norton's System Works, Nuts and Bolts98, First Aid 2000) as it is easy to use, and the various components have similar interfaces. The cost of this program (including the $30 street price PowerDesk Utilities) is $40 to $50. The Mijenix Company can be contacted at 800-645-3649 or http://www.mijenix.com. ◆



More Power !
New processors from AMD

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

The latest announcement from AMD is the new Athlon, claimed to be the most powerful processor ever for the x86 market. But this article is about the almost-latest of AMD's processors, the K6-3. It has some features that are unique and not available in any other processor. Its biggest claim to fame is that it works in all recent Socket-7 motherboards. Socket 7 is the technology started by the Pentium processor when it first came out. You won't see much of the Pentiums on the market, but they're still manufactured and available today at very low cost. Most of what you can find on the market are Celerons, the Pentium II and III (in the Intel world anyway).

The K6-3 is supposed to be the successor to the K6-2, but both are being manufactured today, with the cost differential being more than $150. The K6-3 is available in 400 and 450MHz versions, with 475 and 500MHz versions coming soon.

Warning - Geek paragraph ahead. If it hurts your brain, skip this, and go to the next paragraph: The K6-3 is unique in that the processor contains a large second level cache memory (in addition to the first level cache) ***ON the chip***. There are two 32KB level one caches, and then a built-in second-level 256K cache. AND it supports up to 2MB external cache on the motherboard. The Pentium II and III have two 32KB caches only; but the Celeron has two 32KB, plus a 128K L2 cache on the processor board, running at half the clock speed.

Cache is simply very fast memory. It is essential to running the processors at speeds so very much higher (up to 5.5 times) than the main bus speed. So the cache acts as a "bucket" for data, because the processor pushes it out faster than the bus can handle. The idea is that the processor, being so powerful, can spend its time **predicting** what it's going to be asked to do next, and then doing it, in hopes that when the bus asks for it, the data will already be there. And this is a very successful way to do it. So it may follow that the bigger the memory cache is, and the more successful you are at predicting, the faster the computer will be.

There's more to it than this. If you're interested in learning more, I'd suggest going to http://www.mkdata.dk/click.

The new PC

So to experience first hand what the K6-3 is all about, I built one a few days ago. I'm using it daily, and I have just a few observations to make about speed. But first, back to cache, sorry. Besides the Level 1 and 2 cache, the processor will support up to 2MB of Level 3 cache. Now with the K6-2 and Pentium II and III, that memory would have been called Level 2, because there are only two, one set on the chip and one on the motherboard. The Celerons all seem to have one set on the chip and one on the processor module.

The motherboard

So for a motherboard designed for the K6-2, when you put a K6-3 on it, it actually makes three caches available. I was able to find a motherboard with 2MB of onboard cache. It's an interesting board in that it has no ISA slots and no slots for SIMMs. Just one AGP video and six PCI slots. That's OK; there's nothing in ISA that I can't get (or already own in this case) in PCI. It's an ATX configuration (as opposed to the older Baby-AT form).

The case

ATX boards must have a different case. It's usually about 1" wider; most are a couple of inches taller than a typical Mid-size AT case and two inches deeper. ATX boards are taller, narrower, and they use a different (and easier to plug in) power connector. And all the external connectors are made right on the board, so that they extend out the back of the case: keyboard, mouse, USB, serial and parallel connectors.

Putting it together problems

So this was pretty easy to put together because the ATX case is so large and has plenty of interior room. I did have one major problem though. Usually when I build a new machine, I set it up on my bench before actually putting it in the case. This is just to resolve any issues with the board, and it usually pays off because you have to get settings right on the board – moving jumpers around - and doing that outside of the case is easier than after it's inside. But this time I did not because I don't have a bench power supply with ATX connectors on it, and because I was in a hurry to go sailing that evening. And wouldn't you figure, I powered it up, and everything is dead. No beeps, nothing on the screen, just nothing. But I do have a little diagnostic card I can plug in and detect fundamental problems. But NO! The card plugs into an ISA slot! I don't have any!

So I did 45 minutes of dismantling all my work one piece at a time to see if I had a bad component plugged in, and substituting some things I had lying around and still I had a dead system. So I left to pick up some things and came back with a fresh mind, remembering that I hadn't pulled all the small wires off the board that do things like power the LEDs on the front and the reset button and the power-up switch. So I just

(AMD.....Continued on page 5)

(AMD……..Continued from page 4)
yanked them all off except for the power switch and … it worked! So I put it all back together and got the system running all OK. So finally I started putting the little wires back on and discovered that the thing that made it fail was the reset switch. The case manufacturer had wired it wrong so that it was normally closed instead of open. It was like you stood there with your finger on the reset switch all the time!

So .. How's it work?

Fast ! Don't ask me why, but I now own an AMD K6-2/400, a K6-2/300, and my server is an older IBM PR166+, and now I have this new AMD K6-3/450! I was of the opinion that you had to double the speed of a system for a subjective comparison, that with anything less than that you wouldn't notice enough of a difference. So my expectations weren't real high that I'd see the difference, but I'm very happy to report that it's (subjectively) faster than anything I've used, including Pentuim II 500's. AMD's published benchmarks bear this out, but, after all, it's *they* who are publishing the numbers. Even their own benchmarks show that the floating point speeds do not equal any comparable Pentium. And other benchmarks I've seen show a higher disparity – for floating point. But for what I do – Visual Basic and Access program development, it's just amazingly fast.

Now, what I need maybe is a faster hard drive for my new system. ◆

Internet picture of the month



Computer Divan
Seat and computer rack in one cast aluminum frame

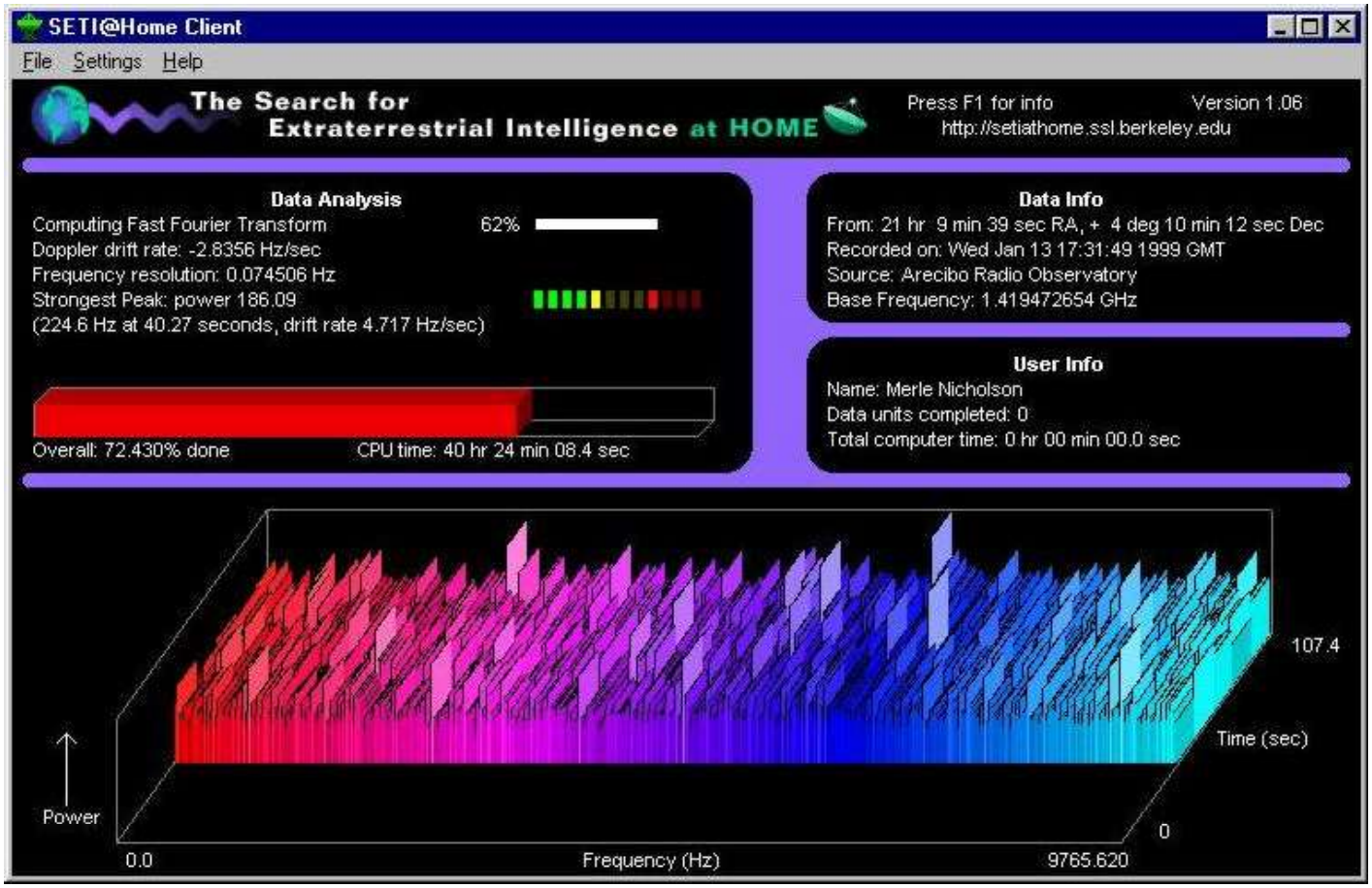
If sitting at your computer hour after hour has you down in the back, you might be interested in this setup from the Finnish design firm Volvomo. Their site is at http://www.netsurfer.fi/ . If you have trouble accessing their less than standard opening page, the product URL is http://www.netsurfer.fi/products/products.htm

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations (links are live)



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Swing Radio	http://www.swingradio.com/main.php3
NetRadio.Com	http://www.netradio.com/
FAX Service by eFax.com	http://www.efax.com/
Wired News	http://www.wired.com/
Brennan's Restaurant - New Orleans	http://www.brennansneworleans.com/
Louisiana Travel	http://www.louisianatravel.com/
Furniture.com – Web furniture store.	http://furniture.com/
Editor & Publisher	http://www.mediainfo.com/
National Library of Medicine	http://www.nlm.nih.gov
City-Gallery.com - Popular History of Photography	http://www.city-gallery.com/
Map Projections	http://www.geo.ut.ee/kartool/p_dana/mapproj.htm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.



SETI at Home

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Everyone knows what SETI is? Right? The movie *Contact*, if nothing else. No, SETI wasn't made up for Jodie Foster. It's Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. And that big radio telescope antenna in Arecibo isn't made up either.

SETI has been receiving data from that antenna for a long time now, and receiving data at a very alarming rate. All that data must be processed by computers. The data is processed to look at patterns that may suggest that they were sent by intelligent beings in other star systems.

A couple of years ago someone had a great idea that there are millions of computers out there with far more computing capacity than would ever be needed to do the job. Your PC and mine, all interconnected by the largest distributed network imaginable – the internet.

So that's what I'm doing right now. My PC has been contributing to that process by analyzing a half megabyte of data from the SETI antenna captured Wednesday, Jan. 13, 1999 at 17:31:49 GMT. There's a wonderful graphic of the process on my screen giving the progress. So far my PC has worked on this data 39 hours, 45 minutes and 50.0 seconds, and it is 71.425% complete.

When it's done, the data results will be sent back to the originator and set back into a database, and I'll receive my next chunk. Also, a credit in computer hours will be logged into my account with them. They've promised that if I find any sign of extraterrestrial life that I'll be given some credit for doing all the hard work!

The program runs in two modes; as a screensaver and as a background process. I have an AMD K6-300 that I'm running this on, and it doesn't seem a burden as I write this. They do warn you, though, to run it as a background process you should have 64MB of memory to limit the page swapping. The screensaver mode needs less memory.

Now I'm not going to upstage these people by giving you all the history. You need to go to the web site and look at all the fascinating information there; but I'll give you a couple of highlights. There are 355,750 active contributors. There are 910,000 total users, with 80,000 new contributors signed up in the last 15 days. 1E+07 total number of results received... let's see … that's 10,000,000, isn't it? And last, more than

(SETI……Continued on page 12)

Visual Basic 6.0

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

I have used Visual Basic since version 1, missing only one version update along the way, I think. I need to see a need to update, like a collection of new and useful tools. At first Version 6 didn't seem to offer that much in the way of an improvement over Version 5, so I programmed along happily with Version 5. And quite possibly if you are not interested in improved database connectivity or Dynamic HTML, you would gain nothing from upgrading—except that an upgrade to Version 6.0 should solve all of the problems some of us have with incorrect versions of some of the VB controls creeping into our computers.

Many of you will recall my writing in this newsletter about problems caused by programs I installed overwriting certain OCX files (the ActiveX VB controls) on my computer, resulting in VB not being able to use the control—or I couldn't get help for the control. The solution was to unregister the control, delete it, find the correct control, copy it to the hard drive and then register it. It happened so many times I got fairly good at the routine. With VB 6 on my computer this problem should go away—until VB 7 is released, causing problems for VB 6.

Another advantage of VB 6 would be the correction of many problems in VB 5 without the use of service packs. I think I was up to service pack 3 on VB 5. There are service packs for VB 6, but they don't seem as necessary.

With the above in mind and the promise of improved database tools like being able to create data reports in VB (like Microsoft Access reports), I installed VB 6 on my desktop computer. At least I tried to install it. Everything went smoothly until the end of the installation when I received the two messages, **"The version of resource DLL MSDASQLR.DLL is not valid" and "MSDASQL.DLL was unable to register itself in the system registry"**. Such problems seem to plaque me. It is the persistent problem of different versions of DLLs.

I looked at these files on my computer and the files appeared the same as on the installation CD. To try again, I renamed the offending files so the installation wouldn't see them and ran the installation again—with the same result. Time to try another tack. I searched Microsoft's Knowledge Base and found only that the files had to do with Microsoft Data Access Components. I then checked my laptop and found newer versions of the same files. After copying them to my desktop, the installation went fine. I can't explain it other than to guess that these newer versions were on my desktop before the installation (having been put there by some unknown piece of software) and registered in the registry, then the installation replaced them but was unable to subsequently register the files it had replaced them with. I don't really understand the registering of DLLs, etc, other than you do it with the program REGSVR32.EXE and that I seem to have an inordinate number of problems with incorrect DLL and OCX versions.

Anyway the problem was solved, and VB 6 was installed. So what can I do now that I couldn't do before? First, let me tell you about what you can do in Visual Basic, in general, then I will address what version 6 has added.

With VB I have written programs to:

- Transfer files via a serial port connection from an Apple II e to a PC
- Open text files and modify the text
- Use Dynamic Data Exchange to import and export data between running Windows programs.
- Construct a sound recorder/player (use it to try to teach your bird to speak)
- Create programs to teach children to read a clock, learn musical notation, practice arithmetic
- Serve as a terminal program to communicate with a BBS
- Check if my Internet mail server has any mail for me
- Check the current IP address of an Internet connection
- Batch verify the correctness of mailing address via the Postal Service Internet site
- Calculate mortgage payments and display a payment schedule
- Solve a system of linear equations
- Parse text to perform an arithmetical operation indicated by that text
- Run a WebCam
- Make a grocery shopping list from items I choose and display it in the order of the store I choose
- Open a database and manipulate the data, e.g., parsing out the separate street address, city & zip from a combined address field
- Open a genealogy GEDCOM file and store the data in a database
- Create the HTML code for a web page with data from a database table, e.g. the links page at TPCUG.ORG
- Create a label printing program using addresses from a database

VB is a great tool, but you have to use it in order to learn it—something I stress in our VB SIG. In fact, there is also a learning edition of VB—much cheaper than the VB Professional version I am writing about—that I am endeavoring to get a review of out of one of the SIG members who is using it. I recommend a beginner purchase this first to see if they really have a taste for VB before investing over $400 in the Professional Version.

(VB.....Continued on page 8)

(VB.....Continued from page 7)

VB is object oriented and event driven. It is nothing at all like your old BASIC programming tool. The code you write to go along with an event is, however, similar to code you would have used in BASIC. Everything in VB is an object, and an object has properties, events and methods associated with it. A VB program starts with a form (itself an object with properties, events and methods). On that form you may place other objects which are called controls, e.g., a text box, list box, command button, or timer.

The following screen capture is of a form with a text box and command button showing, and a Timer control that is hidden.

The text "Thanks" in the text box is the result of pressing the command button. This is called the click event for the button, and its associated code is the simple subroutine:

```
Private Sub Command1_Click()
Text1.Text = "Thanks"
End Sub
```

So by causing the click event for the button object we changed the text property of the text box object.

The time and date printed across the bottom is actually a label whose caption property is changed every second (a timer event) to reflect the current date and time.

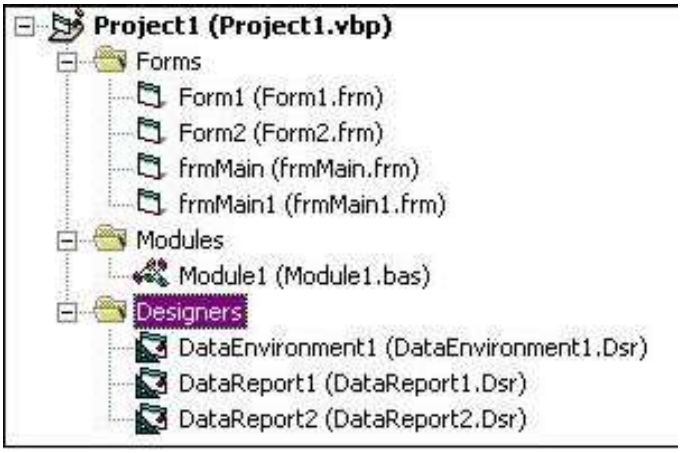
So in this very simple example, a timer (which is an object) event causes via the code below the caption property of the label object to change to the current date and time.

```
Private Sub Timer1_Timer()
Label1.Caption = "The date and time are " & Now
Label1.Refresh
End Sub
```



A full grown VB program will have numerous forms, with each form having numerous controls. To achieve the goal of the program you will have to write code for the various events that performs the manipulations and calculations needed.

One goal of VB 6 is to reduce the amount of code you have to write to interact with databases. To accomplish this it has added several new items: the **Data Environment, Data Reports and a VB Data Form Wizard**. See the screen shot below for the Project Explorer display of these new items.



The Wizard will create a form containing a data grid displaying a table from your chosen database along with buttons for updating, adding, deleting, etc. the records. The Data Environment is a bit more complicated. It allows for creating several data connections and within each connection you set up various "Commands" corresponding to the tables or queries in the connection. Each Command can have child commands. The goal is to set up your commands (tables/queries/SQL) so that VB can then create a Data Report based on a command and its child commands that will resemble what you could do with reports in Microsoft Access.

This is a nice addition. Such reports could not be created in VB 5, and it is at least 50% of my reason for upgrading. My problem at present is to get these VB Data Reports to do what I can get such reports to do in Access. If I make my report a little complicated it doesn't turn out as planned—for example, two levels of grouping of the report data. I assume this is due to my ignorance, and that, as with Microsoft Access, I will eventually learn how to accomplish the desired results. What is frustrating is the lack of examples in Help (only one. and it doesn't go far enough) for doing the type of thing I want to do.

VB Help, in general, is quite good, and you are going nowhere with VB if you don't learn how to use it, but it seems to fall

(VB……Continued on page 10)

Hardware Summary
HP OfficeJet R 80
Color Copier / Printer / Scanner / Fax

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, there is a Santa, and sometimes Christmas comes in July, at least at my house. I had been waiting a few weeks for Hewlett Packard to finally release their latest line of ***All-In-Ones*** (AIO). They were three to four weeks behind according to my calculations, but that may be just because I was anxious to get my hands on it.

A couple of months back I was visiting our local computer superstore on a day that the Hewlett Packard (HP) representative was showing his wares. I was real impressed with the Model R 60, which was HP's current all-in-one on the market at that time. I have always been a little leery of AIO's in the past because I was concerned that if they put all of those features together on one machine quality would suffer. Well, not from what I saw with my hands-on testing. After that I was hooked! My only regret was that there were no faxing capabilities in either the R 40 or R 60 models. The HP representative then proceeded to give me the brochure on the new Model R 80 due out in July. Well, as he promised it hit the streets in July, but to my chagrin it was the end of July, not the beginning. So you see, having to wait those extra weeks was just like having to wait for Christmas. Okay, so what is it and what does it do? Here goes…

Just as the title implies it's a color copier, printer and scanner with a built-in, stand-alone fax machine, and it's fast! The integrated copying, printing, and scanning functions work together with no apparent compromises in quality and/or performance. There is excellent photo-quality color printing on any paper. HP uses PhotoREt II color-layering, a technology that mixes colors to create millions of other colors. The flatbed design gives you a full page of optimized scanning with a cover that adjusts upwards to allow for easy scanning of books and magazines, as well as a single sheet of paper.

The printed result is very professional looking for reports and other documents because of the 600 x 600 dpi for black text and color printing. As I said earlier, it is very fast for its inkjet design with speeds up to 11 ppm for black text and 8.5 ppm for color print-outs. It also prints on a wide range of paper types and sizes including letter, legal and A4 sizes: plain, transparency, photo, envelopes, labels, cards, and iron-on T-shirt transfers.

It has a very easy-to-use control panel with walk-up, one-step scanning at the push of a button. In fact, your computer does not have to be on for color copying or faxing. HP's state-of-the-art technology with PrecisionScan simultaneously scans and optimizes photos, text and line art within a single document. There is built-in Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software that automatically converts scanned-in text into editable text. Scanned images are brought in at 600 x 2400 dpi optical, up to 9600 dpi enhanced with 30-bit color and 8-bit grayscale (256 levels of gray). You can insert images directly into most Windows applications and the scanning and copying can be hands-free because of a 30-page automatic document feeder.

Excellent copies can be made in color or black and white (grayscale) at the same speed as the print-outs: 11 cpm black and 8.5 cpm color. Along with the 30-page automatic document feeder for unattended copying, HP's advanced CopySmart II includes features such as clone, poster, mirror, auto-enlarge, super zoom, and 2 on 1 copy modes, reduction and enlargements from 25%-400% and multiple copies up to 50 or 99. It also copies legal size documents in black-and-white only.

It has an easy to use plain paper fax with the quality results you'd expect from an inkjet printer. There are 12 one-touch dial-keys and 100 speed dials for quick dialing. The 30-page document feeder also works while faxing for unattended multi-page faxes. You can send and receive letter and legal size faxes and there is a 100-page memory with automatic redial.

It comes with black and color ink cartridges, a bi-directional cable (IEEE 1284C), HP OfficeJet R Series software on CD-ROM, HP PrecisionScan software, OCR software (built into the HP PrecisionScan software), Adobe PhotoDeluxe Business Edition software, and KMT Office in Color templates for use with Microsoft Office 95, Office 97 and Office 2000.

System requirements are: Windows 95, 98, or NT 4.0, Pentium 166 or higher recommended, 32 MB RAM (64 MB of RAM recommended for Windows NT 4.0), 50 MB free hard disk space for HP printing and scanning software (210 MB for all in-box software), 256-color SVGA monitor, CD-ROM drive, bi-directional parallel port dedicated to HP OfficeJet (included).

It lists for $799 but you can get it for less if you shop around, especially on the Internet, and it should be in the discount warehouse clubs by the time Christmas really comes around, but I couldn't wait that long!

Although I purchased this for personal use in my home, it would make a perfect All-In-One utility for any small office or home office (SOHO) and I understand it networks well. I couldn't pass this one up.



Warning: On my system anyway, Norton AntiVirus Auto-Protect had to be disabled on the Taskbar to be able to scan. HP's tech support knew nothing of this problem. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.* For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309.*

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Neotrace 2.02

By Brian Lance, Tampa PC Users Group

Looking for a way to see what is where on the net? Wondering just why the page you're trying to reach is *so* slow? Would you like to visually comprehend the distances involved in net traffic? Look no further than Neotrace!

This tool was recommended by my ISP, and I have found it useful for many different things. Tracking down junk mail is one major point in my current online activities. Getting the best game server and finding alternate download locations are others. I can only guess at the various uses for this remarkable tool - like network health, locating customers/subscribers, network load/planning and security.

The latest version (2.02) includes geophysical mapping, locating on a modified Mercator projection each node along the route. Nodes that report geographic data - from RFC 1876 - show as different symbols than those derived from Zip code or address information. You also have the ability to add locations stored in a local file.

Features include the ability to ping 5 separate traces at once, graphical nodelist, tabular nodelist (exportable) and minimum/maximum/average display of ping times for each node. You can configure the display of nodes, latency, how often to ping, sounds and others. All of the screens and configuration dialogs are shown on the web site.

I applaud Neoworx's stance on spam. There is a simple tutorial on looking at email headers, just the thing for tracing that multilevel marketing spiel, after getting it the tenth time. The tool is easy to use and great fun, also. The things you can look up are amazing! After tracing a few addresses like my ISP, I decided to look up something really interesting: lamartin.com. The network info? I leave that exercise up to you. Hint: it has something to do with Constantinople...

Neotrace is currently 1.13MB and sells for $29.95.

Related links:
http://www.neoworx.com/
http://www.neotrace.com/neotrace/spam.asp
http://www.cauce.org/
http://www.cybergeography.org/mapping.html ◆

(VB……Continued from page 8)
down as concerns the Data Reports, as it did with the Internet controls in VB 5. As an aside, I originally moved up to VB 5 to gain the ability to access WWW and FTP sites with VB programs. As regards the Help format, it is now like viewing a web page. What I don't know yet is if VB 6 includes a tool that will allow you create this new type of Help file for your own project. At present, I think not.

Finally, VB 6 enables you to create Dynamic HTML applications. DHTML applications allow you to write Visual Basic code to respond to actions on an HTML page without transferring processing to the server. There is only one drawback with

(VB……Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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BCD

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Micrografx
Microsoft
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
SoftKey International
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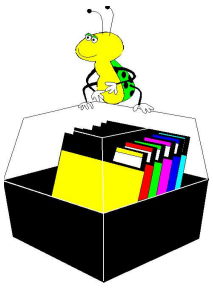
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	5:00pm – 8:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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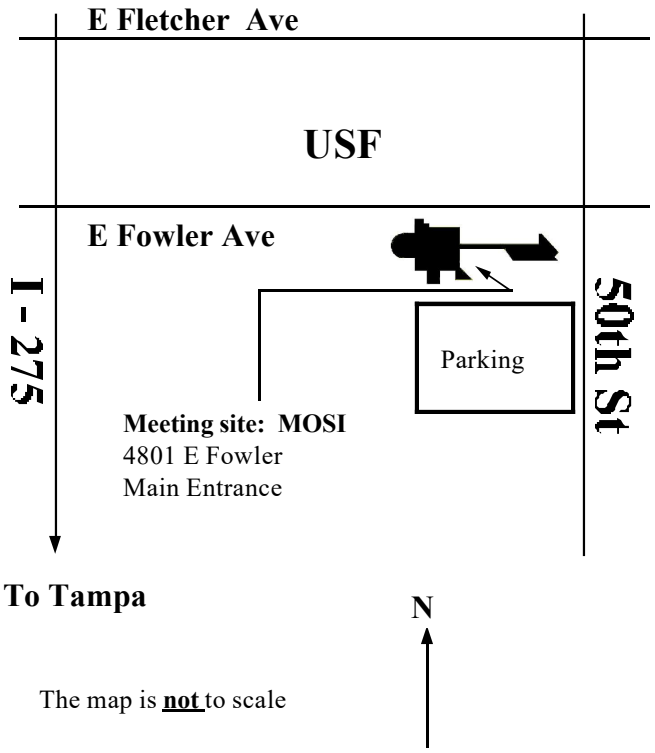
(SETI……..Continued from page 6)
37,000 CPU YEARS contributed so far.

To get set up, you just need to go to the web site, register as a user and download the software. Go to http://www.setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/. Be sure to look at the FAQ there. It answered all my own questions and more. Also, the SETI Institute site is http://www.seti-inst.edu/. There are a number of SETI projects going on. It's fascinating reading.

Footnote
1. An active user is one that has sent data back with at least one result in the past two weeks. ◆

(VB……..Continued from page 10)
DHTML—you must be using Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher as you browser to view the pages. They will not work with Netscape Navigator. So I may create some pages and post them on the WWW as an exercise but not as an essential part of a web site. They would be useful, however, on an Intranet where everyone was using the Microsoft browser.

For the beginner, Visual Basic is a great product but don't expect to become proficient with it without a lot of hard work. For the seasoned user, move up to Version 6 if my comments make it compelling for you to do so. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



September in

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 12 No. 9 September 1999

Meeting

Photo Suite & an Introduction to E-Commerce

September 8, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the September meeting, MGI Software will demonstrate Photo Suite, and Lori Heilman will introduce us to an Internet site designed to get one started in e-commerce . Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

We have three months of very good programs lined up for you. Be sure to attend the meetings. We need you there very badly. The attendance is what speakers look at when deciding how to spend their travel money and what club to go to. It's as simple as this: if you don't attend, we can't get the speakers, period.

My wife and I just got back from a week in Seattle, where our son interned for the summer. So we got a chance to see the Microsoft "campus" a couple of times. It's kind of interesting, I guess, because it's just a collection of low office buildings, none of which was any better than the rest. I think to try to get an idea of its size you'd need an aerial view. In Redmond, where most of it is, there's an ordinance limiting building height so they won't show above the treetops. All are just three stories except where the buildings spill over to the south into the city of Bellevue, and they take a jump to four or five stories. One is planted squarely on the city line, and it's "stepped" from three stories to four

(President.....Continued on page 2)

October 13: **Robert Armstrong from BCD – recent computer technology**
November 10: **Matt McCann from Quicken**

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

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Minutes of the August 11 Meeting

By Jim Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Mary Sheridan started off our Windows SIG at 6:00 PM.

William LaMartin presided over the general meeting in the absence of our president and vice-president. He announced that we would be changing our web host, and he will keep us advised if there are any problems.

William gave a demonstration of Adobe Acrobat 4.0. This was not just the reader we all have access to online but also the full program necessary to create a PDF file for distribution. Acrobat comes in three parts: Acrobat, Distiller, and Catalog. Acrobat is naturally the main part of the program. This is where you can create new documents and edit and add functionality to existing documents. Distiller turns Post Script files into PDF files. Catalog indexes a collection of PDF files. William demonstrated how to turn an existing Microsoft Publisher document (last month's newsletter) into a PDF file. He then demonstrated how to set up links in the document so if you should click on a key word you will automatically go to the associated lines or pages. Finally he demonstrated using Catalog to make a searchable index of all the newsletters for the past three years.

William presented Charles Howe, who is moving to Virginia, with a framed certificate of appreciation for all his contributions to the group.

A copy of Adobe Acrobat was awarded to Clark Evans, and Brian Lance won a T-shirt. The meeting ended at 8:30 PM. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)
right on the line.

But Seattle in the summer is just a wonderful, alive place with gorgeous flowers and interesting parks and neighborhoods surrounded by water. It was hard to come back to 90 degree temperature and 90% humidity weather.

Back to TPCUG, remember that we need you to volunteer to serve in some capacity on the Board of Directors. Tag a Board member and ask what you can do for the upcoming year. You should not expect that this small band of good people would go on year after year serving your needs. The club is run by the membership, and that's **you.**

See you at the meeting on September 8th. ◆

HP CD-Writer Plus 820i

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group



I am almost never the first to buy into new technology. How long have CD-Writers been out? Certainly over five years. I do remember the first ones I took serious notice of cost around $1,000 and wrote at a 1X speed and read at 2X speed. I think the very first ones were over $1,500. Furthermore the writable CD media was quite expensive. Didn't each such CD cost $10? Well, things have changed a lot now. The Hewlett Packard CD-writer Plus 820i that I recently purchased is a 4 speed write, 4 speed rewrite, and a 24 speed read. The drive cost $350, but if you go with another brand and a 2x rewrite speed and a little slower read speed you can probably get one for around $150. And the regular recordable (not rewritable) CD's are now under $1.00 each when bought in quantity.

Until recently I have really had no need for a CD-Writer, but since I started writing Visual Basic programs with database connectivity I have watched a typical VB program installation setup go from two 1.44 MB floppies to at least eight such floppies. Who wants to return to the days of feeding numerous floppies into the computer to install a program. So it's time to move on to installation via CD's.

Of course, CD-writers have other uses. The main one for me is data storage. I can now quit using 100 MB Zip disks to archive all of the images I have scanned in from photos, negative and slides. I can archive all my writing, spreadsheet, database, VB programming, Corel Draw, and whatever other files I can think of on CD. And one CD will hold the contents of six or seven Zip disks. You do the price comparison. A good price for a 100MB Zip disk is $10; a good price for a 600+ MB CD is $1. And $1 is less than $60. Furthermore, retrieving information from a CD is much faster than from a Zip disk. Zip disks, of course, still have their uses, such as backing up data that changes daily.

What else can you do with a CD-Writer. Well, you can duplicate audio (music) CD's if your second CD-ROM drive supports digital audio extraction. I think the newer CD-ROM drives probably all do, since my 1.5 year old 12 speed does. This feature is the primary reason for some I know to have bought a CD-Writer. Also, if you have the HP software mentioned below you can create a set of Disaster Recovery CD's that will restore your system to its current configuration.

As a test I used both the bundled Adaptec software *Easy CD creator* and the *CD Copier* programs to create copies of two audio CD's. The CD copier program is very fast . It took only 21 minutes to make a copy of a music CD. The copying was done without first testing and was done at 4x speed.

Using the *Easy CD Creator* software at 2x without testing, it took 53 minutes to copy a different music CD. So it appears that copying at 4x with no testing produces good results. So why test? I believe you use the testing feature if you think there might be a problem with the copying.

In fact, the first time I tried to copy a music CD using the *Easy CD Creator* I set the testing option. It got down to the last .4 MB on the last track after having run for a little over one hour (at 2x) and froze. The computer was locked up. So much for testing on that CD. The second attempt to copy that CD was what I described above as using the CD Copier program with no testing at 4x which took 21 minutes and was successful

But I have very little interest in copying music CD's. Possibly I will do a few for my car. I have more of an interest in getting the contents of my old LP records on CD. To do this, I first have to get the LP onto my computer's hard drive as a wave (.wav) file or a collection of wave files. That means I need some sort of sound recorder program that will record in CD quality. The bundled software that came with the drive called *Sonic Foundry Acid Music* will do this, among other things (the other things it will do I haven't had time to figure out yet). To simplify things, I simply recorded the entire side of the record as one wave file, not taking the time to do each song as a different file. Then I used the *Easy CD Creator* software to turn these two wave files into an audio CD, although the *Acid* program had a button to click on that was supposed to do the same thing. The process is fairly fast. The recording, of course, takes as long as it would take to listen normally to the record, but the transferring to CD goes much faster.

Another of the bundled programs is Adaptec *DirectCD. DirectCD* is a program that allows you to write files directly to a CD-Recordable (CD-R) or CD-ReWritable (CD-RW) disk in much the same way that you copy files to a floppy diskette or removable drive.

DirectCD lets you read and write your files directly to your CD with any software application that can read from and write to a drive letter. You can leave the CD in this format so that it acts as an extra drive for your computer, or you can close it and turn it into a CD that can be read by other systems.

You might note here that I haven't mentioned using rewritable CD's. Well I bought five such fellows, and my drive will use them, but with the price of the write-one-time

(CD-Writer.....Continued on page 4)

(CD-Writer.....Continued from page 3)
(recordable) ones being so much cheaper, I haven't yet found a good reason to try out the rewrite feature. I suppose they would be good for use in frequent backups of your data. If you were going to be backing up valuable files to CD every day, it certainly would make sense to use the rewritable media. Of course, I would still want to have a fairly recent copy of that same material on the write-one-time CD's since I have more faith in the readability of this type of CD if I should need to load it on a different computer with a different CD drive.

Below is a listing of the software bundled with the drive. For some reason, my drive didn't have the Broderbund CD, but that didn't bother me since I will use Corel Draw for anything that I might have used the Broderbund program for. As a point of interest, I scanned in an image of one of the CD label stock pages, imported it into Corel Draw as a non-printing layer and then made text and graphics for my CD labels with it as a guide. When finished I printed out the page containing two labels on the label stock. For the jewel case inserts, I used the HP provided software, since after a CD had been made *with Easy CD Creator*, the software was already aware of the separate tracks and their times.

The one thing I definitely plan do but haven't yet had time is run the HP Disaster recovery program to make a sufficient number of CD's to back up my system.

The bundled software, as described by HP, is:

- *Adaptec DirectCD and Easy CD Creator—Drag-and-drop your data, photo, audio, and video files for easy storage and access.*
- *HP Simple Trax—Automatically back up, index, and find your files.*
- *HP Disaster Recovery—Quickly and easily restores your hard drive files and operating system.*
- *CD Labeler—Create custom CD labels and jewel cases.*
- *Broderbund Multimedia Organizer—Choose from thousands of images, clipart, and photos.*
- *ACID Music Creator—Create your own compositions on CD.*

The site for the 820i is at http://www.hpcdwriter.com/products/fs_products.asp

A comparison of the various HP CD-Writer drives is at http://www.hpcdwriter.com/products/CompareSelect/compchart.htm. ◆

New Computer (and new things)

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

As some in the club may know, I build computers in very small volume as a side business, and I'm always looking out for new products and ideas. I've built two of these particular PC's – one of them for myself, and I'm especially pleased with the results. It is certainly an extremely fast machine using the new AMD K6-3/450 processor. You'll have to go to the AMD web site to look at the benchmark numbers, but they make a case for this processor being faster than the new Pentium III at much less cost.

I chose the components pretty carefully, trying not to spend much more than I had to, given my goal of making a very fast machine. One thing that caught my eye in looking for performance components was a motherboard that had 2 MB of cache on board. Now this is very unusual. Most boards have 512K, one-fourth of this new board, and the Pentium boards have none, dependent instead on the L1 cache built into the chip or L2 cache built onto the little plug-in board next to the processor.

One characteristic of this AMD processor is that it will handle 2 MB of external cache, so it was interesting that I found a motherboard with just that. The other interesting feature is that the chip itself has both L1 and L2 cache built into the chip that runs at the chip speed. So the 2 MB on the motherboard is a Level 3! I combined the board and processor with a pretty good 16 MB Diamond Monster Fusion video card and a Quantum 7200 RPM, 9.1G hard drive with Windows 98 SE.

A low end machine typically uses an AMD K6-2/400 or Cele-

(Computer.....Continued on page 5)



(Computer……..Continued from page 4)

ron processor and a slightly smaller hard drive and 32 MB of memory. This PC is only about $300 more at about $1350 with a 17" monitor.

ATX form

The board in this case is an ATX form. If you'll refer to the side view on the previous page, you'll see that it's a tall, narrow board. The processor in all these are at the top nearest the power supply fan for better cooling, and the case is a good two inches wider than a standard AT case. Referring to the back view on the next page, the keyboard, USB and mouse ports and the serial and parallel ports are all clustered together on a panel because these are all mounted directly on the motherboard, also a characteristic of ATX.

Size of the case

Had you wondered why all of a sudden, most new PC's are tall? If you were designing an ATX case and had to leave room above a standard ATX board for the power supply, the minimum height would be the same as this case at 17 inches. Pretty tall. But it leaves room for plenty of 5-1/4 bays – four in this case. Another feature of this case is a very quiet case fan that's built in the front bottom.

Slots

Besides the 2 MB cache, another interesting feature of this

(Computer……..Continued on page 6)

Internet picture of the month



Weather Map from Intellecast
http://www.intellicast.com

Go to http://www.intellicast.com, and you can view current weather maps like this radar map of the Mid Atlantic coast taken at 14:00 GMT on August 30. Here we see Hurricane Dennis moving in on the North Carolina coast line.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
SciQuest.com - Source for Scientific Products	http://www.sciquest.com/
Free Legal Advice	http://freeadvice.com/
Sharing Your Internet Connection	http://www.timhiggins.com/ppd/sharing.htm
Cable Modem Help	http://www.cablemodemhelp.com/
Installing Your Own Network At Home	http://www.homepclan.com/
DEVSEEK - The Programmer's Search Engine	http://www.devseek.com/
Visual Basic Explorer - for the Novice VB Programmer	http://www.vbexplorer.com/vbexplorer.asp
Webpedia - the ultimate web builders reference	http://www.webpedia.com/
SIGHTSOUND.COM - Downloadable Movies & Music	http://sightsound.com/
E-LOAN - home and auto loans	http://e-loan.com/
ExpertCentral – Be one or consult an expert	http://www.expertcentral.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Computer.....Continued from page 5)

motherboard is, first, no ISA slots! That's right, there are six PCI slots and one AGP for the video. ISA slots have been around since the IBM PC AT a zillion years ago, and we've given them up at last. There's no reason not to on a new PC because you get the best prices on sound, network and modem cards if you buy PCI boards anyway.



Hard Drive

The only thing this motherboard lacks is UDMA 66. UDMA 66 is the newest hard drive interface that will handle data bust rates of 66MB/sec from the hard drive, compared to the old standard of 33MB/sec. I did buy a 7200 RPM drive which reduces program loading by at least 20%. And I certainly believe that it makes that much difference after using it for a few weeks.

Plug-ins

The other thing about this board is that it has no built-in systems. The minimum you should expect is that it have sound on board, and the newest ones have Sound, Video, Ethernet and Modem! But this board has none of those, making it a bit more expensive. Still this board does not lack for slots, so I have a Yamaha 3D sound card and a Windows Modem on cards. There are still four slots left. You'll need one for the RoadRunner Internet Service, and, let's see, … video capture … DVD …. ◆



Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Road Runner & Networking

When the RR installation crew shows up at your house, they have one objective: getting RR up and running—not necessarily leaving your computer the way they found it. One fellow installs the cable and attaches it to the modem, then a second person installs a network card in your computer (if necessary), connects the cable modem to it and installs the RR software. They do this as many as five or six times each day. So they obviously know what they are doing.

What they don't like to see is a Local Area Network. They will tell you up front that your network will probably not work correctly when they leave. And they are not wrong. The inside fellow makes all the changes he feels are necessary to get RR running on the RR network. In my case, that consisted of removing every network protocol I had installed except TCP/IP on the network card in the main computer. He then set it to have a server assigned IP address.

When he left RR worked fine, but my LAN was nonfunctional. Part of the problem was my fault. I thought, based on bad advice I had read on the Internet, that I could simply connect the cable modem output to the uplink socket on my network hub, with each of the computers on the network—including the one with the RR software installed—connecting as usual to the hub. RR still worked fine, but now none of the computers could see each other.

Adding the protocol NetBEUI back to the network card in the main computer got me back to where the main computer could now see the other two, but this was not true 100% of the time, and the other computers could never see the main one. I am not talking about the other computers being able to connect to the Internet through the main computer's RR connection. I am referring to simple networking.

All sorts of tweaking the network properties on all the computers made no difference. So after some more Internet research (this time correct), I went out and bought a second network card for the main computer—something I could have had for free from RR if I had thought I had needed one (the installation fellow was all too happy to not have to find a free IRQ to install a second card when I told him just to use the one already in the computer).

Installing a second network card

I knew this might present a problem. I had a PSI slot for it but no free IRQ. I put it in anyway and let Win 98 find it and prompt me for the driver. It seemed to install OK, choosing to

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

(Comments……..Continued from page 6)
share an IRQ with the video card and the other network card. Who am I to question this? Win 98 knows a lot more about such things than I. I had consulted with Merle Nicholson, and he said that sharing an IRQ would cause a problem—and it did. My mouse would now freeze randomly for brief moments. The video card and the first network card had been sharing IRQ 11 OK, but they obviously didn't like a visitor.

What to do now? Well, Merle had suggested that I might want to disable COM 2 in the BIOS since I wasn't using it (my mouse is a PS2 mouse and my modem uses COM 1). That should make the IRQ 3 used by COM 2 available. Unfortunately a removal of the second network card from the Windows Device setup and a reboot did not produce a move of it to IRQ 3. It went right back with its friends on IRQ 11.

To make a long story short—and it took me several days to figure this one out—I did the following:

- In addition to disabling COM 2 in the BIOS, disabled it in the Windows Device Manager configuration.
- Physically removed one of the network cards from the computer.
- Rebooted the computer and then found that the remaining network card was now on IRQ 3.
- Shut down, put the second network card back in the computer and rebooted. Windows found it again , asked for the driver disk and the card was installed. And to my joy it was also on IRQ 3 instead of 11.

Why should I be happy since they were now both on IRQ 3 instead of IRQ 11? Well, the video card was on 11, not 3—and despite Merle's foreboding, the mouse worked fine. However, a quick check showed me that my networking was still not working correctly. Again, this may have been due to ignorance on my part. I was—and still am—of the opinion that for peer to peer networking between computers you only need the NetBEUI protocol to be bound to the network cards. I had that and had added IPX/SPX for good measure, but that did no good. Finally after some thought I added TCP/IP to the three network cards on the network and assigned each of the computers the fixed IP addresses of 192.168.0.1, 192.168.0.2, and 192.168.0.3.

I should note that while my network was down I was still able to do all the usual network things via LapLink on each computer under the IPX protocol. Chalk one up for LapLink.

Moving TPCUG to another web server

One of my primary reasons for wanting a cable modem was the need to upload web sites consisting of 20 plus megabytes to the Internet. With a regular modem, that can take a long time with the very good possibility that the connection will be lost before the upload is finished. With the cable modem, uploads go much faster. It took me 28 minutes to publish our 19 MB TPCUG site to the new server. With a 28,800 modem (or with a 56,000 modem since at my home the telephone line will not let any dial-up connection go faster than around 28,800), it would have taken probably five times that long.

The upload was done the evening after our regular meeting and one day after getting the cable modem. It was not done without incident, though. When I went to use Microsoft FrontPage (FP) to do the upload, FP said it couldn't run until it had a web server to use on my computer (Microsoft PWS). PWS had somehow become uninstalled. I could, of course, blame it on the RR installation. But who knows. Don't blame, just insert the FrontPage CD and get the PWS installation file off that. Not quite—the CD auto-started, and the FP installation program came up, noted that PWS was not installed and informed me that in order to install FP, I should first let it install PWS. Since that is what I planned doing anyway, I said go ahead. After PWS was installed I tried to cancel the FP installation that was to follow, but that apparently caused problems, since when I tried to open FP, it wouldn't run. So I had to reinstall FP anyway. Once that was done, finally I was able to publish the TPCUG site to the new server.

But, as usual, my problems were not over. Since I had reinstalled PWS that meant that I had to redo the aliases for the local versions of web sites and I needed to reinstall the Active Server Pages Component (ASP). But that didn't make the computer too happy, since ASP was trying to install an older version of OBDC than Visual Basic 6.0 had just installed a month back. It seems there will never be any peace from the problem of the older version trying to install over the newer version of something. Not to worry, though, since both ASP and VB 6 seem to work OK, which means probably that the older version did not get installed and ASP works fine with the newer version. At least that is what I think the situation is.

It was good that I persevered in getting the web site moved to the new server, since next morning when I checked, the domain name TPCUG.ORG had been moved to numeric address of the new server.

Cable Speed

I have not observed the blazing speed that has been mentioned with cable, but I am happy with the increase over my dial up connection with uploads five times as fast on average and downloads that are perhaps 15 to 16 times as fast. When I have time I will try to get a more accurate measure of these speeds. ◆

HP Web PrintSmart

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

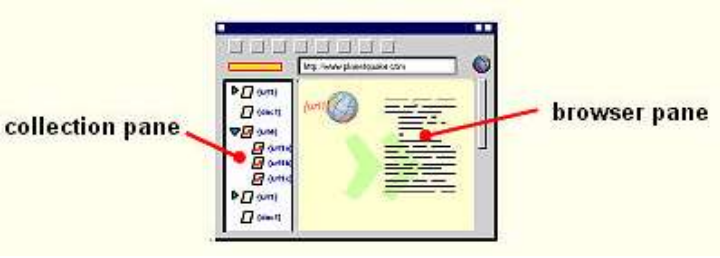
When the email arrived and then re-arrived from our editor asking for articles for this month's newsletter, I was at a loss as to what to pass along this month. Because I tend to work better under pressure I just waited until the last minute for something to pop onto the scene. (That's okay… my wife doesn't buy that "works better under pressure" scenario either … she calls it procrastination.) Our newsletter editor told me to go out and buy something new so I would have something to write about. Good idea, but a little drastic, especially after what I spent to write last month's article. So, I just waited until the last day when the pressure got really strong, and low-and-behold, there it was, right in front of me… **HP's Web PrintSmart™**.

Lately I've been doing a lot of printing of web pages, and usually not with the results I was expecting. Well, I remember a few months back trying a new program from Hewlett Packard (HP) called Web PrintSmart, but I wasn't too impressed. It was a little cumbersome and didn't really do what it promised, at least for me anyway. I receive a free newsletter regularly from HP called *HP at Home* that's loaded with ideas, solutions and tips for home computing customers of HP products, which I happen to be several times over. Recently I remembered reading in this newsletter that HP had upgraded Web PrintSmart so I went looking for it. Frankly, I went to HP.com but could not find it. So I did a search for it using Copernic (http://www.copernic.com) and ended up at: http://www.software.hp.com/. I clicked on *Internet and Security* and had a choice of two versions of Web PrintSmart. One was a Plus version for $29.95 and one was a Beginner version for free. Which one do you think I chose? Right again! The difference being, as far as I can tell, more control over page formatting such as changing the fonts and appearance of the page on the one you pay for. The size of the file download is 4.5 megabytes or you can opt to have a CD ROM mailed to you for $9.95 plus $7 shipping and handling. Either way, just fill out a short registration form and it's yours – ***FREE!*** Okay, what is it and what does it do?

The basic concept behind Web PrintSmart is collecting web pages you want to print, and then printing the collection as a single document. This collection can also be saved as a file for later retrieval and you can save as many different collection files as you choose. However, you can only work with one collection at a time. I mean, it is ***free!***

So, what would you want to collect from the web? How about information on a new computer you're planning to purchase. This collection could contain web pages of the manufacturers about the brands and models you're considering, price comparisons, reviews from computer magazines, and contact information for vendors. Or what about the student who is working on a research paper. This collection could contain the best results of your web searches on the topic of interest. Or how about a personal daily summary. This collection could contain your company's web page with press releases or news stories related to your product and your competitor's products, and reports posted to the web by your people in the field. Get the idea? These collections can actually be whatever you come across on the web.

The Web PrintSmart application window is divided into two areas, or "panes". On the left is the collection pane, which lists all the web pages in the current collection. On the right is the browser pane, which functions generally like other web browsers. You use this pane to find web pages for your collection. To start, I just find the pages using a search tool or search engine in my regular browser and then copy the initial link into the URL line in the right pane and off I go. Or once you find the page in your browser, switch to PrintSmart and use a shortcut key to automatically transfer the URL into PrintSmart.



When you find a web page you want in your collection just click the '*Add to Collection*' button. The web page displayed in the browser pane gets added to the collection and you will see its title appear on the list in the collection pane. If you already have a lot of pages in your 'Favorites' list just import your favorites list into PrintSmart and print what you choose.

Even in this free version there is still a lot of flexibility in the way you can format the printed output by choosing from several pre-defined style sheets, which determines the fonts and colors, or just print all text in black. You can also choose to add a cover page, table of contents, index of links, exclude/include certain paragraphs or pages and add headers and/or footers. Choosing which page to print is easy enough. Just put a check mark in the box next to the page in the collection pane and that's it. Or, if you choose, you can use automatic marking to mark a web page and all its linked web pages. This enables you to print all those pages without marking each of them manually.

One little trick I use is that my printer has the ability to print multiple pages per sheet of paper and print booklets and tablets. By printing two pages per side and on both sides of the

(PrintSmart……Continued on page 12)

Internet Call Manager

Editor's note: The following "blurb" was sent to our group by Mary-Lynn Bedard, a publicist for the following program. If you have only one phone line and spend a lot of time on the Internet, then this may be of use to you.

- Internet Call Manager
"Call-Waiting for Internet users"
Internet Call Manager is InfoInterActive's special patented telephone service which provides Internet users with computer-screen notification of incoming telephone calls – including the caller's name and number – even while the phone line is tied up during Internet usage. The customer then has a number of options to handle the call with the click of a computer mouse.

The InfoInterActive service solves the common problem of families and small businesses missing important phone calls and faxes during Internet use and is a fraction of the cost of acquiring and leasing a second phone line just for Net use.

The latest version of ICM, Internet Call Manager for Business, also allows small businesses and home offices to monitor incoming calls on a number of lines, including those not related to their Internet connection. A "Remote Control" feature also allows business people to monitor incoming calls to their office from home, a subsidiary office, or while they are travelling – and vice-versa.

Internet Call Manager High-Speed is a version of ICM that can be used with all of the latest high-speed Internet services.

When a customer receives an incoming phone call during Internet use, a message instantly appears on the customer's computer screen, identifying the caller by name and phone number. With the click of a computer mouse, the customer then has the option* to:

- Answer the call by logging off the Internet while holding the incoming call.
- Acknowledge the call by sending a special voice message to the caller, indicating the customer is on the Internet and will return the call later.
- Ignore the call, sending it to voice mail or a busy signal.
- Transfer the call to a different number, such as a cellphone or another phone line (for instance, a nearby fax/phone).

***** Some functions may vary by region.

Internet Call Manager also provides customers with a permanent log of incoming calls, including the caller's name and number and the time of the call.

Internet Call Manager does not require any custom calling features such as Call Waiting or Caller I.D., nor any special phone or computer equipment. When a customer is not on the Internet, the phone system operates exactly as normal.

The InfoInterActive service works with virtually all Internet Service Providers and web-browser software. The service is extremely simple to acquire and use, activating automatically to monitor incoming calls as soon as a customer logs on to the Internet.

Internet Call Manager is a special Internet adaptation of conventional telephone services such as Call Waiting, most of which have little or no functional value during Internet use. (For instance, the beeps on the line indicating Call Waiting and Voice Mail messages cannot be heard during Net use.)

The vast majority of North American telephone customers (approx. 83%) have single-line phone service and a low tolerance for missed calls. Consumers currently spend an estimated $2 billion a year on the conventional Call Waiting phone feature alone.

Cincinnati Bell Telephone, a lead distributor of the InfoInterActive service in the U.S., estimates that without Internet Call Manager, households with regular Internet users miss an average of 80% of incoming telephone calls.

1. To demonstrate Internet Call Manager, simply go to the web site at http://www.internetcallmanager.com and hit the "download" circle to get to the signup form.
2. Enter the ten digit phone number you'll use to try ICM. This should be a phone number that you can use to dial in to the Internet.
3. The screens that follow offer three options users can choose from to use ICM.
   - Give out our 1-888-289-9066 number to their friends, so they can reach them while they're on the net.
   - Use the Call Forwarding option to forward their phone to our ICM server during Internet sessions so ICM can handle their calls.
   - Order a Call Forward on Busy option for their phone from the telephone company so ICM can automatically monitor their line while they're on the net. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.* For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jloin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

10 Years ago in the TPCUG

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

A few months back, longtime member Roger Waters gave me a stack of old issues of this newsletter. They start in 1989 with a couple of issues and then continue up almost to the present. Not all months are represented. The oldest issue Roger gave me was February, 1989, and it is identified as Volume II, Issue 02, so we know that they started publishing in 1988. Recall that our group was formed in 1984. Perhaps the newsletter was not always printed each month. Anyway, I thought it would be interesting and instructive to occasionally look at what was being discussed back then when we have some extra space to fill in the present newsletter.

In 1989 the newsletter was printed on six 8.5 x 11 sheets of light blue paper, so there were 12 pages as there are today, but in 1989 there was a lot of white (really blue) space and the print size was quite large. The group met at the GTE building between Zack and Twiggs downtown, and Harvey Bruneau was president of the group. Robin L. Pokoj was the Editor, and Steve Speairs and Vern Semrad seemed to be the most prolific contributors. Of the Board of Directors, the only name listed of a current member was Kevan Sheridan, who was listed as BBS Sysop. Current member Ed Buzzza had a software review in the February, 1989 issue on AUTOMAXX – a combined file manager and menu system.

Back then people were using IBM 286 XT machines, and a lot of attention was paid to the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. More than one article was written on modifications you could make to this file to improve your system—or cause problems for your system. Another big topic was Serial Communications, modems, and the different communication protocols. How many of you remember XMODEM and YMODEM? When was the last time you worried about start bits, data bits, and stop bits? And what do you think was the rate of data transfer for these modems? It appears from the articles that 1,200 BPS was what was being used. That is a far cry from our 28,800 or 56,000 now.

Of course, they didn't have as much need for fast modems since everything they were sending was text based. This was a DOS based group. I see no mention of Windows in the 1989 issues. Perhaps Windows 3.0 was not out yet. My history of Windows is sketchy.

The February newsletter lists the minutes of the January meeting, where Linda Confer of Software Publishing Corporation was the guest speaker. She gave an overview of their product line. Do you recognize any of the following? PFS: First Choice, PFS: First Publisher, PSF: First Graph, PFS: Professonal Writer, PFS: File, Professional Plan, Harvard Graphics, Harvard Project Manager, and Office Writer.

In the June, 1989 newsletter, the minutes for the May meeting note that the planned presentation was delayed for another session due to the lack of the overhead projector. So they had a general discussion instead where it was noted that due to an apparent bug in WordPerfect 5.0 (I bet there are still people using this program), if a space is included in the file name, the

(Old Issues……Continued on page 12)

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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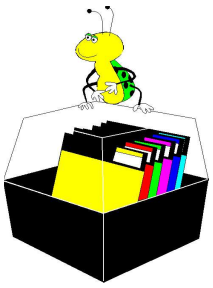
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	5:00pm – 8:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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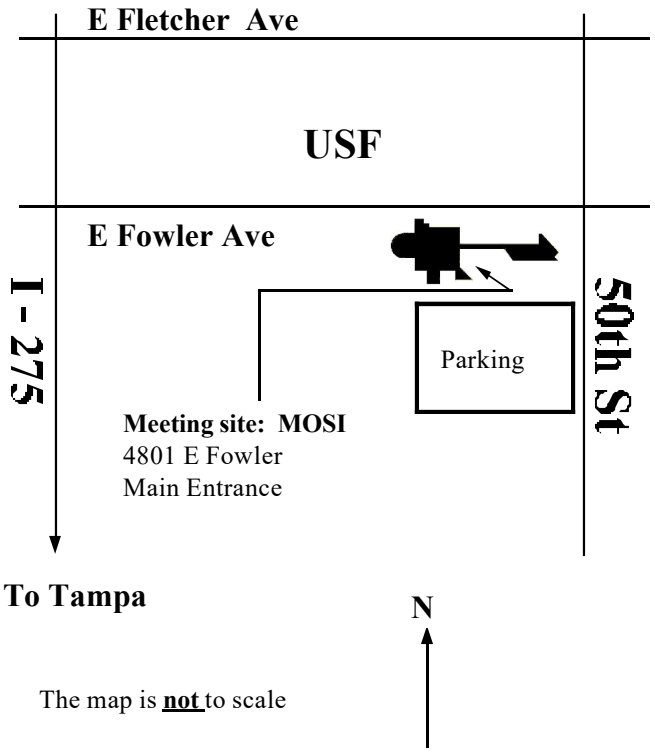
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(PrintSmart……Continued from page 8)
paper I not only save paper (and trees) but I also save ink and money. And the quality is the same just smaller.

And in case you're wondering, you don't have to own an HP printer; it works fine on my Epson also. Actually, you don't have to own anything made by HP. This program is *free* to anyone who fills out the registration. Web PrintSmart is one of the better freebies I've ever come across on the Internet, and it also goes to show that just because you try a program the first time and you don't care for it, be open minded enough to try it again at a later time. Sometimes they do get better, even if they are ***FREE!*** ◆

(Old Issues……Continued from page 10)
document will be saved but cannot be retrieved by WordPerfect. The solution is to use DOS to rename the file, e.g. to rename MY FILE.DOC, the DOS command would be REN MY? FILE.DOC MY_FILE.DOC. It was also noted that the most recent version had corrected this problem.

How things have changed. The only mention of Microsoft I saw was the phrase MS-DOS several times. Certainly there was no mention of Windows or the Internet. And I doubt gigabyte was a size even contemplated then. What size hard drives were they using? I am sure they were no more than 40 MB. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 12 No. 10 October 1999

Meeting

Robert Armstrong
From BCD

October 13, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the October meeting we look forward to another interesting presentation from BCD on the latest directions in hardware and software. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Western Digital If you have recently purchased a WD hard drive, go to the site http://www.westerndigital.com/fitness/drive-alert.html and read the notice. It seems there is a problem with their drives manufactured between August 27, 1999 and September 24, 1999.

Newsletter I wish to thank all the contributors to this month's newsletter. It is a big help to me when the membership comes through early with enough material to fill the newsletter and have an extra article left over with which to the start the next month.

Meetings It is not enough that you pay your dues, contribute to and/or read the newsletter and visit our web site regularly, though all that is great, of course. We also need your live bodies at our monthly meetings. It is important to fill the room so as to make our presenters feel they are appreciated. It is also important to the health of the group.

Full System Backup to CD Last month I wrote an article about the HP CD-Writer 8210i, describing how I had made data and music CD's with it. Now I can report that I have also used the supplied software to make a

(Comments.....Continued on page 2)

November 10: Matt McCann from Quicken

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more



Minutes of the September Meeting

By Jim Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Our meeting started at 6:00 PM with our Windows SIG. We began with a discussion on incompatibilities with the latest version of Office 2000 and older versions of the Office suite. Word and Excel don't show any incompatibilities at this time, but Publisher and Access have demonstrated an inability to correctly identify and open older file formats. We also had a piracy alert from one of our members. It seems Microsoft contacted him with reference to a piracy complaint that he was selling illegal programs. Microsoft had his home number and other information the member thought was confidential. Not only is he unaware of how Microsoft got this information, but also he doesn't own a copy of the software in question. The closest we can figure is our member was hacked while online or a company he deals with was hacked. Either way, this is another warning of how dangerous hacking can be, and how far it can spread from its original source.

The General Meeting began at 6:30 PM with representatives from an online mall called Quixtar. Quixtar promises to be the biggest on-line store in the world with financial backing from companies like Microsoft and IBM. It offers you the ability to buy any product imaginable direct from the manufacturer at a guaranteed markup of no more than $50.00 over cost. Quixtar claims big savings because the distribution network they will use is Amway. Speaking of Amway, Quixtar offers Multi-Level-Marketing options to anyone who gets a user ID number and convinces other people to use their number when making on-line purchases.

Merle took over the meeting at 7:00 PM. He reminded everyone that nominations for Board members are coming up, so be prepared to make nominations or be drafted. A program coordinator is especially needed. We gave Ford Bond a special moment of recognition for all his hard work and dedication in helping us move from the HCC Ybor Campus to MOSI and the time he spent as our MOSI liaison.

The meeting ended at 7:30pm. There was no drawing this week. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

collection of CD's for disaster recovery. The process first makes a Windows 98 startup floppy that it customizes for this particularly recovery process. It then copies the contents of all of your hard drives to however many CD's as it takes to totally backup your system. In my case it used 5 CD's and took about

(Comments……..Continued on page 9)

WordPerfect Office 2000 Pro

By Don Patzsch,*Tampa PC Users Group*

WordPerfect Office 2000 Pro includes

- WordPerfect 9 with Dragon's Naturally Speaking, a speech recognition program.
- Trellix 2, a web publisher.
- Quattro Pro Version 9, my favorite spreadsheet program.
- Corel Presentations Version 9, a slideshow presentation program.
- CorelCentral Version 9, a personal information manager.
- Corel Print Office, a small business publishing program. (Good for newsletters.)
- Last, but certainly not least, is Paradox Version 9, a relational database program.

The word processor known as WordPerfect has been my favorite program for many years. The current version is 9. When I bring up this program it has all the items I want already on the toolbars. I don't have to set anything up. When you wish to write a letter, all the possible things you might want to include are here. Fonts, tables, create columns, save in many different forms such as Word, text, and others are right on the toolbar. Another thing, WordPerfect allows you to view the Reveal Codes, which are embedded codes in your letter that show you how your document is formatted or how fonts are changed within the document. This allows for great formatting.

You may set the default as Microsoft Word, and you can write and read MS Word files. Adobe Acrobat Version 4.0 is included, allowing you to exchange documents with Mac and Unix computers. You can save WordPerfect and Corel Presentations in Adobe Acrobat PDF file format. WordPerfect allows you to put a watermark in your letter, and also it is easy to import graphics into your letter. I know of no word processor feature that is not included in WordPerfect. More than 1000 typefaces are included. AutoScroll will advance the text automatically so you can read it over without using the mouse. Speedlink will allow you to create a hyperlink that takes you to that location on the WWW. I could go on, but I hope I have made this point clear: The reason I like WordPerfect is that it is user friendly, and then some.

WordPerfect has the Real-Time Preview feature allowing you to see how any formatting change will look in your document before making those changes. Plenty of clipart and bitmap images are included with the program and a booklet included allows you to view these, so you can easily find what you want.

Dragon Naturally Speaking, Version 3 and a microphone headset is included. I have not really become interested in using this voice dictation, and so I have not worked with this system much. It is my opinion that IBM's Executive Via Voice is much better.

Netperfect is a server-side application that allows you to publish WWW documents through a central server.

Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications is included in the WordPerfect Office 2000 package.

Trellix 2. Trellix lets you create, convert, maintain, and update content without specialized knowledge of HTML or graphic design. I have not used this feature much because I do not do much publishing on the web. You may publish files in Extensible Markup Language (XML), Adobe's PDF, or Trellix format hyperlinked files.

One of the more interesting changes in this version of WordPerfect Office is in the CorelCentral PIM. It is a calendar, memo writer, card file, task list and an address book. It is one of the better personal information managers due to the fact that it is coordinated with all the other parts of Office 2000. You may use your Windows address book, and it will use your default email program to send messages on the Internet.

Paradox 9. This relational database has been around for many years and is one of the top programs of its type. This program came from Borland originally. A visual database designer allows you a graphic layout of the relationship between the various tables in your database. A new Find Duplicate Expert allows a query that finds and eliminates duplicate field values within the records of a table. Spell checking is now included. PerfectExperts provide you with the ability to create, in a step by step manner, tables, reports, labels and forms.

Paradox can communicate with most databases via the .dbf format. It is hard to know where to stop listing the features, but be advised there are many more.

Quattro Pro. I have been using Quattro Pro since Borland gave me a copy of Version 1 at a seminar in Tampa years ago. I like the way that you can "fit to the page" and print out the spreadsheets. I have put all my financial information into this program and have used it for years. You can produce a spreadsheet of a million rows and 18,000 columns. I've used Excel, and I like Quattro Pro's user friendliness much better for my needs. You can exchange data with databases using OLAP (online analytical processing) as long as the programs are OLAP compliant.

Corel Presentations is another program I have used for a long time. It is easy to bring in slides from PowerPoint or other pro-

(WordPerfect.....Continued on page 5)

Paint Shop Pro 6.0 Including Animation Shop

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



Jasc at http://www.jasc.com just continues to make an already good program better. Paint Shop Pro 6's (PSP6) ease of use allows you to easily capture, create, enhance, and optimize your graphic projects. Whether you're creating web graphics or just wanting to work on a digital photo, PSP6 gives you the tools to do the job easily.

I've reviewed this program a couple of times in the past, and I'm not going into all of its abilities again, but considering all of the newly added features it bears a third article…. because, if you aren't using it… you should be.

I have nearly all of the upper end graphic programs like Adobe's PhotoShop and Corel's Photo-Paint, but they all take so long to load that they are almost bothersome. Not so with PSP6. I have always used PSP to do all my scanning because it starts so much quicker and doesn't use near the overhead or computer resources that the others do. Now, I'm not saying that PSP6 is better than the upper end stuff, but it sure comes real close. And, if you want to talk about what's better, then let's talk about price. JASC sells PSP6 direct over the Web as a download for $99, or delivered FedEx or UPS for $109. Some resellers are selling it for the same price plus a $30 rebate. And if you're lucky enough to already own it, and you should, the upgrade is only $49. Considering all the tools you get with PSP6, plus Animation Shop 2, that's relatively inexpensive when compared to the upper end programs.

One of PSP's weaknesses in the past has been its text tool, but not anymore. Now text can be created as a selection on the current layer, as a floating selection above the current layer, or added as a ***vector object*** on its own layer that can be edited, deformed, and moved. Text is placed horizontally unless a path is created. When created on a path, the text follows the path.

Also new to PSP6 are many other new features and enhancements that include powerful new gradient options, a wide variety of new image effects and deformations, color adjustment layers, expanded digital camera support, multiple image printing and optimization features for producing high-quality web graphics with the smallest possible file sizes. Below is a list of new features and enhancements that JASC lists on their web site:

Editable Text and Drawing Tools

- Editable Text with Character-level Formatting
- Vector Drawing Tools
- Object Manipulation & Node Editing
- Text on a Path

Creative Tools

- Multiple Color Gradients
- Special Effects and Filters
- Enhanced Non-build up brush tools

Web Graphics Solutions

- JPEG Optimizer
- GIF Optimizer
- Animation Shop 2

Digital Imaging Solutions

- Expanded Digital Camera Support
- Adjustment Layers
- Multiple Image Printing

Productivity Enhancements

- Browser File Management
- OLE Screen Capture
- Multiple-level Redo
- Expanded File Format Support

Product Refinements

- Enhanced Control Palette
- Enhanced Tool Options palette
- Enhanced Layers palette for Mask creation
- Roll up feature for tool palettes which minimizes palette
- Enhanced Zoom Tool
- New Recent Colors dialog window
- Numeric edit controls for precise input
- Enhanced Help system
- Eraser mode support for pressure sensitive tablets
- Enhanced Picture Tubes for easier installation and use
- Visual preview pane for Picture Tube options palette
- New preference which defaults saved file type to last format saved
- Multiple-level Undo, Redo and a Command History

And with Animation Shop 2 included, you can also:

- Quickly create animations using built-in wizards
- Edit animations with drag-and-drop flexibility
- Apply high-quality image and text effects
- Optimize and export animations for use on the web
- Optimize and export animations for presentations with full integration with PSP6

All things considered this program should already be part of your arsenal of software. If it isn't, get it. You won't be disappointed with this one! ◆

(WordPerfect……..Continued from page 3)
grams, and this is a great program to produce slide shows for the WWW.

Corel Print Office produces desktop publishing, business cards, and brochures. A most useful addition to the Office Suite.

When I started to write this review, I hoped that it would be easy to do. I find that it is very easy to use the programs, but very difficult to tell you what I would like to about them. If you buy this program, I believe you will agree with me that it is the very best. The suites that I know of are: WordPerfect Office 2000, Lotus Smartsuite, Microsoft Office 2000, Star Office (a program from Germany), Ability Office, and 602pro Suite.

WordPerfect has decided to port at least the word processor to Linux, and they offer it FREE. ◆

Internet picture of the month



TV Station WITN in Washington, NC
http://broadcast.com/television/witn/

During Hurricane Floyd, several TV stations moved to a round-the-clock Internet broadcast of their hurricane coverage. WPEC in West Palm Beach started it off, followed by two of the North Carolina stations. The screen capture above is from WITN, http://broadcast.com/television/witn/ in North Carolina. The feed was at 20 KB/sec, so the small image was OK, updating fairly smoothly, and the audio was good.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations - click, they are hot



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Smart Computing in Plain English	http://www.smartcomputing.com/
HotJobs.com - Professionals' job board	http://www.hotjobs.com/
CareerBuilder – "The Most Jobs on the Web"	http://www.careerbuilder.com/
Monster.com - search for jobs	http://www.monster.com/
University of Central Florida Newspaper	http://www.ucffuture.com/
Commander's Palace Restaurant - New Orleans	http://commanderspalace.com/
SunSpot – The Baltimore Sun online	http://www.sunspot.net/
Sears PartsDirect - order parts online	http://www3.sears.com/
QuickenMortgage, a personal finance service of Intuit	http://mortgage.quicken.com/
Weather Underground – another weather site	http://www.wunderground.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Using VBA Functions in Access

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

Using Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) isn't really hard. Instead, I'd call it complex. This means that in order to do it proficiently you have a lot of small things to learn. And most of all, you have to stick to the task and don't give up. Find a reasonably easy task and just work with it until it's done.

I teach a beginning class in Visual Basic, three hours on a Saturday, spread over six weeks. That's only 18 hours of instruction, and, for the most part, it's been pretty successful. But only after I've learned a few very important things. I tell my students that if they attend every week and work hard in class … they'll not learn anything, actually fail…And they're just wasting our time.

Programming has to be practiced. It's a continual voyage of discovery and accomplishment.

Now to the subject of user-written functions. Understanding functions is a very fundamental part of programming. Surprisingly though, you can program in Access (or Excel or …) for years and never write a function. If that's you, you're missing something essential. Functions give you reusable code. You write functions to be general purpose so that on your next program, and the next, you just merge this function into your module and it's ready to go without modification. ("Without modification" is a goal, not a rule.)

You have to think of a function as an encapsulation of a single idea. To illustrate this, let's look at *built-in functions.* A built-in function – called *intrinsic functions* - are the building blocks of all programs. Let's take Int() for instance. Here's an example of how you use Int(). Dollars = Int(Cost). This takes a variable called Cost, cuts off the fractional part, and stores it in Dollars as a whole number. So if Cost was 3.65, then Dollars will be 3. Int() is just one of dozens of intrinsic functions like Format, Ucase, Mid etc …

If you were going to write your own Int function, here's what it will look like:

```
Public Function Int( ByVal InputVariable As Dou-
ble ) As Double

'Takes the Input Variable, and magically
'cuts off the fractional part if any, and
'returns it by assigning it to Int.

Int = … do something clever with math …
End Function
```

The first line is the function declaration. It simply defines the rules whereby it runs. The name is Int. It takes as a parameter one variable containing any number – InputVariable – and returns a number. Both the input and output are of type Double. Int is dimensioned as Double – the output and InputVariable is of type Double.

The lines beginning with an apostrophe are comments. Comments are ignored. The next line is incomplete. Frankly I can't think of any way to accomplish this with math, but the objective is to take the value stored in Input Variable and cut off any fractional part. Since I can't think of a way to do this, I substituted "psuedo code". The result is that this function won't work, making it a bad example, but I hope you get the idea.

Here's a better example that actually works.

```
Public Function Round2( ByVal ToBeRounded as Dou-
ble ) as Double

'Take the Input variable ToBeRounded, and
'magically round it to two places.
Round2 = Int( ( ToBeRounded * 100 ) + 0.5 ) / 100
End Function
```

To use this function, in your code anywhere in your application, use it like this: Dollars = Round2(Cost). So if Cost was say $105 times 1.0675 tax and you wanted it in dollars and cents, you'd need to round off to the penny. Useful ? Yes, absolutely. If you were to add a column of numbers that had them all rounded off, the result would be very different than if you didn't.

I'd really not program Round this way. I'd add another argument that specifies the places that it would round to. So I'd make the header: Public Round(ByVal ToBeRounded As Double, Places As Integer) As Double. This way it's even more useful because I can round to zero places, or ten places.

OK, now you have the idea, I hope. That is to encapsulate an idea into a single, reusable function. Both examples stand alone with no outside support. They are completely portable. These kinds of functions can be thought of as "*filters*". There are a couple of entire computer languages that operate on the principle of taking data and "*filtering*" it until you get it where you want it.

I'll give a much more complex example. I was asked to help with a problem from another employee in my company. She wanted to calculate 20 working days from now. Whoops. This is more complex.

Simulate it on paper first. Write the date. 7/1/1999 is a good one, and the date plus one, and the date plus 2 in a column on the paper. Write down say 35 days.

Look up the second date on a calendar. If it's not a weekend or

(VBA……Continued on page 7)

(VBA……..Continued from page 6)
holiday, mark a 1 beside it, otherwise skip to the next date. If that one is not a weekend or holiday, mark it one plus the last one. The answer is the one that has 20 written beside it.

That's not too bad. And here's the next step, reproducing the ideas in a kind of a fake (pseudo-code) programming language. I made up my own pseudo-code so that you can easily read this example. It does exactly the same thing as the example above except that it delineates the repetitive part in a computer loop.

```
Set a counter to 0
Get a StartDate
Top of the Loop
If Counter = 20, then stop looping and go below
the bottom of the loop
Add 1 more to Startdate and save it in StartDate
If StartDate is not a holiday AND is not a week-
end day Add one to Counter
Else don't
Go back up to the Top of the Loop
Here is where we go when the loop stops.
Since the counter is now 20, the result is the
new StartDate
```

Now this code needs to be translated into the real thing. The header – the function definition – would be AddWorkDays (StartDate, NumberOfWorkDays) as Date. So this function returns a date, and that date is NumberOfWorkDays more than StartDate.

There are a couple of key things to work out. First, how do we know whether a date is a weekend day? And second, how do we find out if a date is a holiday? As it turns out, the first part is easy. There's a function DatePart that does this. DatePart needs a date and two parameters, one that specifies that DatePart returns the day of the week. And the other parameter specifies that Sunday is the first day of the week. You use it like this: Result = DatePart("w", Date, vbSunday). It returns a 1 for Sunday, and a 7 for Saturday.

A holiday is much harder. The problem is that workday holidays don't occur on the same days. Most holidays are predictable, but those aren't necessarily the days we don't work. So the only solution is to make a table. The table must be maintained manually. So I made a simple table in Access called tblHolidays. It has one column called Holiday, defined as Date/Time, and the Primary Key is placed on that column. And then I typed the workday holidays in the column.

Now we need to get dates from the table. Actually all we need to do is see if a date we have is also in the table.

We do this with some DAO programming. DAO uses the Access Jet engine to manipulate data tables. Here's the sequence needed. Refer to the example below as we do this.

1) Connect to the database. In Access that's easy. Just use the current database. The connection to do that is easy. Set db = CurrentDB does that.
2) Open the table. We use db.OpenRecordSet for this. And we name the table "tblHolidays" and specify that the access method is dbOpenTable. For our purposes, dbOpenTable is the fastest.
3) Set the search index as the primary key. rs.Index = "PrimaryKey" does this.
4) Search for a specific date. rs.Seek = DateToBeSearched
5) If a property called rs.NoMatch is True then it wasn't found. If it WAS found, rs.NoMatch will be False.
6) Seek all the dates you want and check rs.NoMatch.
7) Close the recordset and database rs.Close and db.Close

Now these concepts need to be integrated into the program. And it turns out pretty much as below. The structure of the program is the same as the pseudo-code above. But the DAO programming and the DatePart function is worked into it.

```
Public Function AddWorkDays(ByVal StartDate As
Date, ByVal NDays As Integer) As Date
'
**********************************************
************************
' Add NDays of workdays to StartDate.
' Use:  NewDay = WorkDay( "7/1/1999",20)  Adds 20
Workdays days to 7/1/1999
' Work days is defined as weekdays that do not
appear in a table tblHolidays
' The Table tblHolidays has one field called
Holiday, defined as Date/Time,
'                   required, no duplicates, and
being the primary key
' ************************
Dim db As Database
Dim rs As Recordset
Dim D As Integer
Dim DayIncrement As Date
' ************************
D = 0
Set db = CurrentDb  ' Use the current Access da-
tabase
Set rs = db.OpenRecordset "tblHolidays", dbO-
penTable)  ' Use the holiday table
rs.Index = "PrimaryKey"  ' Assign the Primary key
as the search column
DayIncrement = int(StartDate) ' Make sure there's
no time part on the startdate
Do Until D = Ndays     'Top of the loop
  DayIncrement = DayIncrement + 1     ' Add a day
  if Not ((DatePart("w", DayIncrement, vbSunday)
  = 1) Or _
  (DatePart("w", DayIncrement, _ vbSunday) = 7))
  Then
  rs.Seek "=", DayIncrement  ' See if it's a
  holiday
    If rs.NoMatch Then   ' If not a holiday, add
    one to D.
    D = D + 1
    End If
  End If
Loop
```

(VBA.....Continued on page 9)

The Way It Was

By Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group

Have you noticed a rather curious thing in the trade magazines lately? All the ads are for hardware and, except for Microsoft products (and not many of them either), practically nothing else. And the bloated sizes of these new packages are simply awful. What happened to the old days of fascinating software packages and simple operating systems?

I remember...

in the summer of '87 bugging Walt, a TPCUG member, to let me try out some stuff I'd read about in his copy of the DOS manual. This was before I had my own computer. He had a Kay-Pro. With an 8088 processor. No hard drive. Just two 5.25 floppy drives. With 640K of memory and a floppy disk drive with 360k bytes of whatever. It was a big step up from the Commodore that he had contemplated as his first computer.

But can you imagine - having to put a disk in the A: drive every time you loaded a new program? You see, DOS back then didn't keep but a portion of COMMAND.COM (the heart and soul of DOS) in memory. It had to read the rest of itself from the floppy disk so's it could do something. So every time you wanted to do something in DOS or load another program, you had to put in the DOS disk in the A: drive, then replace that disk with the program disk of the application you wanted to run. You see, you kept the B: drive for your data files.

Then some people would make use of some of the "power" tools available to them in DOS. They would create a virtual disk of 60-70k bytes in memory and put COMMAND.COM, and a few other vital routines up there on the virtual disk. What a breakthrough! No more popping of the master DOS disk just to switch to another program.

Sure you sacrificed some memory but programs back in those days usually got by with just 512k of memory. Now that included the program and whatever space it needed for work files. As for DOS, it used just a pittance of memory; the full COMMAND.COM was under 24k. Just how big was DOS? Version 3.2 (476k bytes, less than 60 files) took up 508k bytes on a floppy.

Oh yeah, back then there was no such thing as buying a box of pre-formatted floppies; no siree, you formatted your own floppies! One nice thing though, since there was no hard drive, there was no need to run backups on your software. 'Cause you loaded a fresh copy each time you ran the program. Now for the data files, some of the scaredy cats did make back-up copies.

Walt was running an integrated package called "Ability". It had a word processor, spreadsheet, database, and a crude telecommunication package. I can still see that dismal green background on the CGA screen. But it did the job. He wrote letters, had a database of addresses, and used a spreadsheet for his household budget.

How many of you remember the 9 pin dot matrix printers of back then? Today, they look pretty awful but then, they were the cat's meow! And the CGA screen with lines running through the text on the screen? You did have eight colors you could use; but only four at a time. You had to switch to a new monitor mode whenever you wanted to change the color "set".

Disk files were remarkable. One box (ten disk capacity) held all your programs and another box held all your data files. However it wasn't long before you expanded your program library. Nor were all the programs legitimately acquired. How many of you had a utility program that would allow you to bypass the copy protection that almost all of the commercial software vendors used to stop just such pirating? F'sure, we all learned to install from a copy of the master disks and never used the master disks to install software. Further, it was gospel that you never, and I mean NEVER bought or installed version 1 of anything. But then, that's still true! Of course the Xerox machines got a good work out making copies of the instruction manuals. None of that "modern" (read: cheapskate) method of putting the manual on disk/CDs.

Then there were all the goodies out there known as shareware. Sad to say, many thought this meant freeware. There were even software houses that issued catalogs and marketed shareware programs (People's Choice comes to mind) that did a thriving business. Plus, who can forget the little programs listed in many of the trade magazines. PC Magazine was famous for that. You copied the code and then compiled the program using DEBUG. Heaven help you if you keyed in the wrong data. Since most didn't know what the code stood for, users were very careful and double checked their data before running it through DEBUG.

One of the things many of our members looked forward to was the Library maintained by our user group. Some one would bring in a "lunchbox" computer and we'd crowd around making copies of shareware and freeware programs. The "lunchbox"? That was a portable computer that had a small cathode ray screen (7"-9"? monitor) and a couple of disk drives. Later, they had hard drives which made copying easier. That lunchbox PC was a far cry from today's laptops and notebooks. And it was HEAVY!

But things change, everyone soon got into the habit of upgrading equipment to handle all the new features of the new upgraded software. Make you wonder (like the question about the chicken and the egg) which came first: improved hardware or improved software. But that's another story. Stay tuned.◆

(VBA……..Continued from page 7)

```
rs.Close
db.Close
AddWorkDays = DayIncrement
End Function
```

It may take a little time to see how this works. I suggest highlighting some of the keywords like OpenRecordSet and press the Help button and learn as much about it as you can. Have Fun! ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 2)

two hours. I have two hard drives totaling about 7.5 GB (with perhaps 2 GB free) partitioned into a total of five partitions. To be able to use your disaster recovery CD's you need to have the drives partitioned exactly as they were originally, so you should write down somewhere what the drive sizes are. I put that information in a text file on the boot floppy. That will allow you to repartition and format your drives exactly as before, boot from the floppy and let the disaster recovery process go on its own from there with you just inserting CD's when necessary. I hope I never have to use it.

Wonders of the Web This past month I found the web useful for two things: watching hurricane Floyd on TV in West Palm Beach, FL and Washington, NC via the web and ordering a microwave door handle from Sears.

If you go to http://www.broadcast.com, you will find numerous radio and TV stations that you can listen to and watch on your computer. The TV stations, for the most part, only broadcast live during their morning, noon, and evening news hours. But for Hurricane Floyd the West Palm station stayed with it for more than 24 hours, which was of interest at our house since we were putting up a couple refugees from that area. As the storm moved north, two North Carolina stations began their continuous Internet feed. The feed was about 20 KB/sec, so to take full advantage of it you need something faster than a regular dial-up connection.

While visiting my mother a few weeks back, I noticed that her Sears microwave door handle was broken. A year or two ago I had checked if Sears had a parts web site; they didn't. But now a search of the words "Sears parts" in AltaVista produced the site. http://www3.sears.com/ for Sears Parts Direct. Once at the site, I entered the model number for the microwave and then clicked my way to a schematic of the door, clicked on the handle, got the price, gave my mailing and credit card information, and the part was ordered.

Y2K I finally got around to checking on the Y2K readiness of my two main computers. I did this by going to the Microsoft site and clicking on their Y2K link (http://www.microsoft.com/y2k/). There you can download the Microsoft Year 2000 Product Analyzer, which, when run on your computer, tells you the readiness of the Microsoft programs you are running. I had to do a little updating on both computers. They also had links to major hardware manufacturers' Y2K pages, where I checked on the readiness of my computers.

(Comments……..Continued on page 12)

Computers and Ham Radio

By Clark J. Evans, Tampa PC Users Group

Computers and Ham Radio have some elements in common. The basic of Ham Radio is digital. Ham Radio starts with Morse code or c.w. or continuous wave. Morse Code is on and off of the transmitter. So if the transmitter is on we have a one and off we have a zero. Where did I hear of ones and zeros before? They are the language used by computers.

A dit in Morse code is as fast as you can send it with a Morse code key and a dah is three times longer then a dit. How, you may ask, did Samuel Morse come up with the different beats of dit and dah for each letter? He went to the local printer and asked him to keep track of the number of letters he used each day by letters. The one the printer used the most was "E" so Samuel gave it dit. The least used letter he gave the most dits and dahs. Example: (Z) he gave dah dah di dit.

You can get a Morse code message through when you can't get a voice message through, because Morse code is digital.

So what else in Ham Radio is computer related? Packet Radio is sending messages around the world by digital, computer to computer links around the world.

Next we have satellites we transmit through. Most Ham Radio satellites are on a low orbit of 200 to 300 miles above the earth. This includes the MIR, Space Shuttles, and the Hubble. Because of the low orbit you only have about eight to ten minutes while they pass over you to communicate with them.
That is why we use computers to keep track of them so we know when they are flying over us so we can contact through them.

The Federal Government asks Ham Radio operators to do one thing when they pass their test and get an Amateur Radio License, to help provide communication for Red Cross, and Federal, State and County Governments when hurricane, earthquakes, or any disaster happens.

Ham Radio operators will use any form of communication to get the message through radio, Morse code, voice, computers and satellites. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.* For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jloin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Book Review: Teach Yourself Paint Shop Pro 5 in 24 Hours

By Cheryl Alexander, Membership Contact, Tampa PC Users Group

The product presentation for December 1998 was Julie Altstatt of JASC Software demonstrating Paint Shop Pro 5.0. When I mentioned to her that we already used this program, she gave me a book: *Sams Teach Yourself Paint Shop Pro 5 in 24 Hours* by T. Michael Clark.

I have been a long-time fan of Paint Shop Pro (PSP) ever since I was dragged kicking and screaming to it. (I was emotionally attached to a program that I knew well but had betrayed me by becoming obsolete.) I was aware that it could do many things but had no clue how to use the functions to make graphic magic. So, I poked, prodded, read the very decent manual and remained clueless. Then I got The Book.

The layout of this book is 24 lessons designed to take about an hour each. Thus, one learns a manageable amount of information each session if one chooses to follow the lesson plan. These lessons are outlined on the inside of the front cover and in more detail in the table of contents. This helped when looking for a specific lesson. The lessons are very clear and step-by-step. Explanations as to why something is done in a certain manner are included.

Mr. Clark covers the basic functions of PSP extensively and clearly. In fact, the first four lessons are for the rankest beginner. As I read through the material, I learned many things about functions that I thought that I understood and knew how to use. However, he goes beyond the basics and explains how to use these fairly easy functions in various combinations to produce some spectacular effects, such as glowing text a la X-Files, textured text, and metallic effects.

He takes one from the point of "okay, I got this, now what?" to "so **that's** what it does!" by explaining the use and how to of color, layers, masks, channels, picture tubes and filters. He then demonstrates how to use these functions to retouch photos, correct color problems and combine pictures for phenomenal results.

The last four lessons help in the preparation of graphics for the web: how to use jpg's compression facility to best advantage, how to make those animated gifs and pagesets (coordinating backgrounds, buttons, horizontal/vertical rules). Also included are resources on the web where picture tubes, tutorials and plug-ins for PSP can be found.

I have been using this book to create title graphics, backgrounds, and pagesets for my web site. Also, anything I can learn about color and its adjustments is a bonus since my site is photo-oriented.

Sams Publishing (http://www.samspublishing.com) has been producing technical books for over 50 years and computer oriented books for almost 20. You can order books or learn online.

The author, T. Michael Clark, has been an artist all his life. He runs GrafX Design (http://grafx-design.com), a web site that features online tutorials for several graphic programs. ◆

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
Reflectone
Marshall & Stevens
BCD

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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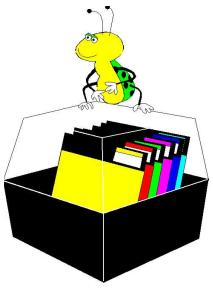
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492



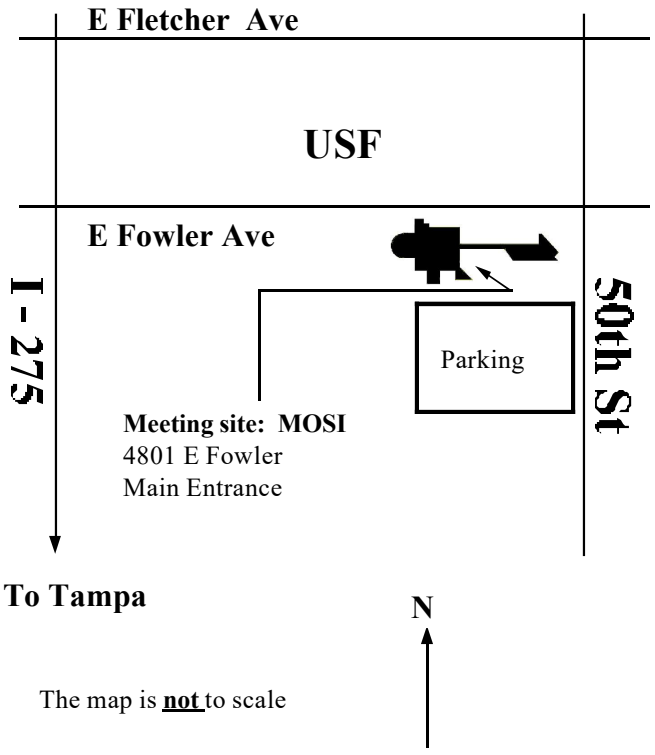
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(Comments……..Continued from page 9)

Next, from Quicken I accessed their update page while online and was supposedly supplied with all the necessary updates. The Corel site said that Draw 8 and Photo-Paint 8 were compliant, but their WebMaster suite would not be tested. Now, how hard is it to test a two-year old piece of software for compliance? Symantec doesn't list my WinFax Pro 7.0 as compliant, but it probably wasn't tested since it is a number of years old. Traveling software says that LapLink Professional is, and so it goes. I assume most programs I have purchased in the past few years are compliant, and the older ones will not be tested by their vendors.

TPCUG Solves Plumbing Problem One of the main benefits of our group is being able to call another member when you have a computer problem or just to share computer information. Wade Herman sent me a link to an article on Cable vs. DSL service. That prompted a phone call from me to him to discuss some other computer matter, and during the conversation I let drop that I had just twisted off a 1/2" pipe inside the wall while trying to install some new pipe along with a new faucet. I had a call in for a plumber since I could see no way to fix this short of making a large hole in my bathroom's tile wall. "You need to borrow the large bolt extractor that I have for just such problems with my lawn sprinkler system," he said. He brought it over, I hammered it into the broken pipe until tight, then to my surprise the pipe began to screw out as I turned the extractor with a wrench. Another documented TPCUG benefit. Cancel that call for a plumber. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 12 No. 11 November 1999

Meeting

Matt McCann from Quicken

November 10, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the November meeting we look forward to an interesting presentation from Quicken on their popular software. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Monthly Programs: We've had a couple of "program emergencies" in recent months, and I'd like to thank Brian Lance and William LaMartin for stepping in there and making a success of the evening. The Windows SIG discussion at 6:00 prior to the meeting is going very well, too. Thanks to Mary Sheridan for conducting these. The Windows SIG is a discussion forum for anyone to discuss their current computer problems and successes. Please don't think you don't know enough to participate. Make use of this, just one more reason that the club works for you, the membership.

Please come to the meeting this month. It's the month for officer nominations, the election itself being in December.

I'd decided to mess around with setting up voicemail on one of my computers, the intention being to use it as an intelligent screening tool for the useless and annoying calls I get. First I'd like to state that I've failed but have not given up hope. I removed the trial software I had and intend to try again later, perhaps early next year.

If I'd been successful, it would make a good article, but since it failed, I

(President.....Continued on page 2)

December 8: Christmas Party plus election of officers

* * OFFICERS * *
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Vice President : Mike Hodges (hodges@reflectone.com) 962-2114
Treasurer: Jenny Lind Olin (jlolin@juno.com) 960-5723
Member at Large: Bruce Register (bregis@gte.net) 968-8170
Secretary: James Weber (jlweber9@mindspring.com) 671-1612

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more



Minutes of the September Meeting

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Since the official minutes were not available at press time, what follows is a reconstruction of the meeting to the best of your editor's memory.

Our presenter from BCD didn't show. Thus, with a little forewarning Mary Sheridan lined up member Brian Lance, who just happens to work at BCD, to do a presentation for part of the meeting. She also persuaded William LaMartin to speak.

The meeting started at 6:00 with Mary Sheridan leading the Windows SIG discussion. We continued this a little longer than usual since our scheduled speaker was not coming.

Merle Nicholson then took over and conducted the group's business session. Bruce Register then reminded everyone about the upcoming election of officers. We will have nominations at the November meeting and vote at the December meeting.

Brian Lance then did a presentation on the software product he uses to diagnose hardware problems with computers, demonstrating the various tests available for the different components

Brian's presentation was followed by William LaMartin displaying the statistics for the group's web site for the month of September. Of note was that we averaged 134 user sessions per day with each visitor staying an average of 7.5 minutes. He highlighted the most visited pages—some surprises here—and noted that AltaVista was by far the leading search engine directing people to our site. ◆

(President……Continued from page 1)
want to make a short mention of the product in case anyone else is interested. I couldn't get the tech support for the product to help because it wasn't tested on Win 98 SE, so I've given up for now.

Anyway, the product is called Cognitel, made by NovCom, a company in Minsk, Belarus. It has some very intriguing features. First, it uses caller-id to identify the caller. If the caller-id is not in its database it asks for the caller's last name and then asks for the first name. It uses voice recognition then to decide who the caller is! You can program specific actions depending on who it is. The actions you can take are: Play a specific message for a specific person, take a message in any number of

(President……Continued on page 12)

SpinRite 5.0 from Gibson Research

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

SpinRite is a disk maintenance utility. Its main use is with hard drives, but it can also be used with floppies and removable media such as Jaz and Zip drives. It is similar to Scandisk in that it, like Scandisk, searches your hard drive for disk surface problems. But it does much more than Scandisk. Ideally, you should verify the logical file system structure of the disk using Scandisk and then switch to SpinRite to scan the disk surface. Here is a quote from the SpinRite web site.

"*Running SpinRite periodically prevents disk crashes by containing any problems that are discovered. SpinRite examines the data storage surface of a drive one region at a time. It first reads the data out of a region, then exercises that region with patterns of data that SpinRite has determined are the most difficult for the drive to read and write. In this way, any weak and failing areas within the region are located and removed from use while none of the drive's original data is being stored there. Only after the region has been made absolutely safe, will the drive's original data be restored to that area. This crucial process of testing the surface of a drive while it contains data is completely unique to SpinRite."*

When your hard drive has trouble reading or writing data that in the past caused no problem, you may not at first notice it, since the drive will retry the read many times if it has trouble getting a good read the first time on some data. So if it finally gets the data, it proceeds as if there is no problem, and you know nothing about it. When things get bad enough that you finally notice something is wrong, if you are lucky the drive will still function well enough for you to back it up or at least get all your important data off it. If you are not so lucky, then you may wish that you had used SpinRite regularly. Again, quoting from the web site:

"SpinRite reads and re-writes the entire surface of the drive, reporting everything it finds. Thus, it is able to provide early warning of increasing numbers of regions that are becoming troublesome for the drive. ……..Scandisk's 'surface analysis test' is read-only and provides no exercise for the drive or the data surfaces. Just before a drive fails, Scandisk indicates that everything is completely fine, whereas SpinRite goes nuts showing the user that the drive is near death."

Even when there is damage to the disk, SpinRite claims to recover much, if not all, of the data in a damaged sector. It does this using its DynaStat Data Recovery method to reconstruct the "lost" data. Don't confuse this with recovering lost files due to deletion or a virus, for which a program like PowerQuest's *Lost & Found* is useful. This is recovery of data that is "lost" due to the difficulty in reading that particular sector of the drive.

You run SpinRite from a floppy disk which has been formatted with the system files. Simply add SpinRite.exe to the floppy, boot from this floppy, then type in SpinRite.exe at the DOS prompt, and the program takes over from there.

When the program starts, it first analyzes your hard drive and gathers information about the drive's characteristics by running such tests as an integrity test, viral infection test, ram test, revolutions/minute test, physical intersection angle (didn't know there was such a thing did you?), and many more.

For example, on my ThinkPad 233 with an approximate 3.2 GB hard drive it noted that the drive was performing an average of 4,201.49 revolutions/minute and had a physical intersection angle of 2.43 degrees. The partition information for the C partition was a sector size of 512, 8 sectors/cluster and 4,096 bytes per cluster. It also gave benchmarks for drive access time.

After the initial disk analysis, SpinRite starts its real work. There are various levels of disk analysis/repair. I chose level four (locate surface defects). This process took about 8.5 hours to process the 2,098 MB C partition. It took another 5 hours to do the 1,1152 MB D partition. Both partitions were FAT 32. No errors were found. That is what you use SpinRite for—Peace of mind. If you need that comfort, get SpinRite.

You can view one of seven screens while this is going on, including one that looks like the detail view when Scandisk is running. Everything is happening so fast, screens like the Surface Analysis Monitor flash their changing information so quickly, that it is of little value. I settled on the Screen Blanker display that displays the estimated time to completion and the percent done.

SpinRite costs $89, less for updates, and is downloadable from the Gibson Research web site. The program is only about 90 KB in size (it is written in assembly language), so you are paying about $1/KB—probably the most expensive program I have bought when figured on a per KB basis. Technical help is free, and an 800 number is provided.

The license is for use on only one computer. To test the pro-

(SpinRite.....Continued on page 4)

Software Summary of AOL 5.0

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group



For all of you AOL users, America Online has introduced their latest integrated software package that is used to access AOL. Below is a list of changes and enhancements in **AOL 5.0** that makes this download worthwhile.

New Welcome Screen
The new Welcome Screen has several new features:

- Channel Guide -- one-click access to all of AOL's channels.
- AOL Search -- one-click access to searching AOL and the rest of the Internet.
- My Places -- a customizable list of places that are most often visited.

You've Got Pictures
Developed in partnership with Eastman Kodak, *You've Got Pictures* lets you choose to have your pictures delivered online so you can share the pictures with friends and family. Additionally, you can order reprints, enlargements and personalized merchandise.

My Calendar
My Calendar is the new, easy-to-use, interactive calendar that allows you to plan and manage important parts of your life by tracking appointments, key dates and other personal events -- all online. With an online calendar, you'll be able to check your calendar from anywhere.

AOL Search
This all-new search product enables you to easily search AOL and the rest of the Internet without leaving the AOL service. It delivers a comprehensive list of results -- both categories and sites -- ranked by relevancy drawn.

Seven Screen Names
AOL 5.0 offers you 2 additional screen names, bringing the total number of screen names for each AOL account to 7.

Retrieve Recently Deleted E-mail
You can recover e-mail that you deleted in the last 24 hours.

Personalized E-mail Signatures
You can create personalized "signatures" that are automatically added into your e-mail messages. The signatures can include your name, contact information, a personal quote, or however you like to end each of your e-mail messages.

Switch Screen Names for Auto AOL
You can set up Auto AOL to sign on and download e-mail and newsgroups from multiple screen names without disconnecting.

Favorite Places and Address Book Save/Replace Features
Now you can save copies of your Address Book and Favorite Places. You can use these copies to update AOL software on another computer where you might also use AOL.

Easily Locate Files that You've Downloaded
The Download Manager now contains a "Locate" feature that will show you the directory location of the file that you downloaded.

Get Profile Button on the Instant Message Form
A Get Profile button has been added to the Instant Message form. You can click the Get Profile button to instantly access a member's profile in the Member Directory.

System Information (SysInfo) Tool
The SysInfo tool was developed to aid Member Services' Technical Support in providing timely and efficient help to you. This tool provides system and modem information, error messages, update status and version numbers, and additional troubleshooting utilities.

Auto detect new modems
After you install a new modem, AOL will automatically begin detecting the new modem and prompt you to update your AOL setup.

Download times range from 40 minutes at 56K to 2 hours 40 minutes at 14.4K. If the icon doesn't show up when you connect, just type ***"AOL 5"*** in ***Keyword*** and you'll be taken directly to the download area. Don't be the last one to update, especially when it's free. ◆

(SpinRite……Continued from page 3)
gram for this article I had to disregard that, since I wanted to see how it ran on various machines. My first choice was another laptop on which the hard drive had definite problems and indicated as much by a message to that effect and a requirement that Scandisk be run. Unfortunately, Scandisk would start then eventually freeze (probably when it got to the problem area). Sadly SpinRite also stopped responding during its initial disk integrity test. A call to the tech line got the response that "if Scandisk wouldn't run, neither would SpinRite". That, however, is not what you are led to believe at the web site, where it says, "If MS-DOS is aware of the existence of a drive, then SpinRite will run on it." I could do a

(SpinRite……Continued on page 5)

(SpinRite……..Continued from page 4)
DOS directory and , in fact, used a ZIP drive in DOS to transfer files to the Zip drive, so DOS was aware of the drive.

My next attempt to use SpinRite was on an old 486 laptop with a compressed drive, which I use for testing purposes. SpinRite is supposed to work on such compressed drives (it says it works with Microsoft's Double Space), and I made the boot floppy on that machine so that it included drvspace.bin (Is this the same as Double Space? I don't know; it has been too long since I dealt with such things.) I even created a config.sys file containing a device line about drvspace.sys and included it on the floppy. Indeed, SpinRite started up, did a little something to begin its initial drive analysis, gave a message to wait a moment—and never did any more. I tried the suggestion to add the command line option "nocachetest" to no avail. I suspect the compressed drive was the problem. Anyway, I then moved on to the machine I used for this review.

Frederick O'Keefe reviewed SpinRite 4.0 in the August 1997 newsletter. That review was more extensive than what I have done here. And most of what is mentioned there is still applicable to version 5.0. He obviously had used the product much more than I and had a better understanding of its technical aspects. If you find the topic of interest, you would benefit from reading that article at http://www.tpcug.org/reviews/SpinRite.html.

The Gibson Research site is http://www.grc.com/ and offers much information about the product.◆

Internet picture of the month



Alice Waters, restaurateur & chef
From the book *Women* by Annie Leibovitz

The above photo is from photographer Annie Leibovitz's book *Women*, which is featured in the New York Times' web site Photo section.

The link for the NY Times is http://www.nytimes.com. The link for the photo section is http://www.nytimes.com/library/photos/index.html. The Times site is free, but you may have to register to view the material.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Merck Manual (medicine)	http://www.merck.com/pubs/
Britannica.com (now free)	http://www.britannica.com/
CareerMosaic (jobs)	http://www.careermosaic.com/
GuideStar - Donors Guide To Charities	http://www.guidestar.org/
Nordstrom (clothing, etc.)	http://www.nordstrom.com/
Maxfootball,com (football news)	http://www.maxfootball.com/
AtomFilms Instant Entertainment (short films)	http://www.atomfilms.com/
Carsdirect.com (cars)	http://www.carsdirect.com/
CD-Recordable FAQ	http://www.fadden.com/cdrfaq/
The Icon Browser	http://www.cli.di.unipi.it/iconbrowser/icons.html
Standard MIDI Files on the Net	http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~ckelly/SMF.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

New Sony FD73 Digital Camera Improves the Older FD71

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

In case you're wondering how you take a picture of your camera when you only have one of them, you take it in a mirror, and, through the magic of Paintshop Pro, mirror the image!



Only problem is, then you have to edit out the fingers.

This $499 camera is at the low end of the models. It looks pretty much like the old FD71. It still does 640x480, not the mega-pixels of the higher end models, but they've improved a lot of things. For the original article on the FD71 by Larry Anders, go to our web site and view the article at the link http://www.tpcug.org/reviews/mavica.html.

Three things stand out about this model. First, it's very much lighter in weight. Second, the floppy disk is much, much faster, and, third, it snaps pictures faster. The obvious advantage to a floppy is the ease of transferring pictures to your PC. Insert the diskette and drag.

In case you're new to the subject, Sony has taken a different approach to storing the images. All the models (and there are a lot of them) have a slot for floppy disks. Depending on the format you want, one disk will store from one to forty images. Mostly you'll store twenty.

There's a "bitmap" format (.BMP) that takes nearly a whole diskette. When you take one of these, it puts the standard JPEG file on the disk, too. The one picture I tried this on, I did a slideshow of the two images, so it would flip from one to the other every two seconds, and then maximized to the full screen, and I just couldn't tell one from the other (actually I couldn't even tell when it flipped).

Sony calls this floppy drive "2X", and I can tell you that it's a very welcome improvement. There are other improvements like adding a "series" file numbering option so that you don't repeat the file number between diskettes, handy when you're dragging more than one diskette's worth to a single directory.

Other features: a 10X optical zoom, three levels of flash, and a half dozen pre-programmed modes that preset shutter speed and aperture. This model is cheap, slick and very easy to use. Sony FD73, $499. ◆

I Remember...

By Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group

I remember my first 286 PC from Leading Edge. I remember, with a secret smirk, how powerful MY machine really was. Why, there was a switch to adjust the speed of the processor. What a charge to jack that switch up to "turbo" mode; yeah, man, I was cruising.

You'd try 10 MHz and it would run most programs. There were some where you had to step it down to 8 MHz for them to run properly. And then there were some where you had to crank down the PC to 6 MHz. These were the game programs that depended on timing by using an instruction loop. Like you'd put a number in a counter and subtract 1 each time you went through the loop and kept checking for zero. And that's how they'd time the program for showing objects on the screen or moving icons, etc.. Later, this method was abandoned since the PC speed kept getting faster and faster and soon an internal clock/timer was available to programmers.

Note in the above sentence that the use of two m's in programmer is a sign of an old timer. Old - like mid-1950's!! The first computers were monsters in size. The old ENIAC took up the space of a large garage. In the IBM 702, cathode ray tubes served as memory components. The IBM 705 used ferrite doughnut cores as memory. They were small but still large enough that the charging and sensing wires were actually threaded by hand. A 20K (yup, twenty thousand) core box was about the size of one of those containers the county used for recycling stuff.

Now 20k was pretty daunting to program. You learned to put your housekeeping routines in the I/O areas reserved for your working files. Then, after you'd done the housekeeping and you'd set up the machine for your program, you "abandoned" the code that was in the I/O areas. Sort of like putting socks and hankies and stuff inside of shoes when packing for a trip.

Later, we (Social Security Administration) were offered 40k of

(Remember…….Continued on page 9)

Broadband Internet Access

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

Fast Internet Access. What a subject. When our esteemed newsletter editor William LaMartin asked me to write an article about cable modem access and asynchronous data subscriber line (ADSL) access to the Internet, I figured it would be a simple either-or proposition. After all, several years ago I was a beta tester for the Roadrunner cable modem service when it was rolled out in South Tampa. And I've now been using Roadrunner's service for several years on a daily basis.

Then came DSL. Recently I became one of the first customers to sign up for GTE's new lower-priced "DSL access service," also in South Tampa, at my office.

So now I use Roadrunner when I'm at home on a Pentium running at 233 MHz with 64 megs of RAM; and at the office I use GTE's DSL access service on a Pentium II running at 433 MHz with 128 megs of RAM. Does the faster and newer machine at work speed up my daily Internet activities? Not really. The speed with which you access the Internet is primarily a function of your "bandwidth" (that is, the speed or "broadness" of the "pipe" you have connecting you to the Internet, which in turn is a function mainly of what kind of access service you use).

Look at it this way. If you have an Internet connection giving you high bandwidth (that is, a big, "wide" pipe), you'll be zipping along on the Internet whether you're on a Pentium 133 or a hotrod running at 700 MHz. Conversely, if you have a low bandwidth connection, then your Internet experience is going to crawl regardless of whether you're running a slow machine or a speedster. However, your ultimate Internet experience is also affected by the machine you're using, particularly with respect to your PC bus and video display.

Got all that? So cable modem Internet access and DSL Internet access are known as "broadband connections." And the traditional dialup modem connections---which started at 1200 baud some years ago and successively moved up through fairly predictable increments to 2400, then 9600, then 14,400, then 28,800, and finally, today's standard, 56,600 BPS (bits per second)---might be called "narrowband," although you never hear at 56.6 connection referred to quite that way.

Incidentally, the original measure of throughput was "baud," meaning roughly (very roughly) "characters per second" (one character in the "old days" generally consisting of one 8-bit instruction; today we're all using 32-bit chips and operating systems, with 64-bit chips and the 64-bit operating system, Windows NT, soon to appear). Somewhere along the line the measure of modem throughput got changed from "baud" to the current standard, "bits per second" or "BPS." Thus, today's standard 56.6 KBPS modem stands for a throughput of 56.6 kilobits per second, or 56,600 bits per second. (As with every other subject in the world, you can find an excellent primer on modems and modem technology on the Internet, in this case provided by the University of Chicago Campus Computer Stores, at http://www-desktop.uchicago.edu/store/technotes/misc/Modems.html.)

Which brings us back to today's Internet reality. First reality: When it comes to Internet access, dialup modems are dead, or soon will be. They are being replaced by various sorts of broadband access, starting with cable modems and DSL service. Second reality: The ultimate struggle over Internet access won't be fought out between DSL service and cable access, but rather will be fought out among four contenders...but more about that later.

What about today's choice between Roadrunner's cable modem and GTE's DSL service?

First cable modem access, because it's been available longer. In Hillsborough County cable Internet access is a service of Time Warner Cable, and is available virtually everywhere in the county. It is an adjunct to cable TV service and runs over the same cable network. Cost is $39.95 for current Time Warner cable TV subscribers for non-business service, and $49.95 for non-cable subscribers. Then there's a one-time installation fee of $99.95 for desktop PC's and $149.95 for laptops. (Roadrunner sends a tech out to your location to install a cable modem and get you up and running.) For business use, Roadrunner charges $79.95 per month, with a one-time installation charge of $149.95.

Speed? Using cable modem access to the Internet is a whole new experience, as anyone can tell you who's tried it. Access speeds are measured by "downstream" and "upstream" data speeds. Downstream is the important measure, as that tells you how fast Internet text and pictures are downloaded or "painted" onto your computer screen. Actually, "painted" isn't a good term for broadband access, because the images don't slowly scan onto the screen, they just "pop up."

"Upstream" measures of speed have to do with how fast your own instructions, from your browser to the Internet, are transmitted. Thus, upstream bandwidth is concerned mainly with mouse clicks and file requests you do.

Roadrunner advertises its downstream speed of "up to 27 MBPS over the network, but the device with the slowest throughput along this path determines the effective speed. Typically, this is the PC bus and/or video display." Upstream speeds are advertised as ranging from one to three megabits per second.

Now. How does all this comport with reality? On the one

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hand, I can't really say, as I don't have the capabilities of measuring upstream and downstream throughput independently of my own machine. But I can give you anecdotal evidence. And that is that Roadrunner is terrifically faster in downloads than any modem connection I've ever experienced, yet much slower than the advertised "maximum speeds." In downloading files (after all, that's the kind of activity that ties up our machines the most, for the longest periods of time, right?), I have on rare occasions had my computer tell me that I was downloading data at the rate of up to 150 kilobits per second. When compared with the theoretical 27 megabits per second, that doesn't seem all that fast. But trust me, it is.

I have also been told by my computer geek friends that what my Netscape software says is my download speed may not be, and that the only way to get a really accurate measure of downstream throughput is by downloading a file of a known size, and measuring the download time with a stopwatch. That I haven't done. And the 150 kilobits per second mentioned above is a relative surprise. More often Roadrunner gives me reported download speeds in the range of 20 Kbps to 50 Kbps... still blazingly fast compared to what is possible on a dialup modem (usually in the range of 3 to 7 Kbps was what I experienced on my 33.6 Kbps dialup modem when I was using it).

All of the above means that really large files can be downloaded off the Internet in just a few minutes. The largest Netscape Communicator install, for instance, takes less than five minutes to download.

A few technical caveats need to be mentioned here also. Much has been made of the fact that the design and structure of cable networks is "shared," and as more users log on at the same time, network performance is degraded. Here's what Roadrunner says about it: "Data bandwidth is shared from the neighborhood node to users in individual homes, so performance may vary depending on how many customers are actively using the system at any given time. The system has been designed to offer worst-case bandwidth exceeding that of ISDN service (which stands for Integrated Services Digital Network), and that worst case assumes continuous, maximal usage by every Roadrunner user in a neighborhood, simultaneously."

Translation: You get better performance from the cable modem network at 5:00 a.m. than at 5:00 p.m. Nevertheless, when you have a worst-case designed speed in excess of ISDN (offered by GTE at a designed speed of 128 Kbps which is itself being supplanted by the much faster ADSL service), you're still flying, even in the worst-case situation.

Let's talk about ADSL service now. Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line service is the fastest Internet access service offered by GTE, the telephone service-provider for our area. They also offer dialup access, at 56.6 Kbps, and ISDN service at 128 KBPS. With the recent rollout of more reasonable pricing of DSL service---which I would hope will inevitably fall over time-- -traditional dialup access and ISDN service seem to be fading.

And there's the bandwidth. DSL Internet access, according to GTE, offers downstream speeds of from 256 KBPS to 1.544 MBPS. Compare that with 56.6 KBPS and we find that the slowest DSL connection is almost five times faster than your normal dialup modem...and potentially nearly 30 times faster.

How does DSL work? Basically, it takes the "twisted-pair" technology---the two small copper wires that are twisted together and which serve us all as telephone lines---and applies "a three-way channel data delivery system." Pretty snazzy technology, when you think that just recently everyone was talking about how the phone companies were "trapped in a copper cage" and would have to massively re-deploy fiber optic cable (yes in the long-term, no in the here and now).

According to GTE, the three-way channel data delivery system mentioned above operates like this: “One channel transmits voice services, so normal phone usage can continue regardless of whether a user is connected to the Internet. A second channel can transmit a massive downstream of up to 1.544 MBPS, and a third bi-directional channel allows upstream of up to 768 KBPS.” Furthermore, per GTE, “DSL Internet access also gives the consumer a constant connection at a click of an icon, eliminating the time spent waiting for call set-up and busy signals.”

The first question I had when I read the above information was "How do they do that?" It has to do with frequency bands. Again, GTE: "Traditional analog voice band modems use the same frequency band, 0-4 kilohertz (kHz), as telephone service, preventing concurrent voice and data use. Because the new DSL modems operate at frequencies above the voice channel from 100 kHz to 1.1 Megahertz, POTS (plain old telephone service) and DSL data service can operate concurrently. By using the same telephone line, there's no need to get a new telephone number to use your DSL service."

That means you save on having to have a second telephone line for your computer. However, unlike cable modem access, you still have to have an ISP (Internet Access Provider; in the case of cable modem service, the cable company itself is the access provider).

Up until recently GTE insisted on pricing its DSL service like a monopoly. The result was that cable access beat their pants off for the past several years. However, someone at GTE finally got through to the old monopoly-pricing-heads, and DSL service has now fallen to a roughly comparable range with cable

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access. GTE has rolled out various "service packages" referred to by the names of metals: Bronze Plus, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, and Platinum Plus, in ascending order in terms of speed. Prices for those services range from $32.50 per month up to $230 per month

But remember, you also have to pay for an ISP when you use DSL service. GTE is offering a pretty attractive ISP package with unlimited access for as low as $14.95 per month. When combined with the cheapest DSL access (the one I chose, of course), then the monthly charge comes out to $49.95, which is the same as cable access for those who don't have existing television cable subscriptions.

DSL setup charges? Yes, they're there: a one-time charge of $150 if you provide your own network interface card (that is, a usable network card), and $200 if GTE provides the network card. And the tech who sets you up will wire your telephone system up with a "frequency splitter"; from that little box, one plug goes to your telephone, and the other heads for your computer.

There's a further hitch on DSL service also: Your computer has to be within a certain distance from a telephone company switching station, or the technology won't work. The distance is about 16,000 feet, I'm told.

So what's the bottom line in terms of prices? You can compare the prices listed above. Further information on both DSL service and cable modem access can be obtained on the Internet by going to: http://www.gte.net/pands/residential/dsl.html (as to DSL service), or http://www.tampabay.rr.com (as to cable modem access service).

What's the bottom line in terms of speeds? Well, the "designed" speeds are all outlined above, with the Hillsborough County Roadrunner access advertising up to 10 MBPS on a typical Pentium machine (there's a designed maximum speed of 27 MBPS and a worst-case scenario, shared-network speed of 128 KBPS). GTE's DSL service, on the other hand, advertises anywhere from 256 KBPS up to 1.5 MBPS upstream.

So you'd think that cable modem access is clearly a faster mode of accessing the Internet, right? I'd have to say wrong, given my experience with both services. In fact, I'd have to say the quality of the Internet experience, in terms of speed, is roughly the same, as far as I can tell. Part of the reason for that is doubtless that once you get into the higher speeds of accessing the Internet, incremental increases or decreases in speed aren't noticeable. I mean, you hit a key, a picture pops up. Who can tell if it pops up in 2.4 seconds or 2.3 seconds, you know?

My personal favorite? You had to ask. Well...I'd have to say... ummmm...hmmmmm...well, uh...ahhhh...the final answer is... neither. I must say that I like them both. Anyone who is considering broadband access---and once you experience it, you'll be through with dial-up modem access in the long run---has to look at the options available. You may not be close enough to a telephone switching station for broadband DSL service. Time-Warner's Roadrunner cable modem access service may not be available in your area. Check them both out. And then if you find you have the terrible situation where both services are available, check out the information at the above web pages, and talk to other users of the broadband services. In the end, you really can't go wrong.

Afterword: You may have noticed that I mentioned in the above article that "The ultimate struggle over Internet access won't be fought out between DSL service and cable access, but rather will be fought out among four contenders...but more about that later." Well, this article spun out of control in terms of length, and I never did have a chance to get to that issue, which is kind of futuristic. However, the future seems to be rushing upon us with great speed. If there's any demand, and you want to hear about it, I'll write another article about that area. Otherwise, I'm a curmudgeon, leave me alone. ◆

(Remember……..Continued from page 6)
memory in the 705-II. Now we could breathe. Do all kinds of fancy stuff. Soon, IBM upgraded (even way back then, computers were being upgraded on a very fast time table) and offered us the 705-III with 80k of memory. We refused it! At the time, we didn't need it.

Then, when the micro-computers, the original personal computers, were introduced, it wasn't long before they too joined the upgrade merry-go-round. Like the story about the chicken and the egg, you wondered which came first, bigger and faster PC's or bigger and hoggier programs. Needless to say, that question has never been answered.

As on the main frame (affectionately called "big iron"), the first PCs were programmed in a symbolic language that was just one step up from actual machine language. People took pride, and were rewarded, for "tight code". That is, "doing the mostest with the leastest". Soon their bosses, always concerned with the "bottom line" figure of profit, were demanding faster delivery times for programs.

That lead to the so-called higher language programming, assemblers and compilers like FORTRAN (FORmula TRANslation), arguably the first higher language, COBOL (COmmon Business Oriented Language), and then the rest such as Jovial, Pascal, etc. While it made life easier all around for the programmers and the bosses, it sure did take up a lot more of the computer resources like memory and created the need for big disk drives.

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Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.* For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jloin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

FACUG Meeting

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

Review of the FACUG meeting at Sarasota October 23, 1999

This meeting reminds me of the first meetings we had when this group started about eight years ago. Right now, the software companies are not sponsoring much, as the cost of software has dropped to the point that no one company is making real large incomes as they did in the more recent past.

The registration started at 9:30 and there was a continental breakfast for all. There were about 75 people in attendance. There was a handout of the usual cloth carrying bag, containing a lot of goodies such as pens. These bags came from Office Depot.

In the first morning session, I attended the session on Volunteers. About one hour was spent in talking about how to find volunteers and keep them interested long enough to get the job done. There were perhaps 30 people in the room, and many good ideas came up.

The second morning session was about Web Pages, and was chaired by Gary Schweinshaupt. This was a fascinating session as the group talked about many URL's that are used by the members to help them prepare their home page and the rest of their web sites. Several groups have over 1,500 members, so they have fairly complex web sites. Orlando is thinking about putting all its members' names on their site. (They have way over 1000 members.) This was one of the best sessions I have ever attended, but there is far too much to list all the discussion here.

The lunch was free and was served in the Masonic (SAHIB) building in which we met. We had grilled chicken breasts, fish, salads, and all the extras. A great lunch, and we could get to meet some new people and find out what they thought about computers in general.

After lunch, the people from Office Depot and also from Compaq talked about their companies and what they are doing currently.

Following the lunch hour, I attended the session on Grants. The art of applying for a grant has now reached a point where any group should be able to get what they want fairly easily. A very long discussion was held about the fact that the Gainesville group is applying for a grant for a whole building and the associated lot! Sun City Center also has that idea. One foundation has over a billion dollars to give away. Everyone had some stories to tell and all the groups are interested in grant applications. Many groups have now bought LCD projectors and other equipment with the grants they have received.

The last session I attended was that of Incorporating as a tax-exempt group. You get to know what groups have had special tax considerations and also you find out in detail how to set up your own incorporation papers. A discussion was held about the C designation; there is more than just a C3 designation.

Following that session, a prize drawing was held. Software and other materials were given away by the number on your ticket given you at lunch. The meeting wrapped up about 4 p. m. From my standpoint this was one of the better meetings of the last two years. And no software people were there at all! Just OFFICE DEPOT and COMPAQ. We can't stop without commending Mary for her work with the FACUG. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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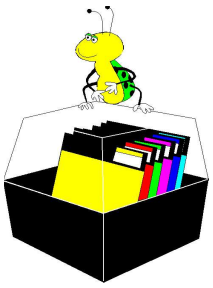
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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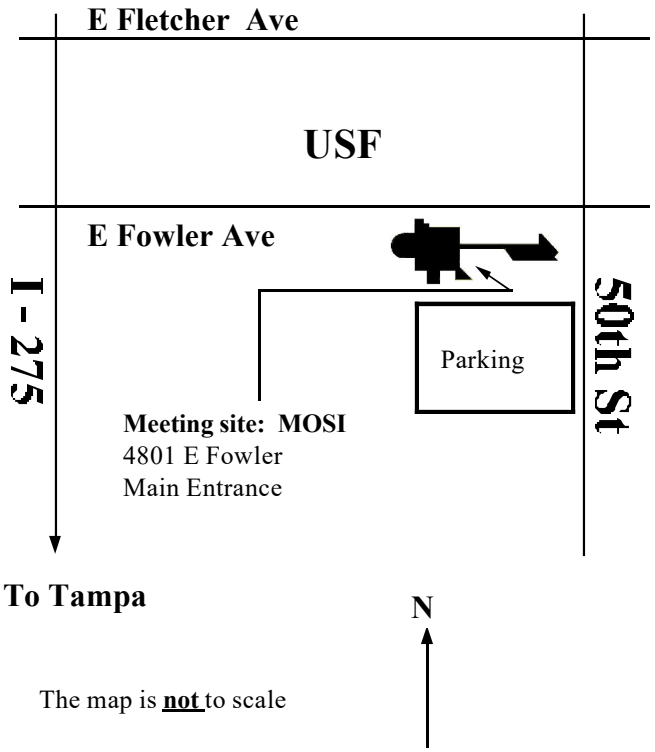
(Remember…….Continued from page 9)

So what used to be a 40-60k routine or program suddenly became a bloated giant needing ten and twenty times as much in memory and disk requirements. Sure, some will say that with today's prices and availability of huge memory and disk space, all that is irrelevant. But do we really need a twenty ton semi to haul the garbage can from the backdoor out to the curb?

My next PC will be a 700 MHz Pentium III. Can you imagine that speed? Way back on that old 286 (in turbo mode at 10 MHz) my typing speed was about 40 words per minute. I know that with the new 700 screamer my typing speed will STILL be 40 words per minute. And I will have acres of hard disk space to store my 15-20k word processor files which, if stored in ASCII, will only take up 3-4k of space. ◆

(President…….Continued from page 2)

voicemail boxes, send a message to your pager or forward the call to your cell phone – or any other phone. You can set up the initial voice recognition part yourself by saying the names yourself, and when that person calls, it will update to the person's actual voice. And it's only $50. The downside is that you must have some specific type of modem that meets the TAPI standard. There are increasingly more modems being built for that standard, but, sorry, you can't use the old Zoom or Hays turkey. Let me know if you decide to try it. I'm still very much interested. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 12 No. 12 December 1999

Meeting

Christmas Party
& Election of Officers

December 8, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science
and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the December meeting we look forward to a Christmas party and election of officers. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

For our December meeting, we'll serve Food!

At our December 8th meeting, the program will be an open discussion, sort of an extension of the Windows SIG, and also have some time for some personal networking. We have the annual elections to conduct and Pizza, drinks and some dessert will be served. So don't forget and eat before you come to the meeting—we'll have plenty.

As you know, this is my last month as president of TPCUG. It's been two years of some fun and some struggling, and I'm ready to pass the position to the next person. The elections are to be held at my last meeting as President, on December 8th.

I have just a few comments to pass on that hopefully will be of some benefit. First, I'd like to say the club exists because a very few members are willing to dedicate their time to make it so. Secondly it exists also because a core group of dedicated members come to the meetings month after month. It's really remarkable that a fairly high percentage of our membership comes to the meetings. I'd like to think that the reason is that the meeting topics and selection of speakers is the draw, because so much effort goes into that very thing. The attendance for the speaker from

(President.....Continued on page 9)

January 12: Meeting topic is yet to be announced — Check our web site

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more



Minutes of the November Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Mary Sheridan started our Windows SIG at 6:00 PM. The main topic of the SIG was the growth of CD recorders in home PCs. There are a growing number of members who have purchased CD recorders in the last few months, and using a CD for a backup media as a replacement for tape or (Heaven Help You) floppy disk has caught our attention. If anyone has a suggestion for a backup utility that can recognize a CD recorder, come to our web site. Your opinions would be appreciated in our discussion group.

The arrival of the "Bubble Boy" virus was brought up. If you were unaware of its presence, don't be alarmed. No one had yet reported an actual infection. If you are concerned about any e-mail related virii check out http://www.ZDNet.com for virus warning updates.

Merle started the general meeting at 6:30 PM. Current nominations were announced at this time and the floor was opened for any additional nominations. A motion was placed before the group to accept the nominations. It was seconded and passed unanimously. The nominations for this year's Board of Directors will be:

President, Mary Sheridan.
Vice-President, Mike Hodges.
Treasurer, Jenny Lind Olin.
Secretary, James Weber.
Member At Large, Merle Nicholson.

A vote for board members will be taken at the December 8th meeting. We will be having a pizza party after the conclusion of business.

Mr. Matt McCann presented Quicken 2000 to our group. Users of the latest version will recognize the layout and will find transition to this version easy. Mr. McCann highlighted several features designed to enhance use. Quicken 2000 also comes linked to its own web site, http://www.Quicken.com. This site tailors itself to each user based on your preferences. It creates a cookie that tracks your preferences as to which features to load when you access the web site. You can have stock quotes from your investment portfolio display automatically so you don't have to go fishing for them.

Quicken also provides a way to estimate the value of your car or home. It uses Edmonds.com as a reference point. You can enter year, make, model and mileage and get an estimate. For

(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)

PartitionMagic Version 5

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

You've just bought a new computer with a 12 gigabyte hard drive.

Some people say that it works fine with only one partition. But let's take another look. The other day I thought I was on the A: drive, and I typed "del *.*". After I hit enter I realized that I had a problem. I had to format the C: drive and put back all the programs I had just lost. (When you are in DOS the deleted programs do not go to the recycle bin.)

Previous to this time, I had copied the files from C:\ to a new partition D:\. I copy over the files every few days. So when I put the operating system and all the programs back, I only needed to transfer all the files I wanted to keep from drive D:\. There are many reasons that some day you will also lose your drive C: drive, and you will find it convenient to just copy over your files from a 2 gigabyte partition that I think you should make on that new drive.

After the first of the year, we expect that new computers will not come with a CD that contains the operating system and all the programs. So it may be worth considering a method of backing up the software on a new computer with a second hard drive of smaller size. Other reasons to partition your new drive are, for example, you may want to have more than one operating system, or you may want to store all your data in one place on a separate drive to make it easy to copy to a backup system.

I used version one of Partition Magic, and I have used each new version; we are now on version 5. The first thing you need to do with any program is to read the manual. I read mine three times before I run the program. Do you understand the BIOS 1024 cylinder limit? Or the 2GB boot code boundary? It helps after you become familiar with Partition Magic to read about these things so that you know where they came from. Don't be afraid of these terms. They are described very simply and you can, if you want to, become very understanding of the various limitations of operating systems and bios configurations. The description of what a hard drive is all about is worth the cost of Partition Magic Version 5. The copy disk program is also very valuable. You may "diskcopy" a partition from one place to another or to another drive. (Neat for new computers, or when you are going to take out the old hard drive and put in a larger one; you copy the old one onto the new one and proceed from there.)

Now let's look at the process of partitioning a hard drive.

The first thing you are told to do in the manual is get out of any programs that are running. Disable your virus program, for example. After you are sure no other programs are running, you can partition your drive easily using the wizards that are provided, or do it manually just because you want to. Creating a new partition may cause your drive letters to change and so you use DriveMapper (included) to rearrange all the programs so that they go to the proper drive and you will find no difference in how your programs work.

Now let's see what is in the new version.

You may merge partitions, change a logical drive to a primary drive, and convert from NTFS file system to FAT32. You may merge FAT and FAT32 partitions.

Reading the manual will show you some of the shortcomings of Windows NT now that larger drives are common. Windows 2000 (Windows NT version 5) will use a non-standard "Dynamic" hard drive, which this Partition Magic v 5 will not work with. You may create 64k FAT clusters to work with Windows NT so it will work with the larger drives.

Partition Magic v 5 supports drives over 20 gigabytes in size. Also it supports FAT16, FAT32, FAT32X, NTFS, HPFS, and Linux ext2 partitions.

You may set up the changes you want to make, add partitions, etc. and then you have a choice of applying the change or changes, or discarding the change. The program switches to DOS to actually make the changes.

I don't want this to become another manual, so I will stop here. Let me say that I do not believe that anyone who owns a computer should be without Partition Magic Version 5. There is a wealth of information in the manual and in the online help so that you can answer almost all of your questions about hard drives simply and on your own. Also, the program works so simply that it is easily used by a beginner. ◆

(Minutes……Continued from page 2)

your home, Quicken uses www.ConsumerInfo.com. This site allows you to enter your city, street, and square feet. The site will estimate the value based on similar homes sold within a ½ mile area of your home. There were questions as to the accuracy of getting a value this way. But, it was pointed out that banks and other financial institutions use this method of estimation. If you are using a 128 bit encryption capable web browser you can send bank book and expense information to your home computer while out on the road.

Quicken 2000 Deluxe was given out as a door prize. The meeting ended at 8:15. ◆

GoBack from Wildfile

By Mary Sheridan, Program Coordinator, Tampa PC Users Group

I had just attended the fall conference of the Florida Association of Computer Users (FACUG) in Sarasota. I rode back to Tampa all smiles because I had won, in the raffle, Microsoft's Office 2000 Premium Edition. In the mail the next day, I receive promotional material from a company called Wildfile. They send the group a copy of "Go Back" for review. I took this as an omen and decided to install, review and use Go Back before installing Office 2000. Yes, I am a chicken when it comes to installing Microsoft new releases.

Wildfile is a 19 year old Minnesota company that specializes in the development of multimedia systems and other software products. Wildfile says Go Back belongs in a new software category called Time Travel Technology. Released in December 1998, Go Back was designed to fill the gap between the undo button and tape recovery. By continually monitoring changes to your disk, Go Back can return your hard disk to the way it was minutes, hours and even days ago.

Enough of the hype, now on to the program. I was worried up front that it would take too much hard drive space. The only information I could find on the subject was "Go Back stores special information on the existing hard drive that allows it to re-create the past. It is recommended that users reserve 10 percent of hard drive space for GoBack's use. More or less space can be reserved, depending on user needs. However, if less space is reserved, users will have a shorter reach back in time from which to retrieve data." Finding percentages involves the use of division, so I decided to move on and take my chances.

The program allows you to set how much hard drive space to allocate. For my four Gig drive, it recommended 280mb, but I changed it to 150 because my hard drive is getting full. It installed in a few seconds and then needed to restart my computer. After rebooting the program went to all the drive partitions and appeared to scan them. 45 seconds later the computer rebooted again. Looking at "my computer" shows Gb_21d(H:), which I assume is a virtual drive.

According to the "short video" on how to use GoBack, "If you cannot get your computer to run properly, then use GoBack to step back in time. First restart your computer. (Turn

(Goback.....Continued on page 5)

Second Chance from PowerQuest

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group



If you are anything like me you are always trying new things with your computer, this utility, that game, or some new piece of hardware. I have found all too often that things don't always work the way they were intended. A conflict between competing programs, or hardware competing for system resources can cause at least an unstable system, or a complete crash. Power Quest has a program they say can help you recover from these problems with Second Chance.

With Second Chance installed you will be able to reset your system to a time when things were working properly. Once the program is installed it will automatically save an image of your system settings and track files and directories that are deleted or changed. Second Chance works with each fixed drive or partition in your system. It doesn't save removable drives like floppies or zips. Second Chance also ignores some directories such as Temp or Internet cache files. The individual checkpoints are not very large in size. The initial checkpoint I created on my machine was just under 6 megs in size for the 2 gigs of data I have on my machine.

Second Chance calls the saved files a Checkpoint. Checkpoints can be set up to save at a specific time of day from once a day to once a week, or they can be done manually. If you really screwed things up and can't even get into Windows, there is also an option to create a start up disk. This disk opens its own operating system and gives you the ability to recreate your system from a stored checkpoint. The number of checkpoints you can create is controlled by variables you set yourself. The checkpoints can be saved for one day to fourteen days depending on your preferences. The total size of your checkpoints can also be controlled by setting a maximum disk size for the checkpoints, and setting a minimum free space on your disk drive. This allows a great deal of flexibility when adding or uninstalling files. Second Chance deletes the oldest checkpoints first when their time limit expires or when the minimum free space on the target drive is reached. Second chance will even ignore the maximum disk size as long as the minimum free space is available on your drive. This allows you to add or delete even the largest programs and not have to worry about losing your checkpoints.

When launching Second Chance, an Explorer type window pops up with three different view panels. A large vertical

(SecondChance.....Continued on page 6)

(GoBack……..Continued from page 4)
the power off and then on, or press the reset button.) Now get ready to press the space bar. Early in the start up process you will see the GoBack Boot Screen. Press the space bar when prompted. You will have about five seconds to press the space bar. If you miss it, simply restart your computer and try again. Next, you will be given the option of returning your computer to exactly the way it was at an earlier time." Lost files are recovered by double clicking on the icon and using GoBack to recover the file. You can make a back up after you need it, by reverting the computer to "the way it was" and then backing it up.

If you have created a document that you don't want to come back and haunt you (e.g., a love letter), you should clear the GoBack history. Click on the Options button in the main GoBack Menu to bring you to this option.

I permanently deleted many files and they were all brought back seamlessly. I hope I don't need to use this program because of a major problem and I hope it works if I ever need to. I plan to install the Office 2000 programs with the hope that all goes well. If it doesn't, I'll be writing follow up articles.

http://www.goback.com/ ◆

Internet picture of the month



Dining Room from the Ethan Allen Online Catalog

The online catalog and site for the furniture dealer Ethan Allen is at http://www.ethanallen.com/. It is only for browsing now. To make a purchase you must go to one of their stores.

Like a lot of other retailers, they are trying to figure out how to get into e-commerce without alienating their existing stores.

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations - links are hot



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
WinDrivers.com (printer drivers, CD-ROM drivers, etc.)	http://www.windrivers.com/
National Atlas of the United States of America	http://www.nationalatlas.gov/
Net Library	http://www.netlibrary.com/
J C Penney	http://www.jcpenney.com/
Crate and Barrel (kitchen, storage, etc.)	http://www.crateandbarrel.com/
Ethan Allen (furniture)	http://www.ethanallen.com/
Byte Online (computer magazine – reborn)	http://www.byte.com/
Fourmilab – interesting scientific site	http://www.fourmilab.to/
Your Sky (virtual telescope)	http://www.fourmilab.ch/yoursky/
Jewish World Review	http://www.jewishworldreview.com/
eHobbies	http://www.ehobbies.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Internet Security

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

I've learned a couple of things about security recently that I'd like to share. This should be of particular interest to xDSL and cable modem subscribers. I know a good number of TPCUG members have Roadrunner.

Now, I don't claim to know a lot on the subject, but I have some help in the form of a web site called http://www.grc.com. Basically what I've been doing is following the advice given on that website. GRC has a web program called ShieldsUp! that looks at your site and gives you back all the information it can find about your computer and gives advice on what to do about it.

I've known that cable modem subscribers have particular problems in keeping their systems safe. That's because the Roadrunner system is actually a network of computers that you're attached to as long as your computer is on. Also, cable modems have one thing in common with xDSL subscribers, a semi-permanent IP address. You may be logged into the network for weeks at a time, and you keep the same address until you log off and on again, lengthening the time that a hacker will have to work on breaking into your computer.

My first awareness of the problem was when a friend of mine called me one evening and said that my computer was wide open and that if he wanted to, he could send a file right to my hard drive! Now, this is an unusual circumstance having to do with the fact that I am also running a local network in my house. My immediate solution was to simply put a good "full" password on my hard drives.

Later, I got email from the Roadrunner help desk warning about running Wingate Internet sharing software in the default configuration, and what to set to prevent intrusion. Also, they advise turning off – uninstalling - "File and printer sharing for Microsoft Networks".

So let's talk about File and printer sharing first. Now this applies to everyone. If you have one computer … you don't need it. So check to see if you have it installed. You may be surprised. Go to Control Panel, Networks and look at the main window where it lists the network components; adapters, protocols and clients. See if "File and printer sharing for Microsoft Networks" is there and remove it after locating your Windows CD; it'll ask for it.

So what if you have a network? I do need File sharing. If I didn't, I wouldn't have a network, would I? Here's what I learned from ShieldsUp!. If you have TCP/IP networking protocol "bound" to File and printer sharing, you're exposing everything you share to the whole network! (As I was, but with a password.) Now it's simple to fix. In Networking, select the protocol TCP/IP, Properties, and the Bindings tab. UNcheck File and Printer Sharing. You don't need it, because if you go to NetBEUI properties, and select Bindings, you'll see that you have a perfectly good protocol for file sharing.

So back to ShieldsUp!. I was exposing much less, but the site could still read my Computer name, my Workgroup name, and Computer Description. So I'm still not completely happy. Coincidently, I got some email from SyberGen, the maker of my Internet Sharing, notifying me a new version was available free to current license holders. So I upgraded, and also found they have a new firewall product called SyShield. Installing the SyShield demo software completely protected my computer, but it was too troublesome. From time to time I'd lose my connection altogether. So I removed it. And in reading the very good documentation on the SyberGen site it suggested enabling the firewall option on SyGate, the sharing software. Well,... I had missed this option altogether, and it fixed everything. Now ShieldsUp! says my computer is "unusually secure" for a Windows 98 machine.

So this is simply building up to a very hearty recommendation for SyGate Internet Sharing software. It's extremely easy to set up. It'll work with xDSL, dial up modems and cable modems. For cable modems (and I presume xDSL) you must have two Ethernet cards: one for the modem and one for your network. With Wingate, you could use but one Ethernet cable to a hub, but both Wingate and Roadrunner recommend that you do not do that, because of a serious security hole to the Internet.

Sygate is at www.SyberGen.com. There's a 30 day trial download of the software. You can subsequently buy a license key for $50. It's a relatively small download and has been perfectly reliable. They notify you when a new version is available (I'm on my third) free. It uses no interrupts and is virtually unnoticeable running on a lightweight computer like the 166 I have it on. But you do have to have two Ethernet cards. On some systems it will share an single interrupt for both cards, but don't count on it. ◆

(SecondChance……Continued from page 4)

panel on the left of the screen lists the folders for the current checkpoint you're viewing. A second panel on the top right shows a list of the recoverable files in the selected directories. The bottom right window shows which files are new or changed. The file and directory entries are color coded so you can easily see which ones were added, deleted, or somehow modified. To go back to a previous system setting, you high-

(SecondChance……Continued on page 8)

Power BASIC DLL Compiler for Windows

By Tom Cone, Tampa PC Users Group

A number of years ago I wrote several articles presenting a series of programming "puzzles" for members of the users' group. My original solutions were written in various DOS languages including dBaseIII+ and PowerBASIC. Recently the publishers of PowerBASIC have added extensions to their windows BASIC compiler that caught my eye. I decided to take the plunge and try to write a true 32-bit native code solution to one of my early puzzles.

The compiler I am using is called Power BASIC DLL Compiler for Windows, PB/DLL vers. 6.0. This version includes new features collectively called Dynamic Dialog Tools. These permit you to build and manipulate the Windows graphic user interface using command line statements with varying argument lists. You can create different types of dialog forms (checkboxes, listboxes, text boxes, message boxes, combo boxes, and so), adding controls to them for interaction with the user.

Using this compiler you can build DLL's for use with Visual BASIC (in fact that's how the publisher positioned the product initially, and it's still apparently a major portion of their market). But you can also build stand alone EXE files which don't require any runtime support.

The source code below is what I developed. You programmer types may be surprised at how easy it is to read, and how little work was required to create and manipulate the interface.

When this code is compiled it creates a single stand alone EXE file which is 12 kb in size. That's right! 12 kilobytes.

Here's the source (comment lines are preceded by an apostrophe):

```
'-------------------------------------------------------
'DOORS.BAS for PB/DLL 6.0
'500 room hotel puzzle
'By Tom Cone - 11/25/99

'Assume hotel with 500 rooms.  Each room has one door.
'       AT outset ALL are closed.
'Assume 500 guests arrive, one at a time.
'Guest 1 visits each room, and opens each door.
'Guest 2 visits every other room and closes each door.
'Guest 3 visits every third room.  If door is closed, he opens it.  If it
'        is opened, he closes it.
'Guest 4 visits every fourth room.  If door is closed, she opens it.
'        if it's open, she closes it.
'And so on.

'After 500th guest visits the 500th room, how many doors are open
'        in the hotel?
'-------------------------------------------------------

#COMPILE EXE  'directs compiler to make EXE file

FUNCTION WINMAIN (BYVAL CurInst AS LONG, _
                  BYVAL PrvInst AS LONG, _
                  CmdLine AS ASCIIZ PTR, _
                  BYVAL CmdShow AS LONG) EXPORT AS LONG

%textcontrol = 100  'program uses a single control.  Each must be
                            '   separately numbered.
LOCAL hDlg AS LONG  'this variable will hold handle of the dialog

' ** Create a new dialog template, the arguments specify size & location
  DIALOG NEW 0, "Progress Report", ,, 260, 50, 0, 0 TO hDlg

' ** Add controls to it; arguments set size & location
  CONTROL ADD TEXTBOX, hDlg, %textcontrol, "", 14,  12, 200, 12, 0

'now declare variables needed for calculations
DIM i AS LONG                 'counter
DIM totaldoorsopen AS LONG    'running count of doors opened
DIM totaldoorsclosed AS LONG  'running count of doors closed
DIM patron AS LONG            'current patron
DIM door(1:500) AS LONG       'array of doors
                                 '-1 = open
                                 ' 0 = closed
DIM currentdoornumber AS LONG
DIM doorstoskip AS LONG     'number of doors to be skipped as a patron
                            'moves thru hotel
totaldoorsopen = 0          'setup start condition
totaldoorsclosed = 500      'setup start condition
FOR i = 1 TO 500
   door(i) = 0              'close all doors
NEXT

' ** show the dialog
   DIALOG SHOW MODELESS hDlg 'this displays the dialog box w/blank text

FOR patron = 1 TO 500  'queue up the patrons to begin their walk
  doorstoskip = patron 'set to match this patron
  currentdoornumber = patron  'begin with this patron's first door
    WHILE currentdoornumber <= 500    'loop through all doors

        IF door(currentdoornumber) = 0 THEN    'if first door for this
patron is closed
            door(currentdoornumber) = -1       'open it
            totaldoorsopen = totaldoorsopen + 1
            totaldoorsclosed = totaldoorsclosed - 1
        ELSE                                   'door was open
            door(currentdoornumber) = 0        'so close it
```

(Power Basic……..Continued on page 8)

(Power Basic.....Continued from page 7)

```
                totaldoorsopen = totaldoorsopen - 1
            totaldoorsclosed = totaldoorsclosed + 1
        END IF
        currentdoornumber = currentdoornumber + doorstoskip   'skip to next
door
    WEND    'go check next door
            'loop ends when currendoornumber > 500

' ** update value of textcontrol and refresh the dialog
   CONTROL SET TEXT hDlg, %textcontrol, "Current patron: "+STR$(patron)+_
           "   Current total doors opened: "+STR$(totaldoorsopen)
   DIALOG DOEVENTS
   SLEEP 10      'needed to slow down the display so you can watch it change
NEXT patron

' ** close the dialog box
  DIALOG END hDlg

' ** display msgbox with final counts
  MSGBOX "Final count of open doors:     "+_
  STR$(totaldoorsopen)+CHR$(13)+CHR$(10)+"Final count of closed doors: "+_
  STR$(totaldoorsclosed),,"All Guests Finished"
END FUNCTION      'WinMain ends here.  Program terminates when user presses OK.
' end of source
```

As the program runs, the text box appears on screen with spinning numeric counters. Here's a snapshot:



When the calculations are ended, this text box is closed, and a final message box is presented. It looks like this:



I am intrigued with this compiler and am particularly attracted to the small size and fast speed of the resulting executable file. If you would like more information on it, visit http://www.powerBASIC .com. The compiler is available for $189 (plus shipping) with documentation on disk. A softcover book is available at extra charge.

If you are working with a different language (like Visual BASIC, for example), I challenge you to try your hand at converting my code so that it will work for you. Maybe one of you would be willing to write it up for publication next month for comparison purposes. How about it? Any takers out there? ◆

(SecondChance……..Continued from page 6)

light the checkpoint and click the restore button, just that simple. The system will reboot and a prompt will ask if you want to reinstall any file that is after your previous checkpoint. This works well if you have done several things since you started experiencing problems and didn't want to undo all of them.

When I first received Second Chance for this review I figured on trying it out by adding and removing a few programs, maybe a few JPGs, or text files too. Then I would see how well it recognized my system changes. But I had the unfortunate opportunity to try Second Chance out on a real world system failure. As I said before, I like to play around inside my machine. This means I'm more prone to major crashes than most people. I try to back up my system files on a regular basis for the inevitable system crash, and I was doing just that last month when my power supply died right in the middle of my backup. Not only did I lose my backup, but the system files that were being read were toasted, too. I could no longer get Windows to even attempt to boot into safe mode. Armed with my Second Chance boot disk I was able to restore my system files from a checkpoint I had created when I first installed Second Chance. Now I could get back into Windows. From there I rebuilt the corrupted or missing VXD files that Windows insisted were no longer present. By opening the Second Chance window and viewing the different checkpoints, I was able to locate various missing system files that didn't load the first time. I was able to get my system up and running, including all the add on programs I use, in less time then it normally takes to just reinstall Windows.

As far as most utility programs are concerned, we see a lot of things on the market that try to be all things to all people. Most of the times they do one or two things well but fall short with the rest of their included tools. Power Quest does a remarkable job of producing powerful tools that function just the way you would need them to. Second Chance worked just as the manual said it would, and I could not be happier with the way things worked out for me. If you would like a quick easy way to protect your computer from corruption but don't do regular backups, I would whole-heartedly recommend picking up a copy of Second Chance. ◆

It's time to browse the virtual aisles

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

The Thursday after Thanksgiving officially opened the last holiday shopping season of this millennium. Some people live for that face-to-face interaction we call shopping. Since the dawn of time that is all we've ever had, besides mail-order catalogs. Although the shopping phenomenon we call *malls* is new to the last half of this century there is now a new kid on the block and it is a *virtual super-mall* filled with *virtual values*.

No longer do just the people that live in the northeastern portion of the United States get to be the only ones that are able to shop at places like Macy's or Bloomingdale's department stores. Typically you can just type the name of the store into your browser and the usual http:// and dot com (.com) before and after the name and like magic you're transported there. No crowded stores, no long lines.

Last year was officially the first major cybercommerce shopping season but in one short year E-commerce has really come on-line (excuse the pun). And although there has been extraordinary growth in on-line shopping this past year it is still only a scratch on the surface of total retail sales… but it is growing, exponentially.

One of the reasons, I believe, that on-line shopping hasn't come of age is the fear by most people of giving their credit card information over the Internet. Yet, these same people will hand that same credit card to some person in a restaurant or retail store whom they have never met before and think nothing of it. Now does that make sense? Secure shopping on-line is a breeze if you know what to look for and you use common sense.

- Look for and read the website's privacy statement. Make sure you are aware of how your information will be used.
- Look for what the Internet calls *Trustmarks*, or indications that the site is being monitored by an outside agency such as the Better Business Bureau.
- Always use a credit card and place your orders through secure servers. Most sites alert you when you are about to enter a secure server but to be sure the web address usually changes to *https* rather than just *http* once you have entered the secure side. In most cases there is also a lock or key visible in the status bar at the bottom of the browser. Remember, if you use a credit card and there is a problem you will be able to contest the charges and under federal law you are only ever liable for $50 if your credit card information is misused. (This is always the part that gets to the people who are skeptical about purchasing over the Internet. But if you think about it, and have done the above, you should feel more secure than physically giving the credit card to someone you've never met before.)
- And, as I mentioned before, use common sense. Don't give out any information you wouldn't disclose over the phone or in person. You have the ability to feel as secure as you want by reading and understanding the web site's privacy and security practices before you make your purchases.

One last thing to think about when shopping on-line during this holiday season is to make sure you check out the deadline for ordering to guarantee a delivery in time. Although the purchasing is done electronically they still haven't found a way to *beam* the gift…… yet….. but….maybe by the end of the next millennium.

Happy Secure Shopping and Happy Holidays ! (Remember the reason for the season.) ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)
Intuit last month was outstanding.

The club itself has a couple of very good things going for it that hopefully will sustain it for the future. Two I've mentioned: a dedicated board and fairly consistent attendance. Three other things: An excellent newsletter, an outstanding web site and consistently good programs. One thing we did this year was find a willing person to chair a membership position. It was slow in getting on track, but we can see the results I think because the membership drop/add rate has gone positive, and that's very good news. For one thing we are doing some advertising and also we're phoning people who did not renew membership, with some very positive results.

Two areas where we seem to come up short on: We're not growing and the SIG attendance is variable. We're still struggling with these two areas, and frankly we need your suggestions. It seems that all the discussion on the topics we need help on is confined to the board. **We need to know what you need**, not just suggestions that may help. We're small enough to be flexible to tailor the SIGs to meet the needs directly. For instance – would anyone be interested in doing some Access study at the VB SIG? Give us a call – in this case, William LaMartin or myself.

(President……..Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.* For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jloin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

It seems as if the months are getting closer and closer together. No sooner do we get last month's newsletter in the mail than it is time for the next. And many times, it is one week before the newsletter needs to be printed so as to get it to you on time, and I have only an article or two. In fact, there have been times when there was no article one week before printing time. But with a bit of prodding , the articles flow in. I certainly appreciate the help of all those who contribute much time and creative energy to writing articles for the newsletter. Likewise for those who very faithfully help me assemble it.

As is the case each month, it is up to me to fill whatever left over space there is. This month there is blessedly little to fill.

The past several months I have been pretty deep into Visual Basic, using it to manipulate the information in databases for the most part. It might surprise you, but one of the prime uses of VB is in dealing with databases. I use it to work with an Access database, but I rarely actually use Microsoft Access other than to build the database in the beginning.

Visual Basic 6.0 introduced a new database tool, the Data Report, similar to the Microsoft Access report. On the surface it seems to lack a lot of the power of an Access report, but that is on the surface. I have found that by properly constructing an SQL (Structured Query Language) query on which to base the VB data report, I can display just about anything I want. It is not as easy as using the Access report, but once done, being an integral part of the VB program, it allows me to do things in VB that were not previously possible.

Another topic of interest this past month was the creation of what is called an ActiveX Document EXE for placement on a web page. This is basically a program that downloads to your computer then runs inside your browser. It provides for much more power than does the use of Active Server Pages (ASP) in conjunction with Visual Basic Script. Recall the ASP web pages I mentioned in the past like the Grocery List Compiler, Mortgage Loan Calculator and others at my web site http://www.lamartin.com.

As usual, though, to get this power we must give up something. To be able to run ActiveX Document EXE's in your browser, you need to be using a fairly new version of Internet Explorer with its security settings on low. Netscape declines to support the technology.

I had visited this technology some time back, but couldn't get it to work. Microsoft's information on the topic is not very clear. Also, when you run the program for the first time, the VB runtime files will be downloaded from the Microsoft site to your computer along with whatever extra files the program may need. This can take some time if you have a slow Internet connection, and I wondered if anyone would really be interested enough to wait for the download.

Well, I gave it another try, and the result is at http://www.lamartin.com/vb/activex_test/index.htm. It is a program that I

(Comments……Continued on page 12)

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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BCD

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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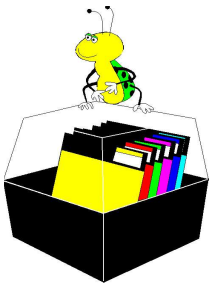
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
Alpha4	A4
AOL	AOL
Computer General	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware General	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet General	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
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Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
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Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Visual dBase	VdB
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/W98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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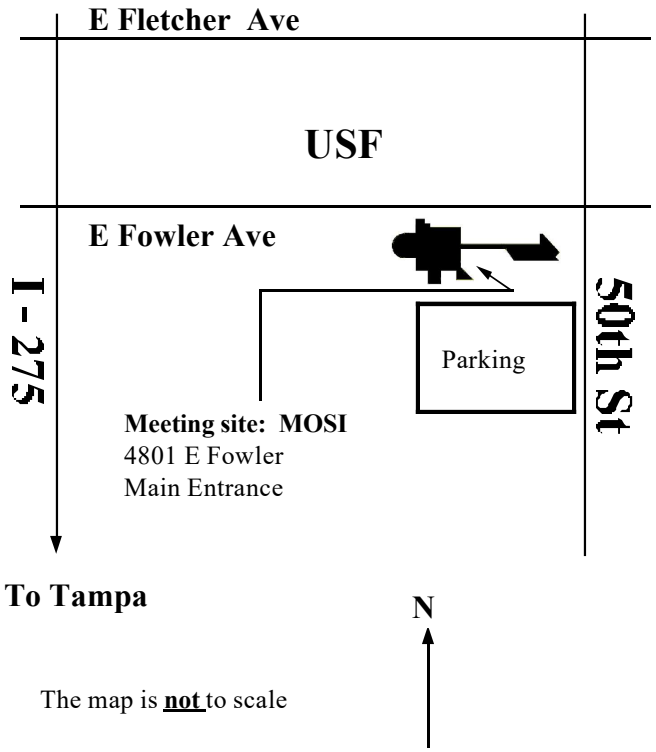
To close, I'd like to thank all those who have supported the club the last couple (and more) years to make my tenure a very positive and rewarding experience. Thank you … and I'll see you at the next meeting. I'll be there and I hope you will be too.

Merle ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 10)

wrote for my daughter many years ago to teach her to tell time with an analog clock. I have now turned it into an ActiveX Document EXE. If you have a fast connection, the download should only take a few seconds; if not, it could take several minutes.

Since Microsoft Internet Explorer and a low security setting are required, it is apparent why this technology is at present better suited for Intranets than the Internet, but I am intrigued by it and will try other examples as time permits.◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 1 January 2000

Meeting

Hardware Presentation

January 12, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the January meeting we will have a hardware presentation covering motherboards, processors, hard drives, hubs and other topics. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group

My first president's article and I have no idea what to say. Since we've all survived the "end of the world", I guess congratulations are in order. I knew we'd make it.

I hope we can make the year 2000 the best year ever, both in our personal lives and for the Tampa PC Users Group.

First of all, it's important to thank the people who have worked so hard to make things run smoothly. I'd like to let Merle Nicholson know how much his excellence in serving as our president for the past two years is appreciated. Kudos to Mike Hodges for his professionalism and willingness to stay late at work so we can use the Reflectone facilities. To William LaMartin who is always willing to help anyone who needs it, who creates and maintains our wonderful website AND tirelessly publishes our newsletter month after month goes our deepest gratitude. To Don Patzsch for knowing so much and writing it down to enable all of us to share his knowledge, much thanks. Hats off to James Weber for his note taking which keeps us all abreast of the meetings we aren't able to attend. Thanks to Jenny Olin, our dedicated treasurer, who keeps the books up to the minute and always makes sure the budget is balanced. Thanks to

(President.....Continued on page 2)

February 9: **Meeting topic is yet to be announced — Check our web site**

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy



Minutes of the December Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group

During this month's general meeting we had an opportunity to sit together and talk among ourselves about some of the many things that have been going on over the past year, without the constraints of a fixed agenda. Our members also supplied a mixed fare of food. There was definitely the air of the holidays about.

We started at 6:00 PM with the election of officers. As there was no opposition to any of the seats it was motioned and seconded that we vote on all seats at once. A voice vote to elect the officers was unanimous.

The remainder of the meeting was spent socializing. There was no drawing.

To you and your families, I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and look forward to what we can do together in the new millennium. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

Larry Anders for all he does and never wants any credit for. To Bruce Register who will do whatever you need for him to do, whenever you need it. To Kevan Sheridan for his years of dedication to the group and for being such a special person. Cheryl Alexander has taken over as our membership "committee" and is doing a great job. Last, but hardly least, to all the other members who make our group the best it can be. Thanks and thanks again.

My personal goals for the year 2000 are establishing working relationships with other user groups in the area. I'd also like to work on partnerships with local businesses.

I appreciate being given the chance to serve as your president. ◆

New Hard Drives for Improved Performance

By Merle Nicholson, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group

Look for new hard drive standards when you're upgrading or buying a new system. The words to look for are UDMA 66, Ultra 66 or UIDE 66 and 7200 RPM. These new drives give significant improvements in your computer's performance. They've become inexpensive too.

On my current system I set the computer up with a standard hard drive first, then copied over to a 7200 RPM drive a week or so later, and a few months after that, installed Ultra-66 support. So I have some subjective comparisons. The system is an AMD K6-3/450 with 2M cache.

Drive Speed

It makes sense, doesn't it? The faster the hard drive spins, the faster the data will go on and come off. The "normal" rotation speed for IDE has been 5400 RPM for a long time. Faster drives for SCSI are available, though. Seagate and IBM - that I know of – have had even 10,000 RPM drives for some time. They've always been with SCSI interfaces, and very high prices. SCSI drives are used in servers and in very high-end workstations.

The newest drives for consumer PCs are 7200 RPM, a 33% increase in rotational speed. These drives should give you a very noticeable 20% improvement in program load time. The price difference between 5400 and 7200 drives is very low, and very often the new ones go on sale with rebates.

Notice that I mention "program load time". Loading large files from disks is where you'll notice the biggest difference; and notice it you will!. You'll see a dramatic improvement when you turn on the computer and it's loading Windows, and you'll notice it when loading large programs like MS Word or MS Access. But the hard drive is used for nearly everything. The extra speed will be used when moving data to the swap file, for instance, and when caching pictures from the Internet and so on, but in my own experience it won't be as dramatic a difference. You'll know it's there, but it isn't a "wow" thing like loading Word or Paint Shop Pro.

Drive Interfaces

The SCSI standard has been upgraded over time to specify higher and higher data rates, starting with 5MB/sec (in 1986) up to 80MB/sec (in 1996), making it possible to raise the data rate of hard drives themselves (or maybe it was the other way round). SCSI drives are not normally used in consumer PC's because of their much higher price. You can do it though, and some people do, when the cost isn't a great factor.

IDE, on the other hand, had been stuck at 33MB/sec for some time, starting with 486 systems, until recently. IDE is the standard for all personal computers other than workstations and servers. IDE drives are inexpensive (I wouldn't have been saying that two years ago), but the recent big news is Ultra-66. It's also called UDMA-66 (Ultra DMA-66). This new standard specifies a data burst transfer rate of 66MB/sec.; technically, "burst transfer rate" means the data transfer from the hard drive's cache memory.

You need four things to get Ultra-66. A hard drive that supports it, a system board or alternately an Ultra-66 controller card, a special 80-wire cable and, last, a utility program that sets the hard drive to either 33 or 66.

Hard Drive

What you're looking for - 66 - should be obvious, but believe it or not there were many drives manufactured that are 66-capable, but set as 33 and shipped that way. Look at the specs on the box if the 66 isn't obvious. Look for DMA Mode 3 or 4. Mode 3 is 44 MB/sec, and Mode 4 is 66 MB/sec. There's a utility program that should be shipped with the drive, but sometimes is not, and can be easily downloaded from the manufacturer's web site. It's a tiny DOS program, and it's used to set the drives speed from 33 to 66 or vice-versa. Recent drives are set to 66 out of the box. So be careful here if you're hooking it up to a 33-only controller. A 66 controller will handle both, but a 33-only will give you drive errors if you connect a drive set to 66 to it. Boot into DOS first, and insert the diskette with the setting software and run it. Follow the instructions.

System board or 66 Controller card.

I've used both – several system boards and also I have a Promise Ultra66 PCI controller card on my personal system. It will simply recognize the drive and use mode 4. Look at the bootup information closely, and you should see it. Mode 4.

Ultra-66 Cable

As you supposed, when you go to Ultra-66, the old 40-pin ribbon cable won't work. It's still a 40-pin ribbon cable but it now has 80 wires. The extra 40 wires are grounded to eliminate interference. It's easy to spot, too. The cable is stiffer because it has two layers of wires and seems – to me – more fragile. It's an additional cost unless either the motherboard or the drive comes with it. In my case the cable came with the controller card, making the Promise board a better deal for me than others. Drive cables normally come with the motherboard, and many boards do not include a 66 cable, just a 33, even though 66 is supported. The cable is expensive - $15 or

(Hard Drives.....Continued on page 4)

(Hard Drives.....Continued from page 3)
so.

Promise Ultra66 controller card - technical

The Promise Ultra 66 works the same as a system board except for one thing, and I discovered it by accident. I don't think it's the Promise Card's fault, but the Quantum Hard drive 33/66 utility would not find the hard drive when it's plugged into the controller card. So I switched the cable to the (33) system board to set it. It had me going for a while. This controller card will recognize that the correct cable is being used and refuse to put it into Mode 4 if not.

A couple of interesting things about this board. All technical. It uses one interrupt (IRQ). That's in addition to the two that your system board takes. But they'll run simultaneously, for up to eight drives total. If you put all your drives – including CDROM – on the controller card, you can disable the system board devices both in Windows and in the bios. In that order. That'll free up IRQs 15 and 14.

Promise is at http://www.promise.com/Products/idecards/u66.htm .

My personal trials

I'd bought the Quantum 9.4G UIDE66/7200RPM drive from Buycomp.com for an incredible price. It was backordered, but I didn't care. I'd wait. When I copied the drive image over to it and installed it – with the system board that does not do 66 – I started having some program failures and some disk errors. But I puzzled over it for a while, lived with it, and in the meantime ordered the Promise card. So when I got it and installed it, I ran the Quantum utility to set it to 66, and found it already was. Errors explained. Read the manual, dummy. Of course that was how I found out that the Quantum software couldn't find the drive at all when it was on the card.

So I got the card in, and Windows up and running, and within twenty minutes got a corrupt registry error message, requiring a shutdown. On bootup the registry utility restored the last backup and restarted Windows, with an immediate error message again, reboot again, etc., to go on forever.

So I decided to reinstall Windows SE. The first thing that Windows SE does on a reinstall is to check for a corrupt registry, and if it finds it, run a repair utility. Good. I cancelled the rest of the installation, and rebooted into Windows, and it worked for a while, but the same evening I got the corrupt registry back.

So I pulled the Promise card out, and connected to the system board and ran the Quantum utility to set it to 33, and we're up and running fine. The machine ran like blazes with that 7200 RPM drive in it.

I used the machine with no problems for a month or so and then got the registry corrupt problem again. Some research on Microsoft knowledge base came up with the reason, a bad memory module. That's what it said. So it wasn't the Promise card at all, and I don't have to send it back – I didn't want to anyway. I bought a 64M memory module and installed it as the first DIMM, and I had no problems for another month, when it happened again. This time I didn't repair the registry, I just pulled one 32M module out of the machine, and I've had no problem since. I got lucky, I had a 50-50 chance of getting the right one of two.

So at last I can install the Promise card again. I was ready to do that because I wanted my machine in a smaller case to go on my desktop, and while I was at it, I wiped the drive clean and have been installing software for four days now.

Adding Ultra66 support wasn't a wow thing because I'd been using an older AMD K6-2/300 system while I rebuilt. I'm so happy with the speed of the new machine, I'm still amazed at how fast the programs load. For a test, I put this article on the desktop, and rebooted the machine, and as soon as Windows was loaded, I double-clicked on the document. MS Word loaded up and read this 2-1/4 page file in 2.75 seconds by my stopwatch. It was worth it. ◆

A Note from our Membership Coordinator

By Cheryl Alexander, Membership Coordinator, TPCUG

Allow me to introduce myself: I'm Cheryl Alexander, the Membership Coordinator. This is a fairly new, appointed position for the TPCUG, so the defined responsibilities are still rather fluid.

I plan to make calls to members every month. For lack of a better roster, I will be using the list of expired memberships. Part of my call will be to remind you that your dues are, well, due. Another part of my call will be simply to make contact with our members and let them know that we care for them as people. The most important part of my call will be to find out if the members are benefiting from being part of the Tampa PC Users Group. If not, please tell us. We can work together.

Input from the members concerning what they want and need will help us help you. Also ideas and contacts for programs would be appreciated. So, when I call, if you have anything to pass on to us, this will be a golden opportunity for all of us. ◆

Editor's Comments: Old photographs, New Computer & Online Shopping

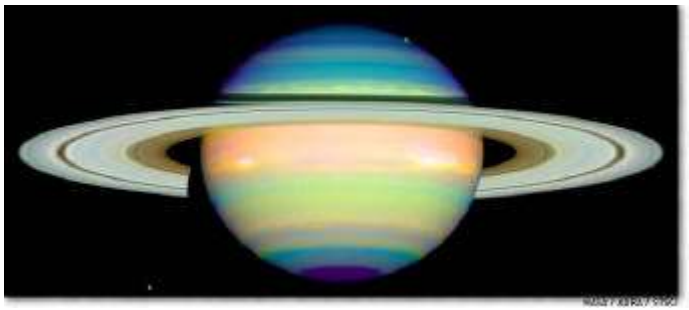
By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Old Photographs My main project last month was creating an online, searchable index for the Tampa-Hillsborough County Library System's collection of old Tampa photographs in their Burgert Bothers Photographic Archive. To access this collection on the Internet you have to use Telnet instead of the World Wide Web (like DOS as compared to Windows). Then use key strokes to move about the different Telnet screens and enter keywords to do a search. Doing a search results in a new Telnet screen with at most seven entries, where you have to enter some more key strokes until you get to a screen that lists the URL for a particular photo. Finally, you have to copy this URL and paste it into your web browser before you can finally view the photograph.

This was like the Dark Ages compared to what we have become used to on the WWW. So, I wrote a Visual Basic program that connected to the library's Telnet site and captured the approximately 4,500 titles listed under Burgert Brothers along with their descriptions and URL's. I then did more programming to

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

Internet picture of the month



A false-color image showing infrared light reflected from the planet Saturn taken from the Hubble telescope.

This image is from the MSNBC's Space News Site. The URL for MSNBC is http://www.msnbc.com
The URL for the Space News is http://www.msnbc.com/news/SPACENEWS_Front.asp
The URL for Hubble Telescope images, including the one above of Saturn, is http://www.msnbc.com/news/338343.asp

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Ifilm (Internet films)	http://www.ifilm.com/
FreeVBCode.com	http://www.freevbcode.com/
VBGreatOne, The Place to learn Programming	http://vbgreatone.8m.com/
One-Stop Source Shop (Visual Basic)	http://www.mvps.org/vb/
10k Wizard (search engine for SEC filings)	http://www.10kwizard.com/
ditto.com - the premier visual search engine	http://www.arribavista.com/
Bandwidth Speed Test Results	http://computingcentral.msn.com/topics/bandwidth/speedtest500.asp
RootsWeb.com (genealogy)	http://www.rootsweb.com/
Hessen genealogy (& good links)	http://users.rootsweb.com/~deuhes/Hessen/index.htm
Nordstrom (shopping)	http://www.nordstrom.com

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Hard Drive Problems

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group

When starting up my personal computer recently I found that Scandisk was under the mistaken impression that I had not turned off my computer properly and insisted on checking out my directory structure as well as my hard drive for drive problems. That has happened before when there was a power outage or for some other reason the computer was powered down and not correctly turned off, but in those cases Scandisk only checked out the directory structure so this was a bit different. Now it wanted to check out the entire drive. Nevertheless I didn't expect anything serious. I was certain I had powered down correctly but it seemed a bit mysterious that Scandisk wanted to check out the entire drive. Scandisk has never found anything serious before so why expect problems now, I told myself. Well, I do want everything to work right so go ahead and see what you can do Mr. Scandisk, I thought. As it turns out it did find and marked one sector as bad. So now I was impressed and felt the worst was behind me. But that was not to be the case.

When I began to use my browser, Netscape Communicator 4.5, it failed to work because it was unable to find the key file Netscape.exe. Based on this I uninstalled Netscape and reinstalled it again. Now, my browser ran all right but it loaded up perhaps a bit slower than it had in the past. I checked some other programs and they also worked OK so now once again I felt the problems were all behind me. Well I was wrong again.

The next time I powered up the computer Scandisk gives me the same message as last time and wants to start all over, not only checking out the directory structure but also scanning the entire hard drive again. Well, since I had already been there and done that, I exited out of Scandisk and proceeded to use my computer as usual. When I attempted (while using my browser) to pull up for downloading a program using Adobe Acrobat Reader it mysteriously ceased to bring up the selected Adobe file. I asked for it again and after three tries it did bring it up and I was able to print out all but the first page. For some reason the first page printed blank even though it appeared there on the screen in front of me. So, I then decided to uninstall and reinstall Adobe Acrobat, after which it worked flawlessly.

The next day I booted up the computer again, and my old buddy Scandisk appears like the ghost of Christmas past with more dire suggestions of impending disaster. Then I put a message on the User Group Web Site and William LaMartin was kind enough to respond in the discussion area of the Web Site, but he phoned me as well. In our phone conversation he suggested that I might want to consider buying and using a copy of SpinRite about which he had written recently, so I took his advice and did so. I was able to download a copy direct from their web site and was using it before the day was over.

The program was simple to use and in the areas of the disk where my hard drive was apparently in good shape it ran very fast. Where there apparently were problems it spent a good bit of time working with one cluster after another.

When I began SpinRite I had been told by Scandisk that I had only one bad cluster. SpinRite found another 40 bad clusters, plus it recovered data from about 18 other places. Most of the bad sectors were in areas where no data was stored so I guess I was lucky there. I set it on level 5 which is the highest and most thorough setting and which not only attempts to recover data but also to make previously unreadable sectors readable. When I started, SpinRite estimated all this would take about 10 hours on my computer. It actually took about 17 hours, so obviously it had a lot of work to do. My spirits were bolstered by all the good things it said it was doing. The messages on the log were so well written and to the point it would not have been difficult to think I was directly connected to some human typist inside there somewhere who was talking to me personally.

I now started up the computer once again, this time thinking that now I have all the gremlins removed. Not the case. Once again Scandisk starts to roll forward like a bad nightmare. This time the problem is one of my Netscape plug-ins. It seems some images produced by the plug-in and stored on the hard drive are corrupted but this program has an uninstall program so I use it thinking this will get rid of this problem. Well, the uninstall program tried but it could not read all the information it needed to uninstall the plug-in. Once again I was stumped. I couldn't remove this corrupted program from the computer because some part of the uninstall program is apparently corrupted. At this point I contacted Dell computer on their 24 hour toll free technical line and was instructed to run Scandisk from Windows using **"Programs/accessories/system tools/scandisk."** Previously, I had run Scandisk only when the computer first started. Apparently this runs the program from DOS. Well I was impressed; running Scandisk from Windows seemed to do the job although it took the program about four (4) hours to run on my computer, a Dell Dimension XPS P166s, using Windows 95. I am certain much of this time was caused by Scandisk having great difficulty reading the drive.

Just to see what would happen on startup I went to the shutdown window and selected RESTART THE COMPUTER, and it restarted without pulling up Scandisk again. Then I got really confident and selected SHUT DOWN THE COMPUTER and after a short while started it up again. This time

(Problems……Continued on page 7)

(Problems……..Continued from page 6)
Scandisk was back again suggesting I might have problems with one or more disk drives so I let it run again to see if it would do any better now that Scandisk run from Windows had been so successful. It began to do a full hard drive scan. Finally I got a message that "Windows has detected a registry configuration error click here to restore this from a known back up copy." I selected this option, really I didn't feel I had any choice, and the program ran until completion. I then got a message that "At least one area of drive C has sustained physical damage –although such damage might be caused by an isolated incident such as a power failure, it is often a sign of impending hard drive failure." The message further suggested that I run Scandisk daily for awhile and if more errors develop the hard drive should be checked by a qualified technician.

At this point I shut down the computer and rebooted from a cold start and miraculously everything ran perfectly. I shut down the computer several times and it restarted and ran without any incident the rest of that day. The next day the old problem was back again.

I found that my 3-year parts warranty with Dell Computer would expire January 22, 2000 so perhaps I was in luck. All this happened in mid December. I phoned the Dell 24-hour line again and got another technician. I learned that they maintain a call log and the new guy was fully up on my earlier problems. He agreed it sounded like a hard drive problem but asked if I still had the Diagnostics disk that came with my computer when it was new three years ago. I did. He asked that I run that program and then call back on the technical line. He also guided me through the start up part of the diagnosis. The Dell technician suggested that this test might take an hour or more. Well it only took about 20 minutes before the program stopped and announced an unreadable area on the disk and announced it as a hard drive failure.

I called Dell back again and they said they would send me a new hard drive under my warranty. Now I only have to learn how to install a new hard drive, which I have never done before but Dell tells me it will come with instructions and if I have problems I can call back and they will walk me through the process. The number is toll free which is a big help although on average it takes about 20 minutes before the technician comes on the line so I spend that playing a computer game while holding the phone to my ear.

The replacement drive is covered by my warranty as long as I return the defective drive to Dell. That makes sense, otherwise there may be too much of an incentive for an unethical individual to talk Dell into a replacement drive when the existing drive is still in good working condition.

When I bought this computer several years ago Dell had set it up so I could make copies of all the supplementary files Dell had installed in addition to Windows, including special video drivers, Windows 95 drivers, etc., which were not on the Windows 95 disk. Now that I have had a hard drive failure, I am so glad I produced these discs at a time when the computer was new and all was working flawlessly.

The replacement drive arrived by Airborne Express Monday morning. The Dell technician had authorized it the previous Friday evening. Now, on Monday morning I got out my original Windows 95 disc, the special Dell driver discs, my various program discs and called Dell for assistance. Since this was my first time doing this sort of thing I wanted all the hand holding I could get.

I thought I would have to run Fdisk and Format the new drive but Dell said that was not to be necessary since the drive was already set up and ready for loading Windows 95. I booted up using the Dell systems disk but when the Windows 95 disc was put in the CD-ROM drive nothing happened. The CD ROM drive would not operate. The Dell technician had me look for the mscdex.exe file, but for some reason it could not be found. It was also not to be found on any of the special discs I had prepared when the computer was new. The Dell technician then wanted to know if I understood DOS because he needed my help using DOS to get my machine functioning. I indicated I felt I knew enough to be of assistance.

I was then instructed to disconnect the CD ROM drive and attach those connections to my old hard drive which enabled us to copy the mscdex.exe file from there along with a number of other files the Dell technician indicated were necessary. We ended up with a modified Systems disc, which also contained the additional files Dell required. I had to exercise a lot of care to make certain that the old hard drive did not come in contact against any other metal parts of the computer possibly causing a short of some sort. I was able to rig a book so that it provided the necessary insulation. And, of course, the computer was turned off whenever any of these connections were changed. I must tell you that it had me holding my breath at times.

Finally, at the Dell technician's direction, the config.sys file was edited and in a short time the CD-ROM drive was functioning properly. After that Windows 95 was installed along with my old programs and files. I did find that some of my accessory items, such as the all important solitaire and hearts games were not installed but I learned that I could go to the Control Panel and select "Add/Remove" programs, then double click on "Accessories", select the missing games and insert the Windows 95 disk and now include them on my hard drive. This was all very new to me since I am much more a computer user than I am a computer technician.

(Problems……..Continued on page 8)

(Problems.....Continued from page 7)
Then I thought disaster had struck again because now my computer had no sound. However, I found that one of the speaker wires had become partly disconnected and all the sounds returned.

Once I had everything running again, I mailed the old hard drive back to Dell as part of their exchange arrangement. The old drive was put in the box in which the new drive was shipped and protected with the same materials used for the original shipment. Dell had a return prepaid Airbill for Airborne so all I had to do was call Airborne who came by the house several hours later and picked up the old drive and got it on its way to Dell.

The drive I returned was manufactured by Western Digital, and the new one was a "refurbished" drive made by "Quantum Fireball." The name infers that it is fast and frankly it seems to be faster than the old drive. Of course it is hard to tell since the old drive was in poor shape and perhaps had been gradually slowing down over the last couple of years, making comparisons difficult.

I am happy with the result. Since I had no prior experience with this sort of thing, it did take a lot of my time. But then, the price was right. The phone calls to Dell did not cost me anything, and their personnel were skilled, helpful, courteous, and took the time needed to get the job done. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 5)
provide two ways of viewing these photographs.

In the first way, I created five web pages at my web site, since the photographs are stored on the library's server in five different archives. On each of the five pages are listed the titles in that archive with descriptions and hyperlinks that you simply click on to view a particular photograph. Some of these pages may contain as many as 1,100 links.

In the second method of viewing the photographs, I created a searchable database of the titles and URL's, then using the Active Server Page (ASP) technology and Visual Basic Scripting, I placed this database online at my lamartin.com web site. Note that after you have done a search, you can click on the word Date at the top of the Date field and the search results will be ordered by date. This is one more example of the usefulness of ASP. To try this out, go to http://lamartin.com and click on the *Hypertext Index to the Burgert Brothers Online Photography Collection of Tampa Photos* link.

New Computer There is a new Gateway 600 MHz Pentium III computer in our house. I am just amazed at what you can get on these machines now: 128 MB RAM, 20 GB hard drive, DVD/CD drive and a flat screen monitor. That monitor is what really sets this machine apart. The 15 inch flat screen has as much viewable area as a regular 17 inch monitor--and takes up less than 1/10 of the space. Of course, it costs a bit more than a standard 17 inch monitor. Gateway was also basically giving away a color printer, an Intel PC Camera and some software. By paying $100 more, we upgraded the printer to an HP 832 C DeskJet. I didn't really need another printer in the house, but since this machine will be residing in my daughter's room, I thought having her own, newer printer would be nice.

You read correctly, the new computer is for my daughter. I am still working away happily on my Gateway 166 machine. However, I will be able to use the new machine, and it will be networked into our home network. Right now it is networked with a temporary cable running through the house that can be rolled up when not in use, but I have plans to run a permanent network cable to it under the house and through the attic.

The only problem I have discovered with the new computer is with the DVD drive. As with most new computers bought from major retailers, there is no DVD decoder card. All the decoding is done with software, Software CeniMaster99 in my case. Not having a decoder card is good since it is not taking up an expansion slot in the computer; however, it is also bad, since there are going to be some DVD's that the software will not decode. And wouldn't you know it, the first DVD we purchased, *October Sky*, could not be played on our system. It played fine on fellow member, Wade Herman's, computer, and all of his DVD's played fine on our computer. But apparently *October Sky* is not going to play on our machine until CeniMaster puts out a patch to their software to cover those titles for which there is a problem.

I had no problem getting through to Gateway's toll free support, but after several calls, I realized that the technicians I was speaking with really had no solution to the problem--probably didn't even understand the problem. That is when I brought the computer into the local Gateway store and the technician there said that everything was fine with my system. It played each of the 15 DVD's they had for testing, but there would always be some DVD's that would not play on a software decoded setup. Anyway, for the 95% or more of DVD's we can view, the quality and sharpness of that 15 inch flat screen LCD monitor makes it quite easy to watch a DVD movie.

Online Purchases With the closing of 1999, you probably

(Comments……..Continued on page 9)

Space Explorer II

By Mike Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, some of you may have gotten a new bike or Barbie, but I got a Meade 60mm (2.4") refracting telescope for Christmas from my wife Laura. It was a surprise, but I couldn't be much happier with the selection. This reaction was augmented greatly when I got a peek at the software that came with the telescope. O.K., O.K. the name sounds a bit hokey, but the program is not. Certainly not for someone such as myself who cannot consistently differentiate the Big Dipper from a large redneck with a lip full of Copenhagen. At one point in time I had a schoolboy level of familiarity with the constellations, etc., but this faded, and once I began trying to keep track of MBRs, FATs, EXEs, ASPs, et alia, lots of things got jettisoned to make room in my old melon for subjects currently in the forefront.

The software includes an Ephemeris which allows the user to see data for the Sun, Moon and all major planets. The information provided covers the Right Ascension (celestial counterpart to the Earth's longitude) and Delination (celestial equivalent to Earth's latitude), the rise and set times for the object and transit time. Also listed are Apparent Size in arc seconds, Disk Illumination in %, and Geocentric Distance/ Heliocentric Distance (distance from the Earth or Sun) expressed in Astronomical Units, Kilometers, or Miles. By clicking the Auto Update On button, the data will be updated in real time.

The Moon Calendar feature, which is located near the bottom of the Ephemeris drop down menu, shows the phases of the Moon for any month and year and may be printed out for use as a calendar.

I would have to say the most impressive part of the package from the strictly visual standpoint is the Star Map. Once this feature is activated, options to print the map, toggle it on and off, zoom in and out, change the view of the current zenith (a snapshot of the whole sky centered overhead) become enabled. Other items such as star and constellation names, grid lines, etc. can be turned on and off. The Star Map can be animated, allowing you to track the orbits of objects such as the moon, the planets and so on for hours, days or years. You can select the interval time to see what the sky will look like in subsequent hour by hour steps, or day at a time intervals. The Star Map can be set up to show you what the sky looked like on the day and year of your birth and you can set down and plan an observing session for a given day and time a month or more in advance if you like.

The Viewing Log which is accessed by left clicking anywhere on the Star Map lets an observer enter the time, date, object being observed, camera used & comments about an observation session. You can also select and attach an image (if you have a camera and the interface attached) to the log entry.

The program has dialog boxes to let the user enter data to make the software work for the specific location and time that observation is taking place. Various dialog boxes ask for latitude and longitude down to degrees, minutes and seconds. You can deal with time via the Gregorian or the Julian calendars.

Now all I have to do to utilize all these features is find a primer on basic telescope orientation and navigation to answer some questions that have occurred to me. For instance, in terrestrial mapping the variation between Grid North and Magnetic North can be sizable depending on your location on the geoid. So exactly where do you set 0 degrees before you start spinning angles both horizontal and vertical to look for Galaxies and Fairlanes (wait a minute that's something else again) in deep space. Never fear, I'm searching the Internet as we speak on these topics. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 8)

have heard all you want to hear about e-commerce, but since I have a little more space to fill, I will relate how I found a difficult item to find, saved a lot of money and received everything in a very timely fashion.

My mother needed new transmitters for two garage door openers made by Pulsar. Pulsar no longer exists. As you might expect, if you don't own a Genie opener, you are not going to easily find a transmitter at Home Depot, Scotties or anywhere else. Furthermore, those "universal" transmitters are not all that universal. However, a search on Yahoo yielded two California companies that could supply a replacement for a Pulsar transmitter of the frequency I needed. The cost was $20 per transmitter plus about $6 in shipping.

My next foray into e-commerce was to Buy.com to purchase some additional ribbons, both photographic and regular, for my ALPS printer. I purchase a lot when I order, and the price came to a total of $95. However, if I had made the purchase locally, the price would have been $160. Quite a savings, and they arrived in two days with regular shipping.

I buy most things locally. The new computer came from the

(Comments……..Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.* For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jloin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Quick View Plus Version 5.1

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group

Quick View Plus is a real neat program. It allows you to view graphics (pictures), text, html files, and much more. A condensed version of Quick View comes with Windows 95 and 98, but the number of programs that it supports is limited. The latest version adds 175 more file types to view, copy and/or print.

Installing Quick View Plus from the CD ROM is simple and easy. Once you have it installed, you can bring up any file, such as a picture, or an attachment to an email, or an html file you have just downloaded and want to check; you may view spreadsheets, or database files also. It shows you the format, and displays the fonts, style, columns, headers and footers, embedded graphics, and OLE objects, etc., exactly as the original program would show them. Hyperlinks can be seen and activated. On my hard disk all the files that are produced here are saved in one location so that it is easy to back up or to copy them to a disk to be stored elsewhere. You can then go to this list of your files and view any one very simply, whether they are pictures, html files, encoded or whatever. This makes it easy to find the ones you want.

Two manuals are furnished with Quick View pro. The guide for win95, win98, and winNT; and the guide for win 3.1.

Suppose you have a couple of compressed files, PKZIP, TAR, or LZH, etc. that you want to look at. Simply bring up Quick View Pro and it will show you the files contained in the zipped files, and you can click on EXTRACT this file, EXTRACT SELECTED files, or EXTRACT ALL files. and you can read any files included in the zipped file, without the need to unzip the whole file first.

You can view a UUENCODED encoded text file from the Internet or any HTML file, and the text will show on the screen in a simple text file view. In other words, the file formatting does not show unless you prefer it to. Makes it easy to print an HTML file from the Internet in simple text form, without the HTML coding showing.

You may edit your files easily. Just click on File "open file for editing". This review is being edited right now in Quick View Pro.

QVP works with all the major e-mail and groupware programs, Microsoft Exchange, Outlook, Eudora, Netscape mail, and Lotus Notes. It is easy to configure QVP with other programs.

You may zoom and/or rotate graphics.

You may view Mac or Windows files on your PC. Take your files home from the office and view them at home; there is no need to have the programs that you have on the office machines.

The QVP program is written by Inso Corporation and sold by JASC, the people who write Paint Shop Pro. The version of QVP used here is 5.1. It is useful enough so that it is on the task bar in the lower right of the screen on this computer. ◆

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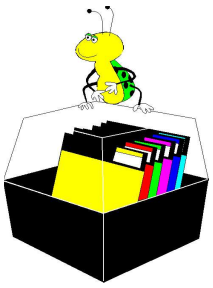
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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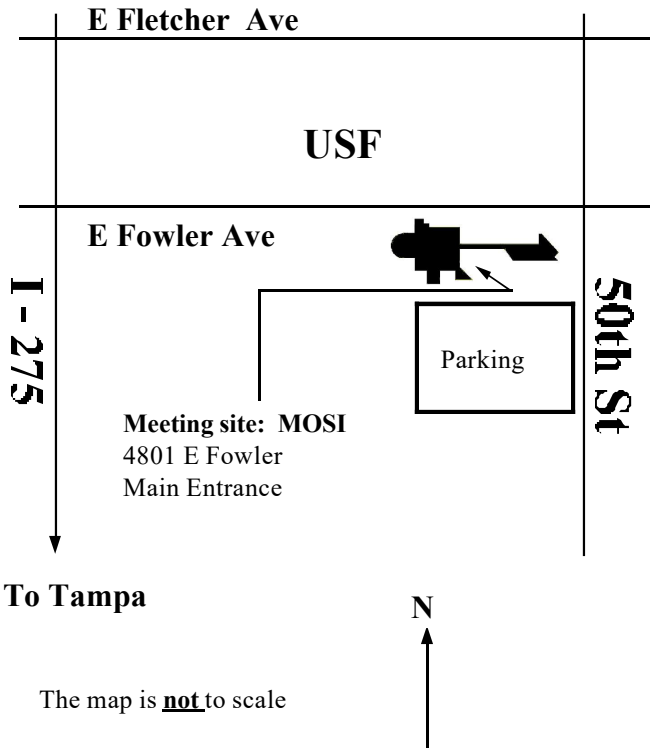


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(Comments……..Continued from page 9)
local Gateway store, and most of my books come from the local Inkwood bookstore; however, technical books I usually order from our User Group's link to Amazon.com, as I did with the DVD above. However, on comparing Amazon.com's price of $50 to Borders.com's price of $35, I was forced to deny the TPCUG their 5% commission and order from Borders. So it pays to compare—something the Internet makes easy. Finally, my daughter made some last minute gift purchases from Nordstrom—and they arrived for Christmas with no special handling. So our e-commerce experiences were all positive.

2000 January 1, 2000 has come, and my computers seem to be fine. The four newer computers seem OK, but not everything has been checked. And on the three older machines, two 486's and a 386—all of whose batteries are dead, thus requiring me to set their clocks to make it 1/1/2000—only the 386 exhibits a problem. Something seems to be wrong with the Microsoft Office Suite. In Note Pad, I could copy and paste for example, but this could not be done in the Office Suite. I also could not insert or format anything in Word. I think this most likely has nothing to do with Y2K. Somehow the Office setup on this machine got corrupted. I am going to relegate this machine to the garage anyway. It is really too old to test anything on. I keep these older machines around to test Visual Basic programs on different platforms, but since no one uses a 386 anymore, it doesn't make sense to take time testing on such a machine anyway. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

SPRING

March in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 4 March 2000

Meeting

Dan Pfeiffer from Comp USA

March 8, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the March meeting we will have a presentation by Dan Pfeiffer from CompUSA. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

Hi ho fellow computer fans! I'm enjoying this president thing. It's just a lot of fun working with all you great people.

Thanks to James Weber for contacting Glen Gasbarrow of e-stamp and allowing us another interesting presentation. I've been considering online postage for a few months and now I'm going to try it. I bought the e-stamp software at buy.com and I'm waiting for it to arrive. As I use the product, I'll try to get an article to William for the newsletter.

This is my second reminder that the Florida Association of Computer Users Groups is holding their Spring Conference in Kissimmee Florida. The conference will begin March 4th. There will be registration and networking on Friday night. The conference will run through March 6th (Sunday afternoon). The conference is for officers of Florida user groups to get together and exchange ideas on ways to make their groups better. Anyone who is interested in attending can be given temporary officer status. For more information go to http://www.facug.org . If you want to go, let me or any of the officers know.

(President.....Continued on page 10)

April 12: George Pilat of Intnet.net will give a presentation on DSL

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

Our meeting started at 6:00 PM with our Windows SIG. The first and most vocal discussion was AOL 5.0 and the number of problems it seems to be causing in Windows. Most of the members had, or knew someone who had, problems with AOL 5.0 upgrade. I think there were only two members who said they had not experienced any issues with their own upgrade. We need to give these people money for next week's lottery. Mary Sheridan passed along some more Windows shortcuts. One that got the most attention (I saw everyone try it right then) was use of the "Print Screen" key. If the print screen key is pressed, a snapshot of your screen is saved to the clipboard. It can then be "Pasted" to any other program through the "Edit" drop down menu.

The general meeting started at 6:30 PM with our president, Mary Sheridan, presiding. Mary announced that Microsoft has agreed to give a presentation on April 4, 2000 at 7:00 PM in the USF Bio-Science Building. They require a 100-person minimum to guarantee their presence, so we will be combining with the Greater Tampa Bay Users Group to beef up the numbers. The Visual Basic SIG is going to be changed around a bit to focus on VB programming for MS Office. Merle was quick to point out that this will be more than just macros: Actual programming to customize and enhance Office. Sign up sheets for attendance and SIGs were passed around.

Our guest presentation started at 6:50 PM. Glen Gasbarro of e-stamp (http://www.e-stamp.com) demonstrated their new prepaid postage service. With e-stamp, postage is downloaded from the Internet, stored on a device attached to your local machine, and printed from your printer. The first time e-stamp runs you register on their web site. This activates the "vault", a device that attaches to your computer's parallel port. When you purchase postage, it is stored in the vault for future use. This offers the definite advantage of having access to postage without being online. Up to $500 can be purchased and stored at one time.

Printing requires a printer with at least 300 dpi resolution, which is any ink jet on the market today. Dot-matrix users may be out of luck. The postage looks a bit like a metered mark common today on envelopes, with the notable addition of an enhanced bar code. These new bar codes look like a checkerboard pattern, but they carry far more information than the original bar codes. Encoded are the amount of postage, mailing address, return address, date postage was printed, envelope size, and serial number. Bar code readers at the Post Office can automatically process this type of postage and ensure proper delivery even if up to 40% of the postage stamp is damaged or if no

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

Microsoft Office 2000

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

A little history. I am going to stretch this review of Office 2000 over several articles in upcoming newsletters. To do the suite justice would take an entire newsletter. There is so much you can do with these programs. I know I haven't begun to push them to their limits, and I have been using them for many years. I started with Microsoft Word 2.0, I believe it was, late in 1991, shortly followed by Excel. I didn't add Access until probably a couple of years later, since at the time I didn't see much need for a database, assuming that I could manage any tabular data that might arise in Excel. Boy, have I learned a lot since then. Now I probably spend as much time using Access as Word and Excel combined.

In the beginning these three programs sold separately, and they were quite expensive--probably at least $200 each. I just don't remember the prices. I do recall that my brother-in-law gave Excel to me as a Christmas gift in 1991 and that when I bought Access a couple years later, I used the fact that I owned a copy of the Windows database program, SuperBase, to get a special upgrade price for Access of less than $150. At some point these three programs were combined into the "Office Suite". Later PowerPoint was added to the suite, and now the suite has expanded to include the additional programs in the table on the right.

Also, when I got started with Word and Excel, they did not dominate the market as they do now. Back then WordPerfect and Lotus 123 were still kings of the word processing and spreadsheet worlds, respectively. Now, of course, both Lotus 123 and WordPerfect are only shadows of their former selves. Additionally, PowerPoint has done in Harvard Graphics and the other presentation software programs. And certainly Access dominates the desktop database market. Thus, Microsoft, in the past nine years since I started using their "office" software, has gone from a small part of this market to dominate it. Why did I purchase it originally instead of the then current industry leaders? Basically I did it because I wanted products made by the same company that worked well together and worked well in Windows. I believe WordPerfect still did not have a Windows version of its program in 1991. I recall, too, that Microsoft also offered some pretty nice pricing to gain market share then.

Now, of course, as mentioned, Microsoft dominates the "office" market. Unfortunately their pricing is not all that aggressive anymore. A quick price check shows Office Standard is $395; Office Professional is $427 (this is a good price); Office Premium is $628. The upgrade versions would be cheaper, of course. You do get a lot for your money, but, for those who are cost conscious, the approximately 50% cheaper price of the competing Corel WordPerfect product vs. Office Standard or Professional may be a draw. In fact, when Corel first took over the WordPerfect suite, they were essentially giving it away to try and gain market share, as I recall.

But they will not get my business at any price—not because I have a dislike for WordPerfect, but simply because I know the Microsoft Office products like the back of my hand and because they blend so well with the other Microsoft programs I use daily like Publisher and FrontPage (which, of course, are now included in the ever expanding Office Suite) and Visual Basic. And almost anything I can think of doing, I can do in these programs.

Two places where Microsoft has not beaten the competition is in high-end desktop publishing and computer graphics. Although I use Publisher and find it quite adequate for our newsletter, I don't think it has made any inroads in the high-end desktop publishing market. Additionally, I have no plans for replacing Corel Draw and Corel Photo-Paint on my computers with PhotoDraw from Microsoft.

	Standard	Small Bus.	Pro.	Premium
Word	X	X	X	X
Excel	X	X	X	X
Outlook	X	X	X	X
PowerPoint	X		X	X
Access			X	X
FrontPage				X
PhotoDraw				X

The Suite Office 2000 comes in four flavors as indicated in the table above. I have the Professional version. This difference in the versions is simply what programs are included. I currently use all these programs except Outlook and PhotoDraw, and I have used Outlook in the past. Now that I have Office 2000, I will begin migrating to the newer versions which are installed on our newest Gateway computer. However, I will still be keeping Office 97 along with Publisher 98 and FrontPage 98 on our older Gateway. (Our ancient Gateway has Office 95 on it.)

Office 2000 Professional comes on two CDs, with the second CD containing Publisher. The one thing I noted about the installation was that there was no indication which component of Office was being installed at any given time. In previous versions, it would say something like "Installing Microsoft Word...", then "Installing Microsoft Excel...", etc. Now it is something like "Completing Office 2000 Installation." Additionally, I was given no opportunity to register online at the end of the installation. That seemed odd.

(Office……Continued on page 4)

(Office……Continued from page 3)

An additional new feature of the installation is that, if you do a custom installation, for many of the features of the different Office programs you may choose to install that feature on your computer, to install it the first time it is called for, to run it from the CD, or simply not to install it. Another new feature is that the Microsoft Windows installer can detect and repair problems associated with installed Microsoft Office 2000 programs, such as missing files and registry settings. On the Help menu, simply click Detect and Repair.

New File Formats While I am writing this I am using Word 2000 as a text editor for Publisher 2000 (there is no real need for this, since Publisher functions quite well as a text editor; however, Word does give you a bit more control over certain formatting features—at least from my point of view). The two programs work together seamlessly. Word 2000 has the same file format as Word 97, but Publisher 2000's file format is different from Publisher 98. However, something new in Publisher is the ability to save a Publisher 2000 document in Publisher 98 format with the possible loss of some of the new features. In the past, when you converted a Publisher document to the newer version, there was no going back.

Access 2000 also has a different file format from Access 97, and, as with Publisher, you can also save an Access 2000 database in an Access 97 format. This latter fact is important for people like myself who have written Visual Basic programs that use Access databases. These programs (until they are modified) will not work with the newer Access file format.

Word Now to the best known program in the Office Suite, Microsoft Word. The look and feel of Word 2000 is the same to me as Word 97. What can I say, it is a word processor—probably the best in the world. You can do all the usual things you would expect from such a modern program. But there are some additions, changes, and improvements. The first thing I noticed was the HTML type of help. Once you have learned how to use this type of on-screen help, you really have no desire to go back to the days of the paper help manuals.

The next thing I noticed was that opening new documents produced an additional entry on the Windows Task bar, just like for a separate program. I like the feature. Now, instead of having to click on the Windows menu item to be able to move between the several documents you may be using, you can click on the Task bar to select, or do the usual Alt-Tab routine to select. Surprisingly, many people apparently don't like this feature.

The second new item I found was the Clipboard feature. It maintains the last 12 items saved to the Windows clipboard from any Windows program. Now that is a real convenience. The next thing I noted is how much better this version of Word handles inserted graphics than previous versions. Now you can easily place a picture anywhere on the page you want and have the text flow around, in front of or behind it. This, with the ability to have text flow from one inserted text box to another (not a new feature), makes Word a candidate for simple desktop publishing, something that I couldn't recommend for earlier versions.

Then, of course, there is the Internet. As with Word 97, you can save your document as a web document in HTML format. You can also import HTML documents into Word and any unknown tags in the document will be preserved, even though Word won't be able to display them. You can now also preview the document as a web document in your browser. But the big addition is web collaboration.

With web collaboration, you can place your documents on a web server for others to review and edit. For this process to work you need the use of a web server running Microsoft Office Server Extensions. Since I don't have access to such a server at the moment, I can not test this feature. But it should work similarly to the more easily attainable form of collaboration through routed email—a feature which existed in Word 97. Here you select the individuals you want to send the document to and the order in which they will receive it. Then when an individual receives the document attached to an email message, the individual may make changes or additions and these alterations will be highlighted in color and the author of the changes identified. The individual then sends the document on to the next individual on the list.

Collaboration seems to be the main thrust ofn changes in Office, and I hear the next version of Office (yes, there is new version that will soon go into Beta testing) will tilt even more in this direction. This is something of interest to large corporate workgroups as opposed to the individual. You might say that Office is moving away from individual use towards group use.

I still think the suite of programs is of use for individuals and advise people I deal with to purchase the Professional version so as to have Access in the package. There are certainly much cheaper alternatives available—but nothing better. I have lived with these programs for the past nine years, learning more as I used them. At present I am discussing their common programming language, Visual Basic for Applications, in our Visual Basic SIG. Come join us if you have an interest.

In the next newsletter I plan on discussing Excel and Access. ◆

Did You Survive February 29th?

By Merle Nicholson, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

You may not have known that the Y2K computer correction wasn't really over on January 1st. Companies still had the leap day of February 29th as a concern for possible computer problems, and here's why.

As everyone knows, the calendar isn't perfect, and the reason is that there aren't exactly 365 days in a year. And further, it isn't exactly 365 and ¼ days either. If it were, adding a leap day every four years would work perfectly but … it's more than 365.25. So to get the calendar eventually right, we need to skip the leap day every 100 years on years that are evenly divided by 100. But … and you guessed it … that still isn't accurate enough because the calendar would be OVER-corrected if that was done absolutely every 100 years, so the plan is to skip not having it on years divisible by 400.

As a result, the years 1900, 2100, 2200 and 2300, even though they're divisible by four, are not leap years because they're divisible by 100. But since 2000 is divisible by 400, it is a leap year.

The temptation when writing code back in the 60's 70's and 80's would be to just divide the year by four (actually for the math majors out there - take the modulus using 4 and test the remainder) because it would take care of all dates through

(February 29… … ….Continued on page 12)

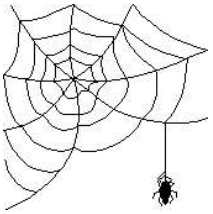
INTERNET PICTURE OF THE MONTH



TRS-80 Model 1
http://www.fortunecity.com/marina/reach/435/

This image is from the PC Museum site at http://www.fortunecity.com/marina/reach/435/
In 1977, the TRS-80 from Tandy Radio Shack was one of the three first personal computers. TRS-DOS was its operating system. The CPU was a Z80 chip, and it had 16 KB of RAM.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Listen.com - music download directory	http://www.listen.com/
Netcraft Web Site Finder	http://www.netcraft.com/
Media News	http://www.poynter.org/medianews/
Brill's Content	http://www.brillscontent.com/
VB Information Center	http://www.vbinformation.com/
WebExhibits Catalogue - Something interesting each day	http://www.webexhibits.com/
America As It Was-Vintage Postcard Links	http://patsabin.com/VintagePostcards/index.htm
Calendars through the Ages	http://www.webexhibits.com/calendars/
Tenement Museum	http://www.wnet.org/archive/tenement/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

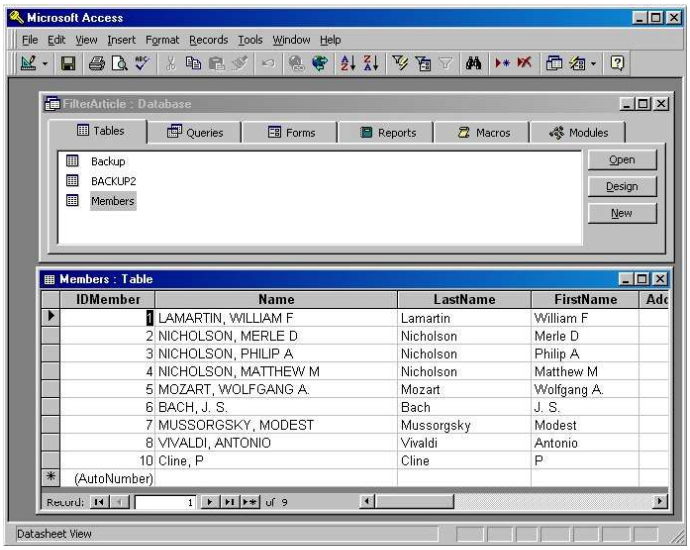
Beginning Access Connections to Data

By Merle Nicholson, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

Very often you must import data into an Access table and do some corrections to the data. The example in this article splits a column containing names (lastname,firstname) into separate columns for LastName and FirstName. It's very easy to do these things with a small amount of VBA code and an Update Query.

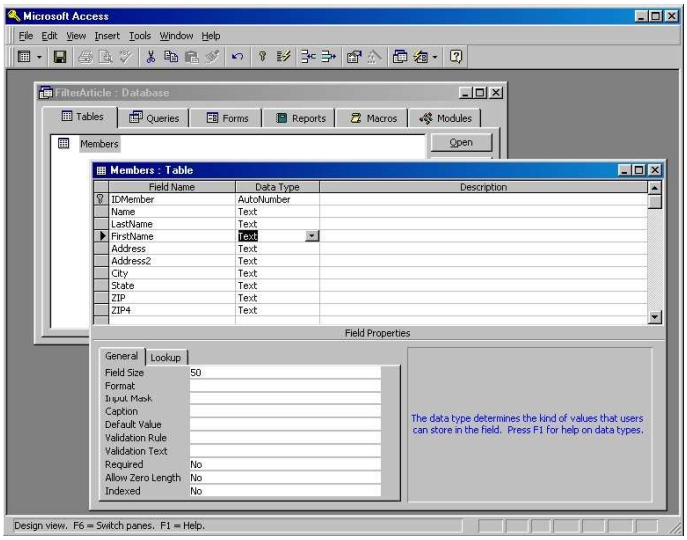
I like to make Functions to accomplish these "data filtering" problems like separating the Last Name from the First Name, Uppercasing just the first letter of each word and so on. So I have a little tool kit of general purpose functions to do this routinely. But what I'll present here is a greatly simplified version of three of these.

So to begin, I'll show you the fictitious data we're going to correct and also the end result. The idea here is that we start off



with the column "Name" that isn't adequate for our purposes and create two new columns "LastName" and "FirstName". Actually, "LastName" is the first word in the Name column (a 'String" of text) and "FirstName" is the rest of the "String". Notice that strings in the original column have commas separating the data, which makes it a little easier to accomplish, but we could have used just a blank or anything else.

So the first thing to do is to insert the columns we need. I simply inserted two new columns, "LastName" and "FirstName", and made them text. Then, referring back to Picture 1, I made a backup of the original data. In the Database Manager, simply right click on Members, and select Copy, then right click again and select Paste. Access selects "Structure and Data" for you, click OK on that and it will ask you for a new name. I selected "BackUp".



Now for a couple of VBA Functions. Open a new module, and start a new function:

```
Public Function ParseLastName(ByVal S As String) As String

End Function
```

This will be our first go at a function to pull the last name from the Name column. The S is the old, long Name string and it "returns" the last name. That's what the "As String" at the end does. A Function takes zero or more parameters (in this case ByVal S as String) and returns a result. Notice that we want to do one database record at a time, and that suits this approach very well. Add to this:

```
Public Function ParseLastName(S As String) As String
' ************************************************************
' Returns all the characters in S that appear before the Comma
' Lowercase all, then Uppercase the first letter.
' ************************************************************
Dim I As Integer
   I = InStr(1, S, ",", vbTextCompare)
   If I < 2 Then
      ParseLastName = ""
      Exit Function
   Else
      S = Mid(S, 1, I - 1)
      S = LCase(S)
      Mid(S, 1, 1) = UCase(Mid(S, 1, 1))
      ParseLastName = S
   End If
End Function
```

The first four lines are comments (note the single quote at the beginning of the lines)

```
' ************************************************************
' Returns all the characters in S that appear before the Comma
' Lowercase all, then Uppercase the first letter.
```

(Access… … …Continued on page 7)

(Access… … ….Continued from page 6)

```
' ***************************************************************
```

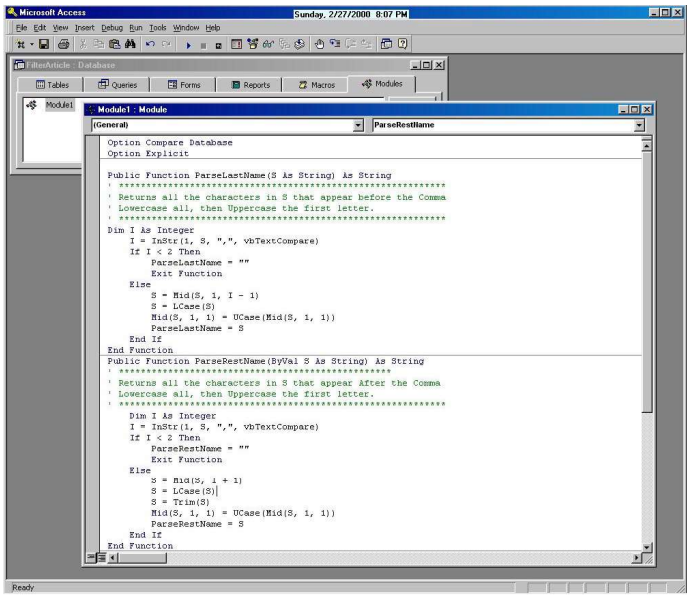
Two of the lines are just decoration for readability, but the middle lines are a description of what the Function does. The line Dim I As Integer declares a variable that we'll be using to save the position of the comma.
I = InStr(1, S, ",", vbTextCompare) uses the Instr(ing) function built into VBA. The Instr function uses three parameters: The position to start (1), The string to search (S) and the character string to look for—in this case, a comma. The vbTextCompare is an option that ignores case, so a lowercase "a" is the same as an uppercase "A". It doesn't apply here because we're looking for a comma, but we use it anyway. Instr saves the result in I. So this lines reads: Look for the comma in S, starting with the first character and save the result in I.

The line If I < 2 then is a test to see if the comma is not found (I will be a 0) or if it's the first character (I = 1). If the comma is the first character, then obviously there is no last name, so we'll just set the result to an empty string (the "") and exit the function. If I is 2 or more then there will be a last name of at least one character, so we'll do the four lines between the Else and the End If.
S = Mid(S, 1, I –1) Uses the VB Mid function to extract the part of S from 1 to I – 1 and assigns it back to S.
S = LCase(S) Uses the LCase function to change the entire word to lower case.
Mid(S, 1, 1) = UCase(Mid(S, 1, 1)) Uses both the Mid function and the UCase function to change the first letter of the word to upper case.
ParseLastName = S Finishes it up, assigning the result to the function name ParseLastName before exiting the function.

The second function ParseRestName is almost identical to ParseLastName. Two changes were made. S=Mid(S, I + 1) is different from the previous function in that this one returns the part of S from I + 1 through to the end of the string – the remainder of the string past the comma. And we've added one line S=Trim(S). This removes any leading and trailing blanks from the string.

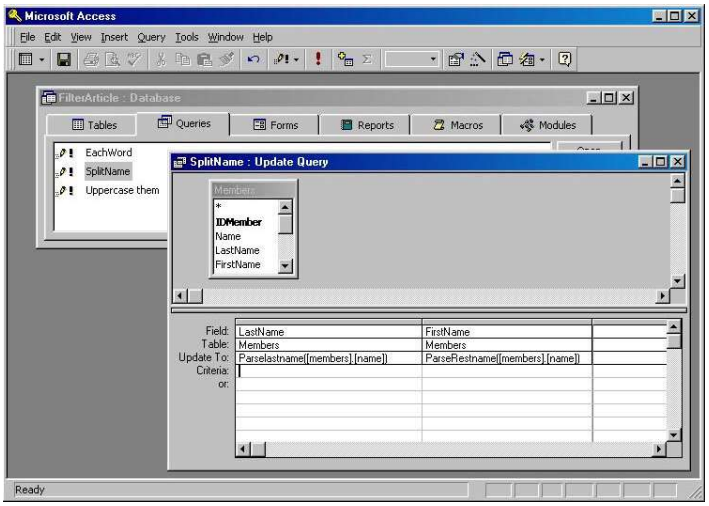
```
Public Function ParseRestName(ByVal S As String) As String
' ***************************************************
' Returns all the characters in S that appear After the Comma
' Lowercase all, then Uppercase the first letter.
' ***************************************************************
   Dim I As Integer
   I = InStr(1, S, ",", vbTextCompare)
   If I < 2 Then
      ParseRestName = ""
      Exit Function
   Else
      S = Mid(S, I + 1)
      S = LCase(S)
      S = Trim(S)
      Mid(S, 1, 1) = UCase(Mid(S, 1, 1))
      ParseRestName = S
   End If
End Function
```

So now we have the two functions for now. They look as shown in Picture 3.



Now we'll use the two Functions in an **update query**. Select the Query tab and press New. Select Design View, and in this case I'll select the Members table in the Show Table, then close it. Go to the menu under Query, and select Update Query. From the list of fields in the table, pull the LastName column down to the first Field column and then pull the FirstName column down to the second Field column.

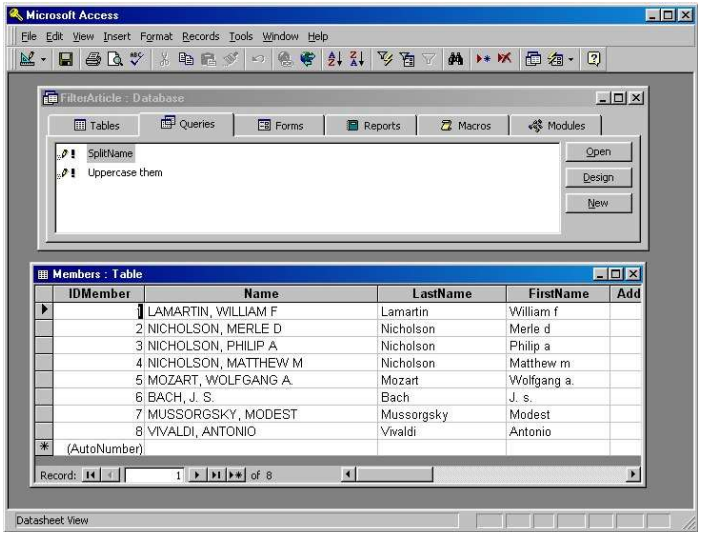
In the Update to: row for LastName type in: ParseLastName ([members].[name]), and for FirstName type in: ParseRestName([members].[name]). So this will use the ParseLastName function to update the LastName column and the ParseRestName to update the FirstName column. Close the query and name it SplitName, then run it. Here's the query – Picture 4:



And when you run the query, here's what the data will look like. (This picture is minus the Cline, P; I put this in later as a further test.)

(Access… … ….Continued on page 8)

(Access… … …Continued from page 7)



Well, what's wrong with this? Two things. One is that LaMartin is not correct, and the initials are not uppercased. So we'll have to correct the initials. There just isn't any way to correct LaMartin except manually. That's OK here because we've saved a lot of work. Imagine if there were a thousand names.

Now to tackle the second problem, and we'll write a new function UpperEachWord to Module1 for this.

```
Public Function UpperEachWord(ByVal S As String) As String
' ****************************************************
' Lowercases all text and then Uppercases the first
' Letter of each word.
' ****************************************************
   Dim I As Integer
   S = LCase(S) ' Lower case all characters
   Mid(S, 1, 1) = UCase(Mid(S, 1, 1)) ' Always uppercase the first letter
   For I = 1 To Len(S) - 1            ' Look at all characters except the last
      If Mid((S), I, 1) = "." Or Mid((S), I, 1) = " " Or Mid((S), I, 1) = "," Or
Mid((S), I, 1) = ";" Then
         Mid(S, I + 1, 1) = UCase(Mid(S, I + 1, 1))
      End If
   Next I
   UpperEachWord = S
End Function
```

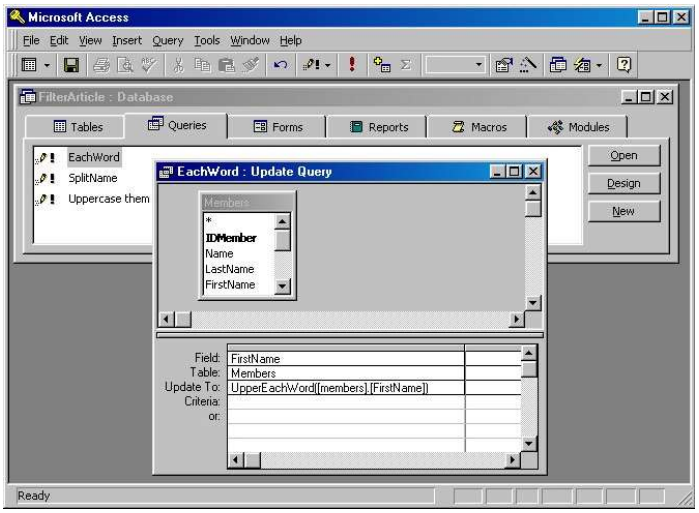
Dim I As Integer As before, reserves I as a variable
S = LCase(S) Lower case all characters
Mid(S, 1, 1) = UCase(Mid(S, 1, 1)) Always uppercase the first letter
For I = 1 To Len(S) - 1 The top of a loop to look at all characters except the last
Next I Is the bottom of the loop.

And in between the For – Next statements:

```
If Mid((S), I, 1) = "." Or Mid((S), I, 1) = " " Or Mid((S), I, 1) = "," Or Mid
((S), I, 1) = ";" Then
         Mid(S, I + 1, 1) = UCase(Mid(S, I + 1, 1))
End If
```

And as the loop steps through each character of S, this group of statements tests the characters to see if the character is a blank, period, comma or semicolon. And if any are found, the combination of Mid and UCase will uppercase the *Next* character.

So we'll close and save the module – it now has three functions. And we'll make a new Update Query as before, and name it EachWord. It looks like this:



So in this update query, we'll just update the FirstName column with an Update to: of UpperEachWord([members].[FirstName]). Save and run it. So the results now are:

Members : Table

IDMember	Name	LastName	FirstName
1	LAMARTIN, WILLIAM F	Lamartin	William F
2	NICHOLSON, MERLE D	Nicholson	Merle D
3	NICHOLSON, PHILIP A	Nicholson	Philip A
4	NICHOLSON, MATTHEW M	Nicholson	Matthew M
5	MOZART, WOLFGANG A.	Mozart	Wolfgang A.
6	BACH, J. S.	Bach	J. S.
7	MUSSORGSKY, MODEST	Mussorgsky	Modest
8	VIVALDI, ANTONIO	Vivaldi	Antonio
10	Cline, P	Cline	P

Now to finish it up, you can select the Name column and hit the delete key. And save the module for the next time you have to transform names. I've probably converted a dozen or more tables in this manner.

It also points out the versatility of Visual Basic for Applications. VBA allows you to extend the language itself by writing your own functions and using them in the same manner as built-in functions. ◆

Free ISPs and Other Thoughts

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@acomp.usf.edu

For those of you who might be interested, let me tell you that I have never had to pay for Internet access.

Many years ago I joined the University IBM PC Users Group. The University gave the group 15 MB of space on the mainframe used by the students. (The University has many mainframes.) This space was used to store the group's member list, and also for general information. We made the mailing labels for a large membership list. In 1981 all the people who had an interest in computers were a member of this group.

Now, in the year 2000, if you are over 60 you may take courses at the University of South Florida at no cost. I have paid for some courses because I wanted to receive credit for those courses. The advantages of this system are not readily apparent. You get many, many perks as a student: discounts on computer purchases, and we used to get about half price for the newspapers, for instance. (The Tribune and the Times were real cheap compared to the "regular" price) At USF they have many locations where there is computer stuff set up for you to use. When you run computers of different makes and styles, you gain a lot of "experience". I have taken almost every computer course they offer at USF: C, UNIX, FORTRAN, COBOL, BASIC, and other computer languages; Software Engineering, HTML, Internet, and so on. If you elect to take the course for free, you do not have to take any exams, nor do you get University credit. You do, however, get an account on the University system. You might elect to take a course called Biblical Archaeology, or maybe Astronomy, or Life after Death, or any of many courses if you want a rounded education. Staff members and their spouses also get a free account on the system. I can't list it all.

Now, the web became a worldwide phenomenon, as you already know. At the present time, many, many sites are offering absolutely free access to the internet. Many others will now be offering a free fast connection called xDSL. You may go to the AltaVista site and register for free access. It takes only a few minutes, and there are no embarrassing questions to be answered. You can be on the Internet in a few minutes by this means. What you see is a one-inch advertising bar across your screen. You can move it up or down but you can't take it off your screen. You must click on one of the advertisements occasionally (though you need not buy anything) as that is the way that AltaVista pays for the process. I have been using this for several months, and it is very worthwhile to join. If for any reason your current ISP site is not convenient, you can fall back to this one. I can find nothing but user friendly, always there and steady service. I have not ever called and found the lines busy. I really recommend AltaVista.

Yesterday, I bought some shoes at Kmart, and I noticed they had a free CD ROM for their free access which they offer with Yahoo. I put the software on my computer and filled out the registration. It asked for the yearly income, but I tagged "less than $24,000" because I do not want to put my income down on any of the Internet sites. In a matter of minutes, I was on the Internet, a space of about one inch across the bottom of the screen has advertisements and other information. I set my screen to bring up Yahoo and I use my own custom screen. It has the latest news, and the stock market info that I want and other bits of information so that I can one click go to various sites. There are music videos as you start the call to Bluelight, and this takes a minute or so. Once that you get on, the only drawback is the advertising. I do not find that a problem as I know that they must try to make money some way. If a minute's delay at sign on and a one inch line of advertising bother you, try AltaVista as it is better in that respect.

I use the Netscape browser, and I just signed on to the AltaVista service, which I am now on. I type google.com in the Netscape location box, and when I got there I searched for "free internet access". You see a list of sites: AltaVista, Juno, Netzero, Free Internet Access, FreePC, Freei.net, Lifestyle, Excite, Monday, Tritium, and many other free sites.

Remember, free Internet access is not new; in Europe it has been available for some time. I also went to Free DSL access, and the list of information is too long to be printed here. I have signed up for a free DSL access to start in April. By that time, I expect we will all be looking at the various services offered free.

Juno: it is a long winded process to join Juno. It is not the type of service I would choose because they also have a subscription service, and I expect that they will want you to join that. The advertising space is about the same as the others. I much prefer AltaVista because it is so easy to use, and it is simple. Juno is more unfriendly to the user. I have used it, and it works, but I am not interested in it. One other thing. Newsgroups are not available from some of these sites. You can't have everything!

I have tried to give you a thought about what I do in my spare time. We need YOU to write an article for the newsletter to tell us what YOU do with your computer. Everyone wants to know. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.* For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(President…….Continued from page 1)

On April 4th at 7pm, The Greater Tampa Bay Computer Users Group will host a Microsoft presentation at USF in the Bio Science Facility auditorium. The Bio Science Facility is known as BSF and is located just west of the northern end of the main entrance of USF (from Fowler Ave.). The auditorium is room 100 and is bracketed by the "L" shaped BSF building and can seat 200 people in a theater-style setting. We've been invited to attend. I told Parker Monroe that he should be able to count on at least 30 of us attending, so if you have an interest in whatever Microsoft has to present, please try to make it. USF now requires all visitors to pay a $2.00 parking fee. You will need to stop at the Visitor's Center located just off of Fowler on the East side of the main entrance road. You can get more information about USF at http://www.usf.edu and a map at http://www.lib.usf.edu/geninfo/campus.html. **We will also have our regular April 12th meeting.**

I saw a few of you at the Microsoft Windows 2000 "Event" (their word, not mine!). I never nap in the afternoon, but I was sure tempted. I also rarely complain, but I really felt my time had been terribly wasted. The program was disorganized and uninformative. I did run into some old friends from my SYSOP days, so it wasn't a total waste.

Dan Pfeiffer of CompUSA will be the presenter at our March 8th meeting. He's done several presentations for the Brandon group, so it should be a good meeting. Please come and bring a friend.

Once again I need to mention that the presentations calendar for 2000 is almost empty. If you have experience with a specific program, please share your talents with the group. If you aren't comfortable standing up and giving a presentation, then write down what you know and submit it to William LaMartin for the newsletter. The strength of the group is based on the efforts of each individual. Hope to see you on March 8th. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

other information is on the envelope. The bar code readers require the 300 dpi resolution to work properly. Postage can be printed to either an envelope or labels, and, with integration into programs like Word or Outlook, postage can be printed directly to a document and used with a windowed envelope. If the postage becomes damaged you can contact e-stamp for a postal claim form to be reimbursed by the Post Office.

The e-stamp program itself is capable of automatically determining correct postage for many different variables. Charts for different zones, package size and weight, shipping preferences, etc., are all accessible through pop up windows. e-stamp keeps up to date on all changes to postal regulations and prices, and updated rates will be made available to all users for the life of the company. They do not currently support registered mail, but they are working on it. The Postal Service requires printed postage to be sent in 24 hrs. E-stamp allows post dating of up to three days, and, if you forget to send your mail in time, a date correction label can be printed and added to the original postage.

The electronic vault is transferable to any machine equipped with a parallel port. When the vault is added to a new machine, you have to return to e-stamp's web site and enter your registration information. This will verify the correct user is still in possession of the vault and prevents theft. Re-registering is only required the first time a user moves to a new machine. The vault can be moved back and forth to any machine it has been registered on.

e-stamp is available in retail stores or by calling 888-4 e-stamp. The initial purchase price is $49.99. There is no monthly service fee as with other online postage companies, but they make their income by charging a service fee from 10% to 5% on postage purchases. The minimum service fee is $4.99 and the maxi-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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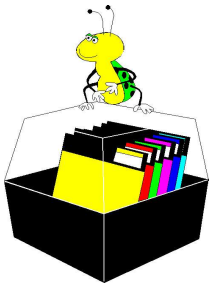
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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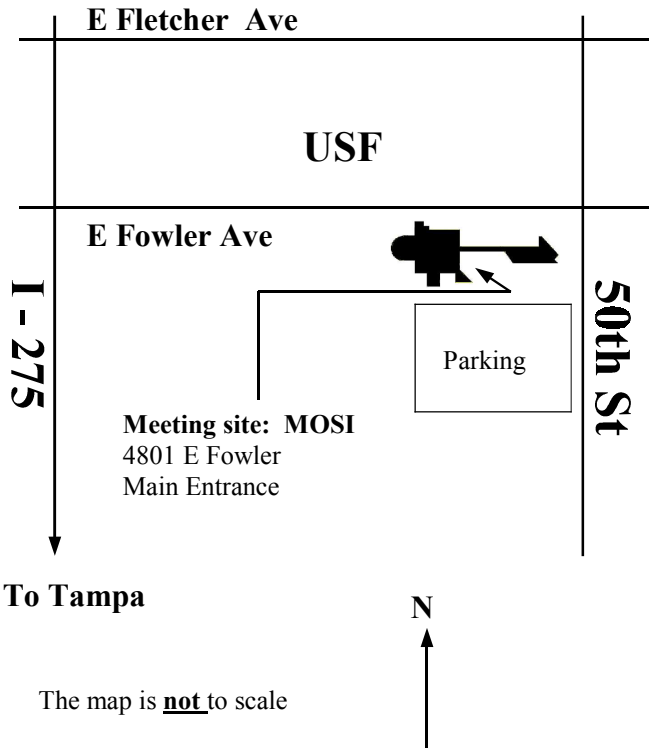
(Minutes… … ….Continued from page 10)
mum fee is $24.99 (on the $500 in postage). e-stamp ships with an address correction CD that will check and correct addresses and zip codes for your destination. Quick Books Pro 2000 ships with a full version of e-stamp.

After the presentation we had our weekly drawing. Among the winners were Will Goble, John Witmer, Brian Lance, Mike Hutchinson, Clark Evans, and Ed Snow. Congratulations to you all. ◆

(February 29… … ….Continued from page 5)
2099. I saw (and wrote – myself) plenty of that kind of code. But, of course, it would have been no good if you were doing calculations on days in the past or future. For instance, on a 30-year house payment or a 100-year property lease, calculating the wrong number of days may throw the payment off by maybe the price of a cup of cappuccino.

So, when we spent the $100 billion the last couple of years for Y2K, we all did the right thing - right? We simply made it accurate from now on. So instead of calculating for a modulo 4, we also did 100 and 400.

And you'd thought you'd heard the last of this in January! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



February in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 2 February 2000

Meeting

Glen Gasbarro from E-Stamps

February 9, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry

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Meeting Preview: At the January meeting we will have a presentation by Glen Gasboro of E-Stamps. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@aol.com

We're already a month into the "brand new year". Where does the time go? For those of you who weren't able to attend our last meeting, you really missed an outstanding presentation. Steve Singer of RDI showed us some new motherboards and CPU's. His information was easy to understand and I, for one, learned things I didn't know I didn't know.

The Florida Association of Computer Users Groups is having their Spring Conference in Kissimmee Florida, March 5th and 6th. The conference is for officers of Florida user groups to get together and exchange ideas on ways to make their groups better. Anyone who is interested in attending can be given temporary officer status. The conference is $35.00, and the food in previous years has been wonderful. If you want to go, let me or any of the other officers know.

The Greater Tampa Bay Computer Users Group has gotten a date from Microsoft of April 4th for a presentation. They don't have enough people to meet Microsoft's 100-person minimum, and neither do we. They are currently trying to find a place to hold the event and have invited us to participate. I'll keep you informed as information becomes available. All those who want to attend need to mark that date on their calendars.

(President.....Continued on page 12)

March 8: Dan Pfeiffer from Comp USA

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Vice President : Mike Hodges (hodges@reflectone.com) 962-2114
Treasurer: Jenny Lind Olin (jlolin@juno.com) 960-5723
Member at Large: Merle Nicholson (merlenic@tampabay.rr.com) 879-3602
Secretary: James Weber (jlweber9@mindspring.com) 671-1612

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the January Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group *jlweber9@mindspring.com*

Our new president, Mary Sheridan, started the Windows SIG at 6:00 p.m. She began with some new shortcut commands for Windows 95/98. We also discussed how all the new devices like PDAs or cameras have their own special battery and how six months from now no one will carry that battery because an “Improved” device is on store shelves. This brought up a local company called “Batteries Plus”. Batteries Plus makes it a point to carry any battery from any device imaginable, and they have been able to custom make batteries not in stock, for a price.

Mary also announced we may be having a swap meet with the Brandon Users Group. No definite date has been set at this time, but there was considerable interest among the members present. Mike Hodges made a plea to anyone with an older system they would like to donate to a needy family. Mike will post a request on our discussion page for anyone interested.

The general meeting started at 6:30 p.m. with Mary introducing the new officers. She also announced a tentative schedule for upcoming presentations.

Steve Singer of RDI was our guest speaker. He gave a presentation of current and upcoming computer hardware. Mr. Singer started with motherboards by passing out an Intel and an AMD motherboard for everyone to inspect while he pointed out and described the function of all the slots and ports. He then briefly described the types of memory likely to be encountered in your machine. Mr. Singer even passed out a new AMD Athlon processor for our enjoyment, but he didn’t let it get too far out of sight. Steve also made us aware of a new development with Intel’s new P-III processors: They will do away with the cartridge based Slot 1 and enhance the socket 370 that current Celeron based systems are built around. A bit of bad news for Celeron owners is current 370 boards won’t accept the new P-III “Flip Chips,” as they will be called.

With the February release of Windows 2000 upon us, Steve warned that all DOS code has been fully and finally removed from the Windows kernel. For most people this is not a problem, as Windows 2000 will probably be shipped to them on a new system, but if you are going to use hardware or software that has been around awhile you may find yourself out of luck.

(Minutes.....Continued on page 4)

Y2K Glitch with Outlook

By Tom Cone, Tampa PC Users Group
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Some of you may use Microsoft's Outlook application to manage your calendar, contact lists, e-mail mailboxes, and so on. I've bumped into a Y2K problem with Outlook's import and translation utility which you should know about. Even if you don't use Outlook, you might find this interesting, because it illustrates a type of problem you might encounter in other contexts.

I learned during the first week of January that Outlook 97 was unable to recognize dBase tables so that data within those tables could no longer be imported into contact lists inside Outlook. When the import process was started, Outlook returned an error message saying that the source file was either corrupt, or possibly that it wasn't a dBase file in the first place. dBase3 and dBase3+ tables have been around a long time, I daresay since before 1985, possibly longer. These are database files in which each individual record has the same overall length. This particular kind of fixed length format is well understood and is often included in the import routines of other commercial programs. For example, both Microsoft Word and Corel WordPerfect can easily read and import dBase files. Spreadsheet programs like Excel and Quattro Pro can, too. Prior to 1/1/2000, so could Outlook. But not afterwards.

I was asked to troubleshoot the problem to see if the problem could be identified. My first guess was that the dBase files had, in fact, become corrupted, possibly with a virus. Testing disproved the presence of any viruses, however. I then tested the integrity of the dBase files by importing them into a variety of other programs. All worked as expected, except for Outlook. I then speculated that perhaps Outlook 2000, the latest release from MicroSoft, might not have the problem, so I tried it. Oops. Same problem. Both Outlook 97 and Outlook 2000 are unable to import dBase files created after 12/31/1999.

Interestingly, Outlook contains an "export" engine which permits one to export data from contact lists and store them in external files. One of the file types supported by the export routine was dBase, so I exported some into files of this format to see if they could then be immediately imported back into Outlook. Oops. The export routine works, but the import engine continued to complain that it could not recognize the source file as a dBase file, stopping the import process dead in its tracks.

dBase files and early versions of FoxPro tables employ the same file format, so I tried to import some FoxPro DBF files. Oops, again. Outlook cannot import FoxPro files created after 12/31/1999 either.

At this point I was stumped. Testing revealed that if I dialed back the system date on my PC to a date earlier than 1/1/2000 I could create dBase or FoxPro files that Outlook would recognize and import. This confirmed for me at last that I was dealing with a Y2K problem.

I posted some inquiries in relevant newsgroups on the internet and received a helpful response reminding me that, in addition to the data, each dBase file contains a variable length header record which precedes the data itself. When the file is created on disk, the header is written first, and then the records containing actual data follow. The respondent mentioned that one of the elements stored in the header of each dBase file is the date the file was last modified.

Doing a bit of research, I discovered that the second, third and fourth bytes of each dBase file contain numbers representing the year, month and day, respectively, on which the file was last modified. Using a disk editor utility, I opened a few dBase files and examined the values stored in the second, third and fourth bytes at the top of each file. I found that there were numbers present in each position and that these numbers are stored as hexadecimal values. For you non-programmer types, this means that each numeric value was stored as a number using base 16 notation. I compared the "year last modified" byte in files created in 1999 against files created in 2000. It turns out that 1999 is represented as hexadecimal 63 or 63h. This is the same as a decimal 99 or 99d. The “year last modified” byte is stored as 64h if the file was created in the year 2000. The value 64h is the same as 100 decimal.

Using the disk editor I was able to modify the second byte of some dBase files, changing the stored value from 64h to 63h (i.e. from 100 to 99 expressed in decimal notation). When I did this, the files would then be recognized by Outlook as valid dBase files and could be imported without incident, even when the system file date for the dBase file was itself 1/1/2000 or later. This confirmed for me that Outlook was not using the system file date of the DBF file to reject the files. Instead, it suggests strongly that Outlook's import utility was designed to check for "valid" values in the "year last modified" byte in the header of dBase and FoxPro files, using routines which stumble when the value there equates to decimal values greater than 99. The internal logic declares the source file invalid and does not recognize it as a valid dBase or FoxPro file unless the value in the second byte of the DBF file equates to 99 or less.

I mentioned this to one of our members, who asked a pertinent question. Whose fault is this glitch? One might argue that the original dBase file format is flawed by using only

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one hexadecimal byte value to represent the "year last modified". With only one byte to use, values are limited to a range from zero to 255. The designers of dBase (and FoxPro) must have decided to simply subtract 1900 from the current year and store the resulting difference value in this field. For files last modified in 1985, an 85 would be stored there (55h). For files last modified in 2001, a 101 would be stored there (65h). This design covers all the way to the year 2155 without requiring an additional byte to distinguish the century. It's true that if the designers had dedicated two bytes of storage to express the year last modified, they would have been able to save the decimal equivalent of both the century and the year. However, it's hard to argue that their design is flawed when it reliably covers all years from 1900 to 2155. Remember, this is not data. These values are simply a record of the year the file itself was last modified. Covering file modifications over such a long period of time seems a generous and reasonable approach to me.

So I lay the blame at Microsoft's doorstep. The Outlook import engine is flawed and fails to adequately deal with dBase and FoxPro format files. Its internal "technique" of recognizing dBase and FoxPro files mishandles the second byte of the source file, improperly rejecting it when values there equate to decimal 100 or higher. Whether this is a problem in Outlook, per se, or possibly in the ODBC interface between Outlook and the source tables, I don't know, but it's clear to me that the problem exists and is found within the import routines employed by Outlook.

Fortunately, it was relatively easy for me to write a BASIC program which opens DBF files and resets the second byte to 99 decimal, thereby making the file "visible" to Outlook again. This work around will be awkward but it's fast and reliable. Unfortunately, it's going to be necessary until Microsoft releases a patch which corrects Outlook. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
Mr. Singer then covered some of the newer peripherals available, such as AGP, USB, Fire Wire, and UDMA 66. AGP is a new video card standard that greatly increases the speed at which images are drawn to your screen. USB and Fire Wire are plug-ins for external devices that will replace the old serial and parallel ports. USB offers the ability to add or remove devices like printers or scanners without shutting down the computer and rebooting. The USB port can address up to 127 devices at a time, with the help of powered hubs. Fire Wire is a faster data transfer technology that has seen a lot of use in the digital camera/camcorder industry. UDMA 66 is the newest connection for IDE hard drives that offers twice the speed of the previous stan-

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Editor's Comments: Scan Disk, Defrag, Scuzzies, and More

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Scan Disk and Defrag This past month I encountered a couple of problems with hard disk maintenance. I have Scan Disk and Defrag set up to run at certain scheduled times. The last couple of times that the defragmentation program ran, for my F drive it gave the message:

> *Windows cannot finish defragmenting this drive because it has encountered a problem. Click Help and carry out the instructions for running Scan Disk, and then try defragmenting again.*
>
> *ID No:DEFRAG00205*

I had run Scan Disk several times to no avail over a period of a couple of weeks. F still could not be defragged, and I began to get a bit worried that a hard drive problem was developing. So I ran SpinRite (see the November 1999 newsletter for a review) to check the drive for surface errors. After a three-hour check, SpinRite declared that F was in perfect shape. Of course, SpinRite doesn't check the logical file structure of the drive.

Time to turn to http://search.microsoft.com. I typed in the first eight or so words of the error message and did a search. I was rewarded with an article stating the following:

> *This issue can occur if the Applog file in the hidden C:\Windows\Applog folder is damaged. ……..*

It then instructed me to find the folder, select all entries in the folder and delete them. After doing this I was able to successfully run defrag on the F drive. Now, how long do you think that it would have taken me to figure this out without Microsoft's help? Forever! What would be the normal response of a computer technician or help desk person to the question? I think they would probably tell you to either live with not being able to defrag the drive or to do their favorite fix--reformatting the drive and starting over. But this would not have solved anything, since the problem was on the C drive.

A few days later Scan Disk gave me trouble on the C drive. I received a message from Windows concerning incorrect file information on the C drive. Windows said to run Scan Disk and have it repair the error. The only problem was that Scan Disk would hang and never finish with the drive. I solved this problem myself without any help from the Internet by dropping to DOS and running the DOS version of Scan Disk. It found a

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discrepancy in the amount of free disk space being reported on the C drive and corrected it.

Since I don't have enough computer problems of my own, I help others solve theirs. My most recent such endeavor was setting up a client's new Dell computer: Moving data from the old computer; installing all the old programs on the new computer; setting up printers, a tape drive and a scanner; importing the old Windows address book, mail messages, Internet Explorer Favorites, etc. There is a lot more to do than you would think—that is, until you actually start to do it. Once you start the process, you see how much is to be done--and some of it doesn't go smoothly. Added to the list above, there is still the Internet connection to configure, the email program to configure, and many other simple but necessary tasks. Then you need to check that all the programs you have reinstalled work correctly with their data. There are always minor problems to be worked out: You forget to bring over the data for a particular program, or, one you wouldn't think of, a particular document needs a special font that the new computer setup doesn't have. So it's back to the old computer to collect some of those old fonts.

With all this going back and forth it is nice to have a network setup. Of course with the Road Runner cable modem connected to the network card in the new computer, each time I want to set up a network connection to the old computer, I need to change the network settings, shut down, disconnect from the

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Internet picture of the month



The oyster bar at the Acme Oyster House, New Orleans, LA, as seen on the Oyster CAM
http://www.nola.com/oystercam/

This image is from the live web cam, known as the Oyster Cam, located in the Acme Oyster House in New Orleans. It updates every 20 seconds, so you can see how fast the oyster shucker is filling an order. It is a place dear to my heart from my time in New Orleans. The picture quality suffers from the usual web cam limitations.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Williams-Sonoma (kitchen supplies)	http://www.williams-sonoma.com/
NOLA Live OysterCAM (Acme Oyster House CAM)	http://www.nolalive.com/oystercam/
About.com - The network of sites led by expert guides	http://www.about.com/
Windows Magazine	http://www.winmag.com/
Forms And Publications - IRS	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/forms_pubs/
Inflation Calculator	http://www.westegg.com/inflation/
Emergency Medicine at NCEMI	http://www.ncemi.org/
FAST Search All the Web, All the Time	http://www.alltheweb.com/
eComplaints.com - The Complaint Registry	http://ecomplaints.com/
Eckerd Pharmacy Online	http://www.eckerd.com/
Walgreens Online Pharmacy	http://www.walgreens.com/
CVS Online Pharmacy Store	http://cvs.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Microsoft Cordless Phone

By Merle Nicholson, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group
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Microsoft makes a telephone? Are they keeping it a secret? Well, in some ways maybe they should keep it a secret, but overall it's a computer geeks' telephone, tailor-made for people like me!

I first heard of it from Kevan and Mary Sheridan at our December board dinner, and a few weeks later I started looking for prices on the Internet and got this baby delivered to my door for less than $65. I'd been looking for a cordless phone for some time and hadn't found one that suited me for any price, until now.

Briefly, it's a cordless phone in two parts. One is a base station connected to your computer. The second part is the handset and charger base. This is exactly what I'd been looking for – the handset never has to return to the base station to be recharged. I don't understand why all cordless phones don't do this. You need to locate the base near a telephone outlet, and the phone itself anywhere you want! Good concept.

So as you may have guessed by now, the system provides you with an answering system facilitated by the computer connection. The connection is by way of a serial port, and the base is actually a voice modem with a 900 MHz radio transmitter/ receiver to communicate with the handset. The entire setup is done on the computer in software. It has full voicemail capability, allowing you to set up mailboxes and corresponding announcements.

The handset looks pretty standard except for a number of extra keys. You use the handset to play messages, store and delete them. You can speed dial from a speed dial directory you create on the computer, and you can use its voice recognition capability to speed dial. Yep, it has voice recognition, and it also has computer voice speech, again enabled by the power of your computer. You can use voice commands at the handset to handle messages if you wish. I find it kind of clunky to do that, but I can certainly see an impaired person doing it, and indeed there's some disability enabling built in and it's pretty well documented, too.

The handset has a speaker on the back so that you can hear the recorded messages from nearby like a normal recording machine works, but is also used to broadcast announcements when incoming calls come in. It uses caller ID to announce the caller. It looks up the incoming call in the address book for an entry, uses any special announcement you've built in for that person and alternately will read the name if it's transmitted by caller ID, and also announce if the caller ID is blocked or unavailable.

On the computer side, there's a Call Manager that needs installing. It uses the Address book from Outlook Express for the database, and adds a couple of tabs in the Address book for announcement and also custom greetings. A custom greeting can be made for any person in the address book. It stores all messages as .WAV files and since it goes to the hard drive you don't have any serious limitations on length and number, although you can choose to limit the length if you wish.

The Call Manager saves all incoming and outgoing calls in a log, saving the number called (if called from the handset) and all numbers received, date, time and duration of each call. You can retrieve messages from the Call Manager, and make calls using speakers and microphone plugged into the sound card. In my case I use a headset and attached microphone. This works for me because I use a networked PC that also is my Internet sharing on my network and don't care about sound otherwise. This PC is always on anyway and is on a UPS.

There's much more that this puppy does. It even reads your incoming Internet mail to you if you remotely call in for messages. There's more, but you can do more research on the Internet if you're interested.

The downside – there always are some aren't there? First – the obvious. You have to have your computer on all the time. And it has to be able to run some pretty intensive software at the same time. Speech synthesis and voice recognition (as a separate, concurrent application).

And the criticisms. The handset speaker is cheesy, and that's a kind description. The telephone is a single line (that's ok with me). The software isn't totally reliable, although it's good in my opinion. I have had a couple of lockups in the last couple of months. The voice command features are slow. (I don't use them anyway.) The phone is good for a geek like me, but I can't see it being sold at Best Buy until some more development is done.

Still, I like it and as long as I'm willing to do the care and feeding, my spouse likes it, too. We especially like the voice announcement of incoming calls, and the ease of managing the recorded messages both from the handset and from a remote call, which is excellent.

Microsoft Cordless Phone, PC Phone System MP-900 $199 retail, but $59 and up at many on-line outlets. http://www.microsoft.com/phone/ ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 5)
cable modem, connect to the other computer and boot up again. Then I can find the old computer on the network and transfer the necessary files. To keep from doing the above again when I needed a particular directory I had missed getting from the old computer, I decided to do a Direct Cable Connection between the two computers parallel ports. First, I had to install the Direct Cable connection feature on the new machine. It seems no computer manufacture ever enables this Windows feature. Doing such a connection is never a sure thing in my experience. Sometimes I have had to reach into my bag of tricks and spend some time with the network settings to get it to work, but this time the two computers found each other fine. What I noticed, though, was how slow the Direct Cable Connection between parallel ports was when compared with a network connection between network cards.

Well, I had saved what I dreaded until toward the end--installing the HP 3c scanner. Moving an older SCSI scanner to a new Windows 98 computer can be difficult. You have two problems right off. You need new software and you need a new SCSI interface card, since the old Deskscan II software will not work in Win 98 and the old ISA HP SCSI card must be replaced by a PCI plug and play SCSI card. I knew this because HP tells you this at their site. When I installed Win 98 on my computer some time back, I had to pay for the new software for my HP ScanJet IIcx, but now you can download it for free.

What I didn't realize was the difficulty I was going to have in getting the new computer to give the SCSI card an IRQ with no conflicts. I installed the SCSI card, booted the computer, and when I opened up the Windows Device Manager, my heart sank. The Adaptec SCSI adapter had the dreaded yellow tag next to it. A check showed that it was sharing IRQ 3 with several other devices. Now, IRQ 5 appeared to be free, so why was the computer assigning IRQ 3 to the Adaptec card? A check of the BIOS showed that IRQ 5 was reserved for legacy devices and was not available. I changed the setting, making it available, and assumed that when I rebooted everything would be fine. It wasn't. The SCSI card had indeed jumped to IRQ5, but so had the sound card, and the SCSI card still had its yellow tag.

I tried the usual trick of switching the PCI cards in the computer to different slots to no avail. Next, I disabled COM 1, freeing IRQ 4, but for some reason none of the devices would use this interrupt. And there is no way in the BIOS of this computer to make them. Time to call Dell, where, after a 30 plus minute wait, I was advised that, since they didn't sell or install the SCSI card, they couldn't help me. Well, I asked, couldn't they then tell me how to make a card—any card—use a free IRQ. No, not really was the answer, since the computer determined all of that. So much for Dell's help. I was on my own. So I called Merle Nicholson, our hardware expert. He had some suggestions, some of which I had already tried, and one that I hadn't. He suggested switching from a PS2 mouse to a serial mouse, freeing IRQ 12. Since I didn't have such a mouse available at the moment, I continued with my efforts.

I discovered that if I took the sound card out, the SCSI card and scanner installed fine, with the SCSI card using IRQ 5. But put the sound card back, and the yellow tag came back to the SCSI card. Somehow, the sound card got preference. But that gave me an idea: Create two hardware profiles, one in which you had a scanner but no sound and the other in which you had sound but no scanner. I did that, and it worked. When you booted the computer, you were given a choice as to which profile you were going to operate under. You could either listen to sounds or you could scan in photographs and documents. My client didn't think much of my solution. And, really, I didn't either. It was just a temporary solution until I could produce the real one.

A good night's sleep and a bit of Internet research produced the fact that of the several sound components listed in the Windows Device Manager, the one called "Sound Blaster 16 Emulation" was only used for sound in DOS programs. Well, I could do away with that. So the next morning, I went into the Scanner only Hardware Profile and added back all the sound components except the Sound Blaster 16 Emulation one. And to my relief, I now had both sound and a scanner working. Both the SCSI card and the sound card were happily sharing IRQ 5. I then removed the other profile and renamed the remaining one "Original Configuration". To test things out, I scanned a few photographs and put in a DVD disk and listened to a surround-sound sound track. Yes, this computer has a surround-sound system. And I didn't have to try the serial mouse that I had brought along at Merle's suggestion.

Now, why couldn't that Dell fellow have suggested that I disable SoundBlaster 16 Emulation? IRQ conflicts must be a common problem they encounter all the time.

There was one major hurdle left--moving the HP Colorado 8 GB tape drive from the old computer to Dell. Of course, physically removing the drive from the old computer and installing it in the new computer is no problem. You just make sure that the CD drive on the new computer is set to master and the tape drive is set to slave, since the IDE tape drive is attached to the empty connection on the secondary IDE controller cable where the CD drive is already attached. The tape drive appeared in the computer's BIOS and in the Windows Device Manager (although it might have been only identified as tape drive there). You are then supposed to run a little HP utility that determines if the installation is correct—at least that is what you did in Win 95. It said no deal--

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Killer Collection of Software

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
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Anyone that has read any of my articles in the past knows that I have kind of an addiction to software. I guess that's why I've been the librarian for our users group for over 10 years now. Originally my job as librarian was to collect shareware software, copy it to diskette, catalog it and bring it all to the monthly meetings so that our members could make copies. With the advent of the Internet, sites such as http://www.Download.com and http:///www.Tucows.com have replaced my original duties as librarian. There was no reason for me to continue to collect the files when these online databanks of Shareware (and Freeware) have it all right there just for the downloading.

To start your own collection of software just jump onto the Internet and do a search for Shareware or Freeware and you'll have enough places to visit to keep you busy for several days. If you're not into searching for software, there are plenty of Internet sites like ZDNet.com that will send you daily or weekly updates of the hottest software on the market. And it is all usually free for the downloading.

So, what's a librarian for a users group do these days? Try to keep you informed of some of the good software that's out there that everyone should have in their collection. So here goes (but not necessarily in any order…)

- **ICQ** - This is one of the most popular Internet instant messaging tools, and it's free. I use it every day for direct contact and exchanging files with certain individuals over the Internet. It's fast, easy and free, which meets my criteria for good software. Similar to **AOL's Instant Messenger** but does not have to go through a server which, I think gives greater privacy and security.
- **Copernic 2000** - Another freebee that is one powerful search tool for the Internet. It's easy to use and you get great results. (As a side note, there are also two Internet based search agents located at http://google.com and http://alltheweb.com that are also extremely fast.)
- **Go!Zilla** or **GetRight** – If you're into downloading software from the Internet, as I am, these two download managers are a must. They both have familiar Explorer style interfaces and work similar to what you're already used to. I personally use GetRight that automatically uses my virus scanning program to check for viruses on each file I download, which we all know is a must! Just select the files you want to download and you choose when the download will take place. There are too many benefits of each to list here. Go!Zilla is free and GetRight is Shareware. Also out there is **NetZip** and **Download Demon**.
- **Paint Shop Pro** – I couldn't begin to compute without this one. It's now up to version 6 and I've used it since version 1. I've reviewed it a couple of times in the past in this newsletter, and it just keeps getting better. It will stack up against any of your professional graphics programs that cost several times Paint Shop's $79 cost. They've recently added an animator program to the mix that most of the big boys don't come with.
- **WinZip** – I'm not sure if there is anyone who doesn't know about this one, but, just in case, I thought I'd better mention it. A utility that makes it very easy to compress and uncompress one or several files together, which is especially useful for sending files over the Internet.
- **Homesite** – If you haven't created your own web site yet, you will eventually. Homesite makes it real easy with its WYSIWYG design component. No more code to learn. Just jump right in and create. Homesite has consistently gotten high honors and is worth its Shareware price tag. But try it. If you like it… buy it for $89. If you don't like it… don't buy it. That's what Shareware is all about.
- **RealJukebox** – Another excellent free program that lets you create and play your own collection of digital music in several formats, one of the most popular being MP3, which takes up much less space than the standard audio file on your music CD. The difference with RealJukebox and most of the other "ripper" programs is that you can listen to your CDs while you rip (copy) the tracks off of them. I've used this program to take my favorite songs off different CDs and make one CD with all my favorites. (Yes, it's legal!) There is also support for automatically downloading the names and songs from your CDs off the Internet (CDDC) to create a database of your music. To go along with this program, check out **WinAmp** and **Sonique**, two free music players with a lot of bells and whistles.
- **ClipMate for Windows** – One thing Windows has always lacked is the built-in ability to manage your clipboard. It's always been *first in – first out* (FIFO). You can copy just about anything and paste it just about anywhere but as soon as you copy something else the last thing copied is gone. Enter ClipMate. Now you can clip text, bitmaps, pictures, etc., and paste them whenever you like. ClipMate allows thumbnail views of Clipboard contents, lists, content editing, printing, magnification, and more. It's Shareware but well worth the $20.
- **iHarvest** – If you use the Internet to search for information, like most of us do, then you should really have iHarvest in your collection. It is advertiser-funded freeware that collects data of your choosing, whether it be whole pages or selected text and graphics, and adds it to your "WebBase," which iHarvest lets you categorize to your liking. You can also add other content, such as

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emails, spreadsheets, or shortcuts and set up agents to categorize information you collect automatically. This is a great idea.

I've only mentioned a few of the thousands of programs that are available on the Internet, and I really only mentioned application and utility type software. If you're into games, business, education, development, Internet, graphics or whatever, it's out there, and not just Windows based stuff either. You can also find software for Unix, Linux, Palm-computing and other operating systems, too. What's the catch?… Nothing… and if you think it's probably not as good as the software you can buy off the shelf, I can tell you this. Typically, the only difference is the price, and a lot of it is **FREE!** You make the choice. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 7)

the drive was not installed. Well, I knew that it was and that all the cables were connected and the jumpers were set correctly. So after checking everything again, I went ahead and installed the Colorado Backup software. Well, it ran but could find no tape drive to work with. Time to call HP.

From HP, I received excellent service--at no charge--on this year old drive. There were two problems. First, the drive needed a firmware update, which I was instructed to download from the HP web site and to run. I did that, and the downloaded program updated the tape drive's firmware. At one point in the update, you get the warning that you are now past the point of no return. If you stop the process now before it is finished, your drive will probably be rendered useless. I didn't plan on stopping the process, but what about Tampa Electric. Just the day before, the power had flicked off momentarily, causing the computer to reboot while I was luckily doing nothing crucial with it. These are the times you wish you had a battery backup system.

Second, with the firmware update finished, I was instructed to uninstall the HP Colorado Backup Software since it wouldn't work correctly in Windows 98. The new software could not be downloaded via the Internet but would have to be ordered from HP at a total cost of around $30. The technician transferred me to the software order person, where I was informed that the software was on back order. So until the new software arrives, the tape drive will be useless.

Dell versus Gateway In the past month I have had an opportunity of dealing with both a new computer from Dell and one from Gateway. Which computer or company is better? I really can't answer that. The answer probably depends on the problems an individual encounters in using the new computer—and the way we use our computers is quite varied. You may never encounter the problems that I might run into the first day. You would then be happier with your choice than I.

I bought my new computer from Gateway since I have been very happy with them since 1991. Their machines are a good value and the support is good. They also have a store in Tampa where I can bring my machine for service if needed. However, this last item proved to be a stumbling block for the individual who bought the Dell. She said that in the Gateway warranty was a clause to the effect that if you lived near a Gateway store, you might be required to bring the computer in to the store for service during the usual first year of on site service. That, along with a perceived better price on the Dell computer, pushed her to Dell. (It is not that easy to compare two systems from different manufacturers, since they don't offer the exact same setups.)

You will not go wrong buying from either Dell or Gateway. Of course, you will not get the best possible price, either. There will always be better bargains elsewhere.

As to phone help, I have to give Gateway the nod. You usually have a technician on the phone within five minutes who will do their best to help you. In two calls made to Dell, a technician was never available in less than 30 minutes. And, as indicated above, one of them refused to help with the SCSI card installation since the card wasn't bought from Dell. I suppose they expect you to buy new scanners and other peripherals from them when you buy your computer. The second technician at Dell was quite willing to spend a lot of time trying to figure out how to make the Dell supplied modem hang up after a specific interval of inactivity. There is usually a setting for this in the modem setting in Control Panel, but for this modem it was grayed out. After about an hour we agreed that this modem probably didn't support this feature.

Regarding the Gateway technicians, with whom I have had much more contact over time, I have found some of the them very thin on knowledge about my particular problem. In fact, some simply gave incorrect information. Of course, there are those among them who know the solution right off the bat. What I have never found with a Gateway helper, though, is the refusal to help you on a problem.

Second in importance to phone help is online help at the company's web site. And here I have to give the nod to Dell. Their support site seems better than Gateway's. For a new computer, when you go there for the first time and enter the identification of your computer, you can look at all the specifications of your computer at the site. When you return to the site, they recognize you (by a cookie, I suppose) and take you directly to your machine's information. Additionally there are many documents on how to solve various problems. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com.* For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

More On My Dell Warranty

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
mfriendtampa@worldnet.att.net

Back in December, Dell Computer replaced my hard drive under my parts warranty. That was the worst of my problems. I had been living with another deficiency in my computer for many months, so I decided to get it repaired also before the warranty expired.

This other "deficiency," as I have called it, seemed quite minor. The On/Off button on the front of the computer had ceased to function. I had removed the front plate to see if I could repair the problem and learned that a small plastic part had broken and a piece of it was missing. I thought if I could find the missing piece I could possibly glue it back together and be almost as good as new. I looked everywhere and the missing broken part could not be located. Lacking a proper switch I had removed the front panel so I could get to the On/Off button, which I activated with the rubber eraser of a number 2 pencil.

Frankly, I was tiring of this procedure, so Dell was again called, and the technician said he would have the replacement part sent me by Airborne. Days passed and no shipment. I called again and spoke to a different technician who found my reference number but could not find anything on the status of the shipment. This technician offered to put through a priority request to his parts department. Another week passed by, and, as I was about the put in another call to Dell, I heard a vehicle door shut in my drive, and there was the Airborne delivery truck.

In his hands he held two items. One was a letter sized sign off sheet for me to sign accepting delivery. The other was a box about two feet square. Now I wondered why was I getting such a large package. All was looking for was a small plastic switch about the size of a silver dollar. So I opened the box like a kid wondering what kind of Christmas present the box contained. Well, I was really surprised.

The box contained an entire replacement front panel. It appears that Dell has changed the appearance of the front panel or no longer has the one which originally came with my computer. Also, the little switch behind my old front panel was no longer used. Now the replacement front panel has a heavier duty switch built into the panel itself.

Anxiously, I attempted to install the new panel. Unfortunately, it fits too closely to my 3 ½" floppy drive which now makes that drive unusable. At this point I go back into the big box and find another smaller box and darned if it didn't contain another floppy drive which I was to learn fit more deeply into the front slot meshing perfectly with the new front panel. All I have to do now is return my old 3 ½" floppy to Dell as credit for the replacement one they sent.

I certainly got more than I bargained for in this exchange and wanted to share this experience with everyone. ◆



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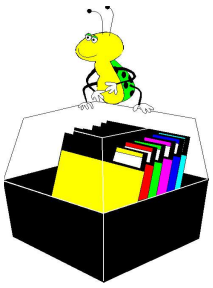
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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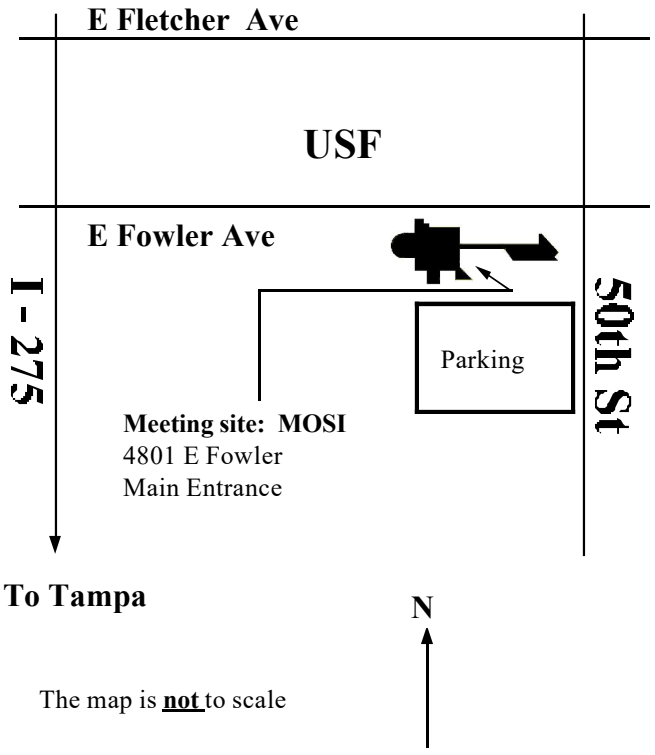
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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes……..Continued from page 4)
dard. For those of us with older systems or those who don't want to deal with a complete system upgrade, add-in cards for UDMA 66, Fire Wire, and USB are available.

With the proliferation of high speed, always on Internet connections, network security is becoming more important. A web site called Gibson Research Corporation (http://WWW.GRC.COM) has a service available called Shields Up! It will automatically probe your computer for security holes, then walk you through their suggestions on how to fix the problem.

Mr. Singer then went over networking. Most of us were at least familiar with network cards and hubs, but Steve pointed out the difference between hubs and switches. A hub, which most people tend to use, shares its bandwidth with each connection. The more machines on, the slower the network. Hubs are also half duplex, meaning they only communicate one way at a time. Switches give full bandwidth to each connection and run at a full duplex. ◆



(President……..Continued from page 1)

In case you haven't noticed, our presentations calendar for 2000 is almost empty. If you have experience with a specific program, please share your talents with the group. If you aren't comfortable standing up and giving a presentation, then write down what you know and submit it to William LaMartin for the newsletter. The strength of the group is based on the efforts of each individual. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



April in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 4 April 2000

Meeting

George Pilat from Intnet.net
Speaking on DSL

April 12, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science
and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the April meeting we will have a presentation by George Pilat from Intnet.net on DSL. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

If you missed the March 8th meeting, I'm sorry to tell you, but you missed a lot of fun. We had a tremendous presentation by Jay and Max of CompUSA. The door prizes were exceptionally nice and we beat our record for raffle ticket sales. We even had cookies and juice. A big "thank you" to everyone who contributed to the refreshment fund for the next meeting.

The 3rd, 4th, and 5th of March we were in Orlando for the FACUG Spring Conference. Jenny Olin, Don Patzsch, Kevan Sheridan, Bruce Register, and myself spent the weekend attending round table discussions and learning as much as possible. William LaMartin won 1st Runner Up in the Web Page Contest. Thanks William for making us all look good.

We're still working on a Rummage/Garage Sale Event with the Greater Tampa Bay Computer User Group in Brandon. Al Pesche, our MOSI contact, is looking at possible options for the event. The Brandon people are also trying to see what they can find. The event will be on a Saturday or Sunday in June. If you know of a likely location, please let one of the board members know.

Spring Comdex is coming up soon, April 17th through the 20th in Chicago. Anyone who is interested in attending can go to http://www.zdevents.com/comdex/ and register.

(President.....Continued on page 12)

May 10: Mike Galvin of Office Depot will do a presentation on scanners

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

Mary Sheridan started our Windows SIG at 6:00 PM. William LaMartin was presented with a nice award from our group for the fine work he has done with the group's web site. FACUG, the state body that governs users groups, judged our site as second place among all users group sites in the state.

CD recording software became our next topic, with most of the group singing the praises of Adaptec. It was pointed out, though, that you should make the plunge and buy the full "Deluxe" version, as the "Lite" version that ships with most CD burners is too lite.

Hard drive upgrades are always a fun topic, and this time was no exception. When a question was put out on how to move Windows 3.1 programs onto a new computer the obvious response was, "Why?" But, thankfully, someone had a useful response with "Aloha Bob," which allows moving programs from one hard drive directly to another without the original disks.

The general meeting began at 6:30 PM with official business. Sign up sheets were passed out for SIGs and attendance. The Office Depot on Fowler has asked us to display our newsletter at their location. Other users groups have found this a benefit in gaining new members.

Jay Kirth of CompUSA presented a demonstration of digital cameras and video recorders. While setting up, he went over CompUSA's warranty policies. Most work is done on site, but most people aren't aware that Sony requires any system or component be sent back to the manufacturer for warranty work. This can be inconvenient for customers, but it is one of those things out of CompUSA's control. Mr. Kirth also pointed out that CompUSA has an on-line presence for ordering products or ordering can be done by calling 1-800-8-DIRECT.

Jay set up a Sony Viao laptop to demonstrate the different cameras. By plugging the video camera directly into the laptop, the laptop became a large viewfinder, and, with the software included with the camera, movies or still images could be captured to the hard drive for editing. For people looking to add video to web pages, some of the less expensive cameras on the market would be more than sufficient. For high quality movies with a VHS or 8mm clarity, look for as high a megapixel count as you can afford. Also, different cameras handle zoom and stabilization by mechanical or software means. Digital zoom works by cutting out the borders in the view screen and interpolating the magnified pixels between the real pixels. At lower magnifi-

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

Web Site Design Pitfalls to Avoid

By Cheryl Alexander, Membership Coordinator, Tampa PC Users Group cbear@quadra.net

Remember the image that you want to project with your page or site. You strive for professionalism in your logo, stationery, presentations and other aspects of your business. Don't blow it on your site. Don't put anything up on your site that you wouldn't put in a newspaper advertisement.

There are many reliable services that can construct a simple page for you that will do just fine for a web presence. Always remember that the surfer is looking for information about you and your services. Bells and whistles (animated gifs and midi files) can always be added after solid content is written.

Before you even start writing code, look at several web sites by similar small businesses, the more the better. Write down what you like and what you don't. Use this information as a starting point when designing your site. What features irritate you will probably irritate a surfer.

If you are building your site yourself and are a beginner, there are several books in the stores for learning "how-to". Good ones will explain everything about web site design, including how to name your files. Checking them out of the library will give you a chance to decide which one suits you best before you buy it. Some titles are:

HTML 4 for the World Wide Web, Fourth Edition: Visual Quickstart Guide by Elizabeth Castro, *HTML 4 for Dummies* by Ed Tittler & Stephen Nelson James (includes CD-ROM), *Creating Web Pages for Dummies, Third Edition* by Bud Smith & Arthur Bebak (includes CD-ROM)

There are many pitfalls with designing a web page or site but here are the most common:

Too many animated gif files. Background sound that is slow to download and plays too long. Background image/color that renders text unreadable Pages that look good as HTML but don't print well. Pages that are too long

Animated gifs: A graphic file that contains several images that are displayed in a sequence either as a "slide show" or to approximate motion.

These files add motion and interest to a web page. However, for every such file on the page, time is added for the loading of each frame of the animation. Some animations have several frames, essential for smooth motion. Too many animated gifs take up too much time to load and if there isn't enough content to keep the surfer's interest, they will leave the page before all the gifs load. There are also programs available to help compress (make smaller) gifs and jpgs.

Background sound: A wav or midi file that downloads to the surfer's computer and plays while the page is being viewed.

Music does add a nice touch to a web site. However, again, it can be a huge file that can take a while to download. And, again, if there isn't enough content, the surfer may leave before the first note even plays. Also, be careful when selecting your file and how many times it is to play. If it's too irritating, the surfer will either disable it or not return to your site.

Background image/color: A tiled (repeated over an area) image or a single color that is used to fill the browser space with the text displayed over it.

Let's face it, gray can be very drab. And we don't like to be drab. Colors and images used for the background are excellent for adding some pizzazz to a site. However, once again, don't forget that information must be legible to be useful. There are background images that look very sharp until you try to read text on them! Choosing a good contrasting color can rescue that really cool image that you are dying to use. Be aware that monitors are getting better. The background that is designed for a 640x480 screen will look good for that resolution but may look odd if not unreadable on a 1024x768 screen. On the other hand, you can only pick a median range of resolution (usually 800x600) and hope for the best.

PDF Downloads: A file that is printable on most printers and is downloaded for that purpose. It can also be viewed with a "reader" program.

This is excellent for a file that you have prepared to be a handout in a word-processing program and decide to save as HTML to display on your site. This method is also good for a page that will make a good information sheet but has features that may not print well straight from the web. It is better to use Adobe Acrobat Distiller to make a Portable Document File (PDF) so that it can be printed on many different printers. Since it is an expensive program, check with your local copy center such as Kinko's or Pro-Copy or other place where computer access or time can be rented. When a PDF file is used, the layout won't be changed by font unavailability, graphics not being the correct resolution for printing (screen resolution: 72 dpi; printing resolution: at least 300 dpi), or the browser window not being fully open.

Page organization: The method of connecting information with hyperlinks.

There is a method of linking from one part of a page to another. This can be convenient. However, again, if your page is too long, it will take a long time to load and interest will be lost. It's better to have many quick loading pages than a single long page. Your web hosting service charges by total amount

(Web Design……Continued on page 7)

Microsoft Office 2000 Part II: Excel & Access

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Review Last month I looked at Microsoft's Office Suite in general and how it has evolved over the many years I have used it into the number one such product. I then concentrated on Word, its word processor. As noted then, the product seems to be evolving toward the corporate user and the web. There is not really much new in the suite for the casual, individual user in a home or small office environment. How many people do you know involved in web coloration of Office documents?

Of course, there have been refinements and minor additions (like the ability to have tables inside of tables in Word, which I have already discovered can be a useful item). But, for the casual user, I don't think these additions will be noticed or prompt one to upgrade from an older version.

However, I can think of one reason to move up, and that is to get away from having to deal with the less than perfect service packs for Office 97. People fault Microsoft regarding service packs, but as a small-time software developer, I can assure you it is impossible to produce a program that is bug free. And at least Microsoft does produce corrections for their mistakes. Some vendors seem to never get around to doing this. The Office 97 service packs, SR1 and SR2, however, were not always that easy to install, and seemed to keep changing, at least in the case of SR1. An upgrade to 2000 should do away with all of that. Not quite, SR1 is now out for Office 2000. But, as best I can tell, the things corrected by it are far less extensive than those for SR1 for Office 97, and I have no plans to download and install it at this time.

Excel and Access Like Word, Excel doesn't seem to have changed much. Excel looks almost exactly the same when you open up a workbook. Access does have a different look as regards displaying the window with your list of tables, queries, forms, etc. It is more like a two pane Windows Explorer view. And there is a new object in the Access window's left pane, the data access page, which is a form-like object to be published to a web site along with its supporting files for viewing by—and interacting with—other Office 2000 users. More on this later.

Another addition to Access is the Visual Basic Editor for any Visual Basic for Applications code you may wish to use. In Access 97, you could use such code, but the method for editing it was less robust than that provided by the VB Editor which Word and Excel already had in Office 97.



However, again, the VB Editor is a feature, like the data access pages, that, I suppose, at least 90% of Access users will never use. Of course, it could be argued that Access is not meant for the casual user anyway. In fact, it is not part of the standard version of Office, and, indeed, most people can get along fine using Excel to keep their "data." But for more demanding uses of data, a database is indispensable.

Much of my work now with Visual Basic involves interacting with Access databases. When Office 2000 first hit the shelves, it caused me to worry a bit about my VB programming. VB 6 was written to work with Microsoft Access 97 databases, and I worried about what would happen if someone were to update an Access 97 database that provided data to one of my VB applications to Access 2000 format—they are different.

I follow several VB Usenet newsgroups, and I had read about the problem. I had also read that to get a VB 6 application to work with a Microsoft Access 2000 database, you needed to set up your program to use *Microsoft.Jet.OLEDB.4.0* as your data connection provider and have a reference to the Microsoft DAO 3.6 object library in the project. So I started using that setup in my programs even though I was still working with Access 97 databases. And it appears to have worked. If I now take an Access 97 database that is used in one of these VB applications and update it to Access 2000 format, all the database components in the VB program still seem to work properly.

But I have drifted away from the average user who will never use VB with a database. As to this person, I think you are getting the drift that there is not really much in Office 2000 that should make him or her want to move up from Office 97. In fact, Office 97 is overkill for most people, and the Microsoft Works Suite (not just Works but the Suite), consisting of Microsoft Word, the Works spreadsheet and the Works database (really just using one table at a time), is sufficient. To me, it seems Office 2000 is aimed at the corporate computing environment where people will collaborate on documents placed on a company intranet or on the web—and to individuals like me who want to work with the latest software technology.

The Latest Software Technology With Office 2000, there are three ways of putting your documents on the Web: As static pages, as pages with limited interactivity, and as documents with an interactivity just like you would have if the document were on your own computer. Office 97 provided for the creation of static web pages from Word documents, Excel worksheets and Access tables or queries. With Office 2000, we get a good bit more.

(Office.....Continued on page 5)

(Office……Continued from page 4)

To publish documents to the web for collaboration by different individuals, everyone using it needs to be running Office 2000 and the server where the document is installed needs to be running Microsoft Office Extensions. I haven't been able to test this out, since I don't have access to a server with Office Extensions. However, I have tested publishing both Excel worksheets and Access tables where anyone using Office 2000 can interact with them and make certain changes. To see the results of this, go to http://tpcug.org/office_2000. Of course, nothing will display properly or work if you don't have Office 2000 on your computer with the Web Component option installed.

There are four examples at present. The Excel example is an interactive work sheet that does a loan calculation and displays the first two years of payments. There are two Access examples, which are essentially the same. One is an interactive display of a database of around 2,500 auto body shops in Florida, the name, address, phone number, etc. for each body shop being displayed one at a time on a form that you can scroll through and either filter or order on any of the display fields. The second example is the same, but consists of only Tampa auto body shops. The final example is a chart from Access that graphs the number of body shops in each zip code in Tampa.

For the above to work, nothing special seems to be required of the web site, but, as stated before, the viewer must have the Office 2000 Web Components on his or her computer.

It is all interesting—at least to me—and I can see the use for organizations. And I look forward to being able to place my documents on a Microsoft Office Extensions enabled server. But for most individuals this is not a must-have upgrade. ◆

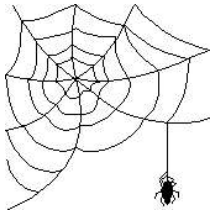
INTERNET PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Bourbon Street Web Cam, Mardi Gras Day in New Orleans

Having enjoyed the New Orleans Mardi Gras eight times 25 to 30 plus years ago, I like to check back and revive memories. The Bourbon Street web cam at http://www.nolalive.com/bourbocam/classic/ allows me to do that. Mardi Gras is over this year, but the cam is functional 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Bartleby.com – Great Books Online	http://www.bartleby.com/index.html
3COM – networking hardware	http://www.3com.com/
Deja Usenet Newsgroup Search	http://www.deja.com/usenet/
ZIP + 4 Code Look-up	http://www.framed.usps.com/ncsc/lookups/lookup_zip+4.html
Woody's Watch (MS Office products)	http://woodyswatch.com/
The Smoking Gun ("secret" documents)	http://www.thesmokinggun.com/
Betty Crocker (Food)	http://www.bettycrocker.com/
The Creole and Cajun Recipe Page	http://www.webcom.com/~gumbo/recipe-page.html
Wines on the Internet Guide to Wine and Wineries	http://www.wines.com/
The Internet Public Library	http://www.ipl.org/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

FACUG in Kissimmee

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@acomp.usf.edu

At Kissimmee, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, March 3, 4 and 5, the FACUG held their spring meeting. President Larry Tyler and all his helpers did a great job of planning and then carrying out the series of meetings. There were well over a hundred enthusiastic people in attendance.

On Friday night, we were registered and all were given a tee shirt courtesy of Visitalk. We were also given a cloth bag containing many goodies and brochures from the vendors. Refreshments and soft drinks were available, and we broke into groups and talked.

On Saturday morning at 8 A.M., a breakfast was served. Larry gave us a talk about the FACUG and what we could expect for the next two days. Bart then put the FACUG web page on the screen and showed much of the very worthwhile information you may obtain by going to that site. It is at http://www.facug.org.

Next we broke into sessions, and the first one I attended was on databases. Each group described what information they put into their database; also they told about who was allowed to view or to use the information. Mailing labels are made from most databases; also, the date each person is to renew their membership and, in some cases, many other details are included there. This was a very interesting session. It is not possible for me to describe the enthusiasm of the people and the interest they express as these sessions progress.

At 12 we broke for lunch, supplied by Adobe. Adobe always gives us CD's and other goodies as they tell us about Adobe. Louise Miller was the host.

After lunch, I attended the Publicity and Public Relations session, then the Web Pages session. Everyone takes part in each session, and you can pick up a great deal of information from each one. At 5:30 we broke for dinner, sponsored by MGI software. We were shown how to use PhotoSuite III, and VideoWave III.

At 7:30 Saturday evening, we were shown the prizes and told the names of the winners of the web page contest. A meeting of the board followed. The winners are: Winner - Southwest Florida PCUG. First runner up - Tampa PCUG. Second runner up - Space Coast PCUG. Third runner up - Tie: PCUG of Jacksonville and Venice Area Computer UG.

All during the three days, the Kissimmee Utility Authority had four computers on the web for us to use. Two were notebooks and two were desktops. I used them to telnet to my two email sources and they are fast! The KUA offers free computer courses, monthly rates starting at $4.50, and other advantages. (http://www.kua.net)

Some of you may not have thought about it, but a utility has rights-of-way all across the country. This means that long electrical lines, natural gas lines and also railroads can install the conduits needed for cross country glass fiber connections to all of the major areas. This is in addition to telephone line rights-of-way. See Boardwatch's "Internet Service Providers" magazine at your local bookstore for the maps of many "backbones" and lots of general information on the www. It is worth the price—$9.95 for the largest amount basic information on the Internet you have ever read.

On Sunday, the morning started with a breakfast sponsored by Microsoft. We were told about such things as how to locate what we want on the Microsoft web site, and also about the events and how to find the dates and times. The Microsoft representative, Mary Sue, introduced herself.

Following that, I attended a real neat session on the Mac. Now this was a real treat. The lady from one of the user groups who led the discussion is very talented and really enthusiastic. Her topic was Vendor Relations. She suggested we meet and get to know the people behind the store. One thing her group did was get to know the CompUSA people and CompUSA keeps a room open after hours now so that the Mac group there in Miami can hold a class! She also told us that she or the others in their group may throw beach balls or other little stuff into the audience as their meetings progress, just to add a little something to the whole meeting night! Rose Lynn is a dynamo. She may add a bunch of Mac people to our FACUG meetings next year. We learned some things about the Mac and the Mac groups.

The final session was on Advertising. Now I did not expect to find so many neat ideas and so much discussion on what and how to place advertisements in your newsletter. You can't help but catch the excitement as everyone tells you what their group does or doesn't do advertising-wise.

At noon, we broke for lunch with Inprise-Borland as the sponsor. Yolanda Davis, our host, gave us a lot of humor and described many uses for the Delphi 5 program. They produce Jbuilder 3 and C programs also.

After lunch, we broke for the Vendors tables. Each of the Vendors people is available for questions and to provide further information about their products. One of the surprises for me at this meeting was Office Depot's people. They give you the names of each store manager, who will work with you to provide a program for your user group. These people were at

(FACUG… … ….Continued on page 7)

(FACUG……Continued from page 6)
the fall meeting also.

Matt, the Intuit speaker provided fabulous humor and a great presentation of his Intuit program, Quicken.

Corel provided an eighteen page White Paper on Linux. Linux is now in use on more than twenty five per cent of the world's servers. The Post Office uses Linux as its operating system, all over the country. Linux is scalable and stable (more so than other operating systems). Businesses are using it more each month. Corel packages a shrink-wrapped LINUX that is easy to install. You know the rest of Corel's programs: WordPerfect, CorelDraw etc.

JASC has its Paint Shop Pro Version 6, and I think we all use that now. Casady and Greene, Corel, and Inprise-Borland provided the carry bags. Visitalk and Laser Perfect were there to answer questions. Kris Canning of Wizcom Technologies showed off their new Quick Link Pen. You have to try it to understand what it will do for you. You can follow a line of print and the scanning takes place. Neat product.

Gene Barlow now represents Caldera Linux as well as the PowerQuest products, Partition Magic, Drive Image, Datakeeper, and Second Chance. Gene and his wife are favorites at these shows.

If you want to know why so many enthusiastic computer people spent the weekend in Kissimmee, come to the fall session that will be hosted by the Tri County PC Users Group in Port St Lucie. Watch for the October announcement on the FACUG web site. ◆

(Web Design……Continued from page 3)
of web space used, not by how many files are using the web space.

A good web site can add to a small business. By considering these possible pitfalls, you can build that web site. ◆

Editor's Comments: Installing Network Cable, USB Network Adapters & e-stamp

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Network cabling I have had the computers in the house supplied with network cards and a crude sort of Windows Peer to Peer network setup for a couple of years. It was crude because if I wanted to connect any two computers I had to stretch out up to 75 feet of network patch cable through the living room, up the stairs and across the hall. That was for the upstairs computer and the main downstairs computer. To connect other computers I had to transverse other rooms. Then everyone including our bird had to be careful not to get their feet caught in the cable. I include the bird since the cable passed right by her cage, and when we let her out to sit on top of her cage, she sometimes would find the cable irresistible. Luckily she never did more than superficial damage to it.

Finally after getting a new Gateway, I decided something had to be done. After going to Home Depot and purchasing a 500 foot roll of Category 5 network cable, a collection of 8 wire modular jacks, outlet boxes, cover plates, 3/4 inch PVC conduit and necessary fittings, I was ready for the big job. And it was a big job, because any time I have to crawl around under my house and go into the attic in the same day, I have had about as much as I can take.

I ran the conduit from the outside wall of the room where my main computer is, under the house for about 30 feet, then up another outside wall inside the sheet metal channel containing the air conditioner's refrigerant lines into the living room attic. Once in the attic I dispensed with the conduit. Of course, there were wall outlet boxes to be installed on each end of the run and the job of pulling the cable through the conduit from one outlet box to the other. To finish the job, I had to connect the eight wires of the cable to the modular jocks on each end.

I actually pulled three network cables through the conduit at the same time, since I wanted one cable for the Windows network, one for a direct connection to the cable modem which is downstairs, and an extra cable for the future. The total time for the job was six hours. And if you think I am a slow worker, I invite you to come and crawl around under my house and then fish wires from under the roof at the edge of the attic.

USB Network Adapter You might ask why I wanted a separate network cable to connect the upstairs computer to the cable modem when Windows 98 SE allows you to share an Internet connection. That is, if I were running Win 98 SE on the computer attached to the cable modem, I could then set up things so that any other computer on the Windows Peer-to-Peer network could also con-

(Comments……Continued on page 8)

(Comments… … ….Continued from page 7)
nect to the Internet using this same connection. Well, I had used proxy server software in the past (see http://www.tpcug.org/reviews/december97.html) and wasn't particular enamored with it and thought that I would simply like to be able to switch the cable modem between different computers by switching the network cable that was plugged into the modem. We rarely have two computers on the Internet at the same time anyway. And in those rare cases, one of the computers can use the regular NetCom dial-up connection.

And this is where I got the idea of using a USB network adapter to provide a second network connection to whatever computer I wanted to connect to the cable modem. Actually I must thank Larry Anders for first bringing my attention to the fact that there were such things as USB network adapters.

Now, in the computer connected to the cable modem I have two network cards installed, one for the cable modem and one for the regular Windows network. In the past if I wanted to connect, say, my laptop to the cable modem, I had to reconfigure the properties of its one network card before connecting it to the cable modem. That worked fine and allowed me to do some large Windows updates to the laptop software, but it was a little trouble. With the installation of the USB modem on the laptop that has all changed. I set the properties of the USB network adapter to what the RoadRunner cable modem wants to see, and, when I desire to use RoadRunner on the laptop, I simply unplug the connection from the cable modem to the desktop computer and connect it to the USB network adapter attached to the laptop. I then only have to run WIPCFG.exe on the laptop to allow RoadRunner to assign an IP address to the USB network adapter, and I am off and running.

I also installed the same USB network adapter on the new Gateway upstairs. My first use of the RoadRunner connection on that computer was to download the newest version of Internet Explorer, IE 5.01. With all of its attendant programs, the full package came to 18,511 KB. To download that on a regular modem would have been several hours. On RoadRunner it took 3 minutes, 52 seconds, which is approximately 4.8 MB per minute.

For those not familiar with USB devices, note that you can simply disconnect them from one computer and move them to different computers. The device I purchased was made by 3COM and cost around $70. It comes with three CDs, so there is much more there than simply driver software. In fact, there is something called Microsoft Home Networking which is supposed to configure your Win 95 and above computers for networking in a hassle-free manner. I am sure some people would be happy to have that happen, since it has been my experience that setting up a network is not always trouble free. However, I already had a network that was working fine, so I didn't take Microsoft up on their offer. The second CD is actually a Win 98 SE upgrade disk for those with Win 98. The software there will upgrade you to Win 98 SE and additionally lead you through the process of setting up the Internet connection sharing I mentioned earlier. I declined to take advantage of that also. The third CD is some Microsoft game sampler CD. The location at the 3COM site for this device is http://www.3com.com/client/pcd/homeconnect/homenetworking/products/p34_key.html. The size of this device is about that of a pack of cigarettes.



E-stamp After seeing the e-stamp demonstration at a recent meeting, I couldn't resist the offer at the Microsoft Office web site and the e-stamp site of the e-stamp software and $50 of e-stamp postage for about $55. Unfortunately, the offer had to be acted on by March 31, so by the time you read this newsletter it will be too late. However, I did post it at our discussion forum, so if you follow that, you would have seen it in time.

You order via an Internet site and pay with a credit card. When you place your order it is recommended that you also at that time apply to the Post Office for a license to use the product, which e-stamp conveniently helps you do from their site. As might be expected, this product is highly regulated by the Postal Service. For example, if you move from your present Zip Code area, you must return the small piece of hardware called the vault that attaches between your printer and computer. It apparently is programmed to be used in one originating zip code, 33606 in my case.

The software package arrived in about three days via priority mail, and the program was easy to install. The next thing to be done was to install the electronic vault as close to the printer as is possible in the parallel connection between the printer and computer. (Note there may be other parallel devices like Zip drives in the parallel chain.) During the installation, the program went on the Internet to the e-stamp site to check on my account and, among other things, it credited my account with the $50 in postage that came with the special offer.

After setting everything up, you print out an address to e-stamp in California and a $.33 e-stamp and mail this to e-stamp so that they can be assured of the quality of your printer.

The first thing I noted was that the date of the stamp was that day's date, but the postman had already picked up the mail, and one of the e-stamp requirements (from the Post Office, I am sure) is that the letter be mailed within 24 hours of the date of the stamp. That was fine, since the letter would get mailed the next afternoon and presumably be processed before 12 midnight. But I made a note that in the future if the mail had already gone out, I would set the date of mailing forward one day to avoid any possible problem. You are allowed to move forward up to three days—but you can't go back any.

(Comments… … ….Continued on page 9)

Email a Phone Call Away

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group larry.anders@gtemail.net

I've been doing this PC stuff so long now that it's been a while since I've found something really interesting. Well, the other day I was doing a routine search for something I can't even remember now and up popped this link: http://evphone.com. I followed the link and read a little about ***E-mail Via Phone*** (EVP). It sounded good to me so I downloaded their 10MB trial version, which, by the way, on a cable modem only took a couple of minutes.

In a nutshell… EVP will call you and read you your email or you can call your computer and have EVP read your email to you. The keyword here is ***read***. EVP uses a text-to-voice engine to translate your email text to an easily understood electronic voice that even seems to put some emotion into it sometimes.

I downloaded, installed, ran setup and it didn't work. I then went back and read the instructions, but evidently not very well because it still did not work. I sent an email to their online support and within an hour I had an answer back. I reread the instructions and help file and it made a little more sense to me then. (As I said above… the keyword was ***read***.) It actually did work and quite well.

First of all, you need a voice modem, and make sure you have the latest drivers, to eliminate some problems if your driver is kind of old. Although I installed a cable modem sometime back I still kept my 56K voice modem installed and now I'm glad I did. But that wasn't my problem. You also must have a standard email account (POP3). Although I have RoadRunner installed I continued to use MSN for my email, which I had prior to RoadRunner. I didn't want to change my email address again. But MSN uses a secure server to access their email and EVP doesn't support a secure server. That was my problem! So I activated my RoadRunner email account, which is a standard email account, and soon I was hearing my email, and quite well too. Along with the above you also need Windows 95/98 (NT and Win2K are currently not supported), a 486/66 or better, 8MB of RAM and a sound card.

Some other things you can do with EVP (from their website) are:

Check e-mail automatically.

- Check in pre-defined time intervals.
- Check for E-mail at a pre-defined time using EVP's scheduler.
- Check it daily, weekly, weekdays and more.

It's a phone call away!

- You can call E-mail Via Phone anytime you want.
- Schedule a call to your phone whenever you like.
- EVP's rule system allows you to specify when EVP will call you.

Filter undesired e-mail messages.

- Delete a message based on sender's name.
- Use a keyword in the subject to delete.

Listen to whatever you like from the message.

- Listen only to the subject and/or sender's name.
- Customize what you want to hear.

Browse e-mail messages using your phone.

- Skip to the next message.
- Repeat the current message.
- Listen to the previous message.
- Delete the message.

Supports Modem and Network users.

- Dial-Up networking using a voice modem.
- Network Users, Cable Modem, DSL Connection.

It only costs $29.95 but you can download a fully functioning trial copy and use it for 14 days to try it out for free. They even give you a 30-day money back guarantee after you purchase it. I don't see how you can go wrong with this. If you decide to get it let me know and you'll be ***hearing*** from me soon! ◆

(Comments… … ….Continued from page 8)

The program can print out postage in three ways. On certain sized labels, on several different sizes of envelopes, and from Microsoft Word or Outlook on these same sizes of envelopes. I have printed only on the regular business size envelopes using both printing directly from the program and from Word. The program seems to run more smoothly when it does its own printing than when trying to do things through Word. I have printed two stamps from Word and three without Word. One of the Word stamps went off into limbo land, and I lost my $.33. Furthermore my printer couldn't be used by any program including e-stamp until I rebooted. So I would say that the e-stamp/Word connection may not be bug free.

You have to have selected a mailing address that is then run through the program's address checking software to be matched against correct addresses on a separate CD before you can print out a stamp. There is no printing of postage without a valid address (more Post Office rules, I suppose).

(Comments… … ….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG Changing to Microsoft Access SIG

We will tentatively have our first meeting of the new Microsoft Access SIG the first Monday in May. It will meet at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM.

We will post an announcement at our web site in the discussion forum when the time nears. For information contact either William LaMartin or Merle Nicholson. See page 2 of this newsletter for email addresses and phone numbers.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Comments… … ….Continued from page 9)

Now we come to the main shortcoming of the program from my point of view. The program provides no database to store the addresses you want to use over and over. It expects you to be using certain Microsoft programs like Outlook or Windows Messaging that utilize certain address books, like the Microsoft Personal Address Book. Unfortunately my computer has nothing like this set up. Outlook Express uses the Windows Address Book, and that is not accepted, as are none of the common Personal Information Management programs, like ACT or Lotus Organizer.

So, what I have to do is to either type the mailing address into the e-stamp program each time I use it, or I can have the address stored, say, in Lotus Organizer, copy it from there to the clipboard and paste it into e-stamp, Not ideal but workable. Possibly in a new version of the program they will address this problem.

When you are ready to print the envelope or label, you may do a test print to see if everything is working correctly before committing to a final print at which time the postage used will be deducted from the amount stored in the "vault."

Features I haven't tried yet include the postage calculator and printing postage on labels for express or priority mail. I like the idea of the program, and the price was right. I basically only paid a little over five dollars for shipping. However, future postage purchases will carry a convenience charge of around 10% based on the amounts that I would probably buy.

My general impression is that the software might be a bit buggy. It definitely does not respond very fast. Possibly that is because it has to communicate with the vault. That could be a problem for volume production right now. For home use it is fine, and I enjoyed using it.

A potential problem is that initially and every two weeks the program needs to connect and upload a usage log file to satisfy another one of those Postal Service requirements. Using my cable modem, the program connected fine to e-stamp, set up my account and even download a software upgrade, so how could uploading this log file be a problem. Well, it was. I could never get the process to finish. Customer support decided that the problem was due to my using a cable modem connection and that the cable provider, RoadRunner, was using some sort of proxy setup. I would need to contact RR and get all sorts of specific information to reconfigure my LAN settings to make the upload work.

That wasn't for me, so while the lady was telling me this, I signed on to my NetCom dial-up account and tried to send the log file again—this time successfully. So the warning is that you may have a problem with a cable modem and this program until certain LAN settings are changed. ◆

(Minutes… ….Continued from page 2)

cation this can work well, but higher magnification causes fuzzy or blurry images. Mechanical magnification uses lenses like on your old trusty 35 mm. Digital stabilization works in a similar manner by cutting out the edges of the image in the viewfinder and attempts to keep the remainder of the image in the center of the screen. Mechanical stabilization, like in the Sony cameras, uses servos and optics to provide a clearer, better image. When downloading images from a still camera to a computer, Jay recommends using a card reader instead of

(Minutes… … ….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
BAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
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Office Depot
PowerQuest
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Symantec

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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

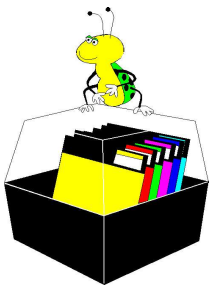
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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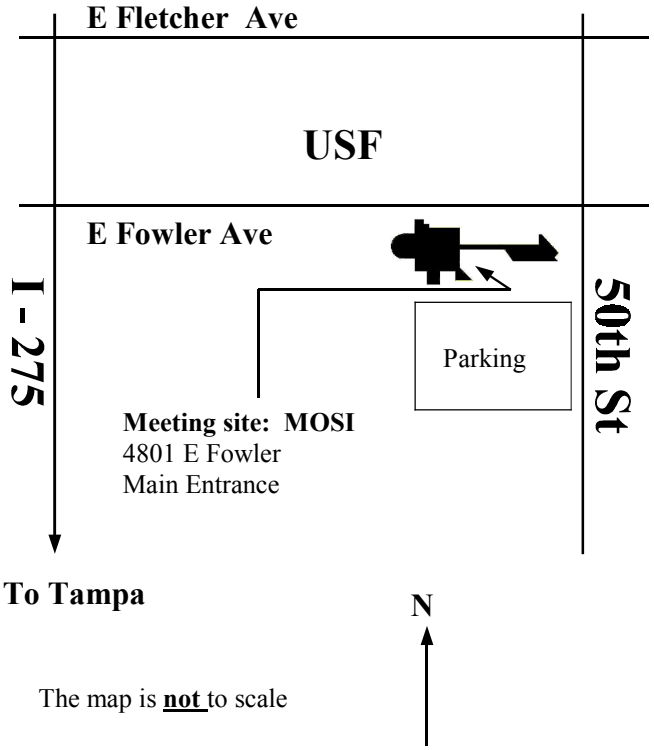
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes… … ….Continued from page 10)
plugging directly into the camera. By plugging into the camera, it becomes a removable drive in the eyes of your computer and its batteries will soon die.

Jay brought in an HP970CSP printer for the demo. The colors and resolution on the more expensive Sony cameras was impressive. Jay warned that with printers, though, you get what you pay for. He also pointed out a major difference between HP and Epson printers. HP uses a built in heating unit to warm the ink before printing. This helps prevent clogging of the ink jets if the printer has sat unused for any great length of time.

Mike Hodges won the big prize of the night, a digital camera. Not bad for someone who wasn't supposed to be in town. Clark Evans won a PC tool kit. ◆



(President… … ….Continued from page 1)

Our next Board meeting will be Thursday, April 6th at BAE (formerly Reflectone). All members are welcome and we'd love to have you attend. Due to security at BAE, you need to contact a board member ahead of time to get your name on the list. We try to start promptly at 6:30 PM and hopefully we're done by 8 PM. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 5 May 2000

Meeting

Mike Galvin of Office Depot
Speaking on Scanners

May 10, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science
and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the May meeting we will have a presentation by Mike Galvin from Office Depot on scanning. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

Happy Springtime! Attendance is improving at our monthly meetings and I'd like to thank everyone who fights the rush hour traffic to get there. The presentation by George Pilat of Intnet.net was interesting and informative. His operation is geared towards the business client, but, as he expands into more of Hillsborough County, he will offer his service to the home user as well.
The garage/rummage sale with the Greater Tampa Bay Computer Users Group (Brandon) for July 17 is still in the works. This sale will enable all of us to clean out some of those old components and software and help the users group at the same time.

I'm trying to find someone to do a Linux presentation at our June 14th meeting. If you know of someone who is fairly proficient in Linux who might be willing to share their information with the group, please let me know. Mostly I want to know the advantages of using it.

If you sign up for one of our SIGs at the regular meeting, please contact someone if you're not able to attend. Sometimes a SIG leader will be the only person able to make it to the SIG meeting. That's a huge waste of time and resources, so let us know if you can't make it.

I upgraded my home computer to 500 MHz Pentium II and added another 64

(President.....Continued on page 2)

June 14: To be announced. Check our web site later.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the April Meeting

By Mary Sheridan substituting for
James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

At 6:00 PM Mary Sheridan started the Windows SIG. Some Windows tips and tricks were presented, and a broad discussion of computer problems followed.

The general meeting started at 6:30 PM with our president, Mary Sheridan, presiding. Mary introduced the officers who were present and handed out information about a free upcoming event called "The Road Warrior Tour" at the Doubletree on Cypress 4/20/00.

At 7 PM the presentation began. George Pilat, our speaker, was from Intnet.net, an Internet Service Provider. In addition, they are a complete communications solutions provider. He spoke about the different levels and different kinds of digital subscriber lines. He compared DSL to the cable modem, as well as explaining the different kinds of DSL. DSL is an "always-on" connection.

At 8:30 a break was taken and we had a drawing for the door prizes at 8:45 PM. Bob LaFave won first prize, a copy of Windows 2000. We also gave away three T-Shirts to Arthur Young, William LaMartin and Bill DeLucia. Brian Lance won an insulated mug and a gift certificate for a Laser Perfect free refill. ◆

(President……Continued from page 1)

MB of memory. It flies now thanks to Steve Singer of http://morevalu.net/. He was available on the weekend and walked me through the changeover. You'll remember Steve from the great presentation he gave at one of our meetings. Thanks Steve, for all you've done to help the group.

Several of us attended the Microsoft presentation at USF sponsored by the Greater Tampa Bay Computer Users Group. Mary Sue Cameron of Microsoft did an excellent presentation. I didn't walk away with much new information though. It seems that Microsoft is having trouble with their Millennium release. And that's hardly a "news flash".

A great big **THANK YOU** to the Tampa Tribune, The St. Petersburg Times and Temple Terrace News for publishing information about our meetings.

(President……Continued on page 8)

Delphi 5 Professional from Borland

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



One of the prizes for second place in the recent FACUG web site contest was a copy of Borland's programming package Delphi 5 Professional. Quite a nice prize, since the discounted price of the package at CDW's online store is $540 (retail $799). There are two other versions available. Delphi 5 Standard costs $89 and Delphi 5 Enterprise is a whopping $2,468 at CDW. The Standard version is sort of like a learning edition and contains no database connectivity. It does allow you to create the small stand-alone EXE's that I mention below. The Enterprise edition contains one feature I would like—ADO database connectivity, but there is enough in the Professional edition to keep me busy for a long time. So my hard work on the web site over the years has resulted in my getting a program that is also going to demand much work in the coming years.

I have been programming in Microsoft's Visual Basic for quite a number of years, so it is interesting to compare the two programming environments. Both Delphi and Visual Basic are considered Rapid Application Development environments, since they allow the programmer to get a working model of his application out much faster than, say, the C language would. Visual Basic's programming language is based on BASIC. Delphi's language is based on Pascal and is called Object Pascal. The program comes with a hard copy developer's guide and an Adobe Acrobat version of the Object Pascal Programming Language guide. Of course, there is extensive online help. I judge the online help about as easy to use as the VB online help. Of course, I could always use more examples of code than is provided. It is one thing to see the definition of a particular function or statement and quite another to see an actual example in code of its use.

With Pascal being a new language to me, there is some learning to do. But I have written several small programs and one simple database program. The database program was the only one so far that has required an installation package for installation on another computer. With Visual Basic, if you want to install the program you have written on your development computer on a different computer you have to create an installation package using VB's Packaging and Deployment Wizard and then use that package to install your program on the other computer. And no matter how simple your program, the installation package is always going to be too large to fit on just one floppy.

And here is the beauty of Delphi 5. For simple applications you write—those not using ActiveX controls or database connectivity—you can simply take the resulting executable file, place it on another computer and run it. I think the base size of such an executable is around 300 KB – 350 KB.

My first application consisted of creating a program that had a running clock, allowed the user to search a directory tree to select a text file or RTF file to open, then displayed that file so that the user could make modifications to the text and formatting and then choose from a directory tree where to save the file. It allowed him or her to again search a directory tree for a graphic file to display. Finally, there were several text boxes and drop down combo and list boxes where various information was displayed and the user could select from items in the combo and list boxes. Command buttons were supplied that when clicked on did various calculations with the items selected. The executable for all of this was around 600 KB and required no installation to run on another computer. I simply placed the application on the other computer's desktop and double clicked on its icon to run it.

I have always wondered why something like the above couldn't be managed in Visual Basic. Now it doesn't matter. Delphi 5 has solved that problem for me. It will be interesting to see how many different computing tasks can be accomplished without having to create an installation package.

My second project was to duplicate a simple program I had written for someone in VB that ran on a client machine which each morning checked for a certain file that was on both the client machine and a server on the network. If the server's version of the file was more recent than the client's, then the program copied the server's version over the client's version. Of course, there was a setup menu where the user could look at a directory tree over the network and select the two locations of the file in question. In writing the code in VB I had used a call to a Windows API file copy function. Once I figured out how to do the same thing in Delphi, I noticed how much simpler it was in Delphi. Although I have done very little with such, it appears that in Delphi you have easier access to the Windows API (Application Programming Interface).

My third Delphi project was to display a database table (our membership list with addresses, etc.) and create a report based on certain fields that could then be printed. Setting this up was very similar to what you would do in Visual Basic 6. You drop data access components on a form and set certain of

(Delphi… … ….Continued on page 4)

(Delphi……Continued from page 3)
their properties so as to connect to the database table you want to use. The main difference in using Delphi is that my Microsoft Access Database is not "native" to this Borland product as it is to Microsoft VB, so I had to set up a Data Source Name (DSN) for the Members database using the OBDC entry in the Windows Control Panel (You probably wondered what it was for). That done, then the Borland database engine could use ODBC to connect to the Membership database.

The report was constructed using Delphi's Quick Report feature, similar to VB 6's Data Report Designer. Here you place labels and text boxes (that get their values from the fields of the database) on the report page either in the Header, Detail or Footer sections.

Once finished, it is time to create the installation package. To do this Borland has provided InstalledShield Express, a "lite" version of the installation program that you have seen many times when installing commercial programs. The first time I ran InstallShield Express I made two mistakes. I forgot to include the Borland Database engine as part of the package and I did not fill in one of three fields about the program where it asks for Project Name, Version, and Company. I left the company field blank. The program seemed to install fine but would produce a database type of error when I tried to run it. That was solved by including the Borland Database Engine as part of the installation. However, with that solved, I then noticed that the program did not appear in the list of programs that could be uninstalled in the Add/Remove section of the Windows Control Panel. A search of the InstallShield web site produced an article stating that this is exactly what would occur if you left any of the three fields mentioned above blank. So I went back and put in something for Company, and everything was then fixed.

I have much to learn and am really a beginner with Delphi and its Object Pascal language. However, I have been pleased how well my trials with it have gone so far. At this point, I cannot really compare it with VB very well, since I have been working with VB for many years, and I have only been using Delphi off and on for a month. But I do like the ability to make stand-alone executables of simple programs.

Also included in the package are JBuilder Sandard (Java development), C++Builder Standard (C++ programming) and HotMetal PRO 5.0 (Web Pages). I think, though, that I have more than enough on my hands without trying to use JBuilder to develop Java programs.

Perhaps after I have worked with Delphi for a much longer time, I will have material for another article.

I should note that the ability to access data sources using ADO

(Delphi.....Continued on page 6)

ClipCache Plus

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
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Occasionally I come across a program that's a real keeper, and I'll admit it's been a while since I've found one, but ClipCache *Plus* version 2.6 fits the bill. In a past newsletter article (February 2000), where I listed some killer software, I mentioned another program similar to ClipCache *Plus,* called Clipmate for Windows, which is also a clipboard extender. By that I mean it allows you to save more than just the last text or graphic copied. While Clipmate does a good job of saving your clips, that's about all it does. ClipCache *Plus,* on the other hand, is a clipboard extender with quite a few other options.

ClipCache *Plus* sits in your system tray monitoring all clipboard activity and automatically saves clipboard objects to a currently active group folder. Your clips may then be retrieved within minutes, hours or whenever you need them. You can also create new folders where you can drag and drop a clip into that folder for long-term storage. Any text clip can be edited on the spot using any of the many handy cleanup functions I'll discuss later. There are no limits on the number of clips ClipCache *Plus* can store and organize, other than the usual disk space and memory requirements.

ClipCache *Plus* has several text editing and formatting operations. For example, the one that got my attention was its ability to strip, or remove, certain characters from your clips, like that gosh-awful bracket indention (>) on forwarded emails. I refuse to forward an email without first removing all the greater-than signs, which sometimes takes a little while. Not any longer. Just highlight and copy the text to be forwarded and click on "clean-up text". Put a check in the box next to "trim bracket indentation '>' " and voilà, it's done. Other text operations and changes that can be made are:

Trim '|' indentation	Trim ':' indentation
Trim space indentation	Trim tab indentation
Trim custom character indentation	Make upper case
Make lower case	Transpose case
Sentence case	Sentence strict case
Word case	Word strict case
Remove empty lines	Remove line breaks
Remove CR/LFs	Paragraph spacing
Strip < > from email addresses	Strip HTML tags
Trim Left	Trim Right.

A **Cleanup Text** dialog box allows all formatting operations to be simultaneously processed. Your favorite settings can be saved as pre-sets for later use. Text items may be **merged** into one clip, the order of the clips to merge may be reorganized,

(ClipCache.....Continued on page 5)

(ClipCache… … ….Continued from page 4)

and/or text may be inserted between existing clips. **Append** mode allows the appending of copied text to the current clipboard contents. And the preview pane supports in-place editing and a context menu that includes **Find and Replace** and **Undo** commands.

ClipCache *Plus* adopts a standard Windows look and feel (drag and drop, property pages, context menus) and its highly intuitive and configurable options cater to the individual needs and preferences of all kinds of users. If you prefer to use hotkeys, the system tray, the main application window, they're all configurable.

The ClipCache *Plus* main window is divided up into three separate areas (panes): Group, Item and Preview panes. The Item pane may be sorted by clicking (or right clicking) on the required column (name, size, format, date or source window); click again to toggle between ascending or descending sort. Items may be dragged from the item pane to different groups or to different applications which support that format.

QuickPaste automatically pastes into the most recently used application, while **FormPaste** can paste automatically into the most recently used application and then tab to the next field of that application, ready to paste the next item - handy for filling in forms. If **AutoPaste** is enabled, then everything copied (from any application) to the Windows clipboard will automatically be pasted into a chosen target application. Ideal for collating snippets of information. A **Find** feature allows quick and easy location of any items, and clips can be printed or sent by email.

While future versions plan to support more formats, currently the clipboard formats supported are:

(ClipCache… … ….Continued on page 6)

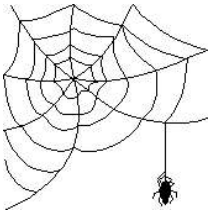
INTERNET PICTURE OF THE MONTH



From the April 28, online version of CNN

The graphic above headed CNN's April 28 online story about the Justice Department's specific plans regarding the punishment of Microsoft. Although the story indicated that the government intended to break the company into two pieces, the graphic had it split into three. http://www.cnn.com/

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Wines on the Internet Guide to Wine and Wineries	http://www.wines.com/
The Internet Public Library	http://www.ipl.org/
The Creole and Cajun Recipe Page	http://www.webcom.com/~gumbo/recipe-page.html
E-Books on Computing	http://www.ee.itu.edu.tr/ebooks/
FDIC Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	http://www.fdic.gov/
TheHistoryNet - Where History Lives on the Web	http://www.thehistorynet.com/
SwapIt.com (swap CDs online)	http://www.swapit.com/
CDW (online computer shopping)	http://www.cdw.com/
Borland (software)	http://www.borland.com/
Essential Pascal (Object Pascal Programming)	http://www.marcocantu.com/epascal/default.htm
Delphi programming tutorials, tips, sources, utilities	http://www.festra.com/eng/intro.shtml

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(ClipCache.....Continued from page 5)

- Text (plain text)
- Rich Text (font type, size, colour etc. is retained)
- OEMText (Text displayed in an OEM font)
- Bitmap (Device Independent Bitmap)
- Enhanced Metafiles
- Drop (files copied to the clipboard are imported as text file names)

The following are just some of the cool things you can do with ClipCache *Plus*:

- Storing of text clips from applications for reading later or pasting into other applications.
- Copying text and making changes to it prior to pasting.
- Instant retrieval and pasting of frequently used text clips.
- Removing unwanted forwarding indents ">>>>" from emails.
- Removing white space and large gaps from text copied from web tables or email.
- Formatting text prior to pasting.
- Assign hotkeys to your favorite functions.
- Clip hotkey assignments can be managed from a central Hotkey window.
- Collating several text snippets into one pastable clip.
- Use as a text editor.
- Fill in web forms.
- Storing of images for later viewing or transferring to an image editor.
- Ideal research tool for copying information (text/images) from various sources.
- Game cheats: visit your favorite game cheat site and copy any cheats to a "cheats" group, then print them out with ClipCache *Plus* later.
- Create Text Clips allows sticky notes usage, which can be pasted any time.
- The 3 pane view (Group, Item and Preview) allows easy management of clips.
- Easy to use explorer style interface.
- Displays clip attributes: Name (supports renaming), Size, Format, Date & Source Window.
- Sort clips based on any clip attribute.
- Edit clips by typing directly in the preview pane.
- Merge selected clips to a list or with any separators you wish, such as commas, semicolons, hyphens, etc.
- Append text to the clipboard, rather than replacing the clipboard.
- Save captured clips to individual files.
- Manage folder/group size using the "purge" feature, or set size limits for each folder.
- Trashcan group avoids accidental deletion of clips.
- No restriction imposed by ClipCache *Plus* on number of clips.
- Expanded Search/Find facility with highly effective "Search and Replace".
- FormPaste facility pastes selected clip into the most recently used application and then automatically TABs to the next field.
- QuickSelect hotkey shows a tooltip of the currently selected clip below the mouse pointer.
- ClipMenu displays captured clips as a popup menu under the mouse pointer.
- Emptying the Windows clipboard to free up memory.
- Many custom configurations possible.
- Drag & drop clips from the item pane to applications.
- Drag & drop selected text from the preview pane to applications.
- Drag & drop data from applications to the Group, Item or Preview pane.

A trial copy of this handy utility that Microsoft left out of Windows can be downloaded at http://www.xrayz.co.uk/. If you like it - it's only $19.95. I believe I'll be keeping this program for a long time. ◆

ClipCache *Plus*

(Delphi..... .....Continued from page 4)

(ActiveX Data Objects) can be added to Delphi 5 Professional for around $200. It is the main method I use in VB to connect to data sources, and in VB 6 it is free.

http://www.borland.com/delphi/ ◆

Recent Computer News

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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Microsoft Breakup The big news item recently in the computer (and business) world is the Justice Department's idea on what should be done with Microsoft now that Judge Penfield Jackson has declared that they have abused their monopoly position in the software industry. The Justice Department and 19 states (or at least 17 of the 19 states) have proposed splitting Microsoft into two parts. The Windows business would be split from the Applications business. Microsoft would have to submit a breakup plan within four months, the two companies would have separate boards of directors, and the breakup would have to last for at least 10 years. The breakup, however, would not take effect until Microsoft had exhausted the appeals process. Bill Gates said that Microsoft could never have developed Windows under such rules, that they are bad for the software industry and software consumer, that such rules make no sense, and that Microsoft is sure that an appeals court will overturn such a ruling if a court does implement it according to the Justice Department's recommendations. The Justice Department's Joel Klein portrays the Department's actions as in the best interest of computing and the consumer.

You be the judge. For myself, I sort of like Microsoft, don't really think the lawyers at Justice understand software, think they have a bias against Microsoft (they use WordPerfect at the Justice Department) and don't think that their actions will lower the price of software to the consumer. Now, instead of one monopoly, after the breakup we will have two monopolies. That said, I do think Microsoft has done some pretty low things over the years to its competition—just about the same as the competition would have done to them if they could have pulled it off. I seem to recall that one of the goals of the Netscape crowd when they were riding high (for about six months) was the destruction of Microsoft by rendering everything in computing browser centric with the removal of the Windows desktop environment to the margins of computing.

Stock Values Of course, with the news of the possible breakup of Microsoft, its stock took a dive along with the values of many other computing related stocks (including the stocks of Microsoft's enemies) and the tech sector as a whole. And some pundits were quick to claim that the Justice Department was putting the economy into a tailspin. I agree that the recent Microsoft problem was good reason to devalue its stock, but I don't think we can blame Microsoft's woes for the decline of the stocks of all those dot.coms that have very little product and no income but were valued up there with the giants of American industry. Here are some examples of the deflation in such stocks. I gathered the information the latter part of August.

RedHat Inc. (RHAT): close 27 3/8 on 4/26/2000; 52-Week High 151 5/16 on 12/8/1999 ; 52-Week Low 20 on 8/11/ 1999. The close is about 18% of the high.

VA Linux Sys (LNUX): Close 42 1/2 on 4/26/2000; 52-Week High: 320 on 12/9/1999; 52-Week Low 26 7/8 on 4/14/ 2000. The close is about 13% of the high.

Ivillage Inc. (IVIL): Close 10 1/16 on 4/28/2000; 52-Week High 79 on 5/3/1999; 52-week Low 9 1/2 on 4/4/2000. The close is about 13% of the high.

drkoop.com Inc. (KOOP): Close 2 3/4 on 4/28/2000; 52-Week high 45 3/4 7/6/1999; 52-Week Low 1 15/16 on 4/18/2000. The close is about 6% of the high,

Peapod Inc. (PPOD): Close 3 on 4/28/2000; 52-week High 16 3/8 on 11/5/1999; 52-Week Low 2 on 4/14/2000. The close is about 18% of the high.

Cdnow, Inc. (CDNW) Close 4 5/16 on 4/28/2000; 52-Week High 23 17/24 on 7/12/1999; 52-Week Low 3 on 4/17/2000. The close is about 18% of the high.

And one that is not quite as bad as those above:

Amazon.Com Inc. (AMZN) 55 3/16 on 4/28/2000; 52-Week high 112 3/8 on 12/9/1999; 52-Week low 40 3/16 on 4/14/2000. The close is about 49% of the high.

And to make maters worse, these companies and many, many other dot.coms have only enough cash on hand to keep spending at their current rates for just a few months, which introduces the following shocking item—at least to me as a long time Corel Draw user, it is shocking.

Corel in its quarterly filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission said a "cash deficiency" may occur if its merger with Imprise/Borland isn't approved by shareholders or the company fails to secure other sources of financing.

Quoting the Wall Street Journal, "Last month, Corel reported cash holdings of about $29 million along with a $12.4 million loss for the quarter ended Feb. 29. It said the prospects for the next two quarters wouldn't improve because of falling sales of its two main products, the WordPerfect and Corel Draw software applications."

When you note that Imprise/Borland has about $250 Million in cash, you can see why Corel might want the merger. It is less clear what Borland will gain other than software that is apparently not selling well and Corel's gamble with Linux, which also may fail. ◆

Presenter's Tribute

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I've been trying since I took over the office of president to find someone to be our Program Chairperson. Not having any luck, I thought I'd stroll down memory lane and remember all the presenters of the past couple of years. Maybe it will give someone the incentive to get the kinds of presentations that they want to see instead of the ones I've wanted to see.

The first presentation I scheduled was Pat Horvath of Mindspring. He lost his scheduler on the plane to Tampa and never showed up at the meeting. Well, I was off to a great start.

At that time, Robert Armstrong of BCD came every year to talk about the latest hardware. He came to the next meeting, answered lots of difficult questions and gave away two $50 gift certificates. Next, there was Joe Roediger of Micro Star. He had an extensive stock market tracking software package. It was pretty expensive, but I heard that a least one person in the group bought one.

I missed the next meeting, but Melanie Arsenault of Kinematics gave an overview of surge protectors. Then, Dick Kellerman, the software "Evangelist", represented MGI software. Last time we saw Dick, he was showing Partition Magic.

Mike Austin of Waldec/IKON Office Solutions was very knowledgeable about Microsoft and the Microsoft certifications. He explained the use of different types of server/client computer setups used in the office environment. In June of 1998, Mike Bruzzone brought the WinChips into our lives, and some of us will never be the same. I have to admit I learned a lot because of the experience.

Gateway sent Rich Podoisky and Beth Wood, and they fielded some very technical questions. Quarterdeck came, and I haven't heard anything about the company since. Tom Rivers and his son were starting their own consulting business, so I guess they're doing okay.

Vinnie Barber was as much fun as I've ever had at a user group meeting. He showed us the Alps Printer, a cheaper web site than Alps.com to buy the printers, and made us laugh. He went to Applebee's with a group of us after the meeting, and he told us that he was doing stand up comedy when someone from Alps asked him to represent them. Now that's different!

Robert Armstrong of BCD came again and introduced an ISP that BCD was involved in.

Jasc Software sent Julie Alstatt. She was smart and cute and very easy to listen to. She got a few people to even buy Paint Shop Pro. Cheryl Alexander told her she was having trouble with a feature of Paint Shop and Julie gave Cheryl a book to help her.

Captain Rod Stebbins told us how to start our own business at home. Mark Haley sold some "not too great" National Parks CD's (my opinion only). Jason Velasco of Ontrack guaranteed to recover anyone's hard drive, for a price. I don't know of anyone who used the service, but in a crisis it would be invaluable. Tom Walsh of American Power Conversion gave away a rather nice UPS. Roadrunner came again and gave away pens and free installations.

Laser Perfect, a printer ink refill company was represented by Chuck McPherson. I've been getting my cartridges refilled every since and I've been very happy with it. I missed another meeting and didn't get to see Mark Komula of Network Technology Solutions. He explained the ins and outs of home networking. William LaMartin did a great presentation of Adobe Acrobat 4. The multi-level marketing fiasco came next. I'm still apologizing over that one.

BCD was scheduled again, but they were a no-show and Brian Lance saved the day by showing us the diagnostic software he used on his job. Matt McCann was funny and informative in his demonstration of Quicken. We had our first ever Christmas Party, and I thought it was grand.

Steve Singer gave an excellent hardware presentation, Glen Gasbarrow showed us E-Stamp and Jay Kirth came from CompUSA and brought amazingly enough a digital camera for the door prize.

I hope I've brought back some memories and that someone may have gotten interested in bringing in new and innovative presentations in the future. ◆

(President…… ….Continued from page 2)
Last, but not least, Mike Galvin of Office Depot will be our presenter at the May 10th regular meeting. Hope to see you then. ◆

A Step Back in Time: 12 & 11 Years Ago in the TPCUG

From newsletters donated by Ed Buzza and Roger Waters

In 1988, meetings were in the NCNB building at 600 N Florida Ave., and the president was Steve Speairs

The OS/2 Solution
By Bob Fultz
From the February 1988 Bits of Blue

OS/2 is here and I wish to address the effect, at least how I see it, that it will have on our use of microcomputers. First, let us understand that OS/2 is not for everyone. The operating system alone demands a large investment in either new hardware or an expansion of that which we already have. An Intel 80286 or 80386 based PC with a 60 meg hard disk (or bigger) and 2 meg RAM minimum is a must. The operating system alone will take over 1 meg, not including any application which you intend to run. So we have an investment of $1000 to $2000 in memory and storage alone for the AT or PS/2 model 50/60 owner, and $8000 to $10000 for the rest of us. *Just to run OS/2 and our existing DOS applications!*

Similarly, we will need new versions of existing software and/or new products which will take advantage of the capabilities of OS/2. Our current DOS applications, while able to work under OS/2, will still be limited to the 640K barrier as always. While OS/2 is not multiuser, multitasking will still be available. Early users claim it is very slow when using disk intensive programs. Also, some early reports show that it is difficult to switch between protected-mode and real-mode operations (by some reports you have to re-boot the system). OS/2 may not be as transportable as DOS has been, allowing different versions of OS/2 to run on other vendors' machines. Because of these problems it appears that OS/2 will not overtake DOS until sometime in mid 1989. By then we will be looking forward to OS/2 for the 80386 family of Intel processors.

After all the technical jargon and difficulties are cleared out of the way, I feel that it will be the users who will decide whether OS/2 will take over in 1989. DOS will not die quietly, it still has a long life ahead. EMS will take care of that. There are a large number of the users out there who will never need what OS/2 has to offer and who will never spend the required monies to upgrade hardware. Yes, OS/2 will open up a new era of microcomputing, but its impact is up the road a long ways yet.

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President's Podium (February 1988)

It's wonderful to see the good turnouts that we have been having lately at our meetings. I know that we can increase our attendance if we let our friends know about our group, the good information and the fellowship that is available here. Remember, the more people that we have attend on a regular basis, the greater the expertise that we have available to our group. Additionally, we are far more likely to attract the top software and hardware companies to give us demonstrations.

We want to extend our warmest thanks to Kathy Johnson and IBM for their excellent demonstration of the PS/2 Model 50 and a general discussion of the thrust of the whole new IBM Personal Computer Operations. The improvements in the video resolution and the new Micro Channel Architecture do show that these new machines are designed for the late 80s and early 90s when we can expect the software to match their capabilities. My only caveat on these machines is that the Models 50 and 60 are based on the 80286 chip which I regard as no more than a souped-up 8088 chip in capability. Personally, I would not plan on any purchases of these AT type machines if I needed true multi-tasking capability and could afford one of the new 80386 machines that are now rapidly entering the market.

Next meeting we will see a demonstration of the Quattro Spreadsheet and Paradox Database by a Borland Representative. We will have an overhead projector to make this demonstration visible to all.

We look forward to seeing you there. Bring a friend and have a good time!

Steve Speairs, President

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In 1989, the meetings were at GTE downtown, the president was Harvey Bruneau and the only current member listed as an officer then is Kevan Sheridan. However, current member Ed Buzza was also writing articles for the newsletter.

RBBS Bytes
By Kevan Sheridan
From the March 1989 Bits of Blue

Baud Rate 300/1200
Number 239-3704

One of the benefits of being a member of the IBM PC Users Group is the Bits of Blue electronic Bulletin Board, and every

(Remember… … ….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM.

For information contact either William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Remember……Continued from page 9)
member should learn how to take advantage of this valuable asset and its offerings. Unfortunately, many members do not understand what a RBBS is or how to fully use it. This month I want to introduce the BBS to you and encourage the membership to use and enjoy the Board.

Our Remote Bulletin Board System (RBBS) consists of a XT compatible with a 20M hard drive and a 300/1200 Baud modem. It is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It contains a variety of free public domain programs which include games, DOS tools, telecommunication packages, and much more. The Board also has a computerized bulletin board, an electronic mail system, a files system, and much. much more. And all of this is just a modem call away.

When you call the Board use your name to tell the system who you are. If you have not called the Board before it will ask you if you wish to register as a newuser. When you answer YES the system will then ask you about your "setup". For a simple first time use answer No or None to most of these questions. Later, when you learn what they mean you can change them with the utilities. From there remember to read the prompts. If you have trouble enter a question mark for further help. Once you have called the system once you can then "TURBO LOGON". By this you just enter your FULL name AND password when asked for your FIRSTNAME. If you have done it right you will see dots as you type your password. ◆

Editor's Note: Our BBS has been replaced by our web site.

Linux Comments



By Don Patzsch,
Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@acomp.usf.edu

Linux is a computer operating system. The trade magazines tell us that IBM has set up Linux so that it is used on their 390 mainframe. IBM's workstations and servers using Linux are selling well. The trade magazines further state that Linux is now on 30 per cent of the world's servers and is used in millions of businesses around the world. Recently, Corel is reported to have "bet the farm" on Linux, and they put on a great show of Corel Linux in Tampa recently. I bought my first book on Linux in 1995. It is *Using Linux* by Que books, and it contains a Linux CD ROM. Since then, I have toyed with the program but have not tried to go into it seriously. I first used UNIX at USF in 1982 on the mainframe, and I have been using it at USF since. We used it on the command line in the course "Internet" in the summer of 1994. We did not use a browser much during that course. In other words, no GUI. All of you who have been using the Freenet have been using the command line and a DOS browser called LYNX. It doesn't require graphical interface of any kind, i.e. no Apple, Mac, or Amiga. So you all use UNIX and you all use LYNX, one way or another, in my opinion.

I wanted to find out a little about the Linux computer operating system, because I plan to have my computer loaded with Linux ONLY.

On the Internet, http://www.linux.org/users/index.html lists people in your community that are interested in Linux. Also, on the Internet at the URL http://www.linux.org/hardware/, you can find many, many companies that manufacture and sell computers with only Linux installed. Linux comes with Office Suites

(Linux……Continued on page 12)

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
BAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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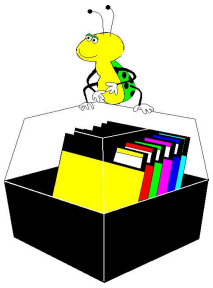
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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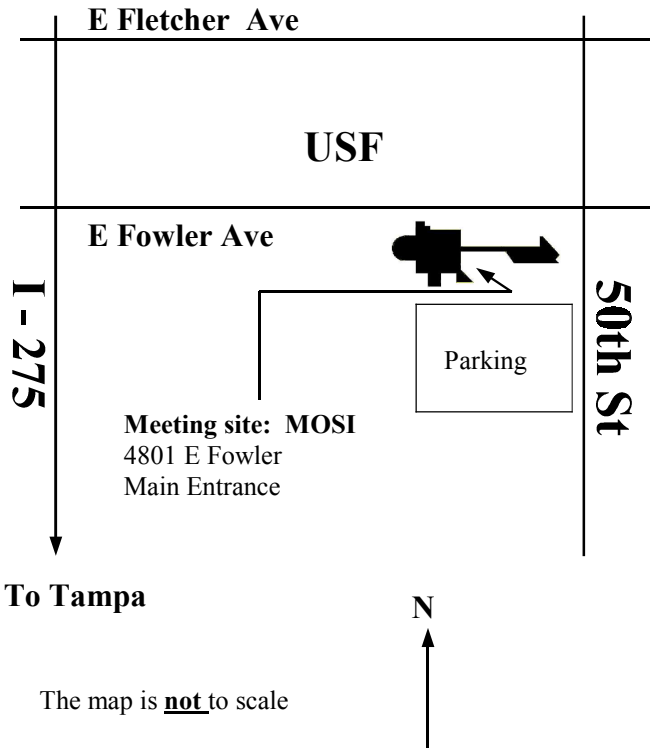


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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Linux……Continued from page 10)
and programs to connect to the Internet, etc. The interesting feature of this URL is that you may now buy a Linux computer that contains Winux. Winux is a program that allows you to have a computer that has Linux as the main operating system, however, you can call up Windows 98 like a shell and run the Windows programs even though you have Linux running your computer. If you do not understand what this means, simply go to several of the companies above and read the story for yourself. I spent about five hours looking these URL's over to be sure I can run the computer after I have the Linux programs installed. I also called many people to verify that I can run the computer once it is set up, just as they did at the Corel show.

At Best Buy, SUSE Linux costs $29.99. On the box, it says there are six CD ROM's inside, and they contain 1,500 programs. There is, also, a large, easy to understand manual. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa
Watering our lawns
(once a week)

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 6 June 2000

Meeting

Bill Preece
Speaking on Linux

June 14, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the June meeting we will have a presentation on Linux by Bill Preece of the Suncoast Linux User Group (http://www.suncoastlug.org/). Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

Half of the year 2000 is already gone and half of my year as President. I'm enjoying it, and I hope I'm doing a good job

We went to ITEC (Information Technology Exposition and Conference) at the Convention Center recently. It wasn't as large as I had expected, but it was interesting nonetheless. I met the President of the Tampa Bay Computer Society, Dave "Doc" Dockery. The group is headquartered in Clearwater and meets at the Clearwater Central Catholic High School. They had a table for the event, and Doc said that people were asking if there was a group in Tampa. He was giving them our web address. The following day I took our brochures down there, and they handed them out for us. What an amazingly philanthropic thing for them to do. I want to extend a great big "Thank You" to them and hope we can find some way to repay them in the future.

The garage/rummage sale with the Greater Tampa Bay Computer User Group (Brandon) for this summer has been postponed until December. MOSI has some old equipment they would like to sell, also. This sale will enable all of us to clean out some of those old components and software and help the user group at the same time. We decided it would be better to have the sale after the "Snowbirds" return for the winter.

(President.....Continued on page 2)

July 12: To be announced. Check our web site later.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the May Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

Our meeting started with the Windows SIG. Just like the news this month, the "Love Bug" virus was the first point of discussion. Following that was a discussion on setting up a network to share a high-speed Internet connection at home. It was suggested a Road Runner connection can be run straight into a hub with the other computers connect to the hub to get on the net. One possible problem was two computers might not be able to access the net at the same time. Another option would be to run your Internet connection to the network card that came with the RoadRunner package, and then add a second network card to connect to the hub. To connect the other computers to the Internet through your first computer, connect them to the hub and install proxy server software on the main computer or install Windows 98 SE with its Internet connection Sharing enabled on that computer. Of course, these solutions require knowledge of how to implement a small local network. With the growth of high-speed Internet connections, security is a growing concern also. Road Runner is an always-on connection that shares a network environment with all other Road Runner customers in your area. Anyone with basic hacking skills can "surf" the network and see your hard drive. Another security issue that is also common to DSL is a static IP address. Hackers can find this and either attack you directly or become you when your connection goes down. A precaution would be to install a firewall on your computer. I'm not talking about the stand-alone machines that filter e-mail and web sites you'd find in large companies. Firewall programs are available for the home user and are installed directly on your machine.

The general meeting started at 6:30 PM with our president passing out sign up sheets and making announcements. Our demonstration of scanning devices didn't go far due to a software issue with the computer Office Depot brought in. We did have our door prize drawings. Brian Lance won a Visual C++ and a gardening program, William Coleman won a T-Shirt, Nellie Lim (one of our guests) won a resource CD, and Gary Ennis won a copy of Drive Image.

The meeting closed at 8:00 PM. ◆

(President,,,,,,,,,Continued from page 1)

The presenter at the next meeting (June 14th) will be Bill Preece. He plans to talk about the Linux operating system, and I'm looking forward to hearing what he has to say.

(President……Continued on page 9)

The Pocket PC has Truly Arrived

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larryanders@msn.com

Originally I went running and yelling, "The Palm is dead", and I wasn't referring to the palm tree in my yard that's dying because of this draught we're currently in here in the Tampa Bay area. I was talking about the Palm Operating System. More later on this….

I had read an article in the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) a few months back that really caught my attention when it described Microsoft's third try at Windows CE, their operating system based on the Windows platform and aimed at the palmtop and handheld market. This newly released operating system is now called PocketPC, and the new devices pictured above are coincidentally called PocketPCs also. Heretofore most palmtops were just PDAs (personal digital assistants) or PIMs (personal information managers) but not anymore, and that's what caught my attention in the WSJ article. I travel for a living, and although my notebook isn't all that heavy, by the end of a long travel day it feels like it weighs a ton. Most of the time I just carry my notebook for the ability to check email and access the web, but not anymore. Now I can carry something much lighter and be able to check my mail and browse the Internet anywhere I go.

After reading in the WSJ article about what was to come in the future, I started doing my research on these new PocketPCs and decided that I wanted an HP Jornada 540 series color pocket PC (HP PPC). It's the one on the right in the picture above. Symbol, Casio, and Compaq units are also pictured with it. Why the HP PPC? Name recognition, features included, highly rated bright color screen and the fact that it is one of the first to be released.

The HP545 was already available when I decided I ***needed*** one, but the 548 was due out May 1st. Well, I called HP on May 1st, and I had a 548 in my hand by May 3rd. I never have been one to wait too long for new technology. Two days was a lifetime.

This new line of handhelds is actually a PocketPC, not just a PDA. I have been a 3Com Palm user for about three years now, and although I had never used a PDA, or even any type of PIM before my Palm III, I could not live without one now. The Palm has been my right hand for quite a while, and I get a sinking feeling in my stomach when I realize it's not close by.

When I first got the HP548, and realized it could do everything my Palm III could do and so much more, I immediately decided the "Palm was dead." Then I read an article about the new PocketPC operating system in a recent PC World magazine that made me stop and re-think about the entire situation. I don't agree with the author's conclusion that most Palm users aren't willing to "sacrifice the simplicity of the Palm for the fripperies of Windows CE" (PC World, June 2000, Alexandra Krasne). First of all, what the heck is a frippery? And second, it is no longer Windows CE. It is a revamped operating system that has obviously been retooled for speed. My new HP548 has a 133Mhz 32-bit Hitachi processor and the new operating system is permanently on the 16 MB ROM chip. It also has 32MB of RAM.



The screen on my 548 is a 240 x 320 pixels, 4,096 colors (it was originally supposed to be 65,000 colors), LCD color display. With Microsoft's ClearType™ technology, on-screen reading approaches the quality of reading text printed on paper. Input into the PPC is provided by a pen and touch interface using the included stylus that has a nickname of "string-bean", which is stored neatly in the flip-top lid. You can enter text utilizing handwriting recognition software or an on-screen keyboard that is much more functional and useful than the keyboard on the Palm. On the Palm I immediately began using the handwriting recognition but so far on the 548 I have stayed with the keyboard input. The battery is a built-in Lithium-ion rechargeable with an 8-hour battery life. The unit recharges in a little over an hour. Input/output consists of RS232 serial, IrDA infrared, USB, CompactFlash type 1 card slot and an AC input jack. There is an external audio speaker and a microphone for the voice recorder. There is also a stereo earphone jack for the digital audio player. It is slightly larger than my Palm III and weighs less than 9 ounces.

The software (http://www.hp.com/jornada/products/540/prod_software.html) included is:

- Microsoft® Windows® for Pocket PC
- Microsoft Pocket Outlook (manage calendars, tasks, contacts, and e-mail)
- Microsoft Pocket Internet Explorer (browse Web pages, AvantGo™ Mobile Channels, Mobile Favorites Synchronization, Microsoft Mobile Channels)
- Microsoft Pocket Word (view and edit Word documents)
- Microsoft Pocket Excel (view and edit Excel documents)
- Microsoft Pocket Money (manage your stocks and checking account)
- Microsoft Pocket Streets (view U.S. maps)
- Microsoft Reader (read electronic books)
- Microsoft Windows Media Player (enjoy digital music and more)

(Pocket… … ….Continued on page 4)

(Pocket… … ….Continued from page 3)

- Landware OmniSolve (Business/financial calculator)
- Conduit Technologies' PeaceMaker 1.0 (exchange contacts with other PDAs via IrDA – *even the Palm*)
- Socket Communications™' drivers for Ethernet and digital phone cards
- HP settings, backup, home, task switcher, game buttons, Microsoft ActiveSync® 3.1 (synchronize files with your desktop PC)
- Microsoft Outlook 2000 (full retail desktop version)
- AOL Mail 1.0 (send and receive AOL e-mail)
- Yahoo! Messenger (send and receive instant messages to online friends and check news, stock prices, and more)
- Sierra Imaging's Image Expert (view, edit, and share digital images)
- MusicMatch JukeBox 4.4 (record, organize, and play digital music)
- Emusic.com (free sample digital music tracks)
- AudiblePlayer for Windows PocketPC 2.0 and AudibleManager 2.5 (if you don't feel like reading, listen to audiobooks and news)
- ZIO Interactive's ZIO Golf 1.1 (play realistic 3D golf)
- Inso's Quick View Plus (view e-mail attachments in Word, embedded tables, and selected graphics formats)
- HP's JetSend 2.0 for Windows PocketPC (exchange information with digital cameras, printers, and more)
- PhatWare's HPC Notes 3.03 Lite and Professional (create and organize notes)

I could go on and on, but if you really want to see what it's all about go to http://www.hp.com/jornada/tour/index.html and take the tour. Pocket PC technology is available with the following devices: HP Jornada 545, HP Jornada 548, Casio E-115, Casio EM-500, Casio EG-80, Casio EG-800, Compaq iPAQ, and the Compaq Aero 1500.

Do I still think that the Palm is dead? … No, not really. Do I think that most Palm users aren't willing to "sacrifice the simplicity of the Palm for the fripperies of Windows CE?" …No, not really. Why? We're looking at two different tools serving two different purposes. I just happen to have need for a PocketPC with many of the features of my desktop and notebook, including MS Word, Excel and Internet Explorer. The fact that it is also a PDA… hey… ***life is good!*** (…and I still have my Palm III too.)



http://www.hp.com/jornada/
HP545 - $499
HP548 - $599 ◆

Book Review: The Age of Spiritual Machines

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

Attention all inhabitants of Earth: This is a message for all human beings, including those of you who are members of the Tampa Bay PC Users Group in Tampa, Florida. There is something you should be aware of: The human species is going to go extinct, and that will happen relatively soon, probably within the next few hundred years. It's not that we're all going to die at the same time. It's that within the next 100 years most people, if not everyone, will voluntarily merge into the intelligent machines that are even now being planned and created, resulting in what will arguably be a new species.

At least that's what well-known scientist, author and inventor Ray Kurzweil postulates in his book, recently out in trade paperback, *The Age of Spiritual Machines.* Yes, I know, it sounds like just so much mumbo-jumbo baloney, on the same level as the predictions 50 years ago that we'd all be commuting to work in helicopters today. But Kurzweil deals with such skepticism, and draws upon an extremely good record in predicting the future of technology to bolster his vision.

Many of us in the TPCUG remember quite clearly the dawn of the "microcomputer" revolution. It happened, if any event like that can be specifically pinned down, in 1981 when the IBM-PC was introduced. Prior to that everyone was fiddling with Apple II's and Texas Instrument TI-88's (was that it?), and Altairs, and Commodores, and various computer operating systems, mostly CP/M. Of course, the stodgy, backward business world resisted all along, regarding microcomputers as mere "toys"...until IBM came out with its Personal Computer, whereupon the new "micro"computer was "validated", and the revolution began in earnest.

That revolution has been driven by the inexorable march of "Moore's Law." Gordon Moore, an inventor of the integrated circuit and in 1965 the chairman of Intel Corporation, postulated then that the number of switches (transistors, if you will) that could be placed onto the face of a silicon wafer would double about every twelve months. In 1975 he is said to have increased the timeline to "every 18 months" (although Kurzweil notes that Moore today says that "his 1975 update was to twenty-four months, and that does appear to be a better fit to the data").

So far no insurmountable obstacles have been encountered to the continuation of Moore's Law. But Kurzweil notes that chip companies only have confidence that the process can continue for about another 15 to 20 years, when "the paradigm

(Kurzweil……..Continued on page 5)

(Kurzweil… … ….Continued from page 4)

will break down. The transistor insulators will then be just a few atoms thick, and the conventional approach of shrinking them won't work."

"What then?" Kurzweil asks.

He spends a considerable portion of his book explaining "what then." And explaining why the continued exponential growth of computing power won't hit a brick wall as expected around 2018 (think quantum computers for starts). If he's right, the result will be the creation of machines with computing power billions of times more powerful than the human brain, and, ultimately, the merging of human intelligence with machine (or "artificial") intelligence.

Mere science fiction? Kurzweil, who is the inventor of the music synthesizer, reading machines for the blind, and a leading variant of speech-recognition technology, was named Inventor of the Year in 1988 by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In addition, Carnegie Mellon University awarded him its top science prize in 1994. He's not a nut case. And, in fact, he has an enviable record of correctly predicting the future over the past 20 or so years (which he goes over in the book).

What he predicts now—in fact, postulates as "an inexorable emergence"—is the imminent arrival of machine intelligence superior to human intelligence:

In the second decade of the next century [that is, from 2011 to 2020], it will become increasingly difficult to draw any clear distinction between the capabilities of human and machine intellgence. The advantages of computer intelligence in terms of

(Kurzweil… … ….Continued on page 6)

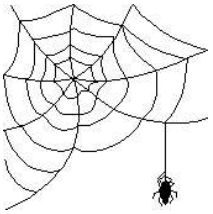
INTERNET PICTURE OF THE MONTH



From the May 21 online version of the Tampa Tribune

The graphic above shows Tampa PC User Group member Merrill Friend and his wife Patsy viewing the aftermath of the great Ybor City construction site fire. The Tampa Tribune's URL is http://www.tampatrib.com. A special section on the fire can be found at http://tampabayonline.net/yborfire/ at their Tampa Bay Online site.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Suncoast Linux Users Group	http://www.suncoastlug.org/
Adaptec	http://www.adaptec.com/
Hillsborough County Property Appraiser (new URL)	http://www.hcpafl.org/
Cap'n Bry's Gnutella search	http://capnbry.dyndns.org/gnutella/gs.php
Seminole Tribe of Florida	http://www.seminoletribe.com/
Visual Basic Code at vbcode.com	http://www.vbcode.com/
Daily PhatPhat News (digital music information)	http://www.dailyphat.com/
Hammacher Schlemmer (gifts)	http://www.hammacher.com/
Bloomingdale's Online	http://www.bloomingdales.com/
Macys Online	http://www.macys.com/
Neiman Marcus Online	http://neimanmarcus.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Kurzweil.....Continued from page 5)
speed, accuracy, and capacity will be clear. The advantages of human intelligence, on the other hand, will become increasingly difficult to distinguish....Before the next century is over, human beings will no longer be the most intelligent or capable type of entity on the planet.

Kurzweil is so sure of his predictions that he includes a detailed timeline, handing over the last five chapters of his book to explicit scenarios that he sees emerging in 1999, 2009, 2019, 2029, and finally what the world will look like in 2099. He postulates that by about 2020 a computer that can be purchased with $1,000 of today's dollars will have the computing power of a single human brain. Then...well, here's what he says:

After human capacity in a $1,000 personal computer is achieved around the year 2020, our thinking machines will improve the cost performance of their computing by a factor of two every twelve months. That means that the capacity of computing will double ten times every decade, which is a factor of one thousand (2^{10}) every ten years. So your personal computer will be able to simulate the brain power of a small village by the year 2030, the entire population of the United States by 2048, and a trillion human brains by 2060. If we estimate the human Earth population at 10 billion persons, one penny's worth of computing circa 2099 will have a billion times greater computing capacity than all humans on Earth.

I know, I know, it's incredible (i.e. "not credible") and beyond belief, and there are all kinds of arguments to throw in Kurzweil's face. We all know about the *current* limitations of computers and computing, and it seems reasonable that it's going to be more than a little hard to overcome hurdles in the future to attaining the kind of computing power Kurzweil is talking about. Yet he's an acknowledged expert in the area, active in computing and invention for over 20 years and making spot-on predictions through the whole time.

There are two concepts which Kurzweil argues are driving the evolution of humans and machines: The Law of Time and Chaos and The Law of Accelerating Returns. The definition of the Law of Time and Chaos is this: "In a process, the time interval between salient events (that is, events that change the nature of the process, or significantly affect the future of the process) expands or contracts along with the amount of chaos." A further definition of "chaos" is needed: "It refers to the quantity of disordered (that is, random) events *that are relevant to the process*....If we're dealing with the process of evolution of life-forms, then chaos represents the unpredictable events encountered by organisms, and the random mutations that are introduced in the genetic code."

The next Law postulated by Kurzweil, which he says is the opposite of the Law of Time and Chaos, "is the most important and relevant for our purposes." This "inverse sublaw" to the Law of Time and Chaos is "the Law of Accelerating Returns." Definition? "As order exponentially increases, time exponentially speeds up (that is, the time interval between salient events grows shorter as time passes)." Thus, "The Law of Accelerating Returns...applies specifically to evolutionary processes. In an evolutionary process, it is order—the opposite of chaos—that is increasing."

But wait! Surely Kurzweil isn't arguing that biological evolution itself is "speeding up"! Well...yes, he does make that argument. Evolution has one huge deficiency, he notes:

[It] is very slow. While it is true that it has created some remarkable designs, it has taken an extremely long period of time to do so. It took eons for the process to get started, and, for the evolution of life-forms, eons meant billions of years. Our human forebears also took eons to get started in their creation of technology, but for us eons meant only tens of thousands of years, a distinct improvement.

The Law of Accelerating Returns also suggests that evolution will devise a way to bypass itself. That is, it evolves intelligence (namely, us) which is capable of devising intelligence (namely computers) that surpasses itself. Furthermore, says Kurzweil, the Law of Accelerating Returns "predicts that the progression in the capabilities of human-created machines will only continue to accelerate. The human species creating intelligent technology is another example of evolution's progress building on itself. Evolution created human intelligence. Now human intelligence is designing intelligent machines at a far faster pace."

In fact, Kurzweil argues that normal biological evolution will eventually have to be scrapped altogether by humans. Consider the human brain, the most complex object known in the universe, a crowning achievement of billions of years of biological evolution. Says Kurzweil:

The human brain is eminently capable in some ways, and remarkably weak in others. Its strength is reflected in its massive parallelism, an approach that our computers can also benefit from. The brain's weakness is the extraordinarily slow speed of its computing medium, a limitation that computers do not share with us. For this reason, DNA-based evolution will eventually have to be abandoned. DNA-based evolution is good at tinkering with and extending its designs, but it is unable to scrap an entire design and start over. Organisms created through DNA-based evolution are stuck with an extremely plodding type of circuitry.

But the Law of Accelerating Returns tells us that evolution will

(Kurzweil..... .....Continued on page 7)

(Kurzweil……Continued from page 6)

not remain stuck at a dead end for very long. And indeed, evolution has found a way around the computational limitations of neural circuitry. Cleverly, it has created organisms that in turn invented a computational technology a million times faster than carbon-based neurons (which continue to get yet faster). Ultimately, the computing conducted on extremely slow mammalian neural circuits will be ported to a far more versatile and speedier electronic (and photonic) equivalent.

Yes, everyone, he's talking about scanning and exactly replicating every neural connection and synapse in our brains, in a computer a billion or more times more powerful than the most powerful computers in existence today. "When will this happen?" Kurzweil asks, not figuratively. His guess is that by the year 2023 a personal computer costing $1,000 will have equal processing power to a human brain. From there it is only a short jump to being able to replicate all the connections of a single brain in a single computer.

In the second half of the twenty-first century, there will be a growing trend toward making this leap. Initially, there will be partial porting—replacing aging memory circuits, extending pattern-recognition and reasoning circuits through neural implants. Ultimately, and well before the twenty-first century is completed, people will port their entire mind file to the new thinking technology.

There will be nostalgia for our humble carbon-based roots, but there is nostalgia for vinyl records also. Ultimately, we did copy most of that analog music to the more flexible and capable world of transferable digital information. The leap to port our minds to a more capable computing medium will happen gradually but inexorably nonetheless.

As we port ourselves, we will also vastly extend ourselves. Remember that $1,000 of computing in 2060 will have the computational capacity of a trillion human brains. So we might as well multiply memory a trillion fold, greatly extend recognition and reasoning abilities, and plug ourselves into the pervasive wireless-communications network. While we are at it, we can add all human knowledge—as a readily accessible internal database as well as already processed and learned knowledge--- using the human type of distributed understanding.

Ultimate meaning? Immortality. That is, we're not going to have to die.

Actually there won't be mortality by the end of the twenty-first century. Not in the sense that we have known it. Not if you take advantage of the twenty-first century's brain-porting technology. Up until now, our mortality was tied to the longevity of our hardware. When the hardware crashed, that was it. For many of our forebears, the hardware gradually deteriorated before it disintegrated....As we cross the divide to instantiate ourselves into our computational technology, our identity will be based on our evolving mind file. We will be software, not hardware.

And evolve it will. Today, our software cannot grow. It is stuck in a brain of a mere 100 trillion connections and synapses. But when the hardware is trillions of times more capable, there is no reason for our minds to stay so small. They can and will grow.

So that's it. Ray Kurzweil, a respected scientist and inventor, is either off his rocker, or is foretelling a future that is assured and unavoidable, and will happen within the lifetime of many us reading this article.

Don't believe it? Read the book. It'll blow your mind. ◆

New Projector Fund Drive



By Merle Nicholson, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group,
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

The TPCUG needs a video projector desperately and as quickly as possible. I've started a drive to collect funds to buy one. We need to raise $3,000 to $4,500.

Anyone who's been at the meetings lately knows of the failures we've had with the projector we're using at MOSI. It's just VGA resolution, and it's increasingly becoming incompatible with speakers' notebooks. And more than once – it didn't work at all when we needed it.

I feel very strongly that the future of our club depends on owning our own projector. We must attract good presenters to continue and to attract new members, and some of the very good ones depend on our having the facilities. But it's not just the projector that's critical, it's also the room where we hold the meetings. We hold three meetings a month: the regular meeting and two SIGs. A portable projector gives us far more flexibility to use different rooms and different locations.

The fund was announced at the meeting last month, and so far we have $215 in four donations. I'd like to set a goal of ten donations at $100 each, and the remainder with $25 to $50

(Projector……Continued on page 12)

Windows Startup Disk



By Merle Nicholson, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

Do you have a startup disk? Do you know where it is? Do you know how to use it? Better still, DOES IT WORK? What are you going to do if your PC doesn't boot because of a disk or Windows file problem? What if you have the seemingly correct diskette and when you boot, the CDROM doesn't work? Never happen to you? It will; sooner or later your good luck will run out, and you'll be glad you're prepared. To get ready for the coming sad event, read on.

Let's start at the beginning. Locate your Windows CD. Read the label. Is it an upgrade or a full version? Does it say "Only for use on a new computer" or "OEM version for a new computer"? Let's cover an upgrade version first, then the full version.

Upgrade Version CD. What are the issues for an upgrade CD? Well, when you installed this version, you already had a qualifying operating system installed, either say Windows 3.1 or a Windows 95a, b or c, or perhaps a Windows 98 and you have an SE upgrade. What's the big deal? Well, you **still** have to have the qualifying product to re-install from your CD if for some reason you have to reformat the hard drive. So, for instance, I have a Windows 98SE upgrade, but I also have a Windows 95 upgrade CD. If I have to reinstall Windows 98SE from scratch, the installation program will ask for my qualifying product, and I'll insert my Windows 95 CD for it to look at before it will continue with the setup. I even have Diskette #1 of my Windows 3.1 product!

Now look at the CD you intend to install or reinstall. Is the CD key on the jewel case or paper sleeve? If not, you're in trouble! Better find it now while you're not in a hurry. And if you do have it, a good idea is to put a paper CD label on the CD with the CD Key written on the label. I also have been writing the key directly on the top of the CD with a permanent marker. The idea is that with it labeled on the CD, you'll never lose it.

Full Version CD. Two issues exist with the full version. One, is that it came with a boot diskette. Do you still have it? It can substitute for a startup disk that we'll make later; it's not as good, but it does have an advantage in that you can do a full installation to a blank hard drive at any time. The other issue is the same as the upgrade version – the CD Key.

Now for the Startup Disk. There are a couple of issues with this diskette, mainly in making sure all the possible needed utilities are on it and also that it works – that is, that it will boot the computer, and that the CD ROM drive is working.

If you already have this disk made, you can skip this part, but pick it up a little further on because we're going to test it. First you need a diskette. I'd use the newest one you have around. Don't for heaven's sake use your old Quicken For DOS disk. Diskettes do have a shelf life, you know. Open Control Panel, click on Add/Remove Programs and select the "Startup Disk" tab. I really do have trouble remembering where this is. If it's a used disk, the program will replace any files on it. Click on the "Create Disk" button. It will tell you how to label the disk, insert it in the drive and click OK. It takes a few minutes to copy all the files.

Now, the above process was just a little different if you have Windows 95 than it is if you have Windows 98. Windows 95 needs the Windows 95 CD in its drive to make the diskette, Windows 98 does not. And there are other differences, and those of you who already have a startup disk need to pay attention here.

Win 98. You should hopefully have a good bootable diskette now. There's just one thing I'd do. Find the files C:\windows \command\EDIT.COM C:\windows\command\SYS.COM and copy them to the boot diskette. I find that these two programs are especially helpful when I have a dead system to contend with.

Now with the diskette still inserted, select Start, Shutdown, Restart. As the system boots, you'll get a DOS menu like this:

1. Start computer with CD-ROM support
2. Start computer without CD-ROM support
3. View the help file.

Select 1. You'll see that a CD-ROM device driver – usually the OakCD driver - should load, and then a number of ASPI for DOS drivers in case you have some SCSI drives, and finally the MSCDEX driver. This is the DOS driver for the CD-ROM. It should appear successful, and hopefully it will be. It's crucial. You should now have an A:> prompt.

Now with any data CD – your Windows CD may be best – do a directory list on the CD-ROM. Usually it'll be drive E:. The reason? This boot disk installs a virtual disk drive (a ramdisk) in memory for a few files, and it takes the first letter after the hard drive. So that'll be D: and then the CD-ROM driver loads as E:. I mention this because you don't want to be fooled into believing the files you see in the directory list are the CD, when they're really the ramdisk. Look at the light on the drive when you do the DIR E: command and make sure it spins up, and if you have the Windows CD there, it'll show you a WIN98 directory.

So all is well. And if not – perhaps the CD-ROM drivers are

(Startup……Continued on page 9)

(Startup… … ….Continued from page 8)
NOT loaded – then just read on, because the Windows 95 boot diskette has similar problems.

Win 95. We have some real work to do here, and it's more complicated. You can go ahead and boot your system with the new diskette, but you'll see that the CDROM doesn't work. There are no drivers on the diskette. Also there's no ramdisk, and that's a good thing. The disk does have EDIT.COM and SYS.COM on it. That's good. Re-boot back into Windows without the disk, then insert the disk again so we can copy missing files to it.

First we have to find the CD-ROM real-mode device driver. And it'll be a file like SBIDE.SYS or OAKCDROM.SYS. You will probably find one of these on the hard drive. One clue may be had from the c:\config.sys file. Edit or view that file and see if at one time the CDROM drive was used. Often it was, and then REM'd out. You may also have a diskette that came with the CDROM with the right one on it, and this is the best one you can get. DO NOT install the diskette. Instead open it with the Windows Explorer and look for the file. Copy this to the boot disk. Then find the c:\windows\command \mscdex.exe file and copy that to the diskette. OK. Now we have to do some file editing.

There's already a config.sys file on the diskette. Edit it with notepad, and add a line after the himem.sys line like: DEVICE=A:\OAKCDROM.SYS /D:MSCD001, or whatever the name of your device driver is. The /D part is the same for everyone. Save the file and then open a:\autoexec.bat. It'll be blank because there isn't a file. Just let Notepad create one for you. It needs one line. A:\MSCDEX.EXE /D:MSCD001. Save that file. Now boot with it. Hopefully you'll have a CDROM after booting. If not, pay particular attention to the screen when the device driver and the MSCDEX programs run. You'll usually have a clue from the messages. The MSCDEX program will not connect to the drive if the device driver in config sys doesn't find the drive. So make sure the device driver messages look good. Usually it'll tell you how many drives it found. (One). Look for keying errors. I have seen a couple of systems where you have to tell the device driver which IDE drive and interrupt it's attached to. In this case the config.sys line would read: DEVICE=A:\SBIDE.SYS /P:170,15. This is right only if the cdrom drive is installed in the secondary IDE port. Get this fixed! The Windows 95 reinstallation assumes that most of the system is still working, and in my own experience, that doesn't happen very often.

Aren't you glad you're doing this now instead of when it's all broken? ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

My contributors came through early and strong this month, so there is just a small space for me to fill. I encourage others to send me your thoughts on computing. The newsletter can always use a new slant.

Since last month's newsletter, I have learned more about Delphi and written a couple more programs. One makes a log file of all the WWW URLs you visit, and the other compares your system time to the Universal Time available via the Internet. Both still need a little polishing. But I have been pleased with my ability to pick up Delphi and use it to complement what I do in Visual Basic.

For those of you interested in the collection of old Tampa photos taken by the Burgert Brothers and being digitized by the Tampa/Hillsborough County Library, the searchable database of them (as well as the static listing) I created at my web site http://www.lamartin.com is now of use again. The Library is again allowing access to the photos via the Internet. ◆

(President… … ….Continued from page 2)
We are in need of a projector for meetings in other rooms at MOSI and at the SIGs. Merle Nicholson has started a projector fund. He generously made the first pledge to get the ball rolling, and Bruce Register was next to pledge. Thanks to both of them and everyone else who is able to help out. Mike Hodges has some older projectors that can hopefully be used as "trade-ins". This should lower the cost of the projector. Let's all pull together and make this a successful project.

I've gotten a couple of phone calls this month from people looking for beginner computer classes. If anyone has ideas of how to serve the needs of new PC users, please let me know. Most people seem to be intimidated by our regular meetings, so we may need to have a beginners' SIG. Any thoughts on this subject will be welcome.

I got an invitation to the Fall APCUG Conference in Las Vegas during Comdex week. My response was, NO, I cannot think about November yet! I do well to know where I might be next week.

Thanks to everyone for continuing to support the group. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM.

For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Update your Anti-Virus NOW !!

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group, Member at Large, merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

Man, there's some nasty stuff going around now. And you can prevent viruses from coming into your PC by:

1) Own a good Anti-Virus program.
2) Make sure it's running !!
3) Get the virus signatures UP-TO-DATE!
4) Disable Windows Scripting Host.
5) Reject incoming Outlook messages with "FW:" in the subject line.
6) Reject any file attachments with .vbs
7) Go to http://www.microsoft.com or http://www.netscape.com and get any Internet security updates.

There's no excuse for not having anti-virus software running on your machine at all times if you have a Pentium class machine. Office Depot puts Norton Anti-Virus on sale regularly for $15. I bought a couple of copies at $9.95!

Make sure it's properly installed. If you're not sure, call one of the club members. This is very important. Further, make sure it's scanning all files. Many times it will scan only at startup and scan only executables (program files). Go into the settings and make sure you're doing the maximum possible.

If you have an anti-virus package that's not more than a couple of years old, you can get free updates. If you can't get free updates, then you need a new program for sure. The companies are now putting out new signature files several times a month, instead of once a month as before because of the proliferation of new viruses. They're on the Internet, and they're free.

Open the anti-virus software you have and do a help | about and see if you can't find the web address. The most popular ones are McAfee, Symantec (Norton), Dr. Solomon and Trend Micro(PC-cillin) at:
http://www.mcafee.com, http://www.symantec.com. http://www.drsolomon.com, and http://www.antivirus.com.

The latest email virii come to you as a file with a .vbs extension. VBS stands for Visual Basic Script. Users of Windows 95 and 98 should turn off the Windows Scripting Host. Click on Start (the button on lower left of your Windows desktop). Click on Settings. Choose Control Panel. Click on Add/Remove. Choose the Windows Setup tab. Click on Accessories to obtain details. Uncheck Windows Scripting Host if it is checked. It may not be in the list at all for Windows 95 if it's an older copy. Click on OK to save any changes.

Last, be conscientious. Set a schedule to get anti-virus updates at least monthly. Don't forget you're a member of a community of other users who can help. See the members help inside the back cover of this issue. ◆

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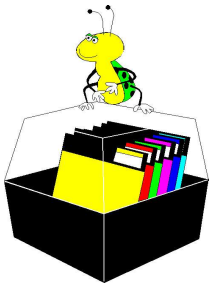
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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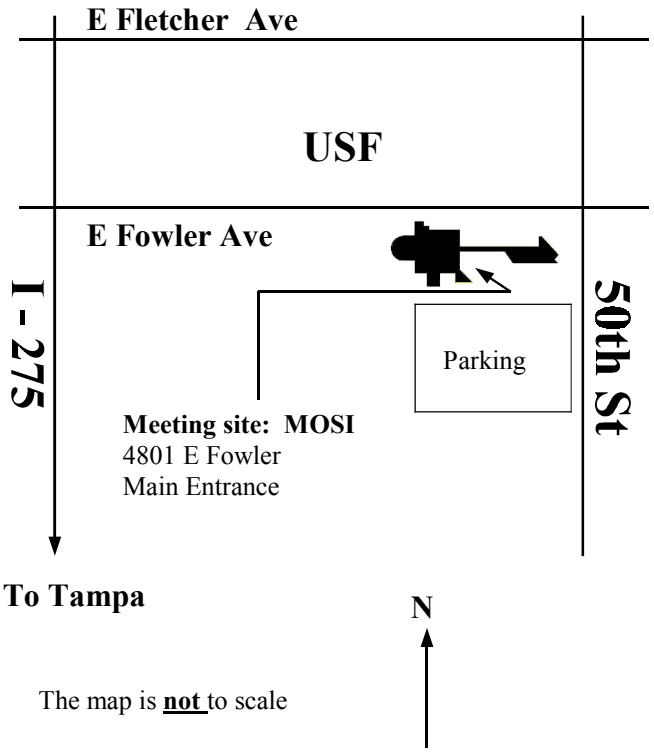
(Projector……Continued from page 7)
amounts. Remember that we're a 501-C3 non-profit corporation. So what you'll get in return is a letter of thanks – by way of a receipt to show the Tax Man and, if you wish, recognition in the newsletter. The recognition is optional, of course.

I'm optimistic that we can do this. It's unusual for the TPCUG to raise the money this way, but it's an extraordinary need. And anyone in the group who's participated in the search for a new meeting location will tell you our options are very, very limited without a projector.

Please don't take this as a desire to vacate MOSI ! We have an excellent relationship with MOSI, and we'll continue as long as they can accommodate us. They do have other rooms that may be more suitable than the computer lab. But we can't do anything at all without a projector!

Think of all the time you have invested in the club. Hasn't it paid back to you in value exceeding $100? It certainly has for me. Give it some thought will you? Make a check made out to Tampa PC Users Group right away. You can contact me:

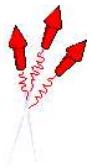
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http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 6 July 2000

Meeting

Personal Digital Assistants
And More

July 12, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science
and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the July meeting we will have a presentation on those handy little things called Personal Digital Assistants. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I really enjoyed the lively discussions at the last meeting. It sort of reminded me of the old MSDOS/OS2/DRDOS debates. People take their operating systems very seriously. The debate seemed kinder and gentler than in the past though. Maybe we're all getting mellower.

Our projector project is off to an excellent start. I'm so grateful to all who have donated.

As usual, the summer brings with it a shortage of presenters for our meetings. The representatives want to travel to Florida to talk to us in January, but they aren't that keen on being here in July and August. If you know of anyone locally who would like to talk to the group about their products, please let someone on the board know.

Cheryl Alexander has volunteered to handle our need for "Novice Users" information and help. We haven't worked out exactly how it will be implemented, but hopefully we find a way to be a resource for those who are new to the computer environment.

We also are painfully short on software for the door prizes. If you've bought

(President.....Continued on page 10)

August 9: To be announced. Check our web site later.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the June Meeting

By Mike Hodges substituting for James Weber
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As usual Mary Sheridan opened the meeting with a far ranging discussion of MS Windows topics. Two new members were welcomed along with four visitors.

The opening discussions centered on virus detectors, as this was the burning topic at this juncture in the PC Internet developments. The "I LOVE YOU" virus being prevalent in early June causing many email systems and ISP providers to be totally on their knees. The main virus detector announced was PC-cillin98 as this is free for the download.

It was also stated that Defrag could double as a memory checker. If Defrag runs without aborting then it has most likely determined that the PC memory is sound. It was also announced that PC memory prices have started to rise again. A 64-MB module has risen by $25 in price in recent weeks.

IP routers were stated to provide an excellent firewall for DSL and Road Runner users. IP routers or cable system routers were stated to sell for $200. Contact Steve Singer of RDI for further details at http://morevalu.net/, the RDI web site.

Our featured presenters for this meeting, one of our more interesting, haled from the Suncoast Linux Users Group (SLUG) which boasts 250 members already. Monthly meetings are held at the Brandon Town Center Barnes and Noble bookstore. Our presenters, namely Bill Preece and Norbert, whose last name I have misplaced, host the SLUG meeting on the first Thursday of each month between 8 & 9 PM. The group also holds other monthly meetings in the area. Our presenters were clearly most enthused as to their conviction that Linux was a far superior operating system than MS Windows and believed it would be only a short time until the PC community would use nothing other than Linux operating systems. A number of Linux application programs are currently available and our presenters believed that the whole world would quickly wholeheartedly embrace Linux as the first choice as a total replacement for Windows. Being skeptical of all and any claims, I asked our presenters to state the reasons for their adoration of all things Linux. First, however, comparisons were rendered between the various competing versions of Linux, Turbo Linux, RedHat Linux and Corel Linux. Turbo Linux was stated to be preferable as a workplace system. Staples is apparently offering a 100% rebate on Turbo Linux. It was also stated that Red Hat Linux is the choice for server systems. Corel Linux was a newer version but was very well supported. Our presenters had indulged in Linux only for the last six months but were

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The Handspring Visor PDA

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Last month Larry Anders described the HP Jornada 548 Pocket PC—cost $600 (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/june2000/pocket_pc.htm). In June, 1998, he also wrote about the Palm III (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/june1998/palm_3.html). This month I will describe the HandspringVisor—cost $179 ($249 for the Visor Deluxe).

The Pocket PC and the Visor are obviously different, the first being a miniature PC with a 133 MHz processor, with 32 MB RAM and a color display. The latter is a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) with 2 MB RAM and a gray scale display. However, if you think you might need more RAM to load some heavy-duty software, the Handspring Visor Deluxe comes with 8 MB RAM and a leather case. If you are not going to use it to connect to the Internet, edit Word documents, listen to digital music, or need a color display, then you don't really need the Jornada, and might just as well get either a Palm or the Visor.

This Visor was developed by the original developers of the Palm at 3COM, and it uses the Palm operating system, version 3.1. Furthermore, all of the software add-ons that work with the Palm can be used with the Visor. The most comparable Palm appears to be the Palm IIIxe. To see a side-by-side comparison of this Palm and the Visor Deluxe, go to http://www.handspring.com/products/vcomparison.asp.

Why get a Visor instead of a Palm? At first, price was a good reason, but Palm has now introduced the Palm IIIxe for $249, and it compares very closely to the Visor Deluxe at the same price. The Visor claims to have enhanced versions of the core applications—date book, address book, memo pad, etc.— used by the Palm, so I suppose this is a plus for the Visor, but the main plus, I think, is the Springboard expansion slot on the Visor that accommodates such plug and play peripherals as extra memory modules, modems, and GPS receivers in a more compact way than does the Palm with its peripherals. Additionally, the Visor comes with a USB connector to sync it with the software on your computer. This is an extra with the Palm. A USB connection is a much faster way to synchronize your PDA with your computer than is a serial connection.

I never thought I really needed such a thing as the Visor until one was given to me by my son for Father's Day. Then I found all sorts of uses. The obvious is to import my address book into it from my computer. If you are using Microsoft Outlook, you can import directly. If not, as was the case for me, you first need to export your address data to a comma delimited file and then import that into the Palm Desktop



that you have installed on your computer. Once you have your address in the Address Book in the Palm Desktop, you get them into the Visor by Hot Syncing. To do this you simply connect the Visor's cradle to the USB connection on your computer, put the Visor in the cradle, then press the button on the cradle.

Similarly, you can fill in appointments in the Palm Desktop's date book , then when you sync with the Visor, this information is added to the Visor's date book. If you add an appointment to the Visor's address book, when you sync, that appointment is added to the computer's date book.

One of my uses of the memo pad is to create shopping lists that I used to keep on paper. For example, I have a Home Depot list where I enter items to get the next time I go there. I could do the same for a grocery list, but I have a much better way of doing that. I am sure you have seen me mention my grocery shopping list compiler before at http://www.lamartin.com. To create my shopping list for my neighborhood Publix, I go to the site, select the items I want and have the web site put the list in walking order of that store. I then have my ordered list on the computer's screen. In the past, BV, i.e., before Visor, I would have then printed the list and taken it with me to the store. Now I save one sheet of paper by selecting the list and copying it to the clipboard and then pasting it into a new memo in the Palm Desktop and then Hot Syncing with the Visor. I now have my ordered shopping list in the Visor, which I take to the store.

Once you start using the Visor, or the Palm, you soon want to download those extra programs, some shareware, some commercial. I download a free reader called CSpotRun and then downloaded the novel Jungle by Theodore Dresser and a collocation of poems by Carl Sandburg. Now, when I have to sit in a doctor's office or an airport terminal, I can start CSpotRun, select a document and have it scroll the text as I read.

There are two types of commercial programs, those that are free and those that are not. The free ones are free because they give you some sort of information from which they hope to get some return. This is the case with Vindigo, a program that lists many of the restaurants, shops and entertainment venues in select cities. I chose to download the database for New York City. This package takes up 563 K of memory—a very

(Visor…….Continued on page 4)

(Visor……..Continued from page 3)
large amount compared with other Palm programs. This is why at some point you might want an extra memory module. When you run Vindigo, you first select whether you want to eat, shop or be entertained. Then you select your location as an intersection, e.g., Broadway and 61st St. To find a place to eat breakfast, you would select this category of food, and Vindigo then displays a list of restaurants in order of closeness (or by rating or by cost). For each restaurant listed it displays ratings for food, décor, service and costs. There are also reviews and even a place to enter notes that could be sent to Zagat, the provider of the reviews in the program. What I think is the neatest piece of information provided is the walking directions from your location to the restaurant. Similar free modules exist for other major cities—but not for Tampa.

The second type of commercial program, the one you pay for, is represented by two programs: The Jungle Mapping program and the Tiny Sheet spreadsheet program.

For all major cities, again excluding Tampa, you can get a Jungle Map—for about $10. They have a free demonstration using the southern tip of Manhattan. If you want to go further north than 20th ST, then you will have to pay. The map allows you to zoom in and out, and at the higher levels of magnification you get street names. Additionally you can search for an address and place markers on the map. It is quite a nice little program.

The Tiny Sheet ($20) program allows for basic spread sheet functions, including many of the functions in a usual spread sheet. But the program is limited—after all it is on a PDA—in that you can't do some common things like sort and filter. You can also download an additional free program that runs on your computer and allows you to bring small Excel sheets into the Visor and open them with Tiny Sheet. I now have several spreadsheets useful to me stored on the Visor.

The Jungle demo is good for about 10 days, and the Tiny Sheet demo-using the full features of the program—is good for 30 days.

There are many, many programs you can add. I have only scratched the surface. Of the ones I have viewed, as with anything, some are good and some are so-so. For example, I downloaded a map of the Manhattan subway system that was not particularly easy to read since it apparently originated from a color map, and in gray scale many of the line and stop identifiers were not distinct. By the way, to view the map, I had to find a free viewer and download it. The viewer seemed to work fine on other images.

http://www.handspring.com/ ◆

Napster and Gnutella: Death to the Music Industry

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

How many times have we all heard that some innovation or invention is going to "change everything"? The end of this! The end of that! Everything's going to be different from now on! **Really**!

Yeah, yeah, blah, blah, blah. We TPCUG members have heard it all, and then some.

And just about then something comes along that really **does** "change everything." I'm talking not only about the Napster and Gnutella phenomena, but about the very notion that we are rapidly---and I mean **really fast---**approaching a time when anything which consists of "sensory information" can be virtually limitlessly reproduced and transported, at virtually zero cost. What do I mean by sensory information? You name it: For your eyes, any and all writing including novels, articles, poetry, books of any kind and any type…**and** any type or kind of picture, film, video, artwork, sculpted representation, etc. For your ears, music, music, and music, not to mention audio books, audio novels, audio poetry, audio-anything. For your taste buds, your nose, and your sense of touch (to round out the five overt senses), we're not there yet. But we will be, you can bet on it.

Right now the ability to endlessly copy and trade audio recordings is what is driving the death of the music industry. First, a few words of explanation: Napster is a program that can be downloaded from virtually anywhere on the web. When you install it the program will hook you up with a web server named Napster.com which then enables you to "share" for copying all the music (that you specify) on your computer with whomever and wherever in the rest of the world people may be looking for what you might have.

And then there's the other side: Not only can you share what you have, but everyone else in the world running Napster is similarly sharing all their music files with you. So, you download Napster, crank it up, run a search for whatever you might be interested in, and in a few moments a whole giant list of what you've been looking for pops up on your screen, from Napster users all over the world. From there you just specify which ones you want to download. Then, you've got the music to use and share as you see fit, with the result that you don't have to go out and buy $17.95 CD's anymore (more importantly, our **kids** don't have to spend their money that way…and we all know they're better on computers than we are).

(Napster……..Continued on page 5)

(Napster……..Continued from page 4)

All of which is why the Recording Industry Association of American (RIAA), hard-metal rocker band Metallica, and rapper Dr. DRE are all piling on Napster.com, suing them for zillions of dollars and asking a federal judge to issue an injunction shutting the web site down. Permanently.

Which is where Gnutella comes in. **This** program is what might be called a "next generation Napster." Except it dispenses with the inconvenience of a central server. Everyone in the world running Gnutella can connect and share music files directly, without any central coordinating location. That is, no location that can be legally attacked and shut down. Um.

The more important implication of Napster and Gnutella **type** programs is how they extend the notion of "sharing" property which was previously protected and kept sacrosanct for owners and creators (often not the same people, remember) by federal copyright law. The emerging "ebook" industry is already being held back by worries about how Napster-type sharing can be prevented for **text-based** works of art. I mean, there's music and there are books, right? And books are made out of paper and ink, right? Not for long. Already the Softbook Reader and Rocket Ebook are on the market. And while they're primitive and expensive as first generation "electronic readers," the future is quite clear for those who care to contemplate it: Printed and bound paper-and-ink books will soon shrink drastically as a method of transferring written information and eventually may be totally supplanted by electronic text on small, inexpensive, portable reading appliances.

Now. Let's talk. What about copyright? What about musicians

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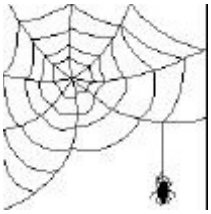
Internet picture of the month



Wreck of the Ole '97
Thomas Hart Benton, 1943

From the Hunter Museum of American Art, http://www.huntermuseum.org/index.html—one of the many wonderful museum sites online.

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Bartleby.com Great Books Online	http://www.bartleby.com/
C4 TotalSearch Technology	http://www.c4.com/
Systems Internals (Regmon & Filemon utilities)	http://www.sysinternals.com/
Nag Hammadi Library - Gnostic scriptures	http://home.sol.no/~noetic/nagham/nhl.html
The National Gallery, London	http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/
Hunter Museum of American Art	http://www.huntermuseum.org/
Butler institute of American Art	http://www.butlerart.com/
InSync Online (Palm Operating System)	http://www.insync-palm.com/
King Features Syndicate (Comics)	http://www.kingfeatures.com/
AthletesDirect - Where Athletes and Fans Interact	http://www.athletesdirect.com/
Beliefnet – Spirituality, Religion and Morality	http://www.beliefnet.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Napster.....Continued from page 5)
and authors? What about a concept as simple as the right to "private property," i.e. being able to enjoy the fruits of that which is yours. **Especially** when that property was created by you. That's what the growing legal, media, and ultimately cultural battle is all about. How can artists hope to be compensated, when as soon as their work is released it becomes instantly available to the entire world for **free**? Perhaps more importantly, how can we as a society hope to **encourage** artists and writers and sculptors and playwrights and musicians and poets and other "purveyors of beauty" to work when they may get paid nothing for what they create?

And that's where the struggle now stands. To the leaders of the "music industry," and plenty of musicians, the kids who invented Napster.com are simply encouraging thievery, threatening an entire industry with wholesale theft. Many of the millions of people who are actively using Napster and Gnutella snarl back that the music industry has been ripping off consumers---not to mention the musicians themselves---for far too long with their overpriced CD's and cutthroat contracts.

So where should the rest of us come down? If the copyright law is clear, this is just wholesale copyright violation. But wait! The Napster.com kids and lawyers are arguing in court that, first of all, **they** don't have any responsibility for what other people do with the program (and even have, ahem, a somewhat disingenuous anti-copyright-violation warning on their web site). And secondly, they argue that the copying and sharing of music files among private citizens, where there's no money changing hands, isn't a violation of copyright law anyway! I mean, if you have a record you like, and you copy it and give it to your friend to hear, is that a violation? Or does it come under the copyright exception rubric of "fair use"?

Interestingly enough, the most erudite and thoughtful writings I have seen on the subject have come from two big-time rockers: One from the (in)famous bandleader and widow of grunge rocker Kurt Cobain, **Courtney Love**, and the other from Grateful Dead confidant and songwriter **John Perry Barlow**.

First Courtney Love: In a long and very insightful speech she gave just a few weeks ago as a keynote speaker at the Digital Hollywood Conference in New York City, she argued that the Napster phenomenon is a "radical democratization of music," resulting in betterment to both musicians and fans. Citing dismal figures from the recording industry that make it look little better than chattel slavery of musicians, she proclaimed that in fact artists will also ultimately benefit financially from the Napster wave. Said Love, the "real" music pirates are the record companies and the RIAA, who have recently successfully changed federal copyright law so that musicians and bands are little more than "sharecroppers."

Clearly Courtney Love has not endeared herself to either musicians on the other side of the barricades, or the RIAA (which may be one reason she's involved in a ferocious legal battle with her former recording label, Geffen Records, which maintains it is owed five more albums by Hole, the rock band that Love fronts). Yet if you read the unedited text of Love's speech, she makes eminent sense. (Which may be why it took me a so long to find an unedited version on the Web: Go now, before it's too late, and download her speech from http://www.undercover.net.au/rncourtney.html. Read what she has to say yourself.)

The other quite thoughtful and important writing I've seen about the Napster phenomenon was written by John Perry Barlow, a former songwriter for The Grateful Dead, co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), which exists to lobby the government in favor of the Internet and cyberspace in general. To give you an idea of where Barlow comes down on the issue, his essay begins like this: "I expect most of you are aware that the Recording Industry Association of America has been fighting a desperate struggle against technologies that would end its century-long enslavement and exploitation of musicians. One of these developments is something called Napster.com…."

Barlow, like Love, is an insightful observer of the modern music industry, having been involved in it himself for decades. "The music industry," he observes, "is generally despised by both music-lovers and musicians, to whom they've been returning about five percent of the retail value of their works." What will happen? "I'm convinced that the traditional music business is finished," Barlow states. "Napster and other environments like it will polish off the likes of BMG and Tower Records within five years. Personally, I can't say I'll miss it. For over a century, it has exploited both musicians and audiences….Whatever models evolve to protect the creation of music, I am not concerned that we will fail to economically support its makers….For some reason, humans absolutely require music, and they were providing for the material needs of musicians for tens of thousands of years before copyright law, just as they will do so for tens of thousands of years after this brief and anomalous period has been forgotten."

You can read Barlow's entire essay by reading or downloading it (for free!) at http://www.technocrat.net/958163435/index_html.

How will it all play out? Can't tell now. My guess is that Barlow is right, and the "music industry" will be destroyed, to be replaced by more direct contact between artists and their fans. Perhaps the most straightforward statement came from a friend of mine who lives and works close to a center of the music industry in southern California. When asked about the apparent copyright violation aspect of Napster, he tried to beg off by saying "My stuff is music that's long out of copyright." But when I pressed him and asked "What about music being downloaded that **is** still covered by copyright?" he paused, then said "Well, I guess they'll just have to kiss my ass."

Chalk up one more supporter of Napster.com. ◆



By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
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I'm running short on time this month, and William, our newsletter editor, has already issued his second notice for articles, so I thought I had better pull one of my reserves out of the closet so I can fulfill my obligation.

As anyone can attest that knows me or has read any of my articles, I like free stuff, especially software. That's one of the reasons I became the librarian of the TPCUG years ago, so that I could be the keeper of all that shareware we made available to our users at the monthly meetings. Well… that was before the Internet became so user friendly and certainly before **The Freesite.com** "*home of the web's best freebies*" (http://www.thefreesite.com/). It would be easy enough for me to say just follow the link above and be done with it, but that wouldn't get this article written, now would it? So…

TheFreeSite.com is separated into many different categories to make it easier to decide which free stuff you want to download to fill up your hard drive. If you're concerned about your privacy on the Internet there is **Anonymous Freebies** (Encryption, E-mail, Web Surfing) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Anonymous_Freebies. If you're in the business world they have **Business Freebies** (Stock Quotes, Management, Jobs) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Business_Freebies. If you're wanting email alternatives there is **Email Freebies** (E-mail Services, Free Newsletters) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Email_Freebies. If you're into family computing then check out **Family Freebies** (Chat Freebies, Children's freebies) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Family_Freebies. If you don't already have a million fonts or you need something to manage the million fonts you already have then see **Free Fonts** (True Type, Logos, Library) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Fonts. Just in case you need a few more games they have **Free Games** (Online Games, Freeware Games) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Games. For the graphic freaks, **Free Graphics** (Banner Graphics, Free Clipart) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Graphics. If you're paying too much for your Internet service, **Free Internet Access** (DSL, 56K Access) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Internet_Access. They have links to **Personal Management** (Online Calendars, Bookmark) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Personal_Management, **Free Samples** (CD-ROMs, Magazines, Videos) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Samples, **Free Software** (Utilities, Graphics, Programming) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Software, **Free Web Space** (U.S. services, Non U.S. services) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Web_Space, and **Free Postcards** (Web Cards, E-cards, Wizards) at http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Postcards.

If you're not sure about all this free stuff then you need to see **Freebies FAQ** (Who, What, Why & Where) at http://www.thefreesite.com/about/faq.html or **Freebie Features** (Question-and-answer interviews) at http://www.thefreesite.com/freebiefeatures.htm.

If after all this you still don't have enough free stuff, then click on **Other Free Stuff Sites at** http://www.thefreesite.com/Other_Freebie_Sites for a full roundup of the Web's other Freebies Sites.

And after all this, if you haven't had your fix of free stuff on the Internet, then you've got it worse than I do and you need to join the F.S.A.A. (Free Stuff Addicts Anonymous)!!! Contact me and I'll give you the time and location of our next meeting…for free, of course. Good Luck! ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

clearly fanatics in their belief of the superiority of Linux as an operating system. Our presenters stated they live, eat and sleep with Linux.

What are these magnificent features that endear Linux so much to our presenters. First Linux can run on a 386 with only 4MB and in general compared to Windows runs faster. Sez who? Linux is very robust with the latest Avalon chip sets due to the extra cache on the chip set that Linux uses to maximum advantage. Linux offers better security and the cost advantage will win over the corporate PC world. Some versions of Linux are as inexpensive as only two dollars a copy. The scalability of installation packages ranges from 720 KB to a system that requires 18 CD's…. Turbo Cluster! The prime advantage is that open source allows everyone free accessibility to every line of code for both operating systems and applications.

Linux was originally developed in the early nineties by the Finn Linus Torvalds as a hobby project and over 10 years has gained approximately 20 million users.

Not all chip sets achieve compatibility and consequently many variants now exist. However the problem is considered not as great as that experienced by MS Window users. Free rapid support is currently available to all users at Linux.COM. Support for PDA devices is also available. There are two major

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MP3s, USB CD Writers and Renegade Programs

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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It has been an interesting month of computer problems. Some months are like that. The previous month almost nothing happened of interest. June was a different matter. And much of it can be traced to the MP3 download craze.

MP3, Napster & Gnutella are words we didn't know only a short time back. Now they appear often in the computer news (see Tim Condon's article in this newsletter), the regular news, and in what is not a good omen, the legal news. I don't intend on touching on the legality of sharing recordings in the MP3 format via the Internet by using Napster and Gnutella. I will leave that to the courts to hash out. As for me, I only got involved to figure out what it was all about so as to help someone with their request. You know, "I tried it, but I didn't inhale."

It all started with a request from someone I help to tell them how to turn music in the MP3 format that they had downloaded from the Internet using Napster into music on a CD that they could play in any CD player. It ended with many hours of work getting a CD Writer to write without freezing on their computer and getting Visual Basic and Microsoft Access to again work correctly on my computer. If you don't see the connection, well, that's what the article is about.

HP USB CD Writer First things first. I told them to go buy an internal HP CD Writer, any of several that I had chosen from the HP site on the Internet. And I would come over and install it. Then if the software that came with this new drive wouldn't do what we wanted we would see about getting the appropriate software.

The next day, I went to their house and opened the box of an HP 9300i CD Writer. Having installed similar devices before, I put the software CD in the computer and ran the program to let it tell me which IDE connector was free—and then it hit me. My problem was not in finding which IDE connection to use. My problem was that this $4,000 Dell computer only had two 5.25" drive bays, and both were taken, one with the DVD/CD drive and the other with an HP Colorado tape drive. Another reason to buy a large tower case.

Back to the drawing board and back to Comp USA for the client, a trip which produced an HP 8200e CD Writer which connects via a USB connection. Since there was already a USB printer and a USB device for connecting a digital camera, I also requested a USB hub.

The USB CD writer installed easily, as did the accompanying software, which included Adaptec's Easy CD Creator 3.5 (they do not give you the most recent version with the drives). Everything seemed to work OK, but we couldn't put any of the MP3 files on the CDs being made because the MP3 files need to be converted to .wav files before Easy CD Creator 3.5 will make an audio CD of them.

When I got home later, I went on the Internet and found several shareware programs that claimed to create audio CDs directly from MP3 files. My client downloaded one of these and tried it. Unfortunately the program would not work. In talking with a friend, he suggested a program called, I think. Ear Jam that he had just found that came highly recommended and which was freeware. He sent all 10 MB of it to me, and I installed it on my computer before he even got it installed on his.

This is where my problems probably started, for as the program installed, I saw a message that said it was installing some sort of data components. I think it possibly said something about DAO. "Uh Oh," I thought. That isn't good. I bet that messes up something. Furthermore, why does a music CD creation program need to use a database. I think the answer to this is that the program also had some sort of marketing angle and would probably keep track of what music you turned into CDs.

Anyway, the program never got past the first track on making a CD on either my computer or my friend's. So I uninstalled it, but made a mental note to watch out for database problems. Next day a bit of research revealed that Adaptec's Easy CD Creator 4.0 (I had 3.5 also) would do exactly what was needed: Go directly from MP3 files to audio tracks on a CD. So the client bought it, installed it, and had problems. It would never get more than two or three tracks written before the program would freeze.

I arrived, checked out the problem and noted that the error message was: "A fatal exception 0E has occurred at 0028: C14F38DD in VXD APIX (01) +……". A reinstallation of the program didn't help. After running out of ideas, I called Adaptec (this was the big mistake in all of this—not because of anything bad about Adaptec help, but because their program was not the problem). I spent several hours on the phone with a very nice fellow doing all sorts of things: renaming files, deleting files, taking everything out of the startup section of the Windows Configuration except Systray and Explorer, slowing down the Video Card, writing at 2 speed, 1 speed, etc. All to no avail. I went home with the promise from him that he would send me two utilities to check and then update the ASPI layer. I bet you didn't know your computer had one.

Next day they had no record of our long session, and we are assigned another tech. A couple of hours with him, and we mutually agree that Adaptec can't solve the problem with their

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(Comments……..Continued from page 8)
Easy CD Creator 4.0 not being able to write to more than a few tracks. But that error message concerning the APIX.VXD certainly pointed to them.

I had also moved the USB connection for the CD Writer to a direct connection to the USB port on the computer instead of the hub, thinking that might help. But it didn't.

My next try was the correct one—many hours too late. I called HP. In describing our travails and attempts at correction I also mentioned that we had a USB printer and a USB hub connected to the computer. I bet it is the printer, the HP tech said. It most probably generates USB traffic at random times and that traffic causes the CD Writer to freeze. I knew better than to try and use any USB device or to plug or unplug any USB device while the CD Writer was creating a CD, but I never dreamed that you couldn't have another USB device plugged in.

However, before we tried his theory, he also wanted to rename and delete a bunch of files to be on the safe side. Apparently there are a lot of files that are installed by other software for devices, scanners, ZIP drives, etc. that also use the Adaptec ASPI layer that aren't removed or updated properly when newer versions are installed.

After about 45 minutes of playing with files, we were ready to make a CD—with all other USB devices unplugged. Ten tracks of ten attempted were successfully written at 4x speed.

So much time wasted in looking for a solution in the wrong place. I then sent an email to the Adaptec technician for whom I had a email address since he had sent me the two files, and a day later he responded that he had used that information to help someone who hadn't been able to use his HP USB CD Writer for 10 days since purchasing it—and who, I might add, had also called Adaptec instead of HP.

By the way, the printer, while connected—even if it were turned off—would cause a freeze in the CD creation process.

Access and VB Several days after installing that freeware CD writing program on my computer, I needed to print out the mailing labels for the June newsletter to be assembled the next morning. I kept getting error messages in Access, but they didn't make much sense. Nothing had changed since last month to speak of, and I couldn't figure it out.

So I finally exported my data and brought it into another machine and used Access there to print the labels. I then noted that I couldn't run certain queries on my regular machine, and would instead get the error message "Function Isn't Available in Expressions in Query Expression" with the problem function described. I did a search of Microsoft and came up with the article http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q194/3/74.ASP. I used their first method mentioned to easily fix the problem. I strongly suggest that those of you who use Access go and read the article. Quite possibly you may need it sometime. I am convinced the problem was caused by installing the program mentioned.

About a week later I opened a VB project that I written months back and not looked at in the past month or so. When I tried to run it I got the message: "Compile error: Error in loading DLL". The program used DAO database components and I immediately suspected that same program. I assumed that some of the DLLs used by my program had been either corrupted or were the wrong version. I spun my wheels a lot as usual looking at the DLLs, checking their versions, etc. And I found one that was highly suspect, since its version description was "MSVCRT40.dll version: 4.20-OS use only. DO NOT DISTRIBUTE." That wasn't good, and I replaced it with the one on my laptop and registered it. Neither that nor a lot of other ideas solved the problem. Of course, I could reinstall VB along with its two service packs, but VB didn't appear to be the problem. Projects that didn't use the Recordset property of the DAO Data control ran fine.

I contacted Microsoft via email and exchanged several messages over the next few days—all to no avail. Then I got the idea of exporting the problem VB project—which I had now refined down to a very simple one with only the Data Control and three lines of code—to my laptop. The project, of course, worked fine there within VB. But now I created an installation package for it and sent this package back to other computer, where I installed it as a stand alone program. Surprise, the packaged program ran fine, whereas it would not run from within the VB environment. I was hoping that this would correct what I still thought was a problem on the main computer with the DLLs the program used. But when I tried again to run the project from within VB I got the same error.

Finally it dawned on me that the problem was not with the DLLs the project used but rather with some DLL that VB needed to implement the Data Control. So VB did need to be installed, something that anyone but myself and the Microsoft tech. would probably have done in the first place.

A reinstallation of VB solved the problem. Well, I was finally made whole after my excursion in to the world of MP3s. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 7)
office suites available in Linux: Sun Microsystems' "Star" Office Suite and the Corel WordPerfect Suite. The Star suite is available free at http://www.sun.com/staroffice/. Corel Linux comes complete with its own partitioning system, which installs with only four mouse clicks required. Yes, installation

(Minutes……..Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG — For July, moved to July 10

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM.

For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG —No meeting in July

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Tampa, FL 33622-1081 MerleNic@tampabay,rr,com

NEW PROJECTOR FUND DRIVE IS AT $740 AND RISING



By Merle Nicholson, Member-At-Large

The TPCUG needs a video projector, desperately and as quickly as possible. Some very loyal club members (and a "friend of TPCUG") have contributed very nicely. RDI@TampaBay – known to us as Steven Singer – has donated $200 to the fund.

I feel very strongly that the future of our club depends on owning our own projector. We must attract good presenters to continue and to attract new members, and some of the very good ones depend on our having the facilities. But it's not just the projector that's critical, it's also the room where we hold the meetings. We hold three meetings a month; the regular meeting and two SIGs. A portable projector gives us far more flexibility to use different rooms and different locations.

The fund was announced at the meeting two months ago, and so far we have $740 in eight donations. I'd like to set a goal of ten donations at $100 each, and the remainder with $25 to $50 amounts. Remember that we're a 501C non-profit corporation. So what you'll get in return is a letter of thanks – in way of a receipt to show the Tax Man, and if you wish, recognition in the newsletter. The recognition is optional, of course.

I'm optimistic that we can do this. Anyone in the group who's participated in the search for a new meeting location will tell you; our options are very, very limited without a projector.

Think of all the time you have invested in the club. Hasn't it paid back to you in value exceeding $100? It certainly has for me. Give it some thought will you? Make a check made out to Tampa PC Users Group right away. You can contact me:
Email: merlenic@tampabay.rr.com
Tel daytimes: (813) 225-5227
Tel evenings & weekends (813) 879-3602
Or contact any officer. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

any programs and never got around to using them, please consider donating them to the group. Someone else may be delighted to get them and your donations are tax deductible. Jenny Olin can give you a receipt for filing your taxes.

The date for the FACUG Fall Conference has been confirmed. It is Saturday, October 14, 2000, and will be held at the Sunlight Community Church, Port St. Lucie, FL. You can get additional information at http://www.facug.org. If you'd like to attend, contact an officer of the TPCUG for details.

I did a phone interview with one of the technical writers for the St. Pete Times last week. Her name was Yilu Zhao, so be watching for the article to appear. The topic was User Groups in general.

I'm sorry my column is so short, but I'm leaving on vacation and haven't prepared anything for the trip.

Thanks to everyone for continuing to support the group. ◆

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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BAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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CompUSA
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Symantec

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Check the address label for your renewal month

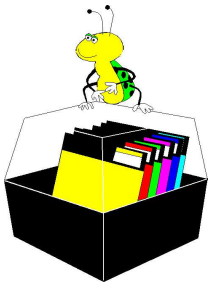
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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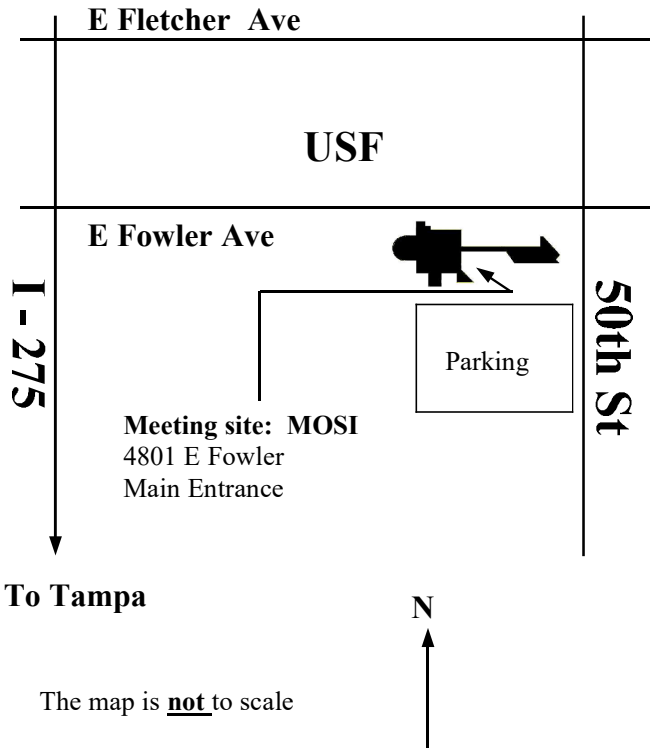
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes……..Continued from page 9)
problems have been encountered.

It was determined also that our presenters had experienced crashes; however, the system did not normally abort and recovery was easy and did not require a re-boot of the PC. Therefore Linux is more crash proof than MS Windows because it handles itself more gracefully. One of our most conservative members, namely Merle Nicholson, claims that he has no problems with MS Windows, as he is very careful as to what applications he installs on his computer. This only requires patience and understanding and a good knowledge of compatibility. Norbert takes great pride in running a whole host of applications simultaneously under Linux.

Overall this was one of our best presentations of recent years. No doubt we thrive on controversy…….

The following were the door prize winners:
David Rodriquez – MS Developer; Bob LaFave – Second Chance; William Coleman – 3D Universe; Brian Lance – Data Keeper; Mike Hodges – Front Page 45 day Demo; Brian Lance – Smart Suite 97; Bill Coleman – Mouse Pad ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 8 August 2000

Meeting

Ryan Harris of Atlantic.Net
The Future of DSL & Broadband

August 9, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the August meeting we will have a presentation on the future of DSL and broadband by Ryan Harris from Atlantic.Net. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I'd like to start by thanking everyone who contributes articles to the newsletter. I hear nice things about Bits of Blue all the time, and it's because of everyone who pulls together to make it a great newsletter. William LaMartin works very hard as the editor. He needed more help last month than he had when it came time to assemble and mail the newsletters. If you can help with this, please contact William and find out when and where you need to go to volunteer.

The president of the Clearwater group is compiling a list of available presenters for the local user groups. We should hopefully be able to benefit from this. However, I thought member William LaMartin did a great job with his "hand held" presentation last month. Thanks, William!

The FACUG Fall Conference is October 14, 2000 at the Sunlight Community Church in Port St. Lucie, Florida. If you're interested in attending, just let me know and I'll be glad to tell you how to register.

Things seem to get a little slower and more sluggish in the summer, and the User Group is no exception. Fewer people attend the meetings, and it's more difficult to get presenters. The Board didn't meet last month because of vacations. So enjoy the summer and get ready for things to get livelier in the next month or so.

(President.....Continued on page 10)

September 13: To be announced. Check our web site later.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the July Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

Our meeting started at 6:00 PM with Mary Sheridan and me sharing Windows shortcuts with the group. We also had a brief discussion about video card problems.

The general meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. It was announced that we have applied for tax-exempt status. As you well know, we are a non-profit organization, and being tax-exempt will greatly help us when making purchases for the use of the group.



William LaMartin presented us with a very well done PowerPoint presentation on the Palm Pilot and Visor Personal Digital Assistants. Both PDAs operate under the "Palm OS" and run the same core applications. Since we all couldn't really crowd around one little hand held device, William set up an emulator for the Palm and Visor on his laptop computer and used the projector to allow all of us the opportunity to see the different functions of the Palm at work in a real, not scripted, environment.

He demonstrated the core Palm applications along with an additional spreadsheet program, a map of New York City and even a program he had written for the Palm using a program called *PDA Toolbox*.

Finally, he mentioned how he makes up a grocery shopping list for his Visor by using the grocery list compiler at his web site and then pasting the ordered list into a memo on the Palm Desktop application and then hot-syncing with the Visor.

The door prize drawing drew $23.00. Jenny Lind Olin won a Web Cam and John Witmer won a copy of "Oil Change".

The meeting ended at 8:30pm. ◆

Sony DSC-S70 Cyber-shot Digital Camera

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larryanders@msn.com

About four years ago, I jumped into the then not-too-old digital camera market with my first digital camera. It was Sony's first Mavica, the only camera that allows you to save your snapshots directly to a standard 3.5" floppy disk. I've used it regularly for over four years in my work and also in my personal life with absolutely no problems and outstanding battery life, never less than 2 hours (total time) on a full charge.

Back when I purchased my Mavica, 640 x 480 pixels was the upper end of the range on picture resolution and there was no other choice of photo size in that camera. Since that time the measurement is now in megapixels with a whole host of different choices for picture resolutions all in the same camera. Obviously there have been a lot of improvements in digital technology in four years but comparing my new Sony DSC-S70 with my older Mavica is a quantum leap forward in technology and quality.

I purchased my Mavica to use primarily in my work, taking pictures of the industrial equipment I appraise, for which it still does a good job. But when taking portraits, the Mavica leaves a lot to be desired.

In the past four years the quality output of color printers has also taken a major leap forward, the result of which is I have a couple of good printers available to me, so I thought it was about time I got serious about purchasing myself a "better-quality" digital camera. I've always been one to stick with a brand I like so when I started my research I was prejudiced towards purchasing another Sony, and I had really gotten used to being able to save my photos on a floppy. I looked at some of the newer Mavicas that still save to a floppy but obviously the larger 3.3 megapixel output with up to 2048 x 1536 image size that I was wanting would not fit on a floppy, or at least that's what I thought.

During my research I learned about the new "Memory Stick" that Cyber-shot uses to save the photos on. The memory stick is 2" x .75" x .125" thick or about one half the size of a pack of book matches. Although the Cyber-shot comes with a USB connector for accessing the files via a PC, the memory stick can also be removed from the camera and slid inside a "Memory Stick/Floppy Disk Adapter", which in turn can be inserted into a standard floppy drive. (Drivers are required to



be installed on the receiving PC to use the floppy adapter and the USB adapter – and it does not work with Windows 2000.)

Okay… enough history, here's a review of the specifics:

- Color depth is 24 bit or 16.7 million colors
- Resolution is 2,048 x 1,536 (high - 1.3 Mb file size), 1,600 x 1,200 (middle – 850 Kb), 1,280 x 960 (low – 525 Kb), 640 x 480 (extra-low – 60 Kb), 320 x 240 (video mode – 1.368 Mb for 60 seconds). I must say though, the quality of the picture of a 640 x 480 on this camera compared to the previous camera is excellent. Must be the lens.
- Image formats are JPEG (.jpg), TIFF (.tif), MPEG (.mpg) and TEXT (.gif). (The text is for taking photos of text for possible later scanning and OCR or just reading.)
- Image sensor is 1/1.8" CCD chip with 3,340,000 pixels.
- Removable memory is 8 Mb memory stick included (no internal memory).

  (16, 32 & 64 Mb memory sticks are also available.)
- Computer connections are USB, AC adapter, PAL/NTSC video adapter, & audio output.
- Focal length is equal to a 35 mm camera with a Carl Zeiss™ Vario-Sonnar 3X optical Zoom lens (34 to 102 mm) & 6X precision digital zoom.
- Power supply is a lithium-ion rechargeable battery with an AC adapter with 2.5 hours battery life.
- Focusing is automatic (4 cm to infinity) or manual.

(Sony……Continued on page 5)

CD-RW Problems

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net



Part I Last September I bought a CD burner because my son Chris was interested in making music CD's and because I wanted to have the use of one for copying larger files without having to use a zip utility and spanning multiple floppy disks. I was able to find an Imation on sale at BestBuy and installed it into the computer that Chris and his brother Joshua use, a homemade (Merle Nicholson brand) running an AMD233-MMX. It installed easily, and we encountered the first problem. I had installed it on the IDE cable that contained a 40X CD, and when we tried to copy from one CD to the other CD we encountered buffer error messages. Calling the local TECH SUPPORT (Merle), it was suggested that we needed to have each CD an a separate IDE controller, and after some rearranging of both CD's and both hard drives we were up and running. Everything appeared to be working, and we both learned how to use the Adaptec software that was included with the CD writer. Between the kids and myself we made use of it 1 or 2 times a day for different projects and had become very happy with its performance.

Then a couple of months ago Chris started complaining that it wasn't working right, and that he was getting BLUE SCREENS which were preventing him from making a CD. I would use it daily to copy downloaded files that I could use on my computer and also take to other locations. Without the use of a cable modem this allowed me to only download once at night when less traffic was on the net. Very seldom did I copy a CD, but I was continually adding files to re-writable CD's. I had not encountered any BLUE SCREEN copying single files and asked Chris if he could create a BLUE SCREEN for me.

The BLUE SCREEN message offered no clues on which file had a problem so I couldn't look at a specific problem file, but I had had a similar experience in the past that suggested maybe an overheating problem with the AMD processor. I had encountered countless similar problems when the computer was built. I removed the AMD chip and replaced it with a Cyrix chip that ran great and found out later that the AMD needed a special heat sink and fan for cooling, I replaced them with AMD approved equipment and solved those early BLUE SCREEN problems.

I opened the computer case to see if maybe the fan wasn't working or was off-center and saw what was a possible problem: one of the IDE cables was directly over the fan, cutting down the air flow. I than called Imation to find out if there was anything else I could try to get it working again, and they suggested that I update the firmware. So I obtained a longer IDE cable and downloaded the suggested version of firmware. Since I had the case open to replace the cable I decided that I would add some grease to the heat sink to further help with the cooling, and I routed all cables away from the chip. I then went to replace the firmware as suggested and proceeded to kill the CD completely. The access light stayed on at all times, the ejection buttons did not work and the CD properties appeared as the firmware update. Imation was called and more help was requested. They apologized and stated that sometimes the firmware updates didn't work, but they would e-mail me the original firmware version to return it to the beginning condition. That also didn't work, and the CD remained locked. When I called Imation and *offered* to return it to them, they agreed and issued the RMA authorization. That night when I walked in to dismantle the case and remove the CD, I noticed the CD access light was off and pushed the eject button. It was working, so I went to the CD properties to see what it showed and saw that the original version was there. I was impressed to say the least. I grabbed a blank CD and proceed to make an audio CD. It worked correctly, and I told Chris that his machine was back in working order. I called Imation and offered to keep the CD and give it a week of use before taking them up on their return and exchange for a new CD-RW. It performed with no problems for a month and all was well until……

Part II Chris wanted to replace the the 4x4x20 CD-RW drive with a faster CD-RW, and we started watching the ads to see if we could find an affordable 8x speed for him. BestBuy had an ACER 8x4x32 on sale so here we go again. I removed the Imation and replaced it with the ACER and have experienced no problems (other than he now wants a faster CD-ROM installed to keep up with the new CD-RW—he wants a 50X instead of the 40X) up to the time I am writing this. But what to do with the Imation CD-RW?

My computer has an empty bay, and we can't have that now can we. The CD-RW installed quite easily in my case, and the Adaptec software as well. The CD-RW properties showed correctly, so I proceeded to try to create a CD as a test. A BLUE SCREEN appeared the minute the computer tried to read the blank CD, but this time I got files included in the BLUE SCREEN and started to look for help. Both files were vxd (device drivers), so I began to experiment with them. I called Imation and explained that I was moving the CD-RW to another machine and was having problems again. I declined the first suggestion to upgrade the firmware because of the last experience with that update.

We started by renaming the vxd's to see what would happen. We were able to get the CD-RW to work sometimes but even-

(CD.....Continued on page 6)

(Sony……..Continued from page 3)

- Exposure control is program AE, aperture priority & shutter priority.
- Aperture is F2.0 to F8.
- View finder is a 2" TFT LCD monitor with diopter adjustment and LED status indicators, High Quality 16 frame/sec 1/4 VGA mode with full screen play-back. And there is also a standard optical viewfinder.
- The built in flash is flash on, flash off, auto flash, and red-eye reduction. There is also a connection for an external flash too.
- Also included is a self-timer and pictures can be de-leted singularly or all at once.

The Cyber-shot DS-S70 has a built-in microphone on top and a speaker on the side. It comes with an 8 Mb memory stick that's really too small for taking many pictures. I purchased an extra 32 Mb card for $79 when I bought the camera and have had plenty of room to take all sorts of different sized still and motion images. The camera is very light and has a feel similar to a standard 35 mm camera. The onscreen user interface was a little confusing at first, so I broke down and read the man-ual. After that it was a piece of cake. The last picture taken can be easily viewed with one click, and if the picture is not what you wanted, with a couple of more quick clicks, it can be easily be erased or the file can be protected against erasing.

(Sony……..Continued on page 12)

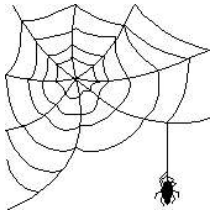
Internet picture of the month



Napster Server Unavailable Due to Heavy Usage

Napster (http://www.napster.com) was much in the news this past week with one judge telling them to basically shut down, then a judicial panel allowing them to continue operating. I decided to visit their site to see what was posted on all the judicial maneuvering and received the browser message above. Apparently the traffic was very heavy at their site on 7/29/2000.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Homes.WSJ.Com (look at home values link)	http://homes.wsj.com/
The Great Buildings Collection	http://www.greatbuildings.com/
Microsoft Windows Media Radio Station Guide	http://windowsmedia.com/radiotuner/
Greenwich Village Gazette, New York City	http://www.nycny.com/home.html
PDA Toolbox - Palm/Visor Development made easy	http://www.pdatoolbox.com/homepage.htm
Nag Hammadi Library - Gnostic scriptures	http://home.sol.no/~noetic/nagham/nhl.html
dotcomfailures.com - kick 'em while they're down	http://www.dotcomfailures.com/
The National Gallery, London	http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/
Butler Institute of American Art	http://www.butlerart.com/
Vindigo (free eat shop city directory for Palm/Visor)	http://www.vindigo.com/
JungleSoft (maps of major cities for Palm/Visor)	http://www.junglesoft.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

A SCSI Experience

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
wherman1@tampabay.rr.com

Some time ago I purchased an Adaptec AHA-8945 combination SCSI (Small Computer System Interface) and Firewire (IEEE-1394) card. For those not familiar with Firewire, it is a Very High Speed serial port allowing multiple devices to be chained together. Currently it is used mainly for Digital Video, but increasingly other devices such as CD-ROM burners are being made for this interface because the data transfer rates are much faster than either SCSI or USB (Universal Serial Bus) connections.

The external SCSI connector on this card is a special Extremely High Density (Lots of connections in a very small space) 68 pin connector which is not available at local computer stores. Also it is a SCSI-2 bus, and to connect my external scanners I need a plain 50 Pin SCSI bus connection. To use these devices you not only have to have a conversion to the proper connector but also the now unused terminals must be terminated. When you ask the local computer emporium about this you get a blank stare. I have been using a separate SCSI card for my scanners but now find that I need to free up that slot for another card. So I decided the only way to solve my problem was to contact Adaptec. The same card is also used to connect an internal high speed Seagate SCSI-2 HD (Hard Drive) and a SCSI Yamaha CD-ROM burner. Hello, Napster. The HD has never seemed to have the speed it should, so I would inquire if I was correctly connecting things.

I searched the Adaptec web site for what I thought I needed. I find their web site a bit confusing. Still unsure, I decided to call them. You cannot reach tech support either by phone or the net without some sort of special password . So the only alternative is to call and "Speak with a Friendly and Knowledgeable Adaptec Sales Associate……". So I called and the computer talked to me while I pressed buttons. Finally I was connected to a voice who assured me he was a real live human being (always check that), and he was very Friendly. One Down. I proceeded to explain about my need to connect my external scanners. After some initial confusion about the connector on the card and being told no can do, he found that they had a new cable that would do the job for only $60. **OUCH.**

Now for the internal devices. They have a cable, adapter and terminator that would allow me to do what I wanted, sort of. Then he asked why would I want to do dat? Now for the meat of this whole diatribe! If I did what I wanted, he assured me, I would severely compromise the performance of the HD as the data transfer would be limited to the speed of the slowest device, the CD-ROM. That was not my understanding of SCSI so I double checked and was assured he had given me the correct poop. Now who am I to question a "Knowledgeable Adaptec Sales Associate….". Should I decide to purchase all the aforementioned stuff anyway, what would be the damage? $175. **OOOOOUCH**. Nonetheless I decided to place the order as I would eventually need most items. Next I spent several hours searching for confirmation of what I had been told to no avail. Finally, I returned to the Adaptec site, found a searchable knowledge base containing an article dealing with the exact performance question, and Guess What? It said what I had been told is a "Common Misconception" (abortion), and each device would operate at its maximum data rate. So what I got was poop. I will have the proof of the pudding next week.

The moral of this story is Trust but Verify. ◆

(CD……..Continued from page 4)
tually we would get a BLUE SCREEN referencing the same two files , CD_Read.vxd and CDVSD.vxd, even after they were renamed. I could get the CD-RW to work making data CD's or Audio CD's depending on which file was renamed, but I wasn't going to rename files each time I wanted to make a CD. These files where located in WINDOWS\SYSTEM \IOSUBSYS and CD_Reader.vxd was also located in an additional folder called Recordit for a program from IOMEGA. The tech person suggested that maybe the IOMEGA Zip that was on the same IDE cable might be causing the problem. He suggested that we uninstall Recordit and also remove the ZIP drive from the cable. The problem remained.

I also had noticed, each time a BLUE SCREEN froze the computer, upon the restart an error message from AdaptecDirectCD stated that the CD properties had either the "Disconnect" or the "AutoInsert" settings unchecked and that they needed to be returned to the correct settings and the computer restarted. According to the tech, Imation had reports that on some computers the "AutoInsert" needs to be turned off but never that the "Disconnect" needed to or could be turned off.

We then decided to try turn them both off to see what would happen, but first we needed to stop the error message from AdaptecDirectCD each time that the machine started. We uninstalled the Adaptec program then went and turned off both the "AutoInsert" and "Disconnect", returned the two vxd's to their original names and rebooted the machine.

I have made one each Data and Audio CD's successfully as of this writing with no apparent problems and definitely no

(CD……..Continued on page 9)

Norton Antivirus 2000

By Clark J. Evans, Tampa PC Users Group
CETrain320@aol.com

We had McAfee Virus Scan in our Compaq Presario 7222 computer for the last three years. It worked great, but the time came to get a newer antiviral program. Virus Scan only did five checks.

I saw new anti-virus software on sale at Best Buy for $9.95 last month. It was Dr. Solomon's Anti-Virus. I figured that $9.95 was a good deal, so I bought the Dr. Solomon software and installed it in our computer. The Dr. Solomon software made our computer run slow and would cause the computer to lock up. I uninstalled Dr. Solomon and the computer ran great. I again installed the Dr. Solomon software a week later hoping my $9.95 was not spent in vain. Again it ran slow and locked up our computer. Again I took it out, and the computer ran great again. I had to install new Anti-Virus software in the computer as my wife works at USF and the Love Bug Virus had hit her and really messed up her computer at work.

A week later I was going through Best Buy and saw the Norton Anti-Virus 2000 program for $19.99. I was totally impressed with Norton's Uninstalled Program, which I purchased a few years ago. So, I bought Norton's Anti-Virus program, and took it home and installed it on our computer. It ran all kinds of tests and said I had no viruses in my computer. The Dr. Solomon Anti-Virus had said there were possibly two viruses in my computer.

I see by the information I got from Dr. Solomon that they have a link with Macao because their advertisements are all over Dr. Solomon's paperwork in the box that Dr. Solomon's came in.

So, I would say save the trouble. Don't buy the Dr. Solomon Anti-Virus software. Spend the extra $10.00 and go with a winner—Norton. ◆

Member Frank Harrell passed away March 19, 2000. Interment was at Florida National Cemetery in Brooksville, Florida.

Frank and his wife Mary had not attended meetings for some time due to his illness.

Internet Shopping

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

Well, it's official; I love shopping on the Internet. I started off slowly a couple of years ago. I was scared to use my credit card and expected to have horror stories about the experience. I've been very lucky, and except for one bad time it's all been wonderful.

I guess I'll start with the bad time to get it out of the way. I bought a Visioneer scanner at buy.com and couldn't get it to work. I returned it, and buy.com sent me another one. I had the same problems, so I assumed it was my computer. I updated the bios and the drivers and called tech support to the tune of $1.00 a minute. Time passed, and I'd had the unit over 90 days, so I returned it this time to Visioneer. I didn't pay to send it registered mail so naturally it was lost. The address I mailed it to doesn't seem to be a valid address, and I'm out $130.00 for the scanner plus the cost of trying to get it to work because I just don't have the time to pursue the problem any more.

Now for the good news, everything else has been positive. I did all my Christmas shopping last year online. The presents were delivered to my door, I wrapped them and stuck on bows and never had to leave the saftey of my home. I could have had them gift wrapped, but didn't want to pay extra for it. And I saved money on every single item.

I've saved on books, software, hardware, clothes, shoes, etc. I got hotel suite rooms at Priceline.com for $70.00 instead of the regular price of $249.00. I've flown several times for small amounts of money. I've paid less for the items that I've gone to a bricks and mortar store to buy because of researching things on the Internet first. I'm buying some groceries now through Priceline.com, and every day something new and interesting is added to my list of ways to use the Internet to shop.

If you've had any experiences that other members could benefit from, either good or bad, please write them down and send them to William LaMartin to be included in the newsletter. Happy Shopping!

My favorite sites: buy.com, barnesandnoble.com, necx.com, amazon.com (be sure to link from tpcug.org to this site), priceline.com, lowestfare.com, and of course, mercedes.com. ◆

Napster Redux: Round II Comin' At Ya

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

So here we have it: A federal judge entered an injunction to shut down the Napster music-sharing server and shut out its more than 20 million users. On July 26, 2000 Judge Marilyn Patel shocked just about everyone, including the lawyers for the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), by abruptly entering a verbal order for Napster to shut down its server by midnight on Friday, July 28th (Pacific Standard Time). Then, within 48 hours of that ruling, the next judicial level up, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, heard an entreaty from the Napster lawyers…and countermanded the lower court's injunction. So Napster remains online and serving its millions of customers...for the time being, at least.

"Pirates" is how the RIAA characterizes both Napster and the music-copying and music-trading fans of the software. While the RIAA argued that the entire Napster operation was a front for wholesale copyright infringement and piracy, the Napster lawyers argued that people have an inherent right to copy and share music downloaded on the Internet as long as no money is changing hands. Round I for the RIAA. Round one-and-a-half for Napster. Where to now? Good question!

The Napster phenomenon has become a cause celebre for both sides of the struggle. Probably because the issues presented involve digitized information that can be utilized for writings as well as pictures, recordings, software and any other kind of information. The battle has been joined on the frontlines of most media outlets, including newspapers, magazines, online forums, online magazines, television reports, etc. And now the stars of the music industry have begun to weigh in, complementing the split ranks (about 85% to 15%) of the music industry "suits". So let's take a look at who's who among those manning each side of the Napster/Anti-Napster barricades:

1. On the Anti- side is a growing list of musicians who feel their work is being "ripped off" by consumers utilizing the Napster software and web site…consumers who they believe would otherwise be buying their pricey music CD's. A short review of current articles on the question shows that these include Aimee Mann, Kristin Hersh (a founding member of The Throwing Muses), Scott Sapp (lead singer of Creed), Chris Robinson (lead singer of the Black Crowes), Sean "Puffy" Combs (aka "Puff Daddy"), Jonatha Brook, Morgan Rose of the hard rock band Sevendust, Mandy Barnett, former Blondie star Debbie Harry, and last but not least, recording star Bif Naked.

2. But wait! Coming up fast on the outside is a list of music writers and performers who, if they're not as numerous as the Anti's, make up for it with their star-power. Included on this side is a list of people who argue that the "music industry" as it is constituted today is based upon the wholesale exploitation and abuse of artists, and that the destruction of this distribution and marketing semi-monopoly can do nothing other than benefit both artists and their fans. Examples? Courtney Love, lead singer of the band "Hole," who has indicted the music industry as little more than an organized system of stealing from artists (her recent inflammatory speech before a Chicago convention can be found at http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2000/06/14/love/); rapper Chuck D (who says "I believe in the technology…it's a fantastic way to build a minor league system of artists"); Grateful Dead songwriter and philosopher John Perry Barlow (who maintains that the music industry is inherently corrupt, greedy, abusive and grasping); the band Limp Bizkit; Marianne Faithfull; and non-star musician Christian Viveros, who simply says "The recording industry is a Mafia."

3. In addition, there are renegade music industry professionals who are bolting from the anti-Napster line and saying that the music-sharing revolution can birth an entirely new (and profitable) way of doing business. Included are Alan Kovac, president of a management company that represents the bands Motley Crue, the Bee Gees, and others. Ditto for Jim Guerinot, a manager for the bands Offspring and No Doubt, who thinks that the music industry and Napster can work together to birth a new way of serving both artists and fans.

What's going to happen? Well, first of all Napster is probably going to lose the lawsuit that the RIAA has brought against it (although the case could well end up going all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court). Most copyright lawyers and other professionals seem to agree that Napster and the services it offers are clear examples of copyright violation as the law exists today.

Secondly, it looks like "the genie is out of the bottle" when it comes to digital copying and trading of music (not to mention pictures, movies, software, books, and all other forms of information transfer). Even as the Judge Patel was ordering Napster to shut down, alternate methods of doing the same thing were being revved up on the Internet in different parts of the world. All of these alternatives do essentially the same thing as Napster, allowing the wholesale free copying and sharing of music files. They include Gnutella (a decentralized software system for sharing music files); AudioGnome (which relies on about 70 servers in half a dozen countries running a

(Napster……..Continued on page 9)

(Napster……..Continued from page 8)
free program called OpenNap); Freenet (which makes every participating computer in essence a file-sharing server and is believed to be "invulnerable to any attack" by the authorities because of its decentralized nature and the use of encryption); Napigator and the "Open Napster" movement (which consists of more than 100 Napster servers running Napster-clone software located in a number of countries); and even MP3Board, Inc., which is being sued by the RIAA for being a company which points to locations on the Internet where bootleg music recordings may be found.

Stay tuned. The recording industry is fighting for its right to force music buyers to buy CD's for $17 or $18 which cost about 35 cents to manufacture (and which have multiple songs on them that no one wants to hear instead of just the song hits which people do want to buy). Essentially, the music/recording industry is fighting any effort to use the Internet to cut them out of the distribution function which up until now they have dominated. In the long run, however, look for the death of the "music industry" and the birth of a new industry which could be called "the artists and fans industry." ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

First, I thank all those members who sent me articles for the newsletter after my email request for material. It was good to see that I wasn't doing this all alone.

I also want to thank John Witmer for bringing his company's computer projector to our meetings. It really helps in that it is so superior to the older MOSI one we had been using.

RoadRunner On a recent trip to New York City, my RoadRunner connection with my laptop at an apartment in Manhattan was 1236.4 kbps. This is essentially a T-1 line. Right now in Tampa it is 401.2 kbps, which is a bit faster than usual for my home. We need to ask RR in Tampa why we are connecting at 1/3 the speed of New York City. Could it be that there are some Time/Warner executives living near where I connected in Manhattan? I determined the speeds using the site http://computingcentral.msn.com/topics/bandwidth/speedtest500.asp.

TPCUG.ORG Our domain name TPCUG.ORG as been renewed with Network Solutions for another year. Speaking of the web site, in June we had an average of 162 user sessions each day with the average visitor staying at the site for 10 minutes and 17 seconds. Most of the visitors come to the site due to a search engine sending them there. AltaVista was the top referring engine to our site.

E-stamp I wrote sometime back about using e-stamp for postage. The program is a bit slow—at least on my computer. I think the reason is that for each mailing it needs to communicate with the "vault", the device that attaches to your parallel port and stores all your postage data—and this is not a very fast procedure. Additionally, I have not had good results printing postage on envelopes from Microsoft Word, so I now stick to printing from the e-stamp program. With some help from their support, I installed Windows Messaging, and this gave me an address book that the program would work with. On my last use, the program went to the e-stamp web site and downloaded an upgrade, so perhaps things will go a little smoother now. The software is now on version 1.1 SP2. I believe I started with just version 1.1. As I use it more, things seem to go more smoothly, and the other day I printed out two Priority Mail labels with postage and address for $3.20 each. That was convenient—printing Priority Mail postage and not having to visit the post office. It is the future, I am sure, but there are still a few kinks to work out.◆

(CD……..Continued from page 6)
BLUE SCREENS. Imation says that the "Disconnect" setting should be enabled in order for the CD-RW to work correctly, but the tech and I agree that if it works not to change it. I had told them that the IDE controllers and chipset were capable of UDMA66 the first time that I called after installing in the second machine, and they now "THINK" that may be the reason for the problems. Imation also offered that this model was not designed for Windows98 or for the UDMA66 speed.

I have learned a few more things about computers with this experience, which is always good, but the one I will remember is that, eight months after I purchased an Imation CD-RW I was able to get a support person on the phone each time I called within two minutes and they were more than helpful. I will look for their products in any future purchase simply because of this terrific support. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM.

For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Tampa, FL 33622-1081 MerleNic@tampabay,rr,com

NEW PROJECTOR FUND DRIVE



By Merle Nicholson, Member-At-Large

The TPCUG needs a video projector, desperately and as quickly as possible. At present we are still at $740—the same as last month.

I'd like to set a goal of ten donations at $100 each, and the remainder with $25 to $50 amounts. Remember that we're a 501-3C non-profit corporation. So what you'll get in return is a letter of thanks – by way of a receipt to show the Tax Man, and if you wish, recognition in the newsletter. The recognition is optional, of course.

I'm optimistic that we can do this. Anyone in the group who's participated in the search for a new meeting location will tell you: Our options are very, very limited without a projector.

Think of all the time you have invested in the club. Hasn't it paid back to you in value exceeding $100? It certainly has for me. Give it some thought, will you? Make a check made out to Tampa PC Users Group right away. You can contact me:

Email: merlenic@tampabay.rr.com
Tel day: (813) 225-5227; evening & weekends: (813) 879-3602
Or contact any officer. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

The theme for COMDEX/Fall is Technology Decisions for the New E-conomy. The dates are November 13-17, 2000 in Las Vegas, Nevada. If you have plans to go, check out the APCUG web site for discounted rooms and information on the conference that the APCUG holds at the same time as COMDEX.

If you have an opinion as to whether or not there should be snacks at the regular meetings, please email me at mcpease@mindspring.com. There hasn't been much money in the snack donation basket, and I don't know if it's a good thing or a waste of time. I'd also like to know how important the quality or quantity of the 'raffle prizes' are. Thanks in advance for your input.

I'd like to express my sympathy to the Harrell family. Frank was a gentle, sweet man, and he will be missed.

The next meeting of the Board will be on August 3, 2000 at BAE (unless that location becomes unavailable). Everyone is invited to attend. Just let a Board member know in advance that you plan to be there, so your name can be included on the list for security reasons.

Thanks to everyone for making it fun to be part of the group. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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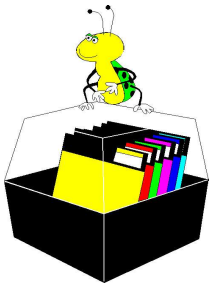
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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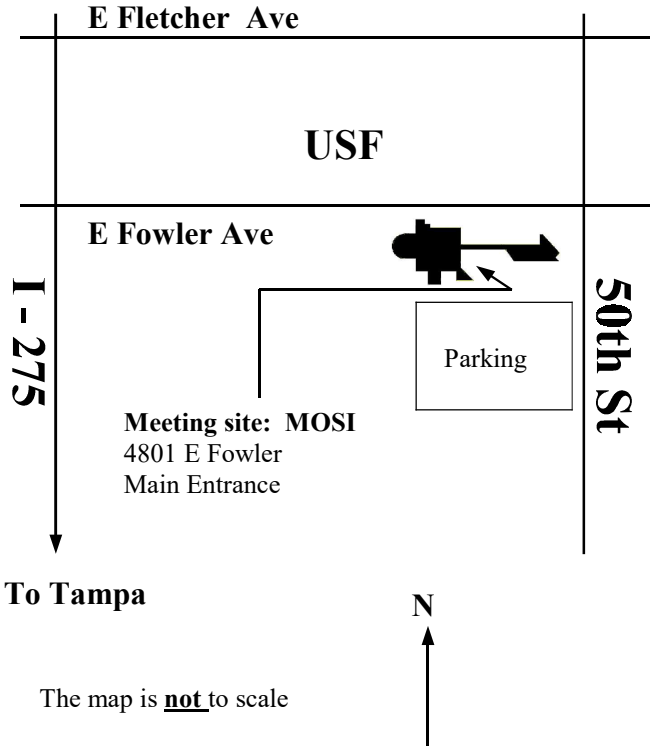


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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Sony…….Continued from page 5)

The camera is fairly new and street price is still in the $800 range. On the Internet I found it for under $700 but it was back-ordered. The floppy adapter is a little under $100. I am very impressed with the overall ease of use and the excellent quality of the pictures rivals any 35 mm pictures I've had printed. I'm especially pleased with the movie with sound capability and the ability to connect it directly to my television and have an instant slide show. I'd recommend this camera to anyone. **Bravo Sony!** ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



September in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 9 September 2000

Meeting

Gateway 2000

September 13, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the September meeting we will have a presentation by John Locke and Michelle Nelson from the local Gateway 2000 store. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

These are the "Dog Days" of summer. I hope you're all keeping as cool as possible and planning on going to the next TPCUG meeting. We'll have the new projector and a Gateway presentation. I plan on having snacks again, so I hope to see you there.

On September 27th and 28th, a "Computer Technology Showcase" will be held at the Tampa Convention Center from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM both days. Tampa Bay Computer Society will have a booth at the event. They've invited representatives from all the local groups to come and join them at their booth. I'll be attending on September 27th. I plan to hand out our tri-folds and try to get new members. Anyone who is interested can go to http://www.tampa-bay.net or http://www.techshows.com for further information.

Window Me (Millennium) will be available in retail stores on September 14th. I hear that you can already be using the product if you've bought a new computer or new hard drive recently. I've ordered a copy for $49.95 through http://www.buy.com. Microsoft is selling it for $59.95 plus tax.

The FACUG Fall Conference is October 14, 2000 at the Sunlight Commu-

(President.....Continued on page 2)

October 11: The MP3 and Internet Handbook author Bruce Fries

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

The Windows SIG started at 6:00. Our President was not in attendance at this meeting, so we had Steve Singer give us brief presentation on Windows Millennium (Me). Me will be the new Win 95/98 upgrade, and it is due for retail sale on September 14. Along with fixes and updates, Me contains Internet Explorer 5.5, a new Media Player and network wizard, and built in movie capture and editing

Mike Hodges started the general meeting at 6:30. We now have a new projector, which was presented to the group at this meeting. Special thanks to William LaMartin for his initiative in this matter. Our presentation was from Ryan Harris of Atlantic.net. His company provides both analog and DSL Internet service. Mr. Harris discussed the differences and advantages of DSL service over cable modem. Cable modems offer a theoretical speed of 30 megabytes per second compared to DSL's 1.5 mps. However, real world use shows cable in the consumer market is only running between 300 kbs and 1.6 mps. Cable is also a shared bandwidth network, the more users on at one time, the slower the individual connection. DSL does not share this problem. DSL also has the added advantage of using existing phone lines to provide point of service to the customer.

A good reason to start looking into broadband will be the growth of Application Service Providers. Several companies, including Microsoft, have announced plans to make their applications and programs available only over the internet on a pay per use schedule. Priceline.com is an example of an Application Service Provider. Mr. Harris ended his presentation at 7:40.

Our monthly drawing was held after the presentation. Mike Hodges was the big winner with a month free internet access from Atlantic.net and three T-shirts (don't be surprised to get one for Christmas). Roger Waters, Brian Lance, Denise Adams, Mike Brazas, and Jim Purcell were all also winners.

The meeting ended at 8:00. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)
nity Church in Port St. Lucie, Florida. If you're interested in attending, just let me know, and I'll be glad to tell you how to register.

(President……..Continued on page 12)



Windows Millennium & a "New" Computer

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Some Background By now, most members probably know about the projector our group recently purchased. Certainly those attending our August general meeting or the most recent VBA SIG do, since the projector was used at those meetings. I will leave it to Merle Nicholson, the member responsible for starting the projector fund and who had the faith that we could indeed raise the money to make such a purchase, to give the details of the purchase somewhere else in this newsletter. What I want to talk about is what I bought for myself at the same going-out-of-business sale where the projector was purchased.

At the August meeting an announcement was made regarding this sale, and a number of members of the group made purchases, myself included, with which, I think, all are quite happy. We owe member Tom Cone thanks for alerting us to the sale.

I bought a Compaq computer that had Win 95 OSR2 on it. It also had a small 3.2 GB hard drive, so the first thing I did was to buy a 20 GB drive and install Windows Millennium on it. You might ask how I have Windows Millennium now when it is not due until the middle of September. Actually I have an OEM version, intended for installation on new computers, which I purchased from Steve Singer at RDI. You can get an OEM version from a dealer if you buy a new motherboard or hard drive, as I did. I purchased a 20 GB Seagate drive and Windows Me. The final price of the Compaq 333 Pentium II computer with 128 KB of RAM, and now with a 20 GB hard drive, 24 Speed CD, external 56K modem, sound card, speakers and network card was around $1,000, plus tax plus the price of Windows Me (I would have had to eventually buy the Windows Me anyway, so I won't include that in the price).

Oh, you say, I overpaid . Not really, since I failed to mention that the system also included a ViewSonic ViewPanel VP 150 15" flat screen monitor—a $1,000 monitor for $500.

Actually I bought the monitor and then added the computer as an afterthought. I love that type of monitor. The Gateway Pentium III we got in December had one, but that computer is used mainly by my daughter, and I was still stuck with a regular 17" monitor (which used to be state of the art for me). The flat screen monitor takes up almost no space and displays a 15" diagonal image—almost the same size displayed by the much larger 17" regular monitor. Not to be outdone on the monitor front, Wade Herman got one also, and my son said he would reimburse me if I got one for him too, which I did and he did.

Installing the Drive I wasted a lot of time trying to figure out how to get what's known as the Compaq diagnostic partition on the new drive. It is something unique to Compaq--a hidden partition with diagnostic software. I could get software at their web site that would install the partition. It was probably there, and I just couldn't find it. I then decided to see if the partition was on the drive that came with the computer. So I installed Partition Magic (to be able to see hidden partitions)--and it wasn't there. Perhaps on newer Compaq computers they quit using this partition. Anyway you can download the same diagnostic software that you install as you would any other Windows program.

Windows Millennium Once I decided to not worry about the Compaq diagnostic partition, I simply installed the drive in the computer, put the Windows Me CD in the CD ROM, made sure in the BIOS that the computer would boot from the CD drive, turned off the computer, switched the cable and power to the new drive and booted up. It took 10 to 12 minutes for the setup to format the 20 GB drive, and the setup took just 14 minutes to install everything. It then restarted the computer and began to set up the hardware and Plug and Play devices and do various other setup things. This took about 15 minutes. This computer has a video card, sound card, network card, and external modem.

After a total of 41 minutes (12 +14 + 15), Windows Me was running for first time. I got a Windows logon instead of a Network logon, so there was a bit of network stuff yet to do. And

(Millennium……Continued on page 5)

MS Messenger

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
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When the instant chat programs ICQ and AOL Messenger first came out, I looked at the literature describing what they did and thought that they were useful little gadgets but decided against using them on my personal computer because of a fear of incompatibility with the Microsoft Windows and Internet Explorer. I installed AOL Messenger on my sons' computer when they "just had to have it", and it appeared to work correctly and caused no problems that I could see on the computer. I looked at the help files and looked at the program itself and still just didn't feel it was worth the possible problems of installing it on my computer.

I also didn't like some of the control functions the program incorporated. Then along came MS Messenger, and it was offered as part of the automatic Windows 98 Update process. I went to the information files that described what the program was and decided to give it a try since my largest concern of compatibility was now incorporated into Windows 98 and should cause no extra problems to solve.

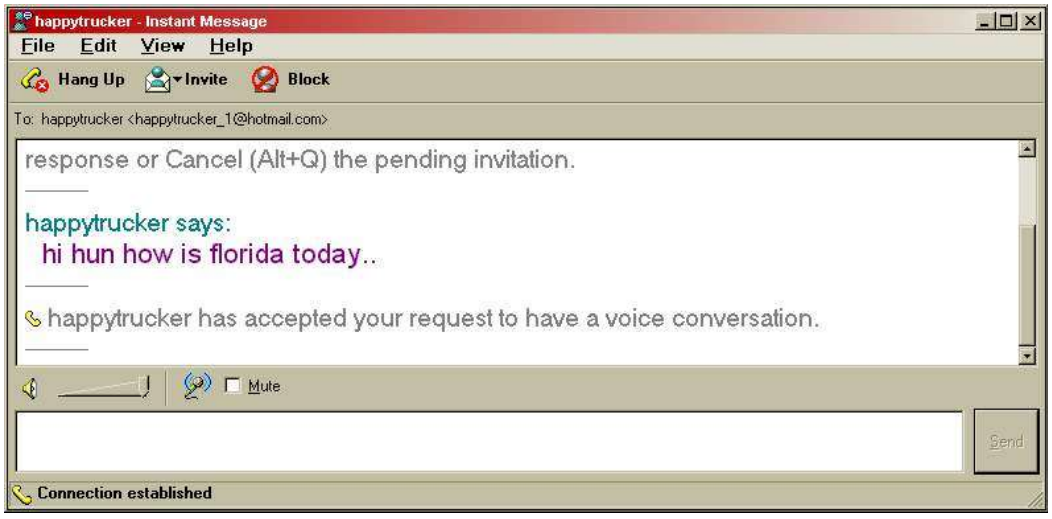
I installed the first version offered and have kept up with the updates that are now at version 3. The only requirement for this service is an Hotmail account or a Passport account. You get instant notification while using Messenger of any e-mail received into this Hotmail account. Your "Buddies" are completely controlled by you so that you don't get any unwanted traffic. I have it set to " Run the program" when I am online and use it almost each time I am online to say a quick "Hi" to friends that I have met online and friends that I have locally. This is also the best way to reach me while I surf since I have a phone modem and one line only. The newer version of MS Messenger is much more than the simple "CHAT" it started out as with typed messages and has progressed to actual voice communications and more. MS Messenger now allows voice communication instead of the chat, after you use an "Auto Tuning Wizard" to set up your sound card and microphone, to talk to your friends. This is considered a "Call" from PC to PC. It takes a few calls to get used to listening through your speakers and talking into a microphone; you can purchase headsets that make it a little easier, and it does sound different from a phone, but you can communicate easily. I play cards on the web with friends in Toronto, Canada and we are able to talk to each other after the games and chitchat with ease. You can also start NetMeeting as easily as voice chat, and the one time I used it was foolproof. The choice of NetMeeting was one of the options in the drop down menu and it was a point and click to make the connection from another easy connection wizard.

The last chat feature that is now available is a "Call" from PC to Phone and Microsoft has incorporated net2phone with Messenger to accomplish this. I have not done this yet but you need to set up an account with net2phone, which takes just a few minutes because there is a charge for this PC to Phone service. I have registered and it was stated at that time that there could be a charge of one cent per minute for this service. Compared to the other long distance phone companies, that seems very fair.

And the last feature that is in version 3 is file transfers from you to any of your buddies. Again this is a point and click process and I was able to transfer a file the first time I tried. This goes directly to the other party and does not have to sit in an e-mail box.

REQUIREMENTS ARE: Free long distance applies to calls initiated on a PC. Calls placed using Messenger Service 3.0 are free PC to PC or free to the 50 United States, District of Columbia, and Canada when made PC to telephone or mobile. Connect-time charges, cell phone, and mobile charges may apply. Certain country restrictions also apply; void where prohibited by law. Requires a Passport or Hotmail account, multimedia PC, 28.8 Kbps modem, sound card, speakers, microphone, and Internet access.

To download this program please go to http://messenger.msn.com and to find out more about the features go to http://messenger.msn.com/support/features.asp .◆



(Millennium……Continued from page 3)

after 3 more minutes it finished. I noted that it didn't pick up my video card and I only had 640 x 480 resolution at the moment, but it did get the ViewSonic monitor. And after setting up a network TCP/IP address for the computer and a reboot, I got a message that I needed to accept some agreement for my Alps printer (which is attached to another computer on the network)--so I now had networking. After doing that and another reboot, I got the Network logon.

It still didn't have the correct driver for the video card, so I needed to install that, which I had already downloaded from ATI. Since that file is over 7 MB, it is lucky that I am on a network to the Gateway where the driver was.

The video driver installed perfectly. I then installed a USB network adapter in addition to the network card already installed so that I can connect to Road Runner when I want using the USB adapter.

What's New There is no Windows Explorer anymore under Start | Programs. Ah, but I did find it in Accessories. And when you click on My Computer on the desktop, you see your local drives but not the network. To see the Network, you need to click on the My Network Places link on the left portion of the window or on the MyNetwork Places icon on the desktop--what used to be called Network Neighborhood.

And—this is a big one—there doesn't appear to be a DOS prompt. There is no option on Shutdown to restart in DOS mode. There is also no entry on the Start menu for a DOS

(Millennium……Continued on page 6)

Internet picture of the month

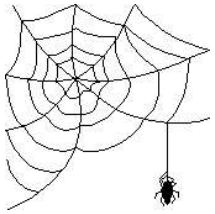


The 16 inch piece of metal that most likely caused the Concorde crash

The photo is from http://www.concordesst.com. This is a site run by an individual, and it is not the official site for the plane.

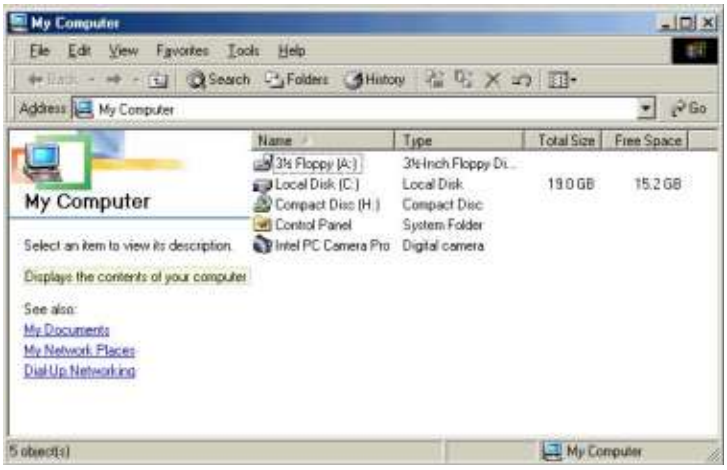
The piece of metal is now thought to have come from a Continental DC-10 which took off just minutes before the Concorde.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Practically Networked Home	http://www.practicallynetworked.com/
Linksys Home Page (networking hardware)	http://www.linksys.com/
LABINS - Land Boundary Information System (Fla.)	http://www.labins.org/
Fast Company (magazine)	http://www.fastcompany.com/homepage/
Internet Firewalls	http://csrc.ncsl.nist.gov/nistpubs/800-10/main.html
OS/2 Connect (There are still OS/2 users out there)	http://www.os2ss.com/connect/
Bern's Steak House – Tampa	http://www.bernssteakhouse.com/
FindSounds.Com – Search the Web for sounds	http://www.findsounds.com/
Concorde Page	http://www.concordesst.com

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.



(Millennium…….Continued from page 5)
window. But Command.Com is still there so you can run it from Start | Run, or you can create your own Program Entry for the MS-DOS Prompt as I just did. If you want to get to the real DOS prompt, you will need to create a Windows Millennium Startup disk and boot from it.

Millennium is much like Windows 98, except for some slight changes in appearance of the various Windows like what I just mentioned about MyComputer. There are, however, several new features worth noting. They are

- System Restoration
- System File Protection
- Boots and closes down faster than Windows 98/95.
- Video Editing
- Improved Networking

System Restore is similar to GoBack (see the article by Mary Sheridan in our December 1999 newsletter) and such programs which return your computer to an earlier time of your choosing. Furthermore you lose none of your work that has been saved in the MyDocuments Folder. I used this feature a day after getting the computer up and running. Needing a virus protection program, I installed a version of McAfee Virus Scan I had, then went to the Internet and downloaded their update of the program. Unfortunately the update never would complete its installation. I gave up on McAfee, used Add/Remove to uninstall what I could of McAfee and then did a System Restoration to when I first booted the computer that day. I then successfully installed Norton's antiviral program. Note that System Restore requires at least 200 MB of hard disk space; the more you give it to use (up to 2.4 GB), of course, the better it works. So this is not for older systems with small hard drives.

System File Protection will not allow any file that is important to Windows to be deleted or over written by an improper version. This should be a big help with what is known as DLL Hell, where the installation of a program results in its old and possibly defective DLLs replacing ones that were on your computer.

It seems to **boot and shutdown down faster** than 98. It certainly opens some programs very fast—especially the Microsoft Office products. This, however, may be due to how the Office programs are structured. I didn't notice any improvement in the opening of programs like Delphi or Corel Draw.

I will take Microsoft's word that **networking** has been made almost foolproof, since I already have a network up and running and thus didn't need that feature.

Regarding networking, though, there does seem to be something happening in the background that I would like to be able to stop since it slows things down considerably. When I access another computer on the network from the new computer, after I get to the directory I want and begin to, say, select some files for copying, things sometimes move very slowly. I think some aspect of Windows Me is possibly indexing the network drive and directory. When I access a directory on the Windows Me computer from another computer on the network, nothing like this happens. I would be interesting in hearing any ideas on this.

I didn't think much of the **Movie Maker** Program. It seemed sort of primitive to me. You can string together videos, still images and sound, but I saw no option to superimpose text. I suppose it is to real Video editing programs what Paint Brush is to real graphic programs like Corel Draw and Adobe Illustrator.

Not to end on a negative note, I think it is worth the upgrade from 98—especially at the prices I have seen quoted of $49 from Buy.Com and $59 from Microsoft. Of course, these are prerelease prices. I think the price after the September 14 release will be $109 from Microsoft for the upgrade and $209 for the regular version.

Minimum Requirements:

- Pentium 150 MHz or higher
- 32 MB RAM
- 200 MB – 400 of free Hard drive space for installation
- VGA monitor, CD drive & mouse ◆

Linksys EtherFast Cable/DSL Router

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larry.anders@gtemail.net

If you have ever thought about setting up a home network (LAN) to share your Cable or xDSL connection with more than one computer, the Linksys Router was made specifically for this purpose. I've wanted to setup a network at my home now for quite a while. I have had a RoadRunner connection on my computer for a couple of years now, while my wife suffered-by on a dial-up connection on her computer (which meant that I actually suffered too because… well, you know what I mean.) I had tried to set up a connection sharing network when Win98se first came out, but I had so much trouble that I just let it slide. (I didn't realize initially that I had to have two NIC (Network Interface Cards) in the Server PC and one NIC in the client.) By the time I figured out what was wrong I had lost interest. But my wife is using her computer more and more these days, and the pressure was back on to do something about our Internet connection speed variance problem in our home.

Fortunately I have a neighbor who is also a computer geek, and he told me about a way that it could be done that was actually a piece of cake to install. I really didn't believe him at first so I put it off for a while. Recently I was visiting this neighbor and saw how he had networked three PCs to his RoadRunner connection and easily added his notebook while I was sitting there. So I made the commitment.

I went home, logged on the Buy.com and ordered a BEFSR41 Linksys EtherFast Cable/DSL router, and three days later darn near got instant broadband access to my wife's computer. It really was much easier than I had ever expected.



I unpacked the router, plugged in the power cord, plugged in a connection from my cable modem to the router, from the router to my wife's computer—all connections using Category 5 cable— and voilà, I had a broadband connection. Really! Only one NIC card was needed in each PC. I already had one in both PCs so it really was a snap (excuse the pun).

All you need to do is install a NIC card, which in Windows nowadays is literally just a snap. Once you do as I mentioned above there are only a couple of other things you need to do before you're connected. Start Internet Explorer (sorry, I don't know how to do it in Netscape), click on Tools, Internet Options, Connections and run the Setup Wizard. Choose to Setup your connection manually, connect through the LAN,



automatic discovery of proxy server, setup a mail account or not if you already have one and click on finish. Then, on your desktop right click on the Network Neighborhood icon, click on the Identification tag and make sure the Workgroup name is the same on both computers. At that point you should be able to log on the Internet at broadband speed. I had had an MSN account on my wife's PC in the past and had to disable MSN before it would connect properly. But that was it! My wife was happy, so I was happy. (…know what I mean?!)

Now, I used all the default settings, but the router comes with a web-based utility to set it up anyway you choose. It is a Hardware Based DHCP Server that allows you to share your Internet connection with up to 253 client PC's. You can **share out your single Internet connection** to that many systems. It also acts as a hardware Firewall, providing the security and protection from Internet Hackers and Peeping Tom's (lurkers). And, to top it all off, it's the ONLY Router in its class which uses a 4-Port 10/100 Switch, instead of a standard non-switching HUB! (In English: It's both fast and compatible.) It also has a dedicated uplink port so you can easily add more switches or hubs. This will allow you to expand your network beyond the built-in 4 port limit. Obviously, this Router provides for enough potential connections to satisfy the most insatiable tech-addict or small business. If you are considering this Router for a small business, it is capable of handling a fat (business level) **1.5MBps** pipe! (A business level T1 is only capable of 1.5Mbps. This router can handle a connection 8 TIMES faster than that.)

Some of the features are:

- Connects to a Broadband Modem Or to An Ethernet Backbone
- Equipped With a 4-port 10/100 Switch
- Connects All of Your PCs to the Internet With Only One Purchased IP Address
- Creates a Firewall to Protect Your PCs From Outside Intruders
- Configurable Through Any Networked PC's Web Browser
- The Switch Dramatically Speeds Up Your Gaming and Multimedia Connections
- Can Act as Either a DHCP Server or Client
- Compatible with All Standard Internet Applications

(Router……..Continued on page 8)

(Router……..Continued from page 7)

- Administrators Can Block Specific Interior Users' Internet Access
- Technical Support - 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week
- Full 1-Year Warranty or Small Office

The Firewall is a Hardware-Based "Port Closer". A primary feature of this is that the Router will not respond to unsolicited requests from the Internet but there is not much control over this. It's either on or off. I prefer a software firewall with options to allow me more control. But it wasn't a problem. I just don't use the hardware-based firewall.

By the way, if you allow printer and file sharing you also have



a full-fledged peer-to-peer network thrown in for the price of the router, which was $149. I had a $30 off coupon from Buy.com so my final cost was $119 plus $7 shipping. It was well worth it for my peace of mind, (if you know what I mean). It really was very simple to set up. ◆

Personalizing & Mobilizing Your World
BLUESQUIRREL

ClickBook 2000

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

ClickBook from BlueSquirrel is a handy little printer utility that you really need, but you never knew it. Only a few programs allow double side printing. For such a program you have to reinsert the pages into the printer when it is time to print the second side—unless you have a duplex printer—but the program handles the chore of printing all the pages in the correct order. Microsoft Word is such a program. It allows you to first print even pages in reverse order, then turn the pages over and put them in the printer again and tell the program to print odd pages in regular order. Most programs don't do this. Enter ClickBook.

ClickBook enables double sided printing and more from any Windows program and on almost every printer. The more is also printing your document in many different booklet formats. Here is how the ClickBook people themselves describe the program:

….ClickBook 2000 is a program that will allow users to create and print normal documents into booklets of any size, as well as greetings cards, CD jewel case covers, day planner pages, etc. …… ClickBook 2000 ….. [is compatible] with 99% of the PCL printers out there, and some PS printers. In addition to that, it offers a flexible range of what you want to create to make booklets so small (and legible) as it would require a magnifying glass to read, all by simply printing out a regular document to one of our custom ClickBook drivers.

ClickBook works by intercepting standard-size pages on the way to your printer from virtually any Windows program that prints. ClickBook takes the pages, shrinks them down, and rearranges them to print out as a double-sided booklet. Create your documents as you usually do in whatever Windows programs you normally use. When you're ready to print, select the "CB" printer driver that was installed during ClickBook's setup, just as you would choose another printer.

I plan to use the program to print out a 40 page neighborhood directory on 8 x 11 paper with two 4.25 x 5.5 pages on each side of the paper (with no reduction in size). As a test, I took our newsletter, which consists of 12, 8.5 x 11 single sided pages in Microsoft Publisher, and printed to the ClickBook Printer driver for my HP 4 plus printer in the format described above for the neighborhood directory. The result was a reduced size version of the newsletter printed on both sides of three 8.5 x 11 sheets of paper instead of the usual three 11 x 17 double sided sheets you get in the mail.

(ClickBook……..Continued on page 9)

Copyrighting the Internet

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
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Allow me a moment to vent my feelings. The last two issues of our newsletter discussed the most recent flap over copyright laws in this country, specifically Napster. Whether you agree with the federal court system in this case or not, Napster is going to lose out, period. Recent case law has upheld the notion that "sharing" copyrighted material by copying and keeping the original and giving away the copies for free is "distribution" in the eyes of the courts. Even though the defendant in this case (sorry, the name eludes me at this time) claimed he made no profit and money never changed hands, "distributing" MP3s on the internet violated the conditions of current copyright law. Read that as the CRIMINAL conditions of current copyright law. This was one person running a private MP3 web site, not a business providing access to hundreds of interconnected users. There were those in the internet community who felt this one lone gunman was a guinea pig before the record industry moved in on larger operations like Napster, and time has shown this to be more than just the paranoia of a few hackers.

Last year, if you remember, there was a similar case concerning MP3. The record industry pooled its resources, hired lawyers, and claimed in court that MP3 served no legitimate purpose other than breaking the law. After several early setbacks the MP3 community survived. If someone remembers the time frame please tell me, but I believe about five years ago the record industry had a short-lived attempt to close down businesses that sold used CDs as well. The claim then was only the person who initially purchased the tape or CD had rights to its use and the tapes and CDs couldn't be "distributed" further. Since I just bought a Tom Petty CD at Sound Exchange I don't think that went anywhere either.

Of similar but unheralded news we have federal judge Lewis Kaplin coming down hard on something known as DeCSS. Never heard of it? If Hollywood had its way you never would. DeCSS is a utility that unscrambles DVD signals and allows copying. This sounds like a no-brainer, "I'm not allowed to own a utility or machine to copy something I already own?" "What about my VCR or cassette recorder?" Don't forget, the movie and recording industry have attacked those in the recent past also. They tried to get the court system to interpret copyright law similar to computer software. If you haven't been listening to the radio recently there has been an enormous increase in scare commercials from a group called the "Business Software Alliance" reminding people of the severe penalties involved in software piracy. Piracy, or copyright infringement, involves the use of a single program on multiple computers, even if they are used for personal use and not "distributed". Imagine what would have happened if this strict enforcement had applied to every CD, tape, or VHS purchase.

These large industries fear something they don't understand and are trying to hold off their obsolescence as long as possible. I feel that the recording and movie industry have found themselves in the classic "buggy whip" situation where technology is making them obsolete and they are using the only tool they understand, lawsuits, to protect their vested interests. The internet was originally designed as a distributed network to store and share information outside of one central authority. Even though it was envisioned as a military endeavor, the recording industry and the government have no place complaining about the internet being used as it was intended. The law needs to be changed to enhance the growth of technology not to protect aging industries from technological development.

A new industry will arrive when and where we least expect it to take the changes around us and turn them into the sort of business that fills the needs of the consumer while protecting the rights and livelihood of the artists. If a company like Napster can create an environment where the artist is getting direct feedback from the consumer instead of market research figures, we may see more original talent like Elvis Presley and Jimmy Hendrix instead of Milli-Vanilli and the Backstreet Boys. This sort of direct connection between the end user and the artist is the way theater, painting, and music have been done for millennia and our culture has not suffered any the worse for it. ◆

(ClickBook……Continued from page 8)
The program is simple to install, and at the end of the installation it offers for each of your installed printers to add a ClickBook version of the printer to your Printers Folder.

To read more about the program, to download a free demonstration program or to purchase the program go to http://www.bluesquirrel.com. The program costs $49. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. **For September only we will meet on the first Tuesday.**

For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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NEW PROJECTOR FUND DRIVE

By Merle Nicholson, Member-At-Large, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com



The deed has been done. We are now owners of an excellent Proxima 9210 projector thanks to all the contributors. We had it in time to use it for the last meeting, and what a wonderful display it has! You definitely have to see it to believe the quality and brightness of the screen.

So the fund is officially closed. I announced the impending closure of the fund at the August meeting and have since gotten some last minute money in. It was needed. Thanks.

Most of the contributors asked to remain anonymous. Everyone will get a letter and receipt for tax purposes. Most of those are mailed out, but if you don't have yours yet, just be patient.

I do want to recognize three businesses for their very generous contributions. They are:

RDI-TampaBay – Steven Singer
L&M Graphic Designs – Mike Huchinson
Fort Knox Security Systems – John Witmer family

We got a very timely opportunity to get this system used from a rental company going out of business. The tip came from member Tom Cone. William LaMartin met Mike Hodges and Wade Herman there and tested it on a notebook. They also decided to pick up a projection screen. It comes in a large bulletproof suitcase. We still must discuss buying a replacement bulb or reserving the money for it, as they are very expensive: not less than $350 apparently.

So a special thanks goes to William, Mike, Wade and Tom for jumping on the deal and getting it accomplished so quickly.

And a very special thanks goes to all the people who contributed money. You have made our club much more viable and versatile. Thanks to all. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
BAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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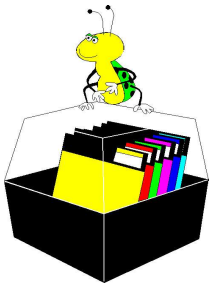
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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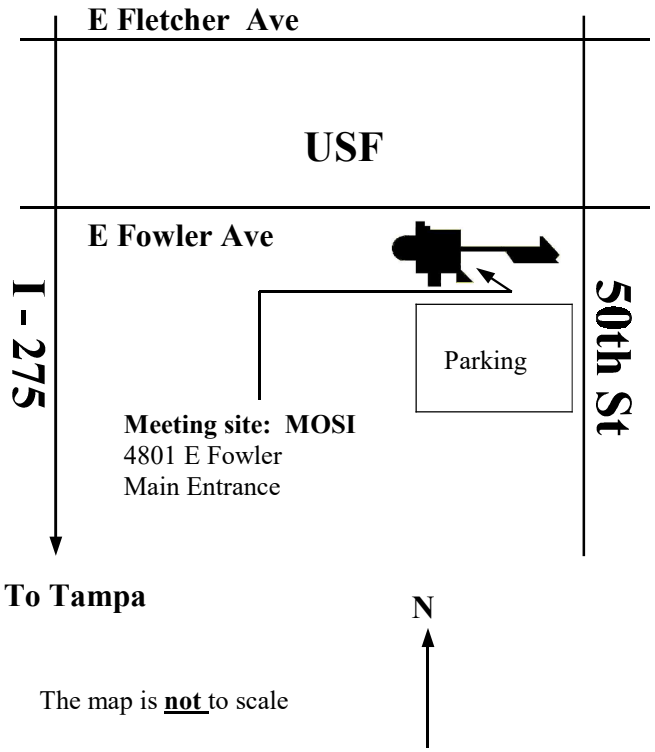


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(President……..Continued from page 2)
The theme for COMDEX/Fall is Technology Decisions for the New E-economy. The dates are November 13-17 in Las Vegas, NV. If you plan to go, check out the APCUG web site for discounted rooms and information on the conference that the APCUG holds at the same time as COMDEX.

And to complete the year, our Second Annual Christmas Party will be held on December 13th at MOSI. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 10 October 2000

Meeting

Bruce Fries, author of The Internet Handbook

October 11, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the October meeting we will have a presentation on MP3 from Bruce Fries, author of *The Internet Handbook.* Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I'm really looking forward to the MP3 presentation this month. If you know a young person, please bring them with you to the meeting. Most are very interested in anything that's music related. I'm bringing my son-in-law and it was his idea to come when he found out whom the presenter was.

I'm writing this early, so I won't be able to tell you about the "Computer Technology Showcase". Watch for all the details in the November newsletter.

Windows ME was delivered to my door on the 15th of October. Have I installed it yet? No. Why? Because I'm basically a chicken and my computer is working great and, you know why! I'll take the plunge soon, but would really like to hear more about how it really works and installs from the people I trust,

(President.....Continued on page 2)

November 15: To be announced — Check the web site later

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Vice President : Mike Hodges (hodges@reflectone.com) 962-2114
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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the September Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

Our monthly meeting started at 6:00 PM. Mary moderated a discussion on DSL and cable modems. Even though there is much interest in DSL, no one present is currently subscribed to a DSL service. This was followed by a discussion of Windows ME problems. For those of you considering an update, be aware that many Windows 98 devices aren't functioning in ME.

The end of the year is approaching and recommendations for new officers will be appreciated.

The Gateway presentation was postponed due to a lack of participation on the part of Gateway. Member Jim Weber was able to give an impromptu presentation on the new wireless dispatch and report writing system being implemented by the Tampa Police Department.

While Jim was retrieving his laptop computer, William LaMartin demonstrated his BirdCam on the Internet. This was a picture of a bird at his home photographed by a video camera at one minute intervals with the picture being uploaded to the Internet via FTP. The video capture and FTP upload were accomplished with software he had written in Delphi.

Roger Waters won a Krups coffee maker in the drawing. The meeting was called to a close at 8:20 PM. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)
namely you guys.

Another reminder about the FACUG Fall Conference on October 14, 2000 at the Sunlight Community Church in Port St. Lucie, Florida. I'm making my hotel reservations today for October 13th and 14th. I use every chance I get for a mini-vacation. Since I'm

(Continued on page 3)

A $100 Digital Camera

By Forrest Wilcox, Tampa PC Users Group
fwilcox1@juno.com

I made my first purchase on the Home Shopping Network, a color digital camera. I wasn't expecting much, but now I declare it a bargain. It is made by Aiptek Inc., Lake Forest, Ca. Its pluses:

- It's the size and shape of a large butane lighter and weighs ounces.
- Has a USB port (many $200 cameras do not).
- Uses two AA batteries good for two hours of snap shots. Otherwise powered by the USB port.
- Low battery indication.
- Capacity of 80 pictures at high resolution, 360 pictures at low resolution.
- Will make a video stream, 0.9/0.2 fps.
- Has some unusual software.
- A ten second self-timer.
- E-mailing option.
- Powers down after 30 Seconds.

It's minuses:

- High resolution is 352 x 288, low is 176 x 144.
- Only supports Windows 98. (Not Windows 95 or ME)
- Manual is sketchy, but the programs are reasonably intuitive.

For my intended purpose the "low" resolution is not a problem. I use the camera for record purposes; I'll not be making portraits or enlargements. See photo printed in grayscale. With its small size it fits weightlessly in any pocket.

The camera has two buttons, one to snap the picture and one to turn on the camera and go through the menu:

- High Resolution
- Continuous (video stream)
- Self-timer
- Clear memory



- Low Resolution

The software installation (CD ROM) was without any problems and the software included is a Manager program, a special effects program including the usual greeting card stuff, Microsoft NetMeeting, and a fun program that will make a 360 degree moving panorama from a series of still shots. This requires a series of 10 - 20 shots that slightly overlap in a 360 degree circle. It is really quite dramatic. A second CD ROM is "Video Studio" for editing and capturing video clips.

The Manager program will make an AVI file from the video stream.

The only problem I have had is the e-mail function. I get "MAPI Failure" when I try to use it. Could that be because I use cheapo Juno as my ISP? It comes with a stand so it can sit on your monitor and act like the usual live PC video camera.

I am pleased with my bargain. ◆

(President…….. Continued from page 2)
the secretary for the FACUG, I'll need the R and R because of all that note taking. If you're interested in attending, just let me know and I'll be glad to tell you how to register.

(Continued on page 9)

Carpal Tunnel Vision

By Michael Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group
myankee@ij.net

This is not a review of a program or recap of a solution to a computer problem (nor a recounting of a thwarted attempt at same). File this more along the line of reaction to what I see as burgeoning cyber-elitism. The manifestations of this phenomenon can range from frustration among older members of the work force to across-the-board featherbedding of public school budgets all over America. Those culpable are by and large the sales departments of the computer industry and politicians whose slush funds are in need of reformatting. Three years ago the Tampa Tribune ran an article in their Commentary section entitled ***Wired to Learn*** by Larry Cuban. This Op/Ed piece gave voice to viewpoints which I thought then and still feel are being bulldozed by the computer industries and their various admen, lobbyists and assorted other shills.

In this article the author raised questions which should be given serious thought by every parent, educator, school board member and legislator in this country. The general theme was that there was (and is) a real danger that we are trying to hand over the task of education to the computer manufacturers and software companies. I do not have an agenda which is fundamentally opposed to the computer industry. I use computers over my own network every day. I recently purchased a laptop that I did not have a comprehensive plan to implement in my business at the time of remittance. Thus, I feel it is *not* a bias against computers which compels me to commit to paper (via Email to our Editor) these thoughts. It is also my strong feeling that Mr. Cuban's article did not carry the line of reasoning out to its conclusion. While it is my central contention here that a techno-snob culture is in full bloom, one must look at the heralds and harbingers of the information age to find the genesis of this attitude. What is the true, fulsome motivation of those relentlessly telling the world that the computer is the alpha and the omega? It is, of course, the last 2-3 decades track record for sales in the field and the very reasonable expectation of like returns in the foreseeable future. The fact that a book by *the* captain of the industry held sway to any extent by touting the role which still more, newer and better computer devices will play in our lives should be a warning sign on that road. That billboard should be colored with irony; apparently it was deemed necessary to use the tired old printed word to help round up the laggard cattle, prod them to finish this cycle of rumination and prepare them for the next "must-have" device or application which will be obsolete before being fully debugged.

A case can and should be made in the national public forum that even if servo-bots can be contrived to achieve the implementation of mundane, non-virtual tasks (driving nails, street sweeping, maintenance of drainage ditches, etc.) planned by AI computers, this is not a desirable goal. Ample evidence is already before us about the validity of the old adage which talks about idle hands. Computers are here for the long haul; just as certainly there are many practical justifications for this state of affairs to continue. However, trying to shoehorn every child in this, or any, nation into learning via the CRT before they have a base of reading (so they can read the screen and manuals) and math (so they can do the math needed to write a program to solve the area of a triangle) just so that every hardware and software drummer has a full order pad is not justifiable. Therefore we should watch with a jaundiced eye any and all persons who advocate that every child should have a computer on their desk at school, whether or not they are up to the curve in the traditional skills which would give them the wherewithal to fully utilize the newer educational tools. The current holders of the land's two highest offices have demonstrated precious little compunction about turning a buck in contexts which, while tried and true with respect to return, are dwarfed by the payoff that would be awarded the front man who institutionalizes unbridled, saturated computer installation in all of the public edifices of the nation.

Many accomplished computer users exhibit an intolerance for anyone who shows the least reluctance to be pulled into the cyber-arena. They cannot stand to

(Vision.....Continued on page 5)

(Vision……..Continued from page 4)

see people doing anything on an old DOS machine. "Why, you could write a macro in Access to do that, do a mail merge and dump it over a network right to the mail room with the postage already metered on the envelopes!" Doubtless true, but to such folk it never seems to occur that some individuals genuinely do not have the time to learn the software involved, funds to purchase the hardware needed, and lastly and perhaps most importantly, the desire to do so. There is a strong element of denial in the viewpoint of hyperbolically enthusiastic cyber-people. Perhaps seeing others whose entire world does not seem to revolve around a keyboard, mouse and monitor reveals a flaw (however small) in their attempt to validate their own obsession; nevertheless, there are still those of us who just want to complete an assigned task or plunk out some invoices and get back to ***doing*** something in the wide world outside of the computer room.

Another form in which the elitist stance manifests itself is the prejudice in the graphic arts industry against the PC. At one time, the Mac may have been a better platform from which to run graphics software. That time has long since passed, but the bias

(Vision……..Continued on page 6)

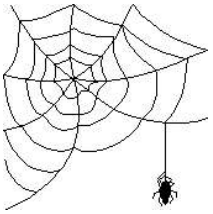
Internet picture of the month



The Washington Monument, Washington, D. C.

This photo is from the site http://www.globexplorer.com. It is a good bit better than the average satellite image there. That said, the images at this site are the best I have seen so far on the Internet. Go there and find your home. I found mine.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Weather sites	http://www.weatherxpress.com/servers.htm
HandSpeak Sign Language Dictionary Online	http://www.handspeak.com/sign.html
CodeHound - The Software Developer's Search Engine	http://www.codehound.com/
Tampa Bay Magazine	http://www.tampabaymag.com/
FirstGov.gov - web site for searching the U.S. Government	http://www.firstgov.gov/
FindSounds.com - Search the Web for Sounds	http://www.findsounds.com/
SimplytheBest Scripts – Perl, CGI, Java ,VB Scripts	http://www.simplythebestscripts.com/
The Internet Movie Database	http://us.imdb.com/
Atget's Paris Then And Now	http://www.gmpanter.com/Atget.htm
GlobeXplorer – satellite images	http://www.globexplorer.com

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Vision……..Continued from page 5)
remains. If one wishes to pay a premium to buy a machine whose maker at times seems to be on the verge of extinction, that's all well and good. It is not logical to expect all concerned to make the same choice. This situation is akin to the contentious posturing which seems to quickly attach itself to discussions about the relative merits of the various operating systems. While personally I have never owned or used a Mac, I reserve the right to investigate Linux because I am interested in greater stability than Windows affords on a consistent basis. To those of the PC purists who loudly testify to the stability of the Windows, I must reply: Why all of the patches, bug fixes, updates, and new major versions each touting greater ease of operation, more features and a more robust nature? These marketing ploys by Microsoft and others remind me of television ads by auto makers which stated our new models are (insert some impressive percentage figure) safer, more ergonomically designed, fuel efficient or whatever than last year's model. All they have accomplished in either case is to point out what a piece of junk they were foisting on the public only a year ago.

To listen to Microsoft loyalists go through the litany of their machinations to keep Windows on the beam in effect puts the lie to the claims from Microsoft about ease of use and stability. I'm no guru, but it is my contention that one should be able to get a scanner which worked well on Win 3.1 to work on the same system after an upgrade to Win 98. As it turned out, the scanner does work on 98; but not before I was forced to:

1) purchase new scanner software which did not include the OCR capability my old setup had;
2) reinstall Windows 98 once or twice;
3) spend a lot of time with tech support whose sum total of wisdom seemed to be: Format the Hard Drive;
4) pay a consultant to bail me out (which he did; but sans any definitive answer as to what the root cause of all this was. Thus, nothing concrete can be extracted from this experience to ward off recurrence. Nonetheless, a conviction on my part exists that this sort of difficulty is part and parcel of the marketing roll-out plan for these new operating systems. They know that you will end up having to upgrade some thing or other as a result of the latest Windows version; if it is one of their apps then it's gravy. If not, well, a rising tide floats all boats.)

The point here is that although no bona fide geek, I have done some programming in a couple of different languages, spent the last 6 years immersed in study and use of Windows computers, and have installed and configured (for the most part) my own network. Still, I get into problems that pop out of the clear blue. Point is only a dilettante can afford to be abstractly immersed in the complexities of the "problem" for the "diversion" it affords when paper is not coming out of the printer. When nothing usable is emerging from the output end of the system, one does not want to hear pontificating about how well Microsoft's products *can* work with each other across the platform. This is especially true when one has made a point of not installing a raft of games, not visiting or downloading from sites known to be risky, not involving my system with chats, discussion groups, etc. Certainly when Windows is working properly it is a powerful tool. If it takes a black-belt power user to keep it working then Microsoft's Plug-and-Works-Better-Plays-Better pitch kind of loses its luster. Point is, given the above, opinion here is that intransigence in the stead of Windows and against any and all other operating systems is short-sighted, counterproductive and probably, at the bottom of it, just a self-aggrandizing move designed to establish how clearly superior the cyber-snob's knowledge and abilities are. Further, when these sorts of forensic histrionics are engaged in the presence of the uninitiated, the most likely end result is bemused disaffection on the part of the neophyte (translate potential user group member). ◆

The Best of….

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larryanders@msn.com

This time of year most of your computer magazines start coming out with the best of the best awards such as best scanners, digital cameras, printers, monitors, PCs… well, you get the picture. For many years in the past I subscribed to several computer-related magazines to get my fix of technology information. Today I'm down to one magazine in hard print and most all my other techy-type reading material is now in the form of e-Mail dispatches, brought right to my desktop, free of charge (and if you know me you know I like free stuff).

One of my favorite sources for obtaining information on the Internet is ZDNet.com at http://www.zdnet.com/. My good friend Bruce Register turned me onto this several years ago, and I have been an avid user every since. ZDNet has been around for a long time, and they also publish many of your major computer magazines in print.

ZDNet gives you a whole host of information to have "pushed" to you on a regular basis. One of my favorites is ZDNet's Software Express download picks of the day. Along with the Hot File of the day, they are also currently providing a links to a Free File, Game File, Screen Saver File, Utility File and Internet File, and many, many more. When you're a file-hound like I am, this couldn't get much better! I'll admit that I don't always have the time to follow all of the links but I do try to read the descriptions and if they sound interesting, I'll click through.

One thing I do is read my email both at work and at home. I typically have more time at home than at work to digest what I am reading so by choosing to leave my email on the server when I read it at work I can also read it at home. But I have gotten a lot of good free utility programs from ZDNet that also come in handy at work. That's why I try to read my email at both places.

My most recent *push* from ZDNet had a special link to a featured collection of their top 100 recent downloads, and finally, that's what this article is about…

At the top of their list, with nearly 4 million downloads, and probably at the top of every other software site like C|Net's http://download.cnet.com/ or http://www.tucows.com/ is **WinZip (32-bit) version 8**. Although I don't use it personally, WinZip has been the most widely used compression tool since Windows based compression began. (I use a program that I reviewed and beta-tested for the software's author many years ago. Some other larger software maker purchased the rights to the program I use and discontinued it - I guess that's how they wipe out the competition in this business - but it does what I need so I continue to use it. Hey, why fix it if it ain't broken?) WinZip has built-in support for .zip, .tar, gzip, UUencode, XXencode, BinHex, and MIME formats (plus support for .arj, .lzh, and .arc files through external programs). The new Zip and Email feature compresses documents and folders and attaches the zip file to an email message without leaving Explorer. The program I use doesn't handle all this but I have other utilities that do. Maybe it's time I looked into changing to one program that can handle it all. For $29 it's well worth the price and it's free to try!

Rated number two and one of my all time favorite programs ever is **Paint Shop Pro version 7**. I was surprised to see it had nearly 2.2 million downloads because PSP7 has only just recently been released. I guess that shows the popularity of this fine graphics program. If you want most of the capabilities of a high-end program like Adobe's PhotoShop without the high cost (free to try, $99 to keep) and without the long learning curve, then you should try the shareware version of PSP7. With version 7 all of the old stuff was left intact but a lot of new features were added like additional and improved photo-enhancement capabilities, along with Web, vector/drawing, and productivity tools. There are way too many new features to list here but if you'll download the readme file at the download site you can read all

(Best……Continued on page 8)

(Best……..Continued from page 7)
about the many other features and effects like Aged Newspaper, Sunburst, and Soft Plastic. There are also new tools for getting rid of red-eye and removing scratches too. Version 3.0 of Animation Shop is included as well. Like PSP7, it offers several additional features and improvements, including integration of the Paint Shop Pro browser and the ability to open MPEG files now.

Next on ZDNet's list at third is **SolSuite 2000 version 5.6,** which is a collection of 250 solitaire games like Diplomat, Easthaven, Equinox, Fifteens, Four Seasons, Fourteen Out, FreeCell, Golf, Klondike, Pyramid, and 235 more. I play Klondike solitaire all of the time and I'm not sure what most of the other games are but at over 1.2 million downloads I must be in the minority. It's free to try and $29 to keep.

Following SolSuite at fourth was **StayOn Pro version 3.24** with nearly 1.1 million downloads. I used StayOn Pro for quite some time before going to broadband Internet connection at both home and at the office. It keeps your Internet connection alive by simulating activity when you're away from your computer and keeps your ISP from kicking you offline. It's free to try and only $19.95 to keep. And it really does work.

Now, I'm not going to go down all one hundred of the top downloads. I just wanted to make you aware that the list is there at http://www.zdnet.com/downloads/hotfiles/shareware100.html. I haven't gone through all 100 yet myself, but so far all the ones I've looked at or tried have been shareware, meaning they are free to try and you pay only if you decide to keep them. As far as I'm concerned there is no better deal on the planet. Stop by and check them out. And while you're at ZDNet check out all the other neat stuff they have to offer. It's well worth your time. **Happy downloading!** ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Well, I was just sitting here late in the afternoon the day before the newsletter needed to be printed looking at around two and a half blank pages. What to do? I just did it. I reformatted all the articles from 10 point type to 12 point type. That added a little over a page—and made it easier for you to read. Now I will attempt to fill that remaining empty space with something of interest.

I have no new software or hardware to write about this month. Neither do I have any terrible computer problems to relate. But I have done a few things worth noting.

First let me say that **Windows Millennium** for which I did a clean installation on my Compaq 333 with 128 MB of Ram and a 20 GB hard drive is running well with no problems. I have found no problems with it. I also purchased the upgrade from Windows 98 version to install on my Gateway 600, but I have held off on that since I think I need to uninstall GoBack on that computer before installing Windows Millennium, and I haven't had the inclination to do it. I read somewhere older versions of GoBack were not compatible with this new version of Windows.

As mentioned in the minutes of our last meeting, as a brief fill-in, I demonstrated the **WebCam** I have been working on. I have one of these small Intel video cameras that connects to the computer via a USB connection. I wrote some Delphi software (with a lot of help from examples in the Delphi online help) that captures a picture of my pet cockatiel at fixed intervals. It then changes the captured BMP file into a JPG file, which it then saves to the computer's hard drive. Another Delphi program I wrote (again with considerable help from Delphi examples) takes this file at fixed intervals and sends it via an FTP connection to one of the web sites I have. On

(Comments……..Continued on page 9)

(Comments……..Continued from page 8)
that site is a page which displays the picture. This page automatically updates itself every three minutes. As with a lot of the things I do, this was more of an exercise in programming than a desire to have my bird on the Internet. I think there is still a little problem with the FTP software, but when I get it totally debugged, I will be happy to share it with anyone who might be interested.

AOL Mail Contacts Online This past month I have had several people tell me that after sending an email to someone who was on AOL, the AOL person would then reply to them, saying something like "I see that you are still online, so I will reply to you." They mentioned it to me, and I said that I didn't see how anyone could know whether you were online or not unless you had signed up with one of those instant messaging services—which these people hadn't. Then I had the same experience, and that led to the following investigation.

Knowing that I hadn't signed up for any instant messaging, I came to the conclusion that the email messages I send apparently transmit more than just my email address, since no one could tell whether I was connected to the Internet using just that. I then sent myself a message from my RoadRunner account to my NetCom account, opened up the message after receiving it, and looked at the "message source". To my surprise, right there in the message source was the line: "Received: from rome (242848hfc60. tampabay.rr.com [24.28.48.60])". Well, "rome" is the network name of my computer and "24.28.48.60" was the current IP address of my RoadRunner connection. So a lot more than my email address was being sent with the message.

Now, how could I use this information to see if "rome" at 24.28.48.60 was still online. Well, there is a program called Ping. All computers running Win 95 and above have it. You can run it from the Start | Run text box, but it is better to drop to the DOS prompt to run it, since then the Window will not disappear when it is finished, and you can then read the results. I ran "Ping 24.28.48.60" from the DOS prompt on the computer connected to NetCom and it indicated that it had indeed sent and received responses from 24.28.48.60. That told me that there was a computer at the address 24.28.48.60.

But how do I know that the person who sent me the email from a computer at IP 24.28.48.60 is still the same person using that IP address? I don't. It is possible that he sent the message then disconnected and RoadRunner then assigned someone else to that IP address. But if, when I pinged the address 24.28.48.60, I could also ascertain that the computer name was still "rome", then I would be pretty sure that I had the same person.

I have not had time yet to figure if and how this last item can be done, but I believe that it can—unless the person is using a firewall.

Anyway, I have basically figured out how AOL knows whether the person who sent you an email is still online or not. And I have learned that when you send an email, much more identifying information than just your email address goes along with it.

I have also been doing a bit of Visual Basic programming involving **Microsoft Access databases**, and I find that I have almost as much of a problem getting the database to behave correctly—which really should be the easy part of the effort— as I do writing the VB code. And it turns out that these database problems are the same ones I have run into in our Microsoft Access SIG. So come out to the SIG and help me solve them. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 3)
The October general meeting will include a list of candidates for next year's officers. I'm hoping for lots of nominations and to really have an election. My experience as President has been entirely positive. It's not nearly as time consuming as being the Program Director…wait, I'm doing both jobs. Well, if you only want to run for President, then hopefully we can find some-

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM.
For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Tampa, FL 33622-1081 merlenic@tampabay,rr,com

Unwanted Programs

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
mfriendtampa@worldnet.att.net

Over a year ago I downloaded a trial version of PKZip from the PKWare website. I was told to try it and if I didn't choose to pay for it to simply uninstall it. That seemed fair enough. So I downloaded it. I have always respected this product and its creator's genius but I was drawn between two choices, whether to use PKWare's PKZip products or to download Winzip, which may be written by the same people. Winzip, however, is marketed by a different organization.

I chose Winzip and currently have a registered copy of that product on my unit. I uninstalled the PKWare product, and in checking to see that everything had been removed I found that I now had a new program on my computer, added at the exact date and time that the now uninstalled PKWare product had been added. Apparently piggybacked on the trial version of the PKWare product was this Timesink program which is somehow involved with a firm known as ADGateway. I don't know how this program works, but I am under the impression that every time I use the Internet it somehow reads into my computer and I know it stores ads of some sort onto my hard drive. I recently found that these ads were taking up about 5,900,000 bytes of disk space and this was from a program I never wanted on my computer.

Since I didn't want this product I contacted PKWare to find out how to get rid of it since they are the ones who caused it to be there. I received what was to me a rather complicated response about how I could make changes in Registry which would take it away but the writer recommended that I not do so unless I was a very skilled computer guru or I might render my computer unusable. So not being a real expert I left well enough alone, fearing that I might cause worse problems which I might not be able to correct.

I am disappointed with the PKWare Company for deceptively putting this unwanted program on my computer. I feel that their uninstall program should have removed everything that their trial program added to my hard drive.

This, however, is no longer a problem for me since I recently replaced my hard drive and I do not intend to ever again download any trial programs from

(Unwanted……Continued on page 12)

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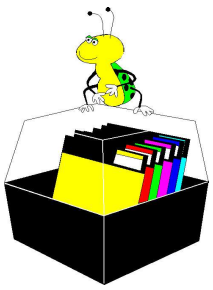
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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(Unwanted……..Continued from page 10)

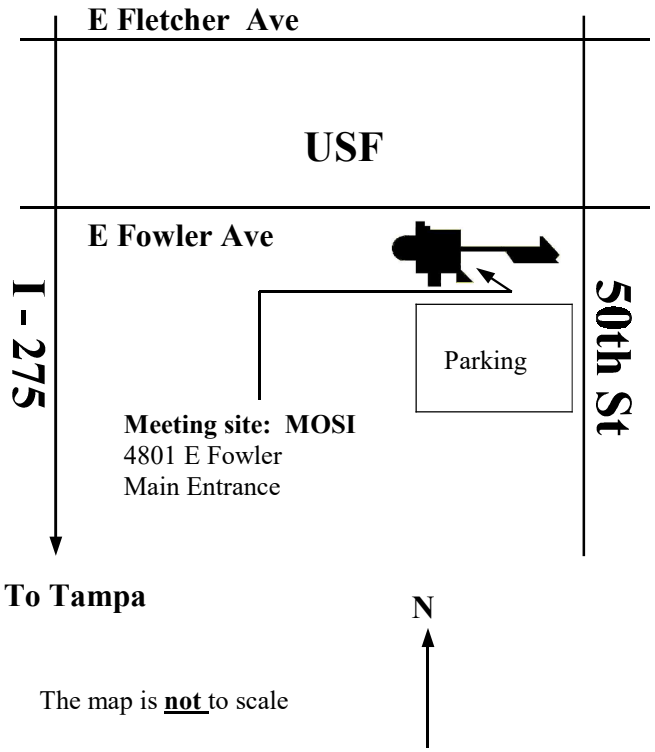
PKWare or any other similar site. Hopefully that will give me some sort of protection from this sort of thing in the future, but now I wonder just how much of this kind of stuff is going on that I am not aware of? ◆

(President……..Continued from page 9)

one else to be the Program Director. Point is, it's your user group and up to all of you to make it the best it can be.

At the November meeting, we'll announce the roster of candidates and we'll vote on them before the party starts at the December meeting.

I'm still having lots of fun as President and am very grateful to all of you for making it such a wonderful experience. Happy autumn! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 11 November 2000

Meeting

John Locke from Gateway

November 8, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: At the November meeting we will have a rescheduled presentation by John Locke from our local Gateway store. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I thought Marty Fries gave a great presentation at the October meeting. We heard before the meeting that an announcement was airing on the radio that Napster would be discussed at our meeting. Not knowing what kind of crowd to expect, I went to MOSI early and tried to get a better-bigger room, wasn't able to, panicked, then found out it wasn't necessary. We had our usual attendance at the meeting. So all was well.

I attended the Computer and Technology Showcase last month at the Convention Center. I was there representing the user group and handing out our trifolds. I also had a hand out from the Greater Tampa Bay PC User Group. I was asking people where they lived and would give them a brochure from whichever group was closest to their home or office. It seemed more of a business-to-business kind of convention, and, to date, I haven't gotten any feedback about the success of the event. I haven't received any phone calls.

Windows ME isn't installed on my PC yet. I just haven't had the time. If anyone has experience with it, please send William an article.

The FACUG fall conference was a big success. There were 54 paid attendees. The most interesting people were the Macintosh group. They came in a huge

(President.....Continued on page 12)

December 13: Christmas party

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Treasurer: Jenny Lind Olin (jlolin@aol.com) 960-5723
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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Mike Hodges, Vice-President, Tampa PC Users Group
mike.hodges@baesystems.com

Mary Sheridan, our stalwart president and ace presenter, kept us entertained as usual by responding to "how to" questions relating to MS Windows for the first 30 minutes of the evening's meeting.

Next, the standard announcements and official organizational business were addressed for five minutes including the announcement of the slate of TPCUG officers for 2001 to be elected at the November meeting. See the President's message in this newsletter for the list.

Then Mary introduced the author of *The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook*, Marty Fries, who co-authored the book with his brother Bruce Fries.

Marty entertained the group with his excellent presentation on the ins and outs of the audio compression technology known as MP3 that has recently opened up the music delivery marketplace and provided a new medium of personal listening opportunities. Marty was definitely in command of his topic and came across as a cool devotee of his passion for music in general and the enhancements provided by MP3 technology in particular. The presentation was like "easy listening" but contained an enormous wealth of technical information relating to MP3. What now follows is my attempt to capture a number of technical nuggets of information recorded as best I could from Marty's excellent presentation. For those anxious for more technical definition, Marty's book has just gone through a reprint and should again be readily available at all the major booksellers.

Marty, a long time band musician by his own admission, also confessed that his interest in things digital commenced with the Commodore 64 and Apple PC's. Marty started out by passing around the group a small compact electronic device known as an MP3 Player. Portable MP3 players range up to 64 MB's of memory. The MP3 compression technology is perfectly legal, notwithstanding the raging Napster legal controversy pitting the recording industry against independent musicians. Typical compression factors achieved by MP3 approach 1 to 10 and can be compared loosely to zip compression that eliminates space and zeros.

The technical discussion started with the factoid that a standard audio CD contains 760MB of data and provides 74 minutes of audio. The laser CD path covers 1.6 kilometers of recording. This equates to 1.1 MB per minute. The Nyquist

(Minutes.....Continued on page 4)

Kyocera-Qualcomm Phone



By Mary Sheridan, President,
Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I recently wanted to get new cell phone service—one of the new plans that include both local and long distance calls for one price per month. I called around and found out that I would need to get a new phone to qualify for the plan. Since the Internet is so much fun, I figured I might as well get a phone that also accesses the Internet.

I stopped at the Verizon kiosk in the mall and got talked into a Qualcomm QCP 2035a. Kyocera has recently bought the cell phone division of Qualcomm. So, I guess it's really a Kyocera QCP 2035. The phone was selling for $99.00, and the guy sold it to me for $49.99. He said that it was a one-day only thing. I half expected him to open his jacket and reveal a bunch of wristwatches, but he didn't. It came with a regular charger. I bought a car charger ($29.99) and a belt chip ($24.99). The salesman threw in a hands-free headset and my total with tax for the phone was $112.06

Next I had to contract a year for the service. It's $40.00 a month and includes 400 anytime minutes and 500 night and weekend minutes. I have no more roaming charges or long distance charges. Features that come with the phone are call forwarding, 3-way calling, voice mail, caller ID, call waiting, check billing, #Pay.

So far I'm having a great time with the phone. Verizon's Mobile Web provides you with your own personalized web site that you can access from your handset. An email account is provided, or you can access other POP3 email accounts. Also available is a personal organizer for scheduling, addresses, important events, etc. I was able to sync my Outlook with the web site, and I now have all of my information available from my cell phone.

The web sites that are available are separate from regular web sites, but there is a world of interesting data. You can make stock trades, shop, and check sporting events, weather, and lots more.

When I cancelled my Alltel (GTE) service, the girl was very nice but told me that I was probably making a mistake because Alltel's signals were stronger than Verizon's. I'll keep everyone posted if I have any signal problems.

If anyone is interested, I have a LGC-300W ($126.87) phone for sale. I have a leather case ($21.34), charger and car charger. I'll take $25.00 for everything.

(Phone……Continued on page 12)

Ebooks and File-Sharing on the Internet

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

When you say "file-sharing on the Internet," everyone thinks "Napster" or "Gnutella" or "Freeinet." Viz. swapping music files, usually in the MP3 format. But there's a potentially more important form of file-swapping "piracy" (which you call it if you're on a certain side of the debate) that's so far received little attention. And that form of swapping really, reeeeellly needs wider discussion...and **your** attention....

But first, a late report from the Napster legal battlefield. When last we checked in, it looked like the Napsterites were going to go down for the count. In August both the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) and a bunch of pile-on musicians went before the Federal District Court in California asking for an injunction to shut the Napster Internet site down for copyright infringement (uh, music piracy to the rest of us).

At a hearing, held on July 26, 2000, the Napster lawyers were stunned (and the RIAA suits elated) by the open hostility shown by Federal Judge Marilyn Hall Patel toward the Napsterites. That first hearing was only an opening barrage by the music industry plaintiffs, asking for a preliminary injunction to shut down the Napster web site while the litigation proceeded. Well.

To the surprise of everyone—not least of all the music industry lawyers—the judge proceeded to enter an immediate injunction ordering the Napster web site to shut down within 48 hours (thus causing a stampede from the 60 million or so users who wanted to stock up before the party was over).

But wait! The Napster lawyers instantly filed an emergency appeal to the Federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals (which is the level directly below the U.S. Supreme Court), and **that** court overturned the injunction and ruled that the Napster site could remain open and operating until the court case was finally decided. Whew!

Which is where things stand today as scores of millions of music lovers merrily share and download free copies of just about any music you can imagine...ahem...royalty-free. Observers of the legal dust-up predict it won't be surprising if the matter ends up before the Supreme Court. And for those of us who can't see how the Napsterites can survive, take a look at the arguments of their renowned lawyer, David Boies, interviewed in the October 2000 issue of Wired magazine at http://www.wirednews.com/wired/archive/8.10/boies.html. His arguments, even in the face of what "appears" to be music piracy by many millions of people, actually appear quite powerful.

(Ebooks……Continued on page 8)

From eOne to Dialpad.com through DSL

By James Kalshoven, Tampa PC Users Group
nasajk@hotmail.com

Having a high speed link to the Internet at work made using my neat little eOne computer at home for surfing more and more tiring with its dial-up connection, especially with time limited by the attention needs of two little girls clamoring to play. The eOne from eMachines is the iMac lookalike with a PC soul that is great because it is an integrated unit (15" monitor with a 466 MHz Celeron) which makes up for its lack of normal expansion slots by including two Type II PC Card inputs, three USB ports, high resolution video capture, modem and Ethernet all built in. And all for only $799 from Circuit City last year. I got a three year warranty for $89 considering the unique nature of the machine. But a lawsuit from Apple has crimped the distribution of faster models and it is no longer listed at the http://www.e4me.com web site.

This machine is cute and beckons you to use it. Josie, my three year old, already can change CD's and start up the games she wants, thanks to its kid friendly feel with the CD player directly under the monitor. It was kind of weird when I first heard the music of a game I had not loaded for her coming from the living room where we keep the computer.

All this was fine, but the Internet at home beckoned. The ads for DSL were tempting. We were using two phone lines since, when we did get on the computer to check email and such and wait for the slow downloads, it made sense to have the extra phone line. Dropping that line and using that cost savings as more justification for a DSL line made sense. The result, with the local DSL competition here in the Washington, D.C. area, was only a bit over $20 a month more for a line ten times faster than a 56K modem! And this was SDSL, not ADSL. Which means up and down links are the same speed. By the way, a great site to check your Internet speed is at http://www.computingcentral.com/topics/bandwidth/speedtest.asp.

Given the always on nature of DSL, and I did keep the computer always on, I installed the free ZoneAlarm software from http://www.zonelabs.com/ and checked my security and web presence using the http://www.grc.com site. I was well hidden.

Now I paid attention to all those neat things I was reading about new web sites – and began to check them out. The payoff came soon: Such a site is http://www.dialpad.com which offers free PC-to-phone calls anywhere in the U.S. I do not know what business model can pay for a company offering this service using just a few banner ads and a shop for PC phone accessories, but more power to them because the site works almost perfectly! Setup is easy, and the information I filled out several months ago has resulted in no unsolicited email or snail mail. My favorite use for the site was when I was on vacation to visit the Expo 2000 World's Fair in Hanover, Germany. I kept in touch with the States using dialpad.com on friends' systems using only modems! The biggest thing to be aware of is that the ringing you hear simulates the real ringing of the party you are calling. There is about 3 seconds of delay from the time they actually answer until you hear the ringing stop and you can hear them. But they can hear you, so now I hum or mumble something nonsensical when calling someone who does not know I am using it until I hear them so they do not hang up. My mom now knows and is very patient with the initial silence!

For the last couple of months, our phone bills have been at least $20 less due to the use of dialpad.com for long distance, so now the DSL is "free"—and that was with a long distance service that gave five cents a minute all the time with no fee!

But with over ten million users, dialpad.com is sometimes down and sometimes choppy. Try again right away for the times it is busy and wait awhile if you can for the less clear times. I found that my computer was introducing most of the noise at first -- it took a lot of testing using Windows' sound recorder. But now I have had calls where the other party does not even know I am using it! The best comparison is a digital cell phone. If you can live with those, you'll have no problem with dialpad.com! ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

theorem, sometimes known as the Shannon theorem, states that the sampling rate must be at least two times the highest natural frequency, which for human audio perception equates to 1.4 MB per second, or 44.1 kilohertz. A typical five-minute song, therefore, requires 50 MB. Also, typically 5 MB is about the maximum practicable amount of data that can be downloaded over a 56 KB per second modem.

MP3 technology mostly overcomes this problem by virtue of the compression achieved. The human frequency range of hearing is from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. The compression algorithm divides this range into 30 bands and eliminates the definition of those bands with a volume level lower in dynamic range than the brain's detection level. Sixteen bit encoding provides a dynamic range up to 90 dB. This equates to 6 dB per bit or voltages ranging from one milli-volt to one volt. Other types of compression have been developed and are also known by their acronyms, such as WMA, AAC and AZT3. However, MP3 has now permeated the marketplace. With a 128 KB per second bit rate, MP3 is found to have a most acceptable audio quality. A full orchestral recording is by far the most musically complex collection of sounds and, even so, a compression ratio of 7 to 8 is readily achievable.

A standard MP3 player with 64 MB of memory can play back over one hour's worth of high quality music. Memory itself has

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

(Minutes…….Continued from page 4)

taken on a number of highly compact forms such as flash memory, the Sony stick, or the smart media chip. With any of these memory forms the MP3 players tend to be extremely light and, therefore, very portable.

Marty then conducted a live test for our captive audience, who were asked to distinguish between uncompressed audio, as from a CD, and the MP3 recordings. MP3 recordings were demonstrated at a number of recorded bit rates, and we were asked to determine from the audio quality rendered if they were compressed or not. These tests were conducted using a Ricky Lee Jones song that contained a significant level of musical complexity. This demonstration was conducted using the Win Amp MP3 player software. The test was repeated for a number of variable bit sampling rates that automatically varied according to the musical complexity. Bit rates of 80 to 200 kilohertz were witnessed. The streaming Internet "Real Audio" uses a 32-kilohertz bit rate, by way of comparison. At the lower bit rates a loss of sharpness or muddiness of sounds was detectable when compared to the audio CD rendition of the same song. The use of a variable bit rate further improves the compression ratio by 2:1 compared to the fixed bit rate sampling rates.

The presentation now proceeded into a less technical realm of MP3 recorded music. "Music Match Juke Box" was touted as the equivalent of a 300 CD disc changer! The software not only catalogs and allows the user to pre-select a large number of songs to be downloaded to a MP3 player but also stores information for readout on the player display, such as the song title and artist and any other information so desired.

(Minutes…….Continued on page 6)

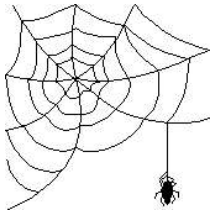
Internet picture of the month



Alba, the fluorescent bunny

This photo of Alba is from the site http://www.ekac.org/gfpbunny.html. "She was created with EGFP, an enhanced version (i.e., a synthetic mutation) of the original wild-type green fluorescent gene found in the jellyfish Aequorea Victoria." The site has all the details, both scientific and philosophical.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
First Monday – articles about the Internet	http://www.firstmonday.dk/
Florida Online Traffic School	http://www.floridaonlinetrafficschool.com/
GFP Bunny	http://www.ekac.org/gfpbunny.html
Help Drivers – for your computer hardware	http://www.helpdrivers.com/
Octavo Digital Rare Books	http://www.octavo.com/
OPE Campus Security Statistics	http://www.ope.ed.gov/security/
SparkNotes.com!	http://www.sparknotes.com/
The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook	http://www.mp3handbook.com/
MVPS.ORG – Microsoft Valuable Professional	http://www.mvps.org/
Tourstates.com – tourist information for any state	http://www.tourstates.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Drive Image 4

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@acomp.usf.edu

When I receive a copy of a new computer program, I read the manual through three times. It took several years for me to recognize the importance of doing that. Drive Image 4 tells you to disable your anti-virus program and close any programs you may have running before you attempt to use Drive Image 4.

With this program you may

1. Set scheduled backups.
2. Drive Image will create image files on floppies, hard disks, CDR drives, and other removable drives.
3. Interestingly enough, you may image more than one hard drive at once, if you have several hard disks in your computer.
4. You may save an image to a hidden partition.
5. In advanced options, you may split an image file to cover more than one removable drive, such as floppy disks.
6. You may make an image copy of one or all the partitions on your disk. This means you may have an exact copy of your partition or partitions transferred to a CD - R or a CD-RW drive. Now if you need to replace a file or two, you may do so from the CD ROM or another partition on your hard disk.
7. Datakeeper 4.1 is included with the Drive Image 4 program. It continuously monitors your system for changes. You specify which files or folders to monitor and then selectively they can be restored.
8. Drive Image 4 will create images on hidden FAT, FAT32, and NTFS partitions. You can check the integrity of the Image files. It works with Windows ME.

PowerQuest Corporation P.O. Box 1911 Orem, Utah 84059-1911. Phone 801-226-8941. http://www.powerquest.com.

When I buy a new computer, I add a second hard drive right away. I also split up my main disk into partitions. Splitting your main disk allows you to set up your programs so that your spreadsheets, letters and databases are all "saved" to one partition. This allows for easy backups, not for the main programs but just for your work. Other people prefer to have one large C drive.

After I set up the new computer and load all my programs, I image copy to the second hard drive. This means that if I make a mistake or if a file is corrupted, I can simply switch over to the second hard drive and go right on with my work. Then, at my leisure, I can image copy from my stored hard disk back to my original disk and be right back where we were when we set up the new computer: with my regular work on my original disk, and with the image backup copy to go to any time trouble develops. This is neat for another reason.

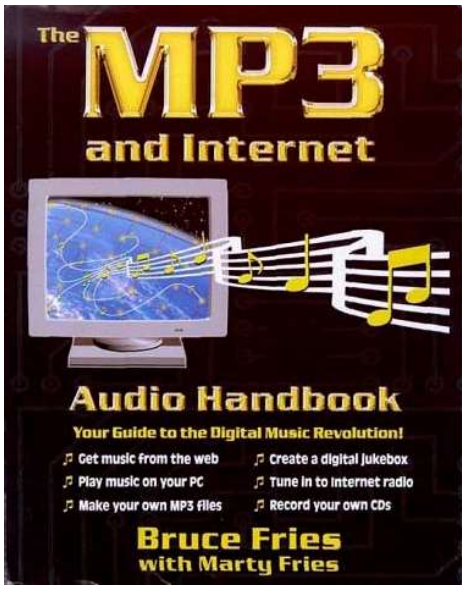
Sometimes, we use a lot of programs and erase them, we think. However, Windows keeps some of the snippets and so the whole computer slows down after a time. Formatting the c:\ drive and image copying it back will close out all those snippets, and I believe my computer runs faster.

I have used PartitionMagic for a long time and Drive Image since Version 1. I am impressed with the people at PowerQuest because the programs work as advertised, and they are not user unfriendly as some programs are. Using DriveImage you can restore your hard disk programs if you accidentally erase some or all. Using Lost and Found, another PowerQuest program, I have gone into hard disks we thought were beyond further use and I have taken off programs and whole sections of data and then deep fixed the bad hard disk.

If you get the latest copy of PartitionMagic, and also DriveImage, you have the manuals that you need to easily understand how hard drives work, and how you can best use them. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 5)

A number of MP3 player models were presented and included the Genica, the Nomad and the JB Works. Prices range from $150 to $900. Excellent 64 MB MP3 players were obtainable by means of Internet sales for $250.



For further details on all of the above and for technical validation, the reader is directed to the web site, http://www.MP3handbook.com. Overall this session was one of the best and most enjoyable presentations ever made at our monthly TPCUG meetings. Thanks again to our presenter, Bruce Fries, who signed copies for us of his book, available for $20. Two copies were donated for our door prize that netted $46 for our general fund. ◆

Do you know what your invisible ink says?

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larryanders@msn.com

As usual, when our newsletter editor started asking for articles for this month's newsletter, I went blank. I usually do better under pressure so… I waited. While I was waiting… and waiting…I came across an article about invisible ink at work in the Wall Street Journal that caught my attention. I remember being the sly one when I was much younger using a mixture of white grapefruit and lemon juice to write secret messages to my friends, but this article was talking about a much more serious situation. So, after reading the article, which I will refer to from time to time (***The Wall Street Journal – Friday, October 20, 2000***), I decided to do a little more research on this matter.

Another name for today's high-tech invisible ink is "*Metadata*." It seems that software makers such as Microsoft created programs like Word (among others in the Office product line) that just happen to leave behind a lot of information that doesn't appear on your screen, such as the author's name and/or initials, company name, computer name, the name of the network server or hard drive where the file was saved, non-visible portions of embedded OLE objects, other file properties and information, the name of each subsequent person who has worked on the file and sometimes, if the correct options are not selected, deleted text and various other revisions and versions. And, you know the old saying, "out of sight – out of mind." Well, maybe you should mind this!

Microsoft says Metadata is used for a variety of purposes to enhance the editing, viewing, filing, and retrieval of Office documents. But, this just may be something you don't want to share. Because Metadata is created in a variety of ways within Word documents, there is currently no single method that you can use to eliminate all such content from your documents. Microsoft says it hasn't had many complaints about this problem in the past but… in late spring of next year, when the next version of Office is due to hit the shelves, there will be a "privacy option" that will allow a Word document author to "remove all personal information with the click of one button and also be warned if you're saving tracked changes and comments." (…and they haven't had many complaints.)

Some Metadata is readily accessible through the Microsoft Word user interface; other Metadata is only accessible through extraordinary means, such as opening a document in a low-level binary file editor. But sometimes even a simple text editor like Notepad can be very revealing. Personally, I can't wait till someone sends me an email with a Word document attached. I'm nosy by nature!



The Wall Street Journal article talked about someone on the Democratic campaign trail continually receiving slamming emails with Word documents attached and signed by someone that evidentially didn't exist. After three months of this finally some techy aide decided to do a little mouse-clicking investigating and uncovered hidden text that seemed to link the email to the campaign of the Republican incumbent. Fancy that! High-tech politics as usual? (And I'm not hitting on the Republicans. The roles could have just as easily been reversed.)

So, what can you do in the meantime, before Office 10 hits the stores, to make sure your invisible ink stays invisible? First of all, check your setting under Tools | Options and see what you allowed to go out in your last Word document. Then go to Microsoft's web site and search for the word *Metadata*. You should find article Q223790 in Microsoft's Product Support Services database entitled "How to Minimize Metadata in Microsoft Word Documents." I won't try to go into the fixes here. The document is quite lengthy so I'll leave that part to you. Also, notice that this problem isn't new to the latest version of Office. This document was published back in the Word 97 days.

There is also something else you can do. The kind people at Payne Consulting Group, after discovering some hidden text in some of their legal documents, devised security procedures for removing hidden text from its files. They developed a program called Metadata Assistant to purge any unseen or unwanted information from documents. The program can be downloaded free of charge at http://www.payneconsulting.com/MetaDataAssistant/. It's free because they can't guarantee that everything will be stripped out. But hey, it's a lot better than the alternatives… and it's free!

Oh, by the way, the Democrat lost the election anyway, but the investigation into the email continues. He just may win after all. Don't forget to vote November 7th so we can get rid of these ads on television! ◆

Easy CD Creator Version 4.0

By Tom Goff, Tampa PC Users Group
tgoff1@tampabay.rr.com

How would you like one CD software package that could reliably duplicate both audio and data CDs or rearrange and record to CD the content from a number of sources including MP3? Any analog audio source like tapes and albums can be "cleaned up" and equalized. Your CD RW can be used as an additional drive letter using the DirectCD part of the package. Also included is a simple backup program that I've used but not needed to restore from. And last is a very complex audio and video editing program that works with WAV and MPEG files respectively or other files you can manage to convert to these formats. The package also comes with a really helpful 120 page instruction book and four bonus programs. List cost $100 (what I paid); street cost $69, and occasionally $59 with a rebate at CompUSA. This software package meshes nicely with the subject of our last meeting on MP3 files and other forms of audio.

First a little history. Back in 1998 I became acquainted with Adaptec by buying a 2940 host adapter and a Ricoh 6200s 2x2x6 CD writer. Adaptec's Easy Creator 3.0 was bundled. It only copied CD's in total or let you rearrange the cuts to make a custom CD. CD-R's were very difficult to find and RW disks were 3 for $25 dollars. No analog audio could be transferred unless you bought their Deluxe Version with Spin Doctor. All these programs survive in the new 4.0 version. All of my comments pertain to version 4.0 purchased software only. I don't know what's being bundled with CD writers at present. They do support patches for bundled software.

The opening sections of CD Copier and CD Creator closely resemble the 3.5 versions. One advantage offered by Adaptec is the vast database they maintain on CD-Rs and CD-RWs that will work with the program, not to mention CD-ROM players from which you might or might not be able to copy data. Many are actually tested. My favorite is the category of CD R/RWs that will **never** ever work with their software. Newer equipment will most likely meet their specs. If you're buying, check their web site: http://www.adaptec.com. Just because your CD-ROM player plays music through your speakers is no guarantee it will transfer to your recorder. However, the first thing the copy program does is run tests on your equipment. Back in the dark ages I had to buy a new SCSI CD-ROM player. I flunked. I still prefer SCSI for this task, the Plexor 12X unit mentioned in the MP3 group meeting would be fine.

Again, always check their web site before you buy or need firmware updates for older equipment. Creator 4.0 required a firmware way beyond my CD writer's 2.03 and directed me to a site that got me up to 2.40. I like that kind of support. I was having periodic problems with the 80 minute CD-Rs if the master were nearly full. This upgrade solved it. They also give unbelievable support to Adaptec's own equipment at this web site. Periodic patches accommodate new equipment and software released. Another interesting note: MS ME requires a special patch for Easy CD Creator 4.0 to work with my CD writer, but there is a bold note saying "You don't want to load this driver!" They have sense humor! I wish Office Depot had had a similar message warning me not to load the Windows Me that I purchased from them in the first place.

Also included in the package but not used by the author is "Video CD Creator" which is new to ver. 4.0. I didn't own any video equipment at the time but have just bought an Intel USB camera, so I'll be trying it. Creator 4.0 does not say exactly how much video will fit on a CD, but for tracks the data rate is 1,151,929 bits per second with some overhead and maximum track length restrictions. Again, not tried.

My only real criticism of the program is superficial— the graphics are young and hip and are just plain juvenile, which doesn't fit their market, as I see it. They have an excellent newsletter explaining many of the inner workings in the CD business.

Finally, a warning: order over the Internet at your own risk, Digital River handles Adaptec's shipping, and I was literally 3 months getting a 2 meter SCSI cable instead of the 1 meter one they sent. This was with high level help. It reminded me of the Capital One Credit Card TV ad running now, where you're dropped into a basement after you order! ◆

(EBooks……..Continued from page 3)
All of which is a digression. What could be more powerful and more interesting than the Napster vs. Music Industry struggle? Just this: A more important industry than the crooners and rock 'n rollers, even if the absolute dollar-numbers aren't as large. I speak of course of the mother of all information tsunamis, the publishing industry itself.

Consider. Each year anywhere from 40,000 to 50,000 books are published in an industry that generates about $20 billion per year, while the music racket generates approximately double that, weighing in at about $40 billion per year. But when you talk about book publishing, you're not talking about screaming adolescents who occasionally smash up defenseless hotel rooms. You're talking about the successors to Johannes Gutenberg, the foundation upon which civilization itself rests. (I

(Ebooks……..Continued on page 9)

(EBookss……..Continued from page 8)
mean, how do you train architects and astronauts and doctors and lawyers and physicists and scientists and teachers and entrepreneurs and all manner of other Indian chiefs without...books? Compare and contrast those societies today which have plentiful books with those, rare though they may be, that don't.)

So what's going on? Just this: The battle over music file-sharing isn't just a fight over who's going to be able to control and distribute the artistic creations of musicians. It's the opening salvo in a struggle over the "unauthorized" sharing of **all** kinds of information files over the Internet. Including music, books, magazines, graphics and pictures of all types of artwork (including photography, painting, sculpture, poetry, you-name-it), and all other possible forms of "information." After all, this is what the Internet ultimately excels in more than anything else does: The quick, universal, virtually costless distribution of information.

Thus, the desperate attempts by some in the music industry to maintain a monopoly in distribution are mirrored in the publishing industry...but with a twist.

In the publishing industry there's no easy way to get best-selling books into digital, and thus downloadable/tradable, format. I mean, it's not like a music file where you play it one time with a ripper running, and then it's on your hard drive for sharing forevermore. To get a book into digital format on your hard drive, you'd either have to digitize it by scanning or otherwise copying it, or you'd have to do it the old-fashioned way, by bribing someone at the publishing house to give you a copy of the book on a disk, which hasn't seemed to happen...yet.

Nevertheless, the writing is on the digital wall: The days of the tree-killing, codex book are numbered, and those numbers are small. Does it make any sense to keep chopping down trees to fuel the cumbersome process of creating paper, then printing on the paper with ink, then putting all the pages together and then binding and gluing them with cardboard covers in the form of a book? Let's face it, whether hardback or paperback, books are heavy, expensive, and cumbersome. In a word, "wasteful" (with apologies to all you bibliophiles out there).

What's the alternative? Why, the "ebook" of course! Everyone's heard about them, few have seen one so far, and almost no one has purchased one. Why? A number of reasons: The first widely available electronic book, the "Rocket Ebook," was guilty of poor execution and high pricing. It had a dull monochrome screen and was priced at several hundred dollars (for the early-adopters). Now the Rocket Ebook has been discontinued when two ebook manufacturers, SoftBook Press (maker of the Softbook Reader) and NuvoMedia (maker of the Rocket eBook), were purchased by a company named Gemstar. As a result, both the Softbook Reader and the Rocket eBook were discontinued, to be replaced by two new offerings by Gemstar, manufactured by Thomson Multimedia and sold in the U.S. under the RCA brand.

The new ebooks, the REB1100 and REB1200, are currently priced $300 and $700 respectively. The 1100 has a monochrome screen and weighs 18 ounces with batteries that last 20 to 40 hours between recharges, while the 1200 is larger, weighing 33 ounces, with a color screen and batteries that last from 5 to 10 hours.

While the pricing is a problem for many of us, that's not the real show-stopper. The problem is that Gemstar is trying the same old trick seen repeatedly in the computer industry: It is attempting to lock REB 1100 and 1200 purchasers into a proprietary, closed merchandising system whereby content can only be purchased through Gemstar or Gemstar-approved content providers. That is, you may generally only purchase your reading matter from RCA or approved publishing houses working with them...and guess what that does to the pricing structure?

Some of the big publishing houses, in their desperate scramble to co-opt the nascent electronic publishing industry, have seen to it that an electronic text downloaded to an ebook reader generally costs either the same or—get this—even MORE than a hardback edition of the same book you can buy in a store. Incredible? The publishers have all **kinds** of arguments as to why ebook texts—with no paper, no ink, no weight, no distribution costs, etc.—should cost the same as tons of books printed the old way.

When it became clear that Gemstar was going to try to pull the closed-system switcheroo on its ebook purchasers, observers immediately raised objections. Ebook crusader and columnist Kelly Ford, upon learning of Gemstar's plans, wrote, "I love eBooks. I love the Rocket eBook. I'm anxious to buy the RCA eBook. But, even I am not willing to spend $300 (or $700 for the REB1200) for a device that locks me into buying content from a single company. This is a recipe for disaster. From the consumer's perspective, it reeks of corporate arrogance and will ensure that their collective wallet remains shut." Amen to that.

So electronic book publishing isn't going to happen any minute now, at least not in a huge way. Let's give it, oh, say two years before open standards are put into place and the entire paper-based publishing industry starts to crumble and reconstitute itself. The ebook industry awaits a light, low-cost, reasonably-priced device with a high-resolution color screen and reasonable battery life. Not to mention the easy availability of books from many origins, priced in a way that reflects the reality of the savings to the publisher (which may in time become the author personally, thus cutting out the middleman publishers and their current distribution monopoly entirely).

Fortunately, the RCA e-readers are only the tip of an emerging iceberg of electronic reading devices. Sony and other Japanese

(Ebooks……..Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM.
For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Tampa, FL 33622-1081 merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

(EBooks……..Continued from page 9)
companies are said to be looking at producing low-cost e-readers (can you say "Playstation II"?). Xerox is said to be looking at the possibility of producing one. A company named Everybook, Inc. has developed expertise in both ebook software and producing an electronic reader that was to have been called the "Everybook Reader." Shaped and read like a regular book, it was to have had a very high resolution color screen and open-standards software so that content could be obtained from myriad locations. Now Everybook, Inc. has spun off its hardware division, resulting in a new company named N-Vision Technologies (http://www.nvisiontek.com/) which will manufacture and sell the codex-type e-reader.

The N-Vision e-reader looks so good, in fact, that I wrote them a few weeks ago asking when their product would be available. This is what I got back: **"***Thank you for your interest in our product. We are currently trying to raise capital to bring this product to market. Once funded, we are about 10 months away from production. We are about 3 months away from having alpha units to demo to the world, and 5-6 months away from Beta/test units. We appreciate your support of this product..... it's been a tough road, but our team is dedicated to bringing this product to market. I will try to keep you posted on our progress. Cheryl, EVP Operations and Sales, N-Vision Technologies, Inc.*"

Oh boy. Personally, I can't wait. I think the age of the paper book is about to come to a quick end. Electronic e-book readers will be better, lighter, cheaper, more convenient, more versatile, and perhaps most of all, more fun to read (the advent of devices that can talk to you and play music while you're reading; allow marginal notes, underlining and other marking; automatically bookmark pages; etc. is almost upon us). It'll save a lot of trees, too.

What do the rest of you think? ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Well, I have no room this month for anything other than to thank Ed Snow and Emelie Jurado for many years of help in assembling our newsletter each month. Both have recently decide to retire from that endeavor. And to remind you to use the Amazon.Com link on our web site's main page if you plan on ordering anything from Amazon. We get 5% at no extra cost to you. The usage has slipped the past six months. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
BAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

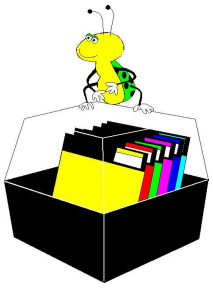
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



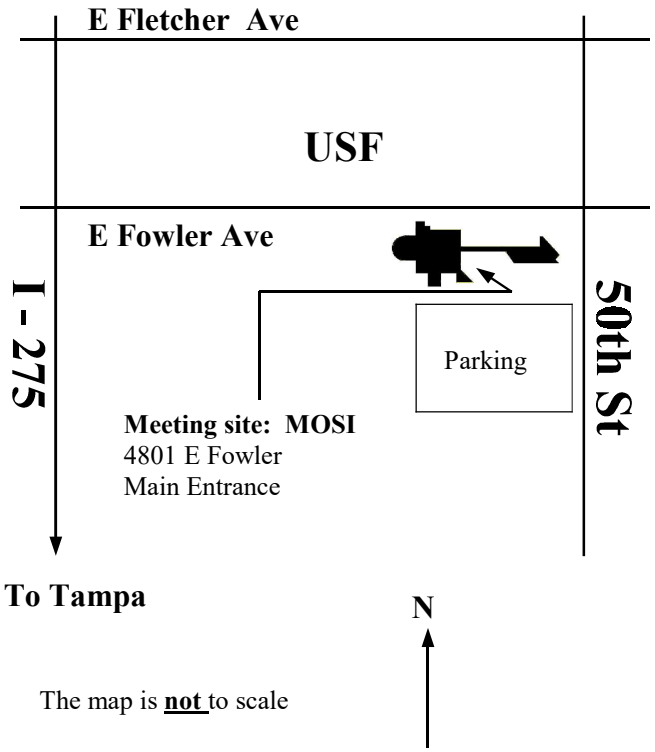
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TAMPA, FL
PERMIT NO. 1917

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(President…….Continued from page 1)
motor home that was decorated with colorful signs and banners. I spend the entire day taking notes, so I'll have to write them up to find out what happened. I'll write an article about the event for the next newsletter.

The list of candidates presented at the last meeting are: Mary Sheridan – President, Mike Hodges – Vice-President, Jenny Olin – Treasurer, James Weber – Secretary, and Kevan Sheridan – Member-at-Large. Anyone can be added and presented at the November meeting, so please let an officer know if you're interested in seeking office. At the November meeting, we'll announce the complete roster.

On a very sad note, another one of our members has passed away. Don Sebrell died at home from the cancer that had plagued him for so long. He was also dealing with a ruptured disk that was so painful that he hadn't been able to attend our meetings. I talked to Don often and will miss him very much. ◆



(Phone…….Continued from page 3)
My new cell phone number is 813-767-3745 and my email address at Verizon is mcpease@VZW.com. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 13 No. 12 December 2000

Meeting

Christmas Party

December 13, 2000
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: A Christmas party and election of officers are the only items on the December agenda .

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

As another Christmas approaches. I feel privileged to be writing this column. I've so enjoyed being your president. I look forward to a successful 2001. The election will be held at our Christmas Party/December meeting, but since we only have one person running for each office, I'm hoping the voting goes smoother than the national election went. I welcome any suggestions that will make the club better. I also encourage everyone to attend the meeting and let your vote count.

I will be starting classes on November 30th. It's important for the group that things continue to run smoothly. I will be asking for help as my available time reaches the breaking point. Don't hesitate to tell me no if you feel unable to help and please don't commit to anything you're unable to accomplish.

Recently I went to William LaMartin's house to help with the newsletter. Later on his way to the post office, William was involved in a car accident. Luckily he wasn't injured. I was amazed to find out that a couple of hours later he had driven to the post office to mail the newsletters. That's certainly above and beyond, and I want to thank him for his continued excellence and dedication.

We sometimes fail to acknowledge what we appreciate and just assume that others know how we feel. I am so thankful that Merle Nicholson is doing so

(President.....Continued on page 12)

January 10: Mary Charboneau of Verizon DSL

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apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the November Meeting

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Our secretary was absent and the member who volunteered to take notes took them, but unfortunately the notes have not made their way to the newsletter, so I will relate what I recall.

As best I can remember, we had our usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting. We then were presented with the slate of officers to be voted on at the December meeting. An opportunity was given to add names to the slate, but none was added.

Since Gateway backed out of their scheduled presentation earlier in the week, Ford Bond, a local photographer and computer person, agreed to fill in. And fill in he did, giving us a very good presentation on digital photography.

He brought with him two of his cameras, both Nikon digital cameras. One was a high end consumer model (a little over $1,000) and the other was a professional model. If I remember correctly, he described this professional model as being on the low end of such cameras, costing slightly less than $5,000 for the back alone, although it did have the advantage of using all of the regular Nikon SLR lenses.

He provided a run down on the advantages and disadvantages of both cameras—the only disadvantage of the more expensive model being its price. Along with this, we learned a bit about digital photography in general. For example, you can do more with an underexposed photo than with an overexposed one.

To display the quality of results that can be achieved with a professional digital camera, he passed around a number of prints made from his digital images. At this point he described the various printers he used to produce the photos which he had printed himself.

The next topic was a discussion of how he modifies digital photos by opening the digital file in Adobe PhotoShop, where he can “fine tune” the photos.

Finally, he took us to his web site where he has, among other things, examples of his panoramic photography. Actually we only visited a duplicate of his web site that was on his laptop. However, you can visit the real site at http://www.computer-doc.net.

As an amateur photographer, I found the presentation very valuable. ◆

The Canon G-1 Digital Camera

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
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Ever since I became interested in Adobe PhotoShop, I have had an increasing itch between the eyes for a high quality Digital Still Camera. I have been able to repress that urge because I have a Digital Video Camera that does an excellent job at TV resolution (640/480). Recently a close friend began seriously considering the purchase of a Digital Camera, with the excuse that he had to replace his Nikon film camera lost in a recent move, so he could take pictures of his granddaughter. So in keeping with current mindset that every dumb thing we do is someone else's fault, it is his fault that I purchased this object. My law firm, Dewy Cheatham and Howe, says I should sue.

This is not a camera that should be considered by everyone. If you have been pleased with the results of your Instamatic, read no further. The G-1 is Canon's latest 3.3 Mega Pixel Camera under $1,000, yes a whole $1.00 under.

Now for some of the justifications and excuses for the purchase:

I WANT IT, not withstanding that I know next year an equivalent object will be cheaper and maybe even better. I may have a heart attack and die without one, so what the H---. My friend bought one, keeping up with the Joneses. Look at all the money I will save on film; after all I took two rolls last year. Holiday photo opportunities are coming, so buy now or wait until next year to buy.

Now for some real reasons for a Digital Camera:

I can snap away without consideration of the cost of each picture. The main difference between snap-shooters and professional photographers is the number of pictures they take. It is easier to throw away all the bad ones, as they did not cost anything. With a program such as PhotoShop, I can do everything that formerly required an expensive dark room and all of those costly and smelly chemicals. If I make a mistake it is only my time that is lost. What you can do is limited only by your creative ability. I can save the good ones to CD ROM and preserve them for future generations. I currently have thousands of pictures that have suffered greatly from deterioration with time. No more box upon box of pictures and slides. I can easily share those special moments with family and friends via the Web. With high quality Digital Pictures I can make high quality enlargements of those occasional outstanding shots. This is the main reason for having an expensive SLR instead of an Instamatic.

Now my reasons for purchasing the Canon G-1:

It was the first camera I have seen that meets most of my desires for features. Its 3.3 Mega Pixels produces an image that is photo quality at 8" by 10". It will accept both standard compact Flash Card and the IBM 340 MB postage stamp size hard drive. Each image in highest quality uncompressed is over 2 MB. It has a 3 to 1 zoom ratio, wish it were greater. In addition to the standard Point & Shoot Mode it has all of the creative Modes one could wish for, including Shutter Speed and Aperture Priority, settable exposure compensation, 3 shot programmable bracketing and much more. In spite of the plethora of features it is quite user friendly with a little practice and careful reading of the manual. It has both an optical and LCD View Finder. I especially like the fact that the LCD normally rests screen side against the camera to protect it and folds out and rotates for creative low and high shots. I am getting too old to flop down on the floor to get kids or animals at their eye level. I still gag at most of the baby, look down, shots. The LCD View Finder also rotates 180 degrees and, with the wireless remote control, allows the photographer to compose and take the family photo and be included in it. I was impressed by the almost unanimous rave reviews, and so far the camera lives up to those accolades.

Naturally there are a few things I wish it had:

A larger zoom ratio, with a little more on the wide end would be nice, as would image stabilization. A faster lens for better low light performance without flash. But then would I want to tote around all that extra glass. One of my Nikon Zoom lenses weighs several times the whole G-1 and is several times larger. Zebra Stripe, which puts stripes in the LCD viewfinder areas that are over exposed. This is a cool feature of my Camcorder, as correct exposure using the LCD View Finder is almost impossible. The G-1 however includes programmable exposure compensation for bright or dark backgrounds and a 3 shot bracket mode. Remember the 2 extra shots cost nothing. The battery pack is a proprietary Li-Ion, so if the battery is dead you must wait for it to recharge instead of slipping in some Al-K-Line batteries, to catch the kid's first poop in the potty.

If you are in the market for a camera of this class, the Canon G-1 is a MUST CONSIDER.

I was fortunate to have missed Ford Bond's excellent demonstration of the Nikon professional Digital Camera at the last meeting. As a long time lover of Nikon cameras, I am afraid that the drool on my chin would have been mistaken for senility. ◆

Another Digital Camera: AOL DIGICAM

By Clark Evans, Tampa PC Users Group
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I have been wondering about digital cameras and how they work, and I have seen them in the price range of $200.00 up to $900.00. But I said to myself, you have two good regular cameras, a Canon EXEE SLR and a new Olympus Accura XB700 ZOOM. So I have been holding off getting a digital camera till the price comes down.

When AOL offered a digital camera for $59.95, I said here is a way to find out what digital cameras are all about without the wife getting mad at me. I ordered it, and it came in five days. I took some pictures around the house and at the ham radio station at the museum. On the front of the camera it says 320 x 240. What does this mean? If you make the pictures bigger than 2 inches by 3 inches, they start getting to look terrible. My son blew up a picture of him to an 8 by 10, and it was really bad looking.

My wife and I had a picture taken at EPCOT by a digital camera. It was a 5 by 8 that came out great. So the AOL DigiCam 320 x 240 is good if you want to send E-mail pictures and print pictures that are only 2 inches by 3 inches. If you want big pictures, you need to get the digital cameras that cost the big money. So you get what you pay for. ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Recording a RealAudio Stream I was sent a link to a RealAudio file the other day, and after playing it I decided I would like to have a "copy" of it. Well, when you play one of these streaming audio files, there is no copy of it left on your computer as there is for graphic images you view on the Internet. So what to do?

My first attempt was to start up the extend length sound recording I had written in Visual Basic, a download of which is available at http://lamartin.com. This differs from the Windows Sound Recorder in that the Windows Sound Recorder will only record for 60 seconds; my version will record for as long as you want. Unfortunately playing the RealAudio file on the Internet while running the sound recorder produced nothing. Next I tried a program I have called Acid Music from Sonic Music Foundry which not only allows you to record sound input to wave files, it also allows you to edit the files. Well, it also produced nothing.

Time to get inventive. I next connected the computer sound card's line-out plug to a cable running to the line-in plug of a tape recorder. I then started the tape machine recording and again played the RealAudio file on the internet. That produced a 7.5 minute audio tape that sounded as good as the broadcast.

To get the file back to my computer, I connected the cable from the line-out plug of the tape recorder to the line-in plug of the computer's sound card. Then I ran the Acid Music program and captured the tape output to a wave file on the computer. Since there had been approximately 20 seconds of dead air in the tape where the Internet transmission had to re-buffer (no data was lost, though), I used Acid Music to delete this dead air. The result was a 76 MB wave file that sounded just like the broadcast. Success!

But remembering our most recent meeting's presentation by Bruce Fries on MP3 files and how they were approximately one tenth the size of the equivalent wave file, I went on the Internet and got a freeware program called Simple MP3 from the ZDNet download center. I used it to convert this large wave file to a 2.6 MB MP3 file using a bit sampling rate or 96, which is listed as near CD quality. I then did the conversion again using a sampling rate of 64 (FM radio quality) and found this just as good as the broadcast quality with a file of only 1.7 MB.

The simple MP3 program is really two programs—a MP3 player and an encoder which will make MP3 files out of wave files and vice-versa.

If anyone has a better or alternate way of capturing RealAudio audio broadcasts, I would be interested in hearing about it.

Invalid procedure call or argument is a message you don't want to see--especially if it occurs when you run some code that is the main component in a presentation you are to give in a couple of hours. But that is the way it is with computers.

The day before, I had prepared a presentation for our Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) SIG on my desktop computer. The next day I polished the code a little and then transferred the folder containing all the presentation material to my laptop. It is always a good idea to try such things out on the laptop to see if everything is OK. Well, this time it wasn't, and it was only two hours until meeting time. The VBA code would hang at a certain point and freeze Microsoft Access. Later I modified the code slightly and managed to avoid the freezing and instead got the above error, which was really no better in getting the presentation done. So at the presentation we worked around the problem by talking about it, trying to change the code to correct the problem, and running other code to fill out the meeting. The next day I reinstalled Office 97 on the laptop, and Access ap-

(Comments.....Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

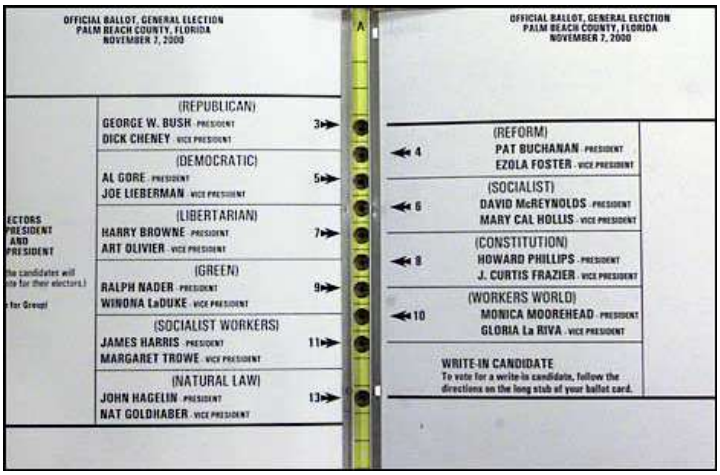
pears to be functioning properly there now. But for how long? How do these applications get corrupted?

VBA SIG What we do in this SIG is study code that allows us to automate processes in any of the Microsoft Office applications. What I wanted to display in the SIG was as follows. At any web site the server software keeps a record of everything that happens and stores it in a log file. There is specialized software that will download and analyze that log file, then present you with tables and graphs to help you see where the visitors to your site come from and what they are interested in--or not interested in. I own one such program called Virtual WebTrends, which cost around $80 as an Internet download. Its big brother WebTrends probably costs at least $400. It serves its purpose with nice tables and pretty graphs, but unfortunately it only displays the top 10 in each category--the top 10 visited pages at the site for instance. But I want to know what is going on with the other pages. So I really need to download the log file and analyze it myself.

The log file for the TPCUG site for September is around 4.5 MB. I have created a database to bring it into as a table containing the requisite fields and also the queries I need for the analysis--how many different user sessions each day, the number of visits to each page for the month, etc. There is only one problem. The log file contains what I would call page header lines all throughout the document. They need to be removed before I can import it into an Access table as a space delimited text file. To remove these unwanted lines throughout the document, I bring the document into Microsoft Word and run some VBA code I wrote that deletes these unwanted lines. I then have a space delimited file that can be imported into the data-

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

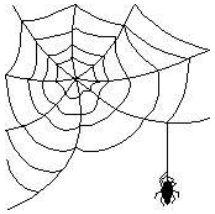
Internet picture of the month



The famous butterfly ballot

This photo of the disputed ballot in Palm Beach County, Florida that started the election controversy to which the lawyers are still adding is from the Washington Post's site http://washingtonpost.com. They have a special election site at http://washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/elections/postelection2000coverage.htm where there is a link to the ballot.

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
HealthSquare Women's Health and Prescription Drug	http://www.healthsquare.com/
Tallahassee Then and Now	http://www.nettally.com/draughon/index.html
Common Errors in English	http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/
FrontPage Magazine	http://frontpagemag.com/index.htm
Exodus - Irish emigration	http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/emigration/
Headhunter.net - Job Seeker Homepage	http://www.headhunter.net/
Image Exchange presents World Gallery	http://www.imageexchange.com/
Visual Basic World	http://www.vb-world.net/
123Jump - Stock Market News	http://www.123jump.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

TPCUG Supports Microsoft Event

By Mike Hodges, Vice President, Tampa PC Users Group
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On Saturday, November 4th, a live telecast from Microsoft's World Headquarters in Redmond, Washington was simultaneously screened at thirty locations, including the AMC Veterans 24 Movie Complex located on Anderson Road just north of Waters Avenue in the Town and Country area of Tampa. The occasion was the release of Microsoft's latest product, "Money 2001". This product is an updated release of Microsoft's personal finance management program that can help one track spending, make a personal budget, plan investment strategies and generally manage one's finances. Details on this product can be obtained at http://www.microsoft.com/money.

A number of Tampa Bay area PC user groups were invited to support the local screening and to promote their groups at each screening. Three local groups participated: the Clearwater based Tampa Bay PC users group, the Brandon based Greater Tampa PC users group and our own Tampa based TPCUG. The TPCUG was represented by Mary Sheridan and her daughter Michelle, Jenny Lind Olin, Bob LaFave, Bruce Register and myself. The local coordinator for Microsoft, working out of her Orlando office, was Mary Sue Cameron. Some 214 attendees were present to view the local screening. The majority came predominantly from Pinellas, but many had traveled from Manatee, Pasco, Polk and Hernando counties. We hope a number of new members will join our group from Hillsborough and surrounding counties.

Microsoft touted this as a "Microsoft Extreme Event" and had previously staged at least four other product releases in this manner, although never before in Tampa. The Clearwater PC users group had previously supported an event in Clearwater. I inspected the Microsoft web page devoted to the event on Friday November 2nd and saw that New York had over 900 people pre-registered for the New York screening. Most locations had one to five hundred pre-registered attendees. Each attendee received information concerning our group, a T-shirt and a CD providing a sixty day trial of the "Money 2001" program.

What was interesting to me was the technology involved to simultaneously telecast the promotion to 30 sites nationwide. The broadcast commenced locally at 1 PM, or 10 AM on the west coast. Is this the wave of the future? For two whole hours the local captive audience was mesmerized for a single commercial. I for one will want to do this again and I hate to watch regular network TV because of all those annoying commercial breaks, not that the PBS stations are much better with their sponsor promotions between programs. I for one have not jumped on the Time Warner bandwagon to get a cable modem as I find my $77 cable TV bill exorbitant already and do not wish to pay an extra $39 to receive RoadRunner Service. Yes, I have deluxe service with beautifully clear reception and the multimedia-streaming video-on-demand. At any time I can watch any one of a hundred just released movies, pause the transmission for a meal and resume watching exactly as if I was controlling a VCR. This article will reach our editor by means of my $21.95 AOL service, which it has recently bid to tie up with the Australian news group magnate owner of Time Warner, Rupert Murdoch.

What also struck me was that none of the Microsoft presenters appeared to be over 25. Everything was cool! Is this the wave of the future! The two hour tele-broadcast lost a little in resolution on the really big screen. To me the white noise was a little disconcerting. As my main function was to be the door greeter, I missed the introductions and started in twenty minutes after the start, but caught the full commercial impact of the "Extreme Event." I took a vacant seat on the front row of the upper tier next to the technician who was in control of the projector and the external feed. The theater I estimated could readily seat up to 300 attendees. The first up for me live from Redmond, who also had a local live audience, was an Austrian born Microsoft employee named Claudia Andrea or was it Andrea Claudia. Everything was cool and Andrea had a charming accent and a wonderful command of the English language and could really command her keyboard and mouse drags and clicks beautifully. In short order we witnessed "Encarta", "Encarta.com", a true reference resource, "Mid Town Madness II", a video driving game, and the video golf game, "Links 2001". Andrea then passed over the presentation to Microsoft's MSN Explorer product manager, Mike Nichols, who demonstrated many of the latest Explorer features, such as how to filter out SPAM, obtain free long distance voice phone calls, get MSN news for up to date election coverage and the good life in general.

Next up was Bill Nye who demonstrated Windows ME and how this product allowed one to snap save the entire operating system such that retrieval of a system status to a prior date and time of saving was readily possible. This is something I hope I will not need to do too often, but it is good to know that as a resort to sanity one can always go back in time. Since I had changed screen resolutions and switched between large and small fonts, I would have enjoyed this new operating system's save feature. Next up before the real finale came the Dutch born gamester, that is gamester, not gangster, John Degleman. John gets paid by Microsoft to play games all day and possibly all night! The products introduced included "About Games", "Sidewinder" and the really exciting features available utilizing "Voice Command and Control." With the "Game Voice" product, true gamesmanship can be enhanced by simultaneously chatting to your opponents as one plays over the Internet with a possible 64 simultaneous channels of communication. Finally some precious few remaining min-

(Microsoft……Continued on page 7)

FACUG Fall Conference 2000

By Mary Sheridan, President, TPCUG
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The fall meeting of the Florida Association of Computer Users was held at the Sunlight Community Church, 477 SW Cashmere Blvd, Port St. Lucie, FL on October 14, 2000. The Tri-County Computer User Group sponsored the meeting. As usual, it was informative, well planned and a great benefit to user group leaders.

Registration and check in for the event began at 8:30 AM. A continental breakfast was available until 10:30. Larry Tyler welcomed us at 9:00 AM, and then everyone went to the round table session of his or her choice.

During the morning sessions, the Board of Directors met and discussed the past and future business of the organization. Lunch was Italian and just wonderful. There was tray after tray of lasagna, ziti, spaghetti and meatballs, plenty of fresh salad and loads of garlic bread. After the meal, I realized how reasonable the conference fee had been.

A short general meeting was held at 1:00 PM. Larry Tyler introduced the Board of Directors: himself as President; Hilda Frederico, vice president; Betty Shearer, Treasurer; Mary Sheridan, Secretary; Web Austin, Newsletter Editor, Murray Tiano, Dave Gerber and Bill McCabe. Bart Koslow has moved to California and will have to be replaced as the ninth board member for the upcoming year. Larry introduced Sharon Rump of the Venice Area UG. Sharon will replace Bart as the Webmaster. Larry also mentioned the importance of keeping all user group data current at the web site.

A Logo Contest will be held, chaired by Murray Tiano. There are hopes that Corel will sponsor the contest. The FACUG will also institute a Community Service Award. Betty Shearer will chair the award committee. The details of both these projects will be available on the web site.

Rose Lynn of the Gold Coast Mac UG announced that the APCUG membership dues were being waived if the user groups joined the APCUG through Rose. For further information you can contact Rose Lynn at roselynn@mac.com.

The Spring Conference 2001 of the FACUG will be held at the Kissimmee Civic Center in Kissimmee Florida. Larry has commitments from eight vendors. A new feature this spring will be Technical Sessions sponsored by Gene Barlow, Microsoft and Adobe. Larry explained that the Spring Conference is a big undertaking. He asked for help so the next conference can be as successful as the last spring conference was. Some of the needs are: panel leaders, round table leaders, and many volunteers. A task list will be posted on the FACUG web site.

The Polk UG in Lakeland will host the Fall Conference 2001. Bob Read, the President of the Polk UG asked the attendance at the current conference. There were 62 attendees representing 18 User Groups.

Larry Tyler introduced Betty Shearer and Tom Chambery as the coordinators of the Fall Conference 2000. Betty then introduces Bob Leonard, CEO of **www.out2.com**, the conference guest speaker. Bob's company is Florida's online Community Newspaper. Bob advises businesses to provide local information as well as advertising. To learn more check out the web site. Bob concluded his talk at 2:05 PM.

The afternoon round tables were followed by a panel discussion in the Sanctuary of the church at 2:50 PM The panelists were Bob Read, Rose Lynn, Betty Shearer and Larry Tyler. The topic was Community Service and Your Group. Items discussed were What is Community Service, How Can My Group Get Involved and the APCUG Jerry Awards. ◆

(Microsoft…….Continued from page 6)
utes were devoted to "Money 2001" and the improved import and archival features available. For these features and others the Microsoft web site tells all and sells this essential product at http://www.microsoft.com/money. If all this information was not enough for those present, our local Microsoft coordinator then introduced each of the local user group presidents and awarded 14 door prizes, including copies of many Microsoft products and three additional T-shirts. For me this was a most worthwhile products demonstration, and I hope to attend future "Microsoft Extreme Events"….. ◆

(Comments……Continued from page 5)
base.

I note that it is quite humbling to see after the analysis of the log file that the Editor's Comments are usually quite far down the list of pages ordered by the number of visits.

If you are really interested in Microsoft Office, you should consider learning Visual Basic for Applications. ◆

Run, Run DLL...

By Michael Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group
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First, I will try to reconstruct the chronology of my problems with Win 98 SE shutdowns. This has proven to be a fairly persistent malady. I am hopeful that it has finally been corrected; however, there have been at least two such hopes already dashed on the rocks of computing reality.

This all started more or less out of the blue. I can't recall any installations or major crashes prior to the first time that an older machine just froze up after clicking on OK in the shutdown Dialog Box. The box would go away and the computer would thrash a little, all of the icons would leave the desktop and there we would sit just looking at the bare wallpaper. When you did a Ctrl-Alt-Del one culprit appeared in running programs/ files list box: RunDLL32. The only way out of this which I found effective was a touch of the Reset Button on the tower's case. After a reboot and the obligatory Scandisk tour ("because Windows was not properly shut down….."), the machine was typically good to go for 5-6 sessions before this occurred again. Since RunDLL32.exe kept turning up as the file that was not responding, I kept thinking that it was corrupted or had been switched for a newer or older version, etc. After predictable reading and webbing, I invoked the System File Checker. SFC said I had numerous files which had been changed or updated including more than one DLL; none of them were RunDLL32. Other trails of possible solutions which were run across on the Web included:

- disabling the assignment of IRQ/s for USB.
- go to C:\Windows\System\MSCONFIG.exe and select the Advanced button and then disable the quick power down option.
- disable power management .
- right-click on My Computer, open Device Manager, click on the plus sign next to System Devices,double-click PCI Bus, select the IRQ Steering tab and remove the check mark beside "Get IRQ Table from Real Mode PCI BIOS 2.1 Call" Then restart the PC and have your Win 98 installation CD handy.
- in CMOS BIOS enable IRQ for VGA

Well, either I was in compliance with these suggestions or my gut told me that I was heading down a dead end on each of the preceding. Basically, I was still looking at RunDll32 as my prime suspect. So thought I, if the file is corrupted just pull a fresh copy of it off of the Win 98 CD. So I hit the Windows Key, Find, entered the file name and hit Enter. Nada. After some more research, a lucky stumble revealed that the file resides in Cabinet 46. More specifically the path to the file is: Win98_se\Win98\Win98_46. Having ascertained the location of the file, I then tried to extract it per the information in Microsoft Knowledge Base articles and got some sort of error message which eludes my memory at the moment. But I soon found that once you dig down to the file itself in Windows Explorer and select it, you then have in the File menu drop down an option to Extract right there. This being done, the machine was restarted and work proceeded. Before going any further I will list some Microsoft KB article numbers/titles which surfaced during this overall process.To Wit:

- Q129605 How to Extract Original Compressed Windows Files
- Q180465 Error Message: The File was Not Found. Verify…..
- Q231793 Corrupted Setupx.dll After Installing Windows 98 Second Edition
- Q192926 How to Perform Clean Boot Troubleshooting for Win 98
- Q239887 Availability of Windows 98 Second Edition Shutdown Supplement

In truth, Microsoft does put out a lot of information about their product even if much of the info needs the three letter prefix "mis" attached. At this point I thought I had accomplished something and maybe this little fracus was over. This proved to be False Hope #1. After following the pattern that had been established in terms of number of normal work sessions, the machine again froze and named RunDll32 as No-Respondent. I then turned my attention to the last of the Knowledge Base articles listed above. Following the directions, I downloaded and installed the Shutdown Supplement as outlined in Q239887. It prompted me to do a restart so that the changes could take effect. OK, let it rip. The machine froze on the restart. False Hope #2. What followed was a lot of frenetic and extremely feral casting of allegations about the lineage of various industry personalities and a forced landing of the system for additional musing. However, at the next opportunity (translate: at the next juncture where I had time *and* had just done the manual Reset), I downloaded the supplement again, installed it again and was prepared for a prompt to Restart the computer. This was not forthcoming. So I then went in through the Start-Shut Down route and restarted the machine and so far so good. On the second or third shutdown after this last attempted fix I noticed a hesitation but after some more churning, it did go ahead and perform the ShutDown normally.

Bottom Line: What I "learned"was more or less corollary to the circumstances at hand, but if it holds up we'll take it.

Onward through the Fog. ◆

Free for the Holidays

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larryanders@msn.com

Well, it's that time of the year again when we've probably spent more than we should (or soon will have) on Christmas gifts, so I thought it was time for one of my "freebie" articles. One of the only computer magazines I still subscribe to is PCMagazine, published by Ziff Davis. It is still dedicated to the PC user and hasn't converted to some type of business magazine that deals primarily with e-commerce. PCMagazine is still about computing and it is published about every two weeks so it's very current with what's going on in the industry.

But, enough about PCMagazine, that's not what this article is about. When I got my most recent issue it reminded me that I hadn't been to http://www.pcmag.com lately, so off I went. I clicked a few links and wound up in the software section and **voilà!**, there was this list of a bunch of free downloads… and you know how I like free stuff!
http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/filters/downloads/

A little ways down the page there is a link to ***Ten cool -- free! -- tools for your system tray***. Here's what I found:

Tray Command Line - Tray Command Line is a free tool that gives you instant access to a small command-line window, just by clicking on its system tray icon. The utility keeps a history list of past commands, can be loaded automatically each time Windows starts, and can be hidden whenever a command is executed. You can assign program/edit aliases and easily insert file arguments into a command line. With the AutoComplete option turned on, Tray Command Line auto-guesses the commands you try to enter, plus you can specify a hotkey to execute the last program entered in the dialog window. Tray Command Line doesn't quite give you all the freedom of working at an MS-DOS prompt, but its benefits more than make up for its minor shortcomings.

FastOpen - FastOpen is a free, tray-based menu system that's incredibly easy to use and offers a great alternative to the Windows Start Menu. Use it to launch your favorite programs, documents, Web sites, and folders from its left-click menu. Arrange your menu entries in any order you wish and add separators to organize items into logical groups. You can even play a different sound when each item is launched.

Wallpaper Changer - Staring at the same desktop background everyday because it's too much of a bother to change it? Wallpaper Changer will add variety to your screen with virtually no fuss. This versatile tray-based freebie supports . bmp, .gif, and .jpg images from any combination of folders, random wallpaper selection, and automated changing of wallpaper on every startup, once a day, or at regular intervals -- even as often as once a minute. Have it tile, center, or resize background graphics to full-screen. Plus, you can build, save, and reload multiple sets of wallpaper images. Another nice feature: Wallpaper Changer can give the captions of your desktop icons a transparent background so that more of your wallpaper shows through. The program automatically analyzes wallpaper images and determines the best matching background and the most readable icon caption color.

Free Disk Space - Free Disk Space resides in your system tray and monitors the amount of free disk space on all of your hard drives. Double-click the icon to invoke an attractive dialog that graphically displays total and free space for each drive. You can also set an alarm that provides notification when free space falls below a certain level. Just set the available slider control to determine the alarm level. Other features include configurable display and refresh times, and historical data display. This utility is easy to use and best of all -- it's free!

TclockEx - TClockEx is an excellent utility that hooks into the system tray clock to let you see a lot more than just the current time. You can display the date and/or the time -- with seconds -- in variety of formats and in the order you wish. Customize the colors, font used, tooltip format, mouse actions, and more. Other neat features include memory/CPU usage monitoring, a pop-up calendar, and a copy-to-Clipboard option. Until Microsoft wises up and makes the tray clock in Windows this versatile, we're glad TClockEx is around -- and we're especially thankful that it's freeware.

Exits 95/98 - Exits 95/98 is a free system tray-based utility that gives you several ways to get out of Windows 95 or 98 quickly. Its options are accessed through its icon's right-click menu. You can elect to shut down, reboot, restart, exit to DOS, log off, activate your screen saver, standby, power-off, force exit, eject removable media, use hotkey, use three types of timed exits, and/or exit on single click. The selected method is displayed in the icon's tool tip. Exits 95/98 also supports several command-line switches. It's very small and doesn't require MFC, VB, or any other runtime library -- just the executable and a tiny included .dll file. A Windows NT version is also available here.

Push The Freakin' Button! - Pesky dialog boxes giving you trouble? Check out Push The Freakin' Button (PTFB)! This free tray-based utility waits for specified dialog boxes to pop up, then automatically presses the button you've configured. So when a dialog causes irritation, you simply tell PTFB which button should be pressed, and it will handle the dialog in the future. Although it doesn't work with all dialog box buttons (we had problems with apps written in Visual Basic and Delphi), PTFB should work with most programs programmed

(Free…….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM.
For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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(Free…….Continued from page 9)
in C++ (such as Windows and its applets) and America Online. It offers a clean, drag-and-drop interface for adding buttons to the "hit-list," with plenty of options provided. Buttons are pushed only once per appearance, so you don't have to worry about a pressing frenzy if the button doesn't dismiss the dialog for some reason. One thing's for sure: PTFB can make life in Windows a lot easier.

Yankee Clipper Plus - Yankee Clipper Plus saves and can even print the past text contents of your Windows Clipboard as you routinely replace it. It stays minimized as an icon in your system tray. A click brings a listing, starting with the most recent clip, of the first line of past Clipboard content. A double click returns any entry to the Clipboard for your repeat use. A second window shows the current contents of the Clipboard and can be scrolled for a complete review. The system can store multiple sets of text collections and retain Clipboard history between sessions. It's a convenient way to retrieve text clips that have been overwritten and can handle text clips too large for even the program to display. Unfortunately, it's not particularly intuitive in use (and the help isn't of much assistance), but it's free and certain to add flexibility to your Clipboard.

WinSpace Light - WinSpace Light lets you create numerous virtual desktops, which give you the effect of having several monitors working at once. (The program does support multiple "real" monitors under Windows 98, though.) This lets you have more applications open at once, with the windows on each program larger than you'd normally run them. You can easily switch between desktops (or "panes") using the system tray-based window manager. We really liked the Elephant Windows feature, which lets you make individual windows larger than your computer's monitor, which gives you unlimited space to display information in one window. Using the Free-Scroll function, you'll be able to scroll inside of one application just by moving the mouse to the edge of your screen. This Light version of WinSpace is free but has a handful of minor limitations. A Professional version with more features is available from the developer.

Hotkeys (Broeze) - Give your poor mouse a break with Hotkeys. This excellent -- and free -- system tray-based utility is similar to the Microsoft Intellitype software, in that it gives you fast and easy access to a lot of common Windows 95 elements through keyboard shortcuts. Hotkeys does this and a lot more. Use it to define hotkeys to launch applications such as Control Panel applets or frequently used programs; send keystrokes to other applications; exit Windows, log off Windows, or reboot your computer; and quickly access some of Hotkeys' internal functions such as its editor or list. Hotkeys also has multiple hotkey commands (useful for scripting actions) and virtual clipboards that allows you to use a virtually unlimited amount of clipboards. Hotkeys works with nearly every key on your keyboard, including that seldom-used Windows key. Delphi 3.0 source code is included.

Some of these could even make a good gift for your fellow computer user buddy who's not geekish enough to know you downloaded these programs for free. But hey! It's the thought that counts, right? Or, just get these utilities for yourself. You deserve a break for all the shopping you've done for everyone else.

(Free…….Continued on page 12)

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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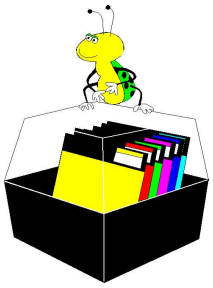
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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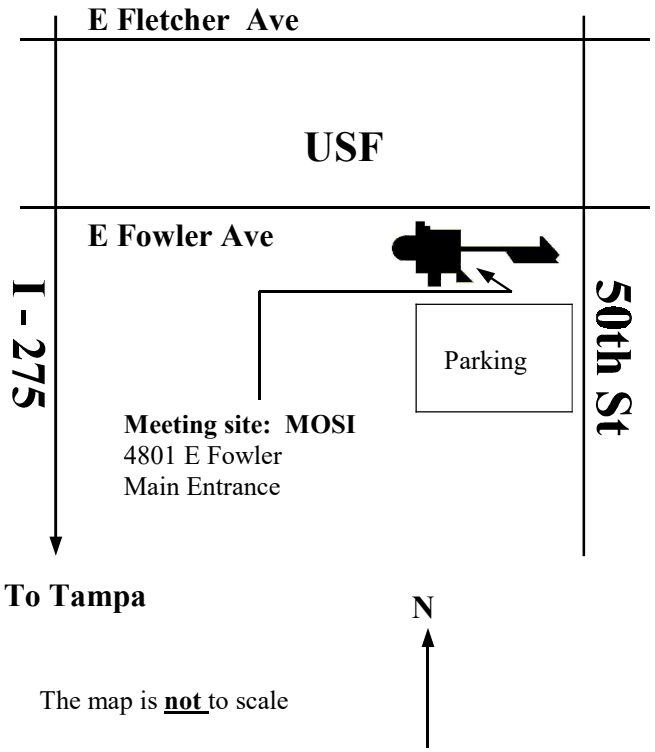
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(President……..Continued from page 1)
well and is able to continue to attend our meetings. He's been such an asset to our group and it's wonderful to know he's well and healthy again.

I'm leaning towards "mushy" here so I'll end the article. Happy Holidays to Everyone!! ◆

(Free……..Continued from page 10)
Have a GREAT HOLIDAY and don't forget the reason for the season! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 1 January 2001

Meeting

Mary Charboneau from Verizon DSL

January 10, 2001
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: Mary Charboneau of Verizon DSL will give us the details of our local phone company's Digital Subscriber Line service. As usual Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

At the close of the year 2000, having survived all of the "disasters", we can approach 2001 with a greater sense of security. I haven't heard any reports that the world will end in 2001, but I guess you never know.

My run for president was a tough battle, but having been re-elected, it was worth it. Wouldn't it be fun to have two people running for the same office?

I'm having a wonderful time as your president but I fully intend to find some capable person to replace me for 2002. I think the group needs fresh ideas and fresh faces. Anyone who has been toying with the idea of getting more involved, PLEASE, let me know.

Our Christmas party was a success. Due to the generosity of those attending, we had plenty of great food and thousands of calories for those of us trying to "bulk up" (giggle). I hope no one thinks the annual party is a waste of time. Everyone who attends acts like they are happy for the chance to just talk to each other and exchange ideas. If you'd rather we didn't have the party, I do care about the feelings of everyone in the group. Email me (mcpease@mindspring.com) and tell me what you think.

(President.....Continued on page 2)

February 14: To be announced — Check our web site later

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the December Meeting

By Jim Weber, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

This month we had our annual Christmas Party in lieu of a full meeting. The only business conducted was an election of officers. Since we all ran unopposed, election was unanimous. (No need for a recount.)

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all of you.

Jim Weber ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

My focus for the upcoming year will be to try to have more interesting topics at our meetings. I could use suggestions on the programs you use and what kinds of things you'd be interested in hearing about. I'm in a rut at home because today my computer is working fine. That makes me want to leave it alone and not add or subtract any programs. And we all know, that's no fun.

By the way, I finally upgraded to Windows Millennium. It's not much of a change. The "find" feature is now the "search" feature. Some change, huh? I was hoping for a faster boot, but I upgraded instead of doing a 'clean' install and it boots as slow as ever. I'm not unhappy with it; I just don't really see the point of the upgrade.

I hope everyone had a very nice holiday and I wish you all great prosperity in the New Year. ◆

For the month of December 2000, our site http://www/tpcug.org had:

- An average of 209 user sessions per day
- An average user session length of almost 17 minutes
- An average of 439 page views per day
- 5 PM EST the most active and 7 AM EST the least active

The HP ScanJet5370 Cse

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
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There is a new scanner in our house—thanks to my mother-in-law. Why might she be interested in my having a third scanner? Well, she just happens to have a lot of old, very large negatives floating around her house, and the HP 5370C series flatbed scanners come with a transparency adapter good for scanning in transparencies, photographic negatives or photographic slides up to 5" x 5" in size.

I have had an HP IIcx flatbed scanner for many years. And it has really been a workhorse for me. I think I have had it for at least seven years. It has been extremely reliable and does fast scans of standard pages of up to 14" in length. It does a good job on photographs, and, coupled with TextBridge Pro's OCR software, I have converted a lot of printed text to digital text. It has a 400 dpi optical resolution and does its scans quite fast with no warm up of the light.



HP ScanJet 5370 Cse Scanner with transparency adapter and large template

But the IIcx cannot scan negatives. That is why my son added an HP PhotoSmart photo scanner to my collection several years back. It will scan 35 mm negatives and slides at an optical resolution of 2400 ppi (pixels per inch), and the results are quite good. It also scans regular photographs up to 5" x 7" at an optical resolution of 300 ppi. I think here we can equate ppi with dpi. So it would be better to scan a photograph using the IIcx; however, if you have a negative for the photo available, the results of using the negative scanner instead of scanning the photo itself in either scanner is superior. So I always scan a negative instead of a photo when I can.

Unfortunately the HP PhotoSmart scanner will not scan negatives larger than 35 mm, and I have a lot of 6 cm x 7 cm and larger negatives. That is where the new scanner comes in. Using the transparency adapter displayed in the photo above, I can scan these negatives at 1200 dpi (I don't know why HP keeps going back and forth between dpi and ppi in their specifications). It would be nice to be able to scan them at 2400 dpi, but since they are so large, the 1200 dpi scan of one of them contains more information than would a 2400 dpi scan of a 35 mm negative of the same subject.

But what about a comparison of using the PhotoSmart photographic scanner versus the 5370C with transparency adapter for either 35 mm slides or negatives? I did the comparison, and the PhotoSmart scanner is superior. I assume for the simple reason that scanning at 2400 dpi will give sharper results than will scanning at 1200 dpi. The color balance also seemed better with the HP PhotoSmart scanner.

But for an all in one scanner, I think the HP 5370 Cse is a real good buy. You get 1200 dpi flatbed scanning for documents and photos with the addition of respectable—although not top notch—scanning of slides and negatives. I think, however, that the average individual will be quite content with the quality of the negative and slide scans that it produces.

The HP 5370 also provides for one button scanning by allowing you to scan by simply pressing one of four buttons on the front of the scanner. There is a button to scan directly to your email program, your printer, your fax program or to your scanning software. A warning, though: If you are installing the scanner on a Windows Me computer, you will need to go to the HP site and download a small patch to make the buttons work.

Personally, I prefer to scan from the HP ScanJet software. And if you are going to use the transparency adapter you will have to use the software. Additional features include the ability to scan a document to text, which means that the HP software contains an optical character recognition (OCR) module. If the document is of good quality, like a page printed by a laser printer, then I found the text was recognized fairly well but not as well as by my standalone OCR program TextBridge Pro. However, for a small amount of OCR work on good quality documents, the included option should be sufficient. I acquired the article from the 1989 Bits of Blue reproduced in this issue using Text capture of the 5370 scanner.

The scanner costs $300 at the local CompUSA store, and for an additional $200 list you can get an automatic document feeder. The scanner can be connected to the computer with either a parallel printer port connection or by a USB connection. I like the USB connection. Additionally with the USB connection it should be easy to move the scanner between different computers.

In addition to the HP PrecisionScan Pro software, you also get

- Corel Print Office 2000
- Boomerang Internet Design Shop Gold
- eFax Messenger Plus
- Caere PageKeeper Standard

(Scanner……Continued on page 5)

New Optical Mouse

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

Okay, I have to admit it: My main home computer sits in a Very Dirty Room. Sure, I've got a way-cool cable Internet connection. And I'm thinking of adding a home local area network so the rest of us can log on to the Internet with our laptops. But guess who shares the room, our sun room out back, with the computer? Buddy, our 5-year-old Corgi. And, what's worse, he's got his own doggie-door so he can go out, roll in the dirt, bark at the squirrels, roll in the dirt some more, and then come back in and roll around on the furniture to get rid of all that dirt. Not to mention shedding, shedding, shedding from his thick doggie fur coat.

All of which has no doubt got you wondering…what does all this have to do with computers, software, and the TPCUG Newsletter? Good question, and here's the answer. Think one word: Computer mouse. Then think two words: Little rolling ball. Then let's make a stretch and think **three** words: Try cleaning that thing!

Yes, this article, such as it is, is all about my new computer mouse. Specifically, my new computer mouse with "no moving parts." You know those little spinning rods and that little Teflon roller inside your mouse? The ones that get "coated" (heh) with dog hair, dust motes, little pieces of string, and JPD ("just plain dirt")? Well if you think **you** have periodic problems cleaning the things…think of what kind of problem I have, sharing that room with Buddy!

So…let's look for a solution. A trackball! **Not!** Why? Because the way those things work, using your **thumb** instead of your **wrist**, and then trying to twiddle your fingers this way and that while spinning that ball with your thumb…is just plain **perverse**, if not awfully confusing (it is to me, at least, but then it may be that I'm just not all that well coordinated).

So what to do. Over the last few years I've always wondered why they couldn't take that great trackball-optical-thingie-with-no-moving-parts technology, and apply it to a good old-fashioned, normal mouse, one that slides around on a mouse pad and works the way the almighty intended it to…only with no moving parts.

Well, **viola** (not "voila," we're in America now). What do my wondering, wandering eyes see during an entertainment outing last week at CompUSA? Why, none other than a Kensington Mouse-in-a-Box Optical Pro with no mouseball, and no moving parts to clean. Say Halleujah! Not only that, but the furry little sucker was only $20. Well, hell; I said to myself right then and there: "Self, for that amount I'll take a flyer and see if it really works as advertised."



It's a pretty little thing. Butttons all over. And no big ball rolling and grinding around on the bottom. Actually, it's true like they say, "no moving parts." Got a pretty red light coming out of the bottom, aka an optical laser. And to make it more stylish, the same pretty red laser light comes out of the back on top of the mouse too, so you can roll it around and see the red light moving around in the dark (at least that's what I figure they had in mind).

Now, the propaganda that comes with the mouse says that it "will glide easily over almost any surface." I tried that out on a table-top with no mouse pad. And it's true, it did "glide easily." However, the pointer on the computer screen didn't glide so easily around on the monitor. No problemo. Just stick with a mouse pad, and all is/was well.

And if you're in to cheap entertainment, you can spend some time gazing into the innards of the Optical Pro mouse, because the bottom of the thing is translucent plastic. As Kensington says in the instructions: "Take another look: you can see right into the mouse interior through the cool blue translucent bottom." Oooookay…if they say so. Fact is, it works perfectly, and I haven't had a speck of trouble from it in the, oh, two weeks I've been using it. Also, getting set up is nothing: The Kensington MouseWorks software that comes with the thing installs off of either a CD-ROM or a 3 ½ inch floppy (both are supplied) in a snap.

One other thing, however. While I do believe that optical mice are going to totally wipe out the old roller-ball things, I don't unreservedly recommend this particular mouse. Kensington is to be congratulated for being the firstest and cheapest with the mostest. However, there are other optical mice out there (go look, you'll see 'em); the problem is that they're more expensive, starting out at $30 or $35 or more, and heading north.

So why not just stick with Kensington? I probably will, but you need to know about a small irritation: The mouse has a thumb-button on the left side, and a button over on the right side that I guess you're supposed to stab at with your right ring-finger, along with the regular two mouse buttons on the top bracketing a scroll wheel. The problem is that button over on the right. I'm used to picking the mouse up and moving it because of limited desk space. You know, to get the cursor to go here or there on the screen. The problem on the Kensington is that I keep accidentally hitting those side buttons as I

(Mouse.....Continued on page 5)

(Mouse…….Continued from page 4)

grasp and pick the mouse up to move it. Irritation, yes. Disqualifying? Not at all. I'll keep it.

So for those of you who want to stop wrestling periodically with those little spinning rods and that big ball on the bottom of your mouses…it's time to Go Optical. Check out the Kensington Mouse-in-a-Box Optical Pro.

For only $20 you can't beat it with a stick. Why you'd **want** to hit it with a stick is beyond me. Heck, I can see beating the old **roller-ball** mouses with a stick, they get so gummed and messed up inside. But the Opti Pro? **Not!** Try it! You may like it! And if not…you can feed it to the cat.

http://www.kensington.com/ ◆

(Scanner…….Continued from page 3)

- Hemera Graphics Desk for HP

I installed none of these since I already have high level graphics and OCR software. ◆

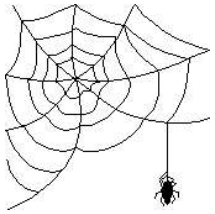
Internet picture of the month



Fifth Ave. & 45th Street, NYC 12/30/2000

This photo from the site http://www.mte.com/webcam/ is from a webcam looking north on Fifth Avenue from 45th Street in Manhattan. When this was taken, approximately 12 inches of snow had fallen. Webcams are a great way to view the current weather situation in different parts of the world.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Digital Cameras Digital Photography Review News	http://www.dpreview.com/
BedandBreakfast.com - Bed and Breakfasts and Inns	http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/
JetBlue – between Florida and the North East	http://www.jetblue.com/
NOAA Photo Library	http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/
HarpWeek.com - 19th Century Harper's Weekly	http://www.harpweek.com/default.htm
Journal E - Real Stories From Planet Earth	http://www.journale.com/
Motherboard Home World	http://www.motherboards.org/
PC Mechanic	http://www.pcmech.com/
Monticello - The Home of Thomas Jefferson	http://www.monticello.org/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Maxtor DiamondMax™ ATA/100 Hard Drive — As good as it gets

By Fredrick Rea O'Keefe
fredrick@tech-center.com

UP FRONT SUMMARY:

- Product – DiamondMax™ Plus 45 GB hard drive kit, Model #54610H6
- Manufacturer – Maxtor®
- Website: http://www.maxtor.com/Maxtorhome.htm
- Class – Hardware, part
- PC requirements – Available PCI slot, Ultra-DMA capable system, Pentium-class processor. MaxBlast™ Plus software comes on 1 diskette. If HD capacity is < 32 GB, requires a full installation of Windows 95 or higher; >32 GB requires full installation of Windows 98 or higher.
- Cable Requirements: An 80-Wire UDMA Interface Cable is required for all UDMA/100 & UDMA/66 hard drives. (Recommended for UDMA/33, too.) Cable comes with both the drive and the card.
- Used with Maxtor Ultra ATA/100 PCI Adapter Card for UDMA 100/66/33 devices.
- Street price – varies, if you can find it in stock. I paid $180 at Staples, $50 for the card.
- Rating (0-10) - 10

Recommendation – This makes a big difference in performance and the price is most reasonable – if you need a hard drive and your PC meets the requirements, a lesser drive would not be the thrifty choice..

KEY FEATURES:

- Fast ATA/Enhanced IDE compatible
- Digital Signal Processor (DSP)-Based Architecture
- Ultra ATA/100 Data Transfer Rate
- 2 MB SDRAM Cache Buffer
- 7200 RPM
- DualWave™ twin processors
- <8.7 ms average seek time
- Up to 100 MB/sec data flow rate

(To skip the verbiage, jump to the table at the end.)

All right, that kind of detail appeals to techies. It even appeals to me, when comparing products into which to sink my hard-earned dollars. 45 GB in a 3 ½", 1.3 lb. package. Remarkable how technology developed by hard drive manufacturers packs more, more reliably, into ever smaller packages. Happily, the marriage of Maxtor and Quantum has brought the fastest drives to market at a reasonable price. I am impressed with the performance.

Usually I review books and software, so why hardware? Despite partitioning my old hard drive, using Microsoft's DriveSpace 3 compression, I ran out of room. Believe me, you don't want to run short of hard drive space. When Windows doesn't have enough resources, including room for data, temp files and swap space, disaster awaits.

My ordeal began when Windows 98 Explorer got bollixed up. Windows refused to boot, and Windows wouldn't reinstall. DOS was useless, although I did manage to delete enough files to give me back enough room on the HD to supposedly be able to reinstall Win98. Nope. After several attempts to repair or re-load, the SR-1 upgrade CDs refused to try again. (Why did I donate my original Windows software?) None of my local suppliers had or could get the Maxtor ULTRA ATA/100 drives. Mail order vendors either never heard of them, or couldn't get them. Maxtor's regional rep couldn't help other than to suggest that the drives weren't released yet, but "try Tech Data". No luck.

My aggravation and lost time depleted my patience. Off to the new, nearby Staples. They didn't have the hard drives in stock or in their catalog, and couldn't help, even through their regional Staples Direct® sales rep. But, the store had Windows ME ($180 full version) and Norton SystemWorks™ 2001. (Seems that Windows 98 is an antique, no longer stocked.) Hating to shell out the money, I was in need. How could I function without the damned computer?! So, maybe a miracle could occur.

Forget it. Regardless of DOS-deleting much more data and programs from the HD, WinME refused to recognize that there was valid Windows somewhere, somehow on the old drive. Nor could I free up quite enough space for an install. The old Windows was causing problems. Time to buy some kind of hard drive to get me through. Back to Staples – convenience was the goal. I was getting worn down.

At the sales counter, what did my eyes focus on? Eureka!!! Both the Maxtor hard drive of my dreams, and the PCI adapter card to go with it! Perhaps I had paid enough for my sins? $180 for the hard drive kit, complete with software and the required 80-wire UDMA cable, and $50 for the Ultra ATA/100 adapter card. Paying, with relief, despite the sales people having their own involved and lengthy PC/cash register problems, I rushed home (never exceeding the speed limit, naturally). I knew my troubles (might be) were over.

My fine, 5 year old ASUS mother board supports a PCI Bus Master EIDE controller with PIO Mode 3 & 4, and DMA Mode 2, with an Award BIOS (Does that sound promising? What the heck – at this point, it's gonna work or I'll have a new PC!).

Installing the drive and the controller was very easy. My PC has a full tower case. I decided to set the old drive as the slave on the new controller, and for once there was enough cable length

(Maxtor……Continued on page 7)

(Maxtor…….Continued from page 6)

for attaching readily to both drives. What could I lose?

A delay - back on the road to buy a "Y" connector for the power leads. (I am now well known at Staples. In this case, familiarity bred contentment.)

Now I was ready to finish the mechanical part of the installation. But here I had a “confusement.” The HD instructions say to install the controller software first. Unfortunately, the controller's instructions indicate installing the hard drive software first. The latter "automatically" (I know you've heard that before) formats the HD and gets it ready for recognition. I chose trying the HD software first. A few choices to configure the system, including drive recognition (perfect), which drives were to be assigned as master and slave, and how to partition the Maxtor were clearly presented. (I didn't need Windows for this.) The software ran so fast that I thought nothing useful had happened. A lengthy scrubbing, partitioning and formatting of the drive were what I expected, as always in the past. I twiddled around a bit, but was left wondering. At least the software offered to transfer any or all data from the old drive to the new one. Great – everything went except the compressed partition data.

So, the card software was next. Again, fast setup seemed too speedy and effortless. Nothing works that well for me. Apparently the drive was preformatted, and because I accepted the recommended FAT 32, single 46 GB partition, little needed doing. Wondrous, as I later discovered.

Straight away, the real test – would Windows ME install? Would my data be recoverable on the slave drive?

Windows installed effortlessly, recognizing all the attached hardware. However, a message let me know the bad news. Something like, "It appears you have a compressed partition - Drive D. Tough luck, WME doesn't support or recognize DriveSpace compression." Searching the CD shows a DriveSpace.exe program, but that works only for floppy diskettes. Drat! Nowhere on the Internet or on the old Win98 CDs could I find DriveSpace. (After a couple of days, I decided to jettison all the data not already backed up, and FDISKed D:. Anything not on the back up tape is tough luck for me, legal records and all.). Enough with frustration.

I lost all of the data in the compressed partition, and much of my Outlook/Outlook Express data, and the Address Book got scrambled. But I am in operation again, and satisfied, even delighted with the new hardware. Here's why.

Comparing the performance of the original Western Digital Caviar™ 32500 2.5 GB HD, plugged into the motherboard controller, with the same drive plugged into the ATA/100 controller, versus the new Maxtor HD on the ATA/100 controller shows these results from SpinRite 5 benchmarking: (7.542 microsecond. is the measured system overhead)

Test	WD direct to motherboard	WD through Maxtor® card	% improvement	Maxtor HD & card	% improvement
random sector access (msec)	17.678	18.079	-2.27	12.412	29.79
sector velocity (MB/sec)	41,068	40,157	-2.22	989,223	2,308.74
burst tx rate (b/sec)	714,418	9,952,183	1,293.05	12,613,525	1,665.57
sustained tx rate (b/sec)	2,203,056	7,333,709	322.89	30,675,957	1,292.43

Burst transfer rate measures transfer of data already in the HD buffer out to the system. This is the maximum rate that data can flow from the HD buffer.

Sustained transfer rate measures transfer of data from the disk surfaces through the buffer out to the system. This is the maximum rate that data can flow from the physical platters.

Summary: This super quiet HD with the ATA/100 card shows an easily observable increase in throughput (i.e., a much shorter time for accessing data). Hard drive operations which previously took a minute or so now take less than 5 seconds. Nowadays, the big slow down on my machine is the motherboard and the bus. The 200 MHz Pentium® II is holding me back!

As ever, wishing you safe and enjoyable computing. Rick O’Keefe ◆ *Copyright © 2000 by the author, all rights reserved*

Canon Power Shot G1 Digital Camera — A Second Opinion

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Last month TPCUG member Wade Herman wrote about his new Canon G1 digital camera. He had a lot of nice things to say and only a few small items that he wished Canon had included but didn't. The main thing he would have liked would be more zoom in the zoom lens. The G1 has an optical 3 power zoom.

Now that we have a G1 in our family, I, too, would like a larger zoom ratio. I would also like to be able to focus closer in macro mode for better close up photography—but perhaps we are asking too much of one lens and should be happy with the quite good quality of photos produced by this camera.

I can thank my wife for the camera, since after reading Wade's article she suggested that instead of separate gifts we get the G1 for both of us. I certainly couldn't turn down an offer like that. Wade brought his camera over, and I tried out about 20 shots with it, he downloaded them to his computer and sent them to me via email (for which a cable modem is handy). Using a setting of medium resolution and medium quality compression, the images were quite good. So then it was only a matter of how to get the camera before Christmas.

With less than a week to go, since Amazon is supposed to give us 5% on orders through the TPCUG web site, I checked Amazon and they had the camera for $900 (a bit less than when Wade bought his from a camera store), shipping in 2 to 3 days. Since the camera comes with only a 16 MB compact flash memory card, we also ordered a 48 MB memory card at the good price of $93. Then the wait began. The flash memory came in two days, but the Amazon site kept saying the camera was in stock and usually ships in 2 – 3 days. It finally did ship and arrived the Friday before Christmas. The only let down was that Amazon restricts its "commissions" on orders to a maximum of $10 except on books. So the TPCUG got $10 for the camera instead of the expected $45.



Horse at Three D Farm in Riverview, Florida

Of course, the camera couldn't be opened until Christmas. Since then we have taken over 160 photos in five days. As Wade pointed out, one advantage of a digital camera is that you can simply delete the photos that you don't like. At present I have deleted 70 of the 160 and will undoubtedly delete many more.

(Canon G1……..Continued on page 9)



Panorama stitched together using PhotoStitch from five photos shot using the G1's stitch assist mode

(Canon G1……..Continued from page 8)

Now a word about the photos accompanying this article. The horse and holiday lights were taken at an image resolution of 2048 x 1536 pixels and saved as JPEG files with what Canon calls fine compression (In descending order there is RAW, i. e., no compression, superfine, fine and normal compression). The rabbit was taken at a resolution of 1024 x 768 and saved with fine compression. The panorama was taken at 2048 x 1563 resolution and saved with super fine compression. All except the holiday lights were taken in the auto mode, with the horse photo using the built in flash.

The holiday lights were taken in manual mode with an ISO setting of 100 (think film speed), a shutter speed of 1.6 seconds and an aperture of 3.5. All of this information and more being available to you when you view a photo in the Canon supplied ZoomBrowser EX. This camera is particularly handy for available light photos, since you can immediately see your potential shot in the LCD display and adjust the exposure time until you get the results you want. And then if you do take several shots at different exposures, you can discard the unwanted shots. I found an exposure time of from one second to 2.5 seconds with the ISO setting of 100 provided the exposure I wanted. Of course, a tripod was used for the nighttime shots.

I am particularly intrigued by the camera's ability when coupled with the supplied PhotoStitch software to make quite good panoramic photographs. If you carefully overlap your separate shots about 30%, then the PhotoStitch program does a fairly good job of automatically merging them into the panorama. However, for the best results you should use the manual align mode of the program, which is the method I employed for the backyard panorama. I used a tripod to do this



When viewed in color, this bunny look as if he needs a little red eye reduction, but what you see is his natural eye color



Holiday lights on S Boulevard, Tampa

panoramic shot. That is the reason for the uneven top and bottom borders—what should be a curved image is being projected onto a flat page. I could have cropped the final image, but I prefer to show more of the combined images.

In addition to the PhotoStitch software for making panoramic photos and the ZoomBrowser software that allows you to view the photos while they are in the camera, download them to computer, then organize and view them in the computer, Adobe PhotoShop LE is also supplied. Since I already have PhotoShop I didn't install this and can't detail the capabilities of the program.

The photos accompanying this article were brought into PhotoShop and reduced to a 1024 x 768 pixel size, then they were saved as JPEG images at what Adobe calls a level 3 (medium) quality file on a scale of 0 – 10. When I publish the HTML version of this newsletter at the TPCUG web site I will probably reduce the files even further to facilitate downloading. As an example of compression, the holiday lights 2048 x 1536 JPEG image as saved by the camera was 1,334 KB, which PhotoShop claims is equivalent to a 9 MB uncompressed file. But after reducing it to 1024 x 768 and saving it with level 3 compression, the resulting JPEG is only 162 KB This is possibly still a bit large for an image on an Internet page, and I will probably reduce it further for the HTML version of the article.

And that brings me to suggest that you go to http://www.tpcug.org and check out this article in the HTML version of the newsletter to be posted there. That way you will be able to better judge the camera's capabilities by viewing the photos in color.

For an excellent review of the camera with probably more de-

(Canon G1……..Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@aol.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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A Look Back In Time

From the September 1989 Bits of Blue

President's Podium

By Harvey Bruneau, President

EARLY RELEASE. WHO WINS.

Ever wonder why some companies seem to announce a product shipping date before it's completed. Generally it's to stay ahead or even with their competition. Whether it's hardware or software these vendors are hoping that their announcement will make you reconsider or postpone a decision to leave their product or purchase another vendor's similar product. This is called the freeze factor. They are betting that you will purchase their product sight unseen. Ever buy a house that way? Did you pick your spouse or significant other with a blindfold on? I didn't think so.

Software vendors are notorious for asking you to send in your upgrade money or purchase their current product now in order that you may be among the first to receive the new product when it ships. JUST SAY NO. Ask a dBase IV purchaser if he got his money's worth either by upgrading or 1st time purchase.

Many of the big boys COMPAQ, IBM, WORDPERFECT, MICROSOFT , LOTUS, BORLAND, ASHTON- TATE, FOX, 3COM and NOVELL, to mention a few, play the game. Unfortunately bigger does not mean better. For instance, ASHTON-TATE decided to ship a bug infested incomplete dBase IV 1.0 after missing more than one delivery date. This early product release has allowed ASHTON-TATE competitors to be winners at the expense of users. Of course now that word-of-mouth has gotten around, ASHTON-TATE is in deep trouble. A $19 million loss and over 200 employees terminated with no better outlook on the horizon.

WORDPERFECT has been dominant in word-processing for some time. MICROSOFT, in order to keep up, released its answer, WORD 5.0, in hope of surpassing WORDPERFECT. While WORD has some nice new features, the product has glitches. It has problems converting documents from the previous release of WORD. There are other problems related to hardware which have also surfaced. Once again the winner is the competition and the loser is the user. These bugs aren't as serious as ASHTON-TATE's but the product shouldn't have been released until corrected.

LOTUS did the right thing. Although around two years late and a loss in market share, Lotus 3.0 has hit the streets with favorable reviews. The jury is still out, but so far it looks like a good clean product. Users and LOTUS win.

There are many more stories like the ones above. The point is that the user generally gets the short end of the stick on early released products. The Japanese are getting more involved in software and hardware development. If our current vendors don't get their act together they could go the way of the American automobile industry by the year 2000. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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BAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Symantec

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Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

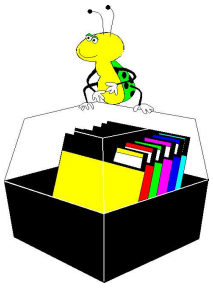
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

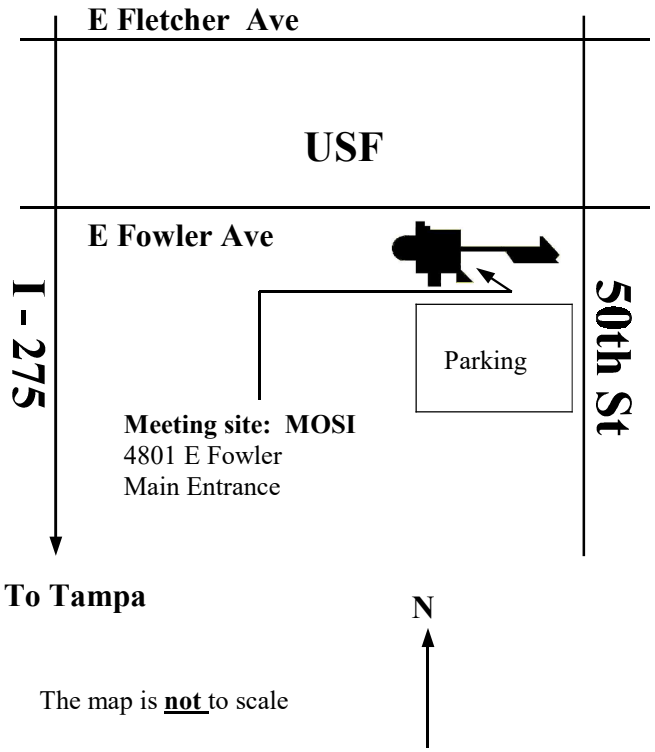
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(Canon G1……..Continued from page 9)
tail than you can absorb, go to the site http://www.dpreview.com/. It is an excellent source of information on digital imaging. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



February in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 2 February 2001

Meeting

Digital Photography And Your Computer

February 14, 2001
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will give a presentation on Digital photography and the digital darkroom. As usual Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting. Finally, we will raffle off a copy of QuickBooks Pro 2000 Accounting software.

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President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

It's 2001, and we find the Tampa PC Users Group doing extremely well. We have a solid member base. We have a wonderful projector and screen that's paid for. Our bills are paid, and we have Bruce Register working on some exciting presentations for the upcoming year. It just "doesn't get any better than this." Sure, we could use a little more income so we could provide better door prizes. I guess you all realize that our vendors, as a rule, are not providing us with product to use for our raffles. We are to the point of needing to buy software to raffle off. We need the raffle money to make our income equal our expenses. The board decided that raising dues would be a bad idea. So we're left with the need for some creative solutions to our raffle issue. William LaMartin, Bruce Register, Bill DeLucia and many others have donated some wonderful things for us to raffle, so that's one solution. Any other ideas will be greatly appreciated. It's not a crisis, but a small problem that needs fixing.

I want to once again thank everyone who contributed to the projector fund. A very special thanks to Merle Nicholson for thinking the whole thing up. The fund was a great idea and a huge success.

(President.....Continued on page 2)

March 14: To be announced — Check our web site later

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the January Meeting

The first part of the meeting Bob LaFave demonstrated how to copy the files from one computer to another by removing the hard drive from Jenny Lind Olin's old computer and installing it in her new computer as a second hard drive. He then simply used Windows Explorer to copy files from the old drive to the new drive.

With the file transfer still continuing we conducted a brief business meeting, which included the installation of the new officers for 2001. We then started our main presentation.

This was given by Chris Morris (in the photo) and Joey Richardson of Verison DSL service, which is no longer officially part of the Verison telephone service. The presenter pictured below gave a brief description of DSL in general and Versison DSL in particular. He then fielded a good number of questions from the group. It appeared that there was considerable interest in DSL.



As usual, the meeting ended with a drawing for prizes—Verison shirts among them. ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

The Spring Conference for FACUG will be the first weekend in March. As always, any who may be interested in attending can contact me or another board member for information. It's in Kissimmee, it's fun and you get to meet some really nice people.

I sure hope this year is as successful as last year. ◆



Digital Photography and Your Computer

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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In the January newsletter I wrote about the new Canon PowerShot G1 digital camera and included some photos taken with it. The photo above was also taken with the camera at our January meeting. The goal of this article, though, is not to write about the camera again, but, rather, to give an introduction to my presentation at our February meeting.

I started snapping photographs when I was around 10 years old—1956—and had a 35 mm camera by the time I was in the eighth grade. I wrote my first computer program (to run on the only thing there was then—a mainframe) around 1967. I developed my first strip of film around 1973, when I also printed my first photo in a darkroom. I didn't get a PC until 1983, and that Apple II really had no way to deal with photographs. Why, it only had 65 KB of memory and 65 KB of what was called auxiliary memory. It had two floppy drives, each able to hold 135 KB of data. And I didn't have a way to get a photograph I had taken into a computer until I got my first scanner, a HP IICX flatbed scanner, in 1994. That $1,100 scanner allowed me to scan photographs—not negatives—into my PC, a Gateway 33 MHz with, I think 16 MB (4 originally) of RAM. So, you see, I had moved up a bit from the Apple.

But that old Gateway would be hard pressed to handle the large graphics files I use now. The file of our meeting above is a 1,855 KB JPEG file, and that is not at all large by today's standards. Of course, anything for the web has to be much smaller to facilitate a relatively quick download.

The next step in my photography/computer journey was getting a scanner that would scan 35 mm slides and negatives. This was the HP PhotoSmart photo scanner. Then came faster computers with more memory and finally a new HP flatbed 5370Cse scanner and the Canon G1 digital camera.

(Photography……..Continued on page 7)

New Computer

By Jenny Lind Olin, Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group
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I didn't have enough memory -- Computer RAM Memory. Somewhere in the back of my mind I remembered that "You can't be too thin, too rich, too pretty, or have too much memory [RAM]." I had tried twice to upgrade the old computer with more memory, and both times the old computer didn't recognize the new chips. Never mind that when I ordered the computer, I asked for a computer that was upgradeable. Is that word, "upgradeable" an oxymoron?

What would buying a new computer mean? I could get the latest version of Windows Millennium (ME), thus no need to clean up the previous version. Two Pluses. I could get a cable Internet connection (Local Road Runner), so no more AOL taking over my machine. Two more Pluses. I could upgrade my word processor, spreadsheet, (Office 2000) which would have Microsoft Access so I could catch up in the Access SIG. Another Plus. I would have the latest version of Internet Explorer and could learn how to use Outlook Express. Is that a Plus or a Minus?

The downside was the cost, just about the same as the three-year-old computer cost. But it is just money.

I got interested in my old jazz records and wanted to play them and save the recordings on CDs. (I am way in over my head here.) I had also seen my brother using Napster to play around with his musical downloads and that looked really neat. With a new computer, I would download Napster, and when around him I would just pretend I had been using Napster all my life and what was the big deal. But I would need some spiffy speakers and the best sound cards (Sound Blaster Live) I could afford. No problem, it was just money.

I would need a CD reader and burner. Then I would need CD blanks and covers. And maybe labels. This is what brought up the question about the life-span of a CD (see our Tampa PC User Group's Online Discussion Group).

I now own an AMD 700 Duron Processor, 30 Gigabyte hard drive, 128 MB SDRAM. With this system I got Corel's WordPerfect Suite 8 which includes their QuattroPro spreadsheet program. This will work, and I can convert all my Word documents and Excel spreadsheets to this new format. I can save my worksheets to Excel format when I want to send them to others as an attachment on my E-mail. Still no database program, but there is time for that later.

I loaded my genealogy program, Family Tree Maker 6.0, without a problem, but I wasn't expecting one. The real problem was getting the large genealogy databases from the old computer to the new one. Most of my data files I could copy on floppies and then copy from floppies to the new computer, but my genealogy databases were too large to do that easily. So the Windows SIG at the last Tampa PC Users Group came into play.

I took both my old computer and my new computer and monitor to the meeting. Bob LaFave was arriving about the same time I got there, so he helped transport the components upstairs to the lab.

Before anybody else arrived Bob had both computers opened up and had removed the hard drive from the old computer (see photo in the Digital Photography article in this newsletter). Bob connected that drive to the new computer as a slave drive. He showed us how he looked at the diagram on the side of the hard drive and then changed the setting to match. After his demonstration of how to do the setup, it was time to transfer the data. The old drive was then considered the D-drive. He made a folder in the new computer called "Old Drive" and then we copied all the files from the D-drive (the slave) to the C-drive in the new computer. My antiviral program was working and did find a downloaded file from some e-mail that had a virus. PC-cillin 98 paid for itself that night. This process took awhile, so we went on with the regular program while files literally flew from one computer to the other.

With that process done, it was time to learn what I had to know to use Outlook Express for my email. I was not so lucky as to be able to transfer my email addresses and my favorite places from AOL to Outlook Express and Internet Explorer. I can't read them unless I am using the AOL program. I had to do them a few at a time. Still doing that to tell the truth.

To finish a message later, I have learned I can copy the message to the draft folder or I can save the file and the default is the draft folder. I can move a message to the draft folder by right clicking on the file listed and then select "move to folder."

I usually send a joke to several people on my list. I like to send them as blind carbon copies (bcc) so that the recipient doesn't have to go through line after line of addresses in the header before they get to the message. I know how I feel after scrolling down line after line after line only to find a joke that I have read so many times that I have memorized it. The other day I sent the joke off in a rush and forgot to put an address in the TO: box. AOL would not send a message without a TO: recepient. But since I had used bcc, the message went out as "Undisclosed Recepient." Neat. My name was in the FROM: box, so it wasn't as though the message seemed to come out of nowhere. AOL will not let you send a message without an address in the TO: box.

(Computer……..Continued on page 5)

Tampa PC Users Group 2000 Financial Report

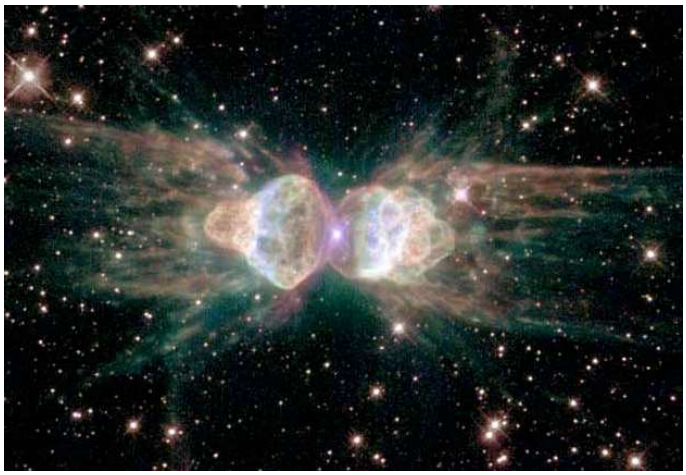
Bank Balance	
Beginning Balance	$2,697.27
Ending Balance	$3,049.94
Earnings	$352.67
Projector Project Fund	
Donations	$3,195.00
Outflow	$2,011.56
Balance	$1,183.44
Total Assets	$4,233.38

(Computer……..Continued from page 4)

I have noticed that if somebody sends me a forwarded message it comes as a blank message, and there is an attachment. That makes it very easy to just delete (no guilt involved) the message as I have no idea what and from whom I am receiving (probably) junk. I also received a GEDCOM for my genealogy program and it came as an attachment, and the text was also in the body of the message. Every message is now a surprise as far as format is concerned.

As soon as I forget how to use AOL and I learn how to use Outlook Express, I will be looking for some other problem to cope with. ◆

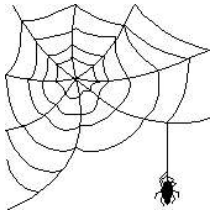
Internet picture of the month



Planetary Nebula Mz3: The Ant Nebula

This photo from the site http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ is the February 5 Astronomy Picture of the Day. Go there and look through their archive of astronomical photographs.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Luminous-Landscape (Photography)	http://www.luminous-landscape.com/
Astronomy Picture of the Day	http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/
PhotoShop Tutorial Search Engine	http://www.rainworld.com/oe_99/forge/ps_tut/
WebReference.com - The Webmaster's Reference Library	http://www.webreference.com/
User Evaluations of On-Line Computer Hardware Vendors	http://www.resellerratings.com/
FreeTranslation.com - Free Translation from English to….	http://www.freetranslation.com/
Florida Newspaper Links	http://www.usnewspaperlinks.com/flnews.html
Biolinks – Internet Search Engine for Scientists	http://www.biolinks.com/
Alex Patout's Louisiana Restaurant	http://patout.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Internet Site Review

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
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I recently got my reminder email from William that the articles for this month's newsletter were due, so the pressure was on. While I was pondering just what to write about this month my email notification chimed-up and there it was, ***DOWNLOAD.COM.***

As Librarian for the TPCUG in years past (before the popularity of the Internet), my job was to collect, categorize and have available to our members all the software I could acquire, and it was a chore to haul that collection to each general meeting. Then the Internet came along and made my collection obsolete. But I'm not complaining because the quality and quantity of software out on the World Wide Web is excellent and so much easier to access now for everyone.

One of my favorite sites for software is http://download.com, a part of CNET, which is a major force on the Internet today. It doesn't matter if you use a PC or MAC, Windows or Linux, or even a handheld computer; it's all there for you. It's a software geek's paradise. (Now you know why I like it.) You can download to your heart's content, and a lot of the software is actually free (another reason I like it), or Shareware, in which case you can download for free, try it for a period of time and if you like or need it, you can buy it. Now, you can't get a guarantee like that off the shelf. And the price is fair. You don't pay for all the fancy packaging or advertisements that the "big boys" do.

When you log-on to ***DOWNLOAD.COM,*** one of the first things you see is **this week's top picks**. As I was writing this article the top picks were:

- **ICQ** – the popular instant-messaging program that lets you communicate with friends and colleagues in real time. **FREE**
- **Napster** – the controversial search engine that allows you to find and download MP3 audio files. **FREE**
- **Diablo II** – the classic dark fantasy game. **DEMO**
- **Opera 5** – a versatile Internet/intranet browser that also includes a newsreader. **FREE to try, $39 to register**
- **WindowBlinds** - a utility designed to change the way you look at Windows by allowing you to completely customize your desktop by changing the style of title bars, buttons, toolbars and many other choices. **FREE to try, $20 to register**
- **Internet Explorer** – get the latest version of IE 5.5 SP1 here. **FREE**
- **TaxACT 2000** – one of the competitors to the commercially popular TurboTax TaxACT 2000 helps you complete your tax return. It features more than 80 forms, schedules, and worksheets, plus an interview process to guide you through completing your return. You can also directly enter your information onto the tax forms. TaxACT calculates your return for you, then reviews your return and alerts you of possible errors. **FREE to try, $20 to register.**

The software for the PC compatible is divided into 11 categories, which are:

- **MP3 & Audio**
- **Games**
- **Desktop Enhancements**
- **Business & Finance**
- **Home & Education**
- **Drivers & System Files**
- **Internet**
- **Utilities**
- **Multimedia & Design**
- **Software Development**
- **Web Authoring**

Each category is broken down into several sections and each category lists its most popular download, new releases and ***DOWNLOAD.COM's*** own picks. So if you want to take the time to go through all the thousands of programs or just look at the most popular titles, it's your choice. And you don't have to download every program to find out what it's all about. There are thorough descriptions and product specs on all of the programs with links back to their home sites if what you find on ***DOWNLOAD.COM*** is not enough for you.

I could go on and on but I think if you will just take a few minutes to go to http://download.com you'll see what I'm talking about. If you haven't been there, you owe it to yourself to see what's available for the download at ***DOWNLOAD.COM***, but be careful… it's addictive! ◆

(Photography……Continued from page 3)

One tool is still to be mentioned—Software. There are the cameras to take my pictures. They are the new digital Canon G1, the relatively new Nikon 35 mm single lens reflex camera, and an assortment of older 35 mm cameras and one large format camera. Then there are the scanners to input the images from the film cameras into the computers. But what do you do with the images once you have the files in your computer? That is where software comes in.

I purchased my first serious graphics and photo editing program in 1994. It was Corel Draw 3, an older—and hence cheaper—version than whatever the current version was at the time. I didn't upgrade to Corel Draw 8 until 1998. In 1999/2000 I added Adobe PhotoShop and Adobe Illustrator, two products that I am still trying to master. So much for history.

With either Corel Draw's Photo-Paint or Adobe's PhotoShop, you have one component of a digital darkroom. Your printer, of course, is the other component. However, most of my digital photographs are never printed. They are either viewed on the computer or optimized for the web and included as parts of web pages.

Let's talk a bit now about how I use all this digital photographic equipment. One obvious use is in the production of this newsletter—although we often have too much content to leave room for much graphical filler. The photo below was a quick snap of Bob LaFave at our January meeting working on Jenny Lind Olin's computer preparatory to transferring data from her old computer's hard drive to her new computer's hard drive. No editing of any kind has been done on this image. Below pirate Wade Herman has had a Hyde Park squirrel added to his shoulder. Since the squirrel was not situated in a uniform background, it did take a bit of work in PhotoShop to cut him out of his photo so as to paste him in with Wade. I assume this is the sort of thing the *National Inquirer* does all the time so as to juxtapose celebrities.



Member Bob LaFave works on Jenny Lind Olin's computer



Member Wade Herman and friends at Gasparilla

PhotoShop, Corel Photo-Paint and lesser such photo editing programs allow you to do much more than cut out squirrels and place them on pirates' shoulders. You can "repair" damage, change the color balance, contrast and brightness, and do so much more that I am convinced you could spend a lifetime learning all the ins and outs of these programs. For an amateur, I am not bad, but compared to the professionals, I know nothing about PhotoShop—but I have from now on to learn. And each time I use the program, I learn a bit more.

What I will be discussing at our next meeting are the various ways I use all of these digital photography tools. The newsletter I already mentioned. Then there are the various web sites I maintain which need photographic content. Of course, there are all those family photos—both current and some well over 100 years old—of which I have made copies. Finally, there are those projects I think of from time to time. My most recent project consists of taking a digital photo of each house in my neighborhood and writing a Visual Basic program which will list all the addresses such that when you select an address, the picture of the house for that address will be displayed. Here I am combining photography, an Access database and VB programming. Hope to see you at the meeting. ◆

A Horror Story

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
wherman1@tampabay.rr.com

About a year ago I upgraded my computer to a new motherboard with a 500Mhz Athalon but kept my old ATI All-In-Wonder Video Card and an even older Creative Sound Blaster AWE32 sound card. I had been reading about the new ATI All-In-Wonder Radion, which promised greatly improved performance for Video Editing. It also turns your computer into a TIVO like system; more about that at another time. There was also the Sound Blaster Live Platinum card which touted a host of cool features. The front panel analog and digital I/O connectors were especially appealing to me.

During a trip to the local Comp USA, I discovered they had just received the new ATI Radion card. So I yielded to the temptation; after all it was only 2 ½ months until Santa Day. While I was at the cashier, I asked about the Sound Blaster card and learned that they had just received, not even on the shelf yet, Sound Blaster Live Platinum 5.1. Having never had any Platinum, I decided to go all the way. Being from Creative Labs and one of the most expensive cards at $199, it must be great.

With great anticipation I dashed home and installed the new Gems. The installation of the ATI card went without a hitch. Now to install the Platinum. I had no concerns as their previous Sound Cards and DVD players installed without a hitch. **WRONG!**

Try as I might the software would not install. I am not exactly new to this procedure, having done it since the first Apple II. Being male, I take it as a challenge to solve problems on my own. I checked Creative's web site—no help there. After several hours of getting nowhere, it was time to call their Tech Support Line. The call is on your nickel, which irritates me, but I am sure it eliminates a lot of calls from people who otherwise would make no effort to read the book. Within 10 or so minutes a very pleasant tech support person answered. It took almost 2 hours but finally everything seemed to be working OK, so I hung up. **WRONG!**

The second or third time I re-booted the system I received one of those dreaded fatal error messages, as the desktop was starting to load. MSGSRV32 has caused a fatal error in Devcon32.dll. This is particularly frightening since, as most people are aware, Devcon5 denotes an impending Nuclear Attack. From a computer standpoint it is almost as bad, as the computer is totally locked. Forget CTRL-ALT-DEL, the only option is to say a prayer and turn off the power. Now the only way to boot the machine is to boot in Safe Mode and disable the sound card. Then the computer will boot normally but naturally with no sound support. More hours of tinkering and un-installing, re-installing and it is obvious that I need help from a higher power, and, since God's line was busy, I again called Creative. A very nice young lady listened to my tale of woe and spent almost two hours trying to solve the problem. She acknowledged that the problem is with their Devcon32.dll file and is probably related to my video card. She will send the problem to engineering and will personally call me back with the fix, which may take as much a two weeks. Naturally I am not a happy camper, but I have the feeling that it will be resolved. Over six weeks later I still had not received the promised call. So I called again, on my nickel, and went through their automated telephone support, and there was a solution—Joy of Joys. But the elation was short lived as the fix did not work for me. Now yet another call to Tech Support, with elevated blood pressure, to let them know how I felt about the company, but no point to take it out on the Tech because those above are not doing their job. The Tech was aware of the problem and said they knew that the posted fix only worked in some instances, which was why I had not receive the promised call—sure.

After trying a few things and getting nowhere I demanded to speak to a supervisor. He told me that he was pretty sure they would eventually have a solution, but it might be a month or two. At this point I requested that they take back their Sound Blaster Platinum Live 5.1 and refund what I had paid. Honest, I did not tell them where I thought they should stick it. They informed me that they do not take merchandise back. I would have to take it up with the Dealer. I reminded him that due to the time that had expired since the promised two week fix that was not possible. He was sorry, but my only other option was to take it up with Customer Service. Great I thought, bring on the SOBs (Sweet Old Boys). He even gave me the number and then added that it was a fax only number; they will not talk to people directly! How about that for Cus-to-mer Service! I am sure I would hear back in about the same time frame as the original promise and with as much satisfaction as I have received to date. I am sending them a copy of this article as my submission.

In one final attempt to get help, a friend suggested I see if they had a News Group listing, and boy do they. I strongly suggest anyone thinking of buying a Sound Blaster or other product read the postings. To be sure you see all of the postings, read them daily as very critical ones tend to be deleted in short order, as mine was when I outlined the problems described above and requested help. I did find out that I am not Home Alone! With all of the other problems users are experiencing, I may be lucky mine was not solved. One critical posting, which did not seem terribly strong to me, was responded to by Creative's Ambassador of Goodwill, Harvey Fong, stating that he was going to block all postings from her ISP until they canceled her account. There may been justification from other postings to ban an individual, but trying to coerce an ISP into canceling someone's account by punishing all of their subscribers, really. Later that day he made a half hearted apology, undoubtedly after taking his dose of Lithium. It is their news group so it is their right to control it as they see fit.

I am sure that most people who purchase a Sound Blaster Live are very satisfied. But from my experience and research I would strongly recommend that you be sure that if it does not function

(Horror…..Continued on page 12)

RunRun DLL Reprise

By Michael Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group
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About three more normal work sessions with my machine after I sent in an article to this publication for December dealing with my problems getting Windows 98 to shut down (and what was hoped was a solution had been arrived at), it froze again. It named the same old suspect, but as time went on RunDLL began to get some company in the Programs not Responding dialog/list box. Among these "norespondents" were:

mprexe.exe and msqsrv32. The first file accepts network requests from the API and sends them to the correct network provider. The second file handles Plug-and-Play messages between various parts of the operating system, coordinates automatic responses to setup programs, plays the system startup and shutdown sounds, runs the shell program. As things now seemed to be on the old computer, these two files were moving up fast on the suspect list, particularly msqsrv32.

But I'm getting ahead of an accurate recap of the situation with respect to chronology. In the parade of events, guesses and angst, I also took a minor excursion through the land of Bootlog.txt and BIOS. This was due to a helpful tip from one of our members, Brian Lance—or was it Jim Weber? I was telling him that as a result of my reading an article or a web page which talked about a file called Bootlog.txt, I suspected that I had a problem with either the mouse driver or an old sound card.

Bootlog.txt resides in the root directory. It is plain old text file so it can be examined with any text editor. Towards the bottom of the file there is a group of lines which should look something like the lines below:

Terminate=User
Terminate=Query Drivers
End Terminate=Query Drivers
Terminate=KERNEL
Terminate=RIT
EndTerminate=RIT
EndTerminate=KERNEL

From Windows Help we have the following:

To pinpoint the problem in the Bootlog.txt file

1. Use any text editor, such as Notepad, to examine the Bootlog.txt file for Terminate= entries. These entries are located at the end of the file and may provide clues to the cause of the problem.

2. For each Terminate=entry, find a matching EndTerminate=entry.
If the last line in the Bootlog.txt file is EndTerminate=KERNEL, Windows 98 shut down successfully.

If the last line in the Bootlog.txt file is one of the following entries, check the listed possible cause:

Last line — Possible cause
Terminate=Query Drivers — Memory manager problem.
Terminate=Unload Network — Conflict with real-mode network driver in the Config.sys file.
Terminate=Reset Display — Video shadowing may need to be disabled. May also need an updated video driver.
Terminate=RIT — Timer-related problems with the sound card or an old mouse driver.
Terminate=Win32 — Problem with a 32-bit program blocking a thread.

After examining this information, I noticed that in the instances when the machine did freeze on shutdown, the computer did not play the new wave file which I had created and then gone into Control Panel and made the new system shutdown sound. At that time I thought that perhaps I had installed something which was periodically asking my old sound card to do things it wasn't capable of and this was causing errors. I did not give enough consideration to the phrase *Timer-related problems with sound card or…*in the Possible Cause column after Terminate=RIT.

I did not know what was wrong, and I was ready to try a little trial and error replacement cloaked in upgrades clothing after getting as close to the problem as was possible. This lead to consideration of updating my BIOS to facilitate various minor hardware improvements either just completed or proposed. Some of these additions or upgrades had no bearing on the shutdown issue. Therefore, I was inclined to think a BIOS upgrade was not a bad idea on a couple of levels. However, other club members didn't feel the BIOS was the culprit in my shutdown woes. So I abandoned this tack. I also tried changing the mouse driver (again grasping at the straws in the wind provided by the Terminate=RIT *Timer* related…) and managed to effectively KO the hapless little rodent temporarily.

Seeing some of my options in the form of throwing small to medium amounts of money at the problem/s thus thwarted, I turned my attention again to the last part of the Bootlog.txt file. At length (fairly great length), I decided to change the system shutdown sound back to the default Windows sound file. It can not be claimed that there was any great thunderclap of sudden understanding behind this move. Rather, this was one of a short list of things to try just prior to formatting the poor old machine's hard drive and putting Linux on it to experiment with.

The computer has now performed a shutdown quite a few times in a row and in a reasonably normal fashion. I say quite a few; don't know how many times exactly, but it's more than the computer has done in a long time. It was the length of the shutoff sound file in terms of time it took to play which was doing the dirty deed. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jlolin@tampabay.rr.com

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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A Personal View of Technology 2000

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

It hasn't been a very exciting year for technology. I can't think of even one new innovation.

I want an MP3 player, but I'm hoping the price will drop below $100.00 and I'd also like for the play time to be longer than one hour.

The Ebook I have is still a great idea, but the books sold for it cost the same price as the hardbound versions. It seems that it is much less expensive to produce an electronic version, so I resent the cost.

The Virgin Connect Web Player has been shut down. It was a neat idea, but I couldn't figure out how they could make money, and I guess they didn't.

My web-enabled cell phone is amazingly slow when accessing the Internet. The phone itself works fine, but that's hardly "new technology."

Digital cameras are becoming more affordable so more people are able to use them. I'm still trying to figure out my Instamatic, so photography isn't for me.

I use my Palm Pilot, but only as an address book. The other functions are just easier and faster on the PC. I'm getting better at note taking with graffiti, but it's still more efficient to take notes on a piece of paper.

I'm taking college courses with the University of Phoenix Online. My schedule would never allow me to physically attend courses on a regular basic, so this is wonderful for me. Online learning has been around for quite some time, but it's just now becoming accepted and accredited.

The upgrade to Windows Millennium hasn't made any difference. I'm just glad I only paid $49.00 for it.

So, here's hoping 2001 will be a banner year for technology and the cushy lifestyle said technology will bring. ◆

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

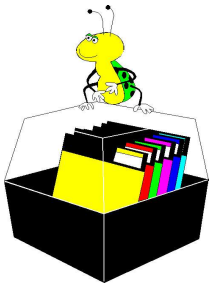
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

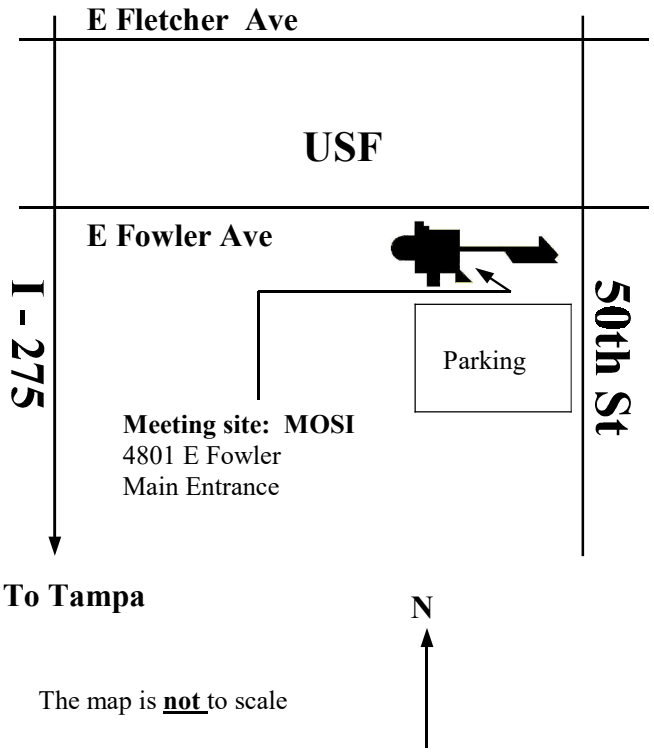


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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Horror…….Continued from page 8)
properly you can return it for a full **Dealer refund.**

Finally, My Solution Since there was no assurance of an early resolution to my problem and others may follow, I decided to take my loss and research other possibilities. Naturally Creative Sound Blaster is the card that immediately comes to mind because of the tremendous amount of money they spend on glitzy advertising. What a shame they don't spend a little of it elsewhere. There are several other possible choices. After reading several rave reviews of the Turtle Beach, Santa Cruz, I decided to investigate further. I called their Technical Staff to ask if there were any known issues that might cause me problems. It was worth it to me to spend a few bucks to try and avoid a repeat of the expense, time, anguish and aggravation with Creative. I was assured me that they knew of none of the problems I had experienced and in fact the Tech personally was using the previous version of my ATI All-In-Wonder card. Then he cinched the choice by telling me that if I bought the Santa Cruz directly from them it carries a 30day unconditional return warranty. It is half the price of the Sound Blaster, but it does not have the cool front panel connectors and teaser software. All I can say is the Santa Cruz installed without a curse word, works and sounds great. Once again it appears Avis tries harder. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



March in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 3 March 2001

Meeting

JR Inkjet

March 14, 2001
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

Meeting Preview: JR Inkjet will give the main presentation. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

It feels like summer already and it isn't even spring. Oh well, that's Florida. We had a great meeting last month with a full house, and that's always exciting. William LaMartin did a presentation on using a digital camera. The pictures he's taken are simply beautiful. I keep waiting for the cameras to fall into my price range, but they aren't there yet.

The Spring Conference for the Florida Association of PC Users

(President.....Continued on page 5)

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Beginning with the May meeting, the meeting time is changed to 6:30

April 11: Computers and the stock market

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the February Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

WINDOWS SIG The Windows SIG got underway at 6:15, led by Mary Sheridan, President.

Bob LaFave suggested that installing Internet Explorer 5.5 slowed his computer down by a significant amount and that he found a solution to it by deleting EMM386 in CONFIG.SYS.

There was a discussion and speculation on the forthcoming operating systems from Microsoft. One thing that was agreed on was it's confusing.

Bruce Register put in a plug for the help list in the back of each newsletter to encourage members to call for help and to participate if possible.

Mary mentioned the ITEC trade show coming up in May. We – TPCUG – will have a booth there. ITEC is also looking for volunteers.

Other news: http://www.bigzoo.com is offering long distance service for 2.9 cents per minute. It's a $20 pre-paid service. An announcement was made that memory prices are at rock bottom right now, and there's not a better time to upgrade the memory on your computer.

PRESENTATION William LaMartin gave an excellent presentation on digital photography. He brought some of his equipment with him and had prepared a terrific PowerPoint presentation.

William began by relating his long history in amateur photography using film and his transition to digital using film to digital equipment and scanning to the present where he's relying more on direct digital photography and using his computers.

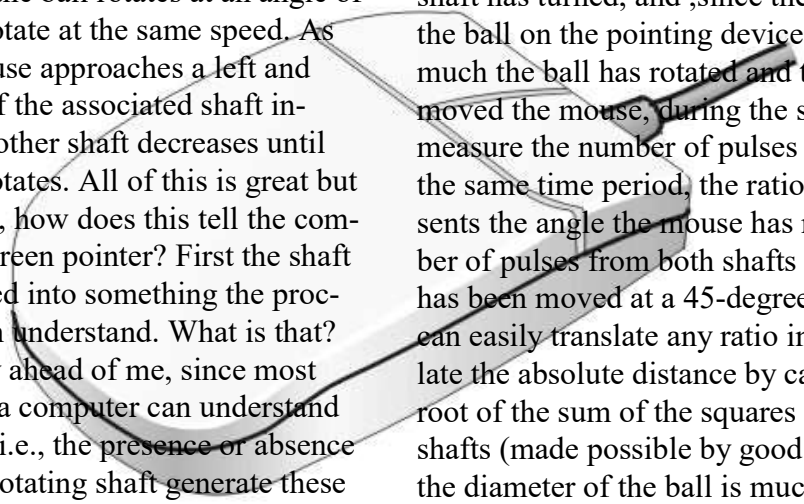
In the presentation he showed 35 mm photos that

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

How Mice Work

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
wherman1@tampaby.rr.com

Most mice and track balls are controlled by the ball on the device contacting two shafts placed orthogonal (perpendicular) to each other. One shaft will rotate when the ball is rotated left and right and the other shaft when the ball is rotated up and down. When the pointing device, and consequently the ball, is moved at some other angle, both shafts will rotate simultaneously and their relative speeds will be proportional to the angle. If the ball rotates at an angle of 45 degrees, both shafts rotate at the same speed. As the movement of the mouse approaches a left and right motion, the speed of the associated shaft increases while that of the other shaft decreases until only the left right shaft rotates. All of this is great but the question still remains, how does this tell the computer how to move the screen pointer? First the shaft rotation must be converted into something the processor in the computer can understand. What is that? You are probably already ahead of me, since most know that the only thing a computer can understand is strings of 1's and 0's, i.e., the presence or absence of a voltage. How can a rotating shaft generate these 1's and 0's? The most obvious way is to put a wheel on the shaft that has a group of equally spaced bumps on it that turn a switch on and off as the shaft rotates. When the switch is on it connects to a voltage source (representing a "1"); when the switch is off the voltage is disconnected (representing a "0"). This was in fact the way some of the earliest mice generated the signal for the computer. The problem is that mechanical switches wear out very quickly, as they may be turned off and on thousands of times a second and undergo millions of operations in a few hours or days. To be practical we must generate the pulses without mechanical contacts. There are several possibilities, but the easiest to implement uses light. How can light do that? Remember when you walk in some small stores there is a bell that rings to alert the clerk. You may already know that this is usually accomplished by projecting a beam of light across the doorway onto a photocell. When the light beam is interrupted by your body, the photocell acts like a switch, generating a pulse of electricity that rings an alarm. So we miniaturize that system thousands of times and put a wheel with many slots or holes in it that break the beam as the wheel and shaft rotates. The light source is an IR (infared) LED (Light Emitting Diode) with almost unlimited life, like the photo diode or photo transistor used as the detector. The light sensitive device generates the pulses without any mechanical contact. These devices can operate much faster than mechanical switches. If we measure the number of 1's and 0's over a short period of time, a few thousandths of a second, it tells us how much the shaft has turned, and ,since the shaft is connected to the ball on the pointing device, we can calculate how much the ball has rotated and thus how far we have moved the mouse, during the sampling period. If we measure the number of pulses from both shafts over the same time period, the ratio (sine function) represents the angle the mouse has moved, i.e., if the number of pulses from both shafts are equal, the mouse has been moved at a 45-degree angle. The computer can easily translate any ratio into an angle and calculate the absolute distance by calculating the square root of the sum of the squares of the pulses from both shafts (made possible by good old Pythagoras). Since the diameter of the ball is much larger than the diameter of the contact point on the shaft and, further, the encoder wheel on the shaft has many holes, every rotation of the ball can produce several thousand pulses, which allows very accurate positioning information, called resolution. The raw data generated in the mouse is encoded by a special processor in the mouse before being sent to the computer to make the operation more efficient.



I have outlined most of the principles of mouse operation; however, I have left out one very important principle. If anyone knows what this is and would like an explanation, I will be happy to include it in an article next month. No techies please. ◆

Roundup Time, March 4, 2001

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

Okay, okay, here's the deal: I was originally going to talk about my recent adventures with a program named "Time Matters." It's what's generically called "case management software" and can be used by various professionals, including lawyers (like moi), accountants, architects, financial planners, etc. Pretty cool program. I'm running much of my law practice with it now. Big and complex, but not all that expensive ($500 for two users)...but.…

But I can't talk about that. It's those damn Napster guys. There's just too much going on, even as I hunt-&-peck here. So Napster and file-sharing it's going to have to be, once again.

Well. Napster. Play taps. It's wide-open file-sharing system is being reined in as I speak. The Nap-guys are instituting a filtering system as I write this on March 4, 2001 that will prevent copyrighted material from being shared over the Internet if the copyright holders don't give permission. This is a preemptive strike by the Napster guys, as the ruling from the federal district court in California is expected shortly.

Oh. You don't know the latest? Background: The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) along with some rockers (e.g. "Dr. Dre" and the heavy-metal band Metallica) sued in federal court in California some months ago to shut the Napster online music-file-sharing phenomenon down, citing wholesale, worldwide copyright law violation. The federal judge who heard the case, Marilyn Patel, evidenced quite a strong hostility toward the Napster defendants, and in July 2000 entered an immediate injunction saying that Napster had the responsibility to block all sharing of all copyrighted works. Napster responded that they didn't have that ability, and such a ruling was tantamount to shutting down the service.

So...Napster took an instantaneous appeal to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, also in California, and they entered what's called a "stay," stopping the lower court injunction from going into effect. Then the Napster guys hired some very heavy-hitting legal talent to argue the case in front of the 9th Circuit (and ultimately possibly the U.S. Supreme Court), David Boies (last seen arguing in front of the Florida Supreme Court and the Supremes in Washington in favor of Presidential candidate Al Gore).

Bottom line? On February 12, 2001 the 9th Circuit ruled that the original injunctive ruling was unfair to Napster, and that the **record** companies had to specifically identify the copyrighted material they wanted blocked. Result: the case went back to the lower court for further proceedings and to fashion another injunction. Which gave rise to further flailing around by all the parties in the lower court. (However, the appellate court did decide that if it looks like copyright infringement, quacks like copyright infringement, and waddles like copyright infringement, then it must be copyright infringement under the law as it presently exists.)

That further injunction from the federal district court is expected any day now, with the RIAA and their rocker-backers asking the court to enter an order that would make it necessary to shut down the Napster service **entirely**. Well. Seeing as how Napster doesn't only help its 64 million registered users to copy zillions of **copyrighted** songs, but **also** assists people in copying music which (a) has an expired copyright, (b) is uncopyrighted (often by struggling starving artists trying to make a name for themselves), or (c) is copyrighted but the owners of the copyright(s) have decided to give permission for everyone to share...well, shutting the Nap-thing down entirely might seem a bit **extreme** to many people.

But wait! Judge Patel **this** time isn't showing the same hostility toward Napster that she did in the hearings last year. "We're here to find out what the parties can live with, something that will work for

(Roundup.....Continued on page 8)

(President……..Continued from page 1)

Groups is the weekend of March 2nd. Since the newsletter goes out around the first Wednesday of the month, this will be old news. I've been quite busy getting ready for the conference, and I'll be much happier when it's finally over.

On May 2-3, 2001, the doors at the Tampa Convention Center will open to 4,000 corporate and government/education business professionals for the region's largest Business-to-Business technology event of the year, the Third Annual Tampa Bay Information Technology Exposition & Conference (ITEC). ITEC will feature more than 2000 products and solutions, representing the latest developments in Computers, Telecommunications, Internet/ Intranet, Software, Networking, Imaging and Records Management, Multimedia, Video Conferencing, Client Server, Network Security, Disaster Recovery, ATM and much more. The Tampa PC Users Group will have a booth at this event and we need volunteers. I'll get the tickets to anyone who may be interested in attending as soon as I receive them.

(President……..Continued on page 12)

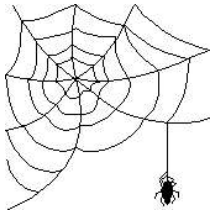
Internet picture of the month



Bourbon Street, Mardi Gras 2001

This photo from the site http://www.nolalive.com/bourbocam/classic/. This is the Bourbon Cam from Bourbon Street in New Orleans. Your editor been checking out this site for the past few years to remind him of his "youth" in New Orleans.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Microsoft Design Gallery Live	http://dgl.microsoft.com/
creativepro.com – Resources for Creative Professionals	http://www.creativepro.com/
Dan Bricklin – web site of the co-creator of VisiCalc	http://www.bricklin.com/
Florida Heritage Collection	http://susdl.fcla.edu/fh/
Floridiana on the Web	http://www.lib.usf.edu/virtual/ldc/floridiana/index.html
ATI Technologies Inc.	http://www.ati.com/na/pages/na_index.html
Bourbon Street Cam in New Orleans	http://www.nolalive.com/bourbocam/classic/
Devil's Dictionary	http://richardgingras.com/devilsdictionary/
Early Recorded Sounds & Wax Cylinders	http://www.tinfoil.com/earlywax.htm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Software Review of Digital Camera Enhancer

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larryanders@msn.com

I've always been a fancier of good software, and, better yet, I've always fancied good **FREE** software. ***Digital Camera Enhancer*** (DCE) is both. I'm not really sure how I came across this excellent digital photo utility program but if one of you reading this article told me about it… thanks! If not, read on.

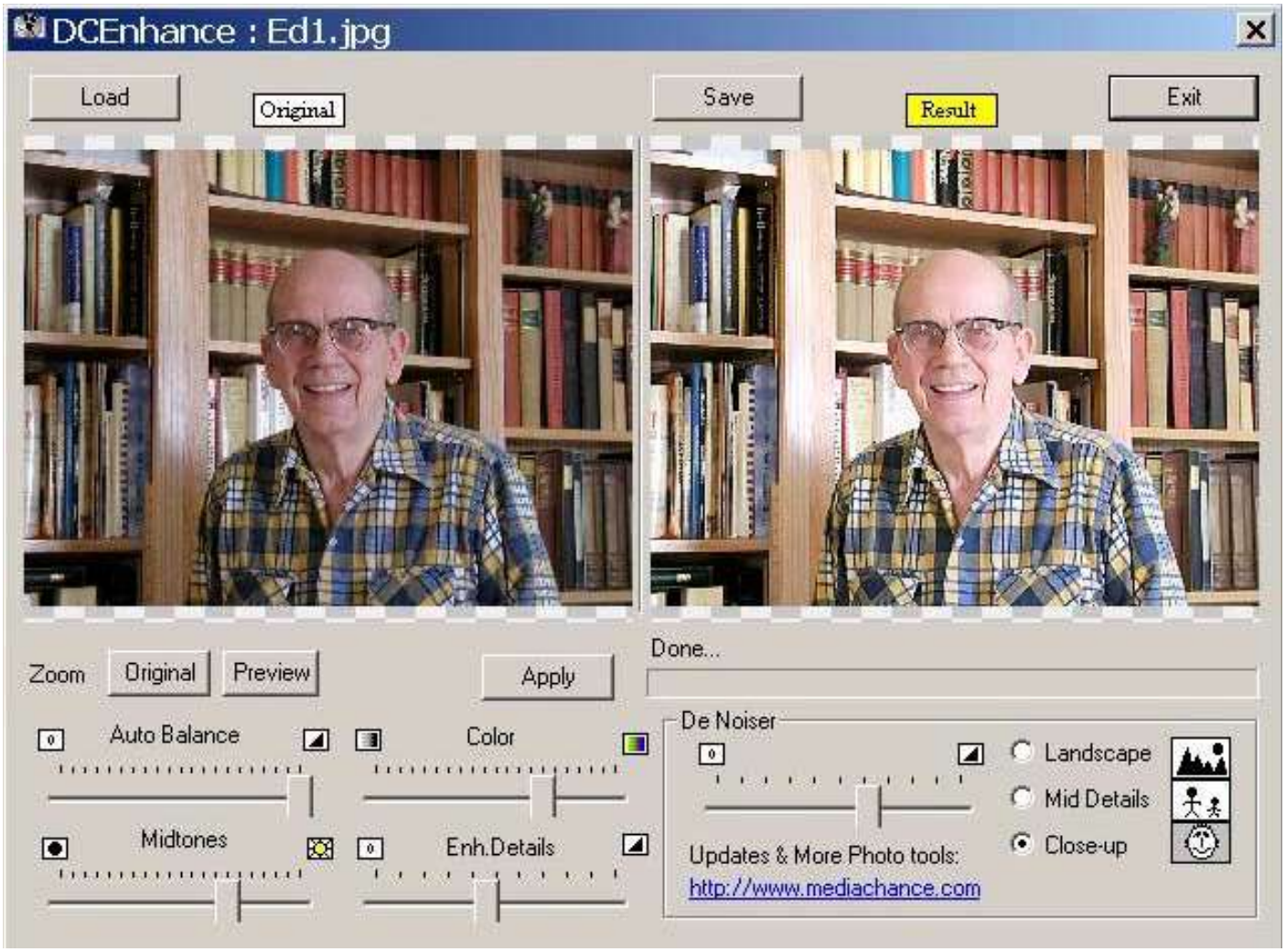
Even with the best digital cameras I've found that the average digital photo still needs a little help, especially in the "brightening-up and noise department." DCE solves this problem and so much more. MediaChance, the makers of DCE, bills this software as *almost idiot proof,* and I agree.

I've got some of the best software made for enhancing digital imagery, and some of these programs would probably do a better job than DCE if I learned how to use the software properly. But none of the best stuff does it faster and definitely not easier.

As I mentioned earlier, you will notice the greatest improvement in your photos if there are bad lighting conditions, especially for photos taken inside or in the shadows. But it doesn't automatically adjust every photo. Sometimes the adjustments are so subtle it's hard to tell anything changed at all.

Initially, when running the program for the first time it will ask you about your camera and try to set itself up automatically to make the proper adjustments for your specific camera. But if you are not satisfied with the results you can always try your hand at adjusting the settings to your own liking. The DCE window

(DCE……..Continued on page 7)



(DCE……..Continued from page 6)

shows your original photo alongside the enhanced photo. There are manual slide-bar adjustments for **Auto Balance, Color, Midtones, Enhanced Details and De Noise**. I found the auto settings were perfect for my camera and I haven't needed to touch the slide adjustments on my photos. You can also zoom in and out and preview the changes before applying them. I have a relatively new upper-end Sony, but I was amazed at the difference between the original and DCEnhanced photo.

Once you decide the enhanced photo is the one you want to save, DCE gives you an option of which format (JPG, BMP, PCX, PNG, TGA & TIF) you would like to save it in. I typically choose JPG because that's the native format of my camera and seems to be the all around best for size, color, etc. DCE also lets me choose the compression ratio I want for my JPGs. Prior to saving, CE adjusts all of the settings previously mentioned above plus it automatically enhances the edges, then saves the new file. If you try to save it using the original name, DCE warns you to use a new name so you can keep the original file intact. One area that DCE excels in is noise reduction and skin smoothing, which makes for some great close-ups!

You don't have to have a digital camera to use this program. It works well on any digital image that needs a little help. (Remember, if the picture is well balanced DCE won't make any adjustments at all.) I tried it on some of my older scanned images, and it did an outstanding job. I also used DCE on some of my older digital camera photos and was quite impressed. DCE will also make better images of the photos you capture from the Internet.

DCEnhancer is one of those programs that come along every now and then that's a real steal… especially at the price! Give it a try and you won't be disappointed. I guarantee it!

http://www.mediachance.com/digicam/dcenhanc.zip

(DCE……..Continued on page 8)

By Mary Sheridan, President,
Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I began using e-stamp a couple of years ago. I loved that I no longer had to go to the post office. Over the years I've had some really unpleasant experiences at the post office and avoiding going there really appealed to me.

I had lots of trouble with e-stamp. I couldn't get a lot of the address book features to work. I would save addresses and never find them again. I would type in an address and when I tried to print it, it wasn't there and nothing was printed. I lost quite a bit of postage and, more importantly, the time it took to try to get the program to work.

Last fall e-stamp announced that they were no longer going to be in the consumer postage business. I didn't want to go back to using regular stamps, so I found stamps.com. I didn't like the fact that I would be charged $4.49 no matter how much postage I used. The e-stamp program had only charged 10 % when I bought postage, and it didn't matter how long it took to use the postage. But, they weren't around anymore, and besides, I'd had all that trouble.

I'm sold on stamps.com now. Everything works beautifully. The address book stores the addresses just as it should with no problems. The postage prints perfectly every time. I'm saving 30 minutes a month from the time that it used to take to pay my bills. I guess I really should go to a bill paying service online, but I still have "trust issues" about that kind of thing.

The stamps.com was easy to set up. Everything is done online, so I didn't have to buy any software. Every time I print postage I remember the trouble I had with e-stamp and it really makes it worth the approximately $5.00 a month that I pay. I've heard that the stamps.com company may be in trouble, but I hope not. I've found something that helps me a lot and I hope it's around for a while. ◆

(Roundup……..Continued from page 4)

everyone," the judge said during a hearing held on March 2, 2001.

But wait again! Napster is also appealing the decision of the 9th Circuit, and the matter could be accepted for review by the U.S. Supreme Court, in which case everything now pending before the district court in California would come to a screeching halt.

But wait **again** again! There's another hearing scheduled for April 10, 2001, and at **that** hearing proposed class-action lawsuits by others ganging up on the Nappers—including independent record labels and music publishers—are scheduled to be discussed.

And wait, wait, **wait** yet again! A mediation among the parties is also scheduled for March 9, 2001, where they're supposed to try to hash it all out in some manner that everyone can live with (but the music-people may not cooperate; they may say screw you to the Napster folks, wishing to make an example of them as they come up with plans to handle the Napster alternatives mentioned below).

So...bottom line is that Napster is today (or yesterday, or perhaps tomorrow) installing a filter system to protect copyrighted music in an effort to forestall the district court judge from entering an injunction that will shut them down entirely. In the meantime, Napster has frantically been trying to cut a deal with the RIAA where the Nap-people will be able to provide copyrighted music on some kind of subscription basis where subscribers will pay Napster, which in turn will fill the pockets of the RIAA and their musicians. But the RIAA, being greedy and evil, and smelling blood, hasn't bitten so far.

Stay tuned for what the district court does. It'll be on all the front pages and TV shows soon, perhaps before this even comes out in print.

Now, all that being the case, what is the rest of the world to do? I mean, everybody wants free music, and they don't care whether it's got any steenking copyright protection or not, and they want to keep stealing...er...**sharing** it.

Enter Gnutella, Bearshare.com, Napigator, the anarchist-designed Freenet, Aimster, Audiogalaxy Satellite, CuteMX, LimeWire, Hotline, iMesh...oh, there're lots and lots of alternatives gurgling and bubbling and growing like bodysnatcher pods out there in Internet-land. As to how they work, I couldn't say, and I leave it to all of you out there who want to steal...er...**share** copyrighted material to figure them out (and maybe write reports on how they work for the TPCUG Newsletter).

In the meantime, remember that it's not only music that the struggle is being waged over. This battle is only the opening show for a war that will continue into the future. Music is just the first front in the war; ebooks and all other kinds of text are on the horizon, along with all types of picture or representational artwork to be argued over, and probably audiobooks and other types of readings will open yet another front in the war. Even farther on, when super-broadband access is available to us all, **movies** are going to be the battle zone du jour. But all that's another struggle, and far in the future (say 12 to 24 months or so from now). ◆

(DCE……..Continued from page 7)

Editor's Note: Go to the web version of the newsletter to better view the graphics in this article. ◆

Powermarks: A Different Way to Handle Bookmarks/Favorites

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
wherman1@tampabay.rr.com

A friend recently recommended I try the Powermarks program. The program is available online from http://www.kaylon.com, and you can try before you buy. If, like me you have a lot of Bookmarks (over 2500) and have CRS Disease, this program may be for you.

My first impression when using it was "I don't like it!" After getting acquainted with it, I changed my mind! Being a long time user of Internet Explorers Favorites, where you organize your favorites in a definitions tree, the representation appears to be completely disorganized. Each entry is placed in a flat database as opposed to the hierarchical representation in Explorer. The reason for the flat database is that searches are performed very rapidly. If you don't understand all of this, do not despair; the technical stuff is unimportant.

The first thing you do on installing the program is import all of your current Bookmarks/Favorites to the program, which is very easy. To use the program, simply begin typing words that define the Bookmark you want to find. Each time you type in a character, the program begins searching for the string. For instance, typing in "Tampa Tribune" will yield all of the Bookmarks beginning with"T" then "Ta"… narrowing to all containing Tampa"… finally narrowing to those containing "Tampa Tribune". Unless you are a very fast typist the Bookmarks will appear almost instantly because the search does not wait for all of the letters to be typed before beginning the search. Finally, select from the displayed bookmarks the one you are looking for. The **Big** feature is that you can easily edit words to be searched for in each Bookmark! For me, the problem in trying to organize Bookmarks by headings is all too often, when I Bookmark a page, I find it may fit in more than one category and have to make a choice. When I later want to find it, I have to try several possible categories before I find where it is.

Bookmarking a new page is very easy but different. Click on the Icon to "Bookmark and edit key words." You will see the Heading and key words that will be saved. You may change the Heading and key words to ones that have the most meaning for you. For example, I have seen sites labeled like "Homepage for the XYZ Corp." Who cares about the words "Homepage the Corp.", so throw them away and add two or three you will immediately recognize. Likewise, some of the key words defined in the HTML code may mean little to you, so erase them and add words that come to your mind whenever you think about that site. It takes but a few seconds, and now you will never have to search multiple categories to find where you put the Bookmark.

The purchase price of Powermarks is $24.95. Kaylon allows you space on their computer to store your Bookmarks in case your computer crashes. With this program you can still use your Favorites in Explorer or Navigator, if you wish, and there is a Synchronize button which will update Powermarks from Navigator or Explorer.

(Powermarks……..Continued on page 10)



May 2-3, 2001
Tampa Convention Center
10:00am - 4:00pm Daily

Tampa Bay Information Technology Exposition & Conference (ITEC). ITEC will feature more than 2000 products and solutions, representing the latest developments in Computers, Telecommunications, Internet/Intranet, Software, Networking, Imaging and Records Management, Multimedia, Video Conferencing, Client Server, Network Security, Disaster Recovery, ATM and much more.

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Tampa, FL 33622-1081 merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

were scanned in and the list of his equipment that he has acquired over many years.

Scanner:	HP5370 and an HP PhotoSmart photo scanner
Camera:	Canon Powershot G1 digital and a Nikon
Printers:	Alps MD1300 for the photos
Software:	Adobe PhotoShop and Corel Photo-Paint

Two good web sites mentioned are: Http://www.dpreview.com for digital camera reviews and http://www.luminous-landscape.com for photographic techniques, opinions and images.

In his presentation, William took pictures, with and without flash. He then transferred these files to his notebook computer, made adjustments to the size and made some contrast changes.

William showed us some of his varied interests in copying old B & W family photos, Mardi Gras photos scanned from slides and close-ups of wild flowers from a 35 mm camera and scanned from negatives with the HP photo scanner.

He also demonstrated his "Hyde Park Project" where he is taking digital pictures of all 400 plus houses in Hyde Park and is arranging them in a new Visual Basic program that he wrote to manage and display them.

He concluded by showing a panorama of his back yard that consists of multiple digital pictures taken with his Canon G1 and merged with Photo Stitch.

Thanks must go to William LaMartin for an excellent and informative talk on the hottest topic in home computing.

DOOR PRIZE
Gary Ennis won the door prize, a copy of Intuit's Quickbook Pro 2000 business financial software. ◆

(Powermarks……..Continued from page 9)

If you are a Power Browser user, try Powermarks. You may like it and the trial is free! ◆

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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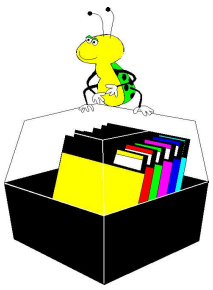
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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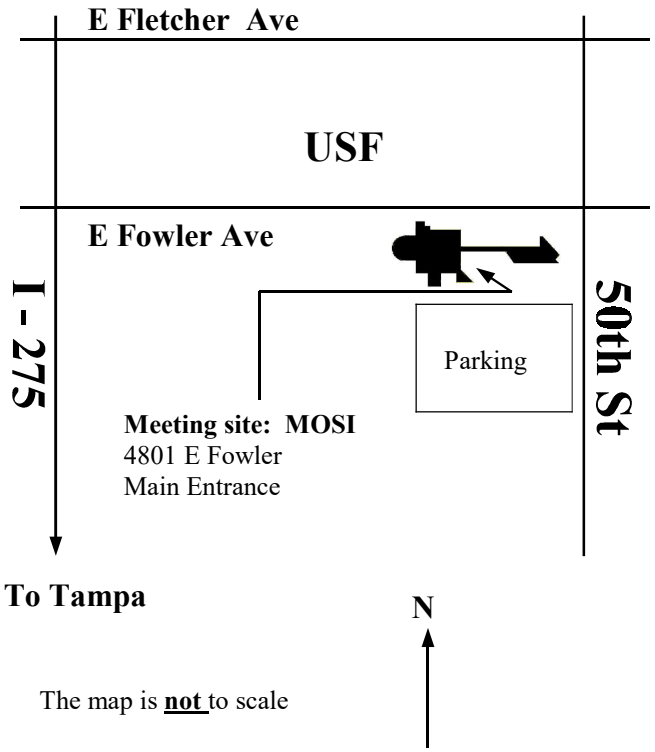
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(President……..Continued from page 5)

At the last meeting, it was suggested that we establish a novice user class in the computer lab at MOSI, if we are able to hold the regular meetings in a different part of the museum. I have a call in to Al Pesche at MOSI, so I don't have anything definite yet. There is a need for the novice classes, and we have members who are willing to act as "teachers" for the class, so it may prove to be workable.

We are planning to change the time of the regular meeting from 6 PM to 6:30 PM. Several people are having a difficult time being there at 6 PM. The changes won't take effect until May.

It's always fun working with this great group of people, and I hope to see a big turnout for the next meeting. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 5 May 2001

Meeting

Web Application Development Tools

May 9, 2001
6:30 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: Sebastian Frey from 4D will speak on web application development tools. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

May 2001 will be our last meeting at MOSI. I'll miss the place. It's been so convenient to my home, but things change. I'd like to thank the museum for allowing us to meet in their computer lab all these many months. We're moving to the Jan Platt Library (details located elsewhere in the newsletter). I'm hoping the move will serve as a new beginning for our group. Thanks to William LaMartin for doing the legwork on the new location.

I thought the Morgan Stanley Online presentation at our last meeting was very interesting. I'm amazed at how savvy our people are on so many topics. Lots of those present seemed to have investing down pat. The questions were probing, and it was fun to listen to the discussions.

(President.....Continued on page 5)

Beginning with the May meeting, the meeting time is changed to 6:30. Beginning in June, we will meet at the Jan Kaminis Platt Regional Library, 3910 S Manhattan Avenue, Tampa.

June 13: To be announced
July 12 (a Thursday): Pens that scan and upload text to your computer

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the April Meeting

By Bruce Register, Program Coordinator,
Tampa PC Users Group
bregis@gte.net

President Mary Sheridan called the meeting to order at 6 PM. President Sheridan announced the **MAY Meeting is our LAST MEETING AT MOSI.** The June meeting will be held at the Jan Kaminis Platt Library at the corner of South Manhattan and Euclid Avenues. She also announced that the May meeting at MOSI will begin the change to meeting at 6:30 PM rather than 6:00 PM.

A general discussion was held about various topics of interest to the group. It was announced that ITEC will be at the Convention Center. TPCUG was given several free tickets for the event on May 2 and 3. There will be many exhibitors who will make the visit very worthwhile. Those who have attended previous ITECs stated that the exposition features top-notch exhibitors and educational sessions. The full list of Special Features and Functions is available at http://itec.asmcorp.com/c4/tam/. President Sheridan has free tickets ($20 value). Her phone number and email address are on the left side of this. Also, Adobe had a free all day presentation on April 26. Microsoft will present Microsoft TechNet Briefing on May 8 at the Tampa Airport Marriott. Register at http://msevents.microsoft.com. Another free meeting is the Microsoft Office XP at the Hyatt Westshore on June 2, 2001 beginning at 1 PM and ending at 3 PM. This is a live event with the Microsoft showcase and announcements.

Bruce Register, Program Coordinator, introduced Ray Hall with Morgan Stanley Dean Witter. Mr. Hall is a financial advisor who spoke on the use of electronics in trading. His company provides several services of an innovative nature. His company provides much free information and also provides financial service and advice on a fee basis for those who desire to use them. Etraders are advised to utilize a professional service that supplies good research analysis. His company provides several programs and services that include online and phone information. They have an Analyst Research Report for their customers and have a program called Mutual Fund Center. They serve risk investors and income investors and all in between. Ray Hall of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter can be reached at ray.hall@msdw.com. With the Palm Pilot and other machines, one may now trade from any location at any time. Mr. Hall emphasized that a new marketing day is upon us in which competition is very fierce. He feels strongly that his company has molded to serve the needs of the customers with exemplary courtesy and latest techniques. With the current bear market, Mr. Hall recommends that each investor have a managed account portfolio so that the investor may quickly move as desired in a fluctuating market. This report touches on only some of the "tips of the iceberg" services that MSDW provides. Our group energetically partici-

(Minutes.....Continued on page 5)

Adobe Photoshop Elements

By Larry Anders, ELibrarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
larryanders@msn.com

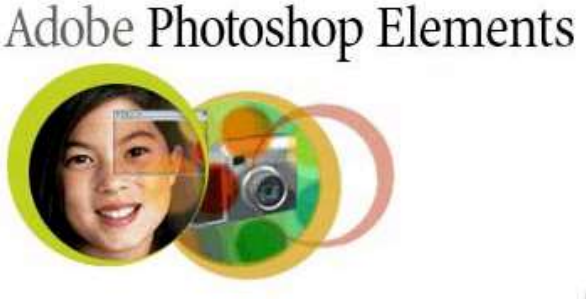
I think most people will agree that Adobe Photoshop is right close to, if not at, the top of the list of digital imaging editing programs. And I think those same people will also agree that it is at the top of the list for difficulty in learning to use. Photoshop is by far a professional editing tool, designed for professionals, and it's quite expensive too (street price about $600). Adobe wisely realized that amateur digital image editors needed a tool also that would be easy-to-use, powerful like Photoshop and competitively priced. Voilà, along comes ***Adobe Photoshop Elements***.

For $99 full price, or $69 for a competitive upgrade for registered owners of Adobe PhotoDeluxe, Photoshop Limited Edition, Arcsoft PhotoStudio, Corel PHOTO-PAINT, Jasc Paint Shop Pro, Microsoft PhotoDraw and PictureIt!, MGI PhotoSuite, Ulead PhotoImpact and PhotoExpress, you can get a state-of-the-art digital imaging program designed to improve your color printouts and web applications. ***Elements'*** editing tools are based on Photoshop software, with a lot of the features included that are built into Photoshop, but ***Elements*** also comes with a whole host of new tools designed specifically for ***Elements*** and not found in Photoshop.

Upon launching ***Elements*** you can be off and running by utilizing the *Quick Start* screen that provides easy and centralized access to the primary file creation and acquisition features. You can start from scratch or load an existing image, copy something from the clipboard, acquire an image from a scanner or digital camera, or click on the tutorial button and get detailed instructions and tips. There is a *Hints Palette* that provides easy-to-understand illustrations of each tool in ***Elements***, not just the name of the button, but also a brief description and usage tips relating to that tool so you can learn what each tool does in a hurry.

A new item called the *Recipes Palette* is a handy feature that interactively teaches you how to perform a particular task but still gives you full control, if you want it. You can get instructions on such things as adding a gradient effect to a graphic, creating a transparent text panel, removing noise (dust and scratches), removing a color cast, or touching up a photo. There is also a "do-it-for-me" button if you're in a real hurry. The program comes loaded with recipes and you can download additional recipes from Adobe's web site.

There is a *File Browser* that displays graphic files as thumbnail images. This allows you to search visually for a file while you are still inside the program. There are several color correction and retouching tools, such as *Color Adjustment Variations* which automatically generates and displays multiple versions of the same image so you can easily identify the color adjustment you want. There is a *Red Eye Brush Tool* to let you remove camera flash with pinpoint accuracy instead of applying a red-eye reduction command to the entire file. There are also *Level Adjustment Controls* that let you precisely adjust colors, brightness, contrast, and black and white levels of an image using numeric value slider bars, and the results are previewed instantly before being applied.



We all take or scan not-so-great photos. ***Elements*** lets you crop and straighten these less than perfect images with one command. There is also an *Adjust Backlighting* command that lets you darken images because of too much flash, or a *Fill Flash* command that instantly lightens images from not enough flash or light. Also, there are darkroom techniques called *Dodge*, which lightens a specific area, or *Burn,* which darkens a specific area of an image.

How many times have you taken a series of photos in a row to create a panorama effect by pasting the photos together? *Adobe Photomerge* is included that will automatically resize, skew, and blend portions of multiple images into a seamless panorama. All you have to do is copy two or more photos into a separate folder and ***Elements*** does everything automatically for you. I have a couple of panorama programs now that I have been using, but I guarantee they are definitely not this easy, nor are the results as good.

One of the carryovers from Photoshop is ***Elements'*** ability to create and edit composite images containing multiple layers. Each layer is editable independently of any other layer, thereby allowing you to create some dramatic effects, such as realistic 3D text, that may otherwise take much more time to create. There is also a rather large library of *Layer Styles*, such as glow, bevel and drop shadow, that you can apply to a chosen layer with a simple click of the mouse.

Included also are drawing tools, such as the *Custom Shape* tool which will let you add graphic elements to your images by choosing from a library of shapes and symbols. There is a wide variety of brushes and something called the *Impressionist Tool* that will allow you to make believe you are Monet or Renoir and apply effects to the entire image or just certain

(Elements……..Continued on page 4)

(Elements……..Continued from page 3)
parts or layers.

The *Text* tool allows you to add text freely to an image with total control of the fonts and type sizes. There is a *Warp Text* command to transform text such as fisheye, flag, wave and arch. You can type horizontally or vertically and bend and distort any which way you choose.

There is a *Filters Browser* that displays thumbnail images of some 95-plus special effects so you can see how the filter will affect your image. When you find the one you want, just drag and drop a filter's thumbnail onto your image and the filter will be applied automatically.

You can experiment with your image and not worry about the changes you've made because there are multiple levels of undo in the *History Palette*. There is also a built-in *Background Eraser* that will let you create professional, seamless composite images. By simply dragging the tool across the portion of the image you want to keep, you can then erase the background without affecting the foreground object. Then just copy and paste the foreground object into another image and create a new composite image. You could make yourself or your friends show up in some strange places. No wonder photos are not used as evidence in a court of law any longer.

One fun tool is the *Liquify* filter that lets you quickly distort an image by interactively pulling and twisting the image as if it were made of putty. Your changes don't have to be real dramatic either. Say you have a picture of your mother-in-law who always frowns when she's around you. Take a picture of her and put a smile on her face subtly. (If you're like me you'll be tempted to put clown lips on her, but this time just ever so lightly make her smile.) Then show her the difference. If she doesn't like the picture, then go back and put the clown lips on her.

If you're into publishing your photos on a web page, like I am, ***Elements*** will make your life easier and your web pages load faster and look better. Using the *Save for Web* command lets you precisely and interactively optimize graphics for posting on the web by fine-tuning your output. I have a web site that mainly houses photos of family and friends. What used to take me hours to prepare for posting to the web now takes minutes, and the quality is much better. By using *Web Photo Gallery* I can now automatically produce photographic web pages without the coding hassles I've had in the past. Just a couple of mouse clicks and a couple of choices and I'm ready to upload. Wow! What a difference.

Elements follows through with Photoshop's ability to produce great printed results. Another added feature is the ability to create a *Picture Package* that automatically generates copies of a photo on a single page to maximize the use of expensive photo-quality paper by printing multiple layout options such as: two 5 x 7 images; four 4 x 5; one 5 x 7 and four 2.5 x 3.5; two 4 x 5, two 2.5 x 3.5 and four 2 x 2.5, and many more picture package templates (20 in all). You can change the resolution and color mode of each print job as well. A thumbnail contact sheet of all the images in a particular folder can also be printed with full control of resolution, color mode, layout, number of columns and rows, etc.

Adobe's excellent ability to manage color has also been built into ***Elements***, letting you choose full color management for the best print output, limited management for the best web output, or no color management if you think your images don't need any help. One feature that will come in very handy if your camera doesn't produce one of the major graphic file formats is *Batch Convert*. You can automatically convert multiple image files from one format to another. Simply choose the source file format, size and resolution and those settings will be applied to all files in a designated folder. You can also batch rename files from your digital camera to file names that make more sense.

I don't think I've covered all the features yet but I have at least hit the high points. I'm still playing with and testing ***Adobe Photoshop Elements***, but, suffice it to say, I think Adobe's got one hot commodity on their hands. Adobe thinks so too because they are giving you thirty days to try it out for free. Just go to http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopel/demoreg.html, fill out a short form and download the free file. The file size is 53.4 megabytes. If you don't have cable or DSL, Adobe has provided a small VBOX Guaranteed Download Container, which will manage the download process and allow you to resume interrupted download sessions, should they occur. Save this program to your desktop. Once the download is complete, double-click on the VBOX icon to download the tryout to your system.

Adobe Photoshop Elements is really hard to beat. It takes the place of several other programs that I am currently using and appears to do a better job. The price is reasonable and best of all it can be tried for **FREE**. System requirements are a Pentium class processor, any version of Windows 98 or better (or Mac 8.6 or better), 64 MB of RAM, 150 MB of hard disk space, at least a 256 (8 bit) color monitor with 800 x 600 or better resolution and a CD-ROM drive.

What have you got to lose? Give it a try. **You won't be sorry!** ◆

(President……..Continued from page 1)

On May 2-3, 2001, TPCUG had a presence at ITEC. Because of the publication time for the newsletter, I'll be writing more about ITEC in the next issue of Bits of Blue.

Our July meeting will not only be at the new location, but it also will be on Thursday, July 12th instead of Wednesday the 11th. The library wasn't available on Wednesday and luckily Bruce Register was able to change his scheduled presentation to the 12th. I hope this doesn't present a hardship for anyone. It was the only reasonable way to work out the problem.

Don't forget, we will be changing our meeting time starting in May. The Windows SIG will begin at 6:30 and the presentation will begin at 7 PM.

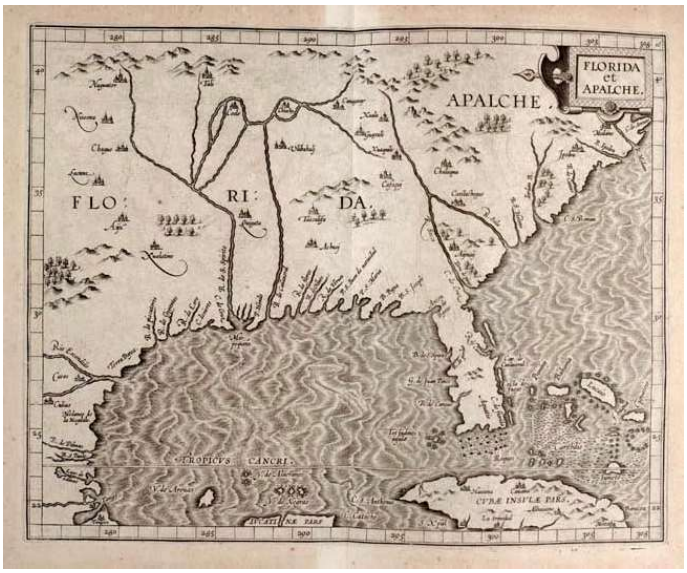
Happy computing! ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

pated in a very interesting Q and A session. He responded to very specific market questions. The Tampa PC Users Group is very appreciative for the presentation. He gave us several door prizes that were given away.

Some asked for contact information for JRInkjet, last month's presentation. It is http://www.tubecomputers.com and email: sales@tubecomputers. ◆

Internet picture of the month

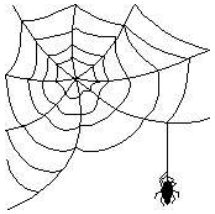


European Map Maker's View in 1597 of Today's Southeastern US

One of many historic documents available online from Paul Mellon's Personal Library at the University of Virginia. http://www.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/mellon/.

The inscription under the map reads: Wytfliet, Cornelius. Descriptionis Ptolemaicæ avgmentvm. Louvain: Tijpis Iohannis Bogardi, 1597.

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
ISB Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants	http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu/
Internal Revenue Code (26 USC)	http://www.fourmilab.ch/ustax/www/contents.html
Florida Stock Photography - New Leaf Graphics	http://www.newleafgraphics.com/stock.html
National PLANTS Database	http://plants.usda.gov/plants/home_page.html
Copyright Basics	http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/smbuss/cpyright/circ1.html
The JavaScript Gate - JavaScript Tutorials	http://www.javascriptgate.com/
TAMPA FLORIDA municipal government - official site	http://www.ci.tampa.fl.us/
Along the Chisholm Trail	http://www.texhoma.net/~glencbr/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

A Few Meandering Thoughts

By Tim Condon
Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

MEANDERING THOUGHT #1: VIRUSES, WORMS, AND OTHER BAD STUFF

If you're connected to the Internet---and who among us is not?---it's getting increasingly important to start thinking about security and protection from these things (don't ask me what the differences are among them; look it all up on the Internet, where all knowledge in the universe now resides). The reason I mention this area is because I've been hit lately, repeatedly, with several viruses, one of which is named the "Bymer Worm" and another known by its name of "ttfload.vbs" or "ttfloads.vbs" (the latter is what's called a "visual basic script," which is why it has the .vbs ending on the file that gets snuck into your computer).

Those two viruses aren't as destructive as some other payloads; over time they'll slow your computer down, interfere with the operation of your network, cause various anomalies to occur that make you think you've got a hardware or software problem, etc. But there are others out there that will try to destroy your computer system, erasing all or part of your hard drive in the process. Those little babies are another story. Right now, your story is this:

A. You need to have a real-time anti-virus program installed on your machine, running at all times, particularly when you're logging onto the Internet. And you need to have a regular schedule when you run your anti-virus program and scan every file on every hard drive in your system (I do mine monthly; others prefer a more frequent schedule). The most popular anti-virus programs appear to be Norton Anti-Virus, Trend Micro's PC-cillin, and McAfee's anti-virus program. Do some investigating on the Internet, where all knowledge in the universe now resides, to find out more for yourself. (I use the McAfee ActiveShield and Virus Scan Online products, and they work well.)

B. You also need to have a relatively new type of program that's been invented just in the last year or two. The general moniker of such programs is "personal firewall." There are plenty of them out there, including some pretty good ones which are free. Because of the repeated attacks on my system, I've found, downloaded, and now use a free one called "Tiny Personal Firewall." Its technology is said to be based upon U. S. Navy encryption and firewall technology, and many people speak very well of it. It certainly has been working for me. Do a search on the Internet (where all the knowledge in the universe now resides), and you'll find tons of info about Tiny Personal Firewall, as well as other popular programs that do the same thing. Particularly at risk in this area are cable and DSL connections (which are "always on" in the background, and thus subject to being attacked at any time by hackers).

To find out just how exposed you and your computer may be when you're logged onto the Internet, go to the following location, where Gibson Research has set up a free service that checks your computer's vulnerability as you watch: Go to http://grc.com, and then click on the Shields Up! icon. You'll be able to download a small free program called "Shields Up Test," and then be stunned to find out just how "open" your computer is to adolescent hackers.

MEANDERING THOUGHT #2: ONLINE BACKUP SERVICES

We all know that backing up our computer systems and data is absolutely essential. Especially in the case of businesses. Our entire businesses now "live" on computers, and (a) theft of our computers or (b) hardware breakdown or (c) a fire in your building or (d) other natural disaster could very well shut your business down. Up until recently the solution was one of a variety of back-up technologies, including zip drives, tape drives, CDR (rewritable CD-ROM's) drives, and even good old fashioned disks. Now there's another technology surging as an answer to this ancient (say, 10-year-old) problem: Online backup services.

With an online backup service, basically what you have is a company with huge backup capabilities. You connect with them over the Internet and upload your data files, business files, or the contents of your entire computer network, to their storage drives. Then, no matter what happens to your office (earthquake, fire, hurricane, attacks by giant beetles, etc.), your essential files are stored safely way far away, from whence they can be quickly and easily downloaded.

Couple of caveats. First, you really want to be on some kind of a broadband connection such as DSL or cable modem if you're going to use an online service. It takes a lot of time to upload your files to such a service. But who cares, if the uploading is happening overnight? Second, although most of these backup services offer free accounts, those types of accounts are limited in size. If you want to safely back up your entire business with an online service, you'll be paying a not-too-big monthly fee. If you want to try out such a service, the obvious thing to do (as I am) is sign up for a free service with only 25 to 50 megabytes available, and try it out. I'm currently compressing all my data files, and a few others for safety's sake, and uploading them to an online service called Connect.

For more information, do a search for "online storage" providers on the Internet, where all knowledge in the universe now

(Meandering……..Continued on page 7)

(Meandering……..Continued from page 6)
resides. Some of the companies that you'll read about include those located at http://www.myspace.com, http://www.xdrive.com, http://www.freedrive.com, http://www.idrive.com, and http://www.driveway.com. Check'em out.

MEANDERING THOUGHT #3: VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORKS

If you travel much and could use remote access to your home or office computer files, you need to take a close look at http://www.mangosoft.com. This company has created an astoundingly easy implementation of a virtual private network ("VPN") which you can try out for free for 30 days (see if it works, after all). The implementation is called "mangomind" and will create an "extra hard drive or drives" on any computers you want when you download the software from mangosoft. The "extra hard drive(s)" will simply appear on your home or office computer, just like extra drives on a local network. And the service sets up so that it or they will be easily accessible to your laptop or other computer from anywhere else through an ubiquitous Internet connection.

Up until now, VPN's have been somewhat expensive and unwieldy, reserved for the big corporations with the money and techies to make it all work. I tried out the "Mangomind drive" (as they call it) VPN and found it to work incredibly easily. It's just like having an unlimited network connection that you can access from anywhere when you're whiling away the time at a deposition in New York, Singapore, Costa Rica, or wherever. Consider what that means (about the Mangomind drive, not the foreign deposition): You can get onto your home or office computer system and pull up any file, any document, any information you need, about any case, from anywhere, just about as easily as you do when you're in the office itself.

I didn't keep the Mangomind drive implementation, which costs something like $25 per remote user per month, because I don't travel that much, and I don't have a bunch of lawyers in the office who need to share. Perhaps some of the rest of you do. It would pay you to check out the Mangosoft offerings, just in case.

Oh yeah, one other thing. "What's a virtual private network," you want to know? Beats the hell out of me. Look them up on the Internet, where all knowledge in the universe now resides, and learn all about them.

MEANDERING THOUGHT #4: NAPSTER, CYBER-NARC AND E-BOOKS

By now everyone knows the sad, unfolding tale of Napster. The Internet music-sharing service where copyrighted music is downloaded "for free" is in the process of being squashed by the evil Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), along with some rock bands who have piled on, including Metallica and Dr. Dre. While Napster attempts to fight off the barbarian hordes with help from high-powered legal talent (notably David Boies, last seen representing Al Gore in Florida and before the U.S. Supreme Court), other free services are taking over, multiplying like cockroaches in the walls. Jockeying to take the place of Napster are music sharing/stealing (depending on your outlook) services, including Gnutella, Freeinet, Aimster, Napigator, and lots and lots of others.

But wait! The RIAA and their rock star supporters have birthed a new phenomenon, "Cyber-narc"! This is a private company that cybernetically "sniffs" throughout the Internet, finding computers that are sharing or offering to share copyrighted music. When they find such a computer, they accost not the computer-users but the ISP (Internet service provider), telling them that someone they're providing service to is illegally sharing copyrighted music, and **they** (the ISP) will be sued if they don't put a stop to it. So the ISP then goes after the music-sharers, cutting them off if necessary. I ask you, is this a great idea or what?

Perhaps more importantly, however, is the looming battle over electronic books and texts. The Internet is, above all, a supreme tool for information-sharing. And the "digital information" can be in the form of music, or books, or pictures, or speech, or non-music sounds, or anything else that can be rendered into other bitstreams. Who gets hurt when everyone is able to share everything with everyone? You would think the artists and writers and poets and the such. But it's not that, not really. The **real** victims of such an information-sharing revolution will be those who make their money off of being the "middleman" between the creators and the consumers. That is, the distributors. In the case of music, it's the big record labels. In the case of moving pictures (coming to a computer screen near you, soon, just wait), it's the film distributors. In the case of books, it's the publishing/distribution industry. In each case huge amounts of money are skimmed off by those who "reproduce and distribute" the product, whether it be music, moving pictures, or writing. The middlemen.

So, perhaps predictably, about two months ago megapublisher Random House filed a lawsuit against a tiny new "ebook publisher," RosettaBooks LLC, accusing the new company of illegally selling electronic copies of books written by Random House authors. Which in turn started a giant imbroglio over who exactly **owns** the rights to distribute electronic renderings of books. The head of RosettaBooks fired back at Random House, saying that his company had contracts with the Random House authors to distribute their writings electronically. Random House fired back that **they** owned the exclusive rights to distribute the works electronically ("ebooks," as

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they're increasingly being called).

If you go to http://www.rosettabooks.com, you'll see a quite interesting selection of ebooks for sale, including some authors who are otherwise published by Random House. Of course the prices are still ridiculously high, "25% off retail price," but that will change. And the industry still awaits a truly handy ebook reading device, which hasn't been invented and marketed yet. But the future is still visible: Less paper, more bitstreams; less ink, more digital rendering; less warehousing and trucks, and more instant downloading.

In the meantime, the lawsuit between Random House and RosettaBooks apparently continues.

MEANDERING THOUGHT #5: PUBLIC RECORDS ONLINE-"YOU CAN'T DO THAT!"

With all the ferment going on throughout the civilized world (not to mention the uncivilized parts, like China) regarding the Internet, it would seem to be a "given" that public records such as you find in courthouses (mortgages, property deeds, judgments, satisfactions, etc.) are going "online," and soon, right?

Well...not really.

But wait! Don't "public records" mean "public records"? Can't anyone go down to the courthouse and pull out any court file or other public records and peruse its contents? That's true. But some people, and apparently some courts, think that public records shouldn't be public if it's "too easy" to access them. For instance, there's a battle going on in Virginia right now over whether to allow the posting of public court case documents on the Internet. Some say that criminals and businesses and other nefarious types can send "crawlers" or Internet robots around to collect personal information from court records if they're posted on the Internet, and then use that information for all sorts of nefarious purposes. Similar battles are going on in Texas, Kansas, New York, Ohio, and all over the place otherwise.

The problem is that traditional public records exist in what experts call "practical obscurity." After all, who takes the trouble to go down to the courthouse to pull those court files and sniff out information about individuals. But when it's right there on the Internet, for everyone to see, including your Aunt Matilda, well, that's seen as far different.

Hold on, says the media-driven Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. Those **reporters** sure do go down to the courthouse and sift through those court records to get what they need, but they don't want it kept off the Internet either. The executive director of the reporters committee, Lucy Dalglish, says, "This is all kind of nutty, part of what I call technology hysteria....If something is so sensitive that it needs to be sealed, you can do what people do now: Ask a judge to seal it."

One prominent battle in this area was lit off when one of the parties in a libel suit set up a web page and moved to post entire discovery depositions of parties involved. Invasion of privacy? Public records? A First Amendment issue? The judge in that case initially granted an injunction against posting the depositions, finding that irreparable harm could come to one or more parties if the stuff was posted (you can imagine what areas the defendant's lawyer got into when the plaintiff was deposed; it soon degenerated into juicy tidbits about extra-marital affairs, drug usage, and other great stuff).

Which way will this issue break? Who knows? Stay tuned for more on this emerging battle.

MEANDERING THOUGHT #6: DSL FOR EVERYONE COMING

For us big-town people in places like Tampa and Orlando, Miami and Ft. Lauderdale, getting broadband internet connections is no big thing. Many of us even have choices between ADSL ("asynchronous digital subscriber line," or "DSL" for short) and cable. However, for you country people, there's often no broadband offering at all. This is because cable Internet access systems piggyback on cable TV lines, and lots of places still don't have cable television offerings. As for DSL, there are range limitations; it only works within a few thousand feet of a telephone company switching station. As a result, only about 65% of the average telephone company's market is reachable with present technology.

But that's all about to change. At least one company, Symmetricom, as of January 2001 successfully demonstrated a "repeater" for DSL applications. The new technology is said to have demonstrated a 30-fold improvement over conventional DSL installations. Meaning that broadband Internet access through DSL service will soon be available to 95% of the average telephone company's market. Stand by. Broadband access will soon be here for everyone.

MEANDERING THOUGHT #7: FABULOUS, FREE, FILE-FORMATTING TOOL

Finally, there's a new software tool out there which can be obtained for free, for previewing and printing out various types of files. It comes, oddly enough, from Kinko's, the copying, printing, photographing, collating, coloring, and everything else store. The program is called, quite originally, the "Kinko's File Prep Tool" and can be downloaded for free from http://www.kinkos.com (or obtained in CD-ROM format at any Kinko's store). What's the big deal about it? Consider

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this:

Everyone has heard of the Adobe Acrobat Reader, the program that reads "PDF" ("portable document format") formatted files. The PDF format is a de facto standard for rendering and reading of pamphlets, books, magazines, pictures, web pages, etc. It can be obtained for free, and virtually everyone who's spent any time on the Internet has downloaded a copy.

Of course, there is another Adobe Acrobat program, the one that is utilized to **create** the standardized Acrobat programs. It's **not** free. Not by about $250. What's the value of such a program? Standardization. When you create an Adobe PDF file and put it on the Internet for downloading by whomever---as many, many downloadable files are---you want to know that when the file is opened it will look exactly as you have set it up to look and that anyone can read it with the same, standardized reading program. That's hard to do with word processing programs, for instance, since the program on one machine might be (and usually is) set up with different settings from the program on another machine. Not to mention that someone who wants to read your document may not even **have** a copy of the program to read it.

Also, the Adobe program handles all kinds of formats in converting to the PDF format. It doesn't matter if the file you're converting is a word processing file, a web page, or a graphics format file. They all come out so that they're readable on the standard Adobe Acrobat reader program. **But...**while you can obtain a free Acrobat reader program in numerous places on the Internet, you must pay about $250 to obtain a copy of the Adobe Acrobat program that **creates** files in the standard PDF format.

So...enter the Kinko's File Prep Tool program. You can get it for free, and it does essentially the same thing as the Adobe Acrobat program that creates PDF files. Except when you install the Kinko's program, you obtain the capability of creating "KPF" files from any other program (it works like you're "printing to a KPF printer"); once you do that, anyone with a copy of the Kinko's program can open and read your document, whatever it may be, or have, or contain, or look like. Very handy. And of course the price is right. And one other thing. It's also...ahem...rumored that Kinko's KPF files can also always be read by the free Adobe Acrobat reader program. Interesting, hah?

Well shucks. I trust I haven't meandered too far afield for everybody. Much of what I've written above may be common knowledge to many of us computer-geek-types. But it's all new, at some time or another, to everyone else...all part of the incredible technological advances rushing upon us. This is just a small effort to outline some of those changes.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Web Bugs and HTML formatted mail in general caught my attention last month. If your email software supports HTML style messages, as most do, then you can send and receive email messages that look just like web pages. Microsoft's Outlook Express makes it easy to put pictures, links and formatted text in such messages, but if you want some of the other things like sound and items created with Java Script you have to be able to do the coding yourself.

To be able to enter the code, you need to be able to work with the source code. If you do not see three tabs in your New Message window saying Edit, Source and Preview, click on the View menu item and make sure Source Edit is checked. You should then have a Source tab. Click on it to see and modify the HTML source code of the message.

So what does this have to do with web bugs? Well, if I insert the following Java Script into the message's source code

```
<SCRIPT language=JavaScript>
document.write("<IMG SRC=http://www.
lamartin.com/images/small/a00100.gif>");
//document.close();
</SCRIPT>
```

every time this message is read, it will go to my web site and download the file a00100.gif. I will then be able to look at my web site server log file and determine when the file was ac-

(Comments……..Continued on page 10)

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May 2-3, 2001
Tampa Convention Center
10:00am - 4:00pm Daily

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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cessed and by what IP address(es). The person who read the email will, however, not be aware of this since the file is a 1 pixel graphic that is very small and white and, thus, doesn't show up on his white email page.

Norton AntiVirus versus Microsoft Publisher When using Microsoft Publisher, I can simply right click on text in a text box (like the article you are now reading) and bring it up in Microsoft Word for editing. That is I could before I installed the newest version of Norton AntiVirus.

When I attempted to bring up Word, I got a message something like: A Word Story Editing error occurred……. A search at Microsoft for such text revealed that it was a conflict with Norton AntiVirus. They gave a solution which was also repeated at the Norton site. The only problem was that the solution didn't work—as other people had told them in the discussion forum that Norton was hosting on such problems. I added my two cents worth and received the response that it should work.

The supposed solution was to unregister the DLL Officeav.dll using regsvr32 /u "C:\program Files\Norton\AntiVirus \Officeav.dll" in the Windows Run text box. After going back and forth with Norton via email for a day with no improvement, I decided to simply rename the DLL by putting a $ in front of the name so that it couldn't be found. That solved the problem.

Apparently on some systems simply unregistering the DLL worked, but possibly because I am using Win Me it took more drastic action in my case. Who knows?

Taskbar Stuck I went to help a new client with her computer problems, and the first thing I noticed was that her Windows Taskbar was on the right side of the screen and could not be moved — even though moving and resizing of the Taskbar was enabled in the Taskbar's advanced properties. A search at http://search.microsoft.com revealed that the solution was to simply restart Windows in Safe Mode, then shut down and then restart Windows as usual—and they were correct this time.

Show Desktop Icon Missing The next problem was that there was no Show Desktop icon on the Taskbar. You know, the icon you can click on to minimize all open windows so that you have your desktop back. Well, I could find nothing at Microsoft on this, but http://www.deja.com/usenet came through with several newsgroup articles with the solution. The solution was:
Find the Show Desktop file in C:\windows\system and drag it to the appropriate place on the Taskbar. Nothing to it when you know what to do.

Map A new meeting site—in June—requires a new location map. I have created one, and you can view it at our web site at http://www.tpcug.org/images/library_map.jpg. If you can't type in all that, there is a link to it on the Announcements page.

For the curious, to make the map, I first open a mapping program like Street Atlas USA, view the area I want a map of and copy the screen to the Clipboard. Next I open a "drawing" program, Adobe Illustrator, and paste the map in from the Clip-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 12)

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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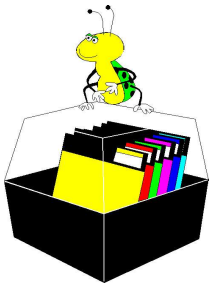
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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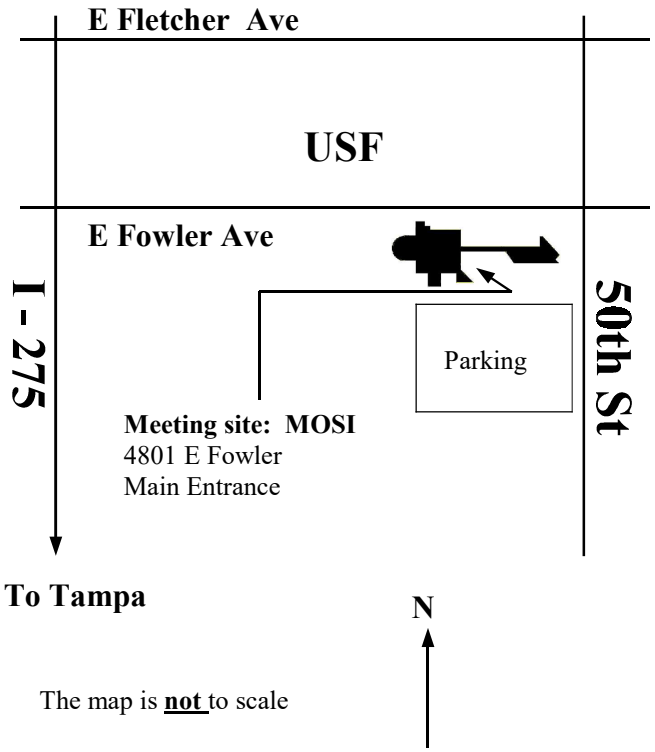
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Meandering……..Continued from page 9)

So read up, tune in, turn on, freak out, enjoy it all, and be ready. Here comes the Singularity! (Read all about that...you guessed it...on the Internet, where all knowledge in the Universe now resides.) ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 10)

board. I make this map a non-editable layer and create a new layer on which to do my drawing, where I then trace all the streets I want over the streets on the non-editable layer. Add a little Clipart and street names and make the original layer invisible, and I am done. ◆



The map is **not** to scale

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



April in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 4 April 2001

Meeting

Computers and the Stock Market

April 11, 2001
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

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Meeting Preview: Ray Hall will tell us about using computer software in investing. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

If you haven't heard yet, MOSI has told us we have to find another location. We can meet at MOSI in May but will have to be moved for the June meeting. I was sad at first and then realized that maybe it would be a good thing. The room at MOSI had gotten very crowded and it was always a headache finding someone to open the door for us. William LaMartin has suggested a library branch that looks promising. Merle Nicholson has told us in the past that we could use the TECO facility on 9th Ave. Any-

(President.....Continued on page 5)

**Beginning with the May meeting,
the meeting time is changed to 6:30.
Beginning in June, we will meet at a new location.**

May 9: To be announced

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the March Meeting

By Mary Sheridan, President,
Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

Mary Sheridan had a Windows SIG from 6 PM until 6:30. At 6:30 the meeting was opened and club business was discussed.

At 7:00, Bruce Register induced our presenters. He explained that he had met Claire Emanuel at the FACUG Spring Conference and she had graciously agreed to do a presentation for us. Kevin Hunt was also on hand to help with the presentation.

Claire began the presentation by explaining that she represents a company called Tu.Be. Computers located in Englewood, FL. Tu.Be. Computers are distributors for many types of computers and computer related products. They are also the distributors for JR Inkjet. JR Inkjet is a seven-year-old British based company. JR Inkjet developed the Universal Refill Ink Kit. Their refill kits can be used with over 400 different types of cartridges. Claire showed a slide show explaining how to refill an ink cartridge. Make sure you refill your cartridge over a protected surface, like the sink or a counter top covered with paper towels because you might get a few drops leak out of the cartridge and you don't want to make a mess. Be careful how you handle the cartridge's print head. They are usually metallic and might be damaged if you touch them. Cartridges should be refilled when they aren't quite empty. When cartridges are allowed to dry out, they may not be useable anymore. The refill kits come with a flush, so if your cartridges have dried out, you can still possibly use them by first running the flush through the print heads. The flush kit will dissolve the dried ink. The starter kit that Claire had for sale contained two 20 ml bottles of black ink. The amount of times you can refill your particular cartridge with the starter kit depends on how much ink your cartridge holds. The kit comes with the primary colors, cyan, yellow and magenta. JR Inkjet offers the starter kits at a special price to

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

Netgear 314 Gateway Router

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
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If you are using a cable or DSL connection to the Internet and have more than one computer, you need one of these routers. In the September 2000 newsletter (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/September2000/cable_router.htm), Larry Anders wrote about his good experience with the Linksys router. This month I am writing a similar laudatory article on the Netgear router with a four port 10/100 Mbps switch.

For several years, I have had a network connecting the four computers I and other family members use around the house. And, as described in an article in the April 2000 newsletter (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/april2000/comments200004.htm), I had even run extra cable so that I could connect the upstairs computer to the downstairs cable modem when I wanted more than a regular dial-up connection for that computer. But I had resisted the Microsoft Internet Connection Sharing feature of Microsoft Windows 98 SE and Windows Me since some aspects of it didn't appeal to me. Neither did the installation of proxy server software, which also allows you to share an Internet connection, which I tried way back in 1997 and wrote about in an article in the December 1997 newsletter (http://www.tpcug.org/reviews/december97.html). But after Larry's article I began researching such routers and watching the pricing.

Last month when I stopped by CompUSA for some new antiviral software, I noted that they had the Netgear 314 router on sale for $129, down from the usual $169 by way of an instant $20 rebate and a $20 mail in rebate. So I could wait no longer.

The router's installation is basically very simple. Each of your computers that will be connected to it will need a network card. These cards need to each have Client for Microsoft Networks installed, as well as the TCP/IP protocol with the TCP/IP that is bound to your network card set to obtain its IP address automatically. This can all be achieved by a right click on the Network Neighborhood icon on the desktop (Network Places in Win Me) and then a click on Properties.

Next, to install the router, with everything powered down you connect your cable or DSL modem to the Internet port on the router, then connect the network cable from each of up to four computers to one of the four Local ports on the router. Finally you plug the router's power adapter into an AC outlet and then power everything up. Everything worked right out of the box for me with the exception that I couldn't see the files on one computer from the other computers. That problem was solved by enabling File sharing for that computer's drives.



The Netgear 314 Router is the same size as the cable modem

The router dynamically assigns each computer on the network an address like 192.168.0.2, 192.168.0.3,…. The router itself has address 192.168.0.1, and you communicate with it via a Telnet to this address. When you do this Telnet you are presented with many menus which allow you to configure the setup in many ways. For example, if you want to be able to run a Microsoft NetMeeting session from a specific computer on the network, say, computer 192.168.0.2, then you will need to use Menu 15 to assign ports 1720 and 1503

(Router……Continued on page 7)

Easy CD Creator 5 Platinum Software Summary

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larryanders@msn.com

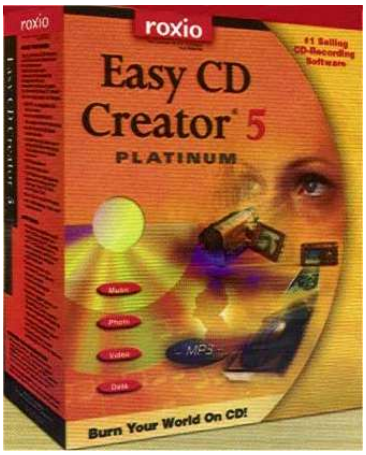
The best just keeps getting better. Several years ago, when I got my first CD burner, Easy CD Creator (EZCD) came in the box with the burner. It was not the latest version, but it didn't take me long to realize this was to be a software package that I would become very familiar with. Because I had that older version of EZCD that came with my burner I was qualified to buy the upgrade, which I did, the same day I got my burner.

I put off purchasing my first burner for quite a while, mainly because of the cost, and also because it was a whole new world of computing that I knew nothing about. But they don't call it Easy CD Creator for nothing. Within 5 minutes of installing my first version I had burned my first CD. Now that's EASY!

Suffice it to say that Adaptec, which I guess now goes by the name of Roxio, has always tried to make EZCD your one stop shopping for CD burning software. And with version 5 Platinum they've gotten enough software to let you do things on CD that you probably never thought you would or could.

As I indicated in the title, this is more of a summary than a review. Here's what you get with Easy CD Creator 5 and some of the things you can do:

- **Easy CD Creator 5 Platinum (of course – but hold on to your hat!)** Easily creates data, audio and multimedia CDs on your PC.
- **SoundStream 2** Enhances the sound quality of MP3 files or records from analog (phonograph, tape or microphone) or digital sources while filtering out the pops, clicks and hisses. Loudness balancing for tracks from disparate sources. Save CDs to HD to create a virtual jukebox of compressed CDs on your computer.
- **Direct CD** Save directly to a CD as if it were a hard drive. Previously, this type of CD could only be read



by another CD burner using Direct CD but now it will automatically "make-writable" on eject so that basically any CD reader can read it.

- **Take Two** Use your CD-R/RW Drive to recover from hard disk disasters.
- **Spin Doctor** Turns your scratchy LPs into Digital quality CDs (nearly).
- **CD Copier** Copy directly from one CD to another, but remember… if you don't own the rights, copying commercial CDs to sell or give away is illegal. Recordable CDs created with such material should be for personal use only.
- **VideoImpression** Easy to use video editing features such as trimming, combine, text overlay and transitions to video clips. Includes MPEG 1 video encoder to save video in the correct format for VideoCD Creator.
- **Photo Relay (which includes Photo Album and Video Postcard)** Make your own photo albums adding sound and narration or email video postcards that any PC can view without any special software.
- **VideoCD Creator** Become a Hollywood director and make your own videos with your very own multimedia studio. You can edit video clips, add text or apply transitions between scenes.
- **CD Label Creator** When you're all done creating, make your very own labels to cover your newly created CDs and CD cases.
- **Sound Editor** You not only have the ability to edit video but audio as well.
- **Session Selector** You don't have to burn a CD all at once any longer. Start it now and finish it later by starting a new session.
- **Web-CheckUp** With EZCD you're always assured of having the latest updates. Just go to the website and give yourself a check-up.

You can also download Internet music, including MP3 tracks, and record to your own CD's, create

(Easy.....Continued on page 9)

(President……..Continued from page 1)

one else who has any potential locations, or just some new ideas, please let a board member know about it.

The Spring Conference for the Florida Association of PC Users Groups was a huge success. We had 140 attendees representing 34 user groups. There were people from Michigan, near Knoxville and Atlanta. The food was excellent. The conference was well planned and a great learning experience for everyone who attended. The attending members from TPCUG were Jenny Lind Olin, Bruce Register, Kevan Sheridan and Mary Sheridan. Mike Hodges was only able to attend the Saturday sessions, but hopefully he found it a valuable experience. The APCUG representatives attending the FACUG conference held a round table session discussing what APCUG has to offer user groups. Two members of the APCUG approached me after the conference. They said their representative from Florida has resigned from the board of advisors and asked if I would consider filling the position. They assured me it wasn't going to consume too much time, so I agreed to help them out.

(President……..Continued on page 12)

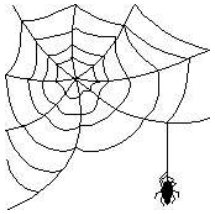
Internet picture of the month



Amazon. Com's Share Price
4/2/2000 – 4/2/2001

This image is from the Wall Street Journal's web site at http://interactive.wsj.com. To see the change in fortunes of this Internet retailer, step back a little over two years and visit http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_1999/january1999/picutre_of_the_month.htm. That was another Internet Picture of the Month.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
U.S. Civil War Center	http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/
NETGEAR – Small Business Networks	http://www.netgear.com/
Tu.Be. Computers – last month's presenters	http://www.tubecomputers.com/
Website Abstraction, The JavaScript technology center	http://wsabstract.com/
world cam collection	http://www.fat.co.uk/world/worldset20.html
Halifax Magazine - East Central Coast of Florida	http://www.halifaxmagazine.com/
HotSyte- The JavaScript Resources	http://www.serve.com/hotsyte/main.html
Hargrett Library Rare Map Collection - U of GA	http://scarlett.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/maps.html
Census Bureau	http://www.census.gov/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Editor's Comments: Microsoft Windows Media Encoder, Adobe Atmosphere and Renegade Fonts

By William LaMartin, Editor
Tampa PC Users Group
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Renegade Fonts Let's do the font bit first. In the June 1996 newsletter I mentioned a problem in Microsoft Access caused by the Hatten font installed with Microsoft Publisher 98. It was the first time I had run across the fact that having a certain font installed on your computer could cause a program to malfunction. I must admit that I don't understand how a "bad" font could cause a program to crash if the program doesn't use that font, and I don't think the program in question, NetMeeting, used any of the fonts I deleted to resolve the problem, since they were all dated before 1995.

Here's what happened. On a computer on which I had done a clean installation of Windows Millennium several months earlier, I decided to do a NetMeeting. On doing this, after NetMeeting had essentially loaded, I got the message "CONF caused a general protection fault in module GDI.EXE." If I closed out this message, NetMeeting would also close. If I just left the message up, then NetMeeting seemed to run sort of OK. There were problems, but they could conceivably be the fault of the other person in the meeting. A check of the Internet and Microsoft's site produced no mention of such a problem.

This past week, which was a couple of months later, I again tried out NetMeeting and received the same error message. However, this time much more seemed wrong. So, as I had done before, I went to Microsoft and downloaded the current version of the program and reinstalled NetMeeting. I also got the newest version of the Internet Explorer package and installed it. The error was still there.

I then searched the http://www.dejanews.com/usenet site (now redirected to Google) for that error message and found out that others were now having the same problem and that Microsoft had said it was caused by incompatible fonts. I went to the article at Microsoft and found out that I needed to remove all fonts dated differently than the date on my Win.Com file and see if NetMeeting ran OK. I did this—and it did. So some program that I had installed had installed one or more fonts that NetMeeting didn't like.

To get as many fonts back as possible, I reinstalled them in blocks ordered by date until the problem reappeared. The problem returned when I added back fonts dated earlier than 1995. I didn't really care about any but two of these fonts, so I reinstalled these two, which caused no problem, and threw away those remaining before 1995.

I have left out a very important detail—how did I remove the fonts and then get them back? I will let you think about that for awhile. You might try it on one font and then think how well what you did would work for hundreds.

Windows Media Encoder Those of you who check your email or look at our main web page, http://www.tpcug.org, know that I put at our site several Windows Media Player files of audio versions of some of the articles in the March newsletter. It was an interesting experiment.

If you would like to record audio and/or video in Windows Media format, go to Microsoft and download the free Windows Media Encoder. It also allows you to change audio and video files in other formats to the Windows Media Player format.

Adobe Atmosphere, really Adobe Atmosphere Beta Builder and Browser plug-in, allows you to create 3D virtual interactive worlds and to view them in your browser. The builder and the browser plug-in can be downloaded for free from http://www.adobe.com/products/atmosphere/main.html. I am sure the browser plug-in will remain free, but in the release version the builder will be a retail product.

(Editor……Continued on page 7)

(Editor……..Continued from page 6)

As you may know, I have played with 3D virtual worlds before, and there is a "TPCUG Virtual Reality" link on our main page to prove it. That was done in a piece of software written by, I think, a company called Cosmo Software. Corel packaged Version 1 of the program with its WebMaster suite and called it CorelWeb.World back then. I later tried Version 2 of HomeWorld or some such name from Cosmo Software and almost had a much better TPCUG world created when my trial time period ran out. I didn't love or need the program enough to purchase it, so the improved TPCUG Virtual Reality world never saw the light of day on the Internet.

The above mentioned 3D rendering for the Internet used a VRML plug-in for your browser. Now such technology is an integral part of Internet Explorer in its latest versions. Atmosphere, however, does not employ VRML but rather its own technology. That is why you need to download their Atmosphere plug-in to view worlds created in Adobe Atmosphere. So, do it right now. Go to http://www.adobe.com/products/atmosphere/main.html and get the browser plug-in. Once you have done that you can view my first attempt at http://home.netcom.com/~lamartin/aa1_test/first.htm. To see more professional examples, click on one of the Adobe book marked links that appear on your browser.

The image on this page is a screen capture of my first world created with Atmosphere Builder. It is not very polished, but it gave me a chance to try out the program. You are viewing the scene from inside a tunnel. There is a photo gallery where you can view the photos on the walls. There are stairs to climb and portals that if entered will transport you to other 3D worlds. The man you see in the image is an avatar representing another visitor to the world other than yourself (you do not see the avatar representing you—however you can choose what it looks like and others visitors to the world will see him). There is a chat feature that allows you to chat with all other visitors to the world.

One feature I've done just a little with is the use of Java Script to make the world a little bit interactive. I have used this idea to play a sound when someone moves their mouse over a particular object and to jump to my web site http://wwwlamartin.com when they move their mouse over a LaMartin.Com sign in the world.

Adobe hosts an Atmosphere discussion forum where you can ask for help and, as you get better at building worlds, give help. The Builder program really appeals to me, but, after getting my first world up and running, I am going to have to let it rest for awhile and get some other things done. ◆



(Router……..Continued from page 3)

to address 1922.168.0.2.

Similar considerations exist for interactive games like Quake, or using a particular computer as a web or FTP server. To be able to use your computer for such purposes, you will have to assign certain ports to a particular computer and possibly remove certain default filters that are implemented in the default setup of the router. There is a very detailed manual in Adobe Acrobat format that describes how all of

(Router……..Continued on page 9)

FACUG Spring Conference

By Jenny Lind Olin, Treasurer,
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Why Would Anybody Want to Attend the Florida Association of Computer User Groups' Spring Conference? It is a good occasion to have fun, meet a lot of people who talk "computerese," see a lot of software demonstrated, get a lot of free software, or purchase software at reduced prices. You can get six meals for a mere $35.00 per person, the total cost of the registration. You can stay in a hotel, bring your mobile home, stay with relatives, or drive back and forth. So there is no cooking, doing dishes, making beds or housework for two complete days.

The Spring Conference is not all about having fun and getting away from it all. It also provides a great opportunity to talk to other leaders from other computer user groups to learn what they are doing to gain and keep their membership, what kind of programs they offer, how they have solved some of the same problems that may be challenging your group.

Granted, Friday night is mostly social. The only responsibility you have is to pick up your stuffed bag of goodies and study your Schedule of Events. Then, after a couple of hours of socializing with new and old friends from years before, you are on your own until breakfast the next morning. Then it is nonstop all day long.

This year, Apple Computer sponsored the Saturday breakfast and gave a presentation. On our way out of the room we picked up a tube which contained a couple of posters. The Apple hardware design is so modern it makes you want to own something that is not consider a clunker anymore. Apple had provided a free sweatshirt which was found in the book bag (like the ones you carry your books back to the library in) picked up at the registration desk.

Also in the bag was a black tee shirt from Borland with a slogan on the back: "Go.com yourself." I thought that was clever. Those book bags were sponsored by JR Inkjet and Jasc Software. The printing of the Schedule of Events was through the courtesy of Office Depot, who had also given us a small stickem pad and a plastic box for our paper clips, part of the stuffing in our bags. So you see there is a lot of involvement from the vendors to make the Spring Conference a lot of fun.

Adobe Systems Incorporated sponsored the Saturday luncheon and presentation. Everybody was given an Adobe GoLive 5.0 package for Professional Web authoring and site management. The Dinner Event was sponsored by FACUG, but the prizes for the contest winners were sponsored by different vendors. The prizes for the winner of the Home Page Contest and the Newsletter Contest were from Adobe. Adobe is always so generous with those prizes. They helped stuff our book bags with several CDs, which included the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader software, Adobe Active Share software and trial versions of about ten of their products in both PC and Macintosh format.

The Logo Contest prize was sponsored by Corel. The Community Service Award was sponsored by FACUG. So you can see where prizes were given out for doing something great or just for being there.

The grand finale for Saturday evening was the Annual Business meeting where the new officers and board of directors were introduced. Our president, Mary Sheridan, was elected the state FACUG secretary. Congratulations are in order for that honor.

The Sunday breakfast and presentation by Mary Sue Cameron, who was very cheerfully animated, was sponsored by Microsoft. Everybody received a backpack from Microsoft. The Sunday luncheon and presentation were sponsored by MGI Software. We all received a ticket each time we entered the dining area. After each presentation there was a drawing and about five big software items were given to those lucky winners. Sometimes they marked one chair or gift package left on the table and so one person at

(FACUG……Continued on page 9)

(FACUG……..Continued from page 8)

each table received a prize. The suspense was just awesome.

There were several other sponsors who provided prizes along with the above mentioned sponsors for the conference. Then at the Sunday afternoon "Displays," products were demonstrated, questions answered, and free software given out. Then we had "The Big Bang," which is the final drawing where there was a choice of many prizes. Everybody received something, although it was more beneficial for those who were called first. Those sponsors were Aladdin, Borland, Cassady & Greene, Corel, Demo Catz, Intuit (who gave everybody a Quicken 2001 Suite package like the one that was raffled off at our last meeting). Somehow I missed out on that offer. Those packages must have gone fast.

Was it all play and no work? No. We did have two sessions in the morning and two sessions in the afternoon with a choice of four different subjects being covered at each. We had our "Panel / Round Table" meetings offering such subjects as Running a Users Group, New Member Orientation, Building and Maintaining Membership, Programs and Presentations, Publicity and Public Relations, Advertising, Fund Raising, Working with Volunteers, Running a Software Review Program, Treasurer's Q & A, Newsletters, Web Design, APCUG Workshop, and Creating SIGs. One group has a Pig SIG where they meet at a restaurant every month and talk about computer stuff. A good idea for those who need more social events in their lives.

I was very impressed this year by the addition of Tech Sessions where you could go see different software being demonstrated. Some of the demonstrations were Digital Video Editing, and presentations by Adobe Systems, Jasc Software and Microsoft on their particular products.

Now I think I will go dot.com myself. ◆

(Easy……..Continued from page 4)

MP3s from your own music CDs, back up important files such as spreadsheets and financial data (or other important files), and free up valuable hard drive space by moving large files such as audio, graphic and multimedia files to CD.

These are only some of the things you can do with EZCD Creator. For $99 street price ($49 upgrade), it's hard to beat Roxio's Easy CD Creator 5 Platinum. If you haven't tried it, try it. If you have, then it's time to upgrade and burn, burn, burn! ◆

(Router……..Continued from page 7)

this is accomplished. However, for the average users, the default setup will probably do what they want.

Http://www.netgear.com. ◆



May 2-3, 2001
Tampa Convention Center
10:00am - 4:00pm Daily

Tampa Bay Information Technology Exposition & Conference (ITEC). ITEC will feature more than 2000 products and solutions, representing the latest developments in Computers, Telecommunications, Internet/Intranet, Software, Networking, Imaging and Records Management, Multimedia, Video Conferencing, Client Server, Network Security, Disaster Recovery, ATM and much more.

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

user groups of $29.00. The kit also comes with a syringe and plugs needed for some cartridges. The kit retails for $45.00. You save money by being a member of the user group.

You can save approximately $160.00 by using the starter kit to refill their cartridges if you buy a new ink cartridge every time the inks runs out They also have a black refill kit with only black ink. It comes with everything the starter kit has except the flush. Another kit that they sell is the color kit. It has cyan, magenta, and yellow inks, the syringe and plugs, but flush. All kits come with complete instructions on how to refill your cartridges. Most people who buy the starter kits then buy the larger bottles of refill ink. They have a 16 ml bottle of black ink and a 250 ml bottle. JR Inkjet has a lot of repeat customers. The have a toll free help line for any problems or questions you may have. Most cartridges have sponges inside, so you are refilling the sponge with ink. The color cartridge has three chambers with sponges. The ink is water-soluble and can be cleaned up with soap and water. The kit contains a tiny hand drill in case you need to make a hole in your cartridge, depending on the type of cartridge you have. JR Ink is dye based as opposed to pigment-based ink. Their ink is the highest formula ink. It is refined to 1/2 a micron to fit through the smallest ink jet. JR Inkjet is in the process of trying to get into the retail market. They are selling the kits on the Home Shopping Network. JR Inkjet was the first refill ink company. As long as you refill the cartridge before the sponges get dried out, you should be able to refill a cartridge ten times before you have to replace it. Printer Companies will often make their money on the consumables like the ink cartridges instead of the printers themselves. The inkbottles will last for a couple of years until they're opened. Claire then fielded questions from the group. You can buy an injector kit if you lose your syringe. All these items can be found on the Internet at http://www.tubecomputers.com. Claire had plenty of merchandise with her for sale. JR Inkjet uses Yahoo for their business web site. We thanked Claire and Kevin and took a short break. JR Inkjet donated two refill kits for our raffle. Bob Parks and John Witmer were the winners of the refills kits. Other door prize winners were: Clark Evans, a clock; Merle Nicholson, Quicken 2001 Suite; Jim Purcell, CD case; Mike Hutchinson, Corel mug; Tom Goff, T-shirt; and Brian Lance. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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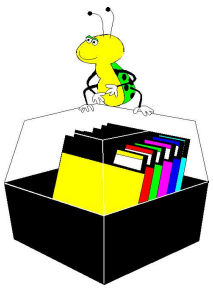
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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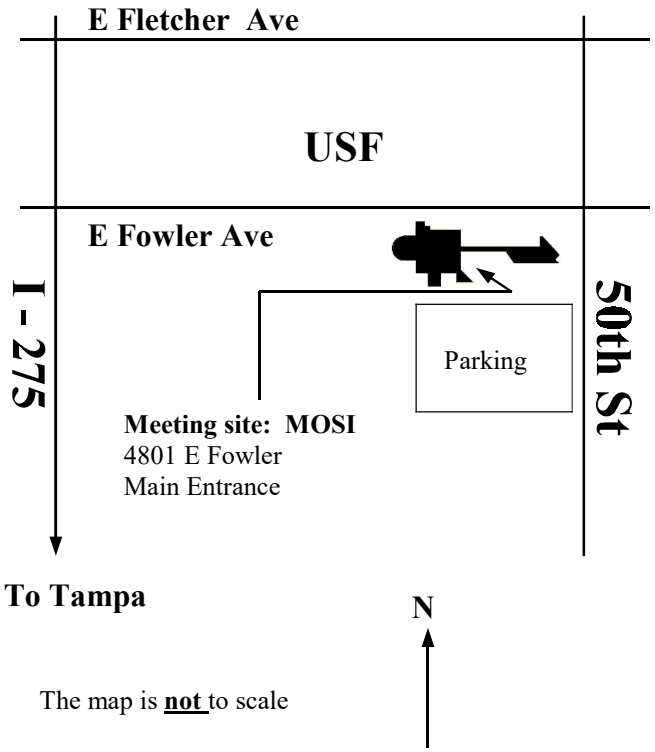
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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(President……..Continued from page 5)

On May 2-3, 2001 TPCUG will have a presence at ITEC. It will be at the Tampa Convention Center and the hours are 10 AM -6 PM. If you can volunteer anytime during these two days, please contact a board member. We will be working at the information desk and two of our members will be judging the World's Sexiest Geek contest.

Don't forget, we will be changing our meeting time starting in May. The Windows SIG will begin at 6:30 and the presentation will begin at 7 PM.

Until our next meeting, happy computing! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 6 June 2001

Meeting

Police Dept.'s Charity Computer Placement Program And Computer Security

June 13, 2001
6:30 PM
Jan Platt Regional Library
3910 S Manhattan Ave.
Tampa

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Meeting Preview: Tampa Police Department members will describe their program of distributing used computers. Additionally, they will discuss computer security. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

June 13th will be our first meeting in the Jan Platt Library. The meeting will begin at 6:30 PM. It is a very nice meeting room, and I'm hopeful we may be able to increase our membership because of the move. Anyone who has friends in that part of town, please encourage them to join us at our new location.

The meeting on May 9th was very interesting. It was technical, but everyone seemed to be intrigued and reacted with enthusi-

(President.....Continued on page 4)

Beginning in June, we will meet at the Jan Kaminis Platt Regional Library, 3910 S Manhattan Avenue, Tampa at 6:30 PM

July 12 (a Thursday): Pens that scan and upload text to your computer

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the May Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

We started our meeting with the Windows SIG at 6:30 PM. Shared high-speed Internet access is still a hot topic. William LaMartin has an outstanding article on our web site covering just this issue. It was in our April 2001 newsletter and can be found at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/april2001/netgear_router.htm. Wireless networking is becoming more visible but the cost is still too high in most people's opinion.

Mary Sheridan began the general meeting at 7:00 PM by announcing a change in venue for our monthly meeting. We will be going to the Jan Platt Library building at 3901 S Manhattan starting in June. She then announced our presenter, Mr. Sebastian Frey of 4D.

4D makes a web enabled data base program that includes a web server application and internal data encryption. 4D is intended as a tool for the small to middle size business but is scaleable to larger server configurations. System requirements are a modest Pentium 233 class CPU with a minimum of 32 MB of memory (48 recommended) and Windows 98 SE. The built in web server software is intended for "light work" and Mr. Frey suggested that a large web sever farm would want to use something like Apache or IIS. The web development tool has a built in debugger to assist in fixing web site code that may be improperly written. The encryption system works within the database itself, so if security is compromised from the outside, the information in the database cannot be downloaded or viewed.

For purchasing information go to http://www.4D.com.

Mike Hodges won a copy of 4D as a door prize. Lisa Fagan won a T-shirt.

(Minutes.....Continued on page 7)

TypingMaster 2002

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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One of the most useful courses I took in high school was typing. That first became evident when I went to college and had English papers to type. It was then useful in my first job, but I think I really came to appreciate it when I first started using personal computers in the early 80's. You communicated with the computer through its keyboard. And the better you could type, the better you could communicate.

With programs like TypingMaster, anyone can become a proficient touch typist in a few weeks, I think. But you have to work at it. It isn't magic; it isn't something you absorb. It is something you attain through completing the lessons that the program leads you through.

You start with positioning your hands in the home position and then practice typing simple two and three letter combinations. I am a fairly good touch typist, but I have fallen into some sloppy habits over the years. I am using the program to retrain myself, and what amazes me is how tired my hands get while doing the exercises. I have to remind myself to sit correctly and try to relax my arms and shoulders as I type.

Next, you practice typing short strings of characters that require you to occasionally reach up one row from the home row like "lassie". Again, although I am considered an "Expert" by the program, my arms and hands are quite tired by the end of the exercise. I am simply not used to typing for a five minute stretch without a break.

The program gives you a break between such exercises by offering you a typing game. The first such is the Bubble Game where bubbles float up, some with letters associated with them. As soon as you see such a lettered bubble, you are supposed to type in the letter. This is quite easy for an experienced typist—until the lettered bubbles begin to come fast and furious. The next such games consists of clouds floating by, some with words under them. But you have to do a bit more here than simply type in the words as you see them. You must first select the cloud with a word by using either the space bar to move forward or the backspace key to move backwards to it—only then will typing in the word get you points. So you see, these games are not really all that relaxing.

Then it is on to typing short sentences like "Kafka is as sad as a fake jade lass." Nobody says that what you type in practice has to make sense. That finishes lesson 1. And on the last exercise I typed a net speed of 47 words per minute. My goal is to get above 60 words per minute by the end of the lessons.

After mastering the home position, you move on to keys above or below the home row. First you work on r and u in combination with the keys you have

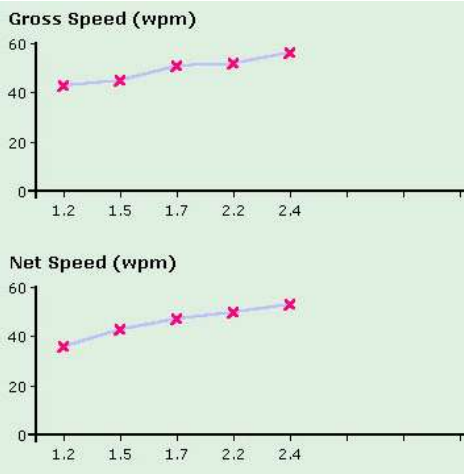
(Typing… … ….Continued on page 4)

(Typing… … ….Continued from page 3)

already learned. And here is when I began to make a few errors. Next it is on to another sentence test, where I manage to up my speed and accuracy a bit. And this is followed by the balloon game.

Next there is a paragraph test, which is the closest thing to a real-life typing test that I have had so far, in that the sentences in it almost make sense. We are still only using the middle two rows. I had a gross speed of 53 wpm and a net speed of 43 wpm with a 94% accuracy. I am not yet back to my high school speed, but I am only on lesson 2.5 of 12.

In addition to the Complete Training course, there are the Numeric Keypad course, the Refresher course, the Special Marks course, and the Typing Training for Typists course.

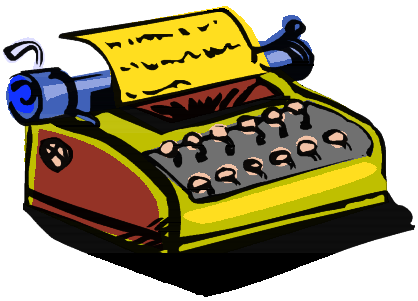


Along a different line there is ProTrainer, which is described by the company as follows :

> ProTrainer analyzes your typing while you are using your word processor, email program or any other Windows application and detects your most difficult keys and words. Based on this information ProTrainer is able to create fully tailored exercises for your current needs.

I let the company describe it since I haven't tried it yet. That will come after I have completed the 12 lessons.

TypingMaster 2002 is a good program with a non-cluttered interface. If you want to become a better typist, the price is right at their web site. TypingMaster 2002 with ProTrainer is $39.90, and TypingMaster 2002 Standard is $29.90 as online downloads. If you prefer to order the program on CD, add $5.00. http://www.typingmaster.com/.



They even have a free online typing test at the site. So go to the site and see if you even need the program. You may already be a world class typist. But I doubt it. ◆

(President… … ….Continued from page 1)

asm to the speaker. He was very knowledgeable and answered all questions with ease.

Here's a second reminder, that our July meeting will be July 12th instead of Wednesday the 11th. The library wasn't available on Wednesday, and luckily Bruce Register was able to change his scheduled presentation to the 12th. I hope this doesn't present a hardship for anyone. It was the only reasonable way to work out the problem.

Today I attended the Developer's Launch of Microsoft Office XP (for experience, they said.) The event was held at the Clearwater Harborview Center in Clearwater, FL. The suite of programs includes Microsoft Word Version 2002, Microsoft Excel Version 2002, Microsoft Outlook Version 2002, Microsoft PowerPoint Version 2002, Microsoft FrontPage Version 2002, Microsoft Access Version 2002, and Microsoft Publisher Version 2002. Microsoft is working on integrating their products with all kinds of handhelds and portable

(President… … ….Continued on page 5)

(President… … ….Continued from page 4)

devices.

The presenter at the launch said there are 250 million Microsoft Office users in the world today. He also noted that 90% of all PC users have Microsoft Office. I thought this was surprising and didn't realize how widespread the use of this product had become.

There were additional products being promoted at the launch. Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server was one. This program enables collaboration over the Internet and intranets. The functions of this program were many and it seemed to be a "must have" for business teams. Other products were Microsoft Visio Version 2002, and SharePoint Team Services. You can get more information about any of these products at Microsoft.com/office.

For those who like free stuff, there was a nice ballpoint pen, a copy of MapPoint Version 2002, a 30-day trial of Microsoft Visio Standard, a 120 day evaluation copy of SharePoint Portal Server 2001, and a Microsoft Office XP Title Sampler.

(President… … ….Continued on page 9)

Internet picture of the month



Peter O Knight Home, Hyde Park Avenue, Tampa FL about 1905

Editor's note: I wouldn't normally include something from my own web site, but I think these old postcards of Tampa are as interesting as anything else that I have seen this month.

The site is http://www.lamartin.com. The postcard page is http://www.lamartin.com/postcards/tampa_cards.htm

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
TypingMaster - Solutions for Better Typing.	http://www.typingmaster.com/
sodaplay	http://www.sodaplay.com/
4D, Inc. – Last month's presenter	http://www.4d.com/
borrisholt.com- - source code for Delphi & C++ Builder	http://borrisholt.com/main.htm
Naked News - The Program With Nothing To Hide	http://www.nakednews.com/
Architecture of the Getty Center	http://web.reed.edu/academic/departments/art/getty/
Computer Price Comparison and More - iBuyer.net	http://www.ibuyer.net/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Buying a New Computer

By Jenny Leitzke
Tampa PC Users Group
Leitzke4@tampabay.rr.com

Last week we took the plunge and purchased a new home Compaq computer. It was the Cadillac version and began becoming obsolete as soon as we walked, computer in arms, out the door. We prepared ourselves before the purchase by making a checklist of everything we needed or wanted. The purchase went very well. Loading the software did not. We now wish we had made an ordered list of the software and files we wanted to transfer. Like our home, the old computer was in dire need of some Spring Cleaning. We did not want to transfer over all the old software or all the old files. This is where the work came in.



First problem: The printer. The old Hewlett Packard printer works great for our needs. When loading our old software, we were alerted that one of the software files was bad on our disc set. We could not load the software successfully. Our old printer was not listed under optional printer types you wish to add either. No problem, they said, just download it off the Hewlett Packard web page. Yes, they had it. No, we couldn't download it. We didn't have Internet service on the new computer yet, and the file was too large to copy onto disc from the old computer. What to do? Install the old Internet service onto the new computer. Sounds simple right? Wrong. Like any semi-intelligent person, we used the wizard that comes with the new Compaq Windows ME. We pulled up the AT&T WorldNet service wizard and let it do the work for us. There are default settings the wizard begins to select for you. Since people don't load server software on a regular basis, the default settings sounded pretty good the first time we went through the process. That was when the problem started. The new wizard incorporated the business option of having a 9 before your access number. Of course, in our household that does not apply. Next, the wizard automatically applied "00" before the access number. Each time we tested the sign-on, we called the operator. After 3 times, it still wasn't connecting. The operator was getting a little annoyed with us, so we stopped to see what was actually happening. We began selecting different options in the boxes. Over the next 30 minutes, when we finally found the selection, that gave us the desired access number that our modem should have been dialing in the first place. Wizards don't always make the installation process easier. We were then able to activate our existing account on the new computer. We went to the Hewlett Packard web page, downloaded the correct software, and danced like elves at a wedding when the software loaded successfully. We are happier campers now that we can print.

Second problem: The silly little software programs that we take for granted. Some necessary software is not already loaded on the new computer. For instance, Acrobat Reader (for viewing documents) and Music Box (for listening to clip art music clips) were two programs missing. These are available as a free download at many different sites. When we tried to remember which sites, we couldn't. After a few days on the Internet and opening web sites, our computer automatically loaded both of these files. Voila!

Third problem: Our eyes were bigger than our desk. Make sure you allow enough room for all the additional items you have now purchased with your computer. We have extra computer ports so of course we added a scanner, a three speakers set, and a joystick. Don't forget the Cadillac 19" monitor we could live without.

(Computer……Continued on page 7)

(Computer… … ….Continued from page 6)

Fourth problem: When changing Internet service companies, be prepared to give up your well-loved email address. With a world to deal with, someone else out there might have already selected your cute email address. You might need to add a number to the end of it. Warning: If the other email name is almost identical to yours, everyone you know might accidentally send your email to that other person. With AT&T WorldNet we were able to use a 10-digit address. With our new Road Runner service, that address is limited to 8 digits only. Good-bye cute addresses with more than 8 digits.

Last: With the bad comes the good. We had Road Runner service installed for free on the new computer. Being a student at the University of Florida, we received a $10.00 a month service discount. Our access is fast and it doesn't tie up the phone line any longer. We have two girls in the house to do that. We really cut a deal on the free installation. They ran the cable up into the attic, and out the garage. A year or so ago, with lawn work being done, the original cable line was accidentally cut outside. The Road Runner people dug up and buried all new cable. For free. We threw in the two cold sodas.

More next month I'll be back with feedback on those new items we purchased with the computer. ◆

(Minutes… … ….Continued from page 2)

Brian Lance won spell checker software.
Mike Brazas won two T-shirts and a “Missing Manual” computer help book.

The meeting ended at 8:40 PM.◆

Email Strippers



By Jenny Lind Olin, Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group
jlolin@tampabay.rr.com

Adding a stripper for your email doesn't make for more smut. It actually cleans up those untidy >>> in those forwarded messages that people send. I wish people would not send me those, but they still do. To clean your dirty email to make them easier to read, I recommend one or all of these three Utilities.

A. emailStripper
B. Stripmail
C. eCleaner

All three can be downloaded and installed for free. All three do the job of cleaning those untidy and annoying >>> in your forwarded email messages. All three are easy to use.

How to get them:
A freeware application, eCleaner (447 Kb) is found at http://www.members.tripod.com/schin26/index.htm

EmailStripper (165 Kb) is a free program which strips ">" and other formatting characters restoring your forwarded Emails to their original format. Get it from http://www.printcharger.com/emailStripper.htm

Stripmail (265 Kb), is freeware. Download it from: http://www.dsoft.com.tr/stripmail/

You will need to download the program and install it. I think placing an icon on your desktop or task bar would be helpful to quickly have it handy to use. We don't like to use stuff we have to go look for.

(Stripper… … ….Continued on page 8)

(Stripper… … ….Continued from page 7)

A. The easiest program to use is emailStripper. It only has one option: select [Strip It]. It also will add a link to the bottom of the message so you can encourage your friends to clean up their email. If you don't like that, you can delete it before you send your stripped-clean message. Any formatting will be lost so this one is not good for verses.

B. Stripmail is very simple to use. It has two selections: [Do It All] or [Strip]. [Do it all] will get rid of the paragraph formatting so is not good for cleaning messages that are in verse.

C. eCleaner is the best for cleaning verse-style email. Last updated: January 24, 2000. A unique feature of this program is you can incorporate the eCleaner function directly into the email toolbar. There are several options to choose so it will take a while to learn what each option actually does. When using eCleaner first select [Clean] and then you have a second option to [Clean], [Remove Symbols], or [Remove Indent Marks]. The second [Clean] will change your verse format to prose which is probably not your desire. You will find these on the pull-down menu or use the icons on the taskbar. Other Options under [Clean] are [Remove HTML], [Remove Headers], [Convert to Courier], or [Remove Indent Marks].

There are other options to check ON or OFF to make them defaults.

When I pasted the stripped clean message into my Outlook Express message box I had to change the Paragraph Style to Normal get the lines to be single-spaced. I don't think AOL people will have to worry about that step.

Now you want to select or highlight ALL OF THE MESSY PART of your email. Then Copy [Control C] or use your Edit menu next to File and click Copy. Bring up your emailStripper, Stripmail or eCleaner program from the desktop. Now Paste (Control-V) or use your edit menu next to File and click Paste. eCleaner automatically copies the new clean version to the clipboard. If you make manual changes then you will need to manually select, copy, and paste.

These copy and paste options are available in all three of the email cleaning programs, too. After you have cleaned your email you will need to copy and paste the new, stripped-clean message into a new email message window.

Pretend you want to send this to a friend:

>> Living on Earth is expensive, but it does include
> > a free trip around the sun.
> >

[Strip it] with emailStripper, [Do it all] with Stripmail, or [Clean] with eCleaner This is what you will send:

Living on Earth is expensive, but it does include a free trip around the sun.

What about this mess:

> > >Hello There Nice Person
> >> > > >
> >> > > >Did Anyone Ever Tell You,
> >> > > >Just How Special You Are
> >> > > >The Light that You Emit
> >> > > >Might even Light a Star

Using emailStripper results in this:

Hello There Nice Person

Did Anyone Ever Tell You, Just How Special You Are The Light that You Emit Might even Light a Star

This email was cleaned by emailStripper, available for free from http://www.printcharger.com/emailStripper.htm

Using Stripmail, click the [Do it all] button gets the

(Stripper… … ….Continued on page 9)

(Stripper… … ….Continued from page 8)
same results. eCleaner will do the same as above if you choose the "smiley face" to "clean."

After selecting the messy part, use Stripmail, select [Paste], [Strip], and [Copy], return to your email message and [Paste] and you get what you see below. Use eCleaner and [Remove Indents] and get this also:

Hello There Nice Person

Did Anyone Ever Tell You,
Just How Special You Are
The Light that You Emit
Might even Light a Star

Now I expect I will not get messy email messages any more. So what will I find to growl about now. ◆

(President… … ….Continued from page 5)
We arrived too early, at 8:45 AM. The event didn't start until 10 AM and was over at 3 PM. We had a very nice box lunch with turkey or ham sandwiches, potato chips, pickles, lettuce, tomatoes, cookies and an apple. It was a long day, but as a learning experience, it was time well spent. At least it made my column longer than it would have been otherwise.

Happy computing! ◆

A look back at 1991

President's Column

By Harvey Bruneau

Well another year is coming to a close. Voting for our 1992 officers will take place after the main presentation by Microsoft. Please be sure to make your nominations prior to that time. Present nominations are listed in the Secretary's Report column. It certainly was an exciting year in the PC world. Next year may not see as many lawsuits, mergers or innovations since many companies have been swallowed up by bigger ones or just plain went out of business. However, endusers will have some serious decisions to make about hardware and software selections in the coming year. Hardware decisions will be mainly based on the processor manufacturer (Intel, AMD, CT, or Whirlpool) and the bus architecture (ISA, EISA, Microchannel or Greyhound). The ever growing list of nonstandard standards is the main reason for falling hardware prices which should continue to drop through the 1st quarter of 1992. In the software arena, the decision will be among operating systems and environment. Please remember that Windows 3.0, the present environment leader, is just a shell which executes other programs. Windows 3.0 does require an operating system (DOS 3.1 or higher) before it can be used. The major battle of the year should be between IBM (OS/2 2.0) and Microsoft (Windows 3.0). IBM has a real challenge ahead of itself to overcome the head start which Microsoft has. It will take some fancy marketing by IBM for OS/2 to establish even a foothold in the PC arena. Additionally, DR DOS 6.0 (Digital Research, owned by Novell) could add to the fight against Microsoft dominance. Below is the tree [omitted here] we will need to climb in 1992. The wrong decision in either hardware or software could put you on the wrong branch. Hopefully as a group we can help each other determine which branch is best suited per individual. Unfortu-

(1991… … ….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Tampa, FL 33622-1081 merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

(1991……Continued from page 9)

nately, I believe that one branch will not be the answer for everyone. Each member may have different requirements of a PC, and only a specific branch may provide the desired results. However, the common denominator between all of us is that we do use a PC.

Last meeting I mentioned that I had ordered, from Gateway 2000 (mail order), a 486 33 MHz PC on the 11th of November. This was the 1st time I had used a mail order company. The PC cost $2645 + $95 for shipping for a total of $2740. The price included a tower case, 4 Mb RAM, 1.2 MB & 1.44 MB floppies, l6 bit VGA board with 1 MB, 14" color crystal scan monitor, 120 Mb HD, Microsoft mouse, MS DOS *5.0* and Microsoft Windows 3.0. *This 486 machine is still cheaper than my original IBM PC that I purchased in 1984.* The day after placing the order I faxed a confirmation letter to my Gateway salesman. The letter confirmed the product I ordered along with detail about possible refund, price guaranty, service and support as it was presented to me. I don't mind telling you that was a lot of money and at 1st I was concerned. However, after reading reviews of Gateway products, seeing the Dun & Bradstreet rating of Gateway 2000, and hearing favorable comments from existing Gateway users within our user group, most of my concerns went away. Gateway promised that my PC would arrive in three weeks, which placed delivery around the 1st week of December. In actuality the PC was delivered in 11 days. The PC booted the 1st time and brought me into Microsoft Windows. Of course Gateway loaded DOS *5.0* and Windows 3.0 before shipping. So far this has been a pleasant experience. The main reason for getting the PC was to get into the Windows environment and yet still have the option of installing OS/2 2.0 when it arrives. After copying all my data from my old PC, I loaded three new Windows product which I have never used. These included Corel Draw, Perform Pro and WordPerfect. It wasn't long before that 120 MB drive was full. I decided to install Stacker V2.0 compression software to increase the drive capacity. In all, my disk space doubled to 240 MB for a cost of only $89 additional dollars. The only other

(1991……Continued on page 12)

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
BAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

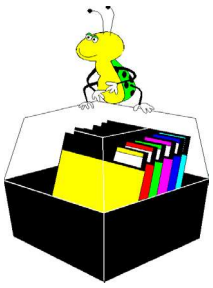
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

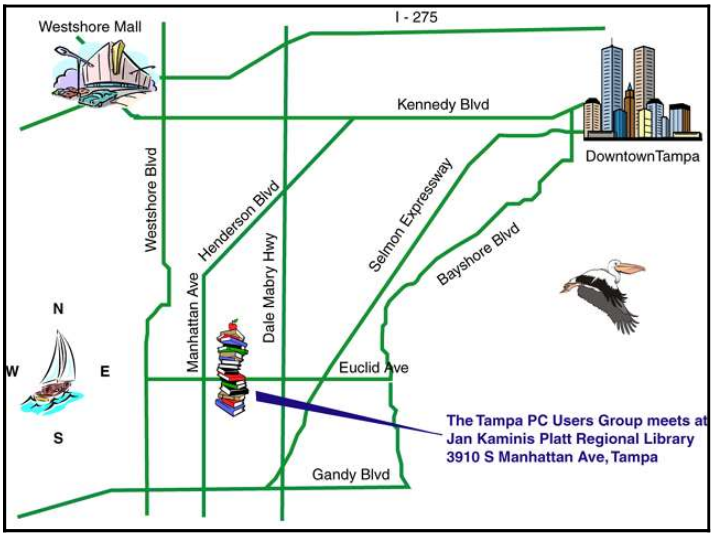
(1991…….Continued from page 10)

problem I can see is that running Windows programs on a 14" screen is hard on the eyes. This is mainly due to the fact that data is displayed smaller than on a text based system.

My comments are not meant as an endorsement for Gateway 2000 products or that you should buy a 486 PC. You should determine your needs, budget and vendor comfort factor before you purchase.

From Marylee and me, we wish you and yours the best for the holidays and the coming new year. ◆

New Meeting Location
3910 S Manhattan Avenue



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 7 July 2001

Meeting

Pens that scan and upload text to your computer

Thursday, July 12, 2001
6:30 PM
Jan Platt Regional Library
3910 S Manhattan Ave.
Tampa

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Meeting Preview: We will have a presentation of Quicktionary Readingpen & QuickLink Pen - pens that scan and upload text to your computer. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

The June 13th meeting was a big success. It's been a long time since we've had as large of a turnout. People who arrived before 6:30 PM began setting up the tables and chairs. After some minor changes, we started the meeting at 6:30 sharp. The acoustics aren't the best in the world, but we hope to be able to arrange the chairs and tables to maximize everyone's ability to hear the presenters.

William LaMartin wanted to get the newsletter assembled early

(President.....Continued on page 9)

We meet at the Jan Kaminis Platt Regional Library, 3910 S Manhattan Avenue, Tampa at 6:30 PM. The meeting is on a Thursday this month only.

August 8: NetPerformance – Web Design and Web Hosting

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the June Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

This was our first meeting in our new location, the Jan Platt Regional Library, and we started at 6:30 PM with the Windows SIG. Mary Sheridan filled us in on the big Office XP roll out and a few problems at the Hyatt. She also requested that anyone with historical information on our group contact her. We have been around since 1984 and started out as the "IBM Users Group" (which has carried on in spirit in our "Bits of Blue" newsletter title), and Mary wants to preserve some of that history.

The General Meeting started at 7:00 PM with Officer Gene King of the Tampa Police Department's Firehouse Squad and Mr. Howie Taylor presenting their Computer Acquisition and Placement Program. The purpose of this program is to find computers that individuals or corporations are willing to donate for use in a computer lab in a low-income neighborhood. The labs are set up in the Community Center of a target neighborhood as a way to faster computer literacy in areas that have been experiencing a "technology gap".

The first program started in Oak Park when it grew out of a conversation with a local business owner and Ofc. King as a way to get the local community more involved in computer literacy and the effect it could have on the children who live in the area. The original program survived by volunteer effort and was called "Cyberworld" by the kids who participated. The growing pains of success forced the project to evolve into a non-profit organization now known as CAPP. CAPP is still accepting donations of computers that meet some very low standards: a Pentium class CPU, sound card, network card, 15' monitor, 1 Gig hard drive, CD, and head phones. They would also appreciate any assistance from technicians or tutors and general-purpose help with cleaning and painting.

(Minutes.....Continued on page 5)

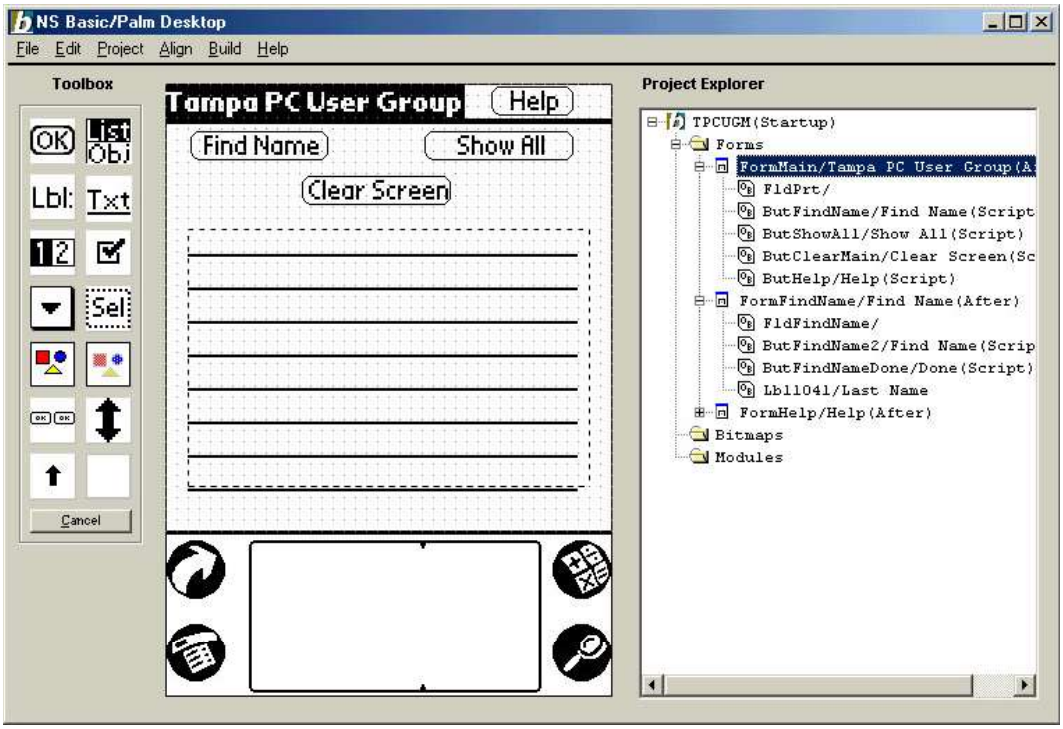
Programming the Palm with NS Basic

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

In the July 2000 newsletter I wrote about my Handspring Visor (think Palm handheld). Online the article is at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/july2000/visor.htm. And at the July 2000 meeting, I gave a presentation on the Palm/Handspring handheld devices. Part of the presentation was a demonstration of the Palm Operating System Emulator (POSE), a program that runs on a PC giving you a Palm looking interface where you can run and test programs for the Palm OS.

The real use of POSE is in testing programs one has written for the Palm. At that time I had discovered a little program called PDA Toolbox that allowed you to do simple programming for the Palm without really writing any code—just selecting objects and setting their properties. No real calculations were possible.

Now a year later I have revived my interest in Palm programming with the discovery of NS Basic, an Integrated Programming Environment (IDE). The IDE is displayed on this page. It looks a bit like the Visual Basic or Delphi IDE. You have a collection of **objects**, like a text field on the left that you can place on the **form** in the center. You then can right click on the object and set various properties for the object. On the right is a listing of all the objects in the project displayed in the **Project Explorer**.



The project in the picture has three forms. The form being displayed is the Main form, which contains four buttons and a large text field.

For each of the buttons, I have written code using a scripting language that is very like BASIC. If you remember any version of BASIC, you will be right at home with NS Basic.

The list of objects, statements, and functions is:

```
Abs, Acos, Acosh, AddDays, AddMonths, AddYears,
Alert, AppLaunch, Asc, Asin, Asinh, Atan, Atan2,
Atanh, Beep, Bitmap, Button, Call, Ceiling, Chain,
CheckBox, Chr, Cos, Cosh, CreateWindow, Cursor, Dat-
eVal, DateMMDDYY, Day, DayOfWeek, DayOfYear,
DbClose, DbCreate, DbDelete, DbErase, DbFind, DbGet,
DbGetNoRecs, DbInsert, DbOpen, DbPosition, DbPut,
DbRead, DbReadNext, DbReadPrev, DbReset, DbUpdate,
Define, DegToRadians, Delay, DestroyWindow, Dim,
Display, Do / Loop, DrawBitmap, DrawChars, DrawLine,
DrawRectangle, End Function, End Sub, End Type, End
If EraseWindow, Exit Do, Exit For, Exit Function,
Exit Sub, Exp, Field, FillRectangle, FirstOfMonth ,
Floor, For, Format, Function, Gadget, GetEventType,
GetKey, GetPen, Global, Gosub, Goto, Hour, HourMin,
HourMinAMPM, If /Then/ Else / EndInStr, Int, Label,
Label, LastOfMonth, LCase, Left, LeftPad, Len, Let,
List, LoadLibrary, Log, Log10, LTrim, MenuDraw,
MenuErase, MenuReset, Methods, Mid, Minute, MMDDYY-
ToDate, Mod, Month, MonthDay, MsgBox, Next,
NextForm, NoOccurs, Now, PopUp, PopupDate, Popup-
Time, Pow, Power10, Proper, PushButton, RadToDe-
grees, Rand, Redraw, Rem, Repeater, Return, Right,
RightPad, Round, RTrim, Scrollbar, Second, Select
```

(NS Basic……Continued on page 4)

(NS Basic……Continued from page 3)

```
Case / Case / Selector, SerialClose, SerialDial, Se-
rialHangup, SerialOpen, SerialReceive, SerialSend,
SerialSet, SetCurrentWindow SetEventHandled, Shift
Indicator, Sign, Sin, Sinh, Sound, Sqrt, Stop, Str,
Sub, SubtractDays, SubtractMonths, SubtractYears,
SysEventAvailable, SysInfo, SysTrapFunc, SysTrapSub,
Tan, Tanh, TestNum, TimeVal, ToDate, Today, ToTime,
Trim, Trunc, Type, Ucase, Val, Year, YearMonth,
```

So, you see, that there is a lot of power here.

To use the mathematical functions above, you will need to load the MathLib.prc (50 KB) into your Palm along with the program you have created. Additionally, all programs created with NS Basic require that the NSBRuntime.prc be loaded into the Palm device. The NSBRuntime.prc file is 86 KB, so any program you write will have that much overhead. However, you only have to load it once no matter how many programs created with NS Basic you load. This is similar to the overhead of the Visual Basic runtime files that are required in the Windows environment when you want to run a program created in Visual Basic.

I have only had the program a few days but have basically figured most everything out. Of course, I already know BASIC and have been programming in Visual Basic. Additionally I had already used POSE to test the much simpler programs I created last year with PDA Toolbox.

A Word of warning. If you want to work with Palm databases using NS Basic, you will probably want to take a table you have in a regular database like Microsoft Access and convert it to a Palm database. NS Basic doesn't have a utility to do this for you, but one can be had at a Yahoo group for NS Basic users.

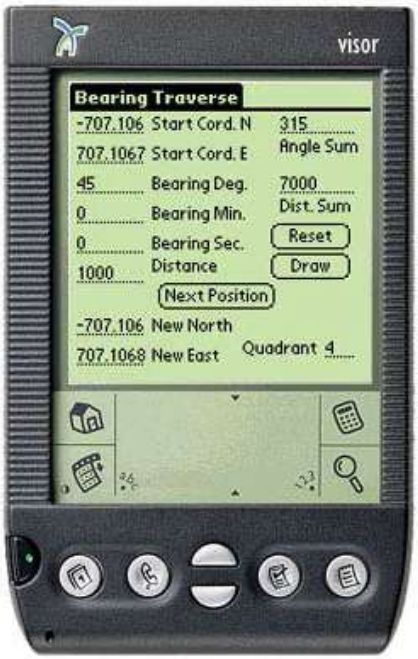
With trepidation I went to Yahoo, created a profile or whatever is necessary to get a Yahoo email address, and signed on to the NS Basic group, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nsbasic-palm. I say with trepidation because at one point a good portion of the junk email I received came from Yahoo addresses. That has subsided in recent months. The group is a good source of information on NS Basic and of Palm programs created with it that can be downloaded and studied. Based on messages there, it appears that people are using NS Basic to create significant programs used by their companies in a commercial environment.

I have now created two similar Palm programs and two associated Palm databases that display name, address, telephone number, etc. for a group of individuals and allow searches by name or address. One is for the members of the Tampa PC Users Group, and the other is for my neighborhood association. That shows I have figured out non-keyed database access on the Palm using NS Basic.

Next I recreated a couple of programs I had written in our Visual Basic SIG as demonstrations, one using financial calculations, the other using trigonometric calculations to solve a standard surveying problem that member Mike Hutchison introduced to us. Here is what the second program looks like running on the Palm Emulator (it has a Handspring Visor skin). The program has a second screen where a graph of what is being surveyed is displayed.

I was basically able to drop the Visual Basic code into NS Basic, make a few changes and have a

(NS Basic.....Continued on page 7)



(Minutes… … ….Continued from page 2)

Mark Anderson, a computer security specialist, gave a brief presentation at 7:35 PM. He passed along some security advice that may sound simple, but I guarantee everyone reading this forgets to follow his tips:

- Avoid e-mail attachments from unknown senders.
- Don't open anything ending in .EXE, .VBS, etc as these are executable programs.
- Use and keep updated your anti-virus software.
- Back up your hard drive or all essential information.

After this basic starter advice, Mr. Anderson talked about how the "tool" menu in Outlook can be used to filter out strange or unwanted e-mail by going to the "Message Rules" line and clicking "Blocked Senders List". A menu box pops up where you can set criteria to forward or delete either e-mail from specific people or things that would look like spam or contain personally selected key words. E-mail addresses and news groups can also be blocked out completely. Mr. Anderson then talked about another type of security program called a firewall. The two that Mr. Anderson uses are Black Ice (http://www.Networkice.com) and Zone Alarm

(Minutes… … ….Continued on page 7)

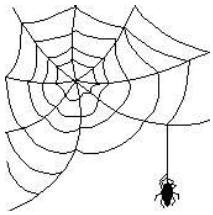
Internet picture of the month



One of the Storyville Portraits by E. J. Bellocq

Storyville was the red light district of New Orleans in the early part of the 1900's. A local photographer, E. J. Bellocq, photographed some of the women who worked there around 1912. At http://www.masters-of-photography.com/, the Masters of Photography site, you can view some of these photos, the one above being one of the more modest. In addition to Bellocq, while there you can view the works of many of the better known photographers of the 20th century. Additionally there are articles about the photographers.

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
dice.com job search engine	http://www.dice.com/
CNET.com - Internet - Bandwidth Meter	http://webservices.cnet.com/bandwidth/
PalmGear.com	http://www.palmgear.com/
NS Basic - Anywhere, Anytime Programming	http://www.nsbasic.com/
CASL vs NSBasic and AppForge	http://frankscaslpage.home.att.net/faq_pages/nsbasic.htm
Masters of Photography	http://www.masters-of-photography.com/
American Museum of Photography	http://www.photographymuseum.com/
Sound Portraits – audio recording on the web	http://soundportraits.org/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

CD Burning Woes

By Mike Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group
myankee@ij.net

Once again I have wandered into the wood, blithely accepting the stories about how easy and fun it was all to be only to find the reality somewhat different. A few months ago I purchased an Iomega CD burner. The acquisition was largely based on a very positive experience with Iomega's 100 MB Zip drive. The machine comes with Adaptec DirectCD, Adaptec Easy CD Creator, Music Match Jukebox Plus, Adobe ActiveShare, Adaptec Toast & an HTML help manual. (There is precious little as far as printed manuals for hardware or software.) Another factor weighing in favor of buying the machine was the Adaptec software which was user friendly, or at least this was what I had heard and read. Of course, as you computer literate, super-users know, it is now actually Roxio in the stead of Adaptec. Lastly, as far as factors affecting purchase as the printed registration cards ask, was the price which was competitive with other similar units. I know those who know of my reluctance to part with any denomination of lucre will be incredulous but this really was the least heavily considered aspect in this case.

At the outset I will confess that I made the quintessential rookie mistakes with regard to choice of CD media for specific jobs. I think that they (Adaptec/ Roxio) should do a little more comprehensive job explaining that the DirectCD software installs software which allows a CD-Rom drive to read the files on a CD created with the burner. This software is a UDF reader. UDF stands for Universal Disk Format, which is a file system for use with packet writing. Once you can read the files and open them with their native applications you can save them under different names to your hard drive after making any needed edits. Or just right-click the file in Windows Explorer and you have your normal Windows options: Open, Print, Send To, Cut,…….. and down at the bottom, Properties. The reason I mention this menu choice in particular is that you might have to click Properties and uncheck Read Only so that you ***can*** do the needed edits.

One of the first CDs I burned was some data I thought I would, in reality, not have to get to again. Why record it at all you may ask. Well, I was just playing with the new toy, and making some more room on my hard drive. Reason 2- see Reason 1. (He thought he would never need the stuff again.) In any event, a client calls and wants me to do some work on one of the jobs on the CD in question. OK, no problem thinks I and off I go to the CD rack. I tried to access the file in the regular CD-Rom drive. Nothing doing. I put the CD in the burner, now the folders and files can be seen but can't be moved, copied, imported, etc., etc.

So I get on the horn to Tech Support after wasting a suitable amount of time with the generic HTML help. The essence of their input was as follows:

1) eliminate as many programs running in the background as possible when recording a CD. This advice is intended to address two potential problems: resources and conflicts.
2) Memorex CD media is <u>not</u> supported by Iomega. Tech Support thinks the specific disk is bad and I can't effectively argue with them since Sony disks made and accessed in the same ways and conditions have had no glitches, and two Memorex disks have burped in this machine; however they were different type burps.
3) They gave me a URL to go to see a list of supported media: http://www.iomega.com/support/documents/10706.html
4) In Easy CD Creator4, when using the Create CD button and the dialog box opens, Under CD Creation Setup-Write Method you want to click the Close CD button. If this is the case why is it not the default choice….anyone's guess, but there is a button at lower right to set this and any other changes you have made as defaults.

Oh yes, I let 'em talk me into uninstalling and reinstalling the software. I know, I know, I should have

(CD…… ……Continued on page 7)

(CD… … … .Continued from page 6)
just gone and gotten a beer and come back and called them and said I had done the deed. In any case, after reinstalling the software, the data on the CD in question was still not accessible.

In summation, when the Adaptec Direct CD Wizard asks if you want to format the CD, the only correct answer in a practical sense is yes. This format process will take from 25 to 45 minutes per the progress bar/dialog box (and in actual practice can take much longer). Iomega HTML style Help says a formatted CD-RW can hold about 530 MB and a formatted CD-R will handle 620 MB. One footnote on formatting: once the format is started it can not be cancelled. Waiting up to 90 minutes for a CD-RW to format is a difficult dose of medicine to take in terms of time but would seem to be the only way to ensure full functionality. Also, in lieu of a resolution per se, I am going to stick to "supported media" at least for the short term future. The only other suggestion I have to offer is test CDs that you have made to make sure that you can open files with the application which created them, make edits to those files and save them to other folders or drives. In other words, make sure you have a working backup before deleting any files on your hard disk. The fact that the CD burner can see the folders/files (and follow a path as I could do with this problem CD) is not enough. ◆

(Minutes… … … .Continued from page 5)
(http://www.Zonelabs.com), which is one of my favorites. A firewall is designed to keep the nefarious types of computer users out there from getting into your computer without your permission. Zone Alarm adds a benefit that it will also not let programs or applications "phone home" from your computer without your knowledge or permission. Security programs such as firewalls usually offer three different levels of security preference, Low, Medium and (guess what) High, that the user can choose. As with any program, carefully read any documentation that comes with your security program before installation because the wrong combination of settings can render your computer sterile.

We then had our raffle where Wade Herman won a finger mouse, Joe Peck won Spell Checker Plus, Manuel Fernandez won an ink refill kit, and two lucky but unnamed members each won a T-shirt. The meeting ended at 8:21 PM. ◆

(NS Basic… … … .Continued from page 4)
functioning program—until I tried to do the drawing. The problem I had with that was in positioning and scaling the drawing on the screen. Theoretically it should be no more difficult than in Visual Basic, but for me it was.

I also had trouble with the scope of variables I declare, and to make things work I ended up with a lot of global variables. This is slightly different from Visual Basic.

A full working demonstration copy of NS Basic can be downloaded by a link on the page http://www.nsbasic.com/palm/info/faq.html. The exact link is http://www.nsbasic.com/pub/Palm_files/updates/NsbasicDemo.exe. The only restriction is that it is good for 30 days and any applications you create will only work for five days. Of course, you may recompile them, and they will work for another five days. The program costs $99. The general web site is http://www.nsbasic.com/.

If you would also like to investigate the competition, here are three links:

AppForge ($299) http://www.appforge.com/
CASL ($65) http://www.caslsoft.com/
PDA Toolbox ($25) http://www.pdatoolbox.com/

All, I believe, have free demo versions. ◆

A Look Back at 1991

Secretary's Report of the January 1991 meeting

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

a) Membership is now on an anniversary basis (based on the date that you joined) rather than on the old calendar year basis.

b) Our Bits of Blue newsletter is now being prepared using WordPerfect as the publishing program. The Editor would appreciate any and all public domain graphics. Also needed are articles from the members for the newsletter.

c) In response to a comment that some other clubs get more favored treatment from various vendors, it's because those clubs have more members than we do. Vendors are always looking for the greatest audience to spread the word about their products.

d) A presentation of Lotus 1-2-3 Ver 3.1 is scheduled for next month. In March, a representative from the Software Publishing Corp will present Harvard Graphics. Later in the year, Aston-Tate will discuss the merits of dBase IV.

e) Owners of Magellan (Lotus) are eligible to receive, for free, seven new file viewers. You will now be able to view Quattro, WordPerfect, Word for Windows, etc. documents while in Magellan.

f) MS-DOS 5.0, now in beta testing, is scheduled for release the first half of this year. It is said to have QuickBASIC, handle upper memory usage, and have some elements of PC-TOOLS.

g) Logitech has announced a new mouse. For left-handed people! Comments from the members revealed that the IBM mouse has a button to do the same thing and that some software packages provide a left-handed facility.

h) We have a lot of good material on the Bulletin Board. Log on and check it out. We now have 120 meg of disk space.

i) If you have any ideas for education classes or presentations, please get in touch with me (Harvey Bruneau) or Ed Kant. We might consider a short session of about 15 minutes before the meeting starts. We have to talk to IBM about getting additional meeting space if there is enough interest in having classes on specific subjects. We do have some volunteers.

IBM PRESENTATION

Chris Mayer, our IBM compatriot, gave an excellent demonstration of OS-2 Ver 1.2 running on a 486-95 with an XGA monitor. The XGA video was awesome. Great color and the resolution was remarkable.

Chris had 8 to 9 windows open and zipped from one to the other with effortless ease. The power of the PC and of OS-2 was very obvious in that a program in one window would continue to run while you were working on another program in another window.

Many of the terms unique to OS-2 were defined, including "threads." In effect, programs are "threaded" when they run in the same application window. As an example, he used an animation program that had two eyeballs follow the cursor motion of the mouse; each eyeball was independently following the mouse cursor.

Also the term "concurrent processing" was clarified. A single processor machine, by definition, can only process one job at a time. What OS-2 does is prioritize the various jobs and give control to each of them according to their priority. When a program is suspended, a "picture" of the machine (register contents, current memory address, flag settings, etc.) is stored with that program. Later, when the program is activated, the "picture" is used to restore the machine to be exactly as it was when it was suspended.

(1991……Continued on page 9)

(1991… … ….Continued from page 8)

Because of time constraints, the Communication and Data Base Managers could not be demonstrated. Chris Mayer did an excellent job of presenting IBM's newest "products." He knew the equipment, he knew the operating system, and he knew how to communicate. He deserves a "Well done" from all of us.

COMPUTER COMPASS MAGAZINE

Bradley Friedman distributed copies (gratis) of his new magazine. It is a directory of computer and business professionals in the Tampa Bay area. He is looking for feedback from computer users and would appreciate any information you can offer.

SECRETARY'S COMMENTS

If any of you are interested in the "mouse watcher" program, check out EYECON3O.ZIP on our Bits of Blue BBS. ◆

Humidity and our Computers

By Jennifer Leitzke, Membership Coordinator, Tampa PC Users Group
Leitzke4@tampabay.rr.com

As we reach the middle of summer in Florida, computer users should take some additional precautions while traveling with their computers and electronic items. The beautiful tropical climate we live in also brings that wonderful humidity. Computers and humidity do not mix well. When caring for or carrying your convenient portable computer items, make sure to allow time for your items to acclimate. Acclimate is defined in Webster's dictionary as: to accustom to a new climate or to new conditions. Example would be when you are inside a cool room and go outside and put on your sunglasses, they fog up on you. Just think what the temperature/ humidity change does to your computer circuits and LCD screen. From the house, to the car, to the office, to the restaurant, all different temperatures and all different climates. A suggestion was given, to allow your computer items 1 hour to acclimate to avoid harm.

I made several calls around Tampa to engineers and air-conditioning specialists this week, and I was told the following information:

Rooms where computers are kept ideally should maintain a temperature of 70-82 degrees. You don't want to get much hotter than that. Commercial computer rooms keep their humidity levels at around 50%. Homes and offices can be a little more flexible, to 65-75% humidity. More humidity than that is not very good. They suggested possibly resizing your room air-conditioner or getting a dehumidifier to better control the environment.

Take a minute and read the article written by Lawrence J. Magid from the Los Angeles Times, detailing a recent trip of his and how humidity & heat threw a wrench into his situation. http://www.larrysworld.com/articles/upriver.htm. ◆

(President… … ….Continued from page 1)

this month, so I'm writing this on June 20th. My daughter gave birth to a 6 lb. 14 oz. little boy on Sunday. He's my fifth grandchild, but it's still the most exciting thing in the world to me. Mom and baby are doing fine.

I bought my airline tickets yesterday for the APCUG (Association of Personal Computer Users Group) fall event in Las Vegas. The APCUG event is for the officers of user groups to get together and find ways to make their groups better. They hold

(President… … ….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

Custom computers for home and business
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(President……Continued from page 9)

the event in conjunction with Comdex, and this is the second time I've been able to attend. The APCUG event starts on Saturday, November 10 and is over Wednesday November 14th. Comdex starts November 12th and runs through the 15th (Monday through Thursday).

Our July meeting will be on Thursday, July 12th.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped out at the Microsoft Extreme on June 2nd. For those who didn't attend, when we arrived at the Causeway Hyatt to set up the event, we found that Microsoft had sent all the supplies and the AV equipment to the Hyatt Downtown. The Causeway Hyatt was gracious and found us a room that accommodated 600 people. They set up chairs and a serving area outside the room. They put up registration tables and signs for us. They were simply wonderful.

The AV people arrived and had the feed from Seattle, Washington ready to go in a short time. They had to leave most of their equipment at the downtown Hyatt, so the show was much less than it would have been. They had to leave behind additional speakers to make it easier to hear the event and additional monitors so that everyone could see. If you attended and had problems either hearing or seeing, now you know why.

The TPCUG people were amazing. Jenny Lind Olin, Mike Hodges, Bruce Register, Kevan Sheridan and Herb Atwood jumped right in and helped anywhere they were needed with little or no instructions. I'd especially like to thank my children: my daughters, Marcia Bennington and Michelle Hominsky and my son-in-law, Jay Hominsky. I was supposed to bring ten people to the event with me and without my kids, I would have been in trouble.

Microsoft contacted me after the event and said it planned to send everyone who helped a free copy of Office XP. I went to Microsoft.com and the price for the standard version is $479.00 and the upgrade is $239.00, so Microsoft is giving us a pretty nice "Thank you."

(President……Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
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Family Tree Maker	FTM
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Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
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Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
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PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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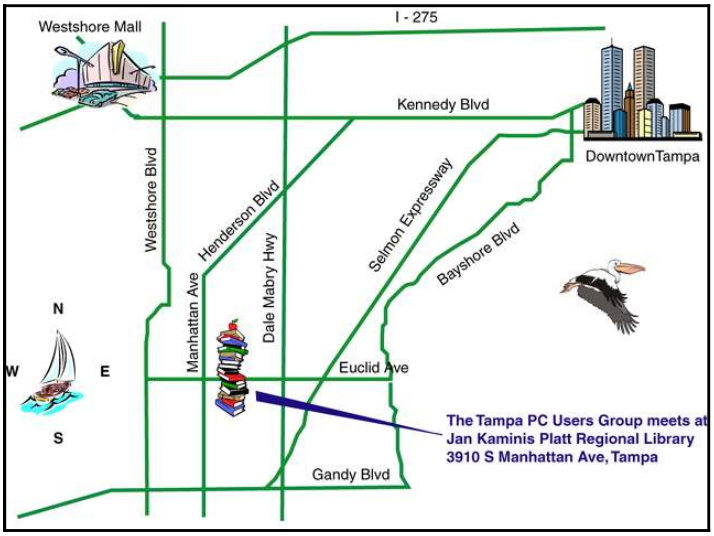
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(President… … ….Continued from page 10)

Jenny Leitzke has agreed to be our program chair-person. We our hoping to set up a table in the back of the room at Jan Platt Library for the following reasons: The membership person or our treasurer will be there to hand out badges in the beginning of the meeting, sell raffle tickets before the meeting and during the break, and handle any renewals or new members who wish to join the group.

I'm looking forward to the next meeting. I've wanted a scan pen for some time and I'm hoping to get a good deal at the meeting.

I hope everyone has a wonderful summer! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 8 August 2001

Meeting

NetPerformance
Web Design and Web Hosting

Wednesday, August 8, 2001
6:30 PM
Jan Platt Regional Library
3910 S Manhattan Ave.
Tampa

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Meeting Preview: Fay Poynton with Digital Chainsaw/ NetPerformance will tell us about web hosting and web design. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I really enjoyed the presentation at the July 12th meeting. I thought I knew all about the scan pens, but when I found out I could transfer the data between the pen and my Palm Pilot, I was much more interested. I was lucky enough to win one of the pens as the door prize. I've been using the pen every day since I've gotten it. I received the extended memory that I bought yesterday via UPS. I now can have a language translation and a dictionary onboard the pen. I'm really excited about the possibilities.

I reserved my room at The Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las

(President.....Continued on page 5)

We meet at the Jan Kaminis Platt Regional Library, 3910 S Manhattan Avenue, Tampa at 6:30 PM.

September 12: To be announced. Check our web site.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

We had a miscommunication between the editor and the secretary, so the minutes for July are not available. However, the meeting isn't too hard to reconstruct.

WizCom gave us a presentation on their various scanning pens, with the emphasis on the QuickLink pen. The presenter in the photo below, Ron Jabera, gave a presentation that was good enough to convince a number of members to purchase the various versions of the pen at the meeting.



The pen was quite accurate in capturing text one line at a time from various documents used in the demonstration. See the review of the pen in this

(Minutes… … ….Continued on page 12)

QuickLink Scanning Pen

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



I, like several others in the group, ordered a QuickLink Pen following the demonstration at our monthly meeting in July. I am fairly skeptical of such items, but the actual scanning of text we selected at the meeting convinced me that it works. The amazing part being that it performs Optical Character Recognition (OCR) right after scanning in a line of text, and in the demonstration the results were quick and accurate. With the thought that I must surely have a use for such an item, and if I didn't my daughter would, I ordered one at the special user group price of $129.

Of course, when I got home I had second thoughts and wondered if I really needed the pen. Then I wondered some more after I went to Amazon.com and saw they were selling the pen for $116 plus shipping. Well, the presenter was a real nice guy, and I appreciated him telling us about the pen. Otherwise I probably would have never known about it, so I wasn't going to complain too much about six or seven dollars more than necessary. Also, a check of other online retailers showed the pen selling for considerably more, e.g. $150.

How do I feel after receiving my pen and trying it out? Well, I am still not sure that I really have a need for it, but it does work quite well—with a little practice.

Here is a paragraph scanned with the pen from Page 535 in chapter 15 of *Professional Active Server Pages 2.0*. I have enclosed the correct word in [ ] where an error occurred.

> Jnce[Once] the user has selected all of the titles that they wish to purchase, they can choose to move to the purchase phase of the application. In this phase, they are presented with detailed information about the items that they are purchasing, E~orig 'a;_th [along with] costs for taxes and shipping. After reviewing the information, the user can choose to amend their order, in which case they would be returned to the Check Selections phase of the application.

Not bad. It made errors in the words Once, along, and with. Missing the O in Once could be attributed to the page needing to be flattened more, since there was a large curve toward the binding, and I flattened it more before scanning in the next line. Also it is always possible that my hand wavered a bit when I went over the words "along with". And that brings me to my main problem with the pen--I get a bit tense trying to concentrate on keeping it on a straight path directly over the line being scanned.

Having the text only in the pen really doesn't do you much good. You want it in your computer. To get it into your computer, you have three routes: A serial connection (provided) between the pen and your computer, an infrared connection if your computer supports this, and finally beaming to a Palm Pilot or Handspring Visor. The last method is the one I used first. I beamed what I had scanned to a memo in my Handspring Visor, then Hot-Synced the Visor with my computer.

To use the infrared or the serial connection, you need to install the QuickLink Desktop Application on your computer. This also gives you several more features. One is Scan to PC when you have the pen connected to the computer with the serial cable.

I just used the pen to scan in the following text that describes this feature. Only one error was made, and that could be attributed to the left margin of the text being close to a dark vertical band in the man-

(Pen… … …Continued on page 4)

(Pen… … ….Continued from page 3)
ual. The manual says:

> The Scan to PC application enables you to use your Pen as an input scanning device in order to scan information ~ firectly [directly] into an application on the computer. The Pen enters scanned information into the application at the location of the input cursor.

At this point, I was still getting the scanned text in my PC via a beam to the Visor and then a Hot-Sync to the PC. Time to try out the serial connection between the PC and the pen. After following the instructions in the Communications Wizard of the QuickLink Desktop, I could not get the PC and the pen to communicate. Well, the first problem was that I needed to change the serial setting from COM1 to COM2, since that was where the pen was connected. (In this day of USB I have almost forgotten about COM ports.) Still no communications.

A good bit of thinking and tinkering with the settings, then I remembered that on my last trip I couldn't get my laptop computer's modem to work. A little sleuthing there showed me that the modem thought the COM port was busy, and I discovered that was caused by my Visor's Hot-Sync program running on the laptop. Once I closed that, the modem worked fine. Even though the Hot-Syncing uses a USB port it somehow makes other applications think the COM port is busy. Once I recalled that, all I had to do to get the PC and the pen to communicate was to close the same Visor Hot-Sync program on my main computer.

Now I, among other things, could scan a few lines of text directly into any Windows application running on my computer. Here is what I brought into Word from the Quick Link manual:

> Congratulations on your choice of a state-of-the-art WizCorn [WizCom] QuickLink PenTM. Inside its tip your Pen contains a sophisticated electronic eye mounted above two rollers. This eye enables you to scan in different types of printed information, such as notes, addresses or business cards, Internet links and tables, anywhere you are. You can later transfer, 01 [or] "quicklink", the information to your computer.

Only two errors occurred. Pretty good, and it was also fairly fast.

The QuickLink Pen does not do quite as well on the Tampa Tribune, making errors in four of 85 words scanned in one trial. I got similar results in other trials.

It works equally well when rolled left to right as when rolled right to left. The latter method is easier for me since I can see the text being scanned easier in that mode.

You can get extra memory (proprietary flash memory) for the pen which will allow you to scan in more than the average 1000 pages with the normal 2 MB of memory. Of course, no one is probably going to need to store more than 1000 pages. But the extra memory also allows you to run dictionary and language translation modules that you can download for free from the company's web site, http://www.wizcomtech.com. Additionally it will allow you to run additional applications developed in the future.

WizCom Technologies also makes other version of the pen: the Quicktionary II and the Reading Pen II. The Quicktionary II does translations and definitions of words and contains a voice module so that you can hear the results. The Reading Pen II is meant for individuals with reading problems and provides audible definitions and pronunciations.

WizCom apparently is not alone in having the idea of a scanning pen. They have competition from C-Pen, http://www.cpen.com. ◆

(President… … ….Continued from page 1)

Vegas for the November APCUG-Comdex event. The Orleans is the host hotel for the APCUG Fall conference. I paid for my registration and Kevan's and then found out that I didn't have to pay for registration because I'm an officer now. The APCUG event starts on Saturday, November 10 and is over Wednesday November 14th. Comdex starts November the 12th and runs through the 15th (Monday through Thursday). If any of our officers or anyone who would like to be an officer in the future is interested, please contact me at mcpease@mindspring.com or visit http://www.apcug.org for more information.

Everyone needs to be thinking about who will be our next president. I think two years is enough for me. We need fresh faces and fresh ideas to keep our group growing and changing into a better organization. I will help the new president in any way I can to make the transition smooth and seamless.

Kevan Sheridan, our member-at-large, will start preparing a roster of candidates for the upcoming year to present at the October meeting. That isn't very far off, so please be thinking about whether

(Presidnet… … ….Continued on page 8)

Internet picture of the month



A lot of Laptop for $999
Gateway Solo 1200

Here is a name brand laptop for $999. The Gateway Solo 1200 has a In Intel® Celeron™ 800MHz Processor with 128K Cache, 10GB Ultra ATA hard drive, 128 MB SDRAM, a 12.1" XGA TFT Active Matrix screen, Internal V.90 56K Modem, Internal 10/100 Ethernet, CD and floppy drives, 2 USB ports, and the other items you would expect. The only two short comings are no serial port and a NIMH battery instead of a Lithium Ion Battery. Quite a deal! From the Gateway site at http://www.gw2k.com.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Find the best price from online bookstores	http://www.isbn.nu/
WizCom Technologies Ltd. - Handheld Scanners	http://www.wizcomtech.com/
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All the News, on the Net, all the Time	http://totalnews.com/_main.html
MEDLINEplus Health Information	http://medlineplus.gov/
familydoctor.org	http://familydoctor.org/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Book Review of
New Webmaster's Guide to FrontPage 2002

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC User's Group
larryanders@msn.com

First, let me tell you that in the past I have written several articles reviewing software and hardware, but to my knowledge, this is my first book review. I'm flying blind here, so maybe you shouldn't expect too much.

When I saw that this book was available for review I immediately volunteered to do it because I was interested in finding out what was new in the next version of FrontPage. I have been using FrontPage since Microsoft decided to develop this type of software, and since reading New Webmaster's Guide to FrontPage 2002 (***NWG***) I have purchased my upgrade to FrontPage 2002 (***FP2002***). Not to say I purchased my upgrade of ***FP2002*** because of reading ***NWG***. I would have upgraded anyway because I think FrontPage is the best program out there for creating and maintaining a web site. Now, on to the book…

The subtitle to ***NWG*** is "*The Eight Steps For Designing, Building, and Managing FrontPage 2002 Web Sites*." Furthermore, the book's cover quotes the Wall Street Journal as saying "*it aims at mainstream business rather than techies or raw novices*." I hate to start out this way but I strongly disagree with the Wall Street Journal's assessment. I think this is a terrific book for anyone wanting to learn about creating a serious web site. (By serious I mean something other than a family picture album.) And you don't have to be interested in developing just a business related site to get something out of this book.

I was disappointed to find that, for the most part, the book dealt with overall techniques applicable to web sites in general and not just FrontPage. The authors, Jason Gerend and Stephen Nelson stated that they felt one problem with most books about FrontPage is that they are only about FrontPage. Duh! Maybe that's why they are books about FrontPage. You think? Well, if that is what they think, then their book certainly is *not* wrong. They could probably have titled the book "New Webmaster's Guide to Designing, Building and Managing Web Sites – with a ***few*** applications relating to FrontPage 2002." But then again, they probably wouldn't sell as many books with that title.

Don't get me wrong. I think it was a very good book on how to build a web site and do it right, but I was misled by the book's title. If you'd really like some good instructions on how to develop a web site here are the eight steps suggested in the book:

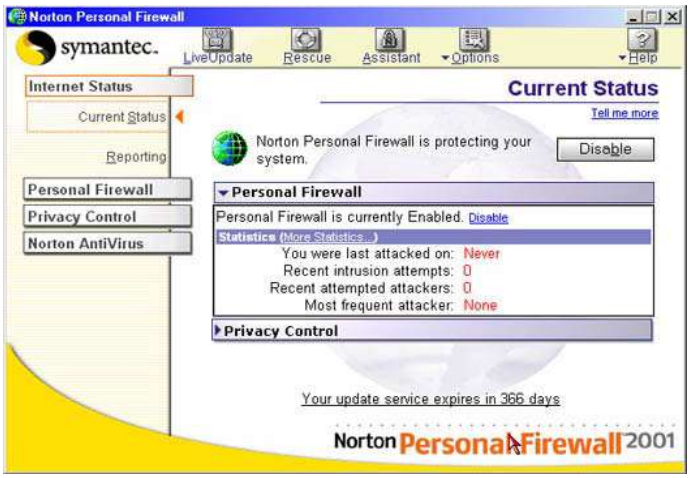
1. Determine your web's goals
2. Lay your foundation
3. Collect and organize your content
4. Create your web site
5. Create your pages
6. Polish your pages
7. Add interactivity to your web site
8. Deploy your web site

NWG is well worth its $24.95 list price and is probably less expensive if purchased on-line. There is a lot of good information in this book that someone new to web site design, or a seasoned designer, can find helpful. But don't expect it to give you all the ins and outs of FrontPage 2002. You'll have to purchase a book about FrontPage 2002 for that, or read an upcoming article of mine on what's new in FrontPage 2002. ◆

Norton Personal Firewall 2001 ver. 3.0

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

After building a new computer a couple of months ago, I was looking at the Sunday ads and saw that Norton Firewall 2001 was on sale for less than $20. And I needed to install a firewall on the new "toy". I have used Sybergen Secure Desktop on my last computer and Zonealarm on my kids' computer but have never used the Norton, so I went ahead and purchased it.



I always read the program instructions before I make a major mistake in installation, and this manual scared me. *It seemed that there was too much control and I was going to need to make each setting individually or I was not going to have access to the web.* I set the manual next to the bed for future reading before I decided if it was worth installing.

Since then I have reread the manual once or twice a week and slowly convinced myself that the manual was written to show what the total power of the program was if needed and what individual settings could be made to control the network communications of the computer. This is both for Home Networking and the Internet connections.

If you want, you can control your Personal Confidential, Cookies, Browser Privacy (this prevents



a web site seeing what browser you use and what the last web site visited was), ActiveX controls, Java Applets and more, but really very few settings need to be set up.

The default settings that Norton uses when you install their Firewall need very little change. Norton has a list it uses to scan your system to identify the programs that access the web during installation and it asks you what to allow on these before you ever get on the web. I installed it and so far every situation I met on the web has been taken care of easily. Any program that tries to communicate from your computer to another is prevented until you allow it. You can allow just one time or allow complete use in the future with just a couple of clicks. Each instance you are given a "Threat Level" and "Choices" of whether to allow it.

Norton installs an Icon in the "Systray" and puts a simple toolbar that they call "AlertTracker " that pops out and notifies you of any activity on the side.

Logs are kept of all activity and statistics of your connection so that you can have a good idea of what is happening while on the web. As with other products you need to periodically update this program for new fixes for new dangers.

If you have Norton AntiVirus installed, the update does both programs at the same time and allows

(Norton……Continued on page 8)

(Norton……Continued from page 7)
you access to the Virus program from inside the Firewall startup screen.

As a test of "HOW GOOD" it worked I went to: Shields up test at http://www.grc.com, Sybergen test at http://scan.sygatetech.com, and Norton's test at http://security1.norton.com and did their internet security test. Norton Firewall passed each test, and my computer was not seen as other than an IP address.

The only bad that I can find in a month of use is



that this program also needs subscriptions yearly for the Update part of the program to be used. This subscription, like Norton AntiVirus (which is $3.95), is for one year and will be $6.95 per year. ◆

(President……Continued from page 5)
you are interested in running for office and let Kevan know.

I'd like to thank our current officers for all the hard work they do. If an organization is running smoothly, it looks like the leaders don't have much

(President……Continued on page 10)

Looking back to 1991: Minutes of the May 1991 Meeting

Harvey Bruneau was the sole speaker for the entire meeting. Software Publishing had to cancel its scheduled presentation on GeoGraphics. It is believed that the local representative had to attend a seminar about the new product that SPC is about to announce. Steve Spears was to give a presentation but had to cancel at the last minute. Seems that Steve's company had a system crash on their mid-west server. What with air freighting new material and having to go to work at 4 in the morning, Steve has an interesting (?) career.

Harvey spoke about some recent product announcements. Some of the items were:

- Version 5 of DOS is scheduled for release in June. The upgrade price is $100.

- WordPerfect for Windows is due to be released in July. It will be called Version 6. The product was demonstrated at Harvey's office and Harvey said that it looks great. He also reported that anyone buying WordPerfect between 4/1/91 and until 30 days after the product release is announced, registered users can get an updated license from WordPerfect. It will cost $15 to get the update disk, $29 for the manual, and $19 for the work book – plus $5 for shipping and handling.

- MicroSoft's Trackball was shown. It attaches to the side of the keyboard. The trackball is packaged with its own case and several varieties of clamps to fit the side edge of keyboards. If you want to attach the trackball to a regular desktop PC, you need an extension cable since the supplied cable is rather short. The coiled cable is of an adequate length for laptops or portables. Logitech offers a similar device.

- Hewlett-Packard has lowered its price for the Desk Jet printer. They have announced the Laser Jet IIIP with a price of $1595; same 4 ppm as the

(1991……Continued on page 9)

(1991… … ….Continued from page 8)

IIP but with the new engine of the III model (resolution enhancement). For $1895, you can get the laser jet fax which routes fax material to the laser printer.

- Hewlett-Packard now offers a palm-top computer with Lotus built into it. The keyboard is very small and would be awkward for touch typists. But if you're only entering numbers into Lotus, it's adequate.

- Okidata has a new 24 pin printer being offered for $349.

- Tandy (Radio Shack) is allowing up to $500 for your old PC toward the purchase of certain new PCs that Tandy offers.

- Version 7 of PCTOOLS is now available. List price is $179; upgrade price will be $49 until July 1st. Until August 1st, anyone with a competing product will be able to get the new version for $59. It is said to have a Windows-like appearance. It will offer back-up through Windows, launch Window program applications and protection or detection of over 600 computer viruses.

- Prodigy has been accused of accessing data on user machines. The Los Angeles District Attorney is checking this allegation. One of the members spoke about seeing some of his records in one of Prodigy's .DAT files.

- Virus problem. America On-Line distribution disks may be corrupted. One member reported that the virus seems to affect floppy disk behavior. He said that he couldn't copy files to a floppy disk. And that the middle half of his directory listing was gone. He reported the problem to America On-Line and they said they were not aware of it. He called three weeks later to check and again they said that they were not aware of the problem!

- Permission had been obtained to extend the 4/30 deadline on the Geoworks coupons for another 10 days. These coupons enable a buyer to get the Geoworks Ensemble for $50, a tremendous saving compared to the list price. The street price is between 130-150 dollars.

- Comments on the working demo of Ami-Pro were solicited. A member reported that he was quite impressed with the features of this high-end word processor. It's easier to work with than the DOS version of WordPerfect. It can substitute as a desktop publishing program. He remarked that, although there were virtually no instructions supplied, it was quite intuitive - very user-friendly. He also said that, as with most Window applications, there is no UNinstall procedure. The working copy WILL comb the physical hard drive to find Windows. When it finds it, it installs itself into Windows. To uninstall it, you have to modify the various .INI files then remove the pertinent files.

LAP LINK Presentation:

Harvey demonstrated Version 3 of Lap Link, a software package that enables two PCs to be connected for file management. Both serial and parallel connector cables are supplied with the package. The software splits the screen and shows both the local and the remote machine. He noted that the ports on both machines must agree. And that parallel hookups were preferred for their speed as compared to serial transfers.

This program enables you to copy files to/from one PC to another when incompatible floppy drives are installed on the PCs. Harvey showed just how easy it was to copy and delete files on either the local or the remote machine. You do have to be careful and keep track of which part of the screen represents the local or the remote PC. He said that it took about 35-45 minutes to copy over 100 meg of data between two machines.

SECRETARY'S COMMENT:

Our president deserves a round of applause and our

(1991… … ….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

Custom computers for home and business
Systems – upgrades – software
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(813) 879-3602

PO Box 21081
Tampa, FL 33622-1081 merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

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thanks for the great job he did at our last meeting. It was unfortunate that the scheduled speakers had to cancel. But as they say in the vernacular, Stuff happens. So, Harvey had to carry the whole meeting by himself. He's always ready to fill-in if one of the scheduled speakers has to cancel; but to carry both ends speaks well of his willingness to help our users group. Thanks Harvey, for a job well done under trying circumstances. ◆

From the June 1991 Bits of Blue

(President… ……Continued from page 8)

to do. What we forget is how much hard work goes into making things run smoothly. So thanks to Mike Hodges, James Weber, Jenny Lind Olin, Kevan Sheridan, Bruce Register and especially to William LaMartin who maintains the newsletter and our web site. I'm hopeful about Jenny Leitzke's taking on the membership chair position. Jenny has lots of energy and good ideas, and I think she's just what our group needs. Thanks to Bob LeFave for taking care of the badges. I really appreciate how everyone helps put the tables and chairs out and back up for the meetings. By everyone helping, it's done quickly and we're able to get out of the room in a timely manner.

Don't forget it's "Back to School" time, so if you have to shop, be careful. ◆



Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
CAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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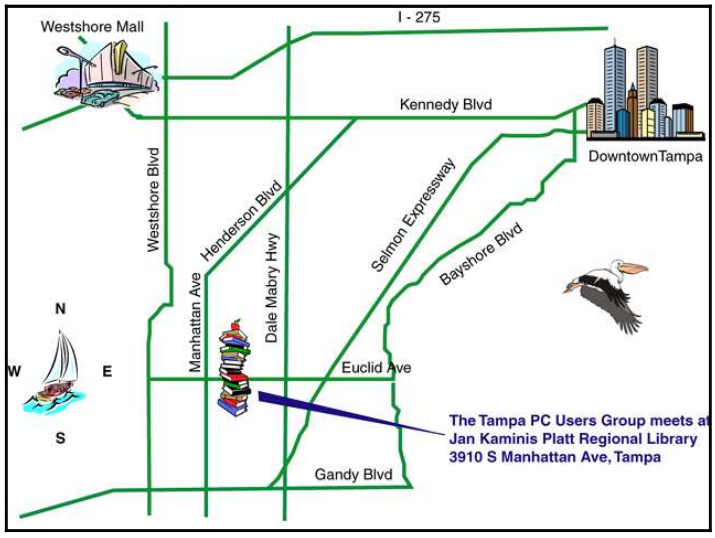
(Minutes… … ….Continued from page 2)
newsletter.

In the drawing, Mary Sheridan won a QuickLink pen and Merle Nicholson won the Quicklink T–shirt with his ticket.

Paper notebooks, ballpoint pens and Microsoft T-shirts were given out. All thanks to Microsoft.

Before the presentation, we had our usual Windows discussion. Among the topics of interest was computer security.

Jenny Leitzke brought in several older computers for members to take whatever hardware they wanted from them. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



September in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 9 September 2001

Meeting

Debra Benoit from Tampa Bay Online

Wednesday, September 12, 2001
6:30 PM
Jan Platt Regional Library
3910 S Manhattan Ave.
Tampa

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Meeting Preview: Debra Benoit from Tampa Bay Online will tell us about the Tampa Tribune's TBO web site. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I wasn't able to attend our August meeting. I had a weird problem with my leg and foot. After about a million dollars worth of tests, my leg and foot are better and neither I nor my doctor knows what was wrong. I'm glad it was nothing serious, but it is a little irritating to have a "mystery" ailment.

Plans are being firmed up for the FACUG fall conference. The conference will be held in Lakeland, FL at the Imperial Lakes Country Club, 6 Country Club Lane, Mulberry, Florida 33860. The conference date is Saturday, October 13, 2001 from 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM.

The FACUG (Florida Association of Computer User Groups) is the leading regional association of its kind in the country; FACUG is a southeast regional non-profit tax exempt association of independent

(President.....Continued on page 9)

We meet at the Jan Kaminis Platt Regional Library, 3910 S Manhattan Avenue, Tampa at 6:30 PM.

October 10: To be announced. Check our web site.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the August Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

Our August meeting started at 6:30 with the Windows SIG. There was some discussion as to how to recover Windows or a Windows program when error messages concerning "Missing or Corrupt VxD" pop up. For those who didn't know, VxD stands for Virtual Device Driver, the small "x" filling in for any number of devices installed in Windows. If a VxD is deleted or, more commonly, overwritten by a new program, any number of odd things, from a refusal of a program to run up to the dreaded "blue screen of death" can occur. In a worst case scenario, Windows will refuse to boot. This brought us into the second area of discussion, how to make a boot disk. The easiest way is to use the "Startup Disk" tab under Start>Settings>Control Panel>Add/Remove Programs.

Our presentation began at 7:05 with Ms. Tara Shiffer (taras@tampabay.rr.com) of 4D Marketing (http://www.4dmarketing.net), who was provided by Digital Chainsaw (http://www.digitalchainsaw.com), a web hosting and site promotion company. She told us how to make a web site more appealing to the different types of search engines in use on the web today and what sort of things turn the search engines off. A brief summary of how a search engine works is that you contact a search engine company (Yahoo, Google, etc.) by their individual processes. If you fail to follow their guidelines, you're automatically excluded. Once you're accepted, the search engine will send out a program called a robot or spider to sift through and record information from each page and sub-page for the search engine's database. How your pages are set up has a lot to do with how many hits you receive. There was far too much information presented to cover here, but 4D Marketing offers a class covering at length all the items touched on during the meeting.

After the presentation we had our drawing. Congratulations to Gary Ennis on winning a copy of PhotoDelux 4.0.

The meeting ended at 8:00. ◆

Replace Napster Legally, I Think!

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

Well, I will have to admit it, "I was a ***Napster*** junkie," and when it effectively went down, so did I. I went into a techno depression the likes of which you have never seen. My withdrawal was so bad I didn't even want to get near my computer. My wife got really nervous because I was hanging around her so much.

I tried a few of the imitations but to no avail. That's all they were… ***Napster*** want-a-be's. Then a ***GOOD*** friend of mine told me about ***KaZaA,*** and **I WAS BACK pounding the keyboard!!!** But, believe it or not, that is not what this article is all about. I was going to write about KaZaA, but I was afraid someone would read my article and tell the download police and shut it down too. So, I'll leave you on your own to discover KaZaA. (Suffice it to say, you won't be sorry.)

When I realized my hard drive was filling up from all the MP3s on my computer, I went looking for a good all around recording program, and, believe me, I tried a bunch of them, but I won't bore you with those. I settled on ***MUSICMATCH jukebox 6.1***, and got a lot more than I expected. Just some of the things it will do are:

- Make **your** own CDs from your MP3s
- Turn **your** music collection into MP3s
- Play **your** MP3s, CDs and Windows Media
- Tune into MUSICMATCH Radio
- Manage **your** digital music collection
- Print custom CD labels and song lists for **your** tunes
- Get free downloads and artist info for **your** tunes
- Send **your** music to **your** MP3 player

(NOTE THE WORD **YOUR .**) I've heard so much lately about what is legal and what is not, I didn't really know what was what and what was not. (Whoa! Maybe I'll try poetry next – maybe not.)

First, let me tell you that what I'm about to tell you next works for me because I have broadband Internet connections both at work and at home. One of the best features about ***MUSICMATCH*** to me is the Internet radio stream



it feeds to your computer. I have not tried this program on dial-up so I'm not sure of the quality of that feed, but the quality is excellent on cable and DSL. A couple of clicks of the mouse, choose the genre of music you like, and voilà, you are listening to quality music, without the DJ's talk interrupting the process.

Most of the above is available on the Freeware version of ***MUSICMATCH***, but my gosh, for $19.99 you also get:

- Multi-session CD burning (at up to 24X)
- Customize and save equalizer settings
- Create and print custom CD labels and liners
- Custom visualizations (skins)
- Print your music library and play list
- Free online technical support
- Radio MX free for 30 days

That last item above, Radio MX, is a service ***MUSICMATCH*** provides for about $30 a year. With it you get additional items such as:

- Artist Match, create stations with up to 25 favorite artists
- CD-quality sound, 128 KBPS high fidelity sound
- No Ads, no banners or radio advertising as you listen
- Skip Button, skip songs you don't want to hear
- My Station, customized to the music you listen to most
- Era Stations, music from your favorite years
- Station Mixer, blends your favorite genres together
- Portability, log into your favorite stations wherever you go

Okay, okay… so what is all this leading to? Now that I was able to listen to the type of music that I wanted, whenever and wherever I wanted, and at CD-quality, all I needed to do was record this music. So… I did a search on Google.com for "record streaming audio", and I came

(Replace……Continued on page 9)

The Invisible Internet Reader

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

Stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid!

Yeah, yeah, yeah, what am I whining about, you all wanna know. Well. Consider this. We've all heard the old saw within the computer-literate universe…if cars had improved as much and as fast as computers over the last 20 years, they'd travel at the speed of light, get zillions of miles per gallon, and cost $1.98 brand new. But they haven't, have they.

Which brings us to what I'm complaining about. The Internet. Look, admit it or not---and most now do, even the Big Doubters of yesteryear, like Bill Gates---the Internet is the biggest thing to happen to humanity since, oh, **language**, or **fire**, or **agriculture**, or something similarly small like those. We all just **love** to peruse the Internet and the inexhaustible (to each of us, at least) supply of knowledge, entertainment, prurience, wisdom, comedy, etc. that it has to offer, right?

Which brings me right back to what I've been talking about here: It's coming! It's imminent. I really mean it! Any time now! Better watch out! What? Why, the appearance of a simple appliance, about the size and shape of a book, that can be cradled in our laps or on our chests when we lie in bed, in order to comfortably enjoy the cornucopia of all that is the Internet.

But it doesn't exist? **What??? Shocccccckkkk!** You figure we've got just about everything, here in the computer-Internet universe, right? Well, if it ain't here already, why, it's just over the horizon. Sing along with me! "Soooome wheeeere, Over the rainbow…Soooome wheeeere…" But **Stop!** That's what I'm tellin' ya! **It ain't happening.**

What have we got that we can comfortably hold and clutch to our bosoms, to peruse the Internet? Not those "lightweight" laptops! No in **my** bed! Uh uh! It cuts off the circulation in my arms and legs. Oh, **well** then, why not just stop being lazy and sit up in front of that big fat monitor on the desk, and peruse all ya want, till your heart's content? Well, because it's **uncomfortable**, you dolt! That's why we're all sitting around thrumming our fingers, wondering when the geniuses who brought us the computer revolution (and they **are** geniuses) are going to give us something **comfortable** and **convenient** that we can read anywhere **comfortably** and **conveniently!**

Is all **that** too much to ask for?

Well, yes, apparently. There are all **kinds** of reading appliances out there **right now**. But of course most are linked up with one big fat publishing conglomerate or another. And you think their main concern---or any concern at all, let's-face-it---has anything to do with allowing us to read what we want and when we want to? **NOOOOOOOOO**, of course not! They're all scrapping around about what kind of **encryption** schemes they can use to make sure we don't read one of their precious books more than once, or that more than one set of eyes don't get to peruse the same pristine orthography.

Hell, by this time more electronic reading appliances and e-reading appliance companies have gone bust than are now available. Rocket eBook and Softbook: Both gobbled up, acquired by Gemstar last year and replaced by the Gemstar REB 1100 and REB 1200. And, of course, you can only read Gemstar ebooks by downloading them by a modem (part of the reader) from **Gemstar's** collection of stuff to read. So sorry, can't just scan the Internet, or download stuff from the Internet to read later. And these two barkers cost $299 (for the el cheapo REB 1100) and $699 (for the REB 1200). How's **that** for a deal to get locked into someone else's small library? (Oh yeah, you can't share books with the Gemstars either; you can only transfer your entire library from your reader to someone else's---they wouldn't want you to be able to re-read a book while someone else was reading it.)

And **one other thing**, too: The copies of books that you download using ebooks (the Gemstars, and others also)---no printing, no ink, no trucks carrying tons of books in a distribution network, no paper and dead trees, no bookbinding and covering---cost **just about as much**, as the damned books we're trying to get away from (dead trees, anyone?). Why? Because the ebook people think the same way that IBM thought back at the dawn of the Revolution: "Lock those stupid customers in to our own proprietary system, and they won't have anywhere else to go! We can charge'em whatever we want!" (Cackle, cackle!)

Okay, let's blow off the Gemstars, and go over to the Franklin eBookMan offerings. The EBM-900, EMB-901, and EBM-911 are three devices that share some

(Reader.....Continued on page 5)

(Reader… … ….Continued from page 4)

characteristics. They all have Franklin's proprietary operating system---can anyone scream out **LOCK-IN SCHEME?**---they're all expensive ($130, $180, and $230 respectively), they're all slow, and they all try to do too much when they're just supposed to be **ebooks**. What? Oh, Franklin is screwing around with them being PDA's (personal digital assistants) and listening devices (**unencrypted** MP-3's only, of course), including both audiobooks and music.

HEY! ALL YOU EBOOK COMPANIES! All we want is an implement that can read books in various non-proprietary (and proprietary, if we so desire) formats, including Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Reader, Glassbook standard, Everybook (if it's still out there) and other formats. **Is that so hard???**

But I digress. I guess we could all agree that ebooks are one thing, and Internet readers are another thing. But I don't think they really are. Look, since all the geniuses in the industries Out There can't seem to get it together, let's go ahead and design what we need ourselves, right now.

First, a color screen of reasonable size will be needed, with an optional on-off back light. Perhaps it could be the size of the upcoming Microsoft tablet computer, but an entire **computer**---with its attendant expense and complexity---isn't what we need or are looking for. But

(Reader… … ….Continued on page 6)

Internet picture of the month



Lips © Copyright 2000 Arena Editions
From *Melvin Sokolsky: Seeing Fashion*

Lips by Melvin Sokolsky

Melvin Sokolsky, a fashion photographer, is one of many photographers whose works are displayed at **The Digital Journalist,** which describes itself as a multimedia magazine for photojournalism in the digital age. You can find it at: http://digitaljournalist.org/

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Images of England	http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/
Earth Viewer	http://www.fourmilab.ch/earthview/vplanet.html
Internet Legal Resource Guide	http://www.ilrg.com/
Florida State Government	http://www.state.fl.us/
Museum of World War II	http://www.museumofworldwarii.org/
The Digital Journalist	http://digitaljournalist.org/
4D Marketing – last month's presenter	http://www.4dmarketing.net/
TBO.COM – this month's presenter	http://www.tbo.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Reader… … ….Continued from page 5)
the **size** is right. Size matters. It'll have to be color, probably an LCD, because all those monochrome screens are deadly borrrrrring. And probably a touch-screen so we can navigate reasonably well without mousing around or having to have a keyboard. (Of course, it would have some buttons here and there, to aid in navigating, but this is a **reader**, stupid, not an incipient AI system or supercomputer.)

Second, the little booger should be fairly lightweight, with batteries that work a reasonable amount of time… say, at least 5 or 6 hours at a sitting (and lots more is possible, given what's out there in the way of low-power technology). Of course, unless those batteries are some kind of super alien artifacts, we've gotta be able to plug the thing into the wall when needed also.

Thirdly, stop screwing around with the proprietary standards and private operating systems in an effort to lock the reader in to a manufacturer's personal library. We're supposed to be selling reading implements, not trying to set up a flaming book-monopoly! So the thing should probably run on some kind of Linux-standard operating system and be able to accommodate all or most of the ebook standards out there, including Microsoft ClearType, Adobe Acrobat, the Glassbook standard, etc., etc.

Fourthly, the thing should be able to connect up easily and efficiently to the Internet, whether through a USB port, a PCMCIA port (that stands for "People Can't Memorize Computer Industry Acronyms"), an old-fashioned ethernet port, or whatever. But it would have to have broadband connectivity, cause that's where the world, and the Internet, are headed. **AND**, it would have to have some capability to connect up to your regular desktop or laptop, so as to be able to transfer stuff (books, pictures, what-have-you) back and forth (and thence be able to email stuff to our friends, if we have any).

Fifthly, it would have to have some storage. No hard drives or spinning floppies to run the batteries down. Probably some kind of flash memory. Just a few megs, so you could transfer stuff off the Internet and into your reader to enjoy without running drives whining in your ear.

Sixth…give us a break, will ya, on the price? Sure, you may be the first-to-market, and so you want to stick the early-adapters with as high prices as possible…but if I'm right, **everyone** is going to be an "early-adopter." So you don't have to jack up your price structure in the beginning so as to screw the first people who want to use the thing. You'll still make billions, so how about restraining your socialist greed ("socialist" greed because any kind of socialist political system is the ultimate in locking in a customer base…in the case of communists and Nazis, **literally** "lock in" and "lock up"). The price, therefore, should be somewhere south of $100. And puh-leeze, don't give us the fairy-tale that "it's not possible." It'll be here soon enough. You wanna be first or **not**?

Did I get everything? Maybe, maybe not. The rest of you can yell at me. But I think the above pretty much outlines what the market needs…and it ain't there yet.

Perhaps as important as what features are **needed** are those features that **we don't want or need!** Consider. The ebook-Internet reader doesn't have to play music. It doesn't have to read audiobooks to us. It doesn't have to turn into a salad-maker that slices and dices and shreds and dreads (it rhymes, that's all I can say). It doesn't have to **play games** (my blood pressure's going up again), because it's for **people with brains** who want to read…not teenagers.

And it doesn't have to have cutesy little features like a clock on the screen and a place that tells you what the date is (if you don't know what the date is, look at your damn watch; it's near the end of your arm, on your wrist). Or funny little helpful pictures or cartoons. Or a calculator. Or an address book. **It ain't a PDA, guys!**

Neither does it have to have twin-Pentium 4 chips running at 2 gigahertz each. It needs to be reasonably quick, but not a flippin' supercomputer. And it doesn't have to do numeric calculations. It probably will have a low-power Transmeta Crusoe chip in it, or something similar from AMD or Intel running at 500 or 600 Mhz. And---did I mention it before?---**No blasted games are needed!**

No. Just give us a simple implement that can easily connect up to the Internet and download those books and articles we want to read, store them in a reasonably-sized flash memory, and display them on a reasonably-sized backlit color touch-screen. It ain't rocket science.

(Reader… … ….Continued on page 9)

Notes on Office XP (mainly Word)

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I have been using the various Office products for many years and have written numerous reviews of them in this newsletter. What more is there to say? They are great products. They will do things that the average user will never even dream of. And they get more expensive and complicated with each new version. Although Microsoft has made an effort to make XP more user friendly—think Smart Tags.

First, note that you will not be able to buy one copy of Office XP and install it on all the computers in your office or home (unless you avail yourself of one of the cracks to the activation process that are supposedly out there on the Internet.) With Microsoft's new activation process you will be stopped if you try to install it on more than one desktop computer and one laptop computer. The activation process collects information about the computer and sends it to Microsoft. Subsequent installations will trigger a denial if the new installation is on a computer that differs substantially from the first one on which it was installed. A phone call to Microsoft and their OK is the only way that this subsequent installation will work. If this bothers you, don't buy Office XP. There is always WordPerfect.

Of course, if you are happy with Office 97 or Office 2000, then there is probably no need to upgrade anyway. Just as our computers have gotten to the point that they do everything we need, so has our software. I have been using XP Professional for about two months and haven't found anything that has made my life easier, although I have only used it in a casual way and not done a proper investigation as would be necessary if this were to be a real review of the product.

Office XP installed in less than 10 minutes over my previous installation of Office 97. So I now have Office XP on the Compaq computer I use most. I have Office 97 on my laptop and my old Gateway that I still use a bit. My daughter's newer Gateway has Office 2000, for which we have misplaced the CD and need to see about getting a copy of it from Microsoft. I even have Office 95 on an old laptop. So I am no stranger to Microsoft Office.

After the installation, on opening Word for the first time I received an error message: "Microsoft Word has encountered a problem and needs to close. We are sorry for the inconvenience." Now that is real nice.

Not a good start, but here is where the new technology came into play. I was offered the opportunity to submit an error report to Microsoft. Which I did and immediately received the following response: "Microsoft thanks you for taking the time to send us information about the program error that you just experienced. After investigating error reports provided by users like you, our engineers devised a workaround for this problem. This article contains information that may help you avoid encountering this problem again in the future."

The article described how the problem was caused by an incompatibility with the PDFMaker.dot add-in that is included with Adobe Acrobat 5.0. Most people don't have the full version of Acrobat, so they would never get such a message. The article went on to tell how to work around the problem and that Adobe was working on a permanent solution. Pretty impressive, I think. I have never had feedback like that before.

A new feature I am less impressed with is Microsoft Document Scanning, listed under Microsoft Office Tools. It will scan a page of text for you, perform OCR on it and put it in your Word document. But I find that TextBridge Pro does a considerably more accurate job with the OCR. There is also the feature to insert a picture into a document via the scanner without leaving Word. This might be useful to some. I didn't install the speech recognition feature, so I can't comment on it.

Another neat feature—but how much do you really need it—is the ability to translate single words into another language (if you have installed that language module). If you want to translate more than one word, you need to sign up with one of the two online translation services that work with Microsoft. It is free to have a computer do the translation. If you want a person to do it, you will have to pay. I chose the computer version of the Mendez translation service for the following example.

Here is the English sentence to be translated:

This is a test of the online Mendez translation service for Microsoft Word 2002. It will translate a body of text--not just one word as Word's built in translation does.

The French translation: C'est une épreuve du service de traduction Mendez en ligne pour Microsoft Word 2002. Il traduira un corps de texte--pas seulement un mot comme Mot a construit dans traduction fait.

(XP… … ….Continued on page 8)

(XP… … ….Continued from page 7)

The Spanish translation: Ésta es una prueba del Méndez en línea el servicio de traducción para Microsoft Word 2002. Traducirá un cuerpo de texto--no sólo una palabra como la Palabra ha construido en la traducción hace.

As I said, the service is free. You just have to download a small plug-in, and you will need a Microsoft Passport (which is also free).

One of the more written-about new features of Office 2002 (another name for XP) is the smart tag. To test it I typed the following sentence into Word: The Tampa PC Users Group meets at 3910 S Manhattan Ave., Tampa, FL .

After typing this into Word, when I move my cursor over the address, a little square box with an "i" inside a circle appears. If I click on it, I am given a selection of smart tag actions, two of which are "Display Map" and "Display Driving Directions". If I click on "Display Map", my browser is opened to the Microsoft Expedia site where an interactive map is displayed showing the location of our meeting site. Of course, you need to have a live Internet connection for this to work.

The Word "Save As HTML" option has been enhanced—and has caused me problems. Don't get me wrong. It works. It just works too well. For example, suppose I have a Word document consisting of only the following sentence: "**This is a test of a simple HTML page created from this very short Word document.**" Here is the HTML code generated by saving it as a Filtered HTML document in Word 2002. If you think this is bad, save it as a non-filtered HTML document (it will contain more Office specific tags)

```
<html>
<head>
<meta http-equiv=Content-Type content="text/html; char-
set=windows-1252">
<meta name=Generator content="Microsoft Word 10
(filtered)">
<title>This is a test of a simple HTML page created from this
very short Word
document</title>
<style>
<!--
 /* Style Definitions */
 p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal
        {margin:0in;
        margin-bottom:.0001pt;
        font-size:10.0pt;
        font-family:"Times New Roman";}
@page Section1
        {size:8.5in 11.0in;
        margin:1.0in 1.25in 1.0in 1.25in;}
div.Section1
        {page:Section1;}
-->
</style>
</head>
<body lang=EN-US>
<div class=Section1>
<p class=MsoNormal><font size=3 face="Times New Ro-
man"><span style='font-size:
12.0pt'>This is a test of a simple HTML page created from this
very short Word
document</span></font></p>
</div>
</body>
</html>
```

Quite a bit to produce one sentence. Office 97 produces the following much simpler HTML code.

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<META HTTP-EQUIV="Content-Type" CONTENT="text/
html; charset=windows-1252">
<META NAME="Generator" CONTENT="Microsoft Word
97">
<TITLE>This is a test of a simple HTML page created from
this very short Word document</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY>
<P>This is a test of a simple HTML page created from this
very short Word document.</P>
<FONT SIZE=2></FONT></BODY>
</HTML>
```

The 2002 HTML is very hard to edit. For example, without wholesale removal of the extra coding you can't even change the font size or color. Office 2000 has a utility for stripping out this extra code called Office 2000 HTML Filter, I think, but no such utility yet exists for Office 2002.

I think the objective of all the extra code is to make the HTML document appear as close to the original Word document as possible. But it comes with a price. For example, when you view the 2002 HTML document in a browser, changing the viewing text size has no effect on the document.

Well, I am almost out of space, and I haven't even gotten

(XP… … ….Continued on page 9)

(XP… … ….Continued from page 8)

to Excel and Access. In what space remains let's talk about Web Queries in Excel. With a Web Query I can link any tabular data on the web to an area of cells in an Excel worksheet—for example, the stock information for Microsoft's own stock at MSN's Money Central. I could do this for any stock. Using the Web Query, I thus can set up worksheets in Excel containing the tabular data and have it refreshed as often as I like, say every 15 minutes. But stocks are not the only web data that you can import. How about the weather information for New York City's Central Park at http://www.weather.com. Or the AP headline news. The possibilities are boundless.

In closing, the only thing I noticed different in Access—other than that it had a different file format from previous versions— had to do with Visual Basic for Applications programming. It is of no interest to the average user, but if you are going to use a construct like

```
Dim MyDB As Database, MySet As Recordset
Set MyDB = CurrentDb
Set MySet = MyDB.OpenRecordset("Main")
```

then you will need a reference to the Microsoft DAO 3.6 Object Library. Something that was not required in Office 97. It took me a little while to figure that one out.

More next time. I really haven't had time to look for new features. It takes all my time to just use the features I already know. ◆

(President… … ….Continued from page 1)

computer user groups with 46 member groups, including PC and MAC groups. The group was founded in 1993 to assist user groups in the performance of their managerial and educational activities, to promote communications among local user groups, and to facilitate relations between user groups and the computer industry. FACUG is the successor organization to the Florida Suncoast Conference of PC User Groups. Suncoast was one of the early regional groups having been started in 1989 in Sarasota. (http://www.facug.org)

I am finalizing my plans to attend the fall event for the

(President… … ….Continued on page 10)

(Replace… … ….Continued from page 3)

up with a program called ***Total Recorder*** (for $11.95), and there I was.

Now I can choose the type of music, download a particular title, artist, genre or era with ***MUSICMATCH,*** and record away with ***Total Recorder***, which gives you several easy ways to save files in different formats. I, of course, have chosen MP3s, and I'm very satisfied with the outcome.



Now, tell me, is this any different from an updated version of taping a song off an old- fashioned analog radio using a cassette recorder? I don't remember the recording industry telling me that I couldn't do that, so I guess I'm legal now… or not!

By the way, check back next month and I'll tell you about some neat stuff to play all these audio files on. ◆

(Reader… … ….Continued from page 6)

But wait…maybe it is. After all, here we are in the 20th plus year of the entire computer Revolution. And not only is this simple implement not on the **market** yet… it's not even on the horizon, as far as I can see. Can you? Can any of us? ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Did You Know This Trick

By Jenny Leitzke, Membership Coordinator, Tampa PC Users Group
Leitzke4@tampabay.rr.com

Microsoft has a number of cute tricks up its sleeve, and, although an experienced user, I am still discovering them. During a training class this week, I learned that in Microsoft Office you can customize your Toolbar Icons to have different pictures from the ones originally assigned to them. This will also drive anyone borrowing your computer absolutely batty trying to identify them.

Follow these simple steps:
Click "View"
Click "Toolbars"
Click "Customize"
Click Tab "Commands"
Click on the Icon you wish to change
Click "Modify Selection"
Click "Change Button Image"
and ala kazam your new Icon. Still the same function, but you have chosen the picture to associate with it.

If you would like to change it back again,
Click "Modify Selection"
Click "Reset Button Image"
and your Icon is back to the original picture before you fiddled with it.

Have fun, but be careful. Too much power is always a little dangerous. ◆

(President…… ….Continued from page 9)

APCUG. APCUG (Association of Personal Computer User Groups) is an organization dedicated to helping member computer user groups succeed. The APCUG helps to foster communications by operating as an informal network between user group organizations and also with companies that provide computer related and Internet related goods and services. The APCUG also assists member groups in the fulfillment of their educational missions and activities by sharing with officers of member user groups the knowledge of what it takes for user groups to better serve their members. The APCUG operates as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. (http://www.apcug.org)

Microsoft is planning their next event on October 20th at 10 AM. I'm not sure what TPCUG's involvement will be, but I may need to ask for volunteers to work the event.

(President…… ….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
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RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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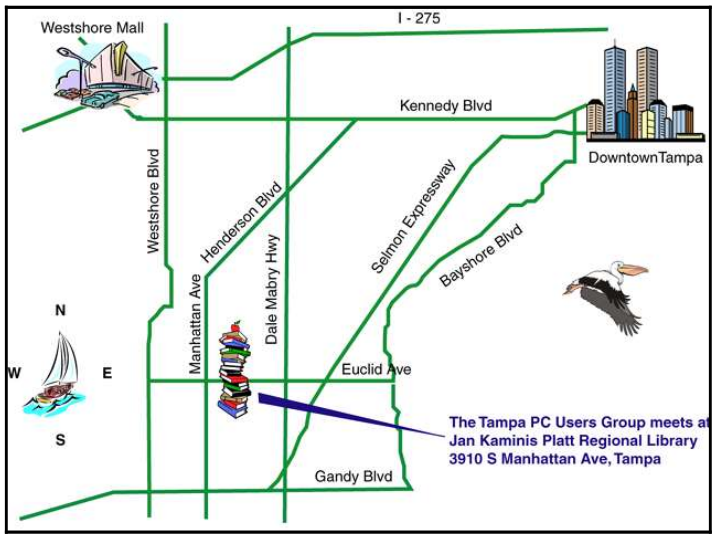
NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
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TAMPA, FL
PERMIT NO. 1917

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(President……Continued from page 10)

I will not run for president again. I think people get stagnant and complacent when they stay in one place for too long. I'd like to see the board at least shake up positions. The best situation is to find new people to come into the board, bringing new ideas and new energy. If it ends up being the same group of officers again, then at least we should switch positions on the board, so we all know how to do each others' jobs. The member-at-large will present a roster of candidates at our October meeting. If you or anyone you know would make a good officer, please contact Kevan Sheridan(kevan57@tampabay.rr.com) (813-988-6480). Remember this is an election, and you can run for a position even though an existing officer may stand for re-election.

Happy Computing! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 10 October 2001

Meeting

Office XP presented by ExecuTrain

Wednesday, October 10, 2001
6:30 PM
Jan Platt Regional Library
3910 S Manhattan Ave.
Tampa

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The World Trade Center South Tower looking west on Cortlandt St from Broadway, July 3, 2001, 4:45 PM. It was just a quick snap under poor lighting conditions. Now I wish I had taken more time. — William LaMartin

November 14: Mike Galvin from Office Depot.

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By Mary Sheridan for
James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

Mary Sheridan had her Windows SIG/open discussion session from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM.

The representative from TBO (Tampa Bay Online), Debra Benoit, was the presenter. TBO.com is the online front door for the Tampa Tribune and WFLA. Debra works for the advertising department, and her talk was about ways to maximize traffic to your web site.

Debra explained that the Internet has changed a great deal in the last few years. In mid-1999 the most popular search engines were indexing 15% of web sites. That figure is down by 35% today. This means that it can be very difficult to get your web site "found" on the Internet. Debra stated that 68 million people made purchases on the internet in the first quarter of the year 2000, and that was up 53 million from 1999. Seventy two percent of all Internet users became online shoppers in the year 2000. This means that public confidence is changing and more people are starting to trust doing business on the Internet. The first thing you need to do to promote your web site is to publicize it everywhere you go. Business cards, signs, stationary, ads, any place where you have your business name, you should also have the URL to your web site listed.

Many search engines index your web site by the number of links you have available. So the more links you have the more exposure you may be able to get.

It was a very interesting meeting, with lots of questions and answers. Debra was well-versed in her profession and was able to field all the questions with grace and good humor. ◆

Magellan's GPS Companion for the Handspring Visor

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I have had this new toy—the GPS Companion—for several months, a birthday gift from my wife and daughter, but am just now getting around to writing a review on it for the newsletter.

As pictured on this page, this device is a 12 channel global positioning receiver that attaches to the Handspring Visor's Springboard expansion port. Two pieces of software come with the unit: Map Companion and GPS Companion. They are installed from the Map Companion CD, which also contains maps of the entire United States. These maps are broken down by county within each state and then further broken down by individual municipality within each county. I think there are more than 20,000 such county and city files.

For example, to cover all of Hillsborough County, FL, you will need to load into your Visor the Hillsborough County map, the Tampa map and the Temple Terrace map. The amount of memory your Visor has will determine how many maps can be loaded.

I have one of the early Visors with only 2 MB of memory. I have added an 8 MB Springboard memory expansion module but have found out that—although it is a great place to store files and programs—many programs cannot be run from there and data stored there cannot be accessed if that data must also be written to. Plus, obviously the 8 MB memory expansion module cannot be attached to the Visor at the same time the GPS Companion is attached. Thus, I am limited to 2 MB for my maps and any other Visor programs that I want to be loaded.

My solution is to load all the maps I might need—a few at a time—and then move them to the expansion module along with programs that I also won't be using at the moment.



For example, I might leave only Hillsborough and Polk Counties in Florida, along with municipalities Tampa and Temple Terrace, in the main memory but have Pinellas, Highlands, Pasco and several other counties, along with their separate municipalities like St. Petersburg, all loaded into the expansion module. That way I would have all of Hillsborough covered, also Polk except for its municipalities. Of course, if you have a newer Visor with a much larger memory, that is even better.

So, how well does this GPS work? When you attach it to the Visor, the Visor turns on and the GPS Companion program starts. However, you must still start the GPS. It can take anywhere from less than one minute to almost 10 minutes for it to get a fix. However, it usually does it on the quicker end of the time scale. With the GPS Companion program you are given your heading, speed, longitude, latitude and elevation. If you switch to the Map Companion, you see your position on the map, which you can zoom in and out. And, as you change locations, the map scrolls.

It would be nice if the two programs were combined, where you didn't need to switch back and forth. And it would be nice if there were a map that showed the counties of each state. I know the positions of many of the Florida counties, since I have lived with them for many years. But on a recent trip to New York, I flew to New York City, spent a few days and then rented a car to travel to the country. I figured out I

(GPS… … ….Continued on page 4)

(GPS… … … .Continued from page 3)
needed Westchester County, since I knew it was to the north, but what about other counties? I didn't know the names of them. Then while driving through Westchester, I came to Sleepy Hollow and my map disappeared since I hadn't included the city of Sleepy Hollow. There are 29 separate municipality maps you need to include with the Westchester County map.

So I have concluded that while quite good when you are walking or when you are driving around a city like Tampa, the GPS Companion leaves a bit to be desired when used in a car on a trip spanning more than one county. For that I will have to rely on Street Atlas USA on my laptop and the GPS unit that came with that program. However, it is certainly not as compact a package as the little Visor device.

I should note that on the plane trip, I sat by a window and tried to get the GPS unit to fix, but it didn't. I have read of others having no problem getting a fix with the same unit on their plane trips. It does, however, work well for me in an automobile.

If you are familiar with a city, then the GPS isn't of much use, since you can often walk a block and see a street sign and also look at the skyline to see where you are. But it would come in handy in a strange location. I certainly could have used it when I got turned around in the outskirts of Sleepy Hollow, but unfortunately I hadn't loaded that map.

The GPS Companion uses two AAA batteries which are supposed to last about 10 hours. But note that while the GPS unit is attached, the Visor remains on—and that also runs down the Visor's batteries. So take a lot of batteries on your trip. The unit costs around $150. ◆

President's Column

By Mary Sheridan, President,
Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I'd like to express my deepest condolences to everyone who lost someone in the recent tragedies in New York, Washington, DC and Pennsylvania. We have all been shaken to our roots by the events of September 11th, and it will be a long time before we feel safe again. In the spirit of keeping things moving and not letting terrorists change our way of life, we held our meeting on September 12th.

We had an understandably light turnout, but it was an interesting meeting and I'm glad we didn't cancel it.

A long time user group representative of Adobe Corporation, Louise Miller, was let go on Friday September 28, 2001. Members of the APCUG and FACUG had written hundreds of letter trying to save Louise's job. I don't know if this means that Adobe is phasing out their involvement with user groups, or if Adobe is having financial problems. Whatever the reason, it certainly wasn't Louise. She was a wonderful market representative and will be missed by many.

The FACUG fall conference will be held near Lakeland, FL at the Imperial Lakes Country Club at 6 Country Club Lane, Mulberry, Florida 33860. The conference date is Saturday, October 13, 2001 from 8:30AM until 4:30 PM.

Microsoft is planning their next event in the area on October 20th at 10 AM. All of the user groups around the country are wondering why they haven't heard from Microsoft about this event yet. No one seems to know if the company is handling the events with in-house personnel or if someone has just dropped the ball on the organizational end of things. If we do need to have a presence at the

(President.....Continued on page 5)

(President… … ….Continued from page 4)

event, I hope I can count on the support of all of you who have helped in the past.

Kevan Sheridan, member-at-large, will present a slate of candidates at our October meeting. It's still not too late you throw your hat in the ring. Just see Kevan before the meeting.

I've gotten my president's column to William LaMartin late this month. I'd like to thank him for his patience and for all the hard work he does month after month making our newsletter great.

Happy Computing. ◆



July 2000 from the Staten Island Ferry — William LaMartin

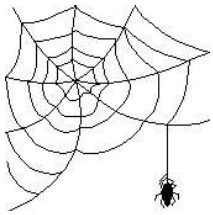
Internet picture of the month



World Trade Center
September 15, 2001

From the site http://www.spaceimaging.com/. This one-meter resolution satellite image of Manhattan, New York was collected at 11:54 a.m. EDT on Sept. 15, 2001 by Space Imaging's IKONOS satellite. The image shows the remains of the 1,350-foot towers of the World Trade Center. The image was cropped to fit this page. Go to the site for the full image plus others.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
New York City Photo Gallery	http://www.nycfoto.com/
Miami.com - Your Miami Everything Guide	http://www.miami.com/
Software602.com -- Freeware and Trialware	http://www.software602.com/
Time for Kids	http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/
Tallahassee Democrat Online	http://web.tallahasseedemocrat.com/content/tallahassee/home/
The Digital Journalist Home Page	http://digitaljournalist.org/
Search Engine Watch Tips	http://www.searchenginewatch.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Neat Stuff to do with your Digital Audio

By Larry Anders,
Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com



As a follow-up to last month's article, I said I would let you know about some neat stuff on which to play all the MP3's you're downloading. I travel a lot, and for quite a while now I have been taking my tunes with me to listen to while traveling. I have an HP 548 PocketPC that has a built-in music player that plays either MP3 or WMA files. WMA, in case you're not familiar with the term, is Window's answer to a compressed music file. Only WMA is about half-again the size of an MP3, which for a traveling music player is great, more music in less space. The capability to convert MP3 to WMA is built into most of the popular music players, including ***MusicMatch***, which I reviewed last month.



With my collection of MP3s pushing 3,000, I wanted some way to listen to the tunes in my family room on my "good" stereo system. So I purchased a new DVD/CD player that has an MP3 decoder built it. Now, I just burn a CD with whatever songs I choose, plop the CD into the DVD player and can listen to one CD for several hours.

Because I have this ability while I am at home, I also wanted to have more choice while I was traveling. So, I started looking around and eventually settled on a ***Phillips EXP-103*** personal CD player that has built-in MP3 decoding capabilities. With two AA batteries I can listen to up to 10 hours of music. The Phillips is also CD-Rewritable compatible, so I can record different selections for each trip using the same CD over and over again. With the Phillips CD player I also got a car kit, which allows me to plug-in my portable CD player into a cassette tape adapter that plugs into the tape player in most rental cars. I recently found out that the tape adapter also works with my PocketPC also giving me a greater selection to listen to on the road. The kit also included AC and DC power adapters.



Last month I told you about ***MusicMatch*** allowing me to listen to and record streaming audio on my home PC, and that the quality was excellent (CD-Quality) because of the cable modem. Well, obviously I don't record everything I listen to but I would like to listen to the streaming audio in other parts of my house, especially in the family room. Enter the ***Kima KS-110 Wireless Audio System***. With the Kima system all you do is plug the speaker cable that comes from the PC into the back of the Kima transmitter and then plug a cord provided from the transmitter to the speakers. Place the Kima receiver close to an FM receiver (radio), within 1000 feet of the transmitter, and anything coming through your computer can be heard on the radio in the other location. A little adjusting is required for gain and signal strength and the receiving radio has to be adjusted to either an 88.1 or 88.3 frequency but that's it! And the quality of the sound is great, or at least I think so.

Of course, it doesn't have to be just music or streaming audio. Anything that you can hear through your speakers on your computer can be heard through the FM receiver at the other location.

So you see, there are a lot of neat things that can be done with the digital audio we have available to us these days. I'm sure there are many other things, and I would be interested in hearing about them myself. If you have any ideas or suggestions send

(Digital……Continued on page 9)

Character Map Savvy

By Jenny Lind Olin, Treasurer,
Tampa PC Users Group
jlolin@tampabay.rr.com

Sometimes when I am typing E-mail messages in Outlook Express, I brag a lot about the nice weather we are having, especially when it is 72°, and I need the degrees symbol. I have just been typing out the word "degrees" because the symbol is not on the keyboard. Well using the symbol is very simple once you know how. I knew about this because I always used **résumé** and **c/o** [editor's note: my printer would not print the symbol that looks like c/o so you are seeing the letters c/o instead of the symbol] in my resume writing days, but my friend David Henry recently brought this to my attention.

Even though I don't cook or write mathematical formulas any more, I use fractions now and then. Which looks better **1-1/2** cups flour or **1½** cups flour? In MS Word it will automatically convert to the neater format but not so in your E-mail. The trick is to hold down the Alt key while typing in the code 0189 for the ½ or 0176 for the degrees symbol (°). This must be entered on the numeric keypad on the right of the keyboard and the Num Lock must be set on.

There are a few other symbols or "special characters" I use from time to time in the same way and so I keep a sticker on my PC desk for easy reference. Here is a collection for your consideration:

ALT plus	Symbol
0162	¢ Cent Sign
0163	£ Pound Sign
0167	§ Section
0176	° Degree Sign
0182	¶ Pilcrow Sign (Paragraph Symbol)
0153	™ Trade Mark Sign
0169	© Copyright Sign
0174	® Registered Sign

Fractions:

0188	¼
0189	½
0190	¾
0185	¹ Superscript One
0178	² Superscript Two
0179	³ Superscript Three
0124	| Vertical Line
0129	□ Box
0149	• Bullet
0183	· Middle Dot

It is so easy to do by using the characters in the Character Map. They seemed to be hidden, but you can find them at Start | Programs | Accessories | System Tools | Character Map. (In Windows 95, skip System Tools). You can change the font to get the characters for the specified font you are using. Use the Font drop-down box to select the type font. For instance, select Times New Roman. The display shows all 224 characters available in the selected font. Place the mouse pointer on a box of your choice and left click to see an enlarged version. If it is the special character you need, write down the Alt Plus formula found in the lower right corner.

This trick should work in any Windows application such as word processing or E-mail. Alternatively, you can click the character you want; hit Select, then Copy to place it on the clipboard. Back in your document, paste it at the cursor position. You can select several characters and place them in the clipboard if you wish.

For the more Advanced:

With a slightly different formula:

2153…2154, Alt + X ⅓… ⅔ Thirds

..215B…215E, Alt + X ⅛… ⅞ Eighths

Use PressWriter Symbols in the font selection

Type Alt + 0234 = ê

Just in time for Halloween, Select Webdings:

Type " =

Type ! =

(Character…… ……Continued on page 9)

Looking Back:
From the August 1991 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP
MINUTES OF 7/10/91 MEETING

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

- Version 5 of Microsoft DOS was a lively topic. At least half of the members in attendance have the new version. Do read the various text files in the new version, especially the notes on applications. For a short while, Egghead and WorkPlace are offering this new version at a big discount. IMPORTANT - Do create a Boot Disk first.
- IBM and Apple are now working together; seems to be Them vs. Microsoft and Intel. Apple will provide the software applications; IBM will provide the operating system; and Motorola will provide the computer chips.
- "Vaporware" and hardware "pronouncements" tend to drive everybody crazy. No sooner is one upgrade announced to be released at a future date, than the one beyond that is also announced. Case in point: the 486 50 MHz chip and the 586 chip announced at almost the same time. The corporate world cannot, and will not, wait; it will go with what's available when needed.
- You can buy the OS/2 version 1.3 for less than a hundred dollars if you already own IBM DOS. You then get version 2 for free when it's available. Else, you can buy version 2 for an estimated $150 when it comes out.
- Computerland (national) withdrew some local area franchise licenses. Comment from the floor was that the local owner shut down the ones that he owned because he's in some financial bind - his bank withdrew his loans.
- It's official - Borland has purchased Ashton-Tate. IBM seems to look with favor upon Borland. Should be an interesting summer.
- IBM and Sieman (Germany) have joined in building 16 megabyte memory chips. Seems to be an effort to reduce dependency upon Japanese suppliers.
- IBM BBS - access now available to members of user groups. It'll cost you a long distance call to log on to this BBS based in Atlanta. The data phone line is: 404-835-6600. Public domain files are on line as well as information about IBM hardware and software.

OS/2 VERSION 2

Our IBM host and guardian, Chris Mayer, demonstrated a beta version of IBM's latest OS/2 2.0 offering. OS/2 can run Windows and DOS applications in a multi-tasking environment. While Chris had a few OS applications on the test computer, he had a lot of DOS applications - and ran them like a charm! It was really something to see. Bouncing back and forth between DOS applications without losing a beat.

OS/2 can give almost 620k RAM to each DOS application. You can run Windows in each "virtual" machine and you can have as many virtual machines as you want.

To demonstrate the versatility of OS/2, Prodigy (an on-line service) was started, then WordPerfect and Lotus 1-2-3 were fired up. While using Prodigy, WordPerfect and Lotus were still running in the background (a little slower, but running). Chris then brought up another DOS program (Meta Stock Professional) and flipped back and forth from the stock report section of Prodigy to the Meta Stock program. As if that weren't impressive enough, he also brought in Flight Simulator and an OS/2 word processor (DeScribe)!

(1991… … ….Continued on page 9)

(1991… … ….Continued from page 8)

Chris then showed how easy it was to "cut" an object from the Flight Simulator graphic screen (part of a building) and paste it into DeScribe. He said that this procedure works both ways: OS/2 to DOS and DOS to OS/2. Flipping back to Prodigy, the news item about Borland acquiring Ashton-Tate was brought to the screen. He then brought up Windows 3 to show how easily OS can run many diverse applications.

(NOTE: It was difficult to count all the different jobs that Chris was running, but I counted ten (10) applications that were open at one time.) The great thing about OS/2 is that it sets up a virtual machine for each application. Now when an application crashes, only that particular virtual machine crashes, the rest of the system is still running. Contrast this multi-tasking methodology with that of Windows: when one Window job crashes, everything must be rebooted.

OS/2 version 2 will include Windows 3 and it emulates DOS 4.0. It will be offered in two versions. The Standard Edition will take up l5 meg of space on the hard drive and is intended for single users. The Extended Edition needs 25 meg of hard drive real estate and is intended for LAN setups and large relational data base managers. It is believed that the new version will be announced before the fall COMDEX, probably by October. OS/2 is a whole new ball game.

- It makes full use of the 32 bit features of the 386 and higher PCs.
- Has enhanced functions for DOS
- I/O bus makes no difference
- Processor path must be 32 bits
- Uses flat 512 megabyte address space

Memory is divided into 4k pages that can be flipped in and out of the hard drive. It can handle a virtual memory size of 512 megabytes by using a hard drive to simulate actual memory. The flat addressing scheme equates the memory address to the actual address on the hard drive via 4k pages. And while it is stated that up to 16 windowed full screens are available for DOS applications, as many as over 200 have been run.

Once again, Chris has come through with flying colors. He was asked to give this presentation on rather short notice. Plus, he was running a beta version of the new software and had not seen the manual for the new version. Can you imagine the kind of show he could put on after reading the manual and working with the release version? Thank you, Chris, for a great job and an excellent preview of OS/2 and the future of personal computers.

THE WINNERS

Lotus FreeLance - Bob Lamb
50-50 - Edward Purcell ◆

(Character… ….Continued from page 7)

Type - = 

Type 1O = 

Alt 0150 =  ◆

(Digital… … ….Continued from page 6)

me an email, give me a call, or, heck, write an article in our newsletter and tell us all about it. I'll be listening for you. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday (a change) of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
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September has been a bad month, and all this computer stuff doesn't seem that important after the massive loss of life in New York City. Only a few of us have spent time in the World Trade Center or the Pentagon, but almost everyone has been on a commercial airliner and can picture the horror of the recent hijackings. That we were not on one of those planes is simply a matter of luck.

Since the *Bits of Blue* is really not the appropriate venue for coverage of stories that deviate much from computers, I will conclude this topic by noting that I have included two photos from trips to Manhattan the past two summers. The first, on page 5, was taken in July of 2000 and shows the World Trade Center Towers in the NYC skyline in a view taken from the Staten Island Ferry. The second photo, on the front page, is a close up of those towers taken in July of 2001. Both were taken in less than ideal conditions. It was hazy and overcast for the skyline photo, and the close up was taken looking directly west into the late afternoon sun. But they are all I have of those lost structures, so I will cherish them.

People talk of how the Twin Towers dominated the Manhattan skyline, but in over 300 photos that I took the past two trips, I only have two images containing the World Trade Center. The city is massive, and 300 photos just doesn't cover that much.

We are changing the meeting day of the Microsoft Access SIG to the first Tuesday of the month from the first Monday. The Visual Basic for Application SIG continues to meet the third Tuesday of the month.

Attendance has been a bit at off the regular monthly meetings. Of course, that was understandable this past month with the meeting the day after September 11. I encourage you to attend the regular meetings. It will make the group stronger, and you will most likely learn something about computers that you didn't know. ◆

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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AOL	AOL
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Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

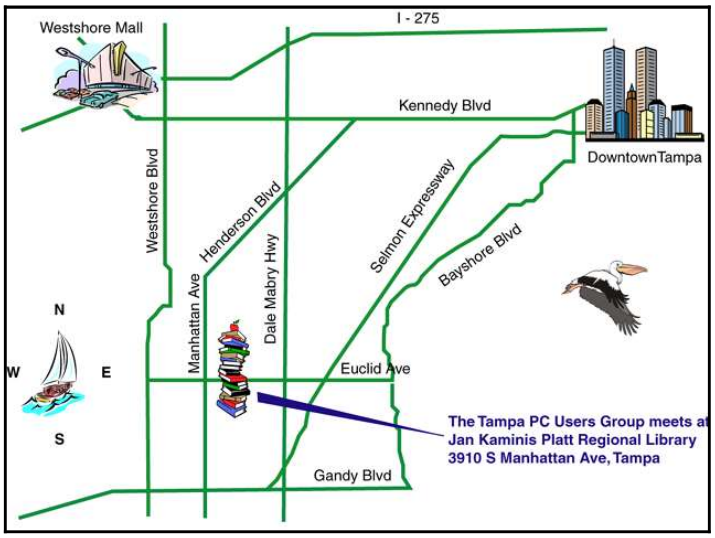
We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 11 November 2001

Meeting

Mike Galvin
From Office Depot

Wednesday, November 14, 2001
6:30 PM
Jan Platt Regional Library
3910 S Manhattan Ave.
Tampa Florida

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Meeting Preview: Mike Galvin from Office Depot will tell us about new computer products. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

We had another good meeting this past month. The presenter was from Executrain, and he was knowledgeable about his topic. He fielded many questions from our members and answered them all.

I'm just back from the Microsoft Windows XP event. They had 1000 people registered and less than 400 were in attendance. I know there were many registration duplications, but other than that, I don't know why there was such a difference in the numbers. Microsoft hired a professional event person for the event and a security guard. A Microsoft field agent was also on hand.

(President.....Continued on page 10)

An unopened copy of Microsoft Office XP Professional will be raffled off at the November meeting.

December 12: Christmas party and Election of Officers

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

Our meeting started at 6:30. Elections are coming up soon and a call for nominees was put to the group. Microsoft held their Windows XP Event at the AMC Veterans Theater on October 20, 2001. Our president, Mary Sheridan, was able to get about ten people present to volunteer.

We also had Mr. Revis Bland from New Horizons learning center (http://www.newhorizons-tpa.com) present a catalogue of classes available in the Tampa and Clearwater areas.

Our main presentation started at 7:05. Mr. Kyle Brodie of Executrain (http://www.executrain.com) demonstrated some of the new features of the Office XP suite. The biggest new feature of all XP programs is a “task window”. This is a separate window containing a list of the most commonly used functions within the particular program. The menus and windows can also be customized easier than previous versions of Office.

Office XP now recognizes print from writing tablets and offers voice recognition and text to speech. Excel XP added color to the tabs at the bottom of the open tables, rows and columns are now highlighted, and the auto sum function has been enhanced. Power Point XP has added new templates and outlines of slides, and the actual slides are more visible to ease use and development of a presentation. Access XP databases are more readily transferred to other XP programs. Front Page XP added a drawing tool bar to enhance creating your own web content.

There were a large number of T-shirts given away, as well as three trial versions of Office XP. The meeting ended at 8:05. ◆

What's Up with the Digital Copyright Wars?

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

What's the latest in the digital copyright wars? These are battles that are remaking copyright in the age of the computer network.

They include battalions in Washington, DC, including lobbyists doing their jobs; venal politicians without understanding; venal, lying industry representatives who understand only too well; and industrious, idealistic fighters from think-tanks like the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) and the Center for the Public Domain who try to foment understanding among others. Such as those making the laws.

First the bad news. When last we checked in on this particular battlefield, Napster.com had been vanquished. The music file-sharing service was attacked by a pile-on group of lawyers representing, among others, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), the rock band Metallica, rapper Dr. Dre, and some musical has-beens like Deborah Harry and Aimee Mann.

Napster lost. It settled with some of the pile-ons, including issuing corporate apologies to some of the musicians. But the RIAA's lawyers are still pushing. They want monetary damages for copyright infringement against Napster. This will not only destroy Napster as a business entity, one of the goals of the RIAA, but will also establish an important legal precedent to be used to attack the post-Napster file-sharing services.

Napster, down but not completely out, is fighting a scrappy rearguard action. The RIAA wants the federal district court in California where they're appearing to rule as a matter of law that Napster is liable for copyright infringement damages. Napster fires back that the court hasn't even been shown that the music industry companies backing the RIAA **own** the songs which Napster is said to have violated the copyright on.

The RIAA tells federal judge Marilyn Hall Patel that the court can take it as a "given" that the record companies owned the copyright on all those popular songs. Napster riposted that there's no way to tell the truth of that unless the Napster lawyers have a chance to look at the **contracts** the record companies have with the various musicians.

OOOOoooohh. The RIAA and the record companies don't want **that** to happen. Why? Simple. Because it would show that the entire modern music recording industry has been built upon wholesale exploitation and economic rape of young, idealistic musicians.

Why? Because it would open up questions about why people are forced to pay $15 to $18 for compact disks that cost 35 cents each to produce.

Why? Because it would open up questions about how each member of one band, a trio named "TLC," made less than $50,000 each in a year after they sold 16 **million** albums and toured nationally to sold-out arenas. Where did all that money go? Check in with the Dixie Chicks. Their first album sold 10 **million** copies; their second album has sold 7 **million** copies and counting. Well, at about $14 each (conservatively), that comes up to over $200 **million**. Dixie Chick Natalie Maines responds "I don't even have a million dollars in the bank. Tell me where this money goes. I have no idea." And they're said to be some of the luckier musicians, with "a great manager [and] great attorneys," says another of the Chicks.

What's going on here? And what does it have to do with Napster and the Napsteronian services that are following?

On the one hand, it has to do with the viciousness and greed of the music recording industry. But on another level it is merely one "front" in a battle raging across cyberspace, across the legal landscape, and across an academic world concerned with economics, property ownership, and copyright. The problem is that the way the music recording business has evolved, the recording companies control distribution. If you control distribution of copyrightable work, you control a **bunch** of the economic infrastructure of an industry.

But wait! What about the publishing industry? In that business the **authors** almost always own the copyrights, and they almost always have ultimate say on who publishes what of theirs, and how. Well, then, how is it that in the **music** industry, the copyrights to the music and songs are almost always owned by the **recording companies**? Well, it's partially because musicians are usually younger, less savvy, poorer, less educated, and more easily talked, scammed or cheated out of what they've created. (Feel free to read up about the numbers of old rock musicians who live penniless because they don't control the music and songs that they created.)

What is going ON here!?! Simply put, the Internet is going on. All of a sudden, the record companies—not to mention the movie companies—can't monopolize the distribution channels as they've been able to do in the past. **Now** it turns out that music and songs and books and tomes and **movies**, for gawd's sake, can all be easily copied and reeeeeelly easily sent all over the world, to anyone who wants a copy. The distribution monopoly is being broken down by the onrushing Internet.

So the battles—the thrusts and parries—the hooks and jabs—the lawyers ripping and tearing at each other in venues all across the land—continue. And it's all happening so fast I can hardly report it to you. The exchange in federal court above between Napster and the RIAA happened a couple of weeks ago on October 10, 2001. And within the past year or so....

(Digital…….Continued on page 4)

(Digital…….Continued from page 3)

Bad news: Congress passes the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), which includes "anti-circumvention provisions" relating to digital encryption coding. That is, it is made illegal to publish or publicize "hacks" or "cracks" of encryption coding that is used (by the recording industry and movie industry) to thwart copying and sharing.

Good news: The motion picture association comes up with an unbreakable encryption system to "scramble" digitized movies, to protect against the illegal copying and sharing of movies.

Bad news: "2600," sometimes referred to as a "rogue hackers magazine," decides to publish DeCSS (De Contents Scramble System), the new decryption code for the unbreakable encryption system, above, and is immediately sued by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), an industry group representing eight of the biggest Hollywood movie studios. The MPAA asks the court to issue an order of "prior restraint" against 2600, thus running squarely into the First Amendment, which abhors prior restraint.

Good news: The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) takes up the case of 2600, arguing that the DMCA is being utilized and interpreted in such a way as to stifle freedom of speech and expression and is thus impinging on the First Amendment.

Bad news: The court grants the MPAA's request, ruling that 2600 is enjoined from either publishing the DeCSS code or providing online links to anywhere the DeCSS code can be obtained.

Good news: Napster comes on the scene and becomes one of the most astounding success stories in the Internet's short history.

Bad news: Napster gets piled-on in court and has to fight a desperate rearguard action or become extinct.

Good news: Napster's rearguard action may bust open to public scrutiny the contracts in the recording industry where musicians are often little more than indentured servants, making about 10% royalties on their music even in the best of cases.

Bad news: The Big Five record companies backing the RIAA have announced that they're creating a duopoly for online music. Sony Music and Vivendi Universal's Universal Music are setting up a pay-me service called "Pressplay," while AOL Time-Warner's Warner Music, EMI Group and Bertelsmann's BMG are forming another pay-me service called "MusicNet."

Good news: In mid-October 2001 the U.S. Justice Department announces it is investigating whether the record companies are cooperating in order to kill off any competition in the still-evolving online music industry (such as...Napster).

Bad news: The RIAA and the MPAA gang up and file lawsuits against MusicCity, Kazaa and Grokster, three post-Napster file-sharing services that were beginning to share not only music files but whole **movies too**. In addition, similar legal actions were able to shut down Scour, another sharing service, and pushed Aimster, another such service, close to bankruptcy.

Good news: Swarms of other music-sharing services start popping up from all over the world. Besides Grokster, MusicCity, and Kazaa, there appear AudioGalaxy...Gnutella...Freenet... Gnotella...FastTrack...iMesh. "One, two, many Napsters!" seems to be the chant.

Bad news: The recording industry fights back and tries another technological fix. The Secure Digital Music Initiative (SDMI) produces uncrackable cryptologic coding to protect music files and other digital works from being copied and shared. The SDMI holds a "Hack SDMI" contest, daring hackers to try cracking what they call their new "watermark" system.

Good news: Six months later Professor Edward Felton, a Princeton University cryptology expert, and a few of his students announce they they've cracked all the watermark schemes. Prof. Felton prepares to present a formal academic paper at the Fourth International Information Hiding Workshop, explaining how the crypto watermarks were cracked.

Bad news: Professor Felton is threatened with a lawsuit by the RIAA if he presents or publishes his paper, based in part upon the DCMA anti-circumvention provisions. The threat is effective. Professor Felton withdraws his paper from the conference, noting that "litigation is costly, time-consuming, and uncertain, regardless of the merits of the other side's case," and saying he and his group didn't want to "expose ourselves, our employers, and the conference organizers to litigation at this time." The threat of lawsuits by the RIAA is thus used to stifle not only the free speech of 2600, but also academic freedom and research. Seems to work great!

Good news: Everyone realizes that Professor Felton's work was already being distributed throughout the Internet anyway. And the EFF files suit on behalf of Professor Felton and his colleagues. Noting that the DMCA contains criminal provisions for use against individuals or companies that violate the non-circumvention provisions, and that parts of the DMCA interfere with academic research and scientific progress, the EFF asks the court to overturn as unconstitutional some provisions of the DMCA.

Bad news...

Heyyyy...wait a minute. We all get the picture, right? We're in the middle of a business and technological revolution! Right now chaos reigns. It's open legal warfare over technology that threatens the distribution monopolies of two very, very lucrative

(Digital.....Continued on page 5)

(Digital……..Continued from page 4)
industries: music and movies.

Where will it all end? Probably before the U.S. Supreme Court. But that may not even put a stop to it (think about the "final" abortion decision in 1973, and the battles still raging over that). Possibly before Congress again. The whole notion of copyright is being transformed by modern technological advances, and the "old system" is breaking down.

From this ferment, presumably, will eventually arise some kind of steady-state where creators of music and movies can be fairly rewarded for their creativity, while the old distribution monopolies wither away.

And you know what? All of this is merely prelude. It's a prelude to a far more important issue that will come to the fore within the next year or so. As I've noted before, eventually, somehow, some hardware company is going to get it through their thick heads that there is a **market** for light, inexpensive, clear, electronic reading appliances with reasonable battery lives. That's all it's going to take. One company.

When that implement is produced, and when the early overpricing inevitably declines with mass production, millions upon millions of those things are going to be sold. Ebooks. **That's** where the final digital showdown is going to happen. Because whereas music and movies are fun and entertaining, **books** can and do deal in the most fundamental and important commodity of all: Pure information. Fasten your seatbelts. ◆

Internet picture of the month



Synapta sp. (medusa worm) skin (100x)

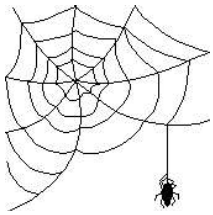
Nikon Small World 2000 Competition Winner, Second Place, 2000 Competition, Christian Gautier, PHO.N.E. Photo Agency, Paris, France.

http://www.microscopyu.com/

"The Nikon International Small World Competition is dedicated to furthering creativity and excellence in photomicrography. Combining microscopy and photography, a photomicrographer is able to capture an image of the world that the naked eye cannot see."

Editor's note: Looks like modern art, doesn't it?

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Digital Camera Buyers Guide	http://www.digital-camerastore.com/
Nikon MicroscopyU	http://www.microscopyu.com/
Guardian Unlimited – UK newspaper	http://www.guardian.co.uk/
FluWatch.com	http://www.fluwatch.com/
lefigaro.fr – French newspaper	http://www.lefigaro.fr/
Le Monde interactif A la Une – French newspaper	http://www.lemonde.fr/
Bandwidth Place - your internet services marketplace	http://bandwidthplace.com/
Internet Traffic Report	http://www.internettrafficreport.com/
Picture of the Day	http://pictureoftheday.kodak.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Windows XP has arrived

By Larry Anders,
Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

If you're ***NOT*** like me, and have decided to wait for all the bugs to show up in the latest incarnation of Microsoft's newest operating system before taking the plunge, then I've got a site for you to take a look at while you wait. (By the way, I wouldn't expect too many bugs with WindowsXP. This software was beta-tested by over half-a-million users.) InfiniSource has created quite a site related to all the Windows operating systems and if you've got a problem or a question about anything from Windows 95 forward to XP this is a good place to start. (http://www.windows-help.net/index.shtml). The site this article is concerned with is http://www.windows-help.net/WindowsXP.

One of the features I was really interested in was the Windows XP Upgrade Advisor. The Upgrade Advisor is a tool that checks your system hardware and software to see if it is ready for upgrade to Windows XP. If you run Upgrade Advisor while you are connected to the Internet, and if your system needs updates that are available on the Windows Update Web site, Upgrade Advisor will find and install the updates for you. Can't get much easier than that. I used the Upgrade Advisor when I upgraded to Windows 2000 and it saved me some time and headaches.

If you're not aware of it, there are two different versions of WindowsXP. Another nice feature on this site is a thorough comparison of both the Home Edition and Windows XP Professional. Most home or small business users can probably get by with the Home Edition (and save $100) but XP Pro has all the features of the Home Edition plus several other features like added security, remote access, access to files & folders on a network even when disconnected from the server, and backup and automated system recovery, to name just a few. There are several more. And if you're into web publishing Windows XP Professional includes the IIS Web server 5.1 software. In my case, I felt the extra $100 was well worth the investment.

If you want to use the upgrade version, like I did, you need to realize that some older versions of Windows are only upgradeable to XP Pro. Below is a table from the site that lists the upgrade options:

Previous Version	Win XP Home	Win XP Pro
Windows 3.1	NO	NO
Any Evaluation Version	NO	NO
Any Server Version	NO	NO
Windows 95	NO	NO
Win 98/Win 98 SE	**YES**	**YES**
Windows Me	**YES**	**YES**
Windows NT 3.51	NO	NO
Windows NT 4.0	NO	**YES**
Win 2000 Professional	NO	**YES**
Win XP Home Edition		**YES**
Win XP Professional	NO	

And yes, if you purchase the Home Edition now, you can upgrade to Professional later. If the price is the deciding factor, the ERP of Windows XP Home Edition is $199.99 for the full version, and $99.99 for the upgrade, while the ERP for the full version of Professional is 299.99, and the upgrade is $199.99.

There are many, many more features on this site like free downloads, etc., but this writer's intention wasn't to tell you about all of them. I just wanted to entice you to visit the site and find out for yourself. And even if you're not considering XP, there is plenty of information to help you out with whatever Windows operation system you're using. Check it out. I think you'll get something out of it. ◆



Editor's Comments: Delphi, Lost Office CD and cmdninst.exe

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Delphi Programs In the past I have made reference to the programming language Delphi from Borland. I find it a nice complement to Visual Basic, since, unlike VB, for fairly simple programs it allows you to create applications that don't require an installation package to install the program. Of course, you can also use Delphi to create just as complicated a program as you would in VB.

I have posted some of these programs to my lamartin.com web site at http://www.lamartin.com/vb/delphi_examples.htm. Here are their descriptions.

Automated Browser Log Run this program, and while you surf the web it will keep track of everywhere you go. When you're finished you can save the log file. Of course, Windows provides a history of where you go also, but you can't save it to a text file.

Share a Network Clipboard I work with two or three computers arrayed around my swivel chair, which is on rollers. While working on one computer, I frequently want to send some text to one of the other computers. My former way of doing this was to copy the text to Computer A's clipboard, open up Microsoft Notepad, paste the text into it and save this clipboard file to Computer B's hard drive over the network. That is inconvenient. This program speeds up the process. Simply run the program on Computer A and Computer B, then a mouse click on each computer gets the copied text transferred.

This program is not meant as a substitute for the Windows accessory, WinPopup. WinPopup will transfer only a small amount of unformatted text. This program will allow the transfer of large amounts of formatted text.

Get Blocked Email Senders List Microsoft Outlook Express has a blocked email senders list to which you can add either an email address or an entire domain from which you wish to have the messages automatically put in the Deleted folder. You can, of course, view this list in Outlook Express, but as the list gets large (mine is now over 500) it is not convenient to view it as presented--especially since it is not alphabetical. This program captures that list, orders it alphabetically and allows you to copy it to the clipboard. One advantage of this is checking if there is someone on that list that shouldn't be there. The program depends on finding this list at a certain place in the registry, which may vary for different versions of Outlook Express. It does automatically find the listing for different identities using the same computer. I would be interested in any feedback on the program for those using Win NT/2000 or other versions than 5.0 or 5.5 of Outlook Express. I have tested it with win 98/ME and Outlook Express 5.0/5.5.

WHOIS Search This program performs a WHOIS search for Internet domain name registration. However, life is not as simple as it used to be. Now you need to first do a search using whois.crsnic.net to get the Registrar of the domain, then, if you want more details, do a second search using the WHOIS server of the Registrar of the domain. Of course, the same information may be obtained by doing the search using your WWW browser to do the search. This program just simplifies the process.

Get List of Files in Directory With this program when you select a drive and directory on your computer, the list of files in the selected directory is displayed. You can then print the entire list to your printer, copy the entire list to the clipboard, or copy selected items to the clipboard. This solves the problem of Windows not providing such a feature (although, if you can recall the method, a list can be gotten in DOS).

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Looking Back to 1991

Tampa IBM PC User's Group
Minutes of 9/11/91 Meeting

INTEL is having trouble with their 486-50 chip and has stopped making them. The problem crops up when used with AUTOCAD. Dell and IBM are still shipping PCs with their version of the chip. INTEL is also being sued by AMD about the use of the name "386" for their chip.

Bits of Blue delivery date has been decided by majority vote. The Editor will make every effort to have the newsletters in the hands of the members about 7-10 days before the meeting date. The question was raised because some members are not attending, and it was thought that later delivery would serve as a reminder to attend the meeting.

Marylee Bruneau, Bits of Blue Editor, was roundly applauded by the members in recognition of her outstanding efforts in preparing the newsletter.

Training sessions on DOS Fundamentals (same as last time) will be given again. The three session course is scheduled to begin with the October meeting. Course time will be from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. Watch the BBS and the newsletter for confirmation of this course. You do not need prior registration to attend. The first session will cover PKWARE (PKZIP and PKUNZIP) and a DOS tutorial program.

Secretary duties will be shared by Charles Howe, Jim Clark, and Ed Buzza.

DOS 5.0 problems and solutions have been documented by Fred Kyle in a WordPerfect formatted file available on the BBS. Since this is a five page document, it was not placed in the newsletter because it would raise the price of postage. Some copies are available at the meeting for those who are interested.

DOS 5.0 seems to be the predominant operating system for the majority of group members. AND they're pleased with it! Perhaps the most significant feature is the improved shell, provision for using a mouse, the DOSKEY utility, and the undelete and other file utilities licensed from Central Point Software (PC TOOLS). It also allows task swapping but that is a **s-l-o-w** procedure.

PACE has a pretty good buy for a fax (4800 baud), modem (2400 baud) circuit board - just $99.00.

DR DOS 6.0 will be available soon and will feature disk compression. This feature could double disk capacity.

Harvey (The President) expressed regrets that he couldn't bring us the latest news about PC technology. He has been quite busy and just couldn't find the time to cull these most interesting tidbits from the various trade publications.

SOFTWARE PUBLISHING CORPORATION PRESENTATION

Linda Confer demonstrated the DOS version (3.0) and the alpha copy of the Windows version of Harvard Graphics. This is not to be confused with the 2.3 ver for DOS which is still being marketed as a separate package. Since the 3.0 ver requires a 286 PC, or higher, it is not considered to be an upgrade to the 2.3 version.

Registered users of ver 2.3 can get ver 3.0 for $125.00. If you have ver 3.0, you will be able to get the Windows version for $50.00 when it is released sometime between [now and] this winter.

The new package includes a completely rewritten draw module (old Draw Partner accessory); it provides for macros and the ability to add eight additional programs to be launched from the main menu. The Chart Gallery brings up chart templates (pie, bar, 3-D, line, etc.) that make building a presentation fast and easy. You can create your own templates and add them to the Gallery.

The Intelligent Charting concept allows for adjusting the font size to make the text fit the chart. It uses Bitstream scaleable fonts for this purpose. It can also be used to prepare speaker notes.

Up to 210 boxes can be shown in organization charts. Also, it is very easy to select/create a subordinate from the master chart. Of course, such attributes as foreground and background colors and graphics are easily handled. Further, these attributes

(1991……..Continued on page 9)

(1991……..Continued from page 8)

can be carried across chart lines.

The new draw module is quite impressive. Especially the Status Box which shows the element currently being used. There are over 500 symbols (coins, arrows, currency symbols, trees, etc.) that can be animated or used as fade symbols. There are 32 palettes, each with 64 colors, besides the customization that lets you select your own colors.

In the area of animation, one image can be evolved into another; arrows can fly to a target graphic; bar graphs can use a plant symbol that grows to represent the bar value - all this in addition to various wipes and dissolves.

One nice feature is the use of "hidden" buttons that can be mouse selected to jump to another chart rather than follow the scheduled order of presentation. The Presentation module includes 17 different backgrounds (clouds, trees, planets, etc.) or you can create your own.

Linda also demonstrated the alpha version of Harvard Graphics for Windows. That the program is pretty solid was proved by the fact that it ran without ever "locking up." The DLL (dynamic link library) feature was well shown with an EXCEL spreadsheet serving as the base for one of the presentation charts.

GeoGraphics is a mapping program. Showing such items as counties, zip codes is done with ease. The Pentagon used this package for some of its TV presentations of the Desert Storm operation.

Software Publishing Corporation has been long known for its very "user friendly" PFS series of programs for the home and small business user. Recently, the company decided to get more involved with the corporate environment and sold the PFS series to Spinnaker Software.

THANKS:

Special thanks to the Software Publishing Corporation for their generous donation to the group of copies of Professional File, Professional Write and Harvard Graphics. And a very special "Thank You" to Linda Confer for her excellent presentation.

THE WINNERS:

Harvard Graphics - Ron Mirth
Professional File - Ben Benedict
Professional Write - Ed Buzza
50-50 - Dee Gabbard ◆

(Editor……..Continued from page 7)

Lost CDs about six months back, I needed an Office 2000 CD to add a feature to the Office 2000 suite installed on one of my computers, and I couldn't find the CD. I tore the house apart for several days to no effect. I then contacted Microsoft via email to try and get a free replacement (I provided documentation). Finally a fellow said he could take care of that and asked for my mailing address. I provided the address, but nothing ever came in the mail. Follow-up emails to the fellow went unanswered. Microsoft has a number, 800-360-7561, to call for replacement software, so I called it, provided documentation that I owned the Office 2000 Professional suite, gave them my credit card number for an approximate $28 charge and then received the CD in the mail a few days later. Pretty good service.

Except that it was Office 2000 Premium instead of Professional. Well, I didn't want to bother them by telling them that they had really sent me Office 2000 Pro plus FrontPage 2000. I already had FrontPage, so it wasn't like I was getting something I didn't already have. Unfortunately when I used the Premium CD and tried to add features to Office Professional, the add/remove program told me it wanted an Office 2000 Professional CD and would go no further.

Another call to Microsoft produced a replacement Office 2000 Professional CD sent via one day air. You can't beat that for service.

This illustrates one result of Microsoft's new attempt to cut down on piracy. It is obvious why you would

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Merle Nicholson

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Systems – upgrades – software
Small business and home networks
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Tampa, FL 33622-1081 merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

(President……..Continued from page 1)

The event went off without a hitch, and I was glad that our user group had the chance to be part of it. I'd like to thank Le Bennington, Marcia Bennington, Lisa Fagan, Tim Hamilton, Mike Hodges, Bob LaFave, Jenny Lind Olin, Jim Weber and Kevan Sheridan for all their hard work. Microsoft is supposed to give copies of Windows XP to everyone who volunteered. I'll get your copies to you as soon as I can. I didn't see any of our members in attendance, but I was pretty busy and may have just missed you. If I did, thank you for attending the event.

The FACUG fall conference was an incredible success. There were 92 attendees and a record number of sponsors. The lucky people whose numbers were called first received copies of Office XP, Paint Shop Pro and lots of other really nice software titles. Macintosh had a strong presence at the conference. They brought software for the Apple platform and the Apple users were thrilled to win it.

I will be in Las Vegas from November the 10th through the 17th for the APCUG Fall Conference. I'm excited about going. I went two years ago, and it was lots of fun. Because of the few articles I write for the newsletter, I'll be able to get a press pass for Comdex. A press pass enables better access to some of the speakers and events. I know that security will be an issue this year, so I'm not sure what to expect.

Don't forget to nominate your favorite person at the November meeting. Happy Computing! ◆

(Editor……..Continued from page 9)

need a CD to add features, although it is not all that obvious—except to cut down on piracy—why you need the Professional version instead of the Premium since the Word, Excel and Access programs are the same for both versions. What will shock you, though, is that if you want to uninstall Microsoft Office 2000, you may also need the original CDs to be able to uninstall. It is all tied up with the new installation method of using Windows Installer to handle both the installation and the de-installation. I haven't experienced this myself so I don't know if it is al-

(Editor……..Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
CAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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Check the address label for your renewal month

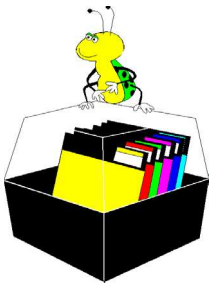
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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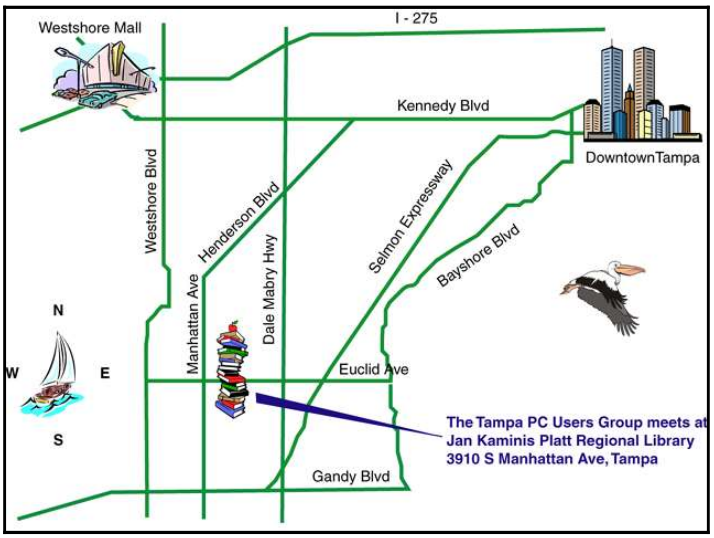
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Editor……..Continued from page 10)

ways the case, but there are certainly more than a few people in the Office Usenet newsgroups who claim to have run into the problem. So don't lose those CDs.

Cmdninst On Start-up, my Windows Me computer sometimes hangs, and CTRL-ALT-DEL shows the file cmdninst is causing the problem. The only solution is to reboot, then everything is OK. According to Microsoft, "Cmdninst.exe is the Configuration Manager Device Installer launcher. Along with the Windows Configuration Manager (Configmg), Cmdninst.exe is a component that drives the process of detecting and installing devices and their nodes in the hardware tree along with the allocation of resources." They say that problems are caused by outdated device drivers on the system. Not knowing what driver might be outdated, I simply chose to restore the file cmdninst.exe to see if that would help—so far it has. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 12 December 2001

Meeting

Christmas Party & Election of Officers

Wednesday, December 12, 2001
6:30 PM
Jan Platt Regional Library
3910 S Manhattan Ave.
Tampa Florida

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Meeting Preview: Christmas Party and Election of officers. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting. Perhaps she will also tell us about COMDEX.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
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As the year draws to a close, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for giving me the chance to serve as your president. It's been a great opportunity for me to meet and get to know many wonderful people. I hope I've benefited the user group, and I look forward to being involved in the future wherever I might be needed.

I'd also like to extend a great big thank you to everyone who volunteers their time and effort to make our user group an educational and worthwhile experience.

Kevan and I just returned from a week in Las Vegas where we attended the APCUG Fall Conference and COMDEX. The conference was a huge success. The primary function of the APCUG conference is to help user group leaders learn ways to make their user groups the best organizations possible. Steve Ballmer had dinner with us and gave a funny, informative and interesting talk. It was much easier to sit through than Bill Gate's keynote speech at Comdex. The round table sessions at the APCUG conference were about getting new members, forming SIGs, and getting people to advertise in your newsletter, just to mention a few of the topics. It was a valuable learning experience, and I hope I'm able to disseminate the information in order to enhance our group.

(President.....Continued on page 2)

January 9: To be announced. Check our web site

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
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Our meeting started at 6:40 PM with V.P. Mike Hodges presiding in Mary Sheridan's absence. Nominees for next year's Board of Directors was announced in preparation for a vote at December's meeting.

The nominations were as follows:

President	Kevan Sheridan
Vice President	Mary Sheridan
Secretary	James Weber
Treasurer	Jenny Lind-Olin and Mike Hodges
Member at Large	John Witmer

It was moved to accept the nominations and seconded.

Office Depot was kind enough to send two representatives as presenters this month. Mr. Joe Pimprel and Mr. Dave Fernandez brought in a Palm Pilot M505 as a demonstration item. This sweet little PDA made it all around the room and had quite a few drool marks on it by the time it got to me. The M505 is the latest high end Palm model and comes equipped with a 65k color 16-bit display that offered decent photo quality images considering the screen's size. The M505 runs off of a 65 Mhz processor and 8 megs of storage space standard, with a 64 meg upgrade available. This may not sound like a lot of resources, but remember that it was not long ago we were all atwitter over our 486DX 33 machines, and Palm applications are not the Microsoft bloat ware we have grown accustomed to in the past few years.

The M505 will hook up, via a cradle with a USB connecter, to either a PC or a Mac. It will also sync with another Palm over an IR connection. May upgrades are available such as a wireless modem or keyboard and applications abound from either a retail outlet or over the internet.

We ended our meeting at 7:50pm. Congratulations to Bruce Register who won a full copy of Office XP Professional. ◆

(President……Continued from page 1)

Microsoft had a rather large presence at Comdex. They had partnered with a slew of vendors who use Windows and it made for a large part of the show. I was disappointed at the lack of innovations this year. Most of the technology has been around for a while and the new things, like the Handspring Treo (a pager, cell phone and PDA combination) are just being rolled out without many of the bugs being worked out. The Treo is a good example because it sounds like a great idea until you find that only two companies are capable at this time of

(President……Continued on page 12)

Death of Paper on the Horizon

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
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For some time now—**years**, in fact—the computer industry, futurists, pundits, geeks, and assorted hangers-on have been ballyhooing the imminent appearance of "the paperless office." And "the end of ink-and-paper books."

Yeah, yeah, bah, blah, blah. In fact, studies in the past ten years have shown that the computer revolution has **increased** the amount of paper used (to the delight of companies like International Paper, Hammermill, Xerox, St. Joe's Paper, etc.).

Does this mean that printed-and-bound books will have a long and distinguished history yet to play out in our world? Will we remain chained to the bonds of paper (and its attendant cuts and slices) forever?

Well…yes and no. Paper is such a wonderful medium, and so handy, and so inexpensive, that it will continue to play a large part in both publishing and business. The thing is, however, that it's going to be subject to a **major** impact in the next few years. And the ultimate outcome is hardly in doubt. Yes, I have spotted the future, and it's going to hit the market in 2003.

It's called "electronic paper." One variant is being developed by a partnership of an American company, E-Ink, and a Japanese company, Toppan Printing. And a division of a European company, Royal Philips Electronics, has already bought exclusive global rights for a period of time to manufacture and sell displays based on that technology for PDA's and electronic books for a $7.5 million investment.

Electronic ink printing consists of using a plastic sheet with millions of tiny "microcapsules" suspended in a clear fluid inside the sheet. One variant has each microcapsule—about the diameter of a human hair—being either white or black. The white particles are positively charged, and black particles are negatively charged, and all can be moved about by application of an electric current. The other variant has each of the tiny particles sporting both a black side and a white side; they can be caused to rotate or spin based on applying electrical current.

Either way, see the possibilities? You apply a negative electric charge to the back of the sheet and the black particles recede and disappear, or the two-tone particles turn or spin. Apply an electric charge to the front of the sheet in places and the black particles appear, or two-tone particles spin again.

The two-toned, rotating particles are being pushed by Gyricon Media, headed up by Nicholas K. Sheridon, who invented the "spinning" version of e-ink as early as the 1970's. But Xerox wasn't interested at the time, and the research was shelved until more recently. Sheridon called his invention "Gyricon" (a Greek term for "rotating image").

The "dual particles" type of e-ink—i.e. all-black particles and all-white particles floating around together—was invented by Joseph Jacobson of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab. He called his discovery "electrophoretic ink" because the process is based upon electrophoresis---the movement of charged particles in liquid when impelled by an electric current.

Either way, "e-ink" sounds like a reasonable moniker.

One of the big advantages of e-ink is that it can approach the legibility of the printed word on paper and be visible in low light (no backlight needed). Another is that it takes very little power, and can retain its "state" when the power is turned off (meaning AA batteries could run a reading device).

So it was no surprise when E-Ink and Toppan recently demonstrated an e-ink reading device at the U.S. Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) eBook 2001 Conference in Washington, DC in November 2001. Their prototype "dedicated reading device" weighed 9 ounces, ran on two AA batteries, was about a centimeter thick, and had a seven-inch diagonal screen. The device also included a memory card slot and had the ability to synchronize with a desktop PC. It's going to cost about $300 and will be on the consumer market by the end of 2003.

Bingo: End of bound-paper books, yes?

Well, not quite. One problem is that the idiots who control much of manufacturing and publishing today (may I engage in name-calling for a moment?) have concentrated most of their energy on devising ways to control intellectual property—that is, copyrighted material—both before and after it has been purchased. They don't want people to be able to share books with anyone else (unless your ability to read the book is disabled), and they **certainly** don't want you to be able to copy it. In some cases they even have schemes afoot where you won't be able to read a piece of writing more than once without their permission. (And how do you get permission? Why pay them more money of course!)

Thus, with most of the publishing industry concentrating on restricting access to information, there hasn't been a lot of real innovation to be had. A light, handy, energy-conserving appliance that enables everyone to download and trade digital materials freely hasn't appeared yet. In fact, many of the presently available reading device companies have worked closely with publishers to make sure that no sharing is allowed, resulting in ebooks that are being marketed with prices equal to or higher than printed paper books. Ridiculous? Sure. Didn't I tell you these people were idiots? In striving to protect their information monopolies and precious profit margins, they've retarded the nascent ebook market.

(Paper…. …. ….Continued on page 4)

(Paper… … ….Continued from page 3)

But help is on the way. All we need in order to stop chopping down so many trees, and having to laboriously haul tons of books and magazines from one side of the country to another, is a reasonably priced reading appliance that works with all or most of the competing ebook formats (think Acrobat .pdf files, the Linux open-ebook standard, Microsoft's Reader format, Glassbook Inc.'s Electronic Book Exchange [EBX] format, HTML, XML, and even regular old .TXT file formats).

That's what E-Ink and Toppan look like they're going to come out with (while Gyricon Media is currently concentrating on large signs being marketed as "SmartPaper"). And while the e-ink technology can now only show black and white and shades of gray, color is on the horizon. Thus, while the advent of "smart paper" and "electronic ink" won't mean the immediate end of printed-paper books and magazines, e-ink reading implements **will** start eating into the traditional printed-paper markets, and eventually supplant them.

Interestingly enough, both companies working on the micro-capsule-based printing can espy a competing technology on the horizon, even as we speak. That competing technology will be based on light-emitting semiconductors made from carbon-based compounds (think about reading "self-lit printing" where the ink emits its own light, like little neon letters). And **that** technology has some Very Big Guns behind it: Labs at both Eastman Kodak and IBM are working to perfect it, and the thinking is that it will be a viable alternative to the electrophoretic printing processes explored above.

Does it make any difference which sci-fi technology eventually wins out? Not really. The important thing is that portable-reading devices with long battery lives, sharing capabilities, and good utility be widely and inexpensively available to everyone. And that's what E-Ink, Toppan, Gyricon, IBM, Kodak, and others are aiming at.

Just give it a year or two. And then prepare to see the gradual phasing-out of printed-paper books and magazines. Trees are rejoicing. ◆



Tim Condon reading the paper

DriveCopy 4.0 from PowerQuest

By Jim Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
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While recently upgrading to a new 30gig hard drive I was struck by the novel idea to migrate all my stuff from the "old" 15gig hard drive currently nestled in a drive bay and use the 30gig as my C drive. Well, you can just about imagine my joy when I was offered a copy of DriveCopy 4.0 from Power Quest for evaluation. I have used several Power Quest products over time, such as Partition Magic, and have always found them to be solid programs that performed just as I needed, but this time I had a different result. Out of the box I found Power Quest again had the novice user in mind and there was a large and well laid out "Quick Reference" poster that covered how to install the software, a new hard drive, set jumpers, and change BIOS settings. Clearly these people know the needs of their customers and are willing to put some extra effort in making them happy. I was also glad to see a real paper manual. There are far too many companies that hide manuals on the CD as a Word or PDF document. It may be a cost saver for a software firm, but it can be a real annoyance to the end user if the computer they are trying to fix is broken and the only documentation available needs a functioning computer to be viewed.

When you load DriveCopy, it doesn't install in the classic sense. You won't find a new application or file folder that opens within Windows. Your options are to run from the hard drive or make a boot floppy. On the next boot, DriveCopy pre-empts the boot process and loads its own operating shell in what's called a "virtual floppy" that deletes itself when you exit. From here you can choose to do an entire disk copy, pick a specific partition, or make a back up to a new hard disk. Since I wanted to do an upgrade, I chose the "Replace" option with "check for bad sectors" and "Verify Disk Writes" checked. DriveCopy recognized both drives correctly as far as size and partition information. I clicked the "Entire Disk to Disk" copy button, then all and proceeded as I hoped. Now for the bad part. After about 5% is copied, I get an error, #49 write fault, and get kicked back to the start screen. No problem, I think. I'll just turn off error checking and do it again. Well, all I got again was the same error message.

Since my computer was a gutted mess on my desk, this is where I was glad to have a real manual to crack open (for the first time) and see what troubleshooting help it could provide. Bad sector? Run Scan Disk and check for problems. Well, neither Scan Disk nor Norton reported any problems on my source drive. Anti-virus software running in BIOS? Nope. This system is only one year old and supports DMA 66, so there was no EZ-Drive or anything to interfere with the boot process and both drives were recognized correctly by the BIOS during boot. I even resorted to making boot floppies to avoid any corruption at the source disk. Nope, not that either. I was getting to where

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I saw "#49 write fault" each time I closed my eyes, kind of like staring at the sun too long. I was beginning to suspect a problem with my shiny new hard drive (which would be a tragedy beyond words). Fortunately I have a shiny new copy of Windows XP to go with my shiny new hard drive, so I did an install from the XP CD. XP did all the partitioning and formatting and installed without any problems. I haven't noticed any errors or hang-ups on the new drive.

As I said when I started this article, I like Power Quest and its products. There is enough provided with DriveCopy 4.0 in the way of utilities and documentation to show that they aren't scrimping on production or support. One small confession before I continue. I didn't contact Power Quest for help. For one, my computer was in pieces and I just wanted to get things back together quickly, and, second, once I loaded XP I no longer had a spare hard drive to play with. I really don't have any other basis of comparison with DriveCopy 4.0 until I can find someone else to try it out and see if this is a program failure or a hardware conflict. I hate sending out flame mail until I think I have my facts straight, but DriveCopy 4.0 gets two big thumbs down from me until further notice. ◆

Editor's note: Jim would be happy to pass along this product to another member of the group to see if he or she can have success. And I would think that they probably will, since it would not be the successful piece of software it is if everyone had Jim's experience.

Additionally, Tampa PC Users Group members may purchase DriveCopy 4.0 at a special price of $25 by ordering from the secure web site at http://www.ugr.com/order/. Indicate the special price code of UGEVAL01 with your order.

Internet picture of the month



The Lords Proprietors' Inn

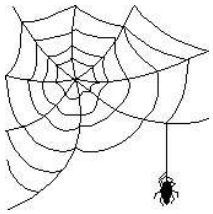
The Lords Proprietors' Inn comprises three restored homes on over an acre of grounds in the Historic District of Edenton, NC.

According to their web site: The Inn offers sixteen elegant guest rooms, and two luxury suites. The Whedbee House dining room is located in the center of the Inn's grounds, and provides the setting for truly fine dining. The cuisine is sophisticated, with a distinct taste of the region. Our marvelous full breakfasts receive comparable praise.

http://www.bbonline.com/nc/lordproprietors/index.html

Go to http://www.bbonline.com/ for more bed and breakfast listings.

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Bed & Breakfast Inns ONLINE	http://www.bbonline.com/
Practically Networked Home	http://www.practicallynetworked.com/
Restaurant Row - World's Largest Dining Guide	http://www.restaurantrow.com/
Virtually Islamic	http://www.stormpages.com/garybunt/index.html
Internet EYE Magazine Tutorials—Adobe, Corel, etc.	http://the-internet-eye.com/HOWTO/Photoshop.htm
Reverse Phone Directory	http://www.reversephonedirectory.com/phonebody.htm
SoYouWanna.com	http://www.soyouwanna.com/
Surprise.com gifts - Gift ideas on the Web	http://www.surprise.com/
Cyberwizard Pit—CyberTweaks and PC Optimization	http://www.cyberwizardpit.com

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

The Joy & Problems of a New Computer

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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A couple of weeks back, I took delivery of a new Gateway computer. It is the fifth Gateway we have had in 10 years. All of those have not gone to me. My son received one when he graduated from college and my daughter received one for Christmas in 1999. Only the first one, a 386, has been relegated to the garage. The others are still being used, although the Pentium 166 is now used mainly for programs that I didn't care to install on newer machines. And it is the one with the original HP IIc scanner that will accept legal size documents.

The new computer is now networked with four other computers in the house, and therein lies a good part of this article—getting the network and printing to work properly after adding the new computer.

My first Gateway was a 33 MHz 386 computer with, I think, four MB of RAM, a 120 MB hard drive and a 14" monitor. This computer is an 1.9 GHz Pentium 4 with 512 MB RAM and an 80 GB HD with a CD writer and a DVD. It has two USB ports in the back and two in the front. These computers now come standard with 15" flat screen LCD monitors. I think these two computers cost about the same amount. And 2001 dollars are worth a lot less than 1991 dollars.

One strange thing is that the speakers with the new computer don't seem to have an on/off switch. However, the 1991 computer didn't even come with a sound card or modem. They were purchased later.

To install Win XP or, as in my case since it was already installed, on first time use requires the authentication process that you have heard so much about (to keep you from putting it on more than one computer). The process is painless if you are connected to the Internet.

After getting set up and connected to the network, the first thing I wanted to do was copy data files from all the other computers on the network. There was no problem accessing the files on the Windows 98 computer and the Windows 98 SE computer, but the Windows Me computer posed a problem. I could see the new Win XP computer from the Win Me computer but not the other way. So I could have copied the files, but I wanted to solve the problem of not being able to get the Win Me computer into the Network Places of the Win XP computer.

With some fiddling, I discovered I could do it if the drive on the Me computer wasn't password protected but not if protected. I then traced the problem to the Me computer having a name with a space in it. Apparently XP doesn't like spaces but they are OK in Me & 98. One problem solved.

I next noted what had been mentioned in the press about Java and XP. Larry Anders sent me an URL that had some JAVA applet on it. Before Internet Explorer 6.0, which comes with XP, could run the applet, I had to download the 5 MB Java Virtual Machine. No trouble over a cable modem, but it is still not clear to me why Microsoft didn't include this feature. Some say it is their dislike of Sun Microsystems, but there may be more to it than that.

I ordered a new copy of Microsoft Office XP Professional with the computer, since you save a little money this way. I have copies of Office 95, 97, 2000, and XP. So why did I need another? Well, I wanted to put XP on the new computer, and under the new rules of Microsoft (actually the old rules now being enforced by the authentication process) you can only put your Office XP on a desktop and a laptop, and my other copy of Office XP was already on a desktop. So that was one set of programs that I didn't have to install, but they did have to be authenticated just like Windows XP. Now they are bound to that computer. Next I need to install my other major programs.

They were Adobe PhotoShop, Illustrator and Acrobat, Microsoft Visual Basic and FrontPage and Borland's Delphi. Also other programs like TextBridge Pro scanning software and the Family TreeMaker program. I am leaving Quicken on my second computer and will get a new version of FrontPage before installing it. I am still using FrontPage 98 and need to move up to FP 2002. These are the main programs I use.

Then there was the hardware to be installed: a USB HP ScanJet 5730 flatbed Scanner and my Canon G1 digital camera. I also wanted to eventually attach an HP 4 Plus printer and an Alps MD 1300 printer to the new computer. Finally, I wanted to move my HP PhotoSmart photo scanner from the older Gateway that I was moving to another room to the newer Compaq that would be my second computer. Much of this meant new drivers would have to be found

While installing either the USB drivers or the application software for my Canon G1 digital camera, I got a message something to the effect that the software or hardware didn't meet the Windows XP logo and that if I proceeded I might destabilize my computer. I had already read up on this, and Canon said it was OK to ignore the warning. I did, and the camera and its software work fine in Windows XP Pro.

The USB HP ScanJet 5730c installed with no problem. However, the second time I tried to use it, it wouldn't work. So I went to the HP site and found out that I needed to download a patch. I did this and it has worked fine since. I really do appreciate being able to get updated drivers from the Internet.

Additionally, XP picked up the three printers already on the LAN. But, as you will see later, all is not well with XP and printing over the network—at least for me.

Borland's Delphi 5 installed with no problem, as did Visual

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(New Computer……Continued from page 6)
Basic 6 with its service pack 5. TextBridge Pro 98 installed OK but wouldn't install a menu item in Word. The Instant Access that, I believe, is supposed to do this produced an error—Win XP did not like it at all. These sorts of features almost never work in an operating system more than one version removed from the one it was written for. So for the time being, I can't invoke TextBridge from Word. I have to run TextBridge, do the scan and OCR and save it as an RTF file, which I then open in Word. Perhaps it is time to upgrade TextBridge—now owned by ScanSoft. Except they do not yet have an XP version. I do note that they have a "special" version of their OmniPage Pro 11 described as a Microsoft Special for $299.99. I think I will pass on that. It is really too feature rich. I will wait on the new version of their TextBridge Pro.

By the way, the OCR was almost instantaneous on this 1.8 GHz machine. Anyway, Office XP has Scanning and OCR functionality built-in as Office Document Imaging. However, using Microsoft Office Document Imaging, I got an error when I tried to send a scanned and OCR-ed page to Word: "The server threw an exception." If I simply copied the OCR-ed text and then pasted it into Word there was no problem. Could this have had something to do with installing TextBridge? No! It is Norton Antivirus (I have more than one problem with Norton AV and Office).

I only discovered the solution to this problem the next day when I started opening Word documents and watched how long it took to open them. I noticed a message at the bottom of the screen to the effect that a virus scan was being requested. Well I went into Norton 2002 and shut down this feature, since on a Pentium 4, 1.8 GHz computer you shouldn't have to wait 30 seconds for a short Word document to open. Now the documents open fast.

After doing that I recalled the problem with Office Imaging not being able to insert OCR-ed text into Word, and immediately suspected Norton. I tried the Office Imaging again. Now everything worked as advertised. Antivirus software is very necessary to our lives, but it can also be very bothersome. And I think Norton could do a little better in checking on compatibility. It is not like Microsoft Office is just any out-of-the-way product.

Norton caused a similar problem in creating this newsletter in Microsoft Publisher. If I tried to edit an article in the Publisher document using Microsoft Word, I received an error message about Windows not having enough memory. I knew from experience that this was caused by Norton. And, as I have written in a previous newsletter, I knew Norton's solution of unregistering the officeav.dll did no good. However, a check of my old friend http://www.deja.com/usenet provided the solution that seems to have escaped Norton: Turn off Script Blocking in Norton AV.

A pleasant surprise in Win XP was that Note pad has a new default font and that it now remembers the directory you last used. I really got irritated in the past when NotePad would always go first to Windows.

Now let's talk a little about networking. Win XP and networking apparently presents a problem for a sub collection of users. If you want evidence, go to the Usenet newsgroup Microsoft.public.windowsxpnetwork_web. You have to get it from the news server msnews.microsoft.com.

As mentioned before, I had a bit of trouble getting the XP computer to see the Win Me computer, but it was nothing major. I should note that only TCP/IP needs to be used for networking with XP, and all of my computers use only that protocol and work fine—with the exception that it can take 20 to 30 seconds for the XP computer to see the folders of the other computers. Going the other way is almost instantaneous. Many people report this situation.

A more troubling problem when I first set up the network was that the XP computer would take forever to print to the printers attached to other computers on the network. For example, when I would print from Word on the XP computer, it would take 30 seconds for the print dialog box to appear, then another 30 seconds for Word to background print a three word document, then a final 30 seconds to send it to the printer. If I attached the printer to the XP computer, all of this was almost instantaneous.

A worse effect of this network printing problem was that, as I discovered, it caused Adobe PhotoShop and Illustrator to take 100 seconds to load. I solved this problem by creating a dummy default printer on the XP computer. Then not only did the Adobe applications open very fast, there was no longer any delay in the printer dialog box appearing in Word. Unfortunately, if I really wanted to print, I needed to select a printer on the network—and this would again take time. But at least the Adobe applications would open quickly.

I never did speed this network printing much (I discovered a service called TCP/IP Print Server in XP's computer management section, and it did seem to help) and would like to know a solution. My solution was to connect my HP LaserJet 4 plus and Alps printers to the new XP computer. Now it prints fast to them, and my other computers print quickly over the network. I still have to wait to print over the network to my daughter's HP DeskJet.

Much to my surprise there is still a command prompt. And you have to use it to find your network settings. Win XP doesn't have the program WinIpcfg. It does have IPconfig, which you run from the command prompt in a "DOS" Window—even though there is no DOS. You can get the command prompt in Accessories or by simply typing cmd in the Run text box. And what I like about this type of DOS window is that it has a vertical scroll bar so that you don't lose a record of what you have done as more text is added, as happens in the Win 98. Finally, you can

(New Computer……Continued on page 9)

Looking Back to 1991

Secretary's Report
TAMPA IBM PC USERS GROUP
MINUTES OF 11/13/91 MEETING

(I did not join the meeting until the DOS class ended at 6:30 PM; what happened at the meeting prior to that time is unknown.)
In his typically thorough fashion, our President brought to the meeting much information relating to developments in the PC world that he had come across since the last meeting. Among those items were:

- A brief discussion of EXPOTECH recently conducted at the new convention center in Tampa. One could see some of the latest developments in PC hardware there, as well as find some very good buys. Harvey cautioned, however, that some of the vendors at such as EXPOTECH may not be from the local area and you might be hard pressed to get follow-on support in such instances.
- A new book store, "Book Shop", had opened across from University Square Mall. It is apparently a warehouse kind of store with a very good selection in the computer field, as well as discount pricing. Harvey reported that there appeared to be no organization in shelving the books and he therefore had some difficulty in locating selections. A good place to buy from a price standpoint.
- Harvey reported that the long awaited Comp USA computer store should be opened before the end of the year. It is being set up on Hillsborough between Himes and Dale Mabry. Visitors to their other store locations in Miami and Atlanta, among others, have made glowing remarks about these stores - especially low pricing. It will be a welcome addition to our sources. A word of caution: This is strictly a discount operation in a warehouse environment where you pretty much have to know what you want when you go in. It has rock bottom prices and service is commensurate.
- A new upgrade to Laplink is now available.
- The Far Side has come out with a personal information manager (PIM) program. One "advantage?" of this program over other PIMs is that it adds Far Side humor. On the other hand, some report utility shortcomings in this program compared to other PIMs. Look it over to be sure it does what you want before you put your money on the line.
- Harvey reported that Intel and IBM have joined together in a collaborative effort in computer chip development. Some discussion followed as to why, with a wide range of whys expressed. We will just have to wait and see. One thing for sure, though, is that both firms believe it in their best interest.

Our club has grown to about 160 members now. Though this is some short of the 200 goal Harvey had set for 1991, we have grown a great deal. The workload had also grown a great deal and more member support and help are needed. The elected officers cannot continue to carry the entire load by themselves. Some very good improvements have been made to date in serving the needs of our members and we want to continue to improve and expand. Here are some of the things YOU can do to help:

- Make yourself available to serve as an officer with the club - and it is not to late to do so for the coming year; elections are at the December meeting. If you can't do that, make yourself available to assist.
- Provide articles for the Newsletter. If you come across information of general interest to the membership, submit it for the newsletter. Write a review of one of the programs you have and submit it. If you hear of or have developed some useful utility or technique which has been beneficial to you, submit an input to the newsletter. You know, our newsletter is a bit like a computer - no input, no output. Please help.
- We would like to expand areas of instruction to include word processing, data base, spreadsheet, communications, DTP, etc. BUT, we need people willing to conduct classes on these subjects. To date we have held two classes on DOS (the second in progress now), both of which have been conducted by Ed Buzza, our workhorse who also provides newsletter articles, program review presentations at our meetings, etc., etc.; he is doing far more than his share now. Come on people, share your expertise with your fellow club members. Contact Ed Buzza or Harvey Bruneau.
- We would like to get involved, as a club, in community service - give something back to the community. We need your thoughts on how we might do that.

NOMINATIONS: The President opened the floor to nominations for the elected positions in the club to serve during 1992. The following nominations were made:

President	Harvey Bruneau
Vice President	Steve Spears
Treasurer	Bill Fuller
Education	Ed Buzza
Member At Large	Roger Waters
Secretary	
(Co-secretary)	Jim Clark
(Co-secretary)	Charles Howe

Elections will be held at the December meeting. Nominations will be open until the time of the elections.

Come on now, be prepared to make your nominations at the December meeting, or better still, volunteer yourself for one of these positions.

COMING PRESENTATIONS: The President reported that the following lineup had been completed for guest presentations:

DECEMBER - Microsoft Visual Basic, MS Works, MS

(1991……Continued on page 9)

(1991……..Continued from page 8)
Money, MS Publisher.
JANUARY - Word Perfect for Windows FEBRUARY - Corel Draw

PROGRAM REVIEW: Following a break, our own Ed Buzza gave a review of Soft Key's Key Publisher. This is a DTP program which is identical to Timeworks' Publish It 1.2. DAK (a California based electronics mail order firm with which most of us are familiar) made a deal with Timeworks for a license to sell Publish It 1.2 under a different name and with different documentation; Timeworks had developed version 2.0, which is now on the market.

Key Publisher (KP) is a very flexible low-end DTP program. It has a lot to offer, especially for the price, and makes an excellent entry level DTP program. I say entry level recognizing that this program could well serve all of your DTP needs. On the other hand, the low end programs cannot compare in power and flexibility with the high end DTP programs like PageMaker.

KP is not word a processor, but it has a word processor capability so that text can be entered from the keyboard into the program without difficulty. You are out of luck on spell check and thesaurus, though. Similarly, KP is not a graphics draw program, but it does have a limited draw capability. Among the features of Key Publisher are:

- Imports ASCII text files as well as files in the format of several of the major word processing programs.
- Imports graphics in several formats, including TIFF, PCX, GEM, 1MG and EPS.
- Ability to create and retain "style" (master) sheets which saves much time on repeat publications.
- All low end DTPs are memory hogs in that they handle both graphics and text as bit maps. But KP makes better use of conventional memory than some other low enders. The program does not use extended memory.
- The program will handle about 30 pages at one time, but I think you would run out of memory before that time if you use many graphics.
- The program is slow on the slower computers if you edit text or alter pages toward the beginning of a multiple page document because of the redraw time. However, redraw time can be reduced by hiding all graphics.
- Hands [Handles] pages from 3.75 X 6.5" to 8.5 X 14", with several sizes in between, landscape or portrait.
- Flexible column guides, with up to six columns allowed.
- Has six fonts, two of which can be sized in increments from 7 to 60 points; the other four offer only two sizes 15 (or 16) or 30 points. All of the standard styles are available, but only light is available in text effects.
- Graphics and text frames can be moved anywhere on a page, but cannot be rotated, flipped or distorted in any way.
- The "Help" available in the program is fairly good, but it is not location sensitive; that is, when you ask for help you are offered a help index from which you choose the area of help you want. And you cannot obtain help when you are in a dialog box.

And so on. Ed gave an excellent presentation of Key Publisher, but space here precludes giving further detail. Though limited compared to the high enders, it is a nice program and fairly easy to learn. He clearly showed that you get a lot of bang for the buck with this package which can be had from DAK for a mere $9.90, plus $4.50 S&H. If you are interested, here's the contact:

DAK Industriçs
8200 Remmet Ave
Canoga Park, CA 91304-4182

1-800-325-0800 with credit card number.

Order item 5919S for 5 1/4" floppy, 5920S for 3 1/2" floppy.◆

(New Computer……..Continued from page 7)
select all the text in this window, copy it and paste it into a program like Notepad or Word. This would be useful for those who want a list of files in a particular directory.

Win XP has a built in faxing program that seems to work quite well. I was able to send faxes of Word documents and then receive faxes. What is missing is the ability to scan a document from within the FAX console and then send it as a FAX. However, if you have a program that will do a black and white scan at 200 dpi, you can simply scan from this program and then print to the FAX driver. Since this computer has the Microsoft Office XP Document Imaging tool, I use this to acquire the scanned image then print from it to the XP FAX driver.

The FAX Console has an In Box, an Out Box and a Sent Items box along with a built-in viewer. It is not as full featured as WinFAX Pro, but it is quite good. By the way, I think to use WinFAX Pro with XP you will have to purchase the newest version of the program for around $100.

I wanted to add my laptop to the network, so I needed to find some more space. The router only accommodated four network connections, and they were all taken. But I had an old 10 mbs, four port hub with an additional uplink port. So I unplugged the oldest computer from the router, connected the hub's uplink port to that now free port on the router and then connected the disconnected computer to one port on the hub and the laptop to another port on the hub. The laptop could see the other four computers on the network and all could see it except the new XP computer. So all I had to do now was set up a network place on the XP computer for the C drive on the laptop. The wizard found the laptop and asked for the password

(New Computer……..Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Election of Officers at the Dec. Meeting

nominations are:

President	Kevan Sheridan
Vice President	Mary Sheridan
Secretary	James Weber
Treasurer	Jenny Lind-Olin and Mike Hodges
Member at Large	John Witmer

(New Computer……Continued from page 9)

for the C drive, and I clicked on OK–and nothing happened. The exact situation as I had encountered earlier in setting up the C drive on my Compaq computer as a network place for the new Gateway XP computer. And the cause of the problem was the same—a space in the name of the computer. I took out the space from the name of the laptop, rebooted the laptop and used the network place wizard again on the XP computer, and this time when I clicked OK I was presented with the file structure of the C drive on the laptop. Success.

With everything working, it was time to move some computers. The oldest of the three computers in this room was relegated to a back room of the house and the newest computer took its place. The oldest flatbed scanner, the HP ScanJet IIc accompanied the old Gateway computer to the back room. The HP 4 Plus printer and the Alps MD-1300 were connected to the new Gateway, and, as I said, that did away with the delay in printing over the network from the XP computer. A new driver for the Alps was required.

I took the old Iomega parallel 100 MB drive from the banished Gateway and installed it on the Compaq computer after first going to the Iomega site and getting the latest drivers. I only use the Iomega for backups of important data that I don't want to bother with putting on a CD. Years back, though, it was my main backup medium.

There were two jobs remaining. The first, to see if I could install the HP PhotoSmart Photo scanner on the Compaq. This scanner uses a SCSI interface, and it was daisy chained to the HP IIc flatbed scanner that was banished along with the old Gateway. I have a relatively new HP 5370C scanner connected to the new Gateway with a USB cable. HP provided a proprietary SCSI card with the photo scanner and I never used it since I daisy chained it. Now I need to install a SCSI card in the Compaq computer for the scanner. HP tells you where to go to get updated drivers for the card. Once there you find that the manufacturer, while providing the drivers for Win Me and Win 2000, says that they will not support them and suggests you buy a new PCI card that they guarantee will work in Win Me. I downloaded the driver for the card and also have 80 MB of updated application software I downloaded from HP for the photo scanner and gave it a try. To make a long story short: It didn't work—possibly due to an error on my part.

Anyway, I purchased a new SIIG PCI SCSI card. It installed fine using a built-in Windows driver. I installed the Photo Scanner software—and again got the same error message as before when I tried to run the software. But this time I did a little thinking: I had Windows search for new hardware. It found an unknown device. I had it install it—and low and behold it discovered it was an HP Photo Scanner with a number I can't remember. Now the scanner with its new and better software is working fine on the Win Me Compaq computer.

One final problem. After the move, I discovered that the old Gateway in the other room connected to the hub by 75' of network cable could no longer see the other computers' folders, even though they could see its folders. It could browse the Inter-

(New Computer……Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
CAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
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RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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(President… … ….Continued from page 2)
handling the GSM cellular network. Once it becomes main-stream, then it will be a lot more appealing to me. I was also expecting much better pricing at the event and saw the only real deals were those offered through the user groups via APCUG.

I'd like to note that without being a member of the FACUG and the APCUG, it would be nearly impossible to get decent speakers to come to our meetings. And, as software and hardware vendors tighten their belts, we need to realize that the software donations to our raffle will become less and less.

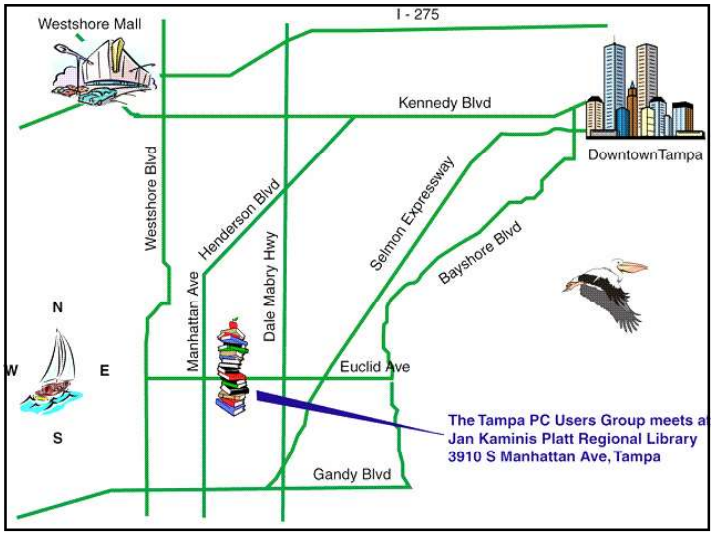
But, on a more positive note, our membership is up and we have more money at the end of this year than at the end of last year, so it looks like we're in pretty solid shape.

Thanks again for letting me be your president. I hope to see many of you at the Christmas Party.

Happy Computing! ◆

(New Computer… … ……Continued from page 10)
net and ping the other computers. I suspected the problem was the old hub—and it was. Replacing the hub with a new Linksys four port switch made everything right.

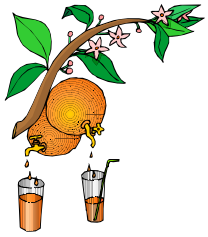
I am out of space—but not problems and solutions. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 1 January 2002

Meeting

Hardware Presentation

Wednesday, January 9, 2002
6:30 PM
Jan Platt Regional Library
3910 S Manhattan Ave.
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Hardware Presentation and update on the recent COMDEX. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, Vice President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

Another year rolls around, and here we are still together. My article will be short and sweet. This is for the January edition of Bits of Blue, and since the president-elect hasn't been formally inducted yet, I guess it's still my job to write the president's column.

I got an Eyemodule II for my Handspring unit for my birthday (Christmas Eve). I'm having a great time with it. It's not great photography, but it links into my Outlook address book. Next time I meet someone new, I can grab a quick picture of them and jot down their name. Then when I run into them again, I won't have to be embarrassed because I remember the face but can't remember the name. I haven't really used it yet, but my granddaughters have taken over 50 pictures of each other, so I know it at least works.

(President.....Continued on page 9)

February 13: To be announced. Check our web site

* * OFFICERS * *
President: Kevan Sheridan (kevan57@tampabay.rr.com) 988-6480
Vice President : Mary Sheridan(mcpease@mindspring.com) 988-6480
Treasurer: Mike Hodges (mike.hodges@baesystems.com) 962-2114
Secretary: James Weber (jlweber9@mindspring.com) 671-1612
Member at Large: John Witmer (JWITMER@Pepindist.com) 963-3760

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Librarian: Larry Anders (Larry@AndersNet.com) 989-9119
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Membership: Jenny Leitzke (Leitzke4@hotmail.com) 968-9000

Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

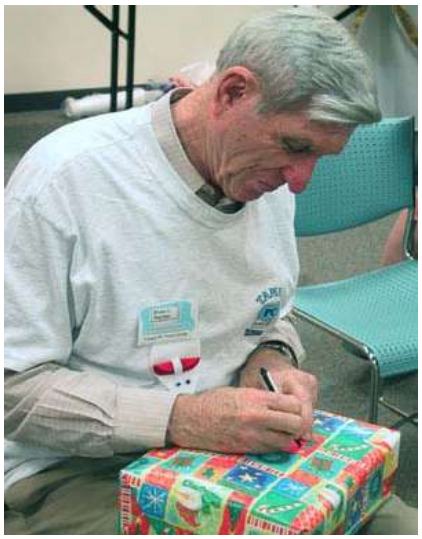
apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the December Meeting

By Jenny Lind Olin for James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

We had our annual Christmas party and election of officers. The officers elected were:

President: Kevan Sheridan
Vice President : Mary Sheridan
Treasurer: Mike Hodges
Secretary: James Weber
Member at Large: John Witmer



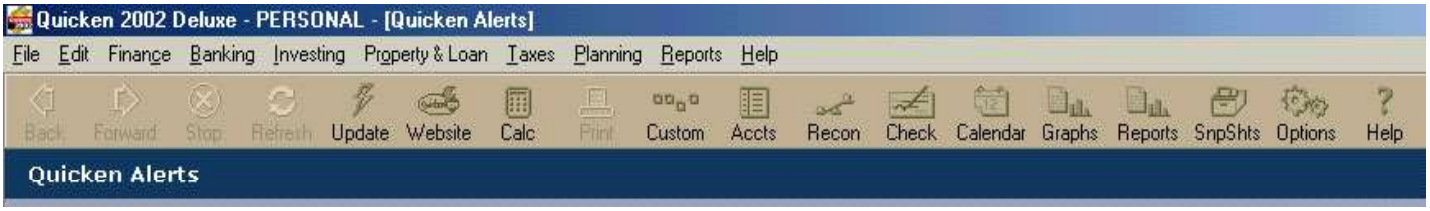
Bruce Register with his prize

Jenny Leitzke played Santa and brought a mouse ornament for everyone who attended. They were such cute items and so appropriate for a computer user group.

There were three blind door prizes [as they were wrapped in paper suitable for the season] available for the raffle which brought in $53. Winners were as follows: Bruce Register won the Windows XP software; John Witmer won a T-shirt, and our visitor Nancy Williams won a cap. ◆



Gary Ennis and Jenny Lind Olin with food



Header for all Quicken Registers

Quicken 2002 Deluxe

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I have been a satisfied Quicken user since 1991, starting with the DOS version and moving up to their first Windows version when it became available. Over the years I updated to their newest version when it became available until the 98 version, when I stopped updating since it did about everything I wanted. I did, however, install their patches that would make Quicken 98 year 2000 compatible. My review of Quicken 98 Deluxe is at our website at http://www.tpcug.org/reviews/quicken98.html.

But with a new computer it was time to upgrade to a new Quicken, since if I were to install the old one on a different computer it would no longer be year 2000 compliant, the patches all having been done online with no software to save for future use.

The Quicken installation asks for no serial number or other type of authentication. It gives you the choice of what components you wish to install. I chose not to install

Quicken Home Inventory
Debt Reduction
Emergency Records Organizer
Deduction finder

Quicken 2002 Deluxe requires 59,290 KB of space. I think the original DOS version used at most two 3.5 floppies.

I installed it fresh on the Compaq computer – not my new Gateway computer. I like to use two computers with some software on one and other software on the other. Right after installation I got a message that _delis has caused an error in _ISDELEXE. _delisio will now close. This seemed to cause no problem, and a search at http://groups.google.com/ indicates it has to do with cleaning up temporary installation files after the installation is complete.

Quicken asks you some personal questions – married, children, house, etc, which I would have just as soon preferred to skip but found it easier to just go along and answer so that I could finish the installation. There is then the option to watch a video. I don't believe the video is a good as the one for Quicken Deluxe 98.

To register Quicken is very slow. It took a long time to make the Internet connection to their server. Once I got the fill-in form to display, filled it in and then tried to send it to Quicken there was another long wait and the process never completed. I might note that I installed Quicken 2002 Deluxe (their copy) on another person's computer, and their registration didn't even get as far as mine did. So Intuit needs to improve the registration process.

After the registration you click Done and get the chance to set up accounts. I didn't want this. I wanted to use the Restore from Backup feature to get my old data. You don't use import since that only brings in one account at a time. So I first backed up my Quicken data on the computer it was on one last time. Then I mapped the drive this backup was on as a network drive on the computer I was installing the new Quicken on and restored from that location. You want to use the QDF file. Everything appears to have come in perfectly, including the printer settings for printing checks from Quicken.

The interface is completely different from Quicken 98. For each account, you have a register view and

(Quicken…… ….Continued on page 4)

(Quicken… … ….Continued from page 3)

an overview. The register view is just that—a listing of the transactions in tabular form for that account. The overview presents the account attributes, like account number, interest rate if applicable, etc. and also has a graph of the account balance each day for the past month, quarter, 12 months or whatever interval you choose. I was surprised to see from the graph of my checking account for this quarter that on one day the account was $2,000 in the red. I never actually overdrew the account so that simply indicates that I wrote checks to pay bills (which would take several days to reach the payee by mail) before I credited deposits to the account. But this is an instance where a graphic points out something that you might not note in the register.

In the overview there is also a pie chart of expenses. You can make this full screen to better view it. Again the graphic can literally open your eyes. In my case it is a bit depressing how large the percentages are that go to taxes and insurance.

Finally, at the bottom of the overview screen is a list of the scheduled transactions to be paid from this account in the near future.

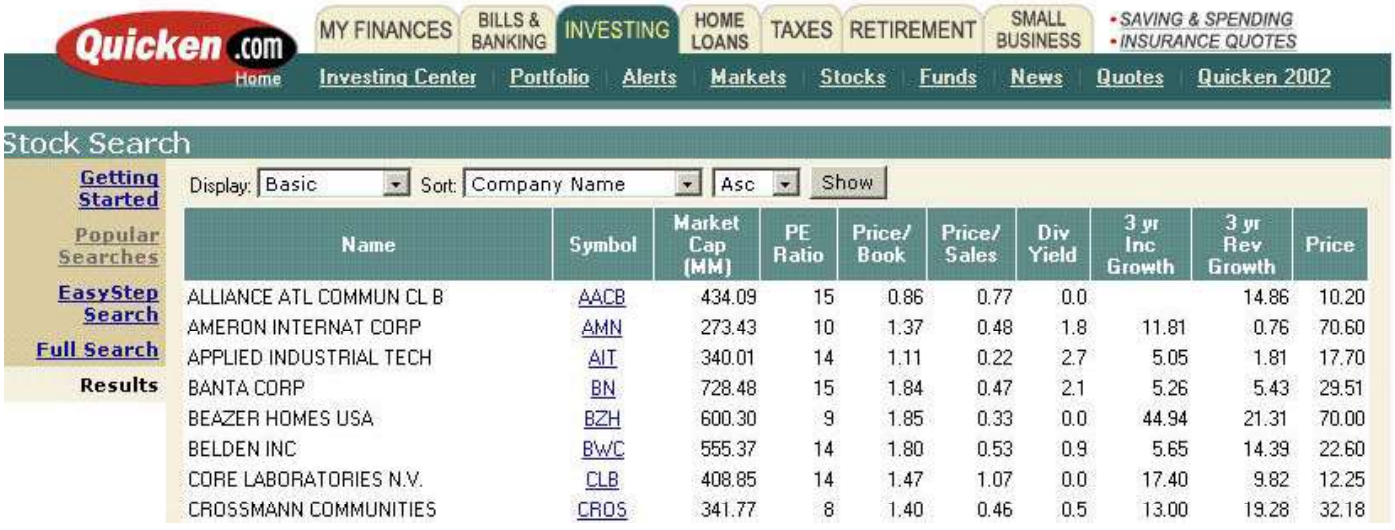
I feel that it is very important to backup my Quicken data to media that I can remove from the computer so that it won't be lost in something like a lightening strike. For this I use a Zip drive since my main file is now almost 12 MB—much too large for multiple floppies.

I at first had a problem backing up my files to the Zip drive connected to another computer on my network until I realized that I couldn't simply browse the network from the backup location folder dialog in Quicken. When I did this to select the location, I would get an error when I tried to backup. What I needed to do was first map that Zip drive as a network drive on the computer with the Quicken program. Then I could use the backup location dialog to select the backup folder in the Zip drive. However, none of this matters anymore, for now the Zip drive is connected to the computer with Quicken.

One nice feature is that when you reconcile a credit card bill and have Quicken print a check for payment, it will look at your scheduled transactions list to see if there is something there that matches what you are doing. It then asks you if the scheduled one and the one you are paying are the same and if so it removes the scheduled transaction from the list. In the past—at least in Quicken 98—after paying the bill from the reconcile process you then had to go to the scheduled transaction list and have it entered in the checking register and then delete it from the checking register.

When I enter a payment or a change in a scheduled transaction, I sometimes get a warning that this action will cause me to exceed my budget. Do I want to change my budget? Apparently at one time very long ago I set up a budget.

(Quicken.....Continued on page 5)



Name	Symbol	Market Cap (MM)	PE Ratio	Price/ Book	Price/ Sales	Div Yield	3 yr Inc Growth	3 yr Rev Growth	Price
ALLIANCE ATL COMMUN CL B	AACB	434.09	15	0.86	0.77	0.0		14.86	10.20
AMERON INTERNAT CORP	AMN	273.43	10	1.37	0.48	1.8	11.81	0.76	70.60
APPLIED INDUSTRIAL TECH	AIT	340.01	14	1.11	0.22	2.7	5.05	1.81	17.70
BANTA CORP	BN	728.48	15	1.84	0.47	2.1	5.26	5.43	29.51
BEAZER HOMES USA	BZH	600.30	9	1.85	0.33	0.0	44.94	21.31	70.00
BELDEN INC	BWC	555.37	14	1.80	0.53	0.9	5.65	14.39	22.60
CORE LABORATORIES N.V.	CLB	408.85	14	1.47	1.07	0.0	17.40	9.82	12.25
CROSSMANN COMMUNITIES	CROS	341.77	8	1.40	0.46	0.5	13.00	19.28	32.18

(Quicken… … ….Continued from page 4)

I have two Quicken files I use—personal and business. When I want to backup a file, the screens I get are much better than in Quicken 98, but there is still the problem of Quicken choosing the target folder to be the one most recently used. For example, if I most recently backed up my Personal file, and I then want to back up the Business file, the default backup folder is the one I used for Personal, and I have to browse for the Business folder. It is a small thing, but it would be nice if Quicken would remember which backup folder went with each file.

Quicken is much more than a simple checkbook or register for your credit card accounts. It allows you to track loans and investments, to do planning and to present all this in reports to view on screen or print. If you desire, Quicken will gladly handle all your financial transactions—for a fee.

One such service is online bill payment. This is basically $10/month for 20 bills. If you actually had 20 bills you could use this feature with, it would come to $.50/bill which is just a bit more than a stamp.

Quicken would like to help you with investing in stocks, funds, etc. On the previous page you saw a portion of a screen capture of Quicken's choice of

(Quicken… … ….Continued on page 10)

Internet picture of the month



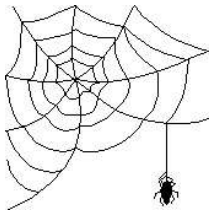
View of the Ducal Palace
by Canaletto

This one of 9,200 digital reproductions of European paintings and sculptures from the Web Gallery of Art at the site http://www.kfki.hu/~arthp/index1.html.

You may browse the collection as follows:

- browsing the collection from the **Quick Index** showing a simple alphabetic list of artists,
- browsing the collection from the **Artist Index** giving more detailed information on artists,
- using the **Search Engine** to find individual or selected groups of pictures, or
- selecting a tour from the **Guided Tours**.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
WebCam Central—WebCams Sorted by Location	http://www.camcentral.com/
U.S. Savings Bonds Online	http://www.savingsbonds.gov/
Virtual Miami	http://www.gssites.com/miami/indexmiami.html
Environmental Working Group—Farm subsidy database	http://www.ewg.org/
Florida Heritage Collection	http://palmm.fcla.edu/fh/
Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center	http://www.tampacenter.com/
angelpig.com—A New Orleans site	http://angelpig.com/
BuyAlps.com—Source of supplies for Alps printers	http://www.buyalps.com/
RetouchPRO—Photo restoration	http://www.retouchpro.com/
Web Gallery of Art	http://www.kfki.hu/~arthp/index1.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Santa's Last Name is Murphy

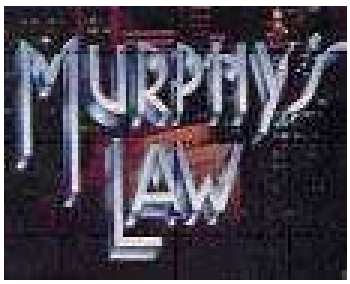
By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

I hope you had a great Christmas! Mine was a good one, spent with family and friends, opening presents, eating a lot and trying to forget what had happened to me on Christmas Eve day. Remember these two Murphy's Laws: "if anything can go wrong, it will go wrong" and "all's well that ends."

It had been a very long time since I had had a major computer problem, and I forgot that the longer it has been since you've had a major problem, the closer you get to another one! When installing a new operating system or virus protection program I ALWAYS create a copy of the emergency repair or recovery diskettes… *except this last time*. I recently purchased a new 100-gig drive and decided to start out clean with a new version of Windows 2000. It had been over a year since I purchased my last computer and a lot of stuff had slowed down the old 30-gig drive.

I had been very careful not to burden the new drive with a lot of needless programs, and for a couple of months it was operating like a brand new system all over again. I typically don't turn off my system unless it starts acting a little funny, and that is what it was doing Christmas Eve morning. So, I rebooted and then it happened. I met Mr. Murphy and the blue screen of death, with a message that said, "***inaccessible_boot_device***." There was some other verbiage saying that it may be caused by a virus or some recently installed new hardware. My virus definitions were up-to-date, and the only new hardware recently installed was the hard drive that had just crashed.

Well, there were a lot of things I should have done to be prepared for something like this, but I hadn't done any of them, and the more I thought about what I had lost the more upset I got. As I would learn later, the easiest thing I could have done was to have made an emergency repair disk, but Windows 2000 doesn't ask you to do that when the system is installed. And something I did not know at the time is that you cannot make a boot disk in Windows 2000 like in Windows 98. Under this situation, you boot to the Windows 2000 CD and insert the recovery disk when asked.



Well, when I realized that there was apparently nothing I could do, I booted to my "D" drive, which is actually my old, original 30-gig drive. The new 100-gig drive could be seen but not accessed. I got a "corrupt or inaccessible drive" error. I started calling friends and relatives and ended up with several possible cures. My biggest and most immediate concern was to get some very important work data off the drive, no matter if I could recover the rest or not. But the more I thought about what was on the drive, the more I realized there was a lot more data on that drive that I did not want to actually live without.

My daughter, Lauren, who is the MIS director for a company here in Tampa, told me about a program that might do the job for me by Ontrack called ***EasyRecovery*****,** and it did! I installed EasyRecovery and proceeded to ease my mind. The data recovery process was pretty straightforward but I soon realized that the 50-gigabytes of data weren't going to fit on the remaining 14-gigs of space on my old drive. So, I went shopping Christmas Eve and bought myself a new 80-gig drive. I took a day off from the recovery process Christmas day and got back at it late the following day. I installed Windows 2000 on the new 80-gig drive, re-installed EasyRecovery and copied all the files from the 100-gig to the new 80-gig drive. Once my data was safely backed up, I sent Mr. Murphy on his way, or at least I thought I did.

For some reason, when I booted to my new drive, I could not read my old "D" drive, so I re-booted to the old 30-gig drive and got the blue screen of death on my old drive. But, earlier in the day I had made an emergency repair disk for that drive. So, I booted to my Windows 2000 CD, put in the repair disk when asked, and I was back to normal, on the "D" drive. I then re-booted to my new 80-gig drive and made an emergency repair disk for it, which I should

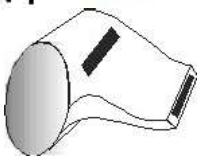
(Murphy… … …Continued on page 12)

Windows XP Home Edition



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and



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By Mike Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group
myankee@ij.net

Once again, Microsoft has plunged ahead cramming more features (many of which have dubious utilitarian value to most users) into an operating system before they get the basics fully ironed out. Do you really need your computer to periodically access an Internet time server to see if your system clock and date values conform to the values contained therein? Do you really want to have to go into a dialog box to prevent this from occurring? (If the modification is desired: Double-click the clock on the taskbar, make any changes to date / time as usual, go to the Internet Time tab and clear the Automatically Synchronize with an Internet Time Server check box.) This is a minor feature overload example compared to the Microsoft Management Console (MMC).

The MMC allows the user to manage the machine that the console is running on and remote computers. In **rough** terms, a console is the basic unit of the MMC's user interface. Per the Help in the MMC: You can use MMC to *create*, save, and open administrative tools that manage hardware, software and network components. The MMC can be run on the various Win 9x and Windows NT operating systems. The MMC does not perform administrative functions; it hosts tools that do. There are two general ways you can use the MMC:

1. User Mode-working with existing MMC consoles to administer computer/s.
2. Author Mode - creating new consoles or modifying existing ones.

The primary type of tool that you can add to a console is called a snap-in. For example: Disk Management is a snap-in that allows the user to manage disks and volumes in a graphical environment. On the Compaq machine which I recently bought, in part hoping that the XP OS would provide greater stability than 98, you go into Control Panel Administrative Tools.

Once in that far, you see shortcuts for Component Services, Data Sources(ODBC), Performance, Computer Management (the MMC), Event Viewer and Services. To get to the Disk Management snap-in, double click Computer Management. Next, expand the Storage category so that Disk Management is displayed. You must log on as the computer administrator or be a member of the Admin's group to use Disk Management. This snap-in can be used to: change drive letters and paths, format disks, create or delete partitions, upgrade basic disks to dynamic disks and eject removable media. Basic disks are disks that contain primary and extended partitions and logical drives, mirrored volumes, striped volumes, spanned volumes and RAID-5 volumes. Dynamic Disks are hard disks that contain dynamic volumes, of which there are five types: simple, spanned, mirrored, striped and RAID-5. Note: Only Windows XP and Windows 200 can access dynamic disks.

Another snap-in is the WMI or Windows Management Instrumentation. The purpose of this is to let you manage your enterprise over the Internet or an intranet. Shared Folders is a MMC snap-in which allows you to view and manage shares on the computer you are using, remote connections to the computer you are using and files that are in use by remote users. I have been told that the nature of many of these features reveals the underlying structure of Windows XP; namely, Windows NT.

Many of the things found in the MMC are repetitions of System Tools familiar to Win 9x users. I guess to boil it down; it seems odd that Microsoft tries to put ultra-power user features into an OS which also includes "cookie cutter" send pictures (or *now in XP* make your own movie on your PC) of the grandkids, burn CDs, store My Favorite J Lo tunes, junk. I think

(Windows XP……Continued on page 9)

Looking Back to 1992

From the January 1992 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 12/11/91 MEETING

There was the customary announcement of upgrades. Windows 3.2 is in early beta testing. It is not a 100% certainty that the Borland/Ashton-Tate merger will be permitted by the FTC.

Kirk Covert of Microsoft demoed three recent Microsoft releases destined for home and small business use.

Microsoft Money - Write checks, track expenses, create budgets, organize your assets and plan your financial future ($48). (This product won by Tom Cone)

Microsoft Publisher - Inexpensive desktop publishing with features found in higher priced packages. Use to designed flyers and newsletters ($138).

Microsoft Works - A combination of important business tools including word processing, spreadsheet analysis, database management, charting and drawing ($138).

Although Visual Basic was on the agenda, it was postponed due to Kirk's time constraints. The majority of the attending membership really wanted to see this product and asked Kirk to come back at a later time for a demo.

Elections: The entire slate was voted in without balloting for individual office. Ed Buzza left the position of Secretary to fill the position of Education. Jim Clark and Charles Howe will share the position of secretary.

The president (Harvey) announced that he was working cooperatively with a New York publishing company, which contacted him, to get exceptional subscription rates for computer magazine subscriptions. Harvey has concerns and apprehensions about telling members to send money to a company he is not familiar with. He is researching the company to make sure it's legit. Following is a sample of 1 year rates for some of the magazines available.

Byte:	9.00
PC Computing	9.00
PC Magazine	17.00
PC novice	8.00
PC World	10.00

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Well, another year (1992) to make our group bigger and better. It seems like I said this the last 3 or 4 years. As usual, I am not sure if your vote for me is one of "Hey, Harvey, you're doing a good job as president and we want you to continue" or "Well, he is the only nomination so we'd better vote for him." As for the other officers, I am personally really happy to see them come back for another year. These people: Ed Buzza, Larry Anders, Kevan Sheridan, Roger Waters, Marylee Bruneau, Bill Fuller and Steve Spears are the glue and nucleus of our group. Without their behind the scene help I could not do my job and the group would flounder. Of course we welcome the new kids, Jim Clark and Charles Howe for '92. Additionally, a big thank you to IBM and Chris Mayer for the help and resources they have provided. IBM has taken some of the worries and problems we have experienced in the past away. In all, you are provided with the best available resources for a volunteer non-profit group. If you think they are doing a good job, please take a minute out of your time to tell them so. A sincere recognition from a fellow PC user can keep us going for a while. At times we are frustrated by the lack of any feedback from members, whether it be positive or negative. While not our intention, we were the best kept secret in Tampa. We have begun with a more aggressive exposure campaign to make our group known. In 1991, we finally created a handout/ brochure to explain our group and its benefits. These can be found in retail stores like Computer Supplies, Software Etc., The Computer Factory and CompuAdd. It's only a start, and we will add more, but we still need your help. Last meeting several of you

(1992……Continued on page 9)

(1992……Continued from page 8)

wanted those flyers to pass out. Look for them at the January meeting. My membership goal for this year is pretty high but yet attainable.

1. Membership by 12/31/92 to 300.
2. Create Special Interest Groups (SIG) for:
    a. Word processing
    b. Database
    c. Spreadsheet
    d. Windows
3. 9600 baud BBS

The first two goals will be easily accomplished with your help. Take and distribute flyers to interested friends or companies. Let a board member know of stores willing to distribute our flyers. If you feel others could benefit from your knowledge, volunteer to lead a SIG group. I have mentioned some SIG groups above, but our group is not limited to only those. SIGs do not need to meet on a regular basis, but they should have an accountable leader.

As our membership increases so will our rewards. The more members, the more experience we bring into our fold to share, the more local authors of articles we can add to our newsletter and the more volunteers we can get to enhance our group beyond what we know have. There is a lot that we can do to help ourselves, but it will require the general help of you, our members. Do not put the entire future of our group growth in the board members' hands**. Help us get bigger and better**.

1992 should be the year of a major battle. IBM vs Microsoft. Should IBM and Microsoft ship their new products, Windows 3.1 and OS/2 2.0, in the 1st quarter it will be something to see. If you got the horsepower (386+), the product works as advertised and the price is under $99. OS/2.0 will be a great operating system. Microsoft will need to add more than fixes to its Window product to keep IBM at bay. Even if IBM gave away OS/2 in '92, it surely won't unseat Windows. However, in '93 the tide could turn. Remember Windows requires an operating system (DOS, OS/2 ...) to run.

Harvey P. Bruneau ◆

(Windows XP……Continued from page 7)

that if Microsoft took the Home/Professional categorization process just a half to one full step further to include Home Office (or some such designation) it would benefit many users. For instance, in my case they could omit any joy stick / game support, accessibility options, speech capability, etc., and I would be just as happy. Instead, according to a reference book bought to help cope with the new OS (*Windows XP Home Edition COMPLETE* from Sybex-$19.99), which was also used heavily to jot down these lines, Pro XP has **all** of the Home Edition features (superfluous or otherwise) and then some.

I would prefer that they see to it that the Wizards for Networking perform as advertised, as just one instance of practical functionality that this user wants as opposed to constantly trying to coerce you into accessing the Net to update Windows.

Footnote with regard to network configuration in Windows XP Home: Norton Internet Security 2002 will put up a roadblock in terms of your network computers seeing each other. So far, the best I can do is set Norton Internet Security so that it does not come on automatically when the machine boots. My three machines then can see other and seem to still see each other if you subsequently put the Internet Security program on, which would seem prudent if you are going to try to access the net from one of the other machines. ◆

(President……Continued from page 1)

As vice-president, I plan to concentrate on membership. Things like getting more and better benefits for existing members and finding new members will be on my agenda. Anyone with suggestions, please feel free to bring them to me or phone me at 988-6480 or email me at mcpease@mindspring.com.

(President……Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

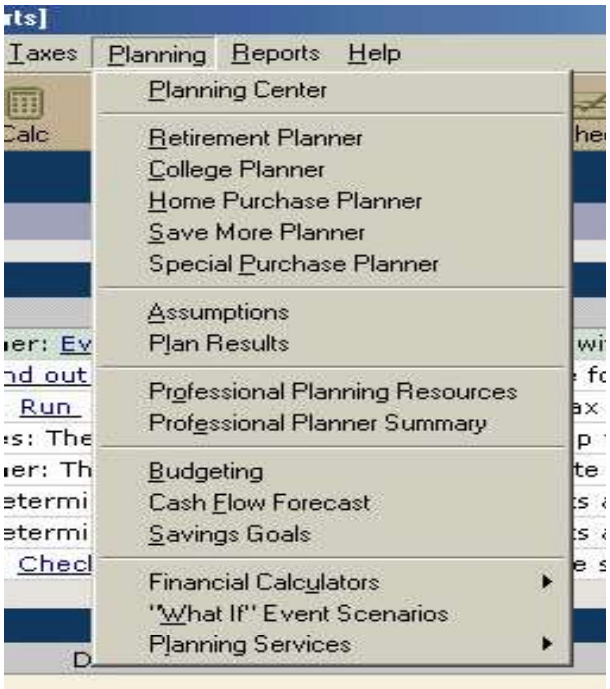
Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Quicken……Continued from page 5)

Small Cap Value Stocks. Of course, you have to be connected to the Internet to use this feature. You can set up alerts to know when selected stocks reach certain values. Quicken provides plenty of current information on stocks, mutual funds, etc.

One final thing I would like to mention is planning. As the screen capture here indicates, Quicken provides a number of planning features. I could have used the Home Purchase Planner 26 years ago when we bought our first home. I recall running all sorts of calculations in a FORTRAN program through a main frame computer that I had access to at the time to convince myself that it was better to buy than to rent.



Of course, in the process of helping you understand how much house you can afford, Quicken will also give you the opportunity to visit QuickenLoans.com. And that illustrates the direction the software has taken over the years. You have the original record keeping with which Quicken started, the added Investment and Planning features, and now all of the financial services they offer over the web.

The program is around $59 retail, and I recommend it. If you are not interested in all the bells and whistles, then there is a Basic version for less. ◆

(President……Continued from page 9)

Once again, I'd like to say how grateful I am to have been given a chance to serve as your president.

Happy Computing! ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
CAE
Marshall & Stevens

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

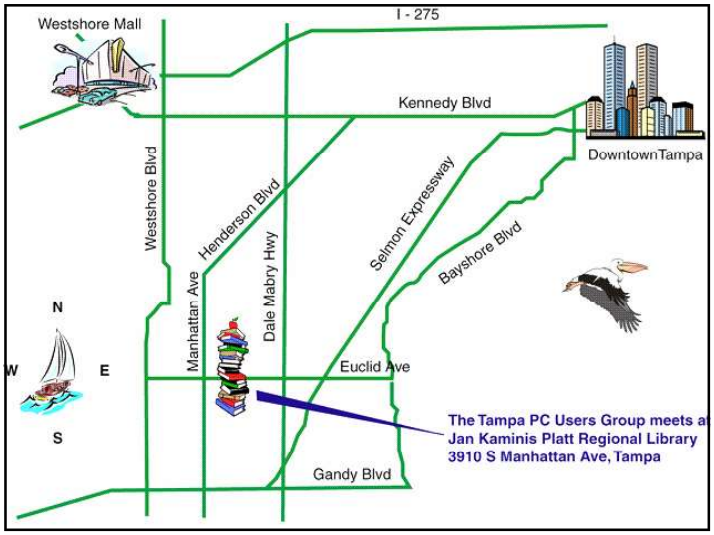
(Murphy… … ….Continued from page 6)
have done immediately after I installed it, but sometime I surprise myself.

Then I got an idea. I inserted my original blue screen drive, booted to the Windows 2000 CD and inserted the 80-gig hard drive repair disk when asked to do so and I was back up and operating after only 5 days.

What caused it? I don't know! Will it happen again? I don't know! Am I ready if it does? You bet your sweet #@$!!!

The reason I am writing this article is to remind you, and me, to backup your important data right after you create it. And if you haven't made a recovery disk, do it now! And be prepared, or at least think you are prepared. Murphy also says, "If you perceive that there are four possible ways in which something can go wrong, and circumvent these, then a fifth way, unprepared for, will promptly develop."

Another of Murphy's Laws is, "All great discoveries are made by mistake." In my case it should read, "All great discoveries are made by the mistakes made." And, I make a lot of great discoveries! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



February in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 2 February 2002

Meeting

Excel Applications
by
John Witmer

Wednesday, February 13, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: John Witmer will present "Excel Applications". As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Kevan Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
president@tpcug.org

I hope you enjoyed Super Bowl Sunday. Was that a game or what? Did you even notice there were only 27 cameras instead of 31? Perhaps not. Many companies are still trying to find ways to cut back on expenses and television networks are no different from companies that support PC Users Groups.

We have less time now to spend and more things to do. We want more out of a PC group than ever before. I find myself, after working with computers for almost twenty one years and being a member of this group for more than fifteen, having a harder time keeping up with all of the new complexities and multiple layers of computing. The user interface may be considerably easier to learn and use than in the days of MS-DOS but one look in the book store should give clear evidence that it's no longer possible to pick up one four-hundred page book and learn the entire operating system.

(President.....Continued on page 10)

Notice: New Meeting Site—See Above
March 13: To be announced. Check our web site

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the January Meeting

By Kevan Sheridan for James Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

This was the first meeting at the Art Pepin Hospitality Room. Many last minute arrangements had to be made in order to replace the Jan Platt library room. There was no product demonstration planned for this meeting.

The Windows SIG, led by Mary Sheridan, started things off at 6:35 PM. She announced the names of the 2002 officers. There were several topics during this session but the most interesting discussions revolved around the meeting location and why we had to quickly find a new meeting room. Library scheduling conflicts with our regular meeting night was the most pressing reason and thanks to Pepin Distributors, Inc and John Witmer (of Pepin Distributors) we were able to find a new location so quickly.

It was noted that we had met at the Jan Platt Library in south Tampa for 7 months and, comparing the trip from south Tampa, William indicated his trip was 15 minutes quicker than previous trips to the MOSI location further north. Several other locations were discussed as options but those present agreed that the current room worked well and John Witmer indicated he would inquire about our using the room regularly.

Mary Sheridan is interested in starting a Hand Held Personal Digital Assistant SIG (Palm, Handspring, etc). She will begin by writing articles for the newsletter. Jenny Leitzke started a discussion of interesting and cool Christmas gifts, including web cams and USB hard drives. GROUPS.GOOGLE.COM was announced as a great place to find user to user product help.

After a 15 minute break, Kevan Sheridan (2002 president) took over the meeting to cover several quick topics including:

- Thank you to John Witmer and Pepin Distributors for the use of the meeting room

(Minutes.....Continued on page 12)

Microsoft FrontPage 2002

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

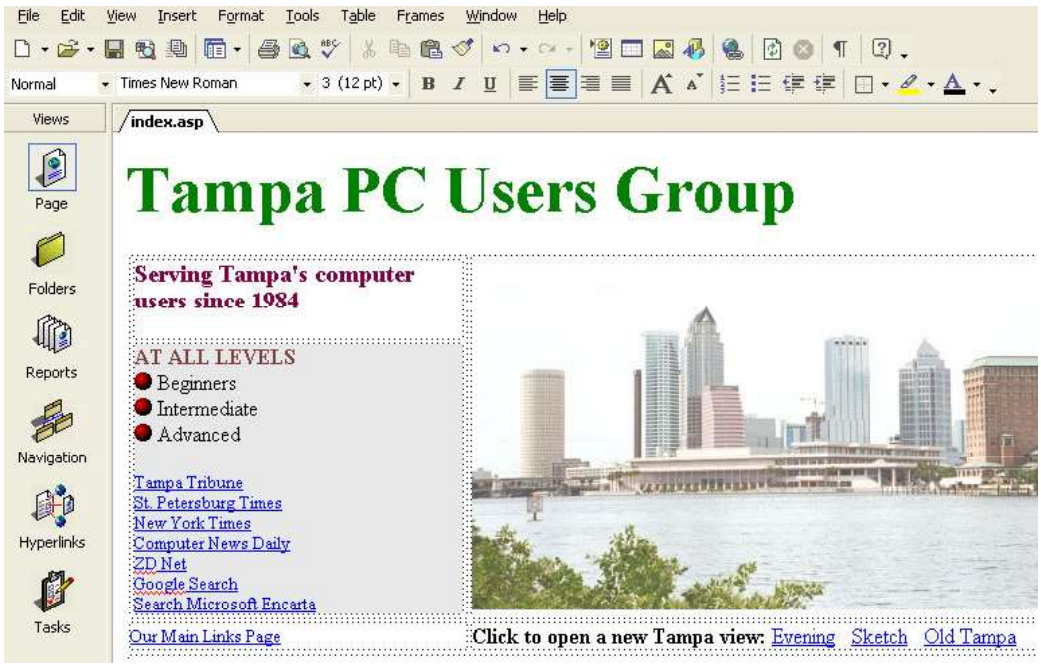
Microsoft has produced FrontPage 97, 98, 2000 and now 2002. I reviewed FP 98 in our June 1998 newsletter. For the review check online at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/june1998/front_page98.htm. I have actually owned all these versions, but didn't use 2000 since it got installed as part of an Office 2000 Premium installation on a computer here that I don't use regularly. And since the new activation of Microsoft products allows you to only install such software on one desktop and one laptop computer, I could then only install it on my laptop. My main computer still had FP 98, which I was fairly content with. I really didn't need most of the new features of 2000 like database connectivity and hover buttons, since I achieved database connectivity using Active Server Pages and VB Script. And I could create hover buttons with one of the many Java scripts that were available on the Internet. Of course, if I had not had such programming options then I would have been more interested.

FrontPage is a program that combines point and click creation of HTML pages in a visual environment where you can simply drop in the things you want along with having the ability to manage your web site. It keeps track of all the details for you—as long as the site you are publishing to is a FrontPage enabled site, something that is fairly standard now at no extra cost. I recall the days of getting everything to my sites using FTP, where I had to keep a list of what files needed to be uploaded and what files needed to be deleted, etc. FrontPage keeps track of such along with checking your site for things like broken links and the typical download time of a page.

What is new in FrontPage 2002? First, I should note that 2000 added hover buttons, database connectivity, the ability to edit more than one page in a web simultaneously and, in fact, to have more than one web open at a time. It also allowed you to work without having server software installed on your computer.

These webs are called disk based webs. Disk based webs (which you will, of course, eventually publish (upload) to a server on the Internet) made life simpler for those who found dealing with the separate server software a bit burdensome. For FP 2002, if you are running Millennium or Windows XP Home you will have to use disk based webs since I know of no server software that will run on these systems and use FrontPage server extensions. It is possible that Windows 98 will support Microsoft Personal Web Server and FrontPage 2002. So if you are serious about FrontPage and want to be able to test out certain components along with Active Server Pages (ASP) on your local machine, you should use FP 2002 on a computer running Windows 2000 or Windows XP Professional, since they both come with Microsoft

(FrontPage……Continued on page 6)



FrontPage 2002's Interface in Page View

Some Incredible News

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

Any of you who have read my past articles in *Bits of Blue* know that I am always looking for something to make computing fun. I guess I just get bored too easily. When I first got involved in the personal computer revolution, just about every new program that came out had a "gee whiz factor" for me. That's why I got involved with our user group as the librarian so many years ago, so I could stay on top of all the new software that was being introduced. If I got the software first, then I could impress all my friends with my expertise. Quite frankly, there wasn't a whole lot of expertise involved, other than learning how to use the programs. I've always loved to see the looks on people's faces when they asked, "How'd you do that?"

Well, as time has passed and the Internet has put the world at our fingertips, software of all kinds has been made readily available to us all. Originally there was freeware and shareware but now you can download a trial version of just about anything that's out by just going to the distributor's website. The Internet also provides access to plenty of good ***FREE*** programs that are out there also. This month I'm going to tell you about a great free program that will also make your computing fun again. I thought about not telling anyone about this so they wouldn't know "how I did that", but… what the heck, spread the fun around!

I'll give credit to my nephew, Joey, for passing this one along to me. A couple of weeks ago he sent me an email with a link to IncrediMail. He said, "Check this out, it's really neat!" So I went to http://www.incredimail.com to check it out! He was absolutely correct. And better yet, it was *FREE!*

IncrediMail is email that has finally evolved! (I didn't say that – they did. If fact, that's their slogan.) Once you start using IncrediMail your email will definitely not be boring any longer. It is loaded with visual and sound effects to fit your every mood and change the mood of anyone you send an email to. IncrediMail actually looks and functions a lot like Outlook Express, which I use, so there was no learning curve associated with getting up and running quickly as with most new programs. And the recipient on the other end does not have to have IncrediMail to see the "goodies".

Here's what IncrediMail's website has to say about its special features:



- **Notifiers**: Vivid animated characters will announce the arrival of new email. Select a Notifier that best suits you from our online collection. Contrary to other email products, IncrediMail Notifiers will let you know that you've got new mail even if your email program is closed (as long as you are connected to the Internet, of course.)

- **Letters**: IncrediMail lets you take full control over what your emails look like. Whether you need to be formal or informal, or are feeling happy or sad, IncrediMail's Web Gallery offers you a constantly updated collection of Letter backgrounds that fit every occasion. Go ahead, breathe some life into your emails!

- **3D Effects**: Emailing just like in the movies. With IncrediMail you can feel the thrill while you send and receive your emails. When you send an email, you will see it fly away into oblivion or sail into the deep ocean blue. When you delete, see your emails shredded before your very eyes or crumpled up like your ordinary office paper. These are just a few of the 3D effects you will see using IncrediMail.

- **Animations:** Enhance your emails with exciting and lively animations embedded into the body of the email message and not as attachments. What better way to express yourself than to incorporate a relevant animation in your message to convey your thought and to set the mood.

(Incredible.....Continued on page 5)

(incredible……Continued from page 4)

- **Emoticons**: Add some life to your emails by inserting emotion icons (emoticons) into the text of your email message. Why use :) when you can use .

- **Sounds:** The IncrediMail Online Gallery offers you an ever-growing collection of diverse sounds and sayings that can be added to the background of your emails at the click of a button.

- **Voice Message Recorder**: Personalize your emails even more by adding your own voice to your emails.

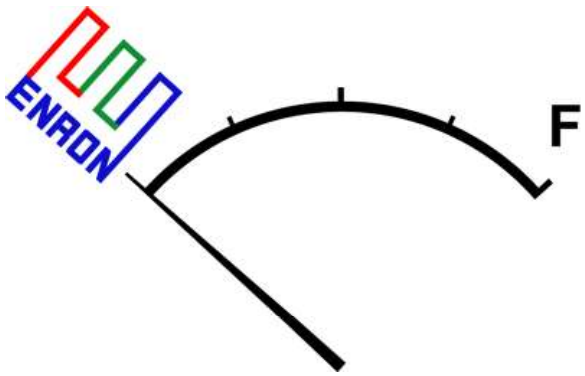
- **Multimedia Attachment Preview**: Automatic preview of attached media files including images, movies, flash and sound.

- **Capturing Animations from the Web**: Grab any gif animation from your Internet browser and add it directly into your IncrediMail Style Box.

- **Ecards**: Sending and receiving ecards has never been so quick and easy. For IncrediMail, ecards are just another type of email. Your friends will appreciate receiving a real self-contained ecard directly to his or her inbox rather than a link to an

(Incredible……Continued on page 10)

Internet Picture of the Month



ENRON after the collapse

from

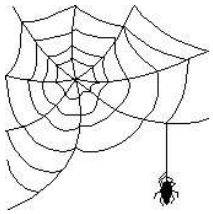
http://www.bomoco.com/Viridian/Enron/Enron.htm

For a collection of new logos for ENRON that more accurately reflect that company's current status go to:

http://www.bomoco.com/Viridian/Enron/Enron.htm

For more official ENRON information you may try:
http://www.enron.com/
http://www.wind.enron.com/
http://www.enroncredit.com/

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Pravda in English	http://english.pravda.ru/
FILExt - The File Extension Source	http://filext.com/
Lichens of North America	http://www.lichen.com/
Documenting the American South	http://docsouth.unc.edu/dasmain.html
IIS & Web Administration	http://www.iisadministrator.com/
September 11, 2001 - War on Terror Portal	http://www.11-sept.org/
ENRON logo contest	http://www.bomoco.com/Viridian/Enron/Enron.htm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

My Handspring Prism

By Mary Sheridan, Vice President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com



I bought a Palm III for my husband in 1998. The following year, I bought him a Palm V and I took his Palm III. I used it on and off. I mostly forgot to take it with me, so it was not very helpful. I had problems with duplicate data when I would synchronize with the computer. It was frustrating to go in and manually remove duplicate records. I cannot say I had any real problems with the Palm III. It was not that easy to read and I simply left it at home too much for it to be much of a benefit.

In November, while attending Comdex, I got a good deal on the Handspring Prism. I really liked the readability of the screen. It is a color unit and very easy on the eyes. I got the unit for $249.00 and they threw in a free travel charger. I could have gotten a copy of Documents to Go for $79.00 with a $79.00 rebate, but I did not know what the program was and did not think I needed it. I bought Documents to Go a month later and could not live without it. I sure missed a deal.

I received a camera attachment for the Handspring for Christmas. It is a very neat device. I can take pictures and attach them to my address book. I no longer have to struggle with being able to remember a face and not being able to put a name to it. That is the theory; anyway, I have not met anyone new since I got the camera. I do not know exactly how much the camera cost, but I found a price range of $149.00 to $199.00 on the Internet.

I bought an Audible device that I ordered from Audible.com. It can play audible pre-recorded books and publications or MP3 files. Because I am a member of Audible, I was able to get the device for $49.00. I have been downloading Stephen King books and I can listen to them in the car. The Audible device came with an adapter that plugs into the cassette player and plays through the car stereo.

The Handspring uses the Palm operating software, so everything is the same as using the Palm III. I was glad that the graffiti (shorthand for the Palm) was the same and I did not have to learn anything (cannot be learning new things at my age…ha ha). I have not had any problem with the duplications when I synchronize. No doubt, the software is an upgraded version.

I am very happy with my Handspring and recommend it to the group. There are many modules available for the unit: a GPS device, extra memory, and a phone, to name a few. I would like to see a Handspring representative come to our group and give a presentation. They were offering discounts to the user groups at the APCUG fall conference. You can obtain further information on the Handspring Prism at http://www.handspring.com ◆

(FrontPage… … ….Continued from page 3)

Internet Information Server (IIS). This was my primary reason for wanting XP Professional as the operating system on my new computer.

So, again, what is new in FrontPage 2002? The interface looks the same as 2000, but now when you have more than one page open for editing, there is a tab for each file that you can easily click on to move back and forth between pages. There is a file upload component which required either a purchase of such a component or very knowledgeable ASP coding ability in the past. You have the new multi-item Office 2002 Clipboard. There are link bars, the ability to insert web content from MSN, MSNBC and Expedia. And there is now a nice Photo Gallery feature. Also there are new items that I have yet to deal with such as: new drawing tools, better Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), integration with SharePoint, and the ability to apply

(FrontPage… ……Continued on page 7)

(FrontPage……Continued from page 6)

XML formatting to HTML.

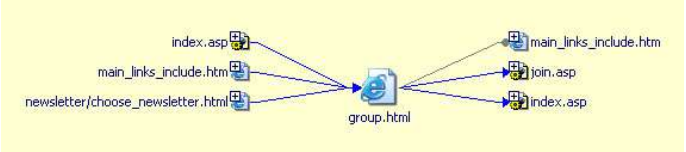
One definite improvement is the protection of ASP code within an HTML page. With FP 98, I would use the FP editor to create the visual look of any ASP page, then switch to Note Pad to do the ASP coding—and too bad if I made the mistake of then opening the page in the FrontPage editor and saving it. My ASP code stood a good chance of being ruined.

I like the program. It has served me well over the years, and the new features and improvements make my life easier. I don't use disk based webs but instead use server based webs. Windows XP Pro comes with Microsoft Internet Information Server 5.1 and FP server extensions 2000 (2002 server extensions are a free download).

The way I deal with web development involves the FP program used to create the web pages and manage the resulting web site both locally with IIS running on my local computer and at the hosting site on the Internet. This is the same setup I have used since I started with FrontPage 97. However, back then you had to use web based FrontPage webs and your local web server was the simple Personal Web Server for Win 95. The web server IIS 5.1 that comes with Win 2002 pro is the same software as used by major web hosting companies with the exception that you are limited to at most 10 connections since the software is meant only for testing sites.

My first question on getting my new computer was how to properly transfer all my FrontPage webs on two older computers to this new computer. From reading the FP Usenet newsgroup I knew that simply copying the files over was not correct. This would destroy some of the FP features that made FP so useful. After consulting the newsgroup, I concluded that the proper way to do the transfers was as follows:

On the new computer, in IIS create a new FrontPage Extensions web (a subfolder of the



A map of all hyperlinks into and from the group page

C:\Inetpub\wwwroot folder) of the appropriate name. Open a web in FrontPage on the old computer and publish it over the LAN to the new empty web that was just created on the new computer. This method preserves all the FrontPage settings. I did this for each of the FrontPage managed webs I had on two older computers.

The next step was now to publish these new versions of the webs to their Internet versions at various web hosting companies so everything would be synchronized. I started with smaller webs—ones of just a few megabytes, and it appeared as if FrontPage was sending up all the files. Now this would take a long time for my larger sites consisting of 50 MB – 100 MB. However, when I published the TPCUG site, a 50 MB site, only a few files were sent. And the files sent were ones that I had made some changes in before publishing. So before publishing the other large sites, I made minor changes to a few of the pages before publishing to the Internet. And in all cases only those few files were sent. Note that all the other files were already at the site and FrontPage checks to see if the ones locally are newer and thus need sending. But why did it send all the files for the small sites and just the changed files for the large sites? I don't know, but if changing at least one file will cause it not to send all the files (Each time I had requested the default of sending only changed files) I think I will do that if I ever need to publish from a new computer again.

This new version has made my life a bit easier—once I familiarized myself with IIS (which, of course, is unnecessary if you only work with disk based webs on your local computer).

To see some of the features of FrontPage and to use one of them to vote in a mock election go to these two pages I have created:

Http://www.tpcug.org/test/test_2002.htm and
Http://www.tpcug.org/test/vote1. ◆

Looking Back to 1992

From the February 1992 Bits of Blue

TAMPA IBM PC User Group
MINUTES OF 1/8/92 MEETING

The President, Harvey Bruneau, opened the meeting at approximately 6 PM. He introduced the officers elected at the December meeting who will serve thru 1992. They are:

President	Harvey Bruneau
Vice President	Steve Speairs
Treasurer	Bill Fuller
Education Director	Ed Buzza
Member At Large	Roger Waters
Co-Secretaries	Jim Clark & Charles Howe

CLUB NEWS:

- Harvey announced that the WordPerfect folks could not make this meeting and they have been rescheduled for March. Meanwhile, our own illustrious Education Director, Ed Buzza, would fill in with a presentation on Professional Write for DOS.
- The President emphasized one of the most important functions of our club - computer education for our members and the need to get going on SIGs. The pressing need here is for knowledgeable volunteers to make themselves available to lead SIGs covering the more significant software on which they are proficient. COME ON, MEMBERS! There is a lot of talent in this club. Share your knowledge with others! VOLUNTEER TO LEAD A SIG! And, give a presentation on the software to the club! (Note: A presentation to the club would be an excellent introduction to your SIG.)
- In pursuit of the goal of achieving 300 members, Harvey informed us that he was placing our flyers at strategic retail outlets that would allow same. And in response to queries last month, flyers were available for members to spread around as well.
- In response to a question about tax software for 1991, the membership was informed that the shareware program AMTAX91 was now on our BBS. One member also advised of a freeware spreadsheet template that was available on other BBSs and should be on ours in the near future. If interested, keep your eye out for 91fm1040. Reportedly, this freebee will work on most major spreadsheets (I know it will work on Lotus and Quatro Pro; apparently others as well).

INDUSTRY NEWS:

- The President reported that one rater of computer suppliers has rated Gateway as #1 overall. Others in our group commented on Gateway - all of which was very favorable. This is not by way of a commercial, rather it is one of the functions of this club - to make all members aware of suppliers who have good products and services at reasonable prices.
- It was reported that the Comp USA store at Himes and Hillsborough was to make a soft opening on 11 January, with a Grand Opening to be sometime later.
- A few problems have been reported with Microsoft Word 2.0 for Windows - mostly with the spell checker, grammar checker and MACRO functions. There was a brief discussion of some of the problems, but I was unable to catch the comments. Be Aware!
- Windows 3.1 reportedly is due out in April. If interested, start looking about that time. As an aside, one member reported a RUMOR, I emphasize RUMOR, that Windows 3.1 had deliberately been designed to not work with DRDOS. DRDOS users might want to investigate before buying. And we all should be concerned IF this rumor is true and reconsider Microsoft as a whole and the implications such an action would have for the industry. Let's hope it is false!
- Harvey reported that the early copies of OS/2 Ver 2.0 are out to selected users. But, all of its features have not been Beta tested, though IBM indicates that Ver 2.0 has been tested in-house. General release to the public is now scheduled for the end of March. We'll see then whether or not that will lead to the software battle of the century.
- Intel is reportedly out of the 386 microchip business since there is too much competition and too little money in it, and is now pushing 486 and higher

(1992……Continued on page 9)

(1992……Continued from page 8)
chips. Many expect a rather large decline in prices to take place over the next year.

- Following a break, Harvey shared a few comments on language translators. He related that he had received French Assistant from Santa Claus and he was pleasantly surprised and reported that it was pretty good for a $49 program. Though it will not make coherent translations for every bit of our personal English, it does a fairly good job on proper English. Check it out (also available in Spanish, German & Italian) if you need a translator.

PROGRAM REVIEW: Professional Write for DOS

In typical fashion, Ed Buzza gave an excellent comprehensive presentation on PFS: Professional Write, now owned and published by Spinnaker Software Corp.

Ed reported that PW is installed simply by copying the program files to the desired directory - no "install" program is involved. The program requires 512K of RAM and an 8088 or higher. It works best with a hard drive, but will work with two floppies - though you may do a bit of swapping and it will be quite a bit slower when disk access is involved. Among the features of PW are:

- Has built in grammar and spell checkers.
- Has a built in address book feature which accepts ASCII delimited files from databases. This allows, of course, merging form or standard letters with a mailing list.
- Setup for the program is very easy and it has excellent printer support, including an extensive list of supported printers and an unlisted printer option, and a control code option for lasers.
- Keyboard MACROS.
- Very good on-line help.
- In contrast to some word processors. PW has toggle choice of insert/overwrite.
- Shows the percentage of memory used of that available for documents. Capacity of the program varies with memory available, but it has relatively good capacity - with only 512K conventional RAM the program will hold about 70 pages; with upper memory, about 85 pages.
- Excellent controls, including blocking (including rectangular/column), line/box drawing, maneuvering on the page and throughout the document, print and save in pieces, are but a few.
- It is mouse supported, and includes a calculator.

This is a pretty good program, but you should note that this is strictly a word processor; today we see many "word processors" which are closer to DTPs than WPs. This is not one of those. It does support multi-column formats, however. But, it does not support graphics - except for charts produced in PFS programs - such as First Choice and PFS Window Works.

One other note about this program - there is little similar between it and Professional Write for Windows. The latter is a much more powerful program and includes many DTP features, including graphics handling. When asked about relative value, Ed indicated that in today's environment the $149 price for PW for DOS was a little high and that for a few more bucks you could get a more powerful program (e.g., WP 5.1).

Having given you this brief summary of the extensive review that Ed gave us, all that is left is to say, "Thanks, Ed, for your typical super presentation. We all appreciate the presentation and all of the effort you put into it."

Copyright Laws: After the presentation a discussion of copyright laws developed. It was noted that some businesses and private individuals are rather loose with regard to the proprietary rights of others - passing around copyrighted software. We might all do well to review/refresh ourselves and reread the license agreement for copyrighted software we hold. The very beginning of one PFS program I hold, for example, says "This Software is licensed, not sold to you by Spinnaker, owner of the product, for use only under the terms of this License..." We all should know and adhere to the copyright laws. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com or* Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com or* William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Incredible……Continued from page 5)

ecard on somebody else's web site. Make everyday a holiday with IncrediMail.

- **Handwritten Signatures**: IncrediMail offers a simple tool for you to add your handwritten signature into your emails. We are committed to making things seamless and hassle-free. (This is actually NOT their best feature!)

So, you ask, how do we get all this, and for free? Well, in the free version there is a link at the bottom of every email leading the reader back to the IncrediMail website and there is also pop-up advertising within the program itself. Everything else seems to function alright. But for $29.95 you can get IncrediMail Premium that has no link at the bottom, no advertising pop-ups, more control over incoming email (like previewing email on the server before downloading it), extra skins to change the way overlay looks, special VIP technical support and loads of other notifiers and letter templates.



Do yourself a big favor and check out the demo at http://www.incredimail.com and you'll see everything I've been talking about and much more. It really is a neat program and I guarantee the recipients of your emails will be saying, "How'd they do that?" ◆

(President……Continued from page 1)

With multimedia, broadband and many other relatively new terms we need to find the right mix of information sources. Now that we have a new meeting location we also need to increase our exposure to the public. We will be working on two of these areas in the coming months.

The Florida Association of PC Users Groups (FACUG) will be holding their spring conference during the first weekend in March. This is where Board members go to learn more about running a PC group. It's a great place to learn what other PC groups are doing to help their groups grow.

ITEC is an annual showcase for technology and once again we will be present. We are currently working on an agreement that will give us a booth near the main floor. This event was good exposure for us last year and we can use your help: We need volunteers to help man the booth during the show (details can be found at http://events.goitec.com/overview/?ec=TAM02) and everyone to help us distribute free tickets. Each ticket will have a code that will tell the promoters of the show the tickets came from us. Please let Kevan or Mary know if you will be able to help. E-mail to president@tpcug.org or call (813) 988-6480.

Please send any ideas, requests or complaints to president@tpcug.org. Let's have some fun learning this year! ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

CAE
Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



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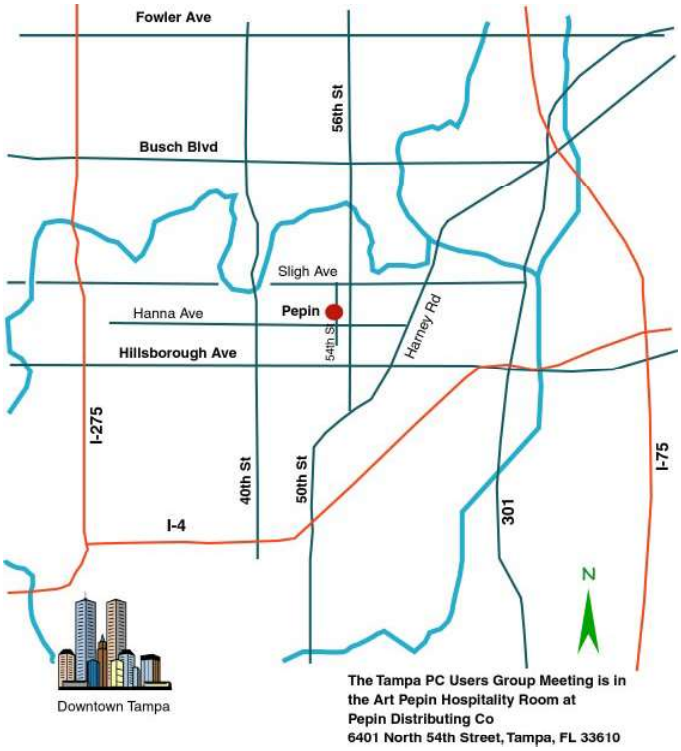
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes… … ….Continued from page 2)

- Benefits of PC group membership
- New e-mail addresses for Board members all use @TPCUG.ORG.
- parking and rest room locations
- free product table (including Microsoft T-Shirts) location
- How to join or renew club membership and importance of bringing potential members to the meetings
- APCUG and FACUG (PC Users Groups Associations, national and state, respectively) involvement. (FACUG has a spring conference the first weekend in March)
- Security issues and virus protection

Overall the meeting went very well. Won't you join us for our next meeting on Wednesday, February 13th?

Please send any ideas, requests or complaints to president@tpcug.org. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



March in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 3 March 2002

Meeting

Paul Willies Presents: Designing and Building a Web Site

Wednesday, March 13, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Paul Willies of Long Bay Communications, http://www.longbaycommunications.com, will tell us how to design and build web sites. As usual, Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Kevan Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
president@tpcug.org

I am recharged! We just returned from a long weekend of user group learning sessions and round tables. The FACUG (Florida Association of Users Groups) events are always interesting and informative. This year the biggest software items covered digital images or movies and how to handle/manipulate/save them. For less than $600 (plus a computer) you can now turn your PC (or MAC) into a very capable video editing system that rivals $50,000 systems of just a few years ago. According to some people with the APCUG (Association of PC Users Groups), Florida has one of the best regional annual meetings in the country. Almost 10% of the PC groups in the country that have signed up with Mindshare are based in Florida. All that says Florida is a great place to use your PC.

When you do use your PC, chances are that you wish you knew a better way to do something. That is where a PC users group, like ours, can help. Not by a few people standing at the front of a room speaking but by the people who attend the meetings and have worked with it before. The networking before, during breaks or after the meetings is a great time to find out very interesting things, things that are hard to find out

(President.....Continued on page 2)

Notice: New Meeting Site—See Above
April 13: To be announced. Check our web site

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Secretary: James Weber (jlweber9@mindspring.com) 671-1612
Member at Large: John Witmer (JWITMER@Pepindist.com) 963-3760

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the February Meeting

By Kevan Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
president@tpcug.org

The Windows SIG (Special Interest Group) began at 6:40 PM led by Mary Sheridan. Several interesting topics were covered during the session. The president began the regular meeting at 7:00 PM. The introduction of officers and handing out of sample newsletters to visitors took place next. The VBA SIG (first Tuesday of the month) was announced for March 5th and the Access SIG for March 19th, the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Sign-up sheets for both were passed out during the meeting. (See SIG section on page 10 for exact times and locations.)

John Witmer, our Member at Large, performed the main demonstration for the evening. The topic was using Excel in the real world and included several varieties of spreadsheets from the simple (employee name tracking and vacation/sick time tracking) to the more complicated (Pivot Tables using data imported from a mainframe computer output report). One gem was example of the use of conditional formatting. The spreadsheet cell displayed a red flag when the expense report line did not balance. John showed how to set up the criteria for using the conditional formatting. The Pivot table spreadsheet was very involved and interesting.

After the Excel demonstration there were several announcements made and a Question and Answer session followed. One question was about network printers and an HP computer. In a Windows XP network, the HP computer was adding network printers without allowing the use of them. To add to the problem there was only one printer on the network and Control Panel – Printers – Delete Printer would not work.

The meeting ended at 9:00 PM and there were several free items on the back tables for attendees to pick up. ◆

(President… … ….Continued from page 1)
surfing the web. This is the area you can help us with by continuing to attend meetings and share your experiences with others who may also wish to join us. I was very pleased to see the number of comments after our first meeting at the new location and even more pleased to see a greater turn out for the February meeting. I credit you for taking the time to attend our meetings and support our

(President… … ….Continued on page 4)

Why Partition Your Hard Drives?

By Wade Herman,
Tampa PC Users Group
wherman1@tampabay.rr.com

A little background:

My daughter's Christmas wish list included the wish that Santa would help her upgrade her old Pentium II 233MHZ Cow computer (never can remember that company's name). Since Santa's computer was almost as old, he felt could justify an upgrade also.

I began doing some research for the best deal on a new case, motherboard and memory. The object was to get the best components at a good price. Just can't understand buying cheap components cheap. Nowhere is the price difference between Chevrolet and Cadillac quality less than in the world of computers. Unfortunately, there are lots of choices, and products are upgraded at blinding speed so you must do your homework or deal with someone you trust. After spending hours online and visiting several local emporiums it occurred to me that I had ignored sources within our own users group. These members apparently do not feel comfortable talking up their business to our members so I will do it for them. Everyone I talked to had very good experiences with them. Problems are always a possibility, but we have very knowledgeable people with a personal interest. However, unless you have some technical expertise this is not the route for you. You cannot expect them to hold your hand through every step. Should you run into some problem beyond the answer of a question, what you will pay for help will be less than at other sources and they are interested. Yes, I had a few minor problems. They were solved quickly, by the Head Honcho, not some tech support person typing your question into a computer!

I settled on an AMD 1900XP processor and Motherboard, 512MB DDR Ram, with 80GB 7200RPM drive. In a spiffy case with 4 full size bays and 2 floppy bays.

I made an image of my old 20GB onto the new 80GB drive, using Norton Ghost, so I avoided having to reinstall my software on the new drive. Pretty Cool!

What is Partitioning?

The little metal box that stores the information is called the Physical Hard Disk Drive. It may be thought of as a big storage box in which you place folders in some order defining programs and inside the folders you place files which contain the information to execute a program or store data. The greater the storage capacity of the drive the more difficult it is to keep your data logically organized and easily accessible. From an organization standpoint it is much easier to efficiently organize data if you have multiple smaller storage boxes or filing cabinets assigned to different categories of information. This is what partitioning allows. You may have just one Physical Drive but now you can divide up (Partition) areas of that drive to look to the computer like you have a number of smaller independent drives. When creating these Logical Drives (Partitions) you can assign them different sizes depending on the amount of data you will be storing. Using Partition Magic you can change the size of a partition without losing data stored in the partition. The primary or boot partition is automatically called C: and is the drive the computer uses to load the operating system (Windows) at startup. Here I install Windows related programs and name the drive "Windows". I make the next partition, Logical Drive (D:) and name it "Programs". Here I store most of the programs I use. The next partition, Logical Drive (E:) I might call "Data". Here I would store data files for letters, spreadsheets, databases. Logical Drive (F:) might be called "Games". Logical Drive (G:) might be called "Music" and so on.

Now why go to this trouble?

This makes it easy and quick to back up your data files that change often. Just tell your back up program to back up that Logical Drive. No need to back up your Windows or Program files if you have not added something new.

(Partitioning……Continued on page 4)

(Partitioning… … ….Continued from page 3)

If files on a drive change often, these are the ones that need to be defragmented, and the smaller the drive the quicker this operation takes place. Files will load faster as the disk will not have to search over the entire Physical Drive for program fragments.

If you do a file search and know that the file resides in the Logical Drive you have set aside for "Data", the search time may be much shorter as the computer will not have to search the entire Physical Drive. Reduce disk space waste. Many people do not realize that the space used on a disk is always more than the actual file size. On drives more than 32GB, storage space is allocated in multiples of 32KB. If the file is only 1KB in size it will use 32KB of drive space, wasting 31KB of disk storage space. If the file is 33KB, it will occupy 64KB. If the Logical Drive is made between 8-16GB, then the 1KB file will occupy only 8KB of disk space, wasting only 7KB of disk space instead of 31KB.

There is now a separate FAT (File Allocation Table) for each Logical Drive so if one becomes corrupted, a fairly common defect, the other Logical Drives will probably still be accessible. Additional bootable drives can be created to allow multiple operating systems on the same machine.

If the above has tweaked your interest in partitioning your hard drive, then read my review of Partition Magic 7.0 in this newsletter. ◆

(President… … ….Continued from page 2)

organization. Thank you for helping us to be a better PC users group.

I welcome your comments and suggestions. Please send them to president@tpcug.org. ◆

Pocket Printer A6 from SiPix

By Mary Sheridan, Vice President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I was asked to work as a volunteer at the SiPix booth at the Photographic Marketing Association Conference in Orlando last weekend. It was very interesting, and I'm supposed to receive a free Pocket Printer for my efforts. The Pocket Printer prints from a Palm, Pocket PC, a laptop, or the desktop computer. It uses a wireless infrared connection for use with infrared devices, a serial cable or a USB connection. It does not use ribbons or cartridges; all you need is the special paper for the printer to print with thermal technology. It weighs 14 ounces and is powered by four AA batteries.

The SiPix Company is a Digital Imaging Appliance Company. Besides the A6 Pocket Printer, they have two portable photograph printers, the PocketColor 200 and the PocketColor 100. They also have digital cameras. For more information go to: http://www.sipix.com. ◆



Lost CD Drives, Wrong End of the Cable and Internet Programming

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Needing something to fill space in the newsletter I thought back on the previous month and came up with the following items. The first two are the results of helping members with computer problems; the others have to do with a combination of web work and programming.

Lost CD ROM Drive A member called with the news that he had done a Windows Update from the Microsoft site, and when he rebooted he had no CD drive. A strange way to lose your CD drive. At first I didn't attach too much importance to the update and had him check in Windows Explorer—no CD drive there. Then a check of Windows' Device Manager in Control Panel said that the CD Drive was there—and everything was OK. Obviously not too accurate.

However, a further check of devices indicated that the Primary and Secondary IDE controllers were not functioning properly. Well, that could certainly cause a problem with the CD drive. At that point, the member said that he had printed out detailed instructions for the update and one of the items updated was the Intel drivers for the IDE controllers. Furthermore, it said that if something went wrong with the update you could uninstall it via the Update Wizard Uninstall. To get to it you go to Start | Programs | Accessories | System Tools | System Information and then click on the menu item Tools | Update Wizard Uninstall.

Uninstalling the Intel update and the rebooting brought the CD

(Lost CD… … ….Continued on page 6)

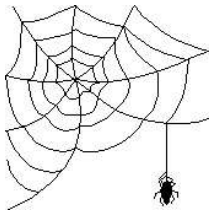
Internet Picture of the Month



One Photo from Here is New York
from
http://hereisnewyork.org/

This is an exhibition and sale of photographs dealing with the World Trade Center running on the ground floor of 116 Prince Street, NYC 10012 . All of the prints displayed will be sold to the public for $25, regardless of their provenance (+ $10 for Internet orders). "The net proceeds will go to the Children's Aid Society WTC Relief Fund, for the benefit of the thousands of children who are among the greatest victims of this catastrophe." The web site has around 3,000 photos. All images are printed on 11 x 17 paper and the images are 9 x 14 or 14 x 9.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Here is New York	http://hereisnewyork.org/
JavaScript Source Free - Java Scripts, Tutorials, Examples	http://javascript.internet.com/
MyFonts.com What Is The Font	http://www.myfonts.com/whatthefont/
Creating and Submitting Search Engine Friendly Websites	http://www.selfpromotion.com/
IRS Forms	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/forms_pubs/forms.html
Lichens of North America	http://www.lichen.com/
DNS Wizard - verify type of server, if FrontPage installed	http://www.dnswiz.com/fptype.htm
Biopharmaceutical, Biotech Industry Search Engine	http://www.biotechfind.com/
Florida State Tax e-Services	http://www.myflorida.com/dor/forms/efile.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Lost CD……Continued from page 5)
drive back. If there hasn't been an update to uninstall and you have problems with the IDE controllers, I think the way out is to remove them in Windows Device Manager and reboot, letting Windows reinstall the default drivers.

Wrong end of the cable Another member called to talk about hard drive problems. He now had two drives, but could only see one of them. He had the one with the operating system set to Master and the other set to Slave but could only see the Master.

I then questioned him about what sort of drive cable he was using, and he said it was one of the new style ones that supports Cable Select. He had tried to set the drives to use Cable Select, but the result was the same. Although not knowing much about Cable Select, I suggested that perhaps both ends of the cable were not equal with such a cable—one was possibly meant for the motherboard and the other for the drives.

Well, in fact, he had positioned it in the way that seemed easiest to connect the two drives without thinking that one particular end may be meant for the mother board. After switching the direction of the cable—and having a hard time connecting the drives (since it was easier to do it the other way)—on boot up both drives were recognized. Another new piece of information to store away.

Accepting credit cards Last year I got involved with building a web site for someone who wanted to accept credit cards. If you recall, we had a presenter last year who specialized in optimizing your site to get more attention from the search engines but had formerly been in the web site creating business. And one of her gems of wisdom was that she wouldn't go anywhere near creating such a site. It was too difficult and it was best to purchase a shopping cart program with all of this built in.

Well, I can't resist a programming challenge—and you do need certain programming skills if you want to do this. First, you need to know that to accept credit cards you need both an Internet Merchant Bank Account (different from a regular Merchant Account) and an Internet Payment Gateway Account. My client already had a Merchant Account, which would allow them to set up an Internet Merchant Account (for a fee) and an Internet Payment Gateway Account (for another fee).

The Internet Payment Gateway is the web site that I would have to write code to interface with. Each such gateway has its own specifications and methods which you can download from their web site. I looked at AuthorizeNet and SurePay. AuthorizeNet was the easiest, allowing you to pass them certain variables via ASP code. SurePay allowed you to use JAVA, CGI, or ASP to pass their collection of required variables as an XML string. I chose ASP and got my introduction to XML.

To make a long story short, I figured out both the AuthorizeNet method and the SurePay method and was able to test each using their respective site's test modes in submitting test orders. And the lady was correct that it is not for the faint of heart. But it is something that can be done with a knowledge of ASP. Unfortunately, my client decided to continue with an 800 number for orders instead when they realized that before anything was sold, it would cost at least $600 in base fees without even selling anything. Then, of course, there is the additional transaction fee for each transaction paid to both the Internet Merchant Bank and the Internet Payment Gateway—not to mention the extra programming fee.

That work, however, was not in vain. Not only did I learn how to do something that I didn't know before, I now have a potential application of that knowledge. Someone wants to sell software for download over the Internet and, of course, take credit cards for payment.

Downloading Files But this introduces another wrinkle that you probably haven't considered. How do you allow only those who have paid to download a file? The typical method to download a file on the Internet is to provide a link like http://www.tpcug.org/filetodownload.exe. But we can't use this method since the first person who paid and thus was directed to the link could then provide that link to additional individuals. You can introduce session variables, cookies, hidden input fields, and databases, but, omitting the details, believe me, every scheme that I came up with involving just these items could be cracked by a knowledgeable person.

I finally settled on using a custom DLL as the center of my method. Luckily I had just been working with writing DLL's both in Visual Basic and Delphi. In fact, I found on the Internet a DLL created in VB that would do just what I wanted—stream a file (from an undisclosed location on a server) to a browser for download to one's computer. So I didn't even have to write one myself. But this DLL had one drawback (as do all DLLs written in VB). It needed to be registered on the server—something that most web hosting companies will not do for you because there is too much chance of such a DLL bringing down the server.

What I needed is what they call an ISAPI DLL. VB can't create these, but Delphi can (in addition to the other type of DLL). With a little work (I am not real proficient in Delphi), I created an ISAPI DLL that would stream the file from the undisclosed location. With the ISAPPI DLL, I can just drop it into any folder with execute permissions, like the cgi-bin folder, at the web site. And to download the file, now all I have to do is put something like response.redirect("http://www.tpcug.org/cgi-bin/MyDLL?File=filename&customerid=S25301").

But, you say, what have you gained? All I need to do is give the above link to anyone who would like to download the file—the actual location of the file has been hidden, but the link will still download the file. If that were all there is to it, you would be correct. But there is more. Once you pay, either in a cookie, database or text file, it can be recorded whether or not you are allowed to download a file, and, as soon as you download the file, that permission can be withdrawn—and the DLL checks all of this. So even with the above link to the DLL, only the person authorized to do the download will be allowed to do it once.

And we are out of space once again. ◆

My PartitionMagic 7.0 Experience

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
wherman1@tampabay.rr.com

The program was supplied to our Tampa PC Users Group by the generosity of PowerQuest.

I have used PartitionMagic almost since its inception. I have always been very pleased with the results. Each new version has added worthwhile features, and this version is no exception. Now the program can be run directly from Windows and supports 80 GB drives.

On opening the box came the first big surprise, a User Guide of 151 pages, which for the most part is quite definitive. They even included easy to find telephone support numbers and 30 days of complementary telephone support, but, of course, you must pay the toll charges.

My elation was tempered when I received an error message on attempting to install the program, indicating the problem was probably with Norton AntiVirus. Checked to be sure that it was disabled and that I had clicked exit on the GoBack program. I could find no help in the User Guide or at the PowerQuest web site. I screwed my courage to the sticking post and decided to call their technical support. I do not know other's help desk experiences, but my experiences over the past year have been horrible to the point that I have greatly reduced my software purchases.

I meditated and said a few prayers and dialed. After about 8-10 ringie dingies, you will never guess what happened! A cheery real honest to God human voice answered —difficult to imagine I know. I could hardly contain my irrational exuberance! Gave her the required information and was switched to the tech support "Q"; now the real test. An understandable computer voice informed me there was one person ahead of me in the system. How encouraging. The elevator music was clear and soothing, and they assured me I was very important several times and they had extended wait time due to heavy call volume (one in Q). The wait time was about 13 minutes. When the tech answered, we went through the numbers disabling Norton AntiVirus and Internet Security, and I exited GoBack from the Systray. When that did not work, he recommended that I run PartitionMagic from the Rescue Disks. He assured me that would get around the problem. As he appeared to be anxious to get on to the next person in the "Q", I let him off the hook and re-booted the computer with the rescue floppies.

It booted OK but no mouse, D@&n, and the tech was gone. Then the light: my mouse is USB. Rebooted and this time at the GoBack splash screen hit the space bar and from here closed down GoBack amid various warnings. Now no problem running Partition Magic, so I should be home free. I wished to create a new partition between the last partition and the unused 40GB. When I attempted this, the dialog box asked which of the existing partitions I wished to take space from? None was not an option. User guide does not appear to cover the situation, so I decided to try online tech support. The response was to tell me to watch the cutsie online video, which is just a video depiction of the printed instructions. I decided to not select any of the options and see what would happen. Low and behold it worked. The new Logical Drive's drive space was taken from the unallocated 40 GB.

Once you get the program working it certainly lives up to its claims and is quite intuitive. A key feature of PartitionMagic is that if you run out of space on one of the Logical Drives you can expand its size by taking unused space from other drives without losing any data. If you need to reassign drive letters, a program is included that will reassign drive references so programs which need to reference other drives will recognize the new drive letter assignments properly.

If you have a large Hard Drive, I feel that partitioning is almost a must, and PartitionMagic is the best and easiest means of accomplishing this otherwise tedious and intimidating task. ◆

Looking Back to 1992

From the March 1992 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report
TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 2/12/92 MEETING

Once upon a time there was a…..

No, that's not right. Let's see. Oh, yes. The meeting began approximately on time, but something seemed different, and it look a while for me to figure out what. But, then my 486/50 mind figured it out after just a few NS's - Harvey, our President, was not there. Instead, our distinguished Director of Education, Ed Buzza, was filling in for our eminent Vice President, Steve Spears, who was to fill in for Harvey who was out in Arizona on what Ed reported as a "well deserved vacation".

In any case, Ed opened the meeting and carried the first few minutes. Steve then took over and conducted the remainder of the meeting. Here is a summary of what transpired (please remember that I do not hear well - I may not have heard it all)

CLUB NEWS:

- Ed reminded everyone that the January newsletter has some good info in it on how to use the equation editor to make large print.
- Ed noted that WordPerfect is scheduled in to make a presentation on WP 5.1 for Windows at our meeting in March. He also pointed out that the current issue of PC Magazine has a review on the most popular mid- to upper-end word processors. In that review PC Mag. rated Word For Windows and AS Pro above WP 5.1. Those contemplating an upper-end WP might want to read that article first.

INDUSTRY NEWS:

- Steve reported from one source that Intel wants to create a new BUS standard which is completely open. Intel feels that the current standards are not adequate for the 4 MHz chip.
- Apparently there are several chip producers that are developing a "doubling chip" to double the internal speed of the 486 chip. Since this would only directly affect internal speed, it is anticipated that the doubling chip would result in about a 50% increase in throughput speed.
- In the chip area, Northgate has combined their chip development with development of a mechanism for the boards which would permit very easy installation and removal of the chips. From a user standpoint, this sounds very good - but I suspect that if it works out it might have a substantial impact on the cost of the boards on which that technology is included.
- Steve cited several examples to illustrate the declining prices in the computer field, noting that it is a user's market and will likely continue to be for the foreseeable future.
- Steve noted that the Gateway 486/133 had been selected as the Best Hardware of the year and DOS 5.0 as the Best Software of the Year - for 1991, of course.

PROGRAM REVIEW:

CorelDRAW

Steve introduced Leslie C. Dort of Corel Systems Corp. who would give us a demo of CorelDRAW. Leslie began by noting that she had provided a number of different informational materials for those interested, including quite a few demo disks. Leslie emphasized that while there are a few special versions of CorelDRAW (OS/2 PM, UNIX OSF?Motif, and UNIX OPEN LOOK), the program most of us are likely to be interested in and the one she would demonstrate requires Microsoft Windows. She then proceeded to outline the current and near-term future of CorelDRAW. The last major release was version 2.0. A maintenance release (2.01) was also out and all owners of 2.0 should have received the 2.01 release free of charge. Version 3.0 was in the works and should be released before the end of 1992. Corel would be marketing a "Blockbuster Bundle" which would include:

CorelDRAW and CD ROM
- An internal CD ROM drive
- An interface kit (with an 8 bit SCSI)

Leslie made a point of informing us that the SCSI in the Corel package would be the first true interface, and it would be capable of supporting 7 external devices. When the bundle would be available was not clear.

The bundle would include 10,000 pieces of clip art, 200 fonts, Art Show 91, and would be usable in 5 languages. The bundle list price will be $1295 for new CorelDRAW

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(1992……Continued from page 8)

purchasers and $595 for upgrades. An external CD ROM drive could be had — and that is recommended to save a slot - for an additional $100. A 16 bit SCSI can also be had for an additional $100. The SCSI will also be available as a separate item for $195 for the 8 bit version and $300 for the 16 bit variety. But Leslie pointed out that CorelDRAW is not really in the business of making or marketing hardware — they are and intend to continue as a software company.

In getting to the demo, Leslie noted that CorelDRAW [obscured text] rated in its niche and that it is excellent for presentation graphics, supporting word processors with graphics and special effects, and for DTP. She reported amazement at the variety of uses that have been found for the program, including engraving.

Leslie is very knowledgeable on CorelDRAW and proceeded to give a very comprehensive and very quick demo of a very powerful program (the 2.01 maintenance version). I could not even hope to put into text what I saw her demonstrate of the program. In short, I can't imagine anything that one might want to do with text or graphics that CorelDRAW can't do - and she made it look very easy. It gives super control of text (with a supply of 150 fonts in the normal package as a foundation, or you can import with ASCII or from most major word processors) and almost unlimited control of graphics - and the capability to make text graphics which then gives phenomenal control of text. Mirror, skew, size, curve, swirl, extrude, bend, fan, rotate at any angle, stretch, etc., etc., etc, is a short list of the many special effects things you can do and any combination thereof.

It supports (imports and/or exports) EPS, Windows Metafiles, BMP, CGM, GEM, DXF, WPG, TIFF, PCX, PIF, Video Show, SCODL, HPGL, and the AI format for Adobe Illustrator file formats. Included with the standard package are 3300 symbols and 700 pieces of high-quality art. Of course, with CorelDRAW you can make your own symbols and graphics. It includes three standalone utilities:

- CorelTRACE, which convert bitmaps to vector.
- Mosiac, which is a visual file manager as well as a powerful batch printing, importing and exporting utility.
- WFNBOSS, which is a font import/export utility that convert fonts from major vendors to CorelDRAW .WFN format.

If you get the impression that I was impressed with the program, you're right — it is the best drawing/graphics/special effects program I have seen, bar none.

After the presentation, Leslie passed out quite a few prizes as part of a question and answer period. Included were several mouse pads and a SCSI manual. All of the winners of these prizes did not provide their names to me, so I know only a few, who are:

Ruth Radlein SCSI Manual
Brad Krantz Mouse Pad
Floyd Thrower Mouse Pad
Bert Karpinski Mouse Pad

CorelDRAW requires a 286 or better machine, hard drive with at least 8-10 meg for the program, an EGA or better display, any printer supported by Windows, and Microsoft Windows. I suspect, however, that the program might be a little slow on the 286.

To Lesley (and Corel Systems Corp) we give you a very BIG " Thank You" for a superb demonstration of a super program — and for all of the goodies you provided. We are indebted.

AM-TAX91

Following Leslie's demo of CorelDRAW, our own Don Patzsch gave a review of the Shareware program AM-TAX91. This program is available on our own and the Sunshine BBS as AM-TAX9IA.zip.

It is quite a nice little program, is relatively easy to use and is fairly well documented. It will work on just about any IBM compatible computer that has 320K of usable RAM, any monitor, and just about any IBM or Epson (or compatible) printer. It will work with floppies, but a hard drive is best.

The version downloaded from the board supports the 1040 and Schedules A, B, C, D, Dl, El, E2, F, R and SE, as well as W-2s. The program completely prints all of the forms in a form acceptable to the IRS, except for the 1040 form - the data for which has to be copied to the IRS form. Registration costs $20 for which you get printed documentation and additional capability, including printing of the 1040 in a form acceptable to the IRS.

There are also more capable versions available to deal

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com or* Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com or* William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Treasurer's Report for 2001

As required by the Tampa PC Users Group bylaws
Prepared by Jenny Lind Olin

Report of the Treasurer of the Tampa PC Users Group
For the Period Ending Dec 31, 2001
January 3, 2002

Balance on Hand January 1, 2001		$3,084.94
Projection Fund		$1,183.44
Amazon.com	$31.89	
TPCUG Tee Shirts	$6.00	
Membership Income	$1,590.00	
Door Prizes	$434.00	
Total Income		$2,061.89
Total		$6,330.27
Disbursements		
Administrative Expenses:		
Corporation Fee	$61.25	
Membership Dues	$75.00	
Box Rental & Bulk Mailing	$38.00	
Insurance	$150.00	
Misc.	$83.39	
Newsletter	$724.21	
Website	$182.40	
Total Disbursements		$1,314.25
Balance on Hand Dec 31, 2001		$5,016.02
Total		$6,330.27

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

CAE
Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(1992……Continued from page 9)
with more complicated returns - each with a modestly higher registration fee. However, for those whose tax return needs do not extend much beyond the forms supported by the basic program, this seems to be an excellent and relatively inexpensive way to go. (Of course, the freebee 92FM1040.ZIP, for use with Lotus 123 or Quatro Pro, is also available.)

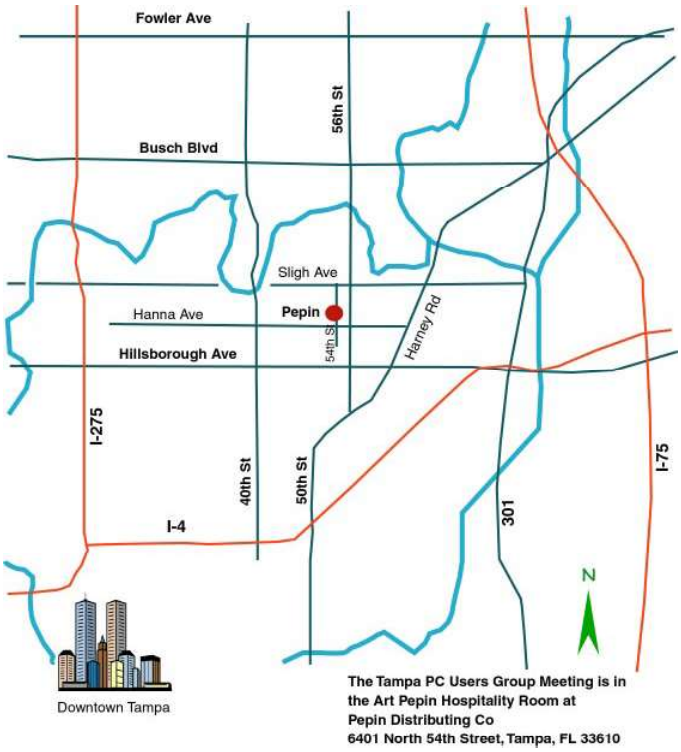
Thanks, Don, for an excellent presentation and introducing us to this program.

AND THE WINNER IS:

After the presentations, Steve began the drawings, using our lovely guest presenter, Leslie, to good advantage. She drew the following lucky names:

Kevan Sheridan CorelDRAW
William Fuller IFX Business Expense Report program
Al Anderson 50/50 ($62)

CONGRATULATIONS! We are happy for you - and a bit jealous, as well.... ◆



http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue





Taxes

April in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 4 April 2002

Meeting

Alpha Five

Wednesday, April 10, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Tom Cone will demonstrate how to use the Alpha Five database program. In his words: "I use it because many powerful features have been put in easy reach for the non-programmer, while the underlying scripting language is powerful enough to permit custom applications to be rapidly developed for others. This combination means that the package is immediately useful to end-users and developers alike.

President's Message

By Kevan Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
president@tpcug.org

Well, it's that time of year again. The time we begin to prepare for Tampa Bay's #1 Technology Event. We will have tickets available at this month's meeting. If you register for this event online (highly suggested well before the event) please use the Registration Code of TX1769. This is really a great event to attend and it's just as great to work in our booth. The show runs from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM at the Tampa Convention Center and if enough people volunteer to help out we could each work two hours in the booth. There is not much to it, all we want to do is get our name out there and have people join our group. Please send e-mail to president@tpcug.org if you are interested. Perhaps you could also help us distribute tickets? All there is to it is to explain the use of the registration code printed on the back of the ticket.

On a lighter note, let's talk briefly about some fun learning software. The programs I am talking about are Solitaire, FreeCell and Hearts. Yes, if you are a beginner and have a newer version of Windows, you already have these valuable card games on your computer. IF you haven't already, find them under GAMES or ACCESSORIES | GAMES. What do

(President.....Continued on page 12)

May 8: To be announced. Check our web site

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Vice President : Mary Sheridan(mcpease@mindspring.com) 988-6480
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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



Paul Willies

Mary Sheridan fielded computer questions and answers for the first 30 minutes of the meeting. Bob LaFave also answered several questions by demonstrating how to solve the problems on his computer connected to the projector.

The main presentation was given by Paul Willies of Long Bay Communications, http://www.longbaycommunications.com/.

Paul's business is designing, building and maintaining web sites. But that is not exactly what he spoke about. Rather he described a new product he and a programmer have been developing that allows far-flung organizations with numerous member groups to maintain their membership records, their meeting schedules, etc. on the web where they can be immediately accessed, modified and updated.

This is done in a secure environment, so that payment of dues or membership information is safe. Every action requires a certain level of access. Any member of a local group would have access to update their personal information, but only designated local officers would be allowed to change other information concerning the local group. Information of a national (or international) scope could only be changed by individuals with the appropriate higher level of access.

Paul said that the project was done totally outside of the Microsoft software orbit. The site is hosted on servers running either Linux or Unix software, the web programming language is PHP, and the database that is behind everything is MYSQL.

Additionally, he showed how, by using templates, each local organization could bring their current membership database into the new setup as a onetime uploading of their data.

It was an interesting presentation, demonstrating that there are very practical uses of the web. I believe this product is aimed primarily at the nonprofit sector of organizations. ◆

Homework and Computer Frustrations

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
mfriendtampa@worldnet.att.net

Usually I look very carefully into purchases I make, but I really blew it this time. I wanted a laptop computer. I needed the portability, and this was the answer. I selected a Compaq Presario with XP Home Edition installed. I really didn't give it much thought. After all it is Microsoft software, and if it has a Microsoft word processor and spreadsheet it can't be too different from what I am already using on my desktop computer, can it? It has seemed to me that every time Microsoft has come out with a new product it has been an advancement over its previous product, so why should this one be any different? And surely it is going to be compatible with all earlier Microsoft products, isn't it? Of course it is, I reasoned illogically!!!

So I get my dandy little laptop home and turn it on. A "Welcome" screen appeared telling me the need for registration of the hardware and software and suggesting that I handle the registration right now through the internet. I really didn't care to register just then and was disappointed to find that the computer and software manufacturer had conspired to push me along in this direction. It was rather like having a high pressure salesman sitting at your elbow. Heck, I had just turned the darned thing on and wasn't ready to do start registering anything just yet. But the welcoming screen just wouldn't turn me loose.

Compaq and/or Microsoft's motivations were clear, however, since under the guise of welcoming me as a client they were steering me toward registering through the FREE AOL program which came with my computer. All I really wanted to do right then was explore my new computer and the XP software but I couldn't get rid of this pushy "Welcoming" gibberish. Since I already had an internet provider, I opted to skip the installation of AOL's service as well as the immediate registration of my computer and the XP software since those tasks required an internet setup which I hadn't handled yet.

The next question the charming "Welcome" screen asked me was what I wanted to name my computer, which impressed me as an awfully ridiculous thing to do. Why in heaven's name would I want to name my computer? I certainly didn't want to name it after the kid who programmed this pesky "Welcoming" screen. Had I done that it wouldn't have been a very flattering name. I thought once about naming it "Bill Gate's Alter Ego," but thought better of it. I didn't want to see that in front of me on a regular basis. Perhaps the naming had something to do with the possibility of my using my computer as a part of a local area network, but no reason, not even that one, was given for naming the computer.

"I don't want to adopt you," I finally said out loud to the computer, "I just want this crazy screen to go away so I can get on with using this machine." I then realized that naming the computer was "optional" so I skipped that step. I have always been rather slow at reading all the directions and somehow in my haste to get on with it I missed that little word "optional". The software then permitted me to gradually work through all the mandatory "welcomes" and I finally got to the desktop. I am thankful that the kid at Microsoft who did the programming of this "welcoming" sequence didn't also program in a temper tantrum to yell and scream at me when I opted to skip those steps the kid and his bosses all obviously felt were so important. At this point, however, I wouldn't have been surprised at anything.

My Internet provider is AT & T. Apparently Microsoft doesn't like them. Of course they don't own them either. The desktop of Microsoft XP contained icons for contacting CompuServe, AOL, and MSN but no Icon to use to set up my account with AT&T. Fortunately, years ago on a much older computer I printed out my passwords and usernames for that account. I also was able to copy the settings I was using on another computer to the appropriate places on the laptop and this made the job manageable. I had stubbornly decided that I was not going to be intimidated by my computer manufacturer or the software provider as to whom I was to use as my internet provider. No matter how much personal effort it took I intended to continue with my personal choice of internet provider. After all I paid for this machine; it now belongs to me and I'll use it as I wish, thank you.

Then I went into the Microsoft Works software that came with the computer and pulled up the spreadsheet product. I had some Excel files on my other machine. "Works" was able to read one of them but couldn't understand two formulas in the other spreadsheet. By redoing these formulas I could get "Works" to accept the second Excel spreadsheet. I then began actually comparing the two spreadsheets and found that the "Works" spreadsheet has far fewer features than does Microsoft Excel.

Had I done my homework I would have already known this, but such is life. One needs only to turn on two computers and bring up Excel on one and "Works" Spreadsheet

(Frustrations…… ……Continued on page 5)

Express Thumbnail Creator

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

First, let me begin by apologizing to ExpressSoft (and William LaMartin – our newsletter editor) for taking five months to get around to reviewing this software. Believe me, it's no reflection on the software, just my busy schedule.

Now… on with the review. Just a few days after I read about the latest version of Express Thumbnail Creator (ETC) in one of my computer magazines, William posted the software for review and I was excited to give it a test drive. After reading the article I was definitely interested. I, like many other people these days, have my own website, which has turned out to be a collection of photographs to share with my family and friends.

When I first started posting the pictures to my website, I would painstakingly take the time to code the pages to show the photos somewhat how I wanted them to appear. I could never seem to get it just right nor the same every time. As time passed, different programs were developed to assist in preparing image collections to be published to the web. I tried a bunch, but none were as simple and fast as ETC.

Without reading a thing, I installed ETC, started the program, chose to **Create a new project** and clicked Next. I then clicked the "+" to add images to the collection. (If you're not sure what the images are, there is a preview window when you click on the file to remind you.) I then chose the folder I wanted to save the project to (better to create a new one for each project) and then selected the default settings for the next 8 clicks. Then I chose to **Generate all** (as in thumbnails, images and the web pages), and my first collection was ready to be published to the web. Really! Less than five minutes and it was done, and I was hooked! And, I got this program for free because I agreed to review it. What a deal! (I'm throwing this comment in because good software is available for our members to review most all of the time.)

Once I finished my first project, I was ready to go back and see what I could customize so my web postings wouldn't all look the same. (Back to the 8 clicks I breezed through.)

1. <Select a **Style** for your gallery> There are six styles to choose from for a background-primarily color schemes.
2. <Modify the look of your **Thumbnails**> Choose the size of thumbnail, crop the image, add a colored border, rename the image file, add a drop shadow and image quality settings.
3. <Full-size **Images**> Resize the original image that will be displayed when the thumbnail is clicked, add a colored border, convert filenames to lower case, auto rename and image quality settings.
4. <**Index Tables>** Customize table size (rows & columns), layout (cell padding & cell spacing), add borders and include a background of your choice.
5. <**Index Pages**> Title your primary page for the gallery, choose the location and graphic for your navigation bar on each index page, and select a background graphic and color.
6. <**Image Pages>** Customize your links, filenames, navigation bars, background pictures and color on each full-size image page.
7. <**Titles**> Customize titles of index and image pages
8. <**Generate**> Generate all the pages automatically and then preview them.
9. <**Upload**> Sometime in the near future ExpressSoft plans to add an upload feature – but it's not ready for primetime as of this writing. I use FrontPage and had no problem publishing
10. <**Finish>** Save the project and you're done, honest! That's all there is to it.

There are other tweaks I did not mention, but those were the primary adjustments that can be made. This software is excellent (and easy) for creating photo galleries, and not only for publishing to the web. You can easily copy these files to a CDR/RW and share your gallery with your friends and family. Just plop in the newly created CD and type the name of the main page and it's as if you were viewing the gallery on the Internet. The software sells for $39.95 and you can order it online at http://www.express-soft.com. You should add this package to your software collection.◆



(Frustrations… … ….Continued from page 3)

on the other and go across the column heading selections at the top of each spreadsheet to see much of what has been left out of "Works." And for those reasons "Works" is compatible with Excel only on the simpler more basic spreadsheets.

One deficiency in the "Works" spreadsheet which was real important to me was the inability of the "Works" spreadsheet program to protect that part of the spreadsheet where permanent formulas exist, thus preventing their inadvertent change or removal. This is a feature of Excel but is not supported on the "Works" spreadsheet. The only way to protect a file under "Works" is to make that entire worksheet "read-only." Not a practical idea unless you only want to read the worksheet and not ever work with it.

When I was growing up and someone said this or that product had "the works," it meant it really had everything. I have learned that it doesn't meant that as far as Microsoft "Works" is concerned because that program obviously has less than other Microsoft programs I am familiar with. Thus, its name seems somewhat of a misnomer.

But you probably already knew that anyway, didn't you? You certainly did if, unlike me, you had done your homework. To those of you who haven't done your homework, read on.

After I saw what had been done to the spreadsheet pro-

(Frustrations… … ….Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month

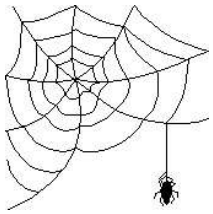


Downtown Tampa
from
http://www.digitalglobe.com/

This is a crop of a much larger photo of downtown Tampa at the DigitalGlobe site, a relative new high resolution satellite image site. Here is how they describe the photo:

"This natural color pan-sharpened image was created by using QuickBird 2.44-meter multispectral image data (red, green, and blue bands) to colorize the QuickBird panchromatic image data. This image chip shows an overview of downtown Tampa, Florida."

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
My Tool Store — over 30,000 tools	http://www.mytoolstore.com/
The Village Voice	http://www.villagevoice.com/
PROVANTAGE.COM - Hardware & Software	http://www.provantage.com/
AGRICOLA - National Agricultural Library	http://www.nal.usda.gov/ag98/
Net Stumbler Dot Com - wireless Internet access points	http://www.netstumbler.com/
The Museum of Hoaxes	http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/
Pakistan News Service	http://paknews.com/
Life Magazine Covers and more	http://www.life.com/Life/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Handspring Prism

By Mary Sheridan, Vice President,
Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com



This is my second article in the "Handheld" series. Instead of starting a "Palm" SIG, a series of articles will be written about the handheld devices. I encourage input as to what things you would like to see more information about. Either the Palm Platform or Windows CE, it does not matter. I will be happy to research the issue and write an article about it.

I got the Prism while I was in Las Vegas attending the Fall APCUG conference. I bought it at the Handspring booth at Comdex. There were two primary reason I chose this unit over the others; 1. The screen is wonderfully easy to see and read and 2. The price was in my range (because of a APCUG coupon I paid $249.00). I began shopping for a new Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) last summer. I had been using a Palm III for a little over a year. The address book had helped me out a couple of times, but that was all I used it for. Once I was able to see the newer units with much easier to read screens, I realized there had been a problem using my unit because it was hard to see. Even with the backlight on, it was still difficult to make out the characters. I had initially planned on trying to get a 'deal' on the newest Palm unit, but once I compared the various units, I walked away with the Handspring.

There were better units and I was really tempted to buy the HP Jornada. BUT, the cheapest price I could find on the Jornada was $599.00. I just could not justify this much money, not knowing for sure if I would really use it more often than I had my Palm III.

The units are less than $450.00 today, but still a lot of money IMHO.



HP Jornada

Anyway, back to the Handspring Prism. There are over fifty modules available for the Prism. These modules are digital cameras, mobile phones, wireless internet devices, MP3 player…the list goes on. The modules are plug-and-play. Just plug them in and they work, no drivers to install or wires to plug in. The modules are very easy to change. They are small and very portable. The Prism comes with the usual software that comes on a Palm Pilot; Addresses, Date Book Plus, Calculators, etc. Because the Prism uses the Palm Operating System, the unit is fully compatible with any other Palm device. I can transfer data to and from my computer by placing the unit in its cradle (easily connected to the computer by USB connection) and pushing a button. It's even easier to transfer data to another Palm based unit by simply 'beaming' the data via infrared port. The unit comes with software that is compatible with either a PC or a Macintosh.

Many of the previous features are standard in other handhelds, but since I own the Handspring Prism, it's easier for me to start with this unit and then compare the other units to this one. I use my Prism every single day. I have it with me all the time and I find new uses for it at least once a week.

I'm investigating a pedometer unit that clips onto your waistband like other pedometers do. The module has some interesting software that does some extensive 'fitness' calculations. It sells for $39.00 and unless I am able to talk myself out of buying it, I will write an article in the future about the unit.

Please send any suggestions for the handheld column to mcpease@mindspring.com.



◆

Firehand Software

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
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Firehand Technologies makes two basic products to assist you in organizing, editing, and displaying your graphics and multimedia files. The company only markets it products on the web at http://www.firehand.com/products/. The first thing I appreciate about their products is that you can download a fully functional trial copy. I especially appreciate this feature because over the past year I have purchased two pieces of name brand software that were so buggy on my machine that I have had to remove them. Another program did not meet my requirements. Leaving me stuck with over a hundred fifty dollars in useless software. For me, try before you buy is hard to beat.

The first product "Firehand Ember" is a graphic file viewer and editor. The edit function is quite limited and does not include any Red Eye Removal function, which is most needed for anyone who takes digital flash photographs. The program's main claim to fame for me is that it is a comparatively small, rapidly loading program that produces excellent quality displays of almost all file formats. What I like most is that you can set it to automatically adjust the image size to fit on your screen. Quite often I receive pictures taken in a resolution that exceeds the resolution of my screen, and, thus, to see the entire image without scrolling you must resize the image in a program such as PhotoShop, which is very time consuming. With this program the resolution of the file is not changed but it will automatically fit your screen. Try it, I think you will like it.

The other program is "Firehand Lightning." It allows you to create versatile slide show presentations of collections of photographs. This program creates a single highly compressed file containing all of the images with the viewer as an integral component. Thus, the file can be viewed on most any PC without the need for any other program on the receiving computer. You can send the file over the net or burn a CD ROM. In addition, you can imbed printed or audio annotation. With this function you can record the voice of your little darling and have it automatically play when the picture appears or you can add background music. Pretty cool. The program allows you to select from a variety of transitions between images, such as dissolves and wipes. My only complaint here is that the transition apparently must remain the same for all images in the presentation and the time on screen cannot be adjusted for individual images. There is much more, so if this sounds interesting go to their site and peruse the features, or better yet download the trial and get some hands on experience for free.

Do it before the meeting, as when I purchased the program I asked if they would be willing to donate a program as a Door Prize for our group and they kindly agreed. If the opportunity arises, please express your appreciation to them. ◆

(Frustrations… … ….Continued from page 5)
gram, I pulled up the "Works" word processing program. Again, I was disappointed and again the same computer by computer comparison was easily be made of each of these two products.

So what was my solution? Phone an expert and get another viewpoint, as I should have done in the first place. So I phoned our own William LaMartin, who suggested that I should be able to successfully install my Microsoft Office 97 software on this new laptop which uses XP Home Edition. I tried that, and it worked fine giving me access to the programs I wanted.

I had been led to believe by a computer salesman when I bought my new laptop that Microsoft Works would be fully compatible with Excel and Word. Had I been told the truth, I would have wanted my laptop outfitted with the latest editions of these programs. When I found that what I was told wasn't true, continuing with the old tried and true software was the easy answer for me. And if I buy any more computers, I now know one store to leave off my shopping list.

Next, I looked for a list of printers and was initially unable to find such a list. I went online to Hewlett Packard, who made my 820Cse printer, to get a driver for XP, only to remember that HP had obsoleted this printer a couple of years ago and no longer provides support for it.

As an aside I should tell you I bought this printer in1996 and at one time thought it would have to be replaced because, when it printed, the ink streaked over the paper and certain lines did not print. I contacted HP then and learned that it was obsolete so they couldn't help me.

But HP has a users discussion board where I went with my problem. Some other HP user had had the same difficulty I was having and told me that there is a "tub" under-

(Frustrations… … ….Continued on page 9)

Looking Back to 1992

From the April 1992 Bits of Blue
PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Ok let's all get strapped in. The roller coaster is a fixing to start. Just as I was preparing for the OS/2 vs. Windows 3.1 battle someone pulled the rug out from under me. First, I am told, and later read, that the parent company I work for, Dun & Bradstreet, is considering buying Lotus Corporation. Ok, that's pretty major stuff by itself, but it didn't stop there. Next, I read where Novell is looking to merge or buy Software Publishing Corporation (SPC), the makers of Harvard Graphics. Now, fact or fiction, I am still trying to figure out both of these deals. Finally, the knockout punch, Microsoft buying Fox Software for 175 million. This deal seems to be fact and will probably be a done deal within the next couple of months. If you are an XBASE user, the last deal will be very important to you. Microsoft, after many years of trying to create their own database product, has opted to buy a very good and established product. My understanding is that Microsoft will not stop working on their own product, yet Microsoft is now aiming squarely at Borland International's dBase. FoxPro by itself is a very good and extremely fast database language. If Microsoft does the right things to FoxPro to evolve it into the Windows environment it will be a powerhouse. The race to the Windows database arena and market share between Borland and Microsoft should benefit all XBASE users. These two giants will not be the first to market a Windows database product. Companies like Software Publishing Corporation (Superbase 4), Computer Associates (dBFast) to mention a few, are already there. It will take a couple of new releases to see if Microsoft can convert FoxPro from a prince to a king, or court jester. Borland has a fight on its hands, first to regain the trust of previous dBase users which still have a bad taste from the original release of dBase IV, and now the entry of Microsoft into the jousting contest.

On April 6th Mr. Bill (Gates) will once again do his magic. He will introduce the long awaited release of Windows 3.1 at Comdex Windows World. His presentation will be shown via satellite around the country. If all goes well I will see it at the Hyatt in Tampa. Anyway if you have Windows already, start saving that upgrade money (around $49.00). This product will be shown by Microsoft at our June meeting.

OS/2 2.0 has been released to BIG corporate land via BBS and other electronic means. To date I have only heard from beta sites. The product has not been seen on any shelves. I read that IBM is thinking about $49.00 for the product. At this time I am not sure if that is for an upgrade or anyone who has DOS or what. If you plan on getting and installing the full works of OS/2 2.0 make sure you've got 30Mb of disk available, at least a 386 20 MHz with 4Mb of RAM as a minimum.

If you have been waiting for a notebook with great color, I saw one. CompUSA recently had an open house for corporate types to meet vendors and kick the tires of their products. Vendors included Symantec (the Norton people), Dell Computer, NEC, WordPerfect and others. NEC had on display their new NEC Ultrallte SIJ2SC. It's one of the few color notebooks which uses an active matrix thin film transistor display. That's a mouthful. Basically it means that each screen pixel is controlled by its own transistor. This produces a sharper focus and brighter colors than passive matrix screens. The list price of the notebook is under $6,000. If you are interested in buying one good luck. CompUSA does not have any in stock.

Sometime back I shared my opinion about the use of 14" monitors with Window word-processing software. I stated that the text was too small to read. Well I have an update on this continuing saga. I recently upgraded my discontinued 14" NEC 3D monitor to a 15" NEC 4FG monitor. At first I was very pleased. This monitor has a new color system which you can set, reduced ELF, VLF and magnetic field (Marylee says all that stuff is good for me). However, NEC decided to discontinue applying the anti-glare coating found on its previous monitors. To date this has produced the 1st computer related problem to my body since starting in this field in 1974. I now have a good case of eye strain which I attribute to the complete reflection of myself (scary) and everything behind me outside the building. I talked to the NEC rep at CompUSA about the problem and asked why they had decided to remove the anti-glare coating. In a nutshell he stated that the market had asked for that feature or lack thereof and that my problem may be an individual one (ouch). While talking to him I noticed that the 4FG monitor he was demoing had a NEC anti-glare screen attached. Of course it's no longer called that; it's now called a NEC MultiSync monitor lens and retails for $79-$199 depending on which of their monitors you have. As I stood there still smarting from the NEC rep's comment that it may be an individual problem, two individuals came up pointing to the NEC 4FG monitor. A young man in his twenties and an older man in his late forties. The young man said "See, that's what I need to prevent my eyestrain." Well, I can tell you my poor eyes lit up when I heard that. I talked to them and explained that I now suffered from the same problem and that I felt that NEC was nickel and diming us by making us buy their product

(1992……Continued on page 9)

(1992……Continued from page 8)
(monitor lens) to prevent this. I confronted the NEC rep who overheard this conversation "Must be another case of an individual problem!" I said. "NOT!" I have ordered the NEC monitor lens to see if the eyestrain goes away or if I should bring back the 14" NEC 3D. Presently, I am highly disappointed with the new NEC monitors. Of course this is my story and 1st hand opinion. I couldn't help notice that other opinions are different: PC Magazine (January 14th issue) selected the NEC F series as one of the Best of 1991 products, PC WORLD (December 1991 issue) rated the 4FG as a BEST BUY for a Windows monitor, PC/Computing (December 1991 issue) selected the NEC 5FG as one of their 1991 MVP, and, lastly, in the April 14th issue of PC Magazine, John C. Dvorak makes the comment about the NEC 4FG that "I can't recommend this monitor enough" in his Inside Track column. Maybe its just me and one other end-user but this has the smell of the initial dBase IV 1.0 recommendations and great initial reviews by the press several years back. I wonder where the human factor of an end user comes to play in all these press opinions.

Look for the continuing monitor saga in the future.

Harvey Bruneau ◆

(Frustrations……Continued from page 7)
neath the place where the printer ink jet cartridges reside when the computer is not actually printing. While sitting there excess ink from the print cartridge drips into this tub. Over the years the tub gets full. He suggested I clean out that "tub" of excess gooey ink residue that had accumulated over the years and my printer would work fine again.

He was correct, and I suspect that has possibly kept my printer going much longer than some others of this model. Whenever the ink jet cartridges moved over that full "tub" some gooey ink residue would rub off on the bottom of the cartridge and ruin the print. Just cleaning out the vat or "tub" with a wooden Popsicle stick cured that problem. I was warned not to touch anything else and not to use any cleaning fluids or lint bearing cloth.

But, back to the XP printer driver problem. I actually have two printers, the HP mentioned above and an ancient wide carriage workhorse Okidata dot matrix, over ten years old which my wife uses for excel spreadsheets. Okidata's web site said that XP contained a generic printer driver, called the 193 Plus-IBM Okidata. I connected the printer to the laptop. Then I went to the Control Panel and asked to install it. It asked for disks, which I didn't have, so I skipped that process and installed the generic driver. I then printed out some e-mail I had on my machine and thought I was home free.

But then I pulled up my "Works" word processor and brought up a 65 page document that had looked fine hours earlier only to see that it had now become a lot of unreadable gibberish. That's when I realized that "Works" uses true type fonts and the old Okidata does not. Apparently Outlook Express doesn't use true type fonts either because my e-mail had printed out fine on the Okidata. Concerned about getting the "Works" word processor working correctly I removed the Okidata printer from my machine and my "Works" word processor again displayed a clearly readable copy of my previous work.

I had never encountered such a situation previously when I was not actually attempting to print something and could not read the document because of the printer selection. Of course, at that time the Okidata was the only printer driver active on my laptop, and perhaps that was the key cause of the problem.

Next I decided to try the same process with my obsolete HP printer no longer supported by HP. I connected the printer and laptop, turned the printer on and then turned the laptop on and, once powered up, got a message on the desktop that my laptop had detected new hardware. The old Okidata did not have plug and play features but the HP and the Laptop did, and the XP Home Edition recognized it. The installation wizard came up and I opted to install the printer. When I was asked for a disk, I selected automatic installation since HP had not provided XP support. I was given two generic XP printer choices. I picked what appeared to be the right one for my printer. Then a test page was printed, and I was in business.

Did it include all the features that this printer was capable of? No, it did not, but enough features were there so that I could print letters on legal size and regular paper. I cannot print in "book" style on both sides of the same sheet of paper, which I will miss, but at least I have a printer and don't yet have to go out and buy another one. If I need book printing, I can still do that on my desktop, where I still have the fully supported HP drivers on Windows Me.

(Frustrations……Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

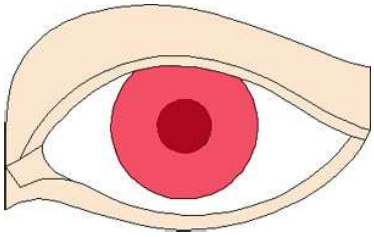
This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Red-Eye: Its causes and how to deal with it

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
wherman1@tampabay.rr.com

I think we are all familiar with that picture that is lovely except for the horrible red spot in the center of the subject's eyes, Red-Eye. The first thing to note is that it only occurs in flash pictures and the darker the room the more pronounced the effect. Fortunately, digital photo editing programs can greatly reduce the problem, but it is still best to eliminate the problem at the source when possible.

The effect is caused by the light from the flash reflecting off of the rear of the eye, the retina, which contains translucent blood carrying capillaries. Thus, the reflected light is red. The reflected light is passed back out of the eye and imaged by the camera. In dark surroundings, the iris of the eye, like that of the camera, opens to pass more light, thus the more pronounced the effect. Professional photographers deal with the problem by offsetting the flash source 6-10 inches from the plane of the camera lens. In this case, the reflected red light is offset so it does not pass through the camera lens. The amateur photographer does not want to carry around such a bulky contraption, so another solution has been developed. Unfortunately, it does not



work very effectively. In this case just before taking the picture the camera sends out one or more preflashes in hopes of making the eye's iris small enough that little light is passed back to the camera even though the flash and lens are very nearly on the same axis. Unfortunately, the preflashes are seldom strong enough or long enough to cause the iris to constrict before the main flash and may cause the person to blink at the wrong time. This feature often does considerably reduce battery life but little else.

What can the photographer do? Only use the flash when there is no other way to sufficiently light the subject. Turn on additional lights and open drapes. Remove lamp shades from lamps out of view of the camera. If you must use the flash, place a bright light source in the direction the subject will be looking, thus constricting the subject's iris. Have the subject look at an object off camera.

If all of this fails to give acceptable results, then obtain a retouching program that has a good Red-Eye Retouching feature. ◆

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Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
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William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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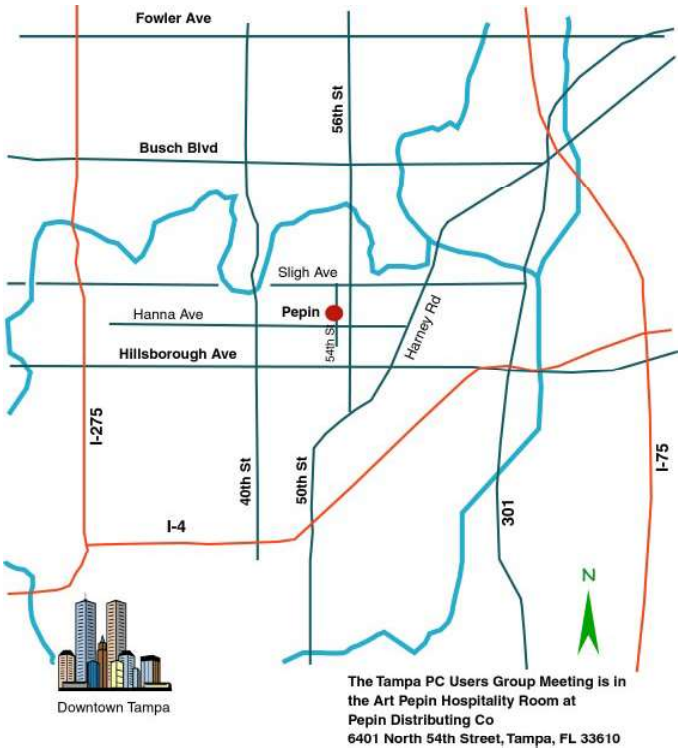
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(Frustrations……Continued from page 9)

I am a bit disappointed at HP for dropping support of my printer. When I called them on the phone they admitted they have other printers that are older than mine which still receive HP support, so age alone was not the criteria for dropping support on this model. XP Home Edition does seem to provide generic support for a wide range of printers from the ancient Okidata to the much more recent HP. (Hey, did I just pay Microsoft a compliment? Darned if I didn't, and my machine didn't lock up when I did it, either.)

Should my next printer be an HP? I really don't know. But I will consider other models as well when that time comes, and I'll try to do my homework this time, not only on printers but also on software and computers as well. It might surprise you to learn this, but I never did like homework. ◆



(President……Continued from page 1)

they teach? Mouse skills! Yes, they help you practice Clicking, Double-Clicking and Drag-and-Drop. So the next time your boss walks in just tell them you are working on your mouse skills.

I welcome your comments and suggestions. Please send them to president@tpcug.org. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 5 May 2002

Meeting

Computer Crime

Wednesday, May 8, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Russell Hayes of the FBI will discuss computer crime. As usual, we will have our Windows/computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting.

There is no President's message this month, so we will substitute a photo of our April presenter, Tom Cone. Tom gave a very informative and well presented demonstration of the "friendly" database program Alpha Five. For details, see the Minutes column on page 2.



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June 12: Steve Singer from RDI@Tampabay, Inc. will discuss new hardware

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Mary Sheridan, Vice President,
Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

Mary Sheridan started the Windows SIG at 6:30 PM. Mary is turning over the moderation of the SIG to Kevan Sheridan, our new president. The SIG/Q&A will continue indefinitely.

Kevan Sheridan took over the meeting at 6:45 PM. Kevan welcomed everyone and introduced the officers. He announced that the Access SIG and VBA SIG are still being held at Gateway on Dale Mabry. Check page 10 for dates and times. Kevan brought the Microsoft T-shirts from the Extreme event and they were given to anyone who wanted one. He also had the tickets for the upcoming ITEC event, May 1st and 2nd. You can register for the event on the Internet from a link on the tpcug.org website. Be sure when registering for the event to include the number **TX1769** so the TPCUG gets credit for your attending the event. Kevan still needs volunteers to staff the tables for the event at the Convention Center in downtown Tampa.

Bruce Register announced the scheduled presenters for the next couple of months. He has an FBI agent scheduled to discuss Internet crime for our May meeting. In June, Steve Singer of RDI will give a talk on computer hardware. Then Kevan called for a 10 minute break.

After the break, at 7:10 PM Kevan introduced the presenter for the evening, one of our own members, Tom Cone, doing a demonstration of Alpha Five database software. Tom doesn't actually represent the company, but he uses and likes the product very much. The company has been through many changes in the last few years. A new version of Alpha Five is due out in June. This software lets non-programmers build fairly sophisticated databases. Tom demonstrated the Alpha Five Windows database program Version 4.5. The single version of this software sells

(Minutes.....Continued on page 5)

Eureka Everybody! I Have Found It!

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net

The Death of Magazines (and books...and newspapers)

I know, I know: The imminent demise of paper—and all that we read on it—has not only been greatly exaggerated, but wrongly proclaimed just about every year for the past decade. Nevertheless, that doesn't mean it ain't gonna happen.

There will come a time, I am firmly convinced, when the developed world will stand on the edge of a precipice. A little nudge, or even a flinch, will be enough to push us over into the abyss...whereupon we spread our collective wings and fly off into another reality. So to speak! Think about when the Mediterranean Sea was a basin (presumably the lost city of Atlantis nested there somewhere) empty of water. The problem was, lo those umpteen zillion years ago, most of the basin was below sea level. Not to worry: A "plug" at the entrance to the valley, at what is now the Straits of Gibraltar, kept the water from the Atlantic out.

Or at least it did until there was a little nudge or a flinch. Probably from a pterodactyl who inadvertently landed. Just when things were ready. Just when the plug was ready to disintegrate. And a helluva waterfall resulted. (Talk about rising **water** tables!)

But I digress, right? What the **hell** does all this babbling have to do with The End of Paper? Just this: We're on a cusp kind of like that right now. It's not physical, like that ancient sea, but it's just as staggering and world-changing. I refer, ahem (roll of drums), to the **real** imminent death of paper.

And I think I've found the implement that's going to make it happen.

But first a look at the duds that have gone before: Ebook reading devices. From the Ebookman to the REB 1200 to the Franklin Ebook, they're all attempted hustles either by the book publishing companies or in cooperation with them. They all include draconian restrictions on ebook format and/or what you can copy and/or where you can get it from, etc. Stupid, stupid, stupid. But that's the nature of the beast when you're threatening the extinction of an entire and well-established industry. The book publishing conglomerates, like the music recording industry, isn't going to go away easily. They'll kick and bite and scratch and try to use governmental power and threats and various kinds of extortion and blackmail...and anything else they can come up with to stave off the inevitable.

Then there are the tablet computer people. Failure after failure. Everyone trying to protect their precious profit margins, everyone thinking that way to make a mint is to set prices so high that only the top 1% of the population would want to buy such toys. Even today, check out most of the prices. For a simple reading appliance that will connect to the Internet-with a **wire** is even fine-they march off across your eyeballs: $1,900 (the Flair web tablet). $1,500 (the SIMpad SL4). $1,650 (Honeywell's Web PAD II). $1,600 (the PenCentra 200). $1,500 (the Acknowledger CE). These barking dogs go on forever. There are plenty of others. Almost all over $1,000.

And then there's the much-anticipated Microsoft Tablet Computer, a solution to a problem that doesn't exist. I'll stick my neck out and predict it will be a huge flop. Costs too much. Doesn't do what we need it to do. Or rather, does more than we need it to (which is in part what drives the price up so). And besides, the job's already taken by the desktop and laptop computer.

Look, this isn't rocket science. Let's tick off what we're facing, what we've got, and where we need to go. All knowledge-and I mean **all** knowledge-has either already migrated or is in the process of migrating onto the Internet. How could it be otherwise? We human beings are evolutionarily **bred** to share knowledge. It's how we **survive**. It's what we **do**. It's an **instinct**, if you will, and a powerful one at that. What's the most revolutionary, most extraordinary way of sharing knowlege? The Internet? No. The writ-

(Eureka ……..Continued on page 4)

(Eureka…….Continued from page 3)

ten word. Then comes moveable type, Gutenberg, mass-produced paperbacks, general literacy (in that order), and romance novels (my favorite).

It all takes paper, right? Well not anymore. Because of the Internet. Electronics and the written word. Simple, right? **Not!** Why not? Because the dummies in the computer industry haven't **yet** been able to put two-and-two together, in order to give the entire world what it's been waiting for: A simple, useable, lightweight implement that can be used for TWO THINGS, okay? One, surf the Internet and **read**, you dummies. And second, handle email (and even that's not an absolute requirement; I'm talking about destroying just about the entire book and magazine publishing industries, so a mere "Internet reader" will suffice, thank you).

What is holding us back? A giant conspiracy by the printed-word publishing conglomerates to save their industry? Nah! A holding action while government can figure something out to stop all that free knowledge from flowing and sloshing around everywhere? Go **on**! No, it's just...lack of foresight.

A couple of years ago I had a **huge** argument with the CEO of a company that was on the verge of "doing it right" with an ebook reading device. But for some reason he was stuck-**stuck!**-on the idea of a "codex" electronic reader. That is, not a "tablet" but a thing that is hinged in the middle and "opens." A book, in other words. Look, I said, at least slap a couple of engineers on it and implement a simple alternative, a tablet, even if it's only secondary and an afterthought. No, no, he wouldn't hear of it. If they'd put out my damned tablet reader at the time, by now they'd be as big as Microsoft. Or some behemoth like that.

But nooooooooo! He wouldn't listen. And so the death of paper...and the death of the printed-word publishing industry...remains only a fond dream (think of all those trees we'll save!). But wait! Wait, wait, wait, wait!

Now I espy a bunch of hippie-sounding guys who...are...actually ...Putting. It. Together. I can't for the **life** of me understand why no one's done it yet. But there it is, and here they are, as of April 9, 2002. Out they pop from their stealth-mode cubicles or wherever, and simply...**say** it. Why ask why? Why are they developing their "information appliance" (that will cost under $700)? Well, duh: "We found there was an incredible opportunity to take advantage of a glaring hole in the marketplace." Get that: "Glaring hole." Now **that's** an understatement.

These guys are called DOT Design Technologies. They hail from (where else) northern California not far from Silicon Valley (San Mateo, to be exact). And they're about to Get It Right. It's called the "X-tend information appliance" (see what I mean about "information" being the key?), and it's the brainchild of a guy named Todd Shafer. It's based upon an "open platform" concept, and — get this — it uses Linux as its operating system (no Microsoft straightjacket!).

The X-tend is going to have a 10.4 inch touch-sensitive screen, and it will connect to the Internet through any of a number of different methods, including 802.11 wireless, Ethernet cable, dual USB, etc. Oddly enough, it also will be able to run your entire entertainment center (as in, replace all those remotes for the TV, the VCR, the DVD, the stereo, the CD-ROM changer, etc.).

But wait! There's still a chance to kill the thing! (Calling Barnes & Noble, calling Borders!) Shafer only has this little beast in the "virtual prototype" stage. And he's looking for funding to complete the prototyping and release it into the world. (Calling Harper/Collins, calling Bertelsmann, calling Simon & Schuster, calling Random House!) So this should be interesting. We all know the old urban myth about the carburetor that ran on water, snapped up and buried by the oil and automotive industries. No money to be made there!

Well, this is a **real** chance for an industry to try to kill a product that could do real serious damage to its profit margins. I mean, if the Internet becomes the preferred publishing venue — which it must — and

(Eureka……..Continued on page 5)

(Eureka…….Continued from page 4)

you've got an "information appliance" that you can curl up in bed with and read in the dark because of its wonderful gently backlit screen...what part is there left to be played by the clunky, smelly, tree-murdering, traditional conglomerate publishing industry?

Indeed. **Watch your back, Todd!** And please don't give in to the zillions of dollars they're going to be offering to co-opt you. You'll make **multi**-zillions more if you stick with the rest of us, the world, and you'll be a great emancipator to boot. Not a bad appellation, that. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Daffodils
From
http://www.bbg.org/daffodilwatch/photos.html#nehemia

According to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, "The Daffodil Project was born in response to the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and blossomed into a citywide volunteer initiative to plant one million daffodil bulbs in public spaces."

The photo above is from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's site, http://www.bbg.org.

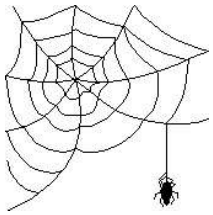
(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

for $149.00 retail or $129.00 for the user group. The product is bundled with a zip code database that retails for $29.00. Our members can get the $180.00 value for only $129.00. Multi-user versions are also available that will run via a LAN with 10 – 15 users. This is a relational database, not a "flat" database.

The program is laid out in a very user friendly man-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 10)

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Doonesbury	http://www.doonesbury.com/
Newsday	http://www.newsday.com/
Troubleshooting Kernel32.dll errors and Invalid Page	http://www.all-windows.com/kernel32.html
1460 CJOY - Good Time Oldie Canadian Radio	http://www.cjoy.com/
Internet Archive Internet Collections	http://www.archive.org/internet/index.html
Brooklyn Botanic Garden	http://www.bbg.org/
NATURE Song of the Earth with David Attenborough	http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/song/
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden	http://hirshhorn.si.edu/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

DC AutoEnhance

Automatic Digital Camera Enhancer and Batch Processor

by Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

Many of us by now have bitten the bullet and purchased a digital camera. With the prices ranging from $79 to well over a $1000, there is a price range for almost everyone. I know because I am on my second one and considering a third.

Although the photographs from digital cameras have gotten much better since my first Sony Mavica of five years ago, they are still not perfect. They all seem to need a little something, whether it be brightening, sharpening or something to make it perfect. Now, I am not saying that the photos I take with a regular film camera are all perfect, but in some sense there's not much I can do about them once the picture is developed and printed, unless I want to scan them in one at a time and "fix" them. At least the digital photos are somewhat ready to be "fixed", or probably better put, adjusted to your liking.

Most any graphics program today will import the image produced by your camera and let you make the adjustments you deem necessary. I have reviewed a few of those programs in this newsletter in the past, such as: JASC Paint Shop Pro, Adobe PhotoShop Elements, and my favorite, because it is free, Digital Camera Enhancer from MediaChance. The one problem I have with all the above software is that only one photo at a time can be processed. Most of the time that is okay, but recently I published a large amount of pictures to my website and it took a couple of hours to prepare the photos. By preparing I also mean resizing for optimal loading on a PC that doesn't have a broadband Internet connection. Two hours to process these photos was totally unacceptable, so I went looking.

NOTE: William LaMartin, our newsletter Editor and Webmaster, tells me that Adobe PhotoShop can batch process graphic images. But at over $600 for the latest version 7, and a learning curve that will take me into the next millennium, I decided to look elsewhere. (PhotoShop is no doubt the best program of its kind on the market for professionals, which I am not.)

I searched the Internet and found a few programs and almost wrote an article on EyeBatch Image Processor, until I visited MediaChance's website, http://www.MediaChance.com, again and found my favorite program had been upgraded to a commercial batch-processing program called ***DCE AutoEnhance (DCE)***. (The free version is still available under the camera tools section.) There is a fully functional evaluation version of ***DCE*** available for the download. The only restrictions on the eval version is that you can only batch process five photos at one time and the evaluation period is only good for 30 days. That is more than enough to put ***DCE*** through its paces. It only took me five minutes to know this program belonged in my arsenal of tools. Enough for the history… on with the review.

DCE has all of the tools of its free sibling but it also goes quite a bit further when adjusting and enhancing batches of photos. I know what you're thinking: "How can you adjust all photos the same if each one was taken at different times, under different conditions." Well, MediaChance uses something called **Exif Metadata** that your digital camera stores with the images and processes that data accordingly. (I didn't know my camera stored anything other than the image.) So **DCE** knows whether the shot was taken with or without flash, in the day or night, etc., and adjusts itself accordingly.

Some of the features shown and talked about at http://www.mediachance.com/dce/features.html are:

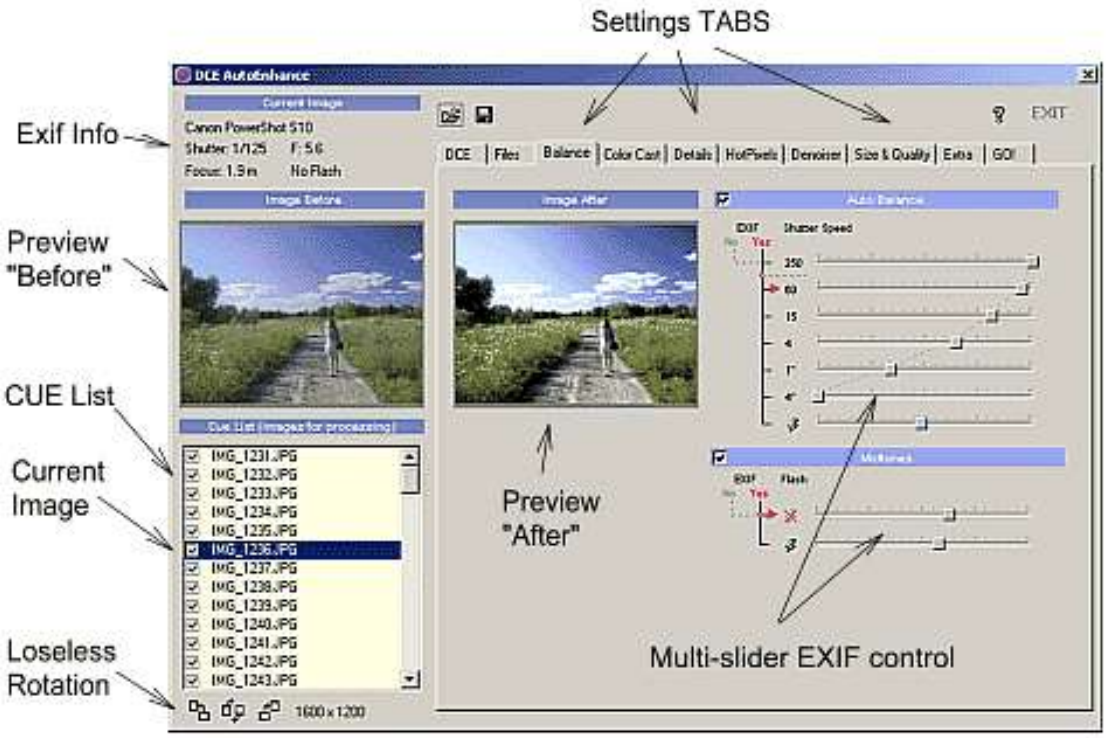
DC……Continued on page 7)

(DC…….Continued from page 6)

- Automatic Balance (Most digital photos are a little dark. This will balance out the light and contrast.)
- Remove Blue cast (Removing the extra blueness brings the sharp color back.)
- Adjust Mid-tones
- Enhance Colors (With this you can give a boost to the colors – without over-processing them.)
- Enhance Details
- Remove Hot Pixels (This removes the "dust" or white dots from photos that have a longer exposure time – like evening shots without a flash.)
- De-noise the image (The new high mega-pixel cameras might add more detail than we really need. This filter smoothes out the roughness while leaving the needed detail in.)
- Portrait De-Focus Filter (This was included especially to smooth out skin tones.)
- Resize the image (This is the real time saver for me. I feel I get a better photo by taking higher resolution snapshots and then reducing the size before uploading to the web. This may or may not be true, but it makes me feel better.)
- Finds the JPG quality for each image according your needs
- Add a text or Exif data such as date of shot taken, shutter speed, ISO etc. into the image with great control about the colors and parameters (You have full control over the size, font, color, background color and transparency and position. I haven't seen this ability in other digital processing software up to this point.)

Don't forget, most of the above mentioned features are all automatic, but if you get that one photo that you think needs a little more tweaking, there are manual adjustments on just about all of the features.

Because of the time it had taken me in the past to prepare my photographs for the web, I had actually all but stopped, or rather slowed down considerably, taking pictures to post on the Internet. This past Christmas I took a great deal of pictures that never made it to my website. They will now, a few months late, but what's wrong with Christmas in July. I just got a Christmas present in April when I found DC AutoEnhance, and you can too. Just go to: http://www.mediachance.com/dce/index.html, download the evaluation version and you can see what I'm talking about. You'll be surprised to find out your digital photos aren't really as good as you thought they were, but they can be - I guarantee it!



If you decide that ***DCE*** does the job for you, send MediaChance the $35 registration fee so they'll keep making good software. And, while you're at their website, look around. There's a lot of other good stuff to try out. ◆

Looking Back to 1992

From the May 1992 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM PC USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 1/8/92 MEETING

!! Harvey's opening remarks centered almost entirely on the just released Version 3.1 of Microsoft Windows. Several computer stores in the area were offering the upgrade and the complete package at bargain prices. Sad to say, but these low prices were for a limited time only. Installing the upgrade takes about 20 minutes on a 386. It takes only about 6 minutes to install as a new package.

!! Big feature is that it's fast. It loads faster, prints faster and the file manager is even faster. Another big feature is True Type, the on-the-fly font generator built into Win 3.1. True Type does work with WordPerfect for Windows, which could not access the Win fonts in the prior version.

!! There are two installation modes: express (which loads everything and needs about 11 meg on the hard drive) and custom (which lets you choose the modules that you want installed). There was no problem in installing the new version over the old version. It is not a good idea to install the new version as a second copy in another directory; there may be conflicts in references to the old files. Still no relief for Uninstalling Window applications.

!! There is now a "Start Up" Group (old Load and Run options) that makes it easier to set up your Window sessions. Also, you can use Control-drag to drag a copy of the icon to a new location. The Control Panel now provides for adjusting Window boxes and font sizes. You can shrink a DOS window to about a fourth of its full screen size and still read the text.

!! The latest version of OS/2 is due by the end of this month. To install the whole kit and caboodle will take about 30 meg of space on the hard drive.

!! On behalf of the User Group, thanks to ROBCO of Lutz for this evening's presentations. Should any of you be interested in their services, (813) 949-7686 is their office phone and (813) 949-7784 is their fax number.

LANtastic Presentation

David Gallagher of ROBCO, Lutz, described the benefits of LANtastic; rated as the number one peer-to-peer network package. This program makes the productive power of a full-featured LAN (Local Area Network) available at an economic price to, typically, small business users. It allows for resource sharing (printers, disk storage, FAX, modems, CD ROMs, etc.) without the need for a dedicated server machine. Any work station can act as the server.

Security levels, audit trails, and passwords are easily established or changed. Various services or accesses are easily enabled or disabled for any station. In fact, log in can be restricted to a particular period of time and/or a particular day.

Also, in a small network, ROBCO can set up the system so that a LAN manager is really not needed. Of course, as the number of work stations increases, so does the need for a LAN manager. One of the latest features is that of voice support. Hardware requirements are rather modest: 13k per station and 40k per file server. It can use the common network adapters such as Ethernet, ARCnet, Token Ring and LANtastic.

Right Hand Man II Presentation

Gerry Roberts, also of ROBCO, demonstrated Right Hand Man which is available from the Futurus Corporation. This is the new, commercial version of the old shareware program. Many new features have been added to make this product a very desirable addition to a LAN system.

It is a TSR (Temporary, Stay Resident) program that occupies only 4-6 K of memory. In and of itself, it is a revolutionary network E-Mail, scheduling, fax and phone message center. One nice feature is the Scan module which will determine the first available time slot for a meeting of selected individuals. The scheduler module can keep track of individuals as well as teams or work groups. The data file, dBase compatible, is like a free form Rolodex file; making it easy to set up records in the various files.

(1992……..Continued on page 9)

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Access & VBA SIGs We have had some pretty interesting SIGS recently where a member presented a project on which they would like some help getting started. The last was a cookbook in Access of interest to Jim Purcell. He has presented us with a number of interesting problems to solve. Next meeting we will be working on one offered by John Witmer involving keeping track of employee accounts.

Windows Scripting Host At our last VBA meeting, Merle Nicholson introduced us to the Windows Scripting Host and gave examples of simple scripts which accomplish some very useful tasks. It really got my attention, and I plan on seeing what I can do with such scripts. Perhaps in a future newsletter I will include a few for you to try. They are just text files that you double click on to run.

XML (Extensible Markup Language) At that same VBA SIG, I presented VBA code that would allow you to export a Microsoft Access table to an XML file and also code to import an XML file in a specific format to a table in Access. This is useful in Access 97 and 2000 but not in 2002, since Access 2002 can both import and export information in the XML format. By the way, XML is a platform independent language for describing data. In XML, our membership data would look like:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<dataroot>
  <members>
    <lastname>Doe</lastname>
    <firstname>John</firstname>
    <company></company>
    <Address>888 Maple St</Address>
    <City>Tampa</City>
    <State>FL</State>
    <memberzip>33606</memberzip>
    <homephone>255-9999</homephone>
    <renewmonth>200205</renewmonth>
  </members>
  <members>
     ……
  </members>
  <members>
    ……
  </members>
……..
</dataroot>
```

Where each block

```
  <members>
    ……
  </members>
```

contains one member's data, and there would be as many such blocks as we have members. This is the simplest form of XML document. Of course, things can get much more complicated.

XML and Amazon.Com Shortly after I did the XML presentation in the VBA SIG, Amazon sent me an email to the effect that they were testing out a new XML interface to their database that would allow developers to directly query their database. With the information they gave me, with what little I already knew about XML, and with some help from the developers' discussion forum at Amazon , I was able to make it all work. The result is an additional link to Amazon.Com at our home page, http://www.tpcug.org, that allows you to directly query the Amazon database without ever leaving the TPCUG site—and as before the TPCUG will get 5% of any purchases you may decide to make at no extra charge to you. Give it a try. ◆

(1992……..Continued from page 8)

Right Hand Man Remote provides the ability to dial in from one PC to another. Usually, one station of the LAN would be set up to wait for remote call-ins. Then uploads/downloads of E-Mail and phone messages can be sent/received in full duplex mode.

The cost is under $500 for a five user setup. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

Helpful Hints Corner

By Jenny Leitzke, Membership,
Tampa PC Users Group
Leitzke4@hotmail.com

Here is another shortcut key that you might have missed that works in MS Word. This short cut will change the font size on any highlighted text in a Word document you are editing.
Ctrl +] = increase font size
Ctrl + [= decrease font size

To clear old entries from your Internet Address Bar, go to TOOLS in the web menu bar, select INTERNET OPTIONS, choose CLEAR HISTORY and this will clear out all previously listed web addresses from your web address bar.

To clear your personal data you have entered into any web forms, go to TOOLS in the web menu bar, choose INTERNET OPTIONS, and click on the CONTENT tab, click on the AUTO COMPLETE button, and, when you select CLEAR FORMS, all the personal data you have saved to forms on the web will be erased. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 5)

ner. Drop down menus at the top allow the user to work with tables, reports, forms and all the other features of a relational database. The forms are quite easily customizable; the data can be sorted by typing information into any field in the form and doing a sort. You can do searches and queries of the forms data. The browse feature allows you to see many records at once. You can use browse and run a query of any field in the database. The program has a script recorder. You can write in query operators such as less than, <, and greater than, >. The queries are very flexible and support standard wildcards. After a query is run, the number of records found is shown at the bottom of the screen. All aspects of the program work with the print function.

When you open a form in design mode, a drag and drop menu is available and holds all of the available fields for the data table for the form you are creating, plus a tool box. You can design the fields with imbedded controls. You can build lists with preset data to maintain control of how the data is entered onto the forms. This is done with field rules. Data can also be posted to an external table.

Tom designed a form for the group's membership and showed us how many of the features of the program are used. It seems to be simple to design a

(Minutes……..Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

CAE
Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

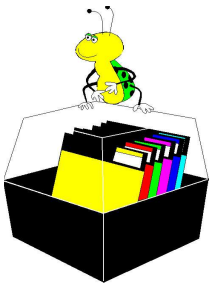
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

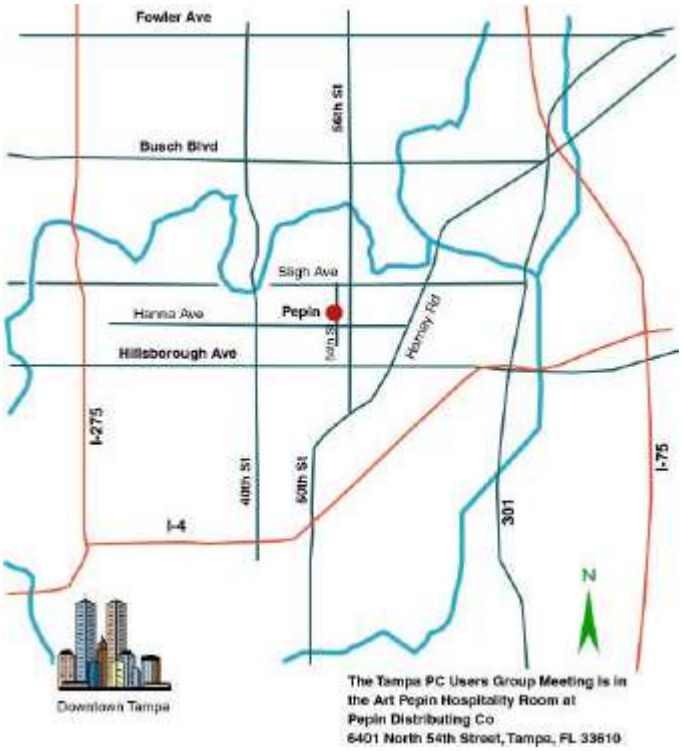
(Minutes…….Continued from page 10)

form. From design mode, Tom used genie's (wizards) to assist in the design. He added a "print labels" button. It is possible to include filters in the label printing. It did a great job of putting barcodes on the labels also.

The program comes with help files in PDF form or Word. Additional help is available on the message board at http://www.Alphafive.com.

Finally, Tom demonstrated a commercial application he created in Alpha Five for Bar Associations (lawyers) to kept track of members and manage meetings.

Tom's presentation ended at 8:20 PM. After a short break, our raffle was held and Merrill Friend won the main prize, a copy of Alpha Five. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 6 June 2002

Meeting

New Hardware

Wednesday, June 12, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer from RDI@Tampabay, Inc. will discuss New Hardware. As usual, we will have our Windows/ computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting.



Member Jenny Leitzke doing her presentation of "Online Learning at Gateway". She had only about six hours notice, but still produced one of our more interesting presentations.

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July 10: To be announced

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the May Meeting

By Bruce Register, Program Chairman, Tampa PC Users Group
bregist3@tampabay.rr.com

President Kevan Sheridan opened the meeting at 6:30 PM, May 8, 2002 AD, at the Art Pepin Hospitality Room with the usual discussion session. William LaMartin told of his problem with Win Me that was solved by searching "Google Groups". His History file was corrupted. He followed the directions found in the Google/Group message to solve the problem. Wade Herman reported a problem with Road Runner and Outlook Express. He had to reset his Road Runner mail server settings.

Program Chairman Bruce Register reported that the FBI presenter had to cancel at the last minute. Steve Singer will present information about the new hardware at our next meeting. Membership Chairperson Jenny Leitzke presented "Walking you through Learning at Gateway." She made a very interesting presentation. This was obvious by the many questions that she fielded very well. Jenny's job involves problem solutions and search. People who purchased a Gateway computer can receive a "free" enrollment KEY which permits a one year access to the Learning Gateway application. Otherwise, one must purchase the KEY.

The Learn at Gateway website, http://www.learnatgateway.com/, is a great place to find all kinds of information. The "Enrollment Key" is $99 unless otherwise provided by Gateway. Gateway does not let you try a demo before buying. She walked through some of her purchased courses for her presentations so that we might see the actual courses rather than just reading them in some promotional brochure. There are home work assignments with each "Learning". You can take as many of the courses as you like in a year for $99 or by otherwise having been given the "Enrollment Key" from Gateway. You may take a test and receive a certificate for each successful course completion. You take practice

(Minutes.....Continued on page 10)

Software Review of Scrippy v 3.01

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
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A few months back I wrote a review of an email program with a lot of bells and whistles called IncrediMail. While this is an excellent program to spice up your emails, a lot of people do not wish to change email programs. So, if you are using Outlook Express 5 or later, Outlook 98 or later, or Netscape 6.1 or later and have no desire to change, there is a way for you to add a little life to your plain old text messages. It's called Scrippy.

Scrippy is a stationary editor/creator that lets you add graphics and sound in the form of embedded borders, backgrounds and sound files to your emails. And best of all you don't need to know a thing about HTML coding. You can use multiple backgrounds to create a layered effect, your borders can scroll and you can do just about anything you want to your fonts. I had no idea that email was capable of all these effects.

You really don't need to do much of anything to get up and running and creating email stationery in a very short time. There are 16 samples pages included in the program. Just choose any one of them and use it as it is or change it to your delight. Then, once you get the hang of it, open a blank new page and create your own. It's not rocket science. The interface is really simple to use with all kinds of pop-up help items throughout the program. If you forget to do something or do not follow the parameters correctly, most of the time Scrippy lets you know immediately. At any time, while making the changes to the samples or designing your own, you can click on Preview and see your results immediately. If you don't like what you see just undo and start where you left off. When you're done Scrippy automatically saves the file to where you can access it in your email program. Not very difficult and not much of a learning curve at all.

Graphics supported are: JPG, GIF, animated GIF, and PNG formats. Sound files supported are: MID, WAV, AU and AIFF, as well as streaming audio formats.

The creators of Scrippy explain the concept this way: Scrippy stationeries are composed of objects, which you select and customize. The following objects are available:

- Background. Multiple backgrounds can be used, overlapping each other to create layered effects.
- Message. Text message and/or graphics. Full control of fonts and colors.
- Sound. You can also have multiple sounds.
- Scrolling border. You can insert as many of these as you like, at any of the screen edges. They can move in various directions at a variety of speeds.
- Ticker. An animated text message in the status bar at the bottom of the stationery window. Lots of different animation options.
- Positioned objects. You can insert a single copy of an image, or a scrolling repeated copy, using a position based on any of the window edges or the center of the window.
- Containers. Containers are a powerful tool, which can be used to create layers of "stationery within stationery". Containers allow recombination of other Scrippy objects in many different ways.
- Frames. A visible border placed around another object or group of objects.
- Objects, which overlap, can easily be dragged and dropped to change the visual layering sequence.

Oh, and because Scrippy creates HTML coded documents you can also create web pages with it that can

(Scrippy…….Continued on page 10)

Spam, Pay for Placement and Nimda

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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Spam We all hate it, and at times there seems little can be done about it. I know people who periodically change their email addresses to cut the flow of it. Sometime within the last 12 months I started keeping a blocked senders list in Outlook Express, along with several "mail rules" that blocked messages containing certain words in the subject line, messages with certain words or phrases in the body of the messages, and messages from certain domains.

I got so desperate at one point that I was blocking all mail from yahoo.com and hotmail.com, since they seemed unable to stop the flow of spam from their servers. Of course, the mail wasn't really blocked; it was simply automatically dumped into my deleted folder, where I would carefully look at the senders to make sure that I wasn't deleting a message that wasn't spam—surprisingly there are actually people with yahoo and hotmail address who are not spammers.

I found myself spending way too much time on adding people to the blocked senders list and updating the "mail rules". After all, I was getting from 40 to 70 such messages per day—and 95% of them were coming in on my NetCom account. The Road Runner account luckily has stayed fairly spam free.

What to do? Earthlink, the company that absorbed NetCom several years back had the answer: Spaminator, their spam blocking program that stops messages from ever leaving their servers if the senders are on Spaminator's Spam list. I enabled it for my account, and the result was amazing. I am now getting, perhaps, three spam messages per day in my NetCom account, and when I go check at Earthlink to see what messages have been blocked—all of the messages are spam, and there are a lot of them. For example, around 11:00 PM I deleted all the blocked messages at Earthlink that had accumulated during the day—30 or so. And this morning there were 38 more messages that had been blocked between 11:30 PM and around 8:30 AM. By the way, if you don't delete the blocked messages, Earthlink will automatically delete them after three days.

Since I am having a bit of trouble filling the newsletter this month, here are the subjects of the 30 deleted messages last evening:

Free Ink + Free Shipping
Lose Weight with Phentermine
Are you drowning in bills?
How to Pocket $4,000-$8,000 in the next 3-4 days
WANNA FREE PCS DIGITAL CELLULAR PHONE?
You Can Make Money Online!
Lock in a Lower House Payment Now
ADV: Do you hate to file?
ADV: It will be too late soon... rnyvk
Borrow Unlimited Paperback Novels
Beautiful, Custom Websites $399 Complete! …..
Rebuild your credit with Gold
$150 FREE BONUS CA$H FROM ONLUCK CASINO!
Get Thicker, Fuller & Healthier Hair - #1 ….
Travel Now and Pay Later!
Get a credit card now, no matter what your credit is like
Guaranteed!
Smart Shopper here's a great Gift Idea
Viagra - Xenical – Phentermine
Human Growth Hormone Supplementation-Save 50%....
Unique Golf Gifts for Dad + Free Shipping
check your domain
FBI REPORT: 2 in 5 Homes Victimized by Property Crime
Get $30 in Movie Cash Certificates
FW: Thought you would want this, 2 free cell phones.
Great deal...
Get a $500 Cash Advance By Tomorrow
ORDER HBO NOW AND GET $20 CASH BACK!
Happy Memorial Day!
Get a DIGITAL CAMERA & CAMCORDER for $29.95
Claim a FREE CD Player!
guaranteed3500 Great investment opportunity

Pay for Placement Have you used a search engine lately? Certainly you have, but did you know that the links appearing at the top of the list were probably "paid links". Yahoo calls them Sponsor Matches and describes them as follow: "*Sponsor Matches are search results that are paid for by businesses or organizations and provided through an alliance with Overture Services (formerly GoTo.com).*" Google calls them Sponsored Links and has two types—those that appear at the top of the returned search results like those of Yahoo and ads that appear in boxes to the right of the results. More on Google's little ad boxes later, for that is the only paid placement that I have actually used.

(Spam.....Continued on page 5)

(Spam…….Continued from page 4)

The situation is the same for all the other search engines, I believe. It is just another manifestation that the Internet is really not free, and when the venture capital runs out someone has to pay. In my opinion, though, it is unfortunate that sponsored ads, I mean links, are appearing right in among the search results. It is sort of like a newspaper running ads as news stories and putting them on the front page at the top.

At Overture (http://www.overture.com), the company that Yahoo mentioned as providing the sponsored matches, potential advertisers actually bid on key words. The person bidding the most, gets the highest listing. What they are bidding is how much they will pay for each click on their ad, I mean sponsored match. The price for the top placement can be anywhere from a few pennies to several dollars. Yes, there are companies willing to pay as much as $5 if you click on their link for life insurance. To verify this, go to http://www.overture.com and put in the search phrase life insurance. Today the top listed "life insurance" link there costs $5.08, and number 40 on the same page costs $.54. Of course, Overture had better have some pretty sophisticated software to detect pranksters from doing multiple clicks on that

(Spam…….Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



Buried Machinery

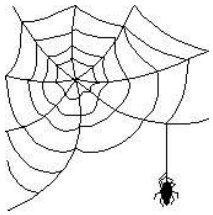
From

http://www.usda.gov/oc/photo/histfeat.htm

Most of the agricultural photographs on display at this site were taken between 1937 and 1943 during the Farm Security Administration (FSA) era. The entire FSA collection consists of almost 300,000 pictures.

This photo is from the dust bowl of 1936. Is the current drought in the same general area a prelude to more photos like this 70 years later?

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
RDI @ TampaBay, Inc - our June Presenter	http://morevalu.net/
LinuxISO.org - A place to learn about Linux	http://www.linuxiso.org/
Savannah, Georgia - an architect's collection of pictures	http://www.savannahgeorgia.org/
IBDB The official source for Broadway Information	http://www.ibdb.com/
B&H Photo—reputable online photography store	http://www03.bhphotovideo.com
Woody's Office Portal	http://www.wopr.com/
On Line Property Assessor Offices (partial listing)	http://www.iaao.org/1234.html
PBASE.com - Photo Database - Web Photo Galleries	http://www.pbase.com/
Molecular Expressions The Silicon Zoo	http://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/creatures/index.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Spam ……..Continued from page 5)
link, for at $5 per click, it will add up. Additionally, I think Overture also has a $20/month fee.

I got into all of this because someone called and wanted to know why his real estate page had disappeared from Google. It had been there for months when you searched for his city and the words real estate. Having followed the pay for placement situation for the past year, I advised that the only sure way of being listed was to pay. And the best option to me seemed to be Google's AdWords program where you say what you are willing to pay for your ad to be displayed when certain keywords are searched. The more you pay above their minimum price for a particular keyword, the better your placement. Most small town names can be had for a nickel, but the phrase "real estate" has a minimum price of $.32 at Google AdWords. But you don't want to use just "real estate" since that would not be specific enough. Instead you use a phrase like "Tampa real estate"

I chose a collection of about six keywords and phrases and started the program. After about a week, 4006 people have viewed pages at Google with the ad, and 71 have clicked on the ad for a click-through rate of 1.7% at a total cost of $12.13 ($.18/click). By the way you can set a limit to how much you will spend in a day. We chose $5, and you can see that we have not come close to using that amount.

But that is just for Google, where, by the way you can still get a commercial site listed for free—there is just no guarantee that it will ever be returned in a search. What about other search engines? Well, Yahoo now charges $299 (double that if it is adult entertainment) just for submitting a commercial site to them—with no guarantee that they will list your site—and no refund if they don't. Also, Yahoo, Lycos, AOL (AOL might be dropping it) and MSN, I think, use the Overture service, so to get a decent placement on them you will need to go to Overture and bid on your keywords and phrases. I just hope life insurance is not one.

Nimda My son is visiting now, and he has been doing a lot of work with his software development over the Internet. I just give him a connection to the router, and everything was working fine. But yesterday when a thunderstorm came through, I said that I wanted to shut everything down and disconnect. I did that, but then he said that he would like to keep working since it didn't seem so bad. So with all my computers disconnected, I connected his computer directly to the cable modem. In less than 10 minutes he noticed strange activity on his machine. He disconnected the connection to Road Runner, but it was too late. He had the Nimda virus.

Here is how he got it. He had a new laptop computer on which he had hurriedly installed all his necessary programs before the trip. It runs Windows 2000 Server. That means that it also has Microsoft Internet Information server (IIS)--and he and not bothered to install the patch that protects IIS from Nimda. With IIS running (he didn't even need it but it runs automatically) when he connected directly to the cable modem without the protection of the router's firewall, within 10 minutes one of the Nimda infected computers on Road Runner's network--and there appear to be plenty of them--had nailed him.

Earlier he had purchased McAfee's antiviral program for 2000 Server off the Internet, but it wouldn't work and he was, in fact, trying to get his money back from them. Norton's version costs $400, so he hadn't bought that. What to do? The regular Norton Antivirus program couldn't be installed on 2000 Server, but I suggested reestablishing the network connections, mapping his C drive as a network drive to one of my computers (the Windows Me one), and letting my Norton AV on that computer scan the mapped drive for viruses. We did that--and it found 48 infected files on his computer, cleaning up all the ones that had originally been his (except Netscape.exe) but failing to clean up the ones that the virus had added--but quarantining them. He then downloaded from Symantec the cleanup up tool for this virus and ran that. So his computer now seems OK.

But after reconnection to the network, my XP computer had a message from Norton saying that it had detected a file with the Nimda virus. And every time you clicked OK to that message another message popped up with the same message but for a different file. This went on for at least 20 files. All the files were in the C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Documents folder, the only one on the XP com-

(Spam ……..Continued on page 10)

From Don Patzsch's Point of View

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@helios.acomp.usf.edu

Editorial Note: Don was kind enough to answer my request of the members for material for this newsletter. Don is one of a handful of people who have been in the group longer than I. In recent years, though, his active participation in our Windows oriented group has declined as his interest in non-Windows computing increased. But every-now-and-then he sends us a note on his view of computing. I rarely agree with Don, but that is why I am happy to have this article—a differing point of view is good for everyone.

We have been asked to sit down and write something about what we as individual computer users are doing; the idea is that other user group members may be interested. Articles are needed for a newsletter. Each of us is doing something that we should write up so that others may benefit from taking a look at whatever we are doing!

When I read that, I wondered just how many people are really interested. So I will try to write something sensible and describe what my thoughts have been in the field of computers that might interest others. Perhaps I might start by describing the CD-Rom that came in yesterday's mail.

The title of the CD is "Software Developers Tools". "Improve your Applications Performance on Windows and Linux." "From the people who know processors." (The CD comes from Intel). Do you suppose that Intel is telling us something?

Now let's go back several years. As an individual I bought only IBM computers, and I could not get across the reason I bought them to others. Unless you experience something you can not understand what that thing is all about. You can only guess.

As time went by, I noticed that there was a force acting on the computer industry that was not right. So I began to look around me and to try to find something that would change the computer world. It was not hard to find. I looked at all the operating systems that were not MS Windows. There was Minix, Xenix, Unix, and many others like those. Then came Linux. Linux is not an operating system. Linux is a core idea that can be expanded to become an operating system. Thousands of computer programmers all over the world looked at Linux and recognized the value of this kernel. Programmers from all over the world began to write add-ons. Very soon the additional work done by all those programmers began to bear fruit.

First a basic operating system began to take shape. Maybe we could look at it as thought it were DOS. DOS was written by some people, and then MS bought it. After a time, IBM and MS began to try to emulate the Apple computer. Apple used a mouse which was designed by the Xerox people. Windows is an add-on to DOS that allows the use of a mouse.

When Linux appeared, it was not the only variation of UNIX. The kids at Berkeley wrote FreeBSD. That is another operating system. IBM took Linux and ran with the ball. Apple took FreeBSD and ran with the ball.

If you were to take a computer and run it, with either Linux or FreeBSD, you would not have any trouble using those operating systems because they use "Windows" in just the same way as the Windows you use. I decided to buy a computer using the FreeBSD system so I could see what it is like. I bought the Apple Mac G4, with dual processors, because it won't be long before we have 64 bit and 128 bit programs.

I am writing this to give you a bit of an idea of what it takes to learn how the Apple system works. I assume you are new to this type of computing, as I am. First, I brought the computer up in Mac OS X. OS ten is based on FreeBSD, reworked by Steve Jobs to operate his NEXT computer when he left Apple. FreeBSD is very similar to Linux. When you bring up a Mac in OS X, you see windows that are the same as MS Windows and many of the keys are used in exactly the same way as those on my IBM. The screen opens with a series of icons on the right side, and you click or double click to bring up a word processor or a spreadsheet or whatever. Now, I use a mail program called

(Don Patzsch……..Continued on page 8)

(Don Patzsch……..Continued from page 7)

PINE. The University Network and the Freenet Network have Pine available, and I have been using it for so long I am used to it. To use Pine, I need to telnet to either the USF network or the Freenet. Now in MS Windows, you use telnet directly. But in the Mac, you use the secure version of telnet called ssh. It took me months to learn how to use ssh. I went to the Apple store at the new shopping center near the airport, and I went to various computer user group meetings, but no one seemed interested in using telnet, so I had to read books to find out how it works. A friend from Johns Hopkins came over and showed me how to use "Better Telnet" a program that runs under OS 9, but I wanted to stay with OS X as that is why I bought the Apple Mac. Most programs run just as they do on MS Windows.

Those are the things that went through my mind, and that is what I have been doing. I am sure you are doing more interesting things, and so your articles would be more appropriate than mine. I have three computers on my desk. One is exclusively Mac, one is exclusively Windows, and the last is exclusively Linux. It is very simple to turn on one or the other as they all work with exactly the same functions. The Mac is now sold with OS X on every computer. This should give you an idea of where the industry is going.

Editor: As a follow-up, I asked Don to elaborate of several of his comments. Below are my questions and his answers.

Editor: Why did you once buy only IBM computers but have now switched to Apple?

Let's see—how many years did IBM supply the TPCUG with a beautiful place to hold our meetings? In 1982 I bought an IBM PC because there was no other PC. Since that time IBM has kept me informed of so much information about my computers, I couldn't list all that help. IBM invited me and my wife to the Yacht Club at Disney. The things we were given there are fabulous. There are many other things I could say.

Editor: Why do you use Pine for email?

I prefer the command line for most of my work. I started using Pine many years ago at USF, and it is the mail system on the Freenet. I can do just about anything I want in PINE. Pine was written at the University of Washington, and I went out there to see several places, including the U of W. Pine is a free and open mail program. I have never had a problem with it.

Editor: Why are you so interested in telnet?

I use telnet so I can get to the command line at USF. Also on the Freenet. I can use UNIX programming from there to read much info I can't get any other way. If I were to want to connect to a friend's computer, I can easily run it from a telnet connection. Telnet simply means connect my computer to that one. You can easily use pass through and have several computers around the world at your finger tips at once.

Editor: Why do you dislike Microsoft?

Here is what came today—A story from the press about Microsoft being forced to make changes in Windows XP. They are forced to open up the operating system so that OEM's may put in a different browser or change other things they don't like. MICROSOFT HAD TO BE FORCED BY COURT ACTION TO DO THAT!

Not long ago, Bill Gates and Steve Balmer made a video tape to be presented in court in the suit by the DOJ and some states. Government attorney Boies showed the court the lies that were contained in the tapes. Bill Gates and Steve Balmer would be in jail for contempt of court if they were not able to buy their way out.

Not long ago, we had a Presidential election. One Supreme Court which was mostly Democrats voted for Gore and another Supreme Court, mostly Republicans, voted for Bush.

That is why I believe that money will buy the verdicts and the delays that Microsoft has enjoyed. I

(Don Patzsch……..Continued on page 12)

Looking Back to 1992

From the June 1992 Bits of Blue
by Harvey Bruneau

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Thanks, Jim. For those of you who read the minutes of the May meeting, please believe me when I tell you that I didn't pay Jim any money to write that about me. However, I appreciate the good words from Jim and others about me and our group. Just remember that our group exists solely on the dedication of a small group of volunteers of which I am only one. A sincere attaboy to a board member is one of the few rewards he or she gets for contributing time to our group.

If you missed the May meeting, well you lost. We had two vendor sessions. Randy Johnston of Symantec (you know, those people who bought Norton out) did a bang-up job! The total amount of money collected ($98) for the raffle was the largest I can remember. That speaks a lot for the Symantec products that were donated. Unfortunately, my three bucks didn't win that Norton Desktop for Windows or half of the collected money. Well maybe next month. Our second presentation by John Fought of Datafiex (St. Pete) covered three CAD programs. It was slick to look at the model of a house from the outside and then go inside the house to look out. Of course this was the high end 3D product, but it was neat.

That May meeting was mighty long and I will try not to schedule two vendors at the same time in order that we can all get home at a reasonable time.

The June meeting should be a dandy! Kirk Covert of Microsoft will demo Windows 3.1 and Visual Basic. This is a must see presentation if you are new to the Windows environment or Visual Basic programming language. While I am sure Kirk will field questions, please realize that he is here to demo these programs not to replace the Microsoft support department.

As I mentioned at the last meeting, the management of the building (not IBM) has done away with the security guard to the building. This means that if you are late there is a good chance that you may not get in. Be on time.

Over the last three meetings I have noticed more noise than usual during our meetings. This noise is usually from conversations in the audience. While no one has complained, I feel that I must speak up before this gets out of hand. I personally find it irritating and embarrassing. Please respect the others around you who are trying to listen to the presentation and to the spokesperson providing us with their personal time. If you must carry on a loud lengthy conversation, use the hallway or wait until the break.

Word-processing in Windows on a 14" screen, revisited. Also mentioned at the last meeting, WordPerfect has released an update to WordPerfect for Windows. Of the several new features, there is one that alleviates that eye squinting that I have been whining about for the last several months. It's the new ZOOM feature. This feature allows you to zoom the document in and out to your liking. This means that your 10 point text can look bigger by zooming to 150% or the max of 400%. The latter is a bit much but 150% is easy on the eyeballs. Maybe when I get my new bifocals I can go back to the standard 100%.

Since we are on the subject of word-processing and WordPerfect, we are planning on offering the famous Ed Buzza WordPerfect classes again. At our last board meeting the general feeling was that these classes should be offered the same night and time as the general meeting. The class would last approximately one hour and rejoin the general meeting during its break and after the vendor presentation. If you have questions, concerns or opinions about the class bring them up at the general meeting or leave a message for me or Ed Buzza on the BBS. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

(Scrippy…….Continued from page 3)

be viewed by users of Internet Explorer 5 and later, and users of Netscape 6.1 and later.

All of this for $39, but it is free to try at http://www.scrippy.com/. And, there seem to be a lot of other people interested in Scrippy on the Internet. Just do a search and see what you come up with. There are tutorials and stationery everywhere. Try it and you will see how easy it is to make your email recipients say, "How'd they do that?" ◆

(Spam…….Continued from page 6)

puter that I had shared with all users on the network. Note that I reconnected the XP machine to the network at the same time I did the Me computer, and the virus apparently immediately went to work on both of them, but could only get to that one folder on the XP machine. Norton seemed to have taken care of everything, since none of the offending files were still there. I then did a full system scan with Norton that found no infections.

When I began testing my main programs, all worked except Photoshop. Photoshop would load, but when I tried to open a file, nothing happened. I rebooted the computer, but that didn't help, so I reinstalled Photoshop, and everything was OK. I can't figure

(Spam…….Continued on page 12)

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

tests also. The program recommends specific areas for further study if you missed those related questions. We watched PowerPoint Tutorial (Learning Gateway). New Horizon and Gateway use essentially the same presentation. Gateway's costs less.

The tutorial acquaints the student with the correct terminology so as to make easier understanding in the tech world. One can also get college credits for courses through Element K Course Books that are available for purchase. A student forum opens for group discussions. In fact, you can make a direct connection to the teacher. One may go to Element K website and preview resource books contents. Element K books are in the Learn at Gateway Resource Center. Continuing Education courses with 10 hours are equal to 1 CEU (Continuing Education Unit). Some CEUs are recognized by the American (something or other, my hearing aid did not pick this up) that issues recognition of accomplishments.

As you progress with each sub unit, you are assessed (tested) for each unit and then assessed for all of the units somewhat like a final exam. One may let others use their sign on to access these courses to a limited degree. (I think that may mean others in the office as long as two are not "signed on" at the same time for the same application.) Jenny presented the subject matter very well. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

CAE
Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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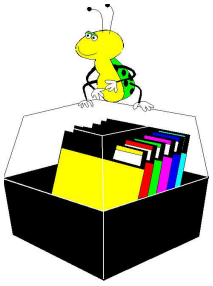
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MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

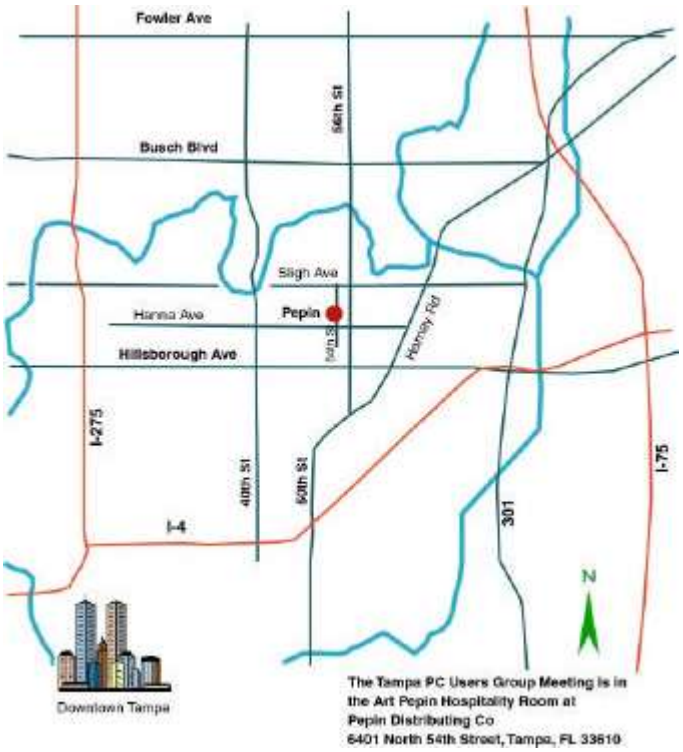


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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Don Patzsch……..Continued from page 8)

could continue to list reasons that I do not like Microsoft and its ways, but let's go to zdnet and read about many businesses that have switched to Linux because they want to get away from Microsoft and its overcharges. Star Office is now actively seeking to outdo Microsoft Word. The Federal government has started to use Star Office. I think anyone who reads about what is going on in the computer industry recognizes that the way Microsoft operates and charges is why people are turning away from Microsoft, as I have. ◆



(Spam……..Continued from page 10)

how Photoshop got damaged, since it should not have been accessible to the virus. Perhaps Norton damaged it somehow in its repair efforts.

My son now has the patch for IIS, but still no anti-virus program for the laptop. He can't bring himself to buy Norton AV for 2000 server at $400. By the way, even if you are running behind a router, if you have port 80 open for a computer running IIS you are at risk--unless you have the IIS patch. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 7 July 2002

Meeting

AgeSpan

Wednesday, July 10, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: AgeSpan (http://www.agespan.com/) will give a program on their approach to computing for older individuals. As usual, we will have our Windows/computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting.

President's Message

By Kevan Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group

The slow, raining days of summer are now in full swing. Or are the days getting cooler as winter starts to cool things off? I look outside and see hot and rainy days and sit inside at my computer and hear about how things are getting colder in Australia (it's winter down under). I have family there and we've been talking through Instant Messaging (IM) quite a bit. I've even been introduced to new family members only through IM. It's the new way to keep in touch with people. I don't seem to be alone either, as many people are discovering the advantages of Right-Now short messages. Even in the workplace an IM can be faster and less disruptive than other methods of contact such as knocking on a door or calling a phone extension. I'd like to hear about your experiences with Instant Messaging too. Please send e-mail to president@tpcug.org if you have any stories or questions.

I'd like to thank you, the group members, for your continued support and meeting attendance. I look forward to seeing you at the next regular meeting! I welcome your comments and suggestions. ◆

August Meeting: To be announced

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Wade Herman, Tampa PC Users Group
wherman1@tampabay.rr.com



Steve Singer

Thanks to Steve Singer for an excellent presentation.

He showed us a neat new telephone. If two people have them, then they can talk to each other any where in the world over the Internet using voice over IP. He also showed the latest in Bluetooth technology. He explained the differences between 80211A and 80211B wireless connections. 80211A is better than B with more range and more privacy and is, of course, more expensive.

He showed some motherboards, one with processor for a little over $100. Also the latest in video cards and processors and the differences in LCD displays.

One interesting item was a portable top of the line computer with everything for $2,000. Everything except a battery. Visit his site at http://morevalu.net. ◆

Opera

By Richard Clary, Tampa PC Users Group
jclary@ij.net

Opera is a browser that runs under Windows, Linux, Mac OS, and Solaris. Recently, Opera Release 6 has received favorable reviews from ZDNet. Being a "software junkie", I decided to try it. On Monday afternoon, I installed and registered Opera. Much to my surprise, on Wednesday morning, I realized that Opera was my browser of choice. I am writing this article with only one week of experience with Opera. I still have much to learn.

Opera installation was straightforward. I purchased the Opera CD ($15) and Opera registration codes ($39) from BMT Micro, Inc. Installation and registration took about 15 minutes, and I was on line with Opera. The advantage of registering Opera is that it removes advertising from Opera.

Opera has a tool to import the Favorites from Internet Explorer (IE) into the Opera Bookmarks. This took about one minute, and all of my IE Favorites were available from Opera.

Opera can operate in either of two modes, Windows on Opera, or Windows on Windows. Windows on Opera is more UNIX-like, while in Windows on Windows mode, Opera has the look and feel of Windows. I prefer the Windows on Windows mode because I can use the Windows Task Bar to manage multiple Opera windows.

The email facility in Opera is limited. There is no tool in Opera to import the Outlook Express (OE) Address Book into the Opera Contacts. Still it was not too difficult to copy and paste some of my OE Address Book to the Opera Contacts. All I ever expect to use Opera email for is to email a link to a page I am viewing.

My environment is as follows:

Windows 98 SE
Intel Celeron processor 400 MHz
RAM 128 MB
Modem 56 kb
Internet Junction, dial up connection.

Opera generally outperforms IE. The tests presented here are not sufficient to quantify the relative performance of Opera and IE, but they are representative of my experience. For this test, I browsed three web sites I visit almost every day with Opera and IE. The sites are Bay News 9, CNN Money, and Daily F1.

Bay News 9 was the simplest test. I simply loaded the first page. Opera took 42 sec. while IE took 51 sec. CNN Money was a little more complicated. I first loaded CNN and then navigated to the business page. Opera took 42 sec while IE took 88 sec.

Daily F1 was the most complicated test. I launched Daily F1, chose the English language version and navigated to four other pages from the main menu. Opera took 43 sec. While IE took 63 sec. This supports my intuition that Opera is a faster browser than IE in my environment.

Opera freely admits that their browser does not support all features of all web pages. They do plan to add support for more features. The only anomaly I have experienced with Opera is that it sometimes shifts columnar data to the left. Opera is not a replacement for IE. For example, McAfee Security Update requires IE.

Security is presented differently in Opera than in IE. Opera informs the user when a transmission is unsecured. By comparison, IE notifies you when you enter and leave a secure site. According to articles in the Support section of the Opera web site, Opera is a secure browser, and is suitable for commercial and financial transactions.

The zoom feature in Opera is the best I have ever seen. Opera will zoom in and out either from the keyboard (+, -, and *) or from a pop up menu on the Address Bar. This is great for me. I only have about six or seven percent of normal eyesight. Opera is the

(Opera……Continued on page 5)

XML-What's that Spell?

By Mike Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group
myankee@ij.net

Extensible Markup Language or XML is a specialized version or variant descendent of Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML), which is the "parent" of HTML. XML allows people working in this language to define their own elements. Some people refer to it as a meta-language, a language used to describe other languages, or to hear some tell it, vocabularies. HTML does not have this functionality. And on the negative side of the ledger with respect to SGML vis-à-vis modern data exchange is the fact that SGML has been around since the 70's. It can't be expected to work in a networked, interactive online application environment. The intent is for XML to work with HTML (& SGML) rather than trying to completely replace them.

XML tries to define a sub-set of SGML which is meant for web use. One early use of XML was Microsoft's Channel Definition Format. It made the assignments of documents for push delivery over the Internet. Push here refers to technology which sends data to users on a regular schedule. XML has different subtypes of it's own: OSD, CDF, Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language or SMIL, Chemical Markup Language-CML, Mathematical Markup Language-MathML.

XML is a plain text file; like HTML, it can be created in Notepad. The language has few rules and these relate only to syntax. For example, all attribute values in XML must be in quotation marks.

In HTML the use of quotation marks for the value of attributes is more flexible. Another rule is that XML is case-sensitive. It does not ignore "white space". The first element of an XML document must be something like this: <?xml version="1.0"?> .

Even though you can write XML with Notepad, you probably don't want to attempt creating a custom parser for each application that you come up with in the same fashion. It also bears mentioning that Microsoft came out with an XML Notepad (a special version of Notepad with the creation of XML files in mind). When Internet Explorer 5 came out it carried full support for the W3C XML standard and came with a built in parser component for XML. A check of the W3C web site indicates that they are still on the XML 1.0 specification. MSXML 2.0 was Microsoft's primary XML processor, and it shipped with IE 5; MSXML 2.0 was freely available as a stand-alone, redistributable file. The W3C says an XML processor is software that can read XML documents and access their structure and content. A parser, by way of review for the writer's benefit, is a program (often part of the compiler) that gets input of various types, and breaks it up into parts that can be processed by other programming elements. The parser frequently is utilized also to check for proper syntax.

HTML uses markup to describe the structure of a document while XML markup is a description of a document's content. HTML and XML both use tags which are words enclosed with <brackets> and attributes e.g., color="olive". HTML spells out what each of these things means, but XML uses the tags to delimit pieces of data; that is, tell where a specific piece of data begins and ends. XML does not require a DTD (Document Type Definition). It can be transformed easily using Extensible Style Language. One basic concept of XML is that data should be exchanged in the form of documents—that is, some sort of form or document (invoice, purchase order, etc.) that non-techie business folks are familiar with, replete with the data that makes it a useful entity.

XML "data islands", a Microsoft concept, can be added to a HTML document. There are two ways to do this that meet syntax constraints:

The XML data can exist inline, surrounded by XML open and close tags.

```
<XML ID="XMLID">
  <XMLDATA>
    <DATA>TEXT</DATA>
  </XMLDATA>
</XML>
```

The **XML** element can have a **SRC** attribute, the value of which is the URL for an XML data source.

```
<XML
SRC="http://localhost/xmlFile.xml"></X
ML>
```

The **XML** element is present in the HTML Document Object Model. It is in the **all** collection and is seen by the browser as just a regular node. The XML data within the **XML** element can then be accessed by calling the **XMLDocument** property on the **XML** element.

(XML.....Continued on page 5)

(XML……..Continued from page 4)

One last note: XML is not just for use in web applications. It is also intended to be a cross-platform medium between different computer systems.

Here are some links:

Http://www.webdeveloper.com/xml/
Http://www.ucc.ie/xml/#spec
Http://www.w3.org/XML/1999/XML-in-10-points
Http://www.w3.org/XML/

These last two are from the World Wide Web Consortium, the people who write the Bible on XML and HTML and DOM, DTD, etc.

For a practical demo don't forget the XML-Search-Amazon-locally on the TPCUG home page. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Steve Fossett's Balloon
From
http://www.spiritoffreedom.com

After, I believe, six attempts, Steve Fossett finally made it around the world. His Bud Light Spirit of Freedom completed the first solo flight around the world.

It was done at an average speed of 70.2 mi/hr and duration of 13 days, 16 hours and 17 minutes. The distance traveled was 19688.3 miles.

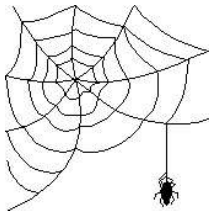
(Opera……..Continued from page 3)

most low vision friendly program I have ever used.

Two other cute features of Opera are sounds and references. You can configure Opera to play WAV files when certain events occur. My Opera says "Hi", "Goodbye", and "You have mail". Also, if you

(Opera……..Continued on page 7)

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
AgeSpan.Com - our July presenter	http://www.agespan.com/
Jazz FM 91	http://www.jazzfm91.com/
kartoo - search engine	http://www.kartoo.com/
http://dns2go.deerfield.com/	http://dns2go.deerfield.com/
Henry B. Plant Museum	http://www.plantmuseum.com/
Picsearch - the search engine for pictures and images	http://www.picsearch.com/
WiseNut search	http://www.wisenut.com/
New Architect - Internet Strategies for Technology Leaders	http://www.newarchitectmag.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin,Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Spam Last month I mentioned that I had enabled Earthlink's spam filter, Spaminator, for my NetCom email account with them, and that it seemed to be working well. I made one factual error in that I said that blocked email was held on their servers for three days before being deleted. It is actually held for 10 days. Right now I have 372 messages being held, an average of 37/day. I don't even bother to check on them anymore, letting Spaminator take care of that. To delete the 372 messages myself I would have to view 19 pages of 20 messages each, selecting all messages and then deleting them.

Of course, some spam is still getting through on that account. Furthermore I can find no such feature for my Road Runner email account. I am probably getting about 50 spam messages a day with Spaminator stopping 37 of them and the other 13 getting past Spaminator or coming in on the Road Runner account. My own spam filter set up in Outlook Express probably catches half of those.

Google AdWords Also last month I mentioned pay for placement in getting web sites listed on the search engines. I described setting up an AdWords account with Google to have an ad appear in a box on the right-hand side of a Google search results page when certain key words were part of the search. The web site owner only pays when someone clicks on those words. And it seemed to be working fine. But apparently Google made a change in their calculation formula since when I checked the statistics at a later date it showed:

Out of 18,801 impressions (views of a page with their ad on it), there were 321 clicks (a 1.7% click rate) with an average cost/click of $187,484.90 for a total cost of $60,182,653.00.

That was somewhat above my budget limit of $5.00/day. Obviously someone didn't do a check with real data after some change was made to the code that calculates this information.

Overture Since the above only got you guaranteed exposure on Google, I later set up an account with Overture (http://www.overture.com) and bid on several key words and phrases. This gets your links placed in the "sponsored links" sections at the top of searches in Overture, Yahoo, and most other search engines.

Since I did the cheaper "self submission", of the material to Overture, I was supposed to have to wait three to five business days, have someone phone me to verify certain credit and other information, have them review the web site and other things. Really, it sounded a bit overdone—and most of it probably never occurred since I never received the phone call—but everything was set up and running over a weekend.

The Overture advertising has only been running for about one day, and has produced only two clicks. Certainly much less than the Google AdWords produced in their first day. At the rate it is going, we will produce far less clicks than required to reach the $20 minimum charge each month. But one day isn't much of a test. After a month we should know if Overture produces results. Of course, I could bid more for some of our key words, and that would get us a lot better position. Even though we had no problem getting on Overture's first page of results with a bid of $.07 for a certain key word, since Yahoo displays only the top three bidders on such a word, we would have to bid $.40/click to be also listed there—with no guarantee that the formerly number three bidder wouldn't up his bid to, say, $.42 for that word.

Telnet Before the World Wide Web there was Telnet. Member Don Patzsch is probably just about the only person left in the U.S. using Telnet, everyone else has moved on to the web when seeking information. I just did a search on Google for "Telnet" and found a site with a directory of "historic" Telnet sites—universities, libraries, governments, etc. Of a random sampling of six of these, none still functioned.

One Telnet site that still functions, though, is at our Tampa/Hillsborough Public Library. Even though they have moved everything to the web including their

(Comments……Continued on page 7)

(Comments…….Continued from page 6)
card catalog, they still maintain their Telnet site. This site used to be the only way to view their card catalog. Originally you had to dial in with a modem directly to the site. Later you could access it via the Internet.

Once connected to the library site, you were presented with a DOS window where you entered key strokes to navigate and retrieve data. There are no mouse clicks and pretty looking pages, and thus it is not used by many other than Don Patzsch—and me. In fact, it is the only Telnet site I use, and I hope the library doesn't discontinue it because every two years or so I use it for a special project of mine.

Those of you have visited my web site, http://www.lamartin.com, are probably familiar with the link there to my database of the collection of old photos of Tampa taken by the Burgert Brothers between the 1890's and the 1960's. I don't have the actual photos, just a database that you can search and about six web pages, each with upwards of 1,000 photo descriptions with links that can be clicked on to take you to the actual photo at the library site.

I did this originally because the only way of getting a listing of such photos was to use the Telnet link to the card catalog, do your search, then copy the photo link to your clipboard, open your browser, paste the link to your browser and then view the photo. At my site you could simply view the information about the photos, choose the one you were interested in and click on it to go to the photo at the library site. That was then, but now the library has moved to the web, and you can do essentially the same thing at the library's site.

While the search feature at my site is now duplicated by the library's search, they still don't have the listing of all the photos available spread over several web pages that you can browse to see if something strikes your interest. For that reason alone, I decided to update my listing of the photos. When I last updated the information about two years ago, there were approximately 5,000 photos online; now there are over 8,500.

So how does one go about getting card catalog information on 8,500 items. You do it by programming an automated Telnet process. When I did this the first time, I wrote a Visual Basic program that interacted with the Windows Telnet program to request the information on each of the Burgert photos and record the results in the Telnet program's log. I did this in batches of, say, 500 items at a time. Next each batch's log file had to have the text parsed for only the information I wanted: Title, Date, Notes, Link. Then everything had to be checked for errors and put in an Access database. It was a lot of work, even with the automation. By the way, for each of the 8,500 plus items, about five Telnet commands needed to be issued to retrieve its data. But that is what computers are good at.

This time around I decided to write new software in Delphi since Delphi has its own Telnet component, and I could, thus, have better control over the process. So I wrote three programs. The first ran the Telnet sessions and saved the results, minus all the returned text that tells Telnet where to position lines on a screen, into a text file of raw results. Then my second program parsed out the information I wanted from this raw text. Finally, my third program took this parsed data and stored it in a database.

I probably won't have my site updated with the new database until after I get this newsletter out. I think this time I will break down the separate HTML pages into date ranges, like all the photos before 1920, etc. ◆

(Opera…….Continued from page 5)
double click a word on a web page, a pop up menu appears. Two options on this menu are Dictionary and Encyclopedia. If you click on either of these options, Opera takes you to an appropriate page on Information Please.

After one week of experience, I believe Opera is the right browser for me. Opera is faster than IE over a dial up connection. I really like the zoom feature of Opera. And Opera is fun. ◆

Looking Back to 1992

From the June 1992 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 6/10/92

Well, we had another good meeting. But, I'm sure I will hear many sighs of relief when I tell you that you won't have to read here about the meeting as much as you normally would. You see, the day after the meeting the index finger of my left hand and a radial saw had an encounter — and my finger lost. No sympathy, please; there has been no great loss — a few hundred $s in emergency room charges, a great deal of inconvenience, and a relatively short report of the last meeting. Don't worry, though, I will be back in usual, verbose form for the next report.

Another difference in this report is that it is not an accurate account of what transpired at the meeting — the program presentations were made at the very beginning of the meeting, followed by news and discussion, instead of the usual opposite sequence. This report is in the normal sequencing.

CLUB NEWS:

Harvey mentioned recent developments with seven! popular programs:

- Procom for Windows is now shipping — and it is getting high marks from industry media.
- Word Perfect for Windows maintenance upgrade is available. Call their 800 number if you are eligible. Cost is S & H - not more than $15, and if you complain of a specific major bug giving you a problem with your current version, you may not have to pay the S & H.
- Harvard Graphics for Windows maintenance upgrade is now available for $15. While I didn't hear specific mention, presumably you can call the HG people for the upgrade.

There was general discussion of upgrading the Bits of Blue BBS with a faster modem. Harvey pointed out that the biggest problem is $$$! We would gladly upgrade to 9600 baud — if someone would donate the modem or the money for same. This is the same problem with other desirable BBS upgrades — like storage space; it is very limited, and we wouldn't have as much as we have were it not for the generosity of our VP, Steve Spears, who donated two 65 MB drives (for which our gratitude has never been publicly expressed — "Steve we really appreciate your gift of the hard drives. It has helped make Bits of Blue more usable for us all, and we appreciate it very much. Thank you!"). If the club is to buy another modem, it is Harvey's view that we should get the 14,400 baud modem. Whichever, the club needs more funds to make such expenditures. Possible sources include: Donations, obtaining more members, selling advertising for the newsletter. What are your thoughts?

A member suggested that we may save money by eliminating our club financed refreshments for break time at the meetings. A vote was taken and the overwhelming majority were in favor of doing away with the refreshments. And so it is! Do not plan on a snack at the next meeting — it won't be there. (See Commentary below.)

Harvey announced that planning was underway for another Word Perfect for DOS class to be given by our Education Director, Ed Buzza. In response to a question raised by our Pres about class frequency and timing, the consensus seemed to be to have the classes every Wednesday evening, except our regular meeting night, from 6-7 PM. Chris, our IBM baby-sitter, indicated that would be OK from IBM's standpoint. Planning for the class will likely be completed at the next board meeting (6/24). More info will follow — watch the BBS.

Harvey announced that the following presentations will be made at the next meeting:

- GeoWorks Pro, to be reviewed by our own Tom Cone. Some say that this program is better than Windows. It is a GUI. I have Geo Works, and it is a nice program. BUT, it is similar to Windows in that it runs only programs tailored for it —

(1992……..Continued on page 9)

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and there aren't many of those I am aware of — or shell to DOS where multitasking is not available. One big advantage is that it will work on just about any computer — from an XT up. I am looking forward with great anticipation to Tom's review of the Pro version.

- Our SYSOP, Kevan Sheridan, is going to update us on using our BBS and the new features/capabilities that have been added recently. I need this very much — I hear comments at the meetings about BBS features about which I know nothing. I look forward to Kevan's presentation as well. I think our next meeting may well turn out to be one of the best yet. I would suggest that you not miss this one.

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

Windows 3.1
Kirk Covert, Regional Sales Rep for Microsoft, was on hand to give a quick review of Windows 3.1. Kirk's review assumed knowledge of Windows 3.0 and he touched on only some of the changes that were made in 3.1. Kirk noted that there are over 1500 changes in 3.1, and he would touch on only a few of them.

Probably the most significant change is that 3.1 is a lot faster (3 - 4 times faster) in all operations than 3.0, including printing. That is a very welcome improvement to all Windows users.

Other significant improvements include:

- Object Linking & Embedding (OLE)
- Alt+Tab program selection
- Scalable outline TrueType fonts (including 13 fonts) and driver that gives WYSIWYG on the screen and high quality print. (Kirk states that TTF saves disk space. Maybe so when compared to fonts for laser printers, or bitmapped fonts, but I do not find that is necessarily true when compared to Adobe Type I or Atech's Fastfonts).
- Has come a long way toward eliminating the infamous UAE'S OF 3.0. You still have unrecoverable application errors, but there is usually some explanation and you no longer have to restart Windows — you are presented with choices: Returning to the application, closing the offending application, or restarting Windows. This gives you the opportunity to perhaps be able to save data in the offending application, and usually avoids the need to close down other applications.
- File Manager has been greatly enhanced and now includes drag & drop capability to copy, move, delete, and print files, and activity programs loaded with any file generated by that application.
- Includes a good tutorial
- Includes quite a few more Icons, as well as a better and easier to use Icon viewer.

Kirk noted that a Technical Resource Kit, which includes some neat programs — such as Smartdrive Monitor, System Monitor and a Graphics Viewer (all popular formats) — was available from Microsoft for $20, including S & H. They looked like nice-to-have programs. If interested, call 1-800-426-9400. Kirk also mentioned that the 32 bit Win NT was on the way without any clue as to timing.

Microsoft Visual Basic:
Kirk continued with his presentation with a brief review of Visual Basic. I am not into programming in any form, so much of what was presented and discussed was beyond me. Here are some impressions I was left with: It is a Windows program and anything written with Visual Basic is compatible with Windows. The program was developed with the user in mind — that is, it is user oriented; Kirk indicated that it was easier than "C." The program includes an Icon maker/editor. Kirk indicated that some knowledge of Basic programming is needed, but not nearly as much as before Visual Basic.

To Kirk and Microsoft, a BIG THANKS for a job well done and for the donation of a copy of Visual Basic.

OVERDUE THANKS:

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

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We have several "unsung heroes" among us that work behind the scenes for our benefit. I think it more than appropriate that at least once in a while we acknowledge their contributions for our benefit and give them a bit of thanks. One was appropriately mentioned by one of our members at the meeting:

- Marylee Bruneau, our Newsletter Editor, who has not only given a lot of time and effort to putting out an informative and interesting newsletter, but she has done an outstanding job in doing so. As our member said at the meeting, she produces a very professional product. And, she continues to make it even better. Marylee, THANK YOU. We really appreciate your efforts and a SUPER job!!
- The other is Chris, our IBM baby-sitter. Chris gives us a lot of time and effort, and most of us aren't aware of any of it. We just take his effort and product for granted — we come to the meeting in some very nice facilities, computers projectors and whatever else all set up for use, and things just sort of click along smoothly. Well, it is not all by accident — Chris makes a very big contribution to make it happen that way. We owe IBM a very big thanks you for use of their facilities, and a similar very big thank you to Chris for all he does in the background to make our meetings so enjoyable and productive. THANK YOU CHRIS and IBM!! We really appreciate all you do for our benefit.

AND THE WINNER IS:

Four software prizes were given away to lucky members with raffle tickets. Microsoft donated Visual Basic. The other three programs were games, the donor of which I am not aware. And there was a nice 50-50 prize. THE LUCKY WINNERS ARE:

Microsoft Visual Basic	Ran Weinberg
Miniature Golf	John Walden
Hill Street Blues	Chuck Bowasox
Tie Break	Barry Yocum
50-50 ($51)	Richard Pope

COMMENTARY:

Those members present at this meeting voted to eliminate the club-financed refreshments that have been provided during break time. I usually enjoy a cookie or two, and the lines are always long with people waiting their turn at the goodies. Yet, when it came time to vote whether or not to keep the goodies, the vote was overwhelmingly NO! Why? I voted against the refreshments. My reasons were many fold:

- We make a big mess, goodies often scattered all over the floors. Someone has to clean that up — guess who, the club volunteers and our host, IBM.
- Secondly, the money the club spends on the refreshments could be used to help finance some

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Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

CAE
Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
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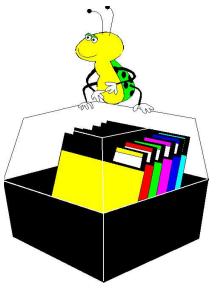
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



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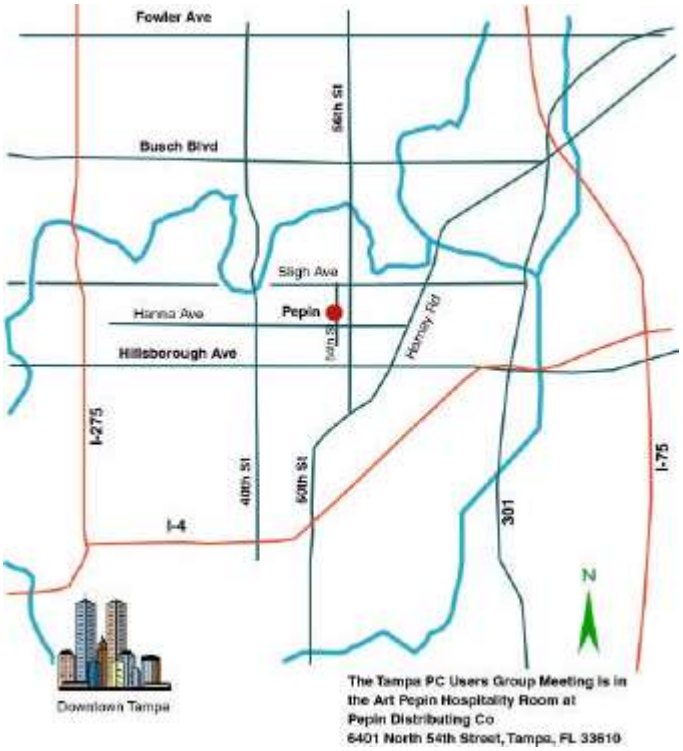
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

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much needed equipment.

- Then, too, we have been consuming 30 minutes or more in break time, principally because it takes a long time for everyone to get through the line. I would rather see that time used for productive purposes (the business at hand, that is) and the meeting be a little shorter in duration. I wouldn't want any less coverage at the meetings, but I would like to see them a little shorter. And I think we need a rest room and stretch break, but it needn't be as long as the break we have been having. I know there are some who come directly from work and except for the snacks at the meeting, get nothing to eat until they get home. I hope they can find another source for a tide-me-over. I think the pluses of eliminating the refreshments at the meetings overwhelm the minuses. What do you think? ◆

Editor's comment: How much would he have written without the finger injury?



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 8 August 2002

Meeting

Protecting your Computer

Wednesday, August 14, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview:



President, Kevan Sheridan

Edgar Duarte will discuss the relationship of your computer to the world…what is in your computer, hardware and software and how it interrelates to the Internet. He will discuss firewalls and how firewalls work and interact with those attempting to get into your system. He will interpret the blocked messages that your firewall reports to you. He will demonstrate zone alarm while connected to the Internet. He will discuss how users around the world come into your computer and use your home or office computer as a staging area for their own manipulative gains.

Edgar is a retired electronics engineer from the federal government. He has an interest in two companies that assist large companies in setting up and maintaining their systems.

As usual, we will have our Windows/computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting. ◆

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September Meeting Topic: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the July Meeting



Craig German

Following our usual announcements and Windows/ computer question and answer period, Craig German of AgeSpan, http://www.agespan.com/, gave us a presentation on AgeSpan's various programs and services for seniors.

These services include a web site with information geared to seniors, a computer with optional touch-screen monitor and special keyboard with oversized letters, and their own dial-up Internet service provider. The latter, according to Craig, uses the Internet business backbone instead of the usual Internet backbone, the result being fewer hops to get to your Internet destination, hence faster service.

Craig was an enthusiastic and polished speaker, and we thank him for his excellent presentation. ◆

Jasc® After Shot™ Premium Edition

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

Well, here I am on vacation at beautiful Indian Rocks Beach, Florida, looking out the window of our condo at an outbreak of red tide… so what better time to take a few minutes from my vacation and tell you about my latest find on the Internet, just free for the download.

Although I am a native Floridian and wouldn't trade our fine state for any other state in the Union, I am not much of a beach-sitting, sun-worshiper. While my wife bakes to a golden-brown medium-rare, I usually bring along my notebook and a couple of programs to test out on the trusty old notebook. I do love to walk along the beach at sunset as the Gulf of Mexico swallows up that big orange ball and click away with my digital camera. A few years back one of the photos actually ended up on the front of our Christmas card. I know that may sound a little strange but if you received one of the cards you'll understand; if not, I took one of the more beautiful sunset shots, and using Jasc's Paint Shop Pro, added a string of colorful beads around the sunset scene, and that became the cover of our Christmas card for that year.

Using that as a segue, just before leaving on vacation this year, I visited http://www.jasc.com to see what, if anything, was new since my last visit and found their latest offering in the view-download-organize-manipulate your digital images world called **After Shot™ Premium Edition**. I figured if it was half as good as Paint Shop Pro has always been, then it would be worth my time to look at it.

System requirements are pretty standard: A Windows-based system using Windows 98 or higher, 64MB of RAM, 60MB of free hard disk space, CDROM drive, etc. Also needed for certain features of the program are QuickTime, Internet Explorer and Adobe Acrobat Reader. They also suggest that your video display be set to True Color (24-bit) so you can view digital images with photographic image quality.

Installation was straightforward as any other Windows-based program except that After Shot "investigates" your system configuration and automatically makes recommendations for installation of additional software, if needed, like the programs mentioned in the previous paragraph.

I suggest the first thing you do is run the After Shot Tour to familiarize yourself with all the features and also check out the tutorials included. When After Shot is started, it opens on the Browse Tab that looks very similar to Windows Explorer with the folders, or directory tree, on the left side and thumbnail views of images on the right. On the left side are four tabs, *Browse, Info, Keywords* and *Search*. From the Browse tab you can create new albums or open existing ones by browsing to the location where the images are stored. While viewing an album you can sort the images in any number of ways, such as name, date, size and type. You can also rename a single image or a batch of images. Double-clicking on any thumbnail opens the image and switches to the Info tab, which gives you image information and camera settings (EXIF data). Although not required, the Info tab allows you to enter image specific titles and descriptions, which can be useful when used by other features of After Shot, like Slide Show and Print and Web Layout tools.

If you take the time to enter information about your images using the Info and Keyword tabs, it sure makes it a lot easier to find what you may be looking for when you click on the Search tab. You can set search criteria such as Image Title, Image Description, Album Title, Album Description, Filename and Album Name.

Jasc divides After Shot into five groups of tools:

Organizational tools – which I discussed above
Acquisition tools – *twain, digital camera* and *card reader support*
Photo Editing tools – *crop, Quick-Fix* (adjust colors, contrast and brightness automatically), *batch*

(After Shot……Continued on page 4)

(After Shot……..Continued from page 3)

process (Quick-Fix: rotate, rename and resize all your pictures with one click of the mouse), *individual image adjustment* (adjust the contrast/brightness, color, hue/saturation, sharpness and equalization of your pictures one at a time) and *quick red-eye removal*.

Sharing tools – *on-line print services* (Shutterfly.com), *print templates* (over 40 easy-to-use print templates, including standard photo sizes like 4x6, 8x10, etc.), *Web* (create web photo albums and you can upload your pages to the Web right from After Shot), *Movies* (instantly turn a series of pictures into a movie that you can save in .MOV format to share with family, friends or business associates. Requires QuickTime to play and view. You can also load, play and add effects to AVI or QuickTime movies.) and *computer screensavers and wallpaper* (use your own digital photos for your computer wallpaper or as a screensaver).

Cool tools – *slide shows* (create slide shows using individually selected photos or entire albums), panoramic views (create panoramas by stitching several photos together), *text* and *sound* (add a soundtrack or captions to your photos, narrate photos, record greetings or write your own captions with After Shot's annotation features).

I've only touched the surface of the ability of After Shot, because **after all, I am on vacation!** But it didn't take long to realize this program is a keeper. Jasc has produced outstanding software in the past and continues to do so with **After Shot™ Premium Edition**. You can download a complete uncrippled trial-version that is good for 30 days from the Jasc site, which should be more than enough time for you to put it through its paces. To keep using the downloaded version after the trial period it will cost you $45, or you can get it in a box for $49. If you already have a collection of digital images, or have a digital camera and are looking for an easy way to get the photos off the camera and into an album to organize, edit and share, then this program is for you. Try it. I think you'll like it. Thanks Jasc, for another fine program! ◆

Death of a Hard Drive

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Of all the computers I have owned, I have never had a hard drive go bad on one until a few days back. Fortunately, it was on a computer that I really don't use for much anymore.

The Story I was looking for the most recent version of a Visual Basic program I had written two to three years ago. I had an installed version of the program that said it was version 1.3.3, but version 1.3.2 was the highest version I could find in my VB projects. All of these older VB projects had been created on a Pentium 166 computer bought around 1996, I think. That computer had been retired to a back room last year when I added a Gateway 1.8 GHz Pentium 4 as my main computer to a Compaq 333 and an IBM ThinkPad used as secondary machines.

At that time, I had, I thought, copied all data files from the old Gateway 166 and the Compaq to the new Gateway. So I didn't really need the old Gateway 166. But it did have installed a collection of older programs that I chose not to transfer to the new Gateway or the Compaq. Programs like WinFaxPro, Corel Draw, Corel Photo-Paint, Micrografx Graphics Suite, Delrina PerForm, Visual Basic 4 (an older 16 bit version). And it did have my first CD Burner and my first scanner—an HP IIcx (original price, $1,000!). So the old computer could have its uses: scanning legal sized documents, which the newer flat bed scanner ($400) could not do, or using Corel Draw to export Draw documents as Adobe Illustrator documents. The same for exporting Corel Photo-Paint files as Tiff's or some other graphic format.

Well, I now needed to check the old computer to see if I could find the VB project. So I stretched network cable to it and turned it on. During the boot it produced a message to the effect that there was a problem with some file names or something on one of the drives. So I rebooted, thinking it was just a one time problem. The next time I was informed that Scandisk, which wanted to run because of an improper shut-

(Death.....Continued on page 5)

(Death…….Continued from page 4)

down, could not run since it could not read some data on drive F. Well, I just opted out of that and moved on and finally got the computer booted to the desktop. But I could tell that things were not running properly. The computer's reactions were real slow. So I ran Scandisk again on the F drive with similar results.

Time for SpinRite. Recall that SpinRite is supposedly like Scandisk on steroids. I booted from the SpinRite floppy and ran the program to check the F drive. It told me that it found four bad clusters and then proceeded to do its thing. Unfortunately, its thing didn't get very far, and it said that it couldn't proceed. So much for SpinRite.

Now drive F is actually on the secondary hard drive in that computer. The main hard drive is partitioned as drives C & E; the secondary drive as drives D, F & G. Logical drives D & G seemed OK, and, of course, the operating system was on the other hard drive entirely. So I still had a computer, but a lot of the programs were installed on drive F.

The more I tried Scandisk on drive F, the worse things got. When I started, I think (unfortunately, I didn't take notes) I could access parts of F with Win-

(Death…….Continued on page 10)

Internet Picture of the Month



AOL's Decline

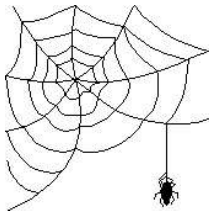
From

http://online.wsj.com

As a reminder of the Internet bubble collapse, we have the stock price of AOL over the past 24 months. AOL now consists of the former AOL Internet service and TimeWarner, which were merged January 11, 2001.

At the time, Time Warner executives were ecstatic. Ted Turner compared the deal to the joy he experienced when he lost his virginity. I bet he now wishes he had his AOL virginity back.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida, Real Estate and Economic Data	http://www.florida-business-data.com/
Conway's Game of Life	http://www.ibiblio.org/lifepatterns/
Dynamic Family Tree	http://www.dftcom2.co.uk/
Tampa News Network	http://www.tampanewsnetwork.com
Florida Cemetery Records	http://www.idreamof.com/cemetery/fl.html
U.S. Universities, by State	http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state
Make your own network cable	http://www.pcnineoneone.com/howto/cat5diy1.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Is the Internet losing its grip? Last month I mentioned I had checked an account with Google for their AdWords advertising campaign and it showed I owed $60,182,653.00—a bit above my $5/day limit. When informed, they responded that it was just a technical error and would be corrected.

This month I have experienced problems with online orders from Gateway and Amazon—again technical problems.

The **Gateway** problem was simply that an order I placed for a replacement keyboard for my new computer (spacebar not working properly) apparently never got placed. After waiting a week, I called them and got a person within one minute. Unfortunately, it took that person and two other people almost an hour to get the keyboard on its way again. My impression is that the people I have dealt with at Gateway over the phone in the past were considerably more efficient than this last group. But my email tells me that a new keyboard is on the way. However, email is not always a true indicator of your order status as my Amazon story indicates.

Amazon.com gives our group a referral few of 15% for books ordered through the link at our site. But on software or electronic items that can have a high price, the fee tops out at $10. Anyway, if I want something that Amazon has and their price is as good as any other reputable (not all online merchants have a good record) seller, then I order from Amazon, except that I purchase most non-technical books from a local bookstore.

I had been looking to upgrade Microsoft Visual Studio to Visual Studio .Net—a $549 item. When I was about ready to buy, I noted that Amazon was selling it for $465, as good a price as I had seen, so it was time to order. And the user group would get $10. Additionally, Microsoft was offering a $300 mail-in rebate for orders placed before September. So the net price was pretty good (I paid $400 with no rebate for the upgrade to Borland's Delphi). Further, on such a large order I was to get free shipping if I didn't mind a few extra days for delivery. That is where I made my mistake.

After placing the order, I would check its status at Amazon every few days. Nothing happened for the first few days, then a message that the order was being prepared for shipping and could not be changed appeared. That stayed there for five days until I lost patience and sent an email to Amazon—and to my surprise received a very quick response that I should ignore what the web site said. The order had shipped. Two days later I got an email message from Amazon saying that my order was delayed and would not ship for awhile. I promptly copied that and sent it with a reply to the first message I had received. A quick response to that said that, like the web site, there were other parts of Amazon that were confused and that my order had indeed been shipped and I should receive it within six days. One hour later the order was delivered by UPS. The next day I got an email from Amazon saying that my order had been shipped.

Does it sound like the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing at Amazon? Two other times in the last four months I have tried to order items from Amazon that the web site said were supposed to normally ship within 24 hours, but which were, in fact, very much out of stock. One was a programming book, *Windows Script Host Programmer's Reference,* and the other was a digital camera. I had to cancel both orders, since right after ordering, I found out that the item would be delayed a couple of extra days, then a week, then not available until the middle of the next month. That was OK for the book, but not the camera. I finally had to give up on the book too, though, because it apparently really is temporarily out of print. I think Amazon had better get their database people on the ball—or hire a few back that they may have fired in a cost cutting move.

Success Online Now to how the Internet can really help you. For years I have done a little electronic/electrical work where I need a small butane torch and 3/32 inch, white, heat shrink tubing. For years I had

(Comments……Continued on page 7)

(Comments……..Continued from page 6)
bought the compressed butane cylinders from RadioShack and the heat shrink tubing from a local electronics store, which closed, then from a local music store, which is now also closed. RadioShack no longer carries the compressed butane cylinders—because of lawsuits, it was suggested—and another local music store said there was no longer much interest by musicians in heat shrink tubing. So, as I have done so much lately, I turned to Google.

An Internet search produced not only the cylinders, but also the site of the manufacturer of them and the torch they went with. Apparently the lawyers have not yet put them out of business. I also found several electronic supply sites offering the size and color of heat shrink tubing I needed. I placed my online orders and had the items within three and five days, respectively.

Visual Studio Dot Net Professional Earlier I mentioned getting VS .net. (See the small dot. That is the way it should be written.) Since Dot Net has been in the news a good bit lately, perhaps a few comments are in order. My first comment is that it is going to take me a year to figure out this new programming environment that combines C++ .net , C# .net Visual Basic .net (and as a free download J# .net) into one development package that installs three GB of stuff on your hard drive. You need Windows NT 4, 2000 or XP Professional as an operating system on the system where you do the installation.

It is described as a platform for building XML Web services and applications. I have been going through the walkthroughs to learn how to do such things using VB .Net as a language. And I can tell you this is not your father's Visual Basic. But as I have more time to devote to it, I am sure it will begin to be easier.

By the way, to run a Windows program created with it requires that the client computer have the .net framework installed. That is a mere 20 + MB download from Microsoft. Perhaps it is already included in XP. So you can see that this will not immediately replace the regular Visual Basic as a programming tool. ◆

Technology Notes

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@helios.acomp.usf.edu

On July 11, 2002 Audio Visual Innovations University 2002 was held at the Saddlebrook Resort in Wesley Chapel, north of Tampa. This is an elegant Technology Expo. Free gourmet breakfast and lunch.

I attended the Emerging Technologies presentation in the Royal Palm West. The presenter had a radio microphone and a very good projector that was connected only to a 110 volt a.c. outlet.

In the projector is a server. I think it was running Linux. The projector sends the presenter an email to show the remaining lamp life and other things. You may change the input to 16 or 32 bps at the podium via radio. The program is transmitted to the projector via radio. No need to go to the projector to check any connections or adjust any controls.

We were told about the newest RS-232 white boards and the 132 bit security that changes encryption data every few seconds. OTC wireless makes the radio equipment for the projector that was in use. Projector Pilot is the name of a setup to add radio to a projector that is older and has none of these functions.

Global Streams' On Q software sends a presentation anywhere. Large corporations are now using IP telephony over the network. This saves long distance via phone lines. Gateway Products builds IP telephony gear.

I picked up perhaps 60 various pieces of literature on the latest and greatest white boards, projectors (I had no idea there were so many manufacturers of projectors now), wireless touch panels, multimedia processors, digital video processors, wireless videoconferencing document stands, etc. It will take weeks of examination of these brochures before I will be familiar with all the new equipment available. Perhaps you will want to attend the show next year. ◆

Looking Back to 1992

From the August 1992 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP

MINUTES OF 7/8/92

This meeting proved that we can improvise when we do not have a scheduled vendor presentation. We did it all in-house this time, and it was a very good, interesting and worthwhile meeting - in very large measure due to the effort and talents of Tom Cone, who gave an excellent rundown on GeoWorks Pro, and our SYSOP, Kevan Sheridan, who gave a rundown on the FIDO Net of which our Bits of Blue BBS is now a part. And, there were a large number of members and guests on hand to take advantage of the opportunity. If you weren't there, you missed another good one. If you are not a "regular" at the meetings, a bit of advice -- you really should be, because every meeting is interesting and packed with useful info.

CLUB NEWS:

Harvey opened the meeting noting the "new look" of the newsletter and soliciting views on same. The response was an approving round of applause. Good work, Mary Lee (and helper Harvey).

Harvey also noted that newsletter volume was at a breakpoint - 200 copies for mail distribution. That is the breakpoint for non-profit mail status (which takes time to arrange) and that the logistics of handling the increasing volume is becoming something of a burden for him and the editor to handle by themselves - in addition to their other club obligations. Be prepared for some changes in the not-too-distant future and to make yourself available to help if you can.

Harvey pointed out that non-current addresses cost the club $8, and deny the affected party the newsletter. Please keep your address on record with the club current. When your address changes, send a change of address to the address shown on the front of this newsletter -- PLEASE!

Our Prez summarized a decision taken at the last meeting to end club-financed refreshments at our regular meetings to make funds available for club needs. Later in the meeting we returned to this subject with a different twist. The funds for the refreshments came from 50% of the proceeds of the sale of "raffle" tickets at our meetings. The other 50% of the proceeds have been given away as one of the raffle prizes. The idea of also retaining this 50% to finance club needs (e.g., a new modem, etc.) was offered as a proposal. Discussion and a vote on this were deferred due to the late hour, but will likely be presented again at the next meeting.

Harvey announced that our Education Director, Ed Buzza, would begin a 4-class series on Word Perfect 5.1 for DOS at 5:45 PM -- 45 minutes before our regular meeting on Sept. 9.

The 2nd and subsequent classes will be held at the same time on our regular meeting nights for Oct., Nov. & Dec.

Each class will be 45 minutes long and will dismiss at 6:30 to rejoin the regular meeting in time for any program reviews that may be scheduled.

Four 45 minute classes is not, of course, enough time to cover a sophisticated program like Word Perfect in great depth. But I caution you to not let this be a deterrence to your taking advantage of this opportunity. ED IS GOOD and will cover a lot of ground in a short time - plus, it will be a good opportunity to ask questions.

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS:

GeoWorks Pro

Our own Tom Cone is an attorney and uses GeoWorks Pro as his "desktop" and he finds it meets his needs very well. Tom decided a rundown of the program at one of our meetings might prove beneficial to others. This meeting was the time - and he gave an excellent rundown of the program, including the following:

It has an environment much like MS Windows, with many of the same kinds of features as Windows. (I believe it is easier to use than Windows.)

One big advantage is that the program will work on an XT. It requires a minimum of 512K RAM (likes 640K), DOS 2.1 or higher, and needs about 7 MB of hard disk space. It will work with just about any monitor, including monochrome and CGA (which gives B&W picture).

Another good benefit is that some users report laser quality print from a 9 dot matrix printer. (I have a 24-pin DM and I do get very good quality out of GeoWorks 1.2, but it is no better than I get from Windows 3.1, Adobe, Powerpak, or Bitstream Facelift, all of which are very good quality.)

The program provides three levels of use: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced:

The BEGINNER level is limited to the desktop features: An excellent planner/scheduler, address book, calculator, note pad/text editor, and a solitaire game and a banner maker.

The INTERMEDIATE level provides the forgoing, plus GeoWrite word processor, GeoDraw drawing program, a scrapbook, and immediate access to DOS at all times. Applications are available thru icons for all documents stored on disk. This level of GeoWorks Pro is locked into a document sub-directory of Geos where documents are stored. Each document is represented by an icon on the screen. Double clicking any document icon will load the application that generated the document, with that document loaded into the application. This level makes available a "waste basket" into which you can move files, individual and up to and including entire directories -- a convenient feature of file maintenance. Another nice feature is capability to store additional info about your individual files, including up

(1992……..Continued on page 9)

(1992…….Continued from page 8)
to 200+ characters of notes (similar to high end word processors). It also provides the capability to group/ungroup files/objects for manipulation, a formatting capability, and file management.

The ADVANCED level provides all of the above. However, instead of being locked into a document directory, a desktop is used, with all applications represented by icons. The desktop is called Geo Manager and is similar in nature to Windows managers. Applications, other than those mentioned above, which appear on the desktop include:

Geo Com; a nice, flexible communications program; and a realities kind of address book with links to Geo Com and the Planner.

GeoWorks Pro can be bundled with Quattro Pro SE, a scaled down, but still powerful version of Quattro Pro. Quattro Pro SE is not a GeoWorks application, but GeoWorks Pro has been designed to allow importing from Quattro Pro SE spreadsheets whatever info you may require.

GeoWrite is somewhat more powerful than WinWrite in that GeoWrite allows use of columns - up to 4. GeoWrite accepts files only in ASCII or GeoWrite. GeoWrite will import a wide variety of graphics, but it does not wrap text around graphics - you can have no text that is not a part of the graphic on the same lines as the graphic.

Other nice features of Geo Works Pro include: A special viewer that allows looking at prospective cut/paste imports into GeoWorks applications; GeoWorks Pro allows shutting down with applications running and files loaded into those applications; it will be returned to that same configuration at next start-up. Another nice feature is the cost; some at the meeting reported purchasing the program for as little as $59. That is cheap. Thanks, Tom, for a super presentation. I have GeoWorks 1.2 and like the program very well, and GeoWorks Pro is a good improvement over that. The biggest problem I have is that, like Windows, it does not have powerful enough built-in programs -- word processors, DTPs, etc. - to meet my needs. Unlike Windows, however, there are no major applications on the market written for GeoWorks Pro. Hence, you are limited to the internal features of GeoWorks Pro and shelling out to DOS to use other applications.

FIDO Net

Kevan Sheridan, our Bits of Blue BBS SYSOP, gave an excellent rundown of the FIDO Net system that our BBS recently joined. A layman's definition of FIDO Net is "a worldwide message network" that allows the exchange of messages between any subscribing BBS anywhere in the world. At present, there are some 17,000 nodes on the FIDO Net. It is a real bargain for us - costing only $3.50 per month for the 10 ECHOs we have subscribed for:

Desqview	Shareware
Novell	QModem
Windows	ZModem
Virus	OS/2
WordPerfect	Disney

Each ECHO on our BBS is limited to the 500 most recent messages. Thus, there are some 5,000 FIDO Net messages on our BBS at all times. That is a LOT of reading. Hence, you are asked to select Only those conferences (ECHOs) you are most interested in and download for subsequent leisure reading, rather than tie up the BBS reading the messages. It should be noted that the Net is designed for the exchange of messages between BBSs and not messages among members of the same BBS; Bits of Blue members sending messages to other BOB members should use the main conference message feature.

For turbo log-on to the BBS, type: (first name) (space) (last name) (space) (password) (space) (!). That will get you to the main menu where you then select Join Conferences. You may then select any conference you desire, with the FIDO Net conferences listed as Public Conferences. M gets you to the QWK mail door. The first time, you must select the compression system you will use (e.g., ZIP) and the conferences you are interested in downloading; these can be changed later if desired. The BBS will keep track of the conferences you select and the messages you download so that the next time you download, only those messages added since your last download of that conference will be downloaded.

You may read the messages on the BBS, but that is not practical and really limits the utility of the BBS for all members. You are asked to download those FIDO Net conferences you are interested in -- it takes a lot less time to download than to read, and you can then read at your leisure. But, you will need an off-line mail reader. The BBS has at least two available:

OLX-TD.EXE for use with DOS, and WINQ200.ZIP for use with Windows. (I believe both have essentially the same features, but I will mention only OLX, which Kevan described.)

When you first crank up OLX (Off-Line Express), you must configure the program to your computer, identifying such as your upload directory, download directory, etc. It is suggested that you set the FIDO Tagline to "Yes". OLX will then allow you to read all messages or selectively read, to print all or selectively print, and/or to save all or individual messages. It is reported to be a nice and easy-to-use program and should meet all your needs in dealing with FIDO Net downloads.

Kevan, you did a super job. I haven't used this new feature yet, but I believe I can do so with confidence after having the benefit of your review of the system. Thanks much, from all of us.

AND THE WINNER IS :

The following had the good fortune of winning some very nice prizes:

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

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Geo Works Pro	Emelie Jurado
Diskette Manager	Calvin Johnson
Box 3 V diskettes	Ruth Redlein
How To Backup Your PC	Bill White & Roger Waters

COMMENTARY:

I recently ordered 0S2/2.0 from a Massachusetts mail order firm, Corporate Software. I received the program after some justifiable delay, due mostly to the need to send in proof of ownership for upgrade price purposes. I had anxiously awaited marketing of 0S2/2.0 after having seen a couple of demos of the program and reading several articles describing the program.

After receiving the program, I used a good bit of scarce "spare time" to read the documentation. I was interested in all of the documentation, especially loading and start-up, with a particular interest in compatibility. I learned much, including that compatibility info was contained in files on the disks -- not much help until I loaded the program. I learned, among other things, that the program included Windows 3.0 and not 3.1. Since 3.1 is a great improvement over 3.0, I wanted to know if 0S2 was compatible with Win 3.1. I also had some other technical questions.

So, I called Tech Support at IBM. I learned that 0S2 was not compatible with Win 3.1. During the course of the conversation, I mentioned disk compression programs. At that point I was also informed that 0S2 was not compatible with any disk compression programs on the market (Stacker, SuperStor, DoubleDisk) and would not recognize the compressed disks. These factors made 0S2/2.0 unsuitable for me.

At that point, I looked at the return documentation from Corporate Software. Among other things, it said it would accept return of only unopened or damaged products. That left me out. I should have read the company's documentation before I opened, you say! It wouldn't have made any difference. I had no reason to believe that I would not want the software -- I had no indication on the surface that the program was not compatible with my setup (to the contrary, compatibility data is imbedded in the program), or contained features I would not want (e.g., Windows 3.0).

So, what are the options: (1) Send in to the producer of any software you have an interest in your complete setup to ascertain compatibility; (2) Buy the software and be stuck with any that you cannot use; (3) Don't buy software from a source that will not permit legitimate returns, including incompatible software. The latter is now my practice, along with complaints to the companies involved in this exercise. I would suggest that all software purchasers give similar thought regarding their purchases. WHAT DO YOU THINK? ◆

(Death…….Continued from page 5)

dows Explorer. Now F was off limits and would hang the computer when you tried to access it.

I talked the problem over with member Merle Nicholson, and the only solution was to first try and simply reformat F using PartitionMagic. However, that couldn't be done either. So the final recourse was to use PartitionMagic to delete F. I did that, and it gave me back smooth operation of the computer—I suppose it was no longer spending time trying to communicate with F.

Before deleting F, I had tried to uninstall the programs installed there, but that was a no go. So after deleting it I tried again. A few allowed me to do this;

(Death…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

CAE
Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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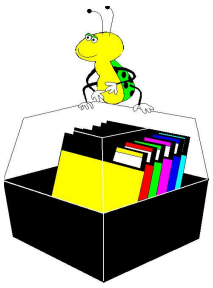
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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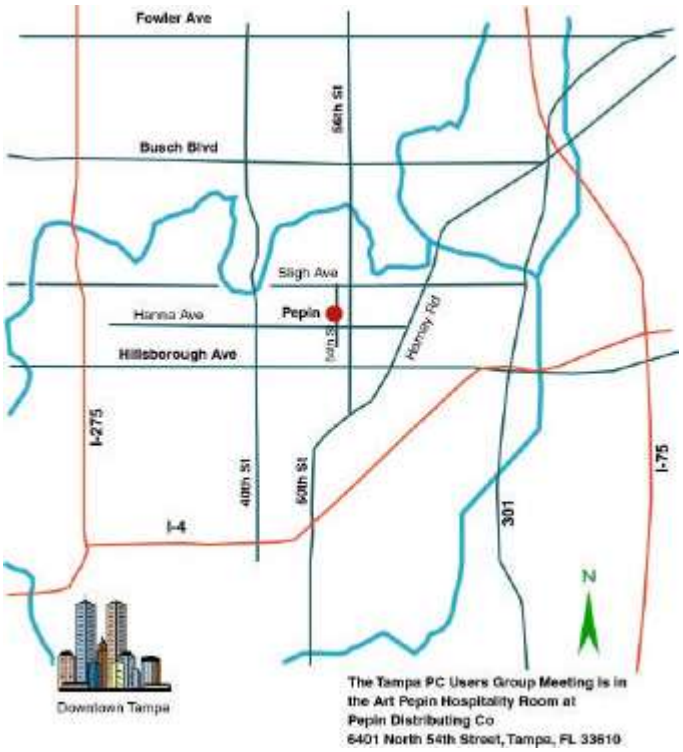
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Death……..Continued from page 10)
others said that they couldn't find their files, but they would remove themselves from the startup menu; and the ones that had used InstallShield as an installation program wouldn't do anything.

I suspect that the rest of the second hard drive will eventually exhibit the same problems. But the original drive is fine, and I still have the old computer—and, by the way, I found that VB project on drive C.

I wonder if letting a computer sit unused for a long time can cause such hard drive problems. I hadn't put power to that computer in several months. I had another computer that I let sit for several months, and then on trying to boot it found that the video card had gone bad. Another older computer that had sat for about six months with no use wouldn't boot properly since it had lost its CMOS data for the hard drive due to a failed CMOS battery.

Anyway, back up your data, because you never know when you are going to need that backup.◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



September in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 9 September 2002

Meeting

Instant Messaging

Wednesday, September 11, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview:

The program this month will be Instant Messaging and Trillian software–Communicate with Flexibility and Style–presented by Kevan Sheridan

Trillian is everything you need for instant messaging. Connect to ICQ®, AOL Instant Messenger(SM), MSN Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger and IRC in a single, sleek and slim interface. Come see how you can use direct, real time e-mail. Trillian is available at http://www.trillian.cc or http://www.ceruleanstudios.com

As usual, we will have our Windows/computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting. ◆



August presenter Edgar Duarte Penaloza

October Meeting Topic: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By Mike Hodges, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
mphs@aol.com

Bruce Register, our program chairman, introduced our speaker, Edgar Duarte Penaloza. Bruce, a Real Estate Appraisal Instructor, had discovered Edgar as a student in one of his Real Estate Appraisal courses. When Bruce discovered that his home PC had been compromised by a mischievous hacker, Bruce engaged Edgar to resolve the problem. Without Bruce's permission or knowledge, Bruce's home PC was being used as a remote server. Having been most impressed by Edgar's knowledge and rapid solution to his home PC security problems, Bruce requested Edgar to come and speak to all of our members.

The presentation again made us realize the value of our membership to keep each of us not only very well informed but also alert to the mischief that hackers can wrought on the unsuspecting PC user. Edgar's presentation was dynamic and thought provoking, and our questions were numerous. Edgar, a Tampa resident, is a principal of a local computer network solutions company, called Data Communications and Computers Corporation. Edgar comes from Colombia, and had for eighteen years previously been employed by the U. S. Postal Service as an electronics engineer.

Before commencing his presentation of Zone Alarm, a firewall security program, Edgar connected to his AOL account from his HP laptop, utilizing a 56K modem and the Internet Explorer browser. Edgar had found the Zone Alarm software when he needed to protect a real time satellite data-link to an expensive oil field control system located in a remote mountainous region of Colombia. Edgar's research for a software protection system led him to a technical seminar being held in Arlington, Texas in 1999. There, Edgar met engineers from Zone Alarm, a small California-based company. Edgar presented a power-point presentation he specifically generated for our meeting.

(Minutes……Continued on page 7)

Hard Drive Replacement

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

A few months ago I started my computer and received the message, "Boot from ATAPI CD-ROM: Disk boot failure, insert system disk and press enter." I went and quickly hit Alt-Ctrl-Del to reboot and see what had happened. Luckily the next boot went without problems, but I would receive the same message from time to time on startup, and I started to debug the drive. I ran the Maxtor utility " Power Max" and received an error code: N80S20, with a reference to "Smart Parameter Failure" and instructions to "Please call Maxtor service and support ...", along with other instructions. I called the toll free number and easily got a service representative. After reading the error codes to them, I was issued a RMA and told I would have a replacement shipped within 3-5 days. This took less than 5 minutes; my only concern was that they could not tell me what was going ***BAD*** with the hard drive or how long it would last.

Boy, was I glad I could still get the computer going by just rebooting. I never had to do Alt-Ctrl-Del more than 3 times, but I could still boot, and I hoped to not lose the defective hard drive until I received the replacement. I had a complete image of the drive on CD's made with Veriatas Simple Backup within 2 months' time and also had Power Quest Drive Image 3, so I was not too concerned.

I received the new hard drive seven days after calling and proceeded to transfer the complete hard drive to the new one. I first tried Drive Image 3 and for some reason never got very far. After starting the program and verifying the drives and determining what needed to get transferred, I would get an error message about " Not Enough Memory" before it would start the transfer, and after 3 tries I gave up on Drive Copy. I have 512 MB of ram and didn't want to bother with finding out why it didn't work, ***yet***. I still had a complete "Restore" using the CD's that I had made using Veritas Simple Backup. I proceeded to doing the complete restore, and, following instructions, I fed my CD's in and finally finished and went to restart as instructed. This was simple to do, as easy as using, say, HP's restore procedure that comes with their computers. I had restored several HP's for people using their restore CD's, and, except that I had many more, 16 in total, the Veritas process was as easy as HP's. I had no problem restarting and went about seeing what I actually had.

After looking at my Desktop and directory structure, I was fairly certain that I had a good Restore and turned off the computer and went to bed. On startup, I received an error about finding Registry problems and went ahead and ran Scanreg from my WinME startup diskette. I restarted and got all the way to the Desktop and then noticed that it appeared different. It looked as if several icons were missing, and, after looking at my directory structure, it appeared I was missing programs. I restarted hoping it would get better. ***It didn't!*** Again, I got the Registry error message and, after using Scanreg from the Startup diskette again, I got to the Desktop. This wasn't promising, as the Desktop showed differently yet again. I have fought Microsoft before so **……** Let me see plans A and B flopped so here goes plan C.

Maxtor includes a utility with its hard drives called Max Blast Plus II, and it not only will check for correct installation and doing format for Fat32, it also has the ability to copy from one drive to another. I had asked the Maxtor representative about this feature when I had originally called and he stated if I had another program such as Drive Copy, I should use it first, noting the Maxtor utility was very basic and not that good. Guess what?

Running the Maxtor copy program took almost the same amount of time as the Restore I had done, was actually easy to follow, and I was able to get to my Desktop without any error messages. COOL. This was looking promising. Nothing appeared to be changed on either the Desktop or the directory structure so I started to check each installed program by starting it. I found two programs that had problems and would not start so I uninstalled each and then reinstalled. It worked and I'm back to where I was. It took about 8 hours total over 3 days to get there, and, again, it was a learning experience. I now have a new 3-year warranty on a new hard drive and "I gained space". The old drive was 60 Gig and 5400-RPM but no longer available, so I got an 80 Gig 7200-RPM hard drive as a replacement. ◆

Norton Clean Sweep 2002

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
mfriendtampa@worldnet.att.net

Recently I began getting messages on my old Dell P166s that I was running out of disk space, so I deleted some programs I no longer needed and got rid of an accumulation of cookies that were of no continuing value and was surprised that very little disk space was actually released. I then deleted the internet cache files but still my hard drive was nearly full.

Using Windows Explorer I reviewed the programs listed there and found some files from programs I had removed using the Add/Remove programs feature of Windows 98se. Apparently these remaining files were not automatically removable. I wanted to remove them to free up hard disk space but I didn't know how to do it safely. I had heard about Norton's Clean Sweep software and decided to see what it could do for me. It turns out the program was selling for $29 at Comp USA with a $25 mail in rebate on items sold through the date of my purchase so I certainly wasn't risking a lot of money by giving it a try. It was my lucky day.

The software box said the program would work with Windows XP, Windows 2000, Windows NT and Windows 98 through Windows me. In my case it required 18MB of hard disk space and I had enough space available for my installation. (The amount of hard disk space and memory needed did vary based on which of the above operating systems was in use.)

The outside of the box touts the product with such phrases as "Frees valuable disk space", "Removes unwanted programs safely and easily", "Gives your computer a one-click cleanup", and "Cleans out internet clutter".

Installation was simple and required a restart of the computer to begin to function. Two new icons appeared on the desktop. One was for the Clean Sweep program and the other was for Fast and Safe Cleanup, as Norton calls it.

The Fast and Safe icon brings up a screen telling you how many bytes of space are available to be safely cleaned up instantly. If you choose to proceed, this feature eliminates all files in your web browsers Web Cache folder. It also cleans internet history files, empties all files in the Windows Recycle Bin, and deletes all temporary files from your Windows/Temp folder. Temporary files are files that other programs have created and not deleted. It also deletes all lost cluster files created by the Windows System utilities CheckDisk and ScanDisk.

These categories can be set by the user by checking the type of file to be cleaned so the user can decide to clean up only the internet history files or only the temporary files by simply selecting the category desired. Each category will reflect the amount of space that choice will free up so the user will know the amount to be freed before making a choice.

The program may also be set to delete all files in selected categories after Windows starts or may be scheduled to delete files in selected categories on a specific day and time.

The Clean Sweep part of the program was of the greatest interest to me. "Safety Sweep" appears to be the default option for Clean Sweep. Individual files are highlighted with a green or amber marker. When "Safety Sweep" is enabled only green highlighted items can be removed by and all selections are automatically backed up in a compressed format and can be restored if needed or desired. "Safety Sweep" can be disabled by the user allowing both green and yellow highlighted items to be selected and backups are optional but highly recommended.

In my situation I found that when I had removed a good-sized database program from the hard drive, a large number of DLL files remained which took up a huge amount of disk space. I had already uninstalled the program using Windows add/install feature but these DLL files remained. I decided to disable "Safety Sweep" and remove all these files, both those marked green and those marked yellow, and to back them up in the event I found it necessary to re-

(Clean.....Continued on page 5)

(Clean……..Continued from page 4)

store them.

I then read the report the software generated about what files it had deleted. As it turned out, there were still a very few files which were marked as "read-only" which were not removed but these utilized only a small amount of disk space and were not a big concern. I then tried other programs on my computer to see if any bells and whistles sounded because of the need for any of the deleted programs but fortunately nothing happened.

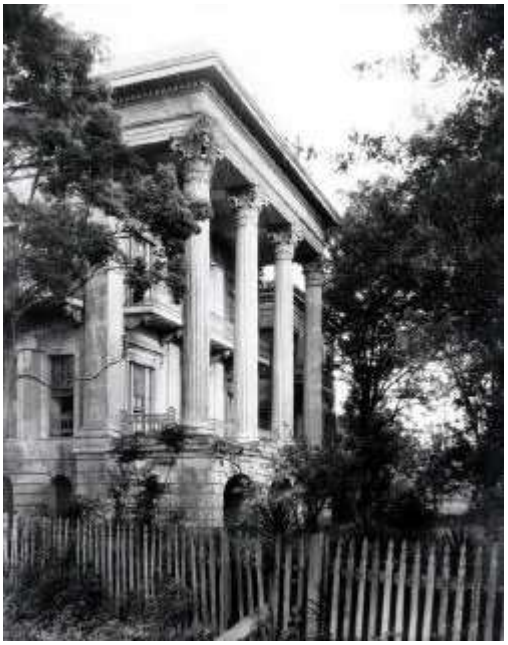
Erring on the side of caution I waited a few days trying other features of my machine and all worked well. Then I went back to Clean Sweep and totally deleted the files that were backed up since these backups were also taking up much of the needed disk space.

Even then the files were sent to the recycle bin and I had to delete them from there as well. I had now recovered over 165MB of space most of which had been used by the database DLL files and was I well pleased with the program.

The program may also be used to eliminate unwanted Active X controls downloaded from a web

(Clean……..Continued on page 10)

Internet Picture of the Month

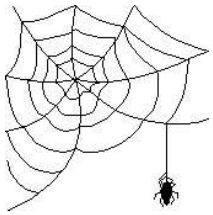


Belle Grove Plantation
From
http://www.lsu.edu/diglib/

The Louisiana State University digital library has many old photographs pertaining to Louisiana, including many plantation structures.

This plantation home, Belle Grove, built in 1857 at the center of a 7,000 acre sugar plantation lasted into the 1950's, eventually succumbing to deteriation and finally a fire in 1952. Costing a fortune to build, with 75 rooms and silver doorknobs, it lasted less than a century.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Computer training	http://www.customguide.com/downloads.htm
LangaList	http://www.langa.com/
Bandwidth Place, Speed Test	http://bandwidthplace.com/speedtest/
Slashdot News for nerds, stuff that matters	http://slashdot.org/
INTERNALMEMOS.COM - Internet's largest collection	http://www.internalmemos.com/memos/
Arthur Avenue Little Italy in The Bronx	http://www.arthuravenuebronx.com/
ASPAlliance.com—ASP.NET Developer Community	http://www.aspalliance.com/
LSU Digital Library	http://www.lsu.edu/diglib/
Earth from Above	http://home.fujifilm.com/efa/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Lightening Wade Herman was to write a last minute article to fill this page of the newsletter. He said that he could relate the rebuilding of his daughter's computer after a lightening strike at her house. He had to replace everything: power supply, hard drive, motherboard, CD drive and modem, all of which he purchased from our friend in the parts business—Steve Singer.

Well, he is going to have to visit Steve Singer again. I know that you will find this almost impossible to believe, but Wade's computer was struck by lightening this afternoon while he was half through the article. Sounds like "the dog ate my homework" story, doesn't it? But I believe him since he lives only a block from me, and shortly before he called me with his tale of woe, I had hurried to shut down my computers and unplug them because of a loud thunder clap that hit with no low rumbles as a prelude. Wade said that his lights flickered when the thunder rolled. A block away mine didn't. I was lucky. By the way, he had a UPS and a surge suppresser between the power and his computer. Of course, there are the phone line and the cable modem, which I am not sure were protected.

Visual Studio .Net As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I have purchased Visual Studio .Net and am attempting to learn it. By the way, Microsoft came through with the $300 rebate in only a couple of weeks. After a month, I can say that I have made better progress than I expected. Recall VS .Net is a programming environment where you can use either C++ .Net, C# .Net, or Visual Basic .Net to write your code. Furthermore, you can create applications either for the desktop or the web. I have been focusing on learning how to use Visual Basic .Net for web applications, since I know Visual Basic and I would like to be able in the future to replace my use of Active Server Page code for web work with VS .Net.

The image at the bottom of this column is a screen capture of the main page of the web application I created. It is actually about 10 applications that can be accessed from this main page.

The data grid example displays a membership database, where you can click on any column to order by that column and where you can add, edit or delete memberships. The interactive calendar allows you to move through the months to see what meetings are scheduled and to also see what memberships are due or coming due.

The next example allows you to send an email from the web-page. It could be to anyone you choose, and it could also have an attachment if I had chosen to combine it with the Upload a File example. The Upload a File example allows you to upload a file from your computer to the web site. The Download a File example allows you to do the opposite—but not by clicking on a link. This method of downloading is of interest if you don't want the downloader to know the location of the file, e.g. if you want to only let them download after they have paid for the file.

The Crystal Report example displays a database style report on a web page. The mailing labels report is a specialized version of such report that would allow you to print one page at a time of labels from the web site (this idea needs a bit of work yet to be made practical).

The Get Web Page example simply scrapes the source code from any web page you indicate. The Address Checker example accesses the Post Office site to check an address and put it in standardized

(Comments……..Continued on page 12)



(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

Zone Alarm is a firewall. A firewall is defined as a system that protects your PC so that nothing can enter your PC from the Internet without your knowledge. A good firewall, however, must distinguish between good and bad traffic. Each PC has its unique IP address. Also, each router has its own IP address. A router is itself a hardware firewall of a limited type. However, a software firewall can provide much greater protection from unwanted traffic than a router alone. An identity search routine can pass through a router to capture a user's PC IP address. Firewall programs are generally very easy to install. Software firewalls nestle between your network card and your Internet connection. The router firewalls are known as NAT firewalls. Advanced hackers can, however, defeat a NAT firewall. Advanced software firewalls utilize Space Packet Inspection (SPI). All transmitted or received data streams are inspected by the software firewall program such that any spaces are closely inspected to detect any inserted packets within the primary data package. The firewall software also inspects to determine the existence of any imbedded "exe" i.e. executable files within the Internet data stream. Often unscrupulous hackers imbed these files in gaming programs and other popular Internet downloads.

Next, Edgar described Trojans and viruses. A virus was defined as a program that attempts to violate the space within a PC and can also reproduce itself out to other PCs. A Trojan is a user-uninvited program that does not reproduce itself but causes mischief within or from your PC. A recently discovered Trojan called BioNet is a Trojan server that exploits the Windows Terminate Process function. The BioNet server permits anyone using the BioNet "Remote control" client on their end to remotely control the victim's machine.

Internet Explorer 6.0 users have been recently cautioned to upgrade to at least version 6.02 to protect from a weakness inherent in the earlier versions of the browser.

The more recent Windows operating systems are considered more secure than the earlier systems. NT and its derivative 2000 operating systems are classified as "administrative state" operating systems whereas the earlier operating systems such as 95, 98 and ME are classified as "fully privilege". The difference between the classifications is that for each installed program an administrative state system requires a verification by you, the administrator, permitting the individual software to be installed, whereas in a fully privileged operating system, no such intervention is required.

A Trojan detector scans your hard drive looking for Trojans. A Trojan program once imbedded in your PC seeks to take control of your operating system. A good firewall program will verify that the incoming ISP is who they claim to be and will also verify that your transmitted IP address is yours and yours alone. Protection in the form of a firewall with a good anti-virus program is highly recommended. Once your firewall has detected an intrusion attempt, it is recommended to reboot your PC. Cable and DSL or other broadband systems are considered particularly vulnerable as users are generally continuously connected to the Internet. Port 53 is the domain name connection.

A "sniffer" is either a small but expensive computer or a piece of software that examines network traffic.

Depending on the type of operating system you use, one can identify your own IP address by inspecting the contents of "winipcfg" or "ipconfig". Use your "accessories" program file to reach DOS Prompt. Type in "ipconfig" or winipcfg" and the IP address will print out for each installed Ethernet adapter.

The Zone Alarm Pro was demonstrated. The firewall software maintains a log of all attempts of Internet data passage. Inspection of the log from Edgar's PC showed that Windows Explorer made many attempts to transmit data. A visit to the site http://www.grc.com, demonstrated that the Zone Alarm program was protecting the Edgar's computer.
Zone Alarm retails for approximately $40. ◆

Looking Back to 1992

From the September 1992 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report
[*Editor's Note: Either Jim Clark or Charles Howe*]

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 8/12/92 –

The focus of this meeting was on IBM's OS/2 Version 2.0 and there was a good turnout to learn what they could about the program. While a few other subjects were discussed, the presentation of OS/2 and the before & after discussion of same occupied about 90% of the evening. Things moved a bit fast for this hard-of-hearing reporter, so I am sure that I will only scratch the surface of what transpired — another reason you should all turn out for these always interesting and worthwhile meetings.

CLUB NEWS

Harvey reminded all present of the Word Perfect 5.1 for DOS classes that are to start next month and continue fo the subsequent three months. They will convene on our regular meeting nights at 5:45. They will be conducted by our own inimitable Ed Buzza. An excellent opportunity for those interested. Please be on time --Ed has a lot of ground to cover in a short time.

Our Prez informed us that our Board is considering trying to start a S for communications -- using a modem and a BBS. A good bit of interest was evident from those present and Don Patzsch, who has been CO-SYSOP and technical answer man for the large Sunshine BBS for a number of years, agreed to lead the SIG. It appears another very worthwhile and productive project is about to get underway. Watch for more info on this.

The president of the Tampa Bay OS/2 User Group was present and invited all interested in OS/2 to join their group which meets from 3-5 PM on the 4th Monday of the month. The next meeting is August 24. The meetings are held at the same place as ours -- room 450 of the Lake Pointe One building (IBM facilities). The group focuses exclusively on OS/2 with a view toward exploring and learning about the many features of OS/2, and to solve user problems with same. For more information, call the group coordinator, Joe Poston, at (813)343-3488. If you are an OS/2 fan, give it a shot.

Steven Woas, the author of a new book, Learning DOS: A Beginners Guide, was on hand. He noted that his new book is a basic treatment of DOS designed specifically for new computer users and is written in easy-to-understand language. It retails for $14.95, but he is making it available to all of our members at 40% off -- or $9. George Pollak of Computers and More was also on hand. George announced that he would make available an internal 14.4 modem w/FAX capability to all members for $229. And, if 10 or more of the modems were purchased by club members, he would donate one to the club for its use. If you are interested, George can be reached at 254-2810 or 251-6833.

INDUSTRY NEWS - Harvey covered quite a few notes of interest from industry news, with several additional contributions from those present. I was able to take sporadic notes on some, including the following items:

Microsoft is getting into the sound card business and reportedly will have one on the market by the end of the year. The reported reason is that it will be a means for Microsoft to help push Windows. If that is true, we could expect very competitive pricing on their card. Those considering buying a sound card might want to wait awhile.

QMS (I believe I heard) is coming out with a 32 page/minute — I repeat 32 page/minute — laser printer. Hey, that is fast! I think I also heard a price of something like $2995 for the machine.

Several of the chip/computer manufacturers are coming out with a 68 MHz line of chips/computers. And, I guess we are still scratching the surface, with much more powerful and faster chips/machines on the horizon.

An upgrade for Harvard graphics was report in the BOB newsletter just a couple of months ago. Well, still another upgrade for Harvard Graphics is out. Wow! (Such rapid changes are not restricted to Harvard Graphics, however.)

PROGRAM PRESENTATION:

We were fortunate to have Chris Mayers, our IBM representative, on hand to give us a presentation on IBM OS/2 Ver. 2.0. 1 am not about to try to cover all that Chris showed us and the many features he pointed out about the program -- it is much too powerful and feature-loaded to do that.

Some compare OS/2 with Microsoft Windows - and to the extent that they both use windows and have graphic interface, and allow multitasking, and have a few other similarities, a comparison can be made. But in reality, comparing OS/2 and Windows is an apple/orange comparison. First off, OS/2 is an operating system, just as DOS and UNIX are operating systems. Windows is not -- it is based on and must have the operating system DOS, and it is subject to the limitations of DOS. Among the many features and capabilities of the OS/2 (Ver. 2.0) program are:

OS/2 includes and will run DOS and Windows and any applications made for them, as well as its own operating system and applications.

OS/2 supports true 32-bit processing, multi-threading and will

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allow up to 240 (yes, two-hundred, forty) virtual DOS windows. That is to say, up to 240 different programs could be run at the same time -- with any mix of DOS, Windows and OS/2 programs.

It would seem that OS/2 gives almost total control of all facets of the environment and desktop, including detailed control of settings for each program and the memory allocated for its use.

It includes a mini-database program and a mini-spreadsheet program which can handle small needs, but neither compares to dB IV or Quatro Pro. It also includes an editor, but does not include a word processor.

The installation program allows considerable latitude in which portions of the program you may load -- or not load. Hence, features loaded and HD space requirements can pretty much be tailored to meet your needs.

OS/2 may be shut down with programs operating, and it will load to that same configuration when next started.

At installation, you can configure your computer as exclusively using the OS/2 operating system; as dual boot where the computer will boot using the same operating system used when last shut down, but will allow you to select the alternative system (OS/2 or DOS) and then reboot; or to make the choice of operating system during start-up each time you start the computer. When in the DOS mode, only DOS supported operations are available to you. When in OS/2, all DOS/Windows/OS/2 operations are available. I believe the main reason the DOS-only option is included is because there are a very few programs that will operate only in a pure DOS environment.

One would think that the documentation for such a powerful program would be quite extensive - and it is. Except, it is not in written form. The written documentation is rather limited, covering primarily installation and information affecting that activity. Program documentation is loaded onto the computer and is available online - and it is very comprehensive and accessible -- with excellent cross-referencing. The index, for example, allows a search feature for any subject and will report all locations where info on that subject can be found - and you can switch immediately to any one of the them.

Online help is super and includes a glossary, a command reference and a tutorial.

Chris covered many other aspects and capabilities of the program, in spite of a glitch which interrupted things, but I did not get notes on them all. It is a super-powerful program and worth consideration by all, including Windows users. It is not all peaches and cream at this point, however. There are a few bugs still, one of which showed up tonight, but IBM's working hard and fast to solve them all. OS/2 Ver. 2.0 includes Windows 3.0, not 3.1, and OS/2 does not recognize disk space controlled by compression programs like Stacker and Super Stor. But, most of these drawbacks will be corrected with an upgrade expected before the end of the year, that rumor has it will be free to Ver. 2.0 owners.

We understand that the producers of Stacker and Super Stor (and presumably the others) will soon have products on the market that will work with OS/2. It is also rumored that Stacker may be included with the OS/2 upgrade -- but I emphasize that that is RUMOR.

Chris reported that requirements to run OS/2 Ver. 2.0 are: 386SX or better; 4 meg of RAM minimum (will operate, but not well), 6 meg gives much improved performance, and 8 meg better still; and a 60 meg hard disk. Loading the complete package takes about 30 meg of HD space. Minimum load takes about 15 meg of space, while a standard loading would take something on the order of 20 meg. Printer driver support is very comprehensive, with 5 HD floppies full of printer drivers supporting just about any printer that is IBM compatible. Video driver support is not as good and OS/2 has drivers only up to standard VGA (8514 mode), and it appears that IBM is going to rely on the many manufacturers of video cards to develop their own drivers.

OS/2 is available at just about any software outlet, or can be purchased from IBM direct (l-800-3IBMOS2). The $49 Windows-upgrade introductory price ended July 31. The Windows-upgrade price is now $79, but one of those present at the meeting stated that a $16 rebate is available (but how and where you can get the rebate, I do not know).

Chris (and IBM), a BIG THANK YOU for the program you donated and for a job very well done, in spite of the computer glitch. You have a very powerful and useful program.

AND THE WINNER IS:

The following members were lucky enough to have a winning ticket at the drawing and won some very nice prizes, with one member winning two prizes:

PCRX (Virus Pgm)	George Pollak
Learning DOS (Book)	D. A. Clary
Turbo C++	Kevan Sheridan
OS/2 Ver. 2.0	D. A. Clary
50/50 ($37)	Charles Howe

(You know, there is something suspicious here. I bought the winning tickets at the meeting, but I didn't win anything. It has been that way for some time. I think I will ask for a congressional investigation. You people had best be a little nicer to me!) ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

New Drives

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@helios.acomp.usf.edu

If you had taken off both sides of your computer so that you could see inside easily, you would notice the prominent cables. The cable that interconnects your drives is a parallel cable which means that it has at least seven wires, and they are arranged in a flat cable with wide connectors.

Now a new system is becoming available, and it is a serial system, which means much smaller cables and much faster transfer of data.

SCSI drives are faster than the ATA drives we have been used to. The new SATA drives are faster and they will change your old 133MBps to perhaps 600 MBps. A real increase in speed. SATA is backward compatible to the present ATA (IDE) drives.

The price is expected to be similar to the present drives. Fiber channel and SCSI drives are more expensive, about four times more expensive. So look for the new drives late this year or early in 2003.

The new computers will have less wiring to hamper the air flow inside your computer and should make the machines less expensive and faster! ◆

(Clean……..Continued from page 5)

page to your computer hard disk and to remove unwanted plug-ins or unwanted cookies. There is also a "live update" procedure for upgrading the software similar to that provided on other Norton products.

I haven't used the product long and haven't yet used all its features but so far it has been a big help in what I wanted to do and I would recommend it to anyone with similar problems. ◆



Clean Sweep

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Imprise/Borland
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

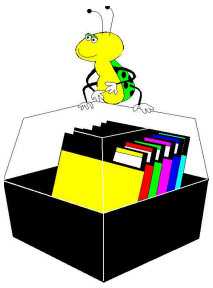
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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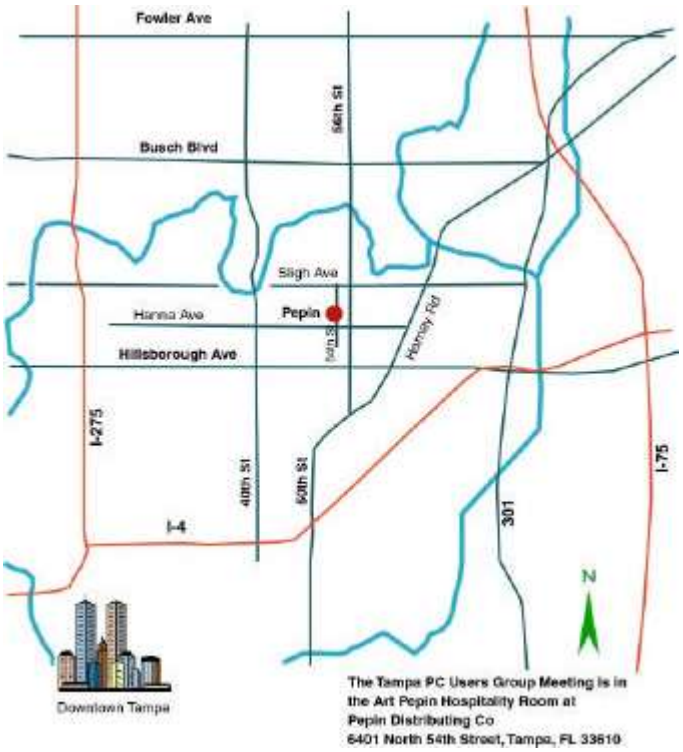
(Comments……..Continued from page 6)

form. The Miscellaneous example contains several small applications that test out various methods of inserting information into a web page.

Before VS .Net, I had done essentially everything above by using either ASP pages with VB script or by using ISAPI DLLs created with Delphi. The advantage of VS .Net is the ease with which it let me do these things—once I had figured out how to do some basic things in the new environment.

Don't expect to see any of this on the web soon, since at present the only place I can run VS .Net web applications is on my own computer, which is fine since I need to do a lot more learning before going live.

As for regular Windows desktop programs created in VS .Net, they will have to wait to be seen away from my computer also, since I will continue to use either Visual Basic or Delphi to write them for anyone else other than myself. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 10 October 2002

Meeting

Programming

Wednesday, October 9, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview:

William LaMartin will present an overview of writing computer programs using Microsoft Visual Basic, Borland Delphi and Microsoft Visual Basic .Net from within Visual Studio .Net.

This will not be a technical presentation, so you will not be inundated with an endless stream of code—just enough to give you a taste of what is happening behind the buttons of a program. The different programming languages will be compared and examples of the final products produced will be shown—some of which you might find useful and can download for free.

As usual, we will have our Windows/computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting. ◆



See page 6 for the story of the cracked Compaq. Did he do it, or did Compaq create its own crack?

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November Meeting Topic: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

At the September meeting, Kevan Sheridan presented a way to consolidate Instant Messaging. Instant Messaging (IM) is a way of talking with someone else on the web by typing a message and sending it immediately while the other person is right there to see it at the moment and answer you back.

Businesses find this works in the customer service section when a caller asks a question that the service rep doesn't have the answer to, but his buddy in the office does. Since they are on the web at the same time, they IM the associate and get the answer, and the caller never has to know who had the actual answer. People like it because they can get an answer fast or send a message right now.

Connect to MSN Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, ICQ and IRC, and most of the time to AOL® Instant Messenger (AIM) in a single interface. What we saw was a way to coordinate all of them through "Trillian". Each person you have entered the name of is shown in your "buddy list", and you can see if they are online, if they have actually done something recently, or might have stepped away from the computer. They can be on any of the six services mentioned and still be managed through Trillian. So you don't have to have your AIM box open and your MSN box open and your Yahoo box open. From that one place, you can talk to any of your buddies if they are available and if there are two or more you can get to an area where the group of you can all IM in the same screen! You cannot, however, chat with someone on one of the systems if you don't have an account on that system set up for instant messaging.

You can block people from seeing that you are online, in case there's someone you don't want sending you messages, or you want to plan a secret party. You can block the whole list from seeing that you are online and do your research without being interrupted by someone sending an IM. You can make the window transparent so it doesn't completely block out the things underneath it on your screen, you can set different sounds, change the look of the box on your desktop, send pictures or links for web sites, and other fancy things, too, that Kevan didn't have time to show us. One other thing he did show is the log feature where your IM words are recorded and saved on your computer. This will help when someone types "Jo's phone number is 555-5555" and you go on chatting and close the IM windows and forgot to note it down.

This will speed and open up communication a lot! Best of all, it is completely free in the version we saw and without ads too! Http://www.trillian.cc will get you there if you want to try it out. ◆

Auto Trip Planning & GPS Routing

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
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Microsoft Streets & Trips 2002
DeLorme Street Atlas USA Deluxe v2.0-2.1
DeLorme Street Atlas USA v8.0

My wife and I enjoy traveling by car. We travel around our state for bicycling sites and canoeing and have family and friends scattered around the U.S. enough that augmenting the experience with travel software has been both practical and enjoyable.

This article is incomplete as a software review. Instead I hope to describe how and why we enjoy it and to help with the selection of products.

We're actively using two trip planning products at the same time. We use the DeLorme Street Atlas USA Deluxe for actively tracking in the car, and the Microsoft Streets & Trips 2002 for route pre-planning. We have three copies of Streets and Trips 2002; one for each of our personal desktops and one for the traveling notebook. We have one copy of Street Atlas USA on the notebook. The GPS unit is attached to the notebook when in the car.

Automobile trip planning and routing uses software (and hardware) to:

1. Plan a trip in advance or modify a trip enroute.
2. Print maps and "Trip Tickets".
3. Provide for any detailed street map or highway needs.
4. Track your current position using GPS, or track your current position along a planned route using GPS.
5. Look up any place, address, business or facility and place it on a map or integrate it into a planned route.
6. Find where you are, where you're going, how to get there and when you'll get there.

Our interest began in 2000 with yet another product, Rand McNally Deluxe Streetfinder 2000, software that included a GPS unit; and although it was interesting, we found it difficult to use, so we switched to Microsoft Streets and Trips 2000 and discarded the Rand McNally. To be fair, I have not looked at Streetfinder since, so I do not know if that product has been improved or not.

We've since upgraded Streets & Trips 2000 twice, to 2001 and 2002. This product has stayed the same through this time with no noticeable changes other than updating the databases. It's the product that we have the most experience with and use it for our standard of comparison. It's relatively inexpensive, too. Our first one was $20 with a $20 rebate. With GPS, Streets & Trips places your location accurately on the map as you travel. It does not actively compare your real track or position to the planned route, so there's no recalculation of how far to get there or when. We have used this software for some major trips including one three week trip of 6300 miles, and we do like the product very much. But I wanted it to track where we were along a route so we'd know how far it is to the next location. So we looked at Street Atlas USA.

I borrowed an unused copy of Street Atlas USA version 7 from a friend, looked at it, mapped ourselves a couple of short trips; compared it to Streets & Trips and removed it because it just did not compare favorably. Although it would track a route, the user interface was very difficult, the graphics were clunky, and it just did not stand up to the quality of Streets & Trips. Then DeLorme came out with Street Atlas USA version 8, and I revived my interest in it. They completely rewrote the user interface, and it bears no resemblance to the previous version. There is also a Deluxe version that I saw in a store that was bundled with a yellow GPS unit in the package for $149. I looked it up on the DeLorme web site and decided I wanted the Deluxe version without the GPS priced $10 more than the standard, searched for anyone that had it, failed to find anyone and then ordered directly from DeLorme. I paid only $10 more than the standard was at CompUSA, so I was happy with the $59 cost. The Deluxe version is 2.0-2.1. It's the Deluxe version of Street Atlas version 8. Isn't there a better way, guys?

I've begun writing this as we're traveling. I'm using MS Word, with Street Atlas also running so I can switch between them as needed while my wife is driving. Right now we're on our way to Chattanooga, then Tampa, having spent a few days in Indianapolis, with a day trip to Chicago. Our total round trip will be about 2450 miles. We just used our software to find a Barnes & Noble Café outside Bowling Green to get a good "café latte" and a scone. We'd never been to Bowling Green, yet we were able to leave the interstate, drive a mile and a half to Barnes & Noble and back with no hesitation or loss of time. Our decision was based simply on a search of candidate cities on our route and my nervous system's demand for caffeine. We simply could not have done this without software and a computer.

HARDWARE

In early 2000 we started traveling with a Compaq Pentium 120MHz notebook and used it on some major trips including a 6300 mile trip in 2001. We had just a few months using a Toshiba Pentium 233 and then purchased our current notebook, a Gateway 1.2GHz Celeron with 256MB memory and a 20G HD ($1,228 shipped to the house). Since there is no Gateway brand car charger available, we also bought a 120 Volt 140 Watt inverter for the car to power the charger cube, and also a power adapter cable for the GPS.

We decided to buy a new notebook to have hard drive space enough to load the entire product CD so that the CD does not have to be in the drive when searching the databases. Both earlier notebooks had very limited disk space. The new one, with 20G, still has 13G left after loading the full databases of both

(Trip……Continued on page 4)

(Trip……..Continued from page 3)
products, along with XP Home and MS Works. Our new machine is very fast for these purposes. Please note that the Pentium 120 was useable for running Streets and Trips in case you can find a used one for a couple of bucks. Ours was free because the previous owner did not want to spend $250 for a new battery. We simply used the car outlet, and shut the notebook down more often, after removing the outlet from the car's ignition switch.

A few words of caution about notebooks. Many now do not have serial and parallel ports. The one we ordered from Gateway would not have had a serial port for our GPS if we hadn't decided to order it at the Gateway store and told the salesman we needed one. The same model Gateway online has no serial port. We would have had to get a much more expensive model, or purchase a new GPS for USB, a very rare item. As it was, the unit also did not have a keyboard/mouse port, but we were prepared for that.

GPS

The GPS, as purchased, pulled its power from the keyboard connector. Fortunately, Rand McNally still sells the GPS and an accessory power cable. Our setup is actually better now because the GPS needs a few minutes to acquire satellites when first powered up, so we leave it plugged into the lighter socket all the time when traveling, except overnight. Many other GPS units are on the market that are suitable for attaching to PCs. Besides the Rand McNally unit, DeLorme sells one bundled with a copy of Street Atlas. The advantage of these two units is price. They don't have any controls or display. They're intended to sit on the dash while you're driving and have no other purpose. Most other GPS models have computer interfaces, and both Streets and Trips and Street Atlas handle several protocols, even some that are specific to particular models. My GPS has one output protocol "NMEA 2", and both software products have "NMEA 2" in the communications setup. I also own a Garmin GPS for our sailing and canoeing. It has two output settings, one being NMEA 2. I don't use this GPS in the car because the Rand NcNally unit is less conspicuous and has an external power cable.

The only place in the car that allows reception from the satellites is on the dash, underneath the sloping windshield. I have it in a small gray felt drawstring sack to make it look less like an electronic device and as a shield from the sun. GPS signals are very weak, so the signal is interrupted by anything overhead and even tall trees to the sides. This has not proven to be a problem but once, when we were looking for a planned turn under the Elevated in Chicago.

THE CAR

I've rewired the cigarette lighter sockets in both our cars, bypassing the ignition switch;,and in the case of our van, directly to the battery, with multiple outlet adapters. All this is not totally necessary, but bypassing the switch we feel is worth the work, and I used heavier wire while I was at it. We leave the system powered up while we're in a restaurant on the road, most times just closing the lid, which immediately turns the screen off (I think.. how do you tell?). The notebook's power settings will also power the screen, processor and hard drive down even while it's on external power, which in this case is our car battery.

HOW WE USE THE SOFTWARE

My wife and I stop frequently while traveling, if only stopping for five minutes, usually to trade off driving. We've found we rarely get fatigued even for a ten hour drive. The notebook sits in the lap of whoever is the passenger at the time. There is room on the floor of the van to put it when there's nothing going on or when leaving the car. The windows are tinted and we use an insulated screen on the windshield and usually drop a towel over it and also take it inside motel rooms.

We use Street Atlas to track our route using GPS tracking. The navigator/passenger uses the software to anticipate events coming up, turns, stops, track how far it is to some event (a turn or a planned stop or traffic merging from another highway is information the driver needs). We use it to locate motels and restaurants in advance. We use it to look up and call hours in advance for hotel reservations, for instance, using our cell phones.

The route is shown on the screen as a map. You zoom in and out showing various levels of details on the map, right down to the corner where you turn, or zooming out to show a whole state if you wish. Street Atlas also has voice announcements warning you of upcoming turns at intervals as you approach. While somewhat useful, the voice announcements are no substitute for a navigator/passenger. When you zoom in, locations of stores, restaurants, exits, services and hotels are shown.

We plan our trip at home on one of our desktop machines using Streets and Trips, sometimes a month in advance, and discuss it for a while, look up scenic locations along the way, plug those stops in with an anticipated length of stay, and use the Internet to research the stops. A good example is this trip we're on. We discovered that we could fit in three hours at Mammoth Cave if we left Chattanooga by 8:00 AM and we could still get to Indianapolis by supper without making our host in Indianapolis wait. It was worth the small amount of work.

With the software, you plug in the Start and End locations, using addresses or place names, then any stops along the way. You have a profile entered that determines the times of day that you start and end. You also can set it so that you do rest stops, say every two hours for 15 minutes. There are profiles that determine how fast you drive on all the various types of roads and set some criteria of a road type preference, so that in our case we may prefer to go a longer distance and stay on interstates. Also, if you put in an average cost of gasoline and your car's miles per gallon, it will estimate your gasoline cost. The software calculates your route, supplies maps, puts a route on the screen and displays or prints written driving instructions.

(Trip.....Continued on page 5)

(Trip…….Continued from page 4)

After the route is planned and before leaving, we take the time to put Start, Stops and End, and Vias into Street Atlas and make any time of day adjustments. This really takes just a few minutes. So far we have not regretted the use of two software packages.

STREETS & TRIPS VS STREET ATLAS USA

I'll try to describe the difference between the two. We like and use both, but it probably is because of our own preferences. And I'll admit that as we use Street Atlas and become more familiar with it, our use of Streets and Trips may diminish.

Streets & Trips is a Microsoft product that *looks* like a Microsoft product. It has all the standard menus and easy to use buttons. It has better graphics than Street Atlas, and produces better presentations if you're printing maps. It is much easier to learn to use, especially if you're a regular computer user and familiar with the operations of Windows. There are a few things that need improving, like the starting and stopping of GPS tracking is buried in the cascading menus instead of being on an exposed button. They've forgotten that you can be operating this in a moving car using a cheesy touch (touchy) pad. Also, it samples the GPS location only every 15 seconds. At 60 MPH, that's 1,320 feet between samples, and sometimes we were confused about which turn to take.

Streets and Trips does have GPS tracking, but it does not interact with a planned route. It leaves all the ETA calculations up to the user to work out in his or her head. And that's all right, I don't have a real problem with that, but it prompted me to look elsewhere. It has a very large database to search,

(Trip…….Continued on page 9)

Internet Picture of the Month

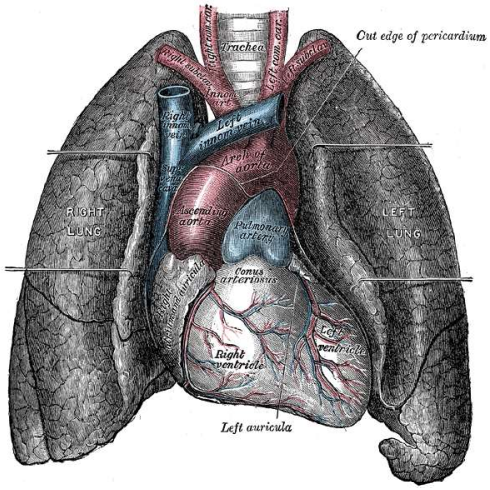
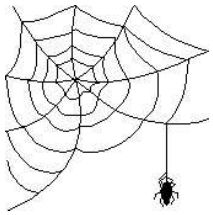


Illustration of the Heart from Gray's Anatomy
at
http://www.bartleby.com/

Bartleby.com offers a great collection of online books. They describe themselves as "The preeminent Internet publisher of literature, reference and verse providing students, researchers and the intellectually curious with unlimited access to books and ionformation on the web, free of charge."

The image is from Gray's *Anatomy of the Human Body.*

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Digital Scanner Reviews	http://www.imaging-resource.com/SCAN1.HTM
Fast Company	http://www.fastcompany.com/
FSU News	http://www.fsunews.com/
Cooking.Com	http://www.cooking.com/
Florida Map Page	http://www.luddist.com/map.html
One thousand years of scientific thought	http://www.timelinescience.org/
Bartleby.com—Great books online	http://www.bartleby.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Warranty on Compaq Laptops

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC User's Group
mfriendtampa@worldnet.att.net

About three months ago I bought a new Compaq Presario model 710 laptop from Comp USA. Before I left the store the salesman tried to sell me a one year maintenance contract. As I recall the cost would have been $149. This contract, as I remember the salesman's explanation, would even cover accidental damage.

Since I had used several laptop computers over a number of years without any damage to the exterior of any of them I really wasn't too concerned about accidental damage to the unit. I have carried laptops on airplanes from Tampa to Baltimore to Miami to Tampa without any problems and safely by car all over the State of Florida so I didn't expect this to be a problem. Also I planned to carry the unit in a carrying case, which should provide reasonable protection. In other words, I have always taken good care of my equipment and expected to continue this practice in the future so why spend another $149 needlessly.

Then one day after I shut down my laptop and closed the top I noticed a small crack down near the rear hinge. "Where did that come from," I wondered as I carefully examined the lid speculating on the cause of this new crack. I had no recollection of bumping the computer case against anything or setting it down hard and I certainly had not banged it against anything when it was not protected in its case. My conclusion was that perhaps there was some fault in the plastic material from which the lid was manufactured. Perhaps, I speculated, the hinge was too tightly connected, placing too much stress on the plastic covering of the top when the screen was widely opened, although I had never heard of this happening with any other laptop I or my associates had used in the past.

At this point I got out the computer's warranty information and dialed the toll free number provided for my use. I went through the usual menu of pressing different numbers on my tone phone until I got to a live person and could describe my problem. I didn't make a note of the exact time this all took but I was pleased that within 10 minutes at the most I had a real person on the line.

The "real" person wanted my name, address and phone number, as well as the model and serial number of my computer. Fortunately, I had written all this information on the material that came with the computer, using the form Compaq provided, even though I had already registered my computer online as soon as I got it hooked up to my Internet provider. Then the "real" person asked me for the date I bought the computer, and I didn't recall that information, although I could have found out by going back through my credit card records. I told her that I had registered my product online and couldn't they find all they needed from the information I gave them then.

Her response to this was that she didn't have my registration information on her computer. "You will have to talk to customer service about that. They have access to that information on their computers." She then told me she would send me a box to pack my computer in for its return to the factory for repairs. She didn't know if the warranty would cover it of not; that is something to discuss with customer service, she added. Then she transferred me to customer service.

The guy that answered the phone in customer service seemed perplexed at my call. He told me that he understood that I was being transferred to him because I was disputing my warranty dates. I explained to him that I was not disputing anything, I just didn't recall the exact date I bought the computer or the date I registered it, and the lady I talked to initially didn't have access to that information on her computer. He then checked and confirmed the registration date of my warranty and confirmed that I had warranty coverage.

Then he advised that I might hear back from the company's repair service telling me they would only repair my computer if I paid them $300 and if this occurred I should call back and talk to someone in customer service because they "Might" be able to help me on this.

I had read the Limited Warranty which stated that "Damage from misuse, abuse or neglect" was not covered. Of course, I feel strongly that I did not misuse, abuse or neglect my computer in any way so I have never felt responsible for this damage.

But now I began to worry that Compaq wasn't going to cover this under their warranty but customer service had given me hope that it wouldn't cost an entire $300. At this point the $149 maintenance policy was looking pretty good but I had already passed on that opportunity several months earlier.

The very next day the box arrived from Airborne Express and I was told I had three days to return it free via Airborne to Compaq. I was only three months into a one year warranty. So I packed the computer as instructed, called Airborne and they picked it up the same day and returned it to Compaq's repair facility in Houston.

Several days passed so I called to check on the status of the repairs. I had been given an account number and the tone phone menu asked that I punch it in. I did so, and the person I got this time required a lot less information than on the first call. They then transferred me to repair service. The lady at repair service asked me for my account number, and I gave it to her. She said, "That is not your account number. An account number has ten digits and that number is only eight digits long." I then explained that this was the only account number I had been given. So then I had to give her the computer model

(Laptop……Continued on page 7)

(Laptop…….Continued from page 6)
and serial number again, and, after putting all this information in her computer, she gave me the 10 digit account number she was using. "Be sure you use this 10 digit number on all calls about this repair." I promised I would do so.

I was then told that my repair was not covered by warranty, and they could either repair it for $300 or send the computer back to me unrepaired. "What do you want us to do?" she asked. Remembering customer service's advice to call them before agreeing to pay $300 for the repair, I told her I would think about it all, call back later in the day and tell her how to handle the repair.

I then dialed the menu again and asked for customer service. Now where is that nice guy who told me to call back to customer service before paying $300 for repairs? Well, he certainly wasn't there this time. The guy I did get politely told me that once repair service has made up their minds on whether to charge for the repairs or not there wasn't anything he could do. I'd just have to pay the $300 if I wanted it fixed.

So once again I dialed the toll free number, and, after the usual wait, I was asked for my account number. Remembering that I now had a 10 digit number I entered that number. The telephone equipment told me that was not a correct account number and to re-enter it. So this time I entered the 8 digit number and I was put through to another real person who routed me back to repair service. When they asked for my account number (I was getting smart by now), I gave them the 10 digit number.

That person said they were getting ready to return my computer un-repaired. I told her that I didn't want it returned until it was repaired and was willing to pay them the $300 they wanted. She then took my credit card information and gave me an order number. Several days later my laptop was returned by Airborne, repaired and seemingly in good order.

I have the impression that HP and Compaq are making a good effort at handling two computer systems for the two newly merged companies of Hewlett Packard and Compaq Computer, which perhaps explains the different account numbers and the inability for some of their personnel to find all needed information on a single computer network. Nonetheless, everyone was friendly and the repairs were handled very efficiently.

And yet I still wonder how strong that plastic is that is used on the cover of those Presario laptops. Nervously, I bought an even better padded carrying case and I still wince every time I open and close the lid and feel it flex slightly at the force necessary to open it fully, hoping I will not ever again see another mysterious crack beginning near one of the rear hinges. I remain convinced that Compaq's design of this convex lid, or the materials used in its construction, is the primary causal factor in the damage sustained by my laptop. ◆

Editor's Comments: Scanner Problems

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

It is nice to see such nice long articles from the members. That way I have to write very little to finishing filling the newsletter. In fact, if I had used 12 point type, the newsletter would probably already be full.

HP PhotoSmart Scanner Revisited In the August 1998 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/august1998/photo_smart-scanner.htm, I wrote about getting a 35 mm negative and slide scanner. In the December 2001 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/december2001/new_computer.htm, I wrote about moving that scanner from a Windows 98 computer to a Windows Me computer and the problems I had in doing that. For Windows Me I had to get a new SCSI card and the new scanning software from HP. But I got it working and did a bit of scanning with it. However, I don't do that much scanning anymore since most of my photos are now taken with my Canon PowerShot G1 digital camera, which I have had for almost two years. But I have many, many black and white negatives, color slides and color negatives that I would like to archive digitally. I scanned in a number of them for my web site and other uses, but I hadn't done a systematic scanning in of everything.

Several weeks back I decided to begin that project. I would scan in the negatives and slides using the PhotoSmart scanner connected to my second computer while doing my normal work on my main computer, which is right next to it. I started with black and white negatives from 1970 (I have earlier stuff than that). These negatives are ones I processed myself and were cut into lengths of 4. I immediately ran into a problem that I had encountered intermittently after installing the scanner on the Windows Me computer. At unpredictable intervals I would get the error message "Hpi_cntr has causes an error in HPI_IH.DLL" and the program would close. Start it back up, scan some number of negative strips, and the error would occur again. I never found a solution—until I moved on to later dated negatives that were cut in lengths of six negative frames to a strip. All of a sudden there were no more error messages.

I believe I know what caused the problem. The scanner is set to scan a maximum of five negative frames. On the strips of four, it sometimes couldn't determine where the end of the fourth frame occurred due to sloppy work with scissors on my part, and that apparently caused the software to crash. When I moved to strips of six frames, it always could determine where the last frame was, in this case the fifth frame. So the problem is solved for negative strips longer than five frames, but what do you do for lengths of four or five. Well, there is no user setting for this, but you can go into the Windows registry and

(Comments…….Continued on page 10)

Looking Back to 1992

From the October 1992 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report
TAMPA IBM USERS GROUP
MINUTES OF 9/9/92

As I sat waiting for the "starting gavel", I noted the gathering of the clan in the very nice facilities IBM makes available to our group and thought how fortunate we are. In addition to these super facilities, we always have a professional presentation of current software by industry reps and/or one of our own, we have a willing source of help with any computer problems we might have, we have access to some excellent training and education in SIGs, we can keep up to date on the most important industry developments. etc., etc., and we get to meet and mingle with some very nice people. And there are always several valuable raffle prizes given away to some lucky members. We always have a nice turnout for our meetings, yet there are many who are members of our group that never attend the meetings. I wonder if they know what they are missing.

CLUB NEWS:

Our Prez informed us of the current SIG on Word Perfect 5.1 for DOS, which was holding one of its classes at the time, and announced that the SIG on Modems & Using the BBS would be held next month -- time and date to be announced. All interested in this group were asked to put their name and phone number on a list — these folks would be contacted by Don Patzsch with the time and place for the SIG. Don Patzsch, a Co-SYSOP for the large Sunshine BBS and an expert in this area, will head up this SIG. Judging from the line of folks waiting to put their name on the list, it is going to be a nice group. Kevan Sheridan, our BOB SYSOP announced that he had ordered our new 14,400 baud modem for the BBS. A 6-8 week delivery is involved, so Kevan is looking toward a Nov/Dec operational date. Club objectives downstream are to add another phone line to the BBS, upgrade the computer to 386 level, and add storage capacity. •We have come a long way, baby—with Kevan's able efforts—and we are going a lot further in the future.

INDUSTRY NEWS:

Harvey informed us of a number of developments in the industry, on only a few of which I was able to get notes.

IBM will be coming out with their new gaggle of PCs next month, including a couple with ISA. A significant part of the announcement is that they will be marketed through national retail outlets, such as Work Place.

New/relocated computer stores: CompuAdd has relocated from its former Fowler location to one on west Hillsborough, west of Dale Mabry, in the same complex as the Sports Authority. A new computer superstore, Computer City, will be going in on Dale Mabry between Kennedy and Cypress.

It appears that at least one company is coming out with a laptop computer that will have a bubble jet printer as an integral part. Harvey observed that that could be a problem -- if you have to have the printer repaired, you would also lose use of the computer. Looks as if that could be handy for the traveler, though.

Software Upgrades:

- MS Money 2.0 will be out next month.
- A new upgrade for Quicken for DOS is on the way. A free upgrade for the Windows version is also out, but you have to ask for it -- so, if you own Quicken for Windows, best get on the phone and make a call to the Quicken folks.
- FoxPro for DOS and a Windows BETA version should be released in October.
- The second interim release (2.0b) for MS Word for Windows will be coming out soon

Still in the software area, the Aldus Corp is perhaps the first major software producer to announce that it will not develop a 32-bit version of PageMaker for IBM's OS2/2.0.

It has been reported that the new Xtree for Windows has some problems. I did not catch all the info, but did hear mention of SuperStor. Check it out before you buy.

Harvey noted that in one of the publications he reviews it had been reported that Windows software now outsells software for DOS. (Think about that just a little bit.)

Speaking of Windows, Harvey observed what could be a very risky situation. In the interest of conserving $$$$ in a multi-computer situation to network and install Windows on the central computer. That's fine, BUT -- what if the central computer goes down? If you are using Windows programs, what do you do???

PROGRAM PRESENTATION

We were again blessed with the expertise and talents of John Johanasmeyer of WordPerfect Corporation, this time to give us a rundown on WP's Presentation program, version 2.0. This was the second Beta version for DOS. A Windows version will be forthcoming later. Its direct competitors are other upper end graphics and presentation programs -- CorelDraw, Applause, Harvard Graphics, to name a few. WP believes that their Presentation package is superior to those of all of their competitors.

It appears to be a super program, but I am not into that kind of software and am not in a position to judge one way or another. I do know that I would like to have some of the capabilities I

(1992……..Continued on page 9)

(1992…….Continued from page 8)
observed. It seemed capable of doing just about anything I could think that anyone would want to do in the way of preparing a computer presentation -- and do it easily and well. Some of the features I noted are:

- Will produce and handle (import and export) both bitmapped and vector based graphics, and the listing of supported graphics formats is extensive.
- Includes a bitmap editor that allows editing of bitmapped graphics in fine detail.
- Allows manipulating both text and graphics in just about any manner one could imagine.
- Includes a WP 5.1 spell checker.
- Includes a "John Madden" draw capability — you know, redraw the play on a rerun of the play
- Supports .WAV and .MID, and includes hundreds of .MID files and the capability to create .WAV. While it will use the computer sound system, a sound card is certainly desirable to take advantage of this feature.
- Automated or manual presentation of slide shows, and one can quickly and easily reorganize a presentation.
- The output of the program can be transported to and used from another computer via floppy. The other computer need not have Presentation loaded, for the runtime program Presentation will load onto the floppy along with the output will allow presentation with the other computer. Interestingly, the file size per slide seems very small indeed, and the runtime package is only about 75K. So, a single 1.4 Mb floppy would hold a very large presentation. Runtime does not give the capability to modify the presentation, however, so the presentation you take in this manner is the only presentation you can give.
- Includes over 1000 pieces of clip art.

I don't recall any mention of supported text formats, but I did note that Presentation 2.0 would accept directly text input from any version on \VP 5.1.

I don't recall any mention of equipment requirements beyond needing about 15 Mb of hard disk space. Just as with any graphics package, the faster your computer, the better off you are. While Presentation may run on a 286, I would guess that you would want a 386 or better, or you may be twiddling your thumbs a good bit. I believe John was using a 386/40 laptop on which the program ran very well. The retail price is set at $495, and no clues were available about expected street price.

John did a great job of presenting what appears a super program, and I haven't done justice to either. Many thanks, John, (and Word Perfect) for an entertaining and informative presentation (and all the goodies, of course) -- another WordPerfect job VERY WELL DONE!!
AND THE WINNERS ARE:

With the generosity of WP Corp and GeoWorks, there were quite a few raffle prizes this meeting, and the lucky winners are:

WP Cap	William Coleman
	Martin Miller
	Kevan Sheridan
	Roger Waters
WP Shirt	Larry Anders
	Susan Atwood
Box 3.5 disks	Larry Anders
WP Graphics Lib	Roger Eggleston
GeoWorksPro	Cheryl Pett
Money Matters	Larry Anders
50/50 ($36)	Chuck Himes ◆

(Trip…….Continued from page 5)
and it rarely has disappointed me.

Street Atlas USA is harder to use and to learn to use, but it offers more features. The user interface is not "Windows-like". Everything is on tabs at the bottom. It's really a clever, unique way to pack a large amount of information in a small space, but it is unlike any other program you've used.

The first couple of times I used it on short trips I thought I would discard it and revert back to Streets and Trips, but I'm glad I persevered. It took this one really long trip of 2450 miles to come to the realization that it would do everything that Streets and Trips will do but only after a good many hours of practice. The database search and information it supplies are equally as good as Streets and Trips, just selected and presented differently. In addition, it tracks the progress of your trip against the planned trip, and gives you a continuous re-estimate of your ETA for the next stops and destination. It announces upcoming turns and will announce on demand (press F5). It even tells you when you're "off route". It also has voice recognition for a large set of commands, like "next turn" being the same as pressing F5. I have not used the voice recognition feature.

One thing that annoys me is when your route backtracks. Say you plan to leave the interstate, go a mile down the road with some turns and return to the interstate the same way. It (understandably) doesn't know whether it's coming or going, and announces the turns as if you're doing both at once, doing double announcements. We've learned to hot-key the sound off as the solution. Sometimes it selects a route that doesn't make sense where it may leave the interstate, go down a road

(Trip…….Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

Virus Alerts - Hoax or Real Threat?

By Jenny Leitzke - Membership Coordinator
Info@tpcug.org

Thank you to Computer Users for your defense against everyday computer attackers. Many of you receive emails addressing such concerns of new viruses that could very well destroy our beloved computer, and many of you act quickly to get that information out to as many people as you know. Please check these email alerts you receive to verify them as a real threat before you take any action. Much of the harm is by hoax emails, which are designed to jam up email servers with unnecessary emails. McAfee and other virus software companies place important information on their sites about which emails do address Real viruses threats or just Hoax chain letters, to get everyone alarmed of an impending threat. Book mark any one of the three sites below as sources to check when you receive these emails.

McAfee Security Alert Page
http://vil.nai.com/vil/content/alert.htm

Symantec/Norton
http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html

Topic Alert Verification Page
http://www.topic.on.ca/VirusOrHoax/

Note: "It Takes Guts to Say 'Jesus'" is just another hoax message that has found its way into the netstream.

Another VERY easy way (and we love easy) is to go to www.google.com and type in the name of the warning you just received. You will easily find several entries that will instantly tell you who has already verified your email as real or hoax.

Thanks for looking out for each other. Friends and Family are the best for watching our backs. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 7)
make the change there to either 4 or 3, whichever produces error free scanning.

I tired of negative scanning, put it away for awhile and moved on to some color slides. I scanned in about 270 and everything seemed to be going fine until I decided to take a close look at my results with Photoshop. Horrors. Under enlargement, they were out of focus with red or green borders around certain parts of the photo. And a random sample showed that all the slide scans were this way. I recalled having had this problem before, but couldn't recall what the solution was other than to recalibrate the scanner. That did no good. Time for the Usenet newsgroup search on Google. I got nothing there—probably because I didn't phrase the question correctly. Time to put a question to the rec.photo.digital newsgroup directly. I had my answer within a couple of hours from two different individuals. The solution: simply unplug the scanner from its power source for one minute and replug it and everything should be fine. It was. How simple, but I couldn't recall it.

With all my problems I thought that I might need to buy a new scanner, but for the time being that does not seem necessary. A lucky observation and the Usenet newsgroups have made the old scanner usable, I am back to rescanning my color slides, and the results look good. But a new Nikon CoolScan IV was looking mighty nice—except for the $800 price. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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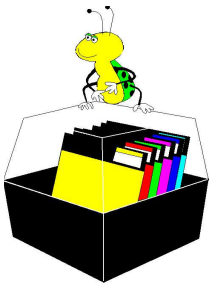
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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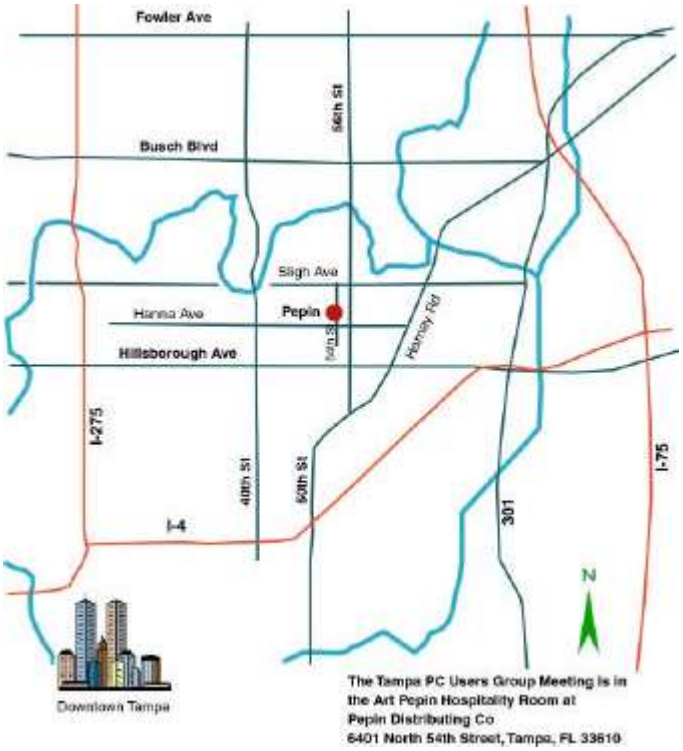
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(Trip……..Continued from page 9)
for a while and return back onto the interstate. It's usually easy to fix by adding a "Via" to force the route. So after it plans the route, you need to review it closely and correct for this. After having coped with it a couple of times, it isn't too big a deal. It is more difficult to add Start, Stops and End. You cannot convert a Stop to an End for instance. You must delete it and recreate it. Streets & Trips does a much better job on this.

They have announced a new release of this product, for $35 for registered owners. Added is the ability to split the screen so that you can track your position at two levels of details, and for that reason alone, I'll upgrade it.

To conclude , if my needs were more casual, and I did not value continuous GPS comparison to a planned route, I would use Streets & Trips, otherwise I'd use Street Atlas USA. My own solution is to use both. You can run both at the same time, but do not attempt to have the GPS tracking on both. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 11 November 2002

Meeting

Smart Computing

Wednesday, November 13, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview:

Kevan Sheridan will present a demonstration package provided by Smart Computing Magazine entitled Smart Computing in Plain English: Your Ultimate Computing and Technology Resource. Smart Computing is offering a special program for the User Group community.

As usual, we will have our Windows/computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting. ◆

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Our most faithful attendee at meetings— the moose

December Meeting Topic: Christmas Party

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

The meeting started with discussions of Windows situations and a new virus, "bugbear". Norton Anti-Virus will find it. Be sure the update your Norton AntiVirus daily!

We discussed http://www.mdhub.com. It is a site through which, if the doctor is registered with the hub, you can contact your doctor.

Contact Mary Sheridan for information on winning a trip to New York having to do with Mindshare starting a program about "what you do with your computer".

The main presentation was an awesome showing of how programming works. Our presenter thought maybe he'd scared members away with the prospect of watching how programming is done. "Boring and complicated" seemed to be the expected lot of those of us in attendance. But William LaMartin showed us how programming works using Visual Basic, Delphi and Visual Studio .Net.

It was a simplified look, and we saw how it worked and just how much effort goes into creating a little button for us to click to add a name or a picture or some other feature to an application. A really cool part was seeing how Visual Studio. Net programs can be written and used on the web.

He also shared some VB and Delphi programs he had built and stored for download on his web site. These programs can be downloaded by any of us to use. One was a voice recording and repetition program, lots of ways to use that. My canaries still don't sing to it, they continue to sing to the noise of the water faucet from the kitchen, but I might just use those canary noises I can capture for my wav dings and pings for different actions on my computer. Just a thought. Anyway, it's at

(Minutes……..Continued on page 10)

A Few Windows Tips and Tricks

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
tim@free-market.net



I had the happy opportunity recently to go to a continuing legal education course where the subject was… technology in the office! Computers! Scanners! Software! Great stuff!

But first, I need everyone to know how enthralled I was to be meeting at the Pepin Distributing facility: I wanted to write an entire article singing paens just to that! You see, I hadn't been to a TPCUG meeting for quite a while (I admit it, I admit it), but I really **did** want to see Kevan Sheridan's presentation regarding Trillion and the various instant messaging products. Okay, okay, I figured to myself, I'll go and sit in a bare concrete room on an uncomfortable folding steel chair (I mean, what **else** would you expect at a beer distributing headquarters?). And man was I delighted with what I found! That place is **nice**. It's comfortable, open, convenient, easy to give presentations (although some might complain that the walls are somewhat horny—see the page 1 photo)…but who **is** the guy who nabbed that facility for our meetings? My hat is **off** to you, good buddy, whoever you are!

Now. Ahem (cough, cough). You wanted to hear about computer and technology stuff. Well…yes, let's talk.

How about a "pen drive," which is a little thingie that looks like a fat pen (it even has a little top with a pocket-clip to put in your shirt pocket) and plugs into one of your USB ports? These things come in various storage sizes from 32 meg to 1 Gig (!), ranging in price from about $60 for the itsy bitsy teeny weeny one to about $1,200 for the Gigabyte boomer (plus about $25 for the little docking station to transfer the data from the fat pen to your own machine). Fascinating! You can move your data around in your shirt pocket now.

Here's another cute little innovation, called "Activewords" (go check it out at http://www.activewords.com). What this service does is make it possible for you to type in a word or click on a word **anywhere you may be on your computer screen**, and the word you write or click will start a program for you. It's like a "universal macro." In fact, the company calls this little ditty a "universal hypertext link" (UHL), and says, "To use a UHL you simply select or type a word or phrase and trigger its UHL by pressing the ActiveWords key (any Function-Key you designate). You can activate a UHL anywhere...anytime...in any application, document or view." Sounds strange, doesn't it? But the concept is really pretty simple: The service replaces icons with words (and most us of know one or two hundred thousand words, as opposed to…how many icons, a few dozen?), and makes it easy and "universal" to invoke the macro. You want to check your stocks, and you happen to be doing a word document? You type in "stocks," hit your chosen F-key, and **bang**, you're there. You want to check out the weather, and you happen to be working on a spreadsheet? Just type in "weather" and hit that F-key, and you're at the weather site. Sounds intriguing. Costs $30 per year, or $2.50 per month. I don't know about the rest of you, but I might try it.

We all love spam, right? Not! **You** may like spam, but I hate spam…or should I say Ihatespam? Because that's the name of a nifty new product that is said to be a very good spam-buster. It filters those irritating unsolicited commercial emails out of your inbox! It's on the web now for sale at http://www.sunbelt-software.com/product.cfm?id=930, courtesy of Sunbelt Software, for $20. Sunbelt Software says, "No configuration or setup needed, install it once and it works! Works with Outlook and Outlook Express. AOL version coming soon. Does not lose emails you really need to see." Sounds great. And I heard a guy talk about it that said it was the

(Tips……Continued on page 4)

(Tips……Continued from page 3)
"ultimate spam-buster." The price is certainly right. Will someone in the TPCUG buy a copy and see if it works as well as advertised?

Then there's the good old Ad-Aware program that sniffs out secret advertising programs running surreptitiously on your computer. If you don't have it, you may be surprised to see how much junk and running programs advertisers have slipped into your machine while you weren't looking. Here's how the progenitors of Ad-Aware describe it: "Ad-Aware is a multi-spyware removal utility that scans your memory, registry, and hard drives for known spyware and scumware components and lets you remove them safely." I like that: "Scumware." Notice how it rolls off your tongue? And get this: This little baby is available from Lavasoft for **FREE** download. The. Price. Is. **Right**! Go find out all about it at http://www.lavasoftusa.com/.

Ahhh…is not the computer industry and scientific community just **wonderful**? Things happening every day, and every day gets better, better, better, in every way! (I think I feel a **song** coming on….)

Lessee (rummaging around in giant toy bag), what else have we got here. Aha! Here's another little free gem, by a software guru named Mike Lin. It's a tiny little program that lets you, and **only** you, control what's starting up in your main launch pad when you turn on your computer. Here's what Mike says about it: "Startup Control Panel is a nifty control panel applet that allows you to easily configure which programs run when your computer starts. It's simple to use and, like all my programs, is very small and won't burden your system. A valuable tool for system administrators!" "Small?" Hell, I downloaded the thing in about 4 seconds flat. Go get it at http://www.mlin.net/StartupCPL.shtml.

Running out of space on your hard drive? Remember when a 5 meg drive cost about $2,000? Remember when there weren't any external hard drives? Fast forward to today: If you need some extra disk space, how about the radically cool Maxtor 3000LE. For as low as $135 you get 120 GIGAbytes (yeah, you read that right) on an external drive that connects via USB port and runs at 5400 rpm (low noise level). The thing looks **way** cool: Red around the outside, white in the center part, a cross between a giant ladybug and some kind of dangerous poisonous **frog**. Great for backing up and taking the hard drive home with you.

PCPitstop is an online diagnostic service run by PC Magazine. Here's the gen on it from the site: "At PC Pitstop we can help you get your PC in top form -- running fast, stable and secure. PC Pitstop runs diagnostics on your PC to identify things that might help improve performance. The process is fully automated, private and safe. The test will not change any settings on your PC. After the diagnostics run, we'll give you tips for improving all kinds of things. Best of all, the service is free!" Try it out at http://www.pcpitstop.com/.

We all know about the magazine Consumer Reports, right? It's one of the greatest resources in the world if you're contemplating buying, building, getting, renting, finding, or using…something…**anything**! Well, it's online now. Big deal, right? Wrong. For an annual subscription charge of $20, here's what you get (in the words of the Consumer Reports people): "Subscribing to ConsumerReports.org gives you instant, unlimited access to our exclusive unbiased Ratings and recommendations of products and services! Anytime you need it, you can get detailed buying information on ALL the products we've tested over the past four years. That's thousands of products in hundreds of categories! What makes us different? Unlike other web sites, we give you completely objective product information. We buy all the products we test right off the shelf, and we accept no advertising or sponsorship of any kind. So the information you get is completely unbiased and accurate." Good stuff. In **addition**, they've got a new and used car price guide; a Travel Letter; a Health Newsletter; and a Consumer Reports Book Store. Check it out at http://www.consumerreports.org.

Finally, I wish to tell you all about this incredible little service that I've glommed onto called "Go to My PC." (no kidding). It's an online service that lets you get into and run your remote computer from no

(Tips.....Continued on page 5)

(Tips…….Continued from page 4)

matter **where** you are…over the Internet. The service costs $20 a month or $180 a year, and has a free trial period. You'll get hooked if you try it, just like I did. I only live five minutes from my office, but this thing is **so** handy and convenient that I immediately signed up with them for a year. You're in New York and need to get into your office computer? No problem. You're in Russia or Bora Bora, and need some file from your home office machine? No problem. It's really pretty cool, and I've gotten into the habit of leaving my office computer turned on at night so I can go home and just continue doing my office work after dinner. It's quite amazing. Once you're signed on (with multiple passwords), your remote computer screen pops up, and it's like you're sitting right there at your remote computer itself. Do whatever you want. Very handy. (Caveat: You need some kind of broadband connection to get the most out of this little baby… but it's well worth it.) Check it out at https://www.gotomypc.com/.

Enough! Enough babbling! As we all know, there are countless little tricks and gadgets and services that we all run across now and again. Well take the time to jot'em down and send a little description to Fred so he can include them in the newsletter! Great stuff! Share the wealth! Let's help each other out! TPCUG! ◆

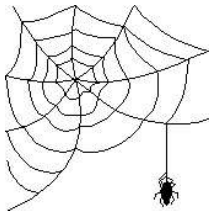
Internet Picture of the Month



Tretower Castle
at
http://www.castlewales.com/home.html

At the Castles of Wales site they "explore some of the most impressive monuments of the Middle Ages, the medieval Castles of Wales. Along the way we hope to educate and enlighten you about not only Welsh castles, but about the unique history of the Welsh people and their centuries-old struggle to preserve their land, their culture, and their ancient language."

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
JAP -- ANONYMITY & PRIVACY	http://anon.inf.tu-dresden.de/index_en.html
Ads.com —Watch TV ads and commercials online	http://www.ads.com/ads/index.jsp
Planet Source Code—public source code database	http://www.pscode.com/
Mathtools.net—technical computing portal	http://www.mathtools.net/
The Castles of Wales	http://www.castlewales.com/home.html
Harvest Book Company	http://www.harvestbooks.com/
Tractor Supply—need something for the farm?	http://www.tractorsupplyco.com/
Skeptic's Annotated Bible	http://www.skepticsannotatedbible.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

My 2003 Wall Calendar

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
mfriendtampa@worldnet.att.net

Recently I read an article in a digital camera magazine suggesting various ways of exhibiting photographs. One that caught my fancy was the preparation of a Wall Calendar for friends and family. The article I read said interested persons could find templates for such calendars on the Internet so I cranked up Google and went shopping.

Frankly, it wasn't as easy as it sounded to find the type of calendar template I wanted. I wanted something that looked nice enough for business or personal use. That left out those shaped like hearts or those with funny picture motifs. Finally I found what I wanted at a site called http://mycustomcalendars.com.

The camera magazine article I read suggested that such calendars would make interesting gifts. Grandparents like those that show their grandchildren's activities over the most recent year. You can bore your friends with photos of your trip to Alaska or last year's woodworking projects. Calendars for valued business clients are another option. The themes seem to be endless.

In my case, I have enjoyed fishing and exploring the Withlacoochee River for over thirty years. A number of my Central Florida friends share my enthusiasm for these activities, so this year I compiled photos of various river scenes which my friends and I are familiar with and used one of these photos for each month in the preparation of a wall calendar for 2003 which I will distribute to these special pals at year's end.

Mycustomcalendars.com provides a free calendar template for downloading for either a wall type calendar or a desk version. The template was prepared using Microsoft Word so it is compatible with the software most of us use. Complete instructions can be downloaded from this site.



The Internet instructions suggest using Hewlett Packard double-sided glossy (44-LB) brochure paper that I purchased at Office Depot for about $17.95 for 50 double-sided sheets. The calendar is printed on one side of the sheet and a photograph on the other side. As each page is flipped over another photograph is shown. I took the web site's suggestion and used this paper, and I am satisfied with the result. It is barely heavy enough for the job, but it is at an affordable cost.

The printer I used is an old DeskJet 820 Cse Professional series printer that was designed as a business color printer. It prints at about 300 dpi, and, while it prints in color, it does not compete with the latest color photo printers, but it does have its advantages and disadvantages.

On the plus side, it produces an acceptable calendar

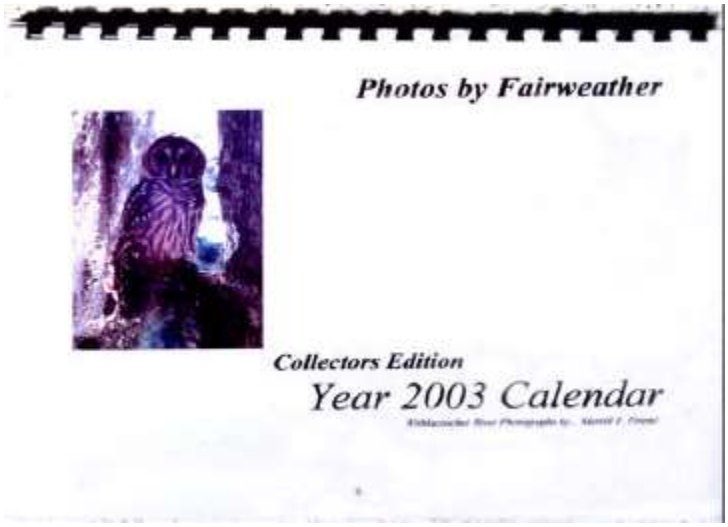
(Calendar……Continued on page 7)

(Calendar……..Continued from page 6)
image at a reasonable cost. On the minus side, it is slow. I was able to produce about six calendars with thirteen 8x10 images on a single $31 color cartridge using this printer. It took about five minutes for each color picture. Given a choice of "Economy", "Normal" and "Best" printing qualities I selected "Best" for the pictures and "Normal" for the black ink only calendar pages. HP suggests that "Normal" is what should be used, but I got noticeably better prints using the "Best" setting and used it even though it was the slowest setting. Also, the photos were JPG images previously saved under "My Pictures," which were pasted into place on the Microsoft Word program. I was using Microsoft Word as part of Office 97. When I had pasted the image in place, I would right click on the mouse and get a menu which let me "format the picture," allowing me to change the brightness and contrast of the image thus produced. It also allowed me to change the dimensions of the picture to adjust to the space available. I used this feature on many of the pictures because the pasted image was often darker than it had appeared on the monitor and the colors were somewhat harsher. Also, some images did require some small adjustment in size. The nice thing about using Microsoft Word was that I didn't have to switch to a photo program to make these minor changes, although many of these photos had printed out far better on an Epson photo printer using Epson photo paper. But that was as I had expected since the Epson 785EPX was designed for photo work and the HP I was using was not.

As an alternate I did attempt to print these calendars using the Epson photo printer, but it did not like the two sided HP paper. None of the images were acceptable using HP brochure paper, and I did try various paper settings to get it right, but nothing I did worked. I rechecked printing on the Epson printer with Epson paper and the results were wonderful. Why then not use the Epson for the calendar project? The biggest reason was cost. The Epson has a smaller color cartridge than does the HP which costs about $21. I have been able to get it to produce roughly fifteen excellent quality 8x10 color prints. That's about $21 in color ink costs for a single calendar against $31 for color ink costs for six calendars with the old HP Desk Jet. Since I was making calendars and not exhibition color prints I went with the HP printer and paper. Epson does have a double-sided matte paper but I didn't try it in view of the increased costs of color ink. Of course, if you are doing this project for the grandparents you would probably forgo the additional expense and use the photo printer.

The calendar is bound together with a spiral plastic comb binder that Kinko's will bind for you with a clear plastic cover front and back. Their charge is $4.95 per calendar. Office Depot quoted me about $3.50 per calendar or you can purchase a small manual binder machine from them for $59 and they will sell you the plastic sheets and plastic combs. These are inexpensive items. If you bind a lot of materials this is the way to go. It is all finished with a hole punched through the front plastic cover and all the calendar pages so each can be flipped up and hooked on the nail hanger as each month expires. Hang it up and that's it.

Now all I have to do is learn how to take better photographs. ◆



Front cover of the calendar

Looking Back to 1992

From November 1992 *Bits of Blue*

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:
By Harvey Bruneau

Without getting into politics too much, you may have noticed that the country has a new president elect. I don't know about you, but I am glad that the air waves have returned to normal. All those commercials, debates and mud slinging attacks on each other started really getting old after a while. Hey, by the way, nominations are being accepted for the 1993 officers and I guarantee the campaign will be fast and clean. I forgot to open the floor for nominations at last month's meeting. You can make nominations for the following positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Member at Large and Treasurer through the mail, BBS or at the next two meetings. These nominations, as well as the elections, are important to the future of our group. Elections will be held during the December meeting and should last a whole 15-20 minutes.

Once again our members did a complete night of talking, presenting and two way communicating. Don Patzsch's presentation on modems covered the technical and rudimentary ins and outs of modems. Thanks, Don. The second part of the presentation, done by Kevan and myself, covered the use of our Bulletin Board System (BBS), online and live. I actually had fun talking and explaining the BBS while Kevan navigated around the BBS through the keyboard, and also explained the BBS. I also learned, as I believe you did, how to use features of the BBS of which I was not aware. The open forum between you, the audience, and Kevan and myself was great.

Of course our own Director of Education, Ed Buzza, conducted the second class, of a four part series, on WordPerfect for DOS. The November class will cover one of my favorite WordPerfect features, Tables. The crossword puzzle in last month's newsletter was built with this feature.

One of our members has volunteered to head a Windows Special Interest Group (SIG). The time, location and hardware/software resources have yet to be determined. If you would like to join this group, please leave me a message at (813) 932-6745 or on the BBS. SIG groups are for members only and are free. If you would like to run your own SIG, please let me know.

Please notice that board members Tom Cone and Larry Anders are setting examples by writing articles for the newsletter. We need additional articles contributed by the other 200+ members. They can be about new products you have acquired, tips & techniques, or whatever information you feel is informative to the group.

Due to a timing conflict, Software Publishing will not be presenting at our November meeting. I am in the process of rescheduling the presentation of SuperBase 4 (Windows database). However, we will be giving away a complete copy of SuperBase 4 at the meeting to one of you lucky members.

Fortunately, Microsoft has accepted my invitation on short notice to present some of their current and brand new Multimedia products. These products will include Cinemania, Word/Bookshelf for Windows, Beethoven and discussion of multimedia extension under Windows. A new Windows extension, Video for Windows, that lets Windows users play video on a PC without additional hardware, may also be presented.

We are still waiting on that new 14.4k modem from US Robotics that we purchased a while back. Indications are that it will be installed this year.

Friday the 13th is closing in on us. More than half a dozen viruses are supposed to expose themselves (eek) on Friday. You can protect yourself by downloading McAfee's antivirus from our BBS and running it on your system, or buying a commercial product and installing it. Also, remember that antivirus software does not look inside compressed files such as ZIP files. It is possible to scan the EXE and COM files on your hard disk without finding a single virus. However a virus may be attached inside a compressed file and when uncompressed it becomes active. Make Backup! of your most Important data. ◆

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Meeting At our October general meeting, the attendance was the lowest that I can recall in my memory, and I have been in the group about 11 years. Of course, our membership is about one fourth what it was in the early 1990's, and our meetings reflect that. But last month was even lower than usual.

I suppose there are two basic reason for low attendance: no interest in the topic or something more important or more interesting to do. Perhaps it was the first night for a new TV show. I wouldn't know, since I rarely watch TV. Since I was the presenter, I hope it wasn't a dislike of the presenter. Perhaps it was the topic: Programming—Visual Basic, Delphi and Visual Studio .Net. I had promised to make it non-technical, but maybe even a non-technical talk on programming is too technical. With computers, it is sort of like cars, I think. 99% of the people just want to drive them and don't care about what is under the hood. But, enough of that.

Viruses As I am sure most of you do, I get quite a few viruses attached to my emails each week, the main one being the klez. But I have Norton Antivirus installed on my three main computers, and as of late it has caught everything, as best I can tell. But the other day while on a trip and using my laptop, all of a sudden I got a message about a file, C:\Windows\ scrsvr.exe, that was going to be quarantined. Where did that come from? I hadn't gotten any message about any problem when downloading my email a few minutes earlier.

I went to the Symantec site to read about this worm. The exact page is http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w32.opaserv.worm.html. Norton apparently doesn't detect it immediately—only after it has tried to write itself to the Windows directory—and after it has put a line in the Win.ini file to have Windows run it on the next startup. Thank goodness for AV software.

Photo Scanning As mentioned in last month's newsletter, I am still scanning negatives and slides into my second computer. At present I have scanned in 4,802. About two thirds of these I have also backed up to CDs, since we all know that hard drives can not be trusted, don't we. This is a long term project, and I am only up to the late 1970's. The 1980's should contain a fair number of photos, but I think the 1990's should contain less. It is interesting how photography and computing have converged.

Snakes and Computers Speaking of photos, member Gary Ennis forwarded me an email with a sequence of photos of a technician removing a snake from a computer. One of them is below. No details were given, but I assume that the snake entered the computer via the fan opening, stayed awhile, and then tried to leave the way he came in when he heard someone coming to turn on the computer. But he didn't make it out before the computer was turned on, and the fan got him or he was electrocuted. Of course, for the snake to get into the computer he first had to get into the building where the computer resided. Have you checked your home for snakes lately? ◆



Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

Technology

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@helios.acomp.usf.edu

Not long ago, Radio Shack sold USB flash memory in the 64mb size for $49. USB flash memory of this size is about the size of your middle finger. You plug it into your USB connector, and it shows as the next hard drive on your computer. No software needed.

Yesterday I put the memory on my PC and copied the files I wanted to back up. I happened to take 41 MB each time for two transfers to my Mac.

You may transfer PC files to a Mac and expect them to run OK if they are text or similar files. The reverse, from Mac to a PC will not work.

I put in a CD-R in the superdrive (CD and DVD burner) and I set the burn format to play on a Mac or PC, with the option of adding to the CD later, if I wanted to back up more files to that same CD.

It's kind of neat to think you can back up your PC to CD by using the Mac burner on someone else's Mac. Makes planning a lot simpler. I have no reason to want to set up a network right now, but this idea makes me wish I had one! ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
http://www.lamartin.com if you want to play with it and invent some uses of your own.

We also learned about what Hash is and how that can be helpful in maintaining the integrity of a written page; plus a program available for us to use. No one will be able to fool you into thinking they have not adjusted anything on your page; the hash will detect even one character change on a whole page.

AND, after the presentation, three lucky winners got GREAT raffle prizes. I am supposed to announce them here, but have lost their winning ticket information. I thought I had the lucky winning ticket when I bought mine, but that is not the case or I would remember who won and which of the three prizes she selected!

If you missed this meeting, you missed a good one.

It was very smooth, and I felt like I'd go home, update my AntiVirus and see if I could program a little something. ◆

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Check the address label for your renewal month

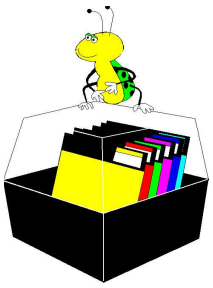
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

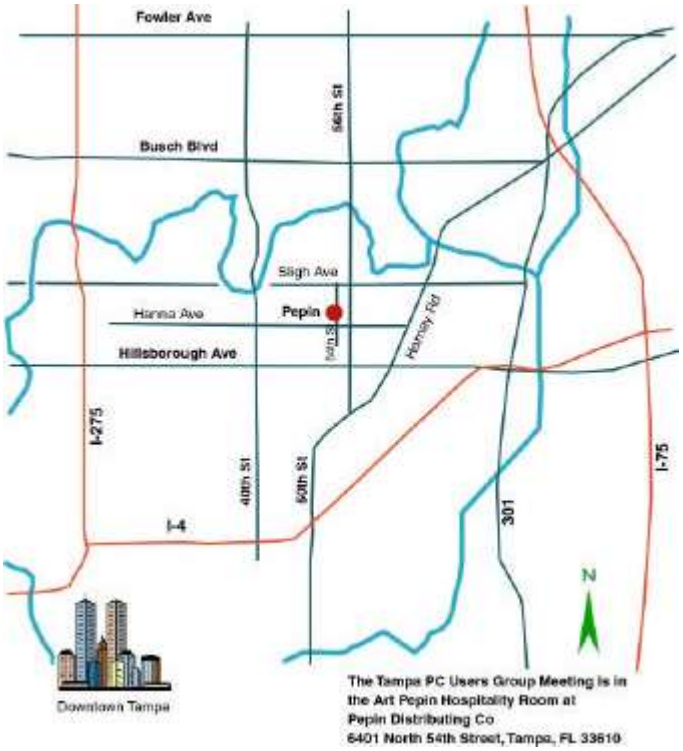
We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 15 No. 12 December 2002

Meeting

Holiday Party & Elections

Wednesday, December 11, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

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Bruce Register at last year's holiday party

January Meeting Topic: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

The meeting started with discussions of MSN and AOL having new versions, business versions and a new instant messaging version coming out.

Elections will be held at the December meeting.

The unopposed, at this time, nominees are:
President- Kevan Sheridan,
Vice President- John Witmer
Treasurer- Mike Hodges
Secretary- Peggy Pulliam
Member at Large- Mary Sheridan

The December meeting will include the Christmas Party December 11 at the meeting room location. It is a great location, and Mary Sheridan would like suggestions of what food you want. Everyone can bring a dish of some sort to share, too, and there is always more than we can eat. We'll have music and a raffle for some really great stuff, one prize being a Windows XP Professional CD.

Don't forget the SIGs at 6:30 at Gateway on Dale Mabry (see page 10):
Access on the 1st Tuesday of each month.
Visual Basic the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Mike Hodges told us about Median and Visa, two computers available inexpensively from overseas. Follow up with him for further information about them.

The presentation was about *CPU,* a magazine for professional and experienced computer users, and *Smart Computing*, a magazine (written in easy to understand language) and an online site full of information designed to increase productivity and help the, shall we say, "less experienced" of us. It is still full of interesting information even for those who have been computing for a long time. If you become a

(Minutes……Continued on page 10)

PictureToTV

Software Review



By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@Andersnet.com

As of this writing, Christmas is less than a month away, and I think I may have an idea for a gift that everyone will enjoy.

It's very possible that someone you know is getting a digital camera for Christmas…or maybe they already have one. Or, maybe they're getting a DVD player…or already have one of those too. Or, maybe that someone is you. If you answered yes to any of the possibilities above, then read on.

If you have a digital camera, a collection of digital photos from the web, or a bunch of scanned images and a DVD player (and a CD burner), PictureToTV (P2TV) is touted as professional photo video made easy. In just a few clicks and a couple of drags and drops you can be showing your photo collection on your TV using your DVD player. A friend of mine, who does not have a DVD player, told me about this program, and it sounded too good to be true. Actually, it sounded too easy to be true. But it did sound interesting, so I thought I'd waste a blank CD and give it a try. (What the heck… I needed something to write about.) But, I was right… it was too good to be true. It took about five minutes. I used all the default settings, burned the CD with the software included in the program, plopped it into my DVD player in the family room and, voila, it didn't work.

I went back into the program and from the help menu went to support on the Internet and checked out the extensive listing of compatible DVD players and mine was one on the list. What now? I was really excited about being able to do something like this so I wasn't about to give up. What was peculiar was that it showed the photo I had chosen for the album cover with the number 1 next to the album on my TV screen but when I pushed play nothing would happen.

This time I went back into the program and read the help file introduction. Under getting started and steps to bring your pictures to TV, this is what it said:

Create a new project.
Add your albums to the project.
Organize and rename your albums.
Import pictures into your albums.
Customize your albums by adding music and transition effects.
Customize your album menu.
Burn your project to CD.

That's all there really is to it. There's no rocket scientist qualifications needed here. I had followed all of the instructions; I just figured that it must be some kind of incompatibility with my DVD player. But in the spirit of not giving up I sent an email to the support department at P2TV, and the next day got the answer I was hoping for. There was nothing wrong with my DVD player.

P2TV is designed to create as many different albums as the space will allow on the CD you are writing to. Each album is automatically assigned a number sequence. When I created my first album I only created one album, therefore, as I mentioned above, the album I created was assigned the number 1. The email I received from the support department admitted that the next version of P2TV would better explain how to "PLAY" the video on the TV. All I had to do is press the number 1 on my remote. I was impressed. It looked professional and it was easy to use.

You can choose from a variety of transitions between photos and add your favorite MP3s as background music. You don't need any extra CD burning software. It's all built in. You can also preview your work before burning it onto the CD. P2TV simulates your TV and the DVD/VCD player in software.

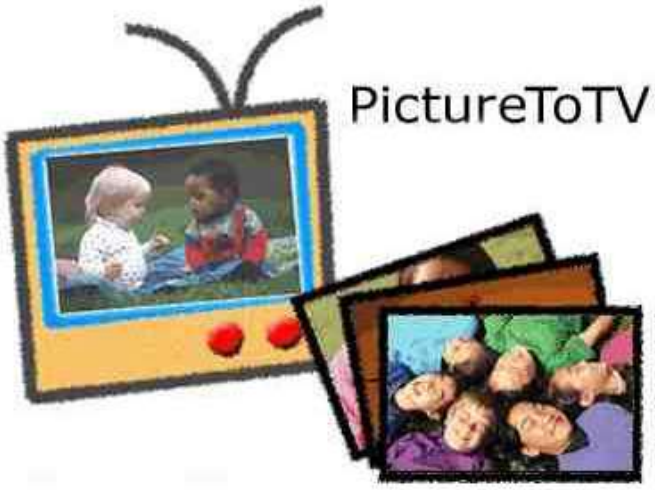
Future enhancements planned are:

(Picture……Continued on page 4)

(Picture……Continued from page 3)

1. SVCD Mpeg2 plug-in
2. Cropping of images - This is useful for portrait pictures so that they can fill up more screen estate on the TV, which has a landscape orientation.
3. Text captions - Ability to add text to the pictures.
4. Individual image control - Ability to customize transition effect and delay for each image.
5. DVD format & writer support.
6. Ability to import home video into the project.

If you go to http://www.picturetotv.com/index.htm, you can download a trial version. See if it's not as easy to use as I said it was. And don't forget to press 1. The price is only $39.95 and it's worth every penny! Merry Christmas! ◆



Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Another year has gone by for me as newsletter editor. What you say, it is not the end of the year yet. Well, I actually did my first newsletter in December 1995. That makes 84 issues, and it is interesting to look back over the old issues and see what the topics were at the time. For awhile I have been running either the secretary's report or the president's message from newsletters that are 10 years old. This issue has the secretary's report from December 1992.

A couple members suggested that I put more current material in the newsletter in place of the 10 year old articles. I would be happy to if they would write those articles for me. That notwithstanding, I kind of like the 10 year old articles. They remind me of a time when , although well over 10 years old in 1992, personal computing still had that new feel to it since there were so many new things coming out all the time. Of course new things still come out all the time, but, to me at least, for the most part they are just better versions of what we already have: Visual Studio.NET instead of Visual Studio (I don't think anyone in the group cares much about that but me anyway); Corel Draw 11 instead of Corel Draw; Microsoft Access XP instead of Microsoft Access (see the 1992 article); 30 speed CD drive instead of a 1 speed CD drive; an 80 GB hard drive instead of a 1 GB Hard Drive.

What is really new since 1992? Well, I certainly like my digital camera, but its arrival didn't have the same excitement as did the arrival of my first scanner (which was actually purchased in 1994). And, of course, nothing can compare to that purchase of an Apple IIe in 1983.

The early 1980's were certainly an exciting time in personal computing. There was a buzz then—a bit like the Internet buzz we went through, perhaps five or six years ago. The personal computing excite-

(Comments……Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

ment really carried through the early 1990's, the growth of computer user groups being one indication. Our meetings of the TPCUG were exciting. At those meeting Microsoft, WordPerfect, Adobe, Corel, Delrina, MicroGrafix and other leading software companies gave us our first glimpse of many of the programs that are now standards: Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Publisher, WordPerfect, Corel Draw, Adobe Photoshop and Acrobat. And many that were standards but no longer exist or just barely exist: Delrina PerForm, Comm Suite and WinFax Pro; MicroGrafix's Graphics Suite. And don't forget IBM's OS/2. We had quite a few meetings devoted to that doomed operating system.

A lot was happening—and there was no World Wide Web. We had the BBS, and that was it. But the newness was wearing off. Version 2 of Access was not as exciting as Version 1; although it was enough to put Superbase, the first Windows database which was demonstrated at one of our meetings, out of business. And, as the excitement waned, so did our membership.

But in the mid 1990's the Internet arrived to the masses with AOL and Prodigy fighting it out. And both companies gave presentations at our meetings. I thought, now, here is the solution to our membership problem. The Internet will revive an interest

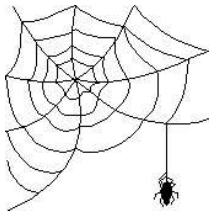
(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



Detail from DuPratz's A Map of Louisiana
at
http://www.lib.virginia.edu/speccol/exhibits/lewis_clark/

Quoted from the site: *A Map of Louisiana, with the course of the Missisipi* is included in the first English edition of Le Page du Pratz's book, *The History of Louisiana, or of the western parts of Virginia and Carolina* (London, 1763). Meriwether Lewis borrowed the English edition from Benjamin Smith Barton, his botany tutor, and took it on the expedition to the Pacific. Several references to Le Page du Pratz's work appear in the journals of the expedition.



December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
FatWallet.Com	http://www.fatwallet.com/
Charity Navigator	http://www.charitynavigator.org/
Early Christian Writings New Testament, Apocrypha,…	http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/
The Economist	http://www.economist.co.uk/
Anomalies Unlimited - the funny peculiar & funny ha-ha	http://anomalies-unlimited.com/
Pambytes Free Web Graphics	http://www.pambytes.com/
Edgar Allan Poe - Collected Works	http://www.pambytes.com/poe/poe.html
Lewis and Clark Maps of Exploration 1507 -1814	http://www.lib.virginia.edu/speccol/exhibits/lewis_clark/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Navman GPS e Series

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com



Navman GPS is a Global Positioning System receiver made specifically for notebook computers. It's unique because of its USB connection to communicate with your trip planning and travelling software. It's sold by Rand McNally in their retail stores and on the Internet.

A couple of words of caution from the start. As packaged, the software does not work on Windows XP. Only Win 95, 98, ME, *NT 4.0 or higher, Windows ME Windows 2000* (Italics mine). Sorry guys, but Windows XP would qualify as "higher". So the packaging is misleading. But help is available for Windows XP. Read on.

The package contains the satellite receiver, Rand McNally Streetfinder software, USB and COMx: drivers, connection cables and a single lever suction cup to mount the receiver to the windshield. The GPS obtains its power from the USB connection, reducing the number of cables to use it down to one.

I assumed that with Windows 2000 and Windows 4.0 or higher, that it would work on XP, so I bought it. The Rand McNally StreetFinder worked only after I downloaded an XP patch from http://www.randmcnally.com. The installation was straightforward and the software obtained my position from the GPS after the 2 minute warm-up. But the GPS did not work with other trip software, namely Microsoft Streets and Trips and Delorme Street Atlas USA Deluxe.

So I returned the Navman GPS to the Rand McNally store. The salesperson said "I'll bet you have Windows XP!" and cheerfully credited my card with the full refund. The reason I returned it? Of the three products, Streets and Trips, Street Atlas and StreetFinder, the Rand McNally StreetFinder is by far the weakest of the three, and the Navman worked only with StreetFinder. The GPS receiver that I'd used for the last two years had died, and I needed a replacement.

So I did two things. One, I sent a note to the technical support group at http://www.navman.com, the New Zealand manufacturer of the GPS explaining the situation, explained that I thought that they were hanging their hat on a very weak product, and asked that I be notified when a fix was available for XP. Second, I set up my boat's handheld GPS to work on the notebook. It's a Garmin GPS 76 that has marine navigation markers in its database and would work very well on the notebook except for a couple of things. One, it runs on AA batteries, and an adapter for a car would cost $35. Two, I didn't like the idea of it sitting below the windshield because it looks valuable enough to be stolen and I was concerned that the extra heat under the windshield may shorten its life. But for now, I'd decided to use it. It does have one advantage: It has WAAS* reception, making it very accurate down to 17 feet, a very big improvement over standard GPS of 65 feet or so, depending on what source you read. In practice, you don't need WAAS accuracy in a car, but well, gee … it just feels better, doesn't it?

My older Rand McNally GPS had died a couple of months ago. I feel that I may have contributed to its demise. It had two connections, one was an adapter to a cigarette lighter socket and the other to a 9-pin COM port on the computer. The notebook sometimes got confused with the GPS plugged in; I think it was interpreting it as a mouse because the cursor would jump all over the screen unless you plugged the GPS in after starting up the travel software. It was misbehaving when it died and I think I had unplugged and plugged it back in and maybe zapped it.

(Navman …….Continued on page 7)

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* WAAS = Wide Area Augmentation System which improves the accuracy of GPS with transmissions compensating for the deliberate built–in error. Your receiver must be WAAS capable by design.
See http://gps.faa.gov/Programs/WAAS/waas.htm



Merle's Navman setup with Gateway Laptop

(Navman…….Continued from page 6)

The nature of USB should allow inserting and removing a GPS safely, which is one of the reasons I was interested in the Navman, the other being that it obtains its power through the same connection. That and the fact that many notebooks do not have COM ports kept my interest high enough that I'd decided I'd wait and see if Navman would fix the XP problem. It took them less than two months; I got a note from Navman USA technical support with the drivers I needed. They are intended for both Windows 2000 and XP.

So I went back to the Rand McNally store and bought it again for $139 + tax.

The fix they sent me contains two small drivers. One is for the USB. It installs in response to the USB system's detecting the GPS for the first time. The other installs to map the USB's GPS signals to a fake COM: port (COM6: in my case). With the two drivers installed, my MS Streets and Trips and my Delorme Street Atlas 2003 (notice I upgraded in the meantime, from 2002 Deluxe) both worked. In each, I went to the GPS setup, selected NMEA signal type and COM6: 4800,n,8,1, and after the warm-up period, it put me exactly in my back yard. I was no longer lost! Yea! Woo Hoo!

Accompanying this article are two pictures, one from the navman web site and one I took. Notice the difference?

Despite the problems, I do recommend this product. It's unique. It works well and is convenient. Rand McNally stores, $139, or one of the following:
http://www.randmcnally.com
http://www.navman.com
http://www.navmanusa.com. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 5)

in user groups. Well, it didn't. In fact, once the World Wide Web (not to be confused with the Internet) was generally available, people could find much more information about computers (and other things) there than they could by participating in a computer club. So, I think, the Internet, while a boon to us computer users, has been bad for computer clubs. It is just the way things work.

Also computers work so much better now than they did 10 years ago. Do you recall all the problems we had then getting modems to work so as to access the BBS. Back then hard drives were not auto detect. In a phrase, there was no plug-and-play. It was plug-and-pray. And if you needed a driver, you had to call the manufacturer and have them send it to you via snail mail—unless you were lucky and were able to download it from their BBS site on your 9600 baud modem.

So, times have changed, and, in my opinion, computer clubs are not as relevant to most computer users as they once were. If any of you have some ideas how to make our club more useful to computer users, I know we all would be like to hear them.

The club has changed, we no longer have a BBS since the web site has taken over that function. We no longer have a WordPerfect SIG since very few

(Comments…….Continued on page 12)

Looking Back to 1992

From December 1992 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report
TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP
MINUTES OF 11/11/92

As the witching hour approached, I noted a nice group had arrived to attend the BOB meeting, and the room was a beehive of activity - numerous small groups talking and picking each others brain, and Don Patzsch conducting his second of seven classes on modems with quite a few folks participating in the class. Off in another room, Ed was conducting the third in a series of four classes on WP 5.3 for DOS. I miss the BOB meetings only when I have no other choice, for even the time before the meeting starts is productive and interesting. This night was no exception. And then, our illustrious President called the meeting to order.

CLUB NEWS

- WP 5.1 Class - The fourth and final class in this series will be held same time (5:30 PM). same place (IBM Bldg) on 9 December, just before the regular BOB meeting.
- Don's second modem class was held in the regular BOB meeting room this time because of a conflict with the ongoing V 5.3 class, and the modem class had to be cut short when the BOB meeting began. The third class will be delayed until January, and that and subsequent classes will have use of a private room and benefit of the planned 45 minute duration. Don has laid out instructions for a total of seven classes. He is providing in-depth instruction, complete with handouts for both present and future reference.
- Harvey announced that a member had volunteered to lead a SIG on Windows. A show-of-hands survey of those present indicated ample interest in the SIG. The problem now is arranging facilities. Harvey indicated that he would try to arrange same, hopefully in time for a January start for the SIG. More info will be forthcoming.
- Harvey cautioned that a virus reportedly in circulation is triggered to strike on Friday the 13th.
- Windows users are well aware that programs installed in Windows make changes during installation in various Windows files/directories. At one time or another, these hackers are faced with the problem of deleting one of these programs. Unless you have retained a copy of all the .INI files and a pre-installation directory listing, there is no way to know just what changes were made with the installation of that program. On the BOB BBS is a program known as In Control that is an answer to that problem. In Control will record in an .WRI (Windows Write) file all changes made by installation of individual programs in Windows. When one decides to delete a program installed in Windows, you need only view the .WRI file to determine what changes need to be made to completely eliminate the program from all Windows files/directories. The only gimmick is that you have to have used In Control when you installed the program in Windows - that is to say, In Control is not retroactive.
- Presentation planned for the DECEMBER MEETING is MS WORK GROUP FOR WINDOWS. This is a networking program which ties individual PCs together without the need of servers, LANs, etc., but it is compatible with these as well. Looks like a nice program that will likely be hot in the work/business world.

INDUSTRY NEWS

- Harvey reported that a PC Magazine book, DOS 5.0 Memory Management, was very interesting and worthwhile for anyone interested in getting more memory out of his computer. It includes some ten utilities on disk which help identify available memory and obtain use of same.
- A parallel to the foregoing, DOS 6.0 is expected to be released in the 1st quarter of 1993. Reportedly, it will include Stacker and better memory management. Whether it will be as much of an improvement over 5.0 as 5.0 was over its predecessors remains to be seen.
- MS database program for Windows, called Access, is now being released. It is reportedly a very nice program. It will have an introductory price

(1992……..Continued on page 9)

(1992…….Continued from page 8)

through 31 January of an amazing $99; amazing because this is a high- end program that will list for $695 after Jan 31. (Looks like MS wants to get lots of copies in use.) I have seen some of the advertising literature on the program, and it truly looks like a "goodie". Kirk Covert says that MS FoxPro has been the fastest (and best) on the market to date, and that Access is even better.

- We previously reported that MS has said that it is getting into hardware only as needed to push its software products. That was said at the time they came out with a sound card to push and take advantage of the new MIDI capabilities of Windows 3.1. Now, MS is coming out with a card for use with IIP printers to speed up printing. One could say that this is an effort to offset the notoriously slow printing cycle in Windows. Come on, now!
- MS Windows NT Beta version is now available from MS for $59. We are told that you need 12 MB of memory and a CD ROM to make use of the program. Anyone interested should call MS.
- Western Digital has come out with a chip that will check your computer for viruses. Interesting, but not enough info is yet available. Like, how do you update the chip for new viruses?
- The last issue of PC Computing should be of interest to Windows users - it contains 172 pages of goodies about getting the most from Windows. If you are a Windows user, you might want to check it out.

PROGRAM PRESENTATION — MICROSOFT MULTIMEDIA

On hand to give us a brief rundown on some Microsoft Multimedia goodies was the inimitable Kirk Covert, Regional Sales Rep for Microsoft, a welcome and well-known personality at BOB. Kirk reported that MS had many things going in the multimedia area and that he would touch on only a few. He noted that multimedia is very useful in the worlds of education, business and entertainment - personal and otherwise. Multimedia requires a sound card and a CD ROM. Among the things MS is producing are:

First, MS is coming out with a new sound card. It is a 16 bit, 5 channel card -- it will handle 5 channels of sound simultaneously. It would be BUS compliant, but not MPC compliant -- but could be made so as an option. He wasn't sure about the price, but thought it would be on the order of $295 list.

As a corollary, Kirk pointed out that sound on computers involves huge files. Computer speed is important, of course, to handle the large files. Also very important is the capability of the CD ROMs - no matter how fast your computer is, if your CD ROM is slow, multimedia will be slow. He suggested checking throughput and transfer rates, and insure that it meets MPC specs.

BEETHOVEN: This was the first MS multimedia disk reviewed. It contains Beethoven's complete 9th Symphony and, among other things, in depth info on the life and times of Beethoven and the 9th Symphony. It allows random access via menu to any part of the music. It sounded great using, according to Kirk, run-of-the-mill speakers. If a price was mentioned, I did not hear it.

CINEMANIA: This disk contains data on some 19,000 movie titles and 3,000 people, including actors, directors, etc. It has considerable detail on the movies, the stories, the studios, and people involved, including their voices. It, too, is easy to use and provides quick, easy access to any of the data it contains. In answer to a question of keeping current in the field, Kirk reported that updates would be available from time to time. List price is $79.95.

BOOKSHELF/BOOKSHELF FOR WORD: This disk comes as a stand alone, and bundled with Word for Windows, which provides for direct access from the Word program or the desktop. Bookshelf includes seven or eight books; I didn't get all the titles. It does include quotations, including voices; a thesaurus; a dictionary; a 16-book encyclopedia (going to 26 books with the next release)

(1992…….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

(1992…….Continued from page 9)

with oral instructions; a world atlas, complete with flags and national anthems; and a world almanac. It seemed to be a very, very nice package. Kirk reported list price as $295 for Bookshelf, and $595 when bundled with Word for Windows. All the packages were very impressive and Kirk did - as usual - a super job of presenting them to us. Many thanks, Kirk and Microsoft, for some really nice programs and a job very well done.

AND THE WINNERS ARE:

With the generosity of several, including Sunrise Computer Supplies & Parts, a member or two and the creators of SuperBase 4, there were a number of nice raffle prizes this meeting, and the lucky winners are:

Superbase 4	Dave Williams
Computer Games:	
Days of Thunder	Marlin Miller
Weltris	Wilfred LaForese
Clue	Wayne Laurentes
Tetris	Jim Clark
Computer book	E. Kaestner
Cmptr Magazines	Dave Williams ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

member with them, you get the magazines at your door at a 64% savings over the newsstand price and you also get 24 hour-access to the website smartcomputing.com, which is a substantial website. All the earlier magazines are online; and you can search for your subject and page after page of information will be collected for you to look through and find your exact answer. There is online tech support and tips on how to get the most out of your computer. Q & A boards and chats are available to help with difficulties or to share information you may have. There are product reviews and more information than you will believe at your fingertips to help you with your computer.

Our group, Tampa PC Users Group (TPCUG), is registered, and, if you join, the TPCUG group receives credit ONLY if you mention the club's numbers: For *Smart Computing* #11644, for *CPU* #310.

If you have questions and are looking for links for computer information, go to http://www.tpcug.org and then go to member Don Miller's site (http://donmiller36.home.att.net/). It is loaded!

Dave Dakin won the raffle for one of the subscriptions we learned about at the meeting; hopefully that will keep him busy and out of trouble. John Witmer and Brian Lance each won a T-Shirt! ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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Symantec

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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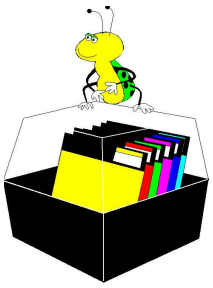
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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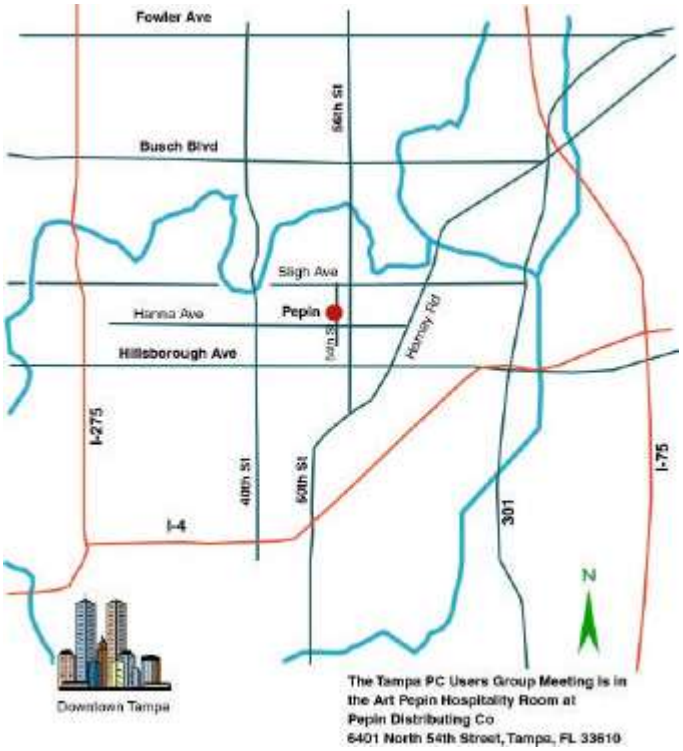
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 7)

people have an interest in WordPerfect and few people probably think there is a need for a word-processing SIG, but they would be surprised at how much there is in Word that they do not know that would be of use. We certainly no longer have an OS/2 SIG. We do have a Microsoft Access SIG and a Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications SIG, but few attend, thinking the material too advanced for them (and it may be).

What is next for the group? It has been suggested that we drop the printed version of this newsletter, since it is also made available on the web. I have toyed with the idea—especially when I look at the extra time required to print it, assemble it for mailing and then mail it. But if I didn't have the deadline of getting the printed version out on a particular date, then I might not get anything out.

So, what does this group need to get it really going again? Exciting computer times like we had in the early years. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 1 January 2003

Meeting

Pocket PCs

Wednesday, January 8, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will demonstrate a hand-held computer with Microsoft Pocket PC, projected on our big screen. The presentation will show the features of Pocket PC (Windows CE) and its compatibility and connectivity to Windows. In addition, a demo will be done of the built-in programs like Word, Excel and Pocket Streets and Trips and how the user interacts with them will be done. Merle will also do a quick tour of two Pocket PC web sites showing the many programs that are available.



Wade Herman, happy winner of a copy of Windows XP Pro, at the 2002 holiday party

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February Meeting Topic: To be announced. Possibly Digital Photography and the Computer

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the December Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

The meeting this month was the Holiday Party. We had holiday music and videos going on the big screen and plenty of good conversation and delicious food!

The business portion of the meeting consisted of the uncontested election of the officers and a member at large. John Witmer presented the slate, the motion to vote was made and seconded. The eager officers unanimously agreed upon are: President, Kevan Sheridan; Vice President, John Witmer; Treasurer, Mike Hodges; Secretary, Peggy Pulliam; Member at Large, Mary Sheridan.

After the dinner we had a raffle with six prizes, the major one being the Microsoft Windows XP Pro, which went to Wade Herman. Mike Hodges won a computer microphone; Peggy Pulliam won a Mini Radio in the shape of computer with key board and a mouse for the on/off switch; Cheryl Alexander won a magnet with a frame and memo holder for hooking on the side of the computer; Ed Purcell and Brian Lance each won the Links 2003 Gold Simulator Game. Very nice prizes. ◆



Treasurer Mike Hodges, our raffle ticket salesman

Paint Shop Pro 7.04

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com



Jasc Software's Paint Shop Pro is a graphics and photo editor. It contains tools for creating, editing and retouching images and enhancing photos. Newly added is the capability to create multi-layered vector graphics. Printing has taken on a wholly new look with a "Print multiple images". And web design features have been added.

All of us in TPCUG will remember that in years past Jasc was actively supporting User Groups and did good presentations yearly at our meetings, making us all familiar with Paint Shop Pro. The first I remember was version 3, available as shareware, and then on to version 4, still as shareware. Those versions didn't even have nags to buy. Jasc has built on those very good foundations and is now up to version 7.04, billed as Jasc Paint Shop Pro Anniversary Edition.

It's available as a download from their site. I obtained mine as an upgrade from my previous version 5 for $49. As I recall, there was a user group price, but it was the same price as the upgrade anyway. Regular price is now $74 as a download, and $82 boxed, plus shipping, I'd assume. And for previous owners, the upgrade price is available.

The download is an 80 MB single installation file. So you'd better have broadband, DSL or cable.

The package contains three programs: Paint Shop Pro 7.04, Animation Shop 3, and Jasc Media Center Plus 3.10. Also included are "Anniversary Edition Product Tour", "Bonus Pack Highlights", "Getting Starting Guide" and "Tutorials". I went through all of them and gained something from every one. They're very well written and presented. It's very impressive.

The basic product should be very familiar to those who have previous versions. The basics are unchanged, but they've reorganized the features on the menus and added toolbars. They've also implemented "rollup" toolbars. They work very well. Normally they show as just a small window title bar, and when you pass the cursor over them they pop to their normal size. It's obvious they spent a great deal of time on this. I have much less problems finding what I want even though they've added many, many new tools and features. I especially like the "Enhance Photo" menu.

The very first thing that got me excited about this version was the "Print multiple images" on the file menu. As it happens I had been doing a lot of searching to find a software product that would allow me to arrange my print images on the page before printing. I found a trial version of one that looked promising, but it also had many problems, so I discarded it. Paint Shop Pro 7 solved the problem very elegantly.



For instance, I want to place two 5x7 photos on an 8-1/2x11 sheet of photo paper. "Print multiple images" does this. I've used it a number of times now, even when I had only one image, because I can place it accurately anywhere on the printed page. To use it, you get a thumbnail view of each image and you drag it to a view of your full page of paper. Then grab them and push them around within the printing area until they're arranged. It has grid dots on the page to aid in this and also an option to snap to the grid for even more accuracy. I like to have photos lined up so I can use my photo cutter to slice down more than one photo at a time. This, combined with the resize feature to establish the print size, trims a half hour off each printing. I really like this.

I'll admit that most of my time spent with PSP is simply resizing, cropping and printing photos. But sometimes I do more. We received a photo in the

(Paint Shop……Continued on page 4)

(Paint Shop……..Continued from page 3)

mail that somehow got sliced getting it out of the envelope. I scanned it after taping the pieces together. It was a grandson snapshot that also needed composing (centering the subject) and cropping. I used the clone tool to copy the adjacent image into the area needing repairing. I had to eliminate the cut marks, and, while I was at it, defocus (blur) the background somewhat. Blurring also helped with painting over the cut marks. There's a tool for doing each of these things to the photo. I'll admit I spent a lot of time with this, but the result was a really terrific 5x7 photo, framed and sitting on our credenza right now.



One thing I just did was doing a re-print of a family photo that I'd scanned a couple of years ago. The photo itself is very valuable to us. We had to borrow the photo from a relative to scan in and we had to mail it right back. The problem was that somehow the scanned result had a reddish hue to the skin tones. It was very noticeable. When I got the new PSP 7, I discovered it has an automatic color balance, and a "remove color cast," all under "effects, "enhance photo". It worked perfectly. I reprinted it, and it's one of our most prized 8x10 family pictures.

I went through the help files on the other two included products, Animation Shop and Media Center Plus, and found both easy to understand and to use for a beginner. It's obvious that Jasc has spent a great deal of time on their help files. The following two paragraphs are a direct quote from them.

"Jasc Animation Shop 3.04 is a powerful yet easy-to-use program that creates animations from one or more graphic images and offers a wide variety of effects and transitions for enhancing animations. Used as a standalone application or as a complement to Paint Shop Pro, Animation Shop 3.04 allows users to easily create animations for use on a Web site or in a presentation."



"*Media Center Plus is a management and publishing program for*

(Paint Shop……..Continued on page 12)

Apple iPod for Windows

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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To quote Apple: "In response to insistent demand from PC users, the world's best MP3 player now does Windows. iPod [is] fully integrated with the award-winning PC media player — MUSICMATCH Jukebox Plus™. So every song you add or playlist you create will automatically transfer to your iPod".



I have not bought anything from Apple since sometime in the 1980's, but my wife figured that our daughter needed one of these new Apple music players for Christmas. The Apple iPod can now be interfaced with a Windows computer, so non-Apple users can now download their filched MP3 music files into the latest cool gadget that costs just $300 - $500. The iPod comes in three versions: a 5 GB capacity, a 10 GB capacity and a 20 GB capacity. The more capacity, the more money. Additionally the 10 GB version, which is the one we purchased, is, I think, a new thinner style.

Unfortunately, we didn't read the fine print on the box, and the salesman didn't warn us about the requirements, so there was no iPod use on Christmas day. The iPod gets its music files from a PC, and the requirements for that PC (written in small print) are: Windows Millennium or higher and a firewire port. My daughter's computer is a 600 MHz Gateway running Windows 98 Special Edition. So the day after Christmas, it was off to the nearest place selling a PCI 1394 firewire card, CompUSA, where I bought the cheapest one I could find, a CompUSA branded one for $30 that had four 6-pin firewire ports. The card installed without a problem in the computer.

(iPod.....Continued on page 5)

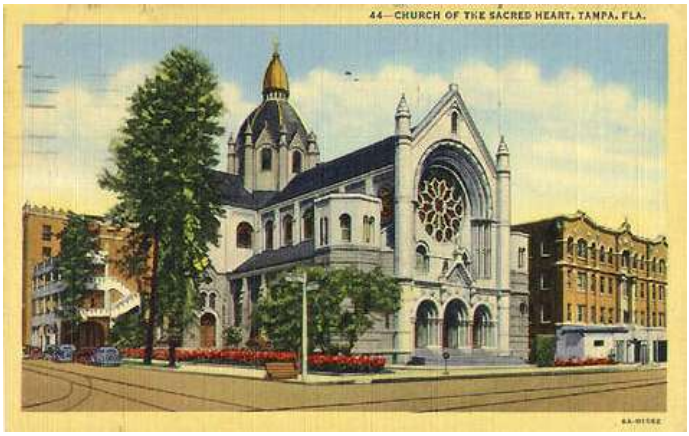
(iPod……..Continued from page 4)

Note that all Windows operating systems from Windows 98 Special Edition on support firewire. Given this, I thought the Windows Millennium or higher requirement was probably not accurate. Well, upon trying to install the iPod software, which is nothing but MusicMatch Jukebox as best I can tell, I got the message that I was using an unacceptable operating system. It is a requirement of MusicMatch that the operating system be Millennium or higher. What to do? Well, there was no choice but to go find that copy of Windows Millennium Upgrade that I had bought for that very computer when Windows Me first came out but had never installed since everything seemed to be running fine and stable with Windows 98 SE. Also, I had another computer in the house running Windows Millennium that seemed to have a few problems that I suspected (perhaps unjustly) were related to Millennium.

But now I had no choice if I wanted my daughter to be able to use the new device. So I first uninstalled GoBack from the Gateway 600, since I recalled reading that you shouldn't install Millennium on a computer running the original version of GoBack because there would be problems. Then I installed the Millennium update, which went on flawlessly, as best I can tell. The only thing I really checked was to see if the local network still worked with the

(iPod……..Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



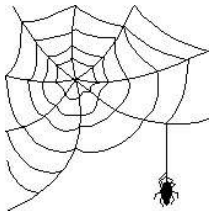
Church of the Sacred Heart

at

http://thebestofusa.com/thrutheyears/

Thru the Years, is a collectables business with some postcards posted on the Internet. They have several from Tampa. One is of the Church of the Sacred Heart. It is described as follows: "This magnificent structure is one of the most noted Catholic edifices of the country. It is equally imposing within, the interior being fashioned along Gothic lines most attractively."

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Financial Times	http://news.ft.com/home/us/
Museum of Florida History	http://dhr.dos.state.fl.us/museum/
Apple II History Home	http://apple2history.org/
Florida Photographic Collection	http://www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/
The History of Computing	http://www.thocp.net/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(iPod……..Continued from page 5)
new Millennium. It did.

I note, for those who dislike Microsoft, that installing the iPod software subjected me to more detailed registration requirements than I can ever recall having for a Microsoft product. For the iPod itself you have to enter its serial number (which you need a magnifying glass to read) along with detailed information about yourself. The MusicMatch software requires similar detailed information. One of them even requires your age—this is not a field you can omit. For the paranoid, what are the chances that the iPod serial number will be used track your listening habits—even if you decline to have MusicMatch, I think it was, monitor your listening habits so as to be able to better make suggestions for your listening pleasure?

Now, we were ready to connect the iPod to the computer via the new firewire port and download some music to the iPod. By the way, the printed instructions that come with the iPod seem minimal at best. In fact the iPod itself seems to be intentionally designed along some minimalist guidelines. There is an PDF file that will tell you what to do—sort of. And the MusicMatch program has a help section, but none of this is very detailed in my opinion. It took us numerous attempts to actually get files transferred. According to the instructions, all you have to do is connect the device to the computer, and it will start MusicMatch Jukebox and download the playlist in Jukebox to the IPod. Not. I finally accomplished this by having the MusicMatch software find the attached device and manually dragging the songs from the playlist to the device—like you would do when you are selecting files to burn to a CD.

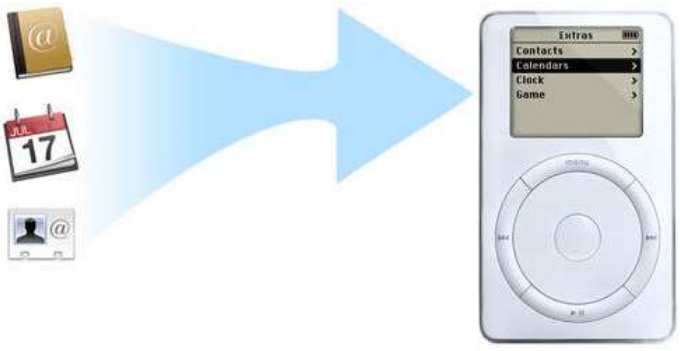
The PDF manual does address this issue, I should admit. Under "When I connect my iPod to my computer, nothing happens", it says "Open MUSICMATCH Jukebox and choose "Download files to portable devices" from the File menu. You should see the iPod icon in the devices window."

If you want to listen to MP3s, the device is certainly good for this. The quality of the sound and the ease of use are good. Additionally for around $50 you can get a car charger and a cassette tape adapter which will allow you to play your iPod through your automobile's cassette tape player. And, I must admit, that having around 2000 songs available for your listening pleasure could make those long trips better.

Finally, one charge is good for about 10 hours on the iPod, and, as indicated above, the 10 GB version will provide you with around 2,000 songs based on the average length and compression of such MP3 files. Additionally, you can import your Microsoft Outlook contacts or your Palm Desktop's addresses to the iPod.

You may read about the iPod at Apple's site http://www.apple.com/ipod/. There are also other sites, like http://ipodlounge.com/, devoted to the iPod.

I think Apple devotees are upset with Apple for porting the iPod to the Windows environment. What I wonder is, a year from now, will the iPod for Windows be outselling the iPod for Apple. ◆



USB Woes

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

It all started about nine days ago as I write this. I had purchased a USB 2.0 card to install in my main computer so as to better accommodate the 40 GB USB external hard drive connected to it. The USB 2.0 drive has been working fine for the past year connected to a regular USB port, just running much slower that it was capable of.

I followed the directions in installing the SIIG USB 2.0 card, using the provided driver instead of letting Windows XP Pro search for one. Note Windows XP Pro does not have a driver for USB 2.0, but Windows XP Pro Service Pack 1 does provide a driver. I have Win XP Pro SP1. Everything seemed to install fine, and a check of the external drive showed that it was transferring files between itself and the C drive about 10 times as fast as it did under a regular USB connection. Now, in addition to the four USB 1.1 ports that came with the computer, I had an additional five USB 2.0 ports that would also support USB 1.1. Real nice. No!

Always expecting the worst, after the installation I checked a few of my USB devices to see if they would connect OK. The Canon G1 camera connected fine; however, the HP ScanJet 5370C scanner had problems. Windows Device Manager said everything was fine with it, but none of the programs that used the scanner could find it. No problem. Just remove the scanner from Windows Device Manager, unplug it from the USB port and then plug it back and let Windows find it again. No good. I tried that several times to no avail. I thought about reinstalling the HP scanning software but decided that wasn't the problem since other software could not find the scanner—even though I could right click on the scanner in Control Panel and have a test run on the scanner where everything was said to be fine. How did installing the USB card cause this problem when the scanner wasn't even connected to the card? What to do? Things are pretty bad when a reinstall of the hardware doesn't bring things back to normal.

Then I thought, I am using Windows XP. It has a System Restore feature. Why not take the computer back to before I installed the card? I did just that. I restored the computer to the previous day. When the computer rebooted, it said that it had found new hardware—the USB 2.0 card (it wasn't there the day before)—and this time I let Windows use its own driver. And the scanner could now be found by all the programs that used it. Thank you, System Restore.

That was last week. Today when I booted the computer, I received the message that new hardware was found, a ScanJet 5370C scanner, and Windows was installing software for it. Uh, Oh. That didn't look good, and it wasn't. A quick check showed that none of my programs that used the scanner could find it. On checking Windows Device Manager, one thing was different: the scanner was now referred to as ScanJet 5370C #2. However, I couldn't find a ScanJet 5370C, which should not be the case if we had a #2.

Removing this device and allowing Windows to find it again produced nothing new. But I had an ace in the hole; all I needed to do was use System Restore to go back to the previous day. I did that, but the scanner still wasn't available. I went back several more days. Still no functioning scanner. I suppose the problem was that I really didn't know when last the scanner functioned properly because it had been more than a week since I last used it.

In desperation, I searched the Internet and the HP site for information. I found that plenty of others had received the error message that the scanner could not be initialized, but I found no solutions. While at HP I decided to download the latest version of the HP PrecisionScan Pro software and drivers for the scanner. But after uninstalling the old version and trying to install the new version I got the error message: "can't create output file:

(USB…….Continued on page 8)

(USB…….Continued from page 7)
C:\sj666\ENGLISH_ISDel.exe." I looked in the folder C:\sj66, and there were a lot of files there including the supposed problem file. So I just double-clicked on the setup.exe that was there, and the installation went ahead fine. I now had a new version of the PrecisionScan Pro software. But that changed nothing. It couldn't find the scanner either.

But I was beginning to understand the problem. It appeared that I had two copies of the scanner installed, ScanJet 5370C #2 and ScanJet 5370C. However, Windows Device Manager only listed the #2 one. And every time I deleted it, it came back. What to do. Well, in browsing the newly created folder C:\sj666 as part of the installation of the new version of PrecisionScan Pro, I noted that there was also a diagnostics sub-folder, and in that folder there was an executable, HPSysDig.exe. I ran it, and it produced a window similar to Windows Device Manager. But under Imaging Devices I now had listed the two versions of the scanner. I deleted the one without the #2. But the software still couldn't find the scanner. However, after a reboot of the computer, I now had ScanJet 5370C in Windows Device Manager, and the scanning software found the scanner (the #2 is only attached if there are two versions installed).

My question: Why didn't both versions of the scanner show up in Windows Device Manager as it did in HP's diagnostic program? Perhaps there is some setting in Win XP's Device Manager that keeps duplicate devices from not being shown unless you choose to display them. And why did Windows all of a sudden decide to install a second instance of the scanner in the first place?

You have undoubtedly heard enough about USB problems, so I won't go into how I trashed USB support and other things on my laptop and the troubles I had in returning things to normal. Suffice it to say that it has been a bad USB month here. ◆

Looking Back to 1993

From the February 1993 newsletter (the January 1993 newsletter had no local content)

SECRETARY'S REPORT
Minutes of meeting - 01/13/93
By: Ed Buzza

Instead of Jim Clark's scintillating coverage of what transpired at our User Group meeting, I did the best I could to record the proceedings. There were many topics of discussion and my 2k scratch pad memory barely coped with what went on. In another room, Don Patzsch conveyed some of his vast knowledge of modems to a group of interested, and appreciative, club members -- more classes to follow. Our indefatigable president called the meeting to order and spoke on a variety of subjects.

CLUB NEWS

- Membership annual dues. $20 for a single membership; $30 for a family membership.
- New membership benefit. A free raffle ticket will be given for each new membership or renewal taken at the regular meeting. For family membership, only the primary member (head of household) will receive a free raffle ticket.
- New computer. Through the very generous kindness of one of our members, who remains anonymous, the BBS now has a brand new 486-33DX Gateway computer. Also, our BBS is now equipped with a 14.4k bps modem. We are in the process of acquiring Desqview so that the Sysop can do some multi-tasking instead of having to wait in line to do some work on the system.
- Guests. Please tell your guests to PRINT their name and address when they "sign in" at the door. We send a sample newsletter to all guests but we do need a legible name and address for mailing.
- Christmas presents. Santa was good to our president this year. He got a Pro Audio Spectrum 16 sound board, with speakers. Prices for the sound board at various dealers in town vary quite a bit.

(1993…….Continued on page 9)

(1993…….Continued from page 8)
Highest was $239 and lowest (Workplace) was $197.

Harvey also shared with us his opinions and comments on The Video Blaster board which he is testing for his employer. The Video Blaster board not only shows TV on the computer monitor, it can also capture video images and save them to disk. But video capture takes up a LOT of space on the hard drive. Ten seconds of 8 bit color needs over 9 meg - and that is without sound

The video board is about $400 locally but only around $320 mail order. Our prez had a bit of trouble with these boards. What he thought was hardware or software failure was really due to one speaker being bad and one of the video jacks not working.

- Business news. Everex has filed for Chapter 11. In contrast, IBM is doing well with Value Point and with PS/1 computers. IBM now offers a 3 year warranty.

- Software news. EXCEL Ver 4 is really nice, Harvey was impressed with the new features. PageMaker Ver 5 is now available. Approach is a very good data base, user friendly, and easy to learn.

- Stacker. Stacker Version 3 is now shipping. Harvey had no problem with installing or using this package but others have reported trouble. The new version lets you stack across floppies. Best of all, Stacker is on the floppy so you can run it from there on a PC that doesn't have Stacker.

- PKWare. The new version of PKWare is now on the BBS. It does a better job on compression. One 400k tile was compressed an additional 60k. There have been problems reported using this version with OS/2, Desqview, and with QuarterDeck - from losing UMBs to the system being rebooted. Also, Norton AV needs an update (it gives a false virus reading).

- Membership benefits.

  1. A monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of the month. The meeting place is the IBM Customer Center, Lake Pointe One Bldg., 3109 W. Martin L. King Blvd., Room 450.
  2. 24 hour, 7 day access to Bits of Blue Bulletin Board.
  3. Monthly Bits of Blue Newsletter.
  4. Hardware/software demonstrations or presentations by vendors of major corporations or by User Group members.
  5. Donated software/hardware and 50/50 pool given away based on raffle drawing at the meeting.
  6. Library of shareware and vendor demonstration programs for copying.
  7. Various educational classes, e.g., Modems, BBS, WordPerfect, DOS, etc.
  8. Discounts at Sunrise Computer Supplies.

- Games. "Wolfenstein" is now passé. "Catacomb Abyss" is the latest thing. Also, "Heaven and Earth" is supposed to be THE game. As one member said, "It'll take you a year!"

PRODIGY

Kathryn Nakib, a Senior Marketing Representative from Prodigy Services Co., demonstrated some of the new features of Prodigy®.

It is the largest on-line service of its kind with over two million members. Prodigy can be described as sort of like cable TV for personal computers. Over 850 services are available for the base subscription of $l4.95 on a monthly basis. A yearly subscription averages out to about $12.95 per month. A subscription covers up to 6 members in a household.

There are a variety of Custom Choices that are available but at additional cost. However, you are told in advance that a particular service is an additional cost item before you enter that service.

9600 baud is available ($2/month) in a number of cities and is being expanded to other cities almost daily. The highlight screen has been redesigned and can be customized. Auto log-on is available and you can change your password. A version for Win-

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

(1993…….Continued from page 9)

dows is due later this year.

BillPay USA is an added fee Custom Choice that lets you pay your bills through your checking account. The fee is $9.95/mo. for up to 30 transactions. Another Custom Choice is the Strategic Investor that shows information about stocks and mutual funds. Data such as quarterly and annual income, dividends, quick and current ratios, balance sheet, performance, etc., is shown and can be downloaded to your printer or popular spreadsheet, database or word processing programs; information on stocks incurs about a 15 minute delay.

There is no shareware download except through the ZIFFaet service. For an added fee of $7.50/hour, and a 4 cent/minute surcharge for 9600 baud, you can access PC Magazine, Computer Shopper and PC Computing.

The basic service has a lot of topics for almost every taste. The over 400 bulletin boards cover such topics as art, computers, education, food and wine, games, religion, seniors, sports and travel. EASY SABRE helps you find information about airline flights, schedules, amenities, and you can book a flight and even rent a car and make hotel reservations from your personal computer.

Electronic mail is available and is limited to 30 messages. After that, a fee of 25 cents is charged for each message. E-mail is held for you for up to two weeks. At this time, all messaging is done on-line; there is no facility to write, spell check and compose your messages offline.

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

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Jean-Luc Burle	Nick Klak
Jim Clark	Bill LaForest
William Coleman	M. N. Martenz
T. Cone	Merle Nicholson
Ray Cooper	Cheryl Petty
Joe Crochet	George Pollak
G. Ennis	Kevan Sheridan
J. Esposito	Robert Stribling
William Fuller	Floyd Thrower
R. Hollander	John Waldon
Charles Howe	Roger Waters

QUICKEN.	J. Esposito
50-50 (S28) ?	Ticket not marked.

COMING EVENTS

February: Corel DRAW
March : Lotus (Smart Suite)
Don Patzsch (AM-TAX) ◆

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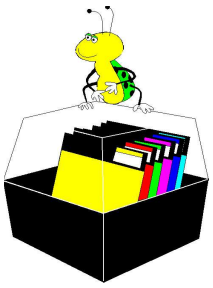
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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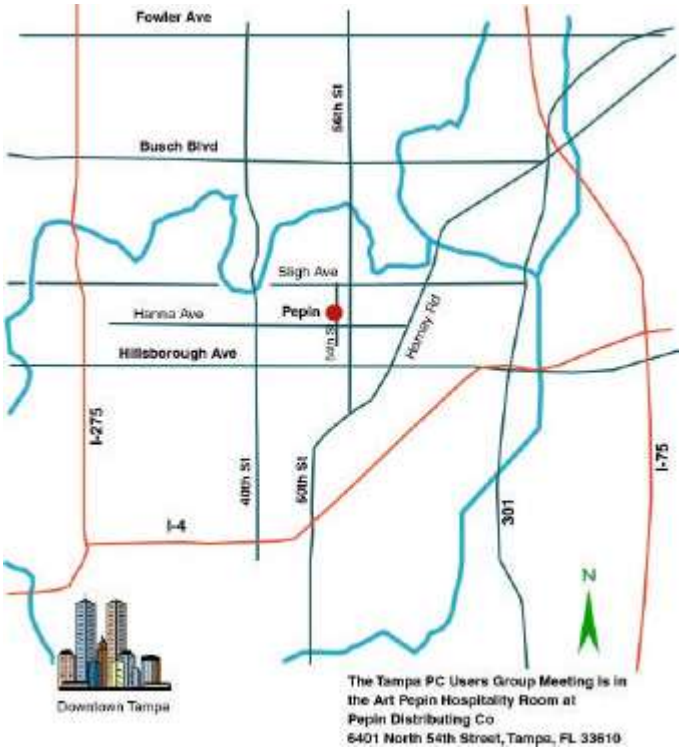
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Paint Shop……..Continued from page 4)

media files. You use Media Center Plus to organize your media files so that they are easier to find and use. Using Media Center Plus revolves around albums, thumbnails and media files: An album is a collection of thumbnails. A thumbnail represents a media file. A media file is an image, sound, or animation file."

I do have other photo editing software, most of which came with scanners, printers and cameras. I've never been really happy with any I've tried. I've never been tempted to go out and spend big bucks for the professional products; I think for my purposes those can't be justified. I keep going back to Paint Shop Pro. Give it a try at http://www.Jasc.com. ◆

Editor's Note: On Dec. 30, a CompUSA ad listed Paint Shop Pro 7 for $99.99 - $20 instant savings - $30 Mfr. Mail-in rebate (need previous version or competing product) - $20 Mfr. Mail-in rebate = $29.99. Even better, at their web site they start with a price of $79.99 and end up with a net of $9.99.



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



February in Tampa Gasparilla

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 2 February2003

Meeting

Gene Barlow from PowerQuest Corporation & AccessData Corporation

Wednesday, February 12, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: According to our presenter, Gene Barlow, his presentation will focus on the following topics: How to Move to Windows XP; Backing up your Hard Drive; and Securing your Hard Drive. Windows XP has garnered a lot of attention this past year. Many users are looking for ways to move their computers to the new operating system, but aren't sure what is the best way for them to go. Gene will outline six ways that you may use to get to Windows XP. He will describe advantages and disadvantages of each approach. If you are thinking of going to Windows XP in the future, this is a presentation you will not want to miss. In addition, he will talk about his CD called "Discovering Your Hard Drive."

Gene will bring handouts and door prizes as well. Special user group prices on these products will be offered at the meeting and available to take home with you. It should be a super meeting. Bring a friend and don't miss it!

March Meeting Topic: To be announced. Possibly Digital Photography and the Computer

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Secretary: Peggy Pulliam (pegrance@yahoo.com) 253-0438
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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

Announcement: FACUG (Florida Association of Computer User Groups) is having their User Group Expo -- Spring Conference in Kissimmee. Contact Mary Sheridan if you are interested in going and interested in expanding our group's activities. Who knows what all else they will provide besides fun and samples!

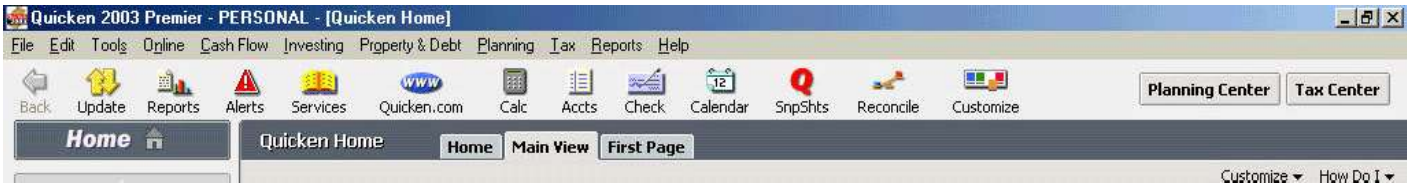
There was some discussion about ZoneAlarm, a system firewall. Apparently when it was deleted it didn't completely uninstall all its parts and remained to cause trouble blocking Internet access completely. If you are having a problem you can check at the "system configuration manager" on your computer and see what is running at startup. Then you can find it and get it deleted.

As part of the benefit of membership in TPCUG you receive the newsletter, can get a great T-Shirt with our logo on it for only $6.00 and attend two Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings each month.

We have Visual Basic SIG on the 3rd Tuesday each month at 6:30 at Gateway. We have Access SIG the 1stt Tuesday at 6:30 at Gateway. See the SIG report in this newsletter as to whom to contact to make sure the meeting is on and there is room before you plan on going! These meetings are very flexible and can cover your needs in these areas, just bring your questions. More people are always welcome at these meetings.

Our Feature Presentation was from Merle Nicholson on the "Pocket PC". An incredible little instrument. He showed exactly how to use it and demonstrated many of its features. It uses a lithium ion battery for indiscriminate charging, (You don't have to wait 'til it is really low before charging it for fear of developing a shorter charge span.) This little pocket pc records to wav files, has a docking station connector and smart media storage. You can even get a cell phone attach-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 12)



Quicken 2003

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Quicken is one of those program that gets a new makeover every year. I don't normally upgrade just one year after installing a version, but Quicken sent me the newest version for review, so I installed version 2003 over the version 2002 on my second computer where I keep Quicken. It installs fine over a previous version if you choose to install in the same directory. The space required for a complete installation is an unbelievable 156,832 KB, 156.8 MB. I whittled that down to 154.6 MB by not installing the Home Inventory, Emergency Records, Organizer and Debt Reduction features. The installation is fairly quick and requires a restart.

The installation dropped all sorts of shortcuts on my desktop—Quicken Premier, Built for Quicken (link to a Quicken Master Card), Get $50 at NetBank (when you open an account), Quicken Broker and TurboTax.com. I will remove all of these since I have no interest in them. For me Quicken is simply a program to keep track of my checking, savings, credit cards and a few investments. About the most exotic thing I do with it is use it to print checks from the computer. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with all the additional features provided by Quicken; it is just that I have no interest in them. Of course, all of these extra features aimed at investing and accessing your accounts online are, I am sure, of interest to others. In fact, at our last meeting several members mentioned how well they liked using Quicken to go online and update all of their accounts or to pay bills.

I have used Quicken since 1991, so I must be happy with it. There is a review of Quicken 98 and a review of Quicken 2002 at this site at the addresses http://www.tpcug.org/reviews/quicken98.html and http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2002/january2002/quicken_2002.htm, respectively. You might want to look at the 2002 one since most of what is said there also applies to Quicken 2003.

Right off I found one improvement in moving from 2002 to 2003. Version 2002 seems to have had a bug in that on my computer and on the computer of one other person for whom I provide computer support, sometimes a text area would appear completely blank. On my computer, it would occur when reconciling an account. I would be, say, reconciling a credit card account and then switch from the reconcile window to the credit card register window, make a change in one entry and then want to switch back to Reconcile. Normally Quicken provides a little "Return to Reconcile" button within the register to be clicked on. But frequently in 2002 it was either not there or the text in it was missing. Knowing from experience where to click, I could always easily return to Reconcile, but to a novice user this could be a problem. That problem has so far not occurred in version 2003. There was another problem with 2002 refusing to automatically enter the payee's name when I wanted to print a payment check for a credit card account that was set up under 2002. There was no such problem with accounts set up using earlier versions. I will have to wait several weeks to see if that problem is solved

Of course, with each new version, you get a new user interface. Quicken views this as a plus since they have added features. But to a previous user it can be a negative until he or she becomes acquainted with it. Also, so much information is included that I don't see how it could be viewed on anything less than the 1024 x 768 screen I use. However, Quicken provides you with the ability to customize what you see. The program comes with three default views: Home, Main View, and First Page. You can customize these or add new views. So, I have just custom-

(Quicken ……Continued on page 4)

ThumbDrive SMART

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com



Every now and then some techy thing (or in this case 'trekkie' thing) catches my eye, and it happened again recently. While browsing through the CompUSA flyer in last Sunday's paper, I noticed an ad for something called a ThumbDrive SMART. The ThumbDrive SMART just happens to be one of the smallest portable storage units in the world. If our newsletter editor has left the size of the graphic to the right as it was the way I sent it to him with this article, then that is its actual size. It is about the size of a BIC lighter, only thinner, and it weighs only 12 grams. But… it holds 251MBs of data; any kind of data, including, but not limited to, music, documents, spreadsheets, pictures, etc.

You simply plug it into an available USB port and voila you have another drive that is assigned the next available drive letter. After that you treat it just like you would any other drive on your system. It is totally compatible with any Windows' platform (Windows 98 and 98SE need to have drivers loaded – which are included) or any Mac OS 8.6 and higher. You obviously also need to have at least one USB 1.1 (or higher) port. I just took my ThumbDrive out of its package, plugged it in and a "G" drive appeared.



It reads at 700Kb/sec and writes at 350Kb/sec. Not the fastest thing in the world, but I'm not complaining. No external power is necessary because the USB port powers it. There is a small status LED light to show drive activity and there is a small write-protect switch on the bottom in case you want to make sure your data is safe. I think the key word in this paragraph is "small."

If there is any disadvantage it may just be its small size. The cap or cover comes with a shirt clip so you can just clip it in your pocket like you would any pen or pencil, but it is so light you wouldn't notice it missing very easily. It also comes with a key-ring attachment, which may be the best way to transport it, unless of course, you have a habit of losing your keys.

There's not much more to say about it. It's really simple to use. I have been transporting CDs or ZIP drives between office and home for some time now, but not anymore. My bottom line cost will be $99 after my rebate. If want to see more about it go to: http://www.trekstorusa.com/thumbdrive_smart.htm and check it out, but it's more dramatic when you hold it in your hand. ◆

(Quicken……..Continued from page 3)

ized the Main View to get things the way I want them.

The first time I tried to reconcile an account, I ran into a problem. There was no Reconcile button on the tool bar, which in past versions you had to click to start the reconciliation process. I looked in Help; indeed you needed to click on the Reconcile button. But it wasn't there. However, there was a customize button there, so I clicked on it, and it provided a list of buttons that could be added to the tool bar. But there was no Reconcile button listed. What to do? As usual, I went to Google to see if others were having a similar problem. But that produced nothing. Later in the day, I clicked on the Customize button again, and again the list of available buttons did not contain a Reconcile button. However, this time I noticed a small check box at the bottom

(Quicken……..Continued on page 5)

(Quicken……..Continued from page 4)

of the window that said "Show more items". A click on that produced more items in the available list—and the Reconcile was there, and I had my Reconcile back.

The Reconcile problem above is indicative of what is, I think, becoming a problem for Quicken. It is getting too complicated for many users. I can always figure out how to get done what I want to get done, since I have been using Quicken for 12 years and spend a lot of time with computer programs. But for the casual user all of these features and options, like adding or removing the Reconcile button from the tool bar, are a problem. In the past 12 months I have helped two people figure out how to use Quicken. They simply could not set up basic accounts and use them. These same people had somehow mastered Microsoft Word enough to write well-formatted documents. Possibly, however, the problem for them was not taking the time to read the instructions.

The most noticeable thing to me about Quicken 2003 is the continued push into the online world. They encourage you to use something called One Step Update. This allows you at one time to update all your accounts directly from their respective financial instructions, plus pay bills, transfer money, download stock quotes and export selected data to

(Quicken……..Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month





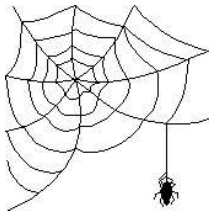


Bucs dominate Raiders 48-21, rule the NFL

In their 27th season, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers finally get to hold the trophy. Dominating on both offense and defense, the Bucs brushed off the feared Oakland Raiders 48-21 on Sunday in Super Bowl XXXVII for the franchise's first NFL championship in its first-ever Super Bowl appearance. The victory capped a season of team records set under the guidance of first-year coach Jon Gruden, who at 39 becomes the youngest coach ever to win a Super Bowl. Complete coverage in Monday's St. Petersburg Times.

In their local Tampa Bay competition, the Saint Petersburg Times online site had their online coverage, captured above, within minutes of the game's end. The rival Tampa Tribune responded much more slowly with theirs.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
User Group Relations - This month's presenter	http://www.ugr.com/
Scanning Basics 101 - All about digital images	http://www.scantips.com/
Southern Living Magazine	http://www.southernliving.com/
IRS Forms in Adobe Acrobat format	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/formspubs/lists/0,,id=97817,00.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Quicken……..Continued from page 5)

Quicken.com. All you have to do is to set this up with Quicken, agree to pay a fee for online banking (which I can't find - is it $9.95?) and then set things up for each financial institution that supports transaction download and online bill payment. You set all of this up from Quicken. Each request is passed on to your bank, credit card company or brokerage, and when they supply a user name and a PIN you are set to go with that account. Don't confuse this with going online to your bank using a web browser and viewing your accounts. All of this is done directly through the Quicken program.

To use a program like Quicken you need discipline. If you don't enter your data regularly, then it is of no use to you. The ability to get most of your information from your financial institutions via the web and the one step update is a plus here. Of course that will be of no use if you want to also track cash purchases and cash income. So Quicken will tell you as much as you tell it. It is a great tool for analyzing your finances—but only if you give it the data—and that can be a lot of work.

Once everything is set up, you can even pay bills while traveling if you have access to an Internet connection and a web browser. Additionally, it appears that you can upload as much as desired of your financial data to Quicken.com and also access it via a web browser. I must confess that I am not comfortable with that. I don't want all of my financial data stored anywhere but on my own computer.

To learn about the program, there is both a printed version and an Acrobat version of the "Getting Started with Quicken 2003" to offer you help, in addition to the program's help file. By the way, one contributor to the large installation size is an additional computer video explaining Quicken. In the past it seems that you accessed this on the CD. Now it is part of the installation.

Quicken Premier is $70; Quicken Deluxe is $50. Read about them at http://www.quicken.com. ◆

FACUG 2003 Spring Conference

By Mary Sheridan, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

It is time for the 2003 FACUG (Florida Association of Computer User Groups) spring conference. The conference is held in the Kissimmee Civic Center in Kissimmee, FL the weekend of February 28th. The three day conference is open to all computer user group members whether they belong to the FACUG or not. The conference is for the leaders of user groups to learn ways to be better leaders.

Conference registration fees are: $35.00 if postmarked by February 1, 2003, $50.00 if paid between February 1st and February 15th, $60.00 on site; nonmembers are $60.00 by mail and $70.00 on site. Tampa PC Users Group is a member of the FACUG, so the member's price applies.

Some of the topics of the conference round tables are: How to run a hardware SIG, treasurers' duties and responsibilities, new member orientations, working with retailers and vendors, personal digital assistants, running a user group, branding, building and maintaining a user group database, how the user group supports home computer networking, and creating a user group website and newsletters.

I am the treasurer of the FACUG this year and am

(FACUG……..Continued on page 12)



Member, Jenny Lind Olin, far left, at the 2002 Spring Meeting

More Woes

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

HP ScanJet 5370 Last month under the title USB Woes I mentioned how installing a USB 2.0 card caused me to lose my HP ScanJet 5370 C scanner and what I had to go through to get it back. Well, the scanner is functioning fine in normal flatbed mode. In fact, the Looking Back to 1993 article on page 9 was scanned in from an old newsletter using that scanner. But another problem has developed. What sort of month would it be without a new problem? There would be nothing to write about.

The HP ScanJet 5370 C scanner comes with a five inch by five inch transparency adapter so that you can scan transparencies or large negatives. (See http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/january2001/ScanJet5370 Cse.htm for a photo of the scanner along with my original article about it.) In fact, scanning large negatives is the only reason I bought the scanner. It seemed like an economical way to scan the many large negatives I had of old family photos and the newer 6 cm x 7 cm negatives I had taken in years past. My HP PhotoSmart film scanner would only process 35 mm negatives, and the older HP iicx 14 inch flatbed scanner had no adapter to scan any negatives.

Unfortunately, I think, my negative scanning days with this scanner are done. After two years, I can no longer get the software to go into photographic negative mode. When working correctly, if you want to scan a negative, you put the negative on the scanner and place the transparency adapter on top of it. You then tell the software to use the transparency adapter, and the scanner turns off the normal scanning light and turns on the light in the transparency adapter. That still works, However, the option in the software to go into photographic negative mode stays grayed out—and nothing I tried like reinstalling the software, reinstalling the scanner, etc. did any good. So I sprung for a $25 talk with HP only to be told that it was a hardware problem, and the only solution is a new scanner.

I find it hard to believe it is a hardware problem, but in my research I have seen others say that HP told them the same thing. I think if the software were written properly that everything would be OK since other scanning software I have, called VueScan, can produce a pretty good result. It is a much better result than the HP software produces in just transparency mode. Unfortunately the VueScan software's result is not quite acceptable and my email correspondence with the author of VueScan failed to produce a solution. He answered one email, then no more. He is apparently harassed by too much email from the many people who have bought his software, and I got lumped into the group that are worth only one email.

So, I have a problem. I have, perhaps, 200 large negatives of my own still to scan, and I may come by more in the future from family members. I would like to eventually digitize these images. I have basically two options if I want to do that. Buy another HP flatbed scanner that has a large transparency adapter—a $300 - $500 proposition—which I am loath to do since I think they have made a defective item. Or I can buy a regular negative scanner that will accommodate large negatives—probably close to a $1,000 proposition. At present I am going to do nothing, since none of these negatives has to be scanned at this moment, and hope that an economical solution presents itself in the future.

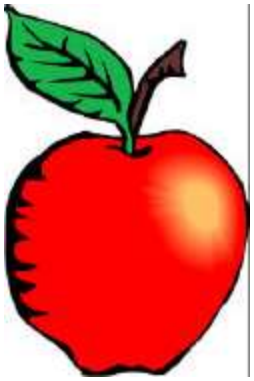
Internet Explorer Problems What do you do when you need to download something from the Internet and your browser is kaput?

This all started, I think, with the installation of the .Net Framework on my laptop. You need to install the .Net Framework (the installation executable is 20.8 MB) in order to run programs written in any of Microsoft's new .Net languages. The installation went fine, only noting that my computer had an old version of the commctrl.dll which would be replaced with a correct version after I rebooted. After a reboot, I installed a program that I had written in Visual Basic .Net. Parts of it ran fine until I needed to access the accompanying database. Then I got the

(Woes……..Continued on page 10)

Don's Apple

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@helios.acomp.usf.edu



About January 15, 2002, I ordered an Apple Mac computer from what I thought was an Apple 800 number. It probably was just a regular sales outfit. Judy, the saleswoman told me several things I do not believe to be true. The computer arrived at my home on January 22, 2002.

It is the largest and most complete Mac that was available at the time. About a week after the computer arrived, I saw an error message that said, "One of your two processors (CPU's) is bad, call for service." The computer was warranted for one year, parts and labor.

I decided to wait till a month had passed before I would call. If anything is going to go wrong with a new machine, I believe it is likely to go bad in the first month. I wrote to Apple people in California and kept writing for some time as I wanted to be sure I had a good trail of letters in case anything serious should develop.

It was about November 14, 2002, before I took the machine, with Apple's approval from headquarters, to the International Plaza Apple store to have the processor replaced. The serviceman went to his computer and looked up the record and told me he would replace both processors. (They are on a separate printed circuit board.) He did the replacement, and the invoice said $1,058.40 for the processors and $85.00 for the labor; total $1143.40. No charge to me as this was in-warranty replacement at the approval of the company offices in California by telephone and writing.

I bought the computer to find out for myself about the OS X (OS ten). That is one great program. Easy to use, and with practically no need to reboot ever. The operating system, OS X, is quite similar to Linux. Both are based on UNIX.

Because of all the conversation and letters between myself and Apple, I believe I have received a rebuilt computer. I do not believe Apple puts a date on the computer at the time of manufacture.

It is now January 15, 2003. My Mac does not function. I press the start button, the light comes on that indicates the machine is starting, and it immediately goes out when I remove my finger from the start button. I called the local Apple Store at the Int'l Plaza. They said, "Bring it in." I did, and the serviceman said he will repair it and it will be ready tomorrow. No cost to me. It was ready the next day, and the cost was $135.00 for labor and $630.00 for the new motherboard. Total $765.00 was covered under the warranty.

When you want to see into an Apple G4, you simply press the button, and the side of the computer opens down. All the power supply and other items not related to the motherboard are inside the cabinet, but the motherboard and associated parts are on the side of the computer that is lying on your table. This makes the access absolutely the best I have seen. Add a hard drive or memory and it is all open and simple to work with.

Now, what do I think of the machine, the G4? It is a great machine. It is fun to use, but not as fast as I was lead to believe it would be. It may be useful in the way I wanted, because the dual processors will prove useful when 64 and 128 bit programs designed for this feature become available. I expected to keep this machine for years, and I hope these programs are available later this year. Some have been out for a while, but they are intended for work of a greater complexity than mine.

P.S. If anyone is interested, I will write up a story on the details of how each OSX component works and how each computer program works with this Apple Mac G4. By the way, my IBM computers never give me any problems even though they are turned on and off as many as 10 times in one day. ◆

Looking Back to 1993

From the February 1993 Bits of Blue

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

A couple of members mentioned that they missed my President's Column in last month's newsletter. Thank you for noticing and stating so. Simply put, I was recouping from 1992 and the holidays which always include Food, Family and Fun. These are my favorite 'F' words. Of course there is one that I don't like, 'Financial debt' which is incurred during the holidays, then comes to visit me a couple of months later. Marylee always says it's better to give than to receive so I always make sure that I give myself something during the holidays. I am sure that's what CompUSA also thinks when they give me a bill for stuff I purchased for the holidays on my charge card. I certainly hope that the Holidays and Santa were good to each of you and your families.

At our December meeting I announced that one of our members had donated a computer to our group. The computer was a Gateway 486. This system has replaced our old 286 BBS PC which required TLC on a regular basis from Kevan to maintain its daily operation. Additionally, the 286 did not have expansion capability for future growth of the BBS without a premium investment. The board felt that it was not in the group's best interest to invest money into the 286. We had decided that the minimum system we needed was a 386/mhz with 4Mb of RAM and a 120 HD. All we needed was a generous donation from a vendor or more money in our bank account to acquire this PC. Neither occurred or would occur in a timely matter. However, out of the blue a PC showed up donated by an anonymous member. To date I am not sure who donated this system. Could it be Mr. or Mrs. Claus or even one of Santa's helpers? I don't know but the donation has revived my belief in Santa. I think he or she has retired in Tampa from the North Pole and is a member of group. Anyway, whoever you are, on behalf of our group I wanted to say — THANK YOU!

The elections are over. Hooray! Now we have a new president and an old president. The country elected Mr. Clinton as our new president and the user group elected me as the old president. This will be my 5th year as president. Trivia Question: Who has been on the board longer than me? I never thought in 1988 when I was first elected that I would do it beyond one year. Well, every year it gets better. I certainly would not have done it if we didn't have a staff of dedicated volunteers. Look at the names under the officers' section, seek these people out during a meeting or get on the BBS and tell them THANKS. They are the ones making this all possible. We have a new Vice-President this year. Tom Cone has been in charge of membership relations in the past. He will continue in that capacity in addition to his new position. Additionally, members are slowly coming forward and volunteering their services. We are extremely fortunate to have a good group of volunteers. Please join me in welcoming back Tom, Bill, Roger, Jim, Ed, Marylee, Larry, Kevan for 1993. Of course, we welcome and need more volunteers.

My goals for this year: 300+ membership, bulk mailing, formal Special Interest Groups (SIGs) including Windows, OS/2, DOS, word processing & spreadsheets. Other SIGs will be started as we get volunteers to run them. Additionally, we will implement a process for members to acquire free software based on a written review of the product. Vendors are willing to give full working evaluation copies of software to our group based on a written review. The board will implement procedures for this process soon. Presently our inventory of reviewable software includes:

- Lotus Organizer for Windows - Personal Information Manager by Lotus Development Corp.
- FASTLYNX - File Transfer System by Rupp Technology Corp.
- Adobe Type Set - Software Fonts by Adobe Systems Inc.
- Star Trek the Screen Saver for Windows by Berkeley Systems
- Express Publisher for Windows - Desktop Publishing w/ Text Appeal - Logo builder by Power Up

(1993…….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

(1993…….Continued from page 9)

Software Corp.

- KUI - Keyboard User Interface for Windows by Softac Corp.

If you are interested in reviewing products please contact me in order that I may add you to our list. Reviewers will need to meet the qualifications specified in the procedures written by the board before any software is handed out for review.

Last year I stated that in 1992 there would be a battle between IBM and Microsoft and their respective 32 bit operating systems. Windows NT and OS/2 were going to duke it out. It never happened because NT didn't ship. Now rumors are that Microsoft will ship a subset of NT just to get it to market in order to prevent IBM from slowly building an OS/2 following. While these two giants have been battling with their marketing machines, Novell purchased the rights to UNIX. It will be interesting to see if this group turns into the *Three Amigos*, *Three Stooges*, *Three Little Pigs* or just *Three's a Crowd*. Meanwhile the classic old DOS is fixing to be upgraded. If this OS is as good as DOS 5.0 was, bring it on Microsoft! As Ray Charles would say, "YOU GOT THE RIGHT ONE BAAAABY. UNH UH." DOS still works for the masses, and Mr. Bill (Gates) knows there is still money in it.

Harvey P. Bruneau ◆

(Woes…….Continued from page 7)

message that .Net required MDAC 2.6 or higher, that's Microsoft Data Access Components. I had MDAC 2.7 ready and waiting, so I installed it along with Jet 4.0, and my new application ran perfectly on the laptop.

Many people have objected to the size of the .Net Framework installation, but once it is installed it makes the .Net program installations much smaller, and eventually it will become part of many things that Microsoft installs, so it will automatically be on your computer.

What does this all have to do with Internet explorer (IE). Maybe nothing, but after all of the above I tried to access the Internet with IE and received an empty browser window with a message of Done in the status bar. Trying different URLs didn't help. A shut down and a reboot of the computer produced the same problem. I tested my Internet connectivity with ping and tracert. Everything was fine. It appeared that IE 5.5 was damaged, but how do you go to Microsoft's site to get a new version if your browser doesn't work. The solution was that there was an old version of Netscape Navigator still on the laptop. Feeling guilty, I used Navigator to go to the Microsoft site and install IE 6.0. In retrospect, I think I could have just used another computer to download the small setup program you put on your desktop and then clicked on to do the actual download and installation, transferred that program to the laptop and then ran the setup program. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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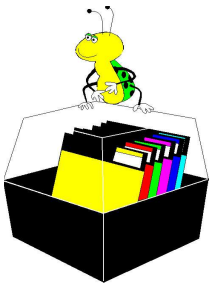
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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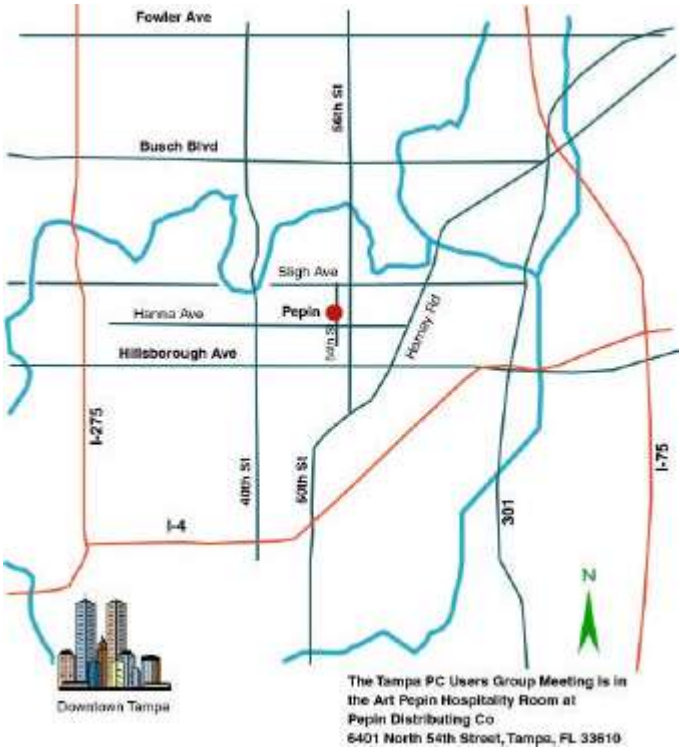
(FACUG…….Continued from page 6)
receiving the registration checks for the conference. We have over 100 early registrations, so it looks to be a very successful gathering.

The Holiday Inn Kissimmee is offering rooms for $55.00 a night to the attendees of the conference. Request the group rate for the FACUG when making a room reservation. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)
ment or a GPS attachment. It has a very large storage capacity and has versions of Word and Excel it can use, and you can do an incredible amount of actual computing with it and even store pictures without using up all work storage. That was a great presentation for a powerful little tool.

We didn't have a door prize this month, but we did confirm that the winner of the Windows XP from last month has **not yet** installed it on his computer!

We took a break in our really nice meeting room and had some more discussion about, you guessed it, computers and their programs and ended the meeting. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



March in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 3 March 2003

Meeting

Digital Photography & the Computer

Wednesday, March 12, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will present a program on digital photography. He will discuss how he uses both film and digital cameras and both flatbed and film scanners to acquire images and get them into the computer. More importantly, he will then discuss what to do with the images once you have them in your computer, focusing on the use of Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator.

Newsletter Change Beginning with the April newsletter we will no longer be using bulk mail to send out 200 plus copies. We will only be mailing the newsletter to our paid membership and a few special friends of the group using regular first class mail. When the group had 200 members, bulk mail made sense. As our membership dropped over the years, we padded the mailing list so as to stay above the 200 minimum for nonprofit bulk mail. But the board of directors has decided it is time to scale back and save a little money and a lot of effort. For those nonmembers who will no longer be receiving a mailed copy, you can, of course, still read the newsletter online at http://www.tpcug.org. ◆

April Meeting Topic: Dave Whittle representing Roxio

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the February Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

Did you know that the club gets a commission when you go to shop at Amazon.com by first checking in at our web site – http://www.tpcup.org – and then clicking on the Amazon link? Go there to shop for your books and other items that Amazon carries. Make a little note of it so you don't forget when the time comes.

You also get a discount at Comp USA if you use your TPCUG card. Now you may not have received a card, but send a request to mcpease@mindspring.com - ask and you shall receive, or so I have been told.

Our featured speaker was Gene Barlow - with Power Quest and Access Data. He and his wife were there, with some of their products available for sale. And after we heard what the products do, there were quite a few sales. Some members have been using these products for years.

Gene gave a great presentation of his products from his laptop. He had a separate external hard drive that was very small and demonstrated the ease of backing up and storing information off site, thus being prepared for the worst.

He talked about managing your hard drive "the heart of your computer system". A script of what we went over is on the web at
http://www.ugr.com/products.html

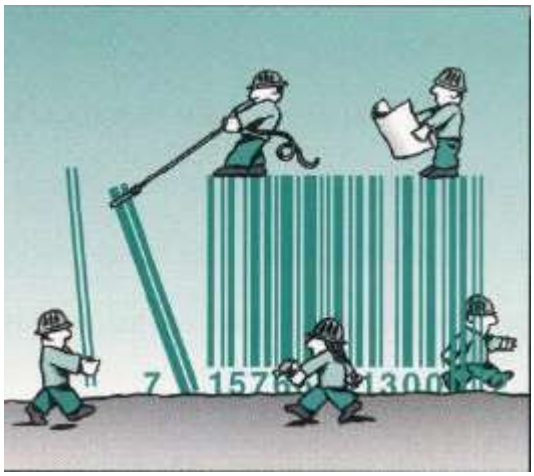
"Discovering your hard drive" is an informative CD he has prepared which is available to user group members for $20. An educational tool that makes getting people acquainted with computers a little easier.

Using the product Partition Magic, you can install a Windows XP upgrade in a partition for it separate from Windows 98. You then have two separate operating systems and can switch to one or the other as needed depending on the application you are wanting to use.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 6)

How About Those Bars?

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@att.net



They seem to everywhere, bar codes. Coke cans, software boxes, furniture, car parts, mail, and a million more everyday and not so everyday items and places. The ubiquitous bar code is a modern day phenomenon that serves two basic purposes, identification and inventory control. They are the essential component of the (AIDC) Automated Identification and Data Capture industry.

For the PC user, amateur or IT professional, they are another very useful utility. Uses are virtually unlimited. Cataloging and tracking parts, hobby collections, retail or wholesale items, storage boxes, ID cards, tickets, work orders or other documents, luggage tags, etc., etc.

Groceries and general merchandise carry UPC bar codes which are controlled by the Uniform Code Council, an issuing authority. This is much like the way domain names are controlled. UPC codes are limited to genuine business applications. However, there are many other bar code symbologies freely available for use. Code 39 is one of many popular codes. Often they incorporate check digits to minimize errors.

Some of the new two dimensional (2D) codes are capable of containing vast amounts of information so that direct reads eliminate the necessity for any lookup files.

In this article I will not go into the technical specifications of each bar code, but rather I am trying to provide more general information to suggest using bar codes for your own needs and ideas.

To use bar codes you will need a scanner as an input device which can be plugged into your keyboard circuit and will deliver the scanned codes to your program and/or display screen. Other RS232 serial port and USB varieties are on the market. Scanners can be Laser, Light Pens, or CCD, the latter being safer and less expensive for amateur use. Today's sophisticated professional scanner gun is often wireless. Some may require a translator box (wedge) and power supply, others are self contained. The scanner is programmed to accept one or more type codes by scanning control code bars into itself. If you elect to use a specific code or unusual size label be sure your scanner has that specific capability.

Various bar code fonts and label stock are readily available for common PC printers. High volume users can purchase special bar code printers such as those made by Zebra.

A wide variety of off the shelf software is available. Two examples are LabelWorks, complete package, and Speedbar, which allows cutting and pasting codes. These programs can accept scanner input as if it were keyed in.

The basic concept is that the bar code acts as a key to a record in a file or database. The file can contain as much or as little related information as desired.

You will find bar codes not difficult to use and understand. They will allow easy access to data and offer solutions to many problems.

Much more specific information is available on the Internet or you may contact the writer through the Tampa PC Users Group. ◆

Ad-Aware

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC User's Group
mfriendtampa@worldnet.att.net

I recently acquired a copy of a product known as AD-Aware 6. What it does is scan system memory, registry and hard drives for known spy ware and give the user the option of safely removing it from the computer. I heard about it from a column by Doug Stanley in the Tampa Tribune. The product is available from http://www.lavasoftusa.com. The basic program can be downloaded for free.

I was interested in the product because I wanted to know if any "bugs" had been introduced into my computer to spy on my internet activity and provide advertising activity or personal information to others. I was amazed to find that the software reported about five separate "events" where the Registry had been altered to provide information to others. There were another half dozen "data miners" implanted to mine information for advertisers. I was pleased to learn that this free software would enable me to remove all this information, including that which was in the Registry area. The software offered to back up or "quarantine" this information first so it could be replaced in the event something were to go wrong. So I went with the "quarantine" option and proceeded to delete all this stuff. As I proceeded with the free software I had a few moments when I wondered if I would end up with a non-functioning computer, but all went well. When I finished I looked at the list of newly quarantined items and rebooted the computer. It restarted and worked fine. After a few days I finally felt comfortable enough to remove the quarantined files altogether. The computer continued to function fine.

When the program first starts you have the options of using the default scan, of selecting specific drives or folders to scan, or of selecting a quick system-check, which scans the memory, Registry and Windows folder.

Other options provide for the creation of an "Automatic save-log file." This is needed if technical support is needed following an incomplete or improper removal. This file provides a starting point to determine what happened.

"Automatically quarantine objects prior to removal." This will back up and store all of the files automatically.

"Safe Mode." This option forces Ad-Ware to get your explicit permission prior to initiating any process or procedure.

Other flexibilities include options to:
"Scan within archives" – This allows the program to check compressed or backed up files.
"Skip non-executable files"- not recommended for an initial scan.
"Skip files greater than (x) KB"- Allows the user to define file size limits.

The "Memory and registry" section options are available to:
"Scan active processes"-
"Scan Registry"- This is a normal registry scan.
"Deep Scan Registry" This allows the program to scan the registry recursively.

If the user uses Internet Explorer, a separate option is available: "Scan my IE favorites for banned URL's." This option allows the user to locate and remove suspicious content from favorites.

Now I wanted to block new attempts by advertisers to implant these spy devices and learned I could have that, too, at a price. Ad-Aware **Plus** is available with **Ad-Watch**, which monitors your use of the Internet and stops all of the known advertising gimmicks from invading your computer. I say "known" because the software seems to work something like a virus detector and requires that you go online regularly to the Lavasoft site to update information on the latest spy ware trying to sneak a peek into your machine. The Plus version costs under $30 so I decided to spend the money on the upgrade. Ad-Watch also blocks pop-up ads, which is a feature I have long desired.

(Ad-Aware.....Continued on page 5)

(Ad-Aware……Continued from page 4)

Ad-Watch is a very intriguing addition. It can be set to load on Windows startup. It can then be set to operate manually or automatically. The program offers "real time accuracy." This determines the speed at which the program responds to detected items. This means how many different concurrent threads Ad-Watch will analyze. At the higher settings more CPU cycles will be required. Three settings are available.

"Basic"- lowest setting uses the least resources and is good for old or limited systems.
"Medium"- Mid range setting and a good compromise in intermediate systems.
"High" – Uses slightly more resources than medium and is recommended for modern systems.

Other very useful options are:

"Lock startup sections in Registry - The startup (run) sections of the registry will be locked. No changes will be permitted.

"Block possible browser hijack attempts" – Stops suspicious files from attaching to and taking over the browser.

"Block suspicious processes"- Blocks all suspicious

(Ad-Aware……Continued on page 6)

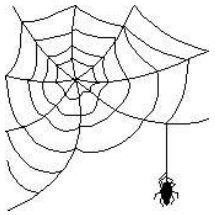
Internet Picture of the Month



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Edenton, North Carolina

This is one of the postcards from the site http://edenton.com/. The specific page is http://edenton.com/history/oldphoto/oldshow.htm. Edenton was the first permanent settlement in North Carolina and is a delightful place to visit if you like old places. If you can't make it in person, the site has 80 old postcards for viewing.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Register - Technical News	http://www.theregister.co.uk/
Brian's Buzz - Window's Tips Search Engine	http://www.briansbuzz.com/
Roman Numeral and Date Conversion	http://www.guernsey.net/~sgibbs/roman.html
Photography 101	http://www.aljacobs.com/
The Flash Mind Reader - New twist on an old trick	http://mr-31238.mr.valuehost.co.uk/assets/Flash/psychic.swf
Adobe Photoshop Basics	http://graphicssoft.about.com/library/course/bllps5out.htm
Espresso Graphics - Photoshop Tutorials	http://www.espressographics.com/
Internet EYE Magazine Tutorials	http://the-internet-eye.com/HOWTO/Photoshop.htm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Ad-Aware……..Continued from page 5)
processes on the system.

"Lock executable file associations" – Blocks (only) the most common associations (used by worms and viruses) so that they cannot stealthily change executable, shortcut and registry file associations.

Unfortunately, I am still getting more spam than I wish but much of that probably comes come from information gathered about me before I installed Ad-Aware.

Interestingly, this product is made by a Swedish company and is marketed in a number of European countries.

I understand there are two kinds of software used by advertisers: 1. Adware, which installs itself after you click "I agree" or legally consent to the software being implanted. Of course, if you didn't read and understand all the fine print before "agreeing" you may have agreed without being aware of it. 2. Then there is spy ware which may install itself without your consent. An article on the Internet recently indicated that this company distributed 4.5 million free copies of Ad-Aware. Those interested in more information on this subject might go to http://www.news.com and look for the article titled PC Invaders. Search under the name PC Invaders for the April 18, 2002 article. ◆



(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
Backup your whole system before adding XP. Use a Windows 98 installation CD in the CD drive to get the XP upgrade to let you use the upgrade version; because of the partition it can't "see" Win 98 so you wouldn't be able to use the upgrade. Other than that, you won't have any trouble. Windows 98 takes 1 to 2 GB, Win XP takes 2 to 4 GB. He does his applications and data on separate partitions.

Another product we heard about is Drive Image. According to Gene, if you have been using computers for any length of time and you have not experienced a hard drive failure, you are lucky and rare. You want to back up. Collect a copy of everything (even the programs) in the hard drive and save it off the computer – even away from the building is safest. Backing up the data to another – external – hard drive monthly was demonstrated using a small external drive that Gene attached to his laptop. With Drive Image you can back up your hard drive in the same computer. If something gets corrupted, you have it right there. This kind of talk always makes me nervous because I know I don't have things backed up sufficiently, and I am one of the rare and lucky ones so far. I did lose everything in my Palm Pilot, though, so I have a mini experience to start me worrying properly.

The next products, Wipe Drive and Secure Clean, are used to keep the hard drive safe when you are giving it away for good. These get rid of all data and all traces of the data. Maybe you didn't know that information has been recovered from computers which had supposedly been cleaned and uninstalled professionally. These products will take it all off, or cover it over, so no trace can be found.

Gene donated door prizes: Wipe Drive and Partition Magic, and the Club gave a fancy T-shirt – so there were three lucky winners. If you weren't there, you know it wasn't you, but it could have been. See you at the next meeting. ◆

Presenter Gene Barlow

3D-Album® for Windows

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

I'm not sure where to begin on this one except to say it's one of, if not the best, programs of this nature I have ever had the pleasure to use, and I do mean pleasure. Now that I have given you my closing remark, I guess I don't have to finish this article and can just tell you not to waste any more time and just go buy 3D-Album! But then our newsletter editor would be upset with me so I'll carry on about this excellent program for a few more lines.

I've been on a roll my last few articles talking about programs to make your digital images look better (quality-wise) and sharing them with the world. 3D-Album is not designed to make adjustments to your photos; however, it can take some of your worst photos and show them in a manner that no one will notice if they are bad or not. I guarantee that you will hear a lot of "gee-whizzes" or "how-did-you-do-thats" from whomever you "show" your picture presentations to. It's up to you if you let them know how easy it really is.

Micro Research Institute, Inc, the creator of 3D-Album, bills this software package as the "Ultimate in 3D *Photo* Presentation." I think they are short-selling themselves by just using the word *Photo*, because if you are like me, you have a collection of a lot of graphic images from all over the place. I think a better catch-phrase would be the "Ultimate in 3D Image Presentation."

3D-Album is quite graphics intensive, so there are minimum requirements that should be adhered to before trying it at first, which are:

PC with 200 MHz or higher clock speed.
Windows 98, 2000, ME, XP, or NT 4.0.
64 MB RAM with Windows 98, NT 4.0; 128 MB recommended.
128 MB RAM with Windows 2000, XP; 256 MB recommended.
3D video card with 16MB RAM or higher, supporting OpenGL.
800 x 600 screen resolution or higher.
24, or 32 bit color depth.
Sound card.
CD ROM or DVD Drive.

Now, these are minimums, and, obviously, the more the better.

3D-Album installs itself with 23 terrific 3D styles (presentations) to display your pictures with well over 50 other available styles for ***FREE***, just for the download on the Internet. Many software companies charge for additional templates, so FREE is good.

The program is designed with a Windows-type Explorer main interface, or maybe that's a Mac-type interface. Whatever its appearance, it is simple to use and easy to figure out without having to read a lot of instructions before making your first creation. And I like that! There are 12 album style categories such as **Album**, which actually has automatic (or not automatic) album-flipping pages, **Cube**, **Photo Frames**, **Movies** and **Seasonal** (including holiday) themes, to name only a few. Under each of those categories are several (depending on if you downloaded all of the FREE extra styles like I did) choices.

I may be getting a little ahead of myself here. The easiest way to see what is available when you first start using 3D-Album is to first make sure the **Preview** button is clicked, then click Organize and select the folder with the images you want to present. In this area, although 3D-Album itself doesn't concentrate on editing your images, it will load your favorite editor for you if you want to make some changes. Now choose the presentation style you want to use. When a style is chosen, a section at the bottom shows the options you have to customize the presentation styles of each to your liking. The presentation area is also where you can add background sound such as MP3, WMA, WAV or MIDI. When you are satisfied with your presentation, click on **Build**. Now you have to choose what kind of presentation you want to create. Here are your choices.

(Album……Continued on page 8)

(Album ……..Continued from page 7)

Application – This will create an .EXE file that can be run on someone else's computer as a stand alone application, even if they don't own 3D-Album. You can also create an auto run CD that will show your presentation automatically by just inserting it into the CD-Rom drive.
Screensaver – Build a screensaver to use in Windows.
HTML start page – All the files are created to be added to a website to literally show your presentation to the world.
Zip file for emailing – Everything you need to prepare your presentation to be sent by email.
Self-expandable .EXE file for email – This file will automatically extract itself when it is received by the email recipient.

Although this may sound extremely simplified, don't let the simplicity fool you into thinking the presentations aren't professional-looking, because they are. The full software I just discussed sells for $39.95 direct. If you're not interested in web page design, email functions and are not suddenly going to become a professional presentation maker, you can get a limited edition copy for just $8.95 (http://visvivasoftwareinc.goemerchant7.com/). There is also an add-on by Visaviva Software Products for $19.95 called **Animation Capture** that will produce video outputs to MPEG, WMA, AVI and RealPlayer from 3D-Album software output. With the proper programs (like Nero - or other programs I have written about recently), these Animation Capture outputs can be exported to VCD or SVCD that can be played on your household DVD player and viewed on your TV. If you'd like to see some demos of what can be easily done with 3D-Album go to: http://www.3d-album.com/demo/index.html and check them out. This is not the first version of 3D-Album, so it is a tested program. There is also a Frequently Asked Questions page with just about everything you may ever need to know about 3D-Album.

It's not too often that a program comes along like this with all the features, ease of use and priced to fit almost anyone's budget. I highly recommend you add this software package to your collection. I also highly recommend that when your friends say,"Gee-whiz,

(Album ……..Continued on page 12)

Looking Back to 1993

From the March 1993 *Bits of Blue*

SECRETARY'S REPORT
MINUTES OF 2/10/93 MEETING
By: Jim Clark

WOWeee!!? If you were not at this meeting, you missed a REALLY GOOD ONE!! . Corel Corporation was good enough to send a lovely and efficient rep to give us a presentation on CorelDraw. And we had a big turnout, with many guests. Don Patzsch and Kevan Sheridan were conducting their very popular modem class in another room while our user group meeting room began to fill. By the time our meeting started shortly after 6 PM, the room was just about full. The folks attending the modem class found few seats left when their class let out at 6:30, and some had to stand or sit on the floor. But it was well worth the inconvenience.

CorelDraw is a large and powerful program, and it takes considerable time to just touch on its capabilities. Our illustrious Prez wisely chose to keep other normal meeting activities to a minimum to allow as much time as possible for the presentation.

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS

- Word Perfect 5.2 is on the market; one member reported that at the $34 upgrade price it is an excellent bargain, especially since it includes Adobe Type Manager 2.5. WP 6.0 is expected to be available this summer.

- PageMaker 5.0 will be on the street soon and the reviews of the program have been very good.

- MS DOS 6.0 should be out in a couple of months. It will include a compression program that some believe is very similar to Stacker, the creators of which are suing Microsoft.

- Gateway continues to be a leader in computer sales, but many report their sales are growing faster than their capability to provide technical support. Some report that it is very hard just to get through to them, and with their taped leave-a-message answering facility, it is harder to be able to talk with anyone. But it is also reported that when you finally get to talk to a human, you are given excellent service. Gateway says it is working on the problem and is adding many new support lines and some 75 additional tech support personnel. Look for tech support at Gateway to improve.

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

(1993…….Continued from page 8)

- Harvey reported that a premier issue of PC Novice magazine is available at many of the computer stores - like Comp USA, Work Place, Office Depot, Computer City - that contains a lot of basic PC info. It is free at Comp USA (and probably at all the locations) and is a worthwhile pickup.

The vendor presentation scheduled for March is Lotus SmartSuites.

PRESENTATION -- CorelDraw

Corel Corporation was kind enough to send a knowledgeable and professional representative -- Denise Zutrauen -- to give a presentation of CorelDraw 3.0 to our User Group. And the turnout for the presentation -- like the program --was quite good.

CorelDraw 3.0 is a Windows program. I have never used CorelDraw nor any other similar graphics package, so I have no basis for comparison. As CorelDraw users already know -- it is a very powerful program and it seemed to me that it can do just about anything that one might want to do in the way of creating graphics and presentations. I can't imagine anything one might want to do with text, for example, that this program will not do -- bearing in mind, of course, that CorelDraw is a graphics package, not a word processor (though it does include spell-check, hyphenation, columns, a thesaurus, and other word processing features). As Denise noted, she could spend days covering all the features of the program; I do not propose to even cover the highlights of this very powerful program in the limited space of this newsletter.

Denise stated that CorelDraw consisted of 12 applications, and it does. From a user standpoint, however, I would say it has four major applications -- Draw, Chart, Photo-Paint and Show for illustration, charting, bitmap editing, and presentations -- with the other 8 applications supporting these majors. The other 8 include:

CorelTrace, which allows bitmap graphics (photos, etc) to be converted to vector graphics; CorelMosiac, a visual file manager which gives the capability to preview application files, view Kodak Photo CDs, print catalogs of artwork and Draw files; Capture, which allows the capture of anything created in CorelDraw and export as a .WMF; and Show Run-time, which gives the capability to run presentations on computers that do not have CorelDraw installed.

Version 3.0 uses TrueType fonts, but will support the proprietary fonts used in the previous CorelDraw versions. It imports text from all the major word processors and PCX, TIF, EMP, Al (EPS), GEM, PlC, HPGL, CGM, PIF (GDF), PICT, WMF, GIF and TGA graphic formats. It will export in these same formats, as well as EPS, SCODL, WPG and TTF. It will export in color and gray-scale, with user definable resolution, and it has a 24-bit color capability. CorelDraw includes over 150 True Type fonts, over 4500 clipart images and symbols, and a host of templates, bitmaps and special effects. A bonus CD that comes with the package includes 250+ True Type fonts and 12000 clipart images and symbols, along with more templates, animation flics and CorelPaint samples. It is also network ready.

The program appears to be well connected with consistent and intuitive interfaces and appears to be relatively easy to learn. It uses roll-up menus throughout and reportedly includes excellent context sensitive online help. And, it supports OLE, DDE and MDI.

The program requires Windows, of course, and it will reportedly run on a 286, but I suspect it would be quite slow. A minimum of 4 MB of RAM is required, but here again, the more the better. A minimum loading of the program would take up 12 MB of hard disk space, while an installation with all the bells and whistles would consume 30 MBs. If you load it on a machine using Windows 3.0, then you must have Adobe TM 2.0, which is not included with the CorelDraw package. A mouse or tablet is required, as is VGA or better video.

One in the audience asked about any problems of compatibility between CorelDraw and compression programs such as Stacker. Denise responded that they had received some calls reporting varying problems, but there had been nothing consistent in the problems, not out of line with problems reported with other interfaces. Others in the audience reported no problems in using CorelDraw with Stacker.

Denise stated that Corel was expanding its technical support and training in several ways, including providing more fax and mail support, and training on CorelDraw at outlets throughout the country, as is now provided at Comp USA in Tampa.

The CorelDraw graphics package lists for $595, but is available at local outlets for $395. I do not take those numbers lightly, but there sure is a lot of capability in the package.

Denise and Corel, a great big THANK YOU for a super presentation of a super powerful program, and for Corel goodies you left with us. We are more enlightened on and impressed by your program -- CorelDraw 3.0.

(1993…….Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

Treasurer's Report for 2002

Balance on deposit as of 01 January 2002			$4,838.02
Income			
	Memberships	$1,180.00	
	Door Prizes	$ 251.00	
	T-Shirt Sales	$ 24.00	
	Amazon.com commissions	$ 26.79	
	Total Income	$1,481.79	
Expenses			
	Florida incorporation fee	$ 61.25	
	Liability Insurance	$ 150.00	
	Florida Association of Computer User Groups fee	$ 25.00	
	Association of Personal Computer User Groups fee	$ 50.00	
	US Post Office Box fee	$ 26.00	
	US Post Office Bulk Mailing fee	$ 150.00	
	US Bulk Mail Costs	$ 326.28	
	Newspaper Production Costs	$ 333.66	
	Website hosting fee	$ 119.40	
	Door Prize - Smart Computing subscription	$ 28.00	
	Banking/Check fees	$ 22.00	
	Party Refreshment Costs	$ 77.34	
	Total Expensed	$1,368.93	
Net			$ 112.86
Balance as of 31 December 2002			$4,950.88

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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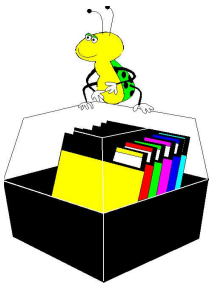
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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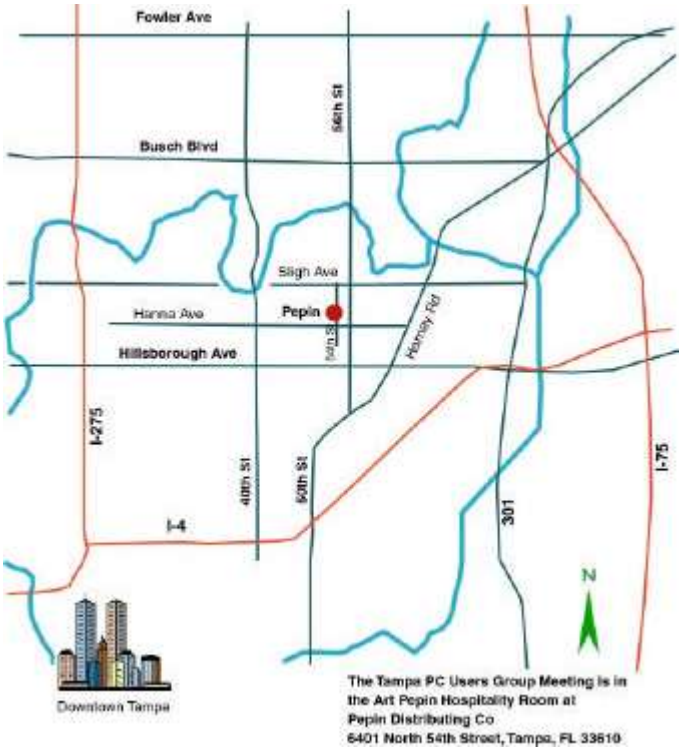
(Album…….Continued from page 8)
how'd you do that?" – ***DON'T TELL THEM!***
http://www.3d-album.com/ ◆

(1993…….Continued from page 9)
AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Corel Corporation, Powerup Software, and Sunrise Computer, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Ron Mipth	Copy holder/Disk cleaner
Ana Elliot	Corel ArtShow 3
Joe Esposito	Corel ArtShow 3
D. Gaigano	Express Publisher
John Witmer	Corel SCSI Software
Philip Tyrgansk	CorelDraw 3.0
Mel Flynn	50/50 ($93)

The meeting adjourned at about 8:40 PM ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



April in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 4 April 2003

Meeting

Whittle's Picks

Wednesday, April 9, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: David B. Whittle, author of *Cyberspace: The Human Dimension* and named by *Working Woman Magazine* as "one of America's most original technological thinkers," will be our presenter.

The topic will be **Whittle's Picks - Quality Software Products Anyone Can Use.** Mr. Whittle will demonstrate or introduce products of general appeal to computer users, including hidden gems from Comdex and from companies with outstanding, innovative technologies, including Intel, 3D Album, Muvee, iSeeMedia, Alpha Software and Creo. There will be a question and answer period, as well as door prizes and special product offers. Non-members of the group are invited to attend and take advantage of this special opportunity. ◆

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This is our first newsletter in many, many years that we are not sending bulk mail. As mentioned in last month's newsletter, bulk mail was no longer saving us money since the required mailing of 200, along with the printing of 200 plus newsletters, was costing more than it would to print

(Comments……..Continued on page 10)

May Meeting Topic: Windows XP

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

At the meeting we welcomed several visitors and went straight into a presentation of digital photography.

Digital Photography involves:

1. Taking the picture, so you will want to have a digital camera or pictures you've already taken. You can visit a site at http://www.dpreview.comto see digital camera reviews. In the meantime you can scan pictures into the computer from the supply you have in shoeboxes already.

2. Getting pictures into the computer, straight from a digital camera or disk or storage device. You can visit http://www.luminous-landscape.com for techniques and opinions.

3. Doing something with the pictures. What we saw was about step three--the "digital darkroom" --using Adobe PhotoShop. This was incredible. You can change the background, fix the coloring and the red eye. You can fix them a little or a lot. The features we saw show how to layer the picture so you can change one part of the picture, make it look like the picture was taken in a completely different location by changing the background, or the person can be adjusted to look like they are holding something other than the puppy, for example, by changing just that portion, and you aren't losing the picture you already had! Nor are you adjusting all the layers of the picture, fascinating. Many professional looking possibilities are also available if you were to use PhotoShop Elements, without the complications and costs of the real professional PhotoShop software.

Our presenter was William LaMartin. He prefers a digital camera that uses the flash card for storage of the pictures and says that Epson makes the best consumer photo printer but developing and printing at the local processors or drug stores is also a way to get some pictures done while you are contemplating what type printer you want to get.

We learned how to take the red eye out and balance the lighting in the picture, better the complexions, even make a person look pounds thinner! He had a butterfly moving around and landing on a flower too. A collection of photos from the back yard was transformed into a panorama of the backyard.

By the end of the evening, William had adjusted a photo of his lovely daughter, transforming her into something else; with purple hair, wider eyes, puffy lips, altered eye color and I'm not sure what all else. I was glad to see that the main picture was still there and the altered one could be saved or not! I vote "Not". There

(Minutes……..Continued on page 9)

Need to buy a new PC and do not know what to buy?

By Mike Hodges, Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group
mphs@aol.com

Do not feel alone. Free enterprise is still very evident in the PC market and one can spend easily between $500 and $6000. So what to do? How can one feel comfortable within this dynamic market environment where technology is moving so rapidly. Very few of us, I believe, fall within any real predefined requirement. So I believe the first rule of the road is not to be in a hurry and at the same time do not dilly dally excessively as the PC technology is rapidly evolving and so is the overall market place. If you are like me, given time, one can do a thorough or close to thorough due diligence and then feel comfortable that you have made the right decision. If your decision is purely based on price you do, however, face a predicament.

I will start with the premise that you still have an operating PC but are becoming disenchanted with what you currently own and are looking to move up-market for any one of a variety of reasons. Since early 1998 I have been churning data on my basic Pentium I, 300 MHz based machine. I am connected by DSL and all is well with fast downloads and good graphics on a sizeable 13" diagonal display. My major concern has been hard drive space and a lack of general inter-connectivity. I recently bought an all-in-one-printer/fax/scanner and again ran into problems. It turned out that my USB port on the basic Pentium Intel-based IBM ThinkPad 600i series laptop PC running Windows 98 standard early edition did not even have the USB port enabled. For me this was the last straw, and my 12-month desire to upgrade was now a firm requirement. I had been forever, it seems, attempting to free up space on the 2 GB hard drive and the overall performance of internet connections were forever throwing up the message "out of disc space, run Cleansweep now!" I had been frequently going to my computer and left clicking on the C drive icon and then selecting Properties to see how little spare hard drive space was available. Sometimes only about 150 KB and sometimes 25 MB of space was inhibiting rapid internet downloads.

So as I do not upgrade but maybe every five years I needed to list my requirements. I am not a gamer and therefore did not need the fastest gun in the West but believed I wanted to be in the high speed range in order to feel respectable. I needed as much hard drive space as affordable. I needed another laptop as I anticipate much business travel in the next few years, as in my past five years. *I wanted good connectivity, I had burnt out many modems in the past at various hotels. I wanted a full Microsoft Office package and I wanted to own my own CD burner and a good DVD reader. I was not as yet too familiar with the latest wireless connectivity rage but wanted to be ready to leap with grace when that segment stabilizes in the next 12 months. Therefore, I wanted a laptop that was at least wireless enabled.* OK, I was now ready to espouse a plan of action.

1 Determine basic and optional requirements
2 Read as many magazine articles as could be found
3 Survey all the advertised specials
4 Get online and search each vendor's latest offerings and prices
5 Get some learned advice from peers
6 Get some hands-on before making a final decision.

Fortunately when you buy infrequently, price for me was not a limiting factor as long as I did not feel pressured or rooked. However, I was not sure that I needed another laptop as the one I had is still quite functional as long as I do not attempt to stash any more software on it or lash it up to any additional external devices. Maybe I could manage with a desktop, save money and have plenty of future expansion capability and use my ThinkPad on the road. So my decision making was temporarily impaired, and I extended my search across both laptops (now called notebooks) and desktops. Finally I decided that I would forever be wishing I carried an elegant notebook with me when on field assignments and that maintaining data across two machines would be somewhat burdensome. So I finally was able to focus on the "notebooks" and not the desktops. So next I sat in the local library and read computer magazines from cover to cover. On the net at CNET, the Dell Inspiron 8250 was the favored PC whereas, in the PC World magazine, the Gateway 600X was the highest rated. I read the April 2003 edition of PC World that sells for $6.99 in the bookstores. However, when you use the library you are required to read the latest editions without removal from the library and as a consequence they do not sit by your recliner for weeks awaiting your attention. On Sunday 23 March, the Sunday papers advertised over 30 separate PC's. I went to Office Depot and obtained their computer sales brochure to round out my survey. Initially I was concerned that Compaq and Gateway may not survive many more years in the marketplace. However, I had read that Dell support was generally not the best.

OK, this saga is now fast coming to a close. I include with this article my survey of 35 machines as advertised on 23 March 2003. A funny thing is that on 30 March I could only find brochures from Best Buy and Circuit City with the Sunday papers, and each of those had far more coverage for TV's and only a few PC's compared to the previous week. In the previous week CompUSA, Staples, Best Buy, Circuit City and others advertised extensively. Beware, as the stores attempt to make up packages that are as different as cheese from each other and therefore direct comparisons are extremely difficult. I surveyed Dell, Gateway, IBM, eMachines, Sony, Toshiba, Compaq and HP brands. Most of the offers require multiple supplier discounts that the buyer has to request in the form of rebates.

I decided I would visit the Gateway store at Columbus and Dale Mabry and the Dell kiosk in Citrus or Westshore Malls. At the Gateway store many notebooks were on display including the 15.7" display 600X model. I then went to the Dell kiosk in Westshore Mall and was informed that the 8500 would not be available for display until mid-April and that the 8200 series was

(New PC……..Continued on page 4)

(New PC……..Continued from page 3)
not available either as it had been discontinued in favor of the non-available 8500. Gee, fortunately before my outing to the retail outlets I had set my sights on the Gateway on account of the PC World article. The Gateway sales guy printed me out a quote that again was different from the PC World configuration but was more in line with my detailed requirements as he ascertained them to be. The Gateway store was a happy, comforting experience, and my machine has been ordered and I expect delivery within a week. Gateway promises 13 days, but I expect the machine will be out of Taiwan and on my doorstep by 4 April. I do believe I will be happy, and I know I am relieved the search is ended.

Finally, before committing myself and considerably armed with as many facts as I could collect, I sought out advice from my peer group members. Fortunately, being a member of the TPCUG provided a number of knowledgeable types on which to call. Our esteemed editor being the final point person I called from the Gateway store parking lot and received his green light on my final choice of PC.

The computer's specifications are:

- Gateway 600X with added options
- Processor: 2.2Ghz-M (M means it runs cool)
- Memory: 512MB DDR SDRAM (Single module, readily upgradeable by adding another 512MB)
- Floppy Drive: Modular 3.5" (Many other manufacturers have discarded the floppy drive)
- Hard Drive: 60GB Ultra ATA...add $75.00
- Optical Drive: 24x/10x/24x CDRW and 8x DVD Combo
- Expansion slots: Two type II or one type III PC Card slots
- External Ports: 2 USB, IEEE 1394 (FireWire), SVGA, Parallel, Serial, PS/2
- S/PDIF, NTSC/PAL Video Output
- Operating System: MS Windows XP Professional
- Application Software: MS Office XP Professional...add $220.00
- AntiVirus Utilities: Norton Internet Security with Belkin Surge Kit…add $70.00
- Screen: 15.7" SXGA TFT Active Matrix
- Video: ATI Mobility Radeon 9000w/64MB DDR Video memory
- Extra Mouse: USB Optical Mouse…add $20.00
- Multimedia Package: SoundBlaster Pro Stereo Speakers and Microphone
- Battery: High Capacity Lithium Ion with AC Pack
- Modem: Integrated V.92.56K
- Network Adapter: Integrated Intel PRO 10/100 VE Network Connection
- Internet Service Provider: One year AOL internet access
- Wireless Networking Adaptor: Integrated 802.11b Wireless

(New PC……..Continued on page 10)

FACUG Spring Conference

By Jenny Lind Olin, Tampa PC Users Group
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The 2003 Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG) Spring Regional Conference met February 28 - March 2 in the Kissimmee Civic Center, Osceola County, which is near Disney World. I have attended several of these annual meetings and find they are well-planned events. If you make your reservation before the deadline, the event is very financially reasonable. The FACUG Spring Conference is a wonderful time for meeting other computer-oriented people and exchanging ideas. It seems somebody always has a success story to tell, or they are excited about the upcoming program that they are planning.

When I walked in Friday night there was a small buffet of crudités (fresh veggies) and chips with dip, cheese bites, and similar pickings, plus drinks. I was a little "taken back" because I thought the plan had reverted back to the Friday night dinner. In the past there was a very pleasant dinner evening -- good food, a presentation, and at least one really neat "give-away" item. I didn't need to worry. There was, indeed, a very nice dinner and presentation sponsored by Adobe that night.

Times have changed and the freebies are not so forth coming, but the Spring Event is really a bargain if you just consider the food you get. Never mind how hard it will be to work off all those calories. If nothing else, we were very well fed. The large round tables of ten very friendly people gave us an opportunity to exchange ideas and just get to know other groups better. Everybody seemed to be in a good mood, especially at meal times.

The theme this year, which has been a trend for several years, was digital processes. I have to admit it is about time I bought a digital camera and tossed out my Brownie. I could then get started removing red eye (a process that has progressed from A to Z in the past few years), making first time photos look professional by manipulating the background, changing the lighting, and touching up old photos now by copying "patches" and pasting them in flawed areas, and organizing photos in computer albums, to name a few. All are very sophisticated processes using today's new software.

A new vendor this year was Smart Computing Magazine. All received their latest issue and a couple of the door prizes were annual subscriptions, a notebook with a collection of the previous year's issues, and a Smart Computing hardcopy encyclopedia. If you attended the November 2002 general meeting of the TPCUG, then you will recall Kevan Sheridan's presentation on Smart Computing Magazine. We saw an updated version of that presentation. During the demonstration of the Smart Com-

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puting website, someone suggested they create an Internet Explorer toolbar add-in for directly searching the Smart Computing website and they seemed very receptive to that idea.

At another session, this vendor also conducted a roundtable session on their user group program. Their demonstration program changes often so expect to see another demonstration before long. Smart Computing Magazine has a program that requires the User Group to have a link to their website: http://smartcomputing.com If five members subscribe to one of their magazines, then the user group gets a free subscription.

Microsoft, the time-honored and well-loved vendor, did several presentations during the weekend. They had their problems as their shipment went to another address and never made it to Kissimmee. The Microsoft agent, Alan Chitlik, had recycled his cardboard boxes and had left an old address on one side of the box. Guess which address Federal Express used. In spite of Alan's sharing his thoughts with Federal Express, they were not willing to overnight the package so it was scheduled to arrive at the civic center the Monday morning after the conference. Alan still did an excellent job with his presentations.

One suggestion I would make for other meetings of this type is to coordinate some of the gifts. Microsoft gave us shoestring type lanyards which held a ballpoint pen. We had a pen in our FACUG bags but I could never find mine. A pen around my neck would have been more convenient. Microsoft doled these out Sunday afternoon, but they would have been better used if they had been in the canvas tote bags we received as we checked in at the registration desk. These bags were sponsored by Borland, Comcast, and Cerious Software. Also, Apple gave us all a large notebook at the very end, and

(FACUG…….Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month

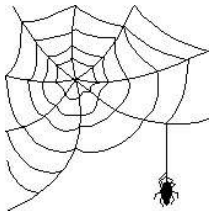


US Third Infantry at the Euphrates in Iraq

This is one of many photos at the New York Times site http://www.nytimes.com/. The subtitle reads: "The Third Infantry Division took control of a bridge crossing the Euphrates River near Hindiyah, Iraq…"

Photo by John Moore of the Associated Press.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

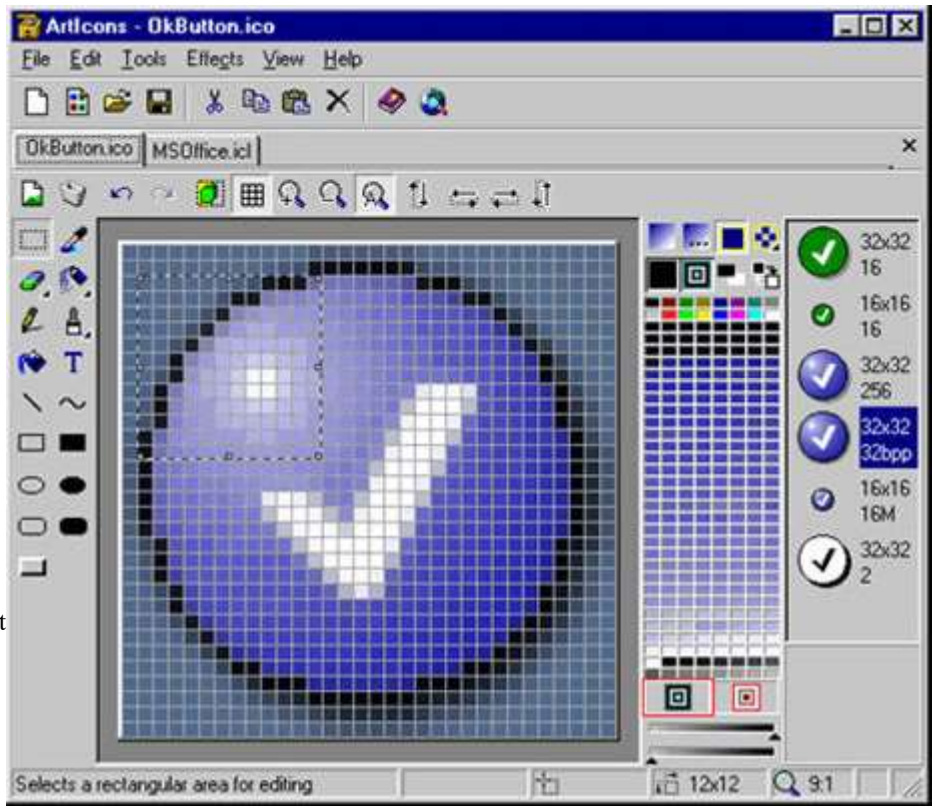


Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
College Search - Links to colleges and universities	http://u101.com/
Evergreen Plantation	http://www.evergreenplantation.com/
The Butterfly Site	http://www.thebutterflysite.com/
The Flash Mind Reader (figure it out)	http://mr-31238.mr.valuehost.co.uk/assets/Flash/psychic.swf
NewspaperDirect.com - Newspapers from around the world	http://online.newspaperdirect.com/webdisplay/worldmap.html
Florida Department of Motor Vehicles	http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/index.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

IconUtils

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC users Group
boblala@ij.net



IconUtils is a software suite that includes the five separate programs that I will describe below. With ***IconUtils*** you can create your own unique icons and cursors or customize existing icons and cursors. You can also take images and convert them to icons or do the reverse and convert icons to graphics images. This gives you a unique look and feel so you can tailor your desktop icons and display various folders uniquely so that you can distinguish them at a glance. ***IconUtils*** is priced at $54.95 as a download from Aha-Soft at http://www.iconutils.com.

AhaView is the first program listed in the start menu and would be $19.95 if ordered separately. ***AhaView*** is a picture viewer and converter that supports all popular graphics formats, including JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP, ICO, CUR, ANI, WBMP, XPM, XBM, PSD. The viewer has a directory tree that you can scan to a folder that contains supported formats, a thumbnail section that displays all items found, and a small area below the directory that shows a highlighted item in a slightly larger view. You can browse images in thumbnail mode and do various graphics manipulations such as Copy, Rename, Delete, Convert and more. You can then double click any image and go to a full screen view of any picture, and if needed you can browse the other files in the folder as a slide show. I found it easy to use since it is very similar to both ACDSee and IrfanView, which I have used in the past but liked that these five programs in ***IconUtils*** together take up very little space, 7.70 MB compared to ACDSee taking up 6.71MB and IrfanView 5.39MB. I also believe it displays it's thumbnails faster when large quantities of graphics, icon, or cursor files are viewed.

Any to Icon is the next program and is also listed at $19.95 online as a download. ***Any to Icon*** is an icon converter that allows you to convert BMP, JPEG, GIF, PNG, WBMP, XPM, XBM, PSD and WMF images to Windows icons. You can convert single graphics or you can batch process all files in a folder and can break down entire icon libraries into individual icons. Icons can be extracted from libraries and some file types such as exe, DLLs, cpl, and more. The program is similar to a wizard in that you progress from selecting the graphics or library and point and click till you create the final desired icons. As you progress you are given the choice to change color resolution and size to create your customized icons.

ArtCursors is the next program in the *start menu folder* and is available as a single download for $29.95. ***ArtCursors*** is a cursor editor, cursor library manager, and cursor creator. You can find and edit single cursors or you can import, export, manage and create cursor libraries. Libraries are multiple cursors contained in a single file name and allow simple file storage. ***ArtCursors*** can create and edit static and animated cursors with color depths to up to 32-bit True Color, and you have different paint tools, including gradient fills, to customize to your hearts content. You can also convert graphics images to cursors and import cursors from icon and library files. This program workplace is set as a grid canvas that allows for easy creation or customization of cursors. I was able to create a simple arrow pointer in minutes.

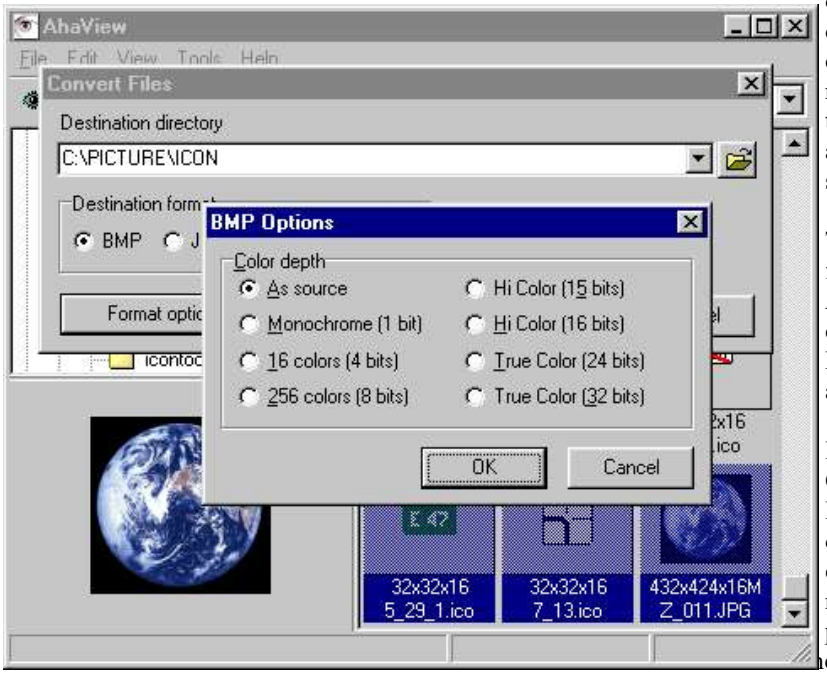
ArtIcons Pro is next and can be purchased separately online as a download for $29.95. ***ArtIcons Pro*** is an icon editor and icon library manager that does for icons what ***ArtCursors*** does for cursors. You can find, create and edit icons or import and export icons, both single icons and libraries. As with the cursors, you can also import, export, create and manage icon libraries. The icons that you create or edit can be of variable size and color depths up to 32-bit True Color, and it supports the new icon format in Windows XP. The tools are much the same as in ***ArtCursors*** with the same toolbars showing each tool name as you hover your mouse over each tool, and you can change effects, such as rotation gradient and fill. You can convert graphics images to icons and import icons from cursor files or from library files. You can scan files and folders for icons and arrange icons into libraries.

(ArtIcons…….Continued on page 7)

(ArtIcons…….Continued from page 6)

Icon to Any is the last included program and is $19.95 if you wish to purchase it separately as a download. This program is pretty much the reverse of ***Any to Icon*** that is described above. ***Icon to Any*** starts with Windows icons and cursors and converts them into graphics images, either BMP, JPG, PNG, GIF, ICO, CUR, WBMP, PSD, XPM, XBM and RC formats. It also has a wizard style interface, and it's very simple to process multiple files at once, plus you have control over size and color (again True Color 32-bit) and pick in which format to save it.

The online site had a ***FREE*** download page with icons, cursors, and graphics to download. There are ***Libraries Samples*** so that you can figure out what they are. You can also order specialized icons from them of your own design, but I think that with these five programs and a little bit of time most users will be amazed at what you can create on your own. I have no artistic abilities and easily customized and created icons and cursors. Overall, I found each program easy to use, the ***HELP*** sections explained each process I tried and did so quickly. I had no problems downloading or installing ***IconUtils*** or figuring how to begin each operation. Each is similar to other programs I have used over the years and most users will be comfortable with these programs. If you like to individualize your computer then this would probably be just the program you would need and would enjoy using. ◆



(FACUG…….Continued from page 5)

it would have been nice to have it at the beginning so we could take notes during the presentations. Maybe it doesn't make as much of an impression to receive it when you register, but the longer we have it in our possession and use the gift, the more time we have to become aware of the vendor. I am certain that Office Depot, another helpful vendor, would be able to give notebooks of maybe a smaller size that could be included in the tote bag.

I was very impressed by the websites roundtable session. During the session the leader was able to bring up several club websites and critique them. He suggested minimizing the graphics so they will load faster. He was not thrilled with animated graphics on the website. He loved having a menu visible on each page so the navigator could move around and especially get back to the beginning. He suggested the counter was not necessary and suggested the webmaster contact the provider to furnish them with the statistics concerning their website. One suggestion I thought of afterwards was suggesting all members use the user group's website as their homepage default.

Ken Bundy of Lake Wales, Ridge Computer Users Group, was the leader of the session on "Running a User Group." He had some very good ideas. One I especially believe is that groups need to train members to perform as officers and ultimately be prepared to be the president. Another was to have the board members listening and reporting on suggestions and comments from the membership. He said his officers all wore golf shirts of the same color at the meetings. Thus all officers are recognizable by any visitor. One club used different colors for the name tags, one color for officers, one color for volunteers, and one color for the regular membership. One club gave their volunteers those neat wallets that you can wear around your neck and use for a name badge. One club gave pins the shape of the state of Florida for a year of volunteering.

The Saturday afternoon vendor panel consisted of the following seven vendors: Peggy Ireland, APCUG; Alan Chitlik, Microsoft Mindshare; Scott Sterns, Microsoft O/S Interaction Team; Kevin Moulder, Office Depot; Peter Bloxam, Comcast, Brian Bess, Comcast; and Ken Torres, Comcast.

I was impressed with the attitude of the Charlotte County Personal Computer Users Group. They had an Expo planned for the following weekend, so they were donating all the gifts they won at the FACUG conference for the benefit of their upcoming event. They needed as many prizes as they could get for door prizes. They have a wonderful community facility to their event - sharing the proceeds with them. They also have the same problems that other clubs have in that not everybody will allow them to hang their posters which they are

(FACUG…….Continued on page 12)

Looking Back to 1993

From the April 1993 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 3/10/93 MEETING
By: Jim Clark

I must say at the outset that our Prez, Harvey Bruneau, is doing a great job. I thought it was another great meeting!!

That the meetings are always enjoyable and productive is in large measure due to the efforts of our Prez. It seems that Harvey always has arranged a super presentation either by a major vendor and/or by one of our own on a new program and/or one of current interest to our group. And he brings many items of interest from the industry to us each month. Behind the scenes, as well, he pushes to make our group ever better. He receives support from a small, but great group of people who serve in some official capacity in our group: Maiylee Bruneau, our editor, who puts together a super newsletter; Tom Cone, our VP, who most know as a pleasant and helpful greeter at our regular meetings, but who also helps in so many behind-the-scene ways; Kevan Sheridan, our SYSOP, which is a time consuming and challenging task, has done a great job maintaining, improving and expanding our BBS; Bill (William) Fuller, our treasurer, who has done a super job taking care of the group's finances and books, and is so helpful in many other ways--Good luck, Bill, you will be missed; Roger Waters, our Member-At-Large, who does what needs to be done; Ed Buzza, Education Director, who helps us all learn more in classes he conducts or arranges, and on a person-to-person basis anytime, anywhere; Larry Anders, our librarian, who not only does a great job of maintaining our software files but also contributes to our group in so many creative and helpful, but, unsung, ways.

It is due to the efforts of these folks that our group continues to produce a useful and enjoyable product, and continues to grow. It takes a lot of time and effort on their part -- and I, for one, REALLY APPRECIATE IT. Don Patzsch, an active member, is currently doing a bang-up job with a comprehensive modem/BBS class that he has been conducting. (I have wanted to take advantage of that class, but other responsibilities have taken priority so far.) Arranging and conducting this class has taken a good bit of Don's time and effort -- the classes don't just happen automatically. A GREAT BIG THANKS to all of you!!

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS

In the rather limited time available for general discussion -- the meeting had started a little late and time was needed for the rather large program that was to be reviewed -- a number of items of interest were bought up, including:

- There was a discussion about discounts provided to members by CompUSA. See the President's column for additional information.
- Harvey reported that his organization (a Dun & Bradstreet company that provides human resource and financial applications to corporate clients) is now using Microsoft's WorkGroup for Windows and it is proving very helpful for them. It is an addition to their network system and is used primarily for internal communications and exchange of data. If you have a multiple-computer office, you may want to investigate the program and what it might do for you.
- There was considerable discussion of Stacker 3.0, started by one who reported a number of difficulties, including compatibility and other computer problems. However, there were no other problems reported from the many other Stacker users among those present. Harvey reported problems with decompressing a drive, a new feature with Stacker 3.0. I run SuperStorPro, which also includes the decompress feature, rather than Stacker. I note in my manuals that the decompression works only with drives compressed by the program, inferring that drives compressed with earlier versions cannot be decompressed with SuperStorPro -- but I haven't tried it. That may be the case with Stacker 3.0 as well. A question was raised about the impact of compression on speed. The answer was that there appeared to be no discernible degradation for normal operations; while decompression does take time, that time is offset by the smaller size of files that have to be read and written. One reported the only noticeable degradation was in the time required to load programs, such as D-Base. There seemed to be consensus among those who spoke that they were reasonably happy with their drive compression program.

PRESENTATION - Impov For Windows

Lotus Corporation was good enough to send to us a knowledgeable representative, John O'Loughlin, to give us a preview of Lotus's new program, Improv For Windows. I must tell you at the outset that I am not an expert on spreadsheets; my experience is limited to use of a 6 x 6 matrix a couple of times.

They term Improv their new "Dynamic Spreadsheet for Windows" with "Functionality Beyond Traditional Spreadsheets." Though John really tried to explain to me what they meant by dynamic, I can't describe to you what they mean by dynamic. My copy of Webster dictionary says dynamic is, "full of force and energy; active; potent." I would have to agree with that definition as a description of Improv. It is a very powerful program that appears to be quite user friendly (that is probably what they mean with "intuitive"). John whipped up new spreadsheets in just a few moments; manipulated with ease the data in just about every way one could imagine, including responses to questions from the floor, "Can you do thus and so?"; and created almost instantaneous charts. Among the many features of the program that give it "Functionality Beyond Traditional Spreadsheets" are:

- Dynamic viewing that lets you rearrange and edit data instantly with drag and drop; hide, show, collapse and expand capability; and switch from flat to 3-D multi-page mode.

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

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- User defined English language formulas which are stored separate from the data and can be applied to many cells at once -- being much like styles in a word processor, it makes for much easier creation and editing. And the formulas are very easy to create -- a few selections using the mouse and,Walla, there it is.
- Multi-dimensional spreadsheet modeling with the capability to analyze up to 12 categories of data, each of which can have up to 63,999 items and allows linking and saving up to 100 worksheets in a single file.
- Innovative user interface with a floating panel that lets you instantly view and set colors, fills, line and text styles; edit and drag & drop any object on screen; right button Quick Menus; smart fill of familiar worksheet categories (years, months, dates, etc.); SmartIcons for common Improv commands; status bar that provides quick access to fonts, formats, styles and other basic attributes.
- Flexible formatting/printing/reporting; includes Adobe Type Manager, with 13 scalable fonts, and uses True-Type fonts as well; print preview to verify page layout and appearance; complete page setup formatting, including headers and footers; portrait, landscape, fit-to-page and scaleable printing options.
- Develop applications with state-of-the-art tools, including L scripting language record and playback scripts which can be edited and attached to icons or presentation objects; Application Programming Interface (API) toolkit; and Lotus Dialog editor to create custom user interfaces to Script programs.
- Supports DDE and OLE client and server for smooth integration with other Windows applications, and it reads/writes WKI, WK3, XLS(4.0) data, formulas, numeric formats and styles.
- Professional creation of graphics quickly and easily, selecting a range of data, pick a graph type from over 20 major chart and graph types, including 3-D bar and pie charts, rotate 3-Ds for the best angle, create and print multi-page presentations, hot link multiple charts and worksheet tables, and annotate presentations with text, images, other drawings and OLE objects.
- It is reported (and appears to be) relatively easy to learn. In addition to context-sensitive menus and Quick Menus, and the simplicity and ease of creating and editing/manipulating spreadsheets, it also has context-sensitive help and an "Exploring Improv" quick-start guide.

Hardware/software requirements for the program are: 386SX/20-class or higher computer (with 33 MHz desired), Windows compatible displays (VGA resolution desired) and printers, 4 MB RAM minimum (with 6 desired), Windows supported mouse, Windows 3.1 or later, and 10 MB of hard disk space.

What does this wonderful package cost? List is $495, but there is a special introductory price of $99 that will be good until May 31. As a limited special, John is making available to members present at the presentation a copy of Improv for $49 using a limited number of controlled coupons he is providing our Prez (members present had to sign-up for this offer); the coupons will be available at the next meeting.. Those members not present at the meeting should watch the BBS, or check with an officer at the next meeting to ascertain if the $49 offer has been extended to all members desiring a copy.

To Lotus Corp and John O'Loughlin, thanks for a wonderful presentation of a great program, and for your generosity with the programs and the special pricing for Improv. It looks like to us that you have another winner.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Lotus Corporation and Sunrise Computer, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

William Coleman	Disk cleaner & Mouse Pad
M.M. Marteny	Lotus Organizer (2)
David Geiger	Lotus Organizer
Ed Buzza	Lotus Organizer
Luis Vergara	Lotus 1-2-3
Kevan Sheridan	Lotus 1-2-3
Kit Kelley	Lotus Freelance Plus
John Waldon	Lotus Ami Pro
Ed Buzza	50/50 ($85)

The meeting adjourned at about 8:40 PM ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

might be a need for that with some pictures, or maybe a Halloween poster, you never know.

The presenter said that he was not an expert with PhotoShop and had much more to learn--if he only had the time. He has begun a project to scan in all his old photos and get them into some order and a meaningful collection. He's also created some special portfolios of photos from the neighborhood where he lives and the photos of plants and flowers that he has taken.

The other software, Adobe Illustrator, gives you the ability to create designs, your own greeting cards and many other graphic ideas in which you may incorporate your photos.

Lucky winners at this month's meeting took away four great door prizes: A copy of Photo Shop Elements, Photo Gallery clip art, an old laptop computer and a copy of Spell Catcher. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the dis cussion.

Hewlett Packard's Inkjet Cartridge Recycling Program

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

This program provides customers with an environmentally responsible solution for disposal of end-of-life HP inkjet cartridges. The program enables HP to recover recyclable materials and responsibly dispose of non-recyclable residuals.

HP works with some of the most advanced recycling resources in the world to recover usable materials from their used inkjet cartridges. The recycling process is unique to HP inkjet cartridges and includes steps for grinding, separating and recovering plastics, stainless steel, and precious metals such as gold and silver. All HP inkjet cartridges except those from DesignJet 2000CP, 2500CP, 3000CP and 3500CP are included in the program. There is a separate program for LaserJet cartridges.

HP will mail prepaid envelopes to you which will hold up to two cartridges. They also will provide prepaid boxes for mailings of more than thirty cartridges. To obtain your prepaid envelopes you can visit the HP web site at http://www.hp.com/recycle or call 1-800-340-2445. ◆

(New PC…….Continued from page 4)

Networking…add $75.00

- Warranty: Three year parts and labor, no onsite, three year technical support
- Gateway Music Vault
- Data Migration Kit…add $50.00
- Shipping: $5.00
- Base Price $2177, Configured Price $2758 ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

and mail via first class postage the newsletter to only our membership and a few friends of the group. If you are satisfied with reading the newsletter online and don't particularly care to read the hard copy of the newsletter and would be just as happy to not receive a mailed version, contact me to have your name removed from the mailing list. That would save the group about $.70. However, the newsletter is a benefit of the group, and everyone is entitled to a mailed, printed version for as long as we print and mail one.

You will note that most of the articles in this newsletter are set at 10 point type, whereas in most recent newsletters most of the articles were in 12 point type. There is a simple reason for that. I got more material than I bargained for when I begged and re-begged for articles this month. On Friday, I had one article; over the weekend I got several more. For that I am very appreciative, but can't we all do this just a few days earlier. This last minute editing is running me ragged.

I also want to thank the members who currently help me assemble the newsletter. They are Jenny Lind Olin, Wade Herman, Jim Purcell and Lew Kaminga. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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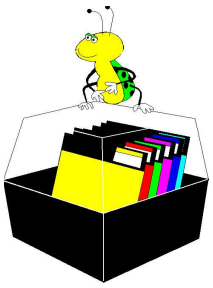
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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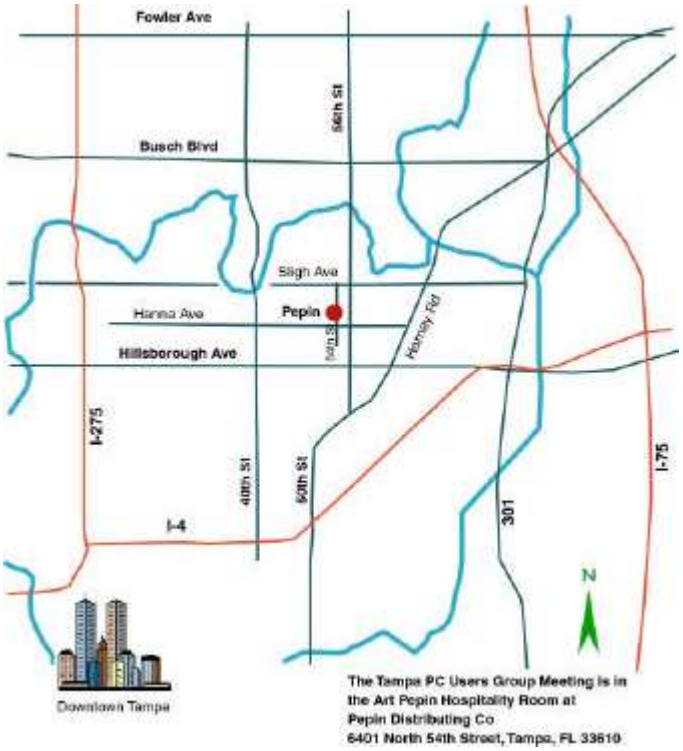
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(FACUG…….Continued from page 7)
using to advertise their Expo.

Times are changing and it is quite evident by the lesser number of vendors available at the conference, the lack of vendors sponsoring the conference events, and the lesser amount of software that was given away. I wonder if the responsibility is ours, the club or the individual, in that we need to encourage more software purchases by our members. Could we accomplish this by providing a means of learning to use new software through general meeting presentations, classes, and SIGs?

I really enjoyed this spring conference and hope to attend more in the future. The registration was close to 200. That tells me there was a real interest across the state in the conference. What little disappointment was expressed came from those old-timers who have been spoiled by the generous software gifts that have now dwindled. Part of the fun was seeing the familiar faces and learning new ones. If you have never attended a FACUG conference, you might want to plan to experience a great weekend next year about the first weekend in March. I will see you there. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa
Gardenias

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 5 May 2003

Meeting

Windows XP

Wednesday, May 14, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: . Merle Nicholson will give a presentation on Windows XP. Preceding that, Kevan Sheridan will conduct the usual half-hour Windows SIG. ◆



Our April presenter Dave Whittle of whats4me.com

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Map	12

June Meeting Topic: To be announced -- Check our web site.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

This month at the Windows Special Interest Group, held just before the special speaker part of the monthly meeting, we discussed the little arrow to the right of the "back" button of Internet Explorer. It shows you where you have been surfing. If you have never clicked on that arrow, try it sometime. Alt F4 closes the current window. That's a good thing to know, too. Other difficulties with Windows were discussed, and the other members present provided lots of solutions.

Each of us at the meeting received a copy of "Computer Link Magazine", a magazine customized for the local Tampa Bay area! See http://www.TampaComputing.com for more information on that.

WINDOWS XP is the PRIZE FOR NEXT MEETING!! All you need (if you win) is 200 MHZ, 64 MB Ram, 16 MB Video Ram. Be sure to come to the meeting May 14th; you can't win if you don't show up, that is for sure.

Our speaker for April, Dave Whittle with *whats4me.com,* introduced us to many interesting types of software and exclusive User Group prices, too. He searches for, finds and presents groups with the coolest and latest software coming out. I'll tell you some of what he showed us, but without the showing part you miss some great ideas of ways to use your computer.

3D Album - by Micro Research Institute. Incredible visual effects for displaying your photos in a slide show. Sort of like walking through the space age or a museum with your pictures in the place of the famous ones.

PhotoVista 2.0 and Photo Vista Virtual Tour - by iSeeMedia. The first creates panoramas from a series of photos, automatically stitching the scene together correctly. He had some wonderful family travel pictures to demonstrate it. The Virtual Tour creates interactive web sites. Dave said some famous websites use that software, like Porsche and Lexus and Tiger Woods. That's worth taking a look at for a little demonstration of the product.

He showed us Alpha 5 Version 5 - by Alpha Software. The newest release of the database product that manages information. Ease of use and learning seems to be the big pull for Alpha 5. It was a smooth demonstration of the program's capabilities. If you weren't there, you can contact them to find out more because it's hard to describe, but clubs and churches and other groups could really use this.

One other piece of software, Six Degrees - by Creo. This software is a desktop application for Microsoft Outlook users. After

(Minutes……..Continued on page 9)

HP's Media Center 854n PC & Windows XP Pro Media Center Edition

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

Well, last month I finally retired my 3+ years old Gateway computer that I had been upgrading since it was about 6 months old and decided to look for something new. I had been using Windows XP Pro on both my home and office computers, so I knew I would settle for no less than Microsoft's most stable architecture to date. While shopping around, I happened into CompUSA at the very time they were setting up a new line of PCs by HP. This new PC also had a new superset of XP Pro installed called ***Windows XP Media Center Edition (MCE)***, hence the name of my new computer, ***HP Media Center 854n PC.***



I had read some pre-introductory promotional info on MCE, but I did not realize it was already out to the public. [I don't usually look at computers when I am shopping because I don't want to see how outdated my current computer already is.] The 854n is actually a 2nd [or maybe 3rd] generation MCE computer by HP that is $300 cheaper than its predecessor, the 873n. I'm not sure what is different between the systems other than some speakers and updated software, but the 854n seemed ready for prime time, and so was I. My last two PCs have had internal TV cards, but they were never fully integrated into the operating system like this setup.

Gateway actually sells a similar model with MCE that comes with a 42" flat-screen monitor that can be set up in the family, or TV room. We already have a large-screen TV in the family room so I settled on a 19" Samsung flat-panel monitor instead, sold separately from the PC itself. But my computer is directly behind the wall my TV sits against so I have plans to go through the wall directly into the TV once I get all of this new stuff figured out. Then I can watch, or listen to whatever is played on my PC on the TV in the family room.

The HP 854n comes with more bells and whistles [and additional software] than one could imagine not too long ago. It has an Intel Pentium 4, 2.53 GHz processor with front-side bus speed of 533MHz. It also comes with 512MB of DDR SDRAM [expandable to 1GB with one open slot-which I did]; a 120 GB hard drive; a DVD+RW/CD-RW combo drive and a 48x CD-ROM drive [which I immediately replaced with a 52x CDR/RW drive]. The DVD writer is 2x and the combo CDR portion is only 12x, so after being used to writing at 48x I wasn't about to step backwards before I got the new computer home.

The graphics card in my opinion is excellent. It is an NVIDIA GeForce MX440 with 128 MB DDR RAM. I was told the new system came with a 5.1 integrated stereo sound and did not realize until I got it home it was only 2.1 sound. [Like I said, this was a brand new system being set up when I bought it, and I truly believe the salesperson thought it was 5.1] My disappointment didn't last long because my neighbor, who was helping me set up the new computer at home, left for a moment and returned with a 5.1 card that he had purchased in Germany a few months earlier and realized he could not use when he got back to the states. We popped in the card and voila, surround sound. XP recognized it immediately. [Funny thing, though, I learned later, most TV isn't surround sound when it's live anyway, but it is after it is recorded and played back.] I forgot to mention earlier, I had also bought a new Lansing surround sound speaker system, with sub-woofer, one center control speaker and four satellite speakers. So 2.1 sound [typical stereo with sub-woofer] would not have worked with this speaker system.

What makes MCE different is that it comes with a personal video recorder, which is a high-performance hardware encoder compatible with digital cable, satellite TV or just regular old-fashioned antenna TV.

Considering this is called a media center PC, the computer also comes with a host of external media ports including: 5 USB 2.0; 1 serial; 1 parallel; 2 PS/2; 2 IEEE 1394; and a 6-in-1 media card reader that reads all standards of digital media cards used in digital cameras today. [No more having to connect my digital camera via the USB cable.] I just slide my memory card into the appropriate slot, and it becomes another drive letter.

The 854n also comes with all the standards like: fax/modem; network card; mouse, keyboard, etc. But wait. The keyboard is anything but standard. Many of the features of MCE can be accessed directly from the keyboard. Oh yeah, there is also a remote infrared [IR] sensor that comes with the system too, fully integrated directly into MCE. It allows the remote control to communicate with the computer, and also controls your cable or satellite set-top box.

So, now you know about my new computer, what about MCE? This is what Microsoft has to say about it. "Media Center is a single, unified full-screen portal for all of your entertainment, designed for viewing and remote control interaction from a

(Media……..Continued on page 4)

(Media……..Continued from page 3)
distance. The easy-to-navigate menu screens feature customizable sound prompts, animated transitions, and backgrounds. Fonts, layouts, and transitions are consistent across all entertainment experiences and with the Windows XP experience."

You cannot buy an upgrade to convert an existing PC to MCE. It only comes pre-installed on MCE-built computers. There is just too much stuff in the operating system and computer that is interdependent on each other for an upgrade to work properly without hours and hours of effort and tweaking. It would not make sense to try and put together a system that would work properly when you can buy a box like I did for $1400.

One of MCE's primary functions is built around the personal video recorder [***PVR***] mentioned earlier. In my case I connected the TV cable to the TV card in the PC, booted the computer and answered some questions about my cable connection and before long it was downloading the TV schedule related directly to my setup and my locale. I must say, the TV listing [***Guide***] on my computer is now much better than what is actually provided by the cable company.

The Guide is an easy-to-navigate grid view of up to 14 days of upcoming programming. The channel lineup can be customized to remove channels that you don't want to view. You can search the Guide for up to 14 days of upcoming programs by title, keyword, or categories such as: Movies, Sports, and Kids and subcategories such as Dramas, Football, and Cartoons. When you find a show that interests you, press the Details (or More Info) button on the remote control to view a description, cast listing, rating, and other program details. The Guide automatically retrieves TV listings from the Internet once or twice each day or you can manually update the Guide at any time.

During the initial setup of your TV connection you can choose to use closed captioning or utilize the secondary audio channel, which may contain a different language or alternate versions of the audio program.

So, you if want to record a specific program or a series of programs and you're not sure when they air, just do a search, make a couple of clicks of the mouse or remote and forget about it. It's really that simple! Oh, and if there is a programming change MCE automatically checks the Guide for the latest programming information, ensuring that your shows are recorded even if the programming schedule changes. So it's actually the program that is the basis for recording, not the time slot. If a recording is set for a previously scheduled time, an alert helps you choose which show to record. You cannot record two programs at once and you cannot watch one program while recording another – yet. But you can watch a previously recorded program while recording another.

Another prominent feature of MCE is the TIVO like ability to stop live TV. Just press Pause on the remote control or the keyboard or mouse. Press Play (or press Pause a second time) to start watching where you left off. A pause buffer automatically captures the last 30 minutes of live TV, so you can rewind any time you're watching. Transport controls let you navigate live TV: pause, rewind, instant replay (jump back seven seconds), fast forward, skip (29-second advance), frame-by-frame advance, and more. If you're watching a program you decide you want to record, just press the record button and the recording will stop automatically when the program ends. Again, the program and not the time slot controls this action. And yes, there is also a manual record menu that lets you specify a specific date, time, channel and recording time period.

There are parental controls to help block TV programming according to a parent's specific and unique needs. Block all movies, block unrated movies, and/or set the maximum allowed MPAA movie rating (G, PG, PG13, R, NR).

Once your program has been recorded to the hard drive, just choose which recorded program you want to view and there it is, ready and waiting. While watching the recorded program, if you need to pause or stop for any reason, you can set a bookmark at the location where you stop the playback, and when you resume watching, the program automatically cues the playback to that bookmark. MCE helps you manage your recorded TV, letting you keep the recorded show for one week, until manually deleted, until watched once, or until hard drive space is needed to record other shows. You can also choose the level of quality of the recording to control hard drive space. Media Center has four levels of recording quality that you can choose - Fair, Good, Better, and Best. Here is the approximate amount of disk space that each recording level will consume:

Quality	**Approximate GB/Hour**
Fair	1.0
Good	2.0
Better	2.5
Best	3.0

When the program is recorded it is encoded into a new Microsoft format with an extension of ***DVR-MS. DVR-MS is an MPEG2 file wrapped with ASF*** [Advanced Systems Format is an extensible file format designed to store synchronized multimedia data.] to allow metadata about the recorded program to be stored. Apparently, in the first release of MCE there was no ability to burn a recorded program to DVD so it could be watched on a stand-alone DVD player connected to your TV, but that was quickly remedied with a patch. Subsequently, the version of MCE that came with my new PC now has the ability to convert the new DVR-MS files to standard-type DVDs with a program called MyDVD, which is included.

There is a lot more to Windows XP Pro Media Center Edition than what I have just covered so far about the PVR. DVD content can be played-back in high-quality full-screen mode for viewing at a distance or in an inset window while navigating

(Media.....Continued on page 5)

(Media……..Continued from page 4)

Media Center or working in other areas of Windows. Parental Controls can also be used to block DVD content according to a parent's specific and unique needs, like blocking all movies, unrated movies, and/or setting maximum allowed movie rating.

The ***My Music*** folder makes recording, playing, locating and organizing your music in a visual way easy by making it easy for you to find what you're looking for. ***My Pictures*** is your digital album for all of your pictures. View and scroll through pictures in the My Pictures folder by using your remote control or your keyboard and mouse. Select a folder of pictures and press Play Slide Show to view pictures as an automated slide show. You can set the slide transition delay time, set the slide show to display your pictures randomly, and play music in the background. And all of this can be controlled by the remote.

I think you get the picture that MCE isn't just a few multimedia applets that have been added to Windows XP. All of this has been carefully thought out, and it is apparent that Microsoft has worked on this for quite a while. There's still a lot more to all of this, like a whole host of included new software that I am not familiar with as of yet. I'll save that for a later article once I've had a chance to learn more about all of its capabilities.

In case you are using MCE and don't know, I have found an excellent newsgroup devoted to MCE at: http://communities.microsoft.com/Newsgroups/default.asp?ICP=windowsxp&sLCID=US&newsgroup=microsoft.public.windows.mediacenter that has a bunch of people ready to lend a hand and answer your questions. Most of the users in this group have already experienced some of the situations you're about to and are very willing to help out. There are also sev-

(Media……..Continued on page 12)

Internet Picture of the Month

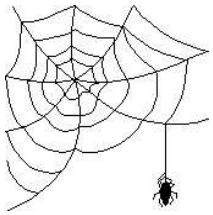


SARS Protection for a Cat

From the *New York Times* online site: "A Taiwanese woman put a mask on her kitten to protect her against SARS. Taiwan's health department has banned all people with SARS from entering or leaving the island."

http://www.nytimes.com/

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
A View on Cities	http://www.aviewoncities.com/index.html
New York City Hotels	http://www.freenewyorkhotelguide.com/
Guide to panoramas and panoramic photography	http://www.panoguide.com/
US Public & Private Colleges & Universities by State	http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/nandigam/region.htm
Plant Facts	http://www.plantfacts.com/
MyFloridaCounty.com - County Websites	http://www.myfloridacounty.com/countyportals/
Photo.Net	http://www.photo.net/
TampaComputing.com - Computer News	http://www.TampaComputing.com

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Game Drive

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

I have one bad habit left. Yes, I did give up the cigarettes and drinking, and I feel much better now; but I still have ONE. I will buy software that I shouldn't because it "*calls to me as I walk down the aisle*." If I hear what I call *reference or learning type* programs such as an encyclopedia or atlas and (possibly the worst) a *game,* then I just have to answer their plea. Over the years I have answered the call way too many times and created a problem that I have finally found a solution to, "*how to play these programs without having all those damn CD's all over the place and having to put them into the CD-ROM ".*

GameDrive is a Virtual Drive by *FarStone Technology Inc*. that I found at Best Buy while browsing the racks. I went home and after going to their web site and researching at Google for reviews of this and similar programs, I bought it. Two reasons at the web site convinced me to try this program: it would eliminate the need for CD's before playing, and it would be faster when the program was on the hard drive rather than playing on the slower CDROM. You can visit http://www.farstone.com and review the list of advantages there for more *features and benefits*. I purchased the program for $19.95 on my next visit to Best Buy. This program creates images of CD's onto your hard drive and places them into a library to use instead of your finding your CD and inserting it into your CD drive for each program. **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH SPACE FOR YOUR USE BEFORE PURCHASING THIS PROGRAM.**

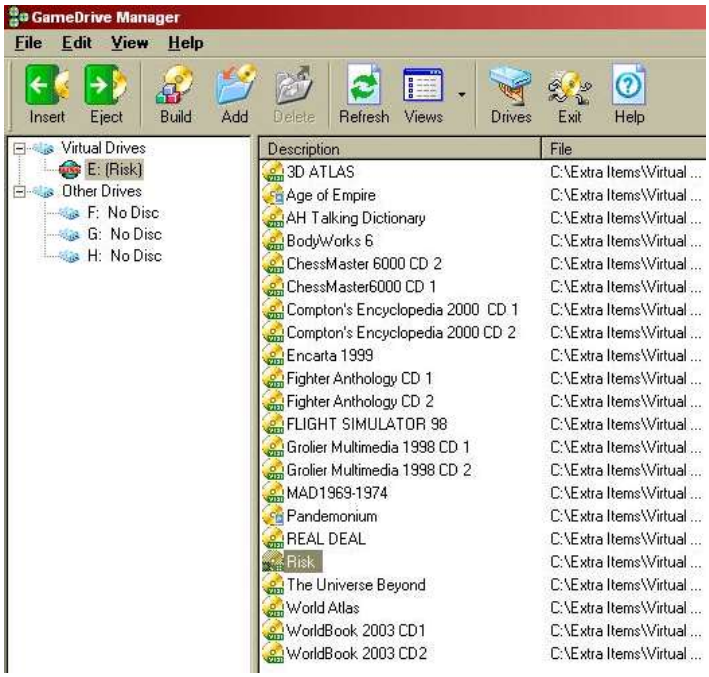
System requirements are Windows 98SE and above, a CD drive to install from, 25MB of hard drive space for the installation files, a Pentium 233mhz and enough RAM (19KB of RAM is used for each virtual drive in use).

GameDrive's installation was typical of other programs today, and all you have to do is follow an *InstallShield Wizard* and agree to the license, enter a serial number and make choices such as what directory to install plus other options. I make sure I read the manuals before I install new programs, and this one went smoothly.

After installation, ***GameDrive*** can be launched by selecting **Start** on taskbar, then **Programs\GameDrive\GameDrive Manager** and by looking for the ***GameDrive*** icon that appears in the Windows system tray.

The main ***GameDrive Manager*** is much like **Windows Explorer** to view and get around. Mine created the **Virtual Drive (E:)** and left my CD drives listed as **Other Devices (F: - H:).** The right panel shows the CD's by name that I had loaded at that time.

The process of entering a CD into your ***Library*** is to insert a CD into your CD drive and pushing the ***BUILD*** button; a Wizard will



start that will guide you step by step. First, you select the physical CD drive that contains the CD. Second, ***GameDrive*** verifies that the selected hard drive has enough space for storage and the folder and VCD file name. Third, you select the CD read method. You can choose ***Normal*** for most CD's and an ***Intelligent Method*** for VCD's that do not run as expected and may be protected by having inaccurate volume information to prevent coping. You can also choose ***Compression*** to save space. There are other steps to build different types of files, such as mixed mode CD's that also contain audio tracks.

Now that you have a CD converted to a VCD file in your library you just select the file with your mouse and then push the ***Insert*** button and an animation graphic appears and the CD is now in your ***Virtual Drive*** ready to use. In the picture above, you can see that the ***Virtual Drive*** contains the ***VCD*** game ***Risk*** as CDROM drive E:. The game will now play as if the CD is inserted in a physical CDROM. You can also eject just by going to the ***Eject*** button.

Now for some other general information that you might be interested in. You can create ***Multiple Virtual Drives.*** You are limited by the number of letters in the alphabet to 26 total drives. You are then able to load multiple CD's or ***VCD's*** that are needed for some games. I have ***Baldur's Gate*** that contains five CD's to play. After I took the picture showing the *Risk* game, I did build all five CD's into the **Library** and actually load all five. To create a new ***Virtual Drive,*** you just go to the ***Drives*** button and add it. You will have to restart your computer any time you add or delete a ***Virtual Drive***.

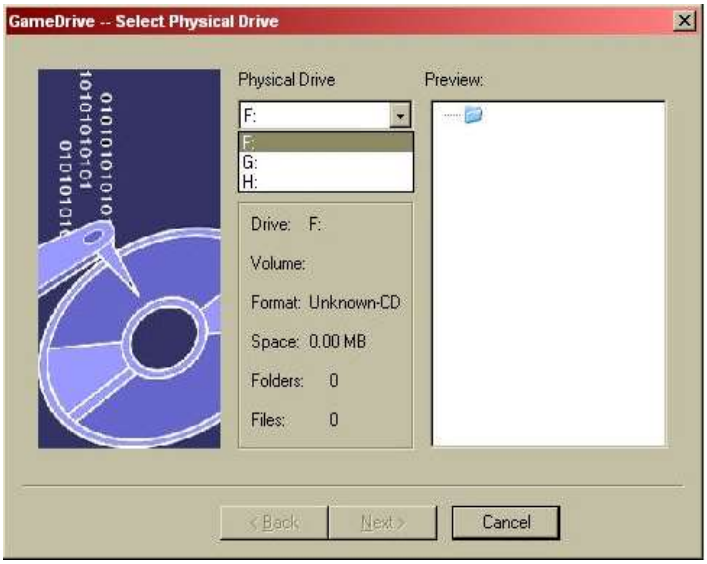
RapidCache is a unique CD caching utility program that uses an incremental caching algorithm found only in ***GameDrive*** that is included. It can be started from the Program folder on the Start

(GameDrive…….Continued on page 7)

(GameDrive……..Continued from page 6)
Menu or from the File Menu in the program. It allows you to set your **Physical CD Drives** with a larger cache amount than Windows allows, which is 214 kilobytes when set at Quad-Speed or higher. It should increase the performance and the manual says to "experiment" to get maximum performance. You have settings over each ***Virtual Drive*** and ***Physical CD Drive*** in your computer. I set mine to "Cache all files" and "Max Caching Mode" with a size of 8192 kb to start and will experiment as they suggest.

This program like many more today includes a ***LIVEUpdate*** feature that is accessed from the ***HELP*** Menu. Unlike other program that I have, this ***LIVEUpdate*** was only usable after I went to the web page and registered and a code was emailed to me. I had to enter the code to use the feature the first time. This was done to inform me that the ***LIVEUpdate*** feature was by subscription and that it would have to be renewed after a year for a ***FEE.*** Now, that was not expected, and I will fight that feature next year; I believe they said it was $4.95. I would suggest that you read the web page and also download the online Manual in PDF format before buying. You can also purchase this product online as a download for $19.95 and save on the taxes.

I used the program with Data, Music, and Mixed Mode CD's and was able to use each as I normally would if I inserted a physical CD. Now I just go and insert a ***VIRTUAL CD*** and have no wear on any of the CD's; now I don't have to burn a copy for my protection against scratches or other misuse. On games that had lag before as the program read from a **Physical CDROM**, I now had none. This is because it does read at a much faster speed from the hard drive. Another feature that I didn't expect and like is that when I ***Insert*** a ***VCD*** into the ***Virtual Drive,*** I could double click the **ICON** of the name in the left panel and the CD would open in much the view you would get by going to **MY Computer** and opening an inserted **Physical CD**. This allows you to view those files if needed or any other operation you could perform with the **Physical CD** ◆



Editor's Comments and Software Review

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

New SIG Meeting Location Starting this month, the Access and Visual Basic SIGs will meet at the Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue. That is just south of Old Hyde Park Village. The move was necessitated by Gateway no longer being able to guarantee a room at a fixed time and date in advance. We are appreciative of Gateway providing a room twice a month over the past several years.

Alpha5, 3D-Album and PhotoVista Virtual Tour As did many of you at our last meeting, I found the software presented intriguing.

Although **Alpha5** appears to be a good database program for those not up to beating their heads against the wall to learn how to use Microsoft Access, I had no interest in Alpha 5, since I have indeed beaten my head against the wall more than once in the years that I have been learning Access. Almost anything can be done with Access as regards the presentation and manipulation of data--but you have to have paid your dues in study to know how to do it. Visit our Access SIG if you think you have an interest.

My interest was in the two graphics-oriented programs. **3D-Album** is just a cute and sometimes stunning way to present a collection of images. You can use it to display them on your computer, send an album via email to a friend (this method is less than ideal), create a screen saver or put the album on the web. I have created two different albums on the web of the same 16 photos at my site http://www.lamartin.com. Take the link near the bottom of the page to "Virtual Tours and Other Such Experiments", then select the 3D Displays link.

When you click on a 3D Display for the first time, you will be asked to download a 2 MB plug-in for Internet Explorer (and theoretically for Netscape Navigator if you use that browser--but I haven't checked this out). This is what actually produces the display. The download is a one time thing. It downloads fairly rapidly on a broadband connection but will take some time on a dial-up connection.

This is where I found my first problem with one of the software packages purchased at the meeting. The download produced a warning that the file had an out-of-date certificate of authenticity (it was six months out of date). It took me several emails to convince the software manufacturer, Micro Research Institute, Inc., that there was a problem. Their first approach was to tell me to ignore the message. The second was to tell me to change my browser setting to not warn about such things. I then suggested that it wasn't very professional for a software company

(Comments……..Continued on page 9)

Looking Back to 1993

From the May 1993 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary Report
MINUTES OF 4/14/93 MEETING
By: Jim Clark

The meeting began just a few moments late (at 6:10, to be precise), but it was another good meeting, with quite a nice group in attendance. In addition to a vendor review of an impressive software program, there were some very interesting discussions on items of interest to a great many of us. Once again, our meeting was guided by the astute leadership of our illustrious Prez, Harvey Bruneau.

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS

Quite a few items of interest were discussed during the meeting, including:

That Comp USA is unofficially allowing discounts for members of our group on many items purchased at Comp USA was confirmed by our Prez. A discount is not given on all items, especially low cost items (e.g., DOS 6 Upgrade, floppy disks). However, the savings can be rather substantial on other items; one member received a 20% on a $50 hardware item, for example. On more expensive items, members have reported $40 or more savings. To receive the corporate discount, take your purchases to the Corporate Desk and show your User Group membership card.

There was considerable discussion of DOS 6.0, with varying opinions from our membership. Harvey introduced the subject, reporting general satisfaction with all DOS 6.0 features used thus far by him at Dun & Bradstreet, including MemMaker, Anti-Virus, and optional boot. He had not yet used DoubleSpace.

- Most indicated that DOS 6.0 was easy to load, and they had no troubles in doing so. A couple of others reported some problem in loading and setting it up. All felt that documentation left something to be desired, with the manual provided containing little to no technical info.
- Most comments about MemMaker were along the lines that it was not quite as good as the stand-alone memory managers at ferreting out more memory, but that it was a good alternative for those who do not need the last byte of memory and who do not want to pay the price of the stand-alone products. And it certainly simplified the task of making upper memory available and loading TSRs in same.
- The DoubleSpace feature generated the most divergent opinions. Several reported problems, including some boot problems which appeared after installing DoubleSpace. One with a CD-ROM, loading the driver in upper memory, reported booting problems following installation of DoubleSpace. Some reported the compression ratio not as good as with Stacker. Others reported it does not allow compressed drives to be decompressed -- as the stand-alone products do.
- Few commented on the Anti Virus, and one reported that the built-in Anti Virus was making his job somewhat easier and that he liked the feature thus far.
- All those who had used the Optional Boot feature seemed to like it quite well. Some of those who had experienced boot problems reported that the AllBoot switch solved their boot problem. The ability to select a clean boot from the hard drive was viewed as a very welcome improvement by all who had experienced booting problems -- negating the need to boot from floppy.

A review of DOS 6.0, and all of its features, sometime in the not-to-distant future would be welcome by all DOS 6.0 users, followed by a seminar to discuss problems experienced and solutions found.

PRESENTATION — SuperBase

Software Publishing Corporation was good enough to send to us a knowledgeable representative, Paul Tondera, Corporate Account Manager, to give us a preview of their program, SuperBase, Version 2.0 — a fully relational database program for Windows. Paul noted that SuperBase is not something new on the market or in Windows, but that it has been around managing data in Windows for over eight years. Hence, it is not something new with a lot of bugs, as is the case with the new programs now on the market; it has evolved as a well-founded, sound and very powerful database program. I am not knowledgeable on databases and have no basis for comparison, but I can say that SuperBase certainly appeared to me to be very powerful, functional and easy to use.

Among the many features Paul reported and/or demonstrated are: A forms-generating capability; a Quick Reporting feature which produces reports in detail; easy setup and modification of all reports and forms; drag and drop editing; provides for query by example; allows up to 999 indexes per file; provides full multi-media support; imports and integrates sound and video files into SuperBase; uses built-in procedural language; provides automatic recording of macros and can use basic macros and those created in "C"; imports from all the major DB programs, as well as ASCII, and exports in most of the same formats; the forms creator uses predefined fields which simplifies forms creation; includes the capability for merging of mail and label files, and SB allows merging of 2 databases. SuperBase is also network ready.

In some respects, SuperBase 2.0 is the least demanding for hardware capabilities of any of the major DB programs. It will load into and work in a 286 machine, for example. A VGA monitor is required, as is 1 MB of RAM, though 2 MBs of RAM are recommended. And 7 MB of hard disk space is required.

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

(1993…….Continued from page 8)
SuperBase 2.0 carries a list price of $795, but has a street price in the range of $500-550. If you already own a previous version of SuperBase, the upgrade price is $149. Those using other DB programs can purchase a SuperBase competitive upgrade for $199.

Many thanks to Software Publishing Corporation and Paul Tondera for an excellent presentation of a great DB program and for your very generous software contributions.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Software Publishing Corporation and Sunrise Computer, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. In addition, Sunrise Computer donated quite a number of computer items that were distributed to those who could use them, including printer ribbons, covers, and static guards; these items are not reflected here. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Larry Anders	Disk cleaner & Mouse Pad
Herbert Atwood	Mouse Pad
Jim Clark	Mouse Pad
Gene Wade	T Shirt
Bill White	Computer Lock
Parker Monroe	Fanny Pak
Kevan Sheridan	Harvard Graphics for Windows
Luis Vergara	Harvard Graphics 3.0
Tom Cone	SuperBase 2.0
Gene Wade	50/50 ($50)

The meeting adjourned at about 9:00 PM ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)
setting it up, it automatically creates and updates a listing of links to the messages you send and receive. So, months later when you are searching for a certain message with a vital piece of information -- it is very easy to locate even if you aren't a filing genius.

We received a pretty good demonstration of each of these, and we had to opportunity to purchase them for an even further reduced price for being at the meeting. The User Group price is great. You can check it out at http://www.whats4me.com. We had a good time and hope to see you at the next meeting, where someone is going to win a big prize. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 7)
to offer downloads with expired certificates unless renewing it was something they couldn't afford. They then completely changed course and said that the problem was their fault and that it would be fixed within the day--and it was. Good for them.

As an aside, I have several ActiveX controls I have created at my site for which you would get the same warning if you tried to download them. Since I am not making any money from the examples at my site, I am not going to pay the $400 per year for a certificate for such things. Of course, everyone trusts that I am who I say I am, so there is really no need for a certificate--is there. In reality, such certificates only guarantee that the software provider is who they say they are. The certificate does not guarantee that the software is virus free or indeed is not a virus itself.

PhotoVista Virtual Tour Maker iSeeMedia has not been as forthcoming in responding to a similar problem I found when I installed their PhotoVista Virtual Tour Maker, which is a very nice program nonetheless. When you start the PhotoVista Virtual Tour Maker software, it wants you to register, but the registration immediately produces an error message when you try to submit the registration. Additionally, when I created a virtual tour to place at my web site that used a Java viewer, the viewer had a yellow button with Zoom written on it. I assume that its purpose is to take you to the software manufacturer's web site. When you click on it, however, you are sent to a web address that no longer exists at MGI--the previous owner of the software, not iSeeMedia--the current owner. In fact, this software still has MGI written all over it. It installs in an MGI folder on your computer, etc. I went to the iSeeMedia web site and downloaded updates for both the Virtual Tour Maker software and the PhotoVista Panorama, which is part of the Virtual Tour Maker package. However, these updates did nothing to remove all the references to MGI.

It appears to me that iSeeMedia has done nothing to the software since taking it over from MGI. There is a forum at the iSeeMedia site to discuss problems with their software. But I see no evidence of anyone from iSeeMedia participating. Furthermore, they have a form you can fill in at the site so as to report a problem, but it has a mandatory field for your registration number. Recall that I couldn't register the product, and there is no registration number on the CD. So that does me no good. There appears to be no way to get email support. Dave Whittle, who presented the software to us, said he would relay my concerns to them, but I have heard nothing from that.

I just checked the iSeeMedia site again. They do have something new there. They say that they have a new plug-in viewer. However, that is not what I want. I do not like forcing people to download large, specialized viewers if I can help it (as you had to do for the 3D-Album) That is why I prefer the Java viewer, but there is no update for that. The Java viewer they

(Comments…….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Comments…….Continued from page 9)
have is basically two years old., and I am sure that is in the same state that it was when MGI had the software.

All of that said, as indicated above, **I like the product**. You can see the results at my site at the above-mentioned link. I have put three virtual tours there: A tour of two rooms in a house, a tour around a pond, and a tour of Ft. Blount Park in Bartow, Florida. Be sure to read the instructions before starting so that you will know how to move about.

I used PhotoVista to make a stitch of around 18 - 22 photos for each 360 degree panorama. The photos were taken with my Canon G1 digital camera attached to a tripod .The software did a fairly good job with very little manual adjustment necessary. I then imported this panorama into the PhotoVista Virtual Tour Maker and produced the tours you see on the web.

One thing I discovered about outdoor panoramas is that you want to take them on an overcast day. That way you do not have to deal with the sun shining straight into your camera lens at some point. If you are shooting a 360 degree panorama, then at some point you are going to have to face the sun unless the sky is overcast--or it is high noon. Another thing you have to consider for any panorama is movement of objects. Since each photo needs to overlap the previous one by 25 to 30%, you really need everything to remain the same in those two shots. So moving people or cars can be a problem.

I have not tried the third program in the PhotoVista Virtual Tour suite, PhotoVista 3D Objects. To use that you really need a rotating platform on which you place the object to be photographed from all sides. Seems like we used to have such a thing in the kitchen years ago that held spices and rotated. But that is long gone.

To close, let me give you an example of the sort of thing we do in the **VBA SIG**. Visual Basic for Applications lets you automate things in any of the Microsoft Office products. Originally you could only do this in Word, Excel and Access, but Microsoft has now expanded this to include PowerPoint, FrontPage and Publisher. This was done in either Office 2000 or Office 2002.

Most of our examples in the SIG have come from programming in Access, Excel and Word, but here is one that I just came up with for Publisher.

Ever since moving this Publisher newsletter document to the Gateway I bought around 1 1/2 years ago, when I open it I get a warning about it having a font--Copperplate--that isn't on the new computer. I could have loaded the font, but I wanted to find what text used that font. I looked and looked several times but could never produce it. Publisher, unlike Word, does not provide for searches based on formatting like the type of font. So I finally got around to writing some VBA code to accomplish the task. It found the text on page 5 in the Internet Picture of the Month heading. Here is the code:

```
Dim x As TextRange
Dim i As Integer, j As Integer, k As Integer
Dim s As String

For k = 1 To Application.ActiveDocument.Pages.Count
    For j = 1 To Application.ActiveDocument.Pages
(k).Shapes.Count
        If Application.ActiveDocument.Pages(k).Shapes
(j).Type = pbTextFrame Then
            For i = 1 To Applica-
tion.ActiveDocument.Pages(k).Shapes
(j).TextFrame.TextRange.Length
                If Application.ActiveDocument.Pages
(k).Shapes(j).TextFrame.TextRange.Characters(i,
1).Font.Name = "Copperplate" Then
                s = s & " " & CStr(k) & " " & Applica-
tion.ActiveDocument.Pages(k).Shapes
(j).TextFrame.TextRange.Characters(i, 1)
                Else
                End If
            Next
        Else
        End If
    Next
Next
MsgBox (s) ◆
```

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

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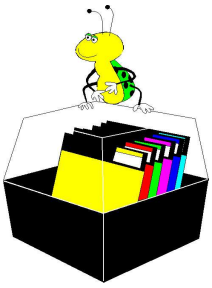
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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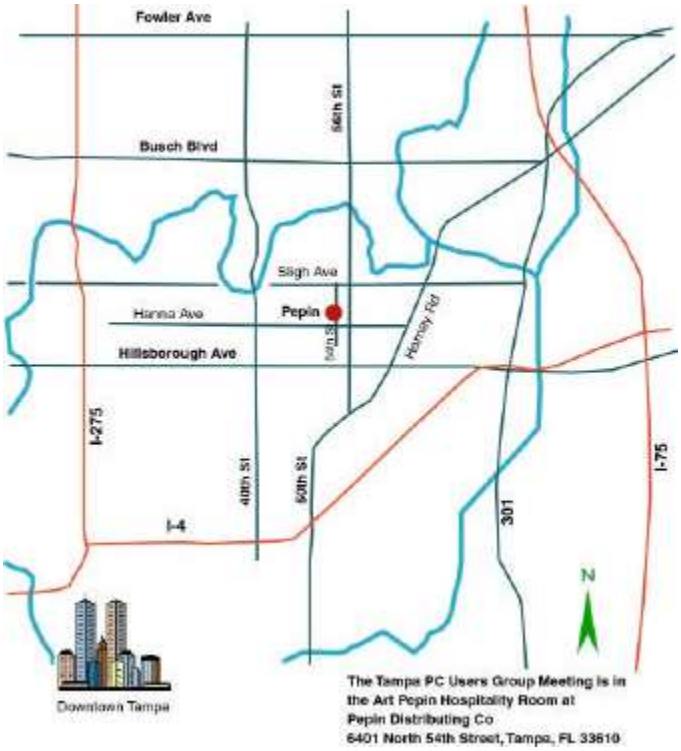
(Media……..Continued from page 5)
eral Microsoft MVPs that keep a watch on this site. I've used it a few times already, and it has been a great source of help. It's not that MCE is that hard to use or learn, I just typically don't read the instructions until I have a problem or can't figure something out on my own, and by using the newsgroup I have been able to get right to the solution and back to computing.

In conclusion for now, there is a lot of new stuff in this rendition of Microsoft's latest operating system, and I personally feel they've done a good job with this release. Just about the time I get a little bored with computing something comes along to catch my fancy, and I think this one will keep me fancied [and busy] for quite a while.

[Note: if you may be interested in one of these systems, you can find an up-to-date listing of the companies selling Media Center PCs at: http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/mediacenter/howtobuy/.

A very good site is http://www.thegreenbutton.com/default.asp

More to follow at a later date… ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 6 June 2003

Meeting

Presentation by
Kevan Sheridan

Wednesday, June 11, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: A presentation on Spybot and other related software by Kevan Sheridan. Preceding that, Kevan Sheridan will also conduct the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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In the September 2002 newsletter, I mentioned purchasing Visual Studio .Net and gave some examples of the type of programs I was at that time writing to test it. At the October 2002 meeting, I did a presentation on programming where I gave examples of programs I had written in Visual Basic, Delphi and VB.Net. I had my home computer set up as a web server for remote access where I displayed examples of web applications created within the Visual Studio ASP.Net framework using VB.Net. I had to use my computer, since no site where I had web sites hosted at that time supported the ASP.Net framework. Within the past month that has changed, and I can now host such pages at my site and the

(Comments…….Continued on page 7)

July Meeting Topic: To be announced -- Check our web site.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

Our meeting started a little late at 7 PM. We talked about our Special Interest Group meetings, which are being held at the Kate Jackson Community Center in Hyde Park. This is a great new location for the Access and Visual Basic Groups. The meetings are tailored for the group that arrives, so don't be worried that you won't fit in; just show up with your questions and have some fun learning new things.

The main part of the meeting was started, and Merle Nicholson presented Windows XP. It is very crash proof – so Merle says and some others in the room agreed. The door prize at this meeting was a copy of Windows XP, which we had been working up to for a few meetings.

The start menu comes up with the last five or six programs used. Your favorites and the ones you use all the time will be there for you to click on without having to go to the Start area and choosing from the longer list.

The My Pictures area allows you to do a slide show with your photos. Any folder of photos can be viewed as photos and as a slide show. This is a feature that used to require special program software but is now standard. You can organize your photos very easily.

Power Toys were shown; you get those from the Windows Download area. There are interesting, helpful utilities for Windows available there.

XP carries an account manager with it for security. Two users can share or NOT share by setting that up according to their needs.

Customize your desktop in the Display area – you have options of backgrounds, and on User Accounts XP lets you set what you want a user to be allowed to do. So if you have a guest who will be using your computer

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

Delorme Earthmate USB GPS

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

I've written about using travel software in previous articles. This is a quick update on the latest GPS on the market – the Delorme Earthmate USB. Delorme had a previous model (with a serial connector) that went out of production perhaps a year ago, and this is the replacement. It's intended to work with software on your PC, usually a notebook that travels with you.

This new GPS is pretty unique. It's WAAS capable for greater accuracy, and as you can see, it's tiny. Unlike the previous model, it has only one cord and uses no battery, being powered from the USB port (and therefore your notebook's power supply). It



works. That's about all you can say about a GPS, because a GPS is just a little piece of hardware that makes your software work as it should. We sit ours fully forward on the dash against the windshield, the only place any GPS will pick up the satellite signals in your car.

I have only one wish, that the cord was as soft and flexible as its competitor, the NavMan e-Series GPS. But it's the right length, 6 feet. It comes with two



software drivers. One is the USB driver that makes it work with Delorme Street Atlas 2003. The other driver is a COMM port driver for use with other programs. It makes the GPS signals appear as a COMM port, in my case COM4:4800,N,8,1. Keep in mind, physically, it has a USB connector, and that's all you use. But the COMM port driver makes it look to the system as a COMM port – a fake one, because physically it's just USB.

The GPS started working with Street Atlas 2003 immediately after installing the first driver using the USB interface, but then as I wanted it to also work with Microsoft Streets and Trips, and also SailGPS, my own sailboat software, I installed the second driver successfully, tested it with the Microsoft software, and went back to Street Atlas, and it didn't pick up the satellite signals. So I did a couple of uninstalls, reinstalls and then wrote Delorme's on-line help. I received an answer within a couple of days. They told me what to do about this. It seems that when you install the second driver to make it look like a COMM port, it disables the USB driver for Street Atlas. So you need to set the Street Atlas to look at the COMM. And it worked just fine. I later got a note from Delorme that tells how to designate the driver to only one of the two USB ports – a feature of Windows XP, which would allow me to use USB for Delorme and Serial for the others. I've not tried this yet. Delorme deserves a great deal of credit for their fast and informative responses to my email. I recommend this GPS for its price, size and software support. ◆

Happiness is: a New PC and/ IntelliMover

By Mike Hodges, Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group
mphs@aol.com

This article is a sequel to the article published in the April newsletter entitled, "Buying a new PC". My intent of publishing this article is to inform those who were curious what I thought of my new purchase. Well, the PC I had selected, namely the Gateway 600X notebook, arrived within seven days after the order being placed, as I had anticipated in the article, a week before promised, at 6.59 PM on Friday 4 April. UPS does not deliver to residences after 7pm, so it was a close call, and I was delighted that I had the whole weekend to set up and exercise my latest purchase. Referring to the April article, you will see I paid a moderate price for this highly recommended machine. See my previous article at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2003/april2003/newsletter_frameset.htm for the machine configuration and the comparison chart with other PCs.

First, let me say I remain delighted with my choice, and I am convinced that this is because I had conducted a thorough selection process. I had the machine unpackaged and up and fully running in under 30 minutes, and this was achieved in spite of the fact that I had never actually owned a machine with an XP operating system before.

Prior to the machine arriving I was able to track the order on the Gateway web site on a daily basis, all the way from order arriving at the plant in Taiwan, shipment from Taiwan within the following 48 hours and delivery via Alaska to my door. I was aware the machine was already in Tampa by 7 AM on the day of delivery. The longest delay, and therefore the longest day, appeared to be on the final day with the machine riding around Tampa in the UPS local delivery truck. More so as I had to leave my house at 5 PM, two hours before the UPS delivery arrived at my door. Fortunately I was able to have someone standing by to receive the UPS delivery at my house, so convinced was I that the package would arrive that very day.

So on the following Saturday morning, I set to work and was delighted that within 30 minutes I had the new machine unpackaged and fully up and running and set about to verify that all the features were working as advertised. I loaded my first DVD and was delighted at the superb graphic display. I was able to verify my Verizon DSL connection and 56K modem and floppy drive operation all within the next 30 minutes. The only feature that I could not test was that the PC was in fact wireless enabled as I did not own a transmitter to verify this ordered feature. In all respects the machine appeared to be sizzling fast as compared to my old IBM 1998 vintage ThinkPad 1400i. Recently I set up my old 1998 vintage 300 MHz IBM laptop and was dismayed how slow access and set up was as compared to my new 2.2 GHz Gateway 600X. I had now grown accustomed to the speed of all that I do with my new PC so that the old IBM machine is pretty much ancient history in my house. You may recall that the final straw with maintaining my old machine was that the USB port was not enabled and as a consequence I was not able to hook up another recent purchase, namely an HP V40, All In One copier, fax scanner printer. This HP V40 I was also able to get running with my new PC within just ten minutes. All that remained thereafter was for me to transfer the two gigs of mostly graphic data from my old PC to my new notebook. At Gateway, at time of the initial PC purchase, I had also purchased IntelliMover, a program designed to help speed up this otherwise laborious file by file transfer. Again the process was trouble free. First I loaded the IntelliMover CD onto the IBM laptop and followed the wizard instructions and then selected all the files I wished to transfer. Most likely I selected 98% of the two gigs of data. It is always difficult to leave anything, once created, behind and not generally thereafter readily accessible. I then loaded the IntelliMover CD on my new PC and then, when prompted, I hooked up the provided parallel to parallel cable to connect the two PCs. The IntelliMover package had provided two sets of cables, a USB interconnect cable and a parallel port interconnect cable. Because my old IBM PC did not have an enabled USB port I was relegated to the parallel connections. The file download required eight, yes eight, hours to transfer all the designated files through the parallel port. The USB connection would have been six times faster and therefore could have completed the transfer in 80 minutes. However, I must say the process was relatively simple and easy

(New PC.....Continued on page 5)

(New PC…….Continued from page 4)

to follow, and indeed all the files I selected have apparently transferred from the old machine to the new machine without loss. I highly recommend that as you build up programs on your PC you maintain a large envelope in which to store all the program and backup CDs supplied. In the event one has problems or moves to a new PC or it is necessary to restore the PC disc drive; thereafter, all the materials will be readily found in one package. These days we appear to be awash in CDs, and an envelope holding all those programs that will be needed for recovery is a great safeguard from panic and frantic searches at a possible future date.

So now I have achieved my objective; I have retained all the intense data files, mostly graphics previously generated on my old PC, have plenty of hard drive space, 60 gigs for future use and I am working in the Microsoft XP Professional environment. With my old PC setup I forever had to delete files to make room for additional applications or downloads. I have even been able, at last, to set up the video cam that Verizon provided me when I initially signed up for DSL some thirty months ago. So now I can be even more productive than previously, in all my computing labors.

Happy computing to all.

(New PC…….Continued on page 10)

Internet Picture of the Month



Paper Moon

From Bill Strong's Eclectic Mississippi Photo Tour at http://www.phototour.com/

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Einstein Archives Online	http://www.alberteinstein.info/
Microsoft Watch - News and Analysis on Microsoft	http://www.microsoft-watch.com/
IP address mapped to country	http://www.idefense.com/Intell/CI022702.html
Graveyards of Chicago	http://www.graveyards.com/
Skyscrapers.com	http://www.skyscrapers.com
Mississippi Photo Tour	http://www.phototour.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Windows XP Update Q811493 Hotfix

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

Perhaps you have seen recent articles on an XP update that says that Microsoft has withdrawn a security patch from its list of recommended updates. In case you want to check to see if you're one of the 600,000 people that installed it, go to your Add/Remove Programs and check the list of updates for Q811493 Hotfix. If you have any reason to suspect that your computer is not running well since the date you installed this, you can remove it. I did – a month ago, and it made a dramatic difference. But you need to decide for yourself. There's a revised version made available on May 28th … read on.

This fix applies to Windows XP, Windows 2000 and NT only. It's an update that plugs a security problem where a person can break into your computer. But in this case, the person needs to be logged on locally (actually sitting at your PC or logged in with terminal server) to do so.

The fix, when installed, apparently interacts with firewall and anti-virus software and continuously consumes some of the resources of your machine. The hotfix was originally released as a "Critical" update April 16th. Within a week, Microsoft had removed it from the "Critical" list and moved it to the "recommended" list, and as of May 27th it was removed from the updates list altogether.

That's how I came to install it myself; I have my Windows update set to automatically download all "Critical" updates. I always read these before consenting to install. I read this one, and installed it. No reason not to, and went on with my life. Except … in mid-April I knew that my machine was running slower. I put up with it for a week, reminding myself that I need to backtrack and see what I may have done to cause this, and kind of putting it off. It was slower enough that sometimes I'd be reminded that something was wrong, but not enough to interrupt my current programming project to try to determine what it was.

And a coincidence happened. I was at my PC, contemplating a strategy to find what was happening to slow it down when I got an email from William LaMartin with a copy of an article about this hotfix that users were reporting was slowing down their PCs. So I did some news searches, came up with some newsgroup complaints, and found the hotfix number. That identified it for me in my uninstall list, so I uninstalled it, and the difference was dramatic! I had a fast machine again. I had installed it on my notebook and my Windows 2000 machine too. It didn't seem to affect my Win2K machine adversely.

Subsequently reading the Microsoft literature in the following weeks, they were still recommending that everyone install this, but to remove it if it caused problems. Microsoft was claiming that, newsgroups complaints aside, they were receiving very little feedback on this hotfix.

So if you have Windows NT, Windows XP or Windows 2000, check your Microsoft fixes and see if you've installed it as I did, determine if possible if your machine is running slower and remove it if necessary.

May 28th Update ! This **revised** hotfix is back on the "Critical updates" list. So if you were one of the 600,000 people that installed the original release, you may want to consider uninstalling it, and reinstalling the new. If you think you need it at all, that is. Read on.

Excerpted from
http://www.microsoft.com/technet/treeview/default.asp?url=/technet/security/bulletin/MS03-013.asp

Why has Microsoft reissued this bulletin?

Subsequent to the release of this bulletin and the associated patches, a performance related problem was identified with the Windows XP Service Pack 1 version of the patch. This problem is unrelated to the security vulnerability discussed in this bulletin; however, the problem

(Hotfix……Continued on page 7)

(Hotfix…….Continued from page 6)

has caused some customers to notice performance degradation on Windows XP SP1 systems after applying the patch.

Microsoft has corrected this problem and reissued this bulletin on May 28, 2003 to advise on the availability of a revised patch for Windows XP Service Pack 1. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

you can set that up and limit access. You can get sophisticated with all the bells and whistles, but you don't have to and can work up to fancier settings after you learn a few more things.

XP comes with some CD burning capabilities built in, so you don't need to get CD software for basic needs in burning CDs, and it walks you through each thing very smoothly.

Merle suggests that partitioning your hard drive, to keep your earlier programs running, is not necessary – most everything is easily updated. BUT there are other programs that won't work with XP so you'll want to make the decision separately, but there are XP updates to cover most needs. XP won't run DOS though, so if you have any of those to run you definitely want to partition and keep your earlier Windows version available for running DOS.

Expect to spend a few hours getting your new XP set up if you are updating programs because you will be going on the web to find the updates and downloading and get them onto your computer, but once that's done you're all set and, like he said, it's pretty crash proof, so it will be worth the effort.

It looks as though we can count on a fairly easy set up and a good stable operating system once we walk through the steps. Windows XP is trying to make it

(Minutes…….Continued on page 10)

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

TPCUG site among others, since they are now being hosted on Windows 2003 servers.

Go to http://www.lamartin.com/dotnet/main.aspx to view several examples. If you are using an older version of Netscape (like 4.7) you will not see the pages correctly. But this should not be a problem for most visitors to the site, since visitors to lamartin.com use Internet Explorer over Netscape Navigator in a ration of 60:1. At the TPCUG.org site the ratio in favor of Internet Explorer is 45:1.

The ASP.Net framework installed on the Windows 2003 servers allows me to use any of the Visual Studio .Net languages to write code for web pages very much like I write code for Windows desktop applications. I can not create an HTML page that has more functionality than could be created in the past--I can just do it a lot easier in an environment where I have error checking and debugging. The ASP.NET framework on the server is responsible for rendering the page into HTML.

One nice feature of this new setup is that it allows me to take advantage of Web Services, which are applications residing on remote servers that I can hook into with my code and then use either to do calculations or provide data to my web pages. The provider of the web service can either charge for it or provide it for free. Obviously I am accessing only free services at this point. Two such are the Weather and Pig Latin examples at the URL listed above.

By the time you read this, I may possibly have a few more examples posted at the above URL. At the moment, I am working at connecting to the Microsoft TerraServer Web Service. You recall TerraServer. It is the site where you go to view satellite photos from around the world. So far, I have figured how to get a longitude and latitude for any given U. S. city and state combination. But I am still working on retrieving the image tile centered on that location. However, I am not sure I want to get too involved with satellite photos at my site, since it might cause my bandwidth usage to surge, costing me an additional fee for my site. ◆

Looking Back to 1993

From the June 1993 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 5/12/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

The meeting began just a few moments late at 6:20, the delay due to "mechanical problems" (had some difficulty getting the NT [New Technology] to work). But, it was yet another good meeting, with quite a nice group in attendance. This meeting was particularly interesting because the subject was current and interesting to just about everybody who uses an IBM compatible computer — the new operating system DOS 6.0 — and because it was an "open forum" type of a session lead by our astute Prez, Harvey Bruneau. Harvey was to be ably assisted by our talented librarian, Larry Anders, but work demands arose which prevented Larry from making the meeting. Like the legendary knight in shining armor atop a large white steed, Harvey carried the evening by himself.

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS: Since NT had delayed start of the meeting, and there is a lot in DOS 6.0 to discuss, industry and club news were omitted.

PRESENTATION — MS-DOS 6.0

No formal presentation was prepared nor intended since this was to be a forum, or seminar type of treatment of DOS 6.0. Harvey guided the discussion by introducing the major changes in MS-DOS 6.0 compared to DOS 5.0 and giving a brief review of each: Double Space, Anti-virus, MemMaker and the changes to the MEM command, Backup, Defrag, InterLink and Selective Boot. Installation was also discussed, as were some upgrades of 5.0 features, such as UNDELETE, and some new commands, such as DELDIR, MOVE, and NUMLOCK.

Documentation: The documentation in the manual with the upgrade version is a little sparse and is not nearly as complete as the DOS 5.0 manual; it focuses principally on the changes that have been made from the 5.0 version. (Apparently no one was aware of the documentation that comes with the full version of DOS 6.0, for no one spoke on that subject.). For upgrading to DOS 6.0, then, one should hang onto the manual that came with DOS 5.0. On-line help is quite extensive, however, and one need only type the command at the DOS prompt followed by /? and a help screen appears revealing the hows and whats of the command. Alternatively, type help at the DOS prompt and a screen showing all DOS commands appears, double click on any you're interested in and, walla, the info appears.

Installation: There were a number present who reported varying levels of difficulty, some requiring some changes to their boot files before satisfactory installation and operation could be achieved. However, I personally had no difficulties installing DOS 6.0, and it seemed that most present who were using DOS 6.0 had no difficulty. Installation instructions seemed adequate for the most part. Rumor had it that one must have DOS 5.0 installed to be able to install the DOS 6.0 upgrade. However, the instructions indicate that one must have only a previous version of DOS to install the upgrade to DOS 6.0. That is logical since a disk partitioned and formatted by an IBM-compatible DOS is required in the first instance, But one need not have a complete installation of any previous version of DOS to install DOS 6.0 — it is enough to have a DOS partitioned and formatted disk. The earliest reported version of DOS to which the DOS 6.0 upgrade has been applied by those present was DOS 3.0.

Double Space: For most, Double Space was fairly easy to install -- and it works as advertised. It appears that it is not as efficient at compression, nor does it have some of the features of the better stand-alone products (i.e., Stacker), but it does do a fairly good job simply. One big advantage is that it loads before anything else and no statements in CONFIG.SYS is required, and except for those needing an uncompressed area for Windows swap, all files (including boot files, such as HIMEM, etc.) may be compressed. The degree of compression using any existing compression program varies with the type of files being compressed - ZIP files almost none, spreadsheets a lot. So, the terminology of doubling disk space that they all use must be taken with a grain of salt. Articles have reported an average disk compression using Double Space at between 1.6-1.8 to 1.

I do not use DSpace, but I tried it on a new disk I was installing. It compressed at about the same degree as SuperStor PRO. Most articles I have read give Stacker a little better compression ratio. I didn't stick with DSpace because it creates another uncompressed drive with a minimum size of 200K for every compressed drive (or partition) compressed. I run one uncompressed and three compressed partitions. DSpace therefore created an additional 3 drives - one for each compressed partition - giving me 7 drives to deal with in all matters relating to drives. Another feature I did not like is that DSpace does not make provisions for decompression, as do both SS Pro and Stacker -- though some report that decompression is so difficult at this point that it is not really a valuable feature, access to DSpace once installed is limited to DOS; an interface with Windows is not yet a part of the program.

There have been quite a few reports in the news since DOS 6.0 release indicating a lot of difficulties have been encountered with DOS 6.0, including DSpace. A couple of folks at the meeting also reported difficulty with DSpace - trouble resulting in loss of data. Microsoft says that there are 3 million copies of DOS 6 out now and they have received only about 1% of that many calls, and a lot less than that which involved anything significant. Still, there have been some serious problems; problems which will no doubt be corrected in the not-too-distant future.

Anti-virus: This is a welcome addition to DOS, especially for those who haven't purchased anti-virus protection. It can be installed in both DOS and Windows. It includes detection and correction of 800 viruses, and includes 2 upgrade coupons for $9.95

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(1993……..Continued from page 8)
each. What will happen after that is not known now, but some form of upgrade will likely be continued — as they all do. This feature can be installed as a TSR, but to install all of its protections (features) takes about 46K of memory (23K of conventional and 23K of upper), a fairly high price. Two cautions were noted: Don't have the anti-virus program TSR when installing new programs on your computer; and be very careful about using the auto correction of detected viruses feature because some false alarms occur with some types of files in some circumstances, and you could lose files.

MemMaker: Another welcome new feature for DOS, especially for those who don't already use another stand-alone memory management program, like QEMM. This feature is also easy to use. It can be installed at the time of installing DOS 6.0, or at a later time. Though not as efficient at rooting out all of the unused memory and managing memory as the top stand-alone memory management programs, it does a fairly respectable job finding and using unused memory, and auto loading into upper memory. And, it is very easy to use. If you don't already own a memory management program, or don't want to invest the bucks in one, this is certainly a good alternative.

Backup: Previous versions of DOS have included a backup capability. The major difference here is that this is a full blown menued program, and it allows for compression of the backup files, It also provides for a range of backup -- from complete, down to a single file, all of which can be selected by the user. This, too, can be installed for DOS, or Windows, or both. It is a good improvement, but here, too, it is not as comprehensive nor as efficient as the top stand-alone programs on the market. Again, for those who don't now own a backup program, it is a very welcome addition.

An article in a local industry paper stated that this feature would only backup to floppy drives. That is difficult to believe. The manual is silent about the types of devices one can backup to, but a member present noted that the only device he has been unable to use is a tape drive.

Defrag: A fairly fast and easy to use addition to DOS. Some reported it not as fast as the better disk/file maintenance programs. Defrag doesn't have all of the capabilities of Norton Disk Doctor or PC Tools, of course, but I have found it as good at defragging for my simple purposes as the other programs I have used, including earlier versions of NDD. Defrag is available only at the DOS prompt, and shouldn't be run at the DOS prompt through Windows.

InterLink: InterLink does the same thing LapLink does -- connect 2 computers together and allow the interchange of files/info between the two. It does not include cables, as LapLink does, and some report it is more cumbersome to use. Nevertheless, for those without LapLink or a similar program, it provides an otherwise missing capability. This feature is available from the DOS prompt.

Selective Boot: A very welcome feature by all DOS users who boot from hard drives. This feature is too sophisticated to go into here in detail. Suffice here to say that it allows for a clean boot from the hard drive in event of some configuration problem which prevents a normal boot -- in effect eliminating the requirement of the past to boot from a floppy in similar circumstances. (This does not mean you shouldn't keep a bootable floppy, though.) This feature also allows one to boot in any configuration desired by selecting desired options during the boot process. It doesn't happen automatically, however; these capabilities must be set up, except for the clean boot which requires only pressing F5 at the appropriate time.

New/Modified Commands:

Undelete: An undelete capability was available with DOS 5. DOS 6 has expanded a great deal on that capability and developed a menued program which can be installed in DOS, Windows, or both at installation time It provides for three levels of undelete: Sentry, Tracker & Standard. Sentry & Tracker levels use disk space to store the files or information about the files which will not be overwritten and thereby removed from recovery, as with the previous undelete command and with the DOS 6 Standard level of undelete. The old undelete command is still available at the DOS prompt as well.

Move: Another welcome, but dangerous, addition to DOS. The MOVE command allows for moving individual files and up to and including complete directories — replacing the old individual files copy/delete method. It is very easy to use. That combined with the magnitude of action that can be involved makes it a command that should be employed with great care

NumLock: Another very welcome addition, especially for those of us with an older machine which does not have provisions in CMOS for configuring NumLock. NumLock can be turned on or off at the DOS prompt, or as a command in CONFIG.SYS.

SmartDrive: I believe this program has been "upgraded", but it functions remain essentially the same as with DOS 5. One word of caution came up at the meeting: If using the Double Buffer feature of Smart Drive, be sure to allow sufficient time when shutting down for the data in the buffers to be written to disk; some have lost data when they haven't allowed sufficient time for the write before turning their machine off. How much is sufficient, I don't know, but I would allow several seconds as a minimum.

Delete Directory: Also a long-wanted capability, DELDIR allows for deleting directories without first having to empty the directory of all files and subs. It., too, is a dangerous command and should be used very cautiously.

In summary, DOS 6.0 provides some very nice additions to

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1993…….Continued from page 9)
DOS 5.0, but some believe that it should have been given a 5. designation rather than a full number change which signifies a fundamental change, as opposed to added bells & whistles. It has a lot of new and welcome additions, however, especially for those who don't now have similar capabilities in utilities from other vendors. It is a large capability for not too many bucks, especially the upgrade version. Some problems have cropped up with some of the new features; apparently, the more sophisticated the configuration and/or operation, the more likely one is to encounter any problems. I, for one, however, running a home computer 386/25, with multiple hard drives, modem, scanner, 3 printers, Windows 3.1, and a host of Windows and DOS software of all varieties, have had no (zero, that is) problems with DOS 6.0. And, I am confident that Microsoft is working very hard and fast to come up with answers to all problems encountered so far.

THANKS MUCH, HARVEY, for an excellent job of guiding us through as much of DOS 6 as time would allow. It was a productive session!

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Microsoft (who donated a copy of Access) and your User Group (who donated a copy of DOS 6.0), along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Kit Kelley	MS Access
Donald Houston	DOS 6.0
Mike Diaz	Mouse Pad
Kevan Sheridan	50/50 ($52)

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 PM ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 7)
easy for everyone; with the increasing numbers of people using computers, that's an important feature; while not losing the advanced features either, seems they have done a good job!

I couldn't believe my ears when they called one of my ticket numbers for the prize! So I went home with a new copy of Windows XP.

We hope to see you at the SIGs and at the next meeting on June 11th, we have a good time and there's always some kind of refreshments and usually some prizes to win. ◆

(New PC…….Continued from page 5)
Selected quotes on "Happiness"

1. "Happy men are grave. They carry their happiness cautiously, as they would a glass full to the brim which the slightest movement could cause to spill over, or break." Jules Barbey D'Aurevilly, 1874
2. "What's a joy to one, is a nightmare to the other." Eric Bentley, 1963
3. "All who joy would win, must share it. Happiness was born a twin." Byron, 1819

(New PC…….Continued on page 12)

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We acknowledge the following firms for their support

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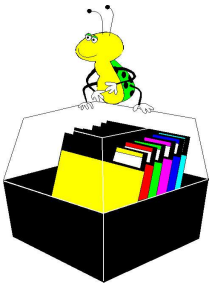
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

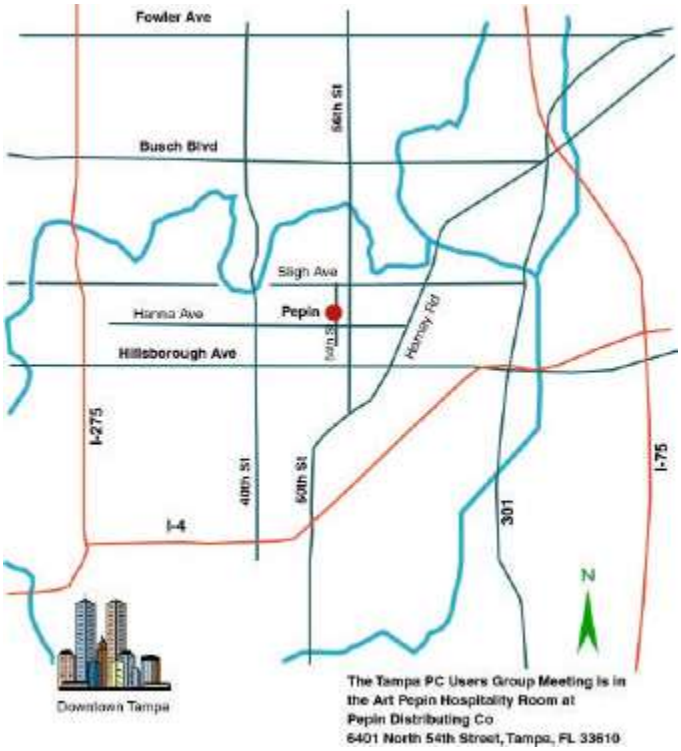


First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(New PC…….Continued from page 10)

4. "You are forgiven for your Happiness and your successes only if you generously consent to share them." Albert Camus, 1956
5. "Happiness, that grand mistress of the ceremonies in the dance of life, impels us through all its mazes and meanderings, but leads none of us by the same route." Charles Caleb Cotton, 1825
6. "What we call happiness in the strictest sense comes from preferably sudden satisfaction of needs that has been dammed up to a high degree." Sigmund Freud, 1930
7. "Happiness makes up in height for what it lacks in length." Robert Frost, 1942
8. "It is neither wealth or splendor, but tranquility and occupation that cause happiness." Thomas Jefferson, 1788
9. "Man needs, for his happiness, not only the enjoyment of this or that, but hope and enterprise and change." Bertram Russell, 1950 ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 7 July 2003

Meeting

Presentation

Surprise

Wednesday, July 9, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: The presentation topic was not available at press time. Preceding the presentation, Kevan Sheridan will conduct the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Since we are a small group, it is not easy to get vendor presentations, and it is impossible to get presentations from major players like Microsoft and Adobe. That is why it is so important for our own members to give presentations whenever possible. Last meeting Kevan Sheridan gave the presentation; prior to that Merle Nicholson did the presentation. Earlier I gave a presentation on digital photography. Now we need for more members to step up and offer to be presenters. We all have different interests and expertise, and it is interesting to hear about things different from our usual computer routine. So it is your turn to step to the plate. Tell Kevan what you have in mind for a presentation.◆

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July Meeting Topic: To be announced -- Check our web site.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the June Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

Kevan Sheridan provided a very interesting two-part presentation. On John Witmer's desktop computer without an operating system, he installed Windows XP Professional. During the first part of the installation he went over the options we had during the installation and pointed out things we should consider regarding the choices available. The second part of the presentation was the installation of Zone Alarm and Spybot Search and Destroy on a second computer.

First, we saw *Zone Alarm* – firewall protection – installed and operated. It checks out any activity into or out from your computer and lets you choose which activities you want done.

If you don't have this you will want to get it. There are so many ways for someone to get at your computer, and there are people out there with so little to do and who find it fun in fact to try to bust through. Who knows what they really want. Half the time there isn't anything they could really want, but they can mess up your information and spread computer viruses that you are definitely better without. If you have your home business or your personal business on your computer, that's just about everyone, you definitely want to find out more about Zone Alarm. Trojan Horses try to infect your computer. Virus Protection and Anti-virus programs will help protect – along with a firewall. You want them all.

"Spyware" can get into a computer; it tracks activity and even tracks keystrokes so it can get your code names by storing the keystrokes: its controller can retrieve your information. *Spybot Search and Destroy* is about the only thing that will handle spyware says our presenter, and it's a free download!

When you load Spybot and go through and select which things to get rid of, you will want to keep many "cookies": you are going to need them for other requirements. For instance, when you go to a site and want to receive a newsletter from them, say the Wall Street Journal, they require the use of a cookie to get that done; plenty of other sites do, too, you'll see when you try it. Not everything that gets on the computer without your doing it specifically is bad, but you want the choice and it's good to have it pointed out which ones are suspect; you learn about your computer doing it, too. If you delete something and later find that you now have a problem, it is all recorded and the choice can be reversed.

A lively discussion took place about how in the world something could get onto your computer and set up an application and program on your computer. One camp claiming it couldn't be done, period. The other swearing it had done just that.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

Backing Up a Complete Hard Drive

By Bob Lafave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

Over the years, I have tried different programs and methods to back up the computers that I have used and have never been completely satisfied with the results until now. I have tried programs that run in the Windows environment and programs with which you create diskettes to use in a DOS mode and have run into different problems.

I have used PowerQuest programs that you use from DOS and had created images that I was unable to use to restore the data when needed or to use in the Windows environment. I have used the Windows Back Up included with Windows versions as an extra which was not installed in the latest versions but included on the installation CDs, but could not use it to restore a complete system if a hard drive decided to die. I have used Veritas Simple Back UP and NTI Drive Backup, both of which work in the Windows environment but, after making a backup, presented me with problems when trying to restore. Even the Windows Restore feature that is in the latest versions is not what I needed. This restore feature ***WILL NOT*** restore from a hardware failure; nor can you restore ***SPECIFIC Information*** that you need. Restore is designed to help you ***RECOVER*** to a previous time if you installed a program that did not work or created other problems. You can recover your system to a time before the problems began. And Restore has problems itself in that conditions have to be present that take you to a useful time.

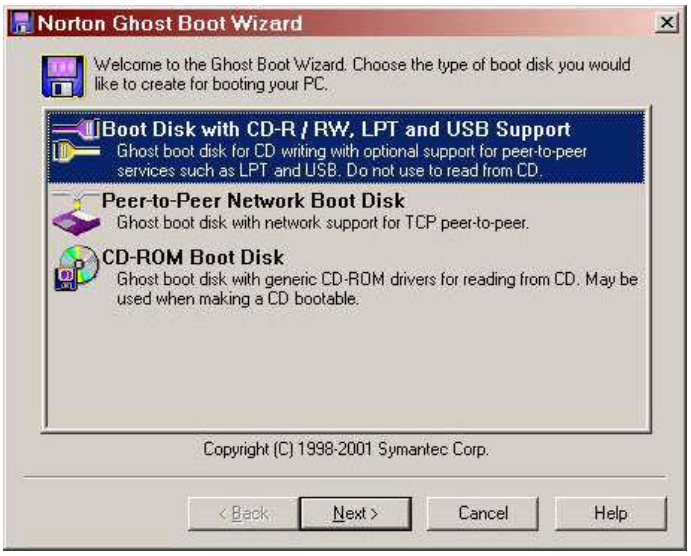
I had about given up with trying to find a reliable method that would work with an ***LARGE*** amount of data on the hard drive and work ***fairly quickly*** to create the image. I wanted a program that would create an image that could be used to ***restore the hard drive easily in the future*** in case a complete restore was needed. And lastly, I wanted a program that ***allows access to the data from inside the Windows environment and lets you restore or even change parts of the data***. So what do I do to ensure I am now protected, and how do I keep it simple enough to be quick, convenient and accurate?

I found Norton Ghost 2002 version 7.0.0.411 that came with Norton System Works 2002 Professional. This program is what I have been looking for to back up a whole hard drive. It is on the System Works installation CD in a separate folder and can be installed by itself without installing any other programs if you choose to do so. The program is also available as a stand-alone program and is $49.99 online at Norton. If you search at other sites, it is anywhere from $25.00 to $68.00. If you look at System Works, it is $69.95 for the 2003 version and between $15.00 and $49.00 for version 2002. The Norton site was all I could find for the 2003 version. My choice would be to find Norton System Works 2003 and use the parts that you need and feel safe using. The 2003 version includes GoBack® 3, Personal Edition by Roxio™, Norton Ghost™, Norton CleanSweep™, Norton Utilities™, and Norton AntiVirus™. The 2002 version I have was a gift so I definitely am using the parts that I liked, which in 2002 included WinFax Basic.

The program takes up only 5.56MB of hard drive space when installed and is in C:\ Program Files\ Symantec\Norton Ghost 2002 folder. The two individual icons that are put on the Start Menu after installation are Norton Ghost Boot Wizard and Norton Ghost Explorer. To use the program, you must first use the Boot Wizard to create a diskette to use to create the image in a DOS mode.

The Wizard takes you step by step and includes a

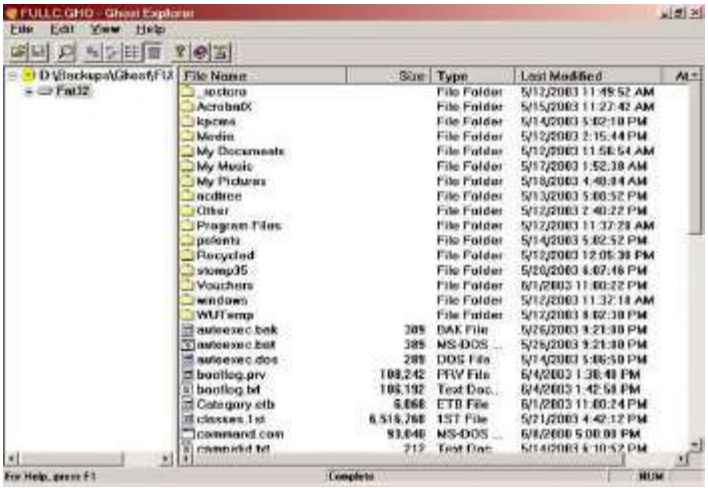
(Backing up…….Continued on page 4)



(Backing up…….Continued from page 3)

help button to explain each step. You can make choices that allow you to create the image to a hard drive, CD R/RW, or USB connections. Instructions for a peer-to-peer network and making a CD bootable are also given. The Explorer is used to view the image that is created and to restore information, along with other data manipulations. You can restore an individual file(s) or folder(s) to a new folder you specify, you can add new data to the image, and you can change information and then replace it back into the stored image. This is all done inside the Windows environment. But in order to do a complete restore, you need to be back in the DOS mode. A pdf manual is installed to the directory and is accessed from the Explorer Help menu by clicking the choice for Implementation Guide. Along with the normal Help files in both the Boot Wizard and Explorer, this manual will tell you just about everything you need to know. If you do have a problem you can go online to Norton support and carry out troubleshooting with their tech support via email. I had a problem that was not listed in their knowledge base that I could find, and I used Norton Online Support to find a solution.

The problem that I encountered was the creation proc-



ess would incorrectly identify how much empty hard disk space was available on the storage hard drive. I was trying to create an image of about 8 GB and had over 40GB of empty space but I was receiving an error saying *I did not have enough room on the storage media.* Norton support instructed me how to collect the information they needed and what commands would be used to gather the information and had me download a utility to help in the gathering. After they looked at what I sent, support explained to me that the problem was because the hard drives I was using were of the same size. I was told how to override the check of space by using a " command line switch," and everything has worked great. It took three days of correspondence, but I got the correct answer without a charge.

The method I have used since then as I build a computer for someone or create other full system backups is:

If the computer does not have a second hard drive, I use an extra that I install in it temporarily; this is needed as storage. I could use the program to burn the image to a CD R / RW, but I have found that if you have an error in the process you have to restart at the beginning. If you are going to span a large number of CDR's with the image, you only have to find out one time that if the CD blank you are using is defective you have to start all over. In other words, if you need to make 15 CD's and you put in a bad CD blank after 14 are made, or your computer burps, you have to start over and waste lots of CD blanks. You can control compression of data so you can save some space. I also have an extra CD burner that I use when needed for the next part. I create the image using more "command line switches" that break the data into 700MB chunks that will burn to each CD blank. After I create the entire image, I can then burn each 700MB file and not waste my time or blank CD's.

I now have an image at a point in time that can easily be restored.

For weekly backups now on my computer, I now use Ghost. If you want to do this you must have a separate hard drive to which to back up the data. If you look in the ads, you can get a second hard drive cheaply today. The destination storage of the image must be different from the storage location of the image that you are creating. I usually take less than an hour to create a full backup of around 8 GB and have not experienced any problems as I had with the other programs. The program limits the size of the images to no more than 2 GB before it will span to a new section, but this only means that you get more

(Backing up……..Continued on page 5)

(New PC…….Continued from page 4)

files that end in a .ghs extension. As an example: my backup is named FULLC and the first section is called FULLC.gho and the next section is automatically named FULLC001.ghs … and so on until all information is included in say the Nth CDR which would be FULLC00N.ghs.

These files are all recognized by the Ghost Explorer as the backup FULLC and allow for data manipulations if needed. Now when I stupidly delete files I can just go to Ghost Explorer and restore the individual files easily. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

If you have some fuel for that discussion, please send it in writing to the president, Kevan Sheridan. We can all hear about your input at the next meeting.

We then continued with the Windows XP Pro installation. It was a very enlightening evening. And, as usual, we had some great door prizes.

Ron Weinberg won a copy of Partition Magic. Wade Herman won two items, Microsoft Money 2003 and a club T-Shirt.

See you all next month ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Great Horned Owl

From the site *On Silent Wings*, bird photography by Peter S. Weber. Mr. Weber says, "Owls have wings and feathers designed to make them fly silently. I'm particularly interested in owls and their unique flight characteristics make for an interesting name!" http://www.wildbirdphotos.com

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Today in History	http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/today/today.html
Fortune Magazine	http://www.fortune.com
On Silent Wings (birds)	http://www.wildbirdphotos.com/
Georgia-Florida Bird Photos	http://www.valdosta.edu/~bergstrm/gafl.html
Florida Facts and History	http://dhr.dos.state.fl.us/flafacts/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Paint Shop Pro 8

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

Well, if you haven't noticed, JASC software has done it again. Paint Shop Pro 8 [PSP8] was recently released, and if you're into any kind of digital imaging, whether your image is acquired from scanning, digital camera, or stuff captured from the web, PSP8 needs to be in your arsenal of software.

I looked back on our website, http://www.tpcug.org and saw that I reviewed this software package in 1996, but I believe I also reviewed it way before that in its early existence as a purely shareware program. By 1996 it was becoming a major contender. Well, there is no doubt that it has arrived. PSP8 is a first cousin to Adobe's PhotoShop but at a fraction of the cost, a lot easier learning curve and some features I think Adobe wished they had. With PSP8's new *Automated Productivity Scripts*™ you can start correcting your digital images right out of the box by just clicking a button that says, **Enhance Photo** and then **One Step Photo Fix** [Real hard!]. I was impressed with the difference in what I thought was a pretty good digital photo that PSP8 corrected for me automatically.

To make the learning curve much easier, JASC integrated a Learning System that is always available just a click away. There are five categories of quick guides that deal with:

- Automation and Customization [keyboard shortcuts, custom toolbars, etc.]
- Basic Tasks [create, save, e-mail, crop an image, etc.]
- Correcting Photos [straighten a crooked picture, remove red-eye, etc.]
- Graphic Projects [add a picture frame, drop shadow or text, etc.]
- Photo Projects [make a picture look old or convert it into a greeting card, etc.]

These are only some of the examples of what is readily available and easily accessible. There are also over 40 movies in the PSP8 Product Tour. You can't help but easily learn how to use many of the features available.

One of the things I typically dislike most is having to learn a new program, or relearn a program because of major changes made in the newer version. I will admit I was a little put-out when I first opened JASC's latest rendition because it didn't look like I thought it was supposed to. But, within a very short time, I realized the changes made were for the better, and I got over it and moved on to learning what else was new.

I suppose it was about time that JASC made some sweeping changes. It's been looking the same for several years now. I kind of liken it to walking into my favorite hardware store and finding they've changed everything around. I have to look over all of the other stuff to find what I am looking for and usually find something I can't live without. [You think they do that on purpose?] We sometimes get so complacent in using a software program for only particular things time after time that we forget its other capabilities. Such is the case with Paint Shop Pro 8, and it's obvious a lot of thought and planning went into this version because there is a lot of new stuff to look over.

One of the new additions is what JASC calls *Dynamic Personalization*™ that lets you tailor the program to what works best for you. New palette docking options, custom toolbars, and the ability to place any tool or command on any menu or toolbar in the program lets you customize PSP8 to your liking. Plus, you can save your custom workspaces or choose from a variety of preset workspaces for different workflow options. And if you continually do some of the same things over and over, you can now save time by recording, editing and saving commonly used tasks with *Automated Productivity Scripts*™. These scripts can be applied to a single image or a batch of images. You can also create and save your own tool or effect presets to reuse or share with other users.

PSP8 now has what is called an *Effects Browser* that will let you see the changes to be brought about by whichever of the many effects you choose to apply to

(PSP8……..Continued on page 7)

(PSP8…….Continued from page 6)

your image. Of course, there is always the *Undo* button also.

Another of the new features I particularly like is the print templates. You can just about accommodate any printing project you might have with the many templates provided, which support many standard photo sizes, combination packs and commercial papers. In the last version you could place multiple images on one page but not nearly as simply as you can now. Just drag and drop, place where you want, adjust the sizes and print. And, if you like your layout [template], you can save it to use again at a later time.

The ability to read or convert to and from just about any format has always been a plus with Paint Shop Pro, and now PSP8 supports about 50 formats, including the newest file formats such as: JPEG 2000, enhanced EPS PostScript 3 and wireless bitmap (WBMP).

One of the other new features [tools] I really like is the ability to straighten a crooked scan or digital photo by just marking a single line on the image that is suppose to be either horizontal or vertical and, voila, it is straightened out. Also, if something has the wrong perspective, you can mark four points on an image that is supposed to be rectangular and straighten the perspective.

There are tons of new tools and effects, along with the standards typically found in top notch digital imaging and graphics editing software, to help you literally work smarter. If you're new to Paint Shop Pro, get it. If you are a previous or current user, then it's time to upgrade. Download price is $99, with a box price off the shelf of $109. I've also seen up to $30 in rebates floating around too. It's a major upgrade to an already excellent program. But don't take my word for it. Go to http://www.jasc.com and try out a fully functional copy for free for 30 days and see if you don't agree. It will be well worth the download time. ◆

LindowsLite OS

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

I was visiting with Steve Singer at RDI, and he mentioned that he is now a distributor for LindowsLite version 3.0.23. After we talked for awhile, he offered me the program to experiment with. Of course, I could not refuse, so I tried it on my current computer. By using my current computer, I could compare how it performs versus my Windows ME that I currently use. Lindows is being advertised as the cheaper solution to Windows. Lindows' full version includes more programs than just an OS, and you should save by just buying their full package over, say, Windows and then purchasing MS Office. Lindows is also being offered preinstalled on computers and is sold through the Wal-Mart chain. LindowsLite is a smaller version that does not include the more advanced programs such as StarOffice Suit. The Lite version has basic programs included which give you an operating system and what I would call other basic programs. These basic programs give you word processing, Internet access through your ISP, Internet messaging and more. There are also free programs that can be downloaded from http://www.lindows.com in what they call a Lindows Jr. membership for the Lite version. The Jr. member-

(Lindows…….Continued on page 9)



Lindows Deskotop

Looking Back to 1993

From the July 1993 *Bits of Blue*

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

By Harvey Bruneau

I was unable to attend our last meeting due to business commitments. I want to thank our VP, Tom Cone, for stepping up to fill the void. Since I did not write a president's column last month and I missed the meeting, I will write a larger than normal column this month. I bet you thought I would spare you. Wrong!

DOS 6.0 DoubleSpace:

20 minutes! For those of you at the DOS 6.0 meeting, 20 minutes represents the time it took DOS 6.0 DoubleSpace to compress my 486/25mhz PCs 209Mb hard drive with about 40 Mb of data on it. If you remember, I closed the DOS 6.0 presentation by starting DoubleSpace on the PC. During the process I rebooted and restarted the process several times to experience that *what if* feeling. It's the same feeling I have about winning the state lottery. I do not recommend rebooting your PC during the DoubleSpace process unless you feel lucky! During the process we saw different estimates of time displayed by DOS 60 as it tried to calculated the total amount of time it would take to complete the compression process. The time varied between one and two hours. Since our meeting ran late, we decided that we would not sit around past 10 PM to see it finish. At that point I powered down the system with DoubleSpace running. Once I got home I turned the PC back on and started the process again. When I checked the PC a half-hour later during a TV commercial break, the job had completed. AMAZING! On the screen was a message displaying the process was complete and the time it took. At this point I was baffled, why did it display to us one to two hours and run in 20 minutes at my house. Well, there are several reasons I imagine, but the one I like is AI (Artificial Intelligence). In retrospect, DoubleSpace knew the exact time it would finish. It based this time not on the file types and megabytes to compress but the fact that the membership was ready to go home. It knew it would not complete during our regular meeting and it knew the time it took for me to drive home and restart the procedure. In reality AI knew it would take between one and two hours to complete. OK, so maybe I'm stretching it a bit with the AI stuff. It did complete in 20 minutes. However, the process to remove DoubleSpace was even a bigger challenge. It took the better part of half a Saturday to remove DoubleSpace without losing any data. Prior to starting the rebuild process, I could've sworn I heard Clint's (Dirty Harry) voice "*You feel lucky, punk?*" in our house. While I use DOS 6.0 and it is a good product, I personally do not recommend the use of DoubleSpace at this time. Microsoft reports DOS 6.0 sales in excess of 4 million copies. Microsoft says 2 percent of DOS 6.0 customer support callers believed they had experienced a loss of data. However, support technicians were able to help most customers reconstruct or salvage their data. The results were that only .5 percent of customers lost data. That may seem like Microsoft did a good job, but .5 percent represents 20,000 customers with some kind of data loss. Those numbers sure bring back the sound of Clint's voice.

COMDEX:

Comdex really consist of two parts. One is Comdex *"The World's #1 Computer and Communications Marketplace for Resellers and Corporate Decision Makers" and Windows World "The Official Conference and Exposition for Windows Computing".* Several vendors and products drew the attention of large crowds. WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS appeared to garner the biggest crowds in each of its theater type presentations. Microsoft also had big crowds attend its continuous hands-on session of Visual Basic 3.0. This product will be the hot product for the masses. Its ease of use, power and great flexibility will allow non-programmers to create almost anything. Windows NT with third party products running on it was displayed in one of the Microsoft areas while IBM had a similar area for its OS/2 2.1 offering. Microsoft seemed to garner more interest. Intel also drew a big crowd with their Pentium show.

One last thing I noticed was the broad availability of green PCs and peripherals. No, these are not items which are available to those suffering from the Incredible Hulk syndrome. This is a futuristic move for saving our planet and ourselves by changing certain facets of PCs and peripherals. They include power management, consumables and personal health.

The typical 8 hour use of a PC consumes $35 dollars a year while the 24 hour use of the same PC cost $105. The average PC consumes 162 watts while the IBM green PC will consume 36 watts. If current trends continue, the EPA estimates that PCs will represent 10 percent of the energy used. The EPA estimates that a monitor is only looked at 20 percent of its power-on time. Even screen savers are accused of using 20 percent more power than a blank screen. The future PC and peripheral will monitor themselves and reduce their power appetites when not in use.

We waste more paper than ever before. Businesses consume 775 billion pages of paper a year. How many of us: copy a fax when we first receive it; copy or print to single sided paper when we can print it double sided, print that document several times before we get that just right printout. The technology to view faxes from your PC is here as is the capability to print double-sided copies. Many software packages include a preview mode or WYSIWYG to show you what a page of printed text will look like before you print it. Email software systems are abundant to reduce the paper flow which chokes many companies. Many vendors at Comdex promoted their products as Green enabled.

Our health is another issue. Ergonomics and electromagnetic emission are important issues today. We are spending more of our time with our computers than ever before. At one point PCs were used for business at work. As prices drop, PCs are invading our homes as education, game and auxiliary work machines. Mice, more so than keyboards, are evolving as ergonomic, or, as I would say, hand-friendly. The Swedish National Board for Measurement and Testing has provided a standard (MPR II) for monitors producing electromagnetic emission. Several vendors had monitors that would go in sleep mode when not in use, and most said they adhered to the MPR II standard.

The EPA has created a program which will discourage waste. President Clinton has mandated that in the near future vendors

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

(1993……..Continued from page 8)
wishing to sell PCs to the government will have to meet guidelines stated by the EPA in the near future. Once in place PCs purchased by the Federal government will need to meet the guidelines of this program

I saw one thing that I never in my wildest dreams expected to see. The weirdness kicked in as I realized that an IBMer in a polo shirt was demonstrating to me IBM DOS 6.0 (not available yet) on a CompuAdd and Gateway PC. Way to go IBM. Speaking of Gateway, their systems were prevalent throughout Comdex and used by most of the big companies for demonstration purposes. ◆

(Lindows……..Continued from page 7)
ship costs nothing additional, and you have 17 programs available after you register your Lindows OS on the web site.

You can also buy a full membership for $99.00 as an upgrade. This entitles you to about 1,777 programs that are on the site. There is a charge for some of the programs, but they are offered with a discount for the members. The majority of the programs are FREE to members. Whether you are using the Full or Jr. memberships, these downloaded programs are part of the OS itself. The web site is accessed from the taskbar icon for what they are calling Click-N-Run warehouse.

Before adding Lindows to your existing system or purchasing in a prebuilt machine, I would advise you to go to the web site and view what you have available in both programs and hardware choices. Currently there are limited choices of both for programs that you are used to, and some of the hardware you currently have may not have drivers and you may not be able to use them. What I have found out so far is that Lindows appears to be a stable OS that can be used for people with specific needs. If you have hardware items that you expect to use or software that you expect to add, check before you purchase to see if Lindows is compatible. For people looking for a cheaper first system or a second system, Lindows may be for you.

I have a 4.2GB Fujitsu hard drive that I installed Lindows on by itself. Not wanting to affect my current data, I figured this would be the safest way. The Lindows OS CD is made to install from your CD drive so you must be able to boot your computer from the CD to install; no diskettes are needed. I scanned the CD beforehand for any read me files or other documents for any instructions but was unable to find any. So I just put the CD in and waited. The installation started and went along the same as many other programs do: You get a screen that has a wallpaper that tells you the steps that are occurring.

This first screen is detecting and loading your computer graphics, system, modules, CD-ROM and other hardware. No choices are offered at this point. The first choice is how to INSTALL Lindows on the computer, as part of currently used hard drives or by itself on a single hard drive. I chose the single hard drive and was asked for a computer name and password; the hint was given to not forget the password if used because there is no way to recover if forgotten. Easy choice is to not use a password. You are then asked to verify the setup of your choices for installation of hard drive, name and password. After you accept your choices, the installation screen changes to a wallpaper that has a installation process gauge to watch, and on the right there is a preview section showing graphics of what the Lindows program can do. This process is much the same as others and went along smoothly until it reached 99% installed and I received a " Fatal Error 600". No other information was given, so I just restarted the whole process to see what I got; I had no way to get to the internet without shutting down the computer and changing IDE cables for hard drive access. Again, it went through the same sequence and at each I was asked to make my choices again; no information was saved from the previous try. The installation went to the same spot, and I received the same error.

I have installed Windows many times on different machines and know some of the problems that occur in its installation. One I know is that with the high speeds of CD-ROMs and the computers themselves, sometimes you need to slow everything down. In Windows you can look at the read me and it will tell you methods to do this. Here I just had a hunch. I went and took the installation CD from the 48-speed CD and put it in a slower 20-speed drive…. success.

(Lindows……..Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Lindows…….Continued from page 9)

This time the installation did not stop. After only about 10 minutes I got " Installation is now Complete," and it rebooted. I then got "Shutdown Complete ... Please remove CD if installed from a CD ... Press any key to continue." The restart went to the Lindows desktop, and I had a box with choices to make of: Set Time, Advanced and Finish.

Set time was easy since it showed the current time, advanced was more extensive and had choices of Set Administrative Passwords, Set Display Resolution, Add Users and Rename Computer.

I changed none of these and just went to Finish and received a "Congratulations".

I was now at the Lindows Desktop without any tasks to perform other than exploring what features were available and how to get things done. There is an animated tour available both from the desktop and at the web site that is a brief explanation of the icons. I found that there is an icon of an orange life vest in the bottom taskbar that gives you access to help that you will find very useful. As I have explored over the last couple of weeks, I have found most of what is in Lindows. Lindows did not like my printers, and the web site will explain that in general Lexmark printers will not work; there are more than 1000 printers from 40 names supported but not Lexmark. It will recognize my Z11 printer, but as of yet I have not found any settings to make it work. My Lexmark i3 is also recognized as a USB printer, but again no success as making it work yet. Lindows only likes certain modems; as of now I have only my external modem recognized and working. Lindows does not recognize my internal modem or my USB external modem: the web site has a list of modems that will work with no problems and the chipset used for the modems. Lindows found my sound card, PCI control card and the 2 CD-ROMs still connected, and they all appear to work. My Canon scanner and HP Photo scanner are recognized, but I have not found a way to see if they are working or not; these are both USB and the Lindows Web site says USB is fully supported. Lindows likes my USB SanDisk 6 – 1 Card Reader and Logitech webcam, but I am still trying to find software for the webcam.

I will continue to play with Lindows for awhile and see what happens over the next few months with the hardware items that are not currently working and see what software is available at other web sites for Lindows. My overall opinion so far is:

Would I or will I change to Lindows in the current version … NO. It does not offer me any reason to on a system that is currently configured as a Windows system, either because of current hardware or software limitations that are usable inside the Lindows OS.

Would I purchase a system that has Lindows preinstalled … YES. I would check the system out beforehand to see what was included, but if it could do what I wanted with the hardware and programs in-

(Lindows…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

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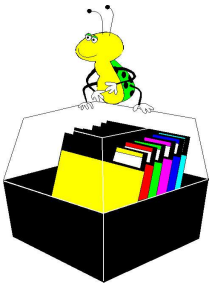
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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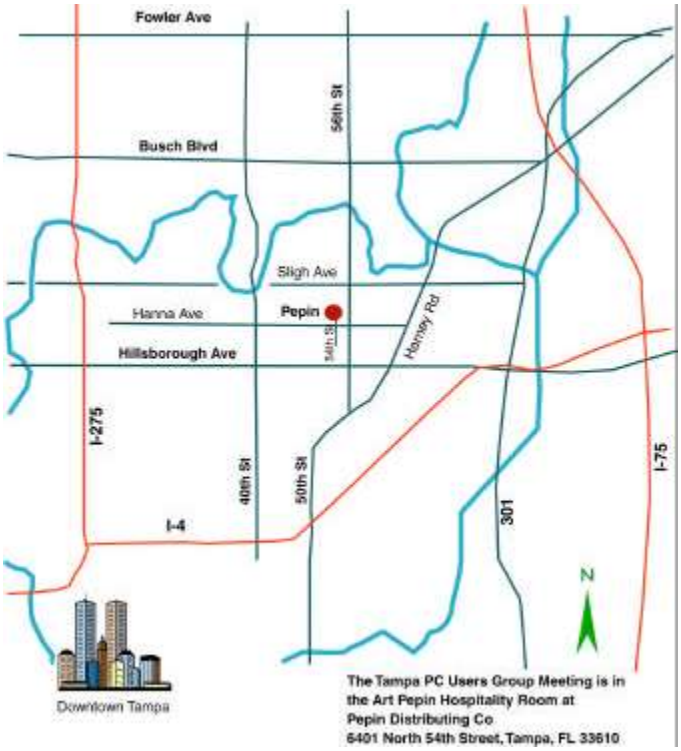
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Lindows……..Continued from page 10)

stalled, I would consider it compared to similar machines available in the price range. I went to Wal-Mart and played with a system they sell with Lindows preinstalled and it seemed to be a quality product but was limited in what it would do.

Lindows OS is very similar to Windows in both looks and how to get things done, but so is Linux. To see how Linux looks and behaves, you can go on the Internet and do a search for Linux Knoppix and you should find listings where this version is free and will run from a CD. You can download an .ISO image and burn it to a CD, and the CD will be bootable from a CD-ROM. The CD will boot to the Linux desktop and you will have accessible programs to experience the Linux environment. No installation files are added by playing with the CD. Both systems are similar to Windows and are trying to be alternatives that can fill certain needs and pricing for computer manufacturers and users. Only time will tell as to advantages of these and other systems. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 8 August 2003

Meeting

Presentation

Surprise Again

Wednesday, August 13, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: The presentation topic was not available at press time. Preceding the presentation, Kevan Sheridan will conduct the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

In the previous newsletter I suggested that members step forward and volunteer to do presentations since it is getting difficult to land presenters except possibly in cases where they have a product to sell. And these products are never major pieces of software, since the days of presentations by companies like Microsoft and Adobe are in the past. Well, we didn't find a presenter for July and none of you came forward, so on returning from a trip to New York City, I thought about what I could present. While there, I traveled to a data center in New Jersey with people who were installing a new server. I took photos and spoke with the owner of the center about the data center industry in general. I thought

(Comments…….Continued on page 7)

September Meeting Topic: To be announced -- Check our web site.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

We had a discussion about what it means when a business says it is "Restructuring IT"; seems to be another way of saying "downsizing". We talked about effects it might have on computer users. There will probably be a few more loose agents in the field and those who want to will be taking their chances on forming their own organization and freelancing and consulting. We could be looking at a whole new development coming soon.

We didn't have any specific questions to cover in the Windows section of the meeting, and we went straight away to our presentation.

William LaMartin showed us a trip to a data center, Tellurian Networks, in Newton, New Jersey. He had some pictures he'd taken from his recent trip there. The building was great. It will retain its old fashioned look from outside and is in the progress of being face-lifted. It is in a quaint section of town, but when you get inside the old outside shell, you are actually in a new building with all the features of a modern data center, like thumb print entry locks to enter the secure sections. It is positioned in Newton because it is very near a Sprint location.

We saw photos of the data center where the servers were stacked one atop the other; a server is only a little over one inch thick, but contains one Terabyte, that's 1000 Gigabytes, of hard disk space. Whew. The space is very clean and neat and kept very cool, so bring a sweater. There are "hallways" between the stacks where a mobile desk is brought to accommodate work on the servers. The one they were installing while our presenter was in the shop with his camera at the ready was for streaming media on the web. It runs Microsoft Server 2003 software. The generator to keep the place up and running in case of difficulties with the electricity

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

A guide: How to outlive the bad guys

Or "Less is best" Or "Don't use crap software"

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

This is my own personal opinion on how to protect your computer from the bad stuff on the internet and also how to protect yourself from the worst of all … yourself. It's a dissertation on how I keep my own PCs successfully running smoothly and relatively trouble free. So if you agree or disagree, I hope you may find something of use here.

A quick summary of my own best practices.

- Have a hardware internet firewall.
- Have a good quality anti-virus installed, running and kept up to date, always.
- Don't use instant messaging (IM) or file sharing programs.
- Don't use gaming sites where a continuous connection is required.
- Never open any email without first knowing or checking on the source; delete all others without reading them.
- Never open or run any email attachment unless you personally know the source and trust them. (And know where you can find them).
- Don't install any crap software.
- Disable "convenience" resident programs.
- Periodically review your startup program list and also your running processes and at least attempt to investigate and document their original authorship.
- Never install any software to "fix" a software problem or an operating system problem. (See 7)

The teenager problem:

Right off, after reading my list, you're going to say .. "I have a teenager. He/She will make my life miserable without IM and Kaaza." Well, I had a couple of teenagers once myself and you certainly have my sympathy. There's only one solution to this problem. They need their own PC. Yes, set up so they can't use yours and can't access yours through your network, and when theirs dies or otherwise get unusable, reformat and restore from a restoration CD. And make them reinstall their own programs. They'll be better, humbler adults for it. Upgrade everyone to Windows XP Home so you have security features so they can be blocked from access to your own computer and also suffer less from crashes.

An alternative – and a good one – is to set up XP with multiple accounts, one for each user and restrict theirs so they cannot install programs. They must go to an administrator (you) to install. This is not ideal, because you'll have to give in and install some crap software and you're on your way to software hell, but at a more controlled pace.

Crap software:

1) Instant Messaging and file sharing .. Don't. I've even renamed my Microsoft Instant Messenger executable and substituted a 0 byte executable of the same name. That prevents it from running at all. Same for any file sharing program. You're putting your system at risk by using them. Eat more vegetables, exercise, reduce your red meat consumption, and refuse to share files.

2) Software that fixes software. Registry cleaners, software that eliminates duplicate .DLL's (who cares!), Ad-Aware, software firewalls, Norton Systemworks etc, etc. You don't need them. My own rule: If I want my PC to run trouble-free, I need LESS software, not more. Why add software to fix the bad software I've installed? Go through your Add/Remove Software list and make sure you're still using everything! Uninstall if you don't! This will free up more hard drive space than a "cleaner" ever will. The registry "bloat" you've heard about is pretty much a myth. Don't install crap software, and your registry won't have any crap in it. It's just data in a file - a database. Windows accesses what is asked of it, and doesn't know about the extra crap in it.

Most of the "crap software" has one thing in common. They're "always on". They start up when Windows starts and run "resident". They provide a "hook" or a "monitor" to accomplish something

(A Guide……..Continued on page 4)

(A Guide……Continued from page 3)
when needed. Anti-virus works this way, but so does IM and things like MS Office's "Fast Find", which is of value only when you're using it, not all of the time. As time goes on, more and more of these things get installed, and pretty soon, you're experiencing crashes or simply a PC that is too slow to be useful to you. You don't always have to uninstall the program to get rid of the offending resident. You can easily disable Office's Fast Find from the Startup in MSConfig, for instance.

People have paid me very good money to fix PC's that to them are just "broken". If they run at all, they run so slowly they might as well be broken. When I get the PC the first thing I look at is the number of icons in the system tray. Invariably, the system tray is loaded up (say more than 6), and if I find RealPlayer and ZoneAlarm, I know that I'm in for a lot of work.

3) Good software you don't need. Fast Find, Quicken Bill Minder, MS Scheduler, RealPlayer, Kaaza and Zone Alarm fall in this category. Replace ZoneAlarm with a hardware firewall. If you MUST have RealPlayer, at least disable the windows startup, but I think Windows Media Player will do most of us just as well, and it least it goes away when closed. You put your PC at great risk using any file sharing programs, and the goal here is to greatly reduce all resident programs. At least learn to remove file sharing from being resident, launch it when needed and close it out when not needed.

Other examples of good resident programs you don't need are like my scanner utility that used to load with Windows. This thing sat in my system tray and shuts off the light tube after 10 minutes of no use. Because the scanner lacks an on/off switch! So I've killed the resident program and I unplug the scanner! I use my scanner, but maybe a fraction of a percent of power on time; why run it all the time? Likewise, a resident program detects when I connect my Fujifilm camera. It was in my system tray just to launch the camera picture viewing program. Duh! I can click on the viewer program icon when I need it.

3) Hardware firewalls. This device sits between your cable modem and your PC. It blocks intruders very effectively. It's programmable from your own web browser, but as far as I know, they are suitable right out of the box with no programming necessary unless you're running a web server or you're doing file sharing. If you're doing file sharing, some port(s) must be opened up (exposed) to the Internet. Some firewalls are preprogrammed to open up for the most popular programs. That they need to be opened up in the first place should tell you something about the risk of file sharing!

The real advantage of hardware firewalls is that they also provide wired and wireless networking within your home or business. You can find these high quality devices as low as $50. Look for them in weekly newspaper sales.

Finally: I think I'm pretty successful in keeping my computers trouble free. Here's my criteria for selecting software.

I buy and install only software that I feel will be productive for me. If I install, use it and find that I'm not totally happy with it, I uninstall it immediately. I'd never install a utility program that purports to "fix" something. After installing any software, I immediately check the system tray and also check the running processes list to make sure I have not installed a resident program. If it has a resident program, I find some way to disable it or I simply uninstall the whole thing.

I use the major brands of anti-virus. I have registered copies of Norton Anti-Virus, McAfee Online and AVG free version. I scrupulously keep all of them up to date at least weekly. When my notebook is not connected to my network, and therefore not connected to the Internet, I may disable active anti-virus checking.

I'm very, very cautious with all mail and attachments and newsgroups. I probably delete most files sent by friends, unless I specifically have discussed the purpose with them and am expecting the file. Don't bother sending me jokes, I delete them. Everything questionable is deleted. I have the Internet se-

(A Guide…….Continued on page 12)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

was behind the building. It is amazing what power is there and how much information and business was going on in a small town behind a gentle façade of a corner building on a small town shopping street!

He took us, via pictures and web sites, to a couple of other data centers. One was here in downtown Tampa. The day of the large data center is gone, and smaller companies are taking their place. What used to be the large data centers are now also used for back-up space for larger companies.

He also showed us several virtual tours he had created at his web site, http://www.lamartin.com, using the Photo Vista software which was demonstrated at a recent meeting. The software did a great job and William presented an enlightening presentation.

Mike Hodges surprised us with a door prize donation of Windows XP Pro! Doug Mullis won the XP, and he won a fax machine too; lucky night for him. John Conrad won Spell Catcher Plus.

We hung around and talked for a while after the meeting, and some of the group went for dinner or a snack afterward! You can't talk too much about computers. ◆

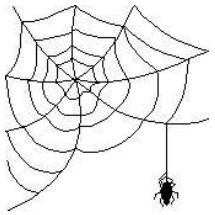
Internet Picture of the Month



Yankee Stadium, July 4

From the site *Webshots*, at the URL http://community.webshots.com/. This particular photo is at http://community.webshots.com/album/79734782lwopXE. In the spirit of the Internet, people here share their photos with the Internet world.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
National Do Not Call Registry	http://206.16.196.198/
Primate Programming Inc	http://www.newtechusa.com/PPI/main.asp
Exploring Florida Maps	http://www.fcit.usf.edu/florida/maps/maps.htm
Adware, Spyware and Advertising Trojans	http://www.cexx.org/adware.htm
The Degree Confluence Project	http://www.confluence.org/
Windows Processes List	http://www.reger24.de/prozesse.html
GeekTels - Hotels with good connectivity	http://www.geektools.com/geektels/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Norton Ghost 2003

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

I had just finished the article on Ghost 2002 (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2003/july2003/backup.htm) when I was able to get a Norton SystemsWorks 2003 containing Ghost 2003 OEM from Steve Singer at RDI, and am I glad I did. The 2003 version has so much more to offer than the previous version, but I think what is most important for others is that it is simpler to use and does much more.

As you start the program you now have three choices on what to do:

- Ghost Basic
- Ghost Advanced
- Ghost Utilities

Ghost Basic gives you three choices.

- Backup
- Restore
- View Log



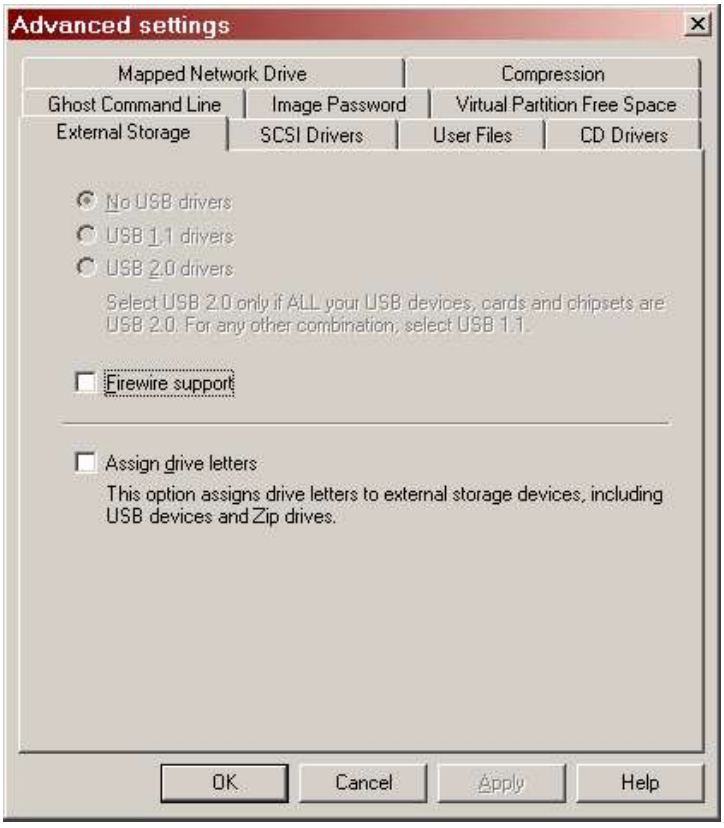
Backup and Restore start easy-to-follow wizards that take you step by step to do what they say. View Log takes you to a Task Log of previous processes. This isn't much information, but it really is that simple to do both the Backup and Restore. Point and click your way through the wizards.

In Ghost Advanced, you again start well-thought-out wizards:

- Clone
- Run Ghost Interactively
- Peer to Peer
- Create Virtual Partition
- Image Integrity Check

Again you just point and click your way through a wizard that is very self-explanatory.

Each screen of the wizards has a help button that will explain each choice you have to make. You can clone a computer, start backup from here, work over networks that can be any configuration, and check a created image for completeness. The advanced settings allow many individual settings that provide the correct drivers for your particular system.

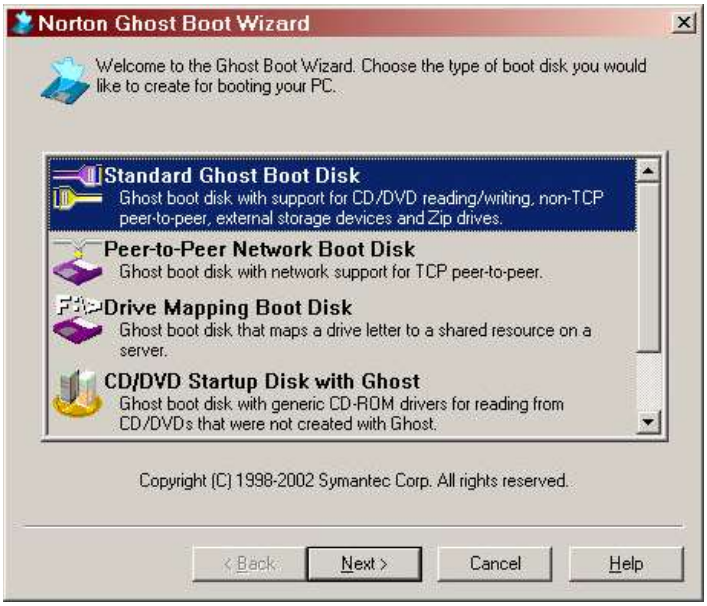


(Ghost……..Continued on page 7)

(Ghost…….Continued from page 6)

Ghost Utilities offers what the previous version contained: Norton Ghost Boot Wizard and Norton Ghost Explorer along with an easy access to the Norton Ghost User's Guide in Adobe PDF file. The boot Wizard allows the user to create a Boot Disc that can be used to start Ghost in a DOS environment. The Boot Disc is created again using an easy to follow wizard that you just point and click till finished.

In this new version the Boot Disc is not needed to create an image because you can now run Norton from inside the Windows environment. As you finish up the process that you have chosen, Norton Ghost now creates a "Virtual Drive" on your hard drive and restarts the computer into a DOS environment and starts the Ghost process without needing a Boot Disc.



Other changes in this version are that you now are not asked any questions when starting to create an image since you do all settings from the Windows wizards and after the image is created the computer is restarted back into Windows automatically. This is simple and is what I like most with this version. You still need the Boot Disc to restore an image to a hard drive from other backup storage media; a second hard drive or CDR's would be examples.

The Ghost Explorer stays the same as in the older version. You can use the Explorer to view the created image files much as you use Windows Explorer to view the contents of storage media. You can also easily extract any file(s) needed, open files and change them, delete files from an image and also add files to an image.

The user guide is now 221 pages that can answer most any question you could have when using. I would suggest that any new users go through the user guide before trying the program. The new version also contains a tutorial that is a quick way to review the program's different actions of the offered wizards. You can use the tutorial in either a Demo mode where you just watch the actions or in an Interactive mode where you can follow the process and click the choices as the wizards proceed.

This program is a must for anyone that wants a reliable and easy to use program to back up their system into image that can be easily restored in case of hardware failure, cloning one system to another, or for protection from virus damage. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

that I might be able to get a presentation for our group out of this information. What you saw at our meeting in July was the result.

Apparently all is not well in the data center world where there is far more capacity than need. The owner of the data center I visited said that only five percent of data center capacity nationwide was being used. It appeared to me that no more than 40% of his cabinets had anything in them. But that is a lot better than 5%. Do you recall several years back when they were worrying if California was going to have enough electricity to supply all the data centers that were being built. I think I even remember an article in the local paper speculating on the availability of power for data centers being planned for Tampa. They mentioned a new one to be put in an older

(Comments…….Continued on page 9)

Looking Back to 1993

From the August 1993 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 7/14/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

He's Back!! Yes, our illustrious Prez, Harvey Bruneau, is back and chaired our meeting. While Harvey seemed glad to be back in the saddle again, the timing of our meeting was again not the most opportune for him and Marylee. It was their 10th wedding anniversary. Notwithstanding, they shared some of their precious time with us on this special day for them. And after presenting Marylee with a dozen lovely roses, Harvey proceeded with our meeting, announcing that he had every intention of having a short meeting and then taking his lovely spouse to a special place in celebration of the special occasion. (Check the time of adjournment to see how successful Harvey was at meeting his timing objective.) Harvey then launched into the meeting in our regular format.

INDUSTRY/CLUB NEWS

A member of our group had told Harvey in the past they would be willing to lead a special interest group (SIG) on OS2. Several at the meeting indicated they would like to participate in an OS2 special interest group. Harvey announced that he would try to arrange a SIG to begin at 5:30 on our regular meeting night in September. Further details will be provided at our next meeting and in the next newsletter.

Software presentation objectives for the next few months are:

August	Word Perfect 6.0 (DOS)
September	Windows NT (If released by that time)
October	CorelDraw 4.0
Not-too-distant future	IBM 0S2, Ver. 2.1

Harvey had read several reports of problems being encountered with CorelDraw 4.0. An interim maintenance release should be available in a couple of weeks. To obtain one, call CorelDraw at 1-800-836-3729.

Harvey related briefly some of his experiences at Comdex in Atlanta. He noted that the Comdex in Atlanta is considerably smaller than the Las Vegas Comdex, but that it is still a very worthwhile gathering to attend, and one will see at both more computer related hardware and software innovations than can be seen at any other location in the world. Harvey recommend attending either if you can, giving priority to the large Comdex at Las Vegas if a choice is available.

Microsoft has announced their intention to make MS Visual Basic the macro language of MS Word, MS Access, and Excel; one could expect that it will end up as the macro language in all of MS software products.

MS Access 1.1 maintenance upgrade is out. It can be purchased from MS directly for $19.95, or call MS for a coupon which will allow purchase from local retailers for $14.95.

It was reported that anyone interested in Superbase, a high-end database program reviewed just a couple of months ago in this newsletter, could be obtained from Software Publishing Corp. for $99 IF you mention one of its competitors.

Harvey informed all that a program he recently acquired, called Romaterial, I believe, is a neat fun kind of utility ROM. It includes about 500 icons and a calculator with voice answers in any one of 5 different voices. Plus several other features, all for a street price of $17.

PRESENTATION JetForm 3.1

The JetForm Corporation was kind enough to make their Regional Sales Manager, Randy Hippe, available for a presentation on their software program, JetForm 3.1 for Windows. Randy related a shaggy dog story of how the twain shall never meet, the result being that the material he had expected to have for all present about their program was not available; it was floating around the UPS system and/or several hotels. In introducing the program, Randy noted that they have versions for DOS, Windows, Macintosh, and were working on OS2

This program is much different than I had expected. I have used a forms program with which one could create a variety of custom forms. Well, JetForm does that, from the simplest to the most complex, quickly and easily. But it does so much more, and it is this part where the program really shines, and which makes this program so much different from the forms program I had used.

JetForm is a very powerful forms program. It really comes in two packages: JetForm Filler, which is principally a filler program, and JetForm Design, which includes JetForm Filler and Design as well. JetForm is clearly designed to meet the needs of businesses/organizations that deal with many different people and/or things. Randy showed and informed us about so much I could not keep up with my notes, but I was impressed that it could create just about any form one would need (invoice, order, etc.) and then fill them in with speed and intelligence. Some of the many features include:

- Import directly from just about any major software; you need only tell the program once where to get the desired data. And, it can import data from several sources for the same form. JetForm also includes a database capability of its own.
- The version demonstrated had an excellent graphical interface, complete with button bar and a huge number of icons (macros) with which to customize to suit individual needs.

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

(1993……..Continued from page 8)

- Easily built-in intelligence in the forms to perform whatever calculations may be needed automatically.
- Built-in automatic address book.
- Allows creation of forms in JetForm from scanned images which can be quickly converted to JetForm forms, complete with intelligence, etc.
- Capability to transmit output via paper or electronic means, such as email, another step toward a "paperless" world.

The requirements for JetForm are minimal. The DOS version requires only that you have 640K of RAM, for example. There appear to be no requirements peculiar to JetForm. If you use the Windows version, if you have the capability to run Windows, you have the capability to run JetForm. Unfortunately, Randy didn't mention how much disk space was required for the program, and since no literature was available at the meeting, that kind of information is not available to us at this time.

JetForm Filler lists for $129, and JetForm Design lists for $495; street prices (usually special order) run about $93 and $328, respectively. Why buy the filler without the design capability, one might ask. Several reasons are possible: You have need for several filler programs, but need only one design package, is one. Another is JetForm offers form design services as well as on-site consultation services, and training if needed.

Randy covered many aspects of the program beyond this brief accounting. I can't cover them all here. It is clearly a very powerful and useful program for those needing that kind of capability. And, for those that do, it would appear that JetForm is a program worthy of further investigation.

A BIG thanks to JetForm and Randy Hippe for a fine presentation on an excellent program and for the copy donated for our use.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of JetForm Corporation, Lotus Corporation, Borland and Sunrise Computer (who donated several maintenance items), along with the 50/50 cash drawing there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Roger Waters	JetForm Design 3.1
W.F. LaMartin	Lotus Organizer
Russ Stepp	Object Vision 2.0
Preston Goossen	0S2 Book
Russ Stepp	Sunrise Mx Package
Preston Goossen	50/50 ($48)

The meeting adjourned at close to 9 PM; good work, Harvey. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 7)

building downtown. Possibly that new data center was never placed in downtown Tampa.

Networking In the past month two members contacted me with problems getting networking set up on their laptops. One was on an older laptop running Windows 98, the other on a new laptop running Windows XP Home.

First the new laptop. The owner used the XP networking wizard to set up his network consisting of the XP laptop, a Windows Me desktop and a Linksus cable/DSL four port wireless router. He had Internet connectivity but could get nothing to work as regards networking, and the laptop's manufacturer, Gateway, said it wasn't their problem since the network card was working fine in the computer and they couldn't be responsible for the rest of the computers in his house. Looking at my network setup while talking with him on the phone, I first discovered that he really could see the new laptop from his desktop computer--he just hadn't known how to do it. He was trying to use a Remote Desktop Connection instead of simply using Windows Explorer or going to Start | Run and putting "\\ComputerName" in the text box and pressing Enter, where ComputerName would be the appropriate computer you want to view.

Getting the new XP laptop to view the desktop took a bit more work. To make the story short, I basically had him undo all the settings that the networking wizard had set and replace them with the ones that work on my systems. As I recall, the problem was a setting or two in WINS configuration of the advanced TCP/IP network settings. One was disenabling LMHOSTS Lookup. After that, everything was OK.

For the fellow with the older laptop, he wanted to connect to two desktops running XP and a new Linksys router, I went through my usual checking of network and network card settings to no avail. The laptop could not ping the router. He had already contacted Lynksys support to no avail. I suggested that he bring his laptop to my house to see if I could get it

(Comments……..Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Comments…….Continued from page 9)

to connect to my network, or if with one of my network cards it would connect.

He brought it over, I connected it to my router--and he was on Internet and connected to my network.

So what was his problem. It was either his router or the network cable at his house. Since he had tried the connection with different network cables which worked fine for his other computers, that wasn't the problem. And the router worked since the other computers were communicating with it. What was different about the laptop?

Returning home, he again contacted Linksys, but this time spoke with the router people instead of the network card people. They had him do the usual of assigning an IP address to the laptop, which you shouldn't need but had been tried before, but added another wrinkle. They had him slow down the connection. In the properties of the network card on the advanced tab there is a drop-down box where you can select your LAN speed. The default is Auto Sense. Linksys had him change it to 10Mbps--the slowest connection. I think that is what did the trick, not the fixed IP address.

Networking seems to be a problem. I thought I had pretty much mastered it, but missing the slowing down of the connection for one of the computers shows me that I don't know everything. Of course, one doesn't really want to have to slow down the networking to make it work. Since it worked at full speed connected to my network, something is deficient about his setup at home--possibly his router.

New Laptops These new laptops are certainly nice. The other member with a networking problem has a new Gateway M500s, which seems like a real good buy at $1,499. It has a very large screen with resolution higher than 1024 x 768, a 40 GB hard drive, 512 MB RAM, 2.2GHz Mobile Intel Pentium 4 Processor, etc. Its only drawback from my point of view is that you really can't change the configuration--you buy it the way it is and, I suppose, allow Gateway to sell it a bit cheaper as a result.

It sounded like an ideal computer for my daughter in college, except that the operating system is XP Home which can't be upgraded in the purchase, and I wanted her to have XP Professional. Why, you ask? Well, I want to snoop on her. Not really, but I would like the ability to access her computer remotely (at her request and with her permission, of course) using Remote Desktop Connection and take control of her computer so as to try and fix any problem she may be having. For this to work, the computer being accessed needs to be running XP Professional, not XP Home. The computer I am using to do the accessing can be running anything from Windows 98 on up as long as the Remote Connection software is installed on it.

After doing my research and visiting the local Gateway store with my wife and daughter, we settled on the

(Comments…….Continued on page 12)

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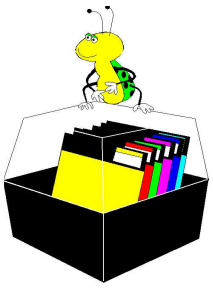
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492

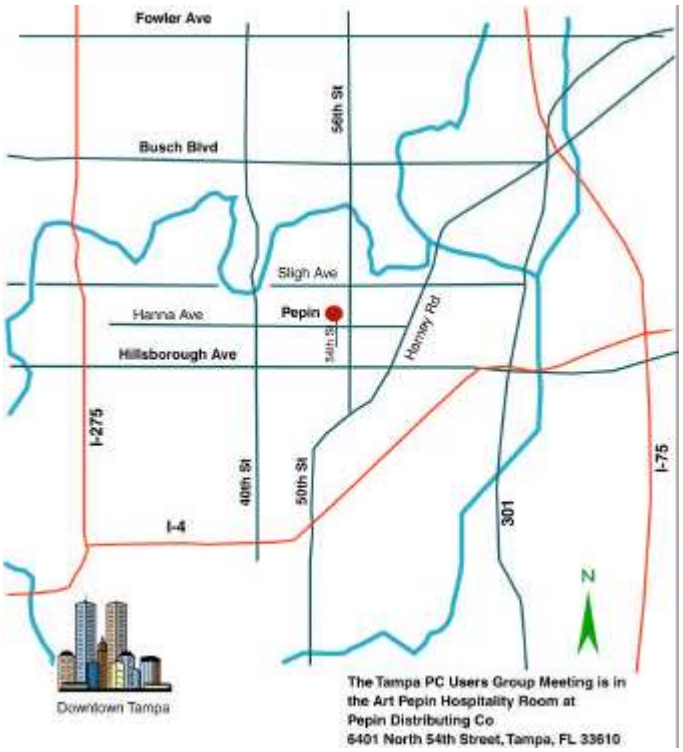


First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments…….Continued from page 10)

Gateway 450X laptop. It has all the features of the M500 except the screen size (one inch narrower) and some sound capabilities (the M500 has a subwoofer and special sound controls on the deck of the computer). Additionally it can be configured as you like and comes standard with the Intel Centrino Mobile processor, a plus. XP Professional is also standard. Too bad they didn't have a two for one sale because I would like to have a new Gateway laptop for myself. ◆



(A Guide…….Continued from page 4)

curity setting such that nothing can be downloaded without my knowledge. I never accept anything automatically downloaded from any website, never, ever. My mail message rules are very large and set to move anything questionable to the delete folder. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



September in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 9 September 2003

Meeting

Presentation

Surprise Again

Wednesday, September 10, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: The presentation topic was not available at press time. Preceding the presentation, Kevan Sheridan will conduct the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Worms August has been a bad month for computer worms. First there was the Blaster which exploited a flaw in DCOM RPC using TCP port 135 in Windows XP and Windows 2000. Microsoft had supplied a fix over a month back, but many people had not applied it, including several of our members. You really need to have Windows automatically check for updates whenever you go online. The second worm, SoBig.F, has been clogging up email inboxes for the past 10 days or so.

I first came into contact with SoBig.F while traveling. The

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October Meeting Topic: To be announced -- Check our web site.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the August Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

This month's meeting started on time with Mike Hodges officiating.

We were reminded to keep our e-mail addresses up to date so important messages don't go astray. The newsletter is online too! Http://www.tpcug.org. Newsletter article submissions are encouraged, so if you have information to share on a likely topic, send them to the editor.

Remember that the Special Interest Group meetings are held at the Kate Jackson Community Center in Hyde Park on the first Tuesday and the third Tuesday of the month.

Our discussion ensued about viruses and how they can get in through a buffer overrun. Microsoft supplies critical updates at the Windows' update site. Use them to seal the holes the viruses are finding.

Mike conducted a survey of those present as to programs for future meetings. The subjects are: Scanning, Excel, PowerPoint, Notebooks, Internet Telephone Calls, Digital Photography, Outlook, Video Editing, Photo Albums, Databases, Microsoft Word. There were a few others, too, but these should keep us going for a while and also branch out into other future meetings.

We learned about a Google Tool bar which kills pop-ups. Bruce Register told us about his experience with the Blaster worm. Many more topics were covered, and it was quite an informative meeting.

Bruce Register is the happy winner of the door prize "Wipe Drive", and Jim Purcell won a T-Shirt.

After the meeting ended, some of the group went on to meet later where there was food and continued talking for a while longer. ◆

AIPTEK DV2

By Bob Lafave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net



The AIPTEK DV2 is a multi-functional camera and voice recorder that does four tasks: Digital still camera mode (takes 1280 X 1024 X 24Bit jpeg), PC camera mode (Web Cam), AV recording mode (avi digital files), and Voice annotation mode (voice recorder in wav format). Sounds like a lot for this little gadget, but it does do them all. The web site at http://www.aiptek.com/index2.php has all the specifications for any surfers to view. First, the price was great. For $89.99 plus shipping, I received not only the DV2 but also a digital watch that they are currently selling for $19.99; still the DV2 is worth much more. The still mode jpeg's are really nice. I can place them as wallpaper, and they look great. They are of equal quality to many other pictures that I have found over the years on web sites. The pictures are true 1.3 mega pixel resolution. With 16MB of memory built in, you get only 15+ pictures, but the DV2 can take an optional 512 MB Compact Flash card to increase that number to over 600 before changing cards. The flash card is also useful if you are going to take digital movies. The 16MB of built in memory gives you only about 2-3 minutes of video with sound. Add the card and you can get almost 100 minutes of digital avi with sound. If used for a voice recorder only, you get about 30 minutes with the 16MB of memory and almost unlimited with a memory card. The sounds are not recording quality by any means, but, if used for reminders or note taking, the quality is fine and, when taking videos, is acceptable.





During a rainstorm, I recorded the rain, wind, and thunder, and it can be heard along with my commentary of what was taking place. Lastly the DV2 is a web cam that is better in quality than the Logitech web cam that I have. There is separate software called *Mega DV Manager.* This picture shows the web cam mode looking out a window. You can take still pictures or AV recording from this application directly to the computer.

When the DV2 is used as a web cam, you are connected by USB; this is really convenient at home, especially if you get a USB extension for added range. This is the only software that needs to be installed for the use of the DV2, but six more programs are included. The programs are:

- Microsoft NetMeeting, for internet communication.
- CyberLink PowerDirector Pro, to edit and create movies on CD's.
- CyberLink Media Show SE, for making animated slide shows.
- CyberLink VideoMail, to create and send video emails.
- Ulead Photo Express, to edit and create illustrations and photos.
- Ulead Photo Explorer, for visual file management.

I could write individually about each of these programs, but I think it would be easier and provide more information for those who are interested to visit:

http://www.gocyberlink.com/english/index.jsp for descriptions of CyberLink programs and http://www.ulead.com for Ulead programs information. What I will say is that there is very little that you will not be able to do with the still images or digital AV that you take using the included software.

(DV2 ……Continued on page 4)

(DV2……..Continued from page 3)
If priced separately, the software itself is worth far more than the cost. Some programs are older versions or OEM versions.

Overall, for the price you get a great multi-functional camera with a LCD display with easy to follow instructions that allows you to record most any choice you can make. Yes, you do have to purchase a Compact Flash card to extend the features, and this will cost as much if not more than the DV2, but I think it is a well thought-out product. Between the DV2 and its included software, what more could you ask for.

The AIPTEK DV 2 is also sold at Best Buy and is where I found it when browsing the shelves. Their cost is $99.99 including tax. AIPTEK products are sold at Circuit City also. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)
first day of the trip I didn't bother to check my email. The second day I had about 30 messages with the worm attached. The next day there were about 120 with the worm, and the following day after only 15 hours between checks, there were around 150 bad messages. For the most part RoadRunner was now replacing the attachment with a message of their own to the effect that they had deleted the attachment since it was infected with the SoBig.F worm. Needless to say, on a dial up connection I have to use when traveling, it was a slow go downloading all of them and deleting them. After that, the messages sort of tapered off

On the day I received the 150 or so messages in less than 15 hours, I think it was Thursday, August 21, I was checking out my daughter's computer setup in her dorm room when I noted that I couldn't go anywhere on the WWW. I then checked email, and it worked. I checked that I could go to the university's main page, and it worked. But you couldn't get anywhere outside the university. I then tried to ping several outside sites like tpcug.org, IMB.com and Microsoft.com. No luck, the university was cut off from the world. I called the campus computer help line and was told that they were taking very heavy traffic. Apparently the worm was jamming everything. It didn't get back to normal until the next day.

On returning to Tampa, I had to face all those bad emails again, since while traveling I have the email program leave the mail I read on the server. But I downloaded them all and deleted them.

It was relatively quiet for a couple of days, then there was a bit of heightened activity of just short of 100 wormy emails over a 24 hour period. Then came a day or so of next to nothing on the worm front. And then, all hell broke loose with over 350 such messages in a day. After that the worm infected email tapered off to almost nothing. And that is where things stand now.

This sort of thing is getting to be a major disruption for me. 350 bogus emails in a day takes up your time. The odd thing is that they all came in on my RoadRunner account and none on my Earthlink account, which is the one that gets the greatest number of Spam messages.

The only funny part of it was all the messages I received from U. S. Senators, bogus ones at first caused by the worm, then later legitimate ones to me as replies to bogus ones sent to them by the worm with my email listed as the sending email. Of course, the replies were pro forma and stated that they were too busy to respond to me individually due to security reasons or the large volume of messages received by their office and that I should write them using the regular mail.

Printer To go with the Gateway we bought for my daughter to take to college, we also purchased an HP 2175 all-in-one printer. That seemed like a good idea since it gave her both a scanner and a printer. Everything seemed fine with it both here in Tampa and at college. However, the evening before we

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

Electronic Recycling Day

By Mike Hutchison, TPCUG
mmyankee@ij.net

Here's is a reminder about the County's Household Electronics Collection Day. It is on October 25, 2003, 8 AM to 2 PM at the East County Collection Center, CR 579, 1/4 mile North of I-4 Exit 10.

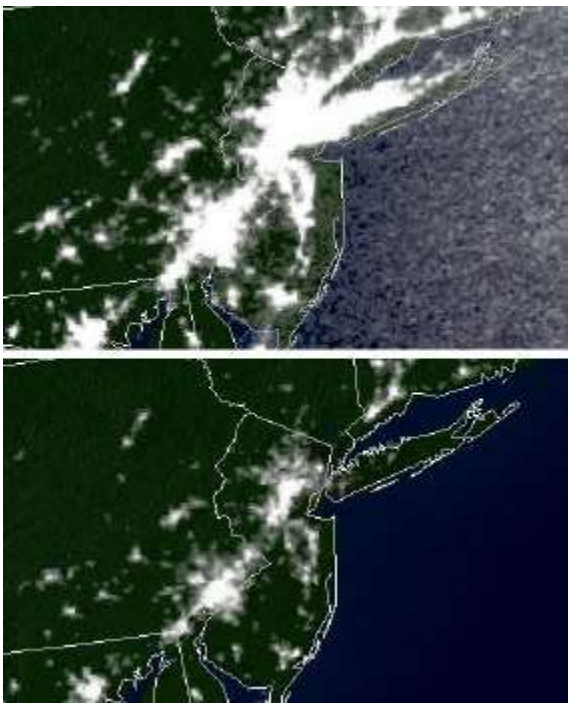
They are accepting TVs, VCR's, computers and computer components, microwave ovens, cell phones, telephone, power supplies (one presumes this would cover cell phone batteries) and other small household appliances at this collection.

NO Commercial/Business electronics accepted.

For schedules and other information about Solid Waste Management Department events, contact the SWMD at 813-272-5680 or visit the website: http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/solidwaste/chemical.html for Residential Collection events, or http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/solidwaste/cesqg.html for Commercial/Business collection events.

(Above was excerpted from The Recycling Planet, a quarterly report put out by Hills. County)

Internet Picture of the Month

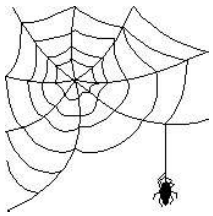


Blackout: Before & During

Aug. 14 & 15, 2003 cropped photos from the NOAA site, http://www.noaa.gov/. The satellite images were taken before and after of the historic blackout of the Northeastern United States. These cropped photos center on the New York City area. "NOAA processed the night lights data taken by the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP). NOAA archives the data from the satellite."

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Urban Legends Reference Pages	http://www.snopes.com/
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	http://www.noaa.gov/
New York Times' On this Day	http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/
The Atlantic Online	http://www.theatlantic.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Wireless Home Network

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merlenic@tampabay.rr.com

I've added wireless capability to put my notebook wirelessly on my home network. I can use the notebook anywhere inside my house and in my back yard, too. My spouse wants me to test it in the detached garage. I haven't asked why yet.

I've had a home network for several years and been very happy with its features and functions. I've had Roadrunner Internet access for several years. I managed to be on the RR network soon after it was available in Tampa, and I quickly set up my home network with Sygate Internet-sharing software, similar to the Windows Internet sharing that is now available. A year or so ago I replaced the Internet sharing with a Linksys Cable/DSL router, and I've been very happy with it, especially for its built-in firewall. It has a four-port switch to handle my network. I do have an older hub attached to provide a couple more ports.

The hardware firewall in the Linksys is wonderful. I was able to remove my software firewall and greatly improve the performance of that PC.

I have four hardwired computers in my home. One, my oldest, just manages my telephone now as its only function. It had served other functions over time, like holding online backups, and it originally did the Sygate Internet access. It's just a P-166. Its function now is to answer and hang up on anyone calling in with an unknown caller ID. It blocks people and businesses that we have identified and announces who is calling for everyone we do know. I love the hang-up part.

Then my wife and I each have our personal computers, and I have a Windows 2000 machine now collecting online backups from all the other machines and running my SQL Server. But we also have a one-year-old notebook that is mostly unconnected. When I want to update Windows or anti-virus signatures or move files from other computers, I set it up on my office workbench where I have a spare network cable to the hub. It came home to me that I needed to improve it when I was watching the Wimbledon tennis matches in the living room, that I had a lot of down time that I could be using productively if only I had my notebook. I have a couple of software projects going on that I'd like to be working on. So wireless is the way to go if I can get it cheaply enough.

I felt that since I don't have an overpowering reason to do this, I needed to do it cheaply. That eliminated the new high-speed "G" systems. So it had to be the older "801.11b" 11Mbps system because I can find them on sale right now. I got a D-Link Cable/DSL router for $40 after rebates and a NetGear for $30 outright, no rebates, both from Office Depot. No other costs except sales taxes.

The Router:
The router I got was not ideal. Remember that I have a Linksys router, and I don't want to disturb it. The ideal device is a "Wireless Access Point" device. An Access Point is designed to do exactly what I need; add wireless to my network. But guess what … they're $100! No way! So I got this wireless router.

How I hooked it up:
The new router has a "Wan" port where you are supposed to cable your DSL or Cable Modem. I've left this empty. It has four switched ports where you can plug in Ethernet cables to hardwire computers directly. I picked one of these ports and cabled it to a similar port on the Linksys router, using a crossover cable. The port I picked on the Linksys is the one I was using for the hub. I disconnected and retired the hub. So I have six ports for computers now, three on each of the routers because the interconnect cable between them uses one each.

It doesn't work .. yet:
OK, right off, some of the network isn't working. So I have to fix it. The problem is, I have two competing routers. A router's function is to provide firewall protection and also to be a DHCP. A DHCP assigns

(Wireless……..Continued on page 7)

(Wireless……..Continued from page 6)
an internal IP address to each of your computers, and you can't have two doing this at the same time. Also, both routers have the same fixed IP address. You access the router's setup with any web browser. The only PC working was the one that was hard cabled to the new router. The first thing I did was change the new router's fixed IP address. Then I started disabling stuff in the setup. The most important thing was to disable DHCP. Then each of the computers worked after releasing and renewing each computer's IP address using either Winipcfg (Win 98/ME) or IPConfig (Win/XP and Win/2000).

Finally:
It really works well. 11Mbps really is fast enough. Internet access is still very fast. When I think about it, my network started out to be 10Mbps and bumped up to 100Mbps only a year ago when I bought the Linksys. I replaced the PC network cards to 10/100 about the same time. The only problem I have is that, for the moment, I don't know the IP address of the new router, so I can't configure it any further if I wanted to without resetting it. I don't know why this is, but my guess is that it doesn't have one any longer. I accessed the configuration of the Linksys and looked at the DHCP client list. All the computers were there. I don't see any practical disadvantage since the new router has an external reset switch that will set everything to the factory defaults, and I can start over again. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)
were to come back to Tampa, she called to say that the printer was producing a message on the computer to the effect that it might be running low on ink. Well, we hadn't printed much more than a dozen pages to see that it worked OK. However, I recalled that in the description of the printer, there was a statement that it came with starter cartridges. 12 pages doesn't seem like enough for even starter cartridges, but what the heck; off to the local CompUSA to buy, for about $50, a replacement pack of a black cartridge and a color cartridge. Then to the dorm to install the new cartridges, and guess what. You know what: The same message appeared when you wanted to print. Fifty dollars that shouldn't have been spent

A quick check of the HP site said that all that really needed to be done to be finished with the spurious message was to reset the printer's mind by turning on the printer (it has to be on to make the cartridges accessible), removing the cartridges, removing power from the printer for at least five seconds, returning power to the printer and replacing the cartridges. I am sure you can guess what the result of that was--same error message. But it got worse.

When I put power back to the printer and put in the first cartridge it started trying to print before I could put in the second cartridge. So I had to unplug it so as to keep it from printing without the second cartridge. Perhaps there was a print job in the computer's print queue. I don't know. But it seems to me it shouldn't try to print with the holder for the second cartridge still open.

I finally tricked it into letting me put in both cartridges by not closing the lock on the first until I had the second cartridge also inserted. Then I pushed them both closed at the same time. This second problem made me think there is something wrong with a sensor for the second cartridge.

What to do? Nothing. The printer was bought in Tampa, and the receipt was in Tampa so I couldn't take it to the local CompUSA. And once back to Tampa, I didn't want my daughter to have to deal with returning it to CompUSA (by then the time to do that might have already passed), and I didn't want her to have to send it back to HP since she would have no printer and anyway the box it came in was in Tampa.

The printer prints fine, and the message can be made to go away for a month. After a month, she can make it go away for another month, and as with her previous printer, she can tell when it is running

(Comments……..Continued on page 10)

Looking Back to 1993

From the September 1993 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 8/11/93 Meeting and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

Another BIGGIE?! Yes, if you weren't at this meeting, you missed another biggie. We had a presentation on one version of probably the most widely used word processor — Word Perfect 6.0 (DOS) — made by the inimitable John Johannesmeyer who has a special knack of getting across a lot of info in a very enjoyable way. And, we had a vote on our Articles of Incorporation (AOI) to change the name of our group. Although we had a good crowd, it was not the wall-to-wall crowd J had expected for this event. It was a productive and enjoyable evening.

CLUB NEWS

- Name Change: Harvey explained the several reasons the Board of Directors (BOD) felt that a change in our name was necessary: 1) Our name is so similar to other groups in our area that we are often mistaken for them; 2) Our present name incorrectly implies that only persons using true IBM PCs are eligible, whereas in reality we are open to users of any PC (as well as those that don't use computers at all, but have an interest in them); 3) Because of the similarity of names, some distributions from the computer industry intended for our group are often sent to one of the other groups; 4) We are applying for non-profit status with the IRS and it is important that our name reflect our true situation — membership in our group is not limited to a select group of people, but is open to all.

- The BOD had agreed upon and proposed to the membership that our name be changed to "Tampa PC Users Group". There were other ideas proposed from the floor during discussion, but in the end it was agreed that this name would probably meet our needs the best; it reflects our openness, and at the same time would also help keep our established identity in the industry. A motion to change our name to "Tampa PC Users Group" was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the motion carried without opposition.

- Financial Reports: A motion was made to incorporate into our newsletter a financial report to let members know what our financial status is. The motion did not specify a time table for such reports. It was noted that financial reports are available for review by any and all of our members at all of our meetings and that for such reports to be included in the newsletter frequently would consume valuable space and create additional work on the volunteers serving the organization. Considerable discussion ensued as to the need for such reports and, if needed, the frequency of them. An amended motion was proposed to publish a financial statement, consisting of an Income Statement and a Balance Sheet, during the first quarter of the calendar year with an as-of date of the last day of the previous year. The motion was seconded and carried without opposition.

INDUSTRY NEWS

- CorelDraw Update: A number of bugs have shown up in the recently released CorelDraw 4.0. To rectfy most of these problems, CorelDraw has developed and is distributing a free update. If you are an owner of CorelDraw and have registered, you should receive your update automatically. If you have not registered, you will have to call CorelDraw at 1-800-836-DRAW to get your update.
- Word Perfect for OS/2: Word Perfect Corp says they are now shipping this version of WP.
- Stacker/Novell Agreement: An agreement has been reached that will incorporate Stacker software in future releases of Novell and DR-DOS. Inasmuch as Stacker seems to be the most popular disk compression software, this agreement will no doubt expand Stacker's share of the disk-compression market and should enhance the value of Novell and DR-DOS programs.
- MS Access 1.1 maintenance upgrade is out. It can be purchased from MS directly for $19.95, or call MS for a coupon which will allow purchase from local retailers for $14.95.

PRESENTATION — Word Perfect 6.0 (DOS)

John Johannesmeyer, area manager for Word Perfect Corporation, was on hand to give an overview presentation of WP 6.0 (DOS). It is a very powerful program and no one could review all of its features in the limited time available, but John did cover a bunch of them--and I shall be even more brief here.

To start with, WP 6.0 is very similar in many ways to WP 5.1 — that is, it does all of the things 5.1 does (plus a bunch) and those things can be accomplished in pretty much the same way as 5.1 if one so desires. Some of the key combinations are different, but if one uses phonetics they are very much the same. V/P 6.0 can be operated in a variety of ways, from a clean screen that would remind you of all of the earlier versions of WP, through pull-down menus on the screen, to a Windows-like operation, complete with user-definable tool bars. One does not have some of the capabilities with 6.0 (DOS) that are available in Windows, such as DDE, but it appears to offer all other benefits of a Windows-like graphical interface. Like Windows, WP 6.0 makes use of all extended and expanded memory installed on the computer and otherwise available for use.

Among the major capabilities offered in WP 6.0 is a very capable spreadsheet built right in. This spreadsheet provides over 100 functions, including all of the ones used most often by most spreadsheet users. And the spreadsheet is indeed very nice. Also included is an efficient send-fax capability so that one can send faxes from within WP 6.0 (the host computer must, of course, otherwise have a fax capability). And, the

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

(1993……..Continued from page 8)
desktop publishing capability of WP 6.0's recent predecessors is still available -- but it has been enhanced and made more powerful than ever. Among the many other features of WP 6.0 are:

- WP 6.0 can be operated in text or graphics modes; text mode takes less memory and looks much like WP 5.1 on the screen; and graphics mode which takes more memory and runs more slowly, but gives full benefit of the graphical interface (i.e., WYSIWYG).
- Up to nine documents can be opened and working at one time. This makes transferring information between several documents (up to nine) very easy.
- Word processing has been enhanced with features such as Grammatik V grammar checker now built in, and drag and drop editing of text. And, 6.0 will import from all of the popular major word processors.
- Provides a conversion macro to convert on the fly documents from previous versions of WP.
- Macros from WP 5.1 are convertible and creation of macros is easier.
- A comprehensive and detailed table creation and control capability - a very powerful and versatile feature. One can create and modify a table structure in just about any way I can imagine with just clicks of a button, and embed formulas as desired.
- Good control of graphics compared to other word processors, including scaling and drag-and-drop moving. It also allows the choice of block wrap of text around graphics, or contour wrap with a click of a mouse button The program will import some 15 different graphics formats, including all of the most popular.
- Another feature that is particularly "nice" is the Watermark. One may import a graphic in any of the 15 formats supported and make it a "watermark" — a graphic that is printed lightly to become a background to any printed document.
- Enhanced, powerful desk top capabilities, including easily set up and controlled column layouts, with any combination of single and multiples allowed on the same page. Automatic text flow between columns and balanced columns are available.
- Some of the other features are: Extensive documentation and context-sensitive online help; drag-and-drop text editing; spell checker; thumbnail preview of up to 32 pages at one time; document length limited only by space; envelope printing, with bar-code capability; hypertext (electronic referencing for documentation); supports full color printing; embed sound in any place desired in a document, with the sound becoming a part of the document file (assumes a sound capability built into the computer); uses Adobe and Bitstream Speedo fonts, with third party software providing True Type capability as well; and many, many more.

Requirements: John says that WP 6.0 (DOS) will run in text mode on a 286 machine. A 386 with 2 MB of RAM will allow operation in text or graphics modes; more RAM will give faster operation. (A 486SX25 laptop was used for the demo, and it worked very well.) The program needs about 420K of free RAM, after all TSRs are loaded. A minimum load of the program uses about 7M of hard disk space-- loading all features takes about 14 MB.

Costs: List price of the program is $495. Upgrade from WP 5.1 lists at $129.95, but has a street price of around $89. A competitive upgrade is available for a little more, but one must be upgrading from a competitive program with a list price of at least $395.

Word Perfect Corp is implementing a program called Easy Move. This program will allow a purchaser of WP 6.0 (DOS) to obtain the software for the Windows version for $29.95, or $59.95 for the program with complete documentation. This "Easy Move" applies to lateral versions and/or earlier versions, but not to later versions; that is, a 6.0 licensee could Easy Move on any 6.0 versions (Windows, DOS or OS/2), or any 5.X versions, but could not do the same on 6.1 or later. John emphasized that one is not purchasing an additional license, but is only expanding an existing license. Hence, if one owned a license for one program and Easy Moved on another, and subsequently gave or sold one version, that person wilt have sold or given away his license for both versions.

Word Perfect Corporation and John Johannesmeyer, many thanks for an excellent presentation of your very powerful new version of Word Perfect for DOS. It is truly an impressive and powerful program, and, John, your presentation was both informative and entertaining, as usual.. MANY THANKS!

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Microsoft Corporation (who donated a copy of Microsoft Access), our own Sunshine Computer (who donated several peripheral items), and Word Perfect Corporation (who donated several WP T-shirts), along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

Jerry Inman	WP T-shirt
Ed Buzza	WP T-shirt
George Pollak	WP T-shirt
Melvin Flynn	WP T-shirt
Kevan Sheridan	3.5" disk case & 25 diskettes
Frank Gallio	FD cleaning kits
Phillip P. Ficarrotta	Mouse Pad
R. A. Friedel	Microsoft Access
Don Keeney	50/50 ($54) ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com,* or William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Comments…….Continued from page 7)

out of ink by observing the results of printing.

However, this is just another reinforcement of my feeling that HP is putting out products lower in quality than they did a few years back. I also have a newer HP flatbed scanner that cost $300 a couple of years back that has lost its ability to scan photographic negatives with the HP software. HP says that it is a hardware problem and nothing can be done.

The new HP 2175 printer/scanner cost $200. My first HP flatbed scanner cost $1,000 in 1994 and my second HP laser printer cost $1,400 in 1995. So at that time I had a printer/scanner combination that cost $2,400. Perhaps you can not make such a thing that is rock-solid reliable for $200.

Wireless Access Merle Nicholson has an article about setting up a wireless home network in this newsletter. Like Merle, I have had a home network working through a router for a number of years. With the addition of my daughter's new laptop with wireless connectivity, I wanted to allow it to connect wirelessly to the network, although it also had a regular Ethernet connection we could have used to connect it with network cable.

My method of accomplishing this was to purchase a Lynksys Wireless-G Access Point (model WAP54G) and connect it to one of the ports on my already existent Netgear router.

To install the Access Point, you simply plug it into the network and run a piece of software from a CD to do a minimal configuration. One thing you should do, in my opinion, at this point is set the Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP) encryption for the wireless network. This will generate a WEP key. You will then need to enter this key into the wireless setup of any computer that wants to access your network wirelessly. If I hadn't done that, anyone could stand near my house with a laptop with wireless connectivity and log into my network.

With the WEP key entered into the laptop's wireless setup, the laptop was connected at 54 Mbps, which is the correct speed of the new g wireless standard, not as fast as the 100 Mbps of my hardwired LAN but faster than the old wireless b standard of around 11 Mbps.

As anyone who has tinkered with routers know, you are supposed to be able to configure them by pointing your web browser to their address on the local network. The address for my Netgear router is 192.168.0.1. Linksys routers have an address like 192.168.1.1, I think. Similarly you can configure (in more detail than the software program allowed) the Linksys Access point. The default address is 192.168.1.245, and I could not reach that with my browser. A little thought told me to go back into the software program for configuring the access point and change the address of it to 192.168.0.245, so that it was "on the same page" as the Netgear router. Once

(Comments…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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Corel Systems
Intuit
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RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
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MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

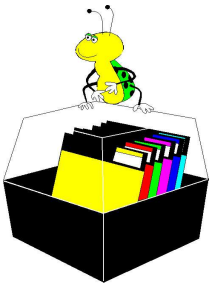
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



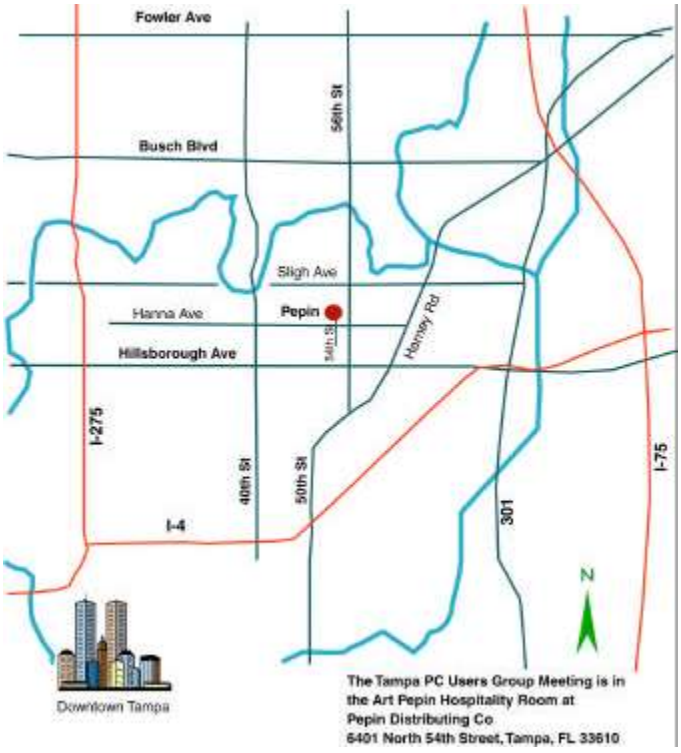
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 10)
that was done, I could access it with the browser.

With the wireless access point in my computer room on the SE corner of the house downstairs, the laptop picks up the network fine in the kitchen which is about 50 feet away and through one or two walls. When I go upstairs to the back bedroom, which would be on the NW corner of the house upstairs, it still works, but the speed is reduced to 5.5 Mbs from 54 Mbs. If I go into the downstairs room below that bedroom it works at 54 Mbs--if I face the direction of the access point while holding the computer. That distance is about 50 feet and has two walls to go through. The windows have metal frames and dividers too, so that may make a difference. If I face away while working with the computer it appears to lose the connection occasionally.

So it appears that it would be better to put the access point in the middle of the house. Possibly even upstairs in the middle. I till try that when I have a lot of time to play with things. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 10 October 2003

Meeting

Ghost 2003

Wednesday, October 8, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Bob LaFave will use Ghost 2003 to create a hard drive backup and also demonstrate other Windows utilities. Preceding the presentation, Kevan Sheridan will conduct the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

More Worms In the previous newsletter, I said August had been a bad month for computer worms, with the Blaster and the SoBig.F. Well, those have disappeared for the time being to be replaced by another, W32.Swen.A@mm, which Symantec originally called Automat.AHB.

The email carrying the new worm most often is designed to look like it is coming from Microsoft. It has a very Microsoft-appearing graphic across the top of the email and begins with the following text:

(Comments…….Continued on page 5)

November Meeting Topic: To be announced -- Check our web site.

* * OFFICERS * *
President: Kevan Sheridan (president@tpcug.org) 988-6480
Vice President : John Witmer (JWITMER@Pepindist.com) 963-3760
Treasurer: Mike Hodges (mphs@aol.com) 962-2114
Secretary: Peggy Pulliam (pegrance@yahoo.com) 253-0438
Member at Large: Mary Sheridan (mcpease@mindspring.com) 988-6480

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Membership: Mike Hodges (mphs@aol.com) 962-2114

Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the September Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

Before the meeting we had a Windows XP Q & A meeting. Some of the things brought up were very interesting to the group, and the people with questions got some answers. Some of the things that seem obvious to one person were a stumbling block for another. Like using Outlook Express for mail and not being able to get attachments. There is a setting you have to use in Tools | Options | Security where you uncheck "Do not allow attachments to be saved or opened...". We were advised to keep those anti-virus applications up and running! We talked about protecting from pop-up ads with the free Google tool bar. Many other things were covered in the half hour we used. Did you know that TPCUG.org has a discussion group and you can ask questions there and get some direct help?

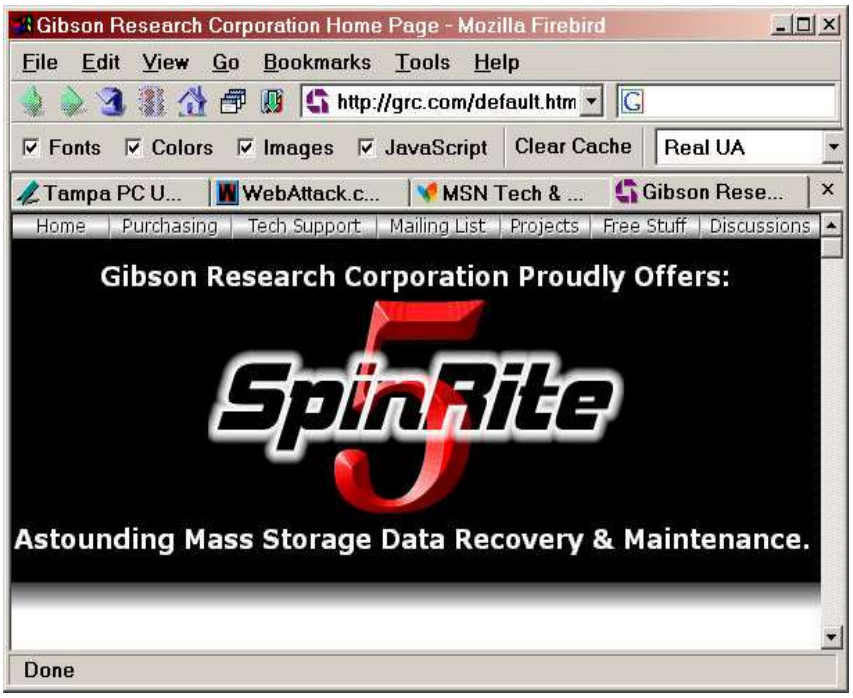
Our presentation started at 7:00. Kevan Sheridan, president of TPCUG, showed us how to use Outlook XP to organize, communicate and remember what goes on with our mail, calendar and contacts. Those of us who have been "using" Outlook found out that, as we'd expected, there is a lot more to be done to use it to its full potential. You can use a single click while you are in the "contacts" and you will get a map to the address of the contact. You can also click and send them a letter all addressed and just needing to be typed, envelope, too. You can add an extra time zone on your calendar and know what time you will be arriving in another part of the world in that time zone and what it would be in your own time zone. (So you can know just how jet-lagged you ought to be feeling.) You can add your e-mail accounts and get them all from Outlook and still keep them separate, not have to go chasing around to separate web sites for your mail.

We learned a great deal, and I have since been experimenting with Outlook on my computer and have come up with some more questions and learned a few more things that make life easier. We will be

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

Take a Chance

By Bob Lafave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net



Have you ever complained about the way that Internet Explorer behaves? Some of my complaints have been:

How slow it seems to be in the current version 6--wasn't it faster years ago?

Have you noticed how much of the computer resources that IE6 uses, and do you reboot your computer after getting off-line so as to recover your resources?

Are you sick of all the popups that appear on most of the web pages today? Granted the cost of sites have to be recovered, but all the ads !!! Buy a popup starter or similar program!!

Have you ever wanted more than one page open but hated to have all the windows of IE open and your task bar running out of room because of these multiple copies of IE open?

These are some of my main complaints against IE, and I have looked for other browsers to use, but I have been careful not to install a browser that would conflict with IE or Windows. Microsoft does provide excellent support but heaven forbid you install a NON-SUPPORTED program. I remember installing IE5 beta from the Microsoft Update site for Win98. Three weeks after I installed, I went to Windows update and received a message stating I could not use update because I had a NON-SUPPORTED BROWSER. Give me a break…. Tell me after a couple of weeks…. Have you ever fought a version of IE and tried to uninstall the program? That is when I made up my mind to find an alternative browser that was more to my liking.

The browser I use most of the time for convenience and speed is currently called **Mozilla Firebird,** a free browser that can be downloaded at http://www.mozilla.org/projects/firebird/release-notes.html. The name has changed from Phoenix to Firebird in the latest version 0.6 because of another company using the Phoenix name. The web site has all sorts of information so I suggest you take a trip and surf to find out all the good stuff, but I will list my reasons for using it.

How easy it is to install. Did I say install? Forgive me. Go to the site and download a Zip file of about 6.6MB and unzip the file into a folder of your choice. Create a shortcut to the execution file MozillaFirebird.exe to place on your start menu and that's it. This browser makes no changes to your system that I can find. The first version I used I downloaded and put on a Zip disc to see if it is possible to run that way. It is, so I then placed it in a folder on the hard drive and feel safe that none or very few changes where made.

Some features:

Built in popup stopper that is easy to set up and understand. It is SOOOOOOOOOO nice to surf with no ads.

(Chance…….Continued on page 4)

(Chance…….Continued from page 3)
Multiple TABBED windows that may be opened at the same time. I have had as many as 5 or 6 site pages open and I can easily access any page from the TAB that each page has. The TABS are below the browsers' toolbar and above the browser windows. Just click the tab and you have the page. Cool or what.

Faster than IE on opening pages. It even will easily open a site that IE has problems with. The site I have the biggest problem with is opening up my HotMail account. I get to the page, put in my password and Wait, and Wait and Wait some more. Some times I get in on the first try, but 9 out of 10 times I get the blank page labeled, **"The page cannot be displayed,"** and, if I refresh the page, I get to sign in again. I don't want to spend 5 minutes on my dial-up trying to access one page. I get in every time with Firebird in usually under 10 seconds.

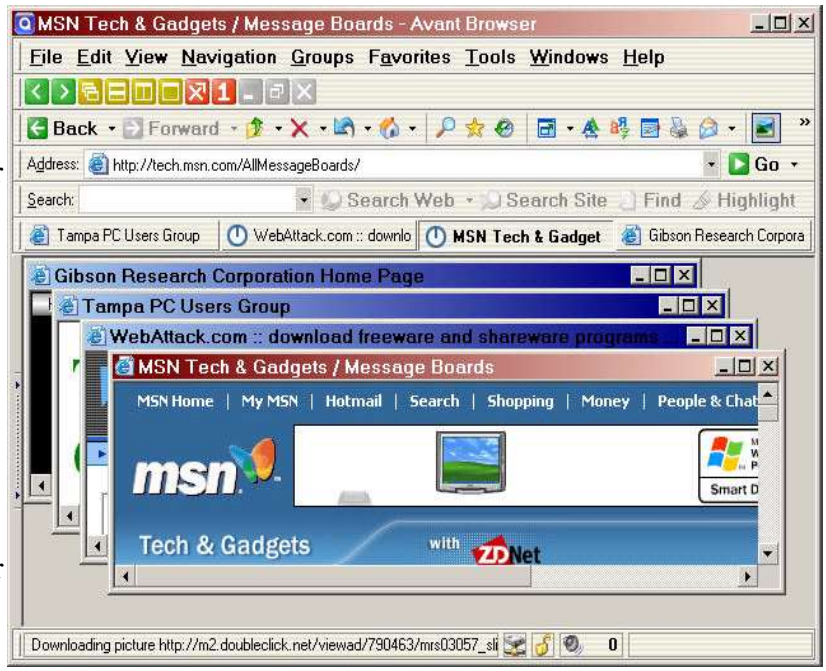
Firebird does not have the blank page labeled "**The page cannot be displayed"** when a site is unavailable. You get a popup saying, "**Site name could not be found. Please check the name and try again".** This happens in seconds, not minutes as IE does at times.

There are sites I cannot go to, such as Windows Update page, but the sites are few and far between and some plug-ins are not available yet. This is still a work in progress but I think it is great so far.

My second choice for a browser is called **Avant Browser**, and you can get it at http://www.avantbrowser.com, and it is also free. Again, I suggest you surf to the site and see what is offered. I hope it is still there because, as I am writing this, the site has been down periodically for a month. Avant is also easy to install in that it acts as a add-on to IE. Much as a skin, it uses the IE features and adds needed functions. A couple reasons I use Avant are:

Avant also is a TABBED browser but has many more options than does the Firebird browser. There are many options on how to show the open pages. This can be set so conveniently that this is the best point.

There is also a popup blocker included that again is easy to use and works great. You also have an audio alarm you can set that sounds each time an ad is blocked. You can look at the browser's bottom bar and see the block with the speaker and a number (0 is the number in the picture below). This block shows that the sound is on when a popup is blocked and shows the number of ads blocked since you started your surfing session.



I can go to any site that is made for IE.

There are many other reasons to use both of these browsers, and I wish each of you would surf to their information pages for full descriptions.

I still do use IE for some tasks but usually only when I have to, and on most of those I can use the Avant browser since it uses the IE base and is identified as IE at most sites, including the Windows Update page. Avant also has version changes and can be checked from the Help menu. Firebird's version is best checked by going to the web site and seeing what the current version is. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

having more of this type meeting, since it gets good group participation and we all enjoy the chance to ask or advise.

Thank you to Kevan and the rest of the group for keeping this going. See you at the next meeting. (And don't forget there are Special Interest Group meetings for Access - 1st Tuesday and Visual Basic - 3rd Tuesday each month at the Kate Jackson Community Center in Hyde Park.) ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)



Microsoft Customer

this is the latest version of security update, the "September 2003, Cumulative Patch" update which fixes all known security vulnerabilities affecting MS Internet Explorer, …….

The intent is to have you run the attached file and

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month

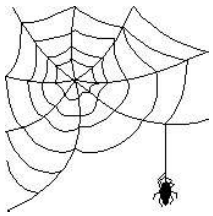


Fontainebleau

From the site http://www.freefoto.com, a large collection of images. This particular image came from the France sub-category of the Europe category.

They describe themselves as "…. the largest collections of free photographs for private non-commercial use on the Internet."

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
GuruNet Reference	http://www.gurunet.com/
Drivers' Planet	http://www.driversplanet.com/
Tallahassee.com	http://www.tallahassee.com/
National Institutes of Health	http://www.nih.gov/
Interview with God (broadband helpful)	http://www.theinterviewwithgod.com/popup3.html
Photo-Guide.Com	http://www.photo-guide.com/
FreePhoto.Com	http://www.freefoto.com/index.jsp

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

GuruNet

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

If you use the Internet as much as I do for searches, definitions, pictures, and just all around reference, then I think I have found a utility program you may be interested in trying. It's called GuruNet and is billed as the ultimate reference tool (http://www.gurunet.com). It has over 100 encyclopedias and dictionaries and works in any Windows program. It's like having a search engine on steroids, but when you perform a search you don't just get a bunch of links to look through, you get a more clear and succinct answer to your search. Click on any word in any program and you'll get an instant explanation of the word.

There is a free version for the download and with it you get the *Basic Reference* that gives you a…

- Dictionary of general word definitions, with audible pronunciations, a
- Thesaurus of synonyms, including related and contrasting words and
- Translations of words from English into 14 languages: Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and Hebrew
- Spell checker
- Just 1-click on *any* word *anywhere*—not only in browsers
- The free version also gives you a seven day trial to the full GuruNet, which gives you the above plus
- Encyclopedia
- Business, finance, investment, company info, etc.
- Advanced reference: history, literature, idioms, acronyms, etc.
- Science/tech: computer encyclopedia, math, genetics, etc.
- Legal dictionary and cases
- Medical and health topics
- Government: U.S. Presidents, Cabinet, Congress, documents
- People: biographies, celebrities, authors, royalty, etc.
- Places: countries, states, cities, stats, flags, weather, etc.
- Religious references: Bible, Old & New Testaments, Islam, etc.
- Leisure: food, recipes, music, movies, TV, etc.
- Automatic translation of GuruNet topics into 11 languages
- Sports
- Shopping
- … and much, much more

There really is too much to try and cover in this article. If you will go here: http://www.gurunet.com/page.pl?p=products_examples and take a look you will see all of the reference material available.

When GuruNet performs a search, it brings up a page with a several tabs on it that breaks down the search into what I call categories. For example, I did a search for the word "computer," and a window popped up with three main tabs. The first, "**Did you mean**" kinda asks me to further clarify the context of the word. The second tab, "**GuruNet Public Library,**" has a host of sub-tabs, such as **Encyclopedia** to give you a detailed explanation of your search and **Sign Language**, if you want to learn how to sign the word. Other sub-tabs include **Products**, **Quotes About**, **WordNet**, **Translations**, **Images** and **News**.

There is a third tab that is "**Search Web**", which is just what it says, your search found on the Internet. Except GuruNet brings back responses from Google, Vivisimo, Teoma and All The Web, all at one time, each on a separate tab with your searched item just a click away.

GuruNet installs a small, unobtrusive Topic Bar just above the clock in the right hand bottom corner on the Status Bar. With one click it slides out and you enter your search criteria and then it slides back into hiding when not in use. And, don't forget you can just put your cursor on any word in any application, hold the ALT key down and click the mouse for an automatic and instant explanation and definition of the word. It can't get too much easier than that!

(GuruNet……..Continued on page 7)

(GuruNet……..Continued from page 6)
Some of the good features of GuruNet are free to keep, whether you get the full version or not. But I think after trying the full version for seven days you just may be enticed to want to have all this power at your fingertips. I was and it has become a permanent feature. Give it a try. It's worth the time for the download. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 5)
thus infect your computer.

Never run an attached file to an email message. And never believe that Microsoft is sending you a message telling you to do so. Microsoft does not send such email messages.

I simply deleted the first 100 or so such messages that came in; then, after an update to my Norton AntiVirus it started intercepting them, and finally my ISP, RoadRunner, started intercepting many of them at the mail server and removing the virus--but still sending a message to me that it had removed a virus for the message. However, all this intercepting did nothing to keep me from being inundated with several hundred such messages each day for the last week. It has slowed a bit, but I am sure that by the end of today I will have deleted over 100 such messages.

One of our members got so overwhelmed in the first couple days of the attack that he simply abandoned his email address for a new one. I really don't have that option. What is interesting is that for several years most of the junk email that came to me came via my NetCom (Earthlink) email address. The RoadRunner one was fairly free of junk email (even though the address is plastered all over several websites and in the Usenet newsgroups). These last three viruses, however, that have bombarded me for the past month or more with up to 350 messages in a day come almost exclusively via the RoadRunner address.

Just think how bad things would be if I were someone who was important and had my email address plastered everywhere. Perhaps, then, I would have to do what another one of our members who uses Earthlink did. She set up an Earthlink feature that only allows people on a list managed by her to send email messages to her. If you are not on the list, as was the case for me, when sending her an email, you get a return email from Earthlink wanting to know if you would like to request to be on the honored list. I responded in the affirmative and was put on the list of acceptable emailers, but you know no spammer or virus sender is going to request such permission--and thus she is safe from them. Of course, some of her friends may opt out also. I don't think RoadRunner has such a feature.

VBA SIG and Outlook Last meeting Kevan Sheridan took us through a tour of Microsoft Outlook showing us many of the features of this contact list, email client, calendar, etc. management program. Many in the audience were quite impressed by its features, especially for those involved in a work group environment where meetings need to be scheduled and the answering of emails needs to be prioritized.

Another interesting aspect of Outlook is the ability to use Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) to program Outlook. Most such programming is involved with automating processes in Outlook or creating customized forms. But in our most recent VBA SIG, I went in a different direction: A routine to retrieve the particulars (Date, Sender, Subject, etc.) of each message in, say, the Inbox and place it in a database. This could actually be quite useful and serve as an accessible backup of your Inbox messages. You put the code below in the Tools | Macro | Visual Basic Editor section of Outlook. Furthermore, in the Visual Basic Editor, you need to set a reference to the Microsoft Office DAO 3.6 Object Library. Finally, you need to create an Access database named OutlookData.mdb with the appropriate fields to accept the data.

Here is the code (you are not expected to follow it unless you have some experience with VBA):

(Comments……..Continued on page 10)

Looking Back to 1993

From the October 1993 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 9/8/93 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

Must be because the new school year has started the number attending this meeting was down a good bit from our normal group, in spite of the fact that we were having a Microsoft presentation on their Windows NT program. Those who were there learned about a great program.

CLUB NEWS

New Meeting Location: This was the most important item discussed in club news area. Recognizing that we have overflow crowds on occasion and that the space crunch is inhibiting growth of the group, the Board of Directors (BOD) has been discussing and investigating potential new locations for our meetings for several months. During the last few weeks Marylee Bruneau, our newsletter editor, has aggressively searched for a new location. Having investigated a very long list of potential locations, Marylee was successful in identifying two that had reasonable prospects, adequate space, a willing host, and a price we could afford. The better of the two is the Ybor City campus of HCC. Our Prez, Harvey Bruneau, brought these circumstances to the floor and solicited reaction from the members present. Several commented, all favorable, with at least two who had attended that campus noting that it is an excellent location with outstanding security. With that, Harvey indicated that the site would be visited and the specifics of the facility would be explored in greater detail. If suitable, his objective date for moving is in time for the February meeting. More at the October general meeting.

INDUSTRY NEWS

- MS DOS Upgrade: MS has version 6.2 of DOS in the works, to be released in the not-too-distant future. It will no doubt minimize some of the problems that have been reported with Double Space, as well as provide improvements in other areas.

- New SmartDrive: Quite a few folks have reported loss of data on shut down when using SMARTDRV in read/write mode. That is reportedly because SMARTDRV may not write to disk for several seconds and those shutting down quickly do so sometimes before SMARTDRV has written to disk. An update of SMARTDRV.EXE is now available on CServ as well as other locations. This version corrects the delayed write problem at shutdown.

- Windows Replacement: Industry news has it that MS now has in Beta testing (or Alpha, depending on which report you read) a program that will be a replacement for Windows. Called Chicago, this program will be much more powerful than Windows and will replace DOS, Windows and Windows for Workgroups.

- Computer Training: Working with computers in the business world and a wide variety of software, Harvey reported on his experience with one source of computer training his firm uses, Executrain. Without going into much detail, which might be construed as a "plug" for Executrain, Harvey reported that the folks there are well-qualified, do a great job of instructing and provide follow-up support. If you need training on any of the many major software programs Executrain provides instruction on, that firm is certainly worthy of your consideration.

PRESENTATION: MS Windows NT 3.1

We were fortunate to have John Jenner, Senior Systems Engineer (Florida) for Microsoft Corporation, join us and give a presentation of Windows NT. He gave a very enlightening presentation. Especially in the early portion of the review of Windows NT, I felt a bit like a fish out of water because I had absolutely no knowledge of networking and client server systems. By the time John had finished, he had con-

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

(1993……..Continued from page 8)
vinced me that it was a super program for network/client server systems.

There are two versions of the package Windows NT and Windows NT Advanced Server. The basic differences between the two center on the size of operations each will support. NT, for example will support two processors, while NT Advanced will support four processors and is an unlimited server. It will also support Mac systems. Both versions are very powerful and loaded with features, only a few of which I made decipherable notes on:

- Compatible with x86-based, RISC based and SMP systems and expanding.
- Compatible with a host of networking options: IBM LAN Server, MS LAN Manager, MS Workgroup for Windows, and TCP/IP networks; and with Banyan Vines, DEC Pathworks, IBM SNA networks and Novell NetWare with some additional software.
- Compatible with a number of "operating systems": MS DOS, Windows, 32bit Windows, POSIX and OS/2.
- Consistent with appearance and functioning of Windows and Windows for Workgroups, and John says that users of these programs are already 80% of the way toward using Windows NT. However, NT has included a feature not now in the other Windows programs, but which we have found so useful in others, a tool bar which provides direct click access to a host of commands.
- A true preemptive multitasking environment.
- Provides an "application interface" and "provider interface" which, among other things, permits otherwise incompatible components to communicate, and it isolates each application so that trouble with one has no direct effect on the others.
- Recognizes and works with FAT, OS/2 and NTFX formatting/filing systems.
- Provides a spectrum of "personal" and "common" security options that are easy to set up, with centralized control of user profiles and actions, which are applied at user logon. Supports up to 2 gigabytes of virtual memory, provides power failure protection with uninterruptible power support and includes built-in backup.

Requirements to use Windows NT on an x86-based system are: At least a 386 computer; will operate with 8 MB RAM, but at least 12 MB RAM is recommended; one HD floppy disk drive; at least 40 MB hard disk space for minimum loading and 80 MB of space for full loading, plus paging space of at least 2 MB, with recommended paging space twice the installed RAM; and VGA, Super VGA or other graphics adapter compatible with Windows NT. A RISC-based system needs more RAM and hard disk space, plus a CDROM drive.

Costs: Windows NT lists for $495, with a $295 upgrade price tag.. Windows NT Advanced lists for $1995. No street pricing was available to this writer.

Many thanks to Microsoft Corporation and John for a great presentation and giving us a look-see at what appears to be a super client server capability, and for the programs you donated to our group. It is all very much appreciated.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Microsoft Corporation (who donated a copy of Microsoft Windows NT and a copy of Windows for Workgroups), our illustrious Prez who secured some other goodies for us during his travels, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are as follows:

M. Kapalas	MS Windows NT
Martin Miller	MS Windows for Workgroups
Steve Hess	Windows NT book
???	Windows NT book
Phillip Ficarrotta	Shirt
M. Kapalas	Cap (times 2)
Jay Reese	50/50 ($58)

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 PM ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Comments…….Continued from page 7)

```
Dim ol As Outlook.Application
Dim ns As NameSpace
Dim myfolder As MAPIFolder
Dim MyDatabase As DAO.Database
Dim MyRecordset As DAO.Recordset
Dim i As Integer

'establish a connection and logon
Set ol = CreateObject("outlook.application")
Set ns = ol.GetNamespace("MAPI")
ns.Logon

'get default Inbox Items folder
Set myfolder = ns.GetDefaultFolder(olFolderInbox)
MsgBox ("There are " & myfolder.Items.Count & " Inbox Items")

Set MyDatabase = DAO.OpenDatabase("C:\My Documents\Access\OutlookData.mdb")
Set MyRecordset = MyDatabase.OpenRecordset("Inbox")

'loop through all the Inbox items
For i = 1 To myfolder.Items.Count
MyRecordset.AddNew
MyRecordset.Fields("Date") = myfolder.Items(i).SentOn
MyRecordset.Fields("Sender") = myfolder.Items(i).SenderName
MyRecordset.Fields("subject") = myfolder.Items(i).Subject
MyRecordset.Fields("Body") = myfolder.Items(i).Body
MyRecordset.Fields("HTML") = CStr(myfolder.Items(i).HTMLBody)
MsgBox (CStr(myfolder.Items(i).HTMLBody))
MyRecordset.Update
Next

MyRecordset.Close
MyDatabase.Close
Set MyRecordset = Nothing
Set MyDatabase = Nothing
```

That is it. See how useful programming can be. Of course, you could do something similar for your Sent Items.

There is no equivalent code for getting the Inbox items in Outlook Express. Outlook Express is not programmable. One time I saw a shareware program that would convert any folder in Outlook Express to a text file (a very large text file in some cases).

You could, however, use my method to put the Inbox messages in Outlook Express into a database by first importing all your Outlook Express Inbox messages into Outlook and then applying my method to the Inbox folder in Outlook. The process could be further refined so that you could write the code to allow you to actually select from the list of all messages a sub collection that you wish to put in the database.

Just a thought What is going to happen to all your old email messages? Are they going to be like old, saved letters that can be read 100 years later. I don't think so. Hard drives will fail. Even if CDs don't degrade (which I think they will), what device will read them 100 years down the road?

If you want to preserve your important messages, you can put them in a database that you

(Comments…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.
City of Tampa's Kate Jackson Community Center

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
Borland
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

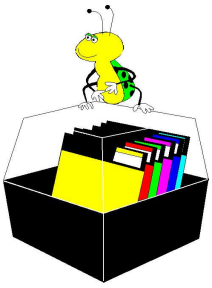
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



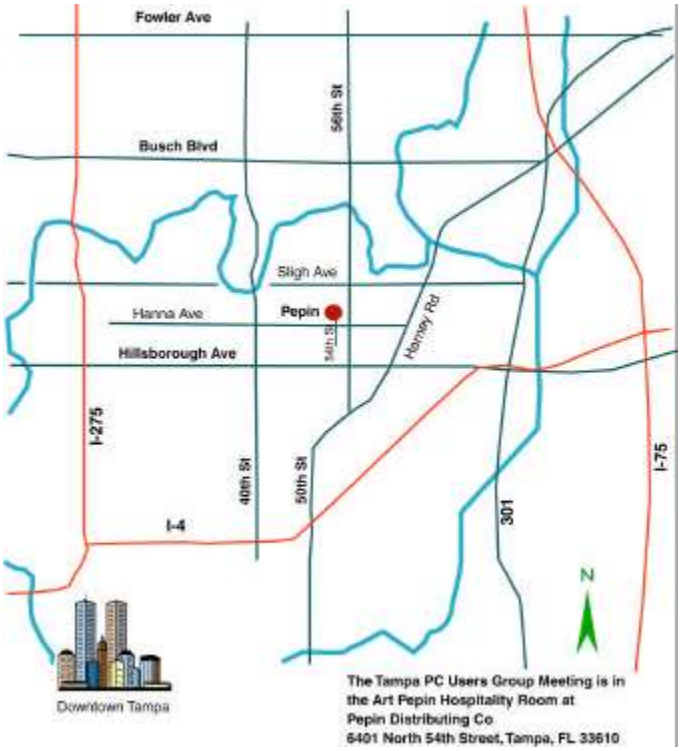
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 10)

periodically import into the latest such program and save the data to CDs which you periodically save to newer media (newer CDs or whatever the newest medium is). Of course, this depends on you being around to keep this process going. Then, on the other hand, you can do the old fashioned thing and print them out on good quality paper and store the paper versions. But, then, you have to worry about the longevity of the ink your printer used. Such worries are never ending.

I wouldn't worry about it much, though, since probably 99.9% of our emails are not of any long-term value anyway. But it is an interesting question. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 11 November 2003

Meeting

Hardware

Wednesday, November 12, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI will present the latest in computer hardware. Preceding the presentation, Kevan Sheridan will conduct the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Junk mail In the past few newsletters, I have complained about all the virus laden emails with sometimes several hundred arriving in one 24 hour period. Well, the viruses are still with me, but the idiotic spam for Viagra, Vicodin, pornography sites, reducing your mortgage, increasing your income, etc. have surpassed the virus-laden messages. It seems like it will never end. As I said in a previous newsletter, at least one member has changed his email address in the hope of missing out on the spam onslaught. Another member says that when he opens his email program on Monday at the office after being away for two days, it takes him an hour to go through and delete all the junk.

(Comments…….Continued on page 7)

December Meeting Topic: Holliday Party.

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the October Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

The beginning of the meeting was spent discussing Microsoft and other areas of interest. We are looking for volunteers for the Tech show in Tampa, in December of this year. This is a good way to keep our name in view and find new members at the same time while getting all the goodies and meeting the local tech types. Contact Mary Sheridan for dates and information if you can help with that.

Our presentation this month was a Norton Ghost demonstration by Bob LaFave. Just in time for Halloween.

Before that he presented a delightful PowerPoint presentation featuring the talking Microsoft Agents.

Norton Ghost 2003 protects your data from computer disasters. The intuitive Windows interface makes it easy to create regular backups of your hard drive. You don't even need to make a boot disk. File restoration is simple from the comprehensive disk image.

We saw:

- How to use the Ghost Boot Wizard to add or modify a Network Interface Card template
- How to clone or make a copy of a computer using an IP connection
- How to create a disaster recovery disk
- How to use a mapped network drive to create and restore images

You'll need the diskette you make to restore your computer if you lose everything, which has been known to happen. You'll want to prepare for that; if you are prepared for an emergency it doesn't happen.

This program allows you to extract a singular record and place it somewhere. You can start and complete part of it and complete the rest later. Other programs

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

Valencia Lakes FACUG Conference

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
patzsch@helios.acomp.usf.edu

At Boynton Beach, we saw an elegant building. No expense was spared to produce a very impressive Club House. Valencia Lakes is a sort of circle of houses around a lake. Each home is quite large and is protected by a guardhouse at the entrance. You drive around the lake to access the clubhouse. There is no way I can describe the giant outdoor pool, the exercise room, the kitchen, the room dividers for the main conference area with its very large stage, and the highest ceiling and stage lighting everywhere. All done in the most expensive way. This is one elegant building. The landscaping is worth walking around to view. My wife and I are not envious of others, but come and see this place.



Don't forget that at these meetings, you can pick up copies of newsletters from all around the state. I spend a lot of time reading these newsletters and going to the URL's that you find in each newsletter. Sometimes I think this is a real plus for attending the conferences.

My wife and I were pleasantly surprised by the breakfast, which was supplied by the Bank of America. Right after we sat around having breakfast and meeting the others, we attended the Bank of America presentation. I was delighted to hear how the software was incorporated into the web site. You may pay bills, check on your accounts, print both sides of a check; and many other features of the software were put on the screen. It is all free because Bank of America believes that the savings to them due to the fact that you do all your banking on the web results in less tellers in the bank. Great presentation. My wife won a very large umbrella in the drawings.

Our next session was the Adelphia people's presentation. We decided on this one because I wanted to get the latest on cable modems, etc. There was not much "new" that we learned, but it is always best to see what the future looks like.

After the Adelphia session, lunch was served. Stuffed chicken breast and all the trimmings made for a great session of chatting with the members.

After lunch, a Palm Beach County Sheriff's speaker told us many interesting stories of how people produce counterfeit money and steal others' identity, and also how they had made many arrests. This is a good idea for future conferences, It is interesting to see what the thieves' computers look like, the ones used in counterfeiting and stealing info on the internet. These men spend years finding ways to outwit the felons.

After the lunch speaker, we went to the session on How to Prepare Programs Without Vendors. I expected this to be boring, but I was wrong. Hewie Poplock presented a clear, neat, complete story of where you can look up information on the internet that will allow your members to make up interesting presentations. Everyone chimed in, and a really good session follwed. Hewie's web site is great. You may see almost the whole session by going to http://www.hewie.net/facug.

The next presentation I attended was on web design. This is always a good session because every club is setting up web sites now and dozens of good ideas are passed around. What software do you use, and how do you make your club look good?

Last, but not least, is the afternoon drawing for the prizes. Everyone gathers around and waits for his number to be called so he can go up and pick out the best of what is left! If this group hosts in the future, I will surely want to attend. ◆

Microsoft Office 2003

By *Mary Sheridan, Member at Large,*
Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

I spent all day yesterday, October 23, at the Convention Center in downtown Tampa. The reason I was there was the Microsoft Office 2003 product launch. I had breakfast, lunch, learned a lot and had a great time. AND, Microsoft will be sending me a full blown copy of Office 2003 Enterprise Edition and One Note 2003 for attending. Does it get any better?

At the event we received a box of Microsoft 2003 evaluation software. Evaluation copies are 120 day trial versions of the various offerings unless otherwise noted. The kit includes: Office Professional Edition 2003 ($499.00*), Office InfoPath 2003 ($199.00*), Office Front Page 2003 ($199.00), Office OneNote 2003 ($199.00), Office Outlook 2003 with Business Contact Manager ($109.00), Office Visio 2003 ($199.00), Office Project Standard 2003 (60 day evaluation) ($599.00), Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003 ($5,619.00), Office Live Communications Server 2003 ($1,059.00), Windows SharePoint Services 2003 (expires with Windows Server 2003) (no pricing available), Windows Server 2003 (180 day evaluation) ($1,199.00) and Exchange Server 2003 ($1,299.00). Whew, that's a lot of money!

Microsoft Office 2003 Professional Edition has the core programs: Microsoft Office Word, Microsoft Office Excel and Microsoft Office PowerPoint. Plus, the professional edition includes Microsoft Office Access 2003, Microsoft Office Publisher 2003 and Microsoft Office Outlook 2003 with Business Contact Manager.

The emphasis of the latest version of Office products is the team environments in the workplace and the ability to collaborate with others. Microsoft lists the ten top reasons to upgrade as 1. Helps employees make smart and timely decisions because of the programs' XML capabilities, 2. Helps companies protect their information with Information Rights Management (IRM) and you can even set expiration



Outlook 2003's Junk email feature

dates for files, 3. Helps employees better manage the information with improved design in Outlook, 4. XML standardizes the collection and creation of information, 5. Helps company groups take advantage of line-of-business applications, 6. Improves performance and user connectivity to email (cached mode saves lots of time when checking email), 7. Shared workspaces help improve teaming and partnering, 8. Support of XML allows custom solutions to be created, 9. Increases security and privacy, and 10. Simplifies upgrades administration and support. The emphasis is giving some power to the end users and taking some of the workload away from the IT departments.

All editions of Office are written for the business environment. There are, however, many nice features added to the new version that any of us could use. I'm out of writing time so I'll just have to steer you to http://www.microsoft.com/office for any additional information.

*Prices are listed on the Microsoft website. Most of these products can be bought for much less at discount dealers. Products do not ship until November 2003. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

only start and go all the way through; if you are stopped midway, you have to start all over.

It makes building multiple machines with the same image very quick; one image can be used for all the machines. Everything in the registry is moved over. One unanswered question remained about the registration of the software.

At the end, Bob showed us some other cool items too: We saw the Google tool bar. It has pop-up stoppers. Check that out.

Be able to open four pages at one time with the Avant browers. Set the browser up, as you want it. It opens pages faster than Internet Explorer.

We had a bunch of door prizes won by the following people.

T-Shirt	Merrill Friend, John Waldon, Bob Davis, Brian Lance
Spell Checker	Peggy Pulliam, Carlos Nogueira
Microsoft Works	John Waldon
Smart Computing magazine subscription	Brian Lance. ◆

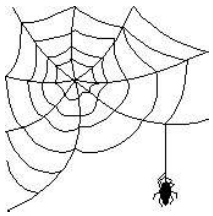
Internet Picture of the Month



Boo Heaven
Trick or treat...or tweed

Photographs by Rodney Smith; styled by Elizabeth Stewart. NYTimes Magazine
http://www.nytimes.com/pages/magazine/

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Museums in the USA	http://www.museumca.org/usa/state.html
Visual Basic Code at vbcode.com	http://www.vbcode.com/
Public Records Online	http://www.netronline.com/public_records.htm
PublicGis a public waypoint forum	http://www.PublicGIS.com
Elected Officials	http://yahoo.capwiz.com/y/dbq/officials/
Hubble Telescope Presentation	http://wires.news.com.au/special/mm/030811-hubble.htm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Helpful Free Utilities & Programs

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

If there is anything I like it's ***FREE*** programs that actually help me enjoy the computer and the Internet. Each of these programs is simple but provides needed information or a task that saves me frustration at times and makes using my computer easier. The most you may have to ***pay*** for any of these is to register with your email and name. The first program stops the frustration of remembering the order of the *Icons* on the *Desktop* after Windows decides to rearrange them all. Have you ever had that happen? You start the computer, or restart it, and all the *Icons* have moved. ***Restore Desktop*** will solve this problem. Go to http://www.softwarium.com and download this small, 78 KB, program and you can now save your desktop positions and return to them if ever mixed up. This program gives you the choice to "Save Desktop" or "Restore Desktop" from the desktop Properties menu. Right click your desktop and those two choices now appear. Set the desktop and click "Save Desktop" and you now are one click away from always having that desktop.

Next is ***CD Tray Control,*** which can be found at http://www.janw.de/software/cdtray and allows you to Eject or Insert your CD-ROM drives with keystrokes from your keyboard. This program is loaded on Windows start, from the Start folder and sits in your SysTray and lets lazy people like me open and close each of their 3 CD-ROM drives without bending over by using the keystroke combinations.

Folder Size Shell Extension allows you see the size of each folder and subfolder of your hard drive. You can go to http://space.dolphin.free.fr and download this program and a couple others. This program gives you an extra *Tab* when you look at the *Properties* of a folder in Windows Explorer; the new *Tab* is labeled "Size". When you click the "*Size*" tab you will now see the size of space that the folder and each of its subfolders take in KB or MB on your hard drive. This is much easier than looking at the properties for each subfolder one at a time. This will also work for a hard drive, just click the "Size" tab, and each directory size will be given. This will take some time for larger drives with more data and folders but it is much faster than looking at each separately.

AIDA32 provides system information on your computer that is easy to use and provides complete information on your computer hardware and operating system. You can download the program at http://www.aida32.hu/aida32-shots.php?type=l and find screenshots of the various task. There are also PlugIns that can do benchmarks on the CPU, hard disks, monitor and network. Using this can save you time in finding out the specific hardware installed in your computer. It will identify most brands and models, from the motherboard, video adapter, memory type, operating systems and much more. You can even get an alphabetical listing of all programs by looking under "*Software,"* then clicking the *"Installed Program*" icon.

Fresh Devices at http://www.freshdevices.com has three programs, but I will mention just "***FreshDownload***." This download utility is as effective as any I have looked at and is not ad supported. I have a dial-up connection and I have used this program on many downloads where I needed a resume feature. If the sight supports the resume feature, you can save yourself from restarting a download if the connection is cut. I have downloaded files as big as 700MB using this program. For those with cable or DSL you can have up to eight simultaneous connections at a time. It interfaces easily with IE such that you can turn it on and off easily. It allows you to schedule downloads at a time convenient to you and much more. Be warned that this site does send you email notifications almost weekly. Before you can download you do have to give them a valid email address on which they send the download link back to you.

Belarc Advisor at http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html is a PC auditor***. Belarc Advisor*** builds a detailed profile of

(Utilities……..Continued on page 7)

(Utilities……..Continued from page 6)
your installed software and hardware, including Microsoft Hotfixes, and displays the results in your Web browser. You can then save the results so that you can keep track of your system and installed software, or you can also print the results from within IE. The software audit will supply you with the software versions and licenses when possible.

WCPUID stands for Windows CPU ID and can be found at http://www.h-oda.com for downloading. WCPUID is a program that displays the CPU information of your personal computer and also shows Frequency, Multiplier, Chipset Info and more. You can use this program to determine the CPU for almost any computer.

For anyone who does not have the installation CD's or diskettes for the hardware on your computer, you can use ***WinDriversBackup*** to create that information in case of emergencies. You can download it at http://www.jermar.com. "WinDriversBackup" can identify all of your Windows driver files and save them to a secure location in two simple mouse clicks. Backing up your Windows driver files means they will be available to you the next time you need to reinstall the driver or the whole operating system. WinDriversBackup places the driver files in one organized location of your choosing. WinDriversBackup is especially helpful in situations where you have a computer in your possession and its internal hardware is unknown. WinDriversBackup can identify the hardware on the system and the associated drivers, then back them up to a specified location. WinDriversBackup is even network compatible -- you can just as easily connect to a remote computer on your network and backup driver files. There is both a ***FREE*** and a ***paid*** version, but the ***FREE*** version will be sufficient for most.

Next is a site that you can download 1,000's of programs from different categories. Go to http://www.webattack.com/freeware. What I have done is just pick a category and then surf to see what programs are there. If you see an interesting program, you can find out more specific information both from a review there or by linking to the author's site for more complete information. They give a rating on the program and supply when a program was updated and screenshots when available. There are so many places to find programs that it would be impossible to name even a small number of them. I have tried to give a few that I have found very useful and have not presented any problems for me. When I do find an interesting program and I am deciding if I want to risk it, I always go to ***Google*** and run a search on the program name to see if there is any additional information on the web about the program. This way I have luckily found programs that I can actually use that I feel safe installing up to this time. Good luck in your travels. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

A couple of weeks back I checked the catch-all email account at my domain name. It is the one that receives all mail directed to webmaster, admin and any name that doesn't exist. It had 3,000 plus messages and was taking up 16 MB of space. A check right now showed only 631 such messages. All of this is such a strain on email servers--and our patience.

To make matters worse, now some of us are having our emails rejected by receiving email servers. Using my RoadRunner account, I sent a message to a member at his office. It was bounced back to me saying that the server rejected emails from this address, meaning from RoadRunner. Within a few hours of that, I received an email from another member on RoadRunner wanting to know why four messages she sent to Verison accounts were bounced back with similar messages. I told her that apparently RoadRunner IP addresses, or at least a

(Comments……..Continued on page 10)

Looking Back to 1993

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 10/13/93 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

HE DID IT AGAIN? I'm not sure how he does it, but our Prez arranged another biggie — and that's what we had, ANOTHER BIGGIE! It was a great meeting, with the focal point being an IBM presentation on OS/2, Ver. 2.1, and we had a good crowd to enjoy and benefit from the evening.

Having assumed the duties of manning the door, I missed the first 20 minutes of the meeting, and therefore missed a good bit of club and industry news Harvey discussed --but I didn't miss it all.

CLUB NEWS

Software Reviews: Harvey informed all that the newsletter listed vendor products (mostly software at present) our group had received for review. All members are eligible to participate. The individual benefits because he not only learns new products, but also acquires ownership by completing a good review. The group benefits by becoming informed on the latest software. Harvey noted that timely submission of a review on what has now become a perishable product is essential, and those members wanting to participate in the review program must be willing to provide a comprehensive and honest review of the product not later than the agreed time. All members are invited and encouraged to participate. Those desiring to do so should contact Marylee Bruneau, newsletter editor.

Education & Information - Principal User Group Purpose: Yes, that is the primary purpose and function of our user group -- informing and educating all of our members on all aspects of using a PC and related software and hardware and of new developments in the industry. We accomplish that purpose in a number of ways -- through the newsletter, exchanging information at our meetings, vendor and in-house presentations, SIGs, etc. We are adding a new way to this list, and would like to add another:

Help Line: The last newsletter began implementation of our newest effort -- a "Help Line". The Help Line is a listing of members willing to help other members who might need help with specific software or hardware products. The persons listed need only have a working knowledge of the products and need not be "experts" on the products they are willing to support. All members are encouraged to participate -- since we all need help from time to time, the more we have to help through the help line, the better off we will all be. Those willing to join in should post a note to Marylee Bruneau on the BBS, by telephone, at a meeting, or by mail at the address on the newsletter.

Tips & Techniques: Harvey suggested we start a section in our newsletter devoted to this subject -- a place where members could share with others in our group hints and tips they have uncovered that they have found helpful in using a particular piece of software or hardware. We have seen these helpful bits of info in other newsletters and computer-related publications. With inputs from all of our members, a tips & techniques section in our newsletter should prove very helpful for all of us. Submit your inputs to Marylee Bnmeau (or any group officer) via the BBS, or as above.

Fund Raising Ideas: While firm decisions have not yet been made, your Board of Directors has been working toward finding a new meeting location to better accommodate our growing membership. Any relocation will likely require our group to own or rent most, if not all of the computer equipment now being graciously provided by IBM for our use at our general meetings. Yes, we are talking $$$$$ -- and quite a few, at that. We need your ideas and suggestions on ways to raise the funds we will need -- and we need to raise those funds rather quickly inasmuch as we will probably relocate early next year. PU-LEEEZZEE give your ideas and suggestions to any of the officers listed on page 2 of the newsletter, or message one of them on the BBS.

Upcoming Presentations: Harvey has lined up some more big guns in coming months, including

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

(1993……..Continued from page 8)
some of our own: Off-line Express and BBS operations in Nov., Computer Associates in Dec., Word Perfect on WP 6.0 in Feb., and CorelDraw in Mar. are among them. They are all good -- and beneficial. Don't miss a single one if you can help it; I have found them all interesting and rewarding.

PRESENTATION -- IBM's OS/2, Ver. 2.1

We were fortunate to have Dennis Hanson, an expert with IBM on OS/2, join us and give a presentation of IBM's OS/2, Ver. 2.1. He gave an excellent presentation on their newest version of their software package, Version 2.1. It is a large and very powerful package. An overview of such a program is the most that we could expect in the time available, and Dennis did that superbly well. Just listing the features would take pages, but here are a few of them:

- Breaks the DOS 640K barrier. DOS has been the most widely used platform for the PC for many years now, and we have been confronted with that conventional memory barrier all that time. OS/2 eliminates that barrier and makes all the available RAM and most of the available hard disk space available for use as RAM.
- Provides true 32-bit capability, and the list of software being written to take advantage of that capability is growing.
- Full preemptive multitasking/multi-threading, with full speed for each. Memory is allocated to programs on the basis of need, up to the limit of RAM and disk space. If one has enough RAM and disk space, OS/2 will support up to 240 DOS sessions, with each allocated a full measure of memory and operating at the same time.
- Will operate DOS, Windows 3.1 and OS/2 programs simultaneously in any mix, with the capability to copy information between them all, and provides DDE between Windows and OS/2 applications.
- Uses IBM's System Object Model and is truly object Oriented.
- Fully supports DOS and Windows 3.1 applications and eliminates the need for DOS and Windows, though those systems may be retained if desired.
- Can eliminate the current problem of often having to shut down Windows and all Windows applications because of a GPF in one. In fact, IBM recommends that a Windows window be opened for each Windows application you start so that any GPF will cause a problem for only the application in which the GPF occurs.
- Uses the High Performance File System, which is faster than the FAT system and provides other benefits, such as a maximum of 250 character file name. One problem here at present is that if one uses more than the traditional 8.3 character file name, DOS based systems will not recognize the file.
- Includes REXX programming language and the capability to write and modify applications.
- Provides full multimedia support, and provides software-only sound and video. It uses three threads to synchronize sound and video. Dennis demonstrated some of the capabilities of OS/2, overall and multimedia in particular, when he operated two multimedia windows simultaneously while running several other applications at the same time, all of which operated at full speed. And, OS/2 includes the tools needed to write multimedia applications.
- Supports and uses True Type and Adobe Type I fonts.

That scratches the surface of its many features. Well, what does it take to use all that power? Start with a 386, preferably with a 40 MHz board, though a slower board may be used. OS/2 will operate with 4 MB of RAM, but 8 MB or more is recommended. Hard disk space between 15 and 30 MB, depending on the features you load. It provides support for just about any popular monitor or printer.

And what does it cost? OS/2 lists for $149, with a $99 tag for a DOS/Windows upgrade -- and that includes just about everyone. You can find street prices several dollars less. For the kind of power you get, that is a pretty darned good buy.

One member raised a question of how to determine compatibility with OS/2. Dennis gave a number of sources and ways to determine that, including the IBM forum on CompuServe, the IBM BBS, and contacting IBM directly. A side bit of info, recognizing that many people are now using disk compression programs: The only compression program that I have

(1993……..Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1993…….Continued from page 9)

heard of so far that supports OS/2 is Stacker. There may be others, but I know of some that do not. Check it out.

To IBM, MANY THANKS for lending us Dennis and for the programs you donated — you have been very good to use right along. And, Dennis, you gave a superb overview of a super program and we are in your debt. THANKS MUCH!

AND THE WINNER IS:
Thanks to the generosity of IBM (who donated 5 copies of OS/2, Ver. 2.1), our illustrious Prez who secured some other goodies for us during his travels, along with the 50/50 cash drawing, there were some very nice raffle prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win include:

D.A. Clary	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
C. Kincaid	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
Wil Goble	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
Jim King	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
Steven Atran	OS/2, Ver. 2.1
M.N. Martinez	Fastlynks 2 software
Gary Peterson	Mentor Notes
Tom Hoffe	$81

In addition, 5 folks won T-shirts, 3 folks won Computer City mouse pads, and 10 folks won a book on OS/2. Add all of that up and you come up with some 26 door prizes. WOW! The meeting adjourned at about 9:20 PM. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 7)

block of RoadRunner IP addresses, were on somebody's "don't accept email from them" list.

And really, that is all it takes. Some guy who doesn't bathe regularly, detests Microsoft and business in general--not to mention his professed hate of spam--sets himself up as the protector of all, creates a database of IPs from which to not accept emails and offers it to the public, possibly at no charge since he hates business. Apparently RoadRunner is on such a list.

Then, there is the problem of your Inbox being so crowded with messages--200 or more in may case per day--that in deleting what you think is spam, you inadvertently delete something of value. I did that earlier in the week apparently, and it has caused a major problem in rescheduling things for next week now that I know from a phone conversation the contents of that email.

To me, the current email problem is much more of a problem than the unwanted phone solicitations for which we now have a don't call list.

Programming and old photographs Those of you have read my offerings over the years know of many of the things I have placed at my web site, http://www.lamartin.com. One was an ASP search

(Comments…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.
City of Tampa's Kate Jackson Community Center

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
Borland
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

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TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

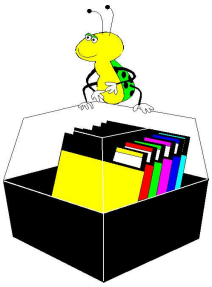
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

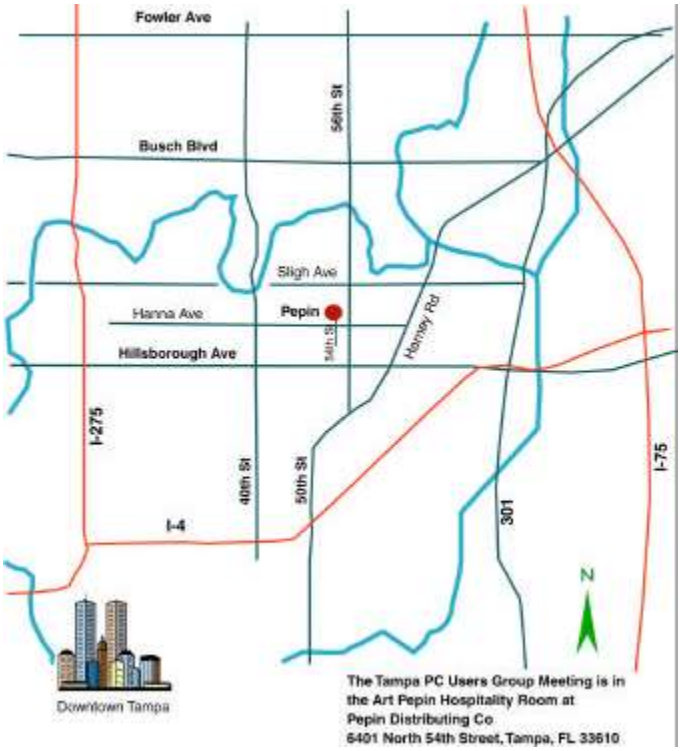


First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 10)

feature and front-end for the Burgert Brothers collection of old Tampa photographs of the Hillsborough/ Tampa Public Library. It is at http://www.lamartin.com/burgert/. I have now updated that to a modern Microsoft .Net version at http://www.lamartin.com/dotnet/TampaPhotos.aspx. Here you can browser the photos ordered by date or do a textual search. The difference is that here the results are returned with thumbnails of the images and the speed of the data return (at least for me) is faster than when using the earlier ASP interface I had created. I am finding that .Net makes programming for the web much easier than in the past. To see more examples, go to http://www.lamartin.com/dotnet/. There you can get the latest news, talk with the web psychiatrist, do a cost of living comparison, check the weather and much more. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 16 No. 12 December 2003

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 10, 2003
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: No presentation this month; it's party time. We will also have the annual election of officers. We might also find time to conduct the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Election In addition to our party, we will elect officers for 2004. At present only the current officers are on the ballot. They are:

Kevan Sheridan	President
John Witmer	Vice President
Peggy Pulliam	Secretary
Mike Hodges	Treasurer
Mary Sheridan	Member-at-Large

Articles The newsletter needs your articles. We have a small newsletter, so we should be able to fill it with material from our members--but not without your help. Tell us about

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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January Meeting Topic: Dave Dabney from LC Technology on Data Recovery

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Vice President : John Witmer (JWITMER@Pepindist.com) 963-3760
Treasurer: Mike Hodges (mphs@aol.com) 962-2114
Secretary: Peggy Pulliam (pegrance@yahoo.com) 253-0438
Member at Large: Mary Sheridan (mcpease@mindspring.com) 988-6480

APPOINTED (Volunteers)

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Librarian: Larry Anders (Larry@AndersNet.com) 989-9119
Programs: Mary Sheridan (mcpease@mindspring.com) 988-6480
Membership: Mike Hodges (mphs@aol.com) 962-2114

Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the November Meeting

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

The meeting started with the usual Windows discussion.

Steve Singer from RDI, Inc. then presented his annual talk on what is new with computer hardware. It is something the members always look forward to, and Steve gave his usual knowledgeable and entertaining talk.



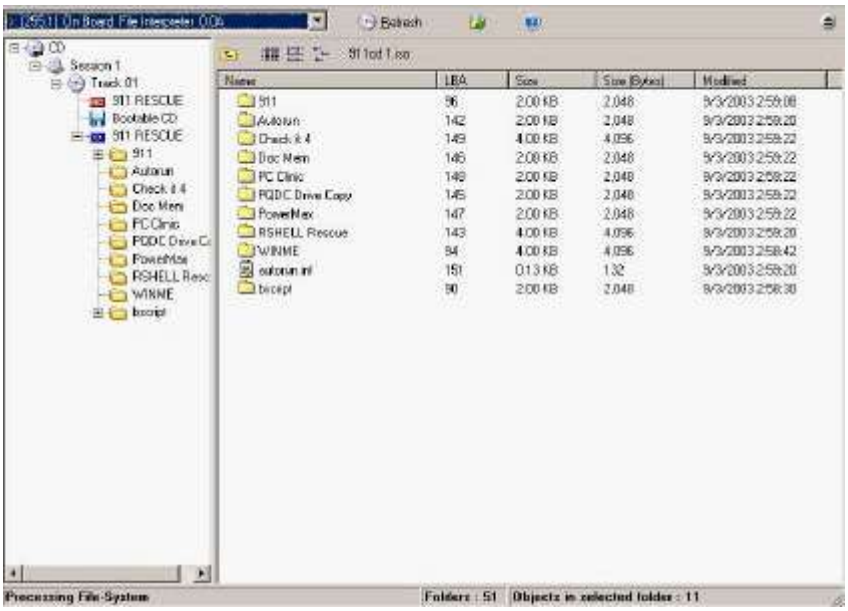
Steve Singer

He started by passing around his personal digital assistant, which is also his cell phone, for attendees to view. He followed this by discussing the various types of memory, motherboards and processors that you can now purchase to either upgrade your existing computer or build a new one. He placed a couple of the motherboards on the central table and passed around two AMD processors so that we could have a closer look.

I must admit I was a bit lost in all the technical details he gave us in describing the various motherboard and processor options. If you want to talk computer hardware, Steve's your man. Steve's site for retail sales is http://morevalu.net/. ◆

IsoBuster for CD/DVD Data Recovery

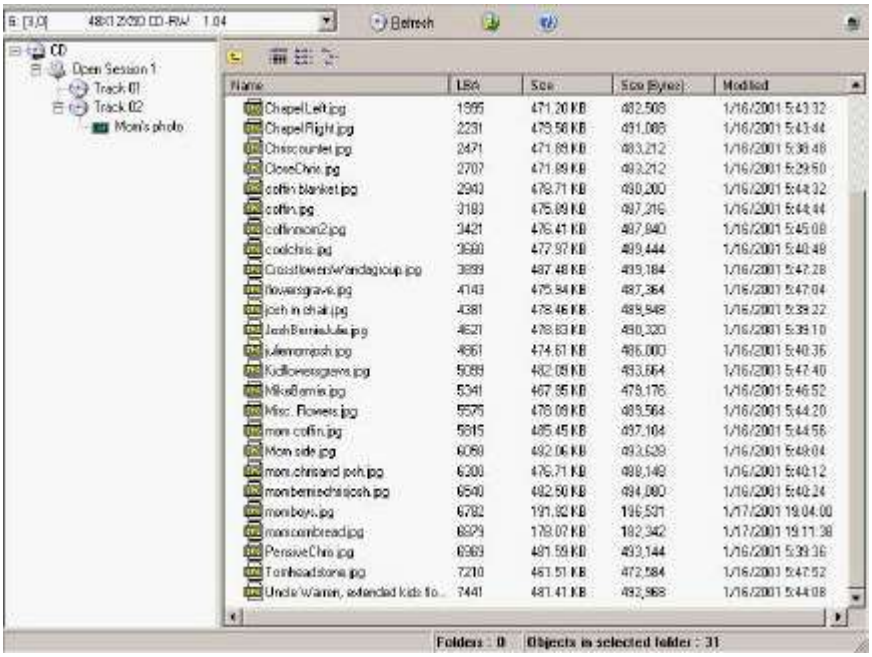
By Bob Lafave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net



Contents of an ISO File

I had started to use ***IsoBuster*** a couple years ago when I had downloaded my first .ISO formatted files. The .ISO format files are actually images of complete CDs compiled as one whole image, just like ***Ghost*** images do for hard disks and partitions. ISO images can be loaded into several different CD recording software packages to create CDs. I wanted to see what was inside these files without burning to a CD and also wanted to see if I could then extract specific files for my use. I also use GameDrive, which creates a virtual CD-ROM on your hard drive and stores the CD's in a .VCD format. ***IsoBuster*** can extract the data from both .VCD or .ISO files and allows you to explore the individual files and directories. As you can see from the screen capture, the interface is very similar to Windows Explorer or even Ghost Explorer; you open the files in the left panel showing directories and the more specific information is shown on the right. These are just a few of the file formats that you can work with and for a complete list please go to http://www.smart-projects.net. Little did I know what this program is able to do other than interpret these images that I was using.

I had started looking at data recovery from different computer storage methods as a subject I wanted to find more about. I had made a few CD-R's that I could not view with Windows Explorer and I was interested in if data could be seen by something other than Windows Explorer. Who hasn't gone and deleted a file accidentally and hated having to try and remember how to recreate the file or prayed to be able to find a backup copy. And what do you do if you back up the file to either CD or DVD media and when you go to retrieve the file Windows Explorer does not recognize your backup CD disc? Besides, what do you do if the data is, say, a picture that was taken with a digital camera and transferred to a computer for use? Sure you made a copy to a CD-R but that was 2 years ago and now the hard drive on the computer died and your memories on the CD-R are not recognized. Thankfully there is IsoBuster!



Data that IsoBuster found on CD-R

I wish to thank Peter Van Hove, the CEO and founder of Smart Projects. I had e-mailed Peter with my inter-

(IsoBuster……Continued on page 4)

(IsoBuster……Continued from page 3)

est in the data recovery and had asked for permission to review a full version for TPCUG and he was kind enough to send a registration id. Little did I know that shortly after I had activated all functions, my sister would call to tearfully tell me about her computer problems. When she sent me the CD, I placed it in my CD burner and I tried to use the undelete program that comes with Norton System Works 2003, but it does not recognize CD's. I then looked at the CD-R in Windows Explorer and with ***IsoBuster***. Windows Explorer did not recognize the disc, let alone tell me if any files were on the CD. With ***IsoBuster*** I was able to see actual file names of photos that my sister said were on the CD-R. I looked at Help and found out what to do to recover the files and easily was able to recover all photos. At that point I was very happy that I had e-mailed Peter the month before and when I let my sister know that the photos were recovered, you cannot believe her happiness.

Each reader should go to http://www.smart-projects.net and see what this program can help with. The individual features available are too numerous to list but put simply: ***IsoBuster*** uses different recovery methods and can recover most data on CD's if you can see it in the program window when inserted into the CD-ROM drive. The site itself has lots of interesting information on the program that, along with the included Help file, makes ***IsoBuster*** easy to use. There is a ***Free*** version of the program that will do certain tasks such as show you what is contained in an .ISO file; and a ***Full*** version that is a wonder at data recovery from CD/DVD that you may have burned yourself or even CD's that you may have purchased. The full version can be purchased online for $25.95 and a registration code is sent via e-mail. As Peter wrote to me, "**The difference is that for files in the UDF file system (e.g. CDs written with Roxio Direct CD or Ahead InCD, or ...) extraction won't work until you are registered.**" To see what others users think of ***IsoBuster*** you can go to http://www.smart-projects.net/reviews.htm and follow the links to other reviews that have been done. If you don't purchase a full version, I am sure many of you will find uses for the free version along with a couple of the other programs that are on the site. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

your computer triumphs and failures.

Amazon Purchases at Amazon.com through our web site like have fallen drastically. Either people are not purchasing from Amazon or, as I suspect, they are forgetting to get there via the link at our web site. If you fit that profile, please remember the TPCUG when you intend to visit Amazon.

Viruses The viruses and junk mail are still filling my inbox. It is down somewhat from previous months, but it is still always between 100 and 200 such messages per day.

1993 I hope you get some value from the reprinting of the articles from 10 years back. Personally, I enjoy recalling how things were in PCs then. Usually I run the minutes of the meetings since that recalls the meetings. This month, though, I went with a very long President's Message where then-president Harvey Bruneau describes his trip to COMDEX, which back then was a much more important event than now, and offers his predictions for the future. Did they come true? Read the article to see what they were.

Send an email card Continuing with my investigation of things .Net I have come up with an example of sending those ubiquitous email greeting cards. If you go to the Visual Studio .Net link on my http://www.lamartin.com, you will now see an option to "Create a Card." There you will be able to combine your brief text into an HTML type email message with a photo selected from a few of the "tourist-type" photos that I have taken over the years and then send it to whomever you choose.

If I could find a free spell-checking web service, I could also run your text through a spell check before the card is sent. I hadn't really thought about one until now. A quick check in Google Groups for the items: spell check "web service" produced a message in a Usenet newsgroup that said Google itself had such a free service in Beta that would allow up to 1000 free Google searches per day, and it included a spelling check.

(Comments……Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

I just signed up for a Google account and already figured out their web service. It is a very simple service that returns what it considers the correct spelling for a phrase that you submit to it. Right now I don't know how long of a phrase you can submit, since it appears that for more than just a sentence or so, the last part of the phrase doesn't get corrected. So, perhaps, soon I will find time to incorporate spell checking into the card.

Google has to be one of the great resources of the web. Most of you know about using Google for the web to locate information on the WWW. But, I think few of you realize that, when doing a Google search, if you select the Groups tab instead of the Web tab you will be accessing the many years of Usenet newsgoups where people have been discussing any topic imaginable.

I use the Groups section almost like a Help file when I am programming in any of the languages. If I am looking for an example of how to do something in Delphi, Visual Basic, or one of the new Visual Studio .Net languages, I can often find it faster in Google than in the particular program's own Help file. As they say, "Google is your friend."◆

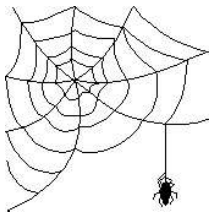
Internet Picture of the Month



Springtime Cypress

From the site Cracker Cowboy Enterprises at http://www.floridacowboys.com/Artwork.htm. If Florida artwork is not your thing, then how about a Florida cow whip sold at the site?

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida Electronic Library	http://www.flelibrary.org/
Mount Vernon	http://www.mountvernon.org/
Karl's Mortgage Calculator	http://www.jeacle.ie/mortgage/
Gawker	http://www.gawker.com/
Answers That Work.Com	http://www.answersthatwork.com/home_page.htm
Free Printable Greeting Cards	http://www.mycardmaker.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Windows Media Center Edition 2004 goes PrimeTime

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

Well, it's almost Christmas again and if you're thinking of purchasing a new computer for the family, let me give you a suggestion or two. Microsoft has recently released a second rendition of its digital media operating system, Windows XP Media Center Edition 2004 [MCE]. I originally wrote about MCE back in our May issue of this year. That article can be found here: http://tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2003/May2003/media_center_pc.htm.

As a reminder, MCE is a superset of Windows XP Professional with additional features allowing the user to access the operating system's digital media features through the keyboard or via an included remote control. Microsoft does not currently sell the software separately, although I purchased my HP 854n Media Center PC last March and received my upgrade a couple of weeks ago from HP free of charge. Consumers must buy a Media Center-equipped PC to obtain the entertainment-based MCE. The media center PC is built around the included TV Tuner and the digital video recorder (DVR) for recording TV shows to the PC's hard drive. Replaying a recorded DVR segment of video in MCE is very similar to what you can do with a VCR. What is different in MCE is a TIVO-like function: being able to pause, rewind, and skip ahead live video. But now in MCE 2004, you can also do it with radio broadcasts.

You can digitally record an entire TV series or program category [educational, kids, lifestyles, movies, news, sports, etc.], watch DVDs and videos, organize and play your music collection, or showcase your digital photos. And, you can do all this from the couch, or your favorite chair, by just picking up the remote control.

It is no secret that Microsoft is trying to move the computer out of the den and into the family room by merging the television and the PC. With most PC distributors offering the larger 42-inch plasma wide-screen TV monitors, with the media center PCs it can easily replace the family TV. I have mine set up in our den [home office] with a 5.1 surround sound system and a 19" flat-panel monitor. I also have a couch opposite my TV and have MCE optimized for viewing from up to10 feet away. If I didn't already have quite an investment in the TV in our family room, I could see this computer setup easily relocating in there. Maybe in the future, but for now, I'm satisfied with my media center PC being located in our den.

I could take most of this newsletter to tell you about all of the features built into MCE but it's easier for you to go here: http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/mediacenter/ and check it out for yourself. It's worth your time.

The one thing I was disappointed about with the original version of MCE, and now 2004, is that Microsoft had not built into the operating system the ability to create DVDs or video CDs from your digital recordings without going to a lot of trouble and a couple of conversions in the process. In the first edition of Microsoft Windows XP Media Center Edition, Microsoft introduced the *.dvr-ms file format. Similar in format to *.asf, the *.dvr-ms file enhancements allow the creation of key Personal Video Recording functionality, including such things as time-shifting [record for later viewing], live pause, and simultaneous record and playback. Until now this file format would not allow for direct recording of the saved video. But… enter ***Sonic PrimeTime™.***

PrimeTime is the first [and only] application designed exclusively for, and which integrates into, Media Center PCs. PrimeTime allows for DVD or Video CD burning of saved videos with just a few clicks of the Media Center's remote control. Once installed PrimeTime integrates a "*Create DVD*" button directly into the Media Center menu so that you can create copies of your recordings on standard DVDs or CDs that can be played back on virtually any set-top DVD player.

PrimeTime creates discs that are compliant with OpenDVD specifications. A PrimeTime rewritable

(Windows……..Continued on page 10)

Looking Back to 1993

From the December 1993 Bits of Blue

President's Column by Harvey Bruneau

We made it. Marylee and I survived yet another week of COMDEX/Fall, the largest and best known computer show in the country. This show had more than 2000 exhibitors from around the world showing their products to over 170,000 attendees. It can be overwhelming if you try to visit the six main sites. But hey, it's a passion and my job, damn the feet, full speed ahead.

Imagine a computer show spread out over the Tampa Convention Center, the Thunder Dome, Curtis Hixon Hall, the Performing Arts Center, the Sun Dome and the Bayfront Center but contained within a two mile circle and you begin to get the picture. All of these Tampa Bay sites still could not contain all the vendors of COMDEX/Fall. In addition to that imagine walking in to a computer show with 2000+ exhibits manned by the employees representing each specific product where you can ask questions or view live demos.

COMDEX/Fall is also the place and time of the annual user group summit meeting put on by the Association of Personal Computer User Groups. This meeting is the world's largest gathering of user group leaders and officers. The summit provides officers with an opportunity to share ideas to effectively run, maintain, promote and enhance a user group. This year over 300 officers attended. Additionally, the officers attend a meeting to recognize user groups that have developed and implemented community service programs within four specific categories: Education and Training in America's Schools, Education and Training for the Economically Disadvantaged, Medicine and Health and Social and Civic Welfare and Improvement. This award program is known as the Computer Industry REACH (Recognizing Exceptional Achievement in Community Help) Awards and is sponsored and funded by some well known companies including Ziff-Davis Publishing, Microsoft and Apple. This year five groups were recognized for their achievements. From helping the visually impaired and disadvantaged inner city residents to developing and supporting a 200-node wide area network for the U.S. Olympic Festival '93, all groups showcased what can be done with an idea, volunteers and the willingness to share their time and knowledge. These groups were each awarded $15,000 to apply to their specific projects. Three of these groups are no larger than ours which shows that a group does not have to be a large group to provide a worthwhile community project.

The summit is also a chance for user group officers to meet and listen to national vendors and see their products on a more personal note. This year over 45 vendors, from the big vendors like Microsoft, IBM, Lotus, Hayes, Adobe and Borland to the smaller ones like Cambell Services, askSam Systems, GST Software and Mustang Software, sponsored roundtables, breakfast meetings, luncheons and receptions to promote their products, share their vision and answer questions. The Microsoft reception is always my favorite. It's not just because of the great food that Microsoft provides us with, it's the visit and presentation by Bill Gates himself. No transparencies or slick computer multimedia presentation, no suit or tie, just plain old English from a podium. Bill shares his thoughts and vision of the computer industry, Microsoft and this year NAFTA. He then opens the floor to questions from the audience. Bill is at ease as usual around 300+ user group officers which at times can be a bit testy. During his one hour visit he was enlightening and humorous. Of course his competitors may tell you otherwise.

Following are my thoughts, opinions which I compiled from COMDEX/Fall.

MOST PREVALENT

This year CD ROM disks were everywhere. This inexpensive medium will be a standard for distribution of PC related items by the end of 1994. This

(1993……..Continued on page 8)

(1993……..Continued from page 7)

not only means distribution of software like MS Office, Novell 4.0 and Corel, but consumer products like educational software, magazines and technical CDs full of information and references. Imagine over 600Mb of data on a CD, no diskette shuffle when installing a large program. Several vendors were showing off a new way of distributing software through a try before you buy approach. Even Gateway is selling this idea. You buy a CD from a vendor with over 40 leading applications on it for you to try. If you like one or more products you call the vendor and give them a credit card number and voila they send you the manuals and give you the key to unlock the program(s). Ziff-Davis issued their first copy of PC magazine on CD at COMDEX. It's different reading a magazine from your monitor than from your favorite lounge chair. However, I can imagine one day when the computer can read the article off the CD to me via a sound card and some software while sitting once again in my favorite chair.

The down side of this technology is the selection process of buying a CD ROM drive. There are too many choices and variations. Each drive has a specific function. Before you buy determine your needs. Do you want to just be able to install software from CD, do you want to use it for occasional access to graphic libraries or reference materials, or do you want to use it for interactive entertainment, education and, yes, even medical diagnoses. At a minimum and if you can afford it, look for drives that have: access time of 300ms or less, dual speed with a transfer rate of 150Kbps to 300Kbps or higher, SCSI interface, support the High Sierra and ISO-9660 standards and are MPC compliant. Remember that a lot of CD drives may not come with the required interface card. Ask before you buy. If you already have a standard SCSI card or sound card with a SCSI connector in your system you may be able to attach your new CD drive to it.

The ever-growing abundance of CD titles will make CD ROM drives a necessity not just a specialty item. Just as the 3.5" diskette drive evolved, CD ROMs will evolve and become a standard in PCs replacing the 5.25" diskette drive.

VERY PREVALENT

PCMCIA, those credit card size computer cards that go inside notebooks and sub-notebooks, are increasing their versatility. In addition to memory, FAX/modems and network PCMCIA cards which have been around awhile, there are now: SCSI, sound, and 100+ Mb hard drive PCMCIA cards. Eventually desktop computers will be fitted with PCMCIA slots to accept all these cards. Imagine adding or replacing these cards on your desktop without the hassle of pulling off the cover or messing around with jumpers. I did see one company, DATA 110 1-800-332-8246, that was selling interfaces designed to use existing PCMCIA cards on your desktop. One version allowed connection through the parallel port while a second version installed in an empty drive bay. I found this product to be WAY COOL! One concern I have about these small PCMCIA cards is that they will be vulnerable to damage and theft.

NEW STANDARD

Look for Intel Corp.'s Peripheral Component Interconnect (PCI) Local Bus to become the high performance desktop Bus standard of the future, however long that is. With a following of at least 150 industry leading companies the non-proprietary PCI Local Bus will supersede and replace the VESA Local Bus currently being used in many PCs today. I am sure you are thinking, "Great, now you got ISA, EISA, MCA, VESA and now PCI--when will it end?"

NOT TOMORROW

After seeing and talking to vendors about Windows NT V.34 (V.Fast) and the PowerPC it became evident that none of the products are ready for prime time, YET.

Windows NT is available today as a network operating system, but as a desktop operating system it needs work. Many vendors within the Microsoft floor space were showing their products running un-

(1993……..Continued on page 9)

(1993……..Continued from page 8)

der NT. However, quite a few were showing non-shipping products. It made me wonder how much of those products demos were done with smoke and mirrors. It should take Microsoft about a release and a half to get the product usable as a desktop OS. Of course the Chicago release of Windows will be out before then and many individuals may be satisfied with it instead. I must admit that some 3rd party vendors were extremely ecstatic about Windows NT, even to the point of showing me NT instead of their products. I believe that this kind of dedication is a positive sign for NT.

IBM and Apple displayed their PowerPCs at COMDEX. Neither of which is available today or tomorrow. Look for these PCs to be available in quantity during the final part of 94. These new PCs will give Intel a run for their money if they can get the product to market. The benefits of the PowerPC is that it will run just about any operating system including DOS, Windows, NT, OS/2, Solaris, Workplace OS and IBM's new AIX version 4.x. Of course at this time that's what the marketing people are telling us. V. WHAT?

Hayes, Microcomm and Practical Peripherals all demonstrated very fast modems. All of course were non-standard. The new high speed non-standards demonstrated were: V.32 turbo at 19.2Kbps and V.Fast class (V.FC) at 28.8Kbps. The standard that you and I want is V.34 (V.Fast) and is stated to be approved by the newly named ITU-T (formerly CCITT) in late 1994. Can I put some more acronyms in this article? In order to use any of these high speed protocols (V.32 turbo and V.Fast class (V.FC)) you must have the same vendors modem on the other end. Unless you have immediate needs for this high speed and you are sure that the modem you connect to is similar, you should wait until the standard is approved. Hayes stated that you could buy their V.FC modem today and pay for the upgrade to V.34 when it becomes a standard.

AND MORE

Microsoft has at least three new products that provide more functionality than their predecessors. The new mouse driver for the MS Mouse, Windows for Workgroups 3.11 and version 2.0 software of the MS Windows Sound System are worth upgrading to.

Adobe has a real HOT PROSPECT with Acrobat. This family of software will allow you to send fully formatted documents as a file - containing distinctive typefaces, color, graphics and photographs created on your computer - to other computers, regardless of the hardware platform, operating system or application software used to create the originals. Receivers will in turn be able to print, view, annotate and store the document on their own system. I hope to be able to use this software to produce a complete file copy of the newsletter for distribution through the BBS.

Compaq will be bundling a slick replacement product, Tabworks, for the existing Windows program manager with their PCs. Tabworks uses a familiar look and feel. If you can imagine a three ring binder with tabs you will understand this simple idea. This interface provides a very clean looking desktop thereby reducing that group icon clutter. Simply place your groups on the tab sheets and your desktop screen looks like your junior high notebook. While Compaq did not write this product they will have sole distribution rights for one year before other vendors offer it.

The above only represents some of my thoughts and opinions which I wanted to share with you. If time permits I will share additional items at the December meeting.

At this time Marylee and I wish to thank the APCUG, all the sponsoring vendors and Dun & Bradstreet Software for a successful COMDEX.

STILL MORE... NON-COMDEX COMMENTS:

Please come to the December meeting to vote for YOUR CHOICE. Your vote will determine the officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) for 1994 and whether to keep the 50/50 door prize. Read the secretary's report for a current list of

(1993……..Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday (this is a change)** of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1993…….Continued from page 9)

nominations and details about the 50/50 door prize. Your vote is important. If you have any additional nominations there is still time to make them at the meeting prior to the vote.

Many of you will notice a renewal slip in the current newsletter. Please take the time to fill it out to renew your membership. The $20 investment is the best PC investment for the money. Of course you will also be helping our group. As you should be aware by now we will be changing our meeting site in February. Our new home will be the Ybor room of the HCC campus. By the time of the December meeting, I will have signed a contract for the use of the Ybor room through the end of 1994. It will be the first time in the past five years that our group will be charged for meeting space. The board of directors and I felt that in order for the user group to grow and flourish we needed to move to larger facilities. HCC was one of the few sites that satisfied our needs.

Unfortunately, we do not have a computer or projection equipment to put on a presentation. HCC currently does not have the equipment we need either. I have contacted some of the local vendors for a donation or to see if we can barter for a PC. On the positive side, no vendor said NO, but more importantly none said yes. I will continue to pursue this with the vendors. Specifically, we need at least a 486/mhz DX with 120 Mb hard drive, 4Mb RAM and VGA monitor. The current cost for the PC is around $1500. If you can help us to acquire a PC or even the parts to build our own please contact me. The big ticket item is of course a video projection panel like the Proxima ColorWorks or the InFocus PanelBook 450. These are the inexpensive models and are priced around $3500. If you have added the amounts of the equipment, we are looking at around $5000. Once again if you have an idea on how we can borrow, rent or acquire these items give me a call. I can be very humble. ◆

(Windows…….Continued from page 6)

disc may be revised without access to any of the original source files that went into creating the existing material on the disc. If the existing disc is a re-writable format, Sonic's Edit-on-DVD™ technology allows the changes to be written directly back to the same disc without first transferring the entire project to the hard drive. PrimeTime uses high-quality MPEG-2 video encoding allowing up to 4 ½ hours on one DVD. Dolby Digital is also converted to a much tighter compressed PCM format to save space but still receive cinema-quality sound.

I have created both DVDs and Video CDs [VCDs]. The DVDs are of excellent quality and sound, while the VCDs leave a little to be desired, but considering you can buy a CD for as little as twenty cents in quantity, you may be willing to forgo a little quality. I personally use re-writable DVDs for most of my recording. That way, at some point in the future I can

(Windows…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.
City of Tampa's Kate Jackson Community Center

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
Borland
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

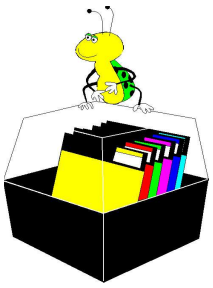
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492

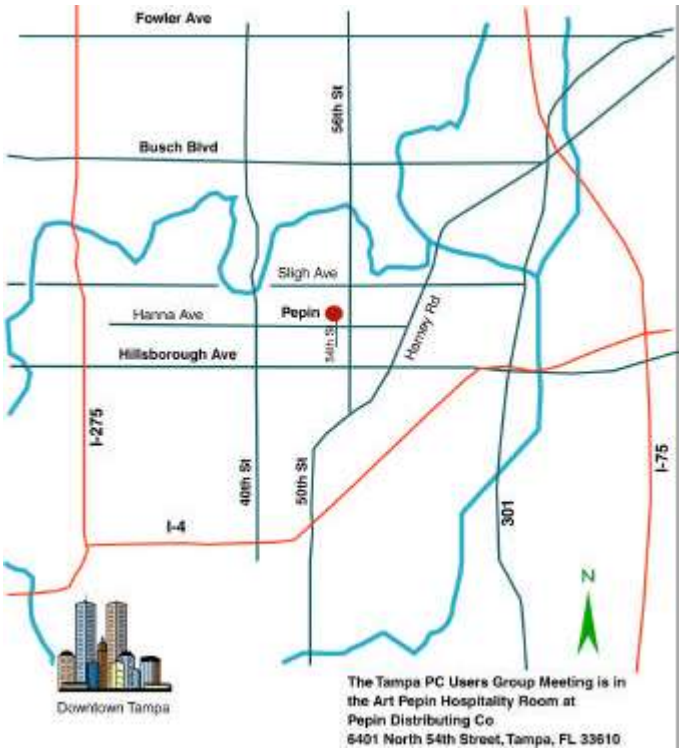


First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Windows…….Continued from page 10)
always reuse the DVD. Hopefully soon Sonic will also allow you to burn Super VCDs and the quality should get better. Oh yeah, it took about one hour and fifteen minutes to burn a one hour program that I had previously recorded, and I did it all from my couch.

I was impressed with its ease of use and its integration directly into MCE. There were no surprises during installation and not much reading before I was burning my first DVD. PrimeTime retails for $79.99 and is an indispensable tool if you're an owner of a Window Media Center PC. You can find out all you want to know about PrimeTime here: http://www.ravisent.com/products/primetime/default.asp. Keep up the good work, Sonic, and … Merry Christmas to all! ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 1 January 2004

Meeting

Data Recovery

Wednesday, January 14, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Dave Dabney from LC Technology will give a presentation on Data Recovery. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Digital Camera My Canon G1 digital camera is now three years old. It is hard to believe that it has been that long since I purchased it along with a 340 MB IBM Microdrive. The price of the camera was about $900, and the Microdrive was $302. See my original article in the newsletter about the camera at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/january2001/canong1.htm.

It has cost me about $400/year to own the camera so far. Oh, there was also the replacement battery at around $45. I have taken 4,867 photos with the camera and saved 3,463 of them. A quick calculation shows that it has cost $.36 for

(Comments……Continued on page 2)

February Meeting Topic: Check our web site for future information

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the December Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

Our meeting was festive and fun. We started the meeting and introduced the officers, who are the same for the coming year: President, Kevan Sheridan; Vice President, John Witmer; Treasurer, Mike Hodges; Secretary, Peggy Pulliam; Member at Large, Mary Sheridan. The rest of the Holiday Party consisted of good camaraderie and lively discussions -- and the food was delicious, with shared dishes and desserts.

Your Board is happy to serve again and looks forward to a New Year of surprises and shared information. We are glad to say that the meeting room at Pepin Distributors is available for the coming year on our meeting nights. It is easy to find, and we have plans for informative and interesting meetings the second Wednesday of each month in this NEW YEAR 2004!

Include some Computer Usage and new computer-trick learning in your plans for a successful and happy New Year. Join us. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

each saved photo (including the price of the new battery). It has cost $.25 for each photo taken. This is probably no cheaper than using a film camera, and at this point with the digital camera I only have a file--not a printed photo. But, oh, the convenience.

I get very good results scanning the negatives taken with my film camera into digital images on the computer, but this is nowhere as convenient as simply downloading photos from the digital camera

(Comments……..Continued on page 4)

Review of ClipMate 6.2 [Clipboard Extender]

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
larry@andersnet.com

For all that Microsoft Windows operating system is and all the utilities that have been added to it over the years to make it all-encompassing, one thing that has always been missing is the ability to work with multiple clips. The clipboard in Windows is based on a FIFO [first in, first out] design. If you want to work with more than one clip at a time or some clip you made several days ago, you're out of luck. But not with ClipMate.

You don't have to work with just one piece of clipboard data any more. ClipMate enhances the native clipboard functionality by remembering all items (both text and graphic) that are copied to the clipboard and storing them in "collections" for later pasting. ClipMate works seamlessly as a Windows companion and you will never accidentally lose a piece of clipboard data again. ClipMate's new relational database can hold hundreds or thousands of clips - of all formats including Text, Graphics, and HTML. And with ClipMate's SQL-based search engine, you'll be able to find your data, and the Shortcut feature keeps your most-frequently used clips right at your fingertips.

Having access to thousands of previous clips is a good thing if you can find the data that you're looking for more easily than typing it again. With **QuickPick**, you can "filter" the titles in the current collection by merely typing the **"?"** key, followed by some text [not case sensitive] that you expect to find in the title of a clip. As you enter each keystroke, the list is updated to show your "hits" up at the top. Keep typing to narrow down the search.

Similar to QuickPick, the **Shortcut** function searches "shortcuts" that you assign to important clips (such as your Visa card info), i.e., V for Visa or M for Mastercard, D for Discover, etc.). This data does not even have to reside in the current "inbox" collection. Shortcuts work across collections and



even databases (if you use multiple databases).
It is fully integrated with **QuickPaste**, so simply picking the item that you want and pressing <ENTER> will enter your data automatically. Then by invoking QuickPaste again, choose another item to enter, etc... The selection remains "live" until you cancel it with the ESCape key.

Clips are saved to the database immediately when captured or edited. Images are stored in the database as JPEG objects, further reducing space and speeding retrieval. Deleted clips are held in "trashcan" status for two weeks, allowing easy retrieval. You can optionally encrypt sensitive clips with 56-bit ARC4 encryption. This is great for passwords, credit card numbers, etc., if your computer isn't always physically secure.

You can encrypt clips with a "blanket" encryption key, or you can do them all individually, but, don't forget your key! The security is so good that even the developers of the software cannot break it, and there aren't any back doors. So, if you lose or forget your key, your info is encrypted for good!

You can now search by title, body text, the name of the creating application, the source URL, data types, dates, encryption status, deletion status, and more. For example, you can search for all Bitmaps created by PaintShop Pro within the past 30 days. And you can SAVE that query, so that you can run it again sometime. The queries run quickly, and the results sets look just like a regular collection. You can print, delete, QuickPaste, etc., from the results. And if you view the results in ClipMate Explorer, you'll see a new column showing the collection that each clip is currently assigned to.

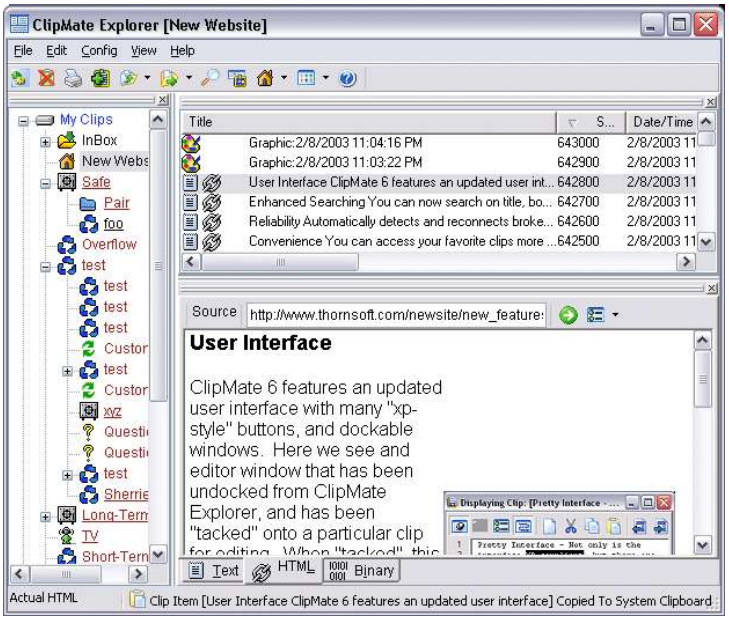
In addition to the standard windows screen capture

(ClipMate……..Continued on page 4)

(ClipMate……Continued from page 3)

keys (PrintScreen for the whole screen, Alt+PrintScreen for the current window), there is also **Area Screen Capture** that gives you a "rubber band" mouse selection, so you can specify an area of the screen to grab, and **Object Screen Capture** - similar to the above, but you simply click on any screen object, and that object is captured as an image. For example, click in a browser window and you'll get a picture of the contents of the window - but not the toolbar, menu, titlebar, etc.. Click on the toolbar, and you'll get an image of the toolbar. Some will find it a bit odd - others will find it to be a lifesaver, as it can save a lot of clean-up that you'd otherwise get with an area capture.

I've only touched on a few of ClipMate's capabilities. Thornsoft Development has been improving upon ClipMate since 1991. I suggest you go here: http://thornsoft.com/viewlets.htm and check out the tutorials available on this site to see the ease of use and some of the things possible with ClipMate. I have to say that I think this is probably the most useful add-on to Windows that I have ever used. I had absolutely no problem paying the $25 registration fee for this fine program, but you don't have to pay to try it out. Go to http://thornsoft.com and download a fully operational trial copy and see if you don't agree with me. You can convert the evaluation version to the fully-registered version at any time during (or after) the 30-day evaluation. Give it a try! ◆



(Comments……Continued from page 2)

into my computer. The film camera undoubtedly produces better images, but the G1 does a quite adequate job if you don't want to produce a print larger than 8 x 10 and you avoid harsh lighting conditions like very bright sunlight. The G1 actually does quite well in low light situations. To see some of my low light shots with the G1 go to http://web.tampabay.rr.com/lamartin/ and view the holiday light photos of my neighborhood. The photos range over the last three years.

Canon is now producing the G5, I think. Several of our members own G3s. These cameras cost more than your average digital camera, and, I suppose, they are aimed at the advanced amateur--and they produce excellent results. I recommend using the highest resolution and least amount of compression in taking the photos. That way you get the maximum amount of information. Hard drive space is cheap. Then you can put any photos you would like prints of on a CD and take it to your favorite one-hour photo place for printing.

Remote Desktop My son visited us for the holidays and every day spent some time accessing his computer in New York City via the Remote Desktop feature of his NYC computer running Windows 2000 Server and my daughter's computer running Windows XP Pro. When he left Manhattan, he left his computer running and connected to the Internet through a DSL connection. He noted his IP address on the Internet and hoped that the connection did not go down and come back with a different IP address.

Once in Tampa, he went to my daughter's laptop and started the Remote Desktop Application (Start | All Programs | Accessories | Communication | Remote Desktop) . He entered the NYC computer's IP address, and since the computer in Manhattan had been configured to accept Remote Desktop logins, he was asked for a username and password. After logging on, he was working on his home computer. He could start programs on it, work with any files, and run Outlook to send and receive email from his computer--not the one in Tampa. Of course fast broadband connections are vital for this kind of work.

(Comments……Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

When we traveled to my hometown to visit my mother and sister, he wanted to access his NYC computer from there. My sister has a broadband connection on a computer running Windows 98. That was fine. All that was needed was to go to Microsoft and get the requisite software to allow her computer to be a client computer for a Remote Desktop setup.

Note that any computer running Windows 98 or higher can function as a client for a Remote Desktop Connection. However, the computer that you want to access remotely (the server in the setup terminology) must be running either Windows 2000 Server or Windows XP Pro--that is XP Pro, not Home). That was one reason that I wanted my daughter's new laptop for college to have XP Pro as the operating system. I had hopes of being able to access her computer at her request to help with any problems she may be having with it. Unfortunately when I tried to access it via a Remote Desktop Connection at her school, I found out that the school wouldn't allow that.

Web Logs That's web logs--not WebBlogs, which seem to be all the rage. A web log is a text file that logs all of the visits to a web site. It is something

(Continued on page 7)

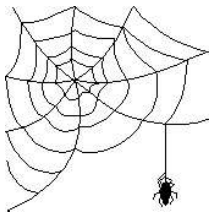
Internet Picture of the Month



Mars Rocks

This is a small detail from the first color image of Mars taken by the panoramic camera on the Mars Exploration Rover Spirit. It is from the NASA site, http://www.nasa.gov.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
LC Technology International (Presenter)	http://www.lc-tech.com/
Academic Discount Software	http://www.micromaster.com/
Overlawyered	http://www.overlawyered.com/
Picture Phone comparisons	http://www.freedom-mobiles.co.uk/mms.html
Spybot-S&D - remove spyware	http://www.safer-networking.org/
National Review Magazine	http://www.nationalreview.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

E-mail Talker

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

Julia Rolling of Scorpio Software offered ***E-mail Talker*** to the TPCUG for trial use to review its operation. I wanted to look at this program because, as many members know, I am interested in both the MS Agent and Speech technology and I have used programs with the animated Agent characters in the



past. The features on ***E-mail Talker*** can be viewed at http://www.scosoft.com/Product.htm and can be downloaded, 3.55 MB in size, for a FREE 21 day evaluation period at http://www.scosoft.com/Download.htm . After the trial period, registration is required for $19.95 under U.S. and international copyright laws.

Installation went smoothly, and upon Windows restart the program was set to start and run in the background with an icon placed in the Systray. This can be changed under Options with the General Tab if you decide against running the program at all times.

You can determine which gesture the Agent character uses when appearing and what he says. The Character tab sets up which Agent character you use, the speaking voice used, and the font used to display the text being read. With the Time tab you determine if you want the time announced in an interval you choose, with the character voice and gestures also being determined by you. The Anti-Spam tab allows you to set filters with words of your choice so as to not read messages containing objectionable words. Some settings allow you to *Preview* the settings that you are choosing.

Under Accounts, you set up your Hotmail or POP3 e-mail accounts that you would like to check. There is no setting limiting the number of accounts. You do need to know your basic e-mail account user information during setup. You need to know: email address, your password, the email server name and login name.

After finishing this setup of accounts, I was ready to see what ***E-mail Talker*** could do. It is very similar in appearance to the split screen that most users are used to with e-mail programs, a screen to show total messages and another screen to show what a specific message contains. You control what gets read from the header, subject and message content to the body text. Also, you will only get printed text read by the program; text that is contained in graphics is not read. This is actually kind of ***FUN*** to listen to. You get to set the voice type to normal, monotone, or whisper. Then you can set the speed and pitch of the reading voice until you can get a voice that is easy to understand and more human than machine in likeness. I had variable results with the e-mail part that can be split into whether I was using it for Hotmail or POP3 mail. I had pretty good results with Hotmail but sporadic use with POP3.

Hotmail worked much as expected and according to the settings I had made during setup. The program correctly got the current mail in my Inbox in Hotmail and read each message that was understandable. If you look at the main screen you can see that there are buttons to either *Skip* or *Stop* a message being read. These buttons are very useful with Spam and with some work you can set up the Anti-Spam feature to also stop undesirable messages. POP3 was never to my liking in its operation. I would have three messages shown from the account, and upon checking with Outlook Express I would find that I had other messages not acknowledged by ***E-mail Talker*** or

(E-Mail Talker…….Continued on page 10)

(Comments……..Continued from page 5)
that the server software does. A web log lets you know what is really happening at your site--what are the most visited pages, what time of the day is most active, how many visits on a particular day, the IP address of the visitor, and what pages get none or few visits. For the TPCUG.ORG site and my personal lamartin.com site, the web logs run close to 10 MB each for a month's data. For a commercial site, it could be more than that for one day's activity.

To make any sense of all this data you need log analyzing software. At one time I bought some such from Web Trends, I think. It was their scaled down version, and it made nice graphs, but it did not allow you to see past the first 10 pages in any category--the most visited 10 pages but not the 11th or 12th. So I created my own log analyzer in Microsoft Access.

Using my log analyzer, I have that for the month of December, 2003, the TPCUG site had an average of 155 unique visitor sessions each day and the lamartin.com site had an average of 234. The TPCUG site used only a total bandwidth of .25 GB, and lamartin.com used 1.4 GB (many more images downloaded). At the TPCUG site, Internet Explorer made up 58% of the page views, Netscape Navigator made up 1%, and other browsers and web crawlers made up the remaining 41%. At lamartin.com, Internet Explorer registered 75%, Netscape Navigator 1%, and other browsers and web crawlers 24%. So, at least at these two sites, Netscape Navigator is basically a nonentity. What I mean by a web crawler is something like the Google Bot which visited 761 different pages at the TPCUG site in December. That is how Google knows what is at the TPCUG site. And that brings the following to mind.

ASP.Net and Google As noted above, Google periodically visits web sites like our TPCUG site and indexes many of the pages there. It can do this because it can follow the links that are given in the underlying HTML on any page where it lands. On web pages created by ASP.Net, you may or may not have such links in the underlying HTML. It just depends on how you allow the user to browse to other pages. If you use regular hyperlinks, then everything is fine for Google. It sees them in the underlying HTML. But what about those buttons I use to access other pages at the .Net Test at TPCUG? Go to the main .Net test page at http://www.tpcug.org/Main.aspx and do a "View Source" in your browser. You will not be able to find a single link to another page at the site, I believe. So what are Google and all the other web crawlers going to do? I don't know.

.Net Speaking of the .Net version of the site, for which I placed a link on our home page, I want to thank those who tested it to see how well it displayed in browsers other than Microsoft Internet Explorer. They pointed out several problems in displaying the page properly, and I was able to trace the problems to errors in my code that, when corrected, made the pages display correctly in all browsers tested except Netscape Navigator 4.7.

Santa If you are observant you can tell that I am stretching this article out to fill the newsletter. If I had gotten that third article I asked for, I wouldn't have needed to be so long winded. Now that Santa has come and gone perhaps some of you will have some articles for me on what he brought you for Christmas. As for myself, this is probably the first time in a long time that Santa brought me no computer-type present. I was hoping for a new laptop since my current one is five years old, but I received none. Santa undoubtedly knows best--probably has inside information on drastic price reductions in the near future on such items. Indeed, I have noted some real good prices on laptops with the specifications I want in the CompUSA ads. They were from Compaq and Toshiba, I think. So far, it appears that Gateway has not lowered their prices on the 450 series much if any since we bought one from them for my daughter in August. ◆

Looking Back to 1994

From the January 1994 Bits of Blue

Secretary s Report
MINUTES OF 1218/93 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

The meeting began a few minutes late at 6:10, led by our illustrious Prez, Harvey Bruneau, with a modest representation of members present and several visitors. Important user group business was scheduled for the evening, along with a presentation of an intriguing software program.

USER GROUP NEWS

Elections: The floor was opened to any additional nominations for the five elected positions on the Tampa PC Users Group Board of Directors. None were offered, the nominations were closed, and preparations for the election began. A motion was made, seconded and approved by the majority present that those persons nominated for positions for which there was no opposition be elected in block to fill those positions. There were three nominees for the position of Vice President: Michaline Ostrowski, Don Patzsch, and Al Poole. Two votes were taken, with the first narrowing the field to two nominees since the first vote did not produce a clear winner. Those elected to serve through December 1994 are as follows:

President	Harvey Bruneau*
Vice President	Al Poole
Treasurer	Tom Cone *
Secretaay	Jim Clark *
Member at Large	Roger Waters*

* = Sole nominees

50/50: A decision was taken by the membership during the November meeting to take a vote at this meeting on a motion to eliminate the split of money collected for the door prize drawings, with the user group instead retaining all of the funds to help offset our need for funds to finance our relocation and other needs. A vote was taken on the motion and it carried by a large majority: At this meeting and all future meetings, all funds collected for the door prize drawings will be retained by the user group.

New Meeting Location: Harvey announced that beginning with the February 1994 meeting our meetings would be held at the Ybor City campus of the HCC. A map was included in the last newsletter. While equipment arrangements had not yet been completed for that site, the facilities are excellent and the normal meeting agenda would obtain, including a vendor presentation.

Software Reviews: Harvey announced that he and Marylee had obtained a number of software programs at Comdex for review by our group. A listing of the programs available will be posted on the BBS and in the next newsletter. Please contact Marylee Bruneau about any of the programs you would like to review.

Adobe Acrobat Explained: Harvey informed the membership of a BOD decision to acquire a license for Adobe Acrobat readers for all group members. Adobe Acrobat allows converting the output of most major programs into a common format, retaining all formatting characteristics of the original document, allowing all computers with a reader to display and printout, if desired, any document as it was originally created, whether or not the viewing computer has any of the software tools of the creating computer. Not only will this be a considerable convenience to our members and group administration, but also it is expected to lead to considerable savings in distribution of the newsletter.

Meet Your BBS: A number of our group took advantage of an offer by our SYSOP, Kevan Sheridan, to meet the Bits Of Blue BBS at the site of the BBS computer. Kevan explained a bit about the BBS and answered all questions with demonstrations where appropriate. It was a very interesting and informative session for all participants. Kevan received enough feedback from those participants to know the eve-

(1994……..Continued on page 9)

(1994……..Continued from page 8)
ning was worthwhile, and accordingly has scheduled another Meet Your BBS Night, the third Wednesday in January. It may well become a regularly scheduled event. Come to the meetings and/or watch the BBS for more current info on this.

Caution In Buying CDs: Low cost CD's are flooding the market, many of which are not worth their few $$ price. Harvey advises that you look before you leap when purchasing CDs; even a cheap CD is a waste if it is not useful.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Word 6.0 Bugs: A number of bugs have shown up in the recently released Word for Windows 6.0. Microsoft has announced there will be a release in February to correct these problems.

28.8 Modems: Harvey informed us that these modems which use parallel ports are now available from at least two vendors. Cost is in the range of what the 14.4 used to cost.

Sound Technology: Summarizing his readings from articles on the subject, Harvey reported that sound technology was now on the fast track and we could expect in the not too distant future that a vocal interface between user and computer would be a lot more practical.

PRESENTATION askSam for Windows, Ver. 1.0

Philip Schnyder, President of askSam Systems, favored us with his presentation of their software program, askSam for Windows. We have been hearing a good bit about that program for awhile now and I, at least, have really not known what the program is about, only glowing words that it is a great program. BUT WHAT IS IT?? Philip was here to answer that question. A very simplified answer is it is a very powerful, super-flexible, very user-friendly information management/database program. I now understand why it was so much of a mystery for me, because even after having seen a demo of the program I am having considerable difficulty coming up with description for you. What I can tell you for sure is that it is a great program.

Designed with a view of doctors, lawyers and others who deal with random information which they need to retain and be able to quickly recall when needed, askSam is a free form information management system. While it can be used pretty much as a conventional database to retain and recall structured data, its greatest value lies in its ability to store and recall information in unstructured form; that is, input information of just about any size and shape randomly into the same database and then be able to quickly recall that information in usable form, using a single or many criteria, and in a wide variety of formats and views. How fast can it retrieve? Philip says they have tested: With a 486/3 3 using DOS 5 and Windows 3.1, it took 15 seconds to search a 5.2 Mb data base. (I am not sure that this is useful information since timing is affected by so many variables, including criteria, format, available memory, etc.) In any case, the demo I saw was fast.

I was too intrigued with the program to get many notes. I did note the following: The limit on the number of criteria one can use in searches is unknown at present, but is well in excess of that one is likely to ever need; each record can be up to 300 pages (yes, three hundred pages) long; supports OLE of text and graphics; supports direct imports of ASCII, RTF, Word Perfect and dBase/FoxPro formats; exports in ASCII, RTF and CDV. Features not yet a part of the program, but which are in the works, include a spell checker and the ability to conduct multiple data base searches. Philip recommends a 386 machine with 4 Mb of RAM to run the program, though it will function with lesser capability. The program requires 2 Mb of hard disk space. askSam lists for $395, with a street price somewhat less than that. Those present at the meeting were given the opportunity to purchase the DOS or Windows version at a great savings for $125. Phil explained that the DOS and Windows versions are essentially the same, the differences in summary being that the Windows version is somewhat easier to use, while the DOS version has a few more options. Phil, we THANK YOU VERY MUCH

(1994……..Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday (this is a change)** of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1994…….Continued from page 9)

for your visit, for a great presentation of a super program, and for the copies of askSam you donated for our door prizes. You have a real winner in askSam. We look forward to your next visit in our new quarters.

AND THE WINNER IS:

Thanks to the generosity of askSam Systems, which donated two copies of askSam, and to Brainchild Computer, who donated a copy of MS Word Assistant, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Tom Church	Cup
R. W. Davis	MS Word Assistant
Bill White	askSam (DOS)
Tom Schroeppel	askSam (Windows)

The meeting adjourned at about 9:00 PM. ◆

(E-Mail Talker…….Continued from page 6)

find that some messages where incomplete. I worked with support via email, and we never found a reason why I was having this trouble with POP3. Support sent troubleshooting information and files for me to try and after 2 weeks of correspondence I was left with:

"Thank you for your help in solving your mailbox checking problem. We tried hard, but have no positive results. We cannot guarantee that E-mail Talker will work perfectly on email accounts like yours. We plan to include modifications to the next version of E-mail Talker, which will help to work more stably on such POP3 accounts. The release is planned for the beginning of December. The current version (ver. 3.30) works perfectly with Hotmail accounts as well as with POP3 accounts, which meet all requirements of RFC 1939 Post Office Protocol - Version 3 including realization of optional POP3 commands."

I did ask to be included in any testing that I could do with the new version and will write a new article if I am asked to test.

The other features that the program has are announcing the *Date*, *Time*, or using the *Clipboard* feature. By pressing the date or time you get the chosen character to say just what the date and time are as set in your computer. The Clipboard feature allows you to copy any text that you choose to the Windows Clipboard feature and by pressing the Clipboard button the selected text will be read back to you.

This program is what I consider a fun luxury program since it does what other programs are designed to do and adds or deletes features from the programs that we use now. This program adds the use of the Agent characters and voice, but you lose accuracy

(E-Mail Talker…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.
City of Tampa's Kate Jackson Community Center

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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Corel Systems
Intuit
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PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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Check the address label for your renewal month

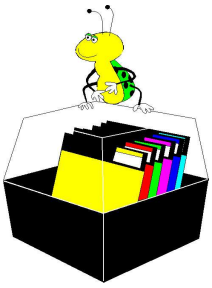
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



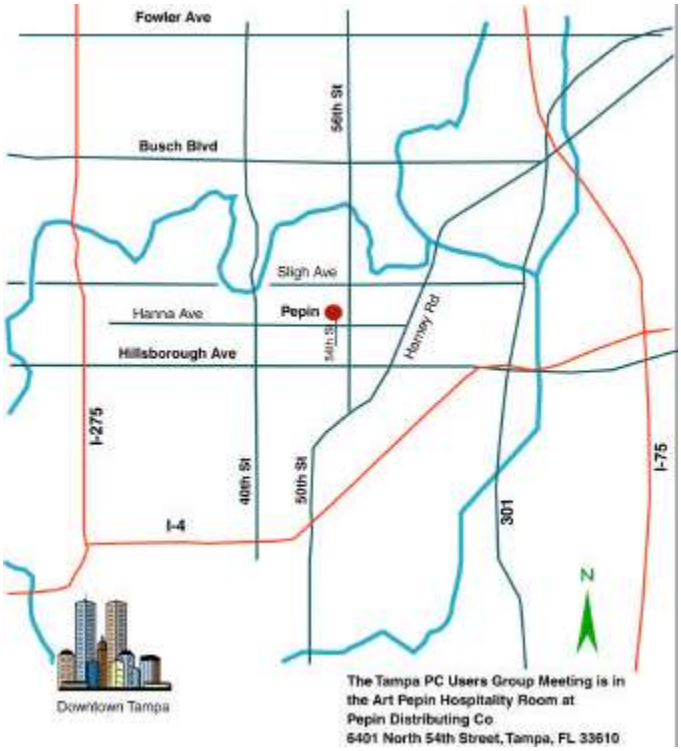
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(E-Mail Talker…….Continued from page 10)

when checking your mail. I cannot currently trust what is read and would always check the email accounts using the more conventional methods that I have used until now. This would have to be done anyway in this version since *E-mail Talker* only checks and reads the current contents of the Inbox in both accounts that I set up. The other folders that are in the accounts are not accessible that I could determine. You also need to use the normal method to delete the messages from the server. After I would check e-mail with *E-mail Talker* and deleted a message, I would still need to use my normal method to delete the message from the server.

I like this program and hope that I get a chance to see improvements in its current operation. I think this program could be very useful not only as a fun program but also more importantly as an aid to anyone with limited eyesight who would like to use some computer features and specifically e-mail accounts.
◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



February in Tampa

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Vol. 17 No. 2 February 2004

Meeting

Software for Consideration

Wednesday, February 11, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Dave Whittle will present the software of several companies he represents. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This is a full newsletter this month, so there's no room for more than a very short note from your editor. That is the way it should be most of the time.

Dave Whittle will be demonstrating new versions, I presume, of some of the software he showed us on his visit last year for panoramas, 3D slide shows and databases. I actually used two of the titles I bought from him at that presentation, and you can see the results at http://www.lamartin.com/virtual.htm. There are three virtual tours and two 3D displays.

My HP ScanJet 5370 Cse scanner died last month and was replaced by an Epson Perfection 3200 Photo Scanner. So you'll probably be seeing a review of that next month. ◆

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March Meeting Topic: PowerQuest – Approaches to Backing Up your Hard Drive

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the January Meeting

By Mike Hodges, Treasurer,
Tampa PC Users Group
mphs@aol.com

Our Member at Large, Mary Sheridan, opened the meeting in her inimitable way and provided us an invaluable update on the current PC viruses and remedies and the after-effects of certain spy-ware programs and other counter-measures that one can take to best protect one's PC activities. Mary also extended an invitation to all to attend the Florida annual users group weekend conference to be held in Kissimmee starting at 6 pm on Friday, March 5. Mary then announced and introduced the elected officers for 2004, who remained unchanged from 2003. Mike Hodges, the incoming and outgoing treasurer, announced that the goal was to achieve 50 paid-up members for 2004 and already seven members had signed up in January. Mike then requested that members volunteer to support the Board as program chair or in any other capacity.

Our presenter, Dave Dabney from LC Technology International of Clearwater, then provided us a very informative live demonstration of his company's data recovery/restoration software products. First, however, Dave afforded us some good tips that would help us not require the use of his products as in "prevention is better than cure."

- Partition your hard drive and separate your data from your system drive.
- Take your memory card out of your camera before air travel to avoid x-ray memory dumps.
- Beware of the low battery warning and remove memory card before completely draining your battery.
- Do not edit pictures on your camera card in camera. First download to PC.
- Use multiple spare cards instead of deleting a few unwanted ones so as to make room for a few more pictures.
- Ensure flash cards and memory cards are prop-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 7)

A Novice's Struggle with CD-RW Drives

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
mfriendtampa@worldnet.att.net

Some time ago I purchased a Buslink Ultra-high speed CD-RW external drive for a laptop which had only a CD Rom drive. The Ultra High Speed unit has a maximum write speed of 52X, which is plenty fast. Then I got some Ultra high speed CD-RW Memorex discs and I was in business. After installing the drive, which connected using a 2.0 USB port, all worked fine. I could easily record, erase and record again on those fabulous Memorex discs. I could select various record speeds, and all I tried seemed to work effortlessly. I also got some Sony high speed CD-R 700MB discs, which also worked fine and were considerably cheaper. This external drive was supported by Nero software. I was happy.

Later I purchased a new Gateway laptop computer with a built in CD-RW drive with Roxio software installed. Since everything had worked so well with the Buslink external drive I expected that I would have the same wonderful and smooth experiences with the Gateway drive. I should never have been so naïve.

I tried my Memorex ultra high speed CD-RW discs in the Gateway computer and got a message from Roxio that I had not installed proper media in the drive and should immediately place a blank CD-RW disc in the drive. I tried one Memorex after the other in the drive and got the same message on all of them. I then tried the Sony CD-R discs which the drive did recognize and I was allowed to burn a CD-R disc.

Next, I went to Roxio's home page at Roxio.com. The first thing I needed there was the identification of the specific version of Roxio Software I was using and the serial number of the product. I was told that I could get that information by opening the Roxio program and then clicking on "HELP" where I could see the software version as well as the serial number. Well, I got the software version but no serial number. I was to learn later that this was because the Roxio software came installed on my computer, and I didn't have a separate Roxio disc with a serial number. Without a serial number I couldn't get technical support from Roxio. I had learned the software version was 5.3.5.10. I then called Gateway and they said it was Roxio's problem. Now why wasn't I surprised to hear that?

I ended up joining the Roxio online discussion group where a serial number is not needed. I soon learned I did need one more bit of information. I needed specific details on the type of CD-RW drive that was installed in my machine. I went to "My Computer", clicked on the CD-RW drive and selected properties and learned that I had a QSI CDRW/DVD 242U drive. Armed with all this data I was able to fully delineate my problem to the discussion group. Within a few hours I had one very good and helpful response.

The respondent indicated that he had researched my drive somewhere and learned that the RW rating for that drive is 10X Maximum. Thus it would be unable to read my Ultra High Speed Memorex discs. He then advised me that there are three speed groups for RW drives. Per this person, the speed categories are as follows:

Low Speed, which is from 1x to 4x
High Speed, which is from 4x to 12x
Ultra High Speed, which is from 12x to 24x

He also added that Memorex discs are the most problematical for use with various machines and software, although they had worked perfectly with the external Buslink Ultra High Speed drive previously. I was advised by the writer that he had also had difficulties with Memorex discs of the correct speed range and had changed to Verbatim discs of 650MB size suggesting that the 700MB size of the Memorex may have also been a factor. He stated that the Verbatim drives worked fine.

I began shopping around for different brands of CD-RW discs. I didn't find any Verbatim discs, but I did locate some "High Speed" Maxell discs at Office Depot so I bought a small package of them. These discs were recognized by my laptop, but my machine

(Novice…….Continued on page 5)

Tiny Cars 2

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

Tiny Cars 2 was offered by Natalia Matveeva from ***REALORE Studios*** for review to the TPCUG, and I quickly answered that I would be a willing test subject. I mean, who can refuse playing a game and providing William with food for his "***Newsletter Monster***!" You can download the game at http://tinycar2.realore.com for trial and purchase the full version for $19.95. No CD is available and the file is 9.7 MB in size with the current version being 1.10.

Tiny Cars 2 is a throw back to the first games that were produced for computers years ago, simple arcade type games that we all can play and enjoy. The game is easy to start, either as full screen or windowed, and has a simple option menu to set up.



The options provide for controlling the sound of the game, controlling either the four keyboard arrows or joystick, and a "Check for Updates" feature to keep the game updated with the latest version. The update feature starts your web browser and goes to the REALORE site and gives you a message of your version and the current version. You then have a link to the download of the newest version. You can set the type of race as either Single or Championship and review the top times by racetrack by going to the Scores screen. The Help options are three simple pages with game instructions and purpose. Once the type of race is selected you can then choose Profile that sets how hard the racecourse is and the player's name. You then get to Select Car to choose the car that you are going to use. Next is the Select Track for the track that you are going to race, and finally the race will start.



This setup can be done quickly and is easily understood, no remembering a bunch of control codes. Yes, that is the best part of this game. I can play it and enjoy it at my age. That is not to say that I dislike complicated games ***but:*** I will say that I do not have the time, concentration, or memory available to play some games today. I have tried with my sons ***Playstation*** and ***Xbox,*** and I cannot get comfortable using all the buttons that you have to push, some multiple times, for playing the games. I can control four arrows using both my hands and easily go forward, backwards, left or right to navigate the course. It's even easier with my joystick in that all I have to do is point in the direction that I want to navigate. As for getting around the course in the least amount of time and avoiding the other cars and picking up the four ***Bonuses*** that are available (look at the Help Screen page 1) by driving under them, I can easily handle the game and have enjoyment instead of stress.

The game is definitely PG rated and is safe for children to play. Yes, you can crash into another car but

(Tiny Cars…….Continued on page 10)

(Novice……..Continued from page 3)

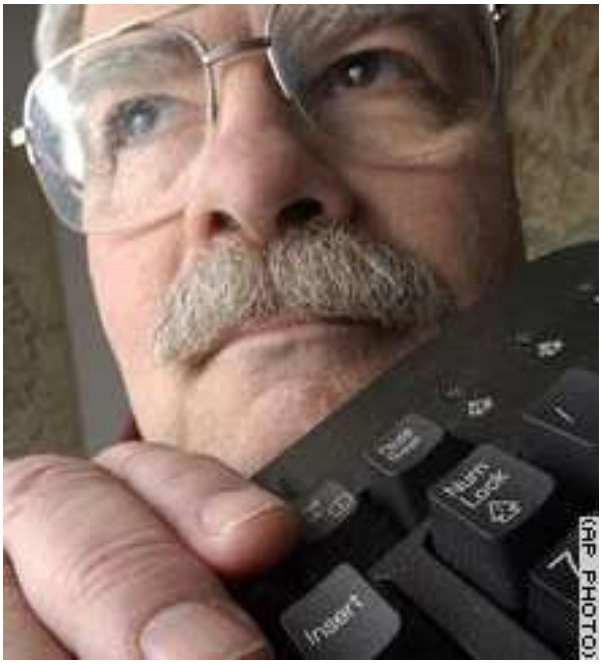
indicated it would only read and write to this disc at a 4x speed. No other speeds were available on my machine. I tried writing to them and they worked satisfactorily although slower than I had anticipated. I was also able to erase material satisfactorily. So now I at least had a working CD-RW drive, albeit a slow one.

After all this difficulty, I began to wonder just why CD-RW drives are needed? Why not just a CD-R? Wouldn't that do just as well? All the new machines seem to be coming out with CD-RW drives, so naturally I wanted to have the latest most modern drive but what exactly can I do with it? I looked through the stock of CompUSA and had difficulty locating any CD-RW discs except for those Memorex discs mentioned earlier. Yet there were literally tons of CD-R discs of various manufacturers. That should have told me something. The CD-R's were also much less expensive and available in large packages at a discount.

For my purposes I felt the CD-RW would be helpful in making up discs to save and organize material which I might reorganize or make minor changes to from time to time until the project was finalized. Then when I had the material in its final state, I could put it all on one CD-R disc as a per-

(Novice……..Continued on page 7)

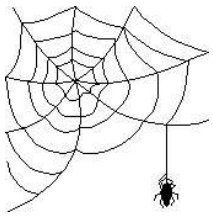
Internet Picture of the Month



Inventor of Ctrl-Alt-Del To Retire

From CNN at http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/ptech/01/29/ctrlaltdelete.man.ap, we have the story of the man, David Bradley, who wrote the code for the IBM PC to reboot when that famous key combination, Ctrl-Alt-Del is pressed.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Uncle Sharky's US Pres	http://news.unclesharky.com/
photo-i index (digital photography)	http://www.photo-i.co.uk/Welcome.htm
Google Guide - Interactive Tutorial	http://www.googleguide.com/
TV guide	http://www.tvguide.com/
Search System (search government records)	http://www.searchsystems.net/
Hotel Discount!Com	http://www.hoteldiscounts.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

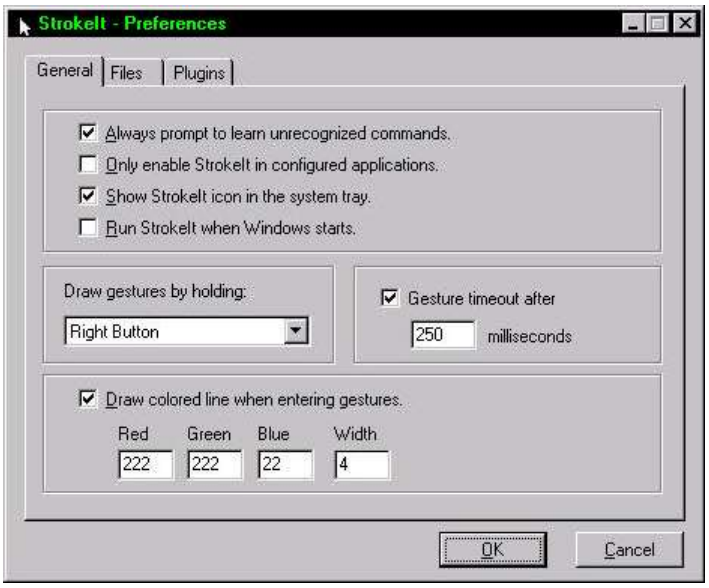
StrokeIt Command Editor

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

Recently I upgraded my computer system to a new Windows XP Pro Media Center Edition machine that is built around a TV card and a dynamite 5.1 surround sound system. Along with the computer, I also purchased a new 20" flat panel monitor. At the same time my wife bought me all new furniture for my computer room. [If you don't know, a computer room is what you call one of the bedrooms your kids used before they moved out on their own.] Part of my new computer furniture is a desk unit that has a center drawer which has a front that folds down to reveal the keyboard and mouse. The drawer is long and wide and slides out rather far. If fact, it pulls out far enough to allow me to almost lie down in my chair while working [or playing] on my computer. But alas, I was having a problem enjoying this relaxing form of computing. Occasionally I have to sit up and type commands into my computer. Well, not anymore. At least I don't have to sit up as much as I did before.

The other evening I was watching one of the lovely ladies, Sarah Lane, on TechTV's The Screen Savers program and voilà, there was my answer. Now don't get me wrong! I spend a lot on time on a computer every day and have for years; so much time that I have already had carpal tunnel surgery on both hands. I figure the best way to prevent this sort of repetitive stress syndrome in the future is to keep my arm as straight as possible while operating the mouse. And when you're practically lying down your arm is almost straight so there shouldn't be any stress on your hand… right?! [It's possible I could be a little lazy, too.] Well anyway… back to my voilà.

Sarah was showing a ***FREE*** program that she had discovered called ***StrokeIt***. [Clean up that dirty mind!] ***StrokeIt*** is an advanced mouse gesture recognition engine and command processor. Simply put, mouse gestures are simple symbols that you "draw"



on your screen using your mouse. But with ***StrokeIt*** installed, these doodles can now tell your computer what to do by recognizing the mouse stroke and performing an action associated with a particular mouse gesture. If you're a Palm or PocketPC user, you're already used to drawing similar gestures with your stylus.

I am using the standard defaults that installed with ***StrokeIt***, which allow me to draw gestures by pressing down my right mouse button and drawing. But if you would be more comfortable using the left or middle buttons it's your choice. For example, right now if I were to press my right mouse button and drag a diagonal line from right to left, the current window I am working in will minimize. There are default configured gestures for programs such *Chat Programs, Explorer, FlashFXP, Internet Explorer, K-Meleon, Kazaa, LeapFTP, Media Player, mIRC, Mozilla, Nero Burning Rom, Netcaptor, Netscape 4.x, Outlook Express, Pegasus, Photoshop, Serv-U, The Bat!, Visual Studio, Winamp 2.x, Windows Desktop, WinRAR, and Winzip.*

StrokeIt also comes with 24 default gestures that work in most any program. For example:

- If you draw a "C" the current window or program you are in will close
- A stroke from down to up will perform the

(StrokeIt…….Continued on page 7)

(StrokeIt……..Continued from page 6)

"copy" command
- A stroke from up to down will "paste"
- A right angle from right to left then down will pop up the search window

I think you get the picture [or gesture]. Although these are built in you have the option to change the program in many ways. If you feel that you would rather have a different command associated with a predefined gesture, you can change that, or vice versa, you can change the gesture associated with a particular command, or you can just create and add a gesture created by you with a command that applies to a particular application that is not included with ***StrokeIt***. ***StrokeIt*** defines an application as a program or a group of related programs, that are configured for special use by ***StrokeIt***. The actions defined for each application will run when a configured gesture is performed in any window owned by that application. If for some reason you don't want gestures to be active in a particular application, then you can disable gestures in a particular application altogether.

There is a learning mode to teach ***StrokeIt*** to recognize new gestures, or better recognize existing gestures. Simply draw the gesture and ***StrokeIt*** will show you which gesture, if any, that motion is associated with. There are several websites devoted to ***StrokeIt*** with good instructions available for all of this so you don't have to be a programmer to know how to make changes.

This program could literally become your right hand [or left as the case may be]. Best of all **it is absolutely free!** Just cruise on over to http://www.tcbmi.com/strokeit/, read about it and then download it, **FREE**. The download will only take you a few seconds, even on a dial-up connection, because the file size is only 121 KB. This deal is really hard to beat. So the next time you're practically reclined in your computer chair and don't feel like sitting up in that correct posture just ***StrokeIt!*** ◆

(Novice……..Continued from page 5)

manent record. Now I am beginning to feel that the cost of the CD-RW discs plus these slower speeds may not be worth the effort. Also, I may end up owning five different brands of CD-RW discs in order to find one or two that will work well with my equipment.

Perhaps I might just as well make a CD-R disc and redo it as needed in its entirety and throw the previous ones in the trash as the new ones are made. Perhaps that will work just as well.

I may have one other option. That would be to install the Buslink external CD-RW Ultra High Speed drive to this laptop and use it for all my serious CD-RW work. The question I am struggling with is will this cause a conflict with my Roxio software for the factory installed CD-RW drive.

I suspect it should not since the Nero software for the Buslink external drive is designed to work only with that external drive (per instructions on the box). The Roxio software would continue to be used for the originally installed drive. If anyone has any other thoughts on that please let me hear from you. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

erly formatted.
- Protect your memory cards by placing in wrappers and not baring contacts.
- Take similar precautions for your PDA memory.
- Copy files by command as opposed to drag and drop copying.
- Back-up your data frequently on to external devices.
- Employ a UPS
- Back-up your important files not once but twice
- Beware of those large media files that write

(Minutes……..Continued on page 10)

Looking Back to 1994

From the February 1994 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 1/12/94 MEETING and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

The meeting, our last general meeting in the IBM Lake Pointe facilities, began on time at 6 PM, with our President, Harvey Bruneau, presiding. There were fewer members present than normal, probably because most had not yet received the newsletter which serves as a reminder, and perhaps because this was the last meeting at the lovely Lake Pointe building. A simultaneous meeting of the OS/2 Users group undoubtedly also drew some of our members. Unfortunate for them because they missed some very good info and an excellent presentation.

USER GROUP NEWS

New Meeting Location In February: Harvey reminded all that this was the last meeting in the Lake Pointe building and that the February meeting would be held at the regular time at the Ybor City campus of Hillsborough Community College. A map is included on the back page of the current newsletter and will be in the next newsletter as well. Harvey also reported that while he does not yet have a computer for the group in his possession, he does have a promise of a donor computer. Arrangements have also been made to borrow from his employer Dun & Bradstreet a projector on a very temporary basis; that is, we cannot make such an imposition for very long and we must obtain our own projector in the not very distant future.

NonProf Status: Harvey reported that the Post Office has approved our application for nonprofit status. That means our newsletter mailing cost will drop again by about 30-40%. (There is no connection between this and our application to the IRS for nonprofit status which is still pending.)

Student Memberships: Harvey informed the membership of a BOD decision to create a new membership category Students & Staff (of the HCC only). Annual membership fee is $15. The good rapport established already in our relationship with the HCC has led to them making available space for use by our SIGs.

Meet Your BBS: All were advised that Kevan, our SYSOP, was holding another Meet Your BBS Nite on the third Wednesday of this month. If good participation continues at this excellent learning opportunity, it may well become a regularly scheduled event.

Word Perfect Presentation Rescheduled: Word Perfect has rescheduled their planned presentation at our February meeting to the April meeting. Harvey is working with Microsoft to come in for a presentation at the February meeting. CorelDraw is still scheduled for the March meeting.

INDUSTRY NEWS

100 MHz 486: Word in the industry is that these machines will be available this year. They will be only slightly slower than present Pentiums and will cost considerably less, like in the $2500 range.

MS Excel: For those looking for the 5.0 version of Excel, Microsoft has announced that it will ship next month.

Windows For Work Groups: Version 3.11 of this program will be widely available soon. Be aware that while OS/2 is compatible with Windows for Work Groups 3.1, it is not compatible with Windows For Work Groups 3.11.

PRESENTATION

CA Simply Money & Simply Tax Computer Associates (CA) graciously made available for our benefit one of their Product Consultants, Marty Steiner, to give us a rundown on two of their products, Simply Money and Simply Tax. Since very few of those present knew much about CA, Marty gave us a little info about the company. It was surprising for most of us to learn that CA is the second largest software company in the business and has been around from the start. In fact, many years ago they produced the second spreadsheet program to be marketed, Super Calc. They have been big in the mainframe area all this time and are now working to improve their recognition in the PC world; hence, the Simply Money and Simply Tax programs they have been making available for only a S & H charge. CA has software covering just about the full spectrum of computer applications: word processing, data base, spreadsheet, etc.; some 13 major applications in all. Marty then gave a brief review of Simply Money and Simply Tax.

(1994……..Continued on page 9)

(1994……..Continued from page 8)

Simply Money is a program for recording and monitoring personal and business finances, It is a great deal more than a check writing program and has features which tie together all sorts of accounts and investments into a comprehensive package. In addition to writing checks and maintaining checking accounts, Simply Money handles credit card accounts, cash and savings accounts, credit lines and loan accounts, mortgages, asset and liability accounts, budgeting, and a wide variety of investment accounts, including stocks and mutual and tax-free funds which can be tracked and updated via modem. Business applications include accrual and cash basis accounting, payroll accounting and business reports. All of the accounts in a financial database can be linked together so that a single transaction affecting more than one account will be reflected in all accounts involved. Reports and graphs can be created quickly and easily for any of the accounts simply by clicking and dragging. In fact, except for the entry of data via the keyboard, all operations in Simply Money can be handled simply and easily with clicks and drags.

As a user of Simply Money I can tell you that it is simple, flexible and easy to use, though I will admit that I have not even scratched the surface of its capabilities. Requirements to load and use Simply Money are: A 286 or better machine, with at least 2 Mb of Ram (4 recommended), mouse, 5 Mb of hard disk space, DOS 3.1 or later, and Windows 3.1 or later. At the present time, it is available only as a Windows program.

Simply Tax is a comprehensive personal and small business tax preparation program. It, too, appears to be very customizable, comprehensive and easy to use. It allows entry of data for the tax returns via interview, questions and answer, or direct entry, all of which appear easy, direct and straight forward. Included are some 90 forms, schedules and worksheets; it is very comprehensive. Its many features include: Use of data from Simply Money, Quicken, Lotus Dollars & Sense and Managing Money, and uses Tax Exchange Format (.TXF) which allows import of data from other accounting programs; automatic overflow statements to accommodate more entries than IRS forms provide; a quick tour to familiarize the user with the program; a tax forecasting capability; data validation; tax preparation checklist; cross reference help; comprehensive context sensitive online help; depreciation history and reference tables; automatic links to appropriate form & line; averages of itemized deductions with an audit alert to notify of entries which exceed substantially the averages; tax tips to help identify ways of reducing tax liabilities; and a "what if" capability, to name just a few.

Simply Tax will print out all of the return forms ready to file. We are told that when printed on a good laser printer the forms will appear identical to the IRS forms. Alternatively, it has the capability and includes instructions to file the tax return electronically.

Simply Tax is available for Windows or DOS. Requirements for the Windows version of Simply Tax are: A 336 or better machine with 2 Mb of RAM (4 Mb recommended), 5.5 Mb of hard disk space, Windows 3.1. A mouse is recommended. Requirements for the DOS version are: Any IBM compatible PC with 640 K of RAM (500K available), 3.5 Mb of hard disk space, and DOS 3.0 or later. Mouse is optional. Just about any Epson/IBM/HP compatible printer can be used with either version.

Simply money can be obtained by calling 1800FREE-MONEY. Cost is $6.95 to cover S & H. Simply Tax can be obtained by calling I8007FREE TAX. Cost is $9.95, again for S & H. If ordering both programs, call the Simply Tax number.

Marty and Computer Associates, we THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your visit, for familiarizing us with your company, for a great presentation of two of your programs, and for the copies of Simply Money you donated. You have a couple of great looking programs in Simply Money and Simply Tax. We hope you will favor us with presentations in the future on upgrades to these programs, as well as introduce us to your other programs.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Computer Associates, who donated several copies of Simply Money, and collections obtained by Harvey and Marylee at Comdex, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Larry T. Brooks	Simply Money
Cheryl Petty	Simply Money
Doug Rapphun	Simply Money
Dan Whitman	Simply Money
M. N. Martenez	Carrying case
W. F. LaMartin	2 cups

(1994…….Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday (this is a change)** of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1994…….Continued from page 9)

In addition, 2 people won monitor borders and at least 9 people won psychedelic sunglasses.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:30 PM. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 7)

their way across reams of previously good data.

- Save data files to a CD frequently.

When any of the above fails or you are having difficulty accessing data, then LC-Tech can be your safe haven and lead you to recovery. Viruses and power failures cause most memory failures that LC-Tech software can restore for most users nine out of ten times.

Dave stated that LC Tech prefers to walk customers through their products rather than let them struggle alone. Customers are sold more on working from a strong knowledge base rather than being brought around after they may have stumbled. He encouraged potential customers to call (727) 449-0891 and be guided through the demo to be found at http://www.lc-tech.com. All are encouraged to call and have the demo demonstrated. LC-Tech is an international company well positioned in Europe and the USA. LC-Tech has supplied significant recovery to many US Federal agencies. Once it took a week to restore one terabit of data for the US Navy, but most jobs are completed same day. The product is currently very stable and the current version was issued over two years ago. The first product was issued in 1996. LC-tech is a major recoverer of damaged physical drives as a depot of last resort as well as a

(Minutes…….Continued on page 12)

(Tiny Cars…….Continued from page 4)

it's done in much the way that you would play bumper cars at the fair. I enjoyed the games I played and will play it again in the future to relax, have a bit of fun and take a few minutes away from today's world. ◆



Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.
City of Tampa's Kate Jackson Community Center

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
Borland
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Intuit
Microsoft
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PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

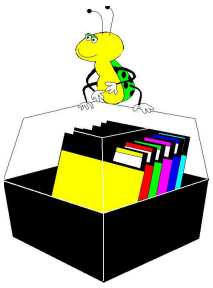
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

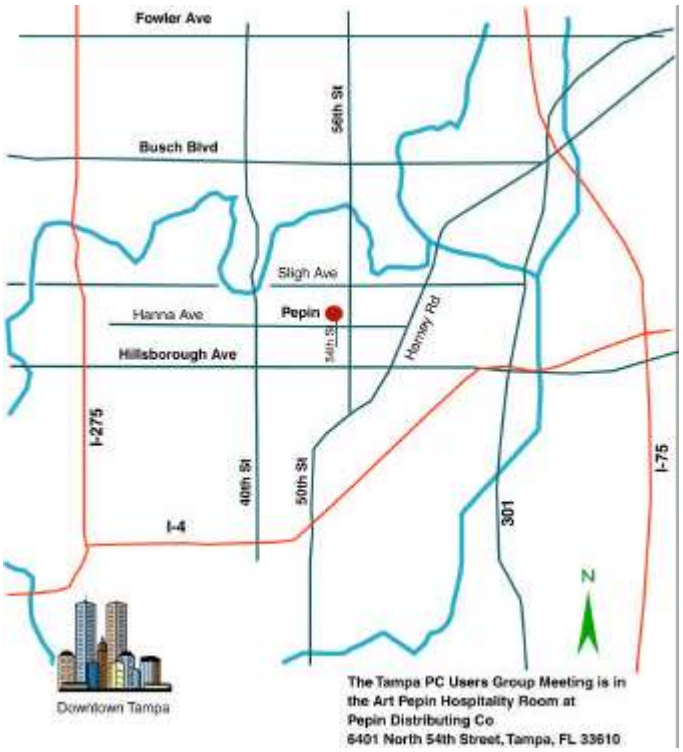
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes……..Continued from page 10)

front runner for remote data recovery utilizing the LC-Tech software. A true endorsement of the product is that the latest camera memory cards, namely Ultra-Extreme cards, have the LC-Tech product rescue-pro installed by the card manufacturer. Photo recovery currently keeps LC-Tech real busy. Their local lab-office is located just north of Countryside mall in Clearwater and employs ten at that location. The LC-Tech products are all downloadable from their web site and are priced as follows: RESCUE.PRO for $39.99, PHOTORECOVERY for $39.99, FILE RECOVERY PRO for $99.95.

Our Thanks go to Dave Dabney for a most interesting and valuable presentation enjoyed by all.

Our door prize winners were John Witmer, who won the Encarta Reference Library CD, and runners up Merle Nicholson and Bob Davis who, won TPCUG T-shirts. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



March in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 3 March 2004

Meeting

PowerQuest
Backing Up Your Hard Drive

Wednesday, March 10, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Gene Barlow will present his ideas on backing up your hard drive with PowerQuest software. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

We haven't had a swap meet in years, so April's meeting should be interesting. Only bring hardware and software that works. You won't see my old scanner that I just replaced, since if it quit working for me, I doubt it would start working for you.

Bob Lafave in his article tells you what you can do with your photos once you have them on your hard drive. In my scanner article, I tell you how to get them on your hard drive. Next month we would like to see your article in the newsletter.

Our SIG meeting location is again in flux, so if you don't receive an email regarding location before the meeting, contact me. ◆

April Meeting Topic: Swap Meet -- see the announcement on page 6

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Secretary: Peggy Pulliam (pegrance@yahoo.com) 253-0438
Member at Large: Mary Sheridan (mcpease@mindspring.com) 988-6480

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the February Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

We had our usual Questions and Answers about Windows at the Windows SIG. We heard about methods to file taxes quickly and easily available with Turbo Tax. And Mike Hodges (TPCUG treasurer) has offered assistance if you want help with IBM repair.

Our featured presenter was Mr. Dave Whittle who represents several software companies and has taken it upon himself to show us some of the new and fun things available in the way of software. He has been acquainted with user groups since 1979 and has a way with presenting things to a group to keep everyone interested.

He was demonstrating on an IBM ThinkPad T-40 with 1.6 MHz Intel Centrino processor, a cool-running processor with wireless connectivity. It runs very fast because Intel has redesigned the cache and other things to increase the speed and prolong battery life easily to 5-7 hours. No Joke! And it really does run cooler. You won't need a thermal pad to actually use it on your lap. He also mentioned that you can get a presentation seminar kit from Intel for the group at http://www.intel.com/personal/pcug/.

For $20 a month any "hot spot" can be used to contact the web using your prescribed wireless service. As an example, there are hot spots at major bookstores in cities around the nation. He travels a lot and has found it completely trustworthy.

On his laptop he showed us **3D Album** -- Lots of different ways to present pictures and add music to your presentation, making sharing pictures a lot more fun. Just open the program, point to your photos, choose a presentation style from over 70 choices and click "build"!

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

Epson 3200 Photo Flatbed Scanner

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

My HP ScanJet 5370 Cse scanner totally died toward the end of January, right when I needed it to scan in the material for the "Looking Back to 1994" article from the 10 year-old newsletter. However, I need a flatbed scanner for much more than that. I use it to scan photos and negatives (35 mm and much larger ones). I also use it to copy and fax documents. So a new one was in order.

Not another HP this time. I have owned three HP scanners. Unfortunately the 5370 had more than its share of problems in the three years I had it. Here is a bit of its history:

- For my original review of the scanner in January 2001, go to http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/january2001/ScanJet5370%20Cse.htm.
- For my first problem with it as a USB device, go to http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2003/january2003/usb_woes.htm.
- For the death of the 5370's negative scanning feature, go to http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2003/february2003/more_woes.htm

Time to give Epson a chance. I know most people wouldn't consider paying over $100 for a flat bed scanner, but since I intend to use it to scan large negatives I need a scanner that would not only have the negative scanning ability but also would give quality results. The Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner fit the bill. I am quite happy with it when scanning both printed material and large negatives.

It will also scan 35 mm negatives and slides. In fact, I am scanning in color slides as I write this. I had planned on continuing to use my HP PhotoSmart photo scanner for that. But the HP PhotoSmart scanner started acting up by kicking the slide back at you. Then the HP scanning software started crashing--probably because of the hardware problem with the scanner. So it was time to totally switch to the new scanner for everything.

The Epson seems to give results just as good as the PhotoSmart scanner for slides when scanned at the same resolution of 1200 dpi that I usually use for slides. The PhotoSmart scanner only goes to 2400dpi, while the Epson goes to 3200. Now there is all this stuff about color depth, etc. that a dedicated slide and film scanner is supposed to beat a flatbed on, but the reviewer in the review I mentioned in the next paragraph seems to think that the new Epson can hold its own in this area.

I could write a long review of this scanner but could not begin to touch the review that is already available on the web at http://www.photo-i.co.uk/Reviews/interactive/Scanners/Epson_3200/page_1.htm. This review with many, many images is about the most complete such review I have ever seen. It is also very complimentary of this Epson scanner. So I will just spend a little time relating my impressions of the scanner and accompanying software.

The scanner has a resolution of 3200 x 6400, quite a jump from the HP 5370 with a 1200 x 1200 resolution. It can accommodate negatives from 35 mm to 4" x 5". It connects to your computer with a USB 2.0 connection (but will use USB 1.1 if that is all you have). It comes with Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0, SilverFast negative scanning software from LaserSort Imaging, and Epson Scan scanning software.

Presto! OCR software is provided. Additionally, if you have either OmniPage or TextBridge OCR software installed, the scanner will use those OCR engines if you wish. The scanner is priced right at $400 at CompUSA, and when I bought it there was a mail-in rebate worth $100.

I installed the Epson Scan and the SilverFast software both as a Photoshop plug-in and a TWAIN plug-in. If I am scanning a photo or a document, I use the Epson Scan software. If I am scanning a negative or slide, I use the SilverFast software. You can use the Epson Scan software to scan negatives

(Epson .....Continued on page 6)

PhotoMix Collage

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

PhotoMix Collage from fCoder Group is a program that I like very much. You may visit the WebPages at http://www.photomix.com/ to see all the features that this program contains. The reason I liked it so much is the ease at which I was able to create the figures below. The figure on the left shows the default window that PhotoMix opens in and the toolbars that divided the work area. The larger center area is the work area that you can either work with a blank or choose from the included frames or layouts. If you look to the right of the work area you can see some of the layouts that are included. The frames and layouts can both be easily scrolled, and to pick your choice you just need to double click your choice. To use a frame you need to have a picture selected in the work area; you double click your choice and the picture is changed. The layout is chosen before you choose any pictures; you select a layout by double clicking the picture showing the template and the work area would then change to the layout template chosen. You then would fill in the template with the pictures of your choice. The bottom area is a viewer that allows you to choose pictures that you add to your image list; you must show the images you are working with in this area. You have a directory tree so you can easily go to your pictures to choose which ones you wish to use. If you have multiple pictures in a directory each is shown as a thumbnail, which makes selection easy and quick. The other figure just shows that you can increase the work area size by pushing little blue arrow buttons that retract or expand the other two areas as needed.

When you go to choose the pictures that you want to work with you get a choice of over thirty format types. The common types such as TIFF, BMP, JPEG and many more can be used along with Cursors; Animated Cursors and Icons can also be selected. When you look at the file-type drop down menu the first two choices are " All supported raster files" and "All supported vector files". The individual types are then in a long list if you wish to use a specific type. To create the figures above I started with a directory with JPEG's of my son. I selected a starting file, and while holding down the "Shift" key I was able to select multiple files quickly to then appear in the bottom viewing area. You also can add images from " Clipboard" to your image list. To place the picture into the work area is just "drop and drag". Further placement inside the work area or changing of the picture size is both quick and easy for anyone who has edited pictures in other programs. The picture has a halo showing that it is selected with spots that can be grabbed by the mouse for sizing, with the cursor changing to a "Resize", and the cursor will change to the " Move" crosshair that Windows uses. As you place pictures and need to move the pictures to exactly fit them to each other, you can use the normal Windows method of using the keyboard arrow keys for precise movement. You also have a "Action" menu to choose from that has picture align-

(PhotoMix…….Continued on page 5)





(PhotoMix……..Continued from page 4)

ment and rotation choices. For those using picture quality printing paper, this feature allows you to place multiple pictures exactly on a sheet for printing with a specific border for cutting each. The same would be used for printing the same picture multiple times on one sheet. You will save money by not wasting printing paper. For those who wish, there is also a "Layer" function in the tool area on the right where you have already chosen the "Frame" or "Layout". You can easily add pictures to overlap and keep, say, just faces as the predominate feature of the collage.

You may save the project in the same multiple formats that you can open. Combine multiple pictures into a more easily stored compression format such as JPEG's. You may also save in the program specific format to create collages, save your layout, and save your framing format that you have created. For those who wish, you may also save your creation to the desktop to be used as wallpaper. This feature is found from the "File" menu as "Set as Wallpaper". How easy can it get? There is also a feature to email your finished project with the click of a button. You are then given the choice of format and if you would like to have the file zipped for sending.

(PhotoMix……..Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



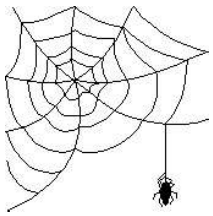
Queen of Carnival 2004
New Orleans

From the site http://www.mardigras.com/, a Times-Picayune photo with the caption:
Queen of Carnival Katherine S. Haygood, center, is showered with beads on the reviewing stand as the Rex parade rolls down St. Charles Avenue at the Hotel Intercontinental.

Editor's note: As I recall from my time in New Orleans not everyone dresses this well on Mardi Gras.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
TweakXP.com - Hundreds of Tweaks	http://www.tweakxp.com/
A.M. Best The Insurance Information Source	http://www.ambest.com/
FAA Aircraft Registration Inquiry	http://162.58.35.241/acdatabase/defimg.asp
Photographs by David Henry	http://www.davidphenry.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(PhotoMix.....Continued from page 5)

The program has large specific " Hint" descriptions as your mouse hovers above a button that I found pleasant. So many programs today see how small and cryptic they can be rather than how helpful. The "Help" files also seemed easy to follow. Each of the three areas--the project work area, the image list and the right hand layout, frame, layer area--has a convenient blue "?" button that takes you to the help files for that specific task.

The program installed easily without problems and leaves a little program group with Help, Start Program, Home Webpage, and Uninstall Information. There is an "Update" feature available from inside the program. Under the "Help" menu is a choice for "Update PhotoMix". To use the update feature you must have a registered copy; this is checked against the database that they have. The program can be downloaded as a trial with a file size of 12.2 MB, but to have a paid version the cost is $29.00, or you can have a CD sent to you for $44.00.

PhotoMix is well thought out to what features are included and very easy to use. I would think anyone who does photo processing could find many creative uses for PhotoMix. I am glad that fCoder offered this program for review to the Tampa PC Users Group and I got to experiment with my scanned photos. ◆

(Epson…….Continued from page 3)

and slides, but the SilverFast software is specialized for this and gives you more options, including scratch and dust removal options.

Here is how the scanning works for slides; negatives are done in a similar manner. First I put four slides in the slide holder on the scanner glass. It is very important to make sure you have the arrow of

(Epson…….continued on page 7)

ALL ARE WELCOME TO OUR HARDWARE SWAP MEET

At our April monthly meeting by popular demand we will be holding a PC hardware exchange meeting. On previous occasions it has appeared true that one man's trash is another man's treasure. This meeting will provide all of us a chance to clear out our living spaces and offices, dens, studies or get away lairs of all that superfluous or no longer used computer equipment. Yes, you can bring software and CD's to the meeting for exchange or disposal. The good news is, even if you do not find a buyer at the price you had in mind or even cannot give away the item for a miserly $1, you are not obliged to take it home again. So this will be a true opportunity to make a few dollars or at least unload items to liberate your living space for other new treasures at home. Our esteemed member Brian Lance has the kind permission of his company, Computer Corner, to remove any and all unclaimed items at the close of the meeting so we do not need to cart the unsold items home again at the end of the meeting, unless you want to that is.

So what are the rules? None really. Just bring your stuff to the meeting. Place a price tag on the item at any price of your choosing. Sell the item to anyone who shows--does not have to be a member necessarily--at whatever price anyone is willing to pay and pocket the money. If you wish to voluntarily donate 10% of your take to the TPCUG, the treasurer will welcome your money, no questions asked. If you do not want even to donate $1 for each sale, still no questions asked. We just want you to come and enjoy yet another one of our interesting evenings. I, for one, will be looking forward to unloading a dot matrix printer, two HP inkjets, an unopened A/B switch box, and some unused software and a host of other items, but not my Apple II. I will keep that as a memento of times past for a few more years. So mark Wednesday, 14 April, at 6.30 PM to 8.30 PM on your calendar as "Computer Clearance Day". See you at our normal meeting place, the Pepin Hospitality Room.

Mike Hodges, Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group
mphs@aol.com

(Epson……..Continued from page 6)
the slide holder pointing to the upper right-hand corner of the scanner or you will waste an hour as I did one evening trying to figure out why your scans are mainly bright light. Apparently the scanner needs markings on the slide holder to tell it what it is scanning. If it can't find those markings, things come out very bad. I tried all sorts of setting changes to try and make things work before I noticed that I had the holder upside down. Once oriented correctly things worked beautifully as they had a few days earlier.

Next I open Adobe Photoshop Essentials 2.0, click on File | Import and select the SilverFast plug-in. When SilverFast opens, I first do a prescan. That shows me thumbnails of my four slides. If I have scanned in slides before, I have four frames outlining the thumbnails. I click on the first thumbnail to enlarge it, readjust the frame to exactly position the image, auto adjust the exposure and then scan. This returns the scanned slide to Photoshop where I rotate it if necessary, make minor exposure corrections and save the file to my hard drive. It takes about eight minutes to scan four slides using this procedure. The result is an approximate1550 x 1050 pixel, 4.6 MB file good for printing something like an 8 x 10 photo of good quality.

If you push the one button on the front of the scanner you are presented with the Epson Smart Panel from which you can do all sorts of quick scanning. The options include:

- Scanning to file
- Scanning to OCR
- Scanning to Application
- Scanning to Email
- Copy

And others.

It is a very nice scanner, and I highly recommend it. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
Next we saw **Muvee Auto Producer** 3 which has some new technologies. You add still pictures and music to match the mood of the pictures, and the program analyzes and automatically adds them, edits out the junk, puts it together and makes a really nice movie presentation. Use your super 8 movies on CDs; if you have really bad footage that just won't go together, you can use a "still" style so the poor footage is still good for viewing if you use Muvee Auto Produce 3.

Photo Vista Panorama 3.0 -- Lets you take pictures and stitch them together to make a 3D panorama picture of your snapshots stitched together.

Portable Document Format **Active PDF Symphony** is a much less expensive replacement for Adobe's full-version Acrobat. There are two different parts to this, a **Composer** to create the PDF document and the **Maestro** that lets you edit it.

Check these out on the web for more information, but if you want to buy them be sure to go through the club because Dave offers us a discount.

It was another good evening of presentations of software nearly everyone can use. We had a door prize, too: MS Money, which Jeanne Gillespie won. ◆



A beach resort scene scanned with the Epson scanner from a small photo taken in the New York City area in the 1920's. Does any know if it is Coney Islands?

Looking Back to 1994

From the March 1994 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 2/9/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

This was our first meeting in our new quarters at the Ybor City campus of the HCC. And the facilities are excellent. We have a large circular coliseum-type of room which can be divided fairly easily into two rooms using a built-in partition. The half we used for this meeting will comfortably accommodate over 100 people, with at least 85 seated at tables facing the 'well' in the center of the room; in excess of that number would be seated in comfortable folding chairs. The other half of the room is set up to accommodate almost 200 people, all of whom would occupy comfortable folding chairs. All in all, I think the facilities are excellent for our purposes. HCC made available an overhead projector for our use, but a computer and color panel were and are our responsibility; all three are needed for presentations. Our group has not yet been able to acquire either of the missing pieces of hardware, but Harvey saved our bacon this time by borrowing a color panel from his workplace and making a laptop computer available for the meeting. This is not an arrangement that is available for very long, and our group simply must come up with our own equipment.

I found the campus very easy to find and to get to. Parking is ample but is located in three different lots. None of us being very familiar with the layout, some had difficulty locating parking. As we use these new facilities and become more familiar with them, I am confident that we will like our new location as much as or more than the super IBM facilities we had been using. Come on out and see for yourself-- you will enjoy yourself, and you are sure to learn something new.

WordPerfect Corporation, which had been scheduled for a presentation at this meeting, has been rescheduled to later in the year. Tom Cone, our Treasurer, graciously filled in the opening that was left by WP with a rundown on a program he uses daily in his law office -- Desqview --and he did a great job, with good interchange with other members. Presentations by one of our own are particularly enjoyable for me because I think we get more of a user prospective, and there is usually much more interchange between presenter and audience. In addition, there was considerable time available after the presentation for freewheeling interchange among those present on any random computer problem/subject suitable for group discussion -- and that is what happened. In my opinion, that is what this group is all about -- the exchange of knowledge among ourselves, supplemented with knowledge from vendors and other sources.

USER GROUP NEWS

Ybor Campus Parking: There is a fairly large lot for open parking across the street (Palm Ave) on the north side of the complex, with some of the spots reserved for staff. There is another fairly large lot for open parking across the street on the south side of the complex, and there is a staff parking lot in the northeast quarter of the complex. Harvey will confirm what parking is available for our use; look for more info on this subject elsewhere in this newsletter.

Non-Profit Status : The Post Office computer has carried our group in non-profit status for the last two months, saving us about 50% ($17) off our bulk mailing rate. However, we had not received official notification of award of that status. You guessed it-- earlier this month the PO informed us that we owed them some $$ for the last 2 month's mailings and that they would not award non-profit status until the IRS also approved same for us. So, we are back to bulk mail rates (which is not all that bad - about $37/mo, versus about $20/mo) until the IRS grants non-profit status.

PRESENTATION — Scheduled:
WordPerfect has rescheduled their planned presentation until later this year; plans for the near future are as follows:

CorelDraw — March
Adobe Systems — April
Microsoft — May
Visio by Shapeware — June

INDUSTRY NEWS

Word Perfect Rumor: - WordPerfect Corporation is undergoing a reduction in force at the present time, as many corporations have and will continue to do to stay competitive. A rumor has been circulating, probably associated with the RIF, that WP has produced its last upgrades of both the DOS and Windows versions of its WP word processors. WP Corp has denied that and other articles

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(1994……..Continued from page 8)
report that new upgrades will be out for both versions of WP in the next few months. A major change that has occurred, however, is that free tech support has been reduced to 180 days free tech support, beginning with the first call for help. Various "for fee" tech support options will be available after that.

MS Access: For those looking for the next upgrade to MS Access, Microsoft has announced that it will be available in April.

Windows For WorkGroups : Version 3.11 of this program is on the market now. Be aware that while OS/2 is compatible with Windows for WorkGroups 3.1, it is not compatible with Windows For WorkGroups 3.11. Also be prepared for MS plans to drop their Windows program as a separate entity and to make Windows for WorkGroups its sole Windows package. As a Windows user, that causes me no great concern, EXCEPT what does that do to my cost? And, surely provisions will be made to avoid loading unwanted portions of the package to minimize use of disk space, but will they? No answers to these and other related questions, yet!

PRESENTATION — Desqview

Tom Cone uses this program daily in his office. He chose that program as an alternative to Windows or other multitasking options. Tom reported that he was looking for a program to speed up his computer work by allowing multitasking to avoid the lost time that otherwise occurs when switching from program to program. Many of us would immediately think of Windows or OS/2. But Tom didn't want the speed cost of these programs. So, he looked around and settled on Desqview, which, by the way, is what your BBS uses operating in a window of Desqview -- that allows the BBS to function normally while our SYSOPs accesses and performs software maintenance on the computer.

Tom very ably demonstrated the features of the program, including creating, using, sizing and switching between windows, all of which is accomplished easily with mouse clicks or short-cut keys. The number of windows that can be opened was not known, but Tom had 5 or 6 open and working at one time, which would be more than adequate for most users. When using a 386 or better machine, all open windows are active and can be working in the background; the more memory, the more windows can be open, active and working. For 386 or better machines, Desqview comes bundled with Quarterdeck's QEMM program. A memory manager, QEMM makes the most of the memory available on the machine, and Desqview does an excellent job of allocating that memory to use it to best advantage for the programs the user starts. Yes, you can tweak memory use for particular programs to insure that a minimum amount is available. In fact, the user can do considerable tweaking to customize Desqview to suit particular druthers. Desqview also includes a program called Manifest, which provides detail to the screen (or printer) about your computer and its setup; it is much like similar computer information programs in Norton Utilities and Windows, among others.

Desqview will even run Windows in one of its own windows (if for some reason one would want to), but only in standard mode. You can also open Desqview windows back to DOS while applications are running in other windows. In some respects, Desqview is similar to Windows (but with DOS speed). Tom reports that programs do crash on occasion in Desqview. As in Windows 3.1, sometimes one can just shut down and restart the offending program. Other times, it may be necessary to restart Desqview. And, some occasions may require rebooting the computer -- just as in Windows.

Desqview will run on a 286 machine, and one can have several windows open, the number depending on available memory, but one cannot multitask on a 286; only the active window can be working. With 386SX or better machines, the number of windows open and working is tied directly to memory requirements of the programs loaded and the total memory available on the machine. Desqview uses expanded memory (EMS), but simulates EMS from extended memory (XMS) on those machines which don't have EMS. Tom reports that he sees no signs of any degradation in speed from using EMS and its paging -- it is fast!! Desqview also uses virtual memory (swapping to disk) when RAM has been exhausted, but there is a speed penalty when that occurs -- as is the case in Windows.

Tom did not have current pricing info, but when he bought his Desqview/QEMM package about a year ago, the street price was about $140. Tom made it a point to make us aware that in his view Desqview is not truly a Windows competitor, for it doesn't have the graphical interface powers of Windows. But, for those who want to multitask with the speed of DOS -- which Windows doesn't have -- Desqview is certainly a super alternative. Tom,

(1994……..Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at the **Kate Jackson Community Center at 821 S Rome Avenue** in South Tampa at 6:30 PM. This location may change. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

TPCUG Calendar Year 2003 Treasurer's Financial Statement dated 14-February-2004

Balance on deposit as of 01-January 2003		$4,950.88
Income		
Memberships	$1,035.00	
Door Prizes	$ 342.00	
Amazon.com commissions	$ 38.23	
Total Income	$1,415.23	
Expensed		
Florida Incorporation fee	$ 61.25	
Liability Insurance	$ 150.00	
Florida Association of Computer User Groups fee	$ 25.00	
Association of Personal Computer User Groups fee	$ 50.00	
US Post Office Box fee	$ 26.00	
Domain Name Fee - 3 years	$ 75.00	
Web Site hosting fee	$ 119.40	
Door Prize-Photo Software	$ 55.00	
FACUG Spring Conference Registrations	$ 175.00	
Party Refreshment Costs	$ 62.00	
US Post Office Bulk Mailing costs	$ 89.26	
Newsletter Postage	$ 336.00	
Newsletter Paper costs	$ 88.03	
Total Expensed	$1,311.94	
Net		$ 103.29
Balance as of 31-December 2003		$5,054.17

Mike Hodges, Treasurer, Tampa PC users Group
mphs@aol.com

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.
City of Tampa's Kate Jackson Community Center

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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Intuit
Microsoft
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PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
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RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
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$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

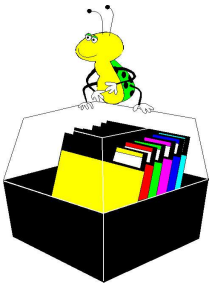
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(1994…….Continued from page 9)
thank you for a great presentation. It was both informative and enjoyable.

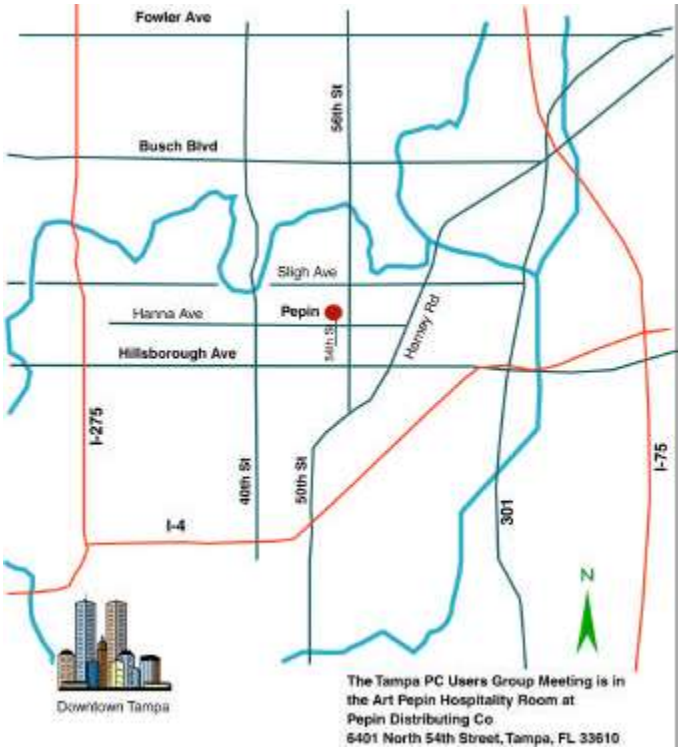
AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of IBM, which donated a copy of OS/2 for Windows, Computer Associates, which donated a copy of Simply Money, Brainchild Computer, which donated a copy of MS Windows Entertainment Pak, and collections obtained by Harvey and Marylee at Comdex, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

M. N. Marteny—T-shirt, Mouse Pad & MS Entertainment Pak

D. A. Clary	Adobe Type Manager
G. Jurado	Adobe Type Manager
Renate Marsh	Simply Money
Bill LaForest	OS/2 for Windows

The meeting adjourned at about 9:00 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



April in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 4 April 2004

Meeting

Swap Meet

Wednesday, April 14, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Swap Meet. Bring in all your old hardware and software, also a little cash if you want to purchase something. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

We have a full newsletter thanks to the members who have provided articles. I even had to reduce the font size a bit on some articles to make everything fit.

While I was away for a week (and checking my email while traveling), I received 639 email messages of which only 66 were not spam. So essentially 10% of my email is something I want to see. I am sure you are having much the same experience. I used to get even more spam. Additionally, it seems that I am receiving a smaller number of legitimate messages. I suppose it is another case of the bad driving out the good. People are simply getting tired of wading through all the junk and are not sending as many messages as in the past. ◆

May Meeting Topic: Intel, Hyper threading and the Pentium 4, presented by Kevan Sheridan

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the March Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
pegrance@yahoo.com

We had our usual Windows Special Interest Group meeting with questions and answers about using Windows and the ins and outs of that.

Our featured speaker was Gene Barlow with User Group Relations. One of the companies he represents was PowerQuest, which has just been purchased by Symantec. It is possible that they may discontinue the user group programs.

The presentation showed that research had been done by White Canyon software, which found that much of the supposedly deleted information on computers that people had donated or given away, thinking they'd cleaned them of private information, still had retrievable private information on the hard drive.

Their product, Wipe Drive, writes over the entire hard drive, leaving nothing to be read at all. Gone.

Secure Clean is a another product that selectively erases data. It leaves the Operating System and/or other programs you designate by choice to keep on the hard drive. You can scan for mistakenly deleted files; it shows you how many it has found and it will even go over email messages. This allows you to restore something before wiping it clean; you can find something you thought was lost.

Hard drives fail, so back up the system AND the data. Using an external hard drive is best for this. With a laptop you have to backup to an external drive. With a personal computer you can use Partition Magic to create extra drives to use for back-ups. Gene showed us several clever ways to back up networked computers too. The products are available at User Group special prices now, but we don't know for how long.

Gene offered Secure Clean for the door prize which Brian Lance WON! ◆

Handy Animated Emoticons

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net



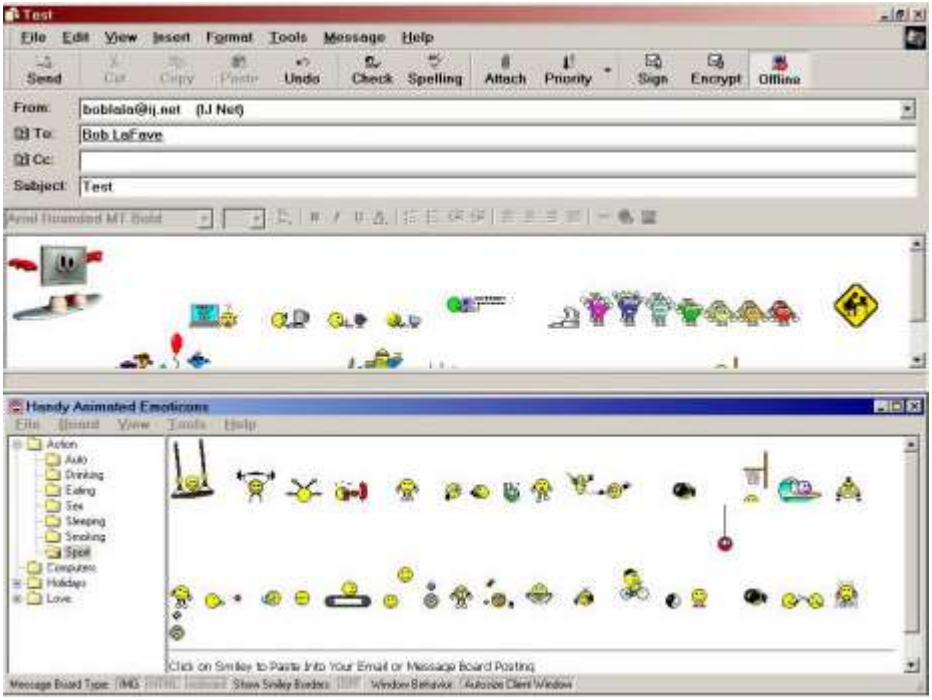
Emoticons can be described as a series of keyed characters used especially in e-mail to indicate an emotion, such as pleasure :-) or sadness :-(. They have evolved into little graphics to indicate emotions and tasks in a shorthanded writing. As you can see from the program Window below from "Handy Animated Emoticons", they have become quite diverse and colorful. This program from ScoSoft is easy to use and does save you time when wanting to include emoticons in your email writings. You can visit http://www.scosoft.com/handy-animated-emoticons.htm to get a complete description. The program itself is available as a download for $19.95 online.

You can also place these figures into text documents, such as an MS Word document. All that is needed is for you to have open both a document and "Handy Animated Emoticons" and to pick an insertion point and click your choice with your mouse, and the emoticon will be automatically placed. Although the emoticons can be placed in MS Word and other text editors, they will not show as animated, only stationary graphics.

The picture shows how the program will automatically open in a split screen with a choice of view of "Auto Size Client Window" with your working application such as MS Word or MS OutLook Express on the top portion and "Handy Animated Emoticons" on the bottom. This allows you to view where and how the emoticons are placed when composing. In the text document, you place your cursor at the insert point and then go to the bottom program screen and "Click" your choice. This point and click is all you need to do. You can also pick to view the Windows Behavior as "Float" or "Float, Float Always on Top". I personally like to use just "Float" so that I have a larger screen of the program I am using to compose the text message.

You should look at the website for what programs are compatible for use to see if you can use the emoticons as a point and insert or possibly as a paste into other formats. You have to remember that this is animated, and these figures perform different movements when you place them into emails or when you read them in an email application reader. The program comes with almost 500 emoticons, and you can also add emoticons to the viewer directory. These emoticons are animated gif's in format and you can put these graphics into the interface to easily place them into messages.

This program is for fun only and is not for all. If you want to liven up your e-mails and be a little creative, then you will enjoy it. Anyone who knows me is used to me using animated gif's in my Outlook Express emails and now can expect a few of these emoticons, also. ◆



WebLog Expert

By William LaMartin, Editor
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If you manage web sites, then in most cases you wish to know the most visited pages at a site and a bit about the visitors to the site: what pages they visit, their paths through the site, and where they come from. The web server's log of your site provides this sort of information--once the data has been analyzed. And that is where a web log analyzer program such as WebLog Expert comes in.

A number of years back I purchased a program called Virtual WebTrends, a lite version of WebTrends. Since it didn't give me as much data as I liked, I created an Access database full of queries and reports that provided a much better analysis of the web log data, but it didn't have all the pretty graphs of Virtual WebTrends.

With WebLog Expert I now get all those pretty graphs but also much fuller reporting, equivalent to the full featured WebTrends version (which was very expensive). If you go to their web site at http://www.weblogexpert.com, you may try out the program for free, with the cost being $75 if you decide to keep the program, or you may simply download a lite version to use for free. The free lite version may be quite sufficient for analyzing your simple web site.

What sort of information does a web log analyzer provide? First, let's look at a typical entry in a log. An entry for the log at the sites I maintain consists of 18 data fields. The more important of these are date, time, the file (page) requested, the visitor's IP address, and the User-Agent, which contains information about the browser and operating system of the visitor.

I have placed the analysis generated by WebLog Expert for the month of March for the TPCUG.ORG site at http://www.tpcug.org/stats200403. Go have a look. The raw log file was a 6.5 MB text file. The log file for my personal site, lamartin.com, for the month of March is almost three times that size. And I assume that for a major site, the log file for only one day could easily be 20 or 30 MB. The job of the web log analyzer is to make sense of all this data.

If you look at the TPCUG analysis, you will see that

- It had 8,177 total visitors for the month
- It had an average of 255 visitors each day
- The average visitor viewed 1.8 pages
- The activity was close to the same for each hour of the day
- The most accessed page was an article on Email Strippers by Jenny Lind Olin (I wonder if these people were really looking for that type of stripper)
- 76% of visitors were from the United States
- Netscape was listed as the browser being used by 51% of visitors. I know this is an error and will discuss it below.
- Something called Xenu's Link Sleuth was the most active spider closely followed by Inkotomi Slurp and the Googlebot

As I mentioned, I do not believe that 51% of the visitors to the site use Netscape Navigator. And a look at the web log with my Access database analyzer found the phrase "netscape" in the cs(user-agent) field of only 217 of the log's records. It found "MSIE" in 13,263 such records. I don't know what phrase WebLog Expert uses to determine the Netscape browser and the Microsoft browser, but I think whatever they use is wrong.

One feature you get with the Expert version is the ability to tell the country of origin of visitors. This is done using a fairly sizable database of IP addresses and the associated countries. A very surprising statistic at my personal site, lamartin.com, was the large number of visitors from China--almost 10% of my visitors. A bit more investigation showed that they were going to only one page--http://www.lamartin.com/asp/ip.asp, the page that will tell you your computer's IP address. That was

(WebLog……Continued on page 5)

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Internet Picture of the Month



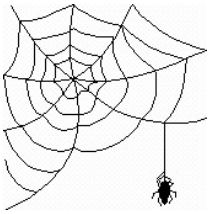
Houmas House
At dusk

From the site http://www.houmashouse.com. Houmas House is one of the larger remaining plantation homes up river from New Orleans. It is open to the public and has a new owner who has populated it with period pieces from his antique collection. At one time it was the seat of a 20,000 acre sugar plantation. A few miles further up the River Road, one can take a right turn and return to today in the form of a giant oil refinery.

(WebLog…….Continued from page 4)
quite a surprise to me.

I like the program and find it quite useful in determining what is happening at the sites I manage. It has more nice features that I unfortunately don't have room to mention. I find the analysis of my personal site more interesting than that of the TPCUG, since the material at my personal site is much more varied than that at our user group site. What people are interested in is always surprising. ◆

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
JetBlue Airways	http://www.jetblue.com/
Houmas House Plantation Home	http://www.houmashouse.com/
Computer Corner (helping with swap meet)	http://www.compucorner.net/
National D-Day Museum	http://www.ddaymuseum.org/
American Museum of Photography	http://www.photographymuseum.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Confession Of A Wanna-Be Geek

By Mike Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group
myankee@ij.net

Confession may be good for the soul; this one does the ego of this wanna-be geek boy none. I tried to open a .pif which was attached to an email which I recieved on March 2nd. There were some minor extenuating circumstances, but we shall not dwell on them now. A .pif file is, as even I knew prior to this misadventure, a Program Information File. They hail from the Windows 3.1 days. They were used to store settings and options which told Windows how to operate the DOS program that a specific PIF was associated with. Nowadays, in XP time, the PIF has faded from the spotlight.

There is, however, one use for them that has been demonstrated recently. Namely, as a vehicle for the Netsky worm. There are at least 4 varieties of this worm. According to the Norton Support site, the other types are descendents of the W32.Netsky.C@mm. I managed to get D flavor. When I tried to open the PIF, my computer began trying to send email messages. Lots of email messages. Norton was scanning as many as 15 at one point. I had to do a Ctrl-Alt-Del to get out of Outlook Express. The W32.Netsky.D@mm is a recent variation to arrive on the scene (again, according to the Norton site it was discovered on March 1st). I had just updated my virus definitions two days previous to the day my problem occurred; in other words, the day before Norton discovered the thing. Nevertheless, this was acting like a virus, so I ran a full system scan of the affected computer. It came up clean.

I deleted the email and attachment and got Outlook Express calmed down. Thought that perhaps I had lucked out. When I ran Outlook Express the next morning, it was soon clear that I had not lucked out. Soon I had Norton scanning 30 outgoing messages. This was before I had even received my messages, let alone sent any. I have well below 30 contacts in the address book. Anyhow, next I called up tech support at my ISP to see if they were hearing anything about PIFs. They were and had been deleting them at a rapid pace. Next I described the situation to William LaMartin. Sounds like a virus, said he, and I had best get myself hither to the Norton Live Update site, which I did. The Virus Definitions part of the update was small, but Netsky must have been in there. When I did another full system scan of the computer after the Live update download, it found 41 files infected with W32.Netsky.D@mm.

These files were all PIFs but were created by the worm after the payload trigger. Then I went back to the Norton Support site and downloaded a Netsky removal tool. The Norton instructions said, among other things, to run the removal tool twice after disabling the System Restore check box which is found in the System Restore tab when you right click My Computer and then click Properties. Norton says in the instructions for running the removal tool **do not** skip this step. They then recommend running Live Update for latest definitions. The removal tool can be downloaded at http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w32.netsky.u@mm.html
.

Some background information on the Netsky D worm (once again courtesy of Norton Support): It is a mass mailing worm that scans drives C through Z on the computer, and it then uses its own SMTP engine to email itself to the email addresses that it finds. The size of the attachment is 17,424 bytes. Systems which are affected by the worm: Win 2000, Win 95, Win 98, Win ME, and Windows XP. Systems not affected by the worm: Linux, Mac, Unix and Win 3.x. One of the messages in the body of the email which brings this worm to your machine that is listed by Norton matched the one I got. To Wit: See the attached file for details. I have a customer who has people whom I have no prior knowledge of sending me email with ads for a publication attached to the email. I have no other excuse. I won't even try to claim that I thought it was a .pdf instead of a .pif. Like they say; **Just don't do it. If you don't know who it is-delete it.**

Addendum: March 9th, 2004- I was still having trouble sending email normally, so I went back into Outlook Express under Tools – Options, then clicked the Connections tab and removed the check mark from the Hang Up after Sending and Receiving check box. I think I had this checked while I was trying to get Outlook Express to stop sending all the spurious messages. Then sort of as a whim, I ran a full system scan of the machine with Norton AntiVirus. It showed 39 files infected with Netsky. Back to Norton Live Update for the latest virus definitions. This time I had Norton AntiVirus quarantine and then delete all infected files. Then back to Symantec support site for some reading about the Netsky K variation and a download of the latest Netsky Removal tool. This was Version 1.0.4 as of the morning of the 9th. It was Version 1.0.3 the first go-around. I then ran the removal tool twice with System Restore disabled as before. So far all seems right in my email world. A full system scan reports no infected files.

(Geek……Continued on page 12)

FACUG Spring Meeting

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
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At Kissimmee, Florida March 5, 6, and 7, 2004, over 150 people attended the Spring Regional Conference of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups. This represents 35 groups from around Florida, some Mac, some PC and Linux occasionally, also.

On Friday night, we register for the Conference and each person is issued a cloth bag of goodies and vendors' brochures. Refreshments were available (free, of course), and we break into small groups to get together with the "regulars" from all over the State, whom we've met at previous meetings.

Every city has an interesting story to tell. Kissimmee, Florida is no exception. In 1881 Hamilton Disston signed a 1 million dollar IOU to the State of Florida. He bought four million acres at 25 cents an acre, and he immediately sold two million acres to Dutch capitalists to get the money to pay for all four million acres! There is more to the story, but let's get back to the FACUG and its president, Larry Tyler, who sets up the Kissimmee Civic Center space and also a motel agreement so we may stay in Kissimmee at a special rate. Larry and his helpers do a great job each year.

On Saturday morning, Smart Computing sponsored the breakfast. Marcie described the various magazines they produce and told us how to access all the articles in all the magazines online and for free. Smart Computing and its sister magazines are written in simple English so that even a novice may read them easily. PC Today, CE, and CPU are some of the magazines they produce. All have their articles on the website and all are available to you as a subscriber to Smart Computing. (The one I take.)

After every meal, there is a choice of three sessions to attend. Dave Dockery talked about why user groups need websites. He described the costs, and others told of their experiences and costs. Dave then went on to describe how they use a simple program to send out the news to any and all of their 1,400 members. Many ISPs limit your sending email to 100 members. He is at http://www.tampa-bay.org/. You will find useful info and newsletters there.

The second session we chose was the APCUG workshop, by Peggy Ireland and Steve Morgan. Florida has the most user groups. California is second. Some groups did not know you do not have to be a member of FACUG in order for your group to join the APCUG. APCUG will host your website, and makes up a listserv. Your user group may make up a member list so that you may send to one location and have the email go to all your members. We attend these sessions so we may stay abreast of what the folks at APCUG are thinking and doing this year. Go to webboard.apcug.org.

After the second session is lunch. Intel sponsored this lunch. Dave Whittle was the spokesman. Dave told us about the Centrino chips for laptops and how the Pentium 4 lets Windows see two processors at once. There is a seminar available on CD re: Centrino, Pentium 4, and Digital Home. Try http://www.intel.com/go/pcug. Dave will provide articles for newsletters.

The next session was on new developments in digital photography. This is the type of session that makes us all excited and interested in coming to these conferences. Rod Scher gave us a real insight into how to set your camera for depth of focus and the time of the lens opening. He presented some neat tables to illustrate his talk. He discussed the optical vs. digital zoom.

The next session we took in was Smart Computing. Marcie described the advantages the company provides for user groups: free magazines, permission to print articles in newsletters, and some information that duplicated her talk at the breakfast event.

Next, the vendors were asked to sit as a group and let the audience ask questions. Later each vendor was given a table and anyone could visit with them or buy their products.

Dinner was sponsored by Microsoft. Alan Chitlik did photos inside email, and he stitched some photos together.

Sunday breakfast was sponsored by Jasc. The program Paint Shop Pro v 8 was shown and demonstrated ably. This whole conference was dominated by photography.

Our first session was given by Alan, and he described the Microsoft music format, and copying CD music and labels. He told us that digital video requires about 198 megs per minute. His topic was, "What Alan wants to show you." Good presentation and some duplication of his other talks.

Our last session was Communicating by Dave Gerber of the Sarasota PC group. He gave us a handout and described how they get around the limit of 100 email messages. One of their people, Forrest, wrote a program so

(FACUG……..Continued on page 12)

Looking Back to 1994

From the March 1994 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 3/9/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

This was our second meeting in our new quarters at the Ybor City campus of the HCC. Things went more smoothly this time, and it was a very good meeting. Actually, it was an excellent meeting, with a "Biggie" vendor presentation -- CorelDraw 4.0. Our facilities are quite flexible now, and we have the space to set up for different size crowds. Hence, CorelDraw was not a "standing room only" session as they had been in our IBM facilities. For those who haven't been out to the Ybor City site, you should certainly do so. The location is easy to find and very accessible from the interstate.

Your Board of Directors has not yet found a solution to our pressing need for a 486 computer and a color panel for our meetings, but we have managed very well so far -- borrowing at the first meeting here, and Corel had their own equipment, as do most of the larger vendors. But we can't rely on that -- Anyone have a spare 486/33 and/or color panel they don't need and can donate to the group?

USER GROUP NEWS

Special Interest Groups (SIGs): John Lucas is organizing an OS/2 SIG. It should get started in the very near future. Meetings will be held at the IBM building from which we just moved. Look for more info on the BBS and in newsletters.

Phillip Ficarota has volunteered to organize a CorelDraw SIG if there is sufficient interest. Decisions about time and place have not yet been made. If you are interested in participating in this SIG, please get word to one of the User Group officers or Phil -- via the BBS or any other way, but the sooner the better.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Microsoft/Stacker Conflict: - The courts have rendered a decision in the disagreement between these software leaders. Stacker has been awarded some $120 or so million from MS, while MS has been awarded about $12 million as result of their countersuit. And, MS is restrained from using the technology that the suit was all about. Hence, MS will soon be coming out with MS-DOS 6.21, which will have a version of DoubleSpace that is minus the "borrowed" technology, and presumably it is now illegal to use the DoubleSpace version in MS-DOS 6.2.

Stacker/MS Windows for WorkGroups Incompatibility: Stacker 4.0 is not compatible with the recently released MS Windows for WorkGroups 3.11. Stacker is working on a fix which you might expect in the not-too-distant future. Meanwhile, be aware.

DX4s Coming Soon: Word is that the new 486DX45 (75 and 100 MHz 486s) will be coming out in the near future. As we have previously reported, they are only minimally slower than the Pentiums and are a good bit cheaper in price. If nothing else, they will likely produce continuing downward pressure on prices. Then, too, how fast is fast?

Superbase Becoming History: SPC, Inc. has announced that they are dropping their Superbase database program from their product line. I personally hate to see that happen because Superbase is a super database program; the competition and pricing are apparently overpowering it.

Dell Shows Big $$ Loss: Dell Computers recent financial statement shows a loss of $40 million on sales of $2.9 billion. We report this not to imply that Dell is in financial trouble. Rather, we can all expect some changes to be made at Dell, for they won't long stand for those kinds of losses. Pricing action is forcing all to cut their costs and/or improve productivity and efficiency.

(1994……Continued on page 9)

(1994……..Continued from page 8)

PRESENTATION -- CorelDraw 4.0 The Corel Corporation was good enough to allow their Product Specialist, Antonio Sanchez, to visit with us and give a presentation of their newest release of CorelDraw, Ver. 4.0. As has been reported before in this space, CorelDraw is a very powerful program, and one could not hope to demonstrate more than a small portion of its capabilities in the time available at our meetings. So, Antonio elected to highlight the differences between versions 3.0 and 4.0 -- and those that we saw are significant. Actually there have been many changes. Here are just a few:

Powerline : A capability has been added to take any line (s) you might want to draw and convert that line (s) into a wide variety (like hundreds) of designs, including ribbon, trumpet, wedge, teardrop and woodcut shapes.

- Creative Bitmap Editing: Allows creating startling combinations of graphic images with special effects and animation.
- Scanning Support: Advanced direct scanning has been added, including a powerful OCR.
- New Fills & Graphics: With added fills, CorelDraw now includes over 1.2 million. The clipart library has also been increased from 14,000 to 18,000.
- Welding of text and graphics is now provided and eliminates a problem that existed with earlier versions when text and graphics overlaid.
- Animation capability has been greatly enhanced and can produce really impressive results.
- Blending capability has also been enhanced and gives the power to blend literally any object to any other with user-defined sequencing.
- Powerful animation of graphics in MOVE has been further enhanced, and includes 125 Corel MOVE animations and 420 cartoons.
- The word processor has also been enhanced.
- Now supports 99 levels of undo.

News to me is that CorelDraw has a comprehensive DTP capability. Imagine creating a flyer, newsletter or other similar publication with the graphic and text manipulation capabilities of CorelDraw. WOW!!

CorelDraw 4.0 comes on 11 - 3.5" HD floppies and a CD. The program itself takes 37 MB of hard disk space when fully loaded, but the user has the option of selecting out any portions of the program not needed. The CD contains the 18.000 graphics and 750 fonts included with CorelDraw 4.0. One needs an IBM-compatible 386 or better machine for the program, Windows 3.1, 4 MB Ram (8 recommended), a mouse or tablet, and a VGA or better resolution monitor. Cost is $595 MSRP ($249 upgrade) and about $399 street. Companion to CorelDraw are several Photo CD Collections, each containing 100 beautiful pictures with a common theme, which list for $49.95 each.

Antonio reports that CorelDraw 5.0 is to be released on 20 May, which will provide further improvement in an already very, very powerful program. We can all recall Ventura Publisher. Well, Corel now owns that program and a greatly enhanced and improved version of that program will be bundled with CorelDraw 5.0. Seems like a great combination to me.

Antonio and Corel, THANKS MUCH for a super presentation of your very impressive program, CorelDraw; it is truly an amazing program. Antonio did a bang-up job of showing many of its new features.

AND THE WINNER IS Thanks to the generosity of Corel Corporation, who donated all of the door prizes, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

M. N. Marteny	Photo CD
M. J. Ciccavello	Photo CD
Larry Anders	Photo CD
Steven Atran	Photo CD
T. Goff	Photo CD
Jeff Jenkins	Corel SCSI
Bill LaForest	CorelDraw 4.0

In addition, five members were lucky winners of a Corel Mouse Pad.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:35 PM. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or *jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

The Good Old Days

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Do you remember the good old days when things cost less (or did they?)

We all know that from time to time replacements or upgrades to our systems are necessary.

You can search the net or scour the newspaper ads for the best deal. One thing is certain, hardware prices continue to drop. Bargains abound on all but a few state of the art models.

But most of us don't realize the real values in today's systems. Compare any one of them to the first PC which I was privileged to use.

It was June 1982, not too long after IBM had introduced their first mass-produced and mass-marketed personal computer, ancestor of all non-Apple systems in use today. Although our company had a substantial mid range system, our Controller requested an IBM PC because of the notoriety and publicity it had been receiving.

At the time there was only one place in Tampa that you could buy one, ComputerLand on Fowler Ave., which disappeared years ago.

After carefully discussing the equipment, options and pricing we made the following purchase.

- Model 5150 64k IBM-PC with Disk Drive (a 5.25" floppy) - $2295
- Model 5151 IBM Monochrome Monitor (12") - $345
- Monitor/Printer Adapter Card (this was not standard) - $345
- Data Mac 64k Memory Upgrade Card (k not MB) - $495
- 2nd Diskette Drive - $570.00
- Communication Adapter - $150
- IBM DOS Operating System - $40
- Printer Cable - $55
- VisiCalc Software (this was before advent of Lotus 1-2-3 and Excel) - $250
- Desktop Planner (another pre-Lotus software) - $300
- Box of 5.25" Floppy Diskettes at no charge - $0
- Sales Tax at 5% - $242
- **TOTAL: $5,087**

Yes, $5,087, without a printer. Only 128K of memory, and hard drives did not yet exist for PC's. Even more amazing is that there was 90% inflation between June 1982 and December 2003, making the cost $9665 in today's dollars.

While this information may not make spending on a new box less painful, no one can say you will not be getting a lot more bang for the buck than in the old days. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.
City of Tampa's Kate Jackson Community Center

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Borland
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Geek…….Continued from page 6)

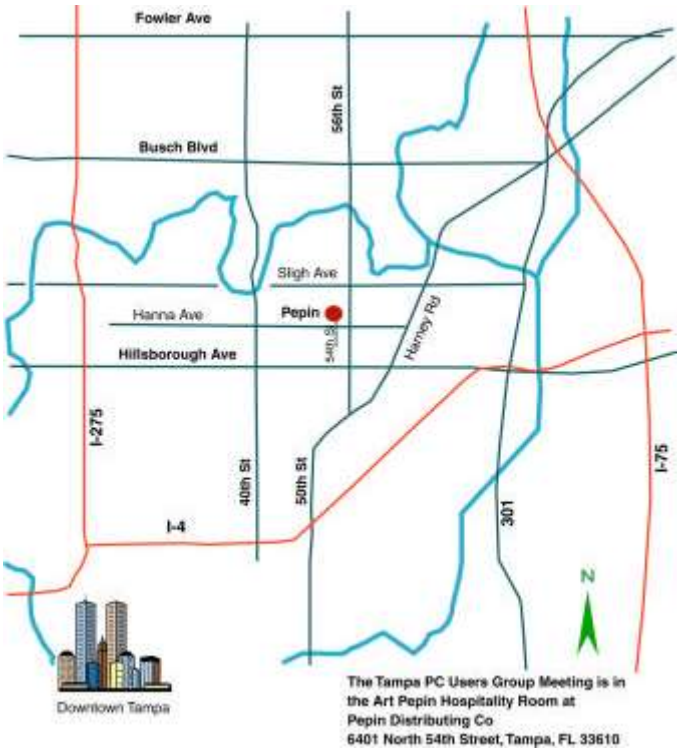
Tech support at my ISP mentioned in response to a question from me that one does have to *do* something to something in a received email message to get into trouble. Still, they say it is a good idea to keep the right side of your Outlook Express workspace as one pane, stay away from the Preview pane on the bottom. ◆

(FACUG…….Continued from page 7)

they can send email to each of 1,400 members real fast. Other clubs may use their service for $5 per month. Go to http://www.SPCUG.org.

Adobe sponsored the Sunday lunch. Dave Helmly showed us the latest Adobe Photoshop Magic. Adobe is a unique company. It would take a great deal of space to go through Dave's presentation. Most of us were thoroughly surprised at the one click changes you may make in your photos.

Goodies too numerous to mention were given out during the sessions and on Sunday afternoon at the wrap-up. Larry and his assistants are to be congratulated on another successful conference. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa
Hibiscus

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 5 May 2004

Meeting

Hyper-Threading & the Pentium 4

Wednesday, May 12, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Kevan Sheridan will tell us about hyper-threading in the Intel Pentium 4. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

What to write about this month? I have a new copy of Microsoft Office 2003 Professional that I want to write a review of, but I haven't had enough time with it to be able to compare it in detail to Office 2002. Perhaps I will be ready by next month.

Some of our members have started a digital imaging SIG. It will meet the fourth Monday of the month, commencing May 24th, at 6:00 PM at Pepin. There is no doubt considerable interest in that in the group. As you probably have gathered from my past comments and articles, it is also one of my interests. And that ties in with the topic of my article for this month--something on digital photography. ◆

June Meeting Topic: Trend Micro Internet Security by Peggy Pulliam

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

The April meeting consisted entirely of a swap meet. Below is a photo of Mike Hodges opening the meeting and below that some typical swap items. ◆





The Nikon D100 SLR Digital Camera

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I have wanted a single lens reflex style digital camera every since I saw Ford Bond's digital Nikon SLR when he gave us a presentation on digital photography in November of 2000, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/december2000/minutes200012.htm. Now I have one, the Nikon D100.



This article is not going to be a detailed review of the camera. That has already been done much better than I could do it at any number of web sites. One I particularly like is at http://www.dpreview.com/reviews/nikond100/. What I hope to convey here is a comparison of this camera to my digital Canon G1.

For the past few years, most members have seen me taking photos at the meetings with the Canon G1, a small but upper-end consumer digital camera that is now about 3.5 years old. I did a review of it at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/january2001/canong1.htm. I have really worked that little camera, taking around 5,400 images in the past 3 years and four months. From looking at the folders where they are stored, it appears that I have retained 3,870 of them. So I have retained about 72% of the images I took. Furthermore, the average size of a file is 2,056,629 bytes, where the files were saved at the largest size (2048 x 1536 pixels) and with the least compression possible. On a recent trip to New Orleans, I took around 250 photos with the Canon, retaining around 230 of them. And I am happy with most of them.

So, if I am happy with what the G1 produces, why move up? Well, because I am not completely happy. There were just some things the G1 didn't do well, and I had learned to work around them as best I could. And the fact that it did better than any other comparable digital in its price range that I had seen gave a sort of satisfaction. But every time I took a photo of a house in bright sun and the lawn in front had splotches that appeared totally washed out, or when I tried to photograph a moving object--even a slowly moving trolley car in New Orleans--and I knew that I had to aim a bit ahead of the trolley to be sure that the trolley was captured when the camera decided to actually take the photo after all its calculations, I thought about that better digital. Then there were those photos taken in available light that had some strange colors around the edge or where two walls joined in a room that I knew wouldn't have such a problem if I had used my film camera.

Finally, I thought of another photography project I wanted to do in the near future which I probably wouldn't be able to do if I waited more than six months and for which I wanted to use a digital camera, and that made the decision for me to drive over to North Tampa Photography and purchase the D100. It is sold without any lens. However, I can use the lenses I already have for my Nikon film camera, which is the main reason I never even considered the competing Canon digital SLR, which I am sure is a fine camera. A typical Nikon lens will cost you around $500, so you don't want to have to buy any more of them than necessary.

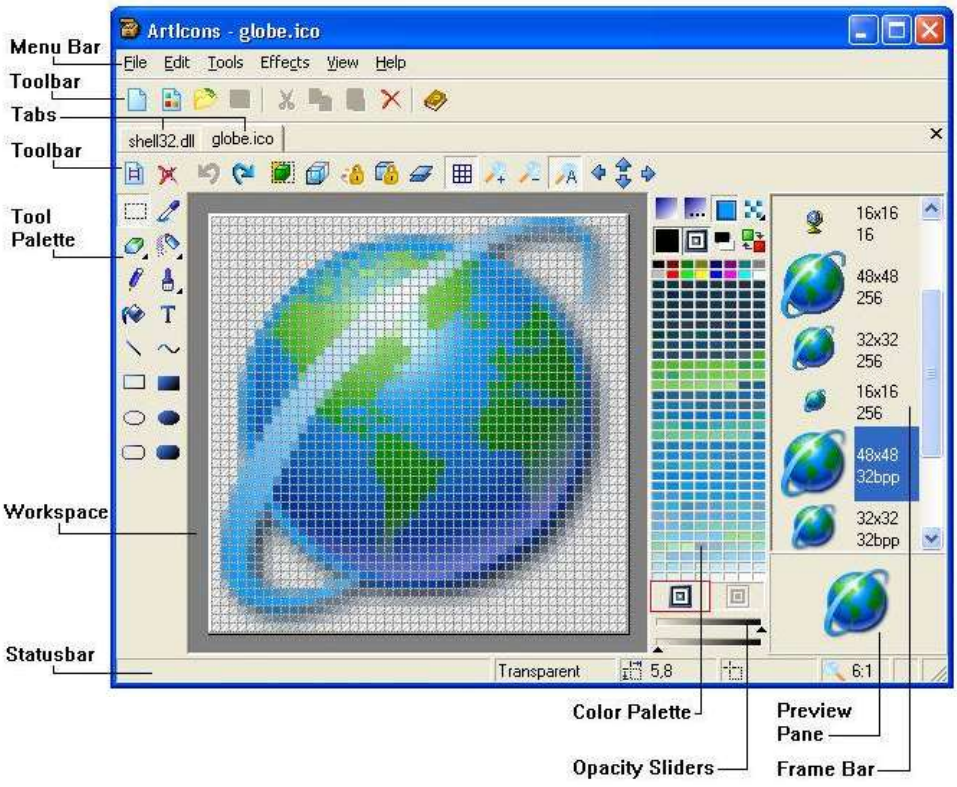
One surprise was that the camera will not work with my Nikon SB-27 speedlight in Through the Lens Mode (TTL). It will only work that way with two of the newer speedlights made by Nikon. I did get it to work with the SB-27 in auto mode and the camera in

(Nikon ……..Continued on page 6)

ArtIcons Pro 4.01

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
boblala@ij.net

In the April 2003 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2003/april2003/icons.htm, I did a review on *IconUtilities Suite* by Aha-soft, http://www.aha-soft.com, and now I'll look at just one program that has been updated from the suite, *ArtIcons Pro 4.0*. You can find a complete description on the web at http://www.iconutils.com/articons/index.htm. From the main page you can link to pages for the cost, $39.95 for the full version and variable costs for upgrading from various other Aha-soft products, along with history, awards received, F.A.Q., and screenshots of the program. I will try to add to the previous article with more details on the program and what is "*NEW*" in version 4.0.



I'll start with the main program window showing the location and description of the individual controls. As you hover your mouse over each button you have a *Hint* over each but you also have a description of the button in the lower left *Statusbar* area. I would like to ask you to look at the two sections that I consider the most useful, the *Color Palette* and the *Frame Bar*. In the *Color Palette* you can see how the colors are presented in different gradients for each. This allows easier color transaction and blending. The predominate colors of the individual icon are shown when editing or changing an existing icon, and when creating a new icon, the full color spectrum is presented. If you need a transition, the shade is easily available without calling up an individual color palette from within the program. The *Frame Bar* area shows the individual icons that are in the different display resolutions. The newer icons are created in *Libraries* that include multiple icons. With ArtIcons you can *Export* any specific icon from the viewing area to work on or to use. This gives greater clarity in the high resolutions available today. You can create a new icon or convert an existing icon from a monochrome (1 bit) up and through 256 colors (8 bit) and finally to True Color + Alpha (32 bit).

The *Customize Windows Icons* feature is much like the *Effects* tab in Windows *Display Properties* but with much greater control over how and what icons are used and displayed in your Windows environment. As you can see in the picture on the next page, under the *Desktop* tab there are many more choices for you to use in customizing your work. From the picture you can see Control Panel, Printers, Desktop and History to name just a few. Each tab offers more choices in a particular area. The *Start Menu* tab allows you to change the icons being used on your Windows Start Bar such as the Run, Shut Down, etc. buttons.

(Icons……..Continued on page 5)

(Icons…….Continued from page 4)



The *Drives* tab allows you to change how hard drives, CD ROMs and other icons in *My Computer* are displayed. Change any of these icons to what you would like, not what Microsoft decided. The *Miscellaneous* tab shows icons such as the Default icon Windows uses to represent unknown file types and even the Printers default icon. Once a Tab is chosen, you can use the buttons on the right not only to change the icons that are displayed, but also to restore any changes to any group or to change any individual icon back to the Windows default.

(Icons…….Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month

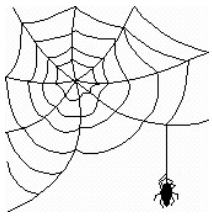


Potato Panic

From the site http://www.photo.net/. The photographer is Dick Smolinski. Not everything has gone digital. This photo was taken with a Mamiya RB67 using Kodak Ektachrome

This site has a nice gallery of photographs along with informative columns and equipment reviews.

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Elena's Motorcycle Ride through Chernobyl	http://www.kiddofspeed.com/
Louisiana State Museum	http://lsm.crt.state.la.us/
Wonkette	http://www.wonkette.com/
The Elder Geek on Windows XP	http://www.theeldergeek.com/
U.S. Government Reference Center	http://www.firstgov.gov/Topics/Reference_Shelf.shtml#laws
U.S. Government Graphics and Photos	http://www.firstgov.gov/Topics/Graphics.shtml

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Icons.....Continued from page 5)

The new feature that is added to this version is *Layers*. What I like about layers is how you can use layers like you would use transparencies in adding to a drawing. Think of having a pretty uncolored painting on a sheet of paper and placing a clear plastic sheet over the paper. You then can add colors to the plastic without affecting the paper below. This leaves the original intact from editing mistakes that would destroy the original. Any changes are easily accepted or deleted. For example, I can start with an icon of a tower computer, Layer 1, and make additions of colors in two more layers, defining the shape and adding color to what was a grey, dull icon. I never changed the original, and it is left alone as I tried to be creative. Once I am satisfied, I save the colored project and have the new icon to play with.

This program allows you to easily change or create icons to enhance your computer's visual appearance. It is not for everyone but can be quite fun and allows you to create a little bit of individuality in your computer. I love it. ◆

Spy Sweeper

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
RobDavis@ij.net

Spy Sweeper is a neat little program to check for spy-ware. Its purpose is to detect and eliminate harmful spy-ware that may threaten one's privacy. Sometimes email may contain spy-ware.

I recently purchased and installed this software because I suspected I had extra stuff running on my computer. Apparently I was right. Spy Sweeper found 20 odd pieces of software to quarantine and over 3,800 other traces! My PC seems to run faster now, too. However, every once in awhile it freezes for about 10 seconds. (I am still running Windows 98.) I suspect Spy Sweeper is doing something. This program is easy to install and costs about $30 at CompUSA. Other than the rare freeze for a few seconds, it is non-intrusive and seems to do a good job at catching those pesky traces and Trojan programs. After installing, go to Options and Active Shields to be sure it checks for what you want. ◆

(Nikon.....Continued from page 3)

manual mode.

The current version of my Canon is the G5 which is a 5 megapixel camera and costs around $520, considerably less than the $900 I paid for my G1. The 6.1 megapixel D100 without a lens costs $1,495, and, as I mentioned, a Nikon Zoom lens can go for around $500. So what do you get by paying an extra $1,500 for the SLR type digital camera and lens? Why, you get better photos!

- They are sharper and cleaner looking.
- The color balance is almost always correct, with no need for modification in a graphics program.
- The camera is ready to snap a photo the instant you turn it on.
- High speed image processing shows you the photo taken in the preview screen almost instantly. Note with a SLR digital, you don't see the photo in the screen on the camera's back until the photo is taken, since the camera's mirror is in the way before the photo is snapped.
- This same high speed image processing allows the photo to be taken the instant you press the shutter release (except on some flash shots in my testing), and the camera has a large enough buffer to allow you to take 3 frames per second to a maximum of 7 or 8 photos.
- Focusing is very fast.

These last two items are also what separate the Nikon D100 from the Nikon digitals that cost twice

(Nikon.....Continued on page 7)

Nikon……..Continued from page 6)

as much again: Faster and longer continuous shooting and the ability to quickly automatically focus large lenses. Think long, heavy telephoto lenses for sports photography. I note that the 24 - 120 mm Nikkor zoom lens I use with the D100 by itself weighs more than my old Canon G1.

That brings up the main disadvantage (other than price) of the digital SLRs--size and weight. I had really come to enjoy the small size of my Canon G1 when compared to my Nikon film camera, which is about the same size as the new D100.





Here are three of my first photos taken with the D100. The top photo is of Wade Herman's parrot cropped from a larger photo taken with the built-in flash. The bottom photo is of a neighborhood cat on his porch shot with the zoom lens at full extension. The photo above is a slightly cropped version of a bee taking nectar from a small flower in the alley behind my home. This photo was taken with an AF Micro Nikkor 60mm lens (close-up lens). The other two photos were taken with an AF-S Nikkor 24-120 mm lens.

All three photos have been considerably reduced in size and compressed greatly to make them usable when the newsletter is put at the web site. However, the quality is still there. The bee is only 56 KB, the cat is 86 KB and the parrot is 121 KB. Check out these photos in the online version of the newsletter to see them in color and with a much better rendition.

Another difference between the Canon G1 and the Nikon D100 is that the Canon uses battery power to go from wide angle to zoom. With the D100 and a zoom lens attached, you use your hand to rotate the zoom ring on lens. This is just one of several reasons for the surprisingly long battery life of the D100. It looks like I am out of space, so other observations will have to wait. ◆



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Looking Back to 1994

From the May 1994 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 3/9/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

A nice turnout for this meeting, and everything seemed to go very well. There was a good bit of time for an open forum kind of interchange between members, along with presentations briefly reviewing a couple of very nice Abode programs -- one of which most of you will be using in the not-too-distant future: Adobe Acrobat and the Acrobat Reader.

USER GROUP NEWS

- Membership Survey: A membership survey form was created by the Board of Directors (BOD) recently for the purpose of gathering the information from the membership needed to help guide our future efforts and the allocation of some rather slim resources. The survey was handed out to those present and was included in the newsletter for those not present. **All members are asked to complete the survey form as soon as practicable and return it to the BOD. or bring it to the next meeting. Your input is very important and will help your BOD a great deal in making the decisions that must be made in the near future.** The data will be held in strictest confidence and will only be used as statistical data.
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs): Preparation for SIGs on OS/2 and CorelDraw are in their final stages of preparation and all preparations should be complete by the next general meeting. Both will likely be meeting not long after the next general meeting. It is therefore recommended that any members interested in participating in either of these SIGs be sure to attend the next general meeting. It appears that the OS/2 SIG will likely meet in the IBM facility, and the Corel SIG will likely meet at the Dale Mabry campus of the HCC.

INDUSTRY NEWS

- Merge Mania: Competition in the software world has led to what seems to be merger mania. In addition to the passing of Word Perfect, recent announcements include Adobe acquiring Aldus, Symantec buying Central Point, and Intuit buying Best Software. Whether the objectives of the companies involved will be achieved is yet to be seen. In the long term, however, this merger mania could have a negative effect on competition, but it would seem the mania has not yet approached that level.
- "Simply Tax" Refund For Some: As many know, Computer Associates, a big name in the main frame world for a long time, has been trying to make their name recognized in the PC world by marketing Simply Money and Simply Tax for only S & H charges. Those that acquired Simply Tax before the final version was available had to pay $9.95 for the early bird version, and then another $3.95 to get the final version. After receiving numerous complaints, Computer Associates has agreed to refund the $3.95 charge to those who request same in writing. So, if you want your $3.95 back you will have to contact Computer associates and request it.
- MS Maintenance Upgrades: Maintenance upgrades are now out for MS Word For Windows 6.0 and for MS Windows 3.1. The upgrades change the program designations to 6.0a and 3.11, respectively. No charge is involved, and they are available form numerous electronic sources, including the MS BBS and CompuServe. They are also available on our own Bits of Blue BBS as WORD6OA.EXE and WW0981.EXE.
- Professional Write Upgrade: Harvey reported that Professional Write 3.0 is available to all present owners of Professional Write, or any competitive DOS word processor, for $65 from Professional Write. Win Fax PRO Upgrade: Version 4.0 upgrade to that program is available for $49 at 1-800-268-6082.

PRESENTATION -- Adobe

William C. Lindsay, South Eastern Account Manager for Adobe Corporation, generously agreed to give us a brief overview of two Adobe products: Photoshop 2.5.1 and the Acrobat package. I say "brief" overview because, although Bill spent a good amount of time

(1994……..Continued on page 9)

(1994……..Continued from page 8)
accomplishing that end, the scope of the power and features of these programs makes anything short of a several hour review "brief". Bill proved to be a very able representative for Adobe, and he gave an excellent presentation of both packages. I can't hope to cover, even briefly, all of the features Bill demonstrated, but here are a few:

Photoshop: Adobe says that Photoshop is "The world's leading photo design and production tool." I don't know whether that is accurate or not, but I do know that if there is anything you might want to do with an electronic photograph it would seem that Photoshop will do it very well and very fast. You can create your own, scan images into it, or import from a host of formats. Once an image (negative or positive) is in the program, it can be manipulated in just about any way you can imagine: Change the image to a negative or positive image; change colors (w/16 million available) of any part or all of the image; create duo-, tri- and quadtones; provide for simultaneous viewing of a range of color options applied to the image to aid in making choices; export and import all or any part of an image to other programs and/or as replacement/added components of an image; create any tint/hue changes desired; create and add in graphics created with the versatile and powerful built-in drawing tools; add in any text desired using the large selection of fonts included, or Windows fonts, and manipulate their size, shape, and color to your heart's content; etc., and then print out or export your finished product to any of a wide variety of formats, including one to create an actual film negative.

Photoshop is truly a very powerful program and can handle 40-50 MB images and includes excellent online help. It also includes 100 beautiful licensed images, covering a wide variety of subjects. It handles a large selection of file formats (import and export). Windows 3.1 (or later) is required, of course, and it will run on a 386, but a 486 with 8 MB RAM is recommended. The specific amount of disk space the program requires is unknown, but it is in the several MB range. But one needs a good bit of free disk space to accommodate images, especially when handling the 40-50 MB variety.

Photoshop is available for IBM-compatibles and Mac. It lists for $895, but is available for substantially less. One flyer from a retailer was available at the meeting listing an Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator (also a high end program) package for $679.

Acrobat: Adobe Acrobat is actually a family of related programs, which includes Acrobat Exchange, Acrobat Distiller, Acrobat Reader, and Acrobat Starter Kit. Acrobat Exchange is the starting point. It converts many commonly used document formats into what is called a Portable Document Format (PDF). This common format then can be read by the other components of the Acrobat family. The components are available in DOS/Windows and Mac. Hence, once a file is converted to the common PDF format it can be read by any PC with a Reader, regardless of operating platform or other application software. "Big deal," you say, "I can do just about that much with ASCII format." The BIG difference is that Acrobat retains all formatting of the document, including fonts, page layout, graphics, etc., literally all of the features of the original, so that what the reader shows on the screen and prints out to a printer, if desired, is exactly the same as the original document. The host computer need not have the fonts nor graphics used in the original document; Acrobat takes care of that. Acrobat, then, allows the interchange of documents between computers, overcoming the limitations of different hardware, operating systems and application software. Interestingly, in many cases the PDF file is substantially smaller than the application file from which the PDF was created.

Acrobat Exchange allows one to create, view, collate, annotate, manipulate and print PDF documents. Acrobat Reader allows viewing and printing any PDF document, and gives the ability to access any annotations, bookmarks and links that are a part of the PDF file. Acrobat Distiller converts postscript language files into PDF files. Acrobat Starter Kit is a 10-user license package of the Exchange and Distiller components, or everything a workgroup of 10 needs to use Acrobat.

For the DOS/Windows version, a 386 machine with at least 3 MB of hard disk space is needed. The street price for none of the components was available at the

(1994……..Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:00 PM. For information, contact Mary Sheridan at mcpease@mindspring.com.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Emoticons Mail 2.3

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@att.net

With the high volume of often dull and impersonal emails we deal with, there are times when it is nice to add a little humor or liveliness to your correspondence. This is easily done by adding emoticons or smileys.

Emoticons Mail 2.3 is an easy-to-use program that enables you to insert smileys in your email messages. It supports Microsoft Windows 95/98/ME/ NT/2000/XP and provides Premium support of **Outlook** 2000/2002/XP/2003 and Premium support of **Outlook Express** 5.x/6.x.
It will not, however, work with other email or word processors.

A simple download installation places access in your system tray. Thereafter, the program loads at Windows start up but can be set to only load on demand.

More than 800 smileys are included, broken down by categories: General, Action, Love, Sad, Goodies, Japanese, Holidays and Favorites. Each category has a number of subcategories and many of the emoticons are animated. The Favorites holds your 50 most recent choices and has a My Photos section which allows you to add new emoticons from external files. The program provides a nice but not unusually large or unique selection of smileys.

A single click on the system tray opens the program and a single click easily attaches the smiley to your email as a tiny gif file with nothing to download.

A great many more emoticons in similar categories as well as many additional categories are available via free downloads so why buy Emoticons Mail?

Here are several valid reasons:

- Free emoticons programs often contain ad ware or spy ware to enable them to be "free".
- No offensive smileys are included.
- No Speedbar or other tool bar is added to your system.
- You can add your personal emoticons.
- You do not need to have an Internet connection when you are adding emoticons.
- The recipient is not required to download anything and does not need an Internet connection to view Emoticons Mail smileys (if they are using Outlook or Outlook Express).

You can download the program from Maxplugs.com for $19 and get lifetime updates and a 60 day money back guarantee. ◆

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Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

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Microsoft
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Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
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Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
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Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(1994…….Continued from page 9)
meeting. List price is: Exchange - $195; Distiller - $695; Reader - $50; and Starter Kit - $1,395.

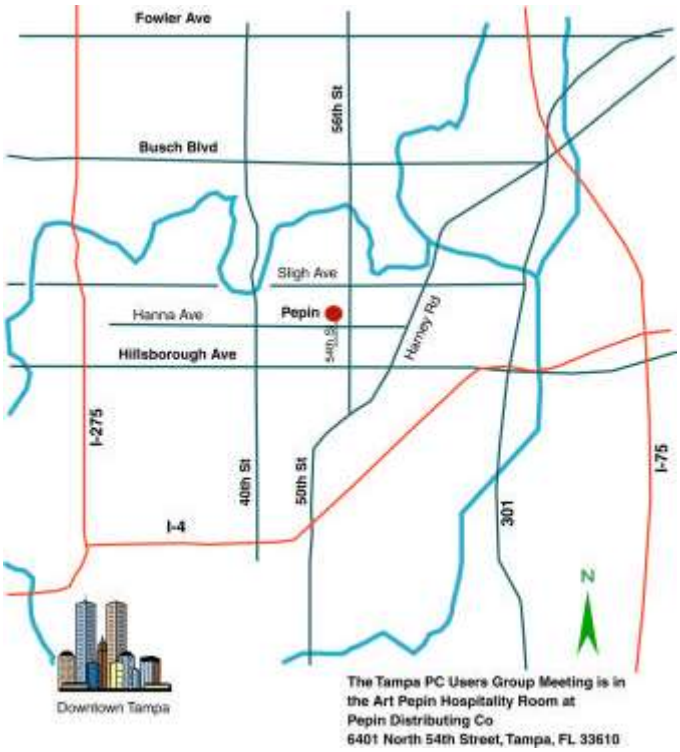
Bill and Adobe, thank you very much for a super presentation. You have a couple of very powerful and useful programs in Photoshop and Reader. We will soon be distributing Readers to our members and then using Acrobat Exchange and the Readers to post our newsletter to our members electronically.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Adobe Corporation, which donated all but one of the door prizes, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Don Simonds - Adobe Wild Type
Joe Crochet - Adobe Wild Type
E. Jurado - Adobe Type On Call
Mark Saunders - Adobe Type On Call
Mark Saunders - Almost Perfect Book

The meeting adjourned at about 8:35 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa
Magnolia

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 6 June 2004

Meeting

Internet Security

Wednesday, June 9, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Peggy Pullliam will discuss Trend Micro's Internet Security. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I hear that the digital imaging SIG got off to a fine start. It is the fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 at Pepin. Unfortunately, Monday evenings I am not always free to attend at the moment.

I have finally gotten around to writing about Office 2003. It is hard to do because there is so much ground to cover and I want to do more than just rephrase what is on the software box. or at the Microsoft site. I think I have done that. In a nutshell, there is not that much new in this version if you are not a corporate or collaborative user and if you don't worry about document rights and such things. ◆

July Meeting Topic: Microsoft Office

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secreary,
Tampa PC Users Group
Pegrance@yahoo.com

Before the TPCUG meeting this May we had our usual Windows SIG where we learned that if there is trouble booting up your computer, lost drivers, etc., boot in Safe Mode, then reboot. It reloads the original drivers, and you should be able to get going again. You can also use MSConfig.exe to see what is running on your computer and help troubleshoot.

Tampa PC User Group member Bob Lafave has a CD of Shareware he has compiled available. If you are interested contact him at boblala@ij.net.

The meeting this month was about the Intel Pentium 4 Processor with Hyper-Threading technology! Kevan Sheridan presented the overview. Circuitry is added, and a single processor is recognized by the operating system and multi-threaded application as TWO logical processors – increasing productivity like crazy.

Kevan started us out with a hilarious clip from the movie Men in Black II (the post office scene) to help us get the idea of what it would be like. It's like having another set of arms to do your work. When you have this capability you won't see the pauses that happen when you are running a program. For example, with a game you may have seen this. An object on screen halts for just a moment and then continues. This doesn't happen with Hyper-Threading technology. It works at the hardware level. Hyper-Threading Technology requires a computer system with an Intel Pentium 4 processor supporting Hyper-Threading Technology and an HT Technology enabled chipset, BIOS and operating system (your XP Home will work for the OS). Performance will vary depending on the specific hardware and software you use. See http://www.intel.com/info/hyperthreading/ for more information, including details on which processors support HT Technology.

We as a club have an opportunity to be granted one of these processors by Intel, and we are planning to apply for it. If that works out, we will have a demonstration in the REAL with all the fixings!

The meeting ended with questions and comments about the technology and our door prize, *Publisher 2002,* of which Merrill Friend was the lucky winner. ◆

Office Professional 2003

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

How many reviews of Microsoft Office have I written? Let me count the times. And here we go again. It is not that I dislike Office; in fact, I use its programs everyday. I am just running out of things to say about it. Furthermore, this newest version's new features, as far as I can tell, are aimed mostly at corporate users. For example, they will benefit from the new XML integration, which makes it much easier to move information from one program to another, including programs outside the Office suite. Additionally, the new version has much-enhanced collaboration features--again something more geared for corporate and intranet usage, as opposed to the individual user. In all honesty, there is really no reason for the typical member of our user group to upgrade to Office 2003 if they have Office 2000 or Office XP. However, if you are still using Office 97, it is time to move up.

For my newsletter review of Office 2000, go to http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/march2000/microsoft_office_2000.htm and http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/april2000/ocffice_2000_part2.htm. For my notes on Office XP, see http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/september2001/officexp.htm.

Before you rush out to buy Office 2003, you need to check your operating system. This version of Office will only install on Windows 2000, SP3 or Windows XP. The installation requires approximately 500 MB with the options I selected. That includes Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Publisher, along with Visual Basic for Applications for each of the applications and Microsoft Document Imaging. After I made my selections, the actual installation took less than five minutes. Then there is a check on the web for updates.

After the installation, on the first run of one of the applications, the activation wizard starts and completes quickly. Following that, you are given a chance to register, which is not required. It is good that it is not required, since my attempts at registering never completed. I can't remember the problem, but I think they were supposed to send me an email with some information that I was then to use to finish the registration. The email with the information never arrived. But activation is what is important. That is what will supposedly keep you from installing the programs on more than one laptop and one desktop computer and also check if it is a pirated copy.

As to new features, Outlook 2003 has received the greatest overhaul. It has a new, larger preview pane called the Reading Pane. It provides junk email filtering and in the calendar view gives you the ability to display two calendars side by side. I don't use Outlook 2003 much except for doing mail merges with Word and for programming it with VBA—mainly to see if I can do the programming instead of using the programming for creating needed applications. I do use Outlook XP on my second computer as my contact manager and calendar. But on my main computer, my email program is Outlook Express. I think my reason for that goes back to when it was considerably safer to use Outlook Express instead of Outlook for email since it was not programmable and thus less subject to virus attacks than was Outlook. Since then a lot more security has been built into Outlook, and I should perhaps reconsider my use of Express.

Word, Excel and Access appear less changed, and all use the same file format as Office 2000. Access has a new file format, but you can, however, set Access to default to the Access 2000 format. Word has added a neat Read toolbar that formats your document into two pages where they appear much as they would look if they were printed as a book. This makes it much easier to proof-read or browse a long document and also allows for minimal editing in this format.

SmartTags, introduced for Word and Excel in earlier versions, are now available for PowerPoint and Access. Recall that a SmartTag is a feature that is applied to text such that when your mouse hovers over the text, you are provided additional information. For example, holding the mouse over an address might possibly supply a link to a map of that address.

(Office……Continued on page 4)

(Office……Continued from page 3)

In Word, Excel and PowerPoint there is a new menu item under Tools, called Research. This allows you to go to a collection of sites on the web to do a search for information on a topic. There is also a translation feature available that will translate a word, phrase or document. The translation is done at a web site (http://www.worldlingo.com) and the translation is displayed in your browser. So you need to be connected to the Internet for this—unless there is a built-in translation ability that I missed.

Here is the French translation of the SmartTags paragraph above:

> *SmartTags, présenté pour le mot et excellent dans des versions plus tôt, sont maintenant disponible pour PowerPoint et accèdent.Rappelez-vous qu'un SmartTag est un dispositif qui est appliqué au texte tels que quand votre souris plane au-dessus du texte, vous êtes des informations additionnelles fournies.Pour l'exemple, tenant la souris au-dessus d'une adresse pourrait probablement fournir un lien à une carte de cette adresse*.

Now here is the English translation of the French translation:

> *SmartTags, presented for the word and excellent in versions earlier, are now available for PowerPoint and reach.You point out that SmartTag is a device which is applied to the text such as when your mouse planes above the text, you are provided additional information. For the example, holding the mouse above an address could probably provide a bond to a chart of this address*.

Much of the annoying auto formatting has been turned off by default. In Word XP, for example, it could be quite frustrating to try and start a new line with a lower case letter since Word would by default keep changing the letter to a capital. If you started a line with "1.", then some text, Word would want to start the next line with "2.". So that is an improvement.

Now for a few annoyances:

One annoying thing (at least for me) that has not changed is the way Word saves a document as a web page (htm, html). Word 2003 has two ways to save as an HTML page, filtered and unfiltered, but both produce HTML code that most old time HTML coders would consider cluttered. The purpose, I am sure, is to produce a web page that is as close as possible in appearance to the Word document. However, this has the byproduct of producing web pages for which you cannot change the font size in your browser. My way of producing more standard HTML code from a Word document is to copy the text that is in the document, paste it into WordPad, then copy that text and paste it into FrontPage (or any other web page editor). That will yield a web page for which the font size can be changed in the browser.

Another annoyance was what appeared to me to be an Office program's propensity to go online for help on a topic when all I want is for it to search its own help database. That was until I realized that the default was for online help but that I could easily change it to offline help. So that is not really an annoyance.

To me a more serious problem is in Microsoft Document Imaging—something that perhaps not many people use. Microsoft Document Imaging allows you to scan in and OCR a printed document. In Office 2000 and Office 2002 I could save the result in Rich Text Format (RTF). However, in Office 2003, if I try to save the results in RTF, I get an error message. The only format that I am able to save my OCR'ed results to is in HTML. I have searched Google and the Microsoft site, and not only can I not find a solution, I can't even find any mention of the problem. Norton Antivirus has caused similar problems in the past, but the Office plug-in for Norton is disabled in my setup, as is script blocking, so I have no solution at the present other than saving the OCR results as a web page and then extracting the text

(Office……Continued on page 5)

(Office……..Continued from page 4)

from there. There seems to be next to nothing on the web about Microsoft Document Imaging. Is no one but me using it?

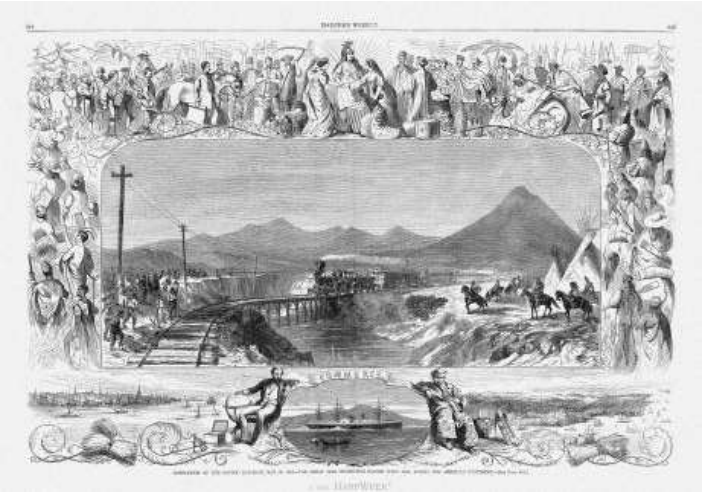
A great deal is made over XML in the reviews of Office 2003 that I have seen. First, it is noted that to get it you need Office Professional and not a lesser version. Then they say that it facilitates the exchange of data between Office and other programs. Then they say no more, since I don't think they know any more, and most people, in fact, don't want to know any more.

I don't know much about XML myself, but here is what I do know and how I use it. First, in Office XP Professional I could export an Access table to an XML file—actually two files, one ending in .xml and the other ending in .xsd. The .xml file contained the data and the .xsd file described the field types of the table (the schema for the data). Also in Excel XP you could save a sheet as an XML spreadsheet. So saving to XML is not new with Office 2003. What is new is that you can now additionally save a Word document in XML format. I see no such option for Publisher 2003 and PowerPoint 2003. However, it appears that you can save a PowerPoint document as a Word document, which, as noted, you can save as XML.

A Word XML file is nothing but a text file contain-

(Office……..Continued on page 7)

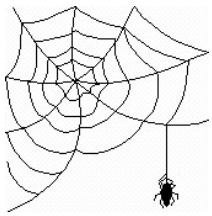
Internet Picture of the Month



Completion of the first transcontinental railroad

From the site http://harpweek.com, which provides electronic access to *Harper's Weekly* from 1857 - 1912. Much of the site is by subscription, but some of it is free, like the collection of cartoons. The one above celebrates the completion of the first transcontinental railroad and was originally published on May 19, 1869.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Harper's Weekly	http://harpweek.com/
Clark Vision.Com - Photography	http://www.clarkvision.com/
The Skyscraper Museum	http://www.skyscraper.org/home_flash.htm
Famous Wills	http://www.courttv.com/people/wills/
Florida Link Index	http://www.planetflorida.net/floridalinkindex.htm
RadioLovers.com - Old Time Radio Shows	http://www.radiolovers.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Information on RAID 0 and Serial ATA

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

For the May meeting, Kevan Sheridan gave an excellent and fascinating talk from Intel material on Pentium 4 Hyper-Threading. Several points of discussion were raised, and during that I realized that I needed to do some research.

One interesting slide was given showing an optimal P-4 system using two Serial ATA RAID 0 drives that suggested that if you had, say, two 80G drives, you would have a total of 160G. And that is the case. I looked it up at an excellent site at Advanced Computer & Network Corporation http://www.acnc.com/04_01_00.html.

RAID 0 uses a minimum of two drives and is used to maximize throughput:

Characteristics/Advantages

- RAID 0 implements a striped disk array, the data is broken down into blocks, and each block is written to a separate disk drive.
- I/O performance is greatly improved by spreading the I/O load across many channels and drives.

Best performance is achieved when data is striped across multiple controllers with only one drive per controller.

Disadvantages

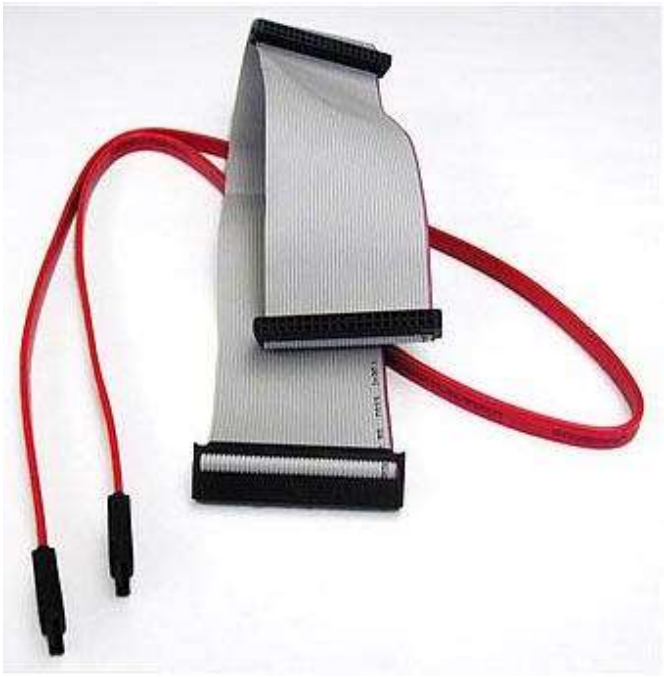
- Not a "True" RAID because it is NOT fault-tolerant
- The failure of just one drive will result in all data in an array being lost

Should never be used in mission critical environments

This is interesting to me, since my own personal computer has one SATA drive and one unused channel, with RAID 0 built onto the motherboard.

Serial ATA is a standard newer than the usual IDE (ATA and Ultra ATA) drive standard. SATA has become very common, with RAID SATA support built onto the motherboard at a very small cost premium.

Over the past couple of years we've seen the "burst rate" rating for hard drives go from 33MB/sec to 66, 100 and finally 133. I tried to find some direct speed comparisons – Parallel ATA to Serial ATA, but gave up on it due to conflicting terminology. The Seagate website claimed only a 1 to 5% improvement in throughput, but also cited the smaller cable used improving air flow (see picture), lower production costs due to the easier-handling connectors, and lower power consumption.



Processors

Kevan mentioned a big discrepancy in megahertz ratings of processors and noted that you just can't trust a megahertz number any more, and that's absolutely correct. An Intel P-4 3000 runs at 3000MHz, and an AMD XP 3000+ runs at 2167MHz. Looking at the specifications, the most glaring difference is that the AMD processes nine instructions per cycle to the Intel's four.

Also there's a difference in the number of integer registers and floating point registers. AMD does offer benchmark comparisons for both AMD and Intel.

Documentation is offered on the site that explains the benchmarks. One interesting thing is that the numbers suggest that for some benchmarks, the P-4 may have better performance with Hyper-Threading turned off.

◆

(Office……..Continued from page 5)

ing the text of the Word document, along with document information like creator and time of creation, along with loads of formatting information. Thus, a program that understood the Microsoft Office Schemas could extract the data and formatting from the XML file and reproduce the Word document.

The only way I have used XML in Office is to export Access Tables to XML files and then use them as data sources on web sites. This is necessary at some hosting companies hosting Microsoft ASP.Net pages (the pages end in .aspx instead of .asp or .htm or .html). They consider using Microsoft Access databases as data sources at ASP.Net sites a security risk, but the XML files are safe since they are just text files. It may strike you as odd that it is safe to use Access with Active Server Pages (ASP) but not with ASP.Net pages (ASPX), but they are different technologies.

Here is what a table of books in my library looks like when exported to XML. You can see the structure with field names like ID, Title and Subject. This table contains 527 entries and is another example of one of my unfinished projects. I would guess that I am about 30% through entering my books.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
- <dataroot xmlns:od="urn:schemas-microsoft-
com:officedata" xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/
XMLSchema-instance"
xsi:noNamespaceSchemaLocation="Library_Table.xsd">
- <Library_Table>
  <ID>1</ID>
  <Title>This Old House Guide to Building and Remodeling Materials</Title>
  <Author>Vila, Bob</Author>
  <Publisher>Warner</Publisher>
  <Date>1986</Date>
  <ISBN>0446-382469</ISBN>
  <Type>Reference</Type>
  <Subject>Houses</Subject>
  <Key_words>building materials, tools, remodeling</
Key_words>
  <Pages>486</Pages>
  <Cover>Cloth</Cover>
  </Library_Table>
- <Library_Table>
  <ID>2</ID>
    <Title>100 Years of Mathematics</Title>
    <Author>Temple, George</Author>
    <Publisher>Springer-Verlag</Publisher>
    <Date>1981</Date>
    <ISBN>0387-911928</ISBN>
    <Type>Science</Type>
    <Subject>Mathematics</Subject>
    <Pages>316</Pages>
    <Cover>Hard</Cover>
    </Library_Table>
  ....
  ....
- <Library_Table>
  <ID>527</ID>
  <Title>The Secret Agent</Title>
  <Author>Conrad, Joseph</Author>
  <Publisher>Doubleday Anchor Books</Publisher>
  <Date>1953</Date>
  <Type>Fiction</Type>
  <Subject>Novel</Subject>
  <Pages>253</Pages>
  <Cover>paper</Cover>
  </Library_Table>
```

So you have now seen more than you wanted to about XML, but at least now you will have some idea of what people mean by the term. Oh, by the way, it stands for Extend Markup Language.

To finish, let me briefly describe how I use the different Office products.

Word I use Word for letters, articles like this one, longer monographs and for business documents containing embedded and linked Excel tables and charts. I also use it in conjunction with Outlook in doing email merges for around 250 email addresses. I should note that in the 2003 version, the email merge seems to run faster than in the XP version.

Excel I use it to calculate my business and personal taxes, to do "what if" business scenarios and to keep track of various items involving numbers.

Access I keep databases for this user group membership, my neighborhood organization, the data required for various web sites that I manage, personal information like the database of books mentioned above and for analyzing the data in the server log of my websites. It is the Office component to which I most apply my Visual Basic programming ability.

(Office……..Continued on page 10)

Looking Back to 1994

From the June 1994 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 5/11/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS
By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

A very good turnout for this meeting, which held the promise of a great presentation by one of the largest PC software companies -- Microsoft Access. And the promise turned into reality - a great meeting and a great presentation.

USER GROUP NEWS

- Membership Survey: Harvey reiterated the why's and wherefore's of the member survey now underway. Thanks were given to those who had completed and turned in their survey form; those who had not yet done so were implored to please do so as soon as possible. The information will be of considerable benefit to the Board of Directors in guiding the direction of the user group and our BBS and in making our group of greater benefit for all members.
- Hard Drive For BBS: Harvey again noted for the group that the BBS has only one 212 Mb hard drive available to serve all the purposes we want of the BBS. The hard drive is full, and we need to acquire a 500 Mb + hard drive, preferably from donation or barter. Members were asked to look for ways to come by more hard drive space. One of our members offered a 200 Mb to the group, an offer that was quickly accepted. The 'new-to-us' hard drive should be installed in the near future, and we will likely see more files available for download in coming weeks. While this is not a long term solution, it will allow us to improve the BBS, and it gives us some breathing space. A BIG THANK YOU from all of us to ELAINE MARMEL for her generosity.
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs): The OS/2 SIG is off and running. The first meeting is scheduled for 26 May - the 4th Thursday in May, at 6 PM, in the IBM facilities on the 4th floor of the Lake Pointe One building across ML King Blvd from Burdines in the Tampa Bay Mall. Subsequent meetings will be held in the same location and at the same time, but on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Many thanks to John Lucas for organizing and leading this SIG.
- The CorelDraw SIG is still in the organization stage, with obtaining meeting facilities at HCC (Dale Mabry campus) the stumbling block. We hope to have good news on this in the near future so we can get this SIG going.
- Possible BBS Move: Harvey informed us that the present location of the BBS may not be available to us in the future. Presently located at our SYOP's place of employment, that business is presently in the throws of reorganization and tenure of our BBS is a bit uncertain. We need to be prepared to relocate the BBS should that become necessary, perhaps on short notice. All members were asked to keep an eye out for a potential alternate location, at least semi-permanent in duration, for the BBS. Please pass on any suggestions you may have to any of the members of the Board of Directors.
- VA Patients Access To BBS: Harvey reported that the Board of Directors had determined that with only one phone line to our BBS it would be unfair to our members and hinder their access to the BBS. For the present we will be unable to grant access to our BBS to the VA hospital patients as had been requested by the Pinellas User Group.
- Review Software Available: Software provided by vendors for our review is published monthly in the newsletter. Since the last newsletter went to print, we have received 4 more software programs for review. All members willing to try the software and write an objective, comprehensive review are invited to contact Marylee (Newsletter Editor) about reviewing any of the software available. A quality review benefits the entire group, and the reviewer becomes the owner of the software reviewed.
- Public Relations Volunteer Needed: Membership growth of our user group does not reflect the quality of our group nor the benefits available from membership. What we need is someone who can take the bull by the horns and get information

(1994……..Continued on page 9)

(1994……..Continued from page 8)

about our group in front of the PC users in the Tampa Bay area-- strategic placement of fliers, contact with area computer retail outlets/shops, etc., and develop other ideas and mechanisms to make the community aware of the Tampa PC Users Group. If you can contribute to this effort, please contact any member of the Board of Directors.

INDUSTRY NEWS

- MS Access 2.0: Microsoft Access, the newest database program developed by Microsoft, has been released. Reportedly, sufficient copies are not yet available at all retail outlets to meet current demand, but keep checking if you are interested -- or order direct from Microsoft.

- Word Perfect 6.0a: A maintenance upgrade to Word Perfect 6.0, identified as WP 6.0a, is now available from Word Perfect. Distribution is not automatic, and you must contact Word Perfect to get your free upgrade.

PRESENTATION -- Microsoft Access 2.0

Skip Purdy, Systems Engineer for Microsoft Corporation, was on hand to give us a rundown on the newest release of Microsoft's database program, Access 2.0. As an Access 1.0 user, I was anxious to see what changes had been made. I wasn't disappointed for there are numerous very good improvements. That is not to say that version 1.0 is deficient -- rather it is to say that Microsoft has taken a very good program and made it a heap better. Emphasis in 2.0 has been placed on making the program substantially more powerful and even more user friendly, so much so that a novice can jump in and do a credible job with it in short order. Many of the routine actions have been automated, and just about everything in the program can be customized to one's circumstances and needs.

Among other things, tool bars have been standardized with the other Microsoft Windows programs; button clues and right mouse-button short command help have been added; wizards have been expanded and made easier, and now include personal and business needs; control of fonts within the program; quick sorting of the data within the database, and drag and drop reorganization of data within a table or other organized manipulations of the basic data base; copies data in RTF format, which means all formatting goes with the copy; seamless integration with Word for Windows; supports OLE and works with any OLE application; reports and other outputs can include graphics of a variety of formats; includes a direct tie-in with a fax and provides for timed dispatch of faxes directly from Access; and many, many more. If you are a data base user, I believe you will want to take a look at Access 2.0-- it includes a lot of "easy to use" power.

Machine requirements for use of Access 2.0 are the same as for 1.0, except that 2.0 disk space requirements are more, now requiring about 20 Mb of hard disk space with all options loaded. Cost of an upgrade from an earlier version from Microsoft is $99, or $129 for a competitive upgrade. You can probably find a little better price at some of our retail outlets -- when they have the program in stock.

To Microsoft and Skip Purdy, THANK YOU VERY MUCH for an excellent presentation of a great program. Your overview of Access 2.0 increased geometrically my anticipation of beginning to use the program myself.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Microsoft Corporation, which donated MS Access 2.0, and other vendors, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Tom Goff	MS Access 2.0
Parker Monroe	Links Course Add-on
J. C. Robinson	Cannon Mouse Pad
Jim Clark	Cannon Mouse Pad

The meeting adjourned at about 8:40 PM. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Mary Sheridan at mcpease@mindspring.com.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Scottish Scientist Clones Another!

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Nah .. no big deal, it's just a disk drive. The message of this article is that if you want to clone a disk drive you need to go out and spend Zero dollars; that's $0.00 on disk image software. Don't let the salesman convince you that you need to buy Disk Image or Ghost if all you want to do is go to a larger (or smaller) drive. The software's free, and you might already have it.

My Project: I'm running out of room on my server drive where I do backups, so I want to replace the 20G with a 60G from my personal system. So I bought an 80G Serial ATA drive for my personal system because it's faster than the 60G Ultra 133. And I'm doing two clones: 60 to 80 on my personal system, and 20 to 60 on my server, and I'll have a 20 left over for another computer I'm building. I got an excellent retail price on the 80G SATA.

The Software: I do have Drive Image v8.0, but I elected to ignore that and use a utility from Western Digital. It's free for the download. It's called "Western Digital Data Lifeguard V11.0 for DOS". There is a companion "DLG Diagnostic for DOS" for repairing or diagnosing problems on a Western Digital Drive. Both Seagate and Maxtor have similar offerings. I've used both, and I recall that the Maxtor (probably) uses the same program as Western Digital; they're both made by *Kroll Ontrack*. It's been some time since I used the Seagate, so I don't recall much about it except that I'm confident that it's functionally the same.

So, if you buy a retail hard drive and need to clone the data from an old drive, look at the CD that comes with it. If you have an OEM drive (no box, even!), all you need to do is download from the manufacturer's website. Maxtor, Seagate and Western Digital all have them, and they're free! You'll see that they all have hard drive diagnostics and repair utilities – all of which I've successfully used. Some have image backup software. ◆

(OIffice……..Continued from page 7)

And we feature it in one of our Special Interst Groups.

PowerPoint is used to do presentations like the ones I have done for this group on digital photography, programming and the visit to a data center.

Outlook I use it as a contact manager and calendar but not for my email. I do use it along with Word and Access for email merges.

(Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
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Microsoft
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AOL	AOL
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Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

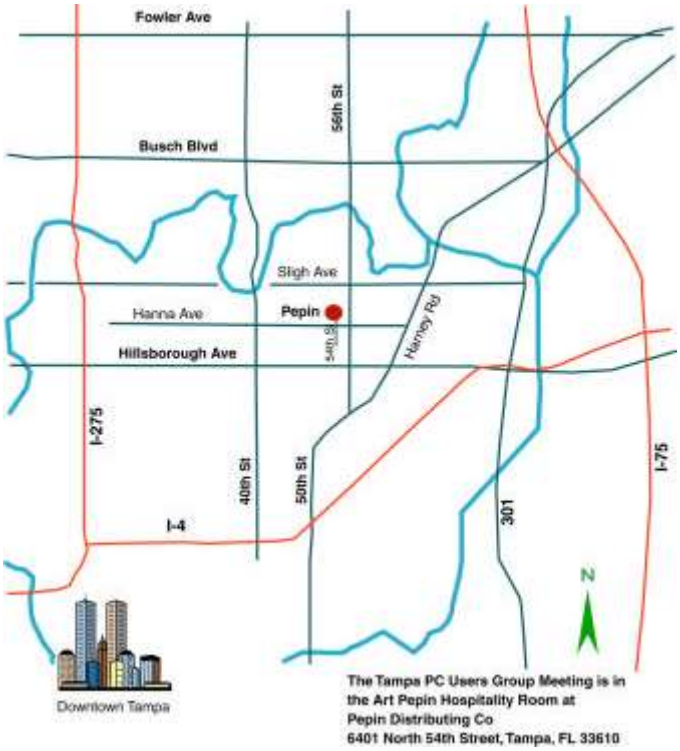
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Office……..Continued from page 10)

To reiterate what I said in the beginning, if you already have Office 2000 or Office XP and are not working in a corporate environment with collaboration and are not a person who has to have the latest version of everything, then this version is probably not for you. For me it is nice to have, since it integrates with Visual Studio 2003--something I did not go into in this review.

If you already have Office, CompUSA is offering an upgrade to Office Professional 2003 for a net price of $180 after an instant rebate of $50 and a mail-in rebate of $100. That looks like a good deal. Their price for the non-upgrade Office 2003 Professional package is $500.

Again, you must have Windows 2000, SP:3 or Windows XP to install Office 2003. If you are using windows 98 or Me, then you can purchase Office XP--for not that much less than Office 2003. So go out and get yourself a new computer with XP installed, and then you can purchase Office 2003 Professional for $500--which is probably not much less than what some of the cheap new computers cost.◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 7 July 2004

Meeting

Microsoft Office 2003

Wednesday, July 14, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Mary Sheridan will do a presentation on Microsoft Office 2003. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

It is getting a bit hard to fill the newsletter with articles by only our members. Merle bailed me out last month and again this month. However, I still have to write a good bit to fill in the remaining blank space. And my time for doing that is much tighter than earlier in the year. So I need some help with articles.

This month I wanted to write a nice long article about Adobe Photoshop CS, to which I just upgraded along with Adobe Illustrator CS. But I haven't had enough time to work with it to do it justice. So for this month I will write a little about Photoshop CS, nothing about Illustrator CS, a bit about my new HP iPAQ 4355 Pocket PC and a bit about Visual Studio 2003 and web services.◆

August Meeting: The Digital Home by Bob LaFave

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the June Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
Pegrance@yahoo.com

Our June 9th meeting started with a bang of thunder and the rain pouring down outside the Pepin Distributors Meeting Room, but we had a room full of people for the Windows SIG which resulted in some lively conversations and questions and answers.

This was followed by a presentation of Trend Micro Internet Security 2004. This program offers virus protection of all sorts, a personal firewall, and has spam control and website blocking and many more features. You can protect your files and data easily. It checks for viruses every time you open, copy move or save a file, blocks spy ware, scans email messages and attachments.

You can set a schedule for the scans to take place or you can click and scan every file on your system right then and there, even floppy disks and macro viruses in Word or Excel documents!

If and when Trend Micro warns you that there is a virus outbreak or other intrusion attack, there is an emergency lock that immediately stops all incoming and outgoing Internet; you aren't locked out by someone else or the program.

All of this is set up in a very user friendly and comprehensive system. You don't have to know how it all works to set it up and get it protecting your computer and data. You can leave understanding it all up to the TrendLabs' engineers and support personnel. Any viruses or files that Trend Micro does not detect or cannot clean you can even send to their virus engineers who will dissect the file and get a cleaned file back to you in a couple of days.

That's pretty good tech support, and there are web pages with troubleshooting information for your use, too.

The presentation was followed by a discussion amongst those in attendance about what other protection systems are available and pros and cons for them and comparisons with Trend Micro.

It was only drizzling when the meeting ended, perfect timing. ◆

Three Mini-reviews:

- **Adobe Photoshop CS**
- **HP iPAQ 3455 PocketPC**
- **Visual Studio 2003 & Web Services**

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Adobe Photoshop CS

Last month I wrote about Office 2003, and since you, without doubt, read the article you will recall that it required a computer running Windows 200 SP 4 or Windows XP. The same is true for Photoshop CS. So don't run out and upgrade to it or buy it if your operating system doesn't meet these specifications.

However, if your system meets specs and you do a lot of work with images and have already tried Adobe's baby version, Photoshop Elements 2.0 (which is a very nice program) but want more power, then, by all means, go out and get Photoshop CS. I recommend it highly and have found a lot of useful and quite powerful features in CS that were not in my older version 5.01 of Photoshop. CS is actually version 8.

As I mentioned in my comments on page one, I have not had time to really go deeply into the new features and will, thus, probably write a more detailed review later. But since the newsletter needs filler and I have spent some time with it, here are my observations.

First, after the installation, the product has to be activated via the Internet. You don't have to do anything except follow instructions. This is part of Adobe's scheme to prevent unauthorized copying and distribution of their software. The activation sends Adobe the product's serial number along with a just-created activation number. You are allowed to put a copy of the program on your desktop computer along with your laptop, and I had no trouble doing this. I did have trouble with the online registration (which is not required and is mainly to keep you posted of updates, etc.). I received some sort of Java null pointer error on two attempts. So much for registering. I have had similar problems registering Microsoft products. But since activation is what is important, I don't worry about it. But it makes me wonder about the testing that goes into some of this.

First off, there was a very valuable movie on a separate CD that gave about an hour of quite good introduction to CS and its new features. It is produced by a separate company which will sell you 24 hours of such training for around $300. Based on the hour I saw, it is probably worth it.

The features, I investigated are below. Most are new, but the Contact sheet in a less robust form was in version 5, and the Healing Brush and Patch tool were introduced in an earlier version, possibly version 7. I will illustrate them with a photo of member Wade Herman since he is not here at the moment to object. To see the image in color, view the newsletter at our web site.

The features are:

- Color Replacement tool
- Healing Brush tool
- Patch tool
- Text on a Path tool
- Shadow Highlight
- Web Photo Gallery
- File Browser
- Create Panoramas

(Mini……..Continued on page 4)



(Mini……..Continued from page 3)

- Contact Sheet

Color Replacement Tool I used this to change Wade's hair from gray to my version of blond. I also changed his shirt from a dull, dark gray to the nice blue you see.

Healing Brush Wade, like all of us who live in Florida and are over 50, has some skin blemishes. To remove them, normally you would have to pay your dermatologist $100 a visit. Here Wade got it for free with the healing brush. The healing brush is much better than the Photoshop clone tool in removing blemishes. It matches the texture, lighting, transparency, and shading of the sampled pixels to the source pixels. Thus, the repaired pixels blend seamlessly into the rest of the image. The healing brush does its painting with a lot more thought than does the clone tool.

Patch Tool To use it you select the area you want to fix, then drag that area to another area that has the same color and texture as the area you want to remove but none of the unwanted blemishes (like bags under eyes) and release it. The area is then "patched (bags removed).

To finish off, I removed the background and gave Wade a new occupation--plumber. There were no new tools used here. Of course, I could have used text along a path to put the occupation on a curve instead of using normal text.

Shadow/Highlight Adjustment This worked wonders on a cemetery monument taken facing into the sun. A piece of trivia is that all cemeteries I have seen have the grave stones facing east. Hence, if you show up in the afternoon to take photos, you will be shooting to the west and into the sun. That will result with a washed out background and a dark monument. The Shadow/Highlight adjustment fixes this in one click.

Web Photo Gallery This is one of the automation tools. Using it, you turn the images in any folder into a slide show ready to be placed at your web site. You have a choice of styles and image sizes. I created two such shows and placed them as examples at http://www.tpcug.org/photoshop/slideshow and http://www.tpcug.org/photoshop/slideshow2. When you view the shows, note the Image Information. That is information, except for the file name, that I was able to add to each image (inside the image file) using Photoshop's file browser.

File Browser In the File Browser you get a new interface for grouping collections of image files. You may then work with them either as a group or individually. For example you could do a batch rename or a batch resize, etc.

Panoramas There is a feature called Photomerge that will create a panorama from selected images. Of course, they should be images that overlap and are in order. I have created panoramas in the past with stitching software (mainly 360 degree ones), so I took the collection of images that I had used for that and tried Photomerge on it and couldn't really notice any improvement. When I have time I want to take some photos with my new Nikon D100 for a panorama and see how Photoshop stitches them together.

Contact Sheet II This feature goes back to version 5, but here it is much improved. For any collection of images you can create a contact sheet or sheets like the old photographic version with as many images of your choice of size that will fit on a sheet and as many sheets as it takes to do the collection. You may also use the files names as captions.

And that is more than I planned to write, and I only scratched the surface. There is so much power in Photoshop. For example, I suspect that a thorough discussion of the many uses of layers alone would fill a book

HP iPAQ 4355 Pocket PC

In July of 2000, I wrote about my new Handspring at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/july2000/visor.htm. I really found it useful when traveling. Using it with Vindigo allowed me to be standing on a street in Manhattan and ask it to display all the Ital-

(Mini…….Continued on page 5)

(Mini……..Continued from page 4)

ian restaurants within a certain distance of my location. Or I could ask it to show me all the nearby bookstores. My family even gave me a GPS module to go with it. Now that was real convenience. But time marches on, and the Handspring's very limited memory eventually relegated it to just keeping track of contacts and notes of things to do. The newer applications, including the newer versions of Vindigo, required too much memory.

Well, four years later, I have an HP iPAQ 4355 Pocket PC, a far cry from the Handspring Visor. For some perspective, Larry Anders got one of the first Pocket PCs, the HP Jornada, and wrote about it in the article http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/june2000/pocket_pc.htm. So I am only four years behind Larry. But this new Pocket PC is also a far cry from that first one like Larry bought. In fact, Larry said that after the original novelty wore off, the very limited battery life of the unit forced him to move back to his Palm Pilot for travel. However, he now tells me that now he has on order Dell's newest version of the Pocket PC, and he assures me that the battery life of these new units is much improved.

I won't bore you with a lot of specifications. If you want them, go to the HP site, http://www.hp.com/, and click on the handheld link. But briefly, it has 64 MB of memory, a 3.5 inch TFT 64K colors display, 400 MHz processor, integrated 802.11b wireless

(Mini……..Continued on page 10)

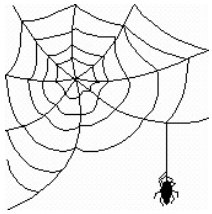
Internet Picture of the Month



Basset Hound

From the site http://www.fotosearch.com/, which presents for purchase stock photographs from many different sources: Corbis, Corel, Digital Juice, Image 100, Stockbyte and many, many more. There are also stock illustrations and stock video clips.

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
PocketGear.com - PocketPC Software	http://www.pocketgear.com/
Search 50 Stock Photography	http://www.fotosearch.com/
Zero Assumption Recovery - Data Recovery	http://www.z-a-recovery.com/
Switchboard.com - Search for people	http://www.switchboard.com/
Troubleshooting Windows XP	http://www.kellys-korner-xp.com/xp_tweaks.htm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Using Two Monitors

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I've been using two monitors for several months, enough time to do a couple of major programming projects and a couple of minor ones to figure out how they work and what they're useful for.

Here's a picture of my sloppy computer table showing my most recent configuration. It uses a new Samsung 17" LCD on the left and a MAG 18" LCD on the right, both using 1280x1024 resolution. 1280x1024 is the "native" resolution of both monitors. "Native 1280x1024" means that the monitors have exactly that number of pixels physically built into the screen.



I've been doing a slow upgrade of my computer over the last year, starting with the MAG monitor, a Jetway motherboard, capable of AMD 3.2G Barton CPU and Serial ATA hard drive. My eventual goal was for two large monitors, 3.2G CPU, 80G SATA hard drive.

My previous system had on-board video which was unsuitable for that. I had a kind of surplus 15" LCD monitor that my wife gave me after I bought her a new 17" Samsung last Thanksgiving. I finally got it all together after buying a "made with ATI" video card that has three outputs, VGA, S-Video (TV) and a DVI connector, and built-in capability for two monitors.

So I used the MAG at 1280x1024, and the 15" LCD at 1024x768 for a couple of months, and decided it was a real aid to my programming productivity. So I waited for sales and found the Samsung for $369 on-line at Buy.com, free shipping, no sales tax. Patience pays off, for sure. Notice that there's a significant difference in physical size between a 17" and an 18".

In the photo, I have this article going in the left screen (the primary screen) and Office Online on the right as a reference. No switching from task to task, just move the mouse pointer from one to the other to manipulate the windows.

Using Access, I usually have the code window on the right and the forms on the left with the help on the left also. The code window is where you program in VBA and again, you need to have the help up and visible whenever you're programming.

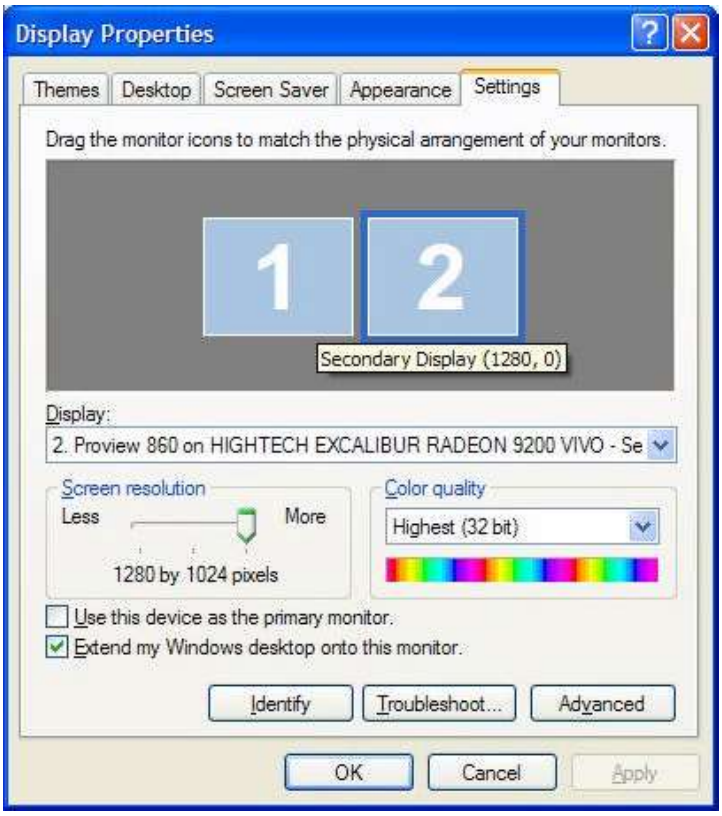
I typically have reference screens on the right. You can't program anything without references and help screens, and switching from one to the other on a single screen really slows you down. For a couple of years, I'd experimented with multiple desktops. But I found that just more trouble that it was worth.

The physical setup is simple. The video card has a VGA connector for the primary display. I used a DVI-to-VGA adapter ($6) to adapt the DVI connector for

(Monitors……..Continued on page 7)

(Monitors…….Continued from page 6)

the secondary display. If I'd bought an LCD with digital input, I could have used it directly, with no adapter. But monitors with DVI cost much more.



The software needed comes with the card, and also two monitor support is native to XP. All that it now takes is the settings. Notice in the settings panel (Start, Control Panel, Display, Settings tab) that a secondary screen appears as 2. And the "Extend my Windows desktop onto this monitor" checkbox is checked. I frequently uncheck this when I don't want the right-hand monitor on; then Apply or Ok, and the monitor automatically goes blank.

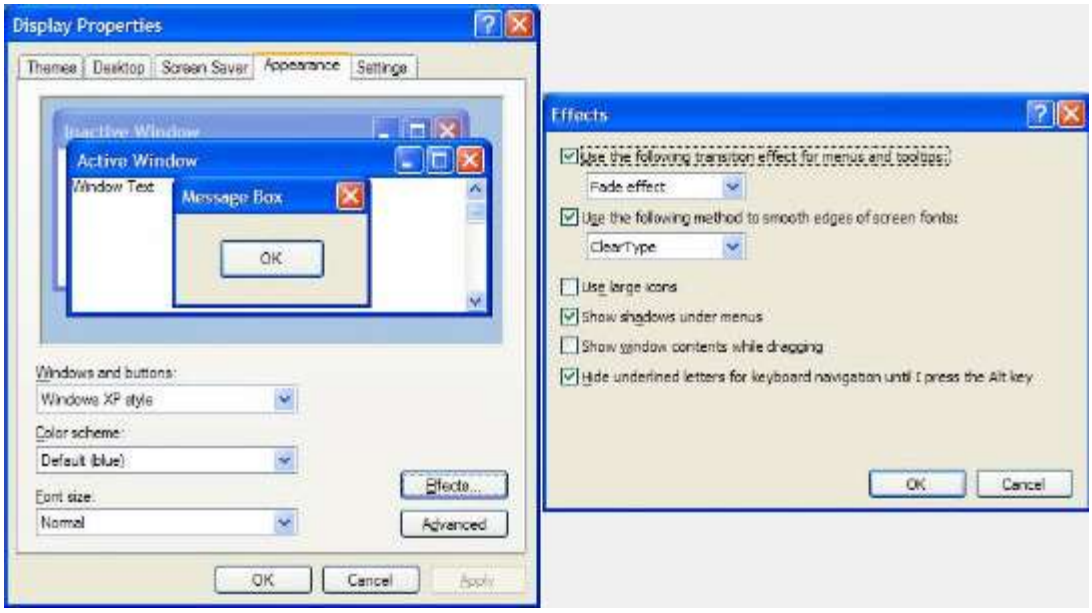
You may ask, why not just turn the monitor's power off when you don't need it? The answer is that then some things may get accidentally lost on the right side, because the computer really doesn't know the monitor is physically turned off. With everything on, my screen size is actually 2560x1024. If I disable the right screen in Display properties, it reverts to 1280x1024.

All in all I find my programming productivity is way up. I don't have time lost going back and forth between Help and the code windows. Also sometimes it's just convenient to have more screen to say run my TV card on the right side when there's something on TV that I can't miss, and also have a deadline to meet on a project. That's rare, I'll admit. More often I'll use the web browser to do internet searches for programming solutions in Google Groups.

As an aside, if you have an LCD screen you may want to try ClearType to improve the clarity of your text on-screen. It really improved mine – dramatically. But don't be surprised if it's worse. Here's how you do that:

Go to Start, Control Panel, Display, Appearance tab, Effects button. Select the "Use the following method to smooth edges of screen fonts" check box, and select "ClearType" in the drop-down box, then Ok, Ok.

Look at the results, and undo it if your fonts are not improved. ◆



Looking Back to 1994

From the July 1994 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 6/8/94 MEETING

By Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Jim Clark is out there in California enjoying himself and has left the gathering of the minutes of this meeting to a "volunteer" appointed by our eminent President, Harvey Bruneau himself.

USER GROUP NEWS

Non-profit status: After months of hard work by Marylee Bruneau, IRS has granted us 501(c)3 status. Also, she has obtained non-profit mail status for our corporation from the US Post Office. This will help reduce some of our newsletter costs.

PageMaker: This top end desktop publishing program is now being used to prepare the newsletter and appears to be very user friendly.

Print plant: The editor is looking for a new source to print the newsletter. Preferably in the Temple Terrace area. The use of scanned images, while excellent when printed, suffer in image quality (too dark) when processed by local copy centers. If anyone has any suggestions, please contact Marylee or Harvey Bruneau at 985-3388.

BitsoBlu BBS: The BBS had a bit of trouble a few days back. But it's fixed. Thanks in large part to Al Poole. Between him and Kevan, they tore that BBS completely apart, poked and prodded, examined all the boards, etc., etc., and put it back together. Now it works but neither Al nor Kevan knows just exactly what caused the initial problem.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Comdex: It was a bigger show than last year. One of our members said there wasn't enough time to see all that was there. The demo on Access suffered from some minor glitches. It was pointed out that Access puts everything into one data base file. It can export pieces of that data base to other data base programs and will import its own exports and work on them. Thus an Access user and a Paradox user can both work on the same exported file.

OS/2: The personal version is now in beta release. It's available from CI$ [sic] and IBM; but it is not to be posted on any other source or BBS. The release is on 21 diskettes and costs about $15 plus S&H. It will run on a system with 4 MB RAM; and the swap file can be turned off. Call (800) 251-2177 for details.

MS-DOS 6.22: The new version of DOS has a new disk compression module and is due out at the end of this month. $50 for 5.0 and earlier users, $10 step-up for version 6.x users. The new version has nothing new for 6.2 users. Users were cautioned not to have Stacker 4 already installed and then install DOS 6.22. You are advised to install DOS 6.22, then install Stacker. Symantec programs, and some others, need a patch to cope with the new compression module.

PC-Tools: This venerable software developer has been bought by Symantec.

Borland: They lost $70 million last quarter. dBase 4 for Windows now sells for under $100. With such a drop in earnings, the sale of Quattro to Novell along with a million copies of Paradox, the future doesn't look well for Borland.

DELL monitors: Dell has recalled 63,000 monitors because there were 32 reports of them overheating and catching fire. The monitor being recalled is the DL-1460N1, a 14" **SVGA,** sold during l992-93.These were sold through Sam's, Cosco, and CompUSA. Dell will arrange for pickup and replacement free of charge. For further information, call (800) 913-3355.

CD-ROM: There is a facility in the USF area that will put your pictures on CDs. In fact, anything you want can be put on CDs: text, instruction manuals, graphics, etc. Cost depends on a number of factors, and there is a marked difference in price if the pictures are negatives or positives.

(1994……..Continued on page 9)

(1994……..Continued from page 8)

PRESENTATION — Internet

George Pilat of Intelligence Network Online gave an excellent discourse on Internet; its origins, uses, and the role of his company in using Internet. The fact that Mr. Pilat spoke for ninety minutes extemporaneously and gave a logical step-by-step presentation of a complex process speaks volumes for the depth of his knowledge about online retrieval systems.

Internet:

In the early 70s it was a network of DOD computers (Advanced Research Projects Agency - ARPANET) to establish a communication network in the event of a nuclear war. During the late 70s, other networks were created, initially serving universities and, later, commercial organizations. The research portion of ARPANET was replaced by the National Science Foundation (NSFNET). Elsewhere, international networks were being established and they tied in to each other and to United States networks. Today, Internet is the fastest growing network in the world with over 2 million computers and over 20 million users. The primary tools are:

E-Mail: Basically, a message handling service. E-mail is often faster and cheaper than conventional mail.

Newsgroups: There are about 7,500 to choose from. While each group is centered on one topic or theme, overall, topics cover everything from A to Z. Many of the people in these groups are subject matter experts. Ask for help and you'll get expert help.

Gopher: A search tool that helps in locating a certain body of information. The material can be read online or downloaded to your computer.

Telnet: An Internet facility that allows logging onto another computer; faster than modem dialing.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol): Allows the downloading of files from any other computer on Internet.

IRC (Internet Relay Chat): Interactive discussion groups where several people can talk/listen at the same time. There are over 1000 channels/groups available. A private TALK mode is available.

The Internet is funded through federal grants. Access to the Internet by the lay public is possible through some BBSs and commercial servers such as IntNet Online, CompuServe, Delphi, etc.

IntNet Online

Intelligence Network Online, Inc. offers a variety of services, access to Internet being one of them. These services are offered through a high end UNIX platform with over 20 GB of online storage. At present, all modem lines are 14.4 (and downward) and 28s will soon be installed. The available account styles are:

Shell Dial UP: Normal dial in PC running through their computer. Shell uses command line prompts, no graphic interface. Uses "pine" program to handle E-mail. Cost is $29/month with a one time $29 setup fee. There are no hourly charges, usage time is unlimited. A tutorial diskette is furnished to all new users.

Dial Up PPP: Point to Point Protocol allows you to be registered with your own location. In effect, you have your own Internet set (like a mini server). Can use Mosaic, a public domain graphical interface, to navigate through the system.

Dedicated PPP (SLIP): Serial Link Internet Protocol. Once logged in, you are on 24 hrs/day, the line never goes down. Email is instant. Can have friends log in on your computer and they can use your machine to access Internet.

Dedicated Line: Offers 56 kb speed (commercial speed). Commonly used where like 30 people are online. Uses the frame relay service of GTE. This service is being offered within the six county area of Tampa (Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota and Manatee). The frame is for 24 hrs/day and 56 kb servers are installed at each of time nodes. T1 : 1 .45 MB speed or the equivalent of 24 56kb channels as an entity.

(1994……..Continued on page 12)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at mcpease@mindspring.com.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Mini…….Continued from page 5)

card, integrated Bluetooth and an integrated keyboard (very small) with backlight.

The wireless LAN feature is very nice. It connects to the Internet instantly from anywhere in my house through our wireless network and allows me to send and receive email as well as browse the web on its version of Internet Explorer. For those interested, it also supports MSN Messenger. I have yet to try it out in a public hot spot.

Using Internet Explorer on it has prompted me to consider making a special page at the web sites I run, including tpcug.org, that is designed for viewing by a Pocket PC. Our links page is an example of a page that displays well on the Pocket PC. Our main page does not display well--those Java hover buttons are nowhere to be seen.

Using Visual Studio .Net 2003, I am supposed to be able to write programs for the Pocket PC, and I plan on doing that as soon as I get time. When I do, you will probably read about it in a future article.

Visual Studio 2003 & Web Services

I did a presentation to the group, I think, within the past 12 months where I demonstrated some programs I had written using Visual Basic .Net, one of the programming languages within Visual Studio .Net. And I think I have mentioned web services to the group before. Briefly a web service is an application you place on a web site that can be accessed with a request which will then send back a response. Of course, for the web service to be of any value, it has to send back some information that you would like in response.

Examples of web services are ones that provide the weather for a particular zip code, stock quotes, address correction information, etc. Web services are not meant for the world at large; they are designed so that programmers can write programs, either web based or Windows desktop programs (or Linux programs), that can access the web service to provide raw data or manipulation of data.

I have written three web services recently using VB .Net. One is a simple cost of living calculation, the other accesses the Library of Congress to retrieve book information based on a submitted ISBN and the third is for our user group officers. It provides membership information. These web services reside at my web site and the TPCUG site. Just by knowing the URL of the service a programmer can access it and use it in the program. For example, by accessing the cost of living service with a beginning year, an ending year and an initial amount of money, the cost of living service will send back to the program how much it is worth in the ending year.

For the user group, I wrote a Windows program and distributed it to the officers that, when they are connected to the Internet, allows them to look at our

(Mini…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
Borland
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

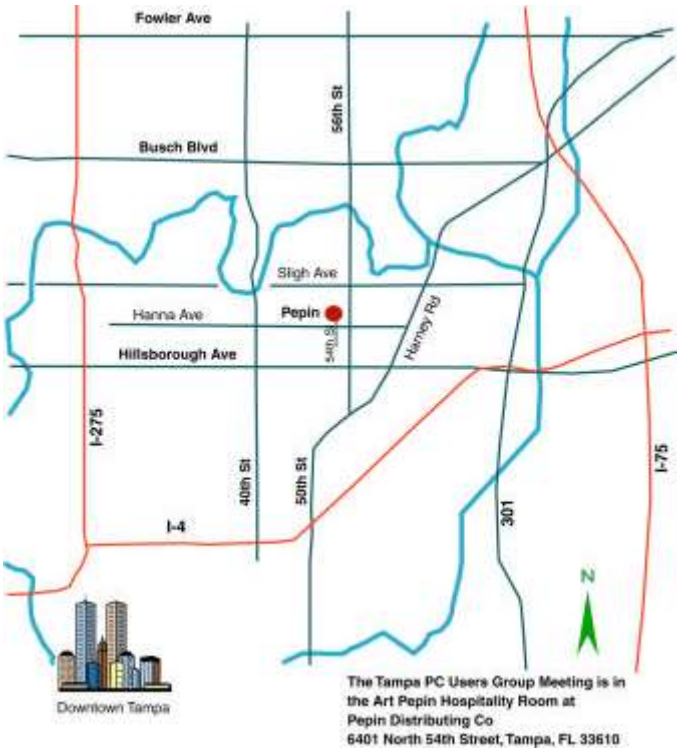
(1994…….Continued from page 9)

For further information, call (813) 442-0114.

Thanks to the generosity of our vendor friends, we have the following winners:

Will Goble - Simply Money
Gene Wade – CorelDraw V4

After a few general questions/answers, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm ◆



(Mini…….Continued from page 10)

membership information and make changes in real time and print out reports like mailing labels. All of this is done through the a password protected service running at the TPCUG site that the Windows program accesses. Quite impressive technology, I think. So if the membership info is not up-to-date, blame the other officers. I have given them the tool. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 8 August 2004

Meeting

Digital Home

Wednesday, August 11, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Bob LaFave will do a presentation on the Digital Home. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Last month I mentioned how it was getting hard to fill the newsletter with our own articles. This month the situation is worse. Merle Nicholson, who has rescued me for the past two months, is apparently running out of steam. However, he still contributed a short piece this month. Others who have been so helpful in the past apparently have writer's block, and those who have never contributed are still withholding their creativity from us.

So what to do? Perhaps I should shorten the newsletter by four pages (one sheet of paper). I had planned to write the Wireless article for this month, and it is here, but I hadn't planned on

(Comments……..Continued on page 9)

September Meeting: To be announced

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
Pegrance@yahoo.com

The July 2004 meeting started with the Windows SIG which ended with a question about how to use foreign characters when you type in Spanish or other languages. According to one member, it seems to have changed with Office 2003 and Windows XP--at least on one of his computers. And we hope to hear the answer at the next Windows SIG!

Mary Sheridan conducted the Microsoft Office 2003 Demonstration. We learned about organizing mail with some cool new features. We learned about different layouts that are available making your work easier depending on what you want to do at the moment, like read the material or work with rearranging it. When you are rearranging a document, you can "track changes" and lock down a document or part of a document. This lets someone edit the text or even parts of the text, but protects the parts that have final approval or the headers--or whatever you want protected. It allows research from where you are without having to leave to go to the web. There is a language button under "Tools" you can use to translate a whole document!

The Clipboard allows more space, the items on the Clipboard can be moved and used in other Microsoft Office programs. There are lots of tours and demos to be used. Microsoft.com has free training available for everything if you have an activated product.

There's plenty more to learn where this ended, so we may have another presentation on Office in the future! ◆

Wireless in Manhattan

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

On a recent trip to Manhattan, I had the chance to try out the wireless connectivity of my new HP Pocket PC iPaq 4355. Every chance I had, I would produce it, turn it on and see if there were any wireless networks available. The first try was at the Tampa airport—nothing. The second try was at the JetBlue terminal at JFK in New York. A banner advertised free wireless connectivity provided in the terminal by JetBlue, but there was no way my family was going to let me pause for more than a moment on the way to baggage claim. Then at baggage claim I had to scan for our bags, then catch a cab, and then the opportunity was gone.

Once in the hotel, there were two wireless connections listed as available—but they really weren't since they didn't allow connections. While walking around the Upper West Side there were always several connections listed as available, but almost none would let you in. This was a far cry from what I had read several years back when wireless routers first became widely available and articles were written about how easy it was to cruise the streets and sidewalks of Manhattan and find a place to connect to the Internet. In the ensuing time, people apparently have learned how to secure their wireless networks and have no interest in sharing a connection with strangers.

In reverse order in which I encountered them in my walks in various parts of the city in the next paragraph is a list of the names of wireless networks I encountered. Of these, only Terrace, Columbia University, the two Bryant Park ones and the one named default let me on. The Bryant Park ones required a sign on from a web page, and I didn't have time to do it, though. The default one, which was at or near a McDonald's on Broadway was OK for email but didn't provide enough bandwidth for viewing web pages with my laptop (I went to the hotel for my laptop in the hope of doing some serious work once I had discovered the connection with the iPAQ). T-Mobile available at Starbucks costs around $30/month or $.10/minute with a 60 minute minimum session in Manhattan. I think the charge in Tampa is less than that.

Default, NetGear, META_NYC_WLA…., Bleeker3, Mfo010, NY Amsterdam, NETGEARH, Moazami, 3CWireless, Stacy Lyn Giunta, Gur, tmobile, Verizon Wi-Fi, fa1779zvpo, NYSAK, BP-PKRR, Bryantpark.org, TOMMYB, Emgott, Columbia University, Terrace, MAX-BG, Elinkdsl, Marianne Wireless, Wireless, SkyLan_Interent

Some of the networks, like SkyLan_Internet and Verizon Wi-Fi, would popup in many parts of the city.



Bryant Park, http://www.bryantpark.org/, deserves special mention. It was one of the first places in the country, I think, to provide an outdoor wireless hotspot to anyone who comes to the park with a wireless device. You can read a description and see how to

(Wireless……. Continued on page 4)

(Wireless……..Continued from page 3)
connect when there at http://www.bryantpark.org/amenities/wireless.php.

It was interesting to see all these people in the park staring into laptops along with the signs admonishing people to be quiet in this section of the park. It was almost like being in a library reading room. Indeed, Bryant Park is located behind the main branch of the New York City Library between Fifth Avenue and Sixth Avenue (Avenue of the Americas) and between 40th Street and 42nd Street.

So why can't Tampa have something like Bryant Park? First of all, Tampa is really short on parks. Our city fathers of many years past saw fit to let Tampa develop with very few parks. There is a nice small park, Kate Jackson, in my Hyde Park neighborhood that has been recently renovated; it contains a small area with benches and paths among the shrubbery that is fairly isolated from the more noisy areas and, I think, would be a good candidate for such a hot spot. I am sure others can produce candidates in their neighborhoods. And, of course, there is Lykes Gaslight Square in downtown.

Speaking of my neighborhood, I decided to walk a bit of it to search for hotspots. I found a lot. Apparently wireless routers are everywhere. I found in excess of 30 and did not walk past more than 60% of the 400 houses in the neighborhood. I think about 10 let me connect and, of those, six gave me a connection to the Internet.

Back to Manhattan The Vindigo subscription I purchased for the Pocket PC again helped me to find restaurants in Manhattan, but I miss the Zagat reviews and ratings that were in it several years back. Now, instead of Zagat reviews you get reviews from the New York Times that may be over four years old. I think Zagat went out and created their own paid subscription service. The shopping information and maps in Vindigo are also of use. And I can load restaurant, shopping and entertainment information for as many cities as I like from Vindigo under my one year subscription. So far, I have only added Tampa. Unfortunately, there don't appear to be any reviews for the Tampa restaurants, and some restaurants that have been closed for more than a year are still listed.

If you are interested in using the subway while in New York, there is an excellent program for the Pocket PC called Tube New York that provides current schedule information on all the lines, a map of the lines and a trip calculator that figures your route for a starting station and an ending station. It will then do an animated simulation of the trip on the route map. The version of the program I have also includes an overlay map of the streets of Manhattan from about 50th Street south. The route maps cover the entire system.

Email problems Once you have lucked out and found a wireless connection that will let you on, you want to check your email. Well, before the trip, I set up an email account in Pocket Outlook on the iPAQ for my RoadRunner email account. It worked fine in my house on its wireless network. When I first tried to send and receive using it on the trip, I received an error message to the effect that I could not send. I should have known that would happen, since all ISPs that I know of will not relay email messages sent over another ISP's network. I needed to be using RoadRunner if I wanted to send a message using my RoadRunner account.

I then had two options. I could try to use RoadRunner's web mail or I could use an email account I created on the server that hosts my web site. It will accept messages originating from other domains since it requires authentication.

Well, it turns out that if I try to use RoadRunner's web mail using the Pocket PC's Pocket Internet Explorer program, I can enter my username and password, but then I go nowhere. If I try to setup an email account on the Pocket PC in Pocket Outlook, I run into the problem that the smtp server part only allows me to use the same username and password that the incoming part uses. And for some perverse reason the lamartin.com email setup requires that smtp precedes your incoming username in its smtp setup. So there is no way to set up my lamartin.com email to both send and receive. And just like Road-

(Wireless…….Continued on page 5)

(Wireless…….Continued from page 4)

Runner, if I try to access my lamartin.com account via their web mail Internet page I get nowhere. In their case, I get a Java error.

When I returned to Tampa I contacted RoadRunner and the host for my website. I found that RoadRunner did not provide a special page for Pocket PCs to access for web mail, but MyHosting.com, my web host, did provide a special page that worked with Pocket PCs where I could send and receive my lamartin.com email.

That got me to thinking. Why not create a page of my own at my web site that would allow the sending of email from the pocket PC. Web sites have the ability to send emails using their own server. I did that--but I am not going to give out the URL here since I don't want the whole world sending emails from my web site.

That got me to thinking some more. Why not create a web service at my site to send such emails that could be accessed from a program that I wrote for the Pocket PC. And I did just that. I wrote the web service that resides at my site. And I now have a program that I wrote using Visual Studio .Net and installed on the Pocket PC to send emails. So on my next trip to the big city, I will be able to send emails with no problem once I find a wireless connection.

(Wireless…….Continued on page 12)

Internet Picture of the Month

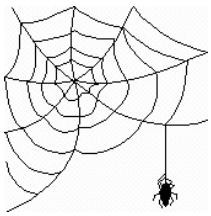


Orangutan at the National Zoo

This is one of the orangutans at the National Zoological Park in Washington, DC.

To see more photos of primates, birds, elephants, and other animals and to read about the zoo, go to http://nationalzoo.si.edu.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
wi-fi hotspots Hotspot Directory	http://www.jiwire.com/search-hotspot-locations.htm
E-Book Library at UVA	http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/ebooks/ebooklist.html
Geometry Algorithm Home	http://geometryalgorithms.com/
JibJab - Humorous take on Bush-Kerry	http://www.jibjab.com/
Ronald Reagan - Photo Gallery	http://www.ronaldreaganmemorial.com/photo_gallery.asp
National Zoological Park	http://nationalzoo.si.edu

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Programming the Pocket PC using Visual Studio.Net

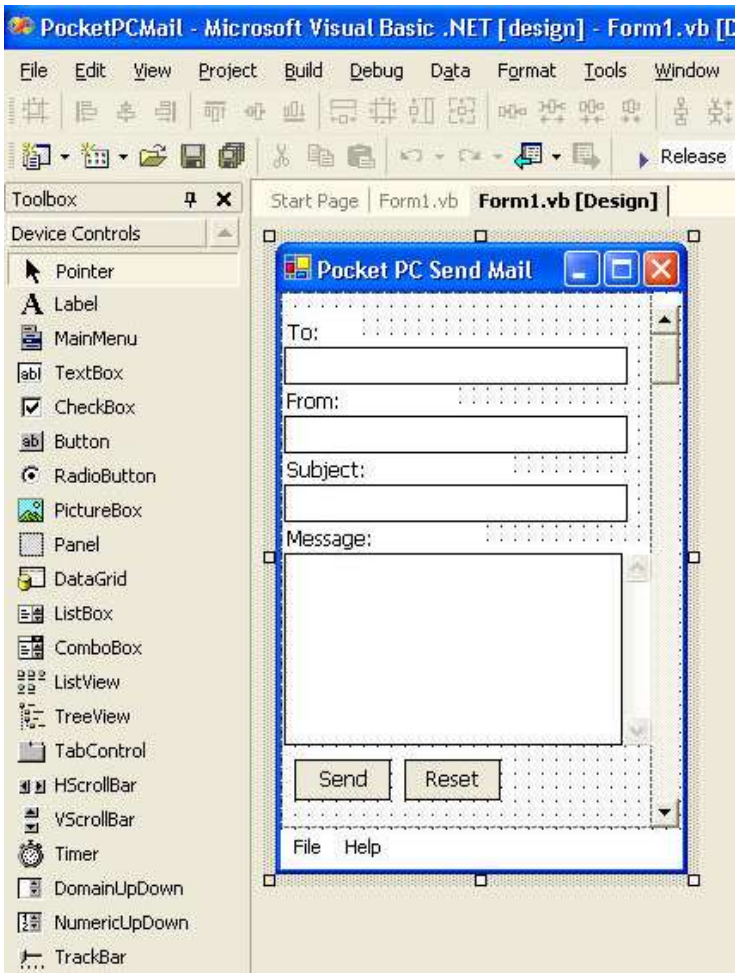
By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

In my other article, Wireless in Manhattan, I mentioned writing a program for my new Pocket PC that allowed me to send email whenever I could find a wireless connection. In this article I want to go into the differences between creating a program for the Pocket PC and other "Smart Devices" and creating a program for a regular computer.

First off, as you all know, most regular computers run on the Windows operating system. The Pocket PC's operating system is a baby version of that called Windows CE. Visual Studio .Net allows you to create programs for both operating systems, with the exception that the tools you have for working in Win CE are considerably more restrictive than those available for working in Windows.

I have touched on Visual Studio .Net before, and you may recall that it is a programming environment with several different programming languages from which to choose when embarking on a programming project. There are Visual C++ .Net, Visual C# .Net, Visual J# .Net and my language of choice Visual Basic .Net.

To begin a Pocket PC project using VB .Net, you simply open Visual Studio .Net, and select options that allow you to create a new Visual Basic .Net Smart Device Application. The picture to the right is the left part of my workspace--the Intergraded Development Environment (IDE)--that Visual Studio created for me. What you see now is the result of my adding controls to the blank form on the right to create my Pocket PC Send Mail application. The controls are chosen from the toolbox on the left. The controls available for a Smart Device application are fewer than those available for a regular Windows application. And the individual controls used in a Smart Device application are quite often much less configurable than their counterpart in a Windows application.



Partial view of Visual Studio IDE

For those familiar with Visual Basic, the code is not that much different. Here is a listing of the code that is run when the Send button is pressed:

```
Dim Password As String = ""
        Password = LCase(Trim(InputBox
("Enter Password")))
        If Trim(Password) = "" Then
            MsgBox("Password required")
            Exit Sub
        End If

        If Trim(Me.txtTo.Text) = "" Or Trim
(Me.txtSubject.Text) = "" Or Trim
(Me.txtFrom.Text) = "" Or Trim
(Me.txtBody.Text) = "" Then
            MsgBox("All entries require
text")
            Exit Sub
        End If
```

(Pocket……..Continued on page 7)

(Pocket…….Continued from page 6)

```
        Dim ws As New SendMailSvc
        Dim Result As String
        Result = ws.SendMail(Password,
Me.txtTo.Text, Me.txtFrom.Text,
Me.txtSubject.Text, Me.txtBody.Text)
        MsgBox(Result)
```

The "SendMailSvc" in the code above refers to the web service I wrote (as a Visual Studio ASP .Net Web Service application) that resides at my web site and handles the email request. It resides at a URL that has been added as a reference to the current project.

As you work on your program, you want to test it. The easiest way to do this is to have Visual Studio run it in the Pocket PC Emulator, which is a software program that "emulates" a real Pocket PC. A screen capture of it with my program loaded is at the right. My own Pocket PC does not look in the least like the skin of the one at the right. What you see is just a generic version of such a device.

To install such a program on someone's Pocket PC, their device must first have the Microsoft .Net Compact Framework installed. It is not part of the operating system Windows CE. This is equivalent to the requirement that to run a program created in Visual Studio .Net on a Windows computer, the computer must have the Microsoft .Net Framework. The big difference is that the Framework for a Windows computer is around 24 MB, the Compact Framework for a Smart Device is around 1.5 MB. To install the Compact Framework on your device, you download a Windows executable from Microsoft (around 14 MB since it must take into consideration all the different processors that a Pocket PC may have) and run it on your computer while the Pocket PC is synced to the computer. Again, I stress that installing the Compact Framework on your device only adds about 1.5 MB of files--not 14 MB.

Once you have the Compact Framework installed (you only need to do it once), to install a program created in Visual Studio to the Pocket PC, all you have to do is copy one CAB file created by Visual Studio to the device and then click on the file. There is a different CAB file created for each of the different processors that a Pocket PC may have.



Pocket PC Emulator

If the developer is ambitious, he or she can create an installation package that has all the CAB files included and, based on what it determines the target device has as a processor, uses the appropriate CAB file to do the installation.

If anyone has any ideas for programs for the Pocket PC, I am interested in hearing about them. I have created three that are useful to me and am interested in trying others. That the newer versions of the device allow you to connect to the Internet via wireless connections when they are available opens up all sorts of possibilities.◆

Looking Back to 1994

Editor's Note: Usually we reprint the minutes for the month in question, but for August 1994 the minutes were extremely short. As a substitute, the president's column for July 1994 is reproduced.

From the July 1994 Bits of Blue

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Harvey Bruneau

Internet
I hope everyone got at least a basic idea about Internet, the global information superhighway, at our last meeting. I hope to schedule a live Internet presentation later this year. As many of you probably noted, a whole new language filled with acronyms and buzzwords is used to relate to the navigation and use of the information superhighway. While these terms are new to us they have in fact been around for quite a long time. Of course you all heard the CIA acronym used along with the word LAOS during the presentation. I hope that everyone realized that these are not Internet words. I am not sure how the presentation diverged into a discussion of the covert operations of the 70's. Anyway cyber surfing the highway can be rewarding once you have all the tools and have built up the experience. Only you can determine if this digital highway is for you. It is anticipated that the highway will have over 100 million users worldwide by 1998. Whether you just want to use the most basic piece, email, or have access to detailed information about anything, I would recommend you get your hands on one of the many hooks available from your local bookstore. I use The Instant Internet Guide by Brent Heslop & David Angell to clarify the proper netiquette and help me understand the highway.

BBS & CD ROM
Please note that a CD ROM drive has been added to the BBS which will provide access to additional online files available for download. We have a subscription that will provide us with a monthly CD containing files from the Association of Shareware Professionals.

July presentation will be a big bang!
This month's meeting will be presented by Broderbund. This will be the first time that six different products have been demonstrated during a general meeting. There should he a product for everybody. The products include:

- **Living Books** - Interactive "electronic books'' for children based on stories and books of proven literary value.
- **Kid Pix** - Creativity tools that can he used to enhance studies across all curricula.
- **3-D Home Architecture**
- **Print Shop CD** - Desktop publishing for greeting cards, signs, stationery, calendars, banners and more.
- **Myst** - Surrealistic adventure game with 3-D photo realistic graphics
- **Harpoon II** - Naval game

Of course special user group offers and door prices of Broderbund products will he made available.

Tampa Tribune moves onto Information Superhighway
The *Tampa Tribune*, in conjunction with Prodigy, is in the process of starting a new service. *Tampa Bay Online,* an interactive local news and information service for personal computer users in the Bay area, will begin operation in August. Imagine reading the daily paper online including photos, graphics and other miscellaneous information. Once again Bill Gates' vision, "Information at your fingertips" is taking another step forward. A paperless society is in the future and the *Tribune* is doing its part to speed up that process before we run out of trees. The presentation to our group of *Tampa Bay Online* by the *Tribune* has been tentatively scheduled for the August general meeting. I say tentative because this product debut by the *Tribune* to the general public is scheduled for the day after our general meeting. If Murphy's law interferes during the days prior to the grand opening of this service, it could result in the postponement of the presentation to our group, until a later date.

We need your help
We need you to help our group. Bring a guest and get them to join our group. Pass out our flyers to your

(1994……..Continued on page 12)

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)
doing more. Necessity then led me to write the article on programming for the Pocket PC using Visual Studio .Net. I know, most readers tolerance for programming articles is pretty low, so I tried to keep that fairly short. Thus, there is still over a page to fill. Forgive me if I am forced to fill the space the best way I can; thus, the following observations.

Never click on anything in an email without hovering your cursor over it to see where it leads and never click on attachments. I have told that to myself and others many times. Last week a relative received an email from her ISP stating that it had detected a large number of emails originating from her computer and that she was obviously infested with a mass-mailing worm and she needed to click on the attached file and read the instructions on how to clean up her computer.

As you might have guessed, the email was not really from her ISP--it just appeared to be--and the file to be clicked on did not contain the promised instructions. It contained the latest version of the MyDoom mass-mailing worm --and her computer ground to a crawl. The mouse would only move in slow jerks, programs took forever to open, etc. When she called me, I had her start in Safe Mode and run msconfig to see what was in the startup. There were a couple of things there that were obvious problems. Service.exe is the only one I can recall at the moment. Anyway she had loads of things starting up that shouldn't be. I had her uncheck all of those and reboot. The computer seemed much better but was still not normal. Next she ran Norton Antivirus, but it found nothing. Oh, I forgot to mention that Norton gave her a warning when she clicked on the attachment--but somehow it did not protect her. Since I wasn't there I don't know, but maybe it gave her several options and she chose the wrong one.

Next day when she boots the computer, Norton comes up and gives her some message, she then goes to the Symantec site and based on that message determines that she has MyDoom, but her computer is so crippled that she cannot download the fix. So I go to Symantec, get the FixMyDoom.exe and send it to her as an email attachment. It takes her forever to download her email. Finally it comes in and she is able to run the fix. It says that it has found all these problem files and quarantined them and reset the registry settings to what they should be, etc. Then, per instructions, she shuts down and reboots and runs the fix program again to remove any remnants of the worm that may have been in memory during the first fix.

I will say it again--do not click on anything in an email--and I will add do not believe any email that tells you it is from your ISP, your bank or Nigeria.

Now that I am on a do-not-do-thing jag, here is one more: **do not hold down the shift key when deleting anything.** If you do, you will not be able to retrieve it from the recycle bin for files and folders or from the deleted items in emails. But you say, "I only hold down the shift key when I know that I will never want the item again." My answer to that is there is always a chance that I will make a mistake and actually want it tomorrow or I will make a mistake and delete something other than what I think I am deleting.

The recycle bin is there for that purpose--to save you from mistakes. It causes no problem to let deleted items sit there for, say, a week before being deleted permanently. You don't even have to look at the items before emptying the bin. Most, if not all of them will have been there long enough to be retrieved in case you suddenly find a need for them.

In the past two years I have had at least two queries from members who used the shift key when deleting, but then wanted their stuff back. There is only one possible solution , and that is to purchase software that can under the right conditions restore the deleted files.

Just recently someone deleted an entire folder of email (the entire folder, not just the messages in it) by holding down the shift key while supposedly deleting only one message in the folder. It was a relatively unimportant folder, so the consequences were not grave, but what if had been the inbox containing two years worth of messages?

Finally, let's talk about buying computers. When

(Comments……..Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at mcpease@mindspring.com.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Office Updates

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

If you use Office 2000, 2002 (XP) or 2003, it's a good idea to go to the Office Updates on the Microsoft web site occasionally. The Download page has a product scanner somewhat like the Windows Update where it scans the Office products that are installed on your system and selects the ones that you need.

I was surprised that it did an update for my Microsoft Visio 2002 Standard package. I had bought that separately from my copy of Office XP.

While you're at the website, poke around for more free stuff like new templates and graphics and articles on how to do stuff. There's a wealth of information there and it's easy to find.

To get there, go to http://office.microsoft.com/home. Under *Home*, select *Downloads.* There you'll find *Updates* for the product scanner. ◆

(Comments……Continued from page 9)

the Gateway store was in Tampa, I tried to always buy from it, since I had bought Gateway computers for many years, was happy with them and wanted to support the store since they had been nice to our group. Well, Gateway closed all its stores this year, so that is no longer an option. Thus, when the relative of MyDoom fame said she wanted a new computer, I first went to the Gateway site, but things were different. There is now very little that you can customize, I confirmed in an online chat with Gateway. In fact, only one of the 710 series computers (not the one we wanted) came with Windows XP Professional. All the others came with XP Home, and when you click on the customize button, there is no way to change XP Home to XP Professional--even though on a previous page there is the message: "Gateway recommends Microsoft Windows XP Professional". You also cannot change the hard drive size. This is not the Gateway I have bought computers from since 1991. So it was off to the Dell and HP sites.

The Dell site was a bit tacky to my taste with messages in red that read something like "Limited time offer"; "ends Wednesday". So after a quick look around it was on to the HP site. The HP desktops seemed aimed at the low-end market, and I must admit a long standing prejudice against HP computers based on a few bad encounters with them. However, at the same site Compaq desktops were available and infinitely customizable. You can have Windows XP Professional if you want, you can have any type of monitor, hard drive and amount of RAM you want. This is the way it should be. So, this time, the order goes to Compaq. I am afraid, at least for the time being, 13 years of buying mostly Gateways is over.

Now, couldn't one of our members have written something similar to the above, giving the newsletter more variety and adding to my knowledge, too.◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
Borland
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Intuit
Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
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MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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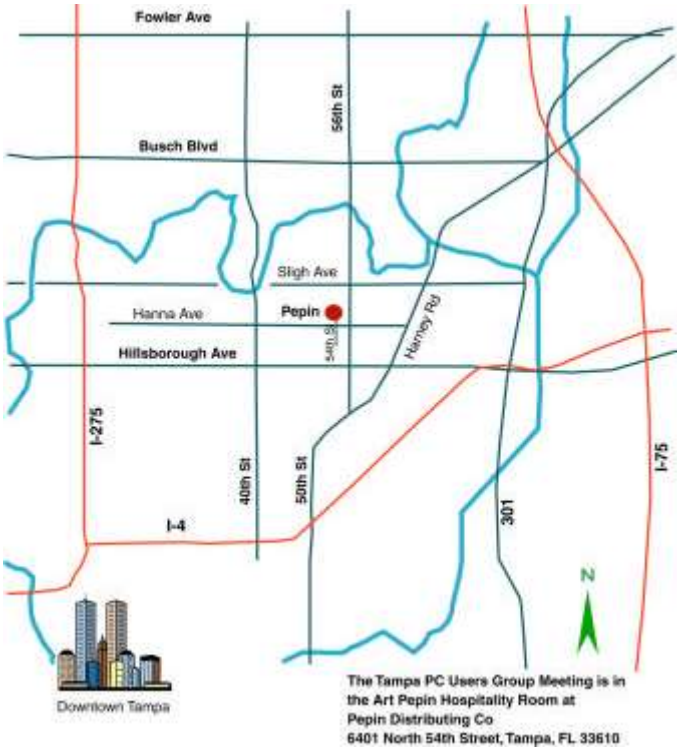


First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Wireless…….Continued from page 5)

In closing, it would be nice if there were some sort of universal wireless service travelers could subscribe to that could be used in airport terminals, hotels, coffee shops, etc. Now if you are lucky enough to find a for-profit service in such an establishment, say, at a Starbucks, it is not going to be the same service you find down the street at a McDonald's or at the airport. And few of us want to pay for wireless connectivity—especially more than one service. ◆



(1994…….Continued from page 8)

business associates or friends. Donate those computers and miscellaneous computer items sitting around your home or business. Our group can get bigger and better, but only if you help us. Remember we are now classified with the IRS as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible. Check with your tax accountant for proper deduction filing. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

September in Tampa

Vol. 17 No. 9 September 2004

Meeting

Internet Scams

Wednesday, September 8, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Detecting and defeating internet scam artists is this month's topic, presented by Laura Royal, a financial criminal investigator with the State of Florida. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Hurricanes and Computers Without a change from the predicted course for Hurricane Charley, it is not clear that I would now be typing this column at my computer in a room under a giant oak limb in a house about 600 feet from the Bay in Tampa. First, it is not clear that the room would still be of use after what I saw oak trees did to homes in Hardee and DeSoto Counties south of here. Second, even if my room had been spared, I am not sure we would have electricity, phone service or cable service yet. There are so many more houses in the Tampa Bay area than in the area hit by the storm, and in my part of Tampa, at least, we have almost total tree cover. The power lines would not have stood a chance. I can see it taking

(Comments……..Continued on page 2)

October Meeting: Understanding .NET (tentative)

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
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Since our secretary was traveling and we can not figure who was responsible for taking notes in her place, here is an abbreviated description of what happened at our last meeting.

The meeting began with the usual Windows computer discussion.

Bob LaFave then did a presentation on the Intel Digital Home Experience. Bob has summarized the main points of the presentation in the following paragraph. Thanks, Bob, for the presentation and synopsis.

Integration of consumer electronics with the current home PC's into today's home. Using wired and wireless networks, it is now available to use your computer as a media center. You can access audio digital music, a TV tuner, digital videos stored on the PC throughout the network to enhance your home. How Intel's CPU's with Hyper-Threading technology allows for multi-users to enjoy different media types at the same time throughout the home. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

more than just a couple of weeks to get power back to everyone.

So what does all this hurricane stuff have to do with computers? Well, if you don't plan ahead you may not have any computers or any of your data after a storm. And even if your computer survives the storm, you most likely won't have any electricity to power it. Even if, as I, you have an electrical generator to provide temporary power, you most likely won't have a phone line or cable connection that

(Comments…….Continued on page 7)

FrogPad One-Handed Keyboard

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Quoting from the FrogPad website, "FrogPad™ is a one-handed keyboard to be used with USB Keyboard compatible PDA's, Pocket PCs, Tablet and Wearable PC's, and other mobile applications".

To be honest, I didn't read that statement when I bought mine for my desktop machine. They're promoting the Bluetooth model with that statement, and I purchased the original "Ion" USB model ($150), not the Bluetooth model. I suspect the Ion USB model is being discontinued now that the Bluetooth model is available. There are still some USB models available, along with free shipping as of this writing, 8/19/04. There are Apple FrogPads and also left-handed versions of each model. The Bluetooth models are $175, plus the cost of a USB Bluetooth transceiver if you don't have one for an additional $35.

Alternative keyboards have always been around. There are a dozen or more available right now. The more interesting are the "chording" keyboards some of which resemble game controllers for either one or two hands. If you're interested, a Google search for "alternative keyboards" will turn up plenty.

So why buy an alternative keyboard? There are several reasons that you may want to try one. First and foremost is the very real possibility that you can – with practice – type faster. After all, there's nothing sacred about the QWERTY layout. By that I mean that the keyboard you're using was not designed for the purpose that you actually require. It has been enlarged (more keys), but not actually redesigned except once since 1873. And that change simply rearranged the keys from an alphabetical format to QWERTY, being designed to eliminate key jamming of all-mechanical typewriters. Alphabetical format would probably be better.

So you may ask, why don't they just study the problem a bit, and then design a good one? Well the answer is, they have, many, many times, and hardly anyone notices. Technical excellence rarely wins out over momentum and marketing. If it did, we'd all be using Apples, Ataris or Commodores. Remember that the IBM computer of 1984 was no great shakes. If speed and typing efficiency means anything, at the least, we'd be using the proven Dvorak keyboard arrangement, available at no cost to everyone!

One concern that I've always heard is that time spent on a different keyboard may detract from or harm one's skill on a conventional keyboard. My own experience tells me that it's completely unfounded. I used a different keyboard (for APL programming) for twenty years, and switched back and forth many times daily with no problems. The human brain is a remarkable thing and fully capable of learning two (and more) keyboards.

Back to the FrogPad, reasons you may want this particular alternative keyboard are: small size, a really well-thought-out layout, and a comfortable hand position. It's small, fully functional and easy to learn. The Bluetooth model offers even more possibilities, with portability and, in time, a wide variety of devices.

This device measures 5-5/8 by 3-7/8 inches and about ½ inch thick. It needs no software. On XP and Win 98SE, it installs automatically and instantly, just as you'd expect of any keyboard. I was able to try it out on Win 98SE since my personal computer dual-boots between XP Home and 98SE.



As you can see in the pictures, the pad is quite small. After an hour or so of using it, I put my regular key-

(FrogPad ……Continued on page 4)

(FrogPad…….Continued from page 3)
board aside and haven't used it since. This is because I found myself tempted to revert back to the regular keyboard in times of frustration and because I wanted to keep myself on track to learn the FrogPad as fast as possible.

I find the positioning of the pad very comfortable. I've angled it about 20 degrees and placed a terry cloth under the heel of my hand. It's far more comfortable than with the old keyboard. I'll buy a gel hand rest next time I'm at the computer store.

This FrogPad is frog green, with white, yellow and green lettering. See our website, http://www.tpcug.org, for the web version of this article; it has color pictures. Other FrogPads are white. Check out the FrogPad website, http://www.frogpad.com.

The pad has ten lights on it to tell you the status of the functions. There are fifteen letter keys plus Space and Enter for characters. The remaining eleven letters are keyed by using the Space key in conjunction with one of the fifteen. With the Number, Symbol, and Shift keys, that makes twenty keys in all. It amazed me how little time it took to learn the position of all the letter keys and a good number of the most-used other characters like Tab, Comma and Period. They are well-thought-out to minimize keystrokes. Other symbols and actions are more difficult, and I'll talk about that later.

Obviously, each key has multiple functions. Just looking at one key alone, the W near the top right, it types: w, m, W, M, a colon, a dollar sign, a 9, F9, pause and Break. That's ten functions.

You position your three center fingers in the center of the pad, on the E, H and T keys. The thumb rests on the space key, and the pinky rests on the Y key. The pinky is used on the Y, Enter, and the Shift. The index finger covers the left six keys. The thumb is used on the Number key as well as the Space. The Period is typed with Space+Enter, and Comma with Space+Symbol. The other important keys are Delete (Number+U) and Backspace (Number+I).

All this is surprisingly easy to learn. It's much more natural than a standard keyboard. And I haven't been tempted to abandon it at all.

To describe one of the various modes, the Number key is pressed to switch into number mode. This converts the fifteen keys into a number pad and also to Function keys if used in conjunction with the Space key. The Number key is pressed again to switch out of number mode. The operation of the Symbol key is the same. That will get access to the two symbols on the right side of each key. In the case of the W key, that's the colon and dollar sign.

The Number and the Symbol keys interact so that one switches the other off. And the Symbol key remembers if it turned the Number key off and turns it back on if Symbol is turned back off. The Shift function is most interesting. Pressing and releasing the Shift key will capitalize just the next letter key you type. To enter



Caps Lock, press the Shift key twice.

The company assures us that all keyboard functions are represented on the FrogPad, so I'll admit here that I haven't learned some. I'm not having any problems typing this article because at least my head knows where every key is, even if my fingers do not. I'm not fast yet, because I'm still "thinking" my fingers into the positions for many of the keys. My top speed is just 23 wpm on a standard keyboard, and I'll be happy to match or exceed that on the FrogPad. It's coming along, and I'm practicing some each day using a program I wrote that presents the most-used 1000 words in the English language.

But I'm a habitual programmer, and the keyboard requirements for programming are much different. I do a

(FrogPad…….Continued on page 5)

(FrogPad……..Continued from page 4)

lot of selecting of text using Shift+arrow keys, then Ctrl+C, Ctrl+V or Ctrl+X. In other words, Select, Copy, Cut, move the cursor and Paste, without using the mouse. Here the FrogPad doesn't shine, at least for me. To use a Ctrl+ function, you press Number+E to enter Ctrl mode, select Space+T (that's a C), then press Number+E again to take it out of Ctrl mode, move to a new location, back into Ctrl mode, select Space+D (that's a V), then press Number+E again to take it out of Ctrl mode again. It doesn't seem worth it, and isn't.

A similar problem exists for entering symbols. You do a lot of entering of parentheses and brackets and double-quotes when you program, and to do that takes a minimum of three key presses each. I think that the Symbol key should work like the Shift key and pop out of Symbol mode with one other key press.

Now to be realistic, programming isn't about typing quickly. My guess is that I type maybe five or six wpm when programming. Programming is 95% research, testing and thinking. So I believe that my productivity will not suffer much. And I consider it a challenge to my ingenuity to find solutions. For instance, I can adopt the use of the mouse more for cutting and pasting. Also, I find that the keyboard arrow keys, Tab, Home and End keys are, if anything, quicker, because the FrogPad requires less hand movement. On a conventional keyboard, your hand must leave the home row to use many, many keys; on the FrogPad you

(FrogPad……..Continued on page 10)

Internet Picture of the Month

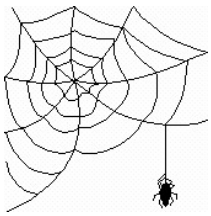


Toppled Arcadia, FL Water Tank

Hurricane Charley did a lot of damage in Florida. The photo above is of a water tank felled in the storm. Much of Arcadia may be without water for some time.

The photo is from http://www.schnittshow.com, where there is a collection of aerial photos at http://www.schnittshow.com/hurricanecharley2004.html. Go there and get your fill of destroyed house trailers.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Naples Daily News	http://www.naplesnews.com/
The History of Computing	http://www.thocp.net/
AnyWho Online Directory	http://www.anywho.com/
Butterfly Site	http://www.thebutterflysite.com/
Fox News Hurricane photos	http://www.schnittshow.com/hurricanecharley2004.html
Flood Zone Map (Zoom to 400%)	http://www2.sptimes.com/pdfs/hurricanemaps/2004/hurr-map-hill.pdf

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

PHOTODEX ProShow Gold

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

I've written a couple of reviews in the past about programs that will take your digital images, either taken with a digital camera, scanned or borrowed from the Internet, and do something special with the images. And those software packages were good, or I wouldn't have written about them to begin with. But I've found one that is better, and quite impressive at that.

ProShow Gold is a program with nine modules to let you create professional-looking slide shows to share with your friends, use for business, or just for fun, I guess. It's as easy as just selecting your images, drag and drop them onto a show window, add sound in the form of music or a digitally recorded track of commentary and choose from over 280 nicely-done transition effects between slides. You can even mix in a video with the still images.

I just used the phrase "still images", but with ProShow Gold your images are anything but still. Next time you watch a television ad notice that you hardly ever see just a still image used in a professional commercial. ProShow Gold gives you this ability to add motion effects, such as panning, rotating and zooming [also known as Ken Burns effects, referencing a documentary filmmaker who popularized these effects]. You can make subtle little changes in the image, or call dramatic attention to a portion or spot on the image, and it only takes a few seconds for each shot, or, if you have several images, just let ProShow Gold randomly select your motion effects [and transitions] for you.

Once you've chosen the images, transitions, sounds and motion effects you can create a show title screen with menus if you have more than one slide show. If you're not into math and calculating the time needed for each slide to match your music, then let ProShow Gold sync the soundtrack by automatically setting both the transition times and slide display times. After you've decided how the slide show is going to look and sound, then you have to decide how to share it. As I mentioned earlier, there are nine ways to share slide shows and they are:

- Create a DVD to play on any DVD player
- Create a video CD that will play on most of the newer DVD players
- Create an Mpeg1 or Mpeg2 video file
- Share the slide show online by uploading it to the Photodex website
- Upload the slide show to your own website--ProShow Gold creates all the code you need
- Create an executable self-contained slide show that can be played on any Windows computer without any other special software
- Send that executable by email
- Create auto run CDs that will start automatically by placing the CD into a Windows computer
- Create Windows screensaver files [.scr]

There are several settings for each of the above listed slide show outputs. Suffice to say, there are plenty of choices. There are two programs to choose from, and both are free for the downloading: ProShow and ProShow Gold. Below is the difference between the two.

(Photodex……Continued on page 9)

	ProShow	Gold
Create customized shows	✓	✓
Over 280 transition effects	✓	✓
Add multiple soundtracks	✓	✓
Add text captions	✓	✓
Build executables	✓	✓
Add multiple captions per slide	✓	✓
Build screensavers	✓	✓
Create PC autorun CDs	✓	✓
Support for CD-R/RW drives	✓	✓
Custom show backgrounds	✓	✓
Generate video files	✓	✓
Include PC show on Video discs	✓	✓
Share shows online at Photodex.com	✓	✓
Create DVDs		✓
Slide motion effects (Ken Burns)		✓
Over 70 caption effects		✓
Use video clips in slides		✓
Publish streaming shows on your website		✓
Add slide sounds and voice overs		✓
Send shows by email		✓
Support for DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW		✓

(Comments…….Continued from page 2)

works so as to go on the Internet. Of course, if you don't have a home left, what happened to your computer and data may not be of great consequence to you. That notwithstanding, let me relate what I did to prepare as the storm bore down on Tampa.

Omitting what we did to secure our home in general, here is what I did as regarding my computers. First, I backed up to CD all my data files and photos files that I had not already backed up. I keep fairly up-to-date on backups, so that was not a very big chore. If I had had to start from scratch, it would have been a very big problem, since the photos alone comprise over 50 GB. Then I made backups of the websites I manage and all of my programming files for Visual Basic, Delphi and Visual Studio. Other data that needed backing up were for programs like Quicken, Family Tree Maker, Access, Word, Excel--all the usual suspects.

Once I had my backup data on CDs or DVDs, I put them in a different place from where the computers reside. Of course, it would have been better to store them off site. And for a small amount of data, if desired, I could have uploaded it to some of the many servers for websites I have access to. All of those servers are outside Florida.

The final thing for me to do as regards computer preparation for the storm was to get the two computers and their associated printers and scanners in the first floor room under the giant oak limb moved to another location in the house. I decided to wait until a couple hours before landfall to do this, since there was always the possibility that the hurricane would choose other victims. And it did. Our good luck in Tampa was other Floridians' bad luck.

Moving Data to a New Computer I assisted a relative recently in purchasing a new Compaq desktop computer. It is a beauty with Windows XP Professional, one GB RAM, 250 GB hard drive, 3.2 MHz Intel Hyper Threaded processor and a 17" flat panel display. Much more computer than she really needs, but she keeps computers for a long time, and who knows what she will need six years from now. Besides, it is the computer I would have ordered for myself.

Knowing that she would want to get all her data, email messages and other such things copied from the old to the new, I decided the best thing to do was buy a wireless router for her, and I found a real good buy on a Netgear WGR614 54 Mbps at CompUSA. The plan was to connect the new and old desktop computers to the router with cables and transfer her data over the network connection. Of course, that could just as well be done with a crossover cable or with a cheaper, non-wireless router. Ah, but the wireless router would also allow me to connect to the network with my notebook computer when I visited. That way I could tap into her broadband connection, and we could easily exchange the occasional file we sometimes share. Finally, with all the rebates, the wireless router was as cheap as a regular router.

With the old computer now connected to the router and configured to share its files, I tested the file sharing with my laptop computer and left her printed instructions on how to set up her new compute when it arrived. I would help her with the new printer and retrieving any files she couldn't find when I next returned.

By the way, the old computer used Windows 98, so I simply shared the C drive and made it password protected. I also enabled WEP on the router so that a casual passerby would not be able to enter her wireless network.

On my second trip over, I set up the new computer to be on the same workgroup as the old computer and then "View Workgroup Computers" from the new computer to find the old computer, put in the password and had access to all its files. We copied all her photos, Word documents, Excel documents, and miscellaneous things like Family Tree Maker files.

To get all her email messages, I mapped a network drive on the new computer to the C drive on the old computer and then from Outlook Express on the new computer imported all the old messages from their

(Comments…….Continued on page 9)

Looking Back to 1994

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 8/10/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS
By: Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Another very good meeting, but the very wet weather played havoc with attendance — which was down to less than half the norm. Too bad, too, because Prodigy gave a good thumbnail of their service and the Tampa Tribune gave a rundown on the new Tampa Bay Online service they were to kickoff the next day.

USER GROUP NEWS

ADOPTBBS: Harvey elaborated on a brief article in the August Bits Of Blue newsletter about the kickoff of our Adopt The BBS fund-raising drive. In essence, our BBS has limited capacity which needs to be expanded and improved. A recent membership survey outlined member priorities for the BBS — more files and add a second phone line, which also entails another high-speed modem. A number of actions have been taken to cut costs and generate more revenues. These have all been helpful, but as yet have done little more than offset increasing costs, such as the rental fees we now have to pay for our general meetings. Our treasury simply doesn't have the funds to accomplish the needed improvements to the BBS. Hence, the Board of Directors elected to raise the needed finds from membership donations. Adopt The BBS is to run through the close of the September meeting. If you want the BBS to be improved and are willing to help with that effort, please send in your check to the TPCUG marked for ADOPTBBS, or bring it to the September meeting. Join those of us who want our group to continue to get better.

INDUSTRY NEWS

IBM Dropping Amber Line: IBM has announced that it is stopping production of its Amber line laptop computers. Full support for these computers will continue, however.

ACCESS 2.0 Problem: Industry news reports that Access 2.0 is giving some users problems with losing data. Those affected are users operating Windows for WorkGroups 3.1 and using SCSI drivers, and then only when accessing the SCSI heavily. While the info is not clear, it would appear that the problem exists only when the SCSI is on a personal machine as opposed to in a network situation. Work is in progress to solve the problem.

Intel Dropping Some Modem Lines: Intel is apparently contracting its modem production and has announced it is dropping some of its less profitable modem lines; it would appear competition and continuing cost-cutting pressures have prompted the move. I do not have details to publish here, so if you are thinking about an Intel modem, you might want to check to see if the one in which you have an interest is one of the lines being discontinued.

Windows 4.0: Word in the industry is that Microsoft will be delaying release of Chicago/Windows 4.0 until the 2nd quarter of 1995. Meanwhile, IBM's work on its OS/2 Personal is nearing completion — IBM will review this new competitor before our group at our September meeting.

PRESENTATION — Prodigy & Tampa Bay Online

Prodigy: Peter Drummond, Retail Sales & Marketing for Prodigy, was on hand to give a brief rundown of Prodigy for those not already subscribing to that online service. He outlined how Prodigy had now grown to become the largest online service in the country, with the most subscribers. Among the many statistics provided, there are bulletin boards for just about every area of interest you might think of, and, collectively, they handle some 100,000 notes each day. Pete's principal purpose was to introduce Prodigy as a means to get to the new service that is coming online on Prodigy—Tampa Bay Online (TBOL). As a Prodigy user, however, I can tell you that there is a wealth of information available to subscribers in just about any area of interest. It has a Windows-like environment (graphical interface) in both its DOS and Windows versions of the software, and in spite of the breadth of areas covered by the service — from news & weather; to business & financial news and investing online; to banking online; to airline info & online reservation/ticketing; to many, many bulletin boards; to games; and on and on — navigation within Prodigy is fairly easy.

In contrast to the other online services, Prodigy offers multiple levels of subscriptions. However, over 90% percent of the subscribers chose the Value membership. This $14.95/month subscription gives access to over 90% of Prodigy features without further access or time charges. Less costly subscriptions are available, down to as little as $2/month. This allows subscribers to purchase the service most suitable for their needs. They also offer a free trial membership that allows one to try out the service without cost. You might want to take advantage of that offer.

Tampa Bay Online (TBOL): The bulk of our presentation time was devoted to hearing about this new service for the

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(Comments……..Continued from page 8)
Tampa Bay Area. Nanette Holland, TBOL News Editor, and Allan Gengler, TBOL Bulletin Board & Information Editor, were on hand to introduce this new service to our members. And they did an excellent job of doing just that. It appears to be an outstanding service. It will provide online all of the goodies contained in the Tribune, except for the national/world news that the Prodigy service already covers, plus other items of interest to Floridians that are not included in the Tribune. Among the latter are computer news and information, including product reviews by our own members; community profiles; beach guides; weather updated periodically, including current radar views; hurricane information and historical data; lottery info; articles prepared for but not published in the Tribune; info on public parks in Florida; and on and on. Another very big plus for TBOL is that it, too, has bulletin boards for notes and messages on just about any subject between TBOL and subscribers, and between subscribers.

Also with a graphical interface, TBOL's opening screen offers 4 or 5 "highlight" items, plus access buttons for each of the following categories: News/Opinion; Sports; Business; Bay Life; Entertainment; The Florida Key; Bay Talk; and Classified. Yes, all the want ads are available on line. Clicking on each of the categories leads you to a similar screen for the contents of that category. Much like the Tribune, it includes items of interest to all Floridians and local news for counties from Citrus County to the north, to DeSoto/Highland Counties to the south and Polk County to the east. Moreover, a good bit of the info available (such as lottery numbers, or recipes from previous weeks, to name but a couple) is archived so that several days or weeks of back info is available,. Most of what you see can be downloaded to printer and/or file.

I tried the service just before beginning this report and I like what I see. It is, in fact, as easy to navigate within as it appeared to be during the presentation. It is very easy to use, easier in my opinion than finding things in the Tribune itself. Moreover, the news in TBOL is available the evening before the Tribune hits the street. And it is less expensive than the newspaper, costing only $4.95 per month, the charge being billed on your Prodigy statement. I don't mean to suggest that TBOL is a replacement for your Tribune subscription. Rather, I am trying to give you a feel for the high quality and timeliness of service that I saw. TBOL is free for the first weekend for anyone interested in trying it out. That, of course, will have long since passed by the time you read this, but I would expect that TBOL will offer some additional free weekends to acquaint those who missed the first offer. Keep your eyes open. But you don't have to wait — they have made it easy and for those enrolling now, the first month is free. Even if that is no longer available when you finally decide you would like to try TBOL, $4.95 is not an exorbitant cost to not wait for the "trial" periods or free months; just tinkering with TBOL for a month is worth the $4.95.

Many thanks to Peter Drummond of Prodigy, and Nanette Holland and Allan Gengler of the Tribune for an excellent presentation of your services. You have been most helpful and we look forward to the continued progress of your respective services.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Asymetrix and Computer Associates, there were a couple of very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Rob Davis	Simply Money
Herb Atwood	Multimedia Make Your Point

The meeting adjourned at about 8 PM. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 7)
known location on the old computer. Retrieving her address book took me a moment since it was not stored in a Windows Address Book file ending with .wab. I suspect it was in some sort of old Outlook file. I gave up looking for it and simply exported it from Outlook Express on the old computer as a comma delimited file and then copied the file to the new computer and imported it into Outlook Express there. To retrieve her Favorites folder, I simply copied its contents from the old computer into the Favorites folder on the new computer.

That's all there was to copying all the important files from an old computer to a new one.◆

(Photodex……..Continued from page 6)

If you like what you try, ProShow is $29.95 whereas ProShow Gold is $69.95 and can be found at: http://www.photodex.com/ . If you're into digital photography then this software needs to be added to your library. It's actually fun to watch the looks on people's faces when the see these still pictures 'moving' for the first time. This software is definitely a keeper. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(FrogPad…….Continued from page 5)

never do. And that's a NEVER.

I seem to look at the FrogPad almost not at all, whereas I'm almost always looking at a standard keyboard, not because I don't know where the keys are, but rather to constantly reposition my fingers. With the FrogPad, I always know where my fingers are because they don't move around that much.

One criticism I have is the placement of the lights. The Scroll, Caps and Num Lock lights are on the right, obscured by my hand, where the left side is completely visible on a right-hand FrogPad. And I do think that the problem of the Cut, Copy and Paste could somehow be accommodated. Please don't think the criticisms dampen my enthusiasm for the product. I certainly like the FrogPad, and when I can think of a good excuse to buy a Bluetooth model, I'll get one.

The Bluetooth version has some differences. I posted the question on the website Blog, and got this reply from Earlene Kaiser, Mgr. Business Development:

"We have added the following functions that are not available on the USB at this time: Alt and Ctrl keys are now accessible in one key stroke and are only active until you press the next desired key (i.e., Ctrl A or Alt Tab). On the USB, one must turn these functions On and Off. Similarly, the App and Command keys are also available in the same manner as above. Shift Lock is accessed by simultaneously pressing the Shift Key and the Space Key. Caps Lock is accessed by simultaneously pressing the Number Key and the Shift Key. The Number and Symbol modes must be turned On and then Off on both the Bluetooth and the USB."

So with my concerns about the use of Ctrl addressed, the Bluetooth version probably would have been a better choice for me.

This my first long document using the FrogPad, and after almost three weeks, numerous emails, and one VB program written and then rewritten – I have a couple of observations.

One, that surprised even myself, is that I can close my eyes and accurately visualize the placement of all the letter keys, numbers and several symbols. That's far better than I can do with the QWERTY keyboard, which I've been using for almost thirty years.

Two, I almost never look at the pad, whereas, normally I'm almost always looking at a conventional keyboard to reposition my fingers. I do a lot of mistyping now on the FrogPad because I want to go faster than my brain will allow, but that's getting better.

And Three, I find myself a little disoriented each first use of each day. I've found that a few minutes repetitious practice overcomes this.

The FrogPad website is a good resource. There are two blogs--one FrogChat and one Technical blog--where a couple of company officers are active and are inter-

(FrogPad…….Continued on page 12)

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems
Borland
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Intuit
Microsoft
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PowerQuest
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Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
HTML coding	HTM
Internet general	IG
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS
Microsoft Access	MA
Microsoft Excel	ME
Microsoft FrontPage	FP
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS
Microsoft Publisher	MP
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB
Microsoft Word	MW
Networking	N
PAF	PAF
PaintShop PRO	PSP
Quicken	Q
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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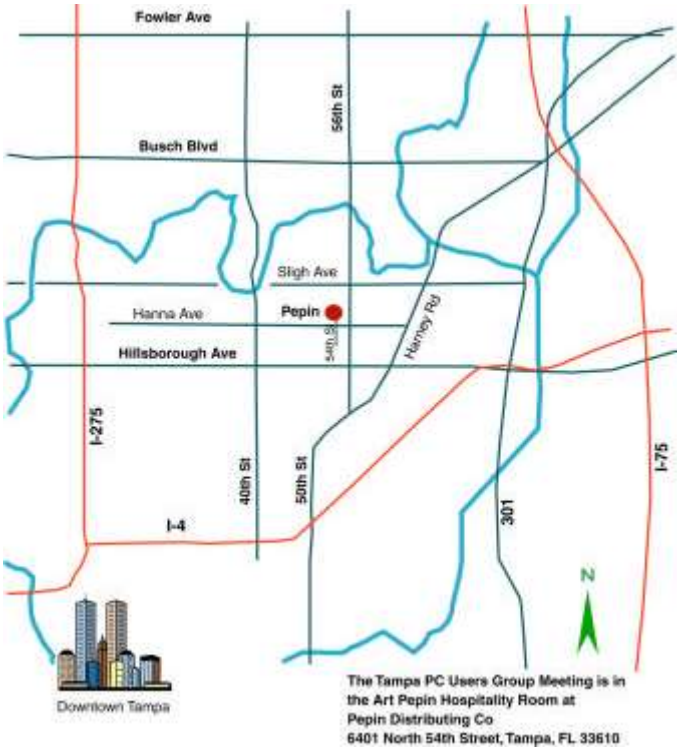
(FrogPad……..Continued from page 10)

ested in servicing any questions. The blogs do suffer some from a couple of frequent participants with too much time on their hands. The poetry is interesting, but doesn't belong on technical or product blogs.

Available at Amazon.com and at http://www.frogpad.com, $150-$175.

Technical Stuff:

I found that I had to enable "USB Legacy Support" in BIOS for the first time. This wasn't because of Windows - or the FrogPad for that matter - but because of the Dual-boot menu that Win XP puts up. The FrogPad wasn't operative during that time, and presumably any USB keyboard wouldn't be either. The change to BIOS fixed that up and was quickly accomplished. The FrogPad works during POST on my motherboard, and in BIOS, but I have a fairly new PC. If your PC has USB as an add-on card, you may need to keep a standard keyboard handy or even plugged in. Having two keyboards plugged in, one being USB, at the same time is no problem. Keep in mind also that Win 98SE was the first Win OS to have good USB support. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

October in Tampa?

Vol. 17 No. 10 October 2004

Meeting

Understanding .Net

Wednesday, October 13, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Randall Nagy, President of Soft9000.com, will do a presentation on understanding .NET. Spend an hour leaning what .NET is, and what it is not. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Shorter Newsletter This newsletter is only eight pages instead of the usual 12. I have decided to change to this format for months when the material is insufficient to fill, without a lot of padding, the larger format.

More Hurricane Last month I mentioned how in preparation for Hurricane Charley, I backed up my software and prepared to move my computers to a safer location only to abort the move when Charley suddenly steered clear of Tampa. Well, since then two more hurricanes, Frances and Ivan, have threatened Tampa, with Frances passing nearby and dumping a lot of water on us as it made its way from east to west across the state.

With Frances aiming at Tampa, before turning in for the evening, I unplugged my main computer from everything and moved it, along with monitor, printer and scanner, to a safer room than the one it normally occupies with the giant oak limb overhead. The next morning the only damage we had was a lot of small limbs down in the yard. So back to the room the computer went, and I connected everything back before turning it on.

(Comments…….Continued on page 2)

November Meeting: New Hardware

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the September Meeting

By Kevan Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
president@tpcug.org

The Windows SIG (Special Interest Group) discussion began at 6:45 PM. Several small group topics were covered during the session. The president began the regular meeting at 7:00 PM.

Laura Royal, Financial Criminal Investigator with the Office of Financial Regulation, Bureau of Investigations (http://www.fldfs.com/), performed the main demonstration for the evening. The topic was **A Case Study: Securities Fraud on the Internet - Putting the Pieces Together**.

This program took us from start to finish of how an investigator uncovered a pump and dump investment scheme promoted through a message board on the Internet. We covered the basics of beginning the case with a complaint about $33.00 which led to uncovering a $3 million fraud from a company in Sarasota. We walked through the investigation process, bank record analysis, investigative resources, witnesses, the Internet message board and the bogus press releases. We learned what it takes to obtain a search warrant, perform an arrest and prepare for trial. As a consumer you can report suspected fraud at http://www.fldfs.com/Data/Fraud/Report%20Suspected%20Fraud.asp or you can request assistance at http://servicepoint.fldfs.com/eservice_enu/start.swe . Overall, this was a very interesting demonstration. The meeting ended at 8:40 PM. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

Then strange things started to happen. After booting the computer, I got messages stating that it had found new hardware, etc. The new hardware was a USB scanner and a USB external hard drive. Later on that day, when I connected my digital camera to download the photos of flooding a block away, I also got the same messages about new hardware. This didn't make sense. I had disconnected all of these peripherals while the computer was turned off and reconnected them before I turned it on. What was going on? Member Bob LaFave had the answer. He said that I must have connected the USB devices to different USB ports than they were connected to before. If that were the case, and it was, they would be treated as new devices.

Bandwidth As Hurricane Frances was leaving the area after passing north of Tampa a bit, its winds were just right to produce a

(Comments……..Continued on page 4)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Quick Look:
Delorme Street Atlas USA 2005

By Merle Nicholson, www.tpcug.org
merle@merlenicholson.com

Street Atlas USA 2005 is a very good product that is simply getting better year after year. It is travel mapping, travel planning, real time auto navigation, a "point of interest" locator, and much more. This version adds many functional improvements in addition to the expected highway and database updates. I'm going to be covering some of the improvements and also go over the disappointing installation problems. If you're upgrading from a previous version, my own experience should save you some time.

At the minimum, even if you don't travel with this software on a notebook as I do, you can make use of it on a desktop at home for travel planning and mapping. It's useful as a substitute paper map of the city – for any city in the US for that matter – or perhaps to find the nearest Starbucks in Orlando if you're visiting there and have a Latte attack. I think just about anyone can find a good use for at least some of the features. And at $49.95, you can't beat the price.

My own interests extend to nearly the full capability of the software. I'd say the only thing I have no personal interest in is the hands-free voice command feature. I use a Delorme Earthmate USB GPS attached, and also an inverter to power the notebook charger while in the car. My next acquisition will be a Bluetooth version of the Earthmate, so I can eliminate the too-heavy USB cord that attaches to the GPS.

New Features
First and foremost, it's faster. The program startup is very noticeably faster, something I appreciate especially on my not-too-fast notebook. The most important change they've made is to recalculate the route dynamically when you're off the planned route. Say you're out of state and in unfamiliar territory, and you decide to leave the highway for a gas stop. When you're a certain distance off route, the program changes the planned route to get you back on track from wherever you are, and gets you back there the shortest (or fastest) way. What a difference this makes! Way to go, guys!

As you're moving on a planned route, the synthesized voice anticipates turns and warns you ahead of time of upcoming turns. They've improved this by announcing the next TWO turns. Perhaps this doesn't sound like much, but in practice it's a much needed improvement I didn't know I needed.

They've simplified the saving of route files. There was a big controversy over the redesign of this product several years ago (in the 2002 version, I think) and the file system was clever, but just too complex. Several other displays have been improved, and the large database expanded even further. There's a GPS Points of Interest (POI) Radar search that is much easier to use. It searches for categories of items (stores, restaurants, exits, rest facilities) along the route, (optionally) in a forward direction. Good going, Delorme!

I do have a couple of complaints. There's extra blank room on the right hand toolbar where a badly needed compass and speed indicator could go (and maybe altitude), and while that information is certainly available on a tab, you have to switch over to it and back to the usual tab, which for me is the next turn display. Another complaint I have is that there is no useful scale on the display to estimate distances. I say useful, because there is a fixed length bar that has a label specifying the length. How useful is a scale that says "2000 ft"? Or "500 ft"? Instead of 2000 ft it could be a slightly longer variable length bar that has marks to .5 miles. That'd be useful.

There's a "clear trails" button that's necessary to get rid of the green breadcrumbs wherever you go, but it's in the wrong place in a hard to find location on one of the GPS tabs. And trails should automatically clear when you reverse your route.

Considering the complexity of this program, and make no mistake about it, this is a very complex program, it's reliable and after a steep learning curve, easy to use. It has to be the premier product of its type. For campers, hikers and bikers, there's a topographical version and also a version for Pocket PC's. There are versions that also package their very fine GPS with the software. One deal is a package that bundles the Pocket PC version with the Bluetooth GPS for $150.

Installation problems
If you don't have a previous version installed on the target computer, and you don't have the Earthmate USB GPS driver software, you shouldn't have any problems. I had both products, and if they had included instructions to uninstall the three previous products before installation (in my case, S&T USA 2004, S&T USA 2004 Data, and the USB GPS driver), I wouldn't have had any problems either.

The installation program doesn't recognize the existence of any previous version, so all the settings you may have had for the previous version are lost to the new one. You'll probably want to edit the preferences to designate the speed traveled on each highway type, change the preferred highway and several other items, and you just have to do them all over again, just as you had to do the previous year.

To top it all off, the Earthmate USB GPS driver must be replaced with a new one, and the existence of the old one isn't detected until the end of the main program installation. So at the end of a very lengthy program installation, it informed me that I needed to uninstall the old driver and then do the setup again. I uninstalled the driver from the control panel and also discovered that my 2004 version was still functional, so I uninstalled that, too. Then the new setup failed, with a message that temporary files could not be copied from some temp directory and with instructions that I must delete the main program directory manually. So I did

(Street Atlas…….Continued on page 4)

(Street Atlas…….Continued from page 3)
that and, with both versions blown off the computer, I could start all over again. I'm still awestruck. It's hard to believe that a computer program of this quality could not have an intelligent installation program written for it. If that CAN'T be done, at least add two sentences to the instructions: "First, uninstall any previous versions, including the Earthmate USB GPS driver" and "All your previous custom settings will be lost".

Finally
The Earthmate driver installation has an optional serial port mapper, so that if you have other software that can read the NMEA standard GPS sentences, you can designate a "fake" serial port. This is very useful. If installed, you must also use the serial port designation for S&T USA 2005. The GPS connection settings are easy to set up.

The product comes on a two CD set for $49.95 ($39.95 + S&H promotional price for existing registered customers). The second CD is the database that can be used in your CD drive; installing it on the hard drive is optional. There's a DVD version with a 31-million-business-telephone database on it, and various other packages including the topo version, Pocket PC and WAAS-enabled GPS, both USB and Bluetooth Logger. Look at the various packages at http://www.delorme.com ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 2)
storm surge in the bay just south of our neighborhood. I have seen such high water, perhaps, half-a-dozen times in the 23 years I have lived here. It covers Bayshore Boulevard and creeps up the streets off Bayshore to varying distances depending on how quickly the elevation of the street rises.

I was ready with my camera to take some photos as soon as the rain slacked off a bit . With a modified plastic food bag covering the camera, except for an opening for the lens, and some wading boots for me, I set out. The water was only one inch deep in the road in front of my house, but, as I walked the one block to the bay, it reached mid-thigh as I came to the sidewalk on the city side of Bayshore. In the street, of course, it was deeper. For about five or six blocks I walked along the sidewalk photographing the water lapping at the doors of some homes but only up to the first or second steps of those built higher from the ground. Quite frequently I had to wipe the camera lens with some paper towels I had brought along. Later in the day I went out and photographed the odd tree or two that had been blown down by the storm.

I then put about fifty of the photos at our neighborhood website, http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org in the form of a slide show. Then I sent an email to the 226 homes in the neighborhood for which I, as the keeper of the database, have email addresses, telling them about the placement of storm debris for pickup

(Continued on page 5)

Easy CD-DA Extractor Ver. 7

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larry@andersnet.com

Since the early days of CD ripping [converting a retail CDA music file into a digital format such as MP3 or WMA], I have used various programs to do the ripping. When converting various MP3s into music files that will play in my car, I have also used various programs. But up until now, nothing seemed to be able to do it all. Now, Easy CD-DA Extractor [ECD-DA] will do it all with the right click of a mouse. ECD-DA is all-in-one audio software that rips, burns and converts between formats.

The program has a typical Windows style layout that allows you to drag and drop files to rip or convert, but I prefer the right mouse clicking from within Windows Explorer. You can highlight one or several at a time, right click and then choose what you want to do. Some of the features are:

- Volume Normalizer and Compressor, Fade In/Out, Silence deletion from the start and end of a song
- Download and upload disc information from/to the freedb, the Internet Compact Disc Database
- Copies "Copy-Protected" CD's
- Input formats: MP1, MP2, MP3, WMA, Ogg Vorbis, MP4, M4A, AAC, FLAC, Musepack, WAV, Shorten, and Monkey's Audio
- Output Formats: MP3, Windows Media Audio 8, Windows Media Audio 9, Windows Media Audio 9.1, Ogg Vorbis, MP4, M4A, AAC, FLAC, Musepack, VQF, WAV, AIFF, Monkey's Audio, and any command line encoder
- Error Recovery, reads audio from badly scratched CD's
- Reads and Writes CD Text
- Supports all CD-recorders without need to update the program when a new CD-recorder becomes available, all CD-recorder parameters are automatically detected

If you want to try a free copy go to http://www.poikosoft.com/download.html . If you like it, the cost is $29.95, and all updates in the future, minor or major, are free. ECD-DA does not install any spyware or anything else that is not placed in the installation folder.

I enjoy my music and this program makes it a lot easier to enjoy my music. ◆



(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

and noting that there were photos of the storm's aftermath at our site.

Then all hell broke loose. The site normally averages no more than 10 visitors per day. The first full day the photos were at the site there were 4,025 visitors, creating 435,728 hits and consuming 22 GB of bandwidth. The site's bandwidth allocation is 20 GB/month--a pretty generous allotment for an inexpensive site. What to do? Reduce the number of photos in the show. I reduced the photos to around 20.

The next day the site had 12,008 visitors with 860,630 hits consuming 36.5 GB of bandwidth, with that reduction. Be careful what you wish for; you may get it.

Time for another reduction. I reduced the number of photos available to nine. And the third day, with 6,679 visitors and 223,343 hits, the bandwidth usage was 7.87 GB. And it has been slowly going down from there with a few blips higher. As I write this 12 days after the photos were put at the site, there have been 72,763 visitors, 2,788,623 hits, consuming 114.3 GB of bandwidth. For all those who think the Internet is free--the 94 GB in bandwidth over the 20 allowed is expected to cost $184.

When it works, word-of-mouth advertising is an amazing thing. All of those people who came to the site did so because of those 226 emails I sent to the neighborhood, plus about six that I sent to others.

Editorial Note After writing the above about moving my computer for Hurricane Frances, I had to do the same thing for Hurricane Jeanne. Luckily for me, Jeanne's final path took her north and east of Tampa, so we received maximum winds of no more than around 60 mph or so. Not enough to bring down that big oak on my house. People in the south central and eastern portion of the state were not so lucky. Four hurricanes in about five weeks. Who would have thought it?

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



Damage from Hurricane Jeanne

This photo of a damaged house between Vero Beach and Melbourne is from the online version of the Miami Herald at http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/

Many roofs were no match for the 120 mph winds as hurricane Jeanne came inland on the Florida coast between West Palm Beach and Melbourne.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Math World	http://mathworld.wolfram.com/
eNature.com	http://www.enature.com/
Spyware Guide Database	http://www.spywareguide.com/
Florida State Webcam Directory	http://webcambiglook.com/fl.html
DrinkBoy Adventures in Cocktails	http://www.drinkboy.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1994

From the October 1994 Bits of Blue Newsletter

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 9/14/94 MEETING
and Personal Comments by
Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

This was another great meeting, but the rain was once again not a friend to our meeting. However, the rain did not interfere with the very good meeting that took place, including a fine presentation on a very new and powerful program — Ca$hGraf Business Office.

USER GROUP NEWS
ADOPTBBS: Harvey gave a brief summary as to what the Adopt The BBS fund raiser is all about and why and then pointed out that the newsletter includes a how-goes-it thermometer to reflect our progress toward achieving the funding needed to improve the BBS — add a second phone line, another modem to support that line, and add a 500+ MB hard drive to provide more file storage capacity. He reported that as of newsletter publication time only $200 in contributions had been received. He emphasized how important the additional funding is to the BBS and urged all members using the BBS to lend their support to this fund raiser.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS VIA FAX: Harvey announced that the Board of Directors (BOD) had decided to send notices of our general meetings via fax to area business and educational institutions as a means of making those organizations aware of us and what we do. These one page notification flyers would be sent to a selected group of organizations for the next meeting. Any organization that desires the notifications should inform the user group at the address shown on the back page of this newsletter, along with organizational info (name, address, fax number, etc.), or notify any member of our BOD. On the other hand, anyone who receives the flyer via fax that does not wish to receive future notifications should also let their wishes be known in the same manner.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP: The BOD has created a new membership category, Corporate Membership. Annual membership fee is $50, with membership commencing when the application for membership is approved and continuing for one year thereafter. This includes membership for three (3) corporate personnel, each of which would have full membership rights. The corporation may sponsor membership for additional corporate personnel if desired for an annual membership fee of $15 per person; however, the expiration of these memberships will be concurrent with the expiration of the sponsoring corporate membership. Each of these additional personnel will also have full membership rights. The initial application should be sent to the user group under corporate letterhead and include the names of all corporate personnel for which membership is requested. Requests to add additional personnel may be submitted at any time thereafter; this request, also under corporate letterhead, must include the names of the additional persons for whom membership is requested.

TBOL PARTICIPATION: Tampa Bay On-Line is in full swing on Prodigy. Harvey explained how our user group is participating in providing reviews and articles for posting on TBOL. All articles provided by us to TBOL will have first been published in our own Bits Of Blue newsletter. Several, usually about four, will be posted on TBOL every month; articles are be retained on TBOL until they become outdated. Nothing will posted on TBOL by this user group until after it has been made available to our own membership.

INDUSTRY NEWS: A number of news tidbits from the industry were tossed out from the podium and from the membership as well. Probably the item of greatest interest is that Microsoft has selected a name for Chicago/Windows 4.0—the name announced is "Windows 95," after the year in which it is expected to be released. Yes, the industry now expects "Windows 95" to be released in the 1st or 2nd quarter of 1995. (Will it have to be renamed Windows 96??)

PRESENTATION Ca$hGraf Business Plus
Our own St. Petersburg-based Target Software Group, Inc. favored us with a visit by four of their staff. Richard Muscarella, Sales Manager, gave us a rundown on the company and the development of Ca$hGraf Business Plus—a comprehensive, interactive financial management program designed for small businesses. Rich explained how the company and this program evolved. Ca$hGraf was in development about 5 years and was first released only last May at Comdex. It has won numerous awards since release from a variety of industry reviewers and critics. The name of the software evolved from Ca$hGraf, to Ca$hGraf Office Plus, then to Ca$hGraf Business Plus because of a need for a name which more accurately reflects the breadth and comprehensiveness of the program. Rich described it as the only fully integrated, single solution financial management software available and the only piece of software a small business would need. Moreover, Rich explained that great emphasis was given during development to ease of use and true user friendliness, the result being that anyone would be an effective user in a very short time. That lead-in raised our level of expectations and set the stage for the presentation of Ca$hGraf Business Plus.

Chris Payne II, Regional Representative for Target Software, followed Rich with a review of Ca$hGraf. The introduction given by Rich soon became evident in the review. A very comprehensive program, Ca$hGraf includes: A financial awareness and goal tracking system, with loan and savings scheduler; full business accounting, including budgeting and projections; supports both cash and accrual accounting simultaneously; handles 3 types of invoices; does credit memos and billing statements; provides a general ledger; does full perpetual inventory with location and multi-location and price levels by item; handles check writing and deposit tracking with up to 99 accounts; provides a preset and user definable database; complete instant text and graphical reporting on all data in the program; provides contact management in client database with "Phone Script" and autodial throughout; includes word processing, complete with spell check and thesaurus, and mail merge from databases and financials; prepares purchase orders;

(1994……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1994…….Continued from page 6)

prints to preprinted forms or will accept and fill in scanned forms; supports bar codes; does time and billing accounting; supports tab tables; provides a day planner and appointment scheduler for an unlimited number, to name just a few. And all of these features are fully integrated and interactive so that data in any portion of the program is instantly usable in all other areas of the program. Boy, that is a mouth full!!

The size of the files that Ca$hGraf will support are limited only by the limitations of the host computer and disk drive space. Ca$hGraf is not yet network compatible, but a network version is currently in development. Meanwhile, an easy-to-use full security capability already exists within the program that provides the capability to limit individual user access to specific areas of the program. True context sensitive help is available at every location within the program. Moreover, a single comprehensive manual provides ready information about the program in the unusual event that you cannot find your answer with on-line help. And if that still isn't enough, free technical support is provided by Target Software via toll-free telephone. To speed up the learning curve, Target includes a 1 1/2-hour videotape with every copy of the program; this video gives the guidance needed to use the program effectively quickly.

Ca$hGraf Business Plus requires a 386 or better computer, with at least 4 Mb of RAM (preferably 8 Mb), Windows 3.1 and a total of 11 Mb of hard disk space for program files. The program lists for $299 but is available at an introductory price of $199 for a limited, but unspecified, time. For those in need of that kind of program who did not attend this meeting, you blew it because Target made the program available to those present for an even better price, Better luck next time.

To Target Software, Rich and Chris, and all who helped with the presentation, THANK YOU very much for an excellent presentation about Target and Ca$hGraf. We appreciate your making our membership aware of both Target and Ca$hGraf.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Target Software Group and Brainchild Computer Distributions, there were a couple of very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Dave Clary - MosesAll!! [networking card]
Torn Cone - Ca$hGraf Business Plus

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 PM. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 5)

Windows XP Service Pack 2 I have now installed Windows XP Service Pack 2 on my main desktop computer and my laptop. If you don't have a broadband connection, it is probably better to get the CD from Microsoft since each of the downloads was in the neighborhood of 100 MB. I think the amount of download necessary is determined by how much updating has already been done to XP, Internet Explorer and Outlook Express.

For my laptop, the download was 114 MB at a speed of around one MB every three seconds. For the desktop computer, the download was around 96 MB. I think the download and installation on the desktop took a little over an hour.

After the update and a reboot, on the laptop the only difference, other than what I will mention about Internet Explorer and Outlook Express below, was that I now had to give permission for the sync of my Pocket PC to the laptop.

After rebooting the desktop and opening Internet Explorer, the first thing I noticed was that whenever I clicked on any link, a window popped up and requested that I insert the Microsoft Money 2002 installation CD. This was mighty odd. I had never used Microsoft Money, but it had come free with the computer two years ago.

(Comments…….Continued on page 8)

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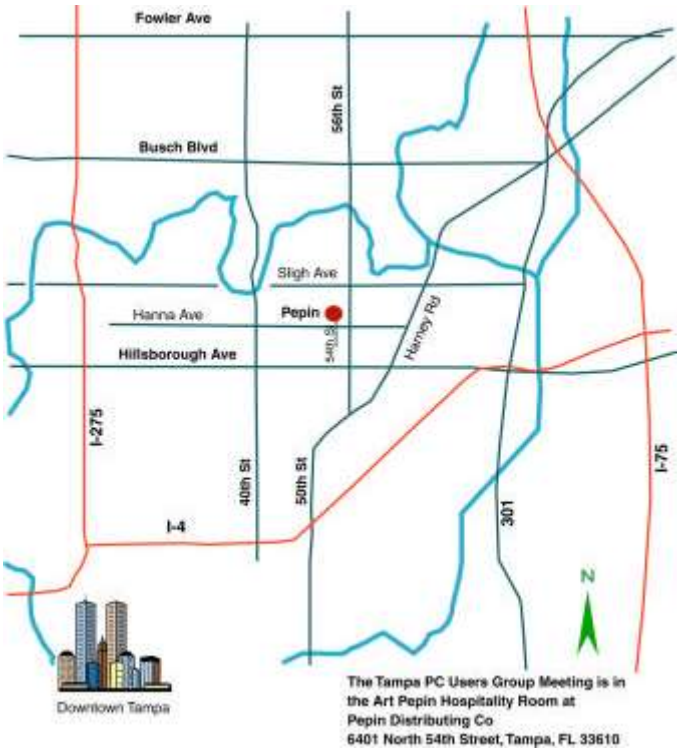
(Comments…….Continued from page 7)

So I did a little research on the Internet, and there were only a few messages about such (none pertaining to XP), and the consensus was to uninstall Money and some other Money component I can't recall the name of. Money uninstalled OK, but the other component produced an error when I tried to uninstall it. The solution for that was to download the W indows Installer Cleanup utility and run it to remove Windows Installer settings for that item. I did that. But on the next reboot of the computer, I received the message "This action is only valid for products that are currently installed."

That forced me to examine the registry for stuff related to Money. I found three items, one of them one of those strange ids like {CF5193F7-6B37-11D5-B7D2-00AA00A204F1}, that I think might be called GUIDs. I backed those up and then deleted them, and now I get a boot up without the message. Why installing SP2 caused all of this is a mystery.

Two nice features are that IE now automatically blocks pop-ups and Outlook Express blocks linked images unless you request that they be shown. The downloading of those linked images could be used to indicate to spammers that you received the email and thus that your address was a good one to keep spamming.

There are a lot of updates out there from Microsoft that you should install. There is one for Office that fixes the new JPEG vulnerability. I could tell of my travails with that on one of my computers, but there is no more space this month.◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 11 November 2004

Meeting

Hardware

Wednesday, November 10, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI @TampaBay, Inc. will tell us about the latest in hardware. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This is going to be another short newsletter. The articles are just not there. Possibly the newsletter needs to change--to what I don't know--but the difficulty in getting articles from the membership is the driving force behind the need to change. So this month we not only have an eight page newsletter, we have an eight page newsletter with 12-point type. Last month we used 10-point type.

Microsoft Office Update In the October newsletter, I wrote about installing Windows XP SP2, which is supposed to reduce the chance of various malicious attacks being successful. There were also Microsoft Office updates out that you were supposed to install for similar reasons. The Office updates, as

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

December Meeting: Marcy Gunn with Smart Computing

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
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Check the address label for your renewal month

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We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the October Meeting

By Doug Mullis, for Secretary Peggy Pulliam
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Mary Sheridan kicked off our usual half-hour Windows SIG at 6:30 PM. Mary was impressed with the Firefox Mozilla Internet browser she saw demonstrated at the FACUG Fall Conference in Clearwater and suggested we try it.

Mary reminded us that 2005 TPCUG officers will be elected in December, so we need a slate of officer nominees by the November meeting. It seems all current officers except secretary Peggy Pulliam are able to remain in office, but remember, they did this last year as well. We need members to step forward to relieve those who have served so well. Treasurer Mike Hodges, although willing to serve, is now teaching evenings and will miss our regular monthly meetings. It is hoped volunteers William LaMartin, Larry Anders, Mary Sheridan and Mike Hodges will continue as Newsletter Editor, Librarian, Program Chairperson and Membership Chairperson, respectively.

At 7:00 PM, president Kevan Sheridan began our regular meeting. He distributed CD's of Microsoft's Service Pack 2, reminding members to first uninstall firewalls and make sure all programs are current. After installing, make sure everything is working, including your firewall.

At this point, our guest speaker, Randall Nagy, president of Soft9000.com, was introduced to tell us about Microsoft's .NET system. If you have Windows XP, you're probably using .NET for system updates which was designed to simplify distributed application development. Microsoft Machine Independent Language (MSIL) relieves the programmer from having to learn another program language to install new applications.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 8)

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APC Back-UPS 1500 and PowerChute

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

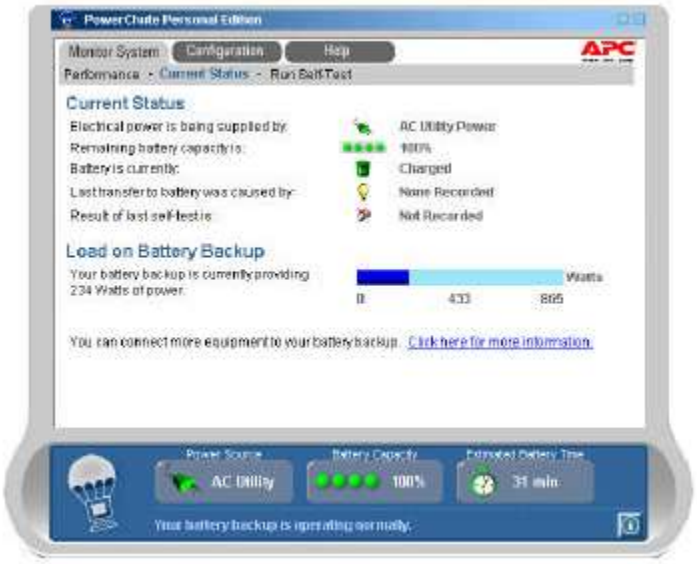
All these many years of personal computing, since 1983 with an Apple and since 1991 when I changed to a PC, I have been running without a battery backup. And believe it or not, I have rarely lost any work to a power interruption or outage. Furthermore, we didn't even lose power during the recent siege of hurricanes.

But about a week after the last hurricane to pass near Tampa, the power flickered off twice in two days, and on the last one, I lost about one-half-hour of work. After a little research, I went out and purchased an APC Back-UPS 1500, the best UPS that I could find easily, for $200. The 1500 stands for 1500 VA. I always thought volts x amps = watts, but I am confused now since the maximum wattage supplied is 865 watts.

This device provides six outlets that are both battery backed-up and surge protected and two additional outlets that are only surge protected. Additionally there is a phone line pass-through that provides surge protection for a phone line. There is no protection provided for a cable or DSL line. See the photos at right. Although the photo of the front of the unit has RS in the name, it looks exactly like what I purchased with XS in the name.



The device when positioned vertically resembles a small thin computer. You may also position it horizontally. But be warned, when positioned horizontally, there is a only one correct side to be the down side.



What is of particular interest is the software that comes with the unit. It is called PowerChute Personal Edition. With this software you can monitor the status of the backup unit and configure how it functions. To the left is a screen shot of my current status. As indicated, 234 watts of power are being consumed. This is for two computers, two flat panel 15" monitors, a cable modem, router and wireless access point. If I bring the flatbed scanner to life, it would add at most another 30 watts. The APC unit communicates with the software via a USB connection to the computer.

What you cannot add to the backup is a laser printer. I plugged my old HP LaserJet 4 Plus printer into the backup, turned it on and watched the APC unit's PowerChute software go berserk with warnings about ex-

(APC……Continued on page 4)

(APC……..Continued from page 3)

cessive power use. So if you want to be able to print during a power outage with a laser printer, get a bigger unit.

As indicated in the first picture, the estimated time that I could run the two computers on the battery is 31 minutes. As the backup is configured at present, when five minutes of time remains on the battery, the software will initiate an orderly shutdown of the computer (only the one connected to the USB cable). The shutdown point is adjustable in the configuration tab of PowerChute. You may also adjust how sensitive the unit is to power fluctuations. This determines under what circumstances the unit will switch to battery backup due to electrical noise. You may also adjust when the battery backup kicks in if the AC voltage goes above or below certain voltages. My unit is set to kick in above 138 volts and below 97 volts. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

best I can recall, went OK on all the computers in the house except for the one upstairs running Windows Me and with Office 2000 Premium installed.

On that computer, I connected to the Microsoft site and went to the Office section, where a search of updates yielded that to get SP3, I had to first install SP1a. So let the download begin. After it ended, and the update began to install I received the message "The file E:\data1.msi is not a valid installation package for the product Microsoft Office 2000 SR-1 Premium," or something close to that. My first thought was that I had put in the wrong version of Office since I had about three different CDs with Office 2000. But a try with the others produced the same error. And the one I originally used had written on its sleeve that it was for this particular computer. Time to go to Google, which produced something from Microsoft's site stating the following:

"CAUSE: This issue occurs if you have Microsoft Works Suite 2000 with Microsoft Word 2000 installed on your computer. The Office 2000 SP-3 Setup program searches for the earliest version of Data1.msi, and Data1.msi for Works 2000 is not compatible with the SP-3 Setup program." I was trying to install SP1a, but I was sure it was the same problem.

Well, Works had come installed on this computer, and it was a version of Works that contained Word. Microsoft's solution to the problem--an hour of work: First, completely uninstall Works. This was not a quick as it sounds. There were all sorts of programs, like a mapping program, that the computer considers as part of Works. I think I had to uninstall about six programs to get rid of Works. Second, you do a normal uninstall of Office 2000, including Publisher. But that is not the end of it. There are two utilities you must download to remove the remaining Office 2000 CD1 files and the remaining Office 2000 CD2 files. After all of this you can then reinstall Office 2000 Premium. But be warned, you now have to go back to the Microsoft site and get the SP3 update. The SP1a update that it tried to first install was based on the erroneous information that having Works on the computer caused. Keeping up-to-date is not easy.

Missing Floppy As you may recall, I helped my sister with the purchase of a new Compaq computer several months back. It has taken several trips to visit her to get everything up and running perfectly.

One thing I had put off until the most recent trip was to see why she had no 3.5 floppy listed. When she first received the computer and booted it for the first time, she received an error message regarding the floppy. Since she didn't really need the floppy at the time, I had her go into the BIOS setup and disable the reference to such a floppy. That way she didn't have to look at the error message every time the computer started.

This trip, I decided to take the cover off the computer and see if what I suspected was true--that the floppy drive was not connected. Sure enough, when the computer's side cover was removed there was the floppy's power cord dangling. Guess that those Compaq assemblers in Mexico had been drinking too much Tequila. Once connected and the reference set to it in the BIOS, everything was fine with the 3.5

(Comments……..Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

floppy drive.

I think most computers now come without such drives. That certainly is the case for laptops. I suppose in the day of USB thumb drives and cheap CDs, there isn't much need for them. But my sister had backed up many things to floppy disks over the years that she needed such a drive to transfer the files to the new computer.

Adobe Streamline is a handy piece of software for those involved with graphical work. It will transform a raster graphic (bitmap) into a vector graphic (line art). Tiff and JPEG files are examples of raster graphics. They are pixel-based and cannot be enlarged without losing quality. Encapsulated Postscript files (EPS) and Adobe Illustrator (AI) files are vector based and can be resized without any loss in quality.

Not all raster graphics lend themselves equally to being made into vector graphics. At this point, I have done very little with Streamline, but I quickly discovered that black and white images are far easier to change to vector graphics than are images with many colors. Also, if the image has text in it, you need the text to be quite large to achieve a good transformation.

As I work with the program, I should have more to

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

Internet Picture of the Month



Touch Screen Voting Machine

This photo is of a Sequoia EDGE touch screen voting machine as used here in Tampa, Florida. Of course, when it is actually set up in the polling place it will be on legs.

You can read about these systems at the Sequoia site, http://www.sequoiavote.com/, or at the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections' site, http://www.votehillsborough.org/.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Times of India	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/
Arts & Letters Daily	http://www.aldaily.com/
CIA Studies	http://www.cia.gov/csi/studies.html
Exquisite Corpse - A Journal of Letters and Life	http://www.corpse.org/
Florida QuickFacts - US Census Bureau	http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/maps/florida_map.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1994

From the November 1994 Bits of Blue Newsletter

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 10/12/94 MEETING
and Personal Comments
by Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, wonders of wonders, it wasn't pouring down rain for this meeting. And it was a good session with a very interesting presentation — a look at some of the latest hardware on the market and where it is likely to go from here. Those that didn't make the meeting missed out on a lot of very interesting information and an excellent give and take.

USER GROUP NEWS

- MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASING: Harvey gave a brief summary of the decision the Board of Directors has taken in light of increasing user group costs —to increase annual membership dues by $5, except the corporate membership which will increase $10, all effective 1 January, 1995. Membership dues will then look like this: Regular Membership - $25; Family Membership - $35; HCC Student & Faculty - $20; Corporate Membership - $60 (includes 3 corporate personnel), with additional corporate personnel at $20 each. New members joining between now and 1 January and renewals of memberships expiring before 1 January, 1994, will enjoy the current rate. Memberships expiring in 1995 may be renewed between now and 30 November, 1994, at the current rate. Beginning 1 January, however, all memberships and renewals will be subject to the above listed rates. All memberships renewing early will have one year tacked onto the expiration date of the current membership.
- CONSENSUS - EXPOTECH A FLOP: Harvey asked for opinions of the EXPOTECH in Tampa this year. This generated a good bit of discussion, most of which was that of disappointment at the reduction in booths this year and the scarcity of computer vendors of interest to most of our membership; the bulk of the vendors provided services, some of which had little or no relationship with high technology.

ELECTION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS: Nominations for the five elected TPCUG corporate officers will be open and solicited at the November 10 general meeting. Elections will take place early in the December 14 general meeting. Nominations may be made until just before the election at the December general meeting. The five elected corporate officers are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Member at Large. Newly elected officers will assume their positions effective 1 January, 1994.

All members are asked to give the nominations some serious thought and to make their nominations at the November or December general meetings, or mail your recommended nominations to the TPCUG Nominating Committee at the TPCUG corporate address (shown on the last page of this newsletter).

INDUSTRY NEWS:
Probably the most important bit of information brought out is that the new OS/2, OS/2 Warp 3.0, has been released and is available for $79, before a $25 rebate. Pretty good price, I would say. One word of caution, however, is that if you are considering getting OS/2, be sure to check the compatibility listing IBM provides for OS/2 to make sure your hardware and software is compatible.

PRESENTATION — A Look At Some Of The Latest In Hardware. Following notification by Gold Disk that they would be unable to make their scheduled presentation at this meeting, Harvey contacted Jason Kimenker, from our own Tampa/St. Petersburg Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc., to see if they could fill in. Like the proverbial "knight in shining armor", Lee Vaccaro and Jason responded to our short notice request and put together a presentation on some of the latest in computer hardware. What's more, Jason did an admirable job with the presentation. And as it turned out, I think it was one of the most interesting and informative sessions that we have had during the several years I have been a member — and I have missed but a very few of the general meetings.

I won't even attempt to summarize the information Jason passed on, but among the hardware Jason reviewed were: Modems; PCI technology, compared to VESA; CD-ROMs; Soundcards, especially in a current Microsoft Office bundle; AMD chips, compared to Intel; and the DX4/100 chip. Jason did an excellent

(1994……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1994…….Continued from page 6)

job of reviewing these new products and was clearly well versed on them. His discussion was not only very informative and interesting, but it generated a lot of give and take with the membership. Some tidbits that I will pass on are:

28.8 Modem: V.34 standard was approved earlier this year is now being put into 28.8 modems. Though it is currently available only in the Robotics Sportster, all manufacturers should have them out soon.

PCI Technology: If you are considering the purchase of a Pentium, be aware that the 60 MHz chip is giving the most trouble.

CD-ROM: The double speed CD-ROM is probably adequate for most of us, but you should consider the quad speed if you are into multimedia sound/video very much because it will provide near-movie quality. New controller cards are also coming out that will support up to 4 floppy drives, and 4 IDE drives one of which can be used for a CD-ROM. This will not only allow increasing the number of IDE drives one can operate, but can free up an expansion slot by eliminating the need for a separate card for the CD-ROM.

AMD Chips : Have proven at least as good as Intel chips and are considerably cheaper; like AMD has a DX2/80 MHz chip that sells for about the same as Intel 66 MHz chip. Also, a 586 line of chips will be out soon in competition with the Pentium line and is expected to be about $200 cheaper.

DX4/100: If considering purchase of this new technology, be sure the voltage of the chip is compatible with your motherboard; some of the earlier chips are 3.2 volts, while 5.0 volts is most common.

Jason and Lee, thank you - and Brainchild Computer - for a GREAT presentation and the most useful and helpful information you provided, not to mention your generous contributions for our door prizes. We hope that you will agree to give us a similar presentation again in the not-too-distant future.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Lee Vaccaro and Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc., there were a several very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Joe Crochet	OS/2 2.1
Dave Claire	Printer stand & mouse pad
A.J Mester	Printer stand & 100 diskette box

In addition, J. Whitmer, S. Atron, Van Ost, M. Nicholson, R. Davis and J. Robinson won mouse pads.

The meeting adjourned at about 9 PM. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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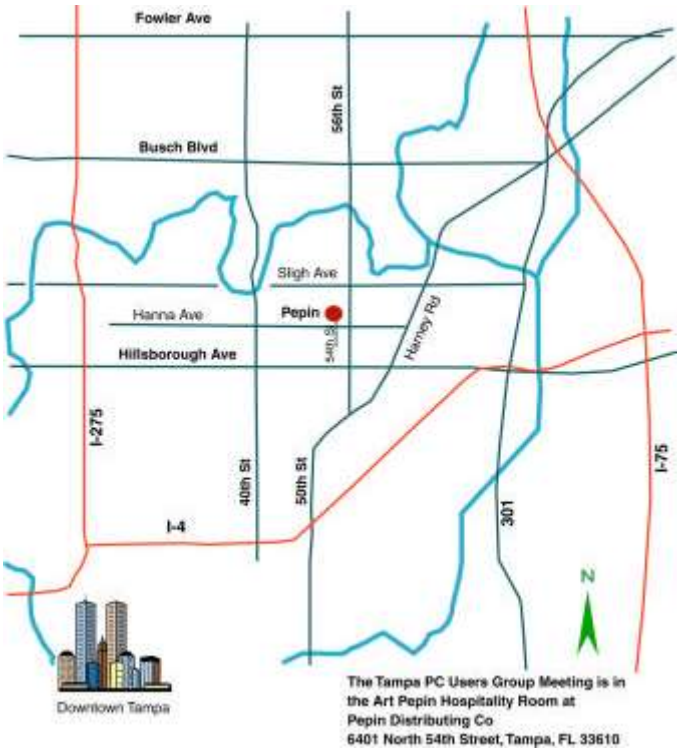
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

Common Language Runtime (CLR) allows different languages to share information. Mr. Nagy says ".NET" is known as the "Virtual Execution System".

After a short break, several attendees won T-shirts displaying "I'M DRAWING THE LINE," targeting hacker viruses and worms, with Microsoft's Service Pack 2 being our protector. The meeting was adjourned about 8:40 PM. ◆



(Comments…….Continued from page 5)

say. One thing of note is the vast reduction in file size when going from a raster graphic to a vector graphic. You can go from several megabytes to just 20 or 30 kilobytes. In the example I had my best success with, the black and white image went from around 5 MB as a TIFF file to just 40 KB as an EPS file. That makes it a lot easier to send the file to a print shop, as this one was destined to go for use in a yard sign. ◆

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Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 17 No. 12 December 2004

Meeting

Smart Computing

Wednesday, December 8, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Marcy Gunn with Smart Computing will tells us what her organization has to offer the computer user. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Data Loss Two incidents in the past week have given me pause to think about this subject.

Server Failure A few days back I checked the neighborhood website I maintain, http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org, and was greeted by a message stating that maintenance was being performed and the site would again be available as soon as possible. When the message was still there after 12 hours, I sent an email to the web hosting company and received the following message.

Unfortunately we have had a major catastrophe. Our data centre technicians replaced a power supply in the machine hosting

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

January Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Doug Mullis, for Secretary Peggy Pulliam
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

President Kevan Sheridan conducted our usual half hour Windows SIG starting at 6:30 PM, He suggested we try Google Gmail as it is almost Spam free and costs nothing.

We will have election of officers for calendar year 2005 at our December meeting. The slate of nominees is Kevan Sheridan for President, John Witmer for Vice President, Mike Hodges for Treasurer, Doug Mullis for Secretary and Mary Sheridan for Member at Large.

At 7:00PM, President Kevan Sheridan began our regular meeting. We have three special interest groups: Visual Basics, Microsoft Access and Digital Imaging. These groups will get back on schedule after the holidays. At our December meeting we have scheduled a Smart Computer presentation and our Holiday Season party.

Our speaker for the evening was Steve Singer, President of RDI. Steve told us of and demonstrated the latest hardware on the market. Some items covered were a Blue Tooth headset for your cell phone, an HP iPAQ with cell phone and camera, a USB dock for notebooks, the latest Motherboards with AMD Athlon Sempron 64 bit and 32 bit processors, also an Intel Celeron D (said to equal the Pentium 4), a very small Konica Minolta 6 meg DiMage G 600 Digital Camera with 3 power zoom lens, and a desktop computer which allows two users to run different programs at the same time (2 monitors,2 keyboards, 2 mice etc).We all wondered what next?

The meeting adjourned about 8:45 ◆

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A Couple of Christmas Gift Suggestions

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com



Well, by the time you get this newsletter there will only be a few shopping days left for Christmas. If you or your family, friends or loved-ones don't have a DVD burner yet you should put that on the list. They are relatively inexpensive now and so is the DVD media to burn to, whether write once or re-writable.

I have always loved music, and I have been collecting music for several years now, ever since ripping CDs to MP3s first became popular. I was originally amazed at how many MP3s one could record to CD. Then along came DVDs which hold over six times that amount and now dual layer DVDs hold almost twice that, etc, etc. I think you get the picture.

I have a retail stereo store near my home that sells all of their CDs for $10.99 each and for years I have afforded myself the luxury of trying to purchase a couple each week. I said try to purchase because sometimes there just isn't anything there to purchase that I either like or don't already have. Like most people I am typically only interested in one or two songs on each CD, unless it's an old Beatles or Eagles CD. I have all of the words to all of their songs memorized, but that just shows my age.

Anyway, I began ripping the tunes I wanted off the CDs to start my own personal listening collection. As I travel a lot, being able to take just one or two CDs loaded with all the music I wanted to listen to made it much easier. Once we were able to write to a CD more than once I started ripping entire music CDs as soon as I purchased them and archiving them away. I could usually get about 10 to 12 store-bought CDs on one archive CD. Along came DVD players that played MP3 CDs and I was able to put in one data CD that could play unattended for a few hours.

A while back I became a PocketPC user. The Dell Axim I use also has the ability to play music files. To save space on my storage cards I started converting some of my MP3s to Microsoft's WMA format, which is about a factor of 10 smaller in size than MP3s and still sounds basically the same, and putting them on CDs. As you can imagine it did not take long before my house was becoming overrun with CDs.

I invested in my first DVD burner when they were still kind of expensive and so were the blank DVDs so I was a little slow to start archiving to DVD but the sheer number of CDs stacking up in my house forced me into starting. Now I have two DVD burners and am thinking of getting one of the new dual layer models next.

But archiving to DVDs caused another problem. Now I could not play my backed up MP3s on my DVD player in the family room. I could never understand why a DVD player would play a data CD of MP3s but not a data DVD of MP3s. So I started a little research on the Internet.

I found a couple of upper-end DVD players that would play "MP3-DVDs" but they were more than I wanted to spend and they also did not have all of the capabilities that my current DVD player had. Not being one to give up easily (or maybe I just waited long enough for the competition to appear), I discovered the **Pioneer DV-578A-S,** a Universal DVD/CD/SACD/DVD-Audio player, and this little baby plays everything I have at home, including VCD and SVCD movies, jpeg files which are the standard for most digital cameras, and it will also play WMA files. The reviews were good and the price was only $149 locally. I unplugged my old DVD player and plugged in the new one with absolutely no problems.

So, theoretically, I could burn one DVD that could play music that could last for days. *WOW!* What do you think will be next?

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

your site. When this machine was turned on after the power supply replacement, there was a major problem with the new power supply which caused a damage to all four of the hard drives (including our backup HDDs), the motherboard and RAID card in the machine.

They replaced that server but had no backup to restore to it, although they were sending the hard drives out for data recovery which could take over a week. Additionally, the three emails they supposedly sent to me never reached me--possibly getting lost in all the SPAM I receive. As with all my sites, I have an exact copy on my own computer (and backed up on CD) that I was able to republish to the replacement server. The only possible problem is that some of the neighborhood residents may have recently changed their password information online, and that data was lost with the online version of the membership database. Also, the statistics for the site reside on the drives that are at data recovery. This is the site where I posted flooding photos of the neighborhood which received a large amount of interest--22 GB of data transfer in one day. So those statistics were somewhat interesting.

Hard Drive Failure The second incident was the erratic behavior of one of my external USB hard drives. This was a 40 GB one made by Maxtor (model 3000 LE) that is several years old. I noticed a few weeks back that this drive would all of a sudden go into some sort of auto play mode where a window would pop up and the names of files would flash by real fast. Momentarily I would receive a request to configure what programs would handle certain file types. I always clicked cancel and everything was fine. Then occasionally, this drive, listed as drive F, would be missing from the My Computer listing. Unplugging one or both of the USB or power cords to the drive would fix this problem--up until this last time. No amount of disconnecting and reconnecting got the drive back. Fortunately I only used this drive as a backup drive, so nothing was lost. And the next day, although the drive was missing after I booted the computer, after several hours it went into this auto play thing, and I had it back. But it is certainly not to be trusted and will be retired. When this drive is having problems, the green light that indicates the drive is doing something blinks rapidly and you can hear clicking noises from inside the drive--not a good sign.

New External Drive Only a few days before all of this, I had bought a new Maxtor 160 GB external hard drive ($199) that supports both USB and FireWire connections. I wanted this as a backup for all the photos, negatives and slides I have scanned in over the years and for all the digital photos I have taken in more recent years. These photos are also backed up on CDs and DVDs, but they are much more accessible on this external hard drive.

This drive has something called One Touch Storage and Backup with a button for such on the front. That is, it does if you install the software that comes with the drive. Since I am only going to use this as storage for my photography efforts and possibly some other file backups like my programming and web sites, I have no need for the one touch thing. But for those who would like a complete backup of their main hard drive, this looks like the thing--and I might get another such drive just for that purpose. Not only can you do a selective backup of files, but also you can back up everything, including the operating system, computer settings, and your applications. This backup can then be used to restore your computer to its state before a hard drive failure or other disaster. This is accomplished with the Dantz Retrospect software provided on the CD.

Photo Database With all these photos now on a hard drive (and backed up to CD & DVD), I needed a way to efficiently give the photos descriptions and dates. A typical path for a photo is G:\HP PhotoScan\Black & White 1970's\1974\March\Scan928.tif.

First, I created an Access database to contain my photo information with fields such as year, month, path, and file name. Then using VB.Net, I wrote a program with two main parts. The first part allows me to select a folder containing photos and have all of the names of the files in the folder added to this database along with the year, month and folder path. This eliminates all typing except for entering descriptions as described below.

(Comments……..Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

The second part of the program displays the database table containing this information. Here when I click on a record, the associated photo is then displayed. This allows me to easily enter a description of the photo. Of course, it is going to take me some time to create all of the descriptions, since there are about 5,700 photos alone in just the HP Photoscan folder's sub folders. Then I have the photos scanned using my old HP flatbed scanner and my newer Epson Perfection 3200 photo scanner. Then there are all the digital photos I have taken and then all the slides and negatives I have not yet scanned.

When I am finished, if I want a photo with a bird in it, all I have to do is search the database table. This should produce all photos with the word bird in the description. Similarly, and more importantly, I could search for a particular individual.

When I do finally get most of my non-digital photos on the computer along with all the ones taken in recent years with a digital camera, how do I protect and preserve these photos? As I noted earlier, computers can be totally destroyed or their hard drives can simply fail to function. My protection scheme at present is to have every photo on two different hard drives--preferably on two different computers and to have at least one CD or DVD backup of each image, then after several years make new CD or DVD backups and also put the photos on still newer hard drives or whatever new storage media may come out. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Winter

One of the tens of thousands of photos at PBASE.Com, http://www.pbase.com/. This is a place to post and share your photos. It is also a place to view others' photographic efforts. Some of it is very good but most of it is of considerably less quality, in my opinion.

You can create a free trial account. But people who pay have galleries with more features. I came across one fellow with over 5,000 photos posted.

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Smart Computing (Our Presenter)	http://www.smartcomputing.com/
Default Password List	http://www.phenoelit.de/dpl/dpl.html
PBase Photo Database	http://www.pbase.com/
Cuban Cigar Reviews & Ratings	http://www.cigars-review.org/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1994

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 11/9/94 MEETING
and Personal Comments
by Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

An important meeting for our group, with nominations for officers, and the weather, though a bit threatening, cooperated. We also had a major and increasingly popular piece of software to be reviewed — OS/2 Ver. 3.0 Warp.

USER GROUP NEWS

SECOND BBS 14.4 MODEM ON HAND: Our group has acquired a second 14.4 modem for use with the BBS. It is an external version and will be placed into use as soon as the ADOPTBBS fundraiser generates enough funds to pay for installation and first year's use of a second telephone line. Harvey called attention to the how-goes-it chart in the newsletter which shows the generation of funds still far below that needed to upgrade the BBS with more file space and a second telephone line, and he emphasized the importance of supporting the ADOPTBBS fund-raiser if we are to realize these improvements in the BBS.

NOMINATIONS: Harvey reported that several of the present officers who have served for several years have expressed their intent to not serve in the coming term. However, most decided that the loss of so many on the BOD at one time could jeopardize continuity for the group and agreed to serve again, if nominated and elected, but for only one more year. Harvey pointed out that it is essential for creativity as well as the continued life of the group that new blood come aboard the BOD. It was also noted that our members must become more active in helping the group to improve by contributing their time and effort to generate new members and perform services for the group as a whole.

Nominations were made for the elected positions on the BOD as follows:

President:	Harvey Bruneau (incumbent)
Vice President:	None (it was not known if Al Poole would serve again)
Treasurer:	Tom Cone (Incumbent - not present at the time and assumed he would serve)
Secretary:	None
Member At Large:	Roger Waters (incumbent)

No new blood was nominated for any of the positions. Members may submit nominations via mail and/or make nominations at the December meeting up to the time of the election. It is extremely important to the group that additional nominees be obtained and that these positions be filled.

Harvey outlined what should be some of our objectives for the coming year, and will be if he is again elected. These included more SIGs, more member-to-member sessions at our meetings where we could help each other with problem solving, using things we already have, working on computers, using DOS, Windows, the BBS and others, demonstrations on installing and setting up components, etc.; and membership of at least 300. None of these objectives are achievable without more active participation from our membership. One of the easiest ways we could all help is to bring in just one new member. Try it, you might like it!

PRESENTATION — IBM's OS/2 Ver. 3.0 Warp
IBM was good enough to make Carolyn White, one of IBM's Workplace Marketing Specialists, available to give us a rundown on the new version of OS/2, called Warp, they just released. And a fine job she did, too. She began by noting some of the reasons "Why OS/2?" Among them are safer operations because program failures, such as occur in Windows, are contained within the offending program and do not force rebooting the computer as is now usually the case in Windows and DOS; OS/2 is an operating system itself and doesn't rely on DOS or any other operating system; it provides better memory management, and is not inhibited with the constraints that have long limited DOS; it allows simultaneous operation of DOS, Windows and OS/2 applications and supports interchange of information between all three; and it is an operating system designed to make best use of new hardware technology.

You all are at least a little familiar and know what a large and powerful program it is — well beyond the scope of this little section of the newsletter. I will only

(1994……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1994…….Continued from page 6)

point out some of the improvements that have been made compared to previous versions of OS/2. First, IBM says that this program is designed specifically for the home PC user, the student and the business executive, and great emphasis has been placed on making it truly user friendly. Warp combines the advanced OS/2 32-bit operating environment with new features for productivity, reduced memory requirements, and ease of use and productivity enhancements. Among them are:

- Redesigned and simplified installation that automatically configures your system; imagine avoiding all those address and configuration conflicts.
- Much faster and smoother operation of Windows and Windows programs.
- Enhanced print performance and significantly improved monochrome and color bitmap printing due to new 32-bit printer drivers.
- New easier to use tutorial that shows best use of OS/2 to fit your style.
- Customizable program Launch Pad for ready access to your most used applications and features.
- Automatic configuration of PCMCIA cards through a "Play at Will" interface which permits putting in another PCMCIA card without having to reboot your laptop.
- Includes a set of popular OS/2 Windows audio device drivers.
- Improved user interface and graphics.
- Now requires only 4 Mb of RAM.
- Warp also includes a number of features and utilities in a “Bonus Pak"“:
- OS/2 CompuServe Access.
- Person-to-person for OS/2: Desk-top conference software where you can share files or multimedia with another computer.
- FaxWorks for OS/2 where you can send, receive and print faxes as you desire.
- IBM Installation Utility & System Information Tool which allows quick, convenient access to detailed info about your soft/hardware.
- Access to Internet which will automatically configure for free hours on IBM's WEB service, and includes several Internet applications including Gopher, Mosaic, News Reader and E-Mail.
- Provides a suite of applications including a word processor, spreadsheet, report writer and database. An organizer to keep track of addresses, phone numbers, to-do lists, and calendars all in one place.

Requirements for OS/2 Warp are a 386 machine or higher, 4 Mb of RAM (though 8 Mb or more is preferred), DOS 3.1 or higher installed if you plan to run DOS applications, Windows 3.1 or higher installed if you plan to run Windows applications, and 30 Mb of disk space for minimum loading and up to 55 Mb for a complete installation, including all the bells and whistles. Carolyn was using a 386/25 MHz with 8 Mb of RAM for the demonstration and while performance was not really fast, it was acceptable. And what a bargain. IBM reports a street price of

(1994…….Continued on page 8)

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P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

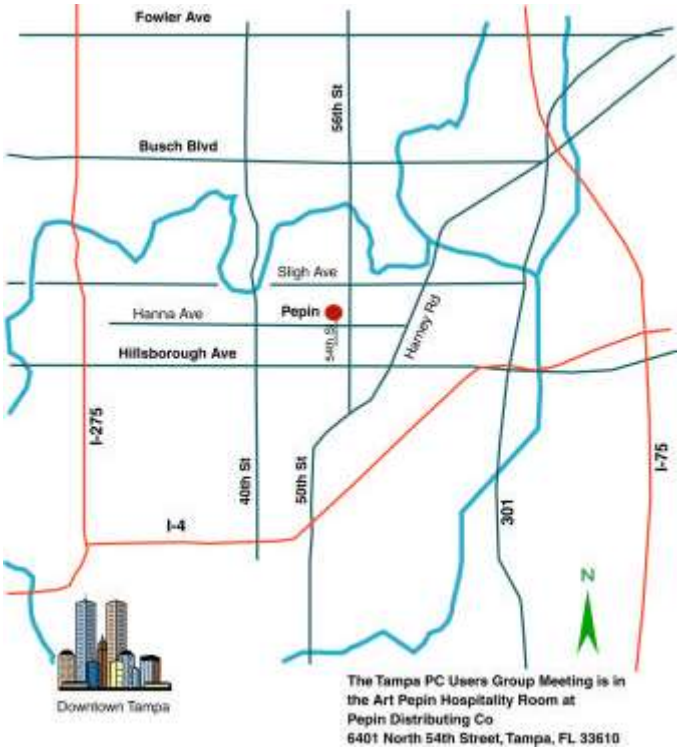
(1994…….Continued from page 7)

under $80; Computer City has OS/2 Warp on 3.5" floppies at this writing for $69.97. Carolyn and IBM, THANK YOU very much for a great introduction to a super program. OS/2 has been and is of great interest to our members and we hope that you will keep us abreast of future developments.

AND THE WINNER IS Thanks to the generosity of Carolyn White and IBM., there were several very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Dan Whitman	OS/2 mouse pad; OS/2 Programmers Guide
Dave Clary	OS/2 cups
Herb Atwood	OS/2 T-shirt
Steven Atran	Disk Optimizer
Roger Waters	Cash Graf Office
Joe Crochet	OS/2 Warp

The meeting adjourned at about 9 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

January in Tampa
Gasparilla

Vol. 18 No. 1 January 2005

Meeting

Web Logs

Wednesday, January 12, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Kevan Sheridan will tell us about web logs, better know as BLOGS. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

It is a new year. What is in store for us in computing? Probably more consolidation in both hardware and software companies. 2004 saw Gateway buy eMachines and then turn themselves over to eMachines president to see if he could make Gateway profitable. IBM sold their PC unit to a Chinese company after 3.5 years of unprofitability, and Corel acquired Jasc Software, the maker of Paint Shop Pro. Only a few months to a year earlier, I don't recall how long, Corel itself had been bought and taken private by a venture capital firm called Vector Capital. And the TPCUG has a slightly smaller membership than last year, but we are still plugging along.

Pay your dues online. You can now pay your dues at our web

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

February Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Doug Mullis, for Secretary Peggy Pulliam
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

This being our annual Holiday Season Party, we did not have our usual SIG session. We did have a presentation by Smart Computing Magazine scheduled. This publication was formerly called PC Novice.

President Kevan Sheridan started the meeting at 7:00 PM by introducing Marcy Gunn to tell us about the magazines and web site offered by Smart Computing. Marcy was assisted by Scott Banks and Kelly Lambertson, all from Nebraska and happy to be in Florida at this time of year.

Packets were distributed containing the January 2005 issue of Smart Computing, a 2005 calendar/mouse pad, a publication, How To Get Trouble-free Email, a pen and user survey, the submitting of which gave us a chance at door prizes. Marcy outlined the offerings of the subject magazine which is presented in plain language for the novice PC user. They also offer PC Today and CPU (Computer Power User) for more technically oriented users.

Smart Computing has a Cover Story section on current items of interest, a Tech Support Center, a Review section for both software and hardware, and a section on how to keep your system operating at peak.

Next Marcy told us about the Smart Computing web site, free to magazine subscribers or for $17 annually to non-subscribers. This gives you online access to all four of their publications, allows you to research articles and then create your own personal library of research results. Also the web site has a Question & Answer board and a Tech Support Center which lists many error messages you may encounter and actions

(Minutes……..Continued on page 4)

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Epson Stylus Photo 2200 Inkjet Printer

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

To have something to write about this month, I had to buy a new printer. Times are tough when you have to spend money to get a newsletter topic. I am sure that writers for more prestigious publications have such items showered upon them for reviews. As far as I can tell, that is not the case for the writers at the *Bits of Blue*. Perhaps that is the reason for our lack of writers.

Anyway, I had been eying this printer for some time. In house before buying the 2200, if I wanted something done in color I would have had to use my old Alps dye sublimation printer (bought 12/1998) or a slightly newer HP 832C (bought 12/1999). The Alps gives quite good results, but I am running out of the cartridges that make the color and of the paper--and there will be no more since this printer is no longer supported. The HP, being a fairly cheap printer, while fine for text, has never produced top quality photo images. And that is what I wanted the new printer for--photos.

For the past couple of years, when I wanted good quality prints, 4 x 6, 5 x 7 or 8 x 10, I would simply put the files on a CD and take it to the local drugstore's one hour photo department. And for the most part the results have been quite good, better than I could have produced on the Alps, and certainly better than I could have produced on the old HP inkjet. Furthermore, the price just keeps getting better. The last 8 x 10s I had made were right at $3.50 each.

This new printer produces prints of comparable quality to the one hour photo places. Now I need to figure out if it does them for a comparable price. More about that later.

I purchased the printer here in Tampa from North Tampa Photography for $679, about $20 less than at the major stores selling computer equipment. I have purchased a fair amount of photography equipment from them--not for the lowest price, but for the very good advice available from their salesmen.

Along with the printer, I also purchased packages of 4 x 6, 8.5 x 11 and 11 x 17 paper at what appeared to me to be quite good prices compared to what I used to pay for the Alps paper. The 4 x 6 was $.25/sheet, the 8.5 x 11 was $.52/sheet and the 11 x 17 was $1.05/sheet. This paper was made by Ilford, a well known manufacturer of photographic paper--not by Epson.

What the final cost of a print will be is still to be determined since I have yet to know how much ink is needed to print the different sized photos. I note that at CompUSA, the ink cartridges cost $13 each. Since there are seven of them required, we are talking about $91 to replace all seven of them. I am trying to keep track of what I print to get a rough estimate of the ink required for photo printing.

Epson gives an estimate of 440 pages with 5% coverage per color. If this means what I think it does, then with seven colors, you have 35% coverage of 440 8.5 x 11 pages, or equivalently, 180 completely covered 8 x 10 images. At $91 per set of cartridges, this would yield a price per 8 x 10 of just over $.50. If that is true, then based on the paper cost above, I could print an 8 x 10 for just over one dollar--not counting tax and the cost of the printer. That is probably too good to be true. If you read the review to which there is a link later in this article, it appears that the reviewer printed the equivalent of about 62 8 x 10 photos before the first cartridge ran out of ink. So $91/62 equals about $1.50 should be the upper bound on ink cost. So we are looking at around $2.00 total cost for each 8 x 10. Of course, the Epson paper costs more than the Ilford and some Epson paper costs more than others.

Now to the printer. This is not a small printer. It is 25" wide, 13" deep and 8" high without any paper supports. With the paper supports extended, the depth and the height are increased by about a factor of two. It will handle paper up to 13" x 44" in either sheet or roll form. As said before, it has seven individually replaceable ink cartridges. Additionally it has two ver-

(Epson ……..Continued on page 4)

(Epson……..Continued from page 3)
sions of black depending on whether you are printing on matte stock or not.

One important marketing feature is the durability of the prints produced when printed on the Epson paper. I am not sure of this for the Ilford paper, but I think it is the same since, I believe, the durability comes mainly from the inks. Depending on the paper used, Epson claims that color prints will last from 71 to 108 years and black and white will last from 95 to 140 years. That is far superior to standard inkjets.

Other specifications are:

- 2880 x 1440 dpi
- USB 2.0, Firewire & parallel ports
- Borderless printing with some paper sizes and types
- 7-Color UltraChrome™ archival inks in individual ink cartridge
- Fast print times

The speed of printing is determined by the print quality selected and whether or not you wish to print borderless. I have not printed anything in less than Best quality, so I can't speak to that. But for a 4 x 6 printed with borders it takes about 3 min, 45 sec. To print the same image borderless is right under seven minutes. The author of the review at one of the links below stated that he could tell very little difference between the best and other quality prints except a much longer print time.

All inkjets I have dealt with left a fairly wide non-printable margin on the trailing edge to leave the printer. This printer is no exception, leaving one of 14 mm. However, there is the option to Minimize Margins which will allow you to print within 3 mm of all sides. This slows the printing only slightly, adding about 15 seconds for a total of 4 minutes. Of course, printing borderless removes all four margins.

I highly recommend this printer.

For a very detailed review of this printer, go to http://www.steves-digicams.com/2002_reviews/epson_2200.html. Another review is at http://www.luminous-landscape.com/reviews/printers/Epson2200.shtml ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
for you to take.

Finally, there is a feature which lists all registered PC user groups and how to contact them. If you make purchases, you should have your group credited toward future promos and discounts.

After a short break, the following door prizes were awarded by Smart Computing:

- Don Patzsch -A Smart Computing Reference Library
- John Witmer - A fancy binder containing the 2004 issues of Smart Computing
- Doug Mullis - A One Year Gift Certificate for Smart Computing Magazine.

Next were drawings for Club prizes, the winners of which were too numerous to record.

No official business was conducted due to the party atmosphere and the changed venue. Meeting adjourned about 8:40 PM. See you all next year. Have a Happy New Year !!!! ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)
site using either a PayPal account or a credit card. Click on the "Join our Group or Pay Dues" link on our main page. Since PayPal is the processor of your credit card if you use one, they take every opportunity to give you a chance to set up a PayPal account. If, like me, you don't want one, make sure you follow the instructions at our site carefully. I have renewed my membership this way; now it is your turn.

Adware My daughter just returned to college, and I spent a few hours before she left checking out her laptop to make sure it was virus/adware free with all its Windows updates installed and in good working order.

The first thing that needed attention was the freezing of the computer when you inserted a blank CD in the drive. I noticed a shortcut to some sort of DVD player

(Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

on the desktop. She said that she had installed it because she couldn't get Windows Media Player to play a DVD. I suspected that DVD player from PC Friendly as the freezing culprit and uninstalled it. Immediately I could now burn CDs--both audio and data. Furthermore, I could find nothing wrong with Windows Media Player.

Next, I ran Norton Antivirus' full scan. It discovered 34 files that it termed adware. They all had to do with a WebSearch Toolbar or WebSearch Tools. I found the associated programs and uninstalled them. Then I let Norton delete any remaining files on its list. After a reboot and opening of Internet Explorer I received a message from some program to the effect that the computer was in danger. A little sleuthing revealed the program as Solid Peer--itself an adware program. Somehow Norton had missed this one. It was listed in the Add/Remove section of Control Panel. On initiating its removal, I received the message that it would search for adware; however, it actually did remove itself. I suppose it was sort of like the message you get from the Windows Installer that it is installing a program when, if fact, you are uninstalling the program.

My daughter said that she was aware she had such problems but couldn't figure how to remove them.

After all of that, I rebooted and ran a full scan in Norton one more time, producing no problems. To finish I created a new restore point for the computer. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Tsunami while receding

Kalutara, Sri Lanka from a satellite image. Shot 10:20 a.m. local time on December 26, 2004.

http://www.globexplorer.com/disasterimages/index.html is the link to the page. They have several other satellite images pertaining to the tsunami.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Default Password List	http://www.phenoelit.de/dpl/dpl.html
Treasury Direct	http://www.treasurydirect.gov/
Wine Access .Com	http://www.wineaccess.com/
Message Wireless Devices	http://www.pagemart.com/customerservice/how2send/
Verizon Super Pages	http://www.directorystore.com/product/productsearch.jsp?type=vz

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1995

From the January, 2005 Newsletter

Secretary's Report
MINUTES OF 12/14/94 MEETING
and Personal Comments by Jim Clark,
Tampa PC Users Group

Another important meeting for the TPCUG, with elections taking place for the five elected positions on the Board of Directors. And there was a good turnout for this important event, as well as for a fine presentation by a very popular software vendor, Broderbund.

USER GROUP NEWS — A foul-up by the Ybor Campus staff, who had just closed the campus that day for the holiday season and hadn't made arrangements for our use of the facility, caused a delay in the start of our meeting, cutting down the time available for user group and industry news.

SECOND BBS PHONE LINE IN OPERATION: Thanks to the donations received so far in the Adopt the BBS campaign, the generosity of an anonymous donor of a 14.4 modem, and an offer by REALTRON (the host site of our BBS) who is allowing use of an existing phone line for the BBS, paying only the monthly phone bill, our second line to the BBS has been put into operation and is now available for all members. This line, 237-4997, is reserved exclusively for members in good standing. Harvey also called attention to the how-goes-it chart in the newsletter which shows the generation of funds still far below that needed to upgrade the BBS with more file space and other improvements. He emphasized the importance of supporting the ADOPTBBS fund-raiser if we are to realize these improvements in the BBS.

NEW SIGs BEGINNING: Harvey announced the offer of one of our members to host two SIGs at his business facility near the intersection of Anderson and Waters. Mr. Hodges [Mike Hodges] is also making available for these SIGs his computer equipment. Plans are already under way to begin an Internet SIG in February; final plans will be announced at the January general meeting; reservations will also be open at that time. Space will be limited to 20 people for each class. Harvey also solicited people to lead other SIGs, such as but not limited to Windows, DOS, communications, or any of the many popular software applications, to name but a few. One need not be an expert in the SIG subject, but need only have an interest in it and be able to guide the learning experience for all. If you have an interest or would like to discuss the matter further, please contact Harvey.

ELECTIONS: Harvey announced the names of the members nominated for the five elected positions on the Board of Directors and opened the meeting to additional nominations from the floor. Receiving none, Harvey proceeded with the election and issued guidance on completing the ballots which had been provided. The ballots were collected and counted, producing the following elected BOD officers who will take office in January:

President:	Harvey Bruneau (incumbent)
Vice President:	William LaMartin
Treasurer:	Tom Cone (Incumbent)
Secretary:	Bruce Register
Member At Large:	Connie Kincaid

Congratulations to you all. We are confident that you will do an excellent job for the TPCUG.

INDUSTRY NEWS:

INTEL PENTIUM CHIP: The bug in Intel's Pentium chip has received a good bit of publicity lately. Intel says the bug has been fixed and all of their new chips do not have the flaw. They also say there has been a big to-do about nothing, that the probability of anyone having trouble with the chip is negligible, that there is no need to replace them, and they have no plans to do so. They will, however, replace the chips for anyone having trouble. Informally, word is that they will replace the chip for anyone requesting same, but it may take a while since they are well behind the demand for their Pentium chip.

PRESENTATION — BRODERBUND Tad Brickson, Southeast Sales Representative for Broderbund Software, Inc., was kind enough to make a presentation for us on some of the Broderbund software. Tad noted that Broderbund had some 147 software titles, categorized into three broad categories — productivity, education and entertainment. However, he wisely chose to limit his discussion to an overview of the company and a brief review of 4 of those titles. Sitting here writing about Tad's presentation, one thing seems to dominate my thoughts — consistent with all four programs is that they seem to be very easy to use; a bit like a multiple choice test where all the answers really are good answers and you can't go wrong.

Print Shop 2.0 for Windows: This is probably the best known and most popular Broderbund title, and it is a really good one. I have used Print Shop Deluxe for DOS

(1995…….Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1995…….Continued from page 6)

and Windows, both of which are fine programs. But, Print Shop 2.0 makes major improvements, adding labels and business cards to the list of things one can create in the other programs - greeting cards, signs, banners, letterheads and calendars. Even more emphasis has been placed on user friendly - and it is truly easy to use - while adding significantly to the text, graphic and layout template options available, and including the capability for almost unlimited user control of all of these. It would be tough to dream up a creation in any one of the categories of documents that Ver. 2 is designed for that one couldn't produce in minutes, selecting only from included layout options; the toughest part would be your determining what words you wanted to say in the document. Ver. 2 will handle a variety of graphic formats, and it provides the capability to print out in any density now available in popular printers or expected to be available in the foreseeable future.

Print Shop 2.0 for Windows is available on floppy disks and CD-ROM. Both have the same program, but the CD-ROM version includes more goodies than the floppy version - 73 versus 30 TrueType fonts, for example, and some 1600 pieces of clipart and 25 PCD photos. The floppy version has a good supply of clipart, though well short of the CD-ROM, and no PCD photos. The CD-ROM version also includes Print Shop Companion. Originally conceived as a program for youngsters, Print Shop has evolved into a powerful, very flexible program suitable for all ages and purposes, including business.

Math Workshop: An example of the education category. Math Workshop is a program designed for younger kids. It does an excellent job of teaching in an entertaining way. Like Print Shop, this program is very easy to use, yet contains a wide variety of options. The graphics are well done and entertaining, even for adults. It provides a number of different levels of difficulty and several different approaches to the learning of math.

3-D Home Architecture: Another example of a productivity program, 3-D Home Architecture shines above the other programs in its category that I have seen for its power, speed and ease of use. Home Architecture is very easy to use, almost intuitive. It is well laid out, fast and very powerful, allowing switching between 3-D and 2-D views and between 3-D views quickly and easily with a click or two of the mouse button. Imagine a house suspended in air, for example, giving one the ability to view the structure for any angle, including from underneath - that is the kind of capability built into Home Architecture. Unlike other programs I have seen, this program will create a useful list of construction materials. Tad was using a 486/33, with a mathco [math coprocessor], for the demo. As fast as the program operated on that machine, I would judge that it would operate fine on a 386/25 or better with mathco, but may be a bit tedious with lesser capabilities. A mathco is not a criteria, but because of the very large amount of complex calculations that take place, it makes a big difference in how fast the program operates.

Myst: Tad informed that this is the best selling entertainment software in the industry today. It is an impressive program, for sure, with stunning graphics. Tad was able to do little more than demo the graphics in the program, however, but reported that it could be addictive in that once you get started it may be difficult to stop. One of our members who had tried the game confirmed that it is very

(1995…….Continued on page 8)

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

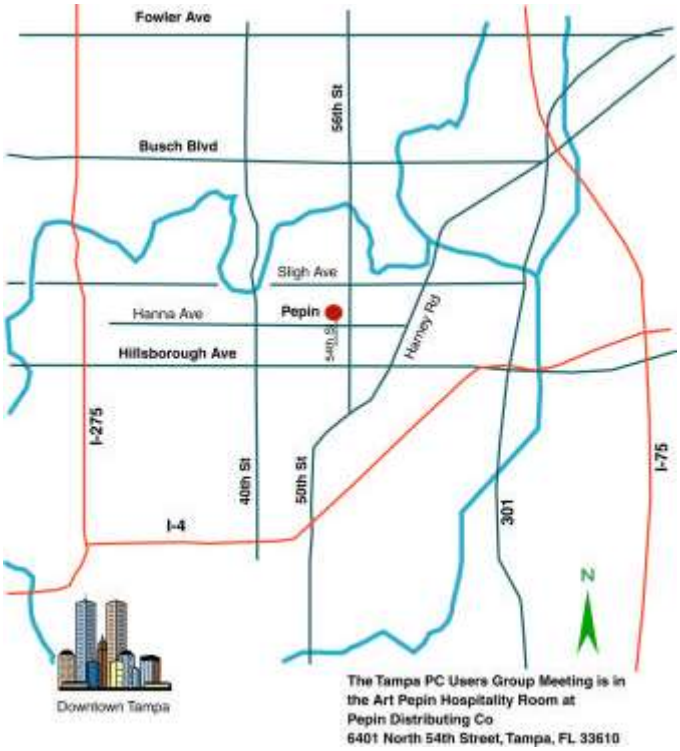
(1995…….Continued from page 7)
fascinating and hard to quit.

Tad, thanks very much to you and Broderbund for an excellent presentation and the opportunity to view some of your great software programs. We will look forward to seeing your updates to these programs, and perhaps an introduction into some of your other programs.

AND THE WINNER IS
Thanks to the generosity of Brainchild Computer Distributions, who donated Fox Pro 2.6 for Windows, and Broderbund who donated the rest of the door prizes, there were several very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

William LaMartin	Garden Plant Selector
Kelly Saunders	CNN Time Capsule
John Whitmer	New Car Buyers Guide
Merle Nicholson	Plumbing Essentials
Jenny Lind Olin	Royal Flush
George Jurado	FoxPro 2.6 for Windows

The meeting adjourned at about 8:40 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

March in Tampa

Vol. 18 No. 3 March 2005

Meeting

Gene Barlow

Wednesday, March 9, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Gene Barlow presents MoveMe, Secure Clean/Wipe Drive & True Image. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

As usual, Gene Barlow's yearly presentation should reacquaint us with our hard drives. He is a font of knowledge on the subject, and one of his topics is the different scenarios of backing up your entire hard drive. It is a subject to which we should all pay more attention.

I have my usual problem this month--a lack of articles. Except this is the first month that I have no article, except the minutes, from a member or from myself, and I am not going out and purchase a new program or piece of hardware just to be able to write about it. So, I need to fill up this space with something else. Let's see what I can produce.

(Comments……Continued on page 3)

April Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

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ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the February Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Mary Sheridan, Member at Large, started the SIG portion of our meeting promptly at 6:30 pm. She announced that President Kevan Sheridan was out of town (in snow country) and would not be conducting tonight's meeting. As Mary spoke, a PowerPoint presentation of past meetings and conventions was shown courtesy of William LaMartin. We were reminded of the Spring FACUG Conference in Kissimmee Mar 4th through the 6th. Those planning to attend were announced. Mary also encouraged members to attend TPCUG Board Meetings the first Thursday of each month starting at 6:30 pm at this site.

Discussion on Microsoft's Service Pack 2 carried over from last month. There have been eleven security updates to XP since Service Pack 1.

We discussed Windows Messenger and whether we need it. If you use Internet Explorer, you are probably stuck with it unless you do a registry modification.

Bruce Register brought up a problem he was having sending JPEG photo files over Outlook Express. The solution was to send the photos in a zipped folder.

It was announced that Peggy Pulliam, our immediate past Secretary, died on Feb 3, 2005. There was to be a memorial picnic for her at MacFarland Park on Feb 13th starting at 2:00 pm. William LaMartin passed around an excellent picture of Peggy taken at one of our events.

At 7:00 pm our regular meeting commenced under Mary Sheridan's leadership. Mary introduced our presenter for the evening, Bob LaFave. Bob's main

(Minutes……Continued on page 5)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

Free Online Tax Filing. If you go to the IRS site http://www.irs.gov/app/freeFile/jsp/index.jsp? and link from that page to one of the vendors listed there, you may just get your taxes figured and filed for free. Some of the vendors listed have restrictions on who may use the free service, others don't. TurboTax, for example, claims that everyone qualifies. I assume that for complicated returns, this service probably lacks the additional forms needed. So Donald Trump need not attempt it.

Treasury Bills Online While we are on the topic of money, have you thought of investing in Treasury Bills instead of CDs at your local bank? http://www.treasurydirect.gov/ is the site to get you started. As I write this, the return on a six month T-Bill is right at 3%, far better than any short term instrument your bank is offering. To get started, you need to download the "New Account Request" Adobe Acrobat file, print it out, fill in the information, sign it and mail it in. Two of the items to be entered on the form are a bank account number and bank routing number for the bank account from which money to buy the T-Bills is deducted and into which proceeds are to be paid. Once your account is set up, then everything else can be done online. T-Bills can be purchased for as little as $1,000 and in increments of $1,000. You can view your account at any time online. Additionally, periodic printed statements are mailed to you.

HP Scanner Redux I recently received an email requesting help with a scanner problem from someone out there on the web. They had done a search and come up with an article I wrote in the newsletter in January of 2003. They said their HP ScanJet 5370C was exhibiting the same problem as I had described. What I outlined in the article that got my scanner working again did not solve their problem, nor did my further suggestions.

My last suggestion to them was to junk the HP Scanner and buy an Epson one, which is what I did when my HP scanner died a year later (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2004/march2004/epson_scanner.htm). HP has produced some quality products for me over the years (e.g., my still working LaserJet 4 Plus printer bought in 1995), but it is my belief that they have let their quality control lapse and have farmed out most of their manufacturing. I'll give Epson a try for a few years. I also recently bought an Epson Stylus Photo 2200 for my photo printing and am very happy with it.

Perhaps with the departure of Ms. Fiorina HP will regain their focus on quality products and figure out there are other ways to create a profitable company than firing a lot of people. I could never figure why HP brought her on in the first place, since I think she presided over the near demise of Lucent, a once-great company. Now I see that after five years of decline at HP under her tenure she is being touted as a candidate for the president of the World Bank. I didn't know she knew anything about banking. But, then, she didn't know anything about computers, and she was hired to run a computer company and kept on for five or so years.

I see that I have over a page left to fill. What can I present? How about how I use my computer? That was the title of a talk I gave to another user group a few years back.

Like most of you, I use my computer to deal with **email** and browse the **World Wide Web**. Also like most of you, I have to delete more than 100 unwanted emails every day. At least, very few of them have viruses attached anymore. It seems that the Internet service providers are getting quite good at stripping the viruses from emails.

As far as web browsing goes, I find that I no longer go to all sorts of strange and new sites as in the past when all of this was new. The past few years most of my WWW time is spent at just a few sites--The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Google. The Internet is no longer a novelty.

In addition, I write computer programs and create and manage web sites. I use **Microsoft's Visual Studio .Net** to write the programs and to create some of the pages at web sites. I use **Microsoft's FrontPage** to manage the web sites.

(Comments…….Continued on page 4)

(Comments……..Continued from page 3)

Visual Studio .Net has several languages within it that you can use to write programs. My choice is **Visual Basic .Net**. Some of the programs I write are presented in our VB SIG. At the last VB SIG meeting we looked at a simple program that allows you to send text messages from your computer to anyone with a number with one of the major cell phone carriers like T-Mobile, Verizon and Alltel.

After I had demonstrated the program, I noted one thing that bothered me--with a slight modification and a database of cellular phone numbers, you could spam all those phones with text messages quite easily. Possibly the providers have a method of detecting such an onslaught and stopping it, but I doubt it, since I just read an article in *InfoWorld* about a vulnerability at the T-Mobile web site that would allow anyone to gain access to a T-Mobile account from the T-mobile.com web site, as long as they knew the account holder's T-Mobile phone number. Of course you had to know a bit more than that, but not much, since even I could understand it.

For many years I used **Borland's Delphi** program for programming, but I have not used it much since the advent of Visual Studio .Net.

Photography Another use I make of my computer is to use it as my digital darkroom with the help of **Adobe PhotoShop CS**. I have been interested in photography since I was a teenager. In the 1970s and 1980s, I took that interest a step further and processed all of my black and white film and prints. In the 1990s I sort of lost interest in photography, except for starting to scan in photos and then negatives in the mid 1990s. However, with the advent of digital cameras and much-improved inkjet printers, I am back into photography.

Now I have total control. I can take a photo with my Nikon D100 SLR style digital camera and instantly see if it is worth saving. Later I can bring it into my computer, adjust the lighting and color balance, and crop it as desired. Then I can store it both on the computer and on a CD, send a lower resolution version in an email message or print the original image on my Epson 2200 in a size anywhere from 4 x 6 to 11 x 17. 11 x 17 is the largest photo paper I at present have, not the largest size the printer will print.

That is total control. My darkroom equipment is stored away in the garage, and all my chemicals and empty chemical bottles have been thrown away.

I have also found a use for my programming in photography by writing a program that will automatically take all the files in a folder and stuff their names and locations into a database. Later when I click on one of the records in the database, the program will display a thumbnail of the photo and allow me to enter data about the photo, such as a description and date. It is a great timesaver, and I eventually hope to realize my dream of having all my photos from the past scanned in and stored on hard drives with CD or DVD backups and catalogued in the program just mentioned. Additionally I will do the same for all of the new photo files from my digital photography. They, of course, don't need to be scanned, but they do need to be catalogued.

Other programs I use are **Quicken** for all my financial records and **Outlook** to keep my calendar and address book. I do not use full Outlook for my email, using Outlook Express for that, except when I want to do an email merge. Of course I use **Word** and **Excel**. Excel was particularly useful recently when I needed a set of financial calculations to determine the best of several scenarios. And I use **Access** to keep and analyze all sorts of data, not the least of which is our TPCUG membership data.

I use **Adobe Illustrator** to create simple graphic designs and greeting cards. All of the genealogy information gathered by me and several relatives is stored in **FamilyTree Maker**. **Microsoft Publisher** is used in creating this newsletter and other desktop publishing projects such as the directory for my neighborhood organizations.

I suppose there are at least a half-dozen other programs that I use from time to time: Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Streamline, PowerPoint, Art Icons Pro, Delorme's Street Atlas, Easy CD Creator and WS FTP come to mind.

Next month, someone please send me an article. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
topic was Google's Gmail.

Bob started by suggesting we subscribe to Staples' discount coupons email notification. They also have an online rebate system that speeds up the rebate turnaround. CompUSA gives TPCUG members a 5% discount if you go to their special checkout desk (on the left as you face the front of the store). You must show your membership card, and that brought us to the realization that most of us have expired cards. Mary will get new cards issued.

Bob now explained Gmail is a web based mail service. It is separate from your current Outlook Express, but can be forwarded by you to your email account. You can only get a Gmail account by invitation from a current user. Bob says there are advantages to having more than one mail service. He then demonstrated the ease of setting up a Gmail web page and some neat features it claims. Get in touch with Mr. LaFave if you want Gmail.

At some point during our meeting, Mary asked if the members were interested in a presentation on Linux. By a show of hands, many present did want a presentation.

No door prizes were available at this meeting so we concluded at 8:15 pm. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Mardi Gras Dog

One of the many photos taken in New Orleans this Mardi Gras was of "Baby Dog" at the Krewe of Grela parade in Gretna by a New Orleans Times-Picayune photographer.

This photo and many more can be viewed at the site http://www.nola.com/mardigras/photos/

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Epinions.com	http://www.epinions.com/
Treasury Direct	http://www.treasurydirect.gov/
Free Online Tax Filing	http://www.irs.gov/app/freeFile/jsp/index.jsp?
IRS Forms	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/formspubs/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1995

From the March, 1995 Newsletter

SECRETARY'S REPORT
TPCUG MEETING 2/8/95, 6 PM
Ybor Room, Hillsborough Community College,
Ybor Campus

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register

President Harvey Bruneau called the meeting to order. Comments and information were given regarding SIGs, miscellaneous topics and vendors.

SIGS
Microsoft Access - February 16,1995, 6 PM Promptly, 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast corner of Mapledale and Northdale. Reservations are closed due to limited seating. Next SIG-Microsoft Access is same place, March 16, 1995, 6 PM (sharp-Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building). Sign up early.

OS/2 - February 28, Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/sign-up.

Internet - February 28, 1995, 6 PM, promptly. Contact Charles Howe. As of February 8,1995, seven seats were available. You can use BBS to sign up. Promptness is required because security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of the street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone building. You must enter the north end and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock the door and escort us to the meeting room. It reminds me of the Pentagon; you don't stray or wander around.

ANOTHER SIG is under consideration. Let Harvey know your interest. A tax SIG was mentioned as a possibility. It is timely. Harvey wants your opinion. He reads BBS regularly. Send him a message.

MISCELLANEOUS
Harvey reported a monetary gift from GTE to TPCUG. GTE has a program for recognizing their employees who make a contribution of time and effort to community and educational activities. In recognition of Roger Waters' many hours of devotion to TPCUG, GTE donated some $430 to TPCUG. Thank you, Roger! Thank you, GTE!

Harvey reiterated the goal of every member in 1995 is to bring in at least one new member.

VENDORS
IBM has recalled power adapters for IBM ThinkPad 360 & 375. If you have one, contact IBM for a replacement part.

HP DeskJet 500, 550 and 560C have glitches in rollers. Call HP for replacement parts.

Pentium prices have dropped and are expect to drop some more before the end of March.

Some surprises have been received by Pentium users who have replaced the old chip with the new chip. Spreadsheets run and calculated under the old chip will carry the same chip errors along with the spreadsheet under the new chip. Solution: when you load the spreadsheet, recalculate the entire spreadsheet under the new chip. Easy solution!

Many companies are tied so completely to Microsoft that they feel that they cannot change software when errors and software problems occur. Some feel that Microsoft, unintentionally, releases software with problems. When this occurs, serious difficulties could occur. Some companies (end users) are so critically dependent upon Microsoft's various packages that they feet it is better to suffer than to try to change it all.

Hardware vendors and software vendors are planning on the future world of Microsoft Windows 95, whenever it is released. IBM OS/2 Warp is the competition. Some feel that sufficient market acceptance of OS/2 would result in a much more healthy competitive market—one without monopoly.

Some feel that Microsoft Windows 3.1 will not only lose its state of the art position but will also become extinct to OS/2 and Windows 95-relatively soon after release.

PS2 mouse ports make your life easier.

Don't use Windows 3.11 32 bit File Access on Gateway, Compaq or Notebook computers. Problems may occur!

SOFTWARE VENDOR DEMONSTRATION
Mr. Robert Morgan of Gold Disk, presented two software products-ASTOUND AND VIDEO DIRECTOR. His general comments during the demonstration ran along these lines: **ASTOUND** was developed originally on a MAC

(1995……..Continued on page 7)

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(1995…….Continued from page 6)

platform. Since then, they have developed it on the Windows platform. Their market demand has been pleasing.

ASTOUND is chasing the PowerPoint (by Microsoft) presentation market. ASTOUND loves multimedia machines. ASTOUND is a presentation package. One can create/use handouts, slides and video clips. A cable connects the computer with video, camcorder and stereo for use in creating presentations. The process was demonstrated to be very fast. We watched a presentation being developed before our eyes!

ASTOUND for Windows allows one to integrate the power of multimedia. sound, animated texts and graphs, and digital video appeared to be easy to add into presentations. Import of files from other presentation packages and from other sources such as clip art, etc., are an emphasized feature.

"No special training is needed—just a few clicks", according to Mr. Morgan. Any object may be animated; you can add digital video animation, sound and synchronized narration. You can save to disk(s) and send or hand to your clients with a full demonstration of what service or product you offer. A user can even add interactivity by making any object button control your presentation. Slides, overhead projections and video tapes are computer based. On-screen presentations appear to be most welcome as tools for instructors and public speakers. The sophisticated production that we have seen on television news, TV advertising, etc., appears to be available now to anyone with inexpensive equipment. The cost of the software is unbelievably low.

ASTOUND has menu bars, and pull-down and pop-up menus. Robert Morgan feels that all the help that you need is on the screen available "for the clicking." ASTOUND can perform 3-D presentations (like you see with CAD). "The time-line is the heart of the presentation. Much time is saved compared to other programs." Voice-over editing is permitted. Mr. Morgan demonstrated by placing a graphics voice track on the screen. The "uhs" and "ahs" can be erased right on the graphics screen. Animation and graphics are very easy to do. One can put together a demo presentation disk to market your product or service and give out the disks. Minimum Requirement: ASTOUND; 486, 4MB (8 MB is better), 66 MHZ. Cost: ASTOUND: Retail, $399; Computer City $129. Gold Disk SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG $79.00 ASTOUND/Video Director bundle SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG $150.00

VIDEO DIRECTOR software. Plug your computer into your camcorder or VCR. Video Director has three modes: Icon, Text and Graphics. A tape library is nice to work with. The video clip that you developed with ASTOUND can be selected to be saved on tape (you have already saved it to disk in the ASTOUND software). Pull in the clips that you want. Click to make tapes. One can create the video clip, click the camcorder to make a video tape for replay on the VCR and go have a cup of coffee while your take is being recorded. Minimum Requirement: VIDEO DIRECTOR: 386, 2MB. VIDEO DIRECTOR: Retail, $199; CompUSA, $119, SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG $89.00.

Editorial Comment: See Kathrine Powell's excellent review article on Video Director, Ver. 2.0, in Bits of Blue.

(1995…….Continued on page 8)

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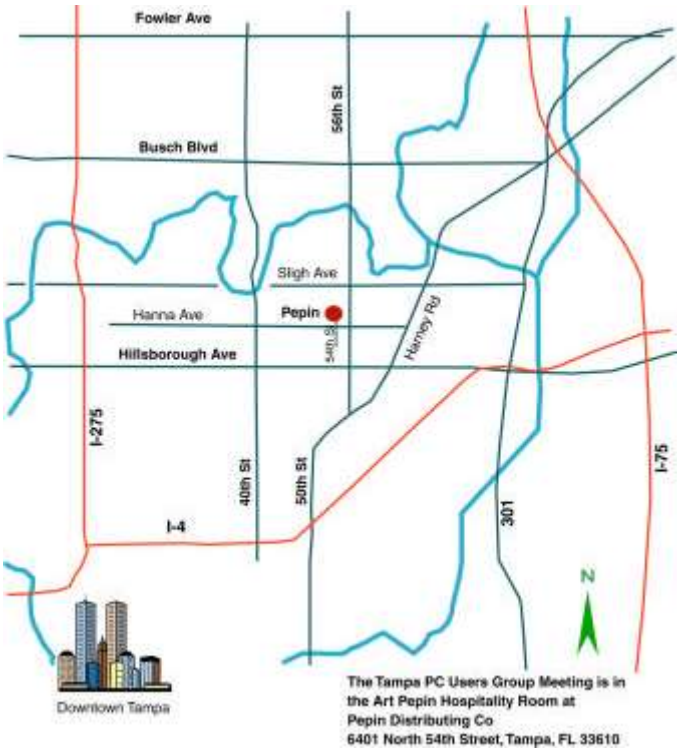
(1995…….Continued from page 7)
Jan., 1995 on Page 5. Yep! The prices are a correct quote of the Special Offer from Gold Disk.

Robert Morgan gave an excellent presentation of these two software programs. Comments were concise, understandable and meaningful. His demonstration was well planned. He is GOOD!

Robert Morgan and GOLD DISK donated the door prizes. We all appreciate this generosity. The following door prize winners appreciate them even more than the rest of us!

Jay Reese	Multimedia Magic
M. N. Marteny	Multimedia Magic
John Lucas	ASTOUND
M. N. Marteny	VIDEO DIRECTOR

Harvey thanked all for coming. He reminded all to return here (Ybor Room at HCC YBOR Campus, adjacent to the Administration Building) March 8, 1995, 6 PM. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. Use the BBS. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



February in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 2 February 2005

Meeting

Google's Gmail and more

Wednesday, February 9, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Bob Lafave will present Google's Gmail and other topics. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I only have room for two short items.

APC Backup update The battery backup unit I wrote about in the November newsletter malfunctioned recently by continuously displaying the overload warning. I called APC, and they gave me a RMA number to send it back to them at my expense (about $20) for a replacement, which I received in an approximate 10 day turn around. The fellow at APC suggested that I may have caused the problem by having a power strip and surge suppressor in line in between the APC unit and the devices. I have removed them since receiving the new unit.

Street Atlas USA If after the New Year you receive an error message in Street Atlas USA when doing a search, you need the Magnetic Declination Update from Delorme. ◆

March Meeting: Gene Barlow presents MoveMe, Secure Clean/Wipe Drive & True Image

* * OFFICERS * *

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Vice President : John Witmer (JWITMER@Pepindist.com) 949-8007
Treasurer: Mike Hodges (mphs@aol.com) 962-2114
Secretary: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

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TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the January Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Mary Sheridan started the SIG portion of our meeting promptly at 6:30 pm. It seems Microsoft is pressing for users to install Service Pack 2. Most responded that they have, with few problems. Some discussion followed as to Microsoft's concern/motivation and the type problems/experiences that were encountered by some. After installing SP 2, you must identify programs you use to your Firewall.

Mary called attention to the need to formally elect officers for Year 2005. Slate presented:

President	Kevan Sheridan
Vice President	John Witmer
Treasurer	Mike Hodges
Secretary	Doug Mullis
Member-at-large	Mary Sheridan

By a show of hands, the nominees were unanimously elected/installed, and a "Thank You" was extended.

Mary announced that the Spring Conference of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups, Inc. is coming March 4, 5 & 6, to be held at the Kissimmee Civic Center. Advance registration for the Conference is $40 (before Feb 10) or $60 at the door. TPCUG will pay advance registration of members involved in running our organization. Let a Board member know if you want to attend. Check out the program at: http://www.facug.org/05springconf.htm.

Mary introduced Jane Jukes who has moved to San Antonio, Florida and is considering joining our PC users group. Jane has been associated with another group for twelve years. We would be pleased to have her as a member.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 8)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Dell Axim X50v Pocket PC

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Pocket PC's are pretty much alike once you get beyond the basic features. There are some new options available now that are very interesting and maybe just the thing you need to push you over the fence, like it did me.

The newest developments in Pocket PC's are: camera (naturally), cell phone, faster processors, WiFi, Bluetooth and VGA screens. There are a lot of models to look at with some or all of these features. I can't keep track of all of the HP iPAQ models, but I'd thought I'd pretty much narrowed my choice down to the HP iPAQ HX4705 ($617.50!) as my base unit of choice. It had all the latest stuff I "need". I could also look some more and maybe even wait six months.

I wasn't about to spend $617.50 on a pocket PC! But it intrigued me enough (actually, I REALLY wanted one!) to look around to see who else is making a PDA with the newest Intel 624MHz processor and who else has VGA. I'd read one reviewer article that said that VGA on a small screen like this is useless except in viewing pictures because the small screen dictates that all the elements — buttons, text, borders etc. — must be oversize anyway. Now that I've experienced the difference, the VGA has so much obviously superior screen clarity that it has to be the way they'll all go eventually.

The usual Pocket PC screen size is QVGA (Quarter VGA) at 240x 320 pixels. VGA quadruples that at 640x480 (Actually 480x640 when viewed in normal portrait mode). There is a modification of the Microsoft Pocket PC OS, called 2003 Second Edition, written to accommodate switching between Portrait and Landscape modes.

And, of course, I wanted WiFi, so I can sit in Barnes and Noble and check on the latest HP and Dell stock quotes, and maybe check out my email. Last, why not Bluetooth in case I want a GPS, wireless keyboard or a wireless headset? I definitely do not need a camera or cell phone on my PDA.

I have a Cassiopeia E-125 that I've been using continuously since I got it three years ago. A Pocket PC syncs up Office Outlook automatically to Pocket Mail, Calendar, contacts, tasks and notes. I depend on it for appointments and all my personal and business contacts. Drop it in the cradle and the Pocket PC to Outlook starts automatically, and in a few seconds it's done. I have Pocket Streets and Trips 2002 with a half dozen or more city maps, and I also use it as a personal picture viewer to dazzle people with pictures of my grandchildren.

The OS on my Casio is not upgradeable. And I thought I would use the MS Money that came with it as my checkbook except that I found that it sync'd up only with MS Money 2002 on the PC. I couldn't buy MS Money 2002 for the PC – no longer available in 2003, and I couldn't upgrade the version on the Pocket PC with the existing OS, and I couldn't upgrade the OS. So eventually I abandoned using Money. I have the same problem with MS Reader. I want to buy books online and most books now are protected, so you're allowed one download each to two registered devices. Guess what. My OS is too old for the new MS Reader. Do I need a new Pocket PC? You betcha!

Dell Axim X50v! It has what I want, and by December 2004, Dell had put a sizeable discount on the price down to $419, and it's still available as of this writing – 1/30/05. That's a clear $200 less than the HP – 32% in fact, so there's no contest for me.

So I figured out how to get it delivered on my birthday and feign surprise that someone mailed me a gift. The UPS guy wasn't impressed. I think he always gets birthday gifts.

The photo below is of the old Casio next to the new little rocket. The physical screen sizes are almost identical. The Casio's is perhaps .1" taller.

(Axim ……..Continued on page 4)



(Axim…….Continued from page 3)

The specs on the new little rocket (copied and modified from the Dell website) are:

- Microsoft® Windows Mobile™ 2003 Second Edition operating system with Windows Media Player 10 Mobile
- Powered by the Intel® XScale™ PXA270 Processor at 624MHz Microsoft® Windows Mobile™ 2003 Second Edition operating system with Windows Media Player 10 Mobile
- Brilliant 3.7" color TFT VGA display with 640x480 resolution
- Integrated Intel® 2700G multimedia accelerator with 16MB video memory
- Integrated 802.11b and Bluetooth™ Wireless Technologies
- Packed with 64MB SDRAM and 128MB Intel StrataFlash® ROM
- Integrated CompactFlash Type II and Secure Digital / SDIO Now! / MMC card slots provide flexible expansion
- VGA-Out Support with optional VGA Presentation Bundle
- Removable Primary Battery with optional High Capacity Battery
- 3.5mm Headphone / Headset Jack for Headsets to support VoIP and voice recognition applications
- Built-in microphone and speaker for easy recording on the go
- USB Cradle including Battery Charging Slot
- Standard v1.2 (115 kbps) Infrared Port
- 3.5mm Headphone/Headset Jack
- 36-pin Cradle/Sync Connector
- Length 119 mm (4.7 inches)
- Width 73 mm (2.9 inches)
- Height 16.9 mm (0.7 inches)
- Weight 175 grams (6.2 oz)

I know I'll get asked about how hard it is to get connected to the nearest wireless router, so I'll relate my first connection. I accidentally bumped the WiFi button, a box popped up asking for the WEP security for the network it detected, I typed it in the five characters I use for the WEP and then opened Internet Explorer to the default home page. That was it. After that all I ever had to do is accidentally bump the WiFi button, and it automatically connected. I did go into the setup and turn off the Bluetooth radio for now.

The things I don't like about it are few. The biggest is the location of the two buttons on the left side; the recorder button and the WiFi connection. I ***cannot*** pick the PDA up without touching one of those buttons. They're not recessed, and they're sensitive. I don't need a recorder button. So I have reprogrammed the two buttons to do nothing, and programmed the WiFi button on the front. Now no button does anything if it accidentally gets pressed. My Casio has similar buttons in the same location and they never got pressed because they are properly recessed.

So how good is the new Dell? Fast? As an example, to load my 2MB Hillsborough County Street and Trips map – less than a second. On my old one, I could have completely driven out of the county while it loaded. Actually just fifteen seconds on the old Casio, but it always ***seemed*** longer. And clicking through pictures goes as fast as I can go, no delay. I'm extremely happy with the quality of the screen.

During my research into current Pocket PC's, I'd read more than one warning that some older applications that you may be using may not migrate to the new PDA, either because of operating system differences, or, in this case, screen display conflicts. And particularly if you want to use the landscape feature of the new screen.

My one fear was that my Pocket PC Streets and Trips

(Axim…….Continued on page 5)

(Axim……..Continued from page 4)

2002 that came with the desktop copy of Streets and Trips 2004 would not work on the VGA screen, but it's great. It's still QVGA resolution, but I can live with that. MS is selling a revised Streets and Trips For Pocket PC 2005 as a separate product now. I'm considering it, but I'll more likely go to the Delorme Street Atlas USA 2005 Handheld for $39.95. It's not clear if it will work on this PDA from their website, but I've emailed their support site to find out.

And the last thing I'll mention is not specifically about the Dell. All Pocket PC's are not necessarily the same. Because of the variety of processors used, there are differences in the operating systems that will prevent you from migrating from one Pocket PC to another the software you have purchased. Usually on an installation CD you will see three .CAB files, only one of which will be used because that is the one specifically written for your processor. In my case, I purchased a couple of applications for my Casio that has only one setup, just for a MIPS processor. So I've abandoned the applications, and in one case I may try to replace it. The best news is that there are literally thousands of high quality programs written for the Pocket PC, and all are pretty cheap, just $5-$15.

The user interface has been improved in appearance, but functionally hasn't changed at all since Pocket PC 2002. On the new VGA screen, the text is very clear and much easier on the eyes. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Gasparilla King's Float 1924

One of the 13,222 photos, mostly of the Tampa area from the late 1800's into the 1960's taken by the Burgert Brothers and available from the Tampa\Hillsborough Public Library, http://www.thpl.org/

The easiest way to search and view the photos is from member William LaMartin's site at http://www.lamartin.com/burgert/

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Imagining the Internet	http://www.elon.edu/predictions/
Microsoft Search	http://beta.search.msn.com/
IRS Forms	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/formspubs/
Florida Photographic Collection	http://www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1995

From the February, 2005 Newsletter

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Meeting 1/11/95. Minutes and comments (as I understood them)

Bruce Register, Sec'y

The meeting was called to order by President Harvey Bruneau. Some 53, MOL, attendees.

Elected Officers are:

President: Harvey Bruneau
Vice President: William LaMartin
Treasurer: Tom Cone
Secretary: Bruce Register
Member-at-Large: Connie Kincaid

Appointed Positions are:

Education Officer
Newsletter Editor
Bulletin Board System Operator
Librarian

President Harvey reported many bits of interesting information. He asked that the members let him know what subject matter that the members would like at the meetings and SIG meetings.

President Harvey reported that SIGs (Special Interest Groups) are scheduled.

Internet SIG...January 24, 1995, 6 PM, Reflectone Corporation, Tampa West Boulevard. The building is located south of Waters near Anderson Road. Security is tight; entrance is through the north entrance for only persons on the advance cleared list. If you signed up before the class maxed out, your name will be on the security list for entry. Charles Howe is the leader. We thank Mike Hodges and Reflectone Corporation for making this possible.

Microsoft Access. February 16, 1995, 6 PM, 3903 North Dale Mabry. Mark Saunders is the SIG leader; Sergio Mendez, Connie Kincaid are among the assistants. SIG enrollments can be made on the Bulletin Board; however, you should report your name exactly as it appears on the TPCUG membership list. Look at your membership card or the address label on the BITS OF BLUE.

SIG sessions are open to TPCUG members only. Have you renewed yet? President Harvey asked that everyone submit topics that we would like to experience, not only in SIG, but also in discussions at regular meetings. He also asked for SIG leader volunteers. Please make a note of your comments and hand them to President Harvey. Written comments are less likely to be forgotten or misunderstood. Lets help our long-serving President by putting them in writing.

President Harvey announced an upcoming SIG on OS/ 2. Come, listen and watch BITS OF BLUE for details at the appropriate time. Caere Corporation will present our program March 8,1995. Delrina will present April 12, 1995.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS:

(As I understood them, factual or not)

- Brainchild offers discounts on products and labor to TPCUG, membership card showing, members. One store is in St. Pete; the other is at 1910 W. Busch Boulevard.
- President Harvey stressed the request that each of us bring in one new member in 1995...early in 1995.He also stressed the need for receiving renewal membership dues for 1995. Please encourage your fellow member friends to renew. Do not let member friends fall by the wayside.
- The TPCUG Board is considering all aspects, known, or made known, to them regarding a more suitable meeting place. Please jot down your comments, however you feel regarding a change or not to change. Give your thoughts to President Harvey.

INDUSTRY NEWS:

- Windows 95 will not run OS/2.
- Lotus is developing an application to run on OS/2 under contract with IBM.
- Notebook with Windows 95 must have a "plug and play" docking station which recognizes notebook Windows 95.
- Some people, today, are spending more on speakers for computer systems than they spent on their stereo systems. Why not just hook up to the stereo; save money; spend the savings on computer needs.
- Gold Disk will make a multi-media presentation at the TPCUG meeting February 8, 1995. Meeting starts at 6 PM, Auditorium, Administrative Building, HCC, Ybor City. Security guards are positioned in the parking lots.

PRESENTATION:

A speech by Bill Gates at Fall Comdex '94 was presented

(1995……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1995…….Continued from page 6)

by President Harvey with equipment provided by Will Goble.

President Harvey announced that the manner of this presentation is a FIRST for TPCUG. A machine (computer) with a video card in it that allows one to hook up a VCR to the machine that has a video and sound card. The computer connects to a display panel positioned on the top of an overhead projector. The display is then viewed on the "movie" screen. The sound card in the machine permitted plugging into the external speakers.

On with Mr. Gates'…..Microsoft is presenting (The following are excerpts from Mr. Gates' speech.)

- "Microsoft Tech Net to help software users, like replacing Intel chips and how to cure Intel Chip problems."
- "40 million PCs are out there and will double in the next ten years."
- "...online service will be improved...Windows 95 will assist online services through innovative ideas."
- "Stereo vision (3-D) is being developed to provide ....viewing...(we) will not see this as mainstream for 3 or 4 years."
- "Internet can be accessed from computers of all types."
- "Information Highway with all types of information by anyone will be available to anyone who wants it."
- "Video is down the highway (Information Highway) at a future time."
- "Fox Pro is to be released in January 1995 at a Fox Pro meeting."
- "Microsoft Access is becoming the common tool."
- "E-Mail is in major use in business. Our E-Mail is our primary application in our company (Microsoft). Our E-Mail includes spreadsheets....(other documents)."
- "Beta use (Beta Windows 95) allows you to use all the connectivity to any number of machines without license problems...this is to allow a user to test applications and get ready for the release of Windows 95."
- "The real question is 'Will the industry run Windows 95 or OS/2' (and) is a dead-end (discussion). OS/2 and Windows 95 are just competition."
- "All new machines that you buy after Windows 95 will come with Windows 95 already installed."
- "In three or four years, the high end users and low end will operate from one platform instead of two as they come together in the future."
- "Bus will become standard...VL....people will likely move to a 64 bit bus level."

After the Bill Gates video presentation, the door prizes were given away.

ALAN JANKOWSKI - UFO for Windows
Gerda Anderson- Optimizer for Windows

The meeting adjourned, approx. 8:50 p.m. ◆

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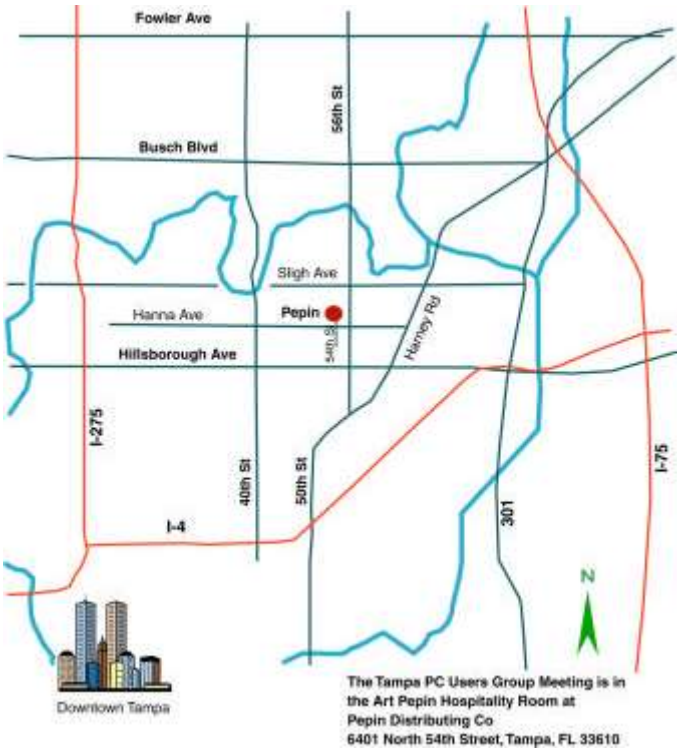
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

At 7:00 pm, President Kevan Sheridan took control of our regular meeting. As our presenter for the evening, he told us about Web logs or Blogs. Blogging in general started in 2002.

What is a Blog site? It is an online publishing site, and Kevan has had one since last May. What is it for, you ask. Anything (within reason) you want it for. It can be a diary or newsletter. Blogging gives you as much presence on the Net as you want. An individual or a designated group can post multiple daily entries to the site. You can receive comments from visitors to your site and a tally of "hits". You will have a worldwide audience. You can publish a profile of yourself and create hyperlinks to other Bloggers who share your interests. Best of all Blogging is free through Google. Anyone can establish a Blog site for sharing information with others. Many Bloggers are women.

After a short break, winning numbers were drawn for a dozen door prizes, ten of which were CD's entitled Bob's Computer Goodies, courtesy of our own Mr. Lafave. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

April in Tampa

Vol. 18 No. 4 April 2005

Meeting

Bringing Genealogy To Life

Wednesday, April 13, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Tony Hills and Kelly Whitelock will present a program on Genealogy. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I am happy to report that this month we have a description of the FACUG meeting in Kissimmee by Mike Hodges and a short article on Digital Print Order Form by Ron Weinberg. That, along with the Looking Back article, pretty much fills the newsletter. So I am grateful for this respite from producing an article for another month, plus it is nice to have variety.

I hear that our web site received a third place award for user group web sites at the FACUG meeting. I didn't enter this newsletter in the newsletter competition, since I didn't see much chance for an eight page publication against all those 20 and 30 page professionally printed offerings by other groups. To see a list of web sites and online newsletters of other groups, go to the FACUG site at http://www.facug.org/ and click on the members link. ◆

May Meeting: Greg Boyd from Microsoft

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$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

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Check the address label for your renewal month

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Kevan Sheridan, President, opened the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:30 pm by pointing out the different ways (web sites) we have for communicating with our members. We have our main web page http://www.tpcug.org, where you can find current club information and links. One link is to Amazon.com where your purchases made through the link benefit our group

Next we have our main e-group site http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TPCUG we use for communication.

Then we have our Web Log, where past and current information about group activities can be found. To participate in the web log, first join BLOGGER (http://www.blogger.com), then ask the page administrator for access to the Team Membership.

Finally, we have our MSN Groups pages: http://groups.msn.com/TampaPCUsersGroup; http://groups.msn/TPCUG; and http://groups.msn.com/BoardofTPCUG. The first two are where the public can find information and links to our group. The last msn group is for Board members and is where online Board meetings are conducted.

Group meeting time and location can also be found at the sites of local newspapers and community web sites http://www.tbo.com and http://www.saintpetersburgtimes.com/.

At this point we began our regular meeting, as it was 7:00 pm. Kevan introduced our speaker, Gene Barlow of User Group Relations now in St George, UT. Gene informed us that their web site, http://

(Minutes……Continued on page 5)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

FACUG Spring Conference

By Mike Hodges, Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group
mphs@aol.com

Bob LaFave and I attended the Florida Association of Computer User Groups, FACUG, conference on Saturday only. We left North Tampa at 7:30 am and we arrived at the conference at 8:45 am, in good time to enjoy breakfast if not being able to concentrate on what Marcy Gunn had to tell us about Smart Computing. Since we have heard her presentations before, I do not believe we missed anything that was new or significant. Bob kept up a continuous dialog in both directions on the journey, and so our time spent driving I-4 seemed to take just minutes. We left Kissimmee at 8:30 pm, and I was home by 9:45 pm, having had a most enjoyable and full day. The breakfast, lunch and dinner were superb, and we as individual attendee members certainly received good value for our $40 each registration fee, even if we only attended for the one day.

The three most significant things I gained from the days event were:

- Our group could save $120 per year if we availed ourselves of the APCUG's (Association of Personal Computer User Groups) free web-start hosting service.
- It was recommended that groups retain paper mail-outs of their newsletters, so that members could use the hardcopy to best remind themselves of upcoming events. I wholeheartedly agree with this premise.
- Florida has a continuing growth in the number of user groups enrolled as members of FACUG. Most of the growth occurs as new gated communities, particularly in the Broward County area, set up computer clubs for their residents. I would surmise that most large urban areas, however, are experiencing a decline in individual memberships from area-wide groups as compared to gated-community groups. The only states in which APCUG noted overall membership growth were in the retirement states of Florida and Arizona.

The sessions I attended were:

- Cyber Mentoring, presented by Dave Dockery
- APCUG Membership Objectives, Vision & Strategy, by Peggy Ireland and Suzy Ball
- Lunch Presentation on Intel's Presentation in a Back Pack, by Dave Whittle
- Building and Maintaining Attendance, by Bob Schneider
- How to increase membership, by Sam Wexler of the Valencia Falls Computer Club in South Florida
- Vendor Panel, moderated by Larry Tyler
- Dinner Presentation, by Microsoft's Richard Katz & Matt McCann.

The presentation skills exhibited by each presenter were outstanding. This made it a pleasure to be in the audience for all the breakout sessions that I attended. Obviously, I was most happy with my selections.

Although I had attended Dave Dockery's session in October on NetMeeting as a means to help members resolve their PC problems remotely, I gained a far better insight at the Spring Conference thanks to the live demonstration in Cyber Mentoring. This was a back-up demo as the Conference Center did not radiate wifi for the initially planned presentation. Unfortunately, NetMeeting is about to become not supportable by Microsoft as they convert us all to Live Meeting for an additional fee. NetMeeting can truly help a coach or an instructor help individuals, including novices, with their problems remotely from the instructor if a broadband internet connection is available and active.

Peggy Ireland's Q&A format was also most informative relating to the benefits afforded APCUG members. Again, a well prepared presentation kept us all most interested in what the APCUG is all about.

Bob Schneider gave us valuable tips on how to ensure our SIG leaders gain the respect of their audience. Prior inspection of the leader's agenda or outline is the key, along with clear diction that keeps material from becoming too dry or archaic. Minimizing technical jargon and detail are critical aspects of a good presentation. Bob himself was dynamic.

The way to membership growth as presented by Sam Wexler was also outstanding. His advice was similar to

(FACUG…….Continued on page 4)

(FACUG…….Continued from page 3)

Bob's. Do not be overly technical if you are to maintain your member's interest at most sessions. It is the novice who will make up about two thirds of the membership. The techies will continue to attend in any event. Limiting the audience to one question per member per meeting was also advised. I am not sure that I can agree with this, however, since some people are much better at asking questions than others.

Gee as to the vendor presentations, I am sorry that I could not experience the Corel girls' presentation at breakfast on Sunday morning, but I have seen enough Digital Studio presentations as demonstrated by Microsoft, even with the lively duo of Dave and Matt at the helm. These products, be they Pinnacle, MS or Corel, keep getting better with each new product.

The vendor handouts or door prizes are generally very useful. Unfortunately, all I got from Microsoft was a free music download. My musical interest is nil; I really had hoped to get a coffee mug as everyone knows that I do drink coffee. Unfortunately although my ticket entitled me to a mug, I dallied towards the end of the line only to find all the mugs were taken already. I got another blue key light from Intel, and this is always useful to have, even if I rarely use it.

As for the Vendor Panel, as last year but even worse this year, there was little value to be gained. These sessions were far better when technical questions filled the forum. As I recall from last year, I was embarrassed to keep hearing the same begging by the audience for vendor freebies, particularly requesting free software. I think this begging does us harm and recommend that the session be limited in the future to truly technical questions or product announcement plans. Dave Whittle was between a rock and a hard place as he was attempting to tell the audience to understand the predicament of the vendors in today's marketplace. His business is User Group Relations. Unfortunately, the retirees cannot change their spots. They do not appreciate that the marketplace is now highly competitive and that unit software prices are these days in the tens of dollars, whereas yesteryear they were in the hundreds of dollars.

Larry, my congratulations to you and your staff for another great conference.◆

Digital Print Order Form

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Despite the prevalence of home PC photo printers, many digital camera owners choose to have prints made at a commercial photo lab for several reasons. They may not have a home photo printer. Commercial quality is better than that of inexpensive home printers. Commercial prints may be more permanent. Last but not least, commercial prints are generally far less expensive per print, often in the range of 17 to 20 cents each for high quality 4x6 prints. Even the common 29-cent price often compares favorably to the per print cost of paper and ink at home. As for convenience, one hour commercial service is often available.

In order to facilitate ordering digital prints in a standard easy to use manner, a consortium of leading camera makers–Canon, Kodak, Fuji and Matsushita (Panasonic)–developed the DPOF (Digital Print Order Form) Standard in 1999. In 2000, version 1.10 was released and has been licensed to more than 80 companies, including most other camera makers, commercial photo finishers, and for use in other digital imaging devices. Many PC photo printers also accept the standard information automatically.

The key features of DPOF are as follows:
Settings are made on your camera and DPOF information is stored on your memory chip (digital media) attached to the image and is downloaded with the photo for processing. Some software will allow you to edit or add DPOF settings to photos residing on your PC.

For DPOF-enabled labs and printers you can specify:

- Number of prints desired
- Print date on photo
- Multiple Image Print (multiple pictures can be printed on the same sheet)
- Specific Size Print (different sizes for printed images).

For DPOF-enabled cell phones, projectors, or other

(DPOF…….Continued on page 8)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

www.usergroupstore.com, is organized into six divisions:

The first division is Organization Products, which includes Acronis Disk Director Suite 9.0, Discovering Your Hard Drive Educational CD, Optimal Desktop Pro 4.0 and Spearit Move Me 2.5.

The second division, Backup Products, includes Acronis True Image 8.0 and Backing Up Your Hard Drive Educational CD.

The third division, Security Products, includes WhiteCanyon Secure Clean 4.0, WhiteCanyon Wipe Drive 3.0/Media Wiper, WhiteCanyon My Password Vault, Acronis Privacy Expert Suite 8.0 and Spearit Associate This.

The remaining divisions–Photo/Video Products, Text/Office Products, and Accessories–were not covered this evening. Gene demonstrated the products in the first three divisions, stressing the importance of backing up your hard drive weekly using incremental backups that use relatively little disk space and can be done very quickly. He recommends hard drive backup be done on an external hard drive using a USB 2 connection.

Gene then answered questions and offered the demonstrated software to our group at a discount from list prices. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Mary & John Evans with giant cabbage

For something a little offbeat, we have one of the giant vegetables from John Evan's site, http://www.alaskabountea.com/.

"John Evans, The World's Giant Vegetable King, …. is a master gardener with 9 world records, 18 Alaska State records, and over 400 first place awards for quality vegetables."

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
New York Public Library Digital Gallery	http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/
Florida Yards & Neighborhoods	http://cfyn.ifas.ufl.edu/water.html
Skype - Free Internet telephony	http://skype.com/
MedlinePlus Health Information	http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/
GUIdebook Graphical User Interfaces	http://www.aci.com.pl/mwichary/guidebook/index
History of the graphical user interface	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_GUI

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1995

From the April, 1995 Newsletter

SECRETARY'S REPORT
TPCUG MEETING 3/8/95, 6 PM
Ybor Room, Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register

Harvey, our president, called the meeting to order. Comments and information were given regarding SIGs, vendors and miscellaneous.

SIG: March 16,1995, 6 PM Promptly. Microsoft Access. 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast corner of Mapledale and Northdale Boulevards. Reservations are closed due to limited seating. First signup first served! Next SIG--Microsoft Access is same place, April 20, 1995, 6 PM (sharp--Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building). Sign up early. Use Bulletin Board.

March 28, 1995. OS/2. Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/signup.

March 28, 1995, 6 PM, Promptly, SIG Internet. Contact Charles Howe. Seats are available. You can use the BBS to sign up. Promptness is required because security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of the street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone Building. You must enter north end and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock door and escort us to the meeting room.

If you would like to have a particular SIG, let President Bruneau know your interest. President Bruneau wants your opinion. He reads the BBS regularly. Send him a message.

A two-day SIG regarding basics and BBS, etc., is in the talking stages. Connie Kincaid is thinking that the interest in overviews of PCs, DOS, hardware, etc., is strong enough to warrant the effort to bring us this educational and functional SIG. What a treat for us neophytes and for the more advanced. Let Connie and Harvey know of your interest.

Harvey asked for VOLUNTEERS to call non-renewal members to encourage them to continue being a member by paying the low, low dues.

Harvey strengthened the reminder that the goal in 1995 is for every member to bring in at least one new member.

There is a new store in town. CompuAmerica. See the *USER FRIENDLY* newspaper for more information.

Harvey presented Adobe Acrobat. He demonstrated how to download the ACROREAD file and how to read the BITS OF BLUE newsletter through the BBS. He says the software download will take about 15 minutes. You can click anything in BITS OF BLUE; you can go right to the article and then you can print it, even in color if you like. You can click on an article and move it around. Harvey has put in tabs for "hot links". If you want to download BITS OF BLUE instead of receiving it in the mail, notify the Editor. You can use the TPCUG Bulletin Board (BBS) to access it.

TPCUG paid for ADOBE ACROBAT but you can download ACROREAD without license/registration problems.

Harvey plans to put BITS OF BLUE on PRODIGY and AMERICA ONLINE.

Contributions to the Bulletin Board will continue to be accepted.

The Editor of BITS OF BLUE will surely appreciate receiving quality fillers for BITS OF BLUE.

SOFTWARE VENDOR DEMONSTRATION

Mr. Andrew Domnauer, District Sales Manager, CAERE CORPORATION, Atlanta, demonstrated OMNI PAGE AND PAGEKEEPER. CAERE has five OCR products. He stated that OMNI PAGE PROFESSIONAL is a high end product. WORD SCAN and OMNI PAGE are middle line; others are OMNI

(1995……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1995…….Continued from page 6)

PAGE DIRECT and WORD SCAN.

He demonstrated scanning a page with graphics, using different sizes of text and also multiple columns. He emphasized and showed the ease of doing this. He said, "This OCR product holds the format in place" You tell OMNI PAGE the scanner product that you are using and OMNI PAGE recognizes text in 6 to 72 points.

When you bring in text, apply text editor to spell check. OMNI PAGE even reports the "success of the scan accuracy." Graphics sharpen images in an easy format. You can add special effects to your work. The program has the ability to retain or hold the "look and appeal" of the original document. You can save the document in your word processor application such as WordPerfect 6.0. You can fax the image. You can scan and use DEFER OCR to edit at a later time. A feature called 3DOCR helps clarify when the original document is "not too good." PAGEKEEPER requires 7 MB to install and is a database program with OMNI PAGE built in. You can retrieve information from virtually any source. Special dealer price is available to TPCUG members. We are very grateful to Mr. Domnauer and CAERE CORPORATION for the demonstration and for the software that they contributed for door prizes.

COMMENTS by various members for our benefit and edification:

THE TPCUG BARGAIN TABLE will be presented at the MAY meeting. That particular meeting will be across the street from our regular meeting place in the auditorium due to the need HCC has for our May meeting night. Harvey asked us ALL to look around for LEGAL software, hardware, connections, etc., that you might like to contribute. Please look around now! Everybody gains. TPCUG gains!

TURBOTAX and TAXCUT have been reported to have some problems.

MICROSOFT Resource Guide at a cost of $19 is a good source for help with unique problems.

Winners of the door prizes were:

Merle Nicholson	Pen Set
D. A. Clary	T-Shirt
Larry Anders	T-Shirt
Margaret Petros	WINSENS
Sec'y didn't get name	PAGEKEEPER 2.0

Remember our long time friend and contributor to TPCUG Ed Buzza. He has been ill. We have missed Ed's presence.

President Bruneau thanked all for coming. He reminded all to return here (HCC YBOR Campus, ADM Auditorium) April 12, 1995, 6 PM. You will not want to miss DELRINA's presentation. Who knows what great door prizes await TPCUG members. Only members are eligible for opportunities of receiving door prizes. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. Use the BBS. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

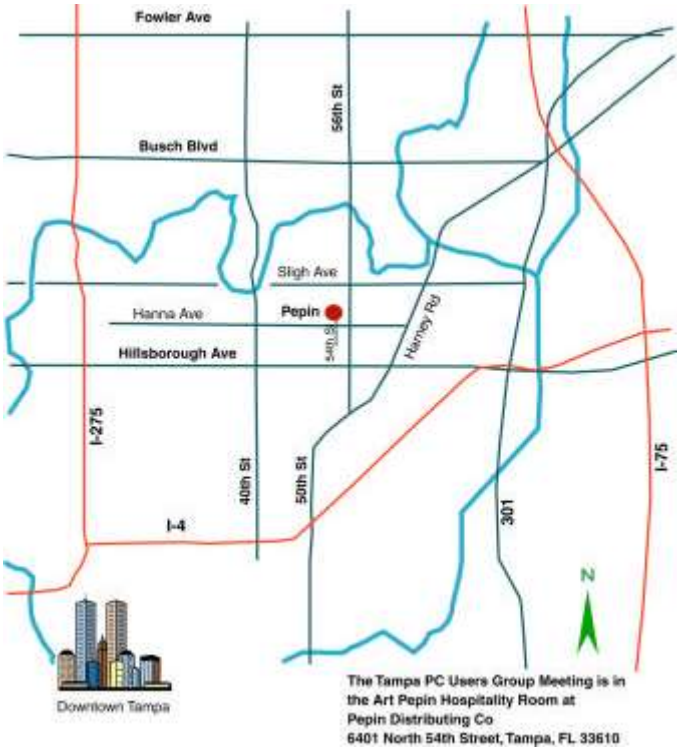
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(DPOF……Continued from page 4)
software or devices you can specify:

- Automatic Transfer (image files can be electronically transmitted to selected e-mail addresses or fax numbers)
- Automatic Play (user can create ``slide shows" of still pictures, audio files and movie files that can be displayed using a digital camera, computer, or electronic display device).

If you have a camera or printer manufactured since 1999, check your manual or online support center to determine if DPOF is available on your model and for specific information on using DPOF with your model. All features may not be available on all DPOF devices.

Complete details on the DPOF Standard are readily available on the Internet, just search for DPOF. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 5 May 2005

Meeting

Greg Boyd from Microsoft

Wednesday, May 11, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Greg Boyd from Microsoft will be presenting current topics from Microsoft. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

We have no contributions from the membership this month for the newsletter other than the minutes from our secretary and the 2004 financial summary from our treasurer. The financial report should have been in last month's newsletter, except that I forgot to include it.

I have several things that I have been looking into in the computer world, but none is at the point of a full article yet. As I mentioned last month, our web site, http://www.tpcug.org, place third in the web site competition at the recent Florida Association of Computer User Groups meeting. That resulted in a copy of **Adobe GoLive CS** for the webmaster--yours truly. I had hoped to get deeply enough into it to be able to write an

(Comments……Continued on page 3)

May Meeting: Serre Murphy with Net Fulfillment Technologies, creators of web sites

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the April Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Mary Sheridan, Member at Large, started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at 6:40 pm. President Kevan Sheridan was not present. Mary raised a recent experience she had with her Toshiba laptop. The cooling fan failed, and she was unable to find a local parts house or dealer who stocked the part. She had to order the part from New York at a cost of $44 plus $36 for shipping. She asked why this is? Merle Nicholson explained that laptops and notebooks are comprised of proprietary components to minimize space and are sold in a very competitive market. These components are not interchangeable and the situation is not likely to change in the foreseeable future.

Several questions were asked about printing out system information, however your Secretary was distracted by the arrival of the evening's presenters and did not comprehend the questions.

At 7:20 pm our program presenters, Kelly Whitelock and Tony Hills were introduced. Kelly and Tony are affiliated with the Mormon Church, and their topic was entitled "Bringing Genealogy To Life". Packets were handed out, which included Pedigree Charts, Family Group Record forms, a Research Log, a list of items to consider in writing your personal history, and a Five-step Procedure for researching your ancestry.

Step One of the procedure was to record what you already know about your family. Step Two was to decide what you want to learn about your family. Step Three was to select the records you will search. It was suggested you first search compiled records (previous research by others), then search original

(Minutes……Continued on page 5)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)
article for this newsletter, but it is so different from Microsoft FrontPage, which I have used for years for web work, that I would have had to drop everything else to find enough time. Perhaps by the next newsletter I will have had time to learn it better.

However, right off the bat, I can tell you that it will not be easy for someone who has not used Adobe products before and is familiar with the FrontPage way of doing things. I have used many Adobe products, but I am having a bit of trouble with it. It appears geared to those who are versed in Adobe's graphical programs. My hope is not to master it so as to use it to manage web sites, but to use it to create graphically rich web pages, since graphics is what Adobe is all about. Then I can bring those pages into my already existent sites.

Two things of note are that GoLive CS2 is now out, so I no longer have the latest version, and in doing a little research on the product I discovered some discontent among users that database connectivity was dropped from the product starting with the CS version. For me that is no problem since I have never used the database connectivity wizards in FrontPage, preferring to roll my own by using Visual Basic script and Active Server Pages, or by using ASP.Net to interface with a database. So, stay tuned to see if I learn enough about the program to write a review. However, that may be a waste of time, since I recently read that Adobe is to purchase Macromedia, the developer of the Dreamweaver web development program, and that may portend a dropping of GoLive in favor of Dreamweaver.

In a different direction, I have also presented two of my **Visual Basic.Net** programs at recent SIGs: One written for the Pocket PC which performs a simple slide show; the other written as a desktop application which allows you to add a time stamp on any photo taken with a digital camera, so that when printed the date and/or time would be visible on the print in whatever position you selected. I could go into a bit of detail about how one does such things. In particular, in the time stamp application I needed to retrieve the date and time a digital photo was taken from what is know as the **EXIF information** in the header of the jpeg file for the photo. By the way, member Merle Nicholson requested the Pocket PC program and member Ron Weinberg requested the time stamp program.

To finish, .I will write briefly about what sort of information goes into the EXIF section of the header. You have camera information, such as Make & Model; you have exposure information, such as Aperture and Shutter speed (listed as Exposure below); and certainly you have the date, which started this programming effort.

Below are the data that I extracted from a photo I took recently. The only thing not put there by the camera when the photo was taken is the Title, which I added using Adobe Photoshop's File Browser feature.

Title	Lizard on cactus in Bayshore yard
Make	NIKON CORPORATION
Model	NIKON D100
Exposure	0.001sec
Aperture	f/7
Program	program normal
Date	2005:05:02 12:16:30
Bias	0.00
Meter	unknown
Light	unknown
Flash	no flash
Focal length	120.00

My Nikon D100 actually creates 59 fields in the header of the image file where for this photo it recorded data in 50 of them. As you can count above, I searched for and extracted only 12 such fields.

VB.Net has methods for extracting this information. However, once it is extracted you then need to know the data type of a particular field to be able to use its information. It turns out that the type could be ASCI, short, rational, long or undefined. To find the data type of a particular field, you need to consult the Exchangeable Image File Format (EXIF 2.2) for digital still cameras of the Japan Electronics and Information Technologies Industries Association (JEITA), which I found in English through a Google search at the Kodak site. Isn't programming useful?◆

Looking Back to 1995

From the May 1995 *Bits of Blue* newsletter

Editor's note: Although not mentioned in the minutes, based on the President's Column from the same newsletter, this was one of those meetings where certain attendees wanted to argue the superior merits of OS/2 over Windows during the presentation, causing a bit of a stir with the presenter caught in the middle. As I recall, there was more than one meeting where the OS/2 vs. Windows argument got a bit heated.

SECRETARY'S REPORT
TPCUG MEETING 4/12/95
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register

President Bruneau called the meeting to order. Comments and information were given regarding SIGs, vendors and miscellaneous. Some members have downloaded BITS OF BLUE. You must have Windows and download Adobe Acrobat Reader to download the BITS OF BLUE. The April issue contained 300 KB. First, you download the reader, then use it to download the BITS OF BLUE NEWSLETTER.

The MAY MEETING will be across the street (north side of street from regular meeting place) in the Performing Arts Building. The bargain table and an excellent program composed of demonstrations, questions and answers regarding many of your concerns, including working through the bulletin board (RBBS) and using the Adobe Acrobat Reader, is planned. Bring your individual questions for which YOU need answers. Come prepared to get those answers to the questions that "you never asked but wished that you had asked." Be prepared to sigh, "I did not know that!" One of the joys of TPCUG is that members are always ready and willing to help each other.

THE TPCUG BARGAIN TABLE will be presented at the MAY meeting. That particular meeting will be across the street from our regular meeting place in the auditorium due to the need HCC has for our May meeting night.

Contribute to the BARGAIN table. Harvey asked us ALL to look around for LEGAL software, hardware, connections, etc. that you might like to contribute. Please look around now! Everybody gains. TPCUG gains!

MICROSOFT Resource Guide at a cost of $19 is a good source for help with unique problems.

May 18,1995, 6 PM, promptly is next Microsoft Access SIG; 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast comer of Mapledale and Northdale Boulevards. One or two may be squeezed in due to limited seating. Be there at door at 6 PM, a few minutes before 6 PM is better. A Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building. Sign up early. Use Bulletin Board. Meeting is the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Instructors and SIG leaders are superb!

April 23, 1995, OS/2 SIG. (Always 4th Tuesday of Month) Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/ signup.

June 6, 1995, 6 PM, promptly, is next Internet SIG. Contact Charles Howe. Seats are available. You can use BBS to sign up. Promptness is required because security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone Building on left. You must enter north end and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock door and escort us to the meeting room. There will be no Internet SIG in May due to scheduling of OS/ 2 on the same 4th date. The next Internet SIG meeting will be the first Tuesday of the Month.

If you would like to have a particular SIG, let President Bruneau know your interest. President Bruneau wants your opinion. He reads BBS regularly. Send him a message. Many have not tried to use the Bulletin Board. Use it, you can't hurt it.

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE SIG. Connie Kincaid has the two day SIG regarding basics and BBS: Hardware, June 27, 1995, 6:30 PM. Software, July 25, 1995 6:30 PM. Place: Reflectone Building. See Internet SIG above for directions, security, etc.

Harvey asked for VOLUNTEERS to call non-renewal members to encourage them to continue being a member by paying the low, low dues. Various reasons were given to the VOLUNTEERS by non-renewals. From "I forgot" to "I lost my interest" and all kinds of good responses in between. Most non-renewals appreciated the call. The responses were helpful.

EACH ONE SIGN ONE. Harvey strengthened the re-

(1995…….Continued on page 6)

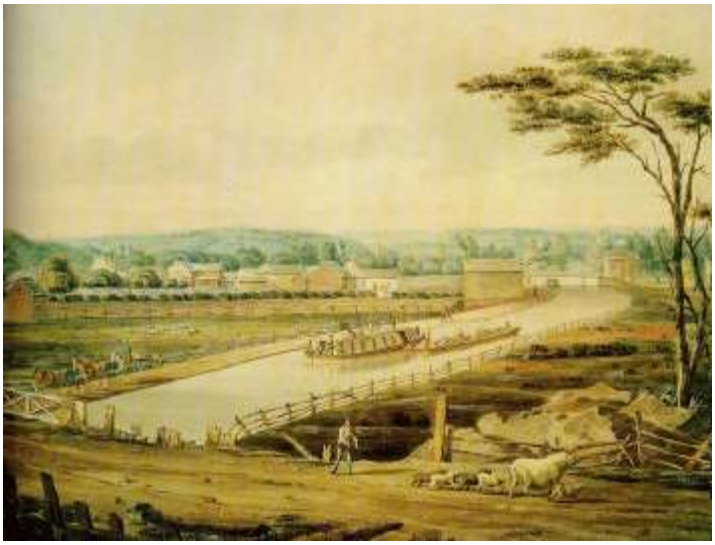
(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

records (birth, marriage, death and census records). Step Four, you should obtain a copy of the records you find and look for facts and clues, recording the results in a log. Finally, Step Five, use and share information you find. When you reach this point, select a new objective based upon what you now know about your family.

Kelly Whitelock instructed us on the use of records at public libraries and outlined the information contained on a page of a census survey. Don't expect to see a census record done within the last 76 years, as, to protect the privacy of the living, this information is not made available. I guess after age 70 you should have nothing to hide, or, having burned the candle at both ends, you are expected to have "kicked the bucket" by then.

Kelly invited members of our group to visit her web site at http://www.tampabayroots.com or to attend future classes on genealogy and family history at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at 2120 W. Fletcher Ave. Other web sites referred to were Ancestry.com, HeritageQuest, Cyndi'sList, Roots.com, immigration web sites and the genealogy section of our local public library's web site, http://www.thpl.org/, at http://www.hcplc.org/hcplc/ig/genealogy_frame.html. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



View on the Erie Canal
by John William Hill

This painting is from the site http://www.eriecanal.org/. The Erie Canal was the engineering marvel of its day. It was completed in 1825 and linked the waters of Lake Erie in the west to the Hudson River in the east and hence to the Port of New York and the Atlantic Ocean.

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Startup Programs Database	http://startup.iamnotageek.com/
Florida Electronic Library	http://www.flelibrary.org/
Open Media Network	http://www.omn.org/
Ghost Towns	http://www.ghosttowns.com/
Butterfly site	http://www.thebutterflysite.com/
The Erie Canal	http://www.eriecanal.org/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(1995.....Continued from page 4)
minder that the goal in 1995 is for every member to bring in at least one new member. Some have already exceeded this goal. Where do you stand? You will be surprised how many people are unaware of how easy it is to get such excellent help. Ask those browsers in the computer store check out line; even your Pastor will want to know. They will not know if you don't ask. Please do; better, bring them.

Harvey reported that you should download the Adobe Acrobat ACROREAD file to be able to download the BITS OF BLUE newsletter through RBBS. ACROREAD download will take about 15 minutes. You can click anything in BITS OF BLUE; you can go right to the article and then you can print it, even in color if you like. You can click on an article and move it around. Harvey has put in tabs for "hot links". If you want to download BITS OF BLUE instead of receiving it in the mail, notify the Editor. You can use TPCUG Bulletin Board (RBBS) to access it.

Financial contributions to Bulletin Board will continue to be accepted, needed, desired and appreciated..

The Editor of BITS OF BLUE will surely appreciate receiving quality fillers for BITS OF BLUE. Some of members have insertions already. Put in your sharing of knowledge, hints, help, etc.

Some members reported receiving BETA WINDOWS 95 ($39). One member reported "running 16 bit and will not change to 32 bit until the final release of WINDOWS 95 comes out."

Tampa College on West Hillsborough is looking for speakers for their PC Users groups. They meet on Saturdays. If you feel that you have something to offer and want to be helpful, give them a call.

SOFTWARE VENDOR DEMONSTRATION-Comments and statements are:

Mr. Hartley Macklin, Manager of User Group Relations, Delrina Corporation, presented Delrina' s several existing and new to-be-released programs. He made an excellent "discount offering" to TPCUG members. "Delrina is the leader in communication and forms products. Delrina has 650 employees in five countries and will be hiring an additional 150 within the next 60 days. Delrina can send out 10,000 faxes for you anywhere in the country. WinFaxPro can be used to download a fax that is awaiting you in your FaxMailBox. This is a Delrina service."

Delrina has Communications Suite "Strategy" (WinFaxPro and WinComPro) for stand alone applications. They are for the mainstream market, i. e., Windows 95 & Macintosh. Applications for OS/2 will be in the future as OS/2 users increase to 20,000,000. WinComPro is for Bulletin Boards. Delrina "is getting a toehold on the Internet." They have Internet Messenger. WinComPro provides for Internet E-Mail. Echo Lake is soon to be released for consumer programs. It is a Scrapbook application for biography, photos, etc.

Hartley gave a BETA copy of Echo Lake to the TPCUG Editor for review. He donated several software products to the TPCUG door prize program. He said, "If you can print it in Windows, you can fax it with WinFaxPro. There are no exceptions regardless of the application. Faxing from DOS will not work. It must be a Windows application that will print in Windows. He demonstrated the ease of use with Microsoft Word, whether faxing to one or to several recipients. You can select style and other features. You can "grab, drag and drop" from one phone book to another. In addition, mail can be sent to those in the address book who are selected to receive mail.

WinFaxPro has menu and tool bars. The "item log" manages the folders with choices and icons. Right mouse button capabilities speeds use. WinFaxPro "Viewer" cleans up fax "dirt" from faxes; it will even add your signature. You can doodle on your fax or draw on it, etc. He demonstrated using OCR. He took Microsoft Word, created a fax and turned the fax back to Microsoft Word. You can hook up any TWAIN scanner and scan a printed document and fax it from WinFaxPro. He says the current WinFaxPro is a tremendous improvement over WinFaxPro 3.0.

Delrina PerForm Designer for Windows was released in December 1994. "It is so easy to use; it is a 'form for idiots' ". It shows you what you see before you get it. It is easy to put in your logo just like you did your signature. The special to TPCUG members present that night only was $39; not the suggested retail price of $129. He presented several other special "one night only" offerings. Several of us took advantage of them.

Many COMMENTS by various members for our benefit and edification were shared.

Winners of the door prizes were:

WinSense	Gary Peterson
Bag	Gary Ennis
Corell CD	Gary Ennis

(1995.....Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

TPCUG Calendar Year 2004 Treasurer's Financial Statement dated 6-March-2005

Balance on deposit as of 01-January 2004		$4,838.02
Income		
Memberships	$ 885.00	
Door Prizes	$ 190.00	
Amazon.com commissions	$ 19.44	
Pay Pal Tests	$ 0.63	
Total Income	$1,095.07	
Expensed		
Newsletter Mail-outs Postage	$ 368.40	
Liability Insurance	$ 339.00	
FACUG Conference Registrations	$ 156.00	
Web Site hosting fee	$ 119.40	
Door Prize-Photo Software	$ 99.00	
Newsletter Paper costs	$ 77.59	
Florida Incorporation fee	$ 61.25	
Association of Personal Computer User Groups fee	$ 50.00	
US Post Office Box fee	$ 48.00	
Florida Association of Computer User Groups fee	$ 25.00	
Mail expenses/misc.	$ 24.68	
Total Expenses	$1,368.32	
Net		$ (273.25)
Balance as of 31-December 2004		$4,564.77

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

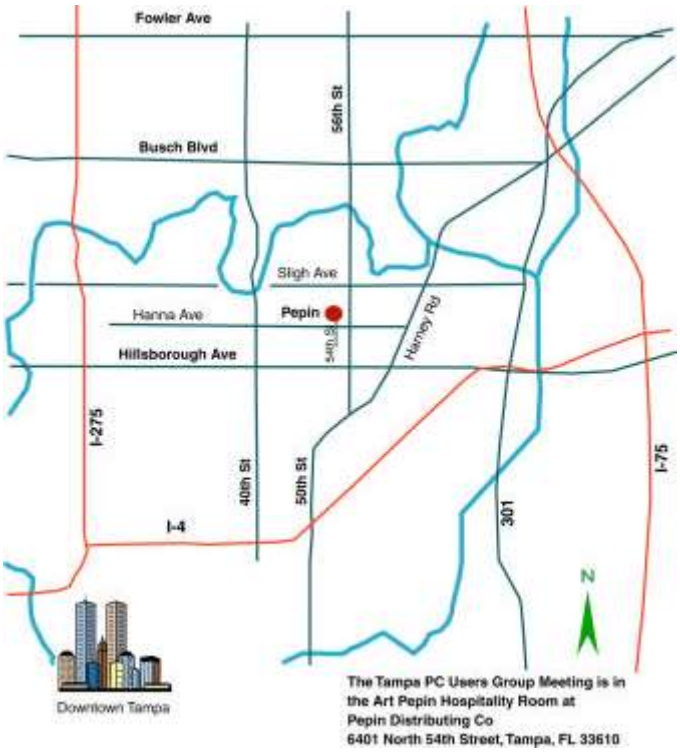
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(1995…….Continued from page 6)

Delrina Com. Suite	Richard Morris
Delrina Com. Suite	Carol Robinson
Delrina Com. Suite	A. Morgan
Delrina PerForm	Bob Davis
Delrina PerForm	Merle Nicholson
T-Shirt	Frank Kinsinger

Thank you Hartley Macklin for the presentations and door prizes.

President Bruneau thanked all for coming. He reminded all to return across the street for the meeting on May 10, 1995, 6 PM. You will not want to miss the exciting BAR-GAIN TABLE and the help round-tables. If you are not looking for help, come on, you will learn something anyway. If you can help others, this is your chance. Who knows what great door prizes await TPCUG members. Only members are eligible for opportunities of receiving door prizes. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. Each one sign one. Enjoy the BBS. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 6 June 2005

Meeting

Serre Murphy
Net Fulfillment Technologies

Wednesday, June 8, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Serre Murphy from Net Fulfillment Technologies will tells us about creating web sites. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I was promised a couple of articles for this month's newsletter, and one was actually delivered thanks to Jenny Lind Olin. I think the other one will be here for a later newsletter. So I am going to still have to write a bit myself this month. It won't be more detail about Adobe GoLive, which I wrote briefly about last month, since I didn't find time to look further into it. Instead, I will cover a USB video capture device and its accompanying software.

We should thank Doug Mullis for handling the job of securing speakers for us. It is good to have new people taking up such roles in the group. And we certainly need to thank Bob LaFave for helping Doug by contacting the Microsoft people who gave last month's presentation. ◆

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July Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
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TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the May Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

We skipped the usual SIG portion of our meeting due to Microsoft being our presenter for the evening. Pepin turned on the beer taps and our guests brought the pizza. A meeting not soon to be forgotten! John Witmer, our Vice President, served as Sgt-at-Arms to make sure no one over-indulged. Actually John pulled double duty and conducted the meeting as our President, Kevan Sheridan, was without a speaking voice.

Mr. Jerry Harris was introduced as a visitor. We hope Jerry will be back. William LaMartin asked members to please submit articles for the newsletter. None has been received in some time. Certainly things are happening out there that our members would like to read about. Please make the Editor's job easier by sending articles.

Our much-missed treasurer, Mike Hodges, was present and plans to be at our meetings until fall classes resume. John Witmer introduced the group officers. Doug Mullis asked that members wear their name tags at the meetings to help him put faces to names.

Normal business being concluded, John Witmer introduced the Microsoft representatives, Greg Boyd and Blain Barton. A little later in the evening, Russ Fustino from Microsoft also joined us.

Topics focused on Internet security and new software coming out in the next couple of months. Business Contact Manager, Version II will be available in June. Security cannot be overemphasized, as there are lots of nasty things out there. It is hoped everyone has Service Pack 2 installed by now on XP. Updates are released the second Tuesday of each month. SP 2 has a removal tool for malicious software that scans your computer every time you download updates.

A good firewall and anti-spy ware are also important to protect your PC. Without anti-spy ware, your computer

(Minutes……Continued on page 4)

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Dazzle DVC 90 and Pinnacle Studio QuickStart

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



The Dazzle DVC 90 is a USB 2.0 Video capture device. It imports video from an analog source (camcorder, VCR, DVD or TV). To additionally import from a digital source (and have the video encoding done by hardware instead of software), you need to spend more and purchase the DVC 150. The accompanying software that allows you to turn your captured video into a "movie" is Pinnacle's Studio QuickStart, a scaled-back version of their Studio Version 9.

Creating a "movie" is a three step process: Capturing, Editing and Generating the Movie. I will only describe using an analog source, since I do not have a digital source or the digital capture hardware.

To capture, you select the Dazzle DVC as the source, select the capture quality, frame aspect ratio (4:3 or wide screen) and the name of the file to which the capture is saved. You may also indicate how frequently a thumbnail of the current scene is created and added to the ever growing filmstrip of such thumbnails. If you choose automatic scene detection, the software will create a new thumbnail whenever it detects a change in scene. In my first project, described below, I found that the automatic scene detection produced very few such thumbnails, so I switched to having thumbnails created at intervals of every five seconds. If I had desired I could have set it to create a new scene thumbnail whenever I clicked the mouse. Once all settings are made, you start the source running and click the capture button of the software.

One other setting that I did not mention allows you to view a preview screen of the actual video as it is being captured. The recommendation is not to do this, since it may interfere with the capture, so that was my choice. And having a thumbnail created every five seconds lets you know very well what is happening.

When you have captured your video material, it is then time to edit it. This is where all those thumbnails come in. In editing mode, you have the thumbnails laid out in the video scenes section of the Album window in the top half of the screen and in the story board below that in the bottom part of the screen called the Movie Window. To include any scene in the final movie, you simply drag a copy of the scene from the top window to the bottom story board. If all you want is to make a movie of everything you captured with no modifications, you would simply drag all the scenes to the bottom and then go the final step of generating the movie.

Since my project was to port two 21-minute videos professionally created for our neighborhood to the neighborhood web site, I wanted to break each into either three or four separate parts and then save them as Windows Media Player files that could then be streamed to the site visitor's browser. File size was the reason for breaking each video up into several parts: I didn't want the files to be much more than 10 MB each. As it turned out, one video broke down into four wmv files totaling 39 MB and the other video was broken down into three wmv files totaling 34.5 MB.

To create one of the short video segments, I selected the collection of thumbnails that contained the portion of the video that I wanted. I could then view this in the preview screen, with my primary concern being to start it and stop it exactly where that should occur. To do this, I switched the view of the bottom half of the screen from story board to time-line view. To get the exact ending of this segment of the video, I started it a little before the end, and, while viewing it in the preview window, noted the exact time that it ended. I then split that five-second long scene there and deleted the remaining portion of it. Similarly I got the exact starting point.

Once I had the collection of scenes that I wanted, I moved on to the generation of the movie and chose to create a file that could be streamed from the Internet and viewed with

(Video ……..Continued on page 4)

(Video……..Continued from page 3)
Windows Media Player. The program then works away for some time and produces the file in wmv format. Other output formats are rm, Real Video for the web and avi and mpeg for playing on computers. You may also save it to a CD as DVC, or to a DVD in the DVD format.

In the above, I added nothing to the video. I simply captured it and then used the software to turn it into Windows Media files that could be viewed on the Internet. They were also sized so as not to take up excessive bandwidth, with a screen size of 320 x 240. If I had been capturing and editing a home video or collection of such videos, I would probably have wanted to add background sound clips, transitions between scenes and titles. All of this is possible with the software and the included transitions. For sounds, some effects are included, or you may use your own sound files. You may also include still images. In addition to the included transitions, you may purchase additional ones. For my next project, I will see if I can use all these features.

InstantDVD Recorder software that allows you to capture video and write it to a DVD as it is being captured was also included, but I chose not to install it. It is something I am not at this time interested in, and the requirements for the computer involved – 2.2 GHz Pentium 4 – exceeded my laptop's capabilities.

To see the videos I captured, go to http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org, click the HPPI button and then the Hyde Park History link. Pinnacle systems is found at http://www.pinnaclesys.com. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
will run slower and slower as spy ware accumulates. You can install multiple anti-spy ware tools, as one will catch things another misses; however, multiple firewalls will conflict with each other. Microsoft offers a free anti-spy ware, or you can also get Ad-aware or Spybot. Microsoft is also coming out with a new anti-virus.

Greg Boyd demonstrated some small business software, such as Business Contact Manager. Russ Fustino distributed a DVD entitled *MSDN Events DVD-ROM* and indicated he was available to make presentations to user groups and even SIG's. Greg is moving on to a new assignment, so we may not see him for a while.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

Being Frugal with Google

By Jenny Lind Olin, Tampa PC Users Group
jlolin@tampabay.rr.com

Do you know all there is to know about the world's #1 search engine? Probably not! However, of the people questioned in a recent survey, 92% said they knew and understood the capabilities of all the search engines. Which group are you in?

Did you know you can enter your telephone number, and your name and address will be the result or whatever is in the phone book directory? Try it. Interesting? Cell phone number--not yet!

On Friday, May 5th, I attended a presentation given by Golden Compass, Inc., http://www.Goldencompass.com, titled "Hidden Google Treasurers of the Internet" at the University of South Florida Learning in Retirement (LIR) Lunch and Learn. They listed eight hints of more effective use of Google in the home and/or office. They were:

1. Quotations / Everybody Knows Bartlett was Right!

Use quotation marks around phrases that belong together. For example, to search for Jenny Lind and not get every Jenny and every Lind but only "Jenny Lind" you use quotation marks. Swedish Nightingale or Baby Furniture? You will find this hint important when doing searches other than just search engines. This is not the best example, but I still reduced the number of choices by 80% when I used quotation marks.

Results 1 - 10 of about 751,000 for Jenny Lind [definition]. (0.11 seconds)
Results 1 - 10 of about 149,000 for "Jenny Lind" [definition]. (0.35 seconds)

2. Google Tabs / Everybody knows about Google Tabs

Right above the Google search box you will find the Google Tabs: Web Images Groups News Froogle Local

If you just want a photo of Anna Kournikova, be sure to use the "Images" Tab on Google. If you just want the latest news stories on Anna use the "News" Tab.

Froogle is the shoppers tab: **Results 1 - 10 of about 98,600 for Replacement Cover Canvas for Directors**

(Google……..Continued on page 5)

(Google…….Continued from page 4)

Chair. (0.22 seconds) This is what I wanted: Replacement Cover Canvas for Directors Chair (ROUND STICK)

3. Preferences / Have it Your Way – Sit, Speak, Roll Over

Click the Preferences tab to make Google behave – or misbehave! Get your results in English or Chinese, or maybe your "other" language is Pig Latin. If you have children using the computer or you are just prudish, you can use strict filtering to filter both explicit text and explicit images. You can also choose to not filter your search results.

4. Alerts / All the News that's Fit To Get

Click the "More" tab to go to "Alerts" under "Google Services." Create a Google Alert. Select HTML or text e-mails. Select the type and how often you want to receive the alerts.

5. New Meaning to Modern Math / It's A Bird, It's a Plane, It's a Calculator!

No need for a disguise, Google is Super (number) man. Now you can help your third grader with math homework.
Try this equation: 8 * 4789 =
Did you get 38312?

These sample queries demonstrate the utility and power of this new feature:

- 5+2*2

(Google…….Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



Billy Bowlegs in his Cornfield
1919

This photo is from the Florida on Florida section of the site http://www.flelibrary.org/.

Billy Bowlegs III, a descendent of his famous Seminole ancestor of the same name was photographed by John Kunkel Small on the Indian Prairie west of Lake Okeechobee, FL in 1919.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Net Fulfillment Technologies (presenter)	http://www.nfti.net/
Brooklyn Daily Eagle Online (1841-1902)	http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle/
Automatic CS Paper Generator	http://pdos.csail.mit.edu/scigen/
Reclaiming the Everglades 1884 - 1834	http://everglades.fiu.edu/reclaim/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1995

From the June 1995 *Bits of Blue* newsletter

SECRETARY'S REPORT
TPCUG MEETING 5/10/95, 6 PM
Minutes and Comments by Brace Register, Secretary

Many of our members and visitors enjoyed the TPCUG Bargain Table. The efforts of the donors and purchasers are much appreciated by all the members The President thanked all for contributions of items and contributions from your purchases. He stated that we might do the TPCUG BARGAIN TABLE again in December 1995.

After considerable and adequate time, President Bruneau called the meeting to order. Comments and information were given regarding SIGs, vendors and miscellaneous. Several comments and questions were raised and answered. Harvey asked for comments from those who have downloaded BITS OF BLUE. (FYI: You must have Windows and download Adobe Acrobat Reader to download the BITS OF BLUE. The April issue contained 300 KB. First, you download the reader, then use it to download the BITS OF BLUE Newsletter.)

The JUNE MEETING TPCUG will be back at our regular meeting place, the HCC Auditorium - Ybor Room.

SIGS: MICROSOFT ACCESS: June 15 (3rd Thursday), 1995, 6 PM, promptly, at 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast corner of Mapledale and Northdale Boulevards. One or two may be squeezed in due to limited seating. Be there at door at 6 PM, a few minutes before 6 PM is better. A Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building. Sign up early. Use Bulletin Board. Meeting is the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Instructors and SIG leaders are superb!

OS/2: (Always 4th Tuesday of Month) Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/sign-up. (Read the SIG information page.)

INTERNET: June 6, 1995, 6 PM Contact Charles Howe. Seats are available. You can use BBS to sign up. Promptness is required because security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of the street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone building on left. You must enter north end of the building and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock door and escort us to the meeting room. The next, and thereafter, SIG Internet meeting will be the first Tuesday of the Month.

President Bruneau wants your opinion. If you would like to have a particular SIG, let him know your interest. He reads BBS regularly. Send him a message.

The Bulletin Board is easy to use. You cannot mess it up. Try it whether member or non-member of TPCUG. Many have not tried to use the Bulletin Board. Use It, you can't hurt it. Check out the HUMOR Board, also while you are on.

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE: Connie Kincaid has the two day SIGs regarding basics and BBS: Hardware, June 27, 1995, 6:30 PM. Software, July 25, 1995 6:30 PM. Place: Reflectone Building. See SIG Internet above for directions, security, etc. Check with Connie for reservations. If it is filled, ask her about a repeat.

DESKTOP SIG is in the planning stage for August.

EACH ONE SIGN ONE goal in 1995. Harvey reminded us that the goal is for every member to bring at least one new member. Just ask whom you casually meet in places of business. If someone asks you a question while you are browsing the computer store, acquaint them with the benefits of TPCUG. What did your neighbor say when you invited them? You didn't. Well bring them next time on June 14, 1995. Bring a whole carload; they will thank you for being a good neighbor.

Use of the Bulletin Board and a demonstration of Adobe Acrobat were presented. A Q & A session was lively and helpful, even for those of us who did not ask questions. We learned also. Kevin Sheridan, SYSOP, showed a tree of files on the RBBS. He noted the new EXPRESS mail file. Over 144 files related to messages are available. He accessed the RBBS so that we could follow the steps on the overhead screen as he walked through the prompts and responses. Mail door is working perfectly, but 255 lines continued to lock up the system. Kevin installed SILVER EXPRESS to solve the problem so that messages of 255 or more can be handled.

Some comments on this and that were given. The RBBS Menu has a different color combination than previously. Al Poole, Asst. SYSOP, has done an excellent job on the system. Kevin walked through BULLETINS Menu. We watched bulletins retrieval. Files have been categorized. You can change your color setting by using Utilities Menu on the RBBS (Bulletin Board main menu). Kevin recommended that we use Z-MODEM Protocol for download. Upload will ask you for that information each time. You can use numbers rather than names of "doors", i.e., TQM door is the 1st. Type in the number of mail conference to turn on that conference. RIPTERM.4 is RIPTERM communication program to download; go to files. RIPTERM iallows the use of a mouse. All uploads on RBBS are scanned for virus before accepting upload. “Express System” explains the RBBS and how it works. When TQM or EXPRESS are packing mail, your screen may look as if nothing is happening but the RBBS is packing the mail. Just wait it out. Downloading messages shows a spinning propeller as it packages messages. Message numbers in series should be separated by a comma or a space in between. Sending a message to (ALL) exposes the messages or questions to everyone. The phone numbers to the Bits of Blue BBS are (813) 239-3704 and (813) 237-4997. In uploading, give one filename and

(1995…….Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

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Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Google…….Continued from page 5)

- 2^20
- sqrt(-4)
- half a cup in teaspoons
- 160 pounds * 4000 feet in Calories

6. Homonymic homonymically Correct / We take Cache, Credit Cards and …

Some people still insist on taking "Cache!" Do you ever get those annoying "Page Not Found" messages? Go back, then click on "Cached" to see the page (and as an added bonus – each of your search terms is selected in a different color!) Google takes a snapshot of each page examined as it crawls the web and caches these as a back-up in case the original page is unavailable. The "Cached" link will be missing for sites that have not been indexed, as well as for sites whose owners have requested we not cache their content.

7. Specifically Searching / Hack your Way to Google Success

Mother always told me the importance of a few choice words! Super Searcher: **intitle:"Bilbo Baggins"** will target your results to the web sites that specifically deal with your search term. Super-Dooper Searcher: **intitle:"Stonewall Jackson"site:edu** will not only target you into Stonewall Jackson web pages, but also return only academic results from education sites.

8. Download Free and Easy to Use Software / Google Really is Everywhere!

Digital photo software that is **FREE** and **Easy to Use**?

Get the New **Picasa 2** enhanced photo editing & organizing features, CD creation and more free at http://www.picasa.com,!

"Google is my rapid-response research assistant. On the run-up to a deadline, I may use it to check the spelling of a foreign name, to acquire an image of a particular piece of military hardware, to find the exact quote of a public figure, check a stat, translate a phrase, or research the background of a particular corporation. It's the Swiss Army knife of information retrieval." – Gary Trudeau

If you found nothing new in this article, click on the **more** tab selection and check out **Google Services**. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 4)

Thank you Microsoft for an informative program and Bob LaFave for making the arrangements. The meeting adjourned about 8:40 pm. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
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First Class Mail

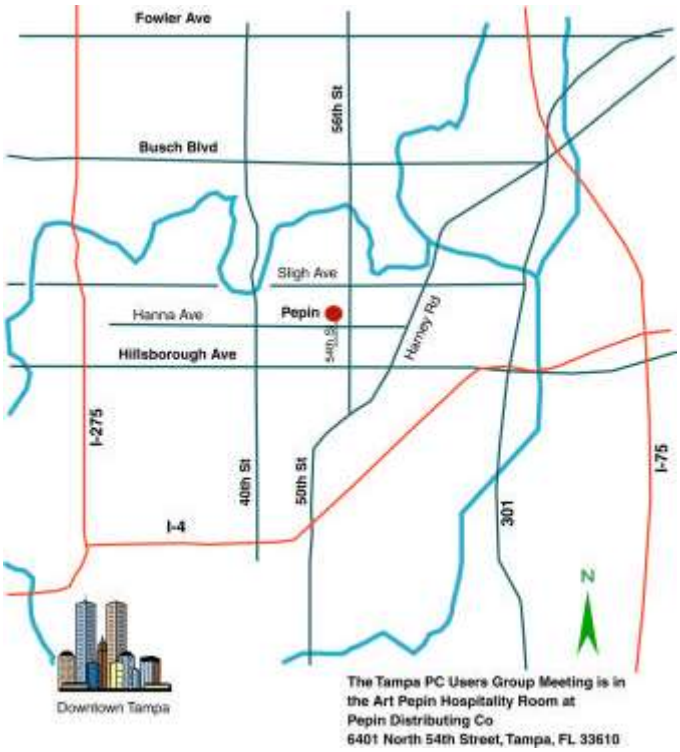
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(1995…….Continued from page 6)
short description, then go into upload. Harvey has a directory called UPLOAD. He enters files there for upload. (Me too, I'll bet you do or will).

Harvey demonstrated ADOBE ACROBAT ACROREADER 2.0. He demonstrated the download of BITS OF BLUE. He installed categories in a new left hand column. He inserted Quick Tabs. Harvey is making BITS OF BLUE available to TAMPA BAY ONLINE. You can click on anything that shows in blue text and then ZOOM ADOBE ACROBAT ACRO-READER will download other information, e.g., New York Times when you are on the Internet.

Winners of the door prize OS/2 WARP: Ever hear of "COALS TO NEWCASTLE"? John Lucas, OS/ 2 WARP SIG Instructor, won the software. Congratulations, John!

President Bruneau reminded all to return across the street to the HCC Administrative Auditorium for meeting on June 14,1996, 6 PM. Who knows what great door prizes await TPCUG members. Only members are eligible for opportunities of receiving door prizes. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. Each one sign one. Enjoy the BBS. ◆



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Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 7 July 2005

Meeting

William LaMartin
VB .Net Programming & Digital Photography

Wednesday, July 13, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will present examples of Visual Basic .Net Programming and then on a different topic present some aspects of digital photography work. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This month I am the presenter, and I will talk on two topics that consume a good bit of my time--programming in Visual Basic .Net and Digital Photography with Photoshop.

In the VB.Net section, I hope to give examples of how to program for the Web, the Windows desktop and the Pocket PC. VB .Net is a far more powerful programming language than the old Visual Basic, the howls of protest from a segment of VB users notwithstanding.

In the digital photography section I will give examples of photos I have taken with my digital cameras and how you may modify or improve them in Adobe Photoshop. ◆

August Meeting: Linspire - a Linux based desktop presented by Merle Nicholson

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the June Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:45 in the absence of Member at Large Mary Sheridan who had injured her foot in a kitchen mishap.

Bob recommended we try the Google Picasa photo-handling program that can be downloaded from the Internet. It is not a full photo editor, but is easy to use, to download and to organize your images.

Bob announced the upcoming AMD Road Show being presented June 14th at the local Hard Rock hotel. This is a free presentation if you can make it starting at 3:00pm.

Our regular meeting commenced at 7:05 pm presided over by our President Kevan Sheridan. Kevan called attention to the fact our treasurer Mike Hodges was at our meeting this evening and that members should see him for nametags, also for dues and membership renewal. Mike said that during the summer he would be able to be at our meetings.

Kevan advised the group that Intel offers a canned program for building your own state-of-the art computer for a price of $999. They supply the components (less the monitor). Phase I is a seminar done at a regular meeting (tentatively our November meeting) at which the program is presented and final orders placed. Phase II is the assembly workshop scheduled by us (not a regular meeting). To start this process, we need at least one person to place an order and the other members to express a desire to attend the sessions. Ed White said he was interested in the program and would place the initiating order. Members said they would support the program.

(Minutes……Continued on page 7)

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New Keyboards And Notebooks as a Desktop Replacement

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

This should be a short article on two keyboards I've purchased, both fairly different from the normal, and also some advice on the use of notebooks as a primary PC and the hazards.

Microsoft Keyboard Elite for Bluetooth
This is a fairly new keyboard, and somewhat hard to find in a retail store. It follows the most recent pattern of layout as Microsoft's other "Elite" keyboards. It's wireless and uses Bluetooth for communicating to the PC. It comes with a Bluetooth USB plug-in, which is about 1-1/2 inches in length.



The USB device can plug into the back of your PC and still communicate just fine with the keyboard and mouse in the front. There is a very small instruction sheet that comes with it that works perfectly if you follow it exactly.

The key layout differs quite a lot from normal. For instance the "Home, End, Page Up, Page Down" cluster of keys is entirely different. It has buttons for multimedia devices, sound - mute and volume, buttons to launch My Documents, My Pictures, your Mail Client, the Internet Browser, Calculator, Sleep, My Favorites, and more. The row of keys that is normally F1 - F12 is also a variety of functions within Windows programs, such as Reply, Forward, Send, New, Open and Close. There is an "F Lock" button to make those keys F1 - F12 when you need that. Notice on the left is a wheel that duplicates the mouse wheel. Both this wheel and the mouse wheel do horizontal scrolling by moving it side-to-side.

All this is surprisingly easy to get used to. I thought that the "home-end, PageUp, PageDown" cluster would throw me for sure, but it really did not. I like this keyboard so much I bought a second one. The large palm rest is a thin rubber. It's comfortable and not removable. I especially like the freedom that wireless gives me, and removing some of the wire clutter from the PC is a bonus, too. It would make a perfect keyboard and mouse for a Notebook Desktop replacement. Never mind that it's larger than a notebook.

Now the downside. First, it's big – really big. It measures 19-3/4 x 10-1/2 x 2-1/2 inches thick. It really needs some desk space. The other disadvantage is that it works in Windows, Period. If you have a more recent motherboard that gives you "Legacy USB Keyboard Support," that's fine, just don't expect this keyboard to work until Windows is active. So it's useless for the F8 menu to get Safe mode, and you have no keyboard to change the BIOS. Just don't throw your old PS/2 keyboard away, because you'll eventually need it.

Microsoft Keyboard Elite for Bluetooth and Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer for Bluetooth. $150 retail, $130 mail order (Try http://www.NewEgg.com)

Adesso Wireless SlimTouch Keyboard Wireless WKB-4000
This is another wireless keyboard, and it's tiny. It's just 8 1/2" x 12", and 3/4" thick. It has a touchpad instead of a mouse. My wife uses it for her desk. The desk is in the living room, and she doesn't want a keyboard sitting out, so she puts this in the desk drawer to hide it. We had a nice – but very old – similar infrared keyboard that was going flaky on us, so this was a perfect replacement.

This is a really beautifully made, unusual looking key-

(Keyboard & Notebooks…….Continued on page 4)

(Keyboard & Notebooks…….Continued from page 3)
board.



It is wireless, runs at 2.4GHz and communicates with its own proprietary USB transmitter. There is a vertical area on the right side of the touchpad that functions the same as a scroll mouse. It really works great. The layout is about the same as a notebook keyboard. If you need a keypad, and lots of keys, don't look here. It does have Windows keys and a Function key, similar to notebooks.

If you search for Adesso products, you'll find various Adesso computer peripheral devices for sale on the internet (for instance CompUSA and Amazon), but not this keyboard. I ordered it directly from them at http://www.adesso.com. And if you're used to the fine Internet shopping, feedback, tracking and emails that, say, Buy.com, Amazon.com and NewEgg.com all give you, you'll be disappointed with Adesso. After I ordered, I wanted the tracking number so we'd be home to receive it, and they wouldn't answer my email. The website has a place for it when you look up your account, but it wasn't there. My wife called them; they didn't have it and said they'd get it and call back. They didn't call back, and it was delivered the next day via FedEx. Actually it was shipped and delivered pretty fast, but you're in the dark all the way.

And then we had trouble with it. It has a sleep mode where it goes to battery savings mode after 10 minutes. And it would rarely wake up. Usually I had to pop a battery out of it to reset it, and it'd be fine until it went into sleep mode again. So I sent an email to Adesso's support the same day we received it, and I sent another two days later; no reply; ever.

I did phone them just before their closing at 5PM PST, and got through to them fairly quickly. The support person said they have gotten several reports of the problem and if I'd look at their online FAQ, there's a solution. I said I didn't see any, but he explained he had just posted it 45 minutes earlier. OK. What it needs is NiMH batteries – four AAA nickel-metal hydride rechargeable batteries of at least 750MAH capacity. And he said he'd send me some when they get some in, maybe two weeks. Give him my address, because he couldn't look up my account, even though I had the Adesso customer number.

We didn't want to wait two weeks, so we went to Radio Shack, which I knew handled them, and bought four and a charger. Hold onto your hats here - $20 for four batteries and $13 for a charger.

But it works just fine. We're absolutely delighted with it, in spite of the problems.

Adesso Wireless SlimTouch Keyboard Wireless WKB-4000

$129.99 – keyboard
$12.32 – S&H
$33 + tax – Batteries and chargers

You add it up, I don't want to.

Notebooks as a desktop replacement

You may be aware that notebook sales in the US have exceeded sales for desktops. Notebooks are increasingly replacing desktop PC's as a person's primary computer. It's partly a result of the changing business climate where people are spending more of their personal time working at home. A notebook makes some sense; it can travel back and forth to work, and it can also float around the house wirelessly connected so you don't have to be isolated from other family members.

But the notebook is not designed to be a desktop replacement. The physical layout is really unsuitable for extended periods of time. Think about it. The keyboard and screen are attached. Something has to give. Either the screen is in a really bad place or the keyboard is or both are, and it's causing repetitive stress injuries to the hands and wrists, and neck, back

(Keyboard & Notebooks…….Continued on page 5)

(Keyboard & Notebooks…….Continued from page 4)

and spinal injuries due to improper posture. It can't be helped; the design is fixed, at least until the system unit can communicate with a detachable screen. That's coming, but that's years away.

There are a couple of ways to improve the situation if you must use a notebook for extended periods. First, get a couple of sets of keyboards and mice for all the locations you may land; home and work. Then get a stand for the notebook that gets the screen higher up so the top of the screen is just below eye level. A very good alternative is to buy LCD monitors, and just pretend it's not a notebook at all. It's an expense, that's for sure, but you really don't want an operation on hands and wrists for carpal tunnel, either!



HP has a couple of interesting solutions, one shown here. It's a stand, and wireless keyboard and mouse. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Georgia Historical Society
Savannah

This photo is from the site http://www.pbase.com/savannahga/, a large collection of photos taken mostly in the historic part of Savannah, GA by Jim Cochran. The direct link to the gallery of photos is http://www.pbase.com/savannahga/gallery01.

It is a beautiful of city, and if you can't visit in person, this is a good substitute. However, it does not provide any fresh pralines which a real visit would.

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Process Library	http://www.processlibrary.com/
Savannah Photos	http://www.pbase.com/savannahga
Ancestral Author	http://www.ancestralauthor.com/
LaMartin.com (Presenter's site)	http://www.lamartin.com

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1995

From the July 1995 *Bits of Blue* newsletter

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
By Harvey Bruneau

June Presentation - I was disappointed when Landmark notified me that they were not going to be able to present at our June meeting. With only a short notice before the meeting, it was not possible to schedule another vendor. Although he never got a chance to do his presentation, I want to thank our own Tom Cone for volunteering to do a presentation. As usual I got carried away with myself and dominated the meeting with my Win95 presentation. I can't stop myself sometimes. I certainly hope that those of you in attendance got as much out of the presentation as I did.

Help Needed - In my column last month I mentioned that we were looking for a replacement newsletter editor. This individual will take over the duties from Marylee for the 1996 year. However, we would like to get someone on-board as soon as possible so that we can begin a smooth transition into the 96 year. To date there has been no response.

We are also looking for early candidates to fulfill officer positions. Look at page 2 for the positions in question While I am not sure which current officers will volunteer again next year or in what capacity, lets not wait until our elections in December to realize that we have no volunteers to run the business of the Tampa PC Users Group in 96. In next months newsletter I'll post job titles and descriptions.

If you are interested in helping and are willing to volunteer your time and effort for a good cause then please call me at 985-3338 or 962-2554 ext. 715.

SIGs -I can't express enough thanks to Reflectone and Michael Hodges for providing the facilities and resources to hold two of our SIG meetings. Similarly, I thank Dun & Bradstreet Software and IBM for providing their facilities and resources to the MS Access and OS/2 SIG groups. Without the contributions of these companies there would be no SIGs.

The 1st meeting of the hardware SIG, led by Connie Kincaid, was an enormous success. Connie mentioned that those in attendance were grateful yet thirsty for more at the end. A reminder: Connie will be presenting her software SIG on July 25th. Both of these SIG meetings will be repeated later this year by Connie. Thanks Connie for a job well done and your unselfish dedication to furthering the education of our fellow PC users.

Items Wanted - A reminder that we are collecting equipment and software for the December bargain table and special community projects yet to be announced. Donations are eligible as a tax donation since we are a designated 501 (c)3 non-profit group. If you have any computer related items to donate Please bring them to any of the following; general meeting, SIG meeting or contact Harvey Bruneau at 962-2554 ext. 715 for pick-up.

A 28.8 modem for the BBS would also be appreciated. Don't forget that we are still taking donations for the BBS.

Win95 - It wasn't that long ago that my belief was WHEN95? However after conversations with many software vendors and using the Beta version, I do believe Microsoft will ship the long awaited Win95 this August.

I am sure many PC users are wondering if Win95 is going to affect them and if they should bother upgrading to it. The answer for both is a resounding YES. Of course there are those who will say NO. Well those are the individuals that still use old 57 Chevys and VWs to get around and THAT'S OK. However, I think most of us would rather have the new models with A/C, stereo, airbags, power steering, and if cruise control and power windows come with it that's even better. Keeping up with PC hardware alone has not been pleasant for most of us. It seems that the state of the art hardware technology we buy gets outdated faster and faster every year. This new release of Windows will not only speed up the outdating of hardware but will now begin to outdate existing software at a fast pace.

Despite all of the hoopla and hype or how many bugs it has when released, Win95 will be the next major dominating operating system for the masses. No, I don't have stock in Microsoft. My experience and common sense tells me that, for now, Microsoft is the undisputed front runner in the OS and GUI world. In the year 2000 Packard Bell may replace Microsoft, but that's a column for another day.

Some things to consider: Win95 will be preinstalled on most new PCs; at best there will we one last release of MS DOS before Microsoft puts it to rest; software vendors will eventually stop developing 16bit Windows apps and de-

(1995……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1995…….Continued from page 6)

velop 32bit apps for Win95 and Windows NT, the same will be true for drivers; hardware vendors will develop plug and play products. When will all this happen you might ask? I anticipate that this shift will be completed by the end of 1996. Of course by then we will have updated Win95 twice.

How would I prepare and implement Win95 and its technology if I could? If you are not in a hurry and you don't need the immediate benefits of Win95, wait till the 1st update. It should be out in the Q4 of 95 and include some worthwhile patches to the original release. The minimum computer sys-tem should be a 486/66, 16MB RAM, 300MB HD, 14" 28 dot pitch VGA monitor. Of course if you are planning on buying a new system, then go for at least a 90Mhz Pentium with 16MB RAM, 1GB HD, 4X CD ROM and a 17" VGA monitor with 28 dot pitch. Don't skimp on the monitor. Also, take into consideration that a 90 MHz Pentium is already outdated in today's PC world. As far as software applications, I would stick with whatever existing 16bit Windows apps I had for at least a year. There are enough benefits in Win95 alone without the need for new 32bit apps. Secondly, Win95 is a brand new operating system and will surely have some bugs. The same holds true for all the 1st generation versions of Win95 3rd party software that will be released after Win95. Unless you feel lucky or have a dedicated IS staff, then wait for these new products to be tested and proven by others ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

At this point Kevan introduced our presenter for the evening, Serre Murphy, president of Net Fulfillment Technologies, Inc. of Melbourne, Fl., which offers a range of services, including web applications, anti-spam services, and consulting. Tonight Serre told us about WebBuild Express, an easy to use and inexpensive web design tool. You may have considered building a website but thought the technology too difficult and the costs too high. No longer! WebBuild Express is a powerful, easy to use program that gives you unlimited freedom to manage web page content and appearance, and you do not need to know how to program or write HTML code.

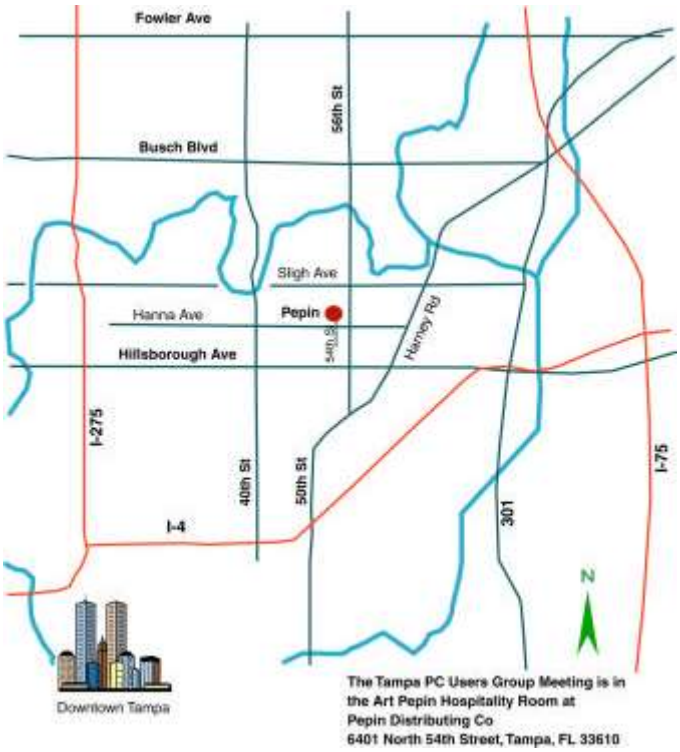
Why should you create a website? You can use it to share information or promote a product or cause. Costs associated with a website can be kept to a minimum and include: Design - using WebBuild Express, as low as $22.50; Domain Name - $10 to $30 per year; Host (ISP) - average $150 per year and may be included as part of your provider's basic service; and finally Maintenance - $30 to $50 per year.

Serre gave each attendee a CD-ROM containing a 30-day evaluation of WebBuild Express to take home to try. He also provided a complimentary CD of WebBuild Express to the group for our raffle. ◆

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August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 8 August 2005

Meeting

Merle Nicholson
Linspire
A Linux based desktop

Wednesday, August 10, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will tell us about Linspire, a Linux based desktop. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This will probably be our last meeting at the present location. If things go according to plan, in September we will be meeting at the new Pepin location a few miles south of the current location. As soon as we know for sure, a new map will be posted at our web site, and a notice and map will appear in the next newsletter. That's if everything goes according to plan.

I just downloaded my email that had arrived since I turned off my computer nine hours ago. There were 94 messages--and every one of them was SPAM. I will receive an equal number of messages during the day, and probably only five or ten will be legitimate email. I am sure with deleting about 200 messages a day some legitimate email gets included. So if you send me an email and don't get a response, send it again because your first one may have been deleted in error. ◆

Sunbelt Software from Clearwater will enlighten us concerning their latest products

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Vice President John Witmer started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:35 p.m. in the absence of both Mary Sheridan, Member at Large, and President Kevan Sheridan. Kevan's absence was because he had to work late.

John announced that the Intel Build Your Own Computer presentation has been moved from August to our November 9th meeting as the program is being revised to permit more flexibility on the participants' part in deciding what they want. John also said that Pepin is moving right after our August meeting. The new location will be south of the existing, on 50th Street at the northeast corner of Martin Luther King Blvd. We will have to get instructions out in the newsletter for getting into the site and finding the meeting place for our September meeting.

Mike Hodges, Treasurer, distributed membership cards and nametags. The cards were very professionally done and waterproofed and the nametags now all match. We can thank Mary Sheridan for such a great job.

Bruce Register reminded us that Comp USA honors our Group with discounts in the range of 12%, so use those membership cards to get your discounts by going to the commercial or service checkout, not the front registers.

At 7:00, the regular meeting began with John introducing our presenter of the evening, William LaMartin, distinguished member and editor of our newsletter. William's demo this evening focused on two areas of interest, examples of Visual Basic .Net Programming and some aspects of digital photography, two areas that consume much of his time. We also got to see part of his collection of "Old Florida" photographs.

According to William, VB.Net is a far more powerful programming language than the old Visual Basic. William gave examples of how to program for the Web, the Windows desktop and the Pocket PC using Visual Ba-

(Minutes……Continued on page 8)

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Photoshop Elements 3

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
edward_j_p@msn.com

BACKGROUND

Adobe Photoshop has long been the industry standard for editing photos. A high percentage of all of the photographs that have been published in the past decade have been edited in some way by Photoshop. This excellent program, however, is quite expensive ($599.00 list price), very difficult to learn and has many features that only a professional photographer will use.

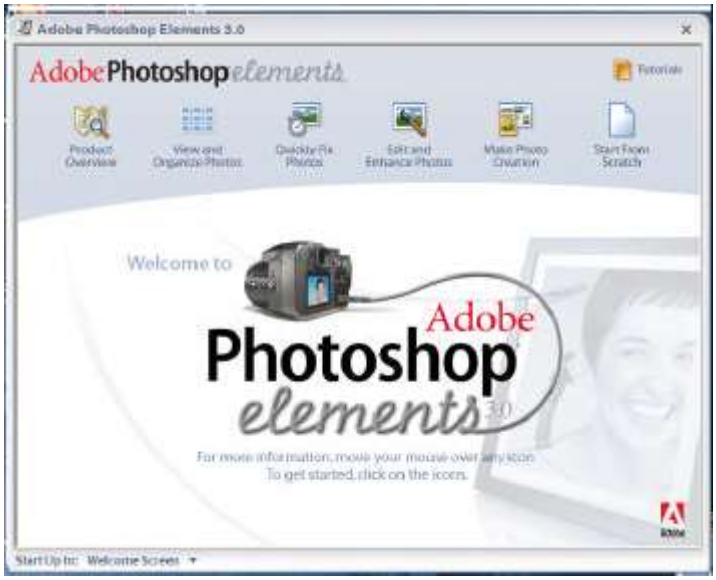
Adobe has worked for sometime to develop a program for the everyday photographer. They started with PhotoDeluxe then Photoshop LE but didn't seem to get the mix of low cost, ease of use and a sufficient number of tools until they developed Photoshop Elements 1. The program was improved with the issue of Photoshop Elements 2. Both of these programs were still a little difficult to learn. With the release of version 3, they have not only greatly expanded the capabilities of the program but also have made it much easier to use and understand.

Adobe has improved Elements as it improved Photoshop. Photoshop Elements 1 was based on Photoshop 6, Elements 2 was based on Photoshop 7 and Elements 3 was based on Photoshop CS, which means that you can use some plug-ins and brushes that were designed for Photoshop CS that weren't compatible in previous versions of Elements.

The Windows version of Elements 3 requires Windows XP with Service Pack 1 or Windows 2000 with Service Pack 4.

The Elements 3 Welcome screen is at the top of the page. The choices across the top of the screen show the new organization of Photoshop Elements 3**.**

All of the Elements programs are loaded with the tools to edit your digital images and create an unimaginable variety of special effects and projects, especially using the Adobe system of layering. Another thing that is special about Photoshop and all of the Elements programs is that practically everything you do has a keyboard shortcut that is identified on the mouse command. As you learn these shortcuts, your speed and ease in operating the program increases greatly. There is no way that this article can begin to cover all of these capabilities. The O'Reilly book *Photoshop Elements 3: The Missing Manual* devotes



more than 500 pages to the subject. I will try to cover "What's new in Elements 3" and discuss some of the program's highlights that I think by themselves make the program worth the purchase price (List Price $99.99, but often on sale for less than $60). You can get additional information and see some graphic illustrations of the program's capabilities at http://www.adobe.com/digitalimag/main.html. You can also download a demo of the program at that site.

SOME OF WHAT'S NEW IN ELEMENTS 3

- **Organizer**: Adobe has merged their previous program, Adobe Photoshop Album, with Elements 3. You can use it to collect your photos, store them and search for them using a sophisticated system of tags. You can also set up many different ways of viewing your files. The Create section provides the ability to make Slide Shows, Cards, Postcards, Wall Calendars and other projects.
- **Photo Review**: Allows you to show acquired photos in full screen in slide show format.
- **Version Sets:** Keep track of multiple versions of edited or shared photos by automatically creating a stacked "history" of the multiple copies.
- **Creations Wizard:** Simplifies the tasks performed by the Creation command such as the slide show, calendar and post cards.
- **Stacks:** Save space in the catalog by stacking less than perfect photo shots behind your favorite of the group.
- **Photo Compare:** Allows you to show acquired photos side-by-side in slide show format
- **Quick Fix:** The Quick Fix window has been redesigned. The new tools and commands often create dramatic results, and with the before-and-after display of

(Photoshop Elements……..Continued on page 4)

(Photoshop Elements…….Continued from page 3)

your photos, you can see and evaluate the changes as they take place.

- **16-bit Image Support:** The more technically proficient can work with 16 bit images. There is a limit to the kinds of edits that you can make using this extra color information but you can make these changes and save your photo in the extra detail.
- **Noise removal capability:** If you are using a digital camera, you probably have seen noise in some of your photos. The noise reduction filter should help correct the grainy areas.
- **Shadows/Highlights adjustment:** This tool allows you to correct exposure errors by adjusting shadows, highlights and mid-tones quickly and easily.
- **Styles and Effects palette:** This palette now contains over 100 customizable filters, effects and layer styles.
- **Spot Healing Brush:** This tool allows you to brush away blemishes.
- **Red Eye Tool:** This tool has been redesigned to allow you to correct red eyes more effectively than before and with just one click.
- **Cookie Cutter tool:** This tool crops your photos in a predetermined shape of your choosing.
- **Photo Bin:** The bin displays all photos that you have open so that you can juggle multiple photos. It can be reduced or enlarged, or it can be eliminated to enlarge your workspace or restored with a single click
- **Scan Multiple Photos:** You can scan multiple photos on your flat bed scanner, and the program will separate the photos and let you save them as individual files.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Organizer:

The Photo Browser is the main workspace for organizing your photos. The terms "browser," which is one of the three windows in the Organizer, and "organizer" are sometimes used interchangeably, which may at first be a little confusing. The Organizer shows thumbnails of all of the photos that you acquire from various sources. The slider at the bottom of the screen allows you to adjust the thumbnails from very small images approximately nine across to a large single thumbnail on the screen. You can acquire photos from files or folders, cameras, scanners and other sources listed under the Get Photos command button. Your files remain where you want them or have stored them. The Organizer merely contains thumbnails that point to the file. If you plan to use Organizer, you need to add, delete and move your files through Organizer to insure that the thumbnails remain connected. Some of the features of the Organizer are a bit aggressive. The Photo Downloader may jump ahead of your camera's software, moving photos from your camera to your computer, so be aware that you may have to make choices on how you perform some of the tasks.

The Organizer automatically assigns a timeline to your photos, so you can search in the point in time in which the photos were taken or in which they were brought into your computer if there is no time otherwise attached to the file. There is a system of tagging that allows you to search in as much or as little detail as you desire.

Organizer also has a very versatile and elaborate built-in backup system for your photos. It's easy to backup to a hard drive, a CD or a DVD. You can choose to backup your catalog only or include your files. If you choose to move your files to a CD, the program will name the CD so that when you at some future date click on a thumbnail of an archived file it will tell you the name of the CD that you have to load in order to retrieve the file.

In summary, the Organizer is a very powerful tool that you will probably love or hate, but even if you hate it, you'll probably find some of the features quite useful.

Quick Fix Window: The Quick Fix Window is probably the most significant feature that has been added to Elements. For the first time user of Elements, it allows correction and enhancement of photos by pressing a button and, with the pictures placed side-by-side, it greatly eases the job of fine-tuning the photo. You are able to make significant improvements to your pictures while knowing little or nothing about the process. It allows you to do some positive work while learning the system. I'm sure longtime users will often start at this page to adjust things like shadows and highlights to take advantage of the side-by-side feature.

(Photoshop Elements…….Continued on page 5)



(Photoshop Elements……..Continued from page 4)

This window contains a group of four tools from the Standard Edit screen. They operate the same in both edit windows and have the same keyboard shortcuts. The Zoom and Hand Tools are the same tools found in many programs that allow you to enlarge and shrink the image and to move it about the work space. The Cropping Tool allows you to crop a rectangle or an ellipse. You can set the exact size or the proportions of the sides of the rectangle. The Red Eye tool works better than any I've used in removing the pesky red eye from your photos and normally requires only one click per eye. If you don't like the results, you can undo, then adjust the darkness and pupil size and click again and continue until you have the results you want.

The Quick Fix Control Panel below is where most of the editing adjustment takes place. The Smart Fix command is what most of the excitement concerning this window is all about. With one click, the command automatically adjusts the picture's lighting, color and contrast. If you are happy with the results, you can move on to the next photo. If it needs sharpening, you can move that tool first. If you are not happy with the Smart Fix command results, you can undo it and try using the Smart Fix slider by gradually changing the amount. Sometimes Smart Fix will not be smart enough to satisfy you and you can undo the results and work through each of the Levels, Contrast and Color Auto buttons, or the slides for each, to satisfy your eye. Of course, you still have the option of moving to the Standard Edit window, where you can take advantage of the wealth of tools and even the famous layer system with all of the selection tools to "fine tune" your job.

(Photoshop Elements……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



Space Shuttle Discovery

Space Shuttle Discovery viewed from the International Space Station moments before docking on July 28, 2005.

The photo is from the NASA site http://www.nasa.gov/ in the Photo Gallery section.

There are many other items there to help you explore the return of the Shuttle fleet to flight

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Internet Archive	http://www.archive.org/
Prescription Drugs	http://www.drugs.com/
Flickr - Photo Sharing	http://flickr.com/
All Net Tools	http://www.all-nettools.com/
Renovator's Supply	http://www.rensup.com/
MerleNicholson.com (Our presenter)	http://www.merlenicholson.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1995

From the August 1995 *Bits of Blue* newsletter

President's Column
By Harvey Bruneau

I certainly hope that each of you weathered hurricane Erin without any major problems. In the aftermath of this storm, it's easy to for many individuals in the Tampa Bay area to say the storm was a wimp. Nevertheless, the center of the storm came less than forty miles from Tampa. It certainly could have been worse. Personally, I thought it was going to be, based on information coming across from the news media. We should all be prepared for these storms and not chance a disaster. Ask the people in the Florida panhandle how they liked Erin. I am sure they have a story that is 180° different from ours.

After the storm, the story, *The Little Engine That Could*, came to mind. Two events happened that caused me to think of this. One was the backups I created for our small data center the night before the storm was to hit, and the second was Erin itself. My nightly backups are usually performed on a 4Gig Mountain tape drive. Unfortunately, it had failed the week before, and I was waiting for a replacement from Mountain. While waiting for the replacement drive, I purchased a 4Gig Conner tape drive from Computer City to ensure that I would have daily backups. At this point Erin was not even a tropical storm. After conversations with tech support from Arcada and Conner it was determined that limitations of the Arcada software that was included with the Conner drive was not going to allow me to properly backup my Novell server. By now Erin was a hurricane and bearing down on Florida and still no replacement drive. Well on Tuesday it was finally time to put plan C and D into action. Plan C was the use of Colorado Trakker 250Mb tape drives. Fortunately I had two. It took a lot of tapes and some time to backup four gigabytes, but it worked. This was a case of the little tape drives that could.

The second reminder is to look at the damage caused in the Pensacola area. Who thought that Erin, that little bitty storm could do over $200,000,000 worth of damage. I guess it was the little storm that could.

I mentioned in my column last month, we are looking for early candidates to fulfill officer positions of the Tampa PC Users Group for the 1996 year. Elections will be held in December. Let’s not wait until the elections to realize that we have no volunteers to run the business of the Tampa PC Users Group in '96. Following is a list of officers needed to run a PC user group and their associated brief job descriptions. I have added some positions which do not currently exist but are important. Additionally, I have placed the names of those individuals currently assuming, in whole or part, the responsibility of each position.

- President (Officer) Harvey Bruneau Duties: Ensure the delivery of the group's mission to its members. Lead meetings and provide overall direction. Serve as overall representative of the user group to the public.
- Vice President (Officer) William LaMartin Duties: Act as president during president's unavailability and chair key committees. Fill other key roles as determined by group needs.
- Secretary (Officer) Bruce Register Duties: Manage correspondence and records. Records minutes from group's general and board meetings.
- Treasurer (Officer) Tom Cone Duties: Oversee financial resources, recording, and reporting.
- Director/Chairperson/Committee Head/Task Leader Tom Cone Committee/Task: Membership Duties: Coordinate new member recruitment and existing member retention. Manage database and membership communication.
- Committee/Task: Program Director Harvey Bruneau Duties: Handle planning and direction of speakers, presentations, demos, special events, and other programs. Periodically query members to identify speakers and programs of interest, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction.
- Committee/Task: Vendor Relations Harvey Bruneau Duties: Responsible for communication with vendors (hard-ware and software; local, regional, and national) regarding working with the group, special events, obtaining review products and door prizes, and other activities.
- Committee/Task: Volunteer Coordinator All officers Duties: Coordinate volunteer recruitment, management, and recognition.
- Committee/Task: Equipment Manager Bruce Register, All officers Duties: Manage inventory, transportation, availability, and storage of equipment owned by group or used by group.
- Committee/Task: Marketing/Public Relations Connie Kincaid, All members Duties: Direct publicity, including media relations, community relations, and special event promotion.
- Committee/Task: Advertising Marylee Bruneau Duties: Manage advertising sales in user group newsletter and advertising placements for group activities. Committee/Task: SIG Director William LaMartin Duties: Assist special interest groups with program development, publicity, membership, meeting arrangements, and other tasks.
- Committee/Task: Newsletter/Magazine Editor Marylee & Harvey Bruneau Duties: Oversee editorial development and submissions, design, production, and distribution of newsletter. Prepares and sorts mail according to bulk mail postal regulations. Creates electronic version, Adobe Acrobat, of newsletter. Selects and distributes

(1995……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

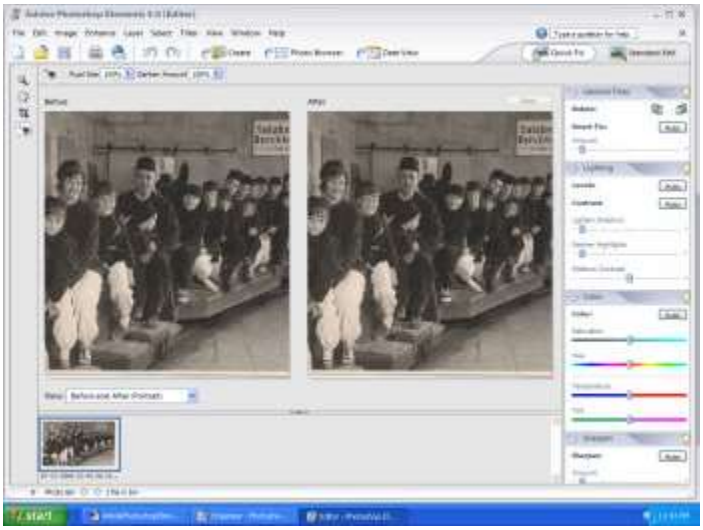
(1995…….Continued from page 6)

articles to be published in Tampa Bay Online via Prodigy.

- Committee/Task; Bulletin Board Sysop Kevin Sheridan/Al Poole Duties: Maintain and operate group bulletin board system.
- Committee/Task: Librarian/Resource Center Coordinator Larry Anders Duties: Coordinate shareware, public domain software, and other resources for group.
- Committee/Task: Software Review Editor/Coordinator Harvey & Marylee Bruneau Duties: Get review software from vendors, coordinate getting software to review writers, and follow up on reviews.
- Committee/Task: Legal Counsel Tom Cone Duties: Advise group on legal issues.
- Committee/Task: Finance Tom Cone/William LaMartin Duties: Advise and oversee financial management. Committee/Task: Development/Fund-raising All officers Duties: Plan and oversee fund-raising events and activities.
- Committee/Task: Community Relations/Outreach Harvey & Marylee Bruneau Duties: Manage community services activities and serve as contact person with community at large.

In conclusion, if you are interested in serving your group in any one or more of the above positions, share those thoughts with the officers in person at the monthly meeting on the BBS or by phone. The future and the success of the Tampa PC Users Group depends on volunteers committed to leading the group. ◆

(Photoshop Elements…….Continued from page 5)



Summary: I've tried to cover the significant changes that have been included in Photoshop Elements 3. As I've mentioned, this article doesn't begin to touch on the total capabilities of Photoshop Elements 1, 2 or 3. There is massive help and an extensive tutorial system available in Elements to help you utilize its many capabilities. There are also many publications that provide even more insight into the use of all of the available tools. I purchased the O'Reilly book *Photoshop Elements 3: The Missing Manual* by Barbara Brundage. It is an excellent and well organized manual for Photoshop Elements 3. It's available on Amazon.com for about $13 below list price. (If you purchase any books from Amazon.com, don't forget to go through the TPCUG web site.) ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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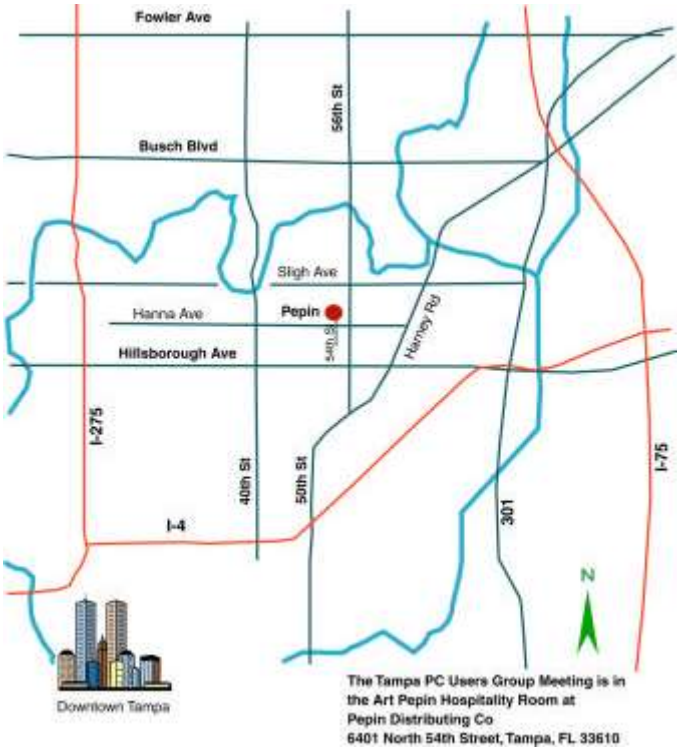
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
sic .Net.

In the digital photography section, William showed us photos he has taken with his digital camera and demonstrated how you can modify or improve them using Adobe Photoshop. We had fun making him and other subjects look better (or in some cases worse) than they are in real life. It was lots of fun, but time consuming. It was 9:00 p.m. before we knew it. Thanks William for an entertaining evening.

We had no door prizes to give at this meeting, so we adjourned at about 9:00 p.m. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



September in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 9 September 2005

Meeting

Sunbelt Software

Wednesday, September 14, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Phil Owens from Sunbelt Software and David Bove, spyware research director for Sunbelt Software, will tell us about their products. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

New Meeting Site Be sure to look on page eight for a map of our new meeting location at Pepin Distributing Co., 4121 N 50th Street. We certainly appreciate Pepin for making this room available to us and for John Witmer for organizing everything. John says that if anyone gets lost, please call him at 404-4655 for directions.

Hurricanes We thought last year was bad with four major hurricanes striking Florida. This year we have had two lesser ones strike Florida. However, one of those lesser ones, Katrina, after passing over Florida grew into the monster that totally destroyed the Mississippi Gulf Coast and left most of New Orleans under water. As I write this, after a week of ter-

(Comments……Continued on page 3)

October Meeting: Pinnacle Systems is scheduled to make their Studio Plus presentation

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the August Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Vice President John Witmer started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:35 pm. John reminded us that Pepin is moving on Aug 12th to their new location at 4121 N. 50th Street. We have directions in this newsletter. Also let John know if you are interested in used 17-inch and maybe some 19-inch monitors that Pepin no longer wants.

John announced the Fall Conference of FACUG to be held Oct. 22, 2005 at the Sahib Shrine Temple, 600 N. Beneva Road in Sarasota. Go to their website for details.

Mary Sheridan, Member at Large, reminded us that election of officers for 2006 will be upon us soon. We will seek nominations in November with elections at our December meeting. We really need to get fresh blood as some of our officers need relief. Please think about serving.

Bob LaFave fielded several questions that members raised about programs available and updates to Microsoft's Windows XP.

At 7:00 pm John introduced our speaker for the evening, our very own Merle Nicholson. Merle told us about Linspire, a Linux based operating system previously known as Lindows. For an annual fee of $49.95, you can subscribe to a website called Click & Run which allows you to download thousands of Linux based programs. PC club members can get a nice deal from Steve Singer of RDI, which includes an installation CD, a Linspire "Extras" disk AND the "Gold Membership" allowing access to their warehouse of programs. Such a deal!

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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Wireless Internet Access on Two Fronts

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

I've been away from writing articles for the newsletter for a while because of my busy work schedule, but I've recently had some experiences with some stuff I wanted to pass along.

I've had wireless Internet access at home now for a couple of years but was never really impressed with it. Anytime I was close enough to the router I always plugged in my notebook with a cable and my desktop stays plugged-in all of the time. If it was absolutely necessary I would unplug and go into other rooms of the house with my notebook or PocketPC. My connection would always seem to go in and out. I typically also had the same type of problem when I traveled. But recently my daughter convinced me to upgrade to a Belkin F5D8230-4 wireless Pre-N broadband router and wireless Pre-N notebook network card. Pre-N is the latest wireless technology preceded by wireless b and g.

Since installing the Belkin, my connection has never been so strong or steady. It is at least as good as or better than my direct cable connection. I can now walk out in my yard or next door and still have a very good connection. I'm not sure if it is the addition of the wireless network card, instead of using the internal adapter, or if it is the three antennas on the router, or a combination of both. Belkin's ad says it's both. A new smart antenna technology that boosts wireless network speed and range far beyond that of a 802.11b or g router, and they claim the wireless network card will increase performance another 20% over the built-in internal card. All I know is that my daughter was correct. This is the fastest and most reliable wireless connection I have ever experienced. If you're looking for a reliable, fast, wireless Internet connection, I highly recommend looking into this dynamic pair. Below is a link to a recent test done on both. http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/chart_test_report/0,chid,6089,prodid,25740,00.asp.

I'm on vacation this week as I write this, and there is something else I wanted to tell you about that has made my vacation more enjoyable. We typically go to Indian Rocks Beach in Pinellas County during the summer for a week or two. We stay at some very good friends' condo with no broadband service. I usually just fire up my old AOL account and use it to check my email. After being on cable at home and DSL at work, dial-up is better than nothing, but in my opinion, not much. My daughter came through for me on this, too.

If you're like me, and have not already signed up for the service, you've probably seen or heard the commercials about Verizon's new wireless broadband service. Having used a cell phone in the past to access the Internet and not liked the results, I had not really paid much attention to the advertisements. Well, my daughter loaned me her Verizon wireless broadband NationalAccess PC card to use while I was here at the beach, and it is really terrific.

If you're not familiar with it, anywhere there is cell phone access, you will be able to access the Internet at speeds typically between 400-700 kbps up to 2 Mbps. In a taxi, airport, or at a park, one click and you are connected. I will admit I was truly surprised at the ability of the service. And, if you are on a VPN at work, all of the security is included in the service to connect to that also. The card snapped into the PCMCIA slot, a setup CD was included, and after a few clicks I was connected. The charge is $79 per month for unlimited connection time. It's a little costly when compared to other normal services, but you can't beat the freedom of accessing the Internet anytime, anywhere. ◆

(Comments……Continued from page 1)

ror, almost all those who stayed in New Orleans and survived have been evacuated. The thousands of dead are yet to be counted.

I lived in New Orleans for eight years in the 1970s and drove along the Gulf Coast many times. So I have been mesmerized by the TV and computer images of destruction and despair, so much so that I have had difficulty finding time to put this newslet-

(Continued on page 8)

Good Service on OfficeJet 4215

By Merle Nicholson
merle@merlenicholson.com

I bought a new HP OfficeJet 4215 all-in-one from NewEgg.com – a low end one at $80 plus $6.50 shipping. It's a FAX, copier, scanner and inkjet printer. I ordered it online and received it via FedEx five days later. As I unpacked it, it didn't take long to find out the "front panel overlay" that snaps around the keyboard was missing from the box.

It wouldn't work at all without the cover. There are four switches that have to get depressed by this cover for the machine's own setup to work. It would power up, but I got messages that the panel overlay wasn't installed, and it went no further.

This printer has an LCD screen that enables all sorts of setup options for all of its functions, including prompts for cartridge replacement. There's no guessing here; this little baby tells you what to do. It said to install the overlay.

So I called HP's 1-800 support number about 4:00 PM the same day, talked to a pretty good customer service lady presumably in India; it took her several minutes to find out she could FedEx me one, and a follow-up email gave me an expected delivery for four days later. The next morning at 9:00 AM the FedEx guy was at the door with box in hand, say about 16 hours after I called tech support. Installed and working in 16 hours. It'd be hard to complain about HP's service.

The machine works pretty well. I haven't found anything I haven't liked so far. My research finding reviews haven't anything bad to say except for printing speed, but the cost was more important to me than speed. You can't say that it's slow, anyway, just not fast, about the same as my other printers. I have an old HP 722C I have set on draft black and white (the color cartridge emptied years ago) for very fast b&w copies, and a nice but rarely used Canon 850i for excellent color prints. All three are attached to the same PC, one parallel and two USB.



This OfficeJet has USB connection only. Other, more expensive models have Ethernet and even Bluetooth. The power cord is a simple small cord, no power cube – the way it should be. There are the incoming telephone line connector and an outgoing one if you want to connect a phone instrument.

My spouse wanted a copier that is easier than using the utility and scanner on my PC, and I've been exchanging FAXes with some business associates lately. I'd been connecting and powering up my notebook to receive FAXes, and I'd grown pretty tired of it. My past experience with multi-function devices wasn't too good, and I never recommended one to anyone unless they owned nothing – no printer, scanner or FAX machine. Then you could justify the cost. But all that's in the past. This does a good job of all of these functions for the price of an inexpensive printer. I'm keeping my flatbed scanner though; obviously you can't slide a book into the OfficeJet.

For FAX there are plenty of options for telephone line situations. You can set it up for a dedicated line, share it with a telephone using distinctive ring detection (an option from your telephone utility); share with a telephone and/or answer machine and receive only when you press a button. The instructions even go into sharing it on a line with DSL.

For copying, you just stack the paper in the scanner input tray, press Copy, quickly set the number of

(OfficeJet……..Continued on page 5)

(OfficeJet……..Continued from page 4)

copies if you want more than one, then press the Black or Color buttons.

If you're attached to a PC by USB cable, you can send scans to the PC – you set the default directory and it's automatic. Just load the paper and press Scan. It couldn't be easier. There is a scanner utility installed on the PC that detects the scan. It includes OCR if you receive the scan as Text. There is also photo organizer and photo printing software and more – see the list below.

You can FAX from the PC – and if you've shared the FAX on the network – from any networked PC. When you FAX from a PC, you select the OfficeJet FAX printer. A panel pops up on the attached PC with boxes for destination telephone, cover page fill-ins, the works. In my own case, the OfficeJet is attached to a PC I use for networked backups along with two other printers. If I FAX from my networked personal PC, I then have to go to the backups PC to fill in the FAX destination information.

And of course this is a FAX machine that stands alone; it doesn't have to be connected to a PC at all to FAX or to copy.

And obviously it's a standard color inkjet printer, too. If the printer is shared on the network, you can add that printer to any other PC and the printer driver automatically installs over the network, a feature of

(OfficeJet……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



Here Lies Vera - God Help Us

Agents with the US Marshal's Service examine a makeshift grave at Jackson and Magazine in New Orleans. It was made by one of Vera's neighbors. The photo is from the site http://www.nola.com/, the Times-Picayune web site, where you can read full coverage of the disaster in New Orleans.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Sunbelt Software (Our Presenter)	http://www.sunbelt-software.com/
Truth Or Fiction - verify rumors	http://www.truthorfiction.com/
iStockphoto	http://www.istockphoto.com/
Webroot Software - Spy Sweeper	http://www.webroot.com/
New Orleans Newspaper	http://www.nola.com/
NOAA Katrina Photo Index	http://ngs.woc.noaa.gov/katrina/090E29M_KATRINA.HTM
Louisiana's Wetlands @ Nat. Geographic	http://www3.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0410/feature5/

Looking Back to 1995

From the September 1995 *Bits of Blue* newsletter

SECRETARY'S REPORT
TPCUG MEETING 8/9/95, 6 PM
HCC Ybor Room Auditorium
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Bruneau (Harvey) called the meeting to order. Miscellaneous comments and information were given: Harvey Bruneau shared Hurricane Erin preparedness. He stressed the importance of being serious about equipment and data. Losses can occur from wind, storm, rain, or sprinkler systems; or maybe even static electricity in the building through the metal superstructure or conduits. He emphasized backup systems. UPS and dedicated plugs are just some of the terms that have familiarity.

Planning is required for most ongoing systems before making a cold splash into W95. Some of your previous applications may not run in W95 without adding this or that software that you previously had within your software system. Some may elect to increase hard drive capacity so as to accommodate a dual boot, W95 and Windows 3.11. W95 will only run on Intel or clones. Other platforms give one an opportunity for other considerations. Many interesting opinions were expressed regarding many applications. (Secretary's opinion— Some people seemed to be polarized toward W95 or OS/2 Warp. Sometimes these strong opinions become almost argumentive as emotional preference is aggressively manifested. Our president, Harvey, seems to be exceptional at keeping peace while allowing everyone their say. One of the many benefits of TPCUG is the openness of the expressions by the members. We are exposed to other viewpoints. We are then able to have better understanding before making decisions). Much open and frank dialogue permeated the meeting. Several members stated that they thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the broad participation. Several expressed opinions regarding the future of the computer world. All comments were enlightening and confidence builders. Someone suggested that TPCUG could set up a 286 in a retirement facility to fulfill the desire to provide community service. Volunteers are needed to do it; suggestions such as this are great and hopeful but "we need doers" according to one opinion. The conversation by individual members reflected enthusiasm during the break. One member stated the "refreshing sight to see pairs, threes, etc., groups exchanging information, assistance and fellowship." Sharing info and ideas are just one of the great benefits of TPCUG, Harvey stated.

Harvey reported that GTE has offered to present ISDN at their downtown GTE building. More later as plans develop. Several members responded with delight. Look for messages on the bulletin board. Some members have avoided using the TPCUG BBS. Do not hesitate to try it. You cannot break it. You cannot hurt it. You will enjoy the experience. If you have stage fright, just call one of those most willing helpers listed in the back of the BITS OF BLUE. Any of them will be glad to talk you through the access. In helping me, they have even "fired up" their own computer while talking to me over the phone. They would ask "Do you see....."? etc. They really like to assist you. Do not hesitate! Miscellaneous comments were "stay away from 5 volts and 60 Pentium", "Lotus Approach is better than ACCESS", "Be prepared to upgrade; but you may continue with your present system and may not need to go to the latest technology. If you need it; do it. If you do not need it; you might want to consult your pocketbook before jumping in." Other comments were also appreciated.

PRESENTATION: Tom Cone, Treasurer, shared a tool that he finds useful. Creator, V6.0, writes programs. It is a "code generator". It is not particularly sophisticated and is very easy to use. Tom presented highlights of the program rather than giving detailed training. He likes the program and uses it in building report programs. You tell it what kind of information you want to track and the type of screen you want. Creator then builds the program. You add fields as you desire. Creator is a commercial program that sells for $99 MOL (More or Less).

CONGRATULATIONS TO DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

Pagekeeper	Steve Schoeneck
CD Murder Mystery	Wil Goble

The next regular meeting of TPCUG will be Wednesday, September 13, 1995, 6 PM at Ybor Room, Administrative Building, Ybor City HCC. Come and bring someone, your spouse, pharmacist, neighbor or friend, etc. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

Merle suggested you set up your system to operate bothWindows and Linspire in a dual-boot setup. In fact he offered a used computer for $150 already programmed with Linspire. This system has an AMD 1300+ MHz chip, 40 Gig hard drive, 256 MB RAM, speakers and keyboard.

Someone asked if Linspire would be compatible with his or her existing devices, printers, etc. Merle said in most cases they probably are but printer settings must be changed. USB connected devices work best.

Merle demonstrated how easy it was to use Linspire and showed us some applications. As usual, the hour and a half zipped by. If you are interested in trying Linspire, remember Merle's pre-programmed computer, or get in touch with Steve Singer. Thanks Merle for an interesting evening.

After a short break during which Mary sold raffle tickets, we had a drawing for a year's subscription to Smart Computing Magazine. Jim Purcell was the lucky ticket holder.

The meeting concluded about 9:00 pm. ◆

(OfficeJet…….Continued from page 5)

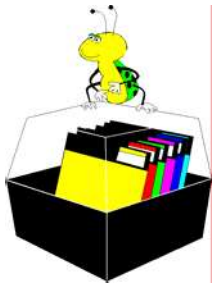
Windows XP. It has two ink cartridges – a three-color and a black. You can convert the printer to a 7-color photo printer by removing the black and snapping in a photo cartridge. I haven't tried this out, but there's no reason to expect anything but good results; all the reviews I've read praise the photo quality. After all, it's an HP.

Hewlett-Packard OfficeJet 4215
$99.99 List price from HP
$79.99 NewEgg.com (8/25/05)
$92.99 BUY.com (8/25/05)
$89.99 CompUSA (8/25/05)

Some specs:
USB Cable not included
Document feeder: 20 sheets
Input capacity: 100 sheets (doesn't look like it to me)
Media: all the stuff, paper, cards, envelopes
Printer:
Print speed black, draft mode: 17ppm
Print speed black, best mode: 0.9ppm
Print speed color, best mode: 1ppm
FAX:
Color FAX
FAX memory: 100 pages
FAX forwarding
Distinctive ring detection
Copier:
Copy speed: 17cpm black, 12cpm color

(OfficeJet…….Continued on page 8)

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(OfficeJet……..Continued from page 7)
Resolution: 600dpi black, 2400x1200dpi on photo paper
Max: 100 copies

Scanner:
Hardware resolution: 600x1200 dpi, 19200 dpi enhanced
Bit depth: 36 bit

Software:
HP Image Zone Photo & Imaging software: HP Director, HP Photo Gallery, HP Image Editor, HP Instant Share, HP Photo Prints, HP Album Printing, HP Quick 4 x 6 prints, Readiris OCR, HP Send to Programs ◆

(Commments……..Continued from page 3)
ter together. But the newsletter is finished (thanks to this month's contributors), and my concluding thought is that if such a powerful storm should come your way, be prepared to leave and take what is important with you--and don't be slow about doing it. As best I can tell, those with whom I have remained in contact in New Orleans all evacuated successfully. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 10 October 2005

Meeting

Steve Singer
From RDI @ TampaBay, Inc.

Wednesday, October 12, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Our old friend Steve Singer from RDI @ TampaBay, Inc., a computing supplier, will tell us what's new in computing hardware. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Wireless Camera Those who attended our last meeting, which was our first meeting at the new Pepin location, saw my new Motorola Home Monitoring wireless camera at work. It allowed me to view on my laptop the entrance to the building, which was a little over 120 feet away with an office and lobby area in between it and our meeting room. This was desired since, being after hours, the doors either needed to be locked or someone would have to stay at them to give late arrivals entry. The system worked fine. I think we only had two late arrivals, and the rest of the activity was the cleaning crew working around the entrance.

The setup consisted of a wireless camera positioned on a stool

(Comments……Continued on page 6)

November Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the September Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Vice President John Witmer started our meeting at about 6:55 pm. We did not have the usual SIG portion of our meeting as we were setting up our new location, including a wireless closed circuit monitor at the front door.

John described the Pepin layout and where the restrooms and break room are. We plan a tour at our next meeting as construction is still in progress. We expressed our appreciation to Pepin for the fine facilities with a heartfelt round of applause.

John Witmer introduced our presenters for the evening, Phil Owens and Dave Bove of Sunbelt Software with US offices in Clearwater, Florida. Their parent company is France-based Sunbelt International Group, a leading provider of enterprise system infrastructure software, including anti-spyware, security, anti-spam and systems management tools.

Phil started with, "Tonight we are going to talk about spyware" and then asked ,"Is your computer spying on you?" If your computer is slowing down, crashes frequently, you're getting more popups when you go from site to site and you suddenly have a new browser home page, then you're probably suffering from spyware. Spyware is installed for commercial gain and to learn your interests.

To protect yourself, you first need a good firewall. Zone Alarm and Microsoft SP 2 were recommended. Next you need to install reputable anti-spyware. Sunbelt offers Counter Spy for detecting and eliminating spyware at a modest price of $19.95 for the first year and then for $9.00 a year you can keep it current. You can install multiple anti-spyware programs if

(Minutes…….Continued on page 8)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

New Trends in PCs

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The latest kinds of PCs aren't made by HP and Dell. If you want to really find out what's going on you can look at Alienware and VoodooPC, smaller computer makers that do direct internet sales. Here's what's going on in the PC industry. All I describe is commonly available, but just not necessarily mainstream.

Dual-Core Processors: Both AMD and Intel are producing CPUs with two processors. Intel's workstation CPUs are not available yet, but will be soon. I'm much more familiar with the AMD product, but suffice it to say that Intel's claims are just as emphatic as AMD's that their design is best. Of course, you can go to various - usually gamers' - websites and read extensive performance comparison tests. The gamers tend toward the AMD products because they are fairly easy to "overclock" - that is, run at higher speeds than they were designed for. The ultimate gamers' CPUs, however, seem to be the AMD 64 FX single core CPUs. There are two available; the most powerful (FX57) runs at 2.8GHz, has 2x64 and 1x1MB cache at $1,100 or so, including just CPU and fan. Games are rarely multi-tasking just yet, and gamers tend to do only one thing at a time.

Dual-Core processors seem mostly to have an advantage in multi-tasking environments where other things are going on in the background. You know how it is. You get something started on the computer and then just relax and fold your hands because trying to do anything else is useless or will even jeopardize your project. With dual processors, well, you have another processor! Go ahead, do more stuff. AMD's processor is called Athlon 64 X2 Dual-Core, and ranges in performance ratings from 3800+ to 4800+. The prices range from about $430 to $1100. That's processor and fan only. Intel's prices are supposed to be lower when they're available. Offsetting some of the processor cost for AMD is built-in support for common and cheaper DDR 400 memory. The on-chip memory cache on X2 processors is very large. L1 Cache on some models is 128KB, L2 is 1MB, but then multiply those times two!

PCI-E (PCI Express): This is a new version of PCI device expansion slots that greatly improves on the standard old PCI expansion slots. They come in flavors of PCI-E x1, PCI-E x2, PCI-E x4, PCI-E x8, and PCI-E x16, with bandwidths of 512MB/s to 8GB/s. The PCI-E x16 is used for video cards and is now common enough that the price differential over AGP is negligible. This interface provides 3-1/2 to 4 times the speed of AGP. In addition to that, many boards have SLI support that takes two PCI-E x16 slots for two video cards sharing the graphics load at a ludicrous graphics speed. So this is the latest in fast 3D video. ATI and NVIDIA are the major players here so far. Many of the GPU (Graphics Processors) on these cards are overclocked, so all of them have fans and large fan shrouds on the card. You should research these thoroughly to make sure the fan noise is acceptable. Some expensive notebooks are using PCI Express graphics. There are a few add-on cards, drive controllers, network interface cards and firewire cards using PCI Express.

Serial ATA (SATA I & II): This is a method of connecting hard drives to your system. The past method (now called PATA-Parallel ATA) is limited to 133Gb/s burst rate. This is the highest momentary burst it will take and in reality is not achieved very often. The sustained rate is more important, but the burst rate is an indication of the ultimate transfer rate. SATA-I will do 150Gb/s, comparable to SCSI, and the SATA-II specification provides for 300Gb/s. Many older PATA systems are 33Gb/s and 66 and 100 are most common.

SATA drives are common enough now that there is little or no price differential. They are physically distinguished by the small diameter red data cable that replaces the wide flat cable. Most new ones also use a different power cable. Many SATA drives on the market are just PATA drives with some conversion interface to SATA built in. One indication of that is that many will also have a 4-pin power connector. The best drives are those designed as SATA from the start. The most famous and the oldest is the Western Digital 36GB, 10,000RPM Raptor, but its newer 74GB counterpart is the fastest of all SATA drives. They're both relatively expensive on a dollar per byte basis.

(Trends……Continued on page 4)

(Trends…….Continued from page 3)

Maxtor has two new drives designed from the ground up, called MaxLine III, in 250 and 300GB, 7200RPM, but with 16MB cache. They have NCQ (Native Command Queuing) capability. And Hitachi is doing new things using SATA-II.

NCQ: Native Command Queuing is simply the capability of a disk storage system to re-order each request for efficiency, instead of supplying data in the order requested. The idea is to minimize the disk head movement, saving time. In a single-user, single-threaded environment, NCQ doesn't supply too much advantage because the requests for data are mostly sequential. But with servers – and multiple core processors, there's a very real advantage. The hard drive controller must be designed for NCQ as well, and so far that's harder to find. Look for NVIDIA motherboard chipsets using RAID that may have support for NCQ. Also some hard drive controller cards have it.

RAID: RAID has been around in the SCSI world forever, nothing new here. But RAID has finally made it mainstream because of the availability of SATA on common motherboards. So you can expect many new motherboards to have SATA RAID support in RAID configurations of 0-Striping, 1-Mirroring, 0+1-Striping+Mirroring and JOBD (Just a bunch of disks). Some new motherboards provide RAID support for PATA.

For pure speed, RAID 0 is used with two new identical hard drives. The two drives become one logical drive, and the files (and the load) are divided between the two. It's very fast. RAID 1 mirrors all the data on one to the other also, providing redundancy. And that's not fast – or slow for that matter. But for pure speed, RAID 0 uses two separate cables and doubles the bandwidth to the drives.

Dual Channel Architecture Memory: This speeds up data flow in and out of memory. The motherboard will have two independent channels to memory in hardware. This is the format of NVIDIA's nForce chipsets for AMD Athlon XP systems and Intel's i850E, where each memory bank has its own memory channel and an arbiter distributes the load between them and plays traffic cop for incoming data. You must have two compatible (identical) memory sticks. It's best to buy them packaged as a pair. The memory controller recognizes them on boot-up.

Motherboards: There are a surprising number of motherboard manufacturers that are trying to supply the needs of hobbyists and of computer companies like Alienware and VoodooPC. Many appeal to gamers, who apparently are willing to spend the extra to have leading-edge fast computers. There are four or five chipset makers for these; ATI and NVIDIA seem to have gotten the jump on everyone. VIA and SIS are there too. ATI and NVIDIA are of interest to gamers because they're familiar with the brands through their leading-edge video cards, and the hope that some compatibility will exist between the motherboard and video card. So the things to look for are the subjects in this article: Dual-Core, SATA, NCQ, RAID, PCI-E and SLI.

Cooling Systems: The new larger processors do generate more heat. AMD and Intel both are developing manufacturing methods to reduce the thickness of the wafer (the new ones are 90 nanometers), which reduces heat requirements. And you may have noticed that notebooks get special attention with slower processors (less computing power) and sophisticated CPU speed controls.

The idea in cooling systems is three-fold. One, it's a good goal to reduce the fan noise as much as possible; two, some people overclock their systems to the point where ordinary fans can't keep up with the increased heat and risk burnout; three, it's neat and clever.

The high capacity cooling systems center around liquid cooling, where, in the places you would have fans and/or heat sinks, you mount a "water block" - just a little box the right size clamped down with two pipes to attach plumbing. They don't really use water but instead use some kind of coolant whose heat retention properties exceed that of water. In any case, these water blocks are interconnected with plastic pipes and finally wind up connected to some radiator device that also contains a pump.

(Trends…….Continued on page 5)

(Trends……..Continued from page 4)

The radiators are mostly external to the PC. Not all though. One mounts inside, where the normal air exhaust fan would be. Most radiators have a large diameter fan that moves slowly with as little noise as possible. And, of course, it can get more sophisticated, with temperature controls, readouts and variable fan speeds, depending on how much cooling is actually required.

There are other things in the cooling arena. The most interesting is CPU cooling, where the radiator can be of immense size, accommodating a large slower-moving fan. Also of interest is the use of "heat pipes," which are liquid-filled metal piping that moves the heat out to larger-finned radiator devices. These work well and are in the neighborhood of $50-$70. There are case fans designed to be quieter.

Building your own system: You need to do quite a bit of research. Start with the processor and then the motherboard to support it, then look at the features you want on the motherboard. Then go to the motherboard website and research the compatibility lists. You'll want to select the video cards and memory from their approved compatibility lists. They're available on the manufacturers' websites. Mostly. If you deviate, there's some risk that it won't work, or worse yet, have problems where you can't identify the source.

The major manufacturers maintain extensive documentation, FAQs, and even model-specific forums for users to exchange information. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Other Evacuees from New Orleans
Photo by Susan Poag

From page B4 of the September 30, 2005, New Orleans *Times-Picayune's* online version at http://www.nola.com/. If you are interested in the story of the "Big Flood," then go there and read all the archived editions of the paper. The story is far from over, and many of the articles are quite detailed with good photographs.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
RDI @ TampaBay, Inc. - Our Presenter	http://morevalu.net/
Newseum - Interactive Museum of News	http://www.newseum.org/
Polk County Historical Association	http://www.polkha.org/
Verizon Online Speed Test	http://infospeed.verizon.net/speedtest/speedtest750k.asp
Net Stumbler - Wi-Fi information	http://www.netstumbler.com/
I, Cringely PBS	http://www.pbs.org/cringely/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

near the entrance. It was provided electricity by plugging its transformer into a nearby outlet. However, it could also have been run off batteries. The base station was connected to my laptop by a short USB cable. I emphasize short USB cable since at home I had tried to use a USB extension cable to move the base station to a location further from my laptop, but I lost the camera's image. I know there is a limit on how long USB cables can be, so perhaps this was past the distance for this particular application. Anyway, everything worked fine with the USB cable provided by Motorola. The base unit and wireless camera are pictured on the right. The base station looks a lot like a cable modem.



To set things up, you first install the monitoring software and USB driver. You then connect the base station to your computer. Finally, you activate your remote camera. The camera has an infrared motion sensor that you can set to save the current color image to a file. This feature can be adjusted so that it will then wait a specified number of seconds before a motion will again cause it to save an image. One limitation I found is that the motion sensor will not work through glass due to its being infrared. However, at any time while you are monitoring the action, you can click the mouse on a button to save the current image. Supposedly, you can also capture short color videos with sound, but I haven't tried that. Another yet untested feature is an email notification of an event, which, of course, requires that your computer be connected to the Internet and be able to connect to your email server.

What I purchased from CompUSA was called the Motorola Easy Start Kit Home Monitoring and Control System, Model HMEZ1000, consisting of the base station and one wireless camera for $149. The system supports up to six wireless cameras, three wired cameras and eight sensors (wireless door/window, wireless temperature and wireless water).

Now to the odd thing about all this - it is not easy to purchase the starter kit or an additional wireless camera, which I think I might want. There is no longer any in the two local CompUSA stores I use, Amazon.com has only one available, and so on. Possibly this is because they have a new version out, the HMEZ2000. And the prices really vary - all well in excess of $200 when I paid only $149.

Speaking of new versions, I went to the Motorola site and downloaded a new version of the software, which is nicer and I think is really the software that ships with the newer hardware since the software is now called Motorola Homesight software.

The Motolola site for all of this is http://broadband.motorola.com/consumers/home_monitoring.asp.

For those of you who want a standalone wireless camera and are not interested in all the monitoring stuff, you can purchase just a camera that has its own server and will appear as another object on your wireless network with its own IP address and which can then be accessed via a browser. Linksys makes one for $180, and there are other brands for around $100.

Network Stumbler In setting up the above wireless home monitoring, you need to know what wireless channel your home wireless network is operating on. There are 12 channels, 1 - 12. However, I believe that for wireless-g there are actually only three that don't

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

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Windows SIG

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(Comments…….Continued from page 6)

overlap: 1, 6 and 11. You can get that information from the configuration setup for your wireless router, or you can download the shareware program, Network Stumbler, that will tell you about all the wireless networks available. Once you know the channel your wireless network is using (6 is the default for most home routers), then you can put this into the configuration of the Motorola Home Monitoring setup and it will choose a different channel for itself. I had to use this program to find out what channel was being used at Pepin. You may obtain the program from http://www.netstumbler.com/.

The image below right is what Network Stumbler is currently showing for the wireless networks available near my home. I have selected the Encryption On filter (none are broadcasting without encryption). As you can see, there are three wireless networks available--one mine and the two others apparently from neighbors.

There is also a Pocket PC version of Net Stumbler that you can download for your mobile device.

I will have the Motorola Home Monitoring camera at the next meeting if you missed seeing it last meeting. ◆

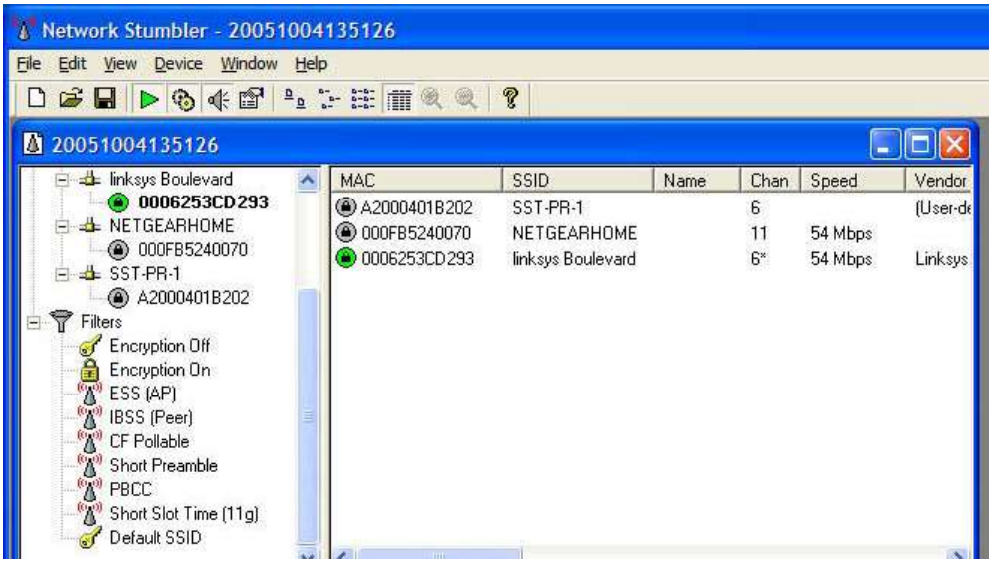
Household Chemical & Electronics Collection

Saturday, Oct 29, 2005, 9AM to 2PM

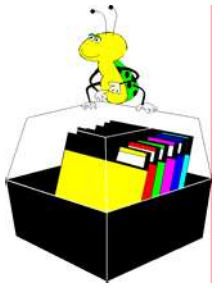
City of Tampa Solid Waste Department
4010 West Spruce Street

Only Residential Waste will be accepted

Chemicals, paints and solvents, automotive products, household cleaners, pool chemicals, mercury thermometers, fluorescent bulbs, lawn and garden supplies and electronics, including computer equipment, televisions and VCRs. Call the City of Tampa Solid Waste Department at (813) 348-1111 for more information.



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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

you wish in the hope that what one misses, another will detect.

Phil and Dave told of their many successes in dealing with spyware installers and answered many questions on how they develop and keep their anti-spyware effective. They suggest you read EULA's closely when you install any "free" software. We were also invited to visit http://www.sunbeltblog.com for some interesting reading.

Sunbelt Software donated three copies of Counter Spy as door prizes. After a short break, numbers were drawn for the prizes. The lucky winners were Linda Neal, Kevan Sheridan and Bruce Register.

The meeting concluded about 8:45pm. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 11 November 2005

Meeting

D. J. Elliot
The Clone Evangelist

Wednesday, November 9, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: This month D. J. Elliott, the Clone Evangelist, will give us an amusing fractured history of the IBM compatible PC. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

What To Do About This Newsletter?

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This month the newsletter well went dry. Well, almost dry. Doug Mullis sent in his usual minutes, and on a second request for material, Mary Sheridan sent me an article. But that leaves a whole lot of space to fill. And since I long ago instituted a policy of using only material from our group, I have a problem. I could reduce the newsletter to four pages this month, or I could try to fill up about three pages myself. Some months when I have purchased a new computer item or had some interesting computer experiences, I could easily do that. But this month there is no new item, and my computer experiences have been mostly redoing web sites and writing computer code in Visual Basic .Net.

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December Meeting: Smart Computing and our annual Christmas Party

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Mary Sheridan, member at large, started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:40 pm. We welcomed Mary back from her vacation to Maine.

As our first item of business, Don Patzsch reported that he was being cut off when doing wireless downloading from the Internet on his new laptop. After several suggestions as to why this may be happening, Don decided he would contact the dealer for a solution.

Mary advised the group that during our Nov. meeting we would submit nominees for next year's officers. So far she has John Witmer accepting the nomination for president, Kevan Sheridan agreeing to accept vice-president, Mike Hodges and Doug Mullis agreeing to continue as treasurer and secretary respectively. Any of these nominees would welcome others volunteering or being nominated, also we need a nominee for member at large. Please express your interest in serving as an officer or submit nominees at the Nov. meeting. Fresh blood is healthy for the organization. Your group needs your service, and those who have served for more than a year need the break.

Mike Hodges, our treasurer, expressed appreciation for the fine job William LaMartin is doing with our newsletter and added that our financial situation is stable for the remainder of the year. Of concern, however, is the fact that we are losing members and therein revenue. Mike made a call for dues payments and suggested we try to attract new members.

Mary reminded the group of the upcoming Fall Conference of the Florida Association of Computer User

(Minutes……..Continued on page 3)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

FACUG Conference and Other Things

By Mary Sheridan, Member at Large,
Tampa PC users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

Despite the threat of Wilma heading for the west coast of Florida, the FACUG fall conference was a huge success. We only had half of the people that registered for the conference in attendance. This was not a problem. The conference was well-organized, and the food was very good.

This is the second event that I have attended at the Shrine Temple in Sarasota. It's a very nice place and less than an hour's drive from home.

Because of my required attendance at the board meeting, I was not able to sit in on all of the sessions that were offered. There were round tables on how to get grant money, how to get programs, how to grow membership and many more. I heard many people discussing that eBay has become a "hot" topic for meeting presentations. I'm working on trying to get an eBay pro to give us a presentation at one of our future meetings.

Dave Gerber (past vice-president of the FACUG) has an online web site, http://www.bitsandbytesradio.com. I tuned in on Sunday and it was quite interesting. His guest was the creator of an anti-spam program. He has a variety of guests and takes call-ins. You could even win software. Check it out.

At our November meeting, I will call for nominations from the floor and present the candidates for the December election. I encourage anyone who wants to help make our user group better and more interesting to consider being an officer. The tentative slate is president, John Witmer; vice-president, Kevan Sheridan; secretary, Doug Mullis; treasurer, Mike Hodges; and member at large, Mary Sheridan. If you have a nomination and are unable to attend the meeting, please email me at mcpease@mindspring.com.

The December meeting is Smart Computing and our annual Christmas Party. Everyone who has a special dish that they like either to make or buy, please bring it to the party. The club will provide something from Publix, probably finger sandwiches, and plates, forks and cups. Be creative and prepare to have a great time.

Happy Computing! ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

Groups on Oct. 22, 2005 in Sarasota. This is a one-day meeting, with continental breakfast and lunch included, for $20. Learning how to maintain an active club and what others are doing will be beneficial to our members.

We are still settling into our new meeting place, and it was decided to delay a tour of the Pepin site until construction is completed toward the end of the year.

At 7:00 pm, Mary started the regular portion of our meeting by introducing Steve Singer of RDI-Tampa. Steve started by telling us some history of his involvement in supplying computer hardware beginning in 1978 when Apple ruled.

Steve displayed three Jetway motherboards and reflected he prefers AMD hardware to Intel. AMD uses two buses to divide the routing of tasks. Their chips utilize a dual core, which take advantage of the motherboard's split bus for greater speed. The dual core CPU requires a 939 Chip socket and RAM must be filled in pairs, but SDRAM PC 100 and 133 can be utilized. Steve pointed out that the emphasis on chip speed has been redirected toward the dual core chips, as faster and faster chips were generating too much heat.

Steve offered an external disk drive case for housing a notebook hard drive for $35. He also demonstrated a portable two channel USB speaker system by Encore Electronics, featuring a 2" subwoofer and two 1" satellite speakers with self contained amplifier, for $29.95.

Steve invited us to visit his website,

(Minutes……..Continued on page 8)

(Newsletter…….Continued from page 1)

The Newsletter and Me I have been doing the newsletter one month short of 10 years. That makes 119 issues of the newsletter, all, if I am not mistaken, produced on time (arriving in your mail before the monthly meeting). And for every one of those newsletters, there is an Adobe Acrobat version. In December of 1995, I took over the job from someone who was burned out, and I would not be adverse to now yielding the job to someone else. I have been thinking of creating a CD with all the Adobe Acrobat files along with a searchable index. It would be sort of a history of what we were doing in computing for the past 10 years. To fill up all that empty space I mentioned, let's look inside some of those issues.

Ten years of the *Bits of Blue*

In that December 1995 issue, Larry Anders had a review of *Street Atlas USA 3.0* . I assume if they were still numbering the product in that manner we would now be on version 13 since they put out a new version each year. However, I note that the product is now called Street Atlas USA 2006. Also in that issue the president of the group, Harvey Bruneau, described his recent trip to COMDEX in Las Vegas. Changing times killed that event, which used to be enormous. There were also reviews of *Adobe Photoshop 3.0* and *Lotus SmartSuite for OS/2* copied from other user group newsletters. I don't think there are any new OS/2 programs out there at the moment. The newsletter, as it was until recently, was 12 pages, and our meetings were on the Hillsborough Community College campus in Ybor City.

The January 1996 issue had a column from our new president, Connie Kincaid. There were also reviews of *Syncware Fill* by William LaMartin, Seattle Film Works (a business) by Bruce Register, *Zip Explorer* by Larry Anders and *Partition Magic* by Don Patzsch. That was version 1 of Partition Magic. I note that *Zip Explorer* is now on version 7 and *PartitionMagic* is at version 8. Remember, you probably heard about them first via the TPCUG.

In the March 1996 issue, I wrote an article about *Microsoft Publisher for Win 95*, as that version was called. That was the first issue I had used *Publisher* to do the newsletter, the previous three issues having been done in *Microsoft Word*. Let me tell you, I found out quickly that a word processor is not the ideal vehicle in which to create a newsletter. I have been using *Publisher* ever since. My current version is *Publisher 2003.* In that issue, Larry Anders wrote about an early version of *PaintShop Pro*. There was an OS/2 article from outside the group. (At that time, I struggled to secure articles about OS/2 since there was a small but active part of the group using OS/2 as their operating system.)

Do you remember *Microsoft Bob*? If not, you can read about him (it?) in the May 1996 article by Tim Condon. The June 1996 issue had a very long article about *OS/2 Merlin*. In the July 1996 issue, we announced our first web site which was hosted by member John Meroth as a subdirectory of his site. It would be a few more months before we got our own domain name of tpcug.org. Remember the Zip Drive from Iomega? Larry Anders wrote about an early one in the August 1996 issue. Iomega is still making Zip Drives but no longer appears to make the parallel interface ones of that era.

In the September 1996 newsletter, I wrote about PC Hell--a topic I would return to not infrequently over the years. The October 1996 issue inaugurated a short-lived column by Will Goble titled *Ask PC Willy.* And again since OS/2 was of interest, Charles Howe had an article on *OS/2 Warp*.

The November 1996 issue has articles about *Delrina CommSuite 95,* of which *WinFax Pro* was one of the components. Faxing from your computer was a big deal back then. There was mention of Internet Explorer 3.0, and it was noted that Netscape was the runaway preference for most of the Internet world. Mention was also made of a beta version of *Microsoft Net Meeting.*

In December 1996, Larry Anders had a review of *Street Atlas 4.0*. (See they had put out their yearly update from 3.0 to 4.0.) And there was mention of our move in February 1997 to a new location for the general meetings to MOSI, the Museum of Science and Industry.

Those are some highlights of my first year of newsletters. And there are nine more years to go, but I will spare you that for now. If you go to our web site, http://www.tpcug.org, you will find Adobe Acrobat

(Newsletter…….Continued on page 5)

Good Hard Drives Needed

Bring them to the meeting!

Do you have an unused hard drive lying around?

Merle Nicholson and Bob LaFave will clean it of data for you, test and recertify it and donate it to Metropolitan Ministries. They can use anything 10G or larger. Nothing smaller, please!

They'll also accept systems that can be refurbished with processors 1G and higher, and also CRT monitors in good condition 17" and up. Bring them to the meeting this month or contact Bob LaFave at boblafave@verizon.net or Merle Nicholson at merle@merlenicholson.com.

(Newsletter…….Continued from page 4)

versions of the newsletter for the past 12 months. There are HTML versions of the newsletter going back to 1998, and a list of articles going back to March of 1996. There are opinions, hardware reviews and software reviews. All that should give you an idea of the members' interests over the past years.

Anyone interested in manufacturing those CDs I mentioned? ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



A Soyuz Spacecraft Approaches the Space Station

This photo, taken recently, is from the site http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/archivepix.html.

If you are interested in space photos, this is the place where a selection is made for you from NASA's vast archive.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
EarthSLOT	http://www.earthslot.org/
Drug Information by RxList	http://www.rxlist.com/
Drugs.Com - Online drug information	http://www.drugs.com/
AltaVista - Babel Fish Translation	http://world.altavista.com/babelfish/tr
AV Science Forum (Audio Visual)	http://www.avsforum.com/
Windows Live Beta	http://www.live.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Some Visual Basic .Net Programming

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

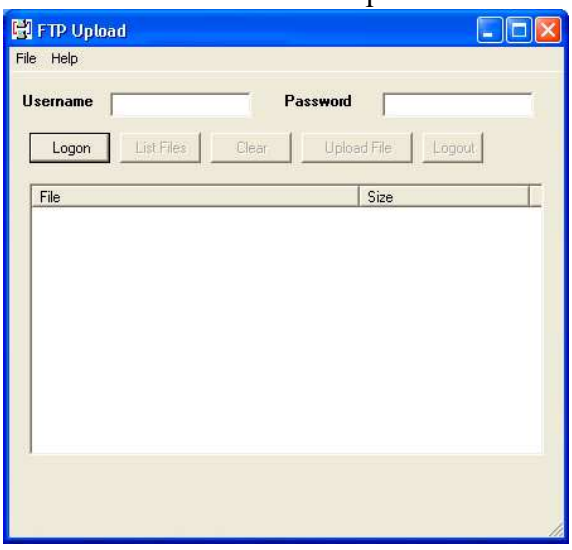
I spend a good bit of my time writing programs using Visual Basic .Net. In past years I used Delphi and Visual Basic. The more I use it, the more I appreciate VB .Net.

In the past month or so, I have written

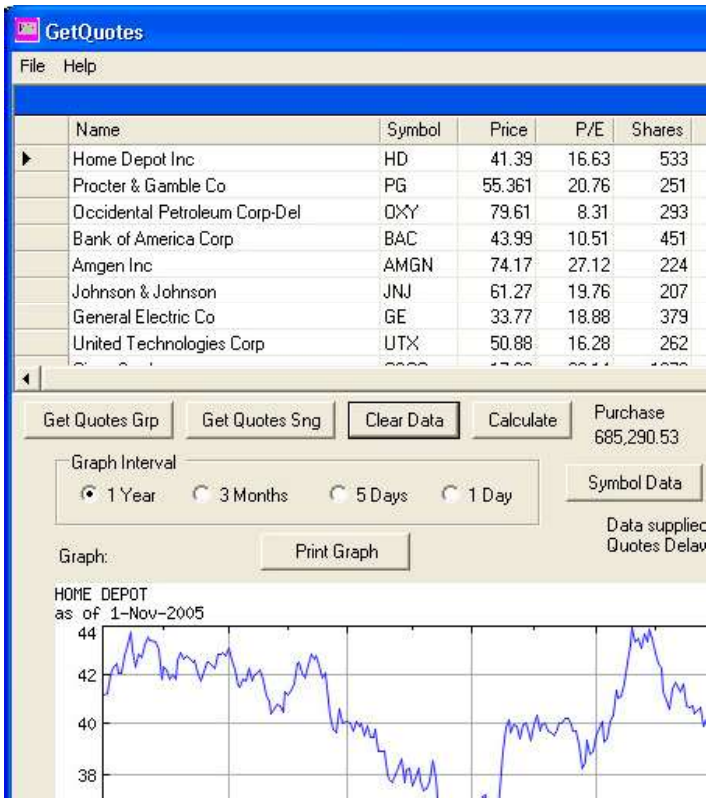
- A bare-bones FTP program
- A Zip and UnZip file program
- A program to parse data from a Telnet session dump and then display it and post it to an online database
- A stock portfolio that retrieves time-delayed quotes and displays the portfolio's current status with individual stock details and graphs.

I am also in the process of using VB .Net in the redo of a web site using ASP.Net technology.

The FTP program was written to satisfy a request from a friend who wanted a simple way for his clients to send files periodically to his server. The clients needed an "idiot-proof" way of doing the file uploads, and telling them to download a shareware FTP program, install it and figure out how to use it was clearly not "idiot-proof." Here is the simple interface of the program. All they need do is supply a username and password, then log on. Once logged on, they then click the Upload File button and select the file to be uploaded from the directory tree. The file is then automatically sent via FTP to the server and put in the folder associated with that username.



There is no



installation of the program; you simply place the executable on the desktop of any computer that has the .Net Framework installed (if not installed, the .Net Framework can be downloaded from Microsoft and easily installed).

The picture above is the upper left hand portion of the stock portfolio program, displaying the status of a hypothetical portfolio and the one year graph of a selected stock, in this case Home Depot. The stock data is supplied by a free web service that has a 20-minute delay. The graphs are gotten from the Yahoo financial site.

For any stock you select, you can display both a graph for varying lengths of time and its statistical details. This program also needs no installation.

In general, a program will need no installation program if it does not reference any external dlls. To write the Zip and UnZip program, I had to use the SharpZipLib from http://www.icsharpcode.net. So this program required an installation program. But the installation program was small and no big deal. At present the program will unzip an archive of zipped

(Programming……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

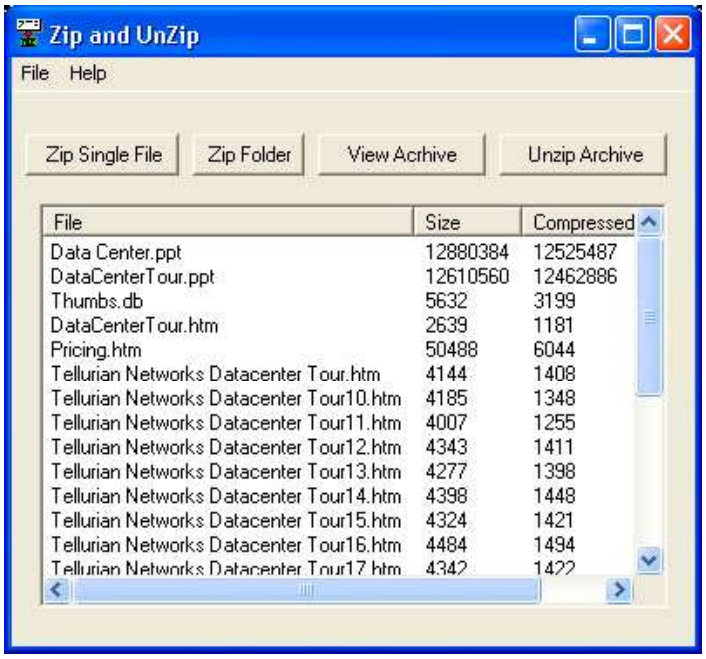
(Programming…….Continued from page 6)

folders within zipped folders to any depth, but will only zip a collection of folders with folders to a depth of 2. I need to come back at some time and write a recursive function to handle that process.

You might rightly ask, why write a program to do something that you can already get done for free. For example, Windows XP will zip and unzip things for you. Well, here is one reason. Say, I wrote a program that as output creates a large file and sends it somewhere using either FTP (as in the earlier example) or HTTP post to put it at a web site. I would like the file to be as small as possible. I could accomplish that by including the zip code within that program so that I zipped the file from within the program before sending it off. The Zip and UnZip interface is at the top of the next column.

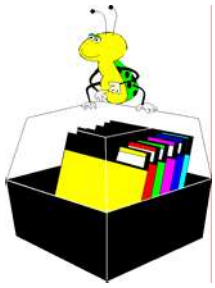
Finally, I'll write briefly about the inventory program. The problem basically was that I needed a way to get data out of a proprietary system that you could only access via a vendor-supplied Windows program which was basically just a wrapper for Telnet. (Remember Telnet, the way you communicated with another computer and viewed the session on a "DOS" screen for which you had to keep pressing Enter to see more data?) About the only thing the program will allow is for you to export the display memory to a text file.

So I wrote a program that opens this text file, parses



out the desired information and displays it in table form. You can then sort based on each column or filter on the values in as many as three columns. You can then save the data as a text file or as an xml file. Finally, the most important thing is that you can press a button and the data will be uploaded to a web service which will then save it to the web site where you want to display the inventory information. The idea is that someone at the business will run this program once a day to update the web site information. And that is the end of my story. ◆

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(Minutes……..Continued from page 3)

http://www.morevalu.net or http://www.videoLAN.org, for free software and movies. He advised that we should periodically update the firmware of our CD and DVD burners to stay current with copyright coding.

Wireless router cards can now be obtained for as low as $35. The wired router should be a thing of the past. A couple new wireless standards are coming, n and nimo. Currently there are 811.02 a, b and g.

In conclusion, Steve donated the Encore speaker set as a door prize and invited members to come up and look at the hardware he had on display during the break.

Tickets for the two door prizes were sold during the break. The winners were: Bob LaFave - a copy of Partition Magic and Roger Waters - the Encore speakers.

The meeting adjourned about 9:00 pm. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 18 No. 12 December 2005

Meeting

Smart Computing
&
Holiday Party

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Meeting Preview: This month we have Smart Computing and our annual holiday party We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Jim Purcell and Merle Nicholson heeded the call for articles and made this newsletter much easier to produce than was last month's. For next month, it's someone else's turn. So….get to work!

Speaking of Merle, I had him build me a new computer. The four year old desktop from Gateway was getting a bit old and cluttered. This one is has an AMD Athon 64 4400+ dual core processor, two GB of memory, two 250 GB serial ATA hard drives configured in as Raid 0, two DVD/CD Read/Write drives, and a very nice Samsung 20-inch LCD monitor.

Perhaps next month I will give a complete description of the

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

January Meeting: Intel's *Build Your Own Computer*, presented by Bob LaFave

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Member at Large, Mary Sheridan, started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:30 pm. We discussed whether or not you should defrag your PC's hard drive. The consensus was that, although defragging does cause wear, if you first delete programs/files you no longer use and run Disc Clean-up before defragging, you minimize the wear and improve the efficiency of your machine. Always analyze your system to see that defragging is recommended. Also remember to run Disc Check after defragging. The entire discussion was humorously highlighted by a dialog between Merle Nicholson and Bob LaFave over what you should and should not delete from your computer.

Bob LaFave announced he is willing to present a session on Windows Restore Console during the SIG portion at an upcoming meeting after the first of the year.

At 7:00 we launched the new "Business" portion of our meeting. Mary announced the nominees for office for next year as follows; John Witmer for President; Kevan Sheridan for Vice President; Mike Hodges for Treasurer; Doug Mullis for Secretary; and Mary Sheridan for Member at Large. Mary asked for nominations from the floor; none was offered. The election will be at our Dec.14th meeting. We will also have our Christmas Party, and Smart Computing Magazine will be our presenter. Bring finger food or dessert if you wish for our party.

At 7:10 our Program Director, Doug Mullis, introduced our speaker for the evening, Mr. Dennis Elliott, who lectures primarily on PC technology to computer clubs in western Florida. He calls himself the Clone Evangelist and presented a 45-minute presentation with sound and graphics tracing the amusing evolution of the PC over a 25-year period.

According to D. J. Elliott, it all started at Xerox Corporation with a research project at Xerox Parc, CA, where they invented the mouse, the graphic user interface, the laser jet printer and the Ethernet. Xerox mothballed these new inventions, as they were not interested in expanding their product line beyond copy machines. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak of Apple Computer and upper management of IBM saw the potential for PC's, pirated these ideas and ran with them.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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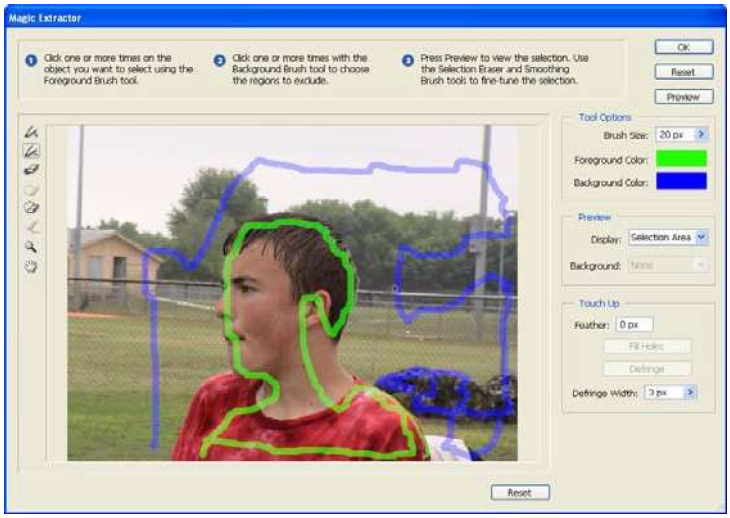
Adobe Photoshop Elements 4

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

This is an update to the article on Adobe Photoshop Elements 3 that appeared in the August Bits of Blue Newsletter. That article focused on the new features that were available in Photoshop Elements 3, with some background information on the overall capabilities of the product. The focus of this article is to cover the new features in Elements 4 and the enhancements to the features in Elements 3.

What's New in Elements 4:

1) Magic Selection Brush: Using this tool, you select an item by using the Magic Selection brush to draw a few lines or place a few dots on the item. It's not necessary to trace the outline of the item; just try to cover the range of colors. Elements then calculates the outline of the item and selects it. The tools required to "fine tune" the selection, when necessary, are exceptionally easy to use. You simply paint in the area to be added with the plus brush or in the area to be deleted with the minus brush.



2) Magic Extractor: This tool is used in a way similar to the Magic Selection Brush in that the areas that you want selected are marked in the same way. After selecting the photo from which you want to extract an image, you select the tool and your photo appears in the preview area of the Magic Extractor. The Magic Extractor provides an array of tools to help you make a perfect selection.
   a. Foreground Brush. This brush is used to mark the area that you want to extract.
   b. Background Brush. You use this brush to mark the area that you want to exclude from your selection.
   c. Point Eraser Tool. This tool is used to remove areas marked by mistake by either the Foreground or the Background brush.
   d. Add to Selection Tool. Use this to add to your selection.
   e. Remove from Selection Tool. Paint over areas that you want removed from the selection.
   f. Smoothing Tool. Use this tool after previewing to smooth ragged edges that aren't connected by the touch up commands that are also provided (Feather, Defringe and Fill Holes).

3) Adjust Color of Skin Tone. Call up this command and click on an area of skin in the photo. The skin tone and all colors in the photo will be adjusted. Tan and blush sliders are provided to fine tune your photo.

4) Red Eye Removal. A new completely automatic Red Eye Removal Tool is one of the neatest additions to Photoshop Elements. You can even select to have red eyes corrected automatically as you bring your photos into the program from your camera, scanner or file folders.
   You'll probably be happier with the results, however, if you wait until the photos are imported and then select the photos with a red eye problem. Once you've selected the photos to be corrected, you merely need to execute the tool from the organizer or the editor and the job is done. If you are not satisfied with the results on any of the photos, you can undo the action and use the regular Red Eye Removal tool in the Quick Fix or Standard Editor, which is more accurate and provides more flexibility (and is also a quick and easy tool to use). The strength of this program is that you also have tools like the clone stamp to use in particularly difficult situations where the "automatic" tools don't work as expected.

5) Defringe Command: When a selection is moved or copied a portion of the former background is often transported with it. This command will remove that fringe to better allow it to blend into the new background.

6) Straighten Tool: If you have a picture that is crooked, you merely need to select the photo, activate the Straighten Tool, and choose from three options: 1. Grow Canvas to Fit. 2. Crop to Remove Background. 3. Crop to Original Size. Then use your cursor to draw a line that identifies the part that should be level (such as the horizon) or perpendicular (such as a flag pole), and Elements straightens the photo.

7) WYSIWYG: The font menu identifies what each font actually looks like.

8) One Click Printing: Prints or Professional Hardbound Books from Photoshop Elements can be ordered by dragging the items to the "Order Prints" palette.

9) Slide Shows on TV: If you have Windows XP Media Center 2005 installed on your computer, you can view Photoshop Element slide shows on your TV and navigate using your TV remote.

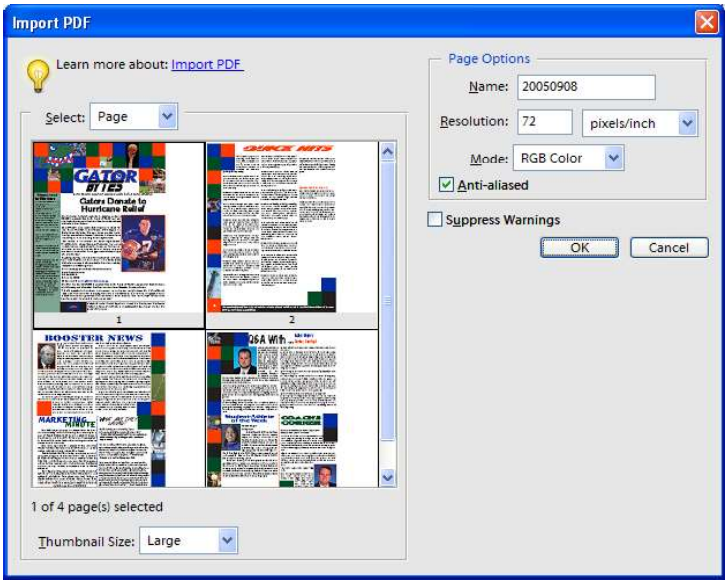
10) Face Tagging: Elements will search a group of selected photos and isolate and display the faces on the photos with a thumbnail so that you can easily tag the photos in your organizer. The photos can be tagged by simply dragging the tag and dropping it on a face or by dragging a face and dropping it on a tag (you can tag multiple selected photos at once).

(Elements…….Continued on page 4)

(Newsletter…….Continued from page 3)



11) Search by Metadata: In addition to the previous methods available to search for your photos you can now search by such items as file type, shutter speed, f stop, iso speed, camera name and camera model. This new feature also allows you to search using multiple criteria.
12) PDF Support: You can open a PDF document in Elements, which produces an Import PDF dialog box. With the Import PDF dialog box, you can preview the pages and images in a multi-page PDF file, then decide if you want to open them in the Editor. You can choose to import individual full pages (including text and graphics), or you can import just the images from a PDF file. If you import only the images, the resolution, size and color mode of the images remains unchanged. If you import pages, you can change the resolution and color mode.



What Has Changed in Elements 4

In addition to the new features, there are numerous enhancements to the previous features. Some of the significant changes in four functional areas are:

Editing and Selecting

- The Crop Tool has been enhanced. The "accept" and "reject" buttons have been moved to a more convenient location at the bottom corner of the item being cropped. New preset sizes have been added and a quick change control for the aspect ratio (switch from portrait to landscape, or landscape to portrait).
- Text handling has been improved. Paragraphs can be formatted and contained by the use of a text box.
- The Quick Fix automatic correction functions have been enhanced. New options and embedded profile support provide easier color management. These changes promise to make it easier to get the color you expect when printing.
- Raw data files from your camera can now be saved in the new Digital Negative format. The Digital Negative (DNG) format is Adobe's proposed standard format for camera raw files. DNG files are useful for archiving camera raw images because they contain the raw camera sensor data and data specifying how the image should look. Camera Raw image settings can be stored in DNG files instead of in sidecar XMP files or the Camera Raw database.
- The Noise filter, used to remove noise resulting from shooting in low light and with the ISO camera settings, has been improved by adding the Remove JPEG Artifact function.

Sharing and Printing

- The slide show editor has been completely redesigned. Many new features have been added, including the ability to pan and zoom and to add clip art to your show. You can make final adjustments or complete enhancements to any photo, even in the middle of the slide show creation process. There are over 50 transitions included in the program. You have the ability to add text, graphics, narration and music (add multiple songs with precise start and end points). Edit and enhance photos from any point in the slide show creation process. Your work can be saved as a slide show, and you can go back and edit it at anytime.
- Create cards, calendars and photo albums, and send them to your printer. There are formats to personalize your email for various occasions and add your photos. You can also create your own wallpaper.

Viewing Tagging and Organizing

- The enhanced Photo Downloader is faster and can be used even when Photoshop Elements isn't running. You can view your photos in full screen without the clutter of menus, or you can view two photos in the same mode either side by side or above and below.
- The Organizer allows you to view photos in four different ways. **Date (Newest First)** shows the most recently taken or imported photos first. (Within a given day, the photos are shown in the order they were taken, oldest-first, unless otherwise specified in the General Preferences dialog box). Newest-first order is convenient

(Elements…….Continued on page 5)

(Elements……..Continued from page 4)

when you need to attach tags to the photos you imported most recently**. Date (Oldest First)** shows all the photos in chronological order. **Import Batch** displays photos in the batches in which they were imported and shows how the photos were imported. **Folder Location** view in the Organizer splits the Photo Browser into three sections: a folder hierarchy panel on the left, an image thumbnail panel in the center, and the Palette Bin on the right. From this view you can manage your folders, add files to your catalog, automatically tag files using their folder names as the tags, and add or remove folders from Watched Folder status.

- Adding a caption is one more way of identifying your photo. The captions can be added in several ways, depending on the view you are using. Like almost everything else in this program, Adobe has made it as convenient as possible for the user. Captions can be used in Creations, printed in contact sheets, and viewed in a web photo gallery. If you have a microphone, you can even add an audio caption to your photo.

Summary: I've tried to cover the significant changes that have been included in Photoshop Elements 4. In addition to the extensive help and tutorial system available in Elements 4 to help you utilize its many capabilities, the changes to the Organizer provide you with an all-embracing search capability for your photos. There are also many publications that provide even more insight into the use of all of the available tools. I purchased the O'Reilly book, *Photoshop Elements 4: The Missing Manual* by Barbara Brundage, as I did her book for Elements 3. It is an excellent and well-organized manual for Photoshop Elements 4. It's available on Amazon.com. (If you purchase any books from Amazon.com, don't forget to go through the TPCUG web site.) ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Bill Gates
Playing with an Xbox

With the introduction of the new Xbox, I wanted to use a photo of Mr. Gates with it, but all I could find were of poor quality. So here is one of him with the old toy from in January 2005.

The link is http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/features/2005/jan05/01-05CES.mspx

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Smart Computing (our presenter)	http://www.smartcomputing.com/
Windows OneCare Live	http://beta.windowsonecare.com/
Fiddler HTTP Debugger	http://www.fiddlertool.com/fiddler/
The Life of Birds	http://www.pbs.org/lifeofbirds/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Photo Story 3 for Windows

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Photo Story 3 is a program that creates movies from your collections of digital photos. It's kind of a slideshow, like Ken Burns does for PBS. If your target platform is a PC, Pocket PC or a new Palm, it creates a Windows Media Video file (.wmv). It also will create DVD's to be played on a TV and for Windows Media PC. And the results are nothing short of spectacular.

Photo Story 3 is a free download from Microsoft. Yes, it's free. The previous version, Photo Story 2, is still distributed on the Windows Plus! CD, along with other things, and of, course, that's not free at all.

There's only one catch. It's a $20 catch, and one that I bumped into early: If you want to make a DVD that will play in a standard DVD player, you need your own software for the creation of the DVD. I was unable to get my copy of Nero OEM to do that, but I did purchase a plug-in for PS3 that did all I needed. More about that later.

There are excellent tutorials on the Microsoft website, with more information than you'll ever need. I highly recommend looking at those. It's where I found the reference to the Sonic site where I bought the plug-in. All these are in the links section of this article.

Now for the program. If you do these following simple steps and did nothing else, you'll just love the results.

Collect all the pictures you want in your slideshow, preferably in a single folder, but if they are scattered around, you can deal with that inside the program, too. Step two, open the program and read in the pictures. Step three, move the pictures along the picture strip to get them in the order you want. Step four, pull in some music you've ripped from an audio CD, point the start of the music to the first picture, then look down the pictures to see where the music ends, and repeat the same music, or point to another. Step five, save the project in a file because you'll want to come back later. And last, step six, create the movie. For the first save, I'd create a movie file to be run on a PC at, say, 1024x768. When it's done, run the movie.

Everyone knows about Ken Burns' wonderful series on the Civil War for PBS, in which he used a technique on all the still photos where he panned through the picture and zoomed in or out of the photo to a point of interest to create a sense of motion. He may not have invented the idea, but his name became synonymous with the technique. I can remember being entranced with the impact of this when it came out.

Photo Story 3 does this pan and zoom on every picture by default. It's wonderful. And the funny thing is, it must be done randomly. It certainly can't know of the content of the picture to do it intelligently. So after you've created your first show and maybe looked at it twice, then is the time to go back into the saved project and go to each slide and change the motion so that the motion fits into the context of the picture. Some pictures you'll want to have no motion at all, and perhaps some you may want to repeat the picture so that you can zoom out after zooming in.

I told a friend about this program, and he put together a movie of about six pictures and one song. He said he did it in about five minutes. Just did pretty much what I described above. He emailed it to me, and it was just excellent. And he was extremely happy with it.

For my own 20 minute project with 165 photos, it took three minutes to create a file for my pocket PC. For a file to be played at 1024x768, it took seven minutes. It surprised me how long it took since I have a very powerful dual-core processor. So if you have an older computer, I'd be prepared for a long final creation time.

The program has a very wide range of options that I'll try to summarize: You can crop the pictures, rotate, color correct, remove red eye, annotate with titles on each, record voice for each, create music and edit each photo with 10 effects like sepia color, black and white, watercolor and negative.

Now for the rest of the stuff. The program is written to be a kind of a wizard with five panels. The panels' functions are:

1. Import and arrange your pictures (color correction, red eye, rotate, crop, add 10 effects)
2. Add a title to your pictures (Add text and arrange on the photo)
3. Narrate your pictures and customize motion (Yes, add voice annotations or narrations)
4. Add background music (Select music, create music)
5. Save your story
    - Save your story for playback on your computer
    - Send the story in an e-mail message
    - Save your story for Pocket PC
    - Save your story for playback on a Smartphone with Windows media player
    - Save your story for playback on a Portable Media Center
    - Optionally, with the Sonic Plug-in,
    - Save your story to a DVD for playback on your home DVD player

On "Save your story for playback on your computer," you have a very wide range of options. You have file, DVD and CD (VCD) formats and a variety of screen resolutions for each.

For creating DVDs to play on a home DVD player, I can recommend the plug-in from Sonic. There's a link to it from the Micro-

(Photo Story…….Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Photo Story…….Continued from page 6)
soft site, but it's listed on the Sonic site too.

I've made three versions of my particular project: for PC playback, DVD player and for Pocket PC. The file size for the PC version is 77MB at 1024x768. This is for 20 minutes and 165 pictures. For the Pocket PC it's 23MB at 240x320. The saved project file is 338MB.

There's a lot of information on this program on the Microsoft website that's worth looking at.

Here are the links:

Download details Photo Story 3 for Windows:
http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=92755126-a008-49b3-b3f4-6f33852af9c1&DisplayLang=en

Sonic plug-in to PS3:
http://www.sonic.com/products/Consumer/PhotoStory/

Tutorial step-by-step Burn a Photo Story to DVD and Play It On Your TV:
http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/knowledgecenter/howto/DigCameraPhotostorytoDVD_StepByStep.aspx

Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows make show-n-tell cool again:
http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.mspx
Microsoft Windows Media Workshops:
http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/knowledgecenter/workshops/default.aspx ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)
Don Estridge of IBM's Small Systems Group went off looking for an operating system for their new small computer that they had spent a year secretly building. After failing to connect with Gary Kildall, who had an operating system called CPM, they sought out Bill Gates, whom they knew but who had never created an operating system. Bill assured IBM that he was up to the task. To his good fortune, his partner Paul Allen stumbled onto a real deal and purchased an operating system from Tim Peterson for $50 thousand. They then entered into an endless contract with IBM wherein they got a royalty for each computer IBM produced using their newly acquired software. We all know where it went from there.

Not only did Bill Gates take IBM for a ride, but also because of the open architecture of the IBM personal computer, anyone eventually could clone their machines. Compaq Computer was the first with a suitcase sized 50-pound portable and then Michael Dell did his thing to capture a part of the personal computer market. Few realized at the time how popular the personal computer would become at its inception. So here we are today, each of us with our own home computers.

Mr. Elliott ended by saying if we wanted him back, he has an equally interesting presentation on the Internet.

Following our speaker, we took a 10-minute break during which tickets were sold for our five door prizes. The winners were:

Photo Shop CS2 Manual	Ed White
Flight Simulator Software	Bruce Register
Laptop Ventilated Platform	Mary Sheridan
Tech Smith T-Shirt	John Witmer
I Hate Spam Software	Ed White

They're being no further business or entertainment, the meeting adjourned at 8:15pm. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

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process Merle and I went through in my ordering the components, his installation and testing of the components, my installation of the operating system and software, and finally the copying of my files and settings to the new computer using Microsoft's File and Settings Transfer Wizard.

Most everything went smoothly, but there were a couple of glitches. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 1 January 2006

Meeting

Bob Lafave
Intel's Build your Own Computer

Wednesday, January 11, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: This month Bob LaFave will show us how to build a computer. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This seems to be hardware month, with Bob Lafave doing a presentation on building a computer and me writing about my new
"Merle built" computer. There is really no need to buy from one of the major computer vendors. Have either Merle, Bob, or one of the local businesses like Steve Singer's put you one together--or do it yourself. You will probably have to buy your own CD/DVD burning software, but that is about the only "free" thing usually provided by major computer assemblers that you will need. The virus scanning software, etc. provided by them is good for only a few months, so you would need to purchase your own copy anyway.

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

February Meeting: Metro Crime Prevention of Florida

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

We did not have our usual SIG portion of our meeting as we were partaking of the Holiday Party Buffet. The spread was fantastic as usual. Thanks to all who brought goodies.

At 6:55 PM, Vice President John Witmer started the business portion of our meeting. After thanking all who brought items for the buffet, John asked Member at Large Mary Sheridan to present the slate of nominees for the coming year's officers. Mary presented:

For President	John Witmer
For Vice President	Kevan Sheridan
For Treasurer	Mike Hodges
For Secretary	Doug Mullis
For Member at Large	Mary Sheridan

The election was held and the above were elected unanimously. Terms of office begin January 1, 2006. To those who agreed to serve as officers, a special thanks.

John expressed appreciation to William LaMartin for continuing in the volunteer position of Newsletter Editor. He then welcomed our guests and acknowledged one new member, Robbie Randall. Robbie is Doug Mullis's son-in-law and has attended a couple of meetings in the past. Unfortunately Robbie's job requires he be in the Atlanta area much of the time. Welcome, Robbie!

William announced that he now owns his first non-Gateway desktop computer in many years. Merle Nicholson set it up for him, and he is initially happy although there was a problem getting some missing

(Minutes……..Continued on page 3)

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Making My First Music CD

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Although a former computer professional, I had remained a more traditional consumer of music, i.e., purchasing records, tapes, or CD's as technology changed. I don't own an iPod or an MP3 player. My first attempt to download so called "free" music resulted in a virus infection that took hours to eliminate.

Lesson 1, "free" can mean including pop-ups, adware, spyware, and virus infections.

Therefore, it was with great trepidation that I attempted to create a special birthday gift by downloading music. Being a neophyte in this area, I resorted to the old trial and error method.

The Web led me to try Rhapsody, one of several prominent services, as they were offering a free trial with 5 free downloads. This worked pretty well after leaving credit card information as collateral. Rhapsody from Realnetworks.com, owner and supplier of RealPlayer, allows you to legally share or burn CD's of purchased selections. Rhapsody downloads were in the restrictive .rax format but Rhapsody burns CDs in CD Digital Audio (.cda) format. This is the format used in music CDs you buy.

Now that I had the free selections, I removed Rhapsody from my computer. This was a mistake! I could no longer play or burn the titles to a CD, and I lost license rights. Rax format could not even be played by most other players. I had to download and reinstall Rhapsody to regain control.

However, Rhapsody did not have several of the older songs I was seeking. Again, research was my guide, and I tried Wal-Mart's Music Service. There I found the songs, at a cost of 88¢ each, which download in WMA format. You can legally burn them to a CD up to 10 times and are allowed unlimited transfers to a portable device, but have restrictions on sharing or attaching to emails, etc. Note that a WMA file is similar to an MP3 file, but the WMA can be programmed to limit copying.

There are many music playing and/or recording programs available such as: RealPlayer, Musicmatch Jukebox, Creative Mediasource and Windows Media Player. My default player is the latter, but I needed Rhapsody to burn all my selections, including those from Wal-Mart. None of the others (except RealPlayer) can handle the rax format.

The final result was a homemade CD that actually played perfectly.

A word of WARNING is in order. It has been well publicized that a number of lawsuits have been filed against PC users for illegally sharing or otherwise misusing downloaded music. The law issues are many and complicated. Conflicting claims abound. This is serious business, and readers are cautioned to exercise great care in their use of downloaded music, particularly with regard to sharing music directly or indirectly with others. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

parts.

At 7:15 PM our regular meeting began with the introduction of Marcy Gunn and Vince Cogley with *Smart Computing* magazine. Its being winter in Nebraska, Marcy assured us they were pleased to be making the Florida circuit in December for the second year.

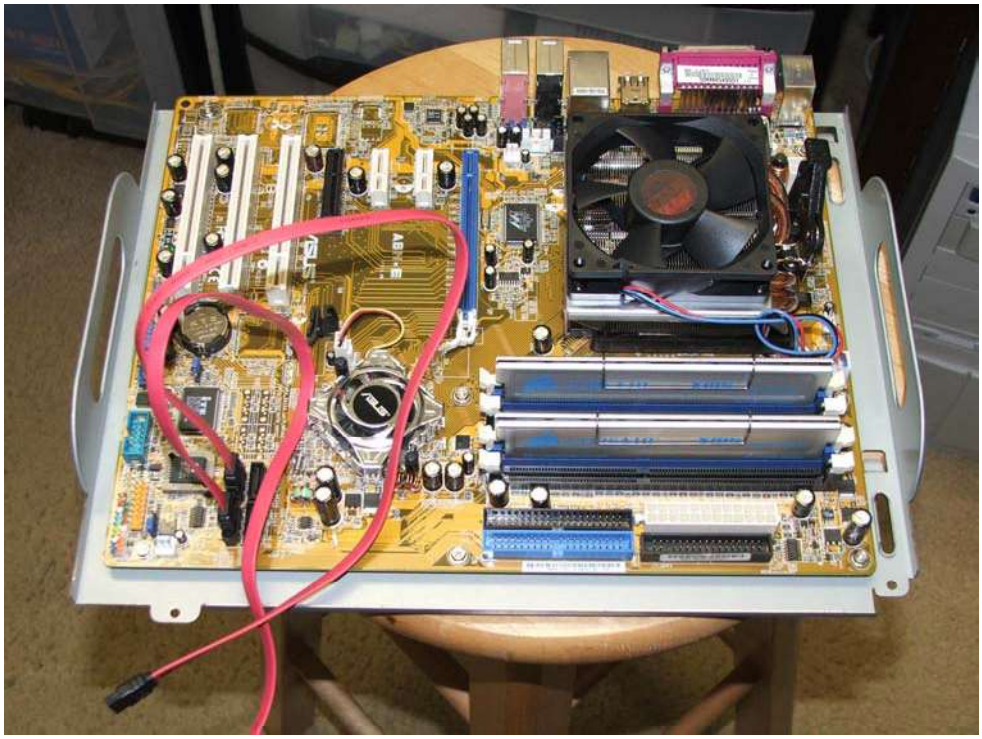
Marcy handed out packets containing the January 2006 *Smart Computing* magazine, the October 2005 *Your Guide To The Ultimate Computing Resource*, a mouse pad with calendar year 2006 printed on it and a ball point pen.

Smart Computing is a monthly publication for computer users of all skill levels. It features easy to follow tutorials, new product evaluations, troubleshooting guides for operating systems and everything in

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

New Computer

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



There it is at the right, my new computer, minus a case, hard drives, CD/DVD drives, floppy drive, video card and power supply, perched on Merle's work stool. Now, he doesn't assemble computers on a stool; that positioning was just to make taking the photograph easier. So what you are seeing here is really only the motherboard, memory and processor fan.

After 14 years of Gateway desktop computers, I finally made the break to a "home built" one (in Merle's home). And I feel I got a better machine than if I had purchased a Gateway, HP or Dell. As I see it, these companies make computers cheap to sell cheap since that is what most people want. My new computer has a large, roomy case, one where you actually have space to put your hand into and do some work. It has an AMD Athelon 64 Dual Core processor, two GB of Ram, two 250 GB Serial ATA hard drives configured as Raid 0, two CD/DVD burners, a multi function floppy, 20-inch monitor, standard keyboard and wireless mouse. Total cost for the parts was $2,365 (including Windows XP Professional). A breakdown of the pricing is on the following page. Oh, there is a card with extra USB ports and firewire ports.

So, how was all this done? The first step was for Merle to go to http://www.newegg.com and select the components for me to approve. The choice of a case turned out to be the most difficult. I did not want a black case or a poorly-constructed case. I would have preferred a mid tower one but had to settle for the larger tower to get what I wanted. I trusted Merle on the memory, hard drives and power supply. He gave me several choices for the monitor. He did this by setting up a wish list that I could go study at the site. Once we had agreed on what I needed, I placed the order.

All the packages arrived within a week. Unfortunately, the box containing most of the small items was missing one hard drive and all the memory. That one box was very poorly taped, so I don't know if Newegg didn't put the parts in the box, they fell out or they were stolen during shipment. Now here is the bad part. Newegg has to "investigate" such occurrences, and this takes at least two weeks before they will either ship you replacements or refund your money. So if you want your parts now, you have to reorder (and repay). That is what I did. However, I had to go to another online company, PCMall.com, to get the hard drive, since Newegg was out of them.

Newegg definitely has low prices, and several members of our group recommend them highly and have never had problems, but dealing with them is entirely different from dealing with someone like Amazon.com. Recently I ordered from Amazon the upgrade for Visual Studio, Visual Studio 2005. This is an expensive program with the upgrade costing just under $500. When my copy did not arrive when the tracking said that it should, I went to the UPS site to check, and much to my surprise it said that the package had been delivered earlier at 5:30 PM and that

(Computer……..Continued on page 5)

(Computer…….Continued from page 4)

LaMartin had signed for it. Well, my wife and I were both home then, saw no UPS driver and certainly signed nothing.

A call to UPS produced sympathy but the information that I had to contact the shipping party, Amazon.com and have them put in a trace. Well, as you might know, there is no phone number for such at the Amazon site. But I had run into this problem before, and went straight to Google, which produced the secret customer support number. Once connected to

(Computer…….Continued on page 6)

Computer Parts breakdown

S-CASE ISTAR S-10000S RT (Case)	$118.00
CPU AMD 64 |4400+ ATHLON X2 939P (Processor)	$497.00
MOUSE|MICROSOFT M03-00090 Plat (Mouse)	$39.99
ASUS MOBO 939 NF4ULTRA A8N-E (Motherboard)	$109.99
CD MS|WIN XP PRO w/SP2 (Windows XP Pro)	$146.95
KB LOGITECH|ULTRA X KEYBOARD (Keyboard)	$19.99
ADD ON USB/FW (4+2)P PG-COM-303 (USB/Firewire)	$15.99
PSU TT | W0090RU 470W (Power Supply)	$67.99
VGA XFX|GF 6800 256MB PVT42PUDP3 (Video Card)	$209.00
Two HD 250G|MAXTOR 16M SATA 7L250S0 (Hard drives)	$206.00
MNTR SMSNG|20"LCD16msDVI 204T-Black (Monitor)	$549.95
CORSAIR 2X1G Twinx2048-3200c2pt RT (2 GB Memory)	$244.00
Two DVD+/-RW SONY DW-Q30A BK OEM (2 CD/DVD)	$77.98
Subtotal	$2,302.83
Tax	$0.00
Shipping	$62.61
Total	$2,365.44

Internet Picture of the Month



Squirrel Problem

You might well ask why such a photo for Internet Picture of the Month. Well, I am desperate. Additionally my neighbor at present has a family of squirrels living in his attic, and I have photos of them entering the attic soffit to prove it, but that wouldn't be an Internet picture, would it—unless I put it at my web site. There are all sorts of sites dedicated to removing squirrels from one's house. The one where this photo came from is http://unexco.com/SQ1.html.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
French Wine Guide	http://www.terroir-france.com/
Big Eye in the Sky	http://www.bigeyeinthesky.com/
Speed Trap Exchange	http://www.speedtrap.org/speedtraps/stetlist.asp
IRS Forms	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/formspubs/lists/0,,id=97817,00.html
Newegg—computer parts, etc.	http://www.newegg.com/
PCMall—computer parts, etc.	http://www.pcmall.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Computer.....Continued from page 5)

Amazon, they immediately offered to ship me via next day air the missing software at no cost. Now I call that service (that we have bought so much through Amazon may have had something to do with it). My Newegg refund was credited to my credit card in about two weeks.

Back to the computer. It took Merle a couple of hours to put it together and check that it didn't explode when booted. Next it was up to me to configure the Raid setup of the drives using a floppy and instructions Merle provided. (If you did not want to do a Raid stripe of the two drives (for faster hard drive access), then this step wouldn't be necessary.) After that I installed the operating system. Following that, again using Merle's instructions, I updated the motherboard chipset driver, sound driver and LAN driver. By the way, Merle normally does all of the above when he builds you a computer, but since he figured that I could manage myself using his instructions, he left that to me and saved himself, perhaps, an hour of work.

Once all that was done, it was time to go to Microsoft and do the Windows updates, of which there were quite a few.

Next came the time-consuming part—installing all my programs. Let's see, there was Microsoft Office 2003 Professional, Microsoft FrontPage 2002, Microsoft Visual Basic 2006, and Microsoft Visual Studio 2003 for the Microsoft ones. Then from Adobe I had PhotoShop CS, Illustrator CS, Acrobat 7.0 Professional and Streamline. For second tier programs, there were Family Tree Maker, WinZip, Stuffit, Nikon View and others.

Now it was time to retrieve all my data from the Gateway. I could have simply copied and pasted folders over the network connection between the two computers, but at Merle's suggestion I decided to use the Microsoft File and Settings Transfer Wizard to accomplish the task, with the additional benefit that most of my program settings for the programs I had just installed would also be transferred. Additionally, all my email folders, address book and Internet favorites would be transferred with no work on my part.



The Wizard is found under System Tools in the Accessories folder of the Start menu. If you have a lot to transfer, it can take several hours to create the package to be transferred (the packaged file was named IMG00001.DAT and was about 2.1 GB in size) and then an equally long time to place everything in the proper place on the new computer. I have lost my notes on all of this, but I think it took a bit more than four hours for each of the two steps.

The one thing I did not include in the transfer was the collection of local copies of websites I maintain, which, I had on the Gateway. For those who know about FrontPage, I chose to use it to "publish" each of those webs separately from the old computer to the new computer over the LAN. As a final note, I should mention that Merle said for some strange reason the Wizard did not automatically include the file type jpg in the collection of file types it would transfer, so I had to add that—don't want to leave all the jpegs behind.

(Computer……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 3)

between, all in plain English. They also keep advertising to less than 20% of the publication.

Marcy used the Table of Contents of the distributed issue as an outline for the presentation. First was "Troubleshooting Your Software," then "Reviews of New Software and Hardware Products", next "Windows Tips and Tricks", then the "Plugged In" section, followed by "Tech Support," with questions and answers, "PC Projects", "Quick Studies" and, finally, "Tidbits".

Next we logged onto the website, http://www.smartcomputing.com so Marcy could demonstrate the ease of use and familiarize us with their homepage. She referred to the second handout, *Your Guide To The Ultimate Computing Resource,* as an outline. Marcy told us of My Personal Library and Browse All Issues & Articles features which allow subscribers to read past and current issues of all four publications they produce online and store articles of interest for quick future reference. The four publications are *PC Today*, *Computer Power User*, *PC Builder* and *Smart Computing*. Subject searches using key words can be done for all publications. There also is tech support available through a question and answer board, or through an 800 number you can call for free assistance in resolving problems.

Heck, for just $17 a year you could subscribe to the website only and access articles from all four publications, printing them, or storing them in your personal library. At any rate, the magazines, web site and free 800 number should cover any PC problems you encounter and keep you current with what's available in the marketplace.

Thank you, Marcy and Vince, for an excellent presentation. We can get *Smart Computing* for just $29 per year.

Smart Computing provided two door prizes for meeting attendees. The numbers drawn were 792690, held by Ed Snow, who won the *Smart Computing* Reference Set, and 792691, held by Richard Brooks who won a year's subscription to *Smart Computing* magazine.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM. Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year to all! ◆

(Computer…….Continued from page 6)

But one thing remained to be done—and a very important one—install antivirus protection and spyware protection. For me this meant installing a new copy of Norton Antivirus 2006 and of Spy Sweeper. Oh, I almost forgot—my scanner's software and two printers also had to be installed.

It is nice to have a new desktop computer with a monitor larger than I have ever had before. It really

(Computer…….Continued on page 8)

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Computer…….Continued from page 7)
does make working at the computer easier. I have a laptop computer but only use it for travel and presentations. How so many people now use laptops as their main computers is something I cannot understand unless it is just a matter of not paying for two computers. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)
Make sure that you use virus and adware/spyware scanning software. It is very necessary. I hadn't had the new computer running for more than a week before it was attacked. All I did was go to Google, do a search on a problem my sister was having with a program, then view one of the pages provided by the search. All hell broke loose with windows popping up everywhere, Norton Antivirus popping up messages, etc. To make the story short—three spyware programs had been installed and it took both Norton and Spy Sweeper two runs each to remove them. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



February in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 2 February 2006

Meeting

Metro Crime Prevention Of Florida

Wednesday, February 8, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: This month we have Metro Crime Prevention of Florida. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Gasparilla has come and gone in Tampa. That is the reason for the pirate image above. He really should have adorned the January newsletter since Gasparilla was on January 28 this year. But that is only because the powers-that-be didn't want to have a conflict with some other important event like the Super Bowl. So we had Gasparilla in Tampa on the last Saturday of January instead of the first Saturday of February.

Since I live a block off the parade route, I sort of have to stick around to make sure my home is not part of the invasion. And it is also a good time to take a few photos with the digital camera. Gasparilla, however, is one of those things to which I can find no computer angle. I suppose I could upload my photos of

(Comments……..Continued on page 4)

March Meeting: Microsoft with a presentation on Windows Vista

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

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We acknowledge the following for their support

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Vice President John Witmer called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm. He welcomed a visitor, Dora Jones. Dora read about our group in the Temple Terrace paper, and we hope she joins our group. We need to get the Tampa Tribune to announce our meetings again.

Bruce Register performed the duties of our vacant Membership Chairperson this evening, greeting guests and members and distributing nametags. We need volunteers to perform these important duties at every meeting. Please step forward to make our meetings more memorable to our attendees.

John announced the Spring Convention of FACUG March 3rd thru the 5th in Kissimmee. The Board is sending five members and others are encouraged to attend. Registration is $40 until Feb. 1st and then jumps to $55. Mary Sheridan is the FACUG President this year and can use help putting this conference on.

At this point John turned the meeting over to Bob LaFave for a shortened Windows SIG meeting. After some discussion of a problem Google is having, Bob handed out a paper listing several web sites he thought we would find interesting. He also announced that Microsoft is continuing to offer Baseline Security Analyzer and Windows OneCare Live anti virus and firewall in a free Baea version. Check this out.

At 7:05 we began the business portion of our meeting. First item was the installation of officers for 2006. They are: John Witmer, President; Kevan Sheridan, Vice President; Mike Hodges, Treasurer;

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Fonts and LCD Screens and ClearType

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

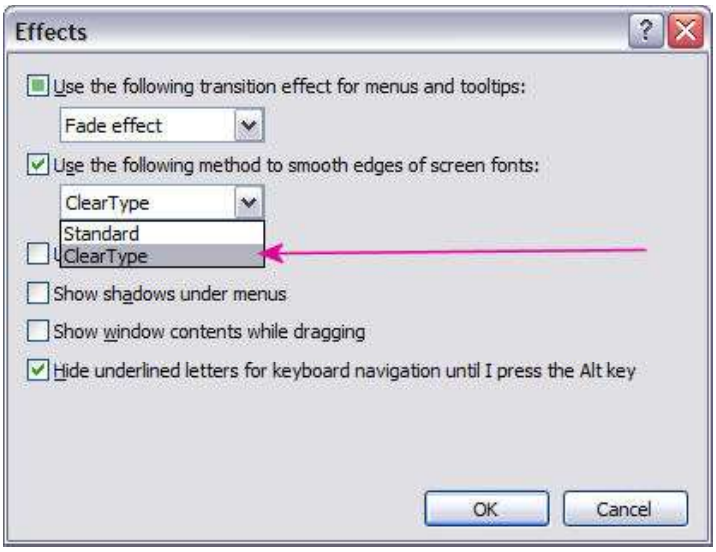
If you have an LCD screen – and you should! – there is a font technology that you should know about. It's called ClearType; it's made expressly for LCDs, and it's already on your computer if you have Windows XP.

You can read about ClearType at:
http://www.microsoft.com/typography/WhatIsClearType.mspx

The following is taken from the web page:

"ClearType is a software technology developed by Microsoft that improves the readability of text on existing LCDs (Liquid Crystal Displays), such as laptop screens, Pocket PC screens and flat panel monitors. With ClearType font technology, the words on your computer screen look almost as sharp and clear as those printed on a piece of paper."

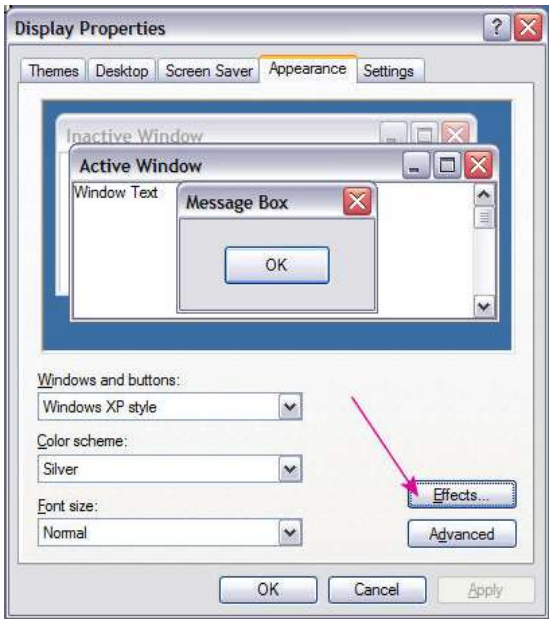
"ClearType font technology works with current displays. Readability on CRT monitors will be improved somewhat, but it will be dramatically improved on color LCD monitors, such as those found in laptops and high-quality flat desktop displays."

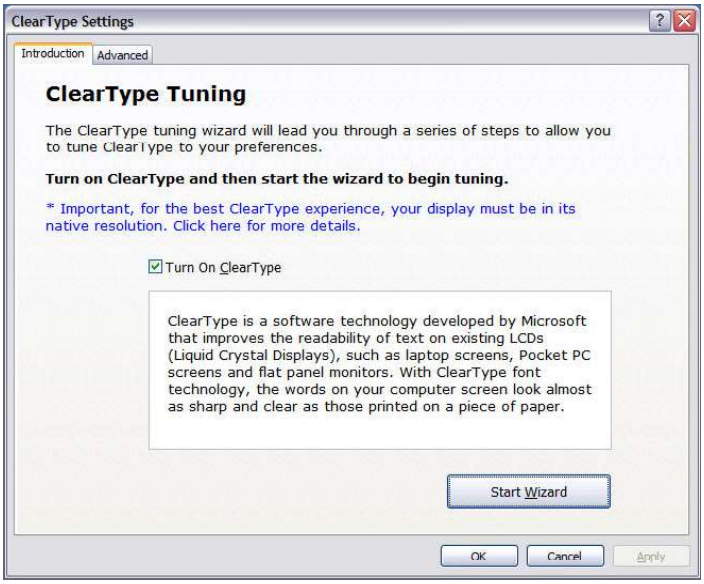


So we know what it's for, how do we use it? Go to Control Panel, Display Properties, Appearance tab, Effects and choose ClearType.

Then click OK, OK. But we're not done yet. We need the Cleartype PowerToy Wizard. It's a free download from Microsoft. You can find it at:
http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx

On the right of the page, the "ClearType Tuner PowerToy" Setup.exe is what you want. Save it to a folder on your computer and run it to install. It'll put an item in Control Panel called "ClearType Tuning." Run that, and here's what we get:

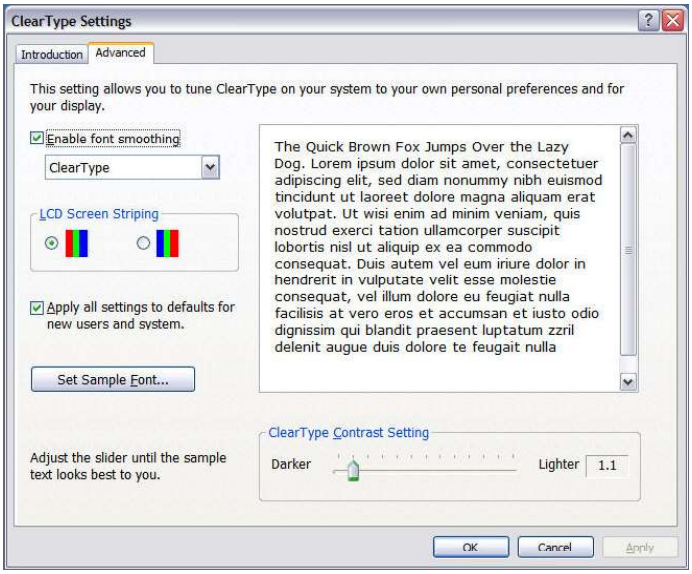




(ClearType……Continued on page 4)

(ClerarType…….Continued from page 3)

And on the Advanced tab :



You can make adjustments to pick the clearest looking font with this wizard.

One thing I should mention. On your LCD screen, you have an "Auto" button. This runs a program in the monitor to optimize the screen for your PC's video signal. Be sure to use that, and then perhaps go back to the ClearType PowerToy and re-run it.

You can make a dramatic difference in the appearance and usability of your screen in just a few minutes. Don't forget it's available on Windows Pocket PCs, too! Give it a try! ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

the event to the Internet. But by that standard, anything that you can photograph or write about and then upload to a web site would become computer-related. So let's drop the pirate discussion and move on to some computer-related items.

Google is certainly computer-related and much in the news lately, the current topic being the federal

(Comments…….Continued on page 5)

FACUG Spring Conference 2006

By Mary Sheridan, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

The twelfth annual FACUG spring conference is scheduled for March 3rd, 4th and 5th at the Kissimmee Civic Center in Kissimmee, Florida. As President of FACUG, I will have the responsibility of coordinating many of the activities for the conference. I've been amazed at all that needs to be done.

The roundtables are held in meeting rooms at the convention center, and each room needs to have whatever equipment that the roundtable facilitator might need for the session. Last year there were several tech sessions, and I'm hoping to have some this year as well.

The caterer last year was Golden Corral, and I hope I will be able to have them again this year. It's a bit of a Catch 22 because some of the vendors pay for meals or pay for part of a meal and this means that the caterer can't just be contracted by one person. It becomes a ballet of getting all the parties moving in the same direction. The FACUG will pay for anything that the vendors do not sponsor, but the conference should be at least a "break even" proposition and that means the more FACUG funds, the less money there is for future conferences.

The vendors change from year to year, so it's hard to say what products will be represented. I have contacted all the vendors from last year and others are working on getting donated door prizes.

We will have a newsletter contest and a home page contest again this year. Letters in the form of emails have gone out to the user groups.

I have contacted the people responsible for working last year's registration for the conference, and I'm hoping to be able to count on them again. Some of the volunteers have done the registrations for many years, and they know much more than I do about

(FACUG…….Continued on page 7)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

government's request for search information from Google. Even though the request does not ask what IP addresses originated the searches in question, all of this has gotten people to worrying that at some time in the future, such information may be requested.

This may be an eye-opener to most of us in the US, but to people in places like China, it is an old story. There you can get into serious trouble for writing about certain forbidden topics; possibly you can get into trouble for just searching the Internet for these things. Recently, at the Chinese government's request, Google removed from the Chinese version of its site the ability to return meaningful links to certain search phrases. In other words, if you search (in Chinese or in English) for Tiananmen Square in the Chinese version, Google.cn, you will get very few links as compared with the version of Google we use, Google.com. I can't read or write Chinese, but I can view photos in Chinese, so I put in the query *tiananmen square* in English into both the Google.com site and the Google.cn site with the second search option selected (the image search). Very different photos were produced by the two sites. I will leave it to you to guess which search produced the photos of police battling students or the famous photo of one lone individual standing in front of a tank.

(Comments……..Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



Gasparilla Invasion

From the City of Tampa site, http://www.tampagov.net, we have a photo of a typical beginning to the annual Gasparilla Day Invasion with the pirate ship entering the city. The exact page is http://www.tampagov.net/about_Tampa/feature_events/Gasparilla/index.asp.

The invasion first began in 1904 on horseback and then switched to the sea in 1911.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Public Proxy Servers	http://www.publicproxyservers.com/
Electronic Frontier Foundation	http://www.eff.org/
50states.com	http://www.50states.com/
Microsoft PowerToys for Windows XP	http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Comments.....Continued from page 5)

So how do English-speaking Chinese do a Google search at Google.com so as to see "all" the results? Well, they don't do it by typing http://www.google.com into their browser, since no Chinese Internet provider is going to allow them to get to that site. What they need to do is point their browser to one of the many proxy server sites on the Internet (and necessarily ever changing since once they are known, they can be blocked). The point of these proxy server sites is to serve as "pass-throughs" for web page requests so as to mask the true destination of your browsing.

You can find sites on the World Wide Web that will do this for you, or you can download software that does this. Of course, without recommendations, you don't know the safety of such sites; they may be nothing but conduits of spyware. For example the site http://proxify.com/ is a proxy site that promises anonymous surfing without having to download any software. However, I am uncomfortable with it since it does have links at the top for casinos (and how to cheat casinos) and such. Perhaps someone can do some research on this topic and write a full article for the newsletter.

What I did some time back before all the current fuss about Google erupted was to make my own special sort of pseudo proxy server setup for doing Google searches. I did it as a programming exercise, but now it looks as if it might be useful. I created a web service that, when provided with a phrase, would return the html code to the Google search results for that phrase. I then put this service at one of the web sites I have. Next, I wrote a Windows desktop program that would pass such search phrases to this web service and then take the returned html code and place it in a web browser control inside the program so that I could view it. I had to add some code to allow for looking at additional links in addition to those on the first page, etc. What this did was make it look to Google as if the search request was coming from the IP address of wherever the web service was installed—not from my local computer where the Windows program was running.

Of course, to make this of any real use in hiding my Google searching from inquiring eyes, I would need two more things: allow a lot of people to use this program so that I would be just one among many and—very importantly—delete or don't let the web server keep a log of activity. This second item is probably only truly possible if either you do your own web hosting or your web host deletes the server logs after downloading each hosted site's part of the log to the individual site. Otherwise, if Google released the IP address of the requestor for a particular search to anyone with a court order, the people with the court order could then go to the hosting company who owned the IP address Google gave them. They, in turn, would say at the time and date that you are interested in, only one individual who was using the IP address of such-and-such accessed the page in question. Then onto whatever Internet Service provider to which that IP address belonged to find out which of their users had the IP address at that time. And I would be nabbed—for searching for something that the government was interested in knowing about.

So given all that, I believe that if I were truly interested in being anonymous on the Internet, I should use one of the proxy services set up to do just that. But not so fast. What if many of these proxy services are really actually controlled by those people who want to find out where I am surfing? Sort of like one of those police sting operations set up to purchase stolen goods and then eventually arrest all their customers. Think about it. The more you think about it, the more complicated it gets.

On a different sort of Google topic, recall that in the previous newsletter I mentioned that two times I had gotten spyware put on my computer by simply clicking on links provided by a Google search. Of course, being a reasonable person, I did not hold Google responsible in that it had cataloged a web page that contained my search text but also contained some code that provided me with an additional hour of work removing spyware from my computer. Now, many lawyers do not appear to be reasonable people in the way you and I may think of the word reasonable (recall your former lawyer president: "It depends on what you mean by the word is"). So I suppose it is only a matter of time before Google gets sued for not provid-

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

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Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

Doug Mullis, Secretary; and Mary Sheridan, Member at Large.

John continued the meeting in his new capacity as President by thanking William LaMartin for continuing as our Newsletter Editor. Next he announced that Pepin would be installing gates at entrances and exits. We are to continue using the main gate. Promptly at 7:15 John introduced our presenter of the evening, member Bob LaFave, whose topic was Intel's power point program "Build Your Own Computer".

Bob presented Part I of an intended two-part series specially developed by Intel for computer user groups. The seminar portion presented tonight addressed "Why Build Your Own Computer" and "Where To Buy The Components". Three processors and motherboards were offered with various combinations of video cards, etc. available. PC Club prices were presented which included shipping and Windows XP Home Edition software. Prices ranged from $572 for the "Silver" system to $1947 and up for the "Platinum" system. The intermediate "Gold" system started at $915.

The PC Club web site listed all the options with price increments for your selection to match your needs regardless of chip/motherboard selection. The array is impressive.

At our next meeting we will see who wants to take advantage of this program. Once all components are received, we need to set up Phase II, a supervised 3-hour workshop to assemble our computers. This would be scheduled for other than a regular group meeting.

At this point we took a break for cookies and the sale of door prize tickets for Roxio software to burn CDs and DVDs. Income on ticket sales was $39. The lucky winner was Todd Grubbs with #792714.

After some intermingling, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm. Remember to turn in your name tags and tell Bruce what a great job he did. Thank you, Bruce. ◆

(FACUG…….Continued from page 4)

what needs to be done.

This is just a tiny slice of what goes into the FACUG spring conference, and from what I've heard in the past, it is well worth the effort. Groups are able to leave the conference with a renewed sense of direction for the individual groups. Better ways to manage each organization, increase membership and please the existing membership are found at the conference and returned to the user groups by the attendees.

Let's make 2006 the best conference ever! Further information can be found at http://www.facug.org ◆

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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 6)
ing a safe computing experience. It certainly didn't provide me one.

To try to keep that from happening again, I download FireFox and now use it for all my Google searches since possibly (I do not know this for a fact) it is not prone to the same sort of spyware attack. I still use Internet Explorer for much of my browsing, though.

Amazon.Com has apparently slipped your mind. Almost no one is using the link at http://www.tpcug.org to do their Amazon purchases—and depriving us of that 5% commission that costs you nothing. Possibly I am wrong: It has not slipped your mind. You are not ordering anything from Amazon, only buying used stuff on eBay. But be warned. Tiffany is suing eBay for promoting fraud. Tiffany ordered 200 supposedly Tiffany items from eBay vendors—three-fourths of them were fake. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



March in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 3 March 2006

Meeting

Microsoft Presents Windows Vista

Wednesday, March 8, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: This month we are privileged to have Microsoft giving a presentation on Windows Vista. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Jim Purcell, I have only this small amount of space to fill this month. Keep those articles coming. Mary Sheridan also sent in a short comment about preparing for the recent FACUG meeting for which I had no room. Perhaps she can expand it to include a description of what happened at the meeting for the next newsletter.

It will be nice to hear from Microsoft about the future of Windows. Much of my time at the computer is spent using Microsoft products—mainly Visual Studio 2005 and Office Professional 2003. Most of the rest is devoted to digital photography and Adobe Photoshop CS and Illustrator CS. And when in the future there is space needing to be filled in the newsletter, I will probably be writing about these products. ◆

April Meeting: Michelle Hominsky presenting "How to use eBay"

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Vice President Kevan Sheridan called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm, in the absence of President John Witmer. We had two guests, Rex Miller and Sam Christy, who were welcomed to our meeting. Bruce Register once again assumed the duties of our vacant Membership Chairperson position, handing out name badges and greeting members and guests. Again, we need someone to formally step forward to fill this voluntary position.

Kevan familiarized everyone with the Art Pepin facilities. William LaMartin announced that D. J. Elliott, who spoke to us last October, had passed away. We had planned to have him back to do a follow-up presentation about the history of the Internet. Kevan then turned the meeting over to Member at Large Mary Sheridan to conduct the Windows SIG portion of our meeting.

Mary brought up her desktop on her laptop computer, which she had in tow this evening. Icons filled the screen to Merle's chagrin; however, Mary uses all these programs. Mary's wallpaper, a scene of Mystic, Connecticut, taken by her while on vacation last fall, impressed us, as well as the choice of programs.

Mary went on to call attention to Microsoft's Power Toys for Windows XP, SyncToy and Image Resizer to name a few, and then demonstrated programs. Kevan commented on the value of Google's Gmail, which can only be had by invitation, an offer he extended to members. Kevan would be willing to do another presentation on Gmail at a future meeting.

At 7:05 pm, Kevan started the business portion of

(Minutes…….Continued on page 5)

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TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
edward_j_p@msn.com

The *National Geographic Traveler Magazine* scheduled one-day seminars in ten locations in the United States. The seminars are designed to help attendees improve their "travel digital photographs". I attended the first seminar, conducted in the Grosvener Auditorium next to National Geographic Museum in Washington, DC. Dan Westergen[1], the Senior Photo Editor for the *National Geographic Traveler Magazine*, and Ralph Lee Hopkins[2], a contributing photographer, conducted the seminar.

The following are some of the topics that were covered:

WELCOME TO THE DIGITAL WORLD

There was a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of switching to digital photography. Among the advantages is the ability to have instant feedback instead of waiting for film to be developed. The ability to change the ISO[3] gives you the ability to, in effect, change film at any time you choose. It is easier and more practical to experiment since you can snap as many pictures as you choose with little or no additional expense. The digital darkroom and digital printing offer even more opportunities for experimentation after the picture is taken.

The disadvantages are the cords, cables, memory cards, chargers and batteries that you have to have available. Also there is the need to download your images to a computer or other memory device. Since you normally snap more photos than you did on film, there is the requirement to review and decide whether to print, store or delete. You must decide the resolution needed to meet the requirements of your intended use of the photo. There is a big difference in the resolution and file size required to display on a monitor or TV and that required for prints and enlargements.

CHOOSING AND USING YOUR NEW DIGITAL CAMERA

In their discussion of choosing a digital camera, they divided the selection into luxury point and shoot cameras, compact cameras, bridge cameras and digital single lens reflex cameras.

The luxury point and shoot cameras do have many of the advantages of digital over film but they also have their limitations. Most have a slow lens and limited zoom capability. The slow lens necessitates high ISO, which can create "noise" in the pictures. In summary, the cameras in this category are convenient but limit the capabilities of a serious photographer.

The obvious advantage of the compact camera is that you can easily carry it in a shirt pocket or purse. It provides the ability to always have an affordable camera capable of taking quality photos with you. These cameras, however, have a limited zoom power and small sensing chips. The small chip provides poor high ISO performance.

The bridge camera is more expensive. It can be as expensive as some of the lower end SLR cameras. They have lots of shooting modes, manual overrides, quality lenses; they are easy to carry and have a better zoom capability than the lower cost cameras. Unlike the SLR, the lens is permanently attached so there is no sensor dust. The disadvantages are that the zoom range is limited to the attached lens and the small sensing chip means poor high ISO performance. There was some discussion that Sony has made progress in improving this performance with its new chip.

The digital SLR has all of the advantages of the bridge camera except small size and absence of dust on the sensor. In addition, you can use any lens that you want, which gives you the capability of greater zoom and faster lenses. The larger sensing chip means great high ISO performance. The interchangeable lenses do create a dust problem on the sensor so it does require cleaning. It was clear that, in spite of any disadvantages, the SLR provides far

(Photography…….Continued on page 4)

(Photography……..Continued from page 3)
more capabilities than any of the other type cameras.

CREATIVE TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR TRAVEL IMAGES

The following tips were given. You might agree or disagree because we all have our own opinions, but I think that they are all worth thinking about:

- Use program icons instead of AUTO for exposure. Use Aperture priority to control depth-of-field. Go deep (F/11 or higher) for depth in landscapes and shallow (F/5.6 or lower) to isolate subjects. Use Shutter priority to control motion blur.
- Switch the ISO setting "Auto" off and preset ISO to 100 or 200. Push to 400 or higher only in low light.
- Preset White Balance to Daylight most of the time. Change to Cloudy for warmer scenes. Experiment with other settings.
- Use the largest JPEG file setting (FINE – LARGE – BEST) with the lowest compression rate, or medium if you don't need the resolution. Use the RAW format for your highest quality projects.
- RAW will not erase your mistakes and is not for everybody (it takes more computer time). JPEG is best for most photographers.
- A good size for a memory card is 512 since all images will fit on a CD. Use multiple cards and protect cards in a protective case or wallet.
- Downloading direct from camera to computer is the slowest. Downloading from a card reader to computer is the fastest.
- To minimize sensor dust when changing lenses, turn the camera power off, point camera body down, avoid windy or dusty conditions and keep caps and camera bag clean.

Workflow, sharing digital travel images, and the digital photographer's camera bag were also covered. Additional information on these seminars can be found at http://www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/photos/photosem0509/ps.html .

Additional Santa Fe Workshops in photography are conducted at Santa Fe, New Mexico; Tuscany; and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Details can be found at http://www.santafeworkshops.com/ .

Footnotes:

1 Dan Westergren
As Senior Photo Editor for *National Geographic Traveler Magazine*, Dan Westergren is responsible for the magazine's photographic vision, which has claimed numerous awards for photography. Dan has also photographed a variety of stories for the magazine. He particularly enjoys cold, high places, having photographed the summits of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mt. Blanc and the Matterhorn for the pages of *Traveler*. He is also an experienced teacher, having led workshops for National Geographic Expeditions workshops in both Santa Fe and Tuscany. As editorial magazine photography rapidly converts from film-based to digital, Dan is amused to realize that he can edit twice as fast with a computer. But since the photographers tend to shoot twice as many images digitally it all evens out in the end.

2 Ralph Lee Hopkins
Ralph Lee Hopkins travels to the world's wild places as photographer and expedition leader with Lindblad Expeditions, which operates six ships worldwide, including the *National Geographic Endeavour*. He is also the Director of Photo Expeditions for the Lindblad Expeditions/National Geographic alliance. His images are represented by the National Geographic Image Collection and have been published in numerous National Geographic books and special publications. Ralph teaches photography workshops for National Geographic Expeditions, Arizona Highways, and the Santa Fe Workshops. He is also author of the popular guidebooks *Hiking the Southwest's Geology* and *Hiking Colorado's Geology*.

3 The international standard to identify film speed. It has been carried over to digital photography.◆

(minutes……..Continued from page 2)

our meeting by reminding us of the FACUG Spring Conference in Kissimmee Mar 3rd thru 5th. At our last meeting, Bob LaFave presented Intel's "Build Your Own Computer" and offered his assistance to anyone interested in doing so. Bob suggested we check component prices at a couple of Internet sites and determine what we want in a system. P C Club brochures were handed out advertising the packages they offer. Please let us know what you want to do.

At 7:15 pm, Kevan asked Program Director Doug Mullis to introduce our speaker for the evening, Gary Robertson with Metro Crime Prevention of Florida. Gary is a retired police officer from the City of Tampa. He first made us aware that we live in a high crime area and presented some startling statistics to attest to this. The purpose of his talk was to tell us what we can do to avoid being victimized.

Gary addressed three areas for us to take safeguards in, and I have organized them as follows:

Home Security: Make it look like you're home. Use 7-day timers to control lights, radio or TV. Make it difficult for a burglar to get in. Lock windows and doors even when home. Use double deadbolt locks on doors and secondary locks to limit how far a window can be opened. Most break-ins occur during work hours. Post "Beware of Dog" signs even if you don't have a dog. A large water bowl and a conspicu-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



Mardi Gras Masker

From the Nola.Com site, http://www.nola.com/, we have a certain person fiddling while New Orleans floods. The URL for the photos of the 2006 New Orleans Mardi Gras is http://www.nola.com/mardigras/photos/. Many of the costumes satirized government officials and agencies.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Nola.Com - Everything New Orleans	http://www.nola.com/
Gas Prices - MSN Autos	http://autos.msn.com/everyday/gasstations.aspx
Zillow.com - Your Edge in Real Estate	http://www.zillow.com/
Parts Store - Over 7 million parts	http://www.partstore.com/
Consumer Electronics Parts	http://www.wehaveparts.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Plantronics DSP-400 Foldable PC Headset DSP-400

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Plantronics DSP-400 is a digitally-enhanced foldable stereo headset with microphone with a USB connection for your PC. I bought it to replace two headsets that I was using because the idea of a USB connected headset kind of intrigued me. So I bought one for my son in Colorado, following Doctor Furst's theory of scientific testing. (His full name was Yugo Furst). After a period of testing, I then bought one for myself.

My son and I have been using Gizmo Project for a couple of months to talk over the Internet. Gizmo Project is a VOIP (Voice over IP) all-software telephone using PCs, and a comfortable microphone and headset are needed for extended conversations. I was using an inexpensive mono headset/microphone that connected to the audio in-outs on the PC, and I was also using a good stereo headphone when I wanted to listen to music at my PC without disturbing my spouse. This turned out to be an excellent choice for both purposes.



FIRST, THE CONS: Well, look at the picture. There is an unbelievable amount of cord attached to this thing. About a half meter down from the headset is the volume control, then the USB connector is 2-1/2 meters from the control. You'll notice that there are two bundles of cord where I've used the cable twists (supplied) to gather the excess. The only other improvement I would make is to have the cord come out one side instead of both in the "Y" iPod-style. That may not be possible with a folding set, but with all this cord bulk, and no way to detach any of it, I'm not sure why it's foldable in the first place.

Everything else is good. The aforementioned control down from the headset contains a volume rocker switch and also a very useful microphone mute button. The control has a neat clothing clip and also tends to keep the weight of the rest of the cord off your head.

The sound quality is simply excellent. You have two software controls – an Automatic Gain Control (AGC) and a Bass Boost with Windows XP. The microphone is lightweight and unobtrusive. My son says he talks with the microphone pointing straight up, and I didn't know the difference on my end. I can see why he does this because it gets the microphone completely out of his vision.

Windows doesn't know if you've plugged in a normal headset or speakers to audio connectors, right? It would be nice if it did, but audio is just, well, audio! A USB connected device is automatically detected, and the Operating System should know what your intentions are. This is the case with this headset.

To install this in Windows XP, just plug it in. Win XP (SP2) detects it and, while it's plugged in, kills your normal speaker output and sets your input to this microphone. So there's no software needed. There are no installation instructions – or instructions of any kind that come with this. For the adventuresome or the completely ignorant, no instruction is needed. The rest of us would like to have a one line instruction: "On Windows XP, no installation is needed."

There is an application available from the Plantronics website called "PerSono". It's a small download (5MB) and is yet another system tray application. With it, you can control volume, bass, treble and balance, and it has a speaker test and a button to switch from headset to speakers. For the microphone, it has a mute and a volume control. I've removed the program from the system tray and left the program installed. The user interface is too fussy to suit me. I'd rather have a straight, easy to

(Plantronics……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

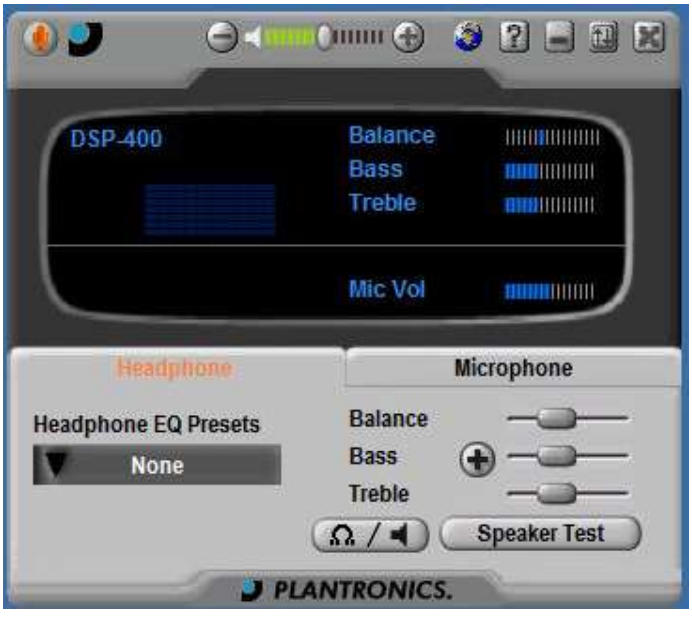
Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Plantronics…….Continued from page 6)

understand Windows application. I really don't intend to use it. I found the application while browsing their website for information on this article. Otherwise I'd never known of it.

CONCLUSION: I'm glad I bought it. It combines excellent stereo sound with a quality microphone in a lightweight unit. It connects using USB, a far more convenient connection, and one that is detectable by Windows.



Plantronics DSP-400. $40 from BUY.COM, $79 from Plantronics. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 5)

ous heavy leash hanging nearby add to the illusion. Never hide a key anywhere near your door. Secure sliding doors so they cannot be lifted from their track. Use pin locks that cannot be jarred out. Install a security system with an audible alarm on all windows and doors. The alarm needs to be loud enough to wake you and be heard by your neighbors. Interact with your neighbors so you watch each other's house and call the police when suspicious activity is observed.

Personal Safety: We are most vulnerable when on foot in public parking areas. Be observant but display an air of confidence. Take precautions if things look suspicious to you. "N'er-do-goods" don't like anything that draws attention. Have keys ready before reaching your car. Carry valuables on your person, not in a handbag. This will make it easier to give up a handbag without a struggle if confronted. Carry pepper spray and be ready to use it. Forget mace or stun guns.

Automobile: Never leave your keys in the car even to gas up. Always engage your alarm system. Even if you have an alarm, use "The Club" as the second deterrent. Consider buying an automobile with a manual transmission. Besides getting better gas mileage, most teenagers can't drive them.

Gary concluded his presentation by displaying locks

(Minutes…….Continued on page 8)

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(Minutes……..Continued from page 7)

and alarm systems and offering pepper spray for purchase at wholesale price. We then broke for the purchase of door prize chances. William LaMartin donated the prizes this evening.

Winners were as follows:

John Waldon—Alpha 5 Data Base software
Kevan Sheridan—Adobe Premier 4.2 software

Thank you, William! The group took in $21 on the sale of door prize tickets. ◆



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Bits of Blue



April in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 4 April 2006

Meeting

Michelle Hominsky
How to use eBay

Wednesday, April 12, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: This month we are to learn about eBay in depth. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson, I have very little space to fill this month. From his article, it appears that almost free phone service is here. Thanks also to our ever-reliable secretary, Doug Mullis, for this month's minutes and to Mike Hodges, our treasurer, for the yearly financial report we are required by our bylaws to put in the newsletter once a year.

For the second time, I have left an old computer sit unused for some time, only to find that when I did boot it, the hard drive had gone bad. This first happened quite a few years ago when I moved on from a Gateway 166 to a newer computer and put the old Gateway in another room and after some time did nothing with it. I thought I had copied everything I might want from it to the new computer but discovered one day that there was this particular very old Visual Basic project that I didn't

(Comments…….Continued on page 3)

May Meeting: Kevan Sheridan on AirSet.com—Share calendars, contacts, lists and more

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Member at Large Mary Sheridan started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:40pm. Mary showed us how to make desktop icons transparent and demonstrated Yahoo's see-thru calendar. Get with Mary if you are interested in installing these features on your PC.

Ed White asked why he has lost Calculator and Notepad from his Accessories menu. No one had an immediate answer.

At about 6:55 pm, Mary launched into the business portion of our meeting as President John Witmer was out of the room. Mike Hodges summarized the FACUG Spring Conference held the weekend before (Mar. 4 & 5). TPCUG had six representatives in attendance. Mary got a round of applause for guiding the FACUG over the past year as President. Vendors were few this year but included Microsoft, Smart Computing, Panda Software and Corel, who all sponsored meals. Lapworks provided carry bags and general sponsors were Chronicles Software, Linspire and User Group Relations.

At the conference, Mike headed up a roundtable on "How Friendly Is Your User Group?" The number one suggestion for making your meetings friendlier was to have nametags. The conference spans a two-day period and many sessions are designed to help the officers run their group.

At this point Mary introduced the TPCUG officers. Merle Nicholson asked that we mention the providers of door prizes at each meeting, as vendors do not provide all. We have some generous members and want to recognize them for providing the interest that door prizes add to our meetings. Mike and I will

(Minutes…….Continued on page 3)

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(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
make sure this is done.

At 7:10 pm, our speaker for the evening, Blain Barton of Microsoft, was introduced. His topics were Windows Vista and Office 12; however, he first told us about Microsoft's Campus Connection program. This is a pilot program for going around to Florida colleges to educate students on current computer technologies. It started at USF and quickly caught on at Miami-Dade. Blain is quite excited about this program that has been in existence for about 18 months.

So, why change to Vista? XP has been around for five years, and many improvements have been incorporated into Windows Vista including better performance and security, improved email service, speech recognition, visual folder stacks, full index searches, fewer reboots and "hangs," and the ability to communicate with "smart phones."

Hardware requirements include a 32 or 64 bit processor with a speed of 3 GHz or better, 1 Gig or more of RAM recommended and a PCI Express or equivalent video card for starters. Recently acquired PCs will most likely be compatible with and upgradeable to Vista.

Blain indicated Windows Vista would hit the market around Thanksgiving of this year (Microsoft has since changed the release to early 2007). Two versions will initially be offered: the Basic Edition for budget users not requiring advanced media support (AERO Glass will not be included in this version); and the Ultimate Edition that will include AERO Glass, pod-casting support renamed by Microsoft as "blogcasting", a game performance tweaker, DVD ripping capabilities and possibly online services for downloadable media. This edition is designed for the high end PC user, gamers, multimedia professionals and PC enthusiasts.

Blain then demonstrated Vista so that we could see the improvements and features of Vista turning Glass on and off. Movie Maker was very impressive. Next he demonstrated the voice recognition capabilities of Office 12 by issuing a variety of commands, which were properly interpreted after several repeats. Then Power Point 2007 was plugged, obviously due for release next year.

Tomorrow's technologies - such as facial recognition, central communications panels, information clustering, collaborative workspaces and radio frequency identification - were mentioned as sneak previews. We watched a short video demonstrating how video conferencing technology of the future could be utilized.

Blain says he will be back in September if we will have him to take up where he left off tonight. Microsoft provided eight door prizes to be raffled off. The winners were:

Adobe Photoshop	won by Gary Ennis
Optical Mouse	won by Todd Grubb
Game Pack	won by Robbie Randall
Game Pack	won by Jim Purcell
X P Book	won by Doug Mullis
Microsoft T Shirt	won by ?
X P Book	won by Bruce Register
Microsoft T Shirt	won by Jim Purcell

We took in $82 on the sale of raffle tickets. Thank you, Microsoft.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)
have. Unfortunately I received some sort of message indicating that the C drive was bad when I booted it, and no amount of Scandisk, etc. would revive it. It turned out that the D drive was also bad.

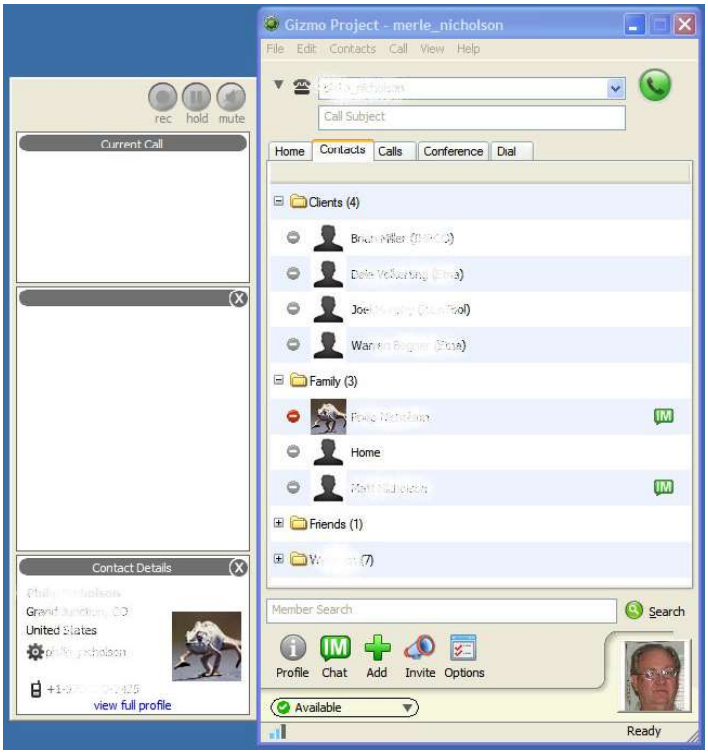
Well, it has happened to another one of my older computers — a Compaq 333. I bet you thought no none used such things still. I had only used it for two things in the past four or five years: to keep my contacts in Outlook and my finances in Quicken. It was one of my quirks that I liked to keep those two things on a different computer (to my left in my L-shaped desk setup) from my main computer. Also, this com-

(Continued on page 8)

Gizmo Project
VoIP Internet Telephone That Works

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Gizmo is a software-only device that allows you to make telephone calls at low cost – or free – from



your PC. You need a computer, broadband internet connection and a headset and microphone. The software is a free download from http://www.gizmoproject.com.

Calls to and from other gizmo users are free. That's free as in unlimited, talk all you want. You can call out from Gizmo to land or mobile phones for $0.01 per minute. That's one cent per minute. You can purchase a local area telephone number for a renewable fee so that land or mobile-based telephones can call your PC as if the PC were just another land phone.

The last two options are fee-based and are called "Call In" and "Call Out". There's a new program similar to "Call In" called "Area775"

I've been using Gizmo since November, 2005, just five months now, and have gotten a lot of very good use from it. One of my sons and I collaborate on software design. We use Windows Remote Assistance to control from my PC in Tampa to his PC in Colorado and connect voice through Gizmo at no cost for hours at a time, a few days every week.

We both use USB-connected Plantronics DSP-400 headsets with boom microphones. This has been our only expense so far at $40 each. I've averaged $1/month in "call-out" fees because I use it to call my clients' land-based phones around the country. That's 100 minutes a month, being all short business-related calls. I sometimes call my sons' cell phones briefly if they're away from their offices and I don't want to tie up our land phone.

The application is a 10MB download from the website. It's well-designed and intuitive to use. It works

(Gizmo……..Continued on page 5)



(Gizmo……..Continued from page 4)

very much like an Instant Messenger (IM) application, except without the advertising. You set up a contact list by either manually entering callout numbers or doing a search for Gizmo users. You can also import contacts from your Outlook or Outlook Express. You can attach an Avatar (it's just a picture) to each if you like, and also set up expandable groups of users.

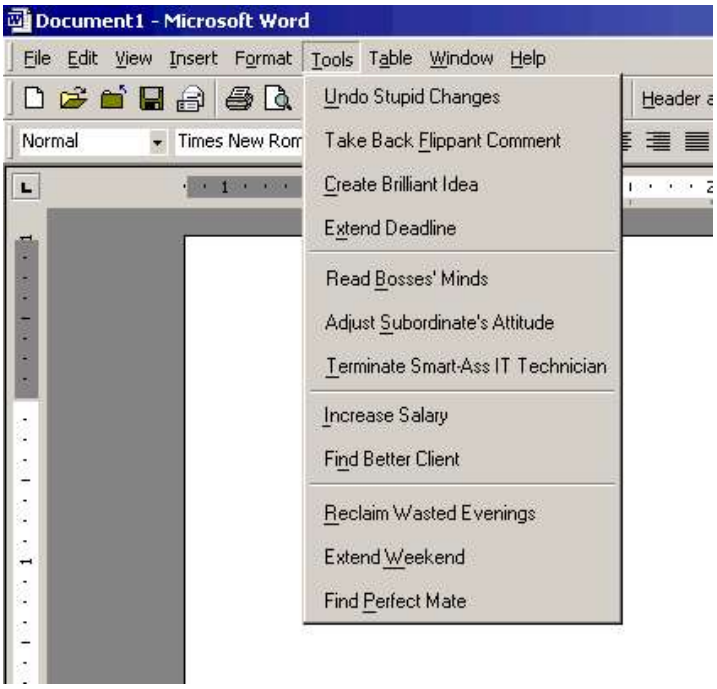
When you click on a name, a side window pops up with contact information, and you can then click on which number for that person to dial if that person has more than one. There is also a dial pad to just make manual calling. Just as in IM, you can choose to hide your identity and block users. When someone calls, you get a ring and a pop-up that tells you who is calling, and an "answer" button.

Just as in IM, you can set your availability as available, away, do not disturb, and your contacts will see that flagged against your name in their own list. The contact list and options are saved on the Gizmo server. That wasn't obvious until I installed it also on my notebook. After logging in with my user name and password, all my contacts appeared from the server, a very pleasant surprise.

When you dial and it goes unanswered, Gizmo will take a voice message, which is emailed to that person as an attached .wav sound file. You can also record

(Gizmo……..Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



Questionable Word Menu Items

From the http://www.psycho-ward.org we have a Microsoft Word dropdown menu item not seen before. To see more such images, go to the page http://www.psycho-ward.org/funnypix/tech/ at the site.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Ask.com - the revamped Ask Jeeves	http://www.ask.com/
This Old House Remodeling	http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/
Webmail for your PDA	http://mail2web.com/pda/
YouTube - Broadcast Yourself	http://youtube.com/
Antiqua Medicina From Homer to Vesalius	http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/library/historical/artifacts/antiqua/index.cfm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Gizmo.....Continued from page 5)

both sides of a conversation, which is saved as a .wav file. Be careful here; the file can get large in a hurry!

There are options to designate ringtones and all the various sounds it uses and a very effective way to designate the sound device. This is handy for me, because I need to switch from speakers to the headset when I use Gizmo. The whole application is nicely configurable. It's one of the best-designed little programs I've seen.

For calling out – that is to a non-Gizmo phone – you draw from a prepaid account. You prepay through a credit card or PayPal. As you use your minutes, the account balance is continuously updated on the home page. If you purchase a Call In number, the cost is $12 for 3 months or $35 per year.

The Gizmo Project website is pretty complete and easy to navigate through. I was disappointed only once, when I was looking for the reason it permanently installed a service called Bonjour Service. There are references to this to be found on the website, and I've been able to determine that it's owned by Apple, and it helps when networking – as on a network, but it presented no compelling reason to have it. I've disabled Bonjour Service in Control Panel, Administrative Tools, Services, to no detriment that I can perceive. I'd prefer that if a program like this installs a service that it start the service and then stop it when not needed instead of running it continuously, just to help manage the "startup bloat" that plagues everyone.

My youngest son in Seattle set up Gizmo to use while he is in India. He bought a "Call In" Seattle area code number to use so he can be called from within the US. But so far it hasn't worked out. His hotel and workplace are apparently blocking the IP Port it uses. He'll try it other places while he's there. We did try it all out before he left Seattle; I called him by Gizmo, and also his "Call In" number and it worked just fine. He uses a notebook computer, with just some lightweight ear plug speakers, and the notebook has a built-in microphone. I had to remind him not to swivel his head while talking to the fixed-location microphone, but otherwise it worked just fine. As an aside, there is a similar, competing VoIP service called Skype, and he



has called us using it from India from his computer. The results are excellent.

The connection almost all the time is as clear as land-based telephones, and although it does drop out on us sometimes, I consider it more reliable than cell phones. In any case, when a dropout does occur, we disconnect and reestablish in just seconds. As far as communicating, there is somewhat of a lack of "full duplex" where if you both talk at the same time, something is lost. But I think it's still superior to cell phones in that regard, although somewhat less in quality compared to land-based telephones.

All-in-all, I've been very pleased with this and plan to continue to use it. It does save me money, but I think most importantly it provides free voice communication to other people while I'm on my computer. I've never thought of using it for normal conversations, but I can see how it would be especially useful to someone who has "gone mobile" – given up their landlines for exclusive mobile phone use. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

TPCUG Calendar Year 2005 Treasurer's Financial Statement

Balance on deposit as of 01 January 2005		**$4,578.71**
Income		
Memberships	$ 855.00	
Door Prizes	$ 181.00	
USPS Refund	$ 40.33	
Cookie Donation	$ 35.00	
Amazon.com Revenues	$ 11.85	
Total Income	$1,123.18	
Expenses		
Newsletter Mail-outs Postage	$ 147.60	
Liability Insurance	$ 339.00	
FACUG Conference Registrations	$ 160.00	
Web Site Hosting Fee	$ 119.40	
Newsletter Paper Costs	$ 57.41	
Florida Incorporation Fee	$ 61.25	
Association of Personal Computer User Groups Fee	$ 50.00	
US Post Office Box Fee	$ 48.00	
Florida Association of Computer User Groups Fee	$ 25.00	
Misc. Expenses	$ 35.25	
Total Expenses	$1,042.91	
Net		$ 80.27
Balance as of 31 December 2005		**$4,796.23**

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments…….Continued from page 3)

puter had windows Me on it, and that allowed me to use it to answer questions about that operating system when someone occasionally asked.

When I got my recent Merle-built computer, I started using Quicken on it, and several weeks ago I moved all my Outlook data to the new computer, too, and didn't try to start the old Compaq again until yesterday.

Somehow sitting idle for several weeks seems to have trashed the C drive such that there appears to be nothing in the System32 folder of Windows and nothing will repair the problem. I can boot with a startup disk and view all the drive except that directory. The D drive, where I kept my data, is still good so that I can remove it and put it in another computer if needed. Or I can buy one of those USB drive enclosures and put it in there. But I think I had already copied all of the data to two of my other computers long ago. So it appears to be the old story of use it or lose it. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 5 May 2006

Meeting

Shared Calendars, Contact Lists and More by Kevan Sheridan

Wednesday, May 10, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: This month Kevan Sheridan will demonstrate programs allowing you to share calendars and contact lists. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

As mentioned last month, I had an old computer's main hard drive fail on me and thought I might buy a USB drive enclosure, put the drive in it and see what data I could rescue. Well, I did just that, buying one for $29 with in-store rebate at COMPUSA. The case was real flimsy (what do you expect for $29), but it worked flawlessly.

I have a Netcom (now owned by EarthLink) email account that I have had for many years. I don't get rid of it because it is a dial-up account and handy for travel—but less handy now that so many hotels provide free—or cheap—wireless connections. Also, it is the account I used when I set up all my early Internet domains and web hosting accounts. Anyway, recently it started asking me for my username and password. That happens occasionally with all my accounts. Normally you just

(Comments……Continued on page 8)

June Meeting: The Anatomy of the Modern Computer — Merle Nicholson

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
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TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the April Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Member at Large Mary Sheridan started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:40 pm. She announced that Nancy Cottrell's mother passed away on Apr. 11th at the age of 94. Nancy and her brother are making funeral arrangements at this time. We offer our condolences to Nancy and family.

Mary served as our "Greeter" this evening as Bruce Register and his wife are celebrating their 48th wedding anniversary with a night on the town. We wish you two many more! Guests this evening included Joseph and Ewana Weaver, Debbie Whittaker and Tim Kearns. Please return and join our group.

Mary asked who needed membership cards, as it has been several months since new ones were distributed. Also, if you need a nametag, email Mary at mcpeace@mindspring.com. If you have taken your name tag home, please remember to bring it back.

Mary announced that Microsoft is releasing Office 2007 in several suites, but that the prices are high. Office Basic only comes as an OEM and includes Word, Excel and Outlook. Office Home & Student will sell for $149 and includes Word, Excel, OneNote and PowerPoint. Office Standard will include Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint, selling for $399, or $239 as an upgrade. Office Small Business is offered for $449, or $279 as an upgrade and includes Word, Excel, OneNote, PowerPoint, Outlook w/Business Contact Manager and Publisher. Office Professional Plus will only be available through multiple licensing.

Mary turned the meeting over to our president, John Witmer, who gave a PowerPoint presentation

(Minutes……Continued on page 7)

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Presenting Genealogy on an Autorun CD

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
mpf1719@verizon.net

There are many ways of presenting genealogy information to family members, and I wanted to give them all a CD which would automatically run in their individual computers. I wanted a CD which would provide a copy of the family tree as well as comments about individual idiosyncrasies and well-known quotations of some family members no longer with us. It would be a lot of information. So much so that I decided to break the information down into four separate presentations. This helped separate subject material and the smaller presentations loaded more rapidly than one large presentation.

These presentations are listed below:

- Family Genealogy
- Family Photographs
- More Family Photographs
- Supporting Genealogy

The Supporting Genealogy contains copies of census forms, book pages, letters, genealogy notes written by long-deceased ancestors about family and the politics of the day, and similar data.

I also wanted to do this in plain English that all could easily read and understand without the need for special genealogy software, which ordinary word processing programs cannot understand. The specialized programs are very valuable when assembling information and understanding our relationships with each other but this wasn't what I had in mind for my CD.

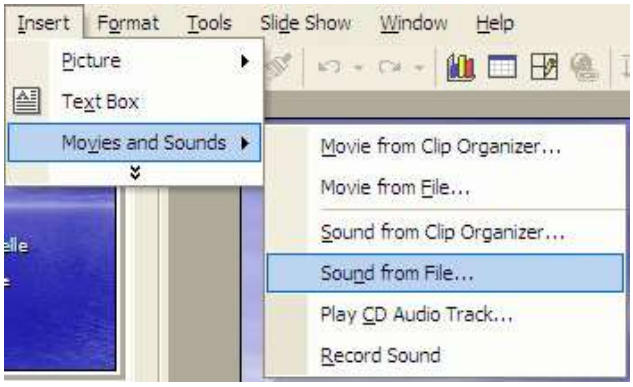
I decided to see what could be accomplished using Microsoft's PowerPoint software since later versions make it possible for this program to be prepared with a PowerPoint viewer, allowing users to run the CD even if they do not have the PowerPoint program on their computer.

Finally, I wanted appropriate music to play automatically through all four presentations, with different music for each presentation. I did not want anyone to have to click on a music icon to accomplish this. I wanted the music to change as each presentation was pulled up. I found that all this could be accomplished with PowerPoint.

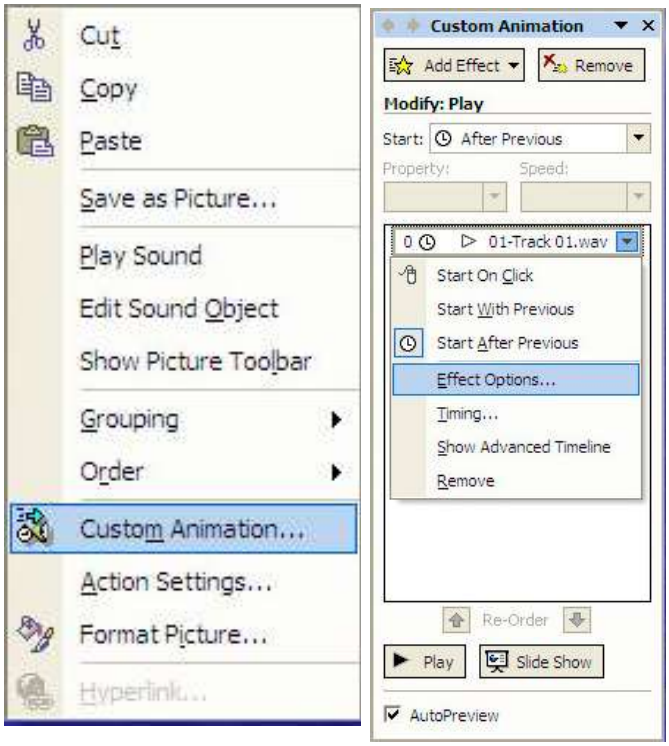
I began my project research on the internet, where I found information on preparing a *PowerPoint Autorun CD* by Echo Swinford, which was exactly what I wanted. That website is found at http://www.indezine.com/products/powerpoint/ppautorunviewer.html. They also have information on *Sound Across Slides* which was most helpful. I also found a similar Microsoft article entitled, *How to play music or sounds across multiple slides in PowerPoint 2002,* which, along with the Indezine article, put everything in perspective.

At this point I had already done all the heavy genealogical research. Also, the PowerPoint slides were ready. Now I needed to make it all work as desired.

The first item was to set up my music files for each presentation. Select Insert, Movies and Sounds, then Sound from File. When "Sound from File" is selected, your sound files will appear. When one is selected, you will be asked if you want that file to run automatically. Select "yes." Then right click on the sound icon on your screen and the options, including "Custom Animation," will appear. Select "Custom Animation," and the Custom Animation screen will appear. Select the track you want to play, and the next menu contains "Effect Options" as an available choice. Select "Effect Options" and the Play Sound screen appears. The Stop Playing option will be open. Change it to stop playing after 999 slides.



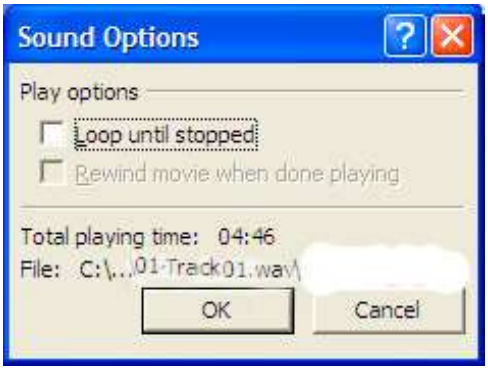
(Genealogy……..Continued on page 4)





(Genealogy……Continued from page 3)

Now close the Custom Animation window and right click on the sound icon again, and the resulting menu will offer the option of playing the music in a loop until stopped. Check the "Loop until stopped" option. It will then restart as often as needed. On my machine there is about a seven second delay when a song ends before it restarts.

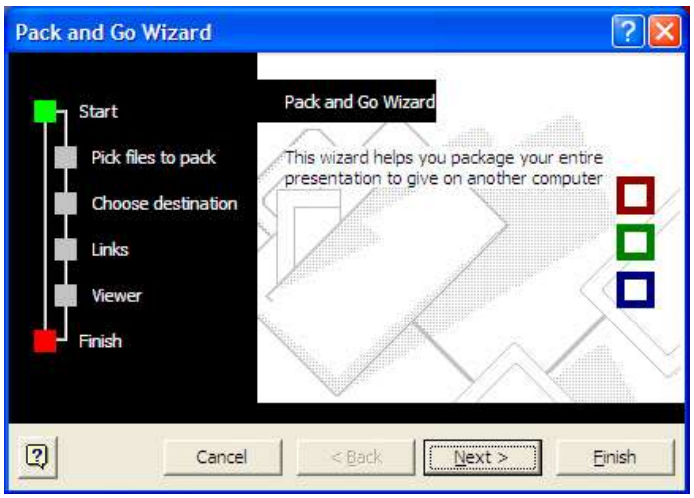


If the sound icon disturbs you, it can be moved out of the way to the side, and the sound will play just the same. Save a copy of the file and run it to be certain it works properly. If the copy works fine, the original can now be saved. This illustration shows the procedure with a single presentation. If there are several presentations, the sound will have to be set up separately in each, and each will have a separate music track. When all are done, we can proceed to packaging all presentations together.

Packaging the Presentation(s) and Preparing the Autorun CD.

I am working with PowerPoint's 2002 version. The 2003 version is less work since the old "Pack and Go" product is eliminated and replaced by a "Package for CD" product. To make the 2002 product do the job, I needed to download from Microsoft the 2003 "viewer" for the 2002 product. With that viewer in my possession I was able proceed as follows:

With PowerPoint on the first slide of the first presentation, click on "File" and "Pack and Go" and the following image will appear.

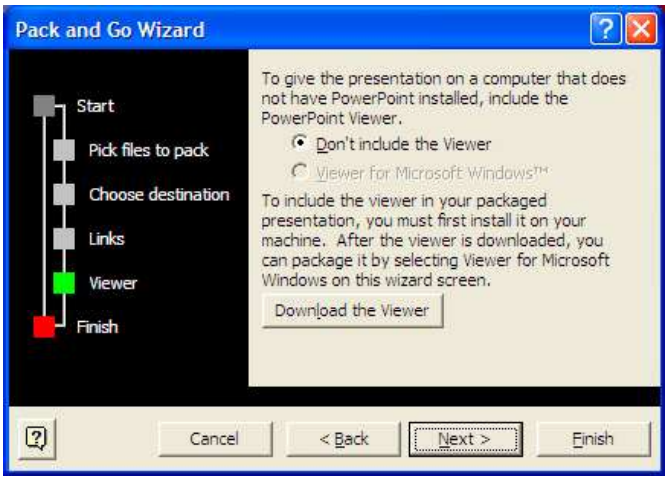


You will pick the files to pack, choose a destination folder to keep them in, and link all the music together. **If there are 3 or more presentations with separate music for each, you must highlight all linked presentations other than the first presentation and make only one selection**. If all are highlighted, it will work. It will not work if they are selected individually. The software allows only one selection of ALL presentations to be linked. You will be given an opportunity to use the "Pack and Go" viewer. Do not download this viewer. Select the option "Don't include the viewer" and proceed to finish the package.

(Genealogy……Continued on page 5)

(Genealogy…….Continued from page 4)

See image below:



Pack and Go will give you two files, PNGSETUP.EXE and Prez0.ppz. Double click PNGSETUP and unpack the Pack and Go files.

There are seven files in the 2003 viewer you downloaded which you now need to copy and place in the folder with the unpacked Pack and Go files. I had mine in C:\Program\Microsoft Office\Powerpoint viewer.

These files are: gdiplus.dll, intidate.dll, ppview.exe, ppvwintl.dll, pvreadme.htm, saext.dll, and unicows.dll.

My packaged product ended up looking like this:

(Genealogy…….Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



Price of Gasoline in NYC July 2, 1936

From the New York Public Library site at http://www.nypl.org/. The specific page for this photo is http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/photo/abbottex/cny0840.html. By the way, $.11 gas + $.04 Tax = $.15/gal in 1936 is roughly equal to $2.10/gal now.

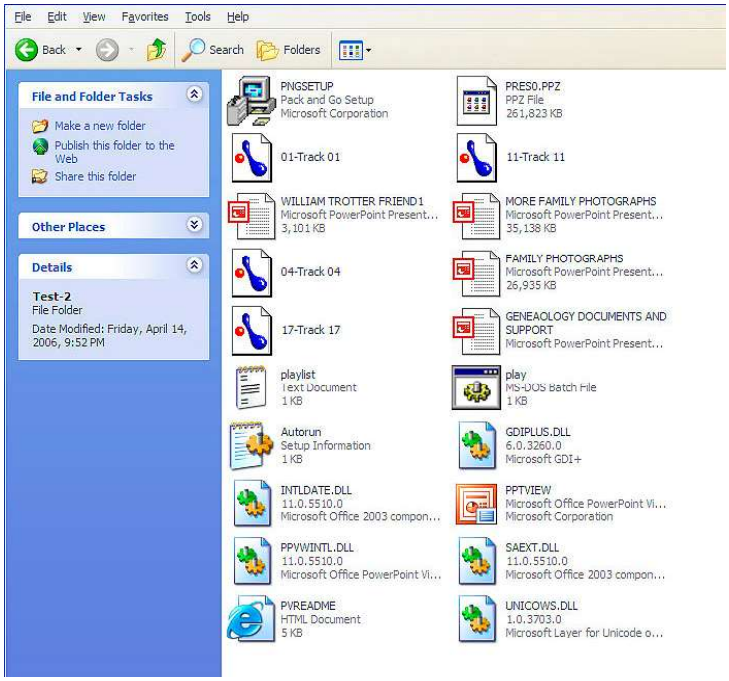
May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



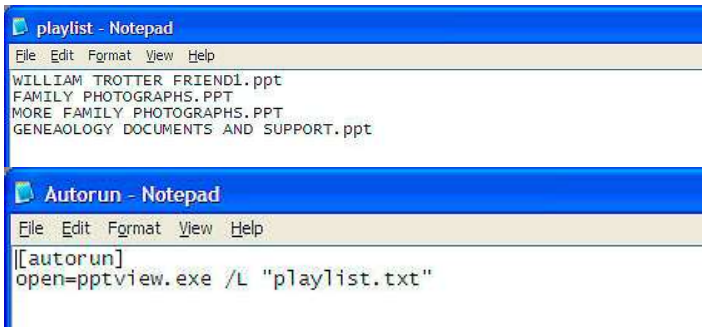
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Arnaud Frich Photographie	http://www.arnaudfrichphoto.com/menu.htm
Citizens Against Government Waste	http://www.cagw.org/
New York Public Library	http://www.nypl.org/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Genealogy.....Continued from page 5)

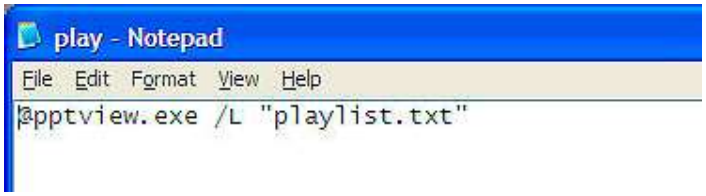


There are three additional files which must be created or modified. They are Autorun.inf, playlist.txt and Play.bat. Pack and Go creates a file called playlist.LST. That file must be changed to a text file in Notepad. When opened the LST file will look similar to this: /s "SamplePresentation.ppt." The Indezine material explained that the "s" indicated the presentation would begin with a splash screen and the /s should be removed. They also indicated the name or names of the presentations should not be in quotation marks. The final playlist.txt file, the Autorun.inf file, and the play.bat files are shown below after their creation in the Notepad.



I learned that the /L tells the new viewer to read the playlist which is in playlist.txt. The file is saved as Autorun.inf. Finally, a batch file was created to start the whole thing and it was also created in Notepad and looks as follows:

To test the work click on the Play (batch) file. If all was done correctly it should work. Then this folder of files may be burned to a CD. They should be loose on



the CD and not inside a folder.

I was pleased with the results. It suited my purposes and I have enjoyed sharing this material with my relatives and I like to think they enjoyed it also. Geneaology is an ongoing process. I have since learned of additional information which should be added to my family tree so future revisions of this CD are planned.

The final face pages of two of the four presentations are illustrated. ◆





Special Interest Groups

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This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

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Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

brought back from the FACUG Spring Conference. The title is "Power Zappers," originally given by Carl Lofstrom, which suggests ways to troubleshoot and speed up your PC. John went through the presentation. We have seen many of the suggestions before, and a number of comments were offered by Bob LaFave and other members. Let John know if you would like a copy of this package. You can reach John at president@tpcug.org

At this point we went into an abbreviated business meeting. Mary introduced the officers and suggested dues payments to Treasurer Mike Hodges. Copies of the newsletter were distributed to guests. Next month's speaker will be our vice-president, Kevan Sheridan, on Airset online calendar. John reminded attendees to register/check info on the sign in sheet.

At 7:10 pm, Mary introduced our speaker for the evening, her daughter, Michelle Holminsky, and her husband, Jay, to tell us all about eBay. Michelle said first bring up the eBay home page and register. This sets up your account with a user name and password. Next peruse the site and determine what you want to do. Choices include Buy, Sell, My eBay, Community and Help. My eBay is my favorite. Specialty sites include eBay Express, eBay Motors, eBay Stores, Live Auctions, Reviews and Guides, Want it Now and eBay Business.

There are some charges for listing items for sale. There is an Insertion Fee, which ranges from $.20 for items under $1 to $4.80 for items valued over $500. There is a Picture Fee of $.15 per picture; however, the first is free. And then there is the Final Value Fee, which is 5.25% of the selling price. You need also to figure what it is going to cost you to ship the item. I usually use $ 4.00 to cover anywhere within the U.S. But you can get actual postal fees, which you include in your asking price. You also need to set a cut off date/time for your item. You also will want to set a minimum bid amount, state the condition of the item and include a picture.

Michelle showed us an ad for a pair of children's play shoes she had placed with a cut-off time during her presentation at the meeting. She had hoped to show the flurry of last minute bidding that usually occurs, but alas, there were no bidders. Apparently all children are well-heeled at this time. She said that around Christmas things are a lot more active and bid prices rise.

Michelle and Jay answered many questions our members had about payment methods, seller ratings and experiences with eBay. We all learned how to get rid of our treasures and make a little money without leaving home. Thank you, Michelle and Jay.

We took a short break for refreshments and then concluded the meeting at about 8:30 pm. There were no door prizes this evening. Members were reminded to leave their nametags and to return any they have at the next meeting. ◆

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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

wait a few minutes—or hours—and then everything will be OK. Not so this time.

I finally contacted EarthLink via an online chat. To make a fairly long story short, my password had been changed from one I had used since 1995 to the word "petlura." I didn't make the change, although Earthlink assured me that it had to be me or someone to whom I had given my information.

I know a bit about email servers, databases and programming, and I am pretty sure that the change was made by something EarthLink did. However, we will never know. I suspect they were making a password change for another client of Ukrainian heritage, and it got applied to my account instead. Why Ukrainian? Do a Google search on the word petlura. It is not exactly a random collection of letters.

I purchased the latest version of Street Atlas USA and, for our web site placing second in the FACUG contest, received a copy of Streets and Trips. I'll perhaps compare the two next month. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 6 June 2006

Meeting

The Anatomy of a Modern Computer by Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, June 14, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: This month Merle Nicholson will explain the inside of our computers to us. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

With the arrival of hurricane season this month, I have some thoughts prompted by a recent trip to New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In 2004, each of four hurricanes at one time was predicted to pass right over Tampa. Our luck was that two missed us completely and the other two only slightly brushed Tampa. Even though our house is less than two blocks from Hillsborough Bay, we did not evacuate for any of the storms. After seeing the Mississippi Gulf Coast, if anything approaching the size of Katrina heads this way, you will probably find us heading for the hills, wherever that is in Florida.

I drove about 35 miles along the coast, from a dot on the map called Lakeshore to Biloxi—a distance of about 35 miles, not counting the detour to the interstate and back to the coast road

(Comments……Continued on page 5)

July Meeting: Microsoft Digital Imaging Suite by Mary Sheridan

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Member at Large, Mary Sheridan started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at 6:35 p.m. in the Pepin Training Room. Mary asked how she could stop Corel from auto playing pictures when she loads her CD ROM? Merle suggested she go to My Computer, click CD ROM drive, then right click Properties, then reset Auto Play.

Mary went on to tell us if you ever have to reinstall Windows XP, you normally have to reactivate Service Pack 2. Now you can just copy WPA.dbl in Windows System 32. Also you can get a screen keyboard by clicking START, RUN and type OSK. Both are useful little things to know.

Mary introduced our guests, Sam Christy and Deborah Whittaker, then our group officers. She turned the meeting over to our president, John Witmer, for the business portion.

John announced that the Digital Imaging SIG would be taking a break for the summer and will reconvene in September. We still have openings for presenters at our July and October meetings. John asked the audience what they would be interested in having presented. Two suggestions were Macromedia Flash and Power Point. We will attempt to find presenters for these programs.

Programs already set up for presentation this year include: In June Merle Nicholson will present "The Anatomy of a Modern Computer". In August Liz Mueller will tell us what is available at the Public Library System. In September Blain Barton will be back to tell us more about Windows Vista. In November Steve Singer of RDI will tell us about the latest computer hardware to hit the market. December will be our Christmas party AND Marcy Gunn of Smart Computing will be back.

John announced that our web master, William LaMartin, distinguished himself and our group by placing second with our website in the FACUG competition this year.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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Mapping Programs: Street Atlas 2006 and Streets & Trips 2006

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
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I recently purchased Delorme's Street Atlas USA 2006. And I recently received a free copy of Microsoft Streets & Trips 2006 with GPS Locator. I want to compare the programs as best I can. It will be a bit hard to do a fair comparison, since I have owned Street Atlas USA since version 1, which, I think, was before 1993. I wrote an article for the newsletter about version 5 in 1998 (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_1998/January1998/street_atlas_5.html). And this is my first use of Streets and Trips.

As to prices, Street Atlas USA 2006 is $34.99 from Amazon, and Streets & Trips is $35.99 from Amazon. If you want a GPS unit with your program, Microsoft Streets and Trips 2006 with GPS locator is $99.99 from Amazon, and Delorme is selling its Earthmate GPS LT-20 with Street Atlas USA 2006 for $99.95. The Delorme products used to be more expensive, but now appear to be about equal in price to those from Microsoft. However, I have seen the Streets & Trips with GPS locator on sale for as low as $79.99.

I think this sort of software serves three purposes:

- Planning a trip by finding the best route before you ever leave the house
- With the use of a GPS unit, tracking your route in real time accompanied by directional instructions ("turn left at the next intersection")
- Just simple browsing of maps to familiarize yourself with an area.

Both programs do these things quite well. The differences are in the interfaces and the depth and accuracy of the information provided — for example, businesses, points of interest, etc. along a route or on a street.

As to the mapping data, I personally found no streets I looked for missing in either program. I have read where other individuals found things missing and had routes planned that sent them along dirt roads out West for parts of their trips when they asked for the shortest route. I am sure with all the roads in the US that things like that will occasionally happen. In fact, I am amazed at how well all of this mapping stuff works—especially the routing part along with the GPS.

What I did find lacking was up-to-date construction information. Streets & Trips has a feature under Routing that allows you to download the latest road construction information. Street Atlas used to have this feature, but I can no longer find it in the program or mention of it in their product description. They do provide phone numbers and websites for the various individual state sources of such information, which is not all that useful.

To check out the accuracy of the construction information I had just downloaded from Streets & Trips, I asked for a route between Bay St. Louis and Pass Christian, Mississippi, two towns just across a Hwy 90 bridge from each other. The bridge has not been there since Katrina. But, as I suspected, Streets & Trips routed me right across the missing bridge. Of course, Street Atlas did the same since it didn't have any possibility of incorporating up-to-date information.

Then there are the points of interest (POI). Both programs give you the ability to display certain types of POIs: restaurants, lodging, landmarks, parks, various businesses, etc. If you zoom in close enough, they will automatically display on each program's maps. Or if you select a location, you can find all of such a type within a certain distance of some central point. Streets & Trips gives you more choice in the type of things to display, even going so far as to break the restaurants down as to type—seafood, Chinese, etc. What I did find strange, though, was that in Streets & Trips, there were no churches displayed on the map and no POI item to check to put them there. They do have an item to show all casinos. In Street Atlas, under minor POI, you get the churches displayed. Neither of the items are usually important to me, since I don't attend church or gamble, but in recording the

(Mapping…….Continued on page 4)

(Mapping……..Continued from page 3)
location of my photos on the Gulf Coast recently, it was important to know the location of certain churches I had photographed.

Street Atlas and Streets & Trips both marked restaurants and lodgings well, but only Streets & Trips marked the gas stations.

In starting off, Street Atlas had the edge in ease of use since I had used it for so many years. I might add that I have never liked its interface. For example, if I want to copy a map to the clipboard, I have to click on the Print tab and then click on an icon in the lower right-hand corner of that window at the bottom of the screen. In contrast, the Street & Trips interface is like a usual Microsoft Windows program. To copy the map to the clipboard, you click on the Edit menu item and then click on Copy Map—just as in any other Windows program.

However, for scrolling the map, I prefer Street Atlas, where to move to the right you simply click near the right-hand edge, the cursor turns into a hand and you pull the map to the left. In Streets & Trips, you again position your cursor close to the right edge, the cursor turns into an arrow, and when you click, your position moves to the right. Not difficult but allowing less control than the hand method of Street Atlas.

Another feature I like in Street Atlas is that when you hover the cursor over a map item, you get a description in a status bar near the bottom. To get the same sort of information in Streets & trips, you need to actually click on the spot.

As a test of routing, I had both programs create a route from my home in Tampa to my hotel in New Orleans, and both came up with the same route and the same length within four tenths of a mile at around 657 miles. As to driving times, that all depends on what preferences you have set in each program. It was 11 hours and 18 minutes using the default settings for Street Atlas and 11 hours and 4 minutes using the default settings for Streets & Trips.

Both programs allow you to create maps for the Pocket PC. But here is where the Microsoft program I have, Streets & Trips 2006 with GPS Locator, comes out ahead. The PDA version of the program, Pocket Streets, is provided free with it. As best I can tell, to get the Delorme PDA program, Street Atlas USA Handheld, you have to purchase it separately for $39.00.

Needless to say, I am using Pocket Streets on my HP iPaq Pocket PC. In addition to creating maps in the regular version of the program for the Pocket PC, you can go to a Microsoft website for such and download maps of popular areas, e.g., Manhattan. But if you want one of Manhattan above 79th St., the Bronx or Queens, you will have to create it in the regular version of the program and export it to your handheld device. However, this is very easy to do.

So now I have a map of any part of the USA I choose on my Pocket PC. I can browse the map, zoom out or zoom into street level. I can also search for places or by address. But what if I want to use that GPS unit that also came with the program. It came only with a USB cable, and that won't connect to a Pocket PC. The solution—spend $99 for what is called a Bluetooth cradle for the GPS unit. It increases the total size of the unit very little and has a battery life of about six hours. The GPS partially inserted into the Bluetooth cradle is pictured below.

The programs are basically equivalent, unless you also need the Pocket PC version. ◆



(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

because of a missing bridge at Bay St Louis. And there was essentially nothing two to three blocks in from the Gulf—nothing. The slate had been wiped clean except for the remaining trees, a few foundations, steel or concrete frames of buildings, and less than a dozen heavily damaged structures. No homes, restaurants, gas stations, or hotels. Near Biloxi there was a bit more to see. The large casino hotels (in various states of repair) were still standing, along with the heavily damaged Jefferson Davis home and a few other structures. That is what 30 feet of tidal waves will do.

New Orleans is a different matter. In general, anything in the city within a mile or so of the river was OK for this was naturally "high" land. But the rest of the city up to within a few blocks of Lake Ponchatrain (again "high" land) flooded anywhere from one foot to 15 feet. Being fairly familiar with the city, I drove around for quite a few hours over a couple of days and saw mile upon mile of deserted houses. The houses were still standing but abandoned, with dead shrubbery and waist-high weeds in the yards. This could be anywhere from 25% to 50% of the city.

What does this have to do with computers? Well, if your computer data was within a few blocks of the Gulf and you didn't take it with you—it is gone. Similarly for much of New Orleans, if it was on the first floor of your house, it is also gone.

I took 600 digital photos with my Nikon D100 on this trip, and, since there were no other contributions to the newsletter this month besides the minutes, in another article in this newsletter I will describe how I used mapping with GPS and some programming to record the positions of the photographs. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month

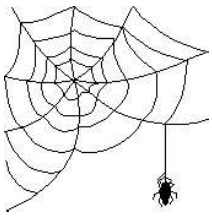


Florida Airplant

Tillandsia x floridana, commonly known as the Florida Airplant, from the Institute of Systematic Botany at USF's site, http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu., A wonderful site if you are interested in Florida plants. I grew up with this plant, as it was all over the property my family owned in South Central Florida.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Internet Movie Database	http://www.imdb.com/
Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants	http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu/
A Year in the life of New Orleans	http://varleypix.com/gall/neworleansyear0506/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Photography, GPS Mapping and Programming

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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I have longed wished for an easy way to record data about a photo when I take it. Digital cameras now record all the technical stuff—shutter speed, f/stop, lens focal length, the date and time and much more. But they do not tell you the location. With Pocket Streets on my Pocket PC and my Bluetooth enabled GPS unit, I could sort of do this. Every time I took a photo, I could then pause and put a push pin where the GPS indicated I was on the map. I could even enter in text for the pin. This would create a map with a collection of push pins at the photo locations with perhaps numbers associated with each pin to tell the order of their creation. In practice, this can be quite challenging with the sun shining on the screen and the general difficulty of writing anything on the Pocket PC under less than perfect conditions.

What I really wanted was a program that would, with the push of a button on the Pocket PC, record the current Date/Time, latitude and longitude to a file. How to get such a program? Write one, of course, using Visual Studio 2005. I had already written a number of programs for this device, so this shouldn't be too big of a problem once I figured out how to communicate with the Bluetooth GPS from my program.

Well, it turns out that the Bluetooth connection between the Pocket PC and a Bluetooth device is made via a pseudo serial port on the Pocket PC. In the case of my GPS unit, it was comm 6. After determining that, things got a bit more difficult since Visual Basic for the compact framework (what you use to program for things like the Pocket PC or smart phones) has no built –in ability to program against serial ports, unlike Visual Basic for the .Net framework used for writing programs for regular Windows devices such as your desktop computer. Not desiring to try to figure out serial communication, I did a search on Google and found one fellow who had written a component (a DLL) that I could drop into my program for free that would do the serial communication for me. With that component, I could now access the stream of data the GPS unit was receiving from the satellites.

The data coming in over the port looks like this:

,87,0*4F
$GPGSV,3,3,10,1,23,276,0,135,26,248,25*41
$GPRMC,205054.672,A,2756.1063,N,08228.1373,W,0.073
604,64.79,100506,,*28
$GPGGA,205055.672,2756.1061,N,08228.1371,W,2,04,2.1,
-21.1,M,-29.7,M,2.3,0000*5B
$GPGLL,2756.1061,N,08228.1371,W,205055.672,A*26

If you look at the GPS specification, all those "sentences" that begin with $ signs have a meaning. You can get various GPS information from different ones with an overlap in the information. In particular I am interested in either the $GPGGA sentence or the $GPGLL sentence. In our particular example, the $GPGLL sentence yields: 2756.1061,N,08228.1371,W,205055.672,A*26, which parses out as 27 degrees, 56.1016 minutes N Latitude, 82 degrees, 28.1371 minutes W Longitude and 20 hours, 50 minutes and 55.672 seconds UTC time

My program stores this sort of information in a text file each time I press a button on the Pocket PC. When I get back to my computer, I can retrieve the file from the Pocket PC and then import the latitude and longitude part of the information into either Street Atlas or Streets & Trips to produce a map like the one here.



I also note that the time information in the file can be correlated with time information recorded by the camera for

(Photography……..Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until the Fall

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

The prize was Microsoft Streets and Trips software that can interface with a GPS system through a USB or Blue tooth connection to your laptop. The unit works well, giving a location update every second or so.

Longstanding member Bruce Register announced that on May 22nd, he and his wife, Marie, would relocate to Dothan, Alabama. The Group offers our best wishes to them in their new home, and thanks Bruce for 15 years of service and support to our group. I remember the warm reception you gave me at my first meeting three years ago. Thanks for being our "Greeter" at recent meetings. We will surely miss your presence at our meetings, and we look forward to future visits when you are back in the Tampa area.

At the inquiry of a member regarding computer security, Merle recommended that we protect our PC's with a single good firewall and anti virus program, but supplement them with other types of "free ware" offered (Ad aware, spybot, windows Defender).

Next month your secretary will be in Lido Beach at meeting time. We need someone to take meeting minutes for the record.

At 7:30 p.m., John introduced our own Kevan Sheridan to tell us about the benefits of using a shareable online calendar to keep our busy schedules organized and available to those who need to know. There are several online calendars, including Google and Yahoo Group but Kevan prefers Air Set at http://www.AirSet.com/public/ calendars.

It is free, and there is no advertising. Air Set also has an "announcements" feature and can "sync" with other public calendar events. For $5 per month you can "browse" online calendars with your Bluetooth cell phone.

Kevan demonstrated his office calendar and the SWAMP (Southwestern Association of Mountain Bike Peddlers) calendar. At the office you can coordinate vacation schedules in conjunction with important meetings/events, limiting access as needed. Events are blocked in half-hour intervals. Public calendars are excellent where the general public would be welcomed to association events.

Kevan went on to answer many attendee questions about administering/using shared calendars. Thank you, Kevan, for the informative presentation.

At 8:35 p.m., we broke for cookies and the distribution of door prize tickets. Group member subscriptions to Smart Computing Magazine had earned the prizes. William LaMartin also donated a copy of Drive Image and eight CD's as "giveaways".

Door Prize winners were:

- John Witmer — A Smart Computing Magazine subscription
- Bob Davis — A publication from Smart Computing
- Jim Purcell — A publication from Smart Computing
- Ron Weinburg — A publication from Smart Computing

We thank Smart Computing for the prizes; the Group earned $19 as a result of the prizes.

The meeting concluded at 8:45pm. ◆

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(Photography……..Continued from page 6)
each photo—if you think ahead and synchronize your camera's and your Pocket PC's time.

The previous map is of one of my photo-taking walks around the French Quarter in New Orleans.

Once I have the location information, I can then use the File Browser feature of Adobe Photoshop to enter a description into the metadata of the file such as "balcony in the 1100 block of Decatur." This information is now part of the jpeg file.

Suppose I now want to create a slide show of a selection of these photos. To accomplish that, I wrote another Visual Basic .Net program to extract this description metadata from each file and then place each file name, description, and data/time in a database. Next the photo files and the database (really an XML file) are uploaded to my web site, where previously developed ASP.Net code is used to display the photos in a slide show with a description under each photo.

To see the results of all this, go to http://www.lamartin.com/katrina.htm. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 7 July 2006

Meeting

Digital Photography
by
Merrill Friend

Wednesday, July 12, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: This month Merrill Friend will do a presentation on Digital Photography. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Thanks to Doug, Merle and Larry, I have only a little space to fill this month.

Bad Mouse For the past two months, my computer has been freezing occasionally, and recently it got much more frequent. Except for one time, it would freeze when I was doing something with the mouse like resizing a window. When that happened three times in one day, I had had enough. I replaced the Microsoft Wireless IntelliMouse with an old Logitech TrackMan Marble that connects via a PS/2 socket. It has now been three days with no lockup. So I believe the mouse was the problem. It is nice to have a simple solution.

Printing Panoramas As you know, I have an interest in photography and also old photographs. In the past year, I was able

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

August Meeting: Liz Mueller - Hillsborough Public Library System's Digital-Based Reference System

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at 6:35 pm. A member asked why he was unable to retrieve email that had attachments. Bob said they are normally stored in a master email file or possibly are going to the Recycle Bin. William LaMartin suggested checking the MSN email settings for the handling of email.

Another member asked why he should have a UPS protecting his computer. Ed White pointed out that TECO is notorious for short power interruptions. Bob added that our lightning season is just beginning. Power-conditioning to smooth voltage variations and eliminating other "noise" is another reason. Bob suggested not putting a power strip between your UPS and your protected devices. Merle added that if you must use a power strip, use one that does not have a surge suppressor. Bob also said to connect your Internet modem but not your printer to the UPS and to make sure there is good air circulation around all electronic devices.

Bob asked if anyone was interested in a session on backing up the hard drive on their system. A couple of members had indicated they wanted this; so let Bob know if you are interested.

Next someone asked what anti-virus and anti-spyware will work on 64-bit systems. Bob responded that all major brand software and most others should work, but that if he were talking about Windows Vista, nothing is available at this time. Windows Defender will be included as part of the Vista operating system for protection.

At 7:00 pm, Bob turned the meeting over to presi-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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Canon Selphy CP510 Photo Printer

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

This is a little photo printer that just does small 4x6 photos – that's it, and it does it well and relatively inexpensively. It uses dye sublimation to lay down the image, and it's virtually indistinguishable from commercial printing.

Dye sublimation is the process of choice for high-end color printing in the commercial world, especially for glossy magazine work. In the case of this little printer, it has a wide semi-transparent spool of film that is laid down on the paper in three passes and then lays down a gloss coat as the last layer. So a color is created by layering (mixing) the colored dyes one on top of another.

An inkjet process lays down dots next to each other, creating the illusion of different colors. They obviously do a good job, but if you compare the two side-by-side, both will be very good, but the dye-sub process will have a better professional look. All that is fine if you value glossy prints. If you don't, then this is not for you.

I have a Canon i850 photo printer as well that I use for regular color printing and for other full-size printing like labels. Although it will do borderless small cut-sheet printing, I think it's a pain to pull the regular paper out, adjust the paper feeder to 4x6, load paper, then put it all back afterward. I really wanted something better for photos. I also want to contain the cost; at least know what I'm paying for paper and ink.

I wouldn't have considered a printer dedicated to 4x6 except for three new developments. First and foremost, I got this little puppy for 50 bucks at Staples. Second, I bought supplies for 105 prints for $29, and last was that I realized how the supplies are packaged.

The supplies for this little guy are complete with a single cartridge of film and 35 pieces of 4x6 photo paper. So when you run through 35 photos, you pull the cartridge out, throw it away and unwrap a new supply of 35 pages and a new cartridge. There's no more guessing about cost, or worrying or tracking when the ink will run out and if it will ruin a photo when one runs out and guessing if you should replace all four (or seven) cartridges at once. I hate that.



On the final (fourth) pass of a finished print

As you can see, the printer is small. It includes the body, a paper tray, a power cube with cord, and a six foot removable power cord for the cube. On the left side is a standard USB "B" printer port for connecting to a PC; next to it is a USB port to connect to a camera in case the camera uses a non-standard USB cable. On the front is a clever retractable cord with a standard mini-A connector that plugs into a camera.

The back has the power connection and a cover that can be replaced with a battery to make the printer a portable. The right side has a door to access and replace the color cartridge.

There are two ways to print to this. One is a direct connection to the camera, the other from a PC.

To print from a non-Canon camera, the camera needs to have "PictBridge" capability. PictBridge is a printing program in the camera. My FujiFilm S5100 camera has that, and I did some printing. And I'd say that while it's OK, I wouldn't want to do a lot of it. It's mainly because it requires a lot of tedious navigation through the menu system on the camera. Otherwise it

(Printer……..Continued on page 4)

(Printer…….Continued from page 3)

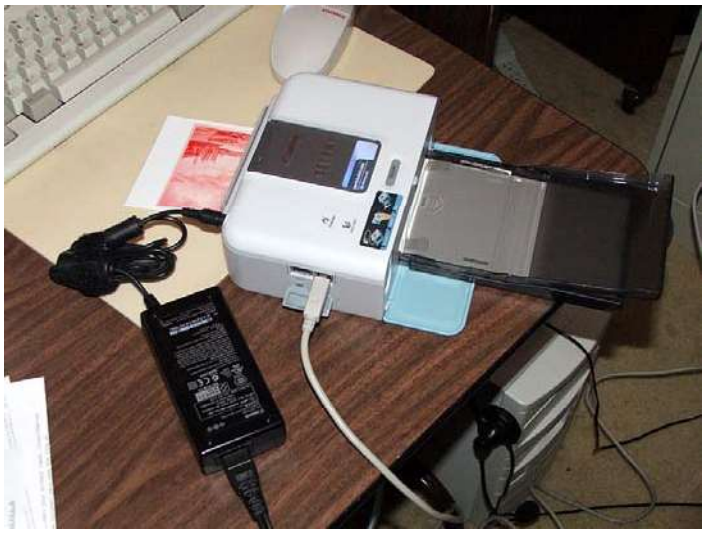
gives satisfactory results, and perhaps there are better implementations of PictBridge on other cameras. My camera has the standard USB mini-A connection compatible with the retractable cord. My older camera – a FujiFilm 2650 – has a non-standard connection at the camera, but I could use the USB cable that came with the 2650 and plug it into the USB connection on the side.

This is a good time to mention that another model of Selphy printer – the CP710 – has an LCD screen on the printer and a printing menu system. I would expect that this would be a better solution to printing directly from a camera, but I have not tried it out.

Frankly, connecting the printer and printing images from a PC is pretty much dead simple, and I'd print directly from a camera only under conditions where I had no other choice. The printer comes with good software: Easy-PhotoPrint, PhotoStitch and PhotoRecord. Photo Record is for creating albums, PhotoStitch stitches photos together, does a good job and is easy to use. Easy-PhotoPrint makes printing photos about as simple as you can make it. I'm experienced with Easy-PhotoPrint and PhotoStitch because they came with my older Canon i850 printer. I expected that Easy-PhotoPrint would recognize the new Selphy printer and the particular paper it uses, but it wasn't to be. I installed the new Easy-PhotoPrint software, and it still did not pick up the printer until I uninstalled it and reinstalled the new one. Fortunately, it recognized both Canon printers.

The printer will print to a couple of smaller size papers that I have not tried out because you have to buy different paper cassettes. The sample paper that comes with it and the paper that I bought is actually a 4x7 "postcard" size with perforations to break ½" borders from each end. The break is clean and invisible even if you choose to leave it at 7". Interestingly, there's light postcard printing on the back in case you want to mail it as a postcard.

This second picture shows the only real surprise of the printing process. As it prints, the paper slides out the back, and retracts four times. You must be careful to make sure the printer is on a flat surface, and that



the power cord doesn't interfere with the slot at the bottom.

PROS: Excellent quality, convenient, 4x6 glossy photos at reasonable cost, in a small size.

CONS: The large power cube and a total of 11 feet of cord! Also, why does the cord plug into the back where you have to be careful to make sure it doesn't interfere with the paper slot? And how hard would it be to supply a wire or plastic guard to protect the back paper slot from interference?

FINALLY: I think it's a good deal. The quality is excellent; the cost is reasonable in quantities of 105 (at 35 it is too expensive) and nearly competitive to commercial printing ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

to locate and scan a panoramic photo of downtown Fort Pierce Florida from 1926. As I recall, it took about five scans on a flatbed scanner. I then pieced the scans together in Photoshop. The result was quite good. I then needed a way to print it. Well, it was about 7.5 inches by 41 inches, and paper that size does not exist. However, for my Epson Stylus Photo 2200 printer you can purchase rolls of paper 32 feet in length and either 8.3 inches or 13 inches in width. Just what I needed.

(Comments…….Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

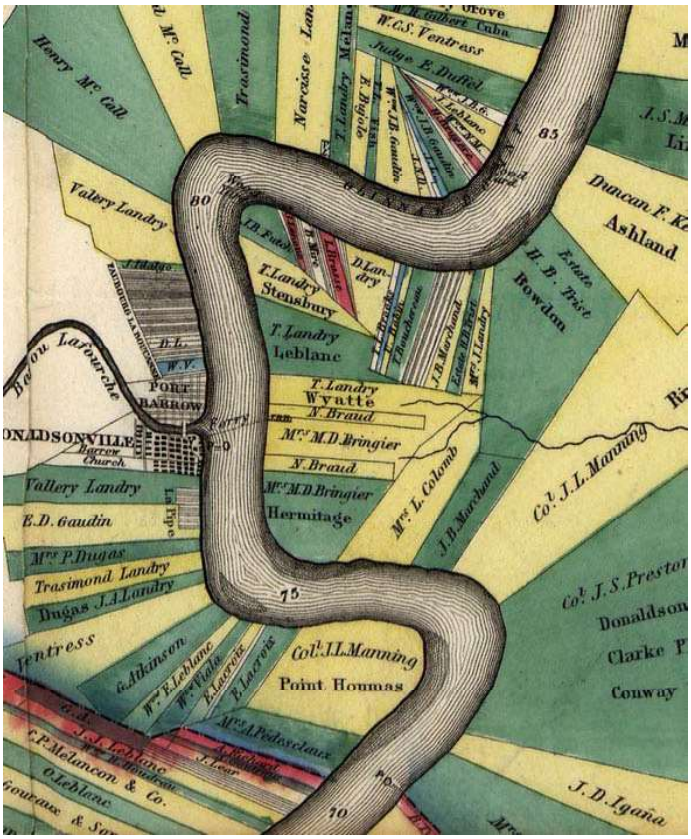
Below is a photo of my printer producing the Fort Pierce panorama. It took it about 32 minutes to do the job.

Where does one get panoramas? One source is your digital camera. Preferably with a tripod, take a number of overlapping photos (overlap about 20%). Then

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)



Internet Picture of the Month

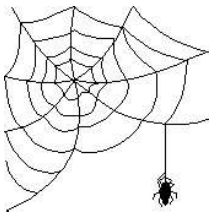


Norman's chart of the lower Mississippi River — A very small section —

The full map displays the landowners along the Mississippi between Natchez and New Orleans in 1858. This was where much of the wealth of the country was located at that time. The MrSID version is 16.2 MB, which if you expand it 1:1 yields a TIF file of 542 MB. A 2:1 expansion yields a file of a mere 135 MB. This would make a beautiful print. From the site http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html .

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Math Pages	http://www.mathpages.com/
Daryl Cagle's Professional Cartoonists Index	http://cagle.com/
Exploring Florida Maps	http://fcit.usf.edu/FLORIDA/maps/maps.htm
Paper Airplanes	http://www.bestpaperairplanes.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Roku: SoundBridge Network Music Player

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

It's been while since I've written an article for the newsletter, so I thought I was due. It's not that I haven't had anything to write about; it's just that I haven't had the time to write it. But I told William I would



take a little time to write about something, so here goes…

One of the fortunate occurrences in my life is to have a daughter who has grown up to be a first-class techie-geek. Better yet, she married a first-class techie-geek. (And I now have a beautiful 8-month-old granddaughter whom I am sure will grow up to be a techie-geek, too.) My daughter is an IT Director for a firm here in Tampa and my son-in-law is a manager and project leader specializing in medical databases and software also here locally.

What does all this have to do with my article? Well…, having two first-class techie-geeks in the family means that I have stopped getting neckties and socks for Father's Day and other special occasions, and now I get some really neat gifts!

My last two gifts have been great! The first, which I'll talk about this month, was a Roku M1000 SoundBridge. Other than just being a very attractive addition to your stereo gear, if you have a wired or wireless network in your home, the SoundBridge can play your collection of MP3, WMA or WAV files stored on your computer (PC or Mac) directly through any powered speakers, stereo or boom box within range of your network.

SoundBridge is only a networked music player. What I mean by that is, it doesn't store any music, but it is capable of playing music files stored on a computer connected to your home network. It can also play Internet radio without connecting to your computer, using a direct connection to the Internet. But to be able to play the music files stored on your computer, SoundBridge needs to receive data from software installed on your computer—that is, a "music server". This music server streams the music to the SoundBridge, sends the list of music that is available to the SoundBridge (when asked), and performs searches of the music library at your request. There is no standard for music servers, but there are several, and you may already have one on your computer. The most popular ones are iTunes, Windows Media Connect, and Rhapsody. But there are others. I had heard a lot about iTunes from friends who use it with their iPods, so I downloaded the latest version of iTunes, which is free, and went with that as my music server. I am extremely impressed with iTunes so far. The installation was simple and straightforward.

After that, you just connect the SoundBridge unit to your powered speakers or stereo and connect the Cat 5 cable to the SoundBridge if it's a wired network, but it is not needed if wireless. If your network is wireless, the SoundBridge will find your network automatically. Then answer a few prompts on the large and readable front panel of the SoundBridge, and you are ready to listen to your music by song, artist, genre, album or even composer, where you please.

Like most electronic devices today, the SoundBridge comes with a convenient remote control device that allows you to control all of its capabilities from across the room. You can also use your computer and a web-interface to customize your musical streams.

The SoundBridge lists for about $200 locally, but I recently purchased one online as a gift for someone for less than that. Now, if they'd make one I can install in my new car, that would be great!



More to follow on another neat gift soon. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until the Fall

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

dent John Witmer for the normal business portion. John introduced the elected officers and William LaMartin, our newsletter editor and webmaster. John announced that our speaker next month would be Merrill Friend with a Digital Photography presentation. In August, Liz Mueller from the Hillsborough Public Library System will tell us what they have to offer. Liz lives in Temple Terrace and will need a ride to and from our meeting.

In the absence of our treasurer this evening, John took dues payments. John then introduced our speaker for the evening, distinguished and long-standing member Merle Nicholson, to tell us about "The Anatomy of a Modern Computer."

Merle told us of and demonstrated the latest success in electronic "cloaking" devices, apparently being funded by DARPA. The idea being to see through or around things. The displays showed the differences between day- and night-cloaking, although, frankly, I saw nothing, So it must be successful.

Merle started by saying most video cards now are capable of driving two monitors. And the latest CPUs are dual core processors. Speed is everything, and with speed comes heat generation. Cooling is therefore a major concern, and Merle is interested in case-modification for coiled and piped cooling of critical heat generators.

Merle took pictures as he built his current computer. Of course, he modified the case, rearranged the hard drives and piped cool air from three, perhaps four, fans to cool critical components. He showed us a $400 cooling system and referred to a Peltier website for information and pricing. He also showed a video of an oil-cooled PC, which may be the coming thing, and a variety of amusing household-appliance housings used to serve as PC enclosures.

John Witmer and those present thanked Merle for the very informative and entertaining presentation. John is considering whether it's time to redo his system. William LaMartin said now he understands the piping in his new computer.

We had no door prizes this evening so instead of the normal break, Bob LaFave told us about an online evaluation by Microsoft to advise if our current computers are compatible with Windows Vista. To do this, go to Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor. Bob also warned about downloading Windows Vista Beta and Office 2007 as they require a lot of disc space and there are still problems with device drivers.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm ◆

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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 5)

locate some photo-stitching software and stitch the photos together. I believe many of today's digital cameras come with such software. Photoshop also has this ability. I don't know about Photoshop Elements.

If you would like to see some panoramas from the past, go the Library of Congress site, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/panoramic_photo/. There you can search for what may interest you. I searched for New Orleans and Florida. I didn't find my Fort Pierce panorama but did find several nice ones of Tampa in the early part of the 20th century.

Another interest of mine is maps, and the Library of Congress site also has many old maps for download (however not in the panorama section). Here you will have to learn how to use the MrSID viewer to view them full-size and to export them to TIF format for your use. The Picture of the Month on page 5 is a very small section of one such map.◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 8 August 2006

Meeting

Liz Mueller
From the
Hillsborough Library System

Wednesday, August 9, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: This month Liz Mueller from the Hillsborough Public Library will tell us about their digital-based reference system. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Printing Much of my computer time the past month has been spent printing out large images. In last month's newsletter I mentioned the panoramas that I had been printing. Well, I don't have many panoramas to print, but I have many, many other photos that I would like to view as large prints. By large here, I mean mostly 11" x 17" images. That is a convenient size since the aspect ratio of the images produced by my digital camera is approximately 2 to 3, and this fits nicely with almost no cropping on the 11" x 17" paper. The printer used is an Epson Stylus Photo 2200 (2400 is the latest version).

If the largest images you have printed are 8.5" x 11" ones, then you are in for either a pleasant or an unpleasant surprise with the 11" x 17" ones. It will be a pleasant surprise if your

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

September Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft returns (subject to be announced)

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Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the July Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at about 6:35 pm in the Pepin Training room by telling us that Windows XP has a program for transferring files from your old computer to a new computer. It is the Files & Settings Transfer Wizard. You must have the Windows XP operating system on both computers to use it.

Bob then demonstrated the Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor, a service available online to scan your computer and determine what upgrades it needs to be compatible with Windows Vista.

Nancy Cottrell asked about adding USB ports to her computer. Bob suggested she get a four-port powered hub at a computer store. When Nancy said she has been camping on her neighbor's wireless network, she was advised her neighbor, by having an unsecured network, is exposed to hackers. Wireless networks should be secured and only authorized access permitted.

Another member was having trouble with his cable provider's Internet access. Several suggestions were offered, all of which had been tried except "change your provider because they are a bunch of dummies".

At 7:00 pm, Bob turned the meeting over to president John Witmer for the business portion. John thanked Bob for conducting the SIG portion of the meeting and introduced the officers present, stating that our vice president and our member at large are vacationing. Joseph Weaver, Richard Brooks and Dirk Vallo were introduced as guests and welcomed to our group. Two new members were introduced and also welcomed, Sam Christy and Jean Gillespie.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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Sling Media's Slingbox™

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
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Last month I alluded to some really neat presents I have been receiving from my techie-geek daughter and son-in-law. Last month I told you about the Roku Soundbridge. This month I want to tell you about how I can now watch the TV in my family room anywhere I have a connection to the Internet; at work, in another state, or even in another country. Well, not actually watch that specific TV, but rather whatever can be viewed on that TV, and not only just viewed but controlled as if I were sitting there in my living room. Sling Media calls it "placeshifting" your TV to your PC, no matter where you are.

The **Slingbox** is a mechanical device that looks like a large silver chocolate bar that connects between the TV and a router, either by cable or wirelessly. The **Slingbox** is compatible with thousands of devices like TiVo, Comcast's and Bright House's DVRs, Dish TV, Direct TV and many, many more. The initial automatic device setup asks you specifics about your equipment so that when you go to control your TV at another location you practically have the same ability as if you were home.

You can receive TV on an unlimited number of PCs without the hassle and cost of adding new hardware (i.e. TV tuner cards) and software drivers to every computer — and with no additional service fees. The only catch here is that only one connection to the **Slingbox** can take place at a time, kind of like AOL.

The setup really is painless — just follow the instructions. They provide a CD with the client software, or you can download the latest version from their website. Once the client software was installed on my notebook I started the program, opened up the remote that looks remarkably like the one I got from Bright House, turned on my TV at home and watched a program that I had recorded earlier, and it really was just that simple. And all the time I was in my hotel room in Houston, Texas.



I travel a lot with my job and this new accessory I have added to my notebook sure makes my travels a little more enjoyable now. As with all good things, there is typically a downside. If there is one with this, it's that you have to have an Internet connection, the faster the better. It has built-in optimization that will automatically adjust to the speed of the connection to give you the best picture. I don't always carry my notebook, but I always have my PocketPC, which will access my TV also. Again, you need an Internet connection with that. This past week I upgraded my cell phone to a new Motorola Q, which runs on a Windows Mobile Smartphone platform, and you guessed it, it accesses my TV, too. But with my Moto-Q, I carry my broadband Internet connection in the phone. So now, anyplace I can make a cell phone call, I can access my TV at home. The picture is obviously smaller, but the new Q has a high-resolution screen and the picture from the TV is remarkably clear.

The Slingbox sells for about $200, and if you're a TV aficionado like I am, this is the best deal on the planet. Go here to see what you must have, what the minimum requirements are and other facts about the Slingbox: http://www.slingmedia.com/us/slingbox/.

Next month, more on my Motorola Q. By then I may have learned all it can do. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)
image file has enough information (pixels) to produce the large print. It will be unpleasant if your file does not have the pixels or is of poor quality. All of the files produced by my camera have enough pixels. However, very few—possibly one in 50—are of the quality that I want to print them as 11" x 17" . So far, I have only printed 20.

Just as an 8.5" x 11" is more impressive than a 4" x 6" photo, an 11" x 17" completely outclasses an 8.5" x 11". Some photos that are nice as 8.5" x 11"s are stunning in the larger format. Of course, there is no way of demonstrating that in this article. Perhaps I can bring a portfolio of them to the next meeting.

Of course, there is one drawback to the 11" x 17" s or the even larger 13" x 19"s that I can print—the price of paper and ink. Based on what paper and ink cost me and using Epson's estimate of square inches printed per ink cartridge, I come up with about $8.00 per 11" x 17" . Of course, that doesn't include the wear and tear on my $725 printer.

And if the print comes out a little too dark, you have just thrown $8 in the trash can. So it is important to know how the print will compare to what you see on your monitor. Supposedly you can calibrate your monitor using Adobe Gamma. I have tried it with so-so results. And I am not going to pay $300 plus to buy a device to do it.

Actually, I get a fairly good match between what I see on the monitor and what I print. I accomplish this by knowing the image will always print a bit darker than the monitor shows it, and I adjust the file's brightness accordingly just to do the print. Additionally, I have downloaded the ICC profiles of the types of paper I use made by Epson and Ilford for my printer. I then set the print driver settings to use the proper profile with no color correction.

For anyone who might actually be doing this, a note of warning: When you do a print with preview on this particular printer using the ICC profiles and no color correction, the print preview will appear very red in tone. Epson says to ignore this and proceed, as the print will be fine. And it will. When I first started using the printer and profiles and saw the reddish preview, I would cancel and simply print with no profiles and hope for the best. But reading at the Epson site that the print preview did not give an accurate rendition when using the profiles with no color correction gave me courage to proceed with first printing 4" x 6"s and then moving up to the larger formats using the profiles.

From what I have read, getting a reddish tone to prints from inkjet prints is not all that uncommon—and I produced my share when I was trying to learn how to use the different profiles and print driver settings for this printer. But once I learned what the correct combination of settings were, I have been able to produce results superior to just simply using the default settings.

Until we meet again was the subject of an email I just received from friend and club member Wade Herman. Normally that would not be out of the ordinary except that Wade died of a heart attack July 27th in Asheville, NC.

The email was listed as from "Wade" with subject "Until we meet again" and began with the salutation "Dear family and friends." I forwarded the message to club members for whom I have addresses, so I won't repeat the details of the message here other than to say that it touched on the past, the present and the future. At this point I do not know if Wade wrote it earlier and set it aside to be used at the appropriate time, or if some family member or friend penned the message. Of course, if you are of a Spiritualist bent, then there is the possibility that Wade did actually send it himself. Regardless, it was well done and much in line with the way Wade did things.

The computer connection My acquaintance with Wade actually coincides with my involvement with the personal computer, which for me began when our family bought an Apple IIe in 1983 from Florida Computing in downtown Tampa. After having the computer for a few months, I learned from another neighbor that there was the fellow living a couple blocks away who also had an Apple. That was Wade. He actually had a slightly earlier version of

(Comments……..Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

the Apple—an Apple II. Our main interaction at that time was simply sharing information on the various software programs available for the Apple.

For those who never had one of those early Apples, let me remind you of the specifications of the Apple IIe (I think the Apple ii may have been more minimal). The Apple IIe came with 64 KB (that is KB not MB) of RAM with an external floppy drive with a capacity of 135 KB. All programs were run from floppy disks inserted into this drive. I think, the computer and a green screen monitor cost around $1,650. If you wanted to buy a second disk drive to write out data to, for example, that would cost you another $350 (I think, as stated, the price of the IIe included a floppy, but it may have been extra). If you wanted an additional color monitor (the Apple produced color), that would be around $400. An Apple dot matrix printer went for around $500. Compare those prices in 1983 dollars to what you can get now for just a few hundred dollars.

I stuck with the Apple, writing my little programs for it using the built-in Applesoft programming language, until we purchased our first PC from Gateway in 1991. That was by far much longer than I have ever subsequently gone without purchasing a new computer. Wade moved on to the PC format much sooner. So, after he purchased an IBM compatible, with no computer problems in common we had very little contact until sometime after 1991.

At some point in the mid-1990's we began communicating regularly on computer problems, and that developed to discussions of life, in general: politics,

(Comments……..Continued on page 6)

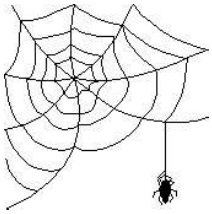
Internet Picture of the Month



Ottoman Empire 1481—1683
— A small section —

For the second month in a row, the Internet Picture of the Month selection is a map. This map is from the University of Texas's Historical Map Collection for the Middle East at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/history_middle_east.html. The different colors indicate when the regions became part of the empire. What is of interest is that on this map there is no Iraq, no Lebanon, no Israel. These countries came into existence after WWI.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Genealogy Atlas	http://www.genealogyatlas.com/index.htm
Apple II History	http://apple2history.org/
America's Running Routes	http://www.usatf.org/routes/
University of Texas online map collection	http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Comments.....Continued from page 5)
automobiles, the stock market, etc. But no sports. Neither of us cared a whit about that.

The last phone call I received from Wade was about a week before he died. He was in Asheville, where he had a second home. He wanted to relate all his tribulations in finally getting his dial-up Internet connection there to work. In Tampa he had a RoadRunner (Bright House) cable connection for the Internet; they also apparently have a feature where you can connect to the Internet through a dial-up account when you are away from your main cable connection (Tampa in this case). I think you possibly have to pay extra for this and it is really through the AOL dial-up numbers. Whatever the case, Wade had signed up for it and used it on previous trips to Asheville.

This trip he had occasionally been able to share (with permission) a neighbor's unencrypted wireless connection, but that would often drop out after only a very brief time. So he needed to try his dial-up. That is where the fun began. An attempt to connect via his modem to the local phone number produced the common error message that says in effect that your username or password is incorrect. I have seen that many times over the years, and it is usually solved by simply waiting a few minutes and then trying again when everything will be OK, since the problem was really a temporary problem on the ISP's end. No such luck for Wade.

I wish my memory were better on this, but here is the outline of what happened as I can best recall it. In all, Wade spent over five hours that day with various phone-help people scattered all over the world. First he contacted RR help. I don't recall the sequence of events here, but I believe they led him through all sorts of setting checks to see if that could be the problem. When that didn't work, at some point they found out his operating system was XP and asked him if he had SP2 installed. On an affirmative answer to that, he was told that was the problem and he needed to contact Microsoft.

I think this took well over an hour, and he then moved on to Microsoft, where after a long wait on hold, he was informed that there was no way that SP2 would cause a problem with dial-up networking—which Wade said that he figured was the case all along. But he was just following up all possibilities since he had not been able to get things to work otherwise.

There are many details of all this that I cannot remember, but I know he again contacted RR in North Carolina with the Microsoft answer, and they tried more finagling to no effect.

Before I reveal the solution to the problem, a little history: Wade a couple of years back had RR as his Internet provider in Tampa, as many of us do. He had a username and password for that account. He then changed to Verizon DSL when that became available in the neighborhood and cancelled the RR (now Bright House) account. Then, sometime in the past year, he decided to change back to Bright House because of an attractive package deal for both cable TV and the Internet. When he did this, he created a new username and new password different from what he had before with RR.

Now back to North Carolina. After five hours of frustration, he decided to try the old RR username and password—you guessed it, the dial-up connection in Asheville now worked. Somehow, even though he had cancelled his RR account in Tampa and then created a new RR account, approximately a year later when he went back to RR, the Asheville account was apparently not cancelled or if it was, it was reinstated with the old information.

Of all the problems we discussed in recent years, keeping his two computers on a network was the most persistent. We always got the problem fixed, but sometimes it would take several days before whatever caused the problem was reversed. Some of Wade's other problems were because he always wanted the latest and greatest in video cards and other hardware devices—many of which did not perform as advertised because they were slightly beyond the cutting edge. As for myself, I was happy to wait until others had tried out such stuff and the kinks had been worked out. But waiting was not for Wade when it came to the latest gadgets. And I will miss him. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until the Fall

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

John announced next month's speaker would be Elizabeth Mueller from the Hillsborough Public Library System. Don Patzsch had suggested this presentation as he heard it at the Brandon Group. A member also asked that she tell us about their e-book service.

Jim Purcell reminded us of our arrangement with Amazon.com wherein books and other computer supplies are not only discounted, but also the group gets a percentage of the sale. You have to access Amazon from our home page for us to get the credit. Bob LaFave said that newegg.com is also an online site with good prices.

Doug Mullis recalled that, at last month's meeting, Bob LaFave asked if anyone was interested in a session on backing up their hard drive. It seems before a response was heard another question was presented. Except for Doug, no one spoke up this time either.

Another member asked about replacing her printer with an "all in one" device (printer, scanner and copier) costing around $100. Merle Nicholson responded that he bought one several months ago and is happy with the performance. Bob made a pitch for the new low-priced laser printers. Although not color, they are fast and you get many, many more copies before having to replace the cartridge.

At 7:15 pm, John introduced our speaker for the evening, one of our own members, Merrill Friend, to show us what he has been doing with Adobe Photoshop Elements 4.0.

Because of his investment in camera and lenses, Merrill uses his Minolta X 700 film camera for taking color slides. He then scans the slides into digital format and is pleased with picture quality.

Merrill says it is important to first adjust dimensions of your images, maximizing resolution rather than simply cropping. After that, there are all kinds of things you can do. Editing your images is fun, but time-consuming.

Merrill showed us things he has learned, such as doing panoramic views, adding or removing people or items, enhancing sky color, clouds and lighting. One particularly nice image was a Rocky Point causeway scene where he had created a mosaic on white foam board, leaving a grid between each picture element with the effect that the scene was viewed through a multi paneled window. A panoramic riverside view with majestic oaks was also beautifully backlit and refreshing. You could feel the shaded air cooling with the retreating summer sun.

Merrill did admit to having the expert assistance of Creative Color Inc., located on E. Cypress St., with

(Minutes…….Continued on page 8)

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(Minutes……..Continued from page 7)

some of his work. They don't come cheaply, however. He showed us price comparisons of photo services for varying sizes and numbers of printed pictures. Shipping usually is additional, so use a local service. To have anything framed, you'd better carry a sack of money, or learn how to do your own.

John thanked Merrill for the interesting presentation. We did not have any door prizes to raffle off this evening; however, attendees were reminded we had chocolate chip and Oreo cookies, Starbucks coffee and bottled water.

The meeting adjourned about 8:20 pm. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



September in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 9 September 2006

Meeting

Blain Blair
From
Microsoft

Wednesday, September 13, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: This month Brian Blair from Microsoft will enlighten us with the latest from one of our favorite software companies. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I hope all of you had fun on Labor Day. I did not. My Road-Runner cable connection was down, and no repairman was available until 4.5 days after the problem started. As I write this, I have two more days to wait. I do have Internet connectivity through a dial-up connection with EarthLink that I have kept for travel and to maintain my old Netcom email account.

The dial-up connection I receive is 50.6 kbps. In the olden days of simple web pages and mostly text based email with no graphics that was pretty good. Today with many emails having pictures and web pages loaded with the same, you wait forever to view anything. In such situations, Macromedia Flash is your enemy. I did speed things up a bit by disabling Windows automatic update once I realized that it was running. I suppose I could walk the neighborhood with my laptop looking for an unencrypted wireless connection! ◆

October Meeting: To be announced

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Treasurer: Mike Hodges (mphs@aol.com) 962-2114
Secretary: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Check the address label for your renewal month

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Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the August Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at about 6:35 pm by suggesting we install test versions of Windows Vista 1.1 or 2.0 to see if we like it.

Two members were having problems, one with MSN and the other shutting down Windows XP. Members offered suggestions for resolving these problems. Another member had changed out a memory card and was getting a driver error message that was unclear. Bob suggested he review the Event Viewer under Administrative Tools for a better explanation.

Ed White had two problems; having installed Windows Vista, he now gets a message there is no driver for a piece of hardware, but the device is not identified. Bob said with Vista, dial-up modems and video cards are notorious for driver problems. Ed was referred to the Event Viewer for identification of the device. Ed's second problem was with Verizon DSL. His computer works fine, but friends tell him they cannot get through on his phone. He has tested all his phone instruments and did not find the problem. Bob suggested he report this to the phone company and have them check his service connection.

At 6:55 pm, Bob relinquished control of the meeting to President John Witmer for the business portion. William LaMartin distributed hard copies of the newsletter to those who wanted them. John recognized a standing room crowd this evening. Richard Brooks joined our group last month so we welcomed him. Richard's dues check is apparently in our mail box, which William said needs to be emptied twice a month. We need name tags and membership cards for a number of new and renewing members. John

(Minutes……Continued on page 5)

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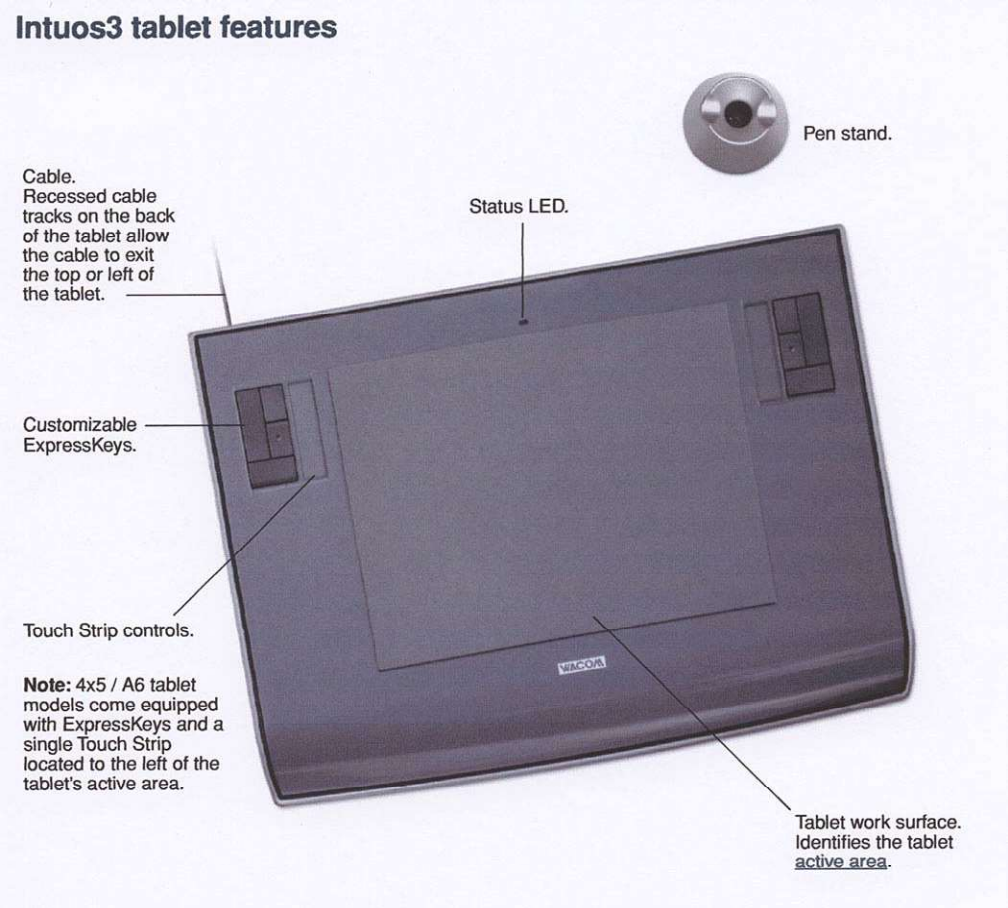
Wacom Graphics Tablet

By Ed Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

I am working on an ambitious project to put about 55 years of photography on DVD's. I am also restoring some black and white photos taken in the early 1950's to be included in the University of Florida archives. Some of the photos require extensive restoration, and a large number of the older slides require at least minor restoration. As I started to perform the work, it quickly became apparent that I needed help. I dug deeper into my favorite Photoshop Elements book by Barbara Brundage. She covered the subject well but recommended that anyone who was going to do much restoration and retouching should look at the books by Katrin Eismann. I bought Eismann's book, "Photoshop Restoration and Retouching". In the book she states that a pressure sensitive tablet is essential. It, of course, is not essential for infrequent or small jobs, but I read a separate paper that she wrote on the subject and she convinced me that not only can you do a better job with a tablet but also you can do it much faster. She also thinks that "mousing" causes repetitive motion injury and that a pen does not. If you are interested in the subject, there is a study of mice versus pens at http://www.wacom.com/comfort/ErgonomicStudy.pdf .

I started looking at graphic tablets and didn't get beyond Wacom. It seems that Wacom is to graphic tablets what Photoshop is to photo editing. Wacom has also evidently spent a great deal of time including features that increase the Photoshop user's efficiency and versatility while editing and enhancing photos. The tablets list from $99.99 (4x5 Graphire entry level tablet) to well over $2,000 (An LCD monitor on which you can work directly). Details and pricing can be found on http://www.wacom.com. The Intous line of tablets is recommended for the serious photographer or artist. Since my project is serious, at least to me, I bought a WACOM Intous3 6X8 model at CompUSA and received a substantial TPCUG discount. Although I plan to use the tablet primarily as an aid to editing and restoring photos and I will only discuss that part of its utility, the tablet has a wide range of applications. Wacom describes the capabilities of the Intous 3 as follows: "Intuos3 gives you the power to quickly and professionally edit photos and create digital artwork by turning on the full power of Adobe® Photoshop®, Corel® Painter™, and over 100 other leading software applications". Among the accessories available are a pen with an air brush effect and an ink pen that allows you to write or draw on paper placed on the work area and have the identical drawing or written words appear on the screen. Business applications of the tablet are discussed at: http://www.wacom.com/businessapplications/index.cfm

(Tablet……..Continued on page 4)



(Tablet……..Continued from page 3)

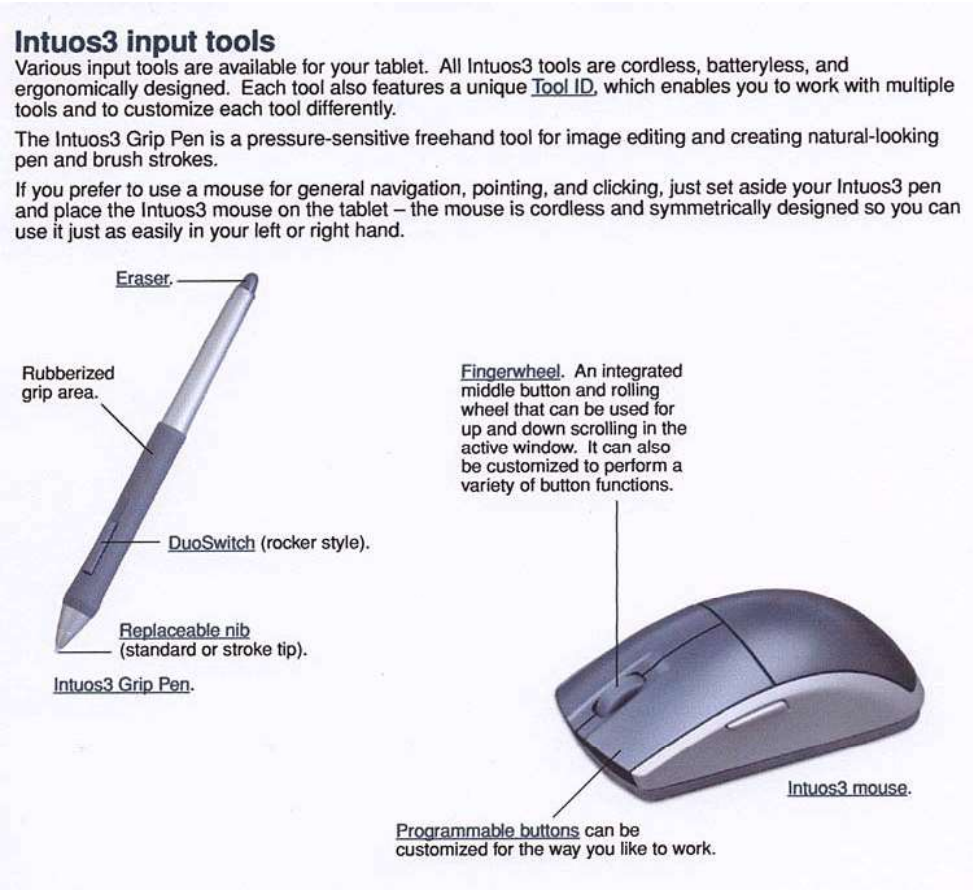
As seen in the illustration, the INTOUS3 6x8 has 4 customizable keys and touch strip controls on each side of the work surface. It came bundled with a grip pen with 4 tips, a pen stand, a five button mouse, tablet driver software with user manual and bundled software. The bundled software includes Adobe Photoshop Elements 4 for Windows, Adobe Photoshop Elements3 for the Macintosh, Corel Painter Essentials 3, nik Color Efex Pro 2 IE and Wacom Brushes 2. The keys are preprogrammed as Control, Shift, Alt, Space, and the touch strip will scroll up and down or zoom in and out. All keys and the touch strip are reprogrammable quite easily with a utility provided with the driver file. One of the things that also set the tablet apart from the standard mouse is that the work surface of the tablet is mapped to the monitor. If you want to go to the upper left corner of the monitor, you merely place the pen (or tablet mouse) in the upper left corner of the work surface. The mapping can also be customized if you need to change it.

The four keys and a touch strip on each side don't sound like much but they become extremely valuable with an application like Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, which have keyboard shortcuts for practically every operation they perform. For instance the brushes that are used for the three tools used most in restoration are enlarged by the "]" key and made smaller with the "[" key. Your finger on the touch strip allows you to zoom in and out instantly while you are editing. The space bar turns any tool you are using into the hand tool, allowing you to grab the area that you are editing and move it to the center of the screen as you zoom. Having these keys on the tablet is a significant time saver. It is so easy to customize the keys that it may be practical to change them for specific projects.

The pen and the mouse are wireless, require no batteries and, like the tablet, can be customized. The only power to the tablet and the tools is through the USB connection. The tip of the pen is set to click, the top of the rocker switch is set to double click and the bottom of the rocker switch is set to right click. All of these and the eraser can be customized to other functions. The pen can use pressure sensitive tools from the application to vary width and opacity with pressure. With some applications, the pen is also sensitive to tilt.

The 5-button mouse is ready to use on the tablet if the project you are working with is better handled with a mouse. The customizable preset functions are as follows: The side buttons are programmed for back and forward movement within an internet browser. The right button is set to right click and the left button to click. The finger wheel when rolled will scroll up or down and when pressed it is a middle click.

There are many more uses of the Wacom Graphic Tablet. The web sites above should answer practically all of your questions. ◆



(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

will get with Mary Sheridan on this need.

Next month's speaker will be Blain Barton of Microsoft who will update us on the release of Windows Vista and Office 2007. The month of October is still without a presenter, so if anyone has a subject they would like to present, let John or Doug know.

Members were advised that Wade Herman recently passed away. He had been a member of TPCUG for the past five years or so. There is a nice article on Wade and computing in the August Newsletter done by his friend William LaMartin. All of us in TPCUG are going to miss his humor and contributions to our organization. Rest in peace, Wade.

At 7:05 John Witmer introduced our speaker for the evening, Elizabeth Mueller. One of our members, Don Patzsch had heard a library presentation at the Brandon computer group and was impressed. Liz is with the Hillsborough Public Library System and told us what their modern library system has to offer us.

Liz took us to the library home page at http://www.hcplc.org and clicked on the **Catalog** link. Using **Catalog** you can search for items by exact title, title keywords, author or subject. The searched item could be a publication, video, CD, DVD or audio book. Once you find the item, you can place a **hold** on it but have your library card handy. Once you choose the library where you wish to pick up the item, you'll be placed on a list and contacted when the item is available for pick-up.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



New Orleans
One Year Later

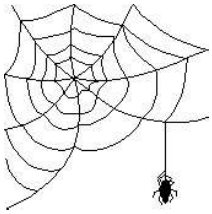
One of a number of photos from New Orleans taken by New York Times photographer Vincent Laforet on his return visit to New Orleans one year after first photographing the Katrina disaster.

This image and many more articles and photos can be found at the link below to the special section of the New York Times dealing with the aftermath of Katrina.

http://www.nytimes.com/pages/national/nationalspecial/index.html

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Hillsborough/Tampa Public Library	http://www.hcplc.org
Be Hidden .com (Anonymous Surfing)	http://behidden.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Motorola Q

By: Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

In last month's article, I finished telling you about a couple of neat gifts I had received lately. One was the Roku Soundbridge for listening to tunes stored on my PC via my wireless network on my stereo system throughout my house. The other was the Slingbox, which allows me to watch what is playing on my own personal TV in my home anywhere I could connect my notebook computer to an Internet connection. I also told you that the only thing negative I found with the Slingbox was that it required an Internet connection. I travel for a living and having that Slingbox makes traveling a lot more enjoyable because I can watch my own TV. But if I was delayed in some airport that did not have an Internet hotspot like our Tampa International Airport does here in Tampa, I was basically out of luck. Not any more. Enter my latest Smartphone.

The new Motorola Q Smartphone has many features that I will list down below, but one of the abilities that attracted me to it was having a broadband Internet connection anywhere I had telephone service. By broadband I mean it typically has an access rate of approximately 500 kb/s. More than adequate for most things you'd want to do on the Internet and plenty fast enough to access my TV at home and play it any where I chose.

The Motorola Q is a Windows Mobile® 5.0-based mobile phone and email device that is small enough to easily fit in your pocket. It only weighs 4 ounces and is less than ½" thick, and with its QWERTY keyboard you can do many of the functions of a larger computer, like reading Word and Excel files, viewing presentations and PDF files, handling business (VPN) and personal email, accessing the Internet, playing music, stream videos, etc. Personally, I think of the Moto Q as being a Blackberry on steroids. Whereas the Blackberry is primarily for email you can do so much more with the Moto Q.

Some of the features are as follows:

- Dual stereo speakers



- Windows Media Mobile Player
- 1.3 Mega pixel-camera with flash and digital zoom
- Video capture and playback with sound
- Supports and plays back most popular audio and video formats
- 64MB RAM/128 MB Flash memory built in
- Removable Mini SD card slot for extended storage of documents and multimedia files
- Send and receive photos, video clips, text and sound
- Browse the web with Internet Explorer Mobile
- Built in Instant Messaging
- View email and attachments (documents, spreadsheets, presentations and PDFs)
- Supports multiple email (inboxes): POP3/IMAP4, Microsoft® Exchange and GoodLink
- Manage personal information with Outlook Mobile (Inbox, Contacts, Calendar and Tasks)
- SMS, Group SMS (Short Message Service) and Multi-media Messaging (MMS)
- Calculator and Alarm Clock
- Photo ID Caller
- Built-in hands-free speakerphone with calling contacts or opening of applications with advanced speech recognition
- Virtually unlimited address book (dependent on

(Motorola……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

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Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

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(Motorola…….Continued from page 6)

available memory)

- Weight: 4.1 ounces; Dimensions (H x W x D): 4.33 x 2.52 x 0.45 inches; Display: 2.4-inch 320x240 65K TFT; Color: Silver
- Talk Time: Up to approximately 4 hours (voice and data), Standby Time: Up to approximately 212 hours
- Bluetooth®: Supports Bluetooth® Headset/ Hands-free
- Synchronization: ActiveSync® and AirSync® with Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003, IrDa (infrared), Motorola mini USB connector
- On-device security features include keyboard lock, device lock and password authentication to prevent unauthorized use

The Pocket PC (formerly Windows CE) has been around for a few years, and I have had a Pocket PC (and still do) for most of that time. Windows Mobile is slightly different, was created specifically for cellular phones and allows you to be able to navigate around the operating system without the need for a stylus as used with a Pocket PC. The QWERTY keyboard makes it much easier to send emails and text messages, which I rarely did on my previous phones because of the cumbersome fumbling with the keys to create the words. I've only had the Moto Q for a couple of months, but it has been well used. The standard battery lasts about two days under heavy use. If I watch much TV on it, I pop in my extended-use battery which is good for a few hours of TV watching. In case you are wondering, I pay $30 a month for unlimited access to the Internet and all the Internet services, over and above the calling plan I chose. My hat is off to Motorola and Microsoft for making a very useful tool that fits into my pocket. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 5)

From the home page, you can also select **Information Gateway** to access subscription services and librarian-selected web sites. Included are 30 subject pages and each links to premium databases, which include Tampa history and genealogy links.

You may choose to click on **Library Locations** for a complete listing of the HCPL branches and partner sites in adjacent cities and counties. Find the branch where the hours, size, services and location meet your needs. Maps are available to help you find the location. Enter your zip code to find the nearest library.

Or you may want to check **Happenings & Events,** which is a newsletter and program guide full of information about free library resources, programs and events listed in two-month increments. All is available in PDF format for downloading.

(Minutes…….Continued on page 8)

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(Minutes……..Continued from page 7)

Liz said there was an interest expressed in eBooks. If you wish to access the library eBooks, you will need to establish a NetLibrary account. Ask your librarian how to access the web page with the account creation function. In most cases, you can enter http://www.NetLibrary.org and use the *Create a Free Account Here* link. Once you have clicked on *Create a Free Account* you will be prompted to provide user information for your account. Page prints can be made of PFD formatted eBooks if you desire.

Liz answered many questions about library services and distributed a handful of written materials telling how to use their system. Many services can be obtained online from your home PC. John thanked Elizabeth Mueller for a most informative presentation, and the members expressed their appreciation.

We did not have door prizes to raffle, so the meeting was concluded at about 8:05 pm. The group socialized and shared cookies, coffee and bottled water provided by John Witmer and Pepin. ◆



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Bits of Blue

October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 10 October 2006

Meeting

Excel for Office and Home
by John Witmer

Wednesday, October 11, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: This month John Witmer will demonstrate various uses of Microsoft Excel. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Mouse problems. At least I think that is what I have, as my computer will occasionally freeze when I am using the mouse to resize a window or click on something. Some days it doesn't happen, and other days it will happen several times. When it does, there is only one solution: Press the start button on the computer until the computer turns off; then reboot. It has been with me for over a month. I have thought that I have found the answer only to be proven wrong several times.

I don't even know if it is a hardware problem or a software problem. At times, I was sure it was hardware, then software, then hardware. Usually I solve such problems within a few days, but this one has persisted.

The obvious thing to check was the mouse and its driver. I

(Comments……Continued on page 3)

November Meeting: Steve Singer from RDI with the latest in hardware

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$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

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Check the address label for your renewal month

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We acknowledge the following for their support

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Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the September Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Due to our speaker needing extra time, we skipped the Windows SIG portion of our meeting and launched into the business meeting at 6:40 pm. President John Witmer began by announcing that we need members to step forward and serve in elected and appointed offices of our group for calendar year 2007. Next month we will be seeking nominees for Member at Large, Secretary and Treasurer as the existing officers heed the call to other challenges. Also anyone interested in serving as President or Vice President should let it be known as the incumbents would welcome the direction of newer members. We also need to fill the appointed position of Official Greeter to greet and distribute nametags at our meetings. Bruce Register did a fine job but has moved to Alabama.

John said he is preparing a presentation for our October meeting and asked whether the members prefer Excel or Power Point. Or possibly someone has a topic they would like to present? Hearing no volunteer, John asked for a show of hands between his two topics. The group was divided, showing an interest in both, so John will do a presentation on Excel, and, if time permits, touch lightly on Power Point.

John next announced the upcoming Fall FACUG Conference in Orlando on Sunday, October 29th. Registration is $15 before Sept. 29th or $20 thereafter and includes breakfast and lunch in addition to interesting lectures and door prizes. What a deal! For details go to the FACUG website.

Our Digital Imaging SIG has been on hold for the summer, and the Board believes regular monthly meetings will be hard to support without a new leader, or possibly a new topic. Does anyone have ideas for this group? Special meetings could be called as the situation warrants. Jim Purcell said he had a new program he would like to present and will get with Doug or John when ready.

Programs through the end of the year include John Witmer

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

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Best Tech Support Website at Techsupportalert.com

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I wouldn't ordinarily write about a website, but this one grabbed me and has kept me entranced, so I thought others in the club may find it useful. It's a website apparently by one man, Ian "gizmo" Richards, and it's a huge undertaking for one person.

The web page is: Gizmo Richards' Tech support Alert and has headings for "Gizmo's Top Picks of the Best Utilities and Tech Resources", "Gizmo's Top Picks" and "The 46 Best Freeware Utilities".

There was a mention in the St Pete Times about this website that was very flattering so I thought I'd check it out.

Most of the website is directly viewable without subscribing, but there is a monthly newsletter called "Gizmo Richards' Support Alert Newsletter", and the last one posted was 14th September, 2006. If you subscribe - free, he sends out an email about mid-month with the latest newsletter. In addition there is a Premium SE (Support Edition) for $10/year.

The September newsletter is very long, with categories like "Top Tech Sites and Resources", "Top freeware and shareware utilities", "Security patches, service releases and updates", "Other useful stuff", "Tip of the month" and "Freebie of the month".

I'm in the middle of troubleshooting a software problem of my own where my Webroot SpySweeper scan is crashing my computer (a real BSOD), and so I first delved into this website because he has very extensive testing and comparisons on antivirus and spyware software. His emphasis is on finding freeware and shareware, and he seems to spend the most space on those, but he also includes commercial products. His sections on Internet Security, Virus and Spyware is very extensive and highly educational. Ultimately, I have turned off my daily scheduled scan in SpySweeper and installed ewido, a free spyware program for which he has some recommendations, and I am doing manually-initiated scans with ewido for now.

I've been through some of his "Best Free Utilities", and I am amazed at how much time this must take one person to maintain! There is plenty of free software that he says he's tested in categories that you've never thought possible. And usually he'll list two or three in that category and give you a summary of the differences. This list is very worthwhile going through.

When you subscribe, your email address is simply registered. There is no password. There is a subscription administration page where you can change your email address and also to un-subscribe and to look at back issues. When you register, you get an email that you must reply to and then wait for a second one saying your email address has been registered.

In addition to his own written material, there is plenty of lists of other websites under the categories of "Best Free Support Sites", "Best Paid Support Sites", "Best Shareware and Freeware Sites", "Best Troubleshooting Sites", "Best Sites for Tips, Tricks and Tweaking" and several others.

Take a few minutes and look at this website; you'll be glad you did. http://www.techsupportalert.com. ◆

(Comments…….. Continued from page 1)

have reinstalled the Microsoft IntelliPoint driver and tried different mice. I even tried old PS/2 mice and bought a new Logitech mouse and installed it. All was to no avail; the computer would still freeze at times—always when using the mouse. Sometimes it would even reboot itself.

Almost all of the freezes were while resizing a control in Visual Studio 2005, so I even began to suspect that program. However, since I was spending most of my time with Visual Studio, it was reasonable to assume that most of the freezes would occur there.

I also suspected USB as being the problem, and there was good reason for this since the additional card I had in the computer that supplied extra USB sockets, along with Firewire sockets, all of a sudden went bad.

(Comments……..Continued on page 6)

UTStarcom PPC 6700

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



In last month's newsletter, Larry Anders wrote about his new Motorola Q Pocket PC and mobile phone. Well, I can't let Larry get too far ahead of me. I have been following him hardware-wise for many years. He had a scanner before I did back when scanners cost around $1,000. We both ended up with an HP IIcx, I think it was called. Then he had RoadRunner cable for the Internet before I did, and a digital camera before I got mine. Then there was the Pocket PC and now the Pocket PC cell phone with an Internet phone service. And, I imagine, there have been many other computer doodads that he has beat me to the draw on—probably some of which I will never buy.

Larry's article was not really the impetus for me to buy a fancy new phone—although once I decided to get one, it did point me in the direction of a Pocket PC phone. What pushed me toward the phone store was actually a cut thumb. That may sound a bit odd, but there is logic in it—my old phone put a nice deep gash in my right thumb.

Perhaps that last line needs a bit of explaining. I wear my phone in a holder on my belt and not infrequently hit it on things like car doors and door frames in houses. Well, this last item, a door frame in an office I was visiting, apparently lifted the decorative aluminum on my old phone up so that a very sharp triangular point of the metal was pointing at a 90 degree angle from the phone. I noticed it and, not realizing the danger, pushed on it with my thumb, resulting in a surprisingly large amount of blood gushing out, and my thumb is still sore five days later. The piece of aluminum could not be bent into its former position satisfactorily. Thus, a new phone.

Buying this phone was a bit of a stretch. It lists for more than $600. However, by taking a plan with Alltel for two years, I got it for a net of $199 after instant and mail-in rebates. I had better remember to do those two mail-in rebates since they total $150. I am sure Alltel is hoping that I forget; isn't that the purpose of mail-in rebates—hope that the buyer doesn't follow through. And if you have a phone that can connect to the Internet via a cell tower, you just additionally have to also buy the Internet plan for $29.95.

That is one thing my previous Pocket PC could not do. It could connect to any available wireless connection, but it had no ability to connect to cell phone networks. Now while we are driving in the car, my wife can order things online instead of being restricted to ordering from the computer at home. At least that is in theory, since she should be able to get some benefit from my fancy new phone.

Of course, you can set up your email accounts on the device so as to send and receive your email. There is one caveat here. Receiving email on your accounts is no problem. However, if you want to be able to send, you most likely will need an email account other than your usual ISP-provided one. For example, RoadRunner will not allow me to send email using that account when I am connected to the Internet via a provider other than RoadRunner. I solve this problem by using an account I set up with my lamar-

(PPC Phone…….Continued on page 7)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

presenting Excel in October, Steve Singer on new hardware in November and Smart Computing Magazine in December at our annual Christmas party.

William LaMartin suggested members pay their dues through the link at our web site. This gives us an electronic path for quicker record keeping and eliminates physically going to the bank and P O Box. Kevan has told us this works well for his bike club. You can use your credit card, but go through Pay Pal. You do not have to join Pay Pal to do this. Try it at the site and see how it works. We may even have nametags and names of new members on our roster at the next meeting.

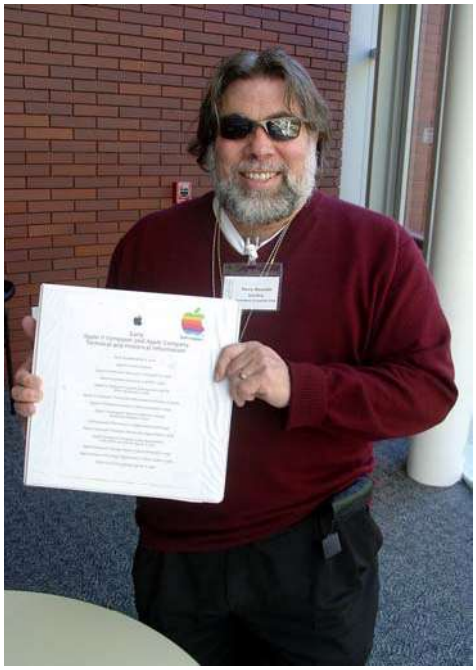
At 6:55 pm, President Witmer concluded business and introduced our speaker for the evening, Blain Barton of Microsoft, to tell us the latest on Windows Vista and Office 2007. Blain thanked us for having him back, introducing himself as the IT-Pro Evangelist representing Microsoft in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. He specializes in client service and is part of a team making presentations across the nation, with sessions planned in the near future for Orlando and Ft Lauderdale.

Blain has been with Microsoft for 13 years and has seen operating systems evolve from Windows 3.0 to Windows XP, with vast improvements overall. Today Microsoft is fine-tuning Windows Vista with a release date before the end of the year. This will be the biggest release in the history of Microsoft! Two hundred and fifty million currently use Windows XP worldwide.

Blain said use the Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor to assess your present computer's compatibility with Vista. It not only tells you what upgrades to make, but also which edition best suits your present system. Almost any computer will run Vista; you just won't get all the features or the best performance possible without the recommended upgrades.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



Steve Wozniak in 2005

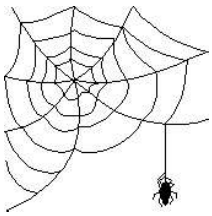
The photo of Steve Wozniak, inventor of the Apple, is at the Homebrew Computer Club 30-Year Retrospective in November of 2005.

"Woz" attended many of the meetings of the Homebrew Computer Club, and it was there he met Steve Jobs and together they formed Apple Computer, Inc. in 1976.

Go to http://www.digibarn.com/history/05-VCF8-HomeBrew30/index.html for more photos and a history of the Homebrew Computer Club.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
DigiBarn Computer Museum	http://www.digibarn.com/
Latest Electronic Gadgets	http://www.engadget.com/
Steve's DigiCams	http://www.steves-digicams.com/
Battery Mart	http://www.batterymart.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Suspend your hard drive in rubber bands

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Just this last July, I built a new server for my office. I like a particular black Enlight case that – at least from the factory – will only mount one hard drive, and I needed three. I also want to keep fan noise at a minimum in my office and also cool the hard drives. So I bought a very quiet power supply for the new machine and then developed a variation on something I saw in a magazine where they mounted hard drives using stock heavy rubber bands. I was a little alarmed at the use of gum rubber bands though so I bought ten feet of 1/8" nylon-covered bungee cord from a marine supply store at $.50/ft.



You lightly burn the nylon cover after cutting, knot it properly and it should outlast the PC for quite a few years. I then mounted a 120mm Silverstone quiet fan using the remainder of my cord, and, along with two 80mm Silverstone quiet fans in the back and the stock cpu fan for the AMD-64 3500+, the PC is virtually silent from two feet away. Note too, I used two long screws in the bottom of each drive to act as stops to keep the drives in place even if you tip the unit violently on its back.

I had to cut a hole in the front for the large fan, and was amazed just how quiet the unit is. Doing some subsequent experimenting, I've discovered that a great deal of fan noise is the air itself whistling through restrictive openings, and just opening up the passages reduces the noise dramatically.



Since that time, I've built two more similar computers using the same method and even cutting two holes in the front for fans on a PC I sent my oldest son. That one moves a very large volume of air over four hard drives, video card and a very hot CPU. In spite of the amount of air flowing through the case, it's virtually silent. ◆



(Comments……..Continued from page 3)

No device plugged into it would work, and it displayed as defective in Device Manager. So I removed it, and things seemed to improve. However, in a couple of days the freezes returned.

I have searched through Google and the Microsoft Knowledgebase, finding no solution. I have unplugged all USB devices while using a PS/2 mouse.

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until the Fall

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(PPC Phone…….Continued from page 4)

tin.com domain. The hosting company for that domain allows me something like 25 or more email accounts. If you can't do something like that, you will have to use web mail to do any sending from such a device, or, for that matter, to send email anytime you are using a computer not connected to the Internet via your ISP.

This device will do all the things Larry listed in his article. To highlight a few:

- Function as a small computer (Pocket PC) so that you can run programs like Pocket Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Pocket Adobe Acrobat, Pocket Streets and a thousand more written especially for the Pocket PC.
- Is a full-featured cell phone
- Has a 1.3 MP camera with flash
- Built in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth
- Mini SD card slot for extra file storage
- Windows Media Player 10 Mobile to play video and audio files (thus an MP3 player)
- Can be used as a modem for a laptop
- Slide out keyboard (large letters for a PDA)

The only problem I have encountered so far is forgetting to disable the Internet and enable Bluetooth on the phone before starting my car. If these two things are not done, I cannot get the phone and the car to connect via Bluetooth. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 5)

Mr. Barton told us there are four editions of Windows Vista: Business, Home Basic, Home Premium and Ultimate. The Ultimate Edition, of course, has the most features, and Blain demonstrated many of its bells and whistles.

Ultimate included Windows Photo Gallery, Windows Aero with Flip 3 D (really neat), Windows Media Center, Windows Tablet and Touch Technology, Windows BitLocker Drive Encryption, Windows Ultimate Extras and Business Networking. Our virtual tour started in the Welcome Center and ended in the Media Center.

Blain then demonstrated the improved search features of Vista. This really makes finding photos easy if you label them distinctly. He also demonstrated DVD Maker, Gadgets and Microsoft Word.

Windows Vista and Office 12 (aka Office 2007) are planned to be released simultaneously around Thanksgiving and will be on store shelves for Christmas. Why upgrade to Windows Vista you ask? For improved performance, increased reliability and the latest in security.

Blain answered many questions, reflected on where we are headed with PCs and distributed DVDs of Windows Vista Beta 2 for us to preview. He also left a copy of Microsoft OneNote, which we will raffle off at a future meeting.

Thank you for demonstrating Windows Vista, Blain, and for updating us on its release. The meeting adjourned at about 8:40 pm. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments…….Continued from page 6)

I have asked Merle Nicholson. Still no solution. Obviously I have checked for viruses and spyware.

Possibly it is some software addition or update. Microsoft, Symantec and SpySweeper are always updating themselves. I have installed a couple of new programs, I think. It is difficult to recall exactly when the problem began and what I might have installed or changed in the days preceding the first occurrence.

There is really nothing in the Event Viewer that I can pinpoint as being the problem. There are always warnings there and an occasional error recorded. But none seem to be a cause of a freeze. In fact, when the computer freezes I don't think it will be writing much to the log.

I think the next step is to totally stop SpySweeper, see if that helps, and if not, additionally stop Norton Antivirus except for email. I'll keep you posted. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 11 November 2006

Meeting

Hardware Presentation
By Steve Singer

Wednesday, November 8, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: This month Steve Singer from RDI@TampaBay will give us his annual rundown on new hardware. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Mouse problems solved Last month I described the problem I was having with my computer freezing occasionally when I moved my mouse or clicked on something with it. I had tried all sorts of things—using different mice, getting new mouse drivers, getting new video drivers, changing the hardware acceleration settings for the video drivers and stopping some software programs that run all the time, like Spysweeper. None of this solved the problem.

Well, one obvious thing remained to be done—try a different video card. Most of us don't have extra video cards just lying around, but Merle Nicholson does, and he loaned me a relatively high-end one from Matrox to try. I took out my NVIDIA card, installed the Matrox one and booted the computer. When the new hardware was found by Windows, I

(Comments……Continued on page 3)

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December Meeting: Marcy Gunn from Smart Computing

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at 6:35 pm. Several members were having problems with their computer's startup routine. Merle Nicholson suggested removing programs from your startup that you normally do not use. Bob referred us to a program by Mike Lin called Startup Control Panel that allows you to configure programs to run when your computer starts. You can get to Mike Lin's Home Page at http://www.mlin.net. William LaMartin cautioned those planning to disable programs, as you may cause more problems if you don't know what you are doing.

One member was having a problem with Windows Vista Analyzer due to his wireless network. Bob said not to worry about it.

At 7:05 pm, Bob turned the meeting over to President John Witmer to conduct the business portion of our meeting. John thanked Bob for doing the SIG meeting and then introduced three guests: Marva Christy and Harry Lockabay from Lakeland and Robin Fortner from Bartow. The guests were welcomed, and Harry Lockabay has become the newest person to join our Group. Debbie Whittaker joined at our September meeting.

William LaMartin called attention to the revised TPCUG website. Some complimentary comments were made, and William asked for suggestions and reports of any problems with access to the site. John said he plans to demonstrate using PayPal on the site to renew and pay his dues at the November meeting.

Elections are to be held at the December meeting for next year's officers. Mary Sheridan wants to relinquish

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)
pointed it to the Matrox CD to install the new driver. After the new driver was installed and I changed the screen resolution to my preference, I went into Add/ Remove to see about uninstalling the NVIDIA driver. It was already gone. Apparently the installation of the Matrox driver also removed the NVIDIA driver.

After three days of being freeze free, I purchased a new video card for my computer and gave Merle his loaned one back. The new card is made by ATI and, importantly, is Windows Vista ready. Merle reminded me that I wanted to be sure to get a card that would support the new features in Vista, like Aero with Flip3D.

Windows Vista After seeing Microsoft's presentation of Vista at our meeting, and given the fact that I had a fairly high-end computer only one year old, I just assumed that I would be upgrading to Vista when it was available. After running the Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor, I am not so sure. The problem is not with my computer—although there were several potential problems, such as no compatibility data for the NVIDIA nForce Networking Controller and the NVIDIA nForce RAID Class Device.

The problem is with my scanner and my photo printer, both by Epson. The advisor said that the Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner would not run in Vista and that it had no compatibility data for my Epson Stylus 2200 Photo printer. Well, the scanner was purchased January 16 of 2004 for a bit over $400, and the printer was purchased December 29, 2004 for $780. Not exactly old items and not exactly cheap items.

I searched the Epson site to find something about Vista drivers but found nothing. So who is to blame here, Microsoft or Epson? Perhaps by the time Vista comes out, there will be a change. If not, Vista will not be installed on this computer. I have too much invested in the printer, plus several hundred dollars worth of ink and paper on hand. And the printer is working well. The scanner is also working fine except for the item below.

Scanner Catch-22 Since my HP Photo scanner died a few years back, I have been scanning negatives on flatbed scanners. The Epson I am currently using, the 3200 Photo, was purchased specifically because it was said to do a reasonably good job on both 35-mm negatives and larger-format negatives, of which I have a few hundred. I have scanned in more than 8,000 negatives frames and slides using the HP PhotoSmart film scanner, an HP flatbed scanner (also now dead) and the current Epson flatbed scanner. I am basically finished with my black and white negatives, the large format negatives and my slides but have a couple of thousand color negatives yet to go. I do them when I have time, or the mood hits me!

About a month back, though, I encountered a problem. For the 35 mm negative holder (or mask, or whatever it is called), the piece of plastic that holds one of the strips of negatives in place on the bottom part of the holder broke. I still had one good top piece, but that meant I could only scan one strip at a time instead of two.

I contacted Epson via email and they supplied the names of three suppliers who should be able to sell me the part. I looked at their web sites and purchased a 35-mm holder from one. In fact, I purchased two 35-mm holders, along with one larger format holder, since there was a minimum purchase of $10, and these holders only cost about $4 each.

There was no joy when the package arrived, though, since I had received three negative holders with no top hold-down pieces. Unbeknown to me, a negative holder consists of a top part and a bottom part. In ordering the holders I saw at the site, I thought you got both pieces. Upon contacting the online supplier, I was told that the top piece was separate and that they did not carry it. Neither did the other two dealers. However, one supplier did give me the part number that was needed. I contacted Epson parts with a "secret" phone number one of the suppliers gave me and asked for the part by number.

In a nice way, the person who answered at Epson said that he could only sell parts to retailers and that I couldn't buy the part from him. He wouldn't even tell me if he had the part or not. So there is the Catch-22. My solution: Krazy Glue, and the repaired piece is still holding together.

iWoz That is the name of the recently published book

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

Monitor/TV and TV/Monitor Samsung models 910MP and 940MW

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

910MP Monitor/TV:
The 910MP monitor is a strange animal, but it may suit you as well as it does me. In short, it's a 19-inch standard LCD monitor, but it's also a TV. It's primarily a monitor, because it's shaped like one. It's a standard 4:3 ratio with a native resolution of 1280x1024. So if it's sitting next to a standard 19" LCD monitor, it's the same screen size and resolution.

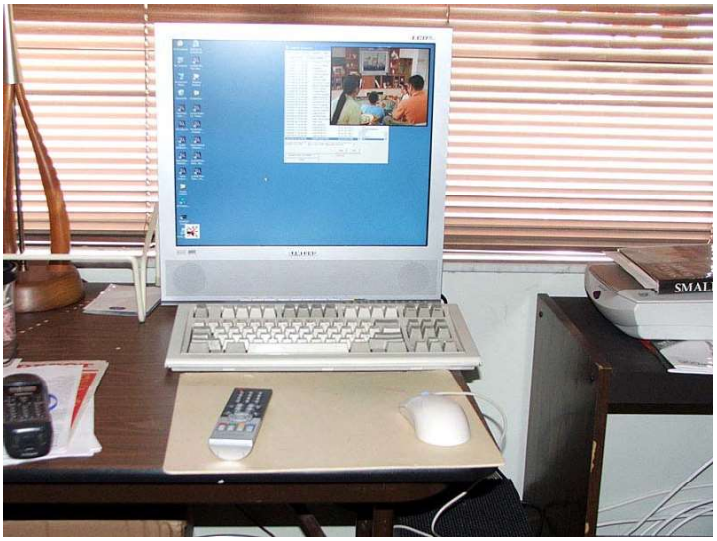
Over the years I've had TV cards in my primary computer from time to time — three different ones that I can recall for sure — all of them ultimately unsatisfactory. In my own experience, TV as a secondary function on your PC is helpful but fraught with occasional PC lockups. I always felt I couldn't push the limits of my computer when the TV card was running and I had to be especially careful not to move or resize the TV window too aggressively to prevent lockups. Maybe it was just bad luck, but it was bad luck with three different cards!

But I do want a TV in my work office. I don't find it especially distracting because I can tune it in and out in my head when I need to. Hence the 910MP. It's attached to my server on a table to the side, and I switch between Monitor and TV sources using the supplied remote. While it's in Monitor source, I can also bring up the TV in a PIP window, something in which I have no particular interest. And — to me — the best thing about all this is that the PC has no knowledge of the TV at all. No lockups.

This device does not have a lot of input/output choices, just the essential ones: Cable Coax, a not-too-accessible headphone jack, AV In (a three jack set - stereo and composite), PC In (15-pin D-Sub VGA and Stereo 3.5mm jack). It has no DVI or HDMI inputs. It has a very good remote with all functions. It has a row of nine buttons at the bottom of the unit, but the labeling is hard to read, and I've never attempted to use them. The speakers are fairly large and adequate.

As for using it as a PC monitor, it works very well. The display is clear and crisp, with no dead pixels. The contrast ratio is an excellent 700:1. My oldest son is using a standard 19-inch LCD Samsung monitor and also had a TV failure and was looking for a replacement TV. He also wanted a dual monitor setup for his primary PC, so I ordered one of these for him too. So his 910MP and his 19-inch LCD monitor are sitting side-by-side. He claims the new 910MP is somewhat crisper with better contrast than his LCD, probably due to the high contrast ratio.

The current price for the 910MP is $410 at NewEgg, but I paid about $350 for mine after a sizeable rebate from Samsung. Search around for deals, and be patient.



940MW TV/Monitor:
I won't go into as much detail as this is an LCD TV, but after buying the one Monitor/TV Samsung 910MP, I went out a month later and bought two TV/Monitor Samsung Model 940MWs to replace two aging tube type bedroom TV's. It has a wide screen with native resolution of 1440x900. At that resolution it's more a TV that also serves as a monitor, but perhaps it could be used functionally as a primary monitor if the vertical resolution is adequate for your own needs. On reflection, it's the same resolution as my notebook, and I certainly find that adequate as long as it's not my primary PC. Functionally, the two — 910MP and 940MW — are the same, except for the shape and the in/out ports. The controls are the

(Monitors……..Continued on page 6)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

her role as the Member at Large; Doug Mullis would like to turn over the Secretary duties to another member, and Mike Hodges has a work conflict that makes it prudent that he give up the Treasurer's duties. We also have an important appointed position left vacant when Bruce Register moved from the area, that of "Official Greeter." This person greets members and guests at the beginning of each meeting and sees that nametags are worn and then collected at the meeting's conclusion. We need a slate of nominees at our November meeting, so let Mary, John or Kevan know of your interest to help lead our Group in the coming year. We will have the duties of the various offices put into the next newsletter. [See page 6.]

The Fall Conference of the FACUG is on Sunday, October 29th in Orlando. Please visit the FACUG website for particulars. Registration is $20 for this one-day conference.

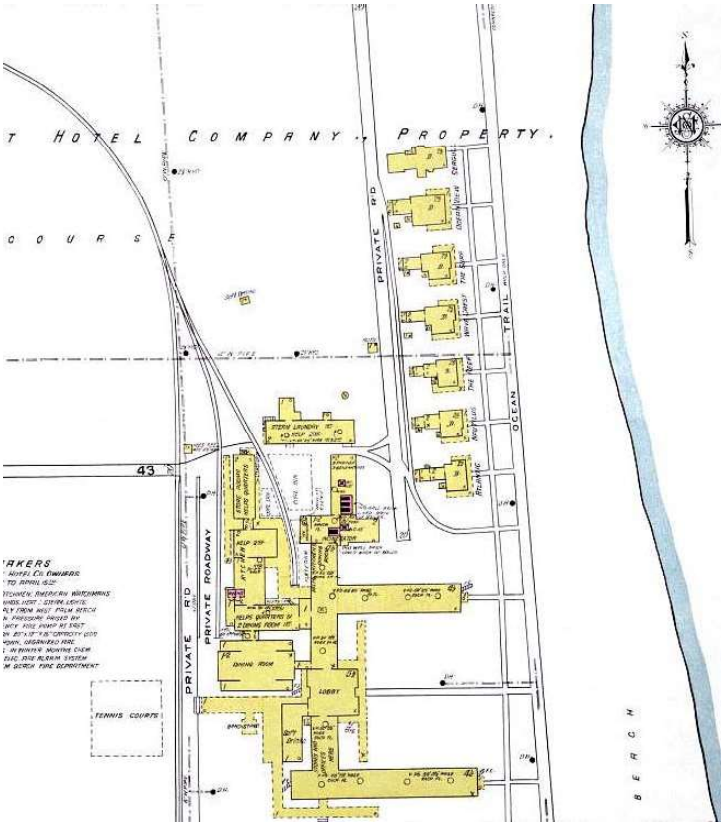
November's program will feature Steve Singer from the RDI distributorship. Steve will tell us of the latest computer hardware, as he does each year. This presentation is always an interesting program to kick off the holiday buying season.

Ed White has suggested a PC Building SIG. Ed recently had fun building two computers and wants to share his experience. Let Ed or John know of your interest in doing this. We will need to find a suitable meeting place for this SIG group.

At 7:05 pm, John Witmer changed hats and became our speaker for the evening. His topic was Excel and

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

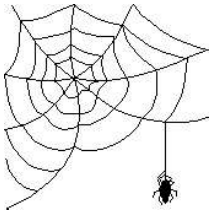
Internet Picture of the Month



The Breakers 1919

This is a screen capture from one of the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of Florida cities. This detail shows the Breakers Hotel on the Atlantic in Palm Beach Florida in 1919. At the site http://palmm.fcla.edu/sanborn/, if you click on search you can select a Florida city and view maps that display the buildings existent in that city from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. The yellow color indicates it was of frame construction, which is certainly not the case now.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
RDI@TampaBay (our presenter)	http://morevalu.net/
Barbecue Recipes and Grill Information	http://bbq.about.com/
Sanborn Maps (Fla. Historical maps)	http://palmm.fcla.edu/sanborn/
JAlbum - free web photo album software	http://jalbum.net/
FL Dept. of Health - Physician Profiles	http://ww2.doh.state.fl.us/irm00profiling/searchform.asp

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Monitors.....Continued from page 4)
same, and the remote may be identical.

I bought these two at the same time at Staples because they were offering a $50 rebate after a $350 store price. One I use attached to a Windows Media Center PC I built to use as a PVR (Personal Video Recorder), with a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse. The other LCD TV uses one external input, a combo DVD/VCR, besides the TV. I'm using an HDMI-to-DVI cable, with excellent results at 720p resolution.

The 940MW has a wider range of input/output ports, comparable to what you'd expect on an LCD TV. Accessible on the left side is a headphone jack and AV input connectors with composite and stereo and also S-Video.

Less accessible underneath in the back is the TV cable connector and component In, audio and video. For PC connection, there's both a 15-pin D-Sub VGA and a DVI video connector and a 3.5mm stereo jack.

The current price at NewEgg is $339.



Incidentally, when you delve into LCD or plasma screens you'll be needing some very expensive cabling, HDMI-to-HDMI, HDMI-to-DVI, S-Video and others. Do NOT buy this cabling at retail stores. It is available online at a fraction of the cost. I bought two Phillips brand HDMI-to-HDMI cables at Sam's Club for $26 each. The cheapest at Circuit City is $85. Best Buy is $120, although they do have a 3-foot cable for $50. ◆

Election of TPCUG Officers is soon
The duties of the officers are:

1. President: The president shall foster and promote direction, leadership, education, and organizational goals. The president shall act as the legal head and chief administrative officer; exercise supervision of the corporation and its activities; represent and speak for the organization; preside at meetings of the members; appoint and discharge committees; sign letters or documents necessary to carry out the mission of the organization; and preside as the Chair of the Board of Directors.

2. Vice President: The vice president shall assume the duties of the president in the event the president is absent or incapacitated, or at the request of the president, and becomes president on the death, resignation, or permanent incapacity of the president.

3. Secretary: The secretary shall serve as the chief recording and correspondence officer and the custodian of the records of the corporation. The secretary shall take such steps as necessary to prepare and certify the correctness of member and Board of Directors meeting minutes; preserve all records, reports, and official documents of the corporation except for those specifically assigned to the custody of others; sign official documents to attest to their authenticity; and carry on the official correspondence of the corporation as directed, except for those matters assigned to other officers. The secretary shall assume the duties of the president and/or vice-president in the event the president and vice-president are absent or incapacitated and shall become president on the death, resignation or permanent incapacity of both the president and the vice-president.

4. Treasurer: The treasurer is responsible for the collection of funds, their safe deposit, and the expenditure of all funds for the organization; and for keeping an accurate record of the collections and expenditures. The treasurer shall submit a report at the Board of Directors meeting and prepare an annual report to the members. The treasurer shall issue payments for bills submitted to the corporation as approved by the Board

(Duties……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

This SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at *mcpease@mindspring.com*.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 5)

its many applications at home and at the office. John said about 85% of his work on his computer is with Excel. He asked how many use Excel and to do what? Several responded they use it to make lists, keep financial records, to record genealogy information and to keep home business records.

John said Excel is a spreadsheet with cells that can contain a value, a formula, text or even pictures. It does functions invaluable for financial and statistical analysis. The power of Excel is in knowing how to use the many tools built into it. You can quickly set up payment schedules, inventories, payment records and plot histories.

John's company uses Excel to track sales activities and expenses, maintain personnel records, track monthly inventories, schedule events and track equipment usage and billing records. John showed us examples of these applications.

At home, John uses Excel for payment records, recording trip logs, cataloging and calendars. John catalogs photos and even did floor plan layouts of his home. Again, he walked us through his efforts and answered many questions.

John offered to help anyone apply Excel to projects they may be contemplating. Based on the interest shown during his presentation (which made us run overtime) and the group gathered around him afterward, John should be busy for a while. Thanks for presenting such an interesting topic, John.

Due to the lateness of the hour, we did not have a raffle for the Microsoft OneNote software door prize left by Blain Barton of Microsoft at our last meeting. If time permits at the November meeting, we will have a raffle at the end of the presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm. ◆

(Duties…….Continued from page 6)

of Directors or the membership, as per standing policy or special consideration by the Board of Directors.

5. Member at Large: The member at large shall serve in the capacity of an ombudsman for the members of the organization; propose a slate of candidates for the offices of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and member at large, and perform such other duties as requested by the president and/or the Board of Directors. The member at large shall, to the best of one's ability, be accessible to the members and to bring to the attention of the Board of Directors those matters that the members, for whatever reason, wish to be brought to the Board of Directors rather than have those matters brought to the floor of the regular meeting. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 3)

by Steve Wozniak, creator of the Apple I and Apple II personal computers and the co-founder, with Steve Jobs, of Apple. If there had been a lot of space to fill in the newsletter, I was going to do a full review of this book ($15 from Amazon), but the space is mostly filled, so here are just a few observations:

- Wozniak, tutored by his engineer father, started learning about electronic devices and transistors in grade school.
- As a pastime, he redesigned on paper the mini computers of the time so as to make them more efficient and to use fewer chips.
- He basically made the Apple I and II by himself.
- He was the first person to type input at a keyboard and to see it appear on a monitor.
- He loves to play pranks on people.
- He is not an ambitious person—and was happy to give the plans for the precursor of the Apple I to anyone (this is where Steve Jobs' business sense became important to the creation of Apple).
- Being shy, he thought he might never have a girl-friend. He is now on his third marriage.
- Finally, Woz is a nice guy. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 19 No. 12 December 2006

Meeting

Smart Computing

Wednesday, December 13, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Jen Clausen will speak about Sandhills Publishing's magazines and the Smart Computing User Group program. Jen will step us through an issue of Smart Computing, convey the value of SmartComputing.com through a live demonstration and introduce attendees to Smart Computing's sister publications - PC Today, Computer Power User, and the Reference Series.

We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Scanner solution Recently I wrote about not being able to purchase a replacement negative holder for my Epson scanner. Well, I have found a solution. It's an 8"x 10" piece of clear glass. I simply put the negatives on the scanner bed aligned parallel to the side of the scanner and then place the piece of glass over them to hold them in position. It works for all negative sizes. The only difficulty is getting the negative aligned properly.

IE 7 I have installed IE 7 on my laptop and my desktop with

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

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January Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org) 988-6480
Treasurer: Mike Hodges (mphs@aol.com) 962-2114
Secretary: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

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We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the November Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at 6:35 pm. A member stated he had bought a music CD in Europe and could not get it to play. Steve Singer (our speaker for the evening) said that foreign CDs and DVDs are encrypted to play only in the zone intended. There are programs for decrypting CDs and DVDs so this is what will be necessary.

Bob showed us a device that accepts standard Stereo cable inputs and sends the signal to your PC through a USB connection. This allows you to store music on your hard drive or make CDs. There also is a turntable available with a USB connection.

At 6:50 pm, Bob turned the meeting over to Member at Large Mary Sheridan to conduct the business of presenting names of nominees for next year's group officers. John Witmer has agreed to continue as President. Jim Purcell has agreed to be nominated for Member at Large. We need members to step forward to serve as Vice President, Secretary and/or Treasurer. Doug Mullis is willing to be nominated for Treasurer if someone else will be Secretary. Eddie Rodriquez has agreed to be our new "Greeter" at our meetings. Way to go, Eddie and Jim! Elections will be conducted at our December meeting.

Mary asked if we want to party at our December meeting. Smart Computing Magazine will make their annual presentation after our election of officers. If you want to party, please bring finger food or holiday desserts to share at our December 12th meeting. We will set up a table as was done in the past.

At 7:05 pm, Mary introduced our speakers, Steve and Pam Singer with RDI-Tampa. Steve is our local dis-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 6)

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Photoshop Elements 5 — New Features

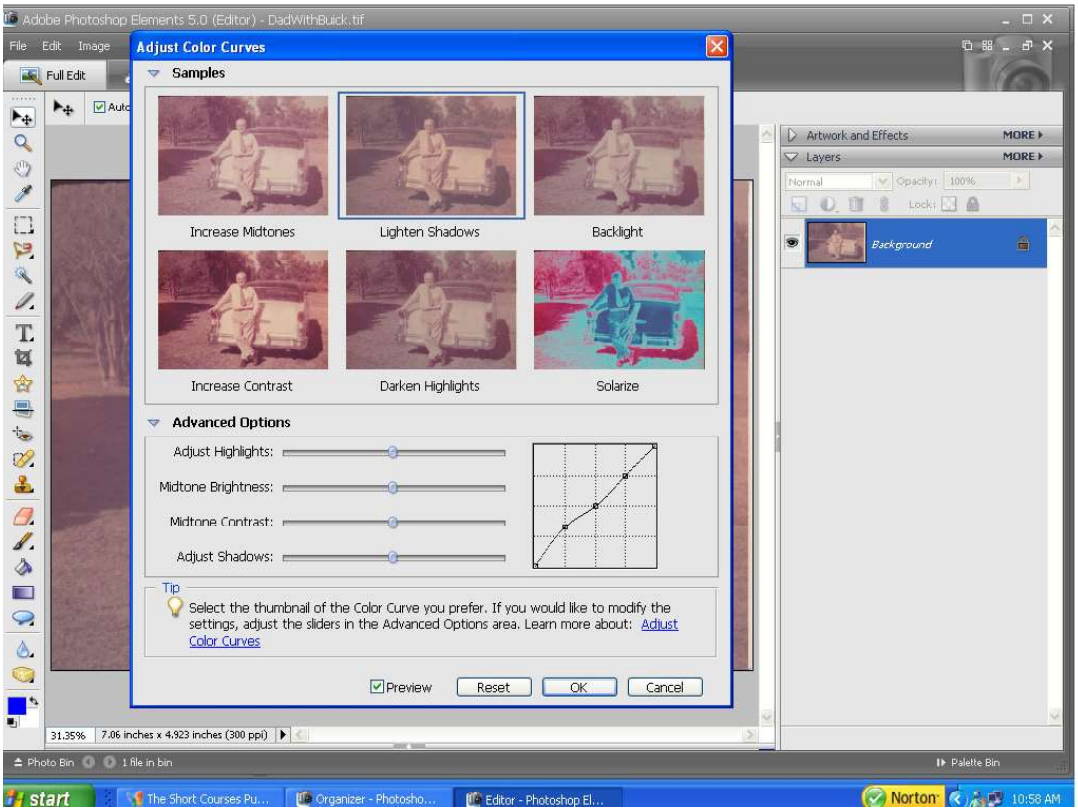
By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Overview There are many online references in this article, so you might want to download the HTML version of this article from the TPCUG web site, http://www.tpcug.org, so that you can merely click on the URL. The basic structure and functions of Photoshop Elements were broadly covered in the article on Photoshop Elements 3.0 published in the August 2005 Bits of Blue, which can be viewed and downloaded at the TPCUG web site. Photoshop Elements is made up of three parts. The first is the Organizer that is used to gather the photos and provide a sophisticated system for organizing them with a user-designed tag system, by time or by the Windows folders to which you have assigned them. The Organizer also provides a system of backup and archiving your photographs. The second is the Editor, which is divided into two parts, the Quick Fix Edit and the Full Edit. The Quick Fix is largely a set of one-button fixes to the most common problems with photographs. The Full Edit is a set of commands using sophisticated commands, filters and layering to correct or improve almost any problem you might encounter in improving the quality of your photographs. The Editor also provides a large number of tools to create special effects. The third is the Creator, made up of Photo Creations and Digital Creations. Photo Creations are print-oriented projects. The Digital Creations are primarily computer or web-oriented. As you can imagine, there is also crossover between these two categorizations. The commentaries I have read indicate that Photoshop Elements has practically everything that is included in Photoshop that the average amateur photographer requires and that many of the Photoshop features been included in Photoshop Elements have been powerful features that have been modified to make them easier to use. To get a thorough look at the entire program, you can download a full-featured copy of the latest version (5.0) for a free thirty-day trial at http://www.adobe.com. The new features in Version 4.0 were reviewed in the December 2005 Bits of Blue newsletter, which is also available for view and download at the TPCUG website.

Some of the more significant new features appearing in Version 5.0 of Photoshop Elements are:

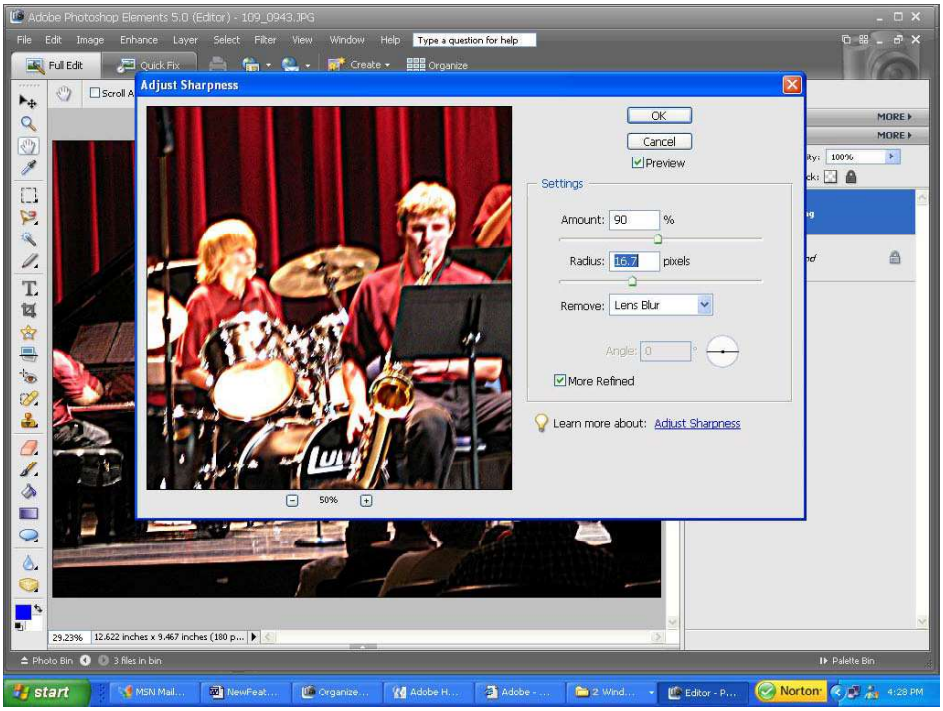
Correct Camera Distortion: The "Correct Camera Distortion Filter" is a popular Photoshop filter that has been transferred to Photoshop Elements minus some of the advanced options. Adobe has made this tool very easy to use in Photoshop Elements. This one filter allows correction of distortions caused by being too close to your subject, by having been forced to take the picture at an odd angle, or by shadows caused by the lens hood. These photos are most often of buildings which are obviously out of perspective, or of faces that look like balloons. The filter can also be used creatively to purposely create some of these distortions.

(Elements……..Continued on page 4)



(Elements……..Continued from page 3)

Sharpen Blurred Edges: The new "Adjust Sharpness Tool" goes beyond the Unsharp Mask that has been probably the most used method of sharpening photos. The Unsharp Mask tool reduces Gaussian blurring, which often is not the cause of the blurring. This new tool, which is quite easy to use, is capable of reducing Gaussian Blur, Lens Blur and Motion Blur. You are given a dialog box (*See Below)* that contains the image you are sharpening so that you can see the results of your changes in real time.



Fine Tune Exposure: The "Color Curves Tool" is introduced in Version 5.0. It is the feature that evidently was the one most requested by Elements users. It is similar to "Levels" but gives many more points of correction. It is not quite as powerful as the Curves Tool in Photoshop, from which it was adapted, but is much easier to use. A short video tutorial that explains the details of its use can be seen at: http://www.adobe.com/special/photoshopel/pse5_help_cc_26.html .

Enhanced Support For Raw Files: Raw files can be likened to a digital "negative," in that they contain the raw data of your picture before your camera makes the changes needed to produce a JPEG, TIFF, or other file format. The Raw format is most used by advanced photographers and sparingly if at all by the amateurs. No matter which you are, it is nice to have this capability if you have a very special subject that you want captured in all of its detail. You can process and edit the raw files of most cameras within Elements 5.0. This is apparently a great time saver. The Adobe Camera Raw Converter allows you to make sophisticated corrections to your photos even before you open them, and you can further edit the file once it is opened.

Create Dramatic Black and White Photos: Previous versions allowed you to remove the color from a photograph. The process is described by Adobe as follows: "The Remove Color command converts the colors in the image to gray values by removing all the saturation from the image. It assigns equal red, green, and blue values to each pixel in an RGB image, so the image is still in RGB mode. The lightness value of each pixel does not change". The "Convert to Black and White" command gives you the ability to make the conversion decisions that are decided for you by the software in the Remove Color Command. This may not seem like much to those of you who lost interest in black and white when color photography became available, but to someone like my daughter it is a terrific feature. She seems to have inherited all of the creative genes that both my mother and her mother possessed. She has done some neat things with black and white photography. I know that she and those of you who are convinced that the birth of color photography spoiled your chances to become the next Ansel Adams will enjoy this new command. Click on the URL below to view a short video tutorial that does a good job in explaining just how simply this command works. http://www.adobe.com/special/photoshopel/pse5_help_cc_27.html

(Elements……..Continued on page 5)

(Elements……..Continued from page 4)

Creations, New Ways to Show Your Photos: Photo Creations includes such things as photo layouts, album pages, DVD or CD labels and greeting cards. They can be single pages or, thanks to a new feature in Elements 5.0, up to thirty pages in one file. The new photo layout feature provides many formats but allows all to be customized. Another new feature allows you to size and resize the photos and artwork that you bring into the layout with no loss of quality, and you can still edit the photos after they are brought into the layout. You can print or email these projects or burn them to a CD or DVD. If you are interested in scrapbooking, the tools and artwork provided within this program will boggle your mind (Check the commercial website at http://www.scrappersguide.com). Digital Creations enables you to make flipbooks and three types of photo galleries that are web-oriented and animated. These can be burned to a CD or uploaded to your website or to a free service provided by Adobe. The wizard does all things necessary to allow you to send the folder, which it creates, containing your project via FTP to your web server. To get an idea of the magnitude of this section of Photoshop Elements 5.0, you can click on the URL below, which will bring up the "Idea Gallery" from Adobe. There are six colored boxes at the bottom of the page. The first contains the two tutorials referenced above. The last five contain examples of what you can do and a section in each that tells you how to do it. There is also a fifteen-minute overview of Photoshop Elements 5 and a shorter one on using the program in conjunction with Premier Elements 3.0. http://www.adobe.com/digitalimag/ideagallery/ ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



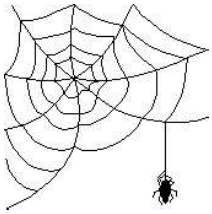
Three test mice

This was in most news outlets on the web in early November. The description below is from the Wall Street Journal (http://online.wsj.com). The exact link is http://online.wsj.com/article/SB116239800769710272.html?mod=mostpop. However, you will need a subscription to view it.

In a Harvard Medical School and the National Institute on Aging study, "three 15-month-old mice from the study were fed, from left to right, a standard diet, a high-calorie diet and a high-calorie diet plus resveratrol. Although it still got fat, the mouse on the right had a 31% lower chance of dying as it aged than the control mouse next to it."

Before you run out and buy some red wine (which contains resveratrol), note that the article also said: "A person would need to drink more than 300 glasses of wine a day to get the amount of resveratrol the mice got."

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Smart Computing (our presenter)	http://www.smartcomputing.com/
Digital Fish Library	http://www.digitalfishlibrary.org/
Hillsborough County Clerk of the Court	http://www.hillsclerk.com/
The "new" CNBC.com	http://www.cnbc.com/
Windows Vista Home	http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/default.aspx

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Replacing that old cassette

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Music CDs have virtually replaced cassette tapes. Many new cars have no cassette slots. CDs are relatively inexpensive and of higher audio quality than most tapes. Converting from tape to CD is probably not worthwhile in most cases. But then again, there are old favorites that may be hard to find in CD format.

Since I had a good sound card (Sound Blaster Audio 2 ZS) with a line-in jack, accompanying software, a CD Burner, and RCA Audio Cables left over from some old equipment, I decided to try. There may be more sophisticated and fully-automated programs, but I decided to work with what I had available.

None of my in-home cassette players or radios however, had proper output ports. Earphone ports were not recommended. This was corrected by borrowing an old Technics cassette tape deck.

To connect the deck to the jack with the cable, I needed to purchase an inexpensive Y-adapter at Radio Shack that accepts two RCA phono plugs and fits a 1/8" stereo phone jack.

The Sound Blaster Card came with a complement of 13 programs from Creative, which allow great flexibility in creating and editing audio. Not being a music guru, I selected the basic Creative Media Source Player, which has a record feature. It creates MP3 files. It was necessary to select the input or Recording Source as Line/CD/AUX/TAD/PC.

Examining the various options of the Creative Media Source Player software, I found an EAX advanced HD Console that has an option to automatically remove unwanted noises in audio, such as hisses, clicks and pops from external sources. I set this option ON using its default settings.

I started the tape deck playing, clicked on Record in the software panel, and the work was in progress. At the end of the first side, I stopped recording and saved the file so as not to have blank space while the tape was reversing or switching to side 2. I manually reversed the tape and repeated the process for side 2. When complete, I saved the second file.

My CD-DVD writer came with Sonic's *Record Now Plus,* which has an option to create an Audio CD for Car or Home Player. Using that, I burned both files onto the CD and tested it in a boom box. The result was a CD with two audio tracks, fair sound, and poor volume.

Unsatisfied, I rechecked the recording software and found a Surround Mixer Panel that had a Master Control, which allowed me to increase the volume setting. Note that the volume dial on the tape deck had no effect on the resulting volume.

After setting the Master Volume to high, I repeated the copy and burn processes, and the result was a success. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
tributor of computer related devices and tells us the latest and what is coming. Pam keeps Steve on course and brings him back to earth when his enthusiasm gets him talking too fast.

Steve first reflected on statements made during the Windows SIG meeting relative to encrypted foreign media devices. There are several programs available for decrypting material from other countries. Some may already be on your computer. Find someone who knows how to use them.

Next, Steve told us about the BitTorrent's web site for downloading audio, video, images, ebooks, games and software for FREE. You do have to become a member by paying either a flat or annual fee. According to Steve, you can earn credits by sharing materials you download with other members. Try http://www.BitTorrents.com for particulars.

Steve says there are wireless video extenders, which

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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(Minutes…….Continued from page 6)

will connect your TVs or music system to your PC using Windows Media Center or D Links software. Antenna extenders can be attached to your wireless router and network cards to improve signal strength. New routers now come with multiple antennas for greater performance. Signal strength is increased by up to three times. The new 802.11n (NIMO) wireless performance standard will be out next year. Speeds and distance will increase substantially. This standard will apply to multiple antennae devices.

Wireless USB is coming, similar to Bluetooth but probably faster. Voice-over IP is an inexpensive way to talk by telephone over the Internet. Voice-over IP can save you lots of money in long distance charges. For $35 a year, you can get a local phone number for receiving incoming calls over the Internet. Or you can have Sip Phone (Gizmo Project) installed, which will give you multiple phone lines using the Internet. Steve can set you up if you are interested.

We now have a choice of Verizon FiOS or Bright House (Time Warner). FiOS is all digital and cheaper for the time being, but negotiate the best deal you can, as Verizon will deal to get your business. Make sure you don't get short-changed on the number of TV channels you desire. FiOS does require a battery backup that you will be required to maintain.

Finally, Steve told us of motherboards he has to offer and distributed price sheets that not all got to see. Also Steve has rebuilt some past generation computers starting around $50. They may be as slow as 133 KHz, but they're great for your Mom to surf the Internet.

Steve answered members' questions and gave information on how to get free passes to new release movies and how to get cheap popcorn to boot.

No door prizes were raffled at this meeting because of the time. The meeting ended informally at about 8:40 pm. ◆

(Comments……ontinued from page 1)

no real problems other than getting used to the new interface. I did notice an increase in security settings when I open web sites on my computer for editing with FrontPage and other programs. But others I know have not bee so lucky.

One person noticed that immediately after the installation, if she left her computer unused for any length of time, when she returned to try to open a web page or send an email, nothing would happen—neither IE nor Outlook Express would respond. The solution to this problem was to change the power settings for her computer from an energy-saving mode to one that only shut off the monitor after a certain length of time. The energy-saving mode was putting the computer in standby, which had caused no problem previously.

Another person could not open any message in Outlook Express after installing IE7. If she clicked on a mes-

(Comments…….Continued on page 8)

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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 7)

sage, she would get an error message to the effect that there was something wrong with the address book and it could not be loaded. If you looked up the exact wording of the error message, there was a solution at Microsoft.com that supposedly provided a solution. It basically involved finding your address book, copying it to the desktop, then deleting all address books under your profile (which had somehow become corrupted). That should allow you to then open Outlook Express and to import the information in the old address book, and everything should be OK.

However, that did not work. As soon as she would touch the address book in OE, the same error message appeared. After some thought, I think I know the problem. What she thought was her profile was probably not her profile. So, since she is the only user of her computer, she should delete all the address books (.wab files) on her computer except the one she put on the desktop. Then OE would create a new blank one into which she could import the data from the one on the desktop. But she has not tried this yet.◆



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Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 1 January 2007

Meeting

Building Websites
With Microsoft's
Expression Web & Visual Studio
Presented by
William LaMartin

Wednesday, January 10, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will demonstrate how to create and manage a web site using Microsoft Expression Web and Visual Studio. Expression Web is just now available and is the replacement for FrontPage.

We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

As noted above, I will be doing the presentation this month. It will be an introduction to Microsoft's new web site creation and management program, Expression Web. I have just used it to give my personal site, http://www.lamartin.com, a new look and will use that as a basis to demonstrate how to create pages with a consistent look and feel, where this look and feel can be easily changed by changing the layout of one master page.

Additionally, I will show how Visual Studio can be used to make the sites much more powerful, with interactivity, programming and database connectivity. Also, we will see what needs to be implemented to make the pages render properly in different browsers and even in hand-held devices. ◆

February Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

President John Witmer opened the meeting at 6:40 pm by welcoming Mike Hodges, who has served as our Treasurer for several years. Due to his work schedule, Mike is unable to attend many of our meetings and has announced a desire to turn over his duties at year's end. John then introduced a visitor, Nancy Norton.

President Witmer then turned the meeting over to Bob LaFave to conduct the Windows SIG portion of our meeting. Bob asked if anyone had computer problems to present. Ed Snow wanted to know how to enlarge the screen print on his laptop. Bob explained how to change screen resolution.

Another member wanted to know how to eliminate paragraph symbols that popped up on her email this afternoon. Mary Sheridan suggested going to Outlook Tools, then Views and uncheck Paragraphs. Someone else asked which file format he should use. Merle Nicholson said NTFS wins "Hands Down" over FAT32.

Some discussion followed on security settings. Bob LaFave said the security programs are now so complex he recommends selecting the manufacturer's default settings in most cases. On the question on how to convert VHS material to DVD, Bob suggested using the $30 DVD Santa program. William LaMartin said he connects his VCR to his PC via three wires (left and right audio and yellow video) and a Dazzle adapter and captures the content. Bob said if you are having problems playing DVDs you've created, get a new inexpensive DVD player, as they are now compatible with many formats.

At 7:10 pm, Member at Large Mary Sheridan took control of the meeting for the election of officers for calendar year 2007. The slate is as follows: John Witmer has agreed to continue as President. Kevan Sheridan agreed to continue as Vice President. Doug Mullis agreed to assume the duties of Treasurer. Jim Purcell agreed to become our Member at Large. The votes in favor of all were unanimous

(Minutes……Continued on page 7)

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Buying a Notebook Computer & Other Stuff

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Notebook sales have exceeded desktops this year, and they've been very close for several years. Part of the reason for this is that notebooks have become very competitively priced and, also at least technically, as capable as desktops. Also, I think that most universities have completely embraced the technology, and high schools and grade schools have followed, and notebooks make sense in those environments.

In this article, I want to offer what I've observed in the notebook market that may help in deciding what to buy.

The big compromise. Keep in mind that a notebook is a very severe compromise, balancing energy use (battery), weight, computing power and file storage. You can't have a very large, powerful desktop replacement and expect it to run more than an hour and a half on the battery! You can however have a small lightweight notebook that will run five hours!

All things are affected by this compromise: Screen size, battery capacity, hard drive speed and overall dimensions and weight. Every element that goes into the notebook is affected. It's up to you to find the balance of these elements consistent with your intended use. If I make it sound hard; that's intentional. It isn't a decision that you can make in a half hour of looking at notebooks at a store. Do your homework first.

Do not consider any notebook without finding good, up-to-date product reviews. They test things like how long the battery really took to run down. That's so very important. Just Google the model number and add "review".

First you must try to classify how you intend to use your computer 90% of the time. Classifications that I can think of are:

1. Desktop replacement next to a power outlet
2. Powerful computer most always in range of an outlet (business presentations)
3. Carry around all day (to classes)
4. Outdoors at Starbucks and occasional outlets
5. Entertainment (Play an entire DVD movie or play games for hours on a plane on battery)
6. Ultra light portable
7. Ruggedized (See Panasonic)

Most of these classifications are mutually exclusive. My own powerful notebook will just barely play a short DVD movie all the way through. I knew that when I bought it, knowing that I am almost always near an outlet. Remember that a battery six months old does not have the same capacity as new, and, if you use it a lot, may be ready for replacement after a year. Replacement batteries are typically $150. Sometimes they cost much more.

Next is screen size. If you're near an outlet 90% of the time, and you don't carry it a lot, you can go for both size and power. You can pick a 15.4" widescreen or 17" screen. With a mostly portable notebook with some outlet availability, you can pick a 14" or 15" screen and, if portability is paramount, pick a 12" to 14" screen.

So here's Merle's notebook rule one: Analyze your intended use (size and capacity vs. portability) and then pick a screen size consistent with that use. Remember that the big compromise prevents you from having both. Go to a big box store and look at screen sizes and the relationship to physical size and ignore the details until you have that down pat. Write down the model numbers, then find Internet product reviews to see what expert testers think of it.

Screen resolution. Find out what it is, not always an easy task. Let's say you pick the very popular 15.4" widescreen. Look at the vertical resolution. I've found five different sizes: 768, 800, 900, 1024 and 1080. In my opinion, a 15.4 vertical resolution should be at least 900. Anything less and you're looking at a cheap computer. A 768 is acceptable for a 12 to 14" standard screen on a lightweight notebook, but not 15".

Operating System. The choices right now will be XP Home, XP Pro and Windows Media Edition (WME). Also they're usually bundling a later Vista upgrade,

(Notebook……..Continued on page 4)

(Notebook……..Continued from page 3)
and, believe it or not, there are options to get an operating system CD for $10 or so (TAKE IT!).

I cannot think of one reason to buy a computer with Windows Media Edition that doesn't also have a TV tuner built in, but so far I've not found one with a tuner, and who'd want one anyway? And external USB tuners are poor. What are they thinking? Enough said about that.

The only real debate is between Home and Pro. If you connect in any way to a corporate system domain server (either locally or remotely through VPN), or wish to control the notebook with Windows Remote Desktop, you need Pro. Otherwise Home has everything you'll need. If you want to control another computer using Windows Remote Desktop from this notebook, Home is fine for this. The software is available for download even for Win 98.

Hard Drive. Be realistic. Look at your needs now, and determine if those needs are going to change. If you need to save the money, don't be afraid to get a standard 60G hard drive and supplement it with an external USB backup drive for your archived stuff or pictures that you don't need online. I'm using about 90G on my desktop right now, but my 60G notebook computer has only 40G used and I can easily clean some of that off. In the notebook world, the price per megabyte is much higher than for desktops.

Hard Drive speed is important. They come in 4500, 5400 and 7200 RPM. Believe me, the notebook takes quite a hit in performance if you have 4500 RPM drive and you are trying to do something intensive that requires a lot of pagefile activity. If you're doing just Internet, email and word processing, the standard drive is fine. Stray out of that arena, and you'll appreciate the faster drives. What's the downside? Battery life.

Battery. There are choices here, too. The standard Lithium-Ion battery has six cells. But most makers also offer 9- and 12-cell batteries for very little more, and they offer significant run time improvements, as much as a 50% increase. Be careful if you're ordering online, and don't mistakenly order a second battery instead of a replacement. I've never seen this option in a store, only online.

Wireless. All notebooks have Ethernet and Wireless/g built in. Do not be tempted to buy "pre-N". It'll be years until that becomes useful. An additional choice is built-in Bluetooth. After using a Bluetooth "dongle" sticking out the side of my notebook and worrying about breaking it off in there, I'd buy the internal Bluetooth in a heartbeat. I've bent the dongle so badly that I'm just amazed that it's still functional. I use Bluetooth for GPS, external keyboard and mouse, and, when I find a good Bluetooth headset, I'll use that for my Gizmo VoIP use and leave my large USB unit at home.

USB. My notebook has only three USB ports, and I wish it had more. I carry a tiny powered hub on the road, but it's just adding more to my collection of power cubes. I have finally resorted to applying labels on every cube I have, so I can't mix them up. That's pathetic.

Processors: There's too much on this subject to write about, so I'll try you give you my own summary.

Forget these: Duron, Sempron, Celeron, Pentium 4, Pentium D, AMD XP.

Celerons and Semprons are still being sold. Pass them by unless you need a really cheap, slow computer. These are the $600 computers you see advertised.

You'll especially find a lot of Core Duo (not to be confused with Core 2 Duo which is an entirely different CPU). Dell is selling systems with a 1.66GHz Core 2 Duo for only $108 more than a 1.6GHz Core Duo. Pass the Core Duo by if you can.

Look for these: Pentium M (older, but with Centrino, very good on battery life), Turion and Turion X2, and Core Solo, Core Duo and Core 2 Duo. The Turion X2 and Core 2 Duo are dual processor low power CPU's. Dual processor CPUs are a very good idea for extending battery life. It's a way to get very good powerful CPU's when needed but be able to partially shut down when not needed.

If you play games or use some specialized intensive

(Notebook……..Continued on page 5)

(Notebook……..Continued from page 4)

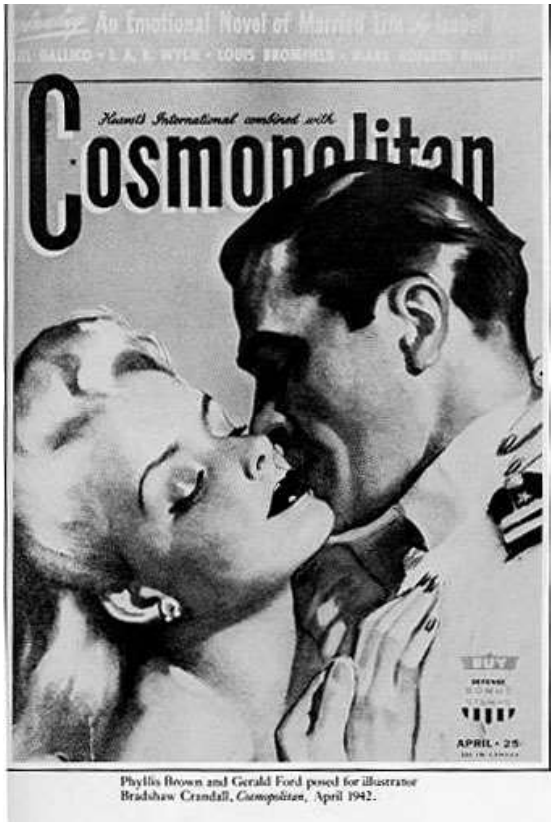
software, and it's very important to you, consider Turion and Core Solo, but at higher speeds (above 2GHz) than is available with 2 cores. The 2-core processors are faster overall, but almost all games and many graphic and movie editors and renderers are optimized for single-core. That's changing, but not very fast, and notebooks tend to have a shorter useful life.

Memory: Windows XP runs best with 512MB and up. It's a real mistake to cut corners here, because the lack of memory forces the OS to swap to the pagefile, and on a notebook with a slow hard drive, you take a real performance hit. To make matters worse, most notebooks' videos use a part of system memory. 1 GB memory, is best. You may also find that, if you want 1GB memory, it's cheaper to get it at the onset. Many 512MB systems use two 256 chips that fill all possible slots, so there's no way to just add 512!

Windows Vista: I would never, ever never upgrade an XP computer to Vista. That's my opinion. Notice I say "upgrade". That means that I'd expect all my installed applications to stay installed and all my data to be intact. Fat chance. BUT .. Replacing the entire system, maybe I'd do. I've read the offers that Dell and HP make which include a Vista coupon. It isn't clear whether the disk they will send you is a system restore or an upgrade. If it was a complete system restore (which effectively reformats your drive), and I was willing to reinstall all applications and data after the replacement, I might do it. … but it wouldn't be worth it. If I just *had* to have Vista on a notebook,

(Notebook……..Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



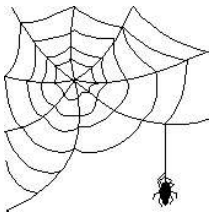
Phyllis Brown and Gerald Ford posed for illustrator Bradshaw Crandall, *Cosmopolitan*, April 1942.

Gerald Ford?

From the site http://www.tommcmahon.net at http://www.tommcmahon.net/2005/05/world_premiere_.html we have what is possibly our 38th president working as a model.

From the site: "According to Carole Conover, in her book Cover Girls, President Ford also posed with Ms. Brown for a Cosmopolitan cover, issued in April 1942." And from the Ford Library: "…., we at the [Ford] Library cannot confirm or deny that it is President Ford in that cover."

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Chowhound	http://www.chowhound.com/
The Museum of Hoaxes	http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/
Microsoft Expression Web	http://www.microsoft.com/products/expression/en/web_designer/default.mspx
Faces of the Dead in Iraq	http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/20061228_3000FACES_TAB1.html

(Notebook.....Continued from page 5)

I'd wait until it was available, and even … I doubt. Give it a year first.

Accessories: One thing I hate about my HP is a monster charger cube that is about 1/3 the weight of the notebook! What are they thinking? Targus and others make smaller replacements. I have several "notebook mouses," two of them with ZipLinq retractors. Also I have a good collection of other ZipLinq cables (try Amazon and TigerDirect). Targus makes an astonishing number of notebook cases, briefcases and backpacks. Go to Targus online for these; you'll find just exactly what you're looking for, and the prices have become reasonable. They used to have a very high retail markup, but that seems to be no longer the case (pun intended).

For home use, I use a Microsoft Bluetooth keyboard and mouse. I put the notebook on an old printer stand to get the screen up high enough for my eyes, and then I place the keyboard and mouse comfortably where my hands land. Remember that on a notebook the screen is located at a fixed distance from the keyboard. Obvious, I know. Consider, though, that your eyes' requirements are in conflict with your typing comfort. Ok, I guess, if you're under 25 and you're oblivious to the eyestrain and haven't experienced repetitive motion pain.

Warranty: The more I look at notebooks the more alike they are. For me, there are only six or seven variables, and I can get what I want from three or four manufacturers with very little difference between them. So I do some research on service and warranty and give the top-rated manufacturer the edge. I want to speak to someone I can understand on the phone when I call; I want extended hours for help; and I want to be able to send my computer out for repair and have it come back with all my software intact on the hard drive.

My brother-in-law needed a keyboard repaired on his Toshiba, and it came back with the hard drive in the same state as new out of the box. They'd done a system restore since it was their policy. Everything was gone. I think that's just inconceivably poor customer relations. The good news is that he called me first, and I convinced him to back everything up before he sent it in.

The major manufacturers are: HP, Dell and Lenovo (A Republic of China company; 20% is owned by IBM). Other name manufactures are Sony, Toshiba, Panasonic (which builds ruggedized ToughBooks), ASUS and Gateway. There are many others, and some build very good quality specialized notebooks like AlienWare (now owned by Dell) and Voodoo. Pick your manufacturer by their service ratings!

In-Store or Online: Consider this. Except for maybe adding memory, you're pretty much stuck with what you buy. And there are hundreds of configurations possible for each model. Stores carry what moves. That's obvious. What are the chances that you can get the exact configuration you want? Well, maybe they have something close that you're willing to compromise on. I did that, and I wished I'd realized that I could have gotten the internal Bluetooth online for the extra cost of the Bluetooth alone. Except for store clearances, I've never found a store to have lower prices than you can get online.

Finally, after you've bought: You still have a lot of work to do. First thing, before installing anything and before connecting to the Internet, you need to remove all the crap software (crapware). I'm serious. Go to Add/Remove Programs and remove all AOL, Yahoo, Google, Real, anything with the word "toolbar" or Screen Saver. Reboot, then uninstall all trial versions of Norton and McAfee, Trend and whatever the current favorites are. Reboot, then open Internet Explorer, click Tools, Manage Add-ons, Enable or Disable Add-ons. Disable all Add-ons except Sun Java and the Microsoft XML thing.

If you're fond of say Norton anti-virus, go to CompUSA and get a highly discounted anti-virus and anti-spyware program. It's usually much cheaper than an online subscription. They also sell 3-packs at a discount. Also consider some good alternative like free.grisoft.com, free AVG and Spyware or perhaps Kaspersky (not free, but highly rated). Install those and then attach your broadband. DO NOT use the Verizon or Roadrunner (Brighthouse) install CDs. You don't need them to attach to DSL or Cable, and you run the very real risk of adding more crapware. After connecting to the Internet, go to Windows Updates, and get

(Notebook……..Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

Elections were concluded with terms to begin January 1, 2007. Doug will continue to serve as Secretary until a member accepts nomination and is elected to this office. Please step forward as Doug also serves as our Program Director and now Treasurer.

John Witmer announced we need a speaker for our January 10th meeting as Microsoft has requested to be rescheduled to March. Presentations on Outlook or Scanners were suggested. Vendor presentations are scarce so we will need members to take up the slack. Volunteers? Get with John or Doug.

At 7:20 pm, President Witmer introduced our speaker for the evening, Jen Clausen, to tell us about Smart Computing magazine and the related website. Jen reminded us that Sandhills Publishing produces not only Smart Computing, but also PC Today, CE Lifestyles, Reference Series and Computer Power User.

Jen started by telling us she is from a small town in the middle of Nebraska and that her office is in Lincoln, which is notoriously cold in winter. Tours of Florida are envied assignments at this time of year, so she is pleased to be here. Packets were handed out containing the January 2007 issue of Smart Computing, a ball point pen with logo, a published guide for using the Smart Computing website and a mouse pad with 2007 calendar, email address and toll free phone number for technical support. Smart Computing boasts being written in plain English for computer users of all skill levels with acronyms explained the first time used in an article. The purpose of the magazine is to improve the computer skills and productivity of its readers.

We then scanned the issue distributed, starting with the Cover Story, which may be several articles. The cover subject is always something of a timely interest. Jen next reviewed the Software and Hardware Reviews section. These reviews are actually done by the writers based on their hands-on experience, and the programs are scored based upon performance, ease of use, (ease of) installation, support/documents provided and price.

We then looked at the Windows Tips & Tricks section, which deals with Windows 98 through XP and will include Vista once released. Articles offer operating system information to make these systems perform at maximum efficiency. Jen then showed us Quick Tips, that is in a question and answer format explaining how to accomplish many tasks covering a number of applications. Next was the Plugged In or Web Tips section, which is all about the Internet and designed to enhance our online experiences.

Mr. Modem's Desktop is a lighthearted series about computers and interesting websites. And finally, Jen covered the Tech Support section, which explains error messages and offers fast fixes to problems you may encounter.

Leaving the magazine, Jen told us about the Smart Computing website, where you can seek support through the Q&A Board, Chat Rooms or Forums, read articles from Smart Computing, Computer Power User or PC Today and create a library of your favorite articles. Articles are PDF and printer friendly. Jen gave us a tour of the website, showing us the many ways we can get support/answers to computer problems or simply improve our efficiency in our applications.

Smart Computing provided door prizes, with the three winners being drawn by Jen Clausen. Prizes and winners were:

- Smart Computing for one year—Nancy Norton
- Smart Computing Reference Library—Merle Nicholson
- Smart Computing Tee Shirt—Ed Purcell

Lucky winners! Thank you, Jen, for the nice door prizes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm. Attendees partook of the Holiday buffet. See you next year! ◆

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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Notebook……..Continued from page 6)
your computer up to date.

Look at your MSCONFIG startup list and also your System Tray. See if there's any crapware you can remove or disable. You don't need Adobe Reader to "call home" through the Internet every time you start your computer to see if there's an update. Note what's on your system tray; write it down before you install any more software so you'll know what came with it and what you've added since then.

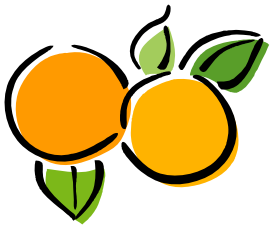
So why do Dell, HP and all the rest put crapware on all new computers? They're paid to. It's income for them. Think of it this way. Yahoo makes money how? From targeted advertising. Advertisers pay them, right? The more advertising they get out there, the more they collect, so paying Dell to install the crapware on YOUR NEW COMPUTER makes sense to them. It's easiest to remove this stuff when the computer is new. If you need help with this, just take advantage of being in TPCUG and call a knowledgeable member. ◆



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Bits of Blue



February in Tampa
Oranges

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 2 February 2007

Meeting

Digital Photography

With Keith Bunch
of
North Tampa Photography
Wednesday, February 14, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: With so many of our members interested in digital photography, it will be a treat to hear the presentation from Keith Bunch from our premier photo store in Tampa, North Tampa Photography.

We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

As is not unusual for me, I did not get to the end of my planned presentation at last month's meeting on building web sites with Microsoft's Expression Web and Visual Studio. The Expression Web part was fairly well covered, but the Visual Studio part wasn't. Partly this was because our Windows discussion went a good bit over time. But such discussions are what the group is all about, so I was reluctant to suggest that we close it down. Anyway, the Visual Studio part you missed would have been more technical and would have given you some insight into what goes on behind the scenes on the server to create more functionality than could be obtained by the standard static web page. Perhaps that can be covered at some future meeting when a presenter is hard to come by.◆

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March Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

President John Witmer called the meeting to order promptly at 6:30 pm and then turned control over to Bob LaFave to conduct the Windows SIG session. Bob showed us the Microsoft SyncToy 1.4 program for copying, moving or renaming files between folders or even computers quickly and easily. This program can be gotten from Microsoft.com's download center free of cost. Bob demonstrated the ease of using this program to make backup files on Flash or other external storage devices.

Nancy Cottrell asked about installing a program for making backups. It was generally thought the feature could be gotten from the Windows installation CD. Discussion followed on backing up your hard drive and the making of music CDs.

Another member was having user sign-on problems. Bob told him about TweakUI, another free, useful program from Microsoft, which gives access to system settings not revealed by Windows XP and allows changes to default settings including automatic logon and privacy settings.

Expanding on a discussion started last meeting, Merle Nicholson gave us a little history on FAT 32 and NTFS file systems and recommended converting to NTFS.

At 7:15 pm, President Witmer ended the very lively SIG session for group business. A record number of guests this evening included Nancy Norton, Brooks Rimes, Roy DeArmond, Eric Goldstein, Emily McGee and Tim Condon. This was Nancy's second visit, and Tim previously was a member. A welcome was extended to all with the hope our guests will join

(Minutes…….Continued on page 7)

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Bits of Blue—10 Years Ago

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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My main impetus for writing this article is that, beginning last month, the newsletter is being printed at Pepin Distributors by John Witmer. Prior to that, since October 1997, Larry Anders of Marshall and Stevens allowed me to use their copy machine to print the newsletter. All we provided was the paper. That is almost 10 years of basically free printing. Thank you, Larry and Marshall and Stevens!!

I think that during that time I used three different copy machines, each one superior to the previous one. In that time, we have gone from printing around 220 copies of a 12-page newsletter of mostly 10-point type to printing 75 copies of an 8-page newsletter of mostly 12-point type.

We did not actually have around 200 members then. It was probably more like 150 members. But to take advantage of the bulk mail rate, we had to mail at least 200 copies. So I would mail around 204 copies each month, with the extras going to vendors and friends of the group. As our membership shrank, I started mailing more than one copy to some of the membership to make the 200 quota. Then one day, I ran a spread sheet analysis that demonstrated that, instead of mailing 200 newsletters by bulk mail, it would be cheaper to mail only to our membership and a few vendors and friends and pay first class postage.

A few years later, due to the difficulty of getting content from our members for the newsletter, we reduced the length from 12 pages to eight. However, the reduction in content was not all that much, since some of what was lost was just boilerplate that appeared unchanged in each newsletter. Still later, most often we printed the newsletter in a 12-point font due to less original content being available from the membership. Occasionally, the membership comes to life and provides enough articles so that I need to reduce the font to 10-point type to make everything fit. However, this month is not turning out to be one of those times. To fill up any remaining space in this newsletter, I would like to look back and see what sort of articles we had in the newsletter when Larry first started letting us use his office machine.

In that October 1997 newsletter, Larry Anders wrote about his new digital camera, a Sony Digital Mavica, which stored its images on a 1.5 MB floppy disk. Boy, how things have changed - a camera that took a full-sized floppy for storage! Don Patzach had an article about the DriveCopy program from PowerQuest. Of course, PowerQuest was subsumed by Symantec a few years back.

In the same newsletter, Larry Anders also had an article about a new type of 3.5 floppy drive and disk, called the SuperDisk LS-120, that would hold 120 MB of data . Its price was from $175 to $200 and was competition for the Zip drive. Like Larry, I also had two articles. One was on the software called Microsoft Dictation and Voice, which was really a work in progress that could be downloaded from Microsoft and was not really a commercial product. The other review was of a video capture card called Computer-Eyes/RT Video Capture. It was used to capture a single frame and not a continuous video. As an example, I used it not to capture a frame from a TV program but to capture a frame from a video that my daughter took of me with a video camera. You cannot see how young I looked back then, since the online newsletters only go back to January 1998. You will just have to take my word for it that there is a difference between then and now.

As a point of interest, in that October 1997 newsletter is says that the current officers were:

- PRESIDENT.—.Connie Kincaid
- VICE PRES.—.Mike Hodges
- TREASURER—Wil Goble
- MEMBER AT LARGE — Bruce Register
- SECRETARY.—.Merle Nicholson

It also notes that we had a BBS with Mary Sheridan as SYSOP.

In the November 1997 newsletter, Larry Anders had an article about the Power Cat Touchpad, which he had begun using for computer input at the suggestion

(Bits of Blue……..Continued on page 6)

Targeted Advertising and Crapware on New Computers

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
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Undesirable software is being installed at the manufacturer on all new computers meant for the consumer market. The results are new computers that, at worst, are running badly right out of the box, and, at minimum, need some expert attention to remove software so that the computer is running optimally.

Taken one at a time, they don't sound too bad. For instance, right now you may really like the Google Toolbar and you'd say that if I bought a computer with it preinstalled, that it'd be easier than installing myself. But here's the catch: Do I need fifteen programs preinstalled on my new computer? How do I know which ones I want to keep and how do I get rid of the ones I don't want? The most dangerous thing is how do I distinguish a really bad program from a program that the computer really needs to run? How do I get rid of a browser add-in when it does not have an uninstall? How do I find out what each one does?

I've looked at a half-dozen brand new computers regarding this problem over just the last year, and I can conclude a couple of things. One, the situation is getting worse, and, two, if you clean up your new computer it will run significantly faster and the power-up time will be reduced an amazing amount.

So why do they do that? I'm talking about Dell, HP and Gateway. I haven't looked closely at other brands, but I don't see any indication that all of them are not doing this to some extent. If there's a brand out there that refuses to load their computers up, they should be advertising: "NO CRAP SOFTWARE".

Back to why they're doing this. It's … you guessed it … money. What is Google's interest in this, for instance? Where does Google's income come from? Targeted advertising. The more advertising that gets pushed out to the consumer, the more money they make. So they pay Dell to preinstall it. That isn't saying that Dell thinks the Google Toolbar or Google Desktop is a good or a bad thing. It's saying that with the extra income from Google, Dell can either sell the computer just a little cheaper or can return more to their stockholders.

Let's explore an analogy. What if you bought a new refrigerator, and when you opened the door each time, a window shade popped down that said: "Wal-Mart Daily Specials on Ladies Undies"? You have to roll the thing up every time you want a jar of mayonnaise. How do you get rid of it? It's tied in such that if you rip it out, it appears that the door seal will be damaged. What do you do? The answer: hire a guy skilled in removing refrigerator advertising shades to come out at $60/hr to remove it. Here's the catch. They didn't say anything about this advertising gadget in the literature when you ordered your refrigerator, and the one you looked at in the store must have had it removed, and you looked at the warranty fine print and did not see a warning: *"Caution. This computer...oops...refrigerator may or may not have removable or non-removable crapware. We are not responsible for expenses incurred in removing said crapware. Your warranty may be voided if damages are incurred in the removal of such crapware."*

The same goes for the car dealer's name permanently mounted on the back of your new car. You can bet they don't do that until after the car is sold! Would you buy a new couch if they mounted a "Monaghan's Fine Furniture" plaque on it?

Back to crapware. First, I'll mention one thing. You can find out about all the crapware by Googling the executable name. Someone has written something about it, you can count on that. There are some specific websites that specialize in describing the programs by name, and, for the most part, you can get an assessment of their relative usefulness or dangerousness. But many of these sites are also trying to sell you something, usually a program that will remove the offending program. I've never purchased these because it's just too self-serving. Usually I can glean the manufacturer's name out of this and then go to that site to see what it is. I disabled a service called Bonjour Service from my computer when I investigated enough to find that it had been installed by the "Gizmo Project" software I use. It was written by Apple Computer of all things, and it's a "network

(Crapware…….Continued on page 5)

(Crapware…….Continued from page 4)

helper" that, when removed, has no effect on the use of Gizmo Project. Since then, Gizmo Project has included information about it in their FAQ's.

I'll classify some of the crapware programs into a few categories: 1) the "Call Home" programs, 2) the "Internet Access Sales", 3) the "Toolbar and Desktop programs", 4) the "Anti-Virus crowd" and 5) the "Really Useless Stuff."

1) "Call Home". The first things that come to mind are Adobe Update Manager, Dell Update Manager, and Windows Update Manager. You'll find the Adobe manager in the Startup manager, MSCONFIG. Do you want Adobe to call home to see if there are any updates ready for Adobe Reader, every time you boot the computer? Has any Adobe Reader update affected your life in any way? How many of these are installed on your computer, and how much time does it add to your boot time? Can you remember to manually look for Windows updates, instead of having Windows do it for you? At least that's configurable in XP. Incidentally, HP printer software is the worst! I've never had any consequences from removing HP software from the Startup in MSCONFIG. The last computerI looked at had four HP items.

2) "Internet Access Sales". The last Dell Notebook I worked on had an AOL icon in the Start tray, that, when clicked, gave you an opportunity to subscribe to AOL. This means that this program is running on your computer all the time it's on, for the life of the computer. To its credit, there was an uninstall in Control Panel, Add/Remove programs. But Wait! I

(Crapware…….Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



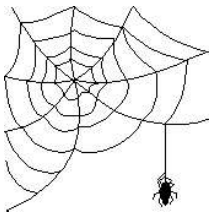
The first hard drive

The photo is from http://www.intelligentmind.co.uk/moc_IBMRAMAC50th.htm. There we learn that (mostly quoting) The introduction of the 350 Disk Storage Unit made it possible for the first time to file, retrieve and manipulate information from database records in "real-time".

With the cabinet covers on, it measured 5' 8" tall, 5' wide and 2' 5" deep, and weighed in at over a ton. The unit comprised fifty 24" platters, one pair of read/write heads and a pulley system that provided both the vertical and horizontal head movement. Furthermore, the native storage capacity of the disk drive was 5MB.

Jenny Lind Olin alerted me to this monster. The photo she sent is similar to the one at http://www.elektriq.com/articles/technology-history-a-hard-disk-in-1956 which shows the drive being loaded onto a plane.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
AVG Free anti-virus, anti-spyware	http://free.grisoft.com/doc/1
Acronym and abbreviation dictionary	http://www.acronymfinder.com/
ShutterFreaks, Promoting Better Photography	http://www.shutterfreaks.com/
Data Recovery Free Software	http://www.ontrack.com/freesoftware/
Google Docs & Spreadsheets Tour	http://www.google.com/google-d-s/tour1.html

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Crapware…….Continued from page 5)
found two more internet services' advertising to remove while I was at it! Give me a break!

3) "Toolbar and Desktop programs." The worst offenders are (currently) Yahoo and Google, which have desktop managers and browser toolbars and IM (Instant Messaging) clients. Again, to their credit, there are uninstall programs. But, in addition, you have to go to your internet browser's Manage Add-Ons to make sure the toolbars are not running, and, if they are running and you have also done all the Add/Remove stuff, that you disable all the add-ons. Remember – the reason they are there is to provide you with some usefulness, but at the cost of targeting advertising directly to you. If you like Google, for instance, put a link on your browser toolbar to www.google.com to click on, and make your default search box in Internet Explorer for Google, all at no cost to you in computer resources.

4) The "Anti-Virus crowd". Every time I look at a new computer there's somebody's three-month trial anti-virus installed. Why do they do that? Well, obviously the anti-virus company is hoping you'll just click on a link and give them your credit card number; you'll get a year's subscription, and then next year they'll charge the same account for another year and send you an email that they've done that, that hopefully your spam filter doesn't catch first. What's going on here? The software company paid Dell to preinstall it, hoping that you'll not give it too much thought. And they installed the highest bidder's software. It has nothing to do with what's good, what's bad or the best software for the money.

Look, you've bought a new computer. New computers need anti-virus and anti-spyware. You know that. You probably know which ones you like, so consider them a part of the original purchase cost and have them ready when you fire the new computer up for the first time.

5) The "Really Useless Stuff". Let's start with Wild-Tangent Online Game network. It's installed. Do you need it? Do you know what it is? Let's look at QuickTime and RealPlayer. Do you need three media players? Really? You have Windows Media player already, and at least it isn't running until you need it and it goes away when you don't. So you run into a site that has a warning that to present some little video it needs Apple QuickTime. Do you really need to look at whatever it is enough to install QuickTime and have it running all the time? You can't turn it off! Yes, you can configure it so that it doesn't start at boot. But ... when it is used in any way, it doesn't shut off after you're done. When I discovered that, I sent Steve a personal note about it. That was two years ago, and I'm expecting any time now he'll apologize ….

Have you realized that your computer is getting slower over time, and you may as well go make a pot of coffee while it boots? Everything you load has a cost in boot time and in processing cpu cycles. So start while the computer is new, buy the anti-virus you need first, clean out the crapware, and then be diligent from then on. You'll be glad you did. ◆

(Bits of Blue……. from page 3)
of his doctor to help alleviate pain from a developing wrist problem. Don Patzsch wrote about the recent FACUG meeting in Sarasota, Merle Nicholson wrote about hardware gifts for Christmas. In the next newsletter, Larry Anders wrote about his new HP DeskJet 1000 printer and his carpal tunnel surgery (of interest to people who type at computer keyboards). Don Patzsch reviewed PowerQuest's Drive Image, and I reviewed the Encyclopedia Britannica '97 CD, where I noted how the once mighty Britannica had gone from being able to charge near $2,000 for a set of printed encyclopedias to selling the equivalent CD for around $100. Like many companies, they were too slow in adjusting their business plan to accommodate the computer. Time Warner's RoadRunner was to give the presentation that month.

Starting with 1998, you can view the HTML versions of the newsletter at our web site. In the January issue, Larry had an article about the Grolier Encyclopedia CD. (Boy, did he write a lot of articles back then. That was nice!) I wrote about Street Atlas USA 5 and also Quicken Delux 1998, and Merle Nicholson had a hardware article about a Umax scanner.

(Bits of Blue…….Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
our group.

John announced the Spring Conference of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups in Kissimee, Florida, March 2,3 and 4, 2007. This is always an interesting affair and a chance to see what other groups are doing and what is successful in regard to programs and speakers. Registration is $40 until Feb 10th, then jumps to $55, and $60 at the door. Five meals are included in the registration and the door prizes are worthwhile. Check their website at http://www.facug.org

At 7:20 pm, President Witmer introduced our speaker for the evening, William LaMartin, our award winning webmaster and newsletter editor. His topic was How to Create and Manage a Website.

William started by giving us a little history lesson. He said that the Internet was actually started as a military project and that Tim Berners-Lee created the World Wide Web in Switzerland in 1990. TPCUG has had a website since 1996, and you can view it by going to http://web.archives.org and then entering tpcug.org and clicking on Take Me Back. Be patient because it takes time to pull up your selections, just as it did back then.

William said the original TPCUG site was created using NotePad. He then moved to FrontPage, and he recently redid the site using Microsoft's Expression Web and Visual Studio. Web pages are much more complicated today.

William then demonstrated the features of the recently updated http://www.tpcug.org site, his neighborhood site, http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org, and his personal site, http://www.lamartin.com. All three of these sites have been updated in the past year to give them a more modern look.

One of the more interesting things was the Useful Things link at lamartin.com, where he had some examples of using Visual Studio programming in creating pages that "do something." Here is where you will find the Web Psychiatrist and a cost of living calculator.

The main part of the presentation involved using Expression Web to create an example site about New Orleans. Actually, he had already created the site and went through some explanations of how you use master pages or Dynamic Web Templates to give your site a consistent look. Also, there was mention of how to separate content from presentation by the use of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), which are nothing but text files that tell a browser how to display web pages. He gave some examples of how by changing one CSS file, he could change the appearance of text on one page or throughout the whole site.

He didn't have time to go more deeply into the Visual Studio material or the database connectivity material.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm. No door prizes were raffled at this meeting due to the late hour. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Bits of Blue……..Continued from page 6)

In the minutes that month, it was noted that the new officers were:

- Merle Nicholson, President
- Mike Hodges, Vice President
- Kevan Sheridan, Secretary
- Jenny Lind Olin, Treasurer

In the February 1998 issue, I wrote one of my Comments columns where I basically just go through all of the computer problems I have had during the past month. Some months the list was quite lengthy. Usually, though, I was also able to provide the solutions. I also had a review of FamilyTreeMaker 4.0, Larry Anders provided one of his many Shareware articles, and the Internet Picture of the Month was none other than Monica Lewinsky. Just looking at all the Internet Pictures of the Month over time is interesting to me.

In the March 1998 issue, we noted the closing of our BBS with two articles by Kevan Sheridan, the person who devoted so much time over the years to that endeavor.

So take a tour of the past by looking over all of the old HTML newsletters at our web site. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



March in Tampa
Baseball

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 3 March 2007

Meeting

Blain Barton
from
Microsoft

Virtual PC

Wednesday, March 14, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft will be back with us to explain the concept of a virtual PC. In his previous visit, he gave us a preview of Windows Vista.

We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments: Vista and Other Things

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Vista is now upon us, and, like all PC users, I need to decide if I am going to upgrade to it and, if so, upgrade how many of my computers. Of the three computers that are used regularly in this house, my main desktop machine is the only one I am considering upgrading. It is the newest of the group at just a little over one year old, having been built for me by Merle Nicholson (see the newsletter article http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2006/january2006/new_computer.htm).

As everyone who is thinking of upgrading should do, I have gone to the Microsoft site several times to get the latest Upgrade Advisor for Vista to run on my main computer to see

(Comments……..Continued on page 6)

April Meeting: Bob LaFave—Topic to be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the February Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave called the Windows SIG portion of our meeting to order at 6:35 pm. He suggested we check to see that the latest Windows updates had been received, as there were several this month.

Nancy Cottrell asked whether Microsoft Windows Defender or WebRoot Spy Sweeper was better. Windows Defender is free and is included in the new Windows Vista operating system. Spy Sweeper will cost you for the license each year, but they both do the job of protecting your PC from spyware.

Bob then told us some ways to monitor what's going on with our current programs. He also mentioned Windows One Care and some of the things it does. At present there is a $20 discount offered. He also is impressed with the service packages and prices offered by Internet Junction. NewEgg is still one of Bob's favored software and hardware providers. Check out their prices on whatever your computer needs are.

At 7:05 pm, President John Witmer began the business portion of our meeting by welcoming our attendees and guest speaker. We did not have any guests, but we had a fine turnout. With our new members, we are going to have to turn attention to issuing membership cards. Some computer stores like Comp USA give discounts to our members if you go to the commercial sales counter.

The FACUG Spring Conference will be Mar. 2 through Mar. 4 in Kissimmee, Florida. This is always the big meeting of the year, but the $40 discounted registration is now past. Still, you get several meals with a number of workshops offered along with im-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 7)

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Buying a Second Digital Camera

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

I recently purchased a second digital camera. Digital cameras have become so versatile that it's pretty hard to justify having two, but there are a couple of things I used to convince myself that it was a good idea. First, when I upgraded from my Canon PowerShot G3 about a year ago I gave the G3 to my grandson and instead of going for a Single Lens Reflex (SLR) Camera I purchased a Canon PowerShot Pro1, a high level point and shoot camera, sometimes referred to as a hybrid. It was less expensive than the SLR's, has Canon's best quality lens and many more features that combined to convince me that it had the capabilities that I needed and would in no way interfere with the full expression of my skills (of course, neither did the G3, but that's another matter). For a lot of reasons, the SLR is the way to go in order to get high quality photos, but SLR's are larger, generally more expensive and there are additional lenses to buy and carry around when you are shooting. So I saved quite a few bucks by not buying a camera system that I didn't need and probably couldn't fully make the most of.

The second reason for getting a second camera was born from my reluctance to take my new camera out in the boat on a fishing trip in the Everglades. There was a fairly safe place in the boat and l had taken other cameras when fishing that area and gotten some excellent pictures. While searching for bait we happened on an island with approximately forty white pelicans just standing on the beach in a semicircle. I missed a picture of one of the most beautiful scenes that I have witnessed. I could have been a contender! I reasoned that if I could find a quality camera small enough to easily fit in a pocket so that I could safely take it places like the Everglades then it was unlikely that I would miss the picture of the century if it popped up in front of me. There would also be many other places where I would take a camera in my pocket that I would not be comfortable taking one strapped around my neck, no matter how safe the conditions.

The first thing I did was to consider how to settle on which of the many small cameras available best fit my needs. I wanted a camera capable of taking a picture that could be printed at least 8x10 or larger in size; I don't print many pictures 8x10 or 11x14, but I often crop my pictures and a severe crop can require a photo with a very high resolution to provide a sharp print. I wanted to be able to take group pictures indoors, outdoors and under limited lighting conditions. There are many small cameras that meet these criteria, so I decided that the best way to narrow the field was to decide what was the largest size I would consider portable enough to comfortably carry it practically anywhere.

I had pretty much decided to stay with Canon unless one of the other camera brands had some overwhelming features. I looked but didn't find any. I have been pleased with the Canons that I have owned, and by staying with Canon I greatly reduce



A710 Back, In Hand

the learning curve. I began my search of the 2 smallest versions of Canon—the A series and the SD (Elph) series.

I was quite impressed with the A series. They are easy to hold steady, even with my large arthritic hands. One of the reviewers stated that he was able to easily shoot steady shots with one hand. They are pretty much full-featured cameras with impressive specifications. The A710 IS has 7.1 megapixels of resolution, 6X optical zoom, ISO settings up to 800

(Camera…….Continued on page 4)



SD800 IS Front In Hand



SD800 IS Rear

(Camera…….Continued from page 3)

and Image Stabilization. The reviews that I read were quite impressive. The camera is small but is a little large for a shirt pocket, and, if it is placed in a suit coat or blazer pocket, it will cause a noticeable bulge that might cause the more suspicious to think you are "packing". I decided that, in spite of how impressed I was with the specifications and quality of the camera, it was not quite small enough. The Elph series are small enough for a pocket or purse, even a shirt pocket (approximately 0.6 inches thinner than the A series). The camera is definitely harder for me to hold steady but is manageable. It takes some discipline to prevent placing a finger over the flash or a sensor. I looked at three of the top Canon Elphs—the PowerShot SD700 IS, PowerShot SD800 IS and PowerShot SD900. My decision was made easier when I looked at the features that Canon has included in the SD800 IS to compensate for these problems. I chose the PowerShot SD800 IS based on these features:



SD800 IS Front

- **7.1 Megapixel Resolution:** This provides a level of resolution that I felt would cover my needs with pixels to spare.
- **Wide Angle 3.8x Optical Zoom:** The wide-angle lens (28mm-105mm, equivalent of a 35mm film camera) allows me to get closer to the subject, especially for group photos. This helps compensate for a relatively low-powered flash capability, which is one of the main difficulties with small cameras.
- **Image Stabilizer Technology (IS):** This feature somehow compensates for shake and reduces or eliminates blur when you shoot at slow shutter speeds and at long zoom settings. It's especially important in a small camera, such as the SD800 IS, because it is more difficult to hold steady than most of the larger cameras.
- **High ISO (Equivalent to Film Speed):** The SD800 IS has an ISO rating of up to 1600 and a High ISO Auto setting that also reduces the effects of camera shake and can sharpen subjects in low light situations. As with film, however, the higher the number the grainer the image and, with digital cameras, the more digital "noise". The ability to get acceptable quality at the higher ISO level with the small processors in point and shoot digital cameras is certainly less than with the larger processors found in SLR's.

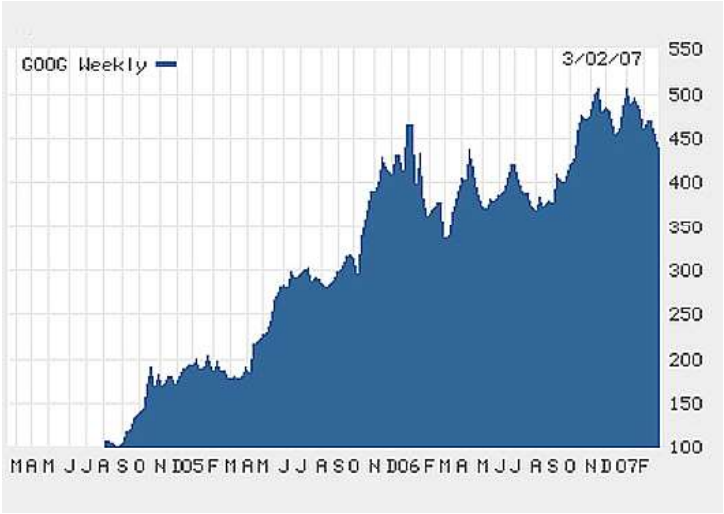
(Camera…….Continued on page 5)

(Camera……..Continued from page 4)

- **High Resolution 2.5 LCD:** The large high-resolution display makes it much easier to frame your picture and judge the quality that you can expect. It is also large enough to see the effects when you adjust the Exposure Compensation. I think this ability to make plus or minus adjustments to the exposure and see the effects of the adjustment on the LCD screen before you snap the picture is one of the greatest features of digital photography. There is also an optical viewfinder, which is often not included in this size camera. I think that an optical viewfinder is essential for bright sunlight and action photos.

Shopping for a digital camera is not easy unless you know exactly what you want and how you will use the camera. The bright side is that there are several sources of information that will give exhaustive detail on almost any camera on the market. If you haven't visited any of the digital camera review sites, it would be worth your time to look at least two. The first is Steves Digicams http://www.steves-digicams.com/, which has extensive technical and shopping information on practically any camera. It is the source of the SD800 IS front and back photos. The other is linked to the TPCUG site and has even more information and some of the neatest photographic tests that show you how the new features work (or don't work). The Link is "Digital Cameras Digital Photography Review News," http://www.dpreview.com/. That site is the source of the two "In Hand" pictures of the A710 IS and the SD800 IS. I think that when you are trying to select a camera, it is a good idea to look at two or more reviews because sometimes opinions (and tests) do differ. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



The Rise of Google

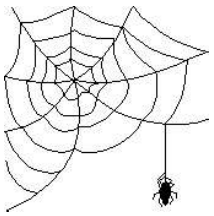
From time-to-time, I like to include a chart of a high-flying computer/Internet stock or, as the case may be, a once high-flying computer/Internet stock.

This month we have Google (symbol goog) for which the chart has been mostly up for the past two-and-a-half years. The chart above is from the March 5, 2007 online Wall Street Journal at http://online.wsj.com/. You have to pay to use this site, but a similar chart can also be had for free at Yahoo Finance, http://finance.yahoo.com/.

You might want to compare the chart above to the one of Amazon.com we featured in the newsletter at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_1999/january1999/picutre_of_the_month.htm in January of 1999. Remember that once high-flying stock?

What goes up usually comes down. So is Google the next Amazon.com? Take a look at another chart we featured http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/april2001/picutre_of_the_month.htm.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Microsoft Virtual PC (our speaker)	http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/virtualpc/default.mspx
World's largest how-to video site	http://www.expertvillage.com/
Wiktionary	http://en.wikipedia.org:80/wiki/Wiktionary
Tampa/Hills. Co. Household Chemical Disposal	http://www.epchc.org/household_chem.htm
Fly a helicopter	http://www.hurtwood.demon.co.uk/Fun/copter.swf

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)
how well its hardware and software will work with Vista. The two major problems to upgrading that are still listed by the Upgrade Advisor are the lack of drivers for my Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner and my Epson Stylus Photo 2200 printer. However, I checked the Epson site and discovered that they now have a new driver for my scanner. Furthermore, an email to them produced a response that a driver for the printer would be available within the month. So the two Epson problems will soon no longer exist.

As to other hardware, everything is basically OK. After the installation, I will need to go to the Realtek site and get an updated sound driver. Also, there are a couple of NVIDIA motherboard drivers that appear to need new versions—but apparently not enough so that the computer will not run after the upgrade.

For software, the few problems indicated were almost always for minor Microsoft products. And most of them carried the message: "This program might have minor compatibility issues after upgrading to Windows Vista," followed by either a link to click for an update or a message to go to the Microsoft site for more information. There were two items that needed to be uninstalled before doing the upgrade: Microsoft FrontPage Server Extensions and Microsoft Backup MyPC. So it is goodbye to the FP Server Extensions. I can still run FrontPage. The FP Server Extensions just can no longer be installed to Microsoft IIS running as a web server on the computer. This is really of no consequence for me, since I have moved away from using FrontPage components that depend on the extensions. Web hosting companies will still support them for those people who have sites developed with FrontPage that need the extensions.

So it looks like Vista will be happy with all my major programs, but will it really? Although I use Visual Studio 2005 now, I still have Visual Studio 2003 on my computer for maintenance of web sites and applications created with it and not yet migrated to VS 2005. The Upgrade Adviser did not flag VS 2003 as a problem, but I have read on the web that there is a problem. Some research is needed here.

Other things Speaking of Visual Studio, here is a list of some of the recent programs I have been working on that we have looked at or will soon look at in the VB SIG.

- SQL Compact Database. Using it with desktop applications as well as mobile device applications. A program to convert an Access database to a SQL Compact database.
- A program to retrieve time from a time server and set your computer's clock more accurately than does Windows.
- A program to wipe (not just delete) files from your computer.
- A program to reveal an Access database password
- A simple FTP program

The SQL Compact database originally meant for only mobile devices (in fact, it used to be called SQL Mobile) has been adapted now by Microsoft to be used as a small footprint database for desktop applications. That should make it easier to distribute desktop database applications. As for its mobile usage, I wrote a program for the Windows Pocket PC mobile device that allows you to view such a database's various tables. So, using the other program I wrote to transform an Access database into a SQL Compact one, I can now take important information I have on my main computer in Access and have it on my mobile device in a secure form since the SQL Compact database can be encrypted and password-protected.

At least I hope it is secure, since I am assuming that Microsoft has improved the security in SQL Compact over what it had in Access. A bit of web searching reveals VB code which is fairly trivial and works to retrieve an Access 97 password. I have also seen code to do the same for Access 2000 and 2003 databases, but, based on my playing around with trying to crack the password on the 2000 and 2003 databases, I found that code did not work. I then managed to crack the database code for a database that I created and gave a password to. I was quite proud of myself until the next day when I created a new database and gave it a password and tried out my program to get the password. It only produced every other character of the password. Not bad, but no cigar, as they say. I think this is probably what happened to the people who proudly posted their code. It was only good for databases created on a certain day.

(Comments…….Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

pressive door prizes. Also, find out what the other groups are doing to draw members and generate interest at their meetings.

Blain Barton with Microsoft will be our speaker next month to tell us about Virtual, so don't miss that meeting. Bob LaFave will entertain us in April.

At 7:15 pm, President Witmer introduced our speaker, Mr. Keith Bunch, owner of North Tampa Photography, Inc. North Tampa Photo has been in business for 36 years. They are at 1020 W Busch Boulevard.

Mr. Bunch told us that digital is taking over from film and that small format film (35mm) cameras are almost a thing of the past. They haven't sold them for two years. In another two years, you may have to mail order film since it is hard for the retailer to make any money on it. To Hell I say!

To add to this, the number of camera manufacturers is declining. Kodak and Sony are the strong runners based on sales, although Kodak doesn't make their own digital cameras for the most part. Minolta has dropped out, and Nikon and Olympus are trying to find their niche in the digital revolution, with Canon a bit better positioned.

Keith said it's his opinion a small-format digital camera of more than 6 mega pixels is more than adequate for the nonprofessional photographer. Secure Digital is the most popular memory card today. The highest ISO is 3200, with 400 being the norm.

He went on to say that DVDs are quickly replacing CDs for external image storage/transfer due to higher capacity and their ability to store moving images. Kodak is offering a printer that uses $10 black ink cartridges and $20 color cartridges. Also, the new ICS (Image Correction Scanners) do a fantastic job copying images. Canon and Sony are my choices.

Keith concluded by saying he recognized faces of customers in the audience. He took questions and invited anyone to their store on W. Busch Blvd. Feel free to come by and they will address your concerns about photography equipment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 6)

But one cannot give up. Especially since I was once turned down for a job at the National Security Agency. And a few more days of work on and off did indeed produce a program that, as far as I and a few testers can tell, reveals an Access 2000 to 2003 database password of up to 14 characters.

I don't plan on making this program available, since it sort of defeats the purpose of such a password. But if you should ever forget your password, ask me, and if I trust you, I will open your database. Additionally, you can pay around $40 on the web to purchase a program that supposedly does the same thing (and if I can figure it out, certainly many other people can too). I assume that in Access 2007 Microsoft will remedy this and my program will not work on 2007 databases.

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 7)

The file-wiping program is designed to write random data over a file to obscure what was there before, since a simple delete only marks the file name as deleted in the disk directory. In fact, the program writes over the file several times because one or two times is not enough to keep really sophisticated snoops from detecting the magnetic residue on the disk. It is not a hard program to write and will save me from having to purchase such. If I needed a more advanced program to write over the "empty" space once occupied by deleted emails, etc., I will go with a commercial product. Like much of what I write, I mainly wrote the program to see if I could.

I have actually written an FTP (File Transfer Protocol) program twice—once with VS 2003 and again using a different approach with VS 2005. Then, at the request of Merle Nicholson, I expanded it a little and made it more user-friendly, since he wanted a simple FTP program that required no installation (if you already have the .Net framework 2.0 installed) that he could give to his clients instead of more complicated many-featured FTP programs requiring an installation.

That's all for this month. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



April in Tampa
Tax Time

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 4 April 2007

Meeting

Bob LaFave

All Things Windows and How to Record & Edit TV Programs

Wednesday, April 11, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Bob LaFave will expand the usual Windows SIG to cover most of the meeting. If we run out of questions and problems, he will show us how to record and edit TV programs on our computers.

Editor's Comments: Linux on a Virtual PC

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Immediately upon arriving home after watching Blain Barton demonstrate Virtual PC 2007 from Microsoft at our March meeting, I went to Microsoft (http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/virtualpc/default.mspx) and did the free 30 MB download and installed it. I had already thought about what operating system I wanted to install as my first VPC. I really didn't care to revisit DOS, Win 3.1, or Win95. What I thought would be interesting was to see if I could load some version of Linux. I suspected that this was not exactly what Microsoft had in mind, and, after struggling with various versions of Linux (Debian, SUSE, and Ubuntu) and the need to occasionally drop to a command prompt to issue commands to make things work properly, I thought perhaps that was part of their plan—To whit: Let people see that installing Linux and using it with various programs is no cakewalk. And, indeed, it is not. But I persevered, and I now have the Ubuntu 6.10 flavor of Linux running as a Virtual PC (VPC). Additionally, I in-

(Comments……..Continued on page 3)

May Meeting: Drew Smith, president of the Florida Genealogy Society

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

The Windows SIG portion of the meeting commenced at 6:35 pm. Bob LaFave turned the meeting over to Kevan Sheridan to present the concept of portable applications. Kevan said a portable application is a computer program that you can carry with you on a portable memory device such as a 2 Gig flash drive, which he then demonstrated. When plugged into any Windows computer, you can access your software and personal data just as you would on your own PC. You can load your passwords, antivirus program, utilities, or the whole Open Office suite with documents and prepared presentations and use them on the host computer. Each of the applications you load on the flash drive has either been modified to run from the flash drive or run in an environment controlled by the flash software that allows it to run from the USB device. And to add to this wonder, when you unplug your flash drive, portable hard drive, or iPod/MP3 player, none of your personal data is left behind.

You can download or purchase flash drives with portable applications programs from a number of sources. Kevan mentioned U3.com and PortableApps.com as two he was familiar with. Then just add your programs and data. Really interesting stuff, Kevan. Thanks!

At 7:05 pm, President John Witmer took control for the business segment of our meeting. John asked that we indicate our presence and verify the information on the sign-in sheets so that our records are accurate. Two or three of our members went to the spring FACUG conference in Kissimmee, and John asked for a report at our next meeting as to what went on at the conference that would be of interest to the Group.

Next month, Bob LaFave will be our presenter, so he asked what topics the Group wants covered. In May we will have Drew Smith, president of the Florida Genealogy Society as our speaker. Some of you missed our genealogy program two years ago, so plan to make this one and see what the local society has to offer.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 6)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

stalled the Apache web server and the MySQL database. Along the way, I removed the version of Open Office that comes with Ubuntu and installed the latest version from Sun along with the latest Java runtime environment.

From my Linux VPC, I can use the Open Office word processor, spreadsheet, database, and presentation programs to do things similar to what I would do with Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint. I can send and receive email using the Evolution email program and browse the WWW with the Firefox browser. I can see and access the shared files on any of my Windows Network computers. However, the reverse is not true. My Linux VPC has an IP address on my LAN (I think you need to be using a router for this) just like my Windows PCs, e.g., 192.168.0.15. If I put web pages into the www folder of my Linux VPC that was created by the installation of Apache, with the Apache web server running I can view them from any of my Windows computers on the LAN by an address like http://192.168.0.15. Furthermore, if I edit the configuration file for my router to point port 80 (used for HTTP) to the IP address above, then anyone in the world can access those web pages on my Linux VPC by going to the IP address of my router (which, of course, I would have to tell them).

The final thing I did was to learn enough php coding to use the php language (server-side HTML embedded scripting language) to be able to insert data from an input form on a web page (at my virtual Apache site) into a database table on the virtual MySQL database server and to be able to also retrieve such data on another web page on my virtual site using php code.

In the space remaining is a very abbreviated sequence of things I did and some problems I encountered. Please excuse the gory details. I have included them as a guide to anyone wanting to do the same thing,

First, I should say, I chose the Ubuntu flavor of Linux since member Tom Cone said that he had installed it on an old PC he had but had done nothing with it yet (a very common Linux situation I have noticed). To get it you can go to http://www.ubuntu.com and click on the download button. Choose the United States as your location, then choose Columbia University as the mirror site. Or just go to http://mirror.cc.columbia.edu/pub/linux/ubuntu/releases/edgy/ubuntu-6.10-desktop-i386.iso. This will get you the iso CD file to use in Virtual PC.

Once you have the approximately 700 MB file, you will need to start Microsoft Virtual PC 2007 that you have previously downloaded and create a new virtual PC. Give it a name and set the operating system to other; next, adjust the RAM to 512 MB, and tell it to use a new virtual hard disk. Finally, look at its settings and set the Undo Disks to Enabled.

Now you have a new empty Linux VPC. Select it and click the start button in the VPC Console.

Note that in all of this you can recapture the mouse cursor from the VPC by pressing the right alt key. Once the process starts and you get a "DOS styled" window, choose “capture iso image” from the CD menu item. Then click on the action menu item and select ctrl-alt-delete. This reboots the VPC, and the Ubuntu installaton will appear. Press F6, then use the backspace key to delete everything from the end of the line through the word splash and press enter. The install will start and the output will be very limited, so be patient.

You will eventually see a screen that has gotten wide and begins to fill with colored squiggly lines. Let this continue for a minute or so until things settle down. Then press ctrl-alt-F1, followed by enter. If you are lucky, another DOS type window will occur with a prompt. If so, type or paste in the following text and press enter: sudo sed -e 's/DefaultDepth.*24/DefaultDepth 16/g' -i /etc/X11/xorg.conf (you are changing Ubuntu’s color depth setting from 24 bit color to 16—with which Virtual PC will be happy). Note this problem would not occur on a non-virtual installation. Now enter ctrl-alt-F7 and press enter. This should give a slightly fuzzy screen. Then press ctrl-Alt-backspace and press enter. In a moment things should clear up. Once you are able to see the Ubuntu screen, just let the Ubuntu user log in itself. Once you see the desktop, double click on the Install icon to start the actual installation to the virtual hard drive. Answer questions about language, location, time, keyboard, etc. Once the install starts, accept the defaults for hard drive and partitioning. (I found the workaround at https://help.ubuntu.com/community/HowToConfigureUbuntuForMicrosoftVirtualPC2004.)

The installation of the operating system took a little less than 20 minutes on my computer. You are asked to reboot the virtual computer. The reboot from the installation may hang. Use the right alt key to get your mouse back and then, in the VPC window, click on Action menu item and choose close. When finished, all of this will close, and you will be left with the Virtual PC Consul. You are now ready to use your newly-created virtual Ubuntu PC.

(Comments……..Continued on page 6)

First-Time Vista

Windows Vista Business Upgrade

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

On previous OS upgrades you could provide proof of a previous OS by inserting a CD. With Vista, this is no longer true. I installed Vista on an older machine with very limited Vista graphics capability.

I'd just acquired a used AMD XP processor, and, with an older motherboard and various parts lying around, I set up a "test bench" computer to run Windows XP for a software job for a client. The client needs networking software I was reluctant to risk on my main computer. So it was taking up space on my bench, and I realized that with another old hard drive from a junk drawer, I could try out my new Vista with no risk.



I do have to say that I have no intention to upgrade my current primary machine to Vista – or any of the computers in my household. Instead, when I do migrate to Vista, it will be using a new computer I've set up from scratch, and on which, over perhaps a couple of weeks, installed all the software I need.

So I have this Windows XP computer sitting there running a legally-activated XP Professional OS. I disconnected the hard drive, connected a new junk hard drive – it probably has remnants of an XP OS from my spouse's computer when I replaced it a month ago. I booted from the Vista DVD and went through some of the process – entered the CD key, only to be told that I must run the DVD from a system that is being replaced and please exit. I can upgrade only from a working system.

Ok, I guess I knew that. Remember on previous OS upgrades, you booted from the CD and eventually you would be asked to insert the media from the previous system you were replacing.

With Vista, this has changed. You must run the DVD from a working system. If you have a broken computer with no CD to repair the OS and decide that, as long as you're at it, you just migrate to Vista, chances are you're out of luck. You may have to buy the full version. Many millions of computers have no operating system CD. Some computers had the only backup of the OS on a partition on the hard drive. That's a disaster waiting to happen. Bad hard drive = no operating system. Others have "restore" CD's. So if you have one of these, that's good. If it works.

Ultimately, I reformatted the drive and then backed up my good working XP system to it using my trusty old Powerquest Drive Image Disk-to-Disk copy, then booted to the hard drive. I inserted the Vista DVD and proceeded with the install.

At the onset, you're provided with two choices: One is to replace the XP system leaving the documents and programs intact, and Two is to put a scratch-new OS on the drive after moving all files to a "Windows.old" folder.

Notice there was no option to reformat or partition the drive. This is an upgrade, and I guess if it has to behave as an upgrade, it offered only those two choices. I don't know what choices you'd have if your drive was formatted FAT32. If you have an XP system with a FAT32 drive, it would take some cautious investigation and some reliable backing up.

In my own case, the system I am replacing had no applications worth preserving. It is a very clean basic XP system, so I picked the second option and put a scratch-new OS on the drive after moving all files to a "Windows.old" folder.

The install options were setting time zone and language options and the option to validate the OS on the Internet. There was one thing to pick to allow it to get its own OS updates from the Internet, which I did allow.

After the setup and learning how to set the screen back-

(Vista……Continued on page 5)

(Vista…….Continued from page 4)

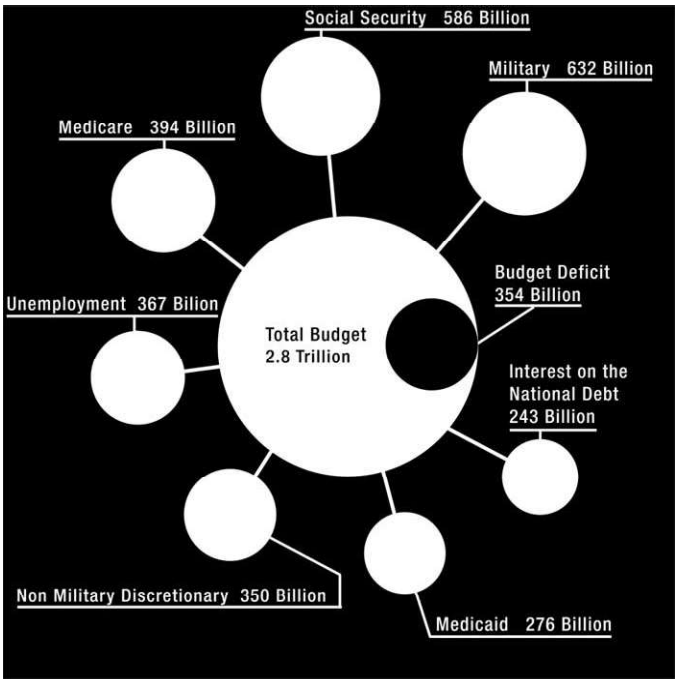
ground to get rid of all the pretty things, I went to the hardware manager and found no issues. It had picked generic video and monitor drivers. After poking around, I found the "Windows Experience Index" with a rating of 1.0 out of 5. It picked the lowest number of all the categories – two were "graphics" and "gaming graphics," both with 1.0. This reflects the age of the system and the fact that it has on-the-motherboard video. Now, this is an AMD XP 2200+, and although it isn't in production, it still – in my opinion – makes a more than adequate computer, and the experience index of 3.1 for processing power bears this out. The Graphics Index of 1.0 is defined as suitability to run "Aero" – the Vista transparent overlapping Windows. I could not find the Windows Aero interface in the list of desktop interfaces, so I assume that I am blocked from using it because of the low rating.

Even with generic video and monitor drivers, I was able to set the screen to the maximum of 1280x1024, 32-bit color depth. I'm not 100% happy with the response of Windows when opening and moving. Perhaps some fine tuning would produce better results, like not showing a window's contents while moving. I have looked for a Vista–capable video card online to help improve the response and can find some in the $68-$75 range.

I did find that the install did some unexpected things, like retaining the data folders in the root of the drive. I'd expected everything to be in the Windows.old directory. There are but three folders in Windows.old: Program Files, Windows and Documents and Settings.

The Control Panel is very much larger, with more of all the various settings concentrated here, which is a very good thing in my opinion. Aside from that – and the time I've spent figuring out where everything is – it's been a positive experience. I'll keep it and use it to test software developed on my primary XP machine and perhaps start installing software to see what works and what doesn't. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



The 2007 Federal Budget

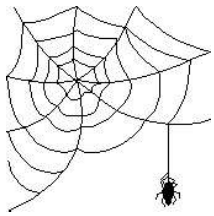
Since April is tax month and I need an Internet picture of the month, here is graphical representation of where those taxes go. As you can see, you are not paying enough since there is a projected $354 billion budget deficit.

The URL of the image is http://www.kaushik.net/avinash/2006/09/the-awesome-power-of-visualization-2-death-and-taxes-2007.htmlprint/, which I really think they could have made shorter.

On that page there is a link to the "Death and Taxes" home page, which you may also find instructive. The link is http://thebudgetgraph.com/index.html.

Happy Tax Month.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Microsoft Virtual PC (repeat)	http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/virtualpc/default.mspx
Ubuntu Linux	http://www.ubuntu.com/
The Art of Bonsai Project	http://www.artofbonsai.org/
Canon Camera Virtual Lens Plant	http://www.canon.com/camera-museum/tech/l_plant/index2.html
Ethanol from Corn: Unsustainable?	http://pangea.stanford.edu/ESYS/Energy%20seminars/patzek_ethanol.pdf

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

Jim Purcell asked for a show of hands of those interested in attending monthly meetings of the Digital Imaging SIG. Seven or eight expressed an interest so Jim will try to arrange a meeting place and meeting schedule.

At 7:10 pm, John introduced our speaker of the evening, Blain Barton with Microsoft. The Group expressed their appreciation to Blain for the great pizza. Blain said that it was his pleasure and tonight he was going to tell us about Microsoft Virtual PC 2007.

Blain said that Microsoft has recently released Virtual PC 2007 and that free downloads are available. The host PC can be any x86-based or x64-based computer running at 400 MHz or faster, although a 1 GHz processor with L2 cache is recommended. Virtual PC supports the use of AMD, Athlon/ Duron, Intel Celeron, Pentium II, III and 4, Core Duo and Core2 Duo processors. You must have a CD ROM or DVD drive, a super VGA (800x600) or higher resolution monitor, keyboard and Microsoft mouse or compatible pointing device.

The host operating system can be Windows Vista Business, Enterprise or Ultimate, Windows XP Professional or XP Tablet PC Edition. Host memory and disk space needed range between 64 MB and 500 MB to 512 MB and 15 GB respectively, depending on the guest operating system selected.

Blain then demonstrated setting up several virtual machines that ran concurrently on the same physical computer. This is particularly useful for running test applications under differing operating systems. Available RAM is the limiting factor for the number of virtual machines you can run simultaneously.

During the demonstration a number of interesting questions were answered. As you might expect, Blain kept us entertained until 9:00 pm. No one dozed off even with tummies full of pizza. Several nice door prizes supplied by Microsoft were then raffled off. The prizes and lucky winners were:

Windows Vista Ultimate	Ron Weinberger
Microsoft Light Pen	Roy DeArmond
X-Box Headset	Jim Purcell
X-Box Headset	John Witmer

Seventy-four dollars were collected in raffle ticket sales. Thank you, Blain and Microsoft!

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 3)

After all that, I was up and running Linux as a VPC. I could browse the WWW and see my Windows Network computers. What I couldn't do was add any new applications. A search of Google for the error message told me to get a command prompt (using the Terminal program) and execute the command "sudo dpkg --configure -a". This apparently reset something, and I was able to use the Synaptic Package Manager, the advanced form of Add/Remove. I then was advised that five packages were corrupted. So I downloaded and installed new versions of them. Then I tried a test of adding some little educational piece of software, and that worked.

Now that I had the Add/Remove working, when I closed down the session (saving the changes) and started up again, I received a notice of all the many updates available--253 MB worth. So I let Ubuntu update itself.

I played with Open Office for a bit and found one problem in that I couldn't create a form using the wizard in its database program (I find the database program to be the least fleshed out when compared to Microsoft Office's programs). So I used the Synaptic Package Manager to remove the main packages of Open Office and then went to the Sun Microsystems site and downloaded the latest version of Open Office and installed it, which was an adventure in itself since the packages were meant for the RedHat flavor of Linux. That meant I had to use the Synaptic Package Manager to download a program called Alien that would convert these packages into the Debian flavor of Linux packages (which Unbuntu belongs to) so as to be able to install them. Alien runs from the command prompt, so you see this is a bit more complicated than installing things in Windows.

To test everything, I exported some name and email data from Access as a DBF file (I could not import the Access file directly into Open Office), imported the DBF file into the Open Office database, then did an email merge from the Open Office word processor to send emails to the people in the file—and it worked. I also imported Microsoft Office Word documents, Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations into the corresponding Open Office programs.

My next step was to install the Apache web server software into my Ubuntu Linux setup. I then copied a folder from my main Windows computer containing a small web site and put it in the appropriate place in my Linux VPC for Apache and, voila, I had a website up and running that could be seen by anyone to whom I gave the IP address of my router once I allowed port 80 to map to the Linux VPC.

There was only one thing left that I wished to immediately

(Comments…….Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2006 INCOME			
	MEMBERSHIPS	$ 870.00	
	DOOR PRIZES	$ 161.00	
	AMAZON & MISC	$ 104.93	
	TOTAL INCOME:		**$ 1,135.93**
2006 EXPENSES			
	NEWSLETTER POSTAGE	$ 156.00	
	NEWSLETTER PAPER	$ 31.65	
	FACUG CONF REGISTRATIONS	$ 200.00	
	FACUG DUES	$ 25.00	
	APCUG DUES	$ 50.00	
	FLORIDA INCORPORATION FEE	$ 61.25	
	WEB SITE HOSTING FEE	$ 99.50	
	PO BOX RENTAL	$ 50.00	
	WEBSITE DOMAIN REG-3 YRS	$ 74.97	
	MISCELLANEOUS	$ 27.42	
	TOTAL EXPENSES:		**$ 775.79**
NET INCOME FOR 2006			**$ 360.14**
BALANCE IN BANK - BEGINNING OF 2006			$ 4,796.23
BALANCE IN BANK - END OF 2006			**$ 5,156.37**

RECONCILIATION OF BANK STATEMENT TO BOOK BALANCE:

Balance per BANK at 12-31-06		$ 5,217.67
Deduct outstanding checks written as of 12/31/06		
	CK #780 APCUG	$ 50.00
	CK #781 MIKE HODGES POSTAGE	$ 11.30
Balance per BOOKS at 12-31-06 is this amount:		**$ 5,156.37**

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(Comments……..Continued from page 6)

try—install the MySQL database server on my Linux VPC. Again, I used the Synaptic Package Manager in Ubuntu to do this. I also installed a visual interface for managing MySQL: MySQL Administrator. I could find no way to create a database using this interface, so after consulting Google, I used the proper command at the command line prompt to create a database. I also created a user who could access the database. Once created, I could then use the nice graphical interface to create tables for this database and add columns to the tables.

Having a MySQL database meant that I could, by using the php programming language, communicate with it from web pages. To test this, I created an input form on a web page where one enters their first name, last name and email address. I gave Merle Nicholson the URL to this page, and he went and tested it for me. It worked, and now the main table of the membership database in MySQL has an entry for a David Slartybartfase, apparently one of Merle's aliases.

This has all been very interesting—and it costs nothing in dollars, only in time. But for me and my house, Windows is still the operating system of choice. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



May in Tampa
Graduation

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 5 May 2007

Meeting

Drew Smith

Florida Genealogy Society

Wednesday, May 9, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Drew Smith, president of the Florida Genealogy Society, will tell us how to track our ancestors and preserve everything on the computer. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Thanks to our contributors, I have little need to write anything this month. And since the past month has been a month without much computer-wise to write about for me, that is good.

I did very little more on the Linux Virtual PC setup I wrote about in last month's newsletter. I did print up a number of 11" x 17" black and white prints from copies of early 1920s photos of my hometown for a friend who is moving his real estate business into a freshly-renovated early 1900s building in that town. This involved using Photoshop to remove blemishes and adjust brightness and contrast on most of the images, which I had copied with a camera years ago, or, in more recent years, scanned as I discovered the old photos. I have

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

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Map	8

June Meeting: Linux on a Virtual PC by William LaMartin

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

President John Witmer called us to order at 6:30 pm and turned the meeting over to Bob LaFave to begin the Windows SIG portion. Bob was also to be our presenter to tell us about Acronis True Image and Beyond TV.

Bob asked for items the members were having problems with. Doug Mullis began by telling us he has been refilling black printer cartridges from refill kits sold by Office Depot. Office Depot has stopped selling the refill kits and now offers a refill service at about 30% less than new but considerably more than the kits sold for. Another cost-conscious PC user told Doug to try Walgreen's Drug Store or Wal-Mart for ink refill kits. Low and behold, Doug got the black refill kit at Walgreen's for under $10 and it had twice the amount of ink as he had been getting. So far he is pleased with the change. Color refill kits are offered for under $15. Bob says Staples issues coupons worth $3 each for used ink cartridges.

One member was having problems with his Firefox browser. While many like the increased security provided by Firefox, the down side, according to Bob, is that you cannot get Windows updates.

Another member just bought a new Acer desktop computer that is about the size of an encyclopedia. He peeked inside to see how they reduced the size. It's like the inside of a laptop. This is probably the coming thing and good if available space is a problem.

Someone asked if Windows XP Media Center was based on the XP Home Edition. It is based on XP Professional, but you cannot join a server-based do-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

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First-Time Vista — Part II
Wood PC
Acronis True Image

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

First Time Vista – Part II
I've only just begun to configure my copy of Vista, and I'm still struggling with configuring it. It's not at all useful yet because of the drivers. So I'm still working on it.

The performance with the video remains less of a problem – See the article last month, April 2007 – and I've decided that I must buy a new video card to completely solve it. The video driver that is installed now for the on-board system is just too generic, making Windows slow to appear and move. The problem is finding a video card that is 1) cheap enough, 2) will work with Vista and 3) will run on my motherboard. It's a process of finding the video card that satisfies 1) and 3) and then going to the supporting website to find if the manufacturer supplies the Vista driver and then finding reviews to see if it's proven to be satisfactory to other users.

To be fair to Vista, though, there is a list of performance options having to do with how Vista treats window behaviors. All are turned on if you tune for appearance, and all are off if you tune for performance. I've turned off nearly all; the most notable for me is "Show Contents of windows while moving". I've kept the "Use Windows Themes" because that makes Vista look like Vista. With it off, it looks like Windows 2000. Turning those off did make a noticeable difference.

The second hardware problem popped up because I'd decided to install a wireless card in the PC. This will help in finding a location in my office for my newest Wood PC, where the Vista hard drive is located. I've run out of wired connections to my router. I have a couple of "new" wireless/G PCI cards in my inventory. I say "new" because they've never been installed, and I'd estimate they're less than a year old. I decided to configure the card for Vista first (before my Win XP) for the obvious reason. After a thorough Internet search, there's no driver for the Netgear WG311 v2 wireless card to be found, and I'm guessing there won't ever be. There's a WG311 v3 that's being sold now that does have Vista support, but it doesn't work on the v2. There are all kinds of user complaints on the Internet and on the Netgear comment board. So much for that. So I must either buy a new router or a new switch or a new card. The new card makes more sense because it's the cheapest at about $20.

After working with Vista for awhile and discovering one program that wouldn't work with the User Access Control (UAC) turned on, I turned it off. You just configure it off in the Control Panel, User Accounts. The UAC is a pop-up (that pops up ALL the time) when anything is being run or changed. I quickly discovered the disadvantage of having it off. The Security Alert now pops up, warning you that the UAC is off. It's almost as annoying as the UAC. The Security Center (Alert) can be switched off easily, which I'm hesitant to do. I'm sure there's an ideal solution. Someplace.

Wood PC
I've designed and built a computer built of wood to use as a test bench to make it easy to change out components. The main feature is that nothing except the motherboard is actually fastened down. Everything else just sits in place. Some things that vibrate are sitting on a rubber pad, like the power supply and CDROM. There are six slots for 3-1/2 inch devices like hard drives. I attached three fans to it, one each to cool the hard drive bays, and one for the center. I have two active hard drives right now, one Vista and the other XP Pro. I use these to test software. Each drive has a partition where a clean image of the boot drive is backed up. I used Acronis True Image 9.0 to back them up.

I'm currently working on a new version of Wood PC in an attempt to make it easier to build. The parts themselves just took an afternoon to cut, but the trim work and finishing were time-consuming. I sketched out several ideas until I'd developed the simplest scheme, and now that it's built and working I can see that I can simplify it even more. It's narrow enough to sit on a 10" bookshelf, but it works well as a

(Vista……..Continued on page 4)

(Vista……..Continued from page 3)

bench computer for testing components and software.



Wood PC Front View



Wood PC Back View

Acronis True Image 9.0

This backup software has been written about several times. We have a nearly annual visit from Gene Barlow, who also sells it on his website. Bob LaFave emailed me a few weeks ago that he'd found version 9.0 at http://www.nothingbutsoftware.com for only $26.95 plus shipping, so I bought one for myself, used it and immediately ordered one to be shipped to my son in Colorado. I used it again to clone a damaged drive to a new one with success. This old drive had a bad Master Boot Record (MBR) which I fixed with XP Recovery Console, but then it failed a diagnostic. It would boot into XP, and I successfully backed up all the pictures and documents to an external drive, so it was worth saving.

I used this software - booting from the CD - to copy the old drive to a new one. The copy process stopped three times, saying that it had encountered a bad unreadable sector. But there was an option to ignore the problem and continue. It did and successfully created a new, usable drive. Presumably there are now a couple of bad files on the disk, but that's usually insignificant. I did find that it was missing one essential file, but I identified that and replaced it easily.

Errors like this are fatal on other drive copy programs, but Acronis saved our bacon. It also says that it will clone to a drive that is smaller, if possible. I haven't tried this, but if it works it solves several problems I've had in the past.

Acronis True Image v9 $26.95 at http://www.nothingbutsoftware.com.
Acronis True Image v10 Home User Group Price $29 download at http://www.usergroupstore.com. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

main.

John Witmer recently installed PC-cillin on his computer. He asked why it tries to update frequently. Bob said the update might not have installed successfully but look at the program User Options to see what the update interval is. Maybe this needs adjusting.

Another member desired to install a wireless router and wanted to know where he could find the best deal. Bob suggested he check Newegg.com. One can be gotten for around $40.

Ed White has gotten Verizon DSL and wants to disable the wireless feature for security purposes. Bob said he needs to find the wireless address and turn it off. Hard wire connections should still work.

At 7:00 pm, Bob closed the Windows SIG format and launched into his prepared program. He began with a backup program he finds better and cheaper than Norton's (Symantec) Ghost. The utility program is Acronis' True Image (remember presenter Gene Barlow) for backing up an entire system or just selected files. While Version 10 is available, Bob got Version 9 as part of a package with a $70 rebate. NothingButSoftware.com is offering True Image Version 9 for $26.95. This program is really fast and is completely automatic. Bob demonstrated a system incremental backup and highlighted features offered by the program.

Next, Bob showed us Beyond TV, which, with a TV tuner card, allows you to use your PC to receive and record TV programs as long as you have ample RAM

(Minutes…….Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



FSU Stadium Stained Glass Window

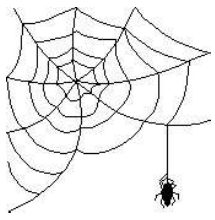
From the site http://sports.webshots.com, we have a photo of the 30 ft. by 20 ft stained glass windows depicting coach Bobby Bowden looking over the field at FSU. I took the liberty of cropping the photo to just display the window. The precise URL is http://sports.webshots.com/photo/2332296220027668403kUZidx.

I was unable to find a photo of the window at night when it is most impressive.

According to http://www.fsu.com/pages/2004/11/22/bowden_window.html, the window "created by FSU artist Robert Bischoff, his wife, JoAnn, and 12 FSU students in the Master Craftsman Program, … is among the five largest stained glass windows in America. It is composed of 112 individual panels and 8,500 pieces of glass."

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Google Trends	http://www.google.com/trends
SuTree — Free Video Lessons	http://www.sutree.com/
Custom film holders for film scanners	http://www.betterscanning.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

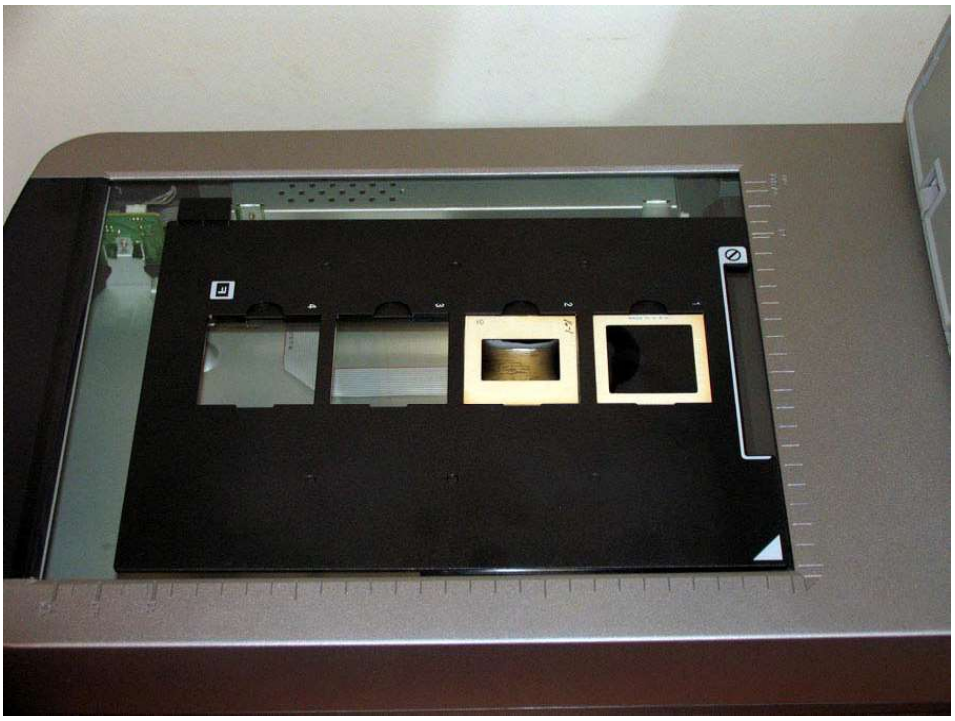
SilverFast Scanning Software

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
edward_j_p@msn.com

My neighbor asked if I could scan some "old slides" so that she could make prints for framing. Since I have a film scanner and a flatbed scanner capable of scanning prints, negatives and positive slides, I told her that it would be no problem. I was wrong; there was a problem. The slides were not 35mm slides but Kodak Ektachrome slides taken on 120 film, which produced a 40x40mm image instead of the 24x36mm image produced by 135 (35mm) film. I knew that I could not use my Minolta film scanner because it can only handle the standard images from 35mm positive and negative film and Advanced Photo System (APS) positive and negative film with an adapter. I thought that there would still be no problem using my "Epson Perfection 3200 Photo" flatbed scanner since it handled images from film much larger than 35mm. I was even more certain that there was no problem when I compared her slides to 35mm slides. The "mounted" sizes of the 40x40mm slide and a 35mm slide were identical (2x2 inches). As you can see in the photo, both slides fit in the Epson holder for 35mm slides, so the problem was solved? Wrong again. When I scanned the film, the scanner recognized only 24x36mm of the 40x40mm image. The software had a setup display that allowed adjustment of both input and output dimensions of the image. However, when I attempted to change the input dimensions they returned to their original settings, reflecting the 2x3 aspect ration of the 35mm slide.

I called William La Martin, who also owns an Epson 3200 Photo scanner. As usual, he had a solution. He said that the SilverFast software included with the scanner (which I had ignored), was much more versatile than the Epson software. I loaded the software and finally the problem was solved; I scanned the slides and printed the pictures.

I was obviously pleased with the results so I decided to further research the product because I plan to scan a large number of both slides and prints in the next few months. I'm writing this article because perhaps some of you are not completely happy with the software that was supplied with your scanner. LaserSoft Imaging's headquarters is located in Kiel, Germany; they also have an office in Sarasota, FL and will answer sales and pre-sales questions at (941) 921-4815. I have talked to them twice at this number and found them to be very helpful. They have an exceptionally informative web site at: http://www.silverfast.com/ . There is a variety of software from which to choose and you can find detailed descriptions of each at the site. There are also movies and testimonials on the site. The software is priced from $49.00 to $332.00. The product is available to support a long list of flatbed and film scanners. You can easily determine at the web site whether or not your scanner is supported. SilverFast can be launched as a stand-alone, an Adobe Photoshop (5.5 or later) or PhotoShop Elements plug-in, or as a Twain driver. Once you've decided the version in which you are interested, you can either purchase a download or a CD from the web site or by phone. If you want a CD and purchase by phone before 3:00 pm, they say that they can have it in the mail by that evening. If you still have questions or want to see the software in action, you can download a fully operating demo but it will place a watermark on your final scan. ◆



Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 5)

and hard disk space. We went to the SnapStream Beyond TV web site. Bob showed us product bundles that are available to get us operational. His recommended bundle was $69.95. This does not include the TV tuner card, which runs about $120 for a good one.

Beyond TV has an Internet guide listing US and Canadian programming. You tell them what kind of broadcast source you have, and they provide a personalized guide. Also, if you turn on the Smart Skip Feature, Beyond TV automatically inserts markers at major scene changes, AND you can skip commercial breaks. Bob prefers to edit out commercials before recording to DVD. Bob then demonstrated features of the program that impressed him.

Bob went on to tell us about DVD Encryptor and DVD Shrink for copying DVDs. Just remember, movies are copyright protected, and, although programs for breaking the encryption can be purchased, there is a continual effort by the recording studios to render these programs ineffective.

President Witmer took control of the meeting at 8:25 pm for the business segment. He thanked Bob for an excellent meeting and announced that our planned speaker for May would be Drew Smith from the University of South Florida, President of the Florida Genealogy Society. His topic will, of course, be genealogy. Also, North Tampa Photography is putting on a Tamron workshop on April 20 & 21, which should be interesting. Cost per person is $119 but you get to use equipment (lenses and tripods) being featured, with discount coupons to be issued. Check the Yahoo Group announcement for particulars.

Visitors tonight included Nancy and Bruce Norton and James Kalshoven. James was William LaMartin's guest.

Members were encouraged to join the Yahoo Group to see announcements such as the Tamron workshop. Also, Bob LaFave's haircut was noted, as he looked great! Bob donated his hair to Locks of Love, a worthy charity.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

been very pleased with how my Epson Stylus Photo 2200 produces quite good results at this large size from images that were originally smaller than 8 x 10 and in most cases smaller than 5 x 7. Either Photoshop or the printer or both are filling in extra pixels very nicely.

I have moved away from using Microsoft FrontPage in the past few months to using Microsoft Expression Web. It has forced me to learn about Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) so as to better format the look of pages. I touched on this in the presentation I gave to our group a few months back.

On a recent trip to Tallahassee, I had a bit of trouble sending one of the mass emails I am often requested to send to all those in my neighborhood organization. Of the 400 households, 267 have provided us with an email address. I send the messages as individual messages using a mail-merge from a Microsoft Word

(Continued on page 8)

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(Comments…….Continued from page 7)

document based on information in an Access database table. I always have my laptop with me and used the hotel's wireless network to send the 267 messages from Microsoft Outlook (you cannot use Outlook Express with a mail merge). When I later went to check my email messages, I had 75 messages kicked back to me, and all except five were from a Road Runner (RR) address. RR considered the hotel's Internet provider to be a source of spam. So I needed a way to send out the message to only RR recipients. The solution was to use my dial-up Netcom (EarthLink) account over a phone line for a new mail merge based on an Access query of only the 70 or so RR addresses. ◆



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Merle Nicholson, merle@merlenicholson.com

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Bits of Blue



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 6 June 2007

Meeting

Linux on a Virtual PC

William LaMartin

Wednesday, June 13, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will demonstrate running Ubuntu Linux in Microsoft Virtual PC, along with Open Office, the MySQL database and the Apache web server. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Merle Nicholson has rescued me from having to write much this month. But I do have a bit to say and, I believe, just enough room to write it.

Rescued laptop I use my laptop only for travel and presentations, much preferring to work with a desktop computer whenever possible. The laptop is a three year old Gateway with a 1.7 GHz Centrino processor, one GB of RAM and a 120 GB hard drive. Three months back it had only 512 MB of RAM and a 60 GB hard drive.

I increased the RAM because, as you might recall from my programming presentation for the group in January, when I

(Comments……..Continued on page 5)

July Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

The meeting started at 6:30 pm, with Bob LaFave conducting the Windows SIG portion. Bob asked, "What do you do when you don't want to keep loading a program you have on CD?" You download Microsoft's free Virtual CD-ROM Control Panel for Windows XP. You can then use a program like Nero to make an image of the program onto your hard drive. This allows you to copy the entire contents of a CD-ROM to your hard disk and run the programs or access the files without the need for the original CD. One thing though, it only works on ISO images. Bob demonstrated how this can be accomplished.

Bob went on to tell us about TechRepublic (http://techrepublic.com/) as a source of information and eEye Digital Security. He recommends AVG as the best anti virus protection; however, BitDefender for $29 per year is also good.

At 7:05pm, President John Witmer began the business segment of our meeting, telling us that next month William LaMartin will be our speaker to tell us of his success installing Linux on a virtual PC. We are looking for members to make presentations during the summer months.

Jim Purcell is trying to reestablish meetings of the Digital Imaging SIG. He asked for a show of hands of those who are interested. Several indicated they would attend. Where and when to meet is another issue for the group. Possibly the SIG could meet before or after the regular monthly meeting at Pepin. Jim indicated that he would conduct an email survey of the members as to what they want to do.

At this point, John turned attention to our speaker for the evening, Mr. Andrew "Drew" Smith, President of the Florida Genealogical Society. Mr. Smith is also the Information Literacy Librarian, Tampa Library at the University of South Florida, and was at our meeting to tell us about genealogical research online.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 4)

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First-Time Vista — Part III

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Vista failed a major hardware replacement, and XP adapted pretty well.

To help you follow this, I'll summarize from the last articles. I have what I call my "Wood PC" that has an open rack to place as many as six hard drives to experiment with and test software on. So far, I have one system each for Windows XP Professional, Windows Vista Business Upgrade, Windows Small Business Server 2003 and Ubuntu. I've now made a major hardware replacement, and Vista didn't survive.

The machine was a very nice AMD 2200+ processor and 1GB of memory with an on-board S3 graphics adapter. The processor is no longer made, and the motherboard was a bit difficult to get. Steve Singer at RDI came through for me on that one, so the motherboard is pretty new. All the systems but Vista worked very well. To be fair, except for a Vista 1.0 Experience Rating on graphics, Vista ran satisfactorily. But not having anything but a generic video driver, all the Vista graphic effects were missing. And it was apparent that the video was slowing down my interaction with the computer. My most apparent solution was to buy a new video card.

But then I had a chance to combine some parts I have and sell them, so I put the AMD 2200+, motherboard and memory in a nice old case I have and out the door it went, and with the proceeds I ordered the newest ASUS nVidia motherboard, memory and an inexpensive AMD AM2 X2 3800+ processor. To say that it's inexpensive doesn't mean that it's not powerful; it has two cores running at 2.0GHz, more than most new notebooks.

VISTA: When you make a hardware change as drastic as this, changing a motherboard with a different chipset, and especially a new chipset manufacturer, you expect an existing operating system to fail, and both XP and Vista did fail to boot. Drawing on my XP experience, though, I expected to repair the Vista OS, maybe with some difficulties. I wasn't prepared for what I did find.

In cases like this, the standard procedure is to first try Safe Mode. No chance there, but not surprising. So it's boot time from the Vista Business Upgrade OS CD. Like XP, you can try installing new, and then when it discovers that there's already an OS on the hard drive, it gives you a chance to repair the existing OS. I selected that, and sat down to watch. I should have timed it but didn't. It ran a long time, and it finally told me that the OS couldn't be repaired. Now that's a surprise. On XP, you could always repair. That repair sometimes replaced so many OS files that the system was put back to Service Pack 1, but it would be successful, and once completed you can expect that all your applications will operate as before, and all your data would be intact. Vista failed, and it knew it failed enough to tell me so. So, not being too trustful, I booted from the hard drive again, and it rebooted itself, and rebooted itself.

Here's what's surprising. The repair facility should have the capability to repair an OS all the way back to the point that it would have been, as if it were a first time installation. Does this mean that it'll fail if I do an original install? The motherboard is advertised as "Vista Premium Ready" and the graphics card – a Gigabyte X1650 (it is an ATI Radeon X1650 licensee) – disclaims the Vista-specific drivers, but that's common to most (maybe all) Vista video drivers.

So the obvious next step is to do an original install over the existing OS. I have not too much to lose: some customization, a Windows Office 2007 installation, anti-virus, spyware and DVD-writing software. I'll have to do those all over unless I abandon the idea of having Vista, and, after all, this is why I sold the old one and bought the parts in the first place—to have Vista. What a mess.

So I went ahead to do an install, and it took me just a couple of minutes to discover that Vista Upgrade will not install over a broken Vista OS. The Upgrade runs from a previous version of Windows. It does not recognize that there's a broken copy of Vista already on the hard drive. It refuses to install. It still angers me right now as I'm writing this. Man, what a mess.

What I need now is a running XP system to run my Vista Upgrade from, and, well, I have to do that anyway because on the same machine I have XP Pro, Windows Small Business Server and Ubuntu. So it's time to fix XP Pro. This runs smoothly but takes a very long time. Again, I was forced to do a system repair. In this case, it replaced all my system files back to the state of the XP Pro CD. On startup it asked to validate the operating system license. I accom-

(Vista…….Continued on page 4)

(Vista……..Continued from page 3)
plished that over the phone to Microsoft without talking to a person. Thanks, MS; this is a first for me; I used the touch key pad on the phone to key in the 6,379 numbers you wanted. I'm curious; why doesn't one number, say, less than 50 million, work as well?

After successfully starting the system, it's at a level of Service Pack 1. I installed Service Pack 2, then I installed 75 updates from the Microsoft Update site. Then I have motherboard chipset, sound, LAN, network and graphics cards updates to do. This is an all-day job in itself. In this case all my other programs worked fine: Office 2007, Nero, Windows Defender. The only non-survivor was AVG Free Anti-Virus. It couldn't find its license number, and I didn't write it down.

Now I'm really able to start – whoops, first I have to clone the drive to the Vista drive. To allay any sharp-eyed lawyers out there, I have XP licenses out the gazoo, don't worry. I'm paranoidly cautious about licensing. Now I can boot into XP and run the Vista DVD. To try to save some work here, maybe I'll actually do a Vista upgrade from XP. This is something I have not done before. This will preserve some of the programs already installed.

The first choices are to either upgrade the XP system or to install a new system. The first choice attempts to preserve any programs and data from the XP system, and the second option puts the old Windows files in a new directory but keeps other root directories in the root. I picked the first one, although it took a long time (and it does warn you that it takes a long time) – hours – I don't know - I finally dozed off for a while and then went to bed. After completing the next day – it was waiting for an answer as to the type of network I have – it was ready, and I'd say working well except for just a few things: It didn't have any animated windows as I expected, it has a Vista Experience rating of 1.0, it blue-screens for a second while shutting down, AVG Anti-Virus couldn't find its license again, and it warned me that two programs, PowerToys Tweak UI and Windows Messenger, did not work on Vista.

I installed all the updates—five, I think, then I downloaded and installed new ATI video drivers. This fixed the blue screen on shutdown, but the Vista Experience rating screen warned me that I should rescan for a new rating and it's now 4.5 out of 5, and, when that happened, the Vista graphics started working on their own. Hooray. This was the reason for buying new hardware and spending three long days of working on software.

I installed more new drivers from ASUS, then I uninstalled some junk that shouldn't be there, like the original S3 video software and PowerToys, and replaced AVG and Windows Defender with a trial version of MS OneCare. Office 2007 survived the transition, as did some custom software that I wrote and some that William LaMartin wrote. I have a ways to go to see if Nero still works and to try to see if I'll ever get used to the new Windows Explorer. We'll see on that one.

Now then what else? Did you guess? I have to quickly make a full system backup. This is to restore to where I am now in case of a full failure. Because remember – **The Vista Upgrade DVD WILL NOT INSTALL over a broken Vista Operating System**. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)
Drew started by saying that the PC has transformed how we do genealogy. With a public library card number, or through a home subscription with data providers, you can have access to many genealogy research sites on the Internet. You can access all types of records, create a website, use bulletin boards to inquire about ancestors, exchange information through chat rooms, or even create your family tree or write a book online.

Mr. Smith distributed a handout showing many online research sites. They included Family Tree Maker, Legacy Family Tree, Roots Magic (which he recommended) and The Master Genealogist. You can reach many of these research sites at your public library without charge to see what is available and then subscribe for direct access from home for more convenient research.

With a current library card and using a library computer, you can also access Heritage Quest, America's Genealogical Bank, many newspapers and Ancestry Library Edition. You may also want to check out the Social Security Death Index, World Connect or Find a Grave. If your ancestors immigrated before 1924, the Ellis Island records are available online at a charge. You can also access naturalization papers. Drew also told us about a weekly pod cast that he and George G. Morgan produce. Check it out at http://www.genealogyguys.com.

(Minutes…….Continued on page 5)

(Minutes…….Continued from page 4)

There are also genealogical mailing lists and message board sites that you can register on and hope for "hits" from other researchers. Ask some leading questions and then be ready to exchange information.

Drew said that while online research capabilities have hurt genealogical societies, there are still reasons to join one. They have interesting speakers to tell of their experiences and to give helpful advice, and there is the camaraderie. You will hear interesting and helpful things at the meetings to help you in your research.

Mr. Smith answered a number of questions the attendees had on genealogical research. We thank you, Drew, for an interesting evening.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:30 pm. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

had Visual Studio, Photoshop, PowerPoint and possibly some other programs going at the same time, things would occasionally get quite slow. The extra memory solved that problem, and it cost around $100 to replace two 256 MB memory modules with two 512 MB memory modules.

As to the hard drive replacement, that was an absolute necessity since I started occasionally getting read errors for the old hard drive when I would boot the computer. When that would occur, you couldn't get the computer to work for several hours. After the several hours, it would boot and run fine.

When I consulted Merle on the problem, he was sur-

(Comments…….Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



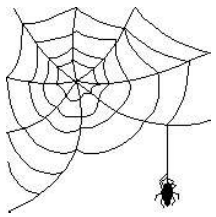
Joint Appearance Steve Jobs and Bill Gates

From the Macworld site. The page http://www.macworld.com/news/2007/05/30/jobsgates/index.php describes the session moderated by Walt Mossberg and sponsored by the Wall Street Journal at the D: All Things Digital conference, which featured Steve and Bill taking a walk down memory lane.

When you become as rich as Steve is, you, too, can wear dirty sneakers, scruffy jeans and less than a recent shave to such an event.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Genealogy Guys Podcast	http://genealogyguys.com/
WorldCat— Library Search	http://www.worldcat.org/
FHP Traffic incidents by region	http://www.fhp.state.fl.us/traffic/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

More Crapware Part II

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

An old friend came to me with a non-functioning Dell desktop that's not far out of warranty. It wouldn't boot at all, and I was able to fix it for her.

Somehow, some of the file system became corrupted. It just wouldn't boot. It did have a white-on-black text message that a system file was missing that, frankly, I didn't believe. But first I needed her operating system CD. Remember dude, it's a Dell, dude. She had no CD. She was aware that she should have one, but she was also very aware that it didn't come with the machine. She thought she could get it from the Dell website. Nope.

First thing was to run a diagnostic on the hard drive. These come free from the drive manufacturer's websites and run from a floppy. The result was that there was no physical damage to the hard drive. Interestingly, the machine had a floppy drive (remember this for later) but was built without keyboard and mouse ports. The machine came with USB keyboard and mouse instead, using two of the four available USB ports. Why would Dell make a machine with a floppy? Now it's time to boot and repair the file system.

I was hopeful that one of my own personal copies of XP Professional OS CD's would boot the machine. All I want to do is repair the existing OS using the repair facility that is built into the CD. So I booted on one of mine after correcting the boot order in the BIOS. So after a few minutes, the OS installation repair said that there was no operating system to be found, and, indeed, there was no hard drive. Well, Duh, Merle. The machine has a Serial ATA hard drive (the little red cable instead of the wide, grey cable), and like some – not all – computers with SATA, it needs a RAID driver despite the fact that it does not use RAID. RAID is a method of combining multiple hard drives to operate as one drive for either speed or data redundancy. AND Windows XP requires that the RAID driver be loaded from a floppy drive mounted as the A: drive with the SATA/RAID files on it.

Ok, here we are with no OS CD and obviously no floppy, but at least there's a drive. So investigations on Dell's website say that I can make a recovery CD by running a program located in Start, Dell Utilities. Ok, but I can't do that until I get the computer to run. No mention of a floppy.

At least the website is organized so that I can select the model number and find all the downloadable drivers, and, yes, there is a RAID driver zip file. So I downloaded that and made a floppy, and, yes, I repaired the OS using my CD and the floppy. Near the beginning of the boot on the CD, you have a chance to press F6 to load any SCSI drivers, and, despite the fact that this is not SCSI, do it anyway. It continues, and later on it asks for the floppy containing the drivers.

The OS repair took a very quick look at the files and obviously decided not to replace all the files, and in just a short minute required a reboot of the machine, and yes, we have a repaired system.

First thing in, I did the (allowed one-time) creation of the recovery CD. Then I ran CHKDSK that cleaned up some file errors, and we're good to go, except that this machine is the slowest powerful machine I've seen. It's a 3 GHz Pentium D, and a MB of memory. It should be very fast, but it takes forever to boot and it's pretty much sluggish all the time. So a quick look at the software, and, no big surprise, it's a Dell. It's loaded with crapware. And to top that off, it's also a Verizon/Yahoo machine. That more than doubles the crapware.

Ok – Dell crapware first. There are several programs running – starting at bootup – that Dell put there to "enhance the Dell experience" that do nothing except to make it easier for the unwitting user to contact Dell, or get some online help from Dell. Then there are two AOL programs running. The owner doesn't use AOL and doesn't want to (she has Yahoo!). Dell has sold out some of your computer. Then Verizon did the same thing by selling their customers' time and part of the computer to Yahoo!. Verizon gives the customer a CD with their DSL modem to install. And the customer really thinks that they must have a "provider", MSN, AOL or Yahoo, for the DSL to work, and it doesn't cost any more.

It cost my customer two hours of work to clean this computer up. Get this – she actually thought she had to sign on to Yahoo just to get her mail. She wasn't using Yahoo mail, she was using Verizon mail! She was thoroughly discouraged in using her computer, and I fully understand what she was going through. If you're going to buy a Dell (HP, Compaq, Gateway, Sony) meant for the consumer market, add a hundred fifty bucks or so to the price; you're going to spend it getting the crapware cleaned off.

A message to new Verizon users: When you get the modem, throw the CD away. You don't need it, and worse, it'll con-

(Crapware……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Crapware…….Continued from page 6)
taminate the computer. Is there a market for a CD crusher?

So here's Merle's **Crapware Rant #1**. It's first about MSN, Google, Yahoo! and AOL. Remember, now, even AOL is no longer a service provider. AOL cannot run a DSL cable to your house. AOL is now providing free "connections" to broadband customers.

These companies are not even Search engines or content providers. What are they? **They're Advertising Providers**. That's how they make their money. They're in business to direct advertising to you. That's what they get paid for doing. Why do you think they're aggressively pushing toolbars to you? To easily push targeted advertising directly to your computer.

Ok, maybe they have a right to exist. It certainly isn't illegal, and if the computer manufacturers and broadband providers didn't sell you out to the crapware providers, there wouldn't be a problem in the first place. They actually are paid by the crapware providers. Why are they selling out? To be as competitive as they can. The crapware provider is offsetting some of their cost.

Crapware Rant #2 This is about RealPlayer. Not that they don't have a right to exist, but RealPlayer has evolved into the same as other crapware; they're in business to push advertising to your computer. They – and QuickTime – put themselves on your task tray when installed. RealPlayer has changed now so that a "message center" pops up much like an instant messenger with "messages" that are just advertising. Now I don't know about you, but what I want to do is play video presentations from a website. My spouse loves Jack Horkheimer's astronomy website. He used to have a 10-minute TV program on PBS. He presents current astronomy events in an informative and entertaining manner. But they've changed the website so that it plays only through RealPlayer. Even if you use msconfig and block the startup item, all you have to do is use the website again, and it re-installs as a startup item without your even knowing about it. The same happens with QuickTime (qttask.exe). Shame – and double shame on the websites that use them. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 5)
prised to hear that I had no backup for the laptop's drive. I never considered needing one since there was no data or program on the laptop that was not also on my desktop. But then I thought about the problem of having to replace the hard drive and then having to reinstall all the programs on it, and I had an epiphany. I went to Gene Barlow's site, http://ugr.com/, and purchased for $29 (the user group price) Acronis True Image 10.0 Home to use to create an image of my laptop's hard drive to an external USB drive. Bob LaFave has mentioned this program in the Windows SIG, and Merle has written about it in the newsletter.

I installed the program on the laptop and had it create an image of the hard drive on the external USB drive. The process took about 50 minutes for the 53 GB of data on my 60 GB drive. The resulting compressed image was 37 GB. During the process, Acronis twice stopped to warn of sector read errors that had to be ignored.

At Newegg, I found a 120 GB Toshiba laptop drive

(Continued on page 8)

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(Comments……..Continued from page 7)

for around $70, ordered it and had it the next day (for an extra $8). I don't have room here for much detail, but suffice to say that all that was needed was a small Philips head screwdriver and some care to get the drive installed.

I then booted the laptop from the bootable CD that I had Acronis make earlier—and found that it couldn't see my external USB drive. No problem, though. Just install Acronis on the desktop computer, connect the new laptop drive to the desktop via a special adapter, connect the external USB drive to the desktop and have Acronis transfer the image from the USB drive to the laptop drive. That took a bit less than 50 minutes. Finally, I put the new drive back in the laptop and booted the laptop. And the laptop has been working fine and much faster (thanks to the new, larger hard drive) than before.

To avoid having a similar problem with the desktop drive, I later made an image of its drive to a different USB external drive. ◆



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Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 7 July 2007

Meeting

Examples in Digital Imaging

Jim Purcell

Wednesday, July 11, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Jim Purcell is to present various aspects of digital imaging—for example, scanning negatives and using Photoshop Elements to modify images. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG led by Bob LaFave.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Again, there is not much room for comments since our contributors have come through again, and I thank them for that.

As a follow up to my presentation on Linux on a Virtual PC last month, I would like to add that I began wondering, what next? And the answer was: "Can I find a program that runs in Linux and allows me to write programs that run in Linux under a graphical environment?" Somewhat to my surprise, the answer was, "Yes."

The program is named monodevelop and can be found at http://www.monodevelop.com. What is nice is that it allows me to write the programs using the C# programming language

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August Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By John Witmer, President, substituting for
Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave opened the meeting with the usual Windows SIG. Bob spoke to the importance of backing up your system regularly, including backing up your data and Outlook Express files. To that end, he presented information on a program he uses that is in the $20 price range for file backup and creating a startup disc. This program is called "DriveClone," from a company named Farstone (http://www.farstone.com). You can find details of the program on the company's website.

As to backing up your Outlook Express files, Bob told us about a free program he uses for this purpose. This program is "Outlook Express Freebie Backup", and it can be downloaded from http://www.oehelp.com/oebackup. Upon checking this website, I noticed a message that said this particular program was undergoing revisions and was not available; however, the site has another program that accomplishes the same purpose, and that is "Outlook Express Quick Backup", also free to download and use.

After discussing several additional items with the audience, Bob turned the meeting over to the group's president, John Witmer. John had Jim Purcell give the group a preview of what he was planning on presenting at the July meeting, which all pertained to digital-imaging-related items that would also serve as a basis for future programs at the Digital Imaging SIG that Jim wants to reinstate. John also received checks from four members who were renewing memberships with the group.

John then turned the meeting over to William LaMartin for his presentation on Ubuntu Linux on a Virtual PC. In order to do this presentation, William first created an environment to run the program, using Microsoft Virtual PC 2007. William demonstrated the steps required to install and utilize this virtual pc application, after which he discussed how he came to the decision of selecting the Ubuntu 6.06.1 version of Linux.

He chose Ubuntu over several Linux flavors because, when he tried the installation of the different Linux distributions on

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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Are CD's and DVD's A Reliable Place To Store Your Data?

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

In January of 2006, I attended a digital photography seminar conducted by staff members of the National Geographic Traveler magazine. They had recently published the first issue of their magazine in which every picture was taken with a digital camera. They instructed all of their photographers submitting pictures to use only digital cameras even if it meant buying a camera. They said that even a "point and shoot" was acceptable if they didn't already own a digital camera. It was interesting to hear of all of the procedural changes that were forced upon them as a result of going completely digital. One of the problems was settling on the most practical way to store and transmit all of their pictures. In addition to backing up on portable hard drives, they used a large number of CD's. They mentioned that people were becoming more concerned about the shelf life of CD's and indicated that MAM-A Inc. produced high quality CD's. I didn't pursue it at the time because I had my desktop with a large hard drive and my laptop had duplicates of my pictures and important files on its hard drive. Then a couple of things happened that brought data storage and in particular the storage of digital photos to the forefront. First, William LaMartin almost lost all of the data on his laptop (twice). He had his data and photo files backed-up on other devices, but the point is no matter how much you know about computers or how good your equipment is, you can very quickly find yourself staring at a blank screen. Next, two of my daughters and my granddaughter are taking a Photoshop course in St. Petersburg. Their instructor, who is a professional photographer, told them that he tried to retrieve some photos that he had recorded on a CD only five years earlier and he was unable to recover a single photo. He emphasized the importance of getting quality CD's and also recommended MAM-A Inc.

After hearing MAM-A Inc. mentioned again, I decided to check their web site. Their organization is described there as follows:

"MAM-A Inc. was founded in March 1996 for the production and sales of recordable compact discs. Its 50,000 sq. ft. plant is located in Colorado Springs, Colorado where the CD-R media is manufactured in a state-of-the-art clean room environment. The MAM GOLD discs use Mitsui Chemical's patented dye and have a characteristic gold color. This combination of dye and pure gold provide superior longevity, high-speed writing and quality recording up to 52X. MAM-A has earned a reputation in North America for producing the highest quality (professional grade) recordable media available. MAM manufactures CD-R media in 650 MB and 700 MB capacities, with reflective surfaces of silver or gold. DVD-R media is manufactured in 4.7 GB capacities. MAM operates two manufacturing facilities worldwide for the production of CD-R and DVD-R media. Facilities are located in Colorado, USA, and in Alsace France".

All of the media that we are discussing in this article is recordable media (CD-R's and DVD-R's). When we get to the discussion of DVD's, we'll briefly discuss the two DVD formats (DVD-R and DVD+R), but the quality is the same for both. MAM-A does not make rewritable CD's or DVD's (CD-RW, DVD-RW or DVD+RW).

Gold CD-R's: There is an Archive and a Standard Gold CD-R. They both come from the same production line. The product is closely monitored during production and those of the highest quality are pulled and identified as having archival quality. Both the Archival and Standard version are tested to have an estimated storage life in excess of 300 years and are available in 74 and 80 minutes.

MAM guarantees compatibility. "MAM Gold CD-R's guarantee a perfect recording compatibility up to 52X, allowing an additional time saving for all users, while preserving an absolute reliability in storage and retrieval of data. MAM CD-R's media are compatible with all recorders and readers."

You can review specifications, as well as labeling and packaging alternatives, for the Gold CD-R at: http://www.mam-a.com/products/gold/Gold%20CD-R%2010_10_03.pdf.

Silver CD-R's: The Silver CD-R's have basically the same qualities as the Gold CD-R's except for the storage life. The Silver CD-R's estimated storage life is in excess of 100 years, and they are available in 74- and 80-minute format.

You can review specifications, as well as labeling and packaging alternatives, for the Silver CD-R at: http://www.mam-a.com/products/silver/Silver%20CDR%2010_10_03.pdf.

A list of the Gold and Silver CD-R's made by MAM-A can be found at: http://www.mam-a.com/products/cd_product_list.htm.

Gold and Silver DVD-R's: The recordable DVD Discs are recordable General Purpose DVD-R media. As mentioned earlier, none of MAM-A's products are "rewritable". They can be used in any format (DV-Video, DVD-Audio etc). Although MAM-A recommends the MAM Gold DVD-R for archiving, both the Gold and Silver DVD-R's have an expected storage life of more than 100 years. When you write your data to a

(Data……..Continued on page 4)

(Data……..Continued from page 3)
MAM-A DVD-R disc, it adapts the same playback characteristics as a DVD-ROM disc. This makes it compatible with the world-wide base of both DVD video players and DVD-ROM drives that support DVD-R media.

The DVD's are available in both formats, the dash R (DVD-R) and the plus R(DVD+R).

MAM-A recommends that CD-R media be handled and stored as follows:

Precautions Before Recording

- Handle the disc only by the outer edge to prevent fingerprints and smears on the surface.
- Never touch the recording surface (unlabeled side) or set it down on a hard surface.
- Store the disc in its protective case. Proper storage helps protect the data from damage due to scratches on the disc surface.
- If dirty, clean the surface with canned air. Cleaning by wiping the surface is not recommended

General Handling Precautions After Writing

- Never use a ballpoint pen or any other sharp object to label your discs. Using a felt tip pen is the easiest and fastest way to label a CD-R. Note, however, a few caution items. Some chemical properties of the ink can actually permeate the disc surface and cause damage to either the reflective layer or dye layer below the surface. Never use a solvent-based permanent marking pen on the top surface in the data area**.** The absolute safest area to label your CD-R is in the clear center near the center hole (any marker can be used here). A water-based, permanent marker is recommended when labeling the top surface.
- Do not attempt to erase anything that has been written on the surface of the disc.
- If you will be using any adhesive labels or stickers, some precautions should be taken:
- Labels must be perfectly adhered to the disc surface. Any bubbling or creasing can imbalance the disc, which can cause tracking errors or noisy spin-ups. Never attempt to remove an adhered label. This can damage the protective layer or the reflective layer, causing permanent damage to the disc. In addition, as with writing pens, insure that your labels' adhesive does not contain any chemical solvents that can become absorbed into the top layer. The adhesive on some labels has been known to damage discs. Labels can also become loose with age. Adhesive labels are not recommended for discs being used for archival purposes. (See list below)
- If you need to remove dirt or fingerprints from the read side of the disc, please follow these guidelines:

Use a CD-cleaner cloth if available and wipe the disc from the inside to the outside, perpendicular to the tracks. (Lens cleaning cloths work well, or a clean cotton cloth. The cloth should be a "non-wood product," i.e., not a facial tissue or paper towel). Do not wipe in a circular motion around the disc, as this may scratch the disc ALONG the track if dirt is on the cloth. (Scratches ACROSS the disc are easier to correct than ones that follow the track) Commercially available CD cleaning liquid, ethyl or isopropyl alcohol, clear or soapy water can also be used. Do not use gasoline, kerosene, benzene, acetone, lacquer thinner, anti-static agents, or LP record cleaners, as they may damage the recording surface.

Quick List for Archiving:

- Use gold CD-R or DVD-R media for the best longevity
- Never touch the recording side
- Do not use adhesive labels
- Store vertically in a protective case
- Protective cases should be rigid and contact the disc at the center hub only
- Store at room temperature at moderate humidity (below 50%)
- For labeling, use a water-based, permanent, felt-tipped marker for writing on the top (write area) of the disc, or mark in clear center hub with any marker, or, ideally, write only on protective case
- Do not subject CDs to rapid changes in temperature or humidity
- Protect from light
- Never flex a recordable disc
- Store one copy offsite if possible.

Firmware: They also point out that if the firmware for your CD or DVD drive is not up to date, it might not record at the top-rated speed and may not produce acceptable recording quality even on the best media. All CD and DVD writers have firmware that contains basic operating instructions that allow them to write to the wide range of disc types in the market place. Drive manufacturers test recordable CD's and DVD's from all major disc manufacturers. These samples are used to find a "writing strategy" that is best suited for each media type. MAM-A has provided the following "pdf" document on their site that will provide even more information and has links to all of the major manufacturers of drives so you can just click to find the most recent firmware upgrades: http://www.mam-a.com/upgrade/default.htm.

(Data……..Continued on page 5)

(Data…….Continued from page 4)

Where to Buy: The product is available at Amazon.com. Just go to our web site (TPCUG.com) and click on the Amazon.com link on the home page, which, at no cost to you, will give our user group a commission. When you reach Amazon just search Electronics for "MAM-A". Depending on the quantity and label or no label, the prices I saw were in the range of $0.47 for a silver CD to $1.99 for a gold DVD. A solvent free pen is $1.90. MAM-A has a web store that didn't have quite the selection that I found at Amazon.com. I'm sure that if you contacted them for a particular item that they would either get it for you or tell you where you can find it. This store has closeout items at excellent prices so it would be worth your time to check there before you buy. Their site is: http://www.mam-a-store.com/.

Summary: I confined my discussion of CD's and DVD's to one company. There are a couple reasons for not covering several manufacturers. One, MAM-A is the name that kept coming up when people talked about CD or DVD quality. Once I visited their web site and encountered the wealth of information available on the site and answers to my questions provided by their Sales & Marketing and International Inquiries representatives, I decided to limit my presentation to the MAM-A product. I hope that this and the links from their site provide information that will help you select the media to fit your needs.

I've include an unusual number of links because I felt that further information would be of interest to some but not all. I am also adding more links at the end of the article because they are quite informative but are not essential to the purpose of the article. As you know, we have the luxury of having all of our newsletter articles available on our web site in "html" and "pdf" format shortly after publication. They can be downloaded, so that you can click on the links to view them.

Beware of Fading Dye WSJ: http://www.mam-a.com/technology/Tech%20News/WSJ_Portals2.pdf

(Data…….Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



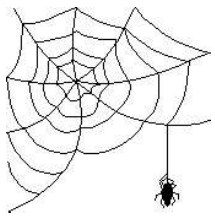
iPhone Cutout

From almost anywhere on the Internet, you can find an image of the new iPhone. An unbelievable amount of free advertising was given Apple for the introduction of their entry into the cell phone market. Price $499 or $599.

If you don't want to spend that much and already have a phone, then why not go to the link below and download the full-size version of the image above so that you can make your own iPhone.

http://www.t2business.co.uk/images/iphone.jpg

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
iPhone cutout	http://www.t2business.co.uk/images/iphone.jpg
Tampa Neighborhoods	http://www.tampagov.net/appl_neighborhoods/
Environmental Working Group	http://ewg.org/
Microsoft Live Mobile Search	http://mobile.search.live.com/about/download/default.aspx
France for Visitors	http://france-for-visitors.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

FACUG Spring Conference at Kissimmee

By Bruce Register, Tampa PC Users Group
bregist3@sw.rr.com

Editor's Note: *Bruce submitted this several months back, and I misplaced it and forgot about it. So the delayed publication date is my fault, and the information is just as good now as it would have been earlier—just not as timely.*

Gene and Linda Barlow (http://www.usergroupstore.com) have been regulars at FACUG for several years. They have been visiting the Florida PC user groups, making presentations and giving door prizes. This year Gene says that he will cut down on his traveling. He will "focus on tutorials instead." Visit his website for tutorials. He will provide groups with review software.

He publishes a technical newsletter that is free to members and friends. Contact Gene/Linda to sign up for it. Go to their website shown above. I made notes to the best of my ability to understand and follow his presentation.

Gene said, "Now is the time to go Vista." He said, I think I understood it correctly, for us to go the MS Product website and view Vista, 300 pages. That must be some review or discussion. I have not been there yet. He says Vista will require "more memory and contains upgraded graphics."

He recommended purchasing the Vista Home Premium edition, $159. Business users may want Windows Vista Business. Current Windows users could upgrade to Windows Vista Ultimate, $259 upgrade price.

He said to avoid replacing XP; buy a new computer and install Vista to avoid problems. He suggested other ways. The new computer route seemed to be his recommendation. He suggested one could make a clean install. In other words, start new with Vista to avoid upgrade over XP problems. Or, partition your drive for both systems.

Gene mentioned software that will transfer applications from one computer to your new PC, named PCMove, which is $49 in store. He also mentioned partitioning your computer with a an extra D drive for your data. Keep your applications on the C drive. One example he gave was C:\XP, C:\Vista and D:\Data. That way you get a clean install. You can expand or reduce space in the partitions. Acronis Disk Director Suite assists with partitions. Vista can do partitions, but it cannot expand or reduce without wiping out all applications and data. Gene has many software programs. User group members get discounts.

Smart Computing with Jen Clausen and Marcy (Gunn) Kremer ("Yep! She got married.") provided the buffet and a great program. The program was filled with good information and a lot of fun games. Prizes were awarded. All agreed that there was no better money spent than on a subscription to Smart Computing. The support, research and all the other features and help are fantastic. You can even get Smart Computing Magazine and articles from their website. They can and will assist you with tech support via an 800 number. This is a subscriber-only feature. Much information, research and support is free to non-subscribers. Going to buy something new, go to Smart Computing product research. Among many, many services that they provide is your own research library maintained on their system available to you 24/7, as are their other services. Quick Studies is another service. Phone contact is 800-368-8304. A user group member who subscribes should subscribe through their system as they have it set for PCUG members so that your group can get credits. Credits are used for freebies to your group. Go to http://www.smartcomputing.com.

As usual, **Corel** presented an excellent program and a buffet meal. They presented Paint Shop Pro XI. They also presented several other software programs. The new Word Perfect program is available. I decided to replace my Paint Shop Pro 8 with this newer fantastic application.

The presentation was made using their "Learning Center." That is also available to you. Go to http://www.corel.com and click on the Community link. Then select Tutorials.

Scott Moore of **Ai Squared** presented Zoom Text 9.0 by Scott Moore. Zoom Text is a most unusual magnifier. It is billed as the world's best magnification and reading software for the vision impaired. It does so much in so many ways that it is far ahead of other magnifier programs. You will be amazed at the features. It was designed for handicapped, but its usage goes far beyond. Close work can be viewed, manipulated and presented in "Wow!" ways. It has a hefty price tag. One version is $395, another is $595. Upgrades are much cheaper. Ai Squared, http://www.aisquared.com, (800)859-0270, will provide you with a trial version which is a really good presentation of the program. Scott was asked if his company will provide a group with a copy of the program for review and group presentation and the reviewer can keep it. He said that he would take the idea back to his company. Give the trial presentation to your group. I think that I remember reading on my copy of the software they gave everyone that it was a free 60-day trial.

Carl Lofstrom presented **"Trouble Shooting"** using PowerPoint. He kept everyone attentive to hear and see all that he presented. One cure for troubles is, "Every 30 minutes, get up from the computer and walk around." I seem to remember him saying that his presentation is available at http://polk-pcug.org. Always carry USB memory sticks to the meetings. The pre-

(FACUG……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(FACUG…….Continued from page 6)
senter will frequently download the presentation for you on site. Carl mentioned so many websites for free help that I could not write them fast enough. He will answer your emails. A program chairperson could do no better than to get Carl to come over and do a demo. He is most courteous, is very qualified in all aspects and wants to be helpful. One can find him in the list of PC user groups on the FACUG website. I lost a UPS from plain overuse and old age. I followed his advice when I replaced it and "did not skimp on money when buying an uninterruptible backup power supply." Low voltage and power surges can be very damaging if not protected.

Microsoft made presentations of several applications. Mindshare was the main focus. Microsoft donated the meal, as did the other presenters. We are lucky and grateful.

New officers were elected. Meritorious Awards were given. Door prizes have become leaner and leaner each year for the last several years. Vendors have had to cut back on budgets, staff, travel and prizes. We appreciated everything donated. Exhibitors were very few. Attendance was way down this year. Numbers were smaller but QUALITY was still very good. Everyone would be rewarded by attending the Fall Conference for one day in October 2007 and attending the Spring Conference the first or second weekend of March 2008. Much, much more was presented. You cannot attend every session as three different ones are going on at the same time. You will just pick one of interest. The breakout session are all day. Breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets are in the main auditorium of the Kissimmee Convention Center. Everyone attends those. ◆

Editor's Note #2: *Bruce, a longtime member of the TPCUG and still a member has moved to Dothan, Alabama and is in the process of starting a computer users group there.*

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)
VPC 2007, Ubuntu worked by far the best with no modifications. For example, connecting to the Windows network and the Internet worked from the beginning. He said that there were two newer versions of Ubuntu, 6.10 and 7.04, but both had problems with the installation (which, however, could be overcome with a bit of command prompt work). Since version 6.06.1 gave you the same basic functionality, why bother with the extra effort to install the others.

He showed how to begin the installation of Ubuntu on a VPC and, since that would have taken some time, switched to a VPC on which he had already installed Ubuntu. From there he demonstrated working within Linux using the Open Office Suite of programs: word processor, spreadsheet, presentation program and database. We saw how to install new programs by installing a game and trying it out. A brief look at the Apache web server and the MySQL database ended the presentation.

At the conclusion of William's presentation, John Witmer reminded the group of Jim Purcell's digital presentation at the July meeting and thanked everyone for coming. We had approximately 25 attendees at the meeting, including four visitors. The meeting concluded at 8:40 pm. ◆

(Data…….Continued from page 5)
Not all CD's Are Created Equal (Contains Discussion of Significance of Colors and Black CD's): http://www.mam-a.com/technology/Tech%20News/Not%20all%20CDRs%20are%20created%20equal.pdf

CD and DVD Care and Handling Guide developed by NIST, Dept of Commerce: http://www.itl.nist.gov/iad/894.05/docs/CDandDVDCareandHandlingGuide.pdf

Dye Details: http://www.mam-a.com/technology/cd/organic_dyes.html ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

with which I have some familiarity. At this point I have only tried to do simple things, like display message boxes, display images, change the image based on a file that is selected from a directory, do simple calculations and connect to a MySQL database. As time permits, I hope to do more.

Programming in monodevelop is somewhat similar to programming for Windows in Visual Studio using C#—except that Visual Studio is light years more advanced than is mondevelop.

I hope my presentation might have tempted a few of you to try out Linux in the VPC environment. If you do, you will probably find what I found: You can do most everything many people want and need to do from within the Linux environment. But for me, there are many things I cannot do in Linux that are important to me, so it will remain just a novelty to investigate while I continue with Windows for my main endeavors. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



August in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 8 August 2007

Meeting

A visit from CompUSA

Mytu Tran

Wednesday, August 8, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Mytu Tran (pronounced Metoo), the Business Services Sales Representative with CompUSA on Hillsborough Ave., will tell us about the services they provide to the home PC user and their current line of PC related products. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG led by Bob LaFave.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

What to write about? I have had the new Adobe Photoshop CS3 for several months. I have had the new Microsoft Office 2007 Ultimate for less than a month. Photoshop CS3 was a two version upgrade from my previous Photoshop CS. Office 2007 is the next upgrade from my previous Office 2003. However, the Ultimate version has several more programs than did Office 2003 Professional: OneNote, InfoPath and Groove. I won't be using Groove since is for collaborative work among a group of people, but InfoPath and OneNote might be of some interest. Then there are the usual suspects of Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Publisher and Access, all of which I use. The problem of doing a re-

(Comments……Continued on page 8)

September Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the July Meeting

By John Witmer, President, substituting for Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

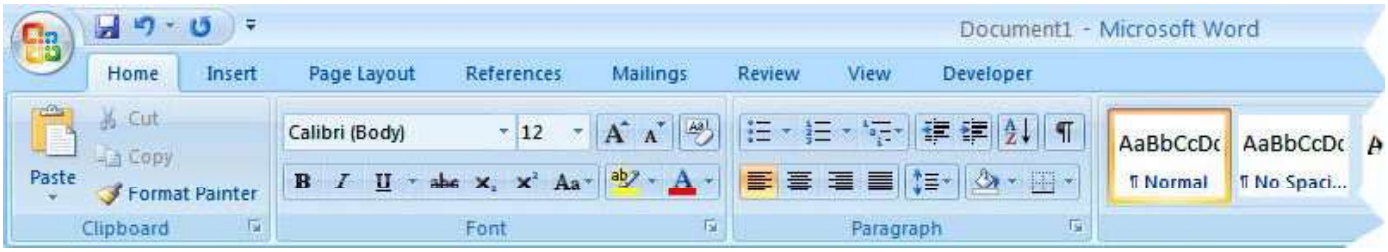
The meeting began with the Windows SIG led by Bob LaFave. Bob stressed the importance of periodically doing a Disk Cleanup. This utility can be found by clicking on Start, | select All Programs | Accessories | System Tools. Both Disk Cleanup and Disk Defragmenter can be found there. On the More Options tab of Disk Cleanup, there are several additional options that can be selected to free up additional disk space. Disk Defragmenter is another utility found there that should be periodically used to help speed up your system accessing the files and data stored on your hard drive.

Bob next took us on a trip down memory lane, bringing up Windows 3.1 in a Virtual PC environment, giving us a flashback to how the old days looked and functioned, including use of the old File Manager, etc. Following this flashback, discussion took place on the benefit of disabling and getting rid of the Language Toolbar, if you don't need it for any reason. This program uses resources to monitor for microphone input and is not necessary if you don't have or use a microphone to capture speech.

A question was asked about monitor resolutions. The response was that your video card and video memory determine what resolutions are available to you; you must also have the correct drivers installed to match the video card. A comment on a different topic had to do with removal of old security programs before installing new ones. If you are unable to uninstall a Symantec problem application that does not respond when you use the add/remove programs approach, you can find a Removal Tool that removes everything that Symantec ever created. This tool is available on their website. This concluded the Windows SIG portion of the meeting.

(Minutes…….Continued on page 7)

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Microsoft Office 2007: My First Impressions

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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The first thing I noticed when saving this document I am writing in Word 2007 is that there is now a new Word document type. It has a suffix of docx instead of doc. Docx is the extension of the new file format based on XML. Microsoft lists several benefits of this format over the old format:

- More compact files: It uses zip compression to compress and decompress on the fly.
- Improved damaged-file recovery: The modular construction of the file allows it to be opened if one component of the file is damaged but others are OK.
- Better privacy: You can use "Document Inspector" to remove hidden data and personal information.
- Easier detection of documents containing macros: Office 2007 Word (.docx), Excel (.xlsx) and PowerPoint (.pptx) files cannot contain macros or VBA code. Only files ending in m like .docm, .xlsm, and .pptm can contain such code.

Of course, you can still save documents in the formats of earlier versions of Office. Additionally, someone using an earlier version of Office, e.g., Office 2003, can open, edit some items, and save Office 2007 Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents by using the Compatibility Pack for the 2007 Office system, from Office 2003. The Office Compatibility Pack for Office 2007 is available at the Microsoft Download Center.

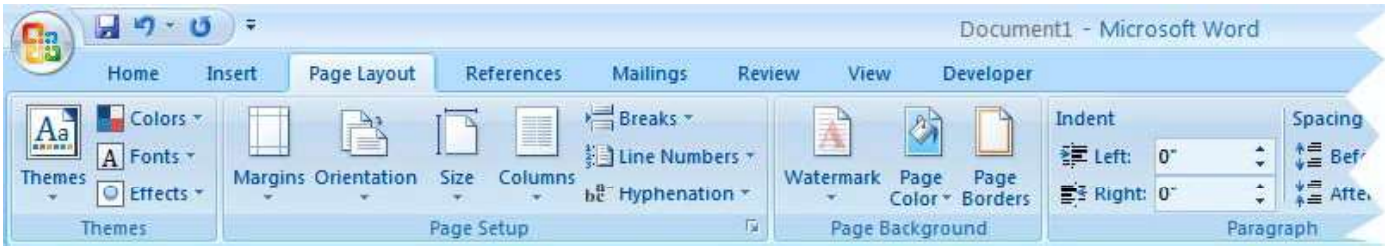
Access has a new file format, also. The suffix for that is accdb. As above, you can convert the new file format to the earlier mdb file format if your Access 2007 database does not use any of the new features in Access 2007. Things get quite technical when discussing the reasons to use or not use the new Access file format, so I will not venture there.

I had no trouble installing the full version (not an upgrade) of Office 2007 on both my desktop computer and my laptop, both of which had Windows XP as the operating system and also had Office 2003 Professional installed. I chose to leave Office 2003 Professional installed and to install Office 2007 Ultimate in a separate folder. The reason for doing this is that two individuals had warned me that I might find a time when I needed to use the older version for something. So far that need has not occurred, but, of course, I have done very little with the new product so far. I should note that you are allowed to install the product on a desktop computer and a laptop computer simultaneously.

Word was the first program I started after the installation, and I was a bit disorientated by what I saw at the top of the screen. Things are not where they used to be. As you will note, there are no File or Edit menu items in the image above. Instead, what you see is called a Ribbon, with different tabs and each tab divided into separate sections.

To get to your file options, you need to click on that large round button in the upper left-hand corner. The usual Edit options of Copy, Paste, etc. are right in front of you on the Clipboard section of the Home tab. If you need to insert something such as a picture, you would click on the Insert tab, where you would be presented with a Ribbon containing a Pages section, a Tables section, an Illustrations section, etc. The Illustrations section is the one containing a picture icon to be clicked on to start the inser-

(Office……Continued on page 4)



(Office…….Continued from page 3)

tion of an image.

The Page Layout ribbon tab looks like the second image, above.

I think the Themes section is something that is new with 2007 (I never saw it in 2003). Of course, the other settings for Margins, Orientation, etc. are the same as before. A check shows me that I am using what is termed the Office Theme in writing this in Word. There is a selection of 20 different themes available, and, as I hover my mouse over any one, my document immediately displays according to that theme's colors, fonts and effects.

Times New Roman is no longer the default font for body text. It is now Calibri if I am using the Office Theme, as you can see in the first graphic for this article.

I suspect the new interface might actually be easier for a novice user since they would not have to search for features hidden in the old labyrinth of menus. For me, though, it has taken a little time to get used to it since, it is so different from the old interface, but I am getting comfortable with it quite quickly.

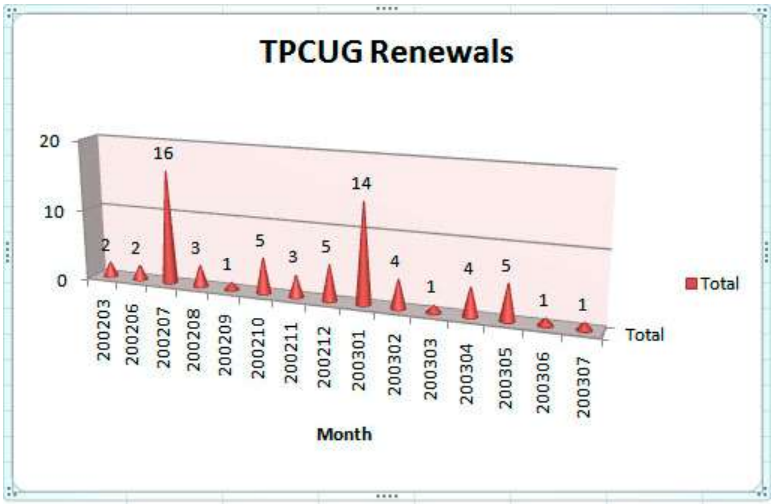


One neat new feature is the zoom slider bar in the lower right-hand corner of the Word screen, as shown directly above. This makes it real easy to zoom the document in or out.

Excel also has a new interface with a Ribbon, like Word. In fact, the home tab ribbon in Excel looks much like the one in Word for the first few sections. So, to show something a bit different, I have displayed the Formulas tab Ribbon from Excel at the bottom of this page.

As in Word, if you hover your cursor over one of the icons in the ribbon, a small window pops up to describe the functionality of the item and also to give you a keyboard shortcut, if such exists and if you should want to learn that.

Also, just as I found with Word, all the documents created with previous versions of the program opened in the 2007 program without problems. I was able to save the document in its "old" format, or I could choose to convert it to an Office 2007 XML format.



(Office…….Continued on page 5)



(Office……..Continued from page 4)

In my brief look at Excel, I could find nothing different about the functionality other than a larger and more colorful selection of charts. The chart on the previous page is an example of that. It is a Columnar 3-D Cone chart based on a pivot table created from the membership renewal data for the club in 2002 and 2003. You might rightly ask why such old data. Well, I keep the membership data for newsletter mailings in Access—not Excel. But, for some reason, in looking for some Excel files with data to graph, I found this old membership data already there in Excel and thus used it to create the graph.

Excel 2003 does have a cone graph style; however, in 2007 there are many more variations that can be applied to it, one of which I used, so the workbook containing the chart has to be saved in the Excel 2007 format.

Merle Nicholson alerted me to one improvement in the new Excel—no limit of 65,535 rows in an Excel sheet. Now you can have million-row sheets.

Outlook in appearance looks basically the same to me as did the 2003 version. I see no Ribbon across the top like the ones in Word and Excel. What I do notice is that Outlook is now fully indexed so that you get quick results for any text search of the messages. To get this going, Outlook first has to index all your messages, which may take some time. But after this, it indexes each new message that comes in, and I gather that when a message is permanently deleted its index information is also removed.

One thing to note is that, as mentioned earlier, I have both Office 2003 and Office 2007 installed on my

(Office……..Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month

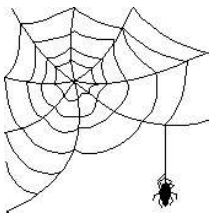


Postcard of old federal building in Tampa

From the Jacksonville Florida Public Library's site, http://jpl.coj.net/, we have one of the postcards from their postcard collection. Their postcard collection at http://jpl.coj.net/dlc/florida/postcards.html is divided into Jacksonville cards and cards from the rest of Florida.

This card depicts the federal building and post office on Florida Avenue in Tampa. It must be fairly old since it shows a horse carriage and no cars. The card's URL is http://jpl.coj.net/dlc/florida/pc/PCJPG/PCJAX211-008.html.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



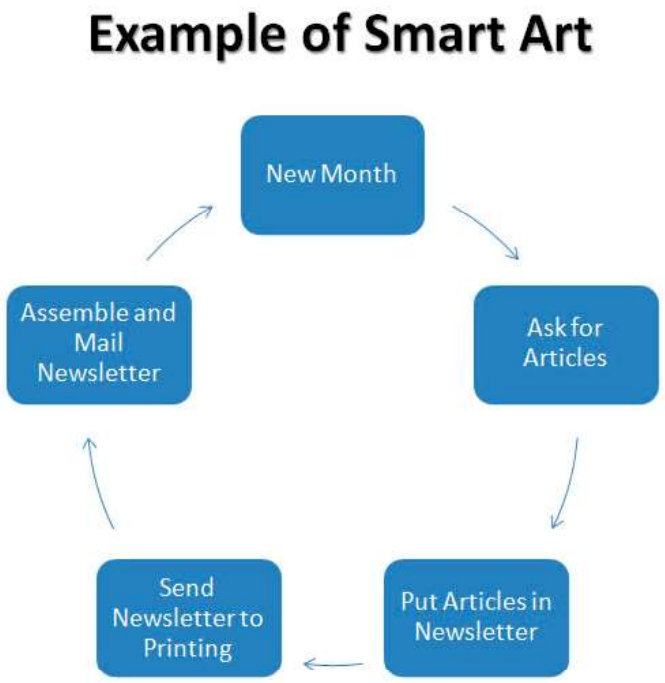
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Stonehenge Aotearoa	http://www.astronomynz.org.nz/stonehenge/
W3 Schools—free web building tutorials	http://www.w3schools.com/
SunPass	http://www.sunpass.com/
Cyberhomes.com	http://www.cyberhomes.com

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Office……..Continued from page 5)

computer. However, that is not totally true since I no longer have Outlook 2003 installed—only Outlook 2007. You can have only one version of Outlook installed.

PowerPoint has the ribbon interface, and after getting used to it in the previously-mentioned Office applications, it is straightforward and easy to use. Of course, there are new templates for presentations, but, since I do fairly unadorned presentations, it is hard for me to tell what new or improved features this new version has. One exception to that is something called Smart Art on the Insert tab or the ribbon.



The types of Smart Art fall into the categories of Lists, Processes, Cycles, Hierarchies, Relationships, etc. The image above is a Cycle example.

Access is probably the least used Office application and is, in fact, not even available in some of the distributions of Office. It is, however, the most powerful and also most difficult to master of the applications. You can make a good living programming Access applications. Of course, the same could be said for Word if you used it to write Harry Potter books.

Much of my Visual Basic programming involves dealing with data stored in Access databases. I would say that Access is Merle Nicholson's primary area of work at present. He sometimes presents some of what he has been working on at our Access Special Interest Group.

It was Merle mainly who caused me not to install Office 2007 over 2003 since he had found that some of his applications created in Access 2003 did not port to Access 2007. He uses custom tool bars in his applications, and the new Access Ribbon is not compatible with them. Such things would not be a problem for Access users who do not create custom applications.

At present, I have found none of my Access databases that didn't open and display properly in Access 2007. I did, however, encounter one problem that was easily fixed.

Many of my Access databases have Visual Basic code modules in them. I found that when I tried to open such databases and then do something like a query or report that used this code, I would receive an error message like *Undefined Function Trim in Expression……..* In this instance, it was telling me it did not know what the Trim function was (the VB function that removes spaces before and after text). A check of Google told me that it was a reference problem that could be easily fixed by opening any code module, displaying the references, adding any new reference at random, closing the reference dialog and then reopening it and removing the recently added reference. And, you know, I think I had this same problem when I installed Access 2003 and used the same technique to fix it.

One new feature I noticed in Access and have tested is the ability to create an email message in Outlook that contains a form to collect information corresponding to certain fields of an Access table. When I receive a recipient's reply to the email, what they entered in the form's fields is automatically inserted into a new record in the database table. This has possibilities for questionnaires within our group.

I just about forgot to mention the program with which I am creating the newsletter.

Publisher 2007 appears the same to me as Publisher

(Office……..Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

Our presentation by Jim Purcell covered a multitude of things related to digital imaging. Jim started off his presentation by showing us a collection of film and digital cameras that he has collected since the late 1940's and early 50's, giving us a little background on why each particular camera was selected to be used by him. For a little show and tell, Jim was able to connect one of his digital cameras thru the room's VCR to the overhead projector, and, thus, we were able to see on the screen what he could see when taking a picture, including some of the settings and the changes made to them. Jim demonstrated the differences in results by varying the white balance settings. He also showed us the differences obtained when choosing the bracket shooting mode, whereby each of three pictures taken sequentially have slightly different exposure settings, allowing you to choose the best one. There was also a discussion on the benefit of getting a digital camera that had Image Stabilization capability, which can eliminate photos that are slightly blurred due to movement in your hands and arm when taking a picture.

Jim next moved on to demonstrating photo corrections that could be achieved using Photoshop Elements 4.0. Through his familiarity with using this program, he made it seem fairly simple to correct blemishes, coloring, red-eye, etc. in your pictures. This is a program that he would like to demonstrate further in a future Digital Imaging SIG, once that group's meetings are reinstated.

Jim brought to the meeting two different scanners that he uses, and he demonstrated use of the Minolta film scanner. He also had a flatbed scanner set up, but, due to the lateness of the hour, he only mentioned some of the ways he uses it. Jim concluded his presentation by reeling off a list of books and publications that he recommended for a more in-depth understanding of the world of digital photography and imaging. Unfortunately, I was not able to get that information written down to include in these minutes, so I would recommend anyone interested in which books Jim has suggested to contact him directly to discuss the particular topics that interest you.

The meeting concluded at the end of Jim's presentation. We had a total of 26 members and guests present at this meeting ◆

This is a correction to my article "**Are CD's and DVD's A Reliable Place To Store Your Data?**", that appeared in the July issue of our newsletter. Lora Swenson, Sales Manager of MAM-A Inc., graciously agreed to review the article to make sure that I had reported their product information correctly. I know that all of you are indeed shocked to learn that I did make an error. She provided the following correction to my article:

"The only correction that should be mentioned is that MAM-A's Silver CD-Rs are estimated to last conservatively 50+years under proper storage conditions, but Silver DVD-Rs are rated only for 20+ years. This is because DVD recordable discs have two bonded plastic layers, which will allow oxidation to occur for the silver metal layer over time, compared to CD-Rs that have only one plastic layer. DVD-R dye is also not as UV resistant compared to Mitsui's CD-R dye.

True archival discs should be 24K Gold, with accelerated aging tests for Gold CD-Rs rated at 300 years, and Gold DVD+/-Rs at 100+ years."

— Jim Purcell

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

view of them so soon after getting the 2007 versions is that I really don't have time to see what is new in each program in any detail. However, I think there is probably more interest in Office than in Photoshop. Certainly more people have some version of Office than they do of Photoshop (not to be confused with Photoshop Elements). So that is what I will write about this month and save anything concerning Photoshop for the future. ◆



(Office…….Continued from page 6)

2003. It does not have the Ribbon across the top, but it has the usual menu bar and tool bars. I really see nothing new, although I am sure that is not the case and that there is at least a larger collection of publication templates than before, if nothing else.

Groove, InfoPath and OneNote are the minor components of Office 2007 Ultimate. I have some interest in InfoPath and One Note and will possibly write about them later. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



September in Tampa
Hurricane??

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 9 September 2007

Meeting

Microsoft Publisher 2007

Wednesday, September 12, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: John Witmer will do a presentation on Microsoft Publisher 2007. William LaMartin will assist by showing how he uses Publisher to put the newsletter together. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG led by Bob LaFave.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Office 2007 Article In my Microsoft Office 2007 article in last month's newsletter, I inadvertently omitted a recommendation as to whether or not you should rush out and buy it. If you use your current version of Office rarely and it does everything you want, then you probably shouldn't. If you use its programs every day and have some money burning a hole in your pocket, then you should. It does offer more functionality and a slicker interface

iPhone Unlocking As you knew would happen, a month or so after the introduction of Apple's iPhone that uses the AT&T network exclusively, various individuals have found

(Comments……..Continued on page 6)

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October Meeting: Media Concepts Inc. - digital duplicating services

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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We acknowledge the following for their support

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Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the August Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

We first watched the flawless launching of Orbiter Endeavour (STS 118) from Cape Kennedy. At 6:47 pm, Bob LaFave began our Windows SIG session by asking if any members were having computer problems they wished to discuss.

Ed Cohen said he recently installed Norton Internet Securities on his three PCs and is unhappy with the four minutes each takes to boot up and then everything seems to run in slow motion. Bob said to see what effect removing unused programs from the startup routine has.

Ed then asked how to remove programs from the startup routine. Bob reflected back on his earlier recommendation for us to download Mike Lin's Startup Control Panel. It is free, although a donation is suggested. It will show what programs are loading at startup, and you simply check off those not needed. It is much easier to use than Microsoft's MSConfig. Merle said his policy, using MSConfig, is to remove from Startup: Adobe Update Manager, QuickTime, and anything starting with HP.

Nancy Cottrell asked about installing a wireless router. She uses Bright House Roadrunner as her Internet provider. Bob told her to call Bright House, as they will install and program a wireless router at a nominal charge. Might as well let them make it work.

Another member wanted to know if he could install a second router. Bob said to try it. He thought it should work.

After some general discussion, the SIG meeting con-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 5)

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Surge Suppressors

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

It was evident at the August group meeting that there was significant interest in this issue, so I am writing this to contribute a little knowledge of the subject gleaned from my professional experience, although I am not an electrical engineer and do not claim to be an expert on this subject.

Tampa Bay is known as the lightning capital of the nation. Computers and other electronic equipment are sensitive to electrical variations. Nothing can guarantee protection against a direct lightning strike, but lesser spikes and power surges can be severely damaging. Therefore, we locals should have a means of protecting our equipment.

Electric utilities may offer full home protection (TECO offers Zap Cap). This may be an ideal solution. For most of us, protecting individual equipment may be an acceptable compromise.

The saying "You Get What You Pay for "applies to the purchase of a surge protector. Those cheap strips claiming protection offer minimal protection at best, and are almost nothing more than extension cords.

Most good protectors use MOV (metal oxide varistor) as part of their circuitry. MOV based designs are subject to gradual deterioration, i.e., the MOV wears out a little with each surge it suppresses. This means that old units may have lost some or all of their ability to protect.

You can judge a Surge Protector by its UL rating, Joule Rating, and of course you should select one offering enough wattage for all your connected devices. UL Rating must be 1449 for Surge Protection and 1778 for UPS. Joule ratings vary, generally higher is better, but unscrupulous companies may quote unrealistic or fake ratings. It is best to buy from a reliable maker.

You can Google "Joule rating" for more detailed information.

Many reliable brands are available. Two prominent ones are APC (American Power Conversion), http://www.APC.com, and Tripp-Lite, http://www.tripplite.com. These companies include insurance for your devices against loss of the type they are designed to protect, such as a power surge.

You will be able to find protection for all kinds of devices and many multiple purpose units. Protection is offered for computers, printers, LCDs, HDTVs, etc. Some units include protection for telephone (modem), cable, and DSL connections as well. Some units have indicator lights for status and even wire faults. You may select a combination UPS unit offering Surge Protection or a Surge Protector only.

Check out what you want online and you will find most popular models available at leading suppliers. A favorite of mine is the Tripp Lite ISOTEL8ULTRA. It has:



8 outlets / 12-ft. cord
2850 joule rating
All metal housing with LEDs
Isolated filter banks
Modem/fax surge protection
$50,000 Ultimate Lifetime Insurance (USA, Puerto Rico & Canada only)
Price around $60.00 ◆

Traveling with a Laptop

By Jim Purcell, Member at Large,
Tampa PC users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

I spent a week, along with other family members, visiting my daughter's father-in-law in Madison, a small town in central Maine. When I had gone several days without checking my email, I started looking for a Starbucks or a Panera Bread Store and found that there was a Starbucks about 22 miles away in Waterville, ME. I hadn't used Starbucks in about three years, and at that time it was free so I assumed that there was no change. After getting my computer set up, buying a cup of coffee and spending a good bit of time trying to log onto the Internet, I finally asked for help. They told me that all Starbucks stores are connected to "T-Mobile Hot Spot" and that I needed either an account or a daily pass. When I declined, they suggested parking close to a motel that was next door or going to Downtown Central Waterville, which they said was "wired". I had tried two or three locations downtown with no success when I spotted the Waterville library and decided to ask them for further instructions. The librarian told me to bring my laptop into the library and find a place that was comfortable. I found a spacious desk with an electrical outlet nearby and was able to quickly connect to the internet and check my email. All of this ate up about three and a half hours, just to check my email.



When I got back to Florida, I decided to see if I could find a way to make things easier on my next trip. Much to my dismay, I found that had I spent about 20 minutes of research before my trip to Maine, I would have easily found access to the internet throughout my trip. I located "The Wi-Fi-FreeSpot Directory" at: http://www.wififreespot.com/index.html. The well-designed index at this site allows you to search by facility or by state and town. I learned from this site that the library in Waterville, ME is one of 57 libraries in Maine that offer a free Wi-Fi connection and one of the 57 libraries is located in Madison, about 4 blocks from where I was staying. I also learned that "First Watch", one of my favorite restaurants, offers free Wi-Fi and now has78 daytime cafes in 11 states. I emailed First Watch to confirm that all locations offer Wi-Fi and received a prompt reply from their marketing manager advising that all 78 locations offer free Wi-Fi. I took my laptop to breakfast at the First Watch just off of Fowler Avenue this weekend and was able to connect to the internet quickly with no hassle. If you are not familiar with First Watch, you need to be aware that they are a daytime café and are open year-round from 7:00 AM to 2:30 PM, excluding Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Their web site links to their menu for breakfast, brunch and

(Wi-Fi……Continued on page 5)



(Wi-Fi……Continued from page 4)

lunch and you can click on the menu items for the nutritional information of each item. http://www.firstwatch.com/article.cgi?file=2007.02.20.9 . Panera Bread is another of my favorite places to eat or to get a cup of coffee. Their menu also provides nutritional information by clicking on the menu item. If you are a serious pastry, sandwich, salad and soup person they also have a downloadable seven page PDF document that lists the nutritional information on all of the items they sell (down to the individual bagel or scone). They offer free Wi-Fi at more than 1,100 Bakery Cafes in 38 states. http://www.panerabread.com/cafes/wifi.php .

If you are a serious traveler, you might be interested in T-Mobile HotSpot. There are 8,288 T-Mobile Hot-Spot locations in the U.S. T-Mobile HotSpot sub-scription customers can stay connected in 712 addi-tional U.S. roaming locations and in thousands of locations worldwide. There is a schedule of rates and services at: http://hotspot.t-mobile.com/services_plans.htm . ◆

(Minutes……Continued from page 2)

cluded at 7:24 pm.

Our president, John Witmer, introduced our guest speakers: Mr. Dana Brooke, Business Manager, and Ms. Mytu Tran, Business Services Sale Rep., from the West Hillsborough Ave. Comp USA store. With Mytu's help, Dana told us about the current state of the computer market from his perspective, changes in his company and what we should do to protect our

(Minutes……Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



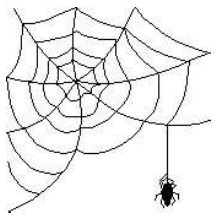
Farm Foreclosure Sale in Iowa

With all the attention being directed to home fore-closures at present, most due to subprime loan problems, it is instructive to look back to the 1930's with its many farm foreclosures.

Many farm debts were incurred when prices for farm commodities were relatively high, in the late teens or early 1920s. However, by the mid-1920s, it cost more to produce the crops than they brought at market, and the situation only worsened into the 1930s. The result--foreclosure by the banks that had made the loans.

This photo is from the American Historical Society site at http://www.ameshistoricalsociety.org/exhibits/depression.htm.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Free wi-fi hotspots	http://www.wififreespot.com/
Expert Village - free how-to videos	http://www.expertvillage.com/
List of anonymous wikipedia edits	http://wikiscanner.virgil.gr/
Penny Postcards	http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/special/ppcs/ppcs.html
Footnote - Original documents online	http://www.footnote.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

ways around using AT&T. The first solution out of the starting blocks was a hardware solution, which, while ingenious, involves work beyond the abilities, I am sure, of 99.9% of iPhone users. More promising to those interested in the iPhone is a software solution that has been announced and demonstrated in a video on the Internet. How anyone can implement the software solution is still a mystery, though, since the developer of the solution is afraid to post the method on the Internet for fear of being sued by either Apple or AT&T.

Burgert Brothers' Tampa Photos I am sure many of you in the group are familiar with the collection of more than 13,000 photos of Tampa from a little before 1900 until in the 1960s taken by the Burgert Brothers' photo shop and now residing in the Tampa/ Hillsborough County Library and accessible from their online card catalog, http://www.hcplc.org/. You may even recall that I created an index of these photos (when the search abilities of the library's online catalog were much more primitive than at present) at my personal site, http://www.lamartin.com. I receive emails occasionally from individuals who thank me for this since they find it easier to either browse the photos or do searches at my site than at the library's.

Although I have an index of them in a database at my site, the photos are at the library's site, and this past month I received an email from a user of my index informing me that my index was of no more use since the library had removed the photos. Now, I knew that the library hadn't removed the photos; they had just most likely changed their location on a server. So I went to the library's site, did a search for Burgert Brothers and found the new base URL for the photos. I just needed to change 13,214 addresses in my database by replacing http://zerver.thpl.lib.fl.us/ with http://burgertimages.hcplc.org/. Computers are good at doing things like that. So go to http://www.lamartin.com, click on the Photos button and then the Burgert link.

Automated Slide Show Staying on the subject of photos for the moment gives me a chance to write a few lines about my programming. Over the years, I have come up with various methods of presenting a slideshow of photos on web pages. Most of my slideshows at various sites were not automated—that is, you had to press a button to go forward or backward within the show. There is a good reason for this—if you want automation of the display of images on a web page, you need to use JavaScript. You can do a search and find such code on the Internet and include it in the HTML of your page to do the show, and I have done this a couple of times in the past. But most of my slide shows contain many photos and this makes the JavaScript method cumbersome since you have to include all the photo links in the code of the page.

Since I use VB.Net (part of Visual Studio) for my web programming, I have stuck with a manual type slide show until recently, when Microsoft added a new tool for web programming—the AJAX Tool Kit. This allows me to do things with web pages that require Java but have the Java aspect of it hidden from me. Thus, I can now do things like automated slide shows from within BV.Net. To see both types, again go to http://www.lamartin.com, click on the Photos button and click on the Hurricane Katrina link. Which do you prefer, the manual show or the automated show? If you prefer flowers to hurricane damage, go to the neighborhood site I maintain at http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org/, click on the Hyde Park | Photos buttons. Here you also have a choice of automated or manual shows. Oh, and there is one hurricane show here, too.

As the tools available change, I try to change with them. We have certainly come a long way from when I used Notepad to create the HTML code for the first TPCUG web site.

Comparing folders Another programming project this past month was to write a program for Windows Desktop computers that would compare the subfolders and files in one folder with those in another folder and then allow you to copy files and subfolders that are different between the folders . You might think that this ability was already a utility in Windows, but it isn't. Of course, you can purchase programs that will do this. However, I wanted to roll my own. Merle Nicholson was my beta tester on this project, and it surprised me how many bugs he could uncover that I hadn't caught. This is what I will talk about at the

(Comments……..Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes……..Continued from page 5)
electronic devices.

Mr. Brooke confirmed that TPCUG members are generally entitled to a discount at the business counter on items not already discounted. Locally, Comp USA has stores in Brandon, Clearwater and two locations in Tampa. They have served the Tampa Bay area for more than twenty years.

One member asked if there was a way for us to check the availability of items online before coming to the store? Dana said there was, and Mytu took us to their business web site for a demonstration.

What are the hottest-selling items at Comp USA? Digital cameras, MP 3 players and iPods with video. People now want a super-compact camera for travel and another with all the features for home use. You might have noticed that electronics prices change very little but that the features increase with each year's models. Dana says most people no longer do major upgrades to their PCs. Now, every three or four years they buy a new computer, usually a laptop for portability. The industry is pricing PC's to encourage this, as obsolescence is assured within four years. Also, Dana recommended not upgrading an older computer to Windows Vista; buy a new one with Vista already installed. You'll save money and avoid headaches.

Here in Florida you should protect all expensive electronic equipment from power surges. Protective devices should be rated to absorb at least 1200 joules of surge energy. Power conditioning and battery backup are also important to prevent crashes of your PC. Soft shutdown preserves your data and is easier on the electronics. Comp USA donated such a protective device at the meeting for the group's benefit. Ed White says TECO will provide something they call Zap Cap for a few dollars a month to protect all your electronics against power surges.

Mr. Brooke said backing up your system is cheap today, so Do It! Thumb drives, external hard drives and DVDs are recommended based upon the capacity needed. Save important data using these backup devices.

Bob LaFave suggested that Comp USA do away with mail-in rebates. Why not instant rebates? Dana said he would pass this along to upper management.

In closing, Mr. Brooke said anyone wanting to log in to the Comp USA business web site should email him at dana_brooke@compusa.com and he will see to it.

John Witmer thanked Dana Brooke and Mytu Tran for the insight into the computer sales world. And for the APC power backup device which will be raffled off as a door prize. Raffle tickets were sold during a short break. Winners of prizes were as follows:

Harry Lochaby	$40 Comp USA Gift Certificate
Roy Drew	$20 Comp USA Gift
Bob LaFave	APC 350 Battery Backup Device

Guests this evening were Hardy Tuegel and Roy Drew.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

(Regular Secretary Doug Mullis thanks John Witmer for carrying these duties for the past two months in addition to being our president.) ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments……..Continued from page 6)
next VB SIG.

Newspapers Are you noticing that not only are the printed versions of our local newspapers, *The Tampa Tribune* and *The St. Petersburg Times*, shrinking, but also their online sites seem to have less news than before, or it may just be that in their reorganization of their sites, they have put the news in locations where I am not used to finding it. It appears that they want their main page to be mainly local news and sports. You have to dig to get the state and national news from the sites. The Tribune is also pushing a subscription to some sort of digital version where you can read the entire paper with your browser or an offline reader. There is only one catch—it is about $90 per year. This is a service from http://www.newsstand.com/. For comparison, it appears that to read *The New York Times* in its original format digitally will cost you about $180 per year.



Perhaps this is the future: It is cheaper than a subscription to the printed version, and it saves the trees (which are grown for the sole purpose of being made into paper). But it is going to be hard to get people to pay for something that they have been getting a scaled-down version of online for free. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 10 October 2007

Meeting

Ken Sparks of Media Concepts, Inc. Presents Digital Duplicating Services

Wednesday, October 10, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Ken Sparks from Media Concepts, Inc. will tell us about their digital duplicating services As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG led by Bob LaFave.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Thanks to our contributors, Merle, Doug and Bob, there is a newsletter this month. I thought for a while that I was going to have to fill the newsletter with some of my rambling thoughts plus a looking-back article extracted from the October 1977 newsletter and perhaps some photos of old meetings. But, thanks to them, we have a newsletter of fresh material, and you don't have to see how much younger we all appeared 10 years ago.

Google seems to have some new news item every day or so. They have bought up some company for a few hundred million or maybe a billion. Or their stock price has increased to a

(Comments……..Continued on page 5)

November Meeting: Steve Singer from RDI will talk about the latest in computer hardware.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Before the meeting began, we watched a video of one of our members, Eddie Rodriquez, do his first tandem skydive at Zephyrhills, Florida. Eddie went with a group of students from USF and hired a cinematographer to record the event. We're not sure why Eddie jumped out of a perfectly good airplane, but he did live to show and tell us about it. Thanks for sharing your experience (and your dark side) with us, Eddie.

At 6:45 pm Bob LaFave brought us back to earth with our Windows SIG portion of our meeting by revisiting a program called PC Decrapifier for removing trial software that comes on new computers. It's free, but use at your own risk. You can download it at www.pcdecrapifier.com/download .

A member told us of a program for removing temporary files from your computer. Bob said this could also be done using Disk Cleanup. Getting rid of unused files will make virus scans quicker, as well as free up disk space.

A member asked how difficult it was to replace a wireless router. William LaMartin suggested trying it following instructions that come with the new router. The wiring is simple, and, if the encrypting is beyond you, just reinstall what you had and call for help. Bob warned that you want to encrypt to prevent unauthorized access to your system.

Another member had a problem with files on her hard drive being converted from Word 2003 format when she went from Office 2003 to Office 2007. William suggested opening each document and resaving it in Word 2000 or 2003 format. Much dis-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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First Time Vista – Part IV

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I'm still occasionally using my Vista machine, but not for my regular business activities. I am getting used to it, including the User Access Control (UAC) pop-ups, which I have not disabled. I'd decided to install Microsoft One-Care on this machine and two other machines, so the following will be on two subjects: Microsoft One-Care and Vista File Manager.

One-Care. Microsoft One-Care is a subscription-based anti-virus, spyware, firewall and backup product. It costs $50/year, but it allows three machines on the one subscription, which makes it pretty cheap. So I installed it on the Vista machine, on my peer-to-peer Win XP Pro server and on my Win XP Home notebook computer. You can install it on a trial basis, and it'll remind you when it's expired and also make it pretty easy to pay up.

My original thinking was that I wouldn't mind having an all-in-one product to simplify administration, and in that respect it works very well. There's a bubble in the system tray to click on, and all functions are accessible in a well-organized panel, including virus and other malware scanning, firewall and also file backup.

Firewall The firewall is two-way, a real improvement over the native XP/Vista one-way firewall. A one-way firewall is always looking at incoming internet traffic, hides your own computer from sight and blocks illegal intrusions from the outside.

A two-way firewall also looks at your own programs when they request internet services, checks against a list of permissions and then asks you in a pop-up if you want to allow some activity that is not authorized. I've used Webroot Desktop Firewall for three years on my business/personal computer, and it works in the same manner, and One-Care seems comparable. With Webroot, you can go into its database of programs and alter those settings, but it's something I rarely do.

Anti-Virus & Anti-SpyWare. What can I say about this? It scans reliably and when it's supposed to. It updates daily and notifies me that it has done so. It doesn't seem like it's a resource hog, but that's a pretty subjective thing. It even runs almost unnoticed on my notebook, a 1.8GHz Athlon single processor, and it's completely unnoticed on my Vista machine, which has a high-end AMD dual-core processor. I must say that both machines have more than adequate memory installed, which is usually a factor.

Now, on the XP machine, One-Care did once find a Trojan downloader virus that caused me some trouble. It was clear it did find the Trojan, but it failed to quarantine it. But – and this is important – it did not identify the file. In One-Care help, it said that the cause of failing to quarantine is based on the file being a system file that was loaded. So I did the pretty standard things. I disabled System Restore. That's because often System Restore will have a copy of the virus and it will return to you. Then I tried to run One-Care in Safe Mode, and it refused to run. So then I loaded and ran a single copy of AVG Anti-Virus, and Spybot Search & Destroy and maybe some others. And these others did not identify any virus.

So I went back to normal and went on with life, and daily, when it ran it found the same virus just like the first time. I looked for other sites that had tools that would remove that virus with no luck, so I submitted a report to Microsoft. And, I think, within two days I got a call from a person about it and also exchanged some email over the course of about four more days. One of the things he wanted to do was to remote control into my machine, and I must say that he accepted the fact that I was probably as capable as he to operate my computer.

To my surprise, he did finally tell me that there is a virus scanner that can be run in safe mode. Later I did find mention of it in the Microsoft Knowledge Base. In any case, it runs on the command line box and is strictly text-based, like an old DOS program. He said it took a long time to run, and he was right. After about four hours, it displayed the name of the offending file that contained the virus, and also said that it failed to quarantine the file! It was in a zip file

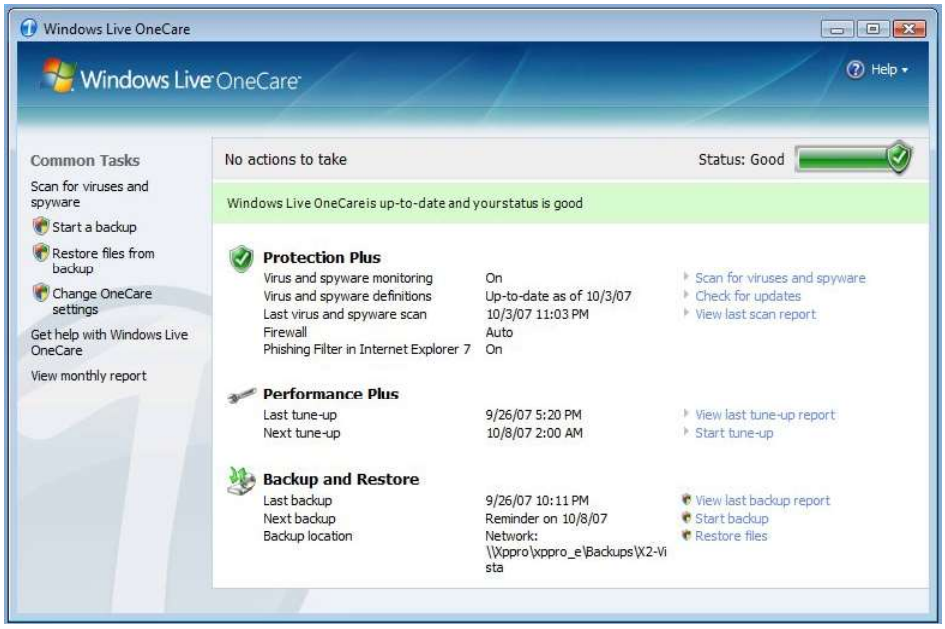
(First Time……..Continued on page 4)

(First Time…….Continued from page 3)

that I'd archived to my file server and had erased from my personal computer. So I just deleted the file. In retrospect I should have "wiped" the file first before erasing, but I did not do that. It didn't go to the recycle bin though. After it was all over, I enabled System Restore. I do think it wasn't really a virus, but I didn't need the file anyway, and I had to stop One-Care from detecting it every day.

Back to the subject of Vista/One-Care. Perhaps you've been reading about this lately. The complaint is that Windows Update will reboot your computer after doing updates. This is causing a flurry among those who believe that it is they – not Microsoft – who should decide when the computer is to be rebooted. The claim of course is that they may lose some important work that hasn't been saved, especially if they are not sitting at the computer when all this happens.

On most of my own computers, I've set the Update Options to download but not install automatically. Now add Windows One-Care on top of this in Vista. The problem is that One-Care has two status levels, "Good" and "At Risk". If it's "Good", there is a pop-up when the program updates and sometimes some other warm fuzzies. If you have a virus or have something that must be attended to, you're in the red zone and "At Risk". And then you're fairly frequently reminded that you must take some action.



But … here's the problem … if you have Windows Updates set to any of the options except "Automatically Update", ol' One-Care goes red on you. And you're reminded pretty frequently that you must do something about it.

Well jeez, give me a break. My own fear was that I'd get so used to the pop-ups that I'd miss something important. So I spent some research time to see if there was something I could do and ultimately submitted a problem ticket to Microsoft.

I got a pretty positive response that they could help, and the guy would phone me once a day, Saturdays and Sundays included; offered a registry edit fix that even I could tell changed the behavior of Windows Update (Not!); wanted to take remote control of my computer (Not!); and then ultimately admitted that it was a feature of One-Care and they couldn't change it. I really did waste a lot of time with a Microsoft person who took many days of back and forth only to realize that he didn't have a grasp on my problem. He would repeatedly ask questions that I had covered in my problem description.

I finally did change my Windows Update to Automatic for two reasons: 1) I thought it's more important to have One-Care show a red at-risk status only when it was important and 2) It's my Vista machine and I don't do my real business there.

Vista Windows Explorer: I've been using Windows Explorer in Vista quite a lot. I do a great deal of file work: moving, copying and organizing. I'll say now that Vista Windows Explorer makes handling files very difficult. It's a complete redesign and bears no resemblance to the XP version or any other version. It appears that the objective was to make casual searches easy, and they may have done a good job at that. But if you're a serious, professional computer user and have a lot of files to manage using even a simple file structure, you're going

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still more astronomical number. (It is at $582 as I write this and was as high as $595 a few days back.) Oh, if we had only had the foresight to have purchased a few shares when it first went public about three years ago at around $85. Google now has a market capitalization of $182 billion, as compared to Exxon with $521 billion, Boeing, $83 billion, GM, $20.4 billion, GE, $430 billion, and Hewlett-Packard, $131 billion. Is Google really worth more than twice Boeing or more than Hewett-Packard? I don't think so. They don't sell anything but search services (other companies use their search) and click advertising. How often do you click on a paid ad when you do a Google search?

As a computer club, we are not really interested in stock prices, but we are interested in keeping our personal information safe when we use our computers. That is why I cannot understand why many people I know use Google's Gmail. As I understand it, every Gmail message you send is scanned by Google so they can direct advertizing to you, and all this information is saved in a database. I personally don't want anyone scanning my email.

What about web searches using Google? They know everything in which you have an interest--that is, they know everything that the person with, say, current IP address 22.156.184.104 is interested in. And then, if that is matched up with the person using Gmail whose messages come from IP address 22.156.184.104, well, they then know that Mary Smith writes letters to her congressman decrying the decline in morality of the country while at the same time she is searching the web for you know what. Think about it. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month

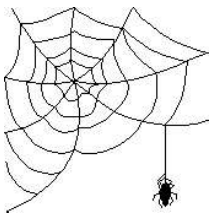


Soldiers of the 55th Armored Infantry Battalion and tank of the 22nd Tank Battalion move through smoke-filled street. Wernberg, Germany

With the Ken Burns WWII epic documentary on PBS TV recently, it is appropriate to use a WWII photo for our Picture of the Month. In looking for such images, I came across the sub-site of the National Archives that features a few select photos from all segments of the war. The URL is http://archives.gov/research/ww2/photos/

The pictures at this site are from the holdings of the Still Picture Branch (NNSP) of the National Archives and Records Administration.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Scroogle (Search without a trail)	http://www.scroogle.org/
WWII Photos	http://archives.gov/research/ww2/photos/
Slate online magazine	http://www.slate.com/
The City Review - NYC	http://www.thecityreview.com/home.html
Pineapple Press (Florida Books)	http://www.pineapplepress.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

FIOS World

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
robdavis7@verizon.net

Did you ever have one of those days when you got 150 emails waiting to download and you're logged on your landline at 37.2KB? Maybe none of you have that problem like I did. So, while spending a lot of time one day downloading email with a phone line, I decided it was time to change to the 21st century! I had tried to switch to DSL, but that is not available at my house. However, Verizon had recently installed their FIOS cable up to my house. I had to twist my own arm to spend extra money just for a quicker internet, but I did call Verizon. I'm getting close to the age where you only buy ripe bananas, and I was tired of spending so much time on downloading email.

Verizon set up a time to install FIOS for 10 am on Wednesday, September 19th. At about 9:50 am that day, the guy was there to install. They had said it would take about 4 hours. He was done in about 3 and a half hours. Very courteous and informative. I also had my old landline (that had zero enhancements and cost me over $40 per month) put on FIOS for an additional $25 per month. The FIOS phone service now includes caller ID, call waiting, voice mail, etc., as well as free long distance for USA and Canada anytime of day or night. The voice quality on the phone is at least as good as it was on the landline. When I added up the bills, I think I am paying less than $20 more per month and I have a lot better phone and internet access. Life is good.

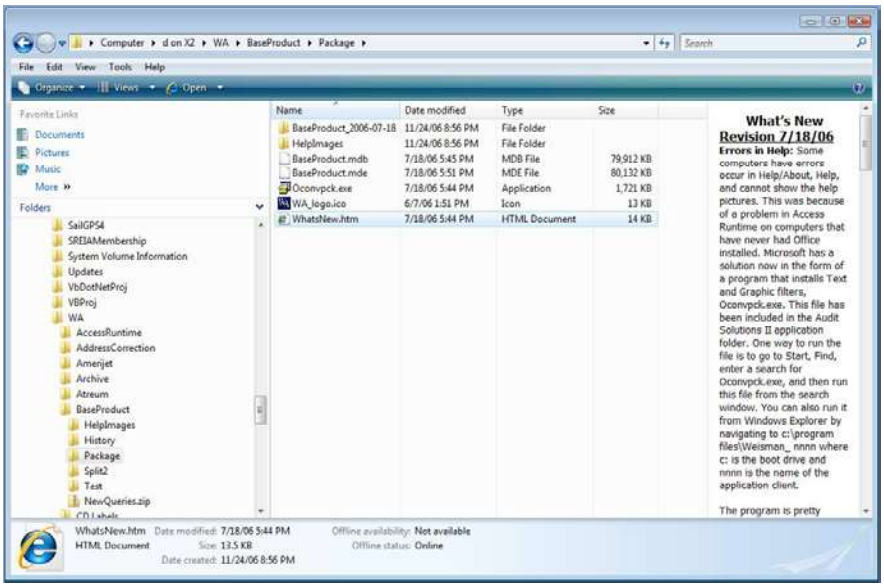
What a difference there is on the internet now! The installer's tests showed the download speed at about 10MB and upload at just under 2MB. Both ways are extremely faster than 32KB! A couple days ago I had 125 emails. With the old landline it would have taken me maybe an hour to download them all. With FIOS, it took about 30 seconds. Quite an improvement. So now I am hooked. Like the ads on TV claim, I will never go back to a landline, ever! The transition has been virtually seamless, so my hat's off to Verizon for a fine group of products. ◆

(First Time.....Continued from page 4)
to be unhappy.

My two largest complaints are that: 1) There is no way to show a complex directory tree structure that you can quickly absorb. Part of that is because the pale yellow folder icons are not distinct and the old + and – distinct boxes are no longer used. Instead, there is a tiny colorless triangle that denotes that there are folders below it. And 2) There is so much wasted space with three non-configurable toolbars and very little left for the tree and file details. You can, however, remove the only really useful menu bar. You can hide the details at the bottom; that does help, and you can remove the file viewer; all useful actions to take.

As a remedy, I have been looking for a Vista-compatible old-fashioned file manager. I'll pay money for it if I can find one. I have reviewed a couple of pretty good ones, but I reject even good ones if they stay resident after closing and if they have a huge amount of features that I have no interest in. I guess a lot of features aren't a really bad thing as long as you can turn them off or hide them. But I don't need to browse the internet with a file manager, I don't need to FTP, I don't need to publish to the internet, I don't need to sync between folders and I really don't need to view files.

It's too bad. I thought that the XP file manager was pretty good and would have been ideal if it had a file filter. There was a Windows 3.1 file manager called Norton Commander that had that feature, and it worked wonderfully. Maybe I'll get what I want eventually. If you find one, let me know, will you? ◆



Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

cussion followed.

At 7:16 pm, President John Witmer took control of the meeting to conduct group business. He announced that the Fall Conference of FACUG would be a one-day event in Orlando on October 6th. Go to their website for full details. John also asked members to add their names to a list being circulated if they want a TPCUG membership card.

Next month's speaker will be Ken Scott from Media Concepts Inc. of Gulfport. They provide a service converting whatever imaging you have to CD's or DVD. Jim Purcell's daughter had them transfer videotape to DVD, and she was very impressed with their service and product quality. In November, we will have Steve Singer back to tell us about the latest in computer hardware.

At 7:25 pm, John Witmer and William LaMartin became our featured speakers for the evening. Their topic was Microsoft Publisher 2007. John presented a Power Point presentation supplied by Microsoft and William showed us how he utilizes this software in doing our newsletter and other things.

John asked how many here tonight have used Microsoft's Publisher software? Four members stated they have used it for newsletters and to produce signs. John said Publisher could also be used to make business and membership cards, calendars with personalized pictures, greeting cards, brochures and even postcards. John had done newsletters in the past using Microsoft Word. Publisher 2007, however, has much more capability. John then ran the Microsoft Publisher demonstration showing its vast possibilities.

John then asked William LaMartin to show the group how he uses Publisher 2007 to do our monthly newsletter. William said he would do that, as well as other applications.

William said he has been doing the newsletter since December 1996 and originally used Word but found it difficult to insert pictures and to flow articles from page to page. He then opened Publisher 2007 to show features offered and generally what it looks like.

Our newsletter page layout is tricky because it is assembled as a booklet printed on both sides of 11"x17" sheets. Publisher allows you to preview the page layout of the entire booklet. Placing images is easy as text will wrap around pictures. You "make things fit" by trying different font sizes and adjusting the margins. William then showed us how he deletes material from last month's newsletter to turn it into this month's issue, leaving things that don't change as is. He then replaces the deleted material with the new articles and images. Talk about minimizing work! Good show, William!

Next, William showed how to make a tri-fold brochure. Again, both sides of the paper are printed on and properly arranged to be right when folded. Font size, image or logo placement and color selection are important in creating an attractive brochure.

Finally, William showed us the Hyde Park Direc-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 8)

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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
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(Minutes……..Continued from page 7)

tory, which he composed and keeps current for his neighborhood. It is published in booklet form and uses data from a Microsoft database for the membership information. He creates reports in Access for the membership information and then saves the reports as Rich Text Files, which are then pasted into Publisher.

Very impressive, but, alas, the clock approached the 9 o'clock hour, and William ended it. Thanks, John and William and Bob, for such an informative evening.

As we adjourned, John Witmer told us of a Publisher 2003 tutorial available for about $30 if anyone is interested in trying Publisher.

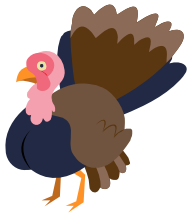
The meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm. ◆



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Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 11 November 2007

Meeting

Steve Singer of RDI
New Computer Hardware

Wednesday, November 14, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI will pay us his annual visit to inform us about what's new in hardware. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG led by Bob LaFave.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

LP to CD Following last month's presentation on Audio Visual duplication, I decided to restart my long-lapsed program of transferring some of my LPs to digital files which could then be put on CDs. I had done this for a few LPs many years back and recalled it was a bit tedious, so I asked Merle Nicholson if he had any suggestions. He said, "Do you have Easy CD Creator?" Well, yes, I have Roxio Easy Media Creator. He said to check and see if they didn't have some software for working with LPs. And they did. It is Roxio LP and Tape Assistant.

After that, everything was fairly easy. I simply connected two RC cables from the output of my very old (1968) KLH stereo system with an integrated turntable to an adapter that plugged into the stereo line-in jack of my computer's sound card. Next I started the Roxio software, started the LP playing and let the software determine the proper recording levels. Next, I restarted the LP and let

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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President: John Witmer (president@tpcug.org) 949-8007
Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org) 988-6480
Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
Secretary: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
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APPOINTED (Volunteers)

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Librarian: Larry Anders (Larry@AndersNet.com) 989-9119
Programs: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343

Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at 6:30pm.

Eddie Rodriquez asked which is the fastest web search engine. Bob responded that Google is fast and will find almost anything. William LaMartin thought Microsoft had a good engine and didn't like the fact that if Google combined information from your Gmail account and your searches they could track your activity. William suggested we also check out Scroogle.org, which does not retain a history of your activities beyond 48 hours.

Bob said Office 2003 SP3 is now out but don't download it if you downloaded SP2. You should go instead to the Microsoft update site on the Internet for updates. Windows Vista SP 1 and 2 are coming, as well as Windows XP SP 3.

Harry Lochabay was at the recent FACUG seminar in Orlando and found the program interesting. At the concurrent computer trade fair, the vendors were mostly pushing notebook computers. Both XP and Vista operating systems were offered, however, XP seemed predominant. Microsoft is already hinting at the replacement of Vista as early as 2009.

The 2008 anti-virus software is constantly improving and is checking for newer forms of viruses. Depending on whom you are with, updates are downloaded anywhere from daily to monthly. Make sure you stay current with the updates.

At 7:05 pm, President John Witmer started the business portion of our meeting. John acknowledged the larger than usual attendance, then reminded everyone that we need a slate of officer nominees to serve the group in calendar year 2008. The elected offices are President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Member at Large. We need members who have not led the group to step up to

(Minutes…….Continued on page 5)

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D-Link Wireless-G Internet Camera Model DCS-G900

By Merle Nicholson,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com



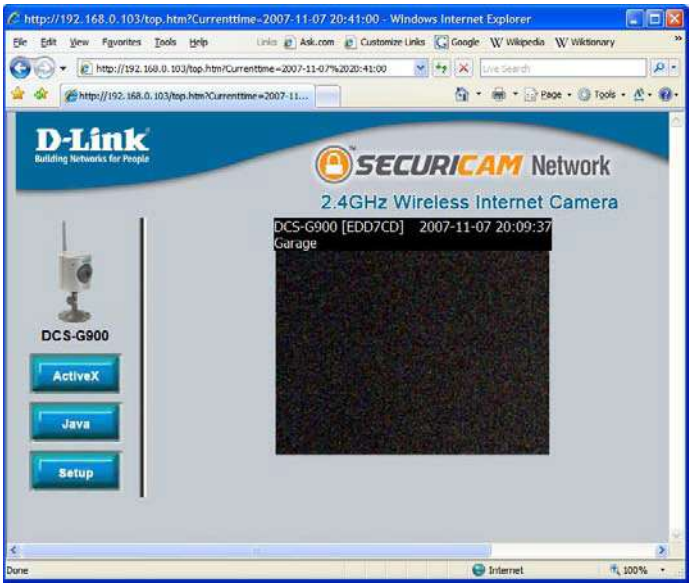
This is a camera you can place anywhere in range of your wireless router. You can then monitor the picture from any computer on your network. It's very easy to set up, and, other than the power cube, there are no wires to run.

My wife, Valerie, and I have wanted some way to monitor our detached garage for many years, and this appeared on sale at NewEgg, so I looked into it. I rely very heavily on the user reviews there in making my buying decisions. I looked at others, more expensive and cheaper, too. This one had very good reviews.

To understand how this guy works, you have to understand that it has a web server built in. It generates its own web pages, and all you do is connect to it with a browser – I use IE 7. It couldn't be simpler.

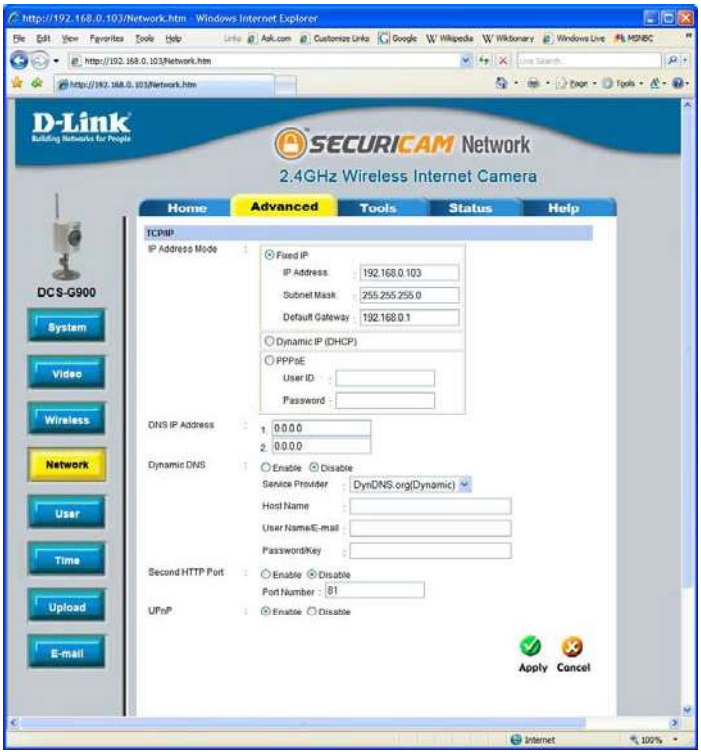
Some people program their router to expose the camera to the Internet, and, as long as you know your router's IP address, you can watch the cat tear up the couch from work! Or see that your hamster really sleeps all day.

I haven't any reason to watch it away from home. But if I did -- what I really like about it is that it isn't connected to a computer. You need the router and the webcam on, and that's it.



To set it up, you just plug it in and run the installation program. You'll connect to the camera's home page and select the setup, then you need to program the webcam with the router's SSID and whatever encryption key you use. Your wireless router DOES have encryption, doesn't it? You don't want your neighbor kid camping on your router to do his BitTorrent download of the latest Spiderman movie, do you?

When the SSID and encryption are set, the picture will start up using its default resolution and frame rate. You can set the resolution to 160x120, 320x240 or 640x480. You can set a data compression rate and frame rates in Frames/Sec of 1, 5, 7, 15, 20 and 30. There are brightness, contrast and saturation controls.



Other settings are available to FTP a picture to an FTP site at scheduled intervals, and there are email settings where you can set your SMTP server address and email address, and it will email a snapshot to you at intervals that you choose.

To view the picture in the browser, it will download an activex plug-in for your browser. There's an alternative Java plug-in, too. These install from the camera web server.

(D-link……..Continued on page 4)

(D-Link……Continued from page 3)

There is a stand-alone program, IPVIEW, that installs from the CD which takes up less screen real estate than a browser. This camera viewer can zoom in and out and also capture snapshots to a JPG file. Its main attraction is that you can view multiple cameras – up to four – in split screen. You don't need this program to view the camera, but it does have some real functions that compelled me to install it on one computer in my house. The others just use Internet Explorer.

With IPVIEW, there's a control panel that will scan your network for the cameras, so you don't need to assign a fixed IP address. From this control panel there are numerous setup options, including an alarm based on motion that will send an email, and there's a recording option.



View of my garage with door open

I've had it running for a month now. I have the application running continuously on my server machine that runs continuously anyway, and I'll set up an email or FTP to my website based on motion when we are out of town. In the meantime, it's there to check if the garage door is down, the garage lights off and the cars are there with their interior lights off. And that the bicycle hasn't yet fallen on my Honda. We like it; it's inexpensive, has a minimal footprint on the computers and easy to set up.

D-Link Wireless-G Internet Camera Model DCS-G900
$104.99 at NewEgg ◆

FACUG Fall Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Tampa P C Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Jane Jukes, Harry Lochabay and I attended the Fall conference of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups last month in Orlando. This group meets in the Spring and Fall each year in convenient central Florida locations. The purpose of the Association is to coordinate activities of statewide PC user groups and to exchange ideas for assuring the success of those groups. .

While few of us would attend a national conference in Las Vegas (the Association of Personal Computer Groups), why not go to the Florida association conferences? If you want to take an active role in leading our group (and you should) to assure its continuance with interesting programs, I encourage you to become an officer and attend FACUG conferences. Of course, you don't have to be an officer to attend. Registration fees are reasonable and include meals and many door prizes. Find out what common problems we have with other PC groups and share ideas on how to deal with them. FACUG programs are also educational, based upon current trends in our area of interest. Let me outline the most recent Fall program:

9:00 – 10:00
Room A: How Does A Web Site Help Me Build Membership?
Room C: How To Do A Pod Cast
Room D: Networking
Room E: The Ins And Outs Of Blogging

10:15 - 11:15
Room A: Double Your Membership
Room C: Bridging Mac And PC Users
Room D: Microsoft Vista
Room E: What FACUG Can Do For You

11:15 – 12:15
Dining Hall: Catered Lunch

12:15 – 1:15
Exposition Hall: Vendor Fair

1:15 – 2:15
Room A: Group Treasury/ 501c Information
Room C: Web 2.0 Technologies
Room D: Newsletters And Editing
Room E: Using Education To Expand Membership

2:30 – 3:30
Room A: Working With Digital Video
Room C: User Group Insurance
Room D: Success Of The Small User Group
Room E: Importance Of Software Reviews

(FACUG……Continued on page 8)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

the plate in at least two critical positions, Vice President and Secretary. Kevan Sheridan no longer can serve as Vice President due to work commitments, and Doug Mullis has served as Secretary for three years and holds two offices. Please offer your name to any of the current officers for any office so we can benefit from fresh leadership. Jim Purcell, our current Member at Large, must present a slate of officers at the November meeting, so act now.

Steve Singer from RDI will be our speaker in November to tell us the latest in computer hardware. In December, we will have our Christmas party, with no speaker planned. We will provide finger food and drinks paid from our treasury. Members may bring their favorite dessert or whatever they desire. We will need to take a head count of those planning to come for the party so we can order enough food and drink.

John indicated that the Digital SIG would be reactivated after the first of the year. Jim Purcell is planning materials for two sessions, and with sufficient interest, meetings will continue. John said these meetings could take place at the Pepin facility.

It was pointed out that some members are in arrears in their dues. Please check to see when your renewal month is and use our web site to make a payment or get a check or cash to our Treasurer.

At this point, John introduced our speaker for the evening, Mr. Ken Sparks with Media Concepts, Inc. of Gulfport, FL. Ken said he has been with Media Concepts for about five years. The company which is owned by Bob Skidmore and John Gallagher, both previously with RKO in New York, started in 1974 as a video equipment rental agency. They branched into video-library sharing (VHS tapes) in 1978. They predated Blockbuster and their first

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

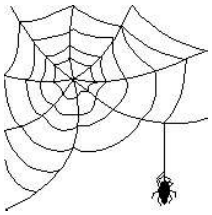
Internet Picture of the Month



2007 California fires from space

A crop of one of the photos taken by NASA's Aqua satellite on October 24, 2007, over the California coast. This is the image at http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/natural_hazards_v2.php3?img_id=14588. The main site's link is http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Financial News at MarketWatch.com	http://www.marketwatch.com/
ZIPskinny - Get the Skinny on that ZIP	http://zipskinny.com/
Florida Historical Society	http://www.florida-historical-soc.org/
PharmaFraud	http://pharmafraud.blogspot.com/
Woodworkers—Livio DeMarchi	http://www.craftsmanshipmuseum.com/DeMarchi.htm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

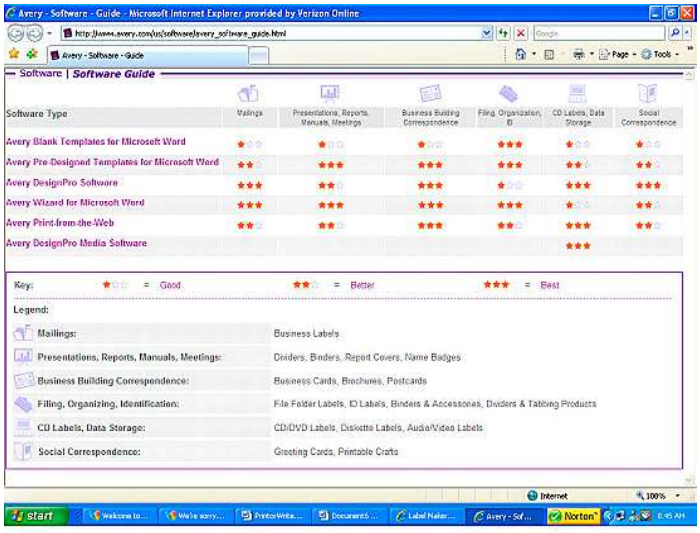
Print or Write Labels

By Jim Purcell, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

I was late in recognizing the utility of Avery's "Print or Write" labels. There are approximately 60 varieties of these labels. Some of the 60 labels represent a different color of the same label, plus you can get permanent or removable versions of some labels, and they even have a gold notarial seal to certify awards. They come in 4x6 sheets and usually cost between $3.00 and $6.00 per package. There is one 3x5 label per page (40 per package) and twenty-seven 1/2″x 7/8″ labels per page (945 per package). This format is an excellent alternative to buying packages costing $15.00 - $30.00 when you only need a few labels of a particular size.

They are also handy if you only need to write or print one or two labels when you add a folder to your filing system or you want to label a magazine case or the AC adapter to your latest toy.

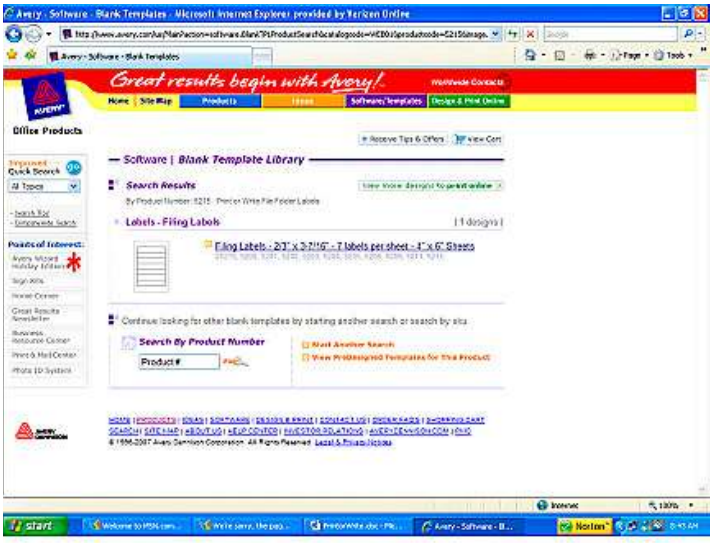
Avery offers some excellent free software that you can use with these and all other Avery products. You can pick from six options offered by Avery. One option allows you to edit on the web and print from there. A table to assist you in picking the product that best fits your needs is found at:
http://www.avery.com/us/software/avery_software_guide.html



Page to Assist in Selection of Software

The "Avery Wizard for Microsoft Word" is probably the most versatile and easiest to use if you have Microsoft Office (or only Microsoft Word) and you print a fair amount of labels. The Wizard will appear in the Tools menu of Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and Outlook. I have only merged from Access. The merge with Access was easy to set up, and I imagine that merging with Excel would be even simpler. The Wizard software currently available for download contains Christmas designs that you can use to embellish your labels and cards. I also merged with an Access data base using the "Avery DesignPro Software" to print name tags on the normal format label. Again it was easy to setup, and it printed just as designed.

At the other end of the spectrum are the blank and predesigned templates that you can download for the products that you are using. You can print single- or full-page labels, and it is easy to print additional labels at a later time on the page if you are printing less than a full page.



Example of Blank Template Page

You can use the labels and other products for many different purposes; I've included just a few examples below. To explore all of the products visit; http://www.avery.com. ◆

The following image is an example of some of the different labels you can have.

(Labels……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

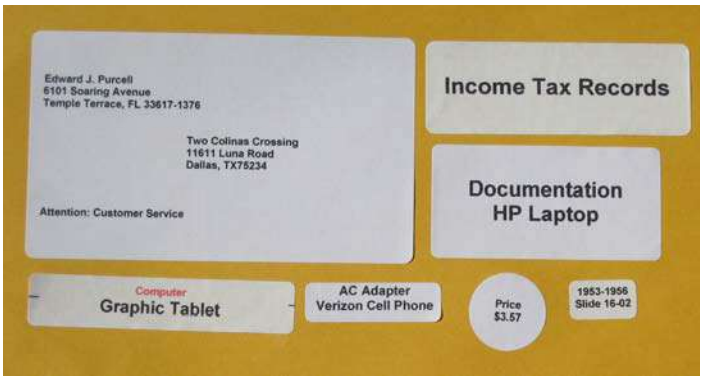
Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Labels……..Continued from page 6)



Different Labels

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

Roxio record the first side of the LP. That done, I stopped the software, flipped the LP and repeated the process. That resulted in an approximately 40-minute sound file.

The next thing to be done was to use the software to examine the resulting waveform and select where the track breaks occurred if the software hadn't already found them. I then entered names for each track along with an album name, musicians and date. The final step was burning everything to CD. I can now listen to music recorded by Louis Armstrong in the 1950s and '60s in my car and see the name of the song displayed in the car's information window. I have done about six albums so far. It really is quite easy after you have done one.

Census by Zip My latest programming project was to find a source of 2000 census data and build an application that will provide that data for whatever zip code you enter. You can see it at http://www.lamartin.com under the Useful Things link. I got the idea from http://www.zipskinny.com.◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 5)

shop in this area was Video Corner in Tyrone Mall.

They started doing DVD duplication in 2001/2002 and currently have 64 DVD drive towers and 152 VHS duplicating machines. They also transfer video from mini DVD tapes, 8 mm and Super 8 mm movie film and 35 mm slides. Video can be put on VHS or DVD. For example, at funeral services they do memorial video shows from photographs. They also provide a service for recovering images from digital memory cards. Finally, they do web site design and sell or rent all types of video products. Ken handed out packets on equipment they provide.

Someone asked the price for converting color slides to DVD. Setup is $25 and $1 per slide, or $2 per slide if color correction is desired. On movie film conversion, every foot is monitored to assure the best quality possible. They do lots of movie film.

Ken then answered a few questions and offered opinions on plasma and LCD televisions. His preference is still rear projection for large screen television.

John thanked Ken for his presentation and noted our sizeable audience as an indication of the interest in the program. He then called attention to free trade magazines Ken had brought in and free used P C cabling and devices being offered by William LaMartin.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37pm. ◆

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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(FACUG……Continued from page 4)

3:45 – 4:45
Dining Hall: Wrap Up Session/Door Prizes

You can see that many of the presentations are directed toward the successful operation of the user group, but these are balanced with current topics of general member interest. In the past, I attended sessions on "how to run a group," but this time focused on current trends and general interest sessions. Many of the sessions are posted on the FACUG web site at http://www.facug.org. Click on Fall Conference and then Roundtable and Panel Descriptions. You will find the presenter, a brief description of the presentation, and, in some cases, the entire outline used in the presentation.

Did I mention the camaraderie of PC users from across the state? Notice that this Fall even a computer trade show was held concurrently at the same site. While only an hour was allotted out of the program to attend the trade show, there were other opportunities to browse and to take advantage of "special show offers." Also, some of the contacts made for presentations to our group were made at these conferences. I hope you are inclined to attend a FACUG conference and that you come back with some exciting ideas to apply in your PC endeavors and at our group meetings. Won't you join Jane, Harry and me at the next FACUG conference? ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 12 December 2007

Meeting

Christmas/Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 12, 2007
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: The Christmas/Holiday Party and the Election of Officers are the main items of business.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

At our last meeting, Steve Singer, president of RDI (http://morevalu.net/), as he does once a year, introduced us to many new things in computer hardware of which we were unaware. I hope to do the same for you in this month's newsletter with what I write about my new phone, which is more computer than phone and runs a mobile version of Windows.

It is truly a remarkable package about the size of, and thinner than, a pack of cigarettes. The iPhone cannot even dream of doing what this phone can. And, in addition to all of the built-in functionality that comes with this phone, I can add as much as my abilities at programming allow. It is the HTC PPC 6800, which I review on page 3.

Agreed, for those of you who are not computer programmers, what appeals to me about the phone may not be so compel-

(Comments……Continued on page 7)

January Meeting: To be announced

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President: John Witmer (president@tpcug.org) 949-8007
Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org) 988-6480
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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave began the Windows SIG portion at 6:30pm by asking for questions or computer problems we may have. A member was having problems with pop up ads. Bob suggested running Ad-Aware, Windows Defender or SpyBot Search & Destroy. Web Root is also good, but will cost you $40.

Bob went on to say Microsoft now offers online file storage for no charge at a site called Windows Live SkyDrive Beta. It's 1 or 2 GBs of storage available to any computer with Internet access.

Bob suggested we look at Picasa Wed Albums that can be downloaded free from Google to find, view, edit and share digital pictures on our computers. Kodak has a similar web service.

At 7:00pm President John Witmer started the business portion of our meeting by thanking the large number of attendees for coming to hear our featured speaker, Steve Singer of RDI. John also introduced our newest members, Nancy and Bruce Norton.

The first order of business was the announcement that officers for 2008 will be elected at the December meeting so we need members to step forward. John introduced the current officers: Jim Purcell, Member at Large; Doug Mullis, Treasurer and Secretary; Kevan Sheridan, Vice President; and John Witmer, President. William LaMartin is our voluntary Webmaster and Newsletter Editor. Having our officers serving double duty reduces the size of our Board, so John asked that members please let Member at Large, Jim Purcell, know what position they would be willing to serve in so that we may finalize the slate of officers.

(Minutes…….Continued on page 5)

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HTC Pocket PC 6800

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Why am I writing about a phone in a computer newsletter? Because it is really more of a computer than it is a phone. A search of the Internet reveals that "HTC is a Taiwanese designer and manufacturer of PDAs and smart phones, particularly Windows Mobile devices. HTC re-brands and sells its devices to other vendors and carriers around the globe, including UTStarcom."

Some History My Pocket PC 6700, which I wrote about in the newsletter about one year ago (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2006/october2006/phone.htm), began to be flaky. You would be, too, if you had been dropped as many times as I had let this phone hit the concrete. Of course, it was really not my fault but the fault of the person who designed its case so that it was removed from my belt by my car's seat belt almost every time I exited my car. The problem was so bad that I eventually quit using the supplied case and bought a clunky replacement case that would not come off my belt. But this case was bulky, so I settled on just putting the phone in my pant's pocket with my loose change.

More importantly, though, that phone's Bluetooth never functioned properly. The way Bluetooth is supposed to work between a phone and a car is that, once the phone and car are "paired" (introduced to each other), the next time you get in the car with the phone, the two connect up again and you can then do all your dialing and talking through the car instead of the phone. However, the 6700 didn't seem to understand that, and almost every time I returned to the car, the phone and the car had to be reintroduced. I know it was the phone's fault because my previous phone did not exhibit that problem, nor does the current phone. This had nothing to do with dropping the phone since the Bluetooth never worked properly even before the phone's first fall.

In addition, though, possibly the outlet plug's not producing any sound to the plug-in ear pieces could be blamed on all the falls, but, whatever the reason, starting several months back I could no longer listen to my



favorite Internet radio stations, as I used to be able to do on walks.

The final thing that caused me to look for a new phone was the 6700's habit of locking up while it was running one of the programs I had written for it (recall, it is more of a computer than it is a phone), and, also, the screen sometimes just stayed very dark when I turned the phone on. But when I went looking for a new phone I ran into several problems: Specifically, I was on my 13th month of a 24-month contract, the one-year warranty had expired one month in the past, and I had no insurance on the phone. Thus, according to the Alltel fellow in the store, I was out of luck in that a new replacement phone--the HTC 6800--would cost me around $600. And this was even though the "advanced" tech fellow that he connected me with to see if he could help with the current problems admitted that they had numerous complaints about the screen going dark and not coming back. My screen wouldn't even come back with a soft reset and a new battery installed while in the store. Everybody was very nice--but no new phone without $600. It was enough to make you want to change to another carrier. However, there are only a few carriers that carry the type of Pocket PC phone I wanted. And I was joined to Alltel at the hip, having three phones under contract with them. So time for Plan Two.

Plan Two was my wife's calling Alltel's 800 number and speaking with a representative; it turns out they can do things the store can't. The result was the deletion of the current contract and the start of another two

(HTC 6800……..Continued on page 4)

(HTC 6800…….Continued from page 3)

-year contract on a new HTC 6800 phone with the same $30/month data service that allows you to connect to the Internet (the real Internet, not some hokey phone Internet). The cost was around $250, including an instant discount and a $100 mail-in rebate. I received the phone in two days and activated it with no problems. And, for all car trips, the phone's Bluetooth has connected every time to the car.

Let's talk a bit about this phone's features. Here is the list of things from Alltel's site.

- Windows Mobile 6.0 OS
- Windows Media player
- 2 MP camera with picture and video messaging
- Wi-Fi-capable
- Voice activated dialing
- Infrared (IR) communications
- Bluetooth® wireless technology
- Use your device as a modem for your laptop while traveling
- Expandable memory slot
- Speakerphone
- Mobile Office includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook, which includes calendar, notes, tasks and integrated address book

These are basically the same features as my previous phone even though the new phone is slightly smaller and more compact-appearing than the older one. It has a 2 MP camera with auto focus instead of the 1.3 MP camera of the older phone. The expandable memory slot takes a micro SD card instead of a mini SD card. It also has much more storage memory, around 160 MB, than did the 6700, so you may not even need to use an expandable memory card.

The specifications may be found at http://www.america.htc.com/products/ppc6800/default.html. They are incorrect in that they list the OS as Windows Mobile 5.0 instead of 6.0.

By the way, the Windows Mobile home page is http://www.microsoft.com/windowsmobile/default.mspx. Watch the Flash demo while you are there.

Observations I find this device responds quicker than the previous one. As mentioned, the Bluetooth works flawlessly with my car. It also connects fine with a Bluetoooth GPS unit I have.

Live Search I can run Live Search to return valuable information centered on a city I choose, a position on a map, my GPS position (if connected to the GPS), or someone's address from my contacts. To demonstrate this, I just selected a person I know in New Orleans, and Live Search downloaded a map centered on the address where he lives. This is the sort of map you can click with your cursor and move in any direction you wish. You can also zoom in or out. I can then search for all sorts of things close by--restaurants, nightlife, government, shopping, hotels, etc. I just did a search for Banks and produced quite a list ordered by distance from the map's center. And, since we are in New Orleans, my second search was for restaurants. It will let you choose a category, or you may select All Restaurants. With that, it will return the 25 closest.

Another useful category of information is Gas Prices. Here a search will produce a collection of service stations ordered by the price of regular gasoline, with the date of the price and the distance from you. It turned out that the closest station was next to last--that is, highest--in price. The oldest price I saw was only three days old.

For movies, it presents an alphabetical list of movies. Clicking on a title presents you with a running time, rating, etc.. For a specific movie, you can get detailed information and a list of theaters where it is playing, with start times, the closest theater at the top.

You can also get a traffic map for major cities. Tampa is included, but New Orleans isn't. The availability of all of this information, of course, is predicated on your having a live Internet connection to your device. For that I pay Alltel $30 per month for their data wireless cell phone service, on top of the monthly charge for regular cell phone service.

Mobile Office, included in Win Mobile 6, is mobile versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. With these programs, you can open and do basic ed-

(HTC 6800…….Continued on page 8)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

John next announced that our December meeting will also be our Christmas party and intentionally no speaker is scheduled. The Group treasury will cover the purchase of food and drink this year; however, if there is something you want to bring, you may do so. John also asked that if you have ideas for the catered food, let John hear them.

If you have music CDs or DVD's appropriate for the occasion, bring them. We will give door prizes away at no charge. You don't want to miss this meeting. A show of hands indicated about 30 will attend.

You may have noticed this month our newsletter is in color. William was curious what color would cost, as our usual printer (Pepin) was not available. Kinko's wanted $800 for 60 copies in color and $90 in black and white. Having his heart set on color, but without approval or the desire to spend $800, William ran color using his home printer and three and one-half hours of his time. Cost was about $40 for ink, wear and tear on his printer and his time. I already mentioned that his duties as Newsletter Editor are voluntary (no compensation). What a deal we get! Enjoy--I doubt it will happen again. Thanks, William.

It now being 7:15pm, John introduced Steve Singer and his wife Pam to tell us what is now available in computer hardware. Steve started by saying computers are continuing to get smaller and smaller. He showed us a fully loaded motherboard that was 10 inches square made by JetWay and selling for $170. He also told us about Thin Client, a mini computer now used in many offices connected to a server. It

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



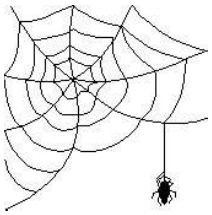
Bug from Flikr

Leptinotarsa decemlineata
Colorado Potato Beetle

This photo is from http://www.flickr.com/, which is a Yahoo company. The link to this beautiful bug is http://www.flickr.com/photos/endie1/1722932693/in/photostream. The photo (titled Kartoffelkäfer in German) was taken by someone named EnDie1.

Flikr is a photo uploading site with, I suppose, millions of photos (the site claimed "3,533 photos uploaded in the last minute"). There is everything from rank amateur to very professional. There are beautiful women, flowers, sunsets, cathedrals and anything else that you can focus a camera on. Why a bug instead of one of the beautiful women? Well, beautiful women are a dime a dozen on TV, but when was the last time you saw a beetle there?

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Central Florida Flowers	http://www.netpamj.com/index4.htm
Old New Orleans	http://www.thepastwhispers.com/Old_New_Orleans.html
Adobe Design Video Workshop	http://www.adobe.com/designcenter/video_workshop/
Bloomberg.com - business news	http://www.bloomberg.com/index.html?Intro=intro3

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Programming for a Windows Mobile Device

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

The real reason I wanted the type of phone I described in the previous article was that I want to be able to write programs that will run on its Windows Mobile 6 operating system, as I have done for the Pocket PC 2003 and Windows Mobile 5 devices I have owned.

Some programs I have written for these devises are:

- A viewer for photos
- An FTP program
- A database program for compact SQL databases
- A GPS program that will post your positions to a text file or to a database on the Internet

The database program is particularly useful and works as follows. First I run a program I wrote (using VB.Net in Visual Studio) for a Windows desktop computer that will turn any Microsoft Access database into a compact SQL database. These are the types of databases for which Windows Mobile 6 has built-in support. In Windows Mobile 5, you had to install a number of additional files to attain such support. Second, I copy the compact SQL databases to my mobile device, where I can then use the mobile database program (also written using Visual Studio) to open the database on the mobile device.

The mobile database program allows me to carry around in a secure manner data for our computer club, my neighborhood association and much of my personal information. It is secured by the data being encrypted in the compact SQL database and the database itself being password protected.

The image at the top of the next column, is from the web page http://www.lamartinsoftware.com/GPS/GPSExample.aspx at one of my web sites, the one used mainly for testing. What we have are 10 markers on a Google map that indicate the points at which I paused on a walk around my neighborhood and took readings from the Bluetooth-connected GPS with my



new Pocket PC phone. What is interesting is how these markers then got on this map on this web page.

Here is what is going on behind the scene that creates this map.

1. First, a program I wrote for the mobile device continuously displays my latitude, longitude and universal time that the device is receiving from the GPS every second.
2. When I click the screen, I am given the opportunity to send this data to a text file on the device--or, more importantly, if I have a connection to the Internet with the cell phone, to send it to a web service (a program I also wrote) running at lamartinsoftware.com, which will, in turn, insert the new position data into a table in a MySQL database at lamartinsoftware.com.
3. When someone asks for their web browser to display the URL, http://www.lamartinsoftware.com/GPS/GPSExample.aspx, the hidden VB.Net code for that page (not the source HTML) connects to the MySQL database, downloads the data that I earlier put there and creates the source HTML that puts the Google map on the page with the 10 markers you see and with the text you will see if you click on a marker.

What you see on that page will not change. It always draws on the same data, but I have other pages for my own use that display the last 10 or 20 or whatever number I desire of the most recent positions I have had

(Programming……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Programming…….Continued from page 6)

my device send to the database. I suppose this is the sort of technology that the phone companies provide parents who pay for a service to track the positions of their kids who have GPS-enabled phones. It is also the same technology that allows trucking companies to keep track of their trucks.

With my previous phone, I created a similar application that only logged the positions to a text file and had no Internet connectivity. I used that application to record to a file the locations where I took photos. I wrote about that in the June 2006 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2006/june2006/photography_GPS_programming.htm. I still have that feature in my new application, where the positions are recorded to a file on the device instead of to the Internet.

If anyone has an idea for another program for this phone, let me know. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

ling. And such a phone is not totally trouble-free. It takes a certain amount of "geekiness" to be able to keep it running smoothly.

I have met quite a few people who had my previous phone, the PPC 6700, who basically never used it for anything other than just a telephone. I suppose they did use the contact manager, the calendar and the camera. So I don't think the phone was really meant for them, since it is not really the best device to have if you only want a phone with a few features and a camera. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 5)

comes with a keyboard and mouse for about $350.

AMD and Intel are still the big competitors producing CPUs. Steve leans toward AMD due to lower prices and proven reliability. The latest push in processors is the quad core. AMD is releasing a three core CPU at a lower price, which essentially is a quad that (maybe intentionally) didn't quite make the grade.

Steve said now is the time to upgrade RAM on your existing computer, as prices are at an all time low. Examples: 512 MB DDR2-667 sticks are selling for $25.00, 1 GB for $34.50 and 2 GB for $74.50. SATA 1 & 2 hard drives are now also at very reasonable prices.

Steve went on to tell us about Photo JoJo, TV Torrents.com, VideoLand.org and MovieSneaks.com, to be checked out as we please. Steve always tells us about many interesting sites.

John Witmer thanked Steve and Pam for the informative evening. Pam periodically makes Steve slow down so that we can comprehend what he's presenting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm. ◆

Please don't forget to use the link at our site, http://www.tpcug.org if you are going to order from Amazon.com. We get a commission, and it costs you nothing extra.

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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(HTC 6800……..Continued from page 4)

iting of the desktop versions of the documents. Although a check showed that the new Word 2007 document format is not supported, there is a free upgrade available that will correct this. Outlook will usually be the most used of these programs, and an improvement over Windows Mobile 5 is the addition of HTML email. Now if you receive an HTML email, you first see the text of the message, and, if you so choose, you may download it again and include all the HTML formatting, including images. There is also a mobile version of Windows Media Player 10 to view videos--including those you may take with the camera since it has that functionality.

About the only problem I have encountered is erratic syncing of the device to my computer, and I have not got the problem entirely solved. The first problem was that apparently the USB cable I was using wasn't reliable, and, when I changed to the new one that came with the phone, things worked better--but not perfectly since sometimes I get the message, "USB device not recognized." Trying several times more usually solves this problem, but obviously something is not right here.

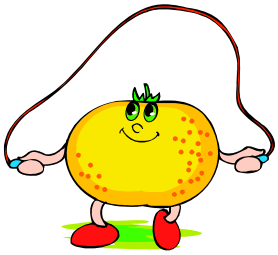
All considered, it is a great phone. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 1 January 2008

Meeting

Office Depot

Wednesday, January 9, 2007
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Representatives of Office Depot will talk to us about wireless routers and other things they sell. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

It's a new year, and thanks to my contributors I have only this small area on the front page to fill. That should give me just enough room to properly put CompUSA to rest. As you probably know by now, CompUSA has sold itself to a liquidation firm and is in the process of disposing of its inventory and will then close its doors.

CompUSA opened their first store in Tampa on Hillsborough Avenue near Dale Mabry in December 1991. I know that because in the November 1991 Bits of Blue, then-TPCUG president Harvey Bruneau noted that they would be open for the holidays. This was a very exciting event for all of us local PC users, and many of us spent a lot of time and money there. Apparently we didn't spend enough in recent years.

I was curious what I had contributed over those 16 years, having bought only one computer from them. So I checked Quicken, and it revealed I spent $25,743.02--not including the few items I purchased in December. So I feel that I still did my share. ◆

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February Meeting: To be announced

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Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org) 988-6480
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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Due to this being our annual Holiday party meeting, we did not have our usual Windows SIG meeting preceding the business session or a guest speaker. President John Witmer began the business meeting at about 7:00 pm. The important item this evening was the election of officers for calendar year 2008. Two members did step forward this year offering to serve the group. They were Ron Weinberg for member at large and Roy Dearmond for Treasurer. Jim Purcell acknowledged his willingness to give up his member at large position and serve as secretary, which would create an opening for a new member at large. Additionally, Roy agreed to withdraw as a candidate for treasurer to allow Doug Mullis an opportunity to serve a second year in this position.

Current member at large Jim Purcell then asked for further nominations from the floor before presenting the slate for a vote. Hearing none, the following slate of officers was presented:

For President	John Witmer
For Vice President	Kevan Sheridan
For Treasurer	Doug Mullis
For Secretary	Jim Purcell
For Member at Large	Ron Weinberg

A motion was made to accept this slate and to vote. All members present voted in favor. Terms of office begin January 1, 2008.

John then thanked those willing to serve the group as officers and acknowledged some past officers present at the meeting, including Merle Nicholson, Mary Sheridan, Jenny Lind Olin and Roger Waters. Appreciation was also extended for the years of ser-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

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Bluetooth

By Merle Nicholson, TPCUG
merle@merlenicholson.com

I've just installed a new Bluetooth device on my brother's new Vista notebook, and while it's fresh in my mind, I think Bluetooth may be a topic of interest to those who haven't seen the full potential of this very fine device.

Most people think of Bluetooth as being the means for the geeks you see walking around with a blue blinking thing stuck in their ear, and talking to no one in particular. Yep, that's Bluetooth, and it's communicating over a short distance to their cell phone in a pocket or purse. And, obviously, it's a short-range communications protocol that allows multiple simultaneous devices to attach to a computer, cell phone or car; wirelessly. The maximum range is 10 meters.

Bluetooth devices include headsets and headphones, keyboards and mice, PDA's and cell phones, GPS, ultra-mobile PCs, Playstation 3, Barcode scanners, in-dash radio/mp3 players, navigation devices, drawing tablets, cameras, printers, speakerphones and hands-free car kits.

My interest, of course, is in its use on a computer. I have three computers with Bluetooth. My main PC that I'm writing this with uses a "Microsoft Desktop Elite for Bluetooth" keyboard and mouse, and my Media PC in the next room is set up the same, with its own identical keyboard and mouse. The third computer is my notebook.

The notebook is a little different. I use Bluetooth on the notebook to communicate with a GPS device sitting under my windshield in the car, and occasionally with a Bluetooth mouse and keyboard when I borrow one from one of the desktops. I do have a Logitech headset (earbud) that I was going to use for IP telephone (Gizmo Project), but I wasted my money on that one--too early, too cheap.

When buying the notebook, I made a mistake in not getting Bluetooth built in. I'd picked up this HP at CompUSA about two and a half years ago, and, as was typical then, computers that were in stock didn't have that option. It's fairly common to have Bluetooth installed internally now, but you really can't count on it unless you research it thoroughly or order it installed as a custom order. As you'll see further down, having it built in is a real advantage.



It was apparent from the start using my notebook in the car that I was on dangerous ground. It sits in the passenger/navigator's lap and gets folded up and put on the floor sometimes or maybe put on a back seat. And I'm always aware of that damn Bluetooth "dongle" sticking out the side of the computer. Once when it was to be passed from the front passenger to the backseat passenger, I remember saying, "Be careful and don't bend the Bluetooth". "Be careful", "Be careful". When it got back to the front seat, it was bent severely.



So, as you can see in the second photo, I've largely

(Bluetooth…….Continued on page 4)

(Bluetooth…….Continued from page 3)
resolved that problem by replacing the Microsoft device on the left with a Cirago BTA-3210 EDR, shown on the right. Note that you normally would only have one of the devices plugged into the USB ports. Both are shown here to compare sizes.



Bluetooth "dongles" vary in price from about $7 to $35. On my desktop, I attached a USB cable, installed it internally to the motherboard and snaked the cable and dongle so that it's under the front plastic cover of the PC. On the Media PC, the dongle is just plugged into a USB port on the back.

When you install the dongle, most times the PC will ask for the Bluetooth drivers. Not always, though. My brother's Toshiba has the drivers already installed, presumably for the models they sell with Bluetooth built in. So the best thing to do is be patient for a half minute to see what happens. Also, you can look in Control Panel to see if there's a Bluetooth icon already there, or one appears after the dongle has been plugged in.



After the Bluetooth driver is installed, there will be a "Bluetooth Devices" icon in Control Panel. Most often the icon will be the official Bluetooth symbol.

To make it start talking to a device – let's take a keyboard for instance, open "Bluetooth Devices" in Control Panel and select "Add". Turn on the device (a keyboard is sometimes "always on"; sometimes it has a power switch). Make it "discoverable" by pressing on the small round button on the bottom and holding while the computer goes into "discovery mode" and the keyboard is found.

Select the keyboard from a list of devices found and then select "Select a new passkey". The computer will generate a passkey of numbers that you then key into the keyboard and press Enter.

The keyboard should be ready to use and will "pair" the keyboard to the computer automatically when the operating system boots. So this passkey business and identifying the device to the computer should happen only once.

So far, in my experience, mice don't use a passkey. My GPS does require one, but it's fixed at "0000".

One downside exists to Bluetooth that I can think of, and that's a Bluetooth device like a keyboard will not work when the operating system is not running, like setting BIOS, or utilities like a DOS-based disk copy of disk diagnostics. I keep a USB keyboard and mouse around for that purpose.

You also may ask why not just buy a standard wireless mouse and keyboard and save some money? Standard wireless mice and keyboards are somewhat cheaper. Remember though that Bluetooth uses a dedicated dongle that takes a USB slot all its' own; and that dongle cannot communicate with other devices.

My next notebook will have the Bluetooth built inside.

Cirago BTA-3210 EDR Bluetooth adapter http://www.eXtremePCgear.com. It was $22.99 but had a $8.34 shipping charge.

Also available now at Amazon.com and Tigerdirect.com. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

vice William LaMartin has volunteered to our group as newsletter editor and webmaster. His fine work is evident to us all. John also introduced his wife, Donna, who had assembled our party buffet for the night. We appreciate her hard work in preparing and presenting such an outstanding offering of food and desserts. Our thanks are also extended to John and Pepin Distributing for accommodating us and providing the array of beverages. The applause of those present attested to the above. For this year's Holiday party, the TPCUG Board Members decided that the party food should be paid for out of the Group's funds, thus alleviateing those attending of having to deal with trying to bring anything other than themselves to have a good time.

John reminded those whose dues are due to forward payment. William reminded us of the ease in using our web site with your credit card electronically for dues payment.

Next month we have asked Office Depot to do a presentation. We are also seeking topics for member presentation. Merle Nicholson offered to have a Windows Vista session ready if a fill-in is needed.

The business meeting adjourned about 7:30 pm. The party continued till approx 8:45 pm. ◆

Please don't forget to use the link at our site, http://www.tpcug.org if you are going to order from Amazon.com. We get a commission, and it costs you nothing extra.

Internet Picture of the Month

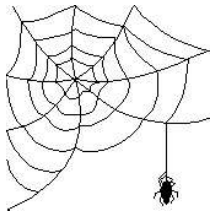


CompUSA Tombstone

This image is located at the URL http://www.counteragent.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/12/compusa-here-lies-gravestone.jpg. The very short story is at http://www.counteragent.com/2007/12/13/here-lies-compusa-beloved-father-lousy-customer-service-rip/.

It is not much of a website, but it had the best image I could find on the web of the demise of CompUSA. Most places I went said that the company died because of poor service and bad pricing. One such article is the PC World blog at http://blogs.pcworld.com/staffblog/archives/004100.html.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Internet Archive Wayback Machine	http://www.archive.org/web/web.php
Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man	http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=OMIM
Newegg.com - online computer store	http://www.newegg.com/
Overlawyered	http://www.overlawyered.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

eBook Readers
Using E-Ink Technology

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

My only hands-on experience with eBooks so far has been with my Palm Pilot. I downloaded my first eBook about three years ago. The Palm Pilot leaves a lot to be desired as an eBook reader but it does have the advantages of portability and instant access to a reasonably large dictionary while reading another book. By purchasing and installing the Merriam-Webster Collegiate dictionary, it became directly linked to any other book that I installed on my Palm Pilot. When reading a book on the Palm Pilot, I merely had to tap on any word and the definition popped up. It didn't clear up what the real definition of "is" is, but about every thing else was covered.

I enjoyed the portability, convenience and the luxury of finding the meaning of a word I didn't know before I'd even left the sentence I was reading. I was on the lookout for a better reader that would provide a page that would compete with that of a book but would provide portability and take advantage of the things that a digital electronic device can provide. I saw the Sony Reader advertised about six to nine months ago. Detailed information was difficult to obtain, but as I read reviews and was able to find a demo at a local Borders store I found that there were desired features that were not provided. The new Kindle Reader has several new attractions, but it also is lacking in some features. Both readers use the e-ink technology mentioned by Steve Singer at our November meeting. This technology paints each new page to the screen, which results in a page that closely resembles a printed page. You really need to see one of these readers to fully appreciate the quality of the page. Borders bookstores have demos displayed. The only time there is any appreciable battery use during the process is when the page is actually being painted. Unlike most digital screens, there is no backlighting so the page is clearly visible in sunlight or normal reading light but is not visible in the dark.

I'm only looking at two of the readers using this e-ink technology developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab, but there is a lot of competition from a lot of locations. A list of some of the competitors is at: http://blog.wired.com/gadgets/2007/11/e-book-readers.html (the chart is included below if you prefer using it rather than the link). I won't go into all of the specifications and all of the details of the features of these two readers, but I will discuss what I consider important pros and cons.

Sony reader Digital Book PRS 505
Sony just upgraded their reader from Model 500 to Model 505. They made several improvements and reduced the list price to $299.99. As mentioned earlier, it uses the e-ink technology that produces a page that is easy to read. You can switch to and from small, medium or large print on your books. The number of pages are increased or decreased accordingly. In spite of these changes, your bookmarks remain in the proper place, no matter which font you select. You can store approximately 160 average size books in internal memory and hundreds more with the optional removable Memory Stick Duo or llSD memory cards. The unit weighs about 9 ounces, is about the size of a paperback book and is only 0.3 inches thick. They claim about 7500 page turns on a single battery charge. There are about 20,000 titles in the CONNECT eBooks Store. You can view and access Native-RTF, TXT, BBeB and Adobe PDF, BBeB Book, Microsoft Word, plain text and RSS internal content. Supplied accessories include soft cover, USB cable, CD-ROM EbOOK Library Software. The AC charger is extra. There is no keyboard. You can buy a dictionary but it is not linked to your books, you must exit your book to search the dictionary.

Kindle Wireless Reading Device
Amazon recently released their e-Ink Kindle Wireless Reading Device with many new and convenient features. The convenience that they built into their system certainly "kindles" interest, but the price is $399.00. You need to look closely at these new features to insure that they provide every thing that they appear to provide. The unit is lighter and thinner than a typical paperback, weighs only 10.3 ounces and holds over 200 titles. More than 90,000 books are available, including more than 95 of 112 current New York Times Best Sellers. You can download and read first chapters for free before you decide to buy. New York Times Best Sellers and all New Releases are $9.99, unless

(Readers……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Readers…….Continued from page 6)

otherwise marked. You can subscribe to top U.S. and International newspapers, including The New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post, and top magazines, including TIME, Atlantic Monthly and Forbes, and they will all be auto-delivered wirelessly. Unlike WiFi, Kindle utilizes the same high-speed data network (EVDO) as advanced cell phones, so you never have to locate a hotspot. There are no monthly wireless bills, service plans, or commitments, so you can simply click, buy, and read. Wireless connectivity enables you to shop the Kindle Store directly from your Kindle, whether you're in the back of a taxi, at the airport, or in bed. When you buy a book, it is auto-delivered wirelessly in less than one minute. You have long battery life. If you leave the wireless on, you will need to recharge approximately every other day. If you turn wireless off, you can read for a week or more before recharging. The unit fully recharges in 2 hours. You must email your Word documents and pictures (.JPG, .GIF, .BMP, .PNG) and pay a small fee to have them formatted for Kindle for easy on-the-go viewing. Supplied accessories are a book cover, power adapter and USB 2.0 cable

Comments about Both Readers

I've described the features of both readers in general terms and did not go into a detailed listing of the specifications because I believe that if you are going

(Readers…….Continued on page 8)



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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Readers……..Continued from page 7)

to spend $300 or $400 for an eBook reader, you need to look closely at the features and specification to see if they satisfy your individual requirements. For instance, the literature on PDF documents is confusing for both readers. The Sony Reader literature says that PDF is supported. You have to dig to find that a PDF document formatted 8½ x 11 shows up too small to be read and the format cannot be adjusted by the reader (small, medium, or large) as it can for the books. You need Adobe Acrobat software or its equivalent to reformat the document. The Kindle literature says that PDF document compatibility is in the experimental phase. It seems that the requirement to email your documents to Amazon for formatting for a fee also needs some further clarification. The operating manuals and startup sheets for both readers can be downloaded in PDF format, and there are numerous reviews that you can consult online. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

February in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 2 February 2008

Meeting

TurboTax
By
John Witmer

Wednesday, February 13, 2007
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: John Witmer will demonstrate tax preparation software. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

As you can see from my article on page 4, I am back into Linux again. Using Fedora on an actual computer is certainly more interesting and rewarding than my earlier installation of Ubuntu on a Virtual PC.

Of course, I spend most of my computer time working on my Windows desktop computer. But this recent installation has convinced me that for people with a very limited amount to spend and needing only to browse the web and send and receive email, along with doing an occasional word processing document, spreadsheet, presentation or even editing images, a fairly robust version of Linux like Fedora is a wonderful, free solution. All they need is an older, used PC and the technical expertise to install Fedora. Most of the things that gave me some trouble, like integrating the Linux computer into a LAN or configuring MySQL, would not be of interest to them. So go for it! It's free. ◆

March Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Minutes of the JanuaryMeeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The meeting started at approximately 6:40.pm with the opening of the Windows SIG portion of our meeting led by Bob LaFave. Eric Goldstein asked Bob to explain the safety concerns of wireless connection to the Internet. Both Bob and Merle Nicholson emphasized that it is very difficult to hack into your router and therefore unlikely that anyone would even try. Merle suggested that if you have concerns for some reason, you can turn off file and peripheral sharing on your computer and this would prevent anyone from looking at your files even if they are successful in hacking into your system.

Another member asked Bob to explain the meaning of "ActiveX". Bob said that it is a program running on your computer that is activated on your browser. He stated that "Windows Update" is an example of an Active X program. He advised that you should set your preferences to require that you be asked before starting an ActiveX program. There was a follow-up question concerning how sites initiating ActiveX programs know which browser to use when more than one browser is in use. Merle suggested that the solution to having three browsers is to delete two of them. Bob cited some features on Firefox that he preferred, particularly the ability to download anything on the screen without purchasing additional programs. William LaMartin said that Windows Media Encoder, a free download from Microsoft, would also allow you to capture anything on the screen.

A member asked the meaning of the message on your computer stating that you do not have sufficient memory and that Windows is getting more memory. Bob stated that the notice is referring to "Virtual Memory" and that Windows automatically designates a certain amount of your RAM as virtual memory. Depending on what you are running, this may be too little or too much. He showed how to adjust the total. William suggested that he shuts down his computer each evening in order to release memory that had been set aside for reasons that were no longer

(Minutes…….Continued on page 3)

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An Infection Repair Case

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

A friend complained his system was very slow. This is an XP Home PC rarely used that, upon investigation, had somehow become severely infected, possibly with an infection that reinstalls itself if not completely cleaned.

McAfee Internet Security Center and Ad Aware, which were already installed had cleaned multiple items but kept missing something. The addition of Webroot Spy Sweeper cleaned more, but still failed to complete the job. Windows Defender was also added.

Just a few of the bad items encountered were:

- Adware SearchSquire
- Adware Ad Destroyer
- Adware eBay Moe Money Maker
- Roings Search Browser Modifier
- Spyware Shop At Home
- Adware Memory Watch
- Adware AZE Search
- Adware180 Search Assistant
- Adware Easy Search Bar
- Many more were buried deep and remained hidden.

But the most noticeable problem was the redirection of any Google search to a legitimate looking page of links, each of which really took you to an undesirable (porn) site, always at 85.255.120.26/feed/search.

A search for this problem revealed that this was a hijack from a server in the Ukraine, and help was available from the Tech Support Forum (http://www/techsupportforum.com).

My request for assistance was responded to by "Pancake," a Security Team Analyst in Australia, who guided me step by step through the issue. Various tools were required to find the malware, Trojans and any Root Kit infections. The steps were:

- Downloaded Fixwareout. It failed.
- Next, SDFIX to remove Trojan Services and repair Registry
- Next, ComboFix, which aborted because it found the system did not have a Recovery Console. It was necessary to download an installation package from Microsoft, which ComboFix used to install the Recovery Console.
- Next, ComboFix ran successfully.

With each of the above repair programs, a log was produced which, together with a new HijackThis log each time, was forwarded to the Security Team Analyst.

Finally, the system was clean, and I removed the repair programs and logs. But in the process I had discovered that the System Restore function was inoperative, and it was necessary to reinstall System Restore.

This whole process was laborious and time-consuming. It took several days because it was necessary to wait for the analyst's response to each log.

For those of you unfamiliar with HijackThis, it is the premier tool used to document system problems of this type. It creates logs of everything related on your system and is available free from Trend Micro. I urge you to download a copy and have it on hand should it ever be needed.

The logs can be analyzed by Trend Micro or any of several free volunteer forums.

It is amazing that this level of expert free help is available from such highly competent volunteers.

Finally, I installed free Spyware Blaster and ThreatFire as further prevention measures. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

valid. Bob explained how to use the task manager to determine which programs are running and what resources they are using. He warned to not to modify the registry unless you are sure of what you are doing.

A member stated that the computer manufacturer had set up half of his drive to be a backup drive; he wanted to know how to have the space available for regular storage. Bob and Merle explained that it was unlikely that it was consuming a significant amount of his storage. There was confusion as to whether the partition was for recovery or for backup. If it is for backup, it was suggested that there is probably a program like "Ghost" installed on his computer to perform this function. Bob explained the procedure for making the conversion in either case but cau-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

Linux One More Time

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

In the April 2007 newsletter (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2007/april2007/comments.htm), I wrote about installing Linux on a Virtual PC -- specifically the Ubuntu flavor of Linux. At the May 2007 general meeting, I did a presentation on that. And then I forgot about Linux. I had seen what it was like to install, update, configure and use it. Of course, this was in a virtual setting with its attendant shortcomings, such as not being able to see the Linux computer from the Windows computers on the network, not being able to print or have sound, and being limited to an 800 x 600 pixel display. There were probably more things missing, but that is what I recall at this time.

Recently, though, someone told me they needed to install Linux somewhere so as to be able to use a program written for Linux. Of course, I sent them my notes on installing Ubuntu on the Microsoft Virtual PC, along with the PowerPoint presentation I had used in my presentation to the group. They said that was helpful, but they had to install Fedora instead of Ubuntu since that was the version of Linux the program in question ran under. Using some of the workarounds for installing Fedora on a VPC that I had to use to install Ubuntu, they were able to get Fedora 8 successfully installed on a VPC. Additionally, the program in question ran in that environment.

That prompted me to download the Fedora 8 iso file and get it running on a Microsoft Virtual PC. But there were a number of problems, such as the display size being too small and its not always booting on the first try. Problems enough for me to eye that unused Gateway 450X laptop that had been my daughter's first computer in college. It got replaced after a couple years of use because of, based on what could best be diagnosed over the phone, a failing hard drive. Additionally, the lid had a crack on the back caused by the binding of the left hinge. Could I bring this machine back to life? It hadn't been booted in a year. I decided to give it a try with the thought of installing Linux on it. It would be nice to give Linux a try on a real computer (with a sticking hinge and a suspect hard drive) instead of in a virtual setting.

I connected it to its AC adapter, let the battery charge for a little, then pressed the power button, and it came to life with Windows XP. I then cleaned up the files on the hard drive a bit and copied any documents and pictures on it to a folder on one of my USB external hard drives. Then I went a step further and installed Acronis True Image on it and did a complete backup of the entire C drive, again to one of my USB external hard drives. That was just is case I wanted to restore Windows XP with Microsoft Office, etc. to the computer at some future date.

Now I was ready to give Fedora a try on the laptop. First, on my desktop computer, I took the 3.18 GB Fedora 8 i386 iso file I had downloaded from one of the Linux mirror sites and made a DVD from it. By the way, I used a mirror site (the one at Georgia Tech) instead of the Fedora site, http://fedoraproject.org/, to get the iso file since the Georgia Tech site was feeding the file to me about 10 times faster than was the Fedora site -- 380 KB/sec vs. 38 KB/sec, as I recall. The URL for the Georgia Tech download is http://www.gtlib.gatech.edu/pub/fedora.redhat/linux/releases/8/Fedora/i386/iso/.

Once I had the Fedora DVD made, I checked in the laptop's BIOS to confirm that it would boot from a disc in the CD/DVD drive, put the DVD in the drive and then rebooted the laptop. The Fedora installation took over from there. It was all very familiar since this was the same sequence of steps I had already been through in installing Fedora on the Virtual PC. I chose to install everything available -- Office, software development (whatever that might be) and web server (Apache). That entailed the installation of 1106 packages.

Unfortunately, I did not take detailed notes, so I cannot tell you how long it all took. I do know that it was less than one hour. And I cannot be sure that upon installation I had immediate Internet connectivity through my LAN, but I think I did.

During the installation, you have to pick a root password, which is required for system modifications, and then a username and password for you as an individual user.

Once Fedora is installed and you have Internet connectivity, a check of available updates will produce quite a large number -- again I didn't take notes. In fact, almost every time you boot Fedora it will check and tell you that there are updates available. Here is a crop of what such a



(Fedora……..Continued on page 5)

(Fedora…….Continued from page 4)
screen looks like.

You can view the updates and then tell Fedora to download and install them. It is just like in Windows -- except a lot more frequent.

With the Firefox browser working, the next thing to do is to set up some email accounts in the Evolution email program, This process is similar to what you would do in Outlook or Outlook Express in Windows, and I had no trouble setting up my Road Runner and Netcom email accounts.

The next thing on my schedule was to check out the Open Office word processor, spreadsheet and presentation programs. I was familiar from these from my work in Ubuntu. They function much as their counterparts -- Word, Excel and PowerPoint -- do in Windows.

To test for the Open Office programs ability to also open these Microsoft-created documents, I needed to get a Word document, an Excel sheet and a PowerPoint presentation on the Fedora computer. Well, it was connected to the network through my router since it was accessing the Internet. But I, as yet, had not been able to see the Windows network from the Linux computer or see the Linux computer from the Windows computers. That was a problem to be tackled later. For the moment, to get some Windows files to work with, I simply emailed them to myself from my Windows computer, shut down the email program on the Windows machine so as not to inadvertently receive them there, and went to the Linux computer and did a send and receive with its email program.

Open Office opened all three documents fine. The only problem I saw was that, in some of the slides in the presentation program, the text was a little large and overwrote some images. I think this may have been caused by the

(Fedora…….Continued on page 6)

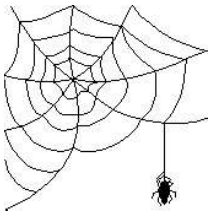
Internet Picture of the Month



Rex, Mardi Gras 2008
New Orleans

February 5 was Mardi Gras this year in New Orleans. And since I am a former resident of that old city and attended many parades and always tried to get to the French Quarter on the big day, I like to check on the Internet to view some photos of the various parades and costumed people. One of the first places to check is the site of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*. This photo of Rex, King of Carnival, came from that site's photo pages. The link to the site is http://www.nola.com/.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Big Think - We Are What You Think	http://www.bigthink.com/
Bloomberg Radio	http://www.bloomberg.com/radio/
Mayflower History	http://www.mayflowerhistory.com/
Techcrunch - review of Internet stuff	http://www.techcrunch.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Fedora…….Continued from page 5)

required font not being on the Linux computer. And that gives me something else to look into -- importing fonts from the Windows computer into the Linux computer, since I recall reading somewhere that Linux could use True Type fonts.

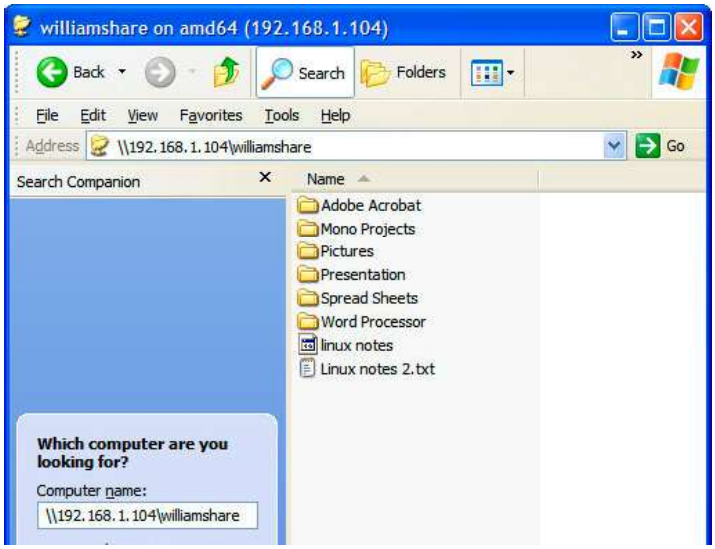
Now to the networking problem. To be able to see my main desktop computer, named AMD64, from the Linux computer, I had to manually set up a host setting in the Linux Networking dialog for AMD64, with the IP address of AMD64. That Fedora provided a Windows style dialog from which to do this, and I did not have to drop to a command prompt, which shows how far some versions (Fedora here) of Linux have come.

I also finally got the Windows computer to see the Linux computer by setting up a share on the Fedora computer in Samba (Unix networking protocol), with System | Administration | Samba named williamshare for the folder I wanted to share. Then I could see it in Windows when I searched for the share with \\192.168.1.104\williamshare. Next, my problem was to get a password and username to work since it asks for them. To do this, I needed to add my Windows username and password to those accepted by Samba, using the Samba server configuration and the samba user configuration, as explained in the Help at System | Administration | Samba. I had a little trouble with the user name when logging on from the Windows computer. I had set up a Samba user with Unix user name william, Windows user name William LaMartin and the Windows password. It turned out that I needed to log on from the Windows machine using the Unix user name of william and the Windows password for William LaMartin -- a bit confusing. Additionally, Samba needed to be enabled in the Firewall settings of Fedora.

The screen capture above is of my shared folder on the Fedora computer as seen from my Windows computer. I have only gone into the details of setting all this up since, if you should decide to install Fedora on a computer where there is a LAN, seeing and being seen by the Windows computers on the network will probably be one of your major problems.

I think most Windows users who install Linux on a computer really do not go much past simply browsing the Internet and using the Open Office programs. My goal is to see how much I can actually do with this Fedora setup. So what more have I done so far?

Since the Fedora setup allows you to include the Apache web server in its installation, I did that, and to get it to work was as simple as starting the httpd service in System |



Administration | Services. I could then place the files for web sites I had already created in the appropriate folder on the Fedora computer and view them with a browser from anywhere on my network -- or, if I had configured my router to allow such, from anywhere on the Internet.

I next downloaded the free MySQL database and installed it and started the MySQL service. After a bit of configuration of the database from the command prompt, I then put the same web pages I had created for the Ubuntu VPC setup on the Fedora computer so that a user from a web browser could view and insert new data into the database. Just the sort of things I do in the Windows server and web programming environment.

To enable the Firefox browser to be able to render some of the "fancy" pages on the web, I downloaded and installed the Adobe Flash and Acrobat plug-ins. I also downloaded Real Player, since obviously Windows Media Player is not available. What I couldn't find is something to Play QuickTime movies.

Now, I do a lot of work with photos, and Linux has a pretty good image editor named GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program). While not as powerful as Photoshop, it will probably do more than most users need. I haven't done much with it but hope to investigate it more in the future. What really surprised me, though, was that you can open and edit Photoshop files with it. In the screen capture below, you have the GIMP toolbox on the left, a Photoshop file (.PSD) open in the middle and a GIMP Layers Dialog open on the right that displays the different layers in the image. I was quite impressed with GIMP's ability to do that.

The two printers shared from my main Windows computer,

(Fedora…….Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

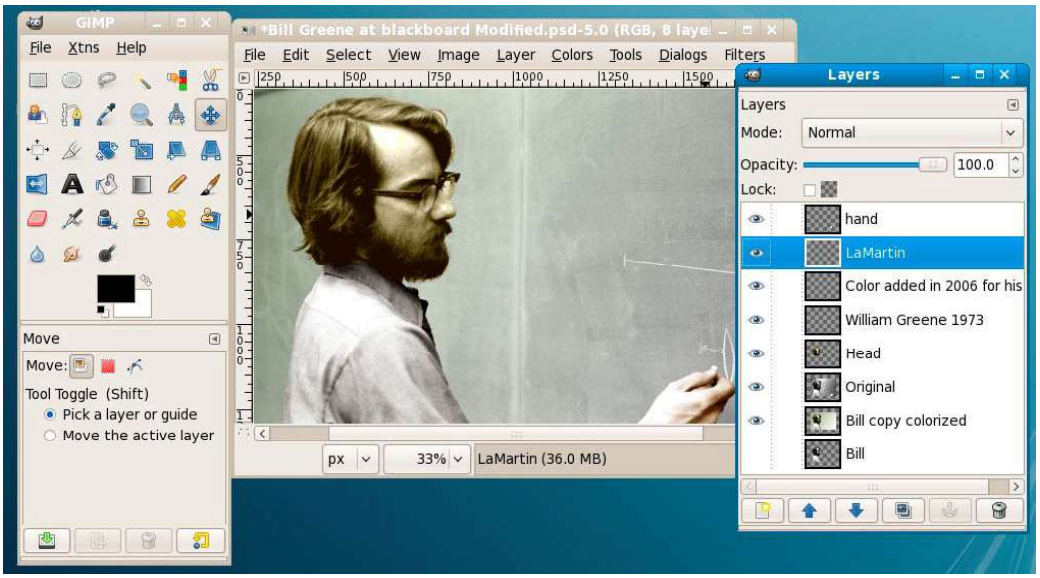
Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Fedora…….Continued from page 6)

an Epson 2200 and an HP 4 Plus, were also easy to set up in Fedora using installed drivers for the Unix printing system copyrighted by Apple. The only thing that I have tried but failed at is getting the laptop's wireless card working with Fedora.

So, if you have an unused computer, give Fedora a try. It is free; all it will cost is your time. ◆



(Minutes…….Continued from page 3)

tioned that the member be sure of what he was doing before taking any action.

A member asked about a backup program. Bob recommended Acronis and cited Newegg as an economical source. He said that there are a variety of programs that will fit various needs. He also mentioned several programs that allow you to easily clone a computer drive. He identified Sync Toy as a free program from Microsoft. It is an easy to use, customizable application that helps you copy, move, rename, and delete files between folders and computers. Bob recommended using external hard drives for backup of files (as opposed to your entire hard drive); they are inexpensive and small so can easily be moved to external locations for storage. William suggested that storage on any media should not be left dormant, especially CD's and DVD's. Jim Purcell reminded members to consider CD's and DVD's from MAM-A Inc. as discussed in the July 2007 TPCUG Newsletter (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2007/July2007/cd-dvd.htm).

President John Witmer opened the business portion of our meeting at 7:40 pm with a discussion of the upcoming FACUG meeting. The meeting will be held in Zephyrhills on March 7th, 8th and 9th at the Zephyrhills High School. The early registration deadline is February 9th. All of the pertinent information can be found at http://www.facug.org.

John mentioned that next month's program would be a demonstration of TurboTax. He advised that the demonstration was not intended to provide tax advice but to show how the software can be used to prepare a return and find answers to your tax questions.

John introduced the speakers for the evening: Dave Aponte, Assistant Manager, and Ryan Pulliam, Tech Specialist, from the Brandon Office Depot store at 10057 E. Adamo Drive. Dave started with a summary of their services. He explained their ink refill program, which they began in 2007. They can only refill cartridges that have the print head attached to the cartridge, which excludes, among others, Epson and Brother. The pricing recently changed to

(Minutes…….Continued on page 8)

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(Minutes……..Continued from page 7)
$10 per cartridge. The machine that they use requires 15 to 20 minutes to fill one cartridge. They usually have about 90 cartridges in their processing queue. William asked about their policy to carry or not to carry a printer cartridge. The only thing that they could identify was whether the store carried the printer.

Office Depot recently entered the HDTV market. They explained the requirements to get an HDTV configured and operating. On February 17, 2009, all analog TV broadcasts will cease. There was also a discussion of their rewards program and their product protection plans.

Bryan mentioned the trend in small laptops. He described the features of the new 8-inch laptop, which weighs about 2 lbs. and uses flash memory with no hard drive. The models have from 2 to 8 gigabytes of flash memory. Doug Mullis asked if there was anything new in wireless routers. Ryan said that the wireless N system is faster and more expensive but there is no advantage unless you convert your whole system. The question and answer session ended at approximately 8:30pm.

John thanked Dave and Ryan and asked the members to confirm that the TurboTax demo is something in which they are interested. The answer was yes. The meeting closed at approximately 8:45pm. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



March in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 3 March 2008

Meeting

Blain Barton
From Microsoft

Wednesday, March 12, 2007
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft will demonstrate Microsoft software. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I have a bit of space to fill in this month's newsletter, so I suppose I should write something. Many years back we decided to only use articles from our members, and that makes it difficult to fill the newsletter some months. Many groups use articles that appear in other clubs' newsletters, but I feel that if you want to read those you can go to the various clubs' online newsletters, as follows: Go to our web site, http://www.tpcug.org, and click on the Affiliations button and then select APCUG. Once at the APCUG site, click on User Groups at the top of the site and then "Find a UG near you." That will produce a list of states and even countries.

As an example, selecting FL and then looking down the resulting list until you get to Tampa, you might want to look at our sister group, the Greater Tampa Bay PC Users Group. Once on their site, you could then select the Newsletters link

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

April Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The meeting started at approximately 6:35pm with the opening of the Windows SIG portion of our meeting, led by Bob LaFave. Bob introduced a product called Autoruns, which is one of many utilities originally from the site Sysinternals by a company called Winternals Software that was recently acquired by Microsoft. The program shows what is running on your computer. He recommended going to Microsoft TechNet on the web and reviewing the utilities provided by this recently-acquired company. One utility that is no longer sold is Erd Commander, a program that allowed compromising passwords on personal computers.

As a lead-in to John Witmer's presentation on Turbo Tax, Bob reviewed several alternatives that offered free tax preparation on the web. John Walden and Merle Nicholson asked about the security and storage of the data that was provided to Turbo Tax when filing online. Bob indicated that it was stored with Intuit and is available to you by password for comparison purposes the following year. Bob was asked about his comfort in using "registry cleaners". He said that he was not comfortable using a registry cleaner because the registry has become so complex that he would rather find the problems himself. William LaMartin and Merle Nicholson questioned the need to clean the register unless there is a specific problem. They stated that they felt it involved a miniscule amount of space and you are taking the chance of causing major harm. William, Merle and Bob agreed that "registry cleaners" are dangerous. Bob discussed the need to monitor your cache settings for temporary Internet files and to set a level that is appropriate for you. Multiple users generate their own sets of data, including temporary Internet files.

(Minutes…….Continued on page 3)

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Virtual Vista

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Like most other users, I am well satisfied with XP. The Microsoft Vista Upgrade Advisor reported that most of my hardware was acceptable except for my old scanner. However, my software required numerous patches or upgrades. Accordingly, I saw no compelling reason to upgrade to Vista at this time.

I still do some limited consulting work and am beginning to encounter Vista systems.

In an attempt to become more familiar with Vista and avoid all the required changes to my system, I decided to try installing Vista in a virtual PC. Using Microsoft Virtual PC 2007, I installed my Vista Ultimate Edition with the New Virtual Machine Wizard.

The installation was simple and my Internet connection was immediately available. A large number of Vista updates were then downloaded and installed.

Next, I installed "Virtual PC Additions", which help tie the host and guest (virtual PC) together, such as Drag and Drop, Mouse Control, and Folder Sharing. Then I added a compatible anti-virus program for safety.

I have not actually used the new Windows Mail but was able to explore it and it seems to be operational. Network Printing and File Sharing worked, and I could access files on my host PC and see the Virtual PC as part of my network from my XP host.

Overall this experiment was worthwhile for me but should not be confused with a full non-virtual installation. I have not tried every available feature but can return to the virtual machine to test something else at any time with just a few clicks.

However, there are limitations of Vista with Microsoft's Virtual PC product.
There is no support for the Aero Glass graphics. Devices are all emulated so the actual drivers are neither needed nor available. I could not directly print from the Virtual PC until I discovered that direct printing works if you turn on LPT1 in Settings of the Virtual PC 2007 Console. Virtual PC is by nature somewhat slower than the host PC.

Support for Virtual PC2007 is at Microsoft's Virtual PC Support 2004 Center. Forums, Blogs and Newsgroups already exist. These include step-by-step installation instructions.

Anyone who hesitates to try this because they fear compromising their host pc should remember that the great feature of this type of virtualization is that it can be deleted with ease, and no harm done.

It should be noted that Microsoft has only recently increased its virtualization technology effort. Several other companies specialize in this technology. VMware makes a free Virtualization Server available. Anyone seriously interested in virtualization is well-advised to check out competitive products. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

One of the members asked if there were tutorials for the use of "Recovery Console". Merle indicated that Microsoft has some very good tutorials on the details of its use. Bob gave an overview of "Recovery Console" and the many facets of its capabilities.

President John Witmer opened the business portion of our meeting at approximately 7:25pm with a discussion of next month's program. Doug advised that Blain Barton from Microsoft will be the presenter for the March meeting. John reminded the group that the Florida Association of Computer User Groups is having their spring meeting in Zephyrhills on March 7, 8 and 9. John announced that we have three new members: Eric Goldstein, Mark O'Leary and Arthur C. Williams. John mentioned that we have no one scheduled to present a program in April and that if

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)
to view one of a list of newsletters going back to 2006. So, if you have a lot of free time, there should be plenty of articles you can read for free when you consider just a few groups for each state plus the foreign ones.

What to write about this month? I can't write more about my Linux adventure, as I did in last month's newsletter, since I haven't even booted that computer in the past several weeks. But I will probably have some more to say later in the year when I have tried to do a few things still undone, like figuring out how to back up the entire setup to a USB hard drive, as I do my Windows computers.

I can't write about programming with Visual Studio for my Windows Mobile phone, since I have done nothing new in the past couple of months. The same is almost but not quite true for my Windows desktop programming.

Statistics for the TPCUG web site haven't been mentioned in a very long time so there is a topic. A look at the February server log shows we had an average of 463 unique visitors per day with an average of 1.6 pages viewed per visitor. All days of the week seemed to receive about the same amount of traffic, as, surprisingly, did the hours of the day. Traffic was a bit heavier around 4 and 5 in the afternoon, Eastern time zone.

As expected, the home page of the site was by far the most visited. The next most visited page was an article I wrote in 2004 about my new Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner (284 visits). Most of these visits were obviously the result of a search engine search. I don't know if they were searching for Epson or for my comments on my previous HP scanners. The next most visited page was our Links page (195 visits) and the third one was an article by Bob LaFave in 2003 on IsoBuster (184 visits), obviously also found via a search engine in most cases.

Google sent 800 people to the site, followed by Yahoo with 442, AskJeeves with 95 and MSN with 56. Of the Spiders that indexed the site, the largest by far was the Inktomi Slurp with 7,784 hits, then the Googlebot with 2,547 and then the MSN Robot with 2,184. There were some 30 more spiders (or crawlers) that indexed the site to a lesser degree.

What computer things this past month might be of interest? I have certainly used my computer to watch my small **investment portfolio decline** in value, along with the interest we receive on our T-Bills, CDs and other such instruments. I am sure many of you are in the same boat, which seems to be leaking. Just this hour I received an email from the Bureau of Public Debt stating that the investment rate on a 182 T-Bill in today's auction was 1.852%. It was above 5% this past summer. I receive most of my financial news from the online Wall Street Journal (there is a yearly charge), the online New York Times Business section or Bloomberg.com. And if I read all that was available in just those three sources, it could take up a good part of the day, which I obviously don't want to do. So I usually just read the more negative articles, since the positive ones will just turn into negative ones in a day or two. However, I need to read something during breakfast, so I scan the printed version of the Tampa Tribune, where it seems most of the articles are ones I have read either at the WSJ or the NYT the day before, unless it is some article about our local government or other local interest. That brings up the question, why do newspapers still carry stock quotes in the business section? Do not 99% of the people interested in such now have computers where they can get this information for free and in large enough type for old eyes to read?

Photography is something that I usually do each month, and the computer and an array of USB external hard drives is where all those digital images are stored and sometimes manipulated. This past month was no exception. There was the annual Gasparilla parade that runs one block from my house, but I believe that was actually at the end of January. However, there were the Gasparilla distance races that also go down Bayshore Boulevard that I can walk down to and photograph. I took photos of this year's parade, selected ones I would like to put at our neighborhood website, used Photoshop to do a bulk resizing of then to a maximum dimension of 800 pixels and then inserted my name in the lower left-hand corner. I started putting my name on photos

(Comments…….Continued on page 5)

(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

that I put on the web a few years back after I found some of them showing up on other sites with no attribution. An automated batch resize and name imprint is not what usually comes to mind for Photoshop but it is a very useful and fast feature. Oh, and I also had it rename the files as 1.jpg, 2.jpg,… for an online slide show.

You can see the Gasparalla parade photos at the site http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org under the Hyde Park | Photos link. You will also see some photos of parades in 1962 and 1969. It is interesting to compare these older parades with our modern, more rambunctious ones. Those earlier parades were photographed by TPCUG member Gary Ennis, who loaned me the Kodak slides to be scanned. I did have to do a little Photoshop work on them to remove, as best I could, the effects of aging, e.g., color shift and small spots.

As for the Gasparilla races, I took a few photos, but they were not all that interesting—just people run-

(Comments……..Continued on page 6)



Gasparilla 2008 photo

Internet Picture of the Month

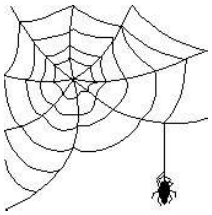


One Kilo Gold Bar

There are sites all over the web that will sell you gold. This particularly nice image is from the site http://www.taxfreegold.co.uk/index.html. The image is from the page http://www.taxfreegold.co.uk/swissvolksbankgoldbars.html.

A 1 Kilo (32.15 Troy oz) bar like the one above will run you around $31,800 at today's prices—not tomorrow's—based on the prices at http://apmex.com/. Sometimes I feel like the change in my pocket weighs that much. It is a shame that it is not gold.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Pinellas Trail Guide	http://www.pinellascounty.org/trailgd/
Appliance Parts, etc.	http://www.searspartsdirect.com
OfficeLive	http://www.officelive.com/
Household Chemical Collection	http://www.epchc.org/household_chem.htm

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

New $450 Notebook: Compaq F750US

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Well, I didn't know you could get a full-size notebook for $450, but Staples has them, at least for now. The Staples off of Dale Mabry and Spruce was temporarily out, but we got one of nine left at the store on Dale Mabry and Ehrlich Road. It's a good PC for $450 ($480 in the store and a $30 on-line rebate), but some things are lacking. More about that below.

From the Sunday ad, I was able to look up the specs at the HP/Compaq site, and determined that this was an exceptional deal. It's a Compaq model F750US.

Ok, here's what it has and doesn't have:

WHAT IT HAS:

- AMD Athlon X2 1.9GHz processor
- 1G memory, shared with Video
- 120G Hard Drive, some of which is reserved for system recovery
- Windows Vista Home Premium
- CD/DVD Writer
- WiFi 802.11g
- Card Reader
- 15 inch Bright LCD screen
- Ethernet, modem, 3 USB, AC Charger

WHAT IT DOESN'T HAVE:

- A card slot of any kind – that is, a PCMCIA or Cardslot
- 2G Memory to run Vista really well
- Bluetooth Transmitter/Receiver
- A case of any kind

The attractive part of the deal is the processor. This is a very powerful CPU. Other inexpensive computers in the $500-$700 range will have AMD Semprons or Intel Celerons. I imagine there will be a trade-off in battery life using this processor, but that is not a big concern for me.

The biggest disadvantage for me is the 1G memory and Vista in combination. HP/Compaq does not supply XP drivers for this notebook. This isn't keeping me from trying, but that's another article for next month.

In my opinion, a $450 notebook computer should stand as is. I would not buy one with the intention of upgrading it, and the reason for that is, in the $500-$700 range you can get everything you need, including 2MB or even 3MB RAM. And you also have to resist the hard sell for a $150 extended warranty.

As a final warning, this computer has a lot of crapware, some of it HP branded, and it's a lot of work to get rid of it. Then, in consideration of the 1G RAM, I started "De-Vista-izing". That is, I've disabled great amounts of graphics and flash and gegaw stuff that slows it down, and the results are pretty striking. A good start is "Tune for Performance", and then restore a few things like ClearType that you will certainly miss. It now certainly behaves no worse than XP, and performs pretty well. More next month.

The laptop is pictured below.◆



(Comments…….Continued from page 5)

ning (or walking). I am not much of a sports photographer. What was interesting, though, was the fellow who, along with several others, was taking photos of all the runners he could capture. He said that he worked for a company whose sole purpose was to photograph runners and then to sell them the shots online. He said during that one day alone he would

(Comments…….Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 3)

any of the members can make a presentation, they should come forth.

John began his presentation of "Turbo Tax" at approximately 7:30pm with an overview of tax preparation software. He discussed some of the more popular tax preparation packages currently available. Tax Cut and Turbo Tax are the two with which most people are familiar. He selected Turbo Tax because he has used it for several years and it is probably the one that is most popular today. He reviewed the four different versions of Turbo Tax and the features of each. Some versions include the ability to prepare your state income tax but of course it is not needed if your state does not have a state income tax. He and William discussed the ability of Turbo Tax to import financial and investment information from Quicken and even import investment information directly from some brokerage accounts. Bob indicated that the online version has the same capability. There was a discussion about the wisdom of placing so much of your personal financial information in one place on an online server. They pointed out the convenience of having all of your information automatically imported versus the inherent dangers of placing all of this information in the hands of a third party over which you have little or no control, or even any knowledge of the measures taken to keep it secure.

John explained the help that is available to you and also the forms that are readily available to you. He showed how easily information could be imported from last year's return if it had been prepared with Turbo Tax (or TaxCut), so that the information could be used for certain calculations or for comparison purposes. He also showed how the return could be prepared from scratch if this is your first time using a tax preparation package. He pointed out that if you have a simple return, the free online version is easy to use and permits e-filing. If you are receiving a refund, it can be in your bank in 7 to 24 days. Another advantage of the packages is that Intuit provides prompt updates that make changes to keep up with the many revisions to tax laws that are made after the period for filing began. The software provides easy access to all IRS publications that you need. You can view them online or print them. He pointed out that the program will calculate your depreciation of things like rental property. It will allow you to add the cost of things like additions to the property and the program will then recalculate your depreciation.

Help even includes videos to explain topics that are not clear to you. Changes in filing required by new statutes or IRS rulings are usually highlighted and explained in detail.

John worked through returns having different types of circumstances, showing how the software handled the input. He went through numerous transactions and answered questions as they were entered to illustrate the versatility of the software. There is also a feature that calculates your probability of an audit. In addition, they provide audit experts, for a fee, to assist in your audit should one occur. When you have completed the return, you are provided a printed copy of the return to file with the IRS and a PDF document that not only duplicates the return but also provides all of the worksheets that the program generated to calculate your return. The program also generates tax reports provid-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 8)

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☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes……..Continued from page 7)
ing useful comparisons with your prior return and with national averages in several categories.

The presentation concluded at approximately 9:00pm. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 6)
take from 8,000 to 10,000 images. And you thought you took a lot of photos. I don't think anyone will be using Photoshop on all those images.

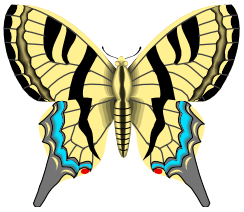
On a final note, I see that COMPUSA is reopening two stores locally, the one on S Dale Mabry in Tampa and the one in Brandon. I believe they are now being run by the company that owns Tiger Direct. They both should be open when you receive this newsletter. ◆



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Bits of Blue



May in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 5 May 2008

Meeting

Elevate Tampa Bay
by
Ed White & Ed Neugaard

Wednesday, May 14, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: See page seven for some background information about this month's Elevate Tampa Bay presentation. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Spanish and French Newsletter

As many members surely know, member Ed White is a big proponent of Spanish, and he has mentioned to me several times about the possibility of a Spanish version of the newsletter. Well, my foreign language abilities are severely limited to one year of Spanish in high school, one or two (I can't recall which) years of French in college and one semester of German in college. I was not a very good student in any of these courses, and they were a long time ago. But time has produced progress, and we can now let Google or Microsoft do our translations for us. These computer translations are not always that accurate—based on what people proficient in the two languages in question have remarked to me about such translations in the past. However, they seem to do a pretty good job on our usually simple and straightforward newsletter articles.

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

June Meeting: To be announced

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Secretary: Jim Purcell (Edward_J_P@MSN.com) 985-1676
Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net) 960-4132

APPOINTED (Volunteers)

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Programs: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave opened the Windows SIG at 6:40 pm. Ed Cohen asked how he can change the default view of his file folders. Bob showed the different ways to set the default to have the folders displayed as he desired. Rick Goldstein and John Waldon both reported that they recently began receiving a message to put the "Sonic" CD into the computer so that the program could be installed. Neither knew of having a "Sonic" program on their computer. Bob stated that Dell used "Sonic" software as utilities or drivers for different devices. The consensus was that their problem was the result of a Dell update. He showed different solutions that might solve the problem. There was a discussion of virus programs and their characteristics and costs. There was also an extended discussion of how to troubleshoot wireless connections. Bob advised that there is a bug in the software "Diskeeper" that can cause loss of data when used with the Vista SP1 operating system.

John Witmer began the business part of the meeting at 7:00 pm. He announced that we would have a raffle after the presentation of Voice Recognition software by Patrick T. Courtney. John mentioned that we are revising our method of notifying members their annual renewal date had passed. He said our financial status is good. Our expenses are relatively low because our newsletter printing expenses have been reduced to the cost of the paper and postage and we do not have to pay for a place to meet. He then turned the meeting over to Patrick Courtney.

Patrick advised us that he is a registered Professional Guardian. He explained the requirements to become a Professional Guardian and the services that they perform. He noted that the very sensitive nature of

(Minutes……..Continued on page 6)

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Olympus Digital Voice Recorder

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

After being elected secretary (by a landside), I felt an obligation to my constituents to report the minutes in the same accurate detail as Doug Mullis, my predecessor, had recorded them. He captured the details of each meeting with a small voice recorder. I had toyed with purchasing a voice recorder for quite some time to record memos and passing thoughts when it wasn't possible or was inconvenient to write them down. It seemed that a digital voice recorder would accomplish both tasks.

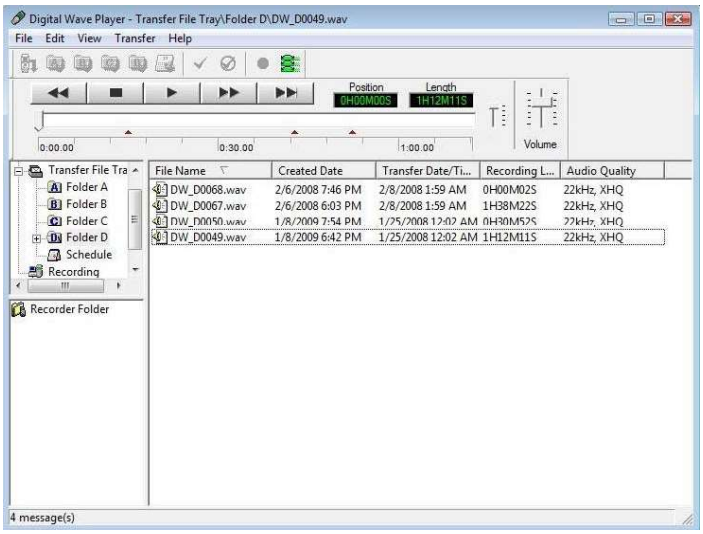
I started looking at Olympus recorders and went no further, because I quickly found what I was looking for at a reasonable price. I purchased the Olympus VN4100PC (list price $59.99, currently available at Amazon.com for about $45.00 plus shipping). This recorder is 4 inches long and weighs a little over 2 ounces. It operates on 2 AAA batteries. It is rated to provide approximately 25 hours of operation with alkaline batteries or approximately 15 hours using NiMH rechargeable batteries. It has four recording modes that allow a remarkable maximum recording capacity of over 144 hours (XHQ mode: Approx. 11 hours & 40 minutes; HQ mode: Approx. 23 hours & 40 minutes; SP mode: Approx. 47 hours & 20 minutes; and LP mode: Approx. 144 hours, 20 minutes). It has four folders built into the recorder, each of which will hold up to 100 files. A digital wave player and USB cord are included with the recorder, which allows you to easily transfer your recorded files to your computer (the model VN4100 does NOT have these features). The digital wave player includes a "Device Detector" which recognizes the recorder when it is connected to your computer and automatically opens the Olympus Digital Wave Player. You have several options in transferring your files but the folders (A, B, C &D) are already set up to correspond to those on your recorder. The included wave player is the only way files can be extracted from the recorder and transferred to the computer. Once the file is transferred to your computer, of course, it can be transferred internally or to another computer, copied and renamed, or played on other digital players that accept a "WAV" format



file. The Olympus Digital Wave Player is not supported for 64-bit operating systems. I have the 64-bit Vista Ultimate operating system on my laptop. Although the Olympus Digital Wave Player runs the same as it does on my Windows XP computer, the "Device Detector" does not work so I can't extract the files to my 64-bit computer. I extract the files on my XP computer and then transfer any files that I need on my laptop by copying them like any other file. (See the second image in this article.) There are at least two Olympus recorders that are 64-bit compatible, the WS-210 (only available at Radio Shack) and the WS-110. These two recorders plug directly into your USB port and come without the wave player software. The WS-110 has 256mb of internal memory and the WS-210 has 512mb of memory. Both of these recorders function as a flash drive and can be used to store files other than those you have recorded.

I've been pleased with the performance of the recorder. I try to sit near the center of the room when I'm recording meetings. I just put the recorder on the

(Recorder…….Continued on page 4)



(Recorder…….Continued from page 3)

table and turn it on at the beginning and let it run until there is a break or the meeting is over. Surprisingly, it picks up practically everything that is said. There are problems sometimes if someone near the microphone is talking rather loudly at the same time as someone else is talking. I've been able to sort these things out by using the wave player's playback feature and the cryptic notes that I've taken during the meeting. This ability might be a disadvantage for some projects. I purchased a "Noise-Canceling Microphone" from Olympus, and even when I reduce the sensitivity of the microphone it still seems to pick up some background noise. The instruction sheet has specific directions on how to use the microphone with voice recognition software. If you are purchasing the recorder for this purpose, I'm sure you can get more precise information from Olympus.

The built-in folder organization has proven to be handy. By dividing my recordings into four categories, it has been quite easy to locate files. I put notes that I want to keep when I'm reading technical books and magazines in one folder. I use one folder exclusively for TPCUG meetings. I put all of my reminders, passing thoughts and things I want to do that that I think of when it is not possible to write on a pad or in my Palm Pilot in another folder. I can quickly review them at the end of the day and take whatever action is necessary. The last folder is my miscellaneous folder for things like odd facts, unusual experiences, or thoughts that I don't know how to spell.

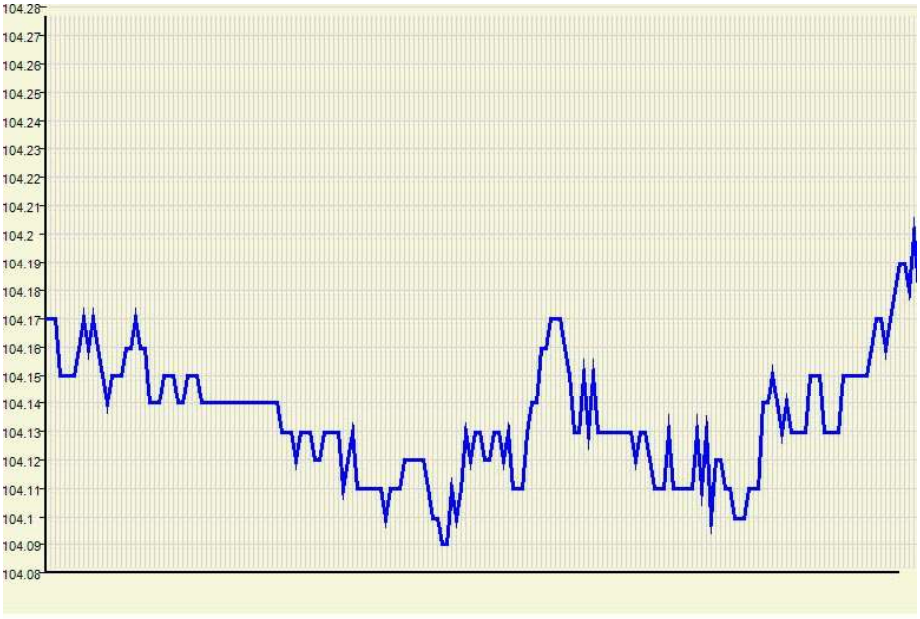
I found the Olympus Digital Wave Player useful in managing and playing my recordings. It is organized like the recorder, so it is easy to extract and organize your recordings. It has an indexing capability that allows you to insert and delete index marks while you are reviewing the recording, and you can also insert a limited number of indexes while recording. It does not allow you to edit the content of the recording or to run it fast or slow, although the recorder itself has a fast or slow mode when you're using it to listen to the recording. As mentioned above, the recordings are in the "wav" format so you can use a player that has the functions that you need. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

So, for the April HTML version of the newsletter, I added links to each article that provide either a Spanish or French translation. I may or may not continue this into the future, since all a person desiring such a translation need do is go to http://www.windowslivetranslator.com/ and enter the URL of the web page they want translated.

Graphing

(Comments…….Continued on page 5)



(Comments……..Continued from page 4)

I was looking for something for which I could write a program to do real-time graphing. Since foreign exchange trading seems to be all the rage now, taking the place of the day trading of stocks that proved unprofitable to most people who engaged in it during the dotcom bubble, I settled on plotting various currency trading pairs — for example, the Japanese Yen (JPY) against the US dollar (USD)

I retrieved the data for these trades from Yahoo in real-time by writing code to "scrape" such information from the Yahoo pages which display that financial data . The graph above is such a graph showing the USD to JPY conversion.

With all my programming, I had never done much graphing. So, with my interest in graphing growing, I then thought about three-dimensional graphing. This involved plotting on a two-dimensional computer screen an object that would appear to the viewer's eyes to be three dimensional. The first image below is an example of such using, Cartesian coordinates (x,y,z) in three-dimensional space and projecting the image on the y-z two-dimensional plane so as to produce a 3D-appearing image.

The second image is an example of doing a similar thing but using polar coordinates (φ,θ,r), where the Greek letters φ and θ are angle and r is a distance from the origin. If you have had some geometry in the past, this probably makes sense. If not, then just look at the images. If you find such images interesting, I have a collection of 3D images I have generated with my 3D graphing program at http://www.lamartin.com/ComputerGraphing.aspx. There

(Comments……..Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month

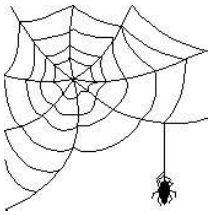


Microsoft & Yahoo

The image is from the site http://sarahmeyers.wordpress.com.

Well, for now the Microsoft purchase of Yahoo is off. They couldn't agree on the value of Yahoo. Microsoft was willing to pay around $43 billion; Yahoo thought they were worth over $50 billion. Today's stock market price says Yahoo is worth $34 billion. Marketwatch.com says that Yahoo had a net income of $660 million in 2007. To my uneducated eye, any of those numbers seems like a lot to pay to make $660 million a year. By the way, Google had a net income of $4.2 billion in 2007, and Microsoft had a net income of $14 billion.

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Graph Function Online	http://graph.seriesmathstudy.com/
FlightAware - Free Flight Tracker	http://flightaware.com/
Ronnie Gaubert's Photos	http://www.pbase.com/ronnie_14187
Marc Andreessen's blog	http://blog.pmarca.com/
Patent Searching	http://www.freepatentsonline.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

these services, legal requirements and the complete vulnerability of some of his clients required that his actions be completely documented. Many professions have similar requirements; for example, he related the story of a friend of his who was a social worker and was also required to document her actions. He said that while he was talking to her he noticed a sign on the inside of her door which read, "In God We Trust, the Rest of Us Must Document". Voice Recognition software helps him to comply with the requirements that his documentation meets the criteria of being factual, thorough, accurate, clear, brief, timely and well-organized.

He then gave an excellent demonstration of how he used "Voice Recognition" software to perform his duties. He showed how the software recognized his vocal documentary and transformed it into a written record of his comments and also how effectively he could use his voice to punctuate and move through the document.

Patrick was very careful to relate that he did not represent nor was he reimbursed by the software company. He was using Dragon Naturally Speaking Version 7 Preferred and recommends Dragon Naturally Speaking Version 9 Preferred, which is the latest version of the software. Merle Nicholson found that the software was available from NewEgg for $69.99 after a $50.00 rebate (includes a wired headset). It's $199.99 from the publisher, Nuance.

Patrick's presentation convincingly illustrated that the software that most had considered a toy or a curiosity has been developed into a valuable tool that can effectively perform a very difficult and exacting function. The presentation ended at approximately 8:30 pm. The raffle winners were as follows:

Sam Christy	Subscription to Smart Computing
Harry Lochabay	TPCUG T-Shirt
Jim Purcell	TPCUG T-Shirt
Dennis Neal	TPCUG T-Shirt
Merle Nicholson	TPCUG T-Shirt
Linda Neal	TPCUG T-Shirt
Todd Grubb	TPCUG T-Shirt
Ron Weinberg	TPCUG T-Shirt
Kevan Sheridan	Trend Micro Software
Eddie Rodriguez	TPCUG T-Shirt
Ed Cohen	TPCUG T-Shirt

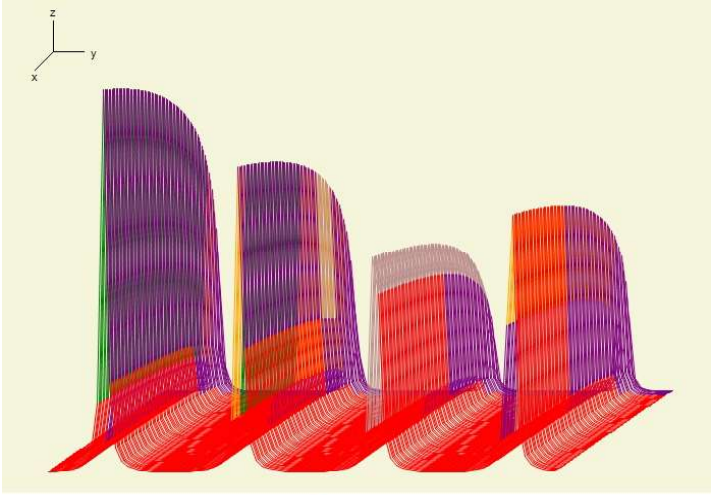
The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 pm. . ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 5)

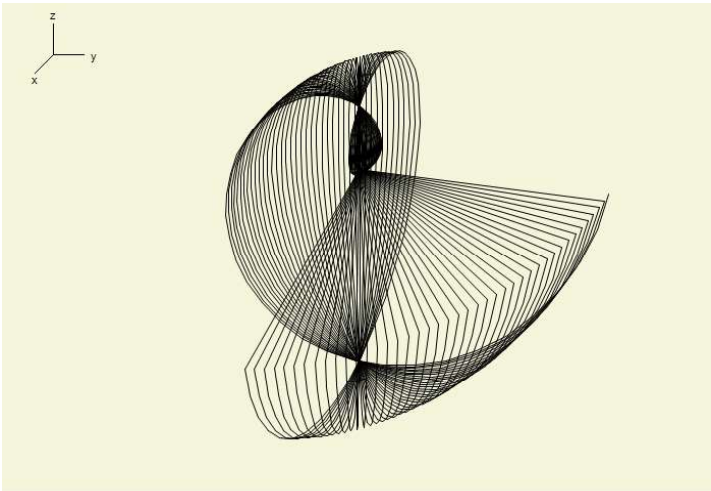
you will see the graphs full size and in color.

It is addictive to sit and think of new equations to graph. After all, there is an infinite supply.

Below is the 3D graph generated using Cartesian coordinates, and below that is a 3D graph generated using polar coordinates. ◆



z(x,y) = log(x)/(sin(y) + 1.01) | Amplitude Adj. = .7 | 0 < x < 250, 0 < y < 500 | x Step 3, y Step 6



r(θ,φ) = 40*φ | Amplitude Adj. = 1 | 0 < θ < 1.570795, 0 < φ < 6.28318 | θ Step 3, φ Step 12

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

ELEVATE MIAMI / ELEVATE TAMPA BAY

By Ed White, TPCUG
cwhite1@mail.usf.edu

To understand this idea, you have to know that it all starts with Jim Osteen. He is James E. Osteen, Jr., Assistant Director - Information Technology, City of Miami.

In conversations in his office, I asked him to explain to me a little more about what he wanted to accomplish.

To understand his answer, you need a little background. Jim Osteen will be retiring from the City of Miami in two years. He wants to leave behind "something really good."

He got his big chance when Manny Diaz was elected Mayor on a platform of improving the schools in the City of Miami. Jim is a very modest guy and will not say, "This is my idea", but I am certain that it really is his baby. Instead, he says: "The IT Department got together to see how they could make the Mayor's plan become a reality." And it is probably true that the mayor jumped on the idea and pushed everybody who works for the city to support it. You have to see this thing in action to believe it. I think that Jim personally is probably spending at least 50% of his time on this project and he seems to get anything he wants from city employees – from printing jobs to city cars for his people.

His original thought was this: The City of Miami, like most big operations, replaces 25% of its computers every year. They had been selling them at auction and getting about $5 apiece for machines with a lot of life left in them. He said: "Why don't we put them in government buildings open to the public? We have lots of them in parks, beaches and other public areas." And the Mayor said: "DO IT!!!" And they did it.

Then they found out that the public did not use the machines because they did not know how to use the machines. So they saw the need for a basic training program in email and web-surfing. The City got AT&T and the other supplier (I forget the name) to provide free DSL service at these locations. Of course the City of Miami spends lots of money with these outfits, and I can see that I really need to get the City of Tampa and/or Hillsborough County to sponsor/support/take credit for, or whatever, and then I can get just about anything.

About this time along comes the priest in charge of Gesu, which is a very large, old and beautiful Roman Catholic Church in the heart of downtown Miami. This priest is technologically-oriented and he tells the mayor: "I have this giant basement below the church. We call it the Gesu Senior Citizens Center. It has a big kitchen with lots of nuns to do all the work, and we serve free breakfast and lunch to the many poverty-stricken senior citizens living in the downtown area. I want computers and training for these people." And the mayor said: "DO IT!!!".

They installed four computers in a little room in the basement, brought in the City's one and only teacher, AND WERE OVERWHELMED WITH DEMAND, especially since the teacher, Maria Martorell, is from Puerto Rico, and teaches beautifully in Spanish, as do the other teachers she has now recruited. I did not see any classes in any of their locations in English.

So the priest built a bigger room, Maria got the old one for her office, the "school" now has twenty computers and is still overwhelmed. Quite a few of the students have purchased computers for home use. And AT&T and the other outfit give them a year of DSL at $10 per month.

They have plans to expand this way beyond senior citizens. The other "legs" of the program are: small businesses, parents and after-school. So the possibilities are infinite. And Microsoft damn well knows it.

Jim Osteen's personal goal is to expand this throughout the

(Elevate……Continued on page 8)

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(Elevate…….Continued from page 7)
state, eventually making Florida another "Silicon Valley." So far, I am the only "civic leader" to bite on this idea, and they are leaning over backwards to help me. I asked him if it would be all right to use "ELEVATE TAMPA BAY" as our name in Tampa and he said: "Yes, do it".

BUT, in May or June or July (I forget a lot), Miami is hosting a big convention for Florida municipalities and naturally Mayor Manny Diaz will make a speech. He will say that ELEVATE MIAMI is the greatest thing since sliced bread and recommend it to all the other city mayors who will be present. They already have posters printed, and leaflets, etc. on the way.

So we think this idea is a winner and we want to pursue it. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



April in Tampa
Taxes

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 4 April 2008

Meeting

Patrick T. Courtney
Voice Recognition

Wednesday, April 9, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: I bet you had almost forgotten about voice recognition, but it is back at our next meeting, presented by Patrick T. Courtney. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Old Newsletters
At our web site, you can view newsletters going back to January 1998 in HTML format and back to January2006 in Adobe Acrobat format. I could have taken the Acrobat version back to December 1995 when I took over doing the newsletter and also saved them in Acrobat format but didn't because at one time disk space was at a premium on our site. Now we have much more space than we can easily use, so I have considered adding more of the old Acrobat newsletters as an historical resource.

Until recently I hadn't consider the still older newsletters going back as far as 1988. The group was formed in 1984, and I am told by Kevan Sheridan that there was some sort of less-structured newsletter published at times between 1984 and 1988. When I took over the newsletter in 1995, then-Editor

(Comments……Continued on page 6)

May Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

President John Witmer opened the business portion of our meeting at approximately 6:30pm with a discussion of a possible presentation on identity theft by Hewie Poplock. The presentation, "Identity Theft – Protect Yourself", was delivered by Mr. Poplock at the recent FACUG meeting in Zephyrhills. There seemed to be interest in the topic but most of the discussion surrounded Mr. Poplock's request for some assurance that there is interest in purchasing "LifeLock Insurance" from him after the presentation. Interested members were asked to contact Doug Mullis, and, if he is satisfied that there is sufficient interest in the topic and the insurance, he can schedule the presentation. If not, it will be discussed and a decision can be reached at the April meeting.

Microsoft was present to provide another of their interesting and informative presentations. John introduced Blain Barton and Yung Chou of Microsoft. Blain said that their theme for the evening was "New Products". He said that Yung would talk to us about the Windows Server 2008 and that he would talk about Windows Home Server.

Yung stated that his objective was to inform us of the trend of new developments in the Information Technology industry. He also wanted us to better understand the reasons that Microsoft is proceeding in the direction that it is with their new developments. He said that Microsoft has found that IT professionals are spending about 70% of their time on maintenance (putting out fires). This prevents these professionals from using their skills to take advantage of the technological capabilities of the server. He gave a detailed explanation of how Microsoft has included changes in Server 2008 to lessen the maintenance

(Minutes…….Continued on page 6)

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Faster Hard Drives

SAS, SATA and 15K drive installation

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I've installed a new type of hard drive – SAS, or Serial Attached SCSI – that has dramatically improved the performance of a new PC. I have a pair of Seagate Cheetah 74GB drives running in RAID 0. They run at 15,000 RPM, and I'm pretty sure they're the fastest available.

I've been building a new PC for a couple of months now for my business use because I do a lot of pretty intensive database work. The faster the machine, the more work I get done. Also my current PC is getting to be about three years old, so I need at the minimum to replace all four hard drives. I don't wait for hard drives to fail, I replace all hard drives as they approach three years.

PROCESSORS

I started with an average-speed processor while I experimented, and have since upgraded to the fastest dual processor AMD makes – an X2 6400+ running at 3.2GHz. The motherboard isn't optimally set up for Phenom (four cores), so I'm waiting for a while on that and for AMD to raise the Phenom processing speed beyond the current 2.3GHz.

SSD

I've been looking for an affordable hard drive that will match the performance of the rest of the system. I was very interested in SSDs – Solid State Drives – and found that the fast ones that are large enough for a full Microsoft Operating System, plus Office and a dozen other programs, are simply prohibitively expensive. I think they will get there, but not just yet. I found also that just because they're solid state doesn't mean they're fast. Besides, a couple of recent innovations with hard drives have lowered the prices on all the parts I needed to stick with regular hard drives. More about that further on.

VISTA

The reason I put two months in the project was because I wanted to experiment with Vista and see if I can make it suitable for my business. I thought I was close after I obtained Vista Service Pack 1, but I now have a regular service program failure that I haven't solved. So I give up for now; I'll stick with XP for the foreseeable future. It's too bad, because, except for just a few things I didn't like, Vista was looking pretty good. I managed to find all the Vista device drivers I needed, with the exception of my old scanner.

PATA and SATA INTERFACES

The conventional hard drive interface has, for a good many years, been IDE ATA, sometimes now called PATA, or Parallel ATA. The connection from the motherboard to the hard drive or CD/DVD drive is a 40-wire cable – and now commonly an 80-wire cable of the same width. This is very quickly being replaced with SATA – Serial ATA that uses a narrow cable about 5/16" wide. They have even become predominant in notebooks. There is no longer a price differential in hard drives or motherboards between PATA and SATA. SATA will handle data faster, are easier to route cabling and don't restrict airflow the way PATA cables do. Even CD/DVDs are using SATA now. Virtually all motherboards now have at least four SATA ports. The software that controls the data is largely powered by the CPU. RAID support is also implemented in virtually all these motherboards, and, if you set up a RAID array, the software that runs the RAID also depends on the CPU to handle the data stream. The fastest and most common SATA interfaces run at 3GB/Sec. (Called SATA II). Desktop hard drives are always 7200 RPM. Notebook drives are usually 4500 RPM or 5400 RPM and, rarely, 7200 RPM. The faster they spin, the faster the data goes out.

SCSI and SAS INTERFACES

Until pretty recently, if you wanted a really fast hard drive you had to look at the server world and get a SCSI drive. SCSI drives have always been small – typically 36GB, 74GB and 147GB. And they're expensive – in the neighborhood of $600 apiece. The cable is very wide – 50 wires – and the connector is a monster, and you really have to know a lot of stuff to make it work. You also need a SCSI controller card at a minimum of $150 and up, more typically in the $800-$900 range. Many of these drives, however,

(Hard Drives……..Continued on page 4)

(Hard Drives…….Continued from page 3)
run at 15,000 RPM or, just as often, 10,000 RPM and deliver up data at one-half and two-thirds the time, respectively. There's more to it than that, but that's close enough. But some things have recently changed. Two things, really: One is the PCI Express bus and the other is the adoption of a serial interface to SCSI called SAS – Serial Attached SCSI.

PCI EXPRESS
All new motherboards have adopted PCI Express – a scheme that allows bus cards – and especially video cards – to connect to the main data bus at a much faster rate. They use different connectors, and, indeed, there are several different connectors that may appear on a given motherboard. Mine has two 1x, one 4x and one 16x – the last for video. Each is a different length. But suffice to say that it makes the old PCI bus look pretty slow.

SAS
SAS is to SCSI as SATA is to PATA. It's the implementation of a serial data stream from the old SCSI parallel scheme. It's cheaper and uses small cables that don't restrict air flow. The connectors on SAS drives are very similar to SATA. Actually, they're designed so that you can connect a SAS cable to a SATA drive. But you cannot connect a SATA connector to a SAS drive. This is because the SAS controller cards will also support SATA drives but not vice versa.

THE REASON to use SAS is because SAS interfaces are available on 15K and 10K hard drives at a reasonable cost. Mine were just under $200 each – I needed two for RAID 0, and the controller card was $315 and a $40 cable was necessary. Two 36GB drives would work well for me, but the 74GB drives were cheaper.

SAS CONTROLLER CARDS
These run between $175 and, well, you don't want to know. The inexpensive ones handle four drives and depend on the computer's CPU to move the data, just as board-implemented SATA does. As the price goes up, they add on-board processors and memory, and they support more drives – typically eight. The one I got after much research does four drives, has an on-board PowerPC processor (remember those?) and 128MB DDR2 memory. So it's a computer on a card for $315. It comes with a cable for SATA drives for some reason, so I bought a SAS cable for $40. Researching the cable to buy was harder than all the other components put together.

THE RESULTS
To briefly describe what I have: Two Seagate Cheetah 74GB, 15,000 RPM hard drives that are controlled by the card with its own computer on board. It's configured for RAID 0, meaning that it combines the two drives to look as one, adds the capacity for 147 GB and divides the workload between two interfaces. A failure of one drive disables data in both; there is no data redundancy. Believe me, I have backups and can recover data to a spare hard drive in fifteen minutes.

I did some subjective testing, comparing some common things I do using a standard 80GB SATA drive compared to the new SAS setup. It turns out that starting up the PC from cold is about the same as it

(Hard Drives……..Continued on page 5)

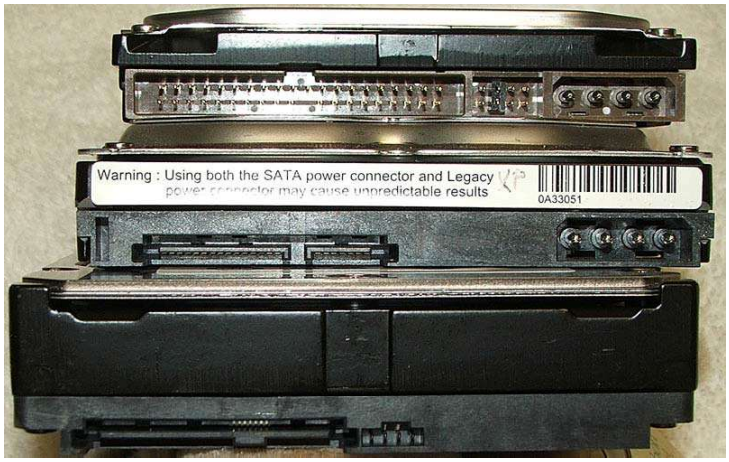


To the right of the controller card is the new 15K Seagate Cheetah, a Hitachi 80G SATA drive and a new Seagate 160G ATA (or PATA).

(Hard Drives……..Continued from page 4)

was before. That's because adding in the controller card itself slows the system boot by about 15 seconds. The controller card has a boot of its own to perform. That it doesn't take longer overall to boot is satisfactory, since we're talking about one minute, 15 seconds. Starting up Word 2003 takes about 3.5 seconds vs 6.5 seconds before. This document, now on its third page, loading from a drive on the LAN, is virtually instantaneous. Shutdown remains the same at about 17 seconds.

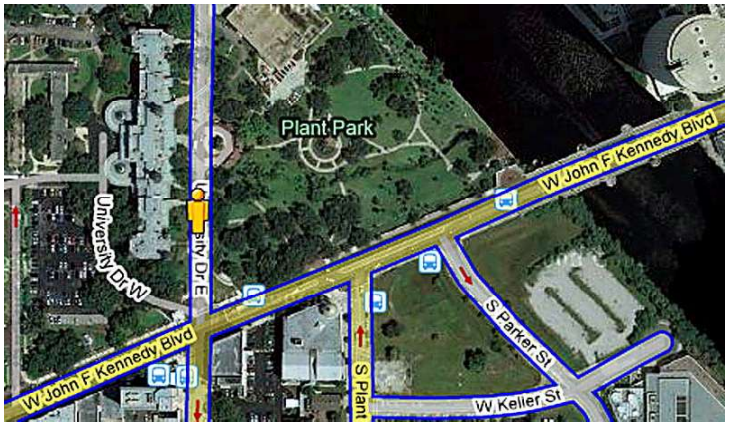
Compared to my previous machine, which has a couple of 10K drives in RAID 0 and a similar processor, but at a 25% reduction in processor speed, the Access database queries round off at about a 20% improvement. Not a great deal, but every bit counts, and I certainly learned a lot in the process. ◆



Looking at the ends from the bottom are the SAS drive, a SATA drive and the top one is the PATA drive. There is a considerable difference in the thickness of each drive, considering the capacity at 74GB, 80GB and 160GB. The SAS 74GB is thickest and heaviest by far – I suppose to handle the stress of the high speed.

Internet Picture of the Month



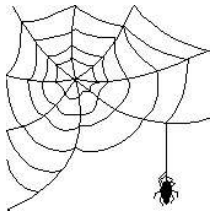


Tampa has been Googled

Google Maps has now added Tampa to the cities where its maps and aerial images have a street level view, in which you can travel along any city street and view both sides of the street as if you were in a car.

Above is the street level view of the Tampa Bay Hotel, now the main building of the University of Tampa, and below it the aerial view, with the yellow man you click on to go to street level.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Astrophotography by Noel Carboni	http://ncarboni.home.att.net/Astrophotography.html
Google Street view of Tampa	http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&tab=wl
Photos of Venice, Italy	http://www.phototravels.net/venice/
Adobe Photoshop Express (Beta)	http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopexpress/?promoid=CBTVM
Book scanning with a camera	http://www.wired.com/entertainment/theweb/multimedia/2008/03/gallery_internet_archive?slide=1&slideView=5

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

demands and to thus greatly improve the ability to utilize both the old and the vastly-improved new technology.

Blain began his presentation by telling us that, within about five hours after he contacted Microsoft corporate to gather information for his presentation on Microsoft Home Server, they had shipped him a 500 GB HP MediaSmart Home Server, pictured below. He said that he was able to hook it up and have it running within about 20 minutes after taking it out of the box. He emphasized the increasing need for a home server based on the number of computers that we own, the value of the data stored and the ever-present possibility of equipment failure. He explained that this would not be a domain controller, so it would not violate the rules normally established by a provider like Verizon. The server provides backup across all home PCs, password synchronization, health details and notification on all connected PCs and also provides better security. You can have 10 user accounts and one guest account. It is also easy to add and remove drives, and the system sees all drives on the server as one space. The server adds and decreases this total space as drives are added and removed. It also allows remote access to all PCs and allows media sharing. Blain followed with a detailed demonstration and a question and answer session to demonstrate the functions.

There was no Windows SIG, so John asked for any questions. Merle Nicholson reminded everyone that their UPS batteries should be replaced if they are more than two years old. John announced that there will be a raffle at the April meeting. The items will include two evaluation copies of Microsoft Home Server software thanks to Blain and Yung, and several other items.



The meeting ended at 8:10pm. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

Marylee Bruneau gave me a box of old newsletters. Later, member Ed Buzza gave me another box when he was cleaning out his home. From those two collections I have a pretty complete collection from March of 1990 on and spotty for 1988 and 1989. An email routed to me by Kevan from a daughter, living in Houston, of a former member in the early days of the group revived my interest in those old newsletters. She had found references to her now-deceased father, Vern Semrad, and his interest in BBSs which also mentioned Kevan Sheridan. She wrote to Kevan: "*I found your name on an article posted about BBS, and it mentioned my father, Vern Semrad. I was wondering if you were still around, and if you remember anything about my father. He passed away many years ago, and I have so few memories of him.*"

Well, she can now read several years' worth of newsletters (Feb. 1989 - March 1991) where her father was a considerable contributor to the content of the newsletter and was also listed as the membership officer for the group in 1989 and 1990. She can do this online at our site because her query prompted me to restart a long-stalled project of scanning in these old newsletters. Quite a few years back, I had scanned in about ten of them but had done no Optical Character Recognition (OCR) on them. So I went back and did the OCR on those already scanned and then scanned in some additional ones and did the OCR. All of this was done using Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional and my Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner, scanning at 150 dpi resolution, best quality and 8-bit gray-scale.

The files produced above are considerably larger than those you get when the Acrobat document is created directly from the program used to create the newsletter, Microsoft Publisher. An additional problem was that these old newsletters were all printed entirely on blue paper (think *Bits of Blue*). That adds a complication to the scanning. The files can be accessed at our site under the Newsletter link or directly at http://www.tpcug.org/OldAcrobatNewsletter.aspx. The articles in these old publications will probably bring back memories of computer things that you have probably forgotten.

Microsoft Silverlight

(Comments…….Continued on page 8)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME, EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE FOR 2007

INCOME	
MEMBERSHIPS (43@ $25 + 2@ $10)	$1095.00
DOOR PRIZES	$136.00
AMAZON & MISC.	$220.17
TOTAL INCOME	**$1451.17**
EXPENSES	
NEWSLETTER POSTAG	$292.10
NEWSLETTER PAPER	$66.29
FACUG CONF. REGISTRATIONS	$95.00
FACUG DUES	$25.00
APCUG DUES	$50.00
FLORIDA INCORPORATION FEE	$61.25
WEB SITE HOSTING FEE	$129.40
PO BOX RENTAL	$56.00
DOOR PRIZES	$60.00
CHRISTMAS PARTY	$234.08
PAYPAL FEES – 9 PAYMENTS	$9.27
MISC. (INK, CHECK CHARGES)	$37.20
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$1115.59**
NET INCOME FOR 2007	**$335.58**
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – BEGINNING OF 2007	$5156.37
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – END OF 2007	**$5491.95**

RECONCILIATION OF BANK STATEMENT TO BOOK BALANCE

Balance per Bank Statement on 12/31/07		$5517.98
Deduct outstanding checks written as of 12/31/07		
	CK# 791 APCUG-12/29/07	$(50.00)
Add:	PayPal dues deposit in transit J Rivera	$23.97
Balance per BOOKS at 12/31/07 is this amount		**$5491.95**

Submitted by Doug Mullis, Treasurer

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Comments…….Continued from page 6)

Silverlight is Microsoft's answer to Adobe Flash. It is a method of supplying a richer visual experience to web pages (and capturing some of the money now going to Adobe for displaying such content).

Silverlight 1 is now out, version 2 is in Beta. To view the Silverlight content on a web page, you will be prompted to download the Silverlight browser plug-in when you visit that page – just like you were asked to download the Flash browser plug-in many years in the past.

What I like about Silverlight is that it is programmable with Microsoft Visual Studio 2008. You can view my first attempts with it at http://www.lamartin.com/Silverlight/. I am using Silverlight 2.0 Beta. To see more impressive examples than mine, go to http://silverlight.net/Showcase/ and when you receive the browser notification about pop-ups, allow them. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 6 June 2008

Meeting

PowerPoint
by
John Witmer

Wednesday, June 11, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Do It Yourself Hell	7
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Meeting Preview: John Witmer will present an overview of PowerPoint and describe how he uses PowerPoint in his work. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Elevate Tampa Bay Have you noticed your house rising? I had hoped to get my first floor above its present 11 feet above sea level, since 11 feet wouldn't be very nice if a 20-foot high storm surge were to come in from the bay. But that is not to be, Ed White and his cohorts are only interested in elevating the computer literacy of Tampa Bay. They, all members of the TPCUG, gave us a presentation of the program and goals at the last meeting and have followed up with progress reports via email.

Parts online I had recourse to order repair parts for a dish-washer and lawnmower in the past several weeks. At http://www.partselect.com, I was able to view a schematic of my GE dishwasher to get the part and had it within two days by ordinary delivery since it was coming from Jacksonville. The mower part was for a 19-year-old Toro and is coming from

(Comments……..Continued on page 5)

July Meeting: To be announced

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

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Check the address label for your renewal month

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Pepin Distributing Co.

for their support

Minutes of the May Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave opened the Windows SIG at 6:40 pm. In response to a question on how to identify unknown or unusual sounds that you are getting from your computer, Bob explained how to identify the commands that generate sounds. He said that the only way that he knew to identify a sound was to go through each command that is marked to emit a sound until you hear the sound that you are trying to identify. Ed Cohen said that he was periodically having very poor performance and he could see that his hard drive was running constantly. Bob indicated that this was often caused by poorly-written software that does not release resources when you exit the program. If this is the case, it can usually be rectified by rebooting your machine. The Windows Task Manager provides some information on what is using the resources, but some of the things, such as updates running in the background, cannot be detected.

Todd Grubb mentioned getting a popup telling him that they had detected a Trojan on his computer with a message to click on a URL to have it removed. He learned that they want to sell a program that will remove the Trojan. This initiated a discussion of various scams involving certified checks passed to you to pay for merchandise that you are selling online. Even though the bank is perfectly willing to cash the check, you are liable when the bank may later find (after you have delivered the merchandise) that it is a bogus check.

William LaMartin relayed a problem with electronic picture frames. Sometimes the individual pictures loaded in the frame become distorted. The problem is usually solved by erasing and reloading the pictures. Bob suggested that you keep the pictures in a group

(Minutes……..Continued on page 6)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Microsoft Pro Photo Tools

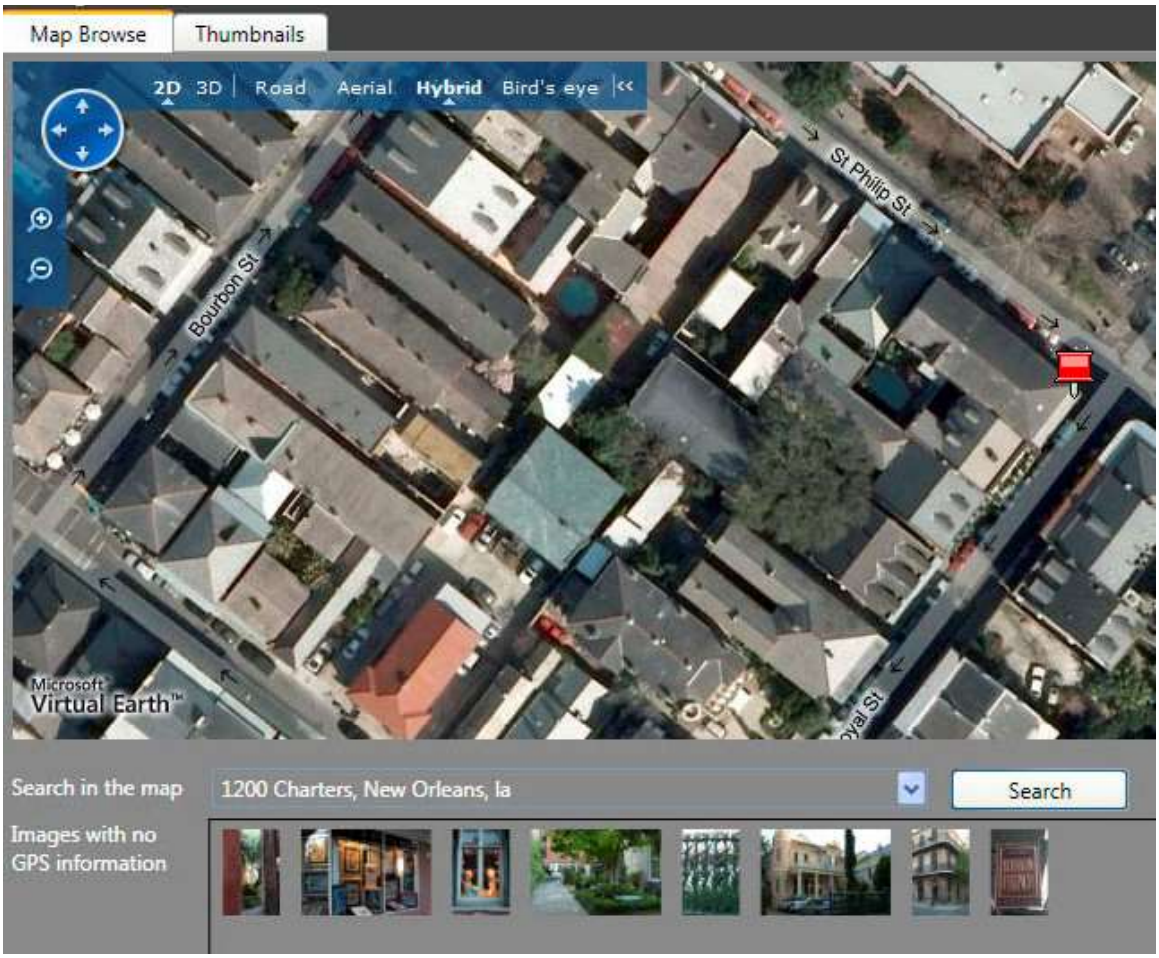
By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

You can now record the exact location of those photos you took yesterday with your digital camera or even years ago with your film camera (and scanned into a digital file). That is, you can if you can pinpoint the location on an aerial photo. Microsoft has a new free tool named Pro Photo Tools that lets you enter meta data about an image, such as location, description, etc., in addition to any camera data that your digital camera automatically recorded, like the date and time and the camera settings. The big feature, though, is being able to write the longitude and latitude to the photo file's header of whatever point you indicate on an online aerial or map in the program, as seen in the screen capture on this page.

For those of you who work only with JPEG (.jpg) files, certainly the tool works with these files. I did a test and found that it also works with TIFF (.tif) files. Such information is stored in what is known as the header of the file, and writing this sort of information to the file does not affect the image portion of the file in any way.

The program can be downloaded at this very long URL: http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=3acbe51c-9d63-48ff-9614-5f30d76061b4&DisplayLang=en. And I thank Merle Nicholson for alerting me to it.

In the screen capture below, I am adding longitude and latitude information to each of the thumbnails at the bottom. This is accomplished by first finding the general location of your images on a map by zooming in from a world map or by putting an approximate address in the search box. Since I started by geotagging (as this is termed) on Charters St. in New Orleans, that is the address you see there. Once in the general area of the photo site, you zoom in until you can find the exact location you want. Sometimes switching to "Bird's eye" view will help in locating a particular building. Once you have the location for a particular thumbnail image, you right-click on the image and tell the program to set the GPS location for that image. It will put the red pushpin in the center of the map, and you can then



(Photo Tools……Continued on page 4)

(Photo Tools…….Continued from page 3)

position it more exactly where you want. Do this for each of the thumbnails (if you can find their locations) and then save the results and you are ready to geo-tag another batch of images.



The image I have tagged above is of the C C Coffee Shop at the intersection of Royal and St. Phillip in the French Quarter, New Orleans, La.

You might recall that I did something similar a couple of years back when I wrote an article about using a program I created for my PocketPC to record the longitude and latitude each time I took a photo. I then used that data to create a map in Microsoft Streets and Trips. The article with an accompanying map is at http://www.tpcug.org/acrobat_files/pcnl2006-06.pdf. Unfortunately I have misplaced the data used to do that, since it would be a great aid in finding map locations if I want to geo-tag those images.

What we are doing with Pro Photo Tools is different. The photos have already been taken, and we are then finding their position on a map and having the Pro Photo Tools program write that information to the files header.

So, what can we do with information? Well, we can create a map with a bunch of pushpins on it that records the locations of certain photos. I have done that for about 50 of the photos I have taken around my neighborhood in Tampa. The result is at http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org/HydeParkVirtualEarth/HPVEMap.htm. If you hover your mouse over a pin, it will provide you with information about the photo (just a description, time and date of the photograph, along with a little blue link to click on to see the image). A small section of that aerial is shown on this page.

This sort of aerial map is not part of Pro Photo Tools. To create such a map, you need to use Microsoft's Virtual Earth Map Control 6.1 (http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb429619.aspx). And, here comes the big thing—you need to be able to retrieve the GPS information from each of the photos you want to use. Of course, you could use the Pro Photo Tools to open each image and copy its longitude and latitude and, if you wanted them, the date and time. This could get old fast. So, I wrote a program to extract such information for all such images in a folder and put the information into an xml file in the form that Virtual Earth likes to find it. Below is what the entry for one particular image would look like:

```
<item>
    <link>http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org/
    HydeParkVirtualEarth/images/DSC_0567.jpg</
    link>
    <title>Spiral stairs on Inman</title>
    <description>Photo taken: 2004-05-
    08T15:34:21.80-04:00</description>
    <geo:long>-82.4719673395157</geo:long>
    <geo:lat>27.9360691931094</geo:lat>
</item>
```

If you view the source code for the page in question, you can see the JavaScript that produces the map. This uses Microsoft's map control. A similar thing

(Photo Tools…….Continued on page 6)

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

http://www.partstree.com in Austin, Texas. I was not so lucky with a Stihl brush cutter since they do not allow their parts to be sold online, as best I can tell. Additionally, I also ordered a toner cartridge for my 13-year-old HP LaserJet 4 Plus printer from HP with free next day FEDX shipping (of course, at $104 they can throw in free shipping). And it is not as if I am taking business away from local stores. Home Depot has about run out of business all the small, independent places that used to sell lawn mowers and their associated parts. And good luck finding a toner cartridge for a 13-year-old printer locally. I suppose, though, with a bit of phoning around, I could have gotten the dishwasher part.

The Internet is a real handy thing, isn't it?

Geo-tagging In another article in this newsletter, I write about adding longitude and latitude information to photos you have taken. Microsoft has supplied the free program, Pro Photo Tools, to do this. You can even geo-tag a photo taken many years ago if you scan it into a digital file. I am sure if you have a photo of your parents standing in front of the Empire State Building, you will have no trouble finding it on the map in Pro Photo Tools and thus be able to tag the image.

In fact, you would be doing a great service to anyone to whom you might be passing these photos in the future if you provided, in addition to a geo-tag if such is possible, a description and other information using this program. That information will then stay in the header of the image file—unless deleted by some renegade image-editing program—for future generations to view. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



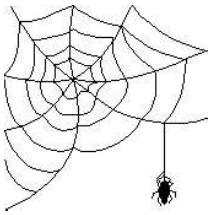


A Celebration Interrupted

From the New York Times, we have the images of a wedding celebration that was being photographed just as the earthquake hit. The link is:

http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/23/from-china-disaster-caught-in-a-wedding-lens

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Live Search cashback	http://search.live.com/cashback/
Appliance Parts From PartSelect	http://www.partselect.com/
Media College	http://www.mediacollege.com/
Pictures of England	http://www.picturesofengland.com/
Louisiana's African American Heritage Trail	http://louisianatravel.com/explore/cultural_history/african_american_heritage_trail/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)
on a flash drive so they can be quickly reloaded. He mentioned that there is a free Microsoft Flash Drive manager that helps manage various types of backups with flash drives.

Bob and Merle Nicholson discussed using PDF writers to copy web pages. The Scansoft program was mentioned as a reasonably-priced program that will do most of the things that the Adobe program will do. There are also several, with less features, that are free. They mentioned pdf 995 and .PrimoPDF.

John Witmer began the business part of the meeting at approximately 7:05 pm. He introduced the night's presentation by TPCUG members Ed White, Ed Neugaard and Juan Romero. As covered below, they described a corporation that they have formed, "Elevate Tampa Bay Inc". It is modeled on a similar program successfully implemented in Miami, FL, and was explained by Ed in an article in last month's newsletter.

John advised that the program for June will be a presentation by the Verbatim company representative, featuring various Verbatim products. [Now moved to a later date]. The July program will be a presentation by Kevan Sheridan. The subject will be announced later. The August through October presentations will also be conducted by TPCUG members. John mentioned that some of the members' dues are in arrears. He reminded everyone to look to see if the box is checked on their newsletters indicating that their dues have not been paid.

William LaMartin reported that the HTML online TPCUG Newsletters are now available in English, Spanish and French. He requested that members fluent in the French and Spanish languages review them for accuracy since they were translated by a computer program.

Ed White began his presentation with a discussion of the history of the Elevate Miami program. He said that he was first alerted to the Elevate Miami program while reading Microsoft web pages. He ran across a Microsoft press release from both Microsoft and the City of Miami as partners in the program. He was impressed with the extent of the program, which he said was probably one of the greatest training programs that he has ever seen. It is available in many languages, including English, Spanish, German, French and Japanese. In addition to the two TPCUG members mentioned above, Ed was accompanied by USF Professor Emeritus William Blount and by Ray Burris, who is a resident of the University Village retirement community and is active in current training programs at that facility.

Ed contacted Microsoft's head of their Department of State and Local Governments, who spent a great deal of time discussing the program and then directed him to James E Osteen Jr., Assistant Director of Information Technology for the City of Miami. Ed contacted Mr. Osteen and then traveled to Miami. He got a royal welcome from Mr. Osteen and the City of Miami officials during his two-and-a-half-day visit. The program is off to a roaring start, as Ed and his crew already have 40 loaned laptop computers to start the program.

The meeting closed at 8:23 pm. ◆

(Photo Tools……..Continued from page 4)
could be done using the mapping ability provided by Google. Google and Microsoft are competing in mapping. I like the Street View that Google has for some cities like Tampa, and I like the Bird's Eye View that Microsoft has for even more cities. And both allow you to customize their maps that you put at your web sites.

Get Microsoft's Pro Photo Tools and start geo-tagging.

Using this program got me to thinking. Possibly I could create a web-based application that would allow you to locate a place on a Microsoft Virtual Earth map, select it, say, with a double-click, so that its latitude and longitude are recorded, enter some sort of description in a text box, and, at the press of a button, store this data in a database. Then I would create a companion program to open the database and put pushpins at all the locations you had geo-tagged such that when you hovered over a pin with your mouse, the description would be displayed. Think of it sort of as a display of all the places in the world of special interest to you for some reason. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

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Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

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Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Do It Yourself Hell

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

A very nice two-and-one-half-year old Sony VGN-S560P laptop was destroyed recently by an improperly-performed memory upgrade. So let this story be a warning to all you amateur computer technicians.

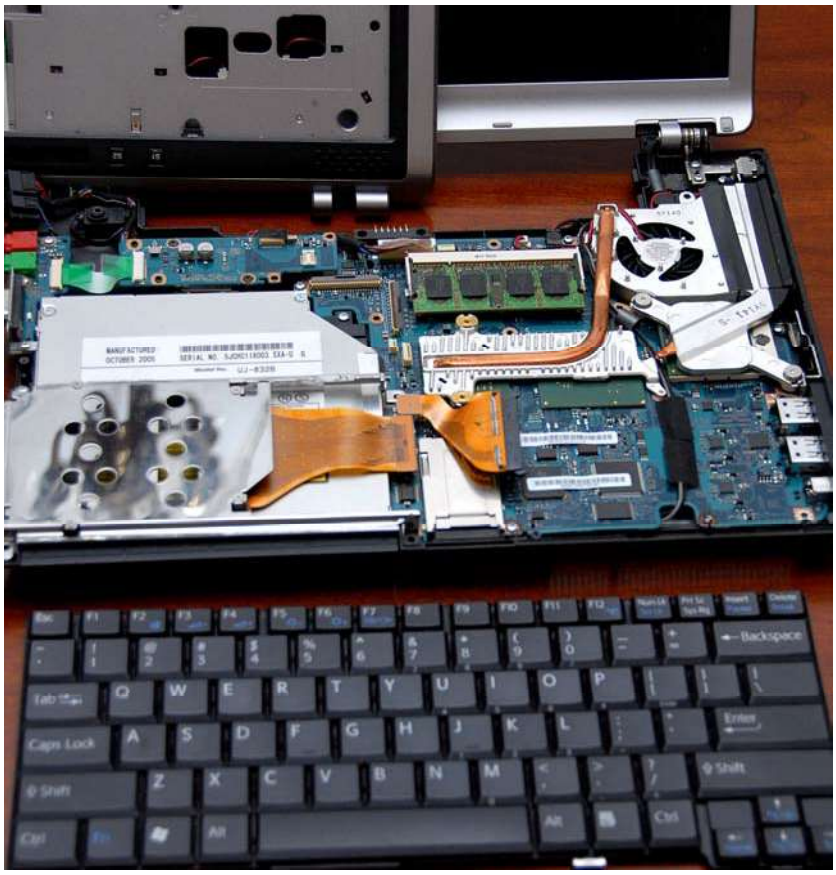
The owner of the laptop complained about the increasingly slower performance of the machine, so a friend suggested adding to its memory. Now there are really only two things that the non-technician can do to a laptop—add memory and sometimes replace the hard drive depending on how accessible the drive is. In the case of this particular laptop, the drive is not easily reached. But the friend was only going to add memory, and the slot for that was easily accessed from the bottom of the computer.

Compatible memory was kindly purchased by the friend, who easily installed it, replaced the cover of the memory compartment on the bottom of the computer, and reinserted and tightened the securing screw. Then the repairman and the owner watched expectantly as the power button was pressed, but nothing happened. After several more tries to boot the computer with the power adapter attached and unattached, it was decided to remove the new additional memory. Perhaps it really was not compatible. After the removal, still no boot. The computer appeared to be dead.

Well, it was time to go to a computer shop where, after several days, the report came back—a fried motherboard, probably caused by overheating caused by a dust ball in the computer's fan. And it would cost $500 or $600 to replace the motherboard.

Now, I suspect the computer store was just trying to make the customers feel good, since I am 90% sure the reason the motherboard got fried is that proper procedure was not followed in installing the additional memory. You must remove the battery from the laptop before working on it. That was not done, and, in my opinion, was the cause of the problem. And, at

(Do it yourself…….Continued on page 8)



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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Do it yourself…….Continued from page 7)

least as regards the Sony, you are told to do this if you read the owner's manual supplied as an Acrobat file. Of course, no one reads such things.

So, the laptop ended up with me, to get the data off the hard drive. I got the laptop halfway apart, but there were two or three screws in the middle that I couldn't get to. They were under the keyboard, and I needed an online video to show me how—Sony certainly provides no information on this. For my Gateway laptop, it was easy to remove the hard drive. This one was quite complicated. The video link, provided by a very helpful person, is http://www.metacafe.com/watch/377396/how_to_replace_hard_drive_on_sony_vaio_vgn_s260/.

The photo above is the disassembled Sony VGN-S560P (PCG-6H4L) laptop minus the hard drive, which at that time was having its data transferred to one of my USB external drives using an USB hard drive adapter. The drive normally attaches to the right-most ribbon cable in the picture. RIP. ◆



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Bits of Blue



July in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 7 July 2008

Meeting

Trend Micro Security Software
by
Kevan Sheridan

Wednesday, July 9, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Member Kevan Sheridan will demonstrate Trend Micro software. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Members Merle Nicholson and Jim Purcell managed to fill the newsletter for us this month. Next month it would be nice if several other members contributed articles. You have almost a whole month to write something. Please get started.

Elevate Tampa Bay, Inc. will be starting new eSenior classes on Monday, July 7 and Tuesday, July 15. These are two-week classes designed to provide proficiency in email and web surfing. They will be held at University Village, 12401 N 22nd Street, Tampa. Contact member Ed White at cwhite1@mail.usf.edu.

Bill Gates Retires No matter what you think of him, he has certainly affect our lives—and I think for the good. There are then and now photos of him on page 5. A piece of trivia: The company was originally called Micro-soft. ◆

August Meeting: Digital Photography and Mapping combined with Programming

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The windows SIG began at approximately 6:30 pm. Bob LaFave discussed the various options available when you run more than one monitor from your graphics card. He also discussed the options available in Windows XP versus Vista.

There was a question concerning the management of updates. One member reported that Microsoft attempted to download an update that was already installed on his computer each time he booted the computer. Bob said that he should first look for the update in "Add or Remove Programs" in the Control Panel and, if this is not successful, check the knowledge base to see what other people are doing under the same or similar circumstances. Bob mentioned that he liked to remove the updates from his hard drive once they were installed. This reduces unnecessary files on your hard drive but also removes the records that would easily identify which updates were installed. Bob detailed his reasons for deleting these files and any others on his hard drive as soon as he finds that they are not needed. He felt that the benefits were worth the risk but some members were not eager to take the risk. William LaMartin indicated that he was having trouble with a browser window opened as a link and resized. When he closed and later reopened the link, the window it appeared in was its original size rather the size that he had created. Bob detailed the process necessary to have the window reopen in the newly created size.

John Witmer opened the business portion of the meeting at 7:40 pm. He introduced the visitors and mentioned that Steve Singer, a yearly presenter to our group each fall, was present.

John asked Ed White to provide an update on his program. Ed advised that they had met with members of Mayor Iorio's staff and that it appears the City of Tampa is going to actively support the program. They are scheduled to have future meetings at the Barksdale Senior Citi-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 6)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Vista – I don't hate it

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I have some observations on the usability of Vista, and a few recommendations. You may find this useful if you've found yourself in the position of needing a new PC and are hesitating because of all the bad press – and Apple commercials. I think the dust has settled; the drivers we need are there now; SP1 is out and we're ready to go.

First – the bad press about Vista. We have to keep in mind that readership is kept higher on bad news instead of good. Some of the bad news was based on pre-release copies of Vista; also on pre-version SP1. The Vista SP1 release, I think has changed Vista substantially. Also, remember that many, many newspaper and magazine writers use Macs and really spend a lot of time just repeating other writers' bad news. As for Apple, remember that they have about 4% of the embedded market of one billion PCs. Apple's PC sales have gone way up since the iPod and iPhone, but that's relative to where they were, and it's still insignificant compared to the numbers of PCs.

Apple makes a high quality, high profit PC with a variation of Unix for an operating system. But it's not faultless at all. Yes, there are fewer viruses and malware, but the OS is constantly being patched with security updates. Apple does, however, bundle fixes together in single releases less often, making it hard to make comparisons.

For the manufacturers of PCs and peripherals, and for the entire software industry and for Microsoft, the real problem is that there are tens of thousands of PC components that can be used and there's no way to predict what combinations will be used in any given PC. Every piece of hardware must have a driver, and, in the case of the motherboard, six or so drivers. The "standards" that every component must comply with are decided by groups of people who are also competitors – with each other. It's a total wonder that anything at all gets decided. Hence the Blu-Ray/HD fight; and the Wireless-N standards debacle. Wireless pre-N devices have been available about two years, and the standard itself is still a year away from ratification. Man, what a mess.

With Vista, MS decided that they would make some major changes to the OS fundamentals to address security, in addition to adding features. That decision necessitated a new driver programming model. It obviously was a huge problem for Microsoft. After all, they had to track 12,000 new drivers and incorporate them into the DVD distributions. The documentation alone must have been a nightmare. But they have done this before; more than once.

One of the "bad" things that the press is repeating over and over again is that Vista will not work with older machines. And that's certainly sometimes true, but completely irrelevant. After all, my old machines (and I have four of those) already have a perfectly good operating systems in XP SP3. Why would I want to change operating systems now? XP will certainly outlast the hardware.

The next common complaint is that you need a very good graphics subsystem to run Windows Aero. Also irrelevant, in my opinion. Aero is one thing I tired of quickly, and, for the sake of performance, I have turned Aero off, along with the taskbar thumbnails, Sidebar and transparent windows. I want to maximize my efficiency and get rid of unnecessary distractions. I rarely have more than a couple of links on my desktop, and no wallpaper. It certainly was not a hard decision to do this on my notebook, because my notebook, like most, has a tendency to have weak graphics systems.

So far, I've purchased one PC – an HP/Compaq Presario notebook, and then I configured my personal/business computer with Vista three times. The final configuration that I'm now using exclusively is Vista Business 64.

I'll lead you through a few details on my progression through installing Vista. I certainly learned a few things along the way.

My PC now has the most powerful two-core CPU that AMD makes. It's also inexpensive. It has a decent but inexpensive ATI x1650 graphics card. It has a SAS hard drive controller and two disk systems; one is the fastest on the planet. And after installing the 64-bit OS, I increased memory to 6GB. I built the PC case myself so that most of the components are readily accessible without de-cabling or even moving it.

I started with a working Windows XP Professional OS on the fast drives, completely configured, that I used for my essential office PC. I then cabled up one or two of three 80G hard drives I have to build my new Vista OS. I used the BIOS Boot menu to select the drive to boot from, so that I could continue my business on XP, and, when I had time to work on Vista, all it took was a reboot. All my data and documents, including My Documents and the

(Vista……..Continued on page 4)

(Vista…..Continued from page 3)
Outlook data, are on a larger, second set of hard drives and then backed up daily across my network.

The 32-bit Vista I have is Business Upgrade. On Vista Upgrade DVD's, it must be run from an existing qualifying WORKING system. Remember that on earlier systems you could insert a qualifying CD to continue and install the update on a blank hard drive. You can no longer do this. On one of my 80G hard drives I had a backup copy of my main XP system, so I duplicated it to another drive, booted that and then ran the Vista DVD. But first I uninstalled a lot of software and drivers from XP.

The install went very easily and quickly without any issues, taking less than an hour. You do not have an option to reformat the drive, obviously. And you have plenty of time to activate the copy before it goes into a "reduced functionality" mode. It's important in case you have network adapter problems and can't get to the Internet to register.

I had no real driver issues, much to my surprise. I did this before SP1, so I had better than ninety updates to do. The big surprise was that Vista recognized my LSI Logic SAS hard drive card, identified it perfectly, and both sets of hard drives were accessible. I kind of slowly installed software and experimented with it over about a month, migrating the installation toward using it as my primary system. Then I started finding discouraging not-good things. There was just too much junk left in the way of XP programs and drivers that just did not work. Some were impossible to get rid of, like my old scanner software. I was not happy with it, so I needed a better approach.

The second time around, I used another unused XP CD and license and wiped out the previous attempt. Then I validated and registered the XP software with Microsoft. I did no driver updates, and even deleted some drivers like the video, then rebooted back in, canceled out any attempts to install drivers, put the Vista Business (32) DVD in and started the Vista installation again. This time the results were very much cleaner. I had no driver issues, although I did not install all my printers or my old Canon USB scanner. I did discover newer versions on manufacturers' websites, like the ATI video card. All in all it was very satisfactory. I did some tuning on the system for performance. Over some time, I slowly installed software from scratch, with the idea that I would switch over permanently sooner or later. I would go back to booting my XP system whenever I wanted to do my real work until Vista SP1 was released.

To me, SP1 changed everything. It installed in about twenty minutes and with no problems. For some reason, the computer seemed to run a bit more quickly. They added about 2,000 drivers to the update. So that encouraged me to try out Vista Business 64, as did the positive experience with Vista 32.

The main reason I wanted to try Business 64 was because of a Vista feature called SuperFetch. SuperFetch loads – and keeps – portions of your most commonly used programs in memory for re-use. It collects your program usage frequency to decide what to keep. With Windows 32 of any kind, there is an upper limit on how much memory is recognized; about 3.5 GB. With 64 bit, usually the limit is what your motherboard will allow. In my case that is 8GB. I increased the memory to 6GB, and I'll probably eventually go to 8. So, with more memory, there's more SuperFetch, and it seems to make a difference.

My copy of Vista Business 64 is a full version, so I didn't have to install over a copy of XP this time. I did install to one of the 80 GB extra drives though, so I could continue to boot into XP. After installing SP1 for Vista 64, I updated just a few drivers, ones for the ATI video card and the motherboard chipset. Three of my four networked printers installed from the Vista disk. For the third, a Canon i850 I bought in 2003, I obtained a 64-bit driver from Canon. I did have problems getting a PDF printer installed. When you're looking for software, very often the OS support includes Vista. But that doesn't mean it will work under Vista 64. I installed three of these before I settled on CutePDF. The installation failed, and I went to the website FAQ and got a manual installation instruction which worked well.

The next hurdle was for a DVD package. I've tried to stay away from the later copies of CD Creator and Nero because the installations have gotten so big with attempts to supply everything, including search and cataloging databases, video editing and even browser toolbars. I was pretty discouraged trying to find a Vista 64 package, until I finally decided to install the latest copy of Nero. They offer a trial-period free version, so I downloaded and installed it, being very careful to un-check as much crap as I could. And – drum roll – it wouldn't even start. Just an error message. Bob LaFave had suggested a free program called StarBurn. I had downloaded it a month before and then forgot it. Once found and installed, it's perfect. It has a simple one-window interface for all CD & DVD

(Vista……..Continued on page 5)

(Vista…….Continued from page 4)
creation.

About three weeks ago I had enough software installed that I could function pretty well in Vista 64, so I backed up the XP SP3 on my main boot drive and cloned the 80G Vista drive to it. I've been very slowly installing more software as I need it. The performance is excellent. My most used software just pops up to the desktop instantly. Internet Explorer, any Office product and my various data/text editors all are at least as fast as my XP, if not faster.

All of my other hardware is working well; the only exception is the Canon USB scanner that I have no hope for. I've simply moved it to another computer. I have a multi-function HP FAX/Scan/Print/Copy device that just installed transparently, as did the networked Brother Laser printer. My old (2005) Dell PDA x50V was recognized instantly and the driver installed automatically. I had sporadic problems with the Vista Sync Center's understanding that the PDA needed to be automatically sync'd until I found a later version of "Windows Mobile Device Center" to download and install. Sync'ing to devices is very much improved over XP.

I think I can attribute the very good performance of the system to having plenty of memory. I bumped my Vista 32 notebook memory to 2.5 GB from 1 GB and the program loads were very noticeably faster.

Now the two things I don't like. I dislike Windows Explorer (File Manager), and I LOATHE the Start Menu. I've used Windows Explorer enough that I can use it when necessary, but I don't like to. I think the Windows XP Windows Explorer had the right idea; it just needed better file search and filtering. I've installed a copy of FreeComander and use that whenever I get serious about finding, copying and moving files.

(Vista…….Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



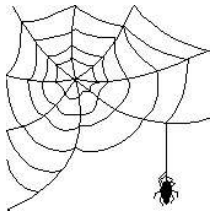


Bill Gates Retires

The top photo is about 1982 and from http://www.linkinn.com/_Bill_Gates_The_Early_Years_Pics.

The second photo is current and from http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/popup?id=5235689&contentIndex=1&start=false&page=10

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Local Gas Prices	http://autos.msn.com/everyday/gasstations.aspx
Snopes.com—Rumor control	http://www.snopes.com/
Florida Wildflowers & Butterflies	http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/wildflower/
Bill Gates: The Early Years	http://www.linkinn.com/_Bill_Gates_The_Early_Years_Pics

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Vista…….Continued from page 5)
The Start Menu just sucks and there just doesn't seem to be anything I can do about it. The problem is that the organization of the menu utilizes a tree structure, and the menu has no tree structure. There is a "Classic" menu that I could switch to, but why does the "Classic" version have to look like Windows 3.1? To counter the Start Menu, I've created a pop-out Toolbar on the left screen edge with all my installed program icons on it. This, along with the Quick Launch toolbar, meets my needs very well. I only rarely use the Start Menu.

Overall, my transition to Vista has been worth the effort. I do not have any problem with it that I'd consider a handicap. The response is excellent when tuned for performance and memory is installed to the maximum. I would not recommend buying any computer with less than 2GB installed or upgraded. Fortunately, even inexpensive notebooks commonly have 2 and 3 GB memory. I do not recommend upgrading any PC from XP to Vista.

For very good reading on Vista see Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_features_new_to_Windows_Vista
and look to the right side where you'll see other subjects in the series on Windows Vista. ◆

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)
zen Center. This is the place that the city parks department wants to use for training Tampa students.

John mentioned an exchange of emails with Parker Monroe from the Greater Tampa Bay PC User Group in Brandon. Doug Mullis initiated the exchange, hoping to work out some program to share or exchange speakers between our organizations in view of the increasing difficulty in getting significant or meaningful vendors to provide speakers to PC user groups of our size. John asked for members who are willing to make presentations to our group and speak at Brandon to contact him so that we can accumulate a list of volunteers. He said that the Brandon group normally had about the same number of attendees as we have but will sometimes have as many as 70 members show up for high interest presentations. This will probably be pursued after the end of the year since we seem to have our presentations lined up through the end of this year. The July presentation will be on Trend Micro.

John began his presentation on PowerPoint with an overview of the types of things that he would cover and a discussion of the information presented in some of the available training programs. He also provided a training outline that lists commands and the instructions on how to access them, as well as operational and navigational shortcuts.

He had numerous examples of presentations, some provided by the presentation experts from Anheuser-Busch and some smaller presentations prepared for a single subject. He demonstrated the different ways to review or examine the content and organization of the presentations. The lesson learned is that PowerPoint is an extremely versatile program. It provides a simple way for the amateur, without an unreasonable amount of effort, to put together a professional presentation which clearly portrays the points that he wants to convey. John played a presentation prepared on PowerPoint by his 11-year-old grandson which clearly emphasized this point. On the other end of the spectrum, he illustrated how the issues, data and graphic information already produced (in Access, Excel and Word) can be easily reformatted and molded into an elaborate presentation and accentuated in many different ways to best present and emphasize the details that you are trying to convey. The data in these Microsoft documents can be linked to the PowerPoint presentation so that, when the data is updated in the documents, the PowerPoint presentation will be automatically updated. John also showed an example of PowerPoint being used to document personal belongings to assist in preparing an insurance claim in the event of a catastrophic loss.

PowerPoint is a very versatile program that meets the needs of the most casual or the most demanding user.

The meeting ended at approximately 8:40 pm. ◆

Are CD's and DVD's A Reliable Place To Store Your Data? – Revisited

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

About a year ago, I wrote an article on the reliability of CD's and DVD's for medium or long term storage of data. There seemed to be no real way of predicting whether the discs would store data that could be accurately retrieved a

(CDs…….Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

LinkSys Wireless-G Game adapter WGA54G

By Merle Nicholson, TPCUG
merle@merlenicholson.com



This wireless game adapter proves to be useful as a PC wireless device. It's really intended to connect Playstation 2, Xbox and GameCube game consoles to a wireless network, or alternately using two units between two game consoles. Its main claim to fame is that it requires no additional network drivers.

I used it to connect my spouse's PC to the household wireless network. That PC has been connected satisfactorily for many years, but something has been going amiss; probably dropping in and out, causing her web browser to fail to produce web pages. I was never able to nail down the real problem. It was using a NetGear USB wireless unit on a three-foot USB extension. This is just a small "dongle" that I have used many times before. I had some evidence that the problem may go away if I moved the dongle to another location about three feet away. But I really needed to solve the problem conclusively.

This unit, as you can see, is small; less than seven inches in length. It has two ports, power and Ethernet. The power cube is very small, and it comes with a generous Ethernet cable. So all you do is power it up and connect the adapter's Ethernet port to the Ethernet port on the computer.

To configure this adapter, you run a program from the included CD. This does not install anything on the PC. It does allow you to set a few things necessary to connect to your secured network. You set the SSID and security code of the router you're connecting to using the CD's software. I also set the unit to utilize DHCP instead of having a fixed IP address so that it obtains an address from the router. All this takes about three minutes. After that – it just works.

This is a very good alternative to the usual solutions to connect a PC to a network. It assumes that your PC has a working network connection, of course. But you don't need to install a card in the PC, and it doesn't need a USB port that may be in short supply on a notebook, and it doesn't need a driver. At $70 it's the most expensive. But on the other hand, it's the least technical solution. It works, and works well, and is easy to set up. ◆

(CDs…….Continued from page 6)

few months or years in the future. I focused on the MAM-A Corporation for several reasons. I attended a digital photography seminar conducted by staff members of the National Geographic Traveler magazine and they indicated that MAM-A Inc. produced high quality CD's. Next, a Photoshop instructor, who is a professional photographer in St. Petersburg, stated that he tried to retrieve some photos that he had recorded on a CD only five years earlier and he was unable to recover a single photo. He emphasized the importance of getting quality CD's and also recommended MAM-A Inc.

I'm doing this follow-up article because of information that I received when I attended a presentation by Bill Baillie, the representative for Verbatim, at the recent FACUG meeting. Bill stated that the life expectancy of Verbatim CD's and DVD's is in the 200 to 300-year range. I visited their web site to get the details of the warranty and was surprised that I found no mention of the 200 to 300 years that Bill reported. I had Bill's phone number so I called him. He stated that they do not put

(CDs…….Continued on page 8)

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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(CDs……..Continued from page 7)
those numbers in writing because there is obviously no way to prove them. Bill said that the figure is the result of their testing and a projection of the results and is their best estimate. While on the phone, I discovered that Bill makes presentations to PC user groups so I passed his name to Doug Mullis. Doug then made arrangements for Bill to make a presentation to our group. Bill has had to postpone several times but we hope that he will be able to visit late this year. Although CD's and DVD's are only a part of the many Verbatim products that Bill will discuss, I thought that a review of the information might bring to mind some questions to which Bill can give us educated answers. Their informative web site is at: www.**verbatim**.com/

The previous article, *Are CD's and DVD's A Reliable Place To Store Your Data?,* is at: http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2007/July2007/cd-dvd.htm.

Three paragraphs that you might want to review are:

- Precautions Before Recording
- General Handling Precautions After Writing
- Quick List for Archiving ◆



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August in Tampa

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Meeting

Digital Photography Combined with Programming
by
William LaMartin

Wednesday, August 13, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will give a presentation tying together his interest in photography, mapping and computer programming. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Most of you probably have a digital camera, and a few have moved up to the SLR-type digital. I am also sure almost everyone has boxes of photos and the attendant negatives you have taken over your lifetime. What to do with these new digital photos and the old film ones?

In my presentation at this month's meeting, I am going to try to answer that question and along the way introduce you to a couple of new programs that are currently free from Microsoft. Of course, any discussion of digital photography has to also include Adobe's Photoshop. Then there are the programs from Microsoft that I have used for years that are not free. I have enough material on this to do several presentation, and the job for me is going to be winnowing it down to the allotted time and presenting it in a nontechnical way.

(Comments……Continued on page 7)

September Meeting: Configuring Vista to Your Liking by Merle Nicholson

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave opened the meeting by starting the Windows SIG at 6:35 pm.

A member had a problem with his wireless connection. Bob went through all of the things that might possibly be causing his problem.

Another member had lost use of Office 2007. After a discussion of the conditions that she has encountered, Bob determined that the program had not been installed after she purchased the program and received the key to convert the trial version that came on her computer. He also mentioned that she might use the Microsoft Complete Uninstall routine if the normal installation procedure does not work after a normal uninstall. He recommends a complete uninstall of the trial version if you buy a new package that may or may not be the same version as the trial version.

Bob mentioned that the "Lost.FM" site was a good source to find music and artists. It has an easy to use and versatile search program that allows you to quickly find practically any artist or song. Bob also recommended "Total Recorder", a program that he has used for several years, that allows you to record practically anything that is playing on your computer.

There was an extended discussion about the provision of free antivirus programs by Verizon and Roadrunner compared to the antivirus programs available commercially from a variety of vendors.

John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of the program at 7:20 pm. He mentioned that

(Minutes…….Continued on page 5)

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Vista – It's Growing on Me

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

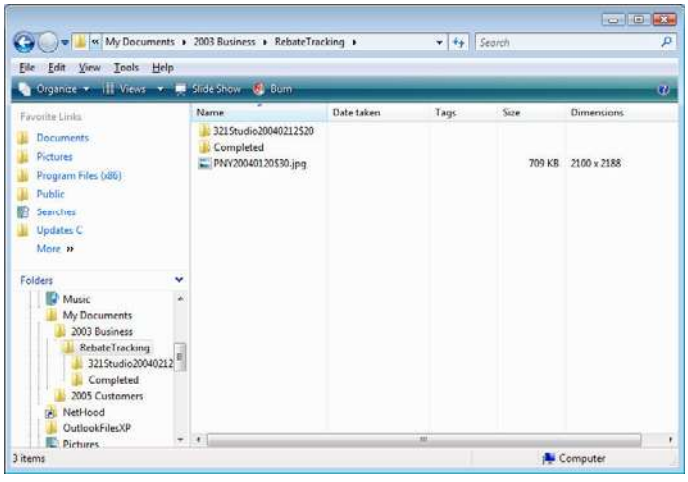
OK, I'm beginning to like this Vista thing. For the record, I have Vista 64 Business installed, tuned for performance. That turns off most of the gee-whiz graphics, including Aero, the taskbar thumbnails and the gadgets/widgets.

Last month I declared that I disliked the Start menu and Windows Explorer. I haven't changed my mind about the Start Menu, but I have mitigated it some.

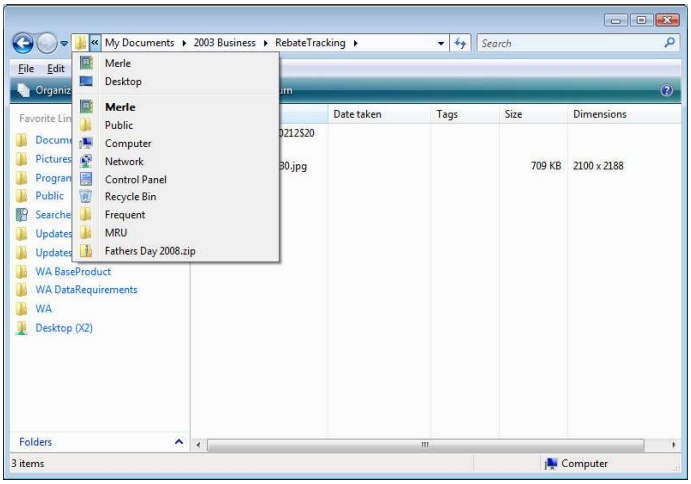
Windows Explorer
I have, however, changed my mind about Windows Explorer. I now think it's an improvement over the traditional old tree structure that goes back to Windows 95 and Norton Commander for Windows 3.1.

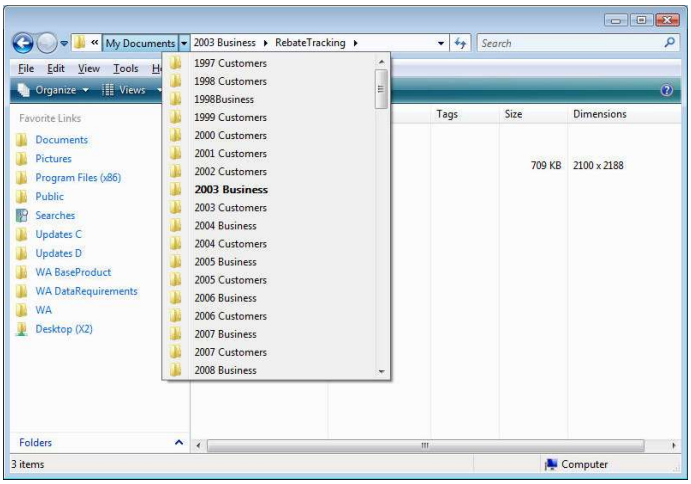
I may keep the Free Commander file manager (http://www.FreeCommander.com and no relation to the old Norton Commander), but I find I'm using it less as I gain experience with Vista's Windows Explorer.

With Vista's Windows Explorer, I was trying to make it fit into my old XP paradigm instead of looking at it as a new approach, starting with the Navigation Pane on the left, having two sections, "Favorite Links" and "Folders".



Where I made my mistake: I was depending on navigating the Folders and hating it – for good reason. So I've stopped using that and closed it so I have more room for Favorite Links, and I'm using the drop-down folder listings in the Address Bar to move around instead.



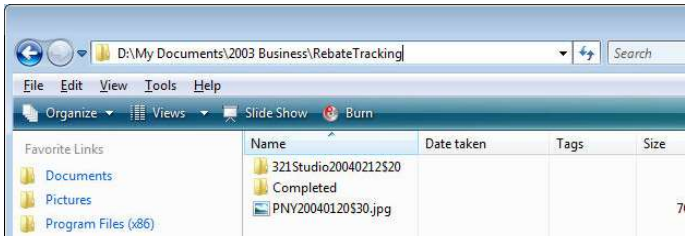


You can see the result above. I've added useful Favorite Links that satisfy my needs about half the time, and I then navigate using the drop-down folder lists from there. Unfortunately, you cannot eliminate the Folders section altogether, but at least you can shove it to the bottom.

For the times I need to copy and paste a path, I just click in the Address Bar and it automatically turns into something you can cut and paste. See below. Also, the in-context menu that you get when you right-click a file changes by holding down Shift. It adds a few items. One is "Copy As Path." Right-click on a file holding shift down, select "Copy As

(Vista……Continued on page 4)

(Vista…….Continued from page 3)
Path," and the entire pathname is sent to the clipboard.



The right-click+Shift also adds "Pin to Start Menu" and "Add to Quick Launch". You get different in-context menus, depending on the file type. For picture files, "Rotate Clockwise" and "Rotate Counter-clockwise" and "Set as Background" are on the menu.

There's a Search Bar at the top right that filters, showing only the file names that fit the search. It looks inside all files for the text, the filename, tags and file properties. The search is limited to the current folder and all its subfolders. You can search only the filenames by typing "Name:" as a prefix as in Name:flower. There are a great many advanced queries available, such as date range or size range (size:>=50 <= 70). There's too much to cover on this subject, but the built-in help is extensive and well-written. Once you're used to it, it works very well, and is exceptionally fast.

There are a couple of other features, like the File Viewer, which I find pretty useless, since, as far as I can tell, it works only with Text files. Office files launch the full Office application anyway, as well as Adobe Reader for PDFs and Windows Photo Gallery for pictures.

In Detail view, there are other ways to organize the files in addition to sorting by columns. You can Sort By, Group By and Stack By. If you Stack by Modified Date, you get all the files stacked in time categories like "Today," "Earlier This Week," "Last Week," "Earlier This Month," "Earlier This Year" and "A Long Time Ago." Each stack contains the files fitting that stack criteria.

Start Menu
We'll cover this next month.

Other Subjects
Vista Screen fonts: Screen fonts are handled differently in Vista, apparently. They are crisper and easier to read than XP. Cleartype is a part of the installed features. It was an add-in in XP. But even considering Cleartype, Vista fonts are even better. It's an unexpected bonus.

Networking and accessing network files
This is a subject for another article, but I've found attaching to shared folders on my network from Vista is very much quicker and more responsive to navigating. It's pretty easy. And I have not found locating Vista shared folders from XP machines any different. If anything it's faster. There were a lot of complaints prior to Service Pack 1. I experienced some frustrations myself. It seems to have gone away.

Windows Live One-Care
I have this on three machines, one XP, one Vista and my Vista 64. It's antivirus, anti-spyware, an improved firewall, automatic backup, scheduled tune-up and phishing filter. It's a bargain at $50 for three machines, in my opinion. I started the subscription eleven months ago, and I'll renew.

It's the most unobtrusive of any antivirus software I've seen. If it wasn't for my noisy hard drives I wouldn't know it's scanning. It detects that you have your machine in use and will slow down to make sure it doesn't interfere. There's a single interface program to pop up from the taskbar, and everything is located there in a well-organized manner. It will pop up and tell you when something isn't done on time. Otherwise it leaves you alone.

More next month. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

Kevin Sheridan, our vice president, would give a presentation on the Trend Micro Internet Security programs shortly. John also reminded the members of the importance of going through our web site for all of their Amazon.com purchases. The purchase is handled the same for your purposes as it would be if you went directly to Amazon.com. The price is the same and you take full advantage of any special prices or discounts that Amazon is offering, and your user group receives a percentage of the sale price.

Kevin opened his presentation by explaining the role of firewalls and of antivirus programs. He discussed the differences among malware (malicious software), viruses and spyware. The stated purpose of his talk was to make sure that everybody has something on their machine to provide protection.

Trend Micro's web site has information on each type of coverage that they provide. The three programs that Kevin discussed are: Trend Micro Antivirus Plus 2008, Trend Micro Internet Security Suite 2008 and Trend Micro Internet Security Pro 2008. Kevin covered the features and pricing of each of these products. He demonstrated and gave numerous examples of how the features of each worked. He concentrated on the details and features of the Trend Micro Internet Security Suite 2008. He ended his presentation with a discussion of the added security provided by "OpenDNS", which will stop your computer from going to unidentified sites. Members were also advised that when they use unsecured or public wireless "hotspots" that they should turn off file- and printer-sharing options on their laptop.

(Minutes……..Continued on page 8)

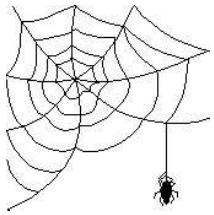
Internet Picture of the Month



Rat Trick

After photographing a squirrel and then a rat trying to steal the seed from my bird's cage while it was outside, I went looking for such photos on the Internet. This one is from kintired's photostream at http://www.flickr.com. The link to kintired's photostream is http://www.flickr.com/photos/8879785@N07/. Incidentally, there were 4,185 uploads to Flickr during the minute before I went there.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Cuil –A new search engine	http://www.cuil.com/
Replacements, Ltd.	http://www.replacements.com/
GigaPan—view and share panoramas	http://www.gigapan.org/
Bankrate.com—Bank ratings	http://www.bankrate.com/brm/safesound/select.asp?insttype=0
NOLA Radio	http://www.nola.com/new_nolaradio/index.ssf?content.ssf/2008/07/satchmofest.xml

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Vista Experiences – Summary

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

If you'll remember from last month, I purchased an inexpensive middle-of-the-road notebook with Vista Home Premium and increased the memory to 2.5GB. Then, after trying out Vista 32 Business (while also using XP) on my main fast desktop computer, I finally settled on a Vista 64 SP1 Business version.

On both Vista systems, I tuned the system for performance, disabling all of the new graphics capabilities.

I haven't experienced any of the "bad stuff" that the press is writing about. The system I built for myself had no real driver issues. In fact, except for the not-surprising non-support of my old scanner and having to visit Canon for a printer driver for a 2003 inkjet, Vista 64 SP1 supplied all of the drivers needed off the installation DVD, including ones for a USB headset, a drive controller card, a Bluetooth Dongle and my old PDA.

On the purchased notebook, since it was delivered with Vista installed, it had no problems for me to inherit. I did remove quite a lot of HP CrapWare, almost none of which was actively bad, just slowing the computer down. It did have WildTangent, which, depending on your point of view, is malware in the wrong hands.

I found Vista networking very easy. I can share folders to other Vista and non-Vista computers and vice-versa. It works as well or better than XP. It's certainly more responsive.

Setup for Mail and Internet is routine; no real difference from XP. All my data is on a separate hard drive, so I didn't have to move much from my XP drive to Vista 64.

I've had no "Blue Screen" events or any unexplained program failures. The system is very "tunable", allowing me to turn off a lot of annoying (to me) graphics. But I was able to leave a few features that I enjoy, like ClearType, "smooth edges of screen fonts" and "use visual styles."

Aside from my personal dislike of Start Menu and Windows Explorer, I can find nothing much to fault. I do find file copying from one location to another using Windows Explorer disappointingly slow, but that's not a real impact on me. The automatic backups I do to a networked PC are very fast, as is Acronis 11.0.

You'll need to upgrade to Acronis 11 for Vista support. A very surprising amount of 32-bit software all runs transparently. I did obtain a couple of replacement programs for Vista 64, but all were free anyway. So far, except for the Acronis 11 upgrade, I've not spent any money for software.

One peculiar thing is that Vista 64 has two IE 7 browsers, one is 32 bit and the other 64. Of course, no ActiveX or any other browser add-in will work on the 64-bit version, even Adobe Reader. I haven't yet found out how I get to one or the other.

I find the system very fast, fairly quick to load (58 sec after POST) and to shut down (28 sec). Applications like MS Office, IE 7, FTP, Acronis and Delorme Street Atlas all load pretty much instantly, somewhat faster than XP. I attribute this to a large amount of installed memory and Vista SuperFetch. I haven't timed the notebook, but I do know it's acceptable. Naturally, I set my expectations low when it comes to an inexpensive notebook.

I do have a wish list for Vista, but it's not large. I would like to see file copying improved. I would like some alternative desktop themes. Mainly I'd like to get rid of the black Start Bar, and I'd prefer the cascading Start menu of XP. The "classic" desktop theme should not be Windows 3.1. The Vista file Dialog box has some interesting features, and there's more there than meets the eye, but I think it operates on a pretty superficial level, aimed at novices. I'd pay money – today – for an improved desktop theme that does not call for replacing a DLL with one from XP. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com,* or Merle Nicholson at *merle@merlenicholson.com.*

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

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Windows SIG

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(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

The programs that I will feature are

- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Illustrator (only a brief mention)\
- Microsoft Pro Photo Tools (free)
- Microsoft Deep Zoom Composer (free)
- Microsoft Visual Studio 2008
- Microsoft Access

Somewhat of a strange collection, you might think. What do Microsoft Access and Microsoft Visual Studio have to do with photography? The Access answer is easy: I created an Access database to record the file name, date, location, etc. of each of the images I have scanned in from either a negative or slide. I am probably halfway through scanning in all my negatives and slides. I have scanned almost all of the oldest ones (that is important since they are losing quality). That amounts to 8,585 scans; however, of that total, I have only catalogued 5,137 in Access.

Then there are all the digital photos: 3,890 taken with my first digital, the Canon G1; 6,482 taken with my Nikon D100 digital SLR; and 2,315 taken with my newer Nikon, the D200 digital SLR. With the digital files, I can use either Photoshop or Microsoft Pro Photo Tools to add a description and location to the EXIF information in the header of the file. And I have been doing this for my more recent photos. With Pro Photo Tools, if you can find the location on a Virtual Earth map, then you can include the latitude and longitude of the location in the image file simply by clicking on the map at the location.

But what to do with this information in the header of the image file? There are programs that let you view it, Photoshop being one, but how can you make use of it? That is where the programming comes in. I have written various VB.Net programs to extract this EXIF data from the image files so as to retrieve the title and description (which I put there, usually with Photoshop), the date (which the camera put there) and the latitude and longitude (which I put there using Pro Photo Tools). I can then either add this information to my Access database of photographs or I can use it to create pushpins on a Virtual Earth map, where for each pin there is an associated photo.

I have touched on these ideas before in the newsletter. In the presentation, I am going to go a step further and show you (leaving out some detail) how this is done. You will be able to do the geo-tagging of your photos, that is adding latitude and longitude with the free Pro Photo Tools using no skill other than being able to find on a map where you took a photo. You can also use this program to add a title, description and much more. So, unless you use some renegade program (one that destroys the EXIF header info) to edit the image files in the future, all that information will stay with the file indefinitely.

In closing, I believe some thought should be given to how you preserve your images. In theory, digital files should last forever. However, that does not take into consideration failing hard drives, lightening strikes, gamma rays and people who don't care.

You can protect your files against failing hard drives by saving copies of the image files to more than one hard drive. You can protect against lightening by making sure the other hard drive is an external one and

Comments……..Continued on page 8)

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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Minutes……..Continued from page 5)

The raffle conducted at the end of the meeting earned $24 for the group. Jenny Lind Olin and Jeanne Gillespie each won software, and Merle Nicholson and Ed Cohen each won a T-Shirt.

The meeting ended at approximately 8:35 pm. ◆



(Comments……..Continued from page 7)

that it is kept totally unplugged from anything when not in use. Of course, you can also save copies to CDs and DVDs. As to the gamma rays, I don't know about that, but we are bombarded with them all the time and we are still alive.

The people who don't care are a harder problem. It is quite possible that when you pass from this earth, your descendants will simply throw everything, including your 10,000 digital photos, in the trash. However, based on my experience with my father-in-law's photos, including those from his father, it is more likely that someone will keep, treasure and make use of at least part of your collection. ◆

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(Vista… … ….Continued from page 7)



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of



September in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 9 September 2008

Meeting

Configuring Vista to Your Liking
by
Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, September 10, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will give a presentation on configuring Vista. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments: Fan Problems

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

My current computer was built in November of 2005. Beginning in July of 2007, I started to have problems with some of its fans. The first fan to cause a problem was the CPU fan, pictured as the first image below in the continuation of the article. It is a fairly large fan positioned on top of the processor and secured with four screws.. It began to make a noise when the computer was started, and the noise would come back later as the computer ran.

I ordered a replacement fan of the same size, except that it was slightly thicker, from Newegg. That solved that problem.

July seems to be a bad month for computer fans because, this July, I began receiving a message that the Chip Fan, as shown in the photo below, had either failed or was not rotating fast enough when I would boot the computer. Simply turning off the computer and then starting it again solved this occasional problem (about one out of four or five startups). Finally the problem got to the point that turning the computer off and then on did not solve it. And when you get that message from the BIOS that a fan is malfunctioning, if you want to use the computer you have to go into the BIOS and

(Comments… … ….Continued on page 3)

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SIGs	7
Map	8

October Meeting: Steve Singer speaking on new computer hardware

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The meeting opened at 6:40 pm. Bob LaFave started the meeting by opening the Windows SIG. He announced that he had changed the format for this meeting because there had been so many questions about "wireless technology". He said that he thought the best way to satisfy these questions in a way that would be most fully understood by all members was to present a demonstration in which he would methodically go through the steps of setting up a wireless router he had brought to the meeting. He discussed in detail the requirements for security and invited comments and questions from the members on a number of approaches to securing wireless connections. There was a discussion of the consequences of not taking the time to make the setup properly secure. He demonstrated how to disable and reactivate the wireless connection. Bob also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using "MAC addresses" to further enhance security. He pointed out the need to keep up with both firmware and software updates of your router.

Additionally, he cautioned to be aware of the baggage that comes with some free software and updates to third-party software. At the end of the presentation, a member mentioned having trouble connecting her printer to her new computer. Bob believed that it was a driver problem and showed her how to locate and download the latest driver for her printer. He also mentioned the advantages of setting up the printer as a network printer if it has either an Ethernet or a wireless connection.

John Witmer opened the business portion of the meeting at 7:12 pm. He reminded the members of the importance to our group for all members and guests to log in at each meeting. Jenny Lind Olin had volunteered to bring in software and hardware that she is no longer using to see if any of the members could make use of either. John urged her to bring it to the next meeting and also encouraged other members who had similar items to bring them in for members to examine. Doug Mullis mentioned that several members were behind in their dues. He also reminded us that we have not finalized the agreement with the Brandon User Group to swap presenters. Doug will reopen the discussion with the Brandon group. Doug said that our current schedule is filled through December. Merle Ni-

(Minutes… … …Continued on page 4)

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(Vista… … …Continued from page 6)



left).

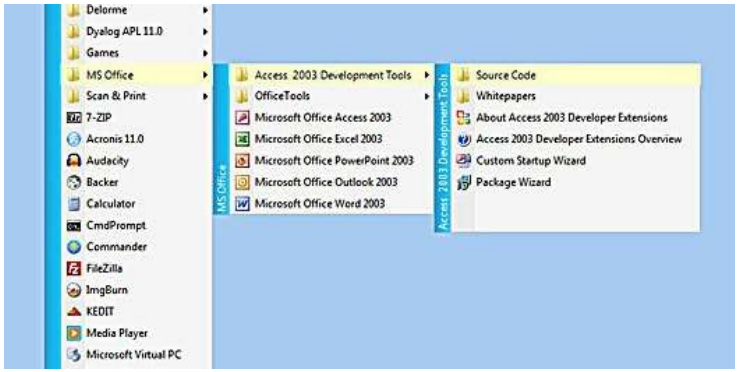
It's hard for me to see any advantages over the XP menu. I find it slow and tedious to get where I want. When you exit from the menu and then later go back, you'll find any folder expansions you've done are gone. And all-in-all, the whole menu is impossibly tall if you have any collection of programs.

You can switch to "Classic" menu just as you could in XP, but guess what – it's the same Windows 3.1 classic menu.

I have to say I do use the Vista Start Menu, but rarely. My personal solution to this is a product called True Launch Bar at http://www.truelaunchbar.com. It's very highly configurable, and you can construct a very efficient menu. But I'd say it is a lot of work. A cropped image of my True Launch bar is the last clip on page 7. You can see a larger picture of my True Launch Bar in the HTML versions of the newsletter that will appear online. ◆

(Vista… … …Continued on page 8)

ual "loose" program icons are sorted above the folders and there are many more folders not shown. You must use the slider to see the remainder of the folders. Further, the way folders expand is vertically, not to a submenu on the right as in XP. This has the effect of making the All Programs list very tall (picture to the



Vista – It's growing on me, Part II

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Last month, I wrote an article mostly about Vista Windows Explorer and what I discovered after forcing myself to use it. I've abandoned the use of FreeCommander, a freeware alternative to Windows Explorer.

This month, I'd like to explain what I've found using the Vista Start Menu—some positive features, and negative ones, too.

The first image on the left below is my own Start Menu, with minimal customization. The area marked "1" is the list of most-recently-used programs. It's configurable in two ways: The number of entries in the list – maximum of 30, and the icon size, large and small. I'm using the small icon size, but the large has an advantage in that it makes the menu much taller. That's an advantage when we discuss "All Programs" later.





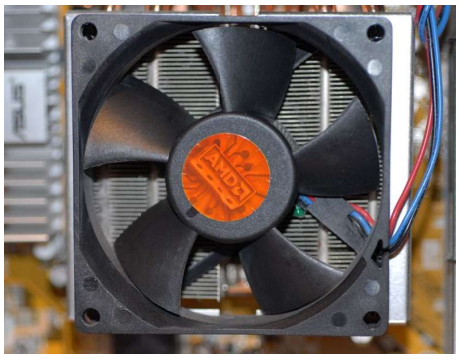
The "Power Button" (2) is configurable if you open Control Panel, Power Options. You can set this to "Shut Down", "Sleep", "Hibernate" and "Do Nothing". When you press this button, it acts immediately with no further interaction or confirmation. I have mine set to "Shut Down" and it simply starts shutting down. I like this a lot: No further questions, no more menus.

Here would be a good place to discuss Sleep and Hibernate. They haven't changed from XP. But one big change is that it's become acceptable to use either one regularly, especially on notebooks. I think it all got started when Vista was new and everyone was looking for a way to speed up the boot and shutdown process. What I would do, I think, would be to use Shut Down for a long while and then try Sleep a few times and then Hibernate to see if it's worth the trouble. If you settle on Sleep, just remember to shut down every couple of days to clear out memory.

The padlock (3) is "Lock This Computer". You do remember the password, right? And last; the Power Menu (4) is a small menu list with Shutdown, Restart, Sleep, Lock, Log Off and Switch User. Some of the items on the right panel under the picture and User Name are optional, just as they are in XP: Printers, Run, Control Panel, Network and others.

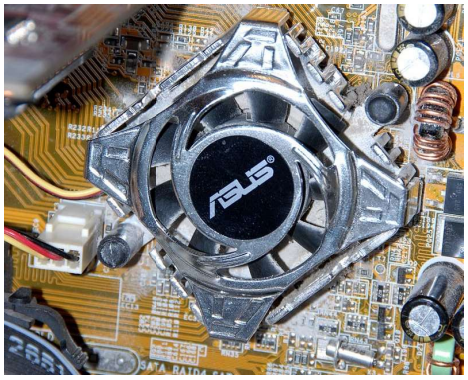
Pressing on "All Programs" (or hovering over it for a few seconds) will switch to the programs menu. It may be hard to see in this second picture (to the right of the first picture), but the individ-

(Vista… … ….Continued on page 7)



(Comments… … ….Continued from page 1)

change the fan settings in the Power sub-menu. For the Chip Fan, which is more accurately called the Northbridge Chip Fan, there are only two options—Enable Fan Monitoring or Disable it. So I disabled it and was, thus, able to use my computer. I used it this way for several days but then began to worry about what would eventually happen. Since I had removed the cover to the computer, I could touch the combination fan/heat sink for the Northbridge Chip and tell that it was hot. In fact, I noted that I could almost get the fan revolving if I tried to spin it with my little finger. So, using a small pair of side cutters, I cut away the metal that held the fan cover to the heat sink to totally expose all of the fan's blades as shown below. This allowed me to spin the fan counterclockwise, which started the fan revolving and made me and the computer happy. Unfortunately this required me to leave the cover off the computer so as to be able to rotate the fan each time I started the computer. Not good, and possibly not safe.

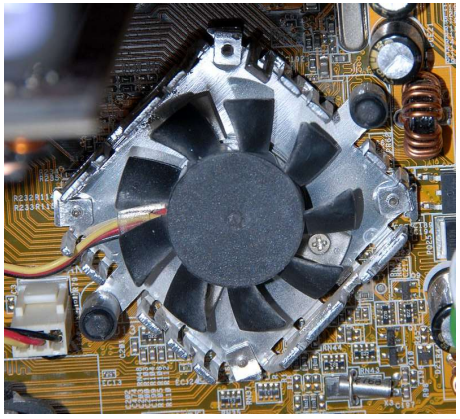


I ran all of these problems by member Merle Nicholson, my hardware expert. He offered three solutions. Buy a replacement fan, buy a replacement heat sink that was larger and, hence, did not need a fan, or take the current fan out and try to oil it and get it spinning smoothly.

A replacement heat sink without a fan or a replacement of exactly the same thing I had (assuming that could even be gotten from the motherboard manufacturer, Asus) would entail taking the motherboard out of the computer to do the installation. Here is a link to how to do that.: http://euroalps.eu/technology/Computing/Chipset_Cooling/Remove_existing_fan/remove_existing_fan.html You will note that the fan looks a bit different from mine, but the removal process would be the same.

I opted for trying to remove the fan from the heat sink and then oiling it. In the previous image you can clearly see one Phillips-head screw attaching the fan to the heat sink. There are actually two more such screws, and, with a small Phillips-head screwdriver, I was able to remove the fan. The removed fan is shown in the first photo below. Unfortunately, I could see no place to oil it, since Merle did not tell me the whole story. You need to remove that white circular adhesive paper cover, seen in the next photo, to see the bearing of the fan. Not knowing this, I simply hit the fan with a fair amount of compressed air and reinstalled it, with the result that it now would not even start when I rotated it with my finger. A call to Merle informed me about the paper cover over the bearing, and I then knew that I would have to remove the fan again (a magnetized screwdriver is a big help here, so as

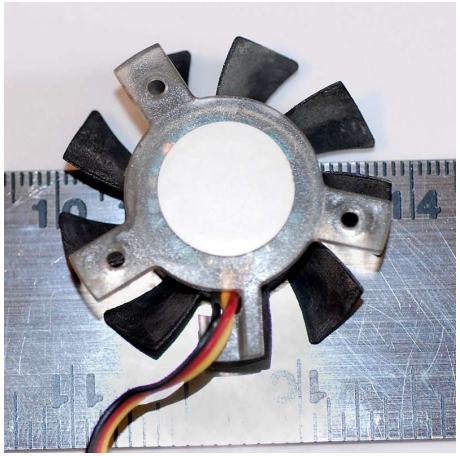
(Comments… … ….Continued on page 4)

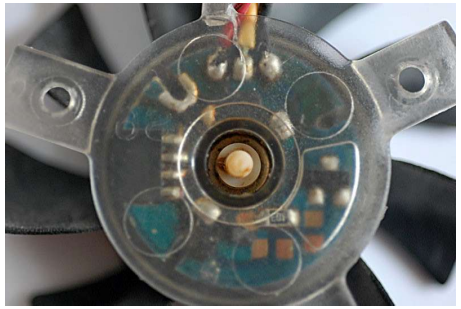


(Comments… …..Continued from page 3)
to not drop any screws).

The second image shows the now exposed ceramic (or plastic) bearing in the center. Applying a few drops of oil to the bearing and working the fan at first produced nothing. But finally, with more oil and more rotating and then turning the fan vertical from horizontal, the fan spun very easily. I reinstalled the fan and watched it with the computer cover off for a few days. Everything seemed fine. So I went back into the BIOS and reset the Chip Fan to be monitored. I also set the CPU fan to give me a warning if it went below 800 RPM and the Chassis fan to do the same. However, on startup, I received a CPU fan warning. And looking at the information about the fans in the BIOS showed that the fan was rotating at 795 RPM, occasionally reading above 800. The fan seemed fine, so, in order to be able to use the computer, I disabled the CPU fan monitoring since 800 rpm was the lowest available setting.

And that is where I am in my fan saga—waiting to see if my oiling of the Chip fan is a long term solution. ◆





(Minutes… … ….Continued from page 2)
cholson will give a presentation on Vista in September, Steve Singer will give a presentation in October and Jim Purcell will give a presentation in November. Our annual Christmas party will be in December.

William LaMartin began his presentation on Digital Photography and Programming. William gave a history of his experience with cameras that began with a Brownie camera when he was nine years old on a visit to California. That experience led to his acquisition of increasingly sophisticated film cameras and a broadening interest in photography. He showed pictures which depicted the improvements in the tools of photography, his methods of using the technology and a pictorial history of the changes in our society that were taking place at the same time. He purchased a Canon G1 in 2000 as his first digital camera followed by a Nikon D100, then a Nikon D200. He talked about scanning his negatives and slides in order to preserve their quality in digital format. He has so far scanned approximately 8,600 negatives and slides (approximately 30 gigabytes). He estimates that this is about half of his collection of negatives and slides. The negatives and slides are scanned to allow a 12-inch wide print at approximately150 dpi. He stressed the need to organize your photos in some logical order and to backup your collection on a regular basis. William discussed the various ways to scan photos and slides using both dedicated film scanners and flatbed scanners.

The digital pictures are, of course, already in digital format and he shoots his pictures at the maximum size his camera will produce, which is approximately 3000 pixels x 2000 pixels as jpeg files with minimal compression. He occasionally uses the camera raw setting, which produces a very large file and marginally better results.

He mentioned that the quality of digital pictures has progressed to the point where it has surpassed those produced by film in the 35mm format. Even the relatively

(Minutes… … ….Continued on page 5)

(Minutes… … ….Continued from page 4)
inexpensive point and shoot digital cameras produce decent pictures that rarely require any post-exposure correction (unless you are a perfectionist; in which case you probably should be using a SLR). He said that Photoshop is his photo editor of choice. He listed eight tools of the many available in Photoshop that will make practically any correction that you want to make. He demonstrated how each of the tools is used.

Next, William spoke on mapping. He showed several maps that were created long before there was a digital capability. He demonstrated some of the things that can be done with Microsoft Deep Zoom Composer to view these maps at various levels of detail. This actually had nothing to do with photography, but allowed him to demonstrate Deep Zoom Composer, which can also be used to view photos or collections of photos at different levels of detail. He then showed us one of his multi-level photo collections created with Deep Zoom Composer.

After that, he demonstrated using Microsoft Pro Photo Tools to geo-tag photos, which inserts latitude and longitude data into the header of the photo file. This position data is, thus, added to the camera data that are already there, such as f/stop, shutter speed, ISO setting, date and time taken, etc. . Both Deep Zoom Composer and Pro Photo Tools may be downloaded free from Microsoft.

William ended the presentation with a demonstration of a web site he is creating that allows you to upload your photos and place pushpins on a map of the world at the exact location at which the photos were taken, such that when you hover your mouse over a pushpin you see a thumbnail of the photo, along with a description, and, if you click on the thumbnail, you view the photo full size.

Since time ran short, he omitted some additional programming examples.

The meeting ended at 9:05 pm. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



High Water

This photo from http://www.huffingtonpost.com shows the localized flooding in New Orleans adjacent to the Industrial Canal caused by rising water in the canal as the result of Hurricane Gustav to the west. The canal reached a level that was within one foot of the top of the floodwall. It is not clear from this photo whether this was inside or outside the floodwall. What do you think would have happened if Hurricane Gustav had actually hit New Orleans?

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The American Scholar	http://www.theamericanscholar.org/
Scanmyphotos.com—cheap scanning	http://scanmyphotos.com/
Fotofix.com—photo retouching	http://www.fotofix.com/
Picwash.com—photo retouching	http://www.picwash.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 10 October 2008

Meeting

Computer Hardware
by
Steve Singer from
RDI @ Tampa Bay Inc

Wednesday, October 8, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Steve Singer from RDI @ Tampa Bay, Inc. will give his annual presentation of new computer hardware. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Thanks to Jim Purcell and Ron Weinberg, we have a newsletter this month. They each simply wrote about a program they are using on their computer—Ubuntu and Microsoft Virtual PC for Ron and Adobe Photoshop Elements for Jim. Almost any member could do the same thing—if you would.

As for me, it has been a slow computing month. I have done a little VB.Net programming, provided descriptions and location information for recent digital photos and created web pages so that I could simultaneously watch several local TV stations in both New Orleans and Houston as the recent hurricanes approached those cities.

For the digital photos, I use Adobe Photoshop CS3 to add my own name, email, etc. to the creator Metadata item. Then I add a description and key words. Later, using Microsoft Pro

(Comments……Continued on page 4)

November Meeting: Jim Purcell — Scanning, Editing, Storing and Sharing Photographs

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

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Check the address label for your renewal month

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Pepin Distributing Co.

for their support

Minutes of the October Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The meeting began at 6:35 pm. Bob LaFave began the Windows SIG with a demonstration of how to track a problem. Bob discussed the use of a print server and the increased flexibility that it provides, in that it is not necessary to have a host computer running in order for other computers to access the printer. He also discussed the ways to recognize printers on a network. He mentioned that Office can cause problems when it becomes necessary to uninstall the program. Bob said that the best way to uninstall Office is to start the installation disk, go to repair – uninstall, and uninstall the program. A member asked how to use "Aero" capability with Vista. Bob gave a brief description of how to take advantage of the things available in the "Aero" program.

He mentioned CPU-Z (a hardware monitor). Bob said that he has found the program useful in monitoring the performance of his computers, especially to insure that the computers are not overheating.

There was an expanded discussion of the pros and cons of Google's new browser. Some members liked the new features and some thought that you paid a price for using them.

Bob discussed anti-virus programs and the ones that are his current favorites. A member asked Bob to identify the free anti-virus programs that he prefers. He explained how to find the one that best serves the individual's needs by determining the one with which they are most comfortable. Member Merle Nicholson mentioned that most programs have a 30- or 60-day trial period, which allows users to make sure they understand the features and peculiarities of the program. There was a discussion of working

(Minutes……..Continued on page 4)

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Upgrading Ubuntu in a Virtual PC

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Like some other group members, I have been experimenting with Ubuntu Linux using Microsoft Virtual PC 2007. I do this out of professional curiosity and for the challenge. With a Virtual PC, I don't have to dual boot or compromise my host XP Pro system in any way.

Day to day use of a computer running Ubuntu is relatively easy. You get a free open source operating system that will run, even on some old underpowered hardware, and programs that provide all your basic needs and features and a lot more. For example, the free Open Office Suite has all the essential functionality of Microsoft Office and good interoperability with it. Each new release of Ubuntu brings added improvements.

However, there are still some rough spots that might intimidate the ordinary PC user. I am reminded of the old days of DOS and early Windows when you had to learn by trial and error and often use a command line. As then, time and patience are required here.

I selected Ubuntu because it seems to be one of the most popular distributions with great potential and it is improving rapidly. Frankly, the Virtual PC aspect does complicate and somewhat compromise the features of Ubuntu.

My original install was version 6.10, so I tried to use the automatic upgrade offered by the built in Update Manager to move to a newer version, 7.04.

Before proceeding, I found out that there was a new Service Pack1 for Virtual PC which supports XP Professional SP3 and Vista, and I installed it.

Using the built-in Update Manager, I started the upgrade to version 7.04 and failed, receiving multiple error code 404 errors (failed to fetch). I retried several times and got the same errors. It was time to get help.

There were so many proposed fixes for these errors posted in search results that it was impossible to determine which would be correct to use in this case.

One of the great assets of Ubuntu is the myriad of online help resources, including the large and very helpful user community easily reached at https://launchpad.net/ubuntu.

I posted a question there, giving the exact problem, and included all the error messages. Suggestions began arriving the same day, but the solution came after 10 days. Remember, patience is needed as respondents are volunteers.

The answer was that Version 6.10 is no longer being supported and there was a link to confirm it at https://launchpad.net/ubuntu. It was suggested I upgrade offline using the 7.04 Alternate install CD, which could be downloaded as an ISO file at http://releases.ubuntu.com/7.04/. Then I was instructed to make a CD from the ISO image. (This requires a free program, such as Infra Recorder or ISO Recorder.) Using Ubuntu 6.10, you then insert the CD into your drive and you get a request to upgrade.

When the upgrade was completed, there was no mouse function.

Searching Google, I found that the problem was that Ubuntu did not recognize the mouse within a Virtual PC. Google provided a makeshift fix, turning the numeric keypad into a pseudo mouse, which was very inefficient. Further research located a permanent fix by editing the Grub Boot Parameters. This sounds difficult, but exact and easy instructions were provided.

After this fix, and the upgrade to 7.04 having succeeded, the Update Manager now offered an upgrade to 7.10. I wanted to move up to this release. Of course, I could have just installed a new Virtual PC with each later version, but I wanted to proceed as if I were actually using the product.

I started the upgrade from 7.04 to 7.10 and left it un-

(Ubuntu……..Continued on page 4)

(Ubuntu…….Continued from page 3)

attended overnight. My PC rebooted due to a Microsoft auto update so any messages were lost. I could not determine how far the upgrade got, but I still had 7.04, and, when I clicked on the Update Manager, nothing happened.

I posted another question on launchpad and got the solution the same day. It told me to try to update in a terminal window. You open a terminal in Applications > Accessories > Terminal. Then type: sudo aptitude update && sudo aptitude upgrade. This command line restored the Update Manager. Once it was restored, I was able to run the upgrade to 7.10. It started over from step 1, "Preparing the Upgrade," and completed successfully.

The upgrades themselves, while automated, do take several hours. In going from 7.04 to 7.10, a time remaining bar appeared showing 13 hours, but the actual time was much less.

Finally, I tested the installation, and everything worked. I could use the Internet, found my local Network Places, and could even share between Virtual Ubuntu and the host computer running XP Pro.

But again I discovered another limitation of the Virtual PC. You can share files, see and use them, but you cannot cut and paste between Virtual and Host. There is a trick found with Google, which I have not tried, that tells you how to do it using Remote Desktop.

Next, upgrade to 8.04, maybe? ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

Photo Tools, I add the longitude and latitude of the photo (if I can remember exactly where I took it). So, now I am considering this as computing and not just photography since I am using the two computer programs to accomplish this task.

For any who have created web pages, you may know that you can insert as many Windows Media Player

(Comments…….Continued on page 8)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

online or offline and how it is that you find yourself offline when you had not specifically requested the option. There seemed to be no answer to the problem, in that there are several things that might have been the cause. The Windows SIG ended at 7:14 pm.

John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of the meeting at 7:15 pm. He mentioned that, in October, Steve Singer will discuss new developments in hardware with his usual insights on all of the technical details. In November, Jim Purcell will discuss digital storage, editing, scanning and sharing. John mentioned the FACUG meeting to be held in Clearwater on Saturday, October 25. The details of the registration requirements and program content can be found at FACUG.org, He also stressed the need for members to furnish newsletter articles. John reminded the members that there were computer related items on the back table that Jennie Lind Olin brought in for any of the members who might have a need for them.

Merle began his presentation on the Vista operating system at 7:20 pm. He explained that the computer in a box that he was using for his presentation was built and designed by him to make it easier to change hard drives and to update and repair the computer. He detailed many of the changes and improvement that he has made since its original construction. He has several SATA ports built into the box so that he can easily use different hard drives for special requirements. He brought three versions of Vista so that he could illustrate his responses to member questions about the various versions. He talked about Vista requirements and why you might go to 64 bit and why you might not go to 64-bit. A primary reason to select the 64-bit version is the ability to address more memory. The additional memory, in addition to the obvious advantages, makes “Super Fetch” even more efficient than it is with only the usual 3GB or less of memory. Merle said that he has found very few programs that would not run with the 64-bit version of Vista. One of the exceptions is Nero, He said that there are a lot of differences between Vista and XP. For instance, the Vista control panel is more complete than in XP, and some of the changes are helpful, but there are many of the fea-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 5)

(Minutes……..Continued from page 4)

tures that seem to have been changed for no apparent reason.

He demonstrated some of the many features of Aero. One that he showed was a very good calendar that is available from Vista. He commented that Vista help is very good. He thinks that Vista Windows Explorer is poorly designed, very confusing and difficult to use. He has made extensive changes to the structure, but there are some things that you cannot change. Networking with Vista is much faster and much simpler. He recommends that you uncheck Automatic Restart on System Failure in the control panel's System & Maintenance link. so that you will get a blue screen and see what is causing a problem. Merle warned to not turn off your User Access Warnings (UAC's). Although UAC's may be bothersome, they help prevent viruses from doing their work.. He also warned not to use the hibernate or sleep modes. Merle has taken all of the frills off of his computer in order to make it operate as efficiently as possible. Merle emphasized how important it is to read the instructions on how to use the Search function. There is valuable information in "Help," particularly on the use of prefixes, which will dramatically improve your efficiency in the execution of searches. He says that Vista fonts are superior to XP fonts. Merle said that he does not believe that anyone should upgrade to Vista, His recommendation is that Vista should only be installed on a new machine that meets the requirements for Vista. The meeting ended at 8:55 pm. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month

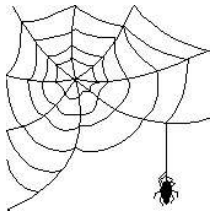


Cattle Roundup

This photo from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/26/us/26cattle.html. Quoting the Times:

"Two weeks after Hurricane Ike blew through Southeast Texas, cowboys on horseback and in helicopters are still trying to round up thousands of head of displaced cattle. The storm's surge carried cows up to 20 miles from their pastures in coastal Jefferson and Chambers Counties."

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations



Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	http://www.fdic.gov/
Bloomberg.com	http://www.bloomberg.com/
New York Times Business	http://www.nytimes.com/pages/business/
Is Your Bank Safe (at bankrate.com)	http://www.bankrate.com/brm/safesound/ss_home.asp
Yahoo Finance	http://finance.yahoo.com/

Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Photoshop Elements 6 Organizer

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

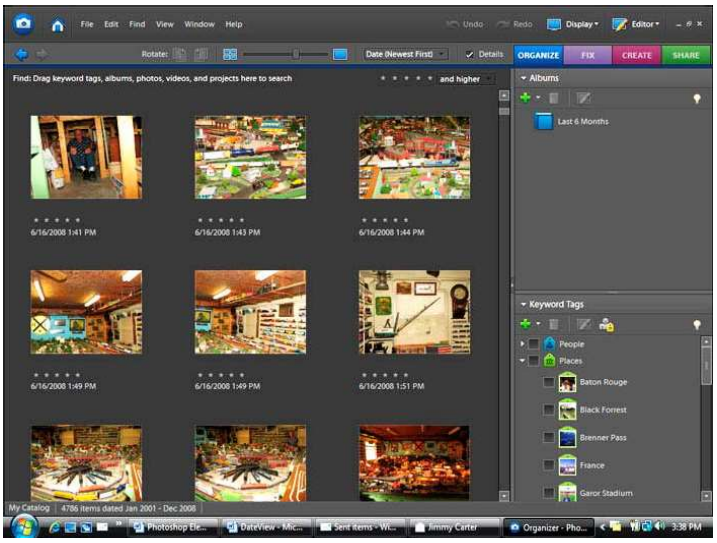
I know that those of you who saw William LaMartin's presentation on digital photography were impressed with the program that he has created in Access to organize his photo collection. Not everyone has the skills to put together such a program. There is an excellent alternative that is not as flexible but is relatively inexpensive.

Photoshop Elements, which is an offshoot of Photoshop, is an extremely powerful program for amateur photographers. Some of the professionals admit to having a copy running on their machine because some of the Photoshop tools that have been modified to make them easier to use often work as effectively as the Photoshop version. There is normally a new version of Elements when there is a new version of Photoshop. Most of the downloads and plug-ins for the new version of Photoshop will work in the new version of Elements. A new version of Photoshop Elements has just been released (Version 7) to coincide with the new release of the newest version of Photoshop, but I will discuss the Organizer in Version 6.

Before I start, I feel that I should give you a broad overview of the software. The list price is $99, but it is often on sale in the $50 -$60 range and will possibly go lower since a new version has been announced. You can have more than one version of Elements on your computer at a time, but Adobe recommends that you have only one version open at a time. There are four main sections: 1. the Organizer, which I will discuss in more detail; 2. the Editor, which is divided into Full Edit, Quick Fix (similar to point and shoot with your camera) and Guided Edit, which takes you through a number of editing tasks a step at a time; 3. Create, which contains several programs to help you do such things as Photo Books, Photo Calendars, Collages, Slide Shows and many more; 4. Share, which allows you to share photos using Online Galleries, Photo Mail, Email, CD\DVDs and more. I know that all of this looks like a lot of complicated stuff with a rather steep learning curve, but the beauty of the program is that you can use as much or as little as you like and the Help system is extensive. There are also many books available if you get interested in really pushing the program. I'm going to discuss a summary of the features of Organizer with just enough detail that you can see how easy it is to store your photos and find the ones that you are trying to locate.

The Display Menu is probably the first place to start in showing how the Organizer helps you keep track of your photos. The basic way that you get your photos into the Organizer is to identify which of your folders that you want included. Once this is done, any additional photos that you add to these folders will be added to the Organizer. Once in the Organizer, there are five different ways to look at your photos:

1. The **Thumbnail View** displays your photos as thumbnails, with or without the detail that you have identified in your options. They are normally sorted by the date in your metadata, either oldest or newest first. You can adjust the thumbnails larger or smaller, which will increase or decrease the number on screen.



Thumbnail View

2, **Import Batch** displays the thumbnails into the same batch configuration (by date) in which they were loaded into the Organizer.

3. The **Folder Location** places the thumbnails in the order in which they appear in your Windows Explorer folder tree and places the tree to the left of your thumbnail collection. You only need to click a

(Organizer……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

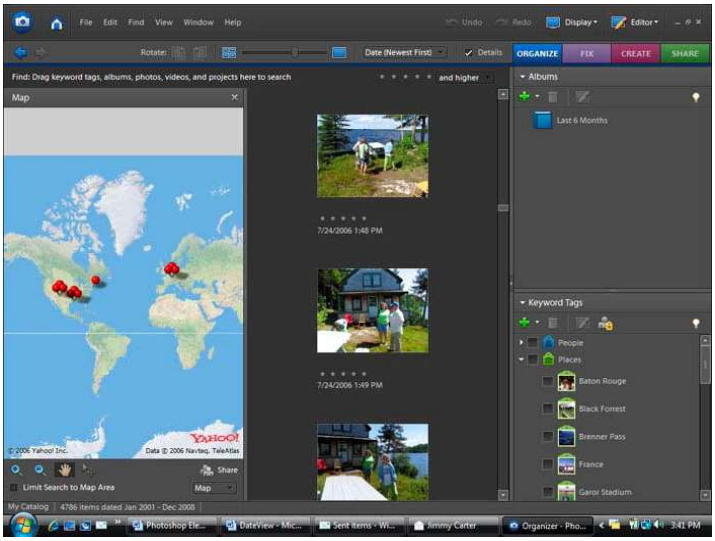
Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

(Organizer……..Continued from page 6)

folder and the thumbnails that are in that folder appear.

4. **Date View** displays your photos on a calendar either by the date assigned to the photo by your digital camera, or the date it was loaded into the organizer, or a date that you have assigned to the photo.

5. **Show Map View** allows you to place your photos on a Yahoo map to show where they were taken, The map has a satellite view that allows you to zoom in and out so you can, in many cases, place the photo in almost the exact spot that it was taken. Once you have processed these pictures at their locations into an online gallery, you can send the gallery to an Adobe web site or your own web site. You can also save the gallery to a CD/DVD, which can be displayed with Flash Player. The tagging system, which I will discuss later, allows you to put a location tag that you have created on several pictures from the same location and move them all at once by dragging the tag to the location. There will be one pin on the map for each location. When you click the pin, it sets up a slide show for the pictures at that location.



Map View

The View Menu allows you to modify the way your thumbnails are displayed and the type of descriptive details that are visible.

Keyword Tags is a system that lets you further identify your photo in as much or as little detail as you wish. You determine the hierarchy for people, places, events, or whatever you like. For instance, you can have only one tag for family, or you can have sub tags for children, or the children by name, or name tags for each member of the family. You can add several tags to the same photo. You could, for instance, have a tag for every name in a group picture if you desired. You can do the same sort of thing for places, events or points in time. When you click on a tag, every thumbnail in your collection with that tag is placed in a group. When you unclick the tag, the thumbnails return to their normal order.

The Find Menu is quite versatile; some of the ways you can search are: The program allows you to group your photos into various Collections and you can search for the individual Collections. You can search by Caption, or Note, or File Name. You can also search by Metadata. You can search for up to seven different historical events. You can search for photos that have a visual similarity to a selected photo(s). You can select a group of photos and have them scanned to find faces for tagging. You can look for

(Organizer……..Continued on page 8)

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(Organizer……Continued from page 7)
items with unknown dates or times and for photos that are untagged.

This by no means covers everything, but it should give you an idea of the capabilities of the Organizer. ◆

(Comments……Continued from page 4)
objects in a page as you want. It only takes a few lines of code for each one. Then all you need is the link for the content you want to show in each media player. You then put the web page on any web server and you can watch as many stations as you can fit on the page—just be sure to mute the volume on all but one at a time.

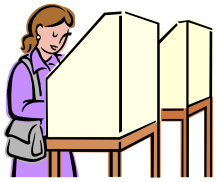
For Hurricane Gustav, I chose two New Orleans stations; for Hurricane Ike, I chose four stations in Houston. ◆



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Bits of Blue



November in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 11 November 2008

Meeting

Scanning, Editing and Sharing Your Slides, Negatives and Digital Photos

by
Ed Purcell

Wednesday, November 12, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Member Jim Purcell will share with us his knowledge of both scanning in slides and negatives and digital photography in general. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I will give the usual contributors a rest this month (other than our hard working secretary, who provides the minutes each month) and write about a new software suite that I have been working with. It is Microsoft Expression Studio 2. As noted in the article, the average computer user will probably only find one of the programs useful and, if they additionally maintain a web site, two programs. The other three programs are more specialized.

It would be much appreciated by me—and the other regular contributors and the readers, I am sure—if more members contributed articles. An article doesn't have to be long or technical. One page about something of interest in your computing life would be fine. ◆

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the meeting by opening the Windows SIG at approximately 6:30 pm. He discussed several sources which he had researched concerning antivirus programs . He had discovered several that were available at bargain rates. He also covered several sites that offered a variety of "Freeware" for practically anything that you want to do with a computer. One of the members asked about whether Microsoft would make its Publisher program available to a nonprofit group. Bob suggested that they contact the local Microsoft Office since they often provide some of their products to nonprofit groups, and they have a person especially designated to handle nonprofit relations. There was a question about links from places like Walgreens not working properly. Bob explained how to follow the information contained in emails concerning links to obtain coupons or other offers. He cautioned that you should be sure of the reliability of the information you are receiving from vendors because you can possibly install a virus by opening a link. He advised to be aware of phishing, especially on emails referencing bank accounts.

A member asked for instructions on creating a virtual PC. Bob gave the information on how to set up a virtual PC. He and Merle explained the operating system licensing requirements for legally installing operating systems on a Virtual PC. Bob mentioned that if you add a digital tuner card to your computer, Vista allows you to record the programs that you are watching to a DVD.

Steve Singer of RDI, Inc., gave a detailed discussion of the capability to view TV programs and movies on your computer. He discussed Media Center and its capabilities and limitations. He also mentioned that

(Minutes……..Continued on page 7)

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Microsoft Expression Studio 2

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Expression Studio 2 consists of five programs: Expression Web, Expression Design, Expression Blend, Expression Media and Expression Encoder. Expression Web was the first on the scene a few years back as the replacement for the HTML editor and web site management program FrontPage.

I switched from FrontPage to Expression Web 1 in December of 2006 (and gave a presentation on it to the group at the January 2007 meeting). For me, the transition was fairly easy, since I was already using Visual Studio to do a lot of my web work that required server programming and Expression Web was designed to work well with web pages that used Visual Studio's VB or C-sharp code. I would use Expression Web to edit the visual aspects of the page and use Visual Studio to edit the code behind.

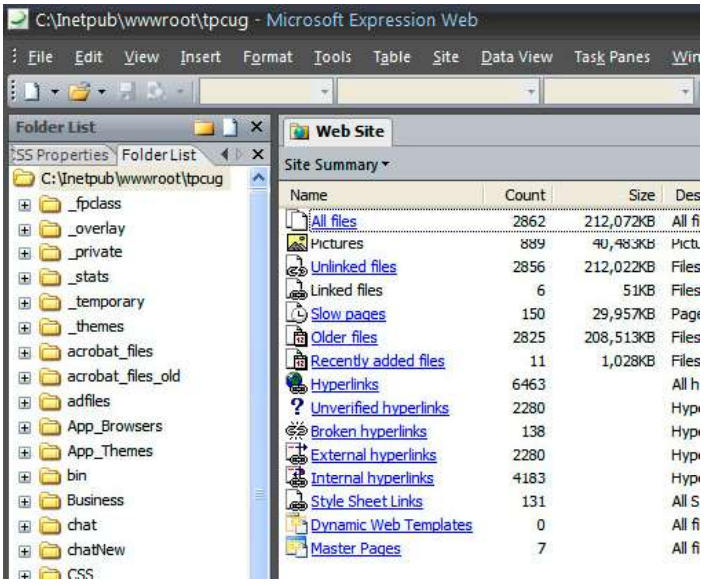
Also, moving to Expression Web encouraged me to start using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to control the appearance of pages. What one lost by leaving FrontPage were all the "web bots" that did things for you, such as a search bot, a discussion-web bot, a feedback forms bot, etc., which all require FrontPage Extensions. Losing the ability to include such bots in new web pages created using Expression Web produced a good bit of angst among FrontPage users. However, for me, I really didn't need these bots since I could program such things using Visual Studio. Furthermore, Expression Web created pages that met web standards much better than did FrontPage.

Now there is a new version of Expression Web out as one of the programs in Expression Studio 2. Of course, you may purchase it or update it separately from the entire suite. I chose the option to purchase the Expression Studio 2 Upgrade since I was allowed to do this by already having Expression Web 1 (which was itself an upgrade from FrontPage). Additionally, I had been working with Expression Blend in a free preview version so as to be able to visually edit my Microsoft Silverlight pages. As you may recall, Silverlight is Microsoft's answer to Adobe Flash, and I mentioned it in the April newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2008/april2008/comments.htm, with a link to some simple Silverlight examples I had put on the web.

If I wanted to work with Silverlight, I needed to move from the preview version of Blend to the new Expression Blend 2, and purchasing Expression Studio 2 seemed the best solution. The web site for Expression Studio is http://expression.microsoft.com/ with a link there to all the different products included. For me the tutorials and forums are of particular interest.

Clicking on the Products tab at the Expression Studio site will give you a brief description of each component. Below is my brief take on each product based on my use to datre.

Expression Web I have already mentioned this program. I should add that new to version 2 is that those who use PHP code can now edit it from inside Expression Web with IntelliSense, which helps you with coding options. You can easily insert Flash or Windows Media files and edit their properties. You can insert Photoshop files and Expression Web will automatically convert them to png, jpg or gif files appropriate for the web. However, I saw no option to resize the converted files while this was being done. Since I typically want to make my Photoshop



(Expression……..Continued on page 4)

(Expression…….Continued from page 3)

images much smaller for web work, this feature is not of much use to me. I will still need to resize the images in Photoshop, save them as jpgs and then import them into Expression Web.

The screen capture on the previous page is of one of the many reports that you may view in Expression Web. This one is the Site Summary for our TPCUG site, which lists information about files, hyperlinks, and other items at the site. You might note that there are 2,862 files at the site.

Expression Design is a vector graphics creation program. In that regard it is the same as Adobe Illustrator. The latter, though, is a much more powerful program (and more expensive). Recall vector graphic images can be made as large as you want without destroying quality. Raster graphics images (like those used in photo editing programs, such as Adobe Photoshop) lose quality as you enlarge them.

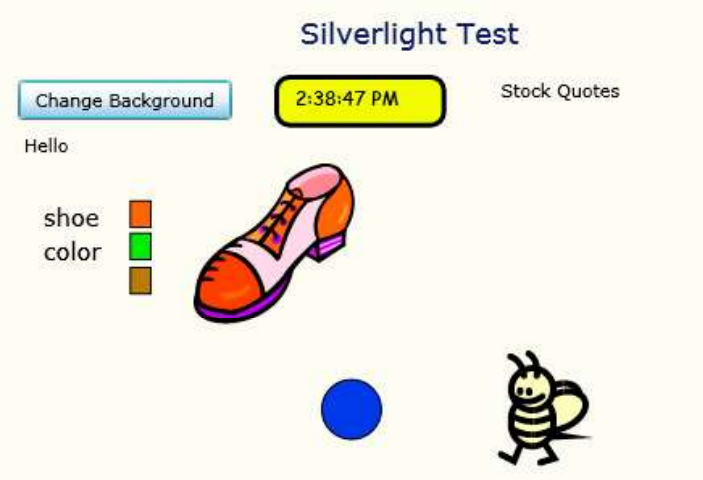
I think Expression Design was not meant to compete with Illustrator (whose files it can open) but rather was to be a simple tool to create images for use in the Expression Blend program that I describe below.

In Expression Design, you create your graphic objects using the brush, pen, rectangle, ellipse, polygon and line tools. You apply colors to the interior of the objects or their borders. You add text with the text tool, selecting a font, size and color. All of these types of objects are then combined to form your graphic. Your resulting graphic may be made up of one layer or many layers of such objects.

If you wish to use your new creation in Expression Blend, you then export it as a xmal (pronounced zammel) file, which is really just a text file.

Expression Blend is used to create the visual effects of a Silverlight application. Visual Studio 2008 is used to create the code behind, for example, what happens when a button is pressed.

In the screen capture at the top of the next column, you see one of my Silverlight Test programs from http://www.lamartin.com/Silverlight/. It has a continuously running clock, a button to change the color



of the background, boxes to click on that change the color of the shoe, a bouncing ball and moving bee. There are some stock quotes that are supposed to appear, but in moving from the beta version of the software to the new version, something went wrong with the code for that and I need to look at it.

All of the visual components of this were created in Blend. The shoe and bee were wmf files from Microsoft clipart that I brought into Adobe Illustrator and then exported as xmal files (there is a xmal export plug-in available). Since Expression Design was meant to create files to use in Expression Blend, it is strange that Microsoft does not seem to support the opening of wmf files in Design since wmf is a Microsoft format.

The bouncing ball and moving bee are examples of animations using Blend. The button click that changes the background is done from code created with Visual Studio. You can also start and stop the animations from code in Visual Studio if you wish.

Slide Shows I am always looking for new ways to create my own slide shows to display photos. I know that you can download such things from the web that use JavaScript to make the show run, and Adobe Photoshop will create several different types of slide shows which you can modify slightly to suit your purposes. But I prefer to be able to create my own. Using Blend and Visual Studio, I created a Silverlight slide show that you can view at http://www.lamartin.com/Silverlight/ by selecting the Slide Show link.

(Expression…….Continued on page 5)

(Expression…….Continued from page 4)

In the past I have used just Visual Studio to create slide shows. However, if I use it to create a Silverlight project instead of just a standard ASP.Net web project, I get the ability to be a little more creative with the appearance of the show. The see-through photo information box that can be displayed in the slide show is one such item.

Now, where does all the information that is displayed about each photo come from. As you may know, when you take a photo with a digital camera and save it as a jpg, all sorts of information is saved to the header of the jpg file. There are free programs available, as well as programs like Photoshop, that will display this sort of information for you—when the photos were taken, shutter speed, f/stop, and much, much more. Additionally these programs will allow you to enter extra information, such as a caption, author, keywords, etc. Recently, I wrote about a free Microsoft program, Pro Photo Tools, that allows you to also add longitude and latitude information to this header information if you can find the location of the photo on a map. But one can also do that with the following Expression Studio program

Expression Media is a program that allows you to create catalogs of all your digital media files. For me that means mainly digital images. In addition, you can view all of the files' header information, such as date taken, flash status, shutter speed, etc., along with things that you can edit yourself, like author, key words, latitude and longitude, etc. It allows you to filter your photos based on such things as a key word. For example, if you filtered on the keyword flower, you would see thumbnails of images where you had previously entered flowers as a key-

(Expression…….Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month

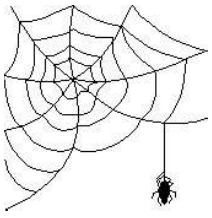


Physicians Recommend Cigarettes

Those were the days—when doctors recommended cigarettes. This image is from a slide show of such images at the New York Times site at http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/10/06/business/media/20081006_CigaretteAd_Slideshow_ready_index.html. Another ad says that "More Doctors smoke Camels." There also you will see Mickey Mantel endorsing Viceroys but then later switching to Camels in another ad.

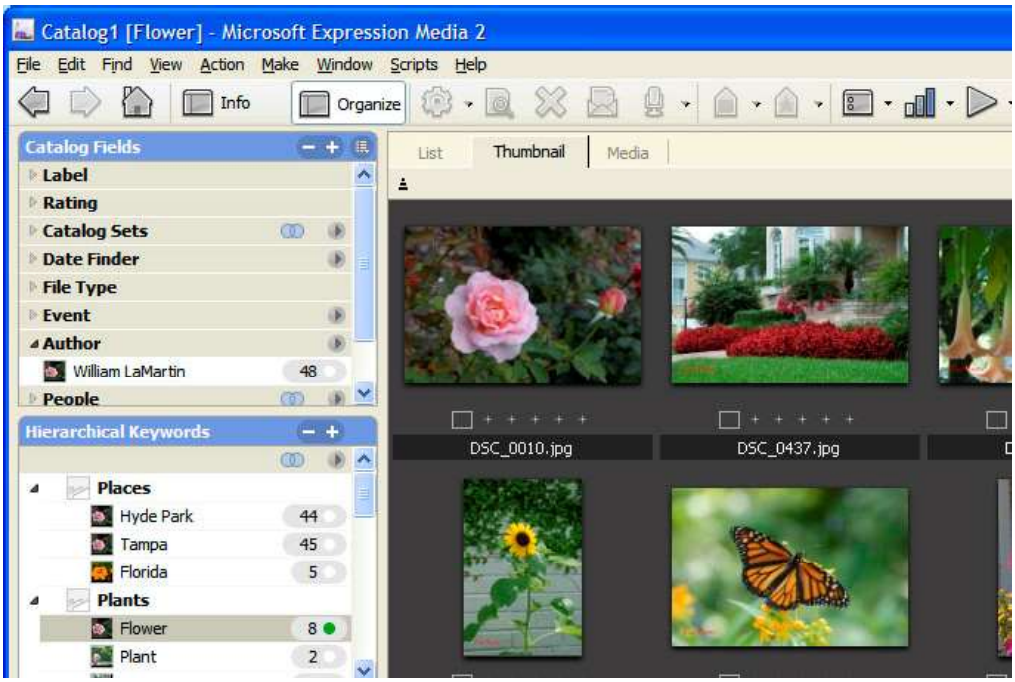
November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
HubbleSite -- Out of the ordinary	http://hubblesite.org/
DIGIBarn Computer Museum	http://www.digibarn.com/
Charity Navigator	http://www.charitynavigator.org/
Pinnacle (makers of Dazzle video capture)	http://www.pinnaclesys.com/



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Expression……..Continued from page 5)



word. This is pictured in the partial screen capture above, where all photos in the slide show with the keyword flower are shown.

In Expression Media you can do a number of time-saving tasks for any collection of files:

- Batch rename
- Batch convert to a different format, e.g., jpg to tiff
- Batch change certain information, such as author, or clear such information
- Make an HTML Gallery
- Make a contact sheet
- Make a tab or comma-separated data file containing all the information for each image
- Make an xml data file containing all the information for each image (of particular use to me for my slide show)
- Display a Virtual Earth map so that you can drop an image on the map to set the location's latitude and longitude where you took the photo.

Expression Encoder According to Microsoft, "Expression Encoder is an advanced video encoding and live broadcasting application especially suited for generating content that takes full advantage of the rich graphic and interactive capability of Microsoft Silverlight playback scenarios."

Expression Encoder is the one program in Expression Studio that I have done very little with—not that I didn't try. I wanted to see if I could use it to capture a DVD made about my neighborhood and then convert it into some sort of file that could be played in Windows Media Player. Expression Encoder seems to want either a live feed from a camera or a media file on your computer, not a video on a DVD. The problem possibly could be due to my lack of knowledge in dealing with video as compared to still photography.

I wrote about one of the few things I have done with video in an article on the Dazzle video capture USB device in the June 2005 newsletter in the article at the link http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2005/june2005/dazzle.htm. That gave me the idea of connecting the Dazzle device between a DVD player and my laptop computer, which could be easily taken to the room with the DVD player. Since I had Expression Suite installed on the laptop, as well as the main computer, I was ready to see if I could do a DVD video capture this way using the Dazzle device as the live input and Expression Encoder as the software. A good sign was that Expression Encoder recognized the Dazzle device, but it was downhill from there, and I won't go into the details.

But that gave me another idea. The idea was to use the Dazzle device and the Dazzle software to first capture the DVD's 21-minute video. I then used the Dazzle software to create a MPEG-2 640x480 MPG file of the video, which came to about 400 MB. That

(Expression……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

(Minutes…….Continued from page 2)

Verizon's conversion to 100% digital format practically eliminates the ability to record and burn any of their programming.

Steve believes that Cloudmark makes the very best spam program available. It does not work on the 64-bit Vista operating systems, He says that Cloudmark also checks email for viruses Steve recommends using the 64-bit edition of Vista if you are upgrading. The reason he gave is that the 64-bit version is required to access 4 gigabits of memory or more. He mentioned that he has a motherboard that will hold up to 16 gigabytes. He described the many features of the new motherboards and said that they are continuing to increase capacity. The board he showed had heat pipe technology and the highest quality capacitors that they could find. He explained that the importance of the capacitors was due to the fact that they are what "blows" if you have overheating. He also discussed the new developments in small computer cases for automobiles and other uses that have limited space available. He mentioned that he sells high-end cell phones. Displays are nearly all going to LCD's. OLED's are the replacement display that is just coming on the market, but they are very expensive and Steve believes that it will be 10 years before they are priced reasonably. There is a program called Vista Antivirus that is not associated with Microsoft. Steve says that you should not even click on the product's ad or even the button to get rid of it. Once you get it on your computer, it is almost impossible to uninstall. He recommends a free program called Magic Disc, which allows you to create virtual CD drives and CD/DVD discs on your computer that can be played at anytime without inserting the disc. Steve explained the concept of connecting to a server with a "Thin Client." This is a small box with a VGA plug, a USB keyboard plug, a USB mouse plug, a network plug and an amplified sound plug. Steve ended his presentation with a question and answer session, Steve provided a 802.11n wireless pci adapter for the raffle.

John Witmer began the business portion of our meeting at approximately 8:45 pm. John announced that Jim Purcell would give the presentation for November. The subject of the presentation will be "Scanning, Editing and Sharing Your Slides, Negatives and Digital Photos". He reminded members of the FACUG Fall Conference at Clearwater on October 25th. He also mentioned that we would have our annual holiday party at the December meeting. The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 pm.

The wireless card donated by Steve Singer was won by Jim Purcell. ◆

(Expression…….Continued from page 6)

finally gave me something I could import into Expression Encoder. I then transferred this file to my desktop machine, where I set Expression Encoder to work encoding the file as a Windows Media Video (WMV) file, which after much, much work ending up being about 175 MB—still a pretty large file for the web. But at least I finally managed to find a use for Expression Encoder.

Perhaps I should try to do a shorter video as above so that I could then have a much smaller example to put on the web.

(Continued on page 8)

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(Expression…….Continued from page 7)

That's it for Expression Studio's five programs. For most computer users, Expression Media which allows you do all sorts of things with your media files, will probably be the only one of interest. For those few who do web work, you will find Expression Web quite valuable. And for anyone who wants to take their web work one step further and create Silverlight applications, Expression Blend, along with Visual Studio 2008, are the tools to use. I should note that Visual Studio can be quite expensive, but, to work with Silverlight in Visual Studio, Visual Studio 2008 Standard for under $300 is sufficient. The free Visual Studio Express does not support Silverlight. As for Expression Design, the vector graphics program, it could certainly be a standalone program for anyone who desires to create vector graphics. I am just not sure of the audience for it. ◆



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Bits of Blue



December in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 21 No. 12 December 2008

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 10, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Holiday Party. Bob LaFave, however, will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

We set some sort of record this month with articles from four members. Of course this is much appreciated by the editor. Now that these four have done it, perhaps others will see that you don't have to write a book to make a contribution—just a one page article is fine. That way the readers will see more than just what the editor is doing with his computer, which was the case in last month's newsletter.

I have been wanting to mention two neat things I have discovered in recent months. The first is a feature of Internet Explorer. If, while using the latest version of Internet Explorer, you come across a word for which you do not know the definition or the pronunciation, you can simply highlight it, right-

(Comments……..Continued on page 7)

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January Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the meeting by opening the Windows SIG at approximately 6:30 pm. There was a question on how to properly delete temporary files. The member said that when she last deleted temporary files, she also deleted useful cookie files. Bob stated that there is a free download called "CCleaner" that does a good job of selectively deleting temporary files. A member asked if he should leave Windows Defender turned on when he adds a new antivirus program. Bob explained that Windows Defender is an antispyware program and should be left on unless it conflicts with a new antispyware program that you are adding. A member asked which antispyware program used fewer resources. The problem seemed to be the frequency with which the program runs. Bob advised that the program that he uses allows him to determine how often he wants the program to run. He suggested that the member check his program to see if his program has a similar setting. William LaMartin complained about a Norton popup offering an update that is almost impossible to cancel. Bob's advice was to keep clicking until you find a way to permanently cancel the popup. Most members seemed to think that an offer to make your computer run faster for $29.95 was not really from Norton.

John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of the meeting at approximately 6:45 pm. He discussed the candidates for election at our December meeting. He introduced Andy Phillips, a visitor at the meeting. John discussed possible presentations in the first months of next year. He asked members to submit topics for presentations during the next year. He announced that there would be no presentations for December. The whole evening at the December meeting will be devoted to a Christmas party and election of officers.

Jim Purcell began his presentation of "Scanning, Editing and Sharing Your Photos" at approximately 7:20 pm. He began with a discussion of the announcement by LaserSoft Imaging AG, a software developer designing soft-

(Minutes…….Continued on page 3)

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By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

After a recent vacation, I created a photo slide show with Photoshop Elements and emailed it to some traveling companions. I was quickly reminded that the file was too big for email because my ISP rejected it. ISP's have file size limits, mine was 20MB. The attachment slide show was over 32MB.

The question was how to distribute this file.

1. Create and send individual CD's by US Mail; not a practical solution.
2. Upload to my own web site and then send out links? That would work, but, although I have the allocated space, I have not seen the need for my own site so far.
3. Use a free photo service such as Google Picasa? No, I already had created the show.
4. Share through Windows Live Spaces, new SkyDrive or some other password-protected online storage? No, because I would have to set up permissions and defaults. For SkyDrive, each access would require the person to have either a Live ID, Hotmail, Messenger or an MSN account.
5. Find or create some other FTP server to host the file. This may require hardware and/or software.
6. Use a service that specializes in this issue.

It seems that there are an abundance of ways to tackle this issue.

I did not want to make it too complicated for the recipients with passwords and URL's since some are reluctant PC beginners. I seldom need to send out large files so a simple quick way would be preferable.

A search using the phrase "sending large email files" returned a large number of hits, mostly referring to the service method (#6 above). I checked out several that looked promising. There were too many to check them all.

Most of the larger, more reputable services cater to business accounts and have many attractive features. Some of these features are automatic notification of recipients, delivery tracking, delivery certification, delivery receipts, plug-ins to send directly from popular programs and high levels of security to protect your files. These services require paid contracts for different levels of service. Many have free trial periods, which have various restrictions.

I chose YouSendit.com, which offers a free level rather than a free trial. No credit card was required. This free level, called Lite, has limited functionality compared to the paid versions but was more than adequate for my needs. It allowed a 100MB maximum file size, 100 downloads per file and a seven-day expiration of the file. After a quick initial registration, I uploaded the slide show, entered the email addresses of the recipients and some comments, and that was about all there was to it. Lite does not access any address book. You have to manually enter a list of contacts' email addresses.

The recipients quickly got an email containing the link and telling them I had sent the link. They clicked on the link and received the download. They required no link addresses or passwords.

If you have the need to email large files, you should choose a service or method that fully satisfies your particular requirements.

A good starting point would be a search, as indicated above, and the excellent article, **Top 9 Services to Send Big Files via Email by** Heinz Tschabitscher, About.com, which can be found at:
http://email.about.com/od/sendbigfilesviaemail/tp/send_big_files.htm ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

ware such as Silverfast for scanners and digital cameras, that they can now remove dust and scratch marks while scanning Kodachrome film. Jim explained that he had not been able to test the process, so that part of the presentation will be given at a later date. He said that he would generalize the discussion of Photo Editors because there are several on the market and practically everyone prefers the editor that they are using. He discussed flatbed scanners and film scanners. He also talked about the growing use of digital cameras to scan large objects that conventional scanners cannot handle and to expedite time-consuming projects, such as large numbers of slides that can be captured by a digital camera in a fraction of the time required by a scanner. He used a picture that William LaMartin produced using a quickly-assembled setup with his digital camera. William pointed out that this sys-

(Minutes……..Continued on page 4)

Quicken Legal Business Pro 2008

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
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Quicken Legal Business Pro is a program designed to help you start and run a small business. The version I bought is compatible with Windows 2000, XP and Vista. The installation was quick and easy. It has a button for checking for updates via the Internet and offered free legal updates throughout 2008. Well, there's not much left of 2008, so I thought I'd better get what updates I could. Since I installed this on a PC that is never allowed on the Internet, and I wanted any updates they had, I had to do some finagling. I decided to load it on an Internet PC, get the upgrades downloaded to a file and then put that on the non-Internet machine. This would have worked, except Quicken doesn't give you that option. It downloaded the upgrade and installed it on the Internet machine. So the next thing I did was email Quicken tech support and asked them how to upgrade the non-Internet PC. Within a day, they answered via an email and gave me a link to download the upgrade files. I did that and was able to upgrade the program on the non-Internet machine with no problems.

Why did I want this program? Well, I have a small corporation, and I have been filling out corporate minutes in longhand writing, which is OK, but lacked some professionalism, as well as some information that should be in all meeting minutes. Additionally, folks with a one- or two-person corporation may be lax in doing a corporate annual meeting, or the organizational meeting, or directors' meetings. QLBP makes it easy to keep these minutes and other stuff up-to-date. My main reason for purchasing this was to use it for corporate minutes. It has a really good wizard-type approach that guides you through filling out every line for corporate minutes for directors' meetings, organizational meetings and stockholders' meetings. But that is just part of the over 140 contracts and documents in QLBP, along with a lot of guidance on how to fill out any form. Some of the things it has are forms for buying and selling a business, corporate minutes and consents, forming and running a business, hiring workers, leasing space, managing finances, buying and selling real estate, and taxes. It also has contracts for goods and services, as well as some sample letters to use.

I have seen this product advertised for anywhere from $12 to $59.95. I bought mine brand-new in a sealed package through the Internet on eBay for under $20, including shipping. It did not come with a big user's manual. In fact, there was no user's manual at all. All I got was a box with 2 CD's in it, one of which was the QLBP CD. But I usually judge how good a program is by how little one needs to consult a user's manual. So far, there has not been any need to have one. The program explains everything and has references we can go to if we need more information on a subject.

Included in the program are things called "Nolo books." Some of the titles are Starting and Running a Business, Tax Savvy for Small Business, Manager's Legal Handbook, and many others available with just a mouse click. There are additional references and products available online via http://www.nolo.com. QLBP also includes a second CD, called "Carbonite," which is a program for online PC backup. I probably will never use that though.

I highly recommend this product for anyone who is running a small business or thinking of starting one. The price is very reasonable for such a powerful and intuitive business tool. ◆

(Minutes……..Continued from page 3)

tem, when properly assembled, is quite expensive. Jim demonstrated how the film scanner works using a roll of Advanced Photo System film. He also demonstrated how the image was loaded into the Photoshop Elements Organizer and showed the features of the Organizer. He discussed the vast improvements and versatility of the new flatbed scanners which, in spite of the quality improvements, are available at much lower prices than just a few years ago. Jim highly recommended a visit to Wayne Fulton's web site for information on practically any aspect of scanning. The site is exceptionally well organized and is written in a style that is easy to understand. Fulton also responded to an email on the same day that it was submitted. http://www.scantips.com.

In showing the Organizer in Photoshop Elements Jim demonstrated how images are added by downloading them from the camera and how they can be viewed by folder, date, or geographical location. Jim demonstrated a feature that allows you to switch good heads for bad between common group pictures, thereby eliminating closed eyes, turned heads and funny expressions. Jim also had scrapbooks available as examples of how to share your photos. The presentation ended with a discussion of scanners and how to look for the features that take care of your specific needs. The meeting ended at approximately 9:30 pm. ◆

InSight

By Jenny Lind Olin, Tampa PC Users Group
jlolin@tampabay.rr.com

Some of you may think that I was kidding when I told you I was in a brain training program. It has been fun to tell people: "I had brain training this morning" and see their reaction.

I have recently taken part in a study using InSight by the Aging Department at the University of South Florida. InSight is an expensive **($395 for the single user)** program which you can purchase online. I participated free because I volunteered to participate and do a follow-up program in five years. After completing the course, I took the assessment test, which was similar to the pre-assessment test I took before starting the program. In five years I will go back to be reevaluated. The study has shown that your assessment score after a 5-year lapse will be very similar to the assessment score that you obtain after completing the InSight program.

InSight features five engaging exercises. These exercises adapt to individual performance, so you're always working at the right level for your brain.

This scientific program has been designed to improve your memory, your reaction time and your life. Check it out at http://www.PositScience.org.

Change the way you see the world. See more, react faster, drive better. Get more out of viewing a movie. InSight features five engaging exercises for visual precision, useful field of view, visual processing speed, and divided attention, found in these exercises: Bird Safari, Jewel Diver, Master Gardener, Road Tour, and Sweep Seeker. Although it was offered, I never did do the Master Gardener. After an hour session, I felt as though I had worked out in the gym except it was my brain that was stimulated

(InSight……..Continued on page 8)

Internet Picture of the Month



Venice Floods

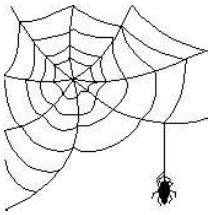
It is nothing new for Venice to flood. This image (cropped to better fit our page) is from the New York Times at http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/world/AP-EU-Italy-Venice-High-Water.html?hp

"The worst flooding in Venice in more than 20 years forced residents and tourists to wade through knee-high water Monday.

City officials said the sea level topped 61 inches (156 centimeters) on Monday, well past the 40-inch (110-centimeter) flood mark, following heavy rains."

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
theRADIO.com — Play any song	http://www.theradio.com/
Opensecrets.org — Money in politics	http://www.opensecrets.org/
Scanning thousands of slides	http://www.scantips.com/es-1.html

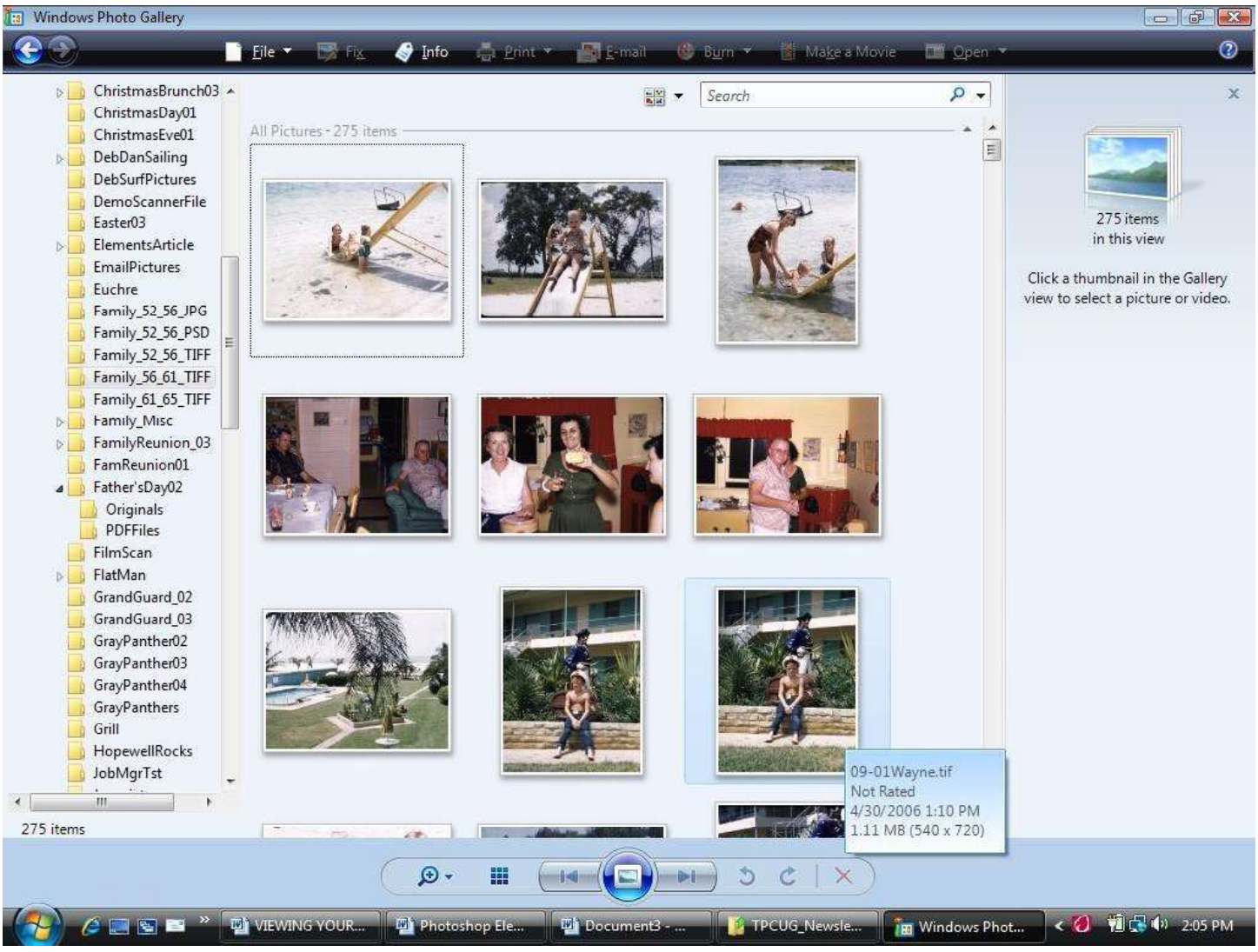


Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Viewing Your Photos In Vista

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

At the August meeting, William LaMartin showed us the program that he created in Access to organize his photos. In addition, there was an article in the September Newsletter about another method, the Photoshop Elements (PE) Organizer, and a demonstration of it at the November meeting.



This should be the last article on organizing and viewing your photos, but I think that it's important to point out the features of the Vista Photo Gallery because I don't think most people are aware of what an outstanding program it is. I believe that this is true regardless of what your definition of is is. Another important point is that, if you have Vista, Photo Gallery is free. Not only is it one of the most powerful and flexible organizers that I have seen but it is also one of the easiest to use. Further, Vista Photo Gallery has a built-in editing program that allows you to correct some of the most common photo problems, such as red eye, dark photos, or faded color. The included cropping program provides a simple way to crop your pictures to standard print sizes. You can also turn your color photo into a black-and-white or sepia photo. Although I'm not actively using Gallery, it automatically picked up all of my photos stored in the Pictures folder. I tested the Red Eye tool on one of my pictures that I had a little trouble with in PE, and it worked like a charm the first time. The program also provides a quick and easy way to assemble a fairly sophisticated slide show or movie and burn it to a DVD. Your photos will be automatically brought into the Pictures folder when you plug your camera or card reader into the USB port of your computer. You have the ability to control the automatic feature, as well as the destination

(Photos……..Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

(Photos…….Continued from page 6)

folder. The program is available in all versions of Vista, but there are less theme options in the home basic version.

The illustration above shows you the general layout of Vista Photo Gallery which I hope will help you visualize the options that I will describe. The folders on the left in the illustration are your folders in your Windows Explorer just as you have constructed it. When you click on a folder, the photos in that folder will appear in Gallery. If you click on date taken, you get a list of folders by year, each of which can be expanded to the 12 months in the year and then to days. By using Ctrl Click, you can include as many options as you wish. Gallery has a ranking system consisting of one to five stars to allow you to rank your pictures in any way you choose. You can select any group or groups that you desire by just clicking on them in the same way.

There is also a system of tagging where you create the tags (Names, Locations, Dates, Events, etc). Tags are properties that will be attached to your files to help you to find and organize them by clicking on the tag and dragging it over the photo. They are not a part of the actual contents of a file but become a part of the file's properties. You can change the size of the thumbnails in the gallery from too small to recognize to large enough to clearly recognize. When the thumbnails are small to very small, you can get a popup of a large picture with its basic data by pausing your cursor over the thumbnail. You can change the appearance of the thumbnails to include captions or basic data. The way your files are indexed in Vista allows almost instant response to your searches, permitting you to take full advantage of the many ways that your photos can be displayed.

The beauty of this program is that it contains practically every function to store, edit and print your photos. It also gives you the capability to create both slide shows and movies. I would consider the organizer in Photo Gallery a full function program. The editing program is certainly not Photoshop, but it contains most of the features that a casual photographer requires. Both the slide- and the movie-producing programs are short of what's available in the specialized programs for those functions, but they allow you to do things like adding music and they have a generous assortment of themes and slide transitions. These may be all that you need, but, if not, they should be big help in selecting a more sophisticated program. For more information you might look at the "Windows Vista Book" by Matt Klosklowski and Kleber Stephenson. ◆

(Comments…….Continued from page 1)

click on it and then choose "Lookup on Merriam Webster" from the several options given. You will be provided with a definition, as well as a speaker symbol, which, if clicked on, will produce the pronunciation through the computer's speakers.

The second item is a web site called theRadio.com at http://www.theradio.com. So far I have found only one song that it couldn't play for me. It seems to know popular songs from many years back, as well as current ones.

Since the stock market has been doing so badly lately, let's end with a look at some technology stocks. The figures are adjusted for stock splits.

Company	1/3/2000	1/2/2008	12/1/2008
Amazon	89.38	96.25	40.47
Apple	27.98	194.84	88.93
Cisco	54.03	26.54	14.96
Dell	50.88	24.39	10.05
HP	45.82	49.65	33.44
Intel	43.50	25.35	12.46
Microsoft	58.28	35.22	18.61
Yahoo	118.75	23.72	10.74 ◆

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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(InSight…….Continued from page 5)
rather than my muscles. Also, I started looking forward to the sessions just as I would look forward to a good physical workout. It was similarly rewarding in the feeling of satisfaction.

Jewel Diver is one of the five exercises in InSight, Posit Science's program for visual processing. These exercises are designed to improve multiple aspects of visual processing—such as divided attention. They also adapt to your performance, so that you are always training at the right level for you. You can actually do a 10-minute trial on the above website.

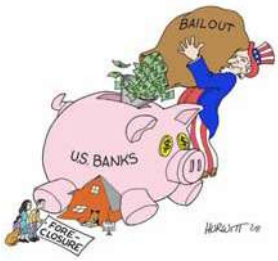
An alternative would be to find games like this one on the Internet and improve your brain that way: Southbank - Turkey Shoot, http://www.southbank-design.co.uk/turkeyshoot/index.htm. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue



January in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 22 No. 1 January 2009

Meeting

Backing up your Hard Drive by Gene Barlow

Monday, January 12, 2009
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

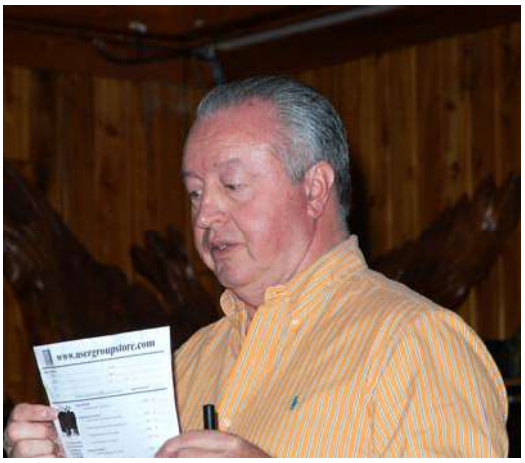
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Meeting Preview: This meeting is Monday instead of the usual Wednesday. Gene Barlow will be our presenter with the topic "Backing up your hard drive using Acronis True Image." Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Gene Barlow (pictured at right speaking to us in 2005) will speak to us again regarding backing up data and, in fact, the entire hard drive, using Acronis True Image. Pay attention to him, for if you keep a computer long enough, the hard drive will fail. And

(Comments……..Continued on page 5)

February Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Check the address label for your renewal month

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We acknowledge

Pepin Distributing Co.

for their support

Minutes of the December Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Since this was our annual holiday party meeting, no guest speaker was scheduled. Bob LaFave did conduct a short Windows SIG meeting preceding the business session to cover any holiday related or urgent questions. President John Witmer began the business meeting at about 6:45 pm. The only item on the agenda was the election of officers for calendar year 2009. No new members offered to serve as officers for 2009. Current members all agreed to serve one more year if there were no further nominations from the floor. John then asked for further nominations from the floor before presenting the slate for a vote. Hearing none, the following slate of officers was presented:

- For President: John Witmer
- For Vice President: Kevan Sheridan
- For Treasurer: Doug Mullis
- For Secretary: Jim Purcell
- For Member at Large: Ron Weinberg

A motion was made to accept this slate and to vote. All members present voted in favor. Terms of office begin January 1, 2009.

John then thanked those willing to serve the group as officers. The TPCUG board members decided that the party food should be paid for from the group's funds. Our thanks are also extended to John and Pepin Distributing for accommodating us and providing beverages for the party. John reminded members to make an extra effort to pay their annual dues on time. William LaMartin reminded us of the ease of using PayPal on our web site.

(Minutes…….Continued on page 8)

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ASUS Eee PC Netbook

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I recently purchased two ASUS Eee PC Netbooks for my grandchildren (ages 9 and 11) as portable computers to take to school. I was attracted by their very small size, relatively long battery life and wide range of built-in features. So far it has been a success, since the children took them on a Christmas trip and connected wirelessly to the Internet unaided in a hotel.

So what is a netbook? It seems to be a small notebook with a screen size of 10 inches or less and a slightly reduced-in-size keyboard. ASUS looks to be the pioneer in this class of notebooks, but there are competitors now in HP, Dell and MSI. As far as I can tell, though, ASUS still enjoys the highest sales in this category, no doubt attributable to the very wide range of models. I read a sales report that a substantial amount of Christmas notebook sales were in this category.

The ASUS line begins with a model 4G with a 7-inch 800 x 480 screen display, Linux OS, Intel Mobile CPU, 512 MB memory and a 4 GB solid-state hard drive (SSD). It has a LAN (wired) port and wireless b/g, stereo sound, and a 0.3 Megapixel camera. The size is 8.9"x 6.3"x 1.26", it weighs just 2 pounds, and it has a 4-cell battery for 3.5 hours of operation. It comes with a cloth/neoprene slipcase and charger. All for $220 at NewEgg.com.

There's an XP Home version, believe it or not, using the same 4G SSD, and depending on a (user-supplied) SD or SDHC card for storage. The Linux OS is a modified Xandros distribution. Some users are installing a version of Ubuntu called Eeebuntu. Many buy the Linux version because it's cheaper and then install their own copy of Windows XP.

By the way, the Eee comes from "Easy to Learn, Easy to Work, Easy to Play".

What these netbooks are (not surprisingly) missing are a CD drive, a floppy drive, serial and parallel ports and keyboard/mouse ports.

They DO have three USB ports and an external VGA port, an SD/SDHC reader slot, a touchpad, camera, LAN-wired and wireless. Starting with the larger models, 8.9" and 10" screens, wireless N and Bluetooth are added, the camera jumps to 1.3 Megapixels, the battery goes to a 6 cell and the processor changes to the Intel Atom. They're also slightly lar-



ger and heavier, but with a much longer battery life.

The ones I purchased are the Eee PC 901. And let me say right here, I want one for myself. I have absolutely no use for it, but after using them myself for a couple of days, I really like them, and if I could find even a small excuse, I'd buy one for myself.

The Eee PC 901s that I bought are black. They look really well-built and rugged. The black gloss finish collects fingerprints like nobody's business. There's no indication that it's not suitable for a six- or seven-year-old who is already used to using a computer. The screen hinge is especially rugged. There's no latch to hold it closed, but there's plenty of friction

(Netbook……Continued on page 4)

(Netbook…….Continued from page 3)
there and it's not really effortless to open.

The features of the 901 (actually there's a 900 series) are a 8.9" 1024 x 600 screen, slightly larger (not much) at 8.9" x 6.9" x 1.5", 2.43 pounds. It has a 1.3 Megapixel camera, 1G of memory, an Intel Atom (1.6 GHz), low-power CPU and 12G SSD storage. The storage is divided into two drives: one 4G and one 8G. It has wireless b/g/n, Ethernet and Bluetooth. The SSD storage and compact design makes it pretty much shock-proof . When you use the SD slot, the card does not project out at all, and, frankly, on a black case it's a little difficult to find. They advertize a 7.8-hour battery life. I paid $600 each for them in early August, 2008. The current (Jan 2009) price is $450 with about $11 shipping.

As for software, it's surprisingly (almost) crap free. They have Windows XP Home installed on the 4G "C" drive. Besides what comes with XP, they include MS Works, OpenOffice and Skype. There was – I've forgotten now – some kind of antivirus that needed a subscription and no anti-spyware. Windows XP firewall was enabled. I installed AVG Free, hoping that it wouldn't bog the CPU down too much (it doesn't). I uninstalled Skype, and went through all installed programs, looking for their usefulness, and uninstalling anything that I felt my grandchildren would not use – like Skype, which is Internet phone and video. I did check out Windows Moviemaker to make sure it would use the camera – it does. I uninstalled Adobe Reader and installed a PDF reader from Haihaisoft, because it is much, much smaller. I felt that the children must have a good photo editor, so I installed Paint.NET, a very good image and photo-editing program. I looked at GIMP (cloned from the Linux world) also, and I think it was a toss-up. I used a good (free) PDF printer, PrimoPDF.

I wound up leaving MS Works on the machine because there was room, but removed OpenOffice. I found an Office 2007 Student, three-license version, for only $90. I custom-installed Word and PowerPoint, both of which the children have used before.

I even went through the Services list to see if there was anything running that was not necessary, stopped any I found not worth running, and set them



to manual start.

Then I did a CCleaner, and created a paging file (it had none; a mystery to me) on the D drive, defragged and wiped my handprints off. As an aside, I have since learned that there is no need to defrag an SSD and that doing so regularly may be detrimental to its life.

I was impressed with the power of the computer. I did some Internet surfing, edited a photo, printed and made a short movie of myself. Now, it's not fast, but I really did not expect it to be as fast as it is. My grandson has played a DVD movie from an external CD/DVD drive and he says it played perfectly. It's comfortable, and I'd say I've certainly owned slower notebooks (a last generation, maybe a Pentium III). This particular PC boots very quickly because of the SSD. I have disabled Hibernation because of the SSD also, there being no gain in boot time.

You should expect the models with an SSD to be somewhat faster, and they should boot much quicker. They're obviously much more expensive.

Looking at other models, there are versions that use conventional hard drives to save money. For instance, there's a model 904HA, which is essentially like the 901 except it has a 160G hard drive, for $350, a full $100 cheaper. Strangely, it does not have Bluetooth or wireless N. I think Bluetooth should be considered as an essential part of all notebooks.

Looking on, there's a 10" model (1024 x 600) with a

(Netbook…….Continued on page 8)

(Comments…….Continued from page 4)

new hard drives also fail, or perhaps a virus will destroy some of your files. A year or so back, my laptop's hard drive began to exhibit signs of failure. I didn't have an Acronis backup of the laptop, since I didn't consider it important, my real work being done on the desktop computer. However, when I thought of the work involved in installing the operating system, all the programs and all the updates for everything on the laptop after a new hard drive was installed, I saw that I really needed a backup of the current drive if I could still get it. And, luckily, the old hard drive cooperated long enough for me to make a backup of it, using Acronis True Image Home.

So I recommend the Acronis True Image Home program to you. I use it about every two weeks to back up my main computer to an external hard drive. I verify that the backup is valid using the program, and I alternate between two different external drives in doing the backups. Additionally, I disconnect all cables from the external drives when they are not in use. It does no good to backup to external drives, leave them connected and then have lightening strike your computer and possibly also damage the external drive. I backup up the laptop less frequently.

I should comment that I also back up the data for programs such as Word, Excel and my Visual Studio programming, as well as photos downloaded from my digital camera, to a third external hard drive as I make changes to the files. I do this simply by copying the new version to the external drive. So these files are saved in four places—on the computer, on two external drives as part of the Acronis backup and on the third external drive as separate files. You cannot backup enough. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month

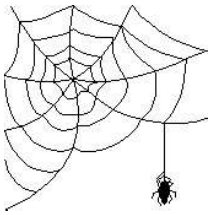


Snow in New Orleans

On December 11, 2008, a rare snowfall occurred in New Orleans. And the amount was enough for a fairly good blanket of snow on the grass. Above is a photo of the St. Charles Avenue street car traveling through the falling flakes. The image came from http://www.nola.com/, the site of the Times-Picayune.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Gene Barlow (our presenter)	http://www.ugr.com/
Dilbert—animated	http://www.dilbert.com/animation/
The Bible on one page	http://www.jrsbible.info/bible.htm



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Stock Allocation with Visual Basic (.Net)

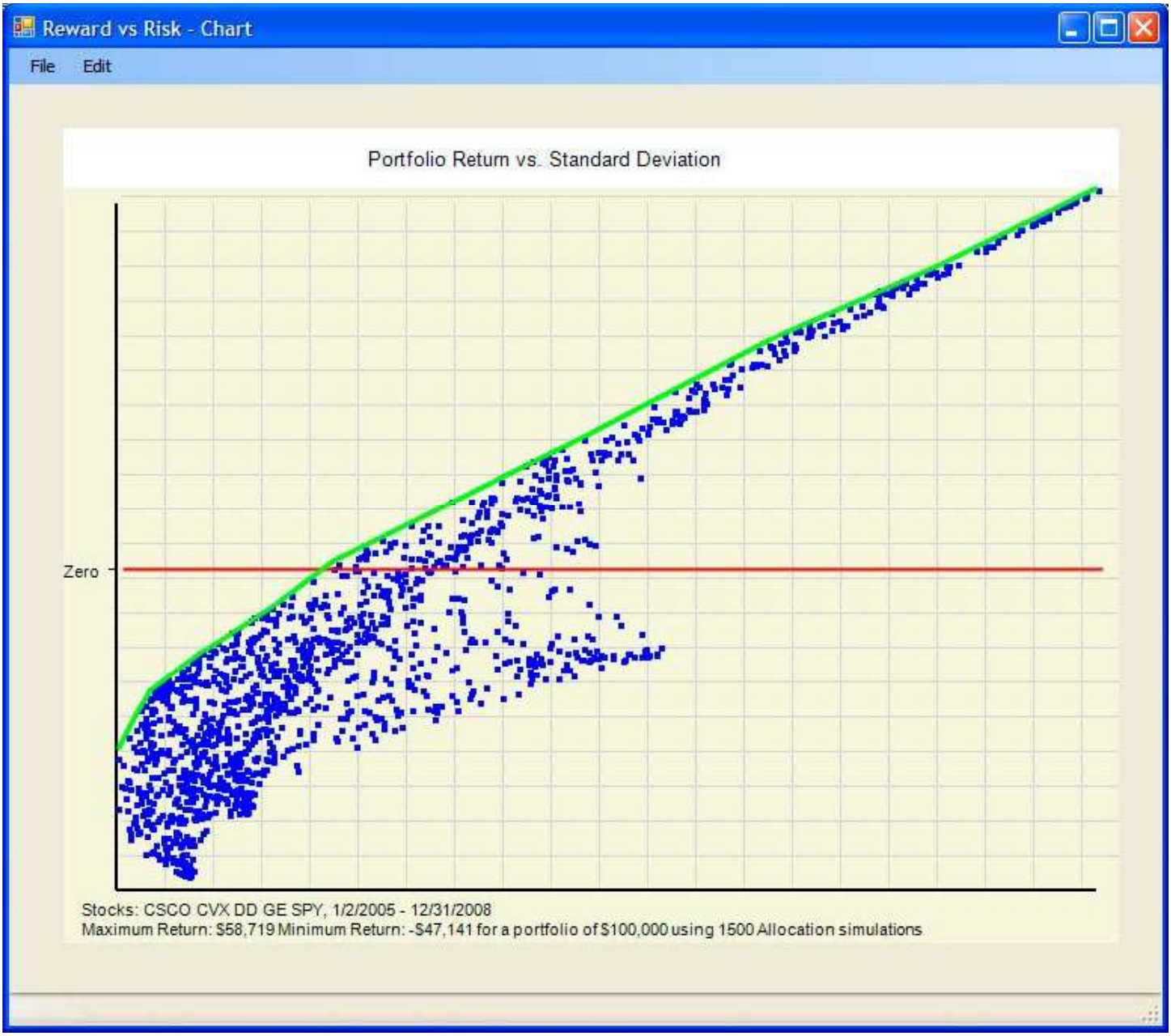
By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I always love a programming challenge. So when I came across the idea of "The Optimal Portfolio" for a collection of stocks, I set to work to see if I could represent the idea in code. Harry M. Markowitz (who, along with William F. Sharpe and Merton Miller, received the Nobel Prize in 1990) first developed the ideas on which all this "Portfolio Selection" is based. The idea is that each collection of stocks would have a level of risk and reward, but that for any given level of risk, there was only one allocation of those stocks that would return an optimum reward. And, for any given reward, there would be only one allocation of stocks that would minimize the risk.

If you want to read about all this, just do an Internet search for optimal portfolio and Markowitz. The Wikipedia reference is http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_portfolio_theory.

The graph below is the visual representation of the results of my code for five stocks over a four-year period. The blue dots represent the results of a Monte

(Stocks……Continued on page 7)



Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

(Stocks……Continued from page 6)

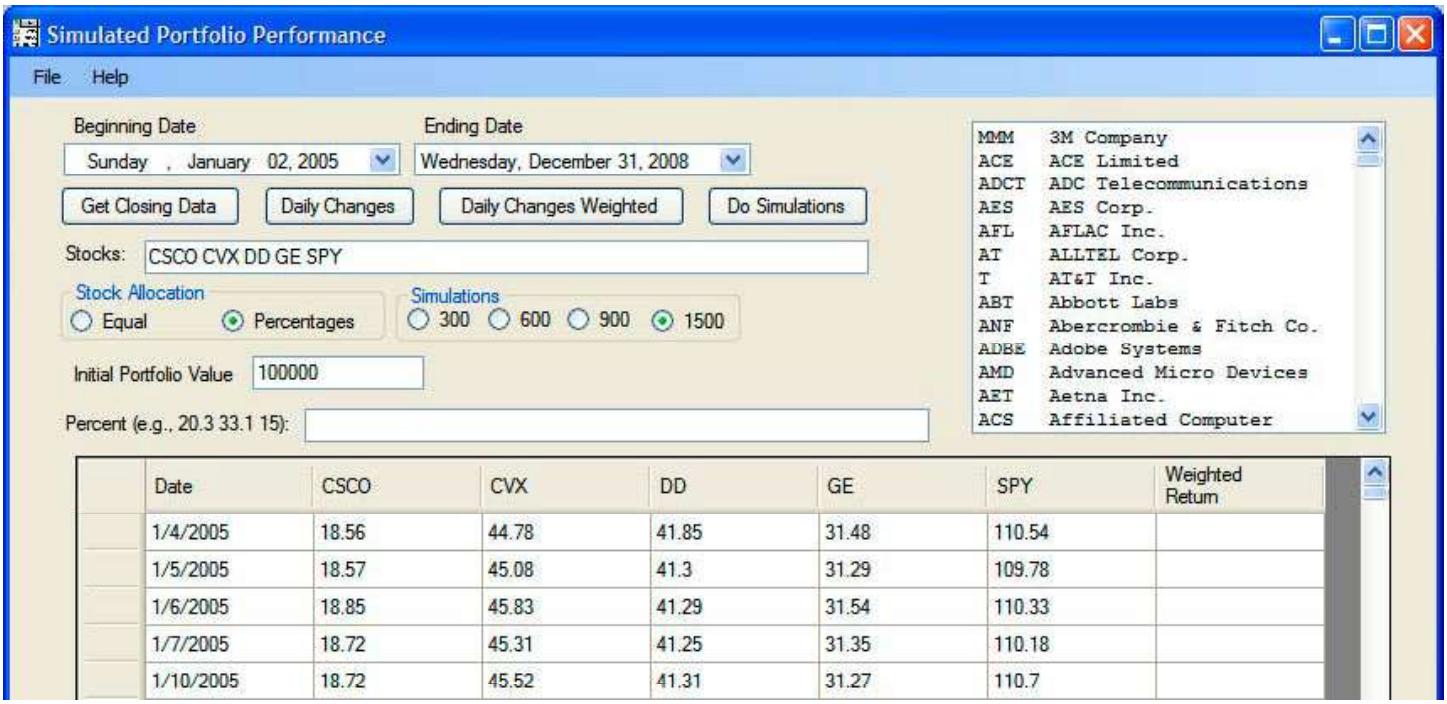
Carlo simulation of different allocation percentages of the five stocks followed for four years. Obviously, we prefer to have the result with the greatest return. That would appear to be the one represented by the blue dot in the upper right-hand corner (when you view the numerical results of the simulation, you see that it is the one with 95% of the portfolio in CVX). But wait a minute, that result carries a high risk (risk increases to the right along the horizontal axis).

There are really two questions:

1. For a particular risk (a point on the horizontal axis), what is the best return we can expect (a point on the vertical axis)?
2. For a particular return (a point on the vertical axis), what is the result with the least risk (a point on the horizontal axis) that produces it?

An inspection of the graph, shows that the points along the green curve are the results that satisfy our conditions. This set of results is called the efficient frontier.

So how is all this accomplished? Obviously there is not room here to explain that except to say that my program retrieves the historical stock data from Yahoo, as displayed in the screen capture below of the program's main interface. Once the Closing Data is received, I click the Do Simulations button, which performs 1500 simulations. For each simulation, a random assignment of percentages of the portfolio is assigned to each of the five stocks. Then, for each assignment, the program uses the historical data to calculate the return for that assignment. After the 1500 simulations, then means and standard deviations are calculated, and a graph is drawn. And I am out of space, which was the point of this article—to fill up space. ◆



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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(Netbook……..Continued from page 4)

brushed aluminum case. It weighs but 2.65 pounds, with a two-cell polymer battery with a 5-hour life. It has a wider touchpad and all the options: Bluetooth and Wireless N, 1.3 Megapixel camera. It's $480. The plastic 10" models are, of course, slightly larger at 10.5" x 7.5" x 1.5". The brushed aluminum is but 1" thick.

The most expensive EeePC is $680. It's a 10" model, but with a 16G SSD and XP Home. Most are available in Ebony and Pearl White. I've also seen some models in green, red, graphite and brown. ◆



(Minutes……..Continued from page 2)

Next month we have asked Gene Barlow to give a presentation on "Backing up Your Hard Drive using Acronis True Image". Due to a scheduling problem, we will meet on Monday, January 12th.

The business meeting adjourned about 7:30 pm. The party continued till approx 9:00 pm. ◆

Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 22 No. 2 February 2009



February in Tampa

Meeting

Creative Memories by Kathy Eustis

Wednesday January 11, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.

4121 N 50th Street

Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Kathy Eustis will tell us about Creative Memories, which offers a scrapbooking program and supporting photo center to help you manage your "photos and assorted digital memories." Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Several of our members now have Kindles. In this issue, member Jim Purcell tells us about his. And I continue the saga of my computer's chip fan that was begun in the September 2008 newsletter. The moral of that story is that, if possible, purchase a computer with a heat sink instead of a fan for the chip's cooling. That way the fan will never need replacing.

For those of you with smart phones, you might improve their functioning by downloading and installing the latest software updates for your particular phone. My one-year-old HTC Windows Mobile PPC 6800 phone (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2007/December2007/htc_pocketpc_6800.htm) had been giving me more and more trouble, the main problem being that it would quite frequently need to be rebooted. As I was almost at the pont of junking this very expensive phone, I decided to call Alltel and see what could be done. They directed me to a web site from which I could download the newest software that would install ROM updates, etc. And, a bit to my surprise, after the update the phone has worked flawlessly for the past three weeks. ◆

March Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the windows SIG at about 6:35 PM. He discussed disk burning software, both free and commercial. He discussed the merits and capabilities of software like ImgBurn, which allows you to read a disk to an image file, create an image file from files on your computer, write an image file to a disk and verify the readability of a disk. Bob pointed out that if you were interested in more sophisticated projects like slide shows or video editing, you would need a program like those offered by Roxio and Nero. There was also a discussion about the viability of upgrading the firmware on your CD or DVD drive. Both Bob and Merle Nicholson cautioned that it is not always a simple download and that it is not advisable to do the upgrade unless either you are having trouble with the drive or the upgrade offers additional capabilities that you need. They also noted that new drives with the latest features are relatively inexpensive. Bob also discussed "Network Magic," offered by Cisco, as an excellent program to help you set up and manage your network. It also includes a network scanner to help you understand and secure your network.

John started the business portion of the meeting at approximately 7:00 PM. He welcomed and introduced a new member, Jim Sides, and acknowledged another new member, Bernard Wesner, who was not present. John gave the details of the upcoming Spring FACUG meeting in Zephyrhills on March 13th, 14th and 15th. This will be a combined meeting with the APCUG, so it will probably address more subjects than normal. More details should be available soon. He welcomed Gene Barlow of User Group Relations and thanked him for working us into his schedule. Gene and his wife Linda last visited our group about four years ago.

Gene started his presentation at about 7:10 PM. He was a part of the IBM team that put the IBM PC together, and he worked for IBM with user groups for about 14 years before he retired. He decided to continue working with user groups after he retired and has represented various software groups. His topic was all about backing up your hard drive. He stressed the importance of doing this on a regular basis. If you have performed your backups, it can not only save you a lot of time if your hard drive crashes, it can also probably save you a great deal of money. But, most importantly, it will prevent the possible permanent loss of valuable information, such as financial records, family or busi-

Minutes .....Continued on page 4

Amazon Kindle eBook reader

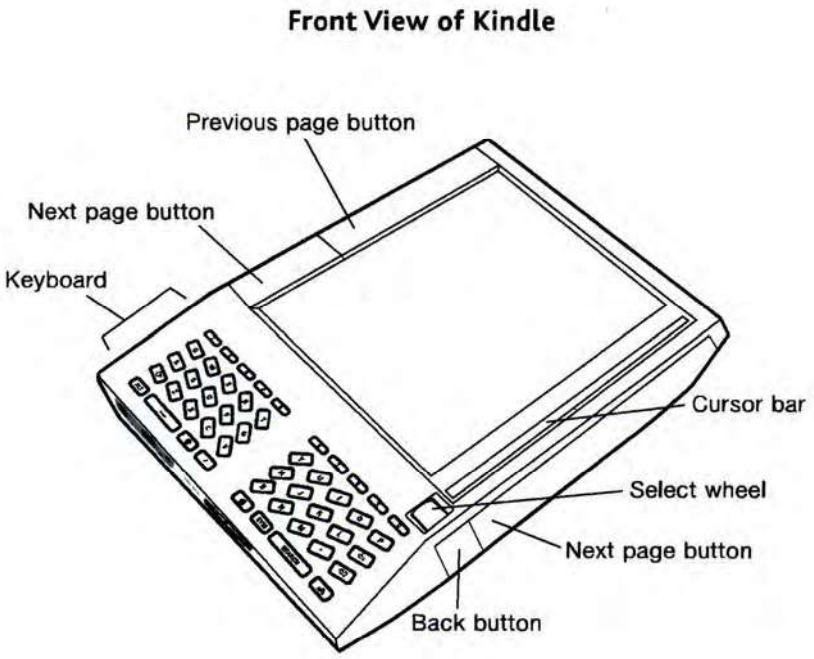
By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_j_p@msn.com

A year ago I wrote an article on eBook readers that focused on the Sony and Amazon Kindle readers and covered what I believed to be the advantages and disadvantages of the two. I've been watching both and have been trying to decide whether to buy or wait. The decision was made for me when Amazon couldn't keep up with demand and developed a six-month backlog sometime in November of 2008. I think this was due to the fact that Oprah came into possession of a Kindle, devoted one of her shows to it and proclaimed to the world that it was her "favorite new gadget," and Amazon reported that she even said that it was "life-changing for me." We all know that an endorsement of that kind from Oprah could probably immediately sell all of those buggy whips sitting in warehouses waiting for us to run out of fossil fuel. The reason that my children were able to purchase a Kindle before Christmas is that my oldest daughter was watching the Oprah Winfrey Show and ordered the reader before the big rush (and, thanks to Oprah, got a $50 discount that Amazon offered to celebrate Oprah's endorsement).

In this article, I will discuss only the Kindle eBook reader. There is a great deal of progress that has been made in both the Sony reader and the Kindle. If you are interested in the Sony reader, you probably should visit Sony Style in International Plaza. They have a full display of the two models that are currently active; one is about $50 less than the Kindle and one is about $50 more. They also have knowledgeable personnel who can discuss the intricate features of each or can quickly obtain the answers to any questions that they cannot answer.

To fully appreciate the capabilities of the Kindle, it is important that you understand how the Kindle reader functions. The diagram to the right shows the page turning controls down each side of the reader. For some unknown reason, the main page-turning control is about two-thirds the length of the unit and is very easy to hit accidently. I know that they have received complaints; I've seen them in the reviews. The "Back" control works the same way the back arrow works on your browser. The keys on the keyboard require a firm click so they do not pose the same problem as the page controls. The keyboard has special keys to assist in entering data and navigating the system. The "Select wheel" runs the cursor up and down the "Cursor bar", to select items from the pop-up menus that appear along the right side of the screen. You make your selection by simply pressing the Select wheel. The Kindle comes equipped with a wireless capability called Amazon Whispernet, which allows you to download books, magazines, Audiobooks, and your personal papers that have been formatted by Amazon to be read by your Kindle. Whispernet is free, extremely fast and works practically anywhere that you are in range of a cellular tower.

BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES: When I wrote my article a year ago, Amazon had approximately 90,000 books in Kindle format for sale at their site. Amazon now has approximately 220,000. The books vary in price but most "best sellers" sell for $9.99. There is some indication that this price is beginning to creep to $14.82. (One Kindle owner suggested in a recent Amazon forum that all owners boycott new books offered at $14.82.) You can search the Amazon Kindle store from your Kindle and order and download from the items available. As discussed



above, books range in price, as do the magazines and newspapers. You can download and read a sample of most books for free. Most all of the newspapers from large U.S. cities, China, France, Germany, Ireland and the International Herald Tribune are available for subscription or an individual copy. The Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, Investor's Business Daily and USA Today are also available. Most of the newspapers that I checked were $9.99 a month or 75 cents per issue.. There are 21 magazines available ranging

Kindle.....Continued on page 4

Kindle.....Continued from page 3

from Technology (MIT publications since 1899 @ $1.25 per month or $2.99 per single issue) to the *Reader's Digest* @ $1.25 per month or @ $1.49 per single issue. *Time* and *Newsweek* are both $1.49 per month or 49 cents per single issue. There are also about 1200 blogs that you can search by category. The few that I scanned ran from 99 Cents to $1.99 a month. I'm sure that the range is larger. All newspapers, magazines and blogs offer a 14-day free trial. You simply need to cancel before the end of the period or the subscription will continue until canceled.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTS: In addition to the items that you purchase, you can also read several formats of your personal documents that you may wish to transfer to the Kindle. Some can be transferred directly to your reader from your computer using the USB connection. Some formats must be converted, which is quickly accomplished by Amazon. The formats are identified in the tables below. You have two choices for the documents that must be reformatted. You email the document to Amazon as an attachment and they email it back to your computer as an attachment for free. You then transfer the document to your reader via USB. For a small fee (currently 10 cents per document), they will send it directly to your reader. I've processed two documents, one to my computer and one to the reader. One took less than two minutes from the time I sent my email, and the other took less than 10 minutes.

Reader Folders	**File Types That Can be Moved Directly by USB**
Documents Mobi (.mobi*, .prc*)	Kindle (.azw), text (.txt),
Music	MP3 music format (.mp3)
Audible	Audible.com (.aa)

* Files containing digital rights management software will not be readable.

The following file formats can be converted via e-mail for viewing on Kindle:

- Microsoft Word (.DOC)
- Structured HTML (.HTML, .HTM)
- JPEG (.JPEG, .JPG)
- GIF (.GIF)
- PNG (.PNG)
- BMP (.BMP)

USING THE KINDLE: Like anything new, it takes a little time to get used to reading an eBook. The adjustment came very quickly for me. It is so much more comfortable reading from the Kindle. The disadvantages of the Kindle eBook are the lack of color and, in some instances, the lack of illustrations and diagrams. I think that a newspaper is a newspaper and it is almost impossible to create a small screen format that competes with it. Some of the mechanics, such as the accidental page turning, need tweaking. Some will probably not like the screen compared to a page, but I find it easier to read. Being able to easily turn pages forward and backward is certainly a plus. The things that I really enjoy the most are the conveniences resulting from the electronic format. When you place a bookmark, it appears in a chronological list at the front of the book in which you placed it. A single click on one of these bookmarks takes you instantly to that location. You can highlight text in a book and it remains until you erase it. You can write notes as you read (via a small keyboard), and they are stored on a page that you can transfer to your computer. A built-in dictionary allows you to quickly find the meaning of words that have more than two syllables. When you conduct a search, it almost instantly searches the content of the reader (every book, newspaper, magazine, etc., that you bring into the Kindle is indexed). Once the internal search is completed, the "hits" are listed and a search document is prepared for you to search the Amazon library or the Internet. The mere fact that you can have 200 books in a unit smaller than a paperback is also very difficult to fully comprehend. ◆

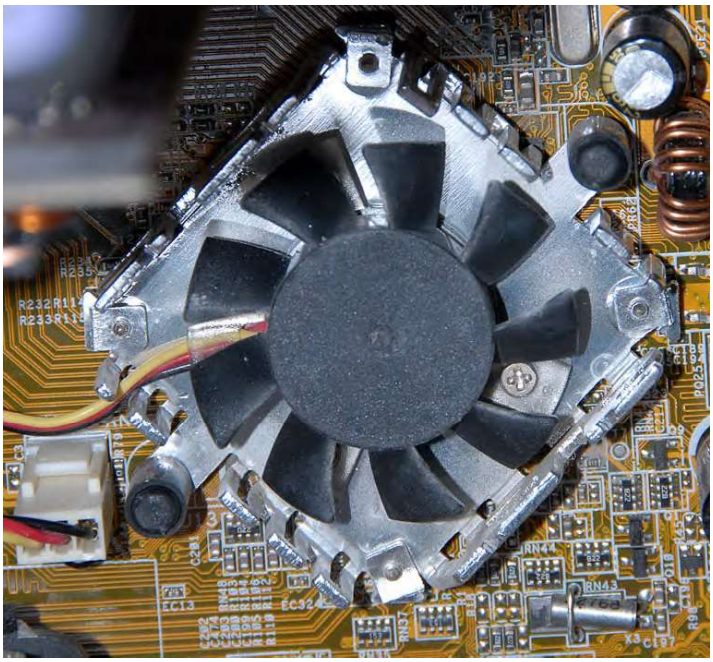
Minutes.....Continued from page 2

ness historical files and pictures that can never be recreated. He identified the two stages involved. First, you back up your data to some other device, such as another hard drive, a CD or a DVD. If something happens to your data due to a hard drive crash or corruption of data, then you restore your data to a functioning hard drive. If backup has been done properly, you should be back and running in a matter of minutes. He covered, in detail, the various options for backing up data and also the details and options for restoring data, as to both the entire hard drive and individual files. His presentation detailed what he considered the best hardware and the best software to create an ideal backup program. Of the options available as a destination to backup your data, such as the Internet, DVDs or CDs, tape cartridges, or another hard drive, he believes that the best thing to which you should back up a large hard drive is to another large external hard drive. He talked about both laptop-size hard drives and the normal large hard drives. These drives have become relatively inexpensive. You should have at least one external hard drive that is dedi-

Minutes .....Continued on page 7

Replacing a Fan with a Heat Sink

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



In the September 2008 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2008/september2008/comments.htm, I described how I removed the malfunctioning chip fan from the motherboard of my desktop computer and oiled it so that it would again turn and do its job of cooling the chip. To the right is a photo of the original chip fan with the top of its heat sink removed so that I could get at its attaching screws to remove it when I did the oiling. I knew that this probably was not a long-term solution — and it wasn't since I now have had to go and do what I didn't want to do. That is, I had to remove the motherboard from the computer and replace the chip fan and its small heat sink with a much larger heat sink.

Heat Sink .....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Good Job - Bad Job

The Super Bowl is known for its inventive and entertaining ads. In viewing the ads online at the *New York Times* site and the *Wall Street Journal* site, this one for Monster.com caught my attention. Some jobs are better than others. The link is http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123354146320838135.html

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Microsoft Pro Photo Tools - Geo-tag your photos	http://www.microsoft.com/prophoto/downloads/tools.aspx
CNBC.Com - Business & Financial News	http://www.cnbc.com/
Wheeless' Textbook of Orthopaedics	http://www.wheelessonline.com/
Learning @ Your Own Pace - lynda.com	http://www.lynda.com

Heat Sink.....Continued from page 5

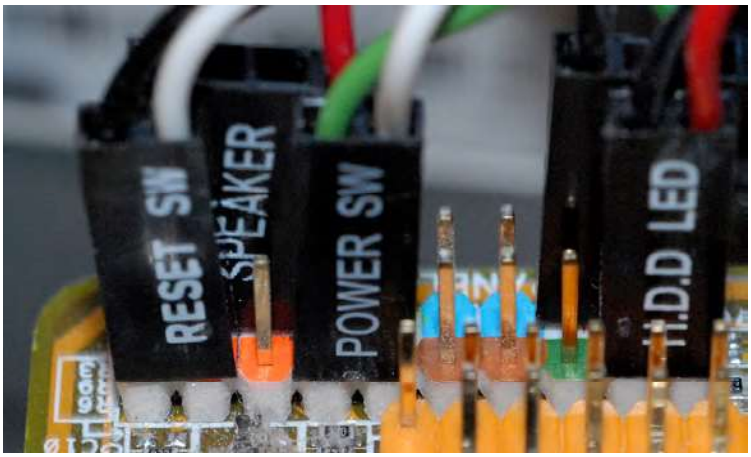
Merle Nicholson directed me to several suitable replacement heat sinks at the newegg.com site. The one I chose was a little under $10, including shipping. The replacement heat sink and its associated parts are pictured at right.



To remove the motherboard from the computer, you first disconnect the power from the computer and then unplug everything that is external to the computer: Keyboard, network cable, etc. Then you have to open up the computer and remove all its cards. But you are still not finished. You then need to disconnect the hard drive, CD and floppy drive cables. And that is not the end of it since there are various other cables that need to be disconnected depending on your particular configuration. The image below is of some of those other cables. And I confess that on my first try I reconnected them improperly since I misinterpreted the position indications on the motherboard. But no harm was done.

But before you do all of this disconnecting and removal, a word of warning. You are going to have to put everything back the way it was. This is where some mailing labels used as tags can be attached to cables indicating where they should be reattached. And a very big help is a collection of images taken with your digital camera of how things were before the big disconnect. Ideally you would have a laptop computer to which you would download these images so as to have them readily available when reassembling the desktop computer. If you don't have another computer to use, I suppose you could print them out.

Once you have tagged and photographed everything you think is necessary, you simply unplug all connections, remove the cards and then unscrew all the screws holding the motherboard in place. I think there were around nine of these screws. Be careful with the video card removal since it does not just pull out like the other cards.



Once you have the motherboard out of the computer, the next thing to do is to remove the chip fan/heat sink. This is held in place with two pins similar to the two pictured in the replacement heat sink image above. To remove one, you first use a pair of pliers to squeeze its expandable tip while pulling with another pair of pliers to remove it. Be gentle since you may need this pin if the replacement ones do not work well (as was the case for me).

Once you have removed the fan/heat sink, your motherboard should look like the image on the next page. There was a sort of paper spacer with a hole cut out for the chip that was between the motherboard and the fan/heat sink that the instructions said you could throw away, which

Heat Sink.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Heat Sink.....Continued from page 6

I did. You then assemble the screws, nuts and flanges and slide them into position in the replacement heat sink grooves. This is somewhat difficult since the screws and nuts are so small. With the flanges roughly positioned in the right locations and the nuts fairly tight, line up the holes in the flanges with the two holes in the motherboard. Then tighten the nuts all you can and recheck the alignment. The next step is to put onto the chip — the silver rectangular object in the center of the image above — a thin film of thermal grease from the supplied tube. The final step is to attach the new heat sink to the chip by pressing the replacement pins until they click in place.

This is where things got a bit dicey for me. The replacement pins just wouldn't make a tight connection. After two tries ended in failure, with the flanges becoming lose and needing retightening, I decided to try the old pins. The old pins worked beautifully. They appear to be a bit longer and heavier duty than the replacement ones, so perhaps that is the reason they worked better.



Once the new heat sink is attached, you are ready to reinstall the motherboard into the computer with the nine screws. When doing this, make sure no cables get trapped underneath the motherboard. This happened to me, and I didn't catch it until I had reinstalled the motherboard, reconnected a number of cables and reinstalled all the cards. I noticed I had a problem when one cable that was shown in my before photo appeared missing. To get at the cable I had to remove most of the cards and screws so that I could gently lift one end of the motherboard and extract the trapped cable.

With the motherboard reinstalled and all internal cables reconnected, you then connect your monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc. to the back of the computer and fire it up. If something is not right, nothing will happen. If everything is correctly connected, Windows will boot as usual.

All of this is obviously not for the faint of heart. Merle's advice was a big help, as was the web site I found with instructions for doing all this on a motherboard similar to mine. The link to it is http://euroalps.eu/technology/Computing/Chipset_Cooling/Remove_existing_fan/remove_existing_fan.html. This was helpful since the instructions that come with the replacement heat sink are minimal. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 4

cated to an organized backup program. He owns several brands of hard drives but prefers either the basic Seagate (without software) or an Hitachi. You should get a backup hard drive about the same size as the hard drive on your computer. You can back up more than one computer on a single hard drive, but the rule of thumb is to get an external drive that equals the sum of the size of the drives that you are backing up. There are two basic types of software available: The "basic file backup software," and the newer "image backup technology," of which he believes Acronis True Image software is one of the best. The image software creates a copy of your entire hard drive and saves it as an image. This image includes your operating system, your

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

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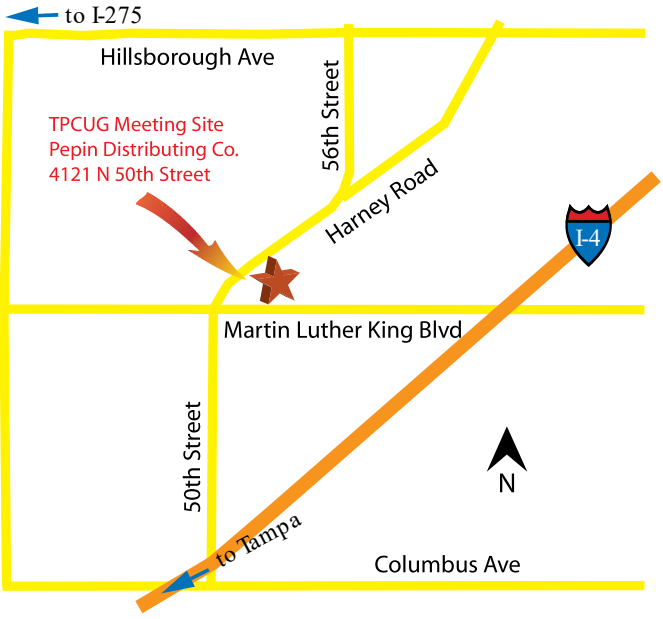
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 4

software, your drivers and everything else, just as it appears on your computer. Acronis also allows you access to all of the individual files on the backup hard drive. The three types of backup are full, incremental and differential. Gene recommends a combination of the full and the incremental. He estimates that the backup takes about one minute to backup one gigabyte. He provided a demonstration of all of the recommended procedures. The required products were offered to our members at reduced rates.

The details of this process are generously provided in the form of a tutorial at Gene's web site at http://www.user-groupstore.com. You will also find tutorials and technical papers on other subjects and the details and prices of all of the products that he distributes. The presentation ended at about 8:35 PM. ◆



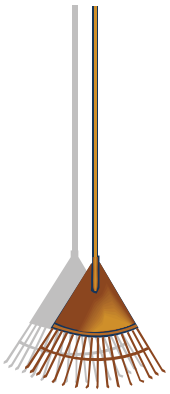
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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 22 No. 3 March 2009



March in Tampa

Meeting

Vista Ultimate Movie Maker

by

Bob LaFave

Wednesday March 11, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Bob LaFave will demonstrate the use of Vista Ultimate Movie Maker. He will also conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Jim Purcell, I don't have much space to fill this month. That is good since I have not really been doing much that I could write about, especially along the programming line. However, I have been using a program new to me — Adobe InDesign CS4, part of the Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Standard upgrade which I purchased in January. And although I used it to create the February newsletter, I don't feel proficient enough to write about it yet.

For many years, I have had Adobe's Photoshop, Illustrator and Acrobat Pro, which I would upgrade individually every other year. However, I noticed that I was paying more for these three upgrades than the price of an upgrade from, say, Adobe Creative Suite 3 Design Standard to CS4 Design Standard (which contains these three programs and additionally InDesign). There was an upgrade path from either Photoshop or Illustrator to CS4 which was somewhat expensive, but there was no upgrade path

Comments .....Continued on page 6

April Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at about 6:30 PM. There was a question about the use of special programs for moving to a new computer from an old one. Bob does not recommend using PC Mover to move applications. Bob stated that the best way to put your applications on a new computer is to use the original CD and install the program on the new computer, just as you did on the old one. He recommended that you use the Windows Transfer Wizard or Windows Easy Transfer to move files and settings from one computer to the other. The transfer can be done in a number of ways, including a "Windows Easy Transfer Cable". There was also a discussion of the problems encountered in installing and uninstalling some antivirus programs. A member asked about dual layer DVD's. Bob discussed the various formats, their capacities and their relative costs.

John Witmer started the business portion of the meeting at approximately 7:15 PM. He purposely kept the discussion short to leave plenty of time for the Creative Memories presentation. He mentioned the need for members to pay their dues on time and suggested some methods that might be used to help members keep up with the expiration dates. He reminded members of the FACUG conference in Zephyrhills. John introduced Kathy Eustis and covered her experience and expertise with the Creative Memories programs. Kathy Eustis started her presentation at about 7:20 PM. She began with an open discussion with the members on how we use and store our pictures once they are taken. She stressed the importance of storing them in such a way that we can easily find them and of having an adequate backup system to preserve the pictures. She pointed out that pictures do not normally stand alone, that we need to record and preserve the story as well as the pictures. Kathy described the "Memory Manager" program as a complete system for storing your digital photos, clippings, children's art, as well as video and audio clips. The program allows you to record the story of the picture in as much detail as you wish. You can easily print, email or create a slide

Minutes .....Continued on page 5

New PC Setup

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

For some reason, I've been setting up new computers the last few months – mostly notebooks. Offhand I'd say six since Christmas, just ten weeks ago. I thought I'd go through what I do to these machines and recommend software to add that will make them a "complete" PC. That would be just those mostly free software applications that should be of interest to everyone. To those, you'll have to add your own software that follows your own interests.

To get started, the first thing I do to a new computer is make operating system backup disks. Sometimes it's not necessary when disks are included in the package. However it's handled, it's the number one priority. Do it first. Also, later that day after removing crapware, it is necessary to make some Acronis image backup CDs and then a bootable Acronis CD for recovery and put all these CDs away for WHEN (not IF) you need them. I don't consider a recovery partition a valid option because it's useless in the case of a hard drive failure.

I'll continue to use the new $550 HP/Compaq as my example. There is an HP program that you can only run once that will make recovery CDs. It is not an Operating System CD, so it will put the PC back to its delivery state. Do it now, not later.

The second in priority is to clean the crapware from the new PC. The last notebook I bought for myself at Office Depot, the sales guy offered a $15 program on CD that will clean up my computer! Later I found it on the HP site as an ordering option. I was just a bit indignant, and my wife said to him "That's why I have him to do that!" meaning me. It's true I'll do a much more thorough job because I have a very well-defined crapware definition. "If I don't know what it is, uninstall it!"

I uninstall everything I do not need from the "Programs and Features" in Control Panel. On an HP consumer PC, there's a lot to do, almost all of them identified as HP. They have even rebranded Wild Tangent as "HP Games". That was the first to go. The problem in uninstalling is the risk of losing something essential, but I've never really encountered that. If I were to accidently delete a hardware driver, I can get that driver back from their web site. I always uninstall any "trial" software. That will include copies of Office and Norton AntiVirus. Also, I uninstall anything that has the word "toolbar", "MSN" or "AOL". Now reboot one last time, and install an antivirus. Then start doing Microsoft Updates. All this will take quite a while.

Antivirus:
At this point I usually install AVG Free 8.5 (http://www.download.com). There are a couple of reasons. First, it's free. Second, it's reasonably unobtrusive even on a netbook PC like ASUS EeePC. It includes anti-spyware, and it has a very understandable user interface. If I put footprint size as most important, I'd use Sunbelt Software VIPRE ($29.95) at http://www.sunbeltsecuritynews.com/LYFUQ0/090218-VIPRE-for-Netbooks. They have specifically tested on netbooks. Remember also that Vista has Windows Defender installed by default, and it probably was installed in some Windows XP update. It's just an anti-spyware program. So if you install a fully integrated anti-malware program, you can disable Defender if you wish. It's in your startup list in msconfig, labeled "MSASCui.exe. It's also installed as a Service in Computer Management, Services. Find it, right-click for Properties, stop and disable it.

I also use Microsoft Windows Live One-Care, http://onecare.live.com/standard/en-us/3/default.htm, on three of my computers. It's very easy to install and use. It's $50 for three PC's for one year. It's very unobtrusive and has the best reporting system and user interface I've seen. It includes an enhanced two-way firewall, schedules tune-ups, checks for updates and schedules automatic backups. By the end of 2009, Microsoft is supposed to rename it and make it free.

Firewall:
If you don't want to depend on the Windows Firewall, and your antivirus package does not include one, there are several free ones available. My favorite free one is

New PC.....Continued on page 4

New PC.....Continued from page 3

Webroot Desktop Firewall, free at: http://www.webroot.com/En_US/consumer-products-desktopfirewall.html

Updates:
After the antivirus and firewall programs are running, it's time to install all updates. First make sure XP is at Service Pack 3, and Vista is at Service Pack 1. If not, install those first, then do the remaining updates. After you have the updates installed, do it again until there are no more updates available. The reason is that updates need updates, and you'll get the first one, and when Update rescans, it'll find more.

In Windows Updates, there are usually "optional" hardware driver updates. I always, always skip those, and also I'll mark them as hidden so I won't be bothered with them again. Then I'll go to the manufacturers' website to see if there are later drivers there. My philosophy on hardware drivers is: Don't fix it if it ain't broke.

Back Up:
Ok, here's a very good time to back up the system. All the crapware is off, and it's up-to-date and an anti-virus is installed. Also, the backup will not be large because I haven't begun to move data files, and I haven't installed any software. I usually do an Acronis full backup. I really don't want to use a file backup here now because I want to have a fast recovery method. So I use either an external hard drive or DVDs – or both. Then I make sure I have a CD that will recover the image.

Essential Software:
PDF Writer: Every PC needs a PDF printer installed. It appears in your printer list, along with all other printers. The difference is that the resulting print is a PDF file. You should never send someone a word document or a text file just to have them read it. Everyone has a PDF reader.

There are many PDF printers. I use PrimoPDF. Other popular freebies are CutePDF Writer and PDF995, all from http://www.downloads.com.

PDF Reader:
Well, everyone has Adobe Reader. http://www.abobe.com/reader, and you probably need it for the add-in for Internet Explorer, but it's gotten so very large it takes forever to load. For a while the install included an IE toolbar which you had to uncheck. And now it installs Adobe Air, and you don't have any choice. However, you can go to Add/Remove and uninstall just Adobe Air. Also, you must (should) remove Adobe Reader from Startup in msconfig. I hate programs that are always "calling home." I would never install Adobe Reader on a netbook.

A very good solution to Adobe Bloat is to install a lightweight reader. Foxit Reader (http://www.download.com/windows/) is very popular. My personal favorite is Haihaisoft PDF Reader. http://www.drm-x.com/PDF_Reader.aspx. It's very small sized at 1.7 MB.

Office Software:
Everyone needs word processing. Most students need a presentation program and a spreadsheet. You can't go wrong with Microsoft Office. The current price for Office Home and Student is $100. I purchased one in December 2008 that is licensed for three computers for $90 at http://www.NewEgg.com. But there are some competitors, and they're very good. OpenOffice is free at http://www.openoffice.org. Its close cousin, Sun StarOffice, is $34.95 at http://globalspecials.sun.com/. You should not have file compatibility problems sharing with Word documents. But check the compatibility out first before committing a lot of work.

Photos:
My favorite free photo searcher/viewer/slideshow/cataloger/photo editor is WildBit Viewer 5.3 at http://www.wildbit-soft.fi The photo-editing capability is not complete like you'd expect of a commercial package, but it does a lot. I found it because I was looking for a program that would sequentially rename all of the photos in a folder. This does that, and much, much more.

More Photos and Paint:
Two very good free Paint Shop substitutes are Paint.NET and GIMP. GIMP is a Linux derivative and is the standard photo and paint program in Linux. Also there

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show with your photos and keep up with the status of each item in storage. The program also includes four pages of editing tools. The editing program is quite comprehensive, is very easy to use, and most scrap bookers will find the tools intuitive. Kathy then described the capabilities and versatility of Story-book Creator Plus, the Creative Memories software program that allows you to create a digital scrapbook. To start a project, you choose from a list of sizes and themes. You begin with the templates provided (or you can start with a blank page). The program populates the first 20 pages with the photos or digital articles that you have selected. You have complete freedom to move or change the photos and rearrange them as you desire. You can also create text boxes where you

Minutes .....Continued on page 8

Internet Picture of the Month



The Dow Jones Industrial Average

As of March 2, 2009, the Dow Jones Industrial Average of 6763 was about back to where it was on April 1, 1997, when it closed at 6611. The chart above is from the Wall Street Journal site, http://on-line.wsj.com/.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Vanity Fair	http://www.vanityfair.com/
Microsoft Fix It Solution Center	http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx/fixit#tab0
GlobalPost	http://www.globalpost.com/
lynda.com - instructional videos	http://www.lynda.com
1914 State Maps	http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~shastaca/maps_index.html

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is a smaller version of GIMP called GIMP Portable. All are available at http://www.download.com/windows/

Media Player:
It's hard to beat the free VLC Media Player from VideoLAN Project. I always get frustrated with the Windows Media Player because I can't seem to remember what file types it WON'T play. With VLC you don't have to worry about that for audio and video files. It also has a simpler user interface than WMP. Any program that offers "skins" isn't for me. Hell, I don't know what a "skin" is.

Backup:
It's hard to beat the free Microsoft SyncToy 2.0. But if you use Vista, don't forget that a built-in "Backup Status and Configuration" (Orb, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools) is very good and easily scheduled. SyncToy 3 is available at the Microsoft Download Center: http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/default.aspx.

Disk Defrag:
The built-in Windows defrag is pretty boring. I use the highly rated Auslogics Disk Defrag 1.5.23.350. from Download.com: http://www.download.com/Auslogics-Disk-Defrag/3000-2094_4-10567503.html?tag=mncol

Outlook Email Organizer:
xobni (all in lower case – inbox spelled backwards) indexes and searches all your outlook emails and attachments. It's a plug-in for Outlook 2003 and 2007. Once you see what it can do, you'd actually pay money for it. Thankfully it's free. http://www.xobni.com/

Three Windows XP Specific MUST HAVES:
Microsoft ClearType Tuner http://www.download.com/ClearType-Tuner/3000-2094_4-10628947.html?tag=mncol

Microsoft ImageResizerPowerToy http://www.download.com/Image-Resizer-Powertoy-for-Windows-XP/3000-18487_4-10905400.html?tag=mncol

Microsoft TweakUI PowerToy 2.10 http://www.download.com/Tweak-UI/3000-2072_4-10002117.html. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

that would be cheaper for those like me with both Photoshop and Illustrator, not to mention Acrobat. So I phoned Adobe about this and laid out my case and did receive a better price for the upgrade to CS4 Design Standard which was cheaper than an upgrade from either Illustrator or Photoshop but more expensive than an upgrade from CS3 Design Standard.

By the way, Adobe InDesign is for desktop publishing and will replace Microsoft Publisher for me in creating newsletters, booklets, brochures, etc. Now I had a new program I needed to learn, and Adobe had just the thing to teach me — a one-month free subscription to lynda.com, where I could watch all the training videos I wanted. In the past, I had temporary access to some of these on a CD for learning Photoshop and knew how good they were. Now I would have access to the entire catalog of training videos.

I highly recommend that you go to http://www.lynda.com and look around. You can sign up for as little as $25 for one month. And a few of the videos may be viewed for free. For example, I think Photoshop CS4 Essential Training has about six that may be viewed for free. Additionally, as is true for all versions of other programs, there is training for all versions of Photoshop.

A list of the programs — some of which I didn't know existed — for which there are videos is below. ◆

3ds Max
Access
Acrobat
Acrobat Connect
Adobe CS4
After Effects
AIR
Amorphium Pro
Aperture
Audition
AutoCAD
Avid Xpress Pro
Bento
Blogger
Bridge
Captivate
Carrara
CINEMA 4D
ColdFusion
Color
Compressor
Contribute
CorelDRAW
Device Central CS4
Director
Dreamweaver
Drupal
DVD Studio Pro
eBay
Encore CS4

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Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

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Encore DVD
Entourage
Excel
Expression Blend
Expression Design
Expression Web
FileMaker Pro
Final Cut Express
Final Cut Pro
Fireworks
Flash
Flash Lite
Flash MX
Flex
FreeHand
FrontPage
GarageBand
GoLive
Google Docs
Google Sketchup
Groove
iDVD
iLife
Illustrator
iMovie
InCopy
InDesign
InfoPath 2007
Interactive Designer
Internet Explorer
iPhoto
iTunes
iView Media Pro
iWeb
iWork
Joomla!
Keynote
Kuler
LiveType
Logic
Mac OS
Mac OS Server
Mask Pro
Maya
Motion
Movie Maker
Numbers
Office 2003
Office 2007
Office for Mac 2008
OneNote 2007
Open Source
OpenOffice.org
Outlook
Pages
Paint Shop Pro
Painter
Photoshop
Photoshop Elements
Photoshop Express
Photoshop Lightroom
Picasa
Poser
PowerPoint
Premiere Elements
Premiere Pro
Pro Tools
Project
Publisher
QuarkXPress
QuickBooks
Quicken
QuickTime
Reason
Shake
Sharepoint
Silverlight
Soundbooth
Soundtrack Pro
Studio
Ultra CS3
UltraDev
Vegas
Visio
Vue
Vuvox
Windows Vista
Windows XP
Word
WordPerfect
WordPress.com
Xcelsius
ZBrush 3

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Minutes.....Continued from page 6

want. There are a large variety of pre-designed pages that you can customize with the software program. Once you have created your book you have a variety of ways to show your photos. You can upload the information to Creative Memories and have them published in a beautiful bound book of 20 to 100 pages. The books are available in sizes of 12x12, 11x8.5, 8x8 and 7x5 inches. You can also have individual pages printed or you can print your own pages to be framed or placed in an album. Creative Memories has a wide variety of optional packages that you can purchase to embellish your pages or you can use your imagination and create your own.

The meeting ended at 8:40 PM. ◆



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Vol. 22 No. 4 April 2009

April in Tampa

Meeting

Online Program Training Videos at Lynda.Com and More

by

William LaMartin

Wednesday April 8, 2009

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Would you like training in any of the major computer programs? William LaMartin will demonstrate how to receive it at Lynda.com. Bob LaFave will also conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

A number of members attended the FACUG Spring Conference this past month in Zephyrhills, and attendee Ron Wienberg tells us some of the highlights of the meeting in his article on page three of this newsletter. Our secretary, Jim Purcell, ever conscientious, while traveling emailed the minutes from a Panera Bread location in New York. However, someone else must have forgotten to send in his/her article, so you will be stuck with what I have this month. Actually, I think my topic is fairly interesting. It is a web application that for any state, displays the location of each city with an National Public Radio station. Further, if you hover your mouse over the pin at a city, a fly-out lists the call letters of all stations in the city, and, if the stations have a live audio feed, a link to that is provided. Additionally, the pins are color-coded so as to indicate multiple stations in a city and whether or not they have live feeds. I hope you find my description of creating it interesting. ◆

May Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at 6:35 PM. He began by demonstrating how to reach Amazon.com through our web site in order for our user group to receive a commission on a purchase. Bob also answered a question on exporting cookies from one computer to another. He described the features of "LightScribe," a labeling program for specially treated DVD/CD's. He advised that sometimes the colors you choose will affect the quality of your label on some LightScribe blanks. He demonstrated the repair and restore functions available in Vista. Bob discussed CD/DVD capacities as a follow-up to a question at last month's meeting. He mentioned Nero Info Tool, a program that will give you all of the information on your CD/DVD players and an inserted disk. Bob discussed the details of how you can watch TV and listen to the radio on your computer. He took a minute to explain the mechanics of backing up computers with the Vista operating system. You can easily backup several Vista computers on the same hard drive. The backup system is very simple, with few or no choices. Almost everything is decided for you. Bob led an extensive discussion of TV tuners and how they can be used. In response to a question on how to record "You Tube" programs, he also mentioned that "Total Recorder" is a program that will record almost any form of audio.

The Windows SIG ended at approximately 8:00 PM. The last part of the Windows SIG led into the presentation for March, "Microsoft Moviemaker," which was also presented by Bob. The Microsoft Moviemaker program is included in the Windows Vista Ultimate operating system. Bob's presentation contained numerous tips and procedures to help the user get the most from this program. Bob stressed the ease with which you can complete complicated and impressive functions which in the past were diff cult to learn and to execute. He demonstrated the ways that you can build your video and enhance it by importing audio and video supplements from various sources. The program also provides numerous special effects. The

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FACUG Conference Highlights

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

The Florida Association of Computer User Groups, or FACUG, held its Spring Conference in Zephyrhills on March 14 and 15. These events consist of a number of separate sessions in which various topics of interest to Florida group members and other guests are discussed. Each topic is led by an expert on the subject. Some presentations are made by representatives of software or hardware companies to explain their products or to introduce new ones. Each presenter tries to answer related questions.

Several sessions were devoted to topics related to the administration of User Groups such as: Increasing Membership, Remote Presentations, Microsoft Live Meeting, Group Communications and Online Newsletters.

More of interest to general members were sessions which covered some of the most timely subjects and technology issues of today. A brief comment on several follows.

Smart Computing Magazine had staff members present to explain in detail the workings of their superb free tech support program, now only available to subscribers. It was noted by several attendees' experiences that this is a very valuable service. The support team will go to great lengths and spend much time resolving user issues.

Virtual Worlds and Second Life. As def ned by Wikipedia, a virtual world is a computer-based simulated environment intended for its users to inhabit and interact via avatars. Second Life is a popular virtual world. Secondlife.com explains that Second Life is a free 3D virtual world where users can socialize, connect and create using voice and text chat. Virtual worlds are predicted to be future locations of many interpersonal relationships, some of which can involve the transfer of genuine actual currency. They can be an excellent educational tool also.

Cloud Computing, one of the new techniques taking over computing was explained. Essentially, banks of gigantic servers replace users' own hardware and software. Access to everything is online. Local PCs or large corporations do not require powerful processors, large memory or storage devices. There is no need to know where the processing and storage is. "It is in the cloud."

Wikis (quoting from the presenter, Dave Dockery). "A Wiki is a web page that can be edited by its creator, and also by visitors. Wikis may be used as an excellent group planning tool. They are easy to create and edit." Two sites to work with wikis are http://www.wikispaces.com and http://www.pbwiki.com.

Ning is an interactive web site with which users can create their own customized social networking site. Go to http://www.aboutning.com for more information.

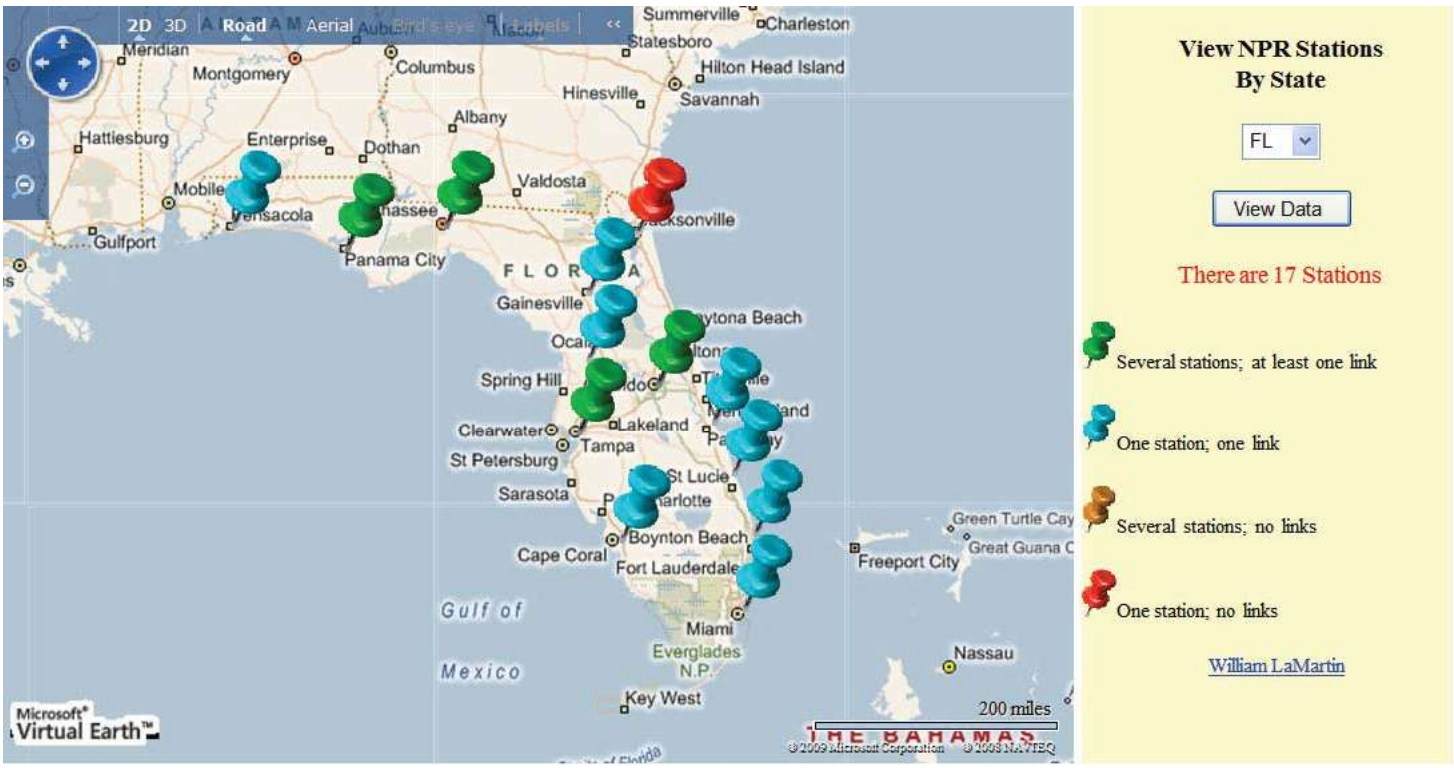
Twitter. Sending tweets with Twitter is the current rage. Tweets are merely short messages (140 character maximum). They are a written Internet version of instant messages. Go to http://www.twitter.com to use it.

Drupal is a very popular complete web design tool, free and open source. It can be learned for individual use or you can contract with consultants to use it for you.

Microsoft Windows 7. Conference attendees received a copy of the beta release and a demonstration by Jay Ferron. Discussion of Windows 7 is best left to the myriad of other articles now appearing everywhere. There seems to be agreement that this will be the answer to complaints about Vista.

This article is not all inclusive. Several of the other valuable sessions were not mentioned here such as: Bar Camp Unconference, Doterati, Magix Multimedia Audio Video Software, offering free Widgets at magixwidgets.com, Photoshop.com for online sharing and editing, and ZoomWare screen magnif cation for everyone. More information on each of these is available through Google. There was also a superb f ll-in

FACUG.....Continued on page 8



Creating Interactive Maps

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

In past articles, I have described how to geo-tag your photos—that is, add latitude and longitude information to the image f le using the free Microsoft Pro Photo Tools. And once you have your photos geo-tagged, you can then identify the locations on a map with a bit of programming. As a f nal touch, you can have a thumbnail of the image display, along with some text, when someone hovers their mouse over the location indicator pin and then, if they actually click on the thumbnail, have a larger version of the image display.

This sort of process opens up all sorts of possibilities for using maps for displaying data other than images. Within the last year, I created an example using the 2000 United States census which, I believe, I mentioned in the newsletter. I will brief y describe that application a little later in this article and give a link to it. My main interest here, though, is to give a non-technical description of how I created my National Public Radio (NPR) stations interactive map shown above in a screen capture of its display of cities in Florida with NPR stations.

First off, I should say that someone did a similar application before me, for when I did a search for a list of all NPR stations, among the hits was the site http://www.broofa.com/Toys/NPRStations/, which had an interactive map based on Google mapping. The creator was also nice enough to have a link to a f le containing the data on which his map was based. He got his data from a stations list, http://www.npr.org/stations/pdf/nprstations.pdf, at National Public Radio, which I, too, had found.

The NPR list had given me a list of stations, their call letters and the cities they were in. What it didn't give me were the latitude and longitude of the cities where the stations were—and, more importantly, what the online audio live feed URL for the stations was. Now I could have used the US Gazetter site, http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/gazetteer, to retrieve the latitude and longitude of each city. I wouldn't do this by going to the page and individually entering the city name and state for each city and then retrieving the result. I am a programmer, so I would write a program that would run down the list of cities and retrieve this information for all the cities on the list without my having to

Mapping .....Continued on page 6

CITY OF TAMPA HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL & ELECTRONICS COLLECTION

Saturday, April 25, 2009
9 AM to 2 PM
Household & Electronics

City of Tampa Solid Waste Department
4010 West Spruce Street
(behind main building — enter from Clark Street)

Materials accepted include:
Electronics, including computer monitors, printers, CPU's, keyboards, and televisions

NO EXPLOSIVE, RADIOACTIVE OR BIO-MEDICAL WASTES ACCEPTED
RESIDENTIAL HOUSEHOLD WASTE ONLY

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL:
CITY OF TAMPA SOLID WASTE DEPARTMENT, PHONE 348-1111

http://www.epchc.org/household_chem.htm



Internet Picture of the Month



William C Durant Mausoleum

With General Motors about to go bankrupt, it might be of interest to consider its founder, William Durant, who, after founding GM, lost the company. He then founded Chevrolet and regained control of GM, only to lose it again. He started Durant Motors and was a major player on Wall Street in the 1920s. The failure of Durant Motors and the crash of the market ruined him f nancially. The photo is from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_C._Durant.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
lynda.com - instructional videos (meeting topic)	http://www.lynda.com
File Extension Database	http://extensionf le.net/
General Motors History	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Motors
Davis Islands Yacht Club Weather	http://www.diyc.org/wx/

Mapping.....Continued from page 4

do anything. However, this was not necessary since the other fellow's data f le provided the latitude and longitude information for each of the cities. So that is the f rst of two things with which he provided me.

His site does not provide a URL for a station's audio live feed, but he did provide a link to a site named radio-locator, http://www.radio-locator.com/, which did provide this information. This was the second thing he provided that was useful. Now all I would need to do was to again use my programming ability to write a program that would, for each station, go to the radio-locator site, provide it with the call letters for the station and be presented with a page of information about the station. The program would then analyze the page to see if there was an audio feed URL listed for the station. If so, it would save it and then move on to the next station on the list.

Well, I wrote my program, tested it on a few stations to work out the bugs, and then set it to retrieve the information on the f rst 100 stations. However, it wasn't long before things stopped. In examining the text on the last page returned, I found "You have exceeded your allotted usage." Next day, I could again retrieve information from the radio-locator site. This time I did it in small bits so as to see at what point I would again get cut off. That happened a little past 60 requests.

You may wonder how did the web site know that the same computer was making those requests. The simple answer is that when my program made what is known as an http request, the same as when your browser make a request for a web page, it sends along the IP address of the requesting computer. How else would the web server know where to send the page. And it would do no good to move to a different computer in the house, since the IP address sent is that of the router to which all the computers are connected.

How to speed up the process a bit? I could have taken my program to some of my friends homes, installed it on their computers and then got another 60 each day. What I actually did was write another type of program, called a web service, that did the same thing and placed it on two of my web sites. Then I modif ed my program to also use these remote web services to request pages. Since these requests would be coming from two new IP addresses, I could get 60 more results from each of them for a total of 180 each day. That made it a bit easier to get the 800 or so responses I needed.

Now I had a list of NPR stations in each state, the latitude and longitude of the cities where they were and an URL of their live audio feed if one existed. The next thing to do was check out the data on the audio URLs. That check revealed a not-insignif cant number did not provide any audio. One problem was that, in cases of what turned out to be long URLs, the radio-locator data was truncated. However, the most common problem was that the URL was now different from what was listed by the radio-locator site. My solution for getting a correct URL for a station was to do a search in Google with terms being the station's call letters plus the text "audio live feed". This was a process that I did one station at a time. Most of the problems stations were resolved, but there are still a few, and I invite you to try my application and send me any stations that don't work properly. Also, enjoy listening to stations all over the country. Right now I am listening to KWED in San Francisco. The current program is Morning Edition, which airs much earlier here in Tampa due to the time difference.

The link to my NPR Stations interactive map is http://www.lamartin.com/VENPRStations/ in the Useful Things section of http://www.lamartin.com.

Brief y, the 2000 Census Interactive Map at http://www.lamartin.com/VECensus/ uses the same technology to plot pins at each zip code in a state. When you hover your mouse over any pin, you are provided with the most important census data for that zip code. For example, if I zoom in the map for Florida to Tampa and then to the 33606 zip, hovering the mouse over the 33606 pin reveals, among many other pieces of information, that in 2000 the population was 14,960. The data for this application is obviously US Census data. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the f rst 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE FOR THE YEAR 2008

2008 INCOME		
MEMBERSHIPS (40 Single + 2 Family)	$1,070.00	
DOOR PRIZES		$66.00
AMAZON & MISC		$176.46
TOTAL INCOME:		$1,312.46
2008 EXPENSES		
NEWSLETTER POSTAGE	$166.20	
NEWSLETTER PAPER	$48.97	
FACUG CONF REGISTRATIONS	-	
FACUG DUES	$25.00	
APCUG DUES	$50.00	
FLORIDA INCORPORATION FEE	$61.25	
WEB SITE HOSTING FEE	$149.50	
PO BOX RENTAL (Pd in 2009)	-	
DEC HOLIDAY PARTY COSTS	$232.61	
REFRESHMENTS - COOKIES	$33.70	
PAYPAL FEES - 11 PAYMENTS	$10.97	
MISCELLANEOUS (LABELS, TAPE)	$36.36	
TOTAL EXPENSES:		$814.56
NET INCOME FOR 2008		**$497.90**
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS - BEGINNING OF 2008		$5,491.95
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS - END OF 2008		$5,989.85
RECONCILIATION OF BANK STATEMENT TO BOOK BALANCE:		
Balance per BANK STMT at 12-31-08		$5,941.55
Deduct: Outstanding checks written as of 12/31/08 NONE		-
Add: PayPal dues deposit in transit Jim Sides		$24.15
(Rec'd in PayPal Acct 12/10 & 12/18) Wm LaMartin		$24.15
Balance per BOOKS at 12-31-08 is this amount:		$5,989.85

SUBMITTED BY: DOUG MULLIS, TREASURER TPCUG

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

FACUG.....Continued from page 3

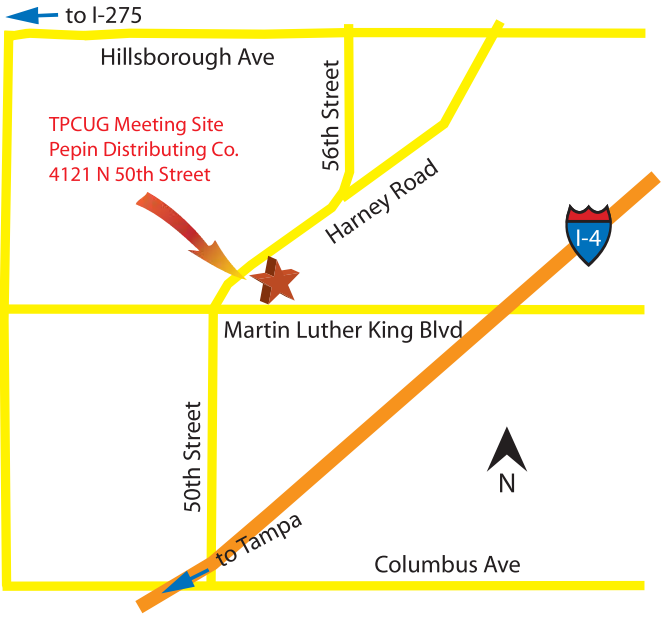
presentation by Jay Ferron on identity theft.

The FACUG.org website shows a session summary under Conference Presentations and has video streams and downloads of most sessions available. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

program can be easily recorded to various forms of media such as your computer hard drive, a DVD, a CD, email, or you can record it back to your camcorder for viewing. Bob also went through the process of downloading video and sound from the Internet.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 22 No. 5 May 2009

May in Tampa

Meeting

Optical Character Recognition

by

Patrick Courtney

Wednesday May 13, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Patrick Courtney, a member of the Brandon group, will give us an Optical Character Recognition presentation that begins with a Power Point show about OCR followed by a demonstration of some practical applications of OCR using OmniPage Pro 14. Bob LaFave will also conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Thanks to Jim Purcell we have some content for the newsletter this month. And since I made a small computer related purchase, I wrote about that.

Last month, right at the end of the meeting, Bob LaFave took us to a site of interest to him--Live Ships Map, in the links this month. That got me to thinking that I might be able to do something similar. Recall that I have mapped census data and NPR stations, among other things. After a good bit of work, I have things the way I want, and you can view the results at http://www.lamartin.com/ShipLocations/. There was a fair bit of programming involved with this: Getting the marine traffic data as a zipped file, unzipping the data, supplying country names and flags for the ships, and, lastly, displaying the data on a map. All done when you select a location to view.

In the continuation of this article, is a view of the program dis-

Comments.....Continued on page 6

June Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at approximately 6:30 p.m. He explained the use of TV and FM tuners. He also discussed the use of programs that let you record any sound coming into your computer. He demonstrated the use of these programs. Bob explained the things which you can listen to and record with "Download Helper." Bob outlined a procedure to play ASF files in Windows Vista, since there is a bug in Windows Media Player in Vista that will not allow ASF files to play. William LaMartin discussed problems he experienced when Norton installed a new version of the anti-virus program he was using. He felt that the problems were serious enough to cause him to switch to another anti-virus program despite several years of satisfactory service from Norton. Bob ended the session at approximately 6:55 p.m.

William LaMartin started his presentation, "Online Program Training Videos at lynda.com and More" at approximately 7:00 p.m. William discussed his use of the online training program at lynda.com. He began with a discussion of his experiences over the years with many copies of a wide variety of software and their updates. He said that he installed and learned these programs "by the seat of his pants," or searched the Internet when he was unable to work out a solution. He said that had he found training videos that were as effective and easy to use as these, he would not have wasted so many years of his life learning the programs and also would have discovered capabilities of the software that he never realized existed. He said that the videos were very efficient and reasonably priced and that, in fact, many are free. William described how he used Adobe Illustrator to plan his installation of a water sprinkler system, which served as an example of the complexity of many software programs.

William went to the lynda.com web site to show the large variety of subjects available and the flexibility of the subscription program. He played programs that showed the quality and versatility of the training. The

Minutes .....Continued on page 8

Monitor Calibration

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

For several years, ever since purchasing an Epson Stylus Photo 2200 printer, I have never been sure that what is printed will appear the same as what I see on my computer monitor. This is not really a complaint about the printer; I have printed many stunning images using it. Yet I have also had to reprint images several times to get the proper degree of lightness and, more rarely, the correct color cast.

The most persistent problem has been that the printed images appear a good bit darker than what I see on my monitor from Photoshop. My solution to this has been to simply make the image about +25 brighter in Photoshop when I want to print it. Additionally, a small reduction of the saturation for red is often needed if I want the printed result to be the same as seen on the monitor.

Now, you might ask: How do you know that what you see on the monitor is correct? Good question, and that is where a monitor calibrator comes in. There are several such devices on the market. The one I chose is the one I was shown at North Tampa Photography, the huey by Pantone. It is a small USB device about 4 inches long and a little over one half-inch wide and about one-half inch thick. The cropped photo, Image A, shows it dangling from the top of my monitor over the blue color portion of Image A during a calibration, with its progress display and cancel button to the left.





It is quite simple to use. First, you install the software from a CD. (By the way, the huey pro is the same hardware item--it just has more advanced software.) Next, you run that software, where the first screen tells you to click the start button. After that you see the second screen, shown at the bottom left of this page, Image B, which tells you to attach the sensor, which has suction cups, to your monitor. Then you simply follow the on-screen instructions. A number of different colors will appear on screen under the device, as photographed above with a blue light on the screen.

When the calibration is finished, you will be able to see the results of before and after and will also be given the opportunity to place the device in a cradle

huey.....Continued on page 7

Improving Your Workspace

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@msn.com

Our workspace requirements are sometimes obvious because we have been using the same space, furniture and equipment for years and are perfectly happy with what we have. This is probably not completely true for most of us because it's rare that there is no change in all of these factors for any of us.

There is an awful lot of assistance out there to help you decide how to approach and accomplish your goal. I won't attempt to discuss all of these possibilities, if for no other reason than the fact that the article would consume more than one newsletter and still wouldn't answer all of your questions. I have just been through this process so I'll give you a quick summary of what I considered, the sources of information I used in reaching a decision and the resulting workspace.

Goal: About five and a half years ago my wife and I began a project, which I have used to identify my workspace requirements. We started by cataloging our estimated 1800 35 mm slides taken between 1953 and 1985. We also began accumulating and arranging any pictures of our family history, both slides and black and white prints and negatives, up to the time we met in high school. We already had begun to accumulate pictures after that time, once we were married. I became interested in photography at an early age. My next door neighbor and best friend since we were 4 years old had our first photo lab in his mother's wash shed in 1947. I got my first 35mm camera in 1953, after college graduation and marriage. My wife also became interested in photography as the number of our children increased at a steady pace from zero to five. When the three grandchildren started arriving, the previous numbers were quickly eclipsed. As a result, in addition to the slides, we have about twelve hundred color negatives in APS format and hundreds of black and white and color photos and negatives to scan. The goal is to create a searchable cross referenced library of all of the images on DVD and on external hard drives. The second part would be to produce DVD slide shows which depict our family and show how our lives evolved in these areas, to give our children and grandchildren a good view of the conditions that existed when and where they were born in the United States and in Germany.

Required conditions: I have long been a fan of Katrin Eismann, an internationally recognized artist, author and educator. She seems to be most proud of her role as educator. In a book that she coauthored with Sean Duggan, they devoted four-and-a-half pages to "Building a Digital Darkroom." It covers practically everything you consider in building a workspace to fit your needs. I discussed their recommendations with some of the many knowledgeable members that we have in our group to try to fit their recommendations to my needs and to update equipment changes since the book was published in 2008.

Equipment: After my information gathering, I decided to, at least initially, keep all of the equipment that I had: (1.) A Dell Laptop Inspiron 9100 with Windows XP that I have had for several years, (2.) A Dell Desktop Dimension 8300 with Windows XP that I have also had for several years, (3.) An HP Pavilion dv6675us laptop with Vista Ultimate 64 bit (4gb of memory) that I purchased about a year and a half ago to replace the Dell laptop, (4.) A Minolta Dimage Scan Dual III film scanner that was purchased several years ago and (5.) An Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner that I have had for over four years. I also plan to keep all of my printers, which will not have much effect on the project, with the exception of an all-in-one that could provide limited scanning of photos and documents. I added a new scanner, the Epson Perfection V700 Photo. This dual lens scanner will provide increased quality and speed. It can batch scan 12 slides or negatives, as opposed to four with my other scanners. I may be able to quickly pass my other Epson scanner on to one of my children, but I wanted to try a few weeks of production to see whether it is needed. The last thing that I added and the pride of my stable is a new desktop. Merle Nicholson provided me with a parts list to order and allowed me to help him put it together (I held the flashlight and gritted my teeth). I never saw so many pipes and towers. It looked like it

Workspace .....Continued on page 5

Workspace.....Continued from page 4

had been designed in Los Alamos. Briefly, it has Vista Ultimate 64 bit, 8GB of memory, an AMD Phenom II X4 940 Deneb 3.0GHz Quad-Core Black Edition Processor, 2 Sata 150GB 10,000 RPM drives combined into one drive using RAID technology for program files and a 750GB 7200 RPM Sata drive for data files and two Samsung 22" monitors. There should be no doubt that this configuration will provide rapid processing of photos in Photoshop or Lightroom.

Furniture:

Once I decided on the equipment, I started searching for additional furniture. I decided to get all of the additional furniture from IKEA, Their furniture is modular and can be easily shaped to use the available space. You can add to the furniture if you need to do so at a later date. Their design is innovative and easy to modify. There is an assembly requirement so don't buy it on Christmas Eve. It is sturdy as a rock but also just as heavy. IKEA has a program that you can download that allows you enter your dimensions and window and door placements to create a scale model of your room to which you can add the exact furniture that you wish to buy and it is loaded into your room to scale. The program allows you to move the furniture around to fit the model. I was also able to insert a model of my old non-IKEA desk to make sure that it all fit. Once you are satisfied, you close out and print. You get a layout of your room and a list of the parts you need to assemble the furniture. You take them both to IKEA, and their representative in the show room that has assembled models of your furniture

Workspace.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Tatoosh in New Orleans

What software can buy. From the site http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2009/04/paul_allens_yacht_tatoosh_dock.html.

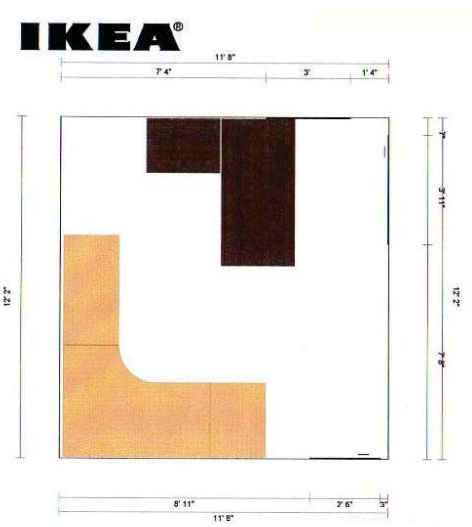
"Owned by Paul G. Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft Corp. and a frequent visitor to the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the Tatoosh is 301 feet long, larger than all but a few dozen super yachts, according to published sources.

The vessel reportedly cost $100 million when Allen bought it slightly used -- one year old -- in 2001."

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Live Ships Map	http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/
Pictures and History of Tampa	http://www.tampapix.com/
TrekEarth - the world through photography	http://www.trekearth.com/
Butterflies of Florida	http://www.thebutterflysite.com/florida-butterflies.shtml
Matching prints to your monitor	http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/article_pages/match_prints_to_screen.html

Workspace.....Continued from page 5



will review the list with you to make sure that it's accurate. He or she will then print a new list which identifies the bin number where each part is located. The special tools such as allen wrenches are provided, but if you're doing much, you'll be much happier if you have a power screwdriver and a ratchet socket wrench. This is also a two person job although I did assemble a mobile drawer unit by myself.

Workflow: I'll give a short summary of my thoughts on workflow. First you probably wonder why I'm clinging to all of this old equipment. The oldest of my equipment is the Dell laptop and the Minolta film scanner. I plan to use them together for one purpose only, to scan the APS film cartridges. The Minolta



scanner is old but it is the only scanner that can process this film and, though it's slow, it can batch process a whole roll (25 negatives). The Dell laptop is slow but this is the only use I intend to make of the computer and it can scan practically unattended. The older of my Epson flatbed scanners I plan to use with my Dell desktop for digitizing photos of high-quality and medium-size black-and-white negatives. The new laptop will be used as a new laptop but is capable of running the new high-quality scanner. The new desktop with the dual monitors will be used editing, organizing and creating slide shows and, hopefully, intelligent archives that will be useful to my children and grandchildren. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

playing ships on the Mississippi River at New Orleans. You may zoom in and then hover your mouse over a pin to get specific information for that ship. ◆



Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

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huey.....Continued from page 3

on your computer desk next to the monitor so that it can re-calibrate your monitor periodically as the room lighting changes.

So, how has this helped my photo-printing problem since I have done nothing to calibrate my printer?

The answer is that, in using a calibrated monitor, you know that what you saw yesterday and see today and will see tomorrow and also see under different room lighting conditions will be the same. That gives you a base from which to make further adjustments. Those adjustments and settings will be made in Photoshop and in the printer dialog settings when you actually print from Photoshop.

All modern photo printers should have an ICC profile for each paper. For example my Epson 2200 printer has a profile named SP2200 Premium Glossy_PK to use when printing using the Epson glossy paper, and it has similar profiles for each of the other papers. So, when printing my image from Photoshop, I select this profile in the print dialog, along with other settings, which I will omit here but which you can read about in the Matching Prints to Screen link and the huey & huey Pro User Guide link below.

This is supposed to give me a printed result that matches what I see on the monitor. But not quite. It seems that for many photos, I need to increase the brightness in Photoshop to get a printed result matching the monitor.

I purchased my huey locally at North Tampa Photography for $77. I have seen it on the web anywhere from $65 to $90. The huey pro costs around $30 or $40 more, and there is also an upgrade from Pantone from the huey to the huey pro. The Pantone site is http://www.pantone.com

Color is a much more complicated subject than you might think. Just do a Google search for things like "monitor calibration" or "printer calibration".

The first three links below are articles by a professional photographer named Keith Cooper, whose knowledge about color far exceeds anything I could write. So, if you are interested in better printed photos, read his three articles.

If you are interested in purchasing a Pantone huey color meter, then read the pdf user guide at the link below. This document also has good information on printing from Photoshop, in its last section titled "Printing after the monitor is calibrated."

Review of huey: http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/reviews/pantone_huey.html

Review of huey Pro: http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/reviews/pantone_huey_pro.htm

Matching Prints to Screen: http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/article_pages/match_prints_to_screen.html

huey & huey Pro User Guide: http://www.pantone.com/downloads/products/pdfs/hueyhueyPROUserGuide.pdf ◆

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492

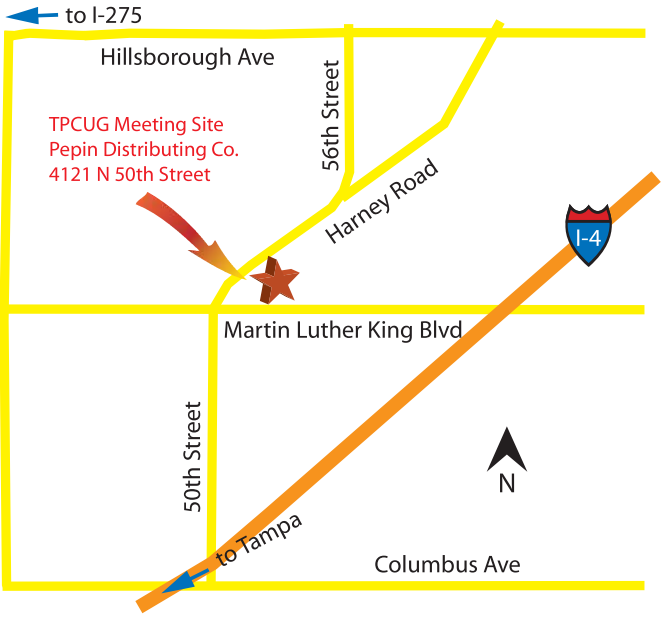
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

presentation ended at approximately 9:00 p.m.

John Witmer, our president, opened the business session and discussed the May presentation, which will be on "OCR" technology. He also talked about some of the programs under consideration for our meetings later in the year. He acknowledged visitors Steve Singer and Wayne Lawrence. He discussed the FACUG meeting and some of the interesting programs that were presented. He mentioned that, through a contract with Microsoft, APCUG has made the program "Live Meeting" available to its affiliated user groups at no charge. Steve discussed some recent developments in computer technology and eBooks. John closed the meeting at approximately 9:30 p.m. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 22 No. 6 June 2009



June in Tampa

Meeting

MandMCards

Creating Cards Online to send by mail

by

Marty Burgess

Wednesday June 10, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: MandMCards, a web-based program where you can choose from over 15,000 cards or designs and create your own Picture Plus cards will be presented by Marty Burgess. Bob LaFave will also conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

The TPCUG has been around about 24 years, having started sometime in 1984. Since I knew that I would be short on material for this month, I checked out the June 1989 newsletter to see what I might reproduce as a bit of history. Unfortunately the minutes for that month were quite short, so I am going to have to write more than I wish. I am appreciative, however, for Merle's and Jim's contributions; otherwise, there would be even more space to be filled. The 20-year-old minutes are on page 7.

Speaking of old newsletters, may I remind you that there are several years of them at the web site in Acrobat format starting in 1988. A little reading of them will show you how far computing has come.

This month I will describe a slide show program and a panorama viewer program that I have written, which I hope you will find interesting. ◆

July Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The meeting began late, at approximately 7:45 PM, due to a heavy rainstorm. Bob LaFave opened the SIG meeting with a discussion of a member's email problem. This led to other email problems that members were having and how problems are affected by the type of email account that is being used. The Windows SIG ended at approximately 8:00 PM.

Doug Mullis, our treasurer, commented on the importance of paying dues on time. A review at the last board meeting revealed that there are about 15 members whose dues are outstanding. John Witmer, our president, discussed the door prize procedures that the board recommended at the May board meeting. There will be two groups of prizes; one group will consist of the better prizes, from which the grand prize winner can select his prize; the unselected items will be available the following month, along with any new things of value that we receive. The other winners that evening can select from a group of lesser prizes in group two. John will provide the details in the newsletter or in an email, as well as a list of items in each group. John introduced Patrick Courtney of the Greater Tampa Bay PC User Group, Inc., and advised that Patrick had donated the grand prize for the night's raffle, a 1,200,000 clip arts software program.

Patrick began his presentation on Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software at approximately 8:05 PM. He started by defining OCR as the transformation of alphabetic and numerical images into editable text. There are many versions of OCR software available, some of which are free. One version, called Instant OCR, advertises that you can upload an image and they will instantly download an editable text document. He pointed out the numerous challenges to OCR software that are posed by the enormous number of fonts that are available and the minor differences in many of the characters in some of these fonts. The software overcomes some of these difficulties by actually learning from the mistakes that it makes in recognizing these minor differences. He demonstrated the actual use of the software and showed how the features can be used to get the best translation of the images to editable text. Patrick also demonstrated how to transform a JPEG image into a text document.

Minutes .....Continued on page 8

Virus encounter – Sunbelt Software Vipre

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

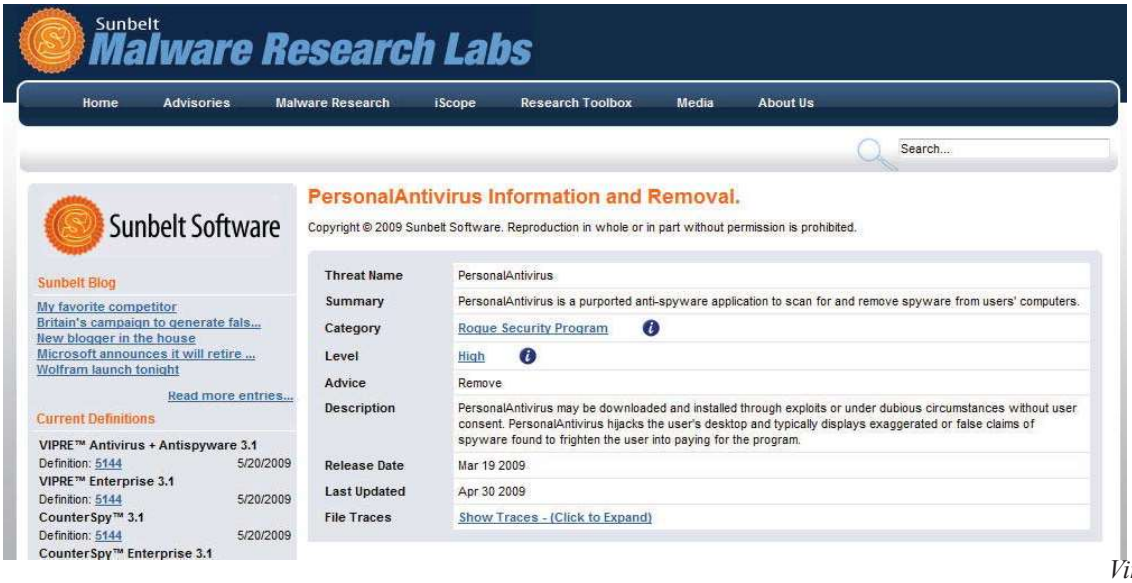
This month I had an interesting virus experience, fortunately not on any of my own computers. This was an older Dell desktop machine, and the owner had given up trying to cope with it. It had a frequent popup virus alert. The home page on the browser looked to me like it had a highjacker on it. The owner was trying to remove the virus the anti-virus software was reporting, which, as far as I can tell, did not even exist on the computer.

The virus was the anti-virus software! I found several descriptions calling it a "Rogue Security Program." It was named "Personal Antivirus," and it would constantly pop up and report a virus. It really looked legitimate – the user interface looked very much like AVG – the colors appeared identical and the icons and text looked very convincing. Looking in the Add/Remove Programs produced nothing. Nosing around in the program just told me two things: One was there wasn't a way to uninstall it, and, two, it was apparent that it intended to make trouble until the user purchased it. So it was definitely a scam for money.

Given all that, it was easy to track down on the Internet. There was a removal program available that I found mentioned on several forums. I failed to find the program in the first couple of locations, and, when I finally found it, I had lost my enthusiasm for it. I certainly did not want to infect one of my own with a virus, and the computer I was trying to fix wasn't in any shape for downloading anything. So I looked at a few other web sites; Symantec had a reference to it as did another site – AVG, I think. The problem was that even though the rogue software was mentioned, nothing there would tell me that their free or trial download antivirus would actually fix the problem. Until I looked at Sunbelt Software's Vipre antivirus. Sunbelt had all the information I needed to assure me that the trial download would remove it. I downloaded the trial, installed it on the bad machine, got the virus updates and had it cleaned up in a half hour. In addition to removing the "Personal Antivirus," it also found a couple of trojans and cleaned up the browser hijacker.

I think that someone in that household responded to a fake virus warning, thinking that it was legitimate, and clicked on it. So be warned.

I did learn some things about Sunbelt Software Vipre in the process. Members may recall that, some years ago, a couple of Sunbelt employees gave a very good talk at one of our regular meetings. They're headquartered in Clearwater. I did buy one of their products not too long ago and since moved on to something else. The Vipre antivirus/antispyware is a fairly new product. Its main claim is its "lightweight" footprint, meaning that it uses a reduced amount of resources, memory and CPU. Their website indicates that it's small enough to make it a good choice for netbooks. Netbooks are especially constrained in memory and CPU size, and many have very small storage using even 4G solid-state drives. I just installed Vipre on another client's older notebook. Even though it has a small Pentium M processor and 512MB memory, the first scan didn't kill the note-



Virus.....Continued on page 8

Slide Shows and Panoramas

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

A Random Slide Show

In the past I have mentioned the Burgert Collection of photographs in the Tampa-Hillsborough County Library. It is quite a collection from the late 1890s into the 1960s. At present there are over 14,000 of them digitized and viewable online. My project over the years has been updating my database of the photo information as they added images. The original reason for this was to be able to do searches for images with my software when all the library offered was a Telnet connection on which to do this. The days of the Telnet connection are long gone, but I have continued to update the database every few years as they added more images.

You can go to http://www.lamartin.com/burgert/ at my site and do a couple different types of searches of these old Tampa photos. I find these searches more convenient than using the library's online catalog, and apparently others like to use them, too, since I get emails about the page.

I have now added a slide show to the site that picks an image at random from the 14,000 plus images and displays it along with its description. So, if you have nothing better to do, you may sit and view randomly displayed images of Tampa over a 60-plus-years span. I find the older images the most interesting.

The slide show can be accessed from the link above, or you can access it directly at http://www.lamartin.com/burgert/SlideShow/.

The show was created using Microsoft Visual studio 2008, along with Microsoft Expression Blend 2, and posted to the web with Microsoft Expression Web 2. The slide show is a Silverlight application, Microsoft's answer to Adobe Flash.

The visual aspects of the page on which the show is displayed are created in Blend. The logic and programming are done in Visual Studio. In theory, all the work done in Blend could also be done in Visual Studio. But it is much easier done in Blend.

The data about the photos is stored in an xml database at the site--specifically, the description and notes for each image and, importantly, the URL to the image file on the server at the library. So all these images are being pulled from the library site--not my web site server--just like they would be if you were viewing them at the library site with your browser.

Panoramas

To display a panorama you need two things. First, you need a photograph that can be viewed as a panorama, and, second, you need a program that will display it for you in a manner that simulates viewing the scene in 360 degrees.

I first made a few panoramas after purchasing a couple of pieces of software form one of our presenters quite a few years back. As I recall, one piece of software was used to create the image that was the result of stitching together the individual images that made up the panorama. The other piece of software was the Java Script viewer to be put on a web page to display the panorama. These first attempts can be viewed at http://www.lamartin.com/virtual_tours/virtual.htm. The software was PhotoVista Virtual Tour Maker from iSeeMedia and was mentioned in the newsletter in 2003, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2003/May2003/comments.htm. So that was six years ago.

Well, a lot has happened since 2003. I now have Adobe Photoshop CS4, which will make a panorama for you from a collection of images you have taken as you pan the camera; the images should have about a 40% overlap. Of course, it is best to use a tripod-mounted camera.

The panoramas I am interested in at present are the 360-degree ones. They are a bit more difficult than the ones that don't make a full circle in that, after Photoshop or whatever stitching software you use to assemble the panorama is finished, you are left with cropping the image so that one end stops exactly

Slide Shows .....Continued on page 5

Slide Shows.....Continued from page 4

where the other end ends.

At the Adobe site, in the comparison of Photoshop CS4 and Photoshop CS4 Extended (I bet you didn't even know there was such a thing as Photoshop extended), the claim is that they both do 360-degree panoramas. But this just isn't the case, as I had pretty much decided for myself and which was confirmed in the Photoshop forum at Adobe.

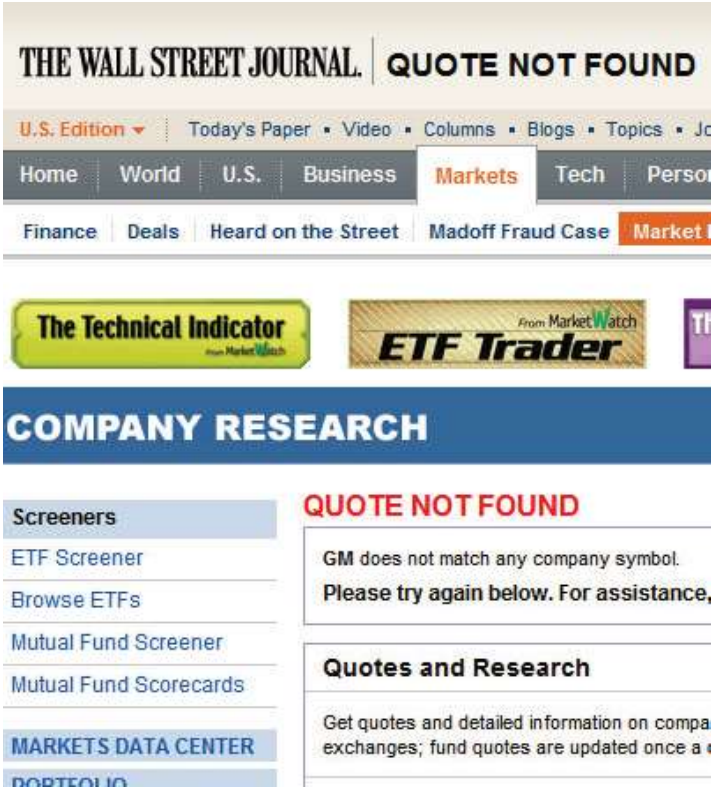
To make a 360-degree panorama, I take my Nikon 200D digital camera with its 18 mm x 200 mm zoom lens and mount it on a tripod in a vertical position. I make sure the tripod is level with all its fittings tight--except the one that allows the camera to rotate around 360 degrees. Using a cable shutter-release also makes life easier but certainly isn't necessary. It is also helpful when setting up to try to minimize having to shoot directly into the sun during the rotation. I prefer to use a zoom of closer to 50 mm if possible, but often, to get the view I want, I am forced to use something closer to 24 mm or 18 mm. This was certainly true for the back yard panorama and the house construction panorama that I will mention later.

Once set up, all you need to do it take a photo, rotate the camera, take another photo, etc., until you have gone a bit more than a complete revolution, overlapping each successive photo about 40%. I found that this will involve snapping 22 to 28 photos.

The next step is to download the images to your com-

Slide Shows .....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



GM does not match any company symbol

From the Wall Street Journal's site, http://www.online.wsj.com, June 2, 2009. Searching for a quote on GM produced the above screen capture. Once the largest corporation in the world, GM filed bankruptcy papers June 1, 2009 and was then delisted by the New York Stock Exchange and will be removed from the Dow Jones Industrial Average on June 6.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Story of Stuff	http://storyofstuff.com/
TRUECAR - The Authority on New Car Pricing	http://truecar.com/release/
WolframAlpha - Questions or Calculations	http://www81.wolframalpha.com/
Bing - Microsoft's revised search	http://www.bing.com/
Web Design Library - Free tutorials	http://www.webdesign.org/

Slide Shows.....Continued from page 5

puter and setup Photoshop to turn the collection into a panorama. There are several different choices available in Photoshop CS4 for this (with older versions, you have different choices). I got the best results using the cylindrical projection--although the recommended one for 360-degree panoramas is spherical.

Warning--do not try to make a panorama out of 25 full-size images taken with a Nikon D200. These images are about 6 or 7 MB each as jpegs, and you will be at it for a very long time. Besides you don't want to put such a large file on the Internet. I did this once, and the resulting image was several hundred megabytes, I think. What you want to do is to first downsize each of the images to something like 400 x 600. Then, when you have Photoshop "photomerge" the images into a panorama, things will go fairly rapidly.

The top image below is Photoshop's created panorama. Notice the differences between it and the image below that has been taken one step further. The bottom





image has been cropped so that the curved edges at the top and bottom produced by the merging are removed. Furthermore, it has been cropped so that the end of the right edge is the beginning of the left edge. I realize that may be hard to see since, for the newsletter page, the images need to be quite small considering that this is a panorama.

The image, perhaps, looks a bit strange, especially in the way the roads run. But when viewed in the panorama viewer, you will only see a small portion at a time, and the effect will be what is desired.

You can view several panoramas I recently created by the above method at http://www.lamartin.com/HP-Panoramas. The bottom image on this page is used in the second panorama. One person has informed me that he had to change his browser security setting before the show could be run.

The Panorama Viewer

More interesting to me than creating the images for the panorama was creating the viewer. I had thought about such a piece of software over the years, and I just didn't see any easy way to do it--until Silverlight. Making an image scroll across the screen is not the problem. Making it scroll so that it appears to never end is.

The basic idea is to have three copies of the image lined up horizontally, with one in the middle and the other two on either side positioned the appropriate distance from the middle and overlapping the middle one a bit but underneath it. You also restrict what the viewer can see to, say, 500 pixels in the center of the viewer screen.

If we start with the middle image moving to the right, at some point the left image will start following it so

Slide Shows .....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Slide Shows.....Continued from page 6

that there is no break in what is seen. Then when the images have gone what amounts to one full image, everything is reset so that we are really starting over, but, to the person viewing, it appears that we are just continuing to rotate around. Going the opposite way, the right image would start moving at the appropriate time so as to follow the middle one and keep things looking continuous.

The viewer is basically finished. All I need to do now is make it look a little more polished and possibly allow for panning the image up or down, along with a possible zoom.

I think the main problem remaining is figuring out how to take better photos. I still don't know what causes some shows at the link, like the back yard one, to have distorted sections while other shows have no distortion. It is obviously caused by the stitching. But possibly this can be mitigated by changing the focal length at which the photos are taken. The back yard one was the first one I did. Possibly I could retake the images and improve the result.

When I started computer programming many years back, I certainly never dreamed that it would tie in so strongly in later years with my interest in photography.

I wish I had time to research some free software to do this sort of stitching so that I could have included it in this article. But I am lucky to even get the newsletter out (the panoramas were photographed today with the exception of the back yard). I know such software comes with many of the digital cameras. Also, there are possibly free panorama viewers to be had on the web. But, again, time is short; the newsletter should have been printed yesterday. ◆

20 Years Ago in Bits of Blue

Minutes from the June 1989 newsletter

MAY MINUTES
By Russ Merritt

The planned presentation by Steve Spears was delayed for another session due to lack of the overhead projector. A general discussion about various aspects of computers was led by Harvey Bruno.

The beginning DOS session by Bill Fuller did take place, using an easel and paper pad to describe the events to be expected when copying files. Another beginner's session will be given next month.

Bill Fuller also announced an apparent bug in WordPerfect 5.0. If a space is included in the naming of a file, the document will be saved but cannot be retrieved or renamed using WordPerfect. The solution is to use a file manager program or DOS to rename the file. If DOS is used, the question mark needs to be inserted in place of the space.

EXAMPLE: If the file name is MY FILE.DOC, the DOS rename command will be REN MY?FILE.DOC MY_FILE.DOC, and now the file can be retrieved in WordPerfect. This was confirmed by your secretary. When I called WordPerfect, they said this was corrected in the version issued as of April 12, 1989.

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Virus.....Continued from page 3

book. There is a setting available to scan slower and take longer. I haven't tried that yet. I am going to be replacing a couple of my antivirus products soon and I intend to go back to Sunbelt.

Here's the final thought: The free 15-day trial version will clean malwear from your computer without asking for a dime. That's very generous.

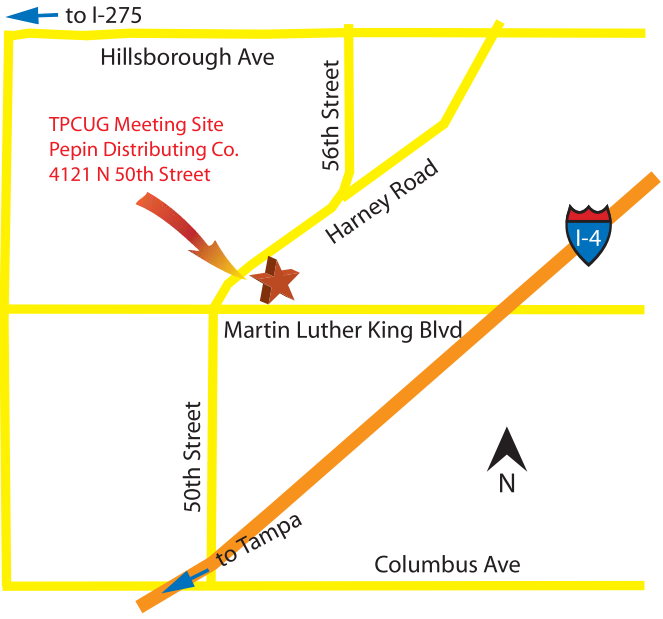
Vipre - $29.95 http://www.sunbeltsoftware.com ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

He mentioned that his version of OCR had problems with script fonts because there is no break between the letters. Screen-capture software images can also be used by OCR software to produce a text document. He ended the presentation with a discussion of the many types of OCR software that are available and pointed out that some, especially those with specialized applications, are quite expensive.

The winners in the raffle were: John Waldon, who won the 1,200,000 Clip Art Program; Jim Purcell, Richard Brooks and Dave Gillespie, who all won T Shirts.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:15 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 22 No. 7 July 2009

July in Tampa

Meeting

Windows 7

by

Bob LaFave
&
Merle Nicholson

Wednesday July 8, 2009

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: For the July monthly meeting, Bob LaFave and Merle Nicholson will demonstrate Windows 7, the newest version that will be in stores on October 22, 2009. They'll be using the Windows 7 Release Candidate that was recently released for testing. It should be interesting, so bring your questions with you, and Bob and Merle will try to answer or find the resource needed.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

More on panoramas

Last month I wrote about a panorama viewer program I had written. I have made some changes since then--not in the viewier but in the panorama images themselves. When I first created the panoramas, I used Photoshop CS4 to do the stitching of the collection of images, and I mentioned at the time that it was left to me to crop the resulting image so that the beginning of the left side matched the end of the right side as to content. Furthermore, often the far left side would be exposed differently from the far right side due to Photoshop's blending, which apparently didn't take into consideration what would happen if the two ends were juxtaposed.

Well, all those problems are in the past. I have discovered a free program created by Microsoft Research that surmounts the two problems I encountered with Photoshop mentioned above. The

Comments.....Continued on page 4

August Meeting: To be announced

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at 6:35 PM. He began by demonstrating how to open PDF files if you are having trouble opening them in Windows Vista. He explained the use of the "Windows Key" on the keyboard and diagnosed a problem that a member was having in the use of the key. Merle Nicholson reported a problem with his cursor jumping forward or backward or even to the next line. Bob believed that it was a bad driver or perhaps the sensitivity adjustment. Bob demonstrated the use of the trouble-shooting wizard.

There was a discussion of several operating system improvements that are being offered in the soon-to-be-released Windows 7. Bob explained how graphic systems can be configured to allow additional monitors to be run from one computer. There was a discussion of the capabilities of cell services' connections to the web. William LaMartin noted that the speed of the service varied greatly with your proximity to large metropolitan locations. John Witmer reported that Internet service on cruise ships is not only very slow, it is very expensive.

John opened the business portion at approximately 7:10 PM. He briefly discussed the problems opening the gate during the severe thunderstorm that struck just before the prior month's meeting. John said he would put instructions in the newsletter (see page 7) to outline the procedures to gain entrance when the gate has been disabled through power outages. John described how the raffle procedures will be altered to, hopefully, allow members a chance to select prizes that are useful to them and advised that this information would be in the next newsletter (see page 5).

He stressed the need for articles for the newsletter. John introduced Marty and Michelle Burgess, the local representatives for "SendOutCards," whose presentation was titled "Creating Cards Online to send by mail." Marty began by describing the operation and services provided by SendOutCards. It is a

Minutes .....Continued on page 4

Vado - Creative Labs' Pocket Video Cam HD

by Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larry@anders.net

I have written many reviews for Bits of Blue in the past, but it has been a while since I have written anything due to an illness I have. However, I am feeling more like my old self right now and bought something I had wanted for a while. The price was too good to resist, so I bit, and I am really glad I did. I thought I would tell you about it.

I have a superb Sony video camera from about three years back that was just below a professional model, one of the first to use the mini video tapes. With the video tapes, as many of you probably know, you have to take the video off the tape and convert it to digital in whatever format the program you use to make a movie recognizes. This is not only time-consuming but also cumbersome. My wife is a teacher of adult students, and she takes a lot of videos of her students, which I turn into DVDs for her. She has a later, smaller version HD camcorder, but, like mine, it still has to be taken off a tape and converted to digital on the computer. Enter the Vado…

When I first read the ad, I thought it was too good to be true, but it was an ad from CompUSA.com, which I have purchased several items from, and I knew I could return the article if I was unhappy with it without too much of a hassle. I have purchased several digital cameras in the past and always made sure the lens was of good quality, feeling that a good lens can make a not-so-good camera better. When I saw the picture of the Vado, the lens was this itty bitty thing that didn't look too much bigger than the lens on my last cell phone that had a camera. Plus, as the name infers, it was HD. Maybe I was more curious than anything to see how something that small could be high definition. Well, I am happy to say, "It is."

The Vado records in an HD video resolution of up to 1280x720p. The lens is a wide-angle precision-engineered glass lens, and, believe it or not, it produces near professional-looking videos in a 16:9 aspect ratio.



There is also a 2x digital zoom, which doesn't seem like much, but with a lens that small it does a decent job. There is no flash or light with the camera, but I have used it in pretty dim light, and it adjusts quite well.

The recording starts with a touch of a button and records 8 hours in VGA mode 640x480 (old analog TV), 4 hours in HD mode 1080x720i (interlaced mode) or 2 hours in HD+ 1280x720p (progressive mode) onto 8GB internal memory, progressive mode being the best and the largest file. I could not tell much difference between HD and HD+ picture-wise except for size.

After the video is taken, simply connect the Vado to your PC with the built-in USB connector and a program called Creative Vado Central will run (from the Vado) that does everything to the recording that you will need to do: View the video, copy it to your PC (in .AVI format), delete it, create a movie and/or edit it, send it to YouTube™, PhotoBucket or Box.net, create a single picture (.jpg) out of one frame or capture a burst of 25 frames. Playback your video on any HDTV by connecting the Vado camcorder to the TV with the included HDMI cable in 1080 quality.

As near as I can figure, the picture is so good because of the H.264 compression technology that provides efficient files sizes for the best possible viewing experience. You can record up to 4 times more videos compared to MPEG-4 encoded ones.

There is a 2" antiglare screen for viewing the videos while you take them and reviewing clips onscreen. Keep the videos you like; delete the ones you don't. It comes with a removable, rechargeable Lithium-ion battery that recharges via USB. An extra battery can

Video.....Continued on page 8

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

website which provides a choice of approximately 15,000 cards that can be selected and customized. When you have finished with the design, you email it to SendOutCards and they will print it, address it, stuff the envelope, place a stamp (not a postal meter strip) and mail it. The card is normally mailed the next day, and you can expect it to be delivered within 3 to 7 days. The card looks just like one that you would mail yourself . The one difference is that all cards will have a Salt Lake City postmark. Cards can be sent for a price of about 62 cents and up depending on the complexity and quality of the card. The system starts with the establishment of a prepaid account. The balance of your account is shown in points. The value of the points varies by type of account. There are a variety of business and personal accounts available. They are structured to allow extensive management of your contacts. You can add pictures on the front or inside the card and can even purchase a font of your own handwriting and up to 4 signatures. Gifts or gift cards can be included. There are many ways to personalize the cards that you choose in that you can write your own message and choose the size, color and type of font. The details and answers to frequently asked questions are provided on the Burgess web site, http://www.MandMCards.com (case sensitive). They have invited everyone in the group to send two free cards by clicking on the red banner on the web site that says "Click here to send two free cards".

You can also call Marty (813-927-5916) or Michelle (813-310-9518) anytime for more details and instructions on how to set up an account. The presentation ended at approximately 8:50 PM.

The raffle winners were Michelle Burgess, who won a copy of Norton Internet Security; Richard Brooks, who won a screen saver; and Ron Weinberg, who won a TPCUG T-shirt.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:05 PM. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

program is called Image Composition Editor (ICE). You may download the program from http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/redmond/groups/ivm/ICE/.

Revisit my 360-degree panoramas at http://www.lamartin.com/HPPanoramas/index.htm. I challenge you to find the place where the join is made. In the earlier examples, the join was easily found in several of the panoramas if you were looking for it.

What you see there is a jpeg image created by ICE that my software rotates. But you can also make less than 360-degree panoramas with ICE. And, here is what I like, you can make them with a zoom functionality. Go to http://www.lamartin.com/ZoomImages.aspx and under Planar Panoramas click on Davis Islands from the West. As usual, you will need the free Microsoft Silverlight browser plug-in installed to view this.

The image was made from 50 photos of the west shore of Davis Islands shot from the Bayshore Boulevard seawall in Tampa with about a six-power telephoto lens (300 mm). Then I let Microsoft ICE do its work of stitching them together and creating a Deep Zoom image that you can zoom in and out and move around.

The closest distance was around 2,000 ft.; the farthest distance was around 1.85 miles. To take the images, I used a tripod to hold a Nikon D200 digital camera with a 400 mm zoom lens set at 300 mm positioned on the Bayshore Boulevard seawall facing Davis Islands. My main problem was focusing. I had made an earlier version where I let the camera do an automatic focus for each image. Unfortunately, since the point of focus sometimes was on the sky, the results were not as sharp as I wanted. So this time I set the camera and lens to manual focus and did a manual focus for the images. I give the Microsoft ICE program most of the credit for the result; I only took the images; it did the magnificent job of stitching them together and creating the ability to zoom.

As a side note, the width of the image saved as one file and not the multiple number that make up the zoom is 67,218 pixels wide by 1431 pixels high. If saved as Tiff file, it is 376 MB. That is quite an image. ◆

TPCUG Meeting Raffle Prizes Update

By john Witmer, President,Tampa PC Users Group
jwitmer@pepindist.com

At the May TPCUG Board Meeting, we discussed our inventory of raffle prizes and what would be the best method to make them available to the attendees at our monthly meetings. We have been lax in the past regarding having raffles at each meeting, and yet we have included this raffle income as part of our budget needs during the year. The raffle income helps offset some of our operating expenses, with the membership dues and Amazon commissions comprising the balance of our income source.

Part of the raffle discussion was devoted to a perceived problem of getting a prize that was useful to the raffle ticket winner. So many times the winner of a nice prize finds it is not something they can or would use, while there may be others in the raffle pot who would have loved to have won and could use the item. One suggestion entertained was to perhaps put the significant items up for auction within the group, thereby assuring that the high bidder/acquirer of the item would put it to good use (no one would bid much for something they did not have a use for). It was felt that, although this may make sense, it would have the potential of cleaning out the prizes in a relatively short time and perhaps take away a part of the meetings that some members enjoy. Another proposal was to only raffle off one item of significant value each meeting, but to let the winning raffle ticket holder select his

Raffle .....Continued on page 7

Internet Picture of the Month

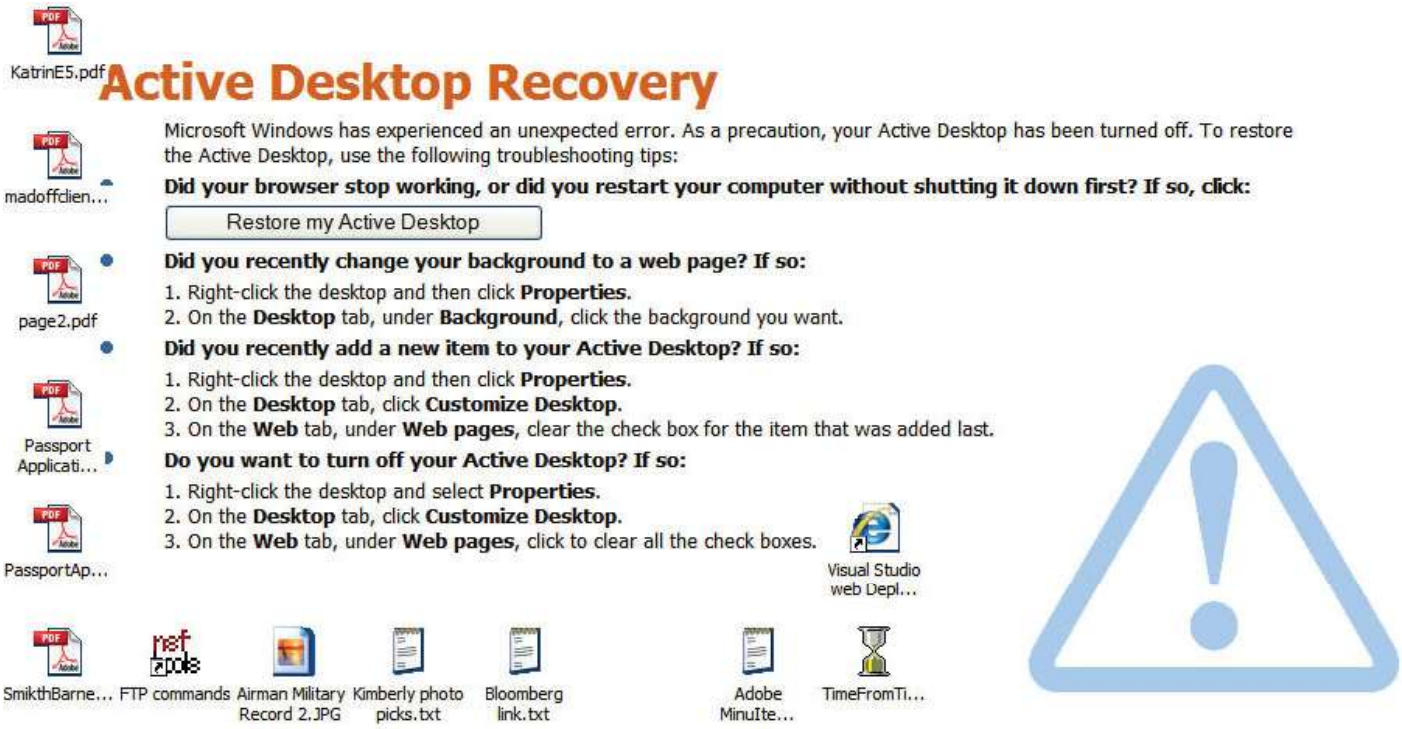


Rodeo Work

A crop of a photo from the Photo journal at the Wall Street Journal's site, http://www.online.wsj.com. The text reads, "A steer hit Trevor Knowles, of Mount Vernon, Ore., on Tuesday at the Reno Rodeo in Nevada. (Brad Horn/Nevada Appeal/Associated Press)"

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Muckety.com - Exploring the paths of power	http://news.muckety.com/
WeedUS - Database of Invasive Plants	http://www.invasive.org/weedus/
Docstoc – Documents, Templates, Forms, Ebooks	http://www.docstoc.com/
G.M.'s Road From Prosperity to Crisis	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/05/31/business/20090531_GM_TIMELINE.html



Active Desktop Problem

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

The image above is a crop of a screen capture of what I saw on a reboot after my computer froze and I had to manually shut it off. That is not really what I saw. What I really saw was all of that writing with a lot of icons covering up much of the text. So what you see now is the appearance after I moved all of the obscuring icons out of the way.

I had this problem once before, certainly over a year back, but could not remember what I needed to do. A click on the Restore my Active Desktop button shown in the picture (I didn't even know that I had an active desktop) produced an error, so that was out. I opted for the option to turn off my active desktop that I didn't even know I had. But when I got to the web tab mentioned, none of the check boxes were checked. I just clicked OK anyway and things went back to normal. But not quite normal since I didn't have my background back yet—and the background change options were grayed out in the desktop tab of the Display Settings.

A search of the Internet (using Bing for a change) produced:

Open Regedit and navigate to the following two items: HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\System

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\System

Delete the values "Wallpaper" and "WallPaperStyle" in the right-pane.

I only had the one entry, "Wallpaper," in the first item. But deleting it solved the problem of being able to choose a background. But one problem remained: I did not have transparent backgrounds for the desktop icon text, and that is really ugly.

Unfortunately none of the solutions I could find (for example those at http://www.entity.cc/icon-label-transparent.php) solved my problem. But researching and talking with Merle Nicholson helped me zero in on the Windows XP Group Policy Editor, which you can bring up by running gpedit.msc. There under User Configuration | Administrative Templates | Desktop Active Desktop, I set Enable Active Desktop to Not Configured and Disable Active Desktop to Enabled. Do you think you can remember all that if you have this problem. I don't think I can.

Desktop .....Continued on page 8

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Raffle.....Continued from page 5

choice from all the available prizes. We could then add a couple of consolation type prizes into the raffle so that we would have multiple tickets/chances available for those entering the raffle process but only one grand prize winner.

The Board elected to go with the latter method to see how this is received by the members. We first implemented this system at the June 10th meeting, and it was very successful for the club as there were many who participated. The winning ticket holder was able to choose from a group of items and was happy to be able to choose the prize she wanted from the available selection.

A list of the remaining prizes to choose from will be available at each meeting, and you can decide if there is something on the list that might make it worthwhile for you to enter the raffle. I am going to list below the main items we still have on hand for a winner to choose from beginning with the July meeting, as well as what we are calling consolation prizes:

◊ **Software Items:** Norton Internet Security 2008; Trend Micro Internet Security 2008; System Mechanic PC Tuneup (XP & Vista); Magix Audio Cleaning 12 Lab; Acronis True Image Home 2009; Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.
◊ **Hardware item:** Video Xpress from ADS (USB Easy Capture & Movie Creation Device, previously used, but still in good condition).
◊ **Subscription:** Smart Computing annual subscription to magazine (4 of these are available for prizes).
◊ Co**nsolation prizes of minimal value:** 4 Large TPCUG T-shirts (size 42-44); 2 Black Norton T-shirts, size large, in shrink wrap cube; twin pack of HP45 Black OEM ink cartridges; miscellaneous older software programs from 2007 or prior; Monitor dust sweep; and mouse pads. ◆

Important Info About Meeting Access At Pepin

By John Witmer, President, Tampa PC Users Group
jwitmer@pepindist.com

As a result of a bout of really bad weather on our scheduled meeting night at Pepin Distributing Company back in May, I wanted to make sure those of you attending our meetings have information on what to do if this scenario happens again. I have the front gate (on 50th St) programmed to stay open from 5:30 pm until 7:15 pm on TPCUG meeting nights. Unfortunately, the lightning killed the computer-controlled connection to the gate and caused the gate to close in the middle of a horrendous downpour. Fortunately, the hard-wired phone connection to the gate was still operational, but the only way it could be activated was by using a call button device on the block wall as you enter the gate area (the call button device is on the driver's side of the entrance wall to the left of a grey scan pad).

So, if you arrive for our meeting (rain or shine) and find the gate closed, press the lighted button on the bottom of the call box and you will reach the warehouse office. Identify yourself as attending the Computer Club meeting hosted by John Witmer, and the gate should be opened for you to enter the parking area. I usually have the building front door open until approx 7:15 pm also, so if you should arrive later than this time for our 6:30 pm meeting, you may have to call my cell number to gain access to the building. My cell number is 813-404-4655. I hope this information helps in the unlikely event you should ever run into a problem attending one of our TPCUG Wednesday night meetings. ◆

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P. O. Box 3492
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First Class Mail

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Video.....Continued from page 3

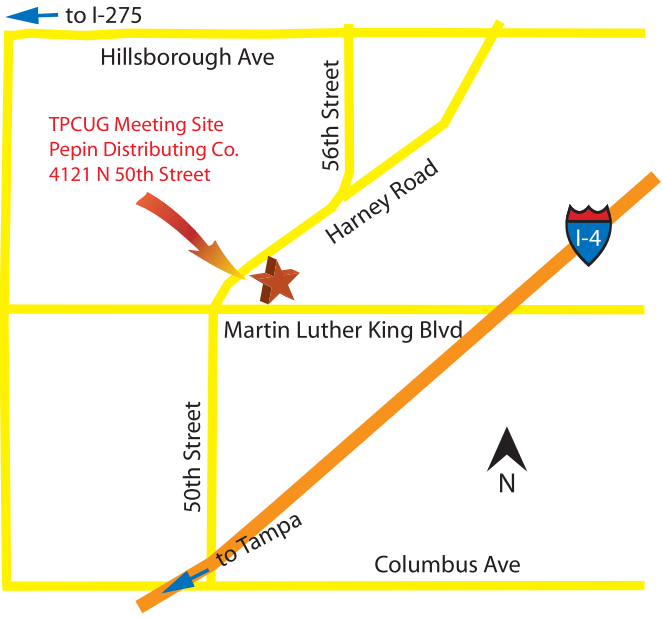
be purchased online for less than $15.

If you're looking for something that is easy to use, provides excellent quality for $150+/-, you can't go wrong with the Vado Pocket Video Cam. ◆

Desktop.....Continued from page 6

Somehow in my having to hold in the power button to shut down the computer after it froze, something must have gotten corrupted in the Windows settings. And what worked for some people in getting back the transparency of the desktop icon text background would not work for me.

Of course, I could have tried the solution of setting back my computer to an earlier date, but there is satisfaction is solving a problem. Now if I can just remember the solution if it is needed again—or remember to look up this article. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 22 No. 8 August 2009

August in Tampa

Meeting

Cloud Computing with Google Apps

by

Kevan Sheridan

Wednesday August 12, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: For the August monthly meeting, Kevan Sheridan will tell us about Cloud computing with Google Apps. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG during the first part of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Web site change This month I sent out a message that the TPCUG site would be down from several hours to a day. I had asked the web hosting company to move us from a Windows 2003 server to a Windows 2008 server. To do that they apparently couldn't just transfer all the files involved. Instead they had to terminate the old account and create a new account (all free), and then, after this was completed, I had to upload all the files for the site to the new server. That consisted of 194 MB containing 5,870 files in 352 folders. Our site does not have all that many images. If it did have a proportionate number of images to the number of files, the size would have been several times larger.

The reason for making the move was to get the additional functionality that the Win 2008 server provides. The particular thing I was interested in was the new interactive map to our meeting location. I wanted to replace the old static map with one that would create a route for you from whatever location you wished

Comments.....Continued on page 4

September Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at 6:30 PM. He began with a discussion of his early review of some of the features of Windows 7. There was a discussion of Internet Explorer (IE) 7 and 8. Bob mentioned that some people have had trouble installing IE 8. Ed White was having some troubles with IE 7 that Bob believed were a Vista problem. Bob said that he has used the Vista Repair Function eight or ten times and said that it has worked for him every time. He explained the different ways to activate the repair function. There was a question from a member about the magnifier. It did not operate properly when it was opened for the demonstration. Merle pointed out a possible solution to the screen magnification problem by using the magnifier in the Accessories section of the operating system. In response to a question about which computers would and which would not run Windows 7, Bob showed how to run the upgrade advisor to see whether your computer can run Windows 7. Bob mentioned that everyone should be very cautious about using registry cleaners. He recommended that you use Windows Live OneCare. There is a Microsoft free tune-up that includes a registry cleaner at www.Onecare.live.com/site/en-us/center/tuneup.htf that Bob recommends.

John started the business portion of the meeting at approximately 7:15 PM. He passed out a list of the prizes available under the new raffle procedures. He announced that Kevan would deliver the presentation at the next meeting, where he will discuss "Cloud Computing with Google Applications." John announced that we tentatively have Blaine Barton from Microsoft scheduled for September. Steve Singer will probably be scheduled for October. Doug Mullis also believes he has a commitment for November but the details have not been finalized. John reminded everyone that we get a commission from Amazon.com on your purchases if you connect to Amazon.com through the link on our web site.

Bob LaFave and Merle Nicholson opened the presen-

Minutes .....Continued on page 5

Favorite, (mostly) free software

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Keep in mind as you go through this list that I'm primarily interested in 64-bit software because my primary computer has Vista Business x64. This means that if I list it here, there should be either 1) a 32-bit version that runs with no issues on Vista 64 or 2) it is 64-bit, but also has a 32-bit version. OK in random order:

Microsoft Windows Live OneCare
If you have OneCare (Anti-Virus, Anti-Spyware, Advanced Firewall, Backup & Restore, Tune-up, Printer Sharing), you'll know that it's being dropped and replaced with Microsoft Security Essentials this year, perhaps along with the release of Windows 7 in October. So what happens if your current subscription runs out? Well, I found out because mine is about ready to run out. It's free! Microsoft will renew your current subscription for $0.00, which will keep it operational past the release date. The new free version will not do some of the goodies that OneCare will do, like Backup and Tune-up, but .. it's free, and the early reports say that it's very unobtrusive and easy on your computer resources.

DataRam RAMDisk VE
As you may expect from the title, it creates a RAM-DISK, just like back in DOS or Windows 3.1. I use it all the time. It automatically configures a 2GB drive for me and also restores all the files that were there the last time the computer was on. It will do a timed backup to its storage/backup file, and it uses that file when booting from scratch. It adds a significant time to bootup and shutdown.

I put my current Access project there, and also sometimes data files it has to read. It makes Access fly!

http://www.dataram.com/products-and-services/ramdisk. Up to 4GB on the freeware version. I've yet to lose a file. Just in case though, I have my own timed backup set to run every 15 minutes. It's not for everyone, but if you have a use for fast disk space, this is a great, quality product. It was made to order for database work.

Remote Desktop Connection
This is software that allows you to log onto another computer, either on your own network or through the Internet.

I use it for two things: 1. When I need two computers running (It happens!), since my primary has two monitors, I remote into one of my other computers and configure Remote Desktop to run full screen on one of the monitors. 2. I use it from one of my notebooks when I'm on the first floor (usually watching TV) and need something on my primary computer. I sometimes do real work in that manner. It's completely reliable and easy to use.

There are two components, server and client. The server software is on the computer you're logging into. It comes with the operating system, but not all Windows Systems: XP Professional, Vista Business and Vista Ultimate & Enterprise, NOT Vista Home Premium or XP Home. The client is available for all Windows operating systems. If it doesn't come with it, it's downloadable from Microsoft. If you want to use it, there are very good tutorials. Try this first from Microsoft: http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/Help/02ddfbec-7a97-4788-9d54-86f174a95f841033.mspx .

FileZilla
FileZilla is a Free Open Software FTP product especially suitable for easy drag-and-drop FTP file operations. It's free, reliable and easy to use. http://download.cdnet.com/windows. It's popular and well-reviewed.

7-Zip
7-Zip is a free zip program. Obviously, it handles zip files. But it also does RAR, TAR, LZH, ISO, CAB, RPM and its' own 7z format, that is claimed to have the very latest compression (2-10% better) and encryption algorithms. It's very easy to use because it has a very understandable user interface. http://www.7-zip.org. There are 32- and 64-bit versions.

Software.....Continued on page 4

Software.....Continued from page 3

Foxit Reader
I had been increasingly bothered by the size of Adobe Reader, its taking so long to load and always calling home for more updates. So I got Foxit Reader, and then removed Adobe Reader, eventually on all my computers. I'm certain that this doesn't do everything Adobe does, but I'm also certain that it does 100% of what I need it to do. It's small and loads fast, and doesn't leave anything running on your PC. http://www.foxitsoftware.com/.

Xobni
To quote Xobni: "Xobni is the Outlook plug-in that saves you time finding email conversations, contacts and attachments. After a quick install, you'll see the new Xobni toolbar appear in Outlook - and suddenly information will become much easier to find. When a new email arrives, the sender's full communication history appears in the Xobni sidebar, including past conversations, attachments and contact details. Xobni also includes a blazing fast email search tool."
Mine is in constant use. It's difficult to imagine any email indexing tool that presents as much relevant information so quickly. Now in version 1.8, there's a for-money "Pro" version. http://www.xobni.com/ or http://download.cdnet.com/windows. "Xobni" is "Inbox" spelled backwords.

Here's others I use. All free except:
Ultramon – multiple monitor tools $40 http://www.realtimesoft.com/ultramon

VLC Media Player – Media Player
Starburn – Burn stuff to CD/DVD
Imgburn – ISO to disk, disk to ISO
Avery DesignPro Labels – Everything Avery has and more. Word Templates, free DesignPro. http://www.avery.com
Paint.Net – Excellent Paint and Photo tools.
Audacity – Record and edit sound
SyncToy 2.0 – Microsoft Backup
Windows Fax and Scan – Scanner control and FAX. Microsoft.
WildBit Viewer 5.3 – Edit pictures, slideshow, organize search and tag pictures. http://www.wildbit-soft.fi/software.html ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

to start to our Pepin location. That uses the Microsoft Live server control for Virtual Earth, which would work on the 2003 server but only under special permissions that the hosting company would not grant for security reasons. Under the 2008 server, the security setup is different and the Virtual Earth DLL needs no special permission.

So, now you can go to our site, under the menu item About Us | Meetings | map, and create your route. The direct link is http://www.tpcug.org/Routing.aspx.

More Mapping I continue to find things to do using Microsoft Virtual Earth (VE) to map data. In previous newsletters, I wrote about creating such maps for the 2000 US Census data, current worldwide shipping information and National Public Radio station locations. Now I have found another use--cell phone tower locations in the US. You can find that application at http://www.lamartin.com/CellTowers/. I have written more about my motivation for creating such an application in a short article which is on page 7 in this newsletter.

Bing I am sure you have heard of Microsoft's new search engine. Perhaps you have even tried it. I know that Google is so entrenched in people's minds when it comes to search that they wouldn't use anything else. I gave bing a try and like it. It gives much better results that the previous MSN search. Possibly not as many results as Google, but possibly more focused results than Google returns.

Internet Explorer 8 problem Since being upgraded to IE 8 from IE 7, I have rarely been able to use that browser to connect to my Linksys WRT54G router successfully. I can log in with my user name and password, and the configuration page sort of appears, but it is missing all the links I need to do the administration. Sometime if I try to log on several times, it is successful in displaying the configuration page correctly. However, a sure-fire way of getting to the configuration page is to use Firefox instead of IE 8. After writing this I solved the problem: I updated the router's firmware from v8.00.2 to v8.00.6, and IE 8 now accesses the router's configuration pages in a flash. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

tation on "Windows 7" at approximately 7:30 PM. Bob started the presentation by polling the members on the time it has taken them in the past to install a new operating system. The general consensus was about one-and-a-half hours. Bob stated that he had loaded the Windows 7 system in 27 minutes and it took only 7 minutes for Microsoft to find, download and install drivers not found in the first 27 minutes. He said that this was by far the easiest installation that he has ever performed. The local network setup was also very easy. He was impressed with the way it handled a wide variety of programs. He liked a feature called "Action Center," which warns you of problems and helps you solve them. Bob discussed how well the Vista system repair disk performed. The repair disk on his version of Windows 7 did not work so he was unable to test it. He did find bugs but was impressed with the software. There was an extended discussion of the "BitLocker" encryption system, but it was concluded that anyone using the encryption system should be thoroughly familiar with the options available to them before they encrypted their data. Bob then turned the demonstration over to Merle.

Merle stated that anyone familiar with Vista will be able to move into Windows 7 quite easily. He views Windows 7 as an improved version of Vista. Microsoft has again rearranged things, but the arrangement seems to be much more logically constructed. The organization of the operating system is greatly improved. Merle installed Windows 7 on a computer approximately 7 years old. He had an initial driver problem for his video card, for which the manufacturer

Minutes.....Continued on page 7

Internet Picture of the Month



August 29, 2005
Hurricane Katrina

It has been four years this month since Hurricane Katrina flooded New Orleans. The image above is a crop of larger photo showing the Lakeview neighborhood flooded after the break in the 17th Street Canal's flood wall. The photo is from the site http://1510365blog.wordpress.com/2008/01/10/010-water-damage/ with credit: Jocelyn Augustino – FEMA

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
BookFinder4U - Compare book prices at 130 stores	http://www.bookfinder4u.com/
Howcast - The best how-to videos on the web	http://www.howcast.com/
Geocoding Address Matching and Reverse Geocoding	http://www.travelgis.com/geocode/Default.aspx
Gauging Your Distraction While Driving	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/07/19/technology/20090719-driving-game.html?hp

Remote Desktop on a Pocket PC

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



Remote desktop allows person A using computer A to take control of another computer, Computer B, if B has been configured to allow person A to connect via the Internet with a certain password. The usual scenario is for someone traveling to use their laptop to log into their home or office computer. Merle mentions this in his article, Free Software, on page 3 of this newsletter.

If you own a Windows Mobile phone, like the one pictured on the right, you may be able to set up a remote desktop connection between the phone and another computer. It will depend on whether your wireless provider has enabled this feature or not. Apparently T-Mobile does not install Remote Desktop on their Win Mobile 6 phones (my son has one). But Verizon does, as did Alltel, my provider, which is now owned by Verizon.

What you see on the right is a small portion of Microsoft Outlook running on my home computer as seen from my phone. It is not at all easy to navigate the desktop applications from the small screen of the phone, so I am not sure how useful this will be.

To set things up on your computer, go to Control Panel |System | Remote Users and set yourself as allowed to connect remotely. If you have a router you will need to additionally enter its setup and forward port 3389 to the local computer you will be connecting to as shown in the screen capture below, where in this instance the local IP address for the computer is 192.168.1.101. You will also need the non-local IP address of your router, which can only be gotten from a web page set up to return that information. I have one at my site at http://www.lamartin.com/ASP/ip.asp. If you are not using a router, this can be gotten by running ipconfig.exe on the computer.

When you are ready to connect from the phone, start Remote Desktop on the phone and enter the remote computer's IP along with your user name and password. That should connect you. In the picture you can see that the phone is connected to the remote computer at IP address 173.171.200.200.◆

Port Range					
Application	Start	End	Protocol	IP Address	Enable
RD	3389 to	3389	Both	192.168.1. 101	☑
http	80 to	80	Both	192.168.1. 101	☐
	0 to	0	Both	192.168.1. 0	☐

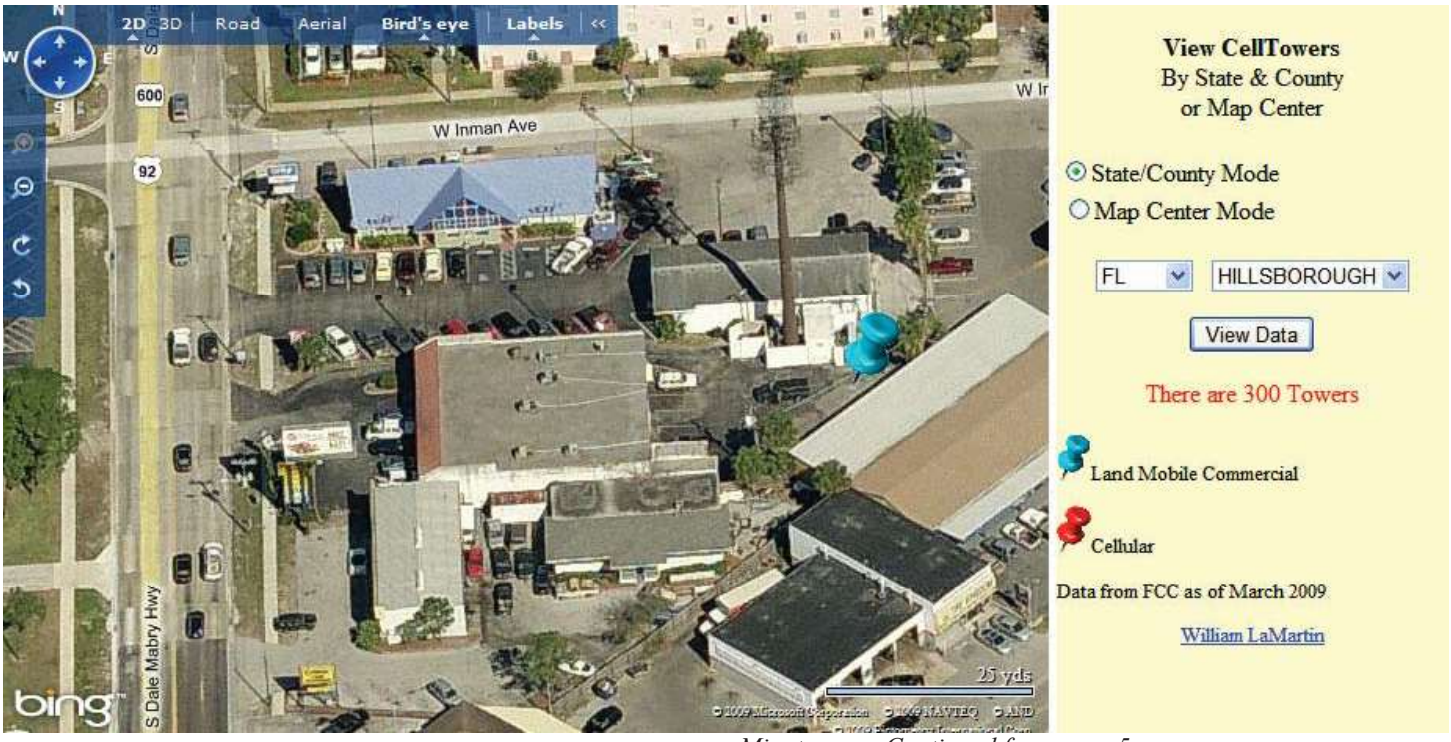
Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.



Mapping Cell Tower Locations

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

The image above is a screen capture of the collection of cell towers in Hillsborough County zoomed to the maximum so that only one tower, represented by the blue pushpin, is shown. It is located in South Tampa in the small area bounded by S Dale Mabry Hwy, W. Inman Ave. and Henderson Blvd. The actual tower is just to the upper left a little from the pin. I chose this tower because they have attempted to disguise it as a large tree, as you can see in the image.

I originally became interested in cell tower information when I thought I would be able to write a program for my Win Mobile phone to display the location of the tower being used at any time. But after a bit of work and research, I found that apparently

Towers.....Continued on page 8

Minutes.....Continued from page 5

had no solution. He turned the computer off and later turned it back on, and Microsoft fixed the problem. The computer, however, is running slower than a netbook. Merle demonstrated many of the new features offered by Windows 7. He discussed which of the new and the old features are available in each of the versions of Windows 7. Merle explained the concept of the file manager, which is an expanded version of the manager that was introduced in Vista. He covered the limitations and showed that it is very much different from the file manager in Windows XP. He also discussed how he had modified the Vista version to better fit his needs. He ended the presentation at approximately 8:40 PM.

The raffle was held immediately after the presentation. The winners were: John Waldon, who won a copy of

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

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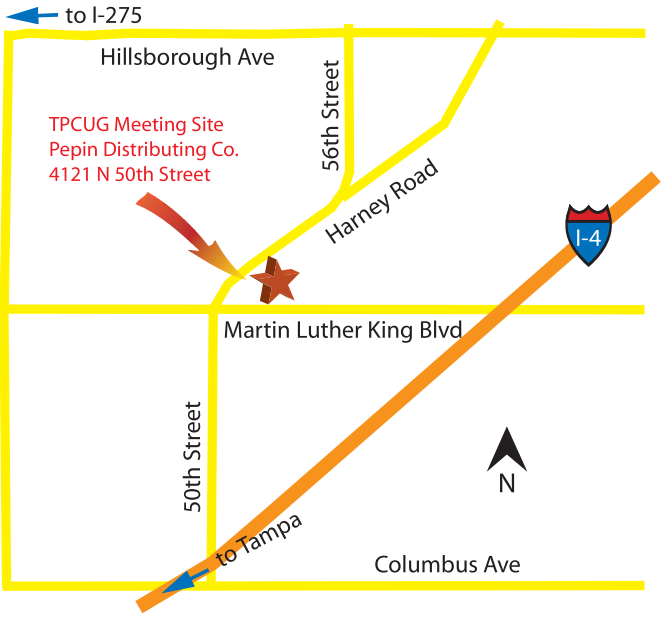
Minutes.....Continued from page 7

Acronis True Image, and Merle Nicholson, who won a Connection Mouse Pad and a Screen Saver.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 PM. ◆

Towers.....Continued from page 7

either the manufacturer, HTC, or my wireless carrier, Alltel, had disabled that feature so that the information could not be acquired by a program running on the phone. Thus, that idea was out, but then what to do with the database of cell towers I had found at the Federal Communications Commission site? Make a map of course. So go to http://www.lamartin.com/CellTowers/ and find a cell tower near you. There are at least 300 in Hillsborough County and 92,537 plus in the USA. Not all commercial towers are necessarily in the database, and none of the private ones is. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 22 No. 9 September 2009

September in Tampa

Meeting

Blain Barton from Microsoft

Wednesday September 9, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft will discuss migrating from Window XP to Windows 7. As usual, Bob Lafave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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The auto cash for clunkers program gave me an idea. What about a cash for clunkers program for computers? Perhaps $500 for your old computer when you buy a new computer for more than, say, $1,500. I bet that would bring out a lot of old electricity-guzzling, CRT-equipped, Win 95-running desktops. That would stimulate the economy, by having us buy more imported computers, just like the clunker car program sold more imported cars than domestic ones. If that didn't provide enough stimulus, then we could have a cash for clunker software program, where you would get cash for your old Word Perfect software toward the purchase of something new. This would actually help American workers since most software is still made in the US, I believe.

I occasionally look at old newsletters. In the September 1989 issue (that's 20 years ago), current member Merrill Friend is listed as a new member. Also, current member Roger Waters was apparently a member then since he won a door prize at the previous meeting. The minutes of the August meeting tell that Microsoft was the presenter, with a presentation about Word 5,

Comments.....Continued on page 7

October Meeting: Steve Singer on the latest in hardware

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at 6:35 PM. Ed White was having a problem with Flash Player. Bob discussed the problem and suggested that it was probably related to his cache settings. Rick Goldstein reported that he was receiving a request at startup to insert the Scan Soft uninstall disk. He said he doesn't have a disk since he has never owned the program. He can't uninstall because the program is not listed as installed. Bob believed that it was due to an entry created in his registry by some software, probably provided with hardware detected by his computer. Bob led a discussion that produced several possible solutions.

The question of register cleaning arose again. Bob indicated, as he had in previous meetings, that he thought it was dangerous to try to clean your registry manually or to randomly select one of the many "Registry Cleaner" software programs available. He again suggested that you use the free registry cleaner offered by Microsoft at http://onecare.live.com/site/en-Us/article/registry_cleaner_why.htm . The site gives you detailed instructions and also explains what a registry is and why it should be periodically cleaned. The site also provides the procedures to follow if you are using the Foxfire browser.

Bob discussed the methods of identifying unknown programs that are running on your computer. William LaMartin mentioned that, when you are unable to shutdown such programs and "popups," ALT-F4 immediately closes the open window. In closing, Bob recommended the "HWINFO32" freeware if you want to learn about the system details of your computer.

John Witmer started the business portion of the meeting at approximately 7:25 PM. He confirmed that Blain Barton will provide the presentation in September. Blain will discuss "Migrating from Windows XP to Windows 7." Doug Mullis reported that Steve Singer is scheduled to give his annual presentation to the group at the October meeting. Doug also believes that he has a speaker for November which he should be able to confirm shortly. John welcomed Mike Hodges and Eric Goldstein, two members who have been absent for awhile. He

Minutes .....Continued on page 5



Creating Mapping Overlays

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I hope you are not tiring of my articles about mapping; I just keep discovering different things that can be done with the Microsoft Virtual Earth maps, which are now termed Microsoft bing maps due to Microsoft's rebranding of such things.

Let's see what I have written about so far and the links to the applications. August was cell tower locations in the US, http://www.lamartin.com/CellTowers/.
May was ship locations around the world, http://www.lamartin.com/ShipLocations/.
And in April I wrote about mapping NPR stations, http://www.lamartin.com/VENPRStations/.

Further in the past, I have written about mapping in real time your recent and current locations using a Windows Mobile phone with GPS. I also recall creating an application that would map where photos were taken so that when you clicked on a pushpin on the map, the image taken there would be displayed. All of this is just another way of visualizing data.

This month, I will tell you how to put one map on top of another. More specifically, I will overlay a current map of the US with a 1915 and a 1922 map of a specific part of Tampa, FL. The area in question is made up of a subdivision platted on the east side in 1911 and on the west by part of another subdivision platted in 1914. This area of Tampa is currently known as Hyde Park, although that is not the subdivision name.

The 1915 map consists of two sheets from the Sanborn Insurance map collection. As best I can tell, the Library of Congress in the 1990s planned to scan in these maps and make them digitally available, but that never happened. However, the various state universities have done this, and luckily the University of Florida allows anonymous viewing of its Florida maps. I would love to view the maps for New Orleans,

Map.....Continued on page 4

Map.....Continued from page 3

but, like most such sites you need a library card for the library hosting the online maps. So I am grateful to UF. To read about the maps in the UF collection, go to http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/ufdc/?c=sanborn&m=hhh.

I used the 1915 and 1922 insurance maps of Tampa. I will describe the process for the 1915 map. For the 1915 map, I used sheets 95 and 97 and viewed them as "zoomable" at the next to highest resolution and largest screen display settings at the UF site. With a good bit of sleuthing, I discovered how to download the image of the entire map sheet and not just the small portion being viewed. I then used Photoshop to remove some of the writing and features that I didn't want to appear when the image was going to be used as an overlay to the Microsoft map.

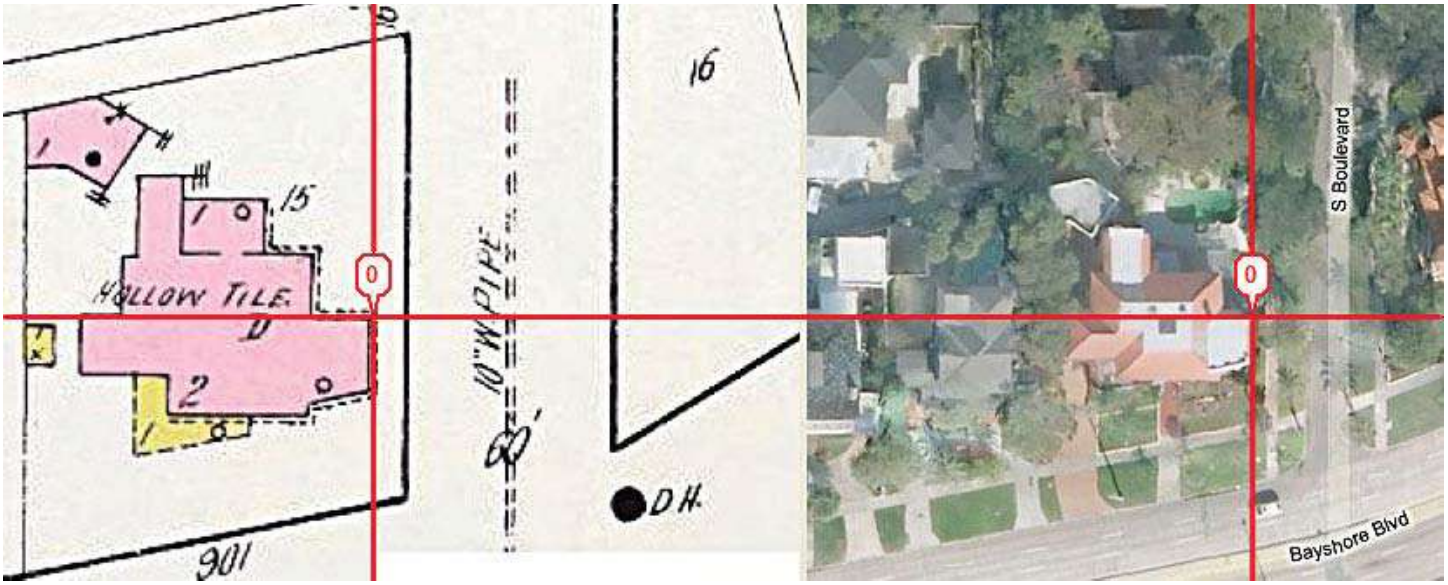
Now what to do with the image I had created from the two 1915 Sanborn sheets? You can't just plop such a static image on a Microsoft bing map, since the bing map is dynamic. Enter a free program from Microsoft Research named MapCruncher that will take any image and allow you to match positions on the image with locations on the Microsoft bing map. In the screen capture below, you can see where I have matched the corner of a house in the Sanborn map on the left with the same house corner in the Microsoft map on the right. (The red color, as seen on the web version of the newsletter, of the cross hair lines was added for emphasis; the lines are actually dotted in the program.)

Once you have created enough corresponding locations--say, 20 in my case--you select the colors you want to be transparent. In my case, I wanted the background color of the Sanborn map to be transparent. That way only the colored drawings of the footprints of the 1915 houses would be seen along with whatever other items the draftsmen had put on the map, such as water lines, etc. The next step is to let MapCruncher create a collection of map tiles (images) for all different zoom levels. In this instance, 297 map tiles were created, totaling about 9 MB. To read about and download MapCruncher, go to http://www.microsoft.com/maps/product/mapcruncher.aspx.

At this point, if you take all the tile images plus all the other files MapCruncher has created for this map and put the entire collection on a web server, you will have a zoomable Microsoft bing map with the Sanborn map overlaid. But, since I wanted a more custom setup, I chose a slightly different route. What I chose to do was use Microsoft Visual Studio 8 to create a Silverlight project, add a bing map to it and then add a tile layer to the map based on the tiles created by MapCruncher for the 1915 Sanborn map of Hyde Park.

I did the same thing as described above for the 1922 Map.

You can see the results for both at http://www.lamartin.com/HPSanborn1915. ◆



Minutes.....Continued from page 2

expressed his appreciation to the members for the large turnout (28 members). He again reminded members of the benefits that the group receives when they go through our web site to place their order with Amazon.com. The raffle was not held because the normal program ran late.

Kevan Sheridan opened the presentation of "Cloud Computing with Google Apps" at approximately 7:30 PM. In his overview of the program, he noted that Email, Calendar, Tasks, Contacts, Spreadsheets, Documents, Chat and more are in one virtual location. The primary advantages of using these apps are that there is no software to purchase or upgrade, there is no fee for individuals using the apps, the programs are available from any web browser, data is stored on Google servers and does not occupy your storage capacity, and you have live collaboration with multiple users that is very easy to learn and use. The primary disadvantages are that there are fewer software tools and features, you have no control of the location or backup schedule of your data, your data, although protected, may be less secure than with your desktop applications, and the Google apps are slower and less stable than those on your computer.

Kevan explained how easily data could be shared between applications. Finally, the amount of free storage space appears to be generous; however, it is not a simple number of gigabytes but is defined by the number and the size limitations for the type of document. These limitations are described at http://docs.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=37603.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 PM. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Foreclosure Tours

From the NY Times site, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/16/weekinreview/16cave.html, we get the photo from above and the quote below:

"Ever since the 1920s Florida has been cast as the place people go to escape contemplation, not to indulge in it. But in the past year, from Pensacola to Miami Beach, Floridians have been soul searching. And for good reason. The state's decades-long binge on real estate has given way to empty homes in rich and poor neighborhoods alike. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have vanished, empty stores are everywhere and even golf courses are shutting down."

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida License Plate Gallery	http://www.floridalicenseplates.com/
Census Online - 54,444 Links to Online Census Records	http://www.census-online.com/links/
The Ephemera Society of America	http://www.ephemerasociety.org/
Ornithology	http://www.ornithology.com/
The Skeleton Closet (political)	http://www.realchange.org/
Google Books	http://books.google.com/

The Confusing and Ever-growing Array of Microsoft Email

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The current list of Microsoft email services other than full Outlook includes Outlet Express, Hotmail, Windows Mail, Windows Live Mail, Windows Live Hotmail and Windows Live Hotmail Plus. If this confuses you, don't be ashamed, it also confuses Microsoft Customer Support. I had a problem with Windows Live Mail, which I clearly identified as a Windows Live Mail problem, and they referred me to the "Windows Live Hotmail Support Team." My problem had nothing to do with Hotmail but with my inability to change the color of the Windows Live Mail font (a very light blue) to a darker color. Even though my monitors are almost as large as a movie drive-in screen, it is very difficult to read. Their final answer, though disappointing, assured me that I might have a part in the future development of the product: "Jim, we currently do not offer the feature that will allow you to adjust the color of your fonts and folders in Windows Live Mail interface. What we can do for you right now is to personally submit this item to the Windows Live Mail Product Development Team as a feature request for evaluation, as I see the usefulness of this capability. We appreciate your interest and will consider your suggestion as we plan for future product improvements."

Outlook Express, the first on the list has, at one time or another, been used by practically everyone. It was bundled with several versions of Internet Explorer beginning with version 4 and with several versions of Microsoft Windows from Windows 98 to Windows XP and was available in Windows 95. Over the course of its life, it has experienced some problems with email standards, database corruption and security issues. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outlook_Express

Hotmail was one of the first web-based email services. It was launched in July 1996 as "HoTMaiL"; its name and capitalization refers to HTML. It was one of the first free email providers. It was acquired by Microsoft in 1997 for an estimated $400 million and renamed "MSN Hotmail." It quickly became the world's largest webmail service and reported more than 30 million active members. During the period 2000/2001, a security issue appeared in Hotmail that permitted anybody to log into any Hotmail account using the password "eh;" it was at the time called "the most widespread security incident in the history of the Web." In 2001, the Hotmail service was compromised again by computer hackers, who discovered that anyone could log into their Hotmail account and then access messages from any other Hotmail account by using an easily crafted URL. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotmail.

Windows Mail was included in Windows Vista to replace Outlook Express. It addressed concerns about email, junk mail and phishing attacks. It also added features to search large volumes of email messages. It was not made available for earlier versions of the Windows operating systems. It has been replaced by "Windows Live Mail," which is also available for Windows XP as a replacement for Outlook Express.

Windows Live Mail is a free email program with many of the same features as Outlook Express, such as synchronizing your email messages, folders, contacts, and more. It also includes junk mail filtering and a built-in calendar that works with your Windows Live Calendar. It also offers:

- Offline mail
- Send/receive mail from multiple accounts in one place - Hotmail accounts or POP and EVLAP mail accounts (like Gmail or Yahoo! Plus)
- Rich photo-sharing capabilities
- Integration with Desktop Search
- Safety tools (anti-phishing, anti-spam features)
- Integration with Windows Live services, including Windows Live Spaces
- RSS feed aggregation
- Built-in calendar view that can access your Windows Live Calendar

Windows Live Hotmail is the free upgrade of MSN Hotmail. It includes the following features:

Email.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Email.....Continued from page 6

- Improved spam protection — safety bar plus one-click spam tools
- 5 GB of storage —five times as much as MSN Hotmail
- Faster than ever — read mail without reloading the page
- Customizable design — use themes to customize your interface

Windows Live Hotmail Plus has all the benefits of Hotmail—ease of use, strong spam protection, fast performance—but with lots of extras. The cost for this service is $19.95 annually. What more do you get with Hotmail Plus compared to regular Hotmail:

More storage Get 10 GB of storage that automatically grows with your needs.

Larger attachments Send files up to 20 MB, twice that of regular Hotmail.

More custom filters Sort and organize your incoming mail the way you want.

Bigger distribution lists Send emails to a much larger group of recipients than with regular Hotmail.

No account expiration You don't need to log in to keep your account active as long as your Hotmail Plus subscription is current.

More "Safe Addresses" 500 versus 250 with regular-Hotmail. Tell Hotmail which senders' emails should not land in the junk folder.

Forwarding Have your Hotmail sent to accounts not hosted by Microsoft.

No graphical ads Just your e-mail.

Finally, Microsoft has announced that they are retiring the DAV protocol September 1, 2009, which will prevent you from connecting with Hotmail from within Outlook 2003 and 2007 unless you download the Microsoft Office Outlook Connector. http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook/HA102225181033.aspx. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

which, I think, was a DOS program. The minutes also say that Microsoft gave the group a free working copy of their Excel program. So we have had Word and Excel around for 20 years. It is hard to believe. And it is interesting that we will be having a presentation at this month's meeting given by Microsoft 20 years and one month after that meeting in August 1989.

The minutes also say the club president, Harvey Bruneau, had two 10 MB hard drives for sale for $100 each. Wow! How the price of hard drives has changed. That is $10/MB, and there is no mention whether they are new or not. I remember buying hard drives in the early 1990s for around $1/MB. Today Newegg will sell you a 2 TB, that's 2 terabytres or 1,000,000 MB, Western Digital internal hard drive for $219. If my mathematics is correct, that is $ 0.000219/MB. Twenty years does make a difference. Automobiles get more expensive, computers cost less.

At that time, the club met downtown in the GTE building that was located in the block bounded by Zack, Morgan, Twiggs and Marion streets. The speaker for the September meeting was to be Egghead Software. The topic was "The Latest and Greatest in Hardware and Software." Sounds almost like the presentation that Steve Singer will give us next month, doesn't it? ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 22 No. 10 October 2009



October in Tampa

Meeting

Steve Singer on the latest hardware

Wednesday October 14, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Steve Singer will make his yearly visit to the group to inform us as to what is new in the world of computing hardware. As usual, Bob Lafave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

September was a very busy computer month for me. I solved a couple of problems, installed a major update for one of my program suites (which caused the problems), installed the Powerline Ethernet adapters that I write about in this newsletter and wrote several useful little computer programs.

The alternating current power line adapters from Netgear in the article on page 3 were not really purchased to solve a computer problem. The wireless connection to the computer in our back room, while not 100% reliable, was functioning well enough. What really pushed me to find a better LAN connection for that room was the purchase of a new TV which would reside there, replacing a large TV that served us well for 15 years. The replacement, a Sony 40-inch LCD Bravia, had a socket to connect a LAN cable. Thus, the new Ethernet adapters mentioned above. Instead of simply connecting the computer in that room to the adapter, I connected an Ethernet switch I had just sitting unused to the adapter, and, from the switch,

Comments.....Continued on page 5

November Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The meeting began at approximately 6:35 PM. Bob LaFave opened the SIG meeting with a discussion about the ways that programs can be adapted to the different operating systems. One of the members had a problem with a computer that was taken to Staples for a cleanup. The computer was working fine except that it did not automatically log on to the Internet when the computer was booted, as it had done before the cleanup. He had to turn on the wireless card each time he booted the machine. Bob discussed several possible causes and explained how to go through each to locate the source of the problem. Bob discussed some of the problems in upgrading to Windows 7 from both Windows XP and Vista. Bob again mentioned the full-service cleaner that can be downloaded from Microsoft. He said that it will take a couple of hours to run but that he had gotten substantially improved performance every time that he used it. Bob said that the quickest way to determine your IP address is by using the site http://whatismyip.com/. The site also provides other interesting information. Members using Windows XP stated that they are getting a message advising that "Outlook Express needs to compress its folders to save space." Bob says that you can set an option in Outlook Express and Windows Mail to determine how often the message appears. The Windows SIG ended at approximately 7:15 PM.

John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of the meeting. He mentioned that we had recently received $50.00 from Amazon.com as a result of routing our purchases from them through our web site. John mentioned that election of Board members will be held in December and the slate will be created in November. He stressed the need for volunteers. John announced that Steve Singer will give the presentation at the October meeting. There was a discussion about the cruise sponsored by FACUG.Our treasurer, Doug Mullis, reminded members to be sure to submit their dues before their membership expires. John welcomed Blain Barton and thanked him for again provid-

Minutes .....Continued on page 7

Powerline Ethernet Adapter

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



Are there places in your home where you would like to have a LAN connection but running a LAN cable is too difficult and a wireless connection is of poor quality? Do you have $120 to spare? That is what the NETGEAR XAVB101 Powerline AV Ethernet Adapter Kit will cost you (at Amazon.com, including shipping). It consist of two modules, one of which is pictured to the right. They also supply you with two short LAN cables.
Installation is easy. Simply plug one of the modules into an electrical wall outlet near where you receive your Internet. For most of us, that would be near our router. Next, connect one of the provided LAN cables from a socket on the router to the one on the module. Take the other module to where you want the remote connection, plug it into an electrical wall outlet there and, similarly, connect a LAN cable from it to the device you want to add to your local area network. It takes about a minute for each of the adapters to be recognized by the network. At that point, you should be up and running--except for the important item of security.

Security for the adapters can be enabled in either of two ways: Either with the security button on each adapter, or by running the configuration software provided on the CD that comes with the adapters. I chose the latter method, where the first step is to install the configuration utility on your computer. Once the utility is installed, follow the instructions in the user guide (also on the CD)

A word of warning: You will need the MAC address of the remote adapter when using the configuration utility, so copy this from the back of the adapter before plugging it into the wall socket.

Below is a screen shot of the configuration utility, showing my two adapters. You would select the Security tab to do the security configuration.



The configuration utility installation also installs a firmware upgrade tool. So, at some point after the network is functional, you will want to run this to upgrade the devices' firmware to the latest versions.

It is a bit expensive but sure beats crawling under the house, or putting up with erratic wireless connections. Now, in a far room of our house, the computer is connected to the local area network at 100 mbps, the same as for a wired LAN connection. By the way, pay no attention to the claim in the specifications that it is a 200 Mbps connection. From what I read, that is gotten by adding 100 Mbs for both receive and send.

If you have another room you want to add to the Powerline network, simply order a single adapter. I think the price from Amazon for one is around $62. Again, this is not as cheap as installing a wireless Ethernet adapter in the remote computer--but it is a whole lot faster and more reliable. ◆

More Windows 7

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I've been messing around off and on with the last free version of Windows 7 and then built a new fast computer just in time for the real thing almost a month ago. I couldn't go too far with the testing versions, knowing that whatever work I put in was going to be lost when the final release came out. It helps to keep reading the press and blogs on this subject, so I had been forewarned.

In any case I've had a system going for a bit less than four weeks, and I switched over to it as my primary computer just over a week ago. After installing Windows 7 Ultimate x64, I attached a copy of my data disk and have spent the last week installing software and configuring the system. My personal preference is to never install any software that I could do without. Fortunately, my previous system was Vista Business x64, so I've invested a lot of time in researching software.

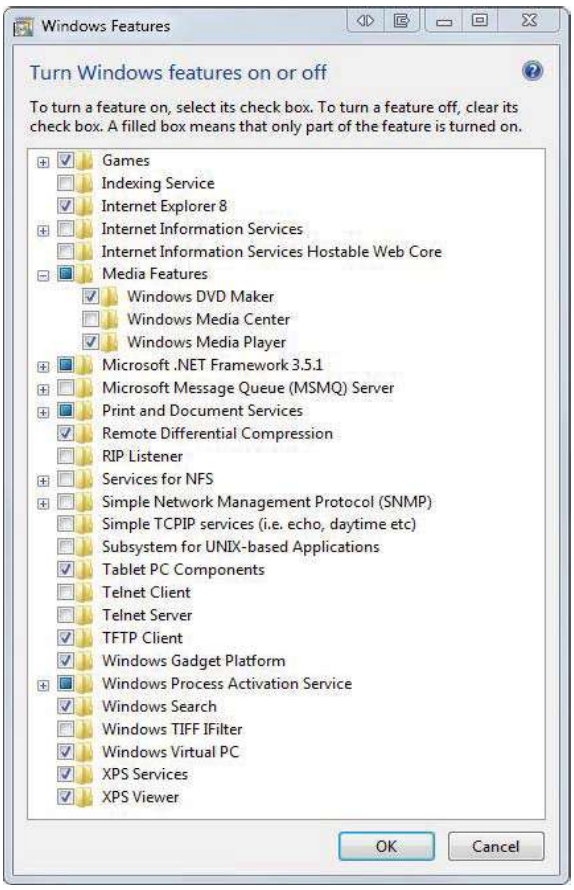
Windows Ultimate has a few things I don't need, so to save computer memory and cpu cycles, I used the "Windows Features" and made sure I didn't have "Windows Media Center" and a couple of other things. While doing that, I actually added a couple of features, and it installed those without asking for the installation DVD.

There's no reason to think that software that works on Vista 64 wouldn't work on Win 7 x64, but I have run into a problem with my old PaintShop Pro 9. When it loads, the screen blinks and a flag goes up to say that the color scheme has been changed to Windows 7 Basic, which I think just eliminates Aero Peek. When I close PaintShop, it reverts back to an Aero theme.

There are quite a few additions that I find very useful. Some were added for Vista.

Virtual PC XP Mode - New

This is a Windows Virtual PC application. Windows Virtual PC 2007 was a free downloadable product, but Windows Virtual PC is now included in Windows 7 Professional, Enterprise, and Ultimate editions. One requirement is a processor capable of hardware virtualization with Intel VT or AMD-V enabled and at least 2GB memory. You configure each machine with a fixed amount of real memory.



With Virtual PC, you can install and configure other operating systems and have them running in a window or full screen. You normally set it up so the virtual machine is connected to your network. One catch, of course, is that you must own a license to that operating system. And just because you have a notebook with XP on it doesn't mean you can use that install CD. The Virtual PC is considered a real machine for licensing purposes.

Now, all this is background. I was getting to XP mode software. It's a free download from MS to a valid legal Windows computer. It contains a free version of Windows XP, so there's no license to purchase. When you have it set up and configured, you can use it like any XP machine. The intention is to have an environment where you can run old software that may not be able to run in Windows 7 (or Vista for that matter). So if you have an old Quicken for Windows 95

Windows 7 .....Continued on page 6

Comments.....Continued from page 1

connected cables to the computer and to the TV, with two additional sockets remaining on the switch for other possible connections.

So, with a TV connected to the Internet what can you do? There is no built-in browser in our Sony TV, so no wandering around the Internet. With this LAN connection (and without any cable or FIOS connection), you can:

- Use Widgets provided by Yahoo to check the weather, the news and stock quotes.
- Use Amazon's Video on Demand to rent or buy movies or old TV programs and watch them as they download.
- Watch You-Tube
- Use Netflix when it will be available later this year
- Watch an assortment of videos from different sources like blip.tv, Wired, Epicurious.com and Concierge.com.

If I had a DLNA Certified Media Server, I could connect that to my network, and the TV could access that also to view the images, videos or music there. Although you cannot access anything on the hard drives of computers on the network, the TV has a USB port, so you can plug in a thumb drive containing this type of media, and the TV can access it.

That is all from me for this month. Happily, other contributors have filled the rest of the newsletter. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Spider Fun

WSJ Photos of the Week, October 2, from http://online.wsj.com.

A large Golden Orb Spider on the face of Wildlife World keeper Borisat in Sydney, Australia. The wildlife park was holding a survey to establish which of two types of animals the public finds more creepy: Snakes or spiders.

I am personally familiar with these large, harmless spiders since they were in an orange grove I owned. They would build their webs across the grove middles, perfectly situated to catch you on the head when driving a tractor down the middles.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
rapidshare File Sharing	http://www.rapidshare.com/
The Big Money	http://www.thebigmoney.com/
Mannahatta Project	http://themannahattaproject.org/
Map & Imagery Library at the University of Florida	http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/maps/
State Library and Archives of Florida (e-Library)	http://ibistro.dos.state.fl.us/uhtbin/cgisirsi/AcDNRtt64m/STA-FLA/0/49

Windows 7.....Continued from page 4

with invaluable 1989 expenses, or in my case – Microsoft Arcade – on diskette for 16-bit systems, you're a happy camper. Yes, I did miss my old original Dig Dug and PacMan, but no longer.

There are a few downsides to this, however. One is the real memory requirement, a minimum of 512M. To run well, it needs at least 1GB. Another is that it's slooow to load and start up. That's 1-1/2 minutes slow on my own, very powerful computer (8GB, Quad processor at 3.6GHz). But it does work well. I just realized that it would have been a good solution to running my old trusty USB scanner, instead of throwing it away and getting a new one. Naw, I wanted a new one.

Backup and Restore – improved
The Windows 7 Backup and Restore is finally worthy of using. There are two versions; The version that comes with Professional and Ultimate will back up through your network; Starter and Home Premium will back up, but just to a local or USB drive.

Editions
In case you're confused about the various editions, here's a summary:
Windows 7 Starter – To be pre-installed on new computers by computer manufacturers. The Aero theme is not included, and it's 32-bit only.
Windows 7 Home Basic – For emerging markets, not available in developed countries like the US, Canada, France, Germany etc.
Windows 7 Home Premium – Aimed at the home market, it includes Aero and Windows Media Center. It does lack some features you may want, like logging into a Domain (server) at your business and Remote Desktop Connection.
Windows 7 Professioal – Adds Domain, Remote Desktop Connection, Location Aware Printing, Encrypting File System, Presentation Mode and Windows XP Mode.
Windows 7 Enterprise – Volume licensing to large businesses.
Windows 7 Ultimate – All the features of Professional and Enterprise, and adds Bitlocker drive encryption and multi-language support.

Remote Desktop Connection – Has been improved with multi-monitor support. So, if you log into any computer that supports Remote Desktop (Professional and up) from a Win 7 PC with two monitors, that desktop will show up on both your monitors. I like this very much, and I've configured a Remote Desktop for three other computers in the house. Very handy. I also sit at a (slow) laptop in the living room and log into my main (fast) computer, located upstairs.

Upgrading – There are upgrade versions at better pricing for Home Premium, Professional and Ultimate. You can't upgrade from XP to Win 7. You can, however, use the File and Settings Wizard to create a file that copies essential settings and email, favorites and more from your XP machine to Windows 7. But you'll have to reinstall all your applications. Also, you can't upgrade a Vista x32 to Win 7 x64, or a Vista 64 to Win 7 x86 (32-bit).

I can see a reason to upgrade your Vista machine to Windows 7. And if you HAVE to upgrade your XP machine (I wouldn't) there is a pretty good chance it will work. If I just HAD to upgrade an XP machine, I'd disconnect the existing hard drive and put a new one in to install to. You can then just swap back if it all goes badly.

Windows 7 x86 (the 32-bit version) vs. Windows 7 x64:
I've gone through Vista x64, and then Windows 7 x32 Beta, and now Windows 7 x64. I haven't found any disadvantage to using the 64-bit versions. I did lose an old USB scanner, but the new one I got uses LEDs light source and is lightning fast. Two of the four printers date to 2005, and the other two to 2007. No driver problems. The x64 has some advantages, the main one being that it will see all of the memory you can install. In my case I have 8G (4 x 2G), and the motherboard would take 16G (4 x 4G) modules, which are cost prohibitive. If I had used x86 (the 32-bit version), the most memory it could see is under 3G.

The x64 Version is more efficient handling memory, but, most importantly, you have the ability to run Virtual PC and dedicate 2G to it and, also, use a 2G Virtual drive. I use the Virtual Drive for my database

Windows 7.....Continued on page 8

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

A Message from your Board of Directors

We are fast approaching the time for election of the Board for the year 2010.

The Board is responsible for all aspects and activities of the Group and provides leadership and for the continued existence of the Group.

We are a relatively small group, one of the smaller groups in the area, perhaps because of geography, but as such, we have the advantage of a more intimate type of meeting.

There is a core group of members who take a more active part.

They all have lives and outside interests, as do all members.

Each of the members of the current Board has served at least two terms.

We urgently need other members to volunteer for the Board.

No positions should require more than a few hours each month.

New members can provide new ideas and a fresh look at things, as well as relieving current members.

Elected Officers are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Member at Large

Editor, Librarian and Program Chairman are appointed volunteers.

Please consider this request carefully.

Applicants should notify John Witmer our current President by email immediately so as to be included in the forthcom-

Elections.....Continued on page 8

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

ing the latest information from Microsoft.

Blain began his presentation, "Migrating from Windows XP to Windows 7," at approximately 7:30 PM. He divided his presentation into two parts. In the first part, he explained virtualization, hypervisor and the tools that he uses to do his presentations. He explained that he uses a server environment that can actually be run in production. He mentioned that the Windows 7 "official street date" is October 22. There is an upgrade Windows 7 version for Vista but not for Windows XP. He explained how he uses snapshots in virtualization to quickly demonstrate various phases of the upgrade. In the second part of his presentation, he covered the many facets of migrating from Windows XP to Windows 7. He talked about using the Easy Transfer Wizard and cable to make transfers needed during the migration. Blain mentioned that you can also use a USB external drive (or a thumb drive) or your network to make these transfers. Blain covered the ways to deal with the many problems arising during the activation of software from the old to the new operating system. He reemphasized that there is not an upgrade version of Windows 7 for Windows XP so the process is a complete replacement of Windows XP and that the transfer of settings and reinstallation of applications is more of an involved process than you would experience with an upgrade. The presentation was followed by a lengthy question-and-answer session.

The meeting ended at approximately 8:35 PM. ◆

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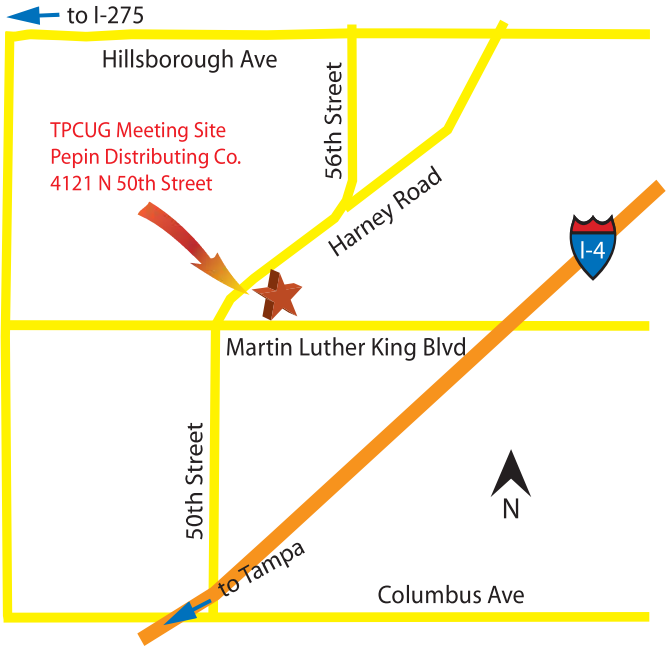
Windows 7.....Continued from page 6

work, and it's well worth the trouble.

Installing: If there's a device that can't be installed, just wait. At the next reboot, it'll find the right driver on its own. I've seen this many times. Remarkable.

Networking: Easiest I've ever seen.

Windows 7 Ultimate: I don't see any reason for a home or home business to pay the difference. I think the Professional version is a good buy for an experienced user. ◆



Elections.....Continued from page 7

ing proposed slate of officers.

Address your replies to: president@tpcug.org

Thank you. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 22 No. 11 November 2009

November in Tampa

Meeting

Mapping, Photography & Computer Programming by William LaMartin

Wednesday November 11, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will demonstrate how to combine mapping, photography and computer programming. As usual, Bob Lafave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Since neither Bill Gates, Steve Wosniak or Larry Ellison were available for our November meeting, you are stuck with me. Don't blame Doug; speakers are hard to come by. However, I think I have some interesting things to show and hope you will find them interesting, too. In the past, I have given programs on computer programming and programs on digital photography. In this presentation, I will combine these with mapping. Thanks to all the developments in recent years, we can do amazing things with maps.

To get an idea of my subject, go to my web site, http://www.lamartin.com and click on the Large Maps/Images button. The programs used in creating these interactive maps and images were almost exclusively Microsoft products. I did use Adobe Photoshop to edit some of the individual images that went into the large compositions.

Microsoft Deep Zoom Composer was used to create the zoom-

Comments.....Continued on page 7

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The meeting started at 6:35 PM. There was no Windows SIG since Bob LaFave was ill and unable to attend. Steve Singer, who was our speaker for the evening, filled in with a question and answer session before his presentation on new hardware.

Steve began with a broad discussion of Windows 7 changes. He showed a small "Complete Computer" that he said was about as small as you can go at this time. He outlined an impressive list of features and specifications that were available in the small unit. The motherboard is 17 cm by 17 cm. In response to a members request for contact information, Steve provided his phone number, 813-600-1901, and web site, http://www.morevalu.com. He indicated that you can contact him at practically any day or time that there is not a free movie playing in Tampa or its suburbs.

Steve gave a detailed explanation of the various computer-based telephone systems and the cost and limitations of each.

He returned to Windows 7 and discussed in detail the various virtual PCs that are available in Windows 7. He mentioned that his word for updates is "bug-fix." So, if you do not get the updates, you put your system at risk. He brought motherboards and cases for the members to examine and showed the members several unusual products that perform a variety of functions and that he has for sale at bargain prices. Steve's presentation ended at 8:30 PM.

John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of our meeting at approximately 8:35 PM. He reminded the members of the importance of keeping their dues current. Newsletters are marked when dues are delinquent to help everyone remember. John also mentioned that the election of officers will take place in December and the slate of candidates will be presented by Member-At-Large Ron Weinberg at the November meeting. John expressed his hope that addi-

Minutes .....Continued on page 8

Continuous Inking System Eliminates the Need to Buy Ink Cartridges

By Ed Cohen, Tampa PC Users Group
condovacations@earthlink.net

There are many inkjet printers selling for less than $100.00 retail. After the first month or two, you could have spent as much for replacement ink cartridges as for the printer.

Using the web, I had found third party suppliers for cartridges at less than half the price compared to OEM's prices. I also tried refilling cartridges using third party inking kits. This worked well except some OEMs date the cartridges and they will not work after the cartridge is "too old". Of course, you do not discover this until you refill the cartridge and attempt to use it.

Another solution is Continuous Inking System (CIS) from http://www.cisinks.com. They have kits that convert most printers into CIS. The startup kits cost between $25.00 and $60.00, depending on the printer. Bulk ink supplies range from $15.00 to $30.00 for a set of inks to match your startup kit.

The startup kit consists of replacement "cartridges" for your printer, bulk ink supply and a ribbon hose attached from the bulk ink supply to the ink cartridges, and strapping to hold the ribbon in place.

Installation is easy:

1. Remove all cartridges
2. Remove cartridge cover if need be
3. Insert CIS cartridges
4. Tape down the ribbon hose using clips supplied, and you are done

My son has used the system for about one year on three different printers. He prints hundreds of pages each month.

I had two minor problems:

1. Make sure all replacement cartridges snap into position. This is slightly difficult since the individual cartridges are bundled together.
2. I did not have enough space for the ribbon cable to swing back and forth when the printer was closed. It worked perfectly when the printer was open. I taped two spacers to the frame which raised the top another ¼ inch and all was well. ◆





Microsoft Virtual PC Hardware Requirements

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The newest versions of Virtual PC (VPC) are designed to use "Hardware-assisted Virtualization." It seems to have become a requirement to have this native to your motherboard and processor for VPC to work.

This has come to the forefront since the release of Windows 7. If you have one of the right versions– Professional, Enterprise and Ultimate, then you automatically have VPC. You also have available as a download what's called "Windows XP Mode." This is a licensed version of Windows XP that runs in VPC. When you configure this virtual machine, you set an option to "Auto Publish."

Auto Publish means that, when you install a program in that virtual machine, it places a program shortcut in your host Windows 7 Start menu. So, after I installed my 1995 16-bit "Microsoft Return of Arcade," my Pac-Man icon appears in Windows 7! (Current price for "Return of Arcade: 20th Anniversary Edition": $113.99)

When you launch the Pac-Man program from Windows 7, it appears that Pac-Man was installed directly on Win 7, and the only sense that you get that it's in a VPC is that it takes longer to load. The long load time is from my habit of always shutting down a VPC session, instead of using Sleep Mode.

So, back to the subject of hardware. Windows Virtual PC requires processors capable of hardware-assisted virtualization with AMD-V™, Intel® VT or VIA® VT turned on in the BIOS. If you have a computer and the desire, you still need to know if you have the RIGHT hardware, if it is supported on the motherboard and that it's enabled.

Microsoft thought of everything. There's a free "Microsoft Hardware-Assisted Virtualization Detection

Windows 7 .....Continued on page 5

Features	Home Premium Upgrade	Professional Upgrade	Ultimate Upgrade
	$119.99	$199.99	$219.99
Make the things you do every day easier with improved desktop navigation.	✓	✓	✓
Start programs faster and more easily, and quickly find the documents you use most often.	✓	✓	✓
Make your web experience faster, easier and safer than ever with Internet Explorer 8.	✓	✓	✓
Watch many of your favorite TV shows for free when and where you want with Internet TV.	✓	✓	✓
Easily create a home network and connect your PCs to a printer with HomeGroup.	✓	✓	✓
Run many Windows XP productivity programs in Windows XP Mode (separate download).		✓	✓
Connect to company networks easily and more securely with Domain Join.		✓	✓
In addition to full-system Backup and Restore found in all editions, you can back up to a home or business network.		✓	✓
Help protect data on your PC and portable storage devices against loss or theft with BitLocker.			✓
Work in the language of your choice and switch between any of 35 languages.			✓

Windows 7 VersionsComparisons

Windows 7.....Continued from page 4

Tool", and here's where you get it:

http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=0EE2A17F-8538-4619-8D1C-05D27E11ADB2&displaylang=en

Remember that this newsletter will be posted on our website, so this link will be "live" for you to click on.

Here's a link to Microsoft Technet "Windows Virtual PC Evaluation Guide."

http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd744684(WS.10).aspx

This guide has links to the software needed and also comprehsive installation instructions. While we're at it, here's a link to "Which one is right for you?"

http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/products/compare?T1=tab20

On a couple of tabs on this page there is a comparison of features for Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7.

More importantly, there's also a comparison on the versions of Windows 7 to help you decide between Home Premium, Professional and Ultimate, which is displayed on the previous page of the article. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



A Little Stock History

The chart above is from http://stockcharts.com and displays the Dow Jones Industrial Average from 1920 to 1940. It is instructive in that the crash of 1929, followed by a partial recovery in 1930, was nowhere as drastic as the drop following that, which reached its greatest depth during 1932.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Noah's Ark	http://www.arkvannoach.com/
Tom's Hardware News	http://www.tomshardware.com/us/
Microsoft Security Essentials	http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials/
MyHomeServer.Com	http://www.myhomeserver.com/

Linksys Wireless Internet Camera

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Goup
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com



The Linksys WVC54GCA wireless camera, pictured on the right without its power module, is my latest purchase and something I have been interested in for some time. In the November 2007 newsletter, Merle Nicholson wrote about such a device made by D-Link that he had mounted inside his garage and pointed at the garage door to monitor if the garage door was open or closed. That article can be read at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2007/november2007/wirless_camera.htm. He advises me that, after two years, the camera is still working well and only occasionally requires a reset because of a lost wireless connection.

This Linksys camera functions much the same as Merle's D-Link one. They both have built-in web servers which create their own web pages that you may view if you know their web address. They both can be hard-wired with a LAN cable to a router, or can work as a wireless device off a wireless router. But in two years the technology for these home wireless cameras (as opposed to commercial ones that cost many times more) has advanced a bit. The Linksys camera can produce an image as large as 640 x 480 pixels, and, instead of producing a static image file every few seconds as does the D-Link, it actually produces streaming video, which you may stream at any bit rate you desire. The larger the image and the faster the bit rate, the more bandwidth you use. Such an image is below. It was



taken through the window of my computer room across the edge of my front porch and shows a parked work truck at the house to the left, a man mowing a yard across the street and a black car parked in front.

Additionally, you may also enable mobile streaming so that the stream may be viewed on your mobile device using the Real Time Streaming Protocol (RTSP), if your mobile device supports this, which my Windows Mobile 6.1 Pocket PC phone does. The camera's web server also creates an .asf file, which may be viewed remotely with Windows Media Player.

So, how do you view the videos produced by these cameras? There are several ways. You can use the Linksys utility that allows you to both configure the cameras and to view all the videos

Camera.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

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for all the cameras you have. I used the utility to do the original setup of my camera. I set it up to be wireless with a fixed local IP address of 192.168.1.120, since I had read on the Internet that using a fixed IP address provided better results. You have to use a LAN cable to do the original setup; then you can move the camera wherever you want that has a good wireless signal. My way of viewing the video is to open a web browser and point it to the assigned IP address for the camera, http://192.168.1.120 in my case. Or, finally, you can use Windows Media Player to play the video at http://192.168.1.120/img/video.asf

What if you want to view the video from Paris? It can be done. Go to the camera's setup, either from within the utility or using a web browser, enable HTTP web connections and assign the camera a port, say 1050. You may also require a user name and password, if desired. Then go to your router's setup and forward port 1050 to 192.168.1.120, the camera's local address. Now, if you know the IP address of your router (which you can find at http://www.lamartin.com/aspx/IPAddress/IPAddress.aspx or at other such services), which, by way of example, we will say is 108.444.200.333, then pointing your Parisian browser to http://108.444.200.333:1050 will produce the streaming video of your camera. That is, it will do that if the IP address of your router hasn't changed since you last checked. In my experience, if you are on broadband, your IP address can stay the same for weeks or more--but there is no guarantee. That is all there is to it. Setting up the Real Time Streaming Protocol (RTSP) is a bit more complicated.

I should also mention that the camera allows you to stream whatever audio that it picks up along with the video. And there is a built-in motion sensor that will record a video clip of the action and send it to you via email if you wish.

I find the camera produces quite good video and have only one complaint. It doesn't seem able to keep a wireless connection for more than two days. However, this may not be the fault of the camera entirely (or it may be). I am using a standard wireless router (WRT54G V8) and Linksys recommends a WRT350N wireless-N gigabit router with storagelink. So the router may be the problem. My solution was to run a LAN cable to the camera since it was convenient to do that. Now I know I will have a connection.

Cost: $90 from Amazon.com ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

able versions of the maps. The maps themselves were mostly downloaded from the Library of Congress. The "Additional Maps" were created with Microsoft Map Cruncher which allowed me to overlay an old map on the current map. The "Photos" were also created with Microsoft Deep Zoom Composer, and the "Planar Panoramas" were stitched together with another Microsoft product named Microsoft Image Composition Editor (ICE). Finally, when I wanted to tag a particular photo with a latitude and a longitude, I used Microsoft Pro Photo Tools. All these programs are free, though ICE is officially listed only as a research project.

One final program that I used was Microsoft Visual Studio 2008. While many of the programs listed above produce web-ready results, most still needed some tweaking to make them work the way I wanted. For example, if I want to show or hide an overlay on a map, this sort of thing was done with Visual Studio.

I hope to have a new laptop by the time the meeting rolls around. Some may recall how, during my last presentation, we had to wait while my laptop did a bit

Comments.....Continued on page 8

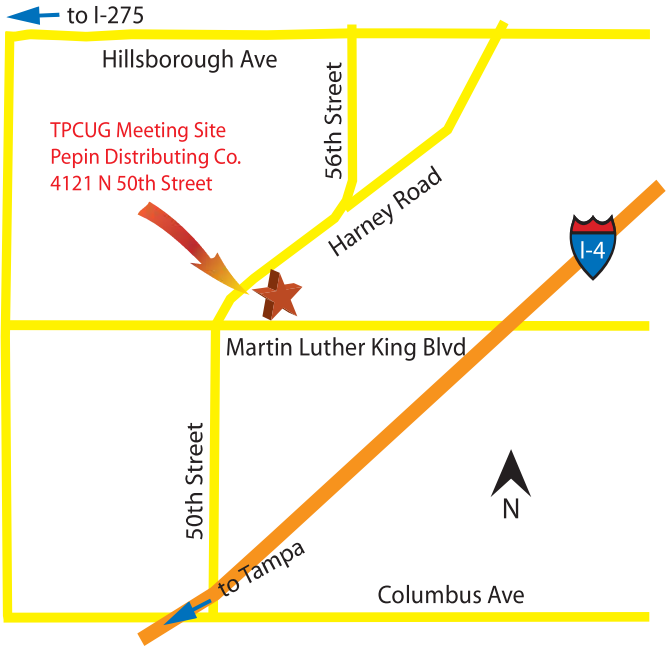
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Minutes.....Continued from page 2

tional members will volunteer to run for each position. He indicated that the presentation by Dave Roberts for November was being deferred as the planned topic on "POS software" was of little interest to the group; however, Dave may be called on after the start of the New Year for a presentation on something of broader interest to the group. John thanked the members for our increase in income as a result of their participation in the group's Amazon.com program. The meeting ended at 8:45 PM. ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 7

of "thinking." I probably had Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator open, along with Microsoft Visual Studio, and tried to do something that required a lot of processing. And maybe Microsoft or Adobe decided to do an update right then. Anyway, five years seemed about the right time for a new one, and it should probably stop that from happening this time. At least it will if it gets built and shipped on schedule. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 22 No. 12 December 2009

December in Tampa

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday December 9, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Holiday party and election of officers.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This is Merle Nicholson's newsletter by the fact that his article on Windows 7 tips takes up most of the space remaining after the minutes and my brief comments here. And for that I am very thankful. Also, Ed Cohen's unsolicited article on *Continuous Inking Systems* last month was a nice surprise. I could use more surprises like that. Less than two weeks before our monthly meeting, I am usually looking at a newsletter with no content. Then, somehow miraculously we get a newsletter made up of member content. The miracle usually consists of my calling several members and pleading for an article, or my figuring out something to write. Happily, that wasn't necessary this month.

I hope my presentation last month on mapping, photography and computer programming was somewhat enlightening. It amazes me how much we have advanced in these things in the last few years, thanks to the increases in computing power and sophistication of the software. As usual, I had more to present than time, and I thank you for your patience since the meeting ended a bit late.

Finally, don't forget to use the amazon.com link at http://www.tpcug.org for your shopping. ◆

January Meeting: Merle Nicholson on Windows 7

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at approximately 6:30 PM. Bob showed how the DVD that you use to install Vista or Windows 7 allows you to install a hard drive in the computer as a hidden partition on your current hard drive. He mentioned that with Vista and Windows 7, Microsoft provides you a lot of options to fix your own computer. He stressed the importance of making a recovery disk as soon as you have installed the operating system and your software, because the information will be lost if your hard drive crashes before you have created the recovery disk. Bob mentioned that Belarc Advisor, a free download, builds a detailed profile of your installed software and hardware, a list of missing Microsoft hot fixes, anti-virus status and also provides the serial numbers of your software DVDs. (http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html) In response to a member's question about updating "drivers," Bob discussed the various ways to update and obtain drivers. Merle Nicholson mentioned how easy it has become with the new operating systems to find the drivers that you need. Bob explained how to add a switch to your router in order to provide additional outlets. The Windows SIG ended at approximately 6:55 PM.

William LaMartin began his presentation of "Mapping, Photography & Computer Programming" at approximately 7:00 PM. William opened with an explanation of how and why he spends so much of his time with maps, photography and programming, He has had an interest in maps since he was a young boy, he has a deep interest in programming, and photography is one of his favorite hobbies. The huge technological changes in all three of these areas have allowed him to explore digital maps and show them with amazing clarity and detail that could not have been imagined a few years ago. William showed the members several examples of what he has been able to produce. He started with several maps on which he had used Microsoft Deep Zoom Composer to develop a zoom capability: (1) 1858 Map of the Lower Mississippi River indicating plantation owners; (2) 1798 Map Of New

Minutes .....Continued on page 7

Windows 7 Installation Tips

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

By now, I've accomplished three successful from-scratch Win 7 64-bit installations and one failed upgrade from Vista BE 64-bit. This isn't counting a couple of Beta installations. Everything I know is a lesson learned by doing it wrong the first time. So I, of course, can call myself ¾ pretty good at it by now.

In two cases, I've run the free Win 7 Compatibility program to anticipate what I may be missing or may have trouble with. The program gives you a pretty informative list. It warns you if there may be some initial problem with a device driver and may say that it should be fixed after a reboot. It will list all the devices it found and whether or not there's a driver for each. It also lists any software that may have problems if you're interested in upgrading from Vista.

If you're upgrading from XP (and I would only if it's a new PC), there is some very good help on this on the Microsoft Windows 7 page (the link is below). You can get all your mail, documents, favorites, address book and more by using the "Windows Easy Transfer" program. It's on the Win 7 Install DVD and is also downloadable for XP and Vista – both 32-bit and 64-bit.

http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/products/features/windows-easy-transfer

So here's more or less what I do now for a Win 7 installation from scratch, whether it's for myself or for a friend or customer.

Install the software and get the computer running. This is really the easy part. There are very few decisions to make, limited to entering your product key, logon name, password and computer name, selecting a public or private network and your time zone. Later if it detects other Windows 7 computers with a Home group name, it will ask for the Home group password. You'll need your network name, too.

Use Help. Now would be the time to say that the Windows 7 on-line help, tutorials and articles are endless and of excellent quality. So, if you don't know what a Home group is, there should be a link on the page to pull up the Help. To get started, you may want to go to http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-7/. Don't forget about Wikipedia, either. There's a mountain of information available there, too.

Refine the OS. The first thing is to see what issues must be addressed. There is an "Action Center." It's a flag in the System Tray and in Control Panel. It lists all current issues, including that you're missing antivirus programs. The Action Center will have suggestions as to how to fix each issue. Hopefully, most will just require a reboot to allow the OS to find a driver on its own.

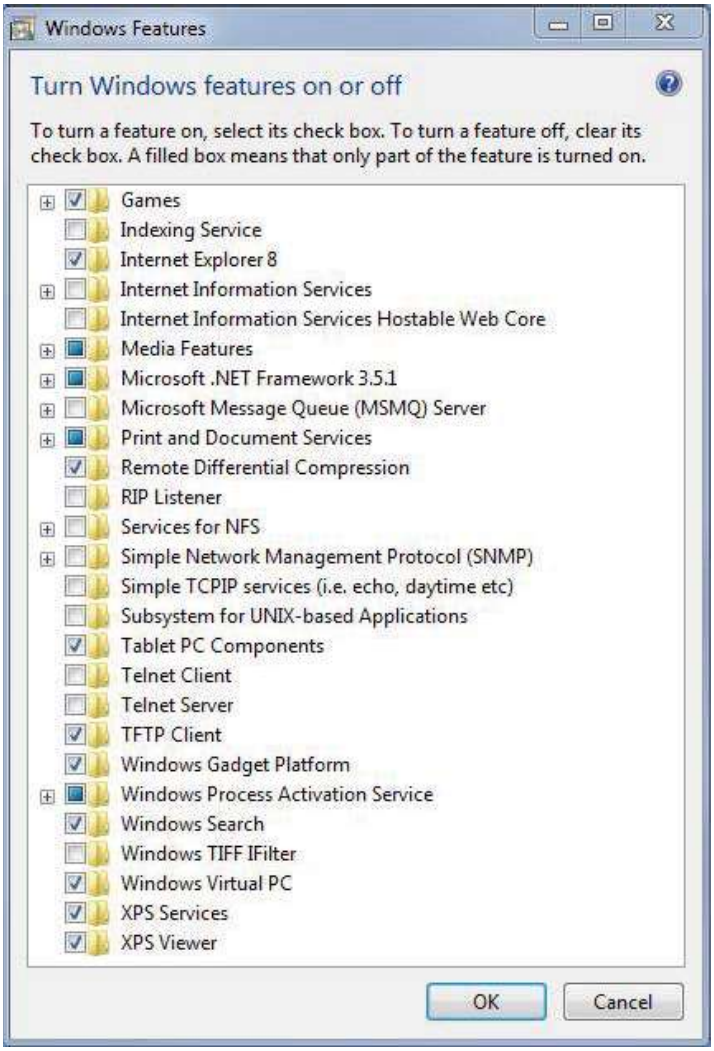
In the case of printer driver problems, you should know that there are many, many supported printers that are not listed in the driver selection where you pick out the model number. In my case I looked under Canon for my i850 inkjet, and it wasn't there. But there's a link you can click on that will update the list, and it goes to the Internet and downloads lots more. I've always resolved all my printer driver problems in this manner. You should know, though, that when I went out to update the printers, it was just the Canon printers because that's where I was in the list. I discovered that I couldn't find my Brother laser printer, until I updated that, too. That was certainly contrary to my expectations.

Look at the Device Manager to give you information about a device if you need more. You can always go out to the manufacturer to get drivers if necessary, but I've rarely needed to do that. Remember that if there's no Win 7 driver, then a Vista driver should work, and a Win XP driver will not. Go to the Windows 7 Solution Center for even more help: http://support.microsoft.com/gp/windows7#tab0

After you've resolved all the hardware problems – and obviously some could wait – you need to look at the OS. Go to Control Panel, Programs and Features, "Turn Windows features on or off." There you will

Windows 7.....Continued on page 4

get a pretty comprehensive list of everything available that it may have installed (checked) or not (unchecked). It depends on the version you have. My Win-7 Professional does not install any games by default, so I have to check that box. And I've been unchecking "Windows Media Center" (go figure). Be sure that you read the info flag that pops up on each one before changing a check box. For instance the one after Games is "Indexing Service," and maybe you want indexing, but this one is the service that was in the previous versions of Windows, and you don't want this one. The "Windows Search" near the bottom is what you need, and it is probably already checked. If you're planning to use Virtual PC XP Mode, you'll want the "Windows Virtual PC" checked. You'll need to look at all of it.



A final OK will configure the features, and pretty quickly, too.

Install AntiVirus. Get this done now. I've been using the free Microsoft Security Essentials, and I see that AVG has a major update –Rev.4- to AVG Free. I installed one of these just yesterday to try it out.

And if you've bought a new PC with Windows 7 – or Vista – it's time to make the recovery CDs or DVDs. Many new PCs have this in the Start Menu, and it should be done immediately.

More Windows components. OK it's time to get the missing programs like Outlook Express (actually now Windows Mail) that you may have discovered are missing. What you're looking for is "Windows Live Essentials." Each program is available individually or all together:

Messenger, Mail, Writer (a blog editor), Photo Gallery, Movie Maker, Family Safety (Internet site blocker for kids), Toolbar (I think this is MSN Toolbar).

Additionally these are available: Microsoft Office Outlook Connector, Office Live Add-in (this is "Cloud Computing" add-ins for IE) and Microsoft Silverlight (you need this one). All are available from http://download.live.com/, or from the Windows 7 page above.

More programs you'll need: I have kind of a minimum list of programs that I download and install, usually from http://download.cnet.com/windows/.
Imgburn – free dvd/cd/blu-ray read & write, ISO creator/burner. DVD support is built into Win-7, so do not spend money on CD Creator or Nero yet--until you see the need. There are many free products that may satisfy your needs.

1. **Foxit Reade**r – Free PDF reader. I use this as an alternative to Adobe Reader because it's faster and smaller. Adobe Reader does a lot of things I don't need.
2. **CutePDF** – A free printer driver that makes PDF files. Again, it doesn't have the capability of the Adobe products, but it does 100% of what I need.
3. **Paint.NET** – A free Paint & Photo program. I used

Windows 7.....Continued on page 5

Windows 7.....Continued from page 4

to use Paintshop Pro 9, but it's a little hard to deal with in 64-bit, and I really don't see the need to buy a new Corel Paintshop. Paint.NET is a very good substitute for these for the limited photo editing that I do.

4. **VLC** – Multimedia player from VideoLan. This doesn't have any codec problems, seems to play anything and it's small and fast to load, and it's free.
5. **7Zip** – This is a zip program that you can drag and drop from/to, kind of like a better WinZip. It has a very nice user interface. I'll admit that I use it rarely, only when I want to do RAR format or some of the more esoteric types. Zip file support is built into Windows Explorer and does a very good job.
6. **Dataram RAMDisk**. I use this RAMDisk because an Access database is blindingly fast when dropped in a 2 GB ramdisk. Having the extra memory is possible because I use the 64-bit version of Windows.
7. **Virtual Clonedrive** – Allows you to put an ISO file online so you can emulate reading from a CD or DVD. It's way faster than a CD/DVD drive.

And last, there's Virtual PC XP Mode. There are two downloads you must make. One is "WindowsXP-Mode_en-us.exe" at http://www.microsoft.com/windows/virtual-pc/download.aspx. This page has advice that should be carefully considered. The first step is to decide if you really need XP mode.

Now Tweak the System. Go to Control Panel, Sys-

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Internet Picture of the Month

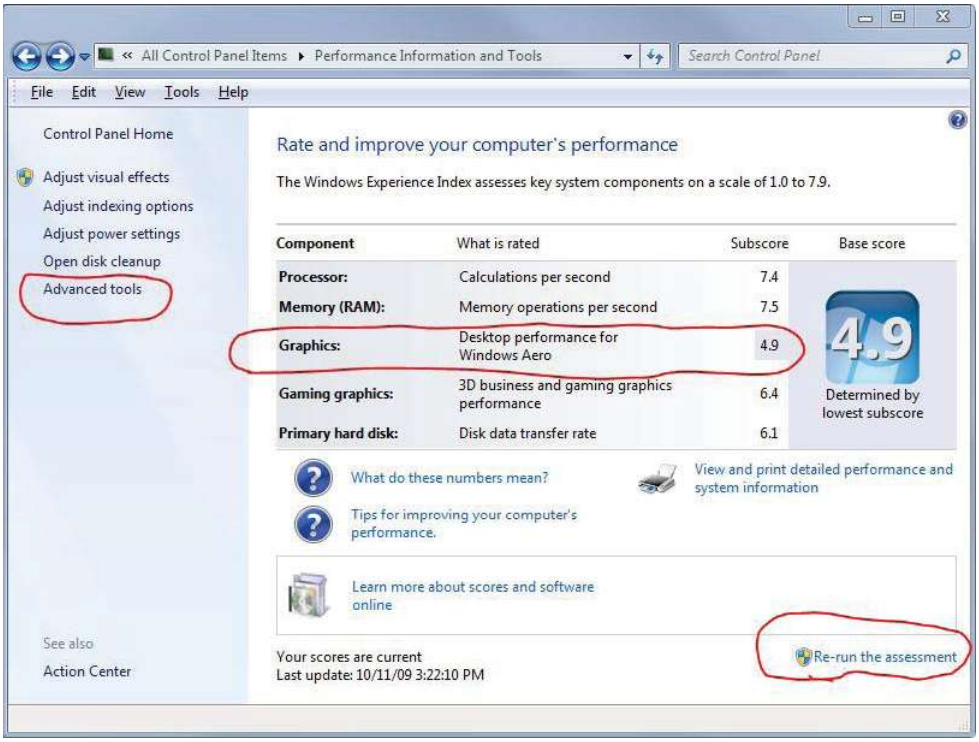


Dubailand

From the New York Times Lens section at http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/11/30/showcase-85/, we see what will probably be a failed real estate development. According to the Times, "Dubailand (is) a complex of theme parks and residential, retail and industrial centers to be completed in 2020" in the desert emirate of Dubai. It is a place that has hit a rough spot lately--not unlike some real estate developments in Florida. In fact, that arch looks a lot like the entrances to some "ranchet" projects I have seen in South Florida. This is a crop of the original photographed by Lauren Greenfield.

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
FoodSafety.gov	http://www.foodsafety.gov/
Airport Time and Distance Calculator	http://www.airportcitycodes.com/aaa/T&DCFrame.html
Denver Post	http://www.denverpost.com/
New York Times Lens	http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/

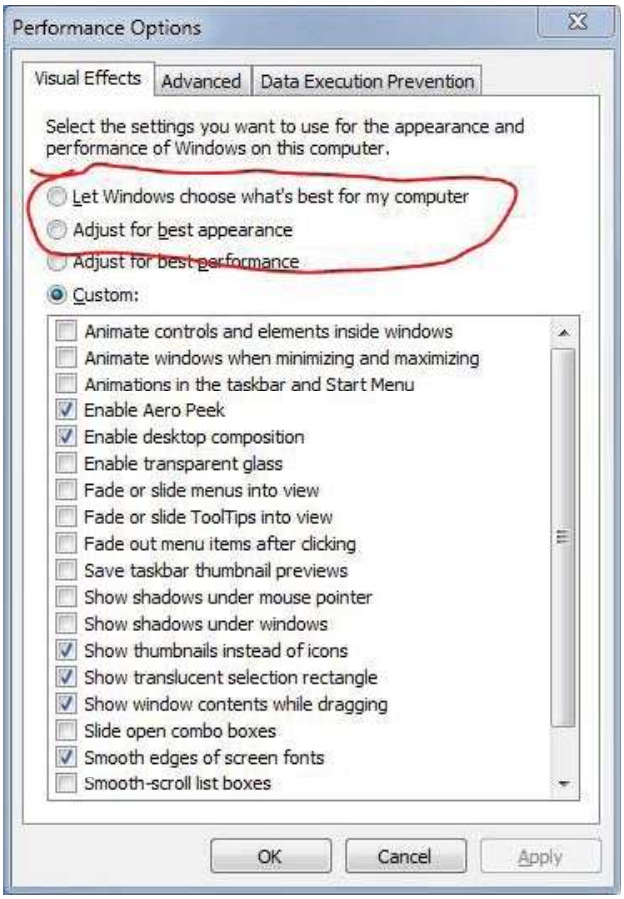


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tem, and see if there is a System Rating for Windows Experience Index. If it hasn't been done – there is no Base Score – then click on "Windows Experience Index" and find "Re-run the assessment." You're looking at a Settings page called "Performance Information and Tools"

It takes awhile to run but then gives you five subscores and a base score. You're interested in the Graphics Component. If that score is too low, it will restrict you from running Windows Aero and Aero Peek.

Now, make sure Aero is on. Click on "Advanced Tools." Unless the Graphics rating limits using Aero, check "Let Windows choose …" or "Adjust for Best Appearance." Then, as you work with Windows 7 for awhile, you may want to tune for performance a bit by unchecking some of the graphics features, as I have done. I look for those things that I don't care about anyway. I really don't care if menus fade or slide into view. Just remember how you got to this panel.



Now, just a couple more things to do.

Right-click on the Taskbar, select Properties, and look at the customization you can do to the Start Menu and the Taskbar. Be sure to look at Advanced Settings. There's a lot you can do that you'll like. I add "Computer as a menu," Network, Run Command, "Devices and Printers" and "Documents as a link." You can also regulate what items go into the "Notification Area;" the name was System Tray in XP. While you're here, be sure to check "Use Aero Peek to preview the desktop," and set "Power button Action." I have it as "Shut Down" because that's what I use it for 90% of the time.

Default Logon. If you want to turn on your machine and have it go to your desktop without halting for a password, you can easily do that, but it's hard to find. In Windows Explorer, go to c:\Windows\system32 folder and look for netplwiz.exe. Create a shortcut to this .exe and save it. I put it in the Start Menu under Accessories, System Tools. It should be named "Advanced User Accounts Control Panel." On the Users Tab, select your login name and uncheck the box "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer".

Set Clear Type. It doesn't

Windows 7.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

Orleans (1875 copy and translation of original);(3) 1900-1910 (date unsure) "Aerial View" of Manhattan; (4) 1884 Birds Eye View of Deland Florida.

He showed a group of COMDEX buttons that he had scanned and converted to PNG files and made the backgrounds transparent. The detailed background information of the button is revealed when you hover over the button. You can zoom in and out on each of the buttons to get a clear view of all of the fine points of the button itself. William showed an aerial view of a ranch that he and his sister had once owned. He used about 40 screen captures in Google Maps to construct an aerial view map of the property by piecing them together in Photoshop. He used Microsoft's Deep Zoom Composer to place 137 photos that had been taken on the property at the approximate locations where they were taken. He demonstrated how older maps can be overlaid on current maps to show the historical changes in locations. Two of the maps that he used were a current Hyde Park map, overlaid with 1915 and 1922 historic maps, and a map of Hillsborough County, overlaid with an 1882 historic map. He also showed three interactive maps that he had developed that showed cell tower locations, National Public Radio station locations and ship locations. William demonstrated how to construct a panorama using individual photographs. He showed a striking panorama of Davis Islands viewed from the west that he had composed. You can zoom in to a sharp picture of each house, including the famous Derek Jeter home currently under construction. All of the above projects and many more interesting ones that he has developed can be viewed on his web site, http://www.lamartin.com. The presentation ended at approximately 8:50 PM

John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of the meeting at approximately 9:00 PM. John announced that the meeting room will not be available on January 13th. The members agreed that **January 20th will be an acceptable alternate date. John said that we would again discuss and confirm the date at the December meeting.**

John discussed the proposed menu for the December meeting. The members confirmed that they had enjoyed last years dinner and that a menu similar to the one from last year would be desirable.

He reminded the members of the elections at the December meeting and again asked that anyone interested in any of the offices step forward. The meeting ended at approximately 9:10 PM. ◆

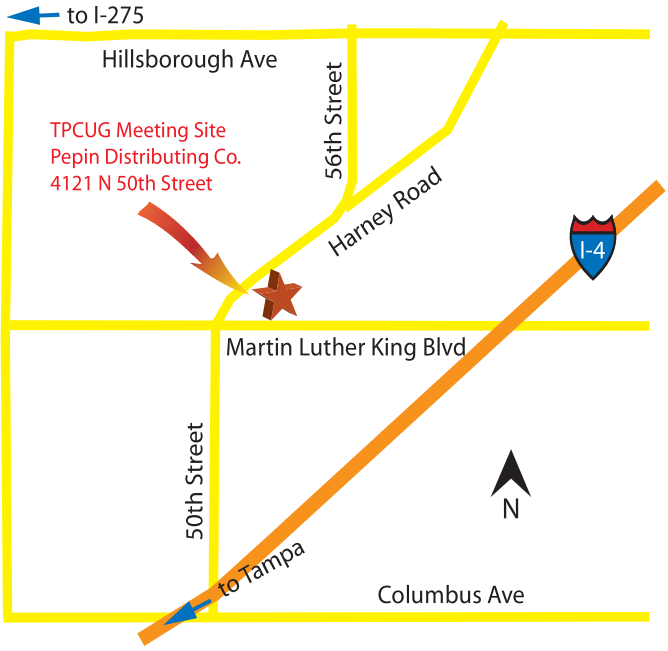
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seem possible that Clear Type is set off by default. Anyone with an LCD screen (all of us, right?) needs to use Clear Type and adjust its properties. Go to Control Panel, Fonts. On the left pane, select "Adjust Clear Type text." Select "Turn on Clear Type" and then Next. A step-by-step procedure comes up. It's easy and quick to do and can make all text on the screen dramatically clearer. The name of the Clear Type program is "C :\Windows\System32\cttune.exe." You can make a shortcut to that as well and keep it. Windows XP and Vista have this feature, too. XP is done through a "Powertoy" download program. ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 1 January 2010

January in Tampa

Meeting

Merle Nicholson
Win 7 Installation Tips

Wednesday January 13, 2010

6:30 PM

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Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Tips on installing Windows 7 by Merle Nicholson. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope included in your New Year's resolutions was one to send the editor at least one article for the newsletter this year. Eddie Rodriguez has already followed through on that this month by telling us in an article how much he likes his new iPhone. Have you ever met anyone who didn't like their iPhone?

Tax time is coming, and I just downloaded TurboTax Premier 2009 from Amazon. Last year I downloaded it from Newegg because they were cheaper; this year Amazon had the best price. Of course, I went through the Amazon link on our home page. Oddly at Intuit, the home of TurboTax, there doesn't seem to be an option to download a stand-alone version – only the ability to pay them to let you prepare your taxes online at their site. Anyway, the price of the program seems to go up a few dollars each year.

You never know when you will need something from an old computer. I have always brought over all my data files from a previous desktop computer to my new desktop computer. I

Comments.....Continued on page 5

February Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

John Witmer, our president, opened with a few remarks during the Christmas Party which began at 6:30. He gave a short summary of the December Board meeting and discussed the decision of the Board to auction all prizes of value at the end of the December Group meeting.

John turned the meeting over to Ron Weinberg, our member at large, who announced that the slate of candidates consisted of only the officers from 2009 since no one else had volunteered. He advised that anyone who desired to run for any of the offices could still be considered. When no one stepped forward, the following slate of officers was presented:

- For President: John Witmer
- For Vice President: Kevan Sheridan
- For Treasurer: Doug Mullis
- For Secretary: Jim Purcell
- For Member at Large: Ron Weinberg

A motion was made to accept this slate and to vote. All members present voted in favor. Terms of office begin January 1, 2010.

The results of the auction were as follows: Michele Burgess got the VIDEO EXPRESS (easy capture and movie creator) for $15; she also got the MAGIX Audio Cleaning 12 Lab (software) for $9; John Witmer got the ACRONIS Disk Director Suite 10 for $2; the following got TPCUG Tee Shirts – Doug Mullis, $5, Bruce Norton, $4, Michele Burgess, $5 and Debbie Whittaker, $4; Michele Burgess got the Norton Internet Security 2008 software for $1; Bruce and Nancy Norton each got the NORTON Tee Shirts for $3 each; David Gillespie got the SYSTEM MECHANIC PC Tune-up Software for $5 and TREND MICRO Internet Security 2008 also for $5. A total of $61 was received. ◆

New HP Laptop

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

It has been a long time since I wrote about a new laptop. My former one with Windows XP Professional served me well for 5.5 years, with an addition of memory and a new, larger hard drive along the way. It was the last of many Gateway computers I bought over the years and the only laptop I bought from Gateway. However, for the past year, it had become apparent that it was not up to handling all I was asking it to do involving Adobe Design Standard CS4 (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Acrobat Professional), along with Microsoft Office 2007 and Visual Studio 2008. Having several of these programs running simultaneously was just too much, as you probably noticed in my past presentations. I did use the new laptop in my presentation at the November meeting, having gotten it just a few days before. I was not fully familiar with Windows 7, but the laptop had no trouble handling all I threw at it.

Well, the new dv6t laptop from HP with Windows 7 Professional 64-bit and a very fast Quad Core i7 processor with six GB of RAM is really a change.

The specifications are:

Operating system	Genuine Windows 7 Professional 64-bit
Processor	Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-720QM Processor (1.6GHz, 6MB L2 Cache, 1333MHz FSB)
Memory	6GB DDR3 System Memory (2 Dimm)
Hard drive	500GB 7200RPM SATA Hard Drive with HP ProtectSmart Hard Drive Protection
Graphics card	1GB Nvidia GeForce GT 230M
Display	15.6” diagonal High Definition LED HP Brightview Widescreen Display (1366x768)
Optical drive	Lightscribe Blu-Ray ROM with SuperMulti DVD+/-R/RW Double Layer
Personalization	Webcam + Fingerprint Reader
Networking	Intel Wireless-N Mini-card with Bluetooth
Modem Port	Integrated 56K Modem

Additionally there are the following: External monitor port; Docking device port; RJ-45 network jack; HDMI port; 3 USB ports; 1394 (Firewire) port; eSATA/USB port; Express Card slot; Digital Media slot.

These specifications are considerably better than my desktop computer. The only thing I do not like is the wide screen display. That may be great for people who like to watch movies on their computer, but, for the type of work I do, it would be better to have a few more pixels in the vertical direction. All of the nice features come at a price, too: $1,608 plus tax, which, however, is about $900 less than I paid for that Gateway 450 XL laptop in February of 2004. So, this is hardly the $500 laptop many people are buying now. However, I do not run the same types of programs on my laptop that most people do.

When one gets a new computer, what should really be done first is to make the recovery CDs/DVDs so that you can recover the original setup in case of some catastrophe. Many people don’t do it and have to pay the manufacturer to provide such if they need them. I didn’t make them the first day I had the laptop, but I did the second.

The first day was devoted to getting acquainted with Windows 7 and installing the main programs I use. First on the list was to go on the Internet to Microsoft and download their free security software called Microsoft Security Essentials. It may be found at http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials/. The second thing done was the installation of Microsoft Office Ultimate 2007. This went without a hitch, with only the product key needed. Microsoft didn’t seem to care that I already had it installed on my desktop computer and my previous laptop (I will probably never use it again on the old laptop). Either next or a bit later I exported my Outlook contacts list on my desktop computer, brought it over to the new laptop via the Wireless LAN and imported it into Outlook on the laptop. I didn’t want to bring over all the email messages or the calendar. To finish with Outlook on the laptop, I set up the three email accounts I use.

What to install next? I think my next installation was the Adobe Design Standard CS4 suite of programs (Acrobat, Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign). Here is where you see the difference between Adobe and Microsoft. Unlike Microsoft, which seems to only ask you not to install their programs on more than two computers, a desktop and a laptop, Adobe enforces it.

Laptop.....Continued on page 4

Laptop.....Continued from page 3

You can install the Adobe products on as many computers as you like, it appears, but you can only have a product activated on two computers at the same time. So, here is a warning: If you are going to uninstall one of these programs from a computer, first deactivate it from the Help tab of the program. For if you do not and then uninstall the program, you have no way of deactivating it on the computer without contacting Adobe. I didn't want to uninstall all the programs in the CS4 suite from the old laptop, but I did need to deactivate all of them. So I did that, and then I was able to activate them on the new laptop. For this installation, I also had to supply an earlier disk of one of the programs since what I was installing was an upgrade version. As an aside, the installation installs both a 32-bit and a 64-bit version of Photoshop.

Next on the list was the installation of the Microsoft Expression Studio 3 Suite, consisting of Expression Blend, Expression Design, Expression Web and Expression Encoder. Again, all that was required here was a product key, although the suite was installed on both my desktop computer and the old laptop. And I don't think I was asked for an old disk even though what I was installing was, again, an upgrade version. But I am not positive about that.

The final one of my main programs to be installed was Microsoft Visual Studio 2008, in which I do all of my programming and some of my web work. That would also have been an upgrade version, and I don't' recall whether or not I had to provide a previous disk, which would have been interesting since 2008 is at least the third upgrade I have in the Visual Studio series.

With the major programs installed, I then created the recovery disks mentioned earlier. This may vary by computer manufacturer, but, on the HP laptop, I went to Start | All Programs | Recovery Manager | Recovery Disk Creation. It took Three DVDs. If you use CDs, it would be a lot more, so I recommend the DVD route. You only get one chance to do this, and the program will verify each DVD after it is created. In my case, the third DVD was found defective and had to be made again.

At some point in all of this, I let the computer do a Windows update to receive all the changes since the operating system was installed by HP. I also did updates for all the programs installed so far.

Next on the list was the installation of the minor programs I use. Several of these programs I demonstrated at the presentation I gave to the Group at our November meeting. The programs are:

Microsoft Deep Zoom Composer
Microsoft Image Composition Editor
Microsoft MapCruncher
The Firefox browser
Microsoft Pro Photo Tools
Acronis True Image Home
Drivers for my Canon portable scanner
Drivers for the two printers I use
Drivers for my Wacom Tablet
Microsoft SQL Server 2008 and its management tools

Finally, I installed Microsoft Internet Information Servicer (IIS). Actually, from Control Panel | Programs and Features, I turned it on in the "Turn Windows features on or off" option. IIS is a web server running on your computer. Most people have no use for it; the same for Microsoft SQL server. I use IIS to test web sites locally. SQL Server is a server-based database that I also use in web work (as well as locally sometimes) that I can access via my Visual Studio-created programs or web sites. All this is certainly stuff of no interest to the average user.

For the few who are interested in this, there are some gotchas in setting up IIS. You really need to create the virtual directories, set them as applications and set permissions for the IIS_IUSR account and the NETWORK SERVICE account properly before importing any web sites into them. If you do it in reverse order – that is, import the site and then try to set the properties – you will have to set all the sub folders individually, which is quite a pain.

About all that now remained was to import any data files I wanted: Word documents, Excel sheets, Access databases, InDesign publications, Photoshop files, etc.

Laptop.....Continued on page 5

Laptop.....Continued from page 4

This was done via the Wireless LAN, which Windows 7 had set up automatically. I think the only thing I did was give the new laptop a name, create a login name and password for myself and set the computer to be in the same workgroup as the other computers in the house. Oh, I did one more thing: I set up the fingerprint reader so as not to have to type in a password at login.

Merle gave me a Bluetooth mouse to use with the laptop, and it is nice not to have cables attached for a mouse. So if you can, make sure you have Bluetooth on your next computer. The laptop also has a built-in webcam, and I figured out how to use that with the HP software. However, I am not sure I want to use it since it does nothing for my appearance. To get a decent image, you really need to position the laptop and yourself so that the lighting is optimal. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

don't worry about that with laptops, since I don't keep a lot of data files on them, and, in any case, they are just duplicates of what I have on my current desktop computer. What these old computers have, however, that is not on a newer computer is old versions of programs. And it just so happened I needed an old version of either Microsoft Word or Publisher. Let me explain why.

My sister had corresponded with a lady, perhaps ten years back, who sent her some images of old wills, promissory notes, etc., that were of interest to her genealogical research. These files had a suffix of .mix, apparently a file type for which both ladies at the time had programs that would create and open these files. However, none of the computers I currently use contained any program that would open them. So I did a bing search to find out about this file type. What I found was "Microsoft Image extension (.mix) is

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Laid Off in 2009

From the online Wall Street Journal at http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/2009_in_photos.html. This photo by Jim Watson of the crowd listening to a speech by President Obama given in September on Wall Street is one of a collection of photos from 2009 at the site.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Free Online Math Calculator & Converter	http://www.easycalculation.com/
Check Airline Prices	http://www.airfarewatchdog.com/
Watch TV and Movies using Hulu	http://www.hulu.com/
Start Up Items in MSConfig	http://www.sysinfo.org/startuplist.php
Sending Big Files Via Email	http://email.about.com/od/sendbigfilesviaemail/tp/send_big_files.htm

The iPhone – A Wonderful Smartphone

By Eddie Rodriguez, Tampa PC Users Group
Eddie2020@gmail.com

During the holiday season – my wife gave me a wonderful gift, the Apple iPhone. I am thrilled to have this phone, and I'm still learning all the features that it has. The newest iPhone comes in two standards – a 16 GB memory or a 32 GB memory. The price difference between the phones is $100. The 16 GB can be purchased from AT&T for $199, or the 32 GB can be purchased for $299; both require a two year contract. I think that 16 GB is plenty of memory for what most people want to do. I have the 16 GB phone that runs on the 3GS network from AT&T.

The phone comes with a number of free and fee-based applications. The fee-based applications can be purchased at a nominal cost. For example, the prices can range from $0.99 to 12.99.

I always wanted a phone that would do everything – including unlimited access to the Internet. Additionally, you have access to thousands of applications that increase the productivity of the phone. For example, the phone comes with a 3-megapixels camera and also a video camera. However, you can download applications for a 5-megapixels camera and also an application that gives you a black-and-white camera. Besides the 3-megapixels camera, other standard features include: "You Tube," "iTunes," Calculator," "Voice Memos," "Weather," "Clock," "Google Maps," "Stocks Tracker," "Notes," and a GPS. The phone also has an applications store where you can review and download free or fee-based applications. Some fee based applications include CNN, a 5-megapixels camera and Time magazine for $0.99. Free applications include "Skype," "New York Times," "Gas Buy," etc. "Gas Buy" shows you where you can buy gas at the lowest price and the distance to the gas station.

The best thing that I like about the iPhone is its simplicity. All applications are integrated, so navigating though the applications is very easy. Also you can take a picture or video and immediately e-mail it.

The total cost of owning an iPhone is the discounted purchase price of the phone with a 2-year contract ($200 or $300) and the monthly fee to have unlimited access to the Internet. The cost for the access is $30.00 a month in addition to the cost of your plan with AT&T. You can also purchase the iPhone from the Apple store or AT&T without a 2-year contract for $400 (16 GB) or $600 (32 GB).

Another interesting feature of the iPhone is its iPod. You can upload (from a computer) songs from CDs or purchase them from the iTunes store. And you can sort the songs by artist or by song title. With the 16 GB version of the iPhone, you can upload hundreds of songs. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 5

a closed proprietary (non-standard) format used by Microsoft's PictureIt! and PhotoDraw." Furthermore, I found that it had not been supported since around 2001 or 2002. So, how to open such a file? The only method I found was that I should open Word and insert the image into a Word Document. On my Windows 7 laptop with Word 2007, that produced an error message. On my XP desktop computer with both Word 2007 and Word 2003, Word 2007 said in order to do the insert I needed to install a certain graphic filter that could be obtained from the Microsoft Publisher 2002 CD. Unfortunately, I couldn't find that CD. It is probably packed away in my garage where I put software I don't want to throw away but will probably never use again. Then I thought of the old laptops I had around.

I selected one that was a couple laptops back. When I booted it, I first had to set the system date and time. After that, it booted into windows 98 just fine. I opened what turned out to be Word 2000. Previously I had transferred one of the .mix files to the old laptop via a floppy disk, since I couldn't find the dongle that attached to the PCMCIA network card that used to connect this laptop to the LAN. I then tried to insert the file into a Word document and again received a notice that a graphic filter was needed, but this time it said to insert the Microsoft Office 2000 Premium CD.

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Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

SMART COMPUTING SUBSCRIPTION DEAL

By John Witmer, President, Tampa PC Users Group
JWITMER@Pepindist.com

Smart Computing Magazine has notified TPCUG (and all other participating user groups) that they are terminating the "Buy 5, Get 1 Free" incentive that has been available to us for the past six plus years. The magazine will continue to be published, but the company apparently needs to cut back on some of its expenses/programs.

Smart Computing has provided TPCUG with three free subscriptions to thank us for our past participation in their program. In addition, we have five free subscriptions remaining that have been earned and accumulated over the past couple of years. As part of the termination process, Smart Computing has set a deadline of April 1st to redeem all these eight subscriptions.

As you know, TPCUG has used these free subscriptions in the past as part of our fund-raising activities via door prizes. At the December holiday party meeting, we disposed of all our other door prize items by auctioning off the ones with value and giving away those that couldn't be sold. The Smart Computing subscriptions were not included in this process at the party, as we were planning to utilize them for additional fund-raising purposes. Now that the Smart Computing incentive program has ended, and we face a deadline to utilize the eight subscriptions that we have, we are proposing the following incentive deal to our members, which will benefit both the Group and the member who is interested in saving on his or her subscription.

We are offering to our dues-paid membership, on a first-come, first-served basis, the opportunity to buy one of the available 1-year subscriptions at a price of $15.00, which is 50% off the regular renewal rate. This offer is limited to one subscription per member/household; if we are not able to have all eight subscriptions sold under these terms, we will open the process to allow multiple subscriptions closer to the deadline.

If you already have an existing subscription, you should be able to extend it an additional 12 months with the purchase of one of these subscriptions under this offer. You also have the option to use your purchased subscription for a gift to a friend or family member if you choose.

If you are interested in purchasing one of these eight subscriptions for $15.00, please send an email to confirm your intention to: President@tpcug.org. As was mentioned above, they will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis, based on receipt of your email request. Thanks for supporting your Tampa PC Users Group. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 6

I had that one, so I did that and was able to insert the image into a Word document.

Success, but now I had to do this for about 20 files. I first burned all the files to a CD on my desktop computer, then inserted this disk into the CD drive of the Win 98 laptop and went about the process of inserting each of them into a new Word document and saving it.

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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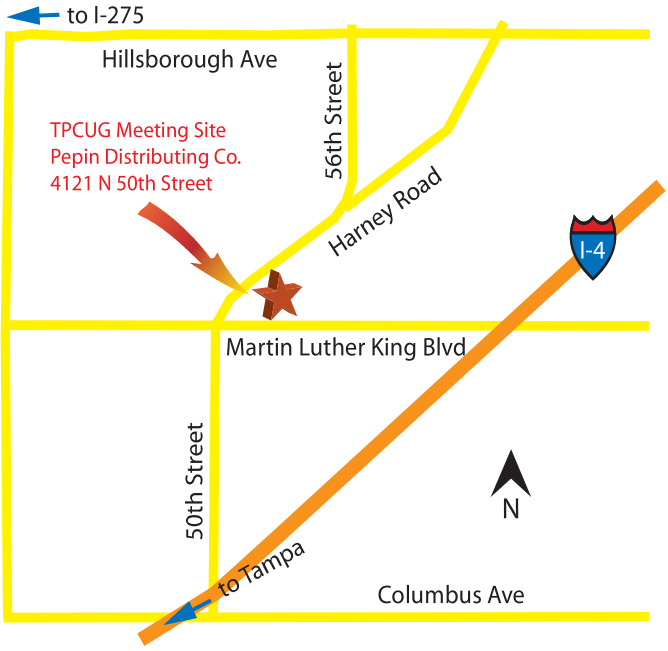
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 7

Now I had the problem of getting them off the Win 98 laptop without a CD burner or a network connection. The only thing I could think of was putting two at a time onto a floppy and then inserting that floppy into my desktop computer to copy the files. For 20 files, this took a bit more than 10 repeats of the process since sometimes only one file would fit on a floppy. As a footnote to this, I found the dongle a few days later so that the old laptop could connect to the LAN.

What you should learn from this is that, if you have any files in strange formats, save them in a format that you think will be around in years to come. If my sister had saved all of these .mix files as either .jpg or .tif file types, then there would not have been a problem.

Comparing that old laptop to my current laptop is like comparing a Model T to a new BMW. The Win 98 laptop was a ThinkPad 385XD-LEU with a 233 MHz processor, 3.2 GB hard drive, 64 MB RAM and a 12.1" screen. It had a USB port (which wouldn't recognize a Thumb drive) and a CD ROM drive. The new Win 7 laptop specifications are listed in the article on page 3 of this newsletter. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 3 March 2010

March in Tampa

Meeting

Michelle Burgess

will demonstrate

FaceBook & Twitter

Wednesday March 10, 2010

6:30 PM

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Member Michelle Burgess will tell us about Facebook and Twitter. Member Bob LaFave will do the usual Windows SIG meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

In my article in this newsletter, I describe two problems with my desktop computer I had this past month that took about four days of my life to solve. The first involved an Acronis full system backup that would freeze the computer, although such a backup worked fine several weeks previous.

The second problem was that I discovered any email sent from my computer or any other computer on the LAN in my house was being labeled as spam by at least two important Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and deposited in the recipients SPAM folder, which they never saw. The ISPs were EarthLink and Verizon. I was particular galled by Earthlink's labeling me as a spammer since I have had an EarthLink email account for 15 years – before there even was an EarthLink. It was with Net-Com, which was absorbed by EarthLink many years back.

My only guess as to how I got labeled a spammer is that several times a week I send about 300 emails to residents of my neighborhood who have provided their emails for that purpose. Read the article for details. ◆

April Meeting: To be announced

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Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

John Witmer, our president, opened the meeting at 6:40 PM. He reported on a discussion that we had at our last Board meeting concerning the content of presentations at our monthly meetings. It remains difficult to attract outside presentations on subjects that are of interest, or that we think are of interest, to our members. He said that our Board members' discussion led us to believe that it would be productive to learn members' exact interests so that we can better concentrate our efforts. He asked the members to complete a survey that Member-at-Large Ron Weinberg had designed to gather their interests. John announced that we had no presentation at present for March but Blain Barton from Microsoft is scheduled to be at the April meeting and a genealogy expert will discuss the latest available genealogy software at the May meeting. He announced that the rest of the February meeting would be devoted to the Windows SIG and a follow-on discussion led by Bob LaFave, Merle Nicholson and Steve Singer.

Bob LaFave opened the Windows SIG at 6:45 PM. A member began the discussion with a remote mouse problem. The discussion included possible cause of the problem, such as a need for a line of sight between the mouse and the wireless or Bluetooth source on the computer, the class of the Bluetooth device and also the number of devices that are competing for space on the channel. There was an extended discussion of problems with sound on video recordings, and their solutions. Ron Weinberg had a problem with MSN Mail's not allowing attachments with pictures to be opened. The problem was suspected of being related to the selection of security options, but no one was able to locate the specific setting. There was a discussion of crashed external drives and how to check the various conditions that may have caused the problem. One member asked for advice on reformatting her "C" drive. The discussion of methods included advice on the use of SATA drives. Merle Nicholson suggested that she should buy a new hard drive and use it as the "C" drive. The advantages and disadvantages of "Solid

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

SSDs – Solid State Drives

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
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Newer and faster hard drives are developing rapidly with the use of Solid State Drives (SSD) in various forms for the end consumer. You may find it worthwhile to investigate these for your own use.

SSDs use a technology similar to memory in flash drives. The on-board program is different, however, to allow for faster, larger and more efficient storage of data.

There are notebooks and high-end desktop computers available right now with SSDs already installed. The most prominent ones are the Eee PCs from ASUS. Most of the early ones have drives mounted on an internal card and are very small, sometimes only 8 GB, just barely enough space to install an operating system. They've gotten larger, of course, as the cost/size ratio gets smaller.

There are several reasons to consider SSDs. First, they are fast. Very fast - like Spaceball One's ludicrous speed in the movie Spaceball. I've seen some claims that have OS load times down to ten or twenty seconds. Second, they use very little power, an important feature for notebooks, and, third, they're shock resistant, in case you're prone to dropping your notebook.

SSDs are sold in several forms. The most common by far is a device that is exactly the size of a notebook SATA drive (2-1/2" size). If you want to install this in a desktop machine, there are several adapters that will allow inexpensive mounting in a 3-1/2" standard mounting bay. The connectors and placement of the connectors are identical to notebook hard drives, so installing them in a docking station or enclosure made for notebook drives is no problem.

Forms and typical prices (2010) are:

- Mini PCIe – For netbooks, mostly, like Eee PC, 64 GB $165
- ZIF Socket – a 1" notebook drive (I'd never heard of this myself) 16 GB $55
- PCIe - For internal desktop systems. 250G $1,275, 512 GB $2,000, 1 TB $4,000. This type is by far the fastest – more than four times faster than notebook drives.
- USB and SATA – 120 GB $350
- Express Card (Notebook Slot) – 16 GB $65 (relatively very slow)
- SATA II Notebook internal drive – 30 GB $130, 120 GB $365, 250 GB $700, 500 GB 3-1/2" $1700.
- PATA – For older notebooks made before SATA became widespread. 64 GB $195, 128 GB $400. Again – relatively slow.

Except for the price, there really is no downside to these devices. Even the slowest of these – and there's quite a range of data speeds – are faster than mechanical drives. There were some initial problems when they first came out: a "stuttering" problem and a dwindling available space. There were (are) some problems with earlier operating systems. All of these have been fixed now for Windows 7. Windows 7 came out recognizing SSDs and utilizing them optimally. There are solutions to problems with XP and Vista on manufacturers' forums, but they should probably be left to experts – if you can find one. Best thing is to simply use Windows 7.

Interestingly, you should never defrag an SSD. I've read that Windows 7 turns off defragging for SSDs, but there's probably nothing keeping you from using other defraggers. But if you do, you'll shorten the life of the drive. Basically, there is no such thing as a fragmented SSD. It's all equally fast all across the drive, and defragging just moves the data back over the most-used part, the very last thing you want in an SSD. Its total life depends on spreading the data out and using the unused parts as much as possible.

And while we're at it, let's address lifespan. I've looked at many of these to see what the MTBF rating is. (Mean Time Between Failures – See Wikipedia for MTBF). A few are rated for greater than 500,000 hours, but many – or most – are rated greater than 1,000,000 to greater than 1,500,000 hours. Well, that's

SSDs.....Continued on page 7

Two Computer Problems and Four Days

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

The last week of February was a real rough computer week for me. First, it appeared that my desktop computer's hard drive was going bad. Then, after that was sorted out, I discovered that email I sent to people using Verizon and EarthLink was being labeled as SPAM. It basically took two days to solve each problem. Of course, every cloud has a silver lining in that I learned a bit and I have something to write about in this newsletter.

That something might be amiss with my computer's hard drive surfaced when I went to bed with the computer doing an Acronis True Image backup and woke the next morning to find my computer frozen with a blank desktop. I rebooted the computer and checked the external drive where the backup was to be and noted it was only 39 GB instead of the usual 300 GB. Oddly, Acronis had marked it as a successful backup on its calendar but did not recognize it when I tried to open the file. So I deleted that file and that evening ran the backup process again. Next morning, the result was the same.

To try to isolate the problem, I then had Acronis do a backup of just my data files. Now, this is not a simple copy and paste but rather the creation of the type of image that Acronis does. I kept an eye on what Acronis was doing. After less than an hour, when I tried to move the mouse, it wouldn't move and the computer was again frozen although everything looked OK on the screen.

Time to see if a little housekeeping on the computer would fix things. On the computer's C drive and the external drive, I did both a chkdsk /f and a defrag. While good things to do, they didn't solve the problem. I then began to worry about my data. Although I had been copying the most recent versions of many of the data files I used to a different external drive, the computer had not had an Acronis image made of the entire C drive in almost a month. That meant there were a fair number of photos from my camera on the hard drive and in my email correspondence for the past month that hadn't been backed up. Then there were the changes I had made to the local versions of my web sites. So I needed to get these things on some of my external drives if my hard drive was going bad, as it seemed to be. What other reason for all of a sudden not being able to do an Acronis image.

My first action was to find the location of my Outlook folder containing the pst file and copy that folder to an external drive. That meant that I had all my emails, contacts and calendar saved. Then I copied my Nikon temp folder to the external drive. The Nikon temp folder is where I accumulate the most recent images I have downloaded from my camera. Finally, I decided to just copy all of the My Documents folder to the external drive since I was not really sure what files in it had not been backed up recently.

Well, the copying process started and went along for less than an hour and then came to a halt. I don't recall the exact error message other than it could not continue the copy. To get to the root of the problem, I deleted all the files on the external drive that it had copied there and then started the copying over. This time I copied just a few sub folders of My Documents at a time so as to get my data copied and to catch where the problem occurred. Eventually I reproduced the error message. I then found that one particular folder couldn't be copied. I discovered I could copy everything in that folder to another folder on the C drive, or to the external drive, so I got all of its data copied. I then deleted the folder on the C drive and proceeded to copy everything else in My Documents to the external drive with no problem. As best I could figure, something must have been wrong with the drive's file allocation table information for that folder.

That discovery opened the possibility that, with the bad folder removed, I could now do an Acronis backup. And that was the case. I ran Acronis and after 4.5 hours I had a completed Acronis backup. My hard drive is apparently fine, and the computer was working well except for the Acronis backup problem. It would be nice if Acronis had some way to indicate at exactly what point a backup goes wrong and then gracefully exit the backup process instead of freezing

Problems.....Continued on page 6

CITY OF TAMPA
HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL &
ELECTRONICS COLLECTION

Held twice a year on the last Saturday
in April and October.
Saturday, April 24, 2010
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

In the Vacant parking lot on the South side of Bird Street (exit I-275 N @ Bird Street)

Materials accepted include:
*Paints and solvents
*Used motor oil
*Automotive products
*Pool chemicals
*Mercury containing devices, such as fluorescent light bulbs & thermometers
*Lawn, garden and household chemicals
*Electronics, including computer monitors, printers, CPU's, keyboards, and televisions

NO EXPLOSIVE, RADIOACTIVE OR
BIO-MEDICAL WASTES ACCEPTED

RESIDENTIAL HOUSEHOLD
WASTE ONLY

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL:
CITY OF TAMPA
SOLID WASTE DEPARTMENT
PHONE 348-1111

Internet Picture of the Month



Kluge House

From the Wall Street Journal's online real estate section at http://www.online.wsj.com, we have a nice home owned by a lady named Kluge with 300 acres near Charlottesville, Virginia, that has been reduced 52% in price to 48 million dollars from the original asking price of 100 million dollars. It is 23,500 sq. feet with eight bedrooms and 13 baths. Now is the time to buy while prices are low.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Spamhaus Project	http://www.spamhaus.org/sbl/index.lasso
Computer Power User	http://www.computerpoweruser.com
PC Magazine	http://www.pcmag.com/
Maximum PC	http://www.maximumpc.com/
Smart Computing	http://www.smartcomputing.com
Bank Routing Numbers	http://www.gregthatcher.com/Financial/Default.aspx

Problems.....Continued from page 4
the computer.

Now to my second problem of the month – disappearing emails. I am sure all of us have been told that emails we were sure we had sent were not received by the intended recipient, so we just resend the email, they receive it and all is fine. Or we tell the person to look in their junk email folder, and it is found there because we put some combination of words in the email that turned it to junk. Recently though things got a bit more serious with email at our house.

My wife mentioned to our son an email she had sent him, and he said he had not received it. She sent a couple more, and he didn't receive them. A little investigation showed that the emails from my main Road Runner (RR) account to his MindSpring account, which is now part of EarthLink, were being put in his known SPAM folder at EarthLink webmail and being immediately deleted since that is the default setting. As soon as he changed the setting, emails from our house started accumulating in the known SPAM folder and were not deleted.

Although my wife was using my main RR account, what was especially interesting was that I couldn't even send him an email using my NetCom account, which I have had for 15 years and which is now part of EarthLink. In fact, I couldn't even send from my NetCom account to itself without the message being deposited in my EarthLink known SPAM folder. EarthLink suggested that my son mark my emails to him as not SPAM and this should clear up the problem – which it didn't. Neither did my so marking my emails allow me to send a message to myself.

I also found that any messages from my computer to anyone on Verizon would not appear in their Inbox. I had a serious problem. Over two days, I spoke on the phone with EarthLink and my ISP, RR. I also corresponded with them via online chats. In addition, I corresponded with the web-hosting company for my neighborhood's web site, which I manage and through which I send email messages to all in the neighborhood for whom we have emails (around 300), since I also discovered I couldn't use the email account I had through their email server to send messages. It was even worse at the neighborhood's webmail site. Any message I sent simply disappeared – not even ending up in anyone's known SPAM folder. None of these providers had a solution. I asked them if they were blocking my messages, and the answer was no, if messages were blocked, I'd receive a bounce-back message to that effect. So some of my messages were being treated as SPAM and some just disappeared.

I decided that the IP address that RR provided to me, just like your ISP provides you when you connect to the Internet, was on some SPAM list. I had the same IP address for as long as I can recall. Years back, when I first used RR, I would keep the same address for just a few days and then receive a new one. That apparently changed at some point. More than a year ago, to send a message to a friend at a German university I had to switch to sending his mail through the email server at one of my web sites. Thus, I could have had the same address for well over a year, and that could have been when the problem really began.

What I needed was a new IP assigned to me by RR. Of course, the RR help fellow was not sure how to make that happen. He did suggest that I take power away from the cable modem and then repower it. But I knew that wouldn't work, since I had done that many times to reset the modem when there had been problems. It always came back with the same IP. Then I got an idea – I disconnected the cable modem from the router and connected it directly to my computer. I then checked to see what my wan IP address was – and it was a new one – and I could send emails to EarthLink and they arrived correctly. Unfortunately, when I reconnected my computer to the router and the router to the cable modem, I had that old problem IP address back. The cable modem had a memory.

Thanks to a web search, I found that I should go into the router's setup and change the MAC number by one digit while the cable modem was powered down and then to power the cable modem back up. The modem would think a new device was attached and assign a new IP, which it did. And I could again send emails. Problem solved!

Now that the problem is solved for me, what about anyone who might be assigned my old IP address by RR. Perhaps they will do an Internet search and find this article. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

FOR THE YEAR 2009

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2009 INCOME	
MEMBERSHIPS	$840.00
DOOR PRIZES	$166.00
AMAZON & MISC	$268.40
TOTAL INCOME:	$1,274.40
2009 EXPENSES	
NEWSLETTER POSTAGE	$281.60
NEWSLETTER PAPER	$74.88
WEBSITE DOMAIN REG-3 YRS	$86.97
FACUG DUES	$25.00
APCUG DUES	$50.00
FLA INCORPORATION FEE	$61.25
WEB SITE HOSTING FEE	$225.23
PO BOX RENTAL	$118.00
DEC HOLIDAY PARTY	$186.23
REFRESHMENTS - COOKIES	$52.84
PAYPAL FEES	$5.95
MISCELLANEOUS	$0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES:	$1,167.95
NET INCOME FOR 2009	$106.45
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS BEGINNING OF 2009	$5,989.85
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS END OF 2009	$6,096.30

RECONCILIATION OF BANK STATEMENT TO BOOK BALANCE:

Balance per BANK STMT at 12-31-09	$6,159.63
Deduct: Outstanding checks written as of 12/31/09	
Check #810 to William LaMartin	$(63.33)
Balance per BOOKS at 12-31-09 is this amount:	$6,096.30

SSDs.....Continued from page 3

not forever. But mechanical hard drives are good for about three years, and there's no reason to think SSDs have a shorter life. Indeed, think of this: When your computer is on, that mechanical drive is probably spinning when idle, wearing out the motor and bearings. There's no equivalent to that in SSDs.

One more observation. An SSD mostly reads blazingly fast. So you should expect dramatic changes in the time it takes to read in the Operating System on startup, or read a large video for editing, or pull from a large database, or edit JPEGs. But the write times are usually much less, especially in small writes. So, while loading programs and data is fast, it may not be so noticeable while you're working with your software. It probably will not do a thing for cruising the Internet or editing a document. Overriding that, though, is a longer battery operation for notebooks, but not a dramatic improvement because the hard drive is only one of the heavy use components in a notebook.

And please, do not consider an SSD for a system with limited RAM installed. Address the RAM problem first – at least 2 GB, but 4 GB or 6 GB is even better, depending on where your interest lies regarding software. ◆

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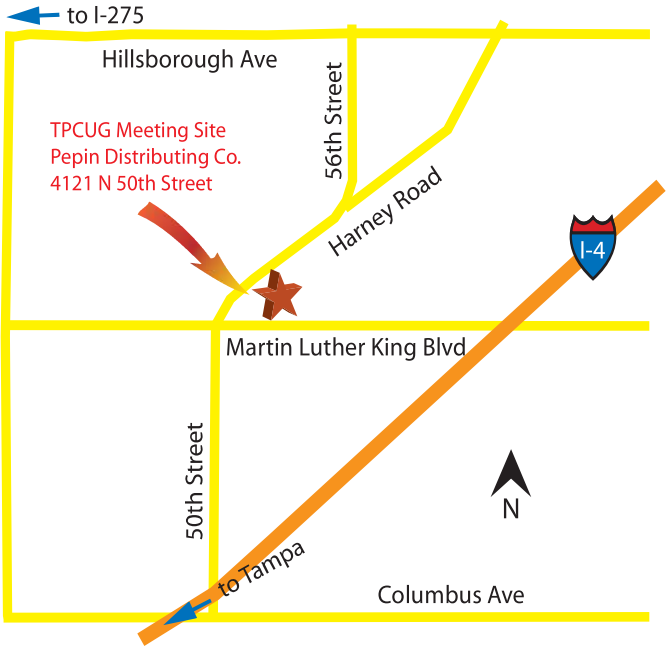
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

State" hard drives were discussed. The deliberation on Windows 7's advantages and disadvantages began at 7:50 PM. Bob opened the session by showing some of the features that he has gained by installing Windows 7. Steve Singer recommends installing one of the 64-bit versions if your PC supports a virtual installation. The Virtual XP Mode that you can download at no cost is very flexible and will probably allow you to use older versions of software and older peripherals that won't work on a 64-bit system. You also must have either Windows 7 Professional or Ultimate to use the Virtual XP Mode. There is a procedure called "God Mode" that makes most features accessible in one folder. There are many features in Windows 7 that have not been publicized by Microsoft. Bob closed the Windows 7 session at 8:45 PM.

John Witmer, in closing, mentioned that some of the Smart Computing subscriptions are still available for half price ($15.00). The meeting ended at 8:50 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 2 February 2010

February in Tampa

Meeting

Extended Windows SIG with Merle Nicholson & Bob Lafave

Wednesday February 10, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Bring your Windows questions for Merle and Bob in this extended Windows SIG meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Another month, another newsletter. And thanks to Ed Purcell, we have some content this month. Additionally, I did a review of the latest version of Family Tree Maker. I know several members of the TPCUG use this program. If space had permitted, I would have gone more deeply into using the online resources that come with the program. The US Federal Censuses are available through 1930 and searchable, where you can download an image of any page in which you have an interest. The same is true for many city directories. I have found useful information in the directories for New York City, New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Unfortunately, there is no city directory for Tampa in their collection. In addition, it appears that most of the directories included for Florida cities are only for the 1940s. I think the reason for this is that they are using these directories as a substitute for the 1940 Federal Census, which is not yet available to the public. In time, I am sure, many more cities and dates will be added. There is so much more genealogical available online now than just a few years back. If there is interest, perhaps we can have a future meeting on using Family Tree Maker. ◆

March Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The meeting began at approximately 6:35 PM. Bob LaFave opened the SIG meeting with a discussion of problems that a member was having connecting to a router. Several possibilities were discussed, and Bob suggested a solution for the member to try. Merle recommended that he not add any utilities such as Network Magic. Another member was having trouble dragging with her mouse. Bob recommended that she adjust the options for her mouse in Control Panel and to uninstall and reinstall her mouse if that didn't work. There were no more questions so Bob closed the Windows SIG.

Merle Nicholson started his presentation on "Windows 7 Installation Tips" at 7:00 PM. He began by showing a list of the things that he would want to do during a new Windows 7 installation. He stated that he has been using Windows 7 for about three-and-a-half months and has found that it has dramatically changed the way he manages multiple windows, runs multiple tasks and switches between the tasks. He has found that Microsoft has finally come up with a system that helps you to manage multiple windows and has provided a useful task bar. He demonstrated several ways of moving, shaping and finding multiple windows. Merle also discussed the new Windows virus and spyware program, Windows Security Essentials, that is replacing Windows One Care. Like One Care, it also has a versatile backup program. He stated that it has a much improved firewall over that furnished in Windows XP. The program is still free, and Merle has seen very favorable reviews of the program. He discussed the various options available in backing up data. He feels that the program covers all of the needs of most users. The two types of back-up provided are an image of your hard drive and several managed folders containing zip files. The email program that is available in Windows 7 is Windows Live Mail. Windows 7 also comes with voice recognition software. Merle went through the many options that are available when you set up your computer and gave advice about the settings and the possible consequences of some of the

Minutes.....Continued on page 5

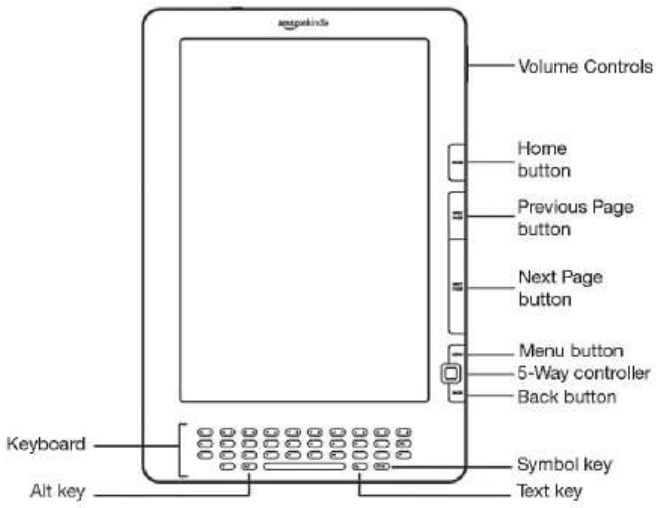
The Kindle DX

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

This is my third article on e-readers, and they have been within a month of being exactly a year apart. The first article compared several e-readers to the first generation Kindle Wireless Reading Device. The second article was right after my children surprised me with a Kindle for Christmas. I was amazed at how well it performed. Being first generation, it had a few flaws but they were far outweighed by the advantages that the Kindle provided.

The second generation Kindle fixed most of the first generation problems. I didn't upgrade because I didn't think it was practical to spend $259 to get the improvements (improved cursor control, correction of a clumsy and irritating page turning system, much better resolution and improved PDF capability). The new generation Kindle has a 6-inch screen like the original.

Amazon recently announced the Kindle DX with a few more improvements and a 9.7 inch screen. This immediately caught my attention. The large screen, coupled with the other current generation improvements, made it a much more functional reader. Illustrations become more legible, especially since you can just turn the reader sideways and it automatically switches to landscape mode. It should be mentioned that the one big shortcoming in all of the Kindles and most of the e-readers on the market is the absence of color. The reason that there is no color yet is that most of the readers use the e-ink technology that mimics a sheet of paper so closely that, in my mind, it is as easy, if not easier, to read than a printed page. The Amazon CEO recently stated that color for the e-ink product is already available in the laboratory, and he believes that it will be available commercially in four to five years. There is no backlighting, so there is little eye strain. The same as is needed for reading the printed page, you need an external source of light where lighting is poor. Several styles of small clip-on LED lamps are available for e-readers, and they work well. I was immediately ready to buy the DX until I saw the price ($489), which, I believed then and now, is too high, so I decided to wait until they lowered the price. My



children surprised me again and gave me a Kindle DX for Christmas. I have been extremely pleased with the Kindle DX and amazed at some of the things it does. I will recommend it highly to anyone when the price goes down to a reasonable amount.

Before I describe some of the more important features of the DX, I would like to discuss one of the reasons, perhaps the primary reason, that the DX was developed, and that is textbooks. If and when the concept is widely accepted, the publisher does not have to worry about how many books to print or the cost of paper, printing or shipping. In addition, no matter how many textbooks the student has, he or she only has to carry one weighing 18.9 ounces. The student always has all the books together and can study any one desired between classes. The student can highlight passages or attach notes, all of which are accumulated in order (page order by book) in a file called "My clips." "My clips" can be downloaded into the student's computer, where it can be reassembled and printed, or imported back into the Kindle as a text or PDF file. (Everything that goes into the Kindle is indexed, so it can be quickly searched.) For this to be effective, the publishers have to make charts and graphs that are not color-coded (at least until color is available) and have to make illustrations large enough to be viewable on the Kindle. Amazon has to create a keyboard on which the student can quickly type notes.

The illustration above shows the new and improved controls: **Keyboard:** One of the worst features, they've made it too small in my opinion to do any-

Kindle.....Continued on page 4

Kindle.....Continued from page 3

thing but type with your thumbs. Use it to enter search terms, notes and URLs for web sites. **Alt Key:** Provides a way to enter numbers. **Text Key:** Adjusts font size and words per line. Turns off/on the function which allows the book to be read to you (unless the publisher disables the function) and lets you choose the speed and choose male or female voice. **Symbol Key:** Presents a menu of punctuation marks and symbols. **Back button:** Like the back button or arrow on a web browser. **5-Way controller:** Moves cursor 4 directions, selects item when pressed. Can also accelerate cursor. **Menu button:** Displays application and navigation choices related to the screen that you are viewing. **Next Page button:** Takes you to the next page. **Previous Page button:** Takes you to the previous page. **Home button:** Shows content stored on your Kindle and content archived at Amazon. **Volume Controls:** Controls the two speakers at the top of the Kindle, or the headphones' volume, for audiobooks, background music and text-to-speech.

Some of the More Important Features:

- **Large Display:** 9.7 inches e-ink display with 16 shades of gray. Auto rotates to portrait or landscape view. Provides magnification in landscape view.
- **3G Wireless:** Books delivered in less than 60 seconds with no monthly fees and no annual contract. Coverage throughout US and more than 100 countries abroad. U.S. customers will be charged a fee of $1.99 for international downloads.
- **Carry Your Library:** Holds up to 3,500 books, periodicals and documents.
- **Long Battery Life:** Read up to a week on one charge with the wireless, or up to two weeks with the wireless off. Charge time approximately four hours. Can charge with USB.
- **USB Port:** USB 2.0 (micro-USB connector) for connection to the Kindle DX power adapter, or optionally to connect to a PC or Macintosh computer.
- **Read-to-Me:** With the text-to-speech feature, Kindle DX can read newspapers, magazines, blogs and books out loud to you, unless the book's rights holder made the feature unavailable.
- **Low Book Prices:** *New York Times* Best Sellers and New Releases are $9.99, unless marked otherwise. Some books are free and some at very low prices. Reference books are often more costly but usually less than hardcover price.
- **Content Formats Supported:** Kindle (AZW), PDF, TXT, Audible Enhanced (AAX), MP3, unprotected MOBI, PRC natively and HTML, DOC, RTF, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP through conversion. Built-in PDF reader. Some features such as annotations and read-to-me are not currently supported for PDF. You can magnify PDFs by viewing them in landscape mode. You also have the option to have your PDF document converted to the Kindle format.
- **Large Selection:** Over 400,000 books, including 101 of 112 *New York Times* Best Sellers, plus U.S. and international newspapers, magazines and blogs.
- **Sync with Other Devices:** You can sync your Kindle books and view them on your computer or iPhone and soon on your BlackBerry.
- **Built-in Dictionary With Instant Lookup:** Kindle DX includes The New Oxford American Dictionary with over 250,000 entries and definitions. Simply move the cursor to the word, and the definition will automatically display at the bottom of the screen.
- **Basic Web Browser:** Kindle DX's basic web browser works well to read simple, text-centric web sites, such as Google and Wikipedia. The web browser is still in the experimental stage.
- **Search:** To use the Search feature, simply type in a word or phrase you're looking for, and Kindle finds every instance in your book or across your Kindle library.
- **Magazine and Newspaper Subscriptions:** Your Kindle magazine is auto-delivered wirelessly when the physical issue hits the newsstand, and all subscriptions start with a 14-day free trial. Your Kindle newspaper is delivered automatically and wirelessly to your Kindle, so it's waiting for you to read first thing in the morning.

A comparison of the $259 Kindle and the $489 Kindle DX is shown below.

Kindle.....Continued on page 5

Kindle.....Continued from page 4

	Kindle DX	Kindle
Display	9.7" diagonal E Ink	6" diagonal E Ink
Size	10.4" x 7.2" x 0.38"	8" x 5.3" x 0.36"
Storage	3,500 Books	1,500 Books
Books in < 60 sec.	Yes	Yes
3G Wireless	Yes	Yes
Wireless Coverage	Global	Global
PDF Support	Yes	Yes
Text-To-Speach	Yes	Yes
Whispersync	Yes	Yes
Rotating Display	Auto-Rotation	Manual-Rotation
Price	$489	$259

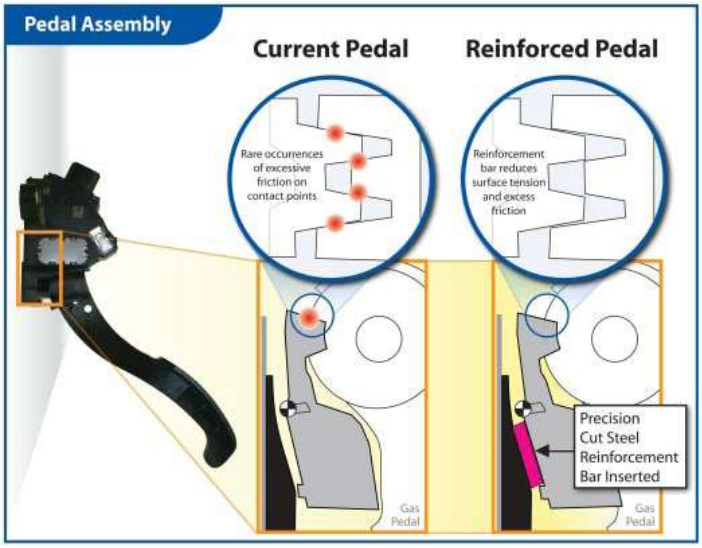
Minutes.....Continued from page 2

choices available to you. He went into the details of how and why to set up Administrator and User accounts. He advised users to turn off the automatic restart function so that it will not restart from a "Blue Screen"

The presentation ended at 9:30 PM. John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of the meeting at 9:35 PM. He stated that a raffle had been planned and asked if the members wanted to stay for a few minutes and have the raffle, or did they want to postpone it. The members chose to stay and have the raffle. He advised that in the last newsletter it was announced that we are offering to our dues-paid membership, on a first-come, first-served basis, the opportunity to buy one of the available *Smart Computing* one-year subscriptions at a price of $15.00, which is 50% off the regular renewal rate. The subscriptions have to be redeemed by April 1st. The raffle winners were: John Witmer, who won the Wireless Mouse; Doug Mullis, who won the Card Reader; and Ed White, who won the Air Net USB wireless network adapter.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:45 PM. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Toyota Problems

In Toyota's drive to surpass General Motors in sales, it appears that they might have also taken on some of GM's bad habits as regards quality. If you haven't been on an extended camping trip, you know about their sticking accelerator pedal problem for eight of their models, for which they have temporarily stopped sales. They now claim to have a fix. The above image of the fix is from Toyota's site at http://pressroom.toyota.com/pr/tms/toyota/toyota-announces-comprehensive-153311.aspx.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
360 Degree Spherical Panoramas	http://www.utah3d.net/
Microsoft Security Essentials	http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials/
Microsoft KODU game programming	http://fuse.microsoft.com/kodu/
Windows 7 Keyboard shortcuts	http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/Windows7/Keyboard-shortcuts

Family Tree Maker 2010

By William LaMartin, Editor Tampa PC users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I have been using Family Tree Maker since it was a DOS program produced by a company called Banner Blue, I wrote about version 4, which was a Windows version, in the 1998 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_1998/february1998/family_tree_maker_4.html. I don't recall how many versions I have purchased over the years. However, the version I was using until recently was version 10, purchased in 2003. That was seven years ago.

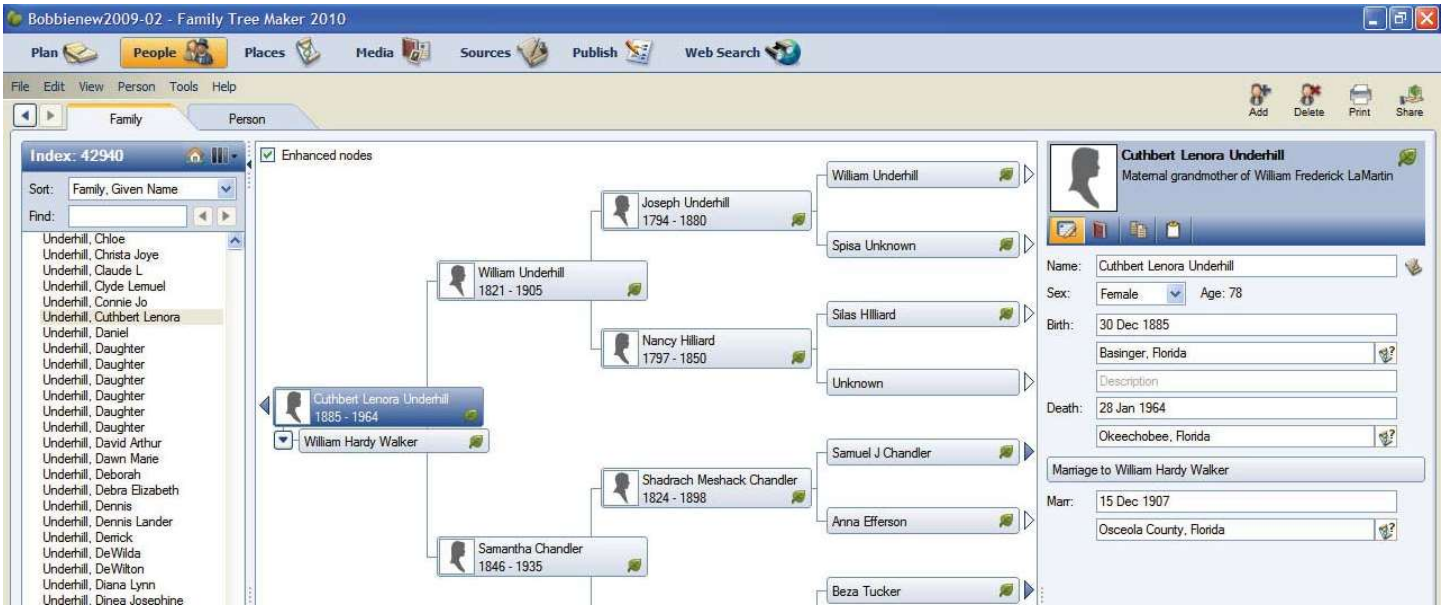
I would probably still be using that version if I hadn't bought a new laptop. I mainly use the program on my desktop computer, and occasionally, on starting the program, it would crash the computer. I decided I didn't want that old crash-prone program on the new laptop. The program is now the property of Ancestory.com and may be purchased from them. Basically how much you pay depends on how much online access to genealogical information and databases you want in addition to the actual program. Ancestory will sell you the program CD (called Family Tree Maker 2010 Essentials) for $39.95, plus shipping. There is no downloadable version. Or you can save money by going to Amazon.com (through the link on our home page) and purchasing the same CD for $27.98, plus shipping.

The interface for the 2010 version is totally different from the version I purchased in 2003, which is certainly to be expected. But, like the change in Microsoft Office from Office 2003 to Office 2008, the changes do take some getting used to, and familiar items are sometimes hard to find. The major change apparently arrived with the 2008 version, which also was apparently a bit buggy. That was supposedly fixed in the subsequent versions in 2009 and 2010.

When I started with my first version of Family Tree Maker, I entered the little information I had and then the information I gathered from others. At some point my sister, much more interested in genealogy than I, got a computer, and I turned over to her the task of making changes and additions to the shared Family Tree Maker file. Now, years later, that file has over 40,000 individuals, entered along with thousands of notes and research references. This is a file you don't want to lose. She has a copy on her computer, as do I, on both my laptop and desktop. We both also have copies on external hard drives.

Below is a screen capture of the top portion of the program displaying what I would call the People view. For the selected individual, you see four generations. The screen is divided into three frames horizontally. There is also a frame at the bottom (not shown), where the selected individual's children are shown. As you

Family Tree.....Continued on page 7



Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Family Tree.....Continued from page 6

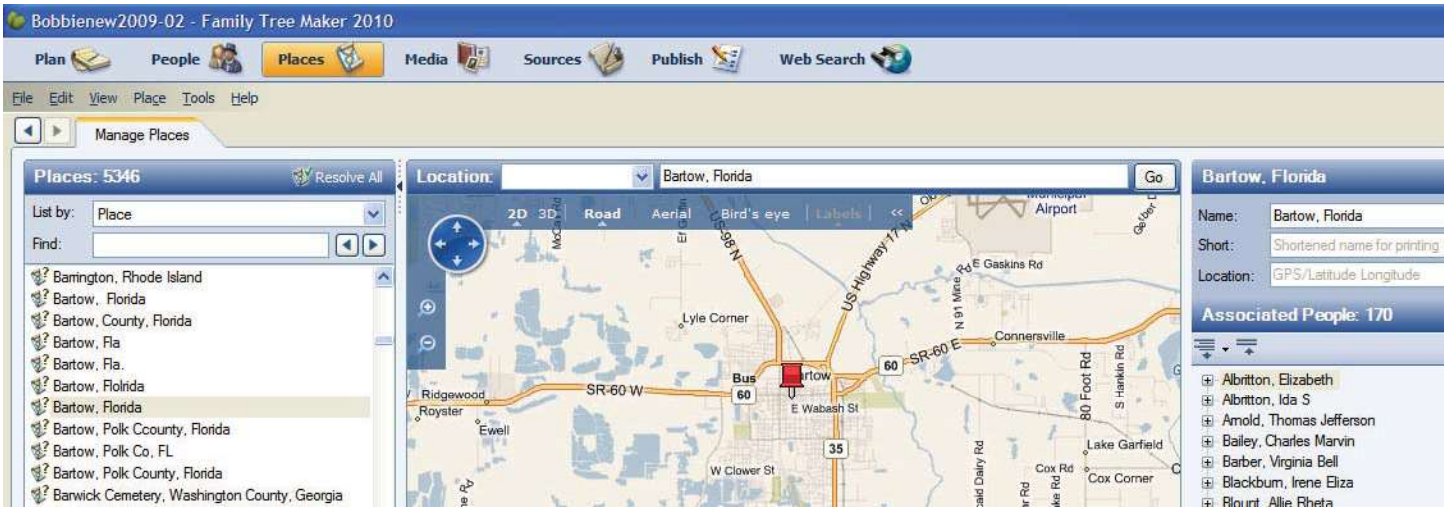
can see, the leftmost frame is an index of all individuals in the database, the center is the immediate tree, and the right frame is where you edit the individual's information, called the detail panel. If you want to add a source for any information you enter about an individual (birth, death, marriage, notes or facts), you simply click on the Edit menu item, choose Manage Sources and go from there. There is also an alternate way of doing this: For the person selected, if you hover your mouse over an item like Birth in the detail panel on the right, a button appears to the right of the text box that, if clicked on, will open the Source Dialog window. This was one thing I was confused about before consulting Help. I first thought to click on the Source view and try to do it from there. Be warned, even if you are not new to Family Tree Maker, this new interface will probably present a few problems at first. But you have four resources: Built in Help, online Help, the Adobe Flash training tutorials that install with the program and the two little books that shipped with the software.

The image below is the top portion of a screen capture of the Places view. The left pane is an index of all the places listed in your data. The center pane is a bing map displaying the location of the selected index location, Bartow, Florida. The right pane lists all the individuals associated with that location. Note in the index pane there are nine variations on the spelling of Bartow, Florida. This indicates that some work needs to be done to settle on one spelling and to modify the data accordingly.

I don't have room to display a screen capture of the Publish view. There you are provided all sorts of ways to display, print and export your data. The broad categories are: Charts, Genealogy Reports, Person Reports, Place Reports, Source Reports and Books. Within each category are the specific reports. What is new to me in all of this is that you can now export reports to PDF, RTF, CSV and HTML. Both the PDF and HTML results are quite nice and, if I remember correctly, were not available in my old version. I recall having to use RTF in the past. Right now, I can't think of a use for a CSV export for the type of reports I have used.

A big part of Family Tree Maker is access to the online

Family Tree.....Continued on page 8



Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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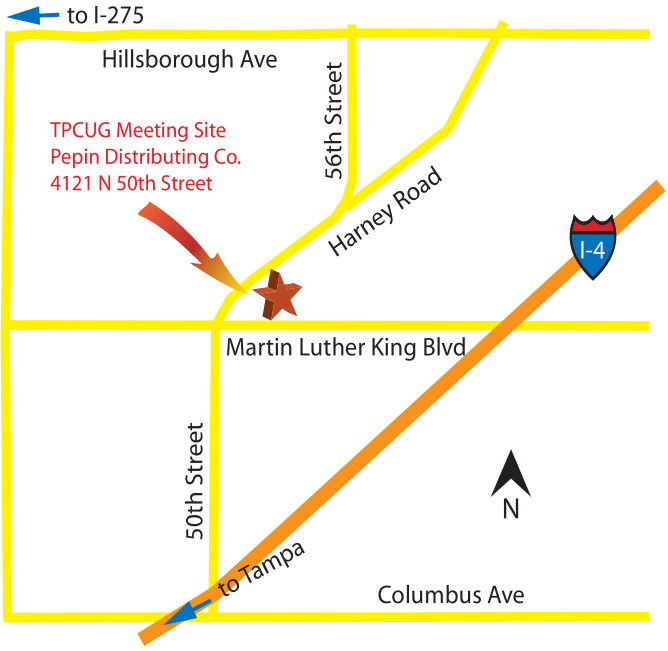
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Family Tree.....Continued from page 7

data. In the People view image earlier, you will notice a little leaf (green in color) in the lower right hand corner of a person's box in the middle pane. That indicates that there is information about this person at the Ancestry.com site. With the purchase of the program, you are entitled to one month free access to this information. If you want more, you may purchase access by the month, or, more economically, by the year.

The data consists of documents such as census records, marriage records, Social Security death records, ship manifests, city directories and many other things. Additionally, you have access to all the family data uploaded to Ancestry by other users. Be forewarned, some of this user uploaded information is good and some of it is totally inaccurate. You may find that the great-grandmother whom you know was born in Louisiana is listed by some submitters as being born in Florida; others may have her as born in Louisiana but with an incorrect date. I have actually seen instances where submitters have a father and son switched. And once an error is made, it gets copied by others over and over. Verify your data. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 5 May 2010

May in Tampa

Meeting

Drew Smith of the Florida Genealogical Society

Wednesday May 12, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Drew Smith of the Florida Genealogical Society will tell us how to use various genealogical software programs. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG meeting.

Editor's Comments: A New, Small Laptop

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

In the January 2010 newsletter, I wrote about my new HP Pavilion dv6 laptop. It had a quad core Intel i7 processor with six GB of RAM and a 500 GB hard drive. It ran Windows 7 professional 64-bit and had a 15.6 inch diagonal display with a resolution of 1366 x 768. I described how I loaded all the programs onto it that I had on my desktop computer: Adobe Creative Suite 4, Microsoft Office 2007 Ultimate, Microsoft Expression Studio 3 and Visual Studio 2008. Then there were all the minor programs, along with Microsoft IIS7 and Microsoft SQL Server. The idea was that I could do anything with it that I could do with my desktop computer. It would be my new computer for demonstrations and for travel.

Demonstrations turned out fine. Travel turned out to be a problem. Although the new laptop was a bit thinner than the old one, it was also a good bit wider. It was fine to put in the trunk of a car and take out when you got to your destination; however, carrying it on a plane didn't appeal to me – especially when I

Comments.....Continued on page 5

June Meeting: To be announced

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the April Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at 6:30 PM. There was a discussion about routers and the availability of security cameras that can be linked to a computer. Merle Nicholson and Bob responded to questions concerning the capabilities of these cameras and the hardware and software required to install them. The SIG ended at approximately 6:45 PM.

John Witmer, our president, started the business portion of the meeting at 6:45 PM. He introduced the guests who were attending the meeting. He announced that we have programs lined up for May and June. Drew Smith of the Florida Genealogical Society will do a genealogy presentation in May, and Blain Barton from Microsoft will appear in June to discuss a topic yet to be announced (after the meeting, Blain Barton's presentation was rescheduled to July). John mentioned that we were still receiving funds from Amazon.com for purchases through our site. He introduced Dave Palmer, the Instructional Media Agent for the University of Florida South Central Extension District, who was delivering the evening's presentation on "Internet Security".

Dave described his job with the extension service and gave an overview of their many services. He emphasized several times that he believes most people are not aware of the many services that are available to them through the extension program. He discussed existing threats on the internet, which include Phishing, Trojans, Spyware, Rootkits and Botnets. He defined each of the threats and described the precautions that can be taken by an individual or an organization. He also described a list of best practices which he had provided in his handout. Dave discussed social networking threats on sites such as MySpace and Facebook. He emphasized that he believed that the primary threat with these networking sites is the type and amount of information that is being disclosed by the individuals using them.

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

Neat Desk

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

I have been interested in a product of the Neat Company, called Neat Receipts for some time. I learned of the product when COMPUSA went out of business. They had several for sale at reduced prices. It looked like a good deal at the time, but reviews were mixed and I couldn't find anyone I knew who had owned or used one. Neat Receipts consisted of a slim, portable, USB-powered scanner and powerful, specialized software whose primary purpose is to allow you to scan bills and business cards which the software will recognize to the extent that it is able to extract the pertinent information on each bill or business card and place it in a database where it can be used in a variety of ways. The reason that I was so interested was because I have for years matched receipts to credit card bills and retained them for warranty and tax purposes. Not only is it cumbersome to maintain the files but also the bills that we receive today quickly become illegible. All things considered, I decided to not buy at the time but kept checking the product for improvements. About eight months ago, a couple of our members talked about unsuccessfully using the product. A few months later I saw an advertisement featuring their new scanner, a small desktop scanner that is both flexible and fast. I checked locally about return policies. They were too restrictive to make it really practical to buy the product and return it if it didn't do the job. I decided to call the Neat Company to ask some questions and mention the local return policies. Their representative suggested that I buy directly from the company and said they would allow me 30 days to try the program. When I asked about shipping costs, he said that they would pay for the shipping and that they were currently having a sale, which in effect made their total price about $70 or $80; this was less than what I could purchase it for locally, and he said that they would pay for the return shipping if I wasn't satisfied with the product. It thus became a no-brainer to try the product. I was happy with what I saw of the product and kept it. Anyone who is interested should probably visit their site and watch the video tutorials. They will give you much more detail that what I am able to give in the general descriptions than I can provide in this article. Go to http://www.neatco.com/products

They still sell the portable scanner (bottom photo), and it works with the same software as the desktop scanner (top photo). Frequent travelers can own and use either or both.

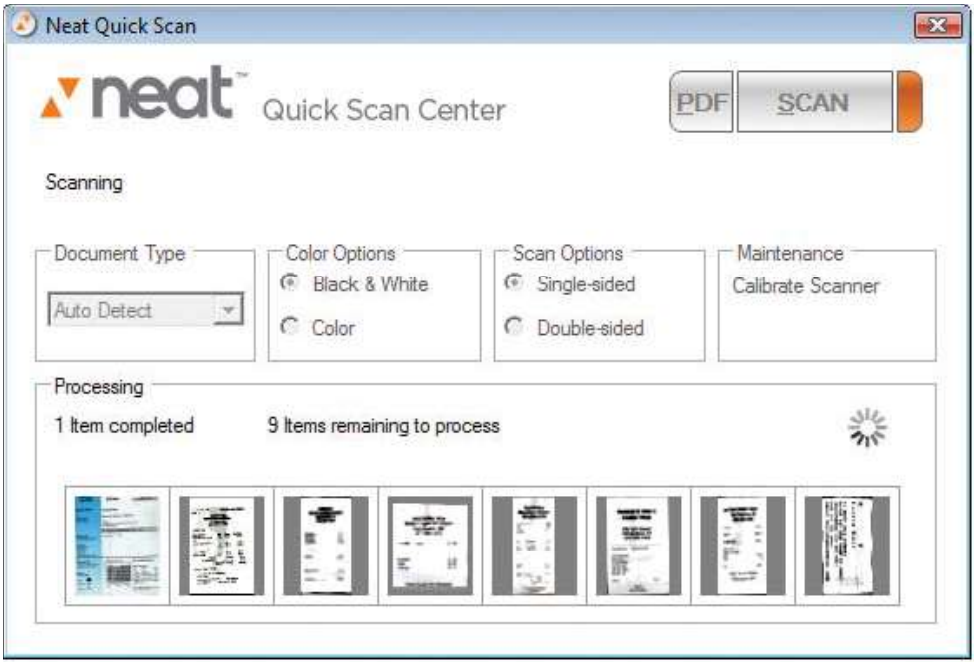




The Neat Desk has an unusual document feeder that allows you to scan up to 15 business cards, receipts and documents (single or both sides) in one pass. If you remove the divided paper input tray, you can scan up to 50 documents (single or both sides). I think that you'll be surprised at the speed. Documents can be scanned directly as a PDF file to a folder of your choice, or they can be filed as a document in the document organizer. Once in the organizer, the document can be exported as a "searchable" or "report" PDF file. The searchable PDF file is selectable, which means that you can select, copy and paste text from the PDF document into a text editor such as Microsoft Word or Notepad; it also is searchable, which means you can

Neat Desk.....Continued on page 4

Neat Desk.....Continued from page 3

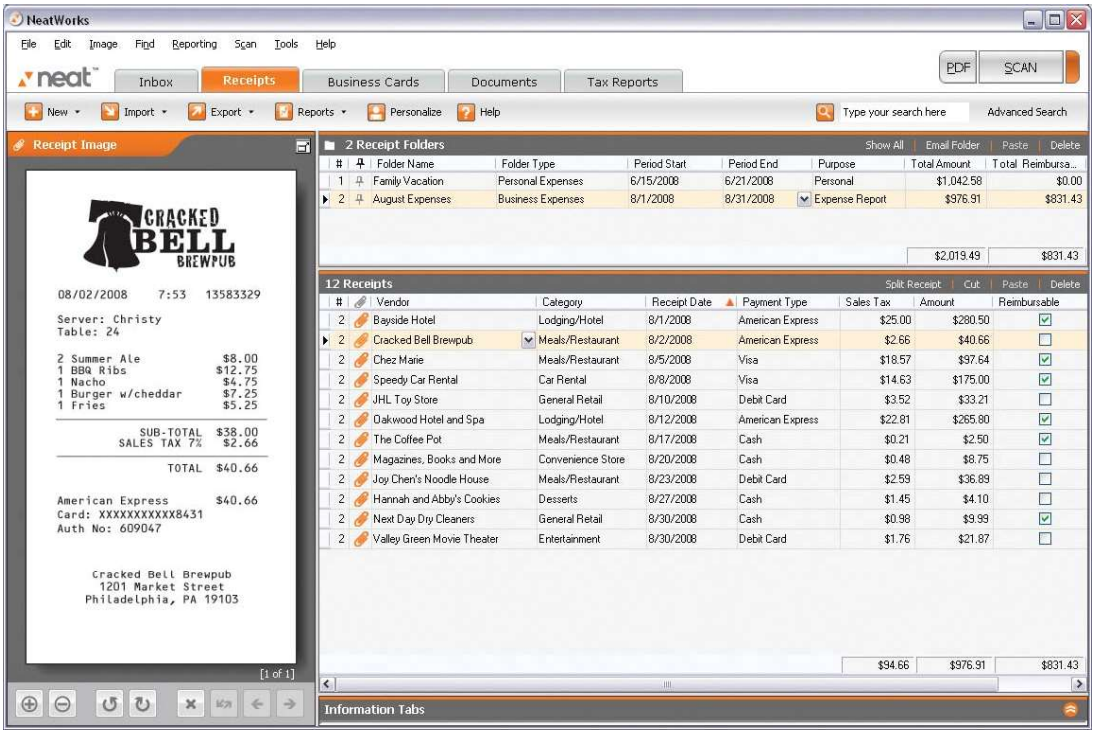


search anywhere within the text of the PDF document, and you can save the PDF document as other document types. You would use the "report" PDF file when you don't need the above features or when you want a document that can't be easily altered, such as a report, invoice or contract.

The scanning process begins with the Neat Quick Scan Center (adjacent image) and is well-organized, fast and convenient.

The Quick Scan Center processes receipts, business cards and documents as you scan them and automatically sends them to the proper Inbox as it completes processing them. The Inbox is where your scanned items display so that you can verify their accuracy, make edits or add notes before filing them in the appropriate organizer.

The Inbox consists of three bins: Receipts, Business Cards and Documents. A scanned item displays in the appropriate bin for editing and filing (see image below). If they should go to the wrong bin, they can be easily dragged to the proper bin. Your edit of the documents allows you to add data not picked up automatically or add additional information that you want included in the file. Individually-scanned documents can be combined into one document file. You can do such things as assigning a tax category so you can prepare a report at tax time that includes your deductible items and a copy of each deductible receipt. You also have both keyword and advance search capabilities. NeatWorks allows receipts to be exported in a variety of formats: PDF, Excel, Word, HTML, QuickBooks, Quicken, MS Money, OFX, and CSV (comma separated values). Your business cards can be synced with Microsoft Outlook or Plaxo and can be exported to PDF or RTF. ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 1

also wanted to take a digital SLR camera along. That meant two bags: a camera bag and a computer bag. And with all the fuss by the airlines now about extra carryon items, I wanted to get down to one bag that would hold both the camera and the laptop.

The idea of a netbook first came to mind, but the limited memory and processing power, along with the less robust operating systems that came with them, got me away from that idea pretty quickly since I wanted to do more than just check email and browse the web. In my looking, I came across the category of small laptops. I looked at such computers from HP, Acer and Toshiba and settled on a Toshiba Satellite T115D-S1125 LED TruBrite 11.6-Inch Laptop.

The dimensions of the Toshiba laptop are 8.3 x 11.3 x 1.4 inches and 3.5 pounds. My HP laptop weighs 6.34 pounds, and its dimensions are 10.15 x 14.9 x (1.33 at front-1.61 at back) inches. So the Toshiba is a much smaller package, but, surprisingly, its display has the same resolution of 1366 x 768 pixels. So what is missing? Well, the main component not in the Toshiba is a CD/DVD drive. When I bought the larger laptop, I said that I would never buy a laptop without a CD/DVD drive. However, when it came down to how to get the smallest real computer I could get (without paying a really large amount of money), I had to give up the internal CD/DVD drive. Instead I ordered an additional external USB drive to use for making those recovery disks that we all are supposed to make and use to install programs (although you could install programs from the drive on another computer on your

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Icelandic Volcano

From the site http://www.boston.com, we have a pretty amazing collection of 35 photos of the recent volcanic activity in Iceland. The exact link to the photos is http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2010/04/more_from_eyjafjallajokull.html.

The description given for the photo above is: "The volcano in southern Iceland's Eyjafjallajokull glacier sends ash into the air just prior to sunset on Friday, April 16, 2010. Thick drifts of volcanic ash blanketed parts of rural Iceland on Friday as a vast, invisible plume of grit drifted over Europe, emptying the skies of planes and sending hundreds of thousands in search of hotel rooms, train tickets or rental cars. (AP Photo/Brynjar Gauti)"

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Paint.NET - Free Software for Photo Editing	http://www.getpaint.net/index.html
Microsoft Research - Turning Ideas into Reality	http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/default.aspx
CutePdf - Free PDF print driver and more	http://www.cutepdf.com/
Icelandic Volcano Photos	http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2010/04/more_from_eyjafjallajokull.html

Comments.....Continued from page 5

home network). The external Toshiba drive costs $64.

The Toshiba also came with two GB of Ram, which for $55 I upgraded to four GB by adding a two GB memory module. So my little laptop which started off at $493 was up to $612. Then to finish things off, for $15 I added a little USB Bluetooth radio (there was no way to purchase the laptop with Bluetooth) so that I could use a Bluetooth mouse I already had with the laptop, since I really don't like to use those laptop touch pads. Thus, the final price was $627. I see that the price of only the laptop at Amazon has now dropped $20 to $473.

This laptop has:

- 1.5 GHz AMD Athlon NeoX2 L325 Processor
- 4 GB 200-Pin DDR2 SO-DIMM Memory
- 320 GB Serial ATA Hard Disk Drive (5400 RPM)
- 802.11b/g wireless LAN
- 11.6" LED (16:9) 1366 x 768 Display; ATI Radeon HD 3200 Graphics
- Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit

Getting Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit was very important to me, since so many of these small computers and netbooks come with much less robust operating systems. I am sure there are more differences, but the only thing I have found so far that Windows 7 Professional has that Home Premium doesn't is Remote Desktop connection – important to some people but used very rarely by me.

On this little laptop, I have loaded almost all the same programs I use with regularity on my desktop computer and had also loaded onto the larger laptop, with the exception of Adobe Creative Suite 4. Adobe really enforces that "install only on two computers" limit for its programs. I could have gone to the trouble of installing the Adobe stuff on the small computer and just leaving it deactivated. Then, if I wanted to use it on a trip, I would have had to deactivate it on either my desktop computer or the other laptop so that I could activate it on the small laptop. But I chose not to do so. Instead, I use the free Adobe Reader to read pdfs and use the free CutePdf to create pdfs. To edit images, since I don't have Photoshop on the small computer, I use the free Paint.Net (probably all the average user would need). Both of these two free programs were recommended to me by Merle Nicholson. He also recommended the free FTP program FileZilla. All three of these free programs are excellent. Since I use Adobe InDesign to create this newsletter, I will not be working on the newsletter when traveling with the Toshiba. However, I still have Microsoft Publisher as part of Microsoft Office 2007, so I do have a desktop publishing program available.

This little computer is really a wonderful thing. The display is so sharp and crisp. And the dual core processor with 4 GB of RAM makes for really fast processing. With all my programs loaded and a modest amount of data brought over from the desktop computer, I still have 217 GB of free space on the hard drive.

Some other features I should mention include three USB ports, an HDMI output port, a five-in-one-card reader and a standard VGA video output port. In addition, there is a built-in webcam that supposedly has facial recognition; however, I cannot get it to recognize my face Finally, the computer supposedly has six hours of battery life, whatever that actually means. Does it mean that I can work on the laptop for six hours before the battery is discharged? If so, that would be very nice.

I suppose the only negative of this machine for most people is the lack of an internal CD/DVD drive since so many people like to pop in a movie on DVD and watch it as they fly through the sky. And I wouldn't really want to lug the external drive along because that would defeat the reason for purchasing a small laptop.

I purchased the Toshiba and all of its additional items from Amazon. Unfortunately, since I set up the Amazon account for the TPCUG, the group is not allowed to get credit for anything I purchase. However, everything anyone not at my address purchases from Amazon by going through the Amazon link at our site, http://www.tpcug.org, will contribute an average of 4% of the purchase price to the club. And for the past several months, people have been doing just that. So keep it up! ◆

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Microsoft Launch 2010 in Tampa
Tuesday, June 29, 2010

5426 Bay Center Dr

Suite 700 Tampa Florida 33609



Launch 2010 Highlights

The Next Wave of Business Productivity

See what Microsoft Office 2010 and SharePoint 2010 mean for the productivity of you and your people—across PC, phone, and browser*. Find out firsthand how to plan for, implement, and deploy the new wave in business productivity at this free, half-day event. There's a lot that's new—here's what you can expect:

- Come and see first-hand how the new wave of products like Office 2010, SharePoint Server 2010, Exchange Server 2010, Visio 2010, and SQL Server 2008 R2 can optimize the way you work every day.
- Learn about tools and resources that'll help you plan by evaluating your current infrastructure
- Explore tools that'll help you optimize desktop deployment.



Launch 2010 Highlights

Life Runs on Code

Learn about the rich application platforms that Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 supports, including Windows® 7, the Web, SharePoint, Windows Azure™ and Windows® Phone 7 Series. From tighter development and test team integration to new ALM tools, there's a lot that's new. Here's what you can expect:

- See how to move your existing skills forward with Visual Studio 2010 both for in-house ASP.NET development and the new frontier of the Cloud.
- Build rich Windows applications with Silverlight 4 using trusted application features including out-of-browser execution and saving to the file system.
- Learn about the powerful capabilities of the Window Phone platform and the developer tools experience.

IT Pros Map & Registration LInk: https://msevents.microsoft.com/CUI/EventDetail.aspx?culture=en-US&EventID=1032451084

Developers Map & Registration LInk: https://msevents.microsoft.com/CUI/EventDetail.aspx?culture=en-US&EventID=1032451077

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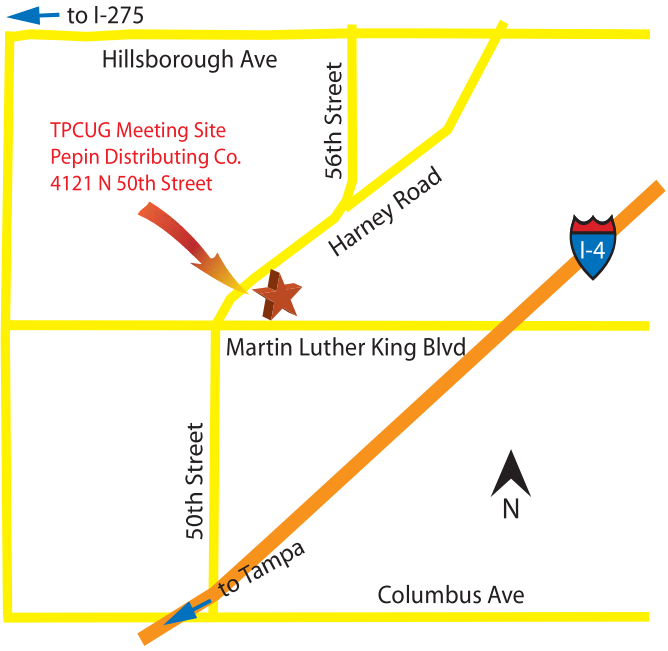
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

He explained the construction of a URL and stressed that this knowledge is one of the most valuable tools that you can use to recognize phony URL's. He provided examples of the damages caused and the extent to which the criminals both local and foreign will go to steal money and information from you. What is even more distressing is the extent to which some individuals will go to destroy your files and equipment just to satisfy their ego.

Dave also discussed in detail the protection that is available to all of us. He covered layered security, best practices, security software and suites, backups and various types of support available from many sources.

In addition to the presentation, Dave provided everyone attending with a very impressive handout that contained a wealth of information to provide a better understanding of not only the security problems encountered on the internet but also how to improve the security of your files and hardware. The meeting ended at approximately 8:30 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 4 April 2010

April in Tampa: Taxes

Meeting

Dave Palmer on Internet Security

Wednesday April 14, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Dave Palmer from the Hillsborough County Extension Office will present a program on Internet security. Member Bob LaFave will do the usual Windows SIG meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I suppose this newsletter might not be considered a true computer publication if it didn't have a mention of the iPad this month. There I have mentioned it. Should I say more? Well, I have a bit of space to fill, so I will.

I haven't actually touched one, so I'll just comment on a few things I read on the web using my un-hip desktop Windows PC, or heard on the TV or radio.

While driving, I heard one of the ladies on CNBC predict that the iPad would be a Dell killer. By this she meant that people would no longer need to purchase the type of things Dell Computer sold since they could now turn their computing life over to the iPad. Her logic was that she had typically purchased a couple of Dell computers every year until she got an iPhone. Since the iPhone now did everything thing she needed done computerwise, there was no need to buy anything from Dell. The iPad would just make the case against Dell stronger.

Comments.....Continued on page 7

May Meeting: Drew Smith on Genealogical Software

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave opened the meeting with his Windows SIG presentation at approximately 6:35 PM. In response to a member's question about problems with his router, Bob suggested that it might be a firmware problem. He expanded the discussion of firmware for other components. He cautioned anyone having problems with their hardware to explore firmware updates to determine specifically what they will correct or improve and to avoid downloads that are of no benefit to you. He cautioned that some firmware installations can be difficult to execute and can cause serious problems if they are improperly installed. In discussing virus and malware problems, he covered a variety of "uninstall programs" and several free "repair programs" that can be used when problems occur. Bob also covered the process of restoring your computer and went into the details of the process.

President John Witmer opened the business portion of the meeting at approximately 7:10 PM. He announced that all of the Smart Computing subscriptions had been purchased by members and that he has received confirmation that all have been processed by Smart Computing. Blain Barton of Microsoft was scheduled for April but he had to cancel. John announced that the May program will be Genealogy by Drew Smith, and Blain Barton has committed to June. Dave Palmer a member of The Greater Tampa Bay Computer User Group emailed John announcing a presentation on an Internet Computer Security Program. He is giving a presentation at the Hillsborough County Extension Office in Seffner on March 18th. It is a free presentation offered by the county, and John had brochures for anyone desiring to attend. The presentation is the product of a partnership between Hillsborough County and the University of Florida. John announced that we had gotten a large check from Amazon.com ($200). He encouraged members to continue to go through our website when they purchase merchandise and gift certificates.

John introduced a member, Michelle Burgess, who had volunteered to give a presentation on FaceBook and Twitter. Michelle began with an explanation

Minutes.....Continued on page 5

Uniting The Internet and Your TV

By Ron Weinberg, Member-At-Large, TPCUG
rswjbr@verizon.net

The era of obtaining VHS tapes or DVD discs from retail or rental store or by mail is ending. Media will be dispensed by pay-per-view or on demand from cable providers, or via streaming or downloading directly to you via the Internet.

This article involves connecting television sets to the Internet to receive media for viewing with or without a PC. It is not concerned with any methodology for directly viewing television on the personal computer.

There are several distinct ways to connect the Internet to your TV, either with or without using your PC. The benefits of connecting via PC are that, once connected, various types of software will allow functions beyond obtaining and viewing movies and TV shows, such as: Saving downloaded material, displaying photos, listening to music, or merely using the TV as a large display screen. Some devices which do not rely on your PC may still require one for initial installation.

Connecting a Computer to a TV

Connecting a computer to a TV requires establishing some form of physical or wireless connection between the two devices. Possible methods are:

1. Use direct cables such as DVI, S-Video, VGA, HDMI, USB, or Firewire. The available ports on both the TV and the computer will determine which methods are practical. These cables may be costly and may depend upon proper video cards or require some sort of converter. The PC and the TV must be located within cable distance.

2. A new hardware approach has been developed. The NETGEAR Push2TV adapter requires an Intel® Wireless Display software enabled laptop powered by the Intel® Core™ Processor Family.

3. Via your home network, (wired or wireless). This is the more common and perhaps the easiest method. An Ethernet or Wi-Fi port is required. Some new TV sets have a built in Ethernet port, or can support Wi-Fi. If no port is available, web-enabled consumer electronics (CE) devices described below provide indirect connectivity.

Connecting TV to the Internet without a PC via your home network (wired or wireless)

Of course, a home network will include at least one PC, but it is the router connection to the Internet rather than the PC's hardware that is usually utilized.

Direct connections through your home network

Some new TV sets have a built-in Ethernet port to access the Internet. More new models are expected to include this port. Any required software will either be provided by the media supplier or the TV maker.

Indirect connections through your home network

Through Blu-ray:

Many Blu–ray players have a built in Ethernet port; some have built in Wi-Fi and can support Internet video directly. The connection between the player and the TV delivers the media to the TV.

Through CE Devices:

Web-enabled consumer electronics (CE) are devices which deliver streamed content. to TV, Blu-ray, or standard DVD players that have no Ethernet or Wi-Fi ports. They are usually wired to the TV with component vfideo or HDMI cables.

There are many different and competing devices already available. Prices range from $100 or less and up. Some have unique features which justify higher costs. Better models should provide perfect 1080p HD and digital surround sound. In time, some will become obsolete as a standard method develops.

Examples of CE media players that relay Internet video to TV are:

- Roku Digital Video Player (requires no PC)
- VUDU - 1080p HD Internet movie player (requires PC for activation only)
- Also may be built into some new TVs
- Apple TV (requires PC or MAC)

Internet and TV.....Continued on page 4

Internet and TV.....Continued from page 3

- WD TV Live HD Media Player (requires no PC).
- D-Link Media Center Extender DSM-750 (requires PC).

Downloading vs. Streaming

Downloading and streaming are the prevalent methods used to move media from the Internet to your PC and TV.

Downloading: The file is copied from the web server to your computer.

Progressive Download allows users to watch or listen to media as it is being downloaded from a web server to the hard drive.

The progressive download feature in most media players allows them to begin playing the file as soon as enough data has been downloaded. The playing file will stutter or stop if the rate of play is greater than the rate at which the file is downloaded. The file will begin to play again as the download improves.

Streaming: The media is played but not stored on the computer or TV. The file is played as it downloads, without having to wait for the download to finish.

Streams can come from a live video camera, webcasts, audio radio feed, or a movie on the server. To achieve highest quality a broadband connection is needed. Streaming has advantages. It allows you to skip ahead in a video, or begin playback somewhere in the middle. Video playlists and Search may be options.

Obtaining Media

There are technical differences in the actual transmission methods used for progressive downloads and streaming. However, the method used is usually determined by the source rather than the client end user.

Streaming content comes from special streaming servers. Netflix, Amazon, iTunes, and Blockbuster offer streamed movies. Prices vary. Other online TV programming portals, such as Hulu and YouTube are free. If the content does not come from a streaming server it will most commonly be a progressive download.

Moving Media from PC to TV

Most streaming would be direct to the TV through one of the connection methods. Media which has been downloaded or otherwise entered into the PC can be transferred from PC to TV by CE media players, DLNA, Media Manager or various other programs which are not in the scope of this article.

CE media player boxes supply their own software.

DLNA is explained by Wikipedia as follows:

> DLNA (Digital Living Network Alliance) is a standard used by manufacturers of consumer electronics to allow entertainment devices within the home to share their content with each other across a home network.
>
> DLNA intends to solve the problems inherent in using digital media between different consumer electronic devices. For example, a DLNA-compliant TV will interoperate with a DLNA-compliant PC to play music or videos and display photos. The specification also includes digital rights management (DRM), a technology to ensure that the "content must be protected from unauthorized copying and use."

Verizon Media Manager

Media Manager is free PC software available to FIOS TV customers which transmits personal media such as photos, music and videos from your PC over the Internet to the FIOS server, which then forwards it to your FIOS TV. You can connect from cell phone, thumb drive, or portable media player, and even go from camera to TV. A DVR set-top box is required.

Conclusion

The technology and equipment for delivering media is improving and changing constantly. No doubt, in time the process will be simplified.

However, it must be noted that most broadband providers already offer on-demand or pay-per-view ser-

Internet and TV.....Continued on page 8

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

of Twitter. She went to http://www.twitter.com and began tracking people and things. She explained how to sign in and establish an account and demonstrated the various ways you can use Twitter to track both subjects and people. Twitter is a free service that lets you keep in touch with people and subjects through the exchange of quick, frequent input. Entries are limited to 140 characters. The format of the application allows extremely rapid access to information and to the activities of people. Michelle described the various ways the program could be used and the versatility of the structure, such as the ability to attach links.

Michelle demonstrated how to create a FaceBook account and how to locate friends to add to your account. She suggested that when you create the account that you indicate networking when asked what you are looking for. She described some of the reasons that you might want to establish a FaceBook account. Michelle explained uploading and downloading photos, audio, video and events to FaceBook. Her demonstration included many of the applications that can be initiated in FaceBook and she showed the versatility of these applications in response to questions and suggestions from the audience. In both the Twitter and the FaceBook presentations, Michelle used audience participation not only to provide the members with an understanding of how the programs operate but also to make them aware of many of the finite details that allow the user to take advantage of the various tools provided by Twitter and FaceBook.

John closed the meeting at approximately 8:45 PM. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



HDR Sunset

This sunset photo from http://www.flickr.com/photos/murtasma/730847627/ is an example of an High Dynamic Range (HDR) photo. I first saw it at the HDR Pictures link in the Interesting Links section below. HDR images are composed of several images of the subject taken at different exposures and then combined in software and further manipulated by adjusting, among other things, the resulting image's tone curve. Adobe Photoshop will do this for you, or there are more specialized programs available.

Go to flickr at http://www.flickr.com and do a search for HDR. I just did, and they list 430,938 such photos. Now tell me how flickr makes money off all of this; I see very little advertising.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Google News Archive Search	http://news.google.com/archivesearch
Product Reviews and Reports	http://www.consumersearch.com/
EntityCube	http://entitycube.research.microsoft.com/
35 Fantastic HDR Pictures	http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/03/10/35-fantastic-hdr-pictures/

Verizon FIOS Battery Backup System

By John Witmer, President, Tampa PC Users Group
jwitmer@pepindist.com

I recently had a situation come up with my FIOS battery backup device, and I thought I would share the experience and information with our Group since I know many of you also have this same service. My system was installed in July 2007 by Verizon and has worked flawlessly since that time. The battery backup system is installed in the garage, close to my electrical panel and the exit door to the outside, so I couldn't help but notice it when the red, replace battery light came on during this past Christmas holiday. After ignoring it for a few days, I was treated to an intermittent beeping alarm also calling my attention to the device and its red light notice to replace the battery.

Being somewhat naive, I thought perhaps this was something that Verizon would take care of, considering I pay them more than $200 a month, so I called Customer Service inquiring about the battery and the replacement warning I was getting. I learned it obviously was not their problem, and they suggested I go to Batteries Plus to obtain the replacement battery I needed. So on December 31st, during a day off from work, I removed the battery from the device and hauled it down to Batteries Plus for replacement. The employee behind the counter took my old battery and hooked it up to a test unit as the first step. To my surprise, he said the battery was in excellent condition and should last me another few years at least. He then let me know that this problem was common with the Verizon battery backup devices, and although he did not know for sure why the problem existed, he thought it had something to do with the Verizon backup box it was installed in. He said he has had the same experience at three different times so far with his FIOS system.

The solution to determine if the battery truly needs replacing (if you don't want to remove it and have it tested as Batteries Plus would do) is to unplug the battery backup device from the electrical outlet it is plugged into, disconnect one of the wires going to one of the terminals (I chose the negative black connection) and leave it unplugged for ten minutes or so. Then reconnect the internal wire to the terminal and plug the device back into the electrical outlet. Chances are you will get a green light showing the System Status to be ok and no red light showing at all.

Interestingly enough, two more people showed up at Batteries Plus with Verizon backup batteries in hand while I was there. I know the elderly lady who was waited on next to me was told the same solution I was told. If by chance you do have to replace the battery, the cost with tax is about $35 at Batteries Plus, or someone said you can get them online for less money (I don't know the web site). There is also the convenience of disposing of the old battery if you go the store route. By the way, my battery and backup system has worked just fine since then, and I have no replace battery warning light coming on at all. In case you wondered, Verizon Customer Service does not furnish this information as a solution, or even alert you to the possibility that the battery is OK. It might lead you to infer that they could have a defect of some sort in their piece of equipment, which would not be good considering the number of units installed in the market. ◆



FIOS Battery and control showing everything is OK

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Comments.....Continued from page 1

What can I say? If the iPhone satisfied all of her computing needs, she didn't really do much with all those Dells she had been stockpiling. And that is fine. Many people really don't do much with their desktop and laptop computers other than browsing the web, using email, taking part in social networking sites like FaceBook and searching for information. And the iPad will give such people a larger screen than the iPhone on which to do all of this.

I will close out this iStuff with the observation that Apple has done a lot of things right. They are also great at marketing their products. And the press gives them so much free coverage. I can't count the number of articles about the iPad that I have seen in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* in the past couple of months. I particularly like articles in the *Journal*, since they always allow comments; sometimes the *Times* does also. It becomes apparent quite soon, as you read the comments, that the audience breaks down into pro-Apple and anti-Apple camps. One of my favorite comments was from the obviously pro side, in which the comment was something to the effect that the individual was so into everything Apple that he would even buy an Apple toilet if they were to produce one.

As for me, though, I will never buy an iPhone because I can't program it as I do my Windows Mobile phone. As I am sure you have read, the iPhone is really locked down in that, even if you have the ability to write a program for it, you cannot install that program on the phone without Apple giving its official seal of approval to the program, which takes time and is not guaranteed to occur. With a Windows Mobile phone, I can write a program and then install it on the phone one minute later. I can even send it to others who have such phones, and they can install the program.

In fact, I am working on a new program for the phone right now that, at the press of a button, will open the phone's camera so that I can take a photo. Once the photo is taken, if I like what I see and press the OK button, it is automatically uploaded to a folder at my web site. At the same time, data about the photo (its file name, time taken, and longitude and latitude of the location if I have the bluetooth GPS running) are uploaded to a Microsoft SQL database at the site.

For display purposes, the images can then be displayed in two ways. For all the photos, there is a page where thumbnails of the photos are automatically generated and displayed, and a click on the thumbnail displays a full version of the image. For photos with GPS data, a map is displayed with a pushpin at each photo location. A hover of the mouse over a pushpin displays a thumbnail of the image, and a click on the thumbnail displays a full version of the image. This is sort of my own flickr for phone photos application.

You will note that I mentioned a Bluetooth GPS for my phone. My HTC Windows Mobile 6.1 phone is approaching 2.5 years in age and does not have a built -in GPS, hence the need for an external GPS. I thought about replacing it when Windows Mobile 6.5 came out, but decided to not do that, and now I am glad I didn't since Microsoft is supposed to have Windows Mobile 7, also known as Windows Phone 7, available by the end of the year.

I hope the Windows Phone 7 works for Microsoft. They have dropped the ball a bit in the phones and let others like Apple move ahead. ◆

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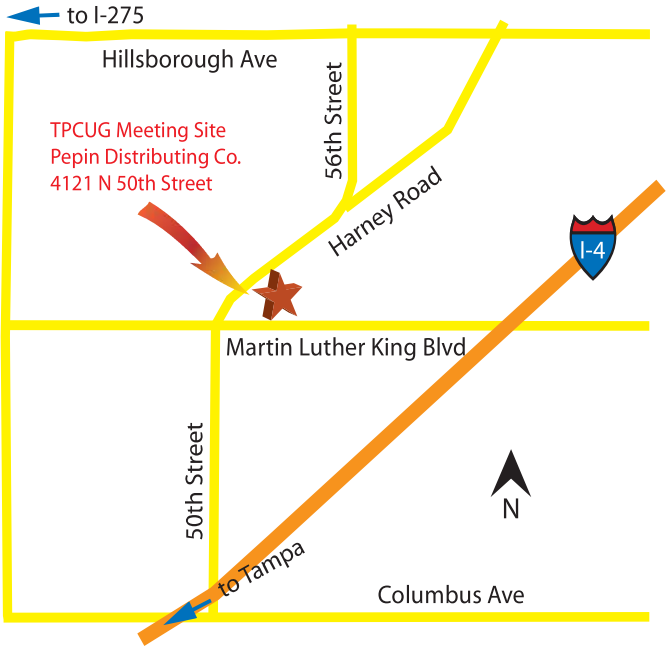
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Internet and TV.....Continued from page 4

vices directly to your TV. They require no additional equipment beyond what they already furnish for their premium services.

If these providers were to reduce the prices they charge, most of the methods and equipment described in this article would become less important. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 23 No. 6 June 2010



June in Tampa

Meeting

Marty Burgess Computer Aided Drafting & Design

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Member Marty Burgess will do a presentation on Computer Assisted Design, commonly referred to as CAD. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

It is less than one week and a day before our June meeting as I sit down and try to think of something to fill the June newsletter. My monthly request for articles turned up only one possibility. And even if that had come through, it takes more than one article to fill the newsletter. So what to write about?

I have done a number of things this past month and even upgraded a software package, but, as you may have already noticed, much of what I do is not of interest to the general computer user. That is another reason we need articles from the group as a whole, since we have diverse computing interests.

One of the items I will write about is Microsoft Pivot Collections, which are a new way of visually organizing data. And since, unfortunately, a computer crash prevented the promised article from getting to me, I will also write about Microsoft Live Mesh, introduced to me by Merle Nicholson at a recent VB SIG ◆

July Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at 6:30 pm. He began with a discussion of various things available to assist you in backing up the contents of your computer. He mentioned that many of the hard drive manufacturers include a program to allow you to easily perform a complete PC backup. These programs are normally an abbreviated version of popular programs like Acronis. Although they are not full-featured programs, they do the job. Bob discussed some of the full-featured programs available. He favors using more than one program and setting a schedule for making multiple backups with each version of software that you own. Bob also discussed the features that are available to you in Windows Vista and Windows 7 to backup and restore your computer. The SIG program ended at approximately 6:50 pm.

John Witmer, our president, started the business portion of the meeting at approximately 6:50 pm. He mentioned that Doug Mullis is always available to accept annual dues payments. John also mentioned the Microsoft meetings on June 29th (see page 7 of this newsletter). There is a change in our June meeting. Blain Barton had to postpone his Microsoft presentation until July, and Marty Burgess has agreed to demonstrate a computer-assisted drawing program during the June meeting. Steve Singer volunteered to give his annual presentation in October. John introduced Drew Smith, president of the Florida Genealogical Society of Tampa, who was scheduled to give a presentation on Genealogy.

Drew's presentation began at approximately 6:55 pm. He stated that his presentation was aimed at bringing us up-to-date on what's going on and where things are in the world of genealogy. He described many of the websites that are available, as well as various versions of software. He covered Ancestry.com and how it interacts with Family Tree Maker software. He talked about the many sources of genealogical data available to the individual and how they can be accessed. Drew recommended a book "How To Do Everything Gene-

Minutes.....Continued on page 8



Microsoft Live Mesh

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

The image you see above is a screen capture of my Live Mesh Desktop as viewed on my desktop computer. The image shows my three main computers in the Live Mesh network along with an Add Device icon and a Live Mesh Desktop icon. Live Mesh is in beta and is free from Microsoft at http://www.mesh.com. All you need to sign up is a Microsoft Passport account or a Windows Live account.

Merle Nicholson introduced this to me, and I was a bit hesitant at first because of security concerns. However, after some thought, I decided to give it a try since, first, to use Live Mesh, I had to enter my Microsoft Passport user name and password. Then, second, the only real sensitive data I might want to put in a Live Mesh folder would be in a database that I could both encrypt and password protect. And, finally, if I wanted to actually remotely log in and use one of my computers via Live Mesh Remote Desktop (which is quite powerful), I would have to enter my login password for that particular computer. Thus, I felt comfortable with the setup.

The first thing I did was to go to the Live Mesh site and click on the Sign In button using my Microsoft Passport user name and password (if you don't have such, you are given the opportunity to acquire a Windows Live ID). I then clicked on the Add Device icon and was prompted to download the required software and install Live Mesh on my computer. That done, I was ready choose any folders (or just files) on the current computer I wanted to sync with any other computers in my Live Mesh network.

The way you add a folder or file to sync in Live Mesh is to right-click on it in Windows Explorer and, depending on whether it is a file or folder, select the Add File to Live Mesh option or the Add Folder to Live Mesh option. The file or folder will then change appearance and appear blue instead of yellow. If you now go to your Live Mesh Desktop, your just-added item will now appear there.

The next thing to do is go to each additional computer you wish to be in your Live Mesh network and proceed as above to install the Live Mesh software on that computer. And, as before, if you have any files or folders on one of these computers you want to share via Live Mesh, you can add them.

For any files or folders that have been added to the Live Mesh Desktop, on each of the computers you have these options for syncing:

- When files are added or modified
- When files are opened
- Only files smaller than 500 KB
- Only files modified in the past 30 days
- Never with this device

All of this works for computers in the same room, the same house, or anywhere in the world as long as they are connected to the Internet. With Live Mesh, you no longer need to email files between computers. To make a file on computer A available to computer B, you simply need to log in to your Live Mesh account and add the file on computer A to the Live Mesh desktop. Then on computer B, someone logged in using the same Live Mesh account will see it available to them momentarily (not instantly). They can then make changes to the file and save it, and in a few moments the modified file will be available to any of the other computers on the same Live Mesh account.

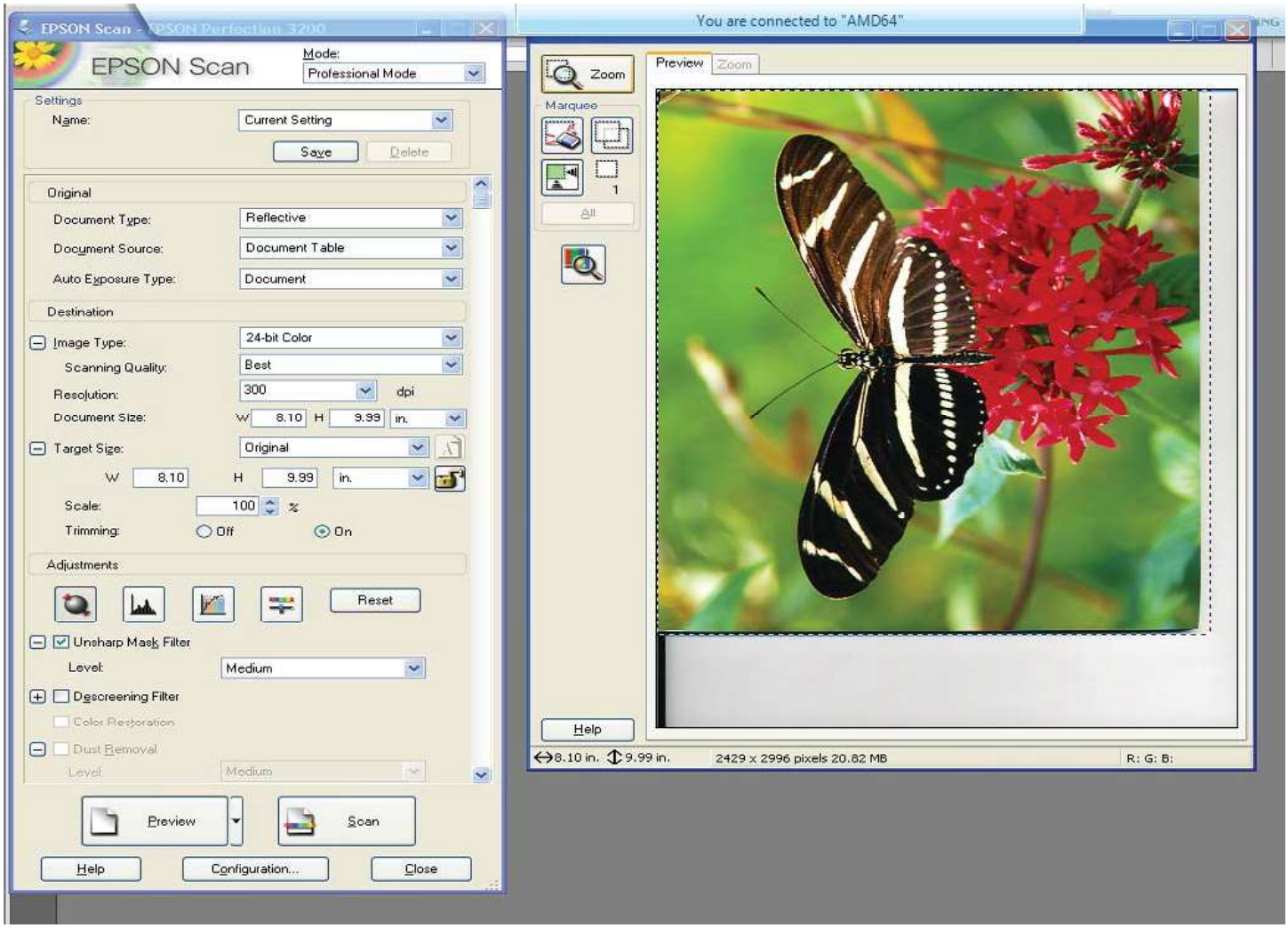
Live Mesh.....Continued on page 4

Live Mesh.....Continued from page 3

There is, of course, a slight problem with this scenario in that if someone on computer A and someone else on computer B decided to edit the document at the same time, there would be an obvious issue. At the top of the Live Mesh screen, one of the menu items is News, which will give you a list of what has been done in Live Mesh recently – for example, files added or files modified.

Now, we come to what I think is the most powerful feature of Live Mesh, the Remote Desktop feature. For at least as far back as Windows XP, possibly further back, Windows has had a Remote Desktop feature where, with permission, you can take over a remote computer over the Internet and work with it as if you were sitting at that computer. This Live Mesh feature is similar but much easier to set up.

To use the Remote Desktop on computer B from computer A, I double-click on computer B in the Live Mesh Desktop Devices view, as shown in the previous screen capture, and wait a moment while a message is displayed on computer B saying that access was being requested. If the acceptance is given or denial is not given within 30 seconds, the remote desktop connect is completed, and I see B's login screen on A, where (if B requires a password) I enter B's password. From then on, I have control of computer B just as if I were there. In fact, I have just connected my HP laptop to my desktop, where I have InDesign open and working on this article. This paragraph has been typed in its entirety on the laptop computer inside the InDesign program running on the desktop computer. But I can do one better than that. The screen capture below is of my HP laptop screen while remotely connected to the desktop computer, where I just scanned a photo on the Epson scanner connected to the desktop computer via Photoshop running on the desktop computer – all controlled from the HP laptop. Quite amazing. ◆



Internet Picture of the Month



AAPL vs MSFT

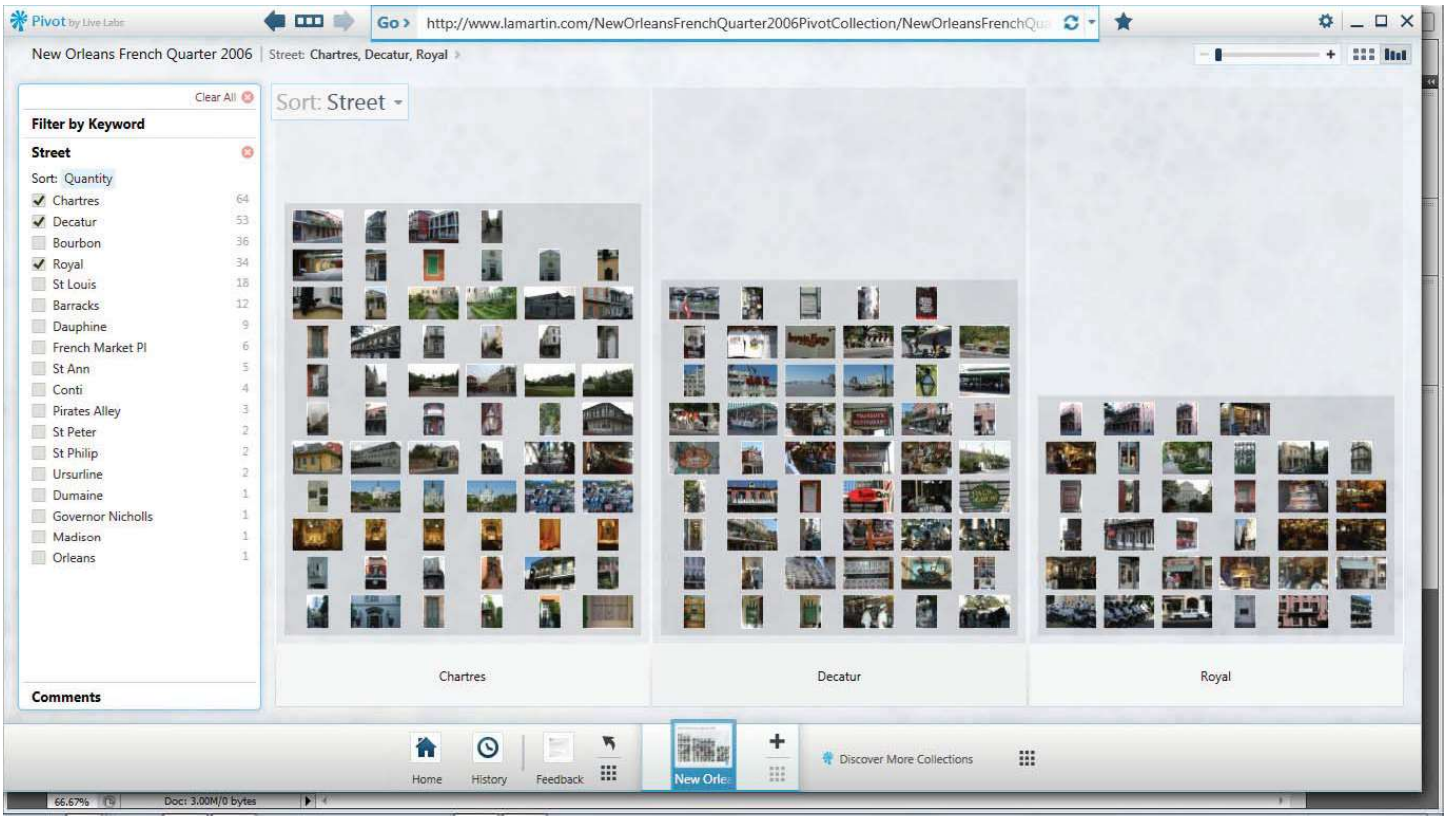
I am sure almost everyone is aware that Apple surpassed Microsoft in market capitalization last week. That is, the number of shares of Apple Computer outstanding times the value of each share was greater than the same number calculated for Microsoft. That does not take into account the profit of each company or the sales of each company--just how investors value each company.

The chart is from Big Charts, a service of MarketWatch at http://bigcharts.marketwatch.com/, and displays not the value of the shares but rather the percent increase of the value of a share of stock in each company over the past 10 years. If you bought a share of Apple 10 years ago and held it until now, it would have increased in value over 1,000%. If you had done the same for Microsoft, you would be down a few percentage points.

I am not sure what is to be learned from this. Apparently a lot of people are purchasing Apple things, but not I. In 2002, my wife and I purchased an iPod for our daughter; in 2004, we bought one for our son; and, in 2008, another iPod was purchased to replace the no-longer functioning first one. And that is it for Apple purchases in the past 10 years. As for Microsoft, there have been thousands of dollars in Windows, Office, Visual Studio and now Expression Studio purchases in that time.

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Mannahatta	http://themannahattaproject.org/home/
ISS and Atlantis in front of the Sun	http://axilone.com/legault/iss_atlantis_transit_2010.html
Google Public Data	http://www.google.com/publicdata/home
Strange signs from abroad	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/05/11/travel/funny-signs.html



A New Way of Viewing Data

By William LaMartin, Editor tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tapabay.rr.com

The screen capture above is an example of what Microsoft calls a Pivot Collection, a new way of organizing data of any type so as to better see relationships among the data. I made this Pivot Collection out of 255 digital photos I took in the New Orleans French Quarter on a visit in 2006. The data includes each photo image, along with a description of the image, the street name where the image was taken and the latitude and longitude of the image (added by geo-tagging). I could have included the time, camera's f/stop, shutter speed, etc. but chose not to do that.

What you are seeing is the data for three of the streets in the French quarter – Chartres, Decatur and Royal – being displayed in a bar-graph format. If you click on an image, you can then zoom in to see the details of the image, while on the right-hand side of the screen will appear the description of the image and the street name. A double-click on the image will produce a Microsoft bing map of the location of the image in birds-eye aerial view (using the longitude and latitude).

You can sort the images in as many different ways as you have provided data. For example, I could display only images that had the word restaurant (17 such images) in the description. If I had included the camera f/stop, I could have displayed all images at, say, an f/stop of 5.6.

Pivot is a product of Microsoft Research and as yet is not intended for general use. To view a Pivot Collection, you have to use the special Pivot browser. However, later this summer Microsoft plans to release a Silverlight control that will allow the creation of Pivot Collections inside Visual Studio such that they can then be viewed with an ordinary web browser, such as Internet Explorer or Firefox.

If you would like to investigate Pivot, the link is http://www.getpivot.com. There you can read about Pivot and download the Pivot Browser to view the existing collections, which right now seem to lean toward sports databases. To see my New Orleans collection, download the Pivot browser and put http://www.lamartin.com/NewOrleansFrenchQuarter2006PivotCollection/NewOrleansFrenchQuarter2006.cxml into the URL text box (not in the regular browser). ◆

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Microsoft Launch 2010 in Tampa
Tuesday, June 29, 2010

5426 Bay Center Dr, Suite 700

Tampa Florida 33609

IT Pros | 8am - Noon — Microsoft TechNet

Launch 2010 Highlights

The Next Wave of Business Productivity

See what Microsoft Office 2010 and SharePoint 2010 mean for the productivity of you and your people—across PC, phone, and browser*. Find out firsthand how to plan for, implement, and deploy the new wave in business productivity at this free, half-day event. There's a lot that's new—here's what you can expect:

- Come and see first-hand how the new wave of products like Office 2010, SharePoint Server 2010, Exchange Server 2010, Visio 2010, and SQL Server 2008 R2 can optimize the way you work every day.
- Learn about tools and resources that'll help you plan by evaluating your current infrastructure
- Explore tools that'll help you optimize desktop deployment.

Developers | 1pm - 5pm — msdn

Launch 2010 Highlights

Life Runs on Code

Learn about the rich application platforms that Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 supports, including Windows® 7, the Web, SharePoint, Windows Azure™ and Windows® Phone 7 Series. From tighter development and test team integration to new ALM tools, there's a lot that's new. Here's what you can expect:

- See how to move your existing skills forward with Visual Studio 2010 both for in-house ASP.NET development and the new frontier of the Cloud.
- Build rich Windows applications with Silverlight 4 using trusted application features including out-of-browser execution and saving to the file system.
- Learn about the powerful capabilities of the Window Phone platform and the developer tools experience.

IT Pros Map & Registration LInk: https://msevents.microsoft.com/CUI/EventDetail.aspx?culture=en-US&EventID=1032451084

Developers Map & Registration LInk: https://msevents.microsoft.com/CUI/EventDetail.aspx?culture=en-US&EventID=1032451077

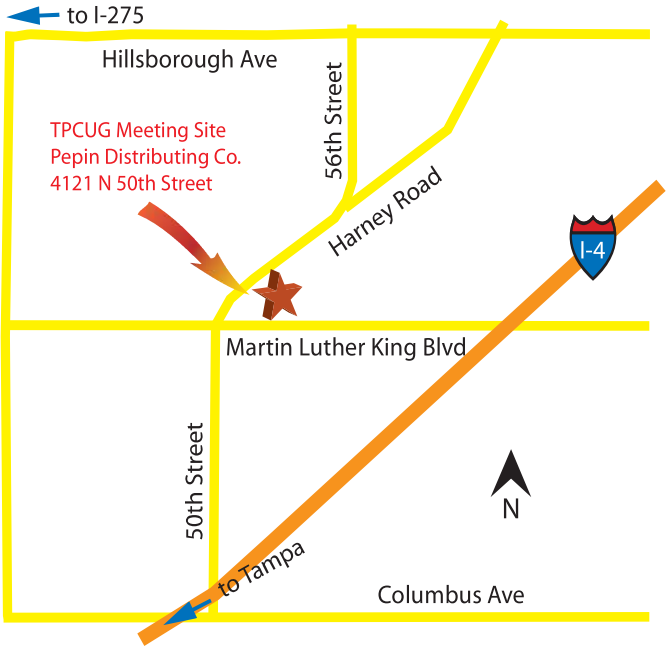
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Minutes.....Continued from page 2

alogy" by George G. Morgan, for the beginner. The book is available in the Hillsborough County library system. Ancestry.com can also be used with no charge on the library's computers. The Florida Genealogical Society of Tampa meets at the John F. Germany Library Auditorium, 900 N. Ashley Drive in downtown Tampa, the third Saturday of each month (except for December) at 10 am. A volunteer is normally available in the afternoon of meeting days to assist members. Membership information is available at http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~flfgs/ . The meeting ended at approximately 8:30 pm. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 7 July 2010

July in Tampa

Meeting

Blain Barton from Microsoft Office 2010

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft, speaking on Office 2010, will be our presenter this month. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

First I want to thank all of you who have been doing your purchasing from Amazon by starting with the Amazon link on our home page. Each month recently we have been receiving a deposit from them for the purchases made a couple of months previously. The latest check was for around $36.

Microsoft Events I saw one of our members at the Microsoft event location on June 29. Possibly more of you attended since the morning event had been over for at least 30 minutes when I arrived for the afternoon event. The morning session was geared toward Office 2010 and its deployment on the desktop and in the cloud. The afternoon event was aimed at programmers and developers using Visual Studio 2010.

The afternoon session was broken down into three parts: What's new in Visual Studio 2010, Web Development and the new Windows Phone7. It also turned out that there was going to be an additional meeting of developers/programmers in the area inter-

Comments.....Continued on page 6

August Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the July Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave opened the meeting with the Windows SIG at 6:35 PM. Bob discussed failed mice and problems with dual-layer discs. He suggested that you first check the battery in your mouse, if your mouse has a battery. If that is not successful, then check the drivers for the mouse.

For your dual-layer DVD player, you should see if a firmware update is available. He advised members to check the description of the update to insure that it contains changes that are beneficial. He cautioned members to be sure to follow the update instructions precisely because a botched update can cause very serious problems.

A member asked how to best increase the speed of his computer. Bob recommended that he download the "Windows Live One Care Scanner" (http://onecare.live.com/site/en-us/default.htm) . Bob and the members discussed various ways to save money on software and computer accessories. There was also an extended discussion on how to solve problems that are encountered when upgrading your operating system. The Windows SIG closed and John Witmer opened the business portion of the meeting at 7:10 PM.

John discussed the problems encountered in publishing the June newsletter and emphasized the need for all members to contribute any information they have that might be of interest to the group. He suggested that members might begin preparing profiles of their life experiences to allow us to know more about each other. He pointed out that it is not only very difficult for a few members to carry the load but also that we believe that publication of more diverse subject matter would improve the quality of the newsletter and of its interest to our members.

John announced that Blain Barton from Microsoft will be the speaker for the July meeting and that our only solid prospect for the rest of the year is Steve Singer's yearly hardware presentation. Members suggested several topics. William LaMartin offered to give a presentation on a variety of subjects. John introduced Marty

Minutes.....Continued on page 7

Home Network Improvements

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Costs for network devices are dropping pretty dramatically. After some slow backups across my little network, I decided to look into improving its speed from the standard 100Mb/sec to "gigabit" – 1000Mb/sec, (or 1Gb/s), a factor of 10.

There were other reasons to revamp my system that you may relate to: I ran out of places to connect new devices for lack of ports.

I'd replaced two of my older USB printers with one new all-in-one, and it has a network connection, far more desirable than a USB port, but I needed to find an Ethernet port.

I discovered that, when upgraded to Windows 7, the notebook I'd recently bought with wireless-g (with the Vista driver) became wireless-n. WooHoo.

The modem/router installed by the ISP has four 100Mb/s ports and wireless-g. Not nearly enough for my needs.

Two of my four desktop computers (three for me, one for Valerie) have 1Gb/s ports built in and were connected to older 100Gb/s equipment. Valerie's was one of the 100Mb/s; I added a wireless game adapter some time back so it was connected wirelessly as Wireless-g. I really needed to improve that since I wanted to look at streaming movies from Netflix – since proven successful.

OK. We need to stop and present some definitions:

Wireless-g works generally up to 54Mb/s, some at 108Mb/s, depending on distance and interference from other things like walls and portable phones.
Wireless-n works generally variably at a raw data rate of 54-600Mb/s. depending on a lot of stuff mostly having to do with money.

Wired Ethernet is reliable, 10/100/1000Mb/s, depending on distance, quality of the cable and the relative positions of Mars and Saturn.

Router is a small ugly box that usually your ISP installs. It may be just downstream of a modem. Most times it has four Ethernet ports and a wireless antenna, typically wireless-g. Or it may combine a modem, router and wireless. Or maybe no wireless. The one necessary requirement to be a router is to have DHCP in the built-in program.

DHCP Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol. Yada-Yada for "IP address traffic assigner" for all the devices on your network needing an IP address. There can be only one of these on your network because they're poor at playing with others.

ISP Internet Service Provider – The large corporate entity seemingly based somewhere in Asia that bills about $300 a month, including TV but not mobile phone.

Ethernet Adapter card A card that you can install inside a computer to a PCI or PCIe socket. The adapters now come in 10/100 and 10/100/1000 speeds. Most computers have Ethernet built in, and this Ethernet can be just ignored or disabled in software. Computers handle more than one Ethernet port easily, but not simultaneously.

Switch This is kind of a small port multiplier with one Ethernet port In and four Out, maybe eight or sixteen Out. It's relatively inexpensive, probably has nothing to set and definitely does not have DHCP. It routes Ethernet signals and can multi-task – that is, handle multiple channels at the same time. If you were to add DHCP, it would be a router. Indeed, if you have a router and disable DHCP in software, you have a switch. If that's not confusing enough, it's similar to a Hhb.

Hub A single-route-at-a-time version of a switch. You don't want one unless you have low expectations and it's offered free of charge.

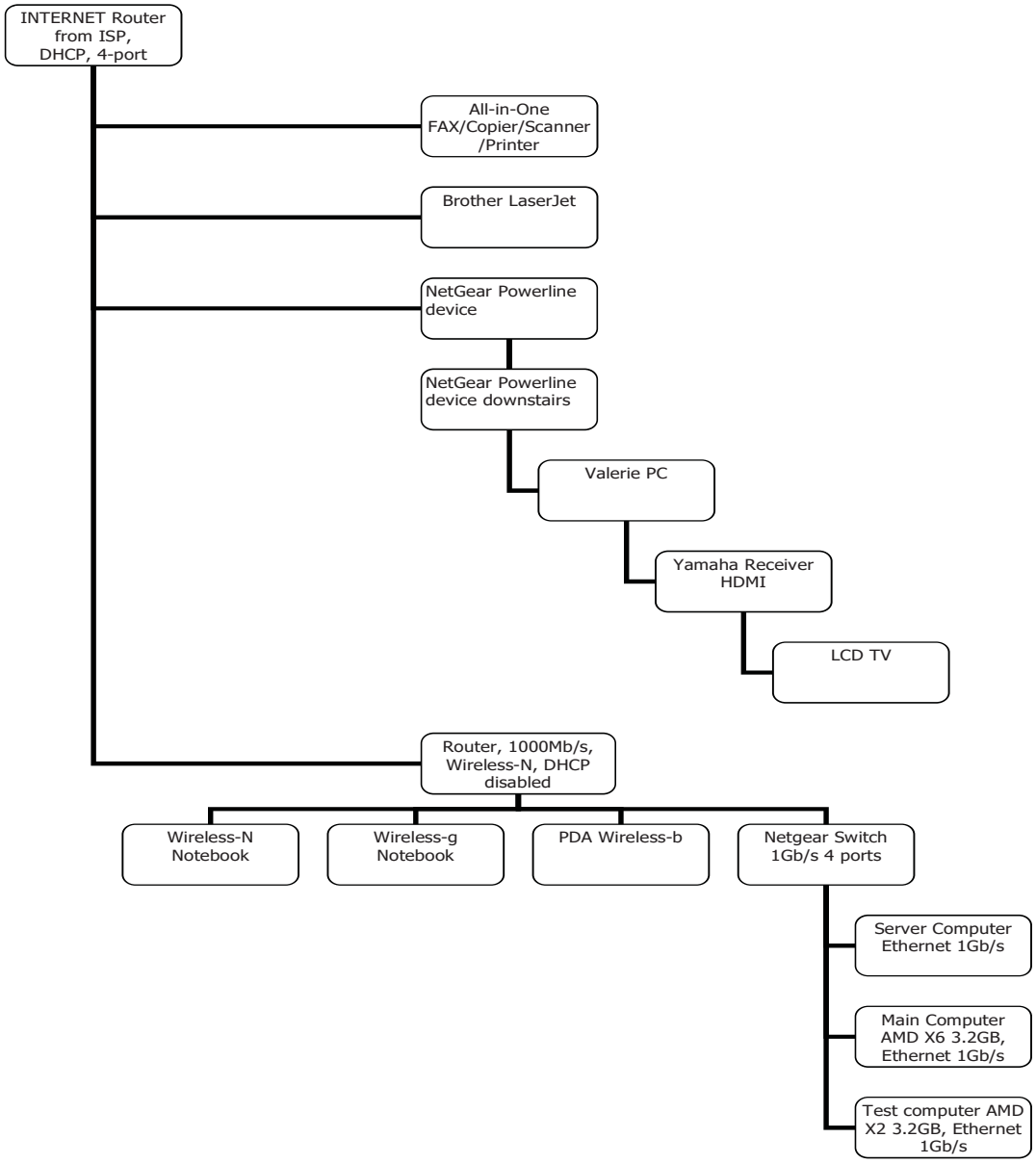
Improving my system a bit at a time.
First thing I had to do was get some more ports available and to improve my backup speed. I had two long

Network.....Continued on page 4

Network.....Continued from page 3

Ethernet cables running to my computer corner where I have my server and main desktop. I abandoned one of the cables and installed a 1Gb/s switch to the end of the other, then two short cables to the two computers. I used CAT5e or CAT6 cables for that. Then I installed a new Ethernet Adapter card in the server. So the rest of the system was slow, but the backups moving files from the desktop unit to the server were fast, and it was obvious it was fast. And it opened up a port on the router for the new printer.

Later, when I was contemplating Netflix streaming, I bought a new Rosewill brand wireless-n router. This was inexpensive, has four 1Gb/s Ethernet ports and wireless-n. I ran the configuration program for this device to set the wireless parameters, set a password, added an encryption code for the wireless, and last thing was to disable DHCP. You do this last because you will lose the configuration program at this point and the only way to go back is to do a hard reset, which blows everything and you have to start the configuration all over. This is because it will lose its IP address. That's OK though. Remember I said they don't play well with others. I placed it next to the ISP's router and cabled it to one of the router's 100Mb/s ports. Then I used the cable from my office corner to the little 1Gb/s switch to the new router, so everything that could use 1Gb/s would. Next steps were to reconfigure my notebook to use wireless-n. Yaaaa cheers. It doubled the speed from 54Mb/s to about 108Mb/s. It's very noticeably faster.

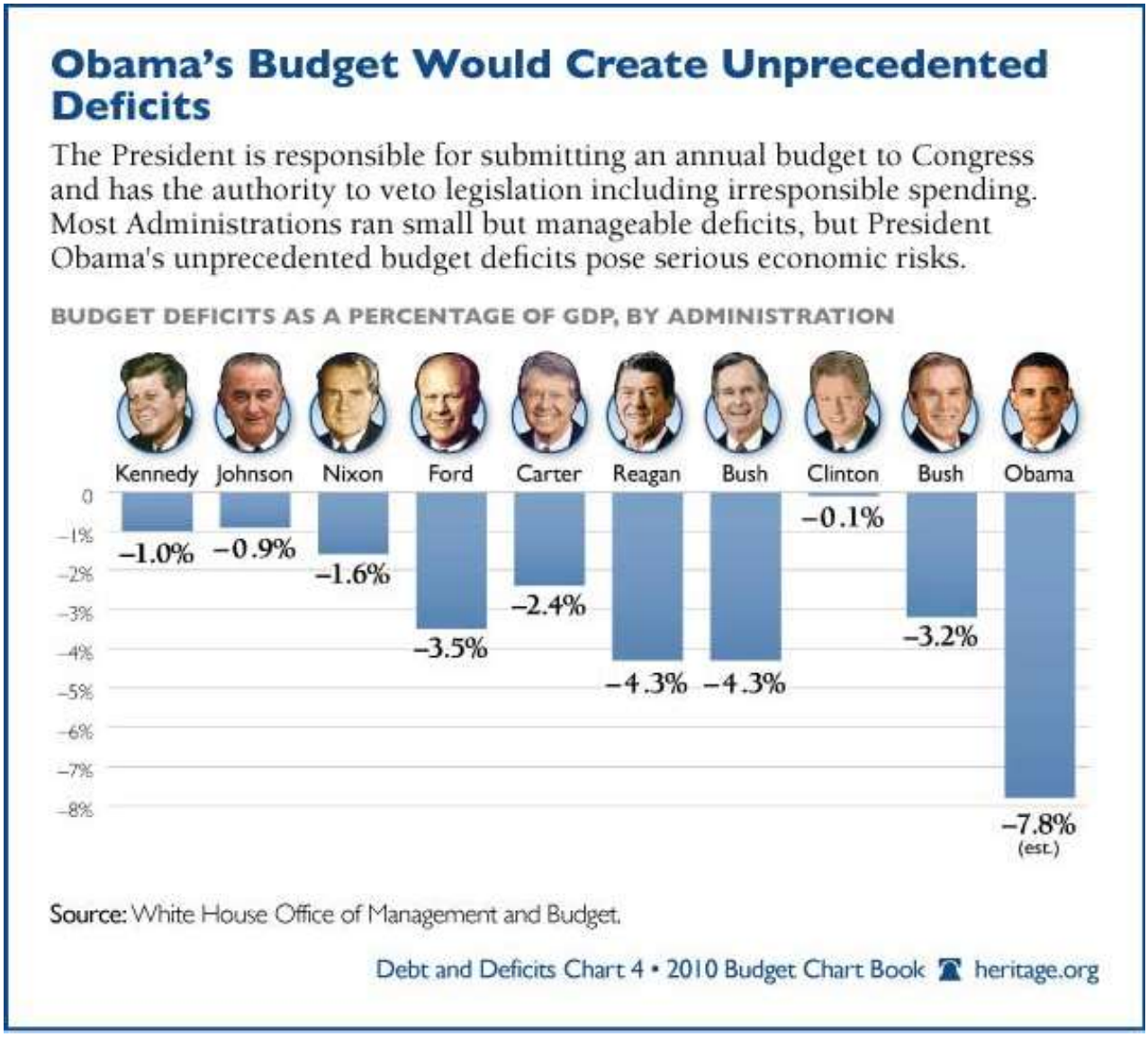


I then installed a pair of NetGear powerline devices to route Ethernet downstairs over the house wiring to Valerie's PC. I'd removed the wireless-g game adapter and cabled it directly to the Ethernet port on her computer. Now that's a 100Mb/s port, but the powerline won't do much better than that. It's more than enough for streaming movies though. I got a long HDMI cable from the PC to my receiver/amplifier which routes video to the big LCD TV. William LaMartin and I have both written about the powerline devices in previous articles. It's a very good way to get good (not great) Ethernet across your house without running wires.

It's complete now, and

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Internet Picture of the Month



Budget Woes

The chart and its comments above are from the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, http://www.heritage.org/, with a specific link of http://www.heritage.org/budgetchartbook/budget-create-deficits. It appears these numbers are accurate independent of political persuasion. In fact, other sites, e.g., the Wall Street Journal, have the 2010 figure closer to -10%.

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida Digital Newspaper Library	http://ufdcweb1.uflib.ufl.edu/ufdc/?a=fdnl1&m=hhh
Gizmag Emerging Technology Magazine	http://www.gizmag.com/
GenDisasters -Disasters that touched our ancestors	http://www3.gendisasters.com/
Tampa Bay Business Journal	http://tampabay.bizjournals.com/tampabay/

Comments.....Continued from page 1

ested in Microsoft Silverlight beginning at 6:30. This is something I am very much interested in, so I had to stay for that. The result was that I acquired some very helpful new ideas between 1:00 PM and 9:15 PM, which is a fairly long day. But iff I had attended the morning session, it would have started at 8:00 AM.

Speaking of Silverlight, I have recreated the Pivot Collection of New Orleans French Quarter photos that I wrote about in last month's newsletter ("A New Way of Viewing Data") as a Silverlight application which can now be viewed in any web browser. You may recall that last month you had to download the special Pivot Browser if you wanted to view the collection. Now to view the collection, just point your browser to the link http://www.lamartin.com/NewOrleansFrenchQuarter2006PivotCollection/. Another such collection, which Microsoft created as an example, is the NetFlix Instant View Movies collection at http://netflixpivot.cloudapp.net.

Live Mesh While on a recent trip to Boston and Maine, I had occasion to use Microsoft Live Mesh, which I also wrote about in the June newsletter. I left my desktop computer running and logged onto Live Mesh while away (something I have not done in the past) on the chance that I might want to access it via Live Mesh. And I did. I needed an email address I was recently given and had not yet added to the Outlook contacts on my travel laptop. So I simply logged onto Live Mesh on the laptop, connected to the desktop computer via a Live Mesh Remote Desktop and opened Outlook on the desktop computer and retrieved the new contact information.

Tethering is the term used for connecting a Windows Mobile phone via Bluetooth to your laptop computer and then using the phone as a modem to connect the laptop to the Internet. Not all service providers allow this feature to be enabled in the phone's operating system. However, my provider, Verizon, does, and I used this feature several days while on my recent trip. The hotel in Boston had a note on the room desk saying that a high-speed Internet connection was available and would cost $10/day. Next to the note was a LAN cable. So I concluded that there was no wireless connection available, and if I wanted to use the Internet, I had to use their cable – or I could tether my phone to the laptop and go that route, which I did.

At the Inn where we stayed in Maine, there was a free wireless connection that worked fine with one exception: It would not allow you to send email. You could browse the Internet and download all the email you wanted using your email client. You just couldn't send any email unless you used a web-based mail setup, such as webmail. Again, I connected my laptop to the Internet via my phone and sent email when any needed to be sent. Arriving back in Boston for a couple more days at the same hotel, it occurred to me that the hotel might have a free wireless connection even though it was not advertised. And they did. It was free, fast and allowed the sending of email. so I didn't need to tether.

I have had a data plan with my phone for many years, and I am one of the lucky ones with an unlimited bandwidth quota. I will probably buy a new phone when the Windows Phone7 comes out in late fall. What I hope is that I will not have to change plans to do it. For, if I have to change, I think the new plan will most likely not offer unlimited data use. Verizon will probably have something like the recently-introduced AT&T plan, with the first 200 MB free and you either pay more for a larger amount or get charged a certain amount for each extra MB. I checked my usage for the trip, and it came to around 125 MB, which was mostly racked up during three days. So, if one did much tethering, it wouldn't take long to go above a 200 MB limit.

Computer Assisted Design (CAD) Member Marty Burgess introduced us to CAD with a very interesting program at the last meeting, where he mentioned a free program called ProgeCad.

I had to do a bit of looking to find the free version of the CAD program he mentioned. It is called ProgeCAD 2009 Smart and can be found at the link http://www.progesoft.com/en/smart-2009.

There does not appear to be a free version of the

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Comments.....Continued from page 6

ProgeCAD 2010 program – only the paid-for professional version. The 2010 version says it is for Windows 7; the 2009 version doesn't mention that. And, in fact, if you download the free version and try to install it on a Win 7 computer, you will get an incompatibility error and the installation will not complete. To get around this, I just right-clicked on the installation exe and had it run in Win XP SP2 compatibility mode, and it installed fine – that is, right up to the end when I received errors about the PDF and JPF print drivers. The problem there is that you need to do them separately as administrator. It tells you where to go look for the appropriate executables. However, I didn't worry about that, since I can print to PDF without their driver.

After all that, the program worked fine in Windows 7 on my laptop. For Windows XP, as I have on my desktop computer, there was no problem at all with the installation, and the programs runs fine.

I found a very good tutorial/instruction PDF for the program at http://www.progesoft.com/skins/progeSOFT/upl/Inside-progeCAD-2009.pdf And I would be lost without it. Using it, I was able to produce a simple drawing of a bathroom floor plan. Unfortunately, my recent trip interrupted my learning of the program, and I have not been able to get back to it since returning. So I will probably have to start almost from scratch whenever I do find time.

My main frustration was in how using CAD differs from the drawing done in a program such as Adobe Illustrator, with which I am familiar. I think we have at least three CAD users in the group. So be warned that I may be asking you a few questions as I progress. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

Burgess, a member, who had volunteered to give the June presentation on Computer Aided Drafting software.

Marty began his presentation at 7:30 PM. He opened the presentation with a discussion of the advantages of utilizing CAD software, which he began using in 1989. He talked about the capabilities of the various software packages. In discussing the advantages of using a CAD program, he cited accuracy as number one. He stressed that you easily have precise accuracy, whether you need it or not. You simply request a length or width, and you get exactly what you requested. The ease of making revisions was his second most important advantage. The ability to change the error only and not the entire drawing saves countless hours. His third most important advantage was three dimensional modeling, which cannot be drawn manually. Marty talked about various software programs and their cost and capabilities. He showed many examples of how he uses CAD software at his job and described how, in addition to the other advantages of using CAD software, it makes it easier and more practical to share data with other contractors on a project.

Marty noted that one of our members, Wayne Lawrence, has been a Computer Aided Design instructor for 20 years. Marty stated that he only recently became aware of this fact, in spite of his interest in CAD software. He said that it made him think that publishing members' profiles might be helpful to the group.

Marty identified a free basic CAD program that he and Wayne think has all of the features that most people need. It can be downloaded using the link: http://www.progesoft.com/en/smart-2009

The meeting ended at 8:50 PM ◆

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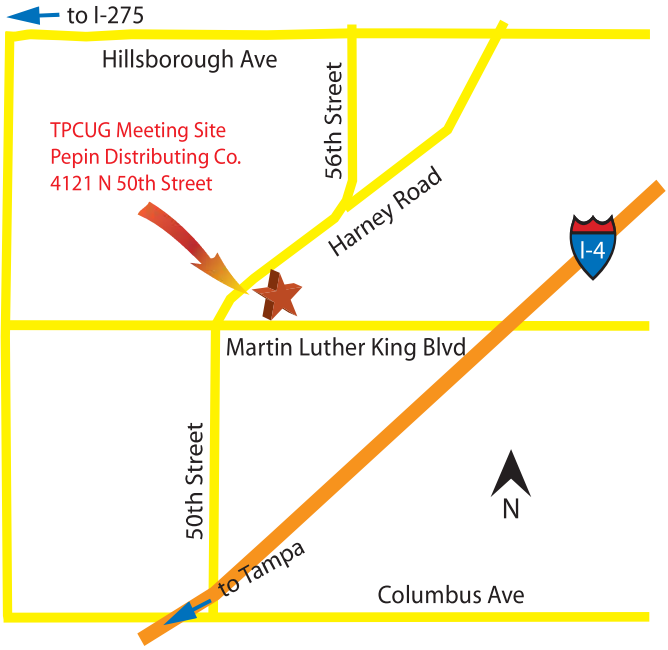
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Network.....Continued from page 4

worked perfectly until the inexpensive Rosewill router failed after just a few months. I had to replace it and went a big step up in price for a Netgear router. I lost several hours because the new router needed reprogramming. I have to send the Rosewill back for warranty repair and I really didn't want to wait, so I bought the new Netgear.

The diagram on page 4 is what the network looks like now. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 8 August 2010

August in Tampa

Meeting

Panoramas, Mosaics and More by William LaMartin

Wednesday, August 11, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will demonstrate the many things you can do with collections of digital images using software – much of it free. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This month I was very happy to get three members' articles in addition to the minutes, so this is a diverse newsletter. Also, this month I get to do the presentation, and I think I have a topic you will find interesting. I will demonstrate the use of software, some of which is free, in the creating of very large images, panoramas and mosaics.

I have touched on these topics before but have done much more since then. The final results of some of this work may be viewed at my website, http://www.lamartin.com. Go there and click on the Large Maps/Images button. On the Large Images and Mulit-Level Maps page, my most recent work starts with the "180 Degree Panorama of Lake Okeechobee..."

I am most pleased with the Burgert Brothers Tampa Photos Pivot Collection and the New Orleans French Quarter Mosaic. Go to the site and browse around; then come to the meeting with your questions.

Comments.....Continued on page 6

September Meeting: To be announced

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Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG Meeting at 6:30 PM. He discussed a small company, Centralists, that was purchased by Microsoft. The company has produced a suite of utilities that are useful and easy to use. Bob has discussed some of these utilities at previous meetings. At this meeting, he discussed "Disk2vhd 1.61," a utility that creates VHD (Virtual Hard Disk, Microsoft's Virtual Machine disk format.) It can be downloaded at: http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/ee656415.aspx He demonstrated how easily a Virtual Hard Drive can be created by the program. He covered uses of the program in connection with virtual PC programs that are available to you within Vista and Windows 7. Bob mentioned that there is a new free download from Acronis called Drive Monitor that has several useful functions. The SIG program ended at 7:00 PM.

Blain Barton of Microsoft began his presentation began at 7:05 PM. He mentioned that he had favorable results with the Microsoft antivirus program, "Microsoft Security Essentials," which is a free download. He discussed the things that you should consider when loading a new antivirus program. Blain suggested that you use the Microsoft Fix it Solution Center, http://support.microsoft.com/fixit#tab0, if you are having problems with one of their products. Blain discussed the differences, features, costs and functionality of Microsoft Office XP, 2003, 2007 and 2010. He explained how to best use the trial versions of Office to get the product that you really need. There was a discussion of the "Cloud" versions of Office and the components and capabilities of the programs that are currently included in the Cloud version. Blain explained some of the advantages of using the cloud programs and how you should weigh these against the power and versatility of the traditional Office programs. He installed Office 2010 and explained the choices that you encounter during the installation. He discussed "PC Decrapifier," a free program that removes unwanted preinstalled software from Windows XP and Vista machines. He recommended that you use the tools that he discussed

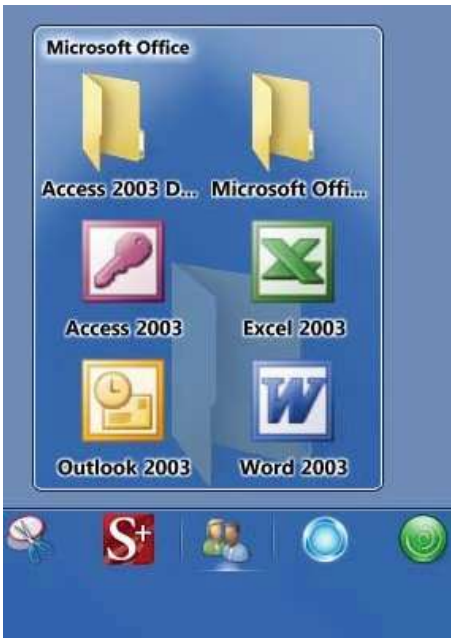
Minutes.....Continued on page 7

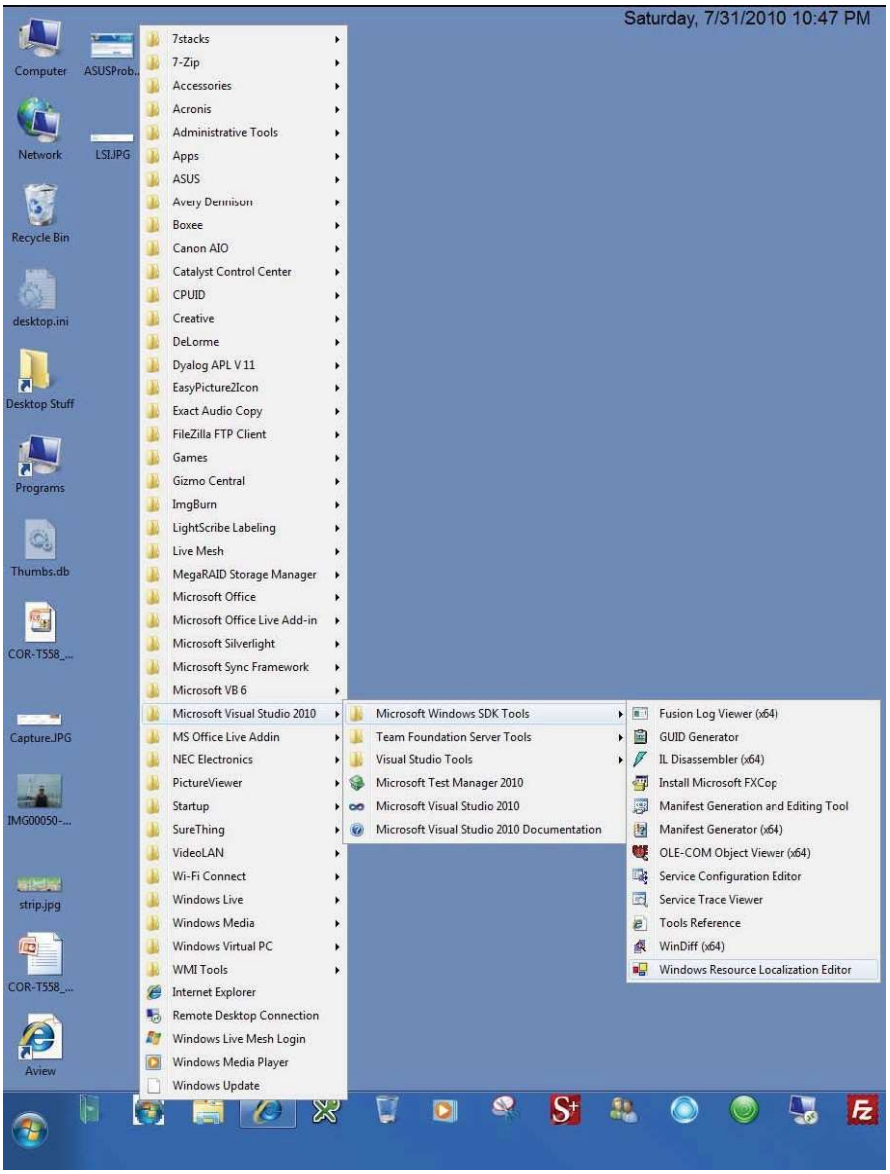
Alastra Software

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

7stacks is just what I was looking for. It's a program that gives me Start Menus just like I want them for Windows 7 and Vista. I'm not running a copy of Vista any more, thanks very much, but it was in Vista that Microsoft decided to change the way the Start Menu "All Programs" items display. It used to be "horizontally cascading." Each level of menu depth appeared to the right, so you could never lose sight of the whole menu or how you got there.

Now, Vista and Windows 7 expand the menu vertically. When it is expanded, it stays expanded, so to navigate to another part of the menu you have to close out the last expansion. (Or let go and start all over again). Then you have to be concerned with the menu growing vertically beyond its capability to show the whole menu. As each level gets a little wider, often important items are pushed off the menu. What were they thinking?





I've been looking for more than a year for the right kind of modification from someone who will agree with me that Win 7 "Start Menu," "All Programs" just sucks. Finally it's happened in the form of 7stacks, and I couldn't be more pleased with the outcome.

Now this program is far from perfect. It's actually flawed pretty badly. But, for the specific purpose of providing horizontally cascading menus, it works perfectly as long as you do it right. The Alastra website does make one mention of cascading menus and shows two screenshots. But I think their real emphasis on its use is "The Stack" (left) and "The Grid" (above), each with titles or not.

At http://www.alastria.com/index.php?p=software-7s, the website points out that it's filling a need to have a menu like the Mac provides called the Stack. While I'm not really disagreeing on the need for Mac-like stacks, their implementation of this is well … ugly. The text can be white (on a border of black) or

Alastra.....Continued on page 4

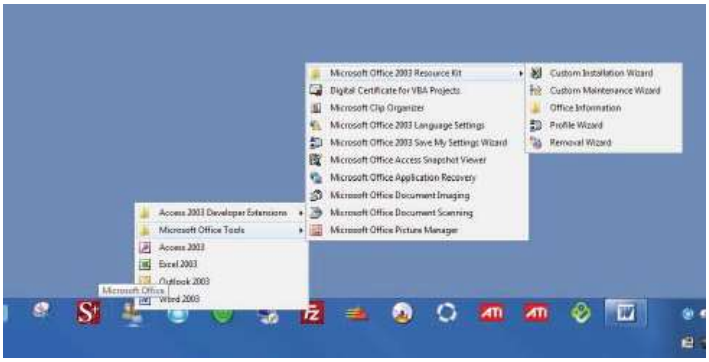
Alastra.....Continued from page 3

black (on a border of white). There are no other choices. The text is hard to read. And, most importantly, if there is more than one level, they don't cascade. Also, they don't adjust to accommodate the length of the icon's name. I almost uninstalled it within 10 minutes of installing. I'll concede there may be a use for this, but not for me.

I now have three different menus that have the content and behavior I'm looking for. Each of them is an icon on the taskbar. The first two are the first two items (icons) on the taskbar containing programs, and the third is the collection of Office programs (on previous page).

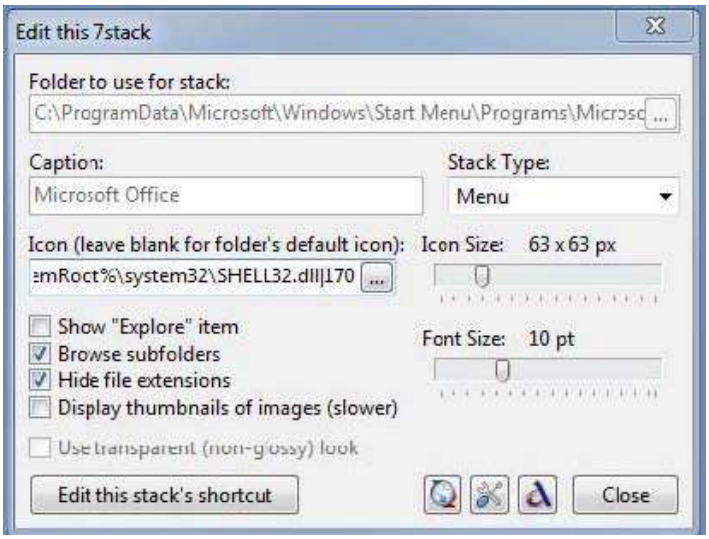
The second icon on the taskbar points to the system "Start Menu" directory. This is so that, as I install new programs or uninstall, this cascading menu needs no maintenance. It directly mimics the system Start Menu, except, as you can see, it is horizontally cascading. There's a technical tip at the end of the article if you decide to try it out.

The next menu (below) is my Office applications. Here, I've set its shortcut to a folder inside the system "Start Menu" to "Microsoft Office," and it gives me Office in a three-tier cascading menu. Notice it arranges a total of 21 items.



The third stack I created is the first icon on my taskbar. I created this one from scratch by creating a folder in My Documents and dropping a shortcut to all the programs I use the most. I tried to minimize the subfolders, but to get everything I needed I had to put ten folders. The folders, of course, just create a cascading menu. This menu is a little harder to maintain because I have to remember to add and delete shortcuts in the folders as I install/uninstall programs. But for finding a program quickly, I haven't found a better way.

Shown in the last picture is the 7stack editor. It's pretty simple. Notice that there is a button, "Edit this stack's shortcut." You MUST use this button to save your work, or you can't recover any previous work. Then you have to start all over again.



One thing that does not show up on the editor is a button next to the text bar, "Folder to use for stack." There is a button that normally shows up labeled "SF" for "Special Folder." A Special Folder can be a folder that has its contents in more than one location. The "Start Menu" is one of those. There is the Start Menu folder stored under the User Name directory, but there is also one under the All Users directory. What you see in the actual Start Menu is a combination of all of them, with any duplications eliminated. Before I discovered what that button was for, I'd already unnecessarily moved all the shortcuts in my User Name folder to the All Users folder.

One disadvantage to using this as a substitute for the standard menu is that you lose the Recent Documents that is provided you in native Win 7. For myself I rarely use them, but, when I do, it's because I've failed to find the file, making the Recent Documents (to me) very important a very few times.

All-in-all, despite the flaws, I really like this little program. And the price is right – free or a donation. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



The Waves

From http://www.flickr.com/, the exact URL being http://www.flickr.com/photos/picture_taking__fool/115862664/, we have this quite stunning landscape image by Jeremy Stumph.

"The Waves is part of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, which is west of Page, AZ off US Rt 89. The whole area is made up of bizarre rock formations. This particular location, Coyote's Butte, is the most special and majestic."

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Development for Beginners from Microsoft	http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/beginner/default.aspx
Federal State Local Public Spending	http://www.usgovernmentspending.com/
HubbleSite - Tonight's Sky	http://hubblesite.org/fun_.and._games/tonights_sky/
80s Movies	http://www.fast-rewind.com/index.html

What is Google Voice?

By Roger Waters, Tampa PC Users Group
rvwaters@hotmail.com

I was curious about Google Voice, so I signed up for it when it became available. Google Voice allows you to choose an available number that can be tied to any phone. Calls to the Google number can be used to ring one or more phones. This allows you control over your phone calls. It offers a host of features at no charge.

Let's start at the beginning. Google Voice was originally called GrandCentral and was established in 2005. Google bought GrandCentral for $95 million on July 2, 2007. Google launched Google Voice on March 11, 2009. Google then acquired Gizmo for $30 million on November 12, 2009. Google Voice was only available by invitation when it was first launched. It then moved to being available to anyone with a Gmail account.

Google Voice allows you to pick a number in your, or a different, area code. Depending on available numbers, you can choose vanity numbers (ones that spell names). If you own a business and wanted a number within another area code, you could look like you were in another city. I chose a number within 813-421 and matched the last four of my home number. This made it easy for me to remember.

Google allows you to set up different greetings for voice mail based on who is calling you. You can set up one voice mail for business and another for friends and family. You can review your messages with your phone, or they are translated as an e-mail and sent to your Gmail account. It will try to convert the message to text for reading or allow you to play the message from Gmail. You can send voice mails to others via Gmail.

Google Voice allows you to designate how a call is handled at different times of the day or on different days of the week.

Google Voice allows you to block calls or do call screening. You can request callers to say their name, and the call will come to you as a call from the name given. You can elect to answer the call, or let the call go to voice mail. You can also elect to have it go to voice mail and listen to the message being left. If you want to take the call, you can barge in on voice mail and take the call.

Google Voice allows for conference calling by having people call you and then you add them one at a time to a conference.

Google Voice allows you to make free calls to anyone in the US and Canada. You dial your Google Voice number from your phone and then dial 2 to input the number you want to call. International calling is available with charges from $.02 to $.06 per minute.
I personally do not text, but Google Voice allows you to text message anyone. You can receive Short Message Service (SMS) text messages on your Google number when it is sent to your cell phone.

Google Voice can be a useful tool to screen calls but may come at a price for privacy. I know William LaMartin is concerned about Google and the data they collect. Using this service would allow them to know whom you call and who is calling you.

As a postscript, I believe that Verizon FIOS will offer what they are calling Digital Voice, which will offer some of the same features as Google Voice. I think others might also offer some of these features in the future. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

And don't forget to do your Amazon.com ordering from the link on the TPCUG web site. We receive our payment two months after the month in question. We did quite will for April but received only a few dollars for May purchases. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Sound Forge Audio Studio

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
RobDavis7@verizon.net

Last month I decided to buy a program that would record music that I create. As a third career, I am performing Early Country Western music at various places and writing songs as well. I used to use a hand-held digital recorder to record tunes I would come up with, as well as songs I wanted to learn to play. This worked fine until I got a lot of stuff on the recorder. I had a hard time finding those tunes and songs mixed in with everything else. Even when I put them in separate folders (the recorder has four different folders), it was hard finding a particular tune or song. Additionally, if I wanted to repeat just a certain part of a song for some reason, I would have to go back to the beginning and start over.

Both my desktop PCs are still running XP, and the recorder program that comes with XP only records for a max of one minute. My laptop with VISTA came with something that will record OK, but I wanted to record stuff on the desktop. And so the adventure began. At first I bought something called Pro Tools from Best Buy's music center. It came with a little box to plug in a mike and/or a guitar to record via USB port. It costs about $100. This seemed to be a good solution since I already have a good microphone. However, the program was not user friendly at all in my opinion. It had no level indicators that I could find to monitor the sound level, and I was unable to change the way it saved stuff to a file. It always would create a new subdirectory for each file. After two frustrating days with this, I returned it and got my money back.

Next I went to CompUSA and bought a program called Sound Forge Audio Studio. It was just over $50, so for another $20 I bought a USB mike, too. The total investment was about $30 less than the supposedly better program. After getting through the LONG activation code, the stuff performed just fine. I was able to record, see the sound levels and save the tunes or songs where I wanted without a problem. There are also several file types you can use when saving, and I chose .wav for my files. The good part is that when I play back the tunes with MS Media Player, I can slide back to any point and replay just what I want. Additionally, all the songs and tunes now have individual names, so it is easy to find what I look for. The Audio Studio is a relatively simple program in that it only has two tracks as far as I can determine, so you couldn't have multiple tracks like a real studio would. It does have many complex features for editing and mixing stuff; however, for just getting the basic songs recorded and keeping track of them, it is very easy to understand and operate. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

to determine if the increased capabilities provided in the Office upgrade that you are considering will be worth the price of the upgrade to you. Blain's presentation ended at 8:25 PM.

John Witmer, our president, began the business portion of the meeting at 8:30 PM. He thanked Blain Barton for supporting our group by providing us relevant and timely presentations on new Microsoft products. Discussion of future programs for August and beyond was had with the members. It was agreed with William LaMartin that he would be our presenter for the month of August, with

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

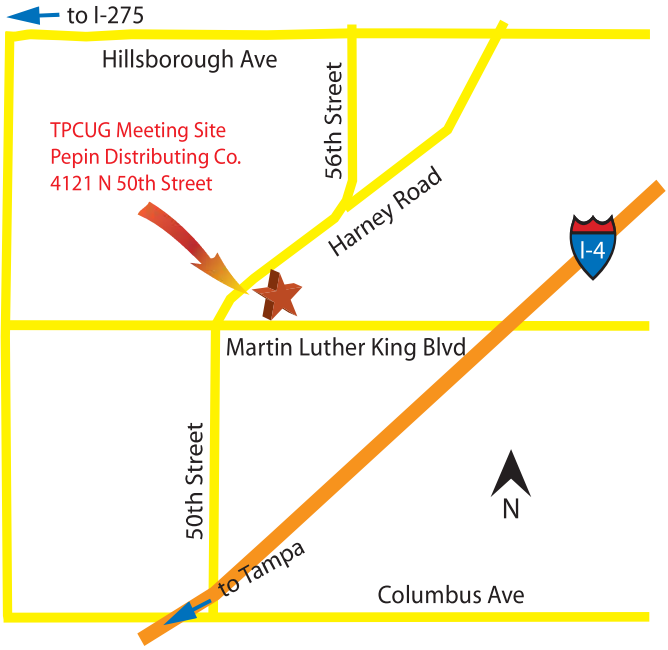
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Minutes.....Continued from page 7

topic details to be worked out. A September presentation has yet to be determined, but includes the possibility of a presentation on using Excel 2007, or possibly having a presenter from the Hillsborough County Public Library system to inform us of what special services are available online with the Library. Steve Singer will give his annual update of the latest hardware innovations at our October meeting. We have a couple pending prospects for the November meeting, but nothing has yet been finalized. In December, we will have our annual Holiday Party get-together. The meeting ended at 8:40 PM. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 9 September 2010

September in Tampa

Meeting

Social Media Management
by
Charles John

Wednesday, September 8, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Learn how to manage all of your social media applications from Charles John. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG before the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

I am looking forward to Jim Purcell's Part Two of his Sony camera article. I am real curious how well some of the mentioned technologies worked for him, in particular the Blink and Smile features; also, the panoramas which, as you saw from my presentation last month, are an interest of mine. Thanks to Jim, Ron Weinberg and John Witmer for helping me fill the newsletter this month.

I recently attended a full-day presentation on programming for the Microsoft Windows Phone 7 that is to be released sometime before the holidays. It will be a total departure from their previous Windows Mobile devices that I use and for which I have written programs. Those phones were aimed at the enterprise and geek segments of the market. This new phone is aimed squarely at the same consumer segment as the iPhone. Microsoft has learned that there is more money to be made from people who want to use their phone for social media type interactions than from people like me who want their phones to be mini computers that can handle databases, run Windows Remote Desktop and function as a modem for their laptops when traveling. ◆

October Meeting: Steve Singer, Computer Hardware Update

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By John Witmer, President, Tampa PC Users Group
jhwitmer@verizon.net

The meeting opened at 6:30 PM with Bob LaFave conducting the Windows SIG portion of the meeting. Bob opened by asking if there were any questions, and one audience member brought up issues he was having creating a wireless connection from his laptop to the router at home. Various suggestions were offered by Bob and others in the group to resolve the issue. Another member was having power problems with his computer. After back and forth discussion of this issue, it was felt that the power issue probably originated with a problem on the motherboard. This concluded the Windows SIG portion of the meeting, and John Witmer then opened the regular meeting at 6:50 PM with a few comments.

John introduced our newest member of the group, Margo Maseman, to the members. Margo joined TPCUG after visiting with us last month. Also in attendance tonight was former long-time member Brian Lance, who continues to work at Computer Corner on Fowler Ave. Next, John outlined the remaining programs for the year. Charles John, an occasional visitor to our meetings, will give us a presentation on software for management of social media at our September meeting. Steve Singer will provide us the October program with his customary update on hardware and gadgets, along with his insight into current hardware trends. For the November meeting, we have contacted a representative of the Hillsborough County Public Library who will present a program on Internet resources available through the library; and our December meeting will be our usual Holiday Party gathering. John then mentioned that Blain Barton had given the group a book on Configuring Windows 7 and that, instead of trying to raffle it off as our only prize, we would auction the book off to members via an email auction. John will email current members with details of the book, and anyone interested in making an offer will need to respond by email to John. After the first go around, a second email will go out to the bidders from the first round with information on the highest bid and giving one more opportunity to raise the bid

Minutes.....Continued on page 6

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX5V Part One

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

In Part One, I'll discuss why I bought a new ultra-compact point-and-shoot camera and chat about the replacement that I selected. In Part Two, I'll report on how well the many features of the new camera work.

In addition to a Canon 40D Single Lens Reflex camera, I own a Canon SD800 IS ultra-compact point-and-shoot camera. I used the small point-and-shoot camera when it was not convenient to use or carry around the 40D. Although the SD800 IS had its limitations, it was ideal for indoor snapshots. The telephoto lens was only 3x, but it was a wide-angle lens, equivalent to 28 - 105 mm, and the 7.1 megapixel CCD was adequate resolution for my purposes.

I started looking for a replacement because the newer cameras can take quality low-light pictures with no flash and I felt that I needed a camera that would give me a better capability of taking outdoor pictures at greater distances than the SD800 could cover. I like to have a camera with me in the car whenever possible, and, since that would normally be the small carry-around, I felt that it needed to be more capable of both close-up and distance shots. I was also hoping to find a camera with GPS capability.

After a long search and a lot of reading, I bought the Sony DSC-HX5V Digital Camera. The features that most influenced my decision were: (1.) The 10.2 megapixel Exmor R CMOS image sensor, which is reported to have exceptional low-light sensitivity with improved image clarity and drastically reduced grain. (2.) A 10x (equivalent to a 25-250mm 35mm film camera lens) professional-quality optical zoom G-Lens (which is used in Sony's top-of-the-line SLR cameras). (3.) It had an integrated GPS receiver and compass to record the location and direction of every shot you take, and it lets you view your images on a map. These features convinced me to ignore two of my long-standing criteria. I have previously stated that I would not buy a camera without a viewfinder. The Sony list of features stated that this bright LCD with special anti-reflective coating would provide sharp visibility, even in bright sunlight. It evidently was not tested at the top of Pikes Peak at noon on a summer day since three of my shots of the beautiful scenery there included shots of my fingers. I also have tried to stay with Canon products, which sharply reduces the





learning curve.
The camera is loaded with additional features, most of which I will discuss below. Some of these helped sway me, and some are almost too "whiz bang" to be believable. In the coming weeks, I'll be testing them and will report the results in Part Two.

Intelligent Auto Focus: Allows you to instantly take snapshots by focusing in as little as 0.3 seconds. The camera can also capture 10 frames per second,

Camera.....Continued on page 4

Camera.....Continued from page 3

Optical SteadyShot Image Stabilization: The camera uses a built-in gyro sensor to detect camera shake and automatically shifts the lens to help prevent blur without sacrificing image quality.

Anti-Motion Blur Mode: Captures cleaner and sharper images in low light for non-landscape shots. When set in Anti-Motion Blur mode, the camera captures six images in a fraction of a second with a higher shutter speed. It then combines the data from all six to create a single image of extraordinary detail and clarity.

Handheld Twilight: You can capture cleaner and sharper night shots without using a tripod. When set to Handheld Twilight Mode, the DSC-HX5V captures six images in a fraction of a second with one press of the shutter and processes them in the same manner in which they are processed in the Anti-Motion Blur Mode.

High Sensitivity Mode (ISO 3200): High ISO allows for faster shutter speed, so you can take photos indoors or in low light without the need for a flash. In addition to High Sensitivity Mode (ISO), you can select up to seven ISO settings (Auto, 125, 200, 400, 800, 1600, 3200) when shooting in Program Auto Mode to adjust sensitivity to your shooting conditions.

Backlight Correction HDR: Shooting high-contrast scenes can often lead to washed-out backgrounds and/or details lost in shadow. Backlight Correction HDR helps correct for this by taking two pictures at different exposure settings and processing the best elements of both into a single image for more natural looking shots.

Easy Shooting Mode: With Easy Shooting Mode, beginners can take great photos and experienced photographers, not familiar with Sony controls can take pictures while they are learning the system. In Easy Shooting Mode, easy-to-understand basic instructions are displayed on the LCD screen and the camera switches to all automatic settings, removing several function choices and allowing you to focus on just your subject. Since this mode works together with Intelligent Scene Recognition (Scene Modes), the camera selects the optimum setting for each scene.

Intelligent (iAuto) Auto Mode: This is a step up from the "Easy Shooting Mode." Unlike traditional auto mode, Intelligent Auto (iAuto) mode thinks for you by recognizing scenes, lighting conditions and faces, and it adjusts the settings to produce clear images and faces with natural skin tone and less blur. It allows you to take advantage of all the technology without leaving Auto mode.

Intelligent Sweep Panorama Mode: You can capture expansive landscapes with Intelligent Sweep Panorama Mode. Press the shutter and sweep, and the camera does the rest, continuously shooting images and stitching them together almost immediately, creating a single image over 7,000 pixels wide. This model even detects faces and moving subjects and stitches different widths intelligently to help avoid subject distortion.

Smile Shutter Technology: Smile Shutter technology captures a smile the moment it happens. Simply press the Smile Shutter button, and the camera does the rest.

Anti-Blink Function: When the camera is set to Soft Snap, the Anti-Blink function captures two images, recording only the photo with less squinting or blinking. If a blink is detected in other shooting modes, a warning will be displayed after you take the shot.

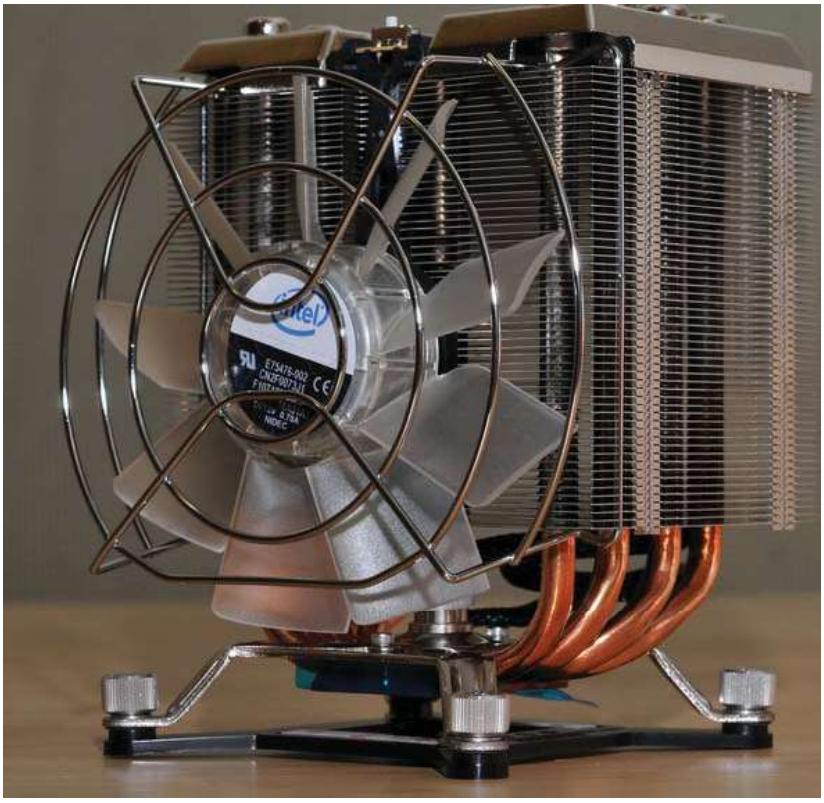
Video Capability: The camera can shoot 1080i AVCHD HD movies. You can shoot a movie continuously for approximately 29 minutes. Both stills and videos are composed and viewed on the 3" Xtra Fine LCD display. HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) connectivity is also available, as is the MP4 format.

In-Camera Retouching Tools: You can retouch and enhance your photos on the go with in-camera trimming and Red-Eye Correction functions.

Sony PMBP (Picture Motion Browser) Software: A portable version of the Sony Browser program is installed in the camera which makes it easy to pre-se-

Camera.....Continued on page 8

Internet Picture of the Month





Intel's Fastest Processor with Cooling Fan

The Intel Core i7-980X 6-Core CPU is Intel's fastest. And it can be yours for $999 with the additional expense of a more expensive motherboard yet to be added in. That is more than most people nowadays pay for their entire computer system, including monitor and printer.

http://forumas.modding.lt/viewtopic.php?f=11&p=67248 is the link for the images. However, I cannot read the language. So, for a very detailed review of the new processor go to the link http://benchmarkreviews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=475&Itemid=63.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Zoom.it - make your images zoomable	http://zoom.it/
New Orleans Virtual Archive	http://luna.ts.tulane.edu/luna/servlet/Tulanetco~10~10
Rogue Antispyware Blog	http://rogueantispyware.blogspot.com/
All about Digital Cameras	http://www.steves-digicams.com/

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

amount. The highest bidder and bid amount will be awarded the book and the rest of the bidders will be provided information on the winning amount. This method seems reasonable in that someone truly interested in having the item will be able to obtain it if their bid wins.

A final comment was made by William LaMartin that he is planning to discontinue creating the HTML-formatted version of the newsletter available for viewing on the group's website and will produce only the Adobe Acrobat version of the newsletter The existing HTML newsletters would remain on the website as they currently exist, and future newsletters would be available only in Adobe Acrobat format. John then introduced William LaMartin as presenter of the evening's program on "Panoramas, Mosaics, and More," using digital images and software that is mostly free as downloads.

William's presentation began at 7:00 PM with the showing of a picture he had printed on paper. He asked the audience if anyone recognized it (no one did), and he went on to say it was composed of over 4,000 pictures put into a mosaic that was created as a picture of the St. Louis Cathedral at Jackson Square, New Orleans. With this revelation, William began the mosaic portion of his presentation. He said the creation of a mosaic required a software program, and he utilized the free program AndreaMosaic that can be downloaded from the following website: www.andreaplanet.com/andreamosaic . This is a very interesting website worth your time to visit and to see what this individual has to offer and say about things. In a demonstration of how to create a Mosaic, William used this free program and selected 372 photos on his computer, specifying that each could be used up to 20 times, and gave a limitation on the maximum size of the mosaic to be created. He selected an existing picture image that served as the base image for the mosaic. From there, the program acquired and used the 372 photos to arrange them as minuscule images that formed a mosaic picture of his selected image. This program is very powerful, yet seems easy enough for us to use.

The program then moved on to Panoramas. William spoke of a Microsoft program that is very useful in creating a panorama, and it is a free download for all to use. Microsoft ICE (Image Composite Editor) is an advanced panoramic image stitcher. You can find out more about it and download it from the following link: http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/redmond/groups/ivm/ICE/ . William demonstrated the abilities of the program using pictures he had taken in downtown Arcadia. He had previously used his camera to take numerous shots around a 360-degree circle of where he was standing in Arcadia. Then, using the ICE program during the meeting, William was able to have them stitched together to create the panorama. He also commented to the audience that if you are taking camera shots to be used in a panorama, it is best to lock the aperture setting, to get a consistent depth of field in all the pictures, and let the shutter speed and auto focus adjust as needed. He also noted that for larger sized panoramas, it is better to have it as a TIFF format image due to the limitation in size found with JEPG formats. In conjunction with a panoramic picture of Davis Islands that William had taken from Bayshore Blvd., he showed us the capabilities of using Deep Zoom Composer to view detail of the homes on Davis Island that were too small to see in the panorama. For more information on Deep Zoom Composer, check out the following Microsoft website: http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc645050(VS.95).aspx . Additionally, you can see most of the pictures, panoramas, etc., used in Willam's presentation by visiting his website at http://www.lamartin.com . There is a wealth of great stuff to see on his site that William has created and arranged into various categories.

The More portion of Willam's presentation involved two items not yet addressed. The first is Pivot Collections, for which there are several examples on his website. Pivot Collections allows you to view images grouped by a similar characteristic, such as the year in which they were taken. For the Burgert Brothers collection of old photos of Tampa on William's website, they can be viewed by year. For the New Orleans collection, they can be viewed by the street they were taken on. The last thing that William demonstrated was the use of Microsoft Pro Photo Tools, which is a free program that allows you to gather information about your pictures if your camera records this info as

Minutes.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Laptop Keyboard Issues

By Ron Weinberg, Member At Large, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

The design of laptops precludes the use of the full-size standard keyboards used on larger desktop systems. Of course, quality and design varies among brands and models, but it is not uncommon for some laptop users to have difficulties with their keyboards: Jumping cursors, missing key strokes, keys which may be either too sensitive or which have to be stroked too hard, etc. Users usually adapt and accept these shortcomings.

If the problem is a jumping cursor it may be that the typist is unknowingly rubbing or grazing the touchpad. Touchfreeze is a free program which can be downloaded from http://www.pcworld.com and which automatically disables the touchpad when typing and enables it when typing stops. If that does not solve the problem or the other key problems mentioned are too annoying, the only true solution is to use an external keyboard. Wireless keyboards are widely available. USB keyboards will also work.

My wife is an experienced professional typist trained at 100 wpm. She is an avid fan of the Facebook games, Farmville and Farmtown, and communicates with other users throughout the world. Our laptop keyboard was, because of the issues mentioned, unsatisfactory for her.

We had a small but full-featured Dell PS/2 keyboard which was ideal for use in this situation. However, laptops have no PS/2 ports. I purchased a PS/2 to USB adapter, connected the keyboard and it was dead, completely unresponsive. It seems that these small adapters merely try to match the wiring of one side to the other. They will only work with keyboards and mice that were originally designed to work with either PS/2 or USB connections. Old style devices will not work. These adapters are called Passive. Many are sold without any indication that they are merely Passive.

Luckily, there is another type PS/2 to USB adapter, which is called Active. The Active adapter contains a chip that converts the actual signal from one type to the other. Often it is a splitter which will allow the optional connection of a Mouse. I purchased an Active adapter and it worked perfectly the first time I plugged it in.

The solution mentioned should also work for an old laptop that may have a worn-out or defective keyboard or touchpad. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 6

part of each picture (shutter speed, f-stop, date taken, camera type, lens used, etc.). You can also use Pro Photo Tools to geo-code your pictures by identifying the place they were taken on a bing map within the program. William demonstrated this with pictures taken from a recent trip to Boston.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:40 PM. ◆

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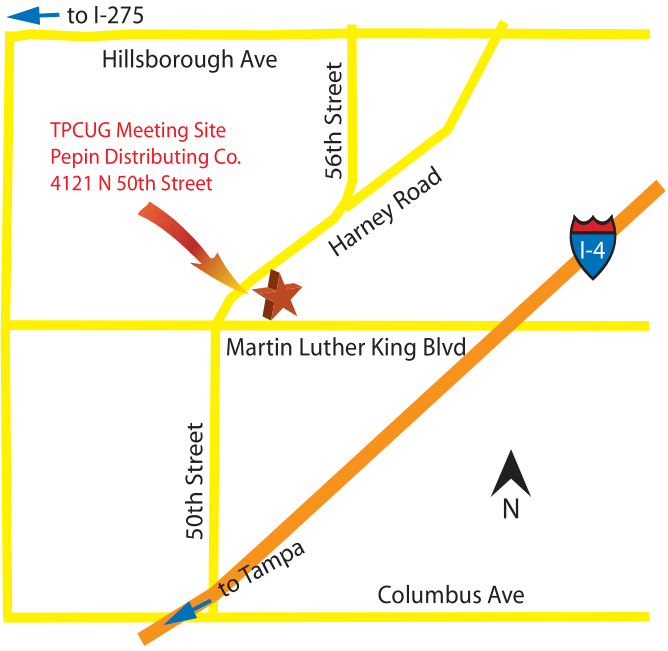
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lect videos and images in the camera and conveniently upload them from the camera to a compatible PC and popular internet sharing sites without the need for any additional software or installation.

Scene Modes The DSC-HX5V features 11 convenient scene modes: High Sensitivity, Twilight, Twilight Portrait, Soft Snap, Landscape, Beach, Snow, Fireworks, Advanced Sports Shooting, Gourmet, Pet.

If you are interested in the camera, there is much more information available at:http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/671993-REG/Sony_DSCHX5V_B.html#features ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Vol. 23 No. 9 October 2010

October in Tampa

Meeting

New Computer Hardware
by
Steve Singer,
RDI @ TampaBay, Inc.

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Learn about new computer hardware from Steve Singer of RDI @ TampaBay, Inc. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG before the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Many thanks to Merle Nicholson and Jim Purcell for helping me fill this newsletter. I know we all are looking forward to hearing what Steve Singer has to tell us about computing and computer hardware at the coming meeting. His annual presentations, which we have had for quite a few years now, are always interesting.

As for my computing, I have been involved with two projects this past month. The main one was setting up the new computer Merle built for me. Possibly next month I will write about it in more detail. But for now here is the bare minimum of facts. First, it is very fast since it has as a C drive a solid state drive and one of Intel's faster processors, the Core i7 875K 2.93 GHz,(the fastest was featured in last month's Picture of the Month). The computer also has 8 GB of Ram and a very fast video card with 1 GB onboard memory. The C drive is only 128 GB and meant exclusively for the operating system and the program files. The data files, temporary folders, etc., reside on a 1 terabyte drive. There is the usual DVD/CD drive, which

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November: Mary Jo Combs of the Public Library System

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave opened the meeting with his Windows SIG presentation at approximately 6:40 pm. The session was short due to the late start and to allow Charles John time for his presentation. There was a brief discussion of rootkits and rootkit scanners. Bob mentioned a few rootkit scanners that have proven to be effective. Bob described a custom method of upgrading from Vista to Windows 7 that will insure that you do not lose your data. Your programs, of course, must be reinstalled, but this custom method will insure that your data is transferred. The Windows SIG ended at 6:50 pm.

John Witmer, our President, began the business portion of our meeting at 6:55 pm with a discussion of the method that was used to auction the Microsoft book donated by Blain Barton. Arthur Williams bought the book with his bid of $18.00. At our October meeting, Steve Singer will give a presentation featuring the latest developments in computer hardware. A librarian from the Hillsborough County Public Library will give a presentation at our November meeting. We will have our holiday party at the December meeting, so there will be no presentation at that meeting. The slate of officers will be determined at our October meeting, and the vote will be taken at the December meeting. John encouraged members to volunteer. He reminded the members that most of the current officers have served for several years. The speaker for the night, Charles John, was introduced by our Program Chair, Doug Mullis. The business portion of the meeting ended at 7:00 pm, and Charles John immediately began his Social Media Management presentation.

He discussed the development of Social Media Management beginning with development of television in the early 50's. The progression continued into the 60's where more sophisticated presentations began to be a prominent part of television programming. The TV began to take more and more of our time but then began to decline because of the development of Internet and computer-based social media. He mentioned that

Minutes.....Continued on page 7

A Quick Look at Internet Explorer 9 Beta and Office 2010

By Merle Nicholson,Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The first beta version of Internet Explorer 9 is available for download now. There are a hundred opinions out there every day about how well (or not-so-well) it works, so I thought I'd throw my quick two cents worth in, making it number 101 just for today.

The top image is it in its basic form, showing the first page of the TPCUG site.





It's a shock at first to see it's missing all its STUFF. Where's the STUFF? OK, right-click on the tab area and then select Favorites and Command bar, as shown in the second image. You get this along with one or two more which I have combined, Favorites on the left and Command bar on the right as seen in the first screen capture on page 4.

After using IE9 for a while, I finally decided I couldn't do without these. But it's still a far cry from the old one where the toolbars took up a substantial part of the window. So where's the rest? Obviously I can select the Status bar. But the Search entry box has been combined with the URL box. Smart move, I think, and reportedly "stolen" from Google Chrome.

One last thing – the menu bar! I didn't find it at all until today when I had to read about it. Press Alt Key, then let it up. It appears long enough to use it, then it

IE & Office.....Continued on page 4

IE & Office.....Continued from page 3



disappears. The image above is what it looks like. Its contents are pretty much IE8, which is fine with me because I like the old Favorites menu much better than the new, and it's still there.

The Command bar is showing clearly now – in my case consisting of five icons (on the right just above the page), which is customizable.

If you notice there are three icons to the right of the tabs (and above the five just mentioned): Home, Favorites and Settings. These, as far as I can see, are not configurable. The Favorites is really Favorites, Feeds and History. They look like IE8's Favorites, Feeds and History and can be placed so they appear either on the left or right. If it's on the right, the window will disappear automatically, but on the left, just as in IE8, it has to be closed with a mouse-click.



On the list of objectives for IE9 is: Support for HTML-5, simplify the user interface and make it faster. Oh yes, I forgot that. It's faster. In my opinion, noticeably so.

HTML-5 is supposed to be of interest because it has the elements built in for playing media, audio and video – without plug-ins. That would be a wonderful thing.

One catch – if you're hanging onto your old Windows XP, forget this. It runs on Vista and Windows 7 only. There are 32- and 64-bit versions.

A couple of quick words about Office 2010. First, they finally reworked Outlook to use the ribbon bar, and they've done a very nice job of it. I don't think there's any area of Outlook that didn't go untouched, and the improvements are all worthwhile. It's just full of good ideas, and yet the basic stuff works with no learning effort at all.

Second is about Access. Here again, it has the same ribbon interface, but – along with PowerPoint, Excel

IE & Office.....Continued on page 5

IE & Office.....Continued from page 4

and Word – the ribbons are all very configurable, so if you find yourself constantly digging for something, you can move it – or copy it – where you can get at it.

Access 2010 will not coexist with earlier versions of Access, and, even worse, now it won't coexist with an earlier runtime version of Access. You can install them, but each time any Access is used, it has to go through some part of a reinstallation – every time. I have, however, configured my own machine with Access 2003 and Word, Excel and Outlook 2010.

I don't remember Word 2007; perhaps it did have the change preview feature, I don't know. But I can tell you I think it's the best thing to happen to word processing. On page 8 is a screen capture of what looks like. It's showing a preview of changing five words from 11 points to 16 points.

The point is that it's just a preview, and it takes another click to commit to it. Otherwise it stays the same as it was. On top of that you get this little formatting menu whenever you highlight any text. Wonderful stuff.

Disable your Caps Lock and other things, too

IE & Office.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Baby Alligators Hatch

From the Naples News web site, http://naplesnews.com, with the exact link being http://www.naplesnews.com/photos/galleries/2009/aug/17/baby-gators/. The location was the Marbella at Pelican Bay, a Naples Florida retirement community that backs up onto a nature preserve. Let's hope that all those small dogs that are probably also living at the retirement community don't become evening meals for these little reptiles when they become large reptiles.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
SuperSite for Windows 7	http://www.winsupersite.com/win7/
PublicRadioFan.com	http://www.publicradiofan.com/
CPU Benchmarks	http://www.cpubenchmark.net/

IE & Office.....Continued from page 5

Awhile back I'd read something about how to disable Caps Lock, and there was something intriguing about the idea. It took the realization that the only time I ever use the Caps Lock is to release it after I've turned it on by bumping it by mistake. I NEVER type with the Caps Lock on. After all, we used to say to people to stop shouting at me in your emails! It's a carryover from the old data-input days where punch cards could handle only upper-case letters.

Knowing it is possible to disable Caps Lock, I found the best source at How-To Geek; they not only explain how to do it manually with Regedit, but they also supply some Registry merge files for downloading. They are reported to work on Win XP, Vista and 7. I have several of these, and I can vouch for Win 7 64-bit myself. I used the one that simply disables the key. There are others. http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/windows-vista/disable-caps-lock-key-in-windows-vista/

Now, the next thing I need is to disable NumLock for my notebooks and for a couple of other keyboards that do not have a numeric keypad. I've had a couple of situations recently on other peoples' notebooks where, no matter how careful I'm being, the logon password wouldn't work. I've since learned that I must check the state of the NumLock if there is no numeric keypad. There is usually a group of keys that substitutes U, I and O, for instance, for 4, 5 and 6. So if there's an O in the password, you are actually typing 6. It's surprising how many keyboards I have like this in my house. I have a small one on my workbench, two notebooks, and my spouse has a very small Adesso keyboard on her desk that's thin and small enough to slip in her desk drawer. And I just bought a new Logitech diNovo Mini Bluetooth keyboard for my NetFlix streaming PC that I'll look at. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

is a Blu-ray one, and, for the first time, I now have a 2-monitor setup with two 23-inch Samsung monitors. After installing my programs, the C drive now has 68 GB free, and, after installing most of my data files, the D drive has 652 GB free.

How fast is the computer? Well, from the time I press the power button until my logon screen appears is 37 seconds. After I enter my password, it is only about five seconds until I can run a program. It is like night and day when compared to my almost 5-year-old Windows XP computer, which I then thought was so fast compared to the 4- or 5-year-old computer that preceded it.

Microsoft Phone 7 The new Microsoft Phone 7 is due in November, but, for anyone who wants to develop programs (or just play at that), the software has been available for some time in beta form. However, in September Microsoft released the software in final form, and I have been trying my hand at programming the phone and then testing the code on the supplied Phone 7 Emulator.

On the next page you can view a screen capture of one of my test programs running on the emulator. It is a mapping program that displays my neighborhood with a red square pushpin over each house (the pushpins are not very visible in the printed newsletter), where if you click on a pushpin the address and resident's name is displayed. Of course, this wouldn't be the data I would use in an actual application; it is just for testing. What this demonstrated was that I could display such a map, populate it with many pushpins at locations for which I had the latitude and longitude and then display any other information that I had associated with that location. Additionally, to use such maps, you need a developer's account for the bing maps (which I have), unless you want a message splayed across the map to the effect that you need to get such an account.

Microsoft just announced that they will unveil the actual phone on October 11, and it will go on sale on November 8. The first phone available will be

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

only GMS (see Wikipedia for this and CDMA), with AT&T being the primary carrier. CDMA phones will follow sometime after the first of the year. The carriers supporting CDMA will include Verizon, my provider. So, it looks as if I won't be getting an actual phone until after the New Year, which is a bit of a letdown because testing programs on an emulator is not as good as being able to deploy them to an actual phone. I have read that there are ways of simulating the acquisition of GPS data for the emulator, and probably there is a way to simulate taking photos with the phone camera in the emulator, although I haven't looked into that.

Microsoft is providing actual phones for testing to many developers, but I am too far down the pecking order to receive one of them, I believe.

Amazon.com We received $25 from Amazon for items purchased in July via the link on our home page. So don't forget to keep using that link, and tell your friends about it, too! ◆



Windows Phone 7 Emulator

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

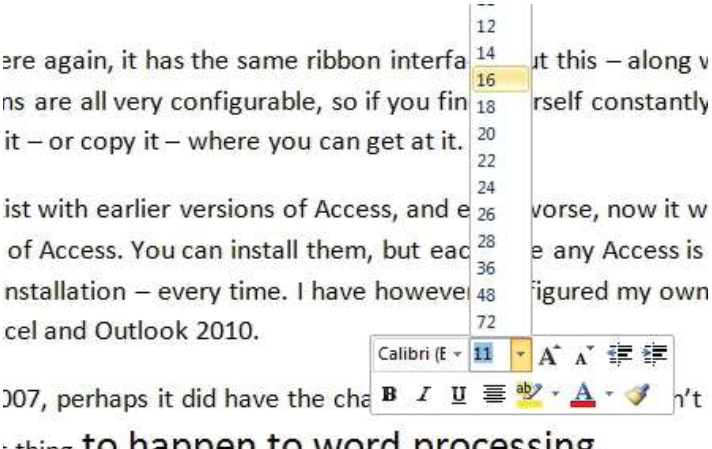
the book *Groundswell* by Charlene Li pointed out that the direction of social information is changing from "top down" to "bottom up" as a result of the communication tools that have been developed. He described social media as various electronic tools that allow us to connect, collaborate and publish information in practically any format and to exhibit photos, and a full range of videos. He showed companies that are using social media both internally and externally to communicate, operate and promote their agendas. He said that Hewlett Packard has one of the most sophisticated social media networks. There are some social media

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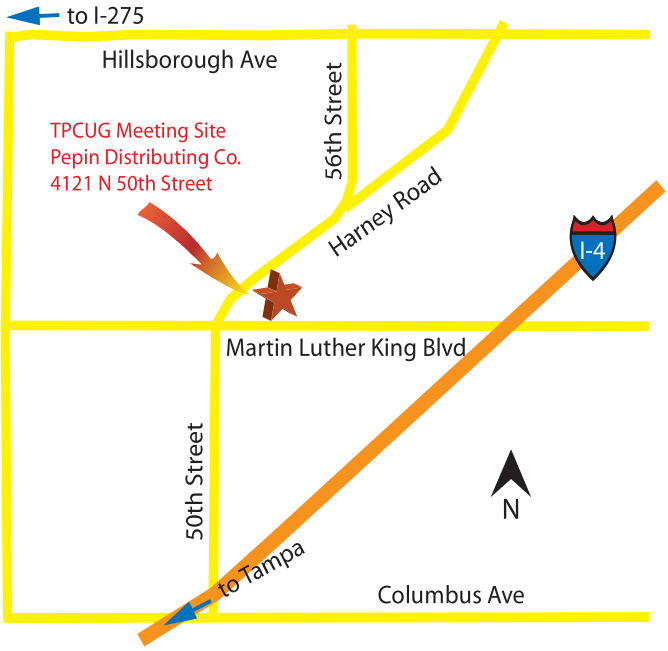
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Screen capture of the preview of changing "to happen to word processing" from 11-point type to 16-point type in Word



Minutes.....Continued from page 7

software programs (most are free) that provide analytics, insights and statistics concerning your various blogs. John provided a handout that gives the details of eleven different versions of free social media manager software. John's handout also listed 15 books that he used in developing his presentation. During his presentation, he gave a summary of the contents of the books, which revealed the broad range of data being assembled and the ways in which society profits from the analysis of the data. The meeting closed at 8:20 pm. ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 23 No. 10 November 2010 November in Tampa

Meeting

Library Databases
by
Mary Jo Combs of the
Public Library System

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

6:30 PM

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Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Mary Jo Combs of the Tampa/Hillsborough County Public Library system will tell us about the library's online databases. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG before the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Roger Waters for his telephone article, which was especially timely considering what I write about below, and also to Jim Purcell for the minutes.

The past month has been quite busy with computer things: The continuing fine-tuning of my new computer; the learning how to program the new Windows Phone 7, even though I don't yet have a physical one to practice with; the updating the membership database for the yearly membership drive for our three neighborhood organizations; and, finally, making the many changes necessary to switch from Bright House (the old Time Warner Road Runner) to Version Fios for my Internet connection. The change to Verizon has caused me much work in notifying many people and businesses about the change in my main email address, which I have had for the past 11 years.

Regarding the neighborhood membership, I am the keeper of the membership database, which I do in Microsoft Access. I am also the producer of the yearly membership directory. For all those

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December: Holiday Party

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Secretary: Jim Purcell (Edward_J_P@MSN.com) 985-1676
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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began at 6:40 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows operating systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob leads the group in finding answers to questions and solutions to problems. This month's SIG ended at 7:00 PM.

The business portion of the meeting was opened at 7:05 PM by John Witmer, the Tampa PC Users Group President. John discussed the Holiday Party in December and asked for input from the membership. The majority of the suggestions were to "do it like it was done the past two years." John asked members to submit any new menu items that they would like to see added, so that they could be considered by the Board when the menu is finalized. He reminded the members that we will also vote on officers during the December meeting. He said that all of the officers except the Secretary were willing to continue for one more year, so there is a need for at least one volunteer. John described the job requirements for Secretary and advised that there is a proposal to change the structure of the minutes to make them less time-consuming. He also mentioned the limited amount of time required to participate in the monthly Board meeting. John advised that, although the other Board members had agreed to serve, they would step aside if someone else wants the job. Next month's presentation will be delivered by Mary Jo Combs of the Hillsborough County Public Library system. She will discuss the many services available to the public. John ended the business portion of the meeting with a request to the members to come forward with any suggestions that they might have for speakers in the next year. He introduced Steve Singer, of RDI of TampaBay, Inc., who began his "New Computer Hardware" presentation at 7:16 PM.

Minutes.....Continued on page 5

The Evolution of the Telephone

By Roger Waters, Tampa PC Users Group
rvwaters@hotmail.com

We have come a long way from "Watson, come here, I need you" to today's telephone. When I started in the telephone industry in 1966, it was an electromechanical system. It was known as step-by-step since each rotation of the dial (you do remember that telephones had dials) stepped you to the next level until you got to a point that you rang a phone. This system had been around since the early 1900s.

The next system that evolved was known as crossbar. It was still electromechanical, but I viewed it as a relay-controlled computer. It did have some logic to it and allowed for more control, as well as allowing features like call transfer, three-way calling, auto number identification and conferencing. After crossbar came electronic switching, which was computer controlled. This allowed for even more features that consumers loved.

The company that supplied the Central Office equipment was originally known as Western Electric, which later became Lucent. The Canadian company was Northern Electric, which became Nortel Networks. Lucent was bought by Alcatel and is now known as Alcatel\Lucent. Nortel sold some of their Central Office business to a startup company known as Genband.

The telephone now is going to VOIP or Voice over Internet Protocol. I first got involved with VOIP after Steve Singer told the group about Gizmo Project. I bought a Linksys PAP2 ATA (analog terminal adapter) and signed on with Gizmo. The ATA is used to hook up the phone to the Internet. The calls were priced at 2 cents a minute anywhere in the US. My wife used it to call relatives and said the voice quality was like a cell phone. I was able to tweak it to improve some of the voice quality but it was not the same as calls over Verizon.

My sons signed up with Vonage for their phone service. With Vonage you can take the ATA with you anyplace that has internet access. When one son was sent to Hong Kong for six months he used it in his extended-stay hotel. Since he lives in Orlando, his number was assigned for that area. When he called us, the caller ID came up as his Orlando number. We were able to dial his Orlando number and he answered in Hong Kong. Having this ability, however, presents a problem with 911 calls.

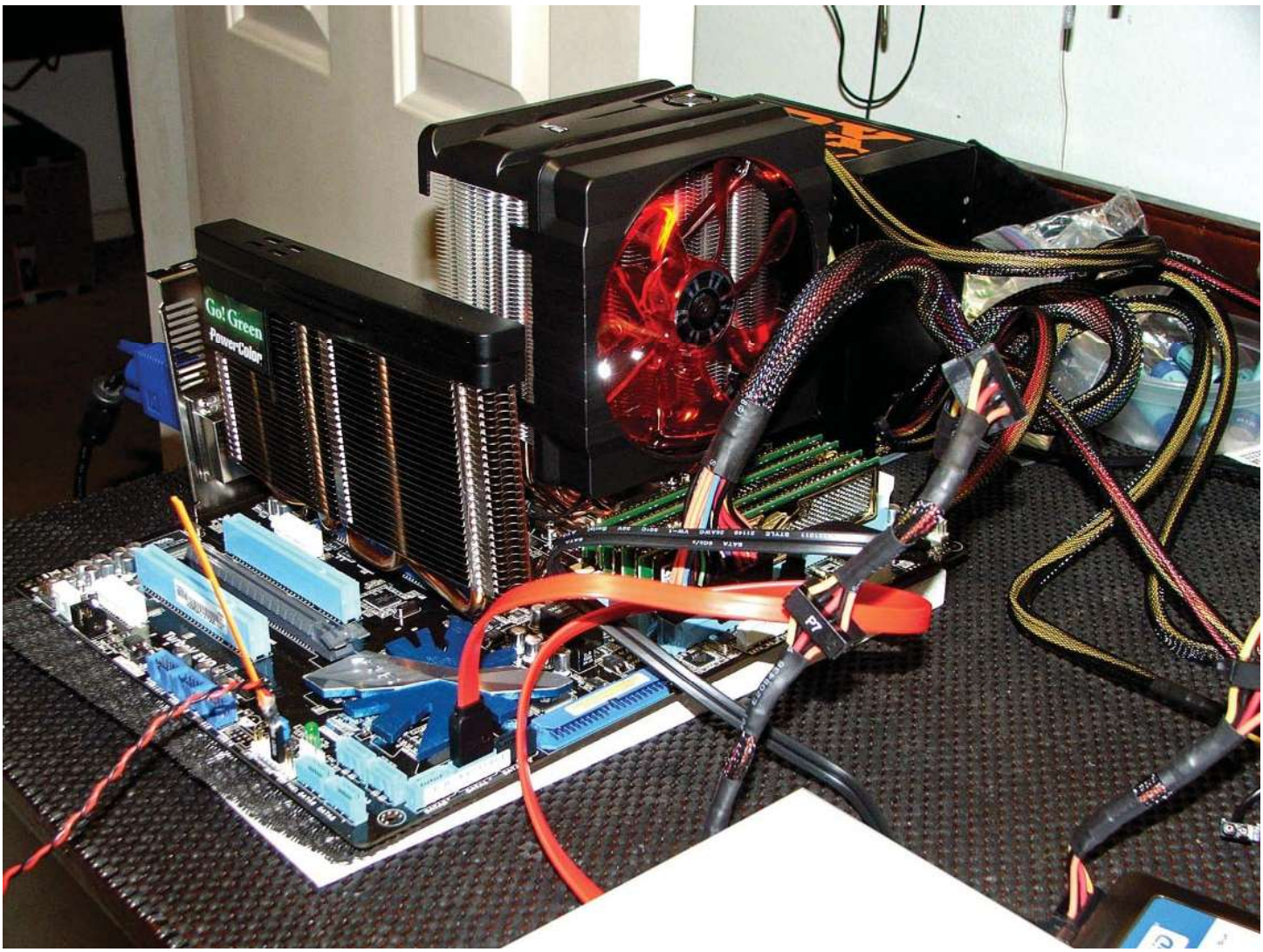
Since VOIP is cheaper to provide, the service is cheap, and free in some cases. I am sure everyone has seen the Magic Jack commercial. For $20 a year you can make unlimited calls in the US and Canada. You can call for free over the Internet with Skype, Gmail, Google Voice and other free services.

I have a FIOS bundle and my home phone is practically free. I am sure that the bundles from Bright House also include phone service at low cost. My home service is not VOIP but is fiber to the home. Verizon offers what they are calling FIOS Digital Voice, which is a VOIP service. With their Digital Voice you get additional features and more control over your phone service. They allow you block calls, get voice mail via e-mail and have your calls follow you. You can program your phone number to ring up to three phones (cell, business, etc). This service is like Google Voice I wrote about in a previous article.

With VOIP being cheaper to provide, I believe that Verizon will stop providing the current analog service. In the Mid-West, Verizon sold their outside facilities to Frontier Communications to provide local phone service. Verizon sold its Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont wireline business to FairPoint Communications. My feeling is that Verizon will sell all of its cable and will become a fiber company and deliver phone service via FIOS. Maintaining fiber is less expensive for them. Verizon reports a 10.9% decline in home phones. Many people are using cell phones for all calls, or using some type of VOIP service and disconnecting their traditional phone. I have heard that Verizon is removing some of the equipment that they use for analog phone service.

Among the current disadvantages to VOIP provided by Skype and Vonage would be loss of power means

Telephone.....Continued on page 8



New Computer

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Above is my new computer under construction on Merle Nicholson's workbench. At this point, on the motherboard is installed, from left to right, the video card, processor with cooling fan and heat sink, and the power supply, along with some cabling. In comparing this to my previous computer, the thing most striking is the size of the processor's heat sink and fan, along with the heat sink for the video card.

The philosophy was to build something that was very fast but affordable (a relative term), so we went for components one step back from the bleeding edge. We were helped in that by Intel's having made available the i7 875K processor at a very reasonable price. In the future, since it is unlocked, I might try to overclock it a bit, but right now I see no need for that. Since we are a computer club and many years back a great deal of attention was devoted to the components it took to build a computer, I have included the component list on the following page, just as it came from Newegg.

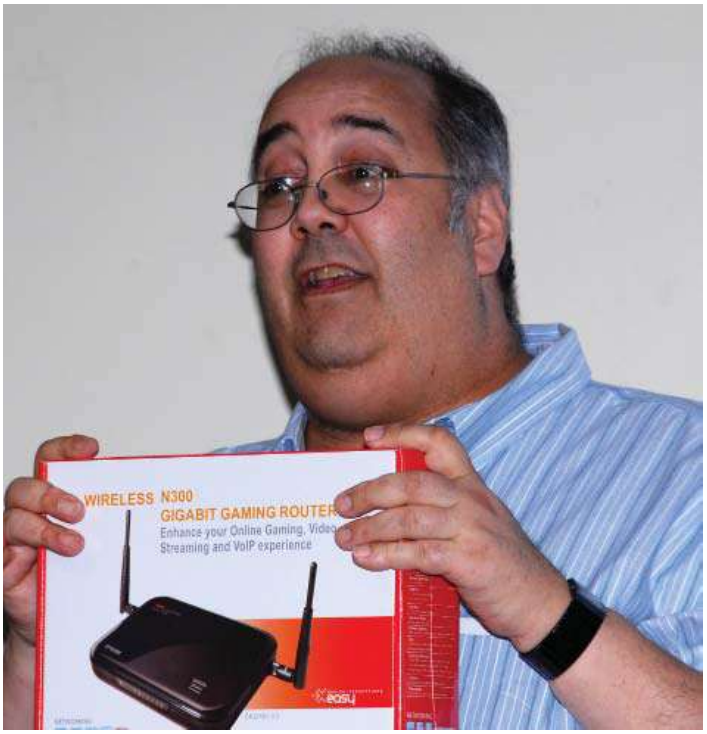
Merle picked out everything except the monitors, keyboard, mouse and speakers. I appreciate that since I know little about motherboards and processors. I do know that the processor you pick will determine the collection from which you may choose a motherboard, and it will further restrict which memory configurations you may have (mine has four 2 GB modules).

New Computer.....Continued on page 6

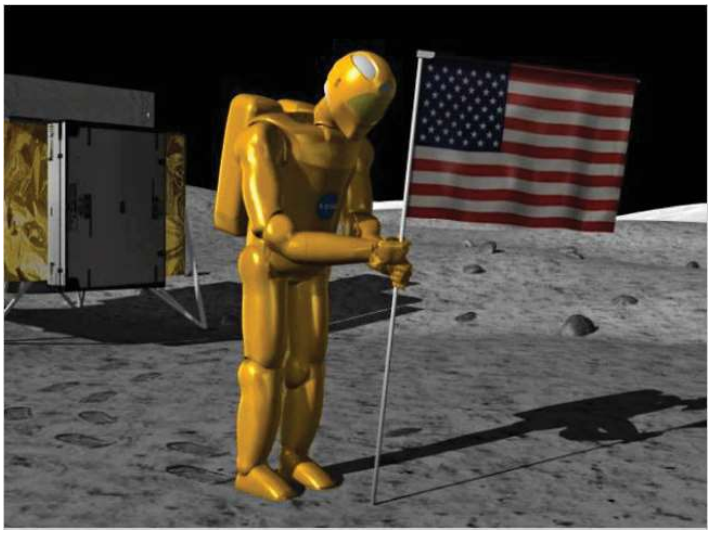
Minutes.....Continued from page 2

Steve Singer (photo below) has, for several years, given the group an annual presentation which highlights the latest changes and improvements to computer hardware. Steve explains in detail the advantages and disadvantages of these changes and explains to our members how to select the hardware that provides the results that they need at the most affordable price. He uses his extensive knowledge of computer hardware and software to answer across the spectrum questions on their use and to provide advice on how to solve problems that users have encountered.

The meeting ended 9:20 PM. ◆



Internet Picture of the Month



Robonaut 2

For less than $200 million, along with about $250 million for a rocket, NASA engineers at the Johnson Space Center in Houston say they can safely send a humanoid robot to the Moon. And they say they could accomplish that in a thousand days.

That is a bit cheaper than the price tag of sending astronauts back to the moon at a cost of around $150 billion.

From the New York Times site at the link
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/02/science/space/02robot.html?ref=technology

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
blekko slashtag search (new search engine)	http://blekko.com/
Florida Digital Newspaper Library	http://ufdc.ufl.edu/fdnl1
morevalu.com - October's presenter's site	http://morevalu.com/
Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter	http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/
GigaPan (Panoramas)	http://gigapan.org/

Item	Description	Qnt	Unit Price	Total
11-119-216	CASE CM|RC-692-KKN2 ADVANCED RT	1	$89.99	$89.99
13-131-620	MB ASUS|P7P55D-E P55 R	1	$149.99	$149.99
14-131-346	VGA POWERCOLOR|AX5750 1GBD5-NS3DH R	1	$169.99	$169.99
15-166-006	ADD CARD ROSEWILL PCI-PARALLE RC303	1	$11.99	$11.99
17-171-052	PSU CM| RS650-ACAAE3-US 650W RT	1	$69.99	$69.99
19-116-368	CPU INTEL|CORE I7 875K 2.93G 1156 R	1	$329.99	$329.99
20-192-021	CARD READ BYTECC|U2CR-318/Hub R	1	$9.99	$9.99
20-227-483	MEM 2Gx2|OCZ OCZ3G1600LV4GK R	2	$97.99	$195.98
20-250-002	SSD 128GB|WD SSC-D0128SC-2100 %	1	$269.99	$269.99
22-136-533	HD 1T|WD 7K 64M SATAIII WD1002FAEX	1	$89.99	$89.99
23-155-037	KB&MS KENSINGTON | K72338US %	1	$39.99	$39.99
24-001-377	MNTR SMSNG|LCD 23" 2MS P2350-1 RT	2	$209.99	$419.98
27-140-046	BD COMBO HP | BD240I-H01 R	1	$99.99	$99.99
32-116-758	WIN PRO 7 64-BT ENG 1PK DSP OEI DVD	1	$139.99	$139.99
35-103-088	CPU COOL CM| RR-V6SV-22PR-R1 RT	1	$49.99	$49.99
36-121-034	SPEAKER LOGITECH | Z313 RT	1	$38.99	$38.99
25-104-137	U.S. Robotics USR5670 56Kbps PCI Fax modem	1	$16.99	$16.99
	Shipping and Handling			$49.35
	Total			$2,193.81

New Computer.....Continued from page 4

What makes this computer boot fast is the solid state C drive. From the time I press the power button until my logon screen appears is 37 seconds. After I enter my password, it is only about five seconds until I can run a program. This drive is 128 GB, which was quite expensive at $270 (current price is $215) when you note that my 1 TB second hard drive cost only $90. I recall that the choices for solid state drives seem to range between 50 GB up to 500 GB. I don't think you want the 500 GB one since its price is right at $1,600.

The purpose of the solid state drive is to hold only the operating system and the program files that I install. Everything else goes on the 1 TB Western Digital hard drive that is itself very fast when compared to other similar drives because it has a dual processor and 64 MB of cache onboard. I preferred getting a 2 TB drive but could not find one that matched this one in speed. By "everything else" above, I mean all my data files, most of which are in My Documents, the operating system's temporary files, My Pictures, Desktop, Downloads and probably several more of the Windows 7 special folders that I have now forgotten. All of this goes on the regular drive. That way the computer is not always writing to and deleting things from the solid state drive.

I suppose I should mention that the computer has a Blu-Ray DVD/CD drive that supports LightScribe. However, I did not spring for the extra money to get a Blu-Ray writer since I have not as yet had such a need. The keyboard and mouse are wireless, and the keyboard is the only part of the computer that has given me any trouble in the two months that I have been using the computer. For some yet unknown reason, occasionally I lose the ability to enter text from the keyboard, and I have yet to find a solution to the problem other than closing out what I can with the mouse and then rebooting the computer. I tend to think that it is some key combination I have inadvertently pressed but have no idea what that is.

Merle installed the operating system, Windows 7 64-bit, and, over several days, I installed all of my programs and brought over via the local area network my data and pictures. The main program suites included Microsoft Office 2007, Adobe Creative Suite Standard CS5, Microsoft Expression Studio 4 and Visual Studio 2010.

Then there were the minor programs like Family Tree

New Computer.....Continued on page 8

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Comments.....Continued from page 1

people who purchase Office without Access, I don't see how they get by, but obviously they do, just as many people around the world get by with no computer. Access produces the mailing labels we use to occasionally send snail mail, since not all of our residents have email addresses. I use it in combination with Word to do email merges for the many email messages we send the residents concerning everything from membership to parties, from City of Tampa announcements to lost or found cats, dogs, tortoises and parakeets messages. Then, using Access along with Adobe InDesign and a bit of Visual Basic programming, I produce the membership directory and send it to the printer for printing. And, because of the complications of all this, I am not sanguine of being able to find anyone to take over the job.

Now to the Internet provider change. I did not make the change because I was unhappy with the Bright House service, although I do like the faster speed of the Verizon Internet connection I now have. My reason for changing was that Verizon failed over a year-long period to fix our regular telephone service where we could be sure that we, not just the caller, would hear our phones ring when they were dialed. My wife and I had agreed that, if the most recent fix failed (as had the half dozen or more previous ones), we would switch to Fios. It failed, so we changed.

Our setup is probably different from most local households in that we do not receive TV over a service; we get it the old-fashioned way via an antenna on our chimney that is two stories high and provides excellent reception of all the local area channels. TV is not a big thing in our house. I probably watch less than seven hours a week. What we do have is two phone lines and an Internet connection. The package deal offered for two phone lines and Internet was pretty good. What was even better was to have the phone service changed from regular Fios to what they call Digital Voice. In addition to the lower price, with Digital Voice you receive a number of extra features more than regular Fios provides (see the Evolution of the Telephone article by Roger Waters on page 3).

So what is Digital Voice? The Verizon representative was a bit cagey about that and would only say that it was crystal clear and had many more options than regular Fios. "It was digital." Well, I had my suspicions, and they were confirmed by our local phone expert, Roger Waters. Digital Voice is Verizon's version of VOIP. Yikes! Was this to be something like Vonage or Skype, and might the quality be less than desired? Roger said that he was sure it would be better since it was over Verizon's dedicated lines. And I read on the Internet that, yes, it uses the Voice Over Internet Protocol, but the voice packets do not travel on the Internet (good). I checked with a few others whom I knew to have Verizon Fios, but none had the Digital Voice version. We were on our own. But I was willing to gamble since it wasn't really a gamble in that this was a no-contract deal and, if things didn't work out, we could always move to the regular Fios phone service for the two lines and pay the extra $40 or so a month.

So far the quality has been fine, and, as with regular Fios, it is nice to have free calling anywhere in the US or Canada. There is one small downside you should know: All calls, including local ones, require 10-digit dialing. I supposedly have 25 MBps up and 25 MBps down for the Internet. In practice, my preliminary tests show slower speeds than that, but what I am getting is much, much faster than with Bright House, especially for uploads. On one test I had a download speed of 13 MBps and an upload speed of 10 MBps. But I need to do more testing.

With Digital Voice, you have 911 dialing and an 8-hour battery backup, just like with regular Fios. ◆

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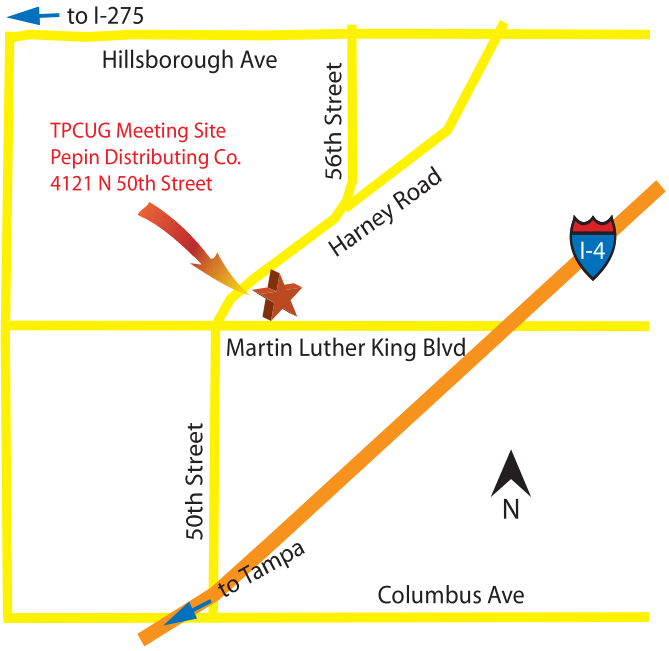
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

New Computer.....Continued from page 6

Maker and Quicken. Since my copy of Family Tree Maker was a bit old, I decided to purchase Family Tree Maker 2010 to install. If I had trouble with the installation of anything, it might have been with Family Tree Maker. I recall that it wouldn't install properly from the CD, so, as I have discovered in the past in similar situations, I copied all the installation files to a folder on my desktop and installed from there.

Finally, Windows 7 64-bit had drivers for my two printers, so there was no problem with that. However, my Epson Perfection 3200 scanner does not have a Win 7 driver and thus cannot be attached to the new computer. So my old desktop is still sitting under my desk with that scanner attached. ◆



Telephone.....Continued from page 3

a loss of phone service. If your Internet service is out, so is your phone system. Calls to 911 are hard to handle since the number could ID for your area and you could be in another city, state, or country. The call quality is dependent in part on the available bandwidth.

We are seeing a shift to all-digital telephone networks. I believe that progress will be made to continually improve voice quality with VOIP. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org





Vol. 23 No. 12 December 2010 December in Tampa

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 8, 2010

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Holiday party and election of officers. Come an enjoy the food with your fellow computer club members.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to the ThinkPoint virus for giving Merle Nicholson something to write about in this month's newsletter. And thanks to Merle for taking the time to fill us in on this particular nasty problem. Also, thanks to Jim Purcell for the monthly meeting minutes.

Later in the newsletter, I tell you a bit about my Cloud Computing experience. And by that I don't mean using Google Apps or Microsoft Docs. What I am talking about is actually installing a Windows application in Windows Azure, Microsoft's version of the Cloud, and setting 15 instances to run simultaneously. The program could have been something I wrote, but in this case it was a program from Stanford University that does one computing task at a time of tasks assigned to it as its part in a very large distributed computing project involving 400,000 plus CPUs around the world.

I wonder if anyone in the group has purchased a Windows Phone 7. They have been out now for a couple of weeks at those providers like AT&T which use the GMS phone systems.

Comments.....Continued on page 5

January Meeting: Merle Nicholson – More on Windows 7

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; william@lamartin.com.

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RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

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$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

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Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the November Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows operating systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob leads the group in finding answers to questions and solutions to problems. This month's SIG ended at 7:00 PM.

The business portion of the meeting was opened at 7:05 PM by John Witmer, the Tampa PC Users Group President. John gave a brief summary of the plans for the Christmas party. He reported that the menu would be basically the same as last year with a few additions. He added that members could bring food if they desired, but there is certainly no obligation to do so.

John reviewed the procedures for electing officers that will take place during the December meeting. He noted that all current board members except the Secretary have agreed to serve another term if no one steps forwarded. He encouraged members to volunteer to fill all positions, but he emphasized that there was an absolute need for someone to volunteer to fill the Secretary's position.

John appealed to the members to volunteer to deliver the presentation at one of our monthly meetings. He noted that we do not have a presentation scheduled for January which certainly highlights the importance of their participation. [Editor's Note: Member Merle Nicholson has agreed to do the January presentation.]

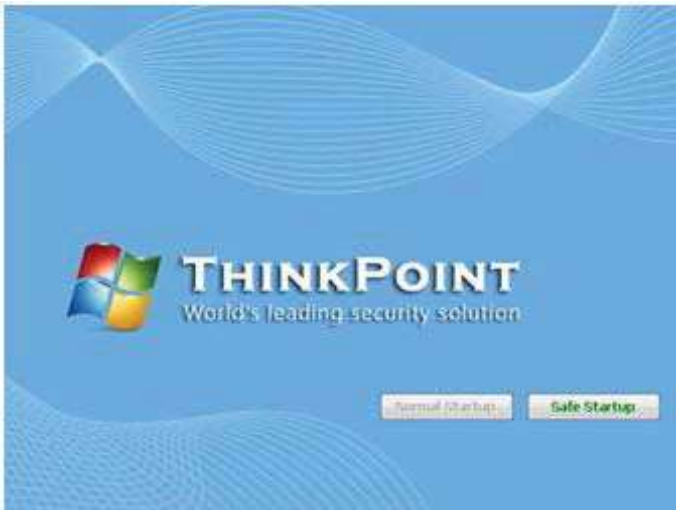
Mary Jo Combs of the Hillsborough County Public Library System opened her presentation of Library databases at 7:10 PM. Ms. Combs discussed databases that are free to the public and several additional databases that are subscribed to and paid for by the

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

What a nasty virus can do to your computer

By Merle Nicholson, TPCUG
merle@merlenicholson.com

I recently was asked to remove a virus from a friend/client's notebook. For all intents and purposes, it rendered the computer completely inoperative. The virus was in a virus category of "Rogue antivirus software". There are many of them out there for the unwary to catch, and this one, called "ThinkPoint," even has the Windows flag on it to further fool you into thinking it is legitimate. The only option you can see is "Safe Startup," and that takes you to a virus scanner and a way to purchase the product. If you close it out, it shows you a blank desktop, no icons, no menus. You can turn the machine off, that's about it. Turn it back on, same situation. I did figure out a way to kill it through the Task Manager's Run command, and then run the desktop. I also found some things written up on the Internet to do something similar, but no help in removing it. I did remove it using some very clever, obscure skills, several virus scanners, then finding and removing twenty or so copies of it. But the computer really didn't work well enough to use. What I found surprised me, and this is what the article is about and what you can do.



Here's a list of what I found. Some things are by deduction and may not be 100% accurate. But I am 100% certain that these problems existed. All of the things fit into a strategy that prevents you from fixing the computer.

1. The worst thing: The computer will not boot into safe mode. It bluescreens every time. I'm speculating that ThinkPoint either corrupted an existing driver or put a new one in that loads and then fails. The way to fix this is to do a system repair or a complete reformat and installation. I did not want to impose that cost on my customer, and she agreed (it's not a primary computer, and it's rather old). So I left it that way.
2. All the system restore points were unusable. Refused to restore to any point.
3. To run most anything, an official-looking popup would ask to confirm the logon user and give a box for an alternative user account that did not work. This is to make sure that everything you try is run under the current user account which has been modified to prevent circumventing the virus. What you want to run is Explorer.exe giving you your desktop, and every effort is made to prevent you from doing this.
4. Most – perhaps all – items in Control panel will not run. It gave a warning that the administrator account has restricted its use. I did manage to get into the power configuration, but it would not accept any change. The computer would go into sleep mode after about 20 minutes, keeping me from running a full system scan from any antivirus software unless I sat there and wiggled the mouse occasionally for four hours.
5. The Internet articles say that even if you purchase the software to fix a bogus virus, ThinkPoint stays on the computer. The uninstall just errors out.
6. The Internet articles say that it installs other viruses, and I did find a half dozen other viruses, mostly downloaders.
7. It leaves about 20 copies of itself under various random names, and places items in the registry to run each of them. So removing the active virus is just the beginning. I also found a couple of viruses in the System Restore files.
8. It apparently makes changes to the current user account profile that look like group policy changes, even though this was Windows XP Home, which

Virus.....Continued on page 4

Virus.....Continued from page 3

doesn't have group policy capability.

9. Only after all the bad software is cleared from the machine can you then get rid of the modified account by creating a new administrative account, copying all of the user files from the old to the new – except for the profile files, then deleting the old account after locating the email files.

Isn't this scary? It is to me, and I (95%) fixed this one with a lot of work. The idea of having to fix my own machine after something like this gives me nightmares.

What you can do to prevent this: A sizable number of virus infections now are rogue anti-virus. There's an understandable reason for this. It creates revenue. Old-fashioned viruses are malicious, but have no revenue-producing strategy. In other words, it's now about money. Most all viruses are sent to you via web pages, and most of those are porn sites, either designed that way or hacked from outside. Porn sites are visited so often, they are a very good candidate for this kind of thing. Also, presumably the porn site owners don't have the skill to remove sophisticated hacks. But most any web site is vulnerable. In any case, you must select something on the site – click on it – to give the browser a chance to violate security rules.

The next common ways to get a virus is with downloads. And that means just about any download or file transfer. So you have to get any and all files from reputable sites like iTunes or Downloads.com, Amazon etc., which have the resources to check their own content.

But that leaves any and all file-sharing sites absolutely and definitely off the list. So if you're downloading songs for free, you're in trouble. Any file-sharing site's software must be uninstalled from your computer. And that also goes for any peer-to-peer gaming sites, LimeWire, Kazaa, and any and all IM programs that allow peer-to-peer file exchanges.

And while we're at it remove – uninstall – anything that says "Toolbar." Right now. Want to know why toolbars are free? Because they're a conduit for pushing advertising to you; and they're easily exploited. Besides you don't need them. They want you to believe you do, of course! But the browser itself and a couple of favorites will do anything a toolbar will do.

An alternative is giving up gaming and IM and to start purchasing songs. So if you have kids who will just die without peer-to-peer gaming or IM and stealing songs, the answer is to live with it with some intelligent prevention.

First, if at all possible, put the kids (and maybe grandpa) on a Windows 7 machine. If you have some internal networking and file sharing, Windows 7 Pro is better because it will back up to a network drive. But so will Acronis Home, or 2010 or 2011, running under Win 7 Home Premium.

Make sure you have a full system backup, and replace it monthly. Use Windows 7 Backup or Acronis. Believe me, restoring the entire system hard drive is way, way better than any alternative that I can think of. Look at what I had to do with ThinkPoint. Want to try it?

I guess it's obvious, but a strong anti-virus program running on your machine is essential. BUT – this is important – make sure you look at the scheduling part of it and make sure it will automatically download new definitions and also run a full system scan at a time of day that the machine will most likely be turned on. Same for Windows Updates. Make certain that all important updates are installed as soon as they are available.

Password protect your main administrative account (this is the one that comes first with the computer) and bury the password paper in the back yard and leave the location with your attorney. Better yet, Win 7 allows you to create a flash drive that will unlock the computer. Hide it under some rubber fake dog poop someplace.

THEN: Create a non-administrative account for yourself – a regular non-privileged account, and a separate one – or one for each kid. A regular account cannot

Virus.....Continued on page 5

Virus.....Continued from page 4

install software. But most importantly, SOFTWARE that is run under this account can't install software. Ah HA!

Then one more step. Set the screen savers to require a sign-in on wake-up, and ALWAYS log off when you leave the computer. That's especially essential when leaving the administrative account.

Skills: There are a few things that would be very helpful to learn. The big one is navigating the computer file system using Windows Explorer. Find out how your files are organized, and more importantly, how to change what files you can view. That's in Windows Explorer, Tools, Folder Options, View tab. Second Important Skill – learn to use the Add, Remove Programs. That's "Programs and Features" in Vista and Win 7. When you find an installed program that you are not using (say, anything with the word Apple or toolbar), just uninstall it, see how it goes. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Or have all our members who want smart phones already purchased an iPhone or an Android one? I plan on acquiring a Windows Phone 7 but will have to wait until my provider, Verizon, has the CDMA version of the phone. As of now, all I know is that is supposed to occur in early 2011. Perhaps there is even an advantage in having to wait in that some of the early bugs will be removed by then.

I have already written a program for the Windows Phone 7 and tested it on the Phone 7 Emulator in Visual Studio, but I have to wait for an actual device to really know how well the program works. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month

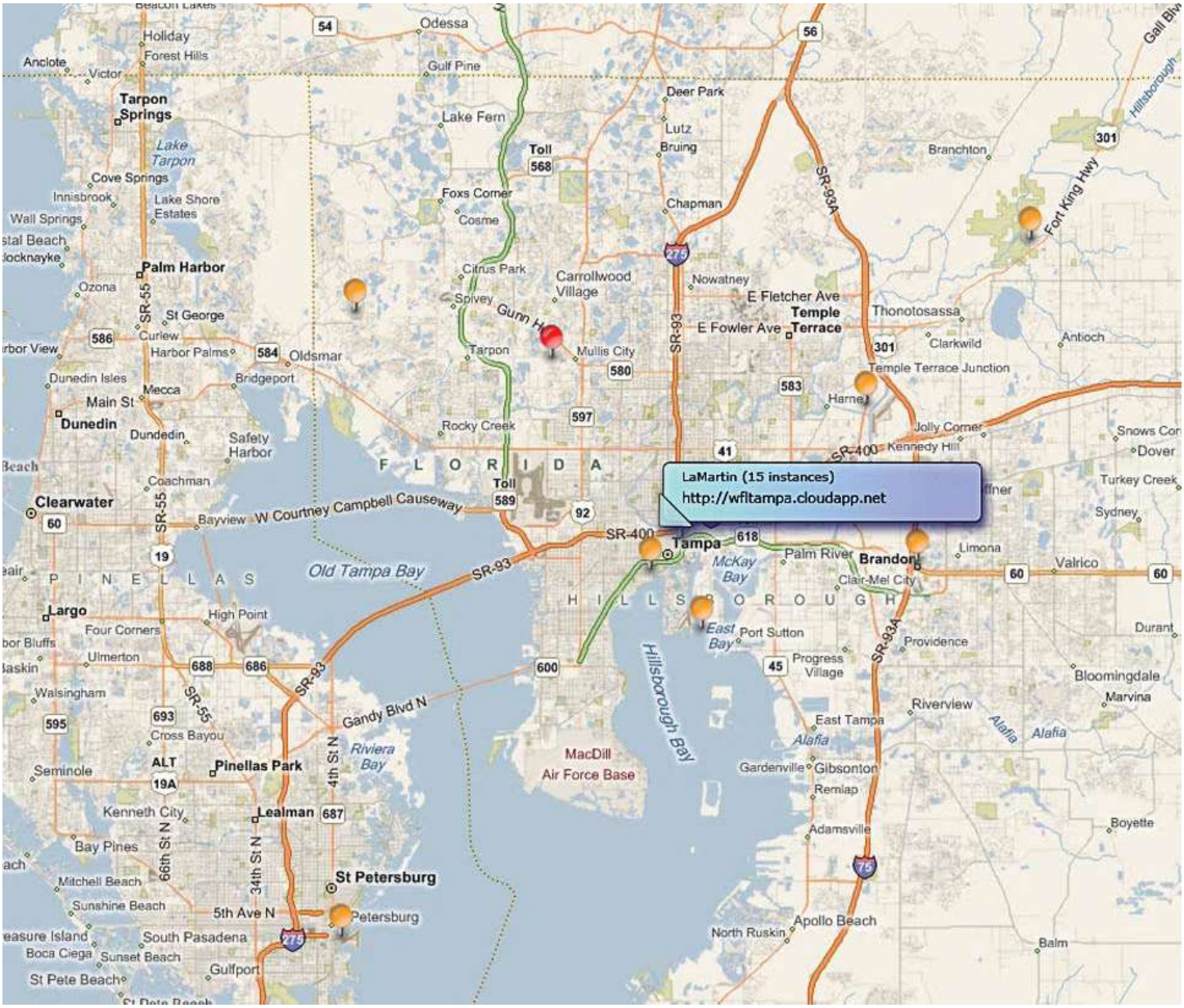


Windows Phone 7

Pictured above is the recently introduced Samsung Focus Windows Phone 7 as sold by AT&T. The image is from the site http://microsoftfeed.com/ with the specific URL of http://microsoftfeed.com/2010/windows-phone-7-samsung-focus-full-specification/

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Folding@home	http://folding.stanford.edu/
Windows 7 Solution Center	http://support.microsoft.com/gp/windows7#tab0
Panopticlick - Check your computer's fingerprint	https://panopticlick.eff.org/
Tom's Hardware Windows 7 Forum	http://www.tomshardware.com/forum/forum-63.html
Alligator Photos	http://people.biology.ufl.edu/ljg/Wildlife%20Photos%20pdfs/Gator%20Photos%20web%2009.pdf



Cloud Computing and Alzheimer's

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

You certainly may be forgiven for wondering what Cloud computing has to do with Alzsheimer's disease, and then to further question what the above map would have to do with either of these items and why is my name on the map. Well, it all started with my attendance at a one day session at the Microsoft Tampa office on Windows Azure, Microsoft's Cloud computing platform.

Don't make a big deal of the Cloud. It is just computing on the Internet of interest mainly to large scale users and not to most of us. Windows Azure is a Windows environment for running applications and storing data on computers in Microsoft data centers (the Cloud). A number of other large companies offer competing platforms. The advantage of putting your applications in the Cloud is that you don't have to worry about infrastructure; you spend your time on writing code and, if there is to be a public-facing interface (web page), developing that. If demand for your service is small, you only pay for the computing resources and storage needed for that. If the demand increases, you then pay for the extra servers, storage and transaction time needed for that increased traffic.

Cloud.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Cloud.....Continued from page 6

At the Microsoft session, they first gave us their presentation on the Azure platform, provided lunch, talked a bit more and then provided each of us with a user name and password that would allow us to use our own computers to access a temporary Azure account good for one month. They then led us through downloading several files from the Internet that would allow those who brought their laptops (as had been suggested) to use Visual Studio to create a Cloud application on the laptop, then test it on the laptop in a "Cloud simulator," and actually deploy it to the Cloud and make it active.

I would say only a hand-full of attendees managed to accomplish the above. One big problem was that the guest wireless network withered under the assault of over 50 people trying to download all the files required. I managed to get all the files via a neighbor's thumb drive after he had downloaded them via his laptop's wireless card and not the guest network. However, that is where things stopped for me since I could not get Visual studio to run the Cloud application that we were supposed to modify and then deploy to Azure.

Later at home I did get everything to work on my desktop computer and was able to deploy the application that I describe below to the Cloud. I also eventually solved the laptop problem by moving the downloaded Cloud application to a different location on the hard drive. Strange, but sometimes Visual Studio objects to running programs created on other computers at certain locations on a different computer's hard drive. However, I didn't look any further into the laptop problem since I had everything working correctly on the desktop computer.

So what was this application? Recall SETI, the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, where they used thousands of people's home computers to run a program that did small bits of the processing required to do the search? This program was similar, and you can download a version to run on your home computer if you want to participate.

The program is called Folding@home with the goal: "to understand protein folding, misfolding, and related diseases." It is run out of Stanford University, and the web site is http://folding.stanford.edu/. Go there and read about the project and how it relates to such diseases as Alzheimer's, ALS, Huntington's, Parkinson's and many cancers. Then if you are interested in participating, download the executable and run it on your computer.

Now back to the map. The map at the beginning of the article is a screen capture of the Tampa area of a world map showing the Microsoft Azure teams efforts in the Folding@home project. There are about a dozen of us in the greater Tampa area with about nine in this map area. Orange indicates active, red inactive. There is a fly-out from my pin noting that I have 15 instances of the folding program running in Azure. The fly-out covers another orange pin with the name of Jeff Odell. Sorry about that, Jeff. I assume most of the orange pins in the Tampa area will turn red in another week or so since we were only given a month of free time on Azure. Once this newsleter is at our web site, the online Adobe Acrobat version will show the map in color.

If you go to http://wfltampa.Cloudapp.net/, you can see the list of work units I have completed on the project – 220 as of November 30. There is also a link to the Microsoft Azure team's results and the map there.

Microsoft gave us the ability to test out other programs (worker roles) at the site. I originally used only 10 of the 20 instances allotted for the Folding@home program, then increased it to 15 with the thought that I still might try something else with the remaining 5, but so far I have not had time to do anything else. ◆

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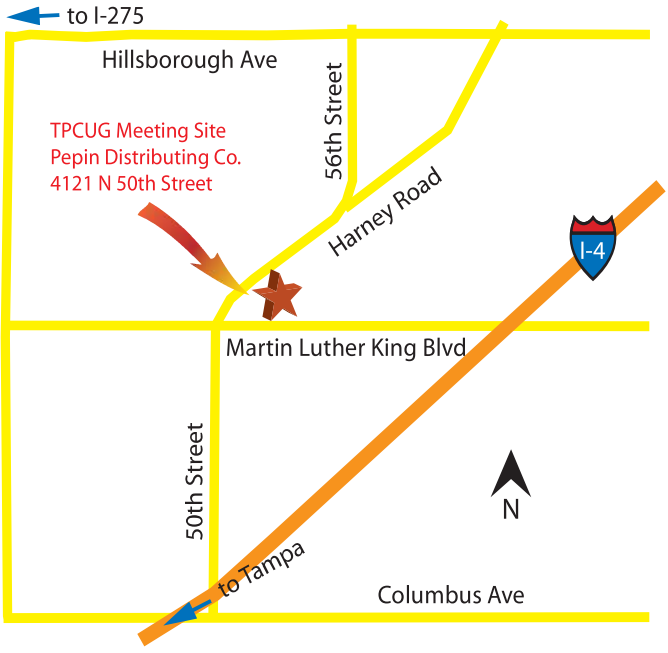
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

library and are offered free of charge to those possessing a Hillsborough County Library System card. She provided members with a 16-page outline of data that is available through the library. Although some of the links to websites in the outline are readily available to the public, they were placed strategically in the outline to assist in research and to amplify databases restricted to those possessing a library card. She suggested that members go to the library web site at http://www.hcplc.org and click on "databases and websites" and work themselves through databases of interest to them. There are detailed help pages available and a "Contact Us" link at the bottom of the initial page, if all else fails.

The meeting ended at 8:55 PM. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



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January in Tampa

Meeting

More on Windows 7
by
Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, January 12

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will expand on what he presented in a prior meeting about Windows 7. As usual, Bob Lafave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half hour of the meeting..

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

The Microsoft Windows Phone 7 is out but not yet available from Verizon, my cell phone provider. So my interest in programming for it has waned a bit. Then Merle purchased an Android phone about which he writes in this newsletter. And that gave me an idea: See if I could write some simple programs for that phone. This would require a new language, Java, and a new programming environment, Eclipse.

I have never really programmed with Java other than to do a few things for web sites with Java Script. And I would have to switch from using Visual Studio as a programming environment to a free program called Eclipse. The screen shot you see on page 6 in this article is of a simple program I wrote (with much help from the Internet) that uses the Google Maps Application Programming Interface (API) to display a pushpin where you click and to also display the coordinates of the point. The program is running in the Android Emulator, which is a software-

Comments.....Continued on page 2

February Meeting: 2010 Malware - A Review by Dave Palmer

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of the meeting with a few remarks during the annual Christmas party which began at 6:30 PM. He gave a short summary of the December Board meeting and indicated that he would present the slate of candidates since Ron Weinberg, our member at large, who normally announces the slate of candidates, was unable to attend the meeting. He advised that anyone who desired to run for any of the offices could still be considered. When no one stepped forward , the following slate of officers was presented:

- For President: John Witmer
- For Vice President: Kevan Sheridan
- For Treasurer: Doug Mullis
- For Secretary: Merle Nicholson
- For Member at Large: Ron Weinberg

A motion was made to accept this slate and to vote. All members present voted in favor of the slate of officers as presented. Terms of office begin January 1, 2010.

The party continued until approximately 9:30 PM ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

created version of the Android phone that Eclipse uses to debug the phone programs. In case you don't recognize the location, it is of our meeting site at Pepin. By the way, Eclipse can be used for any Java Programming, not just for the Android phone.

One advantage, I think, of the Android phone is that you can side-load applications onto it (not have to get them from the Google app store), whereas for the Windows Phone 7 (and the iPhone) you have to go through the Microsoft Phone 7(or iPhone) app store. This, however, may change in the future. Of course, if you sign up as a developer for either the Windows Phone 7 or the iPhone, you get the ability to side-load

Comments.....Continued on page 6

New handheld computer that also phones (Smartphone)

(Verizon Motorola Droid X – Android OS 2.2 Froyo)

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

OK – this is an article about an Android phone by a guy who is three times older than the demographic that normally buys these things. So I'm going to say "Facebook" here and now, the first and last time because I'd don't have a Facebook account; I haven't "friended" anyone, so I certainly don't care where they are. And I haven't gone hunting for dates for 47 years. Just so you know who I am.

I've replaced two pocket devices with one Android smartphone two weeks ago. I had a tiny wireless telephone that I used for, well, telephoning, and a five year old PDA – a Dell Axim x50v.

The old Dell is still functioning almost as well as it did when it was new. Its connectivity options are limited to wireless/b and Bluetooth. I used it mostly to sync with my Outlook calendar and contacts and keep family pictures to bore people with. The charging/sync connector is getting flaky, and I bought a new part to replace it, but the tiny soldering required put me off some and also prompted me to look elsewhere. Don't get me wrong, I can solder. NASA taught me how a lifetime ago. But this is tiny, close together and there are about twenty things to be soldered.

The phone I've had for two years has been just a telephone to me; it connects to a hands-free device I bought for the car, but it will also take pictures and do messaging, in which I had no interest. I discovered that the process to keep the camera from taking pictures of the inside of my pocket made it hard to take any kind of pictures at all and that Verizon was going to charge me to get them off my phone after I did take some. I have a good camera anyway.

Verizon is making it pretty easy to get a new phone and a data/mail plan to go along with it. But Amazon is doing it better by reducing the price of this model (Droid X) down to $120, $50 cheaper than buying direct from Verizon. That's after a $30 credit accumulated at Verizon for having fulfilled my last 2-year contract. That's $120, no tax, no shipping, no activation fee, plus, I later discovered that, because I went to Amazon through the TPCUG link, $65 was credited to the TPCUG. I activated the phone with Verizon within a few minutes of delivery to my house but after the online activation failed. Apparently Amazon and Verizon work it all out because the Amazon price is reduced by Verizon's $30, and Amazon checks while you wait online to verify the Verizon eligibility if you've told Amazon that you're an existing Verizon customer and have given the phone number you want to use.

OK, now about Android phones – or rather what I've learned so far. There seems to be a consensus that the latest version of the OS, version 2.2, is the best so far, and 2.2 apparently has some much-needed new features. Being a Google product – you guessed it – it had a lot of features imbedded in it that depend on Google. I'm not especially fond of going to one source for everything, but Google has not eliminated all your choices, and, with time, now I'm completely comfortable with it.

Email would be a good example. I'm using my own email server account for email, not my Gmail account. My mail is still managed on my home PC because I run a business and my Outlook is essential. My Outlook 2010 isn't just an email/contact list/calendar; it truly categorizes and manages that searchable client data going back several years. So the phone brings in all my incoming mail from my private server, and I can send replies or initiate new mail through my server.

The web-based Gmail/Contacts manages your contact list on your Android phone pretty much seamlessly. I export files (calendar by broad date range and contacts one at a time) from Outlook and then log into my Google email account and import each of those files. I really don't know if the data is on the phone or in the "cloud," but I've decided I don't care. The contacts and calendar data appear in my phone not instantly but within maybe an hour; I'm not sure.

Droid.....Continued on page 4

Droid.....Continued from page 3

So far no one has discovered my Gmail account and that's just fine. On the phone, I pretty much just read any incoming email that I'm especially interested in, reply if required and then just erase all the phone's email. There are programs (purchased and free) that improve the Outlook to Android transfer process, but I haven't yet seen any need to fully automate the exchange.

Here's a list of most of the functions and programs I'm actively using. Most are free and already installed. A few were free from the Android Market, and just two were purchased.

Browser – The Internet browser is surprisingly good considering the screen size. It responds to 2-finger zoom and pan rapidly, so, with a small amount of manipulation, you can see any part of even a large page in all detail. A very large number of websites have pages optimized for mobiles. Wikipedia is one excellent example.

Navigation – Google navigation is just amazing, and it's free, unlike the optional VZNavigator, which has a $10 monthly fee from Verizon. Type in or speak a destination, and Google looks up and presents all the possibilities; select the one you want and the route is presented with voice directions as you drive. When you reach the destination, it presents a Google Street view. This really surprised me when I stopped and it showed a photo of the front of my house.

Maps – Google maps, satellite view and Street View, just like on the PC. Nothing seems to be missing.

Car Locator – This is a small GPS program that lets you quickly set the location of your car and then find it later using a directional arrow as you walk with the distance in feet or meters. $3.

Kindle – This is a Kindle book reader; there are versions available for many other devices including PC's. The library of digital books you own here are identical to your Kindle. If you stay connected on both, it tracks your last read page so you can switch devices and not lose your place. It's wonderfully readable. It's not a substitute for the Kindle if you own one, but it's handy, and if you happen to own a mobile phone, there's no real need to buy a Kindle if you don't want to.

Alarm Clock – You simply add alarms; each has its own settings for sound, snooze and vibrate and appearance.

Kitchen Timer – A free app to track three time settings with alarm at the end. I'm using this every day.

Contacts – An excellent contacts database that is integrated with the Phone, email and IM. You can search and select favorites and list of last calls. It's fully synchronized with Google Calendar.

Weather - AccuWeather.com real-time continuous weather at any multiple locations you select, with 5-day forecasts. Drill deeper and you can get animated radar.

FTP – A free app that is an FTP file server. When turned on, it exposes the entire phone file system to my network wirelessly. A few shortcuts placed in my Windows Explorer and file transfers are trivial. I find this to be the fastest way to drag and drop pictures on and off the camera.

Tether – Provides pretty fast Internet service to my notebook via USB cable anywhere I have 3G telephone service. With Verizon, that's pretty much anywhere I'd go. Purchased for $16 and worth every penny. PDANet at http://www.junefabrics.com.

Dock – I bought a Motorola desk docking station for charging, but it also automatically displays an attractive digital clock and responds to alarms and dimming, the music player and just about anything else you can think of.

Voice Commands – An app with a library of voice commands that you can use to control the device. It makes dialing by voice easy. I may give up the hands-free device I have in my car.

Google Talk – This is Google's version of Instant Messaging. It works great, and transferring files is quick and easy. You can use voice to text if you wish, eliminating typing altogether. The Voice to Text is very good, accurate enough for IM and then some.

Google Voice – VOIP – This is real Voice-over-IP, but wherever your phone is, without eating into your minutes. It's integrated into Contacts as well. It's well thought out and easy to use. My sons and I are using it regularly for long distance.

Droid.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Text To Movie

The image above is a screen capture of a YouTube video produced using xtranormal's text to movie program. This particular one at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FL7yD-0pqZg shows the female bear (in blue) telling the male bear how much she wants an iPhone, and he is telling her it is not as good as the HTC EVO. There are many such movies out there made by people using the xtranormal software. I found some of the ones about Ben Bernanke and the economy particularly amusing. Go make your own movies (http://www.xtranormal.com/).

Droid.....Continued from page 4

Email – Well, it's email. It's the mail that I get from my mail server. I do reply to email from the phone when I feel I have to, and, since the voice-to-text feature works here as well, it's pretty easy.

Calendar – It's pretty good, completely integrated with Google Calendar.

Voicemail – Google voicemail takes your voicemail messages, translates them to text and places a message on your phone to read or play – your option.

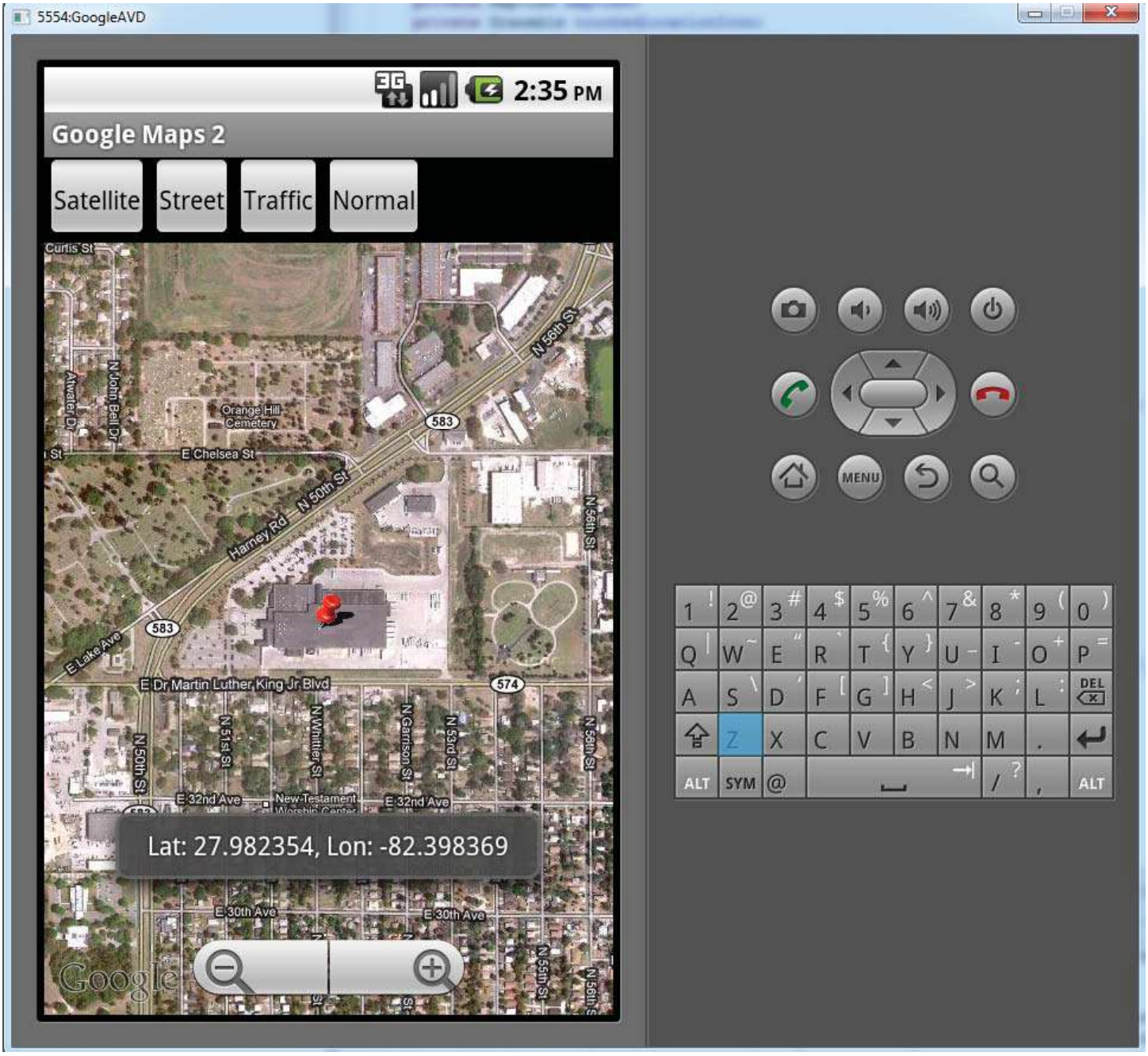
Music player – There's a sync app that detects when you're plugged into a PC and syncs your PC music to the device. There's also a DLNA app that plays media from a network with a media server. Otherwise it's a decent MP3/WMA player that also does videos.

Camera – An 8 Megapixel camera with face detection and panorama stitching. It has two fairly bright LEDs for

Droid.....Continued on page 7

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Xtranormal Text-to-Movie	http://www.xtranormal.com/
Dale Chihuly artwork	http://www.chihuly.com/home.aspx
Free eBooks by Project Gutenberg	http://www.gutenberg.org/



Comments.....Continued from page 2

your apps onto a phone you own so as to be able to test them on an actual device and not just on an emulator. But, at present, I cannot write a Windows Phone 7 application and give it to you so that you would be able to install it on your Windows Phone 7. The same is true for the iPhone. Supposedly this is to save you from rogue applications, but it obviously also makes money for the app store.

What I would like to do in the remaining space is outline the process I went through to be able to write programs for the Android phone. What is needed are several downloads and some configuring. First you need to get the Java runtime (the thing that many of you are probably always being reminded to update when you start your computer--at least that is the case for me) and the Java SDK. The next piece of software is the Eclipse program. Then the fun begins in trying to configure everything.

Here are the steps I followed in setting up everything.

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Comments.....Continued from page 6

That will be followed by links that were very useful.

Steps

1. Install Java runtime and Java SDK. If you are getting them for a 64-bit system, then you need to do the downloads using a 64-bit browser.
2. Install Android SDK: just put the folder in the C:\ directory
3. Add the Tools directory of the Android SDK to the system path variable
4. Install Eclipse: Just put the folder in the C:\ directory
5. To be able to run Eclipse, make a shortcut on your desktop with the property C:\eclipse\eclipse.exe -vm "C:\Program Files\Java\jdk1.6.0_23\jre\bin\java.exe"
6. Install the ADT plug-in in Eclipse: From Help, select install new software, then select the ADT plug-in (https://dl-ssl.google.com/android/eclipse/)
7. Modify Eclipse preferences (Window | preferences) to point to the Android SDK directory
8. Create an AVD (an emulator with the properties of a particular phone)
9. You are ready to start programming.

Links

Java Items: http://www.oracle.com/technetwork/java/javase/downloads/

Eclipse (get the Java EE version) http://www.eclipse.org/downloads/

Android SDK & general Android help: http://developer.android.com/index.html

Create your first App: http://developer.android.com/guide/tutorials/hello-world.html

A good walkthrough: http://android.marvinlee.net/2009/07/start-development-android-sd/

If you are going to use the Google maps, then you will need a Google account, which is free, and then a Map API key, also free. There are tutorials on how to do all of this – just do an Internet search.

Anyone can be a programmer (with a lot of work). ◆

Droid.....Continued from page 5

flash and plenty of manual settings. Very good zooming, as you'd expect with 8MPixels to work with.

Camcorder – The camera also functions as a 720p HD video recorder. The device also has a mini HDMI port for playing to an external device such as a wide screen TV. It comes with a 16GB SDHC card.

Slideshow and picture management – naturally.

Password management I use the PC version of KeePassX, and I was delighted to find they make an Android version. Free.

Swype - I saved this for last. It's an alternative screen keyboard that allows you to enter a word by sliding a finger from letter to letter. It uses error-correcting algorithms to guess the word and presents alternatives. A world record was set on a touchscreen and Swype using a Samsung Galaxy S. The world record text message consists of 26 words and was typed in 25.94 seconds, which corresponds to a speed of 60 words per minute.

Droid.....Continued on page 8

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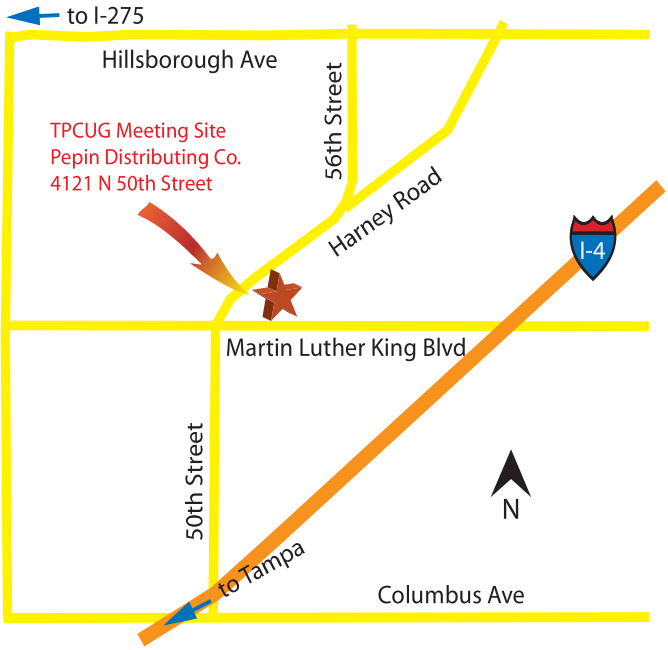
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Droid.....Continued from page 7

The few things I don't like It's a mystery to me that Android applications don't have an exit or close. Instead, they stay running until you either shut down each service manually or turn off the phone. I'd guess the up side to this is that everything launches very quickly. It's so fast in fact that you take it all for granted. I haven't found a disadvantage to this, although I've read complaints that it must be taking up cpu cycles and therefore must be draining the battery and contributing heat to global warming. I guess I doubt all that, but what I really don't understand is why I find apps such as Skype running when I've never used them. There are programs you can purchase to help you manage these, but it's also widely held that you'd live a calmer life if you just ignored it all. Finally I did read a built-in tutorial recommending that you turn the phone off once a day to clear out unused programs in memory.

Second, in spite of the claim of 220 hours of standby and 480 minutes of talk time, this thing eats battery. I'll admit I pretty much actively used it all one day for 10 hours and ran the battery down. I used it for phone calls very little. The display, when on, eats most of the battery, so a continuous charge is necessary if you're going to use it for navigation. There's an extended battery for $50, which is way too much. ◆

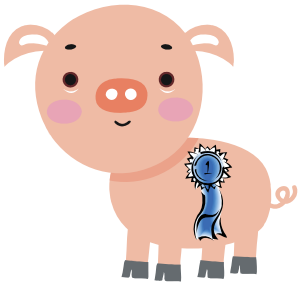


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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 24 No. 2 February 2011

February in Tampa

Meeting

2010 Malware – A Review
by
Dave Palmer

Wednesday, February 9

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Dave Palmer from the University of Florida Extension Service will discuss malware that appeared in 2010. As usual, Bob Lafave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half hour of the meeting..

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

This is turning out to be a particularly tough newsletter since, as I sat at the computer just four days before we usually print and assemble the newsletter, I had no articles. My usual handful of contributors seemed to have run out of ideas (or time) and the rest of the club is in a prolonged dry spell. Then Ron Weinberg came through for me, for which I am very appreciative.

The past and the present

The *Bits of Blue* used to be 12 pages instead of the current eight, and the print was 10 point instead of 12. However, we did use articles from other groups and there was a boilerplate page at the back with a list of members and the software items they were willing to give assistance on. We also had free software given to us by vendors that we could provide to members in exchange for reviews to appear in the newsletter. But that was then, and things are different now: There is no free software, we have many fewer members, and the excitement and newness of

Comments.....Continued on page 4

March Meeting: Bob Gostischa speaking on Internet Security

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob leads the group in finding answers to questions and solutions to problems. This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM.

The very brief business portion of the meeting was opened by John Witmer, Tampa PC Users Group President.

The presentation was "More Windows 7," a second attempt at showing the unique features of the newest Microsoft Operating System. It was conducted by myself, Merle Nicholson, and went from approximately 7:10 to 8:40 PM.

During the course of the presentation, there were many questions from the membership relative to computers in general, including an endorsement of the Amazon Kindle. All attempts to structure the material and keep on the agenda failed, but it was deemed an overall success by many attendees.

Subjects covered included a newly-installed user account intended for my dog and the limitations a dog has in using a computer. We migrated through the default Start Menu and some of the adjustments you can make to customize the desktop. An emphasis was put on the real necessity to learn the basics of the file structure of a computer to help you find files when they're "missing." A brief mention was made on the subject of passwords and the necessity of having a password database of some kind. Bob LaFave had touched on RoboForm earlier and Merle endorsed

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

How we got to watch our first streamed movie

By Ron Weinberg, Member-At-Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Since my earlier article "Uniting The Internet and Your TV" (April 2010), the use of rented DVDs to watch movies continues to rapidly decline and streaming will likely become the standard method, leaving rentals for occasional users and those who may lack proper equipment.

In that article, I enumerated many devices and methods for the task, a list which now includes game consoles, iPhone, Windows Phone, and iPad. Expect other tablets to be included soon. Availability notwithstanding, most people prefer to watch movies on big screens rather than small.

As avid movie fans, my wife and I watch several films each week. We are Blockbuster members, Redbox users, and theatre goers, generally avoiding Video on Demand. I have been anxious to try streaming to simplify things, no disc to mail or take from or to a store or vending machine and no bad weather issues. I chose Netflix because of reputation, availability, and price. Unlimited streaming is 7.99 per month, and currently there is a one-month free trial.

Alas, my new HDTV purchased in 2009, which has an Ethernet port, was supposed to have an app making it easy to connect to Netflix directly using only my router. This would require connecting the TV to the router by Ethernet cable or wirelessly. Running an Ethernet cable would have been awkward. An alternative would have been to purchase a pair of relatively expensive Power Line Ethernet adapters, or a less expensive $69 wireless adapter, to plug into the TV's USB port.

I waited for the Netflix app for the TV, but it never became available for my model TV, so I had to consider one of the other options. We had been considering a Blu-ray player, so we killed two birds with



one stone by buying a Samsung Blu-ray player with a built-in wireless connection. This player includes the Netflix app, as well as other apps.

Our ISP is Verizon FIOS, and there was one issue concerning streaming with wireless that could present a problem.

We are using a Verizon-supplied FIOS 9100EM Router. This is a Wired and Wireless G Router. Reading blogs and reviews, there was a question as to whether or not Wireless G was adequate for faultless streaming.

Some said yes, some said no, but those who said no recommended Wireless N.

Verizon has been promising to offer Wireless N capability but so far has not delivered. Several alternative methods for using Wireless N with FIOS are available, such as connecting a second router as primary, secondary, or bridge. Instructions for this are readily available from the Verizon FIOS site, router manufacturers and independent sources.

I took my wireless laptop close to the Blu-ray player and determined that I was receiving a strong wireless signal there. So, I decided to take a chance and try using the existing Wireless G connection. If that was unsatisfactory, I could then pursue one of the other options.

I opened a Netflix account and selected the equipment I was using (Samsung Blu-ray Player). The first time I

Streaming.....Continued on page 4

Streaming.....Continued from page 3

started the Netflix app on the TV, I was asked if I had an account. When I replied yes, a code number was generated. This code had to be entered into my Netflix account to activate the device. Once activated, I have unlimited access to the library of films. No code entry is required for normal use. The process is simple. It may vary slightly on other configurations.

Turn on Blu-ray player, which is connected via HDMI to the TV. This automatically powers on the TV. Select Internet from Blu-ray Options, and then select the Netflix app.

That evening we watched our first streamed movie. Results were excellent. After a short wait for loading, the film came on. Sound and color was the equal of DVD quality. The film can be paused and restarted and, if turned off, can be restarted from where it left off. So far, we are highly satisfied with streaming, and it is easy to see why this delivery method is predicted to be a winner. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

computing has long ago worn off. For most, I think, computing has turned into entertainment and something called social networking.

A look back over our old newsletters easily demonstrates the changes. We have newsletters in Acrobat format at our web site starting in 1988. There are two from 1988, eight from 1989 (we do not have newsletters for the missing months) and the complete years up through 1993. These were scanned in from printed versions and then had optical character recognition performed. The years 1994 and 1995 remain to be scanned. Starting in 1996 through last month's January 2011 newsletter, we have Acrobat versions that were made directly from the creating program: Microsoft Word for a few newsletters, then Microsoft Publisher for many years and, finally, Adobe InDesign for the past couple of years. That is more than 20 years of personal computing history. Perhaps when I manage to scan in the 1994 and 1995 issues, I can put them all on a CD, 1988 - 2011 and have Acrobat (full version) index the collection so that the entire group is searchable and not just each individual issue. That might be something of interest to the group. Right now, those issues make up around 271 MB of data.

Instead of updating your Facebook page, you could then read all the articles about Word Perfect, Corel Draw, Hayes modems, Windows 3.0, OS/2, 486 computers and 500 MB hard drives. All these items were very exciting to the club at one time. Then there was the beginning of the Internet for the group, with Prodigy and AOL. And there was President Harvey Bruneau reporting to us each year on the excitement of his visit to COMDEX in Las Vegas.

But all this is past, and time marches on. Apple, a company almost unworthy of mention in those years, is now threatening to take over the consumer computing world with, of all things, a computer masquerading as a telephone called the iPhone. Right now these iThings seem to be proliferating like rabbits. There is the iMac, iPod, iPhone, iPad, and suggested by some wags, the soon-to-be iToilet, since it appears that anything with an i in front of it and sold by Apple will produce a line of people wrapping around a city block in all sorts of weather so as to be among the first adopters.

Microsoft, which has provided so much joy (and pain) to us PC users over the past 30 years, has now been pushed aside and relegated to the trash heap of old ideas by a good portion of the computing press, to be replaced by Google and the aforementioned iThing company, Apple. Google, an advertising company that dabbles in computer software so as to create other platforms for its advertising, is supposedly to soon one-up Microsoft by allowing us to do everything we need computer-wise using only a browser and storing all of our data in the Cloud. They are even working on their own operating system that will support this browser-for-everything paradigm and thus free us from the terrible burden of needing Windows or Microsoft. No more need for software, and, hence, no more need for Microsoft. All software will now be free. All you need do is allow Google to watch everything you do so as to better target you with advertising.

Comments.....Continued on page 5

Comments.....Continued from page 4

Apple, which also sells regular computers that surprisingly allow Windows to be installed, has created a tablet, the iTab, that, according to some in the press, will, once it is refined in later versions, allow its users to do all the computing that the average person (read social media type) will need without a keyboard or mouse. You will just move your fingers around and get things done. Sort of like finger painting, I suppose.

But enough of this. Otherwise you will think that I am not a progressive person, willing to accept change and all the good things it brings. But you would be wrong; I applaud Google for what they have done with their search engine and Apple for their improvements in the smart phone interface. I was using a search engine (recall AltaVista) and a smart phone (recall Windows Mobile) long before Google and Apple introduced their versions of these items. So they weren't the first. But they did introduce a better product. However, I now think Bing (from Microsoft) produces nearly as good search results as Google. And from what I have been told the new Android phones (using the Google Android operating system) are as good as, or better than, the iPhone. So time marches on. Today's winners may be tomorrow's also-rans.

We are running out of more than money

We are running out of web addresses. In a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, I read that there are now only 117 million left of the original 4.3 billion. What is an IP address? It is a number, such as 168.144.211.61, which is the IP address of the tpcug.org web site on the Internet. If you put http://168.144.211.61 in your browser you will get our site just the same as if you used http://www.tpcug.org. The TPCUG does not own that numeric adddress. It is part of a block of

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Year of the Rabbit in Gold

From the China Daily site at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-11/12/content_11541201.htm, we have: ".... a 1000g Year-of-Rabbit gold bar at a jewelry store in Suzhou, East of China's Jiangsu province on Nov 11, 2010. To seize the market share, many jewelry stores start to sell new designs for the upcoming 2011, the Year of the Rabbit in Chinese lunar calendar."

At around $42,000, I will take that over a real rabbit.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Art Project, powered by Google	http://www.googleartproject.com/
Microsoft's timeline from 1975 - 1990	http://www.thocp.net/companies/microsoft/microsoft_company.htm
Hard-to-get Industrial Supplies	http://www.smallparts.com

Comments.....Continued from page 5

IP addresses allocated to our web hosting company, myHosting.com, and they assigned it to us when I first set up the web site many years back. We do, however, own the domain name tpcug.org.

The system now used is called IP version four, or IPV4. The new system created to fix the problem is named IPV6 and has 4.3 x 10^{28} possible addresses. That is a very large number. To read more about IPV6, check the Wikipedia article at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/

According to the WSJ article, "....the transition – likely to happen gradually over a number of years – won't have a big impact on consumers. Some older operating systems and home routers won't work with the new addresses, but ones bought in the last couple of years should, according to networking experts."

You can test your IPV6 connectivity by pointing your browser to http://www.test-ipv6.com/. My computer failed; probably because Verizon does not support such yet.

Another very good article on all of this is at http://news.cnet.com/8301-30685_3-20029721-264.html.

Well, enough on the new IP address setup. It may not occur for a long time. However, one does wonder why 4.3 billion IP addresses is not enough. And there are actually many millions of those that, I suppose, have been allocated to hosting companies in large blocks but not yet used.

Photography

One of the primary uses of the computer for me is working with images taken with my digital camera or with images derived by scanning old negatives, slides or printed photos. The image below was taken just a few days ago at the annual Gasparilla Pirate Invasion. It was captured with a Nikon D200 digital camera using a 24 mm to 200 mm zoom lens. Very little work was needed to move this image from the camera to this newsletter.

I snapped around 385 photos on Gasparilla Day – people and floats. The floats are pretty much the same from year to year, but the people vary. And it is a great day for people photos since many of those there are there to see and be seen. Also having a good zoom lens helps. Of the many thousands of people at the parade, I only saw three other people with digital SLR cameras (one was a *St. Pete Times* photographer). All other photos were being taken with phone cameras. I have yet to figure out how such cameras, with lenses the size of the tip of my little finger, can provide enough information to fill five or eight megapixel images, as these cameras supposedly do.



What to do with all these Gasparilla photos? First you select a collection of the better ones; then you make a slide show; and then you put that on the Internet for everyone to see. I selected 163, reduced each to a maximum dimension of 1000 pixels and then used Adobe Bridge (part of Adobe Creative Suite 4) to create a Flash slide show that you may view at http://www.lamartin.com/Gasparilla2011SlideShow/.

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Comments.....Continued from page 6



While watching the slide show, you are supposed to be able to pause the show, then right-click on it and select Zoom In and then be able to left-click and move the larger image around your screen. This works on my laptop, and, for several people I asked to try it, on their computers. However, on both my desktop computers, when I zoom in, I lose part of the image off to one side and am only able to left-click and move the image just a tiny amount. Perhaps someone can figure out why this is happening. Is it because of a setting, a mouse driver, a video card, or a video driver?

The black-and-white photo on this page is from another era, and a lot of work was done before that image appeared here. First of all, that image is from 1946, probably taken with a press camera, and what I had to work with was the negative – a 64-year-old 4" x 5" negative. The photo was taken by my father-in-law when he was living in New Orleans, as part of an article about Mississippi River pilots for the *Saturday Evening Post*. I had earlier scanned this negative, along with many others, from that era using my Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner. Unfortunately, I cannot use this scanner with my new Windows 7 desktop computer since Epson has made no drivers for Win 7. Eventually I will need to get a new scanner to use with what is now my main computer.

A few weeks back, I decided to find the old *Saturday Evening Post* that contained the article and do something with it and the photos of the river pilots at Pilottown, Louisiana. What I did was use Adobe Acrobat Professional to scan in the magazine article, with its color photos, as a number of different Acrobat files. I then used Adobe InDesign to create a 5-page article from these separate Acrobat files, which I then made into one final Acrobat file.

For the 21 black-and-white photos, I used Photoshop to clean them up a bit since they had a few scratches and dust spots. I also adjusted the brightness and a few other things, depending on the particular photo, and added my father-in-law's last name to the corner of each image. After all, these were 64 old negatives that hadn't been kept in archival conditions, so a little work was expected. Finally, I used Adobe Bridge to create a slide show of the 21 photos.

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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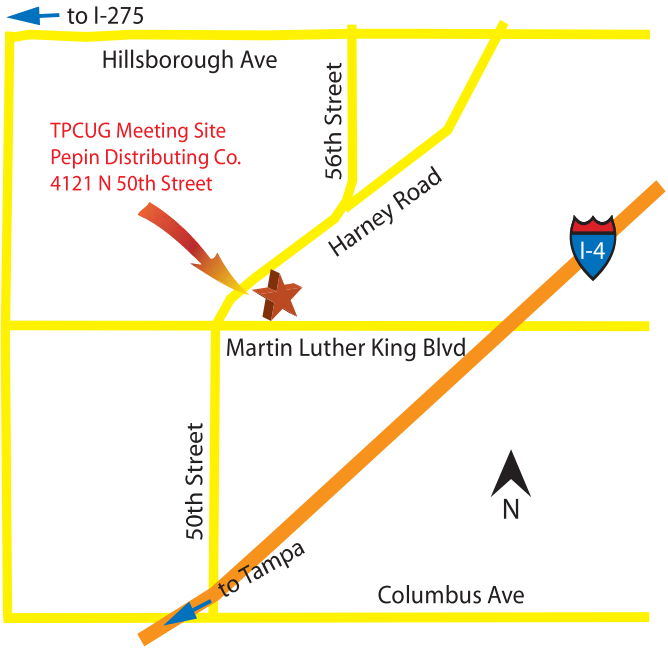
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 7

You may view the *Post* article and the slide show at the Photos section of my website, lamartin.com, at http://www.lamartin.com/Pilottown.aspx.

These 4" x 5" negatives have lasted in fairly good condition for 64 years. How long are my digital files of the Gasparilla photos going to last? I will continue to copy them to new computers as I get such, along with copying them to external drives and then to newer external drives. But are any of those drives going to be around and usable 64 years from now? I know I won't be here. How long will data persist on a flash drive? Do we yet have the equivalent of a film negative for digital data? ◆



Minutes.....Continued from page 2

KeePassX as a free cross-platform password keeper.

The presentation fell apart at 8:40 PM, and everyone went home. ◆

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Meeting Preview: Bob Gostischa, who has presented to other user groups on Internet security, will give us a similar presentation. As usual, Bob Lafave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting..

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

We have three contributors this month from whom we haven't seen anything is some time. Welcome back to Larry Anders, Bob Davis and Doug Mullis. More will be expected from you in the future.

Old Newsletters Last month I mentioned that we have newsletters at our web site running from 1988 through the present. The ones before 1995 are in the Old Newsletter section and were scanned into Adobe Acrobat from the paper newsletters instead of being created as Acrobat documents by the original desktop publishing software. I also mentioned that the issues from 1994 and 1995 had not yet been scanned. Well, that is now done, and they are at the web site. You can now view and search these old newsletters.

Actually, I am not happy with the quality of some of the earlier newsletter scans. I have redone some of them, but some of the

Comments.....Continued on page 5

April Meeting: Steve Singer on Android phones and tablets

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

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John Witmer conducted a brief business meeting and mentioned his experiences with FIOS replacement batteries.

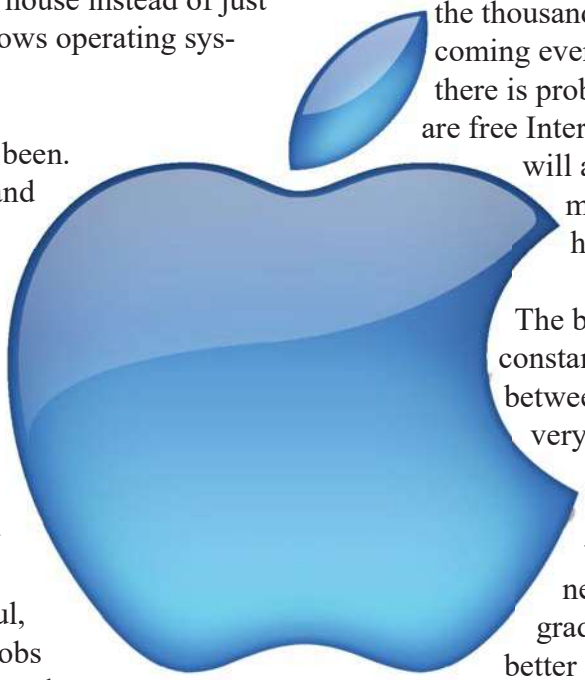
Our speaker this month was club member Dave Palmer of the Manatee County Extension office. He conducts a well-organized review of the latest malware dangers and the steps to protect yourself online.

His slide show of the review of 2010 online criminal activity is comprehensive and thorough. Part of the presentation was devoted to a review of current Internet crime news. As always, Dave gives us a top quality presentation. He maintains a website at http://techteachtoo.com, subtitled "Scouring the Web for interesting technology and Internet security news." ◆

A Free Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

By Larry Anders, Tampa PC Users Group
larry@anders.net

I had been highly opposed to Apple products for years because of what I feel to be the small-mindedness of Steve Jobs and the Apple management by not making their code available to developers, which would allow software to be developed so there would be more choice at reasonable prices. If so, I'm sure there would be a Mac in my house instead of just seven PCs running various Windows operating systems.



Above, you'll notice I said "had" been. Then I purchased my first iPod, and I was hooked! I did not get the first version iPhone, but I have had the 3GS now for almost two years. It is about the 10th cell phone I've owned and by far the very best. I have been tempted to try an Android phone but so far have had no reason to give up the iPhone. The Apps for the iPhone make it an everyday challenge to find something useful, and typically for free. Why Mr. Jobs can't see that allowing all these people to develop software for the iPod/iPhone/iPad has made his products extremely successful is beyond my understanding. He has still kept control by not allowing anything to be installed except through the iTunes App Store store. Even the free Apps. If something similar was allowed for the Mac, I think he would see the popularity of the Mac increase also. I just can't validate paying twice the price for software just because it's a Mac. It's good, but not that good.

For Christmas I was given an iPad by my wife and kids. Now, you want to talk about what I think is the best invention of the 21st century. Since December, I use my PCs at least 50% less. My iPad sits next to me on the couch when it is not in my hand. Email, Messenger and text messaging is with me now whereever I am, between the iPad and iPhone. The two are very similar, but the 9" screen on the iPad is much easier to read and work with.

The iPad comes with several built-in Apps, such as Calendar (to track your appointments), Notes (to keep lists of things), Maps (complete Google maps), Videos (to watch your favorite videos), YouTube, iTunes, App Store and Games. They also include Safari (Apple's Internet browser), Email, Photos (access to your photos, graphics and screen captures), iPod (for music) and Contacts. That's plenty to keep you going until you learn how to start downloading some of the thousands of Apps available, with more coming every day. If you're into anything, there is probably an App for it. Also, there are free Internet music-streaming sites that will allow you to listen to any kind of music whenever you want, with no hiccups.

The battery is excellent. With my constant use, I still get two to three days between charges, and the recharge is very fast.

Apple has also released iBooks, which will probably be a permanent fixture in the next iOS upgrade. In my opinion, it's one of the better (free) eBooks reader programs. If you're used to using Kindle, Google or any of the other readers, there is an App out there for that, too. I downloaded a free App the other day that makes 23,469 classic books available at your tap. And I did say free.

One App I especially like is the Dragon Speaking App, for both the iPhone and the iPad. There is no need to type. Just start the App, push Record and start talking. It recognizes when you stop, allows you to insert commas, periods and new paragraphs. When you're done with the dictation, tap Copy, then paste it wherever you want, or tap Email and it will send it directly into your email. Oh yeah, did I mention it was free?!

iPad.....Continued on page 4

iPad.....Continued from page 3

The iPad does not come with a text program, like the iPhone, but there are several free Apps that will take care of this problem. I use one that I am more than happy to pay for but see no reason to do so as the developers do not ask me to. There is a small unobtrusive ad area in the lower left corner and that's it. The same with Messenger.

I am currently using Dragon Speaking with a free App called Documents to create this article. Documents allows you to review and edit Word and Excel documents. I wouldn't expect to be able to work on some gigantic files. I expect a version of Word and Excel to be out soon, assuming Apple will allow a Microsoft App to infiltrate their domain.

Another thing I am really pleased with are Apps available for our younger computer users. My daughter and son-in-law both have iPads, so my 5-year-old granddaughter is well-versed on using the iPad. I typically get her to teach me some secret thing when she comes over on the weekends. I spent a lot of money for the overhead movie system in my Tahoe for her to be able to watch movies, etc., when we are in the car. Lately, though, she would rather have my iPad while we are driving around. There are some excellent educational Apps (free, of course) that help teach her to read, do math, draw and all sorts of other things.

As some of you know, I am a cancer patient. I spend hours at a time at Moffitt Cancer Center waiting between treatments. The WiFi connection at Moffitt is excellent, and, with the iPad in hand, cancer treatment is so much more pleasurable (if that's really possible).

In any case, as I have thanked Bill Gates and the team at Microsoft in the past for making computing enjoyable with Windows, I now need to thank Steve Jobs and the gang at Apple for heading in a new direction and once again making computing enjoyable. I can't wait for the 22nd century to get here!

Sent from Larry's iPad. ◆

Reviving My Apevia PC

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
RobDavis7@verizon.net

Last Sunday afternoon I powered up my financial PC, got a cup of coffee, and returned to find it wasn't powered up anymore. I hit the power on button, the lights flashed and went out again. It also had a bad smell to it. Not the best way to start the afternoon! This is a PC that has all our financial records on it, and I hadn't backed up the data for a couple weeks. When I opened the box, the smell appeared to be from the power supply. I called Bob LaFave who said if the power supply stinks it's probably bad. I thanked him for calling back and said I would call if replacing the power supply didn't fix the problem. I have an old dead PC lying around with a good power supply in it. So I pulled both power supplies but found the old one didn't have a four-pin plug added on the motherboard power socket. Not being sure what that meant at the time, I went to CompUSA and was fumbling through the many power supply selections. Another guy who was gathering stuff to build a PC came over and explained about the power supplies. My new PC has a P4 motherboard, which requires the extra plug. My old PC was not a P4 type, so the power supply was not right for my newer Apevia PC. Of course, all the new power supplies are equipped to handle the P4 and more.

Unfortunately, the guy took the last of the 600-watt power supplies that were on sale, so I had to settle for a 550-watt unit for about $10 more. But I figured the $10 extra I paid by fumbling around there was the price I paid to find out what to buy. My original Apevia system came with a 350-watt power supply. I had talked the salesman I bought it from a couple years ago into adding a CD ROM drive, and a 3.5" disk drive. They also had added a second hard drive. So I think what happened is the 350-watt power supply was straining all the time to handle all the extra load and finally died. So a 550-watt power supply should be able to handle the extra load without a problem.

I installed the new power supply, even though it had

Reviving.....Continued on page 5

Reviving.....Continued from page 4

several extra cables with odd connectors that I had no idea what they were used for. I bundled them up out of the way. Then came the challenging smoke test. The system came up without a hitch. You know, the first thing I did was back up that data! It may be my imagination, but it seems the PC is running better now than before. Anyway, I'm a happy camper again. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

1991 and all of the 1992 and 1993 ones would be improved by a rescanning. The software I am using now for scanning does a much better job on the old newsletters than whatever software I had used before (I can't recall if I did them with HP or with Epson programs). And that brings me to the next topic.

VueScan, which is a scanning program from http://www.hamrick.com/. I have mentioned that I could not use my Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner with my Windows 7 desktop computer since Epson has not provided any Windows 7 64-bit drivers. So I was still doing all my scanning using my Windows XP desktop computer. I had thought about purchasing a new scanner, possibly the Epson V600 Photo scanner, which has a 6400 x 9600 dpi hardware resolution, while my older scanner has a 3200 x 6400 dpi hardware resolution. The 600 costs $200. I think my Epson 3200 scanner was around $330 and, to my surprise on checking just now, is seven years old. Perhaps I did need a new scanner. However, the old scanner produced document scans that were more than satisfactory, and, in performing negative or slide scans, I noted that my negatives and slides did not benefit from using the highest resolutions the 3200

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



McDonald's at
98 Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris

This photo is from http://www.flickr.com at the link http://www.flickr.com/photos/mckroes/242517306/. The person who placed it there has a collection at flickr devoted to photos of McDonald's locations from around the world. If he took all the photos listed there, he is quite a traveler. The link to that collection is http://www.flickr.com/photos/mckroes/sets/72057594069544156/with/242517306/.

My interest in the photo was because of the address, which was the address for a restaurant on a business card my father-in-law brought back from Paris in the 1930s. The restaurant was the Grand Restaurant Des Écoles Réunies. Now it is the Grand McDonald's, I suppose. Time marches on.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
International Music Score Library Project	http://imslp.org/
Google Ngram Viewer	http://ngrams.googlelabs.com/
City Data	http://www.city-data.com/
VueScan 9 Scanning Software	http://www.hamrick.com/

The 2011 FACUG Technology Conference at Sea

By Doug Mullis, Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Well, you really missed a good experience at the end of January. The Florida Association of Computer Users (of which our group is a member) had their second annual conference at sea, sailing from Tampa while going to and from Cozumel, Mexico. Harry Lockabay and I did our best to represent our group. We even took our wives. Harry is an old hand at cruising, but this was my first cruise. Bruce Register (a former member) now residing in Dothan, AL and his daughter were also along. I can tell you the seas were calm and the weather perfect.

This was FACUG's second such event, as last year they sailed to the Bahamas for their conference. Bruce also went on that one. The only down side of this cruise was that we did not leave Tampa until 3 AM Friday due to repair to one of the propeller pods. No rudder on this ship; in fact, you couldn't tell when it was moving. We ran on both gas-turbine engines, making up all but two hours of our 10-hour delay.

The FACUG sessions were held between 2 PM and 5 PM on Thursday (while still in port) and from 8 AM to 5 PM the two days we were at sea. I attended about half in order to spend time with my wife, who didn't want to attend the conference. Neither one of us had sailed before, so there was a lot to see and experience. The conference welcoming speaker was Dave Dockery of the Clearwater/Largo group followed, by the FACUG general meeting led by President Sam Wexler. The next speaker was Abby Stokes, encouraging people over 39 not be intimidated and to get with current technology. She addressed seniors the next day, encouraging them to buy a computer (and her book on how to use it). Abby is a good motivational speaker, as is Dave Dockery.

As I have been to several FACUG conferences, I can tell you this was the typical conference, with a number of vendors pushing their products (Adobe, Tech Smith, Corel, Zoom Text, Microsoft, Smart Computing and User Group Relations). Not all vendors were presenters but all contributed door prizes. The door prizes and the food have always made these conferences worthwhile. The prizes are not as large as they used to be but there are many.

Other presentations dealt with user group problems and presentation ideas. I enjoyed Abby Stokes' presentations, two by Bill Campbell on taking and making the most of your photographs, and how to get the most (ink mileage) out of your printer by Jere Minich. There were several sessions by Evelyn Watts on Corel VideoStudios Pro X3 and Corel PaintShop Pro. Two or three sessions often were scheduled at the same time in adjacent rooms so you could choose which was of most interest to you. I missed the sessions on how to sell on ebay and shop online. There also was a session by Carey Holzman on security, passwords and backups. Overall we heard that smart phones are taking over the technology world.

Would I do it again? I've always enjoyed the FACUG 2-day spring seminars. Registration is usually $50 including meals. The cruise adds more. Would I go on a cruise again? I enjoyed it but the big draw was sailing out of Tampa. I was really impressed with The Radiance of the Seas. Next year they are back to sailing from Miami. I've seen Cozumel but not Bermuda. I haven't made up my mind yet. Anyone want to go? ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 5

scanner offered. So a new scanner would possibly not improve my results. Nonetheless, I still couldn't use the old scanner with my new desktop computer. That is, I couldn't until I recalled the Hamrick scanning software which I had purchased many years ago. It was VueScan 7.6. If I could have found my information on that order, I could have possibly have gotten a free upgrade to the new 9.017 version. But I could find no documentation of that purchase.

The VueScan site offers two versions: Standard and Pro. The Pro version has several extra features; the only one probably of interest to most users would be

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Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR 2010

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2010 INCOME	
Memberships (28 Single + 4 Family)	840.00
Door Prize/Auction Receipts	166.00
Amazon Link Commissions	463.96
TOTAL INCOME	1,469.96
2010 EXPENSES	
Newsletter Postage	184.80
Newsletter Paper (Used 2009 Purchase)	0.00
FACUG Dues	25.00
APCUG Dues	50.00
Florida Incorporation Fee	61.25
Web Site Hosting Fee (11 Months)	165.99
P O Box Rental (fee increase)	60.00
December Holiday Party Costs	227.51
Refreshments (Cookies)	48.69
PayPal Fees (3 payments @ $0.85 ea)	2.55
TOTAL EXPENSES	825.79
NET INCOME FOR 2010	**644.17**
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – BEGINNING OF 2010	6,096.30
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – END OF 2010	6,740.47

RECONCILLIATION OF BANK STATEMENT TO BOOK BALANCE:

Balance per BANK STATEMENT at 12-31-2010	6,740.47
(No Outstanding Reconciling Items)	
Balance per Books at 12-31-2010	6,740.47

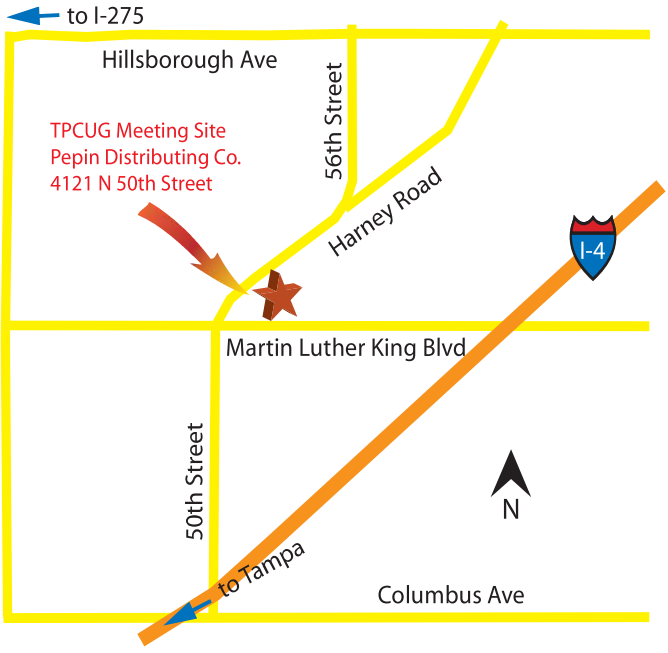
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Comments.....Continued from page 6

the free upgrade to newer versions. You can check if your scanner is supported. And I bet it is, since they claim to support 1,100 scanners. My Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner was there, along with my small Canon scanner I use if I want to take a scanner on a trip. There is no charge to download the software and try it (it puts a watermark on your scans). Once you know that it works you can make the purchase. It supposedly runs on 32-bit and 64-bit versions of Windows XP, Vista and 7. It certainly works well for me on Windows 7 64-bit for both the Epson scanner mentioned above and the smaller Canon CanoScan Lide 500F, which scans a standard letter-sized sheet but is very small and light and gets all its power from the USB connection. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



April in Tampa

Vol. 24 No. 4 April 2011

Meeting

Android Phones & Tablets
by
Steve Singer

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI@TampaBay returns. This presentation will focus on phones and tablets using the Android operating system. As usual, Bob Lafave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting..

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Android phones, part of the topic for this month's presentation, are giving the iPhone and Blackberry pretty good competition. According to Merle Nicholson, his Android is just great. I suppose the only thing missing from an Android phone is the ability to end each email sent with the tag line *sent from my iphone*. I see a lot of those, but for some fortunate reason the Android people don't add *sent from my Android*.

Regarding the picture of the month photo in the March newsletter, member Larry Andrers wrote: *Hey, I liked your picture this month. I've eaten at that restaurant several times. The hotel I stayed in the last couple times I was in Paris is right down the street from that McDonald's so I am quite familiar with it. Thanks for the memories.*

Nancy Cottrell The TPCUG lost long-time member Nancy Cottrell last month. She died March 27 at age 72. I have no idea of when she first joined our group. I have photos taken

Comments.....Continued on page 5

May Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Affiliations

Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the March Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob leads the group in finding answers to questions and solutions to problems. Discussed during the March SIG were questions about monitoring network resources in Windows 7, Backup and Restore and creating restore disks for both Acronis and Windows 7 Backup and Restore. Also, the IEEE 1394 Firewire was discussed, and Bob did a quick mention of Google Cloud Printing. This month's SIG concluded at 7:05 PM.

John Witmer conducted a brief business meeting and mentioned his election as the treasurer for FACUG, the Florida Association of Computer User Groups. John noted the next January "2012 FACUG Technology Bahamas Cruise" is January 23rd through January 27, 2012. See registration details at http://www.facug.org/Conference/2012/2012conference-Reg2.asp

Our speaker for March was Bob Gostischa, a volunteer speaker for Avast! Anti-virus software. Bob displayed a detailed slide show about the present state of virus infections, who is doing it and why. For instance, 85% are through web pages and 15% through infected devices. Surprisingly, 6 out of 10 legitimate websites are infected in some way. He detailed the various ways anti-virus software detects viruses and recommended some free scanners to help clean up your infected PC. Thanks for an excellent program, Bob. ◆

Keyboards and Stuff

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com



I've modified and programmed keyboards, trying my best to optimize my time at the computer. Not that I don't enjoy my computer and the things I can accomplish, but, first, I'm a lousy typist, despite having practiced continuously since 1976, and, second, I hate messing with things that are obviously flawed. Keyboards are all flawed, that's a given. Here's how I'm coping.

I pretty much settled, a couple of years ago, on a Logitech Gaming Keyboard model G11. It's been succeeded by a model G510 ($106 at NewEgg), which is only slightly improved from the G11. I'm always on the lookout for new keyboards, but so far I haven't found anything else to excite me. The G11 is distinguished by 18 programmable keys, key backlighting and multimedia controls. The G510 is the same except the backlighting is probably better and it has a small multipurpose LCD screen. It's the backlighting and programmable keys that make it worth it to me. The picture to the right is the left side, showing the key arrangement and my labels.

You can use these 18 keys in 18 times three ways (54) because there are three buttons at the top of the array – M1, M2 and M3 – that will switch the whole bank of 18 to three sets. So far I haven't found a use for switching the banks. Eighteen seems to be enough, so it stays on M1. Programming is pretty versatile. It accepts macros, shortcuts, functions, text and a scripting language, so I'd guess that you'd be hard pressed to find anything you couldn't program.

The bottom three keys in the picture are pretty obvious: They're a replacement for Ctl+X, C and V. I use these three constantly, since I'm a real believer in cut, copy and paste because I make a lot of mistakes and need to avoid typing as much as possible. The next set up is new for me, marked 1 2 3. They (and cut, copy, paste) don't need labels; I marked them for this article. 1 2 3 run a little program I wrote in VB.NET that will pop the mouse cursor to the center of my monitors 1, 2 and 3 and blip some eye-catching circles. The only disadvantage in using three monitors is finding the

Keyboards.....Continued on page 4

Keyboards.....Continued from page 3

mouse and how to get it where you want it. Problem solved: The buttons “Computer”, “F:”, “G:”, ”C:” and “D:” all just open Windows Explorer to those drive letters. “UP” moves Windows Explorer up one level in the directory tree, “close” closes the current window (it’s really Alt+F4, and a bit hazardous to use). “KP”, “outlook”, “IE” and “WAtracker” all launch programs and are used perhaps once a day. I’ll ditch any of these if I find any other use for the keys. “Date” runs another program I wrote to push the time and date into the clipboard ready for pasting. I use this, well,...sometimes.

There are several other ways to alter keyboards. I’ve disabled the “Caps Lock” key. It has no effect when pressed. It takes a complicated little registry change to do that, but just think about it; the only time I EVER use the Caps Lock is to switch it off after accidently switching it on. What a waste of keyboard space. Likewise “Scroll Lock.” I’ll bet not one in ten thousand keyboard users know what Scroll Lock is, and it’s on every keyboard waiting for an accidental bump. How about the “Ins” key? Although I probably would not disable it as I did Caps Lock, I’d like to at least disable it from an accidental bump almost all the time.

Now that I’m started on this – let’s look at Num Lock. Ok, I’ll concede that some people use it. But I do own three keyboards (two on notebooks) that have no numeric keypad. But Num Lock switches an array of character keys to numbers if you don’t have a keypad. More than once I’ve gone crazy knowing that I know the logon password on a computer that wouldn’t take. Guess what. The num lock was on, the password used characters U,I,O,J,K,L or M, and being a password wouldn’t show up on the screen. Man, I hate that.

What I really want is a 100% fully programmable keyboard program built into Windows. How hard could it be? There are programmable keyboards. One or two really are 100% programmable. Even some that you just place the key switches wherever you want on a slate. But I don’t want it bad enough to pay them $1500!



Pictured above: Logitech G510, NewEgg Item#: N82E16823126100 $106.

Also nice in my living room (think NetFlix): Logitech diNovo Mini Black 63 Normal Keys Bluetooth Wireless Mini keyboard Item#: N82E16823126039 $120, pictured to the right. ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 1

of meetings in 2001 that include her. But I am sure she was in the group long before then. As I recall, whenever she was at a meeting she usually had a question for the Windows SIG, which, of course, is the purpose of the SIG.



The photo above is of Nancy at the March 2002 meeting at the old Pepin location.

Lost Data I had an accident in my computer room that could have been serious if I didn't have multiple

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Mushroom

One of a collection of nature photos by Wolfgang Uhlemann at http://totallycoolpix.com/2011/03/in-the-picture-wolfgang-uhlemann/. Another interesting collection at Totally Cool Pix is Rio de Janeiro Carnival 2011 at the link http://totallycoolpix.com/2011/03/rio-de-janeiro-carnival-2011/?css=light. And there are many more.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
International Space Station comes together	http://i.usatoday.net/tech/graphics/iss_timeline/flash.htm
Internet Health Report	http://www.internethealthreport.com/
Tampa Changing	http://www.tampachanging.com/
Totally Cool Pix	http://totallycoolpix.com/
Exploring Florida	http://fcit.usf.edu/florida/

Comments.....Continued from page 5

copies of my computer backups.

While having a new storage cabinet delivered, I was asked to move one of the monitors on my computer desk just a little so as to avoid the possibility of the delivery people hitting it while placing the new piece of furniture. I complied and in the process knocked to the floor one of the external hard drives that was sitting behind the monitor. The floor is made of unforgiving quarry tile, and the drive no longer works. When connected to the computer, the drive has a light on it that lights and the computer beeps as it always should when a USB device is connected. But the drive is listed as an unknown device with no way to access the data on it. I downloaded the Western Digital Diagnostic program from their site, but it didn't detect the drive, so that was of no help.

What was on the drive? I know that there were several Acronis full-system backups of my main desktop computer, along with possible Acronis backups of my main laptop. I think there were also a lot of other data and image files that had been copied there, too. Of course, I have other Acronis backups of those computers on different external drives, but I was not sure about the data files and image files since I don't know what they were. I am 95% certain that I should have them on my main computer and thus also on any other Acronis backups of it. So nothing is really lost.

I ordered a replacement drive from Amazon with the new one being 2 TB, whereas the old one was 1 TB. The new one probably didn't cost any more than the smaller old one. The first thing I did was perform a complete backup of the desktop computer with Acronis, followed by Acronis backups of my two laptops. I then verified the Acronis backups. And I have also placed this new drive in a less vulnerable location.

The moral of the story? Look before you move something and have multiple backups.

New York Times Digital has moved to a pay-to-read format – that is, after you have read your 20 free articles per month. I have been reading *The New York Times* online for years; the same for *The Wall Street Journal*, except the *WSJ* has been charging me for years, with $155/year being the most recent fee. And, to me, the *Times* was the more important source of information, so I was ready to pay up if that is what it took to continue. However, I received an email from the *Times* saying that Lincoln was going to cover my subscription until the end of 2011. I suppose Ford hopes to sell me a Lincoln. My daughter received the same offer; however, my son in Manhattan did not. I suspect the offers went to longtime readers who were potential Lincoln purchasers, possibly based on zip code information. My son, living in Manhattan is not a very good candidate since almost no one there has a car. My daughter is certainly not a candidate for a Lincoln, but her zip code, the same as mine, may indicate otherwise.

Years ago when the newspapers began putting their publications online, they seemed to compete as to how much material they could put there and how well and timely they presented it. You could go to any of the major US dailies and see great news sites online. Locally *The Tampa Tribune* site was up there with the best in the nation. Then some papers thought about charging for access. I recall *The Miami Herald* tried that and *The New York Times* tried it for their premium content, whatever that is. The *Herald* soon dropped the pay plan since it had resulted in very few paid subscriptions. After a longer try, the *Times* dropped their premium plan. *The Wall Street Journal* is the only major publication I know of that instituted a pay plan and made a success of it.

Then everything fell apart. The papers' advertising revenues plummeted along with their readership, and the nice online versions were scaled back. *The Tampa Tribune* site is a mere shell of its past, at least in my opinion. *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* bucked the trend, their online versions improving, if anything. But all that takes money. So if you really care about in-depth news and not just a headline and a couple of paragraphs, you need to subscribe.

Your email, my email, everybody's email has been compromised. That is basically the message

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Yahoo! eGroup

By Kevan Sheridan, Vice President, Tampa PC Users Group
kevan@tpcug.org

The purpose of the TPCUG Yahoo! eGroup is to inform and promote communication among members of the Tampa PC Users Group. This is a great member benefit and the easiest way to stay in touch with other members during non-meeting days.

Joining the eGroup is simple: Use the e-mail address with which you wish to join the group to send an e-mail to: TPCUG-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Include your full name in the text section of this e-mail. You will receive a verification request that you reply to, then you are up and running.

Note: if you join with a Yahoo! email address you get full access to the group site at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tpcug

To post messages to the group, create an e-mail and address it to: tpcug@yahoogroups.com. Your message will be broadcast to everyone in the eGroup.

Use of the eGroup would include, but is not limited to:

1. TPCUG leadership

- Posting announcements of general interest to the members
- Notifying members of recent changes or additions to meetings or special interest groups
- Requesting feedback from members

2. The Members

- Further discussing topics presented in meetings
- Asking questions that were not answered during the Q/A portion of the meeting
- Posting announcements of general interest to membership or leadership
- Listing equipment, either for sale or wanted
- Holding discussions on consumer electronics or related topics and issues

You may also sign up for and access the Yahoo! eGroup from the link on the tpcug.org main page. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 6

many of us have been receiving from businesses such as Verizon, Walgreens, Best Buy and many other companies that have farmed out to a company called Epsilon the sending of those annoying emails we don't want to receive anyway.

The message I received from Verizon says:

"*We have been informed by Epsilon, a provider of Verizon's email marketing services, that your email address was exposed due to unauthorized access to its systems. Verizon uses Epsilon to send marketing communications on our behalf.*

Epsilon has assured us that the information exposed was limited to email addresses, and that no other information about you or your account was exposed. "

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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P. O. Box 3492
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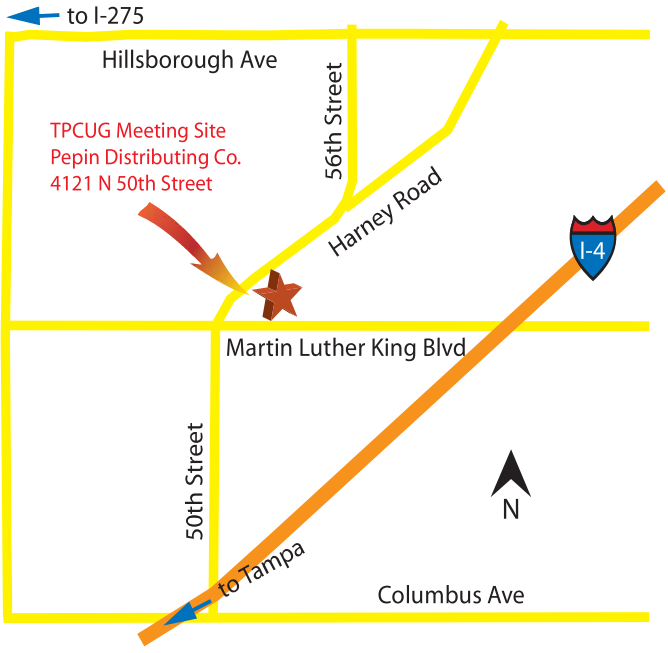
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 7

I wonder what other information about my account Verizon provided to Epsilon. Personally, I don't like the idea of a company I deal with farming out the data I provide them to anyone else. I bet they provided them with such info as my zip code and what sorts of phones I own. And since I have an account with Walgreens, what sort of information of mine did they give Epsilon? My address, my age, what medications I take? Who knows. So far I have not heard anything from my bank, but it was also on the list of companies using Epsilon to send what I consider junk email.

So, you can practice all the safe computing you want, but that will not stop some company you have a relationship with possibly doing you in. The people who stole all this info, by combining all they got from different sources about you, will now probably know almost as much about you as Google does. Happy computing. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 24 No. 5 May 2011



May in Tampa

Meeting

Google Applications by Kevan Sheridan

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Kevan Sheridan will educate us about the different Goggle Applications. The previous time he did this there were five applications; now there are 60. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson for filling up the newsletter this month. He writes about free programs and the Windows 7 Explorer.

I suppose many of you went out and purchased Android phones following last month's presentation by Steve Singer. I am still waiting for the Microsoft Windows Phone 7 to appear at Verizon. The latest guess now for that is the middle of May. However, my daughter has her eyes on an Android.

Another TPGUG member has left us. Don Patzsch died at age 91 on April 24. He was one of the longest continuing members of our group. A search of the old newsletters for the word Patzsch has him attending a meeting in May of 1990, where he won a door prize. According to the Adobe index for all our newsletters, the word Patzsch appears in 120 newsletters with 200 instances. However, since the early newsletters were scanned into Acrobat and then OCRed, the indexing for them may omit some instances. I then did a search for the word Don

Comments.....Continued on page 6

June Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting and began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows operating systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob LaFave, the designated moderator could not attend, so the April SIG was conducted by myself, Merle Nicholson. It concluded at 7:00 PM, and the regular meeting began.

Our April speaker was Steven Singer CEO of RDI, Inc., a wholesale computer hardware distributor. Steven has been a valuable presenter to TPCUG for many years. His presentation was on Android phones, being an Android user himself for several years. He mentioned several products available and software availability, tethering and "rooting". He answered many questions from the audience on a variety of subjects.

As always, a big thanks goes to Steven (pictured below) and to his wife Pam for a valuable and informative presentation. ◆



A dozen free PC applications everyone needs on a new computer

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group.
merle@merlenicholson.com

All of these are excellent quality free software. Most do not even have a paid version and are maintained by professional organizations. All are available from http://download.cnet.com/windows/, but I've included the source websites. I recommend downloads from cnet. The files are tested spyware free, and it's easy to use. http://download.cnet.com/windows/

VLC Media Player At the top of this list is the VLC media player from Video LAN Organization. It's an all-purpose audio player, which also plays all video formats. There's no need to go looking for codecs, as in Windows Media Player. http://www.videolan.org/vlc/

Irfanview Everyone's favorite picture viewer. It will also play most movie formats, as well as audio files. The program has a lot of features and is a great photo manager, but it only does minor photo editing. http://irfanview.com/

ImgBurn For those of you who like to work with ISO images and need reliable ways to create and burn ISO images on and off discs effortlessly, ImgBurn is the CD/DVD burner utility you want. I'm using ISO CD/DVD images more and more as hard drives become cheaper. http://www.imgburn.com

Open Office/LibreOffice If you can't afford Microsoft Office, then Open Office or LibreOffice will do the job for 95% of what you need . The newest open-source version of this is called LibreOffice at http://www.libreoffice.org/

This version comes about because Oracle, the current owner of OpenOffice (acquired from their acquisition of Sun), is making some content and distribution decisions outside of the Open Source community (according to the Open Source maintainers). So they've broken away and have reversed some of those decisions. There are Linux and Mac OSX versions, too.

Audacity is a sound editor. For someone who likes to work with sound files but doesn't want to buy professional systems, this program is a gem. I use it to clean up recordings from vinyl records. Available for Linux and Mac, too. http://audacity.sourceforge.net/

Paint.NET It isn't PhotoShop, but it's at least Paint-Shop Pro quality, and it's free. You'd be surprised at how much photo work this will do. It's available in 64-bit version. http://www.getpaint.net/download.html

Daemon Tools Lite gives you a virtual Blu-Ray/DVD/CD player so you can quickly mount and play .IMG and .ISO files. It's a nice complement to Img-Burn. There's a paid version, too, but my needs are pretty simple, and the free version is excellent and non-obtrusive. http://www.daemon-tools.cc

KeePassX is a login/password encrypted database that works across most all platforms, including MacOS X, Linux, Windows, iPhone, PocketPC, Blackberry and Android. http://www.keepassx.org/

FileZilla is a first class FTP client. There's a FTP server version, too. http://filezilla-project.org/

By the way, Windows does FTP from Windows Explorer, but it's difficult to set up, in my opinion. But if you have an FTP site that you send and pull from regularly, set it up and save it as a shortcut in Windows Explorer. Once set up, it's fine.

Oracle VM VirtualBox – An excellent virtual machine, far superior to Windows Virtual PC. It's much faster, the screen fonts are as good as your screen can get, and it has a snapshot system for experimenting with software scenarios. With a Windows XP machine loaded, it runs 16-bit programs. Think Microsoft Arcade. Pac-Man and Dig-Dug!

You can use a VM to test software, to see how it works before you commit it to your main machine, or to maintain old systems if you have a favorite program that won't run on your current system. I run virtual machines for Windows 7 64 and 32 bit, XP SP3, and

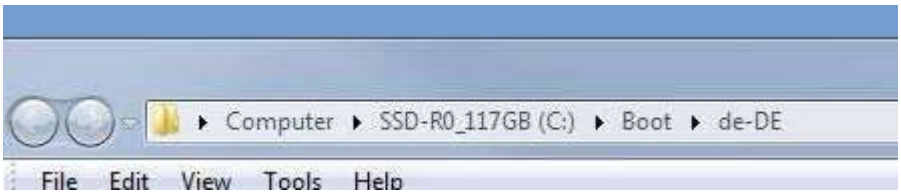
Free.....Continued on page 8

Windows Explorer in Windows 7 (Vista, too)

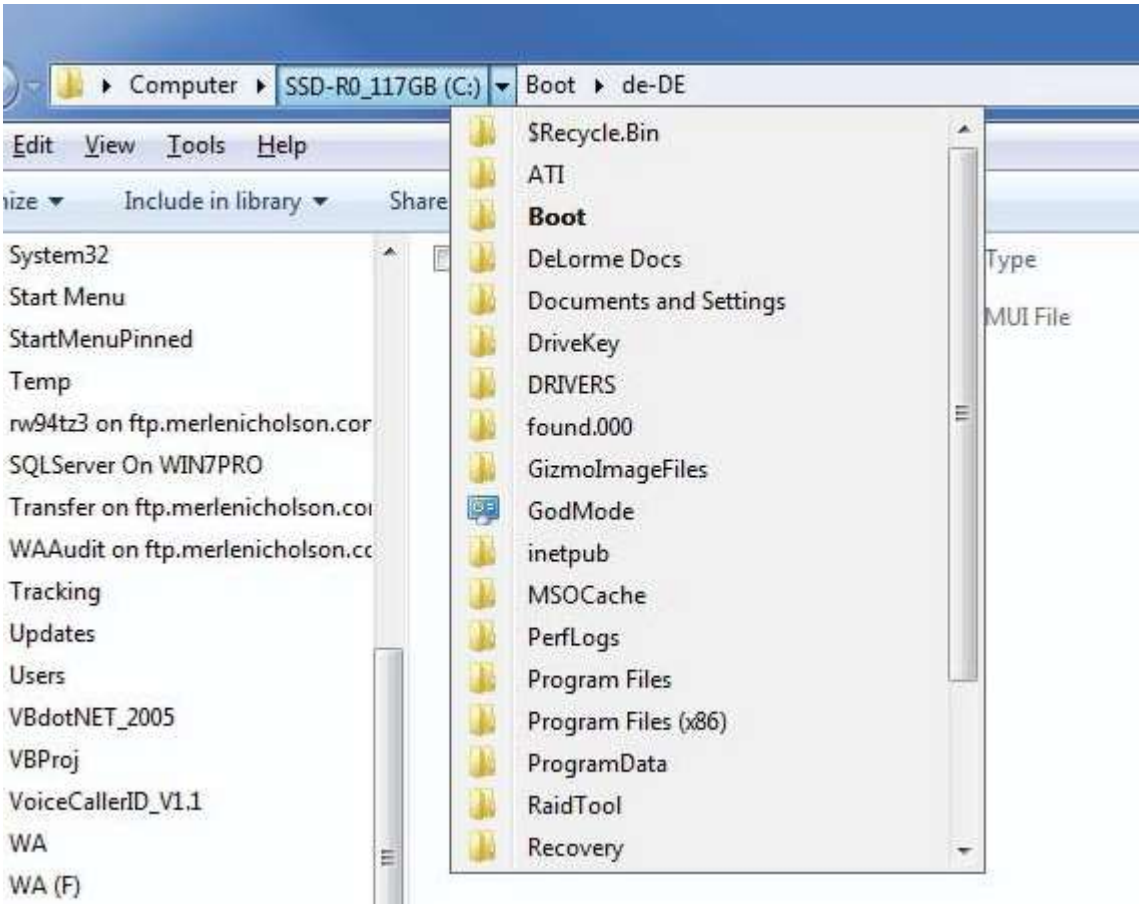
By Merle Nicholson, Secretary Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Here are some tips on using Windows Explorer in Windows 7 (Vista, too). The old "Up one directory" button that we all loved is gone in Win 7. It is now (always was) the keystroke Alt+Up (arrow). Although it's not hard to remember, I have it on a programmable key. I guess there's no point in making it a hotkey, since it IS a hotkey. Anyway, use Alt+Up for "Up one directory."

Also, you can traverse up with the mouse. In the image below, you can click once on the text between the right arrows. In this case I can click on "Boot," "SSD-R0_117GB (C:)" or "Computer,", and the Explorer will move to those locations.



Also you can click on the arrows themselves and get this, dropdown list of file directories:



Explorer.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



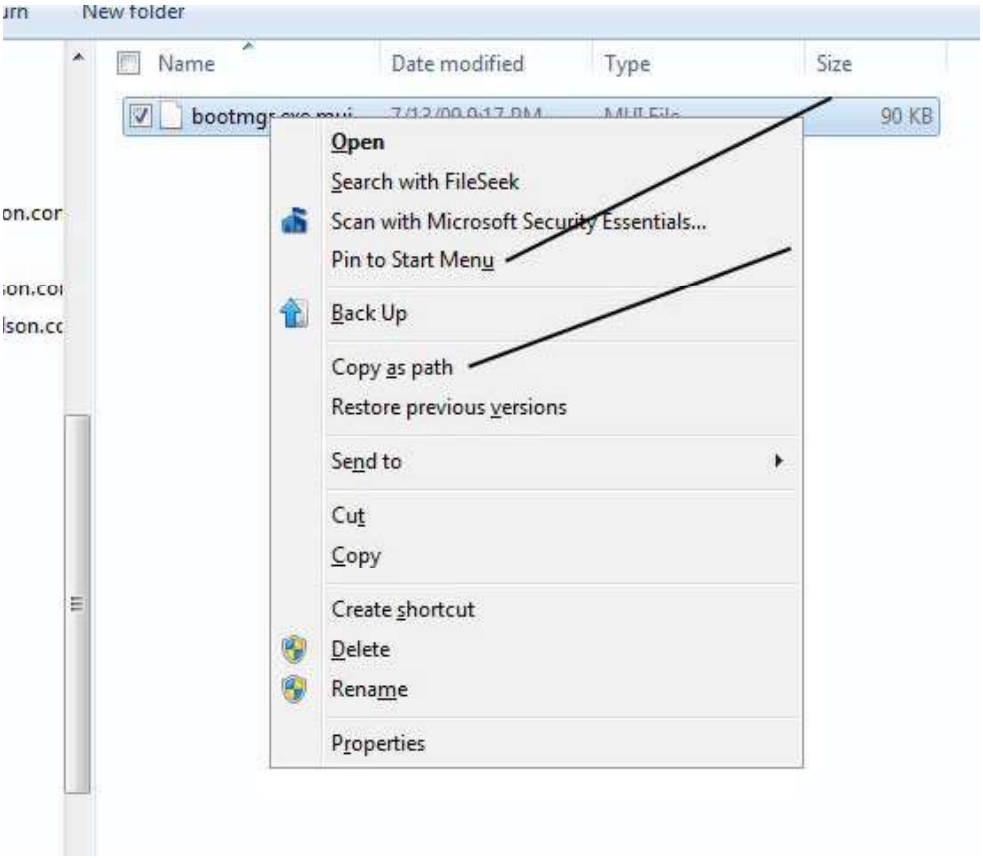
A Reminder

With all the excitement over the death of Osama bin Laden, I thought it appropriate to remind ourselves of why he was hunted down.

The image above is from a PowerPoint presentation found at the financial advice website http://www.cumber.com/ with exact URL http://www.cumber.com/content/special/aerial_photos.pps. When I did a search on both Bing and Google, I thought it would be trivial to produce many good images. That was not the case. There was much junk, little quality and more than one site attempting to induce me to click on a popup window to clean a supposed virus from my computer.

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
September 11, 2001 Images	http://www.cumber.com/content/special/aerial_photos.pps
Alan Friedman Averted Imagination	http://avertedimagination.com/main1.htm
Engadget Mobile	http://mobile.engadget.com/



Explorer.....Continued from page 4

And while I'm at it, the in-context menu in Windows Explorer is slightly different when you hold down the shift key and right-click on a file: Two items are added as indicated in the image on the left. The Copy as path is really useful. It puts the entire drive, path and file name as text onto the clipboard.

And if you Shift+right-click on a blank area in Windows Explorer, you get one with "Open Command Window Here". Less useful, but kind of interesting. See the image on the left on page 7.

You may get other variations on a

Explorer.....Continued on page 7



Comments.....Continued from page 1

and found a fellow named Don Patszch (obviously a misspelling) mentioned in the May 1989 newsletter who had four short articles in that issue. So he was a very active member.

When I joined in 1991, I recall his being interested in hardware items such as modems, on which he gave several SIGs and wrote several articles. Later he took a great interest in different operating systems, seeming to prefer anything other than Microsoft. First there was OS/2, and, when that disappeared, Apple, to be followed by Linux. At one time he appeared to have an in with IBM, managing to get a couple of free computers from them, possibly also the jacket he is wearing in the photo at the left. The photo was taken at the February 1996 meeting. I think the last meeting Don attended was the 2009 Holiday Party. He particularly enjoyed a meeting where there was food and wrote at least two articles about FACUG yearly meetings where he lauded the free meals.

As an aside, current Vice President Kevan Sheridan was mentioned in the 1990 issue and again in the 1981 issue, along with current members Merrill Friend and Roger Waters. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

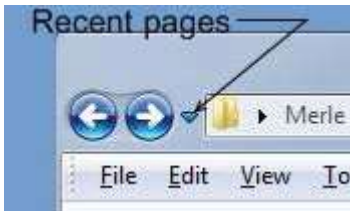
This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

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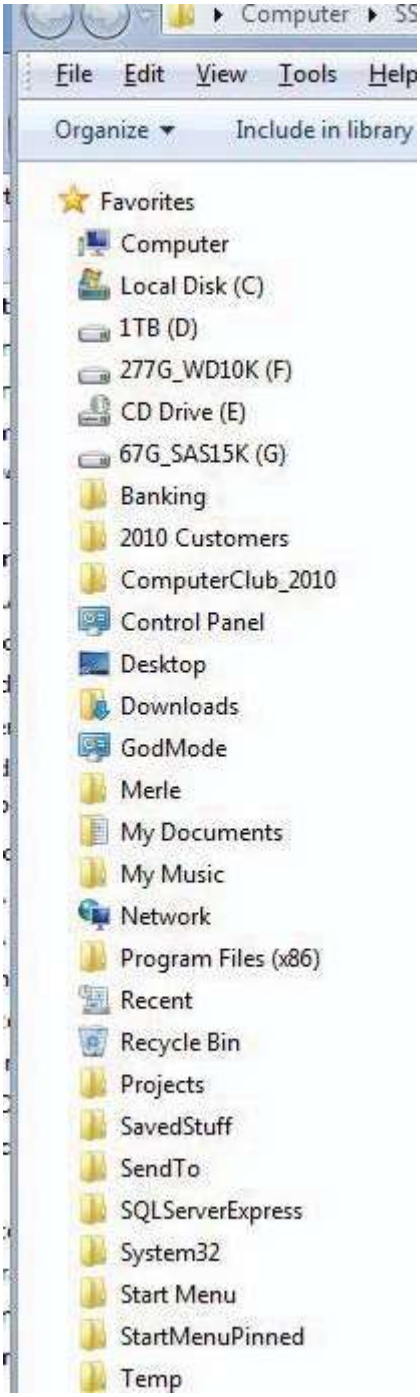
right-click, depending on the file type.

I also added a lot of items under Favorites (see image on far right), because I find the tree menu inadequate. It's not the entire tree, but it's 99% of all the places I go. This really works.

Also there are the Back and Forward buttons and the "Recent pages" button (see image below). The forward and back buttons do not traverse up and down the directory tree, but they have the history of the views of where you've been. As does the Recent pages button. You'll have to try the Recent pages button. It can be very useful. ◆







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First Class Mail

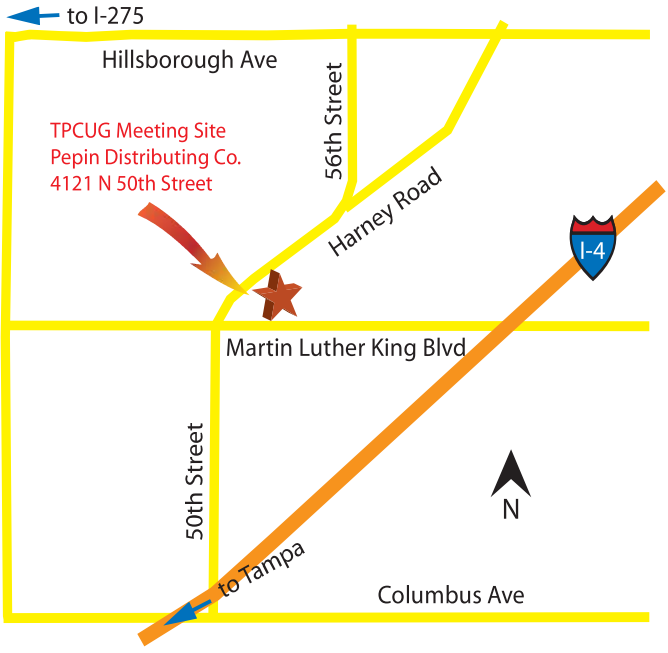
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Free.....Continued from page 3

Ubuntu 11.04. They run flawlessly. http://www.virtualbox.org/. There are versions for Linux and others, even "DOS/Windows 3.x".

7-Zip I guess you could argue (and I have many times) that Windows doesn't need a zip file manager. If you do need something for 7z, cab, gzip, gz, rar and many others, you can't go wrong with this. I prefer this over WinZip. It has a newer interface, and it's free, open source besides. http://7-zip.org/

CutePDF Writer All computer users need to save lots of printed stuff, especially invoices and receipts. There's no better way to do this than with a PDF printer. There are several free ones out there. I've settled on CutePDF Writer. http://www.cutepdf.com/Products/CutePDF/writer.asp ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 24 No. 6 June 2011

June in Tampa

Meeting

A Little Computing History by William LaMartin

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will lead a presentation on the past two decades of personal computing as seen through our club's newsletters. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

This month I am scheduled to do the presentation, and I thought a retrospective of the past 20 plus years of our user group and the PC industry from the perspective of our collection of newsletters would be of interest. I also hope to include some of our long-time members in the presentation and, if possible, have people who devoted a lot of time to the group but no longer attend meetings attend just this one to help us remember.

Our club was founded in 1984 as the Tampa IBM PC Users Group, which was later changed to the Tampa PC Users Group since there were then a lot more personal computers than just those made by IBM. The first formal newsletter, as best I can tell, was published in January of 1988. The earliest copy we have is from February 1988, where there is a misprint identifying it as Volume II, Issue 2. The volume number was corrected in subsequent months.

I have started going through the old newsletters looking for

Comments.....Continued on page 4

July Meeting: Creating a Website for a Wordpress Platform

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows operating systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob discussed several items: MSI i-Speeder, a simple network information tool; IE-9 installation; Microsoft Knowledge Base; and Microsoft Fix-it. He touched briefly on SlimDrivers, a product to scan your PC for missing, broken or out-of-date drivers.

This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM. TPCUG President John Witmer mentioned the FACUG Cruise, a reminder of membership dues and upcoming programs and asked for suggestions.

Our speaker this month was long-time member and current TPCUG Vice President, Kevan Sheridan. His topic was "Google Applications." Kevan is an experienced Google Docs and Google Applications user, having implemented "cloud computing" and cloud-shared documentation at his workplace.

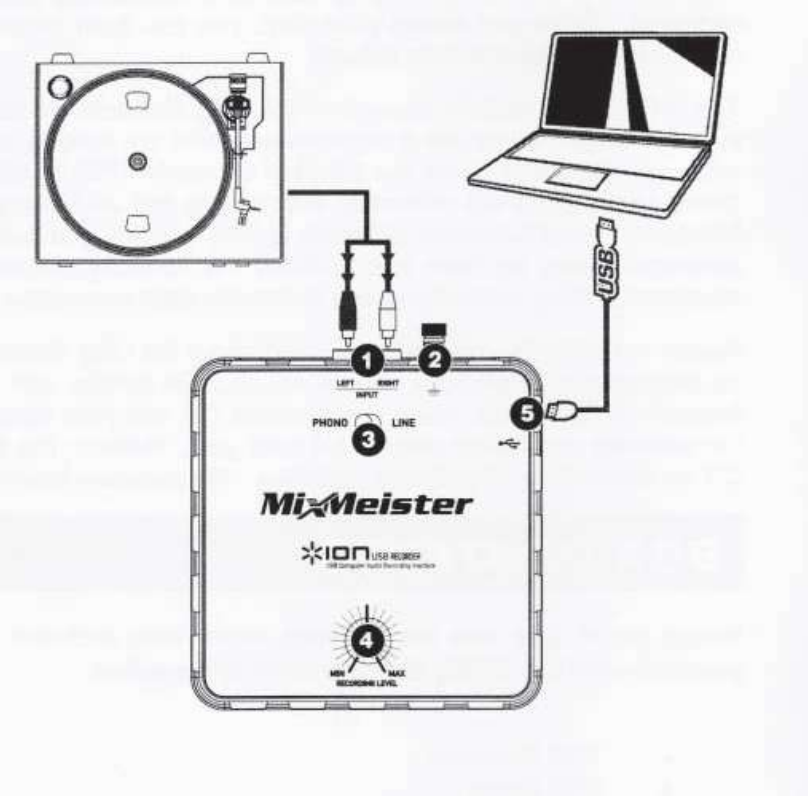
Kevan gave a quick demo on many things Google – as much as time would allow. He touched on email, calendars, documents and slideshow presentations. In Calendar, tabs, tasks, sign in and out of accounts. Google Apps for Business ($50/user/year), Google Apps Free and Enterprise Resource Planning. He touched briefly on creating a Google personal website.

Kevan gave a very enthusiastic and dynamic presentation that barely covered the many features of Google Applications. It was interesting and made the audience want more detail. The presentation concluded at 8:40 PM. ◆

ION Audio U Record USB Music Archive System

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

I have a large collection of records that dates back to the late 1940s. They consist mostly of "Big Band," Jazz, Country Western and Classical, with a sprinkling of other stuff that was popular from about 1940 forward. I have been thinking for some time about digitizing some of my favorites and some that might make good background music for my slide shows. I have a high quality turntable that is still in good condition, but I had heard several discussions about USB turntables and their ease of use so I took a look on Google. Much to my surprise, the first link at the top of the page was: "Don't Buy A USB Turntable - 8 Reasons against USB at dak.com. Use your PC Soundcard. Your turntable or ours." It opened with a beautiful ad and an audio that came on immediately explaining all of the many features, including the ability to copy from tape recorders and CD players. I was impressed and ready to order since the price ($77) was less than I had expected to pay for just the USB turntable. Thankfully, I realized that I didn't understand most of the miraculous things that could be accomplished by the Mixer Interface System, so I asked Merle Nicholson to look at it. In summary, he thought that the price was too high and that the system fixed some things that did not need fixing. If you buy their turntable, the price of the package is $237. He forwarded some options that he believed would do the job. I decided to purchase one of his recommendations, the ION Audio U Record USB Music Archive System, that costs just $40 and has the following features: http://www.ionaudio.com/products/details/u-record



- **Phono/line input records from a turntable, tape deck or CD player** As you can see from the illustration on the left, the recorder is simple to hookup and can accommodate practically all turntables, tape decks and CD players. You plug the RCA output plugs into the clearly-marked input RCA plugs on the recorder (1). If your turntable or tape deck has a ground wire, you attach it to the ground connection on the recorder (2). The Phono/Line switch (3) is set, depending on the output signal from your turntable or tape deck. Most old turntables output a weak signal known as a Phono-level, which needs to be amplified in order to be heard. In this case you set the toggle to "Phono." If your device outputs an audible signal, you toggle to "Line." The Recording Level Knob (4) is used to adjust the volume of the recording so that the audio level meters in the recording application screen shown below never hit the red. The "Plug and play USB connection" (5) gives you a quick connection with no drivers required
- **EZ Vinyl Converter software (PC) and EZ Audio Converter software (MAC)** I'll discuss only the PC version, but both versions are on the disc that is included. The software was easily and quickly installed. You are instructed to install "iTunes" before you start recording. The software will not work without iTunes. This worried me at first, but so far it has worked exceptionally well. You can move quickly and conveniently between iTunes and Windows. While installing iTunes, I got a pop-up recommending that I use the 64-bit version, and it furnished me the link, which installed the

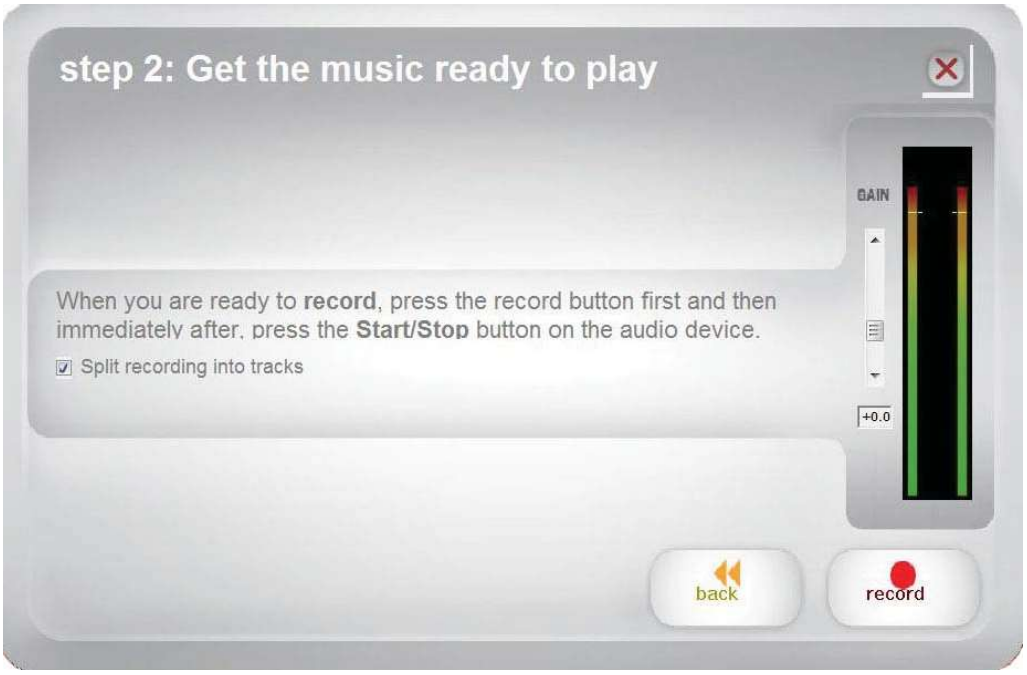
Recorder.....Continued on page 4

Recorder.....Continued from page 3

program without a problem. I found that the iTunes software makes it simple to burn music and MP3 CD's.

- **Audacity software records, edits and corrects** I haven't used the Audacity software, a freeware editor that is included on the installation disk. Merle indicated that he has used it for quite awhile, and he recommends it highly. There are many editors that are available, many of which are freeware, if you need more features.

As I mentioned, I've only used the system for a short time, but I have been impressed with the simplicity and convenience of recording from a turntable and a reel-to-reel tape deck. The ability to record from a tape deck has been especially rewarding. My family was stationed in Germany from 1961 – 1965. We had four children, aged from three to eleven, and two sets of grandparents back in Florida. The cost of long-distance calls between Germany and Mulberry was enough to make it impractical to use with any frequency. Both sets of grandparents bought small reel-to-reel tape recorders. The three-inch reels came in a mailing box, so we exchanged them frequently, and I have a pile of these tapes. The first that I recorded was Christmas of 1964 in Wiesbaden, and it came through crystal clear. That alone has been worth the price of the unit. ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 1

things of interest for the presentation. For 1988, there are two newsletters; 1989 has eight; and in 1990 there are 10. After that, there is pretty much one for every month with a few missing issues. All the newsletters from 1988 through November of 1995 had to be scanned. Subsequent ones were created as Acrobat documents from the originating programs, either Word, Publisher or InDesign. Obviously the scanned ones had to have OCR preformed on them to make them searchable. This allowed me to create an index in Acrobat that lets one search the entire collection of 262 newsletters for words or phrases.

As examples of using the index for searching, searches for the words below produced the results shown with the year indicating the earliest year of mention. With each search, you also get a list of newsletters containing the searched for word or phrase and the ability to click on the link and go to the location in the newsletter.

Pentium: 80 documents, 203 instances; 1992
OS/2: 111 documents, 679 instances; 1988
Windows: 250 documents, 5801 instances; 1989
Apple: 64 documents, 159 instances: 1989
IBM: 165 documents, 976 instances; 1988
Microsoft: 246 documents, 3148 instances; 1989

The early newsletters came mostly from a collection of Ed Buzza with the help of a collection from Roger Waters. All of these newsletters are at our web site. Additionally I plan to put them on a CD, along with the Acrobat-created index, so that you may search for interesting topics, or just browse them at your leisure. You will be surprised how far we have come since 1988.

In the early newsletters there was a lot of emphasis on the AUTOEXE.BAT file and other

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



High Water

This photo was taken on May 13, 2011, a few days before the Mississippi River crested in New Orleans. It looks as if an average wave would put the river over the top of the levee. You have Jackson Square in the background, with the St. Louis Cathedral behind that. Possibly the river is only three or four feet from over-topping here. However, the high crest predicted did not occur due to the opening of two spillways above New Orleans, which diverted a lot of the flow to the Gulf by various other routes.

This image is from the site http://www.nola.com

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Microsoft Answers	http://answers.microsoft.com/en-us
Epocrates Online	http://online.epocrates.com/
The Billion Prices Project @ MIT	http://bpp.mit.edu/

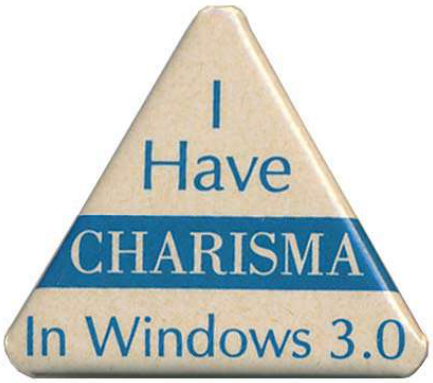
Comments.....Continued from page 4

things which modern computer users do not even know existed (a good thing, I think). Then there was all that time spent on getting our modems to connect to other computers over the phone lines. We needed a certain connection string to connect to one computer, say, at the library and another to connect to our own BBS. You will see Kevan Sheridan's name all over those early newsletters since he was the club's SYSOP – that is, the person who ran the club's Bulletin Board Service (BBS). Yes, at one time personal computer users did not have the Internet and instead relied on BBSs to communicate with other computer users and to post and receive information on topics of interest.

And do you know how much memory those early PCs had? Or the size of the early hard drives? What about the costs of the first flat-screen 15-inch monitors? The answers are all in those newsletters.

Then there are all the programs we used, first in DOS, then Windows 3.0, 3.1, Millennium, 95, etc. that we no longer use, or which no longer exist. You probably recall names such as WordPerfect and Lotus 1-2-3, but do you also recall vendor or program names such as Procomm Plus, Quarterdeck, Delrina, XTreeProGold, Ashton-Tate, Applause, Borland, Paradox. And the list could go on for quite some length. They are all mentioned in the old newsletters, along with information about how important these programs were and their somewhat expensive prices.

If you go to the display of COMDEX buttons at http://www.lamartin.com/ComdexButtons/index.htm, you will get a flavor of some of the vendors and software that were current then. Then-president Harvey Bruneau would attend COMDEX each year and bring back news, software and these buttons, which I have made into a display using Silverlight. For more, come to the meeting. ◆



My Windows Phone 7

By William LaMartin,Editor, Tampa PC UsersGroup
william@lamartin.com

I was beginning to feel like a dinosaur carrying around my almost three-year-old Windows Mobile 6.1 phone with everyone else sporting iPhones or the Android equivalent. I was waiting for a Win phone because that is the operating system I can most easily program. I had looked at programming the Android phones, but that was an alien environment. The Windows 7 phone became available at other carriers last Fall but didn't show up at Verizon, my carrier, until the end of May. It is supposedly a $200 phone, discounted by $50. However, on ordering online from the Verizon site, there was an additional $50 off with free overnight shipping. So I ordered before the required 4:30 in the afternoon for delivery the next day and received the phone via FedEx the next day.



Above is a photo I took of the phone showing about a third of the tiles on the main screen. The phone is an HTC Trophy, hence the large htc tile showing the current Tampa temperature. The flower photo on the Pictures tile is one of the photos I took with the phone's camera. I added a tile for each of my three email accounts. Most of the programs, however, are accessed via what appears in the photo to be the small white disk in the upper right. It is actually a white circle with an arrow inside.

Activating the phone was trivial. I dialed the required number and had only to input my Verizon Wireless account password, and I was finished in a couple of

Phone.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Yahoo! eGroup Reminder

By Kevan Sheridan, Vice President, Tampa PC Users Group
kevan@tpcug.org

The purpose of the TPCUG Yahoo! eGroup is to inform and promote communication among members of the Tampa PC Users Group. This is a great member benefit and the easiest way to stay in touch with other members during non-meeting days.

Joining the eGroup is simple: Use the e-mail address with which you wish to join the group to send an e-mail to: TPCUG-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Include your full name in the text section of this e-mail. You will receive a verification request that you reply to, then you are up and running.

Note: if you join with a Yahoo! email address, you get full access to the group site at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tpcug.

To post messages to the group, create an e-mail and address it to: tpcug@yahoogroups.com. Your message will be broadcast to everyone in the eGroup. ◆

Phone.....Continued from page 6

minutes. The phone was now ready to make calls, surf the web or download Apps to run. What it was not ready to do was email. Setting up my several email accounts was not problem. All that is needed is a user name, password and incoming and outgoing mail server addresses. But after that you would like to have your contacts and possibily your calendar, as you have in Outlook, on your computer. For Windows Mobile, I simply connected my the phone to my computer and the contacts and calendar were automatically synced. Not anymore.

Now for Win Phone 7 (and the Droid and iPhone) you have to sync with some online account. For my phone, I need to sync with Windows Live, which has both a contacts list and a calendar. But then the problem becomes: How to get my contacts and calendar in Outlook up to Windows Live. To do this, Microsoft has created a program called Outlook Companion. When you download and run it, a menu item appears in Outlook named Outlook Companion, along with an additional contact folder named “contacts in <your Windows Live user name>.” You then simply select all the contacts in your regular contacts folder, copy them and then past them into this newly-created contacts folder. Then by some miracle, these contacts will appear at Windows Live and, when your phone syncs with it, the same contacts will arrive in the People Hub of the phone. Your Outlook calendar is imported into the phone is a similar manner.

The only disadvantage of this method is that, if you add a new contact to your regular contact’s folder in Outlook, you then have to copy it and paste it into the Win Live one in Outlook so that it will eventually move up to Windows Live and then to your phone. Also, it appears that I now receive two notifications of the same calendar event in Outlook on my computer, since there are now two identical calendars there. Possibly there is a solution for this.

If you think the above is cumbersome and would not buy this phone for that reason, think on. For the situation is the same if you have an iPhone or a Droid.

Phone.....Continued on page 8

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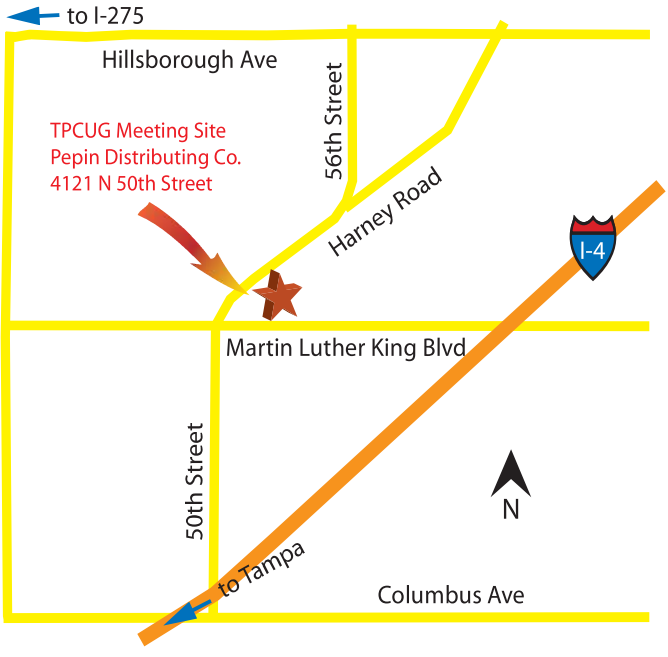
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Phone.....Continued from page 7

For the iPhone, you have to sync through iTunes, and, for the Droid, you have to do something similar using Gmail. The web is full of people having problems doing this. So it is probably equally a pain to do it with any one of these three phones.

I like the phone's interface, with my only complaint being that, on some built-in screens, some of the text is quite small. Right now, both the iPhone and the Droid have a few features that this phone doesn't have. However, a major operating system update will be rolled out in the Fall that should make them more equal. And I particularly like it because I already have installed three of the programs I have written, one of which I am thinking of placing on the Windows Phone Marketplace. Possibly I will even make enough to pay for the phone. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 24 No. 7 July 2011

July in Tampa

Meeting

Creating a Website for a Wordpress Platform by Michelle Burgess

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Michelle Burgess will tell us about creating a website for a Wordpress Platform. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Last month's presentation was mine, and I hope the group enjoyed our trip down memory lane where we revisited the group and personal computing's history through our newsletters since 1988.

I was surprised to learn that a few members had been in the group from the very first days of 1984 and 1985. I knew that Kevan Sheridan and Roger Waters had been there from the earliest days, but Ed Cowen and Gary Ennis also volunteered that they were in the group when it met downtown. In general, some members recalled items from the past that others of us had forgotten.

Those newsletters are online at our website as Adobe Acrobat documents. At future meeting, I will also be happy to provide to anyone interested, for the agreed-upon $5 donation to the group, a CD or DVD containing them that additionally has an index that may be searched using the free Adobe Acrobat reader.

Comments.....Continued on page 4

August Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob talked about Prey software.

Prey is a free, open source laptop-tracking software developed by Fork Ltd, that helps recover computers by tracing their location through the remote retrieval of information. The software is activated from the outside by using a URL as a checking method and phones home by sending a detailed report either to a centralized control panel or directly to the computer owner's mailbox. It's available for Windows, Linux, Mac OS X and Android. http://preyproject.com. This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM.

Our speaker this month was long-time member and newsletter editor, William LaMartin. William has spent a huge amount of his own time scanning all the back newsletters he has been able to find and publishing them to PDF files. He has compiled them and produced a CD that is available to anyone for a $5 donation to the group. Each newsletter can be downloaded from the website, but obtaining the CD from him is well worth it to avoid the time of downloading more than 200 files if you're inclined to have all of them. Additionally, the CD is searchable, of course.

William must have read an impressive number of newsletters to prepare for the presentation. He gave a timeline of events of the club and invited members present to recall details, people and locations. Several people were able to contribute memories and facts not otherwise known.

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

QR Codes

By Ron Weinberg, Member At Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Recently, I have been noticing small high density code squares appearing in magazine articles and catalogs. I found that they are QR Codes intended to be scanned by smart cell phones which then automatically insert a specific URL in your phone's browser. The related web page gives more detailed information about a particular product or subject.

QR codes (QR meaning Quick Response) were developed and widely adopted in Japan, spread to Europe and are now being found in the US and elsewhere. These two dimensional bar codes have multiple uses, but the most common is to store URLs and addresses.

I have had more than a passing interest in bar codes since my days in the retail industry when I was developing coded labels for small jewelry items. Some time ago, I wrote an article for the newsletter explaining and extolling bar codes for personal and business recordkeeping.

Since I knew little about these squares, I wanted to learn more, see what they were, and what they did.

BUT, I do not have a smart phone, neither iPhone, nor Android, not even a new Windows phone. I thought there must be a way to do this using a computer. The problem was how to get the code into the computer. Conventional bar code scanners are expensive and many cannot read QR code.

Fortunately, a method had already been found, using a web cam. I have an early generation Logitech VCAM-U1. This is a simple low resolution camera, but I thought I might see if it would work.

Many programs were available, but professional programs which had to be purchased seemed in excess of my requirements. Several free programs were found, and, after looking at three, I determined two to test.

1. The first was QRreader from densl.net. This required my computer to have Adobe Air as a prerequisite, which I did have.

2. The second was bcWebCam from QS QualitySoft GmbH in Germany.

Both work in a similar way in that a box appears on your screen into which you move the focused image of the QR code from the web cam, whereupon the program reads the code.

After several attempts to use QRreader trying different code squares, all attempts failed, none were read. Since I had to believe that the program probably did work or would not have been made available, I had to attribute the failure to my poor quality web cam.

bcWebCam worked perfectly every time! It had more features than QRreader. It can also read many additional types of bar codes. Although I mainly used the defaults, I did choose two options: To automatically save to the clipboard, and audible beep for successful scan.

The first screen that appears when you begin the program is an illustrated instruction set showing the few steps required to insert the scan result directly into a target document or browser. Since I chose to save the scan to the clipboard, I did not have to choose a target.

When you press START, a box appears into which you scan. bcWebCam remains in the foreground and the target, if you choose one, shows in the background. The resulting text from the read appears at the top of the box and is automatically inserted in the target wherever you have placed the cursor.

If you press STOP after the successful scan, the first instruction screen returns in German. You can close and restart the program to return to English

There are simple ways that anyone can generate and print their own QR codes but that is beyond the scope of this article.

QR Codes.....Continued on page 4

QR Codes.....Continued from page 3

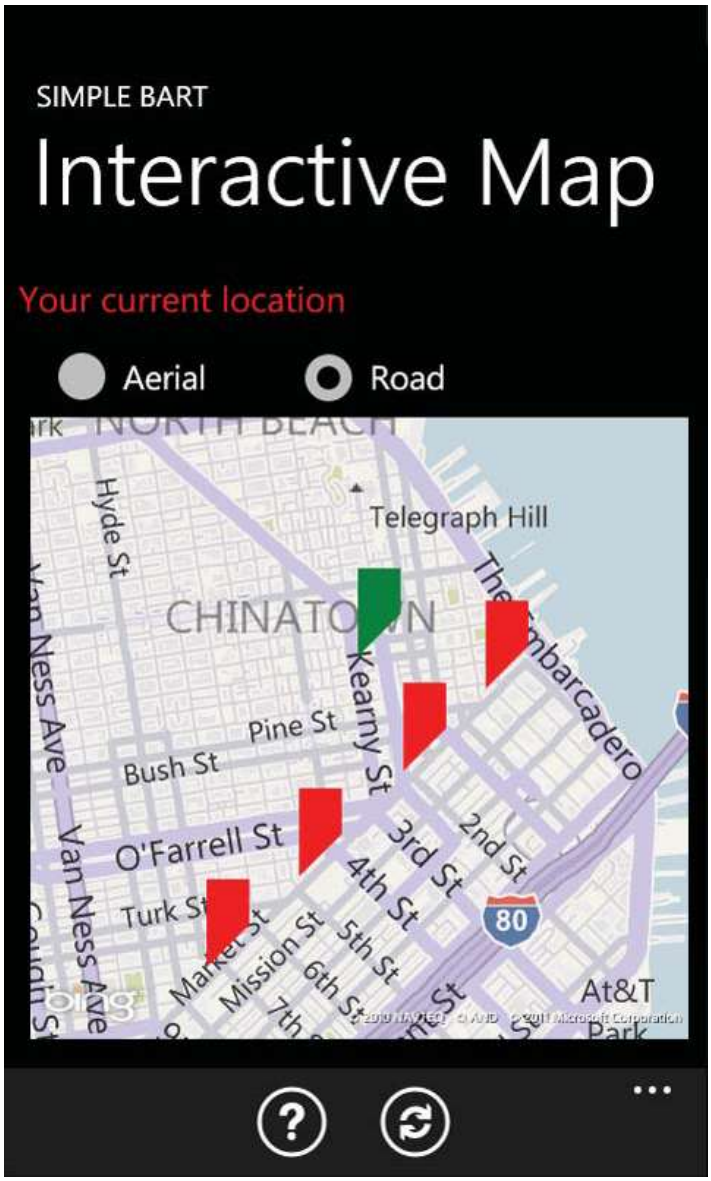
The example code shown here is actual code, created with "Qurify!" (qurify.com). Newsletter readers with appropriate phones should scan it in. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

This month, thanks to Ron Weinberg for his article about those new types of barcodes that appear almost to resemble a square containing lines making up a maze. Recently a friend at a car dealership gave me her business card that had one such code on it. One of the free apps I downloaded for my new Windows Phone 7 was supposed to decipher such codes. And it did, with the result being that it displayed her name, title, business address, phone number and email address. My question, then, is why do people write such applications for free. One possibility is that they make money from advertising that they display during the app, or they collect your location information (supposedly with your permission) to send off to a database for payment. Or they could actually just create such an app for practice or because they enjoy programming. I would love to find out how they get from a camera shot of the code to the deciphered content of the code. Perhaps I will look into it in the future.

Practice and love of programming are the reasons for the creation of two free apps that I have published to the Microsoft Windows Phone 7 Marketplace. Microsoft has strict guidelines that must be followed for apps to be placed at the marketplace. And it takes a bit of study to master the process. I write about this in an article in the newsletter beginning in the next column.

Hope to see you at the next meeting. ◆



Programming a Windows Phone 7

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I received my HTC Trophy Windows Phone 7 (WP7) around the first of June, when it became available at Verizon. Before that, I had already been working on programs for it, termed apps I suppose, using the phone emulator in Visual Studio 2010. The image above is a screen capture of the emulator running my application named Simple BART. What you see is a bing map centered on downtown San Francisco, with the nearby BART subway stations

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indicated in red and my (supposed) location in green. I temporarily modified the code to put my location in San Francisco for the sake of getting a realistic image to use at the Microsoft Phone Marketplace. With the correct code, the program would put the green marker at my house in Tampa, thousands of miles from San Francisco.

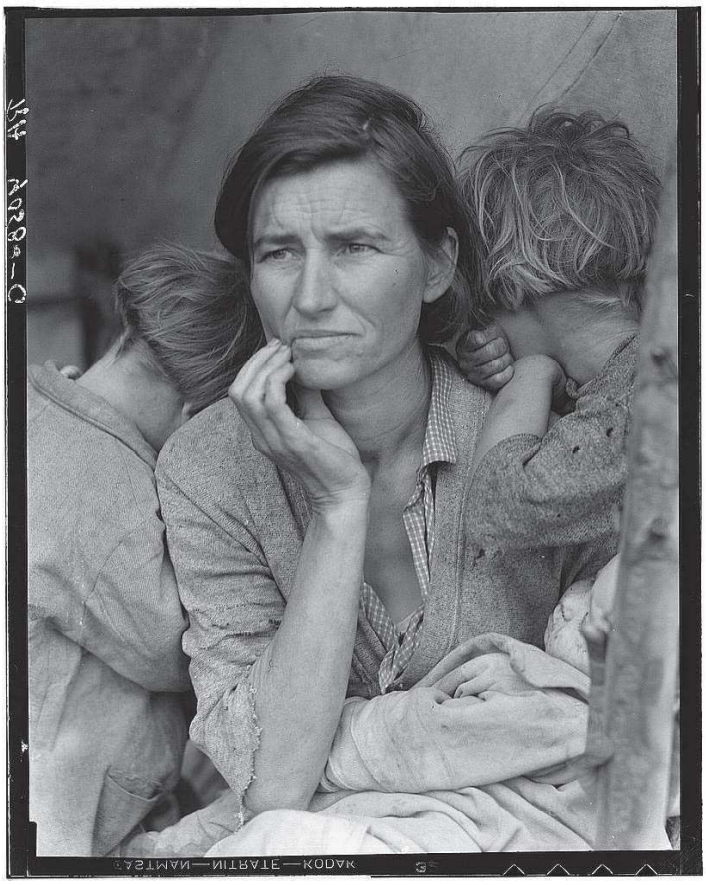
The BART System provides an open live feed of information about the 43 stations in the system: Their arrival times, destinations, direction of travel, track, etc. All the programmer has to do is to sign up with them and figure out the relatively easy SDK for retrieving the information. About the only restrictions I found were the prohibitions against using the BART logo and the official map. So I had to go out and find another map of the stations and the different colored tracks on the Internet. Wikipedia had one, and it was free to use. Isn't the Internet wonderful?!

So how does the app work? When you run it, you are first presented with a page stating that the application uses a data connection to retrieve the BART data and location services for receiving your map position. It is a Microsoft requirement that you notify the user of such things. You can choose to use or not use these features. If you don't use a data connection, the program is of no value since there will be no BART info; if you choose not to use location services, all you lose is your present location marked on the interactive bing map.

When you click the Continue button on the opening page, you are presented with a scrollable list of all 43 stations in the system. A click on any one will then provide you with either a detailed or brief (your

Phone.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Mother of seven children
Age thirty-two

This very famous photo taken by Dorothea Lang in 1936 is from the Library of Congress Photo Stream at flickr, http://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/, which now contains 13,481 historic photos. If you would like a high quality image, you can follow the "Persistent URL" link on any photo's page to download a better quality image such as the 55 MB 6849x8539 tiff version of the one above.

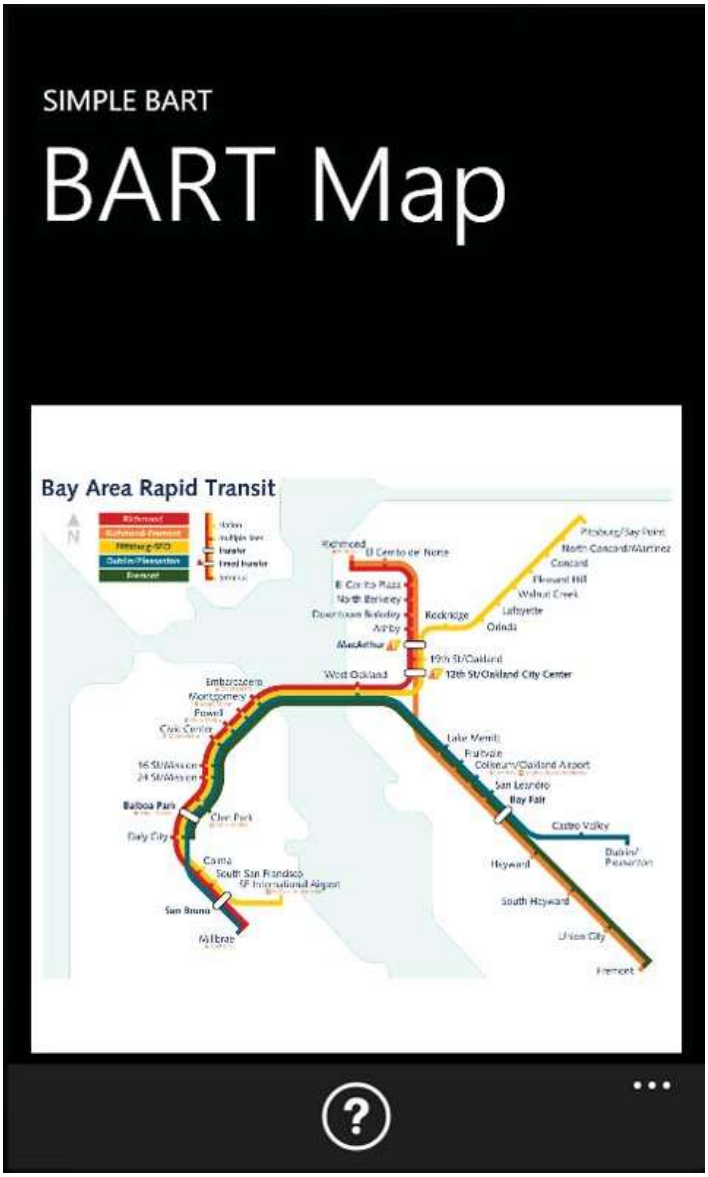
July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Retro Junk Hey I remember that	http://www.retrojunk.com/
Cooks.com - Recipe Search and More	http://www.cooks.com/
Mapping the 2010 U.S. Census - NYTimes.com	http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/map
College Navigator	http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/

Phone.....Continued from page 5

choice) list of incoming trains and details about them and their destinations.

There are probably at least half-a-dozen BART apps at the Marketplace, most free, but a couple for pay. I wrote a preliminary version of mine long before I had an actual phone in hand or had even looked at the Marketplace. It was just something I could program as practice for retrieving data from the Internet, and I could test the program on the emulator until I actually got a phone. There are a number of things, though, that cannot be tested on the emulator. One is changing the size of what you are viewing by using finger gestures. That is something I wanted to do for the system map pictured below. Another is programming and testing that had to wait until I had a physical phone.



For those going to San Francisco who have a WP7, you may download the program from the Marketplace at the link: http://social.zune.net/redirect?type=phoneApp&id=6f2c84ed-7a98-e011-986b-78e7d1fa76f8. Or go to the Marketplace and search for Simple BART.

Around June 20, I was told that if I had two apps registered with the Marketplace by June 30 I would receive a refund on the $99 I paid to register as a WP7 developer. The question then was, could I, in a little more than a week, prepare an app and get it published to the Marketplace. Based on my first submission, at present it takes three to four business days for an app to go through testing at the Marketplace, and then it may well be rejected for not meeting all of Microsoft's guidelines. My BART app was initially rejected because I failed two requirements on my first submission.

I looked over the apps I had already written and saw none that I wanted to submit; some because I thought they would be of no interest and others because I hoped to eventually submit them as paid apps. I decided to write something fairly simple that had been of use to me in the past: Calculating the volume of liquid in a cylindrical tank lying horizontally, based on the depth of the liquid in the tank. If you have ever owned a fuel tank of any kind, then you know the value of such information. To make the app more interesting, I added three more tank configurations as pictured on page 7. Since all these images are in color, you will have a much better experience if you look at them in the newsletter on the website.

A click on a tank type takes to you to another screen where you then enter the appropriate dimensions of the tank along with the depth of the liquid, click on the Calculate button, and a scrollable list of volumes is returned for the various possible depths. You may use either US or metric measurements.

Luckily, this app, Simple Volume, was published to the Marketplace on my first submission. The URL to the free download is http://social.zune.net/redire

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Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

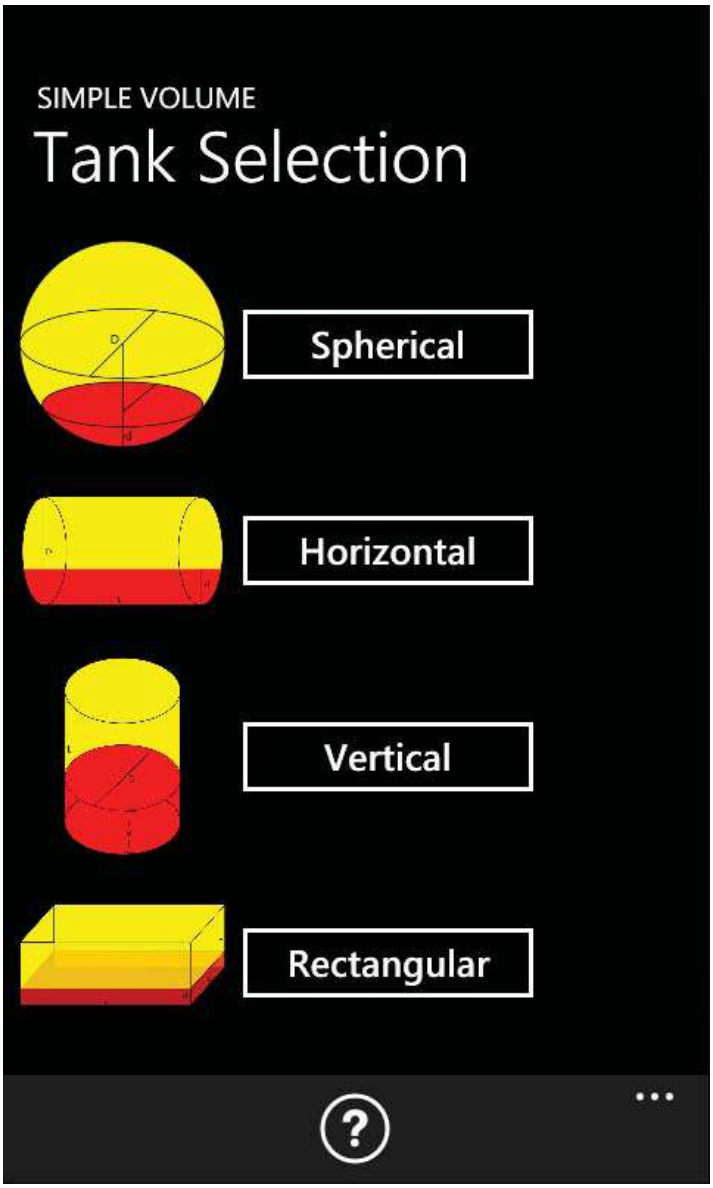
Phone.....Continued from page 6

ct?type=phoneApp&id=1a6c32e7-459c-e011-986b-78e7d1fa76f8. Or you may search for Simple Volume at the Marketplace.

Now, with two practice apps under my belt, I am ready to see if I can create a paid one that will get some attention. I have an idea and have it far enough along that I find it useful to have on my phone. In looking at the Marketplace, I see that there are other apps that supposedly do the same sort of thing. But looking at the descriptions and screen shots, I see that they don't really do what mine does. So I think there is an opening for mine. My problem will be in getting people to notice it and then to think it is worth paying $.99 for instead of using one of the free ones that purport to do the same thing but which really are very limited.

It is clear that I will need to offer a free or trial version with somewhat limited functionality to make people want the very expensive $.99 version. However, it is not clear to me if there is much money to be made with these phone apps due to your app getting lost in all the clutter at the Marketplace,

I recall one fellow in an online forum for WP7 app developers who also developed iPhone apps. He said that in the beginning of the iPhone his first paid app garnered thousands of dollars, and he thought he was on the way to something. So he spent more than 500 hours developing a second iPhone app, which he thought much better than the first. But after he put it at the marketplace, almost no one bought it--not even the free trial version--most probably because they didn't notice it among the, at that time, more than 200,000 competing apps (now more than 500,000). I suppose the secret is getting Apple to feature the app for a few



days. But how does one do that?

I have met one fellow who has a golfing app at all three marketplaces: Apple, Android and Windows, and he seems to be making a success of it. However, it is a full time job for him. I don't know if he was doing

Phone.....Continued on page 8

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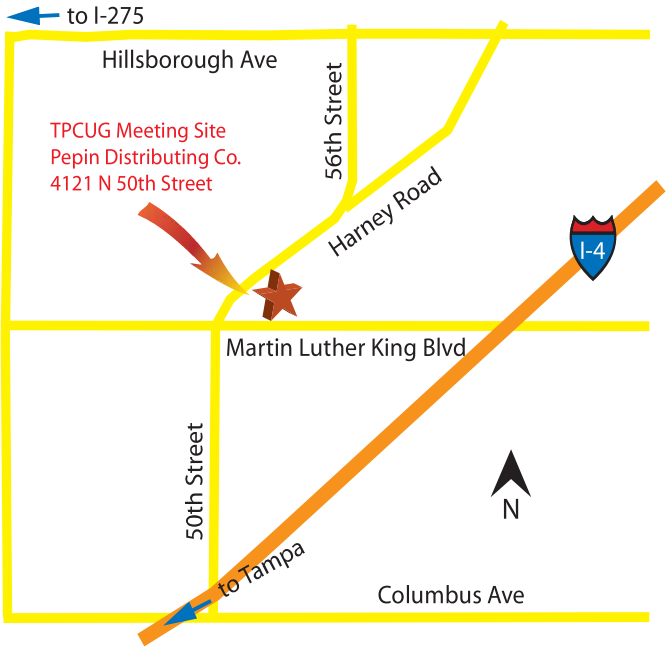
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

MInutes.....Continued from page 2

William showed a brief history of personal computers, Apple II and Mac, Commodore and IBM PC, and recalled the meaning and origin of "PC clone."

William gave a very interesting and dynamic presentation that only partly covered the subjects of the history of the club and the relationship to earlier computing. For complete coverage, we would need several meetings. ◆



Phone.....Continued from page 7

any marketing, but I would guess so. Such success stories notwithstanding, my guess is that less than one percent of app developers are actually making any income of consequence from their apps. Of course, that doesn't include programmers who are paid by major corporations such as Bank America to create apps for their businesses. So, go out and create apps because you enjoy it, but don't expect to get rich. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org





Vol. 24 No. 8 August 2011

August in Tampa

Meeting

Microsoft Office 365
by
Blain Barton
from Microsoft

Wednesday, August 10, 2011

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft will tell us about Microsoft Office 365. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

TPCUG Forum

We have a new forum at the TPCUG site, http://www.linux.tpcug.org/forums/, where you may post or answer questions. Being the webmaster, I set up the forum at the site and then turned it over to Merle Nicholson to configure and manage, since he had volunteered to be the forum manager. Merle has an article in this month's newsletter going into detail on how to use the forum. I encourage the members to sign up and use this new item.

Our web site is hosted on a Windows 2008 server. Additionally the hosting company also provides for free an additional Linux sub-site hosted on an Apache server, with whatever space it uses being subtracted from the space available on the Windows server, of which we have more than we could ever use. I had never been interested in the Linux sub-site until I looked into finding free forum (also called bulletin board) software. There didn't seem to be any for a Windows server. Although I could have written a very basic program myself, I wasn't about to take on that project. I did a bit of research and found that there were nu-

Comments.....Continued on page 5

September Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob briefly mentioned Prey software, one of the subjects of last month's meeting.

Arthur Williams described a problem with his PC sound; it was discussed for a while and not resolved. Bob introduced the TPCUG Forum to the membership at http://www.tpcug.org. This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM.

Our speaker this month was member Michele Burgess, who gave a very interesting talk and demonstration on wordpress.com and wordpress.org, the open source blog and website creation organizations.

Michele demonstrated the building of a web-based, template-driven website builder and blog site, all supplied free (the .org site is self-hosted). She demonstrated and addressed security concerns and how to protect against spam and keep bots off your site.

WordPress is software you download to your PC to create a website or blog. It claims to have thousands of plugins and themes available to transform your site into anything you can imagine. WordPress started out as a blogging system but has since evolved into a full content management system. As much information as you can possibly need is available at the website: http://www.wordpress.org.

Michele's presentation was well organized and very comprehensive. Since Michele is an active user, she was able to give us very helpful instructions based on her experience. She gave an interesting and useful look into a world of quality web and blog publishing. ◆

Kinect without the XBOX

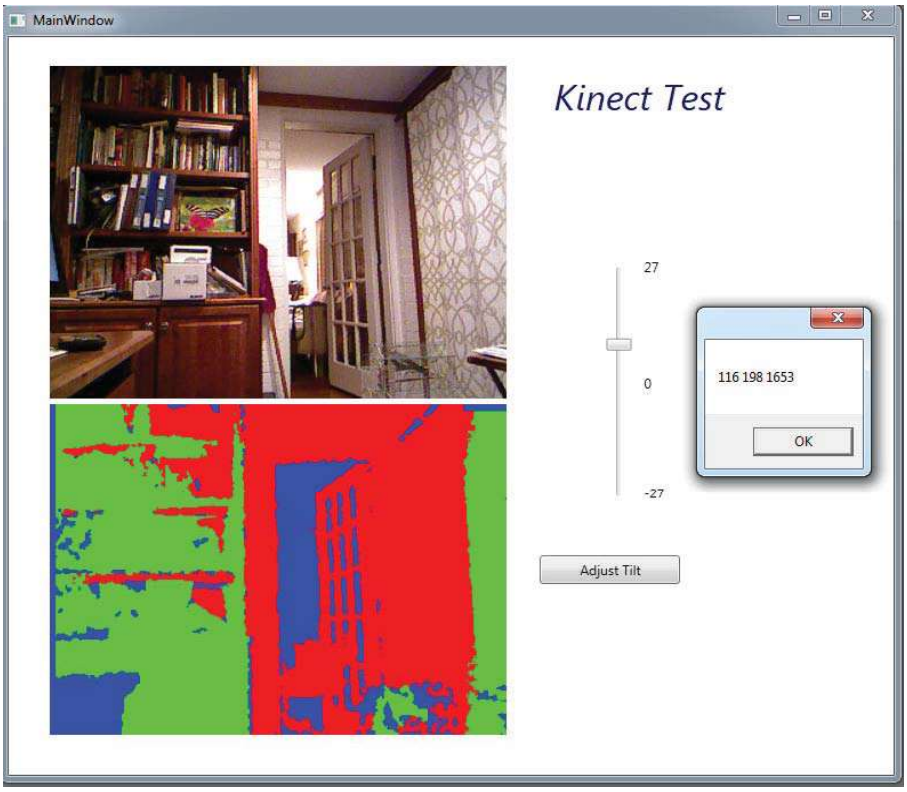
By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I don't own an XBOX and have only seen a Kinect device connected to an XBOX on the Internet. The Kinect allows someone playing a game on the XBOX to interface with it by using body motions, such as hand or leg movements. I am not a game player, so I had no interest in the Kinect – until recently when I heard that Microsoft had released a beta version of the Kinect for Windows SDK. That meant that a programmer could now program the Kinect using Visual Studio.



Was I interested in writing a game? No, at least not at the moment. My interest came from the Kinect being a stereo camera that can provide depth and other spatial information. I have worked with a stereo camera that costs around $3,000, using its programming interface to find three dimensional information about objects in its view. The Kinect, at $150, offered a much cheaper alternative.

The image below is a screen capture of a program I wrote for the Kinect that displays an RBG image in the top frame, a color-coded distance image in the lower frame and a slider to adjust the camera's tilt. The message box that is displayed in the image below is showing the results of a mouse click on the box sitting on the bookcase. The first two numbers are the pixel coordinates of the point clicked; the last number, 1653, is the distance from the Kinect to the box, 1653 millimeters. And when measured with a tape, that distance proved to be right on the money. However, clicking the mouse in other locations sometimes produced distances that were obviously quite a bit off. By the way, the working range for the device to determine distances is from around four to 11.5 feet. This is not a very wide range; the expensive stereo camera I dealt with had a range of more than 30 feet.



The Kinect SDK was released in the middle of June. I started working with it a week or so later but then stopped to return to programming the Windows 7 phone. So I didn't get all that much done. In the project I mentioned, where you see the pixel location at 116,198 of a 320 x 240 pixel image in the message box in the screen capture on this page, I would like to replace the pixel coordinates with actual distance coordinates in millimeters measured from the center of the image. That way, I could use the camera to do such things as remotely measure the area of objects, or even estimate volumes if the object was positioned properly. This was the sort of things I was dong with the more expensive camera.

In looking at the data I receive using the camera, it appears that as you increase the size of the image, say, from 320 x

Kinect.....Continued on page 4

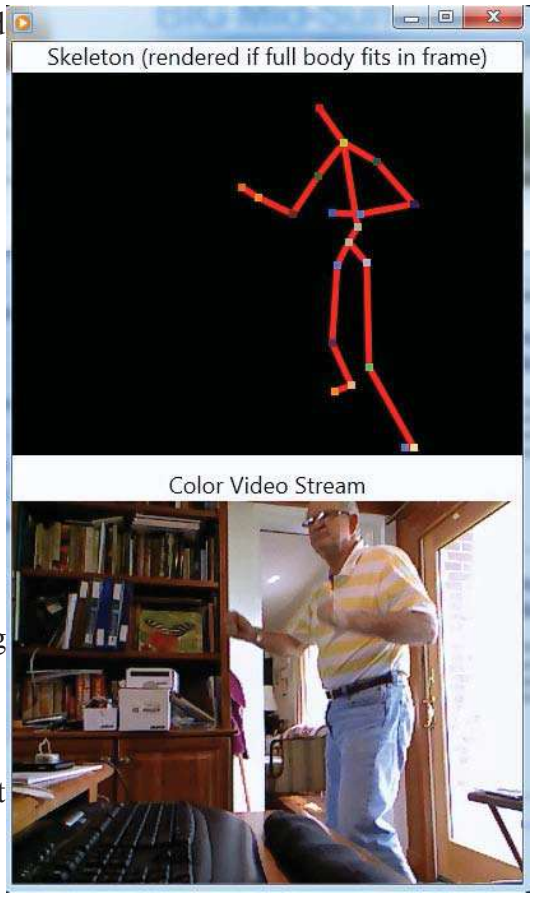
Kinect.....Continued from page 3

240 pixels to 640 x 480 pixels, more of the points do not have valid distance data. And I assume that this would also be the case for spatial data in the other two planes (the x-y coordinates if z is the distance coordinates).



This SDK is beta, and I believe when the release version is available, more features will be available, but I doubt the range will be increased past 11.5 feet, which is a bit of a downer for me.

With the SDK they provide some examples of what can be done. As opposed to my interest in finding distances, what is of most interest to Microsoft and other programmers is leveraging the Kinect's ability to recognize the human body and follow its movements. In one example, they have a game called the shape game, where you stand before the Kinect and look at a skeletal version of yourself on the computer screen with all sorts of shapes (balls, triangles, etc.) falling around you. The object of the game is for you to use your hands, feet, head or any part of your body to make contact with and deflect these virtual shapes. The image above is a screen capture of me playing this game. In the upper right-hand corner is an actual image of me and below that is my skeletal representation. You will note that the skeleton is positioned exactly the same as the person in the actual image. I think I have just gotten five points from bouncing something off my head. The game is actually a bit of fun and not bad exercise. You do have to be careful kicking at the virtual objects since there are actually real objects in the room you can come into contact with.



Another sample allows you to make all sorts of movements and see them instantly displayed as a skeletal view. A screen capture of that is in the upper right of this page. Note how the software picked up my arm positions perfectly.

I should comment that these are not actually screen captures in the usual sense. Think about it. How could I do a screen capture by pressing the PrtScn key while I was a distance from the computer? What actually occurred was that I had running on the computer a program called Microsoft Expression Encoder Screen Capture, part of the Microsoft Expression 4 suite, that will record whatever activity is occurring on a selected portion of your screen and create a video file of it. That gave me a video file which, while being played, I could do a PrtScn for to capture a single image to use in the newsletter.

Kinect.....Continued on page 7

Internet Picture of the Month



Tampa: From Paul B Kamp's photostream at http://www.flickr.com/photos/21732433@N07/page4/

Comments.....Continued from page 1

merous ones written for Linux. With this knowledge, I took a close look at what was available at our hosting company for the Linux sub-sites and found that there was a bulletin board called phpBB 3 available.

To add the bulletin board, all I had to do was click on a link, and the installation process began. When it was finished, I marveled at the complexity of what had been created. I could never have created something like this. For example, it created a MySQL database with 62 tables to manage all aspects of the content and appearance of the forum. Once the forum was created, I did a little configuration, such as adding the world famous TPCUG dancing palm tree as a logo, and set up the ability of the forum to send email messages for whatever purpose the forum administrator, Merle Nicholson, should desire. Merle then took over and has been further configuring things and adding features, as described in his article on page 6.

Apple beats USA

As we all know, our federal government recently had a bit of a to do about being allowed to borrow more money. And if Congress didn't OK raising the limit on how much the government could borrow, the country would run out of money to spend (or give away) on around August 2. Well, someone sent me a link to a CNN article, http://www.cnn.com/2011/

Comments.....Continued on page 8

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
eReplacementParts - Repari Parts for major brands	http://www.ereplacementparts.com/
RepRapWiki - 3D Printer	http://www.reprap.org/wiki/Main_Page
Money in Politics	http://www.opensecrets.org/
Angry Birds Chrome	http://chrome.angrybirds.com/

New TPCUG web site feature: TPCUG Forum

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

We have added a forum for the membership to post questions and answers, tips and just to document interesting resources and other things. It's free, it's open to everyone to read and post most anything computer-related that interests you. Take a look at it right away and see what ideas pop into your mind. It's at our club website, http://www.tpcug.org. Look at the menu on the left, and you'll see "TPCUG Forum." When you get there, make a shortcut, or add it to your favorites.

The purpose is limited to the mission of the club. We have deleted several posts that are not on subjects related to the club, and we will continue to do so. It's surprising to me that the forum has been found by foreign commercial interests, and I've had to delete a half dozen posts and deleted the users' accounts. At least it's not difficult.

To post subjects, you must first join the forum - "Register". You declare a username and password and supply a valid email address. Also, there is a code to type in that is a random character and number combination. But – you're not a forum member yet. You must then wait for just a few seconds for the arrival of an email from the forum. In the email is a link that you select to confirm the registration. More about this process later.

So far, there are four "boards" or forums. Under each board are topics, and under each topic are posts, or "replies" to each topic.

A forum is an overall collection of topics. You, as a registered forum member, can create new topics under any of the existing forums. So far, the three existing forums are "General TPCUG topics," "Windows 7 and Vista (64- and 32-bit versions)" and "Windows XP". I'll add new forums when it's apparent that they're needed. Feel free to post suggestions.

There's a top level forum, "Guidelines and Suggestions," that is there just to provide brief instructions, and the other three are open to new topics and replies to those topics.

So say you are having a problem with a rogue antivirus and need some help with it. Go to the forum "General TPCUG topics" and create a new topic. This is a one-liner where you state the topic of discussion. Name it, say, "Need help with malware." After it's created, post the first reply, and give it a full description of what you're experiencing, with screen capture or camera pictures, if you have them, and details about the computer system. The more descriptive you can get the easier it is to help you. There are several people who are currently monitoring the posts, and, hopefully, you'll get some help from some club member. You will be notified by email when other replies are posted to this topic. There is a check box that determines this. It's checked by default to get the email notice, and you have to clear it if you don't want to be notified.

The registered user can:

- Post new topics
- Reply to topics
- Edit your posts
- Delete your posts
- Post attachments

So far, under General TPCUG topics, we have:

- Best Software I'm using and recommend
- Hack Cell Phone
- Microsoft now has a bootable antivirus
- Best free software list

There are three topics under Windows 7 & Vista

- Create a bootable flashdrive for WIndows 7 installation disk
- IE 9 and Helvetica
- Set my computer to auto log on to my account

When you get used to the forum, it's really easy to jump around to areas of interest. There's a good text search and controls to display and sort topics, for

Forum.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Forum.....Continued from page 6

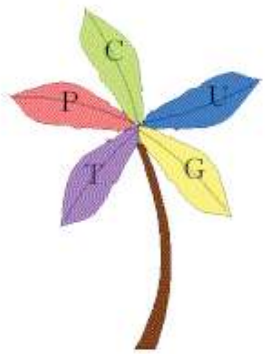
when it gets large enough. So far it's pretty small, but we have hopes that it will become second nature for the club members to log on and see what's new.

About the registration process

The username and password are necessary to be able to identify you and to keep track of your own posts. You have the right to edit or delete your own posts, and the registration process is the only way to do that.

When you register, you need an email address. This is pretty much necessary to determine that you are a real person – not a computer – and are willing to give out the address and have a sufficient level of interest in the forum to return to post your first topic. Many do not click on the link in the email – and they are deleted.

It's about the same situation as when you have to type in a code at registration that is presented to you as a graphic. The idea is that a machine is unlikely to be able to figure out the code, requiring a real person. This is expected to filter out the automated systems that post advertising, or that use the forum to post links to malware. ◆



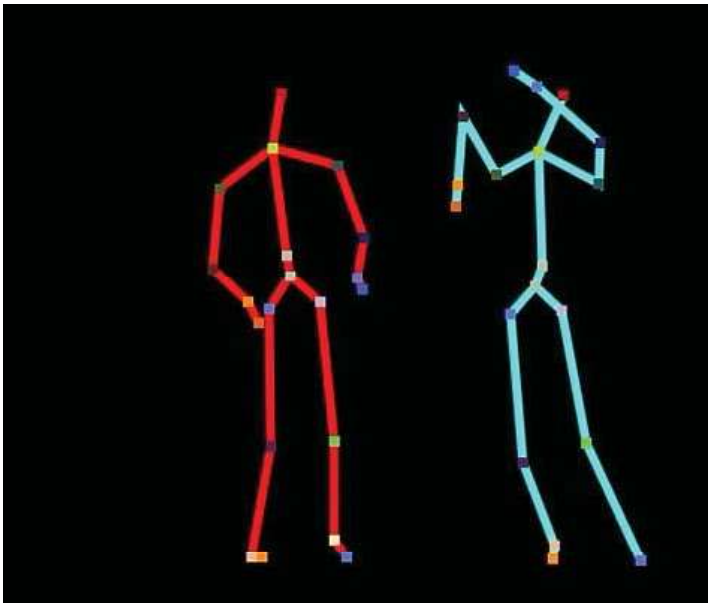
Kinect.....Continued from page 4

The skeletal stuff works with more than one person. The example provided will track up to two people moving about in front of the Kinect, and I believe that it is possible to actually track several more. Below is a screen capture on the computer of two people dancing in front of the Kinect.

After doing only a little work with this, I can see how one could write a game, say a handball game, where a single player would hit a ball that was bounced off a wall. All of this following the applicable laws of physics. And I believe that it would be possible to present your skeletal figure with some clothing. But all of that is for the future when I have time. Right now, I have other things that need my attention.

If anyone is interested, the SDK may be downloaded

Kinect.....Continued on page 8



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First Class Mail

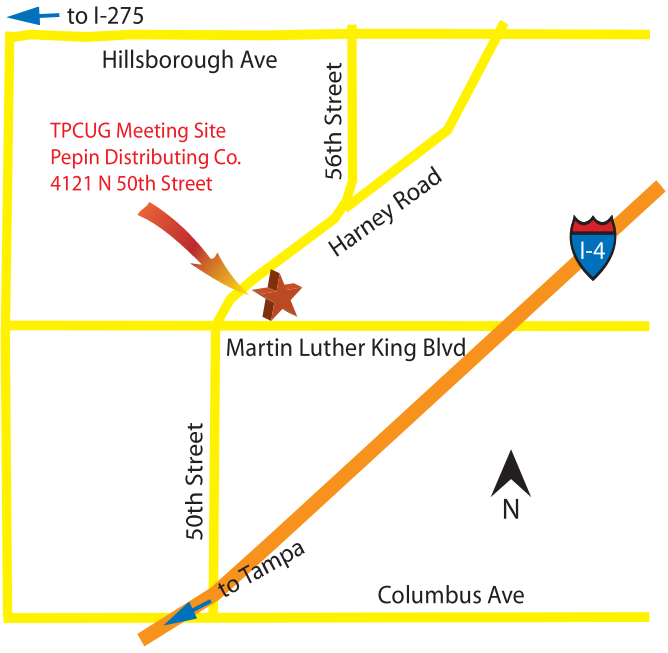
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Kinect.....Continued from page 7

from http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/redmond/projects/kinectsdk/default.aspx. You need to have Visual Studio 10 and Windows 7 and have purchased a Kinect, which you may do from the Microsoft Store, http://www.microsoftstore.com/store/msstore/DisplayHomePage. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 5

TECH/innovation/07/29/apple.cash.government/index.html?hpt=te_bn1, the headline of which was: *Apple now has more cash than the U. S. government*. On that day, the government had an operating cash balance of $73.8 billion; Apple had a total of $76.2 billion in cash and marketable securities. And I suspect that, if Congress hadn't raised the limit, on or around August 3 the TPCUG would have had more cash on hand than our federal government. Now that is a scary thought. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 24 No. 9 September 2011

September in Tampa

Meeting

Windows 7 Backup
by
Bob LaFave

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Our September presenter is Bob LaFave, who will cover backing up your Windows 7 computer with Windows 7 Backup. Also, as usual, he will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

TPCUG Forum

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, we have a new forum at the TPCUG site where you may post or answer questions. The forum has received little use, with only a handful of members logging on and posting or answering messages. However, a number of the existing posts have been viewed more than 50 times. Unfortunately, we are having a problem with SPAM. Before writing this, I checked the forum, and there were four such postings arriving on Sept. 5 and Sept. 6 with the following titles:

- download comedy movies
- Htc touch pro 2
- karen millen dresses
- Quick question about number one treatment for acne

It is difficult to understand anyone going to the trouble that you have to go through to be able to post to the forum. To be able to post, they would have to: Press the register button; give a user name, email address, password; then read and type in the

Comments.....Continued on page 5

October Meeting: Steve Singer concerning the latest hardware

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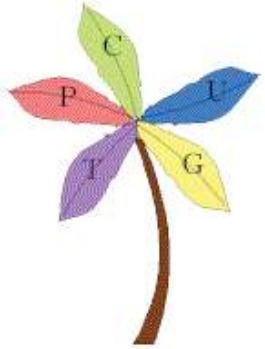
Minutes of the August Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. During this session, a member's printing problems were discussed, as well as expiration dates of files, and Bob discussed video file conversion.

This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM.

Our speaker this month was Blain Barton, Microsoft Evangelist, who kindly has given us an interesting and informative presentation each year for several years now. This presentation was on Microsoft Cloud Computing, coinciding with the introduction of Microsoft's Office 365, and touched upon the corporate data center needs first, then the consumer side with SkyDrive, Office Web Apps and Microsoft Live Essentials. Blain was well-prepared with an extensive slideshow – stored in the cloud, of course, and using web editing tools – and explained what needs to be in the cloud and what does not. Many thanks go to Blain for his usual excellent presentation. ◆



Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX5V Part Two

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@msn.com

In the September 2010 newsletter, I wrote an article describing the many features of the Sony DSC-HX5V Digital Camera that I had recently purchased. I ignored the fact that there is no viewfinder and that the camera probably would have a high learning curve due to its many features and the fact that the rest of my digital cameras have all been Canons. I reported that I had quickly learned that even a high-tech screen is no substitute for a good viewfinder. I have also since learned that, for me at least, the camera does have a high learning curve.

The features that most influenced me to purchase the camera were:

1. The 10.2 megapixel Exmor R CMOS image sensor, which was reported to have exceptional low-light sensitivity with improved image clarity and drastically reduced grain.
2. A 10x (equivalent to a 25-250mm lens for a35mm film camera) professional-quality optical zoom G-Lens (the G lens is used in Sony's top-of-the-line SLR cameras).
3. An integrated GPS receiver and compass to record the location and direction of every shot you take, and it lets you view your images on a map. I will try to demonstrate the success or lack of success that I have had with some of the more futuristic features.

Intelligent Sweep Panorama Mode for taking panoramas: Most high-end cameras now have the ability to produce a panorama. It usually involves using a series of pictures that you take of the area that you want to be included in your panorama. It is necessary that you take the pictures with sufficient overlap so that a "stitching program" can recognize common points on the photos where they can be joined. It is also best if you use a tripod in order to prevent straying from the track of the panorama. You cannot be sure that your subject will allow stitching until you try it with the program because some subjects don't work (such as all trees or similar backgrounds). These stitching programs are on your computer, not contained in the camera. They are often a part of software programs included with your camera or as a part of image-editing programs.

The big differences between the above procedures and with the Intelligent Sweep Panorama Mode in this camera are: (1.) You don't have to take 3, 4, 7 or more photos, you only take one. You depress the shutter and sweep the area to be included in the panorama. There is a limit to the maximum length of the track, but I believe that it is generous enough for most occasions and you have a choice of two sizes: The Standard size, Horizontal: 4912×1080, or the Wide Size, Horizontal: 7152×1080. (2.) You probably will be happy with the results from a hand-held sweep. (3.) All of the stitching is done within the camera. (4.) Processing is rapid and provides you with an image for review. It takes less than 15 seconds from the time you press the shutter button until you see the completed panorama on your screen. (5.) Your first view of the shot is a narrow strip across the LCD screen, but one touch of the control button switches to an image that fills the screen and automatically pans the full length of the panorama, giving you the same quality review that you get with your other pictures. (6) You know within 15

Camera .....Continued on page 4



Camera.....Continued from page 3

seconds whether or not the scene is a good candidate for a panorama shot. An example of a panorama taken with this camera is shown at the bottom of page 3.

Anti-Motion Blur Mode: This is suitable for indoor shots, without using the flash, to reduce the subject blur. A burst of six shots are taken (the camera is capable of up to 10 frames per second), and image processing is applied to reduce subject blur and noise. The pictures below were taken in a darkened scene. The top one (extremely dark) was taken with a Canon SLR camera at ISO 800, 1/50TH of a second and a lens aperture of f4.5. This picture is an attempt to capture the scene as it would appear to the naked eye in order to provide some comparison to the bottom picture produced by the Sony camera shooting in the Anti-Motion Blur Mode. The Sony camera has a range of seven ISO settings from 125 to 3200, including "Auto ISO."





Backlight Correction HDR: Shooting high-contrast scenes can often lead to washed-out backgrounds and/or details lost in shadow. Backlight Correction HDR is supposed to help correct for this by taking two pictures at different exposure settings and processing the best elements of both into a single image for more natural-looking shots. This, so far, has been my most disappointing feature of the camera. HDR technology has allowed the production of some remarkable photos. I had hoped that, when I was shooting a picture in which background lighting washed out a background which I wanted included in detail, I could merely turn the Mode Dial and fire away. To this point, I have not been able to make that happen. I plan to work on finding out why I can't make it work and then consult Sony if I have no success.

In-Camera Retouching Tools: This function allows you to perform Trimming, Red Eye Correction and Unsharp Masking functions on the playback image of your photo. Trimming was the only function that I actually tried, and it was frustrating and unreliable. My experience with automatic Red Eye Correction within a program is that it seems to work more often than it doesn't but, when it doesn't work, it can create a real mess. The owner's manual, in discussing the Unsharp masking function, states, "Depending on the image, sufficient correction may not be applied and the image quality may deteriorate."

Summary: In spite of the shortcomings, I am happy with the camera. It is very small, so it can easily be carried almost anywhere (almost too small for my large arthritic hands). The most serious shortcoming, in my opinion, is the lack of a quality viewfinder. There are also many features that appear to be quite useful but that I have not had occasion to use. Smart phones have provided many with all that they need in an easily portable camera, but these phones don't provide the capability to capture the high-quality photos and the extra features that others desire and that this and similar cameras do provide. The camera is still available on Amazon and the price has been reduced from $349.00 to $205.99. Its apparent successor is

Camera.....Continued on page 8

Internet Picture of the Month



From the site http://artofjohnpugh.com, which features the work of John Pugh, an American artist who creates trompe-l'oeil murals on the walls of public buildings. The mural above is on Taylor Hall at Chico State University in California.

Comments.....Continued from page 1

automatically generated CAPTCHA text. After this submission, they receive an email with a link which takes them to a page at the forum which completes the registration. That seems like a lot of work to be able to post their silly messages. Further, it makes work for Merle Nicholson since he then needs to both delete the postings and remove those people as registered users.

Steve Jobs has removed himself from the daily activities of Apple due to his obvious health issues. Since then I have read quite a few laudatory articles, some even placing him on the same level as innovators such as Henry Ford. I am not sure I would place him that high, but he certainly did great things. And I will be forever grateful to him and Steve Wozniack for the Apple II, my first personal computer. I did love that little computer, but I moved to the PC world in 1991 and have not bought an Apple product since then other than an iPod for my daughter many years back. But someone out there is buying those Apple products since, as noted in last month's newsletter, Apple had pulled even with ExxonMobile in Market Capitalization.

Patent Lawsuits Speaking of Apple brings to mind all the patent lawsuits that have recently been filed,

Comments.....Continued on page 7

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Living Computer Museum	http://pdpplanet.com/
A robot that flies like a bird	http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=Fg_JcKSHUtQ
Money in Politics	http://www.opensecrets.org/
175th anniversary of The Times-Picayune	http://www.nola.com/175years/

Password tracking – Windows and Mobiles

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Tracking passwords has always been a problem for me. Years ago I started a password document to track everything, and, while it worked, it left a great deal to be desired. The problem was much larger than just username and password. I needed to save the URL to log in to websites. I needed to track expiration dates for subscriptions. I needed key codes for software. I have five different logins with Microsoft. Yes, I could reuse some of those, using the same login and password, but not always. For instance, sometimes your login is the same as your email address, but most times not. Making it more complicated, different sites have different login and password requirements.

And Verizon! I have SIX different logins with Verizon: Call Assistant, Verizon Central, Verizon FIOS, Verizon Mail Account, Verizon Mail and Verizon Wireless.

So I developed some "password rules" for myself. I decided that if I could remember more than just a couple of passwords, it was because 1) I had to reuse them (a bad thing) and 2) they were too simple. So something had to go. I decided I need really good passwords and I couldn't handle it in my head.

One of my sons suggested the KeePassX database he'd been using for a while, and I started using it sparingly, slowly embracing its features as I got used to it. The program is maintained professionally and is available free of charge. You can look at the program at http://www.keepassx.org/ to see if this will suit your own needs. Of particular interest is the variety of devices that it works on. You won't see any mobile versions at the website, but each of the mobile devices has a version available from its own app store. I use the Android version on my Motorola Droid X.

The program uses an encrypted database, and I guess ideally there should be a way to automatically update or synchronize between devices. I own several computers and my Droid, and I need the database on all of them. I could use Microsoft Live Mesh or Dropbox or something like that for synchronization, but I dislike the idea of my password database being in the "cloud." So for now I use a flash drive to copy the database file to my computers, and I connect my Droid to my base computer via USB and drag and drop the file. I've found that, in practice, I don't have to refresh the files very often. None but the one on my main computer is up to date at any one time, but it never seems to matter.

What is so useful about this program is that I can store any useful information along with the URL and the logon and the password. For instance, my Amazon/Kindle account logon has the names and Kindle email addresses of two Kindles, two Droids (smart phones) and two PCs. It's a logical place to keep all this stuff. Right now I count 82 database entries, and I'm very careful to keep it trimmed of anything not useful. It has a configurable password generator and the ability to look at the password when you want to instead of a line of *******.

I got an email to my Droid with a notification of an event on the TPCUG forum before I would even think of firing up my main computer. I needed to log on using a regular account on the forum. The peculiarities of a smart phone with just an on-screen keyboard that needed a complex login and password should have been just too daunting. But on the Android version of KeePassX, when you select the group (TPCUG) and title (User Logon), the database puts two little buttons in the notification strip at the top of the screen. So when you open the browser to the site, you just poke the login notifier, then poke and hold on the login box and a paste menu appears that you poke and it's pasted in place. Then the same for the password and I was in and out in seconds.

What a deal, and it's free. There are versions for Linux, Mac OSX, Windows, iPhone, PocketPC, Blackberry and Android. Http://www.keepassx.org. And if you think you don't need one, your passwords are too simple and you're using the same one for everything. ◆

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Comments.....Continued from page 5

many by Apple, regarding various computer and phone devices, or the software than runs them. It seems as if everyone is suing everyone else; and sometimes it is for things that seem so obvious you wouldn't think they could be patented. Such a suit by Apple has caused Samsung to have to stop selling its tablet computer in Germany. But everyone seems to be involved: Apple suing Samsung, Samsung suing Apple, Google suing everyone and everyone suing Google. Microsoft and Oracle are also taking part in all the fun. Google recently paid $12.5 billion for Motorola Mobility for their patent portfolio, not for their phones. There is, however, speculation that they actually want the phones too since several years down the road they may be producing their own Android phone for worldwide distribution and at that time making the Android system proprietary and tough luck to all the phone manufacturers who have jumped on the Android bandwagon.

Then there are companies who really have no product and whose sole value consists of the patents they have acquired and with which they essentially try to extort money from companies that do have products by claiming that these products are infringing on some patent the patent-aggregating company possesses. Many of these dubious patent suits are filed in some small East Texas county where the judicial system seems predisposed to favorable rulings to the plaintiffs in such cases.

Mark Cuban, a successful entrepreneur (Broadcast.com of the DotCom bubble era), said in a *Wall Street Journal* interview that he would do away with the patent system entirely for technology It was stifling any innovation because any time you come up with an idea and try to implement it some patent troll is going to sue you for infringement of their supposed patent. He went further to say that if patent litigation had been at the same level in the 1980s as it is today, there would be no Microsoft. His reasoning was that Digital Research would have taken out all sorts of patents on CP/M and then submerged Microsoft in litigation before they even got started. Now companies buy up troves of patents so that if a company sues them, then can then probably find some patent in that trove that can be used to sue the company. It is sort of like mutually assured destruction.

Data Breaches I just read where Stanford University Hospital has exposed emergency room care patient records online for a year. It seems that we have a new story like that every week. In my small world, I have received Visa cards with new account numbers for two different cards this year because at least two vendors exposed account information for many accounts, apparently including my two cards.

In the Stanford instance, a spreadsheet that was provided to a billing contractor ended up on a website called "Student of Fortune," where students can solicit paid help with schoolwork. The article I read in the *New York Times* said that it appeared "as an attachment to a question about how to convert the data into a bar graph." This is just another example of why such data should, in my opinion, never leave such places as the hospital and why such material should never be on any network connected to the Internet. Of course, there is still the old-fashioned way of losing data. The same article mentions that an employee of Massachusetts General Hospital "left paper medical records on a subway train while commuting to work." That cost the hospital a $1 million federal fine. Perhaps the time of confidential information has passed and everything will eventually be public. ◆

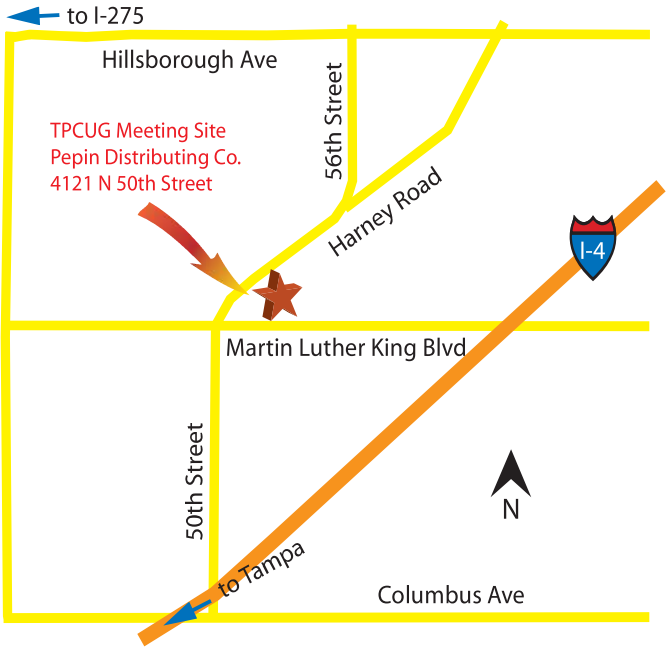
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Camera.....Continued from page 4

the Sony Cyber-Shot DSC-HX7V 16.2 MP Exmor R CMOS Digital Still Camera with 10x Wide-Angle Optical Zoom G Lens, 3D Sweep Panorama, and Full 1080/60i HD Video (Black). The newer version with new features sells for $269. The manual for the camera in PDF format will allow you to find the details of all of the functions the camera possesses. You can view it at this link: http://www.docs.sony.com/release/DSCHX5V_handbook.pdf. I found it to be the most searchable PDF document that I have ever encountered. You might want to take a glance at it even if you have no interest in the camera. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 24 No. 10 October 2011

October in Tampa

Meeting

The Latest Hardware
by
Steve Singer

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Our October presenter is Steve Singer of RDI@TampaBay who will present his annual hardware review. Also, as usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Steve Jobs We should note Steve Jobs' passing since he was one of those who helped create our personal computer world by teaming with Steve Wozniak to produce the Apple I, the success of which, along with that of the Apple II, motivated IBM to develop the first IBM PC, which, in turn, led to the creation of the Tampa IBM PC Users Group, renamed at a later date the Tampa PC Users Group. So I can blame Steve Jobs for possibly being a partial cause, along with Steve Wozniak and Bill Gates, among others, for my working on this issue of the Tampa PC Users Group newsletter.

News I am sure we all have heard that HP may exit the computer hardware market. Apparently selling desktop and laptop computers is a low margin business. HP's new CEO, Meg Whitman, says she will tell us their decision by the end of the year. That is if she is still CEO then, since HP has had three CEOs in what, I think, is less than a year's time. It is amazing how disorganized HP has appeared to be in the past year. I certainly hope

Comments.....Continued on page 5

November Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This session, Bob LaFave could not attend, so Merle Nicholson stood in his place. One subject explored was a question about what computer to get for a person who was not interested in the computer at all and couldn't be bothered. A possible solution was suggested by Kevan Sheridan, who happened to have a Chromebook sitting in front of him in the meeting. (See related article on page 3.)

This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM.

Our speaker this month was myself, Merle Nicholson. Merle talked about Windows 7 Backup, why you must do backups, what the consequences of not doing backups are and suggestions on the possible equipment available to do it inexpensively using Windows 7 Backup as software.

The thrust of the presentation was that your computer's storage is based on a hard drive and that hard drives have a lifetime, after which they die and take everything to the grave with them, leaving you with no choice but to replace the hard drive, recover the operating system and lament losing all your email, documents and valuable pictures.

Windows 7 Backup and Restore is a good software solution, because it's there and it's good and reliable, even if it does not have any useful extras that you get with purchased packages such as Acronis.

The session was lively and some good related discussions occurred during the presentation. ◆

Chrome OS Linux

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

This is about an alternative to a Microsoft Windows computer – Chrome OS. It's for people who want to keep things simple and are willing to do most everything on the web – but, specifically, the Google family of applications. It's similar to a Google Chromebook, but with some additional advantages and disadvantages. And it's kind of free.

By comparison, the Google Chromebook is a Netbook computer with an Atom processor running the Google Chrome operating system. The price at Best Buy today is $429 wifi, and 3G Cellular for $499. That's with a 12.1 inch screen, wireless Internet, no DVD, 16 GB solid state hard drive. It's not cheap, but it does have some advantages. It is lightweight at 3.3 lbs., it boots up very rapidly and you're on the Internet in a minute, where you can do email and web, calendar, messaging, Picasa, Google+ and dozens more applications, all web-based and cloud services that Google offers. And other services, too, if you wish.

What you don't have is access to your own computer in the traditional manner of thinking. For instance, you can't worry about computer viruses and antivirus because, so far, there aren't any (maybe). You don't worry about updates to the computer because that's done for you. And you can't manage your own files. That's all a good thing and a bad thing, depending on your point of view.

This operating system is built around a product – Chrome Browser – that you can install on any computer. I have it myself on my personal computer. It's simple and seems to do everything you need in a browser after you get past its very simple user interface. It's fast; I like it.

So the Chromebook is a very attractive idea and probably works very well if you're happy with everything Google – or at least everything web, because there is nothing keeping you from using Hotmail or Verizon mail or maybe the Windows Live products for that matter. Don't hold me to the Windows Live thing, I'm guessing.

Ok – onward. Did you know you can buy a Dell Mini notebook at Best Buy for $200? Wifi, 10.1 inch screen, a 160 GB hard drive, 1 GB memory and 3.1 lbs! It has the useless Windows 7 starter OS, so why not put Chrome OS on this? $230 cheaper than the Chromebook!

And Hey! A Lenovo notebook, 15.6 inch display – a full sized notebook computer with 4 GB of RAM for $299.99. It's called an ultraportable because it's only 5.2 lbs, and 1.3 inches thick.

Here's what I'm leading up to. The Chrome OS Linux. Now, the Chrome OS is built on a distribution of SUSE (pronounced soo-sa) Linux. SUSE Linux is a German-origin open source Linux project. It has evolved over time, having been acquired by Novell, and then by Attachmate. So SUSE lives on both as a commercial enterprise and as an open source, meaning there are free distributions. Make no mistake, Chrome OS Linux is not a Google product. Instead, it is a free operating system built around the Google Chrome browser. The website to get this operating system starts at http://getchrome.eu.

Copying from their website, we have:

Featured software in Chrome OS Linux:

- Linux kernel 2.6.37
- GNOME 2.32 desktop environment
- Experimental GNOME Shell desktop environment
- Google Chrome 15.0.874 web browser New!
- Google Picasa 3.0 photo manager
- LibreOffice 3.3 office suite
- GIMP 2.6 image editor
- Wine 1.3 Windows emulator
- Cheese 2.32 webcam app New!
- Pidgin 2.7 instant messenger
- Dashboard with social toolbar
- Control Center
- revamped new tab page New!

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Chrome.....Continued from page 3

- and much more!

I have downloaded this operating system and installed it on a notebook with the idea in mind of duplicating a Chromebook in functionality as much as possible, and it looks as if I'll succeed in doing that. I have set the Chrome browser to load at Start and to load the getchrome home page. It happens in about 75 seconds from the notebook power on. And to give you an idea, this page is pretty much the beginning. If you have the Chrome browser and a gmail logon, you can go to the chrome web store at: https://chrome.google.com/webstore and get a few hundred more apps.

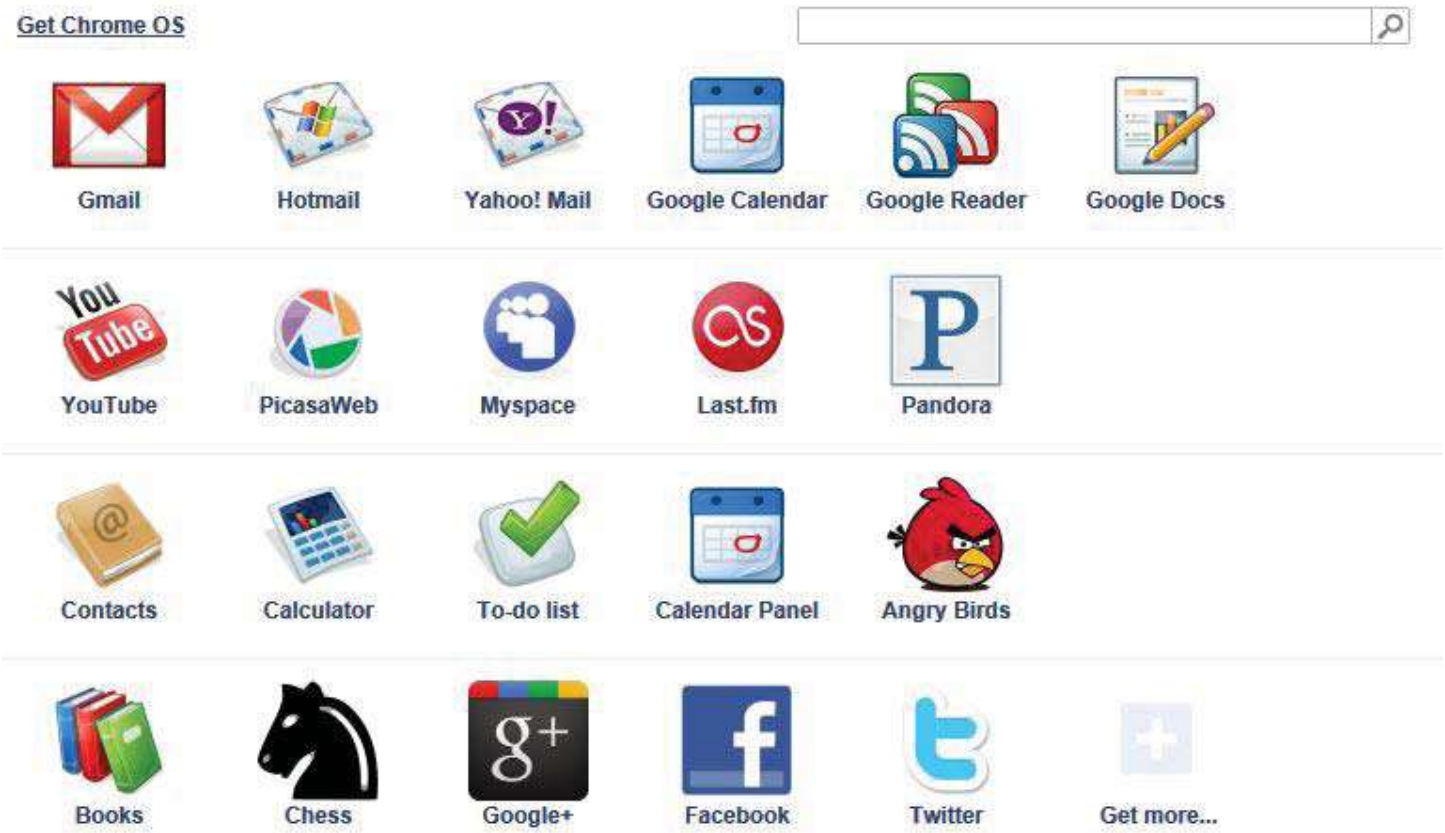
The notebook I installed this on is pretty old as notebooks go – 2005. It's large and heavy but still works well. I pulled the hard drive out and installed an older one that I didn't care about. It's plenty fast enough for this very fast operating system.

I won't go into the technical details of downloading and installing the OS in this article. I will say this: If you're not particularly technical and experienced at this, you'll need some help. But once I had the CD created it was pretty easy from there. First, I did try an alternate – installed to a 4G flash drive and booted from that, and failed with early lockups. My son in Seattle experienced the same thing. So I created the live CD and went forward. It's made to run "Live CD" - so it will run from the CD without installing to the hard drive, and I did that a couple of times. I don't recommend doing this as long as there is a valuable hard drive installed because, just momentarily, I came within an inch of destroying my Windows installation. That's when I decided to replace the hard drive and go on with a regular installation.

My installation isn't 100% complete. I don't have my Bluetooth mouse or WiFi running yet. When I'm 100% done – that's another article.

My thanks to Kevan Sheridan for the introduction to the Chromebook and the time he took to explain it to me.

Below is the Chrome OS home page. ◆



Internet Picture of the Month



A small plane crashes into a Ferris wheel in Sydney, Australia and dangles there with two people inside the plane and a pair of children on the Ferris wheel trapped there for 90 minutes. From the New York Times at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/02/world/asia/small-plane-crashes-into-ride-during-festival-in-australia.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=plane%20%20ferris%20wheel&st=cse

Comments.....Continued from page 1

they decide to continue producing computers because that gives us one more source when we want to purchase a new one. I think the problem is, once you buy a computer from them, that is all they get until you may want an additional computer. However, if you purchase a printer from them, then it is more toner or ink until the printer is no longer used. The same for all the consulting services they supply.

IBM has done quite well since they discontinued selling desktop and laptop computers and sold that business to Lenova. Apparently they are surviving quite well with their mainframe business and computer services. So well, that I recently read where IBM has now, as Apple did some time back, passed Microsoft in the value of their stock. For tech companies, we have the most valuable is Apple followed by IBM and then Microsoft.

Kodak As noted above, being on top does not guarantee that you will stay on top – or even be anywhere near the top. At one time, Kodak dominated photography and was one of the 30 companies in the Dow Jones Industrial Average. Now, they are almost bankrupt, with a stock value of under one dollar per share. You will say, but their mistake was not getting into

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October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Tampania	http://tampaniatampa.blogspot.com/
Call2Recycle - Recycling Your Batteries	http://www.call2recycle.org/
Charles W. Cushman Photograph Collection	http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/cushman/
Animated Knots	http://www.animatedknots.com/

Update on FIOS Battery Backup

By John Witmer, President, Tampa PC Users Group
jhwitmer@verizon.net

I previously wrote of my experience with my FIOS backup battery causing both an audible alarm and a red-light replace battery warning signal. The events occurred over the Christmas holidays in 2009, and the article appeared in our newsletter in April 2010. I thought I would update you on that situation. The very same battery is still alive and well in my FIOS backup system box, some 21 months later. So much for its needing to be replaced! I will have to admit that I have had several more instances in those 21 months where the audible and red-light alarms occurred in the unit, but by following the instructions I put in that old article, the battery alarms were silenced, and the system continues to function perfectly. I have had that battery for more than four years now and expect it to last another couple more. I base this guesstimate on having to recently replace the backup battery in my home alarm system after getting seven-plus years out of it. Here's hoping anyway that the FIOS battery lasts as anticipated.

One of the surprises that came out of that article was receiving emails from a couple of individuals who had come across the article in our TPCUG newsletter while searching the web for a similar problem they were having. They were appreciative of finding a solution to their problem without having to replace the battery and were thoughtful enough to let me know it benefited them. I was curious back when the emails were received as to what was out there when doing a Google search for the topic of "FIOS Battery Backup." I came across a Verizon website forum on the subject. The solution that was contained in my article was not mentioned on this Forum, so I decided to add it as a posting under that topic, hoping that not only would many people benefit from it, but also that perhaps a Verizon representative might see it and offer a comment. I posted my comments and a link to the TPCUG newsletter article on the Verizon Forum in early Feb 2011, and within a month or so, there were favorable comments from a couple of other posters. What really surprised me is that they show the number of views the post has had, and, as shown in the screen clip below for this article, it has had 6,315 views so far. I feel somewhat elated that perhaps a great many of those viewers were able to resolve their problem without the expense of a new replacement battery. I even noted that a later poster to this Forum in July 2011 indicated that he received essentially the same information as in my article from a Verizon FIOS representative when he called about his battery problem, so maybe Verizon has seen the article and is now offering it as a possible solution to customers calling in with this type of battery backup problem. For me, this is another example of what a great resource the web is, with people sharing information and solutions to problems. ◆



Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Comments.....Continued from page 5

digital photography soon enough. Well, I have news for you. They invented the digital camera in 1975. I am not sure, but that may have even been before Al Gore invented the Internet. Anyway, it is obvious that they did not properly capitalize on their invention. Possibly because it would have cut into the cash cow of film photography where they were dominant. Now with what remains of their business, Kodak is trying to become a printer company, I think.

WP7 Mango Update I was one of the lucky ones who got the Windows Phone 7 Mango update pushed to me on the first day it was available. It is being deployed in stages to a percentage of users on different phones from different vendors in different sections of the country, as I understand it. That way they can monitor the process for problems instead of pushing it out to everyone at once.

There are supposedly 500 improvements. I assume most of those will be invisible to the user. The ones I have noticed that are quite nice are

- Holding down the back button displays all the running apps.
- You can now aggregate all your email accounts into one super account for ease of use (the all accounts inbox).
- When you click on the Bing search button and then the eye button, the camera activates, and, if you point it at a barcode, it will provide you information on the product. Similarly it will copy and translate text for you.
- That is all that I have noticed of use to me so far. However, for those who use facebook and twitter there are all sorts of features that will make your life easier. For example, you can put your friends into different groups and then send messages or tweets to everyone in a particular group.

I am sure there are a lot more, but I haven't really been interested in looking for them. My main interest is writing programs for the phone. On the same day the update was released, the final version of the programming tools for the phone using Visual Studio were released. Before I could install the new tools, though, I needed to download and install Service Pack 1 for Visual Studio 2010. I only mention that because the size of the download amazed me. It was 600 MB plus. I think the Apple IIe that Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs designed for me only had 64 KB of memory plus an additional 64 MB I purchased (that extra 64 was really not easily addressable at the time). We have come a long way memory-wise.

Of course, not much attention was paid to the Mango update for the WP7 by the press since it had been devoting its space for a couple of weeks to hyping the upcoming (and now done) release of a new version of the iPhone. It was the iPhone 4S with the iPhone 5 expected sometime in the Spring of 2012.

Are you being tracked? Are you worried about Google, Facebook and other social media following you on the web and storing all sorts of the information about you that you divulge on such sites, which they can then combine with subsequent searching and browsing activity? If so, why don't you use two different browsers. Use one, say Firefox or Chrome, for the social media stuff and use Internet Explorer for your web searches and browsing, or vice-versa. Or make it even more restrictive and use, for example, Chrome for social media, Firefox for web search and IE for general browsing. Then, when you research

Comments.....Continued on page 8

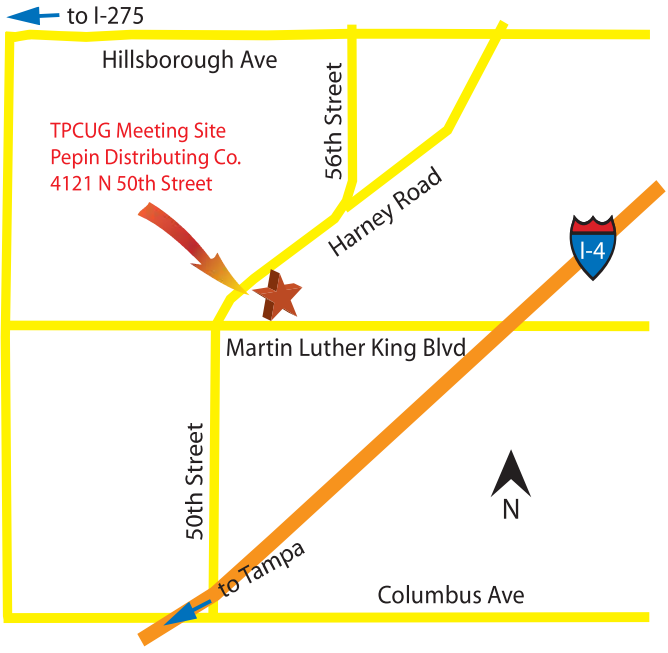
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Comments.....Continued from page 7

water softeners in a web search, you will not be shown water softener ads when you try to read the news on the *New York Times* site. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 24 No. 11 November 2011

November in Tampa

Meeting

Chrome Book & Chrome Operating System
by
Kevan Sheridan & Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

6:30 PM

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Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Kevan Sheridan and Merle Nicholson will introduce us to an inexpensive computing alternative: Chrome Book. Also, as usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG for the f rst half-hour of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

What to write about this month? Well, it is supposed to be something at least loosely associated with computing. So that leaves out the two hot topics of today as I write this: The Greek debt crisis and the MF Global meltdown, the f rst having to do with spending more than you have, the second with betting more than you have. Then there is Bank America and other big banks backing down on charging $5 per month to use their debit cards. Anyone with any sense knew that would happen, but the banks had to run the idea up the f ag pole and see if anyone would salute before giving up.

I think most members of our group will be happy to know that HP has decided to stay in the PC business. I certainly am, although I don't plan on purchasing a new PC or laptop in the immediate future.

The Steve Jobs biography is out, I see. Perhaps someone in the group will read it and be kind enough to write a review of it for

Comments.....Continued on page 5

December Meeting: Party

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows operating systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This session, Bob LaFave was could not attend, so Merle Nicholson stood in his place. This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM.

Our speaker this month was Steven Singer, CEO of RDI Distribution Corp, a wholesale computer hardware distributor at http://www.rdi.us, and at http://www.morevalu.com, the end-user division.

Steven and his spouse, Pam, have for many years done our October or November presentation, bringing with them a variety of hardware from their business to show us and talk about each. Steven is very knowledgeable about all things computer-related and is an entertaining speaker, with hardware examples that are passed around for all of us to handle.

One item was a USB adapter that bypasses the 500 mA charging throttle that USB imposes for charging devices. This sounds very useful for devices that don't adequately charge from your computer.

Steve and Pam passed around the $100 HP tablet that went on the market when HP decided to abandon their production. Steven seems knowledgeable about Android and "rooting" Android devices. He brought – and talked about – a mini ITX computer motherboard with an imbedded processor that seemed very inexpensive and capable of building into a very tiny computer.

The discussions sometimes run far af eld and get pretty lively. It was a thoroughly entertaining session. Our heartfelt thanks to Steven and Pam. ◆

Office Products & Multiple Monitors

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Office products: LibreOffice is my #1 choice for a full-featured Office suite. The suite consists of Writer, Calc, Draw, Impress and Base. If you can't justify Microsoft Office in price or sheer size, LibreOffice will do the job for 99% of what you need. And it's FREE. You should not encounter file compatibility problems. I have switched between MS Word and LibreOffice Writer with the same document and so far have not encountered any page formatting problems. I haven't done much swapping between MS Excel and LO Calc since my spreadsheet needs are pretty simple, but I've never failed to do what I need in Calc. It can use .xls and .xlxs formats as well.

The newest open-source version of this is called LibreOffice 3.4 at http://www.libreoffice.org/. This version comes about because Oracle, the current owner of OpenOffice (acquired from their acquisition of Sun) is making some content and distribution decisions outside of the Open Source community (according to the Open Source maintainers). So they've broken away and have reversed some of those decisions. Even though I spend good money for Office for every version, I still use LibreOffice for Word Processing and spreadsheets. They have Linux and Mac OSX versions, too.

Another thing about Microsoft Word, Outlook and Excel is that I've given the "ribbon bars" several years of my attention, and I just prefer the simple toolbars of LibreOffice. It isn't that I can't get used to the ribbon; I can and do. I use the Outlook ribbon constantly throughout my day (but normally hidden). In my opinion, as long as the "old style" toolbar is customizable it's superior. The ribbon takes just too much screen room and too much searching. The versions of ribbons have greatly improved between Office 2007 and 2010. The ribbons are now customizable, so I use one of my own ribbons almost exclusively, with all my most-used functions.

I'm currently using: LibreOffice Writer, LibreOffice Calc, occasionally Excel 2010 for clients, Outlook 2010 and Access 2003. I've been experimenting with Access 2010. I don't use presentations, so I can't advise on either Impress or PowerPoint.

With Access 2010, I haven't gotten a handle on customizable menus yet, and so far I'm pretty much headed for failure. I have a commercial menu-driven application that just can't be duplicated with ribbon bars. It's very much a shame; I've been a firm advocate of Access for many years. I'll use Access 2003 as long as the latest operating system will allow.

I very highly recommend LibreOffice. You can't beat the quality and price, and, with the exceptions of Outlook and Access, there just is no reason to use Microsoft Office.

Multiple Monitors: Multiple monitors can offer some unique challenges, many of which I hadn't anticipated at first, but I can easily say that they make my life on the computer much more manageable and efficient when I need several programs and windows at the same time. I run a successful software business from them, and I just can't imagine doing this on one monitor.

I last wrote about using multiple monitors with Windows in 2004, when I had just gotten a second mismatched monitor and was making pretty effective use of them. I was using Windows XP, of course, and I talked of getting a bargain in a 15" Samsung LCD for $369. Right now I can get a 27" LCD screen for $300!

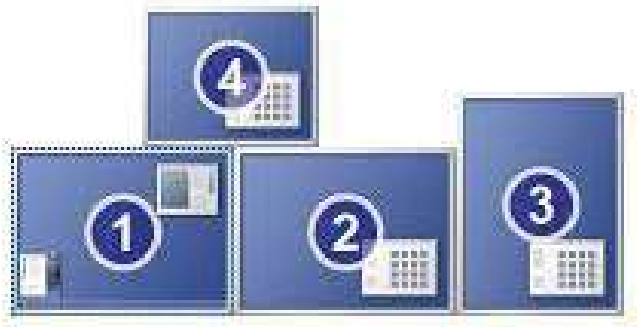
In 2005, I bought a pair of matched 21" LCD screens, very expensive at nearly $600 each, which I am still using, and I still consider them essential. I purchased a very nice multiple-monitor software program called UltraMon, which I can still recommend, but I bought another program called DisplayFusion Pro a year ago that I am extremely happy with.

My current configuration is four monitors with two video adapters. The Video cards are both ATI HD 4650 that are adequate but not especially fast under these

Office.....Continued on page 4

Office.....Continued from page 3

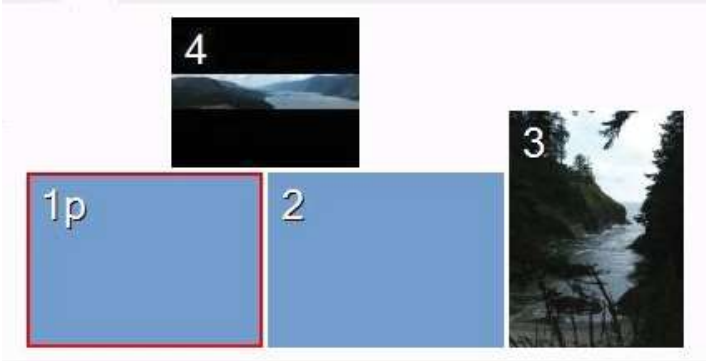
circumstances. I added a 21" monitor to my right (a gift from a friend who had it surplus) and swiveled it to portrait for viewing help and reading PDF f les, and recently I put an old 17" on the shelf above me to display my web cameras, weather gadget and to park Outlook for monitoring incoming emails. Here's what they look like in Windows 7:



Windows 7 handles multiple monitors much better than all previous versions, but the customizing choices are still pretty limited. The options are to decide which is your primary monitor, and, for the remaining monitors, whether you want to duplicate another monitor, or extend the desktop to that monitor; the second choice is the only one you'd want, of course. And you can rearrange the relative positioning with the mouse after identifying which monitor is assigned what number. The positioning is critical because you have to move the cursor from one to another, and you can't go outside a monitor. For instance if my cursor is in Monitor three, I can't get to Monitor one or four without going through two.

The primary monitor has the Start Menu and the taskbar; the others have nothing. The wallpaper, and screen saver choices are pretty limited to one, a less than satisfactory situation. I can't speak too much about screen savers, because I don't use them. They're misnamed in any case. They're for entertainment, and perhaps as a rotating picture frame when not in use, and can't really be effective in a multiple monitor situation. Unless you buy good software. Instead of Screen Saver, I set a Windows Power Prof le to turn the monitors off after 20 minutes of non-use. My wallpaper is plain light blue-grey.

I depend on the program DisplayFusion Pro 3.4 by Binary Fortress at http://www.DisplayFusion.com. This program does a great deal to help you manage your desktop, but, for me, the #1 feature is its ability to add additional taskbars on each of the monitors. Mine is conf gured to have a Windows Start Menu and the "Show Desktop" panel each. Additionally, I have some duplicate shortcuts on each and, when a program is minimized to the taskbar, its task icon goes to its respective taskbar. That is, on the monitor where it was minimized from. This is all unique. Native Windows 7 can do none of these. Below is the DisplayFusion rotating wallpaper setup.



The scope of the things this program will do is just too large for an article to cover well; I'd suggest a visit to the website, but I'll try to summarize: Wallpaper Management, Hotkeys, Titlebar Buttons, Monitor Conf guration, Window Snapping, Window Management, Logon Screen and Multi-monitor Screensavers. For one computer, the Pro version is $25, and $35 for all computers in your household. I highly recommend this; I think it's very inexpensive considering its wide-ranging capabilities.

One other thing that I need to do with multiple monitors is to f nd my cursor! I have to admit that sometimes I don't know where it is. I have the standard Windows setting that pops large circles around the cursor, in Control Panel, Mouse, Pointers, "Show Location of pointer when I press the CTRL key", and that does help, but not quite enough. So I wrote my own program that will move the cursor to whatever monitor I want by a hotkey action. When I press the hotkey for Monitor 4, the cursor pops to the center of Monitor 4

Office.....Continued on page 8

Internet Picture of the Month



Kudzu Bugs. From the site http://naturecloseups.com/posts/globular-stink-bug-invasive. Apparently the invasive vine kudzu now has a bug that loves to eat it. Unfortunately this bug, the Megacopta Cribraria, is also an invasive species, recently arrived in Georgia. The bad thing is the bug also likes other plants, including soybeans. And it stinks.

Comments.....Continued from page 1

the newsletter. We haven't had a book review in a very long time.

Apparently not all laptop batteries are made the same. My daughter's Sony laptop purchased in 2008 needed a new battery recently. The message she was receiving was, I think, "battery not detected." So the question was: Is it a bad battery or is it something else. If you purchase a battery and that does not f x the problem, can you return the battery for a refund or are you stuck with it? After I decided to purchase a replacement battery, do I go with ones found at sites on the Internet for $40 to $50, or do I purchase a Sony exact replacement, which I could not readily f nd by searching the Web? My f rst impulse was to go with one of the $45 aftermarket batteries, but the more I read, the more worried I became about doing that. Here is the rub. The replacement batteries also come with a CD that you are supposed to run on the laptop (connected to its AC power adapter) that will change something in the BIOS or somewhere that will reprogram how the computer interacts with the battery so that the aftermarket battery will be recognized and function properly. In my reading, I found people for whom this worked successfully and others for whom it did not. There were also a fair number of individuals

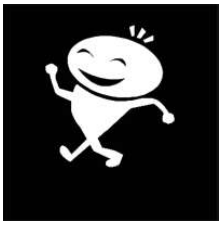
Comments.....Continued on page 7

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
What happened in my birth year	http://whathappenedinmybirthyear.com/
Odyssey Marine Exploration	http://www.shipwreck.net/
100 Abandoned Houses	http://www.100abandonedhouses.com/

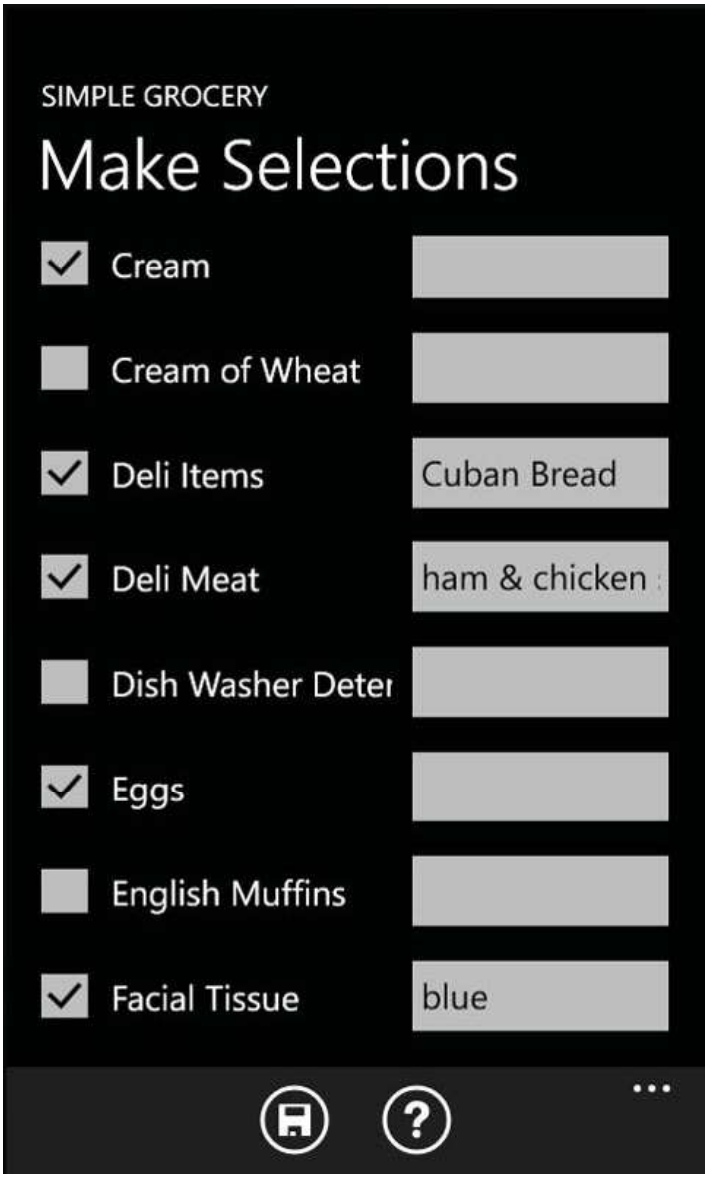
My Phone Apps

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com



I now have f ve apps at the Microsoft Marketplace for Windows 7 Phones. The f rst two I did back in June as sort of practice apps when the WP7 f rst became available from Verizon. One was a tank volume program which calculated for different types of tanks the volume of liquid in the tank at different levels from the bottom. The other was a real-time scheduling app for the San Francisco Bay Area Transit System (BART). These were free apps with no advertising.

With the introduction of Mango, the large update of the WP7 operating system, I decided to get more serious. The last week in October, I put three more apps at the Marketplace, a walking app, a grocery shopping app and a stock market app, hopefully all to bring in a little money via advertising appearing in the bottom 80 pixels of the screen. The little fellow above is the program icon for the walking app, and the screen capture on the right displays the selecting of items for a grocery shopping trip captured from the phone emulator (simulates the phone) running on my computer. This image was done before I added the advertising banner to the program.



Based on what I have seen so far, I don't think I am going to make much from this endeavor. My f rst two apps have been at the Marketplace about three months. The volume app has been download a little more than 200 times, the Bart app, a little under 100 times. As I write this, the walking app has been at the Marketplace for f ve days and been downloaded f ve times.

Here is what I have seen about ad revenue so far. Of course, I don't really have much data, but, with the ads running while I was testing my three new programs over a bit more than a week, I did generate some money. According to the stats, while I was testing the three apps, 1,600 impressions of various ads were displayed (sounds like a lot to me) at the bottom of the screens. And for that impressive total, my estimated revenue is $.30 (that is cents, not dollars). Viewed another way, it amounts to $.18 per 1000 impressions of an ad.

The message here is pretty obvious. If you want to make any money from apps by displaying advertising, then you need to have your apps running on thousands of phones. I know of at least two people, working as a team, who are supporting themselves entirely with WP7 apps that display advertising. So it can be done. They, the last I heard, had 25 apps, and some had been downloaded thousands of times. They at f rst tried to put, say, $.99 or $1.29 as a price for downloading an

My Apps.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the f rst 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

My Apps.....Continued from page 6

app but discovered that almost no one would do that – too much free stuff out there. So they went to the display advertising route. And I took their hard-learned advice and did the same thing. But it appears that my results are gong to fall a good bit short of theirs.

Part of my problem, I think, is going to be that I just don't have the same interests as 95-plus percent of the smart phone users. One way to get a lot of attention is for Microsoft to select one of your apps as a featured app. Perhaps I will get lucky and hit on something that Microsoft will select as a featured app and things will look up. But with so many other apps out there and more coming online everyday, there is little chance of that. I will just keep writing the sort of things that interest me and see if I am fortunate enough to hit on something that is also of interest to others. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 5

who had purchased such a battery which did not work even after the individuals had run the CD. I cannot imagine them running the CD, though, after they had been warned that doing so might damage their computer. Some people, after reading the warning, examined their CDs and could f nd no f les on them. So it seems that many of these batteries are being produced and shipped with essentially no quality control. Additionally, not a small number of the people who had left messages about their experience with the batteries were still waiting for refunds. You pay your money and take your chances.

After thinking about this for a short time, I went to the Sony site to search for their battery but couldn't f nd it. Amazingly, when I entered the model number for the battery into their parts search, it produced other batteries (not listed as replacements for my battery) and non-battery items such as keyboards. So much for Sony's parts site. A call to the local Sony store informed me that they did not have the battery in stock, but I was given the 800 number to call. I did that, and the lady who answered found the battery I needed for a price of $139 + tax + shipping. I ordered the battery, and when it came the laptop was happy and, thus, I was happy. But that $45 price certainly sounded a lot better than the $139 plus price. And, who knows, the supposedly replacement $45 battery may have worked. I just wasn't willing to take the gamble that using the CD would not damage the laptop, as it had done for others.

Finally, on this battery issue you may ask why spend more than $150 when you can buy a new laptop for under $400. Well, this laptop cost more than $2,000 in 2008, and I am sure that you couldn't f nd an equivalent one now for under $1,000. And if the laptop with the new battery lasts two more years, then I will be happy.

The **Amazon.com link** on our home page has been producing results. We received $27, $15 and $32 for the months of June, July and August; the payments are made each month for the month that was two months previous. Keep up the good work and tell your friends to use the link at http://www.tpcug.org for their Amazon.com holiday shopping.

Looking back at our newsletter for November, 1992 (that is 19 years ago, if you can believe it), I see in the President's column where he is looking forward to the opening of Tampa's f rst CompUSA on Hillsborough at Dale Mabry. Well, a lot has changed in the ensuing

Comments.....Continued on page 8

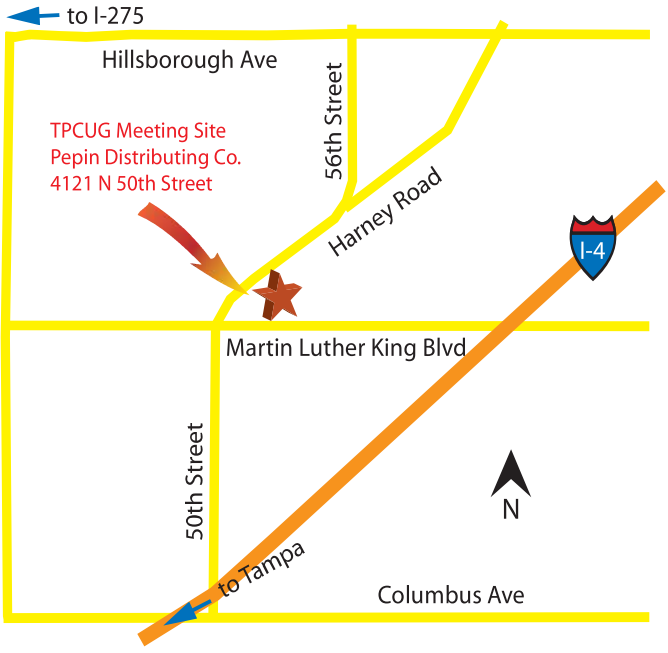
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19 years. For one, there is no CompUSA at that location, and CompUSA is no longer the same one as then, the original having gone out of business. If you would like to read a bit more history, take the time to peruse these old newsletters either at our web site or on the CD I made. I will try to remember to bring some of the CDs to the next meeting since there may still be some members who want one (for a $5 donation to the group). ◆



Office.....Continued from page 4

and pops those concentric, blinking circles so my eye can pick it up quickly. As far as I can tell, this little program is unique. I'd patent it, but I'm sure Apple would then sue me for ten million dollars – a month.

Managing multiple monitors can be a bit challenging, but with the right software it can be, if not fun, at least interesting. ◆

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Bits of Blue

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December in Tampa

Vol. 24 No. 12 December 2011

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

6:30 PM

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Meeting Preview: Holiday Party

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Mike Hutchison, Jim Purcell and Merle Nicholson for providing content. Jim sent along some images to accompany his article, but there just wasn't any extra room. Usually that is not the case, and, in fact, I often use images to take up space. Of course, such images also provide us with valuable information about the topic of the article. You know, "a picture is worth a thousand words." Well, you will only get words in this edition.

I write about tablet computers this month, when a month ago I had not really used one. Now we have two in the family, and I have played with them enough to write a comparison piece about the iPad and the Kindle Fire. At a Microsoft meeting last month, I also saw a tablet, the brand of which I didn't take note, that was running a pre-alpha version of Windows 8. Windows 8 is supposedly going to be both a tablet operating system and a desktop operating system.

The tablets are in many ways a pleasure to use, but don't throw away that desktop or laptop if you really want to do anything productive. In my opinion, tablets are for web browsing, emailing and entertainment. ◆

January Meeting: To be announced

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Our speakers this month were Kevan Sheridan and Merle Nicholson, both long-term TPCUG members. The subjects were ChromeBook (Kevan) and Chrome OS (Merle).

Kevan brought in his ChromeBook – a slim 12.1" laptop-like device with a closed operating system, but optimized to operate in the Chrome browser and interact with all things Google. Google, as we know, is now providing most everything a more-than-casual user may want in "the Cloud" - Gmail, Calendar, Contacts, (Book)Reader, Google Docs (where you can store all your docs online), Picasa (storage and sharing pictures), Google Books, Google Music, Google+ and a wide variety of non-Google apps like MySpace, Facebook and Twitter.

Kevan demonstrated some of this from his own Chrome-Book connected to the projector. There were quite a few questions about this lightweight, slim and fast notebook.

Merle had the Chrome Browser installed on his notebook running under Windows 7, but mostly talked about Linux/Chrome. He explained his process of attempting to install the Chrome Operating System for PCs. That is an open, free Linux variation from SUSE. It's built to be minimal with the Chrome browser as its centerpiece. It also includes non-chromey things like Libre Office Suite, Gimp, and

Minutes.....Continued on page 7

Purchasing a Camera

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@msn.com

[To more easily access the links in this article, view it at our site, http://www.tpcug.org]

My first real interest in photography began in 1946 when I started using my Dad's post-card size Kodak bellows camera and set up a darkroom with a friend of mine in his mother's wash shed. I have bought several cameras before and since the digital revolution. I purchased my first Kodak 35mm camera in 1952. My first high-quality cameras were a Rolleicord ($25) and a Leica IIIF ($165) that I purchased in 1955 while stationed in Germany during the Occupation. Both are still in operating condition. I have had some repair work done on the Leica, but the Rolleicord has required none. I won't go through the list of cameras that I owned since then, but I now own a Cannon 40D single lens reflex camera and a very small but full-featured pocket megazoom Sony DSC-HX5V camera which I use as a "carry around" camera.

Cameras to Consider

Digital Single-Lens Reflex (DSLR) This is the group of cameras most preferred by professionals and serious amateurs. The cameras use a mechanical mirror system and pentaprism to direct light from the lens to an optical viewfinder on the back of the camera. DSLRs allow an accurate preview of framing close to the moment of exposure, and allow the user to choose from a variety of interchangeable lenses. They also have larger sensors compared to most other digital cameras. The sensors are generally the same as, or closer in size to, the traditional 35mm film format that many photographers started out using. These large sensors allow for similar depths of field and picture angle to that of film formats. In general, a larger sensor provides lower noise, higher sensitivity and increased latitude and dynamic range. The downside is that camera bodies and the lenses of DSLRs are very expensive. The bodies and lenses are also large, heavy and cumbersome. For complete information go to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_single-lens_reflex_camera#Comparison_with_digital_point-and-shoot_camera Examples can be found at: http://cameras.bestcovery.com/best-digital-slr-camera-overall?sem=3884548238y&gclid=CPeKsZem7qwCFY1W7AoduGzTIQ

Interchangeable-lens Digital Cameras This group of cameras tries to bring together some of the best features of the DSLRs and those of the compact point-and-shoot cameras. They offer the advantages of an interchangeable-lens system with strong user control features and generally have better than point-and-shoot performance. The absence of the mirror system found in the DSLRs allows a smaller, lighter and less cumbersome design. If you decide to invest in this group of cameras, you should carefully review the specs and determine if the camera in which you are interested fulfills your needs in such areas as video, and the availability, type and cost of interchangeable lenses. Go to review sites such as the link listed below and check reviews by both the site staff and those by individual users. Examples can be found at: http://reviews.cnet.com/best-interchangeable-lens-cameras/

Point-and-Shoot Cameras It is easier to discuss the point-and-shoot cameras if they are divided into four groups.

1. The Megazoom or Pocket Megazoom (compact and pocket high-zoom camera): The Megazoom cameras in some cases are as large as the DSLRs but are the most versatile fixed lens cameras you can find. They offer as much as 20x to 30x optical zoom lenses and usually have impressive wide-angle lens capability. They have manual controls, usually excellent stabilization and a choice of excellent lenses. Examples can be found at: http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/collection/1685/top_rated_megazoom_cameras.html . The pocket megazoom cameras are much smaller than the megazooms discussed above but they have optical zoom ranges from about 10X to 16X. They normally have excellent stabilization features. Examples can be found at: http://www.dpreview.com/reviews/q311travelzoomgrouptest/.

2. Advanced Point-and-Shoot (compact camera with manual controls): The strong point of these cameras is that they have manual controls for shutter speed, aper-

Camera.....Continued on page 4

Camera.....Continued from page 3

ture and ISO settings, giving you control of the quality of the picture. They are a good "carry around" camera for DSLR owners and a good learning tool for novice shooters. Examples can be found at: http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/collection/5586/top_point_and_shoots_with_manual_controls.html

3. Basic Point-and-Shoot: These are the real point-and-shoot cameras because you literally point and shoot since you depend on the automatic adjustment capabilities of the camera, which have improved greatly over the years. They have small sensors, so don't pay extra money for a very high megapixel rating since it will probably lead to higher image noise. Many have good wide-angle capability (28mm or less), which is handy for group shots, arms-length self-portraits and landscape shots. They are inexpensive, so it's important to read the reviews to insure that you get what is needed to give you satisfactory results. Examples can be found at: http://reviews.cnet.com/digital-cameras/canon-powershot-a1200-silver/4505-6501_7-34468799.html?tag=rb_content;contentBody.

4. Rugged Point-and-Shoot: These cameras are for the mountaineers, the divers, the hikers, the extreme sports enthusiasts and the clumsy. They are rugged and can be waterproof, freeze proof, drop proof or dustproof but they are not known for their optics or sensors. It is therefore important that you pay as much attention to the quality of the optics and sensor as to the durability of the camera. If it doesn't take a good picture before you drop it off of the Empire State Building, it probably won't take a good picture after you drop it. Examples can be found at: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/indepth/photography/hands-reviews/rugged-point-and-shoot-cameras

Conclusion

I hope that the category discussion above helps you narrow your search. The example links at the end of each section are just samples to give you a visual picture and specifications of some of the best cameras in the categories. There are many more reviews and,

Camera.....Continued on page 8

Two Tablets

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Tablets are all the rage now, and we went from having none in the family to having two, both belonging to my wife. She is now the owner of an Apple iPad 2 and a Kindle Fire. The Fire is quite new, the iPad has been out for some time. There has been some press where the two are compared, usually to the detriment of the Fire. But, in my opinion, comparing the two as if they were meant to do the same thing and for the same audience is not appropriate.

First off, this particular iPad, the less expensive one with the smallest amount of memory, costs $499. The Kindle Fire comes in only one version at $199. You wouldn't expect a $20,000 car to be a good as a $50,000 car, would you? So you shouldn't expect a $200 tablet to perform on the same level as a $500 one. Both cars will get you where you are going, and both of these tablets will perform most of your desired functions, just not with the same ease or speed. The cheaper one will actually do a few things the more expensive one won't. And, as expected, the more expensive one will do some things that the cheaper one won't.

iPad advantages are

- Larger screen
- Faster processor
- Front and back cameras
- Large collection of iPad apps

Kindle Fire adavantages are

- Direct access to all of Amazon Prime video content, movies & TV
- Ability to connect via a USB cable to your Windows computer to load music and image files
- The web browser supports Flash
- Native Kindle book reader

Web and email

Both of these devices require a WiFi connection to access web content. Once on the web, you can do your

Tablets.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Prince of Tampa Cigar Box Label From the site http://www.cigarboxlabels.com/. This site has much more than cigar box labels to view and purchase. How about an old oil company stock certificate? But since we are in Tampa, I thought it appropriate to use a Tampa-themed cigar box label.

Tablets.....Continued from page 4

browsing and email just as you would on a computer. Well, the email is not exactly the same, since you don't seem to have the option of HTML-style email, only text based. Both allow you to send images you may have on the device as attachments. The iPad appears to insert the image inside the message, but when it arrives at my computer it is as an attachment. And oddly, in my two tests, it arrived upside down.

Of course you use finger gestures on the screen to navigate instead of using a mouse. And once you master that, you will probably find it preferable. I have noticed that in watching movies with either device or on the iPad using Skype that the closer you are to your WiFi transmitter, the better the quality.

Skype

Since I just mentioned Skype, let's discuss that for a moment. Of course, you know that Skype allows you to use your computer to make phone calls, and, if you and/or the other party has a video camera, to actually do a video call. Since the Fire does not have a camera, you will not be using it to make a video call. The Fire also does not have a built-in microphone.

During a video call on Skype, you use the front fac-

Tablets.....Continued on page 6

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Ars Technia	http://arstechnica.com/
Raspberry Pi	http://www.raspberrypi.org/
Penny Postcards	http://www.usgwarchives.org/special/ppcs/ppcs.html
About Chrome OS Linux	http://getchrome.eu/

Tablets.....Continued from page 5

ing camera on the iPad to transmit your image to the other party. While in the call, your screen fills with the image of the person being called. There is also a small insert of your image so you can adjust the camera's position to produce the appearance you wish of yourself for the other party to see. You wouldn't want them to see only your belt buckle or the ceiling of the room.

In the several calls made to our son in New York, the quality of both voice and image was excellent. He says that calls between him and others have not been so good. The obvious culprit for that poor quality is a less than optimal wireless connection. Finally, you don't have to use the iPad's front camera during such calls. You can switch to the back camera. Then you could walk around wherever you are showing your phone partner what your surroundings look like. It is really quite powerful technology and doesn't bode well for the phone companies' bottom line. Of course, my phone company is the one providing the broadband connection, so they are still not locked out of the income picture.

Screen

The screen on the iPad is beautiful and measures 19.7 cm x 14.8 cm. That is an area of 291.56 sq cm. The screen on the Fire, is adequate and measures 15.4 cm x 9.0 cm, equaling an area of 138.6 sq cm. So, the iPad2 has a screen area more than twice that of the Fire. But it costs 2.5 times as much as the Fire, and most of that extra cost is probably tied up in the screenF

Web Browsing

Both devices allow you to browse the web as you would on your computer. However, both have some shortcomings. For the iPad, it is the inability to display Flash. The Fire will display flash content, but it and the iPad both will not display Silverlight content (of which I have made extensive use at my personal web site). The iPad reacts more quickly to your finger taps on buttons or links on web pages. In fact, I have found the Fire to sometimes not respond or respond sluggishly to taps not only on buttons or links on web pages but also to buttons on the screen in general. Particularly bad for me is the fact that the Fire does not like the way I stream the PDF versions of our newsletters at the TPCUG web site. The document is downloaded, but when you try to open it with the Adobe Reader provided with the Fire, you get an error message to the effect that it is not a valid PDF file. On the iPad 2, our PDF newsletters open beautifully inside the Safari browser. Perhaps I need to change the streaming method to simple links to be clicked on, since the Fire downloads the PDF files fine from such a link. Note, however, that the Fire does not display the PDF file from within the browser. It downloads it, and after the download you need to start the Adobe Reader app yourself to view the downloaded file.

Connecting to your computer

For a Windows computer, forget connecting the iPad. It doesn't work. I suppose Windows knows nothing about the file system on the device. When you connect the Fire to your computer using the USB cable that is also used to charge the Fire, you can view a collection a of folders on the Fire with names that include Download, Music and Pictures. To copy some photos from your computer to the Fire, you simply drag them from wherever they are on your Windows computer to the Pictures folder on the Fire. The Fire has an app named Gallery for viewing photos.

For music, or sound, in general, on both devices you can listen through the built-in speakers or through a headset.

Movies

The largest plus for the Fire to me is that viewing movies and TV shows available on Amazon Prime or Amazon Video on Demand is built into the device where you simply click on the Video button. To the best of my knowledge, you cannot access Amazon media from the iPad. Both the iPad and the Fire have Netflix apps.

Apps

No doubt, the iPad has far more apps available. (Of course, the Fire was just released.) So if you want to play games, then I suppose the Fire is not your best choice.

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WIDE OPEN SPACES

By Michael Hutchison, Tampa PC Users Group
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Many years ago at a TPCUG meeting held at the old Pepin Hospitality Room (56th St.), I purchased SecureClean put out by White Canyon Software. One of their reps came and gave a presentation and then offered their software to the members at a user group rate. SecureClean came with two other apps on separate CDs. One was WipeDrive, which was to be used to completely erase/clean a drive for situations when you are discarding a computer or donating one to some charity or person. The other was MediaWiper for cleaning floppies, I think. I never used either of these two programs. However, I have gotten a lot of use out of SecureClean.

In recent time, I used SecureClean in a sort of ad hoc conjunction with Windows Disk Cleaner. Whenever I noticed that my hard disk space on the C: drive was getting low, I would run one or the other, Disk Cleaner or SecureClean, first and then the second application, and in a couple of iterations my hard disk space would be back at a reasonable percentage. That worked well enough so that no future problem was on the radar. As time passed, though, it seemed to take more cycles of the two programs to achieve the desired result. Of course, during this time, anti-virus programs were changed from Kaspersky to AVG and back to Kaspersky. Endless updates of virus definitions were done, and digital photos piled up somewhat. Finally it got to a point where my hard disk space was going down, and no amount of running the two programs, Disk Cleaner and SecureClean, in either Quick Clean or Thorough mode, was helping. I called White Canyon and the rep said he would email a coupon for a 50% discount on an update to SecureClean5. I received two emails from them and there was indeed a "coupon" and a link to their support center - http://support.whitecanyon.com/

I figured it was time to update. However, while doing some research online, a Google search came up with Sdelete, which does the same job for free and was released in September of this year. I downloaded the Zip file, scanned it for virus, unzipped the program and ran it. First run retrieved about half a GB.

A couple words about the Sdelete file or utility that I downloaded: It is v1.6 and written by Mark Russinovich from SysIntervals, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Microsoft. Sdelete is a command line utility which takes several options. I used the -c switch on the first run, which is supposed to clean free space. I noticed that, as I got near to 100%, I started getting a little pop-up from the SysTray area telling me that I was getting very low on hard disk space. Well, that's how we got here in the first place. I also thought it was interesting that I got to 106% disk-space cleaning before it quit.

According to the utility documentation supplied at http://technet.microsoft.com/en us/sysinternals/bb897443, the utility indirectly overwrites free space. This is as opposed to opening the disk for raw access and overwriting files, which runs the risk of collision with other applications' active file operations. I take this to mean Windows internal system operations.

In short, I was pleased to be able to reclaim some of my hard drive space and will now consider uninstalling SecureClean rather than update it. I will also run the little command line Sdelete utility (download was 81 kb) with more passes and different switches to see if it will get me any more room back. ◆

Minutes....Continued from page 2

other things on a regular laptop in which a user might be interested. Unfortunately, that installation was having problems identifying some of the hardware components such as the touchpad and networking, so he abandoned that and installed the latest Ubuntu Linux OS and Chrome, and this was a resounding success. He proved that, if you had an older notebook and an old Windows operating system, the Ubuntu/Chrome combination might be a good way to put some life back into the old notebook. It's fast, operates on very little installed memory – unlike Win 7 – boots quickly and has very few updates/virus problems.

Ultimately it made sense in his case to try doing Chromey things on Windows 7. His notebook runs Windows 7 well, and it proves that the Chrome experience can be about the same. The Chromebook has some advantages like light weight and a simplified experience from a maintenance standpoint and boots very fast.

The Linux/Chrome notebook option might be good if it's something you already own, needs a new life, and the Windows 7/Chrome version has the advantage of versatility along with much more complexity. ◆

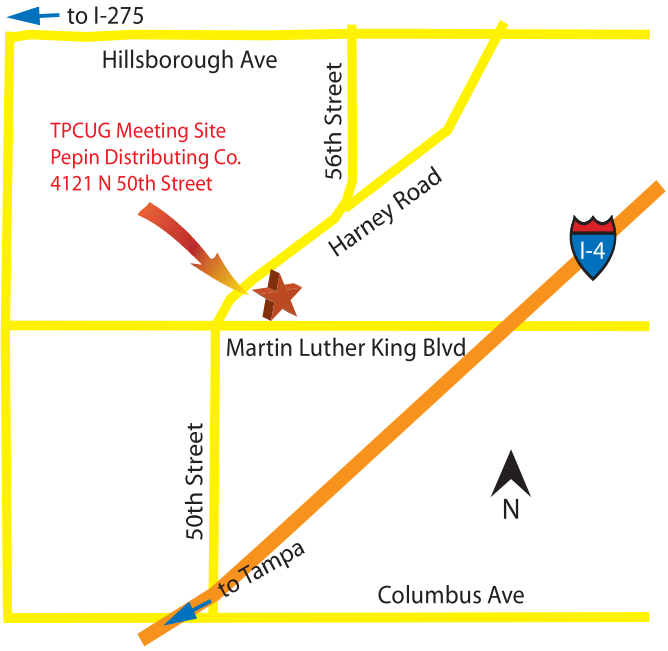
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Camera.....Continued from page 4

of course, many vendors. Amazon and B&H Photo Video are two that I have used often. (If you buy from Amazon, don't forget to go through our site.) We have many local vendors, including North Tampa Photograph who can provide expert advice. I've included one more link below that I think you will find extremely helpful. It explains things about memory cards, sensors, LCD quality and lots more that you may have not considered. Look in the "Point-and-shoot camera features" paragraph: http://www.macworld.com/article/137117/2011/11/buyingguide_cameras.html. ◆



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Conclusion

If money is a concern and if you want Amazon Video, then the Fire is obviously for you. It also has a built-in Kindle reader. However, you can read Kindle content on the iPad, and the iPad has a nicer screen and a better user experience in general, so if you have $500 or more, go for the iPad 2. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



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December in Tampa

Vol. 25 No. 12 December 2012

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

6:30 PM

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Meeting Preview: Holiday Party

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

This is again pretty much a Merle Nicholson newsletter, for which I am again extremely grateful, but he did leave me a little space to fill.

This month he tells us how to set up a new computer with two hard drives: A solid state drive for your operating system and programs and a regular hard drive for your data, temporary files, email files, your desktop, pictures, etc. The process is a bit complicated and certainly time consuming. But if you want a computer than boots fast and runs at optimum speed, this is the setup you want. I went through this process two years ago when I set up Windows 7 on a new desktop machine that Merle built for me then.

This past month I came up with another idea for a Windows 8 application that will make me no money but that should be of interest to a few old-time PC people along with the members of this group. It will allow you to read all of our newsletters beginning in 1988 up through 2012 with the ability to search the entire collection for any word or group of words. I almost

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January Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob touched on a variety of subjects – the main discussion was about Windows Surface, IE9 on Windows XP and Chrome. Ways to send anyone money was a good topic that brought some discussion. And last, Office 13 on Windows 7 and 8; Bob gave a quick demo of Word and Outlook and the difference of the Pro version.

The presentation this month was given by William LaMartin, of LaMartin Software (and the Tampa PC Users Group). LaMartin Software (that's William) has a large collection of programs available for Windows Phone and two apps for the Windows 8 PC platform. There are too many to devote much time here to, but his collection of Windows Phone programs – available on the Microsoft App site: Manhattan 1905, Simple BART, Simple Grocery, Simple Volume, Boston Mosaic, Simple Stocks, Simple Walk and several others.

William started up Visual Studio 2012, the programming development platform used for all these programs. In there are environments called emulators that simulate the target device, so he could demonstrate several – just as you would see them on the device it was intended for. So he gave us some live demos of just a few of his applications. Cell Towers, Manhattan 1905, World News (one of my favorites) and BART on the telephone – that's the Bay Area Transit subway system in San Francisco. For Windows 8 Phone, we saw a speech test of a program William is currently

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

Optimizing Windows 7 and 8 for a Solid State Drive

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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We're going to set up a computer with a solid state drive (SSD) primary boot disk and a second conventional data drive. It makes sense; we want an SSD for fast boot and for fast program startup. For that, an SSD is the way to go. We need more storage for documents, email and contacts, appointments, music, pictures, downloads, image files and data. A conventional mechanical drive is the answer for this. SSDs are relatively expensive and mechanical hard drives are inexpensive. The current technology is merging the two products and reducing the price, but we have a way to go. In the meantime, you can get a 64GB SSD for under a hundred bucks if you're patient.

There are a couple of other considerations, ones that influence the design of our system.

Backups We must do backups, and we may as well optimize our system with this in mind. We want a "system image" backup to quickly restore our boot drive. System Image backup is a backup file of the entire drive. When your system has failed and you need to restore from backup, you don't need a system image that has your entire music collection! All you need is a small, clean boot drive. Your backup should go to a drive that is externally connected. Win 7 Home and Home Premium OS will not back up to a networked drive. A USB or eSATA drive is fine. USB 3 is even better. You cannot retrieve an individual file from a system image.

A data drive is different though. Here you want a file system backup where you can find individual files and even look for earlier versions of a file. A regularly scheduled backup of just the files that have changed is ideal. You don't need a system image of this drive; they're just files.

There are files though that you don't need in a backup at all. TEMP directories, Temporary Internet files, Pagefile, Hibernate file, Search Index Files. I have 52GB of such files. I have a third drive for this purpose, and my automatic backups don't touch these. No need.

Ideally, you would follow the practices I'll be describing on a new computer, or at least a new Windows installation on an old computer. It CAN be done on an existing system but it's just more work.

SSDs The thing to consider is that SSDs have special needs. One, you don't schedule chkdsk and repair and you don't optimize (defrag) SSD's. Why? They are already optimized. If you move files around to shove them together they don't retrieve files any faster and you're hastening the eventual failure (a little) every time they get rewritten. You don't want files that are being constantly rewritten, like pagefiles or search indexes and temporary Internet files on your nice SSD. Your system won't run any faster anyway with these on the SSD. Running faster is the reason you invested in an SSD in the first place. Look at the maintenance schedule in Start, Run, Disk Defragmenter. Make sure there is no scheduled defragmentation on your SSD. Windows should have turned it off for all SSDs, but it needs checking.

My System The arrangement I have put into practice on my Windows 8 computer is as follows:
C: drive – Windows boot installation, a 64GB SSD. 38GB is used out of 59GB formatted. On my primary Windows 7 computer I'm using 43.8 GB. I have moved as many data directories to the data drive as possible. This is backed up irregularly to a system image on a portable drive using Windows Backup and Restore. Note: If you're thinking I don't have much software installed on this computer and you'll have more, you'd be wrong. It IS well organized and maintained, though irregularly. Irregularly means I make a new system image whenever I think I've made enough changes to software or installed or uninstalled something.

D: drive The D drive, the data drive, is 1 TB partitioned into two parts – D: and G:. This has all the

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Optimizing.....Continued from page 3

above mentioned files: documents, email and contacts, appointments, music, pictures, downloads, image files and client data. It is file-backed-up on a regular schedule to a portable drive using Windows Backup and Restore.

G: Drive This is formatted to about 73 GB with 52 GB used. It has SearchIndex Files, TEMP, TMP, Temporary Internet Files and Pagefile.sys and is never backed up. It's a partition on the same physical drive as D:. I could just as easily have used an old drive from a previous system, but not a slow clunker.

How it's accomplished: When Windows is installed, it creates directories and libraries for all your stuff. And all these directories are on the C: drive. So you have to do two things. **One** – either move the directory and its contents to the data drive and tell Windows where it is now, OR recreate the directory in a new location and tell Windows where it is. **Two** – A bunch of other stuff, such as making a setting in Control Panel, Internet Options, General, Browsing history, Settings, and use the Move button to move the Temporary Internet Files directory. Do something similar for Outlook, Windows Mail … etc. – you get the idea.

The following is a pretty formidable list of things to do. There's no need to read on unless you're truly interested in doing this or don't have anything better to do. Although I've done this several times there will be something I've left out, so if you think of something useful – send me an email and I'll add it and update this documentation.

How to move data to the TEMP drive G:

Notation convention: I'm trying to use the underline to denote a specific label or object like a button. If I have Enter the amount of space to shrink, this means there really are those words to look for on the setting panel.

Folder Options: You'll have a very frustrating time following the steps I have here without changing Folder Options first. Go to Control Panel, Folder Options, View tab. Select (enable) Show hidden files, folders and drives and then uncheck Hide extensions for known file types and uncheck Hide protected operating system files. You may want to re-check Hide protected operating system files later when we're done.

Temp Drive Creation: I created my G: drive using Start, Administrative tools, Computer Management, Storage, Disk Management, Right-Click D: drive, Shrink Volume, Entered 75,000 MB in Enter the amount of space to shrink, and clicked Shrink. That left a 75GB unlocated drive, from which I created a Simple volume, Label TEMP, Mount as Drive G and formatted as NTFS. If you uncheck the Quick Format the disk will format in 20 minutes or less. The result is a data drive D and a TEMP drive G on the same physical drive.

TEMP, TMP and Windows\TEMP: In the G drive I created the folders TEMP, TMP and Windows. In the Windows folder, I created two folders TEMP and TMP.

In Control Panel, System, Advanced system settings. In Performance, select the Settings button, then Advanced tab, and Virtual memory, Change button. You're now looking at a settings panel called Virtual Memory. Clear the check box Automatically manage paging file size…., Select C drive, then No paging file, and press Set button. Do the same for the D: drive. For the G: drive you can either click on System Managed file or set a Custom size. I set a Custom size equal to my installed memory. In my case, 8,000 for Initial size and for Maximum size. Click Set button here. Don't forget that. This will require a reboot to take effect, but we're returning to setting TEMP variables. So an OK on Virtual Memory. OK on the warning about rebooting. OK on Performance Options, and we're back to System Properties, Advanced tab.

In the System Properties, Advanced tab, click the Environment Variables button. Edit the User variables for {loginName}. Click on the TEMP line, click Edit button, edit to G:\TEMP. Then edit the TMP line to G:\TMP. Under System Variables, scroll down to TEMP and Edit the line to G:\Windows\TEMP. For TMP, I used G:\Windows\TMP. OK on Environment Vari-

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Internet Picture of the Month



HMS Bounty Sinks

Hurricane Sandy sinks the HMS Bounty replica of the coast of North Carolina on its way to St. Petersburg. This is a Getty Image that was used at many sites on the Internet. This copy came from the site http://womc.cbslocal.com/2012/10/30/tall-ship-hms-bounty-sunk-by-hurricane-sandy/

Comments.....Continued from page 1

have the application completed and just did a couple of searches for words like holiday party or Christmas party or just party or just Christmas, and it appears that we had our first end of the year party in 1999.

I also did a search for autoexec.bat and found 41 pages beginning in 1989 and ending in 2000. Do you even recall what an autoexec.bat file was? Do you recall the software company Delrina? No? Well, there are 51 pages with them mentioned. And I note that the word Internet first appears in July of 1992. You can search until you have run out of words, or you can simply start with the first newsletter and browse through it and those that follow. ◆

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
PriceGrabber.Com	http://www.pricegrabber.com/
Cathedrals - Cathedrals of the World	http://www.sacred-destinations.com/categories/cathedrals
Beer Me - Beer info	http://beerme.com/
The Verge - Technology, science, culture	http://www.theverge.com/

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ables. While we're here, I always go to Startup and Recovery, Settings button, and under System Failure, I clear Automatically Restart check box. If I have a failure, I want to see what the error is, and I certainly don't want it to automatically restart. I can't believe this is checked by default for the last 10 years.

Temporary Internet Files: Control Panel, Internet Options, General tab, Browsing history, Settings button. Tab Temporary Internet Files. There's a button Move folder . . . Select the G drive. It will create a new location G:\Temporary Internet Files. Wasn't that easy? In Windows 8, the system logs you off after asking permission.

Indexing location: This relocates the index files created for fast file searches. If you have a lot of files, and you also want everything indexed as I do, the index files can be large. I don't see the point in backing them up because they're constantly changing, and the indexing service will reproduce them whenever needed. Whether it is moved to the D data drive or the G TEMP drive is up to you. For me, they must be removed from the SSD because they're so volatile. Control Panel, Indexing Options. Select Advanced, and Index Setting tab, Select new button. Click on G and Make New Folder. I named the folder SearchIndex. Select the new folder and OK.

While you're here, you may want to review the file indexing drives and folders. I tend to check everything in C: and D: except for the Recycle Bins, and obviously do not include anything on the G TEMP drive. Ok and Close. You'll see that the indexing service will be hard at work for a while.

After a reboot is the time to manually delete all the files in the old TEMP, TMP and Temporary Internet files. I would not delete these old directories. There will always be some errant program that will look for a TEMP directory in the old location.

Miscellaneous tuning and improvements

Hibernate: Before we go on to the Document directories, let's get rid of the file hiberfil.sys in the root directory. This is used to Hibernate, and has no place on a desktop machine with an SSD boot drive. It's a significant amount of file space. (Mine was 23GB!) Open a Command Prompt from its shortcut by right-clicking and Run as administrator. Enter powercfg –h off. This also eliminates the Hibernate choice in Start, Shutdown and also in power settings. If you change your mind about this later on, you can change it back using on in the command line.

Logon: Next, let's make it so that when you power on your machine, you go right to the desktop without logging on. In Start, Run, enter netplwiz. This is the advanced User Account Setting. On the Users tab, clear the checkmark next to Users must enter a user name and password . . . .. Doing this is NOT appropriate unless you have every expectation that you can maintain who can access your computer. You would NEVER do this on a notebook that ever left your household. Otherwise, keep the logon and password. While you're here, the Advanced tab is where you can manage passwords and secure logon settings

Performance Tuning: Last, let's do some performance tuning. Control Panel, System, Advanced system settings. In Performance Settings button, then Visual Effects tab. If you experiment here, you'll see that if you have a reasonably powerful machine that if you choose Let Windows choose or Adjust for best appearance it will check on all options, and Adjust for best performance will uncheck all options. A little experimentation will help you make a compromise between the appearance and performance. For myself there are some appearances that I consider the mainstay of Windows 7; Enable Aero Peek, Enable desktop composition, Show thumbnails instead of icons, Show window contents while dragging (I would not select this on a weak machine or weak graphics), Smooth edges of screen fonts, Use visual styles on windows and buttons. I just don't notice the difference if I check anything else. I also uncheck (clear) the box Enable transparency in Control Panel, Personalization, Window Color. That's a personal preference of course, but I think it's significant that it isn't an option on a system with a weak graphics adapter. I also Adjust the ClearType in Control Panel, Appearance and Person-

Optimizing.....Continued on page 7

Optimizing.....Continued from page 6

alization, Adjust ClearType text, and of course make sure ClearType is enabled.

Later, you will want to look at all your startup items and eliminate all the junk. And after you install programs, it will be loaded with even more. In Start, Run, enter msconfig and then the Startup tab. Here you will find that there will be a Google Update, and Google Chrome, iTunes and Adobe updates; lots of HP items that makes your printer and scanner look at you 24/7. Uncheck all that crap and see how things go; you can always restore the check later if something doesn't work right. You'll need your Security Client (anti-virus) intact, but you definitely do not need your Java platform and Adobe calling home every time you boot. Believe me, your iTunes will work just fine without the startup item. There is a lot written on this subject, and if you are on the fence about something just ask Google about it.

Relocate Data to the D: drive.

If you look at the properties of some folders, you'll see an extra tab called Location. Right-click and get Properties of the folder C:\Users\{AccountName}\Desktop and you'll see one of these. On this tab you'll find a quick explanation and the means to move any existing files to a new preexisting folder. We'll use this to move much of the default data locations to drive D. When we're done, when you open Word or Documents or Pictures, you'll go to the files stored on your data drive D:. One caution; if you have multiple logins – Administrator and user accounts for other people; this procedure must be repeated for each account.

Create a new Users folder in the D: Drive. That's D:\Users. Inside of Users, create a user account named folder. Mine is named D:\Users\Merle. Don't use mine unless your name is Merle. Under D:\Users\Merle create 10 new folders named Contacts, Desktop, Downloads, Favorites, Links, My Documents, My Music, My Pictures, My Videos and Searches. These are the folders we're going to use the move functions on the Location tabs. I'm not aware of any others. After creating these folders, use the properties of each in their original locations to move them. As you do these, the old folders themselves will disappear by the process. I know; it makes no sense; if the folders are deleted automatically, why are the new ones are not created automatically, too? Remember to do this for every user name that logs onto the computer. That was easy. It's the heart of this article, and it was the easiest to describe.

Mail: If you are using Microsoft Windows Mail, add a folder D:\Users\Merle\Windows Mail, and if you're using Office Outlook, add a folder D:\Users\Merle\Outlook. These locations are optional of course. Sometime I put the mail directories under My Documents, but usually under D:\Users\Merle. If you have started using either Outlook or Windows Mail, it's fairly easy to go into the setting of these and change the file locations, carefully recording the original location, copying the contents or moving the entire folder to the new location, change the mail setting. Microsoft Outlook is much more complicated than this. While it's easy to relocate the main mail .pst file, there are other files to consider; contacts, address book, calendar and mail account settings, and categories. They are NOT in the same folder. Crazy, huh? The locations of these are well documented on Microsoft Office help sites. It's easiest if you do not have mail accounts set up yet, so there is no risk.

Finally: You have to be diligent, at least for a while, and every time you install and use a new program. A new program will have its preprogrammed location to store your newly made file, and that location may not be My Documents and especially maybe not on the D: drive where you want everything kept. So in saving a file, pay particular attention to where it initially wants to save and change that to an existing or new directory on D:. Then look at the programs settings and see if there's a default directory you can set yourself. The object of course is to keep the amount of disk used on your SSD to a minimum, but more importantly to locate all files in a common location for your scheduled backups. ◆

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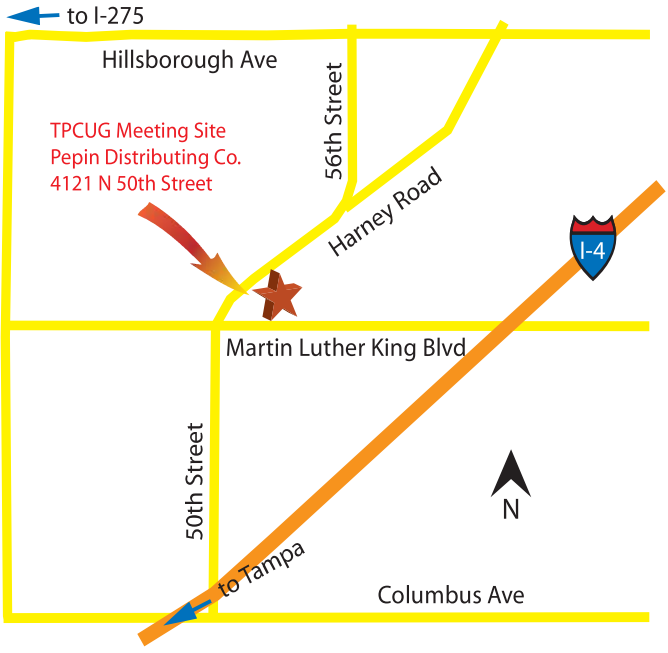
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

working on, and, for Windows 8, a Cell Tower application the – cell towers in the US from the FTC database combined with Bing maps. Our heartfelt thanks go to William for his interesting presentation and the time he devoted to preparing it.

John Witmer concluded the meeting with a reminder of the plans for the December 10 holiday party and the plans for the Board for the coming year. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 25 No. 1 January 2012

January in Tampa

Meeting

Bob LaFave
on
Several Interesting Items

Wednesday, January 11, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Bob LaFave will demonstrate using a tuner and Windows Media center for recording encrypted TV and other topics.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

This has been a rough month to get out the newsletter, but we again made it with the help of Merle Nicholson, John Witmer and Rob Davis as contributors. It really is not difficult to write an article for the newsletter. Just describe some problem you solved or some new item you purchased that is computer, smart phone, digital camera, etc. related. I know you can do it, and it would greatly be appreciated.

Most of my computer activity in the past month has been writing apps for the Windows Phone 7. I did manage to complete the yearly directory for our Hyde Park neighborhood. It is a booklet of 44 five inch by eight inch pages. The layout is done in Adobe InDesign. The neighborhood data is maintained in Microsoft Access, and I use a Microsoft Visual Studio program I wrote to extract the data from Access in a format that I can then use in InDesign. So it is a bit complicated and almost assures that I will never find anyone else in the neighborhood who will be willing to take over the project.

Comments.....Continued on page 6

February Meeting: To be announced

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Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org) 988-6480
Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
Secretary: Merle Nicholson (merle@merlenicholson.com) 879-3602
Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net) 960-4132

APPOINTED (Volunteers)

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Our usual meeting was suspended in favor of our annual club dinner at Pepin Distributors, hosted by our TPCUG President, John Witmer. This year the dinner was held in one of the Pepin meeting rooms. John did his usual fine job of ordering food and getting it set up for our little group. This year, large round tables were set up encouraging conversation. It was a very nice addition. As usual, the food was excellent, and John was a great host. Thanks for the hard work, John and for the whole year as well. Our thanks and best wishes go to Pepin Distributors also.

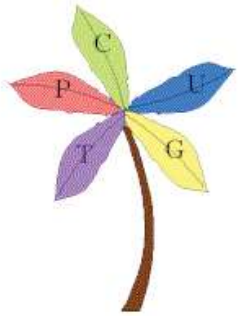
Our slate of TPCUG Officers remains unchanged for 2012.

John Witmer, President
Kevan Sheridan, Vice President
Doug Mullis, Treasurer
Merle Nicholson, Secretary
Ron Weinberg, Member at Large

Appointed positions:
Doug Mullis, Program Coordinator
William LaMartin, Editor and Webmaster
Bob LaFave, Windows SIG

Happy New Year.

Merle Nicholson, Secretary ◆



What Are You Doing Feb 25-28, 2013? Need A Getaway?

By John Witmer, FACUG Treasurer
president@tpcug.org

Most of us don't plan that far in advance, but the Florida Association of Computer User Groups is, and they have a very unique opportunity being pursued currently to obtain the buyout of a luxury resort for exclusive use in holding the 2013 FACUG Technology Symposium. The 2012 Technology Conference cruise is about to depart Miami on January 23rd of this year, and it is too late for you to reconsider attending it. But, that doesn't mean you should be left out of the 2013 conference. At the request of many attendees to these last couple of cruises, the FACUG will move to a land-based Conference in 2013 provided we can get the initial support to make the financial commitment to the resort.

So, what resort are we talking about? It is the only all-inclusive CLUB MED location in these United States, and it is located in Port St. Lucie, FL on the east coast of our fair state. Only a couple of hours away by car, if you are thinking of a great vacation getaway in early 2013, this is something you should seriously consider. There are huge advantages to being able to buy out the resort for our exclusive use and pleasure, and I would like you to check it all out by logging into the http://www.facug.org website, and selecting the 2013 Conference from the menu on the left. Here is where you can read all about the plans, dates, cost, and get a look at what awaits you if you should decide to join the FACUG in this once in a lifetime opportunity for learning and playing all at the same time.

Why am I promoting this event that is 14 months away? First, I signed on to be the Treasurer for the FACUG early last year and have become acutely aware of what FACUG is doing and offering to Florida PC User Groups, as well as groups outside the state. I will be participating in the 2012 Conference in a couple of weeks and look forward to the whole experience. I am a supporter for the 2013 Conference that will happen provided that we can get enough participants to register and put up a deposit by February 14th next month that will ensure the financial viability of FACUG putting down a non-refundable deposit to buyout the resort for its use in February 2013. So, I am asking if you have the desire and means to participate in the 2013 Technology Symposium, check it out on the website and make a commitment to attend. Let me know if you have any questions, and I will get you the answers. I am getting the impression that those land-based conferences that we attended in Kissimmee and Zephyrhills a few years ago for FACUG are no longer viable, and participants want a much bigger experience to draw their interest. The FACUG is trying to provide such an opportunity, and it is working as we have over 400 participants from across the country on the Norwegian Sky attending the 2012 Conference/ Cruise. Give it some thought! ◆

2012 Election of Officers

By John Witmer,President,
Tampa PC Users Group
president@tpcug.org

At our Holiday Party meeting on Dec. 14th, the following slate of candidates for the officer positions shown was presented and unanimously approved for the coming year 2012. These candidates are presently holding the same position in 2011 and had previously agreed to continue in that same responsibility for the New Year 2012. There were no other candidates that volunteered for a position or came forth for consideration. Elected to represent the TPCUG in 2012 were:

President: John Witmer
Vice-President: Kevan Sheridan
Secretary: Merle Nicholson
Treasurer: Doug Mullis
Member-at-Large: Ron Weinberg

Also appointed and continuing in their same position with the Group for 2012 are Doug Mullis as Program Chair, and William LaMartin as our Newsletter Editor and Webmaster.

2012.....Continued on page 8

Camera.....Continued from page 4

Verizon Wireless Home Connect

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I switched my home phone land line to wireless. It's still a home phone, is on the cellular network, but uses no wires. (Actually, there are about ten feet of wires involved).

For background, like many of our members, I have FiOS. FiOS is fibre-optical cabling to the house. It was supplying TV, Internet (25/25) and house phone. I had traditional copper wire until FiOS was installed, and to my surprise they insisted my house phone be switched over to FiOS. I said no, they said yes. It was a package deal, and I agreed to it, so I would have known the details if I'd only read the fine print. So the line was physically patched into the FiOS box, and the copper to my house has been abandoned. Actually that's good. Fibre-optic is much more rugged and reliable than old copper.

The FiOS-supported phone was still a "traditional" phone line in that the calls went to the local switching station that is a part of the local phone network. The next step up is to convert this line to "Digital". This is something that is done remotely – my impression is that it's a computer thing, there are no physical changes – that takes you off the local network. There are two apparent changes when going digital. One is that you must start using the area code even when calling inside your own area. OK. The other change is that your bill will be reduced – my reduction will be about $6.50 because it will no longer be subject to a federal tax. Actually I have mixed feelings about this. I think when government spending and indebtedness increases, reducing government income isn't the best idea. Duh.

Verizon people on a couple of occasions have "offered" to convert us to a digital home phone, but aside from the $6.50 monthly reduction, they couldn't present a case for it. I think the advantage is all theirs, and I knew I would lose a couple hours on the phone either getting it to work or getting the billing right. Kind of like living with the devil. But one person told me that I was going to be switched over to digital within a month or so with or without my participation. I figured if I am going to change, and my billing is going to change, I may as well look at all the options. So I looked at wireless.

Wireless using a cell phone:
Scouring Amazon got me very quickly to a Wireless cellphone/Bluetooth option. There are two types of devices. Both require you to buy a new – or use an old – cellphone with Bluetooth. You add this phone to your cellphone account (everyone has one), and ask that they use your land line number. You put the cellphone down, turn it on, attach a charger to it, leave it on a table and never turn it off. It communicates using Bluetooth with the new device Amazon shipped you . Of the two types of devices, one device is just a black box and has a telephone jack on it. You plug your house phone to that jack. You don't even have to tell your family what you've done, because everything works the same way. The house phone just isn't plugged into the wall anymore. The other option works exactly the same way except that it includes new house phones, and is all in one. It communicates via Bluetooth, has an answer machine built into the base station and one wireless phone. Then – depending on the model, you have one or more – maybe six – handsets placed all over your house that communicate wirelessly to the base station. Mine are made by Panasonic. I've used these for many years with a conventional plug; I'm on my second set that has a base station and three handsets for total of four. I'd have seven except for my policy of never answering the phone from a bathroom. I let it ring until the "survey" company gives up.

OK, so you've just added a cell phone to your family plan, discontinued the land line, reused the home phone number and plugged in your current telephone, and your family doesn't know the difference because you pay the bills – which have gone down because you no longer have the $30 land line. You've discontinued the inside wire maintenance fee, and lost a federal tax. Your wireless family plan has gone up only $10/month, and you got a new free flip phone with no features except Bluetooth for free; it can't even take

Verizon.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Sarasota Chalk Festival From flickr at http://www.flickr.com/photos/dufois/6320944911/. The description is: "3D street painting made by Leon Keer, Ruben Poncia, Remko van Schaik and Peter Westerink during the 4th Sarasota Chalk Festival in Florida US"

Verizon.....Continued from page 4

pictures. Oh, and there is no longer a monthly access fee because you don't need a long distance carrier. That's gone, too.

Here's the bad:
Your new house phone now uses your wireless family minutes. Better keep an eye on that! More on that below.

Last Option – the one I picked.
I'm not sure how I found this. I was looking at the Verizon Wireless phones and plans and stumbled on a tab for "Home Phone Connect." It is shown in the picture on the following page.

It's a variation of the other devices I was considering. It has the cell phone built in, hence the antenna. It has a power cube that also charges a battery and two telephone jacks. One of these goes to the Panasonic base station – the same one I've had for many years and like very much. I tried to order this on the Verizon website and gave up, then talked to a couple of Verizon people. It took about an hour-and-a-half on the phone. And that was without talking to the non-wireless people. They FedEx'd the device to me, and since Christmas Day and the day after intervened, it took two FedEx days to get it to me.

Verizon.....Continued on page 6

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Diseases & Conditions - Medscape Reference	http://emedicine.medscape.com/
Sarasota Chalk Festival	http://www.chalkfestival.com/
The Commodore 64 is 30	http://www.reghardware.com/2012/01/02/commodore_64_30_birthday/

Verizon.....Continued from page 5



We have been using 1/10 of our 700 minutes on three family phones every month. We're not chatty Cathys. But the land line is going to be a different story. I can look at my daily usage online, and also from my smart phone, and I'll be keeping a close eye on it. I can change the plan any time I want by breaking out this phone from my family plan and go to an unlimited local and long distance plan for $20/month vs. the $10/month I'm paying now. We'll see. ◆

I plugged it in, attached an old spare wired phone to it and immediately called the number indicated to activate it. The instructions were clear. I could phone out on this, but incoming calls would continue on my land line until Verizon/wired released the land line number. That took three non-holiday/non-weekend days, actually shorter than they warned. Wednesday morning, the regular phone was dead – no dial tone, so I transferred the base station to the Home Connect. It's been working(almost) perfectly since. The cost? The $129.95 cost was $49.95 with a two year contract, and a $35 one-time connect fee. And $10/month.

One problem – the day after – we determined the Call Waiting wasn't working, and that is important to us. I called *611, got transferred to the Home Connect technician. He reprogrammed it remotely. I assisted by pulling the battery to get it to reboot, and I reactivated it. Then he tested it by calling that number on two phones. Excellent and efficient.

Watching the minutes:

Comments.....Continued from page 1

As for my phone apps, I now have eight in the Windows Phone Marketplace. They are making me very little money, but I am enjoying doing them. The main reason for the small return is that I chose to have them display small ads for the ad income and make them free instead of making them paid apps. Now I realize that for ad supported apps, the apps need to be things like games where people stick with them for an extended time. My apps are not "sticky." You use them for a few minutes and then move to something else.

I entered one of the apps in a contest run by New York City, http://2011.nycbigapps.com/. New York City has made much of their data available online and has asked developers to write apps that use it. I chose to use nine of their datasets, such as WiFi locations, parking garage locations and museum locations in my app that places the items on maps with the associated information. The link to my submission is

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Wireless Fun & Games

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
robd234@gmail.com

Back in November, I got cross-threaded with Verizon and changed to bright house for the Internet. I pretty well got everyone changed over to my Gmail address from the Verizon one. However, bright house didn't offer a free wireless router. Someone said if I had asked they would have provided one. But this seemed OK since I wanted to have my own wireless router. That way I wouldn't have to change things if I switched ISPs again. I have a wireless laser printer, which worked fine on a USB cable, but I wanted it to go wireless as before so my other computers could use it. So I bought a D-Link wireless router model DIR 615. That's when the chaos started.

The router comes with very little documentation, but has a CD with a Wizard program to install it. The Wizard is maybe for more advanced users than I because I could never get the router properly installed using it. Finally, after contacting their technical support, we resolved the problem. I was letting the computer generate a security key. I would copy it to a thumb drive, paste it in the net card on the other computer and it would not work. Finally, the tech guy said to put in a manual key, and that worked. Now I could talk to the Internet from every computer – great!

The next project was to make the laser printer wireless and accessible from all computers. I went through the wireless set-up Wizard with no luck. I called for Samsung tech support and was walked through the set-up by addressing the printer via its network address. The Samsung tech support is great! All went well. I was able to access the printer from all computers that day. However, the next day the printer was no longer available! After much fiddling I discovered it had changed its network address all by itself! So I reinstalled it again with the new address. After that didn't work, I called tech support again. The change that fixed the problem was changing the TCP/IP type from DHCP to STATIC. If I understood him correctly, he said every time the printer is turned off and on again, it would use a different network address. Why would anyone do that? Anyhow, after much de-installing and reinstalling, we got it working from all computers again. So far I have powered off and on the printer and computers several times and everything still works. So I told myself welcome to the wireless world. Another way to spend hours fixing things to save time using computers. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 6

http://2011.nycbigapps.com/submissions/5695-nyc-data.

In doing the submission, I had to make my first YouTube video since the submission required a Video hosted at YouTube demonstrating the use of the app. The link to the YouTube video is http://youtu.be/OYkj7CHK7CI. Now that I have done one, I might make such a video for my other apps.

Happy New Year to all! ◆

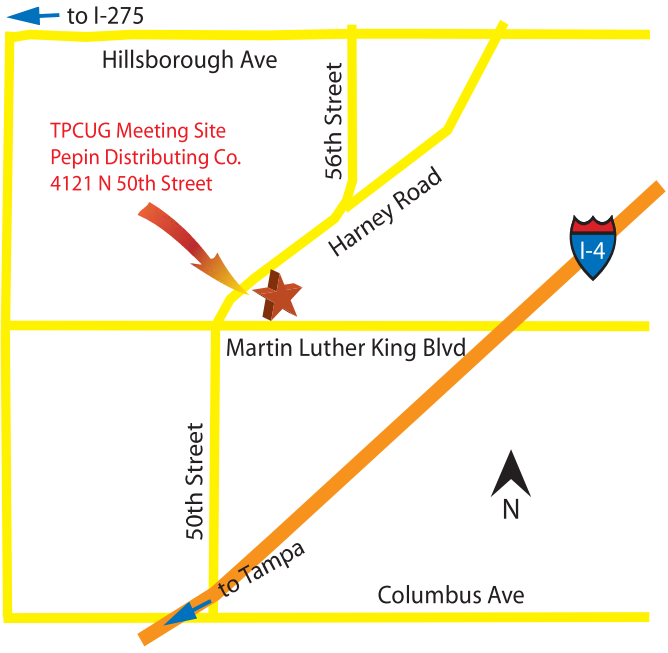
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2012.....Continued from page 3

At a time when many PC user groups are losing membership to the point of fading away, we have managed to maintain a reasonable base of members who attend the meetings and support the Club. Our Club's existence also requires that we have people who are willing to assume the duties and responsibilities needed to keep the Club going, and make it worth your time and effort to attend the meetings. All of the persons elected and appointed above have demonstrated a desire to make this Club worthwhile, and your continued support of their efforts is greatly appreciated. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 25 No. 2 February 2012



February in Tampa

Meeting

Stephen Blaylock of Barnes & Noble on The Nook

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Barnes & Noble will demonstrate their Nook ereader. As usual for the first 30 minutes, Bob LaFave will conduct our Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Please note for now and in your calendar/schedule that the March meeting (not this meeting) date has been moved forward to a Thursday evening at 6:30 PM (March 8th). We have made this one-time change in order to allow the Group to receive a presentation from Gene Barlow, who will be in our area for a limited time, but not on the usual March 14th meeting date. It has been a couple of years since we last heard from Gene, and we wanted to allow our members to hear from him again, and to have a chance to see and purchase his latest offering of software for the hard drive and backups. Please make sure you have this Thursday date in March set aside to attend our meeting in lieu of the normal 2nd Wednesday.

Merle has put some interesting graphics in the minutes. They are QR codes, and there are three of them. If you have a smartphone that will read such codes (I think most do), then by reading the code with the phone, you can go to the web site it represents using the phone. Give it a try. It worked for me. ◆

March Meeting: Thursday, March 8th by Gene Barlow

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$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

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Affiliations

Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the January Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob had a very successful session demonstrating desktop search, starting with the Windows Explorer Search. Since Windows Explorer Search will index and search the contents of documents, the question was asked about searching PDF files. A member had a collection of PDF that needed searching, and she asked about what was on the market. Bob showed the third-party search program Copernic Desktop Search, but also did some searching on the subject in Winsows Search and found the Adobe Registered iFilter 9 for Windows Explorer. This is added as an Explorer add-in. After installation, it indexed quickly. Bob tested it on a couple of documents in the meeting, and it worked amazingly fast. It's bundled with Adobe Reader 9 for Windows 32-bit and for 64-bit platforms. Go to http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/detail.jsp?ftpID=4025

Important announcement – March meeting date change: John Witmer announced a change in the March meeting date. It has moved to the second Thursday, March 8, to accommodate the presentation speaker, Gene Barlow. Please note that this is 6 days before the regular meeting date. Gene has been a regular speaker at the TPCUG meetings for many, many years and always has an interesting presentation. Gene and Linda Barlow live in St. George, Utah and run a business User Group Store, http://www.ugr.com. They market Acronis Backup Utility, True Image Home 2012, Partitioning Utility Acronis Disk Direc-

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Phoneography

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
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I've had a cell phone for many years. It was just a phone with no frills because all I had ever needed was a portable phone. I retired in 1997, so the phone, a laptop and a Palm Pilot continued to provide all of the "mobile" services that I needed at a very reasonable cost. They provided the information that I required and an understandable and easily accessible database of information that had grown from the time that I began using a (manual) Daytimer back in the early 1970's while working in the Pentagon for six years and then for the next eight years as I worked as a budget officer in Washington D.C.

The Franklin Day Planner was first produced in 1984. Somewhere in the late 1990s, I switched to the Franklin Planner when they developed a Windows software program based on Microsoft Access that allowed me to accumulate all of the information on a computer. Going to cut and paste from erase and rewrite was a huge step. You could also print Planner pages in the size and format of the blank Planner pages. The really great thing that they did was sync the program with the Palm Pilot. When I got the ad from Franklin Covey hyping the Palm Pilot I looked at the picture of this little rectangular box with no keyboard and hardly even any buttons, I was certainly not impressed.

I finally let curiosity take over, and my wife and I drove over to Orlando to the Franklin Covey store one evening and the saleswoman very quickly and skillfully showed me why I was living in the dark ages without one. The software and the Palm were probably the best PDP system that I have experienced. Instead of trying to refine it Franklin Covey decided to replace it. To make a very long story short, the replacement program was a mess, and the Palm product died not long after I purchased the Palm that I am now using. It is over 10 years old and is still working, but barely.

I explored many options and spent endless hours trying to find a suitable replacement. I finally decided to buy a Droid X2 smart phone and find the apps to build a system that would satisfy my needs. I'm making a little headway, but it is still a work in progress to say the least.

When I purchased the Droid X2, I inherited what I assumed was a pretty good simple but very portable 8 megapixel "snapshot" camera. The capability of the camera, the scores of apps that have been written and the unbelievable accessories that are being developed sold to enhance this "snapshot" camera is why I decided to write this article.

The first real eye opener that I had in seeing the obsessive way that people are using these cameras and the pictures that they produce was an article in an email photography newsletter called *Photojojo*. The articles in this newsletter are unusual in nature, as is the equipment and novelties that they sell in their Photojojo Store. This article had *10 Tips to make your Phone Photos Amazing.* I'll summarize the article, and I won't list the many apps that are identified to perform the functions discussed, but if you are interested in the detail and a look at the many apps that they reference, you can find the article at: http://content.photojojo.com/tips/improve-your-phoneography/?utm_source=Photojojo+Newsletter&utm_campaign=b710638d0d-10_Phone_Photo_Tips01_02_2012&utm_medium=email . You might want to wait for the online version of the newsletter to be able to use the link. You can also subscribe to the free newsletter at this site.

The first tip is on controlling the exposure of your picture and taking advantage of the extremes to produce your desired effect. They mention the built in features of the camera on some phones and apps that give you a wide capability of options. There are apps that give you control over your phone's flash to the extent that you can leave the flash on continuously while you set up your shot, insuring that you get the exposure that you want. You can purchase eight vibrant, pocket-sized color filters on a handy ring, ready to hold over your lens or flash ($15.00). See the first photo on next page.

Phoneography.....Continued on page 4



Color Filters



holga iphone lens

Phoneography.....Continued from page 3

They also sell a lens dial that mounts 9 special effects on your phone. See the second photo.

There are several apps available that help you combine and split pictures in creative ways just as you would with prints in a frame (see the third photo). There are several examples in the article and at the instagram blog: http://blog.instagram.com/post/12302863597/combiningphotos.

You have a choice of several apps that allow you to add a blurring effect on your photo (Tilt/Shift). The thing that has most astounded me is the fact that supplemental lenses are sold for smart phones and what is even more puzzling is that there is such a wide range in the type and price for these lenses. You can buy a set of lenses that attach magnetically to your phone. The set includes a wide angle – macro lens, a



Separate photos combined



Set of lenses

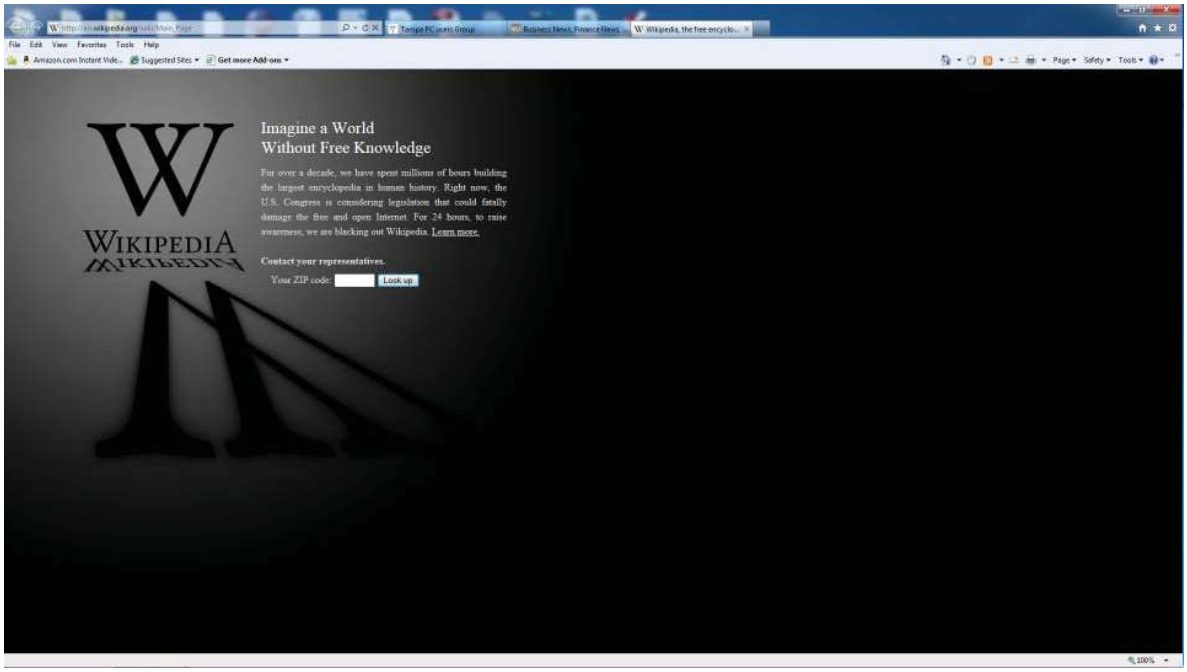
fisheye lens and a 2X telephoto lens for $49.00 . You can buy an 8X telephoto lens that includes a case that is the mount for the lens, a tripod, and a cleaning cloth for $35.00. You can buy both kits and a handy carrying case for $79.00.

There is a mount for either a Canon or Nikon SLR lenses for $249.00 each. Who would want to do this? See the last photo.

Apps are available to shoot your smart phone in the HDR mode in which several photos are taken and

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Internet Picture of the Month



Wikipedia went dark for a day On January 18, 2012, a series of coordinated protests occurred against two proposed laws in the United States Congress—the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the PROTECT IP Act (PIPA). The main such site was Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/.

Phoneography.....Continued from page 4



averaged to produce a more perfect picture. The article suggests that the process creates all sorts of special effects if you shoot fast moving objects, shake or toss the camera during the process. The article covered apps that allow the photographer to combine photographs. These apps will probably excite the photographers that experimented with double and triple exposure photos with conventional cameras.

As you can see the capability of the apps and the smart phones range from simple, affordable and helpful to complicated, expensive and experimental. The newsletters are loaded with information and links to blogs that have even more information. ◆

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Zulucam - Live video of an African waterhole	http://www.elecam.org/
esri (GIS program)	http://www.esri.com/
QR Stuff	http://www.qrstuff.com
Microsoft Access forum	http://www.utteraccess.com/forum/index.php?app=portal



Mapping with Arc GIS Explorer

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Last month a friend asked me if there was a way I could calculate the latitude and longitude of several lots in Polk County he had bought in a bankruptcy auction. He could look at the Polk County Property Appraiser's web site and locate the eight one acre parcels and roughly see they were a bit north of Highway 60, but the map was not all that good, and it didn't supply any latitude and longitude. He needed the coordinates of the lots if he wanted to stand on his land. Now, mind you, he was going to have to walk over several lots owned by others to actually get to his lots since he had bought lots with no road access. He had bought into a classic Florida land scam. But he was lucky, having only paid $1,000 per lot. The original buyers supposedly paid much more for each lot. However, it is basically worthless land. Land that you have no access to is not worth all that much unless you can sell it to a neighboring owner who does have road access or he will sell to you.

So, why is an article about real estate in a computer newsletter? Because I am going to introduce you to a free computer program that will give the latitude and longitude for the above mentioned lots but also do much more. It is also free. The program is Arc GIS Explorer, and it is a large download. You may download it at http://www.esri.com/software/arcgis/explorer/download.html.

GIS stands for Graphic Information System, which, quoting the web site, "lets us visualize, question, analyze, interpret, and understand data in many ways that reveal relationships, patterns, and trends in the form of maps, globes, reports, and charts." Once you have the program, you need something to display. You can import various kinds of data into the program. I imported what are known as shape files which I acquired from various public entities that were nice enough to make them available, Hillsborough County, Tampa, and the above mentioned Polk County to name a few. The screen capture above is of the program displaying for part of Davis Islands the Hillsborough County real estate parcel boundaries in blue (for color see this newsletter at our web site) along with the historic lot

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boundaries (when the subdivisions were originally platted) in yellow. Additionally, there are two roughly vertical purple lines on the left that delineate the flood zones. The westernmost few yards of the island are in the worst zone, and the remaining entire island is in the next zone. So it is not where you want to be in a Cat 4 or 5 hurricane. You are seeing the results of three shape files. Note that a shape file is no more than a collection of coordinates (latitude and longitude) along with the information on which points are connected to other points by lines.

Other shape files provided are Tampa storm water pipes, neighborhoods, historic districts, Hillsborough County subdivisions and section lines. Additionally, for the parcels, if you click on any parcel – for example, the lot where your house is – you will be provided with the same information as at the property appraiser's site: information like lot size, house heated square feet, etc. You will even be provided with your own name.

As I said, Polk County provides similar information, just not as much. But many other counties in Florida provided nothing in my brief searching. I was interested in both New Orleans and New York City, and they provided varying amounts of information in the form of shape files. The Federal Government also is a source of information from the Census and other agencies. There are also other types of files you can download. One such is called a kml file. From FEMA I downloaded a shape file that showed how far inland Hurricane Katrina pushed water over the Mississippi coast.

It is quite interesting if you love data and maps. Just last evening I found a kml file of all the locations in the US of places in the Trust for Historic Preservation and a shape file of all know bald eagle nesting sites in Florida. And as I have time, I am sure I will be adding to my collection of interesting data overlays to put on the map. By the way, the map is of the world, so you can look for data from anywhere. Perhaps there is a file for WWII battles. Who knows? ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

tor 11 Home and Internet Security Invivus Protection Services. You can obtain these products from Gene and Linda on CD at the meeting, or download at the same price.

John Witmer also recognized our long-term member Bob Davis, President of the Society for the Preservation of Early Country and Western Music, Inc. http://mysite.verizon.net/res77qfb/societyforthepreservationofearlycountrywesternmusicinc/id14.html. The QR code for the site is:

SPECWM is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of the traditional sound of country and western music through various programs and projects. See the Tampa Bay Online article at http://www2.tbo.com/news/brandon/2011/nov/21/twangin-and-toe-tappin-old-country-on-tuesdays-ar-325444/. The QR code for the site is:

The program was presented by Bob LaFave – Windows Media Center. Also Windows Live Movie Maker for video editing. Since Bob didn't have a TV connection, his presentation centered on movie captures, editing and transferring to DVD for long term storage. He talked about the Ceton TV cablecard, both the PCIe internal card and the external USB version. These two devices bring TV into your house and present it on a computer and, optionally, your WideScreen

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492

First Class Mail

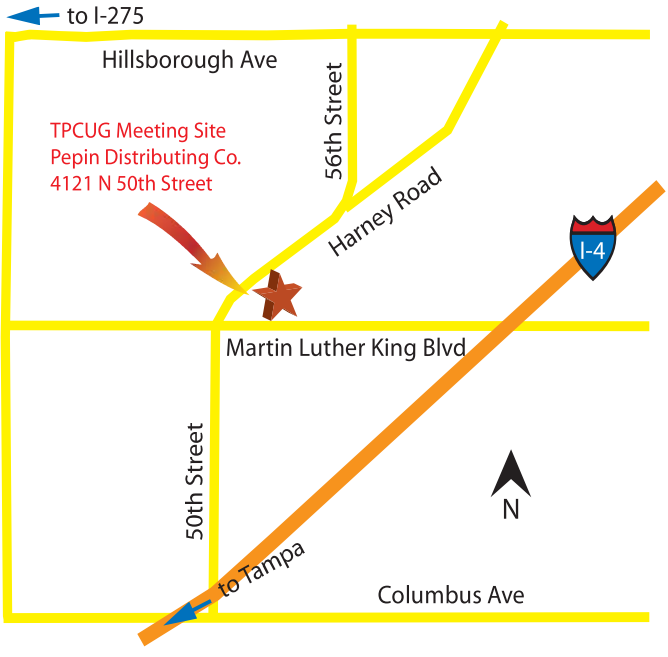
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 7

TV and can record and offer it for editing and long term storage like no other known device on the market.

Also in the presentation Bob answered some questions about Windows Safety Scanner at http://www.microsoft.com/security/scanner/en-us/default.aspx, a live antivirus scanner (QR to the left), and Windows Defender Offline Beta, for creating a CD, DVD or USB flash drive for machines that won't boot otherwise because of a virus. At http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/what-is-windows-defender-offline

Thanks, Bob from all of us for a fine and interesting presentation. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org





March in Tampa

Vol. 25 No. 3 March 2012

Meeting

Gene Barlow on Hard Drive Utilities

Thursday, March 8, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Our old friend Gene Barlow will present the software programs he represents. As usual for the first 30 minutes, Bob LaFave will conduct our Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Please note that the March meeting date has been moved forward to a Thursday evening at 6:30 PM (March 8th). We have made this one-time change in order to allow the Group to receive a presentation from Gene Barlow, who will be in our area for a limited time. It has been a couple of years since we last heard from Gene, and we wanted our members to hear from him again and to have a chance to see and purchase his latest offering of software for the hard drive and backups.

I thank Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg for their contributions this month. And I will see what I can do to fill out the newsletter with a few things of interest.

So much is changing. Merle's article on his home phone, a follow-up on an earlier article, is such an example. You will note that our group was founded 25 years ago in 1987. Apple existed as a company then, but who at that time would have guessed that 25 years later it would be the most valuable company in the world based on the value of its stock. And that there would be

Comments.....Continued on page 4

April Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the February Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob showed us Log Me In Free, a remote control software that allows you to control your PC from a remote location. It's available to run on a PC, iPad, or iPhone and Android.

Bob talked about a Mini Media Player from Western Digital. This tiny device allows you to attach a USB hard drive or flash drive with media files to it and play the files on your TV or as input to your home theater device. It has a small remote control and is very inexpensive.

This month our guest speaker was Stephen Blalock of Barnes & Noble. Steven brought a Nook Tablet – the newest eReader device from Barnes & Noble for $250. It is able to operate as a book reader that uses epub and pdf formats and is networkable to browse the B & N bookstore and purchase online.

The Nook Tablet is a new device that complements two other B & N devices – Nook Simple Touch, an E Ink device, and the Nook Color.

Stephen gave a very good talk on the availability of media files and ebooks, including mention of the public libraries' ecollections and what was available and how it worked – the rules, and how it relates to a real book. He talked about the entertainment aspects – movies and TV shows, newspapers and magazines.

Minutes.....Continued on page 8



Verizon Wireless Home Connect, II

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I switched my home phone landline a wireless system. It's still a Home Phone, is on the cellular network, but uses no wires. (Actually, there are about ten feet of wires involved). I wrote about this two months ago in our January 2012 newsletter and, now that the bills have come in, this is a quick update.

From the January Newsletter
I was looking at the Verizon Wireless phones and plans and stumbled on a tab for "Home Phone Connect," and it looks like the device in the photo above: It has the cell phone built in, hence the antenna. It has a power cube that also charges a battery, and two telephone jacks. One of these goes to my household Panasonic base station (on the left) – the same one I've had for many years and like very much.

The advertised Cost? The $129.95 cost was $49.95 with a two-year contract, and a $35 one-time connect fee. And $10/month.

What it really costs, now that the bills have come in. Well, as everyone knows, your Verizon bills are almost impossible to figure out. What I really would like to see is:
Your bill for this service is normally: $__.__ and it's been adjusted $__.__ for this reason _____.
Not to be, at least in the version of reality I live in.

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Phone.....Continued from page 3

But here's what I've seen so far:

First time installation costs, Verizon wireless:
$53.49 for equipment.
$39.33 Activation and fees.
$8.75 Taxes for equipment and Activation
$9.99 Payment in advance for first months service.
$111.56

Monthly charges added to Verizon Wireless bill:
$9.99 Basic
$4.45 Taxes and surcharges
$14.44

Reduced monthly charges on Verizon FIOS bill:
$-5.99 Inside wiring maintenance
$-30.00 Essentials Freedom
$-14.35 various incomprehensible Florida and Federal taxes
$-50.34 Savings monthly

To summarize, there is a net monthly savings of $35.90 ($50.34 - $14.44), starting in three months after offsetting the one-time charges.

The downside:
We have a 700 minute wireless family plan. We added this phone to the plan, and it is working out, but we have to be careful. We've run our minutes up to 500 of our allotted 700 minutes, a substantial change. We do a fair amount of talking to our sons in Seattle and an occasional sibling out of state. We do this off-peak, evenings or weekends.

When I have business calls, or have to call some kind of lengthy support line, I use my Google phone. It's free to anywhere in the US, even to non-Internet connected numbers. My Google phone runs from my browser or from my Google Talk App on my desktop or my Android Phone. Sometime I have a call come in and anticipating a lengthy conversation, I'll ask to call them back and I use my Google phone. My favorite place for Google Phone is at my desktop machine because I have an excellent USB Plantronics noise cancelling headset. Did I mention the quality is excellent and it's free?

I can look at my daily minutes usage online, and also from my smartphone and I keep a close eye on it. I can change the plan any time I want by breaking out this phone from my family plan and go to an unlimited local and long distance plan for $20/month vs. the $10/month I'm paying now. We'll see, but so far, so good.

Summary:
The Katrina experience has taught us that the communication service that is restored fastest is the cellular systems. The biggest reason I think is that emergency services are dependent on them now. Also Verizon and other services have purchased emergency trucks that have a cellular tower on them to spot them where needed in emergencies.

I'm happy with the service. The quality of the calls is excellent, and otherwise, well, you know, it's a phone. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

another company called Google that would allow us to search for information on anything but which also would cause us to worry about all sorts of information being stockpiled about us. All of this done on the Internet, which began as a military project but now had been taken over by companies like Google and another named Facebook, and where people played games like Farmville where they bought and sold virtual things such as pigs and hay. Much of this being done on, of all things, telephones, but not the phones of old, but these are actually small computers that you can hold in the palm of your hand with more processing power and memory than anyone dreamed of for even a desktop computer back in 1987.

So let's talk a bit about Apple, Google, smartphones and even that old fuddy-duddy Microsoft. First, I want to thank everyone who made an Amazon purchase through the link on our home page. We collected $41.22 for purchases made in December. And this I must remind all was at no extra charge to the

Comments.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



The Ascent of Apple This is a ten year chart from Feb 2002 to Feb 2012 demonstrating how dumb we all were not to purchase Apple stock in 2002 and hold on to it until now. Of course, ten years from now there may be a similar chart demonstrating how dumb we were not to have sold the same stock in 2012.

Comments.....Continued from page 4

purchaser.

Apple is now the darling of the stock-following crowd, closing at around $544 per share on March 2. That seems mighty expensive, but what do I know. I have made very few decisions in my stock trading life about which I can brag. Many stock analysts that I hear or read say that, based on fundamentals, $544 is low, and, say, $750 is a more reasonable price. But perhaps they should note that as recently as 2009 it was below $100 and recall that what goes up can come down--and usually does. Anyway we are not so interested in the price of a company's stock here but in what products that company makes. And Apple has certainly made some popular items. In our house, my wife has an iPad, and I must say that it is a pleasure to use to browse the World Wide Web and to have video talks with our son on Skype. Then there is the ubiquitious iPhone. Everywhere I go, I see people using them. And it is not just the young crowd. People in their 60s and older are walking around poking at them. Almost no one is using the things for a phone conversation since they do not have them near their ear. They are holding them in one hand and manipulating them with the other. Who knows? Perhaps they are viewing their brokerage account with the desire to purchase Apple stock. More likely, they are checking

Comments.....Continued on page 6

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Preservation Directory.Com	http://www.preservationdirectory.com/
techflash, Seattle's Technology News Source	http://www.techflash.com/
New Scientist	http://www.newscientist.com/
VirtualBox	https://www.virtualbox.org/

Comments.....Continued from page 5

their data usage so as not to run into trouble with their service provider since recently several companies, AT&T being the most prominent, have said that they will throttle usage (slow down service) for accounts that exceed a certain amount of data usage in the current month. The surprising thing about this is that this throttling is going to occur on accounts with data plans that were purchased as unlimited data usage. As expected, some heavy data users have cried foul only to be told that they still have an unlimited data plan – they are just going to get that unlimited data at a slower speed once they exceed a, say, 2 GB or 3 GB monthly non-throttled limit. This definition of unlimited reminds me of our former president's statement that "it all depends on what the meaning of is is." (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4XT-l-_3y0).

Google has been in the news recently regarding their tracking of your online computer use. They seem to be doing things that they said they wouldn't do. In fact, they are accused of actively bypassing the Apple browser's built-in setting that is supposed to keep such tracking from occurring. How could that be possible from a company whose motto is "Do no evil?"

What to do about this? Well, many people obviously don't care since they have already turned their life over to Google by having a Gmail account, using the Chrome browser, being a member of Google+, etc. And turning your life over to Google is probably no worse than giving it to Facebook, which half the world seems to have done. But call me an old fogy because I really dislike having done a search for something like water softeners and then, within an hour, while reading the New York Times online, seeing an ad on the right side of the screen for the very same water softener that I just spent some time considering. And those ads were not just at the NY Times site; they were on other sites, and they appeared for days, and anyone else using my computer would have also seen them. Ads for water softeners, or course, should be of no embarrassment to anyone. But what about ads for things you had rather others not know about?

There may be no real solution since Google seems to be able to figure out a way to circumvent anything that is tried, as they did with the Apple Safari browser. But we who do not want to be followed (and also have everything we do stuffed in a database) must try.

InPrivate Browsing My current solution is to use the InPrivate Browsing feature of Internet Explorer (under the Tools menu item) when I am doing certain browsing activities. You should realize that you do not have to be using an obvious Google application to be giving them your data. This is because many websites use something called Google Analytics to analyze their web traffic, and the information collected goes straight to a Google server.

To use InPrivate Browsing in IE, click on the Tools menu item and then select InPrivate Browsing. A new browser window will open and you can go to work. To learn about what InPrivate Browsing blocks and what it doesn't, look up InPrivate Browsing in IE's help.

Microsoft's Windows 8 is coming. Microsoft just released the Consumer Preview of Windows 8. They are not calling it beta software, but I would think that is what it is. You may download and install it from this link: http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/download. But I would think that you would want to do it in some sort of Virtual PC setup and not overwrite your current Windows OS – unless you have a fairly new PC to spare on which to install it.

Based on advice in our meetings from Merle Nicholson, I went to https://www.virtualbox.org/ and downloaded and installed VirtualBox. I then downloaded the Win 8 iso file from the above Microsoft address and had VirtualBox add it as a new virtual machine. Surprisingly there was a choice of Windows 8 as the guest operating system.

After that I was up and running with the Windows 8 desktop with Metro icons for a few apps. There were Internet Explorer, mail, SkyDrive, Maps, Weather, a few games and the ability to acquire more from the Store. At the moment, there are just a few and they are all free. With Win 8 running in a virtual machine, to be able to actually install programs as in Win 7,

Comments.....Continued on page 8

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Verizon FiOS TV Listings Problem

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Verizon TV Listings had been working and suddenly changed several weeks ago. Instead of the spreadsheet format grid of channels and time, all you saw was the channel name or number and a blank sheet. If you click on a channel number you get a horizontal listing of the day for that channel only. I use this to see program listings as well as to set DVR recordings remotely.

I tried to contact Verizon via telephone. After being transferred from one department to another, each saying it was not their problem, and interminable waits on the phone, I hung up in frustration while waiting for the next department (whichever it might have been.).

A day or so later I decided to try again using Live Chat with a Verizon tech. He suggested I try another browser (Firefox) and it worked. However, he could not help correct the issue on my IE 8 in Windows XP. That identified the problem as being from my installation of IE 8, as it also worked on my Laptop which runs Windows 7 IE 9.

How to fix IE 8:

- Backed up my favorites and did a Reset within IE 8.
  Problem not corrected.
- Googled "Repair IE 8" and found repair script "ie8-rereg" and ran it.
  Problem not corrected.
- Removed and Replaced IE 8 with new copy downloaded from Microsoft.
  Problem not corrected.
- Posted request on Verizon forum.
  To date only 2 replies:
  1 Upgrade to IE 9 (but that's not available for XP).
  2. They are using IE 8 with no problem.

I could not find any other information on this even through the Verizon forums.

Not willing to give up, I resorted to trying "trial and error".

- Perhaps it was a security error related to .aspx files so I turned off my AV to no avail.
- I tried various Internet Explorer security settings to no avail.
- Downloaded and installed all Optional Windows updates, and it still did not work.

Then almost by accident I right clicked on the page and tried Print Preview. Lo and behold the missing text appeared in the preview window. That alerted me that it might be something related to the display that I had not tried.

I changed the zoom level to 125% and a large detailed spreadsheet appeared. After experimenting, I found that any Zoom Level less than 99% caused the detail to be missing.

100% looks as well as I could expect.

Problem solved, although I do not really know how it started as I didn't previously alter the Zoom Level. ◆

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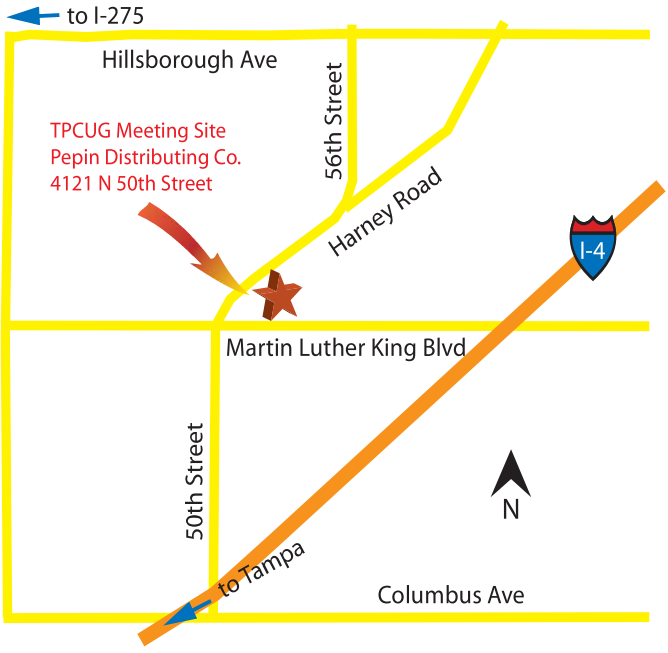
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 6

you need to add some shared folders from the host computer. I added the My Documents folder and the CD drive. Adding the CD drive, allowed me to install Office 2007 in Win 8 using the CD drive of my main computer. I also copied over some documents from the host computers My Documents folder to use in my newly-installed Office 2007 in Win 8.

Next month, I will probably delve deeper into all of this. But for the time being, if you are interested, I think I have given you enough info to get started with Win 8 Consumer Preview on VirtualBox. ◆



Minutes.....Continued from page 2

His talk was very informative and timely, and he gave some time to the Nook competitors as well. Our thanks to Stephen and to Barnes & Noble. ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 25 No. 4 April 2012



April in Tampa

Meeting

Kevan Sheridan on Google Voice & Android Smart Phones

Wednesday, April 11, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Kevan Sheridan will tells us how Google Voice can save you money by changing the way you communicate via phone calls; and how an Android smart phone can further enhance your Google Voice experience.. As usual for the first 30 minutes, Bob LaFave will conduct our Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

The big news this past month was the iPad3, although it was stilled officially still named just iPad. In the Picture of the Month, we have one of the usual lines that form for such events outside Apple stores before opening time. This one was in London. People who could just as well order the devices to be delivered to their home that day still get in line. Perhaps they just enjoy the camaraderie, like Apple cofounder, Steve Wozniak, whom you can view being interviewed while waiting in line in Los Angeles in this YouTube video, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXaJ7TxkfCI, or in the longer one at http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ATfqKRZ0z-4#!. Then there is this guy offering to sell his place in line in Seattle on craigslist, giving his cell phone number and saying "625am right now. U have till 8 to get here.", http://seattle.craigslist.org/est/ele/2905058385.html. Steve Jobs' dream has certainly come a long way from when he offered to sell his and Wozniak's just born Apple Computer to

Commednts.....Continued on page 8

May Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Our meeting was six days earlier than normally scheduled to accommodate our speaker, Gene Barlow.

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

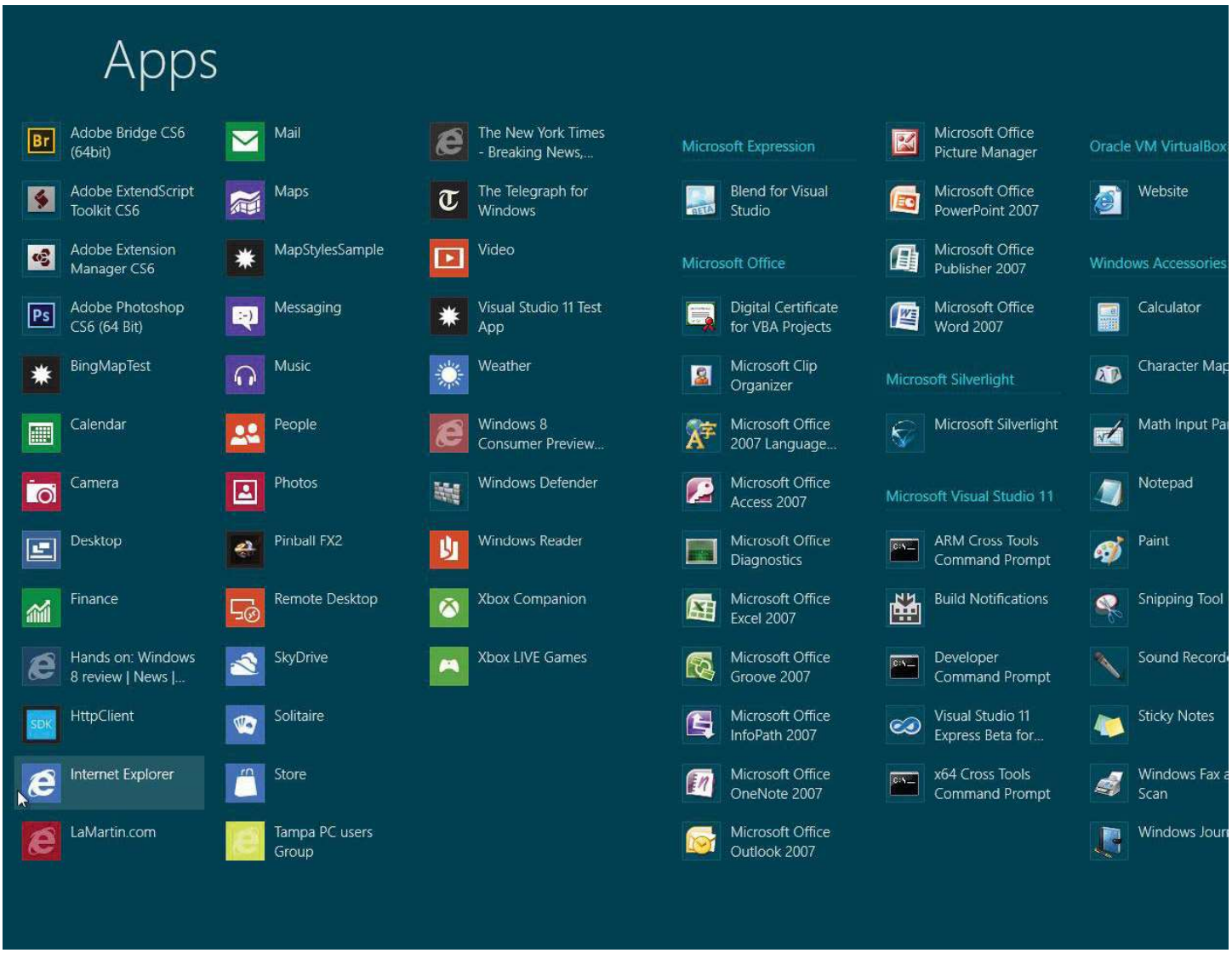
This month Bob showed us Personal Software Inspector and the Western Digital Media Player. WD Media Player is a hardware device with TV output and USB input to play movies and Internet on a TV screen from an attached flashdrive or USB hard drive. It has a remote control and is very inexpensive.

Bod fielded a round of questions on several subjects: Corel PDF Fusion – demo'ing editing a Hillsborough County form; also AVS Document Converter to convert PDF to Docx; and finally an offer of extra copies of BitDefender.

This month our guest speaker was Gene Barlow, a very long term speaker of ours who tours to Computer user groups. He and Linda Barlow run a business – http://www.ugr.com. He has an interesting talk on backups of your computers with a very well-developed powerpoint show. He fielded questions and demonstrated his in-depth knowledge of this very valuable subject.

Gene and Linda offer several well known products: Acronis Disk Director 11, Acronis True Image Home 2012 and Invisus PC Security Solution. Changes to Acronis are a Drive Monitor, and it also has new disk synchronization capability. For the first time, the software installation is monitored, preventing one license

Minutes.....Continued on page 8



Windows 8 Consumer Preview & Virtualbox

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Microsoft has released the Consumer Preview of Windows 8. You may download and install it from this link: http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/download. However, I would think that you would want to do it in some sort of Virtual PC setup and not overwrite your current Windows OS.

Based on advice in our meetings from Merle Nicholson, I went to https://www.virtualbox.org/ and downloaded and installed VirtualBox. I then downloaded the Win 8 iso file from the above Microsoft address and had VirtualBox add it as a new virtual machine, with Windows 8 as the guest operating system.

As for the settings I chose:

- a Base Memory of 2,048 MB
- a dynamically allocated hard disk of 20 GB
- a Network attached to a Bridged Adapter

You want the hard disk to be dynamically allocated so that it will actually consume only as much as needed of your actual hard drive and then expand as needed up to the maximum you have indicated, 20 MB in my case. Unfortunately, it turned out that 20 MB was not enough when I wanted to install such programs as MS Office, Visual Studio and Photoshop. More on how I

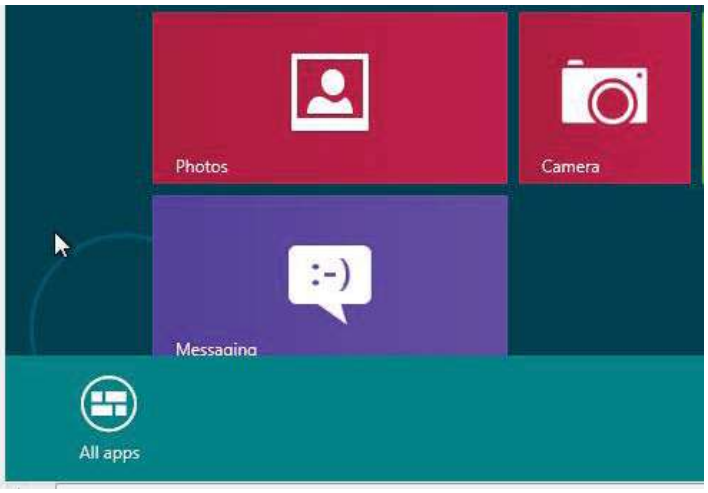
Windows 8.....Continued on page 4

Windows 8.....Continued from page 3

solved that problem later. Using the Bridged Adapter instead of the default NAT, gave the virtual drive easy access to my local area network. This is important if you want to exchange files between the rest of your network and the virtual operating system. Once you have your Virtual Machine up and running, you may also use the option under Devices to "Install Guest Additions." This will allow you to create some shared folders on the host computer. You may also use the CD/DVD drive of the host computer and, in theory, use the USB connected devices of the host computer.

Once you have the new VM created, you use the Win 8 Consumer Preview iso file that you downloaded from Microsoft to install the Windows 8 operating system on it. You will need a Product Key, which is available under "Need help?" in the FAQ where you got the iso file. To save you the trouble, it is: DNJXJ-7XBW8-2378T-X22TX-BKG7J.

On booting into Win 8, you are presented with a window with a bunch of fairly large icons representing some of the apps available. This is certainly not the Windows 7 desktop. And there is no Start button, a major complaint. So how do you get a list of all your apps and programs? Take your mouse down to the bottom of the screen and right-click, and you will be presented with an All apps icon as pictured below. Simply click on it to get a list of everything, pictured in the large screen capture at the beginning of this article, where you see the left-hand side of the listing of all the apps and programs installed in my Win 8 setup. The ones like Calendar, Camera, Finance, Messaging, Music, etc. are Win 8 apps. Anything to do with Adobe, Microsoft Office and Visual Studio are programs (not apps) that I installed.



The Photoshop program is actually Adobe Photoshop CS6 Beta. Visual Studio is Visual Studio 11 Express Beta and Microsoft Office is the Microsoft Office 2007 Ultimate. Photoshop CS 6 Beta and Office do not need Win 8; however, Visual Studio 11 Express Beta does (full Visual Studio 11 Beta does not need Win 8; however, it will run on Win 8).

At some point, when installing Photoshop I think it was, the installation failed, and it traced it to not having a large enough hard drive for the Virtual Machine. 20 GB was just not large enough to hold everything I wanted. A search on the Internet, revealed that I needed to do two things. First, on the host computer I should run at the command line an executable for Virtualbox that would allocate whatever size drive I desired to the Virtual Machine. I wanted to double it to 40 GB. The actual command (executed from the directory where VBoxManage.exe was located) is:

VBoxManage modifyhd "D:\VirtualBox VMs\Windows8Preview\Windows8Preview.vdi" --resize 40000

D:\VirtualBox VMs\Windows8Preview\Windows8Preview.vdi" is the path to my vdi file and 40000 indicating that I wanted a 40 GB drive.

After that was accomplished, I needed to go into Disk Management in Control Panel in Win 8 (just like you would do in Win 7) and expand the current drive, which was still 20 GB, to take up the entire 40 GB now available, as indicated in the screen capture on page 5. The next screen capture at the top of page 6 displays the result of expanding drive C to use the extra space. After that, the installation of Photoshop CS6 Beta went forward flawlessly. As with each iteration of Photoshop, new features are added. To give a brief idea of the more eye-catching type of stuff, have a look at this YouTube video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrlsnQ32YhY&feature=youtu.be.

Once I had about all the programs loaded that I wanted

Windows 8.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month

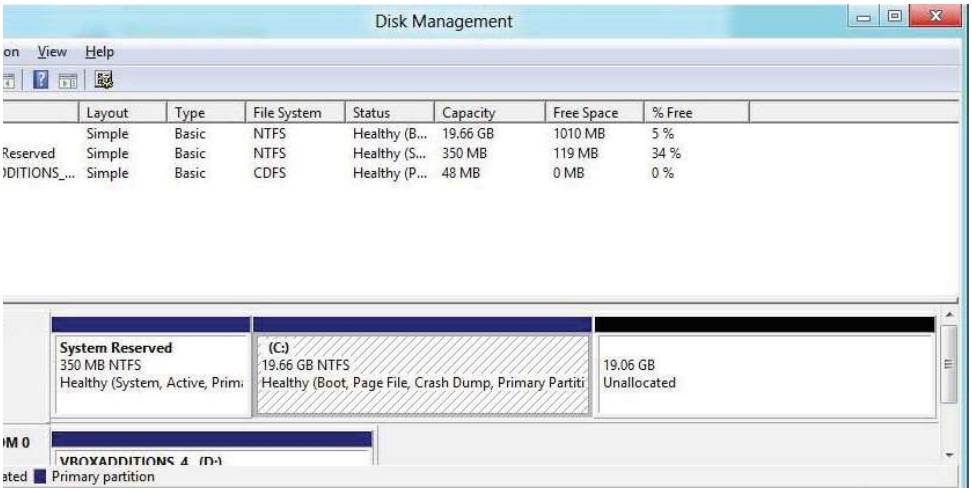


Waiting for the latest iPad

From the March 16, 2012 Wall Street Journal, http://online.wsj.com. Customers line up outside a central London Apple store waiting to get the latest iThing.

Windows 8.....Continued from page 4

to use to test Win 8, what next? Well, the first thing one needs to learn is how to navigate. Recall there is no Start button (at least at this time). First, if you are on the Start Menu, there is a Desktop icon with a fish on it (I think it is the Beta fish). Clicking on that will produce the Desktop, which, if you have not added any icons to it, is pretty bare. I have now added a number of icons to my desktop, but, as I recall, it started out with an Internet Explorer (IE) icon and

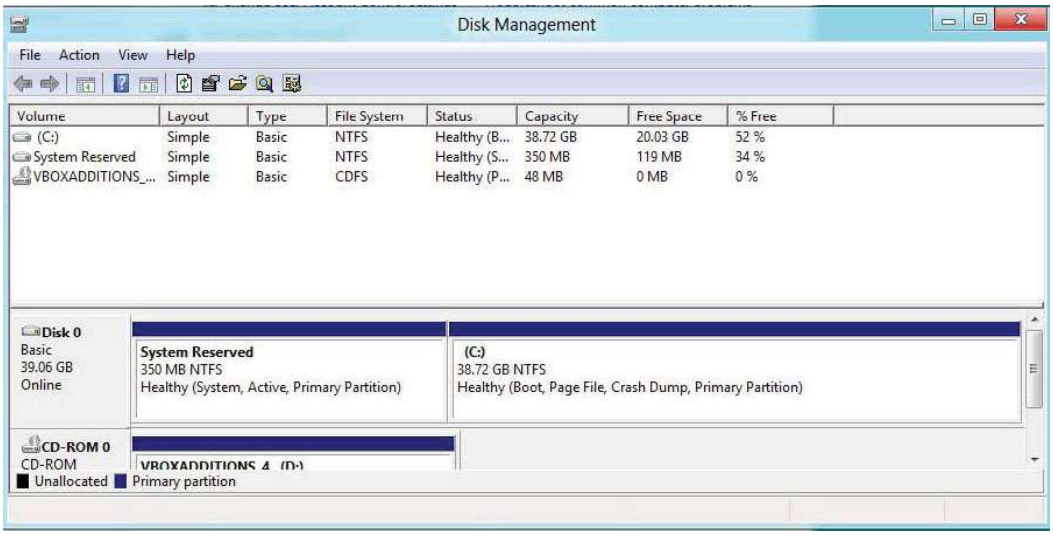


Windows.....Continued on page 6

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
1940 Census	http://1940census.archives.gov/
Arthur's Clipart (free clipart)	http://www.arthursclipart.org/
TinEye Reverse Image Search	http://www.tineye.com/
http://www.findagrave.com/	http://www.findagrave.com/

Windows 8.....Continued from page 5



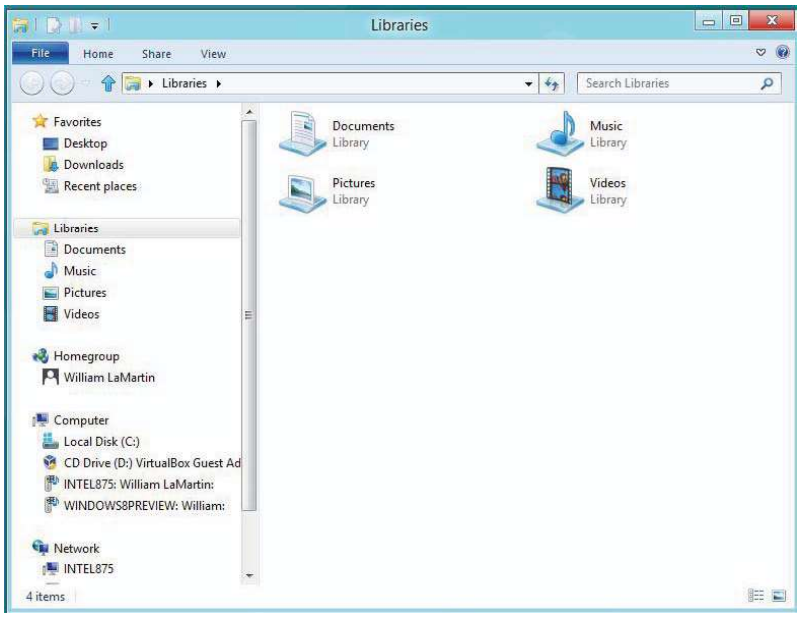
- WINKEY + E – Switch to the (classic) Windows desktop and launch Windows Explorer with Computer view displayed.
- WINKEY + F – Display File Search pane

To see a complete list of such shortcuts, go to http://www.winsupersite.com/article/windows8/windows-8-consumer-preview-windows-key-keyboard-shortcuts-142358.

a Files icon in what I would call the task bar at the bottom. Note that you actually have two versions of IE, IE 10 in the apps Start Menu and IE 9 on the Desktop. The apps version does not support Flash or Silverlight.

The best method I have found for navigation is using the Windows key in combination with another key; for example, WINKEY alone toggles you between the apps Start page and the Desktop. Here are a few I use:

- WINKEY + D – Switch to the (classic) Windows desktop and toggle Show Desktop (hides/shows any applications and other windows).





My Win 8 desktop looks like the screen capture to the left. If I want to view the files, I simply use WINKEY + E if I am in the Start Menu or Desktop. Additionally in the Desktop, I have a Files icon on which to click. In the screen capture above, you see a Windows Explorer screen that looks very much like Windows 7. Even though I am running Win 8 in a Virtual Machine, I have had no trouble installing any program that I have tried. I have been able to see my local network, use the printers on the network and use the Internet connection. The

Windows 8.....Continued on page 8

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR 2011

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2011 INCOME	
Memberships (25 Single + 4 Family)	765.00
DVD Sales of the Newsletter Collection	55.00
Amazon & Misc.	542.89
TOTAL INCOME	1,362.89
2011 EXPENSES	
Newsletter Postage	151.90
Newsletter Paper	68.44
FACUG Dues	25.00
APCUG Dues	50.00
Florida Incorporation Fee	61.25
Web Site Hosting Fee (14 Mos)	211.26
P O Box Rental (Paid late fee)	77.00
Dec Holiday Party Costs	400.04
Refreshments (Cookies)	50.81
Guest Presenter - Gift Card	28.95
PayPal Fees (6 payments @ $0.85 ea)	5.10
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,129.75
NET INCOME FOR 2011	**233.14**
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – BEGINNING OF 2011	6740.47
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – END OF 2011	6973.61

RECONCILLIATION OF BANK STATEMENT TO BOOK BALANCE:

Balance per BANK STMT at 12-31-2011	7,355.28
Outstanding CK# 828 (LaMartin)	247.67
Outstanding CK# 829 (Pepin Hospitality)	107.00
Balance per Books at 12-31-2011	6,973.61

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Windows 8.....Continued from page 6

only thing I have not been able to make work is using a camera attached to the computer. However, this, I am sure, is because I am running inside a Virtual Machine. ◆

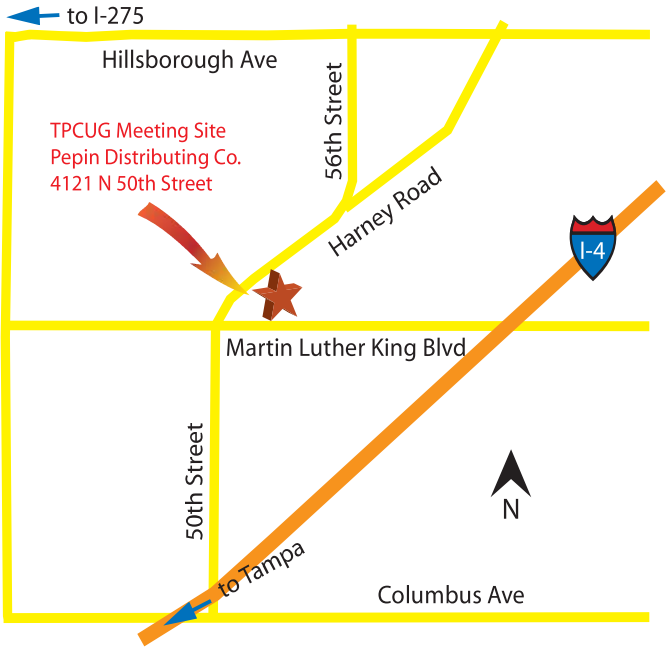
Comments.....Continued from page 1

Atari for a couple hundred thousand dollars.

As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, Microsoft released the Consumer Preview of Windows 8, which received a bit of press but nothing compared to the new iPad. This month I devote most of the newsletter to it along with Oracle's Virtualbox, which allowed me to install Win 8 and test it without having to overwrite the operating system on one of my computers. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

from being installed on more than one computer. A three computer license is $60, a considerable savings over the User Group Price of $25 for one computer. The products are available from their website with a discount for User Group members.



His talk was very informative. Gene has devoted many years to the subject of computer backups and is a dealer for well respected, quality products. Our thanks to Gene and Linda for their helpful presentation. The door prize of a copy of Acronis 2012 was won by Doug Mullis.◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 25 No. 5 May 2012



May in Tampa

Meeting

William LaMartin
on
Windows 8
&
Oracle's VirtualBox

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will describe installing Windows 8 on a virtual machine using Oracle's VirtualBox. He will then take us on a tour of Windows 8. As usual for the first 30 minutes, Bob LaFave will conduct our Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to newsletter contributors Ron Weinberg for his article on resurrecting his Win XP computer, Jim Purcell for the database article and Merle Nicholson for the minutes and all the QR codes. Somehow, we always manage to put out our small newsletter with our own original content.

In last month's newsletter I wrote about installing a preview version of Microsoft Windows 8 on a Virtual Machine using Oracle's VirtualBox. That saved me from having to dedicate an actual computer to the installation. There I gave links to all the pertinent web pages you would need to repeat the process yourself. Possibly some of you actually tried it.

This month I will demonstrate all of this at our monthly meeting and lead you through a tour of using the new operating system that should be coming out in the Fall.

Merle has included QR codes at the end of the minutes which,

Comments.....Continued on page 8

June Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Editor: William LaMartin (william@lamartin.com) 251-3817
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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Our meeting was six days earlier than scheduled to accommodate our speaker, Gene Barlow.

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob showed us quick demos on drive utilities Acronis, Seagate and Western Digital WD Support; also, Easeus To-Do Backup, Easeus Partition Manager and Drive ImageXML, most of which are free as downloads.

- **EaseUS:**
  http://www.todo-Backup.com,
  http://www.partition-tool.com
- **Seagate:**
  http://www.seagate.com/support/downloads/
- **Western Digital:**
  http://www.wdc.com/wdproducts/acronis/um.asp,
  http://support.wdc.com/product/downloaddetail.asp?swid=119&wdc_lang=en
  http://support.wdc.com/product/download.asp

And finally, Bob showed a Microsoft SyncToy demonstration. Bob then led discussions on extending a TV signal and on the Microsoft Security monthly newsletter at http://www.microsoft.com/security/resources/newsletter.aspx

Kevan Sheridan, vice-president of TPCUG and a very long term member, gave a slideshow-augmented presentation on Google Voice, where he routinely

Minutes.....Continued on page 7

SAVING AN OLD PC ON THE THIRD TRY

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

My desktop system is a seven-year-old Dell Dimension system which was well-equipped and not inexpensive for its time. It still has all original components. The operating system is Windows XP Professional, originally SP2 but now SP3. Naturally, age takes its toll, and I have had several system problems in the last few months, all of which I have recovered from.

1. System Failure Feb 6, 2012.

Error Message:
"Windows could not start because the following file is missing or corrupt:
\Windows\System32\Config\System

You can attempt to repair this file by starting Windows Setup using the original Setup CD-ROM
Select 'r' at the first screen to start repair."

I loaded the disk and carefully proceeded to use the System Repair option. However, it appeared that instead it was reinstalling most of the entire system.

When that completed, I repeatedly got as far as the sign-on screen, which did have my user name and did accept my password. But it kept looping back to loading and would not completely boot. I got some fatal system errors which went by so fast I could not record them. It was logging the errors, but because I could not boot I never got to read them.

I repeated the Repair with much the same result, whereupon I ran hardware diagnostics on the memory and hard drive. All passed successfully with zero errors noted.

I concluded that despite my efforts the operating system was corrupted beyond repair.

I then used Acronis to completely restore everything from my last entire system backup. After a few updates were installed I ran a complete AV scan and was fully operational. Unfortunately, the backup was one month old so I lost my January and early February work.

I reinstalled a program which I had recently installed and was now missing. Next, I rechecked for additional updates and there were quite a few, including 11 optional ones, and I installed them all. Lastly, I created a new Restore Point.

At that point my comments were that a seven-year-old system is obviously prone to problems but it has served me well. Reluctantly, if problems continue a new system may be the only answer. Meanwhile I'll be backing up work files weekly.

2. Problem reoccurred on Feb 9.
This time I pressed 'R' at the first screen and got in the Recovery Console wherein a number of DOS commands were available. I copied Config.Sys from the CD and rebooted. Problem appeared corrected.

3. Not long after, my system crashed again, and I was just about to purchase a new hard drive, but, stubborn as I am, and because the hard drive seemed to pass all diagnostics, I decided for one more try at resurrection.

This time, instead of using the Microsoft Repair or Recovery Console, I tried a method published online by Charlie White, http://webcast.broadcastnewsroom.com/articles/viewarticle.jsp?id=8658, which seems to be similar to "How to recover from a corrupted registry that prevents Windows XP from starting." (Microsoft Article 307545)

This process involves copying critical Registry entries from an original XP disk and then replacing those entries in the Registry. There are a number of important steps that must be followed in sequence, but the result for me was excellent.

Upon completion, my system booted perfectly, and I had no loss of program data, personal documents, or

Saving.....Continued on page 5

B-FOLDER 3

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

The reason that I had an immediate interest in "B-Folders 3" software was that it seemed to provide the versatility to create and securely store data in a format similar to what I had used with a Palm Pilot. It also appeared to be capable of importing about 15 years of data that I had accumulated on my Palm Pilot.

I started using a Day-Timer in the early 70s while I was working as a Budget Officer in the Air Force, and I continued to use it until I switched to an almost identical product offered by Franklin Covey. Both companies had developed a computer program that mimicked their notebooks and both programs would print pages for all sizes of their notebooks, either as blank pages or pages containing the content of your program. The Franklin Covey program was frankly one of the best computer programs that I have ever owned. It was simple, powerful and was based on Microsoft Access. When all else failed, you could open your database in Access and correct or repair it. Then in the late nineties, Franklin Covey announced that their program would Sync with Palm Pilot. So "SHAZAM", prior to 2000 I had a smart phone (Sans phone of course but also Sans quagmire and Sans $60 a month). The B-Folder 3 program instructions indicate that you can not only sync your desktop with all of your devices but also you can sync using USB, Wi-Fi, 3G or your LAN, and they provide a tutorial for each method. Sync sessions are always encrypted so you can use whatever network is available - Wi-Fi, Ethernet or even public hotspots. They also have a free stand-alone app for Android for Smartphones and tablets.

About three days before I found the B-FOLDER 3 program, my Palm Pilot died. If I can revive the Palm Pilot, I hope that I can export the data, otherwise I'm going to be doing a lot of cutting and pasting.

You are probably wondering why I am writing about the program since I just downloaded it and have no words of wisdom about how well it has done the job for which it was acquired. There are two reasons, the first of which is the structure of the program itself. It is an encrypted database that allows you to structure it according to your needs. The database is created by establishing a structure of folders that you name and connect. Usually it is by "type" of entry or by "topic/subject". Unstructured data can be stored and found, as can structured data and "managers". Predesigned forms are available for notepad, contact manager, task manager, password manager, bookmark manager, credit card and journal. These forms give you even more flexibility; for example, you can use the password manager simply as an encrypted storage place for your passwords, or you can enter the appropriate instructions on individual or all passwords to allow you to launch a program requiring a username and password with one click from within the database. The forms can also be customized in a variety of ways. The customizable cards format can be used for bank accounts, frequent flyer accounts, insurance and other similarly structured data.

The second reason that I am writing now is that the software is marketed in such a way that you can explore it completely at no cost. You can download the complete and fully-operating program for a 30 day trial period with no charge. At the end of the 30-day period, if you wish to continue, you pay $29.00 for the program. One license covers all your personal computers and devices. If you choose not to buy, editing and creating new items will be disabled. However, you will still be able to read and search your data. The free Android app is fully operational with or without the desktop program.

In summary, when you start B-Folders for the first time, there is no database and you need to create one. You must provide a strong password since the strength of the database is that it remains encrypted when you sync it and when you back it up and that it is constructed to minimize exposure. Another example of the nature of the database is that B-Folders cannot recover lost passwords and, without the password, all of your data will be permanently lost, and since backups require the password in effect at the time of backup, they too are lost. In managing backups, you must retain all passwords and relate them to the appropriate

B-Folder-3.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



May Day Occupy Oakland

May 1 is a big day for protest parades. The photo above is of one such in Oakland, CA. The photo can be found posted on flickr at http://www.flickr.com/photos/bonjourjanel/7134888859/ by a user named jsruby22.

Saving.....Continued from page 3

photos.

I had been using Windows Live Mail, and that disappeared requiring a new install. Accordingly, I lost a few days of email and my old deleted items, but nothing that I had saved in previously created Storage folders.

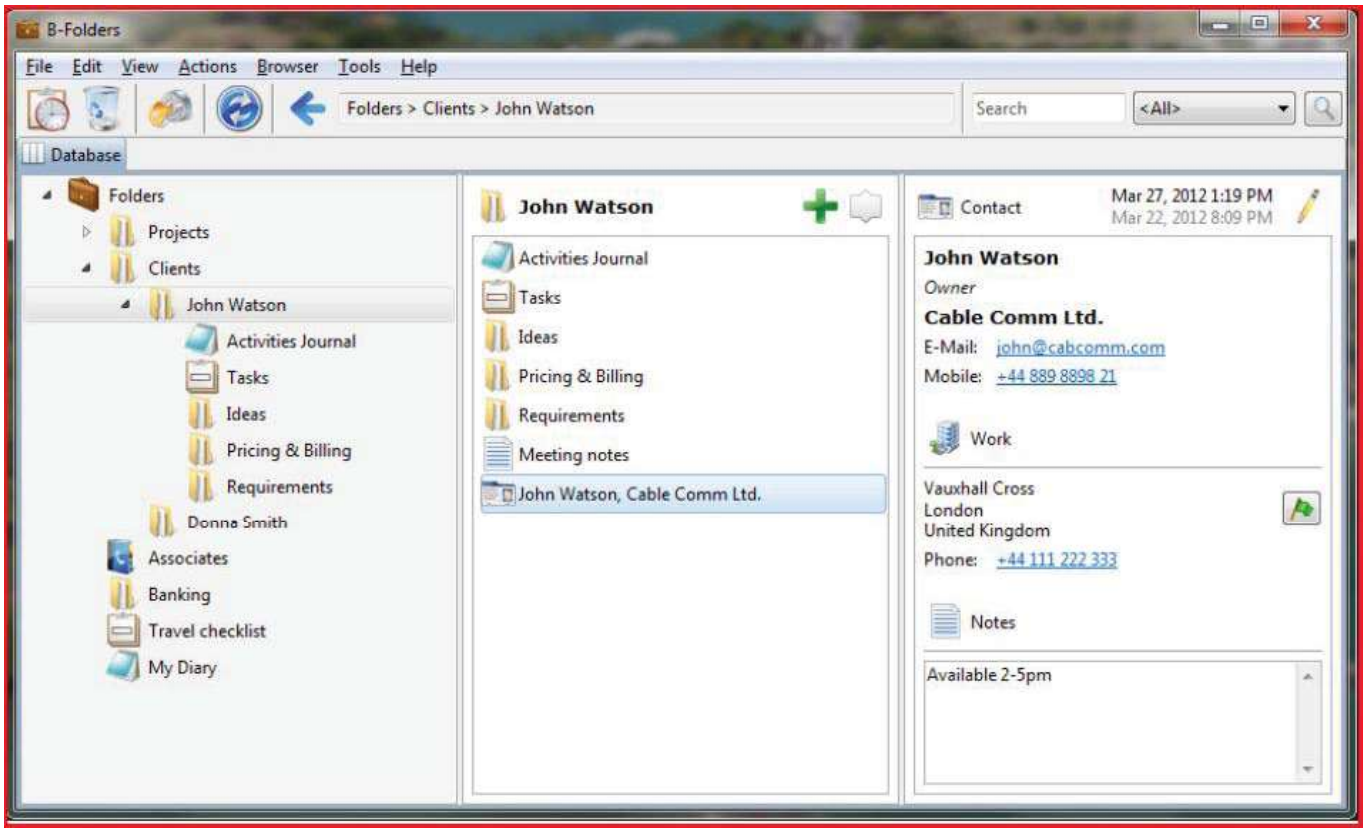
After checking for updates and backing up, I did notice several programs which I had added over the years did not work. It seemed as if they were not recognized by the Registry and did not even show in Control Panel Add and Remove Programs. Rather than try to re-register them, I reinstalled them.

I can now report that my system is working better than ever, response is fast and errors nil.

Just I case, I did install Acronis Drive Monitor to watch my old hard drive. ◆

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Find domain stats - Check website info	http://www.findwebstats.com/
QR Stuff	http://www.qrstuff.com/
The Civil War, Part 1: The Places	http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2012/02/the-civil-war-part-1-the-places/100241/

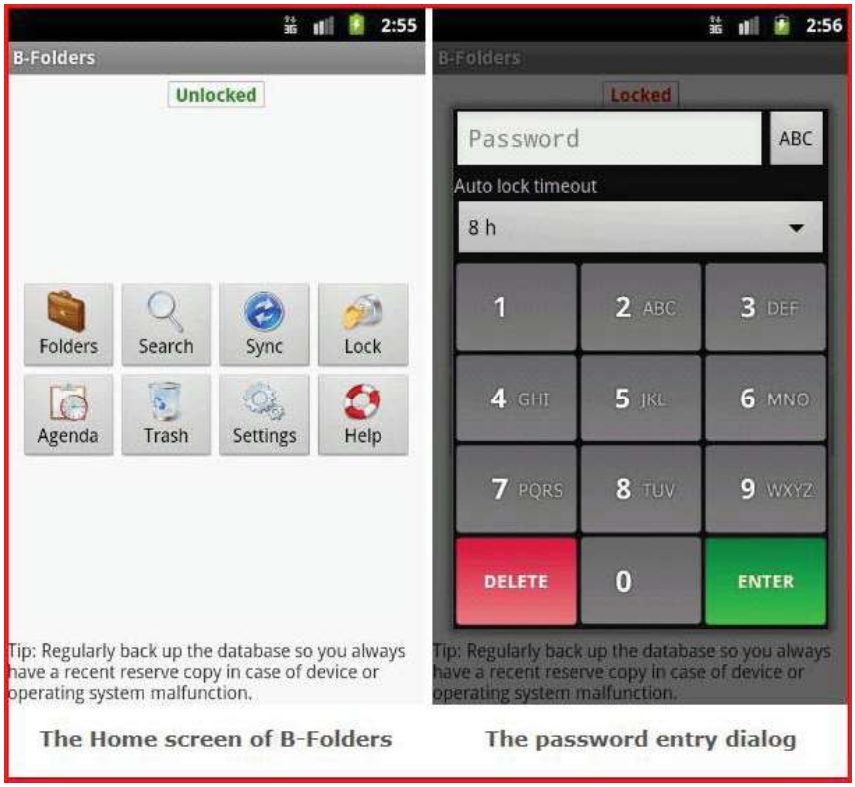


B-Folder-3.....Continued from page 4

backup in order to access the data.

This main application window has three vertical panes (see image above). The left pane displays the hierarchy of folders as a tree structure, the middle pane shows the contents of the current folder as a list of items, and the right pane shows the current item. The B-Folders site at http://jointlogic.com/b-folders/ will provide all of the needed information, including online help, illustrations, support and download of the desktop and Android edition for smartphones and tablets.

The Home screen of B-Folders Android edition (see image to the right) is the first screen displayed when you start the application. It acts like a menu and allows you to easily access the most common features of the application. As in the desktop edition, there is initially no database so you will be required to create a new one. After the database is created, you will see the Folders screen. ◆



Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

directs all his incoming calls to any device of his choice, wherever he is. The subjects and uses of this (free) system are large, and it takes a dynamic speaker like Kevan to cover most of it in a single session. The highlights were:

- Caller ID
- Call Screening
- Consolidation to one number for any number of call devices
- Answer/Call with any telephone or computer
- Money Savings – Text messaging, cell minutes – all free

To get Started: https://www.google.com/voice.

Our thanks to Kevan for a spirited and interesting talk. We learned so much, had our interest piqued in new phone-y things and learned to not hand Kevan your cell phone. ◆

Use your smartphone and the QR codes below to go to the URLs in this article:

GoogleVoice

Microsoft Security

WDC - Acronis

Partition Tool

Segate Support

WD Support

todo Backup

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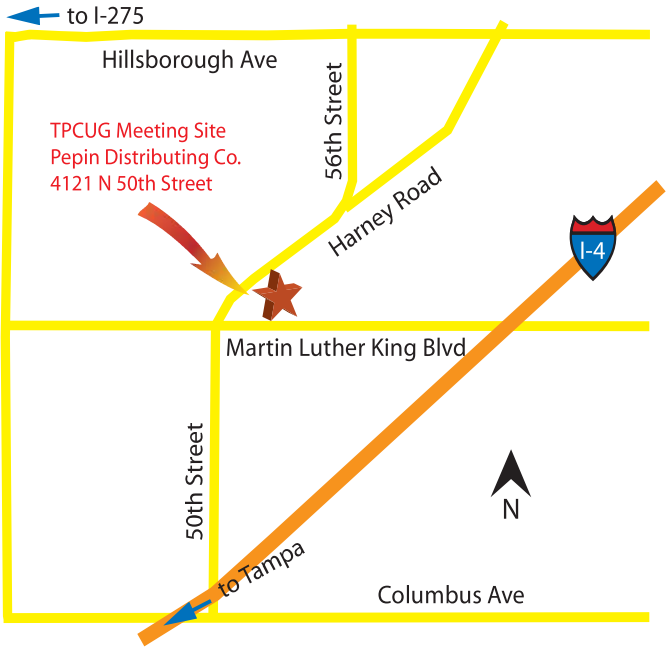
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 1

if scanned with the appropriate program on your smartphone, will open the web page they represent in the phone's browser. Perhaps we should have T-shirts made with such a code on it at which people could point their smartphones and the phone would then open the TPCUG.ORG site in the phone. I have placed that QR code in the upper right corner above.

◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 25 No. 6 June 2012



June in Tampa

Meeting

Blain Barton from Microsoft

Windows 8 & Windows 2012 Server

Wednesday, June 13, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from the local Microsoft office will give a dual presentation on Windows 8 and on Windows 2012 Server and Hyper-V. As usual for the first 30 minutes, Bob LaFave will conduct our Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Windows 8 replay with a virtual drive

Last month I did the presentation on using Oracle's VirtualBox software to install Windows 8 Consumer Preview in a Virtual Machine. I spent a good bit of time on laying out how to set all of this up in Virtual Box. I then began the part of demonstrating Windows 8 and after a few minutes discovered that I did not have the Win 8 Virtual Machine connected to the Internet, something that had never given me a problem at home. A check that the host computer, my laptop, for the Win 8 Virtual Machine was itself connected to the Internet came back positive. A bit of playing with various settings got us nowhere, and the presentation had to proceed and end without actually demonstrating anything in Win 8 that had to use the Internet.

When I returned home, I started up VirtualBox on my laptop and opened the Win 8 Virtual Machine--and, as it had never done at home before, it would not connect to the Internet. I don't recall what actually got the Internet working, but I did get the Win 8

Comments.....Continued on page 5

July Meeting: To be announced

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Check the address label for your renewal month

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Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the May Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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Our meeting was held in one of the large conference rooms at the Pepin facility since our regular smaller room was booked. A special thanks must go to our president, John Witmer, and the Pepin organization for making our meeting facilities possible.

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob touched on a variety of subjects: A discussion on the Path environment variable, the use and editing of it. Finding Windows mail when you have lost it. Roadrunner email help, Set Defaults program and its use. Publishing pictures. Creating a document from a Gmail PDF. A quick look at Skydrive and Hotmail; printing PDF and Google Docs. Whew – it ran a bit over, but we covered a lot of ground.

William LaMartin, a very long term member of TPCUG and our newsletter editor and webmaster, gave a Windows 8 demo and overview and a tutorial on how to set it up on a notebook computer. The Windows 8 Consumer Preview was available for those with the interest and technical skills to load it safely on a computer, and William took advantage of that because of his interest in developing commercial applications. The Consumer Preview is a pre-release version. (Note: By now, an even newer preview is available – called "Windows 8 Release Preview," and usually there will be a "Release Candidate" before the final release version.) William installed this version as a Virtual Machine in the VirtualBox software. We're very glad we

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

ObiHai Obi 110 VoIP Telephone Adapter

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

To tie all this together – what I've been up to for several months - you may want to look at my January and March articles on "Wireless Home Connect". And if you've been to the meetings lately you've seen a presentation on Google Voice that Kevan Sheridan did and how he's managing multiple phone locations through Google Voice. I've used Google Voice for some time now for free calls – but not to any great extent.

To summarize Google Voice, it's a Voice Over IP (VoIP) telephone service that you can use from your computer or a mobile smartphone device (because it's a computer). It's like Skype, except that it's voice only and well - it's free and entirely web-enabled and web-trackable. Google has extended the service for the second year free through 2012, after which they may charge if they decide to. What you get with Google Voice is a real telephone number attached to your Google account. You get voice mail as a playable media file and also a text version of the voice message to your Google mail inbox. It calls and receives calls from all other telephones, wireless, landline and VoIP.

To summarize my "Verizon Home Connect," it's a stationary cell phone. I abandoned the landline phone to my house and gave up the interior wire maintenance, the telephone charges, the fee for not having a long distance carrier (!), and plenty of federal taxes. I added the new "Verizon Home Connect" device to my wireless plan and connected it to my four-station cordless phone. Kept the old landline number, thank-you-very-much.

Ok – well, where are the pitfalls in this scenario? There's only one that I have encountered so far – I have to track my cell phone minutes pretty closely. The danger is getting in long conversations on the home phone, because it's very easy to forget it's on our shared cell phone minutes. As it turns out, talking to friends and relatives – we're all pretty much in the same boat so we use weekend minutes because they don't count.

Looking at our habits, there are a couple of dangers. The first was unexpected – getting into discussions with service people – say the alarm service, or insurance companies – medical providers, my coffee machine repair service. Oh man, they just don't care that it takes an hour just to go through their automated menus, only to get cut off. Verizon has the most broken menu system – oh, don't get me started.

Then I have an occasional business conference call. What a waste of time and never less than an hour.

I can't tell you how I decided to look for a VoIP device. I use Google Voice, but I got tired of fussing with the sound and microphone settings on my computer. The computer has to be on – naturally, and it's difficult to switch from speakers to headset on an incoming call. So I never did reveal the Voice phone number to business clients and coworkers. I wanted an office business phone that I could sit on for hours talking to service providers because I have nothing else to do.

I did some real searching for VoIP alternatives, and if you do this you come up with some real confusing things that look like they must be for commercial use for a lot or money. I ran across a forum about Google Voice and saw this thing and then found its website, http://www.OBiHai.com. I then found the devices on Amazon and NewEgg. There are other more recognizable brands I discovered, but I'm a great reader of reviews and got the impression that you can configure the Obi devices expressly for Google Voice. Out of three devices I picked the Obi110. There's a comparison chart of features on the website to help. So I ordered from Amazon – Obi110 Voice Service Bridge and VoIP Telephone Adapter $50.47 (Do you see why it was difficult to text search to find the products?) and a Uniden DECT1363 cordless phone, $17.69

The Uniden is a standard cordless phone. I could have gotten something for five bucks. I liked this one; I've had this brand before and they seem to last forever.

Telephone.....Continued on page 4

Telephone.....Continued from page 3

I didn't want an answering machine, just one single wireless handset.

Ok so what does this guy do? Here's what it looks like:



It's less than five inches on a side and 1-1/2 inches tall. On the back it has two telephone jacks, One Ethernet jack and a power supply socket for the power cube. So you cable it to your router, plug your telephone in the correct jack and power it up. You configure it – more about that in a moment – and it becomes a telephone. And you did it without even discussing it with Verizon.

I guess here's the place to say again. It's free. There are no monthly charges because Google Voice is free, the device setup with OBiHai is free, and there are no monthly charges from OBiHai. It's free.

For configuring it, first – get a Google Voice account. Before that – get a Gmail account in case you're the last person on earth without one. From your Google account just sign up for Google Voice and get the telephone number. You select the telephone number from the available telephone numbers in the country. So you can have an area code anywhere you want. Give that some thought. It shows up on caller id displays wherever you call unless you block it. If you block your caller id, don't bother calling ME, because I won't answer. I hope that when President Obama calls me to ask for advice on the economy, he's using caller id. To get the Google Voice number assignment you have to establish an account so they can charge you if they ever get around to doing that. I have had an account because I have an Android phone and I purchase Mobile Phone Apps from their app store. (Now called "Play Store"). So it was easy to get the Google Voice account set up. That – for me – was more than a year ago.

With the Gmail account and Google Voice account set up and the OBi110 connected – you need to get your IP address handy and also know your Gmail email account name and password. To get your IP address, you use a website like http://whatsmyip.com. At the top of their page is your IP address at the time you queried it. It's a four-number group separated by dots like 12.12.123.12. You can also get this address by logging into your router. It's usually displayed prominently.



To configure the Obi110, you go to their website and click on the image at the left. All the steps are there, including a video, a step-by-step tutorial and trouble-shooting guides. But basically, you go to http://www.OBiTalk.com and register. You'll need to fill in your Gmail username and password and your IP address. You'll need to have logged into Gmail and do a couple of Google Voice settings. I'd say I spent a half hour getting the phone configured. Instructions come with the device; it's pretty easy.

This device can be configured to work with many other services. It can serve as a bridge from any phone device you can call in on, and it will complete the call to your POTS line. There are apps for iPhone and Android to make it easy to call into your system and use it to forward your calls. It has all the Star Code features that all phones should have – redial, block caller id, call forward, block anonymous calls, call waiting.

In use, it's pretty simple – frankly I don't think about it. There are some green lights on the device; two must be solid green and one is flashing. As long as this happens, it's active and I don't concern myself. It's worked flawlessly since the day I activated it. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



US troops landing on D-Day, June 6, 1944

From the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library via Wikimedia.org at a URL that is much too long to put here. The full title is "Into the Jaws of Death - U.S. Troops wading through water and Nazi gunfire."

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Virtual Machine connecting to the Internet. The only thing that I can come up with that would be the cause is that the Virtual Machine does not like being moved from one IP address to another. I am sure there is a way to quickly fix this problem in the future, but I no longer need one. I have changed how I run Win 8 from running in a Virtual Machine inside VirtualBox to residing on a Virtual Hard Drive.

Without getting technical, a Virtual Hard Drive (VHD) is just a file (see the file WIN8.VHD in the screen capture later) on your computer's hard drive that has been configured so that when the computer boots it is recognized by the Windows Boot Manager as a separate hard drive containing an operating system if additionally an operating system has been installed on it. You will then be given the option of choosing which operating system to boot. In my case it was Windows 7 or Windows 8.

This sounds a lot like a dual boot system, but it differs in that in a true dual boot scenario your hard drive is partitioned into more than one partition with different operating systems installed on the different partitions.

Comments.....Continued on page 6

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

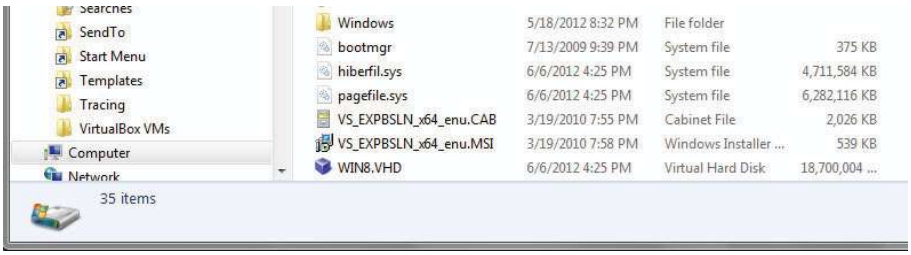
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
NYC Randel Farm Map	http://www.mbpo.org/free_details.asp?id=371
D-Day, June 6 1944	http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/normandy/nor-pam.htm
Dual Boot Windows 8 from VHD	http://blog.concurrency.com/infrastructure/dual-boot-windows-8-from-vhd-using-windows-setup/

Comments.....Continued from page 5

Here we have the VHD file playing the role of the extra partition.

The advantage of running Win 8 on a VHD instead of on a Virtual Machine inside VirtualBox is that there is no virtualization, and that means fewer problems (such as not getting on the Internet at User Group meetings and not having access to the computer's camera) and, in general, having full access to all the computer's peripherals.

There is, however, a catch: It is much easier to set up a Virtual Machine and install an operating system on it in VirtualBox than it is to create a VHD and install an operating system on the VHD. At least this will be true the first few times you try the process, since it is



done from the command prompt. Then there is this small item: If things are not done properly, you may destroy your current operating system by overwriting it with the new operating system you think you are putting on the VHD. I know because I did it.

I was lucky on my first attempt at creating a VHD and installing the Windows 8 Consumer Preview. I used that setup for a few days and found it much nicer than working with the Virtual Machine in VirtualBox. Then Microsoft pushed out a newer version of Win 8 termed Windows 8 Release Preview. So I went to the Microsoft site and downloaded the iso file for it, burned the iso file to a DVD, booted the laptop from it and was quite quickly presented with the message: "You can't upgrade Windows on a virtual drive." That meant that I needed to create a second VHD on my laptop and install the new Win 8 version there.

As to what went wrong during the installation of a second VHD, the best I can figure is that, when I was given the opportunity to install Win 8, I chose the drive my Win 7 was on. It was late at night, I was tired, and the process was a bit complicated. Anyway, the result was that when the new version of Win 8 installed on what I thought was the VHD and I rebooted, I had only one operating system: Windows 8. Windows 7, along with all my programs and data on the laptop, was gone, as was the VHD file containing Win 8 Consumer Preview. Quite a disaster.

But that is why you have backups. I knew I was a bit in over my head, so before doing any of the above, I cleaned up the laptop's hard drive to give me plenty of space for the first VHD file I was going to create (it was to be made expandable up to 60 GB). I then used our old friend Acronis True Image Home 2010 to do the backup. I had not gotten around to installing the newer version, Acronis True Image Home 2012, that I had purchased when Gene Barlow visited a few meetings back.

When I realized I had destroyed my Windows 7, I booted the laptop from an Acronis bootable disk, set it to restore the laptop to the way it was a few days back and went to bed. The next morning I booted the laptop and checked on my main programs and files, and everything seemed to be in good form. Now to create a new VHD and install Windows 8 Release Preview and to not make a mistake.

If you would like to possibly destroy your current operating systems, here is a link to the steps to create a VHD and install Win 8 on it. There are a number of other such links. Just do a search for install Windows 8 on virtual hard drive.

http://blog.concurrency.com/infrastructure/dual-boot-windows-8-from-vhd-using-windows-setup/#Beta.

Acronis Tip

Earlier I mentioned how backing up with Acronis True Image Home had saved me from a very serious loss. Now let me give you a tip on how to save a bit of typing. One reason I was still using an older version of Acronis was that in order to install the new

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Comments.....Continued from page 6

version I purchased from Gene Barlow at our meeting was it required you to type in a serial number of 64 characters plus five hyphens. That was a bit much. I sent an email to Gene and presented my problem. He said to email him the first eight characters for each of the CDs I had purchased. He then emailed me back the complete 69 character serial number for each, so that I could then just copy and paste in the serial number to do the installation.

Eye-Fi

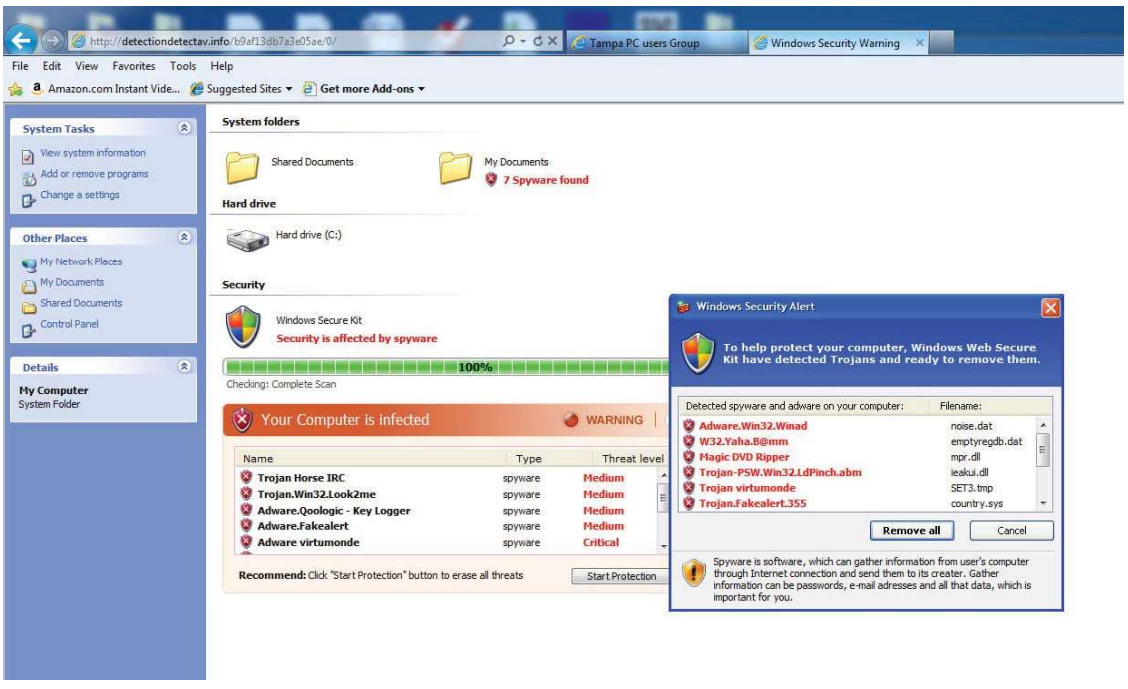
My son likes to carry a very small digital point-and-shoot digital camera with him. The one he had was a number of years old, so for his birthday we decided to give him a new one. I wanted one slightly larger than the smallest you could buy because it had more of the features I would like, such as WiFi, a larger optical zoom and most importantly a GPS My wife assured me that he wanted something really small, and she ferreted out that it was indeed the case. So the camera we purchased was a Canon Powershot Elph 110 HS. This is a 16 megapixel camera, and its dimensions are only 0.8 x 3.7 x 2.2 inches; 4.8 ounces. Now that is a small camera. And it takes quite good photos; much better than you will get with your phone camera. But this is not really about that camera. It is about what came next.

When my son visited Tampa a few days later, we were talking about the lack of a GPS and why that was the main reason I thought the other camera would have been better (at least for my taste). I don't recall how, possibly due to an Internet search about GPS and cameras, possibly because my son had heard about such, we came up with a product named Eye-Fi that is a SDHC memory card that has WiFi built in. How they get all that in a tiny SD card is a mystery to me, but they do and it works.

At first I thought the card also had a GPS receiver, which really astounded me, but later had it pointed out to me that the GPS data the card recorded for each photo was based on WiFi location data. Better than throwing a dart at a map but not as accurate as a real GPS receiver. However, in the test we did at my house, the latitude and longitude were right on the money. How did it know that? Is my wireless router one of the ones for which Google recorded the position?

The setup is as follows: The card comes with a USB card reader in which you put the card and then insert it into your computer that is connected to your wireless network. Once your computer has recognized the card, select the Open Folder to View Files option, navigate to the Start Here Folder and then click on the Setup.Exe file. That will install the required software on your computer. After that you are set to go. Put the card back in your camera. Then, when you take a photo, it will automatically insert the GPS info into the file's EXIF header information when it is saved by the camera to the SD card. Later, when you have the camera near your wireless network, the photo files will be automatically download to your computer.

You may read about this item at http://www.eye.fi/. It comes in different versions: four or eight GB, with or without geo-tagging My son's is the 8 GB with geo-tagging.



Beware of fake security warnings. While trying to move from viewing Nola.com in IE to Bloomberg.com, I saw some sort of message flash up and then disappear from the notification part of the task bar. Then what appears to the left filled up my monitor screen (I have cropped out the right-hand side and bottom

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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First Class Mail

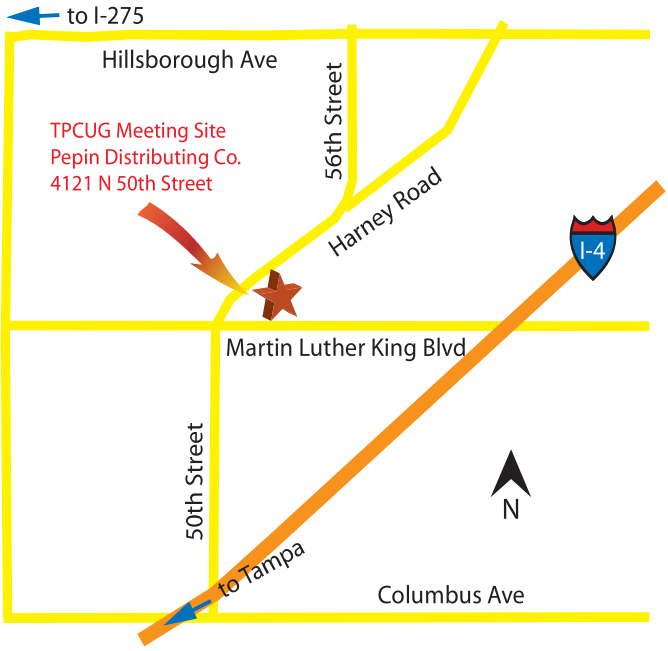
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

have William to go out there and then show us what we can look forward to.

William showed us the process to get this installed, and he then went into the Win 8 desktop and also showed the new Metro interface to see what that is going to look like. After passing through the Metro interface, the underlying settings pages show little change from Windows 7. But the demo should not be taken to represent the final configuration. The final features are still to be decided.

Our thanks go to William and the preparation he took to show us Windows 8. ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 7

where there was nothing).

The effect was to make you think you had a Microsoft Security warning on your computer. But, if you look closely at the image, you realize that what you are seeing is actually a graphic in a web browser page with a popup in front that has a button they expect you to click on. I am sure that a click on that button would have caused all sorts of bad things.

I suspect the Nola.com page was infected. So, when in doubt, don't click. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 25 No. 7 July 2012



July in Tampa

Meeting

Bob LaFave

Multiple Topics

Wednesday, July 11, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Bob says: "I'm going to try to do multiple subjects on items that members have asked me about....what Torrents are and how they work, Portable Apps, free security scanners, what an ISO or IMG file is and what to do to burn to a CD and more."

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

It appears that we have a photography newsletter this month. Jim Purcell tells you about a handy type of lens if you are tired of carrying around a camera with a long protruding lens. Then I relate my experiences with a piece of photography software that I didn't think I needed until I purchased it. Lightroom 4 is probably not for the casual photo snapper, but if you take a lot of photos or just have a collection of photos that you have digitized some other way, then you should consider putting some order in your collection. Lightroom will help you do that.

It has been truly amazing how so many of my interests have been enhanced by what we could now loosely call computing. Photography has been an interest since I was a teenager. Now cameras are lenses with computers attached and the darkroom has no chemicals, only software and a printer.

I am not sure when we first began to mention digital cameras

Comments.....Continued on page 5

August Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting but was deferred so our speaker, Blain Barton of Microsoft, could conclude early and get back to Tech-Ed in Orlando. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. Blain very graciously has given a talk for us on Microsoft matters for many years. We specifically asked about Windows 8, and Blain came prepared to do that, although he admitted to not spending much time with Windows 8 prior to the meeting.

Blain had a pre-release copy on his notebook. Since it was not touch-enabled he was restricted to mouse movements. The subjects he explained were the tiles interface, Metro UI, Charm Bar, Settings and how it's been somewhat consolidated, single sign-on and federated passwords.

He explained some of the integration with Windows Skydrive, a very large and interesting subject in itself. Also Hyper-V, a virtualization technology that requires specific 64-bit hardware. He also touched on Internet Explorer 10, which is available only for Windows 8.

Our thanks go to Blain Barton and the preparation he took to show us Windows 8. We truly look forward to Blain's annual presentation. ◆

TPCUG Forum page:

http://www.linux.tpcug.org/forums/index.php

What is a Pancake Lens and Why Should I Want One

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@msn.com

What is a Pancake Lens:

I received a newsletter from B&H Photography announcing that Canon had developed a new "pancake lens." This was the first that I had heard of the Pancake type lens, and I assumed that it was a recently-developed concept or technology. When I started doing some research for this article, I discovered that the first Pancake lens design was developed by Zeiss Tessar in 1902 and that a "Pancake Lens" is a descriptive name for a group of flat, thin or short barrel lenses. These lenses are generally in the 50mm focal length range, or slightly wide-angled, with a fixed focal length. In the seventies and early eighties a variety of manufacturers offered these lenses in their compact Single Lens Reflex (SLR) camera kits. In that era, Pop Photo declared the Konica 45 mm 2.8 the sharpest lens they had ever tested. Pancake lenses are primarily valued for providing quality optics in a compact package. The Canon lens uses linear stepping motors for autofocus and therefore gains an "STM" designation. This type of motor is commonly used in lenses for Compact System Cameras (CSC) as it offers fast, silent focusing during video recording. This system uses a "focus by wire" manual focus technology. The focus ring on the lens is not manually connected to the focusing mechanism but rotating the ring sends an electronic signal to the focusing mechanism.

Why Would You Want One:

First of all I'll state the obvious. To want a Pancake lens, you would need to own or plan to own an SLR or CSC camera since a lens is of no use to you unless your camera has an interchangeable lens capability. I will use the specifications of the Canon EF 40mm lens for this discussion because you should find similar features in other Pancake lenses. I caution you, however, to carefully check the features of any lens that you plan to buy. If you shoot video, the STM technology provides smooth, quiet and continuous auto focus while shooting. The feature that probably is most attractive to anyone who has carried a heavy and bulky SLR to an occasion where there is absolutely no place to put it is its size (less than 1") and weight (4.6 oz). It is the smallest lens that Canon makes. This size tends to make any camera to which you attach it less obtrusive. The lens has a bright F/2.8 aperture giving the capability to shoot under nearly any light conditions. It provides high image quality from the center to the periphery due to its advanced lens configuration, including an aspherical lens element. A circular aperture (7 blades) allows beautiful soft focus backgrounds. The lens also has optimized coatings that minimize ghosting and flare while providing exceptional color balance.

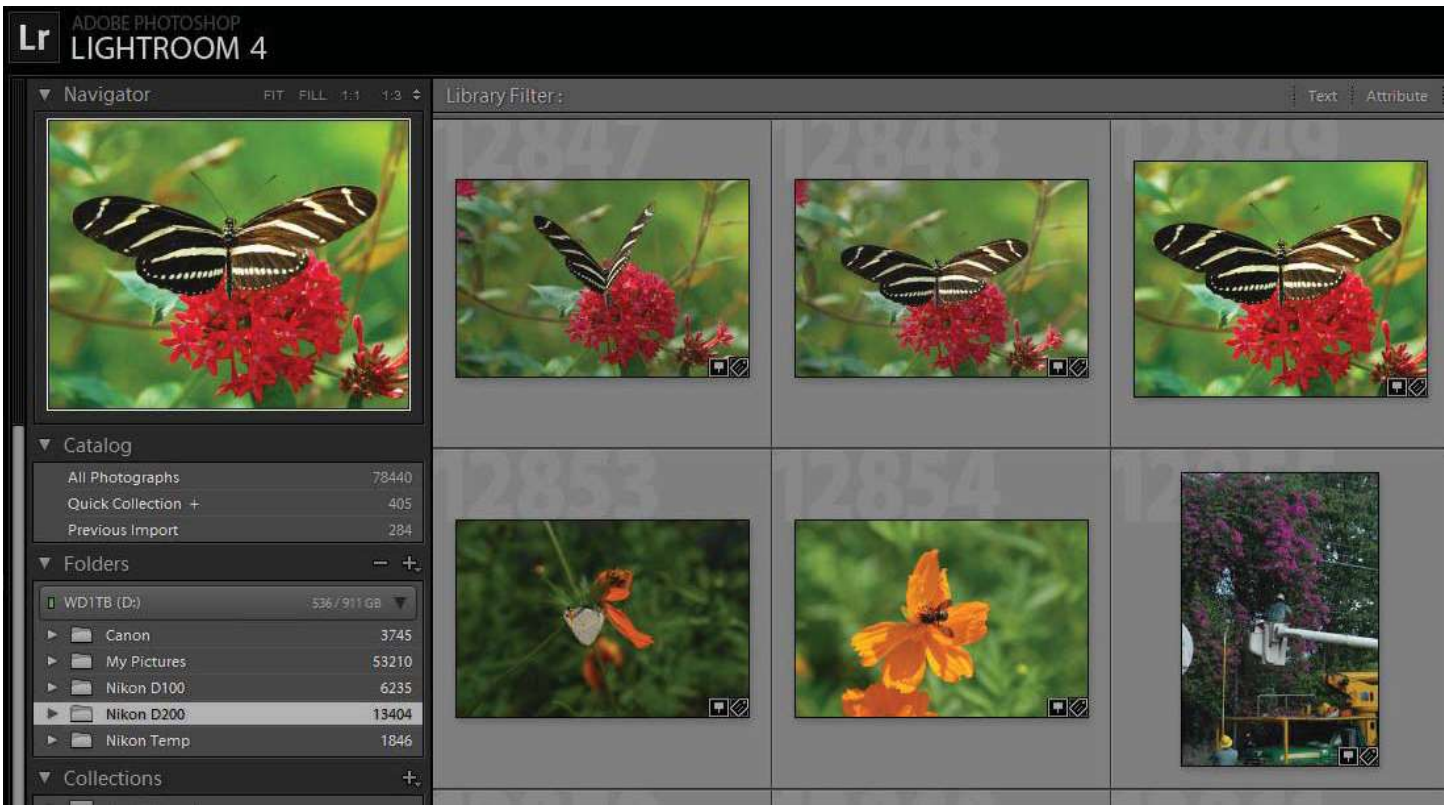
As I mentioned above, I used the new Canon lens features to illustrate the reasons for purchasing a Pancake lens. I again caution you to check the features of any lens that you are planning to purchase. Until I opened the box, I thought that this lens had Image Stabilization. I normally would not purchase a lens without that feature but luckily I believe that the other features override the absence of Image Stabilization. I did not discuss how the crop factor of your camera affects the 35mm equivalent of the focal length of the lens, but it is another thing that you should consider in determining if the stated focal length actually fits your needs. ◆



Camera with 40mm Pancake Lens



Camera with 17-135mm lens



Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 4

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I had held off purchasing this program for a number of years because I didn't think I needed it. To me it was just another program for organizing your photos, and Adobe Photoshop already came with a program called Adobe Bridge which seemed to do that. It allowed you to add things such as a title, keywords and a description to the photo header information. While in Bridge, if you wanted to edit the image it was trivial to bring up Photoshop. What more could you want?

Well, you might want to geotag the photo – that is, add the longitude and latitude of where the photo was taken. I still don't have a camera with a built-in GPS unit. And, of course, any photos that I have scanned from negatives, slides or prints will not have that information. I do have a free program, Microsoft Pro Photo Tools, which I have mentioned in the newsletter, that allows you to geotag photos, but that was a separate program. So I would use Bridge to enter descriptions and keywords and then have to use Pro Photo Tools to do the GPS info. All this was a bit tedious and time consuming. Hence, my decision to purchase Lightroom since it would do all of this and much more in one software package. And Adobe would let me have it for $100 instead of the usual $150.

The first and an important thing you should know is that when you import your images into Lightroom, it does not move their location on your hard drive. This is important since some cataloging programs apparently do this, which, I think, is a bad idea. Importing will be the first thing you do when beginning to work with Lightroom. I did this in batches, not all at once, partly because I don't have all my images in one place like My Pictures and also because I have so many of them. If you look closely at the screen capture above you will note that I have brought a total of 78,440 photos into Lightroom from various places on my hard drive. You wouldn't want to do all that at once even if they were inside the same big folder. I actually have only about 68,000 unique photos on my computer since I have two folders each containing around 10,000 images that are almost the same but not quite the same, so I need to sort out how they are different before making one folder of the distinct images in each of the two.

Lightroom.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Fireworks over the Hudson River

From the New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com. One of their many Independence Day Photographs.

Comments.....Continued from page 1

in our newsletter, but I am pretty sure that one of the first articles, if not the first, was by Larry Anders about his Sony Mavica digital camera. It was a camera that stored its images on a 3.5 inch floppy. Larry's article was in our October 1997 newsletter, where he noted that the Mavica could store up to 20 high-resolution images or 40 standard-resolution images in 24-bit 640 x 480 (VGA) JPEG format. Well, we have come a long way since then. I am having a hard time recalling, but I think a 3.5 floppy stored about 1.4 MB of data. That wouldn't even hold one cell phone photo now.

Speaking of cell phone cameras, that is about all I see in use any more. I see basically no point-and-shoot cameras, although I am sure the new ones produce much better images than the best cell phone camera. And as for digital SLRs, sometime I feel I am the only person using one, at least for casual photography. Obviously professional images for magazines, newspapers and weddings require the digital SLR.

Next month, something more than photography, I hope. ◆

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Fiscal Times	http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/
showmystreet.com - fast & easy street viewing	http://showmystreet.com/
Online PDF Tools - Eastman's Online Genealogy	http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2012/06/online-pdf-tools.html

Lightroom.....Continued from page 4

Lightroom has seven modules: Library, Develop, Book, Map, Slideshow, Print and Web. The image on the previous page is a crop of a screen capture of the Library Module where you do your importing and file management.

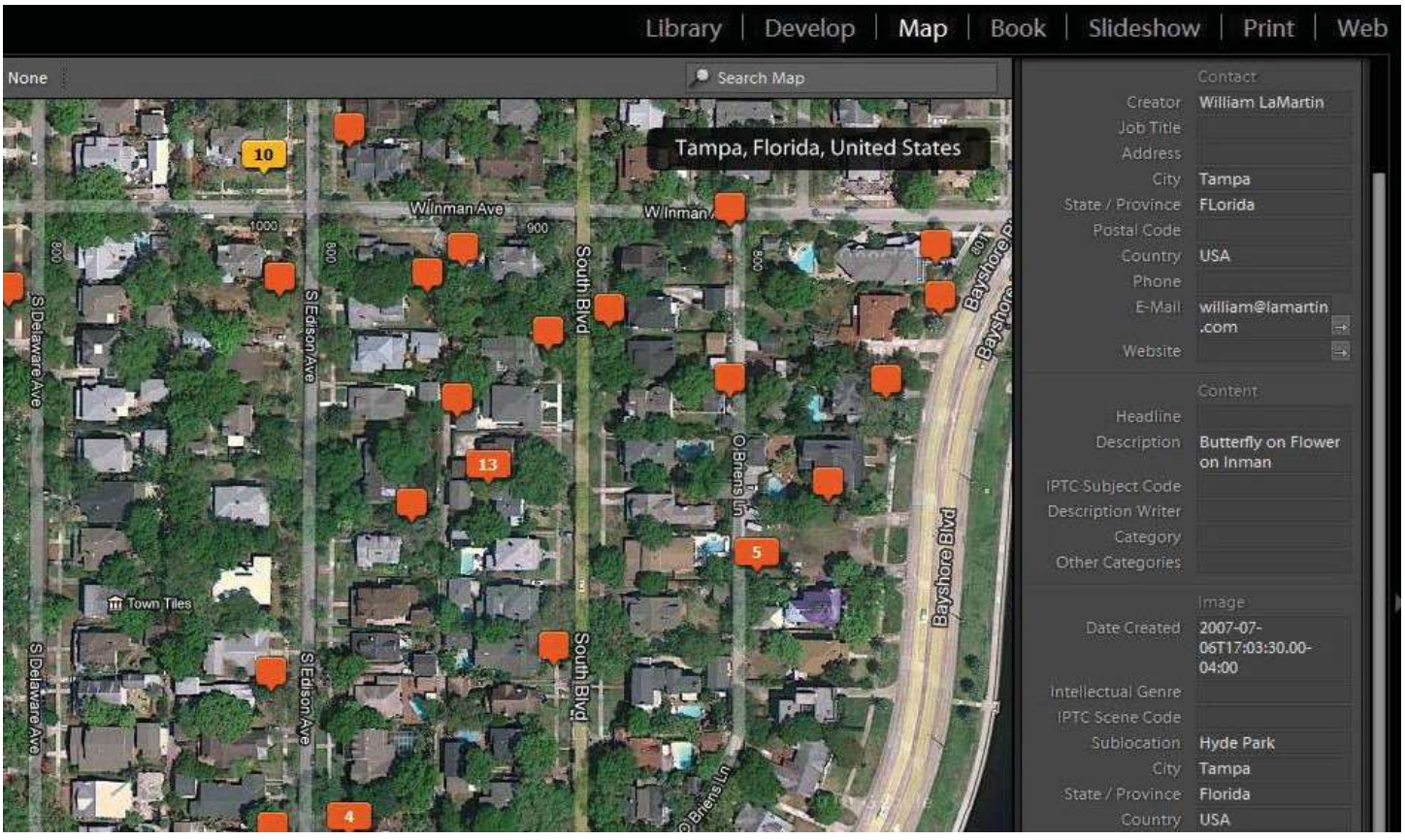
The next Module is the Develop Module where you can modify various items, such as exposure, white balance, contrast, saturation and more, for individual images. At present, I have not used this Module since I have in the past done such things in Photoshop. The third Module is the one that I really like, the Map Module. A cropped screen capture below shows the locations of photos in a folder of images from my neighborhood taken with my Nikon D200 camera. The yellow [view the newsletter at our web site to see color] tag with the numeral 10 is the location of the butterfly image on page 4 and nine other images.

To locate an image, you simply drag it and possibly others from the thumbnail collection (not shown) onto the map. On the right you can see the data I entered about the image. The maps used are by Google. On the right also is a panel containing data entered by the camera, such as when the photo was taken.

If you are in the Library Module, this panel on the right gives you the opportunity to enter keywords. If you then assign keywords to your images, such as dog, cat, tree, water, Tampa,John, etc., in the Library Module, you may filter by keywords to display only those photos in your collection that have, for example, the keyword John. This filtering may be done on any one or any combination of file name, keyword, title, description or any searchable field. Quite a useful feature.

The only problem with the filter feature is that to use it you need to have entered such information in your photos. I have only been doing this since I purchased my third digital camera, the Nikon D200, and there still is a folder named Nikon Temp (1,846 photos) where some of my more recent photographs await geotagging and keywording. I believe most of the photos in Nikon D200 (13,404 photos) have been geotagged and given descriptions and keywords. If

Lightroom.....Continued on page 7



Lightroom.....Continued from page 6

you do it right after you take the photos, then it is not too bad. But who does things when they are supposed to. You put it off, take more photos, put off cataloging them, and before you know it you have 1,846 photos sitting in Nikon Temp that you haven't done.

Then there is the elephant in the Lightroom: 53,210 photos in MyPictures that were not taken with a digital camera. I have already said that I need to get rid of around 10,000 of them that are duplicates, but that leaves around 43,000. Now in that collection are many thousand from the Burgert Tampa Photo Collection and the Historic New Orleans Collection and smaller numbers from other historic collections I have downloaded from the web. There are about 25,000 such images, so I won't be geotagging them. But it is conceivable that if I can figure out how to automate the process via programming, I can add with little effort a description to many of these photos since I have many of the descriptions in a database along with the corresponding photo's file name. Subtracting these 25,000 leaves 18,000. Oh, and there are the 3,475 photos taken with my first digital camera, a small Canon, plus the already mentioned 6,235 taken with the Nikon D100. I should live so long as to get all this done!

But that is not all. I also have about 10,500 images that I have scanned in over many years from negatives, slides and prints, using at least four different scanners. I have added descriptions and keywords to almost none of these (although I know the subject matter since I took the slides and most of the negatives and the other items mostly have some family connection). For many of them I don't know the exact location, so there is no geotagging to be done. However, there are images I took more than 40 years ago that I can tell you the exact locations they were taken. Of course, it is easy if it is in your boyhood home's back yard or some well-known public location.

What else can you do in Lightroom? After the Map Module, there are four more Modules.

Book This Module allows you to create a book in Blurb, PDF or JPG format in four different sizes using a collection of your photographs, You may choose front and back covers, the particular layout of each page regarding the number of photos and text. And if you use the Blurb format, it will tell you the cost of an actual printing and binding of the book. Now you ask, what is Blurb? Blurb.com is a printing service that prints a bound book based on the layout and photos you select. I did a quick test of setting up such a book with some 62 family photos in the 8 x 10 format just to get an idea about pricing. The quoted price (from inside Lightroom) was $78.65.

Lightroom.....Continued on page 8



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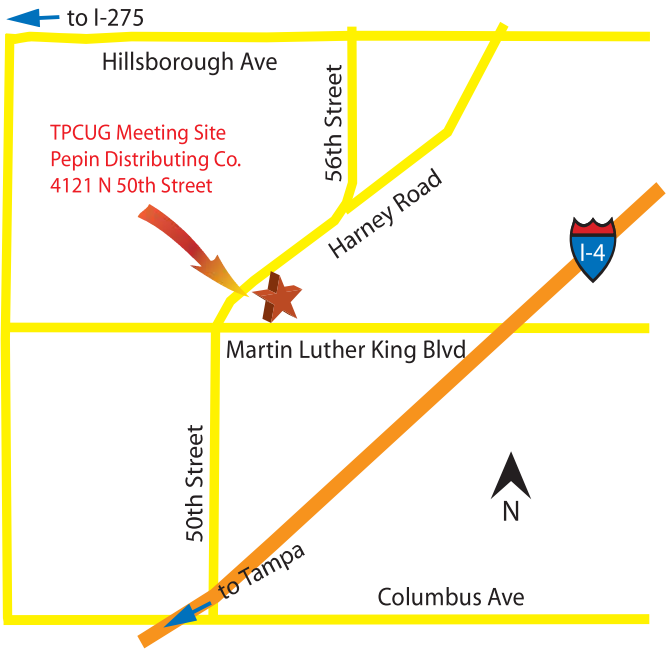
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Lightroom.....Continued from page 7

Slideshow The cropped screen capture below is of the right-hand side of the panel used to create a slide show. The thumbnails running across the bottom are the ones that I have flagged for use from the larger collection. On the right is the panel for choosing the setting for the show. Once I choose the settings, add a little text and preview the show, all I have to do is press the Export to Video button (out of the cropped view) and the program will create a mp4 video.

The remaining Modules are **Print** and **Web**. Print just facilitates printing with a few features like watermarking (for proofs, I suppose). The Web Module is more interesting in that it lets you create what I would call a slideshow for the web as opposed to the mpr4 video mentioned earlier which Lightroom terms a slideshow. These Web shows are termed Web Galleries, and there are a number of different formats from which to choose. Some use Flash and some appear not to, but I haven't had time to really look into them.

If you are serious about cataloging your photos, Lightroom 4 is the program. My question: Will I ever get mine done? ◆



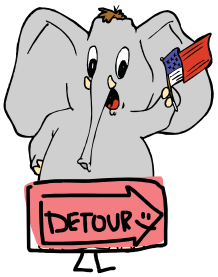
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A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 25 No. 8 August 2012



August in Tampa

Meeting

Merle Nicholson on Various Topics

Wednesday, August 8, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will speak on: Managing passwords using KeePass cross-platform Password Database; inSSIDer wireless network software; Tampa Bay Times eEdition demo; CPU magazine reader. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Well, no phone or camera article this month. Ron Weinberg tells us how to more easily connect to streaming content (movies) on the web, and Merle Nicholson tells us how to protect our computers from weather hazards. So that leaves me a bit of space to write about some computer odds and ends.

Apple vs. Samsung Apple is suing Samsung claiming that Samsung copied the iPhone's look and feel, i.e., the rectangular shape and rounded corners. Also there is something about the Android operating system stealing from Apple's iOS. Apple says that receiving 2.5 billion dollars from Samsung will make them feel better about the alleged theft. Samsung, I think, has a countersuit against Apple. What appalls me about all this is the sort of things that are claimed to be patentable: rectangular shape, rounded corners, certain types of swipes and taps on the phone screen. These companies try to patent variations of

Comments.....Continued on page 5

September Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob touched on a variety of subjects asked by members in attendence: DLL error messages – he demonstrated Autoruns from SysInternals as a good tool to track down errant DLLs. He also discussed a "Take Ownership" menu change program, a quick way to resolve security file ownership problems with files that refuse to be deleted. Further information on this is posted on our TPCUG Forum. See General TPCUG topics for the July 11 entry by Bob LaFave.

Bob LaFave was our presenter for the July meeting, so he continued from where he was. The subjects he presented were Torrent, Portable Apps and ISO files.

Torrent – Bob demonstrated uTorrent – a peer-to-peer file sharing application. He showed how to install the free version, peer ratings on movies, and quite a lot of security cautions. Bob spent quite a bit of time showing various locations and what to do and not to do. All very valuable information.

Portable Apps – a free application and menu system that is to be installed on a flash drive and transported so that a very large collection of good quality applications are available on any computer from the flash-drive. All of these programs are specifically configured to be run from the portable apps application. This is an excellent way to have familiar software on any computer. Nothing is installed on the host.

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

Another Way to Connect

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Do you want or need an Internet connection at or near your TV? Easy, just run a Cat 5e or Cat 6 cable though your walls, ceiling, etc. for the best hard-wired connection. Too difficult? Buy a pair of powerline adapters and connect through them. Not as efficient or fast as wired, but it works. Don't want to spend the money and already have wireless router and receiving equipment? Just set up your slower wireless connection.

Wait! Now there may be a better alternative for you. Here is my story.

As avid movie fans, we have been streaming movies, primarily from Netflix, using a wireless G connection from our ISP router to and through our Blu-ray Player. The quality of the picture has been excellent, but the initial connection has been slow. From time to time we could not connect and received a "Network Interference" message, which seemed to be coming from the Blu-ray Player or an intermediate Samsung server. To resolve each instance we had to turn the Blu-ray Player off and on, sometimes several times, in order to connect to the Internet and on to Netflix. A Google search showed this was a common problem but a specific remedy was not available.

It occurred to me that perhaps a faster, better connection might correct the problem. Hard-wiring is the preferred method for the best signal. Running a physical Ethernet cable was not practical for this location. Budget would not allow powerline adapters. Next best, I thought, would be to try wireless N, which the player was capable of receiving.

A wireless N router was not readily available at no charge from Verizon, my ISP, but I did have the option of buying my own directly, which could be easily connected to my network.

After a discussion of the problem with a Verizon support specialist, it was decided to send a service technician to investigate.

When I explained the problem to the technician he immediately came up with a solution and installed a Coaxial Network adapter, which required a splitter, two short coax cables, one Ethernet cable and one power adapter.

The main coax cable carrying the TV signal is connected to the input of the splitter. The splitter outputs from one port to the adapter and another to the Verizon DVR/Set Top Box. The Ethernet cable is connected from the adapter to the Ethernet port in the Blu-ray Player. Powering off the router does not kill the coax signals to the TV, only the Ethernet connectivity.

We reset the Blu-ray Player to use a wired connection and the router automatically assigned it an address and incorporated it into the network.

After testing it, the tech was on his way.

The adapter shows as a MoCA device in the router. Difficult hard-wiring or other adapters were not needed.

MoCA is the home entertainment networking standard, from the Multimedia over Coax Alliance, used for delivery of cable, satellite, and IPTV signals. Main features are: Supports full Ethernet speed, uses existing coax cabling, and coexists with cable TV services.

The new adapter is Verizon Coaxial Network Adapter, Model ECB2200V, manufactured by Actiontec. You can see details on the Actiontec website, http://www.actiontec.com/. If your ISP can not provide this or an equal device, Amazon sells them without the Verizon brand for about $83.

I can now report that connection times are faster and the "Network Interference" error message has not reoccurred. I have all the benefits of a high speed wired connection. ◆

Hurricane Season – Are You Ready?

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Ok, as we all know – we've at least been reminded – the 2012 hurricane season is upon us. It arrived in late June with a tropical storm that hung around a long time. Some of us in Tampa experienced some real outages that lasted a couple of days. I was fortunate to have just a couple of brief outages over three days; just some blink-outs. Those brief interruptions can cause some real damage if you're not set up correctly. If you're interested in preserving your electronic equipment, I have some ideas and some solutions.

First, I'd like to categorize the types of events:

1. Direct Lightning Strike – fuggetaboudit. The outcome is just dumb luck. Obviously it can burn your house down and/or destroy all or anything attached electrically. In Tampa, the TECO Zap Cap program is the best protection. Outside of the equipment, Zap Cap provides you with a policy against damages.
2. Nearby Lightning Strike – this is the temporary full outage you get from a nearby strike. It's characterized by a single full outage typically lasting for one second.
3. Tree strike – this is when a tree blows into a line. It's pretty common. It's characterized by as many as three successive blink-outs. The fourth usually results in a complete outage lasting for a minute to days, depending on the storm and the demand placed on the restoration crews. Most of the time it's a single blink, but wait a few minutes – it may happen again when the wind gusts again.

It is number three that I want to discuss, because it's what we need to address using UPS equipment. I call it a tree strike, but it could be other things that blow into the overhead lines. An electric company spends a lot of time and resources on tree trimming. The problem is – deciding how much to trim, because they can't afford to over-trim. It's very costly and those costs are passed on to you because they are operating costs.

When a tree branch is whipped into an overhead line, it causes a short that is detected by equipment back at the substation. That equipment opens the line – drops power within milliseconds – waits for a timed interval and then closes; reenergizing the line. If the branch is still touching the line, it will interrupt again. It has a timer so that it counts the number of closings and after that number, it stays out. It can be reenergized from the control center, but to prevent permanent damage someone must be sent out to investigate. An outage may last an hour to days.

Trees are a difficult subject. After all, trees belong to people who are also customers. There is very little regulation concerning the placement of trees. Trees sprout on their own, right? Little trees grow up to be big trees. Some trees grow fast, some slow. And municipalities are very much interested in preserving trees. It's very difficult-to-impossible to cut them down, and there are regulations on the percentage of a tree that may be trimmed.

So what can we do to minimize damage to the home? There are two things we must look out for. One is low (or high) voltage, and the other is electrical and thermal shock to equipment that turned off and back on repeatedly. Our best protection is UPS – Uninterruptable Power Supplies. Now, I'm not ignoring "surges" – that rare event that causes a stray high voltage to surge in and destroy equipment. Surge protection is basic – also covered in the Zap Cap program, but it's an integral part of any UPS. Those surges are a brief high voltage caused by a nearby lightning strike that lasts just milliseconds (that's event #2).

Let's check on one thing. Did you know your computer can be set to turn back on when power is restored? Do you want it to be? Well, I guess that would be a NO! I don't want it turned off and then on .. then off. Right? It must be set so when it goes off, it stays off. If yours does not stay off, you can set that in BIOS. My setting is "Restore on Power Loss" and the choices are "Power Off" and "Power On". This is important. Set it

Hurricane.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Occupy Lego Land

From Flickr at http://www.flickr.com/photos/nat-nat/7679574938/ by Supernat13 (not a real name).

Comments.....Continued from page 1

searching on the Internet, clicking on the computer screen and all sorts of obvious ideas (at least to me they are obvious) that really should not be patentable. Since Google makes the Android operating system that the Samsung devices use, I suppose that the lawsuits are also a shot across the bow of Google, which is probably more of a threat to Apple than is Samsung.

Social Media Stocks Apparently someone has unfriended the stock of Facebook and Zynga in recent weeks. As I write this, both companies' stock prices have plummeted since their IPOs, with Facebook down around 45% since its IPO in May and Zynga down a whopping 70% since its IPO last year. Since Zynga's games, like Farmville, run on Facebook, the two companies affect each other. All you Farmville players need to get out there and purchase more virtual tractors and cows to help these two companies. Facebook is now selling at only $21/share instead of the IPO price of $38.23.

Time will tell if the current collection of social media stocks, which also includes Groupon, Yelp, Pandora

Comments.....Continued on page 7

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Portable Apps	http://portableapps.com/
Raspberry Pi $35 computer	http://www.alliedelec.com/lp/120626raso/
Raspberry PI FAQ	http://www.raspberrypi.org/faqs
Flickr	http://www.flickr.com

Hurricane.....Continued from page 4

to "Power Off".

OK now UPS. It's a battery backup that keeps power on your equipment so it doesn't blink out for those one second intervals. It's to extend the life of your computer or equipment. How long can it power your computer? I don't know for sure, but I certainly hope they stay powered up long enough for me to shut them down manually or the UPS software to do that for me. That's the objective; to carry you through those blinkouts. The type of UPS we're considering is a "standby UPS". This type of UPS powers your equipment with the line voltage and then switches to battery/inverter power very quickly. They are available in sizes from 200 to 1200VA. I have two 200VA, a 550VA and three 750VA in my house.

A UPS has these components:

- Outlets for equipment to have battery backup; they also have surge protection.
- Outlets that have no backup, but they do have surge protection.
- An inverter to supply 115V AC to supply the outlets that have backup.
- A battery – Sealed Lead Acid type to power the inverter.
- An AVR – Automatic Voltage Regulator. This is optional – more about that later.
- Electronics to control all this stuff, power switch and circuit breaker.

When we buy a UPS, there are just a few things to consider: Capacity, runtime, AVR, battery and price.

Capacity This is measured in VA – that's Volt-Amps. Useful, right? Not Watts like you'd expect. Here's what I do.

For a full-blown desktop computer with LCD monitor, I use 750VA. A small computer, small processor, one hard drive and an LCD monitor. I use a 550VA, and for the Verizon router, wireless and network switches I use a couple of 220VA. The Verizon FIOS device has its own battery. I have four monitors, so I have just the one primary on the UPS; the others are plugged into the non-battery outlets. I have the DVR, a small media PC and an LED clock on one 750VA.

All the major UPS manufacturers have calculators to help you with this. In my opinion, they all lean toward selling you more capacity that you may be interested in, but they are very useful. Just Google search "Uninterruptable power supply size", and you'll get several sites. Don't Google "UPS" because .. well, you know.

Runtime I'm sized to get about six to ten minutes on computers. That's enough time to ride out all the blinkouts. If the power goes dead altogether, I have no interest in keeping power on computers. We shut them down properly. All the large capacity UPS have USB cables and software to shut them down gracefully. The small devices like the router will probably run for a couple of days. But – you know why – being in Tampa, I'm not interested as much in runtime as I am interested in having the ability to ride out the blinkouts.

AVR I consider AVR where I live pretty essential. It definitely raises the cost and weight of the UPS significantly. The AVR is a heavy transformer that adjusts the output voltage on low and high incoming voltages. It's available in the larger sizes – 500VA and up. Those UPS that have AVR have it labeled very plainly on the box and in advertising.

Battery UPS uses SLA – Sealed Lead Acid batteries. Batteries should be replaced every two years. You can go longer, but you're at risk, and I would never go more than three years. I have the battery sizes, dimensions and an industry size in a document that I keep up when they are replaced. I also (now) label both the battery and the outside of the UPS with the date of last replacement. You'd think I do a good job on this? Wrong. I just installed four replacements – all have the same size batteries. One I took out had bulges on the sides! And one was dated in 2008 – four years. What prompted me to order those replacement batteries? The hard way of course. When the June storm came in, one UPS battery was so low that it just shut off and didn't come back on. Not that this was a bad thing; it just wasn't what I expected.

Battery replacements are easy to get. I order all mine

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Hurricane.....Continued from page 6

from an online battery sales company at half the price of retail. Yes, the shipping is a bit high, but all those batteries are an industry standard size. You don't have to buy from the UPS manufacturer unless you really want to spend three times the generic brand price.

Rules Never plug a power strip in a UPS unless you absolutely know for sure that the outlet strip has no surge protection built in. No surge-protected power strips. Never plug a laser printer in a UPS. There's no reason to plug any printer in a UPS; use a surge protector instead. It's as important to figure out what you don't need backup for as what you do. Don't plug in any charger, cell phones or wireless telephones. If your house phone has a base station with no battery in it, that would be a good thing for a UPS. If your alarm system uses an Internet connection to call in the alarm, the Internet router is a good one for the UPS.

Last advice Don't wait until replacement time to find out what kind of battery your UPS uses. The time to do that is when you buy it. Sure, write down the manufacturer battery replacement number, but pull the battery out and measure the battery and photograph it while you're at it. Generic battery sizes designate dimensions, Voltage, Ampere Hours and terminal size. Save the information and make a Google appointment in two years. My battery guys: http://www.batterymart.com. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 5

and Linkedin (the only one doing well) turn out to be like Pets.com of the .com era (do you remember them?) or like Google.

Searching Flickr There are many ways to search for photos on the Internet, and there are a fair number of photo sites. One of the oldest and best, but of less interest to the general public now, is Flickr, owned by Yahoo. You can simply go to the Flickr site at http://www.flickr.com and search for any photos you would like from among the over five billion they say they have. Or just click on one of the photos you like that they are featuring at the moment. That will lead you to all the collections of that particular photographer. When I do this, I realize two things: There is a large and diverse world out there, and there are some very good non-professional photographers. In fact, sites like Flickr make things hard for the professionals who used to be able to charge several hundred dollars for a particular photo sold to a magazine. Now the magazines whenever they want a particular type of photo, check the photo sites like Flickr, and, if they find what they want, they offer the amateur a fraction of what they would have had to pay the professional for the photo. And, with these modern high-end digital cameras, the amateurs can produce, when they are lucky, something as good as a professional.

So, why mention Flickr? After all, it is old news. Well, I decided sometime back to write a program that would allow me to more easily search the Flickr database of photos for ones that interest me. Flickr makes this possible by providing an API for doing this. You can find the API at http://www.flickr.com/services/api/. To use the API you need to request an API Key from Yahoo, which is easy and, as far as I can tell, automatically granted on request. And, of course, you need to be able to program in some programming language.

Perhaps six months back, I did all of the above and wrote such a program for a Windows desktop computer and for a Windows 7 phone. As of yet, however, I haven't bothered to put the WP7 app at the phone marketplace since I have made so little on the apps I have previously put there. However, with the arrival of Window 8 for tablets and the desktop, I think I might do better on that platform and have been working on modifying the Windows application for Windows 8.

As an example of using the program, you can put in a search term like Manhattan or New Orleans, set the most recent date to consider, such as today, select how many thumbnails to retrieve at a time, say, 25, and press the Search button. You then receive a collection of 25 thumbnails, where clicking on one will display a larger version of the image along with pertinent facts like: Title, Description, Owner, Longitude & Latitude, Posting Date, Camera and Host Computer. You may also download the largest version of the photo permitted. The Picture of the Month was retrieved in this manner. ◆

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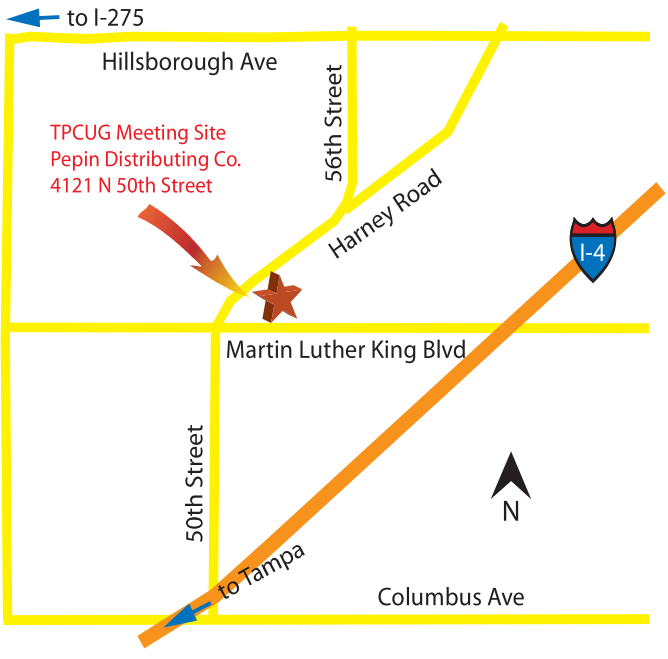
ISO files – Bob showed a small, very popular program for creating and burning ISO image files using Img-Burn.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Bob for the excellent presentation.

◆

TPCUG Forum page:

http://www.linux.tpcug.org/forums/index.php



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 25 No. 9 September 2012



September in Tampa

Meeting

Kevan Sheridan on Android Smartphone

Wednesday, September 12, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Kevan Sheridan will lead us through all the features of the Android Smartphone. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to our contributors, Merle Nicholson, Robert Davis and Ron Weinberg, I have very little empty space to fill.

The big news, I suppose, is that Apple was successful in its lawsuit against Samsung for patent infringement, and they will now try to block the sale of a number of Samsung Android phones in the US. I don't know if Kevan will be using one of these phones in his presentation or not.

In other news, Microsoft will be releasing Windows 8 to the general public in October. People who have certain Microsoft subscriptions, as does Merle Nicholson, were able to download it a couple of weeks back. Today, August 29, Samsung announced that they would have both an ARM processor and an Intel Core i5 processor version of their Windows 8 slate computers that will be available in Europe on October 25. I am sure other manufactures will soon follow suit. There was no mention of the US date. Finally, Windows Phone 8 and Visual Studio 2012 are also due very soon. ◆

October Meeting: Steve Singer on new hardware

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob touched on a variety of subjects – the main subjects were ISO files, and their use, ISO Buster to view the contents of ISO files, ImgBurn to create and to burn ISO files to CD/DVD; there was also a brief mention of Portable Apps and running from the hard drive, and Roboform. As usual, an excellent and informative SIG session.

The presentation this month was given by myself, Merle Nicholson, on the subject of passwords and the necessity of having a system to manage them, the importance of not re-using passwords, and the advantages of a program like Keepass or KeepassX to store them. I mentioned what I thought is the best method of remembering the Keepass lock password and how the brain stores and retains this type of thing.

Also shown was the online e-edition of the Tampa Bay Times, and some directions on how to navigate this and what it has to offer. There seemed to be plenty of interest in this, partly from its convenience, but also the cost savings.

Also demonstrated was inSSIDder, a free program to capture and analyze local WiFi signals when you need to locate a suitable WiFi connection, and incidental to that a quick demo on WiFi sharing from a smartphone, for which, in my case, having an Android phone, I have an app called FoxFi.

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

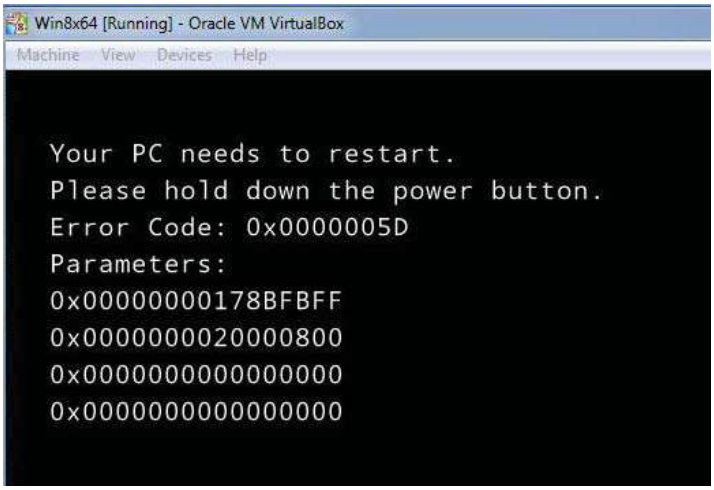
Windows 8 – first three hours

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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I guess after saying I didn't have time to look at the Win 8 release, I was lying. My plan was to eventually build a computer with parts I have around here and install it, but I went ahead and installed a Virtual Machine (VM)in VirtualBox. My curiosity just got the best of me.

Eventually I'll have to test my commercial applications because a customer will buy a new notebook with Windows 8 installed and then call me to ask if that's ok. I can't really say no, because sooner or later no one will have a choice. And that time is coming in October.

I tried to upgrade a Windows 7 Virtual Machine. The Upgrade failed, with the error below, so I created a new virtual machine and then making a new machine failed.



Research on the Internet came up with a BIOS setting in the motherboard that fixed it. "No-Execute Memory Protection" needs to be enabled, as found at:

http://www.tech-recipes.com/rx/26800/windows-8-on-virtualbox-and-vmware-your-pc-needs-to-restart-fix/

I don't know why. There are a lot of incidents on the Internet with this error; some were fixed by this, and some by other things. This was after the third attempt to install.

All went well after that. I did some settings and realized that I was really tired of getting to "Apps" from the desktop with no Start Menu. Apps are there, but you have to leave the desktop to get to this tiled-list. I knew about this because everyone writes about it, but it's just tiresome.

Ed Bott on ZD Net has some good Win 8 articles, http://www.zdnet.com/eight-things-to-do-right-away-after-you-set-up-windows-8-7000002693/. One thing he points out is strange. You have to set your time zone. It used to come up automatically on installation, but it does no longer. So you start out with Pacific time. When you realize this, you have to wade through settings to change it. I think they intend for "Location Services" to catch up and change it, but I don't know when that is, and I turned that off anyway. William LaMartin is pretty sure it's a bug. On the other hand, I have a desktop unit with no GPS.

I took Ed's advice and added several items on the Taskbar by right-clicking on the Metro Tile and selecting to add to the Taskbar. Otherwise I may have never found them. (Maybe not "NEVER.") Notably "Run," "Help" and "Cmd."

I relied on Ed's articles when I switched to Windows 7, and he's holding true to form now. These articles are very useful: http://www.zdnet.com/blog/bott/.

Your default logon account seems to be your Windows Live account. You can change that to a Local account – and I did this and entered a new password for that, and it created an administrative account with that name and password. You really aren't aware you need to do that until you realize that your login password is the same as your Live account. And you just THOUGHT you were entering the Live account and password so they could send you a message in case you've forgotten your account information. Yep, maybe, but that became your account login also. Until you figure it out and change it. They SHOULD be different. Your Live account is probably all over the place; it's not suitable for locking your PC.

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Win 8.....Continued from page 3

Also, there's no obvious way to Shut Down, Restart, Sleep or Hibernate. Believe it or not, it's in Settings from the Metro screen. I had to find Help first so I could find that out, and – I may be wrong here – I had to go to Charms, Search, type Help. I eventually was able to get a Help icon on the Taskbar. Then I made a Shutdown and a Restart shortcut on the desktop.

Windows 8 doesn't have a Start Menu. If you put the cursor at the bottom left corner, you get a little pop-up that when clicked goes to the Start screen [below]:





And when you right-click the Start screen, you can get to the Apps screen, as captured at the bottom of the left column:

The Apps screen is difficult for me to grasp because all the Start Menu programs are here, and when I'm done installing all my applications, I'll have five times this many tiles. It reminds me of people who have their



desktop covered in icons and haven't discovered menus.

To solve the Start Menu problem I added a ToolBar on the Taskbar and used the "Start Menu" folder as the Toolbar source directory. With some fiddling – this isn't easy, I moved the ToolBar on the left. And I now have a Start Menu. I manually added just a couple of items – the Shutdown and Restart shortcuts. It isn't pretty, but it's cascading. Yay [see screen capture immediately above]. Current score: Merle 3 and Microsoft 300,000.

I am used to having Windows Security Essentials installed for anti-virus, and at first

Win 8.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Goats in a Tree

From the Wall Street Journal online, http/www.onlinewsj.com, in the photo section for August 27. The caption read: Goats climbed an Argan tree to get to its fruit near Essaouira, Morocco, Sunday.

Win 8.....Continued from page 4

look, it seems there is no anti-virus. Except while I was in Control Panel, Windows Defender was there, I opened it and found Windows Security Essentials inside there already running. It isn't in the system tray. This is interesting. I like it.

Since my Windows 8 foray is in a virtual machine it's hard to measure performance, but I can say this; I'm not disappointed by how well – and how fast – it runs. It isn't slow.

I'm still working with this, obviously. My immediate objective is to get Office 2010 and Access 2003 installed and some other programs I need and to try everything out so I'll be prepared to help my customers. I'm trying to keep an open mind and to keep from sounding curmudgeonly; maybe I'll find some advantage and grow to love it. ◆

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
TuneIn	http://tunein.com/
Ed Bott Blog articles	http://www.zdnet.com/blog/bott/
Google Nexus 7 Tablet	http://www.google.com/nexus/#/7

Donating or Transferring a Clean PC

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
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Getting a system ready for donation or transfer to another individual is distinctly different from adding another user to the system.

The objective is to remove all personal information including: data, passwords, financial information, emails, photos, videos, etc.

The most common way is to completely wipe the hard drive, which will make the information unrecoverable. Mere deletion allows most data to be easily recovered by using readily available tools. Repetitive overwriting with 0 or 1 or other character will make the data unrecoverable. There are many different standards for overwriting. The common tools offer various options. The more overwrite passes, the longer the process takes.

If you merely want to junk the PC and kill the hard drive there are various programs sold or available free to wipe the drive. Some of them are: CCleaner, Darik's Boot and Nuke ("DBAN"), Eraser, DP Wiper, WipeDrive, etc.

If you completely wipe the drive, you are left with an unusable piece of hardware because the operating system and all programs will have been destroyed. This would be of little use to someone else unless they had their own software or just wanted parts.

You can resolve that issue if you have the OS and Program disks but reinstallation takes time and thereafter updates must be installed, often years worth. Nevertheless, those truly concerned with removing highly sensitive classified Government Security or extreme personal or business data and who fear their hard drive may be searched should only do a complete drive wipe.

Otherwise, you can remove only sensitive and personal data and leave the OS and programs intact using file wipe rather than disk wipe programs. This will take considerably more time than just wiping the whole drive.

Here is the procedure I recently used to clean a Windows XP laptop.

1. First I removed junk, unused, questionable, and trial programs that may have come originally with the new system. Of course, you could omit this step and dispose of the PC with those programs still intact. I used "PC Decrapifier." CCleaner would also work. The Control Panel's Add/Remove Programs may be sufficient.

Use care if the system has any programs that use sensitive material such as Quick Books or a Password Storage Program such as Roboform, Keypass, or similar. Remove the program but be sure to determine the location wherein it stores data so that data is not omitted during the cleaning process.

2. Clear the browser cookies, temporary Internet files, passwords, and history using delete in Internet Explorer's Internet Options. Users of other browsers such as Firefox or Chrome would need to take appropriate action.

3. Locate and delete all the .dbx Outlook Express files (for Windows Mail .eml or for Outlook .pst) and the email account itself.

To perform the clean itself I used a combination of CCleaner and Eraser. It is possible to do the entire clean using Eraser alone. Both offer file wipe options.

4. Using Eraser, clean the My Documents folder and any customized folders. Repeat this for any additional users of the PC you are preparing.

Steps 5,6,7 are easy to perform. A Google search will provide easy to follow instructions.

5. Change the Owner on the General Page of System Properties to remove the name. This created a set of folders as if there were a new user.

6. Change the Computer Name if had been personal-

Donating.....Continued on page 7

The Unknown Problem

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
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Ever have one of those weird days where something goes wrong and you just don't know what it is or what caused it? Well, Friday the 17th was like a Friday the 13th for me. I logged onto my Google email and wanted to send a PDF file I had just scanned to my nephew's email. After attaching the file, I tried to open it to be sure it was the right thing. When I selected Open from the Google Open or Save options, my laptop went into mumble mode. McAfee virus software reported it stopped a program from creating a "Buffer Overload." Nothing worked after that except the mouse. I couldn't even get the Toolbar to come up. I did a Control-Alt-Delete and was able to shut down OK.

I started up the PC again and all looked well. I tried to open the PDF file again and zap – same thing. McAfee again claimed it stopped a program from creating a "Buffer Overload." Then nothing worked.

The technical area of PCs got away from me about when Windows replaced DOS, a long time ago. I called one of our club's technical gurus, Bob La Fave. With his assistance, I tried a Restore, but I didn't realize how long it takes to do a Restore and thought the PC was stuck again. I had to pull the battery to kill the restore. Bob suggested I bring it up in Safe Mode and do a Check Disk. The Check Disk ran and ran and ran, but I could see it was actually doing something. I told Bob I would call him if I needed more help. It checked out over 214,000 files and over 16 million clusters. It took over an hour to complete. Next per suggestion from Bob, I started a Restore again. I waited and waited for over an hour. Finally, I decided to just let it run until it busted or finished. I took my wife out to dinner leaving the Restore running. When we got home, to my surprise it had finished the Restore, and it came up normal. It was late in the evening so I decided to just shut down and do more checking tomorrow.

Saturday morning the PC came up normal again, and I was able to open the PDF file with no problem. However, there was one final problem. McAfee Virus Software claimed I was unprotected and needed to run a full scan. But every time I started the scan, it would stop, claiming it had errors and to try again. I logged on to McAfee website. I selected their FIX option. It ran and fixed 2 of 3 problems. I tried to use the Chat mode but after waiting for about 20 minutes, decided to just download the whole thing and reinstall it. I guess they don't have free Chat on Saturday. Anyway, reinstalling the whole package fixed everything. The laptop is running fine again, thanks mostly to some great help from Bob. But what caused the problem in the first place is unknown. I just hope I don't have an unknown problem lurking in there that will come back a kill a tranquil day again. ◆

Donating.....Continued from page 6

ized.

7. Remove the former user's Profile or Profiles. Repeat for additional users..

8. Clean the Recycle Bin with CCleaner and perform a defrag.

9. Use Eraser on the free space to remove remnants of previously deleted files. Defrag and Erase of unused disk space can be run unattended.

10. (Optional) Clean the Registry with CCleaner or other Registry Cleaner.

There is one limitation to using these methods rather than a complete removal of the operating system. Once Windows establishes a User it can never be completely removed. You can remove that user's data and profile but a folder with that user's name can never be removed because it is a System folder. Although empty, it will forever show in Documents and Settings. ◆

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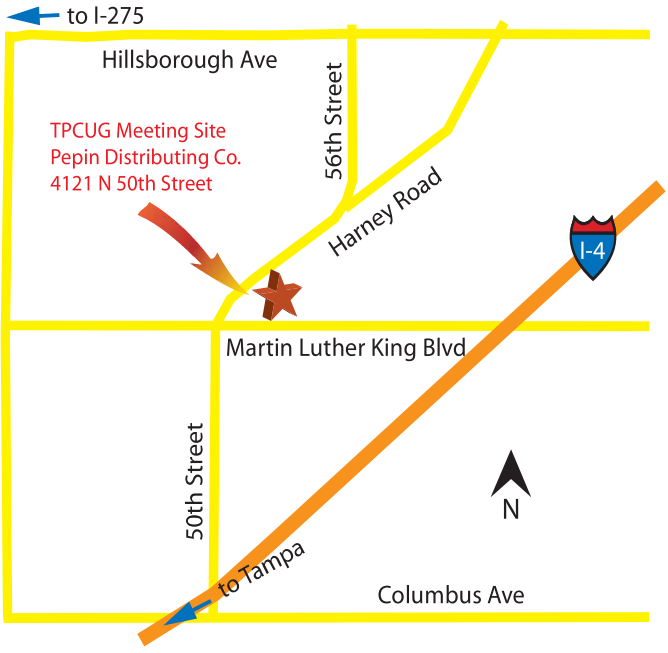
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Minutes.....Continued from page 2

TPCUG Forum page:

http://www.linux.tpcug.org/forums/index.php



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 25 No. 10 October 2012



October in Tampa

Meeting

Steve Singer
on
New Hardware

Wednesday, October 10, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer from RDI will do his annual new hardware presentation. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Robert Davis for sending an article for the newsletter this month. Since there were no others, I was forced to purchase parts for a new computer so that I would have something to write about. Well, that is not exactly the whole story, since I wanted to be able to use Windows 8 on a desktop computer that was not simply a virtual machine or a dual-boot operating system. And I didn't want to sacrifice my Windows 7 desktop to an installation of Windows 8 over it, so it seemed the only option was to get a new computer. Plus, isn't that what we are supposed to do to get the economy going? However, I think all the parts were made in Asia. so I don't know how much they help our economy. Of course, Amazon and newegg did get something out of the deal, as did UPS and FedEx.

As I have mentioned before, Apple has not only surpassed Microsoft in its market capitalization (value of its stock), it is the most valuable company in the US. What is new this past week is that Google for a few days had a larger market capitalization than Microsoft. As I write this on Oct. 2, a share of Apple stock

Comments.....Continued on page 5

November Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob touched on a variety of subjects – the main subjects were Windows 8, Media Center, Start Menus, TV tuner hardware, Kaspersky Anti-Virus. As usual, an excellent and informative SIG session.

The presentation this month was given by Kevan Sheridan, our vice president and one of our longest-term members. The subject was Smartphones and everything you can do with them. Kevan is most familiar with Android, but gave as much of a brand-neutral presentation as possible. He talked about the OS, Apps (applications), Web Access messaging. He made a comparison of Android vs ios, numbers of applications and what that really means.

He spent a great deal of time describing how to enhance the experience with GPS, tracking athletic progress, watching videos, sharing photos, social experiences and much more. Applications he touched on were WiFi Analyzer, HotSpot, Join.me, View Docs, Remote Desktop, Pandora, YouTube and Navigation. YouWave for Android, and Mint – a Quicken emulation were also talked about, as were GasBuddy – a gas station locator that uses your current GPS location and finds the best price on gas. Shazam – a music recognizer, Disney Parks, Weather and fitness workout software.

Kevan is always well-prepared with his slides (on Google Docs of course) and is an entertaining and

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

Building A New Computer

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

If you will look back at the November 2010 newsletter, you will see that I wrote about Merle Nicholson building a quite nice Windows 7 desktop computer for me. You can read the article at our web site and have a look at the specs and the prices of the components. It will be interesting to compare then and now.

Why do I need another new desktop computer so soon? Normally I wouldn't even think about a new desktop computer now. The one I have is still functioning just fine. It is fast, the C drive has sufficient room for more programs and the D drive is not even half full of data. The problem is that I need to be able to work in Windows 8, and I don't want to load Win 8 over Win 7 on my very nice desktop. I am not sure I really trust Win 8 to do all the things I do as conveniently as I do them in Win 7.

I need Windows 8 so as to be able to program in the new Visual Studio 2012 for the new Windows 8 tablets and phones that are soon to appear. You will not be able to do this in Win 7. Right now I have Windows 8 Consumer Preview in a Virtual Hard Disk on my laptop so that I can dual boot to either Windows 7 or Windows 8. Why not just put the final version of Win 8 on the laptop the same way? Well, because I find it difficult to use a laptop to write programs. Thus the desire (I suppose not really a need) for a new Windows 8 desktop. And, I may eventually put Win 8 in a dual-boot situation on the laptop (replacing the Consumer Preview) so as to be able to demonstrate the new programming environment in our programming SIG.

Oh, you say, why not do a Virtual Hard Drive and dual- boot for Win 8 on the existing Windows 7 desktop? Unfortunately, the desktop's C drive is a solid state drive that is 128 GB, of which only 30 GB is free. Having the operating system and programs on a solid state drive is one of the things that make that computer so fast. I am not going the solid state drive route with the new computer since it will have a still faster processor than the current desktop's processor. The processor in my current desktop is an Intel I7-875K and in the new computer the processor will be an Intel I7-3770K, which is about 66% faster.

From Amazon	
Western Digital Caviar Black 2 TB SATA III 7200 RPM 64 MB Cache Bulk/ OEM Internal Desktop Hard Drive - WD2002FAEX	$166.47
Cooler Master Hyper 212 Plus CPU Cooler with Four Direct Contact Heat Pipes (RR-B10-212P-G1)	$25.16
Corsair Vengeance LP Performance Memory Modules 16GB (2x8GB) DDR3 1600MHz (PC3 12800) CML16GX-3M2A1600C10	$89.99
Cooler Master 690 II Advanced Mid Tower Computer Case	$72.24
Intel Core i7-3770K Quad-Core Processor 3.5 GHz 8 MB Cache LGA 1155 - BX80637I73770K	$324.98
SubTotal	$678.84
From newegg	
ASRock Z77 Extreme3 LGA 1155 Intel Z77 HDMI SATA 6Gb/s USB 3.0 ATX Intel Motherboard	$119.99
HIS iSilence H775P1GD Radeon HD 7750 1GB 128-bit GDDR5 PCI Express 3.0 x16 HDCP Ready Video Card	$109.99
CORSAIR Builder Series CX600 V2 600W ATX12V v2.3 80 PLUS BRONZE Certified Active PFC Power Supply	$59.99
U.S. Robotics USR5638 V.92 Faxmodem 56Kbps PCI Express	$26.99
ASUS 24X DVD Burner - Bulk 24X Model DRW-24B1ST/BLK/B/AS - OEM	$19.99
PLANAR PXL2430MW (997-6399-00) Black 23.6" 5ms HDMI LED-Backlit Multi-Touch Widescreen LCD Monitor 250 cd/m2 1000:1	$371.00
SubTotal	$707.95
Total	$1,386.79

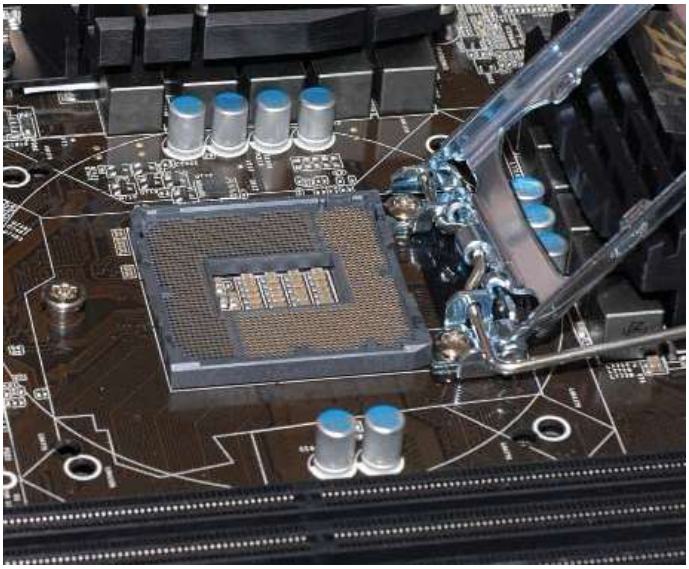
New Computer.....Continued on page 4

New Computer.....Continued from page 3

The parts list for the new computer is above. Merle, who is an experienced and knowledgeable computer builder, made the list with a few minor modifications by me. You will note that there is no keyboard or mouse. I am gong to use what I have around the house until I settle on something better.

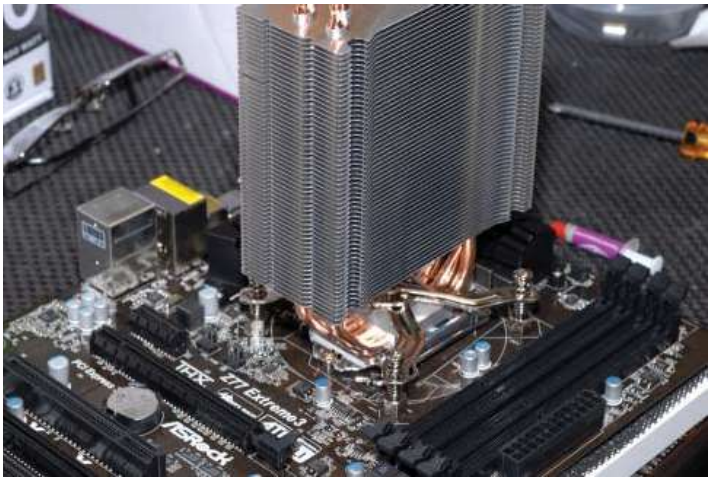
The monitor is special for this computer. It is a multi-touchscreen monitor. That is to allow me to use hand gestures on the monitor when working with Win 8 apps. This monitor is like the screen of a smartphone or a tablet in that not only can you use your finger to select items, you may also do swipes and pinches with your fingers just like you do on your smartphone. This will allow me more easily to see how the phone and tablet apps I am working on creating perform. Visual Studio, where I will be doing the work, provides emulators for the phone and the tablets where you can use the mouse to simulate such actions, but it will be much nicer to actually be able to do them by touching a screen. The only thing that I will not be able to do with the screen is to rotate it from landscape to portrait and have what is on the screen rotate as it does in a phone or tablet.

The afternoon the last of the parts arrived, and they arrived quite quickly from both Amazon and newegg, I took them to Merle's and watched him put everything together. I should note that the reason for buying some things from Amazon and others from newegg was that either the Amazon price was cheaper than newegg, or the total cost was less because I receive free two-day shipping from Amazon because of Amazon Prime.



Merle estimated a two-hour job, but it turned into four because of a few complications. The basic process is to first unpack everything, then put the motherboard on the workbench and expose its CPU socket for installation of the CPU as indicated in the photo on





the bottom left. In the photo at the top, the CPU has been installed, and in the next photo, we see the CPU cooler installed on top of the CPU. In the photo with the cooler, on the lower right is where the memory modules will go and to the left is the slot where we will install the video card. I should note that the moth-

New Computer.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Hurricane Isaac

Perhaps you have already forgotten, but there was a hurricane in late August that caused a lot of flooding in southern Louisiana, just not in New Orleans this time, where it only knocked out the power for a few days. Since it didn't really damage New Orleans it won't be remembered like Katrina – except by those unfortunate, very flooded people in several parishes, Plaquemines being one of the worst. The photo to the left from the online New Orleans *Times-Picayune* pretty much tells the story.

As a side note, the *Times-Picayune* after 175 years as a printed daily paper is now going to be printed only three days per week (another casulty of the Internet), with the online version having to be sufficient for the other days. http://www.nola.com

Comments.....Continued from page 1

will put you back $661.31 and a share of Google goes for $756.99 (obviously there are more shares out there for Apple than for Google since Apple has the larger total value). Oh, the current value of a Microsoft share is $29.66. For the record the market capitalizations today are APPL: $619,915,940; GOOG: $248,360,580; MSFT: $248,651,550. So Google, while it temporarily surpassed Microsoft, today has dropped back below. But just look at Apple. The parts for the computer I just built could be purchased for a little more than two shares of Apple stock. But enough on stocks. Unfortunately I was never smart enough to purchase Apple or Google when they were cheap – only Microsoft and it is still cheap, but at least it pays dividends, which is better than having money in a CD at essentially 0%.

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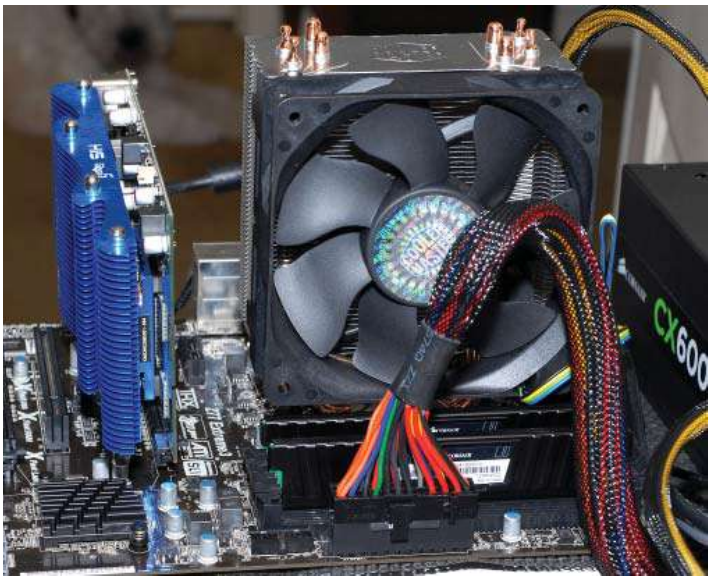
October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Computer History Museum	http://www.computerhistory.org/
Index of U.S. Government Departments & Agencies	http://www.usa.gov/directory/federal/index.shtml
Ars Technica	http://arstechnica.com/
A History of New York in 50 Objects	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/09/02/nyregion/a-history-of-new-york-in-50-objects.html?hp

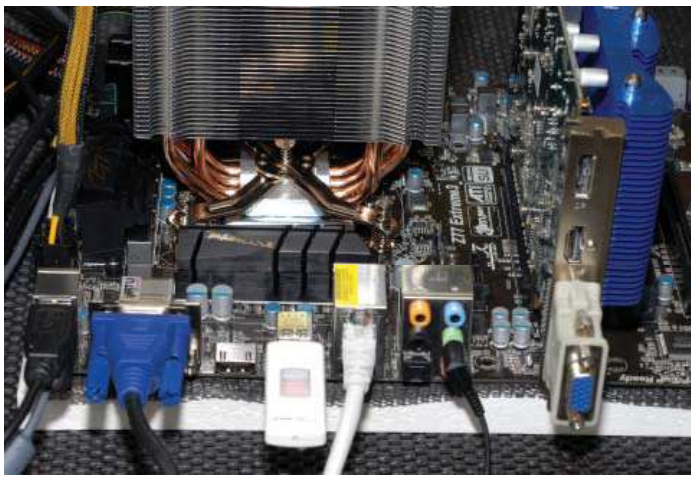
New Computer.....Continued from page 4

erboard comes with a built-in video. However, Merle said that it was awfully slow, so we will be installing a stand-alone video card, as will be seen in subsequent photos.





The top photo shows the cooler fan installed and in front of the fan are the two 8 GB memory modules which give this computer 16 GB of RAM. In the next photo the video card has been installed, and the colorful (if viewed on the web) bundles of wires you see are one of the connections of the power supply to the motherboard. With this motherboard, Merle advised, there is also a smaller secondary connection of the power supply to the motherboard. In the next to last photo we see the motherboard from the opposite side from which we have been viewing. Here you can see the connections we used to test the setup. The far left



black plug is the power cord to the house power. The second from the left (blue if you are viewing this on the web) is the video connection. Note at this point we are using the built-in video to do the test instead of the separate video card. The white rectangular object that is next is a USB thumb drive with Ubuntu loaded so that when booted the computer loads and runs Ubuntu for our testing (at this point I still don't have a final version of Win 8 to load into the hard drive). To the right of the thumb drive is a LAN cable. What you don't see connected above is the hard drive, a DVD/CD drive and an internal FAX modem. The final installation looks like the last photo, except that the FAX



modem had not yet been installed. As you can see there are plenty of slots and bays available if things need to be added in the future.

New Computer.....Continued on page 8

McAfee Problem Resolved

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
RobD234@gmail.com

I had another one of those weird days where something goes wrong, but this time I think I found the problem. McAfee Anti-Virus software! It was right at a week after a weird problem I think was also with McAfee – seeming to stop "Buffer Overloads" – that I had another more damaging and time-consuming problem. Friday afternoon I tried to log onto my email as usual only to see the message "Internet Explorer cannot display the webpage." Thinking I had messed up something, I rebooted the laptop, but I had the same problem. It appeared the PC was not connected to the Internet anymore! I called Bright House tech support, tried plugging their modem directly into the laptop – no good. The laptop was still unable to connect to the Internet. It appeared the modem was broken. I had just had it replaced a couple weeks ago due to the phone line section being zapped by lightening. So I was suspicious of the modem anyway. Bright House agreed to come out Friday night between 6 and 8 PM after I twisted their arm a little. Unknown to me, my mother's Bright House is somehow connected to my account, and, even though my complaint was for my 655 phone number, they called my mother's 653 phone number about 6:30. Of course she told them she had not put in a service request, so I lost the hands-on tech Friday night. She did call me and asked if I had ordered the service – too late.

About 8:30 or so, after I raised a fit with Bright House, their supervisor said he could not send a tech out Friday night anymore, he rescheduled a tech for 12 to 2 PM Saturday, and he wasn't sure they had even diagnosed the right modem! My mom has a similar setup with Bright House. So reluctantly I agreed to talk with their tech support again. After going through the same diagnostics again, the tech thought the modem seemed to be OK, and he asked me what anti-virus I was running. I told him McAfee - for 10 years or so. "That is probably the problem," he said. I thought he was joking, but he wasn't. It seems McAfee has done an automatic update with apparently bad code which causes many PCs to lose their Internet connection! He said he thought the fix was to merely uninstall McAfee and reinstall it. I did uninstall McAfee and after reinstalling the D-Link router (I had reset it for 10 seconds which sets it back to factory default) I was able to access the Internet again. But none of the other PCs could use the router. I did ask why the first tech hadn't asked me about my anti-virus type that afternoon. He said they should have. What happened next is in my opinion an unconscionable act by McAfee! I logged on to McAfee and downloaded what I thought would be a cleaned version of their software. Why would McAfee leave a known problem available for their customers or anyone to download? Anyway, I reinstalled McAfee from the new downloaded file and all seemed well with the laptop and the Internet the rest of the evening. I finally shut down the laptop about 11 PM. I figured I could fix the other PCs' accesses Saturday.

The next morning to my amazement the laptop would not connect to the Internet again! And of course none of my other PCs could access the Internet through the wireless router either! After reconfiguring and messing around for an hour or so, I finally deinstalled McAfee and again the laptop could access the Internet. I cancelled the Bright House call. But the other PCs still could not connect through the router. They all saw it with excellent signal strength but would not connect. I was using the same key word, same password, and I thought the same encryption type, but still no connecting.

It is now Monday night. This afternoon I went into the modem itself and set the passkey, password, and noted the encryption type was different from what I thought. After I used the correct encryption type, everything started working again. All the other PCs and my MAC can access the Internet normally again. So because of what I consider an unforgivable act on the part of McAfee, I cancelled my account. Bad enough to put out a bad upgrade – but to leave it available for downloading by their customers in my opinion is unforgivable! I am now using AVG until I find something better. Just another three days of trouble-shooting so I can save time by using PCs! ◆

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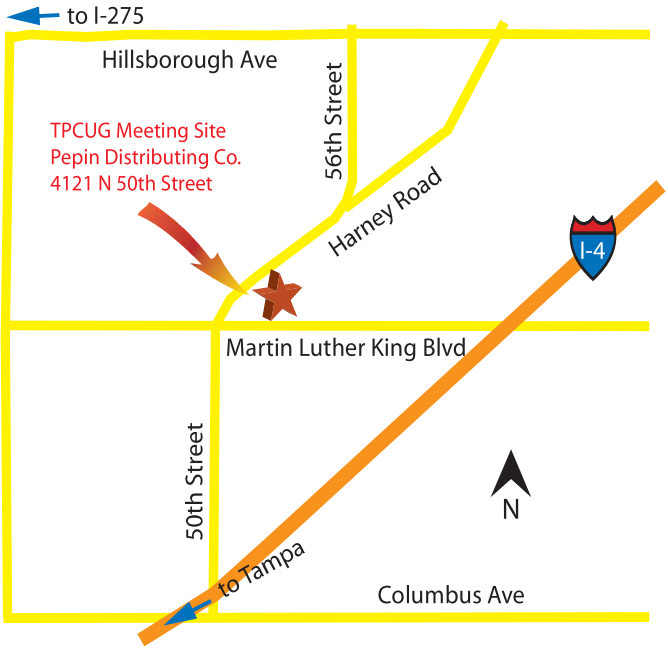
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New Computer.....Continued from page 6

This computer has an Intel I7-3770K CPU, a 2 TB Western digital hard drive, 16 GB of memory and a video card with 1 GB of memory. And, of course, there is the DVD/CD drive and the Fax modem (since we still need to send and receive the occasional FAX in our house).

Now if Microsoft will ever get my MSDN subscription activated, I will be able to download Windows 8 along with Visual Studio 2102 Professional and install them on the new computer and get to work. At least that is my plan. ◆



Minutes.....Continued from page 2

enthusiastic speaker. Our thanks go to Kevan.

Our TPCUG Forum page is inactive and can not be accessed at this time. Merle Nicholson is working on better security to keep the bad guys out. ◆

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Vol. 25 No. 11 November 2012



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Meeting

William LaMartin
on
Writing Windows 8 Applications

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will demonstrate how to write Windows 8 applications. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

This is pretty much a Merle Nicholson newsletter, for which I am extremely grateful, but he did leave me a little space to fill. I hope those of you who don't have Windows 8 installed on anything will not tire of all the Win 8 coverage. But that is mostly what is happening at the moment, and the material can also serve as a guide and reference for the future. So with that hope I will write here about installing Win 8 and other software on the new computer I wrote about in the previous newsletter.

Microsoft finally got my MSDN subscription straightened out, and I was able to download Windows 8 Professional and install it on both my new desktop computer and on a virtual hard disk on my main laptop. Both installations went quickly and flawlessly. However, the virtual hard disk setup on the laptop is always a scary situation for me in that once while doing such I wiped out my Win 7 installation and had to use Acronis to bring it back. I will be using the laptop to do the Windows 8 presentation to the group this month.

Comments.....Continued on page 4

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob touched on a variety of subjects – the main discussion was about Windows 8 and performance, Windows 8 Recovery and partitions. Then Bob touched on the subject of the GoFlex external hard drive, which connects to a router.

John Witmer, President, led a discussion on the December annual dinner/meeting and food. Then he brought up the question about meeting locations after March 31, 2013; asked for volunteers for officer positions for 2013; and noted the need for a program topic for November.

The presentation this month was given by Steven Singer, who did his annual hardware presentation. He brought in a large variety of interesting gadgets and computer components. He started with USB fast-charging devices that will output more than the standard USB 500mA for faster charging. Bluetooth was the next subject with Bluetooth speakers, headphones and headsets and also Bluetooth handsfree.

Steve also brought in some mini-computer components in the way of mini-ITX motherboards, ITX computers and USB WiFi dongle. He then spoke of a passion of his – movies, and talked about the website moviesneaks.com. He suggested software called JV16 Powertools, which claims to fix a variety of computer problems with cleanup software. ◆

Windows 8 Start Menu

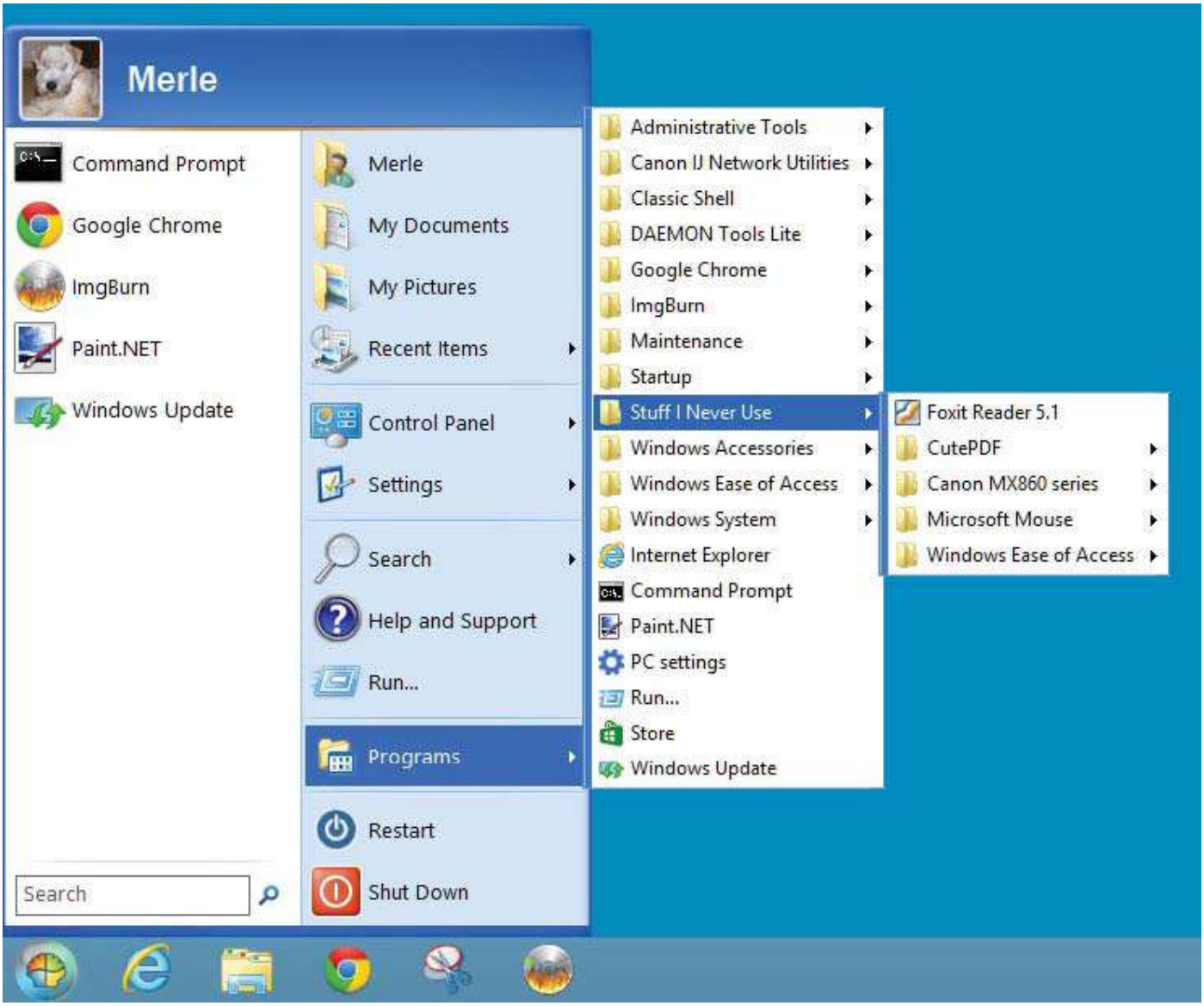
By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The picture with this article is a screen capture of my Windows 8 computer with the Start Menu expanded. We've all been reading about the loss of the Windows 8 Start Menu and having to return to the Tiled Interface to select a program. That switching between the desktop and the tiled interface (* – see footnote, page 4) to me is confusing and will take a lot of learning because the actions are designed for a touchscreen(# – see footnote, page 4). There are keyboard and mouse equivalents, and they are being well-documented now in blogs, but I don't see a Win+h key combination as being intuitive; it's something that must be learned instead.

The alternative is to change the interface so that you deal with the AUFL (*) as little as possible, and I've been working off and on to make it so. My objective is to use the improvements inherent in Win 8 and keep it Win 7 as much as suits me. Also I must test my Windows 7 applications in Windows 8 because one of my customers will surely buy a Windows 8 computer and THEN ask me if my application will work.

There are a surprising number of replacement Start Menu systems that work in varying degrees on Win-

Start Menu.....Continued on page 4



Start Menu.....Continued from page 3

dows 8. The one I have chosen for now has existed since before anyone ever heard of Windows 8. I looked at this several years ago as I was trying to get used to the Vista menu. I found it wanting and went on to other things, but they obviously have been developing and improving this product and I'm very pleased with it now. It's called Classic Shell, available for free at http://classicshell.sourceforge.net/

The interesting thing about Classic Shell is that they have "skins" – that is ways to customize the appearance. They have three basic styles, called "Windows Classic", "Windows XP", and "Windows Vista/Windows 7." It has a basic settings mode and a HUGE amount of customization in "All Settings".

The "Windows Vista/Windows 7" version lacks what the real thing lacks – a cascading menu system. Instead it uses the Windows 7 tree view, where the menu items keep getting taller, to see everything instead of branching (cascading) to the right. It has everything I have always hated AND liked about the Windows 7 menu.

The Windows Classic is what you get on Windows XP as an alternative "classic" menu; it's minimalist and doesn't have the column for "most used shortcuts." It's ok, but needs more.

The Windows XP version is – for me – almost perfect. It has cascading menus and a column for displaying most recently used shortcuts and a way to pin those permanently. To my great surprise, it is customizable to fix the most annoying thing about the original – the location of the Programs button. In the picture on page 3, I have moved it to the right-hand column. It traditionally is at bottom left, and when you expand from there – the left – the menu expands and hides other items on the menu. I have made other changes – like Shutdown; it did have a menu with – you know – Reset, Sleep, Hibernate; I don't need that. Everything I wanted to improve is improvable. I love this product.

There are several Windows 8-specific changes to make, like disabling the hotspot corners and changing it to go directly to the desktop instead of the AUFL when booting.

I like it so much I'm going to use it on my Windows 7 computers.

Classic Shell, available for free at http://classicshell.sourceforge.net/

Footnote:
(*) the tiled interface doesn't have a name – we need to invent one. I tend to think of it as "Annoying Useless Fluff, Lite" (AUFL, pronounced AUFL).

(#) To be fair, it seems to work well on a touch-enabled device if you don't mind going back to doing one thing at a time. I already have a touchscreen – a 7" tablet, and I don't mind doing one thing at a time on it, but it isn't my primary computer. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Once Win 8 was installed on the new computer, I had to then install whatever programs I wanted to use. That included Microsoft Office 2007 Ultimate, Adobe Design Standard CS6, Microsoft Expression Studio, and Visual Studio 2012 as the main programs, along with less important ones like the FTP program FilZilla, the mapping program ArcGisExplorer and another mapping program Microsoft MapCruncher, Firefox and Google Chrome.

Of the programs, I tried to install, only one gave me trouble: Family Tree Maker 2010. The installation started and got a long way into the process and then just stopped progressing at the point where it was installing some background image named Arch de Triomphe.jpg. Later I decided to do a search on that file and Family Tree Maker and found all sorts of people with the same problem going back long before Win 8. But while I was searching I was also trying to do the installation again, and all of a sudden the installation started moving forward and did indeed finally complete. However, the first time I tried to open a Family Tree Maker file, it crashed. But on my second try everything worked fine and has continued to work

Comments.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Flooded taxis in Hoboken

From the New York Times Hurricane Sandy photographic coverage, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/11/01/us/sandy-POD-index.html?hp, Day 1, slide # 25.

Comments.....Continued from page 4

the few times I have tried the program. Based on the Internet search information, this is not a Win 8 problem but a Family Tree Maker problem, which I have luckily surmounted without doing anything other than waiting a little longer for the installation. I am sure there will be a number of additional programs that I will still load, but these are the ones I use most often.

The next job was to load all of my data: Word files, Excel files, etc. I did that over several days, along with copying all of my photos. When finished, I had moved a lot of data: 117 GB of files in My Documents and 183 GB of files in My Pictures. With that, the new computer was ready to be used, which I have been doing for the past month. ◆

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Oyster Guide	http://www.oysterguide.com/
Hurricane Sandy Photos	http://news.yahoo.com/photos/hurricane-sandy-1351517288-slideshow/
Microsoft Visual Studio Express	http://www.microsoft.com/visualstudio/eng/products/visual-studio-express-products

Saving FIOS DVR Recordings

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Saving FIOS DVR recordings: We've had two one-hour DVR recordings on the FIOS Set Top DVR device for more than a year that we – my wife Val and I – want to save. Two reasons – one – we now use a Media computer running Windows 7 and Windows Media Center, along with a cable tuner card for all our TV, and no longer use any Verizon FIOS Set Top Box (STB). Second – I have friends who have had the hard drive in the STB go bad. That's not a problem to Verizon, they will willingly replace it, but, of course, anything you want to save is lost.

Our DVR STB is still in place and connected but rarely gets used because the Windows Media Center (WMC) is far superior to any STB available. I have 2 TB of recording space, and that allows us to never watch live television. Honestly, we never do. We record everything we want and watch it when we want and just fast forward through commercials, pledge drives and anything else unpleasant.

Microsoft WMC is a jewel of a computer program. The remote control is well designed (and inexpensive), the menus are well organized; the advanced scheduling for recordings is a pleasure to use, and guess what – it's free in Windows 7, but uncertain in Windows 8.

The advantages of WMC over the FIOS DVR are apparent from the beginning. The FIOS STB is just painfully slow to respond to anything. Press a button and wait, press a button and wait. And there is so little real information on the screen. They keep changing the menus, improving the appearance, I'll admit, but slowing it down to just painfully slow.

Back on subject now. We wanted to get two Discovery Channel Sunrise Earths off of the DVR and saved. Lots of research had led us to one fact; there are a lot of excellent Sunrise Earth programs that Discovery has not made available on DVD; the two that we like the most are not. We have bought one 3-set DVD collection from them and will buy more if they made them available. The STB is just a black box – no way to read anything from it. But we can play those programs for as long as we want until the hard drive fails.

I've had a solution sitting and collecting dust for some time now in a Samsung VCR-to-DVD recorder. It's a model DVD-VR335. It's designed to make VCR to DVD conversion easy, and it does a pretty good job of that. What I realized was that it also has a video input and can record anything from a video source to either DVD or tape. I don't want to make it sound too easy; I made a half dozen DVD coasters in the process, but it does work. The video input is composite or S-Video. Composite takes three RCA connectors: one Video and two for Stereo. For DVD output I used Component – the best choice for my older 19" flatscreen Monitor/TV. So I had three devices sitting on my workbench; a DVR, VCR to DVD recorder and the monitor/TV. So after recording I had a playable DVD. The recording program ALWAYS puts a menu at the beginning, so when you load the DVD, you must select the only menu item and it starts playing.

OK so far. But I want the videos on the WMC hard drive in the video library.

I now have a DVD with some kind of movie with a .VOB file type. WMC will play it as a DVD, but it will not appear in the WMC video library. I have a large set of media programs by a company called NCH Software Suite. There's a module called "Prism Video File Converter Plus" at www.nchsoftware.com. I'm certain there are other video format converter programs. This one works, but you purchase the modules a la carte, and it can get expensive if you want many of the 17 modules available. In addition it wants to install a crapware toolbar. Fortunately it's optional, but you have to be careful. It created a .wmv file in short order, but for the two large videos, they play in a smaller window with the black bands where the DVDs do not project. So I'm still looking for the solution to that. In any case I have the DVDs and they play fine in WMC as long as I drop the DVD in the PC. If anyone knows of a good conversion program from .VOB to .wmv let me know. Update – well, I should have thought

Saving.....Continued on page 8

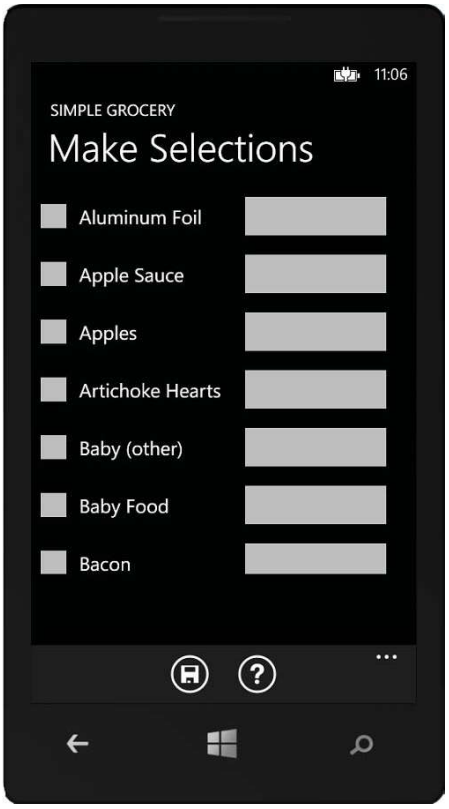
Writing Win 8 Applications

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I have been writing Windows desktop applications for years, Windows Phone 7 applications for a little over a year and now Windows 8 applications for a few months. And with the launch of the Windows Phone 8 SDK, I plan on looking at Windows Phone 8 applications. I will be using the recently released Visual Studio 2102, but you can download the free Visual Studio 2012 Express and do the same thing.

In the presentation at our monthly meeting this month, I hope to give you a taste of what programming for a Win 8 phone application and a Win 8 desktop or tablet application is like.

Below you see a phone app for creating a grocery list, where you check the items wanted and enter any additional text. On other pages in the app, you can add extra items to the list and put the list in walking order of a particular store (assuming you have previously ordered the categories of items in that store: for example, bakery, deli, dairy, cereal,...).



Of course, all of this requires coding both for the interface you see here and for the code underneath that carries out whatever is necessary to record your choices and to then put them in order.

A small selection of the code, called xaml, that creates the visual part of the page is listed next. You don't need to understand it. Just believe that Visual Studio turns the xaml containing that text into the screen you see in the previous column.

```
<StackPanel x:Name="TitlePanel" Grid.Row="0" Mar-
gin="12,13,0,12">
  <StackPanel Orientation="Horizontal">
   <TextBlock x:Name="ApplicationTitle" Text="SIMPLE
GROCERY" Style="{StaticResource PhoneTextNormalStyle}"
HorizontalAlignment="Left"/>
   </StackPanel>
<TextBlock x:Name="PageTitle" Text="Make Selections"
Margin="9,0,0,0" Style="{StaticResource PhoneTextTitle-
1Style}" FontSize="48" />
..............
```

Then there is the C# code that runs behind the scenes and does all the heavy lifting. A small sample:

```
StreamReader readFile = null;
if (myStore.FileExists("ItemAndCategory.xml") == true)
//this will not be true on first use
 {
   try
   {  //Retrieve Category info

    readFile = new StreamReader(new IsolatedStorageFile
Stream("ItemAndCategory.xml", FileMode.Open, myStore));
string fileText = readFile.ReadToEnd();
doc = System.Xml.Linq.XDocument.Parse(fileText);
readFile.Close();
...................
```

My goal is to show you how to create a very simple Windows Phone 8 app (the grocery shopping one is not simple) and a very simple Windows 8 tablet app. After that, I will simply demonstrate several of my phone apps and Windows tablet apps using the emulators provided by Visual Studio. It would be a bit difficult to give a good demonstration on an actual phone or tablet.

If there is any time left, we can talk about what sort of devices have just hit the market for Windows 8 and what is planned. The Windows Phone 8 is scheduled to be released very soon with all major carriers having a couple different types. As you should have seen, Microsoft for the first time has manufactured its own computing device called a Surface. It is a tablet running Window 8 RT that can also have an attached keyboard. A second Surface running Windows 8 Professional is due in several months. We can also discuss the differences between Windows 8 RT and Windows 8. Come out and learn something new. I will try to make it understandable. And if you have a Surface, please bring it. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

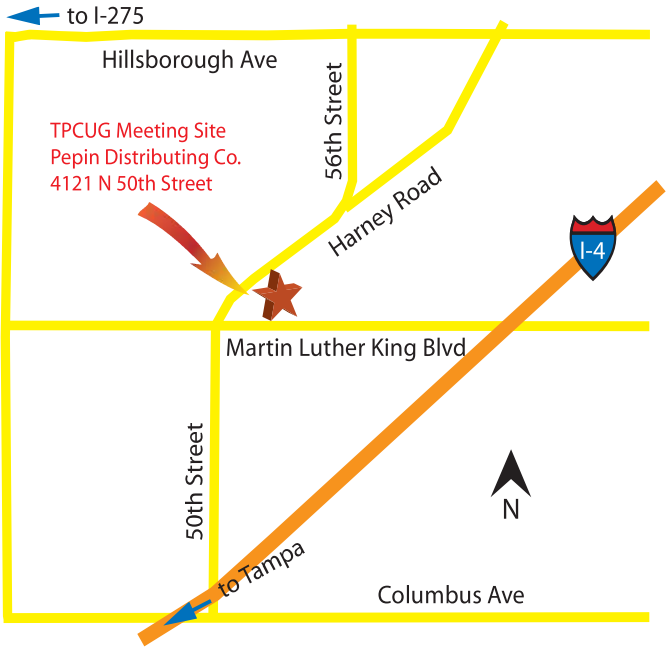
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Saving.....Continued from page 6

of this, but the Windows Live Movie Maker will read multiple .VOB files. That also eliminated the menu and it allows you to clip any ends that need it. Then you can save it as .WMV video file.

I had another, similar project – I have a VCR tape of my youngest son in a TV commercial from when he was professionally modeling when he was seven. I was able to apply what I'd learned and record from tape to DVD, convert to .WMV and then I converted that to .MP4 so it could be published on our family Google+ site. What fun. Now he can impress girls in bars with it. 30 seconds of … Awwww. ◆



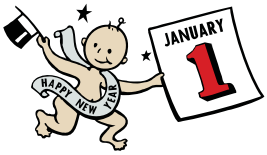
http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 26 No. 1 January 2013



January in Tampa

Meeting

Patrick Courtney
on
Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice Recognition Software

Wednesday, January 9, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Patrick Courtney will be coming from Brandon to tell us about and to demonstrate the Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition software. Bob LaFave will as usual conduct the Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Last month was pretty much a Merle Nicholson newsletter, for which I was extremely grateful, but he said he couldn't do it two months in a row. And since no one else has come forward at this late date, it appears that this month it will be pretty much a William LaMartin newsletter.

I am going to give you an overview of my latest Windows 8 application, which has a lot to do with our club. Its sole purpose is to allow you to read and search all of our newsletters back to 1988. I don't think more than a small handful of our members have yet installed Windows 8 or purchased a new device with Windows 8, but as time goes by many of you probably will. And when you finally do, the Computer Group Newsletters app will be there at the Windows Marketplace waiting for you. It will cost you nothing, since it is free. Merle Nicholson has previewed it for me and even made two suggestions to make it more user friendly. And just before I started this newsletter, I submitted Release 2 of the app containing those improve-

Comments.....Continued on page 2

February Meeting: To be announced

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Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org) 988-6480
Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
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Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the December Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The December meeting was our annual dinner meeting held at Pepin; catered, organized and hosted by John Witmer. The dinner as always was excellent and well-attended. There was no formal program, just plenty of conversation and good food.

A special thanks must go to John for his hard work in making this a special evening.

Our slate of TPCUG Officers remain unchanged for 2013.

John Witmer, President
Kevan Sheridan, Vice President
Doug Mullis, Treasurer
Merle Nicholson, Secretary
Ron Weinberg, Member at Large ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

ments to Microsoft with the hope that they would pass scrutiny and the new version will be available by the time this article reaches you. But you can't tell. Sometimes the submission process takes just a couple of days and sometimes it can take over a week. In this case, it took less than a day and the new version is now in the Windows Store.

I know that some of the TPCUG members received some sort of technical gadget for Christmas about which they could write an article for the newsletter. It would interest your fellow members and help the editor.

As usual, the images in this newsletter appear much nicer and in color in the Acrobat version at our website.

Happy New Year! ◆

TPCUG Newsletter App

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

We are quite possibly the only computer club with its own Windows 8 app, although I must confess that I haven't done a search. It just sounds like the sort of thing no one else would think worth doing. But I wanted to do a couple of free Windows 8 apps before submitting some of my ideas for paid apps to get some practice with the Windows 8 app submission process, it being a bit different from the Windows Phone app submissions. My first such app was one that allowed to you view both private and public cell tower locations on a map of the United States. As I recall there were around 600,000 private ones and perhaps 60,000 public ones. I collected that data from the Federal Communications Commission site, put it in a database and wrote the mapping application. I like working with data and maps, and that application used both.

But what to do next? Then, on a visit to the local Microsoft office for a monthly meeting on programming, I saw an app where there was a grid of images (Boy Scout merit badges, I think) that you could click on to learn about a particular one. And I had a vision: A scrollable grid of TPCUG newsletter first pages that when you tapped on a particular one, the first page of the newsletter was produced such that you could read it and also move through the rest of the newsleter. But what I really wanted to do was to allow you to search the newsletter collection for any combination of words. In this article I will tell you how I did that.

Before going further, lets note that although the Tampa PC Users Group has been in existence since sometime in 1984, the earliest newsletter is from 1988. And for the first several years, our collection of existing ones has holes, but beginning with 1991 the collection is pretty much complete. Since I was the newsletter editor, a job I inherited in December of 1995, former member Edward Buzza gave me a box of newsletters when he was going to move from Tampa to Pennsylvania. I don't recall the year. Later current and longtime member Roger Waters gave me his collection.

Over time, I scanned those paper newsletters into Adobe Acrobat and performed Optical Character Recognition on them. That is the source of the newsletters from 1988 up to December 1995.

From December 1995 onward, whenever I created a newsletter in, first, Microsoft Word, then later in Microsoft Publisher, and still later in Adobe InDesign, I would also have the program create an Adobe Acrobat version. I was able to do this since I had a copy of the full version of Adobe Acrobat thanks to Adobe providing for the small charge of $25 a copy of Acrobat to computer club newsletter editors. They no longer do that, and I have been paying full price for any updates for many years.

Thus, I have all the club's newsletters as Adobe Acrobat files, and you can actually view them at our website at http://www.tpcug.org. And, I also made available a CD or DVD containing all the newsletters through, I think, last July, along with an index that could be used in Acrobat to search the entire collection. And that was what I wanted to be able to do in my newsletter app. And that is where a good bit of the work in the project resided.

At first, my plan was to somehow display the Acrobat files, or possibly the individual Acrobat pages, within the Windows 8 app, but I found that was not possible. So the next best thing would be to display an image of each page. Thus, the first thing I needed to do was to create from each page of the 281 newsletters a corresponding image. That would be 2,924 pages, so we are not going to be taking individual screen shots of the pages while being viewed in Acrobat.

Fortunately Acrobat full version has all sorts of tools. I am using Acrobat X Pro. Here is the sequence of things I needed to do using the tools available in Acrobat:

1. Remove the password for each newsletter
2. Split each newsletter into its individual pages
3. Produce a jpeg image of each page
4. Produce a text file for each page

Newsletters.....Continued on page 4

Newsletters.....Continued from page 3

1. Each of the newsletters is password-protected as to making changes (not to opening to read), and I needed to remove the password from each newsletter so as to do any work on it. Removing the password from each newsletter by first opening it, removing the editing password and then saving the newsletter would be a bit tedious if done for 281 newsletters. However, it can be accomplished quickly and easily by creating an action that first asks for the password and then simply opens each newsletter that is in a folder you select and subsequently saves the newsletter without any password protection to another folder.

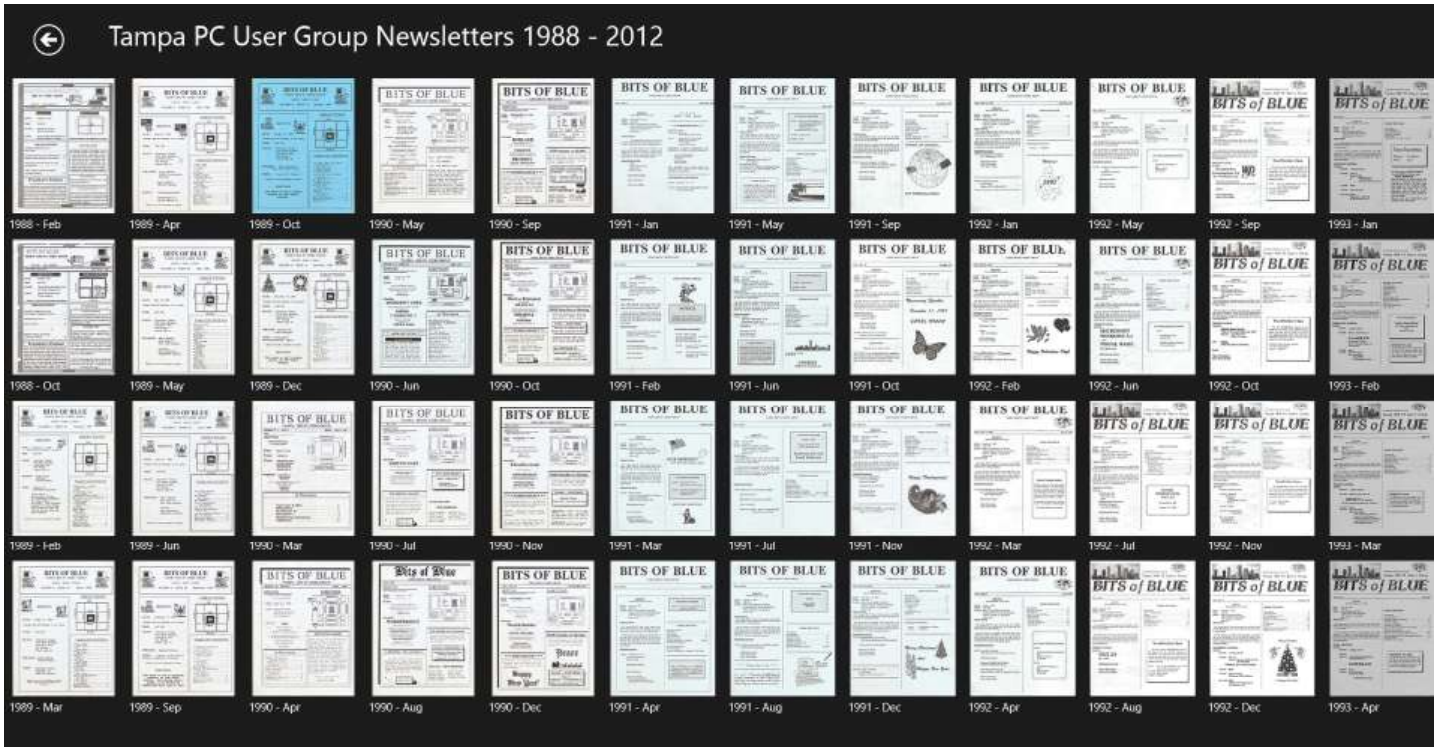
2. Acrobat has a tool that allows you to split an Acrobat document into its individual pages. All I need to do is have it do this process on all the 281 files I have in a folder that I point it to. It will split each file into its individual pages and output them to a second folder I point it to. A typical name for one of the resulting pages would be pcnl2005-01_Page6, which is page 6 from the January 2005 newsletter. When finished, we have 2,924 individual Acrobat pages.

3. The next step is to create an image file from each of these 2,924 pages. Again this is accomplished via an Acrobat tool. You create an action that opens each of the individual Acrobat page files created above that are all in the same folder and simply choose the option to export the file to an alternate format. In this case it will be as a jpeg file. When finished, you will have 2,924 jpeg images of the individual pages in a separate folder.

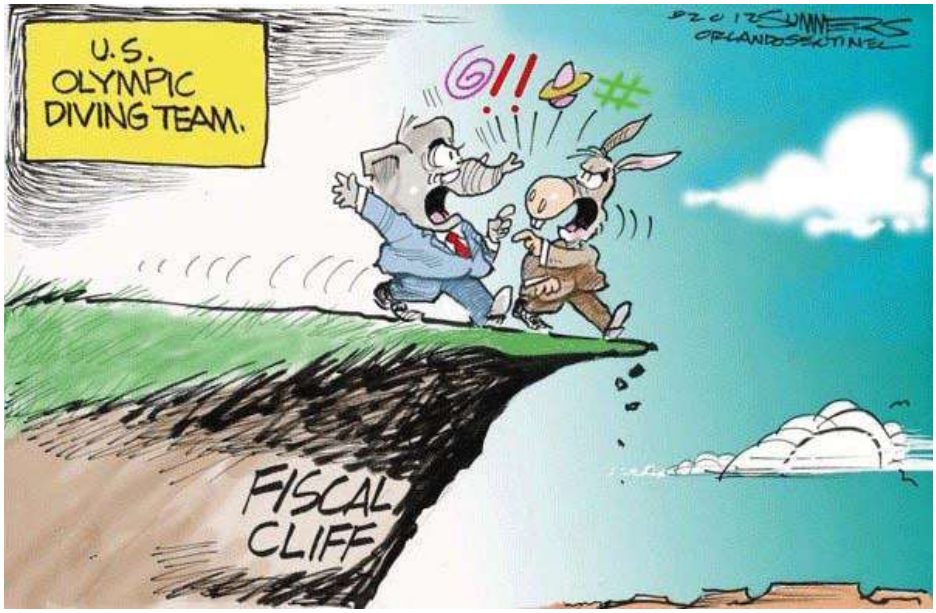
Now to get the images of just the first page of each newsletter, I could go and select each of the 281 first pages from the above, or I could again do a batch type process to extract only the first page of each newsletter and then, as in 3 above, create an image file from each such page. It has been awhile since I did this; however, I think I approached it a bit differently in that I created a batch process in Adobe Photoshop where it would open an Acrobat file, select the first page and save it as a jpeg image. Anyway, it got done and I had a folder with 281 first pages as jpeg images, which I also batch-reduced in size since I wanted small versions of them.

4. To get a text version of each of the 2,924 pages, I

Newsletters.....Continued on page 5



Internet Picture of the Month



The Fiscal Cliff

Continuously in the news for the past month or more, the so-called Fiscal Cliff has finally come and gone with the country going over the cliff for one day. We are all still here and will have to live with the patchwork solution our representatives have worked out. So I thought a cartoon about the cliff would be appropriate for this month's Picture of the Month. And I found one close by from the Orlando Sentinel. It is a cartoon by their cartoonist Dana Summers. The cartoon actually appeared July 26, 2012. http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/opinion/dana-summers/os-summersfiscal-cliff-20120726,0,5208460.photo.

Newsletters.....Continued from page 4

follow the same method as in 3. with the alternate format of the export being a text file instead of jpeg file.

I want a text version of each page so that when you search for Bill Gates, I will have some text to search. In my app, I am going to use the 281 first page images as a sort of list that you can choose from if you just want to browse the newsletters. When you choose one, say the June 1995 newsletter, you will be presented with the first page of that newsletter as an image you can read and additionally that you can enlarge with your finger gestures if you have a touch screen. But how to enable a search of all the newsletters for a collection of words like Bill Gates?

Newsletters.....Continued on page 6

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

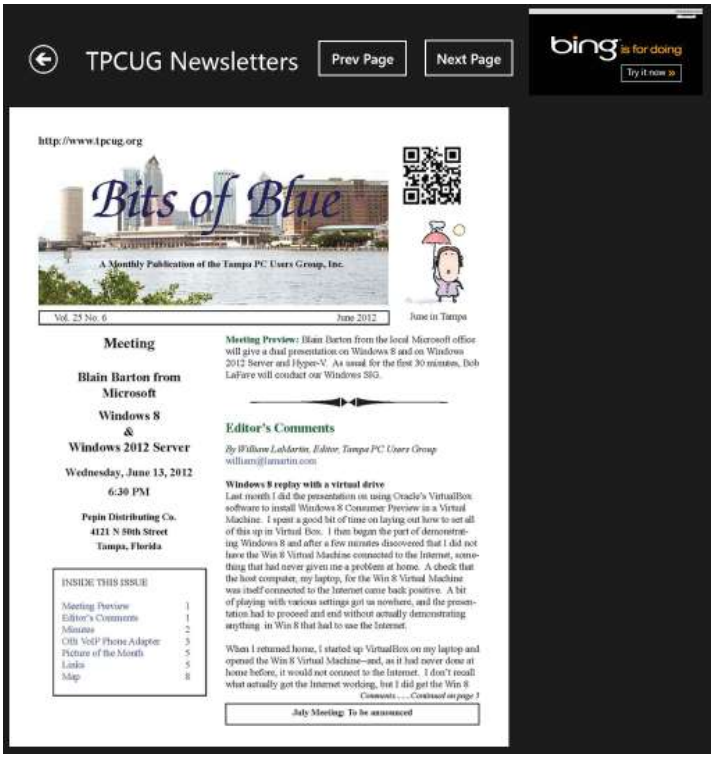
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Nuance Software - home of Dragon Naturally Speaking	http://www.nuancesoftwareonline.com/
Census DotMap	http://bmander.com/dotmap/index.html
Hal's (Im)Perfect Vision – the technology world	http://hal2020.com/
Windows 8 boot alternatives	http://winaero.com/download.php?view.46
Computer Power User Digital edition	http://www.computerpoweruser.com/DigitalEditions/

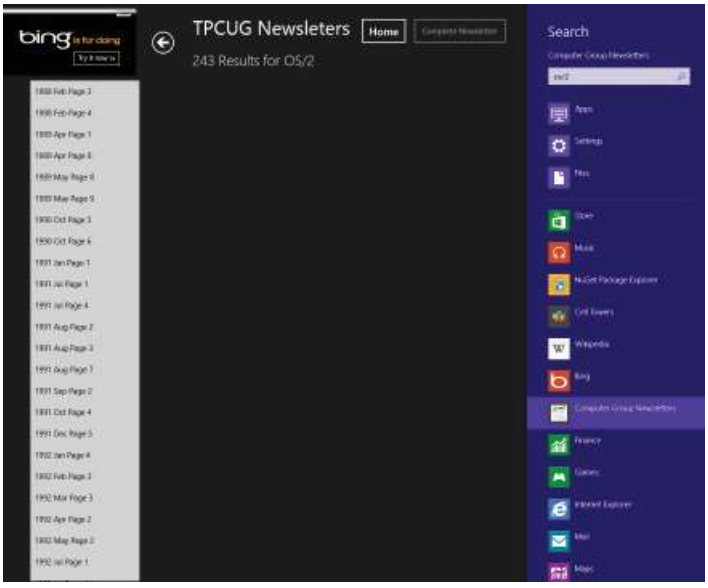
Newsletters.....Continued from page 5

My solution was to create a database of 2,924 records that had fields representing the year, month, page number and a final field holding all of the text on that particular page. The database I chose to use was SQLite, a database that works with Windows 8 applications. To get the data into the database, I first had to create an empty SQLite database with the requisite fields mentioned above. I then had to write a Windows desktop application using C#(I could have used VB) to fill the database with the 2,924 records containing the newsletter page data. Once I had my database, which turned out to be 10 MB in size, I was ready to create the Windows 8 app that would allow you to read and search all the TPCUG newsletters since 1988 through November of 2012.

The image you see on page 4 is the main window of the app. It displays all 281 newsletter front pages in a scrollable grid. What is visible are the newsletters through April 1993. You simply tap on a newsletter to bring it up for reading. The image to the top right is a screen capture of the result of selecting the June 2012 newsletter. You move through the newsletter by tapping the Next Page or the Prev Page button. You will notice an ad for bing in the upper right corner. Sometimes there are different ads. However, Microsoft has not gotten its advertising for Win 8 apps in full swing yet. That is why you see bing a lot. As you might guess, this is not a real popular app, so there is very little advertising income--almost none at the moment.

The second image to the right is a screen capture of invoking what is known as the Search Charm and then entering it as a search term os/2. If have sharp eyes and can read the text, you will see that it says there are 243 pages containing os/2. The first time it was mentioned was on page 3 of the February 1993 newsletter and the last time was on page 5 of the August 2011 newsletter (you would have to scroll the list on the left far down to see that). Of course, you can search for multiple words, such as for the two words os/2 microsoft, and you would get 151 pages containing those two words. If you add my last name of lamartin to the list, the result is 37 pages. You could spend hours doing such search combinations and relive a bit of





computing history. Let's finish this search stuff with a more recent one: android iphone. The result of that is there are 13 such pages, and if you select the June 2011 page 6 one, you will see what is displayed on page 7 of this article.

Of course it takes a fair amount of code behind the

Newsletters.....Continued on page 7



Newsletters.....Continued from page 6

scene to make all of this happen. For example here is the code to do the search

```
string[] A = SearchText.Split(' ');
     string[] B = new string[A.Length];
     for (int i = 0;i<A.Length;i++)
     {
         B[i] = "PageText like '%" + A[i] + "%'";
     }
     string Query1 = "";

     if (A.Length == 1)
     {
Query1 = "SELECT * from NewsletterPages Where " + B[0];
     }
     else
     {
Query1 = "SELECT * from NewsletterPages Where " + B[0];

         for (int i = 1; i < A.Length; i++)
         {
             Query1 = Query1 + " And " + B[i];
         }
     }

     string strSQL = Query1;
     cmd.CommandText = strSQL;

resultSearch = cmd.ExecuteQuery<NewsletterPages>();
```

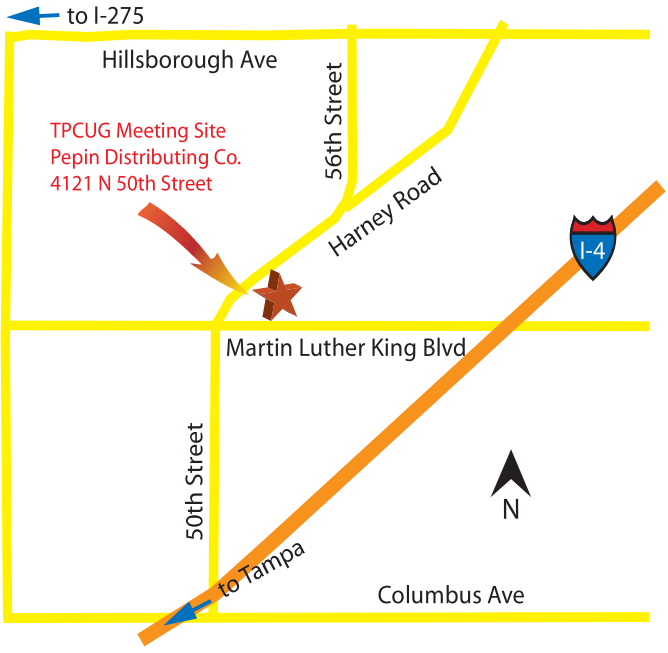
If you are running Windows 8 on a desktop machine, laptop or tablet, I certainly encourage you to give the app a try. It will obviously work best on a multi-touch screen monitor because then you can make the pages as large or as small as you like. In general, if you need to resize them it will be to make them larger so as to be more easily read.

To install the app in Windows 8, simply go to the marketplace and search for Computer Group Newsletters. If you don't have Windows 8, then you can't install the application, but there are a number of ways to get with the program. For example, when Microsoft introduces its new Intel CPU based Surface tablet later this month, you can purchase one. I think that might put you back a bit over $1,000. Alternatively, you might prefer the current ARM processor version of the Surface that is already out. It will also run the newsletter app. However, the ARM versions will not run regular Windows desktop programs like the soon-to-be-released Surface Pro will. Then there are all the other Win 8 devices that are out there or soon to be out there from Acer, Dell and the other usual suspects. Or you may do what I did and contact Merle Nicholson about building your own Windows 8 desktop computer with a multi-touch screen monitor, as I described in the October newsletter ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



February in Tampa

Vol. 26 No. 2 February 2013

Meeting

Bob LaFave
on
Spring Cleaning your PC

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Spring Cleaning. Bob LaFave tells you how to remove the clutter and accumulated junk from your computer. Also Bob as usual will conduct the Windows SIG.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Now everyone can afford the full version of Microsoft Office, the version with not just Word, Excel and PowerPoint, but additionally with Access, Outlook and Publisher. And you can have it for mere $99.99. My that is cheap, you say. What is the catch? The catch is that amount is thea-subscription price for one year (28 cents per day). It is really a rental, and there are other restrictions, such as it is not supposed to be used commercially. Lawyers, doctors and, I assume, writers who earn money from their writing are not supposed to use this version. Neither are nonprofit organizations.

So if you make money from using Microsoft Office (or maybe even if you lose money) in a commercial endeavor, then you need to look at the other options. They are not as cheap, and if you want Access and Outlook, you pay a pretty high price for the purchased version. Additionally those versions can only be installed on one computer. With the subscription version, you can install on up to five computers. See page 3 for details.

Comments.....Continued on page 8

March Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month during the SIG, topics were: A new member's Asus notebook, USB failure with Citrix – many suggestions there, accessing a 3TB (that's a 3 terrabyte drive, or 3,000 Gigabytes). That's often beyond the capability of a computer system's BIOS. A quick look at malwarebytes.org and Teamviewer remote desktop.

The program this month was a return of Patrick T. Courteny of the Brandon users group, Greater Tampa Bay Users Group, http://www.gtbpcug.org. Patrick demonstrated his use of Dragon Naturally Speaking. He uses version 9.10 SP1. The current version is 12. He demonstrated dictating into any Windows software as an alternative to using the keyboard and mouse. He demonstrated the four input modes (normal, spell mode, command …) and very effectively controlled the Windows session using a headset and his voice. He did a variety of demonstrations to show the versatility of the software.

There was a lively discussion on the differences in the current versions, the basic version being the $100 Dragon NaturallySpeaking Home, and also the $199 Dragon NaturallySpeaking Premium version.

Our thanks to Patrick for a lively and informative program.

Our club President, John Witmer, led a discussion about the latest developments on his impending retirement from Pepin and the future of our meeting place. The decision was made that we haven't enough information yet to take serious action, and we tabled it for now. ◆

Office 2013 & 365 Home Premium

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Office 2013 is now for sale or rent. That is correct. You can rent Office now by the year or by the month.. As I write this, it only came available two days ago, and I decided to rent on the second day. In what follows, as I write this over the next few days, I will try to explain the different options on purchasing and renting and give some general comments on the installation and changes I have observed.

I have never rented a piece of software before in my life. But the software landscape is changing. Adobe, for example, started offering subscription versions of their software this past year. They call it the Creative Cloud. You can have a single application such as Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator for $20/month or you can have a full version of all their applications for $50/month. So for $600/year you get all Adobe has. People who have the regular versions receive a $20 discount per month off the $50/month price for the first year. You can have it installed and activated on two computers, as is the case for the standard versions like I have. I have no plan for joining the Creative Cloud in the near future. My Adobe software is the latest version.

Microsoft is going in the same direction. And after you look at the options, there really is only one clear option for you if you are an individual and not a business – and don't use the software for commercial purposes. That is, you will rent the entire Office Suite for $100/year, which will give you the ability to install it on five computers. There is also the option for $10/month. To see the other options for Office 2013, go to http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/buy/.

At the link above, you will note that Office Professional 2013 is $400, and that is the version I would want if I were purchasing the product since it contains Microsoft Access. The other two suites displayed there don't. However Office 365 Home Premium (the $100/year subscription version of 2013) does contain Access. It has everything, and very importantly you can install it on up to five computers. Those other versions may be installed on only one computer.

With Office 365 Home Premium, you also receive 20 GB of extra SkyDrive Storage and 60 minutes of Skype calls per month. I didn't check the details on that.

But I must emphasize again: Office 365 Home Premium is not for business or non-profit origination use. For those purposes, check out http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/business/. However, I think those products will only become available later in February.

Don't be afraid of all the Cloud talk. You do not have to do anything with the Cloud if you choose not to when using Office 365 Home Premium other than to do the original download of the software and for any subsequent updates. You can keep all of your data files right on your computer's hard drive. And if you discontinue your subscription, they do not take your data away. The files are still on your computer, and they may be opened by any other software you have that will open them.

Of course, you may do both: Have your data files on your computer's hard drive and also in the Cloud. That way you have a safe backup of your files, and you can access them from other computers on which you have installed Office 365 Home Premium.

You may try it for free or you may purchase a subscription. Here are the steps I followed to purchase a one-year subscription.

I went to http://www.microsoft.com, selected Office, then Buy Now. It already knew who I was and asked me to login with my Live ID (your experience may differ here). I logged in, and I made the $99.99 + any applicable taxes, which I am pretty sure will be 7%, payment with a credit card. I was informed that my subscription would renew automatically and that I could cancel at any time to stop the renewals.

Then at the bottom of the monitor screen was the message: "Do you want to run or save setup?" I chose

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Office 2013.....Continued from page 3

Run. Once it begins to install, you are presented with a short cartoon-like video about the new Office, and at the end you are presented with a sign-in button. A click on that brings up a place to enter an email address for you to use. It can be any email address. I used my Microsoft Live ID one. It then asked me for the password for that. I don't know what would be the option if you used a different sort of email address.

After that, a click on the Next button gives you the choice of a background for Office or no background. I chose no background. The installation then begins and they give you some information while this is occurring, such as you can sync all your data files in the Cloud with the SkyDrive folder on each computer. "You can invite people to read or edit document in the Cloud right from Office. Then everyone can review and work on the same document. They do not even have to have Office. They can use their browser and Office Web apps."

The installation went fairly quickly. I think it was around 12 minutes; I suspect that later it downloads more as you use different parts of Office. The installation took up about 3.5 GB on the hard drive.

You can install Office 365 alongside any existing version of Office you may already have on the computer. In my case it was Office 2007 Ultimate. In the past, you could also do that with the exception of not being able to have two different versions of Outlook.

I first opened Word, and everything was OK with it. I will cover later the appearance of the 2013 version as compared to the older versions.

My next trial was to open Outlook 2013 to see if it picked up all my email folders and accounts. Opening Outlook, it says, "Preparing Outlook for first use. It may take a few minutes." It took about four minutes. Then I get the message that my mailbox is currently being optimized.

In a moment another message that it could not locate the server for lamartin.com (this turned out to have to do with the Outlook Connector that was installed for Outlook 2007 that allowed me to sync myWindows. Live calendar and Contacts with those in Outlook. More on that later.). It took about six minutes to do the optimizing. Then I tried to send an email, and it worked fine. So OK so far. Now to the problems.

I should say that what I am describing here was done on my Windows 7 desktop computer. A similar installation on my Windows 8 desktop computer had no problems with Outlook because there was no Outlook Connector there. However there was Office 2007 installed on that computer, too.

Somehow switching back an forth later between Outlook 2007 and Outlook 2013, things went awry. At one point, I could not open the Access pst file in Outlook 2013 since it had supposedly not been closed properly (it contains all your messages, contacts and calendar). Well, I would open it with no problem in Outlook 2007 and then close Outlook, 2007 then try with Outlook 2013 and receive the same error. I then decided to remove the MAPI email account that the Outlook connector creates, since I knew that I did have problems with Outlook not closing properly with it sometimes in the past. But that didn't help. I think I even rebooted the computer and tried to open Outlook 2013, and that wouldn't work. Finally I tried an Inbox repair of the pst file (look up how to do this on the Internet). That took quite a long time because the file is 9 GB, but it solved the problem. Outlook 2013 would now load all the messages, contacts and calendars that were originally used by Access 2007. And to avoid further problems, I deleted all the links on the desktop and Start Menu to Outlook 2007 so as not to be using it again; although it is still installed on the computer.

One final thing on Outlook. To be able to sync Outlook 2013 with your Windows Live calendar and contacts, all you need to do is add your Windows Live or Outlook.com email account as an email account in Outlook 2013. No Outlook Connector needed. I am sure that you can also sync your email messages, but I didn't look into that since I don't keep my messages in the Cloud as I do with copies of my Calendar and Contacts. Enough Outlook.

Office 365.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Mardi Gras

Above a masked reveller poses in Saint Mark's Square during the Carnival in Venice in 2012. This year it began on January 26 and, presumably, will end on Fat Tuesday, February 12. To find similar photos, simply do an image search for Carnival Venice. The costumes here are a good bit different from the costumes, or lack thereof, you will see at Carnival in New Orleans.

Office 365.....Continued from page 4

If you have used Microsoft Office 2007 or 2010, you will be right at home as far as the layout of things goes. At least that is true for Word, Excel, Access and Outlook. I have not yet looked at Publisher (in fact I have not used Publisher in years) and PowerPoint.

On the next page I have a screen capture of the menu ribbons of a document in Word 2007 from my laptop and the same document in Word 2013 from my Windows 7 desktop. You will note the menu and ribbon items appear very similar but that the 2013 version is less colorful, very flat and monochrome. This is the new look at Microsoft which I had already noted in

Office 365.....Continued on page 6

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
fotocommunity - Photo site	http://www.fotocommunity.com/
Microsoft Office	http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/
A Consumer's Guide to 3D Printing	http://www.engadget.com/2013/01/29/3d-printer-guide/
Pictures of England	http://www.picturesofengland.com/
FederalBudget.Com (conservative view on it)	http://www.federalbudget.com/

Office 2013.....Continued from page 5

Windows 8. This new look is going to take some getting used to. At the bottom of the page, the top image is a screen capture of a portion of the Ribbon in Word 2007. Below that is a screen capture of roughly the same portion of the ribbon in Word 2013. Items are basically in the same location, but the 2013 is more flat and certainly less colorful.

A few words about SkyDrive are probably in order since you get 20 GB of free space on it to store any files you want. In your My Documents folder you should now have a folder named SkyDrive (if you didn't already have it before). Anything you put in that folder is propagated not only to your SkyDrive account at Live.com but also to any other computers you have that also have a SkyDrive folder that syncs with SkyDrive at Live.com created by the installation of Office 2013 or in some other manner.

Thus, if you have, for example a Word document, Excel file, or just an image file and they are in that SkyDrive folder, any changes you make to them on one computer will be propagated to the same files at SkyDrive and the other computers. But be warned that if you delete such a file, it will then be deleted at all the other SkyDrive locations. So I would also keep a copy of it somewhere else outside a SkyDrive folder.

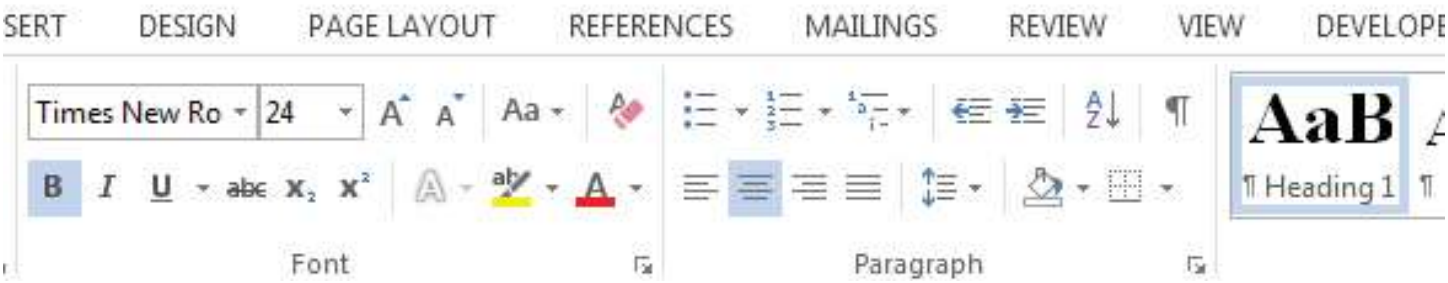
Certainly this is a very handy feature in that you can have access to your files anywhere you have an Internet connection. Lose your computer on a trip or have it destroyed, simply purchase or borrow one, and if you remember your SkyDrive login, then you are good to go.

I am still a bit reluctant to put what I consider sensitive data there, but it is probably pretty safe if I put it in an Access database that then can be password-protected and encrypted.

Well, I have worked with a few documents in Word, in Excel and Access with no problems of any significance. I even did an email merge in Word using a Query in Access. So everything seems a go. I have yet to look at Power Point but don't expect that would be any problem since it is the simplest of all. And Publisher is of no interest to me since I use Adobe's inDesign for such purposes as I am doing at present in creating this newsletter.

This subscription for $100/year (although the price could increase) seems a good deal to me when you consider all the programs you are able to use. I think using Outlook for email would be an eye-opener for many. It is much more complicated than web-based email, but it is far more powerful. To use Office 2013 you will need to be running Windows 7 or higher. ◆





Review - CPU Magazine and Smart Computing Magazine

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group.
merle@merlenicholson.com

CPU (Computer Power User) magazine has been around for a long time, and the publishing company sent someone to give us a talk on Smart Computing magazine some years ago. Anyway, Smart Computing and CPU are two magazines published by Sandhills Publishing in Lincoln, Nebraska. I think they mentioned "Processor" also.

I subscribed for many years, and finally maybe two years ago I found I couldn't renew without calling them and discovered they publish the magazine but no longer sell it, and would I like to receive a copy? Well, yes, since it's free, I would.

So I got free copies for a year and then that stopped on its own. They had been sending me emails about the online edition for a while, and I would look at it; but frankly – it was terrible. There were rectangular blocks on the screen that were flashing, and parts just weren't working.

But look at it now. Everything works, and in my opinion, it's just excellent. I've used it for several months now and have adapted to the format pretty easily. You have to ask why it's presented just exactly like the (formerly) printed version, down to turning pages if you wish. But I've grown to like it better than the print. I think it's because I can flip through the stuff I'm not interested in much faster than print.

CPU is mostly very technical, but with a fair amount of gaming weirdness and LAN party (gaming meets) that I skip over. It's mostly geared toward people who build their own computers from components with reviews on internal computer parts. If you want to know the latest developments in CPU's, motherboards, power supplies and video card benchmarks, this magazine is well worth it. http://www.computerpoweruser.com

I just looked at Smart Computing for the first time in many years, and I'm intrigued now. The current issue has excellent articles on setting an office up with Ethernet and router, and how to install an SSD. The articles look very thorough to me. It appears to be targeted to small businesses and home offices, but that just makes the appeal even broader. It's pretty obvious it uses the same magazine viewer as CPU. I'll register for this, too. The worst they send out to a registered user is a monthly reminder that a new issue is available. http://www.smartcomputing.com

Sandhills Publishing list of publications is at http://www.sandhills.com/pubs-trade.aspx. ◆



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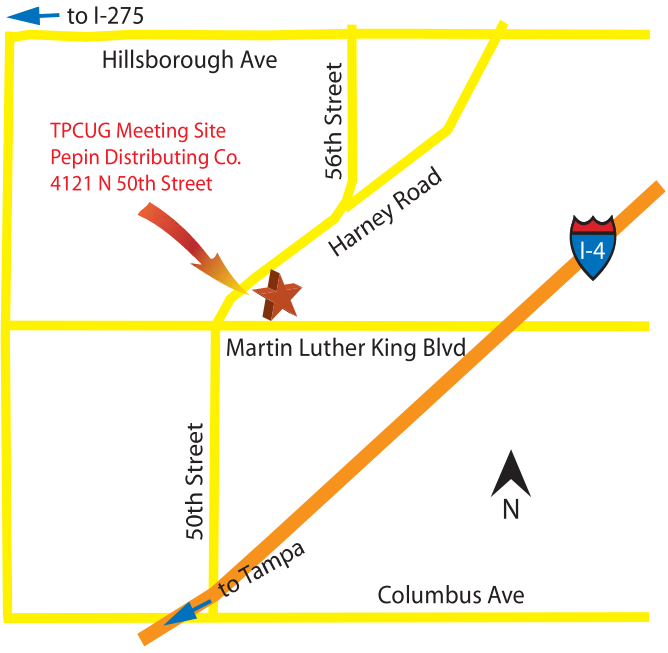
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Comments.....Continued from page 1

Merle Nicholson again came through with an interesting article to help fill the newsletter. I encourage others to do the same.

We have been receiving a decent amount from Amazon most months by your clicking on the Amazon link on the home page at http://www.tpcug.org. We received $82 for October and $29 for November. Keep it up.

And when you get Windows 8 on any device, don't forget to install the free Computer Group Newsletters app that I wrote that allows you to read any TPCUG newsletter from 1984 through 2012. ◆



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Vol. 26 No. 3 March 2013



March in Tampa

Meeting

John Witmer

on

Excel for Home & Personal Applications

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4121 N 50th Street
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Meeting Preview: Working with Excel for home and personal applications by John Witmer. Bob La Fave as usual will conduct the Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

First off, we had a great December with our Amazon link at our home page. The referral fee for December was $169. Keep up the good work and tell your friends about using the link.

Merle Nicholson writes about what to look for in buying a new notebook computer in this month's newsletter. I would like to have such a thing with a touchscreen monitor, but there have been too many such nice things to have lately, including a new desktop Windows 8 computer built by Merle, a subscription to Office 365 and a new Windows Phone 8, so that device will have to wait.

Regarding Office 365, which I wrote about in the previous newsletter, the change from using Office 2007 has been real easy. The menus are slightly different, but mostly everything is the same. One big improvement for me was how Outlook now much more easily syncs its contacts and calendar with the

Comments.....Continued on page 7

April Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month during the SIG topics were: Backup methods, what computer stuff to keep in a safety deposit box, types of backup drives, cloud storage Acronis and Windows backup methods.

For the business meeting, President John Witmer announced a lot of surplus computer components, especially three printers – available for raffle after the presentation. He again went over the arrangements with Pepin to continue the meeting room and a brief review of those meetings that will be held without his presence.

The monthly presentation was conducted by our own Bob LaFave, Windows SIG moderator, the subject being "Clean up your computer." He started out with the physical cleaning and brought in a dirty computer that needed cleaning – it was full of dirt and dust - and the reasons that it must be done to ensure correct cooling of the components. We had some up-close views, and also some pictures of the dirt accumulation that can occur. He showed us computer cases, fans and vents, power supplies and CPU coolers. Methods include vacuum cleaners, brushes and compressed air cans. He cautioned us against turning a compressed air can upside down, and showed the propellant going out the nozzle. One member suggested taking the computer outside and using a leaf blower to move the dust out.

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

New Notebook Computers

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I always have a notebook computer that I use in my business, mostly at home. I'd guess that I replace them every two years. I was originally buying 15" screen devices and more powerful processors that smoked through the battery; units with DVD players; perhaps eight pounds and had chargers plugged into them always. I guess I've evolved some in my thinking.

There are some transitions going on in the notebook arena right now, and some are pretty complicated. So the subjects I want to address are: Windows 8, DVD, SSD, Screen size and resolution, Ultrabooks, Batteries and Upgrade/Repairability.

With my current one and the previous one, I opted more for lightweight, less processing power, longer lasting battery and smaller (14") screen size. It seems to fit my needs better. It's perhaps because I'm using them more as a communications device and I rarely need a powerful processor. I've come to value the portability of lightweight and the ability to go longer without a power cord. The designs have been changing; the choices are better than ever

Windows 8 Most new notebooks have Windows 8. That's not necessarily a bad thing as long as you have a notebook with a touch screen. DO NOT buy a Windows 8 machine without a touchscreen. Many are out there without touchscreens, and, believe me, you will not like it. For experts or those willing to pay an expert, there are changes and software additions you can make to bring back the Windows 7 style menus to Windows 8, and this is pretty foolproof and well tested. I use them myself on a desktop machine, and it appears that all problems are solvable. This means abandoning the Windows 8 tiled Start screen, and that's appropriate for a computer without a touchscreen.

One additional warning. Office 2003 cannot run on Windows 8 (according to Microsoft), so it's time for an Office upgrade if you're depending on Office 2003. I recommend LibreOffice as an excellent quality replacement. It's free. Unless you need Access, Publisher or Outlook, you don't need the expense of MS Office.

You can have someone install Windows 7 on a Windows 8 computer (at extra cost of course), provided the drivers are available. The troublesome drivers for Windows 7 are for touchscreens, touchpads, cameras, fingerprint readers, proximity sensors, LAN and WAN card drivers. This takes a lot of research and is not for the faint-of-heart. There are still Windows 7 computers out there for now if that's what you want, and the pricing is very good. I got a Windows 7 $1,400 HP Ultrabook for $1,000 with free shipping.

DVD players You can probably do without one. You'll have noticed that starting with netbooks a couple of years back more notebooks are available without DVD players. DVD players seem to be common in 15" and up sizes, optional in 14" sizes and nonexistent in anything below 14". DVD players just aren't installed in anything considered thin or light. On my last 14" you could unseat the DVD player, leave it at home and use a plastic snap-in cover over the slot in the side. In the last year or so that I had that laptop, the more I used the laptop, the more I realized I didn't need a DVD. Several reasons; the largest one being flashdrives. A DVD is good for 4.8GB, and a 32GB flashdrive is about 11 bucks and it's rewritable. My latest laptop is an ultrabook, and it's too thin for a DVD drive.

Almost all software installations are downloads now. Downloads come in executables (.exe and .ISO files). Both formats are easily moved over your home network, downloaded directly or put on a flashdrive. I use .ISO files a lot. So when I get the occasional DVD or CD – the only one comes to mind is Delorme Street Atlas, which I buy yearly – I simply mount it in my desktop computer and create an .ISO using ImgBurn. An .ISO file is simply an image of a CD, DVD or BD disk. (BD is Blu-ray Drive) I use a free product called DAEMON Tools Lite that mounts a BD-ROM player on boot that is used to mount an .ISO file in memory.

Notebooks.....Continued on page 4

Notebooks.....Continued from page 3

It's very fast and reliable.

I do have a portable USB DVD player, a gift which I have never used – still in the box. And obviously I never play a movie DVD on my notebook. I do stream from Netflix and Amazon Prime Movies.

For very large notebooks – 16" and 17" – you'll have a DVD or BD player; why not? You've already given up portability and lightweight anyway.

Screen size and resolution This is a complicated subject, but an important one. If you see a very, very good price on a 13" to 15" notebook, always check out the screen resolution. I'll bet it's 1366x768. That's because it's the cheapest display made. To me, it is terrible unless it's an inexpensive 11" to 13" machine. You can say: Well, it's a crappy display but I only paid $400 for it. Obviously it's a compromise. But don't buy an $800 notebook thinking you have a quality machine if it's only 1366x768. It's not.

With screen resolution, you're mostly concerned with the vertical resolution as in Something x 768, or something x 1080. That's because screens are designed with the Width to Height ratio in mind. The ratio is typically 16x9 – a "Widescreen." So if the vertical resolution is 1080, the width will be at least 1920. That's the resolution standard of TV now: 1920x1080. Sometimes you will find 1920x1200 or even 2650x1600.

Except for the inexpensive compromises, the goal should be a vertical of 1080 for displays 15" and up. 13" and 14" the goal should be 900, unless you're buying an Apple MacBook with Retina display costing $1500 and up.

SSDs and other Hard Drives The price of SSDs are dropping like a rock. This fact, and the realization that you may not need all the hard drive space you thought you did, make SSD's the best choice for notebooks. An SSD makes all the difference in the world in creating a fast notebook. You can even compromise in processor speed and graphics GPU as long as you have a fast SSD and plenty of installed memory.

You will see now that many SSDs are not a conventional-looking 2.5" SATA drive at all. Instead the SSD is on an mSATA card. My own has one mSATA card and a socket for a second. Below is an image of an mSATA on top of a 2.5" SATA.



As for size, it made sense to have a 500GB hard drive when it was about $15 more than a 250GB drive. But the operating system needs only 50GB to 65GB. Especially if this is not your primary computer, a 128 GB hard drive may be more than enough. It is for me, but I do not keep many years' worth of pictures, and no video at all. Besides, your pictures probably do not take as much space as you think. A friend's collection of five years' worth of photos for her family was but 16GB, and it was a LOT of pictures. You can make up the difference in external drives or a card slot that the new computer will have anyway.

Remember that all flashdrives and SD cards have minimum speed ratings, commonly 6MB/Sec to 10MB/Sec, and the price goes up slightly – but not much - the faster the speed. Buy as fast a card as you can.

On Intel notebooks, look for Intel SRT (Smart Re-

Notebooks.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Ghost Cities

As you have mostly likely read or viewed, China is full of ghost towns built in the past for years because of the rampant real estate speculation there. Most of the new cities consist of high-rise apartment buildings, but the one pictured above is a meant to resemble an English Village. The photo came from http://www.businessinsider.com/china-ghost-city-english-town-2011-6#.

Notebooks.....Continued from page 4

sponse Technology). This is a hybrid system utilizing a 20GB to 32GB SSD and a separate conventional hard drive working together. It results in nearly-SSD speed, but with the large lower-priced, conventional 5400RPM mechanical drive. As I understand it, you must use the system a bit before the extra speed is apparent.

Looking at new notebooks at NewEgg, I found hybrid systems priced from $500 and up. They weren't that easy to spot because there wasn't any emphasis or special mention. I found typically "500GB HDD + 32GB SSD."

Notebooks.....Continued on page 6

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
ifixit The free repair manual	http://www.ifixit.com/
60 Minutes - CBS News	http://www.cbsnews.com/60-minutes/
The Florida Wildlife Corridor	http://www.floridawildlifecorridor.org/
Online Newspapers	http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/

Notebooks.....Continued from page 5

Be careful if the SSD is 128GB in concert with a hard drive; it probably isn't a hybrid. Instead you should expect to see the entire OS on the 128GB, and the conventional drive a data drive, just as you would see on a desktop machine. That's better than a hybrid anyway.

I've had quite a few notebooks go through my hands recently for repairs, and it's always puzzling at first when I start it up. I say "Why is this thing so slow? There's nothing much going on and no viruses. Oh, it's got a 4500RPM conventional hard drive. What a piece of crap." It's fixable! Look at installed memory, and for Windows 7, 64 bit, it should have 4GB and a reasonably good SSD, and we'll have a new machine!

If all you can afford is an inexpensive machine with a conventional drive, at least look for the hard drive speed. They come in 4500, 5400 and 7200 RPM. Higher is better. 4500 is unacceptably slow. A hybrid system is better, and a SSD is best by far.

Finally, the manufacturers are doing some creative hard drive partitioning, especially on Windows 8. But my Windows 7 machine had two partitions for recovery and emergency install that totaled 16GB, and that's out of about 120GB available. I created the recovery disks using the supplied HP program. It allowed me to make DVDs or boot flash drive, and since it doesn't have a DVD drive the choice was easy. Then I used some Windows utilities to deallocate those two partitions and then extend the C: drive into that space. The result is the full 120G useable.

Ultrabooks First an explanation about the term. The term "Ultrabook" is a word copyrighted by Intel. They have a certain set of rules that, if adopted into the design of the notebook, grants the manufacturer rights to call it an Ultrabook. And obviously the numero uno is that it have an Intel processor. So just because it has an AMD processor and is called a "Speediebook" or something like that, does not mean that it's no good. As a matter of fact, AMD has some excellent APU's – that's the GPU, a graphics processor built into the CPU – that are very much more powerful than Intel's built-in GPU. The Intel graphics are numbered 2000, 3000 and 4000, and are notoriously slow – especially for games. If you're just processing words, who cares?

An Ultrabook has some characteristics though; slim, light, no DVD, reasonably long battery time. So how do they accomplish this? They sometimes do it by making the battery non-replaceable! Not exactly, you can have it replaced, but if it involves taking the whole thing apart, you may not want to do that yourself, and believe me, if the battery has soldered leads and a glued-in soft pack battery, this is not a DIY project.

Many, including my own, require a complete disassembly to add more memory. In my case I can access the hard drive and easily replace the battery, but only after completely removing the back cover. Some cannot have the memory even replaced at all because they're soldered in. An Ultrabook is a compromise, like anything else.

So how do we make sure we're getting the best system? One way is to discover how well designed it is for repairs. The website http://www.iFixIt.com tears notebooks – actually all kinds of devices – apart and makes a video of it and gives it a repairability index number. Many, many other people put tear down videos on YouTube. Just search for your model number. Do this BEFORE you buy. This is primarily the reason I bought mine, because of the reduced price and because it had a good repairability index.

Batteries, as you may be aware, last for just a couple of years, depending on how they are used. Battery life is rated basically on how many times it's recharged. If it's already charged and you're connected to it with the charge cube, it doesn't count. If it's 50% down when you start charging, that counts as 1/2, not 1.

The newest processors are so much better than previous years as far as battery usage is concerned. They've gone to smaller and smaller die size – Intel Ivy Bridge is now at 22 nm, with every generation getting better. You can research all this ahead of time on the Internet given the manufacturer's model number. Look at the number of hours of operation that they claim. You should expect much better than four hours, but typically five or six.

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Notebooks.....Continued from page 6

Look into the cost of battery replacement. Replacement batteries are very typically $150, but sometimes much more. Think about that. When it's two years old and costs $200 to replace the battery it'll be worthless as a used computer if the battery is gone completely. Perhaps it doesn't matter to you, or perhaps it can continue as a useful computer plugged in for a couple more years. The cost of battery replacement should be included as the basic cost of owning the notebook in the first place, and to not know the battery cost is the same as not knowing the cost of the notebook.

Upgrade/Repairability I've pretty much covered this where batteries are concerned. Batteries are the #1 repair concern. When buying new, be sure to research all the reviews out there on that model number. It may surprise you with some things you have not considered. Like a really huge clunky charging cube, or screen hinges that are too stiff, or funky keyboard layouts.

The last thing to consider is installed memory. For Windows 7 and 8 with x64 Operating System, 4GB is the minimum. But subtracted from that is memory that video needs, and it could be substantial. My Intel 4000 graphics can use up to 1.6GB of my 4G memory. Mine is upgradable to 8G, but many are not. You can offset this by buying a notebook with "Dedicated Graphics." This is a graphics module that is installed in addition to the built-in graphics on the CPU. Intel machines have switches so that you can switch from one to the other, with the CPU unit using less battery. So it's a battery vs graphics performance trade-off.

Finally – I can't emphasize this enough, don't buy one without doing your research. Read the reviews first, and then see if there's a repair video. If it's too new to have these things, then it's too new to buy that model. Look for another. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

contacts and calendar at Windows Live, or as they now call it, Live.com. All you need do is add your Outlook.com (Live.com) email address as an email account in Outlook.

I have had one problem, though. Twice on trying to open an Office program, possibly Outlook or Word, I don't recall which, the program would appear to begin opening but never finish. To fix this, I simply went into Programs and Features in Control Panel and did a repair of Office 365 (right-click on the program and choose Change). The first time it happened, I did the online repair, which takes longer but is guaranteed to fix any problem. The second time I chose the Quick Repair, and that also fixed the problem.

I mentioned earlier that I now have a new Windows Phone 8. That replaces a Windows phone 7, I have had for about a year-and-a-half. My contract with Verizon was a two year one and not due to be over until either May or June, but I noticed in January that they were allowing me to purchase a new phone at the usual reduced price so I began thinking about what to get. However, there really wasn't too much of a choice, since Verizon only offered two Windows Phone 8s. I chose the HTC 8x. It had a larger screen with more pixels and a better processor than my previous phone, and it was thinner – and it cost $100. However, at Amazon Wireless, I could get the same phone in their Verizon substore for $50. So I made the purchase there, where they have access to whatever setup you have at Verizon so that I maintained the same plan I had before with one exception: I no longer had unlimited data. But that is the case now at Verizon whenever you purchase a new phone and had nothing to do with me purchasing through Amazon- you can no longer have an unlimited plan and must chose from various metered plans. I chose the 2 GB plan and don't really expect to use more than that based on my past usage.

Now here is the really good part. Since I had clicked on the Amazon link at our website, the purchase of that phone was credited to us, and we received the entire $50 as a referral fee, not just 5%. I don't know how Amazon makes money on this deal. ◆

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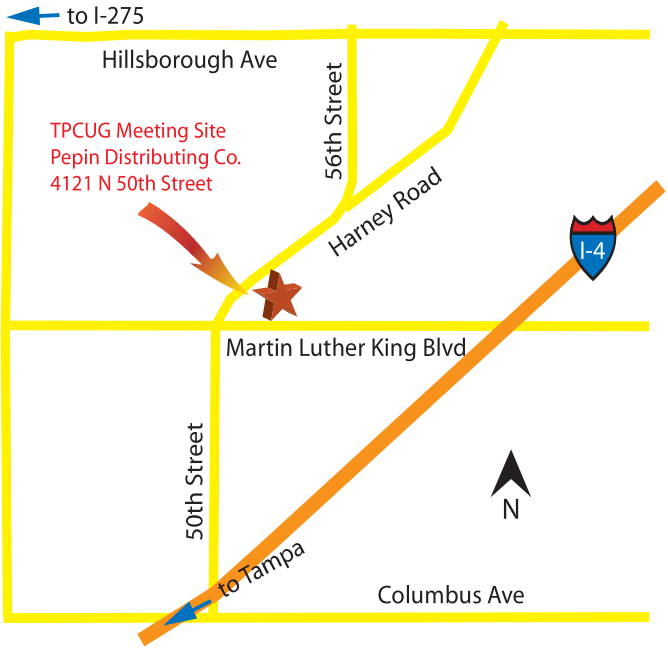
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Minutes.....Continued from page 2

Bob then transitioned to software, TMP and TEMP directories and use of CCleaner to remove unwanted software debris.

Our thanks go to Bob, a long term member who can always be counted on for a lively and informative presentation.

At 9:00 PM the raffle was postponed due to the lateness. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 26 No. 4 April 2013



April in Tampa

Meeting

Merle Nicholson

on

Time and position, GPS and When We Are

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
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Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Since cars are now computers, Merle Nicholson is going to tell us about his new iCar. Bob La Fave as usual will conduct the Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle for his iCar article. It made me pause and think of all the things around my house that are run by computers. There is certainly the central intrusion and fire alarm system. It is obvious that it is a really a special purpose computer when you open its metal box and see a motherboard with chips just like a desktop computer. I suppose even my coffee maker is sort of a computer since you can program it to grind coffee beans and brew coffee at a certain time in the future. Unfortunately it has no feature that will automatically dispose of the used coffee grounds.

Then there is the more obvious example of my HTC 8x Windows Phone 8. As does Merle's Android phone, my phone connects to my car via Bluetooth, where I can communicate with it manually or with voice commands and view its address book on the car's display screen. I don't know if it can play its music through the car's audio system since my phone doesn't have any music files installed. It is odd that as a teenager I

Comments.....Continued on page 6

May Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Bob discussed antivirus options on Windows 8. Windows 8 comes with a new version of Windows Defender – formerly called Windows Security Essentials.

President John Witmer introduced the raffling of hardware we missed last month. He noted the passing of former member Richard Brooks, and we welcomed new member Frank Weitzman. The raffle then was held with Eddie Rodriguez drawing an ink jet printer, Nancy Norton a security camera package, Jeannie Gillespie a printer and iPad cover, Gary Ennis a Bocce Ball set, and additional articles to Merrill Friend and Doug Mullis.

This month the presentation was given by our president, John Witmer, who showed his interest and skills with Microsoft Excel. Starting with a blank spreadsheet, he presented call basics, cell format and custom format, cell math and conditional formatting all using several examples.

John then demonstrated the kinds of activities useful for private use: Check register, filter by category, checking recap and forecasting. John demonstrated an Excel sheet for personal finances including credit card accounts, amortization schedules and net worth. All of these are available as Office templates.

We were shown working copies of spreadsheets for TPCUG; a password keeper file; a graphics demo showing drawing elements and pictures: crop, rotate,

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

iCar Tech

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
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William LaMartin, our newsletter editor, suggested I buy an iThing this month so I'd have something to write about, and I guess I already did without thinking about it. I bought a new Honda Accord, and it certainly qualifies as an iThing as much as a new phone or tablet qualifies. So this month it's about my iCar.

The technology advances that are being made and the progression of that technology downward in price make it available to everyone. Much of the really useful computer technology has been moved to affordable cars. The Honda Accord I bought is just one step above the base model. For those who are not car-aware, the Accord has been a top selling mid-sized sedan in the US for many, many years. Most years it has ranked no lower than third. And Consumers Union has always recommended it. In short, it's a mainstream sedan. Mine is an EX, one up from the bottom of their offerings. No Navigation option, no Leather.

This thing runs on computers. The car won't start, and certainly won't run anywhere, without them. The fuel, air and ignition to the engine are all completely automated by computer. The gas pedal is an input device to a computer. The doors unlock and lock, the daytime lights and headlights come on and off, all by computers. It has an 8-inch LCD screen in the center of the dash, just larger than my Android tablet. The car has two cameras. It has a Near Field Device (a radio), which I keep in my pocket. To open the door, I simply touch the door handle. (You cannot lock yourself out of the car.) To start the car, I push the start button. There is no physical key needed to unlock a door or to start the car.

The LCD screen is used for a variety of functions, all of it real-time. Current music information (track and title, album, sound volume etc.), time of day, current instantaneous miles per gallon, overall mpg since last fill up, last four trips mpg, miles to empty, trip odometer and, of course, the two camera displays, and much more. You pick the music source, AM, FM, CD, Bluetooth and USB. There are a variety of display configurations and options to set for each display. These are pretty much selected by one turn knob with a push select in the center. Many of these functions are duplicated as dedicated buttons on the dash, but, as far as I can see, not used very much after you've settled on your main display. You can even upload a JPG to be used as a desktop background.

Smartphones communicate with the car using Bluetooth in very important ways, and it's this telephone capability that is the focus of this article: CELLPHONE, MUSIC and MAPPING

CELLPHONE

The cellphone connection is truly a marvel. There are controls on the steering wheel to initiate calls, receive and hang up. The microphone is built into the car (somewhere), and the sound comes from the car's speakers. It's always clear sounding, and the person you're talking to will not be aware you're in a car as long as the windows are up. Any good cellphone will have active background noise cancelation, and the interior of this car has noise cancellation, too. When you first "pair" the telephone to the car, it will download the entire phone's contact list to the car. There is a manual process to pick the number for dialing on the screen from the contact list if the car is not moving. It can be done by voice command any time.

Most of this takes some practice to get proficient. If you expect to put the practicing off until you need it, you'll be disappointed. But there's a pretty good built-in solution for that too. It has a shortcut list of twenty telephone numbers that you attach voice commands to, and connect those to the contact list. I have a contact called "Home". But it turns out that a single word like "Home" isn't distinctive enough to voice-recognize reliably, so the voice command I use is "My House." That voice command calls the "Home" contact in the list. You can set up smartphone connections for more than one person.

While driving you press the call button on the steering

iCar.....Continued on page 4

iCar.....Continued from page 3

wheel, the Car Phone Lady says "Say a command," you say "My House." She says "Calling. Press hang up to cancel." You get a recording of the voice command as you made it and hear the dial tone. We're good.

Now you don't want to get me started on using a phone in the car. If I ever die from apoplexy it'll be from seeing a person holding a long conversation on his hand-held with small children in the van. My goal is to keep conversations to less than 15 seconds. I'm convinced that hands-free devices in the car are a tremendous step up in convenience and safety, but having a telephone conversation is a serious distraction.

Still, for convenience and safety, it can't be equaled. I once called 911 to get an ambulance for a motorcycle driver who went down in the street, and it makes you think back to pre-cellphone days and the thousands of lives it has saved by now.

For those interested, there are good add-on hands-free devices that you can carry in the car and clip on the visor. I had a couple of those for many years. Look for "Motorola hands free" in an Amazon search. The current ones look a lot better than the early ones I used. They have much the same capability as my car, with buttons to pick up, hang up and initiate voice commands. They are only $60. There are also a couple of "Speaker Phones" that will pair to your phone and act as just speaker and microphone. When I was using these I wasn't enthusiastic about them, but the button arrangement was complicated and the battery life short. I think the new ones look pretty good.

MUSIC

The next Bluetooth feature I like in the car is playing music from my phone. It's always playing my album collection when I'm in the car. It comes on when it connects – gets within Bluetooth range – and starts playing from where I left off. There are extensive controls for radio, CD, flashdrive and iPod playing options that I'm not very familiar with, since I never listen to a radio or CD in the car. There are controls on the steering wheel for sound volume, track and album forward and back, pause/play; all the controls you need to manage music, and it's all controlled through the Bluetooth connection to the smartphone. You have the same capability using a flashdrive – the car has a USB connection. Unless I have the smartphone mounted on the dash for navigation, it can stay in my pocket for both music and cellphone calling. There's just no need to ever look at the smartphone. All the music information is displayed on the screen. Current track and album name – all that music stuff.

GPS MAPPING

We've used GPS mapping software in the car for many years. I'd guess 2001 is our first long trip with a computer and an attached GPS. The notebook navigation is perfect for long distance planning and turn-by-turn assistance, but requires an operator (In My Opinion); Google Navigation does not. When I got our first Android phone and started using Google Navigation, it gave us local, full time navigation in the car unassisted by a passenger. We have car mounts for our phones (both cars) so they're in sight and always on charge.

Google Navigation gives you turn-by-turn navigation and presents itself on the screen as a (optionally) satellite view. It looks like you're viewing your progress and having a long view ahead from a camera a hundred feet above the car. It's all from composite recording from satellites. The advantage of this is so you can look ahead and anticipate turns ahead and see what it looks like before you get there. Google Street View is there, too and it pops up unexpectedly. I can navigate to Pepin for a meeting, and when I get there, it presents me with a camera street view of the Pepin main gate. You just need an active Smartphone connection with data capability. Also, you can use Google Maps that shows you a continuous street map and positions your car in the center of the screen. There's just no reason to not know where you are. Best thing - it's free. And it comes on Android Smartphones.

OTHER TECHNOLOGY TO LOOK FOR IN A NEW CAR

Some of these items are available as standard or optional on a variety of cars. It's difficult to predict, however. For instance there is no rear camera on a VW Jetta. Even on models that would greatly benefit. It's

iCar.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Nesting Sandhill Crane

From the photo stream at Flickr of Carlton Ward Jr. in his Florida Wildlife Corridor set. http://www.flickr.com/photos/carltonward/. For more information on the Florida Wildlife Corridor, go to http://www.floridawildlifecorridor.org/.

iCar.....Continued from page 5

just not available. But its sister company, Audi, heaps technology in their cars. It's pretty much expected in high-end cars, but you'll be surprised to see what is available in lower-priced cars.

Lane departure warnings: This is implemented in several ways depending on the maker, from just a light that comes on in the corner of the outside mirror and audible warning, to a vibrating warning in the steering wheel, and in high-end cars, some form of active steering.

iCar.....Continued on page 6

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida Wildlife Corridor	http://www.floridawildlifecorridor.org/
Birds-of-Paradise Project - YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/embed/REP4S0uqEOc
IRS Tax forms	http://apps.irs.gov/app/picklist/list/formsInstructions.html

iCar.....Continued from page 5

Forward collision warnings: Sometimes this is just a warning sound or voice warning, to (Volvo) actively braking for you.

Cameras: Rear cameras are available both as standard and as options in most cars now. Some will have multiple views that can be switched and most, if not all, have distance markers overlaid. There are cameras that look at the lanes on either side, emulating outside mirrors.

For more expensive makes, the list goes on and on, like driver dozing detection, heads-up displays on the windshield and night vision augmentation.

Satellite Radio, gas station, ATM and business searches and communications to subscription roadside assistance are common. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

thought I would like to be a musician and as a young adult I listened to much jazz and classical music. Now in my old age I hardly ever turn to music on the radio and have no collection of music on either my phone or computer. One's interests change. As to talking on the phone while driving, I think using a hands-free setup as Merle and I have is just about as dangerous as holding the phone in your hand while driving because the problem is not where your hand is but where your mind is.

Finally, as to computers in the house, there is my Nikon D800 camera. Now that is a computer. If you want some optics, then you have to buy a lens. I have had three Nikon digital cameras, a D100 and a D200 being the previous ones. This new camera stands apart in its use of computerization. There are just so many features. The printed manual that comes with it is approximately 5 in x 7 in x 1 in. I should probably read it. One jpeg image producerd by this camera ranges between 12 and 15 MB; a raw image is 35 MB. I think my first IBM compatible had only a 120 MB hard drive, and before that my Apple IIe didn't even have a hard drive, so you could not store very many

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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It's so unusual to see a company treating their employees with Massage Chairs, Billiards, Foosball, and a Big Screen T.V., complimentary Beverages and attractive surroundings like the serene and scenic Aquarium.

All this you have shared with us and you don't even charge us. You have given us your time, patience and kindness as you set the meeting room up for us, bring beverages and Cookies in and set up the screen and plugs, and probably other activities that we aren't even aware of.

Every year you and your wife go to a lot of trouble creating a warm and welcoming Christmas Party for us. Whenever the time comes that we must go, you and Pepin will be missed ever so much. I and I'm sure many others feel the same way about you, John and Pepin Distributing. You are truly a Class Act.

— Debbie Whittaker

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2012

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2012 INCOME	
Memberships (29 Single + 3 Family)	870.00
DVD Sales-Newsletter Collection & Raffle	48.00
Amazon Commission Received	389.67
TOTAL INCOME	**1,307.67**
2012 EXPENSES	
Newsletter Postage	197.00
Newsletter Printing – 2 Months	61.53
FACUG Dues	25.00
APCUG Dues	50.00
Florida Incorporation Fee	61.25
Web Site Hosting Fee (12 Months)	181.08
P O Box Rental	74.00
Dec Holiday Party Costs	234.11
Refreshments (Cookies)	41.92
Website Domain Name Registration – 3Yrs	110.97
PayPal Fees (4 payments @ $0.85 ea)	3.40
TOTAL EXPENSES	**1,040.26**
NET INCOME FOR 2012	**267.41**
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – BEGINNING OF 2012	6,973.61
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – END OF 2012	7,241.02

RECONCILLIATION OF BANK STATEMENT TO BOOK BALANCE:

Balance per BANK STMT at 12-31-2012	7,241.02
Outstanding Checks or Deposits	0.00
Balance per Books at 12-31-2012	7,241.02

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First Class Mail

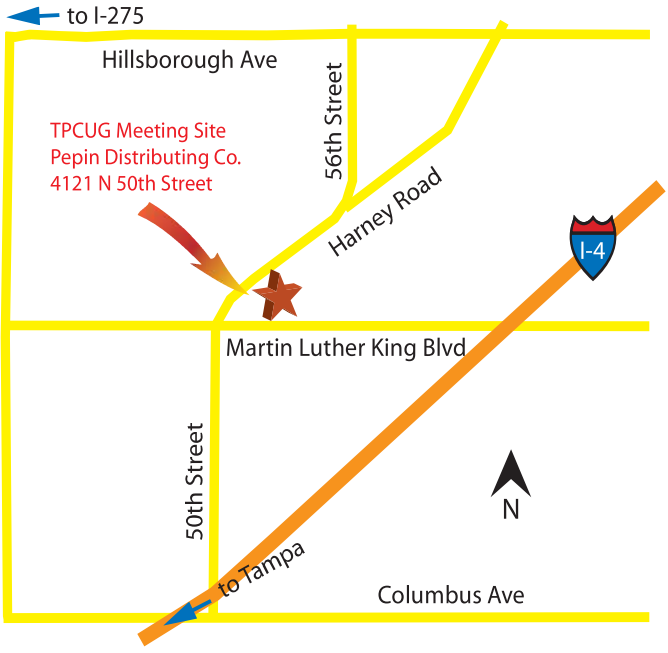
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

insert text and crop to a shape, finally concluding with a collage of pictures and methods of printing. Altogether an interesting view of what Excel is capable of, and some interesting and useful techniques. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 6

photos from this camera on that. Luckily my present computer has a 2 TB hard drive. The D800 has two memory card slots, a SD card slot that will take up to a 64 GB card and a Compact Flash Card slot that will take up to a 128 GB Card. I have 32 GB cards in them now. I use the SD for storing still images and the Compact Flash for movies. Yes, this camera also takes movies (1080p Full HD movie mode at 24/25/30 fps, 720p at 24/25/30/50/60 fps). My point is that we have gone from a personal computer in 1983 that had only 64 KB of memory (could be increased to 128, which I did) with no hard drive to a camera in 2013 that takes images 35 MB in size (which can actually be 74 MB if you use the RAW uncompressed 14 -bit mode). Wow! It would take a lot of Apple IIes to hold that one image. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 26 No. 6 June 2013



June in Tampa

Meeting

Blain Barton from Microsoft

on

Setting up a WordPress Site in Azure

Wednesday, June 12, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from the local Microsoft office will demonstrate how to set up a WordPress site at Microsoft Azure. Bob Lafave will have the usual Windows Q & A for the first 30 minutes.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I have had two problems recently that involved computers with two monitors. One was on my Windows 7 desktop, the other on my Windows 8 desktop. It took a while to figure out the cause of the problems, with the solutions coming from the Internet and Merle Nicholson (who, I believe, got his solution from the Internet).

On the Win 7 computer, the problem was that the computer started booting with the right-hand monitor as the main monitor with all the desktop icons etc. I would then set the left-hand monitor as the main monitor in the place where you do that, and everything would be as I wanted. Unfortunately, on a subsequent boot the main monitor had again moved to the right-hand one. This is not supposed to happen. I tried all sorts of solutions, such as switching which port the monitors were connected to, but the problem persisted. Then Merle did some research and came up with the possibility that an installation of Micro-

Comments.....Continued on page 2

July Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the May Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Bob extended this time to cover the month's presentation.

Bob covered a wide variety of PC subjects, starting with a walkthrough of Windows 8. Bob's version of Windows 8 on his notebook has Start8 installed to restore the missing Start menu of Windows 7. He demonstrated several browsers, Windows 8 new Performance monitor and Performance Index.

He then showed ATTO disk benchmarks and talked about the advantages of SSD, and then explained IDE, SATA I, II and III. He moderated a discussion of wireless networking, private and public and those settings. He had brought in a show-and-tell directional wireless antenna.

Then he went on to a variety of other subjects: Windows step recording, NTI Echo disk cloner, Windows System Image software and Windows 8 Restore to remove everything and reinstall Windows 8. There were several other subjects of wide interest. Bob conducted a very interesting and entertaining session with good group participation. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

soft Live Mesh was causing the problem. Microsoft had discontinued Live Mesh, and I had uninstalled it. So how could it be causing a problem? Well, it was actually still there but hidden as part of Live Essentials 2011. After I followed the suggestion Merle had found, to simply go into Programs and Features and

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Buying a New PC?

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

This month, I'd like to talk about Operating Systems. We'll start with XP.

XP Maybe you're not too concerned, but there's one upcoming event that you should be watching. It's the end of support for Windows XP. That's April 8, 2014, less than a year from now. That's the day that Microsoft stops patching the OS for updates and security improvements.

Why should that concern you? Well, Windows XP is vulnerable enough now, but I am advising you now that without security patches your computer is more vulnerable to outside attacks than ever. Another problem is that as time marches on your chances of buying compatible devices lessen. In April basically all manufacturers' new device drivers will stop as well. Most have stopped long ago anyway.

What to do? Well, you can buy a new computer or install a new operating system on your old computer. The operating systems available to you are (in my own order of preference) Windows 7, Ubuntu, Chromium and a dead doubtful last – Windows 8. More on Windows 8 later. If your hard drive is more than three years old, I advise replacing it and keeping your old one as a backup to avoid putting your XP system at risk. If you have a slow or weak computer, Ubuntu may be the very best option.

XP - Installing Windows 7 on an old computer: Fortunately there is some help here. There's a Windows 7 compatibility survey program available from Microsoft. (There's one for Windows 8, too.) This program scans your hardware and software and tells you in some detail what will work and what will not. The #1 thing to look at is if you can run the x64 bit version or the x32 bit version. They are sold separately, so you buy the 64 bit version if the system is compatible, the 32 if not. Start with the Windows 7 upgrade advisor download at http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/upgrade-advisor and http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/help/upgrading-from-windows-xp-to-windows-7#T1=tab01

XP – Installing Ubuntu, a version of Linux: This can be a breeze or it can be hard, depending on what you do with your computer. The mostly easy part is that you can install the Ubuntu OS onto a flash drive and resolve any compatibility problems without putting your current system at risk. If you use your computer for mainly Internet use or Google apps and email, Skype and IM, Chrome, photos and movies, Netflix and Amazon Prime, then Ubuntu is an excellent choice. All these things are dead easy, as well as LibreOffice, an excellent MS Office-compatible word processor, spreadsheet and presentation editor. All of these things I mention are free. No cost whatsoever. Now if you already do more than the above with your computer, there are endless varieties of programs available, and if it's critical for you, start your research on available software. There's a very surprising amount of commercial and free software that will run on Ubuntu. There are thousands available for free. And the Chrome browser may solve many of these software needs. See Chrome Browser below.

XP **– Installing Chromium OS**. This OS and it's sibling Ubuntu are becoming more and more viable for the average user. The reason is the suddenly popular migration to cloud computing. As you find yourself using cloud services and storage more, Ubuntu and Chromium and Chrome are leveling the environment. With these OSes, all you need is a very good web browser not named Internet Explorer. Chromium is a variation of Ubuntu, modified to load a slightly different package of programs by default and to emphasize Chrome as the browser of choice. (See the paragraph on Chrome Browser below.) The idea is to emulate the Chrome OS installed on computers sold by Google, Samsung, HP and Acer Chromebooks. The Chromebooks OS itself is a variation of Ubuntu. You can't buy the Google Chromebook OS, but the next best thing is Ubuntu with Chrome installed or Chromuim OS.

XP – Installing Windows 8. Well maybe, I doubt it,

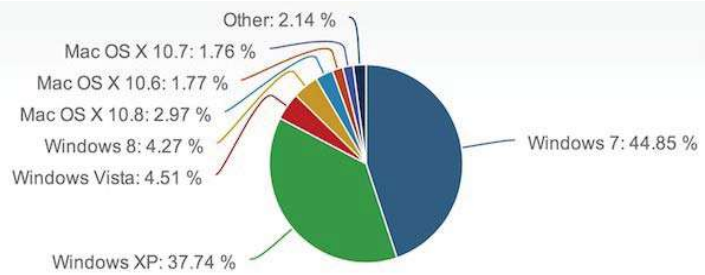
New PC.....Continued on page 4

New PC.....Continued from page 3

but you need to read a later section on Windows 8. The Windows 8 Upgrade Advisor is at http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-8/upgrade-to-windows-8

Buying a New Computer
Buying a new computer, the OS choices are for a computer without an Apple logo on it: Windows 7, Windows 8 and Chromebook. With an Apple logo: Mac OS X.

Let's start with a little graphic of computers in current use in the US (about 300 million) and 1 billion worldwide: This is a graph of the currently installed operating systems. Surprised? Windows XP is still



pretty huge, and the combined Mac OS X at 6.5% is pretty stable over many years and not growing. Ubuntu, Chromium and Chromebook OS, by the way, are imbedded in that 2.14% "Other," along with others.

What the graphic does not tell you is that the Windows 8 slice is slowly growing, as is the Windows 7 share. The Windows XP share is dropping as corporations migrate in favor of Windows 7. Remember that the retail sales of computer OSs (XP, 7 and now Windows 8) is a very small part of Microsoft's income. The Windows 8 slice is small, but that's expected.

Before the Windows 8 share gets bigger, it has to become what Windows 7 is now to XP. That's a very long way off, and it may never make it at all. That's because Windows 8 has no appeal to any corporation trying to manage thousands of personal computers. The transition to touchscreen is just prohibitively expensive with no established productivity improvement.

New computer - Windows 7 Buying a computer with Windows 7 x64 is risk free. If you can find one. New computers with Windows 7 are out there, but you have to look. My guess is that Microsoft is providing Windows 8 software to manufacturers at a lower price than Windows 7. You can downgrade Windows 8 to Windows 7 only on the Windows 8 Pro version, using the Windows 8 Pro license. Check on that first to make sure it's still available.

New computer – Windows 8 Windows 8 uses a tiled interface designed for touchscreens. All your old and new programs – menu selections and icons now are on tiles on the Start Screen(s) that slide right and left. You can group these tiles in categories and name the categories. You cannot create a folder and drop tiles into them to hide them. For instance I have a menu selection I call "Stuff I never look at." It's one item on a Windows 7 menu, but in Windows 8 it's 40 tiles in a group. I move past that 40-tile group all the time.

Staying in the tiled interface there are apps designed to work well. At the moment you can view but two of the Win 8 apps at a time, and one is always larger than the other. Windows 8.1 will improve that some, perhaps to 4 equally-sized apps. All others must drop to the desktop where they work normally, but there is no menu there. You must switch back to the tiled Start screens, temporarily abandoning all that you're doing on the desktop. Yes, you can use a mouse. Many people really like the tiled interface. **BUT. If you don't have a touchscreen, you're going to have a very hard time using Windows 8.**

As an alternative to the tiled interface, you can get one of a couple of Start Menu programs that do an excellent job of adding a traditional menu system to Windows 8. The ones I've used are excellent, and mostly free or inexpensive. Here's the catch. They're somewhat technical. So you may need help getting it set up and configured so it's working satisfactorily.

I've read recently that only 20% of new computers have touchscreens. I really am sympathetic to those thousands of new computer buyers who have expectations that Windows 8 will work well out of the box only to discover the interface needs a touchscreen to

New PC.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



An Old Plantation Home

The above is one of many thousands of photos by Jeff Lamb at Flikr. You may view many of his New Orleans area photos at http://www.flickr.com/photos/fej/with/388214062/. Jeff died in 2011, so Flikr makes it possible for one's work to live on after them. My interest in the photo was because I photographed the house in the mid-1970s. You might also note that Flikr has a new look.

New PC.....Continued from page 4

work well.

When I'm asked about a new computer, I always say to make sure you're willing to pay the extra cost of a touchscreen, or you're not going to be happy. Adding a menu program is somewhat technical and you may need help setting it up. On my own version of Windows 8, you may not be able to tell that it's not Windows 7. But is it worth the trouble over a real Windows 7? No. Definitely not.

Chrome Browser

Ok, I know the Chrome Browser isn't an operating system. This browser, available on a number of op-

New PC.....Continued on page 8

June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Campaign Finance	http://www.campaignmoney.com/
The Rijksmuseum (Netherlands)	https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en
Disunion - The Civil War (New York Times)	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/10/29/opinion/20101029-civil-war.html?_r=0
Japanese Man Creates Amazing Art Using Excel	http://kotaku.com/old-japanese-man-creates-amazing-art-using-excel-wait-499616608

Gaming and You

By Brian Lance,
Tampa PC Users Group
master.pc.tech@gmail.com

Games. They serve as a way to blow off steam, unwind, compete or even show an extreme level of unsportsmanlike conduct. Games can do all this and more! But this can get expensive. Here's how to get the games you want for PCs, and get them on the cheap.

We start with the major platforms for PC: Steam (http://store.steampowered.com/) and Desura (http://www.desura.com/). Both allow you to search for games by various criteria such as genre, price, or popularity, download and automatically update, interact socially with other gamers, host a server where others can connect to your game, get modifications to games ("mods") and much more.

One of the handy features of both is the ability to sign in to your account on another computer, download a copy of purchased (or free or gifted games) and play them. On Steam, many games support SteamCloud, which allows saved games and settings to follow your login wherever you are. Currently, this is 100MB per game, which should cover multiple save states for most games. This also means less annoyance in avoiding having to "back up" or otherwise find a way to rescue your game saves, as there is no unified way to do this with regular retail boxed games.

Steam also allows you to do a full backup of your games, should you find the need. If you have a lot of backup space, this can be a time saver vs. re-downloading the games. This can also be useful when migrating to a new PC or one that will not have net access.

Some First-Person Shooters (FPS) can be upwards of 8GB in size, so you might not want to simply add those to every computer you own, but it can be nice to have a casual game and its current state be available on all your PCs.... well, maybe not the office computer!

Some social features include your own nym (pseudonym) and homepage, joining groups, and in-game chat with friends. Access to game guides and blogs while a game is in progress has been useful to me. Big Picture is a feature that's handy if you have a large monitor or are using a TV. It even allows a game controller to navigate the interface, making Steam more like a jukebox of games.

The Steam Store page even has categories for under $10 & $5. Some top titles go from $50 to $10 and under in a year or two – see below. There are a bunch of completely free-to-play titles on Steam; many of these are MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game) or FPS titles. With most (all?) of these you can purchase extras, but basic gameplay is still worth trying out. Some will limit the player to a certain level of advancement without paying, but nowhere near the underhanded and avaricious tactics of game monetization with mobile gaming. This will be covered in an upcoming article!

Desura's interface is a bit less polished, but still makes it easy to acquire and play games. One of its unique features is that is can scan and add games to your account if they are already installed elsewhere on your PC. Desura seems to center more around inexpensive and indie games. Don't let the indie appellation fool you - I found some of my favorite games and developers this way.

Best to get both Desura and Steam. Search for major or new games on their interfaces, but use various sites like these to get games on the cheap (and support charities!): indiegala.com, humblebundle.com, indieroyale.com, indiegamebundles.com, bundlestars.com

With these, you typically get a mix of indie and commercial games as direct downloads on PC, Mac, Linux and Android, as well as having them attached to your Steam or Desura accounts. They have a low starting price and most bundles of games give you extras (music, artwork) if you beat the average. Bundles will typically be available for one day to a week. And the average is typically less than $6, so it's easy to give freely to charity, developers, or the hosting site. You can pay with diverse methods such as PayPal, Amazon, Google Wallet or even BitCoin. ◆

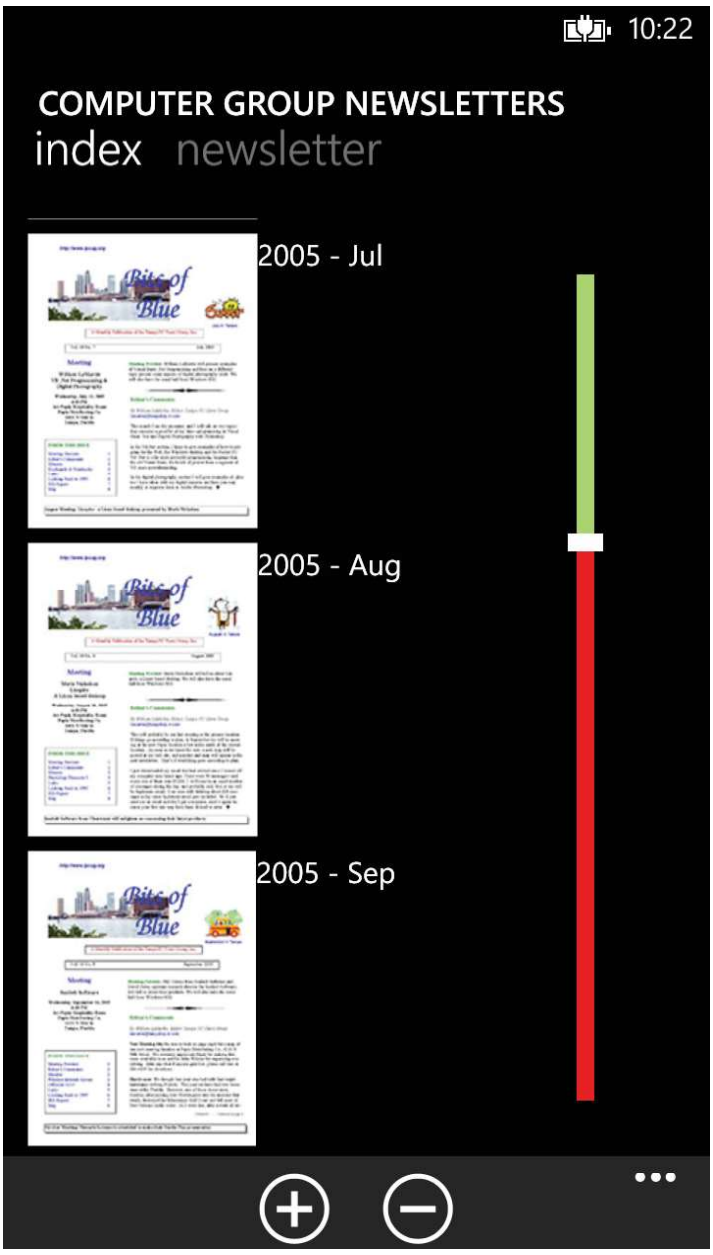
Comments.....Continued from page 2

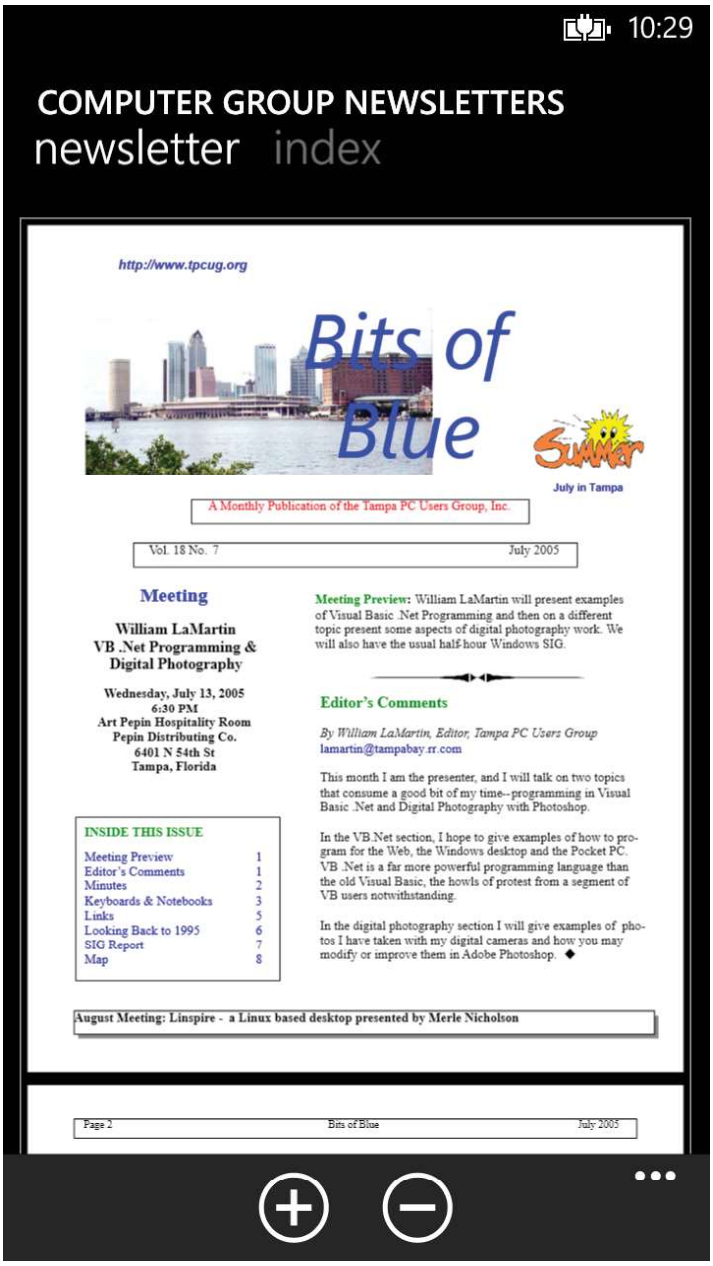
uninstall the Live Mesh feature from Windows Live Essentials 2011, Live Mesh was truly removed, and I could get my monitor changes to work.

The Win 8 problem was that often when I booted the computer both monitors would display the blue Windows logo as if everything was fine, but after I was presented with the login screen on my main monitor and I had logged in, the right-hand monitor became dark. My temporary solution was to simply restart the computer, and then miraculously everything worked as expected. Again an Internet search indicated that when I shut down the computer I was not getting a true shutdown and this caused a problem on the next boot. The solution was to turn off the option of Fast Startup in Control Panel | Power Options | Choose what the Power button does. After that I got true shutdowns and had no more problems with the monitors.

TPCUG Windows Phone 8 app

Below are two screen captures of my Computer Group Newsletters app in Win Phone 8, which I am porting from my Windows Store app of the same name. So soon (after I publish it) you may read all the old TPCUG newsletters on your Windows 8 Phone. (You do have one don't you?) I don't think I will include the feature to search all the newsletters in the phone version as is in the Windows 8 Store version since that would entail packaging up the fairly large database (10.4 MB) necessary to do that with the phone app. ◆





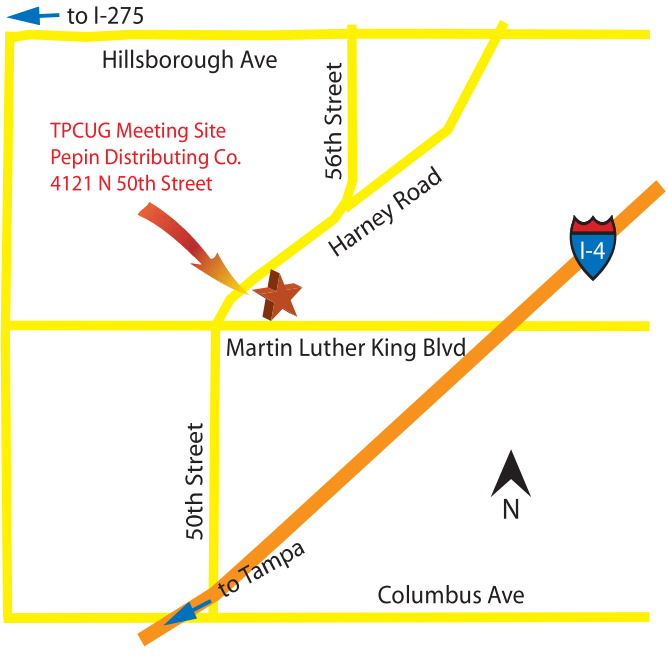
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New PC.....Continued from page 5

erating systems, kind of levels the field. It has a wide variety of programs that run inside of the browser. So if you have Chrome on a Windows machine, you have the same Chrome in Ubuntu and other Linux, Android telephones and tablets, the Chromebooks and Chromium OS. In my own Chrome I have: Netflix and the usual Google stuff (Calendar, Maps, Gmail, Drive, YouTube and Books). But I also have apps: TwistedWave (Sound editor), Write Space (Text Editor), Pixlr Editor (Graphics editor), Drive Notepad (Text again), draw.io (org charts .. excellent!) Google Docs (Word Processor), Sheets (spreadsheet), Drawings, Slides, Remote Desktop and Angry Birds. But guess what … there are thousands more and mostly free. Many have "Pro" versions with a small cost. Need a financial organizer? Try Mint or Cash Organizer. These are not amateur applications. Most that I've looked at are professionally written by established software companies. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



May in Tampa

Vol. 26 No. 5 May 2013

Meeting

Bob LaFave

on

Questions and Answers Plus Quicken

Wednesday, May 8, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Bob Lave will devote most of the meeting to a Q & A session, followed by a discussion of the Quicken financial software.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I have several topics I can write about this month, and that will give Merle Nicholson a rest after he basically filled the newsletter for the past two months. Ron Weinberg has also helped by contributing an article this month.

I have three topics I would like to cover this month:

- The Tampa PC Users Group Windows 8 Store application I wrote, named *Computer Group Newsletters.*
- Removing a hard drive from a laptop
- The Microsoft Surface Pro

I will deal with the first item here. If you have Windows 8 on a computer, go to the Store and search for *Computer Group Newsletters* and install it. Then you will have access to all of our newsletters from 1988 through 2012. You will be able to search the entire collection, and in the update I recently made you will now be viewing the newsletters as PDF files instead of just images, and you will be able to print the newsletters from inside the app. ◆

June Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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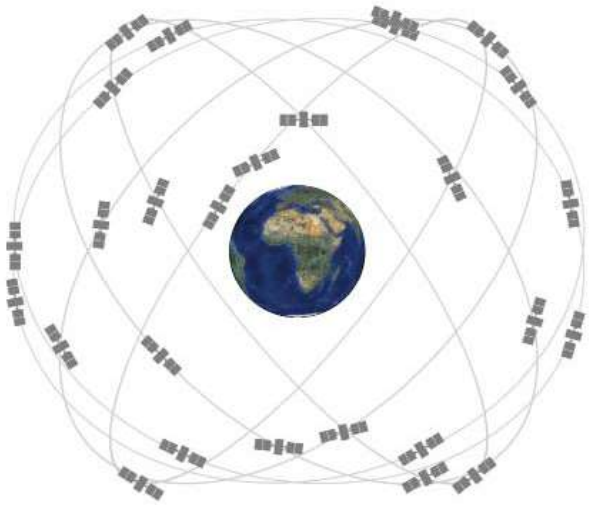
Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month topics covered by Bob included wireless access options and setting up an access point from a distance.

This month the presentation was given by myself, Merle Nicholson. The subject was GPS, but first a presentation on the world coordinate system and some history behind it was necessary. The presentation was on time measurements and the nature of time related to longitude, the locations of the Equator, equinoxes, Arctic and Antarctic circles, Tropic of Cancer and Capricorn. The presentation went into GPS and the satellites in orbit, altitude and period, number of satellites to obtain a good fix, a description of WAAS, the difference between celestial time used for GPS and terrestrial time. There were some questions asked and some lively discussions and all in all a success thanks to a great audience and their expressed interest. ◆



GPS Satellites

vCard

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Uswers Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

We installed a new telephone and needed to add our contacts. This was not a smartphone or cell that could retrieve contacts from the Cloud or the Telco website. However, it did have an Internet connection, and we wondered if we could enter the contacts automatically from a file rather than hand-entering each record individually. A check with the phone's website indicated that it could be downloaded from there into the phone if we first uploaded our own vCard file to their website.

But, what is a vCard?

A vCard is often referred to as a virtual business card. It is defined in Wikipedia as follows:

> *"vCard is a file format standard for electronic business cards. vCards are often attached to e-mail messages, but can be exchanged in other ways, such as on the World Wide Web or instant messaging. They can contain name and address information, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, URLs, logos, photographs, and audio clips."*

The following, also from Wikipedia, is an example of a vCard file containing information for one person: There are several versions, with 2.1 being the primary and higher versions adding additional fields or properties.

```
vCard 2.1
BEGIN:VCARD
VERSION:2.1
N:Gump;Forrest
FN:Forrest Gump
ORG:Bubba Gump Shrimp Co.
TITLE:Shrimp Man
PHOTO;GIF:http://www.example.com/dir_photos/
    my_photo.gif
TEL;WORK;VOICE:(111) 555-1212
TEL;HOME;VOICE:(404) 555-1212
ADR;WORK:;;100 Waters
    Edge;Baytown;LA;30314;United States of America
LABEL;WORK;ENCODING=QUOTED-PRINT-
    ABLE:100 Waters Edge=0D=0ABaytown, LA
    30314=0D=0AUnited States of America
ADR;HOME:;;42 Plantation
    St.;Baytown;LA;30314;United States of America
LABEL;HOME;ENCODING=QUOTED-PRINT-
    ABLE:42 Plantation St.=0D=0ABaytown, LA
    30314=0D=0AUnited States of America
EMAIL;PREF;INTERNET:forrestgump@example.com
REV:20080424T195243Z
END:VCARD
```

Business Card (vCard) or Business Card (.vcf) records can be sent or imported by Outlook and many email programs into their respective address list (Contacts). They can also be used by other devices such as cell phones, PDA's, laptops, etc., as well as various software programs. In short, they are the electronic digital method of transferring business cards via Infrared, Bluetooth or Internet.

Each vCard record has the .vcf file name extension. and is equal to one business card.

Again, my object was only to transfer my contacts but in the process I learned how valuable vCards can be. Today's business person should consider having their own vCard.

A little research revealed many software programs and websites which are available that could create and/or read vCards. There were others that could translate to or from Excel, Comma Delimited, or other formats. Most were offered as "free" shareware but in reality they would allow a short trial with very limited capability and then a purchase to fully function. Prices ranged from $39 to $69.

Since the format is standard, it would not be too difficult to write an input program to create vCards individually or in a batch from a file containing the needed information. The Contact List for this phone would only contain 25 records, so I decided to forego any purchase or programming and try to make do with what tools I already had available.

vCard.....Continued on page 4

vCard.....Continued from page 3

I have a fast i7 Windows 7 laptop, but my primary system is an 8-year-old Dell desktop with Windows XP Professional and Microsoft Office 2003. I plan on keeping it, barring catastrophic hardware failure, until at least April of 2014, when support for XP ceases. Although well-equipped at the time, the software in particular is generations behind and obviously lacks the more recently added features.

The challenge was to finding a way to create the vCard file with available resources. I enjoy this kind of challenge. Here is what I found:

As a backup I already had an Excel file with the needed data (25 essential records) in .xls format. I used Excel 2003 to save the .xls file as a comma delimited file. Then I imported the comma delimited file into the Outlook Contacts.

Outlook 2003 and Outlook Express can save each individual contact as a vCard but only one at a time, not as a batch. Note that Outlook Express uses an Address list; it does not use a Contacts list, but the function is the same. Windows Live Mail would only create a vCard for every corresponding item in its Contacts list (my 177 records), many more than needed here.

For only 25 records, I quickly saved each record individually as a vCard using Outlook 2003. Now I had 25 individual business card records but they needed to be in one file to be quickly moved into the database.

To bring them into one file, a simple old-fashioned DOS command did the job.

I used the name AllVCF1.vcf.for the file. Then from a Command Line, I went to the Folder containing the vCards and entered COPY *.vcf AllVCF1.vcf .

Mission accomplished! AllVCF1 uploaded successfully and contacts were downloaded to the phone. ◆

Removing a Laptop Hard Drive

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

My daughter's almost five-year old Sony Vaio laptop just quit working. The first indication anything was wrong was that it produced a white screen while she was using it. She did manage to get it to reboot and retrieved the PowerPoint presentation she was working on and needed the next day. However, after shutting down, the laptop would never again produce an image on the screen or on an attached external monitor. But you could hear and feel that the fan was working.

I contacted Merle Nicholson. He offered several possibilities, but nothing worked to revive the laptop. So we pronounced it dead. My immediate goal was to remove the hard drive so that I could see if I was going to be able to extract her data, as she, like so many others I know, had not done a full backup in over a year.

As they say, I had been to this rodeo before and knew what I needed to do. Since opening up a laptop and extracting a hard drive is usually a multi-step and sometimes very tedious process, I wanted a YouTube Video that detailed the process.

If you have my Windows 8 Computer Group Newsletters app and you search for Sony Vaio, it will produce the June 2008 newsletter where I describe the same exact problem I was confronting: removing the hard drive from a Sony laptop. For that laptop, I had found an online video that demonstrated step-by-step the process of removing the hard drive. Unfortunately, the innards of that laptop were nowhere near the same as the one I now had in front of me. And still more unfortunately, I could find no video that detailed the disassembly of a what was supposed to be a model pcg-6w1l, according to the bottom of the laptop. I then had the idea to check back on my Quicken expense file for when I purchased that laptop. It was in May of 2008, and in the memo the laptop was described as a Sony VGN-SZ770N/C laptop. I passed that info on to Merle, and he found, not a video, but a web page with

Hard Drive.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Visiting Alligator

The alligator pictured above has become a regular visitor to a golf course in Avondale, LA. Having just three legs, he has been nicknamed Tripod. The photo above came from the *Wall Street Journal* at a mile long URL. A search of the Internet for the words alligator golf course Zurich Classic will produce other links.

Hard Drive.....Continued from page 4

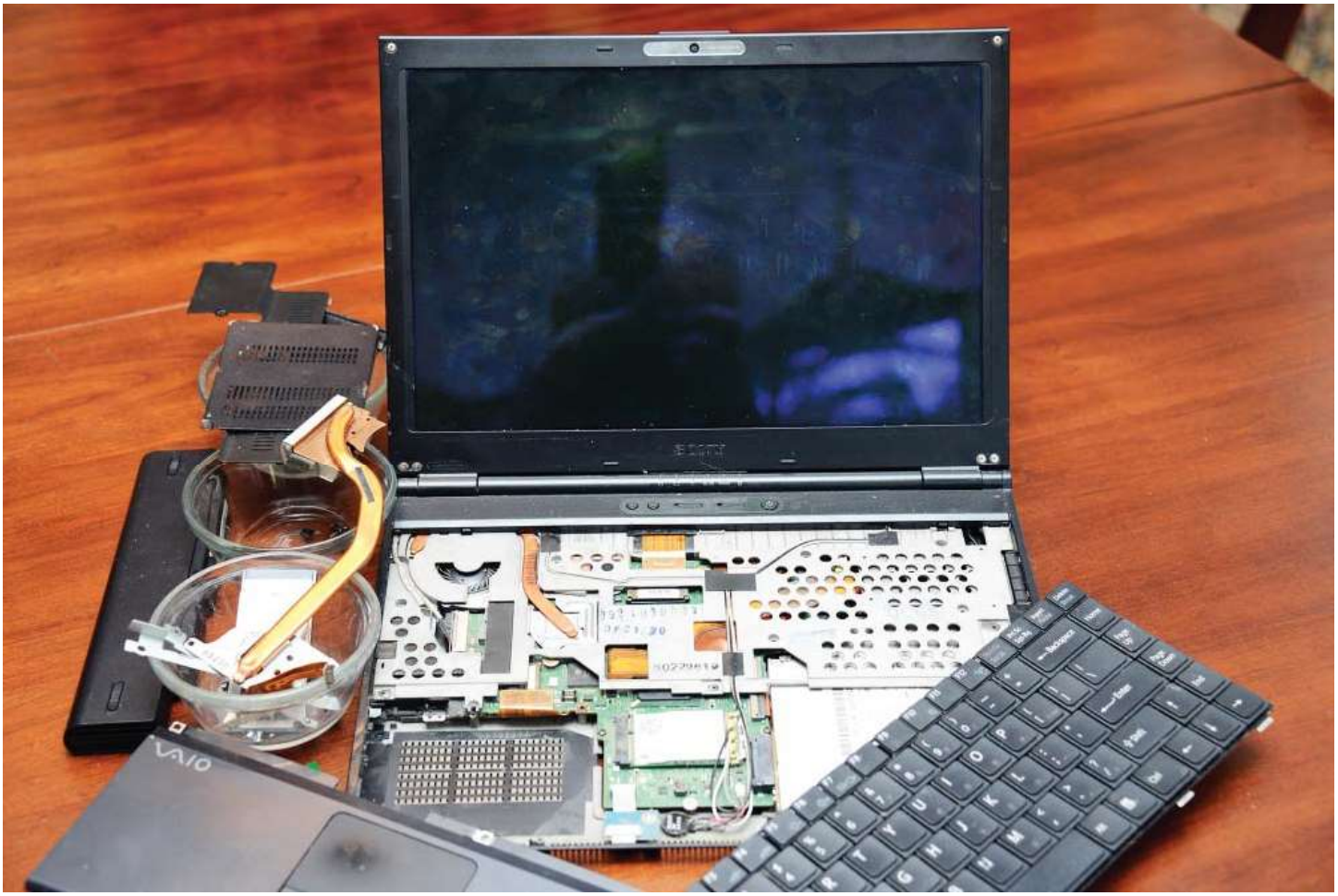
photos that detailed such an action, not on my model, but on one that was close enough that it got me three quarters of the way through, so that I could figure out the rest on my own. The link Merle found is http://laptoprepair.ca/news/11449.html. What would we do without the Internet and the ability to search it?

The question in my mind, though, is why is there one model number on the bottom of the laptop and a different one that I entered in Quicken, probably from the box the laptop came in? Anyway, with the help of the Internet and Merle, I eventually extracted the hard drive in a way that the laptop could have been reassembled if that had been desired. And to make this

Hard Drive.....Continued on page 6

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Chronicling America - Library of Congress	http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/
USGS TNM 2.0 Viewer	http://viewer.nationalmap.gov/viewer/
Epocrates Online	https://online.epocrates.com
Ubuntu	http://www.ubuntu.com/



Hard Drive.....Continued from page 5

all complete, the data on the hard drive was intact and readable.

Above is a photo of the disassembled laptop displaying every component that was removed except the hard drive. The hard drive is shown at right connected to my Windows 7 desktop computer via a SATA hard drive dock on top of the case. That dock is a very handy feature for temporarily connecting hard drives to a computer.

With the laptop's hard drive connected this way, my desktop computer recognized it as just another local disk, and I easily copied the folders and files wanted to my desktop computer. I then copied them from my computer to my daughter's external USB drive. Eventually they will end up on whatever new computer she gets. And this will be the topic of another article in this newsletter. ◆



Microsoft Surface Pro

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

If you read the previous article, you know that my daughter's laptop died. What to get her for a replacement? She could use a tablet in her work, but a tablet is not a computer. A Surface Pro is definitely a computer, having a 3rd generation Intel i5 processor with Intel HD graphics, a 64 or 128 GB solid state drive along with a USB 3.0 port and a mini Display Port and running on Windows 8 Professional, but it has a slim profile and with its keyboard detached looks like a tablet. It also has a pen, with which you can write on its capacitive touch screen, and front-facing and rear-facing 720p HD cameras.

My son already had a 128 GB Surface Pro and was happy with it. So, we went with the same thing, purchasing it from the Microsoft kiosk right near the food court of International Mall in Tampa. One thing you note right away is that the Microsoft kiosk at International is a lot less busy than is the Apple store in the same mall. (There is a full-size Microsoft store in Orlando.) However, the Apple store has nothing like the Surface, and that is what we wanted.

In the photo below you can see the Surface Pro with its real keyboard in front of my 23-inch touch screen monitor for my Windows 8 desktop computer, and over on the right in front of my second monitor is my Windows Phone 8. That is an image that should make Microsoft happy.

The Surface is a bit pricey, but recall that it is a real computer that can function as a tablet and run tablet type apps. However, you can also run any program on it that you can run on Windows 7. Right now the only thing installed other than the tablet type apps that come with it for Weather, etc. is Microsoft Office 365 (also known as Office 2013).

Surface.....Continued on page 8



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First Class Mail

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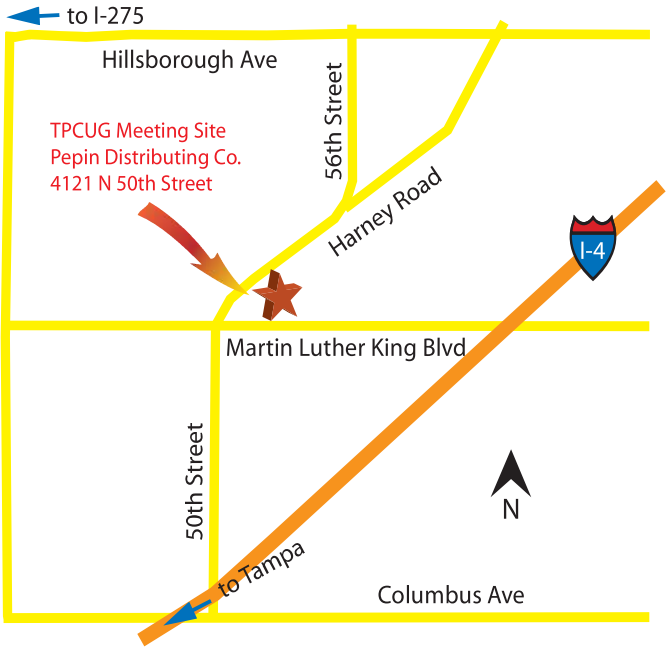
Surface.....Continued from page 7

If you have a student ID, Microsoft will give you a student discount of around $100 on the Surface Pro. Still the price is going to come in a bit over $1,000. Also, the Type Cover ($129) is much better than the slightly cheaper Touch Cover.

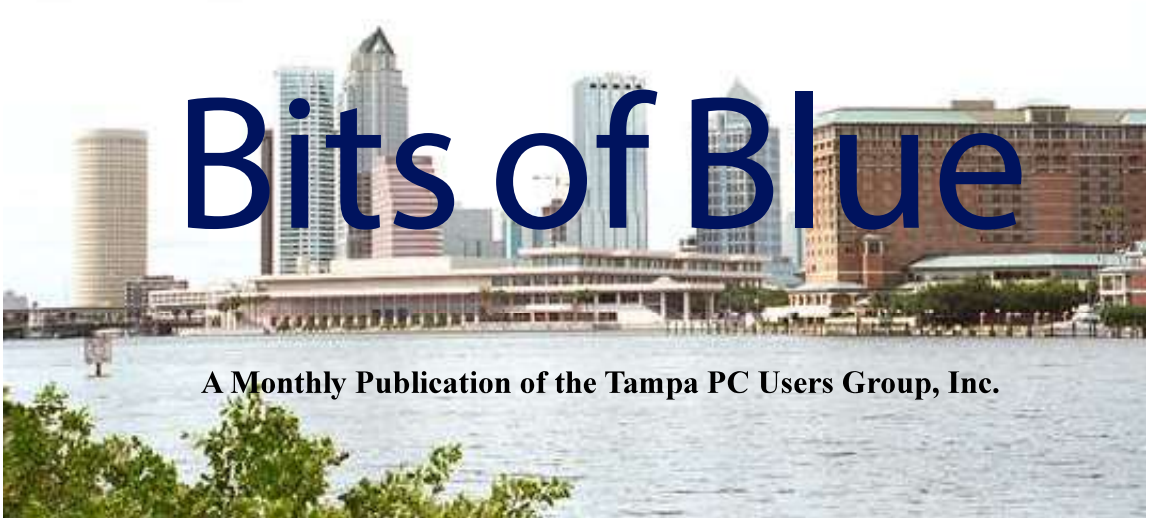
You may read about the Surface Pro at http://www.microsoft.com/Surface/en-US/surface-with-windows-8-pro/home.

I think it is quite possible that late this year in time for the holidays there will be a slightly improved and possibly less expensive version of the device available. .

◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 26 No. 7 July 2013

July in Tampa

Meeting

Merle Nicholson

on

GPS, Time and When You Are

Wednesday, July 10, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will present: "GPS, Time and When You Are, session two of 96, a lifetime spent on the edge of your chair." Bob Lafave will have the usual Windows Q & A for the first 30 minutes.

Editor's Comments: Windows 8.1

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com



Last month you had Merle Nicholson and Brian Lance to enjoy reading. This month it is just me. Last week I spent some time watching Microsoft Build 2013 that took place in San Francisco, so I will write about that. This was a collection of presentations for developers introducing the latest developments in Microsoft

Comments.....Continued on page 3

August Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Bob covered a wide variety of PC subjects, starting with a review of search providers. Then he demonstrated the setting that turns off the system restart and presents a bluescreen instead. This is a very desirable setting for everyone, as Windows Install defaults to Restart.

Bob then demonstrated Windows Download Center, and Knowledge Base and how to look up the KB (number) updates, as well as how to check updates for install errors. Bob then mentioned InTune, an update manager application, then EMET v4.0 Beta (Enhanced Mitigation Experience Toolkit). Bob conducted a very interesting and entertaining session with good group participation.

Blain Barton from Microsoft was again with us for the meeting presentation. Blain has been doing an annual presentation for us for several years and he's always entertaining and informative.

This session, Blain demonstrated Windows Azure, the cloud-based software service. This is a storage service but includes many valuable software packages that run on the user's behalf. He demonstrated creating an SQL database and also how easy it is to set up a WordPress web site. He did a quick starter website for us.

As always, interesting and informative. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

programs such as Windows 8, Azure (the Microsoft Cloud), Windows Phone, Bing and more. The 6,000 attendees (who either paid or their employer paid $2,000) were treated to three days of major and minor presentations and as a bonus given free items, such as a Microsoft Surface Pro and an Acer Iconia W3 Windows 8 tablet. They also were given some lesser items like 100 GB of storage on SkyDrive, a one-year subscription to Office 365 Home Premium and a one-year subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud. So the attendees got back most of their registration money in the form of gifts.

You can watch the Day One Keynote address at http://channel9.msdn.com/Events/Build/2013/1-001. Some of the highlights are:

- Windows 8.1 Preview now available
- Visual Studio 2013 Preview now available
- Two new Nokia phones, the 928 and the 925, thin and light with the best cameras on the market
- The Nokia 521 for third world markets at $150
- Also HTC 8XT and Samsung ATIV S Neo phones going to Sprint this summer
- Many new small and larger tablets, some combo type with detachable keyboards
- New small and larger laptops, all with touch screens
- Windows 8.1 will have built-in support for printing to 3D printers (if you can afford one)

Microsoft CEO Steve Balmer admitted that most of the first Win 8 devices did not have touch, but that will not be the case going forward. There is now a large collection of different Windows 8 touch tablets, laptops and combo devices. The small 8.1 inch Acer Iconia W3 Windows 8 tablet comes in at around $400. The Lenova Helix can go over $2,000 depending on RAM and hard drive size. And Dell has an all-in-one with a 27" screen, an i5 or i7 processor, up to 16 GB of RAM and a hard drive up to 2 TB, starting around $1,600.

Balmer paid particular attention to the Lenova Helix device with an all-day battery because it has a detachable keyboard with an additional battery. It weighs only 2 lbs., has an i7 processor, 8 GB RAM and a 180 GB solid state drive. "Is that a PC or a tablet," Balmer asks. It is not cheap. Have a look at http://shop.lenovo.com/us/en/tablets/thinkpad/thinkpad-helix/index.html/.

Win 8 has been out seven months and has 100,000 applications (seven of which are by William LaMartin). Additionally, you have the millions on regular Windows desktop applications.

He said that there were 800 updates to Win 8 coming in 8.1. Bing will be part of the operating system instead of just a search engine, whatever that means. You watch the video and see if you understand it. Free music streaming is built into Win 8, streaming what was a bit unclear to me – all songs or a select collection. When in the Win 8 app mode instead of the desktop mode, Snap (displaying two Windows Store apps on the same screen) is no longer constrained to the 1/3

Comments.....Continued on page 4



Comments.....Continued from page 3

- 2/3 part of the screen. You can now snap two applications to any ratio. In fact, you can now snap more than two applications. And the upgrade of Windows 8 to 8.1 will be free.

Now to the big thing, at least for some people. The Windows Start button is back. Here is how I understand that. You will be able to configure Win 8.1 to boot directly to the desktop (as seen in the previous image), not the Win Store apps Start screen. And once on the desktop, you can tap the small icon in the bottom left corner of the desktop to bring up a Start screen on top of the desktop. Based on what I saw, that results in a collection of tiles representing both Windows Store apps and desktop applications. You can also go further and have the Start screen display all applications sorted in different ways, alphabetically being one choice, as shown in the screen capture on this page. However, it is still not the same as what you had in Windows 7. I think the reason Microsoft will not go back to that is that it would be quite difficult to tap on those entries on a small screen with your finger. With a mouse, you could but not with your finger.



Personally, I am not going to jump in and install the 8.1 preview since I have Windows 8 on two computers, and I don't want to do anything that might cause problems for my current perfectly-functioning Windows 8. If I had been one of those attendees at Build 2013 in San Francisco and had thus been the recipient of a new Surface Pro tablet, then I might have installed 8.1 on that.

I learned many years back the dangers of installing trial software when I installed some beta version of Internet Explorer (probably as far back as IE 4) and it caused spell check to disappear from Outlook Express, which was my email program at the time. There was no way of fixing the problem until the final release of that version of Internet Explorer was available to install. And if anyone needs a spell checker, I do.

There is also a preview version of Visual Studio 2013 available, and I just might try that out since I don't believe it will cause any problems with my currently-installed Visual Studio 2012. As I understand it, VS 2012 and VS 2013 exist happily side-by-side on the same computer. However, I am going to do a full Acronis backup of my Windows 8 computer before installing Visual Studio 2013 Preview so that I can restore things if that is not the case. And it is time to do such a backup anyway. Have you backed up your computer – or at least your data files – recently?

A few extra items:

Recycling Staples will accept many computer items for recycling at their store: Desktop computers, laptops, monitors, printers, UPS battery backups and much more. Here is a link to their info: http://www.staples.com/sbd/cre/marketing/easy-on-the-planet/re-

Comments.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Apple 1 Computer

The Apple 1 computer above in working condition sold for $671,400 in May at an auction in Germany. You may read about the auction at http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/28/tech/gaming-gadgets/apple-computer-auction. I love the comment to the article at CNN that says: "Good old Apple fans. Still overpaying for dated products."

Comments.....Continued from page 4

cycling-and-eco-services.html. I have a defunct laptop from which I removed the hard drive and a defective UPS backup that I plan on dropping off. It seems a lot easier than getting in line for the Hillsborough County collections of such things.

Amazon link Don't forget to use the Amazon.com link on our website's main page to do your ordering at Amazon. It costs you nothing and the club gets approximately 4% of your purchase price. For your March purchases, we received $50.43. For your purchases in April, we received $24.24. Also, we receive no information about who made the purchase, only what was purchased, its price and our share. So think TPCUG.org before you go to Amazon.com. ◆

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Shorpy Historical Photo Archive	http://www.shorpy.com/
Wandering Wino (had to include for the name)	http://wandering-wino.com/
Display fusion	http://www.displayfusion.com/
UltraMon Download	http://www.realtimesoft.com/ultramon/download.asp



Old Tampa Photos

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I have been dealing with the Burgert Brothers photographs of the Tampa Bay area for many years. A lot of people use my two search methods at http://www.lamartin.com/burgert/index.htm, which the library is well aware of and quite happy with. I particularly like the version which requires Silverlight in the browser.

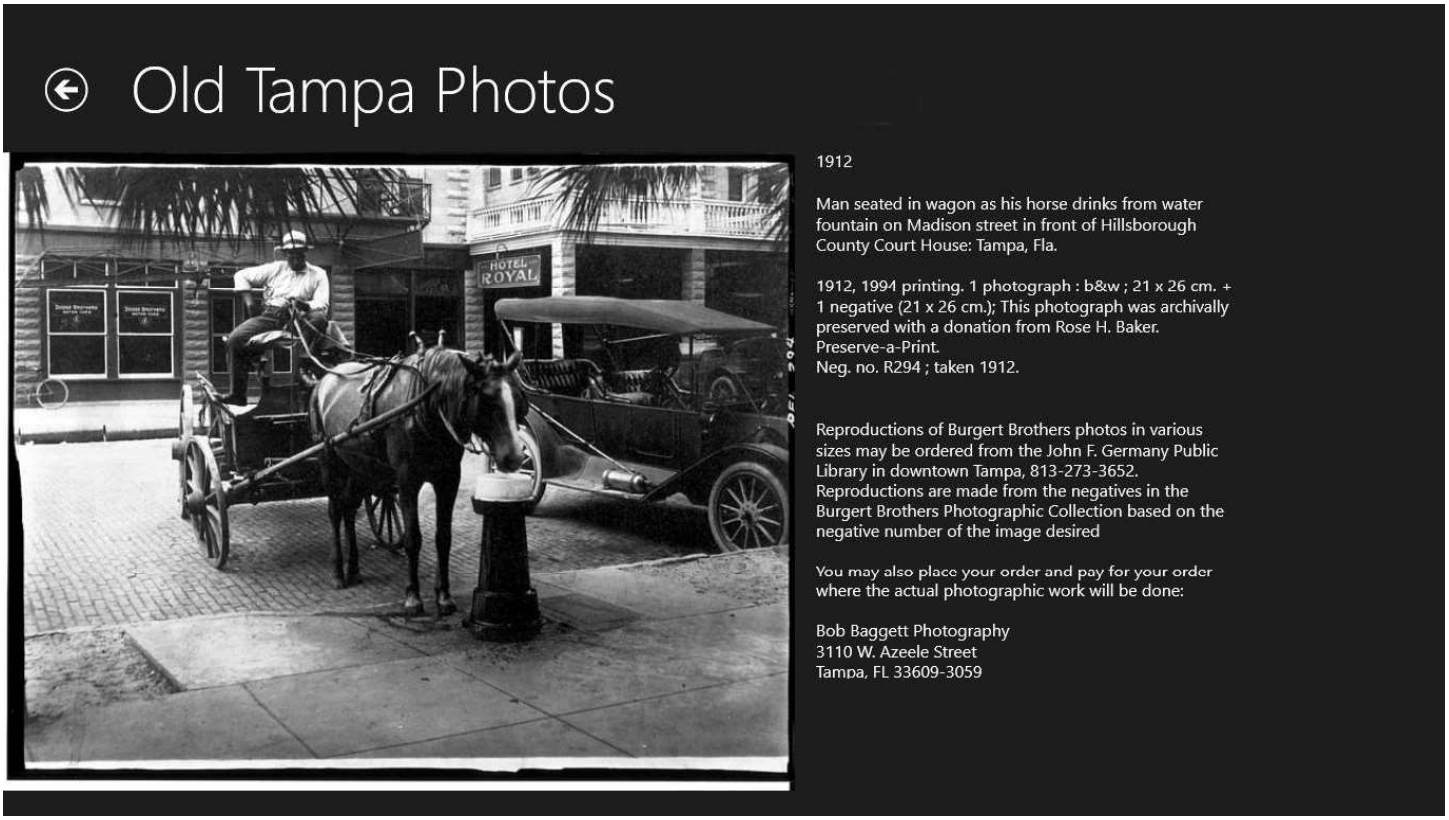
But now, according to Microsoft, we are moving away from such things and focusing on apps, so I have created an app that does that, as they say, named Old Tampa Photos. The link to the app is http://apps.microsoft.com/windows/en-us/app/old-tampa-photos/73777782-b140-41bd-acfe-0676ae1be3ee. If you go to that link, you will see seven screen captures of the app, considerably more than space here allows. And if you have Windows 8, you might also install it and take a tour of this area in a time that for the most part was before any us had arrived on the scene. I find the photos interesting and think that I have probably viewed all 14,000 plus of them over the years.

What you see above is the opening screen displaying the images in the collection dated before 1920. There are 625 of them, which you may view the thumbnails of as you scroll to the right. In the app, if you were to tap on the thumbnail in the lower right corner of the image displayed above, you would bring up a page with a larger image and information about the image as seen in the screen capture on the next page. That photo is from 1912. I don't think there are any water fountains for horses left in downtown Tampa.

The screen capture below the latter one shows the Windows 8 Share charm being displayed, which allows one to send an email to someone with the photo and its accompanying information.

Windows 8 also has a Search charm, which, when invoked in this app, will allow you to search the entire Burgert collection for a single word or phrase. As an example, a search for "hurricane" will display 34 images. A search for computer will display zero. However, one for "IBM" or "International Business Machines" will yield several. There is also another Windows 8 charm, the Devices charm. Bringing that

Burgert.....Continued on page 7





Burgert.....Continued from page 7

up will allow you to print the photo in question to your local printer. Since most of the images are no more than 750 pixels wide, the image produced will not be of top quality or size. If you should want a very high quality and even a very large reproduction of the photo, you will want to follow the instructions

Burgert.....Continued on page 8

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Burgert.....Continued from page 7

provided with each photo to contact the library or their assigned photo studio to have that reproduction made for you.

There is one last feature of the app, a slide show. Pick the time period in which you are interested and simply move through the images using your finger (on a touch monitor) or the mouse. If you wish to skip ahead, there is a slider that allows you to do that. And, as before, if you find one you would like to share, bring up the Share charm and send it to a friend.

I don't expect this app to have much appeal outside this part of Florida. However, I suspect that more people will be interested in it than in the Computer Group Newsletters app covered in last month's newsletter comments; that app featured all the TPCUG newsletters, and the Windows Phone version is now published at http://www.windowsphone.com/en-us/store/app/computer-newsletters/dd35c8f2-8d5e-4c5b-84de-e24d1204f2ac. I am also curious to see if Old Tampa Photos increases the requests to the library for reprints of the images. I will check with Bob Baggett Photography in a few months on that. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 26 No. 8 August 2013



August in Tampa

Meeting

Blain Barton

on

Windows Azure Backup

Wednesday, August 14, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Blain Barton of Microsoft will be our speaker, and his topic will be Windows Azure Backup Bob Lafave will have the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Merle Nicholson and Brian Lance have come through for us again with interesting articles. Otherwise, you would have been left with my ramblings. Those would probably have been about my newest Windows Store application, Drug Data, where I provide easily accessible information about the drugs in the FDA's list of prescription and nonprescription drugs.

Then there is the site I discovered with old newspapers. A number of years back I found a Google site for searching old newspapers and retrieved quite a few articles about the land boom of the 1920s in my home town area of south Florida. But for some reason Google disbanded the site, as they are wont to do with some of their projects. The articles I collected are at http://www.lamartin.com/OldNewspaperArticles.aspx.

The new site I have found, http://www.genealogybank.com, is not free, but has, I think, a much wider selection of papers

Comments.....Continued on page 2

September Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Bob covered a wide variety of PC subjects.

This month the program was presented by myself, Merle Nicholson. It was a continuation of the April 10 meeting where I started a discussion of GPS, the use of time to determine a person's longitude on the planet. This month I expanded the notion of time zones, and how to determine where you are in the time zone, some history of timekeeping. Also throwing in some examples of timepieces, American space travel and animal training.

Our gratitude is extended to Pepin for providing the room, projector and the presentation materials for the meeting. There were no announcements made due to president John Witmer's absence. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

than did the Google archive. Importantly to me in my searching, it has the *Miami Herald*, the *Tampa Tribune*, the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* and the Baton Rouge *Advocate*. And the dates covered go quite far back, in some cases, from the 1800s up to the 1980s. The site has all *Tampa Tribune* issues, I think, from 1895 to 1959. The *Times-Picayune* runs from 1837 through 1988.

All of this is a phenomenal resource, and it is at your fingertips for $70/year. I think there is also a free trial offer. ◆

Building a Portable Office

By Brian Lance, Tampa PC Users Group
master.pc.tech@gmail.com

Have a spare USB drive? Of course you do. Even a 2GB drive can be a useful tool if you ever need to run a program on another computer. This simple guide can show you how. The first place to start is one of the most popular sites for portable applications:

www.portableapps.com The PortableApps platform can get you a fine list of portable applications. You can select all the programs you want upon installation, or add/remove at any time. I list the programs' home pages so you can check what you might want and get more info about them.

www.winpenpack.com Gives three pre-selected lists of applications to install portably.

www.portablefreeware.com Another, more extensive list of portable applications. Portablefreeware even has a complete list of Program Launchers for launching your own list of applications.

There can be the temptation to install every application you find. I don't recommend this. Your list should have two or three of any one type, at most. You'll want your menus simple so you can quickly find just the application you need and get to work.

Some of the more useful applications I've used:

TrueCrypt, www.truecrypt.org In my opinion, the best encryption software available. Its many advantages include open source code, speed optimizations, portability, hidden volume and even hidden operating system capabilities. You can use files or executables from an encrypted volume with almost no lag on modern systems, and the volumes can be located on any writable device.

There is some learning curve to proper use of encryption software, and the site has solid direction on this. It's very important to get an idea of how large a storage area you will need per volume ahead of time, I recommend no more than half of the drive or partition the volume will be stored on. Dynamic ("sparse") volumes that grow as you use them are not recommended.

KeePass, www.keepass.info For password storage (vs. file storage), I recommend KeePass. Also a very solid, open source program. It was recently updated with browser integration and many other improvements.

IrfanView, www.irfanview.com "...one of the most popular viewers worldwide!" There is no doubt about this! Very easy to use, just jump right in and browse a list of your favorite images. Offers many options for file-handling and thumbnail-previewing. Supports dozens of formats. Note there is a separate plug-ins pack if you need the more esoteric camera formats. If you have different types of non-image files in the same folders, I recommend you disable Irfan from previewing audio/video formats. Use MPC for those.

MPC-HC (formerly Media Player Classic), www.mpc-hc.org For all your video and audio needs. Plays back all major formats and will run on anything built in the last decade.

Greenshot, www.getgreenshot.org Better than many commercial programs for screen shots, I found new features while researching this article.

AbiWord, **OpenOffice**, http://abisource.com/ and http://www.openoffice.org Both useful, but keep in mind that if you import MS Office documents, the format may change on import even if you just enter data into a form. This is especially true for office documents edited in Google Drive.

So, jump on the Microsoft bandwagon, get a Live address at **www.live.com** and edit Word like a pro. One useful Live feature is the ability to log in with a one-time password sent to your cell, avoiding the need to expose your password while on an unknown network or device.

Your own browser can be one of the most useful items

Portable.....Continued on page 8

Random Computer Ramblings

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I'll summarize my ramblings first, and you can use them to decide if you want to read further:

Windows 8 and Touchscreens
Windows 8.1 Preview
Multi-Tasking – the computer kind
A new notebook checklist
Notes on Operating Systems

Windows 8 and Touchscreens
I know, you have heard this before from me, probably monthly. There are many, many new computers on the market without touchscreens. Virtually all have Windows 8. This is a big mistake. I had a call from a friend who bought a new Acer notebook in Indianapolis and had to return it. She said she "hated Windows 8," and "hated Acer notebooks." Well, yeah. No touchscreen. She trusted Microsoft, Office Depot and Acer to sell her a functional notebook and found that they have violated her trust. I've noticed even Office Depot, whom I generally trust, is listing some of their notebook models as having "Windows." Not Windows 7 or Windows 8. That's deceptive. Yes, you can run Windows 8 with a mouse only, but it's so much trouble you'll be looking for a solution. There are free good quality products out there designed to make Windows 8 operate like Windows 7, but it's some work and a lot of experimentation. You'll be looking for an experienced friend to help you. I have done it, I think, pretty satisfactorily, but it was a lot of work and research.

You can order new computers online with Windows 7 for some time to come – directly from the manufacturers. They are usually "Business Computers" or "Home/office". This is because the corporate world is not about to switch to Windows 8 for many years. They have just barely transitioned from XP to Windows 7.

An alternative is to install Windows 7 over the Windows 8 operating system. This is generally a $140 "downgrade," but there's a lot of technical work to be done if you have the ability. The Windows 8 Pro version license can be converted to Windows 7 Pro version at no cost. But you cannot upgrade a Windows 8 Home version to Windows 8 Pro to make that work. Personally, I would not hesitate to downgrade, but first you must find out if all necessary hardware-specific drivers are available from the manufacturer's website and download them.

Last, there are always people speculating that Microsoft will "fix" Windows 8. But I think most professional industry writers are saying that it won't happen. They may make some improvements over time, but they will stick to the current theme. I think they see themselves as social innovators and are willing to bet that computers will follow the trend of tablets and go to touch and also that users are interested in running only one program at a time. At the same time, their Microsoft Phone, Microsoft Surface and Surface RT devices are just not selling well. Microsoft has the resources to stick it out, and probably will.

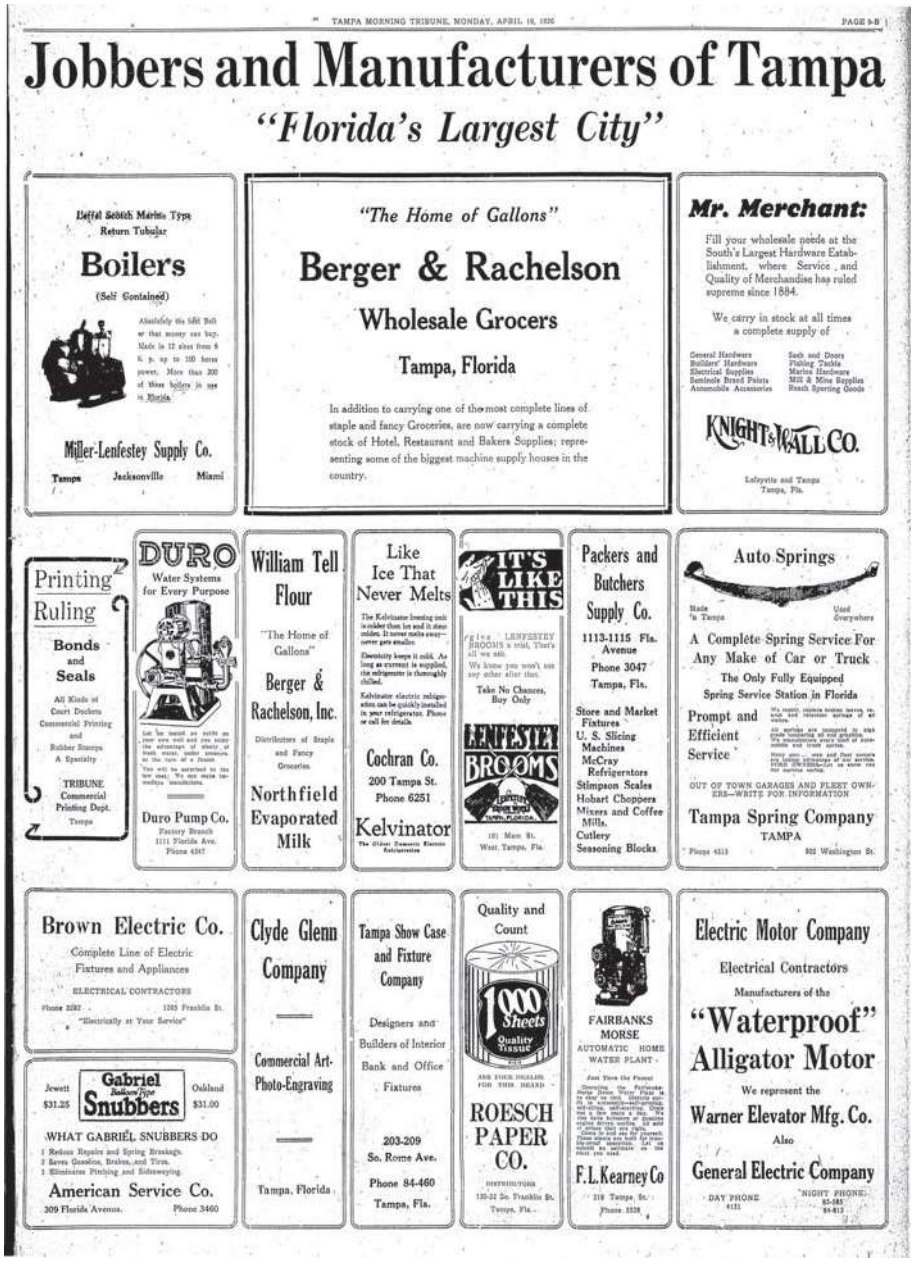
Windows 8.1 Preview
If you have Windows 8, you'll want to install 8.1 when it comes out, NOT the 8.1 preview. There are some good reviews out there to read in advance. If you're hoping for a return of the menu system though, it isn't going to happen. There are some important changes like allowing you to window four running applications on each screen at a time, sizeable. The current Version 8 is limited to two apps and is not sizeable. There is a new option to boot to the desktop, but the menu is still the "modern" tile screen. That screen has some real improvements in organization, but if you're like me, you will find it wanting.

Multi-Tasking of the computer kind
It's a popular idea now that a person can claim to be multi-tasking, and of course it's completely delusional if you give it some serious thought. If a human brain can multi-task there wouldn't be vehicle collisions while using a cellphone, or stubbing your toe on the table leg. It isn't lack of attention, it's just more things than you can process. The human brain can, however, TASK-SWITCH fairly well. That is – when the demand appears (an "interrupt" in computer terms), the brain can put the current task aside and switch to one being held in near-term memory. Like remembering to put gas in the car while putting on your pants to go to work. Or watching tennis while writing a newsletter article.

It is interesting, though, that there is a set of redundant pathways from your eye receptors to your brain. The more primitive pathway bypasses that part of the brain that processes images and instead provides a survival alarm. Every driver has been amazed that he had the ability to slam on the brakes to just avoid a collision at the same time knowing his eyes (and his brain) were focused elsewhere.

Random.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



TAMPA MORNING TRIBUNE, MONDAY, APRIL 19, 1926 PAGE 9-B

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Tampa Morning Tribune, April 19, 1926, Page 9B

From the newspaper archive at http://www.genealogybank.com.

Random.....Continued from page 4

It wasn't luck and it wasn't experience. It is a primitive physical survival ability. In computer terms, it's task-switching.

A computer has hundreds of processes going on simultaneously. You can find out how many in Windows Task Manager. Look at the number of "threads." A thread is a part of a process, and each is independent. A process can have one or hundreds of threads. A process typically launches threads and allows each either to complete independently or to wait until each is finished because it needs to aggregate the results of many threads. Multi-threaded applications are written so that the operating system decides what processor runs each thread so that the threads can be run simultaneously on several processors.

So if you have one processor in your computer's CPU, it has to do a lot of task-switching because it does only one thing at a time, very fast. Each Task, Process and Thread is held in memory and is serviced in its turn. Obviously if you have more than one processor in your CPU, it can, overall, complete more threads simultaneously. That's mostly true. So if you're comparing computers you would conclude that a quad-core computer is better than a dual-core (probably, maybe), and an Octal-core is better than a Hex-core (possibly, probably not). And an Intel i7 is better than an Intel i5 (probably not). So here's the CPU skinny according

Random.....Continued on page 6

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida Memory - Collections	http://www.floridamemory.com/collections/
North American Birds Photo Gallery	http://www.birdphotography.com/
Software Protection Initiative	http://www.spi.dod.mil/lipose.htm
GenealogyBank.com	http://www.genealogybank.com

Random.....Continued from page 5

to Merle.

A dual-core or quad-core processor is about right for most everyone. A single-core CPU may be disappointing because it has to do a few hundred tasks (like antivirus and firewall) while simultaneously paying attention to your needs. Let's throw the single-core processor out.

There are a lot of new computers out there with old processor technology, and those are to be avoided. Specifically Pentium, Duo Core, Core 2 Duo, Athlon, Athlon II, Sempron, Celeron should not be on the market at all, but they are.

An Intel i7, by the way, demands a price premium because it's "hyperthread" capable. A hyperthread in this case means that each processor can do two threads at the same time. So if you have a quad-core i7, look at the Task Manager performance tab and you'll see eight "CPUs." For the most part, as you monitor it, whenever anything significant happens on your computer, you'll see that most of the processors are idle. Worse, if you have an intensive application like Access you'll see only one of the eight processors servicing that demand and the remainder will be idle. This is because Access, like most applications, is "single threaded." So trying to get the maximum performance out of a quad-core i7 CPU, you'll be disappointed to learn that you're restricted to one-eighth of the CPU. That's 12.5%. Yes, antivirus and firewall, keyboard, display and USB devices; all that are running, taking another 4%. In my opinion, skip the i7 and get an i5, save the money. What's more, unless you have software that demands multi-threading (high-end graphics rendering, motion picture processing), let's throw out hex and eight-core processors. I was surprised to find out that AutoCad, a very expensive, high-end 3D complex drawing program that has no peer, costs thousands, is single threaded. I disabled hyperthreading on that client's computer. I'm now expecting my client's AutoCad to use 25% of the computer instead of 12.5%.

Don't be afraid of AMD processors. The "A" series, A4, A6, A8 and A10 all have the GPU (graphics processor) built in (as do Intel I3 and i5), integrated in the CPU – called APU. AMD's APUs though, have superior graphics. In general, if you're looking at notebooks, the Intel processors have better (lower) power requirements, and AMD's better graphics. That's not to say AMD's APUs are especially bad, power usage wise, unless a notebook's battery life is important to you.

When you're considering a computer, get the CPU model number from the specifications and look it up on the Internet. I use a website called Passmark Benchmark. http://www.cpubenchmark.net/ . It gives you a relative performance number (Passmark) and gives you a cost/performance graph and a comparison to currently popular CPUs. For a notebook computer with normal low demand (Internet, word processing, email) and no need for demanding graphics (games), look for a CPU with two or four processors and an operating frequency of 2.2GHz and higher, not less than 1.8GHz. For Intel that will be an i3 or i5. A desktop processor is different. You can get more processing power for less money. Look for a quad processor with at least 2.5GHz, and compare to those with 3.2GHz. You may find more power for very little extra cost. Why is there a difference between Desktop and Notebook processors? CPU cooling and battery drain. Notebooks are a necessary compromise especially in cooling systems, so they tend to have lower power CPUs. Less cooling and less battery demand.

You have to be careful in comparing benchmark numbers. Usually sites like CNET Reviews will do a series of different benchmarks that may or may be relevant to your own usage. So pick and choose the performance benchmark that aligns to your own usage. The Passmark mentioned above is a good indicator of relative total power. But that benchmark powers all available processors 100% at the same time. This never happens in real life. I use these numbers to determine cost to performance. To decide if the cost of a processor is worth the money or not.

Buying a new notebook – a checklist

If you're in the market for a new notebook and want to make the right selection, you have some real work ahead of you. I hope the checklist I use will be some help to you. In any case, when you have a candidate, be sure to get on the Internet and read all reviews available for that model. Read both the professional reviews and the actual purchaser reviews. I use mostly CNET professional reviews and then the user reviews on Amazon and NewEgg. If there are some low-rated user reviews, be sure to read those. You may find out that it's rated low because it did not meet the user's expectations for delivery or something that does not pertain to you. On the other hand, low ratings sometimes make you consider something important that had not occurred to you.

Here – in my opinion –is the only way to make a well-considered decision when you're buying a new notebook computer. The ORDER of decisions is very important

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because it will save you time.

1) Operating system Choices are - Windows 8, Windows 7, OSX (Apple), ChromeBook and Linux (Ubuntu and Chromium OS). Windows 8 REQUIRES a touchscreen. Chromebook is a very viable option because of its low cost and low power requirements.

2) Screen size 11, 13, 14, 15.3, 16 (rare) and 17 sizes are normal. The screen size is very important. It's a deciding factor in portability, weight and battery life. You should go to a store like Best Buy, ignore the prices and brands and look only at screen size, try out each one and make this decision number 2.

3) Battery rundown time This is at the top because it's so closely tied to the screen size. Generally, the smaller the size, the longer the battery run time. This is because the screen is the biggest power consumer. If it never leaves the desktop or is always near a plug, the decision is easier. Look at the specs on all notebooks under consideration and go to professional reviews.

4) Hard drive Choices are – SSD, SSD/HD combo, Hybrid and HD. Fortunately, traditional mechanical drives are becoming rare except in the cheapest notebooks. SSDs are affordable, especially in the small 128/256GB size. Hybrid SSD/Disk are common now as is the SSD and HD combination that Intel is building into Intel chipsets. Make SURE you know what your actual hard drive size requirements are. It's probably much lower than you think. The Windows 7 notebook computer I'm typing on now uses 53GB out of 119GB SSD total. Obviously I wouldn't spend a dime on a 500GB hard drive. The consumer of hard drive space is music and videos and game software. I have no need for storing videos, and my whole collection of music CD's will fit on a 4G flashdrive. Consider flashdrives. You will never regret buying an SSD system.

5) Features:

Bluetooth There is NO excuse for building a computer with no Bluetooth. It's cheap and makes connections to your phone, cameras, speakers, headsets and remote controls. Yet you'll see many on the market without.

Backlit keyboard This is a very valuable feature unless you're an accomplished touch typist. If you need to watch your fingers, you'll love backlit keys.

Camera Skype & Google hangouts.

Fingerprint reader This technology seems to be not fully developed yet. I've never heard anyone say "I LOVE my fingerprint reader."

CD/DVD/BD This is becoming less common. My current notebook has none, and I haven't missed it one bit. I still have my household network and flashdrives. But I don't play games and I don't play DVD movies. I did (Once) make an ISO file of a software DVD and put it on a flash drive.

USB 3 The combination of a USB 3 port and a USB 3-speed flashdrive is just amazing. It's faster than a mechanical hard drive and an order of magnitude faster than USB 2.

USB ports I look for at least one USB port on the right hand edge for a USB mouse. My personal preference would be three total including at least one USB 3. The thinner, lighter notebooks may not have three.

SD card port With WiFi and Bluetooth available for camera and phone connections, I've lost interest in card ports. For your particular camera it may be a necessity. But don't forget $8 USB adapters.

Notes on Operating Systems

By that I mean Windows, MAC or Chromebook. This decision is pretty much independent of the hardware. It's based though on your personal experience with the kind of software you use. If you find you're doing Internet browser, email, IM and word processing, you may want to consider Chromebook for its simplicity and low cost. If you have specific applications in Windows right now, the decision is already made.

I have a relative who became entranced with a MacBook Air, an expensive, beautifully made slim notebook. He took the salesperson's word that his Windows-only case management software will run just fine, and two years later it still would not work and he finally gave it up. He had better than $2,000 in it by then. A seriously technical person probably could have managed it. The upshot of this was that he had to own two notebooks. This is a good example of a compromise computer that uses a very weak processor because of the room for a CPU cooling system and limited battery space. The battery is actually glued in place and is not owner serviceable. But it's a gorgeous little computer.

Once the OS is selected, and if that OS is Windows, and it is for 91% of all computer users, then you have to decide if it's Windows 7 or Windows 8. ◆

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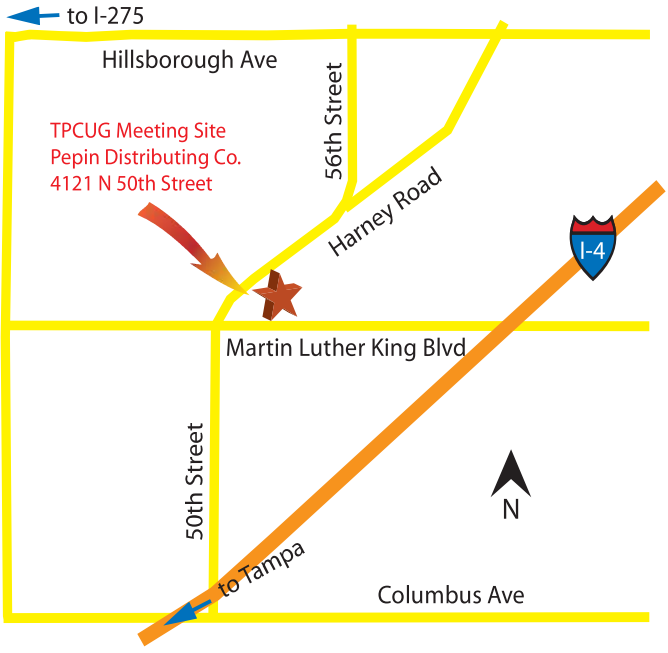
Portable.....Continued from page 3

to take on the road with you, with your own bookmarks, preferences, and saved passwords.

Chrome, Firefox, Opera - whichever browser you like, all portable. There are also more minor variants that are portable, but I recommend you use major recognized ones. Many, but not all of these have been tested under Windows 8.

I recommend grabbing a **Program Launcher** and just having fun with it. Try it out on your own PCs first. I think you'll find many uses for these utilities, some being lighter and more configurable than their standard installed, licensed counterparts.

One last note: The launchers and many of the utilities are open source projects and can certainly use any financial help you care to give. ◆



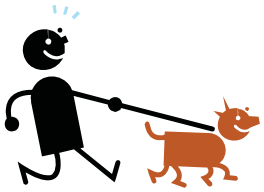
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Vol. 26 No. 9 September 2013



September in Tampa

Meeting

William LaMartin

on

More Windows 8

Wednesday, September 11, 2013

6:30 PM

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Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will cover the latest in Windows 8 and his applications. Bob Lafave will have the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg for providing articles this month, but they came short of filling the newsletter, so I suppose I will have to write something. Merle sometimes writes quite long articles, but we can't expect that on a regular basis.

Since no outside speakers were found this month despite the best efforts of Doug Mullis, our program coordinator, I volunteered to talk on Windows 8 and the applications I have written for it. I gave a similar talk to the group in November of 2012. I know a lot more about Windows 8 now than I did then and have more applications, and, besides, you have probably forgotten what I said then anyway.

Windows 8 has turned out to be a controversial operating system with many detractors and few supporters in the computing press. Let me declare myself to be a supporter, but one who understands much of why there are so many detractors.

When I learned I was to do this presentation, I thought there was a good chance that Windows 8.1, the reworked version of Windows 8, would be available to me. But that is not the case. There is a Beta

Comments.....Continued on page 2

October Meeting: Steve Singer on new hardware

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the August Meeting

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Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Bob covered a wide variety of PC subjects and handled member questions, IE not playing video and ActiveX filtering in IE Tools and compatibility mode. Ransomware and NSA phone monitoring were discussed as well.

This month's program was presented by Microsoft's Blain Barton. Blain is continuing his presentation of Microsoft Azure. The subjects were very wide ranging: Azure recovery services, Certificates, private and public. A private certificate in this case is a pairing of you and Azure and a public certificate is you, Azure and the Internet. Backup Vault was shown. Blain went into "Blain Barton Blogs" using certificate. For Backup there are menu items: Server backup and local backup to server, register server and schedule the backup. There is an Azure simple store for simple file storage.

His advice, when starting up your new account, be sure to create the storage using a friendly name yourself first. It apparently cannot be corrected after storing a file. Blain then showed us Windows Azure Backup, creating a new website and creating a WordPress website. Blain is an entertaining and informative speaker. Our thanks to Blain for a very good presentation.

Our gratitude goes to Pepin Distributors, Inc. for providing the meeting room, projector, coffee and water for the meeting. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

version of Windows 8.1 out there, but not the final release to manufacturing version (RTM) that I would feel comfortable in installing. The RTM version has been given to the hardware makers but not to developers such as myself, unlike when previous new versions of an operating system were made available. So the developers will have to wait until sometime in October just like the general public. But the original release of Windows 8 that I have will prove quite sufficient for me to explain the operating system to you, pointing out why so many tech writers hate it and why I and other users don't really have a problem with it. ◆

Preserve Those Vital Contacts

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Those of us who are serious computer users well know the necessity and value of adequate backups. Some of the most common, valuable and essential data we have is our Email Address Book or Contact List.

I often assist others who have malfunctions or other computer problems. Far too many do not have adequate backups. Most do not even know how to backup properly.

Regardless of the complete backups you may have, I recommend that everyone keep a separate backup copy of their contacts by exporting them to a .csv file. However, Microsoft has not provided any way to export email contact Groups (categories). If you export all contacts, Groups are always lost.

Recently, I aided someone whose Vista system was completely dead without any power. Due to the age and quality of the system, over 5 years and only a basic model, they decided to purchase a new computer (iMac) rather than repair the source of the problem, which was probably the power supply. Their backup included only a few personal documents on a flash drive.

I removed the hard drive and was able to reclaim all of their data and photos using my Sabrent USB to SATA/IDE Hard Drive Adapter. I recovered a Contacts file containing email addresses wherein each record has the .contact extension.

A file with the .contact file extension is a Windows Vista or Windows 7 Contact file. These files are not readily utilized by other programs. Unless you have the same program on the new systems as the old (e.g. Vista to Vista or to Windows 7) or you use Windows Easy Transfer Wizard or an equivalent, .contact records are useless. How these were translated is described later in this article.

Of many available formats, the standard for transferring address files or contacts in all email programs is universally to import .csv. Restoring even from the best of backups to a different email program or operating system may present problems if you do not have a copy of your file in .csv format.

It should be noted that online programs like Outlook (Hotmail), Gmail, Yahoo, etc. may also have copies of your addresses which could be recovered only if the addresses have been properly transferred in.

Here is how I made the recovered file of contacts usable in any email program by using Windows Live Mail, without purchasing a third party converter.

1. Save your personal original contacts by exporting to a .csv file.
2. a. Delete all contacts in your Windows Live Mail (must be online to Hotmail online account).
   b. Highlight the first record of the .contacts file and press shift and highlight the last record.
   c. This will select all. Use the delete option from top or by right click. This removes all existing records.
3. Check the properties of the folder containing new contact records for number of records.
4. Open that folder containing the .contact records
5. Highlight the first record, press shift and highlight the last record. This will select all.
6. a. Use Open With command to open Windows Live Mail.
   b. A box will appear with one record. Click OK and box will appear for next record
7. Add one click for each record and the result will be a complete new file with the correct number of records.
8. When complete, export this new file in .csv format.
9. Delete this new file retaining the exported file.
10. Import to reinstall your original saved contacts.

The exported file is now available for any email program. ◆

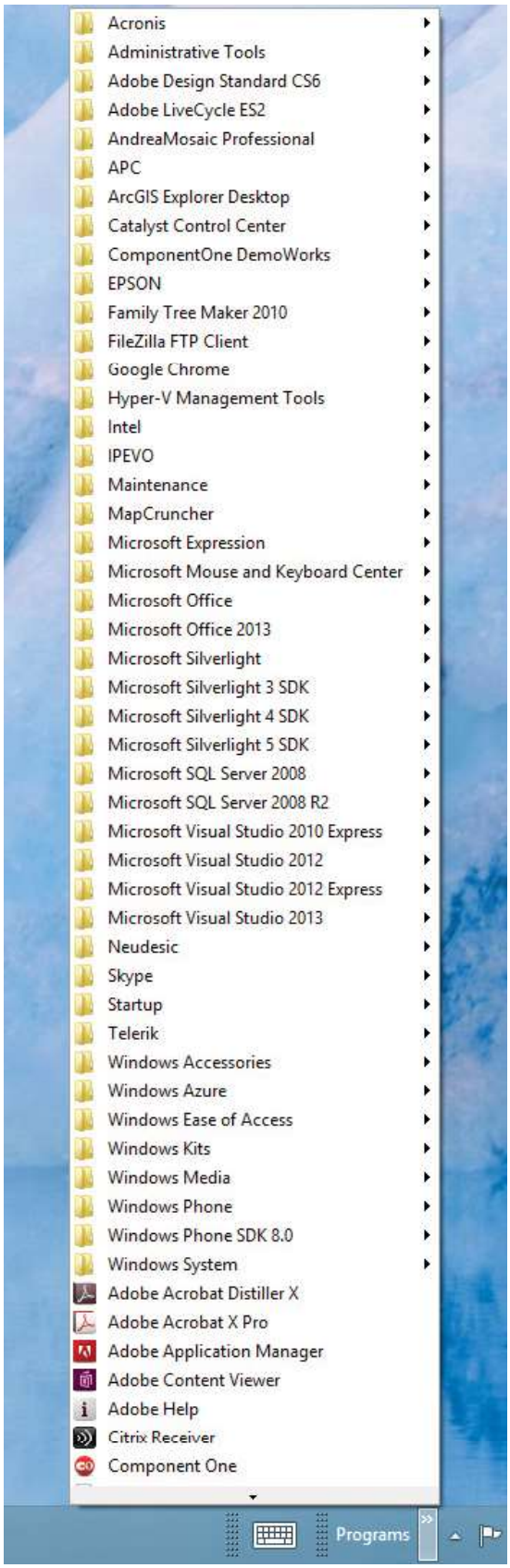
Windows 8 Is Not That Bad

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I have written about Windows 8 in previous editions of this newsletter. Even though I had not used it, I also wrote about Windows 8.1 in the July 2013 newsletter based on what I had viewed online of the presentations regarding it at Microsoft Build. And there have been various Windows 8 items inside other articles going back into 2012. Since you will be hard pressed to find another positive article on Windows 8 (or Microsoft for that matter), let me have a try at it.

First off, you should realize that professional writers have to write something to make a living – even if they don't really have a firm grasp on the subject at hand. I think that is why there are so many negative articles out there about Windows 8. They take a quick tour of Windows 8, they read other negative articles that resulted from a quick tour, and then they produce their variation on the "Why Windows 8 is a Disaster" theme.

I have used Windows 8 since it first came out, first on my main laptop in a Virtual Machine setup, then in a much better dual boot setup. The laptop does not have a touch screen. I also had Merle Nicholson build me a new desktop computer with a touch screen monitor specifically for Windows 8. I use both my Windows 7 desktop and Windows 8 desktop computer almost every day. I have essentially every program of importance to me that is installed on my Windows 7 desktop computer also installed on my Windows 8 desktop computer. I do not find it any more difficult to use Microsoft Word, Excel or Access in Windows 8 than in Windows 7. The same is true for all my Adobe products: Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Acrobat. And I could go down the list of Windows Desktop programs that are installed on both my desktop computers. But there is no need. To the right is a screen capture of the program list on my Windows 8 desktop computer. Looks like a pretty good Start Button-produced list to me, the Start Button being that small rectangle at the bottom to the right of "Programs." It is nothing other than an added Toolbar. Such a Toolbar is easily added, and if that is not enough for you there are all sorts of other ways to add a Start Button for Windows 8 out there. Merle has written about them in previous newsletters.



So what is the problem with Windows 8? I think that fact that

Windows.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



The new San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge

From http://www.flickr.com and the photostream of Wayne Tilock, where there are some beautiful photos, http://www.flickr.com/photos/42105057@N02/with/9607125817/

Windows.....Continued from page 4

it is really two operating systems in one. What I have just shown a Start Button list for is the Desktop part which, I believe, is essentially Windows 7. It is where you go to run the traditional Windows Desktop applications like Word, Excel, Photoshop, Quicken and Family Tree Maker. This is not the app world. It is the world for what we call programs. And most programs there still function better with a mouse and keyboard and have no real need for touch. Of course, you can use touch to manipulate them. It may just be difficult sometimes if the thing you want to touch is not all that large.

Windows.....Continued on page 6

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
The Official Microsoft Blog	http://blogs.technet.com/b/microsoft_blog/
The Next Web (Technology News)	http://thenextweb.com/
Nixon White House Tapes Collection	http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/forresearchers/find/tapes/collections.php

Windows.....Continued from page 5

Then there is the other part of the operating system – the app world, or whatever you want to call it. It is the world of colorful tiles that you are supposed to touch with your fingers and which when touched will start a program that does something just as a traditional Windows program would do; however, all aspects of the program can be manipulated by touch. In reality these apps are more appropriate to a tablet situation than a desktop computer or even a laptop with only a keyboard. Think playing games, browsing the web and doing simple email. I cannot imagine composing this newsletter in a Windows Store application (that is what programs than run in the tiled part of Windows 8 are called at present, or simply apps). Or doing anything serious with Excel or even Word.

So, what is so hard about all this. You start up your new Windows 8 device, and you are presented with a Start Screen of tiles representing many of the apps or programs on your device. And to the lower left is a tile that when tapped will bring up the standard Windows desktop (without the beloved Start Button). On the Start Screen, by the appropriate finger gesture, you may also display smaller tiles in alphabetical order for all the apps on your device - including any Windows desktop programs. Apparently in Windows 8.1 this is all going to be made easier. However, from what I have read no one thinks it will be easy enough, and nothing will suffice until Microsoft gives us back our Start Button.

Well, I have news for you. I don't think you are going to see a Start Button any more than you are going to see a DOS prompt when your computer boots. Times change, and if a company does not adapt, they may be left behind. In recent years, Blackberry failed to notice that smart phone users preferred a touch screen phone to one with a keyboard. Blackberry, once the most popular such phone is now an also ran. Going further back, the number one word processing program, WordPerfect, was slow to move from a DOS version to a Windows version. They subsequently essentially disappeared. Microsoft does not have to worry about disappearing from its enterprise products like SQLServer and Azure, but for its consumer products like Windows on desktop computers, where are they if people continue to migrate to tablets such as the iPad, not using Windows to do their email, web browsing and social media? That is why they need a tablet-oriented operating system. And, fortunately or unfortunately, they chose to offer it in conjunction with a new version of their desktop operating system. Having said what I have, I will concede that Microsoft probably should have made a built-in way for people who cannot tolerate too much change to have a Microsoft-supplied Start Button. I earlier displayed one I made for the Windows desktop programs, but I think the desire is for one that would have both desktop programs and the new apps in one vertical popup list – not the alphabetical collection of small tiles as now exists.

There is also a method in the supposed madness for a tiled interface for everything except the traditional desktop applications. It is to have a standard interface across three types of devices: Windows phones, Windows tablets and Window 8 on a desktop computer (the tiled Windows Store part - not the standard desktop applications part). With this common interface, the programmer can write code that will work on all three platforms by creating something called a Portable Class Library. That does not mean that the programmer can write a Windows Phone app and immediately turn it into an app for a Windows tablet, but it does mean that he or she may create a block of code that does something in a phone application that is easily reused in a Windows tablet or Windows store application by simply importing the code library (DLL) that contains that code. It can be a great time saver.

In summation, I suggest that change is often difficult. I recall many years ago the difficulty for myself in changing from programming in Basic to programming in Visual Basic, then the change to also programming in Delphi, since the syntax was so different. Then I made the change to Visual Basic.Net and finally to C#.Net. All of these changes required an adjustment but all had rewards.

But we must change. Or we would still be using DOS without even a mouse. Of course, there are people who would be completely happy with that. ◆

ChromeCast by Google

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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ChromeCast by Google is a little device that allows you to play Netflix video streaming, YouTube and "Google Play Movies" on your TV. It must use a remote control device; there are no on-screen controls. That remote device, however, is a PC, Phone or Tablet.

The list of video sources is limited. But it's only $35. Google promises to expand the offerings. I'm happy with the limited functions, because it's only $35. My wishlist would be Amazon Prime Movies and ESPN3.

Did I mention that it's only $35, and for what it does, it works very well? In the first picture, it's not real clear, but on the business end there's a standard HDMI connector, and on the other, a power port. You must have a wireless network in range and an outlet for the power cube. It has a built-in wireless network receiver.

TV – must have an unused HDMI input and a means of quickly switching between them. Most flat screen TVs have two or more, but be careful that you have one unused. In my case I use only one, and I have four on my receiver. One is unused, so I am in business. I use a programmable remote, so I added a control item that will switch to that HDMI port.

Wireless Network. The Chromecast has a wireless receiver for 802.11g/n. My Verizon router recently expired, and the replacement router has Wireless-n instead of g. If I had known that, it may have expired sooner.

Power. You must have an available outlet for the power cube. The ChromeCast device does not have a battery, so it works only when powered. There is no on/off switch. I have a UPS next to my media center for things I don't want to drop out, like the set-top box and the media center computer.

Unboxing. So first, unbox it - In the photo on the left, working from left to right; the power cord; an HDMI M/F extension cable; the small power cube and on the right – the ChromeCast.

Connecting is simple. Thanks to the included extension cable I just plugged the ChromeCast into the extension cable, and the cable into the HDMI port on the receiver. Note that the base of the ChromeCast is wide and probably won't insert without the extension cable if there is another port next to it. Then the power cable and the power cube. That's it. Switch on the TV and select that port. There's a screen on the TV that prompts you to use the ChromeCast app to make the wireless connection work. It displays a temporary name for itself. Install the ChromeCast app on your control device. I have only Android devices and Windows PCs in my house, so I can't comment on anything Apple-wise, sorry.

The ChromeCast app is quick and easy and free at the Google Play app store. When you run it, it searches your own network for the ChromeCast device. When found, the same device name as on the screen will appear and ask for the wireless network security password. It remembers this. It also suggests you supply a name that may describe its location in case you want to buy one of these for each room in your house. At pressure times like this my creativity goes away, so I named it "Main". Looking at the picture on page 8, that name is on the screen, as is the SSID of the wireless router.

Now, it's "ready to cast". That symbol before "ready" on the screen is the symbol of the button that appears on some (in my case – my Nexus 7 tablet) apps. When I open the regular Netflix app on my tablet, I can pick a movie or TV episode to play, press that symbol at the top of the Netflix screen on the tablet, and it automatically plays on the TV. It does not play to the tablet and then the TV. It bypasses the tablet and streams directly through the Internet to the ChromeCast device. So far it's that easy, but just for Netflix, YouTube and Google Play Movies. But that's a lot.

ChromeCast.....Continued on page 8

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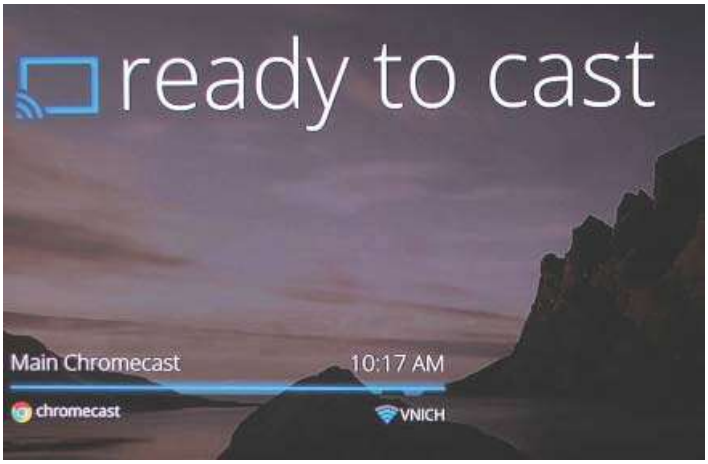
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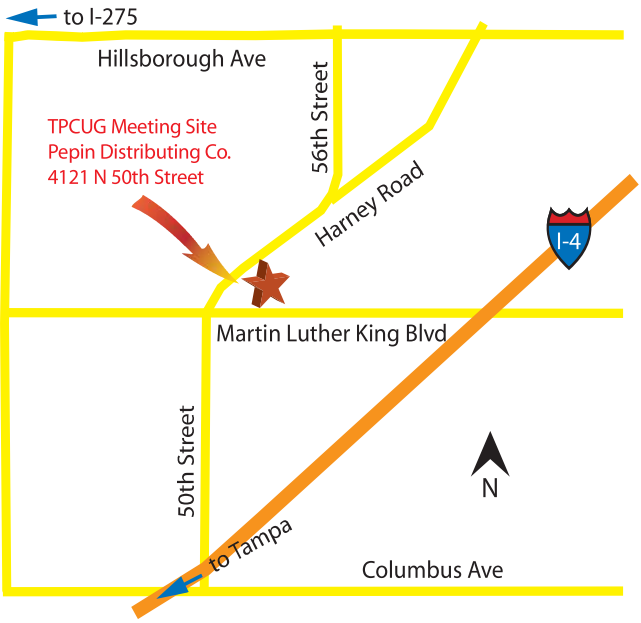
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

ChromeCast.....Continued from page 7

Experimentally (it's beta) for the PC and Mac, there is an app that is a plug-in to the Chrome browser. You can easily display the browser window through ChromeCast on the TV. I have done this a few times, and it's useful to get an Internet browser to display. But it's laggy, and a little frustrating. It certainly will not play video in any useful manner. But if for some reason you want to display a browser window and it's fairly static so you don't induce vertigo for the viewers, it works. And it's $35. Available at Google - https://play.google.com/store/devices/details?id=chromecast (You do have a Google Login, don't you?) $35.

It is also at Amazon.com. Search for ChromeCast – temporarily out of stock, but when it's available it's $35. ◆





http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 26 No. 10 October 2013



October in Tampa

Meeting

Steve Singer, RDI

on

New Hardware

Wednesday, October 9, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI, MoreValu.com will present his annual review of new hardware. Bob Lafave will have the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Robert Davis for providing articles this month. The article by Robert reminded me of how much old software and hardware is residing in the room above our garage. The hardware starts with an Apple IIe followed by computers with almost every subsequent processor available in an IBM compatible PC starting with a Gateway 386. Since a lot of the monitors went bad and were discarded, there are many fewer monitors than PCs. I think there is only one printer up there, the one used with the original Apple. All other printers were either given away when no longer wanted or recycled if defective. There are even two Apple plotters that I purchased at give-away prices. Of course, you can no longer get the pens for them. And there are several scanners there, too. Then there is the software. I don't believe I ever threw away more than a few items of software. I am sure that room contains large floppy disks with games and applications for the Apple. And there have to literally be hundreds of large and small floppies for all the Microsoft DOS and Windows programs purchased over the years. The question is will any or all of those old PCs boot and run the programs on their hard drives, since I suspect the hard drives go bad just sitting there. ◆

November Meeting: To be announced
The December holiday party will be moved up one week and held on December 4.

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Bob covered a wide variety of PC subjects, starting with a discussion of a members' broken computer and steps to take to revive it. Then he demonstrated the features of Kaspersky Anti-Virus.

William LaMartin, our volunteer newsletter editor, provided our presentation this month on a couple of subjects surrounding Windows 8, which he has experience with both as a user and an application developer.

The first subject he addressed is that "Windows 8 Is Not That Bad," with a comparison and use of the two user interfaces, Tiled Screens vs. the desktop. William emphasized that the Windows 7 interface is still there, with the exception of the Start Menu. He did demonstrate the "Programs Toolbar" that Merle Nicholson has written about and that they use. This allows a very useful cascading program menu with very little effort to implement.

William went on to mention Office 365 and how it differs from the traditional sales model. Office 365 is a subscription-based (SAS-Software as a Service) for $100/year. Also he mentioned Adobe CS 6.0 Suite for $600/year.

William continued with a PowerPoint-led presentation of his Windows 8 metro-interface applications. These are applications that he has published in the Windows Store. Following this, he ran several of the apps including"Computer Group Newsletters." This is a way to search for all past articles in *Bits of Blue,* our own club newsletter, from 1988 through November of 2012. It's free in the MS Windows 8 App store. It's very well presented, and very easy to use in Windows 8.

William then discussed how the Microsoft App store payments are made, both advertising and direct sales, and how his are doing. As always, interesting and informative. ◆

The Box of Stuff

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
robd234@gmail.com

Have you ever cleaned out your software closet? I hate to admit it, but I guess I am an old pack rat at heart. I'm one of the few people who still have a 3.5" disk reader on my desktop PC. I even copied some old 3.5" disks onto CD's for a friend last month. He had some perhaps priceless pictures on the disks and no longer had a disk drive to display them with. Modern technology bulldozed the 3.5" and 5-1/4" disks. Even the old spinning hard drives I believe will be replaced with solid-state disks. What comes next?

Today I took a mental trip back to the past. My wife Marty gave me an old big box full of "stuff" she dug up from a closet and said, "See if there is anything worth keeping in it." The stuff must have been packed into that box back in 1997 when we moved to Seffner, Florida. Nothing had been touched for over 16 years! The box literally contained hundreds of old 3.5" and 5-1/4" disks and floppies. There were old back-ups and perhaps bandit/backup copies of some old outdated software as well. It had all kinds of original software packages from the past in there, too. Most of the software stuff I probably have never used, nor will I ever use in the future anyhow. I can't remember where I even got some of it. You know how stuff just seems to accumulate? I used to work for StorageTek Corporation, and I suppose some of it was for the old laptops we used.

I thought I would list the major stuff to see if anyone remembers any of these priceless gems…. But don't expect to acquire any of this stuff from me. I may actually just blatantly toss this stuff out! Here's some of the software that was in that big box. Think back – what were you doing when these programs were hot stuff?

- Business Works integrated accounting system v7.0 on a 5-1/4" Floppy disk
- CA-Textor for Windows on a 3.5" Disk (says it Requires a VGA monitor!)
- NmbrCrunchr version 1.5 on a 3.5" disk C 1991 (with registration card)
- NmbrCrunchr Beta test version 1.3 on 3.5"
- Frontline Demo 5-1/4" Disk
- Doom - The Ultimate 3-D Virtual Reality Game on 3.5" Disks
- Online for Windows version 3.0 on 3.5" disk
- WinFax Lite v 3.0 for DOS on 3.5" disk
- LePrint 3.1A Manual dated May 8, 1989
- Cc:Mail for Windows Version 1.1 C1991 on 3.5" disk
- Kiplinger's CA-Simply Money Version 1.0 on 3.5" disk
- Prodigy (requires DOS version 2.0 or higher)
- Crosstalk Communicator - still in sealed package
- Online Library Omnibus Edition VM Collection dated September 1993 (use with IBM Library Reader/DOS included in the sealed package)
- Online Library Omnibus Edition MVS Collection dated September 1993 (use with IBM Library Reader/DOS included in the sealed package)
- Lotus Works Pro Visionary CD June 1995
- Compuserve version 1.4

Box Stuff.....Continued on page 8



Don't forget to Google it first!

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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I know, Google isn't a verb, or it isn't supposed to be. I think using it as a verb is not a social shortcoming but an English Language shortcoming. So the title of this article should be "Don't forget to use your favorite search engine first."

My latest success with search was "Windows Live Mail offline." I just resolved my brother-in-law's computer problem in Louisville. We talked for two hours trying to figure out why his gmail wouldn't pull in his Windows Live Mail. Here's a case where I could have resolved it in five minutes with a specific search in Google. So this is a reminder to me as well as for you. Search first before launching into fire walls and email settings.

This turned out to be a setting in Internet Explorer that Windows Live Mail uses: "Work Offline." Even though IE is not his default browser and the IE browser setting was "Online," setting it to "Work Offline" and then back to "Work Online" fixed his email client.

The discussion thread had some misinformation, so it paid to continue reading the discussion posts until I got to someone who had symptoms identical to ours. One red herring was to first make IE the default browser. Next one was to look at the IE setting to see if "Work Offline" is checked – it wasn't – but piecing it all together said to first enable the IE Menu Bar and under File check or uncheck "Work Offline," then uncheck it if you just checked it. The Windows Live Mail worked immediately, and it downloaded all of the old mail as duplicates, so when I hung up he was looking at 425 emails to sort out. ◆

What is this?

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com



I'm a fan of PBS's "This Old House" and "Ask This Old House." On "Ask" they do a "What is it?" segment for quirky gadgets and they goof off awhile with funny uses for odd plastic things. So I have my own "What is it?"

The photo above is a Sony DSC-QX100, and it's obvious it's a lens because it says "Carl Zeiss" on it. Other fact is that it's $500. What is it? No, it's not what you would think.

It's a camera. A fully functioning still and HD movie

What is this.....Continued on page 5



Internet Picture of the Month



The Rabbit Hop

From http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2013/09/animals-in-the-news-with-a-vladimir-putin-cameo/100598/. "A rabbit hops to avoid a five-month-old leopard cub in a test of the cub's wild natural instincts at a wildlife park in China."

What is this.....Continued from page 4

camera with 3.6x optical zoom, image stabilization, a 20M pixel 1-inch sensor, HD video, battery, WiFi and NFC communications.

It clips to the back of your smartphone, as shown in the second photo and communicates with NFC radio so that you can then control the camera on the smartphone screen using software for either IOS (iPhone) or Android.

I'm still incredulous. Maybe someone needs to tell me where this fits within the categories of human endeavor. It's a camera. Buy a camera if you need a camera. ◆

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
National Geographic - Nokia	http://www.nationalgeographic.com/nokia/index.html
The Verge	http://www.theverge.com/
The Writer Automaton	http://www.chonday.com/Videos/the-writer-automaton
America's Cup Race	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHdmviq1kyg
2013 - 2014 College Salary Report	http://www.payscale.com/college-salary-report-2014

App Studio

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

You too can build a Windows Phone app without having to do any coding. All you need is a Windows Live account, which Microsoft is now calling a Microsoft Account, You don't even need a Windows phone, but having one would be nice so that you can see your app run on the phone. To get started, go to http://apps.windowsstore.com.



The first thing you should do is to open the tutorial, which is a pdf file, under the Resources heading on the page. Ignore the information about installing a certificate since that really comes later when you want to install and test the app on a Windows Phone. At that time you will need to install the certificate on your phone, but to create an app just follow the tutorial.

To begin, click the Create link on the web page. That will produce a web page where you have the option to create an empty app or an app from a template. I chose the empty app option. After that, you give your app a title, description and select an image for a logo. Then you are at a point where you can begin adding things to the app. Clicking the + button on the then-current web page, you have the choice of adding a Menu, which I didn't, or a Section which consists of a group of pages. I chose to add two sections: An Introduction section and a Photo section. For the Introduction section, I gave it and its data source names and chose HTML as the type of source, which simply means that it is going to be text. That text is seen in the top left image on page 7, where the Introduction section is displayed. I then added another section, the Photo section. The Photo section will use a local collection as the data source for my photos, but they could be pulled from the Internet. To populate the Photo section I need to add photos while supplying them with Titles, Subtitles and Descriptions. I will add a total of 30 such photos to create my app.

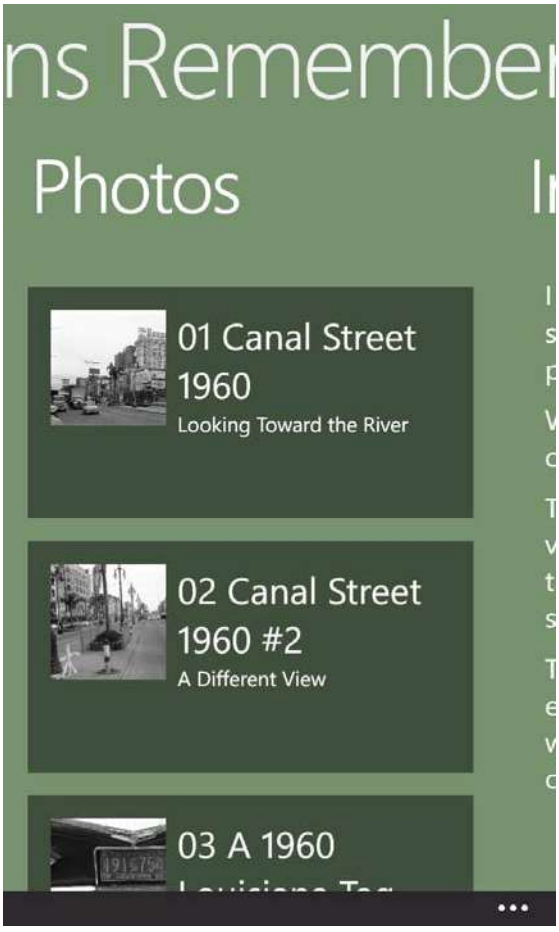
There is more to be done. I need to select a theme for the app as regards background color, etc. Also needed is a layout for the photo thumbnails and the photo details page.

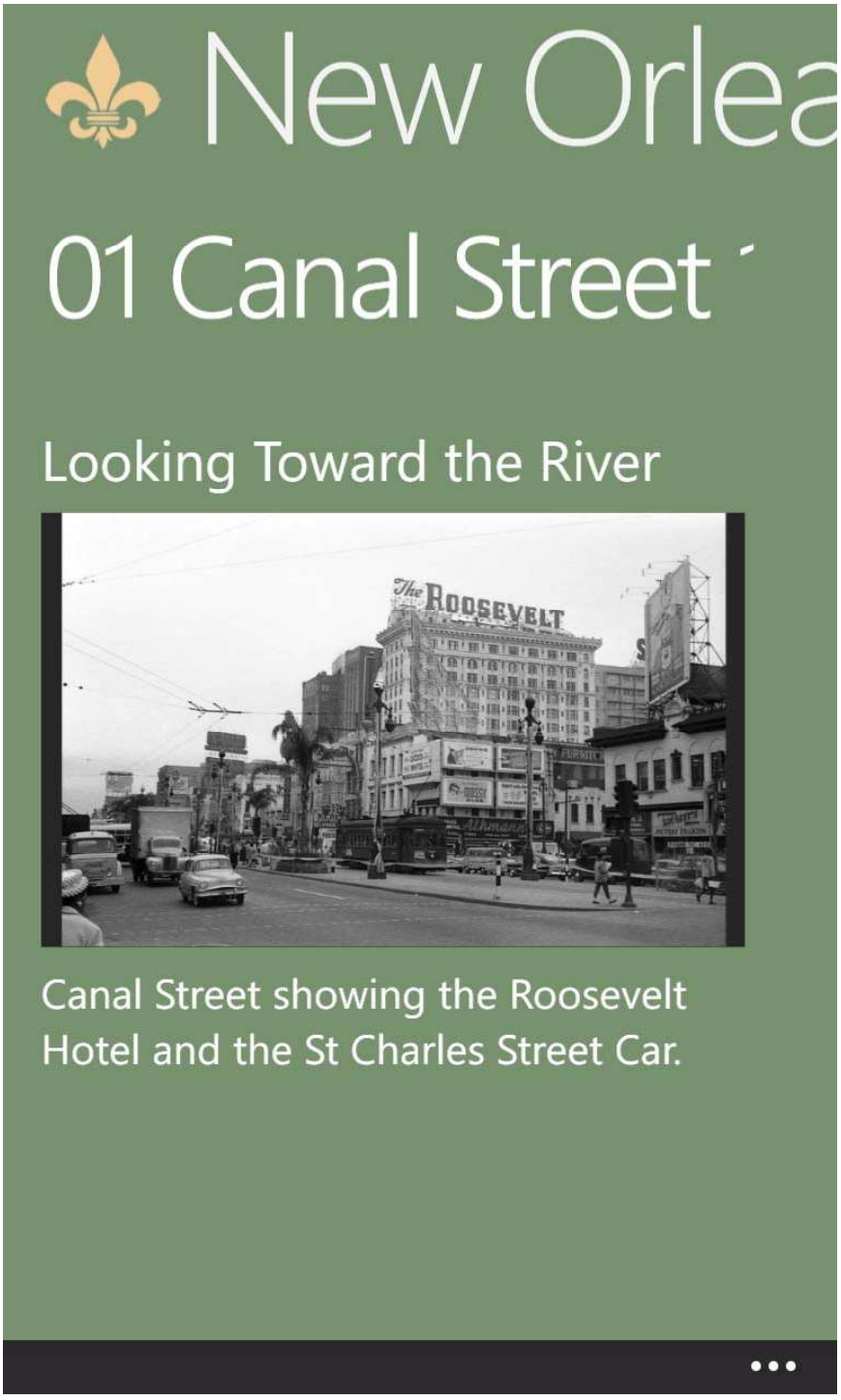
On page 7 are three screen captures of the finished app, including the Introduction and photos in the theme I chose, the third made larger for better viewing. The photos shown are black and white, but of the 30 included, perhaps half are in color.

Once you have completed the design of the app, you click a button on the web page to generate the app. And after a very short time when the app has been generated you are presented with a web page with the options to 1. download the source code, 2. download the publishing package or 3. to share the app by email (with someone else using app studio). But the neatest thing is the display of a QR code which you can use to install the app on your phone simply by capturing the QR code with your Windows Phone's camera.

I have submitted the app to the Windows Phone Store under the title *New Orleans Remembered*. After it is in the store and accessible to the public, I am going to need to do an update since by not first reading the tutorial I missed the part about creating a Splash Screen (a minor item). ◆


New Orlea
Introduction
I have been visiting New Orleans since I was a teenager and taking photos on those visits.
What follows is a tiny part of that collection.
Tap a thumbnail to see a larger version with a description, then tap the larger version to see it full screen.
This app was created as an experiment using App Studio without writing a single line of code.


ns Remember
Photos
01 Canal Street 1960
Looking Toward the River
02 Canal Street 1960 #2
A Different View
03 A 1960


New Orlea
01 Canal Street
Looking Toward the River
The Roosevelt
Canal Street showing the Roosevelt Hotel and the St Charles Street Car.

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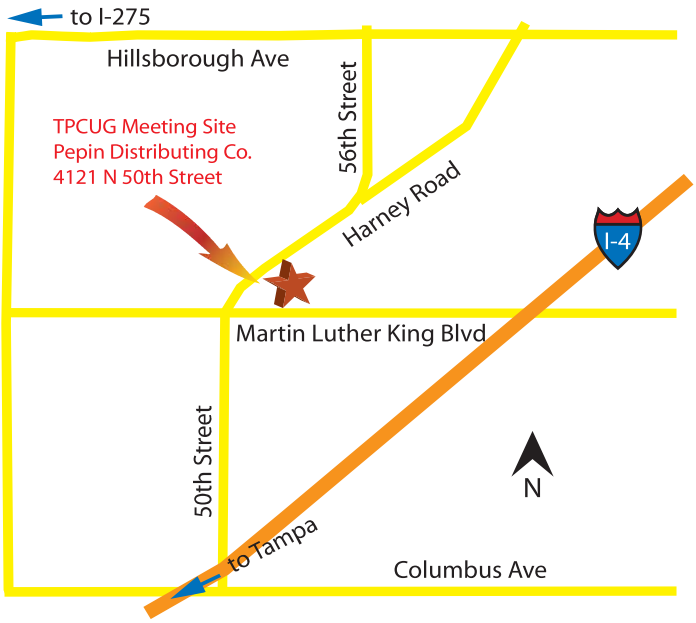
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Box Stuff.....Continued from page 3

- MS-DOS Version 6.22 still in a sealed package! The best DOS version ever!

It is truly amazing how different the PC world is today compared to just ten or fifteen years ago. I even wrote my own amortization program for DOS back then using MS QuickBasic 4.0. Actually, I still use that Amortization program today to calculate payments, etc. It just won't print to a USB port. But it's like an old friend you hate to see go. I am getting into the modern Windows programs, though. Why just this year I converted from Quicken version 8.0 for DOS to Quicken for Windows. The reason why, you ask? I use Quicken to print reports for our tax returns. Quicken for DOS wouldn't print to a USB port and my old parallel port printer died! Alas, the old printer went to the recycle dump on SR 579 along with some other broken electronics.



Today the software is mega better than the old DOS programs were. It's a challenge to keep up with changes in the PC's and the software that runs on them. After going through that big box, I'm thinking I need to take a look at the old stuff in my software cabinet, too. Have you cleaned out your old out-of-date stuff lately, or are you a pack rat like me? ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 26 No. 11 November 2013



November in Tampa

Meeting

Bob LaFave

on

Editing Movies

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Bob LaFave will show us how to record HDTV using CETON and how to edit out commercials, as well as presenting some surprise topics and the usual Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

It's been a bit exciting here with all the projects I have been working on. And it got even more exciting when I pressed the power button on my Windows 7 desktop computer that I use for most of my work and nothing happened. I will write about that later in the newsletter.

Don't you find it interesting that Google is upset because it has been disclosed that the National Security Agency is intercepting much of their data when Google's whole business plan is to intercept your data so as to better aim ads at you from which they make no small amount of money. Anyone who uses Gmail has to know that every word they write is picked over and analyzed by the Google software to see if they are a good candidate for a camera, long underwear, health food, unhealthy food or whatever else is mentioned in the emails. The same goes for

Comments.....Continued on page 2

The December holiday party will be moved up one week and held on December 4.

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Bob covered a variety of PC subjects, a member's lost user account and password, using the administrator account to recover it, and a tool from Farstone.com Total Recovery Tools v10. He touched on WEP/WPA router settings and answered questions from other users.

Steven Singer was with us to present his annual hardware talk with trends and new stuff. The subjects he talked on were phones – mostly the Android kind – and ebooks. WiFi, Smart TV, Windows Media Center, TPLink Router, 1TB 2-1/2" drives and Powerline Networking were discussed. Other hardware mentioned were: a discussion of AMD and APU, new AMD A10, ITX motherboards, USB 3 adapters and 64GB SDHC storage. As always, interesting and informative. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

the Google search engine. If you use Gmail, then I assume Google knows who you are and which computers you use, so it is then easy to conclude that the searches coming from your computer you also use for Gmail are associated with you.

Since I use an email server at the company which hosts my website, I at least don't have Google pawing through all my emails. However, I am sure that doesn't stop the NSA from seeing my requests to you each month for articles for the newsletter. ◆

A SET Menu for Windows 7/8.1

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I'll say it right off the bat, I love Android. Even on my not so new v2.3 Droid phone, but my tablet and my spouse's phone have v4.2, where a swipe down from the top will get all your system settings. Maybe kind of like Windows 8/8.1 Charms menu may be one day years from now when they fix it. By the way, the "Charms" name doesn't set too well because I'm not an eight-year old girl. I'm a grumpy old man, and "Settings" would pretty much suit me.

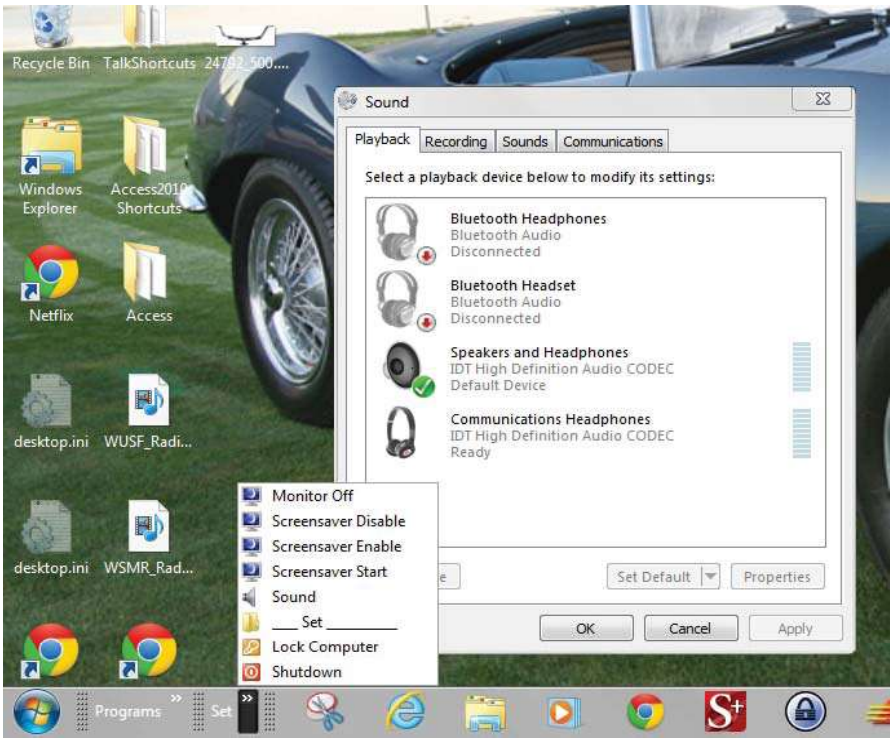
The Android feature I'm referring to is "Settings." That's a convenient way to get all your settings quickly in one place (it's an expandable drill-down menu). In Windows 7 and 8 they're scattered all over the place, sometimes where you can never find them without some kind of a desktop word search. Why can't we do that on Windows 7?

So I decided to track the things I do on my notebook and see if I can make it easier. I can't duplicate the Android look without programming something, but the Taskbar Toolbar feature will do the job. I've written before about my "Programs" menu, and William LaMartin has shown it in the Windows 8 environment. You'll see it below just to the left of my "Set" menu.

My "Set" toolbar is constructed exactly like the "Programs" toolbar. You simply add a toolbar to the taskbar by pointing to a folder you create. Then you add items in the folder, and they become the menu items. The items are all in the form of a Windows shortcut. In this picture, I had just clicked on the "Set," "Sound" shortcut to get the sound settings. These are all I have for now, but it takes care of 90% of my day-to-day annoyances. I have no intention to put all settings there, just my favorites. An explanation for each:

Monitor Off. Sometimes I want to walk away from the notebook. The screen is a major user of the battery. Setting the Windows Power Options to a short time creates annoying behaviors in other circumstances. You certainly do not want to make a Power Option change knowing you will set it back in a couple of hours. The method I used to turn it off uses a mouse movement to wake it.

I NEVER use Sleep or Hibernate on this notebook. It has an SSD and boots in about 20 seconds. It would take another long article to give all the reasons.



Screensaver Disable and Screensaver Enable. First, let's call a screensaver what it really is: entertainment. Pictures on a wall; I see value in that. I use photos I've taken – the ones I'm most proud of. It's a lot of trouble to turn off your screensaver and back on. You have to change the screensaver program to "none" then later select the one you usually use. I turn the screensaver off when I want to put an instructional PDF on the screen to refer to and sometimes to monitor the progress of a major backup or disk clone. These are circumstances where the screensaver interferes with something that is being displayed. Then if I turn it off, I'll need to turn it back on.

Menu.....Continued on page 4

Menu.....Continued from page 3

Screensaver Start. Start it NOW.

Sound. I don't mean change the volume. I mean change the sound device to another. For me that usually means change it from internal speakers/headphone to Bluetooth or USB and back. Windows should have a better way to do this, but it doesn't.

____ Set ____. This is a Windows Explorer shortcut to the folder where the Toolbar's Set shortcuts are. So I don't have to remember where to look if I need to make a change.

Lock Computer and Shutdown. These are the standard system functions except that it's immediate – for people who accept the consequences of their rash behavior. These items, along with "Restart" will be invaluable in Windows 8/8.1 desktop mode, since the Start menu has been eliminated. As it is, you have to go to Charms, Settings and Shutdown to turn the computer off.

That's it. I'm sure I will be adding more items over time, and if you're interested in doing this and you have some other ideas, be sure to email me. The following is a technical description. It involves downloading a free utility program for some functions.

Technical Part.

First, create a folder for the shortcuts. Mine is called "Set", and I put it in "My Documents". "C:\Users\Merle\Documents\Set". Then in "My Documents" create a shortcut to the folder, and move the shortcut into the folder. Rename the shortcut to "____ Set ____" or just "_____" so it will resemble a menu divider. Then right-click on the Taskbar, Toolbar, New Toolbar, and select the "My Documents\Set" folder as a new toolbar. The toolbar will appear on the right, next to the System Tray, and I moved mine to the left. Sometimes that's tricky to do, but be persistent. You'll see that then locking the taskbar messes up the appearance. I just leave it unlocked.

OK, so now it's a toolbar and it has one item in it: The folder to conveniently open Windows Explorer to drop shortcuts into it. You can drop any kind of shortcut there, copies of ones you already have or shortcuts to other useful folders, or create new ones. Here are the details of mine.

I use a tiny utility called Nircmd.exe from http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/nircmd.html . DO NOT do the download at the top of the web page. Go to the bottom of the page where it says "Download NirCmd 64-Bit". If you happen to have Windows XP or the rare Windows 7 32-bit, download the other one, "Download NirCmd". You get a zip file. Unzip the files into a folder. I put mine in a convenient place by creating a folder in "Downloads" called "nircmd-x64", so the path to this executable is now C:\Users\Orion\Downloads\nircmd-x64\nircmd.exe, Orion being the administrator logon name. When you go to that NirCmd web page you'll see the pages of stuff this little executable will do. You can even create scripts, so that it will execute a series of steps.

Usually I create a shortcut on the desktop with a Right-Click , New, Shortcut. The dialog box Opens and in this case I paste in the location of the NirCmd. Exe, Ok and then the name of the shortcut "Monitor Off". Then I go to properties of the shortcut and edit it. In this case I add a space and "monitor off" to the target. Then I change the icon with the "Change Icon" button. You get a warning that NirCmd.exe has no icons, but it should open up a chance to select an icon from the library: %SystemRoot%\system32\SHELL32.dll.

Here's the list of shortcuts, the shortcut name and the target field.

- **"Monitor Off"**, C:\Users\Orion\Downloads\nircmd-x64\nircmd.exe monitor off
- **"ScreenSaver Disable"**, C:\Users\Orion\Downloads\nircmd-x64\nircmd.exe regsetval sz "HKCU\control panel\desktop" "ScreenSaveActive" 0
- **"ScreenSaver Enable"**, C:\Users\Orion\Downloads\nircmd-x64\nircmd.exe regsetval sz "HKCU\control panel\desktop" "ScreenSaveActive" 1

Menu.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Looted Art

From the National Archives, http://www.archives.gov/. I thought with the current interest in the 1,000 plus trove of paintings recently discovered in Munich that were most likely looted by the Nazis it would be appropriate to view one of the most famous photos of such a discovery. Here we have: "General Dwight D Eisenhower, Supreme Allied commander, inspects art treasures looted by the Germans and stored away in the Merkers salt mine. Behind GEN Eisenhower are General Omar N. Bradley (left), CG of the 12th Army Group, and (right) LT Gen George S. Patton, Jr, CG, 3rd U.S. Army. 4/12/45".

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Freeware Genius	http://www.freewaregenius.com/
CPU Digital Magazine	http://www.computerpoweruser.com/DigitalEditions/
NirCmd Utility	http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/nircmd.html

What do you do when the power button doesn't work?

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com



As I mentioned in my introductory comments on page 1, things around my house got a bit bothersome when I pressed the power button on my Windows 7 desktop computer that I use for most of my work and nothing happened. My first thought was that something might have gone wrong with the computer's power supply. But a quick check showed that the computer was getting power since several LEDs inside the case were lit. The first thing to do was open the case and look for loose connections. I saw none and did nothing.

My work was backed up on external drives and at live.com but no more recently than several days back. So if I wanted to be able to use that data, the thing to do was remove the drive in the computer that had my data on it and attach it to a convenient drive port that exists on my newer Windows 8 desktop. I did that and copied all the important files to that computer.

Then I sent an email to Merle Nicholson. His response was: The power button cable is disconnected. Well, I had already looked at all connections to the motherboard, and everything appeared to be connected. But to make sure I grasped what I thought to be the power button cables, along with the other cables they were bound together with (in the center of the photo to the left), and moved them in and out and then tried to boot the computer by pressing the power button. And everything was fine. Merle was correct – sort of. To paraphrase one of our former presidents: It all depends on what you mean by connected. The cables were plugged in, but the connection was not good, and by my moving the plug in and out I apparently cleaned off whatever minor corrosion had occurred.

So I learned something, and all that was lost was the time I spent removing the data hard drive (there is another drive that contains the operating system and the installed programs) and connecting it to the Windows 8 computer so as to copy the files of interest. And what is the answer to my question in the title? You call Merle. ◆

Menu.....Continued from page 4

- **"ScreenSaver Start"**, C:\Users\Orion\Downloads\nircmd-x64\nircmd.exe screensaver
- **"Sound"**, Go to "Control Panel", "All Control Panel Items", Right-click on "Sound", and select "Create Shortcut". The shortcut should appear on your desktop labeled "Sound – Shortcut". Edit the name to "Sound" and then drag (move) it to the Set folder.
- **"Lock Computer"** C:\Windows\System32\rundll32.exe user32.dll,LockWorkStation
- **"Shutdown"**, C:\Windows\System32\shutdown.exe /s /f /t 000

Menu.....Continued on page 8



Cloning a replacement drive

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

In the previous article, I indicated that my Windows 7 desktop computer had two drives. There is a Solid State Drive (SSD) that is reserved for the operating system and for the programs there is the C drive The second drive is a much larger capacity standard hard drive that is for all other files such as files in My Documents, My Pictures, the Desktop, and more.

When I had Merle Nicholson build me that computer in 2010 (see the November 2010 newsletter for the building of this computer), the price of SSD drives was quite high, so I chose the smallest size I thought I could live with, a 128 MB one for $270, which was still larger than Merle thought I needed. He just didn't realize how many programs I have - and I have acquired more since then. Hence the need now for a larger SSD drive. This time I purchased a 240 GB SSD drive from Newegg for $170. Quite a price reduction from three years back.

Once I received the drive, I needed to install it. But before doing that I needed to transfer everything that was on the original SSD to the new one. And before doing that, I decided to back up my entire system to an external drive using Acronis True Image Home. Once that was done and the backup was verified, the next day I again used Acronis True Image Home to do a Clone Disk of the SSD drive in the computer to the new SSD drive that I had installed into the drive dock in the top of the computer, as indicated in the photo to the left. If I had not had that convenient setup, I could have used an inexpensive USB device that connects a drive to your computer.

I recall that at first neither Acronis nor Windows Explorer saw the new drive I had put in the dock. I had to go into Control Panel | Administrative Tools | Computer Management | Storage | Disk Management where I could then see the new drive listed. Here I am a little vague in my remembrances, but I think I right-clicked the new disk and chose the Initialize Disk option. After that when I restarted Acronis, the new disk was visible, and I could proceed with the cloning.

The cloning of the disk took less than 10 minutes. To install the new drive, I had to take off both sides of the computer case so as to be able to first get at the back of the drive to be removed and disconnect the two cables connected to it. Then I needed to open the front cover and remove the old SSD drive itself. Actually I removed the tray containing the drive and then unscrewed four small screws that attached the drive to the tray. Reversing this procedure, I installed the newly cloned drive and everything was good to go. So I stupidly put both covers back on the computer case and booted the computer.

But everything was not OK. The computer produced a message to the effect that something was missing that Windows would like to have. I don't recall the particular item, but it was one of those things that is normally on the C drive but that I have relocated to the larger D drive to save room on C. And I, in fact, no longer had a D drive. Without taking much time to think about the situation, I simply phoned Merle Nicholson who told me that I had somehow disconnected a cable

Cloning.....Continued on page 8

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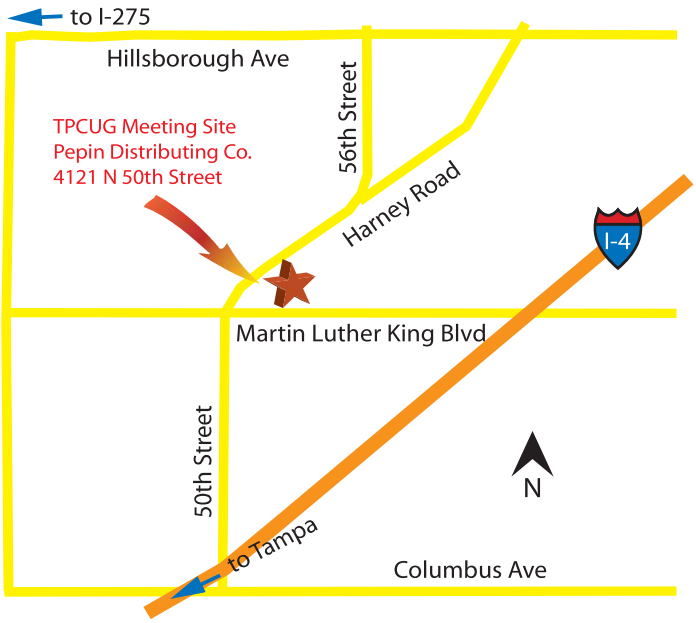
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Cloning.....Continued from page 7

to the D drive while I was working on the computer.

So the back cover had to come off, and indeed the cable was hanging loose. After connecting it, this time I did not put back the cover until I had booted the computer and noted that everything was OK.

Merle knows about such problems since he works on computer hardware all the time. For me, it is an occasional thing, so sometimes I just don't see the obvious, and having Merle's assistance has been an enormous time-saver . ◆



Menu.....Continued from page 6

I obtained the information to create these from sources on the web just by Googling the objective. One of the treasures I got was the NirCmd. It's been invaluable. I also get very worthwhile information from HowToGeek.com. ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 26 No. 12 December 2013



December in Tampa

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 4, 2013

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Holiday Party – Bring yourself and enjoy the food and visit with your fellow members.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Since the monthly meeting is occurring a week earlier than usual, this newsletter may well not reach you before the meeting. But if it should, don't forget that our meeting is is on the first Wednesday of the month this one time.

As usual, Merle Nicholson came through with an article this month. However, for myself, I had to purchase a new program to have something about which to write. It is a program that I had previously thought I didn't need but now realize is very crucial if I want to do anything with the movies my digital single lens reflex camera can take.

As to newsletter articles, Merle and I need some help. We receive the occasional one from others, but what is needed is an article or two from the rest of the group each month. Otherwise, we may have to rethink the purpose and format of the newsletter. I cannot purchase a new program or piece of hardware to have something about which to write each month.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! ◆

January Meeting: To be announced

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Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Bob covered a variety of PC subjects: A member's Java Script error and how to verify that the Java you have installed is the latest from the Java website; updating Flash; protecting your computer from infection with some common sense rules of conduct; and some discussions about tablets.

Bob was also the speaker for this meeting and gave several tutorials and ideas on a variety of subjects. Playing movies and storing large volumes of media were discussed.

Bob went on with some screen captures taken during the installation of Windows 8.1 over an existing Windows 8 machine. Some interesting new information was revealed: The new dependence on a Microsoft online account and the need to receive a code by email while your computer is tied up on the upgrade. Bob investigated the means to retain your 8.0 user account password and avoid creating a new account and displayed slides for that. Bob demonstrated several good tips to make the upgrade go smoothly.

Next was the subject of the Ceton Infinity4 TV tuner for PCs to allow Windows Media Center (WMC) to receive and record standard and HD television. The Ceton is available as a USB connection and also as a PCIe card. Bob showed us the Ceton Diagnostics Tool to look at the settings available on the card. There was some discussion of the abilities of the card and program and the advantages in cost and function over a standard FIOS or Brighthouse DVR, explaining the card and the Cablecard that must be purchased from

Minutes.....Continued on page 8



Adobe Premier Elements 12

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I have always been a still photographer, never having owned a movie camera until recently. And that camera is not a dedicated movie camera but is a digital SLR camera with the ability to take movies. Of course, over the years I have used others' video cameras to take short videos at their request. So I have a little experience with movies – enough to know that it is not easy to take decent movies. My main problems are holding the camera steady, zooming without shaking the camera, and focus.

Oh, you say, "Why do you have a problem with zoom and focus? My video camera has a power zoom and automatic focus. It also has image stabilization to minimize shaking." Well, my Nikon D800 is not a dedicated video camera. It produces excellent quality videos, but it is up to the user to hold the camera steady, use the zoom ring to zoom in or out and refocus the lens when the subject to camera distance changes very much. If you do a good job at all this, you will have nice video with good sound. Finally there is no stopping and restarting a video. If you stop a video and then restart, you create two separate video files. And that brings me to why I purchased Adobe Premier Elements 12. At the least, I needed something to allow me to combine several videos. Microsoft Live Movie Maker was a possibility, but I found it lacking (possibly my fault).

Anyway, I had heard about Adobe Premier, so I went to the Adobe site to have a look. Well, things have changed. You can no longer buy the Adobe professional products as separate downloadable or DVD based products. Now you have to purchase a subscription. And to get Premier, you either purchase it as part of a one-year subscription to the Adobe Creative Cloud, which contains many of the Adobe programs such as Photoshop, Illustrator, etc., for $60/month ($720/year), or as a standalone subscription for $20/month ($240/year). That is a bit much for an amateur movie maker such as myself – and I already owned Adobe Creative Suite 6, which includes Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Acrobat.

There was, however, another option, the baby version

Premier.....Continued on page 4

Premier.....Continued from page 3

of Adobe Premier, Adobe Premier Elements 12. I suppose it is sort of like their Photoshop Elements. In fact, they offer the combination of Adobe Photoshop Elements 12 and Adobe Premier Elements 12 for $150 as a download. Having the full Photoshop, I had no need of that, so I sprung for Premier Elements 12 for $100 as a download. I figured that should do all that I needed. And it has.

With this program, I have been able to

- Combine several videos
- Cut out selected segments
- Insert still images and textual screens (titles for example)
- Apply transitions
- Adjust the brightness, contrast and color of a video
- Add a sound track and adjust the volume at different locations
- Save the video as an MP4 file and upload to the Internet
- Burn the video to a DVD or BluRay disk

Then there are the things I have not yet tried:

- Add a narration
- Install a graphic or other video over the main video and animate it
- Add photos or other videos on top of the main video to create a composition
- Adjust the speed of segments of a video
- Pan and Zoom an image (the Ken Burns effect)
- Mix the audio
- Export the video to a site like YouTube or Facebook with the built-in export presets.

The program has three editing modes: Quick, Guided and Expert. The screen capture on the previous page displays the Quick mode, which has a simplified timeline. I find that good for combining videos, deleting segments, and inserting textual frames. When I want to add a music track and adjust the volume of different portions of the music, or if I want many more options for adding audio, graphics or effects, I use the Expert mode.

The first thing you do when beginning a new project is to import the media you will use: Existing digital video, photos, audio and graphic files on your computer's hard drive. Or you may import from DVDs camcorder, camera or webcam. I have only used video, photos and audio that I already have on my computer. Premier Elements has a companion application called Organizer whose sole purpose is organizing and indexing all the photos, movies, etc on your computer. I don't use it, since I have the much more powerful Adobe Photoshop Lightroom that serves the same purpose. However, it is not integrated with Premier Elements as is Organizer, and Organizer has some interesting features such as the ability to identify people in images.

The basic idea is simple: Add media, edit and add special effects and then output the result to whatever media format you desire. But to do this, you really should first watch some instructional videos. Guided mode is somewhat helpful to teach you; however, what is really better is to find instructional videos on the web. I subscribe to lynda.com which has training videos on almost all popular software, Premier Elements 11 (but not 12 yet) included. For free, Adobe provides help and tutorials here: https://helpx.adobe.com/premiere-elements.html.

All my videos so far were made from material I already had on my computer, where the videos originally came from my Nikon DSLR. But you may import directly for all sorts of devices, including tape-based camcorders as long as you can connect the device to the computer.

I am just a beginner at this movie stuff, but here are some of my first attempts:

- http://www.lamartin.com/Videos/ChristmasDinosaurs1280x720.mp4
- http://www.lamartin.com/Videos/JansonChristmasOnBoulevard1280x720.mp4
- http://www.lamartin.com/Videos/CookingASteakHD1280x720.mp4

The Christmas ones were made almost a year ago, but put together only recently with Premier Elements. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Macy's Duck

From http://www.flickr.com, a large balloon duck from this year's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. The photographer is listed as david.gardiner1. His photostream at flickr is at http://www.flickr.com/photos/15022466@N03/, where he has 3,608 photos, some very good. The duck is not one of his better ones, but it is the appropriate one for this time frame. Anytime I think that I take good photos, all I need to do is go to flickr and view some of the work there. It makes me humble.

December's Online Computer Shopping Locations

Microsoft Store	http://www.microsoft.com/store/
HP Home and Office Store	http://shopping.hp.com/
Dell	http://www.dell.com
TigerDirect.com	http://www.tigerdirect.com/
NewEgg	http://www.newegg.com
Amazon.com	http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Amazon link

Windows 8.1 Upgrade – quick notes

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, TPCUG
merle@merlenicholson.com

I finally felt it was time to do the upgrade. Bob LaFave gave us some tips at the last meeting, so I felt I was fairly well-prepared. And it went almost-smoothly.

Two things are important. One is that in the middle of the installation, Microsoft wants to send you an email with a code you'll need to type in to continue. They don't have any suggestions (that I can see) on what to do if the only means to receive email is the device you are upgrading, and therefore you can't receive it, but I had another device. Two, the other thing is that it asks for a Microsoft online password to set for the login password. It does give you a chance to create a new one, use one you have and use your local login that you have for Windows 8. Even though Bob found it, and demonstrated it, I failed to find it, so I approached the problem later; details below.

There are several legitimate authorized Microsoft logins: Passport, Windows Live and Hotmail will all work. I suspect that the login is needed because for 8.1 your SkyDrive account is an integral part of all your drives. It even appears as a folder in Windows Explorer. More on SkyDrive later.

At first, the install stopped because it needed me to uninstall my Vipre Internet 2013 antivirus. I researched that a bit (on another computer obviously) and found surprising little on that subject, and the Vipre phone service was after hours. So I uninstalled it and let Defender and Windows Firewall activate. I reinstalled Vipre later, and everything works fine. The little I did find on the Internet suggested that Vipre will work fine after reinstalling, and they were right. It even upgraded to Vipre Internet 2014. Remember that Windows Defender is an integral part of Windows now, so it will be sitting there not running if you have installed another antivirus product. When I reinstalled Vipre later, it turned off Defender and the Windows firewall.

Back to the login problem, I think I followed Bob's instructions wrongly because I had to sign in with my online account and password every time, and even though I unchecked the "must sign in" with netplwiz Network Wizard, I still had to sign in. In Control Panel, User accounts, I was able to switch the login account from the online account to my local account. Then had to do the netplwiz again because it was checked again! Under Win 8, it was unchecked before I even began, so the installation messes with it. All is well now; it logs in automatically on the local machine account. That makes sure that it's on the Internet when I want it to be. I almost believe that.

Last thing, I wanted to get rid of the SkyDrive and eliminate the item in Windows Explorer. A quick group policy GPEDIT fixes that. I found the instructions in HowToGeek. For those not familiar, SkyDrive is an on-line storage drive that anyone with a Microsoft account can get; I think it is 5GB. I'm much more familiar with Google's similar Google Drive. I use Google Drive to sync files to all my – and my spouse's - computers; four Windows 7 computers, a Windows 8.1, a Windows 7 laptop, an Android tablet and two Android phones. Basically, you drop any file in any of the local designated folders and it's available on all the devices within a minute. Skydrive works identically, although it looks like it may be more tightly integrated with Microsoft file types. SkyDrive has an Android App, and Google Drive has a Windows App, so there does not seem to be a conflict or compatibility problem. http://www.howtogeek.com/167058/how-to-disable-skydrive-integration-in-windows-8.1/

More on SkyDrive at http://www.howtogeek.com/166996/how-windows-8.1-integrates-skydrive-everywhere/

It looks like the 8.1 install does not affect the Classic Start Menu I have on this machine to give me a good menu system. The Classic Menu System recognizes that it's on 8.1 immediately. Perhaps through an update that I was not aware of.

More on Windows 8.1: http://www.howtogeek.com/173871/what-you-need-to-know-about-windows-8.1/

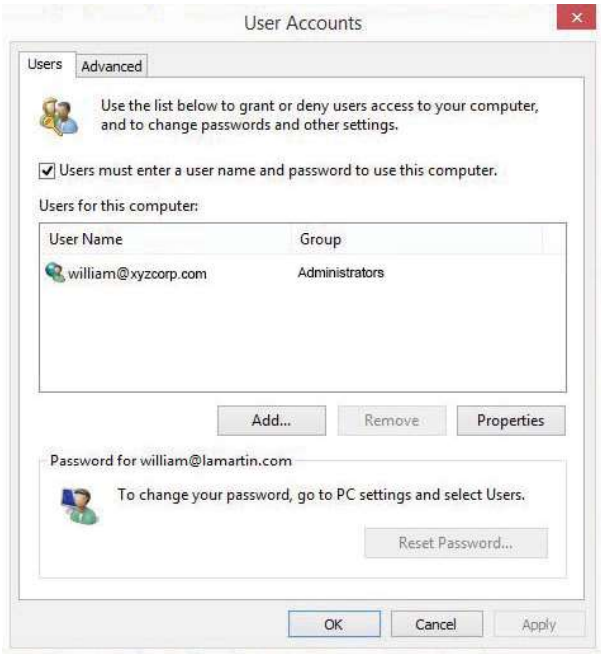
Upgrade.....Continued on page 7

Upgrade.....Continued from page 6

This from Bob LaFave:

You can set to go to the desktop without signing into your MS passport account. Type in netplwiz into search and open netplwiz.exe as seen in the top image below.

Uncheck the box "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer." Hit the "Apply" button. Enter the current password and confirm and you will GO TO DESKTOP when starting. ◆





Hazardous Waste Reminder

By Merle Nicholson
merle@merlenicholson.com

This is a very valuable (and free!) resource for disposing of your old computer parts, household chemicals, paint, oil, lead acid batteries, fluorescent bulbs and more. I use this a couple of times a year and have found it easy and quick. The staff are very helpful, and they do all the heavy lifting once you get there.

Hillsborough County Household Chemical & Electronics Collection Center
9805 Sheldon Road
Tampa, FL 33635
Hillsborough County
Phone: (813) 272-5900
Facility Contact: Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator
GPS: 28.038283, -82.579087
Facility Type: Household Hazardous Waste

Household Chemical & Electronics Collection
Household chemicals and electronics are accepted from 8AM to 2PM at the Northwest facility (9805 Sheldon Rd.) on the 1st Saturday of the month, the South County facility (Powell Rd., east off US 41, ¼ mile north of Big Bend Rd.) on the 2nd Saturday of the month, and the East County facility (Thonotosassa, CR 579, ¼ mile north of I-4, Exit 10) on the 3rd Saturday of the month. Materials accepted include paint, solvents, pool chemicals, hobby and craft supplies, lawn and garden chemicals, computers, stereos, televisions, etc. Collections are for residents only - NO chemicals or electronics will be accepted from commercial interests. Call (813) 272-5680 or click on the link below for more information and maps to the collections.

http://www.wastemap.org/Facility-Profile.cfm?idsFacility=817 ◆

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Minutes.....Continued from page 2

Verizon or Brighthouse. He passed a card around the audience.

Bob went on to talk about the format of programs recorded in WMC and converting and the problems occurring when DRM (Digital Rights Management) is applied to the recorded media. He demonstrated the AVS Video editor ($59 Lifetime License), converting .WTV to .DVR-MS.

Last Bob went on to the universal person-to-person method of file (movie) sharing – uTorrent, and some brief discussion of the risks.

Our thanks go out to Bob for a well-prepared and interesting talk on some timely subjects. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



February in Tampa

Vol. 27 No. 2 February 2014

Meeting

Ubuntu Linux

by
Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, February 12, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: This month's meeting topic is Ubuntu Linux presented by TPCUG secretary Merle Nicholson. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

This month Merle Nicholson covers working with Windows 8.1 and modifying it to suit his needs, even though he is to give a presentation on Ubuntu Linux at our next meeting. Ron Weinberg tells us why he no longer feels the need for a desktop computer and has purchased a Windows 8.1 touch-screen laptop as his main computer. And Doug Mullis has provided us with the 2013 financial report. In the remaining space allotted to me, I will write about various problems I have encountered.

In January, I wrote about a problem with my new Microsoft Surface Pro 2 computer that was caused by an update in mid-December. The problem was a UEFI boot screen loop when you pressed the power button to boot the device. UEFI stands for Unified Extensible Firmware Interface, which is meant to replace the BIOS. It has been around for some time, but the Surface Pro 2 is the first computer I have had that uses it. If you would like to learn about UEFI, simply do a search. Personally, I have suffered enough with it where, when booting my Surface,

Comments.....Continued on page 6

March Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Bob covered a variety of PC subjects: Service Pack 8.1; his personal computer software PaperPort and Power2Go; how Mozilla Backup for Firefox and Thunderbird recovered both his Windows 8 desktop and notebook; and a comparison of Windows 7 Virtual Machine running XP on VirtualPC vs Virtualbox. Our thanks to Bob for a well-prepared and interesting discussion.

Our presenter this month was our own long-time vice-president, Kevan Sheridan, who demonstrated Google Chromebook and the features available from Google. He started out with the communications features: Google Voice, Hangouts, Snapchat and Pinterest. He then showed us calls using Voice from/to three cellphones and two PCs using Windows 7 and his Chromebook. Mary Sheridan participated from home, Bob LaFave, Brian Lance and myself participated using a combination of cell phones and PCs with cameras. It was an interesting and informative session.

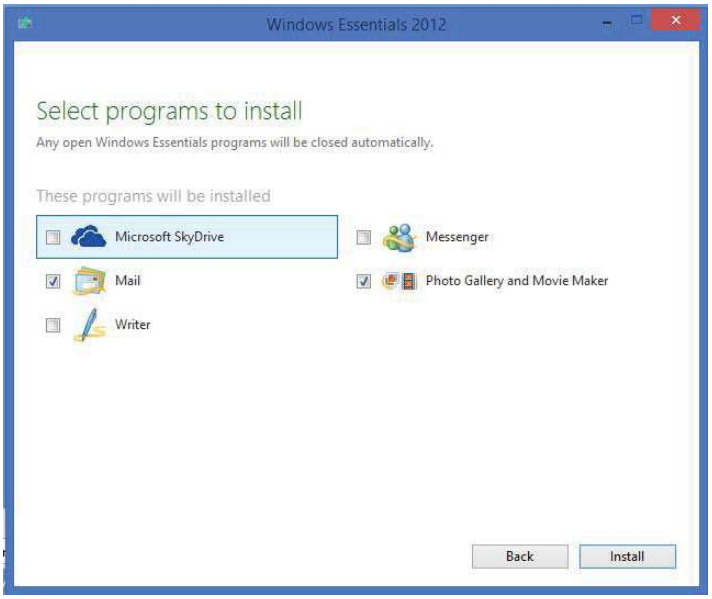
John Witmer, our president, then reviewed the O'Reilly book offers and how to download e-versions in mobi, PDF and other formats and encouraged the membership to participate. John concluded with describing the next FACUG Technology Conference. ◆

Windows 8.1 Adventures

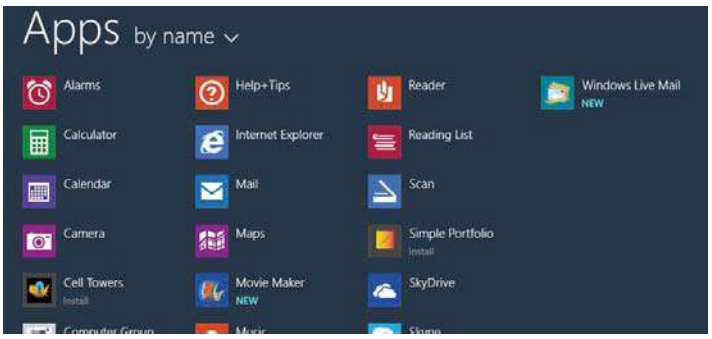
By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Mail: I just want a mail client in Windows 8.1. I don't want yet another online account, and Microsoft is making this hard for me. I don't want yet another email account, thank you. If I type in "MAIL" in the Search box, I'm led through a path that leads to Outlook.com, which insists that I establish an account at Microsoft. (Here's where I disclose that I already have one, many years old that I do use often, but not for mail, not for cloud, just some professional software accounts.) And I do not want to tie my PC activity to an online account … anyone's. Apparently Outlook.com will handle ("Import") POP accounts, but not until I enter my Microsoft account.

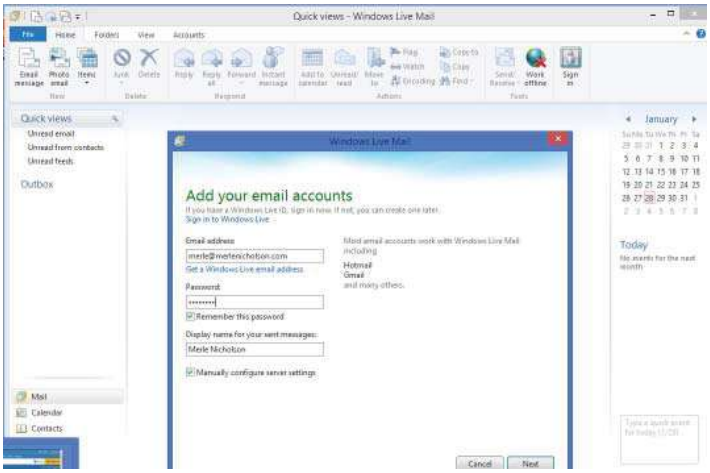
Ok, here's where my guys would say "Thunderbird, Duh!", and I'll go there but first I'll search for my old Windows 7 solution and see if it works. http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-live/download-windows-essentials is where I can get Windows Essentials 2012. It's SO 2012! It first installed a .NET 3.5 package before downloading this installer:



While I'm at it, I'll get Photo Gallery and Movie Maker.



We're off and running. Wasn't hard was it? While Windows Live mail is running and waiting for



your POP account settings, just go to the item on the taskbar, right-click and select "Pin to Taskbar". While we're at it let's turn the Reading Pane off. Under the tab "View", select the drop-down little arrow next to "Reading Pane", and select "Off". You should NEVER have a reading pane on. That's because you can't delete a harmful email without opening it. If the reading pane is on, it will open when you click on that email to delete it. That's what you don't want.

I realize this email client runs from the 8.1 desktop and not from Tile World, but you can have email without a Microsoft account if that's what you desire. I've never been a big fan of Windows Live Mail because they "flattened" out the appearance – eliminating color – and for me making it hard to read from.

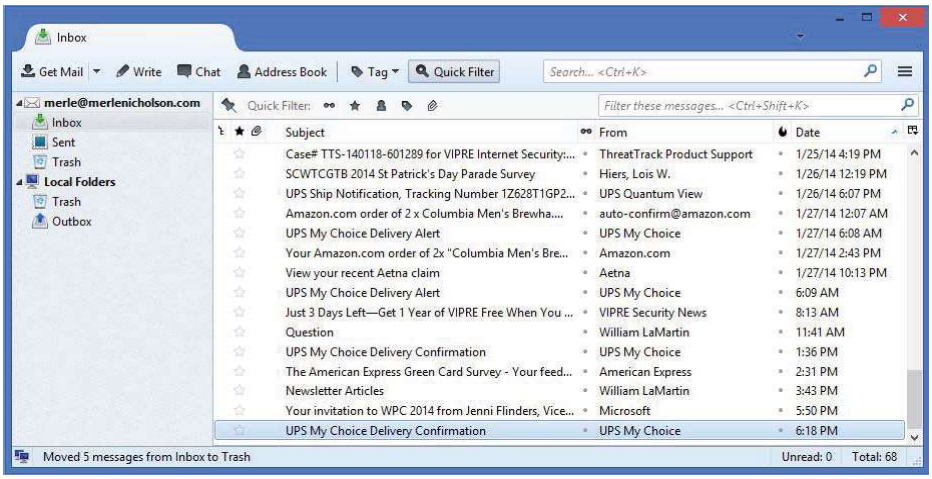
A good alternative is Mozilla Thunderbird at http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/thunderbird. After installing, it will make an offer to you for a new email service. Click on the "Skip this and use my existing email".

Adventures.....Continued on page 4

Adventures.....Continued from page 3

When you put your email address in, it does a credible job of finding the account settings. It found all mine, and I didn't have to change anything except "Leave messages on Server". F8 will turn the reading pane on/off. I like a couple of features in Thunderbird. One is that it makes use of tabs to read messages. Even in Windows 8.1, it doesn't have the flat, hard-to-read appearance you find in Windows Live mail. As I did with Live Mail, while it was open I pinned it to the taskbar. When you right-click on the taskbar, there are two tasks: "Write New Message" and "Open Address Book". Live Mail has four similar tasks.

Mozilla Thunderbird



Having both email clients on the PC is interesting. Both want to be the default, so I guess I'll let them fight it out.

ISO FILES: I recently built a new Windows 8.1 computer for my younger son. He bought some new parts; case, motherboard and CPU, and I pulled other parts out of bins in my closet, built it and shipped it to him. It was my second 8.1 computer built recently, so I was able to configure the software pretty quickly. I had to resist the temptation to "customize" it the way I would do one of my own. This case is but 4-1/8 inches tall, the size of a stereo receiver. It has no optical drive, which posed some interesting installation problems. One was creating a Windows 8.1 installation onto a bootable USB drive, and the other was providing him with two other DVDs needed when he had no drive. He isn't remotely challenged by this but I thought I would resolve it before it got to him. The answer really lies in .iso files.

.iso files are simply images of optical disks. You can increasingly buy downloadable software in this form. If you start with the physical CD/DVD/BD media, making an .iso file is easy with little utility programs like ImgBurn (at http://www.imgburn.com). And with ImgBurn you can recreate the physical media from the .iso file.

If you have the .iso it makes sense that you could skip the physical media entirely and "mount" the .iso file directly into a "virtual" drive (a software simulation of a physical drive), and indeed you can.

As it turns out, Windows 8.1 will mount .iso files automatically without any software. From what I read, it will not do audio or video format files; I have not tested that. If you want to mount video or audio disks, see the following paragraph for the Windows 7 solution. In any case the 8.1 problem is solved with no effort on my part other than some research time. I included the .iso images of the two DVD's on the flash drive.

For Windows 7, I have been using a nice little product called "Daemon Tools Lite" for many years – a nice, free program from http://www.daemon-tools.cc/products/dtLite (see screen capture on page 6). It acts like a CD/DVD/BD player. The file extension .iso (and optionally many other types) is associated to the player, so a double-click on the .iso file auto loads it into the drive. You can configure the drive to auto-load on Windows startup. You can configure it to auto-load the same .iso file on startup. A word of caution; there are imbedded links to game sites in this app. I was first aware of it when my antivirus blocked the installer as an advertising application. Looking at it, I think it's benign; at least my Vipre antivirus doesn't protest when I went to one of the links. You can collapse the pane where the game site links are shown. The paid versions of this app are too steep in my opinion. I'll

Adventures.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Microsoft has a new CEO

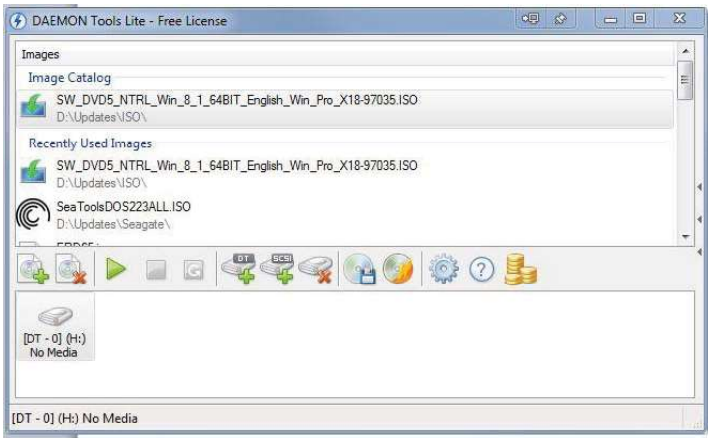
From the New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/05/technology/microsoft-names-engineering-executive-as-new-chief.html?hp. From left, Bill Gates, the first CEO, Satya Nadella, the new CEO and Steven A. Ballmer, the previous CEO, shown at a Microsoft event Feb 4. Funny thing, no one is using an iPhone to take a photo.

February's Links

Tampa PC Users Group	http://www.tpcug.org
TPCUG Newsletter Win 8 app	http://apps.microsoft.com/windows/en-us/app/computer-group-newsletters/64b111b8-0c55-4f76-8728-709dbf32dc2b
Antoine's Restaurant, New Orleans	http://www.antoines.com/
Vox Media	http://www.voxmedia.com/
Frequency Allocations	http://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/spectrum_wall_chart_aug2011.pdf

Windows & Alternatives.....Continued from page 4

stick with the ad-supported free version. ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 1

it would produce the UEFI screen (which looks like an old DOS screen and is not supposed to appear), I would have the option to save any of the two possible changes having to do with Secure Boot and then continue. No matter what I did, the computer would most often come back to the same screen. If I did that enough, five or six times, then possibly I would see Windows 8. Or if I pressed the power button until the computer shut down and then restarted, I may be lucky and have Windows 8 appear--or I may not.

I tried all solutions suggested on the Internet (I was not the only person experiencing the problem), but none fixed anything. I contacted Microsoft technical support, and in a week's time they did not produce a solution. There were several other problems caused by the update that I had been able to fix, but this one seemed intractable. So my solution was to phone Microsoft customer service and request a return. The lady who answered cheerfully said she would put that through and I would receive a return label within 48 to 72 hours via email. When the label did not arrive, I phoned again and spoke with someone who sounded like the same cheerful lady; she made the same promise – with the same result: no label in 72 hours. A third try produced the same result. Enough. I contacted someone I knew at the local Microsoft office, and he said he would escalate my request. Within two

Comments.....Continued on page 8

Goodbye Desktop Towers

By Ron Weinberg, Member-At-Large
rswjbr@verizon.net

The April 8, 2014 support deadline for XP fast approaching and my old reliable and powerful custom Dell desktop's hard drive showing signs of wear, time to consider a replacement. Holiday season specials were overflowing.

Dell no longer seems to offer the wide customization options with which they formerly excelled. HP still offers some, and there is a vast array of ready built systems from Lenovo, ASUS, and Acer, etc. Of course, complete custom built or build your own are still available.

Times have changed. The explosion of tablets with thousands of apps has made the PC less important for many. But those of us who are a little bit more involved in computing still need the PC over a tablet.

The days of the big box tower with large power supplies, extra card slots and massive memory are past – such items no longer needed except by a few gamers, professionals, and serious enthusiasts. I have no need for heavy-duty graphic cards for heavy gaming, art or photo/movie editing.

Today's mid- and high-range laptops easily outperform our best older desktops. Their graphics are more than adequate for most tasks.

After due consideration, I decided I could best be served by a Windows 8 Touch Laptop that offers portability and compactness, rather than a big screen All-In-One desk model.

Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop Elements and Premier Elements are the only programs I must purchase. The latter two will satisfy most of my editing needs. Mine are old (Office 2003, Photoshop Elements 5.0, Premier Elements 3.0) and needed to be upgraded in any case.

Goodbye.....Continued on page 7

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR 2013
Submitted by Doug Mullis, Treasurer

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2013 INCOME		
Membership Dues (24 Single + 5 Family)	$	775.00
Door Prize/Auction Receipts		43.00
Amazon Link Commissions		688.48
TOTAL INCOME	$	1,506.48
2013 EXPENSES		
Newsletter Postage	$	184.00
Newsletter Printing (9 Mos in 2013)		323.45
FACUG Dues		25.00
APCUG Dues		0.00
Florida Annual Corporate Fee		61.25
Web Site Hosting Fee (12 Months)		181.08
P O Box Rental (fee increase)		76.00
December Holiday Party Costs		276.13
Refreshments (Cookies)		5.48
PayPal Usage Fee (5 Payments @ $0.85 ea)		4.25
TOTAL EXPENSES	$	1,186.64
NET INCOME FOR 2013	$	319.84
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – START OF 2013	$	7,241.02
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – END OF 2013	$	7,560.86

(No Bank Account Reconciling Items for Beginning or End of Year)

Goodbye.....Continued from page 6

My reliable B&W LaserJet 2100 Printer is compatible and already networked. My old Color DeskJet 895CXi will work via USB.

There is no Windows 7 or 8 driver for my old Canon LiDE 50 Desktop Scanner. Like other devices no longer supported after XP, they have mostly been replaced by newer models and, although they still perform, must be sacrificed to so called progress (i.e. planned obsolescence).

While I have already purchased a new laptop, it has not been my intention to extol the virtues of one or another, but rather to comment on desktops' demise as they slowly fade away. ◆

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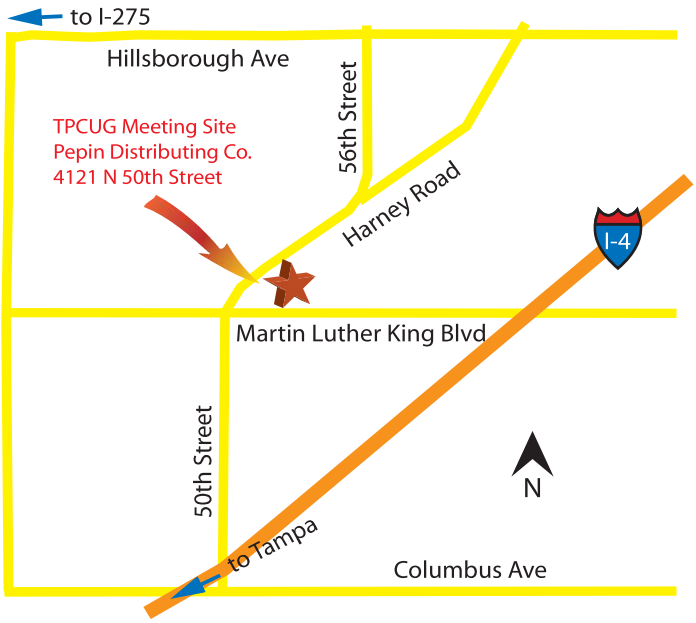
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 6

hours I had been emailed a label. Was it his request or just a coincidence or both? Anyway, I had the label, and the next day the defective Surface was on the way back to Microsoft. About a week later, I had a credit for that Surface Pro 2 in my credit card account, which was nice since, when the first lady said I would be receiving a return label, I immediately purchased a replacement at the online Microsoft Store because I knew the devices were in short supply. In fact, the one I wanted, the 512 GB version, was the only one not out of stock, and as I write this the 128 GB version is the only one in stock. So for a little over two weeks I had two Surface Pro 2 512 GB devices on my credit card.

Now all is well, the new device is fine (please, no bad updates) and is a pleasure to use. It is a real computer with a detachable keyboard in the footprint of a tablet. It has great battery life, seven or eight hours in use, and runs all my Windows desktop programs in addition to the Win 8 apps. One of those apps is Computer Group Newsletters, the updated version of which allows you to view all our newsletters from 1984 to 2014. And there is no room to relate other problems.
◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



January in Tampa

Vol. 27 No. 1 January 2014

Meeting

Communication in the 21st Century

by
Kevan Sheridan

Wednesday, January 8, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: This month's meeting topic is "Communication in the 21st Century" presented by TPCUG Vice President Kevan Sheridan. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Microsoft Surface

Before receiving Merle Nicholson's article on Windows and Alternatives, I was afraid I was going to have to fill the newsletter by myself except for the possibility that Ron Weinberg would be sending me something. So I had started on what would be a fairly long article on the Microsoft Surface Pro 2. But seeing Merle's article, I think I need to change course and write a shorter article explaining what the Surface is, why you might want one and why you might not want one. And Ron's article is being saved for next month.

The Surface and its newer version Surface 2 are tablet computers and run only apps, not Windows desktop programs. They are similar to the iPad with a few additional features such as a full-size USB 3.0 port and an HD video out port. But tablets are not my interest. I want a full-featured Windows computer in a tablet format. The Surface Pro 2 is such a device.

Comments.....Continued on page 2

February Meeting: Ubuntu Linux

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

In December of each year, TPCUG members dispense with the usual meeting and hold a banquet. This year it was a week early, December 4th for scheduling reasons, held at Pepin in the open conference table. It was well attended; we ate well and got a chance to talk in a social setting with other members. Thanks to John Witmer for arranging the food and meeting location, and our thanks also to Pepin Distributing for providing the venue. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

The Surface Pro 2 is not simply a tablet; it is a real Windows 8.1 computer. In addition to the Windows 8.1 apps, it will run any Windows desktop program, such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, Family Tree Maker, Quicken and TurboTax, and Microsoft Office programs such as Word, Excel, and Visual Studio. In short, it will run any program that will run on a Windows 7 desktop computer. Additionally, you have all the tablet-style Windows Store apps that come with Window 8.1, plus the ones that people such as myself write.

My wife and I had gifted both our adult children with the earlier Surface Pro 128 GB devices shortly after Microsoft introduced them. However, I waited and recently purchased the new Surface Pro 2. It has several important advantages over the original. Briefly, it has two additional storage sizes: 256 GB and 512 GB, with 8 GB RAM instead of the original 4. Also, very importantly, it has a much better battery life than did the original Surface Pro because of the new Intel Core i5 Haswell processor it uses. The time that the original Surface Pro would run on the battery was the primary complaint people had, including my son. With the Surface Pro 2, battery run-time is no longer a problem. To see the specifications and pricing on the Surface Pro 2, go to http://www.microsoft.com/store and select Surface as the shopping category.

Comments.....Continued on page 3

Comments.....Continued from page 2

I like the Surface Pro 2. It is a very compact and powerful computer, but it is not for everyone for several reasons, the first being price. I haven't done much research, but I am sure you can purchase a quite adequate Windows 8.1 laptop with a touch screen for a good bit less than a mid-priced Surface Pro 2 with a detachable keyboard. Then there is the problem of your vision with the small screen. The display on the Surface is superior for a tablet and when running apps, viewing web pages or reading documents you can enlarge what you are viewing by the usual finger gestures. However, if you are running a desktop program such as Photoshop on the Surface screen you are going to have a hard time identifying the small tool icons in the tool box. If I didn't already know where the clone tool or the paint bucket tools were, I would have a difficult time identifying them without using a magnifying glass. Now if you are using the Surface at home, you could just connect a larger monitor. That would give you two monitors, and you could use the larger one for working with programs such as Photoshop. Problem solved, but on the road it is a different matter.

And that brings up another advantage of the Surface over most tablets: It has a full-sized USB 3.0 port, a mini Display port and a Micro SD card reader. You may purchase all sorts of adapters to use with these ports. There is a VGA adapter and an HDMI adapter that you may use to connect the second monitor. There is also an Ethernet adapter you may use to connect to your local LAN to get a faster connection that is available through a wireless connection.

The Surface Pro is really not much different in size from the Apple iPad, being shorter in one dimension, longer in another dimension and slightly thicker and weighing a bit more. But the big difference is that the iPad is a tablet; the Surface Pro 2 is a real computer. If all you need are email, web browsing and apps, then there is no need to pay for the Surface Pro 2. Buy an iPad or Android tablet – or the Surface 2 tablet. But for me, I want a real computer as my portable device, just as I used laptops for portable devices in the past. But now I can get the same functionality in a much lighter and smaller package with the Surface Pro 2.

So the good is that it is a very compact real computer with a wonderful screen, good front-facing and rear-facing cameras with ports to connect peripherals that will do anything your desktop Windows computer will do.

The main downside is the cost, ranging from around bit over $1,000 with a detachable keyboard and a 64 GB SSD drive to almost $2,000 with a 512 GB SSD drive. Not cheap. If you want cheap, do what Merle did with his old desktop machine. But instead find an old laptop and put Ubuntu on it. That will give you a cheap portable device – but it won't be touch enabled, it won't weigh only two pounds, it won't run for eight or so hours on one charge and, if you carry around a normal size lady's purse, it won't fit in that.

And at present there is one other downside to the Surface in addition to the cost. In mid-December, Microsoft issued an update for the Surface that caused many Surface owners' machines to experience various problems, a fix for which has not yet been issued. The update was removed from the Microsoft site, but the damage was done. My Surface Pro 2 was one of the affected computers.

For some, the problem was the battery draining even when the Surface was supposedly sleeping, others had different problems after the update. My problem is termed, I think, the Secure Boot Loader Loop where on some boots of the Surface instead of going to a login screen, you are presented with what appears as a very abbreviated BIOS screen with four choices. And no matter what choice you make and then tap Exit, you are brought right back to the same screen. In my case, I can eventually escape. I have spoken with Microsoft, and they are researching my problem. In the interim, I rarely shut down the Surface Pro 2 and instead just let it go to sleep by closing the keyboard cover. ◆



Windows and Alternatives

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary TPCUG
merle@merlenicholson.com

A startling idea: Chromebook sales were 20% of total notebook sales in 2013. I'm sure even Google – the "owner" of Chrome – is surprised. So I thought it's time to have a look at what is available – kind of a reflection of my own recent activities.

Windows, the one we're all familiar with. I can safely say that until Windows 8, Windows had not changed much in functions or in user interface since Windows 95. It has steadily gotten better; that's obvious. The change to Windows XP and then Windows 7 x64 was dramatic in reliability and in minimizing driver issues and making new devices self-installing. But usability – the day to day launch of an application, using it and going on to the business of what you own one for – had remained the same since 1995. There is a good reason for this I think. It was well-thought-out in the first place, and the 1995 version was a result of a development process – as a graphical user interface – that began, say, 12 or 14 years earlier with Atari, Amiga, Lisa, Macintosh, Xerox Star and of course Xerox PARC.

The details of how to operate application Windows right now is the result of nearly 30 years of minor changes. So we can look at this as "well-developed and mature" rather than "old in the tooth".

I can personally attest to this since I'm using Google Docs for the first time right now to compose this article, and there is nothing that is unfamiliar. It is a better, more developed version of Word Perfect 6 that I used in 1989.

The point I'm trying to make is that ALL of the alternative computers are alike in all important usable ways.

Windows 8.1 Is the first real change Microsoft has made to the user interface with a tiled screen designed for touchscreens. We're calling it "Tile World" – I think first suggested by David Pogue of the New York Times. His YouTube videos on the subject are worth watching. This OS is not being adopted by businesses. The loss of XP support by Microsoft this coming April is forcing businesses to replace their old XP OS in favor of Windows 7. It's an expensive migration.

Computers using Windows operating systems have an overwhelming share of the market (new sales) and the existing base. Its nearest competitor is the Apple Mac computer, constituting just 6% and dropping slowly. I'm referring to the personal and business computer market excluding servers.

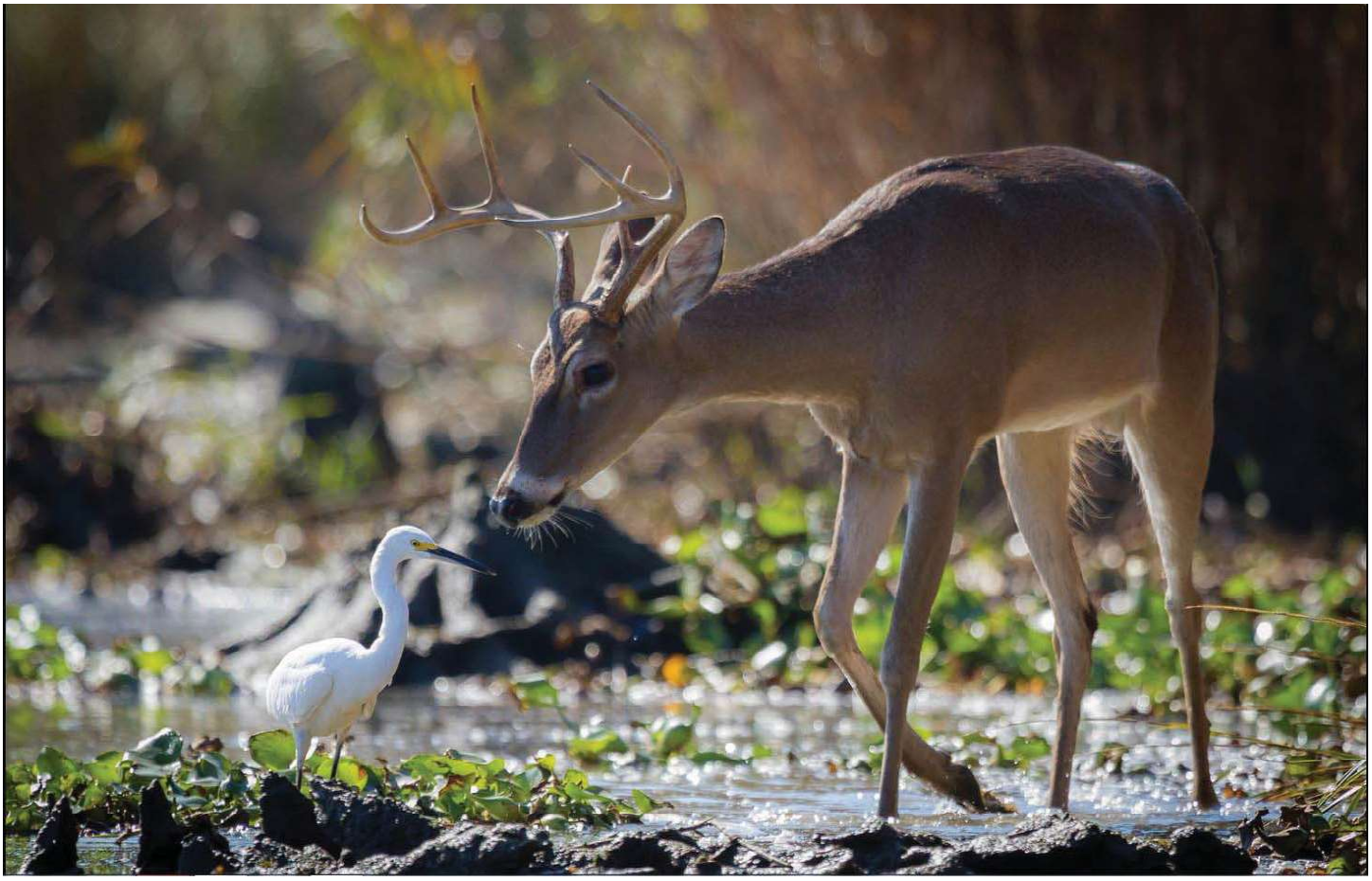
There is no lack of personal and business software for Windows OS. With a little research you can do very well with no-cost software. Business software is plentiful but more expensive. The virus problem is overwhelming for the non-technical user. I advise non-technical users to bite the bullet and purchase good quality self-maintaining antivirus. Too much of the day-to-day of Windows computers use is technical and a "Social Media" user would be better served with ChromeBook, Linux or Mac.

Apple Mac This uses an OS called OSX (X as in ten). They are available in both desktop, all-in-one and notebooks. They use essentially the same components as Windows machines, but the choices are relatively limited. (Basically they make one model of anything. I say this because if you look at HP, you should find a dozen different 15" notebooks, all configurable, and it's the same for all screen sizes. Then there's a business class . . .)

This limited choice – one model for each size – is a strength because it's not confusing you with choices, and a weakness because there are no choices. No one else makes Macs, and it's difficult to get the Mac OS to work on other hardware (called Hackintosh). Apple enjoys very high profitability because they have a high margin and high retail prices. Since they don't compete and another company cannot compete with them; they're unique. Their investment in software is much less because they support far fewer hardware choices. They enjoy a reliability that's hard to beat for the same

Windows & Alternatives.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Snowy Egret and White-Tailed Deer

From http://www.flickr.com, by Gary Seloff, whose Photostream at Flickr is at http://www.flickr.com/photos/gseloff/. Gary takes wonderful nature photos, as this image demonstrates, and he has 7,876 photos on Flickr. The photo was taken at Armand Bayou, which Bing tells me is in Pasadena, TX near Houston. This particular photo is located at http://www.flickr.com/photos/gseloff/11677373374/

January's Links

Tampa PC Users Group	http://www.tpcug.org
Gutenberg Bible	http://bav.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/icv/page.php?book=arch._b_b.10
Compensation at Private Colleges	http://chronicle.com/article/Executive-Compensation-at/143541#id=table
Government Health Care Marketplace	https://www.healthcare.gov/marketplace/individual/
History of the IBM Mainframe	http://www.vm.ibm.com/devpages/JELLIOTT/pdfs/zhistory.pdf

Windows & Alternatives.....Continued from page 4

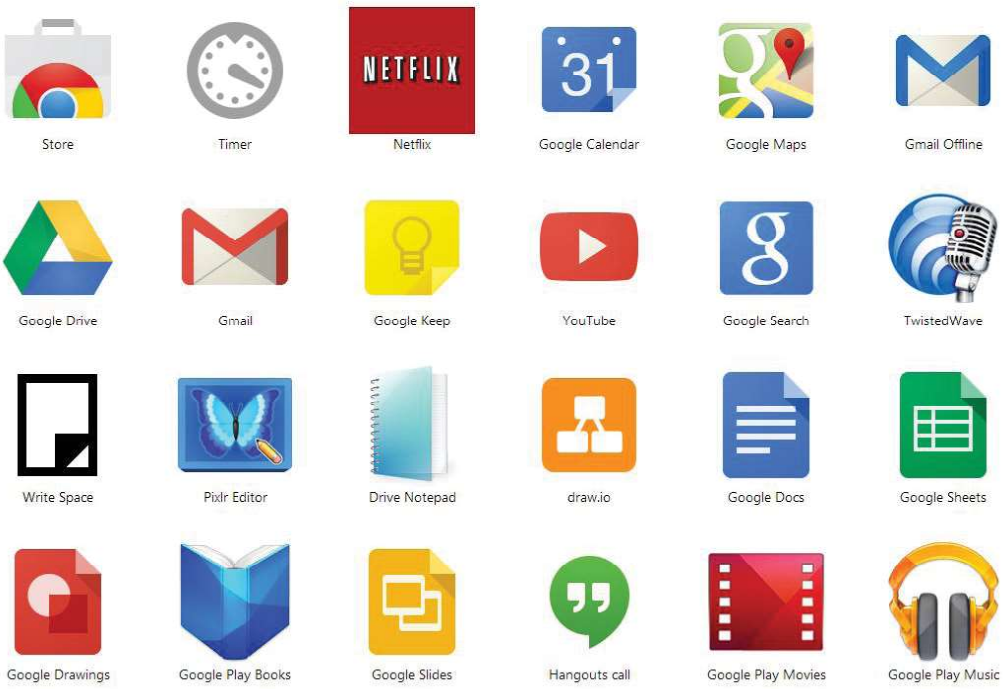
reason – limited hardware choices.

As far as usability – running applications from the desktop, they're the same. I'll disclose that I used one only for a few weeks earlier this year but study the subject often. It takes a bit of learning to find everything, but in the end I can do all of the essentials: web, email, photos, documents. But I found if I want to do real work – publishing, movie and photo editing, programming, database development, commercial applications, the number of applications is extremely limited and what is available is expensive. I found printer (and other non-Apple devices) setup problematic. This is my own opinion; I think Apple Mac usability is lightweight but it would suit 90% of the "Social Media" users and none of the people wanting to derive income or use in business. You CAN run Windows software in a Virtual Machine, but I found it slow and difficult (impossible for the non-technical). The Apple hardware is first class; they lag behind the current Intel hardware offerings, not necessarily a bad thing, but if you need real processing power or reasonable pricing, look elsewhere.

ChromeBook (and ChromeBox). A ChromeBook is a thin, lightweight notebook that uses the Chrome browser as the user interface. There are eight ChromeBook models on the market and one ChromeBox. The prices top out at $320 for seven of the eight and the one exception can run up to $1800. All of these are very attractive; slim and light. The largest is 14", the smallest is 11". I took a serious look at the HP 14", and, honestly, until that time I thought the most attractive notebook I've handled was the Apple Air, but this is better. Most – not all – have a limited size SSD 16G hard drive. One Acer has a conventional 320G HD. The SSD and the lightweight operating system allow them to boot in about 10 seconds, and shut down in two.

Models are available with built-in cellular for portable web browsing, email and data. The extra cost is low, but of course you'll be paying the blood-sucking-phone-provider-of-choice more money every month.

Since the Chrome browser is always on, it does all the Googley things well. All Google accounts have a 5G "Google Drive" where you store most things you need. Obviously you can't store a music library on that drive. But Google+, Picasa, Google Keep are all a part of this automatically. Google Play Music is available if you need storage for music. The ChromeBooks I've looked at have USB ports and SD card readers for more storage, and of course because they're networked you can transfer pictures from your phone or tablet. If you're an Android user, phone or tablet, most of this will come naturally. You can purchase more storage for a monthly fee.



If you have Chrome on your Windows PC you can preview what is available on ChromeBook by installing the Chrome Apps in your browser.. I'm using "Docs" right now, and I just completed a fairly large

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Windows & Alternatives.....Continued from page 6

spreadsheet project using "Sheets". On page 6 is an image of what I have installed in Chrome right now on my Windows 7 PC Not shown is Angry Birds and Google Play.

As you can see in the image on the previous page, all the "Social Media" requirements are being met by a standard collection of applications. There are much more available (thousands) than what I have, such as Kindle Reader, Outlook.com, Remote Desktop . . . . Google takes a pretty low key approach to announcing new applications.

ChromeBooks are technically Linux (Ubuntu) computers but the base operating system is hidden, just like it is on your phone or tablet. It means that updates are done automatically. If an update requires a reboot it will tell you so just like it does on your smartphone. There is no antivirus available nor is it necessary. The base OS being Ubuntu means that it's fundamentally secure from viruses, probably not forever.

I have recently looked into a ChromeBook as an alternative for my wife's desktop. She is getting tired of contending with Adobe flash player updates, Windows updates and pop-ups and warnings of impending doom and threats of viruses. The ChromeBook is as close to meeting all her requirements as anything I can find except for her Quicken application, and there doesn't seem to be a way to solve that so I'm writing a "Google Sheets" spreadsheet. The big advantage to this is that it is shareable with her Android phone, albeit hard to read.

ChromeBook will probably satisfy all your "Social Media" needs and do it well and quickly in an attractive lightweight notebook with no update and no virus hassles. In a way it's because it does just the necessary fundamental things very well.

Linux (Ubuntu) I haven't looked at any distro except Ubuntu, but there are dozens of distributions (called distros) available, all of high quality and most requiring a fair amount of technical skill. The exception seems to be Ubuntu. Their obvious goal is to try to make the OS foolproof to install. As far as I'm concerned Ubuntu has accomplished that. It's free, as in $0.00 for an unsupported version.

I think my own situation can be typical. I have an older PC, still running OK that I would ordinarily scrap or give away. It was running – for several years – as a media PC running Windows Media Center and a TV card. Basically it was my TV/DVR. I did have a failure on it that I later identified and fixed. But because it was my TV/DVR I needed to get something running and picked another good PC in my house. So I was left with this thing. By then it had no hard drives, but that was all it was missing.

It happens to everyone, say when your old laptop just isn't hacking it any more. Ubuntu is a good solution to a weak PC or laptop. It runs on virtually anything. And it runs well with very little memory and very little hard drive space.

I picked a 60G SSD relatively low performing HD that I had in a Windows 8.1 machine. It's perfect. It's slow for a SSD, but still five times faster than a conventional drive. I created a startup "Live CD" on a flash drive from the Ubuntu website, and booted from that; I picked the first of two choices – (1) install on hard drive or (2) run from flash drive without installing, and in 30 minutes had a running system. It's fast – boots from scratch in ten seconds. So far it's taken all the devices I've attached to it: wireless USB WiFi, wireless keyboard and mouse, speakers, monitors. I plug this stuff in; it does a software update and we're good. It takes all of 5.6G on that 60G drive. The rest is unused.

I look at Ubuntu kind of like I do a Mac. They're really similar in appearance and usability, and I would rate them fairly equal. Ubuntu does have some advantages in the availability of free high-power, high-quality software. That's because Linux has a very long history and culture of being open and free. Ubuntu has three things going for it. "Ubuntu One" is a 10G storage "cloud" like Windows Skydrive and Google Drive. Next is the Ubuntu Store where all the free software is. It's well organized, easy to find by searching and all start installing quickly and with virtually no interaction. Third is a really huge forum and help community

Windows & Alternatives.....Continued on page 8

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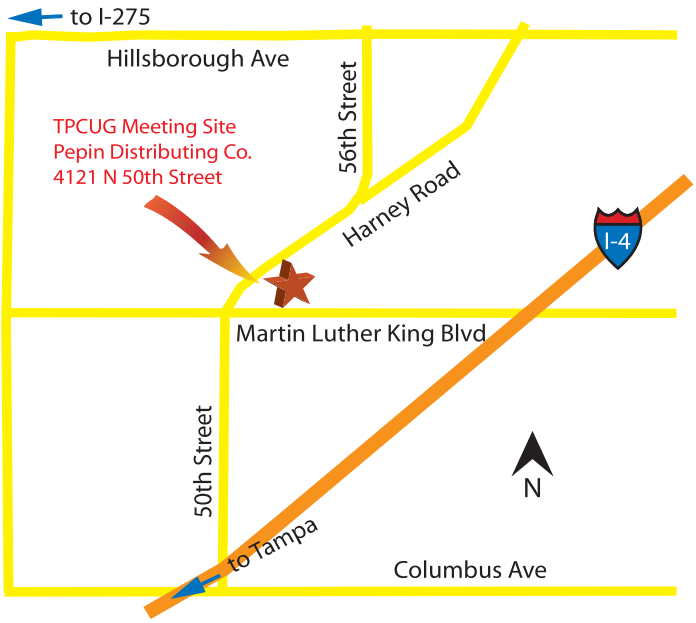
Windows & Alternatives.....Continued from page 7

so that you can get virtually any problem solved. Just use the web; ask the question. It never failed me.

Some TPCUG person whom I will not mention by name, asked how I would run Microsoft Access if I went to Ubuntu – just as a challenge, I expect. I installed a Linux Oracle VirtualBox and a virtual machine manager, then copied a Windows 7 virtual hard drive from my Windows server over to Ubuntu unchanged and ran it. It took two hours to get it right, but I now have Windows 7 running in a Ubuntu window on an old computer, and it does very well. It runs MS Access flawlessly. I did decide to add a second hard drive to accommodate the very large VirtualBox files.

Last thing to mention. I installed the Google Chrome browser in Ubuntu and now I have all the Googley functions that I would have in a ChromeBook as well.

Finally, I think Linux Ubuntu is just as functional as a Mac for everyday "Social Media" functions and has additional advantages of free major applications like LibreOffice. It accepts a wide variety of hardware and is a very viable solution to reviving old hardware that doesn't run that well under Windows. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 27 No. 3 March 2014

March in Tampa

Meeting

Various Windows Programs & Utilities

by
Bob LaFave

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: This month's meeting topic is Various Windows Programs and Utilities. Bob LaFave will be the presenter. Bob also will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

In this month's newsletter, Merle Nicholson educates us about a new plan from Verizon Wireless that can possibly provide you with a better package than you now have. I know that I am going to look into it. Then Merrill Friend tells us how to monitor our heart with a personal EKG device. However, you will need to have an iPhone to use it.

Dell All-in-One

I was in Microsoft's local office this past week for a programmer's meeting and saw a very interesting new Windows 8.1 portable computer brought in by one of the attendees. It was an XPS 18 Touch All-in-One made by Dell. It was an 18.5 inch tablet with separate keyboard and mouse. It had an Intel i5 processor, 500 GB hard drive, 8 GB of memory and Windows 8.1. According to the Dell site, the cost for this configuration is $1,300. Different options are available. With an i3 processor and 4 GB of memory, 500 GB hard drive, and Windows 8 (freely upgradable to 8.1), the cost is $1,000. With an i7 processor,

Comments.....Continued on page 4

April Meeting: "Doc" Dockerty on the future of user groups

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, normally introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Merle Nicholson, Secretary TPCUG, was moderator in Bob's absence.

Merle introduced the newer line of Logitech keyboard and mouse using the "unified transmitter" used across a wide variety of Logitech input devices. The features are much longer battery life and the ability to wake from sleep so fast that you're not aware of the sleep state.

Merle then went on to describe the method to get a toolbar menu added to Windows 7, 8 and 8.1 by utilizing the existing Start Menu folders. This is especially helpful in Windows 8, where there is no menu at all, and is highly recommended for those who value a cascading menu system that even Windows 7 does not have.

The meeting presentation was also given by Merle Nicholson on the subjects of the Ubuntu and Kubuntu, two of the many Linux operating systems. He brought a desktop computer with a single hard drive set up to dual boot to either OS. The two OS have very different appearances, despite both being based on Ubuntu 13.10. This OS is an interim release between the fully supported 12.04 LTS and the next fully supported LTS of 14.04 Trusty Tahr. The LTS designations are milestone releases that have five-year support by Ubuntu.

The Ubuntu release is similar in appearance to the MAC OS X, with an animated app dock on the left side that is included in a desktop product called Unity. It is easy to install from a bootable flash drive. When running from the flashdrive the user has a choice to

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Verizon Wireless Revisited

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Switching over to the Verizon "More Everything" plan has been interesting. It's not necessarily the best thing to do, depending on the equipment you have and how much you value some features. I sprung for it, and I think I will benefit from it.

I have my wireless account with Verizon. Verizon has the best national coverage and the best reputation of all carriers. Their recent 4G outbuild into the US has been outstanding. Basically if you can't get at least 3G cell phone coverage with them wherever you are in the US, you probably shouldn't be there. Of all US carriers, Verizon is the most expensive.

That they have the best reputation isn't saying too much, because it's compared to the other carriers. As a group, Cable TV operators are the most reviled businesses in the country, and a very large part of Verizon is FIOS. I'm not even remotely fond of phoning them. In making my recent changes, their website failed three times over two days, completely, saying that the service I was using was not available. I had to phone to make the changes only to discover that the changes had been applied on one of my three previous website attempts. I think the Verizon Wireless website has improved over time.

A large part of my own dissatisfaction is the virtually unreadable bills, and the dearth of vital information. I am finally getting used to the bill to the point where if nothing has changed – no adjustments, credits or new equipment – I can compare it to previous months and decide if it's a valid bill.

I wanted to determine how much data my family's phones use before I was ready to make my most recent changes. The new plan has shared buckets of data, and it's important that I pick the best one. 2GB is $50, 3GB is $60. We have three Smartphones. My own is on a "grandfathered" unlimited data plan.

The bill summarizes the amount of data used in KB. Last month mine was 13,000KB. That's 13MB, and .013GB. Considering the use I make of my phone as a GPS (and Google Navigation) while in the car and using the browser while I'm away from my home WiFi, it's surprisingly low. Just about nothing.

The other two phones are each on $30/mo 2G data plans. How much does Verizon report? 1G for each. Not some fraction of a gigabyte, no … just round it up to the nearest gigabyte. I'm certain that my spouse uses no more than I, so if it were the same amount as mine, how do you round up from .013GB to 1GB?

On Verizon's website they have a calculator that takes your devices in account and recommended … wait for it … 6GB for $80! By the way, 10GB is $100. 250MB is $15. So it's priced on a slope. At $15 for 250MB, 2G would be $120, not $50.

There is a very good Verizon Android app to monitor your usage. Now that my plan has been changed, it is reporting my plan data usage in KB. Excellent. Also I set alerts to message me when my usage hits 50%, 75%, and 90%, so I'll get plenty of warning if I need to increase it.

Copied from their website: "Data overage for plans with 1 GB or more is $15 per 1 GB. Need more than 10 GB of data. Add 2 GB for $10 by logging into My Verizon". So if I'm in danger of exceeding my shared data limit, I can jump in there with the mobile app and increase it for $15, or wait for them to charge me that $15 overage.

To change everything over to the new plan, you are charged a monthly "access" fee for each device: Smartphone $40/mo; Basic phones $30, Jetpack, USB devices and Home Connect $20; Tablets $10 and Connected Devices $5. For my three smartphones ($40ea) and Home Connect ($20 for one) plus one $50 2GB data plan for a total of $190. Plus fees and taxes. The fees have been running just over $2 each, and taxes are taxes.

This is just shy of a $9 increase over my base charges

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Verizon.....Continued from page 3

significantly. I now have unlimited phone minutes and unlimited messaging. Messaging for me has ranged from $6 to $22/mo. That sneaked up on me, and it was when I was doing 2013 taxes that I realized the reason for this: I was enjoying the message alerts from Amazon, UPS and FedEx on purchases and shipments. I like those, but I was paying for each one. Duh. December was $22! To be fair, I could have added coverage for messaging, but I mistakenly never thought it was worth it.

The final improvement is that the smartphones are now unlocked for mobile hotspot. Hotspot uses cellular Internet data and transmits it – makes it available to connect to like any other WiFi.

My Verizon hotspot app now works, where before it asked if I were ready to pay the $20/mo hotspot fee. For me, this is an optional activity to get Internet access for my notebook or tablet when a WiFi is not available. I have tested it; you just set up the SSID name and the security password and it's ready to go. The notebook and tablet detect the SSID and remember the security code. William LaMartin reports that the Windows Phone hotspot is in settings > Internet Sharing. iPhone is settings > general > cellular. Android has one of those Verizon apps that you can't delete, along with CityID and Madden football crapware.

A word of warning about hotspot. You can't take it for granted that your smartphone is hotspot capable. Almost all are, but there are exceptions. Second, when it's on, it's a significant power drain, so turn it off when not needed; watch your battery usage.

Here's why I think "More Everything" will work for me. I have multiple devices that are already in the system, paid for or under contract. At worst, it's a wash, moneywise. But let's say I want a new Nexus 7 tablet with LTE (that's 4G) cellular capability. It's $10 a month. A bargain. Add to that the occasional use of hotspot, eliminating my variable messaging fees, and eliminating the worry that our shared 700 minutes would get crunched, it looks good for me, and I really want a new Nexus 7. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

a full installation (very fast, especially from an SSD). After installation, the OS boots from scratch in 10 seconds and shuts down in less than two. There are thousands of good quality applications available, almost all are at no cost. For those who have a Windows application that can't be duplicated there is a Windows emulator called WINE that does an excellent job of running many Windows binaries. It does some Windows applications very well and very many not at all. For ultimate Windows support, the Oracle Virtualbox is the answer. There, it runs an entire Windows OS and then the applications you want can run in the VM. This option is pretty much flawless, although somewhat more resource intensive.

Ubuntu desktop is available from http://www.ubuntu.com/desktop. It comes in LTS or the current release in either 32bit or 64bit. If your computer will run 64 bit, and most do, be sure to get that one.

The second OS Merle demonstrated is Kubuntu, which is a Ubuntu OS, but with a desktop called KDE. KDE replaces the Unity desktop that Ubuntu uses. Otherwise, the capability and availability of applications is the same as Ubuntu. There's a KDE organization that administers the product and one that has some corporate support to help sustain their efforts. The key feature of KDE is the Windows-like appearance, but it is very highly configurable. The look and feel appearance can be radically changed depending on how much time you want to devote to it. It's the version that Merle has adopted and uses often. http://www.kubuntu.org. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

8 GB of memory, a 500 GB hard drive, and Windows 8.1, the price is $1,400. All have an additional 32 GB solid state drive for quick startups, two USB 3.0 ports and a camera.

This is a real computer and tablet with a full-size screen that has all the power you will need with a size of 11.17"x18.25"x.7" (HxWxD). It weighs about five

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Internet Picture of the Month



North Korea at Night

From NASA, http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=83182. To quote: "Flying over East Asia, astronauts on the International Space Station (ISS) took this night image of the Korean Peninsula. ..... North Korea is almost completely dark compared to neighboring South Korea and China. The darkened land appears as if it were a patch of water joining the Yellow Sea to the Sea of Japan."

We can't accuse those North Koreans of wasting electricity. Original large photo relabeled by WFL.

February's Links

Tampa PC Users Group	http://www.tpcug.org
Pando Daily	http://pando.com/
ComputerWorld	http://www.computerworld.com/
Exploring Florida Maps	http://fcit.usf.edu/florida/maps/

A Heart Monitor For Your iPhone

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
absecon1933@gmail.com

My wife's doctor recently recommended that she obtain a medical app for her iPhone-4. The app operates a Heart Monitor which sells for $199. I was surprised to see such a device available through an iPhone app, but I suppose it is just a sign of our highly technological times. I thought others might find the concept as fascinating as I did, so here is what I have learned about it so far.

The monitor is sold by AliveCor and is a mobile, clinical-quality electrocardiogram (ECG) recorder for use by both physicians and patients. The duration of the recording is customizable from 30 seconds to continuous. The software can store thousands of recordings on your iPhone 4,4s or 5, and these recordings are accessible to you on the AliveCor, Inc. (AliveCor) server.

- The Heart Monitor, which snaps onto the iPhone, contains sensors and electronics used to collect ECG rhythms and transmit them to the iPhone.
- The AliveECG mobile application (AliveECG App) is used to collect, view, save and wirelessly transmit ECG recordings to the AliveCor Server. A user supplied Apple iPhone 4, 4S or 5 operating with iOS 5.1 or greater is required. Note: The iPhone must be purchased separately.

This Heart Monitor enables the physician or patient to:

- Collect and view single-channel ECG rhythms using the iPhone. (As I understand it, a full ECG in a physicians office involves 12 leads – the iPhone is a single lead recording only.)
- Store ECG recordings on the iPhone.
- Wirelessly transmit ECG recordings to the AliveCor server.
- Access ECG recordings stored on the AliveCor server from anywhere in the world, and print the recording or save it to a hard drive.

INDICATIONS FOR USE

The Heart Monitor is intended for use by licensed



medical professionals or patients to record, display, store and transfer single-channel electrocardiogram (ECG) rhythms.

The literature furnished by AliveCor indicates there are no known contraindications for the Heart Monitor.

Until mid-February 2014, Federal law (USA) restricted the sale of this device to or on the order of a physician. Over the counter clearance has now been given for the AliveCor Heart Monitor.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE USER?

The device is intended to be used by licensed medical professionals or by a patient under the care and supervision of a physician. Previously, AliveCor would sell the product only to patients who provided them a prescription for the device signed by a licensed physician who is also a user of this product.

Recently that changed when over-the-counter clearance was granted under Federal law. Now the device can be ordered without a prescription. Expert analysis of ECG recordings can still be shared with a user's physician, or sent to a board-certified cardiologist or a U.S. based cardiac technician through AliveInsights.

Users without prescriptions can pre-order the device with shipments beginning in March 2014.

The device measures heart rate and heart rhythm only. This device is not designed or intended for complete diagnosis of cardiac conditions.

Monitor.....Continued on page 7

Monitor.....Continued from page 6

The Monitor does contain its own separate 3-volt replaceable battery power source.

Below are two photos. One shows the face of the Heart Monitor held in the patients hands with the screen facing the patient. His fingers make contact with two finger contact points in each end of the Monitor. Once the patient has signed in with name and password to the AliveCor website, simply making contact with these contact points starts the recording.

The second photo shows the iPhone 4 Heart Monitor itself and its storage container, which has rubberized





edges enabling the patient to slip it over the rear of the iPhone for operating the Monitor.

The Patient can email a copy of the ECG to her physician for discussion and may also send it as a PDF file.

The list of smartphones usable with this device is expanding. For more information, http://www.alivecor.com/. Follow them on Twitter @ AliveCor, Facebook at Facebook.com/aliveCor, and see the videos at YouTube.com/aliveCor

One of the best of these videos in my view is the interview on NBC News with Dr. Nancy Sniderman, along with a former physician from the Cleveland Heart Clinic. This video includes a demo of the product.

AliveCor, Inc is a privately-held company headquartered in San Francisco. Company literature indicates the company is dedicated to enabling individuals to participate in their heart health through the use of the AliveCor Heart Monitor, an innovative mobile healthcare solution. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 4

pounds, and the battery should last around five hours before you need to use the A/C adapter.

I was impressed. I personally never had a good opinion of Dell computers, but this looks like a game changer. HP has a competitor named the HP Envy Rove, but I think it falls short.

Although this is a large tablet which is portable, it is not as portable as a laptop since you have to worry about protecting the screen. And it is certainly not as portable as my Microsoft Surface Pro 2, which has similar specs (i5 processor, 8 GB of memory and a 500 GB solid state drive) but which is much smaller at 6.81”x10.81x.5”(HxWxD), weighs only two pounds and has a battery life during use of around seven hours. But for that solid state drive, small size and weight you pay an extra $500 over the Dell. Even though the Dell screen is much larger, it has the same resolution as the Surface.

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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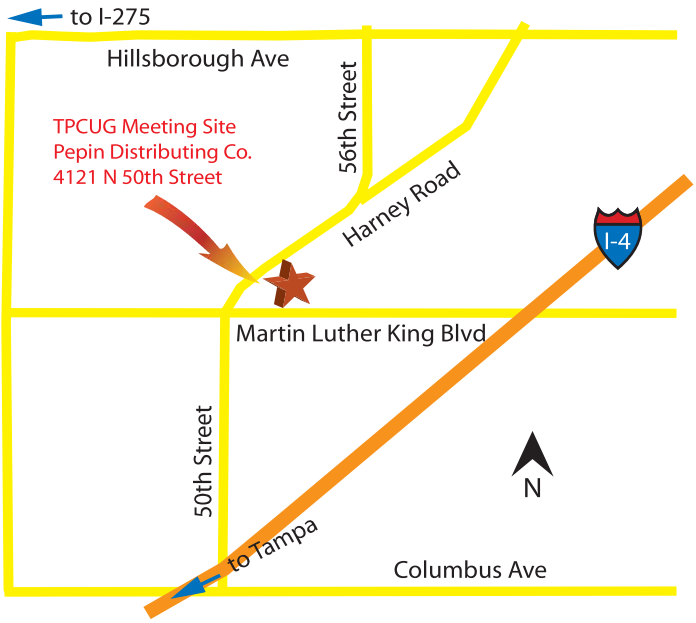
Comments.....Continued from page 7

I would include a link to the Dell device, but it is way too long. Just go to the Dell site and look in All-in-Ones for the XPS 18 Touch with stand.

Looking Back

I just consulted my Win 8 app, Computer Group Newsletters and note that in March of 1994 the TPCUG was meeting on the Ybor campus of HCC and the presentation was going to be a demo of Corel Draw. For April, the presentation was going to be Photoshop presented by Adobe, and for May, Microsoft was going to demo Office, which, according to the May newsletter, turned out to be a demo of Access 2.0. Those were the days: Big name vendors doing our presentations.

For March of 2004, the presentation was about PowerQuest products like Partition Magic, and the presentation was given by our friend Gene Barlow. I think by 2004 we were mostly doing our own presentations with an occasional visit by someone like Gene Barlow. No more Adobe, Corel, Symantec, etc. Times had changed – as they always will. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 27 No. 4 April 2014

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April in Tampa

Meeting

The Future of User Groups

by
Doc Dockerty of the Tampa Bay Computer Society

Thursday, April 10, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: On Thursday, not Wednesday, Doc Dockerty from the user group across the bay will give us his take on the future of user groups. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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The perennial question: What to write about this month to fill the newsletter with something that might be of interest. Merle Nicholson's and Bob Davis' articles are greatly appreciated. My first thought for the space remaining was to write about the difficulties I had in getting a wireless connection in the hotel in which we were staying while our house was fumigated for drywood termites, along with the attendant problem of sending a mass email merge to 400 residents of my neighborhood concerning some neighborhood matters that it is my responsibility to publicize as the neighborhood webmaster.

To make a long story short, for two days in the hotel I could not connect to their wireless network with my Microsoft Surface Pro 2 running Win 8.1, my HP laptop that has both Win 8 and Win 7, or my Windows Phone (the phone does have a cellular connection and I could use the Internet that way, but I do not have the ability to use the phone as a wireless hot spot). To add insult to injury, my wife could connect fine with her iPad. Now

Comments.....Continued on page 2

May Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Bob covered a variety of PC subjects in answering questions from the members: IP address conflict, USB disconnecting problem, and an Internet camera access.

Bob LaFave also gave the monthly presentation, "A little bit of this and a little bit of that". He showed a new revision of Sysinternals Process Explorer, which many of us are familiar with. They have added a feature that allows an Internet lookup of any process to get a new "virus total". This can be very helpful in chasing down an infected computer.

The next subject was SkyDrive, the MS cloud file storage service, and how to increase available storage space. Bob gave a demo of TrueCrypt, which encrypts files and folders, and 7-zip, a popular zip utility that also has the ability to encrypt and add a password, which is required to open the file. Last was DockLock, another interface to encrypt files. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

that was bad. A check with the desk informed me that they had many complaints other than mine, but nothing seemed to be getting done, and the poor beleaguered desk person could only pass on the complaints to management. Apparently management did not realize that to many people nowadays a wireless connection is as important as having hot water. I thought about going to a local Panera Bread or some other such location to get a connection but opted instead to go to my own backyard, sit at a lawn table and do my mass mail merge from there using my own wireless Internet connection. The only problem I had was convincing my Surface Pro that it indeed had an Internet

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Last Chance For Windows XP

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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April 8, 2014, about the same date you get this newsletter, is the date your computer explodes. No, not really, but, if you're one of the millions of XP users, you can get a step ahead to protect yourself. And I'm here with some suggestions that may keep you out of trouble.

The event really affects three Microsoft products: the OS - **Windows XP, Microsoft Security Essentials and Office 2003**.

Windows XP. As of April 8, there will be no updates issued for the operating system. If you've been watching your updates as they come in, there are always changes to the operating system that are issued for security improvements. That's because the bad guys out there are always finding new ways to exploit your system, and finding and attacking the operating system itself pays off for them. So Microsoft has been keeping up with this and rewriting the code to block attacks. So it's never only been about improving your antivirus software, it's patching the OS as well.

Outside of replacing your OS altogether, which I will address here, there are a few things you can do to keep it safer. **1) Get up to date now, today.** Install all Windows updates. **2) Get the machine running well and virus-free.** You may have to get an expert to do a tune-up. That means removing startup items, uninstalling services you don't need and optimizing the hard drive, replacing the hard drive or installing more memory. Do not buy or use any "tune-up" software. There is no such thing. The solution to a badly running computer is less software, NEVER more software. **3) BUY A QUALITY ANTI-VIRUS**. You can no longer use Microsoft Security Essentials, and I'll go into that later. Buy a well supported, full-featured "Internet" version of a quality product. The "Internet" versions will have a good firewall, and Windows XP's native firewall is primitive, to say the least. Look at antivirus reviews - PC Mag does a good job on reviews. If you have a weak machine with only 1G memory, you may want to focus on those that have a lightweight footprint. Look at the major brands first. You'll have to spend some money here. 4) BACK UP. Make a good, and I mean good, full image backup of your system. I recommend an Acronis Recovery CD, even an old version. This has both backup and recovery capability. Make the boot CD (or USB flash drive) from the Acronis software. Then use that bootable backup CD (USB) to actually do a new full disk backup to a suitable external storage device. I usually use an internal hard drive and SATA Enclosure Docking Station, because I have them, but any external USB or eSATA hard drive backup will do fine. They have become very inexpensive, and you really don't have an excuse.

Microsoft Security Essentials on Windows XP. On April 8, 2014, you will no longer be getting new virus signatures for this. It will continue to run, but an antivirus that is not being updated regularly is no antivirus at all. Time to step up with the big boys. Spend a little money and get the best because you're out there all by yourself and security patches to the OS have been discontinued.

Just yesterday, I had to do a refurb of a friends laptop with XP. I had just done a thorough tuneup on it last September - six months ago, and I had replaced his hard drive because it was old, with a 60G SSD and had made a full image backup to that old drive that I had removed. He had acquired some ransomware that had hijacked his whole system. His fault - the ransomware mimicked Microsoft Security Essentials saying he had a virus and to install a PC Repair program to fix it. He did that and then it asked for $30 to do the "final" repair. Since he had the backup I made, along with an Acronis boot disk, we were golden.

Then I had to install the 37 MS updates for the last six months. There were two security updates installed that interested me. One is a notification that runs with every startup of the computer that warns of the impending loss of support; the other is a similar warning that Microsoft Security Essentials will no longer be updated. I also installed a trial version of Vipre Internet Security and made him promise to pay for register-

XP.....Continued on page 4

XP.....Continued from page 3

ing it. I selected this one because it does a good job of real-time protection and scanning your Internet pages prior to opening; it has a very lightweight footprint for his 2GB machine and a very aggressive and sometimes annoying firewall. It isn't rated very high for removal of virus that has already infected a machine. Reviews seem to rate antivirus for the capability to detect and remove virus from a test computer, and I'm not too sure that's right. Virus removal software is pretty much free. I'm not sure I value a product that will remove a virus after allowing it to get on the machine to begin with.

Office 2003. Same problem. They have been providing security updates all along and it's ending now. They have replaced this product three times over, in 2007, 2010 and 2013. This is a shame because millions of people consider Office 2003 to be the best and most usable version of all, and the installed user base is enormous, especially in the workplace. Remember that for 2007 they introduced the ribbon interface. That seems to work fine for inexperienced users to find the most commonly used controls, but for an advanced user and for program developers it just gets in the way (perhaps except for Word). They could have retained support for standard menus without its getting in the way for ribbon users. Kind of the way Windows 8.1 does with crippling parts of the desktop. On the Microsoft sites, they state clearly that Office 2003 will not run on Windows 8.1. I have found that to be not true, at least with Access. There certainly is nothing stopping you from installing it fully. There are plenty of excellent alternatives for Office, and I don't intend to worry about loss of support for this.

What are the alternatives? There are Microsoft sites dedicated to helping you upgrade your old computer to Windows 8.1 for $199 retail. ($102.21 at Amazon). They suggest that for the x86 version (32-bit) the minimum memory required is only 1G, and it is 2G for the 64-bit version. You have to find out what the installed memory is, whether the system will support 64 bit, otherwise use 32 bit. There is a compatibility program for XP that is designed to determine what hardware and software will not make the transition. Their website, http://www.microsoft.com/windows/en-us/xp/end-of-xp-support.aspx, states: "Keep the familiar desktop you love."

Another alternative is to install Ubuntu or one of its many relatives: Mint, Kubuntu, Lubuntu. Chances are very good that your old laptop will be supported very well and will boot up and run faster than it ever did in Windows. I have configured my spouse's computer with Ubuntu very successfully. Everything she needs or could ever want is available, all at no cost. I have configured a spare computer with Kubuntu for my own use. Again, I want for nothing (except live sync with Google Drive, but that's not a deal killer). Both machines work well on my network along with several printers and Windows computers. Ubuntu's desktop is very Apple Mac-like, and Kubuntu (Ubuntu + KDE desktop) is very Windows-like. The Ubuntu interface has become very graphical, and you can probably get everything you want without ever using the command line interface. And it's free, attractive and easy to use and free.

Buy a new computer. Yes, and this should be seriously considered. Interesting thing right now is that Windows 7 computers are plentiful after 18 months of Windows 8.1 on the market. The manufacturers have bitterly complained that the business sales are depressed because businesses will not buy Windows 8.1. So there is a new agreement made. Computers will be available for another month or so with Windows 7 Home and also Windows 7 Pro, after which the Home version will be discontinued. Windows 7 Professional will be available for another year until March or April 2015. Speculation is that this may be extended if the sales are good. You'll see that especially Dell flyers are offering Windows 7 machines for business use. The downside is that these business computers' prices are pretty high.

Most people I've talked to that have transitioned to Windows 8.1 say they have adapted to it pretty well. I think that having a touchscreen is needed for a frustration free experience. The premium you pay for touchscreen on new computers is pretty much gone now.

There is a Windows 8.1 revision 1 coming out soon

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Internet Picture of the Month



Slowing down high speed traders

From the New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/06/magazine/flash-boys-michael-lewis.html?hp. This box kept at a data center in Secaucus, N.J., contains a 38-mile coil of fiber-optic cable that creates a slight delay in the processing of orders, which levels the playing field among traders.

April's Links

Tampa PC Users Group	http://www.tpcug.org
Tampa Bay Computer Society	http://tampa-bay.net/
brokercheck - FINRA	http://www.finra.org/Investors/ToolsCalculators/BrokerCheck/
Microsoft Security Scanner	http://www.microsoft.com/security/scanner/en-us/default.aspx
VIPRE Rescue	http://www.vipreantivirus.com/live/
Kaspersky Virus Removal Tool	http://www.kaspersky.com/antivirus-removal-tool-register

The PC That Wasn't Broken

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
robd234@gmail.com

It was a cold morning in February. I went into my office, turned on the window shaker heater, and hit the power on for my PC. After I hit the power on button, I sipped some coffee and waited, and waited, and waited. My menu program never came on the screen. Nothing came on the screen. I thought about the last time I backed up my data - probably weeks ago. About five minutes later, I hit the reset button hoping maybe there was a glitch in the startup. To my amazement, the screen lit up. The PC booted up but it just did not bring up my main menu as it usually does. After the PC booted up, I tested every program I could think of. Everything worked fine.

My PC has a digital thermometer on the front panel. I noticed it was reading about 76 degrees. I thought maybe now something had to warm up before it would boot up. So I tested my theory. At first, I found if when I powered up the temperature was less than 72 degrees, the PC would not start up. If I let it sit and warm up to 73 degrees or so, it would boot up but still would not come up with my menu program like before. A few days later, I noticed it had to be up to 75 degrees or so to make the reboot work. I was getting desperate.

After doing some listening and watching, I suspected the monitor. The PC always sounded like it was booting up normally. I could hear the hard drive clicking, and I could see the access light flashing for a while and then go quiet - just like a normal boot up. The PC was coming up normal every time. It was the monitor that was failing! I replaced the old 17" LCD monitor with a new 23" LCD Acer monitor. Presto everything is back to normal! Apparently, my old monitor had to warm up to work. That's about an eight on the 0-10 weirdo scale. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 2

connection since I had tried so often in the hotel and received the message of there being no connection. It seems the device has some sort of memory of such things. But I finally got the job done.

What else has been happening? I have essentially brought a long term project to completion. The project was gathering historical information about my Tampa neighborhood. Using Census data, old Tampa City directories, historical maps and photos, as well as old Tampa Tribunes, I have been able to piece together a history of the neighborhood that includes a pretty precise estimate of when each of the 394 houses were built ranging from 1880 up until 2012. We refer to our neighborhood as Hyde Park, which is actually two subdivisions, West Hyde Park (1906) and Morrison Grove (1910), situated in South Tampa and bounded by Swann Avenue on the north, Brevard Avenue on the east, Bayshore Boulevard on the south and Rome Avenue on the west. In addition, Hyde Park is the name of a pre-1900 subdivision immediately south of the University of Tampa, and people for years have referred to the area west of the Hillsborough River, south of Kennedy Boulevard and east of Howard Avenue as Hyde Park. So that name means different things to different people.

Anyway, our neighborhood decided that this year would be a good year to celebrate 100 years of existence, and that prompted me to try to bring my research to a close and post all my findings at our neighborhood website, http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org. The specific page that is the window to this information is http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org/HouseDates.aspx. At this page you will find links to much of the data I have collected. To the casual observer, I suppose the maps will be of most interest and possibly also the old Tampa Tribune articles.

One of the maps is reproduced on page 7. It displays the date ranges for the build dates of all the houses in our neighborhood. To see the different colors, you really need to view this newsletter online, or better yet, view it via the neighborhood website link above. By the way, this is quite a large map, 4464 x 3586 pixels.

Comments.....Continued on page 7



Comments.....Continued from page 6

There is a companion map at the site that instead of a colored circle actually lists the address and build date of each house. How I created these maps is a story in itself. Many years ago, I used a Microsoft mapping program and Visual Studio to do a geocoding of each address to get its exact latitude and longitude. I then stored that in an Access database along with all the historical information I subsequently gathered on each address. The final step was to write another program in Visual Studio to place a color-coded circle on each house in the map indicating in which date range it fell and put all this on a map at a web page. At full resolution, the map covered more than one computer screen, and to capture it I had to do around 10 separate screen captures and then piece them together in Photoshop to produce the map you see. A similar process was used to produce the map that lists each address and its estimated build date.

As to the old Tampa Tribune articles, I made a mockup of 15 pages of an old Tampa Tribune with 17 inch x 22 inch pages in Adobe InDesign using articles I had discovered about our neighborhood – hundreds of them – and then saved it as a PDF file. I first tried putting that at the neighborhood site, but the downloading from there was just too slow. So I moved it, and the link on the house date page at the neighborhood site actually points you to a file at my Microsoft Azure cloud storage account. ◆

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XP.....Continued from page 4

that will appear in the Windows 8.1 update that makes more small changes to the user interface. It's mostly changes to help make mouse users find things easier. I'm sure there will be more changes coming, but slowly.

Endnote: I'm using Google Docs to write this article, and the file is being saved to my Google Drive. To send it out to William LaMartin, our newsletter editor, I download it from Google Drive to the download folder. Google Drive makes the conversion from Google Docs format to Office .docx for William. There are a half dozen different formats, including PDF. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 27 No. 5 May 2014



May in Tampa

Meeting

Blain Barton

From Microsoft

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft will be speaking on various Microsoft products with an emphasis on Windows 8.1. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I am sorry that I was unable to attend last month's meeting and hear what Dave Dockery from the Pinellas club had to say about the future of user groups. Obviously that group is much larger than the TPCUG and provides many more services for its members. Nonetheless, based on Merle Nicholson's minutes of the meeting and a conversation I had with Merle about the meeting, that group has had a severe loss of membership. Surprisingly to me, it was attributed to the iPad. You don't need much help for an iPad. It either works or it doesn't. If it doesn't, you either send it to Apple, take it to the Apple Store or throw it away. I sort of like the last option. Then you could purchase a Windows-based tablet that has a USB port and a few other handy things that an iPad doesn't. After that, most importantly, you could download all those Windows Store apps that I have been writing, including the TPCUG's own *Computer Group Newsletters* app.

I was only half serious about your discarding your iPad, since

Comments.....Continued on page 7

June Meeting: To be announced

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Bob covered a variety of PC subjects in answering questions from the members and also demonstrated DocLock file and folder encryption software.

This month's presentation was a talk by Dave Dockery, the multi-year president of the large computer club in Clearwater - Tampa Bay Computer Society. The subjects were on the state of club membership and where they believe it's going. This computer club has been in operation for 30 years and hosts fifty training events a year, including a monthly computer repair clinic.

There has been a downturn in membership in the Tampa Bay Computer Society from a high of 1300 members to just 600 today. Dave attributes this to the advent and popularity of the iPad. Dave then went on to describe his vision of the future use of personal computing in a well-rounded and well-prepared talk. We are very grateful to Dave for his time, and thoroughly enjoyed his presentation.

The Tampa Bay Computer Society can be found at http://tampa-bay.org/. Be sure to check out the club calendar at http://tampa-bay.org/calendar. ◆



Exchanging Large Files

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Sometimes you need to send someone a large file - too large to email. Even harder is receiving a large file from a non-technical friend or associate. What is the best way for them? Over the years I've done this various ways. I've most recently settled on the quickest and easiest, using a web-based service http://www.WeTransfer.com.

MAIL: All the traditional ways to send files are still available. In operating my software business I have resorted to Priority USPS mailing or FedEx CDs, and some high-security conscious federal agencies insist on this. It seems strange at first, but I think it's a proven reliable safe method. The information just does not hit the Internet. Since we're discussing large files, a CD is good for .7GB and a DVD normally is 4.7GB. There are variations of DVD capacity like DL, but sender and recipient must both have that capability in hardware.

WEB: To distribute software, I maintain a website on a server where I create a webpage with a download link for just one file. Then I email the recipient a password and a download link. It's really pretty easy and economical when you have direct access to the web server file structure as I do. I have a script that I copy to the web folder that presents a listing of all the files as a live download link. The web server software is free. I've used this for many years. To clarify, I require three passwords. The web folder, the zip file password and finally the application password. It's obviously not for receiving a file from someone else.

FTP: For close business associates and my technically inclined sons I maintain an FTP server with password-ed folders. FTP is well known and relatively easy to use but it is technical. It requires a client FTP application, but these are free and of high quality. Look for Filezilla on Windows. There are equivalent applications available for all platforms from a smartphone to mainframes. Windows Explorer will do FTP natively, but in my opinion is very difficult to set up. FTP is an excellent way to store and distribute collections of large files as well as one-off exchanges. I sometimes use this just for myself to distribute large files to my own computers instead of using a flash drive.

Flash Drives and cards: Speaking of flash drives, they have become cheap. Remember you can get a name brand 8GB flash drive easily for $4.50, and you can get them for much less if you look for promotions. A microSD card can easily be purchased for $5 and is a little more mailable perhaps. Most everyone with a notebook has a reader built in, and a USB connected card reader is less than $5. If waiting for snailmail is OK, it's a good solution for a non-technical person or for a high-security application.

Online Storage: My experience with this is limited to Google Drive, but many others are available, most notably Microsoft OneDrive (formally SkyDrive) and the many services like DropBox. I'm using Google Drive now as I write this article on Google Docs on my Ubuntu computer. I share common ongoing files with my family through this, but have only once used it to "send" a file. They are encouraging me to use this and Google+, but so far I restrict access to my immediate family and I'll keep it that way, thanks. Keeping the (free) limited storage amount in mind, and to me, the tenuous legal obligation to provide permanent reliable access, it isn't for me. The subject at hand is exchanging large files, and I don't think this qualifies for me.

Large File Services: WeTransfer at http://www.WeTransfer.com is the only service like this I have used. This is a quick and easy method of sending a large file to anyone with an email address. It's easy. You supply your email address and the recipient's email address, an optional note to the recipient, then use the upload button to select your file up to 10GB. The service sends the recipient an email with the download link and your note and sends you a copy of that note. Then when (if) the recipient downloads the file you are notified by email. The file is available for a week, then removed permanently. You do not create an account. I have zipped all files I have sent so far; with a password that I send by separate email.

Large Files.....Continued on page 6

New Ubuntu Release

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Ubuntu has just released a new version of the popular operating system. This is release 14.04 LTS (Trusty Tahr) April 17, 2014. The previous LTS release was two years ago - version 12.04 LTS (Precise Pangolin) April 26, 2012.

This takes a little explanation. LTS - or Long Term Support are the main releases of the OS, and are milestones in the direction of the continuous development of the OS. The LTS indicates that they are supported and receive updates for five years, with paid technical support also available from Canonical Ltd. Since the last LTS release - 12.04, there have been three interim versions 12.10, 13.04 and 13.10. I demonstrated two variations of 13.10 a few months ago at a TPCUG meeting, and I have since upgraded to 14.04 LTS on my own machine, but not my wife's.

This time I selected the Gnome variation called Ubuntu Gnome - an official flavor of Ubuntu. If you're interested, the Ubuntu Gnome official release notes can be found at https://wiki.ubuntu.com/Trusty-Tahr/ReleaseNotes/UbuntuGNOME. I am especially pleased with this variation because of its excellent use of multiple monitors and multiple simultaneous desktops (workspaces in Ubuntu-speak). It's a little more technical, but it's highly configurable.

This version features enhanced capability for multiple users. Of particular interest for me is the optional smooth integration of Google services - and other services like FaceBook and Yahoo. I have been using my Google account and by setting up an account found that the email, calendar, reminders, contacts, IM and tasks appear in the native Gnome applications and sync and update automatically. So it's automatically in sync with my phone and tablet.

For the average user, I recommend the primary release of Ubuntu at https://help.ubuntu.com/community/Installation. This is a Wiki page that provides excellent, detailed instructions for everything you need and has links for special installs from live CD/DVD and bootable flash drives.

The maturity of this OS is very evident. It is well organized, with everything you need cataloged and easy to find. All of the configuration is done in graphical interfaces in a System Settings panel, much like Windows Control Panel, but simpler - more akin to Android settings. The native web browser is Firefox, but of course Chrome installation is just a couple of clicks away. Obviously Internet Explorer is not available, but Chrome surpasses this in every way. I'm not a user of Firefox, but I have no doubt that it's fully capable.

LibreOffice is included, so you have a full Office suite with full file compatibility with Microsoft Office files . . . except for a database application compatible with Microsoft Access. This shouldn't be a concern for most users. This is not to say that very fine full featured technical databases are not available - they are.

There is a huge software catalog with virtually everything you will ever think of - almost all of it free and of high quality and with user ratings. The library is very easy to use; everything is cataloged and searchable. Most applications give thorough descriptions and screenshots. There's an "Install" button and it's installed very quickly with plenty of progress information. The catalog knows what you have already installed, and of course you can get a listing of all that and uninstall anything very quickly. This all works so much faster and easier than in Windows. For instance in Windows you may see software in "Programs and Features", but you don't necessarily know what it does, remember why it's installed or even if you need it. With this Software Catalog it doesn't come up as an issue. It's all there.

So far in my year or so of using this and previous versions, I am missing only one thing. There isn't a Netflix application available in any Linux release. That's just amazing. I manage without it because I have multiple computers and a tablet, but jeez. My son's solution is to run Windows 7 as a virtual machine in VirtualBox so he can have Netflix. But he would have

Ubuntu.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Giant Omelet

From the Wall Street Journal, http://blogs.wsj.com/photojournal/2014/04/25/the-week-in-photos-2/, "Men stir a large pan of eggs in the preparation of the legendary annual giant Easter omelet of Bessieres in southwestern France." Remy Gabalda/Agence Framce-Presse/Getty Images

May's Links

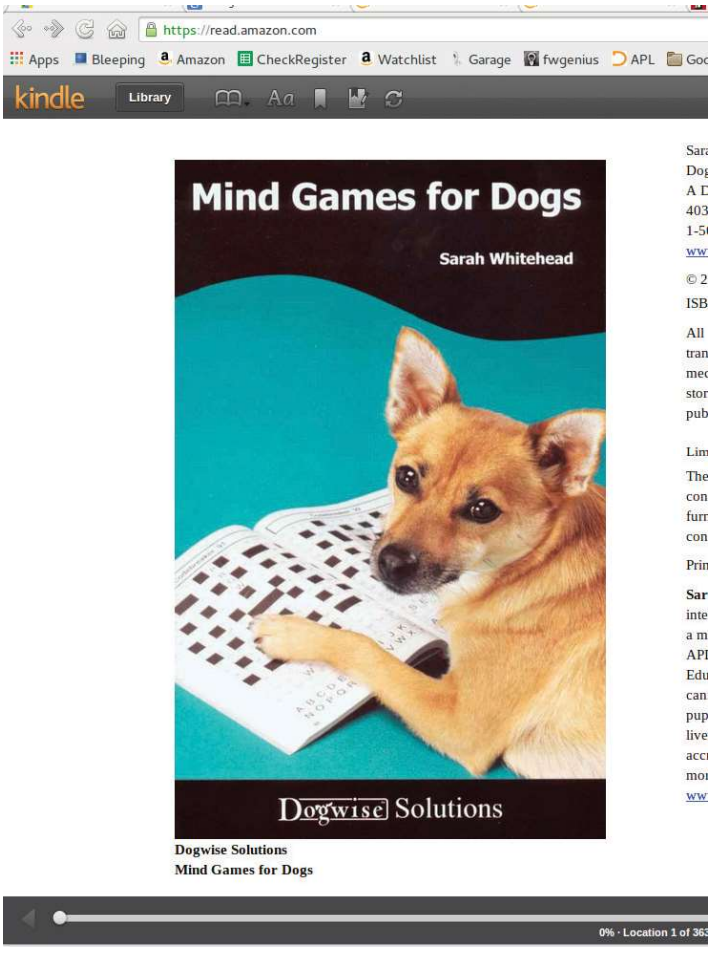
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Safe Web - Heartbleed Check	http://safeweb.norton.com/heartbleed?url
International Space Station position	http://iss.astroviewer.net/
Browse The New York Times Archive	http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/browser
American Museum of Natural History	http://images.library.amnh.org/digital/

Ubuntu.....Continued from page 4

that VM in any case - as would I. I run Windows XP, Windows 7 and Windows 8.1 virtual machines in Ubuntu VirtualBox with no issues at all except for the time it takes to keep them updated.

I'll say that I don't read Kindle books on any PC; I prefer my 7" Android tablet. For those who need it, there is no stand-alone Kindle application. However, your Kindle book library is completely available in the Chrome browser as the "Kindle Cloud Reader" (see the screen capture below). I just used it for the first time for this article; it's excellent. My entire Kindle library is available immediately, and if I wish, I can download any for offline reading, as in the picture.

As for updates, there is a non-intrusive notification of updates that always goes smoothly and much more quickly than in Windows. This installs updates for ALL of your installed applications, not just Windows, just as we come to expect with Android.



Dogwise Solutions
Mind Games for Dogs

As for performance, it's very fast even on older computers with limited memory. I have installed quite a bit of software and so far I haven't gotten to 6GB of disk usage. It's a perfect situation to replace your notebook drive with a small SSD. My older AMD 2-core computer with an SSD boots in twenty seconds and shuts down in less than five.

For my day-to-day computer use, this release of Ubuntu suits me very well. It literally covers all my needs exceedingly well (except Netflix support). I continue to advocate for this OS as a perfect replacement for Windows XP computers and any other computer that has limited resources; memory or hard drive, so if you have an older notebook that needs new life, you won't be disappointed. Remember that you can run the OS from either a live CD or better still, a bootable flash drive, eliminating the risk; it does not touch your existing system and will identify any hardware incompatibilities before you commit to the changeover. It will also install as a second bootable operating system, leaving your existing OS intact. This requires though that you have sufficient space on the hard drive. ◆

Large Files.....Continued from page 3

What impressed me most besides its doing precisely what I needed at the time was the website's professional layout, help and the FAQ, which left me with no unanswered questions. The advertising is even tasteful (and large) and never got in the way. They say on the site that they do not use your email in any way except for this file transfer, and so far I have not experienced otherwise. The fact that they do not require you to create an account is outstanding.

I was introduced to this by another company that requested a large file from me. As it turns out that company had purchased an account at WeTransfer that provides some visual enhancements, so I didn't realize at the time I was looking at a useful tool for everyone. For $120/yr the advertisements are removed, an optional custom background picture can be uploaded for the screen, the storage expands to 50GB and the files are not erased. It will zip the files for you if requested.

Large Files.....Continued on page 7

Large Files.....Continued from page 6

There are many services available, just a quick search found these - please beware - I have used NONE of these so I am not recommending them: SendThisFile, Files2U, SendUit, TransferBigFiles, BigUpload. Some of these I see are restricted unless you create an account. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

my wife has one which has really been a boon to her. However, it sometimes seems to not hold a charge as well as in the past, so a battery replacement may be needed in the future, and the cost is around $100 with the possibility that you may receive a replacement device and not your original device when the iPad with a new battery is returned to you by Apple. So what happens to all your emails and pictures? Well, they say to back them up. I suppose that means you have to put them in the iCloud or whatever (I must confess that I have learned no more about the iPad than is necessary to help my wife set up her email accounts, which are POP 3 accounts that are not web based). But we will cross that bridge if we come to it.

In the past month I have learned of the deaths of two TPCUG members who were in the club when I joined in the fall of 1991: Larry Anders and Parker Monroe. A little searching in my *Computer Group Newsletters* app tells me that Larry joined the group in June of 1989 and Parker in May of 1991. Because of his illness, multiple myeloma, Larry stopped attending meetings perhaps seven years ago but maintained his interest in the group. He was a good friend, and I saw him occasionally and often exchanged calls and emails with him. You may read the last of many, many articles he wrote for the newsletter in the March 2011 newsletter. When I joined the group and for many years after that, Larry was the Librarian, which included doing research on software and keeping a box of floppies that had programs and utilities we could borrow to install on our computers. There was no downloading such from the Internet then. You could, however, get them from Bulletin Board Services (BBS) via a modem and phone connection. Larry was always the guy who got the hardware first. He purchased an HP



flatbed scanner at least six months before I got mine. You can read about that on page 6 of the August 1994 newsletter. (All newsletters are available at our website.) That was when such an item cost a little over $1,000. He had the first digital camera in the club, a Sony Mavica that used a 3.5 floppy as its storage media. You can read about that on page 3 of the October 1997 newsletter. He was one of the first in the club to move from a dialup Internet connection to a broadband connection. Besides being a main contributor to the newsletter from October 1997 through December 2006 he provided free printing of the newsletter, on paper we provided, at his place of business. Larry, pictured above in August of 1996 helping assemble the newsletter, died April 5.

Parker Monroe I recall from the TPCUG meetings at IBM in 1991 when the membership was probably around 150 or so. At that point, I was new to the PC

Comments.....Continued on page 8



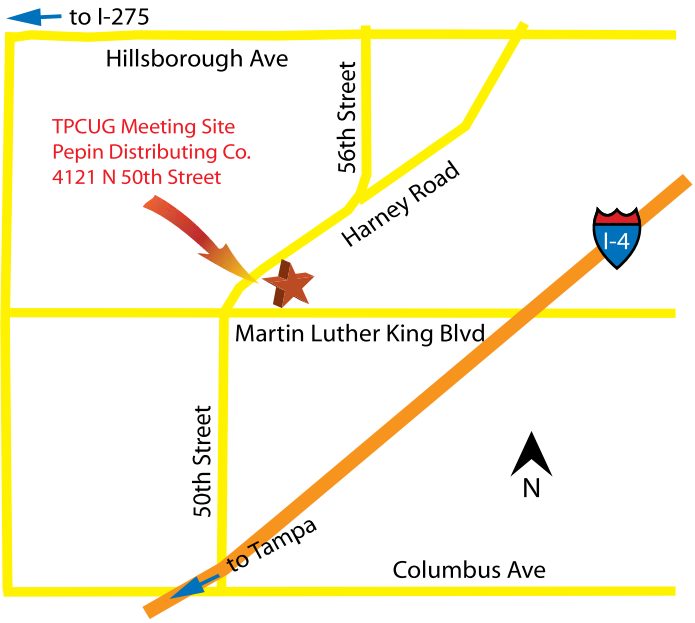
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Comments.....Continued from page 7

world, having just decided to move over from Apple, and Parker seemed to know a good bit more than I. So when he said in a meeting that he had purchased a Gateway computer via a phone call, I did the same and continued purchasing Gateways for many years. Parker at some point discontinued attending our meetings and became an active participant in the Brandon club's meetings and was their president at one time. He, however, continued his membership in our club up until sometime around the beginning of 2013. Over the years we had phone conversations about computer topics, and from time-to-time he would compliment me on articles in the newsletter, articles not necessarily written by me. The photo of him on the previous page was taken at the one TPCUG meeting he did attend in recent years. It was the June 2011 meeting, where I did the presentation on a history of the PC based on articles in our newsletters. I had specifically invited him and several other long-time members who did not attend our meetings anymore. Parker died November 10, 2013, although I did not hear about it until shortly after Larry's death. They both will be missed. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 27 No. 6 June 2014



June in Tampa

Meeting

Cyber Crime as an Industry
by
Dave Palmer

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Dave Palmer will present an overview of the cyber crime industry and how it has evolved over the last 10-15 years. The presentation includes a look at current business practices, the role and importance of malware, the structure of the industry, and at the flourishing underground market that serves the industry. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Last month it pretty much fell to Merle Nicholson to fill the newsletter. He also contributed a major part of the previous month. So we'll give him a rest this month, and I will write a bit. Ron Weinberg has helped out with an article on using Win 8 with a mouse since it is not exclusively a touch operating system.

I have two items: My new eight-inch Dell Venue Windows 8.1 tablet and a new Windows Store app I have written to view photos of Florida in the early 1900s. That app allows me to combine my interest in old photos of places I am familiar with and the creation of mosaics made up of thousands of photos .

Again I invite all members to write articles for the newsletter. I am sure your unique contributions would be appreciated. ◆

July Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Bob covered a variety of PC subjects in answering questions from the members. He talked about the reasons to abandon XP operating system computers, being that support has been discontinued. Discussion ensued about getting rid of the pop-up reminders about loss of support; perhaps restoring to an earlier restore point or checking the "Do not show again" box. Some discussion went on about the "missing mbr" on a desktop machine when a USB external drive is plugged in. The solution is to change the boot order in BIOS. The problem of managing pop-ups in IE was discussed by using "managing add-ins". Bob mentioned the increasing difficulty of machine-guessing passwords as the length of the password increases.

The April, 2014 meeting presentation was given by Blain Barton from Microsoft. Blain has done a presentation for us yearly for a number of years now, and we always welcome him. He's entertaining and a very accomplished speaker. He is one of the "Microsoft Evangelist" employees.

His presentation was roughly entitled "1-2 years of future stuff" and encompassed Cloud computing, mentioning the new Microsoft CEO who came from the Microsoft Azure open platform. He talked mainly about transitioning from the "private cloud" (local area network) to the "public cloud" (Azure).

One brief subject was the product Intune Manager, which configures and manages computer configurations (mobile device management from the cloud).

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

Dell Venue Pro 8

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

May was a good month for me. I wrote a Windows Store app titled *Manhattan Then and Now*, the purpose of which is to allow you to overlay any of six historical maps of Manhattan over the current map. In doing that, you can see what was at any current location in 1905, 1879, 1865, 1852, 1836 or 1807. For example, at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, instead of the current New York Public Library there was a reservoir in 1905, as there was in 1836. But in 1807 there was no reservoir. You can see where there were ponds now filled and hills now leveled on one of the maps. I find it very interesting. Unfortunately, not many others do because the app's sales have been minimal, as have the downloads of the trial version. Of all my phone apps and Windows store apps, this is only my second attempt at a paid version ($1.49), and in both cases the results have been very poor as compared to the free apps, some of which have ads and a few with no ads. It seems that if the subject is not compelling, the paid label deters people from even downloading and trying the app.

But all is not in vain. Microsoft is currently running a contest named Best App of the Month (BAM), where in different regions of the country they give a prize to the "best app of the month" submitted that month by a developer from each region. For April, *Manhattan Then and Now* won for the Central and North Florida region. And the prize was a 32 GB Dell Venue Pro 8, along with a Nokia Lumia 925 Windows 8 phone. I have received the Venue and have been using it, and the phone just arrived but is still in its box.

The Venue Pro comes as a 32 GB or 64 GB Windows 8.1 8-inch tablet. The 32 GB version sells for $299.99, the 64 GB version is 349.99. You may also purchase a wireless keyboard and a stylus and a few other items. I have an order in for a stylus. Now to the specifications:

Processor: Intel Atom Z3740 1.8GHz Quad Core
Operating system: Windows 8.1



Memory: 2 GB
Hard Drive: 32 GB or 64 GB Solid State Drive
Screen: 8-inch 1280x800 HD 800p display
Front camera: 1.2 MP
Rear Camera: 5.0 MP
Port: Micro USB
Extra storage: MicroSD, SDHC or SDXC
Battery: up to 9.9 hours of use; 3 hours of video

Venue.....Continued on page 4

Venue.....Continued from page 3

Extra Software: Office Home & Student 2013

This Tablet is running a full version of Windows 8.1 which, if you wish and are willing to pay, may be updated to Windows 8.1 Pro. But I see no need for that since it will run any Windows desktop program you may want to install. I installed Office 365, which I rent from Microsoft for $99/year and am allowed to install on up to five machines. This is a full version of Office 2013 and hence includes Outlook, which I very much wanted to install so as not to have to use the email client that comes Windows 8.1. I am not saying that there is anything particularly wrong with the email client in Win 8.1. It's just that I prefer Outlook. Office 365 also gave me Access which I like to have installed since there are several Access databases that I like to be able to consult from time-to-time (one is the TPCUG membership). I should note that there is a free instance of Office Home and Student that Dell will provide for the Venue Pro 8. That would have given me Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote – but no Outlook or Access.

Now to the usability of the device. It is a small tablet with an 8-inch diagonally measured screen. Since it is just 5.25 inches wide you could put it in a large pocket, possibly in a jacket or cargo pants. It is very thin and light, so you will not tire holding it. For browsing the web it is quite good. However, in using it in my home I have found that its wireless range is a bit less than that of my wife's iPad or my Surface Pro 2.

The small screen works fine for web browsing since if the text or images are too small, you can simply enlarge them using the usual pinch and zoom finger gestures. What does not work so well on such a small screen is a standard Windows program. For example in using Word, the text you are typing can easily be sized with the pinch and zoom finger gestures. What you cannot do is enlarge things on the Ribbon such as the menu items so that they are easier to read and select with a finger tap. My solution is to use a Bluetooth mouse with the device whenever my location makes it feasible (you need a location to place on which to place and move the mouse). Possibly the stylus I have on order will obviate the need for the mouse.

Just because you may install any Windows desktop program on the Venue doesn't mean you should. I have no intention of installing Visual Studio or any of the Adobe Creative Suite programs such as Photoshop. The device has only 2 GB of RAM so that will slow such programs down, plus the difficulty with seeing the controls and menus in such programs will be a problem as I mentioned for Word. Of course with a magnifying glass you will do just fine. Don't laugh at that. I had to resort to a magnifying glass when I wanted to use the Command Prompt to run a Windows PowerShell script to install my latest Windows Store app on the Dell to see how it would work on a small tablet. I could read the text, but it was difficult. So once I typed in the command, I wanted to check if it was correct and resorted to the magnifying glass to make sure. Possibly younger eyes would have had no problem.

Why do I need to use Windows PowerShell to install an app on the Venue? If the app were already in the Windows Store, I wouldn't; I would just go to the store and install the app from there. But to install an app under development, you need to either have Visual Studio 2013 on the device and then open the project in Visual Studio, or you need to (through your wireless network) place an installation package for the app on the Venue and then run the Windows PowerShell script in that package to install the app. Oh, and one more thing, you need to have previously installed your Microsoft Developer's License on the Venue. And that is, I am sure, more than you wanted to know.

I can recommend this device if you want a small portable tablet to browse the web, check your email, take notes and keep up with your calendar and contacts or even to watch videos. I do not recommend it as a tablet that you would use as your sole Internet device. I think a larger tablet would be more appropriate for that (and cost twice as much, at least). And Dell has one named the Dell Venue Pro 11, I believe. That would be a a Windows 8.1 tablet with an 10.8-inch diagonally measured screen. It will cost more, be heavier but give you a much larger screen. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Steve Ballmer in 2010

Mr. Ballmer made, perhaps, 20 Billion dollars selling you Windows, Word and a few other Microsoft products over the years. And he just offered two billion of that for a basketball team. I think this photo captures his personality, more of a salesman than a technical guy. He was Bill Gates' roommate at Harvard and actually graduated from there, unlike Bill, and was Microsoft's 30th employee. So that is probably why he was eventually given the job of running Microsoft, from which he has now retired. The photo is from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Steve_Ballmer_at_CES_2010.jpg,

June's Links

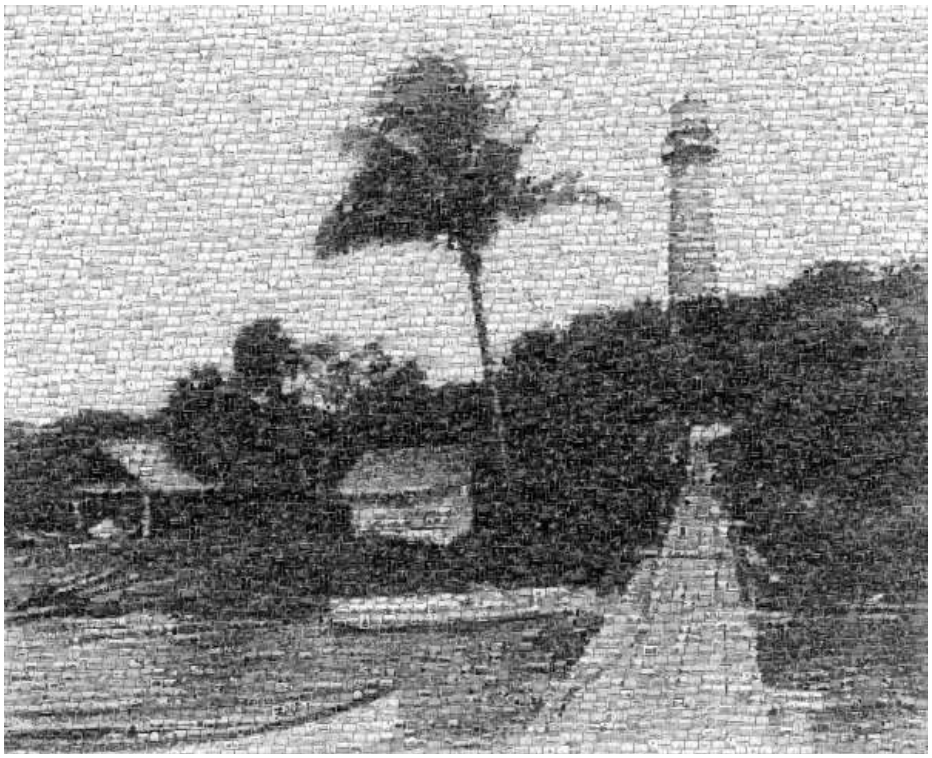
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Andrea Mosaic (create a mosaic of photos)	http://www.andreaplanet.com/andreamosaic/
National September 11 Memorial & Museum	http://www.911memorial.org/
National WWII Museum - New Orleans	http://nationalww2museum.org/

Why You Need a Windows 8 Device

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Simply stated, you need a Windows 8 device, actually 8.1 now, device so that you can use all the apps I have written for that operating system, almost all of which are free. I think you would really find useful the *Computer Group Newsletters* app that has all of our newsletters from the earliest days through just a few months back and which is searchable. Then there is the *Old Tampa Photos* app which allows you to view, search and share any of the 13,000 plus historic photos of Tampa that are in the Tampa/Hillsborough County Public Library's collection of Burgert Brothers photos. And there are many other apps I won't mention, but which you may find by searching the Windows Store for LaMartin Software.

Now I have a new app that I am just finishing and will put in the Windows app store soon. It will be titled Old Florida Mosaic. The mosaic pictured to the right is on the opening screen of the app. That mosaic is made up of about 900 images repeated enough times to total approximately 5,100. The base image is the Jupiter lighthouse, photographed around 1897.



This will be my first app that Microsoft terms a Universal App. What this means is that in Visual Studio 2013 I create both a Windows 8.1 Store app and a Windows phone 8.1 app in the same project where they share much of the same code and assets. This is possible since Microsoft has rewritten the code base for Windows Phone 8.1 so that there is a major overlap with its code base and that of Windows 8.1. The two operating systems do not share everything, but they share a lot. And this should make creating both Store apps and Phone apps much easier.

I created the Store version of the app first, that is the app that will run on a Windows 8.1 operating system. Then I let Visual Studio create the 8.1 phone app for me based on that. The result was that almost none of the underlying C# code had to be modified; however, the layout for the phone had to undergo a bit of re-jiggering since fitting things on a phone screen is not the same as placing them on a larger tablet or desktop computer screen. But in theory, if you can use the same layout on the phone as on larger screens, then such a Universal App could run on a phone with a four inch screen or on a 40 inch wall display with no adjustments necessary.

When I get my app in the Windows Store you will be able to run it on any Windows 8.1 desktop, laptop or tablet. You will not be able to run the phone version yet since Microsoft has not yet released Windows phone 8.1 to the general public, only to developers. However, it should not be long before anyone with a Windows 8 phone receives the 8.1 update.

Eventually I will create a second app using these same Florida photos that is similar to what I did with the Burgert Tampa photos. In that app besides viewing the individual images and downloading them, you may also view a slide show or search the collection. ◆

How-To Tips for Windows 8.1 without a Touch Screen

By Ron Weinberg, Member At Large,
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Important Parts of Windows 8 or 8.1

The **START Screen** shows all the Programs on the System in Tile form which was originally called the Metro style.

- Left clicking on any Tile will start the associated program.
- While in START, clicking on the Desktop icon or pressing the Windows key and the letter D at the same time will switch to the Desktop.

The **DESKTOP** is the screen used for daily use and, if used, rarely requires use of the START screen.

- Pressing the Windows key in a program or when in the Desktop mode switches to the Start screen.
- To return to the program switch to the Desktop or Press the Esc (Escape) key.

The **CHARM Bar** is a toolbar which appears on the right side of the screen when you place your mouse at the top right or lower right of your screen. It quickly disappears if no action on it is selected.

- The top Charm is Search, used to search the computer for words or programs.
- Other Charms are: Share, Start, Devices, and Settings. Share allows the user to share files or photos with other users.
- Start brings up the Start Menu.

You can learn more about Charms by clicking on this link.

http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-8/charms-tutorial

Alternatively, you can enter that address in a Browser's address bar.

Common Browsers are: Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox, which are programs that allow you to access the Internet.

The **TASKBAR** is the ribbon at the bottom of the Desktop which shows which programs are active. It also displays Icons for a few often used programs which can be clicked on to start the program.

Selecting Records

To add a Sender to your Contacts automatically in Windows Live Mail:

- Highlight the Message in your Inbox with one left click of the mouse.
- Right click on the Message.
- Select Add Sender to contacts and press Enter.

To select a group of records or email messages,

- Highlight the first message or record
- Move down to the last message in the group and hold down the Shift key while left-clicking on this last item.

To select multiple individual records or messages,

- Highlight the first record
- then hold down the Ctrl (Control) key and left click on each additional desired record or message.

Ways to shut down or exit a program

To exit a program such as Live Mail, left-click on the Red X at the upper right corner.

To turn the computer off use any of the power symbols.

- In the START menu a Power symbol is displayed in the upper right corner of the screen.
- Using the Charm Bar, the lowest charm called Settings will offer a power key with the Shut down option or in some cases Update and Shut down.
- In the Desktop, right click on the Windows icon at the lower left corner of the Task bar and an option to shut down will appear. ◆

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First Class Mail

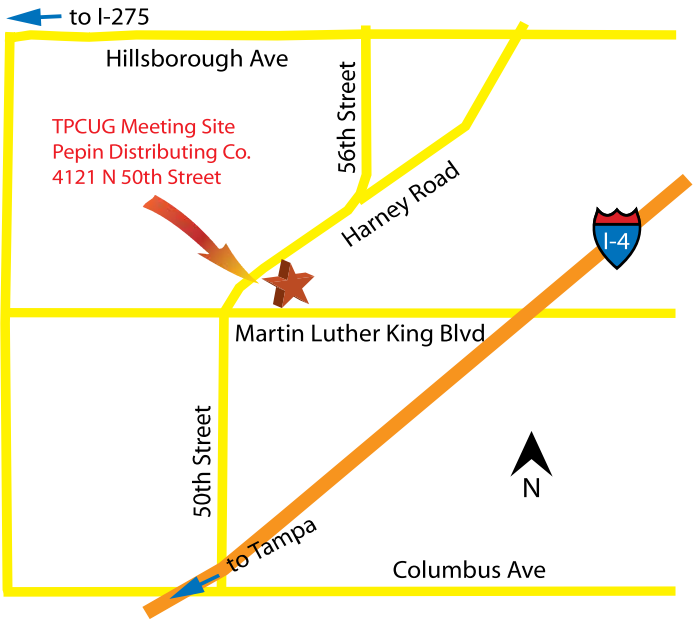
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

Most of Blain's talk involved Azure, the Microsoft cloud computing platform. Azure runs multiple virtual computers, handles most other OS clients like Ubuntu, Oracle Linux and other Linux clients, and has data center security, Global Foundation Services, Active Directory services and manages remote desktop and telecomputing. OneDrive (formerly SkyDrive) synchronizes local folders to cloud drive folders.

Blain then demonstrated the newest preview of Azure portal for websites; SQL database and MySQL; and the ability to create a complete website from a gallery of website elements.

Once again, our heartfelt thanks to Blain for his entertaining and current technology presentation. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

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July in Tampa

Meeting

A New Version of Ubuntu

by
Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, July 9, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will give an overview of the new version of Ubuntu - 14.04 LTS "Trusty Tahr". Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Kevan Sheridan for providing content this month and to Merrill Friend for sending in something that will go in next month's newsletter.

I filled the remaining pages with a description of my latest Windows 8 app. It is a display of photos I have taken of the flowers in my neighborhood over the past 10 years. It is amazing how many different blooming things there are in our 400-house neighborhood. I included around 170 photos but could have added more. If you have Windows 8.1, I invite you to download *Hyde Park Flowers* from the Windows Store. I have not published it yet, but it should be there by the time you receive this newsletter.

Last month the presentation was on cyber crime, and a number of recommendations on avoiding being a victim were given. I have to disagree with the one about avoiding Internet Explorer. My best advice is to avoid clicking on anything you receive in an email that did not come from me – all others are suspect. ◆

August Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob LaFave was not in attendance this meeting, so I (Merle Nicholson) substituted for Bob.

The first subject covered in the SIG was a demonstration of WeTransfer, a free or optionally paid website for the purpose of sending large files to other people over the Internet. This was a subject covered in the previous newsletter, but the demonstrations seemed of interest. Basically you upload a large file to the site along with necessary instructions for the website to send the recipient an email with a download link. http://www.WeTransfer.com. The second demo was a brief overview of sending money to another person via Amazon Payments at https://payments.amazon.com/home. This is an easy way to send or receive money using a credit card. It's an interesting alternative to PayPal for those people with Amazon accounts who deal with Amazon anyway. Despite several requests I did not want to send a club member any money, so the demo was limited.

The June 11, 2014 meeting presentation was given by Dave Palmer. Dave is a TPCUG club member. He gave a similar presentation some time back and he has obviously kept current on the subject. His presentation used slides extensively and was well-organized and interesting. The subject this month was "Cybercrime Goes Professional" and outlined how the virus business has become professionally organized into a very big business. Dave quoted one source that estimated the loss at $500B/year, with 84% of all businesses infected with some form of malware aimed at stealing financial information, account passwords, intellectual property or competitive business strategy.

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

The DVR is Dead

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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We're reading a lot about "cutting the cable" lately. This is about people who have decided they no longer want cable TV and have opted for Internet streaming from Netflix, Amazon Instant Video, Google play, Hulu plus and others to provide entertainment content. There are several reasons for this, the one most obvious is that the content people want is now available from streaming services. Usually the episodes of a TV program will be made at the end of a season, and there are some more expensive subscription services that have TV content that is just a few days old. Of course if you don't care about being current, there is more content available than you can possibly watch for eight bucks a month from Netflix. The major networks have their own websites where many TV series episodes are available just days or weeks old.

All this isn't the same as having an active live TV, of course, but it's suiting millions of people, and if you're willing to work at it a bit, you can keep the cost to a minimum, maybe $20/mo – an insignificant amount compared to the cost of cable TV.

The other motivating factors are a little more subjective. One of my own pet peeves is the poor quality of the TV controls and on-screen menus on the set-top boxes I have had. The controls I had were close to being unusable they were so slow and unresponsive. It took forever to look ahead at future programming, and the number of channels you can view are very limited. Further, the storage capability in my DVR was tiny compared to my needs, and being limited to two simultaneous recording channels just wasn't working. Further, there was the $32/month being charged for two unsatisfactory devices; an HD set-top box and an HD DVR. I needed to do something. I seriously considered cutting the cable altogether as my adult sons had done. I decided instead to improve my equipment.

First – the direction my sons have taken. I built both their computers. One has his attached to a standard monitor, the other to a TV screen. Part of their motivation is that their only provider is Comcast, repeatedly surveyed as one of the most hated corporations in the US.

The monitor is a 1080p 23" widescreen with just two input connectors, VGA and DVI, and must use external speakers. It's a quad-core AMD A8 with a mATX motherboard in a conventional PC. This means that the GPU (graphics processor) is built into the CPU and the motherboard handles the output connections to the speakers and monitor. AMD calls this processor an APU – Accelerated Processing Unit – because it has combined a very powerful GPU and CPU all in one. The operating system he uses is Ubuntu-Gnome 14.04. The Chrome browser handles most of his video needs, the exception being Netflix, which requires a Firefox browser at the current time (long technical story). He uses Netflix and Hulu Plus.

The TV installation (other son) is different. He uses a computer with an Intel processor that, while powerful, is somewhat weak in graphics capability, so this one uses a low-profile graphics card with DVI and HDMI connectors. The HDMI cable carries stereo sound as well as digital video. We installed Windows 8.1 and a nice wireless compact keyboard. The compact case he wanted can be mistaken for a piece of stereo equipment; it's about five inches tall and the same width as a stereo. The TV he uses, like all TV's, has a TV tuner for OTA (Over The Air) broadcasts (Who does this?) but also has a few HDMI inputs for Set-Top boxes and in this case the computer. That computer is inconspicuously stashed on a shelf along with other stereo equipment.

My own setup is quite different. I have not cut the cable, but at least have minimized the requirements from Verizon FIOS. I no longer have any Set-Top boxes or DVRs in the house. My TV channel lineup has no premium channel content, but isn't just basic. I have one "M-Card", the only rental equipment at $5/mo. It's the size of a credit card and slips into a slot in the back of a dedicated computer I have named "Media-PC". The computer serves no other purpose except

DVR.....Continued on page 4

DVR.....Continued from page 3

as a PVR (Personal Video Recorder).

It has three large hard drives totaling about 3TB. The AMD CPU is far more powerful than needed; it's an older style quad CPU without graphics. This particular one was simply made up of parts I had on hand when the previous very old one died mysteriously. It has a very powerful dedicated graphics card, plenty of memory and runs continuously (it's never been turned off) plugged into a large UPS. I replace the UPS battery every two years.

I use a TV cable adapter made by Ceton and exposed in the back of the computer. The Verizon M-Card is inserted into this and has a connector for the incoming TV cable. So this combination of the Ceton card, Verizon M-Card and the incoming TV coax cable substitutes for what you would use a Set-Top box for.

The Ceton card – along with a couple of other brands – now comes in a couple of configurations; as an internal card, an external USB connected device, and models that will give you six channels for recording instead of the original four like I have. There is no reason you can't have more than one device in a computer. I'm happy with my one card and four recorders. For software, there is a downloadable package that installs software that communicates with the TV card and also – in my case – Windows Media Center, free with Windows 7. It's $40 with Windows 8.1. All of this – software and hardware has proven to be nearly trouble free.

Windows Media Center handles all your TV recording, storage and playback easily and fast. You can scroll forward in the TV guide for a couple of weeks faster than you can read them. You have lists of programs you are set to record in the future, and settings to establish what you intend to record. You can edit the list of channels that appear in the guide. Search by keyword or wildcards is excellent. Try as I can, I find very little to fault in this software. I did have a confusing couple of hours once when my Vipre Internet software got updated and blocked the Ceton card. One thing Vipre has – good responsive phone help. I would rate both Windows Media Center 7 and Vipre Internet 2014 software 4.9 out of 5.

The software also handles your DVD player and music and picture libraries. It's network aware so that it can use the libraries of other computers on your network, and if you have WMC on other computers, you can play or store recorded content on those as well, without a cable card.

Other equipment needed is a WMC remote, a keyboard/mouse device and perhaps a universal remote. The Windows Media Center remote is found on Amazon and is less than $20 by several manufacturers. It is similar in appearance to the DVR remote that you're familiar with. It's IR (Infra Red), and comes with an IR receiver that you attach to the PC by USB. It gives you on-screen control over WMC. You can do the same control by other methods like the PC mouse or even with network software that you can control with your Android or IOS phone or tablet. I have a tiny Logitech Bluetooth DiNovo keyboard/mouse that is about the size of my hand to use when I'm using the browser, or have dropped to Windows out of WMC. The DiNovo is fairly expensive, but has a replaceable, rechargeable battery, and had proven to be ultra reliable. I shouldn't have to say this but you also need the best Anti-virus/Internet software you can afford. I also paid $50 too much for software to play Blu-ray disks because WMC does not do it natively. I say $50 too much because it should integrate seamlessly – as advertised – into WMC but does not.

The last item is a programmable remote. I control a stereo receiver for 5.1 channel sound, minimal TV set control functions and even most of the WMC functions, although I never use that. The programmable part turns the TV and receiver power on and off together. I purchased this remote while I was using set-top boxes, and I probably will not replace it if it dies. ◆



Internet Picture of the Month

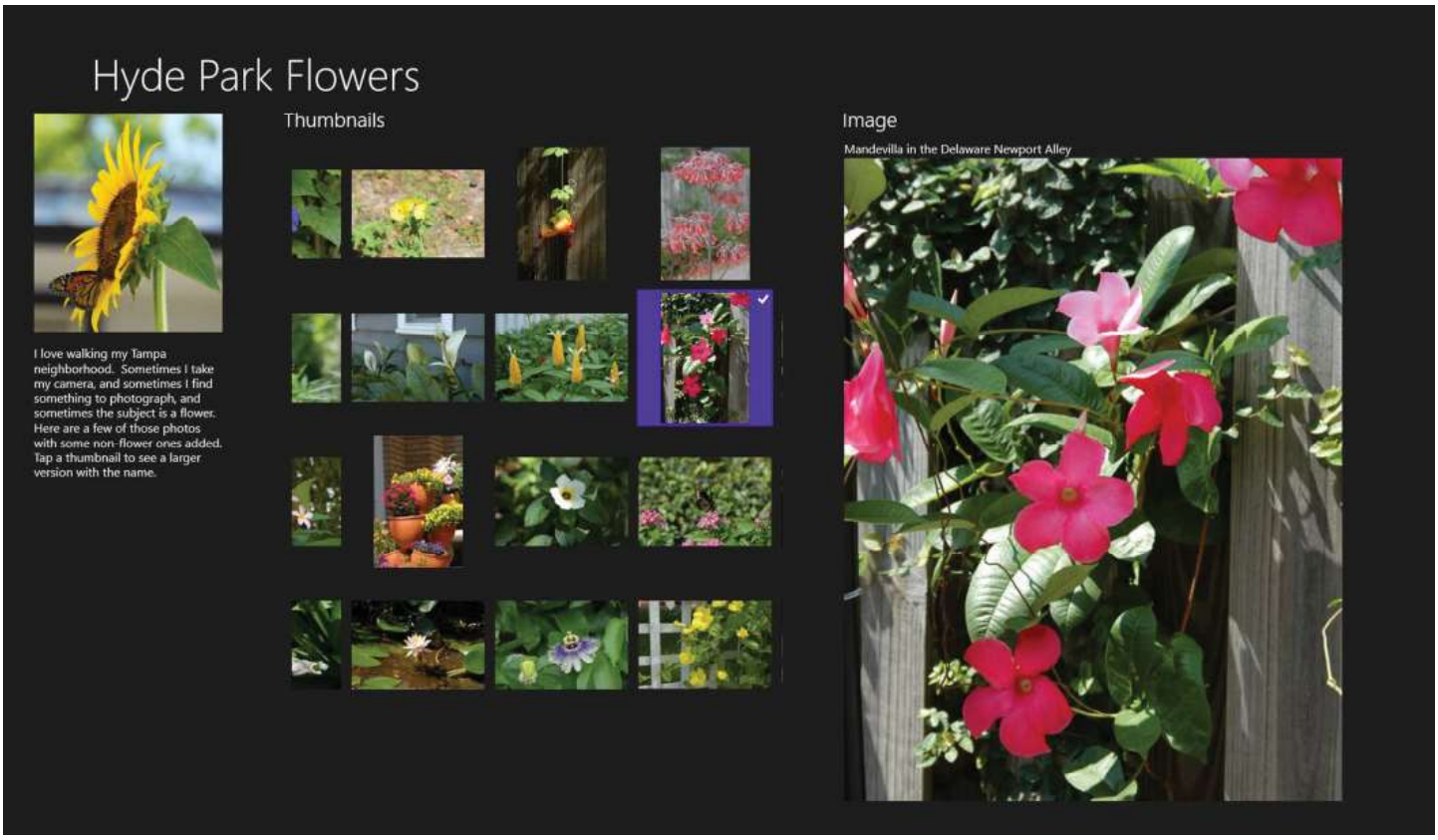


Detroit 2014: 43,634 Properties on the Brink of Foreclosure

From the New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/06/27/us/detroit-foreclosure-photo-mosaic.html. "This mosaic, created with images from Google Maps Street View, shows one of the many enormous challenges facing Detroit as it tries to climb out of debt. As of January, the owners of these properties collectively owed the county more than $328 million in unpaid taxes and fees. Since then, some have paid their debts, entered in payment plans or qualified for assistance. But 26,038 properties, shown with a yellow triangle, remain in jeopardy, and many are headed for public auction."

July's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection	http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online
Scenes from D-Day, Then and Now	http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2014/06/scenes-from-d-day-then-and-now/100752/
Foreclosure in Detroit	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/06/27/us/detroit-foreclosure-photo-mosaic.html



Hyde Park Flowers

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

What do flowers have to do with computers? This is a personal computer club that is morphing into a personal computer club and all things digital. First off, that is the main page of my newest Windows 8.1 app. That means you have to have a Windows 8.1 computer or tablet to use it, which I hope you will download and do (it's free). There is also a companion Windows 8.1 Phone app. Next, all the photos were taken with a succession of digital cameras over the years: A Nikon D100, a Nikon D200 and a Nikon D800. So that is something digital. And all the photos have been resized in Adobe Photoshop, and that is software. So there are a lot of computer and digital things going on here. Oh, there is one more thing: All the photos for the app are stored in Microsoft Azure, which, as Blain Barton has told us is in the Cloud, one of the latest buzz words in computing.

Now that I have established that Hyde Park Flowers has something to do with computing, let me describe a little of what goes into making such an app. By the way, this app is what Microsoft terms a Universal App, where in the Save Visual Studio project you create two apps at once, a Windows Store app and a Windows Phone app. The theory is that this will involve less work than creating each app separately. Not all apps are amenable to this, but what I am doing here is.

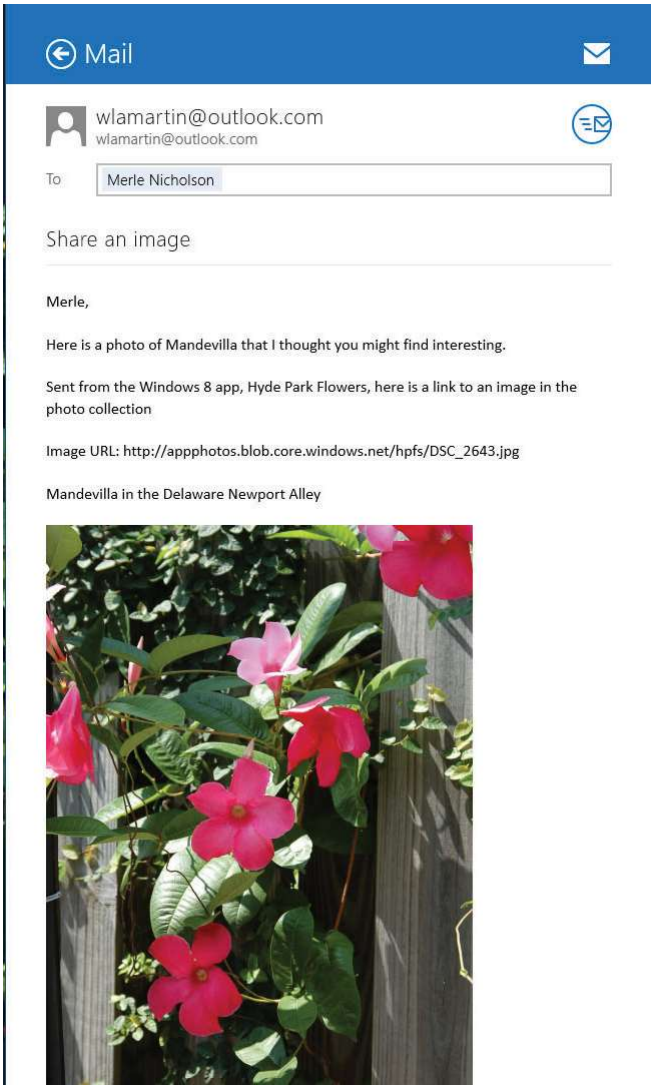
The first thing I did was select out around 170 photos of flowers and a few other photos that had images of various fruits in them from the much larger collection of photos I have taken around my neighborhood. I then made two folders of the photos that contained resized versions of the photos. The first folder contained photos with a maximum height or width of 200 pixels. These would be the thumbnail photos you see in the middle of the image above. The second folder contained photos with a maximum width or height of 1200 pixels. These would be the photos you see on the far right above when you have tapped a thumbnail. Once I have all the photos resized, I upload them to Azure to be accessed by the app.

Flowers.....Continued on page 7

Flowers.....Continued from page 6

Next I import all the photos' file names into an Access data table (this took a bit of programming which we will skip). After that, there is the tedious work of supplying each photo with a description in the table. For flowers, I do not know, I did a lot of searching in Bing for Florida flowers in image searches. When the table is complete, I note that I have 173 photos, and I export this table to an XML file which will be the data source for the app: You tap a thumbnail, the app looks up that flower in the XML file and provides the description.

The real work begins with writing code to make all this work. I certainly won't go into that. Perhaps we can close with one of the features that I coded in: The ability to send via email the photo you are viewing. Below is a screen capture of such a message being sent to Merle Nicholson. ◆



Yahoo! eGroup

By Kevan Sheridan, Vice President ,
Tampa PC Users Group
kevan57@gmail.com

The purpose of the TPCUG Yahoo! eGroup is to inform, promote and encourage communication among members of the Tampa PC Users Group. This is a great member benefit and the easiest way to stay in touch with other members during non-meeting days.

Joining the eGroup is simple: Use your preferred email address to send an email join request to TPCUG-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Include your full name in the text section of this email. You will then receive a verification request that you reply to, then you are up and running.

Note: if you join with a Yahoo! email address you get full access to the group site at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tpcug

To send email messages to the group, address it to: tpcug@yahoogroups.com Your message will be broadcast to everyone in the eGroup.

Use of the eGroup would include, but is not limited to:

1. TPCUG leadership
   - Posting announcements of general interest to the members
   - Notifying members of recent changes or additions to meetings or special interest groups
   - Requesting feedback from members
2. The Members
   - Further discussing topics presented in meetings
   - Follow up to previous requests or links from presentations
   - Asking questions that were not answered during the Q/A portion of the meeting
   - Posting announcements of general interest to membership or leadership
   - Listing equipment either for sale or wanted
   - Holding discussions of consumer electronics or related topics and issues ◆

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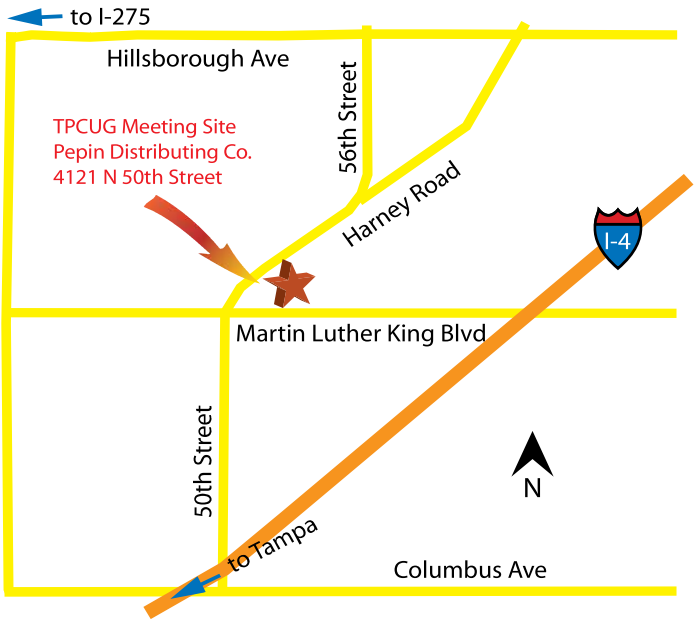
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

Dave outlined the business of creating malware itself where people develop inexpensive kits to sell to people who want to customize their own malware. The variety and volume of new malware has made the Antivirus industry lag 24-48 hours behind in the creation of detection software, which is always too late for some.

Dave went on to outline the steps that the regular user should take to be protected from malware as much as possible: 1) Create and use a standard user account, with logins for each user. 2) Games are dangerous because the gaming websites are targets for malware. (I may add that goes for music download sites, movies and torrents.) 3) Download only from known sources. 4) Disable script processing in your browsers. 5) Don't use Internet Explorer because that's the browser that receives the most hacking attention and 6) Disable Java.



These minutes cannot do justice to Dave's presentation; it covered so much valuable information. It was well-presented, interesting and informative. Our thanks go to Dave for his time and effort. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 27 No. 8 August 2014



August in Tampa

Meeting

Protecting Your Personal Safety

Wednesday, August 13, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: ; A deputy (name unknow at time of publishing) from the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office will do a presentation this month on things we can do to improve and protect our personal safety. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Merrill Friend for providing content this month. Let's see what I can do to fill the rest.

I have been doing my usual: Writing apps for Windows 8.1 and the Windows Phone. That is something I enjoy. I write the sort of apps in which I am interested. Unfortunately, not many others have the same interest. Or, perhaps, they cannot find my apps in the Windows Store. Most of my Win 8 apps have over 1,000 downloads with several having much more, and the best one, my Drug Data app, having around 17,000 downloads at present. But having downloads does not make any money on ad-supported apps unless the users not only use the app but spend time on a page that has an ad. For apps such as the Drug Data app, if someone uses it, they most likely simply look up information on one drug, and then they are gone. That sort of use produces very little income. My Simple Portfolio showing selected stock listings produces the most income because people

Comments.....Continued on page 6

September Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

The subjects covered in the SIG by moderator Bob LaFave were notebook overheating problems and known solutions; a KickStarter powered module Bob brought for powering a paper airplane and controlled by smartphone; Mac Drive, software to access Mac Drives from Windows, free and pro versions from http://www.mediafour.com

The monthly program presentation this month was given by myself, Merle Nicholson, on the subject of Ubuntu 14.04 LTS, the newest iteration of Ubuntu and the first in a year to have the LTS – Long Term Support – designation. The Ubuntu organization has commited to making every fourth release of the OS as LTS; the last being 12.04 LTS. The website – the place to begin if you are interested in the desktop version of this free OS – is http://www.ubuntu.com/download/desktop. Ubuntu is especially attractive as a replacement for older Windows XP systems, for those who want to avoid the current virus and malware nightmare, or for those disenchanted with Windows 8.1. It has fairly low processor and memory requirements. It's available in both 32 and 64 bit versions. I demonstrated software availability – office suite, image editing, software catalog and software updates.

The presentation was well attended; fairly lively with plenty of questions and discussions. ◆

Oracle VirtualBox Introduction

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

If you have an interest in using a different operating system temporarily for any reason, the risk-free approach is to use a Virtual Machine (VM). There are several VM programs available; my favorite, the one I now use exclusively, is Oracle VirtualBox. Other systems are described with less detail below.

VirtualBox is a free software product that allows you to run more than one operating system (OS). As an example: You have a Windows 7 computer and you have an interest in trying out Windows 8.1 without putting your computer at risk. Or you really can't find a replacement for your old 1982 SuperCalc spreadsheet and it hasn't run since Vista. You need either a DOS computer or maybe Windows 98SE.

Perhaps you have a Windows XP computer to do certain things but you know it's not safe anymore or perhaps it's dying. (Microsoft recommends you disconnect your XP computer from the Internet – even if it's running in a virtual machine.)

A virtual machine extends the capabilities of your existing computer so that it can run multiple operating systems (inside multiple virtual machines) at the same time. So, for example, you can run Windows and Linux on your Mac, run Windows Server 2008 on your Linux server, run Linux on your Windows PC, and so on, all alongside your existing applications. You can install and run as many virtual machines as you like -- the only practical limits are disk space and memory.

VirtualBox runs on Windows, Linux, Macintosh, and Solaris. It hosts and supports a large number of guest operating systems including Windows NT 4.0, 2000, XP, Server 2003 and 2008, Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8 and 8.1, DOS/Windows 3.x, Linux, Solaris, OS/2, OpenBSD and others.

If you are going to run an operating system, you must own it. A pirated OS won't work any better in a VM than in a real computer. So before you devote any time with this; be sure to get your license key if it's necessary (Windows, OS X). Obviously you can run any OS free when the OS is free, as in most Linux. A Windows OS that comes installed on a commercially made computer is usually licensed for that computer only (called an OEM version), and is not normally transferable to another.

The computer that you have running, the computer where you install the VirtualBox software, is called the "Host" computer, and the virtual machines are called "Clients", or "VMs".

So what do we need to host VMs, and where do we get it? For software, we need the OS that we're going to run, and the VirtualBox software from the VirtualBox.org download link below. As for hardware, well that's a bit more complicated. First, let's say you have Windows 7 and you want to experiment with Windows 8.1. It takes 4GB of real memory to run both of these products really well (although 8GB each would be better). The Windows 7 VM software dedicates real memory to the VM, so we're talking 8GB to run well. If you want them to just run, and are willing to wait while your PC chunks around swapping memory out to the swap file, you can actually do it on 2GB each. Obviously if you want to run Ubuntu, Lubuntu or Eubuntu (that's (L)ight and (E)ducation versions) which will run on as little as 1GB, 3 or 4GB of real memory, will do not too badly. There are numerous other Linux that are specifically designed to be small - "Tiny Core Linux" and "Damn Small Linux" and others. Those small Linux machines have greatly reduced memory requirements as well.

Now we need to talk about disk space. A VM simulates a disk (Virtual Drive) for your new VM computer, in the form of a disk file. That disk file obviously needs to be as big as if it were on a real computer, so if you need a large computer disk, that space is going to be allocated on your host computer. But there's some good news here, too. One is that VirtualBox supports dynamically allocated drives. This is where you set an initial and an upper limit for the size and allow it to

VirtualBox.....Continued on page 4

VirtualBox.....Continued from page 3

grow. This is well documented, so be sure to research it. The other good news is that you probably don't need nearly as much disk space as you think you do. Look at the actual amount used on the host machine or look at folders on other computers like notebooks. You can get folder properties to see how much of your disk is taken up by Downloads, documents, music and pictures. I allocated 25GB for my Windows 8.1 Virtual Drive. I use the VHD (Virtual Hard Drive) file type because that type is recognized and is readable by other VM's, and is transferable to a real hard drive. The basic OS takes only about 9GB, but more gets eaten up as you install software. You have to get serious about this if you intend to load music, video or pictures.

After doing some reading, open VirtualBox. This is just a manager of virtual machines. You create new VM.s and manage existing ones here. Each VM has a handful of settings such as number of processors, memory allocated, number of monitors, virtual and real CD/DVD and even floppys. You can set the guest VM to share the Host DVD to load software or USB devices. There are sound settings and Network devices, microphones and camera support. Virtually anything a "real" computer needs can be connected to the VM. You think of the VM as a real computer and the procedures for installing software and hardware are the same process, except for one thing: Your risk is just lost time. You can't harm your real computer unless you access (share) your real computer hard drive, which is something a novice should not do. Restrict your activities to your "local" machine and you can't go wrong.

Once you get your new computer going, it should easily start any time from the VirtualBox manager. Then it's time to look at modes. There are three. One is a full screen mode where it uses all your monitor(s) and hides your host from view. Here you are simulating what your new computer would look like and behave as if it were booted up. Another useful mode is windowed so that the machine looks like any other window with the whole screen scaled down in size. There are setting and procedures to transfer clipboard and files between the host and the client.

If you have plenty of memory and processing power you cannot tell it's in a VM. It's that good.

Other features of interest; if the VM is running and you have shared it to your network, it's accessible through the network and even controllable using remote access software. It's a good option for running a SQL Server or MySQL. There are command line calls so that you can set up a desktop shortcut and bypass opening the VirtualBox manager, or startup with the Task Scheduler or command line. All of this is well documented. See the links to the manual and also for a very useful forum where other users will answer your concern if it has not already been addressed.

Other stuff on VM:
One very useful VM product is "XP Mode" in Windows 7. It's included in all copies of Windows 7 Professional, Enterprise or Ultimate. It's a free licensed version of Windows XP. It is very easy to set up. Microsoft recommends you disconnect your XP Mode computer from the Internet. XP Mode was not implemented in Windows 8. See the XP Mode link below. It's very well documented.

There are other Virtual Machine products besides VirtualBox. Windows Virtual PC is one I have successfully used. If you have a MAC and need to run Windows products, Parallels is the most common choice at $50. My personal experience with Parallels did not go well. We found that the computer was brought to its knees for lack of memory and slow hard drive. See this somewhat older article in Lifehacker: http://lifehacker.com/5714966/five-best-virtual-machine-applications

Resources:
Website: https://www.virtualbox.org/
Online Manual: https://www.virtualbox.org/manual/ch01.html
Forums: https://forums.virtualbox.org/
Downloads: https://www.virtualbox.org/wiki/Downloads

Other products:
VMware: http://www.vmware.com/products/player
Microsoft Virtual PC: http://www.microsoft.com/en-

VirtualBox.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Hillsborough County Courthouse, 1905

From the University of South Florida, http://etc.usf.edu/clippix/picture/the-hillsborough-county-court-house-in-tampa-florida.html. Demolished in 1952

TPCUG Yahoo! eGroup Joining the eGroup is simple: Use your preferred email address to send an email join request to TPCUG-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Include your full name in the text section of this email. You will then receive a verification request that you reply to, then you are up and running. To send email messages to the group, address them to: tpcug@yahoogroups.com. Your message will be broadcast to everyone in the eGroup.

Note: if you join with a Yahoo! email address you get full access to the group site at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tpcug.

August's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
South Tampa Magazine	http://southtampamagazine.com/
New Republic	http://www.newrepublic.com/
Tom's Hardware	http://www.tomshardware.com/

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us/download/details.aspx?id=3702
Windows XP Mode: http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/install-and-use-windows-xp-mode-in-windows-7 ◆



Windows 7 running in VirtualBox

Comments.....Continued from page 1

tend to leave it running for some length of time. But it has been out there a while and I haven't updated it (not that it needs updating), and that tends to cut down on new downloads. But you can have quite large downloads and make no money if you don't update your app, particularly for a game. I know one fellow who wrote a game for the Win Phone that has garnered over 300,000 downloads and produced some noticeable ad income at first. Now he says he receives almost nothing since he has not updated the game and people have apparently lost interest. It also helps to promote your app through various means such as on



Windows 8.1 running in VirtualBox

Facebook and Twitter. I don't do that, but the developers who are working at making a living writing apps very much do that. I don't even have a Facebook or Twitter account. Well, I will just have to suffer the consequences of not being on social media. But then I have the benifits of not being on social media – I am not inundated with trivia.

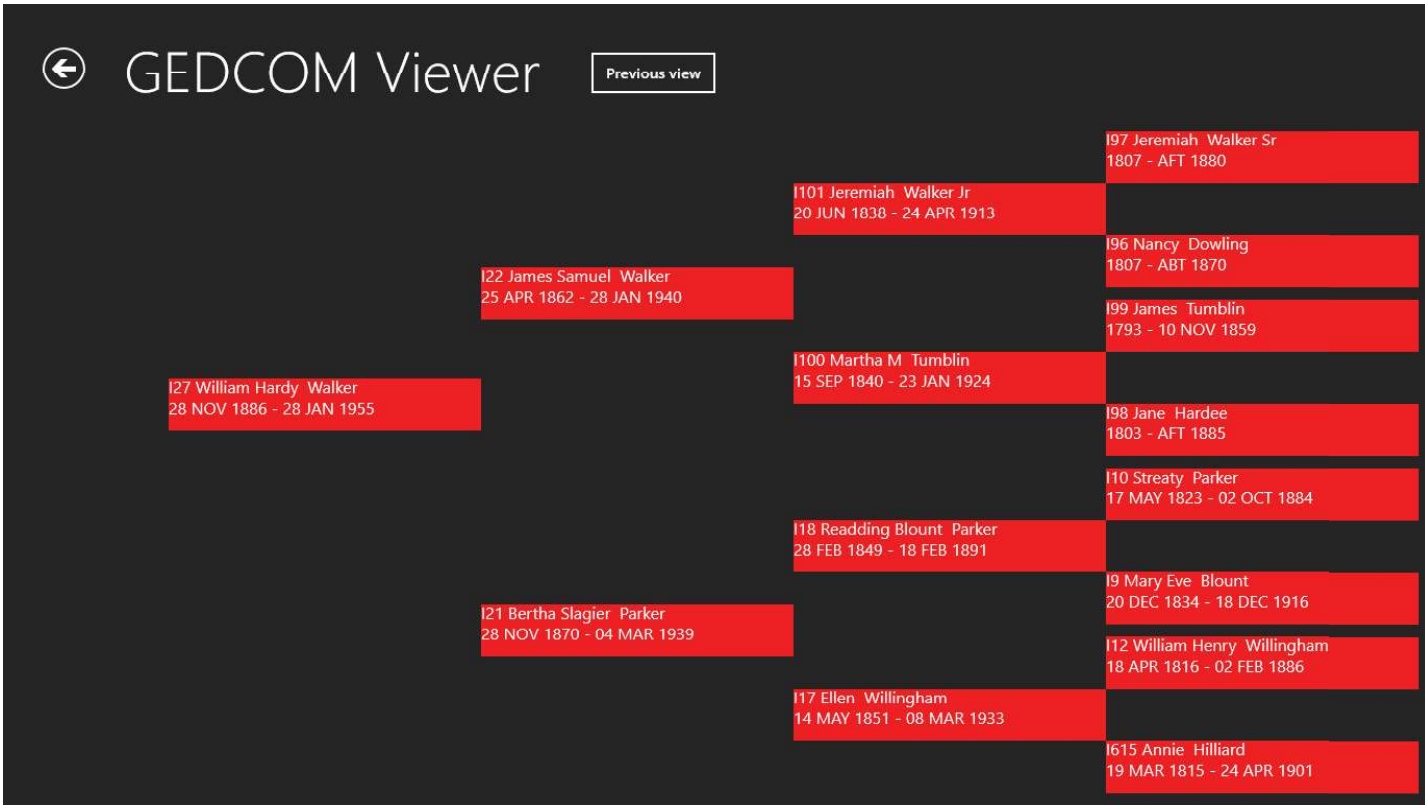
I am about ready to add to my app list with a Windows 8 and Windows Phone app that allows you to view, search and download the Civil War photos by Mathew Brady in the Library of Congress – all 8,000 plus of them. It will be simply titled Civil War Photos and should be out sometime this month.

And while finishing that up, I have also started on an app that will allow you to view all the geneaological data in a GEDCOM file with the usual ancestor and descendant reports. So I am keeping busy. Here is a

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Comments.....Continued from page 6

screen capture of one of the ancestor reports. ◆



WiFi Problem

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC Users Group
absecon1933@gmail.com

One of my wife's relatives recently gave her a brand new iPad. Neither my wife nor I have ever owned an iPad and learning to use the thing involves a convoluted learning curve for us both. In our case that learning curve was more difficult than we expected.

We took the thing out of the box and found that the battery was fully charged but we couldn't do a darn thing with it. There were some interesting Apps available for downloading, many for free but we could not get any of them to work. So I made an appointment with the geniuses at the Apple Store in International Plaza where everything worked beautifully. Those genius types made it look so easy I really felt kind of stupid. So I thanked them for their kindness and took the iPad home and tried again. Once again it would not do the easy things at home that it had no difficulty doing at the Apple Store in International Plaza. My pride now almost destroyed, I decided I would have to figure this out by myself. I just couldn't face all those smiling Apple Geniuses another time.

I began to suspect that my Bright House Wifi was not working properly but that made no sense because my laptop which operated off my Bright House router was working just fine. I looked at the Wifi settings on my iPhone. When I first checked, the iPhone indicated Wifi was on and then it suddenly said it was Not on. That made no sense. But it did suggest that perhaps I had a weak Wifi signal. Why then was my laptop still working so well. Years ago I hooked my laptop up to the router using a cable, thinking I might improve the connection and speed. So, now I disconnected the cable and found that I could no longer get the Internet.

I phoned Bright House who seemed to immediately know what the problem was. I was asked to reboot the modem, which failed to make any difference. Then

WiFi.....Continued on page 8

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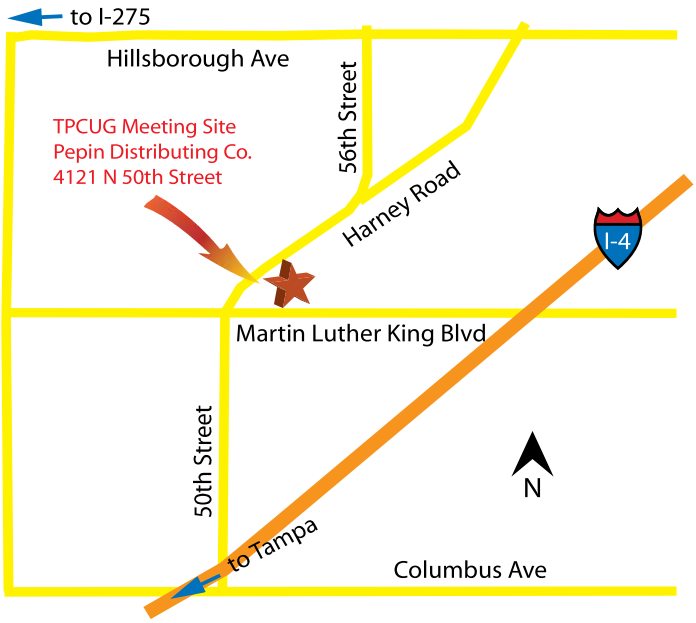
First Class Mail

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WiFi.....Continued from page 7

the Tech guy on the phone made more changes at his end and my Wifi reception gradually improved until it was up where the Tech guy said it should be. Since my computer was close to the modem and router, the Techie suggested I discontinue using the cable to connect to the router. My wife is using her iPad a couple of rooms away, and it now seems to be working fine and the roughly 50-foot distance from the router and modem doesn't seem to be a problem.

I have not heard of this type problem before and wonder if it is specific to Bright House or is it more commonplace than that. It would be interesting to me to know if anyone else in our group has experienced this type problem with their Wifi connection. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 27 No. 9 September 2014



September in Tampa

Meeting

How to Use Google Like an Expert

by

Dave Palmer

Wednesday, September 10, 2014

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Dave Palmer will tell us how to be expert searchers using Google.. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Since it is less than one week before we usually mail the newsletter and since no one has sent me anything, I suppose I should see what I can come up with to entertain you.

First off, I can tell you that our newsletter and our website did not place in the yearly APCUG newsletter contest or the website contest. Most years we place somewhere in one of those. I suppose our offerings may have become dated and do not fit what is expected of a modern newsletter or website. Have a look, for example, at the winning websites listed below and you will see that they all have a similar look that is quite different from the TPCUG website. Anyway, our site serves its purpose. But I do need to do a bit of updating to some of the information there. Kevan Sheridan has made a few suggestions which I will look into. If anyone else has any ideas, send me a note.

Regarding the newsletter, I think we are one of a very small number of groups that still put out a printed version of the

Comments.....Continued on page 3

October Meeting: To be announced

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Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org) 988-6480
Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343
Secretary: Merle Nicholson (merle@merlenicholson.com) 879-3602
Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net) 960-4132

APPOINTED (Volunteers)

Editor: William LaMartin (william@lamartin.com) 251-3817
Programs: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 234-9343

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. The discussions about members' questions were lively and interesting.

The presentation this month was given by Judy Woster of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. The topics were Personal Safety and Internet Safety. She emphasized that, for children, no child should have a Facebook social media account, and they should have their computer in an open area in where their activity can be monitored. She described the huge numbers of sexual predators and active pedophiles. She emphasized that hundreds of pedophiles are active in Hillsborough County every day. Children have no defense against these people, and their online activity must be closely monitored.

Judy also mentioned specifically those people who roam neighborhoods in vans and sell steaks; their procedure is to ring the doorbell and immediately try the knob, looking for immediate entry. Your defense is to lock your doors, and if you hear the knob being tried, call 911 immediately. The Sheriff Department's dispatcher number is 813 247-8200, and the dispatcher supervisor number is 813 247-8240.

Judy spent some time addressing purses and billfolds. She recommends trimming billfolds down to the essentials; one credit card, drivers license, cash. Do not carry insurance cards, Medicare and above all never carry your Social Security card. If you trim the billfold down to the minimum, put it in a front pocket, not the back. The backside is just not sensitive enough to detect someone pulling it. Women should do the same. Women should never let a purse out of their grip. Never put it in a shopping cart. Take it to the restroom and carry it over a shoulder. Never put it on a hook, shelf or on the floor. If you can, wear clothing with a pocket to carry the slim billfold, not in the

Minutess.....Continued on page 8

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newsletter that is mailed to each member in addition to posting an Adobe Acrobat version at the website. I think we are almost unique among user groups, too, in that all the content in the newsletter comes from our members. It would certainly make my job easier if I just copied articles from other computer club newsletters. That was what we did for some of our content when I took over as editor many years ago. Perhaps the matter should be revisited, though when members contribute it is always very well-received.

I don't know what the future of the newsletter, the website, or even the TPCUG is since we are all getting older and no one younger seems to be coming along to replace us.

Below are the winners of the APCUG contest. When the online version of our newsletter is published, the links below will be live.

NEWSLETTER

1st place - Danbury Area Computer Society, Richard Teasdale, Managing Editor with Allan Ostergren, Production Editor – http://www.dacs.org/

2nd place - Monterey Bay Users Group-PC, Carolyn S. Lake, Editor – http://www.mbug.org/

3rd place - Hilton Head Island Computer Club, Wesley Taylor, Editor – http://www.hhicc.org/

WEBSITE

1st place - Tellico Village Computer Users Club, Phil Cozadd, Webmaster – http://www.tvcuc.org/

2nd place - Tampa Bay Computer Society, Sam Richardson, Webmaster – http://www.tampa-bay.org/

3rd place - Under the Computer Hood User Group, Bob Woods, Webmaster – http://www.uchug.org/

The Internet of Things

I imagine you have read a lot recently about the Internet of Things, where everything is connected to the Internet: Your refrigerator, your A/C, the lights in your house, even you possibly. Of course, a good portion of this is hype. But some of it is already here and, I am sure, more is to come. For the most part, whether you participate is up to you. However, there may be some things that you will not have a say about. For example, your future car may be connected and be reporting on your driving with nothing you can do about it, certainly not if you want to have insurance coverage. I don't think, though, that you will be required to wear some sort of monitor that keeps track of your body temperature, pulse rate, etc and sends it into the cloud. However, I have already seen a fellow termed "the most connected man," I think, who has such a setup in place. Here is the link http://www.businessweek.com/videos/2014-06-04/meet-the-worlds-most-connected-man.

That fellow is a bit more connected than most of us would like to be. Possibly more acceptable is the person who can control the lighting and A/C in his house from his cell phone. I know such a person, and he did it all himself, which would be easier for him than for the average person since he is an electrical engineer by training and a software programmer by occupation. He installed all the sensors and controllers necessary for this to work himself. So he can remotely monitor and change the lighting and A/C in the house. And he also can view remotely most of the rooms of his house, along with the pool, on his cell phone because he has a web camera installed in many rooms.

If he is away, he can set the A/C warmer, then an hour before he returns home, have the A/C begin to cool the part of the house he plans on using first and later have the bedroom area cooled. I don't think he has set up his lawn sprinkler system for remote control yet, but I have seen such setups demonstrated by others. Right now, such things are for the geeky among us, but in 10 years, you may be able to have your refrigerator talk to you regarding the freezer compartment temperature while you are away.

My only contribution to the Internet of Things so far is to be able to view a webcam video of the front and rear of my house via an app I wrote for my Windows Phone. Perhaps I will come up with something additional in the future. ◆



Intel Galileo

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

If you would like to create your own connection to the Internet of Things, then you will need a micro computer board such as the new Intel Galileo, now in Version 2. It is a microcontroller board based on the Intel® Quark SoC X1000 Application Processor, a 32-bit Intel Pentium®-class system on a chip (SoC). Version 1 will cost you $50 and Version 2 will be $75, and they may be purchased from Amazon. The dimensions are: 4.2 x 2.8 inches (not sure of the height). Interesting, but I don't think the average person should be purchasing one since to make them useful, you are going to need to understand some basic electronics and some basic programming.

There are other such boards, the Raspberry Pi and the Netduino. I have worked a little with the Netduino but gave it up for lack of time. The most I got done was to make various LEDs flash when I pushed a button and to make an electric servo turn x number of degrees. All of these boards are available from Amazon.com (don't forget to go through the link at our site) along with all sorts of other electronic items that you will need to actually accomplish anything: LCD, motor, thermoresistor, and temperature sensor are examples of that.

What interests me about the Intel Galileo is that you can actually install a version of Windows on the board and then program it in C++ using Visual Studio. At present you can only do this with Version 1 of the board, but such support will be coming to Version 2. I will wait until the Version 2 board supports this before even considering looking into it. But it has prompted me to do something I have avoided doing for many years: Learn C++ programming. I know Visual Basic and C# but never learned C++. I should be able to learn enough to do the simple programming required for this board. And since I have a subscription to lynda.com and they have several courses in C++, I have already made my start on that. Once I learn a bit of C++ and have written some simple programs using Visual Studio, I will no longer feel inferior as a programmer. The lack of C++ programming ability has always bothered me. Although I cannot think of anything at the moment that I wanted to do but was not able to accomplish in VB or C#, I think there were such things in the past that I just can't recall.

To see a schematic and the accompanying code in C++ for what Intel calls a Smart Fan have a look at https://ms-iot.github.io/content/SmartFan.htm.

When I was working with the Netduino board, I saw a video where a fellow had modified the lock on his apartment door so that in addition to a key he could use his phone to connect via the Internet to the Netduino board in his house that somehow communicated with the lock and with the correct password could have the lock to unlock (or lock) itself. I can't find the video now, but if you just go to YouTube.com and search for Netduino you will produce videos of all sorts of projects people have done with the board. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Amazon Drone Delivery

From Business Week, http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-12-05/amazon-drone-delivery-is-bezoss-latest-bold-disruptive-bet. You can find the standard photos of the Amazon delivery drone everywhere. I like this one better.

TPCUG Yahoo! eGroup Joining the eGroup is simple: Use your preferred email address to send an email join request to TPCUG-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Include your full name in the text section of this email. You will then receive a verification request that you reply to, then you are up and running. To send email messages to the group, address them to: tpcug@yahoogroups.com. Your message will be broadcast to everyone in the eGroup.

Note: if you join with a Yahoo! email address you get full access to the group site at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tpcug.

September's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Short URL to Long URL	http://www.longurl.org/
Google Removal Requests	http://www.google.com/transparencyreport/removals/copyright/requests/
Internet of Things Humor	http://online.wsj.com/articles/when-the-internet-of-things-attacks-1409331700

Some Thoughts on the Internet

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I don't recall exactly when Al Gore invented the Internet (joke) or exactly when I first got on it. I do know that my first foray was with Prodigy, followed by AOL and then via a dialup on Netcom. As I recall, Prodigy and AOL did not provide what we now think of as the World Wide Web but rather a collection of places under their control that we could visit using their software. But I may be wrong about that; it has been a long time since.

My website, lamartin.com, was started in 1998, as was the club website tpcug.org (see the September 1998 newsletter). I actually created a website for the club a bit earlier that went live in July of 1996 as a sub-site of member John Meroth's business site. The address then was http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug. However, John had an untimely death in August of 1997 and member Larry Anders then offered us a sub-location at a site he owned. The URL for that was http://www.canx.com/tpcug, where we stayed until we got our own domain name as mentioned above. The point of all that is to indicate that I have been creating web content for the past 18 years and have witnessed a lot of changes.

When I started, there was no Amazon.com or Google and certainly no FaceBook, companies that now dominate the Internet. I think the first time I entered Amazon.com in the newsletter's Interesting World Wide Web Locations page, as our Links page was then termed, it was as a sub-site of some other site, but I can't verify that and find no information on the Internet to back that up. So most probably I am thinking of some other well-known site. I first entered Google on the Links page in July of 1999 describing it as "A different search engine." Google was founded in 1998.

There was actually very little selling back then. The commercialization of the World Wide Web came later. Newspapers were all free when they created their sites. And if a paper tried to charge, very few people were willing to pay and the paper soon rescinded the pay model. The only paper back then that made it stick was the Wall Street Journal. It was all so new and so exciting. So many new sites popping up. Now, I am a bit jaded with it all. Perhaps you are too.

I now visit very few sites on a daily basis: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Bloomberg*. I follow links I receive in emails to sites that have computer news and visit Microsoft for updates to my programming software that are not fed automatically to me as are Windows updates. Usually if I end up at a new site or viewing a YouTube video, it is because I followed a link in an article in one of my news sites. Or it is the result of a Bing or Google search for something.

There is so much useful information out there – some of it accurate. In the beginning of the World Wide Web, there was no online encyclopedia as we have with Wikipedia now. If you wanted an encyclopedia you purchased a CD. Well, that may not be exactly true, since I think Prodigy had what they claimed was an encyclopedia. However, I suspect that it provided a very limited bit of information. In 1992 Microsoft had something called Bookshelf for Word which was a 16-book encyclopedia costing several hundred dollars. In the July 1994 newsletter, Larry Anders wrote a review of the *Grollier Multimedia Encyclopedia* that sold for under $100 and which he described as by far the best of all the CD based encyclopaedias that he owned, and he owned four. I think I purchased this encyclopedia based on his recommendation. About the same time Microsoft came out with a similar product called *Encarta*. And that is what killed the printed encyclopedia business of which *Encyclopedia Britannica* was the king. They tried an expensive CD version but were too late to the game. CD Encyclopedias are not on the Internet, and when Wikipeida came along, the CD encyclopedia business also disappeared. The first mention of Wikipedia in our newsletter was in the Links page of the April 2005 newsletter. It was founded in 2001, so there should be an earlier reference in the newsletter, but I didn't see one. CD based encyclopedias replaced printed book versions and Wikipedia replaced the CD versions. I cannot imagine what will replace Wikipedia. Perhaps the Wikipeida app for Win 8 could be considered a replace-

Thoughts.....Continued on page 7

Thoughts.....Continued from page 6

ment for the method of accessing Wikipedia using a browser.

Forget Wikipedia, though. When most people want to know anything, even the web URL of a business, they simply type it in to Google. Want to know about high blood pressure, water filters or laserjet printers, type that into Google and you will find an answer. But you will get more than an answer. For when you go anywhere else on the web in your browser, for example the New York Times site, you will most likely see an ad on the right side of the screen for whatever you recently searched for in Google. So don't search in Google for anything that might embarrass you if someone else using your computer saw an ad for it at another site.

The club receives $30 - $70 each month from the Amazon link on our home page. And I personally make several purchases each month from the link, but my purchases are not credited to the TPCUG since I am the one who set up the account. Almost anything you can think of may be purchased from Amazon. It has sort of turned into America's store and undoubtably has hurt many other businesses. But not everything I want may be gotten from Amazon.com. I recently needed to replace my lawn mower. I wanted a quality one, and Amazon's offerings just did not meet what I wanted. So I went to the Home Depot site and found numerous mowers that were of the quality I wanted and ordered one. It arrived about five days later fully assembled in a large box at my front door with no shipping charge. In the past I would have gone into several different stores in Tampa to see what was available. Another advantage of the online site at Home Depot, as well as Amazon.com, is that you may read numerous reviews about the item of interest written by people who have previously purchased the item (and possibly returned it if they were not satisfied).

For entertainment, the Internet provides us with movies and TV shows on demand. That was certainly not the case in the beginning. There just wasn't enough bandwidth on a dialup modem connection. There are also things such Kindle books that I find particularly valuable. In my house I have two walls and more of bookcases filled with books I have purchased since my early twenties. On my Kindle I now have a collection of ebooks purchased in recent years. If they should want them, my descendants will have easy access to the printed ones in the bookcases. As to the ebooks, I don't know how one can pass them down. They are, however, very convenient to purchase and read, with the price generally being less than a printed book. In fact, I think they could be even cheaper than they are, but Amazon seems to be having trouble convincing the book publishers of that. Of course, this has greatly diminished the quantity of books sold in real bookstores. But it is just the way the Internet affects almost everything it touches.

Lastly, the Internet allows us to express our opinions, share what we are doing and keep in contact with friends and "friends." The latest manifestation, I suppose, is sites such as FaceBook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram, where you can basically post your interests to be shared with others who do the same. It sometimes seems that everyone except me and a few like-minded people I know is doing this. Additionally it seems that every criminal or terrorist in the world is also using these service, for when such a person makes the news it is inevitable that they have a FaceBook page or Twitter account where their warped ideas may be viewed.

But enough of the Internet. The question is what comes next? I suppose some would say that mobile is already here and is the next great thing. To me, mobile is simply a different way of accessing the Internet and its World Wide Web instead of using a computer and a browser.

In closing, which I am doing since I have now filled the newsletter, here is what I have done recently:

1. A list of my Windows 8 apps is posted on my website at http://www.lamartin.com/Win8Apps.aspx

2. Using my Nikon D800 DSLR in video mode, I captured a movie of a brown anole showing off in my back yard, http://www.lamartin.com/Videos/The-BrownAnole.mp4, which I edited with Adobe Premier

Thoughts.....Continued on page 8

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Thoughts.....Continued from page 7

Elements.

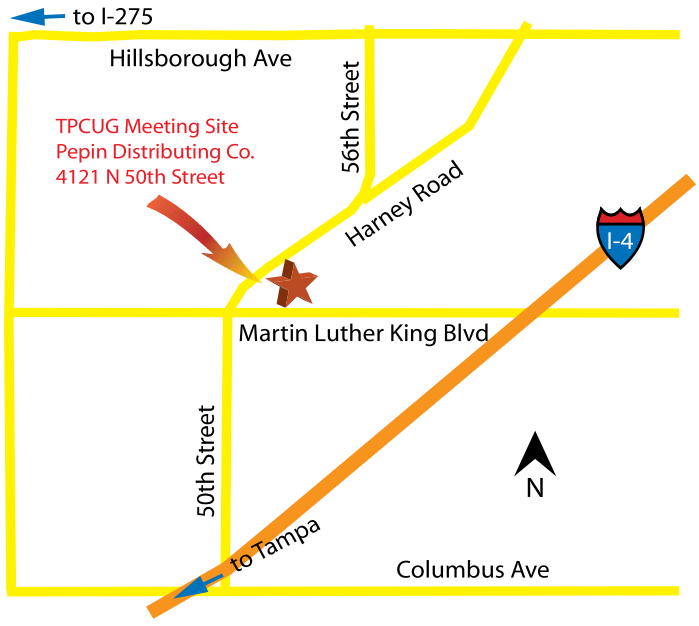
3. Similarly, but with more difficulty, I captured an ant taking over my computer: http://www.lamartin.com/videos/An Ant on A Monitor.mp4. ◆

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

purse, and, better yet, don't carry a purse.

Regarding the credit card, make arrangements with your bank to limit the amount that can be withdrawn to limit how much a thief can withdraw. Never carry a checkbook. Checkbooks are of no real value now. The trick that a thief uses is to pull one check out of the middle of your book where you will never miss it and use the numbers to cash checks against the account. Never shop at night, and under no circumstances go to an ATM at night. Use your car alarm fob to set off your car alarm as you approach. This is to help bring out someone hiding behind and also to verify the alarm is still working.

For alarm systems, test your alarm system by notifying the police dispatcher that it will go off, and set it off.



Allow the alarm company to do their regular procedure and time them to see how long it takes for them to phone your house and to call it in to the dispatcher. Judy addressed some items about gun safety, the procedure to certify the owners competency, and license it. The presentation was well practiced, very informative and never for a moment lacked for subject matter. Our thanks go to Judy Woster and to the Hillsborough Sheriff office for a very valuable presentation. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

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October in Tampa

Vol. 27 No. 10 October 2014

Meeting

What's New in Hardware

by

Steve Singer, RDI

Wednesday, October 8, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI and MoreValu.com will show us what is new in hardware. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Another month, another newsletter. Many thanks to Merle Nicholson for his article on how to protect your computer by setting up a non-administrative account as your main account. That way, malware will not be able to install itself.

What's new in computing and technology? The first things that come to mind are the new versions of iPhone. As usual, people lined up for what seemed blocks at Apple stores to purchase the latest version in addition to all that were sold online. Apple claimed 10 million were sold during the first weekend. Apple also released a new version of its mobile operating system. However, apparently everything did not go all that well with the release of the new operating system, with people saying that it trashed their iPads and iPhones, and Apple pulled it very quickly. I think the moral of that story is to not install any update the first day that it is available. Let others be the guinea pigs.

Comments.....Continued on page 7

November Meeting: Working in the Cloud by William LaMartin

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month the SIG subjects were laptop overheating problems and possible solutions, Windows Compatibility Mode, and Merle passed around a mSATA SSD (solid state drive). The discussions about members' questions were lively and interesting.

The presentation this month was given by our own Dave Palmer, who had a well-prepared PowerPoint-based presentation on "How to use Google like an Expert".

The overall subjects were History, Search Engine, Search Basics and Google Beyond Search. Dave discussed Google Toolbar, Search Operations, Google Alerts, Google Images, Sports Scores, Movies, Flight Information, Google Translate, Google Finance, Google Now, Google Maps, Google Earth, Moon and Mars, Google Voice and Google Plus. There is no way to make these minutes describe the breadth of Dave's presentation. It was well organized, well practiced and interesting to the end. Our thanks to Dave for another excellent presentation. ◆



Windows 9 is coming

Create a Standard Account

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

We all need to be using a standard account for our daily use and reserve an administrator account for installing software. This gives us added protection against viruses and especially hijackers. I'll explain how to do this safely.

This setup is an absolute necessity if you have children using the computer, and also unsophisticated adults as well. The first time you pay someone a hundred bucks to get rid of a hijacker because a 6-year-old clicked on something, think back and find this article. Make one new standard account for each user.

First, I'll excerpt from Windows 7 Control Panel, User Account Help for definitions. I begin quoting here.

Standard account
The type of user account that allows users to install software and change system settings that do not affect other users or the security of the computer. This account type is recommended for daily use.

Administrator account
The type of user account that allows complete access to the computer. Administrators can make any desired changes. This account type is not recommended for daily use and should only be used when necessary.

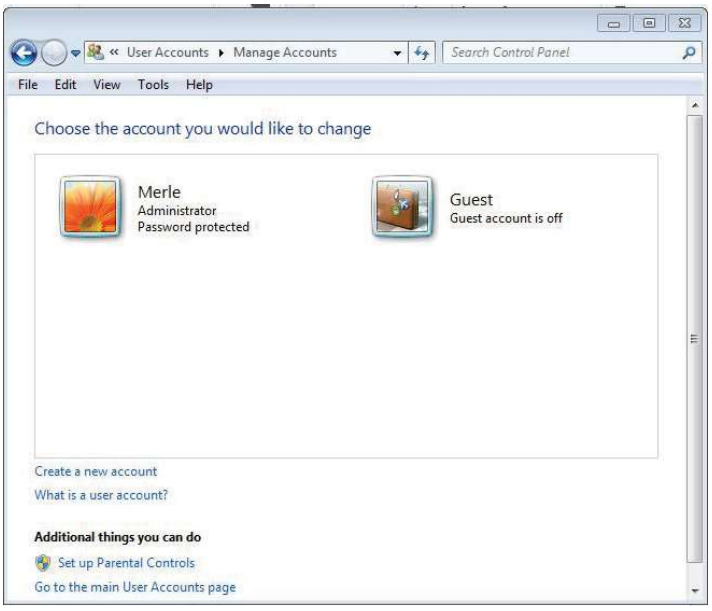
Why use a standard user account instead of an administrator account?
The standard account can help protect your computer by preventing users from making changes that affect everyone who uses the computer, such as deleting files that are required for the computer to work. We recommend creating a standard account for each user.

When you are logged on to Windows with a standard account, you can do almost anything that you can do with an administrator account, but if you want to do something that affects other users of the computer, such as installing software or changing security settings, Windows might ask you to provide a password for an administrator account.

That is the end of quoting.

Whoa. Wait a minute. My computer came with two accounts. The Administrator and a disabled Guest account. Since when are they saying I need a standard account? Well, the answer is - That's the way it's always been (maybe since XP and Windows 2000)

I'll predict that all of us use an administrator account all the time. That's because that's the way our computers come to us by default, and we just go with it because there's nothing special to deal with. But if you go looking for it, Microsoft has always recommended using a standard account and then just made it hard to find. In my opinion, setting up two accounts should be a part of the Windows setup procedure.



So we'll begin. We'll assume that you have the usual: Two accounts – Administrator and Guest. Go to Control Panel, User Accounts, and click on Manage Accounts.

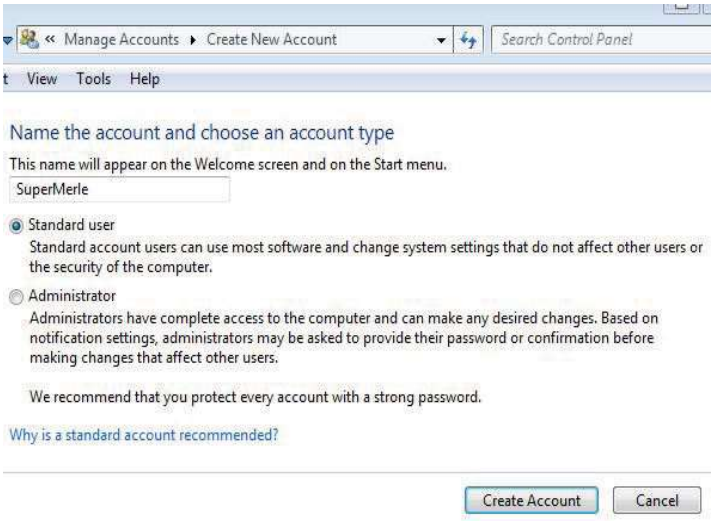
In the following, I'll put names specific to my installation in parentheses. Passwords will be (xxxxxxxx). That's at least eight alpha/numeric/upper/lower case. The procedure we'll use is this:

Standard Account.....Continued on page 4

Standard Account.....Continued from page 3

1. Create a new administrator user account. (Super-Merle).
2. And create a password for (SuperMerle) in a separate step.
3. Test the accounts - Restart Windows, select a user.
4. Share (Merle) user document folder to (Super-Merle).
5. Change the old administrator account (Merle) to standard.
6. Change the User Account Control Settings to Default or to Always Notify.
7. Test that we can still do administrative stuff.

As an aside, if you look at the bottom of the next picture, there's a link that says "Why is a standard account recommended?"



I entered (SuperMerle) in the New Account Name. You cannot use any special characters. When you click on "Create Account", you then have to change (Super-Merle) to add a password. Strange, huh?



Click on "Create a Password" [screen capture of this step omitted due to space limitations].

Fill out the password, confirm the password, fill out a hint and click on "Create password" button. And we're mostly done with (SuperMerle).



OK, we are done with creating the new account. Notice (SuperMerle) is now password protected. Just close the panel window. Notice we haven't touched the original account, and we're still in the (Merle) account.

Time to restart. Start, click Restart. When you get to the account sign-in you'll see both users. The first time you select the new administrator account (Super-Merle), after typing the password, you'll have an extra delay because it has to create the new desktop and set up the new account directories. Restart again and this time select the original account (Merle).

Now that we're back in the original (Merle) account, we'll share the user directory with (SuperMerle). This is really not completely necessary, but it saves time later when in the Super Account and you're trying to find files.

Standard Account.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



iPhone 6 Line in New York

From http://www.pcmag.com/at the slide show at this very long URL: http://www.pcmag.com/slideshow_viewer/0,3253,l=327592&a=327592&po=20,00.asp, we can see part of the 12-block long line along 5th Avenue heading to the Apple Store. Don't they know there is such a thing as online ordering? Perhaps there is the cult of standing in long lines.

TPCUG Yahoo! eGroup Joining the eGroup is simple: Use your preferred email address to send an email join request to TPCUG-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Include your full name in the text section of this email. You will then receive a verification request that you reply to, then you are up and running. To send email messages to the group, address them to: tpcug@yahoogroups.com. Your message will be broadcast to everyone in the eGroup.

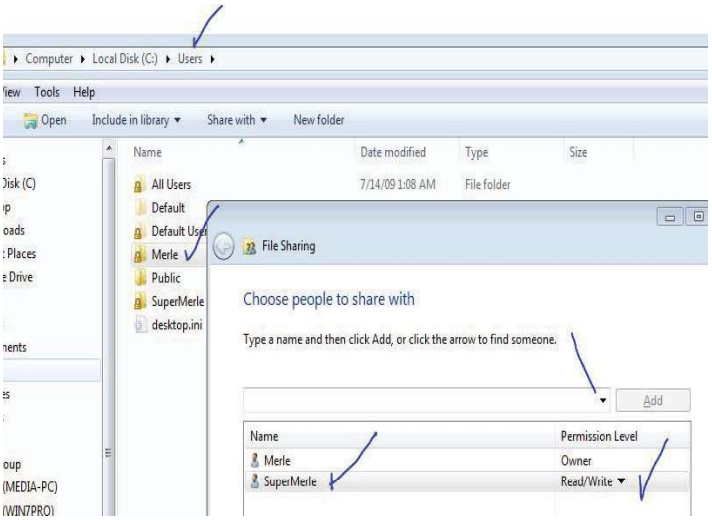
Note: if you join with a Yahoo! email address you get full access to the group site at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tpcug.

October's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Virginia Wildflowers	http://virginiawildflowers.org/
PC Magazine	http://www.pcmag.com/
Steve Singer's MoreValu.com	http://morevalu.com/

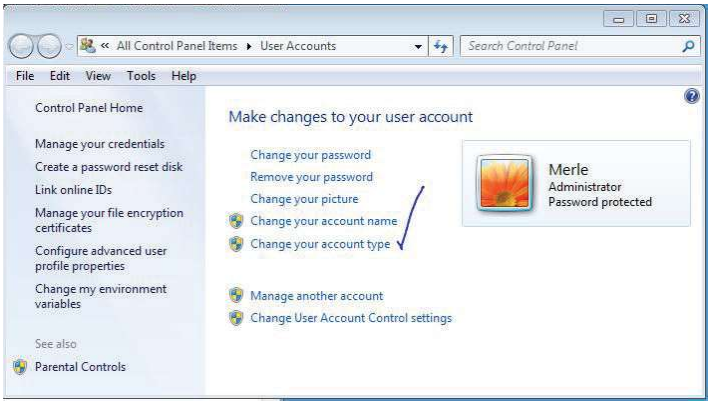
Standard Account.....Continued from page 4

Open Windows Explorer, click on Computer, then open the Users directory, then right-click on (Merle) and select Share With … and then on Specific People .

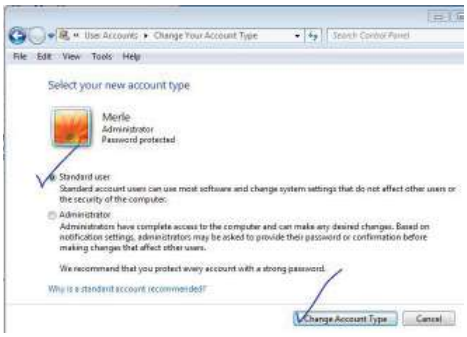


Click the Arrow to find and select (SuperMerle), and then click on Add button. When the (SuperMerle) user is in the list, change the permission level to Read/Write and then OK.

Just to check, let's log into (SuperMerle) and make sure we're accessing all of (Merle) files. Go to Start, ShutDownArrow, Switch User. Select (SuperMerle) from the Login Screen, enter password and we're at the new (SuperMerle) desktop. Open Windows Explorer from the taskbar, Computer, Drive C, Users directory, open (Merle). As a test, open (Merle)'s desktop directory, right-click and New, Text Document, and create a new document on (Merle), Open and type something, and file. This time you'll notice in the Start, Shutdown menu, there's a Log off. Do that. Then Log back into (Merle); we're going to change



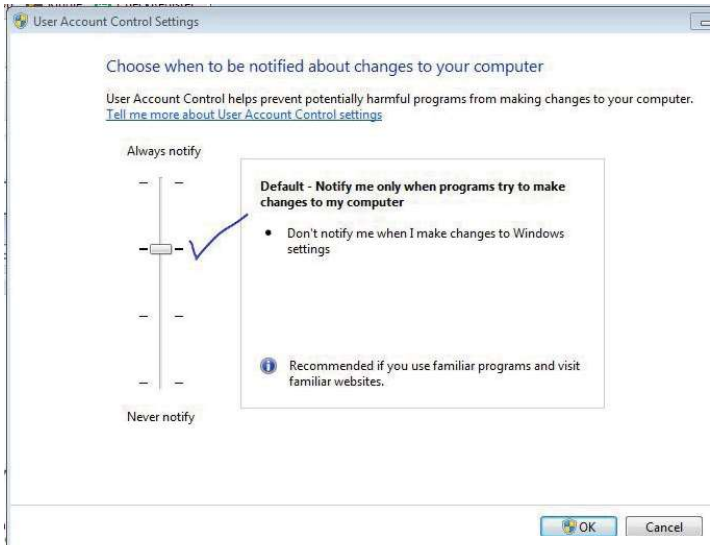
(Merle) to a Standard User.



Control Panel, User Accounts, Select Change your account type. [Image at bottom of previous column]

Notice at left the Standard User is already selected. While we are here, you'll see another item in User Accounts . . . Change User Account Control settings. This is "UAC". Click that and you'll see the image below.

Make sure the slider is set to either Default or to Always Notify. The Always Notify is best, of course, and if you haven't tried it, you should for a while at least. You can always go back to Default later. Some people find it annoying, and it was an original default feature in Vista. Remember we're doing this mainly to keep hijacker software



from installing, and especially to protect your computer from unsuspecting or unsophisticated users. You'll need to reboot to put the new UAC into effect.

Finally, to test, Let's try something. Go to Start, click on Run and type in msconfig and OK. Here's something new. It's asking for the password for the administrator account (SuperMerle). It's working. So if that's the kid in the house, he'll have to ask you to type it in. And if you're the Super, it's a minor inconvenience. Think of that last hundred bucks you spent. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Then there was the IPO of the giant Chinese e-commerce business named Alibaba. All the excitement around it reminded me of the Internet bubble of 1999, although Alibaba is supposedly quite profitable, as compared to the startups of that bubble What was a bit odd to me is what you are actually buying. Because Chinese law prohibits foreigners from owning assets of a Chinese company, to get around this buying shares in the IPO "will buy you a stake in a Cayman Islands-registered entity which is under contract to receive the profit from Alibaba's lucrative Chinese assets but will not actually own them" (from *MarketWatch*). Well, put down your money and take your chances. I don't do that; possibly it is why I am not rich.

Hacked again My computer has not been hacked, but my personal website, lamartin.com, was hacked back in July, and now all the sites that I have at a particular web hosting company, including the TPCUG site, are suffering from the effects of a hack on the hosting company that hosts them. First, let me explain what happened to my site in July.

On July 7, I noticed that lamartin.com was inaccessible up until the web hosting company reset things. And it had been that way since the 4th, although I did not discover it until the evening of the 7th. I contacted the web hosting company about it. Based on what I found below, it appears that some Chinese site caused the problem.

In using FTP to look at my most recent log file for the site, which was on 7/4/2014, I noted that under cs-uri-query (the query that sent them to the site), around 2:55 AM I begin to see nothing but items such as

http://fashionandnewest.com/www.lamartin.com/fake-michael-kors-clutch-bag-c-1.php&inurl=http://www.discountbagsshopping.com

I would appear that my site was bombarded by hits from http://fashionandnewest.com/ every few seconds from 2:55 AM to around 3:30 AM and then nothing. Perhaps my web hosting company shut my site down; I do not know. Anyway, I got them to reset it and get it up and running again, but the "attacks" just kept coming. I then noted what the originating IP addresses were and blocked access to entire blocks of IP address that included those. Things got better, and only a few such visitors were getting access to the site (although they were still trying).

I then took a close look at what was at my site. I found a folder named file that I did not put there. It contained 1,019 files and was 22 MB in size. All the files were php files. I deleted all of that and reset the site's password. I don't think my password was the problem. I believed then and am now sure that they got to my site through hacking into the web hosting company. So what was the purpose of all of this? They were using my site to direct people to their site. My site's IP address would be one whose IP address would not be blocked as their IP address probably would.

With that fixed, I forgot about things until around September 26, when I needed to send up new version of some files to my site. That is done using FTP. But the FTP process would time out with no connection. I then went to the hosting company's site and logged into my account and found a message that read "We are currently completing a necessary upgrade which required FTP services to be disabled. Please use File Manager instead." Well, for lamartin.com their online File Manager application will not work because the site is too large – almost 9 GB with 718,187 files. So I could not make any changes. I had quite a few discussions with people of varying expertise, and I discovered that it may take over a month before I could again have FTP access. I also discovered the reason for what was termed an upgrade. All of their servers for my type of account had been hacked, and they needed to clean up and transfer to new servers all of the many thousands of such accounts one-by-one.

The only solution to regain FTP access sooner was to change my account to what is termed an OnCloud account. They would migrate all my data and email settings to the new account in several days, and I should be good to go. That has not happened yet, and my fingers are crossed. As for my other sites, which are much smaller, such as the TPCUG site, since I can make changes using the hosting company's File

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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First Class Mail

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Comments.....Continued from page 7

Manager application online, I will hold off on converting them to OnCoud. But I may eventually migrate all my sites to the OnCloud type since that is what they really want people to do. The main reason I have held off is that if you do that for email for the site's domain name, you have to use Exchange Server which has one feature I do not like: In the mail server setup, you cannot forward an email received by one person to two additional people. You may only forward to one additional person. That is of no concern to me on my personal site, but it is something I use at the neighborhood site I maintain, http://oldhydeparkfl.org, and it may also be something used for the TPCUG site (but I would have to check on that to make sure).

Anyway, the only constant is change. So I have to bend to the prevailing winds and move to the Cloud.

◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 27 No. 11 November 2014



November in Tampa

Meeting

Computing in the Cloud

by

William LaMartin

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will speak on using the Cloud in general and Microsoft Azure and OneDrive in particular. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks very much to Merle Nicholson for almost everything in the newsletter this month. I will add a few comments to fill in the space that is left. As you will note on this page, I am the speaker this month. A lot of computing news seems to involve the Cloud, so I have decided to demonstrate how I use the Cloud in my computer life.

The Cloud is really nothing more than servers connected to the Internet. The main providers are Amazon, Google and Microsoft. In the most basic sense, our TPCUG site is in the Cloud, as are all websites. But people mean much more now than websites when they speak of the Cloud. We now have Cloud Storage, Cloud Computing and more. I found Cloud Computing of special interest since I can create at Microsoft Azure a Virtual Machine running Windows 8 that already has Microsoft Visual Studio 13 installed. I can then upload any of the programs I have written for Visual Studio to that Virtual Machine and then run

Comments.....Continued on page 2

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Bob was absent and Merle Nicholson filled in.

The presentation this month was given by Steven Singer from RDI and http://www.morevalu.com. Steve has given us a quality hardware presentation every year for many years. He has always entertained us and filled us in on the latest in hardware and what the manufacturers are doing. This year he brought in several routers and cable modems and gave us some interesting insights on what the TV and Internet providers in our area are doing. We expect a quality presentation and once again we were not disappointed. Our thanks go to Steven for taking the time for us. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

it. I recently did that with an application I had written that captured images and their descriptions. There were many thousands of images that I wanted to download along with their descriptions. I was running the application on one of my desktop computers. To speed up the process, I began doing the same with my application running at Azure. Using both together cut the time involved in half. Now my job is to go through the large collection of images, selecting the approximate 10% that I want to use in a Windows 8 app. And there is no Cloud item that will help me speed up that.

My main use of Azure is to store photos for use in my Win 8 applications. such as *Old Tampa Photos*, *Old Florida Photos*, *Currier & Ives* and my most recent one, *5 Southern Cities*. If I wanted, I could also create websites there. In addition, I will demonstrate how I use Microsoft OneDrive to backup my files. ◆

Windows 8.1 First Startup

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
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We'll attempt to cover all the "first things" you need to do with a new Windows 8.1 computer. We won't necessarily cover all the details; it would take too much space in this newsletter, but hopefully we have sources for you to read. In the following, I'll revert to calling the Desktop interface "desktop", and the tiled interface "tile"

The main thing to keep in mind is that eventually you'll decide if the Windows Desktop is your primary workspace, or the tiled interface is where you do your stuff. Or perhaps you may be comfortable switching back and forth. Having a touchscreen will certainly influence your decision, because the tiled interface is awkward without a touchscreen. Some people get along just fine with tiles and no touchscreen. Others get tired of leaving the keyboard and touching the screen. Realize now, even MS Office 2013 works in desktop only and most important settings are in tile. You'll need to work with it for a while; just give it a chance. Here's why it's important, but not necessarily urgent:

Windows 8.1 has many dual applications: desktop AND tile, and many important functions are available in tile only or in desktop only. Let's take a PDF reader. If you've been using other versions of Windows, you have installed and used Adobe Reader, and for quite a few years its competitors like Foxit Reader. If you open a .pdf file, the "default file association" determines which reader is used, and in the case of 8.1, it's a built-in reader in tile. But here's the thing. The 8.1 reader is just lame. There's no other way to describe it. It's limited and awkward to use. Like all 8.1 apps, it comes up full screen, and the only option is half screen something, and you can't share the screen with a desktop app .. you get the picture. So for PDF files, you have no choice, just install Foxit or Adobe Reader, make it the default, and .. at least for now, you're in desktop. By the way, in Windows 10, you'll be able to run a tile app in a desktop window.

And one of the last items on the "First Startup" list is installation of "Classic Shell" that restores a very fine menu system and has options that pushes the tile interface in the background so it mainly goes away except to annoy you.

Here's the "First Startup" list in pretty much useful order. Check further under References and Resources to see if I have elaborated on the item or referred to an Internet link.

- Check the time zone. Yep, Windows will be reporting the time zone as Pacific, and you're three hours off. This is important.
- "Trust this PC". Look in Actions in the notifications tray. This is important.
- Decide if you would rather log onto your PC with a local account or a Microsoft online account. If you are already set up with an online account, you can switch to a local account. This is important. There is much written about this, and I'll add my two cents below.
- Create standard login accounts for each user of the PC, including one for yourself, and "share" the Documents folder to the administrative account. This is especially important for protecting children and to protect your PC from visitors' good intentions, and from Viruses and Hijackers. This is important.
- Create a Windows rescue disk. On CD if you have one or on a small, cheap USB flashdrive. No excuses; it must be done.
- Create a password recovery on a small, cheap USB flashdrive. No excuses; it must be done.
- Configure Windows Update, then install all MS updates. Do it now and when it says "no updates to install", force a new update again and repeat. The only time you can believe there are no updates is immediately after you force a scan for new updates. It isn't lying, it just isn't telling you the whole truth.
- Remove all crapware; anything that has the word "toolbar", and any online gaming. Disable all unnecessary startup items. Uninstall any trial versions, usually anti-virus and Office.
- Decide on a good anti-virus, firewall and Internet scanner product. Visit PC Magazine recommended products. Right now, McAfee, Webroot, Norton, Panda Free, BitDefender. Install it from the Administrator account. No excuses; it must be done.
- Configure your backup scheme. Buy an external USB drive and do a full backup now that your updates and anti-virus have been installed. No excuses; it must be done.
- Install essential software:

1. Email. The standard Windows email is designed to make you want to purchase Outlook or Microsoft Office. I recommend Mozilla Thunderbird. It's free, well supported, has plenty of add-ons, and is a very mature,

Windows 8.1.....Continued on page 4

Windows 8.1.....Continued from page 3

easy to use full featured product. There are no compromises made because it's free. It's fully compatible and has importers for transferring accounts and mail from your old email.

2. Office. At http://www.LibreOffice.org. Like Thunderbird, it's a mature up-to-date full-featured product. Unless you need, need, need MS Access and/or Outlook there is no reason to buy MS Office. LibreOffice uses the same formats as MS Office, or the other way around; MS adopted Open Document Standards to comply with the inevitable. LibreOffice has Word Processor, Spreadsheet, Database, Presentation Manager, Drawing and Math editor.

3. Browser. This is one of those dual 8.1 apps – different versions for desktop and tile. You seem to get the version in the same environment that you are in. The tile version seems to be limited in some areas of graphics and of course runs first full screen and then can be reduced to a part-screen. I prefer Google Chrome, and then make it the default browser for both situations. Chrome has this wonderful list of apps that run as add-ons, matching the list on Android, Ubuntu and OSX: Calendar, Clock, Drawings, Docs, Sheet, Hangouts, Kindle, Keep, Google+, Remote, Timer, Gmail, Google Drive and more. Another browser alternative is Firefox.

4. PDF Reader – Foxit or Adobe Reader.

5. Instant Messenger, Skype, Google Voice, Google Talk.

6. Printers, camera, webcam, scanners, microphones, speakers.

- Classic Shell. This is a sophisticated, well developed application that puts a menu back where it was in Windows 7. It's what you want if you want to push the Windows 8.1 tile world a little further in the background. You can use it to disable many of the mouse actions in desktop that shove you unwillingly into tile. If you do not disable hot corners and charms, there is nothing lost by using this program. There are three styles of menus to pick from. I chose the 2-column menu style, and clicked an option to start when Windows starts, and left the rest as default. This has the minimal impact on the operation of the 8.1 tile features.

  I have been following the development of this from their earliest version, and have complete trust in this. It's free, but please consider a donation.

References and resources:

"**Trust this PC**": http://www.howtogeek.com/121875/htg-explains-why-does-windows-8-want-me-to-trust-this-pc/
Decide on a good antivirus: http://www.pcmag.com/products/1594?Editor+Ratings%3d4.5

Decide if you would rather log onto your PC with a local account or a Microsoft online account. When your PC is first set up, it's apparent that they want you to log onto your PC with a Microsoft online account. Indeed, they don't really make it easy to avoid that. They make it tempting, because they set up a OneDrive "cloud" storage for you, free, and make it clear that this is the way you get Windows 8 Apps from the store, free email and settings synchronizing between your computers if you have more than one. If you are already set up with an online account, you can switch.

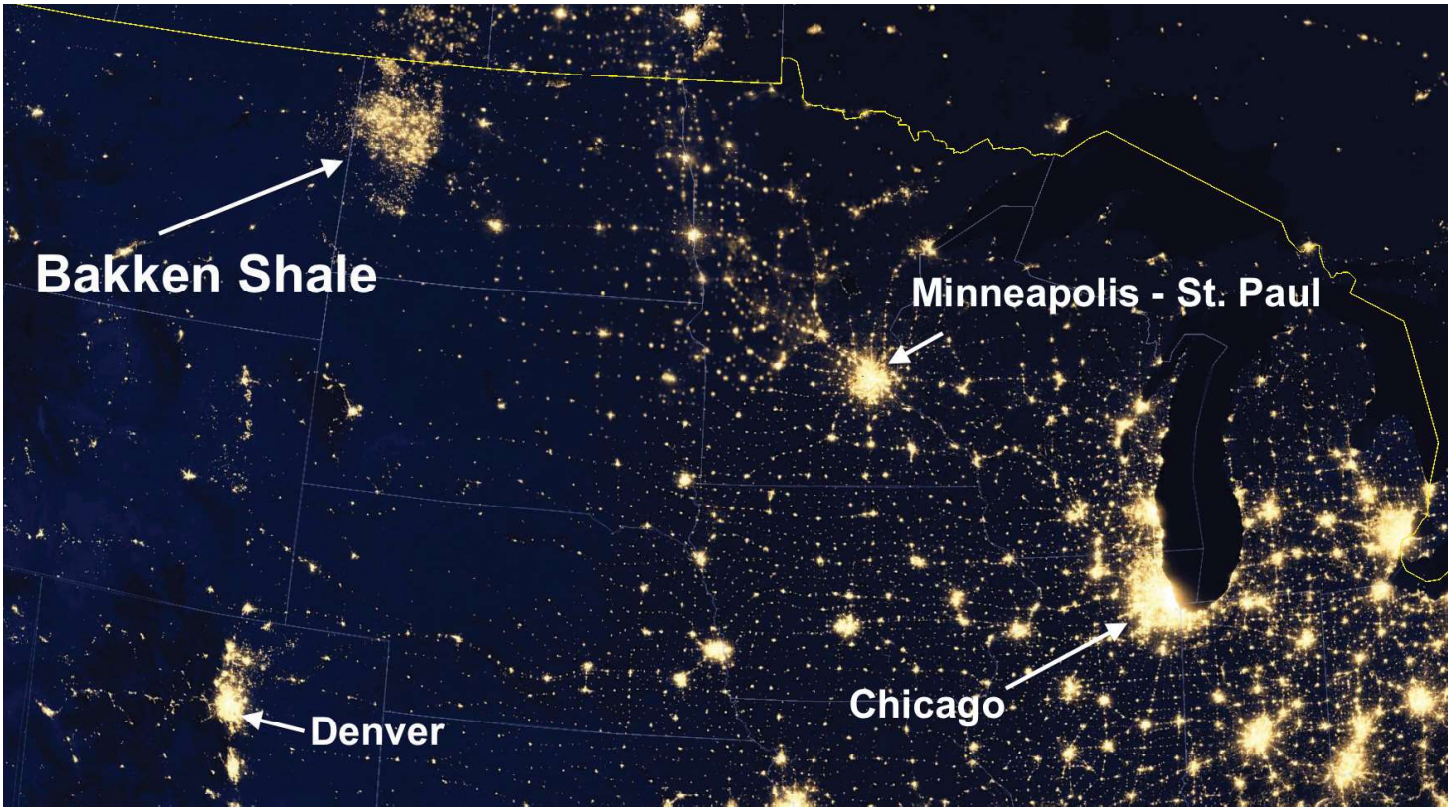
Microsoft is just jumping on the bandwagon now that its competitors, Apple and Google, developed this relationship with its customers that guarantees a steady revenue stream* (see note 1 at the end of this article). If you have Apple and iTunes, you already know that you can't get anything, even music without that iTunes account. If you have an Android phone or tablet you'll have a Gmail account and probably a credit card attached to buy apps, books, magazines, music and movies. This relationship with Google is much more open than iTunes, because you can get most anything from other sources, even applications. Amazon is a good Android resource for apps, movies and music.

What Microsoft is not telling you is that it's only barely more trouble to use a local account. Obviously, if you want to buy a $4.00 app from the Microsoft Store, you just order it and authenticate the purchase with your Microsoft account. In my opinion, my relationship with Google and with Microsoft are very much different. I carry my phone in my pocket, and being an adult, never carelessly expose it to theft. The phone has very limited monetary exposure, and I can track it and disable it if stolen – if it's on. My computer(s) are very much different. They are exposed to the Internet (and open in my home and vehicles), malware and hijackers, keyloggers and children inclined to click on things. http://www.howtogeek.com/121975/htg-explains-microsoft-accounts-vs.-local-accounts-in-windows-8/

Create Standard User Accounts for each user: http://www.howtogeek.com/142434/htg-explains-why-every-user-on-your-computer-should-have-their-own-user-account/ and a step-by-step instruction for Windows 7 at http://tpcug.org/AcrobatNewsletter.aspx, select newsletter pncl2014-10.pdf, look for the article on "Create a Standard

Windows 8.1.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Bakken Shale at Night

From http://publiclab.org/notes/davidmanthos/09-01-2013/skytruthing-the-bakken-shale. The glow there is not from city lights as it is for the other locations. It is due to flaring, "the practice of burning off natural gas to dispose of it. Operators do not want methane (the primary hydrocarbon in natural gas) accumulating on their well pads where it can explode, and burning it off is slightly less harmful to the climate than venting it directly to the atmosphere."

Windows 8.1.....Continued from page 4

User" and http://www.howtogeek.com/school/windows-network-sharing/lesson1/

PDF Reader: Foxit at http://www.foxitsoftware.com/Secure_PDF_Reader/ and Adobe Reader at http://www.adobe.com/products/reader.html I prefer Foxit because it loads quickly. To me, Adobe Reader is bloated with features I will never use and has become painfully slow to load.

Recommended reading: 10 things you need to know about Windows 8.1: http://www.howtogeek.com/180155/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-windows-8.1/

"The How-To Geek Guide to Windows 8.1", eight lessons.

Windows 8.1.....Continued on page 6

November's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Global Sea Level Rise Map	http://geology.com/sea-level-rise/
Cloud Computing Defined	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_computing
Classic Shell	http://www.classicshell.net/

Windows 8.1.....Continued from page 5
: http://www.howtogeek.com/school/windows-8-guide/lesson1/

Classic Shell: http://www.classicshell.net/downloads/

notes:
1. Revenue stream - money flows continuously from us to them. ◆

Comments and Notes for Nov. 2014

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Catastrophe planning – Here's your checklist

- Have you made your Windows Recovery disk?
- Do you have a password recovery USB?
- Are you doing backups to an external drive?
- Do you use a good quality anti-virus and keep it up to date?
- Is your computer up to date? Is your computer updating automatically, or do you initiate it manually and forget?
- If you have children or unsophisticated users on your computer, have you made a separate standard login account for them?
- Are you still using Windows XP connected to the Internet? You could be in trouble and your computer is in jeopardy. Worse, you may be in a position to lose all your family pictures and documents. They may not be recoverable. Scary, right?
- How old is your hard drive? Is it more than three years old? You're at risk of losing everything unless it's backed up to an external drive.

Windows XP – if you insist on continuing with Windows XP, you must have a very good anti-virus and Firewall. The Windows firewall for XP is very weak. Windows Defender and Microsoft Essentials anti-virus will no longer update, so you must buy a good quality product. Look at WebRoot, Kaspersky, Norton. Check with PC Magazine to see their ratings on both paid and free products.

Linux Desktop – For my day-to-day computer, I have switched away from Windows and adopted a Linux OS for my notebook. I added a second hard drive, so one drive is dedicated to Windows 7, and it default boots to the other – Linux. To me, the Ubuntu family of OSs makes sense because Ubuntu (through the company Canonical) continuously updates to keep up with the latest hardware. And so far I have not had to go looking for drivers except for one of my two printers. The "flavor" of Ubuntu 14.04 LTS I've chosen is Gnome Desktop. There are five or more flavors available. I'd recommend, in order, Ubuntu/Unity (the one supplied by Ubuntu), Gnome or KDE. Pick the latest LTS version, 14.04. There is a new version 14.10 (October), but the LTS is like it says – Long Term Support(ed). Start at http://www.ubuntu.org.

For those of you who have a Windows XP computer that is otherwise running well, this is an easy and inexpensive replacement. It needs very little computer capacity and memory to run. It installs easily and quickly. The instructions to create a boot USB flashdrive or CD/DVD are well-written and easy to follow and assume you are making it from a Windows computer. If you wish, you can boot and run the OS from the flashdrive itself (slower) or DVD (v.slower) without installing it to the hard drive. Then if you like what you see and haven't any serious hardware problems, go ahead and install. You have the option of keeping your Windows and dual-booting to your old Windows OS or Ubuntu, or completely replacing everything on the hard drive.

I have not spent a penny other than the hard drive cost. I installed some excellent quality free software. All of the following have a Windows equivalent version:
Chrome Browser - with apps Hangout and Keep and everything Google; Docs, Drive, contacts, Gmail.
Mozilla Thunderbird – Email. I choose this because it runs in Windows as well, and is excellent quality
VLC – Music/Media player. WUSF and WSMR PBS radio anywhere!

Comments And Notes.....Continued on page 7

Comments and Notes .....*Continued from page 7*

LibreOffice – Word Processing, Spreadsheet and presentation manager, Database, Draw, Math all compatible with MS Windows formats. This was pre-installed on my Gnome version.
KeepPassX – Password manager compatible with all my devices; Phone, Tablet, Windows and Google Drive.
Oracle VirtualBox – Virtual Machine manager, completely interchangeable with the Windows version.

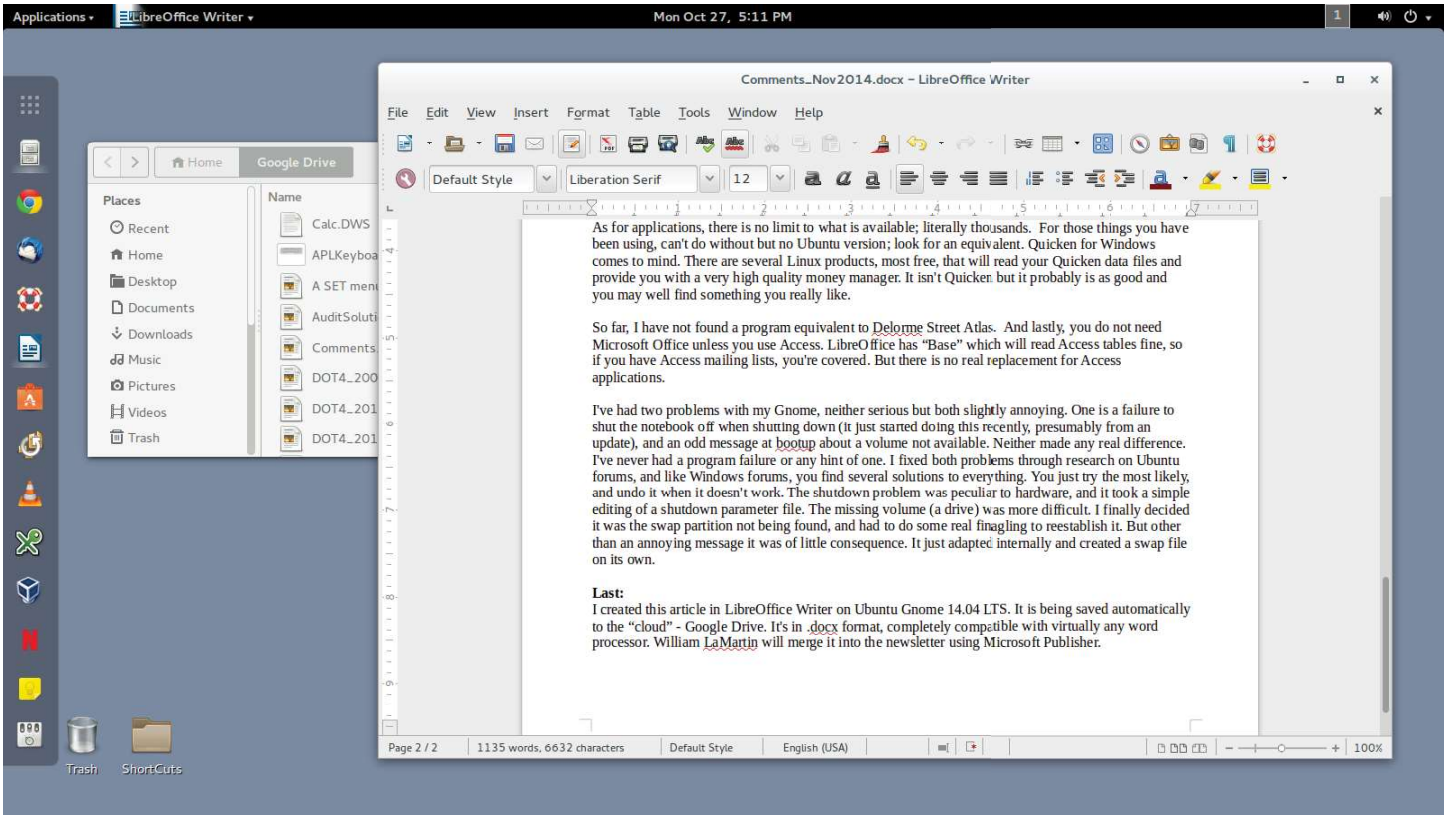
There is a program called WINE, which can make some Windows programs run natively in Ubuntu. I used it to install my 1996 version of Microsoft Return of Arcade. So I still have my old 16-bit PacMan. I have used it for others, like my copy of Windows KEDIT, probably the best text file editor ever made. The results are varying; you should go into this with low expectations, but be persistent and be prepared for pleasant surprises.

In Gnome, you can set up your online accounts for integration to the desktop. I have only one, Google. After setting it up, it automatically integrates my Google calendar to the built-in calendar, IM program and Google Keep. Not having a Facebook or Twitter account, I can't comment on those. There is an app called Grive that will automatically synchronize a folder with your Google Drive. It's unofficial, but it works well. Google does this in Windows, OSX and Android but has not yet done an official Ubuntu synchronization app.

As for applications, there is no limit to what is available; literally thousands. For those things you have been using, can't do without but no Ubuntu version; look for an equivalent. Quicken for Windows comes to mind. There are several Linux products, most free, that will read your Quicken data files and provide you with a very high quality money manager. It isn't Quicken but it probably is as good and you may well find something you really like.

So far, I have not found a program equivalent to Delorme Street Atlas. And lastly, you do not need Microsoft Office unless you use Access. LibreOffice has "Base" which will read Access tables fine, so if you have Access mailing lists, you're covered. But there is

Comments And Notes.....Continued on page 8



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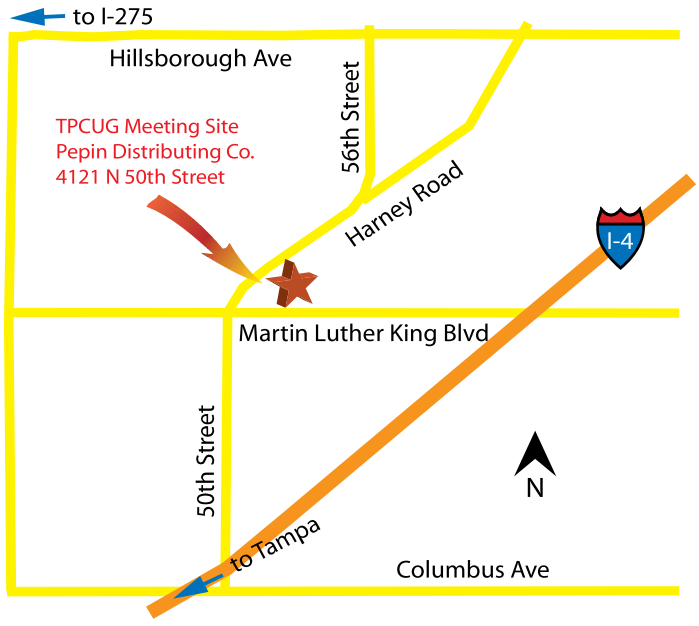
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments And Notes.....Continued from page 7

no real replacement for Access applications.

I've had two problems with my Gnome, neither serious, but both slightly annoying. One is a failure to shut the notebook off when shutting down (it just started doing this recently, presumably from an update), and an odd message at bootup about a volume not available. Neither made any real difference. I've never had a program failure or any hint of one. I fixed both problems through research on Ubuntu forums, and like Windows forums, you find several solutions to everything. You just try the most likely and undo it when it doesn't work. The shutdown problem was peculiar to hardware, and it took a simple editing of a shutdown parameter file. The missing volume (a drive) was more difficult. I finally decided it was the swap partition not being found and had to do some real finagling to reestablish it. But other than an annoying message it was of little consequence. It just adapted internally and created a swap file on its own.

Last:
I created this article in LibreOffice Writer on Ubuntu Gnome 14.04 LTS. It is being saved automatically



to the "cloud" – Google Drive. It's in .docx format, completely compatible with virtually any word processor. William LaMartin will merge it into the newsletter using Adobe inDesign. ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 27 No. 12 December 2014

December in Tampa

Meeting Preview: Holiday Party. Food and good fellowship will again be in abundant supply.

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

6:30 PM

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Tampa, Florida

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

I had a very rough day this past week. Shortly after booting my Windows 7 desktop computer and checking my email, I was reading an article in the New York Times about a Russian programmer when a small window popped up with a message to the effect that something bad had happened and, here I don't recall exactly, that Internet Explorer or the computer needed to be restarted. I tried to use the Snipping tool to capture the message, but it wouldn't work. I then immediately stopped Internet Explorer from Task Manager. I next tried to open Windows Defender, where I was informed that it was not set as the default for whatever it does and hence was not running. There was a place to click to make it the default for protection, but a click on that started OK and then just disappeared. I could not run Windows Defender.

Sensing that I had a serious problem, I immediately uploaded the important files I had been working on, including this newsletter, to OneDrive. I then shut down the computer and restarted only to find that I now had no network connection and no ability to

Comments.....Continued on page 7

January Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month the SIG subject was a member's system backup problem. The discussion created some lively comments and further questions from the group.

The presentation this month was given by our own William LaMartin, who had a well-prepared presentation on "Computing in the Cloud". The presentation was done completely on a Microsoft Surface Pro 2 with the detachable keyboard. He began by showing Live.com; Contacts, Calendar, Office Online (cloud versions of Word and Excel) and OneDrive.

He showed examples of the online versions of Word and Excel at OneDrive (formerly named SkyDrive). He then compared these online versions to Office 365, a subscription version ($100/yr) of Office. The Office 365 product is a full-featured copy of Office installed on your computer (actually up to five computers). It includes Publisher, Access and OneNote, as well as Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

William continued with Azure, a Microsoft Cloud service that provides: Storage, virtual machines, SQL databases and Cloud Services (worker computers). As a subscriber, you are able to connect from any of your computers from anywhere on the Internet. William used a Remote Desktop connection to connect to a Virtual Machine running Azure from his Surface. Then he even did the same thing from his Windows Phone.

Our thanks to William for another quality presentation.
◆

Securifi Almond

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

My wife had been complaining about the wireless connection in our downstairs back room where she spends much of her time. To get a good connection on her iPad she often would have to move closer to the Verizon Fios router, which is in my computer room at the opposite end of the house. At one time I had used an old router as an extender, but that did not improve things much. So, with her birthday imminent, I went to Amazon (through the link on our home page), did a bit of searching for "wireless extender" and produced the Securifi Almond, a strangely named and somewhat expensive device that can function as either a router or just an extender.



Since I could have purchased a wireless extender for around $20, why did I spend $90 on this device? There were several reasons, the first being that my brother-in-law had just purchased a cheap wireless extender that he could never get set up to extend anything. Second, I had similarly purchased a cheap wireless extender many years back which worked but didn't really do much extending. Third, this device had a touch screen and received many rave reviews. And last but not the least, a $90 gift seemed better than a $20 gift.

There is a manual as a PDF file that you may view or download at http://firmware.securifi.com/AL1/AlmondQuickGuide.pdf, which will tell you all you need to know about the device. It has nice pictures that explain everything about the setup as either a router or an extender.

It is quite easy to set up, and I had it up and running in no time. I placed it about 33 feet further toward the interior of my downstairs from where my router is. It obviously requires an electrical connection. I followed the on-screen menu to set up everything. You are asked to select a language (English), then the region (North America) and next whether you want to use the device as a router or a range extender (I chose extender). It then searched for nearby wireless routers, giving me a list from which I chose my Verizon FIOS router. The only real work came next when I was asked to enter the very long password to connect to the router. This was made easy, though, by the virtual keyboard that pops up on the Almond's screen. If you find the letters on the keyboard a bit too small for comfort, a small stylus is also provided.

I did have one small problem when I was attempting to look at all the different screens that provide various sorts of information about the connection and the device. On the main screen there are five small square boxes near the top, and only the first box was always checked on the main screen. To me this meant that I had a connection with very poor wireless strength. So I phoned the support line, which was answered quite quickly by a fellow who not only resolved my question but also wanted to have me run through several things just to make sure I had the device set up properly. Oh, the answer to my question was that the small squares did not indicate signal strength but rather the screen you were on.

How does work? It seems to do quite well. Now there is a strong wireless signal in all parts of the house, downstairs and upstairs. http://www.securifi.com/ ◆

32 Gigabytes Is Not Enough

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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There are now a lot of new Windows 8.1 tables out there at prices as low as $99. But buyer beware, they may work fine for your web browsing and even email, but should you ever need to do a Restore to the tablet and it is a tablet with only 32 GB of drive space instead of 64 GB, then you most likely will experience the problem that I relate below of not being to do a simple Restore (with files and apps you have added retained) but instead having to return the tablet to its original state

My tablet is a Dell Venue Pro 8 with a 32 GB hard drive and 2 GB of RAM which currently costs around $200. Another warning: those $99 tablets have only 1 GB of RAM.

The first indication of a problem was that when I tried to do a Windows Update on the tablet it would never finish looking for updates; just a busy indicator forever. I finally figured out that this was probably caused by so little free space remaining on the hard drive, a little over 3 GB. I hadn't used the device in several weeks, when I had no trouble in doing an update. What had changed?

What had changed was that now the OneDrive folder on the device was taking up 3.5 GB. And the shocking thing about that was that there was no data or photos in that 3.5 GB. All that was there were the names of my folders and files that were at OneDrive at Live.com. How did this happen? Well, it is all Microsoft's fault. They gave me unlimited storage at OneDrive. I can put as much data and images there as I desire. So I had gotten to work in earnest copying everything I have there so that I would have a backup in case of a disaster. I back up all my computers to external drives using Acronis, but what if my home burned, then those external drives would also be gone. So everything was headed to OneDrive, which would take a long time to finish since you have to create a folder at OneDrive before you can upload something to it. It is not as simple as right-clicking on MyPictures and saying copy and then paste into OneDrive at Live.Com. It would be that simple if I did that to the OneDrive folder on my computer.

But I don't want everything I have on my computer to also be its OneDrive folder. To make a long story short, I had already placed 167 GB of files at OneDrive online made up of 1,075 folders and 82,163 files. It was simply the cataloging of all of that and not its content that created the 3.5 GB folder on my tablet. The solution to my problem was to purchase a micro SD card for the tablet (make sure your tablet has a slot for one) and move the tablet's OneDrive folder there. I did that.

I purchased a 64 GB Micro SD card, and I moved all the OneDrive files to the Micro SD card (3.5 GB), but that did not solve my problem with being able to do a Windows Update on the device. I then uninstalled all my installed apps, and that didn't help either. I only had less than 20 MB of other files, but I got rid of those also. That gave me 7.2 GB free according to File Manager (what was taking up the difference between the 20 GB supposedly available of the 32 GB drive and the 7.2 GB free since I had uninstalled everything I could possibly uninstall?). Still I could not do a Windows Update.

I then tried a Restore of the device. However I received the message that there was not enough free disk space and 2.71 GB more was needed. Now after I did all the uninstalling and moving of OneDrive, there was 7.2 GB free of the 20 or so gigabytes available. Hard to believe that it needs 9.791 GB to do the Restore. That is almost half the 20 GB on the drive that is usable. So there was nothing left do to but to return the device to its original state.

I did the total Restore by taking it back to its original state, and once everything was set up I made sure that I moved the location of OneDrive (called SkyDrive at the moment before any updates) to the Micro SD card location so that wouldn't cause a problem again. I was then able to initiate a Windows Update. It also took over 20 minutes to check on available updates. Once I started the Update process, there were numerous downloads, restarts and surprisingly some roll-

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Internet Picture of the Month



Peyto Blue

From https://www.flickr.com/photos/deaconsenter/7780728178/in/photostream/ Described as a different shot of Lake Peyto (in Banff National Park in the Canadian Rockies) from Drew Senter's Photostreat at Flickr https://www.flickr.com/photos/deaconsenter/

32 Gigabytes.....Continued from page 4

backs with the message that not all updates could be installed. But finally after many, many hours, 101 updates were done.

And the little device seems to be functioning fine. From all of this my conclusion is that 32 GB is not a large enough drive for such a device if you want to do a Restore instead of wiping the drive clean and starting over, at least that was my situation.

Some people recommend removing the Restore partition and that will free up six gigabytes. Don't do that because then you can not do a full restore as I had to do because you cannot connect a thumb drive containing the Restore and have power at the same time. ◆

December's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Paris 1870 and Today - Marville Photos	http://parismarville.blogspot.com/p/map.html
The Chronicle of Higher Education	http://chronicle.com/
Reuters - Business & Financial News	http://www.reuters.com/
Bloomberg.com - Business & Financial News	http://www.bloomberg.com

4K TV with Media Center

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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As a last ditch subject for the newsletter, we can always fall back on "what technology stuff did I buy this month?" So for me, it was all started with a new TV. But this isn't all about TV, it's about the computer connected to it.

Much is made of "Smart TVs" now. A new "Smart TV" has programs built in so that with an Internet connection you can connect to various streaming and internet sources. The newest ones will have Skype (yes, a built-in camera), Netflix, Hulu, a browser (mine is Opera), several social Internet services.

By personal preference, I don't use any of the smart features, and I have never used the TV tuner. That's because, since 2006, I've used a smart computer instead. I use the TV as a monitor for the computer, which has a TV tuner card and runs Windows Media Center software. Like any window, I can minimize or restore the size and use the Windows 7 desktop and anything else a Windows 7 computer can do. So there is no limit to the available entertainment and social media sources. But it's on a big screen TV that I want to watch it. Until now, I used a 2006 42" TV at a resolution of 1920x1080p at 60Hz. That's a ratio of 16:9.

1920x1080 has -unfortunately- become the standard for computer screens, and in sizes of 14- or 15-inch screens has an acceptable pixel density for a pleasant reading experience. In sizes larger than that, like the very popular 21- and 23-inch desktop monitors, the pixels are just too far apart for close-in desktop computing. The 1080 standard has accomplished one great thing though; monitors have become inexpensive at 1080 because the same technology is applied to TV devices. There was years-long debate over the latest TV standard when it became obvious that we had to adopt a new standard to replace the old 4:3 TV. There were many people involved that rightly claimed that the new TV standard was wide-reaching into other industries – especially computers.

There's one thing to be taken from this: The resolution (pixel density) should be increased as the screen gets larger. That was the case for my old 42" sammi. While playing movies and TV were acceptable, the desktop was very difficult to work with. It didn't detract from the entertainment experience, but researching and setting up – for instance Amazon Watchlist, mostly reading text, or a quick research into Imdb.com or Wikipedia – was difficult.

Now enter the new 4K TV "standard." It's double the dimension in pixels – 3840x2160. That's four times the total number of pixels. With the approach of Christmas 2014, the prices are getting reasonable, somewhat less than the 2006 cost of the old 42. And with a new home established for the old TV, we jumped on it. But that's not the real story. The story is: will the old equipment handle the new monitor? (I'm referring to the new TV as a 3840x2160 monitor now). The answer is obvious – not by a long shot. Starting with the video card. And guess what. There is very little support for that resolution.

I use NewEgg.com as a research tool because of the thoughtful selection criteria; looking for 4K support, I found the Nvidia 700 series card. I settled on the 750, partly on cost (it was getting expensive – more later) and it met the resolution criteria. There are more models: 760, 770, 780 ranging in price for my 750 at $150, to nearly $600. In comparing specs, the larger, higher priced have more cores (processors) and memory. They also have much higher power and cooling requirements, with fan noise a consideration. All these have at least two fans, some have three. And the higher models have power requirements that exceed the capability of my power supply.

The one I picked was probably too low-end. I didn't know it when I ordered, but at max resolution the output frequency is but 30Hz, not the standard of 60Hz and a long way from the 120Hz that the monitor is capable of. What scared me downwards in selection was the power requirements. I am considering buying a higher-end one, but I'm taking my time and have quite a bit of research to do. For one thing, the

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TV .....*Continued from page 6*

higher end ones are "overclocked" - that is, the GPU is running at a higher clock rate than the original design calls for, and the cooling and power requirements are higher as a result. I think I should be looking for one that has the larger number of cores – 640 to 2880 ($575) cores running at 1176MHz to 7000MHz is typical, but clocked normally. I can replace the power supply, but at some cost – say $80-$100. I'm not in a hurry though, because the display I have now is truly outstanding regardless of the technical shortcomings.

Earlier I mentioned it was getting expensive. I knew going in that I had to replace the systems receiver. The receiver – better known perhaps as a "Stereo". It's the sound system, and after spending the money for a new monitor, it makes no sense to use the crappy TV speakers. The receiver handles all the sound – the output from the computer – 5.1 speakers, and is also an AM/FM radio. But here's the problem.

The output of the TV is one HDMI cable. It has both the digital video, and also the digital sound. This is no different than if you were just using a Verizon or Brighthouse Set-top box. If you want better sound than those TV speakers, you have to route the HDMI to a receiver which intercepts the sound and handles your six speakers and then passes the signals through to the monitor. You then disable the TV sound in the TV setup.

So will your 2006 receiver handle 4K? Certainly not. Need a new one. So now we have a project. Replace the video card, get that set up and running, replace the receiver – no small thing – it has 12 speaker wires – inside a cabinet, and several more cables, a manual to look and about a hundred possible on-screen settings. Then finally replace the monitor and send the old one to a new home.

The results are just spectacular. I was concerned that the low technical specs on the video card would be a limitation, but I think it's just technical. That means that I can take my time toward improving that and only me (and you) know about that. I also was worried that the quality of TV and streaming services would be a limitation; that is, the new higher screen resolution would be wasted, and that's completely, totally unfounded. Even on live TV broadcasting the detail is just outstanding. The real improvement is using it as a monitor – going to the desktop. All text is clear; using the mouse and typing and reading the browser are easy now; remember it's a Windows 7 computer so backups and updates are no different from any other. And -wow – what a screen. It will just bowl you over.

REMINDER: Remember to use the Amazon link on the TPCUG website for your Amazon purchases. My TV purchase got TPCUG a $100 commission! ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

use System Restore, in addition to no Windows Defender.

Time to call Merle. He suggested that I download several virus scanners: Microsoft Security Scanner, a Vipre product and a couple of others. I ran Security Scanner, and it found no problems. I then ran Vipre all night, and it produced quote a few things that it cleaned. But much of what it found did not seem legitimate to me since it involved programs I had written in Visual Studio 2005. Anyway, after running Vipre I still had no network connection, could not use System Restore and Windows just looked funny.

The next morning I totally crashed the computer by using System Configuration to change from a Selective Startup to a Normal Startup, which seem like a good thing to do since I was having problems. When I then rebooted I had nothing but a screen telling me that Windows failed to start and that I should insert a Windows installation disc, restart the computer and then choose the option to repair. I did that. It then said that Windows had found problems with the computer's startup options and asked me to choose to repair and restart. I did that and then like a miracle I had my Windows 7 computer back.

My Windows 7 computer was not the only thing causing problems that day. I had started up my Surface Pro 2 and it had no wireless network connection. I

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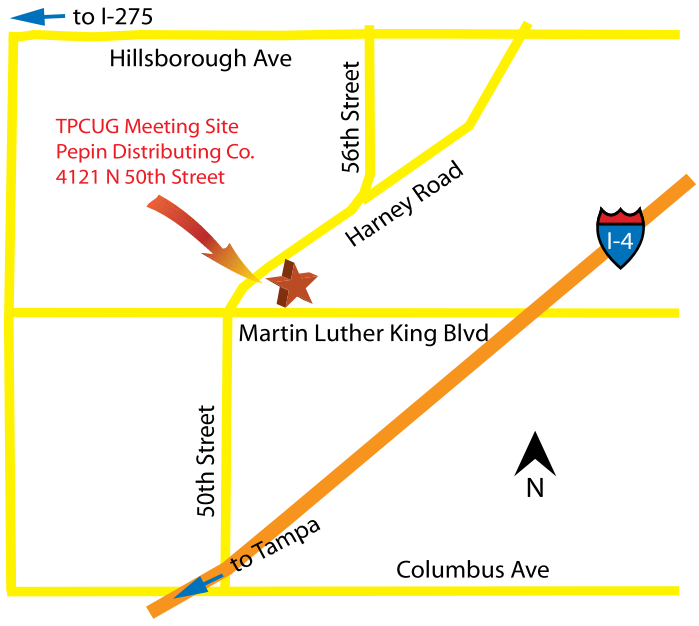
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 7

tried all sorts of things to get one and then decided to turn the modem/router off and back on, since that usually fixed such problems.

But that introduced another problem. The modem would not turn back on. A lot of checking finally determined that the AC adapter had gone bad and was not producing any power. Verizon said they would send me a new modem/router in two days (it actually arrived in one), but I couldn't wait that long with no Internet. So I scrounged around and found an AC adapter with the same size plug and about the same output in amps. That got me back on the Internet, but the Surface still had no connection.

I then went into Device Manager and saw that the wireless adapter for the Surface had a yellow tag. I checked and found the error message, searched the Internet for that and produced a page at Microsoft with a Fixit button on the page. I clicked on the button, and much to my astonishment that got me back the ability to do a wireless connection on the Surface How do these things happen? What else can go wrong? Well, something, for sure. My wife told me the washing machine was on but it was not doing anything. I told her to be patient, then she tried to get some water in the kitchen and there was no water. A check outside produced a city employee replacing our water meter without having warned us. Now if we had had the Internet of Things, our washing machine would have told us what was wrong. ◆



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January in Tampa

Meeting

Password Presentation by Dave Palmer

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: There is much more to passwords than you might think. And Dave Palmer will tell you the details. Bob LaFave will conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Much thanks to Merle Nicholson for providing a long article with several screen captures. I really needed help in getting the newsletter filled.

Last month I laid out all the problems I had on my Windows 7 computer caused by some sort of malware that, as best I could tell, I received while viewing a page at the New York Times on-line. You can never be totally sure about such things, but while viewing that page was the time I received the message about bad things happening on my computer. As noted there, within 24 hours I had everything fixed with no sign of any damage. I also mentioned that while coping with my computer problems, our washing machine appeared to malfunction; however, the cause was simply the city replacing our water meter without giving us any warning.

More about the washing machine in a moment. But first I want to announce that I will soon have a new version of my Windows

Comments.....Continued on page 2

February Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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Our December meeting has been for several years an occasion to socialize without the usual program. Our president, John Witmer, catered a dinner for the club members and guests for an evening's enjoyment. As in the past, John reserved a nice corner at Pepin Distributors for the more than 20 attendees. John obviously works hard to set this up for us and the spread was up to his usual standards. It was a very enjoyable evening.

Our thanks to John for a job well done and to Pepin Distributors for providing the place. ◆

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8 app, *Computer Group Newsletters*, that displays all of the TPCUG newsletters going back to 1988 in searchable form updated to include the 2014 newsletters. The new version should be in the Windows Store as a free app by next week. I will also publish an update to the companion Windows Phone app which is titled *Computer Newsletters.*

Now back to my appliance problems since that is about all I have to write about this month because of the many problems, some more serious than the appliance problems, that have kept me from getting any serious computer work done other than the updating of the newsletter apps.

The good luck with the washing machine did not hold since a few days later it began to malfunction and we had a repairman out who said that it needed a new water valve, which he would order. It appeared that our appliances were rebelling since less than a month before the same repairman had replaced water valves in the refrigerator and the dishwasher. The dishwasher malfunction was particularly bad since if I had not

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Hard Drive System Using RAID 10

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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This is about the hard drive I put on my home computer, a Windows 7 desktop. It may be too technical for everyone, but please, give it a try .. I'll give some background and definitions for you. Overall, it should be of interest at least to those who are really concerned with backups and performance.

I have written before on the idea of separating your boot drive from the data drive, so that you have two: One small, fast one that will contain the operating system and your programs that you keep a backup system image of, typically not more than 60GB, and the other for all the data, settings, pictures, desktop folders, and documents. I partition this data drive into two drives, one large, one small and relocate all the stuff that doesn't need backups: Swap file, temporary Internet files and TEMP files to the small drive and then put all my data files on the large drive. So in total there are two physical drives and three drive letters. The boot drive is occasionally cloned to a spare or just an image copy that goes on a spare drive or even on a flash drive as a backup. A Windows 7 OS is just 6 – 15GB, and even as the system ages, it should not go over 30 or 40GB. I use SSDs for boot drives now, usually either 60 or 64GB. The data drive needs a backup system, either online or more practically using external portable drives. There's too much risk not having a good reliable backup, yet I talk to people who have no backup and try to help when they have lost valuable pictures and documents.

The computer I'm working with now is a very powerful machine. People are not really aware that $5,000 (or more) computers are available from "boutique" system builders, and even from major manufacturers. My computer – at least in performance – matches those boutique computers easily except in graphics performance. But mine can be easily duplicated for about $2,000 in parts, since I assemble my own.

I really do use the power of the computer for database development, and I've been very happy with it for some years now; it's powerful enough that I don't see replacing it for years to come. I mention cost to illustrate that the cost of installing five hard drives isn't inconsistent with the overall cost of the computer. More on that following.

In order to balance the hard drive performance with the processor power, one hard drive for data will not do the job. It's easy to tell with the performance tools available that even the best hard drive doesn't have the speed – throughput – that keeps up with the rest of the system's CPU and memory. So I bought two very good Western Digital High performance drives and installed them as RAID 0 and used that as my only drive, boot and data. Later I acquired a very fast 128GB SSD. It was time then to split my system up into boot (SSD) and data. So now is the time to explain RAID. We'll start with RAID 0, then RAID 1 and finally RAID 10 (Or alternately RAID 1+0).

Quoting from Wikipedia, RAID is "originally called redundant array of inexpensive disks; now commonly redundant array of independent disks. It is a data storage virtualization technology that combines multiple disk drive components into a logical unit for the purposes of data redundancy or performance improvement."

Physically, the work of operating RAID systems is built into virtually all motherboards. There's a system chip that manages this. It uses the power of the CPU to drive it, but it works independently from the operating system. That allows the operating system to load as if the RAID array were one drive. There are other means to do this; some are built into the operating system (but can't boot), and the ultimate is a RAID add-in card that has the RAID system chip and also a dedicated CPU. This card starts at about $400 and goes up.

In the case of my RAID 0, it combined two identical hard drives and makes it look like one to the operating system. This is also called "Striping" or "Stripe". The RAID 0 scheme divides the workload of reading and writing data into the two. Since the system is capable of operating several hard drives at once, by divid-

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RAID.....Continued from page 3

ing the work up, the throughput is doubled (for two drives). So Windows 7 thinks it has but one really fast drive. Believe me, doubling the throughput is noticeably faster. Here's the downside. If a failure occurs on one of the two, the data on both are lost. Most times that does not happen though. Usually some sectors are lost, and some files, but sometimes the whole drive will fail, and you've lost everything. This isn't entirely different than having one drive, but you have statistically increased the chances of this happening by having two drives. The hard drive space is the sum of both. To summarize, RAID 0 makes the hard drive significantly faster but reduces reliability. So something further is needed. So we look at RAID 1.

RAID 1 is for reliability only. It takes two drives minimum, reads and writes all data to both. RAID 1 is easiest to implement. This is also called "mirroring" or "mirrored". Most operating systems have this built in software, but it's easiest to set up on the motherboard to move the workload off the software. It has the advantage of very high reliability. If a file on one drive is damaged, the data will come from the other undamaged. If one drive fails altogether, you just unplug the failed drive and plug the new one in its place. The RAID system then rebuilds the new automatically in the background. It takes quite a while, but for the most part there's no impact on the system. As in RAID 0, the ideal is for the two drives to be physically identical. They must be at least the same size. Obviously, since the data is mirrored, you lose half the capacity. So a RAID 1 array of two 1TB drives yields 1TB, not 2. There is also a slight, perhaps unnoticeable penalty in performance. The main advantage is reliability. You have an automatic backup running in the background with no effort on your part.

RAID 10 (Or sometimes called RAID 1+0) is a combination of RAID 1 and RAID 0. It is two sets of mirrored drives (RAID 1) that is striped (RAID 0). It takes a minimum of four drives. The advantage is that it provides the reliability of RAID 1 with almost the speed of RAID 0. The total capacity is halved, just as in RAID 1. But it is nearly as fast as RAID 0 – not quite – because of the overhead of mirroring. But the result is that it can withstand the total loss of one drive and continue to use the system. Any one of the drives can be replaced and the RAID utility will rebuild the array. The system can even withstand the failure of two drives as long as it's the right two. If the two are in different RAID 1 groups it will continue with what it's got.

Remember I had a set of drives originally set up as a boot and data in RAID 0. Then I did an inventory and discovered that among my computers I had two more drives with identical manufacturer's part numbers. They are WD1002FAEX in case you want to look at them. They are pretty unique with two processors built in and a 64MB cache. They are about as fast as you can buy for a consumer drive and also have five year warranties. They are somewhat more expensive – and still are – but the newest replacement drive is affordable at $75 each for 1TB. Anyway I had four of them and did some swapping around and reconfigured my system to accept my newest SSD for boot (operating system and program files) and four 1TB drives for data. The ages of the drives start in early 2011, now nearly four years old.

Since I configured the system a few years ago, I have had two in-warranty failures, one very recently (prompting this article). The first indication something is wrong is that it tells you so! When the computer goes through its boot process, there is a program built into the motherboard that checks the availability and then the condition of the RAID array. It reports the status of all four and also the health of the array as a whole. If one drive does not check out, it reports that a member of the array has failed or has problems, and displays the manufacturers part and serial number. The computer boots normally, and in my case there is an Intel utility that can manage all this from Windows. That will reaffirm which drive it is and will also run some integrity utilities and attempt to relocate the data if possible. In this last incident, it reported the problem was not repairable. Guess what? I have a spare! Next I shut the system down and had to identify which drive it was. I had to dismount each one and read the serial number. So this time I got out my handy label maker and put the a serial number label on the end where I could see it. (Proving even old geezers can learn new

RAID.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Lower Manhattan Skyline

From Flickr at https://www.flickr.com/photos/kazinacastle/16165411415/, this photo taken December 28, 2014 shows the new World Trade Center tower on the left. It was probably taken from a helicopter (?) by Kazina Crediza, whose Photo Stream can be found at https://www.flickr.com/photos/kazinacastle/with/16165411415, which consists primary of European photos. The original photo is 4592x3056 pixels and was taken with a Sony NEX-5

January's Links

Tampa PC Users Group	http://www.tpcug.org
1926 Hurricane in Miami, Florida	http://www.genealogytrails.com/fla/miamidade/hurricaneof1926.html
Linux - Ubuntu Home page	http://www.ubuntu.com/
Linux Today - All Linux news	http://www.linuxtoday.com/
Birds of North America - Whatbird.com	http://www.whatbird.com/ (use Browser feature to find Florida birds)

RAID.....Continued from page 4

things.) Back into Windows and the Intel utility, I found that the drivers have already discovered the new drive and was rebuilding. It took three or four hours, but the computer was operable if I chose to keep working.

Now the only thing left is to mount the failed drive in a dock and run the Western Digital (WD) diagnostic, obtain the error number and do an online RMA, pack it up, print the UPS label and run it over to Staples. I had the new replacement in 10 days. The cost to me was the UPS shipping one way. But I have a new drive with a 5 year warranty.

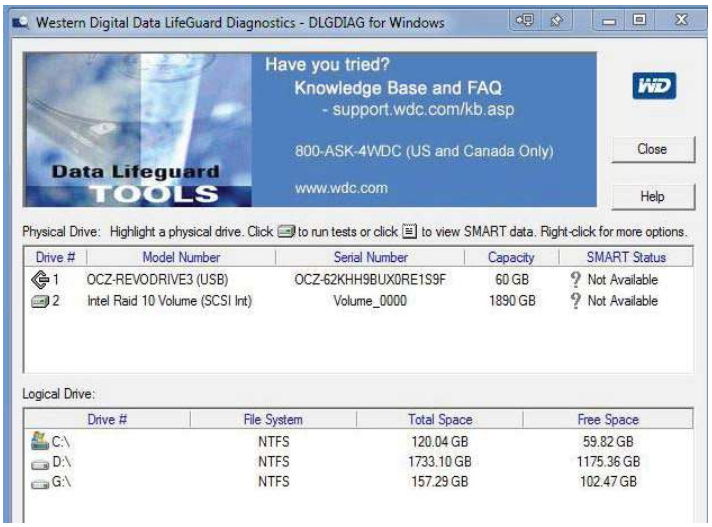
This was my first – and only – implementation of RAID 10, and it has worked out well for me. I have had four years without a single loss of any data. It's a bit more expensive – about $325 for a 2TB array, but remember this also includes a backup drive. That backup drive is alive and copying all files in real time with no intervention at all. Additionally, it is performing at a throughput level unobtainable in anything but an SSD. You can reduce the cost slightly by using four 500GB drives, yielding 1TB, but the cost differential is small.

RAID is used routinely in business systems. No one would consider a server that doesn't have RAID of some kind, and it has been in constant use in millions of computers for many years, so there just isn't anything new or unknown. But it's rarely used in desktop systems, even though on a well designed system there has to be a backup system in place that requires some intervention and attention.

Below are some screen captures of the RAID setup. ◆



Screen shot of the RAID utility initializing during POST. The first item is the full RAID10 array, then the four member disks. Instead of green "Member Disk(0)" you may get red notices like "Fail" or "Rebuild". There is a part number "WDC WD-1002FAEX" and serial number "WD-WCATR5485298" to help you identify the bad drive. Notice you can enter a configuration utility. It's very complete, but difficult to use. Fortunately you can wipe the configuration and start over again.



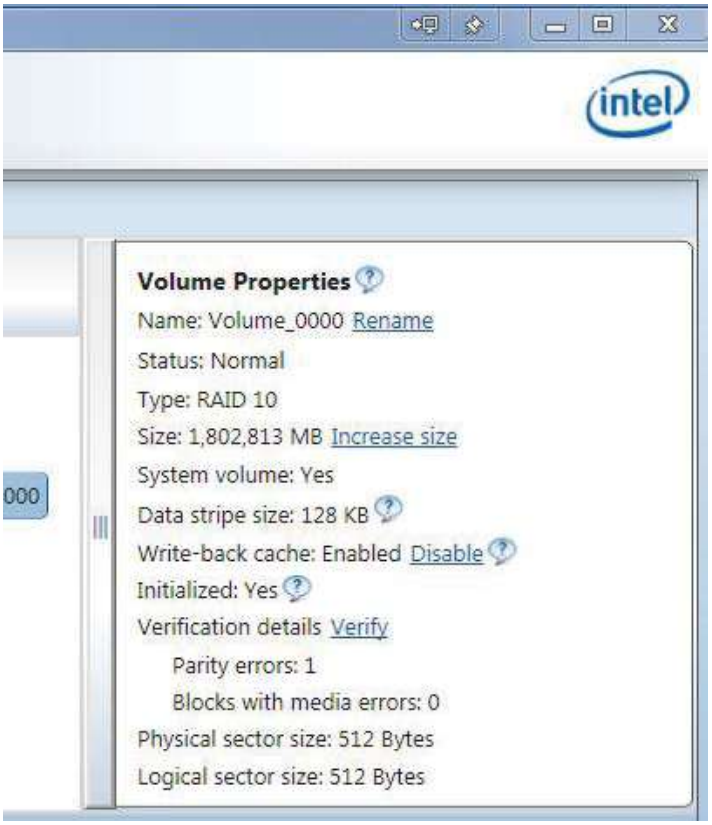
The Western Digital Data LifeGuard Diagnostics utility. If you have a suspect disk you want to return, run this utility and WD accepts an error code as proof for issuing an RMA. Note there are two physical drives. One is the SSD boot disk, 60G capacity and the RAID 10 1890GB virtualized drive. So you cannot test a single drive from a RAID array without dismounting it from the array. But good thing here – the program runs from the SSD boot drive.



RAID.....Continued on page 7

RAID.....Continued from page 6

Left half of the Intel Rapid Storage Technology application. This originally came from the motherboard manufacturer driver disk, but it's easily downloaded from Intel. Notice the SATA_Array_0000 volume_0000 and its member disks consisting of four SATA disk (932 GB). You usually use this application to initially set up the array and test it – unless it's also a boot drive of course. The alternative is a text-based complete RAID utility whose program is built into the BIOS. You punch the right key(s) at the right time during POST, much like you do for BIOS settings. In this case it's a Ctrl-I (that's an i).



Right half of the Intel Rapid Storage Technology application showing characteristics of the RAID array. Notice you can do several settings, and I also see I have one parity error; a possible bad file, but it's self-correcting.

The end of screen captures and comments.

Comments.....Continued from page 2

caught it before going to bed, when we awoke in the morning we would have awakened to a flooded house since the valve stopped working in the open position. But that was not the end of it. When the repairman came to replace the washing machine's water valve he told my wife that she had a leaking hot water heater and should call a plumber. I was not home at the time, spending a few days in the hospital to get a minor problem corrected. She contacted me, and I called our plumbers, who determined it was just a malfunctioning pressure valve, which they replaced.

And it is not over. A couple of days after writing the above, we noticed that the thermostat control panel for our downstairs A/C was totally blank as if it had no power. A check of the pertinent circuit breakers came back OK. So the problem must be in the air handler which sends power to the control panel. Of course it was the weekend and no repair person could be called. This unit is only two-and-one-half years old.

On Monday, the A/C repairman came out, found a clogged condensation drain line, fixed it and gave us a bill for $179, which I was glad to pay and have the downstairs A/C back running.

And there is more. Feeling neglected, I suppose, the Win 7 computer decided that it needed to complain again. After opening an article in the New Orleans Newspaper, http//www.nola.com, Windows Security Essentials warned me about a dangerous item and directed me to go to my home page instead. I forget the name of the item other than it ended in .pl indicating it was a Perl Script, since when I looked at it in Security Essentials history, I saw that it was quarantined, checked its box and then said remove, thinking that would remove it from the computer, but it appears that it removed also all the listings of things that had been quarantined.

Anyway, this time Security Essentials appeared to have caught the malware as compared to my earlier problem. However, I immediately did a full scan of the computer with Security Essentials. And that evening, I did the same on my Windows 8 computer

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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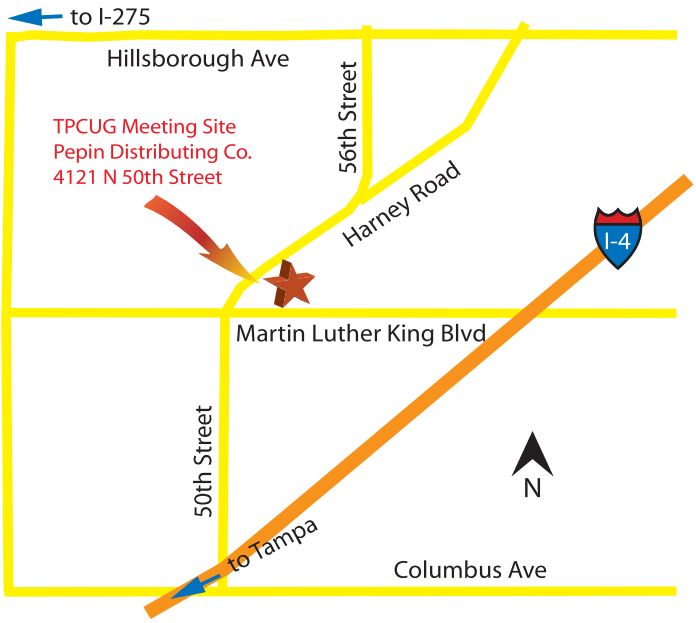
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 7

with Windows Defender. Note that Windows Security Essentials is the Microsoft malware and Virus program for Windows 7 and Windows Defender is the same for Windows 8.

What next? I hope nothing. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 28 No. 3 March 2015



March in Tampa

Meeting

Windows 10 And Other Things

by William LaMartin

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will demonstrate Windows 10 Technical Preview plus two other items on which he has been working. Bob LaFave will also conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Dave Palmer is back with another article for the newsletter, for which I am very appreciative. Also, our president, John Witmer has several short comments for the group, and Doug Mullis provided the annual financial report. So there is very little room remaining in the newsletter for me to fill.

The past month for me at the computer has been one of searching and selecting. I have two computer projects that I have been slowly working on for several months. The first consists of compiling a list of old newspaper articles, mainly from the Tampa Tribune and Miami Herald, about happenings in my hometown of Okeechobee. For that project I search the online archive of newspapers at http://www.genealogybank.com, which is a subscription-based site. It is a tedious process since I must consider each of the 17,237 possible items that a search for

Comments.....Continued on page 2

April Meeting: FBI agent to discuss the latest in scams

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$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

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Check the address label for your renewal month

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Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the February Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month in Bob's absence, I was the substitute moderator. The subjects covered were mostly about passwords and the best practices for storing them. Also discussed were the available email clients - particularly Mozilla Thunderbird. The discussion created some lively comments and further questions from the group.

The presentation this month was given by myself, Merle Nicholson, on the subject of Ubuntu Gnome desktop - a variation (officially a "Flavor") of Ubuntu. The demonstration computer is a dual-boot Windows 7 and Ubuntu Gnome, defaulting the boot to Gnome. Navigating around the desktop was demonstrated, as was the menu system, the cataloged download library, updates and utilities.
An overview was given of the installed programs and a discussion of WINE, the method to run many of the Windows programs.

I demonstrated and talked a bit about LibreOffice and the reason to never buy Microsoft again for most people. The latest update of LibreOffice has a slightly new look. It is available for Windows users as well. I also displayed the list of useful apps in Google Chrome, all of which are available in Windows, too.

The level of participation during the demonstration was gratifying as was the later feedback from a few members in attendance. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Okeechobee produces, discarding the vast majority which actually have nothing to do with Okeechobee City and the happenings there. So far I am up to 1926 and have selected around 667 articles. You may view the results at http://www.lamartin.com/OldNewspapersOkeechobeeInfo.aspx. I will mention the second project at the meeting. ◆

Malvertising

By Dave Palmer, Tampa PC Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

Just as 'malware' is short for malicious software, 'malvertising' is short for malicious advertising. Like many services on the Internet, online advertising has become highly automated. And like nearly everywhere else on the Internet, cyber criminals have found ways to corrupt that automation to turn a profit.

Have you noticed that after you do some online research for a specific purchase that you soon see online ads for similar products on different websites? That's a result of websites leaving 'cookies' on your computer. Cookies don't identify you personally but they can identify you as having an interest in a category of products. In addition, the IP address of your computer provides a general geographic location. When you visit other websites, they read your IP address and any cookies left recently. They also provide this information to an ad network which quickly adds interest-based or location-based ads to the websites you visit. Now advertisers and ad networks know your approximate location and the categories of products you're interested in.

How online advertising works
Ad networks consist of publishers, advertisers and the middlemen who connect the two. Publishers are the owners of the websites you visit. They sell advertising space on their websites. Then there's the advertiser, the individual or business that has a product or service they want to advertise. They buy advertising space on websites.

The sites you visit usually do not play a direct role in choosing the ads you see. Instead, a middleman, a third-party advertising company, manages the ad selection and placement for both the publisher and advertiser. This makes the process more efficient for everyone. The process is highly automated – humans are only rarely involved – usually only at the beginning for initial approval. This business model, advertising supported by ad networks, supports a large portion of the Internet, providing the 'free' information and websites we have come to rely on.

Online advertising can come in many forms. Ads can be a single static image without animation, ads can be animated in one of several different ways, or ads can be video-based. There are pop-up ads, pop-under ads, banner ads and a dizzying array of shapes sizes, styles, formats and technologies involved.

As this advertising business model has developed, ad networks have spread across the Internet. Over time the sheer volume of ads has given rise to a massive and tangled conglomeration of ad networks, ad exchanges and other related businesses that buy, sell, trade and swap ads and ad space constantly as the tides of supply and demand shift constantly. Of course, opportunistic cyber criminals weren't far behind. They soon found many ways to abuse the system for profit.

Delivering the payload
Bad guys may scam the system by posing as legitimate advertisers. They may hack into legitimate but dormant accounts. Either way they gain access to the ad networks. They then create legitimate-looking ads to disguise malware to either deliver malware directly from booby-trapped ads, or to redirect viewers to a poisoned website that delivers the malware payload. In most cases neither the publisher (the website displaying the ad) nor the ad network providing the ad knows the ad is booby-trapped.

One major obstacle to detection of malicious ads is that they are not persistent. Once the user leaves a website or closes the browser, all traces of the ad disappear. In addition attackers take great pains to make their ads hard to detect. They may enable their malicious payloads only after their ads have been approved. They may set the malicious ads to only attack every 10th user. They may set up many different domains and redirect victims many times before the victims reach the poisoned website. These and other practices make detection quite difficult.

Once installed on the victim's computer, malware may look for login information for e-mail, social media, and bank accounts, as well as for identity information.

Malvertising.....Continued on page 4

Malvertising.....Continued from page 3

In some cases the malware can lock the user's computer and demand a ransom.

Click fraud

Another way the bad guys corrupt legitimate advertising is to commit 'click fraud.' Click fraud occurs in pay per click (PPC) online advertising when machines or programs imitate a legitimate user and click on an ad to generate a charge per click without having any interest in the ad itself.

Hackers may use the malware installed by ads to commandeer the victim's computer and add it to the hacker's botnet – a network of hijacked computers used for criminal activities. Botnets (bots) are often used for click fraud. Click fraud sometimes begins when unscrupulous publishers or ad networks hire hackers to boost their numbers or to generate income. Computers in the botnet are instructed to visit various websites and click on specific ads.

Here are a few eye-opening stats from an adweek.com article (http://goo.gl/9zrH7X). Up to 50% of publisher activity is from botnets - automated click fraud. Bots account for 11% of display ad views and 23% of video ads. Of the $43.8 billion in ad revenue, fraudulent activity accounts for $6.3 billion. More than half of traffic from 3rd parties claiming to lift publisher's traffic numbers comes from bots. Click fraud is a major problem in that it raises costs for legitimate publishers, advertisers and ad networks. Click fraud can also be used indirectly to attack legitimate competitors and force them to pay higher advertising costs.

What can be done?

Unfortunately there's little agreement on who is responsible for addressing these threats. Both publishers and advertisers need to take action to limit malvertising on their networks. In addition a number of companies now exist to validate that ads are being seen by humans. They include WhiteOps, ComScore, Integral Ad Science, The Media Trust and Double Verify, among others. But since consumers are under a serious and direct threat, we must do what we can to protect ourselves.

How to protect yourself

In some cases the bad guys are hoping they can redirect your browser from your intended website to a poisoned website so they can download malware into your computer. For that scenario to work your browser has to: 1) allow the redirect and 2) contain a vulnerability that allows malware to be installed and 3) operate in administrative mode to allow the installation. I've included some instructions below on how to set up the Big 3 browsers to prevent redirects*. In case you still operate daily in administrative mode, Merle wrote an excellent explanation of how to create a standard user account in the Oct 2014 edition of the TPCUG newsletter.

In some cases the ad is booby-trapped with some executable script, often Flash, Javascript, etc. Your protection is to use script-blocking software – NoScript for Firefox and ScriptSafe or Script Blocker for Chrome. Things are a bit more complicated with Internet Explorer. Don't use Internet Explorer unless absolutely necessary. If you're an IE diehard check out the instructions here: http://goo.gl/YTcQpK. Although script blockers are not terribly convenient, removing malware is way beyond inconvenient.

In the end, the threats from malvertising are really no different than other malware threats across the Internet. So the protection advice is no different either.

To reduce the threat from vulnerabilities, first minimize your 'attack surface,' that is, remove programs you're not using. The next step towards minimizing your vulnerability is to keep everything updated – your operating system, browsers, programs, add-ons, plug-ins, etc. Backup your data and system regularly. Use a password manager and strong passwords.

Preventing redirects*

Chrome

To prevent Chrome from being redirected to another site without your knowledge, click the "Customize and Control Google Chrome" button. The button has three horizontal lines on it. Click "Settings." Click the "Show Advanced Settings" link to display more setting options. In the Privacy section, click "Enable Phishing and Malware Protection." Close the browser

Malvertising.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Colorized Photo by Dullaway

The image is a 1921 photo of an automobile accident in Washington, D. C., which is nothing out of the ordinary. What is of interest is that it is a colorization of an original black and white photo [view the newsletter at our website to appreciate this]. The very subtle colorization was done by Sanna Dullaway. You may view this photo and other of her colorizations at http://mygrapefruit.deviantart.com/gallery/

March's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Windows 10 Technical Preview Download	http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/preview-download
Old Newspaper Search	http://www.genealogybank.com
Digital Photo	http://www.dpmag.com/
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	http://myfwc.com/

Malvertising.....Continued from page 4

window. Google now displays a warning if the browser is trying to redirect you.

Mozilla Firefox

In Firefox, click the "Open Menu" button, which has three horizontal lines. Click the "Options" button in the panel that opens. Click the "Advanced" button and then the "General" tab. In the Accessibility section, check the "Warn Me When Websites Try to Redirect or Reload the Page" box. Click "OK."

Internet Explorer

Internet Explorer doesn't have a way to expressly stop redirects. Instead, you have to limit the whole Internet. Click the "Tools" button, which looks like a gear. Click "Internet Options." Click the "Security" tab. In the Security Levels for This Zone pane, set the slider to "High." This prevents IE from running ActiveX controls, which is how many browser redirects are carried out. However, this might prevent some safe sites from loading correctly. Click "OK."

These steps work for Google Chrome 40, Internet Explorer 11 and Mozilla Firefox 35. Other versions might use different steps.

*The above instructions were taken from: https://www.ehow.com/how_8744477_do-links-redirecting-different-sites.html ◆

Reminder To Use Our Amazon Link; New Board Members

By John Witmer, President, TPCUG
jwitmer@outlook.com

TPCUG has a link to web shopping giant, Amazon, on our website (http://www.tpcug.org) for which the Group receives a small referral commission for all purchases made through this link. It costs you nothing extra to make your purchases by accessing Amazon through this link. Amazon commissions are a valuable source of income to our Group, as seen in the annual Financial Report for 2014, which is included in this March 2015 newsletter. We received income of $427 in 2014, and $688 in 2013. Without this fee income we would have had a $369 operating loss in 2013, and our small 2014 loss would have grown to be $479. Please remember us when you do your shopping on Amazon. We all benefit by keeping our Group's membership fee low as a result of this needed extra income from Amazon.

Update On Officers And Board Members For 2015

I was pleasantly surprised that my annual plea for other Group members to become involved in the leadership of this Group actually produced results for this new year we just began. I am pleased to report that Dave Palmer and Ed Cohen both volunteered their services to be on the Board of Directors for TPCUG, and to add their input and insight into the discussions and decisions affecting the operations and direction this Group faces in the coming year(s). Thanks to you both for stepping up and lending us your help. As most of you know, Dave has also done several great presentations to our Group in the past, including the January presentation on Passwords. ◆

Commentary On 2014 Financial Report

By John Witmer, President, TPCUG
jwitmer@outlook.com

Included in this month's newsletter is the 2014 TPCUG Financial Report prepared by our Treasurer, Doug Mullis. As I looked it over, I was struck by the fact the expenses were greater than the income for the first time ever that I can recall. We spent $55.88 more than we received in income from membership dues and Amazon Commissions. Dues income was in line with past years, and reasonable in amounts, so why the loss this year? It appears the culprit is a combination of lower Amazon Commissions in 2014, and our Newsletter printing costs rising substantially as a result of having to pay a vendor to print all 12 monthly issues this year.

Commentary.....Continued on page 7

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2014
Submitted by Doug Mullis, Treasurer

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2014 INCOME	
Membership Dues (22 Single + 4 Family)	$815.00
Door Prize/Auction Receipts	0.00
Amazon Link Commissions	427.14
TOTAL INCOME	$1,242.14
2014 EXPENSES	
Newsletter Postage	$196.00
Newsletter Printing (12 Mos in 2014)	468.60
FACUG Dues	25.00
APCUG Dues	50.00
Florida Annual Corporate Fee	61.25
Web Site Hosting Fee (12 Months)	181.08
P O Box Rental (fee increase)	78.00
December Holiday Party Costs	204.00
Refreshments (Cookies)	24.99
PayPal Usage Fee (6 Paymts @ $0.85 ea)	5.10
TOTAL EXPENSES	$1,294.02
NET LOSS FOR 2014	$51.88
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – START OF 2014	$7,560.86
CASH BALANCE PER BOOKS – END OF 2014	$7,508.98

(No Bank Account Reconciling Items for Beginning or End of Year)

Commentary.....Continued from page 6

Let's consider the newsletter printing cost increase. The Group was fortunate during my employment years with Pepin Distributing that William created the newsletter each month and sent it to me to print on the Pepin copier at no cost other than the cost of a few 8.5x17 reams of paper each year. I was able to print three months of newsletters in 2013 before retirement, so we had to pay for 9 issues to be printed in 2013 using a local printing vendor. In 2014, the Group paid for all 12 months of newsletters to be printed, at a cost of $469. This cost used to be less than $75 a year when I was able to do it at Pepin.

The second item concerning Amazon Commissions is not within the control of the Group, other than reminding the membership to please remember to use the Amazon link on our website before you purchase on Amazon. There is a separate article related to this reminder in this month's newsletter. We do count on these commissions to help offset costs, and it is even more important given the rise in costs of getting the newsletter to our members.

I think we are one of only a few Groups left that still print and mail Newsletters to members, and I know that the members generally prefer to have it that way, like reading a newspaper in hand is preferable to reading it online. So we are not going to propose

Commentary.....Continued on page 8

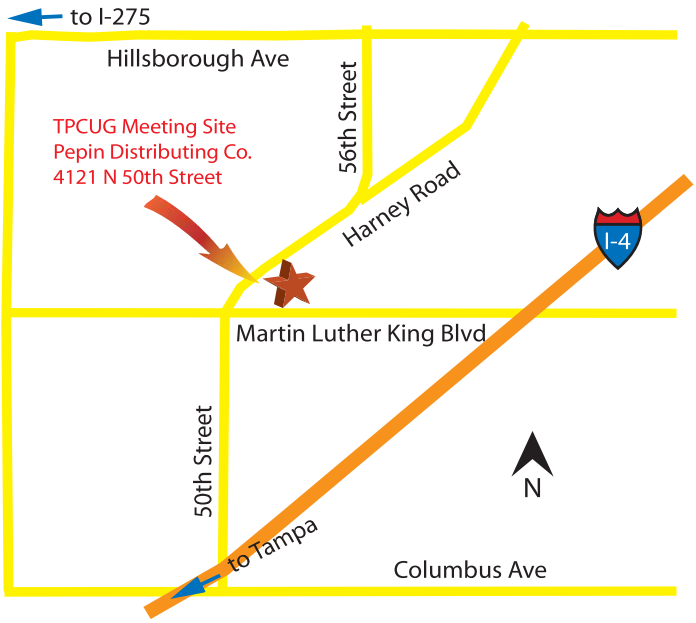
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Commentary.....Continued from page 7

any changes to how you get your newsletter in the mail. The good news is that we have a reasonably comfortable bank balance that can afford to absorb small losses each year for a long time without affecting the financial health of the Group, even in light of declining Amazon commissions if that should happen. And we do not need to raise our dues for membership either as long as the level of membership stays fairly consistent year after year. There are measures that can be taken should our financial situation begin to decline significantly, but I see no indication this is going to happen in the next few years. So sit back and enjoy this newsletter, do your entire Amazon purchasing through our website link, and keep your membership dues paid timely. Your TPCUG should live happily ever after as a result, at least financially. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 28 No. 2 February 2015

February in Tampa

Meeting

Windows 10
by
Bob LaFave

Wednesday, February 11, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Bob LaFave will demonstrate how to install Windows 10 Technical Preview. Bob LaFave will also conduct the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

It is nice to be able to welcome Dave Palmer as a contributor to the newsletter. He certainly knows a lot more about passwords than I. And I look forward to more articles in the future. Merle Nicholson has also been helpful in providing an article to fill out the newsletter so that all I need do is make a few comments.

Compared with last month, I have no problems to report. But I do have a complaint about what is happening at major and not so major websites. When I go to websites such as the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, quite reputable organizations, I am amazed at all the processing my computer is doing. You can monitor this in the Task Manager's Performance tab. To see the actual traffic between your computer and the website, you can install the free program Fiddler and run it while visiting websites. You will be shocked at the volume.

In the first 15 seconds, the NY Times site's server had sent out

Comments.....Continued on page 2

March Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob covered a wide variety of PC subjects, starting with his new notebook computer with Windows 8.1 and touchscreen. He talked about an external USB FAX modem and the software "Windows FAX and Scan," reassuring us that Windows 8.1 still has it included as standard.

He showed us what the Start-8 menu system for Windows 8.1 looks like and how to get it as a download. Last he led a discussion on a member's problem with lack of sound while using Firefox.

Dave Palmer gave us a very comprehensive presentation on passwords and what criminals do to attack users and best practices on prevention. Since the presentation is included in this newsletter, we'll just thank Dave for an excellent program, well-organized and thoughtful. It's clear that Dave worked very hard and long putting this together and we're the grateful recipients. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

just over 200 http requests to various places, probably a little over 50%, of course, to the NY Times site itself. But the rest are to places such as ad.doubleclick.net, ckm-m.xp1.ru4.com, beacon.krxd.net, r.flite.com, b.scorecardresearch.com. And the list goes on. The Wall Street Journal is just as bad. The site of the New Orleans newspaper, the Times Picayune, produced over 1,000 http requests in the first 15 seconds. And it didn't stop once the page was loaded. Periodically, another large batch would arrive. It is no wonder that,

Comments.....Continued on page 8

Taming the Password Beast

By Dave Palmer, Tampa PC Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

In recent years cybercrime has become a growth industry. The tech-savvy criminals began developing and selling crimeware tools. Now it seems anyone who can operate a keyboard can buy a do-it-yourself malware kit for less than $100. Hacking into websites and stealing data has become a favorite, and lucrative, pastime.

But some of the data stolen was encrypted - usually passwords. How to decrypt, or "crack'"it? Cybercrime newbies found the necessary tools and how-to help forums on the web. Now they're off to the races.

Once a database of passwords is stolen, the criminals need to operate quickly – before the breached website discovers the data has been stolen and notifies users to change their passwords.

What do the hackers need?
Above all they need to work fast, and that means working smart. They need big lists of commonly used passwords like "LetMeIn" or "Password1" or "12345678." They need lists of words (called wordlists) commonly used in passwords. And they need to understand common password patterns. No problem, all those items are available online – usually for free. Did you know entire forums exist online to share stolen passwords and to assist in cracking them? In addition YouTube has many self-help videos aimed at new criminals and "password recovery specialists."

Wordlists exist in many places on the Internet. Wordlists exist in multiple languages and can contain every word in Wikipedia, every word in Webster's dictionary, first names, last names, sports teams, pet names and much more. Check out openwall.com/wordlists/. This paid wordlist has 40 million entries and contains commonly used passwords from 20+ languages. This database is 500MB in size. Another wordlist available at Crackstation.com contains nearly 1.5 billion words and is available for free or for a small donation.

RockYou changed everything
In late 2009 a gaming website called RockYou was hacked. It contained 14 million unique passwords. Unfortunately they were not encrypted; they were in plain text. Both legitimate security specialists and criminals quickly analyzed this treasure trove. Many common password patterns were discovered. This analysis changed password cracking forever.

Analysis of the RockYou passwords confirmed that nearly all capital letters come at the beginning of a password and almost all (90%) numbers and punctuation come at the end. Many other common patterns were revealed.

Password-cracking software is surprisingly easy to find, and often free. Several popular titles include John the Ripper, Cain & Able, Brutus, and oclHashcat. Most come with "rules" to test various patterns against a password database.

Rule-based attacks always begin with a wordlist. They can combine words, append endings, prepend beginnings and test common substitutions – like substituting 3 for E, 5 for S, 1 for L, etc. A rule, known as a "combinator" attack, runs two or more words together and either strips out all the spaces or leaves them intact. Other "mangling" and "hybrid" rules account for variations in capitalization, character substitutions, and other tweaks.

The cracking process
Experienced password crackers will begin by testing the database against a large list of common passwords (12345678, or Password1). Often that process alone will crack 15% – 20% of the passwords. The next step is to use a comprehensive wordlist to test dozens of password patterns (rules). Again a 15% – 20% success rate is possible. The last resort is to use a "brute force attack" to test every possible password combination for a specific number of characters: aaaaaaaa, aaaaaaab, aaaaaaac to zzzzzzzz.

Following Moore's Law, the power of computers is increasing quickly. In fact, performance of computers roughly doubles every 2 years. (www.mooreslaw.org/) Along with it, the ability of bad guys to "guess" or "crack" passwords is increasing too. (http://ow.ly/pkgvW) Expert crackers have learned to utilize the power of graphics cards, also known as GPUs, such as the AMD Radeon 7970 to boost the performance of their computers. During the recent presentation Merle added that this particular card has a total of 2048 processors on each card (!) and can run at the blazing speed of 6,000 GHz! It is capable of running billions of calculations (not guesses) per second. I believe that translates to around 8 million password guesses per second.

Why are longer passwords better?
Without getting too deep into the math, let me explain briefly why longer passwords are better. Imagine a 2-char-

Password.....Continued on page 4

Password.....Continued from page 3

acter password that is limited to numbers. Since each character can be any one of 10 possibilities (0-9), the number of combinations for a 2 character password is 102 or 10 x 10 = 100.

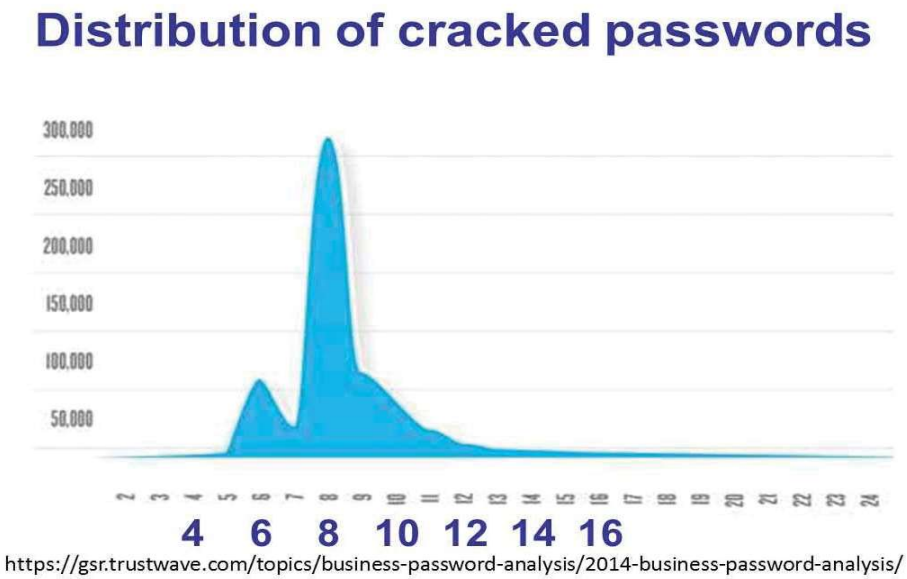
If we have another 2-character password that can include upper case letters (26), lower case letters (26) and numbers (10), the number of possibilities for each character jumps to 62 (26+26+10). The number of possible combinations is now 622, or 62 x 62 = 3844.

Let's try a 12-character password that uses upper case (26), lower case (26) and numbers (10). The number of possible combinations is 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 x 62 = 6212 or 312,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 possible combinations. In spite of the number of combinations, these passwords can still be cracked by a determined but patient criminal using brute force.

Password best practices

Passwords MUST be random – hackers are experts at testing for ANY pattern. The longer the password the better! The more complex the better! Passwords should include upper and lower case letters, numbers and, if possible, special characters. You absolutely MUST use different passwords for each account. Hackers have created software that can automatically check multiple accounts (banks, retailers, social media) for a single password.

The graph below shows a distribution of cracked passwords according the Internet security company Trustwave. It show that few people use passwords less than 5 characters or more than 12 characters. It also shows that passwords between 6 and 10 characters are often cracked.



https://gsr.trustwave.com/topics/business-password-analysis/2014-business-password-analysis/

Given that computing power doubles every 2 years, I would contend that 12 and even 14 character passwords are not currently safe. To secure sensitive accounts such as bank accounts or investment accounts, or even e-mail accounts, I would suggest using 18+ character passwords. 10, 12, or 14 character passwords could be used for less sensitive accounts such as the New York Times, etc. Given the state of password pattern analysis, I don't believe that passwords created by humans are safe even if they're longer than 12 characters.

Do not use whole words

Hackers are getting wise to people using whole word phrases for their passwords. They are starting to include multi-word phrases in wordlists like givemelibertyorgivemedeath(1). [(*) indicates a footnote at the end of the article.]

Are security questions a weak link?

If your security questions are more easily guessed than your password, you have a problem. If the website allows it, make up your own questions. If not, either make up your answers, use someone else's information, such as a spouse or simply use the correct answers but spell them backwards.

If you can create your own questions consider making them 1) safe so they cannot be guessed or researched, 2) stable so they do not change over time, 3) memorable so you can remember them, 4) simple so they are precise, simple, consistent, and 5) have many possible answers.

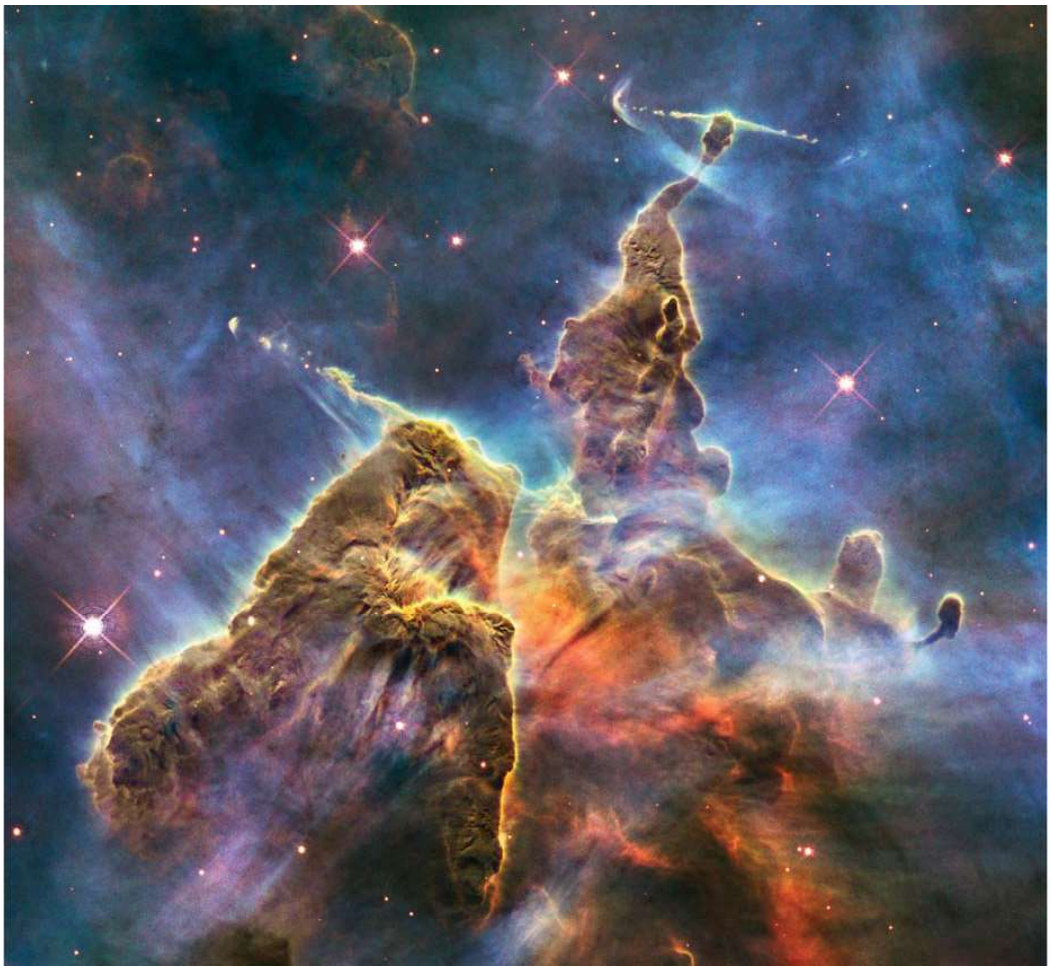
Consider using a password manager

A password manager can remember all your passwords for you except your master password. It can generate long random passwords. Most can auto-fill username and password boxes. Many can even log you in automatically. Most password managers are cross-platform – Windows, iOS, Linux, and mobile cross-platform. Some can also save other data beyond passwords. The basic version of most password managers is free. I suggest that you not use browser password managers as most are insecure to some degree.

A word about master passwords

Password.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Images of outer space from the Hubble Space Telescope

From http://www.wsj.com/articles/star-studded-images-from-the-hubble-space-telescope-1422658561?mod=WSJ_article_EditorsPicks_6. "It may look like a fantasy film still, but this image is actually the top of a pillar of gas and dust. Located 7500 light years away, the pillar is three light-years tall." Note that these are not the colors you would see with the naked eye. They are due to enhancements by NASA to emphasize certain features. The Hubble telescope has been in orbit for 25 years.

February's Links

Tampa PC Users Group	http://www.tpcug.org
Windows 10 Technical Preview - CNET	http://www.cnet.com/how-to/windows-10-guide/
Florida's Springs	http://www.floridasprings.org/
European Synchrotron	http://www.esrf.eu/
Mardi Gras in New Orleans	http://www.neworleansonline.com/neworleans/mardigras/

Password.....Continued from page 4

If you can create a completely random password that you can remember, use it. If not consider this system. Find a quote, a song lyric, a line from a poem, the Bible or a movie that you can repeat almost without hesitation. Use the first letter of each word and include all punctuation. The password will be much stronger if it includes numbers, punctuation and/or capital letters in the middle. If it doesn't contain them, figure out how to add them or find another phrase.

Here are a couple of examples to lead you in the right direction. I increased the font size so the characters underlined would show up better.

Ifi2abrof,Iwdddatfwh. – 21 characters – Johnny Cash
I fell into a burning ring of fire, I went down down down and the flames went higher.

Y,Amtssfa,Nilatth2s. – 20 characters – Beatles
Yesterday, All my troubles seemed so far away,
Now it looks as though they're here to stay.

Fascinating articles

In 2013, a tech-savvy journalist with no hacking experience attempted to "crack" a database of over 16,000 encrypted passwords. His editor gave him one day to find the resources, learn the tools and "crack" as many passwords as possible. The rules were he could use only consumer-level computers and free tools from the Internet. After some initial struggles Nate Anderson cracked over 8,000 passwords (47%) in one day.(2)

Not long afterward, Wired magazine asked 3 expert crackers to attack the same database. One spent only one hour and cracked 62% while using a single GPU card. One used a bit more than an hour and cracked 82% while using two GPU cards. The last cracker spent 20 hours and cracked 90% using a single GPU card.(3)

What I've learned

- Cracking tools are quite sophisticated and mostly free.
- Wordlists, online help,and other resources are easily available and mostly free.
- Computing power doubles roughly every two years.
- Cracking passwords is all too easy even for relative beginners.
- Human generated passwords (HGP) invariably have patterns embedded in them.
- Humans are not usually capable of generating completely random passwords.
- Wordlists, pattern analysis, and pattern-generating software can defeat HGP.
- Shorter passwords, whether created by humans or completely random, are simply not secure.
- The degree of difficulty in cracking passwords increases exponentially with the number of characters.

Conclusion

The only way to generate and remember long, completely random passwords for every account is to use a password manager.

References

(1) "How the Bible and YouTube are fueling the next frontier of password cracking"
http://arstechnica.com/security/2013/10/how-the-bible-and-youtube-are-fueling-the-next-frontier-of-password-cracking/
(2) "How I Became a Password Cracker"
http://arstechnica.com/security/2013/03/how-i-became-a-password-cracker/
(3) "Anatomy of a Hack"- http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2013-05/28/password-cracking ◆

Where is the Linux Desktop?

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

We all know by now that Linux is in wide use all over the world, just not on the desktop. It dominates phones (Android) and servers and even supercomputers. The top 20 supercomputers worldwide almost all use Linux. The one supercomputer exception uses Unix – an earlier version. And the millions of internet servers? Almost all Linux.

Chromebooks outsold laptops last Christmas season, and the year before. Linux is a dominating force in connected devices. So it's all around us, except for the desktop and for notebook computers – Chromebooks being the exception. Chromebooks are making great inroads in schools where the ability to control what gets installed ranks high, as does the relative resistance to malware and viruses, and obviously cost.

Computers with Linux OS pre-installed just aren't gener-

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ally available. Dell and HP have always sold them, but you won't find them in stores. With Dell, the cost differential with Windows OS is small, just $50; although if it were on a $500 computer that's 10%. And I suspect that the margin will be even smaller because Microsoft is now giving the OS software to manufacturers at a price close to zero. Look for an operating system called "Windows 8.1 with Bing."

First, let's state that there are no file or networking incompatibilities between Linux and Windows. Common files are fully interchangeable between the systems: Documents, spreadsheets, pictures, movies. This concern is even less important now that users' computer needs are evolving toward Internet-centric applications. The Internet browser is a great equalizer. You can even install some Windows programs in Linux using an emulator called WINE. For the technical-minded you can run excellent Virtual Machine software and then run any and all Windows software.

But there are some needs that have so far been unmet. The first that comes to mind is Intuit's TurboTax. If your tax needs are simple enough to use the online TurboTax, problem solved. Otherwise, there's no Linux solution. The second thing is a major trip planning and navigation software like Delorme Street Atlas. But most everything else is available in first-class applications like Office Suite, financial systems, photo and movie editing, publishing, CAD drawing and thousands of games. And to top it all off, nearly all these are available at no charge. There is a built-in software catalog program that helps you find and install everything.

I have yet to install Linux only to find I have a driver problem. The device drivers – except for some printers – are built in. And they work well.

Finally, let's address malware and viruses. There are some few known viruses that affect Linux. But the OS itself is constantly being updated to plug those exploits. Linux users don't use virus scanner software because the chances of getting one is much smaller than a Windows computer with the very best virus software installed. Statistically speaking, no one gets a virus with Linux.

So why would you consider a Linux desktop? What circumstances make it a viable option?

If you are currently running an old Windows OS. XP or earlier, you need to replace it now. Right now unless you are not connected to the Internet. Linux will run on an old system easily and much faster than Windows ever did. For free.

If you have a computer where you're up to your eyeballs in malware and can't fix it yourself, you're looking at a $100 professional repair. Save the bucks and give Linux a try first. If you can back up your data you have nothing to lose.

If you're just plain tired of fighting off malware and viruses or you feel you don't have the skills to do it, Linux is a good way to go. No yearly fees for virus scanners that work about 95% of the time anyway.

If you're looking for a simpler system with good protection for the kids in the house, you can't do better than Linux. You can control everything that gets installed and also know it's virus-free. Nothing gets installed without the administrator password. Just don't tell the kids what it is. The desktop and application launcher is actually closer in operation to an Apple iMac than it is Windows. It's simple and easy.

What are the issues?

Probably the biggest issue is deciding which of the many versions to install. If you count all the variations and branches, there are probably 250 or so choices to make. The most popular by far is Canonical Ubuntu with the standard "Unity" style desktop. This is a very good way to start because the base OS is being maintained by a large multi-national company. Alternately, there are some "flavors" of Ubuntu that replace the desktop appearance and controls, menus, settings and a unique selection of standard software. These all have the blessing and cooperation of Canonical. Each has a target audience like Eubuntu which is designed for children and schools. The website https://wiki.ubuntu.com/UbuntuFlavors details the differences of the nine flavors.

There are good instructions on how to make a bootable CD or flash drive with Linux and then run it on your computer without installing any software. This is a very good way to try it out to see if there are any hardware incompatibilities and to see if you really like it. You have nothing but a little time to lose.

There is a wealth of friendly web pages to help with all this. Start at http://www.ubuntu.com/ or https://wiki.ubuntu.com/ and proceed to http://www.ubuntu.com/download, a very good place to get installation guides and instructions; also "Ask Ubuntu" and "Ubuntu Forums." ◆

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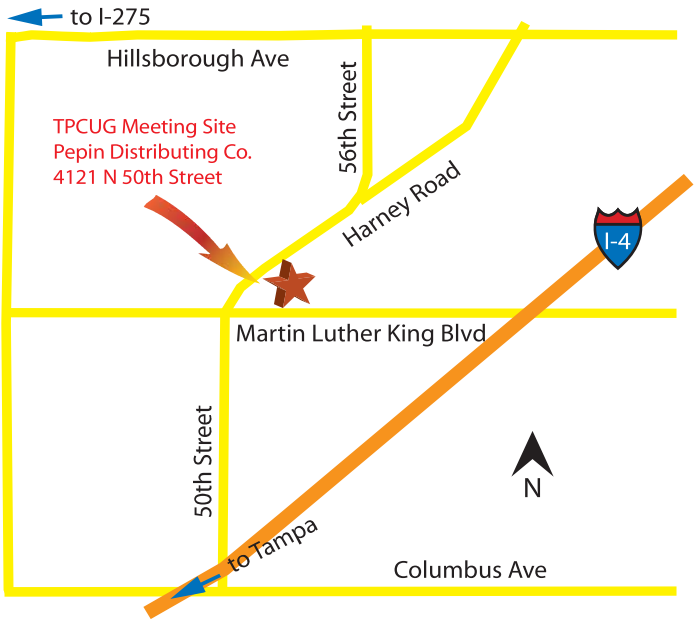
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Comments.....Continued from page 2

for sites such as these, our browsers are unresponsive at times. And it is getting irritating.

I am sure you have probably noticed at many sites now when you start viewing at the main page and then click on a link to go to another page at the site and then click the return button to return to the main page nothing happens. To get back to the main page (using IE), you have to either hold your cursor down on the back button to see a list of previous page and choose the main page or you have to find a link to the main page and click on that. I am convinced this is because of all the activity that is going on in the background.

What would be nice is a new browser that stripped out all that advertising and tracking stuff and just presented you with a web page containing text, images and whatever links were appropriate. Think we will see anything like that anytime soon? ◆



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Vol. 28 No. 4 April 2015



April in Tampa

Meeting

Internet Fraud and You
by
Andrew Sekela, FBI Agent

Wednesday, April 8, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: FBI Special Agent Andres Sekela with the local FBI office will speak to us on Internet fraud. There will also be the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Dave Palmer and Merle Nicholson are back with articles for the newsletter, for which I am very appreciative. At present, I do not have time to think about articles, so it is nice to have others step in.

I have been thinking, though, about our website, http://www.tpcug.org, and how it is a bit dated. It still works fine when viewed in a browser on a desktop or laptop. However, there is a problem with viewing it on all the new smartphones and tablets. Problem one is that the navigation menu is built on the assumption that you will be using a mouse and, hence, can hover over a menu item to pop out a sub menu. Touch devices do not allow that. Also many of the pages do not display well on the smaller screens.

To fix this problem, I looked into what are know as responsive

Comments.....Continued on page 2

May Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month, in Bobs absence, Merle Nicholson was the substitute moderator. The discussion created some lively comments and further questions from the group.

The presentation this month was given by myself, Merle Nicholson, on the subject of creating a new spreadsheet in Google Docs. The subject at hand was a need for a monthly money manager for my spouse. She has been hand writing one every month for many years. It consists of all regular monthly bills and payments and estimates of expenses. That is balanced against the monthly income, and should give a difference of an amount that can come from or go to savings. This interested the members, and they became very engaged in the finished product. Many questions, suggestions and comments were made, and the result was a collaborative effort. The meeting was adjourned at the spreadsheet's completion.

The level of participation during the demonstration was gratifying, as was the later feedback from members in attendance. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

websites, did a bit of research for tutorials on how to create such sites and have produced a new test version of our website. I learned how to accomplish mostly from tutorial videos at http://www.lynda.com, to which I subscribe

The test version of our website is at http://tpcugtest.azurewebsites.net. It should work well on your phone. Eventually I will move that content to our site at http://www.tpcug.org. ◆

What Would a Digital Society Look Like?

By Dave Palmer, Tampa PC Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

I read an article recently about the tiny but highly wired Baltic country of Estonia. While Europe and the United States debate the role of technology in people's daily lives, Estonia has welcomed it as a fact of life.

Estonia gained its independence in 1991 after the fall of the Soviet Union. At the time, Estonia had few financial resources and a small population to jump-start its economy. Local policy makers soon realized that they could not offer Western-style services without using new technology, including the Internet, to keep government costs to a bare minimum.

When the Iron Curtain fell, less than half the population had a telephone. In the last 20+ years, Estonia has transformed itself from being a member of the Soviet bloc to being one of the most connected countries on earth, using technology built primarily within its borders.

Estonians, using a national identity card embedded with a microchip, have access to thousands of services, including banking, business registration and even fishing licenses. They can review medical records and order prescriptions on smartphones. Almost everyone files taxes on the web within minutes, and about a third of voters now cast their ballots online. By law, the state may not ask for any piece of information more than once, and people have the right to know what data the government holds on them.

When Estonian political and technical leadership began laying the foundation for e-Estonia, it decided on the following principles:

1. Decentralization. There's no central database, and every stakeholder, be it a government department, a ministry or a business, gets to choose its own system in its own time.
2. Interconnectivity. All the elements in the system have to be able to work together smoothly.
3. Open platform. Any institution can use the public key infrastructure.
4. Open-ended process. E-Estonia was conceived as a continuous project to keep growing and improving organically.

E-services available to citizens and businesses in Estonia include the X-Road, I-voting, e-Identification, e-Residency, and e-Tax among others. The two key ingredients in the infrastructure are the X-Road and e-Identity or e-ID.

X-Road – X-Road is the backbone of e-Estonia. It's the invisible yet critical environment that allows the nation's various e-services databases, both in the public and private sector, to link up and operate in harmony. One of the key elements of e-Estonia is that its databases are decentralized, which means:

- There's no single owner or controller.
- Every government agency or business can choose the product that's right for them.
- Services can be added one at a time, as they're ready.

X-Road is the all-important connection between these databases, the tool that allows them to work together for maximum impact. All of the Estonian e-solutions that use multiple databases use X-Road. Originally X-Road was a system used for making queries to the different databases. Now it has developed into a tool that can also write to multiple databases, transmit large data sets and perform searches across several databases.

X-Road was designed with growth in mind, so can be scaled up as new e-services, with their various platforms, come online.

In 2013

- Over 287 million queries were done over X-road.
- Over 170 databases offer their services over X-Road in Estonia.
- Over 900 organizations use X-Road daily in Estonia.

More than 50% of the inhabitants of Estonia use X-Road through the information portal eesti.ee.

All outgoing data from the X-road is digitally signed and encrypted. All incoming data is authenticated and logged. X-road allows databases to interact, making

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Digital Society.....Continued from page 3

integrated e-services possible. Institutions are not locked into any one type of database or software provider.

Struck by the X-road's scalability and security, and the fact that it has already worked well for over a decade, Finland and other countries are adopting the Estonian system in whole or in part.

e-Identification –Estonia has by far the most highly-developed national ID card system in the world. Introduced in 2002, the e-ID is the nationally standardized system for verifying a person's identity in an online environment. Much more than simply a legal picture ID, the mandatory national card serves as the digital access card for all of Estonia's secure e-services. All Estonian citizens and permanent residents are legally obligated to possess this ID card from the age of 15. There are more than 1.1 million active e-ID cards in Estonia. That's nearly 90% of Estonia's 1.3 million residents.

A chip on the card stores digitized data about the authorized user: the user's full name, gender, national identification number, and cryptographic keys and public key certificates. Only a minimum of private data is kept on the ID card itself. Lost cards can simply be cancelled. The embedded files use 2048-bit public key encryption, which enables it to be used as definitive proof of ID in an electronic environment. And in over a decade, no security breaches have been reported. Also issued are two PIN codes, one for authentication (proving who the holder is) and one for authorization (signing documents or making payments). Asked to authenticate a user, the service concerned queries a central database to check that the card and relevant code match. It also asks for only the minimum information needed: To check a customer's age, for example, it does not ask, "How old is this person?" but merely, "Is this person over 18?"

Here are some examples of how the ID Card is regularly used in Estonia:

- As a national ID card for legal travel within the EU for Estonian citizens
- As the national health insurance card
- As proof of identification when logging into bank accounts from a home computer
- As a pre-paid public transport ticket in the cities of Tallinn and Tartu
- For digital signatures (Under Estonian law the cryptographic signature is legally equivalent to a manual signature.)
- For i-voting
- For accessing government databases to check one's medical records, file taxes, etc.
- For picking up e-Prescriptions

Public transportation

Larger cities in Estonia have made arrangements for residents to purchase "virtual" transportation tickets linked to their ID cards. Period tickets can be bought online via electronic bank transfer, by SMS, or at public kiosks. This process usually takes only a few minutes and the ticket is active instantly from the moment of purchase. To use the virtual ticket, customers must carry their ID card with them whenever they use public transport.

Customers also have the option of requesting e-mail or SMS notification alerting them when the ticket is about to expire, or of setting up automatic renewal through internet banking services.

During a routine ticket check, users are asked to present their ID card, which is then inserted into a special device. This device then confirms that the user holds a valid ticket, and also warns if the ticket is about to expire. The ticket check usually takes less than a second.

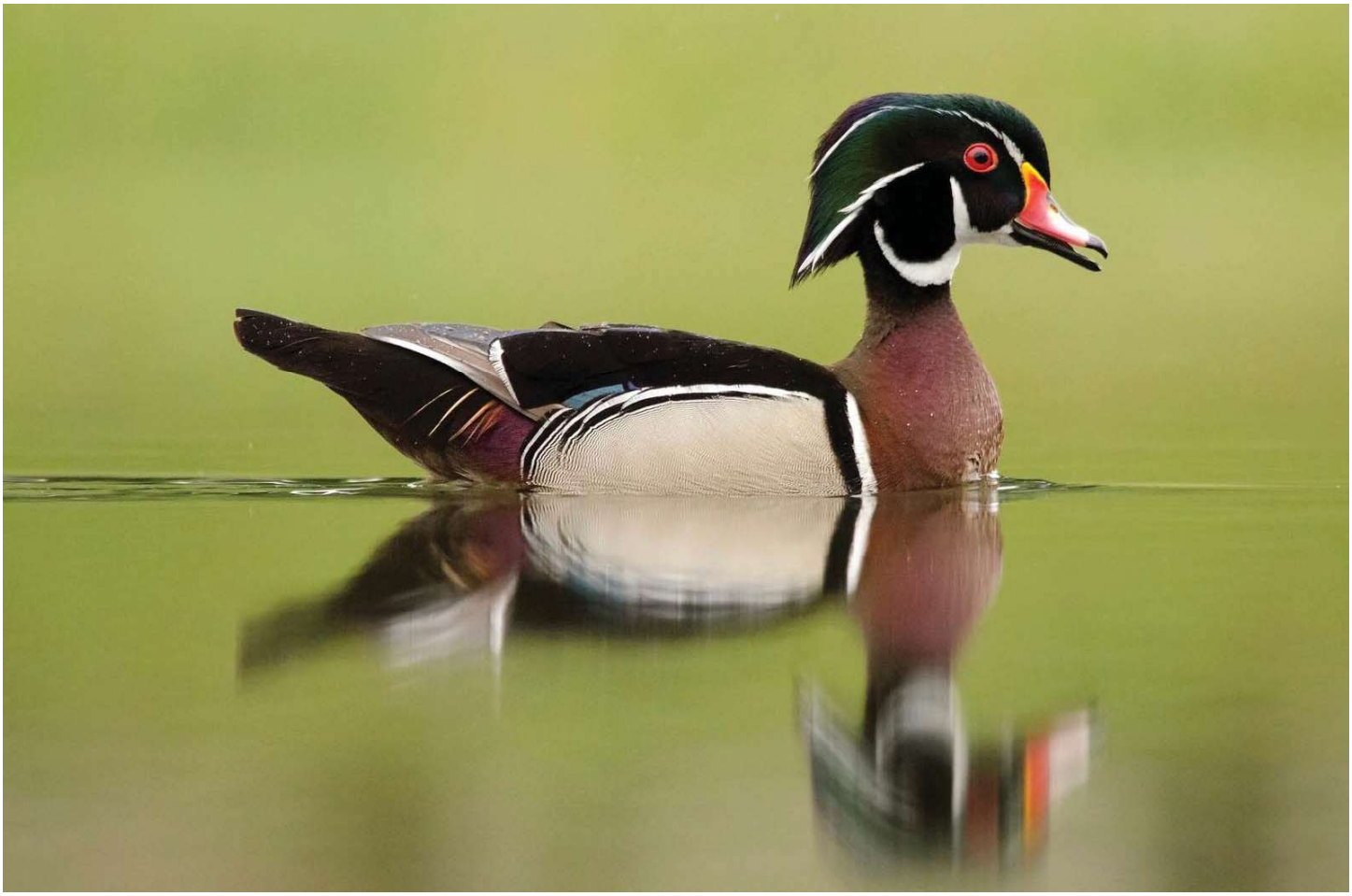
Ticket information is stored in a central database, not on the ID card itself. Thus, to order a ticket, it is not necessary to have an ID-card reader. Ticket controllers have access to a local archive of the master database. If the ticket was purchased after the local archive was updated, the ticket device is able to confirm the ticket from the master database over a GSM (cell phone) data link.

I-voting – Internet voting, or 'i-voting', is a system that allows voters to cast their ballots from any internet-connected computer, anywhere in the world. Unrelated to the electronic voting systems used elsewhere, which involve costly and problematic machinery, the Estonian solution is simple, elegant and secure.

During a designated pre-voting period, the voter logs onto the system using an ID card or Mobile ID, and casts a ballot. The voter's identity is removed from the ballot before it reaches the National Electoral Commission for counting, thereby ensuring anonymity.

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Internet Picture of the Month



Colorful Duck

This photo of a male wood duck, titled *Reflections,* by Peter Brannon may be viewed at https://www.flickr.com/photos/peterbrannon/14093253056/. You may view many very nice bird photos taken by him at his Flickr Photostream at https://www.flickr.com/photos/peterbrannon/. As with most Internet Pictures of the Month, this is best viewed in the newsletter at our website.

April's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Photoshop Tutorials	http://www.iceflowstudios.com/category/tutorials/
National Broadband Map	http://www.broadbandmap.gov/
TurboTax Free Federal (1040EZ/1040A)	https://turbotax.intuit.com/personal-taxes/online/free-edition.jsp
Tampa River Walk	http://www.thetampariverwalk.com/

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With any method of remote voting, including traditional mail-in ballots, the possibility of votes being forced or bought is a concern. Estonia's solution was to allow voters to log on and vote as many times as they want during the pre-voting period. Since each vote cancels the last, a voter always has the option of changing his or her vote later.

In 2005, Estonia became the first country in the world to hold nation-wide elections using this method, and in 2007, it made headlines as the first country to use i-voting in parliamentary elections.

The cumulative time savings in the Estonian parliamentary elections of 2011 were 11,000 working days, which would amount to around 504,000 euros in average wages.

e-Residency – By 2015 Estonia is planning to issue e-ID cards to non-resident 'satellite Estonians', thereby creating a global, government-standard digital identity. Applicants pay a small fee, 50 euros or about $55 at this writing, and provide the same biometric data and documents as Estonian residents. If all is in order, a e-ID card will be issued, or its virtual equivalent on a smartphone (held on a special secure module in the SIM card). Estonia hopes to add 10 million 'satellite' Estonians over the next decade. What may help provide the necessary scale is a European Union rule soon to come into force that will require member states to accept each other's digital IDs. That means non-resident holders of Estonian IDs, wherever they are, will be able not only to send each other encrypted e-mail and to prove their identity to web-service providers who accept government-issued identities, but also to do business with governments anywhere in the EU.

e-Tax – e-Tax is the electronic tax filing system set up by the Estonian Tax and Customs Board. Since its introduction in 2000, it has drastically reduced the time spent by individuals and entrepreneurs on filing taxes. In 2002 the system matured tremendously with automated tax declaration forms. In 2013, 95 percent of tax declarations in Estonia were filed electronically. Using a secure ID, a taxpayer logs onto the system, reviews their data in pre-filled forms, makes any necessary changes, and approves the document with a digital signature. The process

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Keep Your PC Clean

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
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You're going to say, "Here's Merle again, preaching on the same ol," but keeping your computer fully functional goes further than just buying antivirus and doing backups. Here's my take on what we have to look out for.

Emails: We're getting emails – it seems constantly – with requests to straighten out your credit rating, fix an error on the mortgage, a report on someone logging into a credit card account that you don't even own. Or worse, one that you do own. Scams – all of them. Any legitimate concern – they'll NEVER send you an email. It's a scam to get you to reveal something that will harm you. They need to be deleted immediately. You'll soon be able to recognize each one because they're persistent, and you'll delete without opening. Better still, mark the email as spam, and the next time you get one from them hopefully your email client will recognize it and put it in your spam folder for later deletion.

The objective is to never open the spam email in the first place. Sometimes you have to. But first, let's make a small change to your email client. If there is a pane (a section of the email window) that automatically shows the content of the email; turn that off. If it's on – guess what: You have already opened that spam. That's not good. You want to be able to select it and hit delete without reading it. If the reading pane is showing, it's too late.

No legitimate business will ask you to click on something in an email unless you're expecting it. For instance, I buy something from Amazon, and they send me a link to get a tracking number. There's something there that I recognize: The previous transaction. But if I get something from Amazon that doesn't contain a known previous transaction, just urging me to click on a link, forget it. I may open the browser independently of the email and log into my account to check, but probably not.

Incidentally, there's a system of second level login security on some websites. One of my sons told me about it

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when he knew I was using PayPal, and he directed me where to set it up. I associated my mobile phone number to my PayPal account and checked one option. Now when I log in, I'm stopped asking for a six digit number to type in to continue. There's a "Send SMS" button to click and when I do, they immediately send a message to my mobile phone with the number to type in. You have five minutes before the number expires. I really like this. I can glance at a six digit number and remember it long enough to type it in, so I don't see that I've lost a thing. I'd like to see more of this – my banking site first comes to mind.

Finally on this subject, guess how many unopened emails you should have. If you guessed none, you're managing your mail effectively. If you have hundreds, you're not managing at all. How can you find the important emails if you have hundreds of unopened ones?

To get on the right track, sort all your current email by sender, start at the top and block delete the entire senders mail if it's not of interest. But just before that, right-click on the first one in the group and mark it as Spam. If your email doesn't have a Spam filter, it's time to change email clients.

Downloads: One very disconcerting trend on websites is the appearance of multiple "Download" buttons on a page where you expect a singe download of a product. I do have several products, some paid and some free that require new versions. I'm directed to the site and I see a confusing number of Download buttons. What is happening is that the owners of the site have sold a section of their page to a service that provides content. That content is then sold to advertisers, and I'd guess there is very little oversight of the content. In any case those things with Download buttons can't be to your benefit. Be alert, cancel this quickly if you can; if there's a file being downloaded, there's a notification on the lower left of your browser; it can be canceled if you're quick. If you don't catch it, there's a menu item to "Show in Folder", go to that file and delete. Hold Shift, hit Delete or Shift, right-click Delete. Be careful! The next thing you have to look out for are downloads of things you don't want that are attached to things you do need. When you want to update Flash, or PDF readers, and get the update, very frequently you'll see a popup that has a toolbar or something else already checked for installation. UnCheck those first. Do it slowly and make sure you understand everything that is happening.

Phone Calls from Microsoft Support: You have to believe me. Microsoft does not know what PC you have, cannot tell you have a problem, and certainly will never call you! There is no mechanism existing that can do that to benefit you. None. That the speaker is saying something in a language vaguely resembling English has to be the first clue.

Offers to "Fix" your PC: Merle's Rule Number 1 is worth repeating. No software can "Fix" your computer. It doesn't exist. If you're having problems it's because you have software installed causing it. That's Too Much Software, don't add more! First uninstall all software you don't need. You don't need anything that has the word "Toolbar" in it. You don't need "Repair My PC" software. You don't need "PC Cleanup" software and you certainly do not need someone to log into your computer remotely to repair it, even if they say they are "Microsoft Support." Even benign PC repair software stands on its ability to clean up the registry. Guess what? No one needs that. Ever. You also don't need but one antivirus software installed and running. Then look at all your browser add-ons. Anything with the word "toolbar," disable it.

Actually there is plenty of software that will fix specific problems. But first you must identify the problem in detail first. Frankly, if you have the knowledge to do that you probably wouldn't have the problem in the first place.

Last, make sure you are completely up to date on all Windows Updates. Don't just assume that it's being done automatically. Check on that first. One of the tricks malware pulls is to block or turn off automatic updates. Microsoft creates and sends you a "Malicious Software Removal Tool" on the second Tuesday of each month. Currently it detects and removes the top 264 malware. It runs automatically. The tool is a part of the Windows Update process.

There are lots of things you can do to be safe, and operate your computer with a minimum of fuss, but if you're having problems with your computer that you can't handle, get some help. This is one reason you are a mem-

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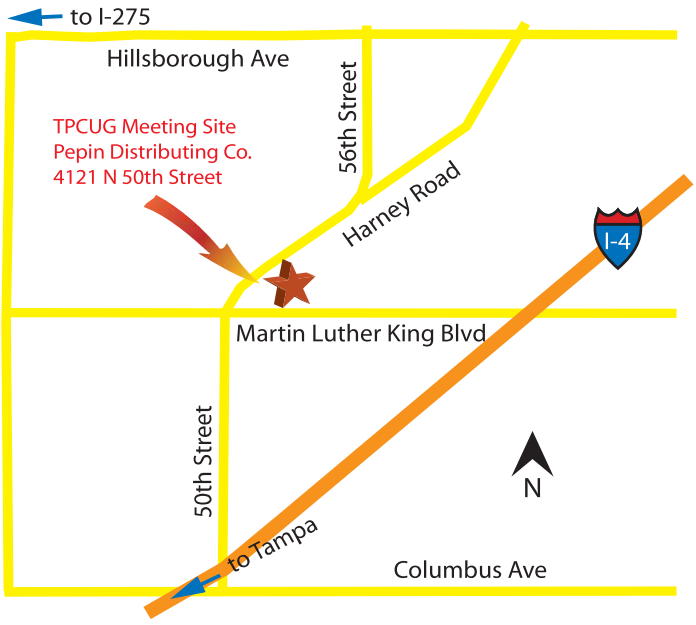
ber of a computer club. Every club has several people who are very adept at cleaning up your system when it's misbehaving. ◆

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typically takes five minutes. Refunds are paid within 48 hours.

More information

https://e-estonia.com/
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-Estonia
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/09/business/international/estonians-embrace-life-in-a-digital-world.html?_r=0 ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 28 No. 5 May 2015



May in Tampa

Meeting

Setting Up Your Business In The Cloud

by
Blain Barton from Microsoft

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft will talk on the subject of his new book: *Setting Up Your Business In The Cloud*, available at Amazon.com. There will also be the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Dave Palmer and Merle Nicholson are back joined by Ron Weinberg with articles for the newsletter, for which I am very appreciative since, as you know, I do not have time to think about articles, at the present time.

Last month I mentioned a test version of our website at http://tpcugtest.azurewebsites.net. It is what is know as a responsive site that should work well on your phone. I said that I would move that content to our site at http://www.tpcug.org. I haven't done that yet, but I have made a similar responsive version of my personal site, http://www.lamartin.com which may be viewed at http://lamartincomtest.azurewebsites.net. That, being a much larger site, required more work. And there are pages there , mostly in the Large Images/Maps section, that you will not be able to view with any phone or non-windows tablet since they depend on the browser plug-in Silverlight. ◆

June Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month in Bob's absence, Merle Nicholson was the substitute moderator. The discussion covered exporting Thunderbird mail, a demonstration of WinDirStat – a mostly file-size utility analysis of your hard drive, A discussion of SSD and (not) defragging.

This month we were very fortunate to have Andrew Sekela from the FBI White Collar Crime/Public Corruption section. Andrew is a very accomplished speaker, and he covered subjects that we're all interested in; cyber security, phone high pressure sales, phishing and "social engineering" via email and websites.

His section investigates white collar crime when the loss exceeds the threshold of $1 million. There is no minimum threshold for public official corruption. Andrew strongly advises reviewing activity reports from the three credit bureaus for unusual activity and filling a police report for any fraud loss, even small. He says that while small losses do not get investigated that your loss may fit into a larger pattern that may exceed the threshold. Also, to use the US government website http://www.ic3.gov. It's the "Internet Crime Complaint Center". "The IC3 serves as a clearinghouse and repository of cyber crime complaints from private citizens and industry. The IC3 refers complaints to law enforcement agencies for investigation and prosecution and provides analytical support for cyber crime investigations and prosecution." Looking at the site there is a lot educational materials on cyber crime and fraud to be read.

The presentation was excellent, well-prepared and fascinating. Our heartfelt thanks go to Andew Sekela for taking the time to speak to us. And to Doug for finding him! ◆

Recent Cybercrime News Highlights

By Dave Palmer, Tampa PC Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

A Clever Criminal
Back in 2014, Neil Moore, a 28 year old man awaiting trial in London's Wadsworth Prison, found a creative way to be set free. He used an illicit mobile phone to create a fake email account. Using that account, he then set up a fake web domain which closely resembled that of the court service's official web address. Moore registered the bogus website in the name of investigating officer Detective Inspector Chris Soole, giving the address and contact details for the Royal Courts of Justice. Posing as a senior court clerk, he then sent bail instructions to prison staff, who released him. Moore had previously used four different aliases to commit fraud worth £1,819,000 ($2,700.000). http://goo.gl/XoTfmy

Clear Evidence That Running in Admin Mode is a Threat
An analysis of Microsoft Patch Tuesday bulletins suggests that 97 percent of all 'critical' security vulnerabilities reported by Microsoft could have been mitigated simply by removing administrator rights. The figures are from the 2014 Microsoft Vulnerabilities Report by UK- based security firm Avecto, in which the company pulled data from every patch issued by Microsoft in 2014 - 240 in total. In 2013, the same report found that 92 percent of 147 total vulnerabilities with a critical rating could have been prevented via the same admin rights removal. The report goes on to say that user accounts with admin privileges are the primary targets for exploitation by malware, as they provide unrestricted access to a computer. http://goo.gl/vcpa8T

Energy Sector Targeted
Researchers have uncovered an ongoing espionage campaign that uses custom-developed malware to siphon confidential data out of energy companies around the world. The majority of the targets were linked to the petroleum, gas and helium industries. The United Arab Emirates was the country most targeted by the attackers, followed by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Kuwait.

Computers are initially infected through spam e-mails. The e-mails contain a malicious attachment that exploits a Microsoft Windows vulnerability. The vulnerability was patched in 2012. The malware, called Trojan.Laziok, acts as a reconnaissance tool that scours infected computers for data including machine name, installed software, RAM size, hard disk size, GPU details, CPU details, and installed antivirus software. The attackers use the acquired data to decide how to further infect the computer, using malware tailored for a specific compromised computer. http://goo.gl/lE0DX7

Did Elaborate Scheme Lead to Winning the Lottery?
Prosecutors say an Iowa man, Eddie Raymond Tipton 51, the information security director of the Multi-State Lottery Association, entered a locked computer room in 2010. They say he infected the computers with software to make sure the Random Number Generator picked his number in the December 2010 lottery. Although the room was monitored by a video camera, the cameras on that date recorded only one second per minute rather than running continuously like normal.

A little more than a month later Tipton was videotaped buying a Hot Lotto ticket that later won the $14.3 million payout. As an employee of the association, he was barred by law from buying lotto tickets or claiming lottery prizes. The winning ticket went unclaimed for almost a year. Hours before it was scheduled to expire, a company incorporated in Belize tried to claim the prize through a New York attorney. Weeks later Tipton was charged with two counts of fraud.

According to the prosecutor, the former security director "was 'obsessed' with root kits, a type of computer program that can be installed quickly, set to do just about anything, and then self-destruct without a trace." http://goo.gl/CaGU27

Dyre Wolf – a Sophisticated and Targeted Attack
The heist starts with highly targeted phishing email (called spear phishing) that attempt to trick people into

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installing a strain of malware called Dyre. Researchers say this malware was undetected by the majority of antivirus products.

Once the infected victim tries to log in to one of the hundreds of bank websites for which Dyre is programmed to monitor, a new screen will appear instead of the corporate banking site. The page will explain the site is experiencing issues and that the victim should call the number provided to get help logging in.

One of the many interesting things with this campaign is that the attackers are bold enough to use the same phone number for each website and know when victims will call and which bank to answer as. This results in successfully duping their victims into providing their organizations banking credentials.

As soon as the victim hangs up the phone, the wire transfer is complete. The money starts its journey and bounces from foreign bank to foreign bank to circumvent detection by the bank and law enforcement. One organization targeted with the campaign also experienced a DDoS. IBM assumes this was to distract it from finding the wire transfer until it was too late. http://goo.gl/cxZlsb

Elusive Botnet Takedowns

Beebone – A small but highly elusive botnet called Beebone was taken down recently. It was a bit of a feat as the underlying malware, a worm, is extremely resistant to detection. Polymorphic downloader software at the heart of this malware updated itself many times a day. Beebone also relied on a pair of programs that re-download each other, acting as an insurance policy should one of them be removed.

Identifying a unique malware 'signature' is one of the oldest and most common methods of combating malware. This method is the standard among big-name anti-virus (AV) software such as Trend Micro, Norton, etc. The malware behind Beebone tries to overcome signature-based detection by changing its form every time it moves to a new system. It can also detect sandboxes and antivirus software, block connections AV websites, disable tools that try to terminate it, leverage encryption techniques, and dynamically change control server addresses and domain names. As a result, it has remained a threat since it was first discovered almost six years ago. The worm has been responsible for infecting tens of thousands of systems, and initial estimates from the sinkhole operation suggest that the botnet is considerably larger than our original estimates (more details to follow).

The takedown was carried out by "sinkholing" the Beebone command-and-control network. Sinkholing is the process of seizing all domain names and IP addresses used to communicate and update the infected machines. The whitehats performing the takedown set up their own command channel that prevented the computers from downloading malware updates or participating in any other botnet activities. http://goo.gl/tXnaOn

Simda – A week after the Beebone takedown, law enforcement groups and private security companies around the world said they have taken down a botnet that enslaved more than 770,000 computers in 190 countries. Simda, as the botnet was known, infected an additional 128,000 new computers each month over the past half year, a testament to the stealth of the underlying backdoor Trojan and the organization of its creators. The backdoor morphed into a new, undetectable form every few hours, allowing it to stay one step ahead of many antivirus programs.

Botnet operators used a variety of methods to infect targets, including exploiting known vulnerabilities in software such as Oracle Java, Adobe Flash, and Microsoft Silverlight. The takedown involved the seizing of 14 command-and-control servers that were located in the Netherlands, US, Luxembourg, Poland, and Russia

The malware modified the HOSTS file Microsoft Windows machines use to map specific domain names to specific IP addresses. As a result, infected computers that attempted to visit addresses such as connect.facebook.net or google-analytics.com were surreptitiously diverted to servers under the control of the attackers. Often the booby-trapped HOSTS file remains even after the Simda backdoor has been removed. Secu-

Recent Society.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Kathmandu, April 27

"Damaged buildings lean to the side in Kathmandu" From CNN online at http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/25/world/gallery/nepal-earthquake/ where you may view many more photos of the destruction.

May's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
New York Architecture	http://www.nyc-architecture.com
Internet Crime Complaint Center	http://www.ic3.gov
Mobile-Friendly Test	https://www.google.co.uk/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/
Microsoft HoloLens Official Site	http://www.microsoft.com/microsoft-hololens/en-us

Recent.....Continued from page 4

rity researchers advised anyone who may have been infected to inspect their HOSTS file, which is typically located in the directory %SYSTEM32%\drivers\etc\hosts. People who want to discover if they have been infected by Simda can check this page (https://check-ip.kaspersky.com/) provided by AV provider Kaspersky Lab. The page is effective as long as a person's IP address hasn't changed from when the infection was detected.

Taking down a botnet however, does not clean the infected machines. To be fully free infected computers still must be disinfected using AV software or, better yet, by having their hard drives wiped and operating systems reinstalled.

These takedowns are just the latest internationally coordinated botnet takedowns. They are encouraging because they demonstrate the growing ability of police and private industry to launch highly coordinated operations that can sever large, international criminal operations from the Internet in a single stroke. On the other hand, the need for a steady stream of takedowns demonstrates the persistence of the botnet problem. http://goo.gl/57zMIE ◆

Verizon FIOS Router Security

By Ron Weinberg, Member-At-Large, PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Many of us who reside in the Tampa Bay area rely on Verizon as their ISP. We benefit from their fiber optic service FIOS. In most such cases, a router is supplied by Verizon to support home wired and wireless networks. The latter being essential for linking tablets, laptops, and smart phones.

TPCUG members well know the importance of Security in everyday electronic transactions. Your router is the door to all your connections and transactions. Is it secure?

I recently helped install a replacement Actiontec M1424 supplied by Verizon. The Wireless Password (WPA2), The router's controlling software (User Name: admin) and its password, are printed on the label permanently affixed to the Router. This is like leaving the key to your house in the lock.

The average customer, even if given instruction by Verizon on how to install this product, is unlikely to change these defaults. If you have an older Verizon Router you may wish to check it's settings. Bright House customers may wish to check their Routers also.

WPA2 is the highest level of security available on the Router. Verizon recommends using the default Pre-Shared key printed on the label rather than a Custom Pre-Shared key.

One might say that an intruder or hacker might have to come into your home to see these settings. Personally, I prefer to err on the side of more security, not less.

Changing the settings is simple, just log in to 192.168.1.1 through your browser. Sign in using the admin and provided password combination. The software is straightforward. ◆

Monthly Rambling

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I want to mention three things this month: the availability of inexpensive printers with full features; inexpensive laptop and computers-on-a-stick; and Google Fi.

Google Fi

First, Google Fi is a new phone carrier, in competition with Sprint, Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile. It's unique though. They don't own any infrastructure, but instead purchase coverage from Sprint and T-Mobile. In addition to cell coverage it switches to WiFi as if it were a cell whenever it can. So if you happen to be in an

Rambling.....Continued on page 7

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area with no cell coverage, head for the nearest library, or bus. It's inexpensive as a result; unlimited phone and text coverage is just $20/mo, plus data at $10 per gigabyte per month.

There are a few catches (of course), but maybe it will suit you. Personally, I come close to liking all this but not 100%. First, the phone has to have the capability to do all this and there's but one expensive phone that works; a Phablet called Nexus 6, and, yes, it's a 6 inch phone and a superb phone/tablet at that if you have big enough hands and pockets. I'm considering one myself as a replacement for my current phone and Nexus 7 2012 tablet combined. The big downside is the $650 price. Wow. It's made by my favorite Motorola. But it's made to do all the carriers and WiFi calling too if you have the right SIM card. You can get the phone right now from carriers like Verizon and from Google, Amazon and others. Google Fi will be selling this phone for $27/mo on a two year contract.

You buy into the data plan in 1GB chunks, but unlike Verizon the cost per GB is linear and unlike everyone else they credit you for unused data! Even data overages cost the same as the plan!

This is where Verizon really stinks. You don't want to go over your data plan with Verizon, the cost is 50% more. There's no real reason to do that since you can monitor your usage and buy a higher plan at any time over your Verizon app, but still, you have to monitor it; especially if you share the plan with family members as I do.

So Google Fi isn't for everyone, for sure. Right now it's by invitation only, and I haven't been invited yet. Because of my shared plan, I'm paying $63/mo each at Vz, and if I broke away I'd be paying $75/mo each for the two, plus . . . man, my head hurts. I think this would be a no-brainer if I were on an individual Vz account and my trusty Nexus 7 tablet stopped holding battery charges.

Still, it's good for all of us to have this kind of competition. Verizon needs to dump their tiered data pricing. It makes no sense at all, and is not fair to anyone. Secondly, they need to lower the monthly charge when a phone goes off contract. In Verizon's defense, they provide the best coverage and reliable service. They have also finally gotten the billing statements so they're understandable.

Inexpensive notebook computers

ASUS notebook for $179 at Staples. It's Windows 8.1 and just 11" screen, 2GB memory and 32G SSD. Looking at the Staples and Office Depot ads, it looks like small Windows 8.1 notebooks are common at $250 and less. Maybe I don't want one, but it's intriguing. I certainly don't want a Windows 8.1 computer without a touchscreen, but I see a $250 one that is. What's happening? Well one thing is that Microsoft has essentially stopped charging manufacturers for the "Windows 8 with Bing" operating system. The other thing Intel is working hard on processors that compete with the ARM processors going into tablets and phones. They are years behind in this market. They have always made something, but the new requirements are stringent. Battery life and heat are the big problems that are solved only by smaller, more efficient cpu designs. And then Intel processors mean that Windows 8.1 is possible in small devices since the price for small memory storage modules has gotten reasonable.

So this $179 notebook has some serious limitations, but it's a good alternative to a tablet and keyboard combo, mostly cheaper, and if Windows 8 without touchscreen it doesn't suit you, installing a good Linux OS is just perfect. Using Chrome and Chrome Apps will get you pretty much everything and you can add Linux programs like LibreOffice and Netflix. I like it. If I drove away with it sitting on the roof of my car, I'd only be out the $179 bucks.

Quick review – new inkjet all-in-one – HP Deskjet 2540 - $59.

I was looking for a compact inkjet for my spouse' computer in our living room. "Compact" is a tough one. I gave up when all I can find are portables costing $300-$500. Not for me. But I did find that all the makers now have small inexpensive all-in-ones (Epson's is "Small-In-One"). In this case All-In-One means

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printer/copier/scanner, not FAX, and no scanner sheet feeder. Prints on one side, but is wireless! After checking prices thoroughly, Valerie bought this HP Deskjet 2540 wireless model in a retail store, a rarity for us. Several things are surprising. It was very easy to set up from a Windows machine since they provide software for Windows and Mac and no other; via a USB cable (supplied). Then the USB cable is no longer needed. The wireless connection needs to be set up, and from there on, printing is from anything. I can print anything directly from my Android phone or tablet. Scan, too! After setting it up, our computers and phones and tablets were easy. Two Linux computers, two phones, one tablet and one more Windows 7 computer found the printer and scanner and installed drivers. It isn't compact, but it isn't big either. After all, it has a flatbed scanner lid that determines the footprint. $59, one color, not pretty. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 28 No. 6 June 2015



June in Tampa

Meeting

What Happens To Your Files When You Die

by Laurie O'Hall

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Laurie O'Hall, an attorney with the O'Hall Law Firm will tell us what happens to our online files when we die. There will also be the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Dave Palmer and Merle Nicholson are back joined by Roger Waters with articles for the newsletter, for which I am very appreciative. It means that I have to write less myself.

I don't usually mention such things in the newsletter, but since my wife, Karen, was my proofreader for all the years that I have edited the newsletter I feel it appropriate to mention that she died in the middle of May. Her cancer took a turn for the worse, and she was not able to do either the April or May newsletters. I think she had probably proofread every issue I have put out since I began in December of 1995, even doing that job while in the hospital at times. What that means is that now you most likely will find some missing or misplaced commas, some misspellings, occasional bad grammar and whatever else goes along

Comments.....Continued on page 7

July Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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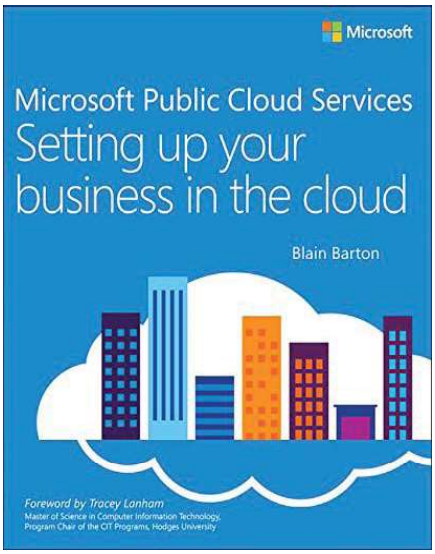
Minutes of the May Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month in Bob's absence, Merle Nicholson was the substitute moderator. The discussion covered a demo of Portable Apps – a Windows program that packages and presents a menu of important and useful Windows application, all on a USB drive.

Our guest speaker was Blain Barton. We are very fortunate that Blain is willing to do a presentation to us yearly. Blain is a Microsoft Senior Technical Evangelist who focuses on cloud technologies. He has just completed a book entitled: *Microsoft Public Cloud Services: Setting up your business in the cloud*. A Paperback will be available June 27, 2015 at Amazon.

- Blain gave us an outline of the first chapter of his book Azure platform as a service
- SaS Software as a Service
- IAAS – Infrastructure as a service, licensing and delivering
- PAAS – Platform - web apps in a ready made cloud based environment



Finally, Blain gave us a pretty quick view of Windows 10, especially the menu system which looks to be a blend of Windows 8.1 and Windows 7. ◆

Robocall Help

By Roger Waters, Tampa PC Users Group
rvwaters@hotmail.com

During several past meetings comments were made about robocalls. This discussion will be for those that still have land lines. The frequent calls at supper and later can be disruptive. Many sign up for the Do Not Call list. I signed up for both the national (https://www.donotcall.gov/) and state (https://www.fldnc.com/) do not call list. It did not seem to help. I was still getting calls.

To understand why they keep coming is to understand the predictive dialers that are used. Some of these dialers run through area codes and office codes and then dial number 0000-9999. As an example my area code is 813 and the office code is 949. The dialer will dial 813-949-0000 through 813-949-9999. As you can tell, it will eventually hit my number. These dialers can dial every area code and office code. Most of them are set to target a specific area. The dialers can tell if they get an answer so an agent can be engaged for the sale. It can also tell if they have a dead number or intercept. Suggestions I have seen to reduce robocalls include putting a SIT tone at the beginning of your voicemail. The SIT (Special Information Tone) triggers the auto dialer to think the number is disconnected. The tone can be found on many sites. You just need to Google Special Information Tone. One example can be found here:
http://home.comcast.net/~mcbrides9/sit.html. I believe that it could also be useful for cell phone calls if placed before a voicemail message.

In April 2013, the Federal Trade Commission issued a Robocall Challenge. The FTC declared two winners. I believe one system was for a hardware device for your phone. The other solution was the one I am using. Aaron Foss was awarded $25,000 for his Nomorobo. This works with Voice Over Internet Protocol lines. This would be the phone service through the cable companies. I have Verizon FIOS. As part of the phone service you can put numbers on a list to block the call. To stop some of the calls I could set up a list of numbers to block. This helped with the fake calls from Windows about my computer having issues. As you can imagine, I would be all day blocking all numbers that call. That is why I signed up for Nomorobo. It stops most of the calls.

Nomorobo uses a service called "simultaneous ring" that is provided by most VoIP phone companies. This feature allows customers to have numerous phone lines ring at the same time. When a call comes in it also rings a number Nomorobo provides. The company uses caller ID and call frequency information to screen calls. When Nomorobo decides a call is a robocall, it hangs up after the first ring. That's how you know a call was blocked. You don't need to have caller ID on your phone for this to work and Nomorobo promises the information they collect is anonymous to protect subscribers' privacy. There are currently millions of phone numbers in the company's database of blacklisted phone numbers. These known robocallers come from complaints filed with state and federal regulators. The system isn't perfect. Robocalls do slip through. Nomorobo encourages users to report robocall numbers that are not in their database. It will not block schools, political campaigns or any emergency numbers. It works well for us. Since all calls are checked, you may not want to use the service. Their system will know all of your incoming calls. I don't worry about the privacy issues using the service. I just enjoy not having sales calls. If you are interested in using Nomorobo here is the link for them http://www.nomorobo.com The site has a video explaining the service and how to sign up. ◆



Creating a Windows Standard Account

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Last month, Dave Palmer wrote an article "Recent Cybercrime News Highlights" in the May 2015 newsletter on page 3. One part stood out for me, and I'm reprinting it here:

> **Clear Evidence That Running in Admin Mode is a Threat** An analysis of Microsoft Patch Tuesday bulletins suggests that 97 percent of all 'critical' security vulnerabilities reported by Microsoft could have been mitigated simply by removing administrator rights. The figures are from the 2014 Microsoft Vulnerabilities
>
> Report by UK- based security firm Avecto, in which the company pulled data from every patch issued by Microsoft in 2014 - 240 in total. In 2013, the same report found that 92 percent of 147 total vulnerabilities with a critical rating could have been prevented via the same admin rights removal. The report goes on to say that user accounts with admin privileges are the primary targets for exploitation by malware, as they provide unrestricted access to a computer. http://goo.gl/vcpa8T

The solution is to create a standard user account for your normal everyday use and reserve the use of an Administrative account for the times you need to install software. The problem is that you don't want to disrupt your or your family's own use of your computer. That is solved by creating a user account with administrative rights and then change your existing account to standard. That way you won't have to rebuild the new account by copying documents and files. It's all here in a TPCUG newsletter article *Create a Standard Account*" in the October 2014 newsletter on page 3 at our website.◆

What is an Exploit Kit?

By Dave Palmer, Tampa P C Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

You may have heard the term 'exploit kit.' Maybe not. The term has become more prominent over the last decade as Internet crime has become more sophisticated. A few definitions will be helpful in explaining what an exploit kit is and how it's used.

A vulnerability is a weakness in a system that can be directly used by a hacker to gain access to a browser, a router, a system or a network. Vulnerabilities can result from mistakes in software, weak passwords or infected software. The vulnerabilities mentioned here are the software variety and require updates, patches, or fixes in order to prevent compromise by hackers or malware.

A zero-day vulnerability is a newly discovered vulnerability. It is completely unknown to the security community. It has not been recognized, analyzed or patched. Signature-based anti-virus software will not recognize it and cannot defend against it.

To take advantage of a specific vulnerability, hackers create software, called an exploit, specifically designed to take advantage it.

An exploit kit is a malicious software toolkit that automates the exploitation of browser and computer vulnerabilities for the purpose of spreading malware. I'm beginning to believe that 'tookit' is too soft a term. 'Attack platform' is more accurate. The goal of an exploit kit is to automate the infection of computers or other systems.

Exploit kit basics
The earliest exploit kit was developed in Russia and was first seen in mid-2006. It was called WebAttacker, and it sold for $20 US and included tech support. Researchers and security analysts are currently tracking over 70 exploit kits around the world. Together they

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Internet Picture of the Month



Microsoft Band

The photo I used came from the German site http://www.stern.de/digital/smarthome/microsoft-band-ausverkauft-darum-wollen-alle-das-windows-wearable-2150052.html. However, you can find all about the Band in English at http://www.microsoft.com/Microsoft-Band/en-us.

June's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Microsoft Windows 10	http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/Default.aspx
Explore.org	http://explore.org/live-cams/
Dan Heller's Stock Photography	http://www.danheller.com/
David Stockman's Contra Corner	http://davidstockmanscontracorner.com/

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take advantage of more than 100 different vulnerabilities. While they can, and sometimes do take advantage of zero-day vulnerabilities, the vast majority of the time they attack vulnerabilities that have already been patched. Those computer users who are slow to patch their systems are therefore at highest risk.

Advantages of Exploit Kits

Easy to use - Exploit kits are designed from the beginning to be easy to use. Their target market includes criminals with only low-level tech skills. They also provide a console or dashboard to help attackers track the performance of the infection campaign and provide information about the victims system. Did I mention tech support is included?

Flexible – Most exploit kits probe for multiple vulnerabilities. Their initial payload can include multiple exploits, or they may download exploits to match the victim's vulnerabilities. Customers can often customize specific features to fit their business model such as ransomware, bank heists, botnet building, etc.

Evasive – Some exploit kits can probe for anti-virus programs and virtual machines. If found, these exploit kits may stop themselves from running to avoid being found and analyzed. Some exploit kits don't write their payload to disk but run directly in the memory instead to prevent detection by anti-virus programs. They are called 'fileless infections.' Exploit kits also use a number of other evasive techniques.

Continuously updated – Subscribers are continuously updated with the latest exploits against such software as Java, Adobe Flash Player, Adobe Reader, Microsoft Data Access Components (MDAC), and other programs and browser plug-ins.

Good Communications – Once an exploit kit is discovered and analyzed, authorities and security firms can usually block communication URLs (web addresses) within 24-48 hours. To counter this, authors of some exploit kits provide fresh communication URLs every hour plus an automated process to update the URL to stay one step ahead.

How an exploit attack works

The hacker builds one or more websites that contain a 'landing page' and adds an exploit kit. To drive traffic to the exploit kit, the hacker has many options:

- Email spam - Spam campaigns using content such as warnings from the IRS, banks, and even police seem to work well. Fake alerts from legitimate companies that contain poisoned links are also popular. Unlike traditional phishing spam, the victim of these spam campaigns isn't taken to a look-alike site and asked for credentials. Instead they are directed towards a landing page that hosts an exploit kit.
- Purchased traffic – Underground markets have 'traffic providers' where traffic can be bought and sold.
- Compromised websites – When hackers compromise a website it's trivial to add a redirect. To slow down security analysts and authorities hackers typically add multiple redirects that change frequently.
- Malvertising – Malicious advertising is a relatively new and rapidly growing tool hackers have added to their arsenal. Hackers create fake companies and legitimate looking ads on existing online advertising systems to redirect victims toward exploit kits.

Just prior to connecting to the exploit kit, potential victims are screened by automated traffic direction systems (TDS). Hackers can filter out unwanted IP addresses (like security companies) or target specific countries or companies.

Once a potential victim encounters the poisoned landing page, the kit quickly (in fractions of a second) analyzes the browser and its components to see what's out of date. If there is a usable vulnerability, the correct exploit is loaded and executed. The hacker is then notified which exploit was used as well as the victim's country, operating system, browser and which piece of software on the victim's computer was exploited.

As a result, and without your knowledge, the hacker now owns your computer. Additional malware will

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Exploit Kit.....Continued from page 6

added to prepare it to become a vehicle for further crime. Just as smart street criminals don't use their own vehicles for street crimes, cybercriminals don't use their own computers for Internet crime. They will either use it to commit crimes or rent it out to other criminals as part of a botnet.

Exploit kits facilitate the addition of most other types of malware such as backdoors, droppers, banking Trojans, spyware, ransomware, botnet malware, scareware, keyloggers, rootkits, viruses, worms, adware, remote access tools, and ad fraud malware.

Earlier I mentioned that exploit kits could and probably should be considered attack platforms. A comparison could be made between exploit kits and unmanned military drones. Both carry sensors. Both carry weapons. Both can be programmed to operate with little or no human oversight. Both can be assigned a variety of missions.

Exploit kits are commercial products developed by teams of specialists. A recent example is the Blackhole exploit kit developed by Dmitry Fedotov (aka Paunch) and his team. Blackhole was one of the most notorious exploit kits of the last decade. Popular and quite profitable, it was first offered in 2010 and lasted through the arrest of the Paunch and 12 others in late 2013.

The Blackhole product itself and the service and management of the business was quite sophisticated and business-savvy. The scripts that made the software work were protected by a commercial coder to prevent other criminals from lifting & reusing the code. Blackhole was reported to have had thousands of customers and making $50,000 a month. Paunch was the first to use a 'rental' business model for exploit kits. Other licensing agreements were also available, all of which included tech support.

How to protect yourself

The standard excellent advice you've heard dozens of times before still applies. Run in Standard User Mode, NOT Administrative Mode. Stay patched & updated. Don't click on links in e-mail. And I'll add one item not typically mentioned: Configure your browser(s) to deny redirects without permission.

More information

http://krebsonsecurity.com/2013/12/who-is-paunch/

https://www.trendmicro.com/cloud-content/us/pdfs/security-intelligence/white-papers/wp-evolution-of-exploit-kits.pdf

https://blog.malwarebytes.org/intelligence/2013/02/tools-of-the-trade-exploit-kits/

http://www.securityweek.com/black-hole-exploit-business-savvy-cyber-gang-driving-massive-wave-fraud

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackhole_exploit_kit

◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

with not being an expert in such things entails.

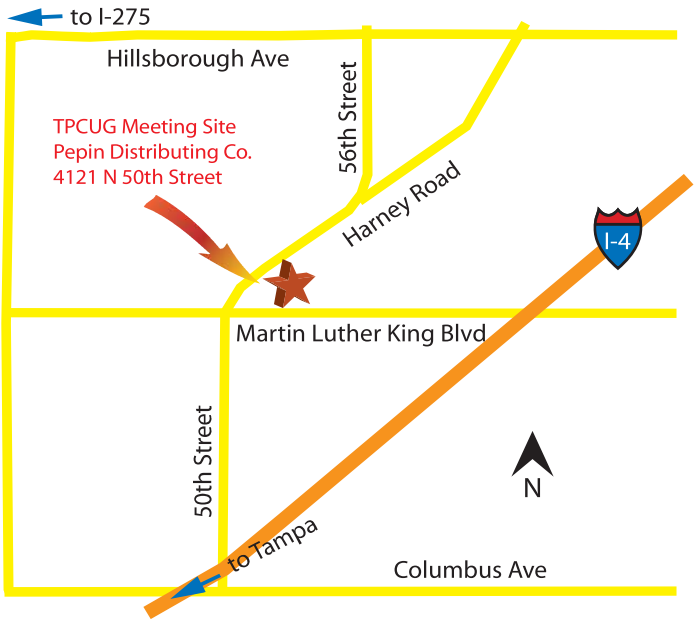
Windows 10 will be here on July 29. And if you are running Windows 7 or Windows 8.1, you are eligible for a free upgrade. The Windows 8.0 people are eligible too, but, I believe, they have to first upgrade from 8.0 to 8.1. If you are running Win 7 or 8.1, you should now see a small new icon in your system tray that looks like a window. Clicking on that will begin the process of reserving a free copy for you when the upgrade dat arrives.

A friend asked me to work with him on apps for the Microsoft Band. But, I don't have a Band, I said. I don't need to know how many steps I have taken today. Yes but it does much more and will do more in the future. So I went to the Microsoft Store at International Mall and purchased one. And it does do a good bit more than I thought. The most interesting thing is the report on my sleep last evening: I had 2 hours 43 minutes of restful sleep and 3 hours 53 minutes of light sleep and woke up five times, etc. There is a lot more, but let's save that for the next newsletter. I have only had the item for 24 hours. ◆

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Vol. 28 No. 7 July 2015



July in Tampa

Meeting

Identity Theft and Skimmers

by Dave Palmer

Wednesday, July 8, 2015

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Dave Palmer will further educate us about all the bad things out there that the bad actors would like to impose on us. There will also be the usual Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com



Last month, I mentioned that a friend asked me to purchase a Microsoft Band so that I could work with him on writing phone apps for it. I did that and have been working on such an app. For now let's ignore my app and see what the Microsoft Health app provides.

Of the many reports that it gives, I find the Sleep Report displayed on the right the

Comments.....Continued on page 6

August Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month in Bob's absence Merle Nicholson was the substitute moderator. The session was a discussion of Ninite.com's Ninite program installation/updater, where you can select Windows programs that packages important and useful Windows applications for installation on your computer. This is in contrast to a trend of otherwise clean downloading websites allowing advertisements for downloads for malicious and/or unwanted software. A discussion of that problem ensued with dire warnings to check the download source before installing anything.

Our guest speaker was Laurie O'Hall, a Board Certified Elder Law Attorney, with the subject of "What Happens to your files when you die." Obviously she is an advocate of elder estate planning and addressed the questions "What is a will?", "What is Probate?", "Durable Power of Attorney," "Health Care Surrogate," "Living Will," "Living Trust," and "Asset Protection planning." She also covered the law on digital assets and offered advice on the value and the circumstances where you may want to control the disposition of the assets.

Our thanks go to Laurie O'Hall for her excellent and well prepared presentation. ◆

ISO Disk Image Is Your Friend

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Yes, it is. ISO images solve some problems for you that you may not have known you had. I'm here to explain. But to make an early point, it has mostly to do with your new slim notebook or Chromebook that has no optical drive. It's slim and lightweight for a reason. No CD, DVD or Blu-ray drives. Things still come on these CD/DVD, so how do we adapt? There are a couple of ways.

Microsoft has said (maybe unconfirmed at this point) that Windows 10 installation distribution will be available on a flashdrive. It's not unprecedented; Linux OS distributions have been available on flashdrives for years now. There are utility programs available (even in Windows!) that prepare flashdrives for Linux installations. One difference is that the OS can run completely on the flashdrive without writing anything to the system drive. To me, an SD card would make more sense because systems having no optical drive always have some kind of card slot for cards. Flashdrives can be somewhat faster, especially if they are designed for USB3.

You can buy other operating systems on flashdrive (all Linux of course) like for the Raspberry PI. Most software now comes as a download. I've bought Microsoft Office software and Intuit Turbotax from Amazon, Acronis from UGR.com, and Street Atlas from Delorme all as downloads. I can't remember the last time I purchased software on DVD. Despite this, downloading software has become more difficult because of the failure of reputable sites to keep the sites safe.

An ISO image is an archive file of an optical disk, a type of disk image composed of the data contents from every written sector of an optical disk, including the optical disk file system. On the hard drive of your computer, it usually has an extension of .iso, but sometimes .img is used. The name is taken from the ISO 9660 file system (one of many ISO standards) that is used on optical drives. ISO is the International Organization for Standardization.

We're used to software installation distributions coming to us as an .exe, but we're increasingly seeing .iso and .img. What do we do with a file with an .iso extension? Two things: 1) burn it to optical disk then put it back in and use it as a real DVD; and 2) Mount it as a logical drive on your computer and then just pretend it's a real CD/DVD/Blu-ray drive and run whatever's on it. For your no-optical-drive-notebook, you can buy or borrow an external USB optical drive – that's for option 1.

For option 2, it's easier than you may think. For Windows 7, you get a nice piece of free software called Daemon tools Lite from http://www.daemon-tools.cc/home and install it permanently on your system. Configure it so that it creates a virtual DVD/Blu-ray drive on bootup. Then you just either double-click on an .iso file or right-click and select Open. If the drive has an autostart, Windows will ask to run it. To remove the iso, just go to that drive in Computer, right-click and select eject. It works identically to having a real optical drive.

For Windows 8, 8.1, and (presumably) Windows 10, and Linux operating systems, it's built in. Just right-click and select "mount."

BUT Wait! There's More! What if you want to do more? Let's put your favorite CD music albums online. Instead of "ripping" music to the mercy of player software, just make your own ISO file from the CD or DVD. My spouse's daily exercise DVD is a good example. We have Windows Media Center playing to the big screen that plays DVDs. Inserting the (expensive!) DVD in daily and running it that often; it will certainly eventually fail from handling, so let's make our own .iso, put it on that system that has 3 or 4 TB, and it won't even be noticed hidden in 10 hours a day of Wimbledon Tennis recordings. We have a computer and a brand new workout DVD, how do we get it there? Free software of course. Here's ImgBurn in the screen capture at the top of page 4.

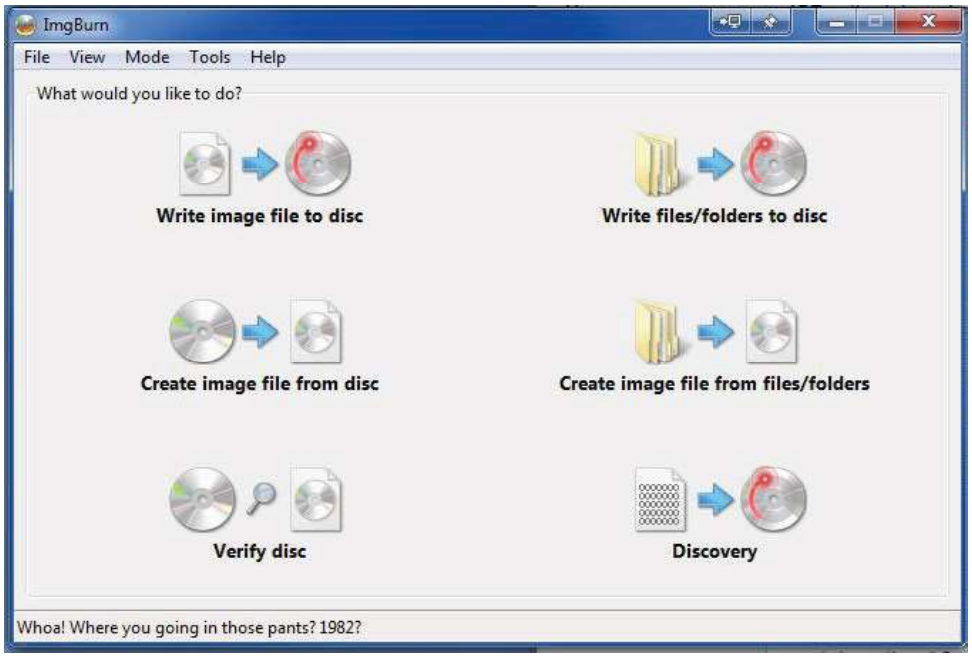
ISO.....Continued on page 4

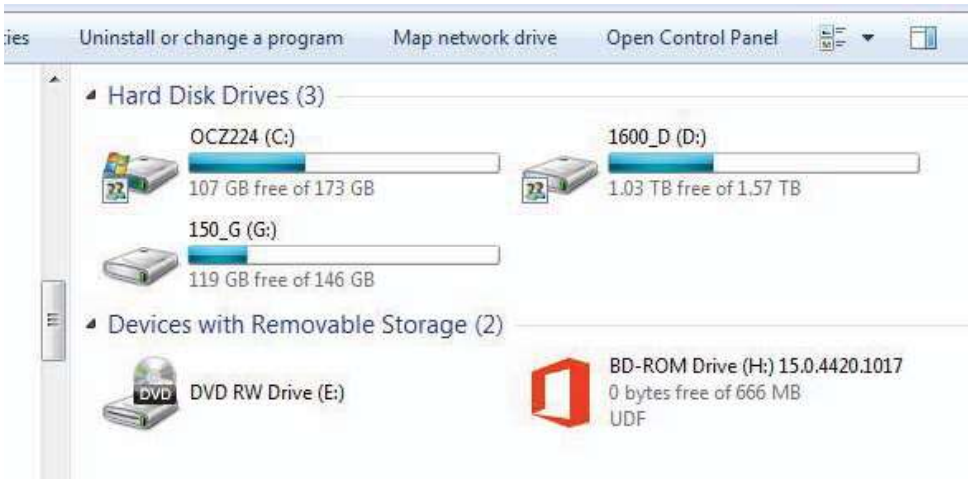
ISO.....Continued from page 3

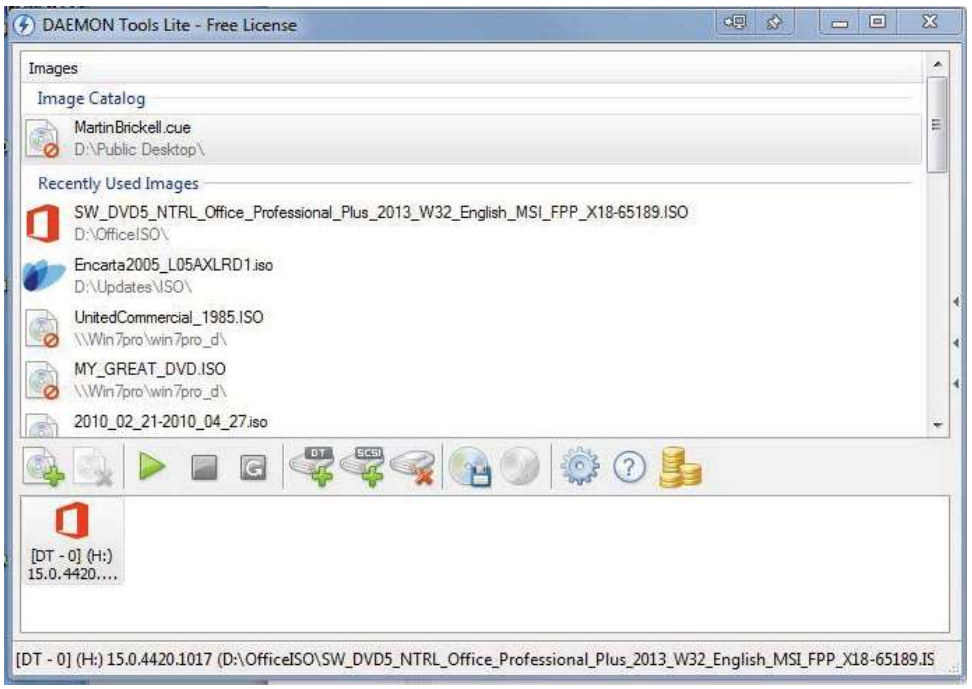
The website is http://www.img-burn.com/, but I wouldn't get it from them. It's another risky website. Instead get it from ninite.com at https://ninite.com/ Too bad ninite doesn't have Daemon Tools Lite, too.

Select "Create Image file from disc" and insert the DVD, let ImgBurn find it, then select the installation path and name. When it's done, it plays a happy little tune to let you know. Then just mount the .iso in a virtual optical drive, and you have the video on line all the time.

In Daemon Tools Lite, you can configure a maximum of four drives, allowing you to have four Virtual drives, and you can autoload the .iso for each on boot-up. ◆







Internet Picture of the Month



Volcano

Ash from the eruption of the Mount Sinabung volcano fills the sky over an abandoned church in Indonesia's North Sumatra province. Sutanta Aditya/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images. From http://blogs.wsj.com/photojournal/category/photos-of-the-week/ at http://www.wsj.com/

July's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Microsoft Windows 10 (will be here 7/29)	http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/Default.aspx
Mashable	http://mashable.com/
Tampa Bay Times Top 50 Restaurants	http://www.tampabay.com/specials/2015/graphics/top_restaurants/
Ninite	http://ninite.com
Daemon Tools	http://www.daemon-tools.cc/downloads

Old But Better

By Ron Weinberg, Member-At-Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
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They don't make them like they used to. My HP LaserJet 2100xi black and white Printer is 16 years old, still running perfectly, now on Windows 8.1, and has produced thousands of perfect crisp clear pages at a very low cost per page.

It has never required a repair or an adjustment. The only problem, very occasionally encountered, is an easily cleared paper jam. Long-lasting toner cartridges, yielding approximately 5000 pages, are still available online at prices well below HP's list.

Purchased in June of 1999 for $649, a time when cheap throw away inkjets were unknown, it was inherited when my company went out of business. This printer was intended for individuals and small work groups. It has 4MB of memory, a parallel port, and now obsolete infrared wireless capability. Additional memory and Postscript emulation cards were available, included in other similar 2100 models, as well as individually. It prints 10 pages per minute with a resolution of 1200x1200 dpi and projected monthly volume of up to 15,000 pages.

With the increasing disappearance of parallel ports, in July of 2009, I had the foresight to purchase a HP Jetdirect 600N J3113A Print Server which is actually an internal 10/100 Ethernet network card. It cost $22.50, well less than the original list price. This was the same card which was standard in the 2100TN network ready model. It allowed me to abandon parallel and connect as well as share it on my home network. Although my printer lacks 802.11a/b/g/n wireless connectivity, which became popular much later, I can still connect wireless devices to it via the network.

The first HP Laser Printer 2680A appeared in 1980. It was large, cumbersome, and very expensive at $108,500. Newer designs followed, and in 1984 the original desktop LaserJet Model, at $3,495, was introduced with great success. Those early models were substantial, high-quality pieces of equipment, manufactured with heavy metal cases, built for volume output and durability, mostly for business use. My LaserJet 2100, a much later model still weighed 31.7 pounds. Improvements continued and prices dropped as ever newer models became available.

Inkjets ultimately took over the consumer market because of price and color printing capability. Multifunction printers (MFP's) also called All-in Ones that print, copy, scan, and fax entered the market. Additional manufactures such as Epson, Canon, Lexmark, and many others mass produced printers and competition drove prices down.

Quality and durability declined as cheaper designs and plastics were used to reduce costs. Inkjets dropped so low as to make repairs more costly than replacement, while ink prices remained the cash cow for the makers.

Lower priced laser printers, claiming a lower cost per page than inkjets, are now competing with better laser models. Conversely, some new better inkjets are now claiming a lower cost per page than lasers. You can choose Print only or Multi-Function (MFP) models, most are wireless. Beware of advertising claims. The old adage "you get what you pay for" applies here.

Heavier, solid, durable laser printers including color capable models remain available for heavy duty or commercial use, but, as expected, are priced accordingly. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

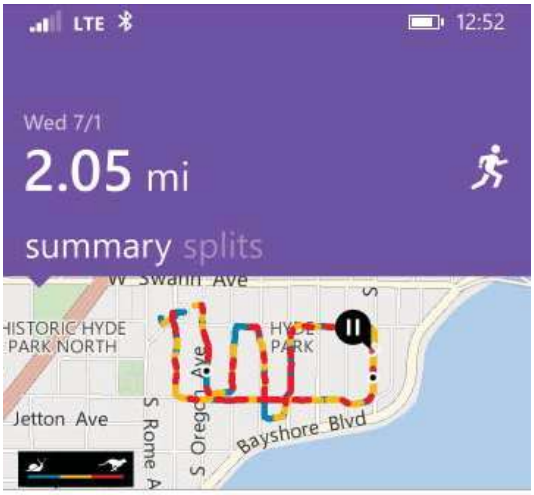
most interesting. In addition to what you see in the screen capture, if I scroll the screen down, I would also see the following items: Efficiency 87%, Duration 8h 30m, Resting HR 54, Calories Burned 626 and that my Sleep Restoration was Good. How the band knows when I am sleeping or awake is beyond me.

There are many other things the Band will monitor such as a run or walk, a bike ride, a workout and how many steps you have taken during the day; also how many calories burned.

Comments.....Continued on page 7

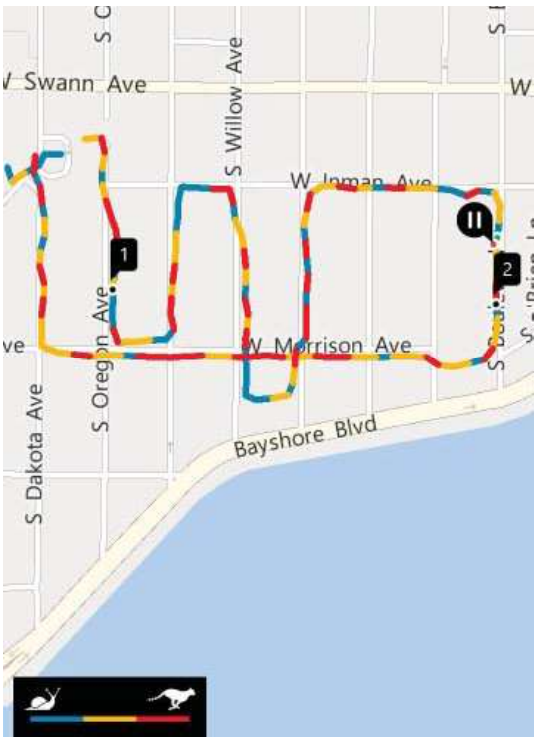
Comments.....Continued from page 6

On the right, you see the summary of a recent walk of 2.05 miles. On most of my walks, I pause to talk to people and pet cats that may appear, so this will not be the fastest walk possible.





The phone screen capture at the bottom right is just a larger version of the map in the top image. Red segments are faster and blue one are slower.



You do not need a Windows Phone to use a Microsoft Band. There is a Microsoft Health app for both the Android phone and the iPhone. ◆

Found Treasure

By Eddie Rodrigues, Tampa PC Users Group
eddie2020@gmail.com

Have you ever wondered, do I have money due to me that I need to claim? Well, the good news is that there is a web site for the State of Florida where you can look to see if there is money due to you personally or to a business that you have or once owned.

The website is at the following link:
https://www.fltreasurehunt.org/

The following statement is on the website: Currently, the Chief Financial Officer holds unclaimed property accounts valued at more than $1 billion, mostly from dormant accounts in financial institutions, insurance and utility companies, securities and trust holdings.

In addition to money and securities, unclaimed property includes tangible property such as watches, jewelry, coins, currency, stamps, historical items and other miscellaneous articles from abandoned safe deposit boxes. Unclaimed money is deposited into the state school fund, where it is used for public education. There is, however, no statute of limitations, and citizens have the right to claim their property any time at no cost.

It's important to note that claiming your "lost' property is at no cost to you. Also, be aware that you indeed need to have an undisputed claim to the property.

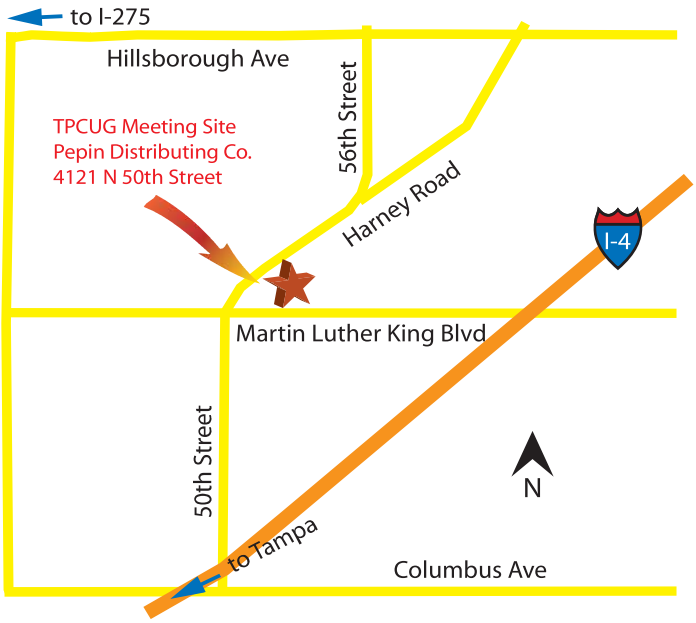
On the website, please read "Frequently Ask Questions" about your claim and identification. Also note that every state in the nation has a similar website, and you can make similar claims. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 28 No. 8 August 2015



August in Tampa

Meeting

Windows SIG
Full Meeting
by

Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, August 12, 2015

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Windows SIG for the full meeting using Windows 10. Merle Nicholson will set up an administrators account and standard account and some initial settings that should be done with any new installation. Subject to having remaining time, Merle and William LaMartin will answer any Windows 10 installation questions.

Editor's Comments – Windows 10

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Have you upgraded your computers to Windows 10? I have done that for five of the six devices I have that are eligible: A win 8.1 desktop, a Win 8.1 Surface Pro 2, a Win 7 desktop, and two Win 7 laptops. The remaining device is a Win 8.1 tablet with minimal memory. It has the small white window in the System Tray that indicates that an update is coming, so I will just wait and see what happens.

As for waiting, all my computers had the little white window in the System Tray indicating they were eligible, and on June 29, the first day of the update, two of them actually already had the folder $Windows.-BT in the C:\ directory which is an indication that something should be happening soon. So I waited, and on June 30 my Surface Pro 2 said it was ready to do the update

Comments.....Continued on page 2

September Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month in Bob's absence, Merle Nicholson was the substitute moderator.

Our guest speaker was TPUG's own Dave Palmer, giving us one of his well-prepared cyber security presentations. This month's topics were Identity Theft and Fraud, both Identity Fraud and Consumer Fraud. How a company website is targeted with an overview of the 2014 large target data breaches, and the world's largest data breaches. He showed a fascinating video on how fake credit cards are made. Finally, he told us what we can do to deter identity theft. Our thanks go to Dave for his excellent and well prepared presentation. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

when I clicked on the little white window. And I did the update. The update on it took about one hour and 12 minutes. That is pretty fast, but that computer does not have a lot of files or programs on it. That installation went fine as far as I can tell, with all my programs, files and settings preserved.

Now to wait on the update for my other computers. I particularly wanted the update on the Win 8.1 desktop, since that is where I do all my programming in Visual Studio 2013 for Win 8.1 apps. I had recently installed Visual Studio 2015 on it and was looking forwarded to working with Windows 10 Universal apps as soon as Win 10 got installed. But the little white window kept telling me that Win 10 was coming and that I would be notified when the installation was ready. I waited two days and decided to take things in hand. There is another way to do the upgrade. Simply go to the URL

Comments.....Continued on page 4

What is Yubikey

By Dave Palmer, Tampa PC Users Group
DKP205@HOTMAIL.com

As Internet threats have grown over the years, and as my understanding of them has grown, I've tried to keep pace and become more secure. About five years ago I adopted Lastpass, the password manager. Afterwards I slowly switched my all my accounts to long, randomly generated passwords. Usually extra security means less convenience. But the change to Lastpass actually made my life both easier and more secure.

Two-factor authentication.
Last year I tried two-factor authentication (2FA) for the first time. Wikipedia says 2FA "… provides identification of users by means of the combination of two different components. These components may be something that the user knows, something that the user possesses or something that is inseparable from the user. A good example from everyday life is the withdrawing of money from a cash machine. Only the correct combination of a bank card (something that the user possesses) and a PIN (personal identification number, i.e. something that the user knows) allows the transaction to be carried out."[(1)] In other words 2FA adds another layer of protection by requiring a second login step. 2FA can keep the bad guys out of my Lastpass account even if they steal my username and password through malicious software.

Lastpass supports several 2FA options, a number of which I had never heard of. I first tried Duo Security, a third-party service that can either generate one-time verification codes or send push notifications (texts) to my phone. Setting up and configuring the account turned out to a bit complicated. But eventually I got it set up and began using it. Whenever I logged in to Lastpass, Duo Security would send a code in a text message to my smart phone, which I would enter as the last login step. It turned out to be less convenient than I thought. Maybe I expected too much.

Having listened to Steve Gibson's podcasts[(2)] for many years, I knew that several years ago, he had dug deep into the security behind the Yubikey and the company behind it as well, Yubico[(3)]. He liked what he found and, like Lastpass, decided to use a Yubikey himself.

What exactly is a Yubikey?



As you can see in the accompanying photo, the Yubikey is a small thin device, smaller than most flash drives. It plugs into a computer's USB port. When I tap on the metal circle, the device generates a password and enters it into whatever text box or web form my curser is in. This password is authenticated against my account, and can be implemented by a website either in place of a text password you know or as an additional login requirement (2FA). For Yubikey to work on a website, that website must add the Yubikey code and implement the Yubikey process.

Here's how it works.
In Lastpass, I first enter my password, then Lastpass shows me a dialogue box (see photo) that needs input from the Yubikey. When I touch the metal surface the Yubikey provides the password and - I'm in. It's far easier than waiting for a text message and typing it in manually.

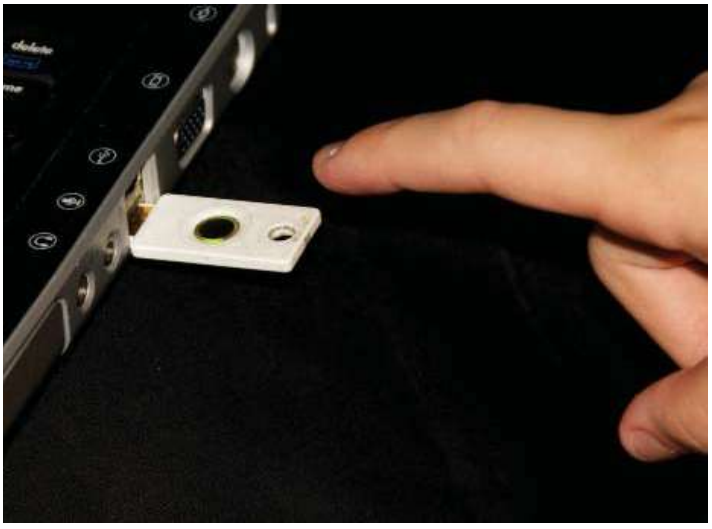


Yubikey.....Continued on page 4

Yubikey.....Continued from page 3

YubiKey does not require software installation or a battery; just plug it into a USB port, and touch the button. A Yubikey is something I have that provides security protection beyond something I know (my username/password). So, even if someone steals my username and password they can't get into my Lastpass account without my Yubikey. To use a Yubikey on Lastpass however, you do have to be a Premium User, which costs $12 per year. Speaking of costs, a Yubikey costs $25 – a one-time fee. Yubikey is also available on Amazon.

Yubico products work on Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux. Yubico currently has several versions of the Yubikey available,[4] in addition to hardware and software for business.[5] I'm using the Yubikey pictured. Yubico has complete and relatively easy instructions to set up and activate the Yubikey. Lastpass and other websites have instructions on connecting Yubikey to their websites. Yubikey works on Gmail and Google Accounts, WordPress websites and the following password managers: Keepass, Password Safe, Password Tote, pwSafe, and PassPack, and of course Lastpass.[6]



Who else is using Yubico technology?
According to the Yubico website these companies have purchased Yubico products for their employees: Google, Facebook, Salesforce, Novartis, Microsoft, and many others. There's a long list on the site.[7]

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-factor_authentication
2. https://www.grc.com/sn/sn-143.pdf - the Yubikey discussion starts on page 7.
3. https://www.yubico.com/
4. https://www.yubico.com/store/
5. https://www.yubico.com/products/
6. https://www.yubico.com/why-yubico/for-individuals/
7. https://www.yubico.com/about/reference-customers/ ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 2

http://www.microsoft.com/en-US/software-download/windows10?OCID=reserve_r_PostReserve_MediaCreationTool and follow instructions. I used this for four out of five computers I upgraded.

The process was problem free except for one computer, the small Toshiba Win 7 Home Premium laptop. Everything seemed to be going fine and almost finished. I walked away and came back to a blank screen and after a few minutes wait with no activity decided the laptop was off. I pressed the power button and the laptop booted to the message that my previous operating system was being restored. After that was done, and I was in Win 7 again, I read a message that said: "0xc1900101-0x30018 The installation failed in FIRST_BOOT phase with an error during SYSPREP operation."

I had a thought. I had let the laptop run on battery power alone since it had a full charge. Was it possible that the charge ran out just before everything was finished properly? I tried the installation again and this time received an error message which I don't recall exactly other than it did not like the Windows product key and quit at some early point in the process. A look at the product key on the label on the back of the laptop told me that the original product key for the laptop did not match what was currently in the registry. I suppose the Win 10 update had given the device a new product key. How to get around this? How about a reboot first off since I had neglected to do that after the previous failure before trying again.

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Too Much Rain

The picture this month is a bit a cheat since it is actually at one of the websites I manage, http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org, my neighborhood's website in Tampa. It is one of the photos used in the video at http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org/Videos/TooMuchRain.mp4 that demonstrates just how much rain fell in my neighborhood on August 1.

August's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Acronis 2015	http://www.ugr.com/
Hamrick Software (scanning)	http://www.hamrick.com/
Windows 10 Media Creation Tool	http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10
Customise Windows 10 Start Menu	http://www.howtogeek.com/197836/8-ways-to-customize-the-windows-10-start-menu/

Comments.....Continued from page 4

So a reboot to Win 7 and a retry at the installation. Thank goodness this is not an important computer to me. However, in somewhat of a surprise to me, everything went smoothly this time, and I had my fifth computer running Windows 10. I will wait and see if Microsoft eventually does the update to the tablet.

The moral of the above is: Try again on the Windows 10 upgrade using the link I provided if you experience problems. My sister found when she checked the little white window that Microsoft had tried three times to upgrade her Win 7 desktop only to encounter problems. I gave her the above link, she used it and got Win 10 installed successfully.

Now the question is: What do I think of Windows 10? Well, I had actually been using the Technical Preview version on a Virtual Machine at Azure for some time. And to be honest, I really didn't poke around much to see what was new and different since my main reason for working with it was to be able to use Visual Studio 2015 to modify my Windows 8 and 8.1 apps to be Windows 10 Universal apps.

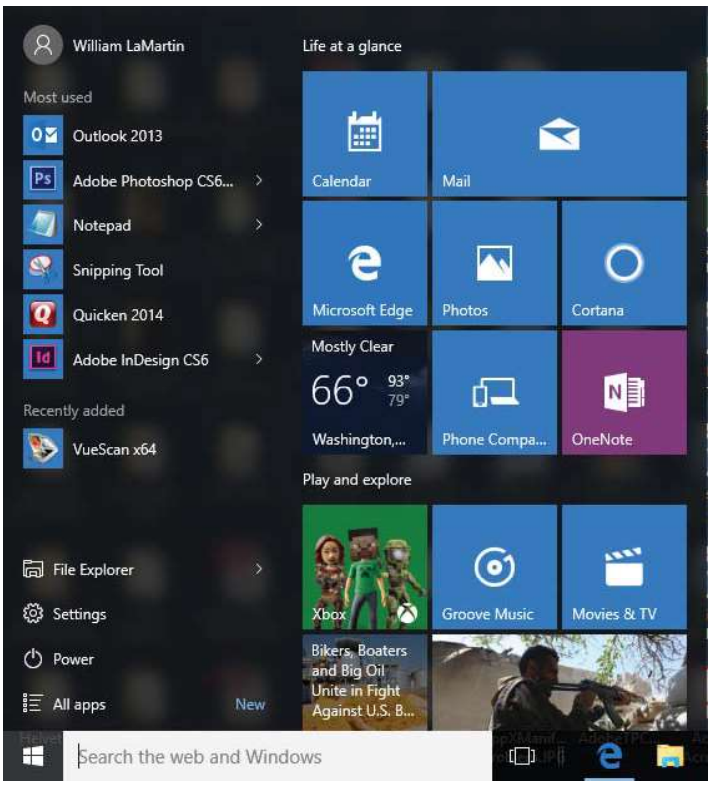
First, I should note that when I boot any of my Win 10 computers they all go to the desktop where I see my desktop with all the many icons for folders, files and shortcuts that I have put there – just as in Win 7. If I press the Windows key or click the Windows icon at the extreme lower left of the screen I am presented with what you see in the image to the right overlaid over the left side of the desktop. If I click (or tap for a touch screen) on the All Apps item, then I am presented with an alphabetical list of my applications as you seen in the top left image on page 7. Note, however, that I can only see the first part of the list of applications beginning with A. Of course I can scroll down as far as I want. However, if I tap on the A or any other letter heading, I am presented with the image at the bottom left on page 7 displaying the alphabet. If I click on any letter in that I am taken to that section of the alphabetical listing beginning with that letter. Not exactly the start menu from Win 7, but still quite functional. You may also search for an application by name simply by typing it into the search box you see at the bottom left of the first image.

Some problems that Windows 10 may present are: It will uninstall Windows Media Center if installed; Older versions of Acronis True Image are not supported, the 2012 version, for example; Your printer may need a new driver; And your scanner may need a new driver. Also, provided by Merle Nicholson: Since Microsoft no longer supports Office 2003 (no new updates), Windows 10 (and 8/8.1) will not provide any old updates if needed. There are no Windows 10 Drivers for the Ceton InfiniTV cablecard devices, USB and PCIe

I lost Acronis True Image 2012 on the upgrade of my Windows 7 desktop, and I needed to download from Epson a new Windows 10 driver for my Epson Stylus Photo 2200 wide carriage printer. That is the printer I use for all my photography work. It produces excellent prints, and I didn't want to lose it, not in the least because I have well over $100 worth of extra ink cartridges on hand. Epson had the Win 10 driver.

My Epson Perfection 3200 photo scanner was another matter. There is at this time, at least, no Windows 10 software available. And even though there is now a

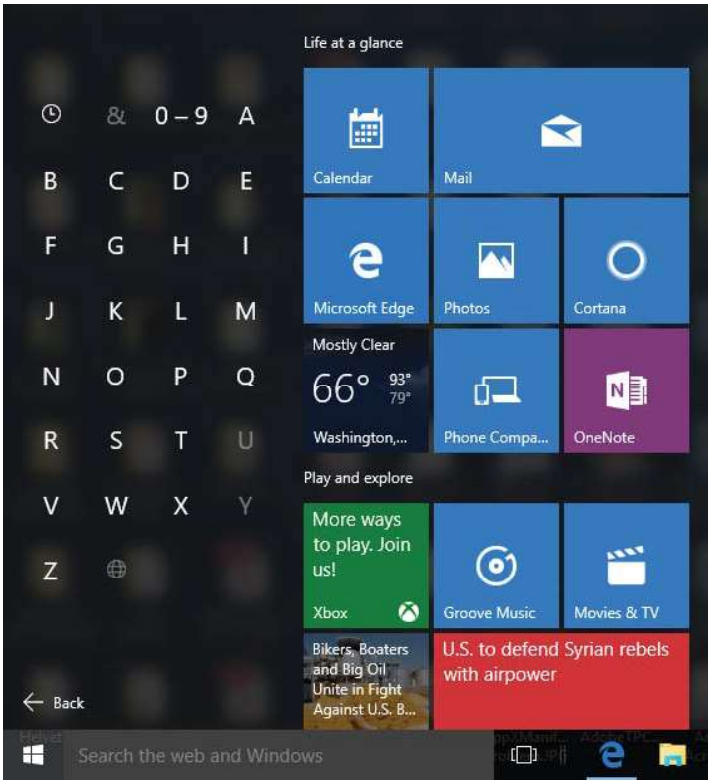
Comments.....Continued on page 7



Comments.....Continued from page 7

Windows 7 driver, as I recall when Windows 7 first came out there was no Win 7 driver either. So you see this scanner is a bit old; however, it still produces excellent results. What to do?





When I could not find a Win 7 driver when Win 7 first came out, I discovered a program named VueScan by Hamrick Software (http://www.hamrick.com/) that would work with any scanner and any operating system. Too good to be true? It is true – believe it! I still had that software on my former Win 7 desktop, and before upgrading that device to Windows 10, I found the installation for it and installed in on my recently upgraded to Win 10 Windows 8.1 desktop. The software would not work. So I went to Hamrick Software and downloaded and installed the new Window 10 version of VueScan. It worked with the scanner in Win 10. But to remove watermarking on the scans, it required a product serial number, a customer ID and a customer email. I had all these items from the old version, and after entering them into the new version, I had a fully registered and functioning new version of VueScan and a working scanner in Win 10. Now that is quality software support, not having to pay for new versions. So I had no fear of upgrading my Win 7 desktop to Win 10.

My recommendation is that if you have Windows 7 or later on your computer and don't have any printer or scanner driver problems (check this out ahead of time regarding drivers), then do the upgrade. You will have problems at first adapting to something new, but the new start menu is fairly straight forward, and you should have easy access to all your applications. Also, we will be discussing and demonstrating Windows 10 in future meetings if you want to wait and see those demonstrations before plunging ahead.

I am sure you can find on the Internet many people saying don't upgrade. A few of them may provide valid reasons concerning old applications and old hardware. But most of the naysayers really don't know what they are talking about and basically are simply Microsoft haters.

Before you upgrade to Windows 10, make sure your Windows updates are 100% current. If incompatible programs do need to be uninstalled, the upgrade will tell you. With the exception of Windows Media Center, it helps the process by uninstalling in advance any

Comments.....Continued on page 8

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Comments.....Continued from page 7

applications that are listed as incompatible.

I am sure you can now find may good tutorials that will teach you about Windows 10 before you make the leap. Here are a few.

- http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/windows-10-faq
- http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-10/getstarted-whatsnew
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2M5IhjE8HM ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 28 No. 9 September 2015

September in Tampa

Meeting

Windows 10
On Many Devices
by

William LaMartin

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Windows 10 will be displayed running on devices of various sizes: A laptop computer, a Windows 10 phone, and a credit card sized computer running windows 10 IoT, where IoT means Internet of Things. There will be the usual windows SIG preceding the presentation.

Editor's Comments – Raspberry Pi 2 and Windows 10 IoT

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

The entire newsletter is one long comment this month. It is a comment instead of an article since it started on the first page. Last month I wrote that I had installed Windows 10 on six devices: Two desktop computers, two laptops, a Surface Pro 2 and a seven-inch tablet. Now I can say that I have added one more device to the list. It is a credit card sized computer named the Raspberry Pi 2. It is simply a tiny motherboard with all the necessary items to make it a real computer. It has four USB 2 ports, and I have connected a keyboard and a mouse to two of then. It has an HDMI port, and I have attached a 23-inch monitor to that. There is port for a LAN cable, and that is how I first connected the Pi to the Internet and the Local Area Network. Finally there is an RCA port to connect a cable

Comments.....Continued on page 3

October Meeting: To be announced

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the August Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month in Bob's absence Merle Nicholson was the substitute moderator and also the presenter for the months presentation. The SIG was brief, and the topic was, of course, the new Windows 10, which brought us to the presentation, done on a Windows 10 computer.

The subject of the presentation was "Windows: Use a Standard Account for security and other good reasons." I presented all the reasons that it is a bad idea to do your daily work on an Administrative account. It means that as long as you're logged on, any malware or electronic intruder can execute and install using the authentication level of the current user. 90% of all virus infections and other malware could be prevented by simply using a standard account. A standard account user is prevented from installing software and making configuration changes and settings. The system must ask for an administrator password.

Using Windows 10, the demonstration activated the administrator user account, created a password for the account, tested the accounts, changed the original account to standard and changed the User Account Control Settings.

As was expected, there were continuous discussions surrounding the operation and appearance of Windows 10 and questions about installing it. Windows 10 final release was just a few days before, and most members had not upgraded.

All in all, we had a successful and lively presentation.

◆





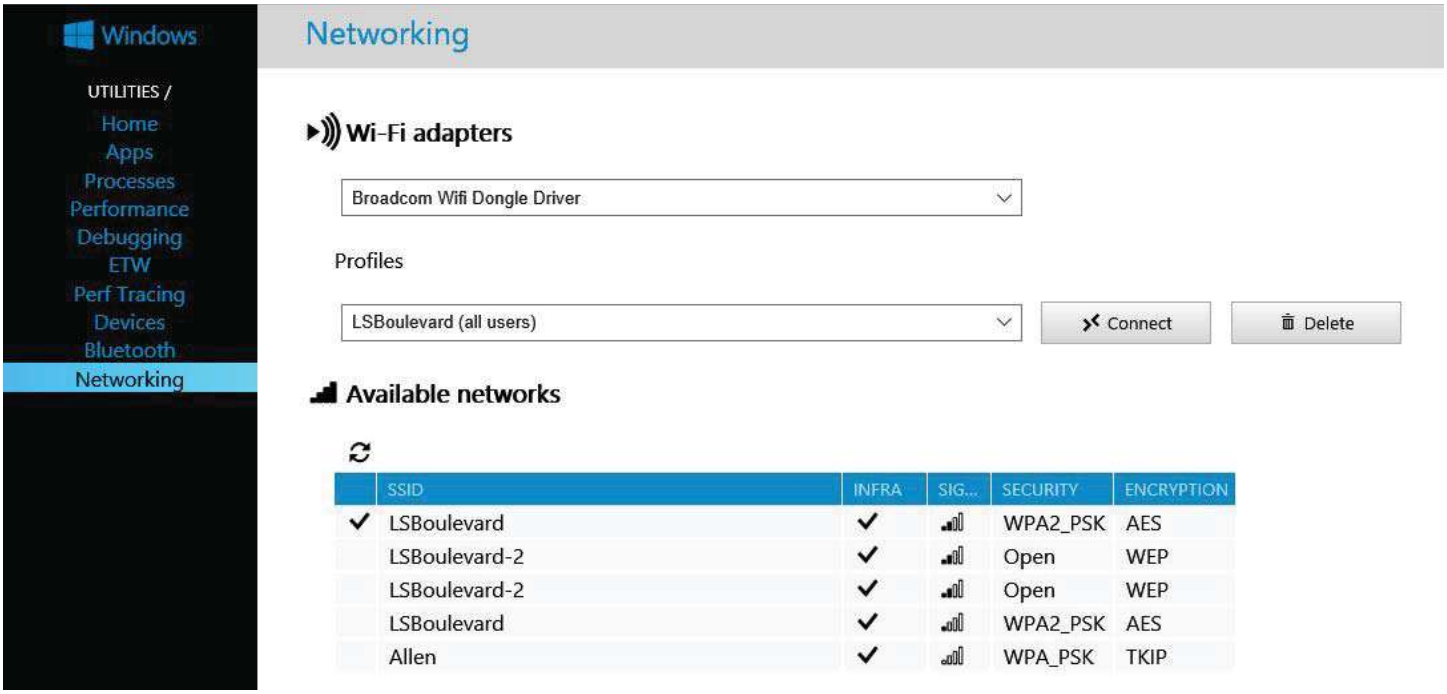
Comments.....Continued from page 1

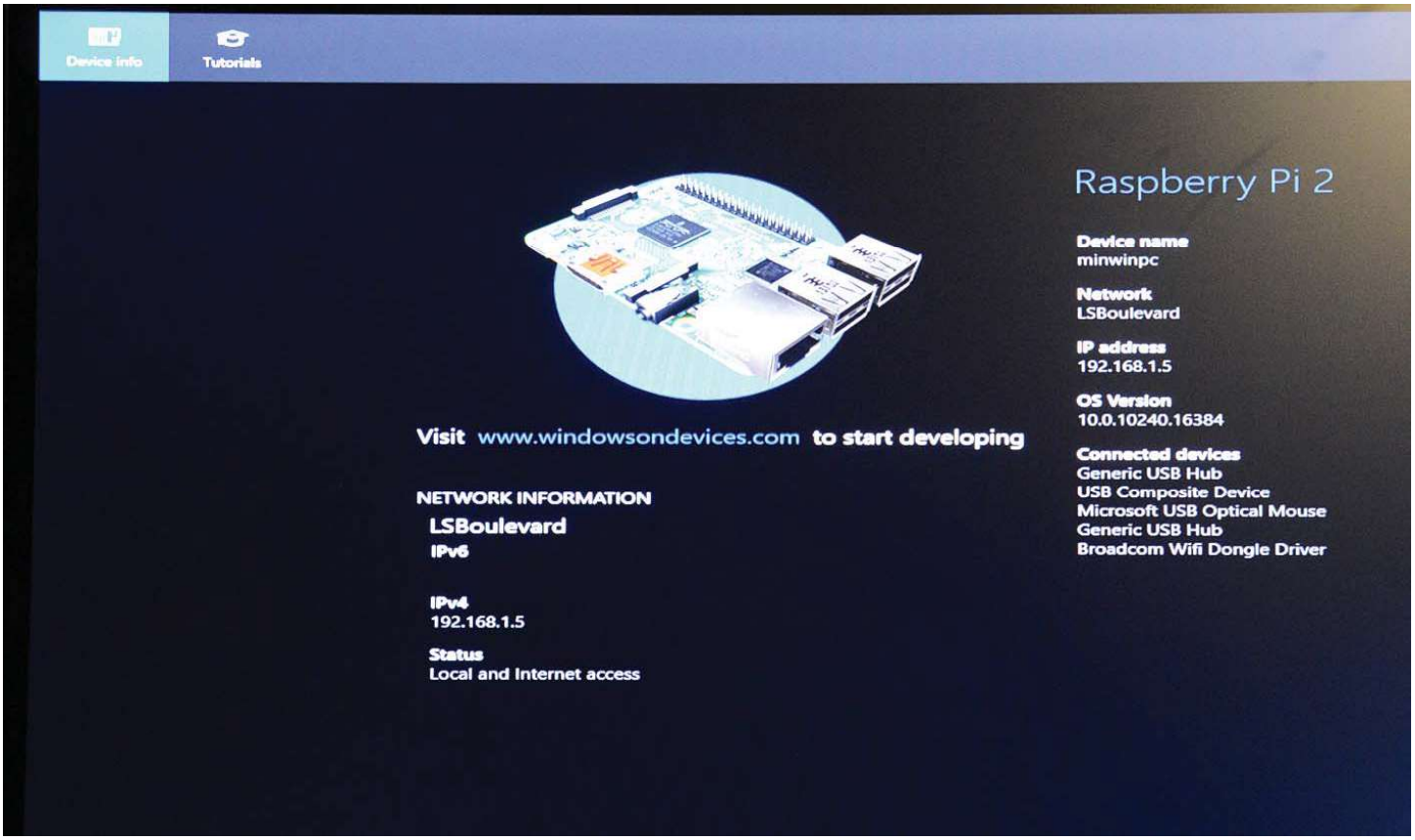
to the speakers on the monitor. The price of the Raspberry Pi 2 is around $45. A mouse and small keyboard are around $10 to $12 each. The most expensive item is the 23-inch monitor at around $130, as I recall. Of course, you could use a spare monitor you already had. To the left, there is a photo of the Pi with nothing attached. Then following that is a photo the Pi enclosed in a clear plastic case with the mouse, network cable and monitor attached. At the time I took that photo, my keyboard for the Pi had not arrived.

But before you can use the Pi you will need to give it an operating system . My choice is obviously Windows 10 IoT (Internet of Things). I won't go into how you put that on a micro SD card that you then insert into a slot in the Pi. But if you are interested you can get detailed instructions from http://www.Windowsondevices.com.

All the hardware items mentioned above were purchased through Amazon (using the link on our home page). What I

Comments.....Continued on page 4





Comments.....Continued from page 3

couldn't get from Amazon was a USB wireless dongle. Actually I could get one. In fact, I own one already. However, I have been told that the only such dongle that will work with the Raspberry Pi 2 is the official one from Raspberry Pi – if you plan on putting Windows 10 IoT on it as the operating system. Apparently there are many such wireless USB dongles that will work if you are running whatever is the appropriate version of Linux on the Pi, but only this one for the time being if you are running Win 10 on the Pi. I ordered an official such item from the only place you can purchase one, England (the home of the Raspberry Pi), and it is coming via Royal Mail. However, since it has been shipped over a week ago at the time of this writing and I have not received it, I believe the Royal Mail is a bit slow. And 30 minutes after typing that, the Royal Mail package arrived in my mail box after a nine day journey. I inserted the dongle into one of the two empty USB ports in the Pi, and the Pi immediately saw that it had some wireless networks available.

Now, you might ask how I knew the Pi had recognized the new Wifi dongle. That information was arrived at as follows: When I connect the Pi to a power source, it boots its operating system, which is Win 10 IoT. When the boot is finished, on the monitor is a screen that lists information about the Pi including the device name, OS Version, as in the image above with the exception that in the original image there was no IP address listed (this photo was taken after everything was set up). What you see above is a photo of the monitor after I have set up the wireless connection using the list of Wireless sources as shown in the photo at the bottom of page 3, where I have selected LSBoulevard and have put in the required password. I cannot explain why each of the two inhouse sources is listed twice.

I hope to demonstrate this little computer to you at the meeting, and having the wireless USB dongle should make things easier since to do some of the things I want to do requires that the Surface Pro 2 that I will be using as my computer at the meeting be on the same network as the PI. I am not sure that connecting the Pi to the LAN connection at Pepin will put it on the same network as the Guest Wireless network there that the

Comments.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Red-Eyed Tree Frog

From the site http://www.safariscience.com/safari-science-fun-fact-of-the-day-flash-coloration/.I liked this photo, but there are hundreds of other sites with such images. For example, http://animal-wildlife.blogspot.com/2011/08/tree-frog.html.

September's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Windows 10 Beginners Guide	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZqKyhfD7-E
10 Reasons why Win 10 is important	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kfq6rbgFlVA
The Raspberry Pi site	https://www.raspberrypi.org/
Capacitive Touch on the Pi	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wk76UPRAVxI
Raspberry Fruit Keyboard	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VS9qk9P21ok

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Surface Pro 2 will be connected to.

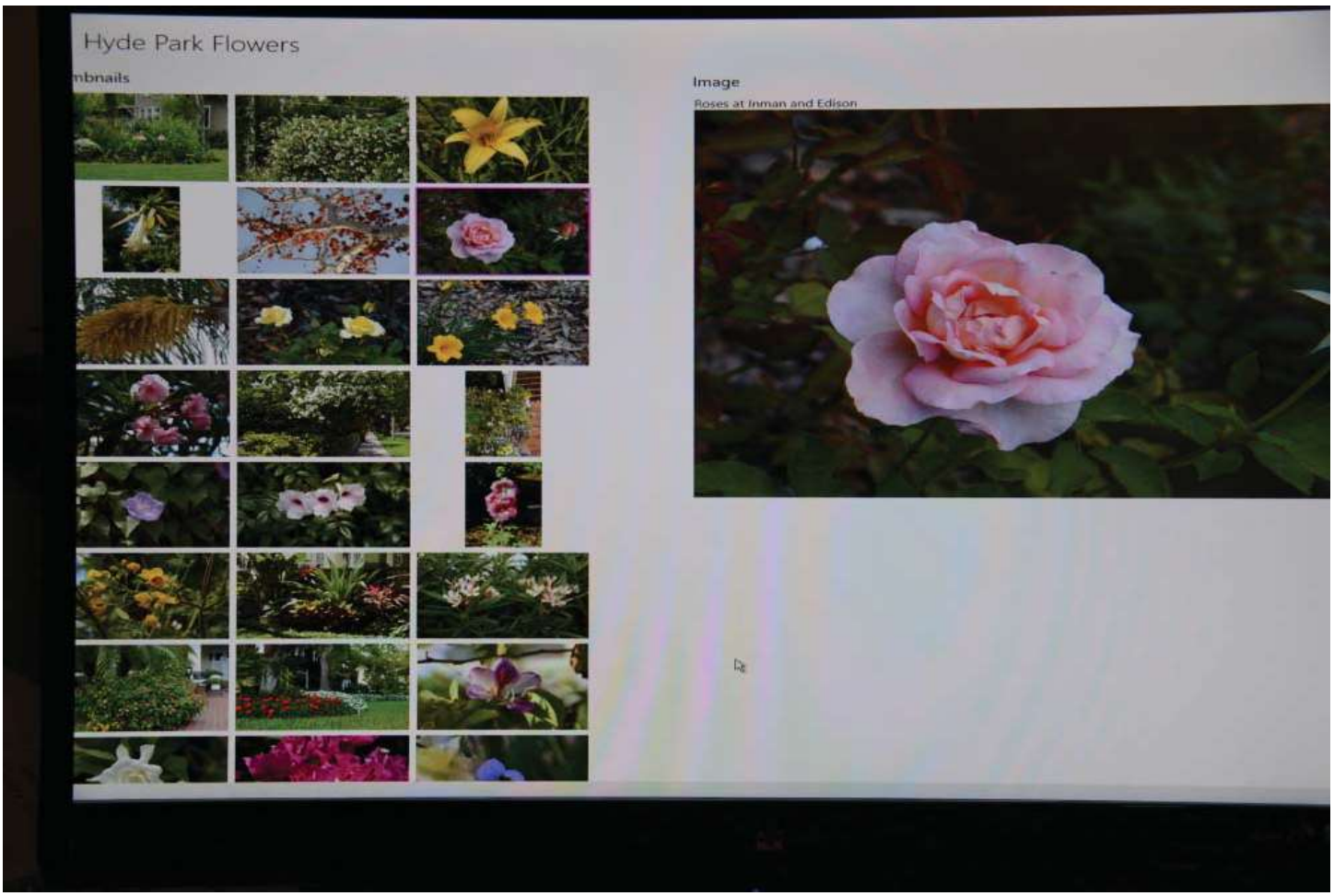
I think that the Pi is not really meant to mostly be used with a monitor. It is meant to control electronic devices by a program that you write and install on the Pi. There are all sorts of examples of such out there on the Internet. Some examples are: Opening the dead bolt on your apartment door via your cell phone, controlling a small robot, and the simplest of all – making a LED blink at various rates.

So far, not being much with electronics, I have only done two simple projects of that nature. The first is to make a LED blink at varying rates. The second uses a proximity sensor connected to the Pi to indicate when something is moved close to the sensor. Both of these apps will work without the monitor since they indicate what is happening by the use of LEDs. However, the program that controls then (written with Visual Studio) can also put output to a monitor such that the rate of the blinking LED is controlled by a slider on the monitor and we have a red dot on the screen that blinks on and off in unison with the actual blinking LED. And for the proximity sensor, we can also have our program output information to the monitor where it displays Close when something moves close to the sensor and Far when the sensor detects nothing.

So much for blinking LEDs. I am not really an electronics person. Although I am going to try to learn how to do more with sensors and the Raspberry Pi 2. To that end, I have bought quite a collection of sensors sold by SunFounder and available at Amazon. What I want to discuss last is what makes Windows 10 so special as an operating system.

If I write what is called a Windows 10 Universal app, and if I take care to consider the different screen sizes that are available in my layout part of the app, that app will run and display properly on all Windows 10

Comments.....Continued on page 7



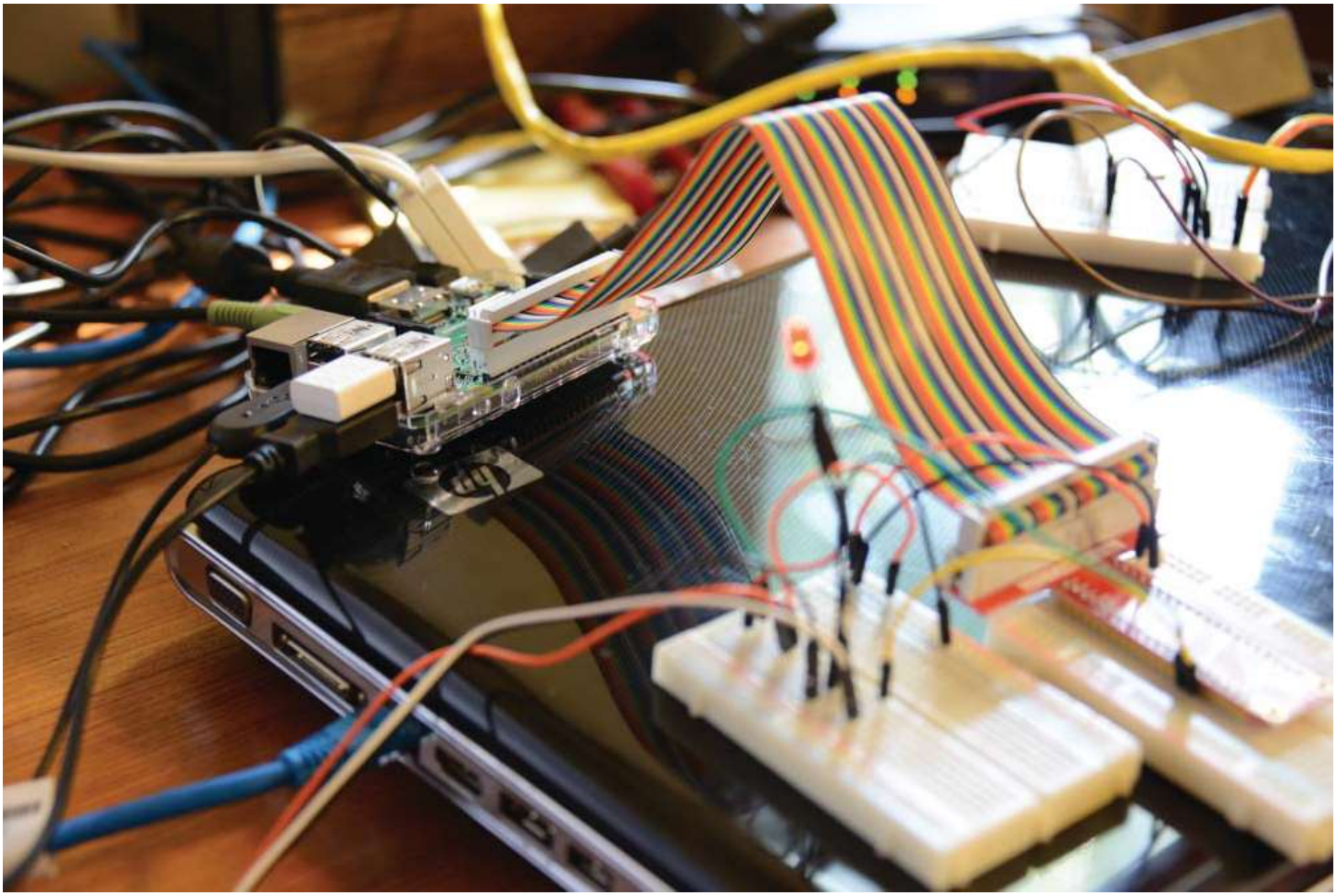
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devices: A Microsoft Surface Hub (http://www.microsoft.com/microsoft-surface-hub/en-us), a Windows 10 desktop computer, a Windows 10 laptop computer, a Windows 10 tablet, a Windows 10 phone, and – here is the surprise – a Windows 10 IoT device's monitor. And I have done it, since my Window 8 Store app Hyde Park Flowers, which I have ported to Windows 10, runs perfectly all the devices listed. The photo at the bottom of page 6 is the Hyde Park Flowers app running on a Raspberry Pi 2 and displaying on the connected monitor. Admittedly it runs a lot slower on the Pi than on any other of the devices since the Pi's processing power is much less. But it runs with only one thing missing: I cannot share a selected image via email since the Pi has no email program.

In the meeting this month, I hope to demonstrate Windows 10 running on all the above mentioned devices except the Surface Hub which is not yet available and which I will not own when it becomes available due to its high price and a desktop computer since I don't want to bring one to the meeting. But I will bring a laptop, my phone and the Raspberry Pi 2 with a monitor for it.

We can talk about Windows 10, in general, and compare our experiences with it since it has now been available for about one month. I know some of you may be holding back on installing Win 10, so perhaps this will give you a bit more information and make you more comfortable with installing and using it. My sister solved a lot of the problems she was having with her five year old Windows 7 computer by moving up to win 10. And she is nine years older than I. So you know that makes her somewhat advanced in years. As I said in last month's newsletter, the only problems you may encounter would be drivers for old scanners and printers. And I gave you the solution for scanners: View Scan by Hamrick software.

Comments.....Continued on page 8



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Comments.....Continued from page 7

To finish, the photo on page 7 lets look at a completely decked out Raspberry Pi. Everything is sitting on top my old HP laptop computer. The Pi is to the left, and you can see the empty top left USB port where a LAN cable was connected but which was disconnected when I added the wireless USB dongle that you see in the top right USB port. In the bottom two USB ports,the two black cables connect to the mouse and the keyboard. The sound connection is the green item plugged into the Pi on the far left, and beside it is the HDMI cable to the monitor.

The colorful ribbon cable contains 40 wires that connect to the 40 pins on the Pi and which then terminate in a 40 pin connection to the breadboard on the lower right corner. That bread board is then connected to another breadboard to its left and then jumpers connect it to the proximity sensor out of sight, and the blinking red LED is connected to it and is standing upright to the left of the ribbon cable.

It will all be much clearer when you see all this in person at the meeting.



To end this, here is a video of my proximity app in action: http://www.lamartin.com/Videos/RaspberryPi2AvoidanceSensor.mp4. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



October in Tampa

Vol. 28 No. 10 October 2015

Meeting

The Latest Hardware

by

Steve Singer

Wednesday, October 14, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Steve Singer will tells us about the latest in computer hardware. There will be the usual Windows SIG preceding the presentation.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Last month I wrote about in the newsletter and did a presentation at our monthly meeting on Windows 10 On Many Devices. A part of the meeting focused on my running Windows 10 programs I had written on the credit card-sized computer know as the Raspberry Pi 2. Some of the programs were standard Win 10 programs that displayed photos, etc. on the attached monitor. But a couple of the programs were meant only for the Pi and not other Windows 10 devices. They were simple programs that used sensors to make LEDs connected to the Raspberry Pi blink when the sensor detected something.

But the Raspberry Pi and Windows 10 IoT (Internet of Things) can do much more than that in the hands of programmer who is also an electrical engineer. In short, in the hands of someone much more talented than I. And I have an example for you created by one of the area's Microsoft developers. If you go to the link, https://microsoft.hackster.io/en-US/cyborg-gibson-11/ultimate-kegerator, you will see how to control all the various

Comments.....Continued on page 2

November Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Bob LaFave, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month in Bob's absence Merle Nicholson was the substitute moderator.

The subject of the presentation was Windows 10 On Many Devices, and the presenter was William LaMartin. William demonstrated Windows 10 running on his Surface Pro 2 (a laptop/tablet), a Dell Venue Pro tablet, a Windows Phone running Windows 10 and a credit card sized computer called a Raspberry Pi 2 to which he had connected a 23 inch monitor, a keyboard and a mouse. He ran a couple of the Win 10 Universal apps he had written on all of these devices.

The meeting ended with a general discussion of Windows 10. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

aspects of a four-keg beer dispenser with the Raspberry Pi 2.

There is a video there where the creator, Kevin Wolfe, describes the project, and there are photos displaying various steps in the project. If you would like to view more projects of this nature, go to https://microsoft.hackster.io/en-US. There are so many talented people out there. Page 6 of the newsletter has a screen capture of the kegerator.

New Microsoft stuff

On the heels of the recently released Windows 10, Microsoft just previewed the latest versions of their hardware products that will be available later this month or in November. The video of what is termed

Comments.....Continued on page 6

ATM Cashout Fraud
Highly Coordinated, Highly Profitable

By Dave Palmer, Tampa PC Users Group
DKP205@HOTMAIL.com

ATM fraud has been growing steadily over the past decade. There are many varieties of ATM fraud, from simply stealing a PIN and withdrawing money illegally, to reprogramming an ATM machine to spit cash out on demand, to installing skimmers to steal customer data for later use. But the type of operation called 'Unlimited Operations' by both the criminal underground and the U.S. Secret Service takes ATM fraud to a new level.

The cyber crime groups attempting these crimes combine two different types of criminals. On one side are the highly skilled masterminds and technicians. They formulate the plan and break into the bank networks using combinations of social engineering, malware and technical skill. They recruit and coordinate the other team, the street criminals, and carefully monitor the withdrawals and flow of cash. The street team consists of multiple 'cashout crews,' or cashers, those who withdraw and forward the money to the money launderers. The laundering crew purchases expensive items then liquefy them to erase any connection to the cyber crime group.

Let's look at several of these crimes in some detail.

2008 attack against RBS WorldPay - $9 million
The group used sophisticated hacking techniques to compromise the data encryption that was used by RBS WorldPay to protect customer data on payroll debit cards. Payroll debit cards are used by various companies to pay their employees. By using a payroll debit card, employees are able to withdraw their regular salaries from an ATM.

Once the encryption on the card processing system was compromised, the hacking ring raised the account limits on compromised accounts, and then provided 44 counterfeit payroll debit cards to several cashout crews.



The hackers then sought to destroy data stored on the card processing network in order to conceal their hacking activity. The cashers were allowed to keep 30 to 50 percent of the stolen funds. They then transmitted the bulk of those funds back to the ringleaders.

Within a span of 12 hours the cards were used to withdraw more than $9 million from over 2,100 ATMs in at least 280 cities worldwide, including cities in the United States, Russia, Ukraine, Estonia, Italy, Hong Kong, Japan and Canada.

Federal prosecutors in the U.S. alleged that the 2008 RBS theft was orchestrated by at least eight men from Estonia and Russia — the alleged ringleader, Sergei Tsurikov, was extradited to face charges in the United States. In October of 2014 Sergei Tšurikov was sentenced to eleven years in prison for conspiracy to commit wire fraud and computer intrusion for his involvement in an elaborate scheme.

Another key figure in that case was Viktor Pleschuk of St. Petersburg, Russia, who monitored the fraudulent ATM withdrawals remotely and in real-time using compromised systems within the payment card network. Pleschuk and Russian accomplice Eugene Anikin were arrested and charged in Russia. Prosecutors asked the court for five- and six-year sentences, but those requests were ignored. Pleschuk and Anikin agreed to plead guilty for their roles in the RBS heist in exchange for suspended sentences (probation, but no jail time!!).

ATM Fraud.....Continued on page 4



"You know, you can do this just as easily online."

ATM Fraud.....Continued from page 3

2011 attack against Fidelity National Information Services (FIS) - $13 million

In May 2011, Fidelity National Information Services (FIS) said it had incurred a loss of approximately $13 million related to unauthorized activities involving one client and 22 prepaid cards on its Sunrise, Fla. based eFunds Prepaid Solutions, which was acquired by FIS in 2007.

Jacksonville, Fla. based FIS is one of the largest information processors for the banking industry today, handling a range of services from check and credit card processing to core banking functions for more than 14,000 financial institutions in over 100 countries. Cyber thieves broke into the FIS network and targeted the Sunrise platform's "open-loop" prepaid debit cards. The balances on these prepaid cards aren't stored on the cards themselves; rather, the card numbers correspond to records in a central database, where the balances are recorded. Some prepaid cards cannot be used once their balance has been exhausted, but the prepaid cards used in this attack can be replenished by adding funds. Prepaid cards usually limit the amounts that cardholders can withdraw from a cash machine within a 24 hour period.

The crooks were able to drastically increase or eliminate the withdrawal limits for 22 prepaid cards that they had obtained. The fraudsters then cloned the prepaid cards, and distributed them to co-conspirators.

The thieves then waited until the close of business in the U.S. on Saturday, March 5, 2011, to launch their attack. Working into Sunday evening, conspirators in Greece, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom used the cloned cards to withdraw cash from dozens of ATMs. Armed with unauthorized access to FIS's card platform, the crooks were able to reload the cards remotely when the cash withdrawals brought their balances close to zero. The heist netted around $13 million in cash.

As a result FIS came under heavy scrutiny from banking industry regulators in the first quarter of 2011. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) found the company failed to enact some very basic security mechanisms. For example, the FDIC noted that FIS routinely use blank or default passwords on numerous production systems and network devices. Analysts say FIS's problems almost certainly stem from having to cobble together various networks and systems that it inherited from a long series of corporate acquisitions over the past few years.

Feb 2013 - $45 million cashout attack across 24 countries

In two precision operations that involved criminals across two dozen countries acting in close coordination and with surgical precision, thieves stole $45 million from thousands of ATM's in a matter of hours. In the first operation, hackers infiltrated the system of an unnamed Indian credit-card processing company that handles Visa and MasterCard prepaid debit cards. Such companies are attractive to cybercriminals because they are considered less secure than financial institutions, say computer security experts.

The hackers, who are not named in the indictment, then raised the withdrawal limits on prepaid MasterCard debit accounts issued by the National Bank of Ras Al-Khaimah, also known as RakBank, which is in United Arab Emirates.

With five account numbers in hand, the hackers distributed the information to individuals in 20 countries

ATM Fraud.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Microsoft Surface Book

From the site http://blogs.microsoft.com/blog/2015/10/06/microsoft-unveils-new-era-of-windows-10-devices-at-event-in-nyc/. For more information on this new, powerful and expensive laptop, go to http://www.microsoft.com/surface/en-us/devices/surface-book.

October's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Birds of Florida #1	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_birds_of_Florida
Birds of Florida #2	http://www.pbase.com/r_paul/r_pauls_birds&page=all
Computer History Museum	http://www.computerhistory.org/
Inside the Creation of the Surface Book	http://mashable.com/2015/10/07/microsoft-surface-book-inside-story/?utm_cid=hp-hh-pri#uZXQOsTH9Gq0

ATM Fraud.....Continued from page 4

who then encoded the information on magnetic-stripe cards. On Dec. 21, 2012, the cashing crews made 4,500 ATM. transactions worldwide, stealing $5 million.

In the second operation, 12 account numbers were secured for cards issued by the Bank of Muscat in Oman and raising the withdrawal limits, the cashing crews were set in motion. The crews made 36,000 transactions and withdrew about $40 million from machines in the various countries in about 10 hours. In New York City alone, the thieves responsible for ATM. withdrawals struck 2,904 machines over 10 hours starting on Feb. 19, 2013, withdrawing $2.4 million. This New York street crew however, was the first to be caught, their pictures captured as they traveled the city withdrawing money and stuffing backpacks with cash.

In May 2013, eight defendants were charged with stealing $2.8 million from New York banks in the 2 separate attacks. The indictment and criminal complaints in the case offer a glimpse into what the authorities said was one of the most sophisticated and effective cybercrime attacks ever uncovered. Prosecutors said it was one of the largest heists in New York City history. Alberto Yusi Lajud-Peña, the leader of the New York cashing crew, was later found murdered in the Dominican Republic on April 27.

In June 2015, Ercan "Segate" Findikoglu, a 33-year-old Turkish man who investigators say was the mastermind behind several of these ATM cashout crimes appeared in the U.S. court system for the first time. The investigation is ongoing.

Sources

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http://money.cnn.com/2013/05/09/technology/security/cyber-bank-heist/index.html

http://krebsonsecurity.com/2011/08/coordinated-atm-heist-nets-thieves-13m/ ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 2

the Microsoft Devices Briefing may be viewed at http://www.microsoft.com/october2015event/en-us/live-event. I found it quite interesting. Here is a list of the items discussed:

- HoloLens
- Microsoft Band
- Lumia Phones
- Surface Pro 4
- Surface Book laptop

The **HoloLens** virtual reality thing will not be available until 2016 even for developers, who have to pay $3,000 for a development kit. The other items will be available later in October or in November.

There is a new version of the **Microsoft Band** that is more aesthetically pleasing with its curved design and which also has several new health features. It is available for pre-order at $250, $50 more than the original Band, which I have and find useful for monitoring my sleep, calories burned and my walks, just some of the features it has. This should be available by the end of the month.

I am particularly interested in the new **940 and 940 XL Lumia phones** since my current Windows phone is over two years old. Unfortunately for me, at least at first, the phones will only be GMS type phones available from the Windows Store and from AT&T. I saw no mention of CDMA phones that would work on

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Comments.....Continued from page 6

the Verizon network where my account is. The same goes for Sprint customers. However, since T-Mobile is a GSM carrier, one of these phones purchased from the Microsoft Store will probably work there. At the Microsoft Store, their prices will be $549 and $649, respectively, definitely high-end phones.

The **Surface Pro 4** looks fantastic, thinner with a slightly larger screen, faster processor and up to 16 GB of RAM and one terra byte of storage. You may pre-order the Surface Pro 4 now for delivery by October 26. The base model with an Intel Cor M processor, 4 GB of RAM and 128 GB of Storage will run you $899. The top of the line Intel Cor i7 with 16 GB of RAM and 1 TB of storage will run you $2,699. Oh, and don't forget the detachable keyboard is extra at around $130. These are not cheap devices. But they are well-made and cutting-edge.

And to the big surprise, a Microsoft laptop named the **Surface Book**. It has a 13.5-inch PixelSense™ touchscreen display with (3000 x 2000) resolution. It weighs only 1.6 lbs. The base version has an Intel Core i5 processor, 8 GB of RAM and 128 GB of storage and will cost you $1,499. Not cheap because you are paying for the slim packaging and quality construction and the superb screen. The top version has an Intel i7 processor, 16 GB RAM and 512 GB of storage and will cost you $2,699. This is a very high end machine, twice as fast as the Mac Book Pro, as I recall, and intended for power users. And after seeing the screen moved to all sorts of different positions as is normal with a laptop, the surprise in the presentation came when the presenter simply detached the screen and turned the screen into a tablet, which he preferred to term clipboard mode, as you can do with the Surface Pro.

All of these devices may be viewed online at the Microsoft Store http://www.microsoftstore.com/store/msusa/en_US/home. And, I am sure they will soon have them at the Microsoft kiosk at International Plaza and then when it opens sometime in November, as I have been told, at the full Microsoft Store at International Plaza.

One of the most amazing things demonstrated was using your new Windows 10 phone as a computer via a small Display Dock pictured below connected wirelessly to a mouse and keyboard and to a monitor.



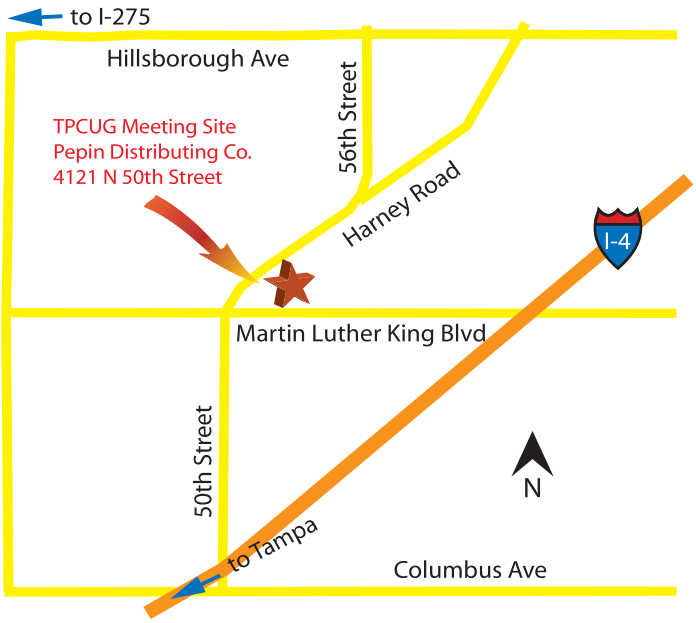
I am excited about all this new Microsoft hardware. I know it is expensive, and if you want to get a new touch enabled laptop running Windows 10 there are many options out there from other vendors that will suit almost any budget. However, I doubt any will match these new microsoft products in performance and styling. Personally I am content with my Surface Pro 2 since I do most of my work on one of my two desktop Win 10 computers. But I would really like one of those new phones. Unfortunately Microsoft and Verizon do not seem to be on the same page at the moment. ◆

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ATM Fraud.....Continued from page 6



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 28 No. 11 November 2015

November in Tampa

Meeting

Exploit Kits

by

Dave Palmer

Wednesday, November 11, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Dave Palmer will tells us about Exploit Kits, a relatively new way to deliver malware. There will be the usual Windows SIG preceding the presentation.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

This newsletter belongs to Merle with his two articles, one long and one short. It is good to not have to write anything other than this brief paragraph or two here on the front page.

The big news for me is that Microsoft is opening a full-scale store on the Second level of International Mall on November 5. As everyone knows, Apple has had a store there for several years, and all Microsoft had was a kiosk. Now it appears that Microsoft is getting serious about becoming a hardware vendor with their new laptop, the Surface Book, in addition to their Surface Pro 4. They will also have Windows computers from vendors such as Dell, Lenova and Acer on sale.

I was in Manhattan recently and saw the large presence Apple has there in retail with their flagship store at Fifth Avenue and 59th Street. But I also saw, about five blocks to the south on Fifth Avenue a five story Microsoft Store scheduled to open two days after I left. It will be interesting to see how this plays out. ◆

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

We welcomed back old member William McKenney who had been absent for several years. He suggested using Beezix cards cheat sheet and tips to learn Windows 10.

William LaMartin advised that TPCUG Newsletters are indexed and can be searched using the App "Computer Group Newsletters" available from the Windows store.

Tonight's presenter, Steve Singer, showed a selection of the latest tech products and discussed several items of interest.

According to Steve, Windows 10 has security holes for use by Microsoft which are still open at this time. Steve suggested "JV16 Power Tools," free for 60 days, to fix this and it will also do a good system cleanup.

The program "Calibre" is an excellent manager of E-Book collections.

Steve showed the latest Netis Routers which could be used with FIOS. Cat 5 wiring can be used instead of Coax. There is an Ethernet Port in the FIOS in-box.

You can eliminate your land line and connect wired phones to your Router by using Google Voice and the OBIHAI black box which Steve showed.

Charging speeds are affected by the quality of charging cables. Two apps for Android measure the speed: "Read Charging" or "Galaxy Charging Current." A number of new universal smart chargers were shown. They can handle Apple and Android phones as well as tablets.

Steve also displayed a new improved Bluetooth headset and several of the latest system boards in small format using AMD processors and featuring APU

Minutes.....Continued on page 8

Travelling With Tech

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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We just completed a 7,500 mile cross country road trip by car. We equipped ourselves to use the Internet as much as we could for the route planning, reservations and scouting for resources – food, lodging, supplies and all the necessities of a month long trip. By "we", I mean my spouse Valerie, our dog Guinness and me traveling in a recent Honda CR-V. Our farthest stop was Seattle from Tampa FL.

The technology devices we used were: 1) The car, 2) two Android smartphones, 3) an Android tablet, 4) a Windows 7 notebook, 5) a GPS tracker on Guinness' collar and 6) an Aircard/wifi router combination. Plus software and apps for all of these.

We started out with no idea of what our physical capabilities were going to be – how many miles we could manage in a day and sustain that for a month. That complicated things making it impossible to make hotel reservations more than a day in advance. That and the desire to avoid being tied down to a schedule. In the "old" days we would land in a city and start looking for a place to stay, then look for meals. That's hugely time wasting, making it necessary to depend on fast food. The further complication is Guinness and needing a dog-friendly hotel and dog-friendly places to eat, being determined to eat well and not in the car.

It took about three days to determine a daily distance goal. That number ranged from 350 miles to 450. We accomplished that with one exception – extending the distance for an additional two hours of night driving just once – and had some serious consequences.

We needed a flexible range because when you get into low-population western states, there just may not be a town with dog-friendly hotels at the distance we wanted. So we tried to use the technology at hand to make the best choices we could.

The Car – 2013 Honda CRV. How is the technology in a car a factor? We used my smartphone on a car mount with Google Navigation and voice commands. The microphone and speakers connected via Bluetooth and Honda "Hands-FreeLink". It handles phone calls hands-free while navigating. While driving, Google Nav gives you continuous distance to destination remaining and estimated arrival time of day. The car displays miles of fuel remaining and can be compared to the navigation distance from destination, making fuel stop decisions easy. It has two trip odometers and an average MPG for the current tank since filling. The Google navigation app uses voice for turns and directions through the car speakers, temporarily killing any music playing.

Smartphones. We used one of the two phones continuously for navigation, telephone and information from the Internet. In addition to Google Nav, we used Google Now, Google Maps, and voice communications ("Ok Google, distance Denver to Hays, Kansas"). I set the Nav app to the next city's hotel's exact address, just a finger poke on a Google map. Once the route was selected and saved, I could then ("Ok Google, navigate to Starbucks nearest me"), get coffees on the way out of town and return to the original navigation route while we were waiting in the drive-thru. The Nav adjusts to the current location and gives us miles remaining and estimated arrival time. I found the estimated arrival time to be extremely accurate, and we came to depend on it. It told us how much time we could afford at rest stops and breaks and puppy-walking time. We tried to arrive as close to 5:30PM as we could, and we were very successful.

The other telephone was used intermittently through the day. Valerie had an app called "rest stops" which gave us the location and minimal informations about all the interstate rest stops. It was current location-based, but needed manual input for direction (southbound lane). It gave the location in mile-markers so it was easy to do the distance math. We do not recommend the app because it was ad-supported and had really vicious ads ("Your phone is infected …"). Val would use the phone occasionally - once to cancel a reservation. It was used mainly for Internet information. ("Ok Google, distance current location to Mobile Alabama").

Data Plan. Ok, time to talk Verizon data plan. My standard plan provided 2GB/month of data, plenty for our family's three phones. We do not **ever** stream video, music or internet radio to our phones. Our intention was to use the phone data as necessary to make life easier on the road, but never use it for entertainment. This fits in with our normal lifestyle in any case.

I was certain that 2GB would be inadequate for the trip. We

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Travelling.....Continued from page 3

were to leave two days before the turnover of my account, so to avoid 2-day prorating we took off with somewhat less than 2GB with intent to raise the plan in a couple of days. With Verizon of course if you exceed the allotment, they automatically start charging overages at 1.5 times the normal data rate. Not really a disaster, but something easily avoided, since you can monitor the data usage real-time on a Verizon phone app. But surprise, I blew through nearly all the 2GB in the first two days, and we had another 28 days to go. After getting over the shock I realized that without thinking I had included the "satellite" layer on Google Nav. This is the way I normally use it, and I didn't think about it. So of course there was a constant stream of data for perhaps 10 hours. I simply turned that off. It certainly is not needed.

In my panic I upped the plan to 4GB using my phones app, and a couple of days later as I monitored the usage I was fairly confident I needed 12GB. They had just revised the rate schedule and the current cost for 12GB was $80. I raised it to 12GB and found that it did not show as increased on my account so I called them. The on-line system assumed that I was changing it for the following month instead of immediately, and they fixed that by backdating it to the time I changed it to 4GB, all fine with me. $80 seems quite a lot, but I looked at it as a one-time vacation expense. I changed it down to 3GB as we were returning to Tampa, effective the following month. The 2GB plan I was on had disappeared from their offerings, but the cost differential was minimal. I had about 3GB unused at the end of the month when we returned.

Android Tablet: A new Google Nexus 9, 32GB WiFi only. I used a couple of very valuable apps on the tablet in hotels and sometimes at rest stops. Use of the tablet grew during the trip, and the use of the notebook decreased. This Nexus tablet has a large enough screen with a very high resolution that made it a pleasure to use. The apps we used made it invaluable for the trip. The first being AAA travel. We used it exclusively to search for and book hotels. There is a complete map of the US to zoom into and out and a (difficult to use) trip route system where you can highlight your entire highway route. Then zooming in on an area of interest, we used a search criteria for hotels included pet-friendly, our #1 concern. Once we selected a city (or town) suitable for one day travel distance, then windowing on a map area, selecting hotels produces a list of all AAA-rated hotels and their location on the street map. The information gives pictures, ratings, facilities, reviews and booking details down to the type of room, a typical picture of that room, smoking or non. This data is real-time so you can book right from the app, and we did this most of the time. We did find an advantage to phoning the booking directly to discuss the dog and the resultant extra fee, and we did that in a few cases while using the information from the app.

The AAA app has the capability to transfer the hotel address and phone number directly to Google Maps. When Google Maps appears, I only had to "save" it as a favorite location. Since all the Google data is saved to my Google account, that location appeared on my phone as well. So Google Nav used in the car has the next day's destination. This reduces time for setting the days destination to just seconds, and you never have to use the keyboard.

The tablet was used for many searches for eating establishments, self-serve dog washing facilities, the Seattle bus system and ferry (both are dog friendly). The tablet was used for other Internet things such as handling my email and for the Kindle reader. It has the apps needed for the GPS dog tracker, and we even ordered an item from Amazon and tracked delivery to our son's house.

Obviously, we needed WiFi to do all this. All activity except for the Kindle needed an Internet connection.

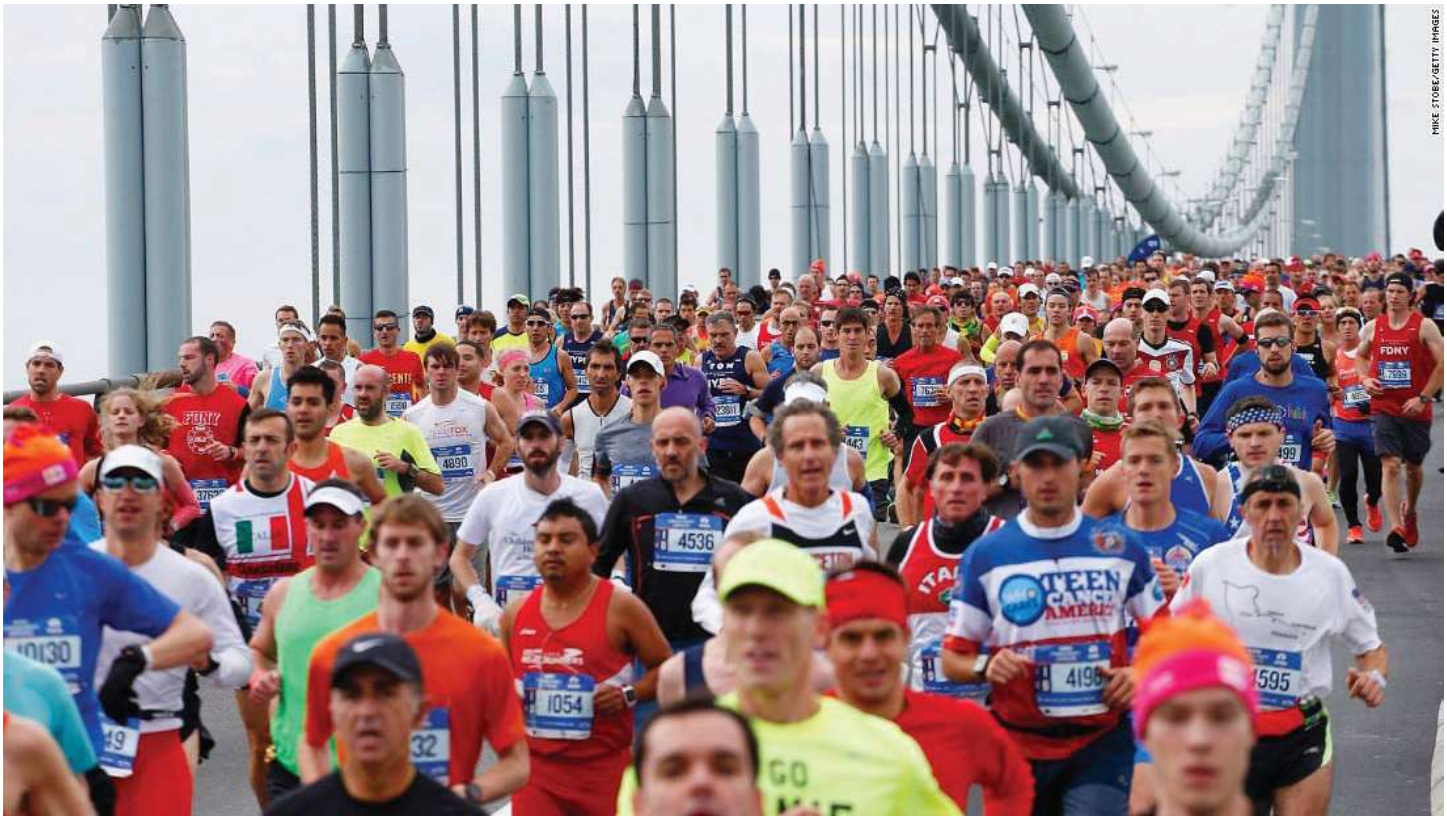
During the trip, all hotels had free WiFi access, and in Seattle, WiFi was abundant. As a rule, we never connected the tablet or PC to public WiFi, preferring our own aircard system for security. The aircard uses Verizon data, but we had planned on that as a vacation expense. More about the aircard later.

Notebook. I have a three-year old HP 14 inch Ultrabook that has served me well. It's small and fairly thin, about the size of a 13" notebook because of the very thin screen bezels. In retrospect, we could have left it home, but we did make use of it. It has Delorme Street Atlas 2015 (SA) software which we have used for real-time navigation in the past, using a small USB-attached GPS.

One of SA's real strengths, besides being completely offline, is its trip planning capability. During our planning stages we established routes out and back based on where our family lives but also to make the route as interesting as possible and sometimes routing to areas we have not seen (Western Montana, wow!). With SA you can set daily mileage or driving time goals, your expected speeds for the various types of highway, fuel capacity, miles per gallon, starting days tank level and the level that you expect to fill your tank. The software then puts symbols on the route and

Travelling.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



2015 New York City Marathon

This past Sunday, November 1, 2015, was the running of the New York City Marathon. The photo is of the runners crossing the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge near the start of the race. The photo is from http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/01/world/gallery/new-york-city-marathon-2015/index.html

November's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Free legal documents templates	http://www.formswift.com
Largest website devoted to recipes	http://www.allrecipes.com
This Old House	http://www.thisoldhouse.com
Bloomberg Business (free)	http://www.bloomberg.com

Travelling.....Continued from page 4

the routing instructions to designate overnight stops and fueling positions. This was uniquely valuable in the early stages. We were prepared to use the notebook full time for navigation in case the phone's Google Nav did not work out, but we were happy with the Google Nav capability right away.

We did use the notebook for our online banking. We paid several recurring bills as we always do when home, moved money and constantly checked our credit card accounts for current charges, making sure the charges corresponded to the receipts we accumulated. While some of this could have been done on the phone or tablet, we are most comfortable doing these with a full size computer, screen and mouse. We used the aircard for this exclusively. The notebook was never connected to a public WiFi.

Google Navigate (Google Nav): It needs to be pointed out that while Google Nav is truly excellent for point-to-point navigation over even long distances, it can't program a mid-route side stop. It isn't designed for handling multiple routes or multiple stops, something I suspect would be easy for Google to do. The current route must be interrupted, the route to the stop selected and then after that stop, restart the original route. So it was used for one day at a time; point-to-point with interruptions.

It was sometimes interesting when we didn't like the route it selected. The route is always based on the expected minimum driving time. So you may find yourself on a non-interstate road to save four minutes (or an hour) driving time over a five hour trip. This happened only a couple of times, but we were alert to that and just kept going on the interstate and let the Nav eventually adjust to our new location. It was always spot on to point out slow or stopped traffic, and in a couple of cases an estimate of the delay time and the cause (accident). It adjusted the ETA accordingly.

The destination locations failed us three times. Twice in towns in Colorado it routed us to Walmarts that had moved locations. Valerie went into an existing business to ask and found that it had moved ten years earlier. Once, in Hays Kansas (pop. 20,000) it routed us to a Starbucks that did not exist. We suspected it was there once. My advice, if you find yourself in Hays Kansas, forget your latte', but it has a truly remarkable brewery/restaurant downtown, found by an online search.

Tagg dog collar GPS attachment (now "Whistle"): The Tagg company produced an attachment for an animal collar with a battery-powered GPS receiver and cellular phone-based communications device for $80 (now $60) and $10/month. It has an Android or iPhone app that allows you to query the current location on a map (Google-based), and also a system that activates a map based report every 30 seconds in case the animal needs retrieving immediately. It has several features such as monitoring the battery, notifying you when the tracker is out of range of the base charger and also if the device gets detached from the collar.

It was the availability of this device that made it possible to have our dog travel with us. Guinness was in and out of the car many times every day in areas that we were experiencing for the first time ourselves. We simply considered it a necessary one-time travel expense. We have no intentions of keeping the service now that we're home. During our trip, another company, "Whistle", bought Tagg and issued new tracking software. Although they did provide the same basic service as Tagg their "social media" approach on their app was disturbing to us; we lost some email notifications and multiple phone SMS notifications, the basic usefulness did not change. We still recommend this product. http://www.whistle.com. The only dislike is a battery that we felt needed charging every other day.

Aircard/WiFi: We needed to take the Internet with us and provide WiFi service for the tablet and PC. With Verizon policy no longer restricting hotspot use, my current phone, a 2013 Moto X with Android OS 5.1 Lollipop has a "Tethering and Mobile Hotspot" switch in settings and a "Verizon Hotspot" app. This turns the WiFi receiver off and uses it as a WiFi receiver/transmitter using data from the cellular network. You configure it with an SSID and a WPA2 security password. There are a few disadvantages in using my phone for this; the most important is that it's a huge battery drainer. If the screen is on because you're using it for full time navigation, the battery charger will not keep up, and obviously if the battery is low to begin with you're risking use of the phone as a phone. With the right careful planning you can get around this by making sure you start the day out with a full battery charge, keep it on charge while in the car and limiting the time hotspot is actually on. The other disadvantage is that obviously you can't fiddle with turning it on and off hands-free while driving.

An alternative is to purchase a portable hotspot or USB device from Verizon and add it to your account. Currently, they offer four devices, three WiFi hotspot units and one USB receiver. The pricing is simple; $200 each, plus tax and $10/month, and the one-time activation fee for the de-

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Travelling.....Continued from page 6

vice on your account has risen to $40. So no, it's not for me when it's really a luxury item to be used because the phone hotspot is not ideal.

Spending enough time researching, I found an affordable solution. First, a USB Modem/Aircard for $50. It's a Verizon-branded 4G USB device LG VL600. After I activated it ($40!) at a Verizon store, I am able to plug it into a USB port on the PC and have 4G data networking. The Verizon guy just shook his head when I told him where I got it for 50 bucks. At the same time I bought a TP-Link 4G Wireless portable router (battery powered model) for $30. This is an amazing little device that has a USB port to attach a USB Modem, a 10/100Mbps WAN/LAN port and a micro-USB charging port with a power adapter, USB cable and an Ethernet cable. Configured for 3G/4G, I have a choice of an Ethernet connection or WiFi. It can also be used as a portable Access Point.

After setting it up, I carried it in the car (charging) and also in my day-pack when on foot or in a hotel room. It was simple to just flip the switch on and have internet service within about 30 seconds. The battery is good for just a couple of hours, but I had it on only when needed and never ran it down. On Amazon: TP-LINK TL-MR3040

A side note: Somewhere above I mentioned some night driving with consequences. We went over a deer carcass on the interstate at about 70 mph. We assume it was killed by a truck that continued on because there was no car wreckage nearby. The car seemed OK so we continued. This was in South Dakota, and even in daytime you can drive for a while and see no cars in either direction. Three days later in Seattle I took it to a Honda dealer and had some deer meat removed, a missing undercarriage panel and some fasteners, a leaking drive seal and drive shaft replaced. Close call.

◆

Microsoft Update KB3035583 Problems

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, TPCUG
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On 5/29/15, my computer became unresponsive for a while. I tracked the problem down to a new Microsoft Update, uninstalled the update and got my system back. Some research turned up some interesting things about the update that applies to all Windows 7, 8 and 8.1. Update 10/19/15: It also provides the "Install Windows 10" nag in the system tray, and it acts as the conduit to signal MS to download the Windows 10 update to your PC.

Windows 10 is not for everyone. If you use Windows Media Center software, Windows 10 will uninstall it. If you are using WMC as your DVR, Do not install Windows 10. The Windows 10 Start Menu really can't be called a menu without a lot of work or by installing a third party menu program. Office 2003 is disabled, and can be revived only with a lot of technical work.

The offending task that was killing my computer is GWX-ConfigManager.exe. It was trying to send data to the Internet, and my Vipre Firewall was blocking it causing the computer to bog down. It's located in the Windows\System32\GWX folder. I had never heard of that so I did some research on the Internet. It's a program that is installed on your computer relating to upgrading to Windows 10. You can find it in Windows Update>Installed Updates.

I looked at my other Windows 7 computers and it was installed there too. Microsoft wasn't being very forthcoming about what it was for at the time. Going to Windows Update > Installed Updates (click on the text near the bottom left of the Windows Update). If you sort by category, under Windows System updates it should be in order of most recent, so it should be near or at the top. Look for KB3035583, right-click and select Uninstall. But there's a catch.

On the next Windows Update, it will appear again and if you have automatic install set, it will just install again. Here's how to fix that. You have to set that particular update as hidden. Just "Check for Updates" and you'll get at least one "Important" update KB3035583. On that update, right-click and hide. If you do another "Check for Updates", you'll see that it does not appear. If you later "Restore Hidden Updates" for any reason, it will appear again.

Here's all the information available from Microsoft:
Update for Windows 7 for x64-based Systems (KB3035583)
Download size: 517 KB - 601 KB
You may need to restart your computer for this update to take effect.
Update type: Recommended
Install this update to resolve issues in Windows. For a com-

Problems.....Continued on page 8

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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.....Continued from page 2

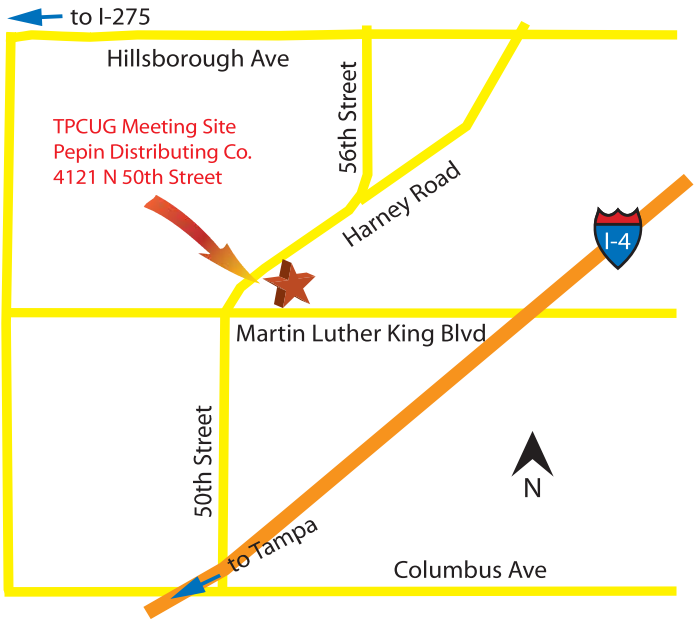
design. An APU is a combination of a CPU and GPU wherein the GPU provides the greater power needed for graphics.

More information is available at Steve's website: Http://moreValu.com. ◆

Problems.....Continued from page 7

plete listing of the issues that are included in this update, see the associated Microsoft Knowledge Base article for more information. After you install this item, you may have to restart your computer.
More information:
http://support.microsoft.com/kb/3035583
Help and Support:
http://support.microsoft.com

Update 10/19/15: Even though I marked the update on my computers as "Hidden", I found it installed on my four Windows 7 computers all over again. Microsoft made a change so that the Hidden status will be ignored. I have repeated the uninstall and hidden process once again. This is very disconcerting to me. It appears that Microsoft views my personal computers as their property to install anything they want. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 28 No. 12 December 2015



December in Tampa

Meeting

Holiday Party
by
Everybody

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Holiday Party. There will be lots of food for dinner - please come.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Dave Palmer for articles this month. Dave's article on tracking ship locations was of particular interest to me since I created a web app that did exactly that at one time. I pulled the worldwide shipping data from some Greek university. However, after a couple of years, the source of that data disappeared, and I was forced to remove that app from my website.

The Microsoft Store is now open at International Mall, just in time for your Christmas shopping. It is in the Nordstrom wing of the Mall on the upper level. Have a look at the Surface Book. It is expensive but very nice. If that item is a budget buster, there are many other devices at all price levels.

Just the other day, someone told me that they had totally wiped all the files from their data hard drive. And they couldn't really give a clear explanation of how they did it other than it happened while trying to move the data to One Drive. They had been told it would cost $99 to examin the drive and considerably more to recover any data. I said to bring the drive to me, and I would have a look. That look verified that the drive did appear to have nothing on it.

Time to ask Merle Nicholson, who told me that he had an ancient DOS

Minutes.....Continued on page 2

January Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month, Windows 10 installation problems were discussed, and Merle gave a quick demo on Windows 10 keyboard shortcuts.

Our guest speaker was TPUG's own Dave Palmer, giving us one of his well-prepared cyber security presentations. This month was Exploit Kits, software designed to take advantage of software flaws; the flawed software most exploited is Java, Silverlight and Flash. Flash accounts for 80% of all exploits. Server-based exploits target built-in browser applications. Besides disabling Flash and Silverlight, another suggestion is to use an alternative PDF reader other than Adobe Reader. Also it's very important to keep all operating system updates current at all times. Our thanks go to Dave for his excellent and well prepared presentation. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

program named Uneraser, which he sent it to me. That program showed me that there were a lot of files still on the disk (when you delete a file it is not really gone; the operating system just can't find it). However, I couldn't figure out how to use the program to unerase the files. So I went to the program's website, http://www.uneraser.com, and downloaded a free trial Windows version of the program. It displayed many folders full of files on the disk and would allow me to unerase one file at a time. To be able to completely restore all the files, I purchased a registered version for $39. And I was then able to restore around 33 GB of data consisting of aproximately 19,000 files in 14,000 folders. Success! ◆

More windows 10

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Now that Windows 10 has seen some improvements, I've revisited it and installed it on my notebook.

Back in July, Windows 10 came out, and I thought at the time it was suitable for my notebook, replacing Windows 7 Home Premium. I kept it a couple of weeks and even showed a couple of things at a TPCUG meeting. As I got into it and trying to do my day-to-day stuff, I became somewhat discouraged with the inefficiency of the menu and the old/new schizophrenic settings. Then I got an ad for something on my desktop in a live tile. That did it for me. I recovered my Windows 7 from a backup and went back to where I was three or four weeks before.

Some things have been happening since that time. There is a revision 1511 that came out early November that makes important changes to the licensing and to make it possible to install Windows 10 from scratch easily. Sometimes that's a very handy thing especially if you have some persistent virus or malware. Just as importantly, now you can use Cortana with just a local login. You do miss some advantages because you are not sending your personal information back to Microsoft so Cortana doesn't have the benefit of knowing your habits.

In the meantime I have been running a Windows 10 Virtual Machine that I revisit occasionally to try to learn how to live with it and to see if there are any compelling reasons to switch. I have found nothing in the area of "compelling", but I finally concluded that with the 1511 revision I can configure Windows 10 to be as efficient as 7. By efficient I mean the time and trouble it takes to find stuff and run applications.

A few days ago I felt I was finally there and tackled it. I have to say that once you have Windows 7 (or 8.1) configured, the upgrade goes quickly and smoothly. For this particular notebook I have a "Dual Boot" setup that complicated things for me, but once I learned how to deal with that, the Windows 10 installation was mostly uneventful.

Preparation: Number 1: Make certain your Windows 7/8.1 is up to date. All Windows updates must be installed. **Number 2**: Now is the time to uninstall all the applications you no longer need. Go to Control Panel, Programs and Features and go down through the list, find all the stuff you have never needed. Also uninstall anything with the word "toolbar" or "fix my pc" or "repair". Uninstall WInZip while you're at it. **Number 3**: Do a "Disk Cleanup". That's on the properties of your C: drive, including clearing your Recycle bin. **Number 4** do a complete system Image backup or clone of the drive(s). If you cannot make a system backup or clone the drive DO NOT PROCEED. If you don't have the technical skills to do a full backup, you need help with Windows 10 upgrade anyway.

I do have a suggestion for you. If you have a hard drive over three years old, buy a replacement for it. Clone the boot drive to the new drive and swap them, keeping the old drive as a backup. If the Windows 10 upgrade destroys your system just swap them back. Another good reason to buy a new drive is if you can afford an SSD for your boot drive. There are some bargains out there especially for last year's slower SSDs. Believe me, last year's slow SSD is still five times faster than a conventional drive and far more reliable.

A couple of important changes to Windows 10 installation have been made. First, the upgrade no longer insists that you install your system with a Microsoft login. Previously it did that, but if you knew what to click on you could set up a local account. Now, it assumes a local account. Later on, when I wanted to get something from the MS Store, it tricked me into signing in with my MS account and changed my login to that account, wiping out my local account. I suspect that I wasn't being attentive enough and could have avoided it. But it did not give me a warning that my local account would be wiped. The first I knew of it was when I booted the system and the login screen appeared, and it would not take my account and password. So I tried my MS account name and password, and it logged me in. It's easy to switch back in Control panel, Accounts, but you can't just say "use the local account", you have to create the account over again.

Why is this important to me? I feel that I will not get advertising "pushed" to my desktop with a local account. There are a couple of other settings to make in that regard; more later. Also I don't want to search the internet for items. It's too time consuming. There are obscure settings for that now, too.

Back to the installation. One of the early things it does is scan your PC for incompatible software. It will give you a list of suggested programs to uninstall. In my case there was one; Daemon Tools Lite. This software allows you to mount .ISO files as a drive. That's built into Windows 10 and is not needed. One other item is a clear warning that it is going to uninstall Windows Media Center. I've written on this subject before; if you depend on WMC, Windows 10 is not for you. If you're using it for your DVR, there is no suitable replacement. But the Windows 10 installation makes the removal very clear. I suspect that if you choose to not uninstall the incompatible software it will proceed anyway. As for the WMC removal, it's not optional. It's just there as a warning that it will be removed. Even if you'd paid for it.

It takes quite a while to go through the installation. I used a USB3 flashdrive with all the needed files. This is easy to get from the Microsoft website. You download a tool called "Media Creation Tool", have a USB flashdrive available and run it. Get it from https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/

More.....Continued on page 4

More.....Continued from page 3

windows10. If you go this way, you may want to hang around 20 minutes or more and when it does the first reboot, pull the flash-drive out so it doesn't attempt to reboot to the flashdrive. I use the USB route so I don't worry about an internet interruption while installing. Also it's much faster if you have two or more computers to upgrade. The website has very accurate instructions.

Once it's done all the reboots, you're ready to configure it. All your files should be where you left them, and all your programs should still be working. In particular, check your printers and any other external devices. Also look at Computer Management, Device Manager. (or right-click on the start button, select Device Manager) Look for any system device with a warning flag on it.

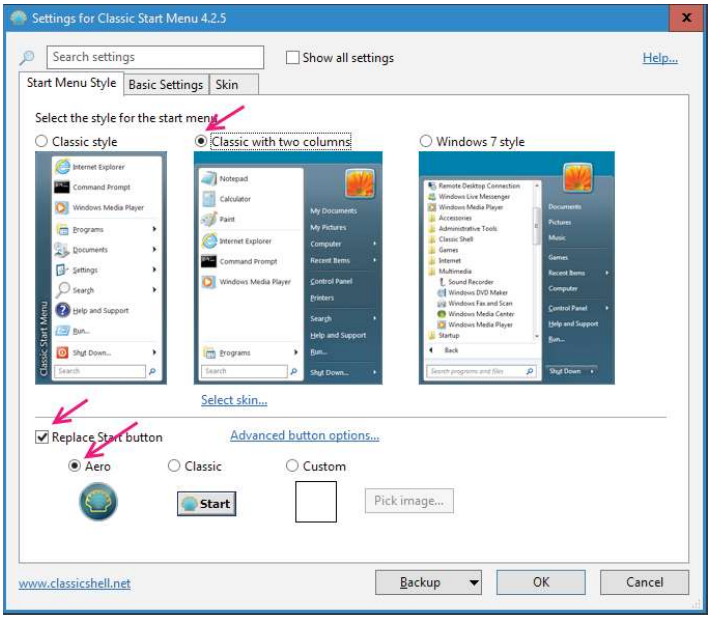
Look at the screen resolution, make sure it's where it was and that you like it. Mine had all desktop icons much larger, a sure indication that my screen resolution is not set to my full native screen size, and that was the case. Right-click on the desktop, select "Display Settings", then pick the "Advanced Display Settings" link at the bottom, then look at the "Screen Resolution" drop-down, make sure it's set on the "recommended", which should be the highest (top) one.

In my case, I had to deal with a disabled Vipre Internet antivirus. The standard Defender was running, and Vipre did get an automatic update for Windows 10 and reinstalled itself. Defender complained on each boot until I disabled it in Startup apps.

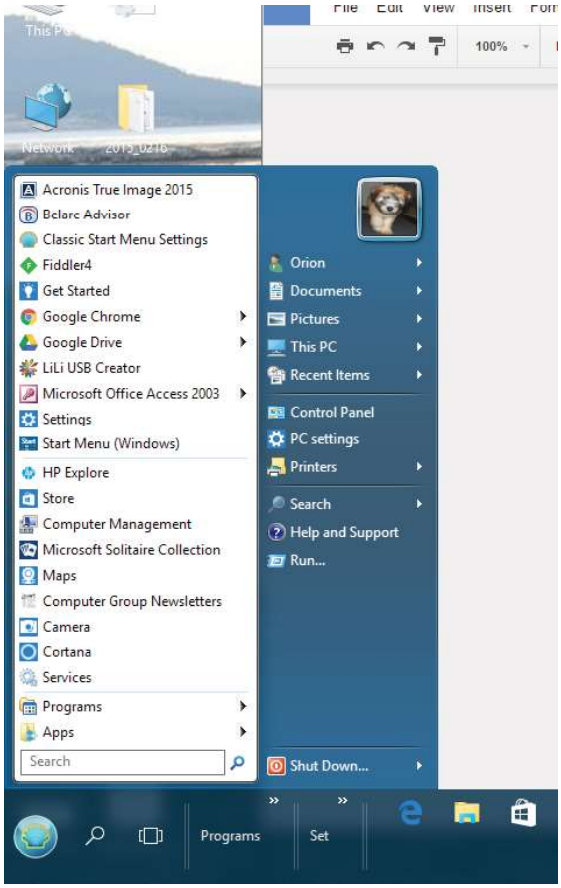
Here's a list of all the things I found necessary to change. You may agree with them or not. First thing I did was to unpin all live tiles. They're interesting for the first 10 seconds, but then you have to ask; "do I want to expend system resources just for this?" Right-click on each and select "UnPin".

I would state right now that I have no intention of making Windows 10 look like Windows 7. But, I do feel that Windows 10 is a step forward with two or three things deficient. The main one being the menu. Frankly, it isn't a menu at all, it's just an alphabetical list of all applications, giving important programs equal weight with the stuff you'll never use. Second, it lacks visual style. The white titlebars are a real pain trying to find the top of anything for windows controls. And last, that you must go to quite a bit of trouble to protect your privacy. Fortunately, using a local account disables much of the information being sent to Microsoft. There is much written about this.

Next I downloaded and installed "Classic Shell" from http://www.classicshell.net. Do NOT download from any other site. While you're there, donate 10 or 20 bucks via PayPal Guest. It's a quick install. When you run it, there's a list of items to include. You do not need anything but Classic Shell and Classic Shell Update, and you do not need Classic Explorer or Classic IE. These make changes to Explorer and Internet Explorer. Windows 10 has changed both of these, and I think it's a good idea to get used to them before making changes.



When you look at the setup for classic shell, the "advanced settings" should be off, leaving three tabs of settings. First tab, I selected "Classic with two columns" and "Replace Start button" with "Aero". Under "Skins", I selected "Windows Aero" skin, and in "Basic Settings" , I did not change anything. Please don't blame me if you're not happy; just pick something else. Classic Shell is very highly configurable under "Show All Settings".



More.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



Smog in China

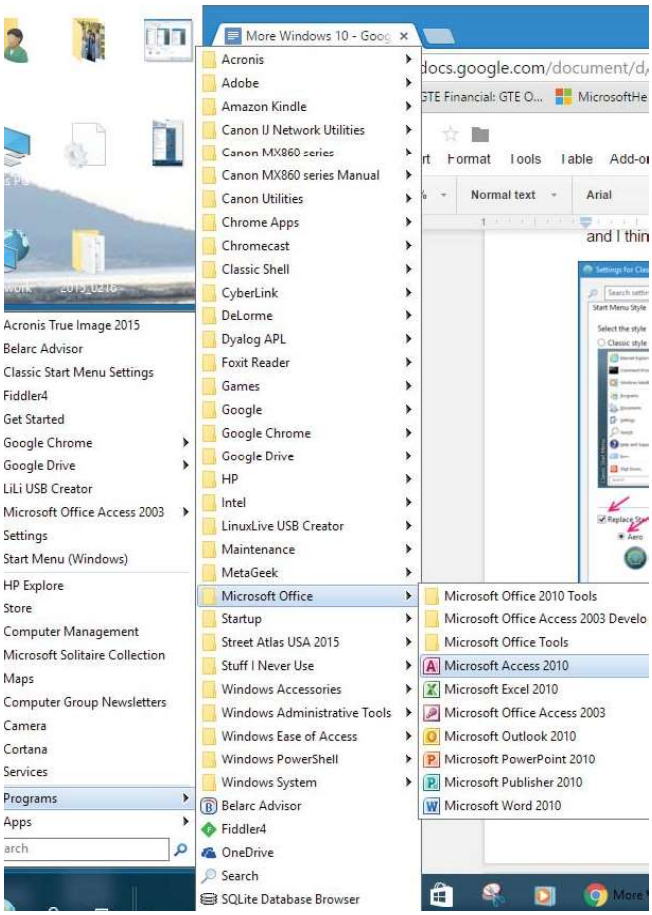
From the Wall Street Journal, http://www.wsj.com. “A man rides his bicycle across a street amid heavy haze in Fuyang, Anhui province, China. Heavy smog and thick fog engulfed many parts of northern and eastern China on Monday, local media reported. Reuters”

December’s Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that’s us)	http://www.tpcug.org
File uneraser program	http://www.uneraser.com
Classic Shell	http://classicshell.net
Ed Bott Windows 10 Help	http://www.zdnet.com/blog/bott/
Microsoft Store - Tampa	http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/store/locations/fl/tampa/international-plaza/store-1111

More.....Continued from page 6

"The Classic with two columns" has the two column layout of Windows 7, combined with the cascading menus of Windows XP. In my mind, it's perfection.



Configuring further, I installed a theme exported from Windows 7. That put color in the title bars, a badly needed improvement. With the new 1511 update, you can add color to the titlebars, taskbar and action center in settings, personalization, colors. Last, I changed some registry settings that changed all window border widths to the narrowest possible. Contact me if you are interested in doing that; I can send a registry file to you.

Concluding: Do a full system backup of your new Windows 10 now. Don't wait. Later, when you have full confidence in your system and have it backed up, clean up the boot drive. In "Disk Cleanup" there is a button labeled "Clean up system files". This will reclaim a very large chunk of disk because the Windows 10 upgrade stored all the Windows 7 or 8.1 files on a Windows.old folder. When you do this, you will no longer be able to revert back to the previous version. But we don't care because we have a full system backup that we can use anytime we want.

Resources:
http://www.classicshell.net

More.....Continued on page 8

Interactive Tracking Websites

By Doug Palmer, Tampa PC Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

I have an extensive list of weird, odd and interesting websites that I've run across over the years. Here are two that might qualify as tracking maps as they track something. Most also qualify as interactive as the user has some control over the data seen.

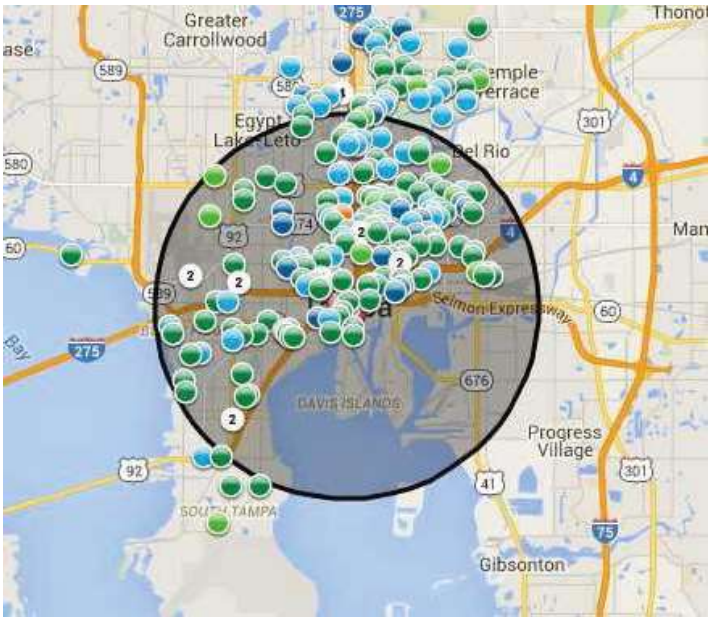
http://raidsonline.com/
RAIDS Online is a free public crime map developed by BAIR Analytics. Crime mapping takes data available from law enforcement sources and makes it available to the public in a visual format. This is just one of several such websites available. Raids Online also has mobile apps available for Android and iPhones.

This map works much like Google Maps or other such maps on the Internet. A toolbar is on the left side of the screen that contains controls to specify multiple layers of data. At the top of the toolbar type in a city name, an address or even a zip code. The map will adjust accordingly. The Buffer section of the toolbar allows you to adjust the size of the area you wish to pinpoint. Below that are several filters that you can use to specify a date range, a long list of various events and crime to either include



Interactive.....Continued on page 6

Interactive.....Continued from page 6



or exclude. Tabs on top allow you to view the data on the map, in charts or in a spreadsheet format. Once you have adjusted the area and events to your liking, you can create a daily or weekly email alert notification of crimes within a certain distance of your home or business

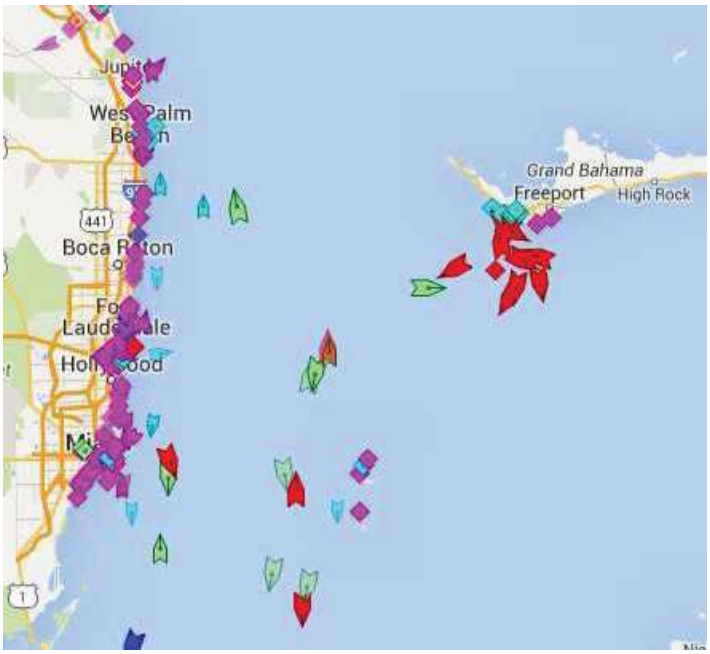
http://www.marinetraffic.com/

The Worldwide Marine Traffic interactive map is serious fun for those who love to explore and tinker and learn. This site and several other similar websites are free Internet-based vessel tracking services. They do not require any user registration. They list the position of thousands of ships around the world. On occasion it's interesting to look specifically at the waters around Tampa Bay to see how many ships are out there, where they're from, where they're going, which are underway and which are anchored. Other times I'll pick out a really busy port somewhere in the world – there are many. Those ports make Tampa Bay look like a backwater! Here are a few basics from the FAQs.

Vessels over 299GT (Gross Tonnage) are required to have an AIS transponder on board, which transmits their position, speed and course, among some other static information, such as vessel's name, dimensions and voyage details.

Data received are uploaded in the database in real time and are immediately available on the map and on other pages. However, several positions shown on map may not be continuously refreshed (e.g. when a ship goes out of range). Vessel positions shown on the map may be up to one hour old. Please note also that map web page is only periodically refreshed or whenever the 'Refresh now' link is pressed manually.

There are numerous filters and controls. The shape of the icons tell you whether the ship in in underway or anchored. The color of the icon tells you what type of ship it is. Running your cursor over the icons will give you the name



of the ship, the heading, speed, destination and age of the data. Left click on the icon to see bring up a information box with basic details of the ship along with a small image. Inside that box is a button called 'Vessel Details' which will provide extensive information as well as one or more images of the ship.



Editor's Note: Dave provided a couple more such examples of tracking websites, but we have run out of space. Perhaps they will find a place in the next newsletter. ◆

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First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

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http://www.howtogeek.com/223728/bring-the-windows-7-start-menu-to-windows-10-with-classic-shell/

http://www.laptopmag.com/articles/make-windows-10-like-windows-7

http://www.cnet.com/pictures/8-windows-10-settings-you-should-change-right-away/

https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10

◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



January in Tampa

Vol. 29 No. 1 January 2016

Meeting

Protecting Yourself, Your Computer and Your Identity

by

Bob Gostischa

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: John Witmer's description of this month's speaker: "I attended his presentation at the APCUG Conference last September in Las Vegas, and from his years of experience representing Avast software and doing presentations, he has gained a very good understanding of virus, malware and other internet threats to users of computers, tablets and smartphones."

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson, Dave Palmer, Bob Davis and Ron Weinberg for articles this month. I continue Dave's article on Interactive Tracking Websites from last month since we ran out of space to include all his examples in the December newsletter.

We are starting a new year, and you will note above that this newsletter is Number 1 of Volume 29. So this group has been around for a long time, and we have the newsletters to prove it. You may view newsletters from 1988 through the present at our website, or you may use the Windows 8/10 app I wrote, *Computer Group Newsletters*, to do the same. However, that application only does the newsletters through 2014. I am preparing a new version, a Windows 10 Universal version, that will include the 2015 newsletters. And, since it is a Universal version, it will also be available on the Windows 10 Phone.

Comments.....Continued on page 2

February Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The December meeting is reserved for a dinner to celebrate the holidays and allow the time to socialize and eat. As in past years, John Witmer catered the event and Pepin distributing provided the space. It was well attended, and some old friends who have been unable to attend regular meeting were able to make it. It was a success; that was certainly agreed upon. Our special thanks go to John for acquiring, toting and hosting the food and goodies for the event. Good job as usual. And thanks to Pepin for having us. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Speaking of Windows Phone, I am probably the only one in the group with a Windows Phone, and that has gotten me to thinking. I suspect most of you have now or will eventually have Windows 10 on your desktop and laptop computers, but I am far less sure that any of you will purchase a Windows Phone. So how do I reach you and all the other iPhone and Android phone users out there with the apps I write for the Windows Phone, including the newsletter app? There is a solution, but it is not cheap.

The solution is a program named Xamarin which you can run independently or integrate with Microsoft Visual Studio that allows for the creation of Windows Phone, iPhone and Android apps using the C# programming language where much of the code is shared among the three different platforms and what is not shared you have to write for each platform. In simple apps, you have to write almost nothing extra for each separate platform.

I have begun working with Xamarin for Android only, not iOS, and will probbly write about that in next month's newsletter. ◆

Operator Error
(How to spend more time fixing things)

By Bobert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
robd234@gmail.com

Back a few months ago, Merle suggested we change our normal login from administrator to guest mode. A guest login has limited power to do things. In guest mode, if something tries to stick in a malware or virus, a screen pops up asking for the administrator login password. This is a way to keep unwanted stuff from knowingly or unknowingly getting on to the PC. I changed both desktop PCs (an old XP and a Vista machine) to boot up with two options, guest or administrator mode. To do this I went into my normal login and took away administrative powers. Then I created another login with full powers. Now it's a bit of a nuisance having to tell it which login to use every time I power up the PC. Also if I want to install anything or change some things I must switch to administrative mode. However, I think the benefits of using guest login are greater than the inconvenience of having to click on the guest mode when I power up.

After a couple months, I realized the old XP PC literally has no internet access. It has no modem or LAN, so it can never be exposed to malware unless I load something on it myself. In a weak brainstorming moment, I decided to delete the guest login for the XP PC and only use the new login with full powers. Thus I wouldn't have to click on the guest icon every time I powered on the PC. I did select to not delete the files associated with the old login. I realize now I should have just turned on the administrative powers on the old login and deleted the new one. When I deleted the old login, even directing it to save the associated files, my folder with all my shortcuts went away! Even worse than that, when I found the Address Book program and ran it, it had no contact phone numbers and addresses (I use the MS Address book program). The data file seems to have disappeared. I looked at what file the program would import, but nothing I found contained the information I wanted.

The only thing I found was a comma delimited file called address book.txt, last modified July 26 of 2013. I imported that and have most of my addresses and phone numbers back. But I'm pretty sure I've made new entries since July of 2013. The imported folder has no subfolders like the old one had. So the original file is probably lurking somewhere on the PC but I haven't found it yet. If anyone knows where that file may be, please let me know! In the mean time, I keep adding shortcuts back as the days go by and I find something else I need. ◆

Mirroring to TV

By Ron Weinberg Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Download a film to your PC but watch it on a large screen. Show a slide show or photographs to a large group. Demonstrate or teach PC applications. View the web on a big screen. These are just some of the reasons to use mirroring.

Mirroring is viewing your PC or Smartphone's screen on a TV. It can be done using any of several methods or devices. Hard wired using an HDMI Cable (which requires some proximity between devices) or through physical devices such as: Google's Chromecast, Apple's AirPlay, Samsung All Share Cast Hub, Microsoft Wireless Display Adapter, and many others.

MIRACAST, a wireless screen mirroring protocol solution created by the Wi-Fi Alliance, has emerged as the leading contender which requires no additional hardware. Miracast has experienced some technical problems (reliability and connection failures) but is emerging as the dominant standard. It has been described as wireless HDMI. Although wireless, it does not rely on your existing Wi-Fi network but rather Wi-Fi Direct. As more and more new devices contain built in Miracast capability, problems should diminish.

Miracast has been included in Windows 8.1, Windows 10, Android 4.2 and newer releases. Note that if you upgrade from Windows 7 to 10 and your system does not include Intel WiDi or equivalent support, Miracast will not work. Each Miracast connected device must have mirroring capability. Search the Wi-Fi Alliance web site for compatible devices.

Many new Smart TV's have mirroring capability built in, and the ubiquitous Roku now has the feature but not on all older models. Miracast can also connect to enabled Projectors.

I have successfully and easily used both Windows 8.1 and 10 to mirror my laptop to both an older TV with Roku and a newer Smart TV that has mirroring capability.

Here are the steps for Windows 10 which are slightly simpler than those for Windows 8.1.

Mirroring.....Continued on page 8

More windows 10

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I've submitted a couple of Windows 10 articles in past months. I'll continue to write about 10 in the coming months. The last article, and the largest to date, was about my experience upgrading Windows 7 to Windows 10. I was never a fan of 8 and 8.1, so my experience with that is limited.

There's an additional advantage to upgrading from 7, and that is, if you're the owner of (or a fan of) Office 2003 even though it is no longer supported. The best way to get it running in 8/8.1/10 is to have it already installed and up-to-date before upgrading. It's difficult to install Office 2003 after. But unlike a couple of other Microsoft products it will survive the upgrade.

Windows 10 got several important upgrades with the November 15 update. The most notable is that now you can install Windows 10 from scratch using a qualified Windows 7, 8 and 8.1 license, so if you are interested in a fresh build with nothing left over from the previous version you can do that now. Don't make an assumption that it's easy, though. You have to be careful and get the specific instructions.

There are new upgrades coming in 2016, reportedly in the spring and fall, and it seems that Microsoft intends to continuously improve Windows 10.

What you lose: For Windows 7 users going to 10 you will lose a few things you may be fond of: Windows Media Center, The Windows games collection (Solitaire, Spider Solitaire, Minesweeper, Mahjong Titans, checkers and more ..), Windows XP Mode, and the Windows Mail client (which wasn't much anyway). The Windows 10 games being ad supported, browser-based and pretty much crappy graphics are a real disappointment.

For a mail client, I recommend the free Mozilla Thunderbird. There are published ways to restore the Windows 7 games and Windows Media Center to 10, which I have done successfully, and a way to install Windows XP mode which I have not tested. These three products are documented on reputable internet sites, just Google them.

Of course you also lose the Windows 7 Start menu. There is a very good article on getting the most out of the existing start menu at

http://www.pcworld.com/article/2960788/windows/how-to-customize-windows-10s-start-menu.html and http://www.howtogeek.com/223412/getting-to-know-the-new-start-menu-in-windows-10/

But there are several first class complete replacements: Start10, IoBit Start 8, StartIsBack++, and my personal favorite Classic Shell. There are 10 replacements out there, half of them free.

What you gain: Not too much, but some are interesting. For those of you that have a Windows touchscreen tablet – the Windows 10 tablet interface is there, just turn it on. The new browser Edge has many limitations, but it is safe and attractive. Fortunately the older Internet Explorer is installed as well. The Notifications are a step up from previous Windows, but still need some refinements. Virtual Desktops work really well, but with not quite the convenience you'll find in any Linux OS where it has been around for a long time. And of course you have Live Tiles, which may interest you. Mounting ISO files as a CD drive is now native. Windows 7 needed an add-in like Daemon Tools, and the upgrade will force you to uninstall it.

For my own part, I'm not a heavy user of Windows 10; my daily business/productivity/programming computer is still Windows 7, and my internet cruising/entertainment computer is Linux Mate'. I especially like Linux (and Android tablet) because of its internet safety and easy maintenance. No virus worries. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Flooding in Missouri

From the site http://ktla.com at http://ktla.com/2015/12/31/rivers-expected-to-make-record-crests-flooding-towns-around-st-louis/. "Flood waters cover a McDonald's in Union, Missouri on Dec. 29, 2015."

January's Links

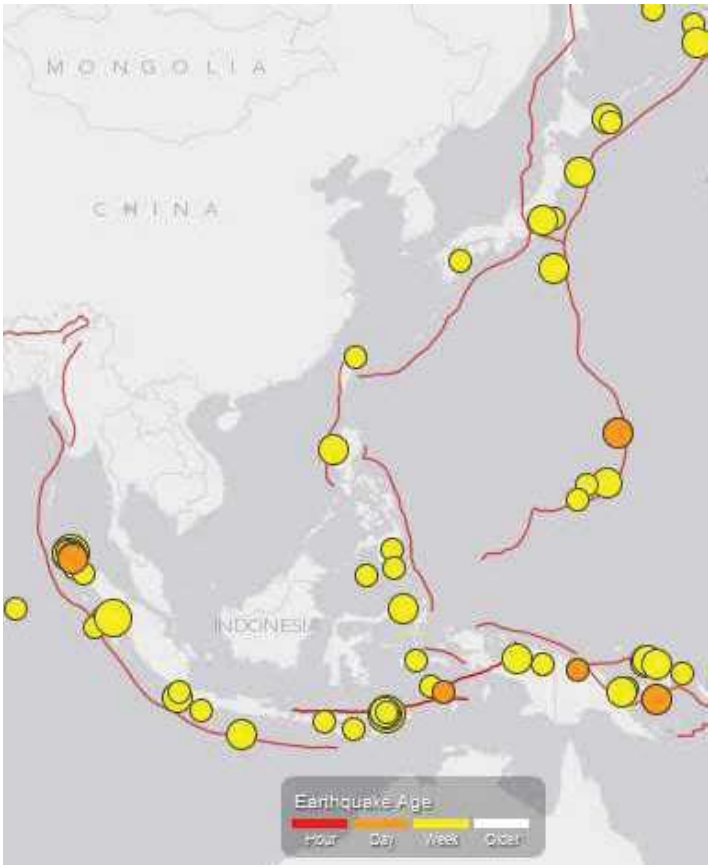
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Xamarin	http://www.xamarin.com
New York Public Library Digital	http://www.nypl.org/research/collections/digital-collections/public-domain

Interactive Tracking Websites

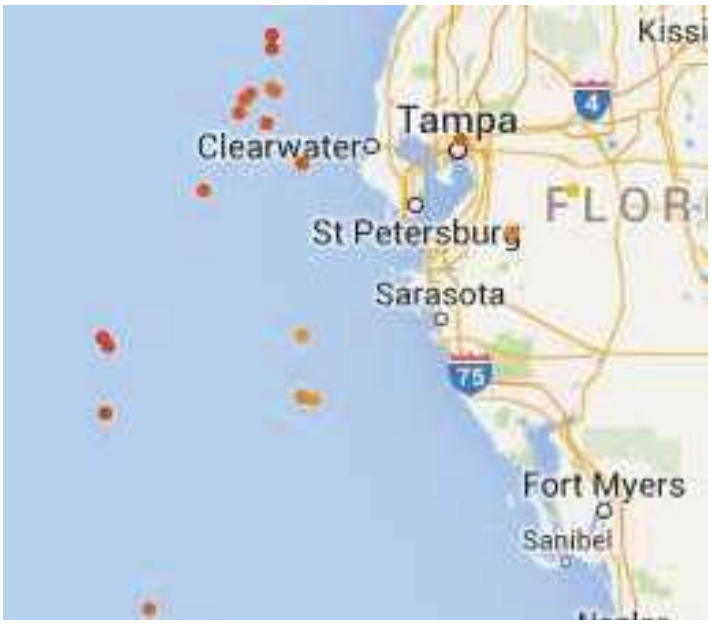
By Doug Palmer, Tampa PC Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

[Editor's note: This is a continuation of Dave's article from the December newsletter, where we didn't have space for the entire article]

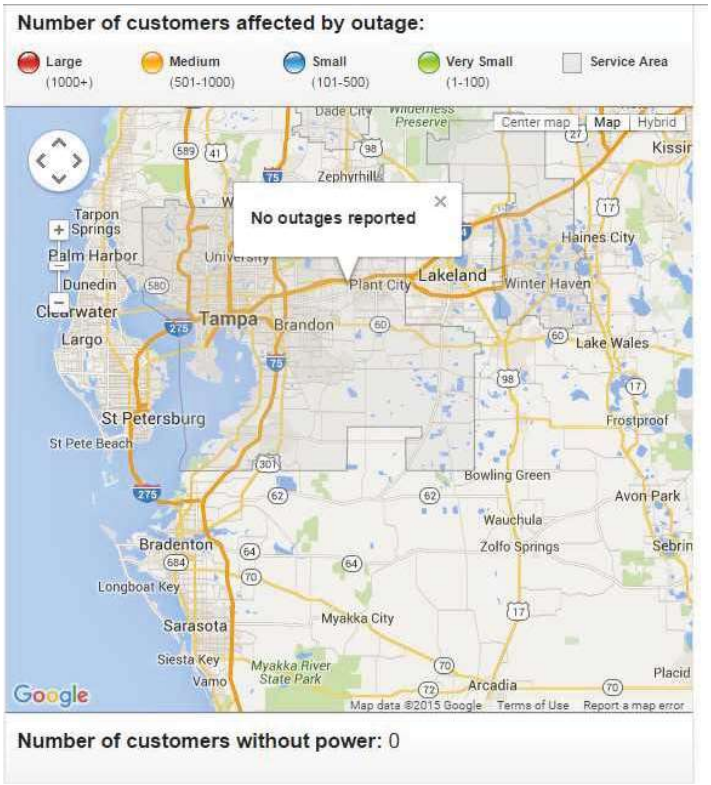
Http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/map/
Live Earthquakes by the U.S. Geological Survey. In this case the menu icon up top controls whether or not the list of earthquakes is show on the left side of the screen. To access more choices click on the gear icon. A dropdown menu on the right side of the screen will provide you with numerous options.



http://goo.gl/9xkGbL
Near real-time lightning tracker by Blitzortung.org. This site calls itself a 'community collaborative real-time lightning location network.' The Blitzortung hobbyist members build (from kit parts) the detector which monitors emissions from lightning strikes, and has a set of servers in Europe to correlate the data.



Http://www.tampaelectric.com/residential/outages/outagemap/
TECO Outage Map - This map isn't really interactive at all. It simply tracks power outages. Useful if you're not sure TECO knows about your outage. It updates every 10 minutes.



A couple of photos from the December Holiday Party by Merle Nicholson





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Mirroring.....Continued from page 3

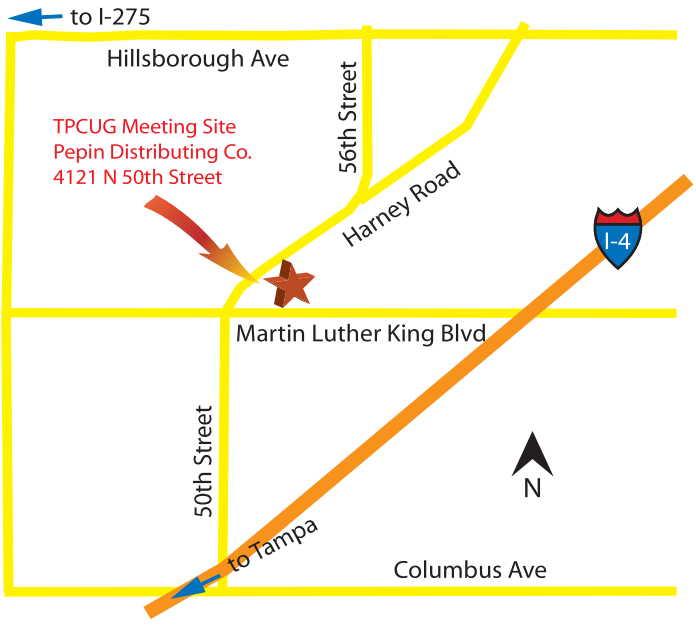
Mirroring Windows 10 PC to Samsung TV

1. Change Input Source on TV To PC Mirroring
2. Select Connect Option from Action Center of PC
3. Select [TV] Samsung XXX to connect
4. Change projection mode to Duplicate if necessary Step 5 below
5. Projection Mode
   Select method: PC Screen only; Duplicate; Extend; Second screen only
   Press or click "Connect to a wireless display"
   If needed, press Connect Option again to display the connection so it can be disconnected.

Mirroring Windows 10 PC to TV through Roku 3

1. In Roku Settings, Screen Mirroring should be checked Enabled.
2. Select Connect Option from Action Center of PC
3. Select Roku 3 to connect
4. Follow steps 4 and 5 above as needed.
5.

Connection automatically connects with the Roku connected TV. There is no need to manually change the Input Source. When the PC disconnects, the Roku the TV resumes what was playing before the connection. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 29 No. 3 March 2016



March in Tampa

Meeting

How To Be Smart With Your Smartphone & Tablet

by

Abby Stokes

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: See page 3 for a detailed description of this month's presentation. Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg for their contribution this month. Thanks also to John Witmer for a detailed description of this month's presentation on page three.

Last month I wrote about using Xamarin to port some of my Windows 8.1 and Windows 10 Universal apps to the Android platform. I had finished converting several apps but had not as yet published them to the Google Play Store. Well, as I write this, three of them are now in the Store for you to install on your Android device, phone or tablet. The apps are Hyde Park Flowers, Civil War Photos and Computer Group Newsletters. That last app should be of interest to the group since it provides access on an Android device to all the group's newsletters from 1988 through December 2015. Install them and give me a decent rating. Who knows, you may be the only people who do that, since I have read that there are many apps in both the Apple and the Google stores that never get downloaded.

Comments.....Continued on page 2

April Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Merle Showed several items of interest in Windows 10.

The February presentation was given by myself, Merle Nicholson, on Windows 10 in two parts. First was a Pros and cons of doing the upgrade and the circumstances where upgrading may not be the best thing. Next was steps to prepare for the upgrade. Get your system healthy, do a chkdsk and make a good backup or clone of the existing drive.

The second part was Windows 10 essential customizations. A description of Windows 10 Build 1511 and what it means, and finally 11 things to do after installation. The three page slide show is available - just email the presenter at merle@merlenicholson.com. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

In the news toward the end of February was that Microsoft bought Xamarin. I had to pay Xamarin $800 to use Xamarin in conjunction with Microsoft Visual Studio to create my Android apps. Perhaps with that purchase Microsoft will now offer the use of Xamarin with Visual Studio as cheaper or possibly even free. I know a lot of independent developers found the $800 per year for Android too high. And if you wanted to develop for iOS along with Android with Visual Studio, add another $800/year. The development for Microsoft Windows was free. Perhaps they will make an announcement about all of this in April at the Mi-

Comments.....Continued on page 3

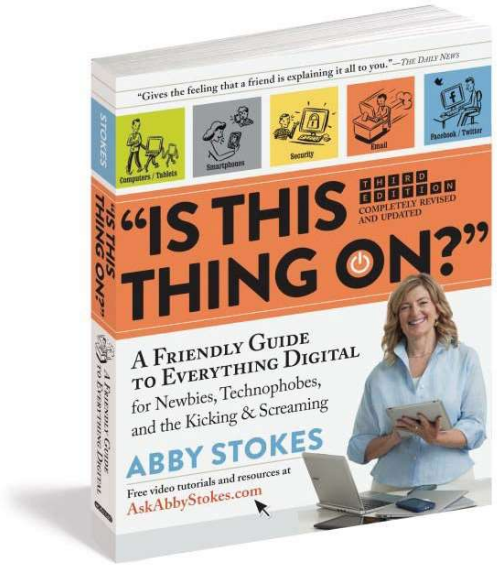
March 9th Meeting Presentation

By John Witmer, President Tampa PC Users Group
tpcugpres@gmail.com

We are privileged to have Abby Stokes present to us this month. The topic selected last month by our members was for her to give us a presentation on "How to be Smart with your Smartphone and Tablet." Abby is an entertaining and very knowledgeable speaker who gets great reviews from the numerous groups she presents to. She targets her presentation to the older generation, especially those who did not get on board the digital revolution thru work experience or other means before retirement. She also has knowledge and tips to share with the more experienced technology users.

She is the author of the newly revised book "Is This Thing On?" She will have copies of the paperback version (496 pages) of her book available for purchase at the meeting. The cost is $18.00 and can be paid with cash, check, or credit card. I encourage you to consider purchasing a copy for personal use, or as a gift to someone you know who would benefit from having access to this friendly guide to everything digital.

I would also suggest you check out Abby's website to review the video tutorials, helpful guides, and other resources she provides to supplement the book content. Go to http://www.AskAbbyStokes.com to access her web content and further information on her book.





I am also encouraging our members to invite their spouse or a friend to hear Abby's presentation. I don't want anyone who attends our meeting to feel any obligation to buy her book – I just think whoever does attend this meeting will find it entertaining and enjoyable to hear Abby speak. Hope to see you at our monthly meeting on March 9th at Pepin Distributing Co. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 2

crosoft Build conference in San Francisco.

Developing for a platform really requires that you have different devices to check how your app appears on them. For windows, I have several Windows phones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers. For Android, I had only one phone. And when I found in using an Android tablet emulator that the buttons on some pages of an app did not look good, even though they looked perfect in an Android phone emulator and an actual phone, I decided it was time to purchase an actual tablet. I settled on an ASUS ZenPad S 8 Z580CA-C1-BK 8" 64 GB Tablet from Amazon.com. The tablet received good reviews, and I have found only one thing that is less than optimal. When I want to watch some of the videos I have made and placed at http://www.lamartin.com/Videos.aspx, they are jerky. At this point, I am not 100 percent sure of the cause, but I think it is that the tablet does not get a good connection to the wireless router. The same videos run

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Windows 10 tips - March 2016

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

This month I have some beginning tips to improve the Windows 10 experience: Playing DVD movies, reducing the amount of "telemetry" data going back to Microsoft and eliminating advertizing on the lock screen.

DVD: Windows 10 will not play a DVD movie as delivered, although DVD devices are supported otherwise. Windows 7 did movies through the Windows Media Center and Windows Media Center was available for Windows 8.1. But Windows Media Center is uninstalled by the Windows 10 Upgrade. Please don't mistake what I've said here; Windows 10 handles DVDs fine, but not DVD movies.

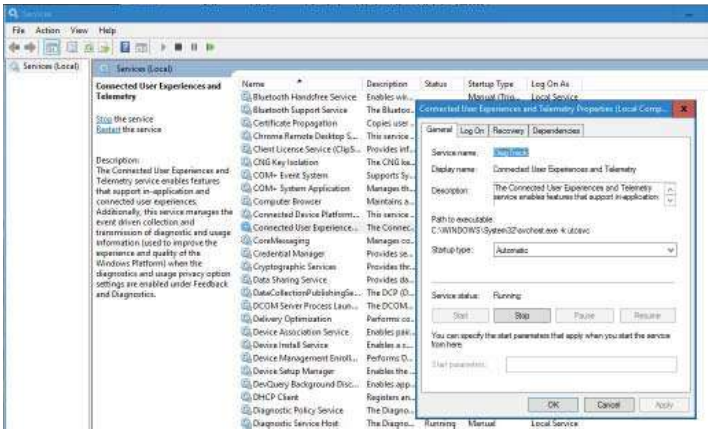
There are several solutions to this. You can overcome the loss of WMC by reinstalling it through an unofficial source (See my previous articles on Windows 10). Second option is to install VLC from VideoLAN, a free and open source media player. Be sure to get VLC from the official website http://www.videolan.org. DO NOT download from one of the many locations that a Google/Bing search produces. Last option is the best but costly, PowerDVD from CyberLink at http://www.cyberlink.com. PowerDVD is a good option if you have a Blu-ray drive. PowerDVD also extends Blu-ray support to WMC.

Telemetry: The bloggers (and Microsoft) are now calling the usage data being sent from your computer back to Microsoft "telemetry". Not a bad word I guess if you're trying to downplay the importance of this data. (I worked on space programs at Cape Canaveral for 10 years and I'm pretty sure I know what telemetry is.) There is a long technical Microsoft TechNet article that explains the general content of this data, and describes four levels of settings available to some versions of Windows 10. Windows 10 is always set to the highest (least private) "Full" setting by default. As it turns out, the settings are accessible. A very trustworthy technical writer, Ed Bott, writes about this pretty comprehensively. See http://www.zdnet.com/article/windows-10-telemetry-secrets/. He references that TechNet article, and if you have access to it, it's pretty interesting technically.

Further searches produce instructions on how to make the setting as low as possible. In addition there is a background service that handles some or all of the "telemetry", and everyone is saying that it's safe to disable this service. I have done so on my four Windows computers.

One last thing about Telemetry. Recent updates to Windows 7 and 8.1 have installed the "Diagnostic Tracking Service" to your PC if that's what you are using. The Service name is "DiagTrack". I have now disabled that service on my Windows 7 computers. I have read the claim that DiagTrack was installed by an optional update, suggesting that it's your own fault that it's installed. I think that's valid only if there's a thorough description of the update in Updates. I look at the Microsoft articles on all optional updates for my computers, and I guess I just missed this . . three times. My fault obviously. Disabling it in Windows 7 and 8.1 is the same as in Windows 10.

To kill the DiagTrack service in Windows 7, 8.1 and 10, go to Control Panel, Administrative tools, Services. Scroll down and find "Connected User Experience" service, right-click and select "Properties".



Then Use the "Stop" button to stop the service – it takes a moment – and then change the "Startup type" to Disabled as indicated in the screen capture on page six.

Tips.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month

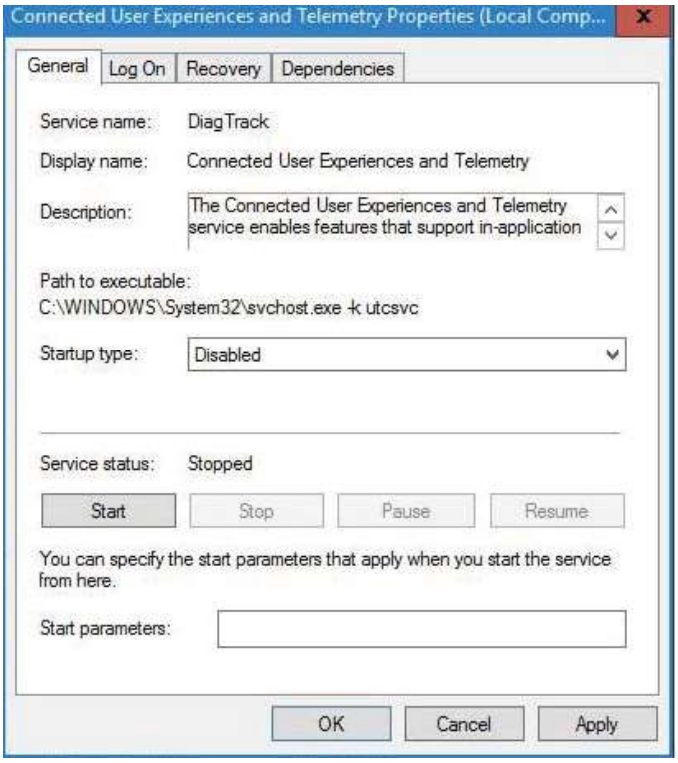


Black Back Gorilla

From Flickr at https://www.flickr.com/photos/helenehoffman/25396174705/in/explore-2016-03-01/. Photographed by Ron Anthony Bautista at the San Diego Zoo. You may see more of his photos at https://www.flickr.com/photos/bautistany/favorites/.

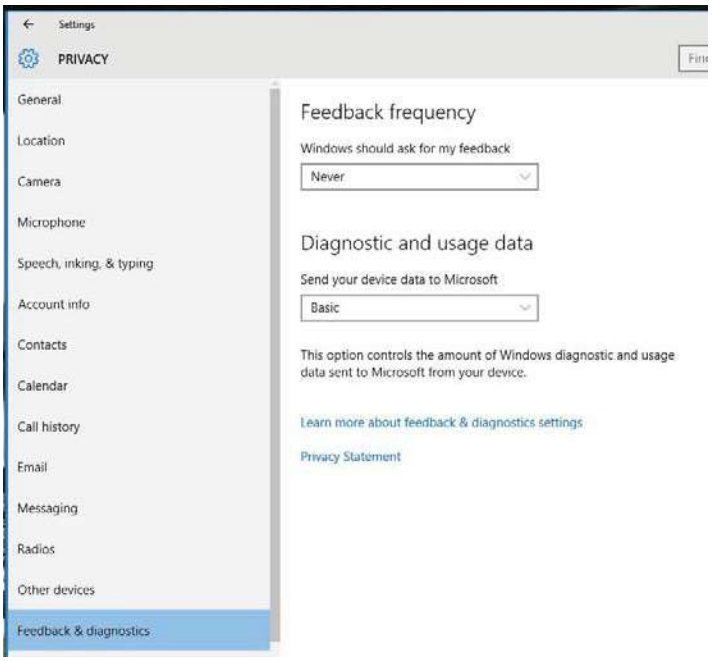
March's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Ask Abby	http://askabbystokes.com/
Flickr - great photos	http://www.flickr.com
The Ed Bott Report	http://www.zdnet.com/blog/bott/
Tampa Police Calls for Service	http://apps.tampagov.net/CallsForService_Webapp/Default.aspx?type=TPD

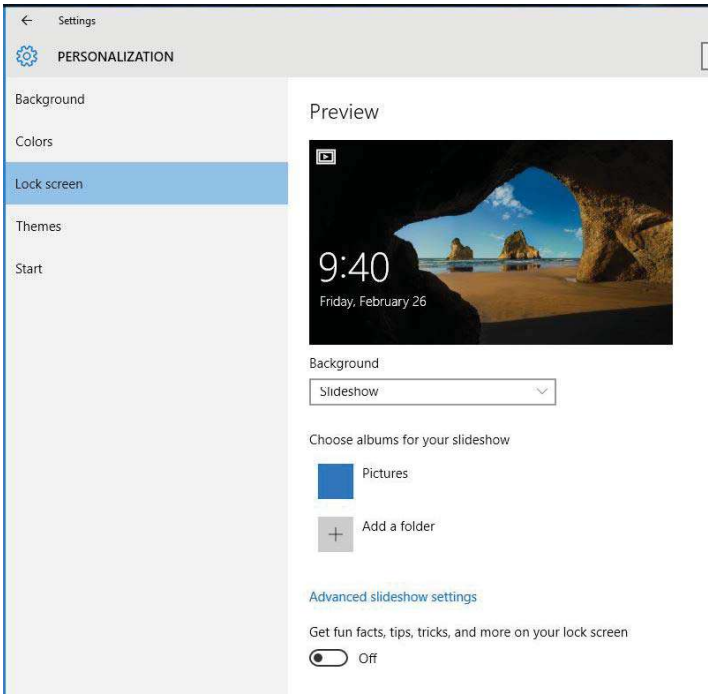


Tips.....Continued from page 4

In Settings, Privacy, Feedback and Diagnostics, Set "Windows should ask for my feedback" to "Never", and set "Send your device data to Microsoft" to "Basic".



Advertising on the Windows 10 lock screen. Yes, that's right. Microsoft has been pretty discrete about this. Some advertizing for a couple of games and for Minions has appeared. It was planned all along to use this for push advertising to you; they finally did and got a lot of flack about it. I probably wouldn't notice it for a long time because I bypass the lock screen, but sooner or later I would want to login as Administrator and maybe see this. As it turns out, there's a setting to turn it off, but like a lot of Windows 10 settings, you wouldn't have guessed it.



In Settings, Personalization, Lock screen, set the Background to anything but "Windows Spotlight", the installation default. I've set mine to Slideshow. Then switch "Get fun facts, tips, tricks and more on your lock screen" to Off. ◆



Verizon.net Mail Moves to AOL

By Ron Weinberg, Member-at-Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

The many Verizon subscribers in Florida, California, and Texas who use Verizon.net email at home or when traveling have already been notified in an email proclaiming new benefits.

You should have also received a separate activation notification message wherein the necessary conversion could be completed. If you use Verizon for email you must take prompt action.

Here are a few important points to be aware of.

We quote from AOL Help. "Your verizon.net email must be moved to AOL before March 15, 2016. If you do not complete the basic AOL registration to move your verizon.net email to AOL by this date, your email will be deleted and you will not be able to use it in the future."

"If you use your verizon.net account to access Flickr, you must update your login ID to another Yahoo account. This action MUST be taken BEFORE you receive the notification that it is time to make the move to AOL Mail or you will lose access to your Flickr account and stored photos/videos. You can complete this process at http://aol.it/flickr."

"If you use your verizon.net account to access other Yahoo services, such as Yahoo Finance or Groups, you will no longer have access to those accounts. You must use an existing or new Yahoo account to use those services in the future. It is a good idea to take a screen shot or print out any information you want to retain before you migrate your verizon.net account to AOL Mail. Then you can mirror that information within your new Yahoo account."

By using the method in the notification you will be able to retain your Verizon.net address. Folders and Contacts and sub accounts will be moved for you. If you attempt to sign up to AOL Mail directly, the connection to Verizon will not be available. Therefore, if you have lost the notification email you may have to call Verizon or AOL for assistance.

If you receive your Verizon email on your local PC through Outlook, Thunderbird, Live Mail, Incredi-Mail, Apple Mail, etc., you will not have to change your POP or SMTP server but you must replace your Verizon email password with the AOL Mail password. Verizon passwords will still be valid for non-email entry to your Verizon account.

Android or iOS users need add AOL to their native email app or download "Alto" or the "AOL Mail News Weather and Video" app.

Additional information is available at: https://help.aol.com/products/aol-mail-verizon. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 3

fine on my desktop computers and also on my Surface Pro 2 that is using the same wireless. The tablet works fine for regular web pages. There is just a problem with my videos (which are quite large).

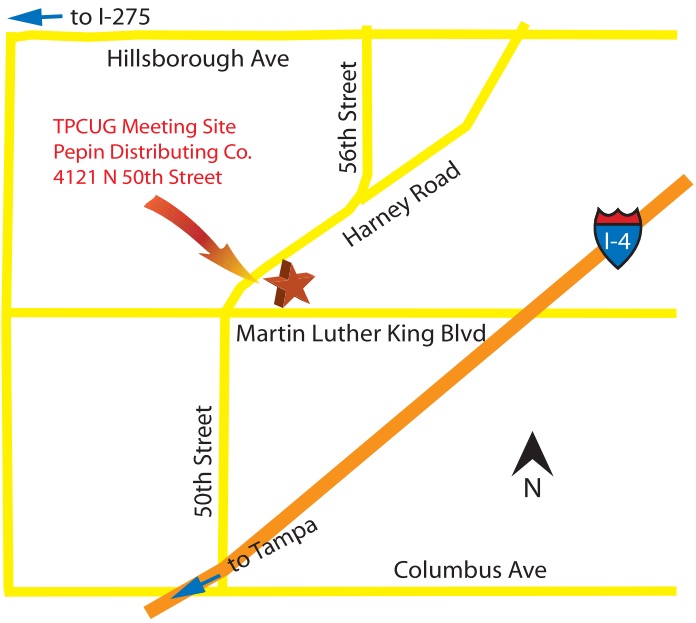
My videos are of three types. Videos that are made of a collection of still photos joined together using Adobe Premier Elements. Then there are ones made up of still photos interspersed within actual movie clips, and finally ones that are exclusively movies. Having taken only still photographs since I was in junior high, I only started taking movies when I purchased a Nikon D800 DSLR that had movie capabilities in addition to still photography two year ago. I never thought I would enjoy making movies but am finding it interesting.

While the Nikon D800 gives excellent results when you have managed to get it correctly focused and held steady, it is not the ideal piece of equipment for making moves. Hence, a Sony HDR-CX900 Full HD Handycam Camcorder is on order from B & H Photo. I am spending my children's inheritance. ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 29 No. 2 February 2016

February in Tampa

Meeting

Window 10 Essential Customizations

by

Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, February 10, 2016

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will present Windows 10 Essential Customizations. Merle will also lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson for his contribution this month, including the Picture of the Month. And Doug Mullis has provided our financial report for 2015.

Speaking of the financial report, we missed renewing with the Florida Department of Corporations for our nonprofit TPCUG, so to renew we also had to pay a penalty of $175, then $65 for the missed 2015 renewal and $65 for 2016. I suppose it was my fault since I am the one who usually does that. However, the state is supposed to send out an email reminding you to renew. I have no record of receiving such an email but do have a record of having received such for the previous three years. In the distant past, they used to send me a postcard. Now I have put the renewal on my Outlook calendar.

There is not a lot of text in this newsletter since I used the space for screen captures of my apps running side-by-side in an Android and a Windows 10 Phone in my Xamarin article.

Comments.....Continued on page 2

March Meeting: To be announced

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Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net) 813-960-4132
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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Merle showed several items of interest in Windows 10; Windows Media Center from Windows 7 and Gadgets restoration from Vista.

The January presentation was given by Bob Gostischa, an independent presenter of Avast!, a free Antivirus for PC, Mac, iPhone and Android. The Avast! "Free Antivirus" gives essential protection from viruses and malware and also "strengthens your home network." There are other paid versions with more features that Bob did not discuss. Bob presents a well-prepared talk on the essentials of Antivirus and was very willing to give advice to the members in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. It was an enjoyable hour and very informative. Thanks go to Bob Gostischa and to Avast! for sponsoring him. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Ancestry.com created quite a furor a month or so back by announcing it would discontinue its support for Family Tree Maker. There would be no new versions and no maintenance after 2016. They want everyone to move to their cloud app and store all their genealogical data at the Ancestry.com site. That did not go over very well with the many thousands of Family Tree Maker users, many who don't want to trust their data to the cloud and who found the web-based app lacking when compared to the desktop version.

Well, just yesterday Ancestry.com relented a bit to say that they will sell the Windows version to a company that already makes an Apple version of Family Tree Maker and they will also enable the desktop Windows program genealogical RootsMagic to be able to sync with Ancestry.com. ◆

Xamarin

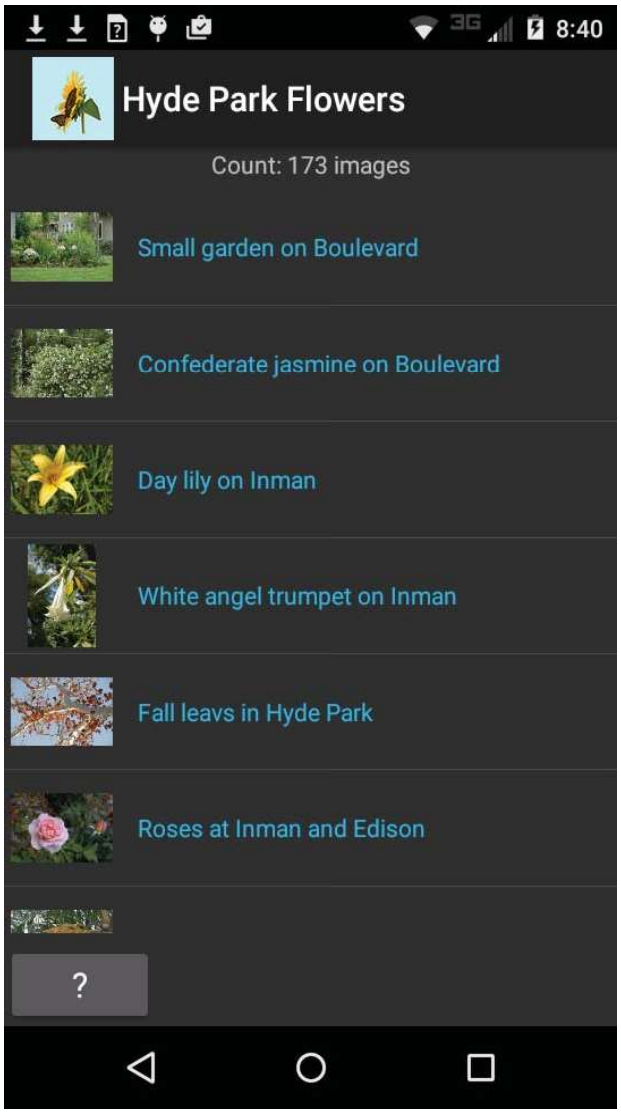
By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

As I mentioned in my comments last month, Xamarin is a software development tool that allows you to develop simultaneously (up to a point) for the three main mobile platforms: Android, iOS and Windows. Also as you probably know, I have been a Windows developer for many years, recently working with Windows Phone and then more recently with Windows 10 Universal apps. The Win 10 Universal apps have the nice feature in that you write one code base and you have an app both for Windows 10 on the desktop/laptop and you have a Win 10 phone app also.

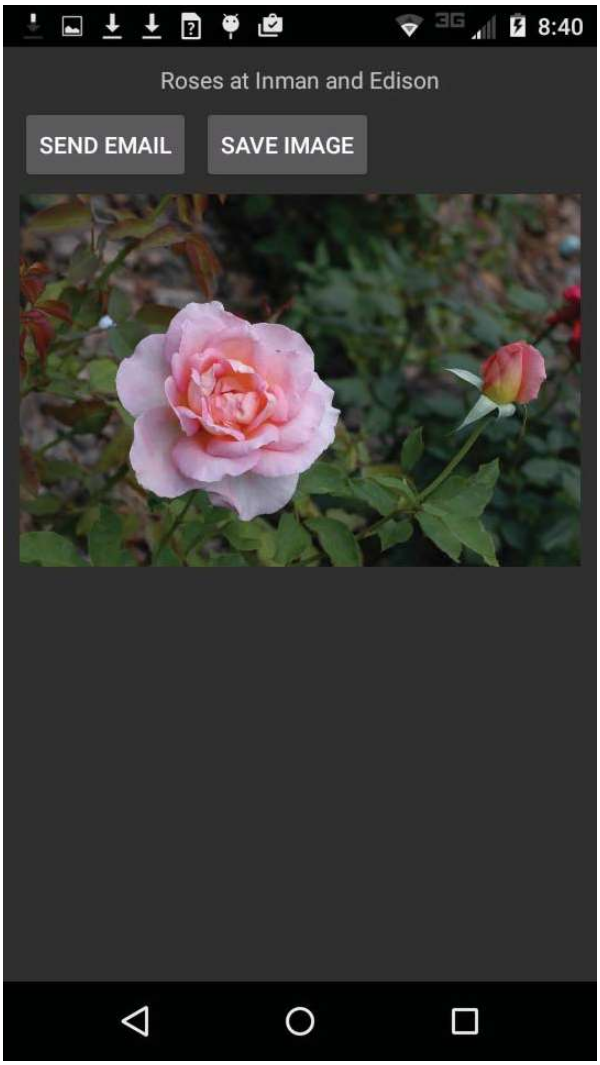
When I heard about Xamarin, I thought, hey, that will allow me to easily port my Windows phone apps over to Android. I didn't include iOS since that would require an Apple computer to compile the code for iOS and twice the cost for Xamarin. What cost, you ask? Well, Xamarin is not free. To use it with Visual Studio you need to pay $1000 per platform per year, discounted to $800 per platform for independent developers such as I. That also helped me omit iOS.

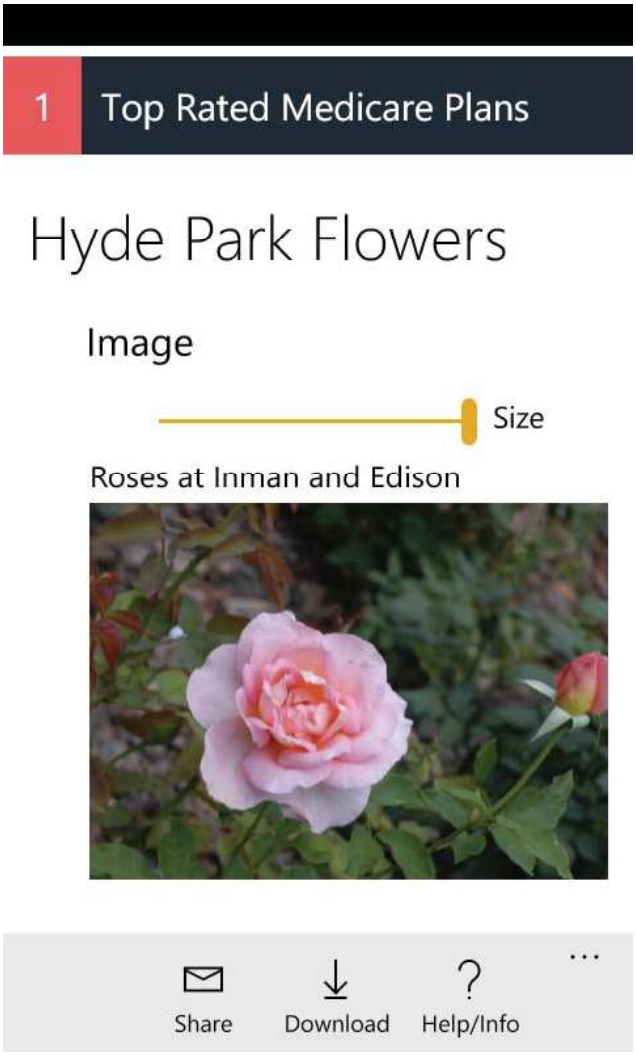
Before going further, note that on this page and the next, there are screen captures of the same app running on an Android phone on the left and a Win 10 phone on the right. The Win 10 version has ads. If the Android app and the Win 10 app are using the same code base, you are justified in asking why the difference in appearance. The reason is that I didn't use Xamarin as it is meant to be used in developing the

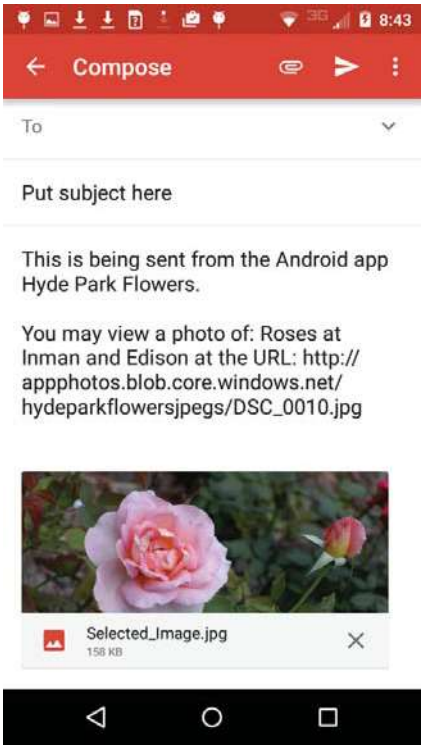
Xamarin.....Continued on page 4







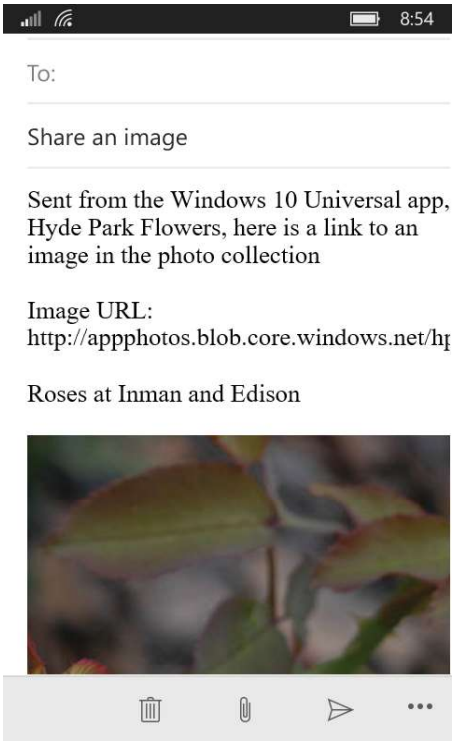




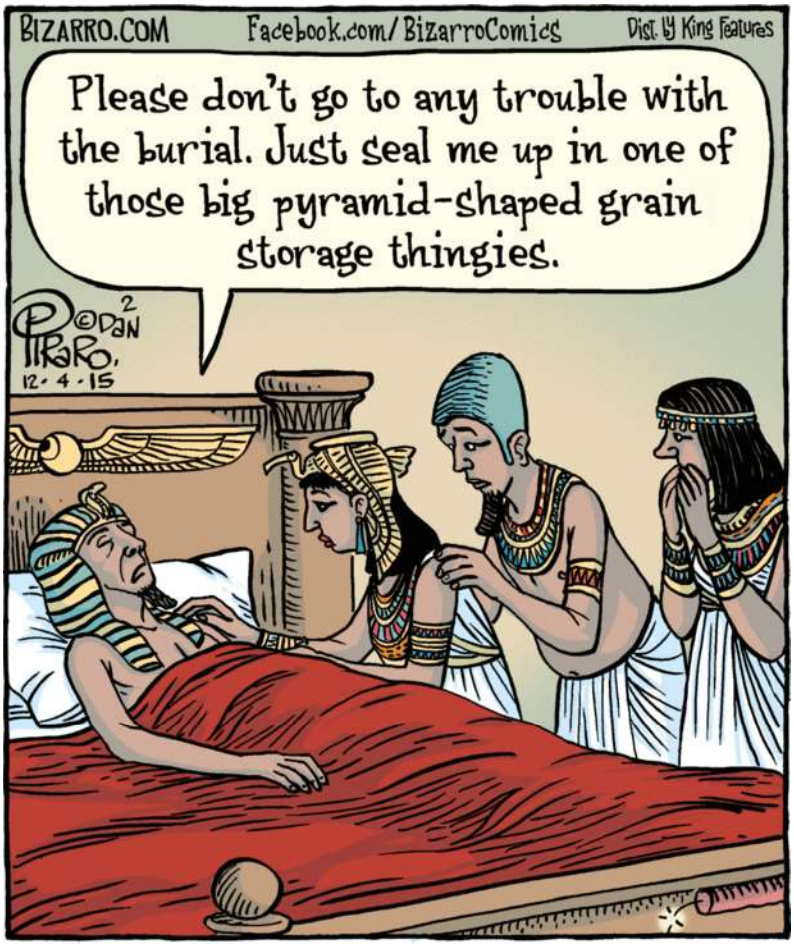
Xamarin.....Continued from page 3

app for both platforms simultaneously. I already had the Win 10 apps, and I only wanted to port the apps to Android – and not use the usual Android development tools. So I simply dropped my C# code for the Win 10 app into the shared part of Xamarin, made a few changes in component names to satisfy Xamarin, such as changing <StackPanel> to <StackLayout>. That got me the Android app up and running with its basic features. To enable features such as sending email and saving an image to the Pictures folder, I had to move to the Android only part of the Xamarin and do what was needed

Xamarin.....Continued on page 6



Internet Picture of the Month

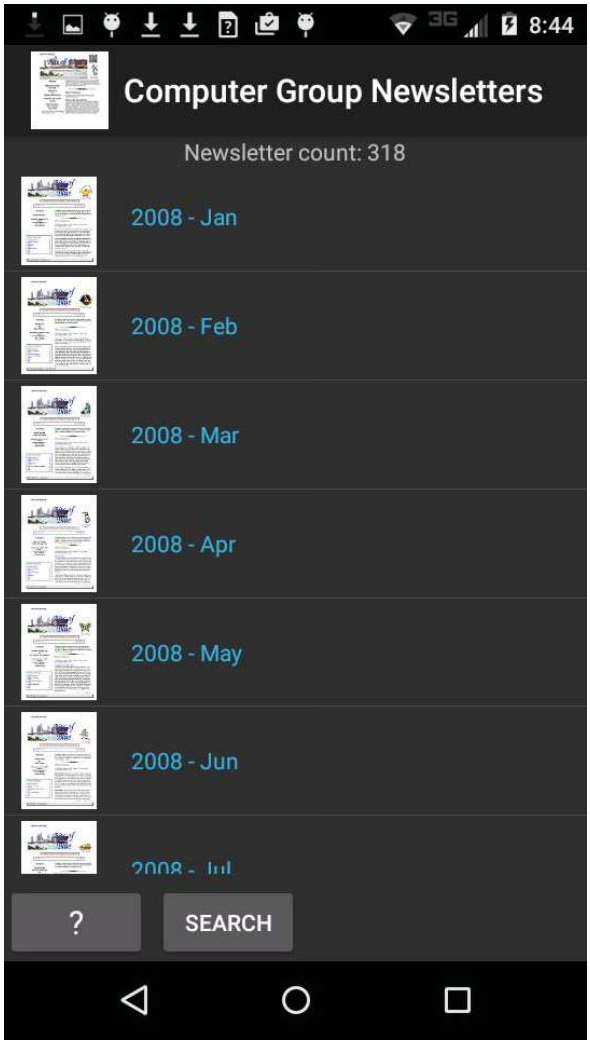


Apparently Ben Carson was correct

From the site http://bizarro.com/ at http://bizarro.com/comics/december-4-2015/. Obviously inspired by Ben Carson's comment that the pyramids were built to hold grain.

February's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Bizarro Comic	http://bizarro.com/
Windows 10 Media Creation Tool	https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10
Suggested changes to Windows 10	http://www.cnet.com/pictures/8-windows-10-settings-you-should-change-right-away/



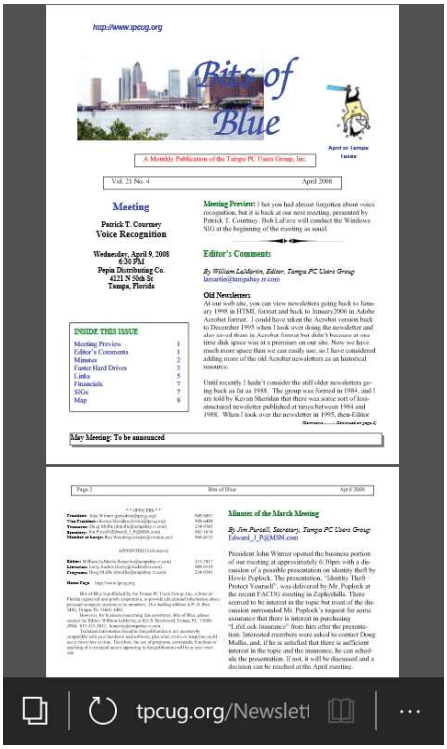




Xamarin.....Continued from page 4

there to be able to send an email with an image attached and also to be able to save an image to the Pictures folder in Android.

A Xamarin Solution in Visual Studio has four projects: A shared code project, then three separate projects for the three platforms. In my work, since I already have a Windows app and am not interested in an iOS app, I only deal with the shared project and the Android project. So far I have ported the Computer Group Newsletter app you see on this page, the previous Hyde Park Flowers app, my Civil War Photos app and my Old Florida Photos app. However, none of the Android apps have yet been published. That is my next project. ◆



TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2015

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2015 INCOME	
Memberships (23 single 5 Family)	750.00
Amazon & Misc.	529.10
TOTAL INCOME	1279.10
2015 EXPENSES	
Newsletter Postage	197.30
Newsletter Printing	464.17
FACUG Dues	25.00
APCUG Dues	50.00
Florida Incorporation Fee (paid in 2016)	0.00
Web Site Hosting Fee (12 months)	181.08
P O Box Rental	80.00
Dec Holiday Party Costs	300.87
Website Domain Fee (good for 3 years)	113.97
Refreshments (Cookies)	0.00
Miscellaneous (connector cable)	54.94
PayPal Fees	8.94
TOTAL EXPENSES	1476.27
NET DEFICIT FOR 2015	**197.17**
BANK BALANCE – January 1, 2015	7508.98
BANK BALANCE – December 31, 2015	7311.81

Submitted by D.W. Mullis, Treasurer, TPCUG

Yahoo Groups email group

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

We have had a Yahoo group for broadcasting emails to members TPCUG@YahooGroups.com for many years, and although there are messages coming out of the group every month, it seems to me the participation is lower than it could be. Will you please consider joining?

The concept and use of the group is pretty straightforward. If you send an email to the YahooGroup, that email gets sent to all subscribers. So you can ask a question, make announcements, send items of interest or ask for help from the entire membership just by sending your email to TPCUG@YahooGroups.com. At least to those members who have subscribed.

Yahoo.....Continued on page 8

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Yahoo.....Continued from page 7

To subscribe, send an email to tpcug-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. It will add the email address that you sent it from. If you're not sure if you're already on the list, just send it anyway, and you'll get a message back to that effect.

We are not getting any spam or anything unwanted from this so far – and it's many years old. There is a monthly reminder to contribute an article to the newsletter and a reminder for the monthly meeting, and an occasional ask for help on one thing or another. It's always had the potential to be truly useful as a way to ask questions of the membership. Will you join? ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 29 No. 4 April 2016



April in Tampa

Meeting

Most Useful Tablet and Smartphone Applications

by

Michelle Burgess

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Michelle Burgess is doing a session on the most useful tablet/smart phone applications and is asking if we have favorites to suggest. Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Brian Lance, Ron Weinberg and Merle Nicholson for their contributions this month and again to Merle for the Minutes of that very well-presented presentation last month.

Last month I wrote: "In the news toward the end of February was that Microsoft bought Xamarin. I had to pay Xamarin $800 to use Xamarin in conjunction with Microsoft Visual Studio to create my Android apps. Perhaps with that purchase Microsoft will now offer the use of Xamarin with Visual Studio as cheaper or possibly even free..... Perhaps they will make an announcement about all of this in April at the Microsoft Build conference in San Francisco." Well, they did, and they made it free, just as is Visual Studio. Now I can hope that they will refund the $800 that I paid on December 28 to be able to use Xamarin with Visual Studio to create Android apps.

Speaking of my Android apps, the downloads of them have

Comments.....Continued on page 2

May Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Merle Showed several items of interest in Windows 10.

The February presentation was given by Abby Stokes, a technology author who concentrates on the basics of technology: computers, phones and tablets (http://askabbystokes.com). The title of the talk was "Is this thing on?" Abby talked on a very wide range of subjects: WiFi, Cellular, hands free driving, passcodes and how to protect your smartphone and battery savings. Abby gave a very informative talk; well prepared and entertaining throughout.

Our heartfelt thanks to Abby for an interesting and informative presentation. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

been minimal. The three of them, *Civil War Photos*, *Computer Group Newsletters,* and *Hyde Park Flowers* have received a total of less than 50 downloads over the past month, with Civil War Photos receiving the most. I didn't expect much because of their content, but I expected more than that since there are supposedly a massive amount of Android devices out there. Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained. And I have just added to the list by publishing *Old Florida Photos* to the Google Play Store. So it gives me something to do and keeps me occupied.

At the end of March, I watched the Microsoft Build conference via a live stream from San Francisco, and I saw a few truly amazing things. The app that left the

Comments.....Continued on page 4

Fixing Bad Menus in Windows 10

By Brian Lance, Tampa PC Users Group
master.pc.tech@gmail.com

I had this happen to a Lenovo Yoga laptop that was upgraded from Windows 8.1. I do not have a screen capture of the original issue, but I can describe it as all menus that had underlined shortcuts, such as Word and Notepad, were bold and misaligned and not the standard font.

I remembered a similar situation had occurred with Windows 7 years ago and tried my usual trick to restart the Themes service. Anyone who knows me knows I typically run with this service off. In this case, I elevated a command prompt to toggle the service to no effect. Rebooting and power cycling also had no effect.

Looking further, I went to the display settings, which, in the 'new' Windows manner, hides many customizations from the user.

Fig 1: Right-click on desktop and select Display settings.

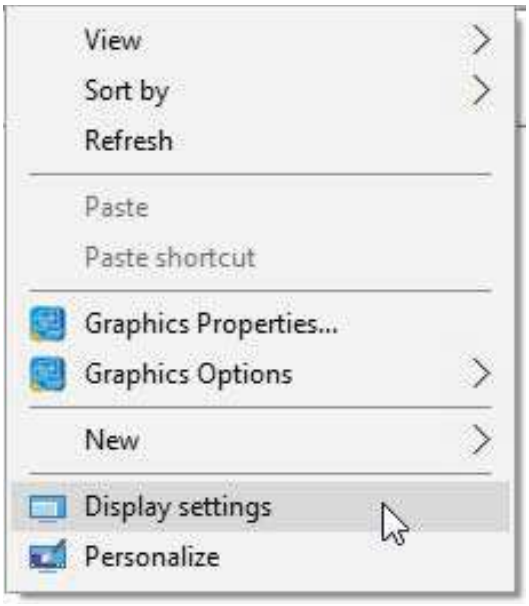
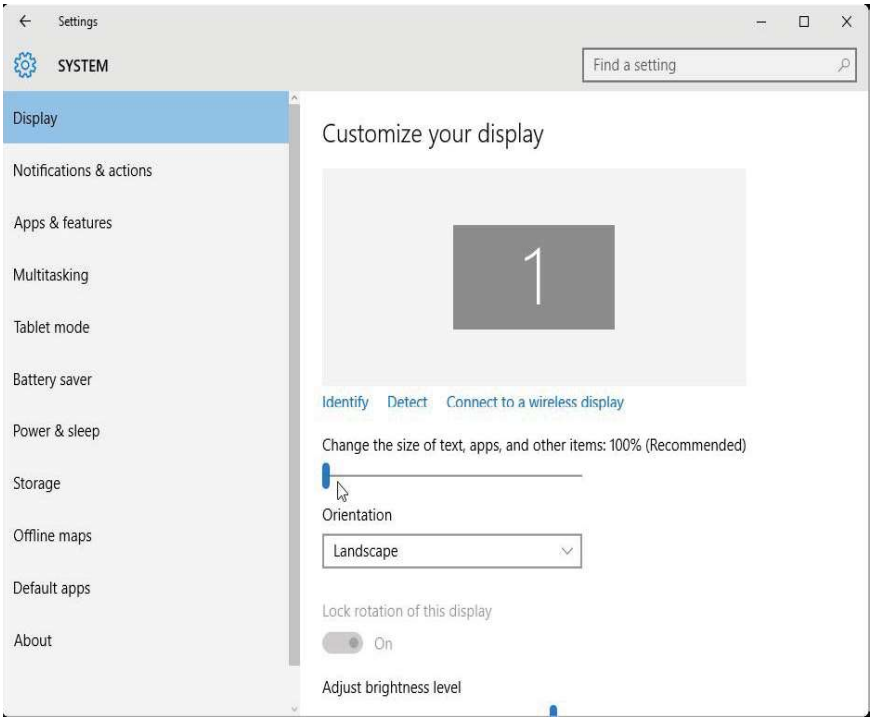
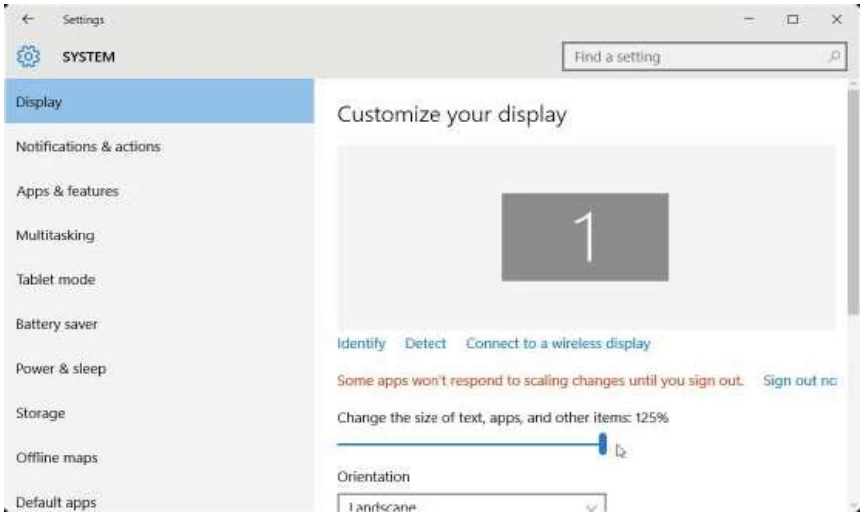


Fig 2: System, Display, Change the size of text, apps, and other items



You'll see the setting here at its default, 100%. My display is slightly crowded, 1366 * 768.

Fig 3: Here is the display at 125% of normal, the only other option for this notebook display. Note that changes are processed immediately, and all was back to normal when toggled back to 100% default. Verified OK after reboot. ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 2

most lasting impression was one created by a Brazilian developer named Flavio Almedia. It was named Pro-Deaf and used the Microsoft Translation API to convert spoken Portuguese into English, which was then converted to American sign language instructions that were then acted out by an Avatar. It could also convert English directly to American sign language instructions sent to the Avatar that went though the motions of displaying the spoken words with American Sign Language.

Below you see the Avatar saying part of "Hello, how are you today?" I don't know what word the screen capture is depicting. So, with this app you can now speak to a deaf person.

Then there was Saqib Shaikh, blind since seven and a software engineer at Microsoft. He created an app that



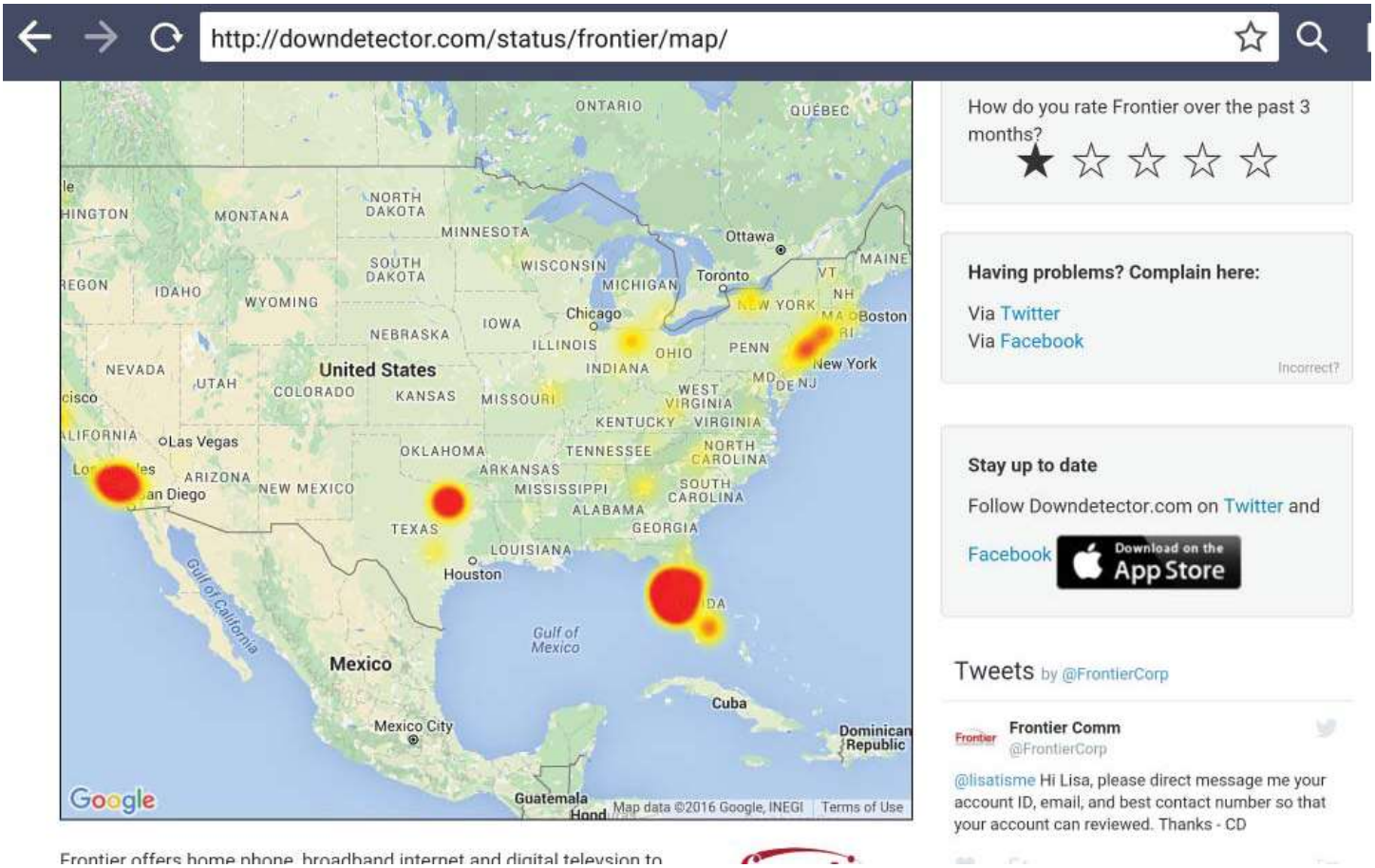


helps you know what is going on around you, based on the Microsoft intelligence APIs. The app runs on smart phones and also the Pivothead smartglasses, pictured above on Saquib. When he swipes the side of these glasses while facing a man on a skateboard as pictured below, it gives him its best guess as to what is happening. In this case it says, "I think it's a man jumping in the air." Of course, the blind person does not see the image below; he only hears the spoken description.



When used on a Smartphone and a restaurant menu is presented to it, it will guide you to position the menu so as to be better viewed by the phone. Then it will read the menu and allow you to request things such as "read me the entries." All of this is truly amazing, and there was much more. I have put a link to the Keynote Address at Microsoft Build Day 1 in the "April's Links" list on page 5 ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Frontier Communications Outage

From the site http://downdetector.com, we have a screen capture of a heat map of the Internet outages on the day of the transfer from Verizon to Frontier of the land lines and FIOS services. This screen capture is from my Asus Android tablet that was receiving a wireless connection shared from my Windows phone (which had a cellular connection) since I lost my Internet all my waking hours on the day of the transfer. This screen capture was made around 10 PM on Friday, April 1. Some of my neighbors never lost service that they noticed, some lost it briefly, and I and others were out all day. Area wide there were many outages as evidenced by the 6,000 plus messages posted to a site I viewed following the problem. Frontier has said the problems were minimal.

April's Links

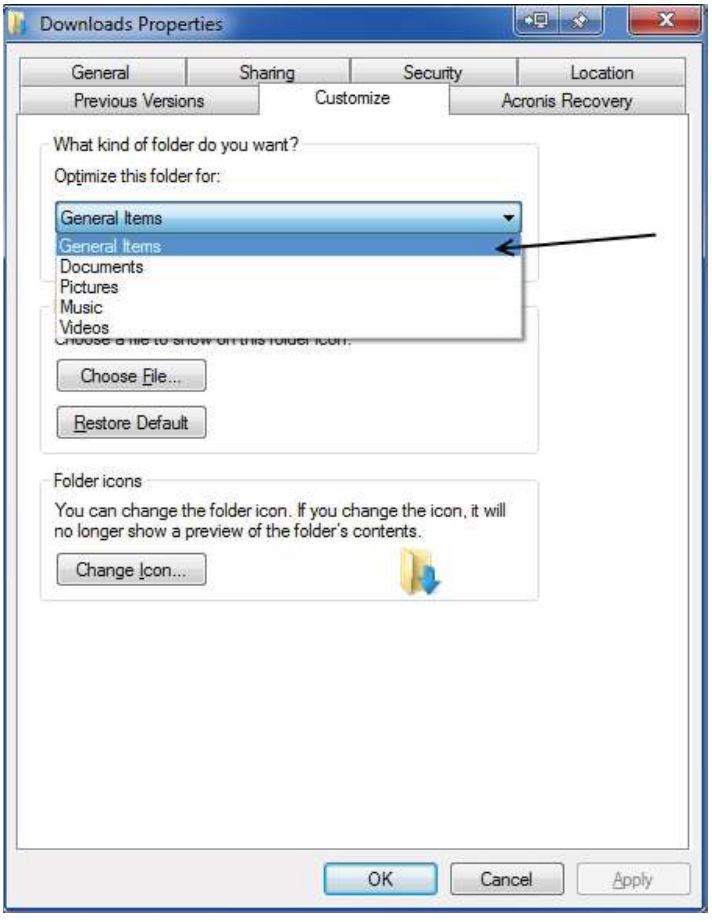
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
Microsoft Build Day 1 Keynote address	https://channel9.msdn.com/Events/Build/2016/KEY01
Historical Photographs of New York City	http://www.oldnyc.org/
Microsoft Edge's Favorites Folder location	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoEQdKfFkZk
How to Tie your shoes	http://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2015-11-12/how-to-tie-your-shoes-and-lace-your-shoes-the-best-way

Windows 10 for April 2016

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa Pc Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Here is an interesting factoid I wasn't aware of. Windows folders are optimized for the type of files in them, and sometimes they're done non-optimally. A case in point is that your Downloads folder is optimized for Pictures, and since folders for pictures generate thumbnails of each one, this slows the opening and scanning of all the files. Instead, change the optimization to "General Items", and opening the folder will be much faster. Here's how.

To do the above, open the Downloads folder and right-click on an empty spot, select "Properties", tab to "Customize", and change the "Optimize this folder for:", and select "General Items" instead of "Pictures". There is a check box just below for "Also apply this template to all subfolders", select OK or Apply. Note, too, that you can change the icon that the shortcut uses, and even use a picture in its place. This works in Windows 7 as well,



and I'd assume Windows 8 if you haven't upgraded to Windows 10, but I've not verified that one.

I've been upgrading a friend's/customer's PC the last couple of days. It was necessary because the motherboard blew out on an electrical fault that left a burn on the board. So the motherboard and processor needed replacing. The new motherboard required new memory, and the drive was four years old. So I added a 1TB Samsung SSD, and just to be safe a new power supply. So there's very little left of the original PC. I first built it in 2004 with Windows XP, then rebuilt in 2009 with Windows 7, so this is the third time around with Windows 10.

The Windows 10 upgrade for Windows 7 is evolving. The screen prompts are very much different than they were a couple of months ago. There was no mention of using a Microsoft online account for the user account. There were three pages of options, mostly concerning choosing your preferred level of information ("telemetry") sent to Microsoft. You have to read the prompts carefully, but as it says on the page, you can opt to make changes to the settings after installation.

For the upgrade media choice, I use the Windows 10 media creation tool, which will download the latest software and either write the software to a USB flashdrive or to disk in ISO form. If you choose ISO, then you can easily write the ISO to a DVD disk using ImgBurn. Installing from a USB3 flashdrive is easy as long as you pay attention. For me, it took an hour installing on that new SSD.

There are still settings left that you must change to minimize Microsoft's involvement. I've covered them in previous articles, and there are surely more to come.

And finally I installed some software over the top of Windows 10 to improve the experience. I installed "Classic Shell" – a menu system, 8Gadgets – to restore desktop gadgets introduced in Vista, Windows Media Center, and Microsoft Games to replace the crappy games collection that Windows 10 provides. I like 7-Zip and FoxIt PDF reader.

One new discovery is that the "Windows Live Family Safety" from Windows 7 no longer works, producing errors in Windows 10. Signing into any account gives a

Windows 10.....Continued on page 7

Save on Ink

By Ron Weinberg, Member-at-Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Inkjet printer users know that no matter how inexpensive an inkjet printer may be, the cost of cartridges to run them is steep. According to *Consumer Reports,* ink costs from $13 TO $75 per ounce or $9,600 per gallon, one of the most costly liquids known, far exceeding the finest aged wine. There have been two recent developments addressing this problem: Epson's new tank printers and HP's Instant Ink.

Epson's Tank Printers
Epson has introduced four new ecotank Supertank Printers. These are equipped with refillable tanks instead of cartridges. Each new printer comes with up to two years' worth of ink, enough for 4,000 to 11,000 B&W or 6,500 to 8,500 color pages depending on model. Prices range from $279 to $499. There is also a new business professional heavy duty model which uses ink packs.

These are full featured all-in-one and wireless capable printers, two of which include FAX and Ethernet.
With prices starting around $279, these do not compete with the $99 and less than $99 type printers and likely would not really be cost effective for users of those basic printers.

HP's Instant Ink
HP's Instant Ink is a service available for only certain eligible HP printer models. Current HP Instant Ink eligible printers are the HP ENVY 4500 series, HP ENVY 5530, 5660, 7640 series, HP Officejet 4630 and 5740 series and HP Officejet Pro 6830 and 8610/8620/8630 series, and Officejet 8040 Series with NEAT®.

- 2.99 per month provides ink for 50 pages, ($1 for each additional 15 pages.)
- You can rollover 50 unused pages.
- $4.99 per month for 100 Pages, ($1 for each additional 20 pages.) You can rollover 100 unused pages.
- $9.99 per month for 300 pages, ($1 for each additional 25 pages.) You can rollover 300 unused pages.

Ink usage is monitored on connected printers automatically via Internet. You never run out of ink. Free shipping for cartridges and return of the used ones is included. You get genuine HP ink cartridges. All calculations confirm this will produce substantial savings. HP owners who have an eligible model would likely benefit from the Instant Ink plan.

Neither of these two options is the perfect or complete solution to high ink costs. Other attempts to reduce costs have been made, notably by Kodak who later abandoned the printer business.

For those considering a new printer, if an ecotank or eligible HP is not for you, check reviews and do some online research. It should help determine printer models which are likely to be more economical than others. Also, consider Laser printers, more costly to buy, cheaper per page, especially for high volume printing. ◆

Windows 10.....Continued from page 6

notification flag that it failed to run. Looking it up using an internet search gives plenty of information on what Microsoft expects you to do to replace it. If you go to the Microsoft Family Safety website, it's clear that you must sign in with a Microsoft account, and identify the family structure. There is no mention of how to clear the startup error messages. Research into that just brought up that you go to Control Panel, Programs and Features, Windows Essentials, select uninstall and then select the family safety item for removal. But that family safety item is not on this panel, and it is nowhere to be found. Not Essentials or Windows Live. Eventually the startup error stopped on its own.

Last, I must mention that you must make a full system backup before upgrading, and I've been taking my own advice, and it really saved me this time once again. Actually it saved my customers data and all her pictures going back 10 years. In my complacence, I put her pictures at risk without thinking about it, and I had an unexplained failure of a disk clone (Acronis DiskDirector) that wiped out both the old disk and the new. I was absolutely distraught, kicking myself for putting both disks at risk at the same time.

I'd started the clone and headed for bed and within five

Windows 10.....Continued on page 8

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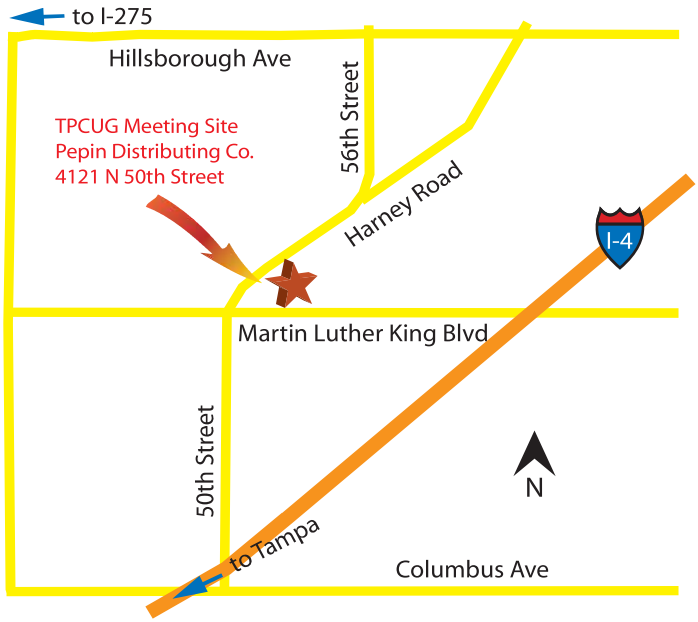
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Windows 10.....Continued from page 7

minutes I realized that both drives were attached and running at the same time, and slept knowing that the likelihood of something happening to them was slim. When I got up I attached the new one to the new system and it failed to boot, and the Windows 10 installation drive failed to repair it. I found the same result with the old drive. I was so distraught I wasn't thinking clearly, and when I calmed down I realized that of course I had done a complete system backup to a portable drive that I could recover from. If the recovery worked, that is. But it worked. I used the Windows 10 installation flash-drive and selected "repair this computer", then "Restore System Image". I did this on both the old drive and the new. The old drive is mounted inside the case, but not hooked up as an emergency full system recovery. It was replaced because of its age and was working fine. Sitting unplugged it should outlast the computer itself.

The new Windows 10 backup program is called "File-History," not "Backup and Restore". FileHistory is a scheduled backup system that backs up just personal files. But "Backup and Restore" is still on the system renamed to "Backup and Restore (for Windows 7)". "Backup and Restore (for Windows 7)" seems to be fully functional. It clearly says it's to recover backups made with "Backup and Restore" made from Windows 7. It can be used however on Windows 10, and that's how I made the System Image Backup. So I'm mentally kicking myself for doing a dumb thing, but congratulating myself for being in the habit of doing backups. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org





Vol. 29 No. 5 May 2016

May in Tampa

Meeting

Windows Backups

by

Dave Palmer

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Dave Palmer will be moderating an interactive session on windows backups, and we need your help.

The idea is to present the schemes that our members use for backups and discuss them. So in preparation for this, if you will put your thoughts down: Computer type, software used, backup hardware (external drives etc), backup frequency and bring that with you. Or better still:

If you feel that a presentation slide would be interesting, email it to Dave and Merle and we'll put it on the screen. We can handle Google Slides, Microsoft .PPT and LibreOffice Impress formats. Or any document type for that matter.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Dave Palmer for their contributions this month. The newsletter sort of snuck on me this month, and if not for Merle asking me about its status, it would probably have been late. And it still might be a little late since I am struggling to get it finished and to the printer with the hope that they will print it immediately.

Comments.....Continued on page 2

June Meeting: To be announced

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Merle demonstrated several Windows 10 Tips and settings items.

The presentation was given by a TPCUG member, Michelle Burgess, on her favorite applications. It turned pretty interactive with lots of suggestions and quick demonstrations. It was a lively and interesting session.

Favorite apps: Keyring, Google Maps, Bubble Levels, Google Goggles. Michelle opened the Windows 10 store and we looked at Fresh Paint (Interesting!), USA Today, iHeart Radio, TuneIn, Allrecipes Video cookbook, PicSketch (turns your photos into pencil sketches) and My Radar (available for Android as well)..

Our heartfelt thanks go to Michelle for an interesting and informative presentation. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

I have taken a slight break from programming and have been using my new Sony Video Handycam to take videos and then edit and piece them together in Adobe Premier Elements 14. You may have a look at my amateur attempts at my website http://www.lamartin.com by selecting the Videos menu item.

In closing, I note that Microsoft, after purchasing Xamarin and then making it free to developers, refunded anyone who purchased the program after February 1 their purchase price. I paid $800 on December 28, 2015, so I missed out on the refund by 34 days. That's $23/day to use the program. I am not happy. ◆

What Interesting Phone Apps!

By Dave Palmer, Baord Member,
Tampa PC Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

At last month's TPCUG meeting, Michelle Burgess demonstrated a wide variety of highly-rated smartphone apps. I'll attempt to recap the presentation. Michelle began the presentation by recognizing our own William LaMartin's apps, Computer Group Newsletters, Hyde Park Flowers, Civil War Photos and Old Florida Photos. They are free, and I understand they are available for Microsoft and Android but not iPhones. I especially like the fact that the newsletter app is searchable.

First Aid, an app by the American Red Cross looks especially useful. They advertise it as "…expert advice for everyday emergencies in your hand." The app features videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice.

Are you tired of carrying around all those loyalty cards? Key Ring might be a solution to consider. One of many such solutions, the app offers the benefits of carrying not only your loyalty cards, but also the stores' weekly ads, coupons, and your shopping lists – all in one app.

One app that woke up my normally dormant inner-handyman was the Bubble Level app. My understanding is that this and similar apps use the accelerometer in the phone (the chip that allows your phone display to move when it's tilted) to help create a digital image of a working spirit level. Some apps also display the angle in tenths of a degree. Looking at the range of similar apps, I'm drawn to the 'tool kits' that contain a range of useful tools. One that caught my eye is the Army Knife for Android. It contains a flashlight, a unit converter, a timer, a stop watch, a compass a bubble level, a calculator, a magnifying glass, a mirror and a ruler, depending on the hardware/software combination. For us primitive Homo habilis (handy man) types a tool kit like that is nearly irresistible. The permissions on that app are quite benign. No forays into my phone looking for my location or contact list.

Frank Weitzman mentioned a highly-rated app called Like That Garden - Flower Search. This and similar apps take image recognition and attempt to extend it into the garden. As Frank mentioned it's a work in progress, but is improving by leaps and bounds, much to the delight of tech-savvy gardeners.

Google's app Goggles was discussed as well. This highly interesting app is a combination of tools - image recognition, optical character recognition (it 'reads' print), translator (Goggles can read text in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and Turkish, and translate it into other languages), as well as a barcode & QR code reader. The app works by taking a picture - a landmark, a famous painting, a barcode or QR code and Goggles will bring you information on the image. If you take a picture of text in a foreign language, Goggles will provide a translation.

The bottom line is that there are many (many) potentially useful and interesting apps available. Thanks for the interesting meeting Michelle ◆



Casper 8.0 Disk backup/utilities by Future Systems Solutions, Inc.

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

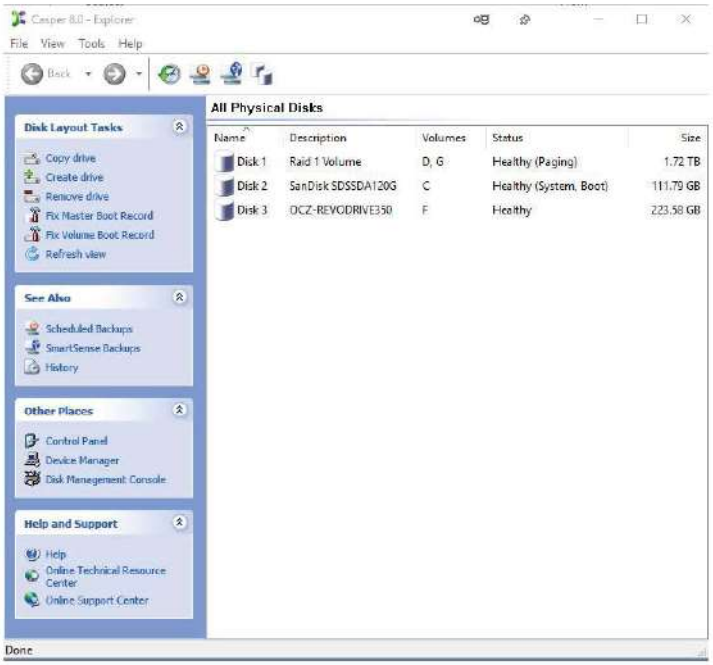
I've been using Acronis for many, many years, through our long term relationship with Gene and Linda Barlow at http://ugr.com/, and I expect that to continue. But I recently ran into something that Acronis was failing at. I needed to make a clone disk of my primary boot drive for the transition from Windows 7 to Windows 10, and Acronis failed with an error message that it failed to read from sector yada, yada. I wasted quite a bit of time trying to find out what was going on, because I had a good working boot drive with no errors … and well, it's not a mainstream disk product. It's an OCZ (Now Toshiba) RevoDrive, an SSD that is plugged into a PCIe video slot and is about three times faster than a conventional SSD. So I contacted OCZ and they acknowledged that they know of the problem and it isn't their fault, and they are having good service from Casper. So I downloaded a 30-day trial version from Future Systems Solutions, and cloned the drive. Since then I have purchased a standard one-user version for $50. Yep, a bit expensive if you have more than one computer as I do, but I can stick with Acronis for my other three Windows machines (Server, notebook and Media Video machine). Gene and Linda have attractive multi-computer license prices.

I like to use Casper. It's a simpler user interface compared to Acronis, and it covers everything I want to do, which includes making full image backups using wizards, and creating a boot disk on USB. I do full image backups to the server, and I also clone all the boot drives to separate drives so they can be connected in seconds and get a machine running quickly without software. You just mount the cloned drive physically, and boot to that. The prices for good quality drives are now so low that I value my time much higher than the $60 it takes for an alternate boot device.

Casper makes that clone process fast and easy, and I do mean fast. I cloned my primary drive on my desktop to an SSD in minutes. I don't know how long it takes, but it's not more than 10 minutes.

There are three entry points to launch Casper: Wizard, Explorer and SmartStart. SmartStart figures out for you which drive it thinks you need to back up and pre-configures the settings. If it guesses wrong, it's no harder to change to what you want than any other backup method.

Explorer interface shown below.



Explorer has a good collection of utilities like the "Fix Master Boot Record", create a startup disk and Schedule a Backup.

Launching Casper into Wizard gives you the basics. Copy Drive, Create Image, Restore Image. All other actions are on the menu, or you can jump to Explore. See the screen capture on page 6.

The current version (8.0) is not yet optimized for Windows 10. I asked their support about Windows 10 before I purchased, and here's their reply.

"We are currently preparing a new version of Casper specifically for Windows 10. That said, there are no known issues with creating or restoring a backup

Casper.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



The Tampa Tribune is No More

The Tampa Tribune was purchased by its local rival, The Tampa Bay Times, on Tuesday, May 3, 2016. The image above is from a video at the Tampa Bay Times website, http://www.tampabay.com with an actual link of http://www.tampabay.com/news/business/tampa-bay-times-purchases-tampa-tribune/2275765?platform=hootsuite. The announcement is being made by the Times CEO, Paul Tash.

From the accompanying article: "The purchase marks the end of the 121-year-old Tampa Tribune as a daily newspaper. It was started in 1893 when Wallace Stovall moved his existing news operations to Tampa from Bartow, according to Tribune files. Stovall's first Tampa Morning Tribune debuted on March 27, 1893, and became a daily in 1895."

May's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
AnyWho	http://www.anywho.com/whitepages
London review of Books	http://www.lrb.co.uk/
Scientific American	http://www.scientificamerican.com/
Project Gutenberg	http://www.gutenberg.org/



Casper.....Continued from page 4

of Windows 10 using Casper 8.0. (NOTE: Due to a driver change in Windows 10 support for booting directly to a USB backup is not currently supported, but booting from an internal backup or alternate external connection (e.g.,eSATA) is fully functional.) Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance. Thank you."

I can recommend this product; having a simpler user interface may justify its higher price, but keep in mind you may want to delay if you're using Windows 10. Also you can contact them and ask them to waive the charge for the upgraded version when it becomes available as I did. The normal upgrade price is $25, and in my opinion it should have been ready for Windows 10 a year ago. https://www.fssdev.com/

In my opinion Acronis has been trying to add some minor functionality every year and changing the look without actually justifying a new product every year. I'm happier with my Acronis 2009 than my Acronis 2015 because the new user interface is messier. It has that flat, colorless "material" design with no borders. Still, the price for multiple computers is much more attractive, and Gene and Linda make it easy. ◆

Continuum

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

It is a pity all of you don't have a Microsoft Windows 10 phone, either a 950 or a 950 XL. Since if you did then you wouldn't need a regular computer for most of what you do. I think most people only surf the web, use email and possibly work with Microsoft Word or Excel. With certain Windows 10 phones, you can do all of this on a screen of any size and also do it with a mouse and keyboard--but without a laptop or desktop or tablet device.



What you need in addition to the phone, is a Microsoft Display dock ($99), pictured above as the small cube looking device with all the cables emanating from it. In that photo there is a power cable, a USB cable to the phone, an HDMI cable to the monitor, USB cable to the mouse and also one to the keyboard.

What apps can you use? Anything that will run on the Windows 10 phone. That includes the usual phone apps plus the Edge browser, Outlook email, Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint and OneNote. And these last Microsoft items are quite full-featured.

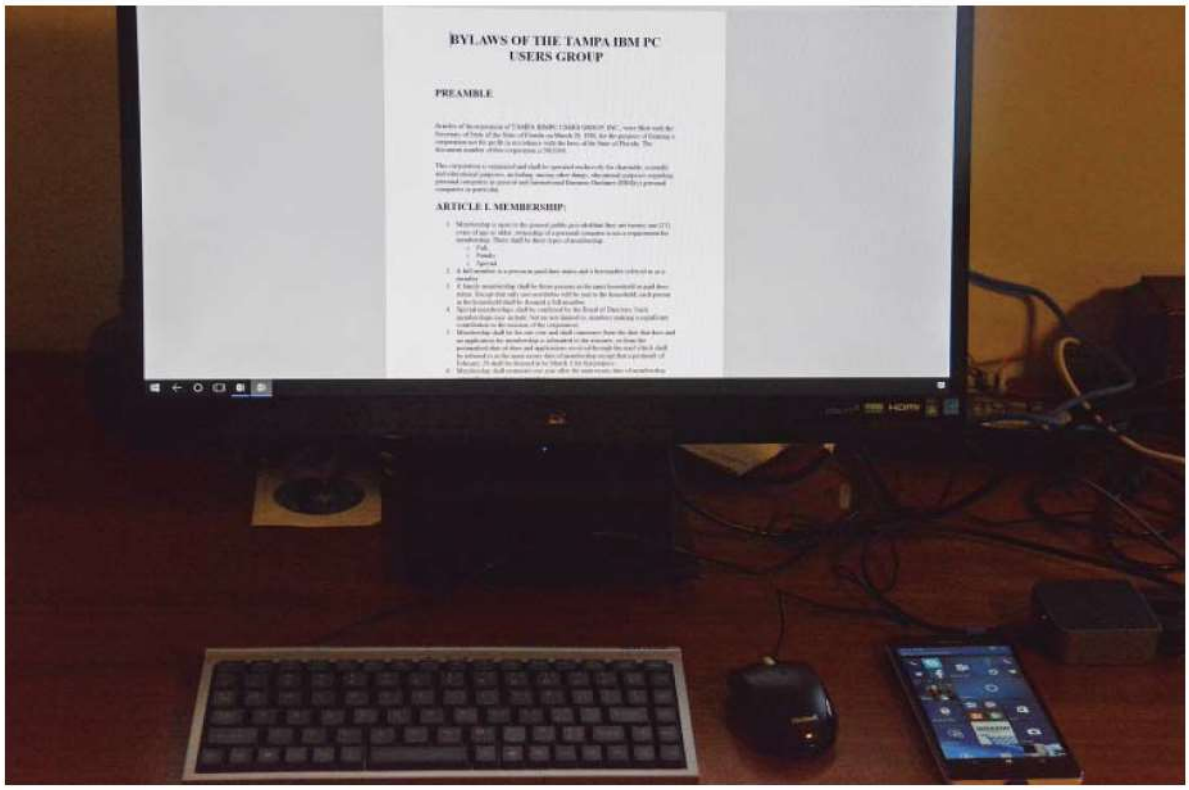
And if your monitor has wireless connectivity, then you can connect the phone to it in that manner with no cables. I have no such monitor or TV, so I cannot test that feature. However, you can view it in use in the

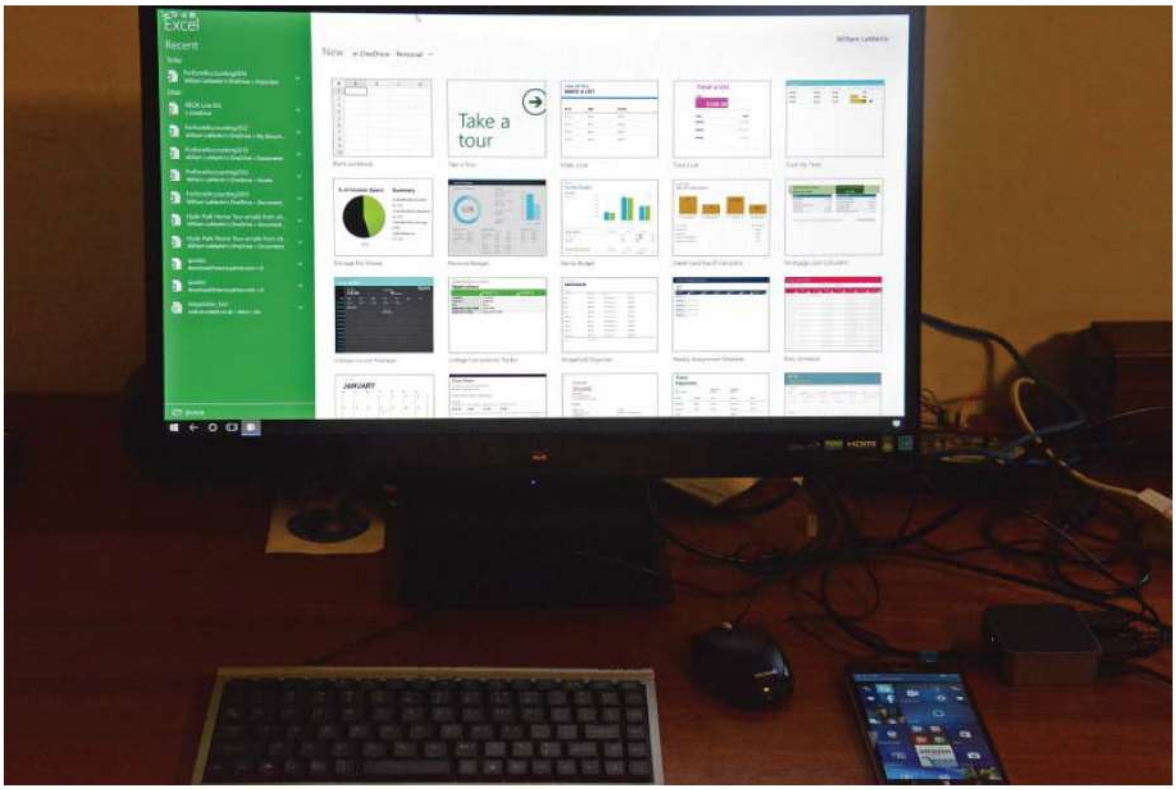
Continuum.....Continued on page 7

Continuum.....Continued from page 6

demonstration video at this link: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/Continuum.

I don't have much to say about Continuum at the moment other than I have used it, and it works. I have created and/or edited both Excel and Word documents using it, as pictured below. I also have opened and viewed PowerPoint presentationes but have not done any editing in PowerPoint on the phone using Continuum. ◆

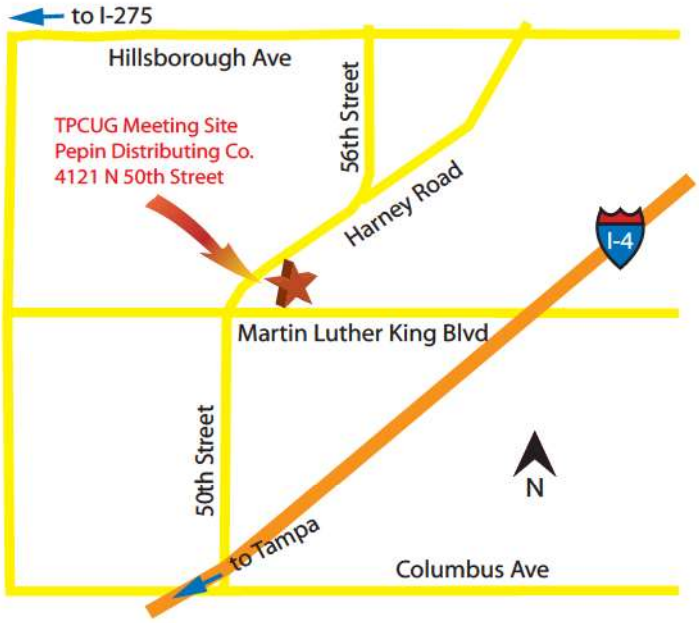




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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 29 No. 6 June 2016



June in Tampa

Meeting

Google Maps &Google Earth
by
Brian Lance

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Brian Lance will give us the details on Google Maps and Google Earth. There is probably a lot more to these two items than you would think.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Dave Palmer and Ron Weinberg for their contributions this month. Now this is important:

The July meeting, not the current meeting, is moved up one week from the usual second Wednesday to the first Wednesday of July 6

I have for the past few months been receiving a tremendous amount of email that have attachments on which I know I do not want to click. I send all of them to the Deleted folder. I have heard from others who are experiencing the same problem. Typical subjects are:

Photos; attachment Photos
New Invoice; attachment INVOICE_editor.zip

Comments.....Continued on page 2

July Meeting: Blain Barton from Microsoft - July 6

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Merle demonstrated the change on the TPCUG website that launches the latest newsletter in PDF. Thanks go to our webmaster, William LaMartin.

The presentation was a discussion of members' data backup methods moderated by Merle and Dave Palmer. The subjects were wide-ranging from online backups, file transfer methods, Acronis, Casper, Truecrypt at grc.com, and RAID drives. Also discussed were file backup and imaging and duplicate boot drives as were files that don't need backing up. It was a good and lively discussion for the entire membership present. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

(I received about 10 of these in one day)
Court Meeting; attachment information_944141.zip
Information request; attachment changes_editor.zip
RE:copy; attachment doc_copy_info.zip
Your Package #53797; attachment security_53797.zip
Re; attachment responses_william.zip
+49 22338293137; attachment Fax 49 22338293137.doc

You get the idea, and there are many more. I think they are all dangerous. So just delete and don't look back.

Links: I think it is time to retire out Links section of the newsletter that has appeared on page 5 of the newsletter since January, 1996. Back then we often had 20 new links every month. Now I am finding it more and more difficult to come up with any interesting new links, simply because I do not wander

Comments.....Continued on page 8

A Difficult Windows 10 Upgrade

By Ron Weinberg, Member-At-Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

We are nearing the end of the time frame (July 29, 2016) wherein the Windows 10 free and automatic upgrade is available. Those who have not so far proceeded and wish to do so should not wait until the last minute as problems may occur. After completing this upgrade and before you read about the difficulties encountered, I would like to offer a recommendation.

For the average person the choice should be: If the automatic upgrade works, fine. If not, unless there is a need for Windows 10 features, which is doubtful, my suggestion would be leave well enough alone and stay with Windows 7 or 8.1. Of course, if there is a known quick fix or minor tweak a competent user could proceed.

The first of the attempts to upgrade the ASUS N61Jq laptop (Windows 7), began in late 2015. Completion took over six months of intermittent work. One must ask why put so much effort into a 6-year-old Laptop? In truth, the average non-technical layman would have been unlikely to complete the task and would have experienced a series of frustrations leading, and properly so, to the abandonment of the project.

I am very experienced, stubborn, and was challenged by the failures involved. The laptop is a full featured i7 model, definitely worthwhile. It was my choice to upgrade mainly to keep it current.

Documenting this upgrade and its failures in detail took over four pages. The following is a summary.

The process was complicated because of the absence of a Windows 10 Compatibility Checker and the presumption that all Windows 7 systems could be easily upgraded.

Microsoft was of little help in dealing with the many issues that occurred, nor was the PC's manufacturer.

All solutions were obtained from Google research of similar issues, User's forums, my own experience, and some luck too.

As I researched each problem, I found that others had encountered the same or similar problems. Many suggestions were offered, some worked, and some did not. In some cases multiple solutions were offered for a problem. It was necessary to guess which might be the best or to try them by elimination.

My first try in late 2015 failed, presumably due to defective Windows Update Utility and numerous hard drive problems. The hard drive was subsequently replaced with a new SSD (purchased Jan. 3, 2016). Windows 7 was completely reinstalled from a clean copy and programs reinstalled.

The second attempt also failed for reasons unknown. I was able to access the recovery menu and return to Windows 7.

For the third try after which, if it failed, I did consider keeping Win 7. I decided to try the Media Creation tool. It appeared to be installing well and then it stopped leaving a blank black screen. I tried to reboot several times, to no avail. I couldn't get to the recovery menu to recover Win 7 nor could I get into Safe Mode no matter how many times I tried. Google revealed blank black screen was a frequent issue, generally device related. It was suggested there might be a new second video driver that should be removed with Device Manager (which was inaccessible). My only hope was to restore Windows 7 with the backup image and Win 7 recovery disk.

This Laptop always operates on AC as the battery is worn out. In order to move it to the location of my backup external hard drive, I unplugged the AC adapter. And the screen came alive and said "Hello Ron" indicating the upgrade was almost complete. I plugged the power back in and the screen went black. I repeated this several times realizing that it was a power issue. I ruled out connection or power supply problems since the disconnect worked. I took a chance, and went into Control Panel Power Options

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and switched from High Performance to the "Recommended" selection. This mysteriously woke the system. Still, the upgrade did not work properly. The next day there were many "Machine Check Exceptions". These were supposed to cause a restart but didn't. No error numbers were indicated.

A "Machine Check Exception" is accompanied by the blue screen (BSOD) and indicates some kind of hardware error but is not very specific. It can result from Device drivers, Registry corruption, or damaged system files.

I had to manually restart. I also encountered locked up conditions where mouse and keys did not function. Finally restored again to Widows 7 from disk image backup.

Later, I found that the black screen problem was caused by the upgrade's change to generic AMD-ATI driver instead of a customized ASUS driver. Pressing (FN+F6) turns the screen back on. Several failures occurred because when the screen went black I assumed it was processing but when after a prolonged period it did not come back I rebooted, thus aborting the upgrade.

The next try encountered Windows Update Error 0x80070057. I ran Windows Update Troubleshooter, Windows Update Diagnostics.diagcab, Fix Windows Update-setup.exe, and Microsoft Fixit 50123.msi. After which there were "Machine Check Exceptions". Again, they were supposed to cause a restart but never did. Reboot was required. Thereafter, locked up conditions occurred where mouse and keys did not function. Each time I had to manually restart. Reluctantly I restored again to Windows 7 from disk image backup.

Drivers are most frequently the cause of failures in the upgrade and I located an independent European site that listed all the Windows 10 drivers for my model. Not every driver listed was needed.

April 26, after several weeks passed, I Installed most optional Windows 7 Updates, Created Windows 7 Image Backup, Uninstalled ASUS Control Deck, Performed Disk Clean and updated Drivers for: ATK Package (which controls function keys), Realtek Audio, (LAN) Atheros AR8131 Gigabit Ethernet, and Elan Touchpad. Next I disabled Avira Antivirus Program during the upgrade and upgraded via Media Creation Tool. When the black screen appeared, FN+F6 immediately turned it back on. The Upgrade completed successfully. Avira AV required an update. Then I ran Windows Update too.

The next day there were continual lock ups; the System froze completely. Research found a fix that seems to have corrected the issue: Control Panel-Power Options-PCI Express-Turn Link State Power Options OFF

Day 3, Start menu stopped working and Search box frozen. This too was a known problem, fixed using Windows PowerShell and it reinstalled Windows Apps quickly and automatically after entering the proper command line.

April 31, (Next day) Start Menu and Search box stopped working again. I performed a system reset which supposedly kept files but removed many programs including all the vital ones needed. System Reset produced a report "Apps removed while refreshing your PC." After reset completed, I ran Windows Update again.

May 1, I was preparing to reinstall missing programs but system failed again "Machine Check Exception" with BSOD. Completely unusable. Suggestion was to disconnect hard drive. So I opened the case and disconnected the Hard Drive and reconnected. This seemed to alleviate the lock up. Then I installed the missing programs: Avast AV (replacing AVIRA), Acrobat Reader DC, Chrome, IncrediMail and Contact List, LastPass Chrome Extension, Skype Desktop, LibreOffice. The Ethernet controller was missing so I downloaded and installed Qualcomm Atheros AR9285 Gigabit Ethernet Driver.

Many items, particularly bloatware ASUS proprietary programs, were left uninstalled as some may have contributed to the earlier problems. I decided to wait and see, watching carefully for the next few days.

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Internet Picture of the Month



Beaches

From the Wall Street Journal, http://www.wsj.com/articles/beach-party-1464359770, we have a selection of photographs of beaches from Gray Malin's new book *Beaches* that he took from a helicopter.

"Flying over this beach in Barcelona, Mr. Malin directed the helicopter toward a cluster of bright umbrellas, only to discover there were no people there. It turned out to be a film set." That is the photo pictured above.

June's Links

The Links item is being discontinued, as discussed in the Comments section. It has run for 20 years and four months. Look back on some of the old newsletters starting in January of 1996 to relive the past by seeing the 20 or so new links listed each month. Do many of those sites still exist? I don't know because I have not checked. But I think that would be an interesting historical exercise to check. Goodbye Links!

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May 2, System won't Wake from sleep mode. Tried changing power settings, but before I could complete them the system began freezing completely.

It will freeze as soon as you reboot, even in sleep mode. No way to add drivers or any other repair without reset or retuning back to Windows 7. System seems to be running hot. Shut down and allowed to cool. Problem continued when cold. Had to perform another reset. Created Restore Point before adding back programs. Added ATK Package, Intel Driver Update Installer, which I ran, and the appropriate AMD VGA Windows Driver.

May 3, Removed Sleep Button from Start Menu Power section and through all settings of the active power plan. Reinstalled Avast, IncrediMail, Chrome, and ran Windows Update. Created another Restore Point and reinstalled LibreOffice and Skype Desktop.

May 5, Chrome would not connect. There have been some reported problems with Chrome and Windows 10. I considered uninstalling Chrome and using Microsoft Edge but before I could on **May 6**, the System completely froze again with "Machine Check Exception" as on May 1. Both times the exception was to restart after collecting some information but did not. I had decided enough was enough.

In a last and final effort? on **May 7** I re-flashed the system BIOS. Voila! Everything worked! But, on May 19 the system froze again.

I restored it to **May 12** (Restore Point) and installed Chrome again making sure it was the 32 bit version as the 64 bit had been reported troublesome. Everything now seems to be working properly.

After all of the above I cannot claim complete success, but I am cautiously optimistic. It has truly been a learning experience. ◆

Cleaning, Scanning & Backing Up Your Computer

By Dave Palmer, Baord Member,
Tampa PC Users Group
dkp205@hotmail.com

Like many others, the process of backing up my data didn't interest me greatly until I lost a lot of data. It was a traumatic experience. I found my religion pretty quickly after that. That was nearly 20 years ago. Since then I've been on a quest to create a backup system that would protect me from such losses ever again.

Over the years, I've been part of a number of discussions on the topic. Many have been one-on-one and some have been in small groups, like the one at the TPCUG meeting in May. It turns out many others have been through traumatic experiences similar to mine. Some of them are on a similar quest.

Many people don't back up their data at all. I can understand that. They may have never lost valuable data. Or they may have looked into backing up their data, and found that it can be difficult, as well as complicated, to do it well.

I found Merle's backup system quite interesting. He's applied a lot of thought, and a lot of technology, to the problem and come up with a system that works well for him. His backup system is based on the configuration of his computer system which is a bit unconventional. That's worth an article all on its own.

William has a system too, quite different from Merle's but it works for him. I've spoken to people who are minimalists – they use the online Carbonite system, and nothing else. While it seems a bit inadequate to me, it works for them. That may be the key, to find a backup system that works for you.

I think there are several basic principles involved in any backup system.

1. **Only backup data that has significant value**. If losing last year's episodes of the Walking Dead wouldn't shake your world, why spend the time and effort to back them up?
2. **Don't backup data that doesn't need to be backed**

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up. This is Rule 1 from a different perspective. Computers accumulate a lot of temporary files and other useless data. Why spend time and energy backing that data up?

3. **Don't backup the same data again and again.** Data that changes frequently needs to be backed up frequently. Data that does not change ('static' data - like last year's tax returns) should be put in an archive and only backed up infrequently.
4. **Don't back up any data that you aren't sure is 'clean'** (uninfected).
5. **When you do backup, make multiple copies.** The general rule is 3-2-1, make 3 different copies, in 2 different formats, and keep 1 copy off site. Redundancy is the key to successful backups.
6. **Verify that your backup copy is good, or that it can be restored.** In an emergency you need to have confidence your data still exists and can be restored. A backup that cannot be restored is worthless.
7. **Automate the backup process wherever possible.**

Here's a brief explanation of my backup process. At the end of the article I've listed some resources to help you find and download these programs safely.

I start with preparation. I like a clean house so I dump the trash and uninstall programs I'm not using. If I have accumulated any 'static' data, I move it to my archive. I then use **Ninite** to update all my major programs - why backup an out-of-date program? Next I run the free version of **CCleaner** to clean out temporary files both in Windows and in various applications. Now, with some confidence that I've minimized the amount of data to backup, I use multiple scanning programs to search out any malware and PUPs (potentially unwanted programs). I currently use the free version of **Avast!**, a paid version of **SuperAntiSpyware,** and a paid version of **Malwarebytes**. These choices change occasionally. Once I have some confidence the computer is relatively clean, I create a restore point and run **MozBackup** which backs up my data and configuration of both FireFox and Thunderbird. To back up data I currently use **FreeFileSync**, to sync 2 copies of my current data. My last step is to use **Acronis** to create multiple images of my system. Luckily I still run the 2014 version so I haven't run into the problems Merle and William have. I don't run validation on these images as it would take twice as long. To compensate, I keep the 3 latest past versions of the image. This is certainly not ideal, but then my backup system is a work in progress. I think the next step in the evolution of my backup system will be to clone my hard drive rather than use Acronis. I may also try to emulate some features of Merle's backup system.

While many people use online or 'cloud' services as backups, I share William's concerns about corrupted data. I use Dropbox and once saved a file that somehow got corrupted. When I went to my other devices and the cloud to retrieve an uncorrupted version, it turns out all of the current copies of that file were corrupted. That surprised me for a moment. But then I realized that the purpose of Dropbox, and other similar cloud services is to 'sync' files, not to serve as a backup system. While Dropbox keeps 'previous versions' of files, the previous version of my corrupted didn't contain the most current data.

As for an offsite copy of my data I currently use an encrypted 4TB SSD. On it I keep a current copy of my data and a current copy of my system image. I keep that drive in a backpack in my truck.

Resources

Proceed cautiously when downloading programs. Read everything. Watch for checkboxes associated with unwanted toolbars and other programs. Unless downloading programs from major, reputable websites, check the website or .exe file through VirusTotal.com

Ninite - An easy way to install and/or update multiple programs all at once. https://ninite.com/

CCleaner - Utility that can delete temporary or potentially unwanted files like browsing history, cookies, recycle bin, memory dumps, file fragments, log files, system caches, application data, autocomplete form history, and various other data. Unless you are an experienced user, use with caution, especially with registry files. https://www.piriform.com/ccleaner

Avast - An anti-virus, anti-malware program. It can be set for 'silent mode' to show no ads. Although it comes with many features, I have not used any of them. https://www.avast.com/en-us/index

SuperAntiSpyware - An anti-virus, anti-malware program. I use the Professional (paid) version and keep it running in the background. http://www.superantispyware.com/

Malwarebytes - A highly recommended anti-virus, anti-malware program. I use the paid version and keep it running in the background. https://www.malwarebytes.org/

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antimalware/

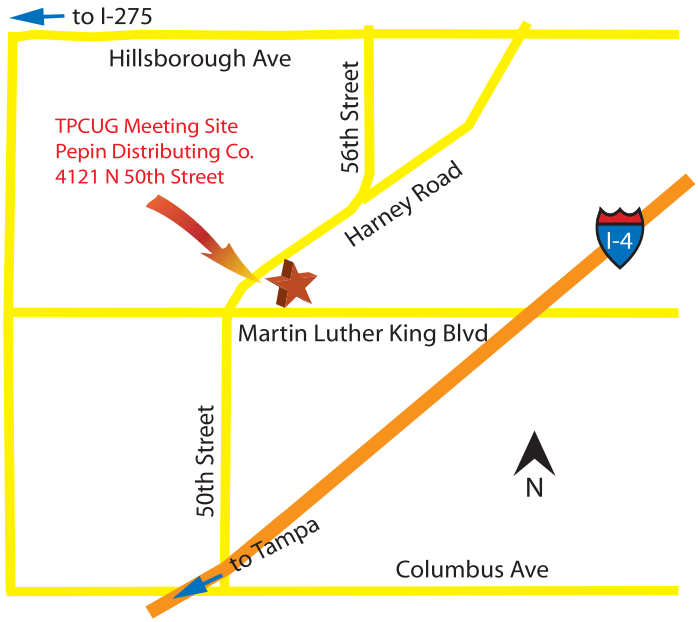
MozBackup - This is a utility for creating backups of Mozilla products including Firefox, Thunderbird and many others. It allows the backup and restoration of bookmarks, email, contacts, history, extensions, passwords, cache etc. Developers site- http://mozbackup.jasnapaka.com/ More info from Mozilla - https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/questions/985211

FreeFileSync - Helps synchronize files and folders for Windows, Linux and Mac OS X. Developers site - http://www.freefilesync.org/

Acronis - A utility that creates an 'image' or snapshot of the entire computer system that can be restored after a catastrophe. http://www.acronis.com/en-us/ ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 2

around the world wide web as much as I used to. I basically read three news sites, the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Bloomberg News* and go wherever they may take me I do no Social Media.



Furthermore, when I started the Links item, there was no Google, which was founded in 1998. There were search engines, but they were manually updated and not all that helpful. Now if you want to find a site for a particular topic, you simply do a Google or Bing search for it. So I think it the Links item has served its purpose and needs to be retired. ◆

http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



July in Tampa

Vol. 29 No. 7 July 2016

Meeting

Understanding

Microsoft & DevOps

by

Blain Barton

Wednesday, July 6, 2016

[1st Wednesday - Not 2nd]

6:30 PM

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Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft will give us a look at the newest technologies for building infrastructure in the cloud from a Developer and Operations perspective.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson's article on Windows 10, there is very little room for anything else in the newsletter this month. And that is fine with me, since it is usually, but not always, a struggle to find enough material each month.

This July meeting is moved up one week from the usual second Wednesday to the first Wednesday of July 6

In the small amount of space Merle has left me, let me say I have done the unthinkable: Purchased an Apple iMac. Now, don't get the idea that I am going over to the dark side. This iMac is to serve a special purpose. I have decided to extend my app publishing to include iOS devices in addition to my

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August Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Merle demonstrated using the Windows Store and how to keep Microsoft from hijacking your local account.

The presentation was given by a long-time member, Brian Lance, on Google Maps and Google Earth. He demonstrated a lot of useful capability that just isn't obvious. Cameo by Google Earth searches businesses and routes, drag and drop way points on route, a menu to embed and share map boundaries and custom saved maps.

He demonstrated fine measurement of closed polygons in a Google map to get area in acres. Draftlogic.com has plugins: Google Maps Area Calculator tool, Send a position, and Maps Guestbook. Staticmapmaker.com is a service that generates HTML to display an imbedded map on your website. All in all, this was a very interesting and useful demonstration of the uses for Google Maps. Thanks must go to Brian for an entertaining and useful presentation. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Windows and Android apps. And to do that I needed an Apple computer on which to compile the code that is created in Visual Studio using Xamarin. That was not necessary when I wanted to use Xamarin to create Android apps from my already existent Windows 10 Universal apps. Android was happy to be compiled on a windows computer. But Apple is special in this regard. Thus, I made my first Apple purchase since the mid-1980s when I would have been purchasing items for the Apple IIe I had back then. ◆

Windows 10 Priority One For New Installations

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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I'm using Windows 10 successfully, but only after being satisfied that I've done all I can to change some of the behaviors through policies and settings. Let's face it, it's rough around the edges. The start menu and PC settings are a work in progress, as is Edge. Some Windows 10 settings are just strange and inexplicable, and then some policies and settings just are not in your best interest. Fortunately, there are legions of technical people out there looking for solutions for us. Here's a compilation of what I've found and implemented myself. I consider every one of these mandatory for all computers. I have implemented all of these on my own computers and others as well.

Note to readers: Instead of typing the URLs referenced in this article, go to the TPCUG.org website, and on the first web page, open this current newsletter. There you'll find that all the links in this article are live. Just click on them.

Below is a link to an article that got me inspired to write this. I don't agree with the priority, and it's not complete, but it's worth a read, and it has some excellent instructions. But be sure to read my own advice below on some of these same subjects.
http://www.itpro.co.uk/operating-systems/25802/fourteen-windows-10-problems-and-how-to-fix-them-3
and this article is similar with a different set of issues.
http://www.howtogeek.com/227827/windows-10-is-great-except-for-the-parts-that-are-terrible/

The following is in my own priority order, with a quick explanation and the best solution I've found.

Convert to Local Account from a Microsoft online account Some will certainly disagree, but I believe that setting your login account and password on your computer and then giving it to Microsoft over the Internet (daily) is an unconscionable risk. Yes there are advantages to do that, but every reason is contrived to encourage you to violate a basic security principal. If you look at what every corporation does - many hundreds of millions of secure computers, you won't find one that does this because it's automatically turned off for Windows domain users. The initial Windows 10 installation setup assumes you want a Microsoft account, and actually obscures local account setup. Also, the Windows Store will hijack your local account if you're not careful. More on that later. Here's a good article to convert back to a local account.
http://www.howtogeek.com/230543/how-to-revert-your-windows-10-account-to-a-local-one-after-the-windows-store-hijacks-it/

I used the word "contrived" reasons to discourage local accounts. For instance, the Family Safety feature, which was a part of the "Windows Live" set of software is still there but now requires it be managed from on-line accounts and even requires an email address for each child. That's shameful and unnecessary. This was a very valuable tool to protect vulnerable children from predatory websites. PC Magazine now rates it at a very poor 2. Instead, Google search for "Best Family safety software". It appears that Net Nanny and Norton Family Premier is still prominent. In any case Microsoft is encouraging you to convert to Microsoft accounts to get something that they used to offer for free. That's a contrived reason. It's the same for Microsoft Games.

If you elect to stay with Microsoft Account sign-in, all the changes below apply, but there's more security and privacy setting that need to be done than is covered here. Start with "Settings", "Accounts", "Sync your settings". And a lot more.

Administrator Accounts If you follow my articles over several years, you will know that I advocate setting up a local Standard account for daily use and activating the Administrator account, invoking the Administrator name and password only when needed to install or make changes to the computer. Microsoft actually advocates this as well, but you have to deliberately go looking for it.

Windows 10.....Continued on page 4

Windows 10.....Continued from page 3

Using your computer in a Standard account blocks any outside influences - ransomware, viruses, malware from installing anything on your computer. Or maybe 95% of it. Microsoft should have a wizard that helps you set up accounts and encourage every new installation to use it. Instead, they are actually making it more difficult. After years of doing this pretty much in my sleep, when it came to Windows 10 I gave up and started looking for a tutorial.

Activate the Administrator Account. Every Windows OS has a hidden Administrator account. Activate this account - it puts the name on the login screen - and give it a very good strong password. Using that account, convert your regular account to "Standard". Create separate Standard accounts for children or anyone else using the computer.

In Win 10, right click on the Start icon, select Command Prompt (admin). Enter: net user administrator /active:yes . Then set the password with: net user administrator . enter the password and then again to confirm. Here's a good article.
http://www.ghacks.net/2014/11/12/how-to-enable-the-hidden-windows-10-administrator-account/

Create a new local user account. If you try to add a new local account in Windows 10, you find as I did, it's incredibly difficult. A tip: when asked for the online Windows account name, click on the item that says you don't know it. That moves you forward, otherwise you'll never find it.
http://www.howtogeek.com/226540/how-to-create-a-new-local-user-account-in-windows-10/

System Protection, System Restore. This is the system that manages restore points so you can revert to the last good system or undo damage that an update or driver installation has caused. It's just as important now as it was in 2002 with XP. But in Windows 10 it's disabled by default. That's just astounding. But it's still there; it needs to be turned on.
http://www.howtogeek.com/237230/how-to-enable-system-restore-and-repair-system-problems-on-windows-10/

Boot into safe mode. If you think you can boot into Safe Mode using F8 early enough - just after POST, think again. It's gone. But we can get it back. Actually you can go into safe mode in several ways but all of those ways require you to boot into Windows first, and I don't know about you, but every time I needed Safe Mode is because I can't boot into Windows. Or you can use a Rescue Disk or a Windows installation disk. Here's what it looks like.
http://www.howtogeek.com/107511/how-to-boot-into-safe-mode-on-windows-8-the-easy-way/

Add Safe Mode to the boot menu. This really works; I've done it, but I consider it technically challenging. Look at this first, but the best way is the subject after this - activating F8.
http://www.howtogeek.com/245175/how-to-add-safe-mode-to-the-windows-8-and-10-boot-menu/

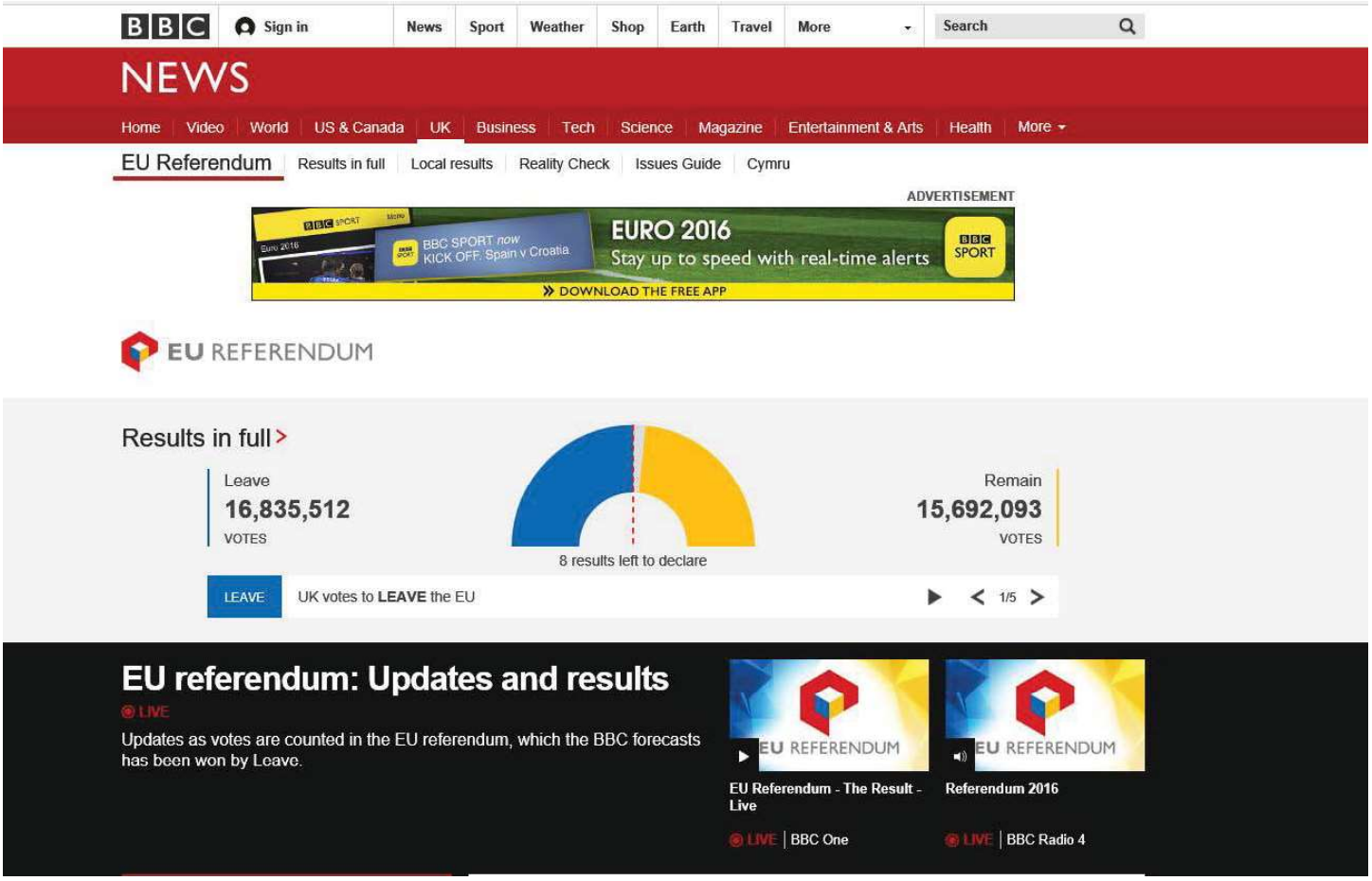
Add F8 Safe mode on boot. This article was written for Windows 8, but Windows 10 is the same. This option gives you the white text menu on black screen with a lot of options. It looks identical to Windows 7. You press F8 repeatedly very early in the boot sequence. I do have one computer where this does not work, I suspect because of a dual boot system in place. So I implemented the option above this one.
http://www.howtogeek.com/164001/how-to-make-the-f8-key-work-for-safe-mode-in-windows-8/

Restart to BlueScreen. This appears on systems back to XP. If you have a serious enough hardware problem you get BSOD, Blue Screen of Death. But sometimes not. You can actually set it to automatically restart! after a System Failure and as a result, boot right back into the failure, and leave yourself confused as to the reason. This is supposed to be Unchecked, but I find it time and again on computers as checked, don't know why. I check for this on every computer I set on my workbench, perhaps 20 a year, and I always find some to change to unchecked. The setting is called "Startup and Recovery, System failure, Automatically restart"

Control Panel, System, Advanced system settings, Advanced tab, Startup and recovery is seen in the leftmost screen capture at the top of page 6. Then click the Settings button there and get what is shown in the

Windows 10.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Brexit

A screen capture from http://www.bbc.com taken at 12:59 AM Eastern Time of the page at the BBC's website displaying the current status of the British vote to leave the European Union. At that moment the exit side had prevailed. On another page at the site, they were running a live broadcast of talking heads giving their opinions on this, the majority saying that it would have dire economic consequences.

Windows 10.....Continued from page 4

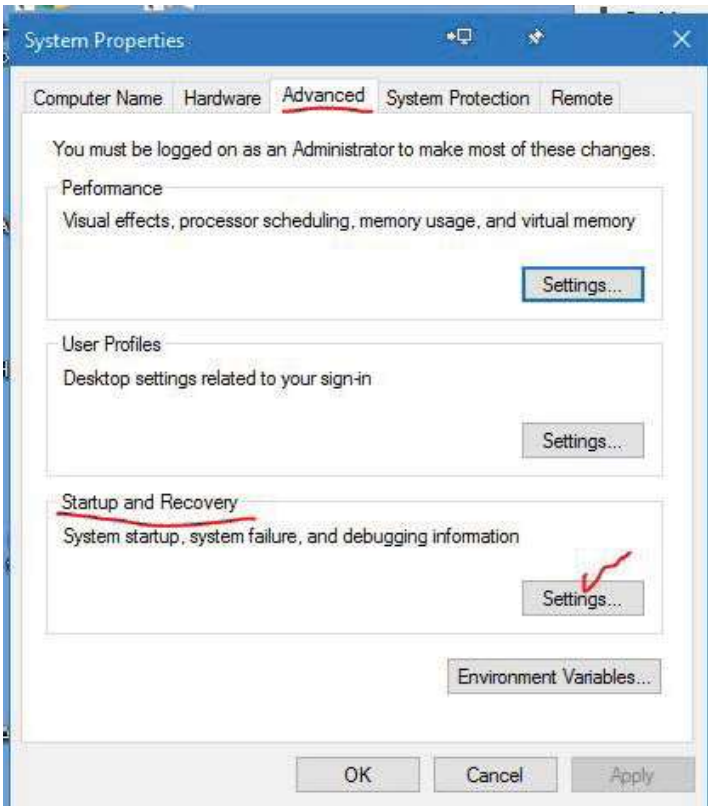
right-most screen capture at the top of page 6.

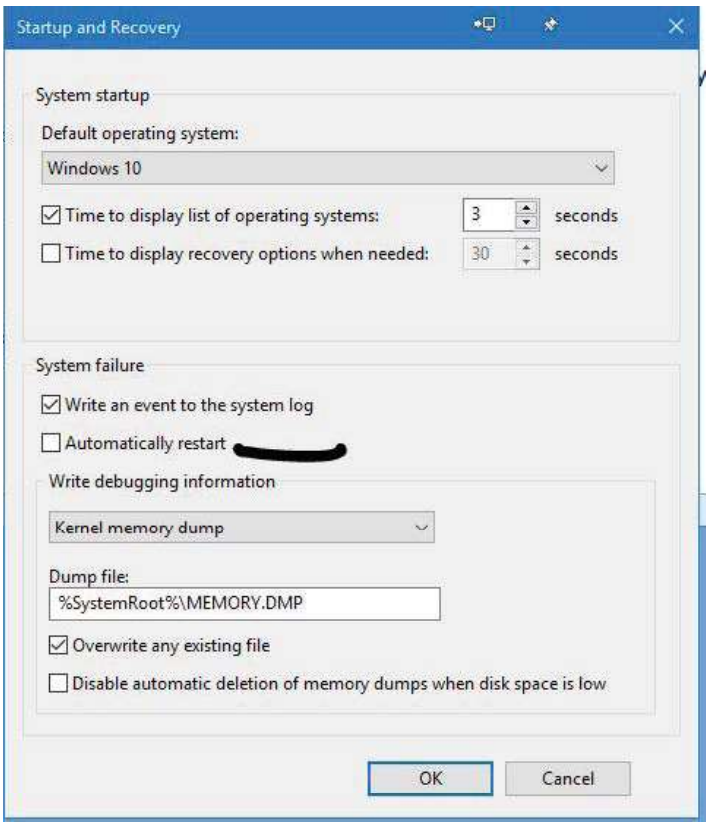
Control Updates and turn off forced updates. Windows 10 is set by default to automatically download and install all updates, then reboot. There are changes you can do that will mitigate some of this like notifying you first to reschedule a reboot.

Windows 10 Pro versions have an option to take total control of this. It's intended to be used by corporations who want to test all updates before deployment to thousands of their computers.

This following link is pretty comprehensive. It was here that I found a solution for a problem on my main

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desktop machine: An update that appeared every day - a printer driver - that installs fine, but doesn't go away. It installed daily for a couple of weeks. There's a downloadable Microsoft tool that troubleshoots update problems called wushowhide.diagcab. It's at https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/kb/3073930 . Look at http://www.howtogeek.com/223864/how-to-uninstall-and-block-updates-and-drivers-on-windows-10/ first. This worked for me. Standard (home) users don't have this beyond setting the reboot policy.

Prevent automatic downloading Updates For comprehensive help on controlling what you can, see: http://www.howtogeek.com/224471/how-to-prevent-windows-10-from-automatically-downloading-updates/ . OK, you may not want to mess with this and I can't blame you. But when you're in trouble, there's a way back.

Choose how updates are delivered. Incredible as it sounds, Windows 10 will use your internet connection to send updates to other PCs on your network and to PCs on the Internet to "save on bandwidth". By default, you give them permission to do so. You can change that in settings. The quickest way to get there is type "advanced update" and click on "advanced windows update options" in the search list, then click "Choose how updates are delivered". There's an on-off button that is on by default.

Privacy There's a ton of privacy settings in PC Settings. There's the obvious "Privacy" category with 15 tabs on the left. But first go to the taskbar and click the Cortana window, then the settings in Cortana. "Search online and include web results" needs to be turned off, no question. This limits searches to your own PC, and there's no reason at all to wait until a Bing search covers the entire internet to find Windows FAX. I turn off the "suggestions, ideas, reminders, alerts" as well.

Then go to PC Settings, Personalization, tab Lock screen. Under Lock screen, change the Background dropdown to Picture or Slideshow. Windows spotlight allows advertising to your lock screen, along with "Get fun facts, tips, tricks and more … ". Turn that off too. See:

http://www.howtogeek.com/243263/how-to-disable-

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ads-on-your-windows-10-lock-screen/

Then go through all of the privacy settings. Frankly, I don't see any of this is to my advantage. I just turn it all off. I'm happier.

Then while we're at it, if you're a Chrome browser user, you can set the default search engine to Google with the Chrometana extension. If you're also an Android phone or tablet user, you have about a hundred reasons to switch to Chrome. I find Edge to be a work in progress, and have seen no reason to use it. Indeed, there's one website that I use often for a client that doesn't even appear in Edge. I understand that the late June Windows 10 "Anniversary" update will improve Edge. Most of all, I can't see me using and maintaining more than one browser, so goodbye IE and Edge.

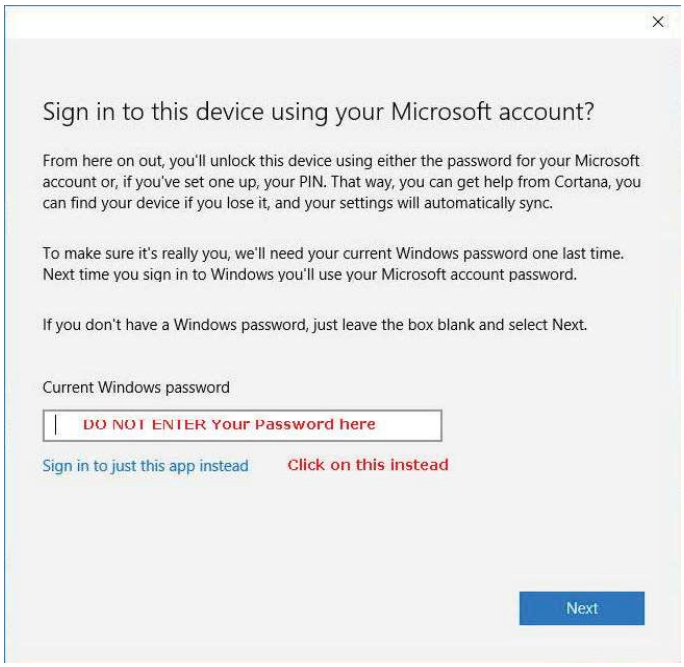
WiFi Sense If you're using a computer with wireless like all notebooks and tablets do, WiFi Sense connects you to suggested WiFi hotspots that your contacts share with you. And you with them. You must be signed in to a Microsoft account. Of course there's very little you can do in the way of security, and that makes just no sense at all. I've read an article lately that the Windows 10 Anniversary update to Window 10 is going to remove this "feature". In the meantime it needs to be disabled. I have read that it is enabled by default. In PC Settings, Network and Internet, WiFi tab, select "Manage WiFi settings", "Connect to suggested open hotspots" and "Connect to networks shared by my contacts". In "Advanced Options", turn "Metered Connections" off as well. This probably has no real impact, but it should not download updates to your notebook when your Wireless is 3G/4G.

And speaking of 3G/4G, instead of connecting to unknown WiFi networks in public places, learn to use your cellphone's hotspot feature and connect to that for your travelling notebook needs. Obviously it should be used for essential purposes only, but if you have purchased a data plan that will allow streaming video to your phone, it may as well be on a notebook screen.

Windows Store You can log in to your Microsoft account for just the Microsoft Store without having your local login account hijacked (converted to a Microsoft account). If you're careful.

While you're logged onto your computer using your local account and you want to install your first app from the store, your local account is in jeopardy of being hijacked and converted to a Microsoft account. When you use the store for the first time on your computer and for your first app download, it asks for your Microsoft login and password and even offers to create an account. It offers a confusing explanation as to why it needs your Microsoft account password a second time, but believe me, this is where you can go wrong. Underneath that password box is a text **"Sign in to just this app instead"** click this; do not enter your password. You'll find you can use the Microsoft Store with no more nags for account and password, and your local login account will stay intact. The request for the second password says that the next time you log onto your computer you will need this password. And they're right. The login will be changed as well. Bad Microsoft.

http://lifehacker.com/install-windows-10-store-apps-without-switching-to-a-mi-1723075610
and http://betanews.com/2015/08/03/you-dont-need-to-use-a-microsoft-account-to-download-apps-from-window-10s-store/



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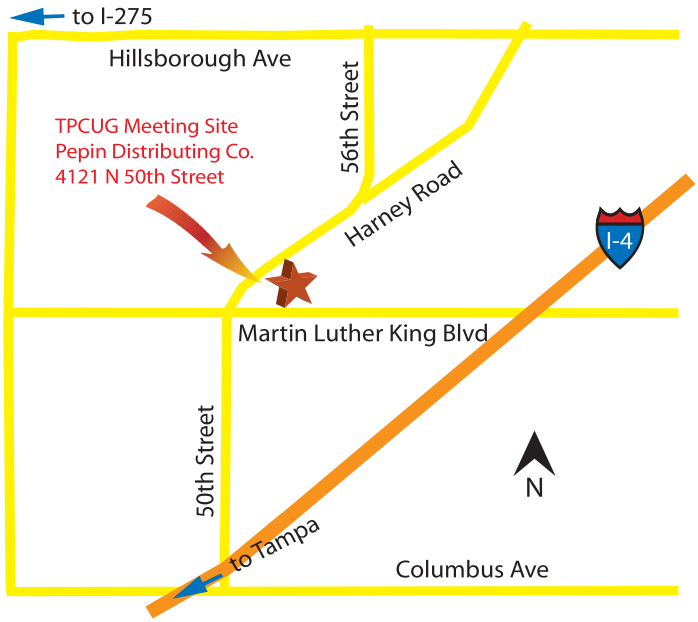
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

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Lock Screen I'm not sure why they call it the "Lock Screen", when you first power Windows 10 up, the first screen is just a picture that you have to click through to log on. This is a just a nuisance in my opinion. If you're interested in eliminating this and booting to the login screen it takes some skill editing the registry: http://www.howtogeek.com/134620/how-to-disable-the-lock-screen-on-windows-8-without-using-group-policy/

Other, not urgent but important stuff

- Classic Shell menu system. http://classicshell.net
- Windows 7 games http://winaero.com/blog/get-windows-7-games-for-windows-10/
- Vista desktop gadgets http://8gadgetpack.net/
- Windows Media Center http://betanews.com/2015/09/09/how-to-install-windows-media-center-on-windows-10/
- Turn off or uninstall OneDrive https://support.office.com/en-US/article/Turn-off-or-uninstall-OneDrive-f32a17ce-3336-40fe-9c38-6efb09f944b0
- Eight ways to customize the Windows 10 Start Menu http://www.howtogeek.com/197836/8-ways-to-customize-the-windows-10-start-menu/
- Trouble signing into Windows Store http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-8/why-sign-in-windows-store ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 29 No. 8 August 2016



August in Tampa

Meeting

Publishing Apps

& Windows Continuum

by

William LaMartin

Wednesday, August 10, 2016

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
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Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: William LaMartin will discuss several topics: Publishing apps to Windows 10, Android and iOS; What is Windows Continuum; and creating videos from your photos.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Last month I mentioned purchasing an iMac to enable me to create iPhone and iPad apps similar to my Windows 10 apps, some of which I had already extended to Android. Well, I now have two iOS apps in the Apple App Store: *Newspapers of the World* and *Computer Group Newsletters*. As time permits, I will add to that collection. Without a doubt, there are more hoops to jump through to create an iOS app than for Windows or Android. On Android and Windows, the first app is titled News of the World. The second app has all the TPCUG newsletters through 2015.

I had an iPad 2 around the house so as to be able to check the functionality of my iOS apps on a real device but thought that I also needed a small form-factor device. I purchased a used iPhone 5s for that purpose. It was an expensive month, especially considering that I make no money from these apps, considering it just a hobby. ◆

September Meeting: Merle Nicholson on Windows 10 Tips

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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For July, we had a scheduling conflict for the meeting room and scheduled it a week early from July 13 to July 6. As a result, the meeting was poorly attended, quite a shame since our speaker was the ever-entertaining and informative Blain Barton, an employee of Microsoft. Blain has been there for us every year for quite a few years. Our gratitude goes to Blain for his continued support.

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Merle demonstrated more Windows 10 settings challenges, including how to prevent Windows Store from hijacking your local account.

Our presenter, Blain Barton, was the July presenter. He always has something interesting to talk about on projects he's engaged in at Microsoft. His main topic was about DevOps, a combination of the words Developer and Operations. It's for "orchestration and automation technologies needed in the world of big data analysis, cloud and Agile rapid application development." Blain is now engaged in the development and deployment of small applications. He explained his interaction with a business customer and modeling applications for them.

Thanks to Blain for an entertaining and useful presentation. ◆

Rethinking 2-Factor Authentication

By Dave Palmer, Tampa PC users Group
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I've taught various aspects of Internet Security for many years. I subscribe to many newsletters and newsfeeds. I have a number of Google Alerts to bring me information on a variety of related topics. As a result, I do a lot of reading. Like any good cub reporter, I like to confirm information I've read from one source with similar information from other sources, usually a number of other sources. In other words, I don't like to get fooled.

But I recently I got fooled. Or maybe lulled to sleep is a more accurate description.



Let me start at the beginning. 2-Factor Authentication (2FA) isn't new, but it's become a lot more popular over the last few years as hackers have more gotten more sophisticated and better at what they do.

Wikipedia (https://goo.gl/5QkXD) says 2FA is "… a method of confirming a user's claimed identity by utilizing a combination of two different components. These components may be something that the user knows, something that the user possesses, or something that is inseparable from the user." The standard example is the combination of an ATM(automatic teller machine) PIN (personal identification number) and a debit card. Something I know, the PIN, is combined with something I have, the card.

One popular method of 2FA is to use mobile phone-based two-factor authentication. This method of 2FA relies on the user inputting their user name and password (1st factor) into a website. The website responds by sending a one-time-valid, dynamic passcode via SMS (text) to the user's phone. Inputting the code (2nd factor) into the website authenticates the user and allows use of the website.

Many security-sensitive websites now have the ability to be configured to accept various forms of 2FA, including mobile/text 2FA. These websites include the Who's Who of technology: Google, Apple, Facebook, Yahoo, Amazon, Twitter and dozens, if not hundreds, more. All include mobile/text 2FA as well as other methods of 2FA. At least one site I'm aware of (https://www.turnon2fa.com/) offers specific instructions on setting up 2FA, including mobile/text, on many of these websites.

In addition, hundreds of articles have been published in the last few years touting the benefits of mobile/text- based 2FA. I'm sorry to say that the constant drone of this input put me to sleep.

Recently, while watching Steve Gibson's 'Security Now' broadcast on Twit.tv, I was jolted awake when Steve proclaimed that, in fact, mobile/text- based 2FA was INSECURE!



'What?' I thought. That seems to go against the advice of the entire technology ecosystem. His point, perfectly valid once I was roused from my comfortable acceptance, was that the phone system itself is not secure! But of course! My reading on privacy, tracking

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Rethinking.....Continued from page 3

and the shenanigans of the NSA and similar organizations around the word came racing back. Of course cell phones are not secure. I, like so many others, had not put the puzzle pieces together. That realization triggered another round of online research.

The information I ran across completely contradicts any thought that mobile/text 2FA could possibly be secure. Here are a couple of articles demonstrating that sophisticated hackers, as usual, are well ahead of us.

http://goo.gl/cNMrcq - 'Malware Bypasses 2-Factor Authentication' (2014) - "Criminals have been bypassing the Android-based two-factor authentication systems in use at 34 banks across four different countries, as part of a sophisticated spear-phishing and malware campaign…"

http://goo.gl/hAEERv - 'Two-Factor Authentication Bypassed in Simple Attacks' (2016) - This article concerns recent research that demonstrates "…practical attacks against both Android and iOS devices, showing how a Man-in-the-Browser attack can be elevated to bypass 2FA."

https://goo.gl/yr40pw - 'So Hey You Should Stop Using Texts for Two-Factor

Authentication' (2016) - This article points out several ways messages to mobile phones can get hijacked.

https://goo.gl/2mpUHk - In this recent (7/27/16) article the U.S. National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) says the SMS-based two-factor authentication would soon be discouraged citing a lack of security.

I also found the following academic paper. Dr. Wolfe should have added 'Let Me Count the Ways' to the title. This is an interesting read, 6 pages, and a bit scary.

http://goo.gl/SQ04ln - "The Insecurity of Mobil Phones" by Dr Henry Wolfe, a PhD specialist in computer security.

Rethinking.....Continued on page 8

Windows 10 Priority One for new installations Continued

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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This month, I'm adding a few more items to the changes that should be made to all Windows 10 installations. The main article is in last month's issue of Bits of Blue July 2016.

Note to readers: Instead of typing the URLs referenced in this article, go to the TPCUG.org website, and on the first webpage, open this current newsletter. There you'll find that all the links in this article are live. Just click on them.

But first, let's discuss the security of your computer. I've heard the argument many times that your computer is in your house and isn't accessible, so having a no password login or setting it to log into a default user account is acceptable. I'll disagree, and here's the reason why.

User Accounts

By default, on installation, the main user account has "administrative rights" which means that any user of this account can install and run any software unimpeded, including undesirable software as well as useful, intended software. All that needs to happen is to log into that account. The problem with this is software that comes into your computer from the Internet or software that has been piggybacked onto some other process that may or may not be initiated by yourself. Email attachments, hacked websites, software that you acquire thinking it's useful, PC help phone calls from people representing themselves as Microsoft employees .. all this is dangerous.

OK, well, what do you have to lose? Let's look at some worst cases; the situation where some ransomware changes the operating system to encode all useful files. Or gets your Amazon account or Visa card info. Or just wipes out the hard drive. Do you have a

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Internet Picture of the Month



Fighting a California Wildfire

From the Wall Street Journal, http://www.wsj.com/, in the Photos section.

"A plane drops fire retardant while battling the Soberanes Fire near Carmel Highlands last Saturday." Noah Berger/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

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complete image backup stored where you can just re-image the hard drive using a boot CD or flash drive? Are your two- thousand photos backed up? Important documentation? Perhaps you can reinstall Windows and all your software from scratch. Do you have the original installation media? Do you have the CD installation keys? If you have Windows 7, do you want to then install the drivers for all your devices and also 260 updates?

If you believe you are fine with reinstalling Windows 10 after a disaster; you have documents and pictures in Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive; use a browser email implementation and do mostly internet, I'd sug-

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Windows 10.....Continued from page 5

gest you're not well served by Windows and should look at ChromeBox, ChromeBook, Linux (Ubuntu) or even MacBook. They're all much more secure, way cheaper (except Apple, which is much more expensive) far less trouble, and you can stop worrying about viruses and malware. My spouse and I both use Linux and Android for much of our everyday needs.

Compounding the user account situation on Windows 10 is that Microsoft obscures the route needed to create local accounts. All the buttons are there to route you to a Microsoft online user account and password. Yes local account links are there, and if you are not forewarned or are not using a well written tutorial, you'll miss them because they are just text, not a button, sometimes a different font color, sometimes not.

So what's wrong with using an online account? Wait a minute .. what? This is a login entry into your computer that malware, virus and ransomware can use to install on your computer, and you want to send it over the internet to Microsoft? Why would you do that? There is no other operating system that allows this. I can use my Android phone and tablet without logging into my Google Account, can't you? Yes, I do log into that gmail account, but it's not a condition of turning on the device. And obviously I don't have the level of concern about viruses.

If you like (insist on) an online Microsoft account to log into your computer, please change the security level to "standard". That's the only way there is to protect yourself. First, create an administrative level local account or activate the "Administrator" account. Use a good password, memorize it and use a password database like LastPass or Keepass. Don't tell anyone what that password is. Log into it once, then out, you may not need it again. Log into the main (MS online) account and change the security level to "standard". You may never use the administrator account again, but you'll use its password many, many times whenever a setting or a software installation requires it. You'll get to recognize the password prompt and it'll become routine. This will block out 95% of all viruses as well. All the details are covered in last month's article.

Number One problems with Windows 10 that you should fix right now.
See last months article for details.

1. Fix your login accounts. Activate or create a local Administrator account
2. Activate System Protection, System Restore
3. Fix the Boot into Safe Mode, activate the F8 on boot up.
4. Fix restart to BlueScreen
5. Manage Microsoft Updates (Win 10 Pro)
6. Disable as much Microsoft telemetry and forced advertizing as possible.

Turn off or uninstall OneDrive
In last month's article, I included one link to turn off OneDrive, the file storage and sync supplied for Microsoft users, and built into Windows 10. I personally don't use OneDrive, not that there's anything especially wrong with it. I have been using Google Drive for many years, and I really don't want to manage two cloud drives. There are three concerns associated with OneDrive. One is the System Tray icon, second the service itself is running in the background even though it's not being used, and third is the OneDrive drive shortcut in the left pane of all Windows Explorer windows.

This link from last month doesn't address the main problem - disabling the OneDrive service, but it is the least technical. https://support.office.com/en-US/article/Turn-off-or-uninstall-OneDrive-f32a17ce-3336-40fe-9c38-6efb09f944b0

This following link does everything, but by necessity is more complicated because Microsoft chose to not provide an accessible uninstallation or even an optional Windows Component for OneDrive. In fact, I've seen claims from Microsoft that it's a built in feature of Windows 10 and cannot be uninstalled. Bad Microsoft.
http://lifehacker.com/how-to-completely-uninstall-onedrive-in-windows-10-1725363532

More on Managing Updates
If you need a better reason to manage Microsoft Updates I have one you maybe haven't guessed.

If you can delay the installation of updates you can

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Windows 10.....Continued from page 6

have a chance to create a new restore point. This is important because every now and then there will be an update that cause enough havoc on boot up to keep you from using your computer. I'd wager this has happened to you at least once. Fortunately with Windows 10 Pro you can get notification that updates are available, you can then create a new restore point manually (if you have activated it), then allow the installation to proceed. Then, on a bad update you can use Safe Mode to restore the last good restore point.

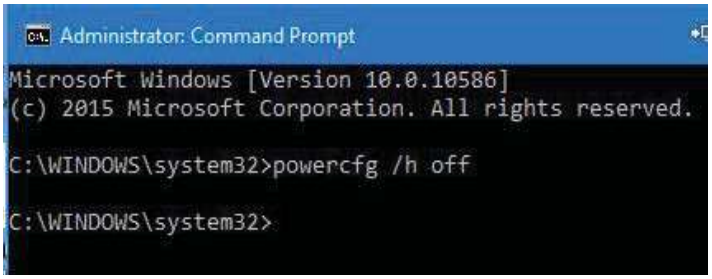
Fast Startup Power Option

It's a variation of the long standing Hibernate system available mostly for notebooks where the entire content of memory is saved to disk to be reactivated on next boot. But it went through some changes with Windows 10, became faster because it's been modified to save just the kernel (essential part) of memory. And it may be causing some problems on your computer. It may or may not be turned on. I would make sure it's turned off for several reasons. First, if you are booting from an SSD drive, it really has very little advantage and no further discussion is necessary because you're already enjoying fast boot up; make sure it's off. Problems it may cause are with USB devices not activating after boot because they haven't been awakened or updates becoming out of sync.

Turning Fast Startup off (or on) is available through the Settings: Settings, System, Power & Sleep, Additional Power Settings, Choose what the power buttons do, Change settings that are currently unavailable, Turn on fast startup (recommended). That's six steps, uncheck the box.

This link, http://www.howtogeek.com/243901/the-pros-and-cons-of-windows-10s-fast-startup-mode/, pretty much covers the subject except for one thing, and this is what I do to disable hibernate entirely which also erases the hibernate file from disk (hiberfil.sys). I would rather my computer do a complete reload at boot and not carry anything loaded in memory from the last session. I've encountered USB devices not working too many times, requiring that you first figure it out then unplug and reattach the device. My old USB scanner comes to mind. I boot from an SSD, in any case. I have tested this to see if there's any discernible difference and have found none.

In an elevated Command Prompt (Admin), enter: powercfg /h off



Lightning Strikes Again

By Bob Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
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Lightning makes no sense some times. Although my computers and all the peripherals are on an uninterrupted power source, the other day a lightning strike killed my 4-port USB unit plugged into my laptop. Fortunately the laptop has 3 USB ports so I was able to hook all three important things back into it like the wireless mouse, the keyboard, and the printer. Next I went on to Amazon and ordered a replacement 4-port in case I need it.

I tried to print the invoice. That's when I found out the printer no longer communicated with the laptop. After testing all the USB ports on the laptop, I concluded the USB port on the printer was fried too. I thought about using the wireless feature but you have to use the USB port to set up the wireless feature. Go figure… End result, I needed to buy another All-in-One printer. I hate to throw the old 915 away. It still copies okay. I even think it will send and receive a FAX okay. It just won't talk to a computer so what would you do with it? I found it very inconvenient to dump a file to a thumb drive and take it to the desk top computer to print something. The work horse printer has always been the one hooked to the laptop.

Another problem is I just purchased a pile of spare cartridges for the fried Pro 915 printer. Contrary to what

Lightning.....Continued on page 8

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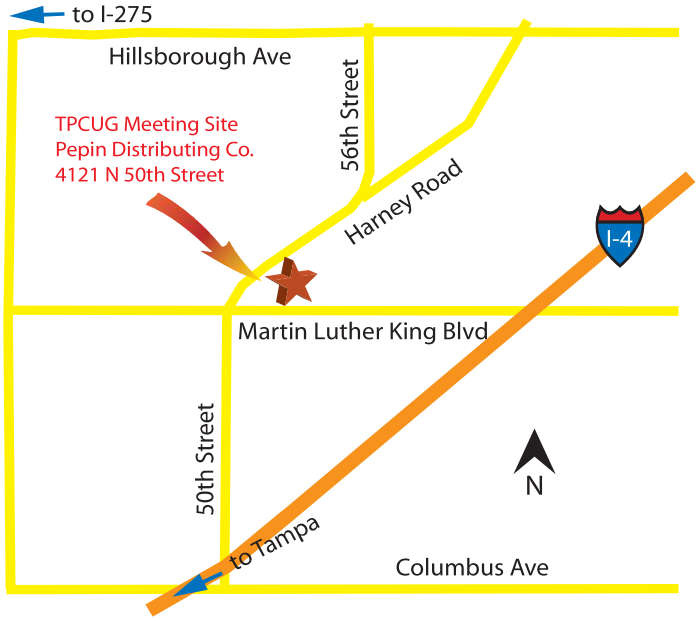
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Rethinking.....Continued from page 4

In spite of the information above, I believe that if you're using texted codes on your cell phone as 2FA, the risk is relatively small. This is not (yet) a wide-spread threat. But if you're relying on mobile/text 2FA to secure your valuable accounts (banking, e-mail, etc.), it might be time to consider other options. The fact is, it's not secure. ◆

Lightning.....Continued from page 7

a professional printer user might say, I liked my little Lexmark Pro 915 All-in-One printer. (And what can I say – sometimes I go cheap.) Of course the Pro 915 printer is out of production and not available at a price I want to pay. I did some research and found the Pro 715 printer uses the same ink cartridges, and I was able to buy a barely used Pro 715. After updating the drivers, etc. I have a working printer again. The front panel is not as nice as the 915 but other than that, it's hard to tell any difference between the two.



I always say enjoy the journey, but some days are more enjoyable than others. Like the days when you don't have to buy another All-in-One printer. So now I am enjoying the journey again. ◆

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November in Tampa

Meeting

What's New in Hardware

by

Steven Singer

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

6:30 PM

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Meeting Preview: Steven Singer with the latest in computer hardware.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

In this newsletter, Merle Nicholson tells us about new phone trends. And then he stops way too soon. Doesn't he realize we have a newsletter to fill, and no one has sent me anything, and that I really have nothing to contribute since I put all that in last month's newsletter. But necessity is the mother of insertion, as they say. And, thus, I have pieced together a few things that I observed or did this month that are computer related.

First I tell you about the amazing new computer that Microsoft will bring forth in the first part of 2017. It is named the Surface Studio, and it is a beauty with a beauty of a price. It is aimed at the creative crowd according to the video I watched. So it is obviously not meant for me

Comments.....Continued on page 2

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

In October, Merle did the presentation as well as the SIG, and since they were the same subject, Windows 10 Tips, the SIG simply continued. Of the attendees, only two people did not have or use Windows 10. Merle demonstrated how to tell the update level of your Windows 10 OS, and explained the history of the two: 1511 and 1607. Next were complete instructions on the System restore points, how to check if Microsoft update had turned it off and how to reinitialize System Restore. Then new changes to how system updates are handled. The next subject was drivers, their importance and how to manage drivers; more specifically how to turn driver updates off without affecting security updates. Finally with William LaMartin's help a demonstration of Windows 10 Quick Access, yet another remote control, windows third remote control program. William controlled Merle's computer after receiving an invitation. Lastly, Merle shared some pictures and narrative about Cape Canaveral in the early 60s. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Another new item is the quite remarkable Windows phone from HP named the Elite X3. At least that is the opinion of the writer who reviewed it for PC World. I provide a link to the review, which will be more easily followed in the online version of the newsletter.

With all these new devices from Microsoft and such things as the HP phone, it would appear that things are looking in the Microsoft World. I certainly hope so since I am a stock holder in the company. ◆

New Phone Trends – what you may not know

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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It's common to buy your smartphone from your carrier, and while in the past, some carriers discounted the price, they are now charging full retail; having "unbundled" the phone payment from the monthly service. Some may give other incentives if you ask. There are advantages to buying from sources other than the carrier, not the least of which is a much lower price.

I had decided to replace my (only) three year old Android phone and then I monitored prices for several months until I found what I wanted at a good price. I pretty much met my goals with last year's Moto X Pure. It's a 2015 model by Motorola (now owned by Lenovo) and was highly praised as a "flagship" smartphone when it came out. FedEx delivered it Oct 3; the tracking info originating in Wuhan, China. I paid $289 + tax, shipping included. This is for a phone that cost $600 last year.

Lenovo has replaced this model Moto X Pure with the 2016 Moto Z, a modular smartphone that comes in several varieties, including the Droid Z phones that are sold by Verizon. But they're still selling the X Pure and others (Moto G and Play) from the Motorola website.

I moved my VZ (Verizon) SIM card from the old phone to the new, waited for Google to transfer data and install apps, then waited for an OS upgrade to 6.0, installed the 64G micro SDXC card ($20 at amazon), then to formatted it as internal storage, and I was in business with a new 80G top-of-the-line (in 2015) smartphone. Motorola will upgrade it to the very latest OS (7.0 or 7.1) in December, but 6.0 is excellent. The VZ cloud restore from backup failed as expected, but all I lost was some old text messages that I was saving. No big loss, and Google had saved the rest. Motorola has a data transfer app, and even has a transfer program using NFC radio holding the two phones back-to-back if you want to wait 6 hours to do it.

Most of my search was based on a goal to release myself of Verizon's unhealthy need to control what devices are available to their customers. Specifically, they demand that they determine the apps that are installed (we call it bloatware), and their insistence that they control updates to the OS – late or not at all. The other goals I have is to never go on contract and to never pay full retail price, all of which means that although I love being on their network, I will never again be buying a phone from Verizon. There are excellent alternatives – more on that later.

The only manufacturer that is refusing to supply Verizon branded phones is Apple. If you will recall, Apple phones were not available from Verizon for perhaps a year later than AT&T because of Apple's refusal to allow Verizon to control updates. Obviously Verizon relented.

What makes it possible to buy a phone that works on Verizon but not supplied by them is a class of phone called "unlocked" and in addition one that is built to work on any carrier called "Universally Compatible". I mean any carrier; Verizon, T-mo, Sprint, AT&T and European carriers as well. That means that the phone must have two kinds of cellular receiver/transmitters - GSM and CDMA, so that the carrier's SIM card determines the type of radio that is in use. The Google flagship phones - Nexus 5X and 6P, new Pixel and Pixel XL, The Moto G, the Moto X Pure, and a new one from LG the V20, all are "unlocked", and multi-carrier and also international. Amazon calls these phones "Universally Compatible". See Amazon https://www.amazon.com/unlocked-cell-phones/b?ie=UTF8&node=2407749011 for lots of good information.

These phone's updates are controlled by the manufacturer the same way Apple has all along. You can count on the Nexus/Pixel getting the first releases when Google makes a major change to the OS. The advantage is that Verizon does elect to freeze your phone's OS at an older level. It's understandable because it's a lot of work. But it's unnecessary in the first place if they would leave their bloatware off. Really, who would pay a monthly subscription price for Verizon Navigator and be unremovable from the phone? John

Trends.....Continued on page 4

Trends.....Continued from page 3

Madden NFL .. Really?

Since I started this article, VZ has started selling the Pixel and Pixel XL, "exclusively" from Verizon. But don't be fooled by that; Google also sells the same model that is unlocked and "universally compatible" and works on VZ. No one has figured out the "exclusive" tag Verizon uses.

You do have to be careful when selecting an unlocked phone. There are models that are not universally compatible, almost always GSM-only (not Verizon) and there are "International, no warranty" versions made for Europe. You want to look for "US Warranty" and check out the published carrier compatibility. You can get one of these phones for as little as $150*, and it will work on any US carrier. You can travel to Europe and pick up a prepaid SIM at the destination airport and use it during your European trip. Watch for models that are compatible with VZ except that it may not work on 4G. Not a deal-breaker for me.

* This $150 phone is an excellent Moto G. It has ads on the lockscreen. The no-ads version is $200. It may not handle VZ 4G. 4G US coverage isn't 100% anyway and I don't stream movie content.

If you travel to Europe and back, you may want to look for a phone that has two SIM slots, US and Europe. They're available. ◆





Two Miscellaneous Items

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

On the left is a phone photo that was taken an a meeting at the Iron Yard in St. Petersburg last week showing me trying out a Microsoft HoloLens. I was able to view a shark, a hamster, a ballerina and an object that I can't recall that floated in space and which with finger movements I was able to move to different places in the room. Quite interesting. At present the devices are $3,000 and still under development. The hope is to be able to sell them at under $1,000 and possibly as low as $700.

The fellow doing the demonstration was working on an app for the device. This is one thing I have no interest in working with at the present, the steep price being one of the determining factors.

Miscellaneous.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Halloween

It is Halloween around the world. This photo is from the photos section of the Wall Street Journal, http://wsj.com. The caption reads: "Dublin hosts the Bram Stoker Festival on Halloween. Mr. Stoker was an Irish author who wrote the novel 'Dracula' in 1897. Niall Carson/Zuma Press"

Miscellaneous.....Continued from page 4

The image at the top of page four is a screen capture from an Android phone of an app that Merle Nicholson requested I develop for him. He wanted a bicycle riding app that would display the instantaneous speed in big digits at the top and then two separate leg displays below that which would keep track of elapsed time, distance and average speed over the leg. The two leg displays needed to be able to be reset, frozen (not paused but just have the display frozen) and paused. You also would be able to unfreeze and un pause.

In the image, the data is from a short test walk I did where both leg displays are showing the same information. When finished, the leg displays would normally be used to display data from different legs. The app could also record walk data. ◆



Microsoft's New Hardware

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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On October 26, Microsoft did a presentation in New York City showcasing their new hardware products. That's correct; hardware products and not software. That would be the Surface Pro 4, the new version of the Surface Book, and a new and exciting item: The Surface Studio. Warning: You are not going to like the price, but you would love to have one. At least, I would love to have one. But, beside the high price, I am not sure where I would place it. I am already overloaded with two desktop Win 10 machines, a monitor for working both with my Win 10 phone using Continuum and with the Rasperberry PI 2 (I think there is a 3 out now) and an iMac. All of which take up desk space around the house. However, the main thing that stops me from ordering one is the price, which starts at $2,999. However, by the time I configured it as I would like, it would balloon to $4,199.

To learn about the Surface Studio and the other items, you can view the presentation at https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/octoberevent/microsoft-live-event. This is a two-hour presentation. The Surface Book and Surface Studio starts at time point 1:11.

You may view the Surface Studio at the Microsoft site at https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/surface/devices/surface-studio/overview. And you may even preorder it for early 2017 delivery

It comes with either an it5 or and i7 processor with up to 32 GB Ram. It has a stunning 28-inch, 192 PPI, 4,500 x 3,000 pixel multi-touch display. The hard drive can go up to two terabytes. How they get all of that into what you see in the photo above is a mystery to me.

The presentation indicated it was aimed at the creative class, so I suppose that leaves me out. ◆



HP Elite X3 Windows Phone

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Just when you thought Windows Phone was dead, HP has revived it with the new HP Elite X3, a smartphone aimed not at the consumer but at the business world. You will not find it at the Verizon store since it is a GSM phone and not a CDMA one as Verizon would require. But that is not the only reason. The real reason is that it is not at present sold in any of the telecom phone stores. You may at present only purchase it from HP, starting at $799 (and possibly ending at $799) which, I will bet, is more than you want to pay for a phone.

To read about this phone at HP, go to http://www8.hp.com/us/en/products/tablets/product-detail.html?oid=12740553#!tab=features.

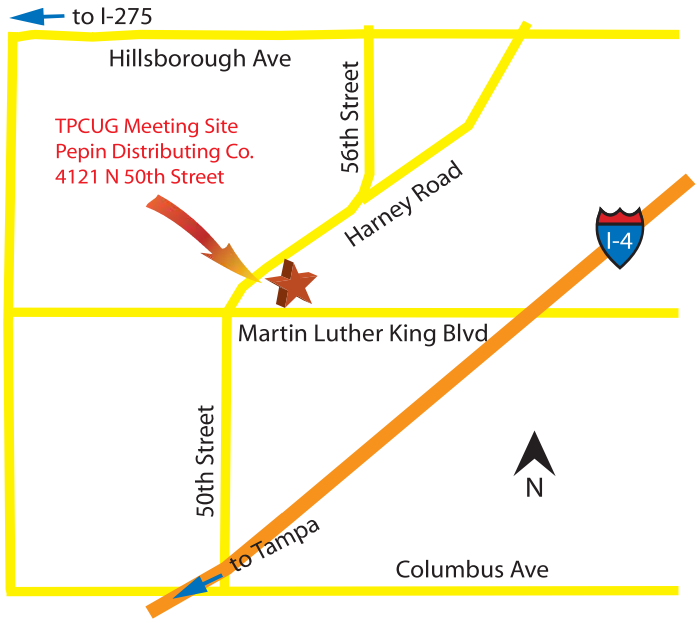
To read about it at the more informative PC World site, go to http://www.pcworld.com/article/3129416/phones/hp-elite-x3-review-this-could-be-the-last-great-windows-phone.html.

This phone seems like a slight notch up from my Microsoft 750 XL Windows 10 Phone, both of which allow you to use it as a PC running Windows Universal apps by way of Microsoft Continuum as demonstrated in the photo above. And, this is the big one: If you are willing to pay more to use the HP Workspace in a virtualized cloud environment, the HP phone will even run Win32 apps – for $579/year or $939/year. Obviously this phone is meant for business, not the rest of us. But it points the way to what will be common in the future. ◆

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October in Tampa

Vol. 29 No. 10 October 2016

Meeting

Windows 10

Demonstration & Tips

by

Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, October 12, 2016

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Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson telling us more about Windows 10.

Merle will also lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Last month I wrote about upgrading the C drive in one of my desktops from a 240 GB SSD to a 512 GB SSD. That was needed since my free space was getting pretty low. I thought that was what kept me from being able to install the Windows 10 Anniversary update on the computer, but that was not the case. Even after the upgrade to the twice-as-large SSD drive, I still had problems installing the upgrade. I eventually did get the update, as described in that newsletter. I also wrote about my smartphone programming.

This month, I do not have too much to relate computer-wise other than I have replaced the 1 TB data drive with a 2 TB one on that same computer. So I will relay what problems I encountered in doing that. I also took a a trip to London and Paris and, as always, took many photos. I think describing how I deal with those photos also may be of interest. ◆

November Meeting: Steve Singer

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month Merle discussed the necessity of restoring System Protection back on after the Anniversary 1607 update. Then a demo of Google Photos, the replacement for Picasa, and finally some discussions on "cloud" storage.

Our presenter was William LaMartin, TPCUG member, newsletter publisher and web administrator, who demonstrated methods Microsoft has developed for a programmer to develop applications for Windows 10, including Windows Phone 10. He started by displaying Windows 10 on his phone using Continuum through a Microsoft device, a display dock, that presented the display on the Pepin large wall screen. It also provided a connection for a keyboard and mouse effectively turning the phone into a computer. After exploring a bit, he then started a PowerPoint presentation he prepared for this session. Finally he switched to a Windows 10 Surface Pro 2 where he brought up the programming environment he uses to program apps for Windows, iOS and Android. He demonstrated three apps that are in the respective app stores and shared some insights on the difficulties presented by the very different environments.

Thanks to William for an excellent and entertaining program. ◆

Replacing a Data Drive

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Last month I wrote about replacing my 240 GB SSD C drive on a desktop computer with one twice as large. That went fairly smoothly. Unfortunately I did not recall the one problem I had and repeated it when attempting to clone the 1 TB data drive on that computer to one also twice as large.

What I forgot was that when doing a Clone Disk from Acronis you do not, I repeat, do not want to do it from inside Windows. I tried that first from the Clone Disk item in the Acronis folder in my Windows 10 Start Menu. After several hours with the progress indicator showing no progress and Time Remaining indicating nothing, I abandoned that and thought that starting Acronis True Image 2016, selecting Tools and the Clone Disk from within Tools might work better. After letting that run overnight, the result was the same: No indication of progress.

Now, Merle Nicholson had always told me that I really should run Clone Disk after booting the PC using an Acronis Recovery CD or USB thumb drive. So I proceeded to do that. First, I had to figure out how to set my computer to boot from the thumb drive I had made. I have two desktop machines, and on the one that has a standard SATA C drive, things go by slowly enough that you see a message about how to change the boot device. On that computer you press F11. Unfortunately on the computer on which I was working, because it had a SSD C drive, things happen so fast that you never see such a message. So I started guessing what F key to press to get the boot menu. F11 did not work; however, F8 did, and I was able to set the computer to boot to the Acronis Recover Thumb drive.

Once the program, which I think is running on Linux, starts, you choose Clone Disk from the Tools & Utilities menu. You then select a Source Disk (my D Drive) and a Destination Disk. It may take it a little time to find your new destination disk. Mine was mounted in the nice drive port on top of my computer case as indicated in the top photo. It assigned it a drive letter M (it can't use the already used D and





CD drive E and also several small USB drive letters assigned to a card reader that the computer has). That letter M will cause us trouble later. In the second photo, you see the program running with a nice indication of progress. The total time to clone a 1 TB drive was around two hours and 40 minutes.

It then took me around ten minutes to replace the D Drive in the computer with the new drive. I started the computer and got all sorts of error message that I don't recall along with no desktop and Taskbar icons – and no D drive. Possibly the message said something about Page Files. Anyway, the problem became obvious when I used File Explorer to see the drives on my computer. No D drive – but there was a M drive that was around 2 TB and which contained all my data files. So all I needed to do was change the drive letter

Clone Disk.....Continued on page 4

Clone Disk.....Continued from page 3

for that Drive from M to D. A phone call to Merle Nicholson informed me that I needed to go into Control Panel > Disk Management to do that. Once that was done, I had my desktop and Taskbar icons back. The reason: When I set up this computer originally, I moved My Documents, My Pictures, Desktop, Temp, etc to the D drive. So, once I changed the drive letter from M to D, the computer then knew where to find things.

But the computer was still not happy, and I am not sure it occurred at the same time as the missing desktop items or just after when I tried to do something else. Anyway the problem was that the new D drive did not have a Page File. Merle to the rescue again telling me to go to Control Panel > System > Advanced System Settings > Performance > Settings > Advanced, where you can create a Page File for that Drive.

The next problem: Now that I was up and running, I needed to start this newsletter. Merle had sent me the minutes as an attached Word document in an email. I opened that email and double-clicked on the attachment and received an error. A little analysis of the error message showed that it was looking for a temp folder in a drive K. There was no drive K. However, there was a partition on the new drive that was listed as L. I suppose that was where the temp file for that drive was. Problem solved – No! I was not allowed to change the drive letter.

A bit of Internet research told be that I needed to set that drive as having no Page File before I could change the drive letter. I did that, and after the required reboot, I could then open the attachment by double-clicking.

I had none of these problems when cloning the C drive because none of the standard folders such as My Documents, etc. were on the C drive.

Why do I need so much space on my data drive? Well, the My Pictures by itself requires 539 GB. I have taken a lot of photos over time, and not just digital. I have scanned in most of the photos I took with my film cameras over the years. Then there is My Documents folder which has 297 GB of data. And I am already up to 834 GB. Additionally there are My Videos and some more that add up to an amount that leaves only 14 GB on the 1 TB drive I replaced. With an extra terra byte on the new drive, it should take some time before I fill that. ◆

Photographing London and Pairs

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

There is a lot of newsletter left to fill, and no one else at the moment has come up with an article. So I will continue by describing the process I use to photograph places I visit and how I manage the photos using Adobe Lightroom with modifications to the photos using Adobe Photoshop, which are part of the Adobe Creative Suite. I will also discuss how I use Adobe Premier Elements to make videos of the still image or simply edit the movies I can also make. So this will also be about software and not just photography.

For travel, my photography equipment consists of only one camera, a Nikon D800 DSLR with a 28 mm to 300 mm zoom lens. That is a heavy and obtrusive piece of equipment, especially when everyone else is using a phone to take their photos. I do use my Microsoft 950 XL phone to take photos sometimes, especially in restaurants, and it does quite good job on both photos an videos. Additionally the Nikon camera has an attachable GPS unit. Why Nikon cannot put a GPS inside the camera baffles me since the much smaller phones seem to include one. For storage in the camera, I use a 32 GB extremely fast Compact Flash card to store the still images. And since the camera will also take movies, I store them on a very fast 32 GB Micro SD card in a second camera slot. Finally I carry along and leave in the hotel room an extra of these cards in case one gets full, as did the compact flash one on this trip. I also include a battery charger and extra battery

Photography.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Paris Fashion Week

From the NY Times site, with a URL of http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/04/fashion/paris-fashion-week-day-8-no-one-goes-bigger-than-chanel.html, is this photo from an article on Fashion Week in Paris. The model is wearing something from Vanessa Seward. Photo by Bertrand Buay/Agence France-Presse. I missed the opportunity of seeing any of this since it occurred right after I returned to Tampa. However, I doubt they would have let me into the shows anyway. Why do fashion models always have a bored look?

Photography.....Continued from page 4

for the camera. I own a Sony HDR movie camera and would love to be able to use it, but that would simply be too much equipment to take on a trip.

For camera settings, I usually used the program mode and let the camera select the aperture and shutter speed. I do adjust the ISO based on the lighting conditions. For example, inside museums I will set the ISO quite high to be able to get decent photos with no flash. I also moved it very high so as to force a very fast shutter speed when attempting to take photos out the window of the Eurostar train traveling at 180 plus miles/hour between London and Paris. There is a feature to increase or decrease the aperture from the programmed selected one. I usually use this to increase one f-stop when taking a photo facing into the sun of

Photography.....Continued on page 6

Photography.....Continued from page 5

something. That's it. I am not a professional photographer; just a fairly advanced amateur. Most times, I spend no more than two seconds on composing and snapping a photo. That is why I think of myself as a snapshot photographer. However, I do manage to get some fairly decent pictures

Of the 1,721 photos I took over eight days, I selected 491 to use plus several of the short movies I took with my camera along with a few of the restaurant photos I took with the phone.

My method is as follows. While on the trip, each evening I would copy the day's photos from the camera to a folder on my Surface Pro 2. That way, I had two copies of the images: One on the camera and one on my laptop. On the laptop I had a folder for each day of the trip. When I arrived back in Tampa, I opened Adobe Lightroom on my desktop computer and imported all the 1,721 photos. In Lightroom, I then go through and delete any that are quite bad, such as badly out of focus or something that is totally of no interest. Next in the Library menu item displayed below, I add my name as creator and the location as London or Paris to the metadata of all the photos.

If I really wanted to spend a lot of time, I could identify photos as being buildings, gardens, statues, paintings, etc. in the metadata in the Library portion of Lightroom. But that was a bit too much for me.

I next look at the GPS tags in the metadata of each photo. Most have it, but there will be some without. For example, those taken inside a museum will not have this information. But it is easy to add in the Map menu item of Lightroom. I simply select all the photos taken inside the museum and then use my mouse to move them to the museum's location on the map. For other photos where the GPS did not fire, I can, with a bit of work, use Microsoft Bing's street view to trace my route, identify the building in question and then place the photo at that location on the map. That is a bit of work, and I don't do it for all photos for which the GPS did not fire. The map at the top of page 7 is a screen capture from Lightroom showing all the locations of my photos in Paris on a Saturday.

The final step is to do a presentation of the photos. I have two methods. One is to simply upload them to my OneDrive account, reduced in size from 7360 x 4912 pixels to 2400 x 1602 pixels, which is done in

Photography.....Continued on page 7



Photography.....Continued from page 7

Photoshop, and share them. The second is to make a video of the still images using Adobe Premier Elements as displayed in the screen capture at the bottom of this page. I add some text at the beginning and select a music track to add and have the program create the mp4 file. The higher the quality of video, the larger the size of the resulting file. For these images, I used 1920 x 1080 HD, a better quality video than the 1280 x 720 HD that I usually use. The resultant file is considerably larger but the resulting video

Photography.....Continued on page 8





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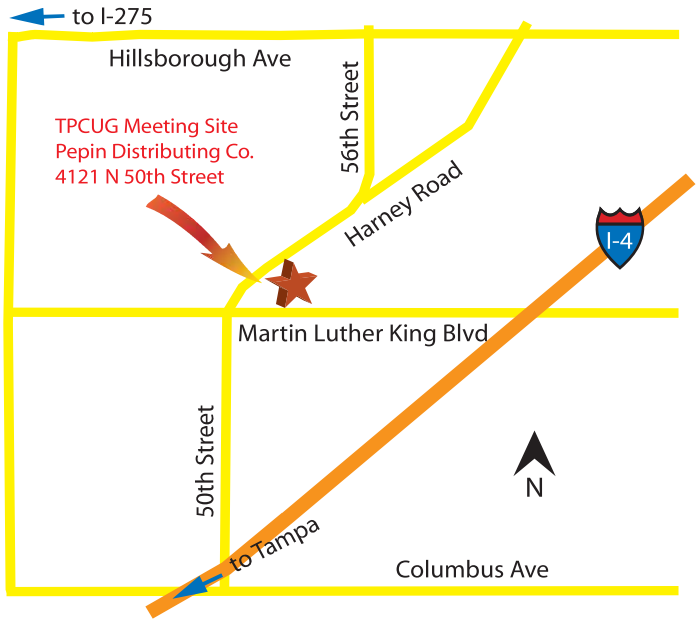
Photography.....Continued from page 7

is noticeably better. I would like to share these images with you if you have an interest. I have two ways of viewing them. You can watch the videos by going to my website http://www.lamartin.com and selecting the Videos menu item. The items of interest are the ones at the top. The second method is to view the London and Paris photos as individual images at these shared links at my OneDrive account

London:
https://1drv.ms/f/
s!AjI1fQgXBbBGloNgQXEkwn3y2kUfHg

Paris:
https://1drv.ms/f/
s!AjI1fQgXBbBGloVv6Fi87GjYdJ16nw

Of course, for the second method, it will be easier to go to the TPCUG website and view the current October newsletter where the above links will be live. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 29 No. 11 November 2016

November in Tampa

Meeting

What's New in Hardware

by

Steven Singer

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steven Singer with the latest in computer hardware.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

In this newsletter, Merle Nicholson tells us about new phone trends. And then he stops way too soon. Doesn't he realize we have a newsletter to fill, and no one has sent me anything, and that I really have nothing to contribute since I put all that in last month's newsletter. But necessity is the mother of insertion, as they say. And, thus, I have pieced together a few things that I observed or did this month that are computer related.

First I tell you about the amazing new computer that Microsoft will bring forth in the first part of 2017. It is named the Surface Studio, and it is a beauty with a beauty of a price. It is aimed at the creative crowd according to the video I watched. So it is obviously not meant for me

Comments.....Continued on page 2

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the October Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

In October, Merle did the presentation as well as the SIG, and since they were the same subject, Windows 10 Tips, the SIG simply continued. Of the attendees, only two people did not have or use Windows 10. Merle demonstrated how to tell the update level of your Windows 10 OS, and explained the history of the two: 1511 and 1607. Next were complete instructions on the System restore points, how to check if Microsoft update had turned it off and how to reinitialize System Restore. Then new changes to how system updates are handled. The next subject was drivers, their importance and how to manage drivers; more specifically how to turn driver updates off without affecting security updates. Finally with William LaMartin's help a demonstration of Windows 10 Quick Access, yet another remote control, windows third remote control program. William controlled Merle's computer after receiving an invitation. Lastly, Merle shared some pictures and narrative about Cape Canaveral in the early 60s. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Another new item is the quite remarkable Windows phone from HP named the Elite X3. At least that is the opinion of the writer who reviewed it for PC World. I provide a link to the review, which will be more easily followed in the online version of the newsletter.

With all these new devices from Microsoft and such things as the HP phone, it would appear that things are looking in the Microsoft World. I certainly hope so since I am a stock holder in the company. ◆

New Phone Trends – what you may not know

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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It's common to buy your smartphone from your carrier, and while in the past, some carriers discounted the price, they are now charging full retail; having "unbundled" the phone payment from the monthly service. Some may give other incentives if you ask. There are advantages to buying from sources other than the carrier, not the least of which is a much lower price.

I had decided to replace my (only) three year old Android phone and then I monitored prices for several months until I found what I wanted at a good price. I pretty much met my goals with last year's Moto X Pure. It's a 2015 model by Motorola (now owned by Lenovo) and was highly praised as a "flagship" smartphone when it came out. FedEx delivered it Oct 3; the tracking info originating in Wuhan, China. I paid $289 + tax, shipping included. This is for a phone that cost $600 last year.

Lenovo has replaced this model Moto X Pure with the 2016 Moto Z, a modular smartphone that comes in several varieties, including the Droid Z phones that are sold by Verizon. But they're still selling the X Pure and others (Moto G and Play) from the Motorola website.

I moved my VZ (Verizon) SIM card from the old phone to the new, waited for Google to transfer data and install apps, then waited for an OS upgrade to 6.0, installed the 64G micro SDXC card ($20 at amazon), then to formatted it as internal storage, and I was in business with a new 80G top-of-the-line (in 2015) smartphone. Motorola will upgrade it to the very latest OS (7.0 or 7.1) in December, but 6.0 is excellent. The VZ cloud restore from backup failed as expected, but all I lost was some old text messages that I was saving. No big loss, and Google had saved the rest. Motorola has a data transfer app, and even has a transfer program using NFC radio holding the two phones back-to-back if you want to wait 6 hours to do it.

Most of my search was based on a goal to release myself of Verizon's unhealthy need to control what devices are available to their customers. Specifically, they demand that they determine the apps that are installed (we call it bloatware), and their insistence that they control updates to the OS – late or not at all. The other goals I have is to never go on contract and to never pay full retail price, all of which means that although I love being on their network, I will never again be buying a phone from Verizon. There are excellent alternatives – more on that later.

The only manufacturer that is refusing to supply Verizon branded phones is Apple. If you will recall, Apple phones were not available from Verizon for perhaps a year later than AT&T because of Apple's refusal to allow Verizon to control updates. Obviously Verizon relented.

What makes it possible to buy a phone that works on Verizon but not supplied by them is a class of phone called "unlocked" and in addition one that is built to work on any carrier called "Universally Compatible". I mean any carrier; Verizon, T-mo, Sprint, AT&T and European carriers as well. That means that the phone must have two kinds of cellular receiver/transmitters - GSM and CDMA, so that the carrier's SIM card determines the type of radio that is in use. The Google flagship phones - Nexus 5X and 6P, new Pixel and Pixel XL, The Moto G, the Moto X Pure, and a new one from LG the V20, all are "unlocked", and multi-carrier and also international. Amazon calls these phones "Universally Compatible". See Amazon https://www.amazon.com/unlocked-cell-phones/b?ie=UTF8&node=2407749011 for lots of good information.

These phone's updates are controlled by the manufacturer the same way Apple has all along. You can count on the Nexus/Pixel getting the first releases when Google makes a major change to the OS. The advantage is that Verizon does elect to freeze your phone's OS at an older level. It's understandable because it's a lot of work. But it's unnecessary in the first place if they would leave their bloatware off. Really, who would pay a monthly subscription price for Verizon Navigator and be unremovable from the phone? John

Trends.....Continued on page 4

Trends.....Continued from page 3

Madden NFL .. Really?

Since I started this article, VZ has started selling the Pixel and Pixel XL, "exclusively" from Verizon. But don't be fooled by that; Google also sells the same model that is unlocked and "universally compatible" and works on VZ. No one has figured out the "exclusive" tag Verizon uses.

You do have to be careful when selecting an unlocked phone. There are models that are not universally compatible, almost always GSM-only (not Verizon) and there are "International, no warranty" versions made for Europe. You want to look for "US Warranty" and check out the published carrier compatibility. You can get one of these phones for as little as $150*, and it will work on any US carrier. You can travel to Europe and pick up a prepaid SIM at the destination airport and use it during your European trip. Watch for models that are compatible with VZ except that it may not work on 4G. Not a deal-breaker for me.

* This $150 phone is an excellent Moto G. It has ads on the lockscreen. The no-ads version is $200. It may not handle VZ 4G. 4G US coverage isn't 100% anyway and I don't stream movie content.

If you travel to Europe and back, you may want to look for a phone that has two SIM slots, US and Europe. They're available. ◆





Two Miscellaneous Items

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

On the left is a phone photo that was taken an a meeting at the Iron Yard in St. Petersburg last week showing me trying out a Microsoft HoloLens. I was able to view a shark, a hamster, a ballerina and an object that I can't recall that floated in space and which with finger movements I was able to move to different places in the room. Quite interesting. At present the devices are $3,000 and still under development. The hope is to be able to sell them at under $1,000 and possibly as low as $700.

The fellow doing the demonstration was working on an app for the device. This is one thing I have no interest in working with at the present, the steep price being one of the determining factors.

Miscellaneous.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Halloween

It is Halloween around the world. This photo is from the photos section of the Wall Street Journal, http://wsj.com. The caption reads: "Dublin hosts the Bram Stoker Festival on Halloween. Mr. Stoker was an Irish author who wrote the novel 'Dracula' in 1897. Niall Carson/Zuma Press"

Miscellaneous.....Continued from page 4

The image at the top of page four is a screen capture from an Android phone of an app that Merle Nicholson requested I develop for him. He wanted a bicycle riding app that would display the instantaneous speed in big digits at the top and then two separate leg displays below that which would keep track of elapsed time, distance and average speed over the leg. The two leg displays needed to be able to be reset, frozen (not paused but just have the display frozen) and paused. You also would be able to unfreeze and un pause.

In the image, the data is from a short test walk I did where both leg displays are showing the same information. When finished, the leg displays would normally be used to display data from different legs. The app could also record walk data. ◆



Microsoft's New Hardware

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

On October 26, Microsoft did a presentation in New York City showcasing their new hardware products. That's correct; hardware products and not software. That would be the Surface Pro 4, the new version of the Surface Book, and a new and exciting item: The Surface Studio. Warning: You are not going to like the price, but you would love to have one. At least, I would love to have one. But, beside the high price, I am not sure where I would place it. I am already overloaded with two desktop Win 10 machines, a monitor for working both with my Win 10 phone using Continuum and with the Rasperberry PI 2 (I think there is a 3 out now) and an iMac. All of which take up desk space around the house. However, the main thing that stops me from ordering one is the price, which starts at $2,999. However, by the time I configured it as I would like, it would balloon to $4,199.

To learn about the Surface Studio and the other items, you can view the presentation at https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/octoberevent/microsoft-live-event. This is a two-hour presentation. The Surface Book and Surface Studio starts at time point 1:11.

You may view the Surface Studio at the Microsoft site at https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/surface/devices/surface-studio/overview. And you may even preorder it for early 2017 delivery

It comes with either an it5 or and i7 processor with up to 32 GB Ram. It has a stunning 28-inch, 192 PPI, 4,500 x 3,000 pixel multi-touch display. The hard drive can go up to two terabytes. How they get all of that into what you see in the photo above is a mystery to me.

The presentation indicated it was aimed at the creative class, so I suppose that leaves me out. ◆



HP Elite X3 Windows Phone

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Just when you thought Windows Phone was dead, HP has revived it with the new HP Elite X3, a smartphone aimed not at the consumer but at the business world. You will not find it at the Verizon store since it is a GSM phone and not a CDMA one as Verizon would require. But that is not the only reason. The real reason is that it is not at present sold in any of the telecom phone stores. You may at present only purchase it from HP, starting at $799 (and possibly ending at $799) which, I will bet, is more than you want to pay for a phone.

To read about this phone at HP, go to http://www8.hp.com/us/en/products/tablets/product-detail.html?oid=12740553#!tab=features.

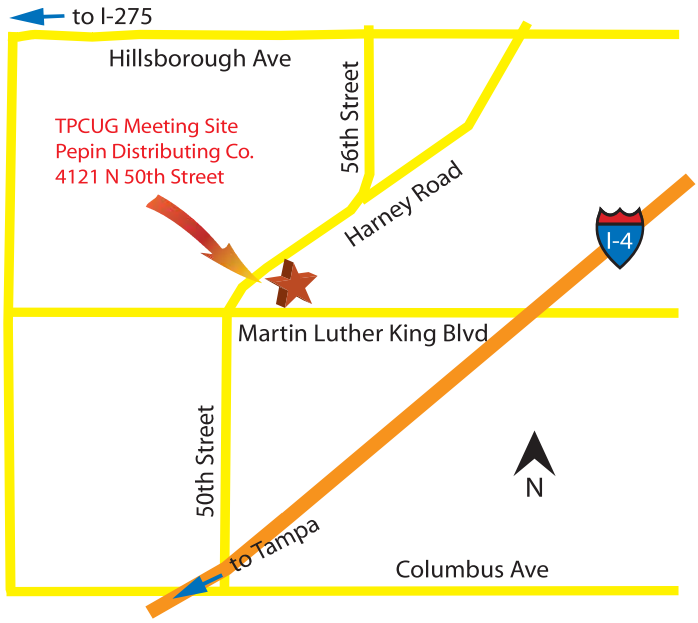
To read about it at the more informative PC World site, go to http://www.pcworld.com/article/3129416/phones/hp-elite-x3-review-this-could-be-the-last-great-windows-phone.html.

This phone seems like a slight notch up from my Microsoft 750 XL Windows 10 Phone, both of which allow you to use it as a PC running Windows Universal apps by way of Microsoft Continuum as demonstrated in the photo above. And, this is the big one: If you are willing to pay more to use the HP Workspace in a virtualized cloud environment, the HP phone will even run Win32 apps – for $579/year or $939/year. Obviously this phone is meant for business, not the rest of us. But it points the way to what will be common in the future. ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



December in Tampa

Vol. 29 No. 12 December 2016

Meeting

Holiday Party

by

All of Us

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Annual Holiday Party.

Merle Nicholson may or may not lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting. It will depend on whether there are any questions.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thankfully Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg have something to contribute this month, for I have very little to write about. I have been keeping busy, just not doing things that would provide much material for a newsletter.

I continue to refine the Android phone app that I am working on for Merle to keep track of his bike riding. However, I can't seem to finish because of all the other projects that pop up--some that have to be taken care of immediately and some that are all of a sudden new and interesting.

One of those that has to be taken care of immediately is handling the data that comes into PayPal from our annual home tour in my neighborhood of Hyde Park. Each year we have a home tour of six or seven houses on one of the streets in the neighbor-

Comments.....Continued on page 2

January Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the November Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

For the November meeting, Steven Singer of RDI did his regular hardware presentation after introducing his brother, Scott. Scott brought a very high-end, powerful Windows 10 desktop machine. The computer was specially designed for Scott for editing video – one of Scott's businesses is recording live music bands and putting out a professional product. Scott demonstrated and discussed Adobe Premier for Video rendering, a product that a couple of our members have interest in. Steven went on to discuss some of the computer components he had brought with him: Computer cases, cell phone chargers, mini-ITX motherboards and also some AMD processors, one with a larger but flat fan for low profile cases. All-in-all once again Steven has done an entertaining and informative presentation. We always look forward to his annual visit. Our thanks go to Steven and Scott Singer. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

hood. My job is to take photos of the exteriors of the houses for the brochure and then to return the day of the tour and take interior photos right before the tour begins. You may view a video of this year's houses at my website, http://www.lamartin.com, in the Hyde Park menu item. The alternate link usually works better than the first one for most videos.

The most tiresome job is keeping track of all the PayPal payments for the tour when people make online purchases. It is not difficult to view the data. The problem comes when the organizers want a

Comments.....Continued on page 4

Have a Spare Smartphone?

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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I recall TPCUG member Michele Burgess asking if I had ideas for uses for good older smartphones, and somehow the conversation was interrupted and I didn't have a chance to answer. I've been using an old smartphone in my car for much more than a year. It's not on a cellular account; it's an older Moto X2 that's working fine as a GPS device. As it turns out, I own four surplus working smartphones that are not in use. I've checked on their market value which range from zero to $10. I think it's interesting that it's pretty normal (and strange) to replace a device like this every two or three years in full working condition. I think two are going to be donated to The Spring, and two are re-purposed as GPS readouts.



One device, I'm referring to the phone on the left of the steering wheel above, is an older model that uses a replaceable battery that's especially cheap. I've actually replaced it as my primary phone twice now, the latest is on the right - a Moto X Pure. But it's a good functional smartphone that still has the Verizon SIM installed. As long as the SIM is there it can be used for emergency 911 calls. It's always plugged into a USB charging device, never unplugged. But I do shut off the smartphone itself because I really don't drive the car enough to keep it sleeping and charged.

Its only function is information the app can get from GPS. Primarily speed, and you can observe my speed was zero when the photo was taken, not 0.3, more on that later. I prefer a digital speed indicator, which this current car does not have. I've had a couple of predecessors (2009 and 2012 Civics) that had a digital speed readout and I find it's less distracting than an analog speedometer. In any case this GPS app provides compass direction, a couple of trip odometers and several speed settings you can set to give warning that you're exceeding speeds, and a bunch of other functions. I use the digital speed and trip odometers, and ignore the rest. If you look at available GPS apps for smartphones the only problem is selecting among the hundreds available, including some that are in reverse so that they'll reflect on your windshield as a heads-up-display. I actually have three GPS apps on this phone and have settled on this one for now, but I'm always looking for "the right one".

The phone on the right of the steering wheel is my newest primary smartphone, a large 5.7" Moto X Pure. Normally it's rotated landscape and running Google Navigate (Maps). It's connected via BlueTooth to the car for hands-free telephone and for music to the car speakers. For this photo however, I was testing an app that William LaMartin is developing that I asked for. I want a GPS app that has just the functions I use and no more. Speed and two trip registers for my bicycle. Here's that phone with William's app mounted in my bicycle phone bag.



That bag is good for a billfold, keys and has the win-

Smartphone.....Continued on page 4

Smartphone.....Continued from page 3

dow for a phone. The plastic window does not inhibit touching the screen. It's hard to see in the photo, but it's very readable in direct sunlight because the digits are large and William's app has very little to interact with. If William's app turns out as I expect, I'll use it in the car as well, replacing the current app. Then I'll dedicate one of my surplus phones just for this bicycle bag.



The other uses for surplus working smartphones are car and bicycle GPS, donating to The Spring, and for remote control of household devices. We were using one of these phones to run a Honeywell app that remote controls our air conditioner thermostat. The only thermostat is on the second floor of our townhouse. We try to keep it as warm as we can comfortably most of the time, but several times during the day set it a couple of degrees lower for kitchen activity, vacuuming and cleaning. It has an internet connection for remote control and it works surprisingly well. We have no interest in controlling it when away from the house, but it did allow for us to use a smartphone dedicated to the app – always on – to pick up and make quick adjustments. We have since abandoned that when we set up our Amazon Echo to do the same thing by voice command: "Alexa, set thermostat to 78".

Other notes:

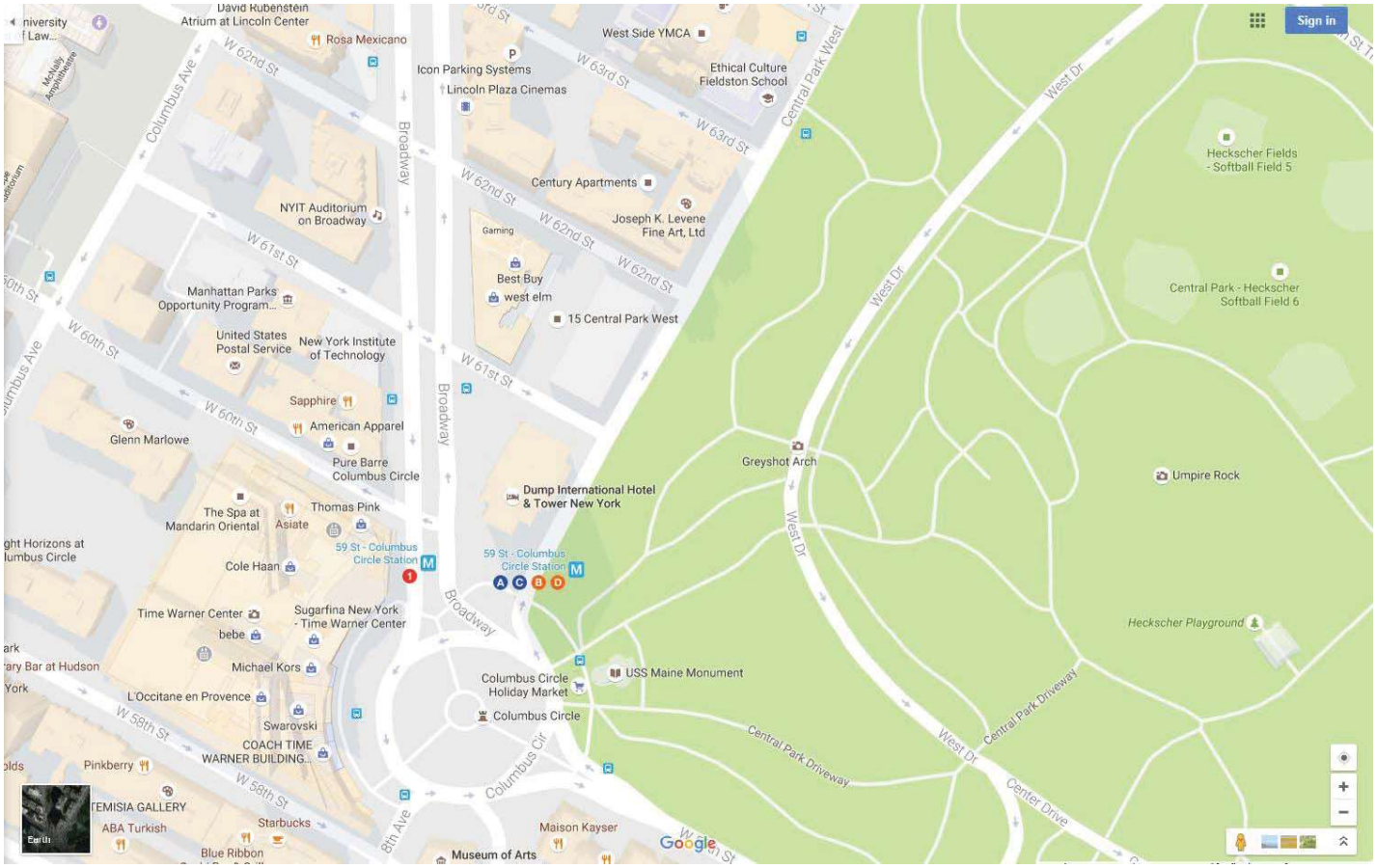
1. I think a digital speed works best for me because that speed I read goes directly to my brain. An analog speedometer must be interpreted – translated to digital before it's useful.
2. You can buy a semi-clear reflective film to adhere to the inside of your windshield so that a phone used as a heads-up-display will be readable in daylight. It's reflective enough to read the phone sitting on the dash. See next note.
3. You have to be careful to make sure your phone does not get fried in sunlight. The interior of your car can easily reach 150 deg f, and the phone will get much hotter than that being directly behind the windshield. I use a white terry facecloth to drape over the phone if it's parked in the sun, and if I think it's especially intense while I'm away from the car, I'll dismount it, wrap it and put it in the glove box. This is a precaution for any similar device left in the car. I let it overheat one time and it shut down, did not power back up until it cooled down. It even notified me why it shut down. It obviously monitors its internal temperature.
4. You also have to be concerned that a phone may be a temptation to steal because it's in plain sight. Not that you lose much, but you'll have car damage to deal with.
5. Smartphone-controllable devices are commonplace now. Especially remote controlled wall outlets and switches and internet-connected light bulbs. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 2

listing every few days of who has purchased tickets so as to be able to make up a wrist band package for them. They do not want to wait until the last day or two to do this, so it falls to me, the person who set up the Pay Pal account, to supply them frequent updates. No good deed goes unpunished. Next up for the neighborhood is the creation of the directory of residents which I do each year. To do that, I receive the data in an Excel file from the membership person. I then transfer it to Microsoft Access and then use that along with some Visual Basic programming to arrange the data, which I then transfer to Adobe inDesign for the final product. I am trying to shed some of the

Comments.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Dump International Hotel & Tower

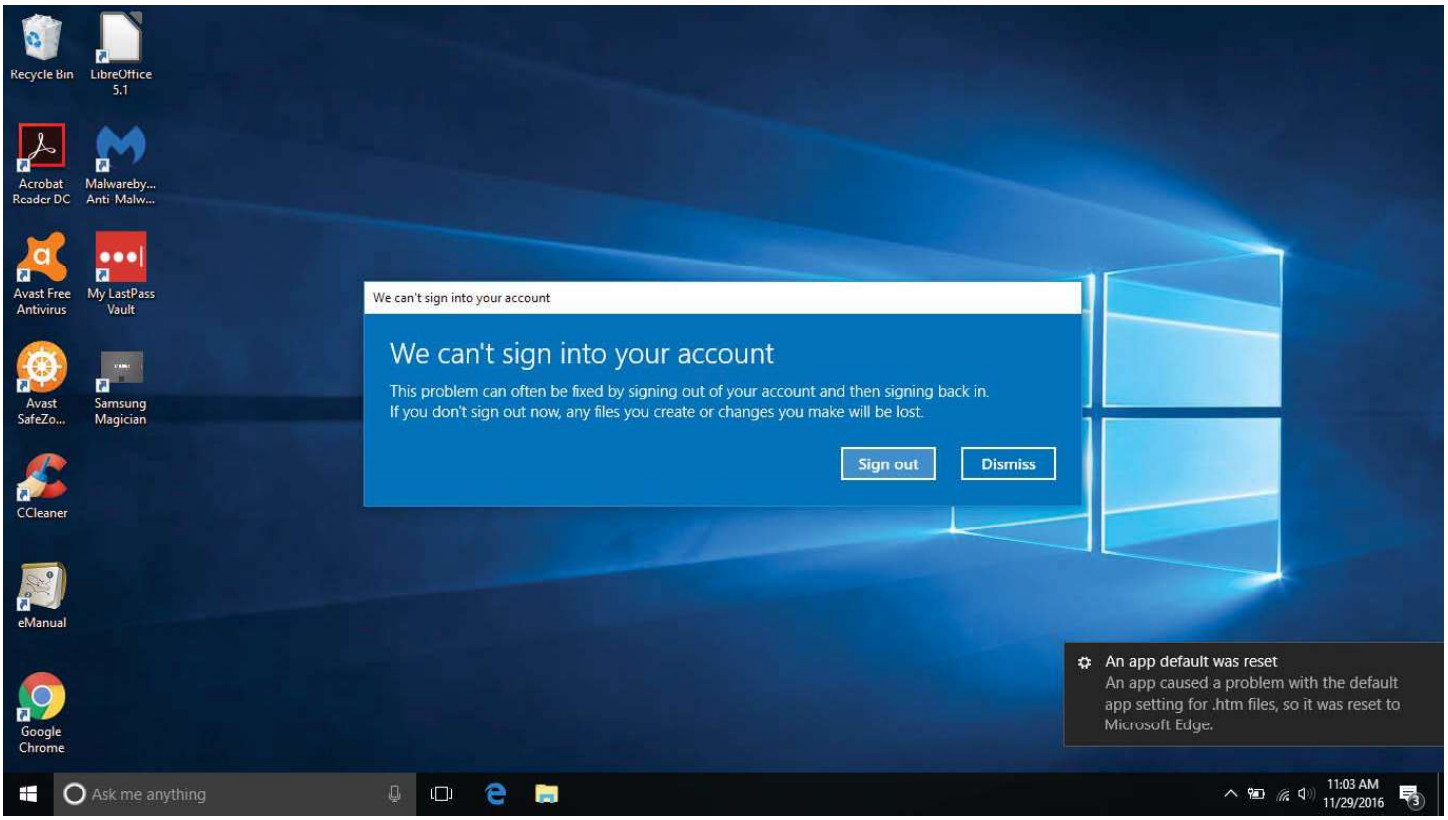
As seen in the screen capture above, on November 26 Trump International Hotel & Tower on Central Park West just north of Columbus Circle in Manhattan was temporarily renamed to Dump International Hotel & Tower New York on Google maps (https://www.google.com/maps). Additionally, Trump Tower in Manhattan was renamed Dump Tower (If you don't know the location, it is just to the east of 5th Avenue and in between 56th and 57th streets). It is unclear who was responsible: Google programmers, hackers inside of Google, hackers outside of Google, or the Democrats' favorite suspects: Russian hackers. Anyway, the renaming remained for a number of hours.

Comments.....Continued from page 4

many "jobs" I have, but the only one I have managed to drop is doing the neighborhood website, as I still have the the neighborhood database, emails and directory--not to mention this TPCUG newsletter.

Microsoft has also been causing me problems. A number of years back, when the Windows Phone 7 came out, I began writing phone apps for it. One of them was a database named My Data Tables. The way it functioned was that you exported xml files from Microsoft Access tables or queries or text files from Microsoft Excel and placed them at your One-Drive account (then called SkyDrive). From the app, you then downloaded these files from your OneDrive (SkyDrive) account. In the app, the data was encrypted and the app password protected. Everything was fine until a month back when Microsoft decided to recertify apps. They noticed that this app did not have an

Comments.....Continued on page 7



Back from the Dead

By Ron Weinberg, Member-At-Large
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Our six year old i7 Asus laptop, which I had previously written about, describing the difficult upgrade to Windows 10 had, after a few minor tweaks, been working perfectly. It is primarily used by my wife, an experienced touch typist. As such, she prefers to use a heavier external USB keyboard laid on top of the laptop keyboard.

We know food and especially drink should not be placed near a laptop. There was a glass of unsweetened iced tea on a nearby table, a relatively safe place, or so we thought. An accidental bump caused the tea to be thrown onto the laptop.

We immediately shut off via the power button and tried blotting up the tea. The external keyboard did not shield the laptop very well and it was very wet. We grabbed a hair dryer to help.

Later, we found what we should have done: Immediately disconnect the power cord and the battery. Do not use a hair dryer, it forces the liquid further in. Our first step after power off probably should have been to turn the laptop over to let gravity remove the liquid as much as possible.

After allowing everything to dry we tried many times to restart the laptop and all failed. The system was presumed dead. A call to the manufacturer's service department indicated that the system board had probably been ruined and it was not cost effective to replace.

I removed the SSD hard drive and tested it. It, as well as the external keyboard, was not damaged. All the files were easily recoverable. I stored it in a static free bag and stored the laptop in a vertical position like a book intending to scrap and replace it when the forthcoming holiday sale season began.

Fast forward four or more weeks. Black Friday is approaching, the time to buy. I decided to make one more effort, reinstalled the hard drive and switched it on. The screen appeared, wildly flickering, a sign

Back From The Dead.....Continued on page 7

Back From The Dead.....Continued from page 6

of life. I could not sign in as the "s" on the laptop keyboard was inoperative. Adding back the external keyboard I was able to sign in and adjust the display setting to eliminate the flicker. When my wife tried to sign in we got the message "We can't sign into your account."

The suggested fixes for this condition are to try to sign in and out multiple times. If that fails you need to edit the registry from the safe mode and change the Ref Count to 0 in the ProfileimagePath and then install any Windows updates. Neither method worked. We could sign into the other user but not the principal user. The main user's profile was corrupted and had to be replaced.

By activating and using the Administrator account we saw that all the original files were intact. We created a new user, copied the old files into it and renamed the old user. Then we were able to rename the new user to the original name. The sign in problem was corrected. It was necessary to reenter the email program's settings and everything was back to normal.

Upon further examination it was determined that many of the built in keyboard keys would not work including all of the FN keys. Using the external keyboard was a satisfactory work around. However, the external keyboard lacks a Fn key so all of the functions controlled by key are disabled. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 5

age rating, which was not in existence at the time it was published. So they re-tested it and discovered that they needed to access the OneDrive test account I had provided and for which there was a provided user name and password. When they tried to access the account, Microsoft now required (but not in the past) that they retrieve a verification code that was being sent to the email associated with the account--which was sent to the owner of the account – me! so there was no way for the tester to actually test the app. I discussed this with Microsoft for over a week and finally gave up on the idea of keeping the app in the store, since they had no solution and simply said that there was no way for them to certify apps that require access to a OneDrive account. So, since some fights are not worth fighting, I gave up on that.

I am now toying with the idea of redoing the app so as not to need OneDrive and redoing it as a Win 10 Universal app with possible Android and iOS versions. In this version, to get the data on your phone, you will connect it via a USB cable to your computer, copy the xml or txt files desired to a folder on the phone, import them into the app where they will be encrypted, and finally delete them from the folder on the phone. That way you will only have encrypted versions of the data on the phone. Working on that has also taken up some time.

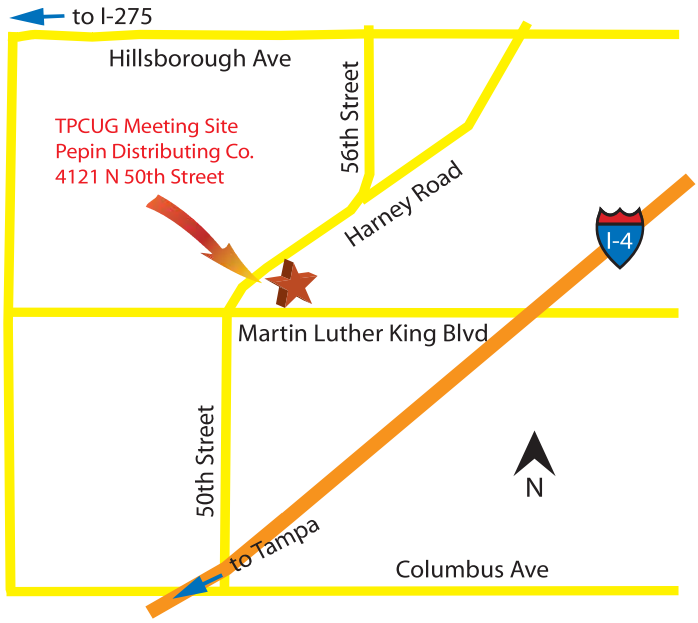


Now there is one final thing that I recall as taking up a bit of my time: Building a robot (pictured above fully assembled). This robot is really meant for children. It includes a small arduino computer on it that can be programmed. One way for children to program it is using the simple SCRATCH language. However, a collection of adults, of which I am a member, is going to attach a Raspberry Pi 3 that is running Windows 10 IOT to the robot, and we are going to write programs to control the device using the C# programming language. The group meets monthly at the local Microsoft office. You may view a video of my robot running around the house on its own at https://1drv.ms/v/s!AjI1fQgXBbBGlsIbKUbpZnOrPrknuw (wait for the online version of the newsletter to more easily use the link). ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 30 No. 1 January 2017

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

January in Tampa

Meeting

Extended Windows SIG

And Business Meeting

by

All of Us

Wednesday, January 11

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: Extended Windows SIG and a Business Meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

There almost wasn't a newsletter this month. But here it is again. However, you may not have received it in the usual timely manner before the monthly meeting. It may have arrived a few days later. I am pretty sure it will be finished a couple days before the meeting, but that does not allow enough time for having it printed and then mailed. However, it should have been posted online a couple days before the meeting

The main reason it is late this month is that I received no articles. As should be obvious, in recent years only a handful of members submit anything, and that handful consists mainly of Merle Nicholson and myself with occasional help from about four other members. And this month the handful was an empty hand. In years past, members would provide articles. Sadly some of those members have died, some have left the group and some are just getting old and tired. I am a bit old and tired myself. I have been newsletter editor since December 1995. That is 20 years. I have managed to put out a newsletter on time for those 20 years despite going on vacations, being in the

Comments.....Continued on page 2

February Meeting: To be announced

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the December Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

The December meeting is a social meal held at Pepin Distributors. John Witmer did all the hard catering work with help from his wife. John has done this for enough years that he's found the winning formula, and it was a resounding success. The members took the opportunity to socialize, something that's difficult to do during regular meetings.

Our heartfelt thanks to John and Donna Witmer for the food and to Pepin Distributors for providing the venue. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

hospital and worse. I have enjoyed it and learned a lot in the process. But I need some help with articles if I am to continue.

At the last minute, I told Merle that we had nothing. He said that he had no ideas, and I had only the thinnest of an idea. But we decided to put ourselves to the task, and this newsletter is what we came up with.

As I have mentioned before, I have written a Windows 10 Universal app that you can download from the Windows Store, either for your Win 10 computer or your Windows 10 Phone (I think I am probably the only one in the group that has such a phone) that will allow you to read and search all our newsletters back to 1988. I have also ported that app to Android, so it is available in the Google Play Store for your Android phone or tablet. Well, you know what comes next: An iOS version.

Comments.....Continued on page 5

Where did Safe Mode go?

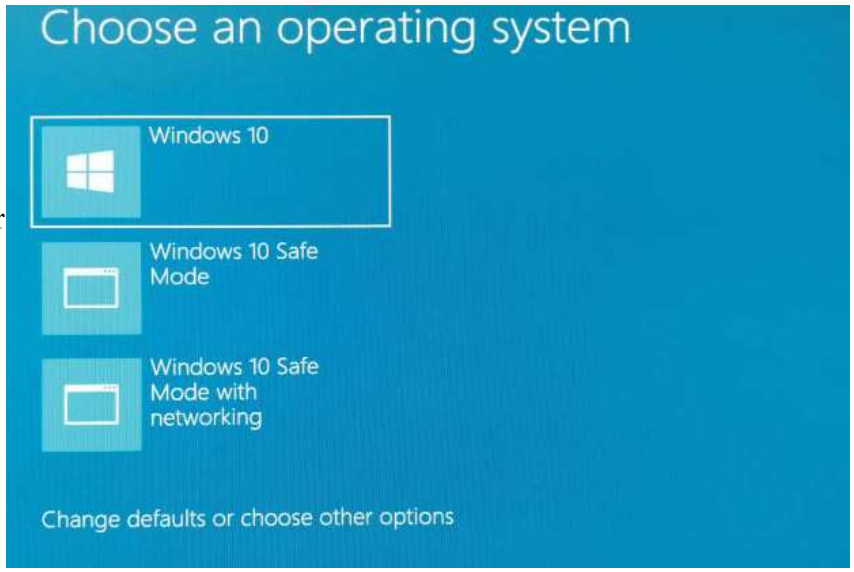
By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Those of us that have been Windows users for a while have certainly used Safe Mode, and on an OS before Windows 8, it was extremely useful to recover a broken OS without going to extreme measures like reinstalling. Safe mode loaded a minimal OS without many hardware drivers. It was useful because if you got a driver that was incompatible with say a network card, you could boot without drivers and remove the offending one. Most times it is useful to run a virus scan when you have an infection that is persistent. Chances are that the virus is not running in Safe Mode, so it can be removed more easily.

In Windows 7, for instance you must press F8 after the hardware is booted but before the OS is loaded and you got a menu that included Safe Mode. Sometimes the timing was difficult and it took several tries. Another way to get there is through a setting in System Configuration, on the boot tab, set a temporary boot into Safe Mode and then restart. But that presupposes that you can get into Windows in the first place.

Windows 10 has changed it all around. The F8 option is no longer there. If you can run Windows you can get into safe mode, but frankly if I can get into Windows, I don't need Safe Mode. It isn't even available in the repair options. And to my mind, Windows 10 needs it more than ever because of the way updates are forced. You can avoid driver updates somewhat with Windows 10 Pro, but it's a lot of work and only temporary so you have to re-do a lot of work because the driver updates will keep popping up.

There's an interesting change you can make in Windows 10 to get a boot menu with Safe mode on the menu. It is not a secret especially, and apparently it's been there a long time. Anyone can do the changes, but it is technical in nature. Here's the final result. Just read on if you think it's worth it.



After making the change, the screen above appears just before a normal boot. I've made sure the default choice is Windows 10, and if no action is taken, it will boot into Windows 10 after a three second wait. The time-out is adjustable. I have three seconds to press a down arrow, and regardless what I do after that, there is no time-out. The truly interesting thing is that if the "Change defaults or choose other options" is clicked on you get the full system repair and troubleshooting. These options are normally accessed through a recovery flash drive or installation media.

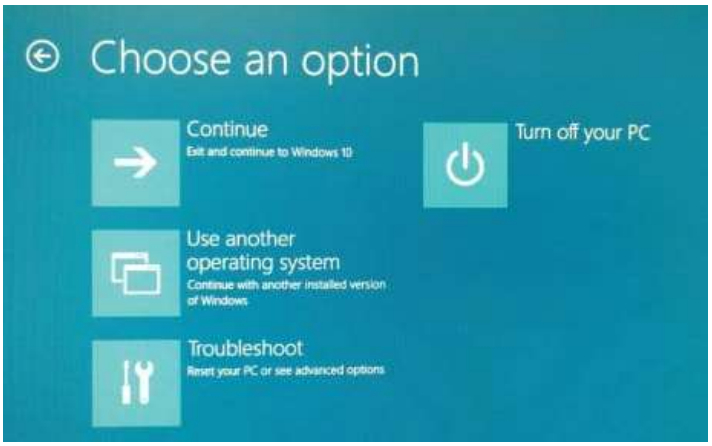
I've clicked around on the options and made some screenshots:



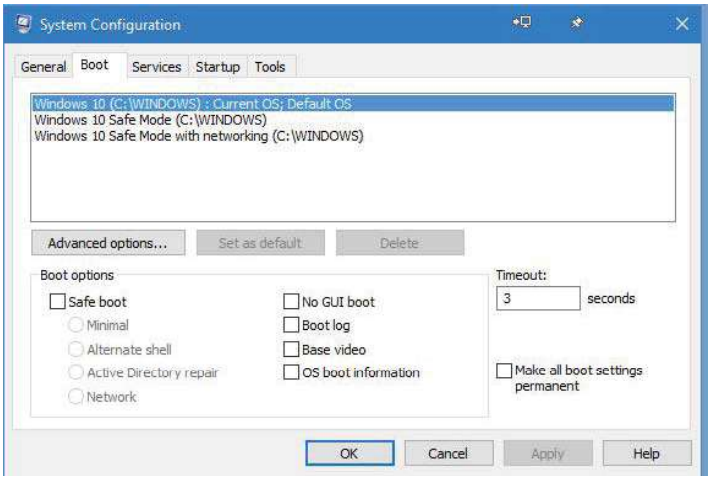
Safe Mode.....Continued on page 4

Safe Mode.....Continued from page 3

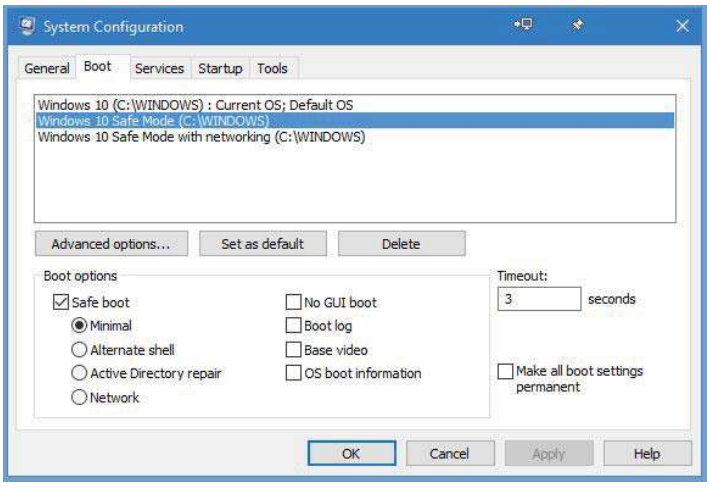




Here's how you add this menu:
Go into "System Configuration". This can be done several ways, you can search for "system configuration" or in the start menu type "msconfig" or right-click the start button, select "Command Prompt (admin)", and in the command line type "msconfig.exe" (all without the quotes). Click the "Boot" tab and here's what you get, except that you have only one entry, "Windows 10 (...) … Default OS" We're going to add the other two. Notice that the first, default Windows 10 entry is selected and that there are no Boot Options and that "Set as default" is greyed out because it's already the default and we want to keep it that way.



To add the second option, we need to go back to the "Command Prompt (admin)" and type the following: bcdedit /copy {current} /d "Windows 10 Safe Mode" and press Enter. Close out System Configuration and open it again to the Boot tab and you'll see the second "Windows 10 Safe Mode" entry. Select that and click the "Safe boot" option and then the "Minimal" button. Click on "Make all boot settings permanent" and click Apply. There's a lengthy message box with dire warnings, so just read, worry a bit and click.



Now we need to add the third menu item. Repeat the last steps except you want a different description in the command prompt line: bcdedit /copy {current} /d "Windows 10 Safe Mode with networking". Then close and open System Configuration, select "Windows 10 Safe Mode with networking" and click "Safe boot" under "Boot options" and click the "Network" button. You can change the time out from 3 seconds to something longer, but not shorter. Again, click on

Safe Mode.....Continued on page 6

Internet Picture of the Month



How to get hummingbirds in your garden

From the Old Farmer's almanac, founded in 1792, at the link: http://www.almanac.com/content/plants-attract-hummingbirds They tell you what plants attract hummingbirds and provide facts about hummingbirds, such as: "They are the tiniest of all birds, weighing less than an ounce and measuring only 3 inches long.

Comments.....Continued from page 2

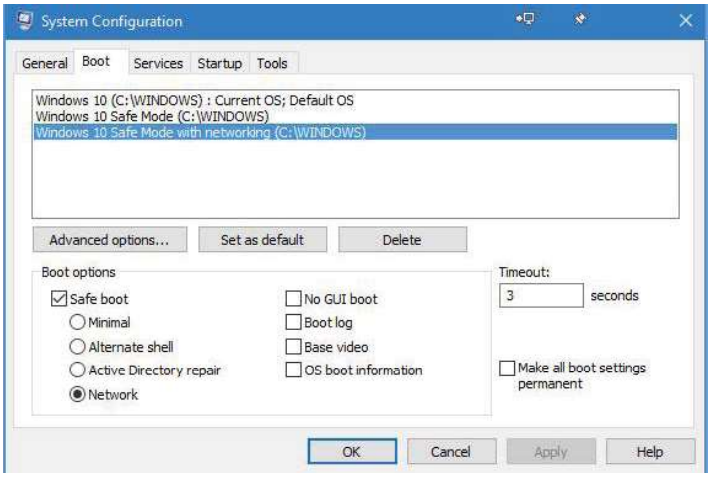
Porting an app or writing one from scratch for iOS (iPhone and iPad) is more difficult, at least for me, than for Windows or Android. And once you have it written and working with no obvious bugs, having tested it on the various OS simulators, an actual iPhone and an actual iPad, there is the problem of jumping through all the hoops necessary to finally get it in the Apple App Store.

As I write this, I have the newsletter app, *Computer Group Newsletters*, running on my iPhone and iPad. The most difficult thing was figuring out how to display a pdf file on an iDevice so that you could pinch and zoom it. But with the help of the Internet, I got that done. It was considerably easier on Windows and Android. I will test the app on my iPhone and iPad for several days before submitting the app to the store.

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Safe Mode.....Continued from page 4

"Make all boot settings permanent" and click Apply.



Be sure to use the Command Prompt (Admin), because the changes won't work otherwise. Be sure to select each option in turn to make sure the options are correct and make doubly sure the Windows 10 first entry is the default. It says so and also the "Set as Default" is greyed out and when you click on each of the others it isn't greyed.

I really like this. I'm not sure why it hasn't been talked about or even considered common knowledge. At worst, it's a three second delay on bootup and that may annoy some, but I don't notice it. The access to the system recovery and troubleshooting was a complete surprise to me and I'm really pleased to have it.

I discovered it quite by accident when I was researching a problem with a friends computer. The article I found has several very useful tips including "Enable System Restore", something I have written about myself. Enabling system restore should be number uno on all new installations. I think this boot menu should be on the top 5 at least.

See
http://www.itpro.co.uk/operating-systems/25802/15-windows-10-problems-and-how-to-fix-them-5 ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 5

The following screen captures from the iPad Pro simulator will demonstrate the appearance of the app.

What you see in the first image below is the app's opening page scrolled down through 330 newsletters to the latest one, December of 2016.

Perhaps I should have ordered the newsletters in descending order by date so that the most recent newsletters were at the top. However, the current order may be the best if you are interested in reading about the early days of the group. And I think that is one of the main values of the app. It allows you to read and recall what was happening in the PC world in the late 1980s and early 1990 when so many exciting things were occurring. At least they were exciting for me, having purchased an Apple IIe in 1984 and a Gateway 2000 IBM close in 1991, after which I soon joined the Tampa IBM PC Users Group, as we were then named.



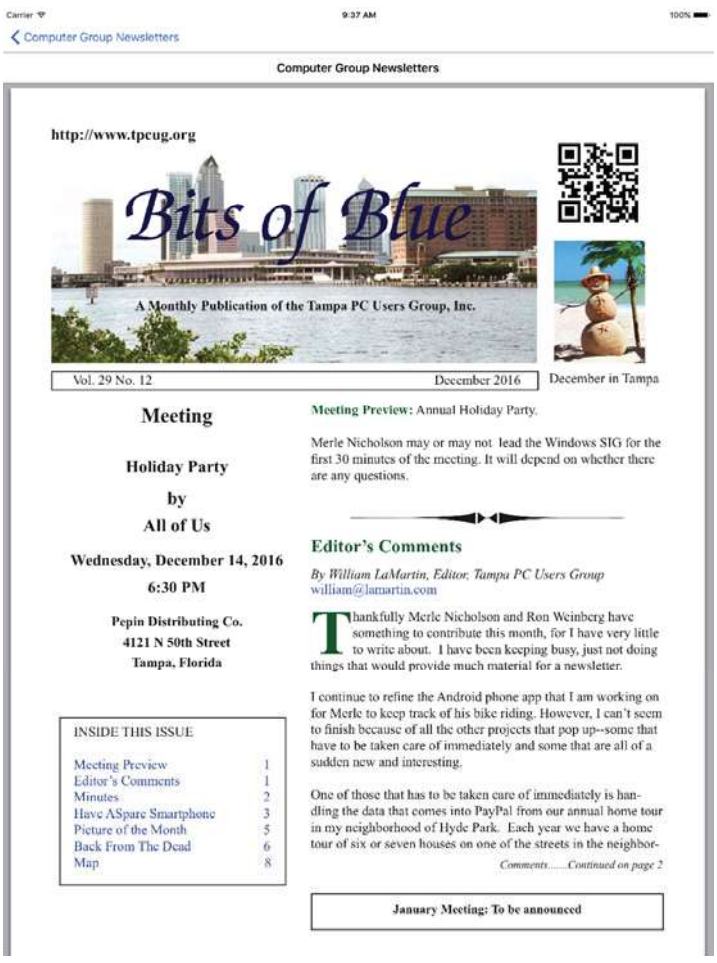
Comments.....Continued on page 7

Comments.....Continued from page 6

When I read one of the old newsletters, I am amazed at how much I have forgotten. Just choosing the December 1995 newsletter, the first one with which I had anything to do, the article titles are fairly familiar, being Street Atlas USA, Adobe Photo Shop and Lotus Smart Suit for OS/2. That last one may be a problem for some. Do you recall Lotus? Do you recall OS/2?

Go to the next newsletter, the January 1996 issue. Do you recall Syncware Fill, Photo Works from Seattle Film Works, Zip Explorer., Partition Magic or Impos/2. The only one you probably recall is Partition Magic. And a reading of the many more old and older newsletters will show you how much you have forgotten. Just try to recall how many personal computers you have owned in the past 20 or more years; how many different operating systems; how many peripheral devices, etc.

The image below is of our most recent newsletter being displayed in the iOS version of the app that I hope to have in the Apple App Store within a week.



The final image below is of the search page of the app, where it is displaying the results of a search for the word Microsoft and claims to have found 1394 instances of it. The first instance found was on page four of the March 1989 newsletter. The results for the newsletters before December 1995 will not be as complete as those after since for those early newsletters. I scanned them into Adobe Acrobat from paper copies and then ran optical character recognition on them. I next used a feature of Acrobat to extract the text from each page of those newsletters and used that to build the searchable index. Since the OCR was not 100% accurate, the index for those early newsletters will not be 100% accurate. For newsletters from December 1995 onward, the searchable index should be totally accurate with the exception of hyphenated words in the articles.

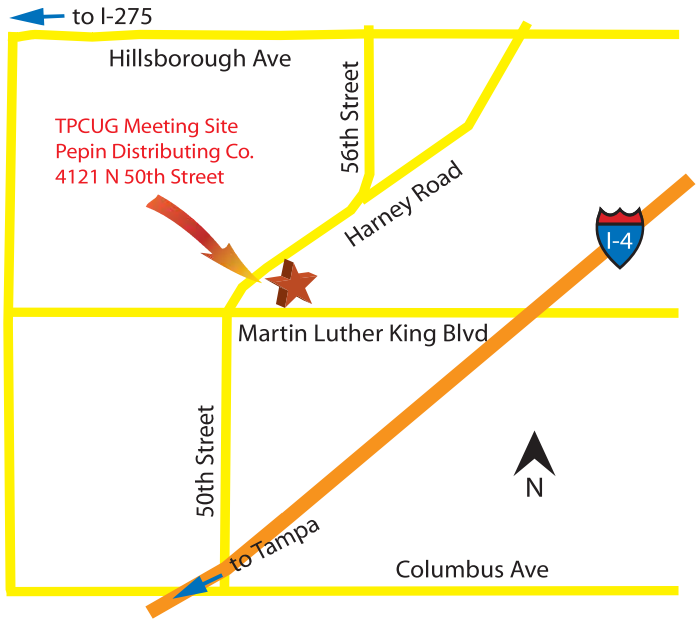
Once I get the iOS version finished, there will be a version for all three different platforms. Go get one. ◆



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A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



February in Tampa

Vol. 30 No. 2 February 2017

Meeting

FaceTime versus Google Hangouts

by

Michelle Burgess & Brian Lance

Wednesday, February 8

6:30 PM

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Meeting Preview: FaceBook vs Google by TPCUG members Michelle Burgess and Brian Lance.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg, I do not need to write much this month, which is good since I don't have much about which to write. The TPCUG newsletter app, *Computer Group Newsletters*, was accepted by Apple, so now you may view it on your Windows 10 device, your Android device and your Apple iPhone or iPad.

At first it was rejected (Apple is always looking for something to use to reject an app, it seems). Their reason was that an app was not needed to view the newsletters; All that was needed was a browser. That would lead you to think that they had gone to our website and noted that all the newsletters back to 1988 were there to view. Given that, in their opinion, my app added nothing of value.

I thought about that for a few minutes, a bit hurt since no one likes to be rejected (Google and Microsoft didn't reject the app). Then I formulated a response, which basically pointed out

Comments.....Continued on page 2

March Meeting: To be announced

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Secretary: Merle Nicholson (merle@merlenicholson.com) 813-879-3602
Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net) 813-960-4132
Board Member: Dave Palmer (dkp205@hotmail.com) 813-789-0488

APPOINTED (Volunteers)

Editor: William LaMartin (william@lamartin.com) 813-251-3817
Programs: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com) 813-234-9343

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Minutes of the January Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

For the first meeting of 2017, the agenda was a business meeting and Windows SIG. John Witmer, president, led the meeting, and he and the members present discussed a variety of subjects mostly having to do with the future of the club and its newsletter. The slate of officers was informally discussed and opened to new officer volunteers. None forthcoming, it is assumed that the current slate will continue for 2017. The officer list is published in this newsletter on this page. Doug Mullis, treasurer, supplied a financial sheet and the 2017 budget was discussed.

After some discussion, it was resolved that members in good standing as of December 31, 2016 will have their membership dues waived when they renew in 2017.

Some other observations were discussed: The current location and accessibility of the club PO box; obtaining speakers monthly; the difficulty of obtaining original newsletter articles, and the somewhat unlikely possibility of reducing the newsletter to four pages. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

that the app did provide one very import thing that a browser could not do: Using the app, you may search for a word or phrase over the entire collection of newsletters from 1988 through 2016. And I provided a couple of examples of doing such a search. Apparently that impressed the reviewer since in less than an hour, I had a message indicating that the app was on its way to the Apple App Store. ◆

Changing Providers

By Ron Weinberg, Member-At-Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Since December 2009, when I switched From Bright House Networks for TV and Internet services to the newly introduced Verizon FIOS fiber service, at their attractive introductory price, I had been satisfied with the products and service, but not customer service which was at times problematical.

I had a bundled package deal which included my long time Verizon land telephone line.

Over the intervening eight years cost of the services had been inching up to becoming burdensome,
too costly for the value received. My obligatory signing contract had long since expired.

It was time to try and do better. Actually, I attempted to negotiate with Verizon just at the time they were selling to Frontier and timing was poor. After the transition was completed and several months had passed to allow the new company to formulate their own prices and policies, I began again to request a price reduction.

I have been receiving excellent introductory offers in the mail from Dish Network for TV, Bright House offers and more recently a complete package from AT&T Direct TV, including Phone and Internet. Dish and Direct TV are satellite systems, and I prefer to keep a wired system.

I had been warned by the experiences of others that switching from Verizon to Bright House for whatever reason was difficult and troublesome. Recently, Bright House was purchased by Spectrum, a much larger company.

Spectrum, new to the area, obviously wishes to increase their customer base and has offered a very attractive introductory one year new customer plan for full-featured TV, Internet, and Voice (Phone) service. At the time this article was created, Spectrum's introductory offer was valid until Feb. 2, 2017. It may be extended or other offers may be available.

Armed with the competitive information, and not limited by a contract, I contacted Frontier several times and threatened to cancel their services unless they could offer me a substantial price reduction. I was transferred to their "Retention Dept." to negotiate. Their initial quotes were not sufficiently improved. Each time I called I had to deal with a different person. The third or fourth call which I had hoped to be my last and final was handled by a person that seemed new to the job and quoted me higher than the previous despite the fact that the earlier quote was supposed to be in my record.

At that point, I concluded it was time for a change, and decide to take a chance and signed up with Spectrum. I had to pay the first month in advance but there was no contract and a 30-day money-back guarantee. Installation was scheduled for the following week with telephone number porting expected to take several additional days.

It should be noted that Frontier, as did Verizon, continues to have an excellent new customer offer which they refuse to give to existing customers. Also, Spectrum has a conditional limited offer to buy out your existing contract.

Specific costs for Frontier and Spectrum bundles are not listed as each subscriber may require different equipment such as number of set top boxes, etc. Taxes and fees are much lower on Spectrum since Frontier is taxed as a traditional land line carrier.

Since Verizon had transferred email address routing to AOL it does not appear that it will be necessary to replace the Verizon.net address.

FIOS Internet Speed was billed as 15/15. Speed tests showed approximately 25/16 Mbps. Spectrum quoted 100/10 and after the installation various tests showed speeds from 71 to 94 download and 12 upload using wireless, a distinct improvement.

On Friday Jan. 13, I prepaid for the month through Feb. 18. The installation was scheduled for Wednesday Jan 18. Since there was no access to the connection box in a neighbor's yard, installation was delayed to Jan 19. Completion took about 1½ hours. The Installers were subcontractors, not Brighthouse workers.

The Installers left leaving only the Router's SSD and WEP Password. They provided no setup or instructions other than making sure all TVs were operational.

After the installation was completed I observed that contrary to my expectations, external wiring was run along

Changing.....Continued on page 4

Changing.....Continued from page 3

a neighbor's fence for expediency rather than buried for protection and security. I have requested that this be corrected. A service call to bury the cable has been scheduled.

As of the first evening, outgoing calls could be made; incoming failed while waiting completion of porting from Frontier. Porting was completed by late afternoon Jan 20, restoring incoming phone service. At that time, I called Frontier to cancel their services. The representative offered additional inducements to stay, but it was too late. Those inducements should have been offered by the retention department.

Here are the pros and cons of this changeover.

Con:

- Phone, TV, and Internet are all passed through the telephony gateway (router). If it fails or loses signal, all is lost.
- There is no power backup for the telephone line. (Charged cellphones serve as our emergency backup.)
- A battery backup for telephone while not supplied, is available at extra cost.
- There was no customer service follow up after the physical installation.
- Little information was provided as to features making it necessary to call support for every question. MoCA is not supported by Spectrum at this time and is deactivated in the Router. I was able to substitute a wireless connection for the one location it was used.

Pro:

- Phone, Internet, and TV are performing well. TV picture quality is excellent.
- Telephone service is full featured, unlimited, and includes US, Canada, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.
- Digital adapters on two TV sets were replaced by full featured set top boxes, at lower cost.
- Installation was on schedule and brief with minimal inconvenience.
- Internet speed was greatly increased. Total cost is significantly lower.

My years of IT experience reduced any difficulties caused by the lack of customer service to fully complete the installation by providing guidance to the new customer. A layman or average customer would have had greater difficulty. The changeover appears to have been worthwhile for our household. ◆

Windows 10 essentials

By Merle Nicholson, secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

If you're not aware, Windows 10 is evolving. Two major "updates" have been issued – 1511 and 1607. I've seen several major changes to the installation procedure; not just cosmetic changes like to the Start Menu. With some updates, you'll find that some of the settings changes you have made have not been honored and have been set back to the default, all without notification. Another large change ("Creators Update") is essentially completed and due this spring.

I've had several Win 10 computers come to me that were essentially broken – unusable (unbootable) after updates were made. I've spent two to four hours getting them restored to working condition. In one case, the system restore could not repair without wiping out the disk so I had to remove the hard drive, mount it on one of my own systems and copy all the user files I could find, then let the system replacement work and return the files. Looking at internet forums for solutions to the problems I've found, I see that the same problems are not uncommon. None of the repairs I've done could be explained and are certainly not the result of owner mishandling.

One thing all these broken computers have in common is inadequate backup. No repair flashdrive, no image backup, no file backup, no accessible Safe Mode. The fault really falls on Microsoft because they do not even attempt to inform the user of the essential steps to be safe. I'm particularly apprehensive for the millions of casual users who really need an internet/mail/messaging/streaming/word processing appliance and have no interest in learning settings and fixes, antivirus and more software. Most would be much better served with Chromebook, Ubuntu, Android tablet and even maybe iMac, in that order.

To Microsoft's credit though they have made restoring the operating system back to "factory" condition fast and pretty easy. There are but two options, one pre-

Windows.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



Robotic Barista

From the Wall Street Journal, http://wsj.com, at http://www.wsj.com/articles/robot-baristas-serve-up-the-future-of-coffee-at-cafe-x-1485781201, we have : "Cafe X's [which is in San Francisco] barista robot uses a six-axis Mitsubishi arm to grab cups, get them filled at an espresso station, then serve them to customer." It appears that one more job for college graduates without a marketable degree is about to be eliminated.

Windows.....Continued from page 4

serves your user files and the other does not. Neither though preserves any programs you have installed and of course all the settings will be at default, your accounts lost, all your email to set up all over again. For a "mature" installation it may be a week to get back where you were or maybe never. All this can be largely avoided by making an image backup. Image backup is not a part of Windows 10 backup, but it's there left over from Windows 7. It's left to the user to find it provided he knows it even exists.

To have direct access to the system repair programs you need one of two things - a system repair flashdrive or access to Safe Mode. Actually you need both. I wrote about how to revive Safe Mode in last months Bits of Blue January 2017 issue. I used it to reinstall Win 10 from scratch on one of my own systems, and it works quickly and it even did the major updates. But to use Safe Mode for repairs means that your hard drive boot record is not damaged. So Windows can be broken but not 100% broken. For 100% broken you need a repair flashdrive.

I said that I recently did a complete system replacement. It was to a Virtual Machine that I had nothing invested in. It was an upgrade from Windows 7, then

Windows.....Continued on page 6

Windows.....Continued from page 5

8.1 and then 10, and I had some confusing software testing to do and decided I needed a clean Windows 10 machine. It was surprisingly quick and it installed the latest version – 1607 and it powered up with the original licensing activated intact.

Windows 10 installation is somewhat different now. Early on, be sure to select "customized" settings so you can turn all the security and telemetry settings off manually. And I do mean ALL OFF. I have found no advantage – absolutely none – in allowing any of the security and telemetry to go through. If you find something you need later, they're easy to find in "Settings," "Update and security."

The installation or repair process still makes it difficult to recognize where to create a local login account. It really looks like you must create an on-line Microsoft account to continue. There is no need to and no advantage to do that. Just don't enter an existing account or create an account – click on the other things and you'll find a panel that asks who will be logging on, two password fields and a password hint field. This isn't an extreme or angry response. It's simple. If you were on Windows 7 and you had a pop-up from Microsoft asking for the login and password to your computer, would you give it to them? I Don't Think So! Will they promise to keep the private login to your computer safe from Russian hackers forever? Don't think so, Dude.

So, it seems appropriate right now to again publish a list of essential settings to improve your odds of surviving a broken OS. For instructions on each, you'll have to read my previous TPCUG articles, July through September, 2016. If you want to download them, just go to http://www.TPCUG.org, look in the menu for past newsletters. Also you should get LaMartin's *Computer Group Newsletters* in the Microsoft App Store. The articles are in PDF form so all the links are live, making it fast to go to instructions. You will need a Microsoft account to get William's app, but you do not need your computer to be logged into a Microsoft account. Be very careful though, it's easy to be fooled into allowing the store to hijack your local account and replace it with a Microsoft account. I've written about that in July newsletter, page 7.

Essentials:

1. Fix your login accounts. Activate or create a local Administrator account and for daily use, employ a standard local account. There's no real disadvantage in doing this. The worst case is if you install something using a standard account it will ask for the administrator's password. This will prevent most malware from installing on your system without your permission. Under no circumstances should a Microsoft on-line account be an administrator account. That would be crazy.
2. Activate System Protection, System Restore, create a new restore point.
3. Fix the Boot into Safe Mode. See January, 2017 newsletter article.
4. Fix restart to BlueScreen
5. Manage Microsoft Updates (Win 10 Pro). Do your best with Windows 10 if you don't have Pro.
6. Disable as much Microsoft telemetry and forced advertizing as possible.
7. Disable Remote Assistance. Search for "Allow Remote Access", and if you have Windows 10 Pro, disable Remote Desktop.
8. Create a Recovery Drive. Use a USB flashdrive; 8GB will allow system files to be written to it.
9. Create a Backup Image. Search: "Backup and Restore (Windows 7)". Use an external USB backup drive for this. Look at how much disk is used. Get USB3 if your computer has USB3 ports. For myself, I use Acronis, Tools, Clone drive to an external SSD for each of my computers. This gives me a complete alternative drive to boot from with no image restoration to go through.
10. Make a new Image backup regularly, replacing the old. How often you do this depends on how much your system has changed. Keep a log so you can look up the last backup date.
11. Use backup software to back up data. The Windows 7 backup program is still as good as it always was. Others: Acronis and Caspar. Windows 10 has "File History"
12. Check your network connections. My last new installation defaulted my network profile to "Public" which prevented file and printer sharing. It

Windows.....Continued on page 7

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2016

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2016 INCOME

Memberships (21 single 5 Family)	$750.00
Amazon & Misc.	373.63
TOTAL INCOME	$1123.63

2016 EXPENSES

Newsletter Postage	$144.30
Newsletter Printing	457.29
FACUG Dues	25.00
APCUG Dues	50.00
Florida Incorporation Fee (Reinstatement)	297.50
Web Site Hosting Fee (12 months)	181.08
P O Box Rental	82.00
Dec Holiday Party Costs	248.12
Website Domain Fee (Not due until 2018)	0.00
Refreshments (Cookies)	0.00
Miscellaneous	0.00
PayPal Fees	7.24
TOTAL EXPENSES	1492.53
NET DEFICIT FOR 2016	**$368.90**

BANK BALANCE – January 1, 2016	7311.81
BANK BALANCE – December 31, 2016	6942.91

Submitted by D. W. Mullis, Treasurer, TPCUG

Windows.....Continued from page 6

really confused me how to change it to "Private". I wound up just joining my HomeGroup, something I usually don't think of doing. That freed up whatever was stuck.

Options:

- Disable One-Drive if you're not using it. The latest updates make One-Drive real nagware. By default it's running all the time and synchronizing files on your computer. Unfortunately the fix is pretty technical. Chances are if you're an Android Phone user you're using Google Drive which works excellently with Windows 10. See http://lifehacker.com/how-to-completely-uninstall-onedrive-in-windows-10-1725363532
- Install Google Chrome browser especially if you're also an Android Phone or tablet user or Linux for that matter. May as well, it's become the most used browser in the world anyway. Google Earth and Google Maps are unparalleled. I share

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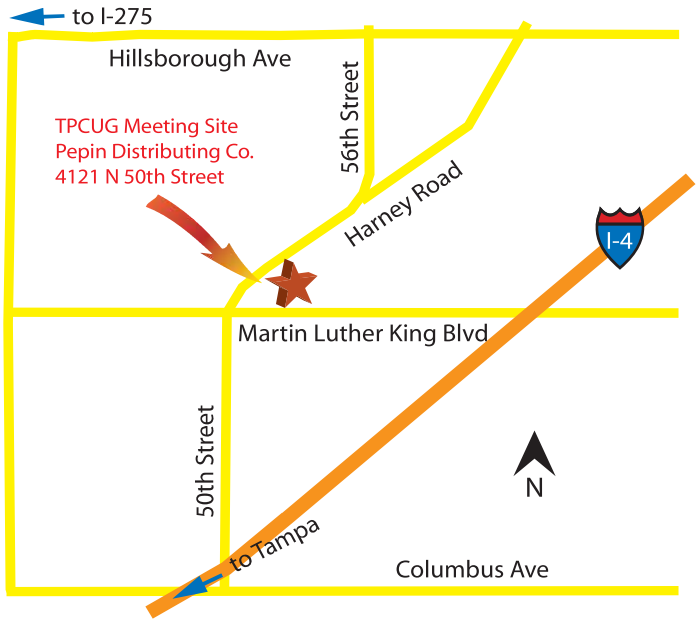
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Windows.....Continued from page 7

documents and spreadsheets among all my devices and spouse's Ubuntu computer and Android phone. My documents and spreadsheets are edited in Google Docs in Chrome browser.

- Get LibreOffice. You don't need Microsoft Office unless you have a free copy or need MS Access or Publisher. Don't be fooled into believing the old term "compatibility" which disappeared with the term "IBM Clone". LibreOffice reads and produces all file formats and it's free. It's much easier to use than Office for the casual user and yet does all the esoteric stuff that mostly never gets used. http://www.libreoffice.org/ Microsoft themselves have had to make the most changes to make Office files compatible with Open Standards, so there's just no issue anymore and hasn't been any for many years. ◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 30 No. 3 March 2017

March in Tampa

Meeting

Apple's FaceTime

by

Michelle Burgess

Wednesday, March 8

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Michelle Burgess will demonstrate FaceTime, the proprietary videotelephony product developed by Apple.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and my purchase of a little camera, there is something to fill the newsletter this month. But I can't purchase a new item each month to have something about which to write. So, some of you need to step forward with your computing experiences.

You might ask, what has a camera to do with computing. Well, a modern digital camera, just like your modern car has a lot of computing going on inside. You cannot begin to imagine all the things that happen when you press the button to take a photo. Then, when you download the digital images to your computer, you typically use a program such as Adobe Lightroom or Sony's Play Memories Home to both download the images and to also organize them. Next, your modern darkroom is software such as Adobe Photoshop or the simpler Adobe Photoshop Elements. Finally, in my case, I use Adobe Premier Elements to either edit and combine the movies from my movie cameras or to turn my still images into videos for easier viewing. It is so nice to not have to purchase film and mess with photographic chemicals. Don't forget to view the newsletter online to better see the photos. ◆

April Meeting: To be announced

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Florida Association of User Groups

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Minutes of the February Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month, there were questions about Outlook.com, losing contacts in Windows Mail, Facebook security and a discussion about the current on-line live session on the APCUG website.

Our own longtime member Brian Lance gave an interesting talk and demonstration on video conferencing using Google Hangouts with some discussions on Verizon services, set top boxes and DVR. Brian used a prepared slide show and demonstrated a Brian-to-Brian conference from the outside hall. It was an informative and interesting demonstration after which we discussed if there was a better way to do Android connections to the big presentation screen. ◆

Me vs. The Computer

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

My first personal computer encounter was in 1976, five years before the release of the IBM PC model 5150 in 1981. It too was an IBM, but the model was 5100. Mine (I'm calling it mine) was bought by my company for the engineering department, and the director of my department at the time really did not know exactly what it was to be used for. He just hoped that it would be useful – and eventually it was. How he was able to sell his own management on a $20,000 machine he really couldn't

Computer.....Continued on page 7

Amazon Echo

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

My birthday was in February, and my son thought I needed a new toy. He gave me an Amazon Echo. The Echo is a voice-enabled device that connects to the Alexa voice service via a wireless connection. Merle Nicholson tells me he has had an Echo since 2015, but I don't recall an article.

The voice service Alexa is similar to Microsoft Cortana and Apple Siri. It is a personal digital assistant. The Echo simply sits on your desk, or wherever you wish to place it, and responds to your commands. You bring it to life by saying "Alexa." When it hears that word, a thin blue ring with greenish trim lights around its top, as pictured on the right, and it awaits your request.



Once you bring Echo to life, you may ask it the local weather, or you may ask for the weather in any other city. It does a good job at that. But when I ask about nearby Chinese restaurants or about nearby Italian restaurants, the results are not so good. It provided non-Chinese and non-Italian restaurants and some of the addresses were many miles away.

It does better with playing music. It knows who Chopin is; also knows Rachmaninoff. So it is up on the Classics. It even suggested another classical music station after hearing my two previous classical requests. However, asking it to play some Dixieland music produced the response. "I can't find Dixieland songs." But it knows Louis Armstrong and Scot Joplin. Merle Nicholson tells me that Alexa knows performers better than composers or musical genres.

It will also read you a book – if it is in your Amazon library. I asked it to read to me from the *Sound and Fury* by William Faulkner. The response was, "I can't find the *Sound and Fury* in your library." However, when I ask it to read from a book that I have in my Kindle library, it gets right to the task, beginning at the start of the book. I am not sure at this point if you can make it move to a different place in the book.

If you ask for the latest news, you get the news from National Public Radio from tunein. Alexa also knows that Bob Buckhorn is the mayor of Tampa, and it knows what the current time is. I had no luck in asking it for recipes for various dishes. But it knows how many kilometers are in a mile. It doesn't understand the question: "What Florida county is Tampa in?". Perhaps I needed to rephrase it.

It supposedly can access your calendar and contacts, but not my Microsoft Outlook calendar and contact info. I believe it has to be Google's gMail and Calendar.

There is an Alexa app for both Android and iOS. If you go to that app and set up your commute, then Alexa can tell you about traffic conditions for that commute. A handy feature for me is setting up alarms and timers.

If you have the appropriate interfaces for your lights, appliances, etc. in your house, you may use Alexa to control them via voice commands.

In theory, the Echo could record everything you say, but Amazon says it only pays attention to what is prefaced with Alexa. ◆

Sony RX100 V

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com



Obviously the Sony Cyber-shot RX100 Mark V is not a computer in the normal sense of the work, but it is really a computer, as are all modern digital cameras. If you know me you might ask, "Why do you want such a 'toy' camera when you have a very serious Nikon D800 Digital Single Lens camera?" The Nikon does indeed take very good photos (when I don't muck things up). But it is large, heavy and intrusive. I wanted something that I could slip in my coat pocket, or even in a shirt pocket.

Of course, everyone now uses their phone as their camera of choice. And a modern smart phone takes quite good images, my Microsoft Lumia 950 XL included. I imagine that most of the photos you see on the Internet are now taken with either iPhones or top-end Android phones. But that is not good enough for me. One thing phones fail at is low-light photography, and this camera does quite well at that. You can take the ISO up to 12,800. However, I recall reading that the quality of the image is degraded (noise) a good bit after you go over 6,400, I would never use such a high ISO except in essentially nighttime conditions.



The camera takes 20 mega pixel images and has a one-inch sensor (13.2 x 8.8 mm). The images are 5472 x 3648 pixels. Your most recent iPhone is, I believe, 8 mega pixels with a 1/3 inch sensor (4.8 x 3.6 mm). Quite a difference. Just for comparison, my Nikon D800 has a full frame sensor at 36 x 24 mm and creates 30 mega pixel images of 7360 x 4192 pixels. The Sony also has a 35 mm equivalent 24mm to 70mm optical zoom of 2.9 times. Not a big zoom but OK (I have read that the larger sensor makes it more difficult to have a large zoom).

Oh, I almost forgot my main reason for purchasing. The dimensions are 102 x 58 x 41 mm (4.02 x 2.28 x 1.61 inches). That is width, height and depth. The second image on the right displays its width and depth with the lens retracted. It will fit easily in your shirt pocket. The weight is 10.99 oz. For its safety, I use it with the included wrist strap.

In the top photo above, you see the camera with the lens in shooting mode and the built-in flash and the built-in electronic viewfinder extended. There is an LCD screen on the back that can be put in various positions, but when you have bright sun, the viewfinder is a real plus.

Ever tried to catch an action photo at just the right moment? I have when trying to catch the small cannons being fired and thus emitting smoke. The only sure way to do it is with having your camera fire multiple shots. I believe the Nikon D800 will do 10. The Sony

Camera.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



The Jose Gasparilla

From TBO.com at http://www.tbo.com/events-tampa-bay/gasparilla-parade-an-expensive-affair-but-not-for-taxpayers-20160128/. Described as a Tribune File Photo with the description "The Jose Gasparilla approaches the Tampa Convention Center during The Gasparilla Invasion". It happens every year on the last Saturday in January.

Camera.....Continued from page 4

RX100 V will do 24/second until its buffer is full, which will last several several seconds.

There is a good and detailed written review of the camera at https://www.dpreview.com/reviews/sony-cybershot-dsc-rx100-v-review

For a video review of the camera on YouTube, that has many details, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcNa_eFTzkk

For a video review without all the small details, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPKF_DAdsgU

I am finding it a great camera. There is so much photographic power packed into the very small package, not much larger than a pack of cigarettes (recall those things?) when the lens is retracted.

The Rx100 V, where the V stands for the fifth iteration of this camera, can also take videos and stitch together short panoramas. On page 7, the large photo of bread and wine was taken using available light in a restaurant, a task that was previously assigned to my phone. The camera works extremely well in low-light

Camera.....Continued on page 6

Camera.....Continued from page 5

situations where a flash might be considered intrusive. And, I actually prefer the no-flash available light photos to those taken with a flash most of the time.

The photo at the bottom of this page is a stitch done by the camera as I panned it around my living room; it is 8192 x 1856 pixels in dimension.

On page 7, the flower photo was taken in bright sunlight from just a few inches. The camera will focus down to around two inches. The image below that is another of my restaurant photos taken in available light.

I have yet to mention videos, and the RX100 V does a very nice job on those also. In fact, I have a hard time differentiating videos made with it and those made with my much larger Sony HDR-CX900 HandyCam video camera. I recently took still images with my Nikon D800 DSLR and video images with the Sony HandyCam and the new Sony RX100 V. Go to my website, http://www.lamartin.com, select the Video menu item and then scroll down to the Gasparilla in

Camera .....Continued on page 7





Camera.....Continued from page 6

Hyde Park subheading. There you will see four Gasparilla 2007 videos, two each for the races on day one and day two. For each day there are two videos: One video is made of still images taken with the Nikon; the other video is actually made from movies taken both with the Sony HDR-CX900 HandyCam and the new Sony RX100 V. First off, all the slow motion segments interspersed through the movie video were made with the RX100 using the High Frame Rate movie setting. But I challenge you to identify which camera was used to take the other normal speed video segments.

My only complaint about the camera is that it has a very extensive and complicated menu system you need to master if you want to use any but the most basic settings. Oh, the price? You won't like it: $1,000. And you really need to purchase an extra battery since it literally eats batteries. But, it fits in a shirt pocket and gives far superior photos to any phone. ◆





Computer.....Continued from page 2

justify is beyond me. That's $86,000 in 2017 dollars for a computer that couldn't do one hundreth of the calculations of a new smart watch today.

If you want to know more, Wikipedia has good articles on both the 5100 and of course the 5150 with pictures. It makes good reading.

Below is what it looked like. On the left is a 5-inch screen and on the right is a precision tape drive. It was called a "Portable Computer" even though it weighed 50 pounds, and you could even buy a fabric case for it.



We also had a robust dot matrix printer, and eventually we bought a second external tape drive and a small B&W monitor to ease the eyestrain from that 5-inch monitor. Other than that, it had no connection to the outside world. If you had external data you typed it in.

This was a 64K machine, and it was very much more powerful than the typical IBM PC of five years later. It had ROM with the language interpreters on it – mine had two languages, BASIC and APL.

Employees of the department were invited to look at it, time permitting, and to try it out and then go through very long and tedious programmed instruction tapes that taught the programming languages step by step. I started them as did others. Most of the interest was in APL programming, and I believe that the

Computer.....Continued on page 8

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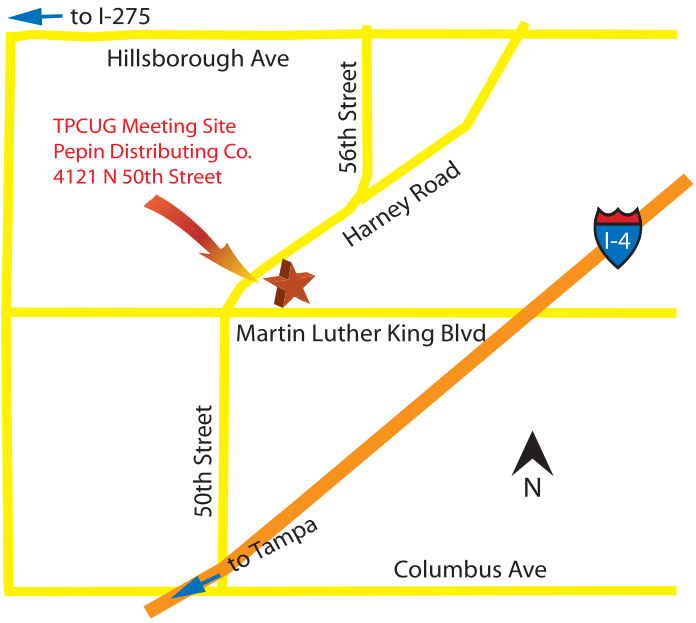
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Computer.....Continued from page 7

instructions were very thorough. Some people made it all the way through the tapes, some even quickly, but most were ultimately unable to convert that to a real program that did something useful and gave up. I was slow at it and sometimes frustrated, and I thought I had failed, which at the time put me in a sweat. I was 35 at that time and I couldn't admit to anyone that I couldn't do it. Finally, well before I could finish the tapes, something just clicked in my brain – I got it – and from that point on I just looked up things I needed in the excellent programming manual. And, from that point on for another six or seven years, that computer was mine.

As an aside, the APL language is still very much in use. I have a 2017 version of it, completely modernized and it's available on virtually any computing device including Raspberry PI. ◆



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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 30 No. 4 April 2017

April in Tampa

Meeting

3-D Printer Demonstration

by

Sean Daniels-Ennis

Wednesday, April 12

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: 3-D Printer demonstration by Sean Daniels-Ennis from the Hillsborough Public Library.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg for their articles. And to fill out the newsletter, I have a couple recent problems that you may find of interest. One of the problems might well happen to you.

Windows 10 Creators Update
Before getting into problems, let me remind you that a new windows 10 update is coming available on April 11. It is going to be pushed out in waves, so not everyone will receive it on that date. And for those few who have windows phones, it will be available on April 25.

A brief video about the new features may be found at: http://www.pcworld.com/article/3185431/windows/how-to-get-windows-10-creators-update-the-release-date-and-more.html. *PC World* says that "Newer PCs that have the optimal specs for

Comments.....Continued on page 2

May Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month, there were questions about network sharing and browser details.

Our own TPCUG member Michelle Burgess gave an interesting talk and demonstration on video conferencing using Apple Facetime. Harry Lockaby was attending with his Apple Mac Air notebook and served as a conferencing partner. Michelle was using a Mac mini and the room big screen as the only monitor. After the demo, Michelle went on to describe her attendance at a General Motors Hackathon and showed some of the possibilities of connected apps being considered for autos. Our thanks go to Michelle for an informative and interesting demonstration. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Windows 10 will get the Update first." Personally I am in no rush since much of what I do on a computer does not involve what all the new features address. But there are some interesting things there regarding inking, for example. One of the more impressive things I saw in the demonstration of inking was: You draw a route on a map, and then Microsoft will tun your drawn route into an actual route with all the information usually associated with a route. The Edge browser will now be able to read your eBooks and display YouTube videos in 4K. I expect everyone to have the Creators update by our May meeting and for someone to give a demonstration of using the new features. Any volunteers?

Comments.....Continued on page 6

New 4K Computer Monitor, Three Weeks Later

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
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A new 27" computer monitor has been a big change for me. It's been mostly a good experience, but there are some considerations that suggest that it may not be an entirely wise move. I'll try to explain.

For those not familiar with the term "4K", it's a very high resolution monitor that's four times the resolution of a "standard" 1080 monitor. That is, vertically and horizontally it's doubled. A 1080 monitor is 1920x1080, and a 4K is 3840x2160. Pixels, that is, dots on the screen.

A little background about the 1080 standard first. We have television to blame for 1080. We needed a digital flat screen for television use for years and years, and we just had to put up with CRTs long after digital was technically possible – we had digital monitors in all sorts of sizes until the (mostly TV) industry decided on a standard. The standard was necessary to move on and scrap the 1930s CRT technology. It stood to reason that the TV standard would be duplicated in other products, not the least for computers, and that happened without question. If you'll look at good quality monitors right now, the 1080 is by far the least expensive and, because of the sheer numbers sold, is pretty much the standard consumer monitor.

In the meantime, computer technology has bypassed the need for standardized monitor sizes and resolutions; the 1080 remains on the least expensive computers. But there are a dozen or more resolutions that are common.

We bought a 55" 4K TV more than 2 years ago for use as our only TV in the household. Its TV comes from a cable tuner in a computer that serves as a large capacity DVR. So we have a lot of experience with the standard. In our minds, we knew the clarity of the 4K screen will be so dramatically improved that I would thoroughly enjoy the change on my desktop computer, and that is mostly true.

The tipping point on the decision to replace my perfectly good flat screen monitors was price. Amazon hit a low of $330 one night as I was checking almost daily and clicked on it. It's at $428 today and $377 yesterday. That night, I bought an LG 27UD58-B 27-Inch 4K UHD IPS Monitor. It replaces two 1600x1200 21" monitors that I bought in 2005 for about $550 each. That's $1,372 in today's money for both.

Surprisingly, there are very few suitable 4K monitors made. Amazon has just eight, and half of those are in the $600 range.

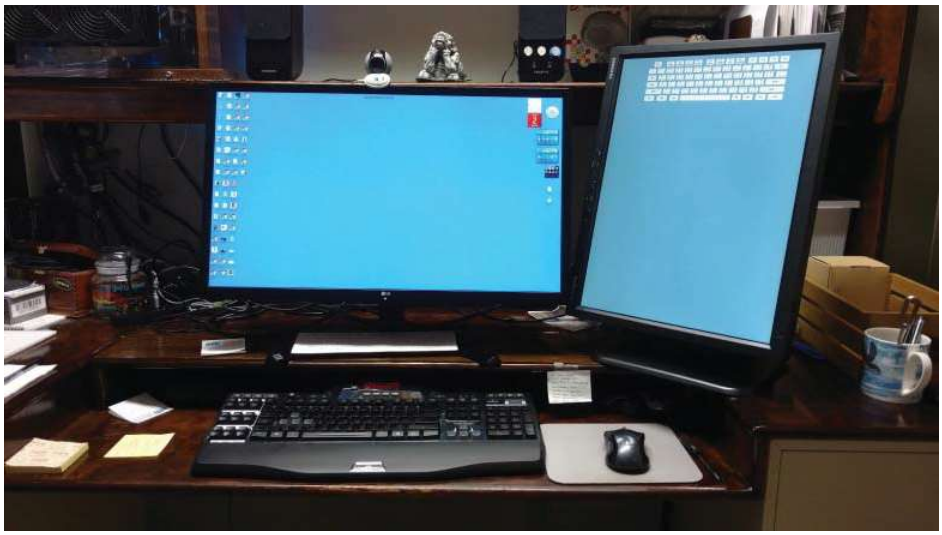
First, though, the hardware. To use this you need a video system that will handle 4K, and very few do. Mine did not. The newest, higher end computers largely do, but you can't count on it, check the specs. Look for 4K at 60Hz. I built my own system – you could say it evolved over many years, and I knew it wouldn't do 4K. I had two video cards that were just a few years old; I replaced one and kept the other only to discover that AMD video software wouldn't allow an old card to coexist with a new one, so back off the shelf it came and torn apart the second time to remove the second. The new card, a Radeon RX470 was $175. A DisplayPort cable (and an HDMI) came with the monitor.

OK, so let's see what I did. I replaced two 21" monitors placed side by side for a combined 442 square inches (17"x 13" x 2) with a single 4K screen 305 Square inches (23.5"x13"). And increased the pixels from 3,840,000 to 8,294,400. Oh oh, what have I done? Well, I made those 8.3 million pixels a LOT tinier.

I find it strange to look at Windows elements that small. All this detail is crystal clear and very sharp, but very tiny. Remember I have 8.3 million pixels. Now, Windows 7, 8.1 and 10 all have the capability to scale windows elements larger. If you look at Windows Display Settings, there is a slider that allows you to enlarge everything. Windows 10 offers to set scaling at

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Monitor.....Continued from page 3



150% right off the bat. But think about it. My 8.3 million Pixels will then become an equivalent of 5.5 million. Well, that's one way to look at it, but remember those very, very sharp pixels are still there doing their job, and it's just spectacular. If you want to really get blown away, look at a high rez movie on Amazon, or even a relatively low resolution YouTube video . . well it's hard to describe. And worth it.

I finally settled for 125% scaling. In terms of how many useful, readable, windows of information I can get on the screen all at the same, it's a tremendous improvement. If you're just a one-application-at-a-time person, you'll still like it because of the clarity. If you're a programmer who needs four or five windows up at a time because you're referencing information between, it's a godsend. Sometimes I'll need to set the scaling back to 100%, and at least Windows makes that easy to do. I have a problem with a 14-year old Microsoft Office product Access 2003 that cuts off 25% of user windows when scaled. I attribute that to fate and the computer gods messing with me. Bill didn't know that would happen back in 2003. But my support for Access 2003 applications is slowly going away.

Now the downside(s). I have to be fairly close to the screen because of the size of screen elements, and that's ok for my eyes; I have computer glasses selected for that distance. But I really can't relax and tip back in the chair unless I'm watching a YouTube video. The previous arrangement with two 21" screens (18.5" x 2 full width) worked well, because I had both turned inward, each facing me. A 23.5" wide screen really needs to be curved, and I'd guess by the time I'm ready to replace this one they'll be readily available. Curved 4K TV screens are available, expensively, but none small enough for computer use.

Sometimes when I have a lot of detail on the screen I feel I must shift my body right or left to get the detail right in front of my eyes. I'm trying to not do that now that I'm aware of it. As I said, the previous arrangement had both monitors turned inward.

I've been discussing my primary monitors' replacement, but I really had four. There is one 1080x1920 monitor on my right, turned in portrait. I use this for help screens and PDF references. It's turned inward to face me. The fourth was a low resolution screen that I used rarely for spillover when I wanted my email and calendar up. I have abandoned use of that one now that I've increased my window area so much.

The side portrait monitor is invaluable, and I've been considering replacing that one with a 24" 4K monitor. The one I'm using now is one of the old ones of course and it has its problems that I've been struggling with. I finally convinced myself that the text is fuzzy and everything is scaled larger even though it should be at 100%. I have just done some research and finally found some Microsoft descriptions of my problems. It seems that even Windows 10 can't handle mixed resolutions well. That is, if you have a new high resolution monitor it works well but any second or third monitor that is older, lower resolution, you can expect that the display isn't sharp like it was (yep), and the scaling may be off (check!). And although Windows 10 handles multiple monitors much better than Windows 7 or 8.1, they acknowledge these problems and offer some suggestions that may mitigate, but not cure them.

Microsoft also mentions that some of the scaling problems have to do with the capability of the applications, and that those applications assembled as a Universal

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Internet Picture of the Month



The island Hotel

In Cedar Key, Florida, a bit of old Florida. From Flickr.com, taken by Faye, whose photstream is at https://www.flickr.com/photos/sheffe73/. She has lots of interesting photos, but you will need a Yahoo account to be able to see more than just a few. My interest in the photo was that I stayed in that hotel just a few months ago and also many years ago. Go to Cedar Key. It is very relaxing and off the beaten track.

Monitor.....Continued from page 4

App (from the Windows Store) will scale fine and there's no guarantee that others will work. It's also a plug for Office 360 or Office 2016. But that jibes perfectly with my problems with Access 2003. One suggestion on older apps is to change the apps compatibility property. There's a setting "Disable display scaling on high DPI settings". I've changed my MSACCESS.EXE settings, and I'm still assessing the effect.

The only definitive solution is to use secondary monitors of the same resolution. Hence supporting my "need" to buy another new monitor.

Considering how relatively inexpensive they are and how much benefit, the only remaining problem is finding a home for my old ones. ◆

HDMI Cables with Ethernet

By Ron Weinberg, Member At Large,
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At our last meeting there was a dearth of information on the new HDMI with Ethernet cables that are now widely sold in anticipation of devices that have not yet appeared in common use. Here is a simple explanation of these cables.

In short, this feature reduces the number of Ethernet cables required in some networks, primarily home entertainment networks.

Both standard and high speed HDMI cables are available with Ethernet. These cables are backward compatible and serve as regular HDMI cables if the Ethernet channel is not used. Both ends of the cable must be used in enabled ports for the Ethernet channel to work.

Ports which utilize the Ethernet feature may be marked HEC (HDMI Ethernet Channel enabled). The use of that mark is optional to the manufacturer of the device. When purchasing new devices, as with any new feature, it would be advisable to check product specifications and or user manual to determine if the feature is included.

Here is the basic information and diagrams obtained from the HDMI.org website.

HDMI Ethernet Channel

HDMI Ethernet Channel technology consolidates video, audio, and data streams into a single HDMI cable, combining the unmatched signal quality and convenience of HDMI connectivity with the power and flexibility of home entertainment networking. It incorporates a dedicated data channel into the HDMI link, enabling high-speed, bidirectional networking at up to 100 Mb/sec. ◆





Comments.....Continued from page 2

Hijacked

Read this closely so that you won't fall for the same trick. Although I am not at all sure that I fell for any trick. But here is what happed to me just a few hours before I sat down to write this.

I was using my other desktop computer to work with Visual Studio 2017. I was working on what is known as a cross platform app, that is one that uses Xamarin from within Visual Studio to create a solution that has four projects: A shared project, an Android project, an iOS project and a Windows Universal project. The idea is to put as much of your code as is possible into the shared project and then for anything that has to be dealt with specifically for the separate operating

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systems, such as saving images to the device or sending email, you put the code required by the separate operating systems into the three separate projects

Well, Xamarin is still a bit new to me, even though I have been using it for over a year. So I have to search for how to do certain things using Bing or Google. In this case I was using Bing and had put in a search regarding tapping on images.

And here is where my memory is not perfect. I recall there were a number of links returned as results. I then clicked on one, and I don't recall if it was the first link I tried or the third. Anyway, I clicked on one of the links provided by Bing and was presented with a web page in Edge that had what appeared to be a large yellow popup saying that FLASH was required to view the page. And here is where my memory fails me. I don't recall if I clicked on the x in the upper right corner of the popup to close it or it closed automatically. Anyway, all Hell broke lose with loud audio telling me not to close the web page or I would lose all access to my data; that all my contacts were being sent to some site along with my Facebook contacts (none of which I have); and some other threats that I don't recall. I was supposed to follow the instructions on the screen to make a payment to be able to access my data again.

I stopped paying attention to the verbal instructions since I felt that I really needed to get Edge closed and was pretty sure that the problem was restricted to Edge and not the entire computer. Edge could not be closed except via the Task Manager, which I did. Foolishly I then reopened Edge with the result that all of that talking and threatening was presented again. So I again used Task Manager to close Edge.

What to do? I opened a different browser, FireFox and did a bit of searching and came up with a page about the Edge browser being hijacked. I had not used the word hijacked, but that is exactly what had happened to me. And the solution was quite simple. All that was necessary was to disconnect from the Internet. With that done, if you started Edge again it could not load the offending web page. You see, Edge keeps track of what web pages were open when you close it and then reopens them again when you start up Edge I don't particularly like this feature and now see a real problem with it.

Anyway, when I restarted edge with no Internet connection, the offending web page informed me that I had no Internet connection. And I was able to close all of Edge's tabs and then Edge. On restarting Edge, I noticed no problems. I did a quick Windows Defender scan that produced no problems and will do a thorough scan soon.

Did I click on that web page? Had the web page been infected with code that redirected me to a malicious site? I don't know, but I do know that many years ago, I followed a link to a page and had something similar happen, and I did not click on anything. It would seem that you should not be harmed by simply viewing a web page after all these years of technological improvement – but I just don't know.

Networking Problems

At least I thought my problem was a networking problem for several weeks. About four months back, I lost my network connection to my TV. The TV is in a room some distance from the router which connects to the TV room via a power-line Internet adapter; the TV connects to a switch which connects to the power-line adapter. Disconnecting the Ethernet cable from the switch connected to the power-line adapter, I easily discovered that the switch was the problem and ordered a new one. In that room connected to the switch I also had an iMac and an older HP laptop, my main computers being in the room with the router. Everything worked fine for several months, then I noticed that the iMac, which I leave running since I use it to compile iOS apps from Visual Studio running on a Windows computer in the other room, had a problem. The iMac started to often lose its network connection while the TV an the HP most of the times still had a connection. I thought the new switch might be going bad because if I rebooted the switch, the iMac reconnected to the network. So I ordered another new switch, but the problem persisted. I tried all sorts of connections, through the switch, directly to the power-line adapter, and even ran a 50 feet plus Ethernet

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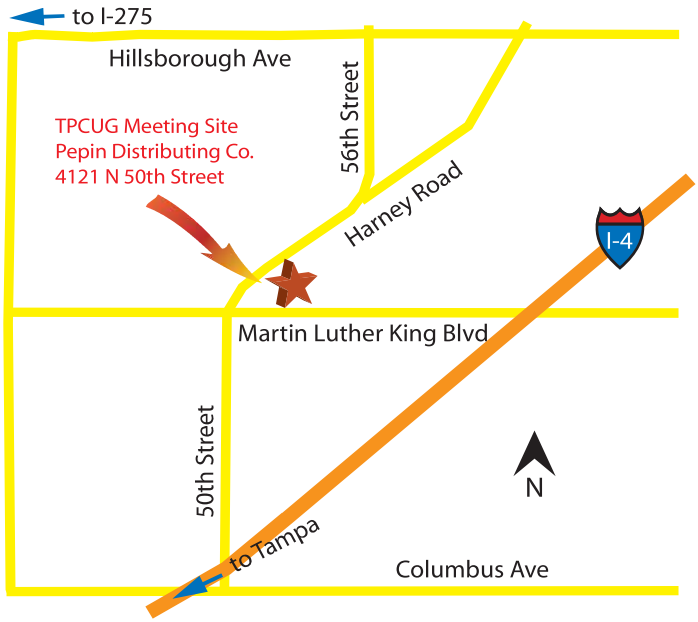
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Computer.....Continued from page 7

cable on the floor through the house to connect things. Sometimes I had a connection for over 24 hours, sometimes not. None of the combinations produced an uninterrupted connection for more than two days. I even set the iMac to not go to sleep. But nothing would give me the weeks-long uninterrupted connection that I had experienced in the past.

I then hit upon an idea. The iMac had its operating system updated to Sierra sometime in the recent past. Could that have anything to do with it? An Internet search for "iMac, Sierra and Network" produced many people experiencing the same loss of network connectivity. Many solutions were proposed, but none seemed to fix things for people. Then I found one fellow who had the answer that he had received from Apple: The article said that I should try going to the iMac's Sys Preferences>Energy Saver and untick Wake for Network Access. I already had it set to not go to sleep (which did not fix things). But de-selecting the Wake for Network Access seems to have fixed the iMac losing its network connection.



What would we do without Google and Bing? However, in all my searching, I only found one person with the correct answer. ◆

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May in Tampa

Meeting

A Sticky Math Problem
By
Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, May 10

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will demonstrate using a computer to solve a sticky math problem.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson I have to write very little this month, and that is good, since I have not had much happening this month that would be of interest to a general audience. I have spent a lot of that time updating my Windows 8 app, Cell Towers, to be a Windows 10 Universal app and then to porting it to Android. I also managed, much to my surprise, to install the Windows 10 Creators Update on my minimal Dell Venue 8 Pro Windows tablet.

Windows 10 Creators Update

The Dell Venue 8 Pro tablet, which I won as a prize, has only two GB of RAM and a 32 GB of hard drive, and I thought it was a miracle that I managed to update it to Windows 10 when I did that. I tried to install the next Win 10 update and could not do it for lack of disk space. The update required eight GB, and I only had five free on the drive, no matter how much stuff I deleted.

Comments.....Continued on page 2

June Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Our own TPCUG member, William LaMartin, reflecting a current interest in 3D printers showed several pictures and videos of a Microsoft meeting he attended that demonstrated 3D printers. He then showed several YouTube videos of a few in action creating useful plastic objects. William went on with a powerpoint show discussing the upcoming Windows 10 Creators update. William at that point had done updates on three of his computers and was able to describe the slight differences it makes. He went on to show Microsoft Edge and the enhancements that were included: 3D Cities, Loss of the Control Panel in the shortcut menu (right-click on the start menu or Win+x), and how to find it. He went on to show changes to Edge, Search Box new things and a quick demo of Paint 3D. Our thanks go to William for an informative and interesting program. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

What I did not realize at the time was that there was a Windows.old folder that contained the previous operating system that could be deleted (if you let Windows do it via Start > System > Storage > This PC > Temporary Files > Previous version of Windows and do not try to do it yourself).

After not being able to install the next update (for lack of disk space and not knowing the above at the time), I got a notice on the tablet that an update for Windows was available, and much to my surprise, after a couple of tries that was accomplished. That left me with version 1607. And I am not at all sure how that was done

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Windows 10 Sleep/ Hibernate/Shutdown

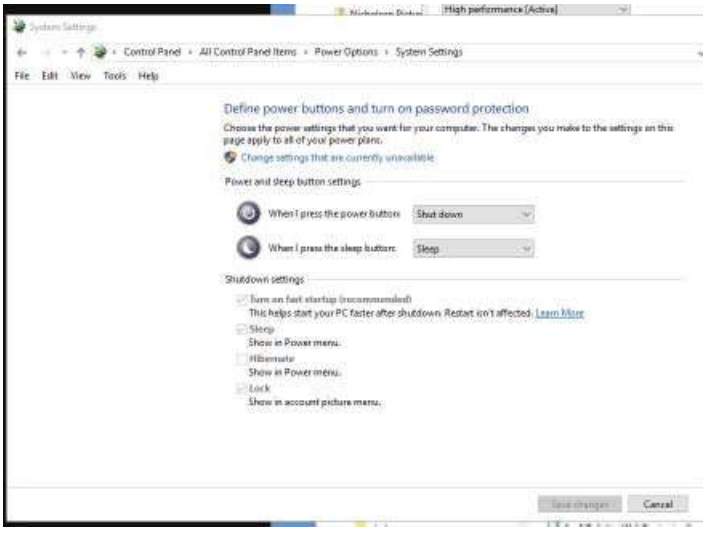
By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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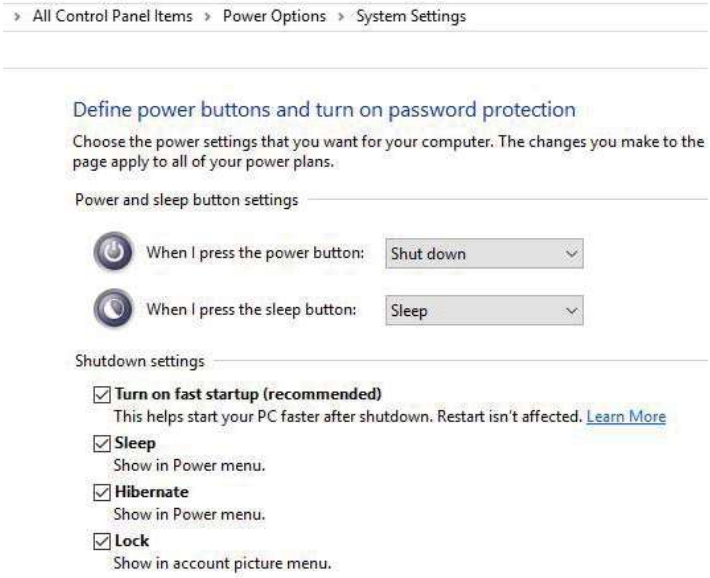
Windows 10 has a boot scheme called "Fast Startup". There's a remote possibility of it causing problems with some hardware. Here's a breakdown of all the schemes and the settings and options you have.

Shutting down - and then rebooting - a Windows computer is more complicated than you would guess. There are options to choose the shutdown and restart methods, and in Windows 10, you may not care for the defaults that are set for you, and in some cases have caused some unresolved problems.

Windows 10, if you accept the defaults preset for you, really does shut down OK, it's the restart that will surprise you. By default, a new method called "Fast Startup" is enabled. It really does dramatically reduce the Windows start time if you boot from a conventional hard drive. That goes double for a typical slow notebook mechanical hard drive. But if you're booting from an SSD, there's not much advantage. In any case, regardless of the boot drive, there are some potential annoyances. Hopefully I can tell you what you need to know about this new "feature".

In Control Panel, Power Options, System Settings, you





want to look at the – Shutdown settings – Notice that in order to change any of these settings you first have to click on the blue "Change settings that are currently unavailable", and that to do so, you have to be in an administrator account (that's the blue and yellow shield). After you click on it, it disappears – as in the second picture. You will probably find the "Turn on fast startup (recommended)" already checked.

If that "fast startup" is checked, when you shut down it actually will do a hybrid Hibernate. It's also referred to as "Hybrid Sleep". It's the old style hibernate available in previous Windows editions, with some changes. The old conventional hibernate copies the entire contents of memory to a disk file C:\hiberfil.sys. On the next startup, instead of a traditional boot, that is loading the OS kernel and then loading each of all the drivers and services, it simply restores the contents of that file into memory and resumes where you left off. Fast (or at least faster). For conventional hard drives it saves a lot of time. For SSDs it's technically faster. In notebooks it is useful to overcome the cheap, slow mechanical 5400 RPM hard drives.

I've observed a lot of people using notebooks where when they are finished, they typically just close the lid, putting it to sleep. Sleep is an entirely different thing. The computer – when in sleep mode is still powered up – at least the screen is shut down, and probably the

Sleep.....Continued on page 4

Sleep.....Continued from page 3

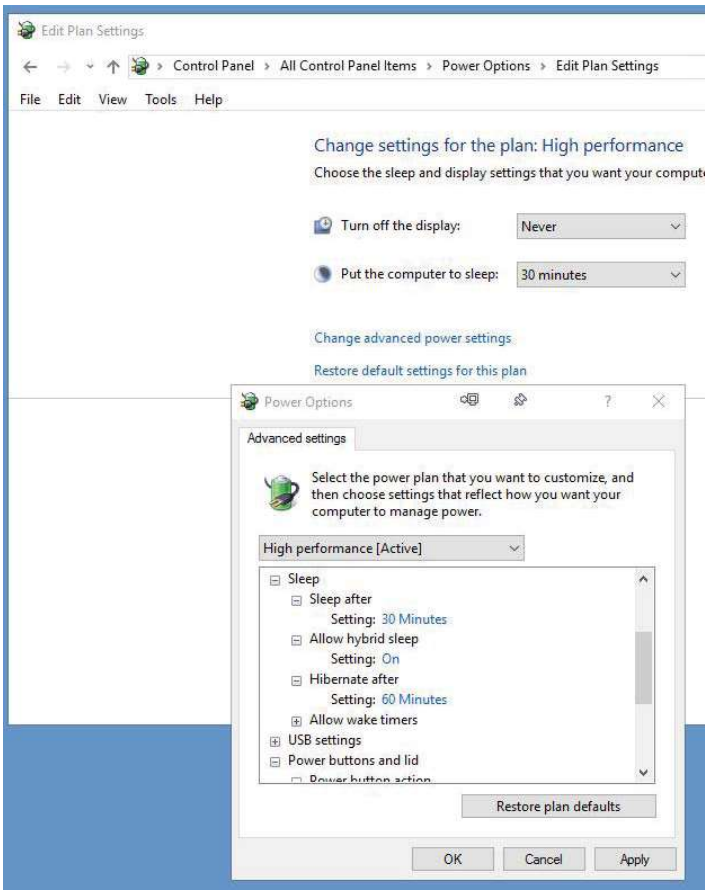
hard drive too, saving power on the battery, and the wake-up is instantaneous as long as you do that before the battery runs down (a month?). In sleep mode the contents of memory is maintained in memory – just where it was. But it will eventually die when the battery is depleted.

So far you're saying "So What?" Right? The Sleep and (old, conventional) Hibernate restore everything just as it was. If there was an open application it reappears just as you left it. Your keyboard and mouse, touchscreen .. wait a minute, my old printer isn't communicating or my external touchscreen monitor doesn't work unless I unplug it and plug it back in. Maybe you haven't seen any problems and are OK, but maybe you're looking for a reason that your scanner doesn't resume as it should. My own single problem is my new 4K monitor doesn't come back from "fast startup" (Hybrid Sleep). It's black. Not off .. that would be white in this case .. but black, and fortunately I have a second monitor so that I can do a Reset. That fixes it, but not permanently. I have a permanent solution for this if you can bear with me.

To be honest with you, since I have a very fast SSD boot drive, I have had all forms of Hibernate turned off for years. For this article, I turned it back on so I could do the screen captures, and serendipitously had the monitor problem within minutes of doing so. I have no desire to fix it other than to disable Hibernate again. But it was a big Ah Ha moment.

I said I did a Reset to temporarily fix the fast startup problem. This is because Reset is designed to do a real 100% power down and restart from scratch. It is done this way because Windows updates and application installs just couldn't work correctly if it did a sleep, hibernate or "Fast Startup".

In Control Panel, Power Options, there is a "Change advanced power settings". Click that and the Advanced settings panel comes up. Here, you can find several thing of interest on this subject: "Sleep after Setting", "Allow hybrid sleep", "Hibernate after". The "Power buttons and lid" settings determine what happens when you close the lid. Mine is set to "Shut



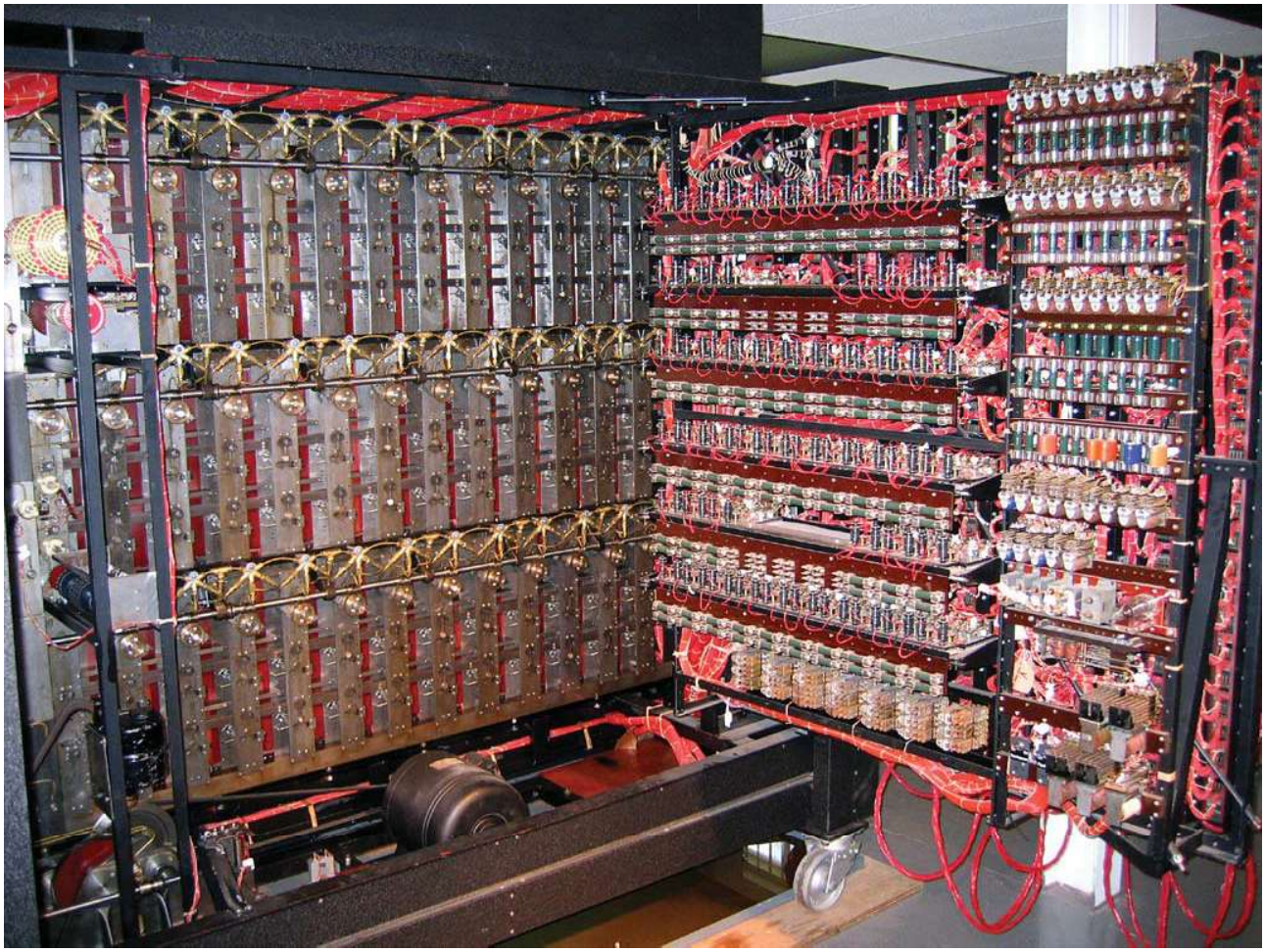
Down". But my notebook uses an SSD. It boots just fast enough, thank you.

"Hybrid Sleep" means hybrid Hibernate. This means that instead of saving the full memory contents to disk, it saves just the operating system kernel and drivers. It closes all applications first before saving, thus greatly reducing the size of the file and the time it takes to restart. The regular Hibernate saves everything, the intention being to restore the desktop just as you left it. Note that you can enable Hibernate and disable Hybrid Hibernate. I wouldn't, but hey – have fun.

Here's one of the big things I don't like about Hybrid Hibernate. It's indistinguishable from a real shutdown and start. You can easily think you have been doing a full shutdown all along and even wasted time trying to figure out why your mouse sometimes doesn't work. How can you tell? Well, you have to look at the settings. See if "Allow hybrid sleep" is on and "Turn on fast startup" is checked. Or maybe you don't experience any problems at all. In my own opinion, though,

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Internet Picture of the Month



The Bombe

The first "computer" that was used to crack the German's Enigma code. The photo is of the back of the re-built machine from the site http://www.benryves.com/gallery/bletchley. There is also a good write-up there. This is the machine at the center of the recent movie, *The Imitation Game*.

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it is peripherals – especially older USB devices that may sometimes have a problem, but maybe you don't have any of these.

On my own systems, I simply disable Hibernate using the powercfg.exe application. This has the advantage of automatically erasing the c:\hiberfil.sys file, freeing up – in my case – 12GB of file space. To do this, open a command prompt for admin. The easiest way for me is to right-click on the start menu, select "Command Prompt (Admin)". This gives you the command prompt box and command line. Here, type: powercfg /h off. There is no message that it's completed, but it should not report an error. Before doing this you can check what you're about to do by typing "powercfg /h /?". This will give you the help topic on what you're about to do. Another effect is that Hibernate no longer appears in the shutdown options. You reinstate it easily with an ON.

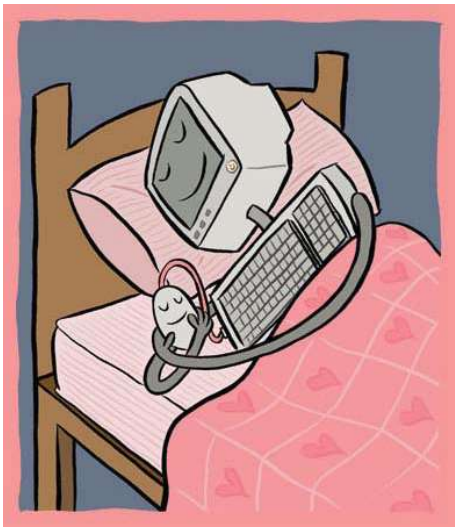
For myself, I use different settings between my desktop unit and my notebook. On my desktop, I set the

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power setting for Sleep to "Never", Allow Hybrid Sleep setting Off – not that it would work without a Hibernate file – it can't, and Hibernate After is "Never". Obviously "fast startup" is not enabled. I do leave "Sleep – show in Power menu" enabled, but I have never used it. I just don't see any advantage in Sleep or Hibernate on the desktop. I do have a slideshow screen saver, but it's set for a very long time and it's for entertainment – pictures I especially like.

On the notebook, I have the lid set to "Shutdown", not sleep. On this computer, a quick blip of the power button will put it into sleep. It's like that because if I want it to sleep, I want it to go there deliberately. I'll admit I have used it in the car while travelling. We could make a lunch stop, and I want to leave the laptop in the car but not with an obvious screen on. I put it in sleep and then close the lid, put it out of sight but with the power cube and GPS still plugged in – it does not do a shutdown in that case, and it resumes when we return. Apparently the GPS does some sort of handshake periodically because it has always resumed. But this is rare, maybe two or three times in the five years I've had it. The other thing different is I set is the Display timer. "Turn off the display" "Never" for when it's on external power, and 30 minutes for "on Battery". The desktop doesn't have that option. The display is by far the biggest battery drainer component on the laptop. If I had a mechanical hard drive (I don't) I would set "Turn off hard disk after Setting (minutes)" to the same as the display. ◆



Preparing for Creators Update

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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I'm not sure why I was so fortunate, but one of my two Windows 10 computers was selected for the latest big update a week ago. No, this is not a sad tale, it went fine. In anticipation of that event, I had done some prep work to make sure I could recover in case of a disaster.

My objective is to get an external USB3 hard drive cloned to be exactly like the computer drive and to test it by booting from it. This makes sure you have not lost anything and can get running in minutes in case the update hoses the system. Second objective is to set a restore point. More on that later.

To create the external boot drive there is some prep work to be done in the way of disk cleanup. There is no need to move files over to the external that you don't use, that should be obvious. Cleaning up has the secondary advantage of removing unneeded files from the computer hard drive before the big update gets run. On systems with little unused space it may be critical to clean up first. Even if it's some time to wait until the update and you need to do it again, it's good practice. Besides, all computers need to be cleaned up occasionally to get rid of the accumulated crap.

The first thing to look at is your Downloads directory. This is where I accumulate the most unneeded files. Usually it's an installation exe. It's been installed, and I can replace it online, so I may as well delete it. PDF bank statements that we printed and filed – that kind of stuff. Also it goes without saying, documents and pictures, sometimes just duplicates. Excel files always have backup versions. Then it's time to do the Windows Cleanup. Open "This PC", right-click on the C: drive and select Properties, then a button called "Disk Cleanup". It goes through a system scan. You want to pick out most if not all of these categories. Notice that it includes "Delivery Optimization files", "Recycle Bin" and "Temporary Files". These weren't checked in

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Creators.....Continued from page 6

my case, so I checked them. When completed, it sends you back to the drive properties. But there's more. Click again on Disk Cleanup button, then click on "Clean up system files". There is another system scan, and if you look at categories, you'll see that some new categories have been added, the most important are the Windows backup installations files.

If you look at your C: drive – as long as you have not hidden system files – you'll may see a Windows.old directory and a couple of folders starting with $windows. In all, as I write this article, I gained 10.3GB of disk space. I also lost the ability to restore to the previous large update. But remember, you were going to lose that ability when the Creators update comes out for you anyway. And that 10.3GB may be just the critical space needed to do the update in the first place.

Next thing to look at are emails. Emails really don't take up much room unless you just don't pay attention to them, but attachments to emails do. Usually if someone sends a picture or two or ten, you copy them somewhere, and it's ok to either delete the email or delete the attachments. Some email systems allow easy sorting. The Outlook I was using and Thunderbird I now use has a column where you can click the header and sort by attachment. That gets all emails with attachments together so you can block delete them all, or open each and delete the attachment itself. When you're done restore the sort you like and then force the email client to compress its file.

Next is the system restore point. To go "System Properties", "System Protection" tab, you can do a search on "create a restore point" or right-click on "This PC", properties, and click on "system protection". You should see your hard drives, and the C: drive protection should be "On". If not, select "Configure" button and configure it on. Windows System updates have a tendency to set this off, which means you have lost the ability to set restore points. When all that is done, click on "Create" button and give it a name. I usually name it something like "before creators update" or something like that. The restore point always carries the date created regardless.

Now we're ready to clone the drive. I usually use an Acronis rescue disk that has a utility 'tools' category with a "clone" function. I've transferred this to a bootable flash drive. Usually if you buy an SSD it comes with a clone drive program that can be used, and of course you can buy one if you don't otherwise have it. You may have a good use for Acronis backup, but if not Acronis has an excellent "Disk Director" program . See our friends Gene and Linda Barlow at http://www.UGR7.com, and be sure tell them how you heard of them and whether or not you're a TPCUG member..

For my PCIE SSD boot drive, Acronis clone will not work so I use Casper at http://www.fssdev.com. It's similar to Acronis, but more expensive than the Barlow's UGR Acronis.

After the Creators update, be sure to look at System Protection to make sure the update did not disable restore points. If it did, the previous restore points have been deleted, and it's time to make one more new one. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 2

other than Windows on its own deleted the Windows.old files.

That got me to thinking that maybe I could also get the Creators Update, and I went to the System Update and asked for new updates and was given a link to tap on to receive the Creators Update. I was informed that I was again short on disk space, and would I like to delete the files in Windows.old to acquire more space. A yes answer to that did not delete the Windows.old folder, but it did remove essentially all the files, giving me more than enough free space on the C drive to do the installation. Thus, I now have the Creators Update on my minimal Windows Tablet. Remarkable.

Cell Towers

This is an app I wrote about five years ago, and which someone asked me to update, that will display on a map all the cell towers in a selected county of a se-

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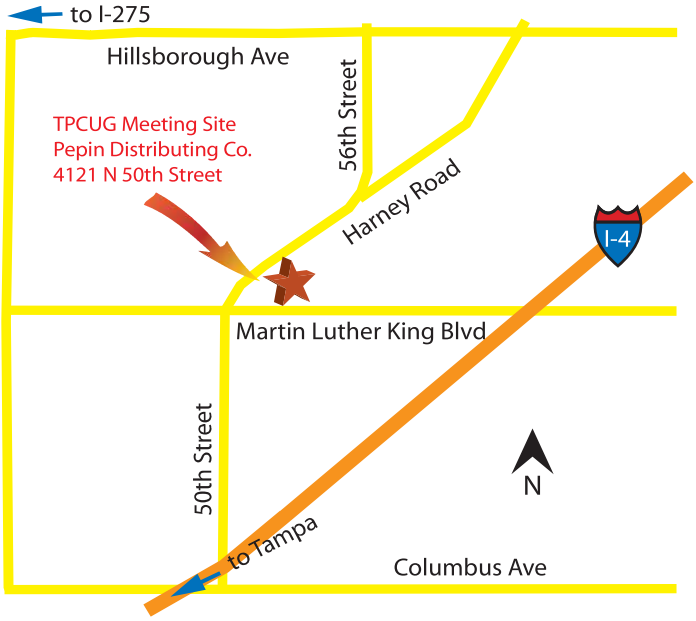
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

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lected state. Actually it is not all the cell towers; rather, all that are in the database I found at the FCC. For example, I know a rancher who leases a plot of land to a tower owner, and that tower is not in the database. Anyway, in the latest information I could find at the FCC, there are a lot of towers in the current database – 240,401 nationally, 882 in Hillsborough County, FL and 4,757 om Los Angeles County, CA. At first, I didn't want to bother updating the app; then, I thought, why not?

I will be updating the app to have that new data along with a new interface where it will run on a Win 10 desktop, Win 10 tablet, a Win 10 phone and hopefully an Android phone and tablet and eventually an iPhone and an iPad. The Windows 10 work and the Android work are close to completion; the iOS work, yet to be started. I make no money on such apps. It's a hobby.
◆



http://www.tpcug.org



Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 30 No. 4 April 2017

April in Tampa

Meeting

3-D Printer Demonstration

by

Sean Daniels-Ennis

Wednesday, April 12

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

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Meeting Preview: 3-D Printer demonstration by Sean Daniels-Ennis from the Hillsborough Public Library.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg for their articles. And to fill out the newsletter, I have a couple recent problems that you may find of interest. One of the problems might well happen to you.

Windows 10 Creators Update

Before getting into problems, let me remind you that a new windows 10 update is coming available on April 11. It is going to be pushed out in waves, so not everyone will receive it on that date. And for those few who have windows phones, it will be available on April 25.

A brief video about the new features may be found at: http://www.pcworld.com/article/3185431/windows/how-to-get-windows-10-creators-update-the-release-date-and-more.html. *PC World* says that "Newer PCs that have the optimal specs for

Comments.....Continued on page 2

May Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the March Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. This month, there were questions about network sharing and browser details.

Our own TPCUG member Michelle Burgess gave an interesting talk and demonstration on video conferencing using Apple Facetime. Harry Lockaby was attending with his Apple Mac Air notebook and served as a conferencing partner. Michelle was using a Mac mini and the room big screen as the only monitor. After the demo, Michelle went on to describe her attendance at a General Motors Hackathon and showed some of the possibilities of connected apps being considered for autos. Our thanks go to Michelle for an informative and interesting demonstration. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

Windows 10 will get the Update first." Personally I am in no rush since much of what I do on a computer does not involve what all the new features address. But there are some interesting things there regarding inking, for example. One of the more impressive things I saw in the demonstration of inking was: You draw a route on a map, and then Microsoft will tun your drawn route into an actual route with all the information usually associated with a route. The Edge browser will now be able to read your eBooks and display YouTube videos in 4K. I expect everyone to have the Creators update by our May meeting and for someone to give a demonstration of using the new features. Any volunteers?

Comments.....Continued on page 6

New 4K Computer Monitor, Three Weeks Later

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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A new 27" computer monitor has been a big change for me. It's been mostly a good experience, but there are some considerations that suggest that it may not be an entirely wise move. I'll try to explain.

For those not familiar with the term "4K", it's a very high resolution monitor that's four times the resolution of a "standard" 1080 monitor. That is, vertically and horizontally it's doubled. A 1080 monitor is 1920x1080, and a 4K is 3840x2160. Pixels, that is, dots on the screen.

A little background about the 1080 standard first. We have television to blame for 1080. We needed a digital flat screen for television use for years and years, and we just had to put up with CRTs long after digital was technically possible – we had digital monitors in all sorts of sizes until the (mostly TV) industry decided on a standard. The standard was necessary to move on and scrap the 1930s CRT technology. It stood to reason that the TV standard would be duplicated in other products, not the least for computers, and that happened without question. If you'll look at good quality monitors right now, the 1080 is by far the least expensive and, because of the sheer numbers sold, is pretty much the standard consumer monitor.

In the meantime, computer technology has bypassed the need for standardized monitor sizes and resolutions; the 1080 remains on the least expensive computers. But there are a dozen or more resolutions that are common.

We bought a 55" 4K TV more than 2 years ago for use as our only TV in the household. Its TV comes from a cable tuner in a computer that serves as a large capacity DVR. So we have a lot of experience with the standard. In our minds, we knew the clarity of the 4K screen will be so dramatically improved that I would thoroughly enjoy the change on my desktop computer, and that is mostly true.

The tipping point on the decision to replace my perfectly good flat screen monitors was price. Amazon hit a low of $330 one night as I was checking almost daily and clicked on it. It's at $428 today and $377 yesterday. That night, I bought an LG 27UD58-B 27-Inch 4K UHD IPS Monitor. It replaces two 1600x1200 21" monitors that I bought in 2005 for about $550 each. That's $1,372 in today's money for both.

Surprisingly, there are very few suitable 4K monitors made. Amazon has just eight, and half of those are in the $600 range.

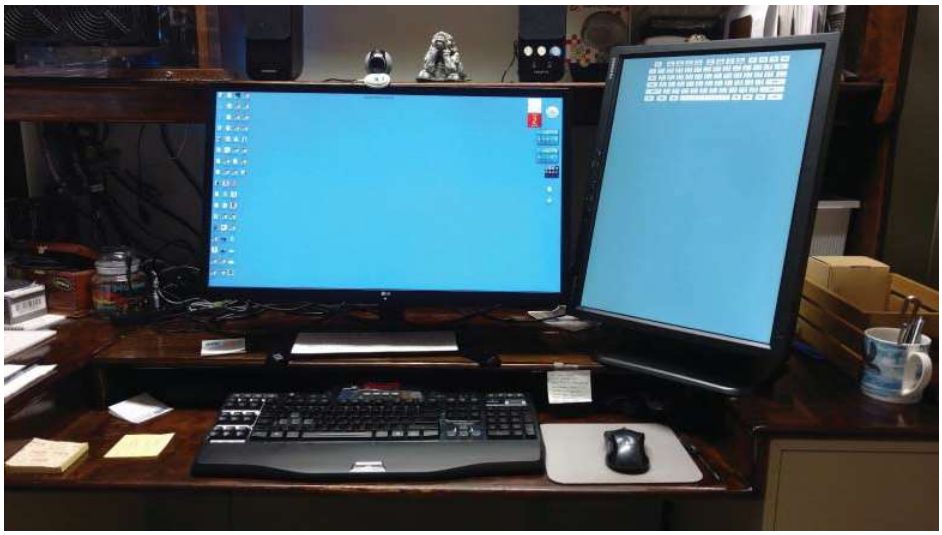
First, though, the hardware. To use this you need a video system that will handle 4K, and very few do. Mine did not. The newest, higher end computers largely do, but you can't count on it, check the specs. Look for 4K at 60Hz. I built my own system – you could say it evolved over many years, and I knew it wouldn't do 4K. I had two video cards that were just a few years old; I replaced one and kept the other only to discover that AMD video software wouldn't allow an old card to coexist with a new one, so back off the shelf it came and torn apart the second time to remove the second. The new card, a Radeon RX470 was $175. A DisplayPort cable (and an HDMI) came with the monitor.

OK, so let's see what I did. I replaced two 21" monitors placed side by side for a combined 442 square inches (17"x 13" x 2) with a single 4K screen 305 Square inches (23.5"x13"). And increased the pixels from 3,840,000 to 8,294,400. Oh oh, what have I done? Well, I made those 8.3 million pixels a LOT tinier.

I find it strange to look at Windows elements that small. All this detail is crystal clear and very sharp, but very tiny. Remember I have 8.3 million pixels. Now, Windows 7, 8.1 and 10 all have the capability to scale windows elements larger. If you look at Windows Display Settings, there is a slider that allows you to enlarge everything. Windows 10 offers to set scaling at

Monitor.....Continued on page 4

Monitor.....Continued from page 3



150% right off the bat. But think about it. My 8.3 million Pixels will then become an equivalent of 5.5 million. Well, that's one way to look at it, but remember those very, very sharp pixels are still there doing their job, and it's just spectacular. If you want to really get blown away, look at a high rez movie on Amazon, or even a relatively low resolution YouTube video . . well it's hard to describe. And worth it.

I finally settled for 125% scaling. In terms of how many useful, readable, windows of information I can get on the screen all at the same, it's a tremendous improvement. If you're just a one-application-at-a-time person, you'll still like it because of the clarity. If you're a programmer who needs four or five windows up at a time because you're referencing information between, it's a godsend. Sometimes I'll need to set the scaling back to 100%, and at least Windows makes that easy to do. I have a problem with a 14-year old Microsoft Office product Access 2003 that cuts off 25% of user windows when scaled. I attribute that to fate and the computer gods messing with me. Bill didn't know that would happen back in 2003. But my support for Access 2003 applications is slowly going away.

Now the downside(s). I have to be fairly close to the screen because of the size of screen elements, and that's ok for my eyes; I have computer glasses selected for that distance. But I really can't relax and tip back in the chair unless I'm watching a YouTube video. The previous arrangement with two 21" screens (18.5" x 2 full width) worked well, because I had both turned inward, each facing me. A 23.5" wide screen really needs to be curved, and I'd guess by the time I'm ready to replace this one they'll be readily available. Curved 4K TV screens are available, expensively, but none small enough for computer use.

Sometimes when I have a lot of detail on the screen I feel I must shift my body right or left to get the detail right in front of my eyes. I'm trying to not do that now that I'm aware of it. As I said, the previous arrangement had both monitors turned inward.

I've been discussing my primary monitors' replacement, but I really had four. There is one 1080x1920 monitor on my right, turned in portrait. I use this for help screens and PDF references. It's turned inward to face me. The fourth was a low resolution screen that I used rarely for spillover when I wanted my email and calendar up. I have abandoned use of that one now that I've increased my window area so much.

The side portrait monitor is invaluable, and I've been considering replacing that one with a 24" 4K monitor. The one I'm using now is one of the old ones of course and it has its problems that I've been struggling with. I finally convinced myself that the text is fuzzy and everything is scaled larger even though it should be at 100%. I have just done some research and finally found some Microsoft descriptions of my problems. It seems that even Windows 10 can't handle mixed resolutions well. That is, if you have a new high resolution monitor it works well but any second or third monitor that is older, lower resolution, you can expect that the display isn't sharp like it was (yep), and the scaling may be off (check!). And although Windows 10 handles multiple monitors much better than Windows 7 or 8.1, they acknowledge these problems and offer some suggestions that may mitigate, but not cure them.

Microsoft also mentions that some of the scaling problems have to do with the capability of the applications, and that those applications assembled as a Universal

Monitor.....Continued on page 5

Internet Picture of the Month



The island Hotel

In Cedar Key, Florida, a bit of old Florida. From Flickr.com, taken by Faye, whose photstream is at https://www.flickr.com/photos/sheffe73/. She has lots of interesting photos, but you will need a Yahoo account to be able to see more than just a few. My interest in the photo was that I stayed in that hotel just a few months ago and also many years ago. Go to Cedar Key. It is very relaxing and off the beaten track.

Monitor.....Continued from page 4

App (from the Windows Store) will scale fine and there's no guarantee that others will work. It's also a plug for Office 360 or Office 2016. But that jibes perfectly with my problems with Access 2003. One suggestion on older apps is to change the apps compatibility property. There's a setting "Disable display scaling on high DPI settings". I've changed my MSACCESS.EXE settings, and I'm still assessing the effect.

The only definitive solution is to use secondary monitors of the same resolution. Hence supporting my "need" to buy another new monitor.

Considering how relatively inexpensive they are and how much benefit, the only remaining problem is finding a home for my old ones. ◆

HDMI Cables with Ethernet

By Ron Weinberg, Member At Large,
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At our last meeting there was a dearth of information on the new HDMI with Ethernet cables that are now widely sold in anticipation of devices that have not yet appeared in common use. Here is a simple explanation of these cables.

In short, this feature reduces the number of Ethernet cables required in some networks, primarily home entertainment networks.

Both standard and high speed HDMI cables are available with Ethernet. These cables are backward compatible and serve as regular HDMI cables if the Ethernet channel is not used. Both ends of the cable must be used in enabled ports for the Ethernet channel to work.

Ports which utilize the Ethernet feature may be marked HEC (HDMI Ethernet Channel enabled). The use of that mark is optional to the manufacturer of the device. When purchasing new devices, as with any new feature, it would be advisable to check product specifications and or user manual to determine if the feature is included.

Here is the basic information and diagrams obtained from the HDMI.org website.

HDMI Ethernet Channel

HDMI Ethernet Channel technology consolidates video, audio, and data streams into a single HDMI cable, combining the unmatched signal quality and convenience of HDMI connectivity with the power and flexibility of home entertainment networking. It incorporates a dedicated data channel into the HDMI link, enabling high-speed, bidirectional networking at up to 100 Mb/sec. ◆





Comments.....Continued from page 2

Hijacked

Read this closely so that you won't fall for the same trick. Although I am not at all sure that I fell for any trick. But here is what happed to me just a few hours before I sat down to write this.

I was using my other desktop computer to work with Visual Studio 2017. I was working on what is known as a cross platform app, that is one that uses Xamarin from within Visual Studio to create a solution that has four projects: A shared project, an Android project, an iOS project and a Windows Universal project. The idea is to put as much of your code as is possible into the shared project and then for anything that has to be dealt with specifically for the separate operating

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Comments.....Continued from page 6

systems, such as saving images to the device or sending email, you put the code required by the separate operating systems into the three separate projects

Well, Xamarin is still a bit new to me, even though I have been using it for over a year. So I have to search for how to do certain things using Bing or Google. In this case I was using Bing and had put in a search regarding tapping on images.

And here is where my memory is not perfect. I recall there were a number of links returned as results. I then clicked on one, and I don't recall if it was the first link I tried or the third. Anyway, I clicked on one of the links provided by Bing and was presented with a web page in Edge that had what appeared to be a large yellow popup saying that FLASH was required to view the page. And here is where my memory fails me. I don't recall if I clicked on the x in the upper right corner of the popup to close it or it closed automatically. Anyway, all Hell broke lose with loud audio telling me not to close the web page or I would lose all access to my data; that all my contacts were being sent to some site along with my Facebook contacts (none of which I have); and some other threats that I don't recall. I was supposed to follow the instructions on the screen to make a payment to be able to access my data again.

I stopped paying attention to the verbal instructions since I felt that I really needed to get Edge closed and was pretty sure that the problem was restricted to Edge and not the entire computer. Edge could not be closed except via the Task Manager, which I did. Foolishly I then reopened Edge with the result that all of that talking and threatening was presented again. So I again used Task Manager to close Edge.

What to do? I opened a different browser, FireFox and did a bit of searching and came up with a page about the Edge browser being hijacked. I had not used the word hijacked, but that is exactly what had happened to me. And the solution was quite simple. All that was necessary was to disconnect from the Internet. With that done, if you started Edge again it could not load the offending web page. You see, Edge keeps track of what web pages were open when you close it and then reopens them again when you start up Edge I don't particularly like this feature and now see a real problem with it.

Anyway, when I restarted edge with no Internet connection, the offending web page informed me that I had no Internet connection. And I was able to close all of Edge's tabs and then Edge. On restarting Edge, I noticed no problems. I did a quick Windows Defender scan that produced no problems and will do a thorough scan soon.

Did I click on that web page? Had the web page been infected with code that redirected me to a malicious site? I don't know, but I do know that many years ago, I followed a link to a page and had something similar happen, and I did not click on anything. It would seem that you should not be harmed by simply viewing a web page after all these years of technological improvement – but I just don't know.

Networking Problems

At least I thought my problem was a networking problem for several weeks. About four months back, I lost my network connection to my TV. The TV is in a room some distance from the router which connects to the TV room via a power-line Internet adapter; the TV connects to a switch which connects to the power-line adapter. Disconnecting the Ethernet cable from the switch connected to the power-line adapter, I easily discovered that the switch was the problem and ordered a new one. In that room connected to the switch I also had an iMac and an older HP laptop, my main computers being in the room with the router. Everything worked fine for several months, then I noticed that the iMac, which I leave running since I use it to compile iOS apps from Visual Studio running on a Windows computer in the other room, had a problem. The iMac started to often lose its network connection while the TV an the HP most of the times still had a connection. I thought the new switch might be going bad because if I rebooted the switch, the iMac reconnected to the network. So I ordered another new switch, but the problem persisted. I tried all sorts of connections, through the switch, directly to the power-line adapter, and even ran a 50 feet plus Ethernet

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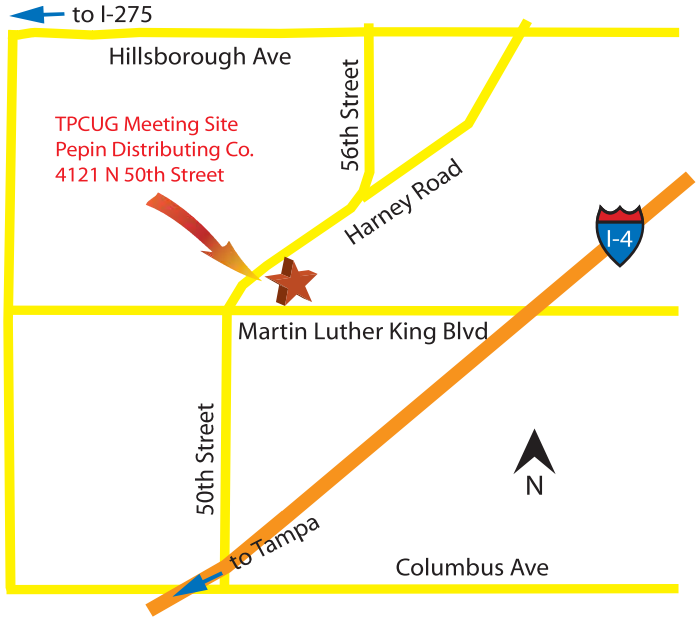
First Class Mail

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Computer.....Continued from page 7

cable on the floor through the house to connect things. Sometimes I had a connection for over 24 hours, sometimes not. None of the combinations produced an uninterrupted connection for more than two days. I even set the iMac to not go to sleep. But nothing would give me the weeks-long uninterrupted connection that I had experienced in the past.

I then hit upon an idea. The iMac had its operating system updated to Sierra sometime in the recent past. Could that have anything to do with it? An Internet search for "iMac, Sierra and Network" produced many people experiencing the same loss of network connectivity. Many solutions were proposed, but none seemed to fix things for people. Then I found one fellow who had the answer that he had received from Apple: The article said that I should try going to the iMac's Sys Preferences>Energy Saver and untick Wake for Network Access. I already had it set to not go to sleep (which did not fix things). But de-selecting the Wake for Network Access seems to have fixed the iMac losing its network connection.



What would we do without Google and Bing? However, in all my searching, I only found one person with the correct answer. ◆

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Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 30 No. 5 May 2017



May in Tampa

Meeting

A Sticky Math Problem
By
Merle Nicholson

Wednesday, May 10

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will demonstrate using a computer to solve a sticky math problem.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to Merle Nicholson I have to write very little this month, and that is good, since I have not had much happening this month that would be of interest to a general audience. I have spent a lot of that time updating my Windows 8 app, Cell Towers, to be a Windows 10 Universal app and then to porting it to Android. I also managed, much to my surprise, to install the Windows 10 Creators Update on my minimal Dell Venue 8 Pro Windows tablet.

Windows 10 Creators Update

The Dell Venue 8 Pro tablet, which I won as a prize, has only two GB of RAM and a 32 GB of hard drive, and I thought it was a miracle that I managed to update it to Windows 10 when I did that. I tried to install the next Win 10 update and could not do it for lack of disk space. The update required eight GB, and I only had five free on the drive, no matter how much stuff I deleted.

Comments.....Continued on page 2

June Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Our own TPCUG member, William LaMartin, reflecting a current interest in 3D printers showed several pictures and videos of a Microsoft meeting he attended that demonstrated 3D printers. He then showed several YouTube videos of a few in action creating useful plastic objects. William went on with a powerpoint show discussing the upcoming Windows 10 Creators update. William at that point had done updates on three of his computers and was able to describe the slight differences it makes. He went on to show Microsoft Edge and the enhancements that were included: 3D Cities, Loss of the Control Panel in the shortcut menu (right-click on the start menu or Win+x), and how to find it. He went on to show changes to Edge, Search Box new things and a quick demo of Paint 3D. Our thanks go to William for an informative and interesting program. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 1

What I did not realize at the time was that there was a Windows.old folder that contained the previous operating system that could be deleted (if you let Windows do it via Start > System > Storage > This PC > Temporary Files > Previous version of Windows and do not try to do it yourself).

After not being able to install the next update (for lack of disk space and not knowing the above at the time), I got a notice on the tablet that an update for Windows was available, and much to my surprise, after a couple of tries that was accomplished. That left me with version 1607. And I am not at all sure how that was done

Comments.....Continued on page 7

Windows 10 Sleep/ Hibernate/Shutdown

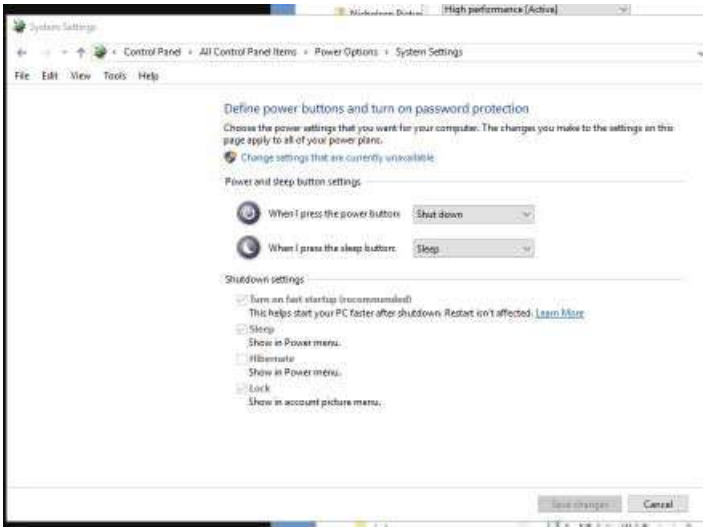
By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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merle@merlenicholson.com

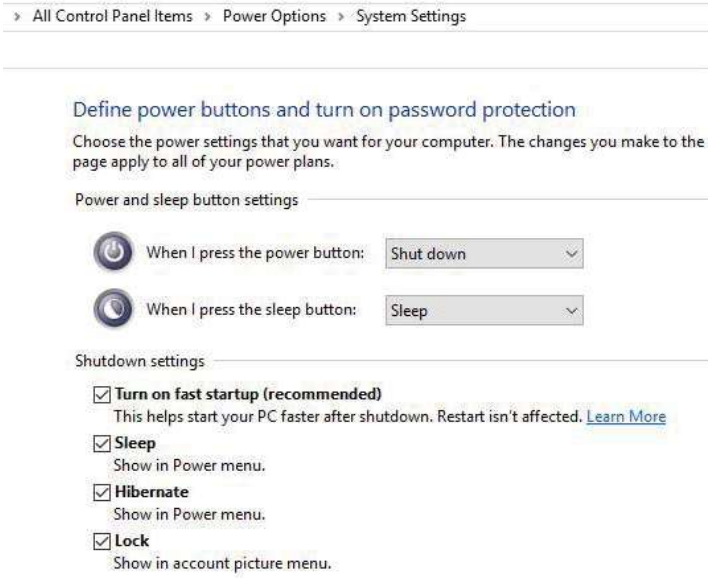
Windows 10 has a boot scheme called "Fast Startup". There's a remote possibility of it causing problems with some hardware. Here's a breakdown of all the schemes and the settings and options you have.

Shutting down - and then rebooting - a Windows computer is more complicated than you would guess. There are options to choose the shutdown and restart methods, and in Windows 10, you may not care for the defaults that are set for you, and in some cases have caused some unresolved problems.

Windows 10, if you accept the defaults preset for you, really does shut down OK, it's the restart that will surprise you. By default, a new method called "Fast Startup" is enabled. It really does dramatically reduce the Windows start time if you boot from a conventional hard drive. That goes double for a typical slow notebook mechanical hard drive. But if you're booting from an SSD, there's not much advantage. In any case, regardless of the boot drive, there are some potential annoyances. Hopefully I can tell you what you need to know about this new "feature".

In Control Panel, Power Options, System Settings, you





want to look at the – Shutdown settings – Notice that in order to change any of these settings you first have to click on the blue "Change settings that are currently unavailable", and that to do so, you have to be in an administrator account (that's the blue and yellow shield). After you click on it, it disappears – as in the second picture. You will probably find the "Turn on fast startup (recommended)" already checked.

If that "fast startup" is checked, when you shut down it actually will do a hybrid Hibernate. It's also referred to as "Hybrid Sleep". It's the old style hibernate available in previous Windows editions, with some changes. The old conventional hibernate copies the entire contents of memory to a disk file C:\hiberfil.sys. On the next startup, instead of a traditional boot, that is loading the OS kernel and then loading each of all the drivers and services, it simply restores the contents of that file into memory and resumes where you left off. Fast (or at least faster). For conventional hard drives it saves a lot of time. For SSDs it's technically faster. In notebooks it is useful to overcome the cheap, slow mechanical 5400 RPM hard drives.

I've observed a lot of people using notebooks where when they are finished, they typically just close the lid, putting it to sleep. Sleep is an entirely different thing. The computer – when in sleep mode is still powered up – at least the screen is shut down, and probably the

Sleep.....Continued on page 4

Sleep.....Continued from page 3

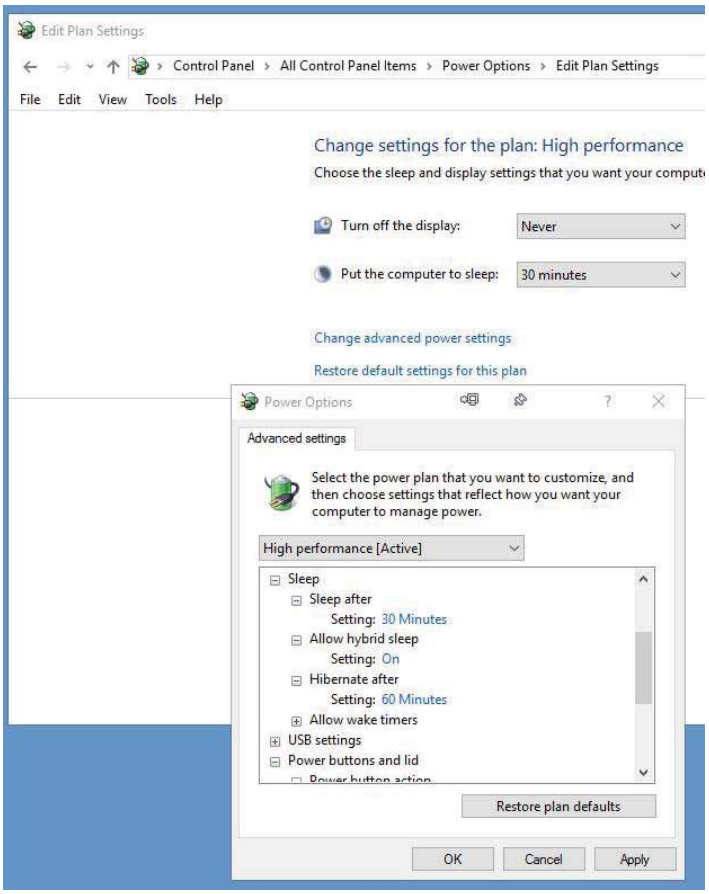
hard drive too, saving power on the battery, and the wake-up is instantaneous as long as you do that before the battery runs down (a month?). In sleep mode the contents of memory is maintained in memory – just where it was. But it will eventually die when the battery is depleted.

So far you're saying "So What?" Right? The Sleep and (old, conventional) Hibernate restore everything just as it was. If there was an open application it reappears just as you left it. Your keyboard and mouse, touchscreen .. wait a minute, my old printer isn't communicating or my external touchscreen monitor doesn't work unless I unplug it and plug it back in. Maybe you haven't seen any problems and are OK, but maybe you're looking for a reason that your scanner doesn't resume as it should. My own single problem is my new 4K monitor doesn't come back from "fast startup" (Hybrid Sleep). It's black. Not off .. that would be white in this case .. but black, and fortunately I have a second monitor so that I can do a Reset. That fixes it, but not permanently. I have a permanent solution for this if you can bear with me.

To be honest with you, since I have a very fast SSD boot drive, I have had all forms of Hibernate turned off for years. For this article, I turned it back on so I could do the screen captures, and serendipitously had the monitor problem within minutes of doing so. I have no desire to fix it other than to disable Hibernate again. But it was a big Ah Ha moment.

I said I did a Reset to temporarily fix the fast startup problem. This is because Reset is designed to do a real 100% power down and restart from scratch. It is done this way because Windows updates and application installs just couldn't work correctly if it did a sleep, hibernate or "Fast Startup".

In Control Panel, Power Options, there is a "Change advanced power settings". Click that and the Advanced settings panel comes up. Here, you can find several thing of interest on this subject: "Sleep after Setting", "Allow hybrid sleep", "Hibernate after". The "Power buttons and lid" settings determine what happens when you close the lid. Mine is set to "Shut



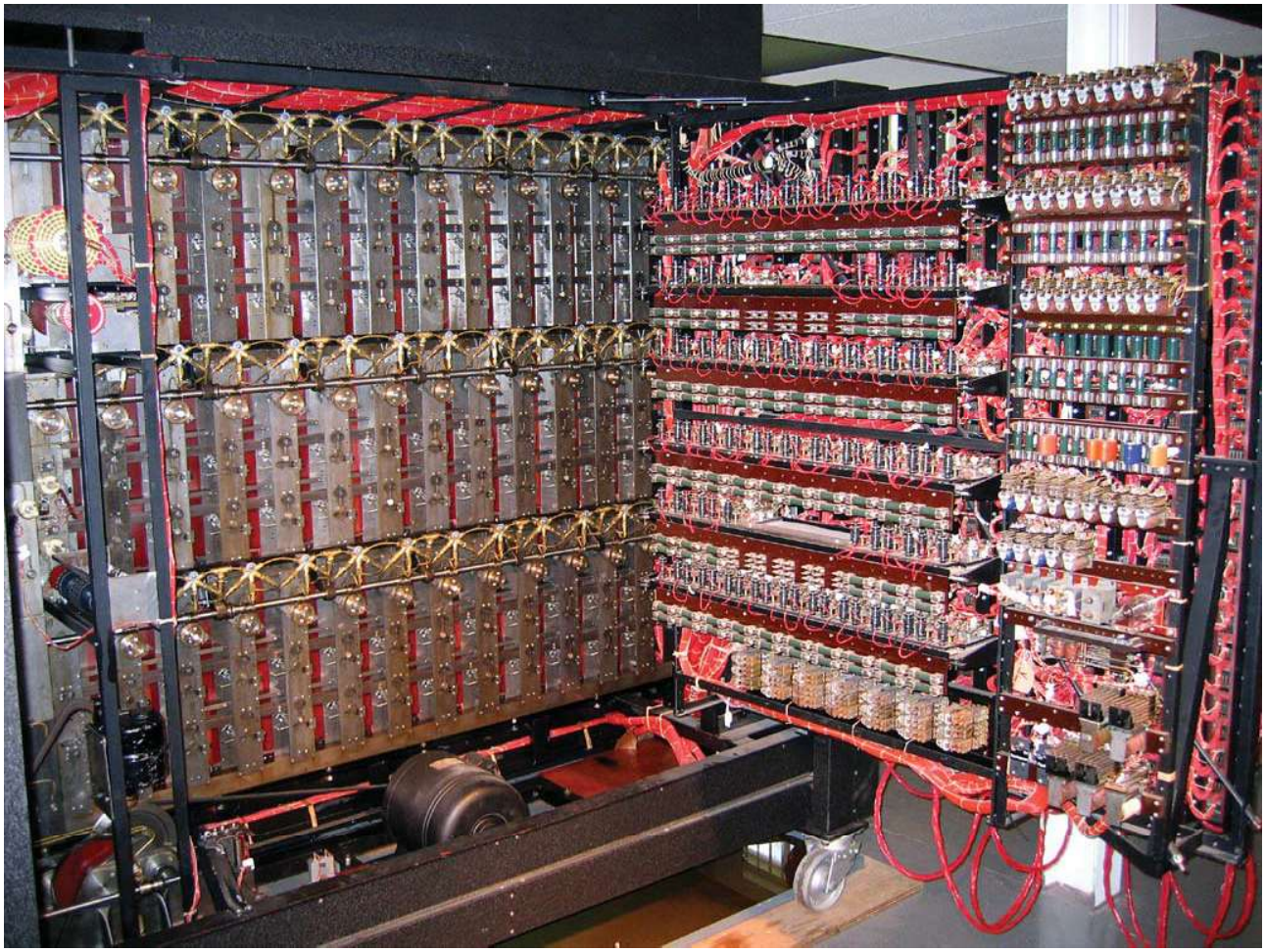
Down". But my notebook uses an SSD. It boots just fast enough, thank you.

"Hybrid Sleep" means hybrid Hibernate. This means that instead of saving the full memory contents to disk, it saves just the operating system kernel and drivers. It closes all applications first before saving, thus greatly reducing the size of the file and the time it takes to restart. The regular Hibernate saves everything, the intention being to restore the desktop just as you left it. Note that you can enable Hibernate and disable Hybrid Hibernate. I wouldn't, but hey – have fun.

Here's one of the big things I don't like about Hybrid Hibernate. It's indistinguishable from a real shutdown and start. You can easily think you have been doing a full shutdown all along and even wasted time trying to figure out why your mouse sometimes doesn't work. How can you tell? Well, you have to look at the settings. See if "Allow hybrid sleep" is on and "Turn on fast startup" is checked. Or maybe you don't experience any problems at all. In my own opinion, though,

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Internet Picture of the Month



The Bombe

The first "computer" that was used to crack the German's Enigma code. The photo is of the back of the re-built machine from the site http://www.benryves.com/gallery/bletchley. There is also a good write-up there. This is the machine at the center of the recent movie, *The Imitation Game*.

Sleep.....Continued from page 4

it is peripherals – especially older USB devices that may sometimes have a problem, but maybe you don't have any of these.

On my own systems, I simply disable Hibernate using the powercfg.exe application. This has the advantage of automatically erasing the c:\hiberfil.sys file, freeing up – in my case – 12GB of file space. To do this, open a command prompt for admin. The easiest way for me is to right-click on the start menu, select "Command Prompt (Admin)". This gives you the command prompt box and command line. Here, type: powercfg /h off. There is no message that it's completed, but it should not report an error. Before doing this you can check what you're about to do by typing "powercfg /h /?". This will give you the help topic on what you're about to do. Another effect is that Hibernate no longer appears in the shutdown options. You reinstate it easily with an ON.

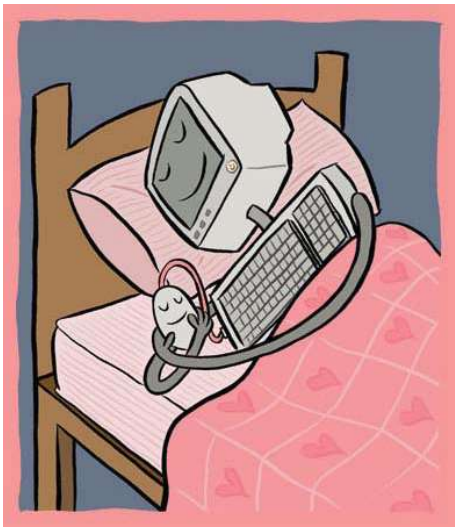
For myself, I use different settings between my desktop unit and my notebook. On my desktop, I set the

Sleep.....Continued on page 6

Sleep.....Continued from page 5

power setting for Sleep to "Never", Allow Hybrid Sleep setting Off – not that it would work without a Hibernate file – it can't, and Hibernate After is "Never". Obviously "fast startup" is not enabled. I do leave "Sleep – show in Power menu" enabled, but I have never used it. I just don't see any advantage in Sleep or Hibernate on the desktop. I do have a slideshow screen saver, but it's set for a very long time and it's for entertainment – pictures I especially like.

On the notebook, I have the lid set to "Shutdown", not sleep. On this computer, a quick blip of the power button will put it into sleep. It's like that because if I want it to sleep, I want it to go there deliberately. I'll admit I have used it in the car while travelling. We could make a lunch stop, and I want to leave the laptop in the car but not with an obvious screen on. I put it in sleep and then close the lid, put it out of sight but with the power cube and GPS still plugged in – it does not do a shutdown in that case, and it resumes when we return. Apparently the GPS does some sort of handshake periodically because it has always resumed. But this is rare, maybe two or three times in the five years I've had it. The other thing different is I set is the Display timer. "Turn off the display" "Never" for when it's on external power, and 30 minutes for "on Battery". The desktop doesn't have that option. The display is by far the biggest battery drainer component on the laptop. If I had a mechanical hard drive (I don't) I would set "Turn off hard disk after Setting (minutes)" to the same as the display. ◆



Preparing for Creators Update

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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I'm not sure why I was so fortunate, but one of my two Windows 10 computers was selected for the latest big update a week ago. No, this is not a sad tale, it went fine. In anticipation of that event, I had done some prep work to make sure I could recover in case of a disaster.

My objective is to get an external USB3 hard drive cloned to be exactly like the computer drive and to test it by booting from it. This makes sure you have not lost anything and can get running in minutes in case the update hoses the system. Second objective is to set a restore point. More on that later.

To create the external boot drive there is some prep work to be done in the way of disk cleanup. There is no need to move files over to the external that you don't use, that should be obvious. Cleaning up has the secondary advantage of removing unneeded files from the computer hard drive before the big update gets run. On systems with little unused space it may be critical to clean up first. Even if it's some time to wait until the update and you need to do it again, it's good practice. Besides, all computers need to be cleaned up occasionally to get rid of the accumulated crap.

The first thing to look at is your Downloads directory. This is where I accumulate the most unneeded files. Usually it's an installation exe. It's been installed, and I can replace it online, so I may as well delete it. PDF bank statements that we printed and filed – that kind of stuff. Also it goes without saying, documents and pictures, sometimes just duplicates. Excel files always have backup versions. Then it's time to do the Windows Cleanup. Open "This PC", right-click on the C: drive and select Properties, then a button called "Disk Cleanup". It goes through a system scan. You want to pick out most if not all of these categories. Notice that it includes "Delivery Optimization files", "Recycle Bin" and "Temporary Files". These weren't checked in

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Creators.....Continued from page 6

my case, so I checked them. When completed, it sends you back to the drive properties. But there's more. Click again on Disk Cleanup button, then click on "Clean up system files". There is another system scan, and if you look at categories, you'll see that some new categories have been added, the most important are the Windows backup installations files.

If you look at your C: drive – as long as you have not hidden system files – you'll may see a Windows.old directory and a couple of folders starting with $windows. In all, as I write this article, I gained 10.3GB of disk space. I also lost the ability to restore to the previous large update. But remember, you were going to lose that ability when the Creators update comes out for you anyway. And that 10.3GB may be just the critical space needed to do the update in the first place.

Next thing to look at are emails. Emails really don't take up much room unless you just don't pay attention to them, but attachments to emails do. Usually if someone sends a picture or two or ten, you copy them somewhere, and it's ok to either delete the email or delete the attachments. Some email systems allow easy sorting. The Outlook I was using and Thunderbird I now use has a column where you can click the header and sort by attachment. That gets all emails with attachments together so you can block delete them all, or open each and delete the attachment itself. When you're done restore the sort you like and then force the email client to compress its file.

Next is the system restore point. To go "System Properties", "System Protection" tab, you can do a search on "create a restore point" or right-click on "This PC", properties, and click on "system protection". You should see your hard drives, and the C: drive protection should be "On". If not, select "Configure" button and configure it on. Windows System updates have a tendency to set this off, which means you have lost the ability to set restore points. When all that is done, click on "Create" button and give it a name. I usually name it something like "before creators update" or something like that. The restore point always carries the date created regardless.

Now we're ready to clone the drive. I usually use an Acronis rescue disk that has a utility 'tools' category with a "clone" function. I've transferred this to a bootable flash drive. Usually if you buy an SSD it comes with a clone drive program that can be used, and of course you can buy one if you don't otherwise have it. You may have a good use for Acronis backup, but if not Acronis has an excellent "Disk Director" program . See our friends Gene and Linda Barlow at http://www.UGR7.com, and be sure tell them how you heard of them and whether or not you're a TPCUG member..

For my PCIE SSD boot drive, Acronis clone will not work so I use Casper at http://www.fssdev.com. It's similar to Acronis, but more expensive than the Barlow's UGR Acronis.

After the Creators update, be sure to look at System Protection to make sure the update did not disable restore points. If it did, the previous restore points have been deleted, and it's time to make one more new one. ◆

Comments.....Continued from page 2

other than Windows on its own deleted the Windows.old files.

That got me to thinking that maybe I could also get the Creators Update, and I went to the System Update and asked for new updates and was given a link to tap on to receive the Creators Update. I was informed that I was again short on disk space, and would I like to delete the files in Windows.old to acquire more space. A yes answer to that did not delete the Windows.old folder, but it did remove essentially all the files, giving me more than enough free space on the C drive to do the installation. Thus, I now have the Creators Update on my minimal Windows Tablet. Remarkable.

Cell Towers

This is an app I wrote about five years ago, and which someone asked me to update, that will display on a map all the cell towers in a selected county of a se-

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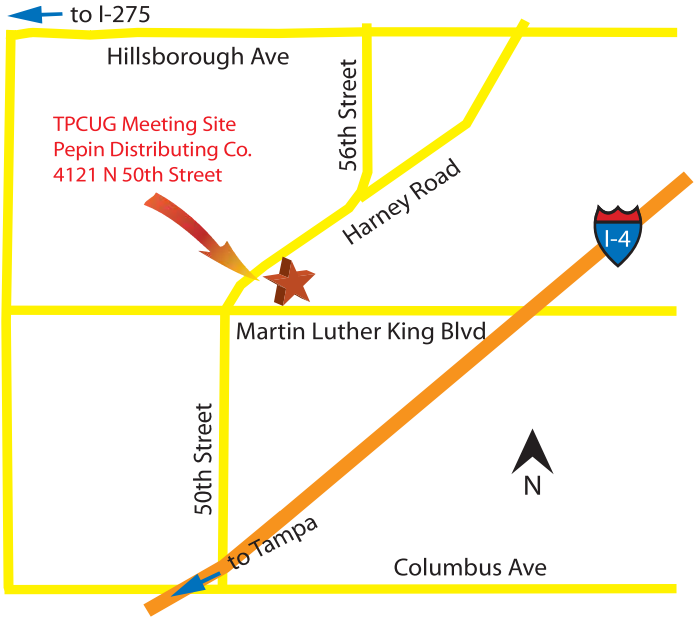
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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Comments.....Continued from page 7

lected state. Actually it is not all the cell towers; rather, all that are in the database I found at the FCC. For example, I know a rancher who leases a plot of land to a tower owner, and that tower is not in the database. Anyway, in the latest information I could find at the FCC, there are a lot of towers in the current database – 240,401 nationally, 882 in Hillsborough County, FL and 4,757 om Los Angeles County, CA. At first, I didn't want to bother updating the app; then, I thought, why not?

I will be updating the app to have that new data along with a new interface where it will run on a Win 10 desktop, Win 10 tablet, a Win 10 phone and hopefully an Android phone and tablet and eventually an iPhone and an iPad. The Windows 10 work and the Android work are close to completion; the iOS work, yet to be started. I make no money on such apps. It's a hobby.
◆



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Bits of Blue

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Vol. 30 No. 6 June 2017



June in Tampa

Meeting

No Meeting in June

Meeting Preview: The June 14th meeting is cancelled and will not take place. As noted in the article on Page 3 by the President of TPCUG, we are considering not having any meetings over the four summer months of June thru September. No final decision on this summer hiatus for meetings has been made, so you are encouraged to check in on the TPCUG website to confirm when the next meeting will be held, which could possibly not happen until October 2017. Read President, John Witmer's article regarding this on page 3.

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Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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To *be, or not to be, that is the question* is a famous quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It is also the quandary that now faces our club. We have existed since 1984. I joined in 1991 and have been doing the newsletter since December of 1995. Some of you have been in the club almost from the beginning. At one time we had in excess of 200 members. Now it is around 30 with sometimes as few as a dozen attending the monthly meeting. At one time we had national presenters such as Microsoft, IBM, Corel Draw, Harvard Graphics, Delrina, and Word Perfect – many of which no longer exist. Perhaps the TPCUG should no longer exist; perhaps it has served its purpose of educating person computer users. I know I have benefited much by being a member and contributor. But now we have the Internet, which seems to be enough for most people. Read John Witmer's letter on page 3, think about the situation and let's come to decision over the summer. ◆

June Meeting: Cancelled

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Home Page http://www.tpcug.org

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Minutes of the May Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

Merle Nicholson (myself) moderated the Windows SIG portion of the meeting and then moved on for the rest of the evening with "A Sticky Math Problem". I had an ulterior motive in that I wanted to introduce my favorite computer language to the group, hoping that perhaps someone may be interested in it. But what intended to accomplish was resolving a way to express the gearing on my 21-speed bicycle in terms that are easily understood, and to be able to introduce the variables (variables are cadence and physical gear set replacements) to demonstrate my current dislike of my gear ratios. I used APL, (A Programming Language) one of the oldest computer languages and fairly unique in that you can use the full capability interactively. That is, see immediate results and then choose if you want to include it as a program so you can introduce variables to see what different results may be obtained. In my case I wanted to show the entire 21 speed range expressed in Miles Per Hour and to recalculate it with different cadence (cadence being how fast you are pedaling) and a different cogset (the rear set of 7 gears) that are commercially available. Some of the members had useful suggestions along the way, and perhaps some interest in APL. The program content was a bit unusual for our group, but I think pretty successful. See http://www.dyalog.com for free software, tutorials, books and other documentation, be sure to look at years of annual symposium presentations available online at http://video.dyalog.com , and http://tryapl.org. ◆

Message Regarding the Current Status of the TPCUG

By John Witmer, President, Tampa PC Users Group
jwitmer@outlook.com

Fellow Members of the Tampa PC Users Group: The June meeting scheduled for June 14th is being cancelled at this time and will not be held. We have at least three Board members who will not be able to attend, including Merle Nicholson, our SIG moderator and one of our main presenters. Doug Mullis will also be out of town, and he has not been able to secure any presentation for June. Additionally I am gone for the rest of the summer and early fall. I also know of several regular attendees who cannot be there in June, so it makes the decision to cancel the June meeting as the only reasonable course of action.

I think this is the first time I can remember that a meeting had to be cancelled entirely. With our dwindling attendance at the monthly meetings, it is time to address the question of how much longer will we continue to be a viable computer club, and what, if any, action needs to be taken to keep the club open for meetings and a source for information to be shared among the members. TPCUG also serves as an opportunity to meet periodically with fellow members sharing the same interests and insights into the world of computing. We have been very fortunate to be able to continue to meet at the Pepin facility long after I retired from there. I do not see that changing in the foreseeable future, so a place to hold meetings is not a consideration in the discussions about our future, unless there is a feeling the Pepin location is not suitable for some reason.

This year we suspended the collection of dues from those members who were paid up and current as of 12/31/16. Our bank balance indicates we do not need to continue collecting dues for the foreseeable future. I think this makes sense, and yet allows us the ability to continue having a newsletter printed and mailed to each of us, and pays for the Holiday Party we have each December.

The factors affecting our TPCUG are no different than those affecting other computer clubs and organizations across the country, including the Florida Association of Computer User Groups, and the APCUG national organization. As Treasurer for the FACUG, I can see firsthand that membership by clubs in the state continues to drop, from over forty clubs 5-6 years ago to less than 20 this year. Some clubs are disbanding or dissolving, and others exist solely within the residential community they draw membership from and are a quasi-social club in addition to being a computer club. Outside speakers and presentations are virtually non-existent, and all clubs have this same problem. With our ever smaller group, we rely on just a couple of members for providing each month's program, and so far, it has worked pretty well for us. But even these presenters grow tired of the monthly obligation to provide a meeting topic and presentation. So, what are our options? Listed below are a few that come to mind, and you may have some of your own to contribute to the discussion. We need to begin having this discussion to determine where we go from here. I have been asked to get the discussion started.

The obvious solution would be to join the many other clubs that have dissolved and no longer exist or meet. It might be the easiest answer; however, I personally would prefer to not go this route if at all possible. I would like us as a group to come up with a workable answer that takes some of the huge burden off of certain members, and gives them a periodic rest from the monthly obligations of a newsletter and program.

My initial thought would be to do like many of the computer clubs in South Florida, and suspend activities over the summer months when members are traveling and returning to other places they have back up north. We could make the months of June thru September as non-meeting months with no newsletter created or provided, and then resume monthly meetings in October until the following May, after which we would again take the summer months off.

Members would be able to reach out to each other during the summer to get questions answered, or problems resolved, but just not in a formal meeting setting. I would think and hope that those technical savvy members who provide assistance would be willing to do so over the course of the summer, and that this would not be an inconvenience for the limited investment of their time and talent. Perhaps website content or a different form of communication could be provided for any member wishing to communicate an event or story they want to share

President....Continued on page 4

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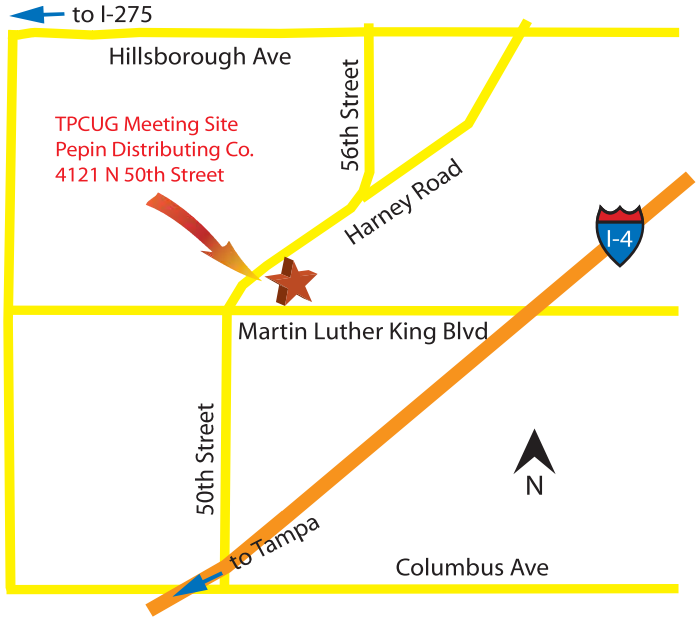
☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

President.....Continued from page 3

with the group or perhaps some other form of staying in contact.

There are other options that can be considered, and I leave it to you, our members and officers, to offer what else you would like to be considered. I hope you will respond to the email sent out to you and all the other members and reply to all, so that your comments and suggestions can be shared within our group, and help foster a dialogue as we move forward on what course of action the group members would like to see.

Sincerely,
John Witmer
President, TPCUG ◆



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Vol. 30 No.7 October 2017

Meeting
No Meeting in October

November Meeting: Wednesday, November 8, 2017 6:30PM
Steven Singer hardware presentation at Pepin
December Meeting: Wednesday, December 13 6:30PM
Annual Dinner for members and guests at Pepin

Meeting Preview:
Steve Singer, a long time TPCUG member will give his annual Hardware Presentation where he shows off the latest computer components and peripherals.

A note about this newsletter. This is an experimental format used for the first time, and a big departure from past years. Please forward any questions, comments and suggestions to any or all board members listed below. As you can see it's intended to be simple.

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Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org)	813-988-6480
Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)	813-234-9343
Secretary: Merle Nicholson (merle@merlenicholson.com)	813-879-3602
Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net)	813-960-4132
Board Member: Dave Palmer (dkp205@hotmail.com)	813-789-0488

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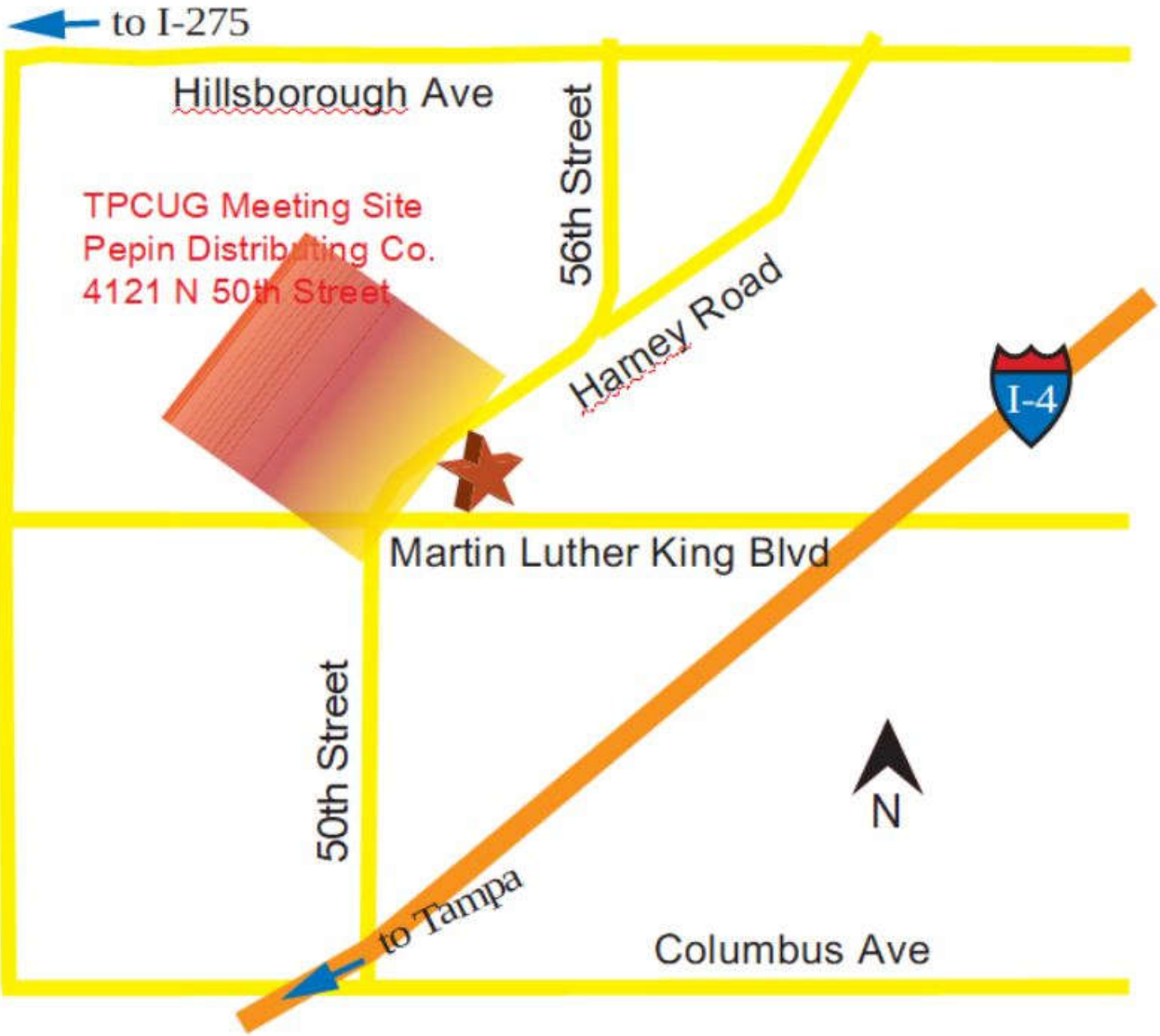
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Vol. 30 No.8 November, 2017

Upcoming Meetings:

November Meeting: Wednesday, November 8, 2017 6:30PM
Merle Nicholson Newest Ubuntu v.17.10
December Meeting: Wednesday, December 13 6:30PM
Annual Dinner for members and guests at Pepin

Meeting Preview:
Windows SIG followed by John Witmer, President TPCUG will bring us up to date on the latest happenings in the club. The presentation will be by Merle Nicholson, Secretary TPCUG, on the latest version of Ubuntu 17.10. There have been a lot of new improvements with this version, making it an excellent, easy to use OS alternative to Windows 10.

A note about this newsletter. This is an experimental format, and a big departure from past years. Please forward any questions, comments and suggestions to any board members listed below. As you can see the newsletter is intended to be simple and easy to produce. Volunteers welcome.

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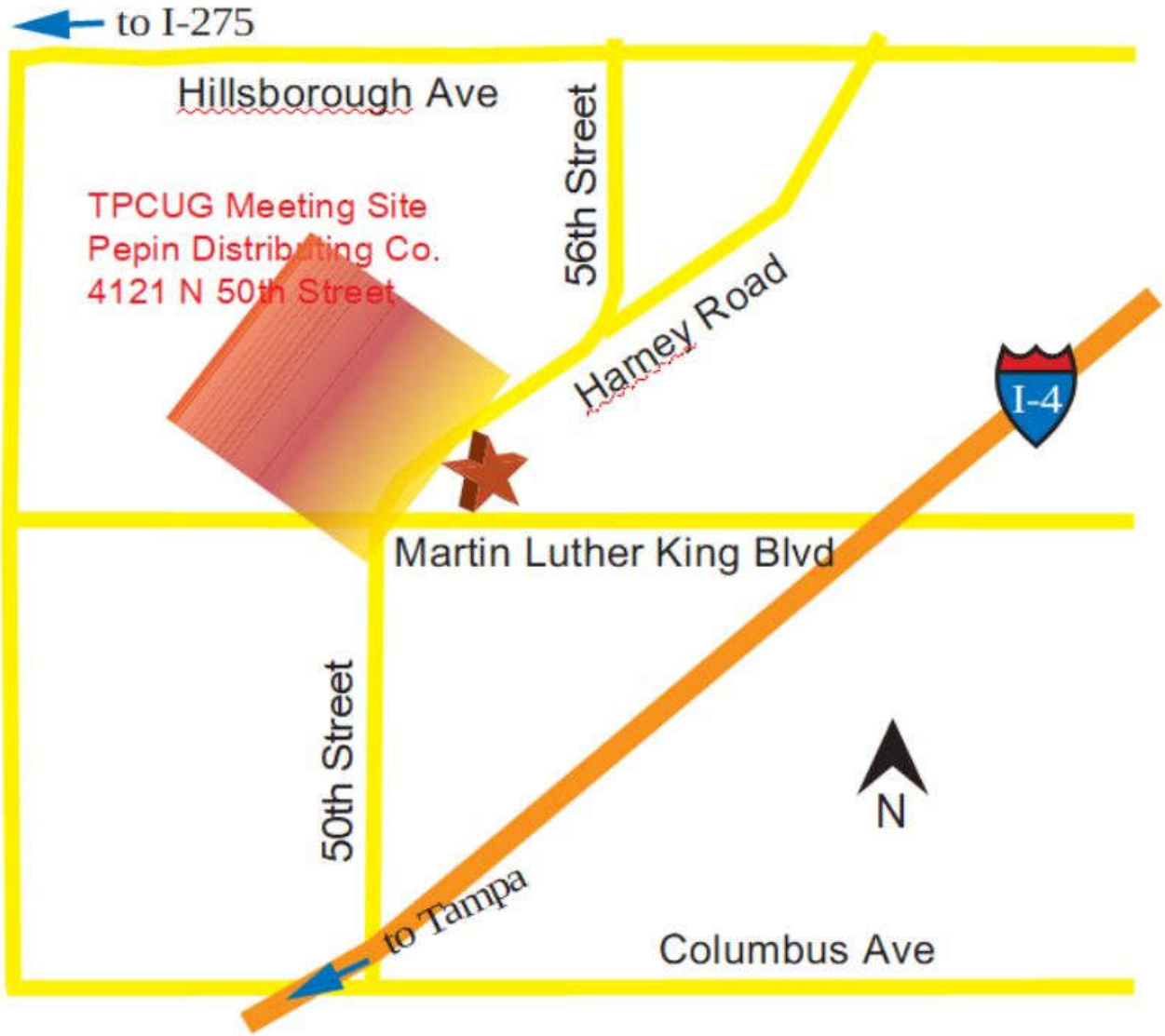
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Vol. 30 No.9 December, 2017

Upcoming Meetings:

December Meeting: Wednesday, December 13 6:30PM
Annual Holiday Party for members and guests at Pepin
January Meeting: Wednesday, January 10 6:30PM
Bob Gostischa from Avast Software
"If it's Connected it Needs to be Protected"

December 13th Annual Holiday Party

The December TPCUG Meeting is this Wednesday, and it will be our Annual Holiday Party for the Group. It starts at 6:30pm at our regular meeting place at Pepin Distributing Co. The menu of items will be similar to past years, including chicken nuggets from Chick-Fil-A, shrimp with cocktail sauce, other hot hor d'oeuvres, cheese and crackers, miscellaneous other snacks items, and chocolate & various other desserts. We will have soft drinks available along with water, but no alcoholic beverages. We hope you are able to attend, and look forward to seeing you at the party. You only need to bring yourself to this event, as our Group treasury provides for all the food and beverage.

January 10th Upcoming Meeting Presentation

We are scheduled to have Bob Gostischa from Avast Software present his new program “If It’s Connected, It Needs to be Protected”. His presentation will cover computers, tablets, phones and the Internet of Things (IoT) devices, and will discuss the current dangers that face us on a daily basis, and how to secure and protect those same devices. It is not often we are able to have outside presentations made to our group, so please plan on attending this informative January meeting and help our group show support and appreciation for Bob making us one of his stops on this winter’s Florida tour of user groups. Mark your calendars or reminder list now for the Jan 10th date of this meeting.

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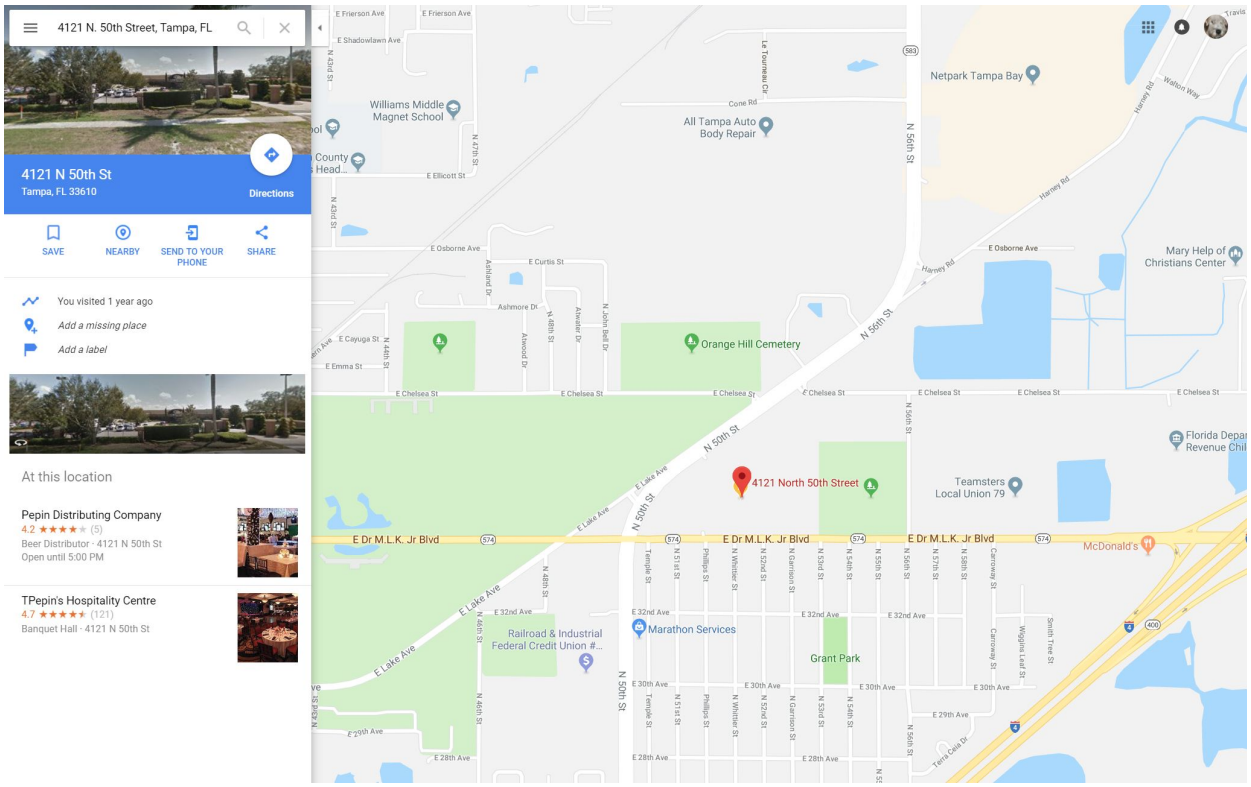
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Vol. 31 No.1 January, 2018

Upcoming Meetings:

January Meeting: Wednesday, January 10 6:30PM
Bob Gostischa from Avast Software
"If it's Connected it Needs to be Protected"

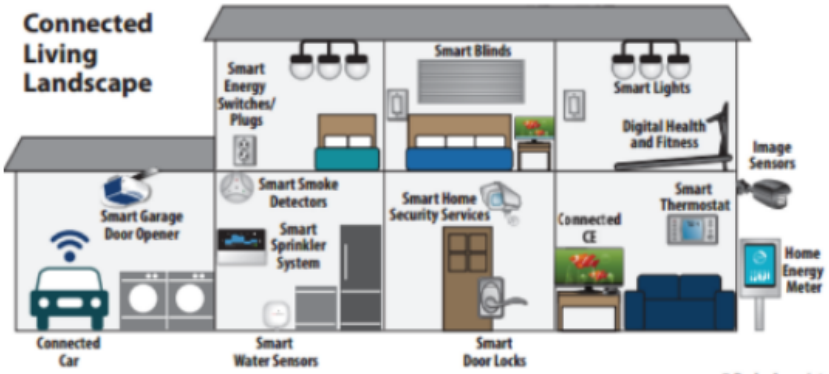
January 10th Upcoming Meeting Presentation

Our Presentation for the Jan 10th meeting at Pepin Distributing Company will be done by Bob Gostischa who represents AVAST security products to the PC groups across the country who are members of APCUG. It is not often we have a presentation available to us from someone outside of our User Group, so I encourage you to make plans to come out this Wednesday to hear Bob's presentation. I would love to see a full house in attendance if you can possibly be there. - John Witmer

Here is some information about Bob and his presentation:

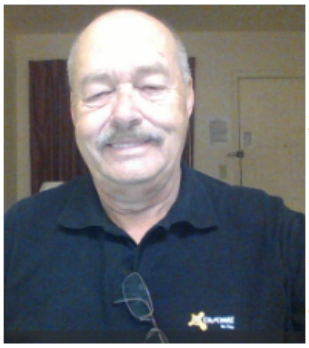
Bob Gostischa's 2018 Presentation

If it's Connected, It needs to be Protected



Updated information on why and how things that connect to the internet need to be secured and protected.
This presentation will cover: Computers (Windows and Mac), Tablets, Phones and the IoT (Internet of Things.

Join presenter Bob Gostischa, as he explains the current dangers that face us on a daily basis. He'll also share what he uses to keep his computers, smart devices and other connected things that are a part of the IoT.



About the Presenter:
Norbert "Bob" Gostischa, after a successful career in banking, enjoys his retirement as an enthusiast IT security expert, most notably for **Avast Software**.
Avast is the creator of avast! antivirus software.
The Avast website has a discussion and help forum, where Bob has been helping with security-related and general computer issues since 2004.
He has contributed over 35,000 forum interactions. Avast Antivirus s.r.o. is currently the most used antivirus software in the world.
Avast has been making security software for over 25 years and has more than 400 million users worldwide.
Although Bob's presentation is not a sales pitch for Avast, mentioning Avast and their Software in your announcements, would still be appreciated since they pay all the bills. **There is no charge to the Club, Usergroup or, Organization for Bob's services.** You can also learn a little more about Bob's presentations and passions in his Blog and YouTube Channel. BobG. is also a proud member of the APCUG Speakers Bureau.

The following is an excerpt from an email from the APCUG that should be of interest to us all. - JW

UPDATE YOUR IPHONE AND MAC NOW: APPLE CONFIRMS VULNERABILITIES- iPhone and Mac owners, you're not escaping unscathed from the flaws affecting the processors inside laptops, PCs and smartphones. Apple confirmed tonight (Jan. 4) that the security issues known as Meltdown and Spectre also affect Mac and iOS devices. Read more at this Tom's Guide article: http://bit.ly/2m0oJVR

HOW WILL THE MELTDOWN AND SPECTRE FLAWS AFFECT MY PC? - What Are Meltdown and Spectre? -Spectre is a "fundamental design flaw" that exists in every CPU on the market—including those from AMD and ARM as well as Intel. There is currently no software fix, and it will likely require a complete hardware redesign for CPUs across the board—though thankfully it is fairly difficult to exploit, according to security researchers. It's possible to protect against specific Spectre attacks, and developers are working on it, but the best solution will be a CPU hardware redesign for all future chip Read more of this How-To Geek article at: http://bit.ly/2qshuf6

Other info.....

CALIFORNIA HEALTH OFFICIALS RELEASE GUIDELINES ON CELLPHONE RADIATION – Even though this is specific to California, I thought you might be interested in the information from the Department of Health. California health officials have a new safety message for cellphone users. CBS San Francisco reports that for the first time ever, the California Department of Public Health is releasing guidelines about cellphone radiation and how you can reduce your exposure. Read about the guidelines at: http://cbsn.ws/2lAMhAr

LOCK DOWN YOUR TECH IN 2018 WITH THESE RESOLUTIONS - If you're a human person who occasionally engages in commerce, hackers are probably targeting you. This year, resolve to do something about it. You know you need to take better care of your personal information, but you keep putting it off. It's understandable, but this is the year you take your security into your own hands. Here are seven resolutions you can make to lock down your data in 2018. Like going to the gym regularly, it might be annoying to get started, but you'll be better off once you build better habits. Read more of this How-To Geek article at: http://bit.ly/2qeyB3T

APCUG's VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE is on February 10. Sessions to date are:

2 Factor Authentication (2FA), Ron Brown, Silvercom Computer and Technology Club

From wildfires in California to hurricanes in Texas and Florida, Toby Scott's presentation will cover how to protect your important tech stuff in the event of a natural disaster. He's the tech guru for the Channel Islands PCUG

Google Apps at Home and on the Go, Phil Sorrentino, The Computer Club

Hate on the Internet, Rick Eaton, Senior Researcher, Simon Weisenthal Center

Becoming Your Own Computer Expert, Phil Bock, Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

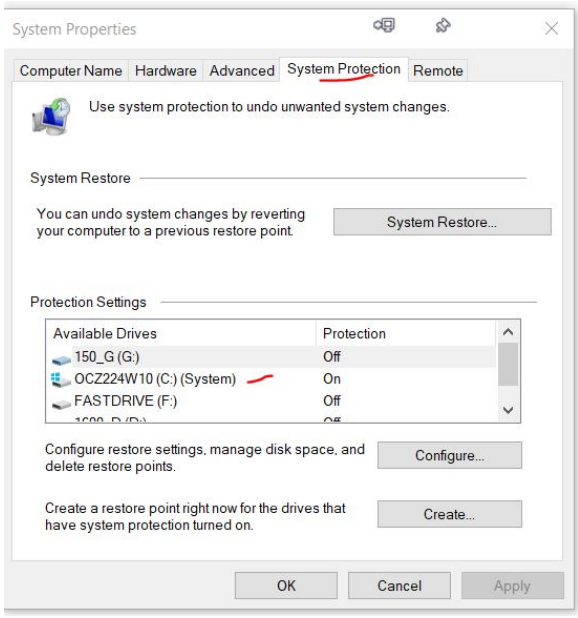
Windows 10 recovery (from disaster).

by Merle Nicholson, Secretary TPCUG

In case you've missed this along the way, every Windows 10 computer needs a recovery USB drive in case of a software failure. This allows you to start the repair process when something goes bad. Believe me, eventually something will go bad, and when it does, you'll be prepared.

The process of recovery has been steadily improving with each new major update, and it's within most users ability to do this successfully, provided you have set things up right. So do this while you can – the preparation obviously needs to be done *before* the disaster – right now.

First a setting needs to be made – or at least checked to make sure it's been done. In Search, type "create a restore point", and select "Create a restore point". That should get you to the System Protection settings.



Notice that the (System) drive (C:) is On, others are off. If you have found that the system drive was off, there are no system restore points. Enable it, then create a new restore point right now. On the Configure page, you can control the amount of storage allocated for this function. Mine is about 2.5G.

After doing two major OS upgrades, I have found that the Microsoft update had set protection Off, much to my annoyance, so it's best to check on it.

The restore point is used for the recovery process. If a software update or failure (virus, malware) happens, you can revert back to a time when it was working well. Most major updates automatically do a new restore point prior to installing, and of course you can initiate it yourself. I usually do this just before installing any major software.

Now for the recovery process. You need to make the bootable recovery drive USB. You boot from the drive in case Windows is broken and cannot start. It needs to be at least 8GB. Put a label on it and save it somewhere obvious, like taped to the PC or hanging from a cord attached to the ceiling.

To create the drive, find “Create a recovery drive” in Search. Be sure to check “Back up system files to the recovery drive”. It will tell you to insert a USB drive.

I've had to rescue a user twice now because Windows would not boot. Fortunately, I had been asked to set up his computer when it was new and I had turned System Protection on then. There is much less risk to personal files if a restore point is available. That's it. You can save yourself a couple hundred bucks when your system goes bad and won't start on it's own because you can maybe fix it yourself.

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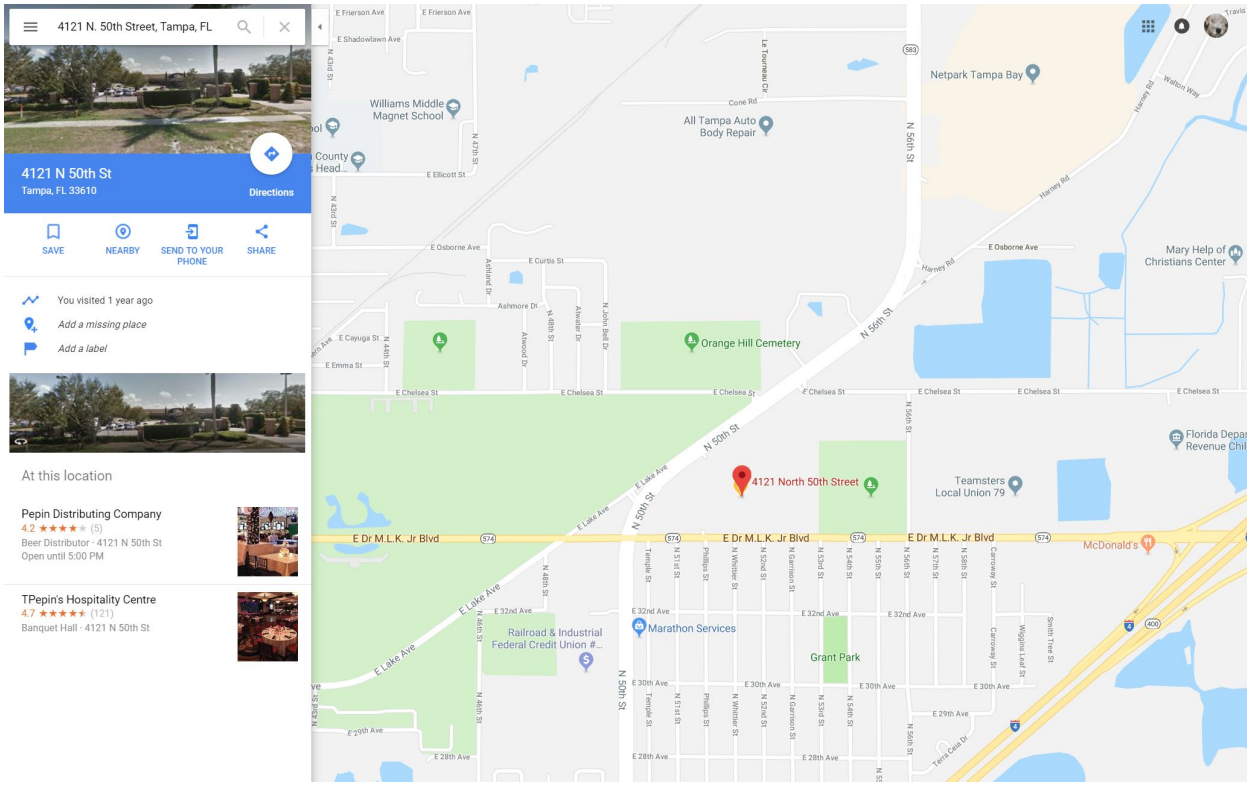
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Vol. 31 No.2 February, 2018

Upcoming Meetings:

February Meeting: Wednesday, February 14 6:30PM
Merle Nicholson – Google Chromecast demonstration
"Display media content on another screen"

February 14th Upcoming Meeting Presentation

After the Windows SIG and short business, Merle will connect a Chromecast device and display content from an Android device and Windows 10 to the screen wirelessly. This is a very inexpensive way to get content such as Netflix, YouTube, HBO, Hulu, ESPN, internet browser and more to a large screen, TV or anything with an HDMI input.

Before the meeting, you can preview the Chromecast device capability at:

https://store.google.com/product/chromecast_2015 and
https://store.google.com/product/chromecast_ultra

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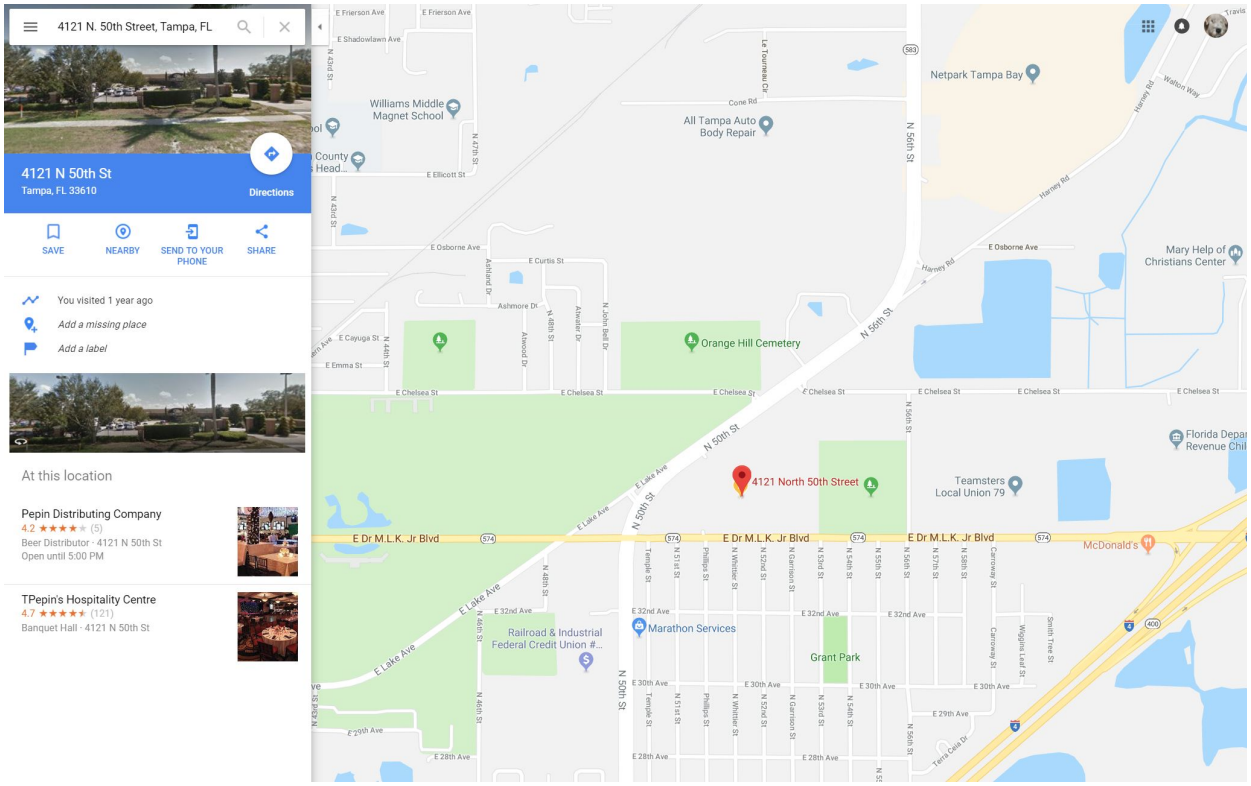
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Vol. 31 No.3 March, 2018

Upcoming Meetings:

March Meeting: Wednesday, March 14 6:30PM
Windows SIG, Windows 10 Q&A
"New Smartphone tech"

March 14th Upcoming Meeting Presentation

Windows SIG, Windows 10 Q&A, "Interesting new Smartphone tech".

In this issue:

Page 2 - An easier way to find Netflix Movies, by Ron Weinberg, TPCUG member at large.

Page 3 - 2017 Financial Report – Doug Mullis, TPCUG Treasurer

An Easier Way to Find Netflix Movies

By Ron Weinberg, TPCUG

The vastly popular and almost universally used streaming service stocks a myriad of movies, numbering in the thousands. The Netflix program itself offers a search tool and displays choices somewhat tailored to your previous viewing.

If you know the name of the Movie or Performer you wish to see, the built is search is adequate.

However, if you have trouble deciding or the choices offered don't seem to fit the bill there are some other excellent tools to help. Most require you to already be a Netflix Member in order to

Immediately transfer your selection to Netflix.

Netflix Streaming by Alternate Genres (Extended List) is a list of all categories from Action and Adventure to TV shows. It includes everything: Children's, Action, Sports, Drama, Romance, Multiple Foreign, Documentaries, Thrillers, Horror, Independent Films, Musicals, Sci-Fi. Comedies, etc. It runs on line in your Browser. Simply clicking on a line item brings you directly into Netflix and displays a selection of films to watch on your PC or to allow you to add to your queue (List) for future viewing on PC or TV. This is the link to it.

http://ogres-crypt.com/public/NetFlix-Streaming-Genres2.html

There are quite a few other index/search programs available, some more sophisticated, allowing particularly tailored searches to satisfy your requirements. Here are some which you can review if you need more than the Streaming Genres of Netflix.

Lifechecker's Flix Plus Extension for Chrome (Customizes the Netflix Interface.)
http://instantwatcher.com/ (For both Netflix and Amazon)
http://fixable.com/
http://flicksurfer.com/

If you stream from other sources such as Amazon, hulu, VUDU, Crackle, epix, HBO, STARZ, Acorn, etc., try search programs that include many or all available streaming apps, including Netflix.

Some provide access to foreign or worldwide content.
Here are a few examples:
http://justwatch.com/
http://canistream.it/
http://allflicks.net (a gateway to reelgood.com)

Remember that these are only search/index aids and do not avoid the need for any required paid memberships.

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR 2017

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2017 INCOME		
Memberships (2 single 1 Family)	$	85.00
Amazon & Misc.		243.34
TOTAL INCOME	$	328.34
2017 EXPENSES		
Newsletter Postage	$	94.00
Newsletter Printing		194.95
FACUG Dues		25.00
APCUG Dues		50.00
Florida Incorporation Fee (Reinstatement)		61.25
Web Site Hosting Fee (12 months)		226.44
P O Box Rental		0.00
Dec Holiday Party Costs		231.04
Website Domain Fee (Not due until 2018)		0.00
Refunded Dues		60.00
Miscellaneous		0.00
PayPal Fees		1.92
TOTAL EXPENSES	$	944.60
NET (Income-Expenses) 2017	$	(616.26)

BANK BALANCE – January 1, 2017	$6,942.91
BANK BALANCE – December 31, 2017	$6,326.65

Submitted by D.W. Mullis, Treasurer, TPCUG

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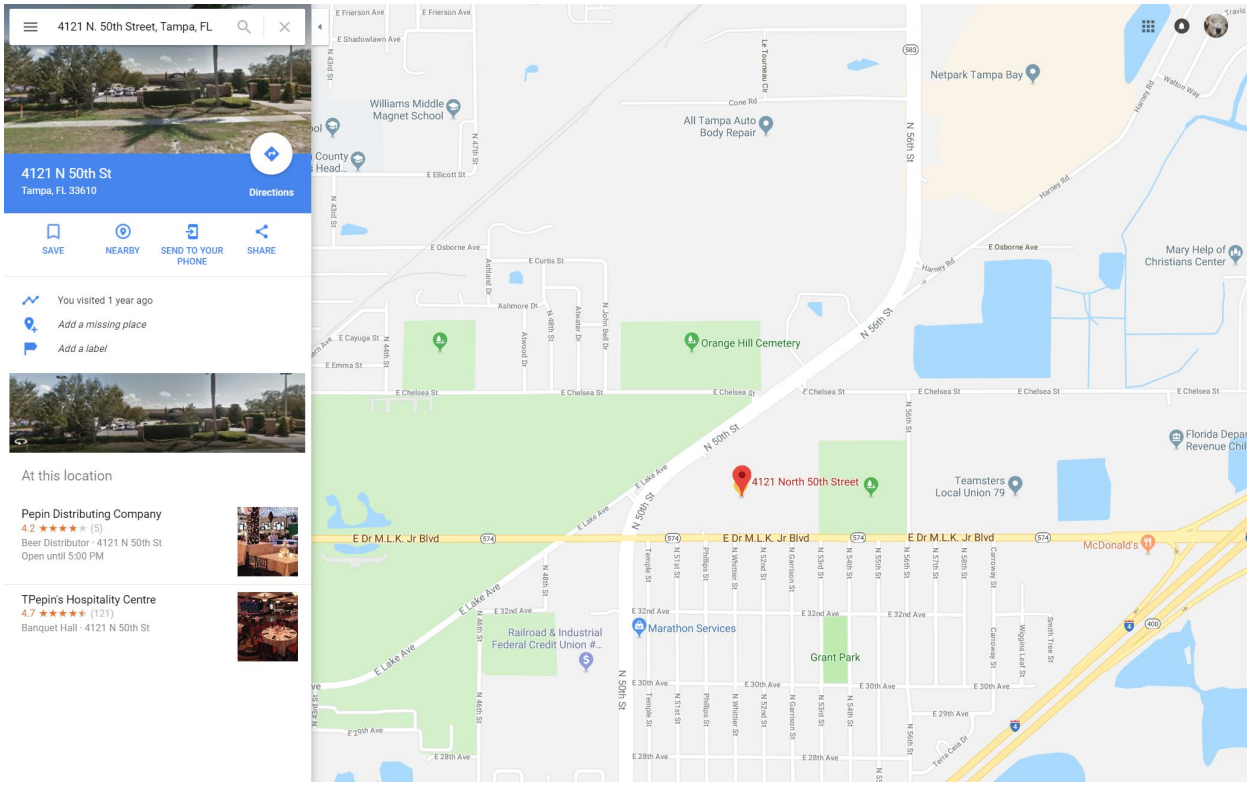
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Vol. 31 No.4 April, 2018

Upcoming Meetings:

April Meeting: Wednesday, April 11 6:30PM
Windows SIG, Windows 10 Q&A
"18650" – Merle Nicholson

April 11th Upcoming Meeting Presentation

6:30 PM Windows SIG, Windows 10 Q&A
7:00-8:00 PM "18650" – Merle Nicholson

May Meeting: Wednesday, May 9 6:30 PM
6:30-7:00 PM Windows SIG – Dave Palmer
7:00 PM Presentation by Dave Palmer

"Tech in the News - The Good, the Bad & the Ugly"
"Privacy, Tracking, Crime, Facial Recognition, Etc."
by Dave Palmer

In this issue:

Pages 2, 3 – COAX A WEAK LINK? by Ron Weinberg, TPCUG member at large.

COAX A WEAK LINK?

Prepare Now! You may not be as safe as you think!
By Ron Weinberg, TPCUG, March 2018

We all know about Tampa's notorious May to October Lightning season, (not to be confused with our Hockey team) which has been known to last over 80 days. Electronic equipment is dependent on the smooth and regulated flow of electricity. Uncontrolled variations from whatever cause can inflict serious damage. Nothing can protect you from the power of a direct lightning strike. The best protection you can take is to unplug everything which is totally impractical.

For many years my equipment (power plugs) have been protected by high quality surge protectors from Tripp Lite and APC which had high joule ratings. I thought I was safe.

Last June, an expensive High Definition television set suddenly failed for no apparent reason. At the time of the TV failure there was no discernable lightning. House lights did not drop or even flicker and no other TV, electrical device, or equipment seemed to experience any difficulty.

The HDMI port and the circuit board of the TV was damaged beyond repair. The TV repair technician said the fault was caused by Brighthouse equipment and that they would compensate me, which I doubted. A claim was filed with Spectrum-Brighthouse. An inspector came and made a report but was not optimistic. I replaced the TV at my expense. While trying to set up the new TV it was determined that the set top box and my HDMI connected ROKU Box also had failed, and had to be replaced. Not surprisingly, Spectrum declined my claim for responsibility.

It is possible that the Roku failed as it was connected to the damaged circuit board of the TV.

The likely path of the destruction was ISP's COAX to set top box and HDMI from box to TV. The problem may have been caused by an electrical issue on the COAX or the failure of the set top box, which itself could have been caused by the COAX line.

What can be said for certain is that some surge or power variation entered my system. Damage was limited to the one area. Since all wiring is vulnerable, the least protected closest to the damage was the COAX.

COAX (Coaxial Cable)

Coaxial cable is a type of electrical cable that has an inner conductor surrounded by a tubular insulating layer, surrounded by a tubular conducting shield.

COAX is omnipresent, a basic part of every installation. You are connected by COAX cable at your ISP's input to the structure and by COAX to Modem or Router and set top boxes. A Satellite Dish also enters through a COAX cable. Antennas too, generally have adapters to connect to the COAX port.

Modern television sets receive input through COAX via set top box to HDMI or to an out COAX cable.

Even old component video or RCA type stereo/composite cables, if still used, can originate from your set top box. In some cases, where there is no set top box, COAX cable is directly connected to the TV.

The ISP reportedly protects the COAX by grounding but is that sufficient? Some surges can even bypass ISP equipment and directly affect electronics. Any type of wire or cable in the home or office,

including COAX is susceptible.

I am not an Electrical Engineer. Research indicates this subject is controversial, pro and con. Some articles say that it is not necessary to further protect COAX beyond the ISP's grounding or even not to. When protectors are used some signal degradation can result but if the signal is strong would be minor. This should not be an issue with better quality protectors. Were it not that we are in such a lightning prone area and that I have already sustained a loss I would tend to heed that advice, but we are. Brighthouse does not encourage or discourage use but rather indicates specific specs required for the device. The fact remains that we are in an extremely vulnerable area.

Expensive stereo equipment and Televisions are better protected when COAX is monitored. This extra protection, a belt and suspenders approach, is readily available at a reasonable cost. I am in the process of replacing the surge protector at each television, closest to the endangered device rather than at the incoming modem router, with a more adequate model containing coaxial protection.

There are many choices of protective devices with various numbers of ports, most available from Amazon. Here are just two examples: Tripp Lite Isobar 10 HT10DBS and APC 11 PV11VNT3. Both include Equipment Protection Insurance which pays if they fail to protect and you sustain a loss. If specific specifications are required check before purchase. Bear in mind that you must pay more for quality and reliability. Very low priced items from lesser known manufacturers may not do the job.





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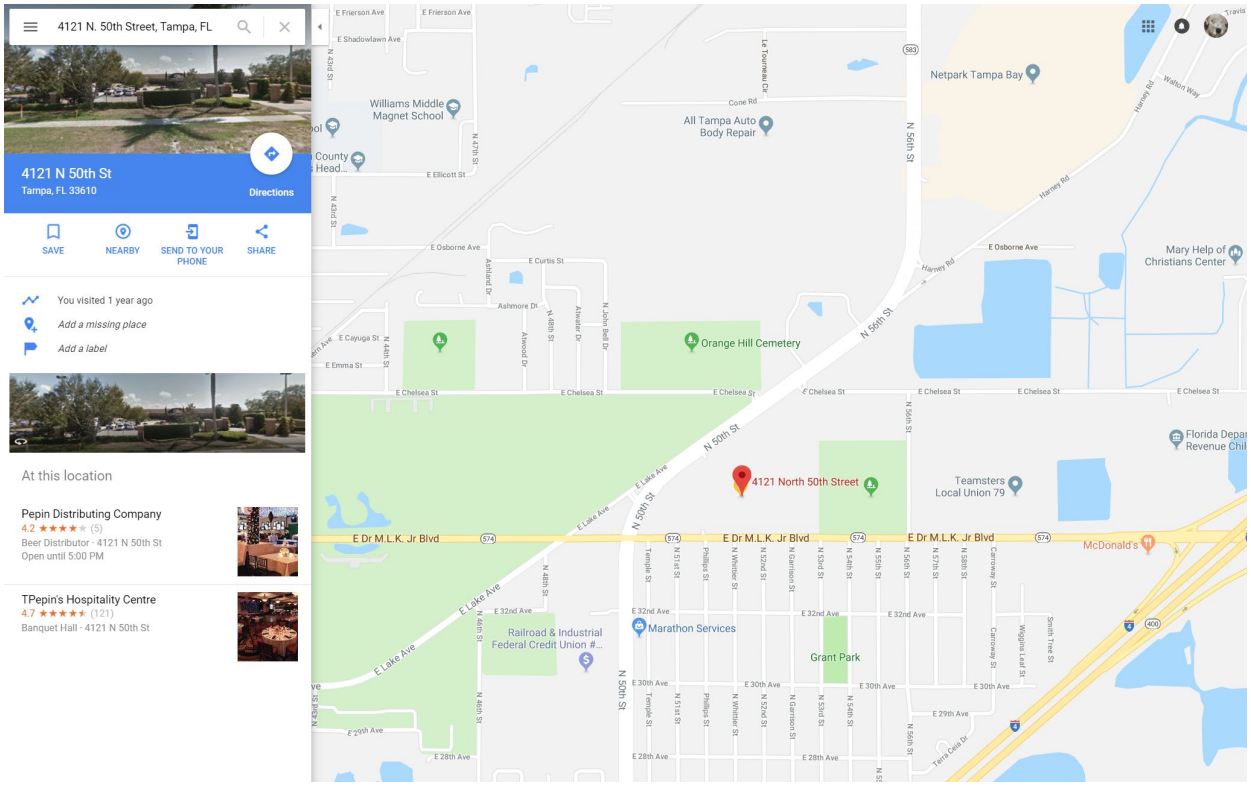
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Bits of Blue

Vol. 31 No.5 May, 2018

Upcoming Meetings – The May date has changed:

NEW DATE!! - May Meeting: Wednesday, May 2 6:30 PM
6:30-7:00 PM Windows SIG – Merle Nicholson
7:00 PM Presentation by Dave Palmer

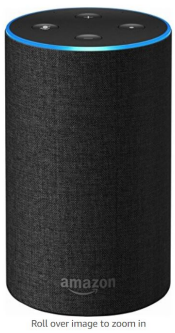
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by Dave Palmer

ON VACATION – June, July and August meetings - ON VACATION, resume in September

In this issue:

Pg 2-4 Amazon Echo and Google Home Mini by Merle Nicholson

Pg 5-7 FREE 2018 SPRING VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE (VTC)





Amazon Echo & Google Home Mini
By Merle Nicholson, secretary TPCUG

Four days ago we received a Google Home Mini and have it installed just about three feet from our Amazon Echo. We're using both Mini and Echo even though they do largely do the same things. There are definite differences though and as we're learning each strengths and weaknesses, we're currently planning to leave them where they are and use them both. We'll see.

In case you're living in an off-the-grid cabin in Montana, both devices are voice-command connections to the internet and have a lot of built-in functions that serve as a personal assistant and access to vast amounts of information. You interact with them by voice, but they require an Android or IOS application for setup, and you can further interact through that app on your phone or tablet, even remotely. Everything you do on either the device or on the phone is recording a history that is a part of the app. Both products' capabilities are evolving and since the firmware is updated remotely, we are expecting them to last a long time.

We have plenty of experience with the Echo. Ours is three years old this month. We pre-ordered it in January, 2015 and it was delivered in May. It is used every day. It's located in our media area above the TV on a shelf. If you look it up on Amazon, there's a later - second generation version now at $100. By the time it was delivered to us the price was $200, and we got a pre-order discount at $105. This model is tall and has an excellent speaker system worthy of listening to good music.

For the Google Home device, we opted for the mini at $50. It's hockey puck size, attractive and unobtrusive. The speaker is very good for voice and is pretty much worthless for music. There are three models; Mini at $50, Home for $130 and Max for $400. They are available in a variety of stores or directly from Google - everywhere but Amazon.

Both products have an app for Android and IOS. My experience is completely about Android. I'm assuming IOS functions are identical, but I have zero experience with that. The Amazon Alexa app is specifically for Amazon, and there are required setups and for interconnecting devices that must be done within the app. Then the Alexa app can also be used just as if you're interacting with the Echo device either by voice or keyboard.

The Google Home app is more tightly integrated within an android phone or tablet. That's because the Home device and Google Assistant are one and the same. When you speak to the Home device, you're interacting with Google Assistant and obviously, Google Search because Google has integrated the two for Android 6 and up. The Google Assistant integration is what triggered our purchase of the mini, along with the realization that it can control our Chromecast device on the TV as well. More about Chromecast further on. Our interest really peaked when Google Assistant recently became the search engine for Android Auto.

Music
We almost never play music even though the Echo has plenty available. Being an Amazon product, my Amazon personal music library includes all the music CD's I've ever bought from them going back many years, and of course they're all my personal choices. This is in addition to the huge Amazon Prime library. It's interesting to be able to choose music by voice command, but after the initial amazement, it's just too tedious. A better choice is to set up Amazon Music on a tablet, and command the Amazon Alexa app from there. Echo knows all about Amazon Prime Music Playlists. Now I would never have a playlist otherwise since I play albums, not songs. So to abbreviate the process of identifying an album, I can create a playlist that contains just one album. This works because I can just say "Alexa, playlist Rare Bird" and get a specific Steve Martin album, instead of some random

accidental pick. But it's just too tedious, and there's no way to track fifty playlist names. And by the way you would NEVER ask for anything random, because you'll probably get some loud four-letter rap song. That happened once to me in the car and I could have had an accident in scrambling to turn it off.

Google has "Google Play Music" and "Google Movies and TV", "YouTube", "YouTube Music" and "Youtube TV", all of which you can direct to a Chromecast device. I don't use any of these services except YouTube, which I use a lot on either my tablet or notebook. When on the tablet, I can direct any content to the TV using the Chromecast. Experimentally after discovering the Home Mini speaker is unsuitable for music, I directed a 70's song Valerie wanted to the Chromecast using voice command on the Home Mini. It was simple to do, and doing so turned on the TV and started playing through the stereo system speakers attached to the TV speaker output. By default, apparently it uses "Google Play Music" which we do not subscribe to, but nevertheless has an extensive library of free music.

Devices
We control our house thermostat a couple of times a day especially when we're baking in the kitchen - we lower it a couple of degrees then set it back to normal when we're away from the oven. The Echo is within voice range of the open kitchen downstairs. The house thermostat is on the second floor saving a trip up and down, although we do have specific Android apps for the thermostat, but this is really easy and fast. We have daytime and nighttime temperatures, and since we are night owls setting by voice is better for us than setting rigid schedules.

Our security system can be queried, armed and disarmed through Echo voice command, but although we test it, it's never been used. A more useful feature is querying the status of the garage door. It's a detached garage and we're very cautious about leaving it open accidently. The door could be opened and closed by Echo voice, passing the command onto the security system. It works, it's never been used, but comforting because of its remote capability. I'm sure that we could also send a voice panic command to the alarm company. That would be useful. I just thought of it.

Last, we have one controlled outlet (so far). I found one at Amazon for $13 that needs no hub for controlling by both Echo and Home. It works really well, it's fast, and we're delighted with it. Looking at these devices, many are in the $40-$50 range and need some kind of controller hub. I gave it a name "Living room light" and we can say "Alexa .. living room light off" or "OK Google living room light off"

On the Home Mini ,we have connected just the outlet. I did that just for the experience to see how difficult it is (about 1 minute). It isn't set up for security or thermostat, and there's no reason to.

Day to Day use
We use both Echo and Mini many times a day. Since we bake (mill flour, bake bread, cake, pies, scones) , cook and Green Egg Grill, we get a lot of use out of timers. "OK Google set timer for five and a half minutes" or "Alexa set timer for one hour", "Alexa time remaining?", "Alexa cancel timer", "Alexa Stop". They handle multiple timers - I don't know how many. This is an excellent, capable way to set cooking timers. We have abandoned use of our kitchen timers.

Weather reports - "Alexa .. is there rain nearby?", "Alexa what is tomorrow's forecast for Seattle?", "Alexa, seven day forecast", "Alexa is there rain today?"

Much other stuff. Just today - "How old was Chief Dan George?" (119 years this July), "When was Little Big Man made?", "what time is it in Barcelona?" - (Tennis match). "Hours difference in Barcelona?", "How many days since February second 2018?" (answer 83 days to mark in the log for changing the water filter).

We do lots of conversions like “convert 23.4 degrees centigrade”.
“Distance Paducah, Kentucky to Kansas City” (ans - 419.8 miles, 6 hours and 23 minutes via I-70 . . trip planning .. remember paper maps?)

Differences Echo vs Home
We have had the Home Mini just for a few days, but a few things stood out from the beginning. The Mini is way faster. When you want to say something to Echo, you say “Alexa” .. hesitate .. look at the blue listening light and the listening sound then say what you want. It’s fairly fast, but you can’t just command it. You have to use the “wake” command, then say what you want. With Home Mini, you just say “OK Google living room light on”. It gives the impression that it’s always listening. I can see that it may put you off, but it’s doing it the only way it can to accomplish the task really quickly.

We’re both convinced that the response in looking things up on the internet is much more powerful on Home. It has really impressed us several times with its responsive speed. Valerie asked for some sports score the other day kind of vaguely and Home had a surprising fast answer. She immediately asked the same of Alexa, and got a “Sorry I don’t know the answer to that one.” Sports scores aren’t something we’re interested in, except rarely for major tennis tournaments. The Echo has never satisfied us in any case, but today the Home came up with a detail score at the Barcelona match quite by accident when we were trying to find the home country of a player. (Tunisia). We have the impression that Echo knows American football scores really well though.

Valerie and I set up our Android Google Home apps on our respective phones and linked them to the Home Mini. The app wants to do a voice recognition process and link it to our respective Google mail accounts, which also links to Google Calendar and Contacts. It’s easy to set up, just do what it says. Then I ask “OK Google who am I?” it says “You are Merle”, and for Valerie it says “You are Valerie”. So if I ask for my next calendar appointment it recognises my voice and uses the appropriate calendar.

I’m assuming I can send SMS and email by voice command and for the two of us use the correct address book and sending email account. I’ll try that.

The Echo does have multiple accounts. I had to research for the instructions to set them up, and it did not seem trivial to me, and as far as I know you have to name the account to switch it to. I saw no indication that it recognizes the voice to decide who you are. We would leave it on my account in any case because we use Echo for information on shipments from Amazon which it does really well. Valerie and I use one Amazon account (mine).

You can make internet telephone calls from either device. I have not done that yet, but I’m especially intrigued by the Google setting where you set the caller ID that you want to appear on the callee’s screen. It defaults I think to the number on the phone you set it up on. The Echo will make Echo to Echo calls, if that is of interest. Google has always had “Google Voice” available as an Internet-caller-to-POTS bridge, and I noticed when I looked at it that it knows my one Google Voice telephone number and offered that number to use for Home device internet calls. In my case it’s attached to a FAX machine so perhaps it’s not suitable.

Being an android user I’m delighted to have the same Google Assistant on my phone, car and living room voice commands.

We are very happy to have these in our home. They’re unbelievably useful. At only $50 I’m looking at someday getting enough use to have one in every major room in the house. It could happen if it keeps evolving at the current pace.



FREE 2018 SPRING VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE (VTC)
SATURDAY, MAY 5
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm ET / 12:00 – 3:00 CT
11:00 – 2:00 MT / 10:00 – 1:00 PT

Thank you for forwarding this message to your members.

Attend APCUG's May 5, 2018 Virtual Technology Conference (VTC) from your own home, invite some of your members to join you, or have a Technology Tailgate Party with your club members!

You only need to register once; you do not need an Eventbrite account to attend the conference. Before the VTC, you will receive an email with directions and links for attending both conference tracks.

You can attend using your computer or tablet with Zoom software. The sessions are 50 minutes in length and offer attendees the opportunity to ask questions via a chat window.

Make sure you have the latest version of Zoom for your device. "Zoom Client for Meetings - The web browser client will download automatically when you start or join your first Zoom meeting and is also available for manual download here."

https://zoom.us/download

When you attend the conference, please sign in with the user name and e-mail address you used to register for the VTC.

Register at Eventbrite

For detailed information about the presentations, including the presenters' bios click here.

If you would like further information or have questions, please send an email to virtualconferences@apcug.org

TRACK 1

1:00 PM ET

AI Assistants / Smart Homes
Joe Melfi, Mobile Road Warrior and Die-Hard Tech Enthusiast

Description TBD

2:00 PM ET

What's new in the Spring Windows 10 update
Jere Minich, Program Chair, Lake-Sumter Computer Society

Microsoft is readying the release of its semi-annual update to Windows 10. The upcoming update is expected to be called Spring Creators Update - Windows 10, version 1803. There are several new and useful features coming your way with Spring Creators Update. Here are the headlines, they will all be covered:

- **Timeline**
- **Nearby sharing**
- **Focus assist**
- **Password recovery for local accounts**
- **Choose your GPU (graphics processing)**
- **Windows Diagnostic Data Viewer**
- **Mute tabs in Edge**
- **Swift Pair**
- **Better privacy**
- **A better Microsoft Store**

3:00 PM ET

Teaching Computer Skills to Seniors
Ray Baxter, Payson Computer Meet-Up Club, APCUG Treasurer

As we know, Seniors are special; some are up-to-date with technology and some are still learning about it. Ray's presentation will give us tips on how to open the world of technology to seniors as well as enhance the skills of others.

TRACK 2

1:00 PM ET

Synchronizing Your PC, a Guide to…..
Bill James, VP, Computer Club of Oklahoma City; APCUG Advisor, Region 8

There are numerous ways to sync desktops, laptops, tablets and phones.
From the complex to relatively simple solutions, this presentation will cover sharing over a

network, local file sync programs, LANs, Cloud services and more.

2:00 PM ET

What's new with Ubuntu?
Orv Beach, Training Chair, Southern California Linux expo – SCALE

Named "Bionic Beaver," it is a Long-Term Support release with 5 years of support for both the desktop and server version. What's new?

- **Minimal install option**
- **Faster boot speed**
- **Easier live patching**
- **New Linux Kernel**
- **GNOME desktop environment**
- **New default apps**
- **New way to install apps**

3:00 PM ET

Write and Publish Your eBook on Amazon Kindle… for Free
Bill Neves, Member, Silvercom Computer and Technology Club

In this session you'll learn how to easily and quickly do the following:
- **Research your book**
- **Write your book**
- **Name your book**
- **Format your book**
- **Set up your Amazon Kindle account**
- **Upload your book**
- **Offer your book for sale, or free**
- **Rinse and Repeat**

Virtual Technology Committee
Judy Taylour, Chair

Francis Chao
John Kennedy
Jere Minich
David Williams

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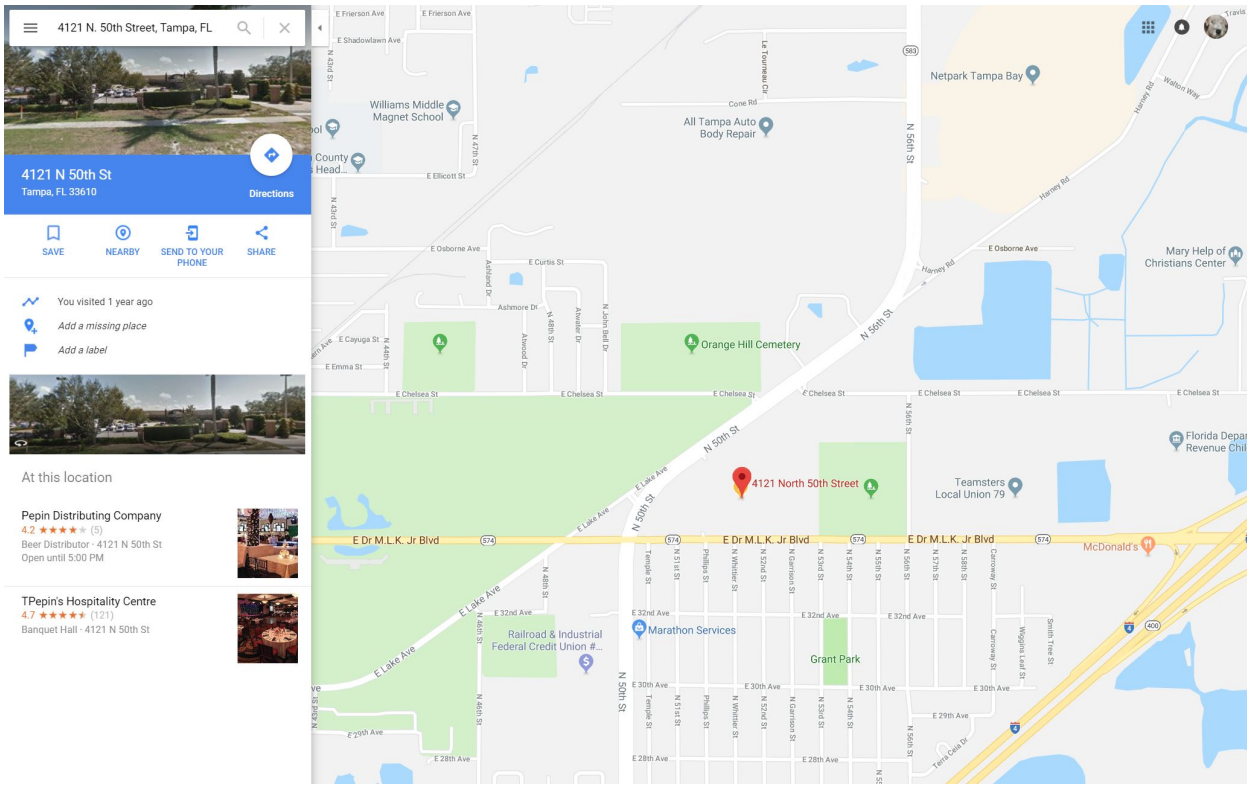
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Vol. 31 No.6 June, 2018

ON VACATION – June, July and August meetings, resume in September

Reminder – No meetings until September

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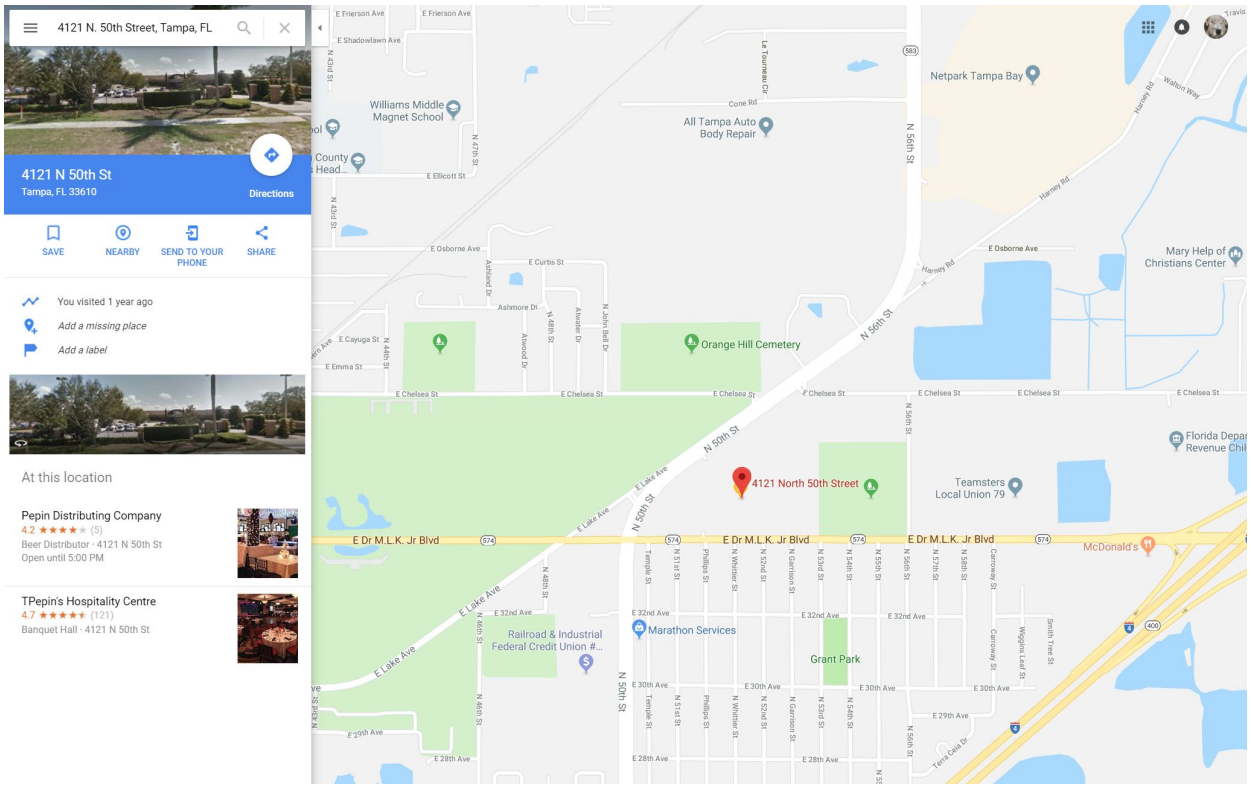
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Vol. 31 No.9 September, 2018

September 12, 2018, 6:30PM meeting at Pepin

Upcoming meeting presentation

Dave Palmer, TPCUG member

'How the Russians Hacked the 2016 Election'

The presentation will include discussion of the techniques & tools the Russians used to plan, research, gain & maintain access, and cover their tracks. Also included are techniques you can use to stay safe from the bad guys, whether state-sponsored, or cybercriminals. The presentation is based on the 2018 Mueller indictment.

Dangerous invasive species

by Merle Nicholson, secretary TPCUG

I'll admit, this is far from a technology issue, I hope for forgiveness but I'm in the middle of a cane toad crisis and I'm constantly surprised that it isn't well known. I've shown my neighbors one and they always say "oh - a Frog".

We – my spouse and I - have killed several cane toads in our back yard recently – yes you got that right, killed. They are an invasive species not native to the US. The Tampa area used to be at the northern edge of their range, but I'm sure that's creeping northward with global warming, and we're certainly seeing an increasing number at our home. This happens yearly during our summer rains.

Cane toads were introduced to the south florida sugar cane fields to control insects and is one of those great ideas gone wrong. They're dangerous because they exude a toxin that's deadly to other animals. If a dog or cat gets his mouth on one, the dog has about 15 minutes to live suffering a horrible, painful death usually of a heart attack. A bite on the toad isn't necessary, the toxin invades through the mucus membranes in the mouth and eyes.

The size of the toad – another name is "Giant Bufo" - doesn't matter. They are just as poisionous when tadpoles. They are laid as eggs – about 25,000 in one clutch, and I guess fortunately, are cannibals so they feed on each other and only a few survive. But given time and a food supply they can grow quite large – 6 to 9 inches. The ones we have been seeing are about five inches long, but I'm assuming these are fairly young.

The prescribed method of humainly killing them is to put them in a zip-lock bag and freeze them for a couple of days. The State of Florida says that they are to be killed when found. They are easily identified – cannot be mistaken for a friendly frog. They are mottled brownish and are extermely well hidden in soil or vegetation or mulch until they feed just after dark. We have found just a couple in daylight, but usually find them from their motion from a flashlight. They are relatively easy to catch, but if they detect pursuit they'll move faster than you could pursue. We use a frog gig on a 5' pole. We keep a "toad kit" at our back door consisting of the frog gig, gallon ziplock bag and plastic disposable gloves.

The State of Florida website states that if you have what looks like a toad that is 4 inches in length, it's definitely a toad. Their legs are shorter in proportion to their bodies than a frog, and if you're interested, the Wikipedia site has a recording of their sound. They're quite noisy after a rain, and the sound is distinctive.

Our main concern is our dog. For many years we cannot turn the dog out for his final poop, we have to walk him on a leash in our own back yard, scanning with a flashlight, and it's that walk that we invariably find a toad, sometimes a close call.

They are capable of limited climbing a tree, maybe a couple of feet to escape but I don't think that's a regular activity.

There are pictures available on the internet, just Google "cane toad". I have taken some pictures myself, but not suitable for publication here. We found a dead toad just two days ago laying on our potting bench top outside. We cannot imagine in any way how it got there except perhaps from a screech owl dropping it there.

There are huge areas of Australia that have been invaded and there are some interesting YouTube videos where people are attempting to deal with them including grinding them up to manufacture fertilizer.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cane_toad



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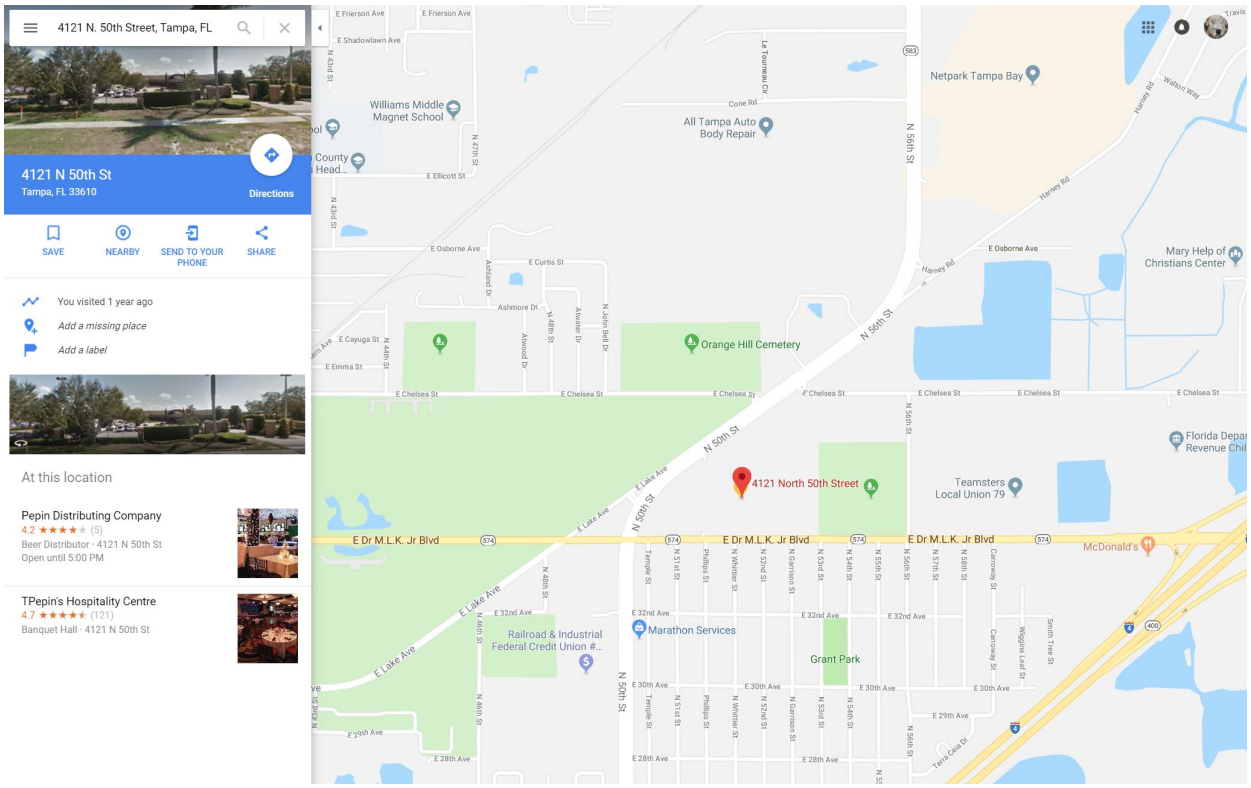
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Vol. 31 No.10 October, 2018

October 10, 2018, 6:30PM meeting at Pepin

Upcoming meeting presentation

"Chromebooks 2018"

Merle Nicholson, TPCUG member

There have been some major changes in Chromebook product lines; availability, cost and capabilities. If you're planning to buy a new laptop, it makes sense to consider Chromebooks as an alternative to Mac or Windows 10. They're available everywhere now.

There are opportunities to re-use older Windows notebooks by installing a Chromebook OS called "Neverware CloudReady" at https://www.neverware.com

We'll be using a presentation from the 2018 collection of APCUG Virtual Tech Conferences.

November meeting: "Crime Prevention Task Force"

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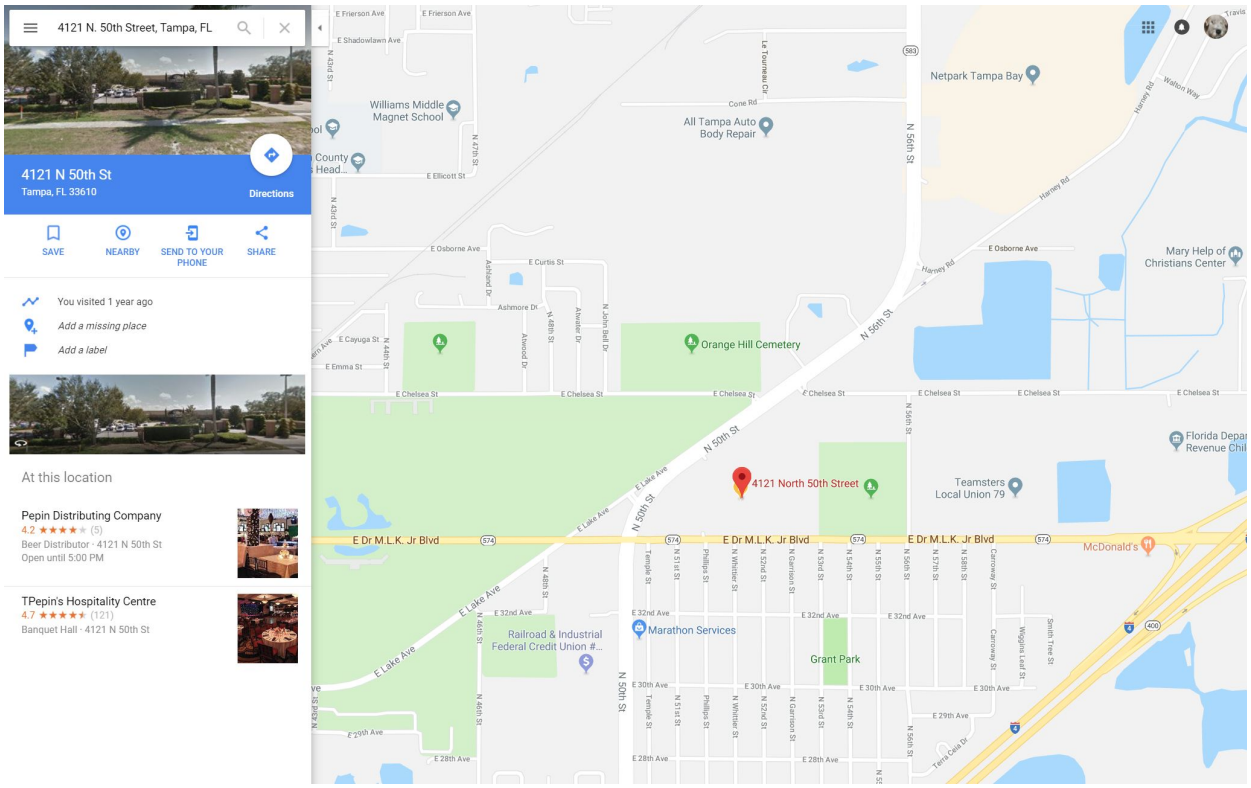
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Bits of Blue



Vol. 31 No.11 November, 2018

November 14, 2018, 6:30PM meeting at Pepin

November meeting: "Crime Prevention Task Force"

We will discuss the plans for the annual December dinner and social meeting. Please plan to attend on Wednesday and contribute your ideas

---

December 12, 2018, 6:30PM

Dinner & social meeting, details to be determined

NEW meeting date for January

January 3, 2018, 6:30PM

NEW meeting date for January

"Protecting Your Digital Life"

by Bob Gostischa

We are changing the meeting date just for January only, to accomodate the presenters schedule

---

Upcoming meetings

<u>November 14, 2018, 6:30PM</u> at Pepin: CRIME PREVENTION TASK FORCE

Crime Prevention Task Force is a community service organization developed by former law enforcement officers. Our mission is to achieve more awareness by the public of the criminal threat facing everyone in today's society and show effective measures to counter that threat.

We support the community, businesses, groups and organizations by providing free crime awareness programs. Our speakers offer current information on all aspects of the crime problem, and recommended tested procedures to enhance personal safety.

The Program requires only 30 minutes, although 40 minutes are recommended to accommodate questions and answers.

Topics discussed are:

*** Identity Theft * Fraud and Scams**

*** Purse Snatching * Guns and Alternative Weapons**

*** Hurricane Safety * Carjacking and Much More**

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss a program with your group. We have the flexibility in crafting a program that will minimize disruption at your scheduled event, while significantly enhancing the personal safety of those in attendance. You will find our program to be both informative and interesting.
Saving lives, preventing personal injury and, or property loss are our goals.

We will discuss the plans for the annual December dinner and social meeting. Please plan to attend on Wednesday and contribute your ideas

<u>December 12, 2018, 6:30PM</u> Dinner & social meeting, details to be determined

<u>January 3, 2018, 6:30PM</u> "Protecting Your Digital Life" by Bob Gostischa

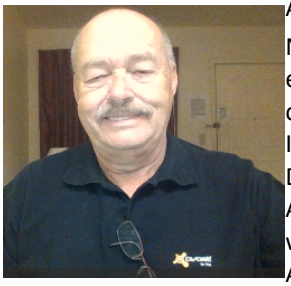
Protecting Your Digital Life



Between ransomware, data breaches, cryptojacking,
supply chain attacks, and mobile malware,
it's never been more important to protect your
digital life.

avast

Our security and privacy are constantly in danger of being attacked from many sources. Staying secure and guarding as much of our privacy as possible is a constant challenge.
This presentation will cover how we can protect our computers (Windows and Mac), tablets, smartphones and other smart devices.
Join presenter Bob Gostischa as he explains the importance of guarding our online presence. He'll also share what he uses to keep his computers, smart devices as well as connected Internet of Things devices secure.



About the Presenter:

Norbert "Bob" Gostischa, after a successful career in banking, enjoys his retirement as an enthusiastic IT security expert, most notably for Avast Software s.r.o., the global leader in cybersecurity products. The most known product is Avast Antivirus.
In 2016, Avast purchased AVG Technologies and in 2017 Avast bought Piriform (Ccleaner, Defraggler, Recuva and Speccy).
Avast has been making security software for over 30 years and has more than 400 million users worldwide. Avast prevents 2 billion malware attacks every month.
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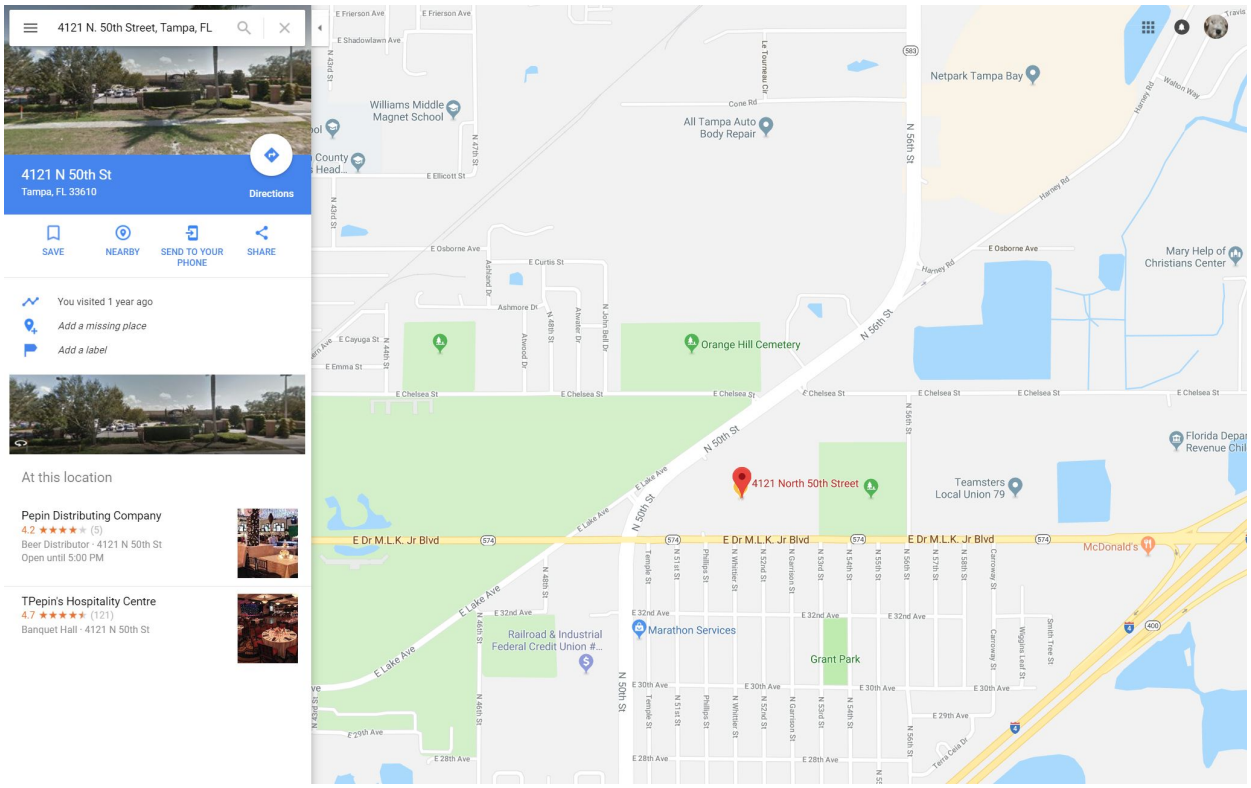
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Bits of Blue



Vol. 31 No.12 December, 2018

December 12, 2018, 6:30PM

Dinner & social meeting

Remember: 6:30 PM at Pepin

John Witmer hosts this annual event for us and it's always outstanding and good fun, good food – Invite your spouse or whoever, even if you haven't emailed John yet. president@tpcug.org

---

NEW meeting date for January

January 3, 2018, 6:30PM

NEW meeting date for January

"Protecting Your Digital Life"

by Bob Gostischa

We are changing the meeting date just for January only, to accomodate the presenters schedule

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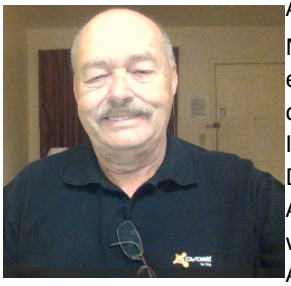
Protecting Your Digital Life



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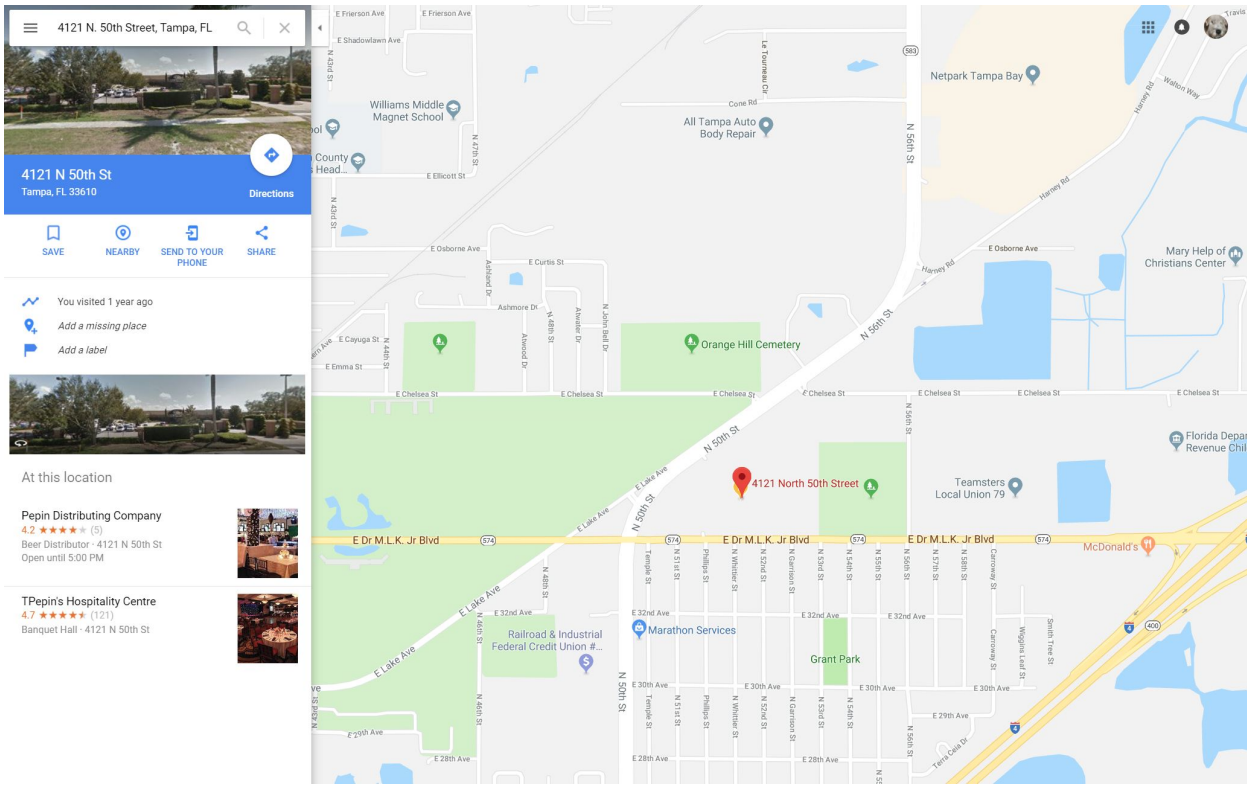
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Vol. 32 No.1 January, 2019

NEW meeting date for January

Thursday, January 3, 2018, 6:30PM

NEW meeting date for January

"Protecting Your Digital Life"

by Bob Gostischa

We are changing the meeting date just for January only, to accomodate the presenters schedule

A Year-End 2018 Message
John Witmer, President, TPCUG

As this year draws to a close, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of you who were able to come out on December 12th for the Holiday Party. This event was well attended by our members and in addition we had some spouses who also joined us this year. I think all who came out had a good time enjoying each other's company and meeting some spouses for the first time in quite a while. The menu this year was also influenced by several requests made by members, and I hope you enjoyed the food selection for this year's party. As usual, there was food available to be taken home afterwards, and I'm thankful to those who did so. I also want to thank my wife Donna in assisting me with the food preparation and setup at Pepin.

As computer clubs are becoming dinosaurs on the landscape of this country, our Club has managed to hang in there with 8-9 meetings held each of the last few years – taking the summer months off, and by having a few members who willingly step up to give us presentations each month. Occasionally, we are able to get an outside presentation such as the one held in November. Doug Mullis, in addition to being our Treasurer, is constantly looking for outside speakers of interest to our group. They are becoming very rare to find, but we do have such a speaker lined up for our January meeting that had to be moved to this coming Thursday evening, Jan 3rd. See the following article on who and what is in store for us this Thursday.

Our Club is in great shape financially with about $6,000 still in the bank. We have suspended dues collection, and the monthly income from our affiliation with Amazon on our website has generated a nice stream of commission payments that help offset the minimal expenses we have each year.

Our membership unfortunately mirrors many of the other clubs across the country, as new members seldom join, and existing members for numerous reasons fall by the wayside. I was reminded of this situation while reading a Dec 14th article in the Lakeland Ledger about Polk County's last public computer group shutting its doors for the last time this month. As noted in the article, teens and young adults know more about technology than we in the older age category ever hope to learn. So I mention this demise of computer clubs because I think we may also have to address our being a viable computer group in the not too distant future. But it is not a topic to deal with for the present time.

If you are able, I hope to see you come out to Pepin for the Jan 3rd presentation by Avast.

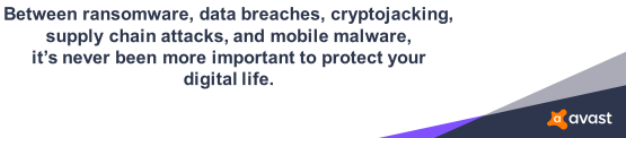
Finally, on behalf of your Board of Directors for TPCUG, I wish you all a healthy, prosperous, safe, and fun filled New Year.

Warmest regards,

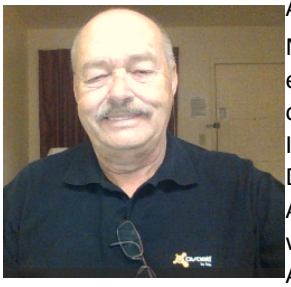
John Witmer, President

Protecting Your Digital Life





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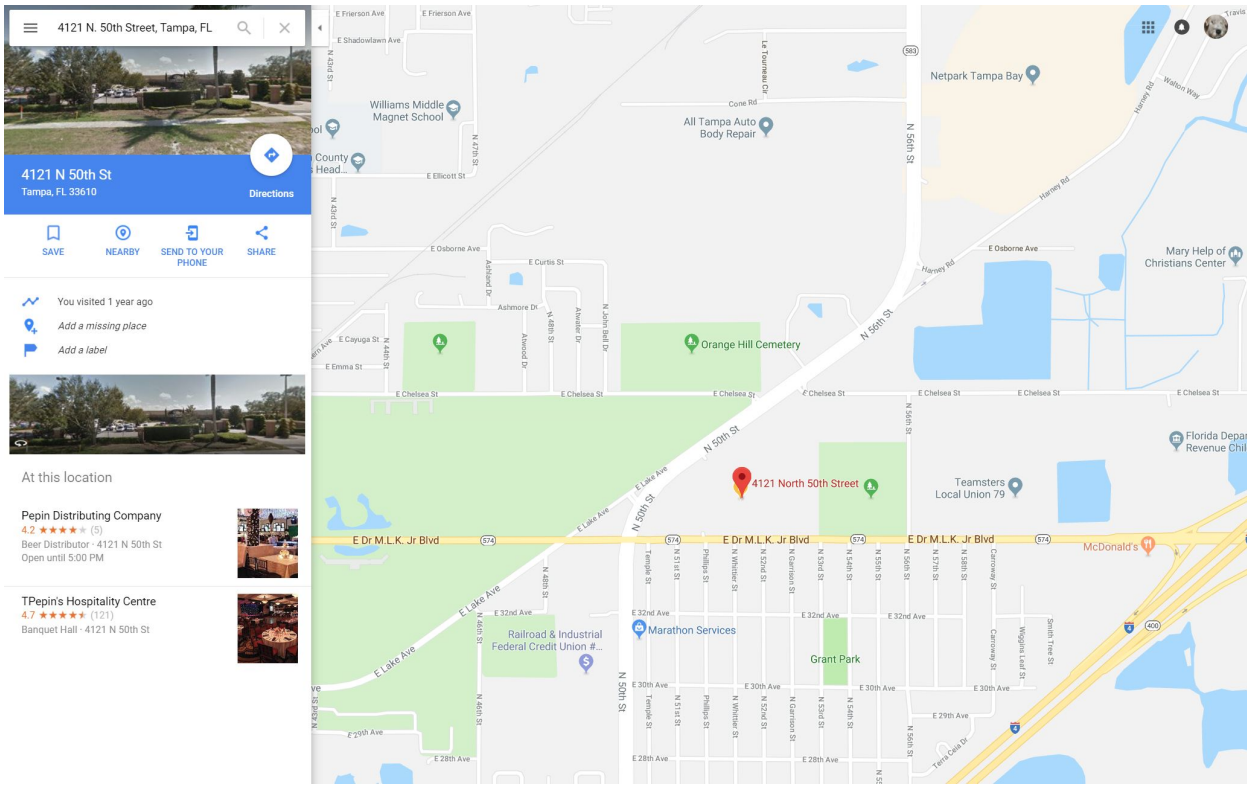
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Vol. 32 No.3 March, 2019

March Meeting at Pepin

Wednesday, March 13, 2019, 6:30PM

"Google Hardware"

Google has integrated Google Home devices, Home automation, Security, Google Assistant, Android Auto and Nest Cameras all into one (mostly) linked system. Here's what it can do for you.

Please plan to attend!

Page 2 – TPCUG Annual Financial Report 2018

Page 3 – About TPCUG and location map

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR 2018

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2018 INCOME

Memberships (1 single)	$	25.00
Amazon & Misc.		297.74
TOTAL INCOME	$	322.74

2018 EXPENSES

Newsletter Postage	$	0.00
Newsletter Printing		0.00
FACUG Dues (Waived this year)		0.00
APCUG Dues		50.00
Florida Incorporation Fee		61.25
Web Site Hosting Fee		0.00
P O Box Rental		0.00
Dec Holiday Party Costs		377.89
Website Domain Fee		0.00
Refunded Dues		0.00
Miscellaneous (Speaker compensation)		100.00
PayPal Fees		0.85
TOTAL EXPENSES	$	589.99

NET DEFICIT FOR 2018	**$**	**267.25**
BANK BALANCE – January 1, 2018	$	6326.65
BANK BALANCE – December 31, 2018	$	6059.40

Submitted by D.W. Mullis, Treasurer, TPCUG

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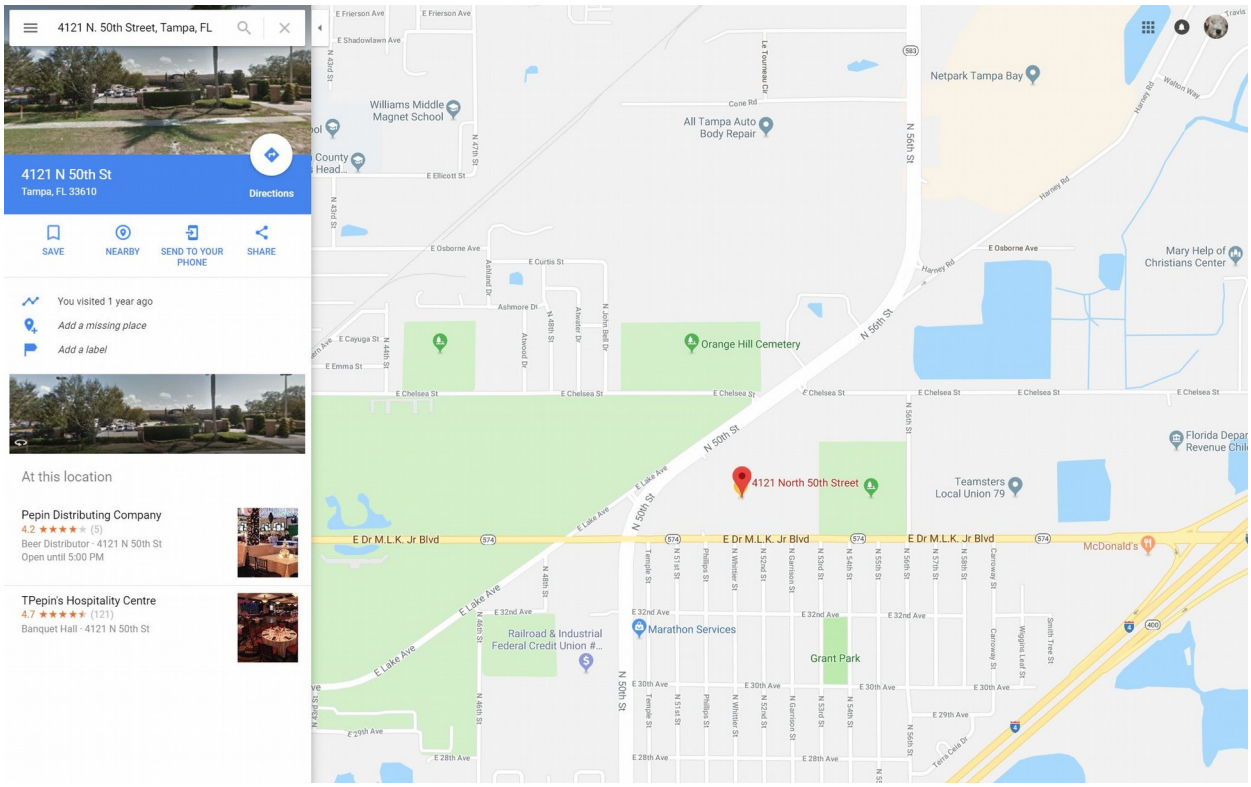
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Vol. 32 No.4 April, 2019

April Meeting at Pepin

Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 6:30PM

"Google Hardware Part 2"

Google has integrated Google Home devices, Home automation, Security, Google Assistant, Android Auto and Nest Cameras all into one (mostly) linked system. Here's what it can do for you.

Due to technical difficulties at the March meeting, Merle was unable to cast the phone screen to the big screen. That's fixed now (dead power cube of all things) and hopefully demo some of the things we talked about last month.

Please plan to attend!

Do you know any good presenters? We need to fill the May meeting. Volunteers from the membership? Then June, July and August we suspend meetings for the summer.

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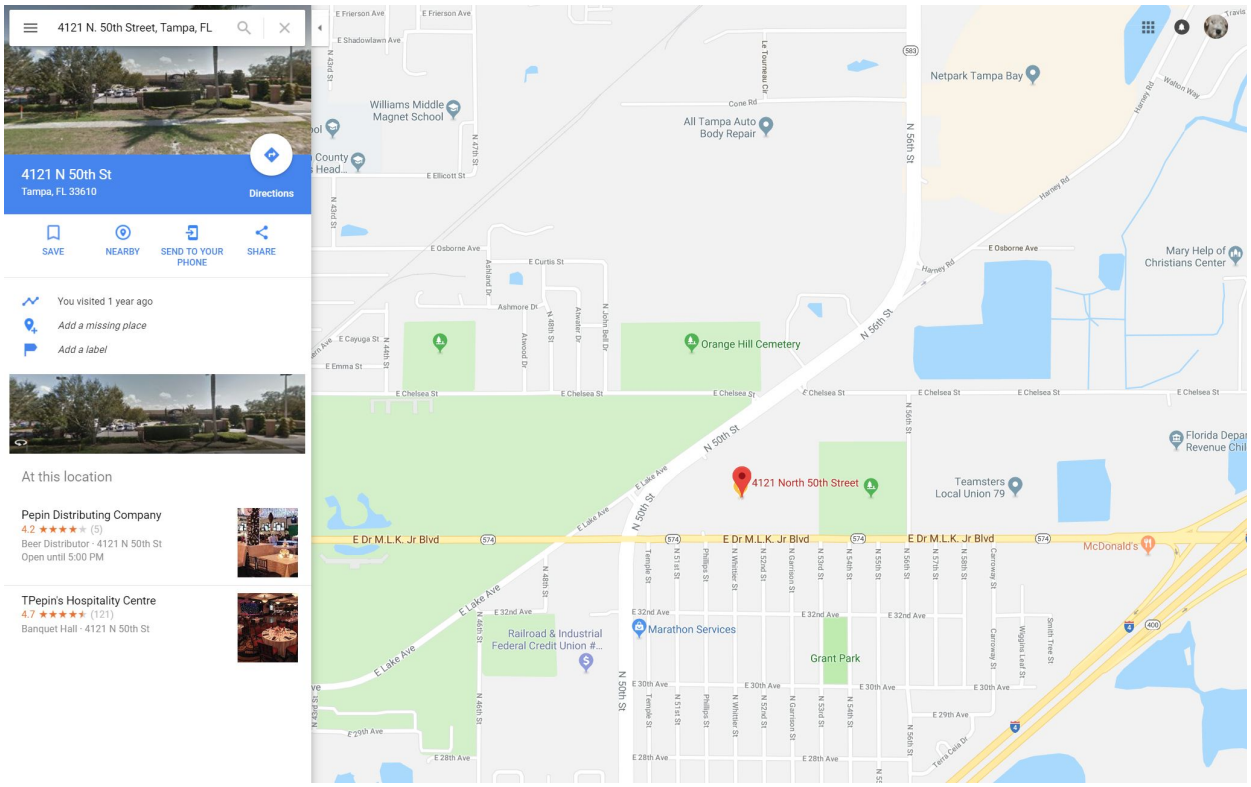
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Vol. 32 No.2 February, 2019

February Meeting at Pepin

Wednesday, February 13, 2018, 6:30PM

"VPN – virtual private Networks"

by John Witmer

Please plan to attend!

February 13th TPCUG Meeting Presentation

The presentation for Wednesday's meeting will deal with VPNs, with a review of some popular VPN service providers. John Witmer will utilize an APCUG VTC presentation on VPNs from the fall of 2017 that was presented by Joe Melfi, as well as some articles and current reviews found online. He hopes to demo a service he has selected and implemented on his laptop.

There will also be a discussion about the possibility of using an online presentation/meeting service that is used by the APCUG for their Virtual Technology Conferences. This service is Zoom, and has the ability for us at times to do online meetings and not have to drive to Pepin for a meeting. Additionally, the APCUG has a speaker's bureau of presenters that can present to us online in real time, and allows for Q&A during the presentation. As most of you know, the ability to have speakers come to our small group is almost non-existent. We should explore if this is a viable option for us.

Come share your thoughts and opinions.

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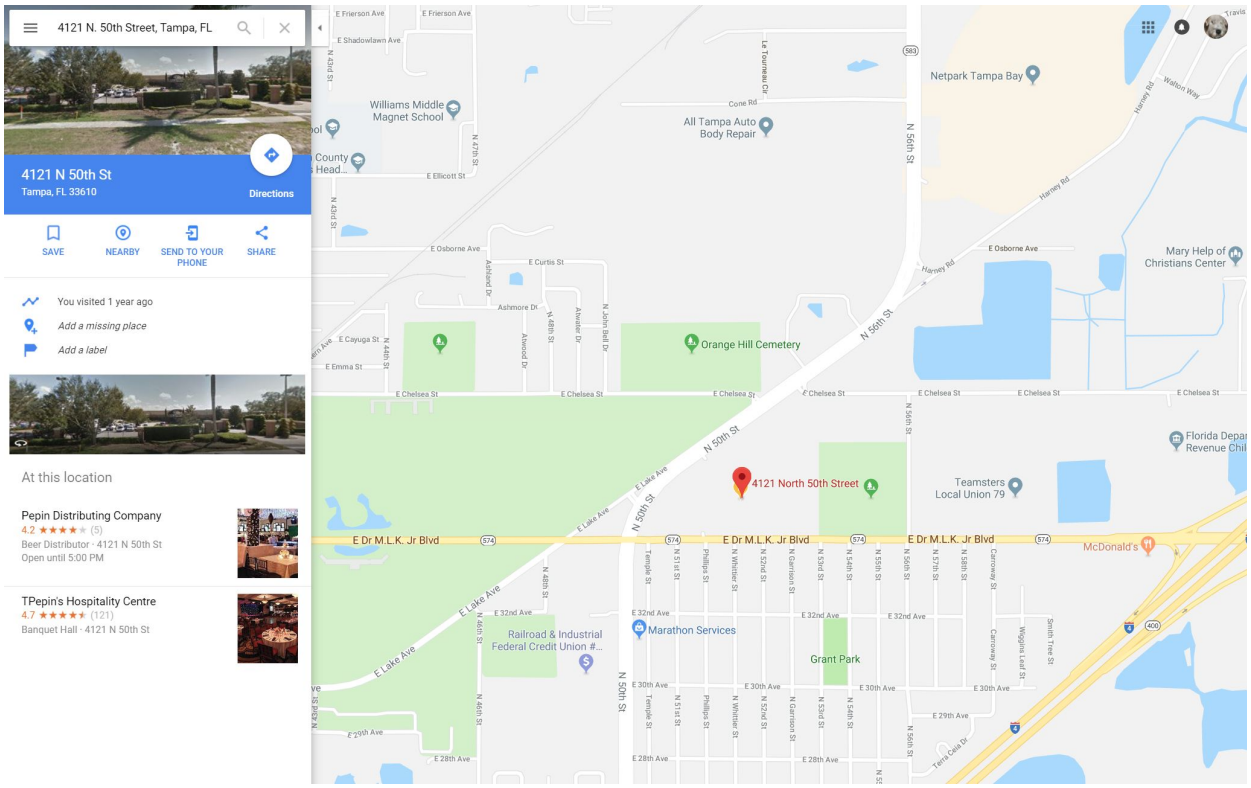
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Vol. 32 No.5 September, 2019

Wednesday, September 11, 2019, 6:30PM

September meeting is unfortunately canceled

We plan to resume in October

October 9, 2019 6:30PM at Pepin

Do you know any good presenters? We need to fill the November and December meetings. Volunteers from the membership?

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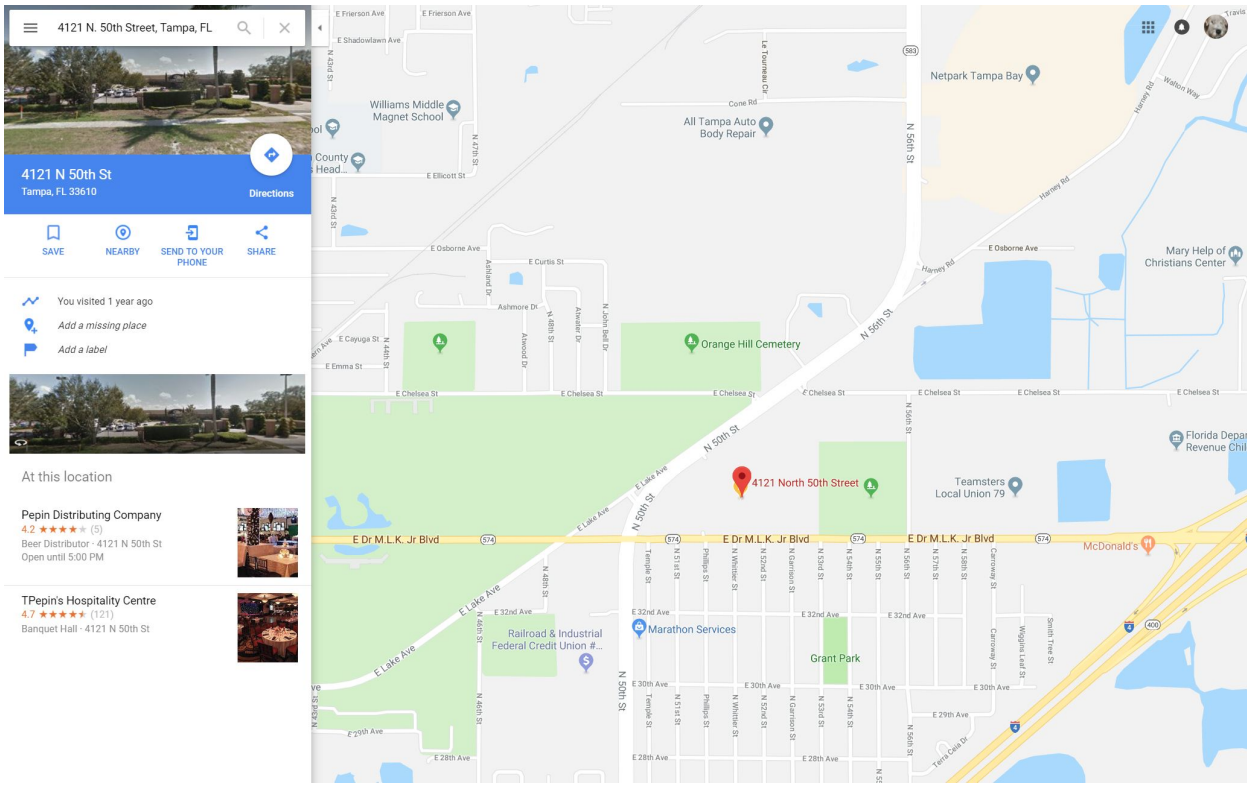
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Vol. 32 No.6 November, 2019

Wednesday, November 13, 2019, 6:30PM

November meeting

Wednesday, November 13, 2019, 6:30PM at Pepin

Do you know any good presenters? We need to fill future meetings.

Volunteers from the membership?

For November, we'll take a quick look at the APCUG Free presentations and select one. You may want to review the presentations before the meeting, just search YouTube for "APCUG" or "APCUG Technology conferences". There are plenty of good subjects to choose from. Also we'll discuss the December holiday get-together, currently scheduled for December 11, 2019

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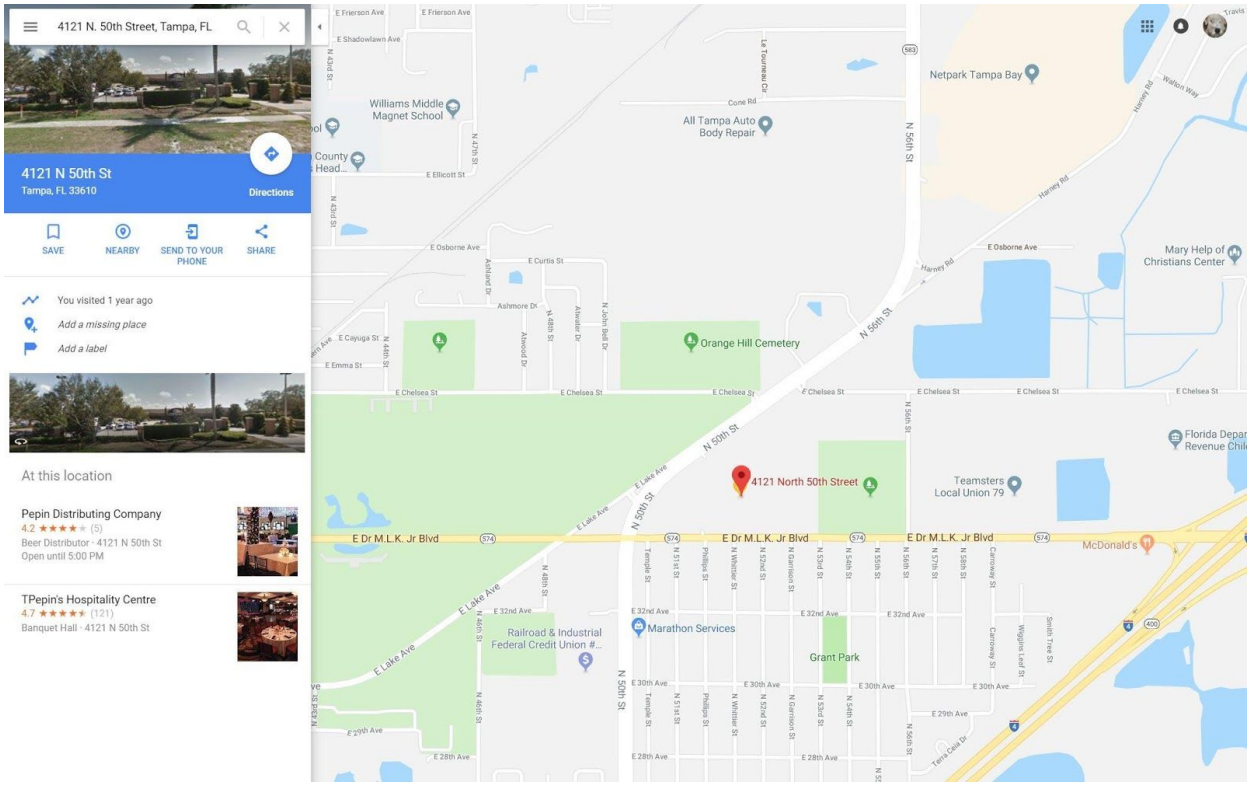
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Vol. 32 No.7 December, 2019

Wednesday, December 11, 2019, 6:30PM

December Holiday Dinner

Wednesday, December 11, 2019, 6:30PM at Pepin

December holiday get-together, December 11, 2019. For anyone not attending for the last couple of years, John and Donna Witmer cater a dinner spread for members, past members and spouses.

John has promised more of the same for this year and past years dinnes have turned out especially enjoyable. Pepin has an area to the left of the entrance suitable for a gathering of this kind, so it will be worth your while. Please come, and if you know of a recent past member not on our current mailing list, please pass it on.

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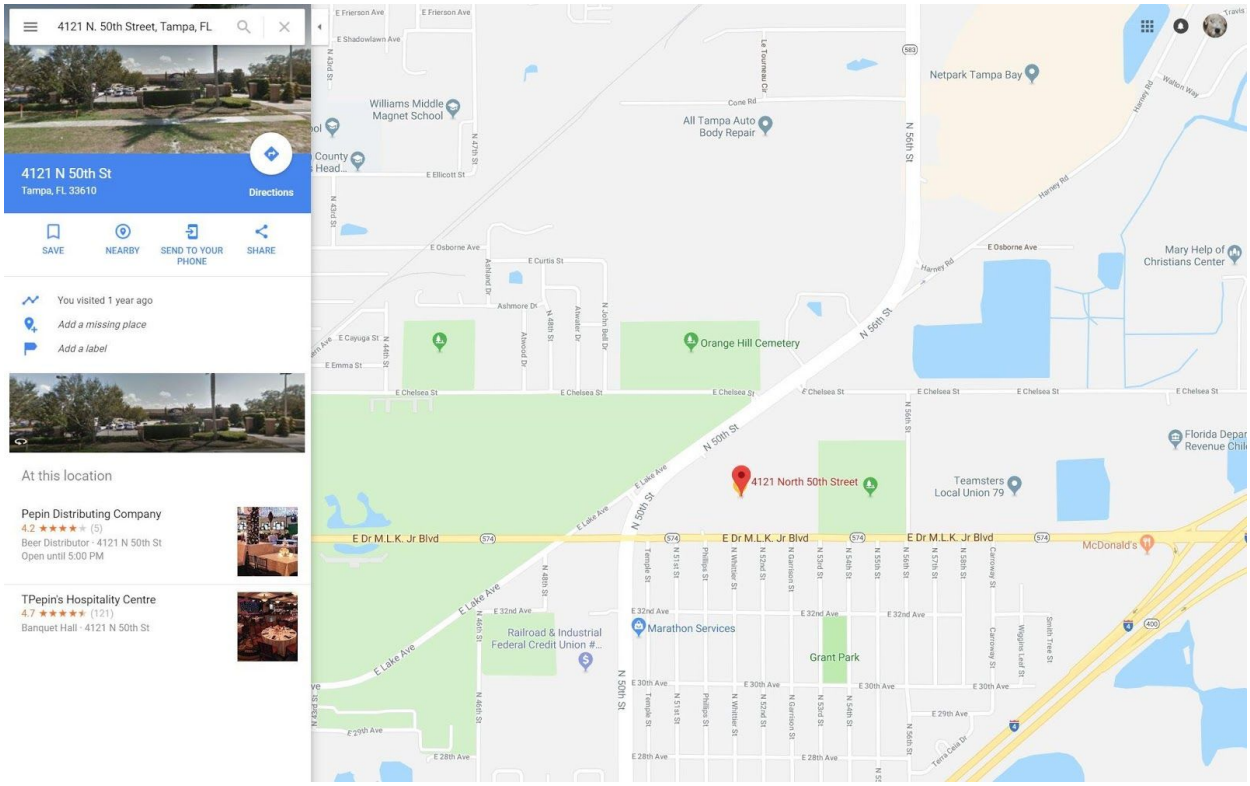
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Vol. 33 No.2 February, 2020

Wednesday, February 12, 2020 - 6:30PM

Speaker Merle Nicholson

Creating an Administrator Account and then operating as a Standard account.

This is important to your on-line safety and Windows 10 doesn't make it routine or especially easy. Learn how and why at the next meeting.

Other items, time permitting:

APCUG instructional videos

Google Remote Desktop

Classic Shell menu for Windows 10

Wednesday, February 12, 2020 - 6:30PM at Pepin

TPCUG FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR 2019

TPCUG STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND BANK BALANCE

2019 INCOME

Memberships	$	0.00
Amazon & Misc.		137.99
TOTAL INCOME	$	137.99

2019 EXPENSES

Newsletter Postage	$	0 .00
Newsletter Printing		0.00
FACUG Dues (Waived this year)		0.00
APCUG Dues		50.00
Florida Incorporation Fee		61.25
Web Site Hosting Fee		0.00
P O Box Rental		0.00
Dec Holiday Party Costs		221.72
Website Domain Fee		0.00
Refunded Dues		0.00
Miscellaneous (Representation at APCUG seminar)		75.00
Bank of America Fees (New checks/ledger)		77.76
TOTAL EXPENSES	$	485.73
NET DEFICIT FOR 2019	**$**	**-347.74**

BANK BALANCE – January 1, 2019	$	6059.40
BANK BALANCE – December 31, 2019	$	5711.66

Submitted by D.W. Mullis, Treasurer, TPCUG

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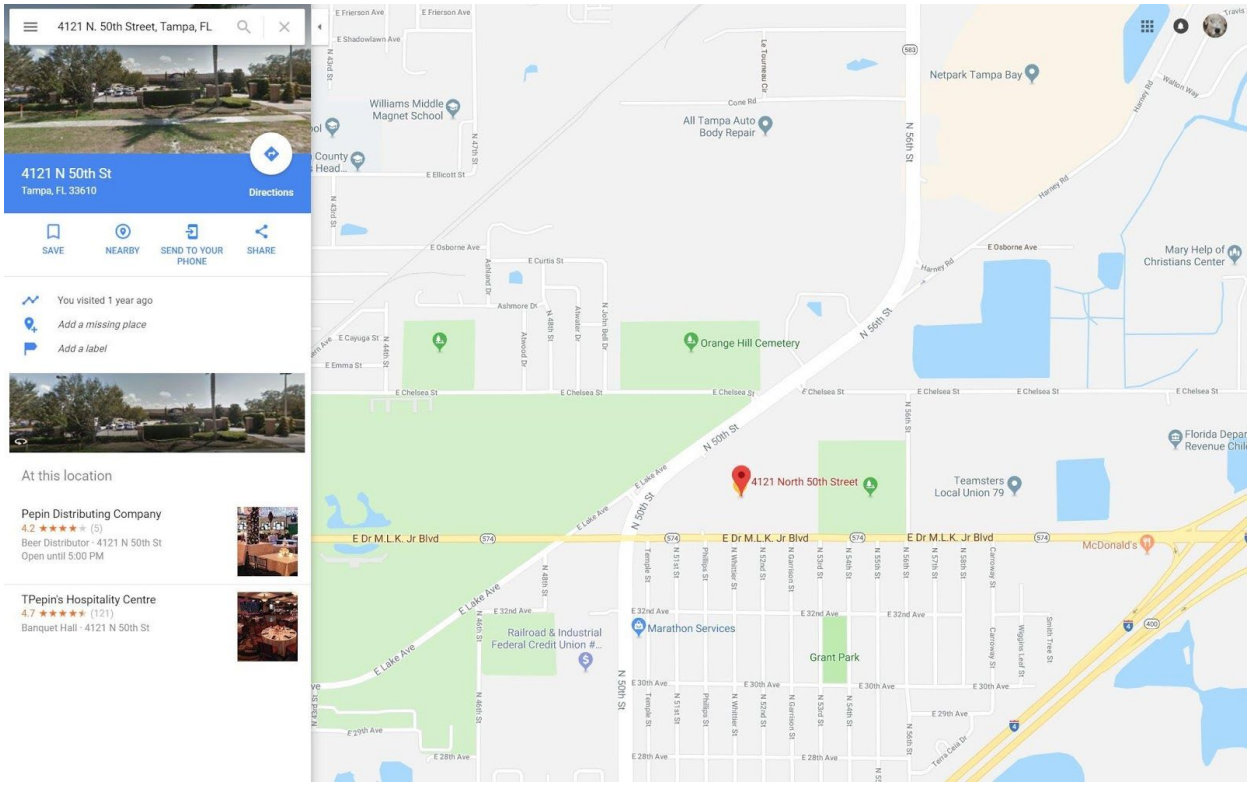
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Vol. 33 No.1 January, 2020

Wednesday, January 8 2020 - 6:30PM

Speaker Jere Minich Presentation

Wednesday, January 8 2020 - 6:30PM at Pepin

Jere Minich is our District Representative from the APCUG. (https://apcug2.org/) In addition to being Advisor, Region 5 (AL, FL, GA, SC), Jere is on the APCUG Speakers Bureau and writes "Jere's Tech Tips". Go to the APCUG website, his Tech Tips are on the APCUG Home page.

Jere's presentation subjects: "Configure Storage Sense to free up space", "Keep your Windows 10 PC clean and running at top performance" and "Create a Restore Point on Windows 10"

His presentation should be of interest to everyone, We hope for a good turnout. See you there on Wednesday.

Windows 7 to 10 upgrade

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, TPCUG

I've recently seen several web articles warning you that you may need to buy a copy of Windows 10 and get your old Windows 7 machine upgraded now.

It's not exactly correct.

This is the month that support ends from Microsoft. And while it's true that your risk of new hijackers, ransomware and viruses increases, it will continue to otherwise work as well. I wouldn't exactly advocate that, but it's prudent that you get the best rated security package you can afford. You especially need a strong website scanner.

I've very recently (Dec 2019) upgraded two of my Windows 7 computers and upgraded a couple of friends computers with no trouble, even on my two ancient AMD computers. Free.

I've seen no indication that you cannot upgrade for free.

I've upgraded by using the Microsoft Windows 10 "MediaCreationTool1909.exe", and create the installation on a USB flashdrive. You then run the setup from the flashdrive in Windows 7. In the event that the Windows 7 OS is broken, hopefully you'll have the Windows 7 License Key. Before I do any upgrade I make sure I have that key documented. If you don't have it, the easiest way to get it is by using "Belarc Advisor Free edition". That tool gives you a comprehensive configuration of the entire PC, hardware and software. Obviously if Win 7 is broken, you're not going to use the software, but it's a good idea to get this documentation ahead of time on a working machine because it's not unknown for the upgrades to completely brick your computer.

The media creation tool will give you a choice of "Upgrade this PC Now", or "Create Installation Media (USB, DVD ....)", and I have always created to a USB drive.

This newest installation (1909) forces you to install with a Microsoft account, and then after installing you must know to create a local account.

Media Creation tool: (https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10)

I'm going to admit that I've adapted to Windows 10. I certainly do not recommend a new Windows computer (or upgrade) to anyone who is not technically inclined.

My daily use computer is a Chromebook that suits me perfectly 95% of the time. But when I need to do photo or video editing, complicated printing, database or programming I go to a windows machine. But the Chromebook suits me for any web browser work, word processing, spreadsheet, email, messaging, communications and streaming, TV programming, movies. It syncs to my cell phone in all ways, something that Windows does only uselessly.

But back to Windows 10.

There are a few things I intensely dislike, one being the Start Menu. I think it's absolutely useless. I've mitigated the annoyance by installing "Classic Shell" and have a lot of experience with it. It's highly configurable if you feel the need, but it defaults to a useful configuration. You do not lose the Windows 10 menu, it's still available by holding Shift while clicking Start. I highly recommend it if you find the start menu difficult. It's not your fault, it's designed to be difficult.

The second intense dislike is the default privacy settings along with annoying tips and disguised advertising, and the constant hijacking of your local sign-in account.

The newest installation (1909) forces you to install with a Microsoft account, and then after installing you must know to create a local account.

If you then try to use MS OneDrive or obtain any app from the MS Store, your local account will be hijacked again and you PC will revert to the MS account again. If you've used different passwords (AND YOU SHOULD !), you may be surprised that your account has been hijacked again. You can fix all this if you are really careful to click on a cleverly worded opt-out to the left of the Accept button when it asks for your MS account. Be careful.

There is absolutely no reason to sign in to your computer with a Microsoft Account. Everything works keeping them separate. The MS Store and OneDrive will sign in separately with your MS Account even though you sign in with a local account. There are dire warnings that your personal information will not sync to other sessions if you use another computer, but that's what we're trying to prevent in the first place - saving your personal information.

I've documented a 42 item checklist to configure a new or upgraded Windows 10 installation to satisfy myself that the system is safe to use. Most that must be changed are settings and accounts setup, but many items are in the old Control Panel, restore points and activation of the Administrator account (a command line!). Some of the changes that must be made are pretty daunting and I could not recommend doing this without some skill, patience and experience or help.

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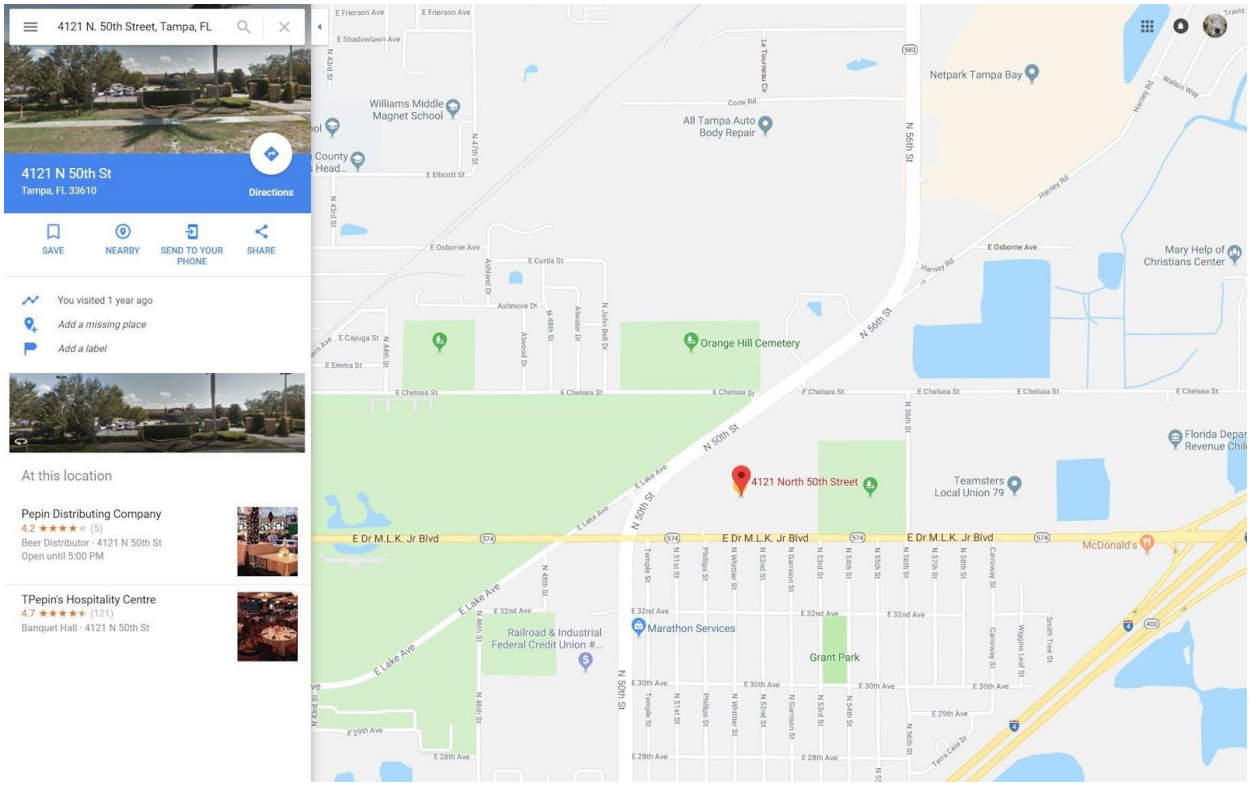
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